

Beauty and the Yeast

BY P.S. NIM

Dedicated with apologies

to the cast of "Beauty and the Beast"



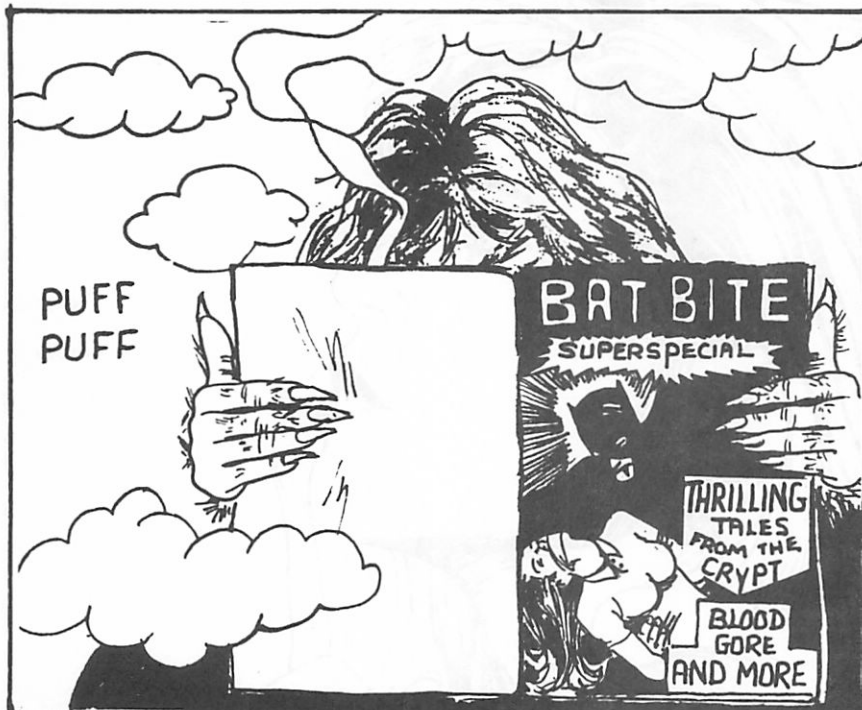
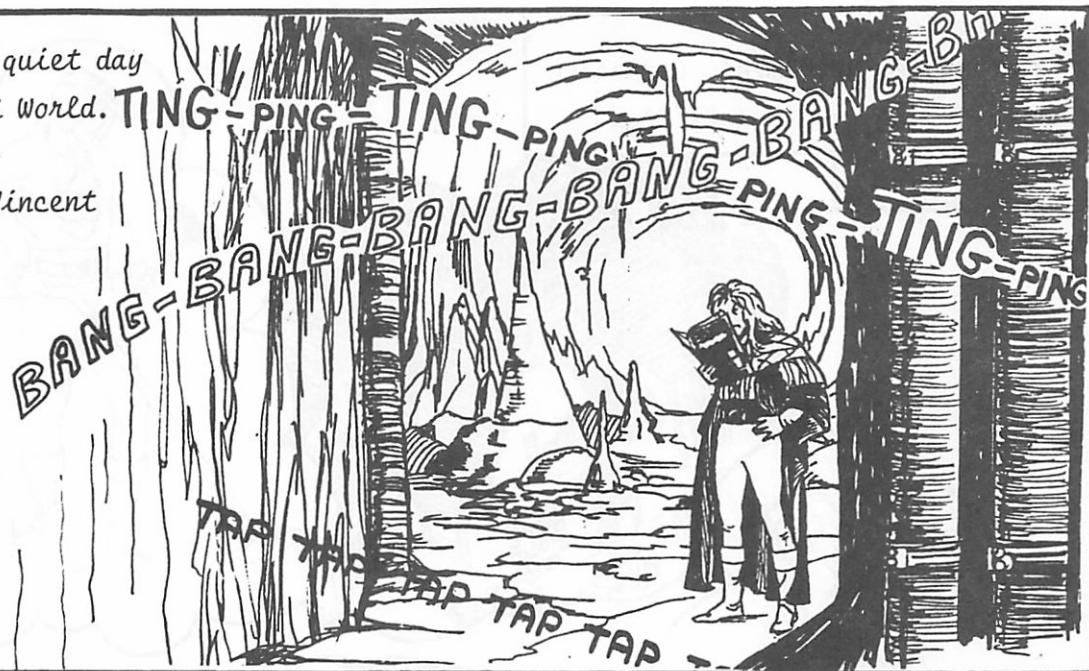
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(apologies to Olivia De Berardinis)

It's another quiet day
in the Tunnel World.
All is well--
except that Vincent
has been
missing
for
hours...



Alone in her apartment, Catherine
is suffering from unfulfilled
dreams...





Finally...

Hello...? Is this
the Dough-Dough
Baking School...?



Somewhat later...

Catherine...
SIGH...

Vincent...
SIGH...



Catherine...



Vincent...

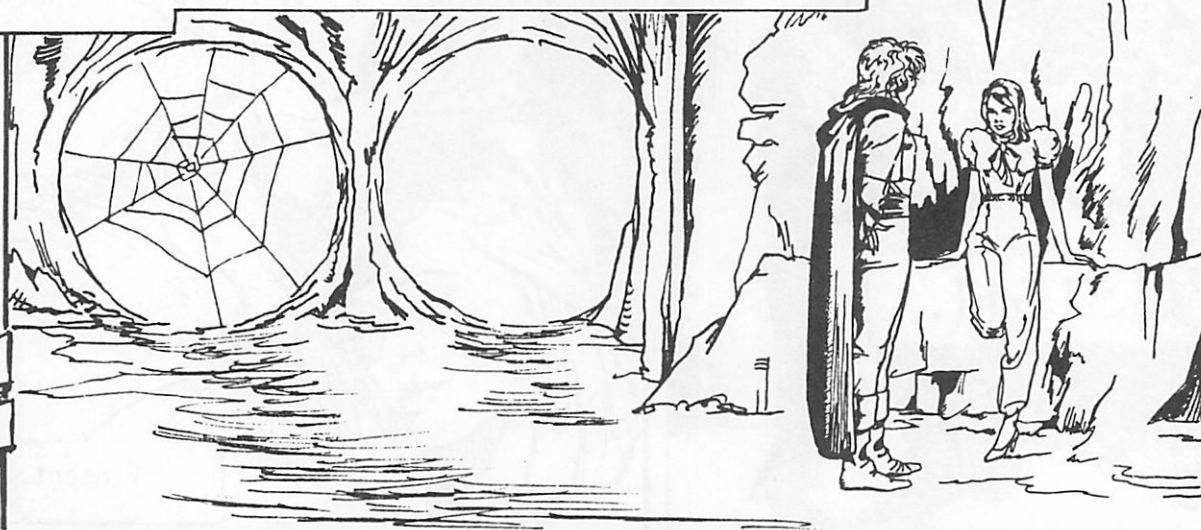


I came because
I sensed your despondency...



...and because I'm supposed to
be cleaning my room.

Vincent--I've enrolled myself in a bread-baking course as a way to find
fulfillment, self-actualization and enrich my experience of meaningful
connection with my inner earth-mother, maternal/spiritual
longings...



Vincent...?



Vincent--what's wrong?



I'm trying to think of an appropriate quotation... or poem...



Well, don't strain yourself, Vincent--



I can't think of anything!

NEVER MIND!!!



Why don't you just--
kiss me...



What did I say???



Later, in Vincent's chamber...

Why, you haven't done a thing! Really, Vincent--
I shall have to discipline you...



