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THE DARKNESS

COMPENDIUM

VOLUME 1





THE DARKNESS



39


DAVID WOHL
DAVE FINCH

Digital
Edition

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and Matt Nelson

THE DARKNESS #39





LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

...BOYS AND GIRLS...

...PLEASE ALLOW ME THE INDULGENCE OF A LITTLE OF YOUR TIME...

...SO THAT I MAY TELL YOU A STORY...

...A CAUTIONARY TALE, IF YOU WILL...

C'MON, CORNBALL! LET'S HEAR IT!

EXCUSE ME, SIR. IT'S JUST THAT THESE PEOPLE THINK THEY KNOW ABOUT THE DARK ---

SO TELL US ALREADY!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT...

WHERE WAS I?

OH YES...

OUR STORY TAKES PLACE IN THE LAND OF GASTONIA. YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF IT, BUT IN ITS DAY, GASTONIA WAS THE GREATEST CITY IN THE LAND. ITS WALLS AND SPIRES SOARED TO THE HEAVENS, SIGNALING TO EVERYONE FOR HUNDREDS OF MILES THAT THIS WAS A CITY THAT GOD, HIMSELF, HAD SMILED UPON.

IN ITS DAY, GASTONIA WAS A PLACE WHOSE DENIZENS ALL BENEFITED FROM ITS GLORY. GASTONIA KNEW NO POVERTY, GASTONIA KNEW NO NEED. THE GREAT LEADERS OF GASTONIA SAW TO IT THAT ALL MEN SHARED IN THE LAND'S BOUNTY.

IN ITS DAY, GASTONIA WAS PERFECT.



THIS WAS NOT THAT DAY...

AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT DAY HADN'T EXISTED FOR A LONG TIME.

NOT SINCE THE REIGN OF DUKE ROSS III BEGAN...

FOR STORIES NEVER MORE

THEN AGAIN, ISN'T EVERY DAY GLORIOUS HERE IN MY GASTONIA?

ISN'T IT SO VERY FORTUITOUS THAT YOU, MY PEOPLE, ARE ABLE TO LIVE HERE DURING MY REIGN?

A LEADER WHO NEEDLESS TO SAY WAS MORE ENAMORED WITH HIMSELF THAN HIS SUBJECTS...

WHAT A GLORIOUS TIME THIS IS!!!

NOT THAT THEY EVER TOLD HIM HOW THEY REALLY FELT.

THEY KNEW BETTER THAN TO DO THAT.