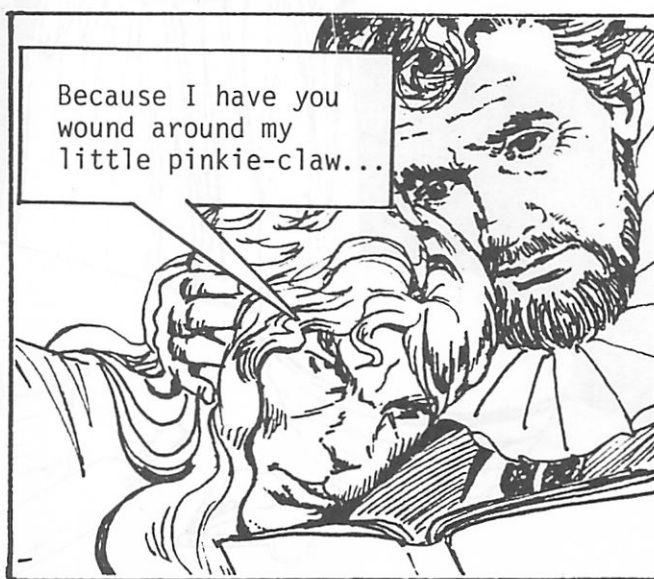
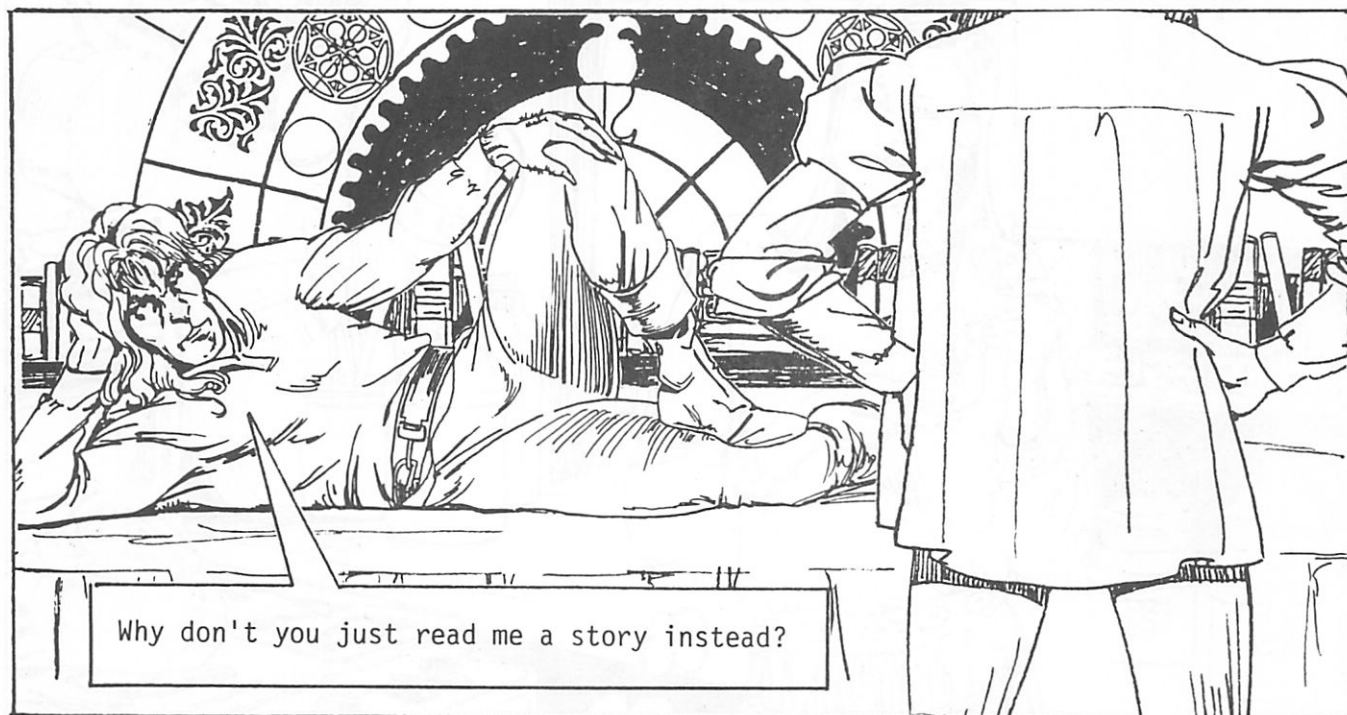
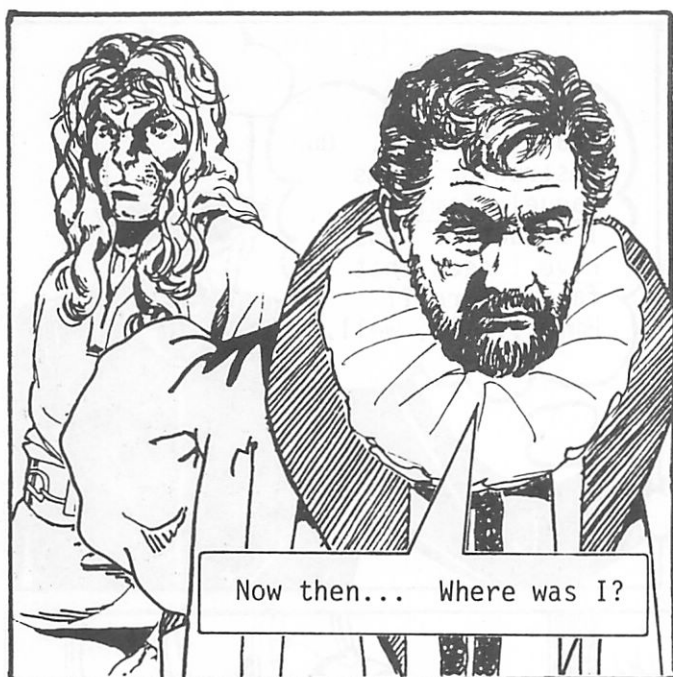
Father-- What on earth are you wearing???



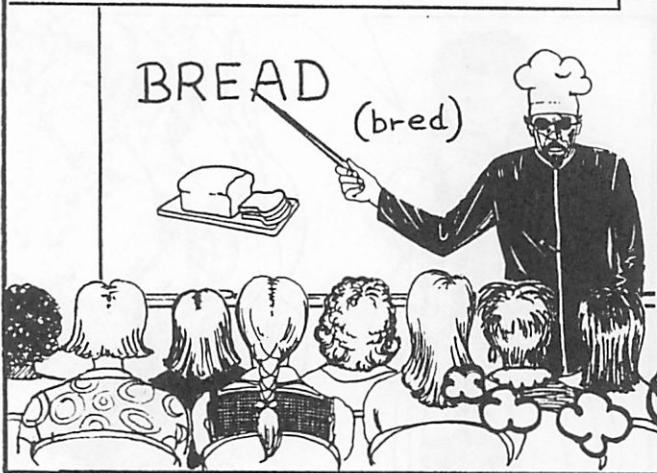
Well, I suppose these duds are a bit outdated...

GIGGLE...

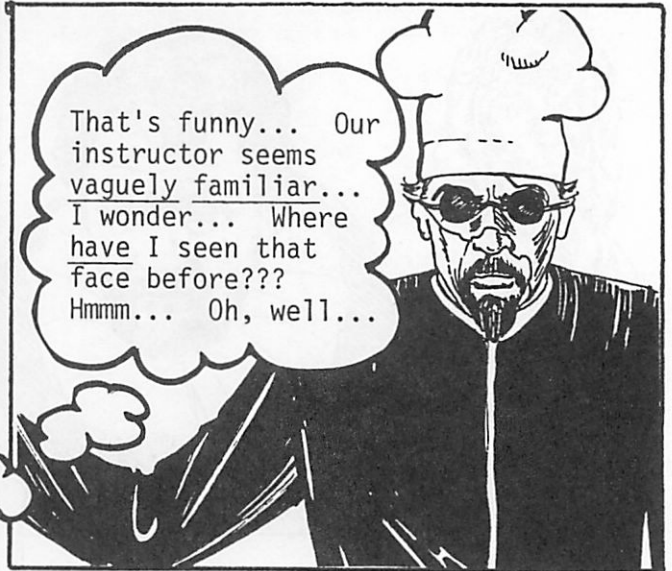




Meanwhile, Catherine attends class...



That's funny... Our instructor seems vaguely familiar... I wonder... Where have I seen that face before??? Hmmmm... Oh, well...

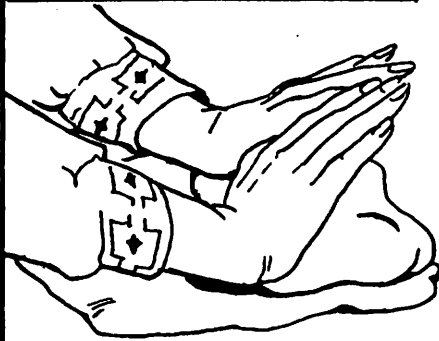


Later, in Catherine's apartment...



Wasn't it nice of the professor to give me his own special super-strain of yeast to use in my homework...?

She sets to work with true enthusiasm...



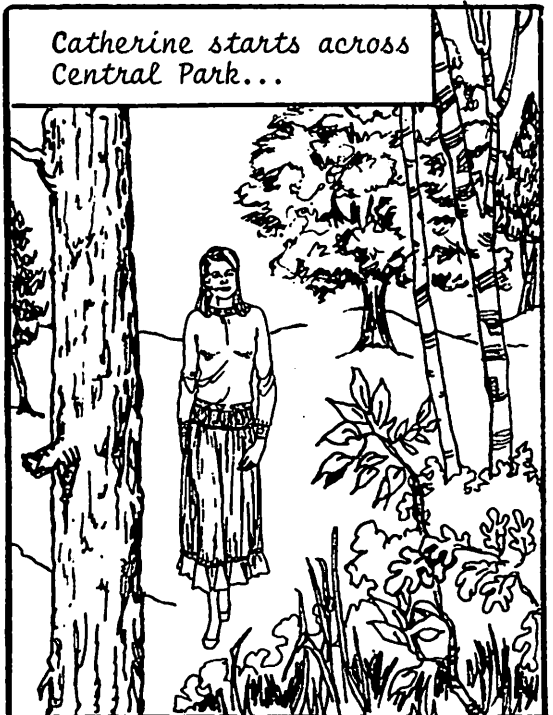
Won't Vincent be impressed. Who knows, maybe he'll even kiss me...

And if this doesn't work I suppose I could learn to knit, press wild flowers, render lard, build an oil derrick, make potash soap, do tinsmithing or skin rabbits or something...



There! I think I'll go call on Vincent while the dough rises...

Catherine starts across Central Park...



Ahead lies the tunnel entrance.

BEWARE OF THE... WHATEVER...

SPEAK IN WHISPERS ONLY

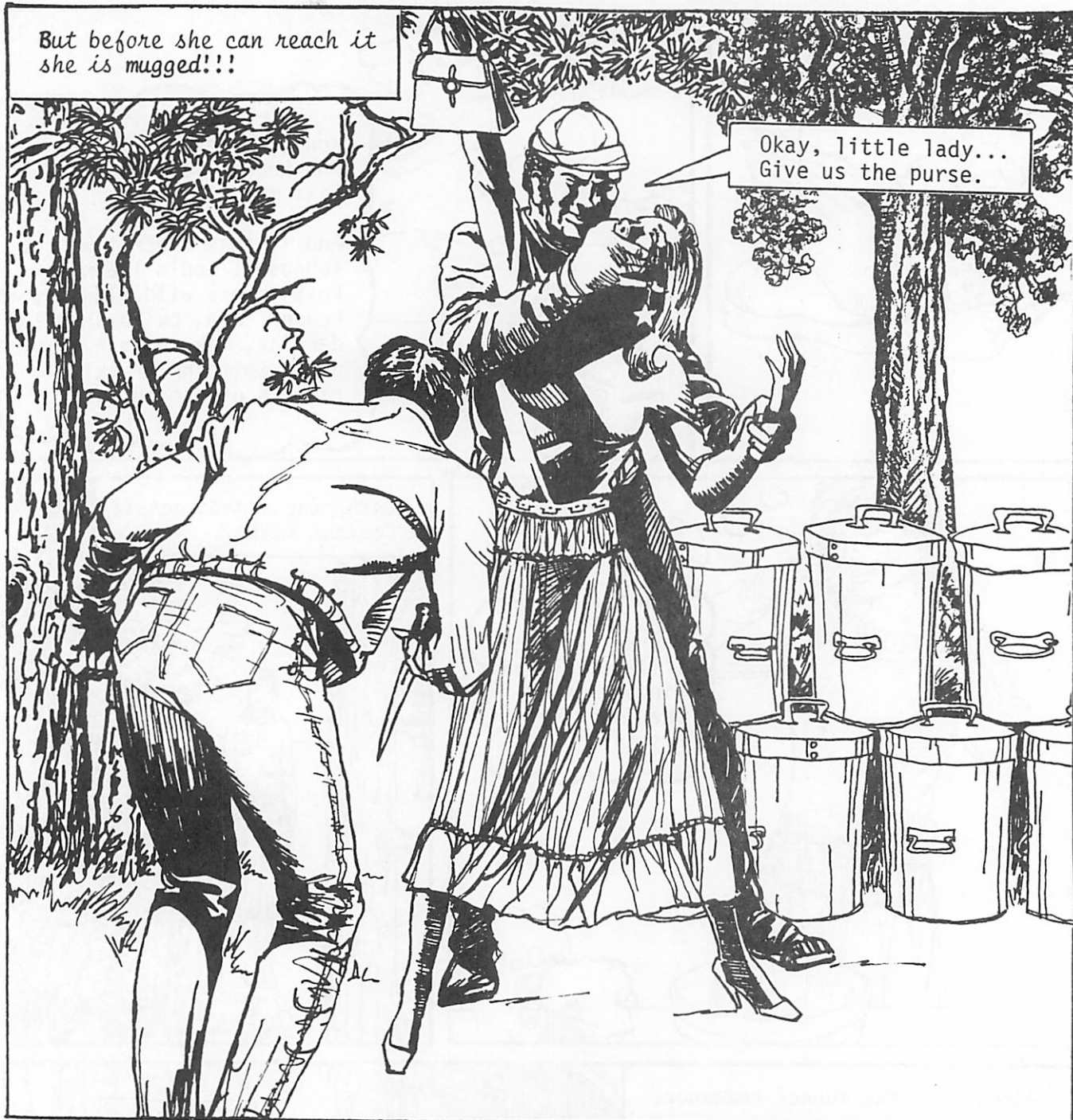
CAUTION
MOUSE-TRAPS POTHOLES
CLASSICAL MUSIC!
POINTLESS DRIFTING HAZE

ENTRANCE TO TUNNELS

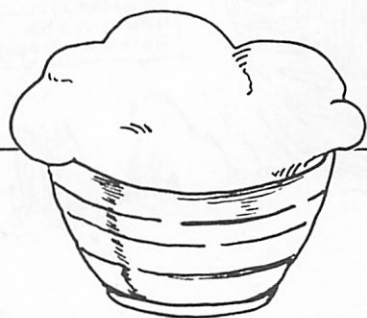
NO:
TAX COLLECTORS
CENSUS TAKERS
SOLICITORS
SENIOR WITNESSES
TRUANT OFFICERS
C.O.D. DELIVERIES
HOMELESS DERELICTS
SPELUNKERS
WAIFS OR STRAYS

But before she can reach it
she is mugged!!!

Okay, little lady...
Give us the purse.



Meanwhile, back at Catherine's
apartment, the dough rises...



And rises...

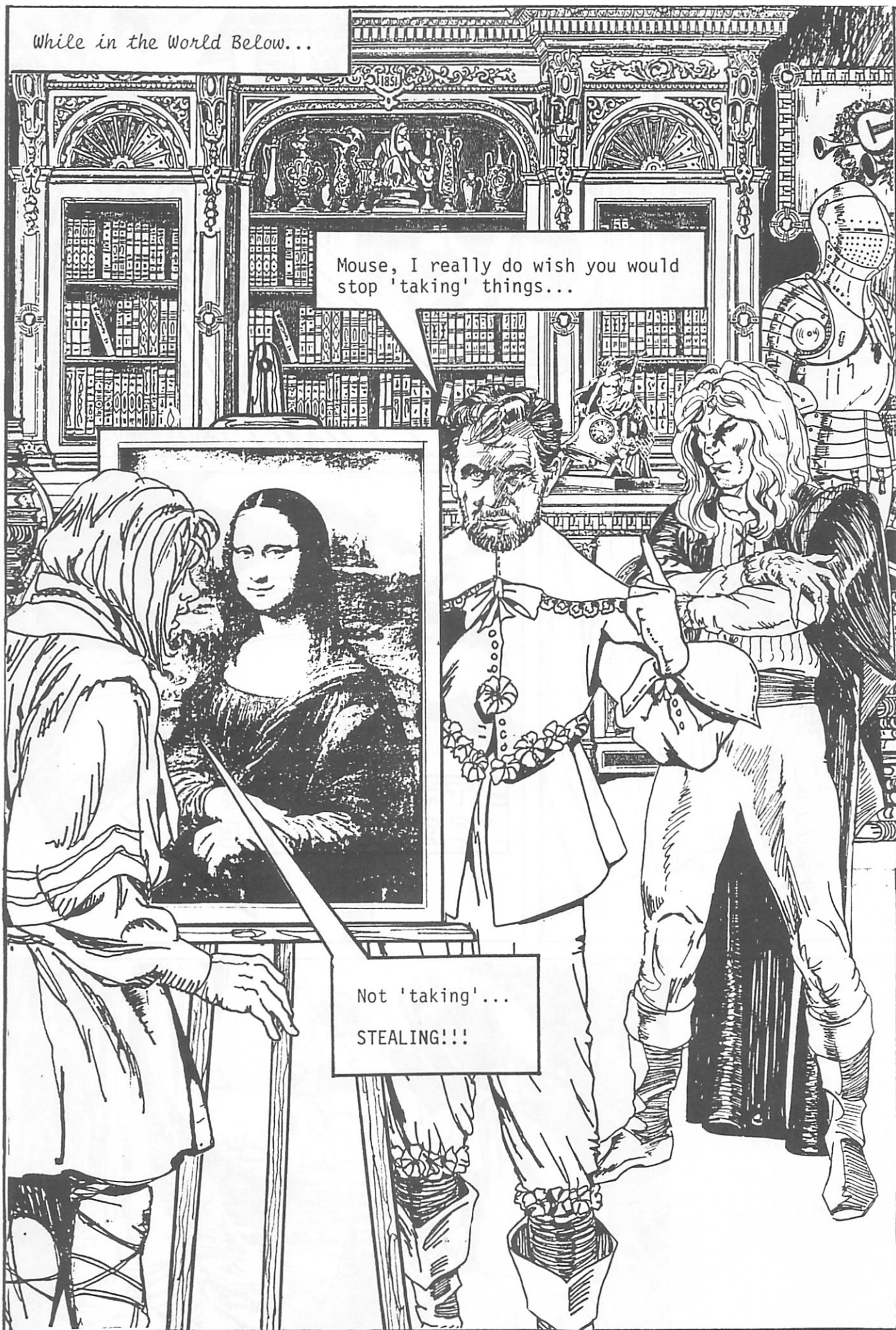
BLOP!



While in the World Below...

Mouse, I really do wish you would
stop 'taking' things...

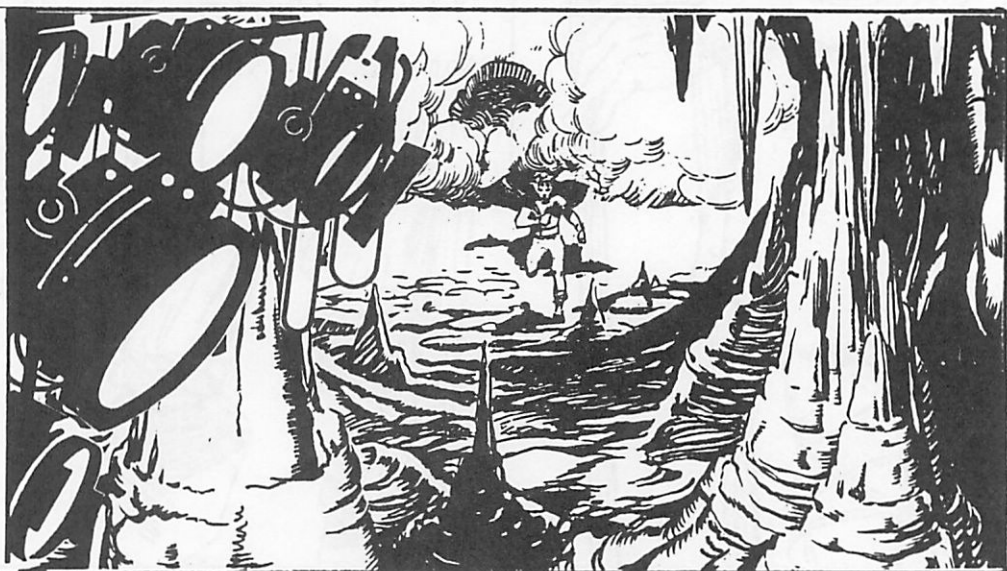
Not 'taking'...
STEALING!!!



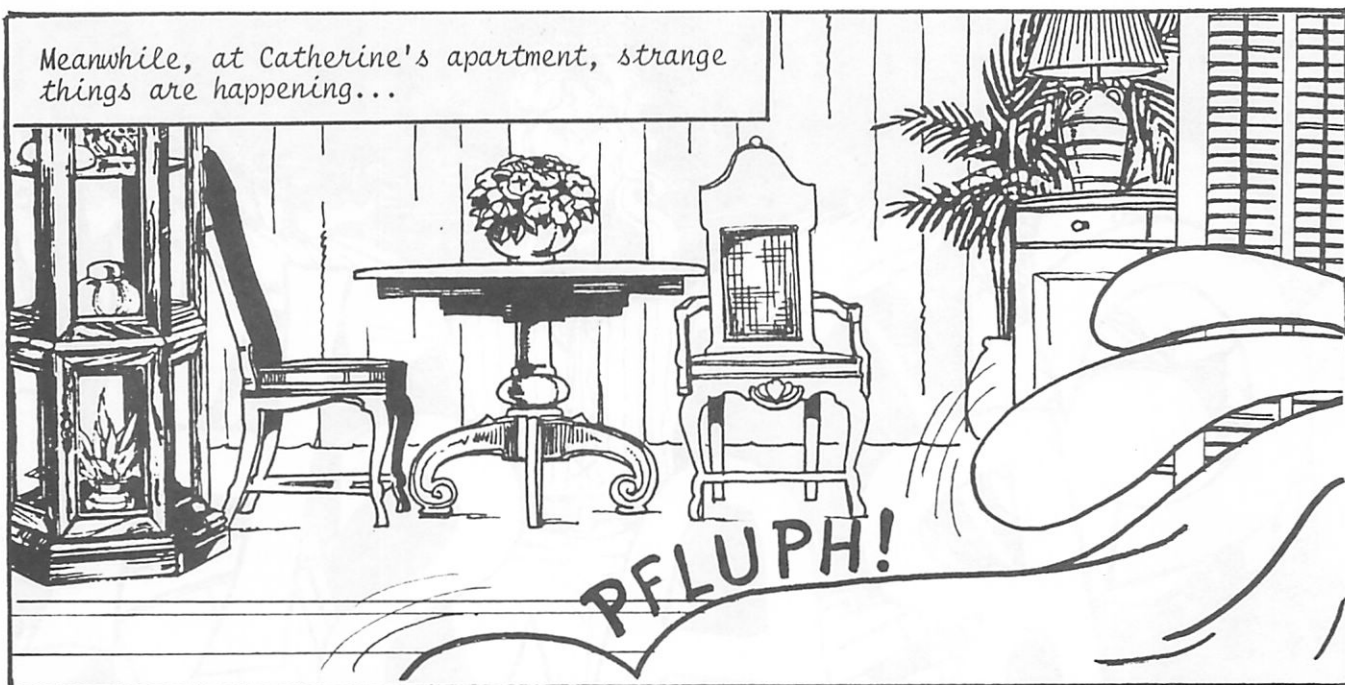
Suddenly Vincent senses Catherine's fear!!!



Hastening to Catherine's rescue, Vincent races through the bowels of the earth...



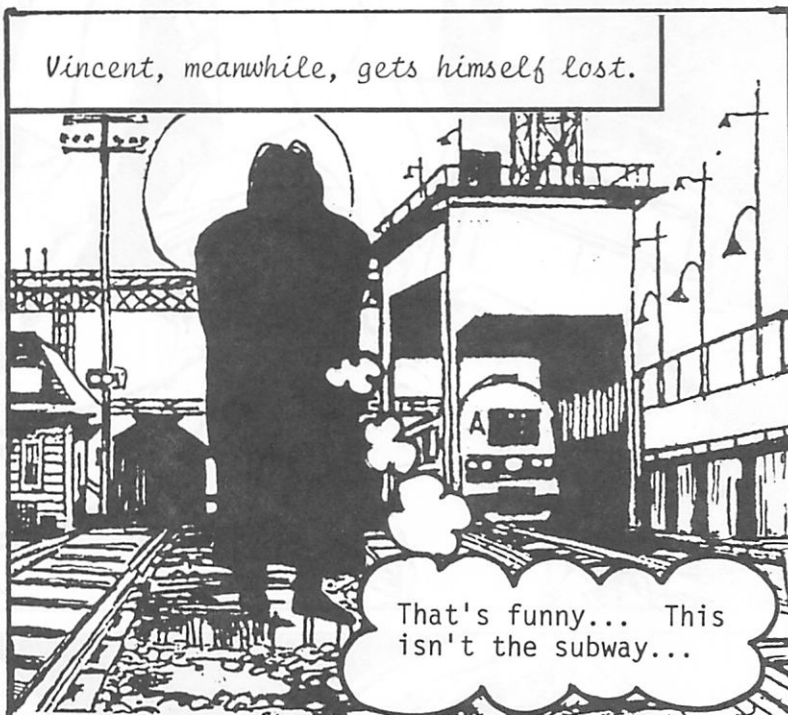
Meanwhile, at Catherine's apartment, strange things are happening...



Inevitably...



Vincent, meanwhile, gets himself lost.



Vincent plunges back into the bowels of the earth...

I've never kept her waiting before...

Oh well, I suppose a man can't always be on time...





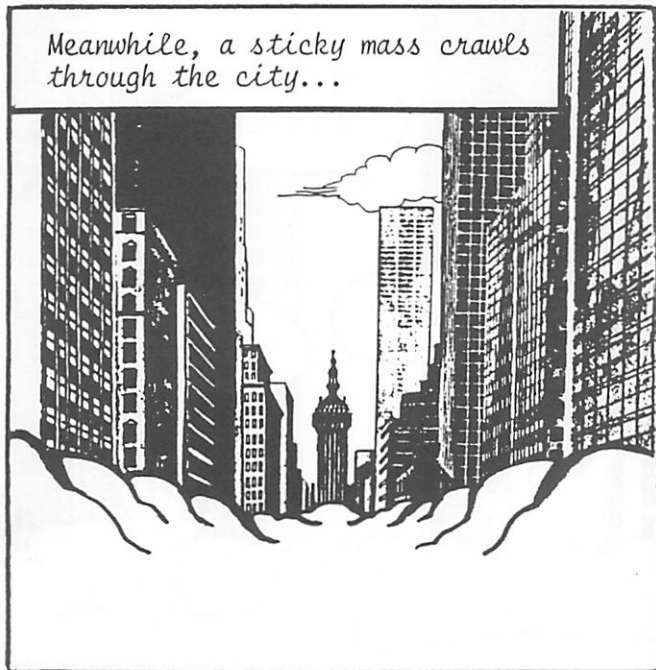
SQUEAK!



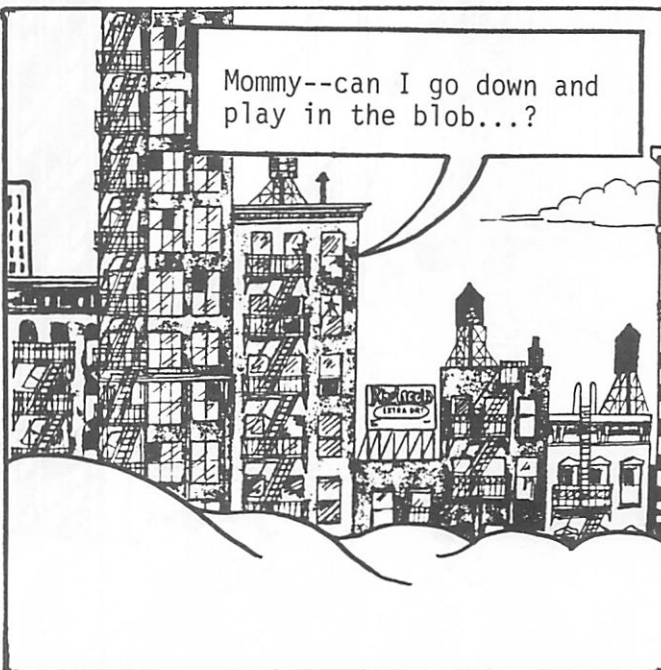
Oh no... I think
I've got laryngitis!

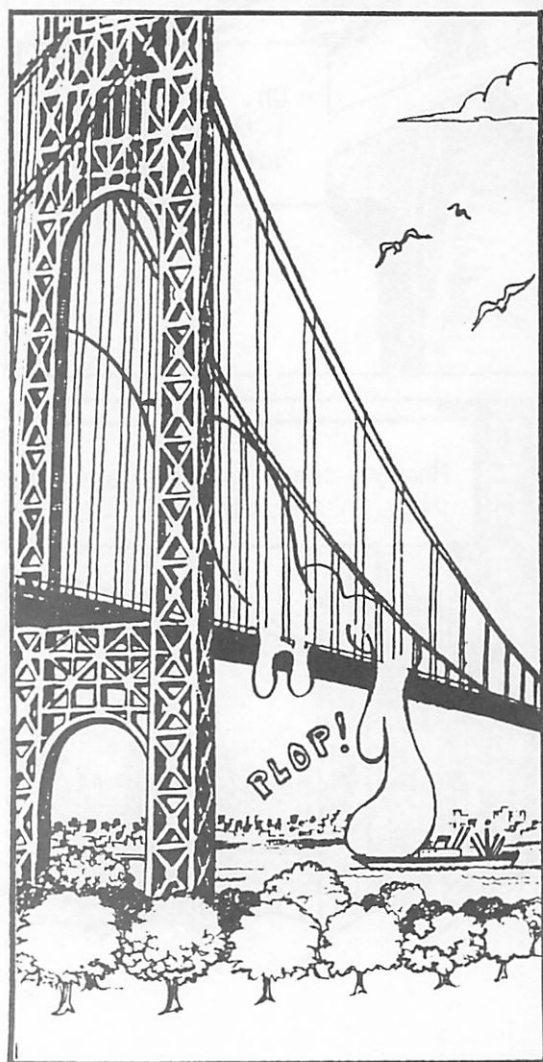
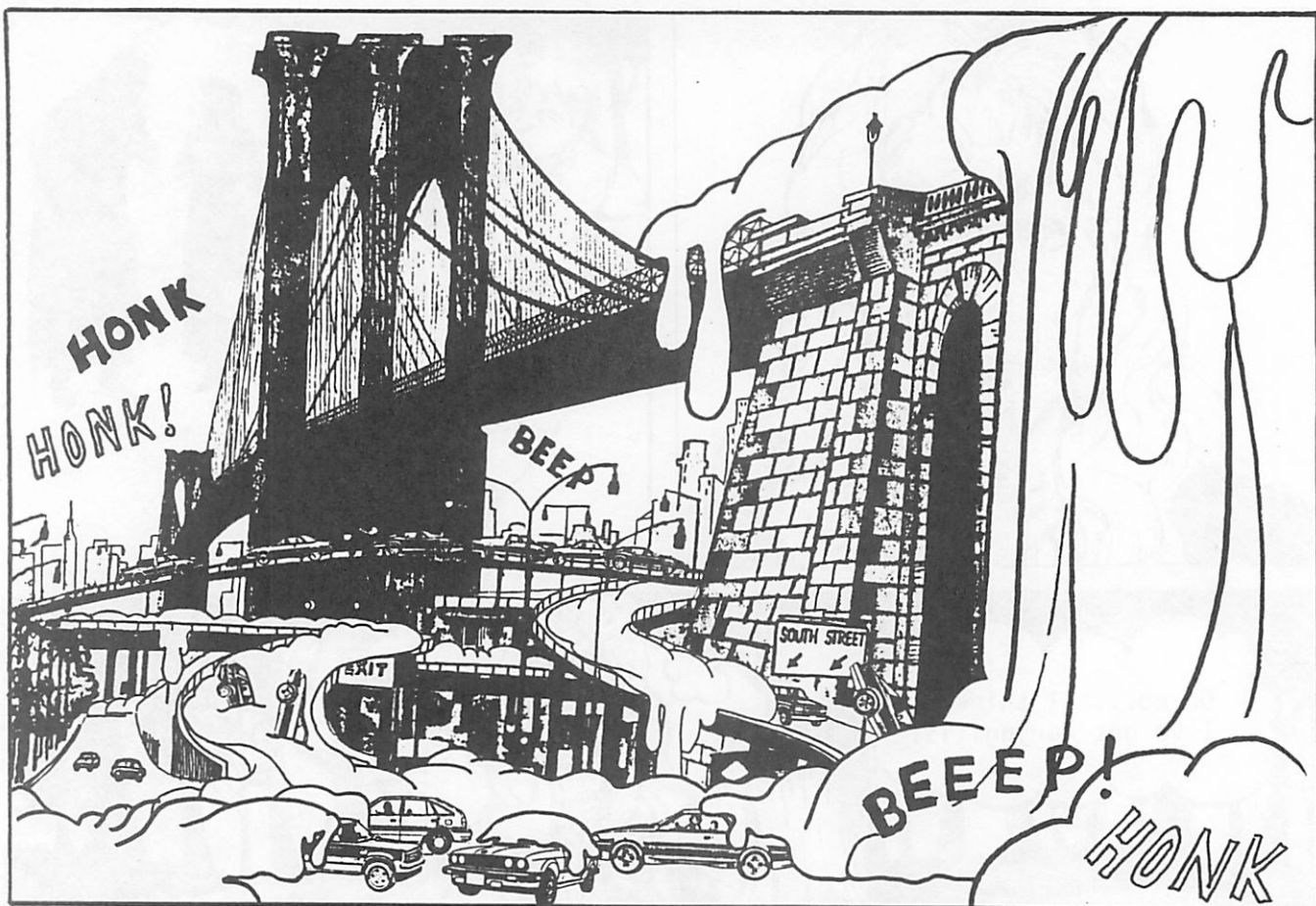
Oh, Vincent...
I think you've
got laryngitis!

Meanwhile, a sticky mass crawls
through the city...

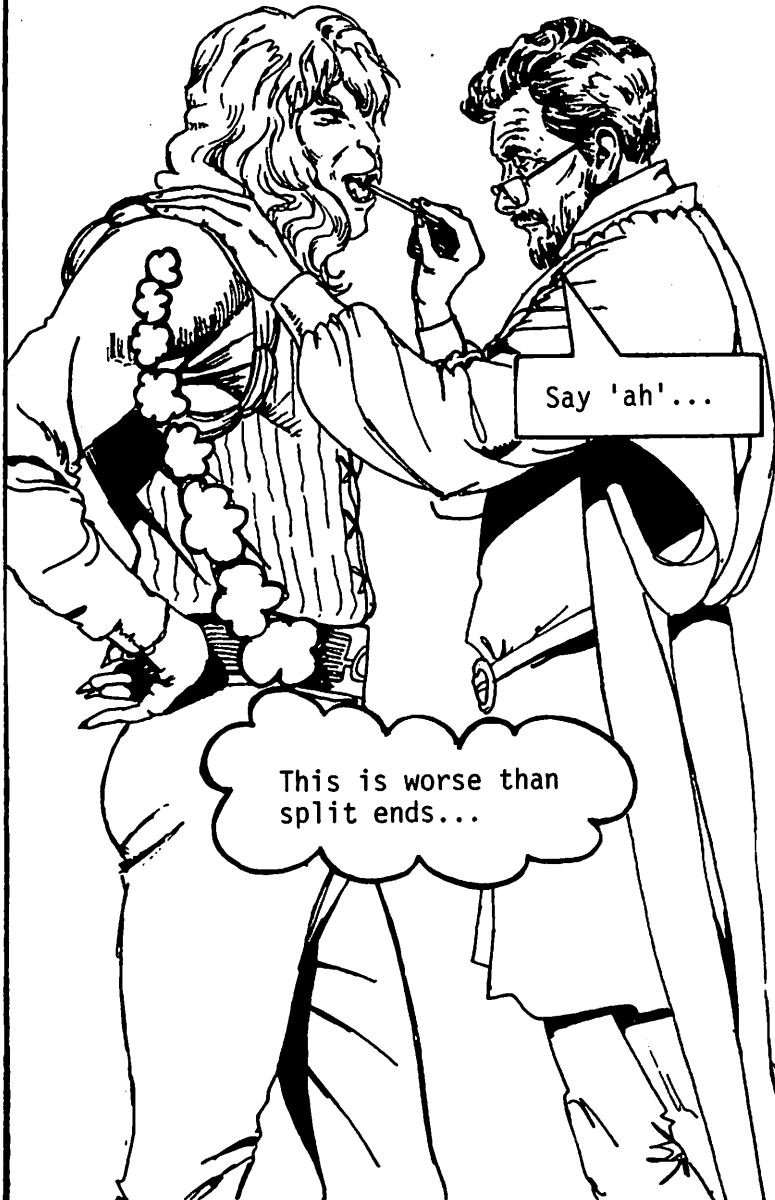


Mommy--can I go down and
play in the blob...?





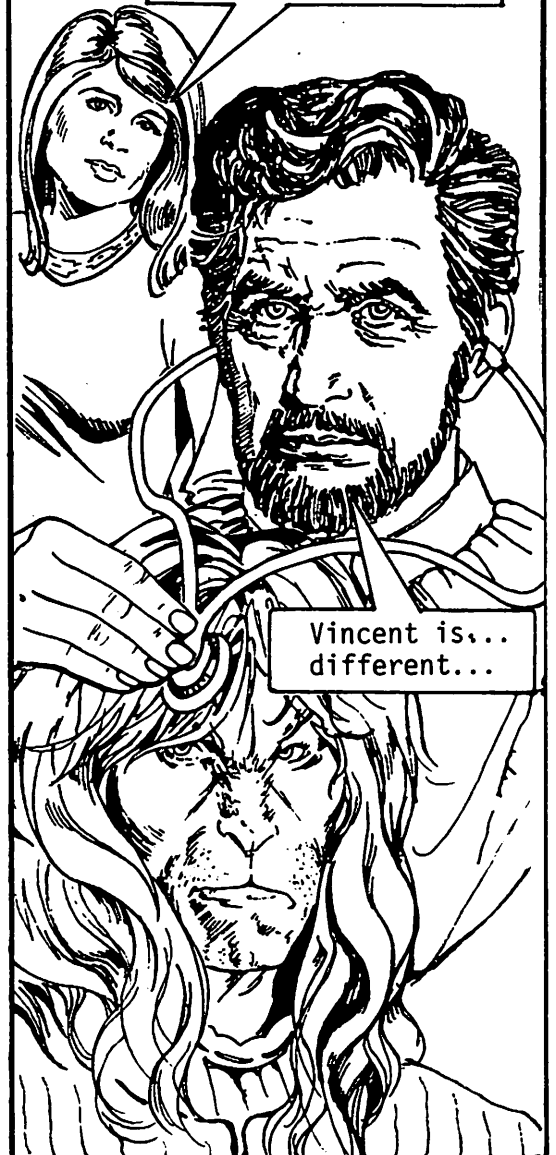
Father examines Vincent...



Say 'ah'...

This is worse than
split ends...

Haven't you got that
in the wrong place?



Vincent is...
different...

Father reaches for his medical supplies...



It's definitely laryngitis, Vincent. But I'm
sure I've got something that will cure it--

Just then--



Oh, dear God... The pipes say that a huge mass of rising bread dough has taken over the entire city!!!

This is terrible! Our exits will become blocked and our air supply cut off! What an untimely disaster... If only Vincent still had his voice-- Then he could roar at it and perhaps terrify the yeasts into submission...

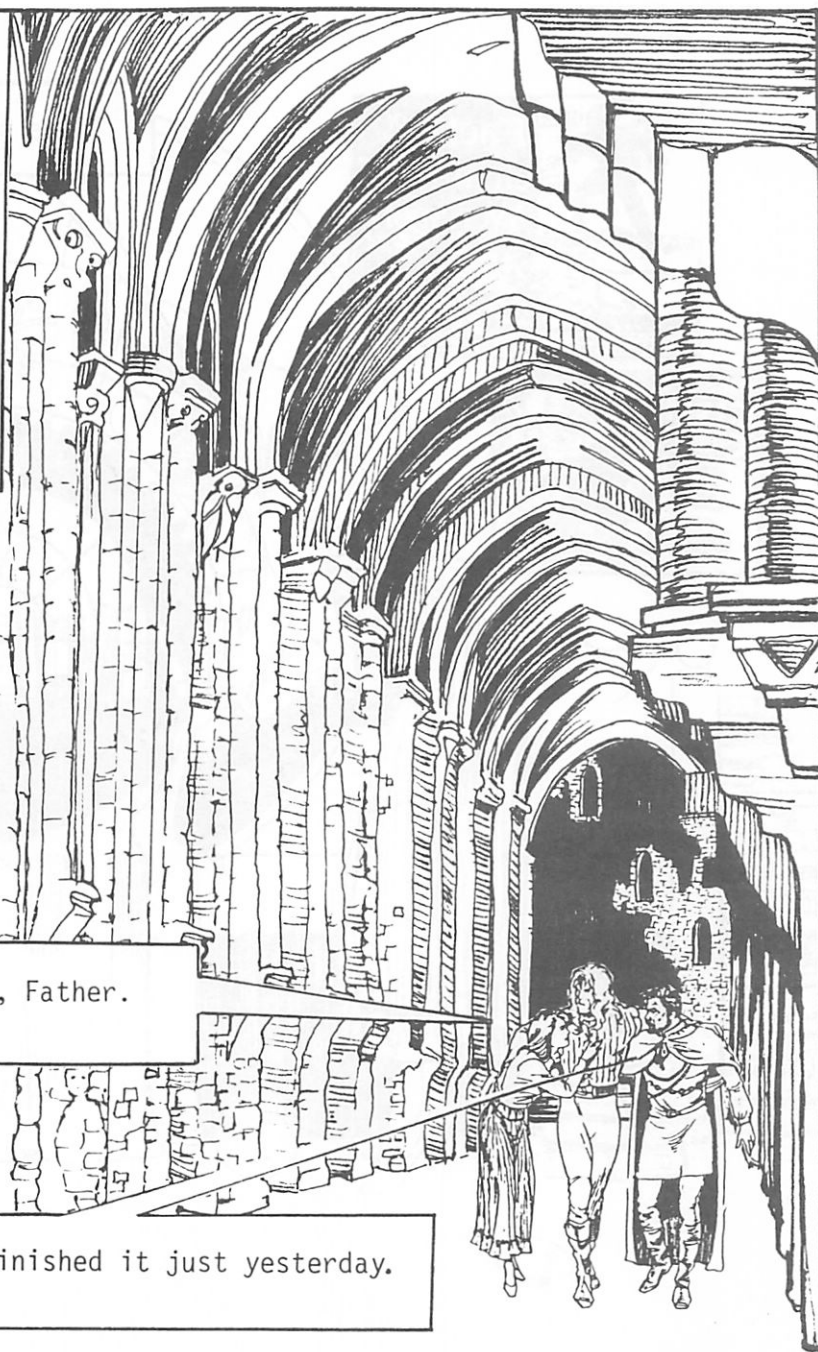
...impotence would be a better word.

My dough...

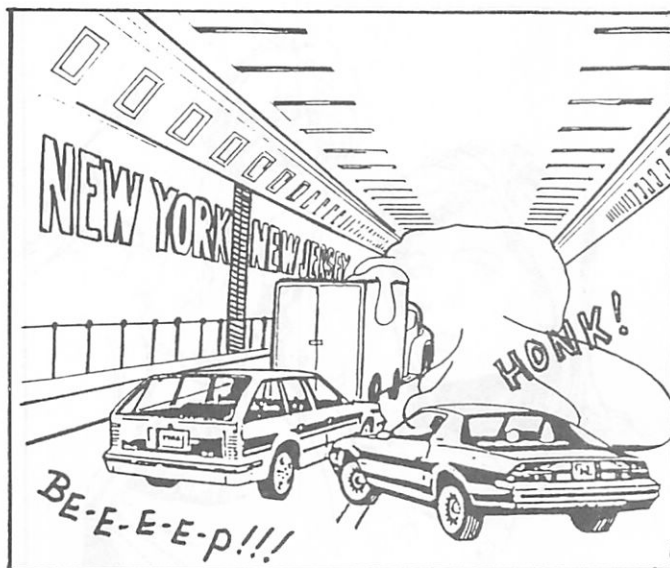
Since nothing can be done about the dough, Father and Catherine decide to put Vincent to bed... Perhaps in the morning a solution would present itself...

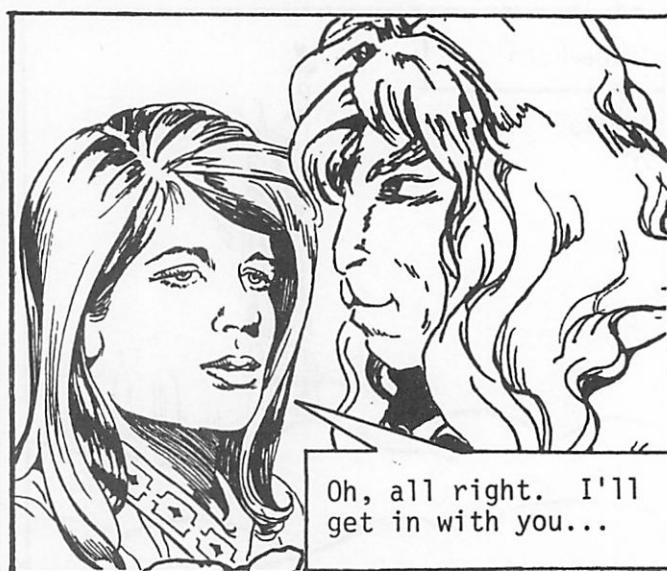
This is a nice tunnel, Father.

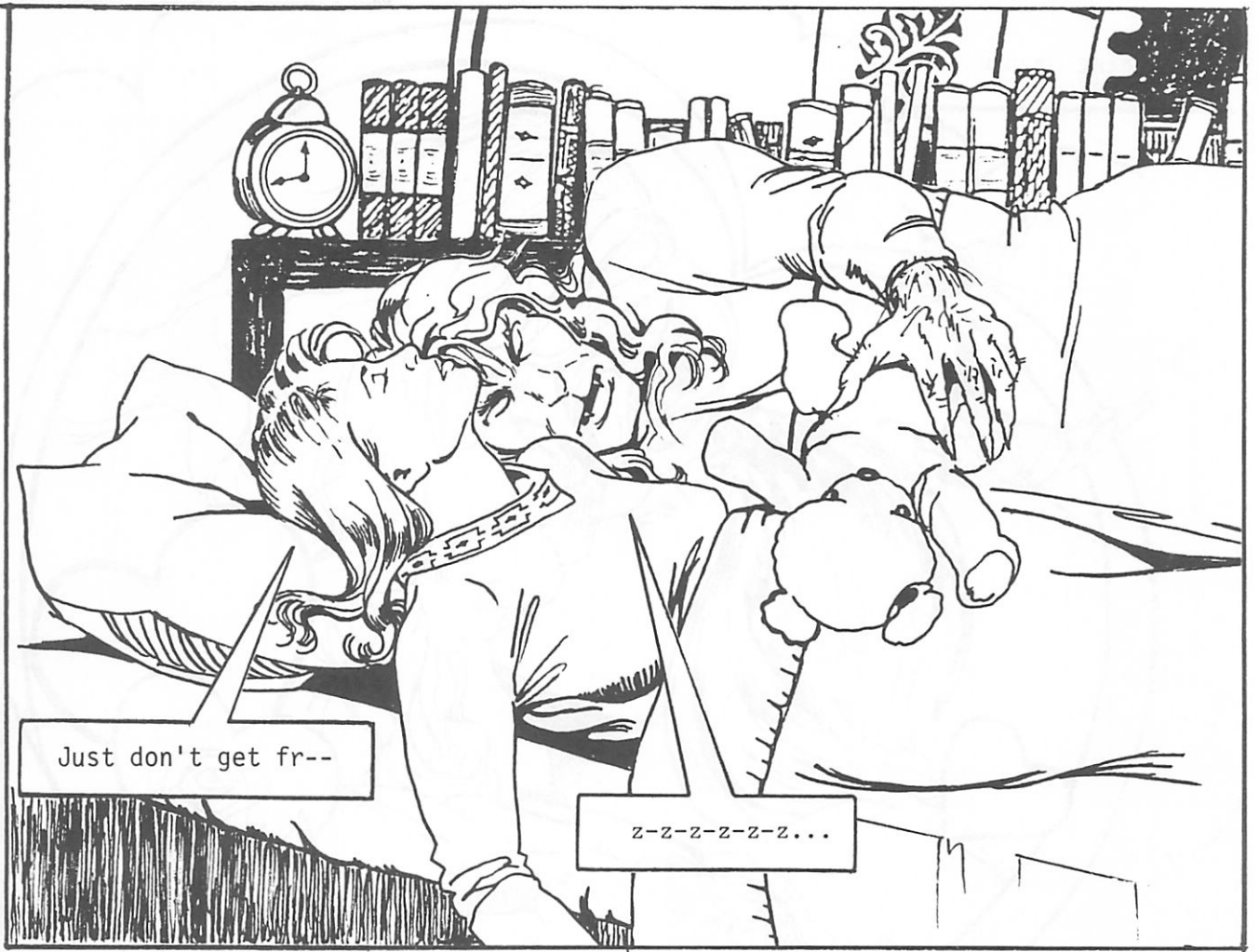
Oh, yes-- The children finished it just yesterday.



Meanwhile...



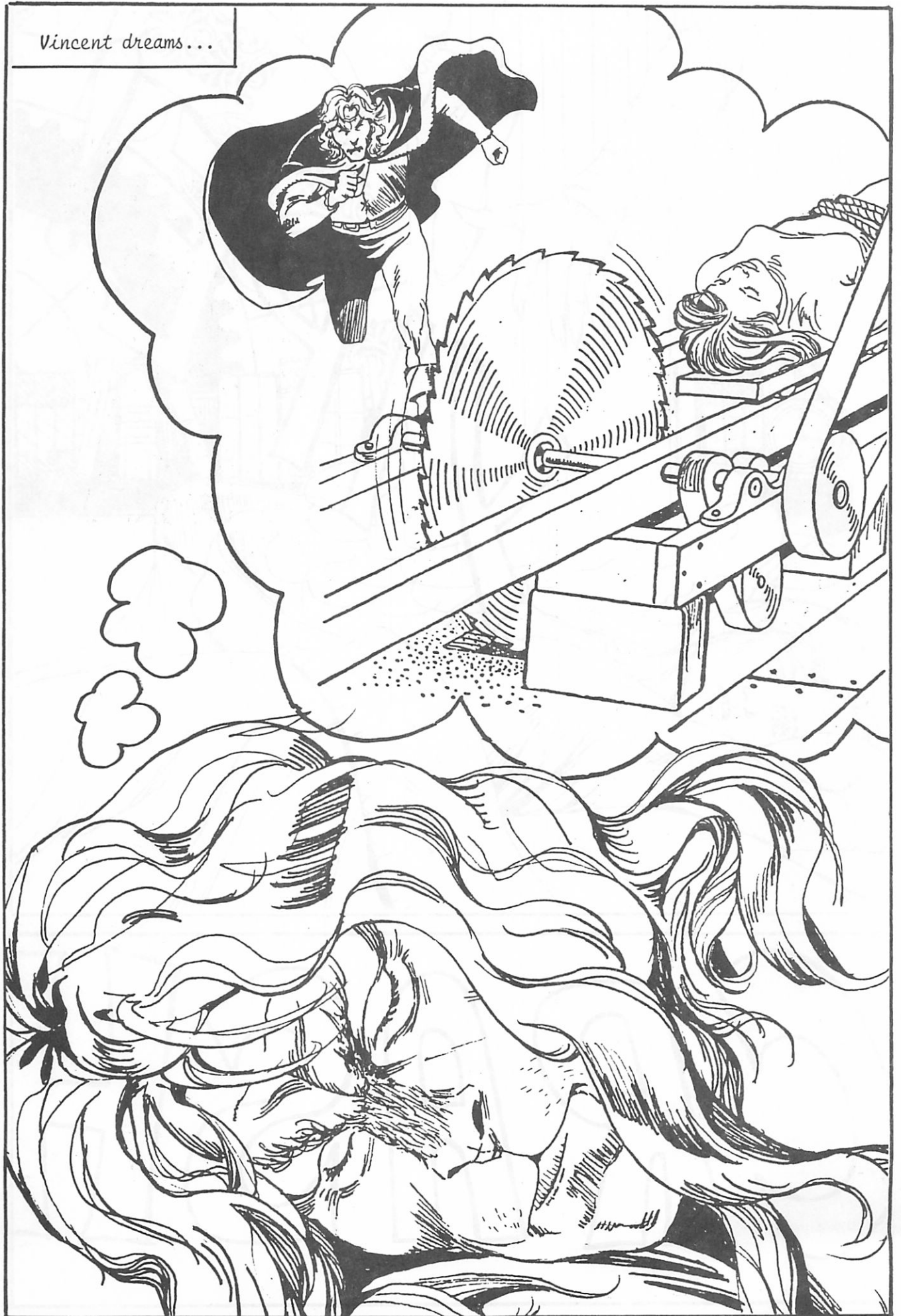




Catherine dreams...



Vincent dreams...

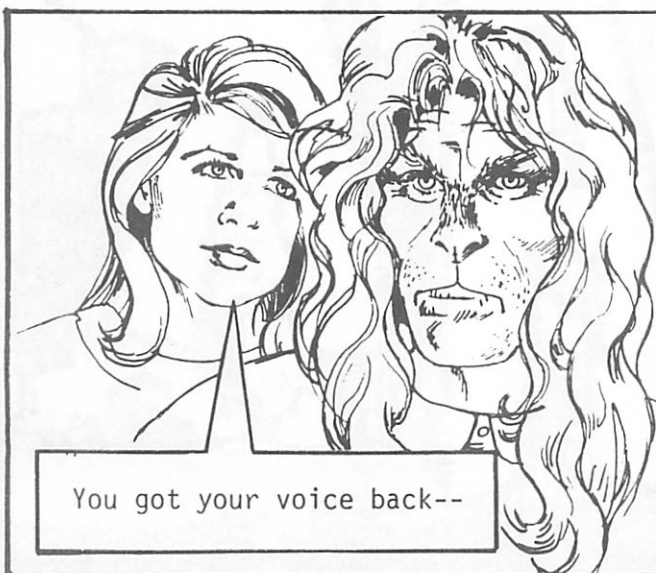




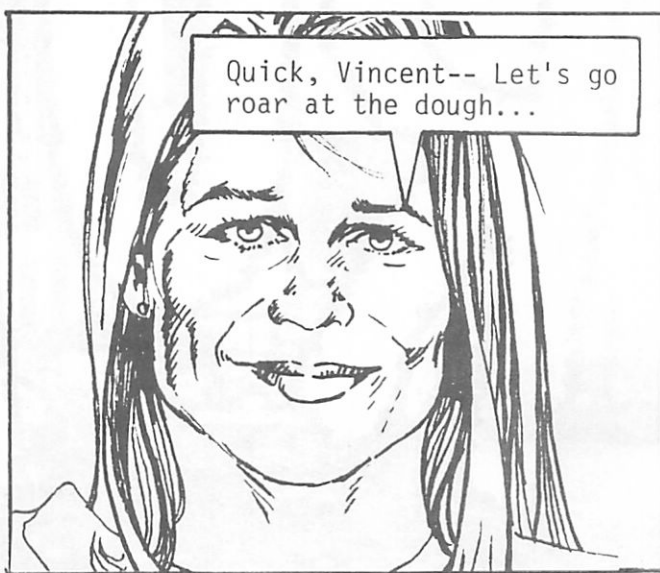
CRASH



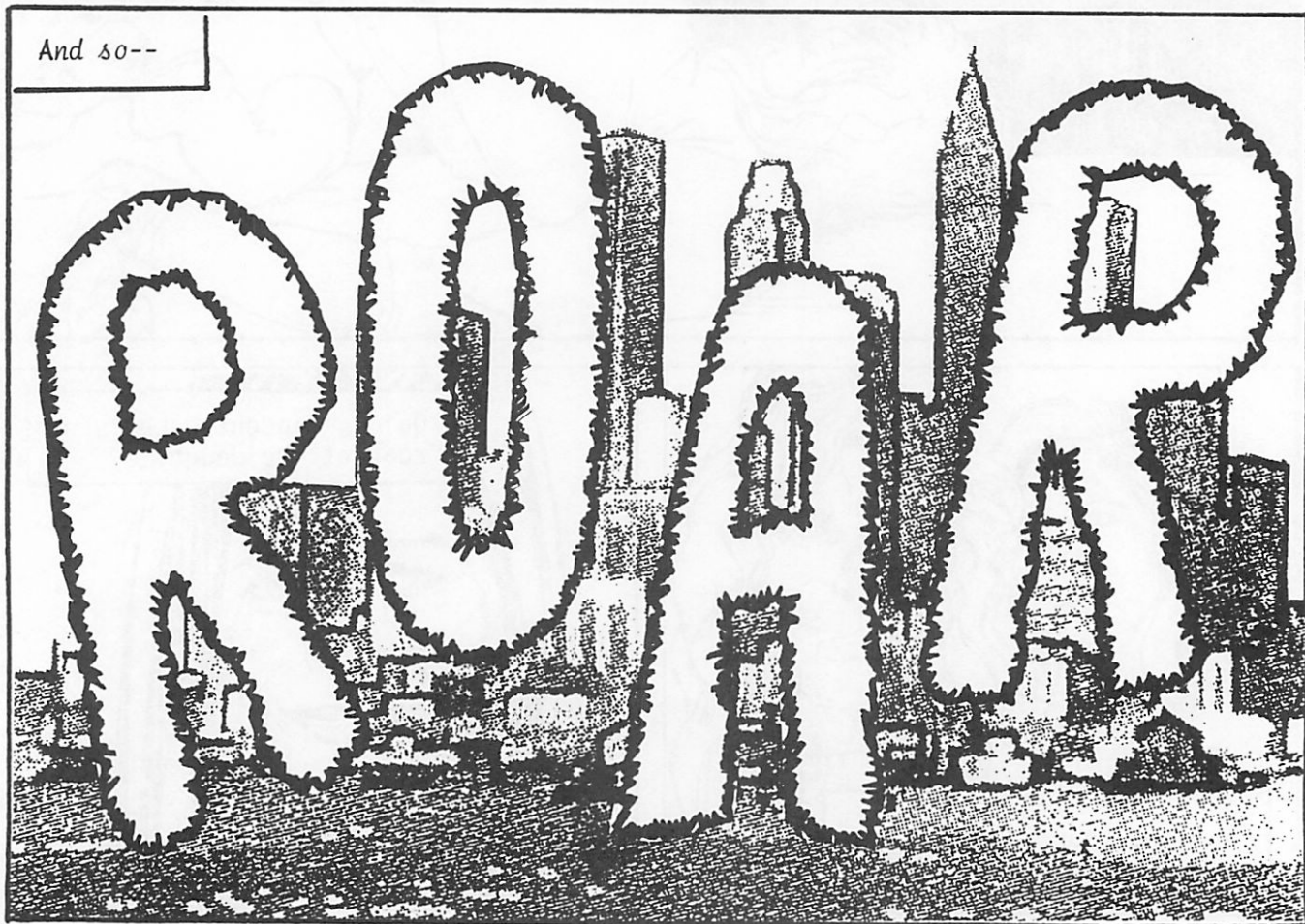
Wake up, Vincent...
You're having a
bad dream...



You got your voice back--



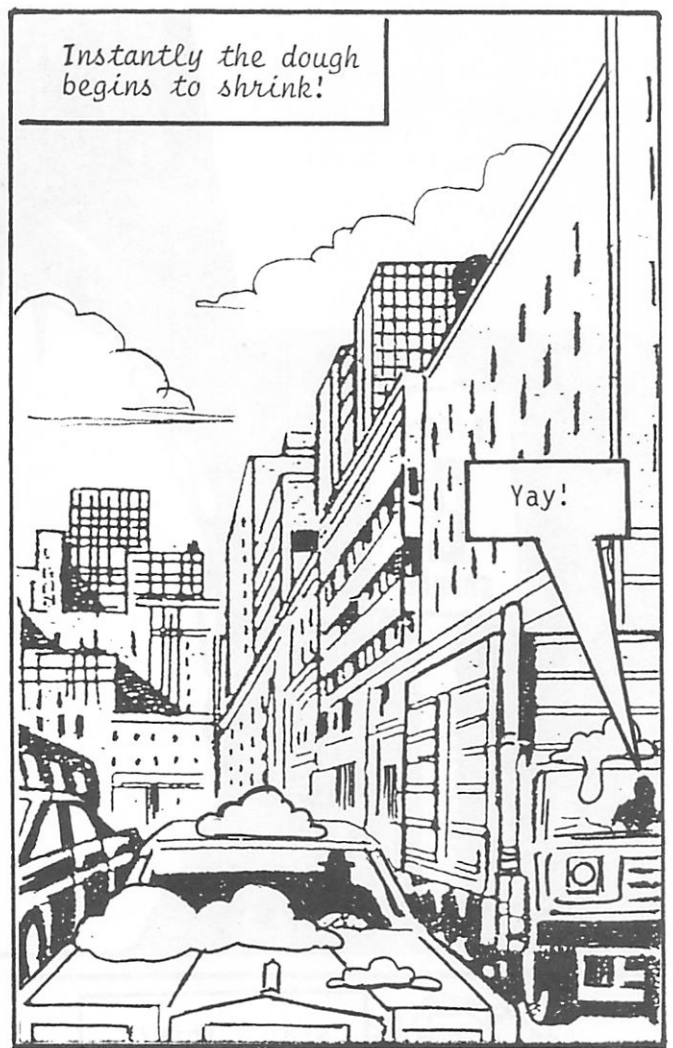
Quick, Vincent-- Let's go
roar at the dough...





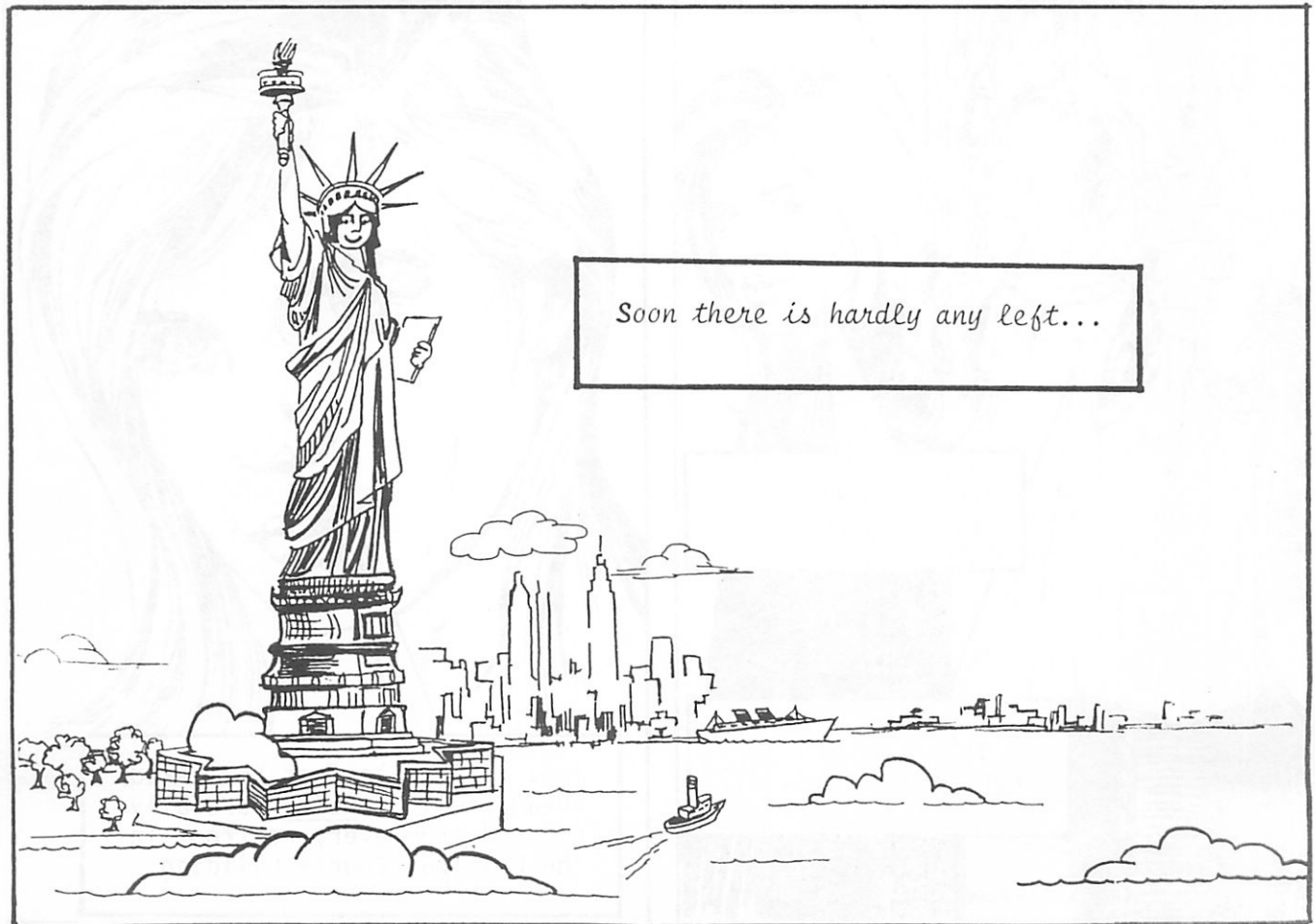
That was pretty good, Catherine...

I'm learning...



*Instantly the dough
begins to shrink!*

Yay!



Soon there is hardly any left...

The city is saved and Catherine goes home. Three days later she returns to the Tunnel World...




What's this?

It's a gift
for Paracelsus...

A gift...?
For Paracelsus...???




Yes. It's a loaf of homebaked bread, full of hairs carefully gleaned from every restroom in the Criminal Courts building.



But before I deliver it
I want you to kiss me!!!

Oh, not this again...




You mustn't kiss me,
Catherine...

Why not?

Something will--
happen...

Oh, baloney.



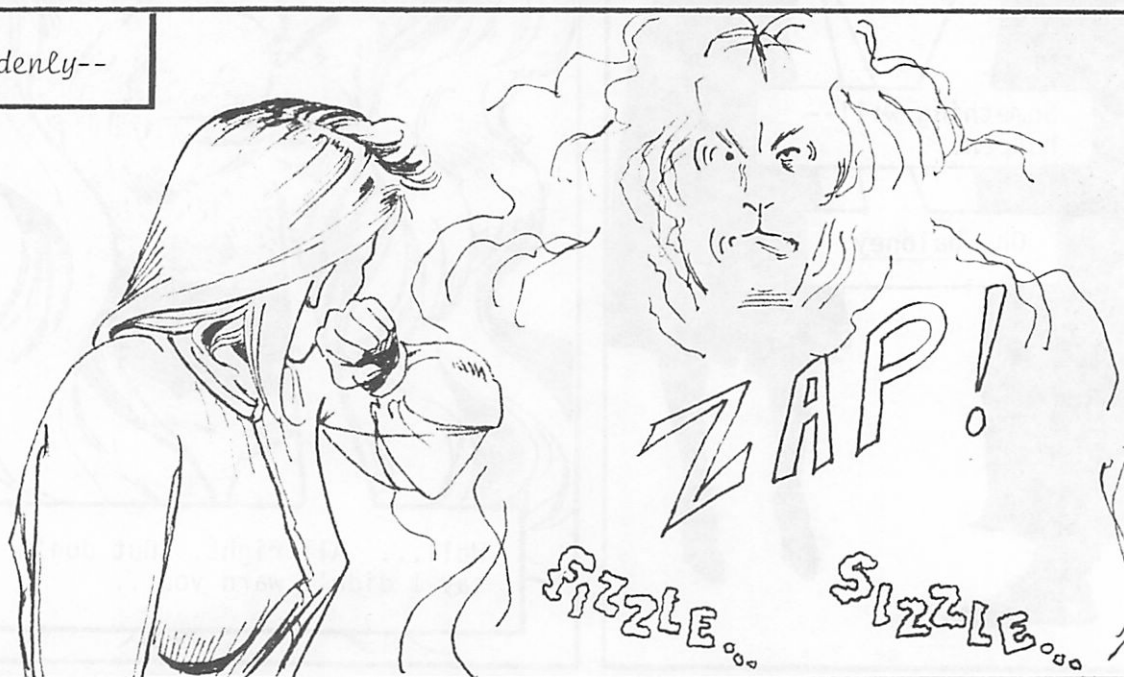
Well... All right. But don't
say I didn't warn you...

Finally...they kiss.



ARTIST'S NOTE: YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK YOU WERE GOING TO GET TO SEE THIS, DID YOU??????????????????

Then, suddenly--

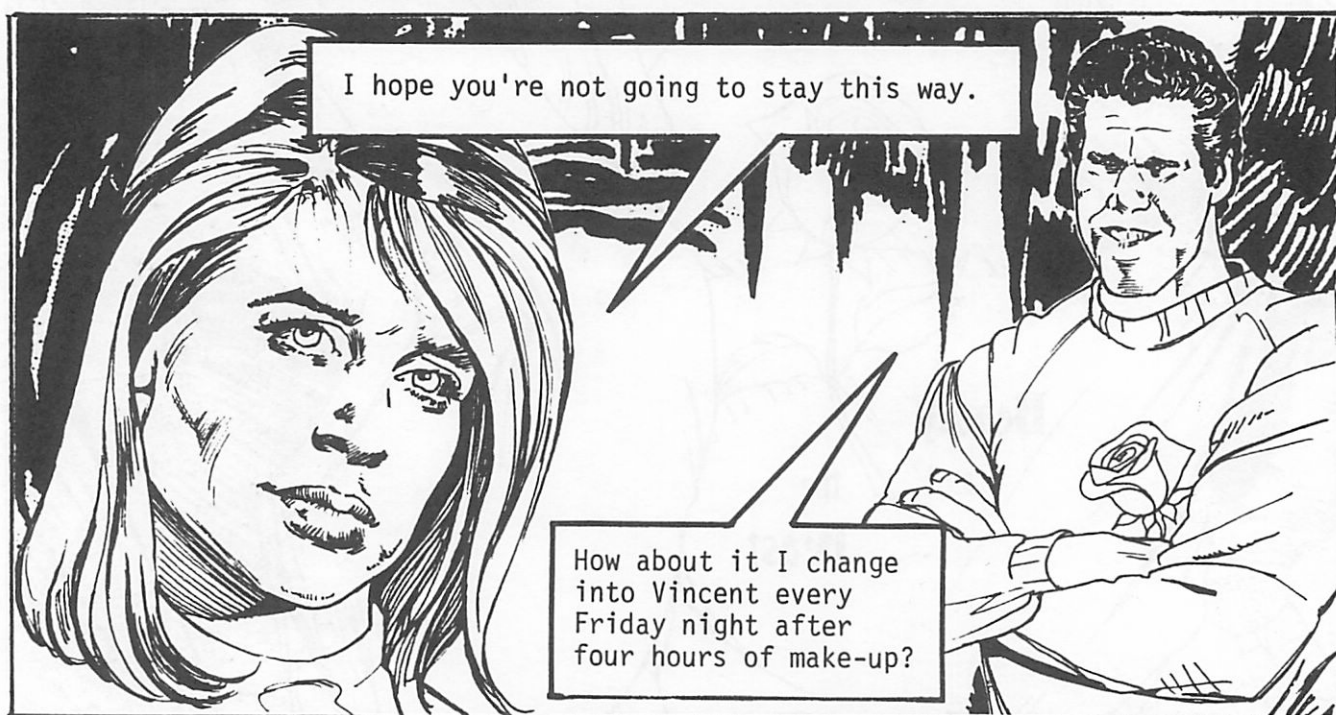


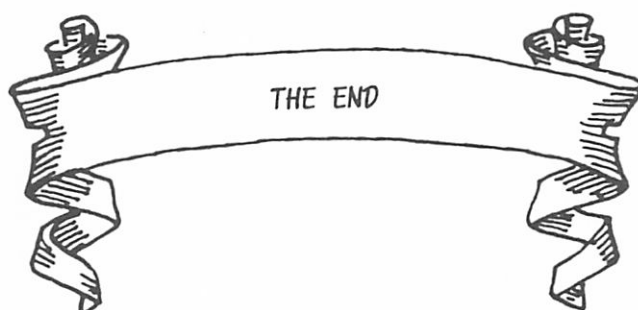


See? I've turned into a regular guy.

What's the matter?

Beauty
and the
Beast





Comments??? Write to P.S. Nim, P.O. Box 3999, Trenton, N.J. 08629
Please enclose a S.A.S.E. if you would like a reply. Thanks!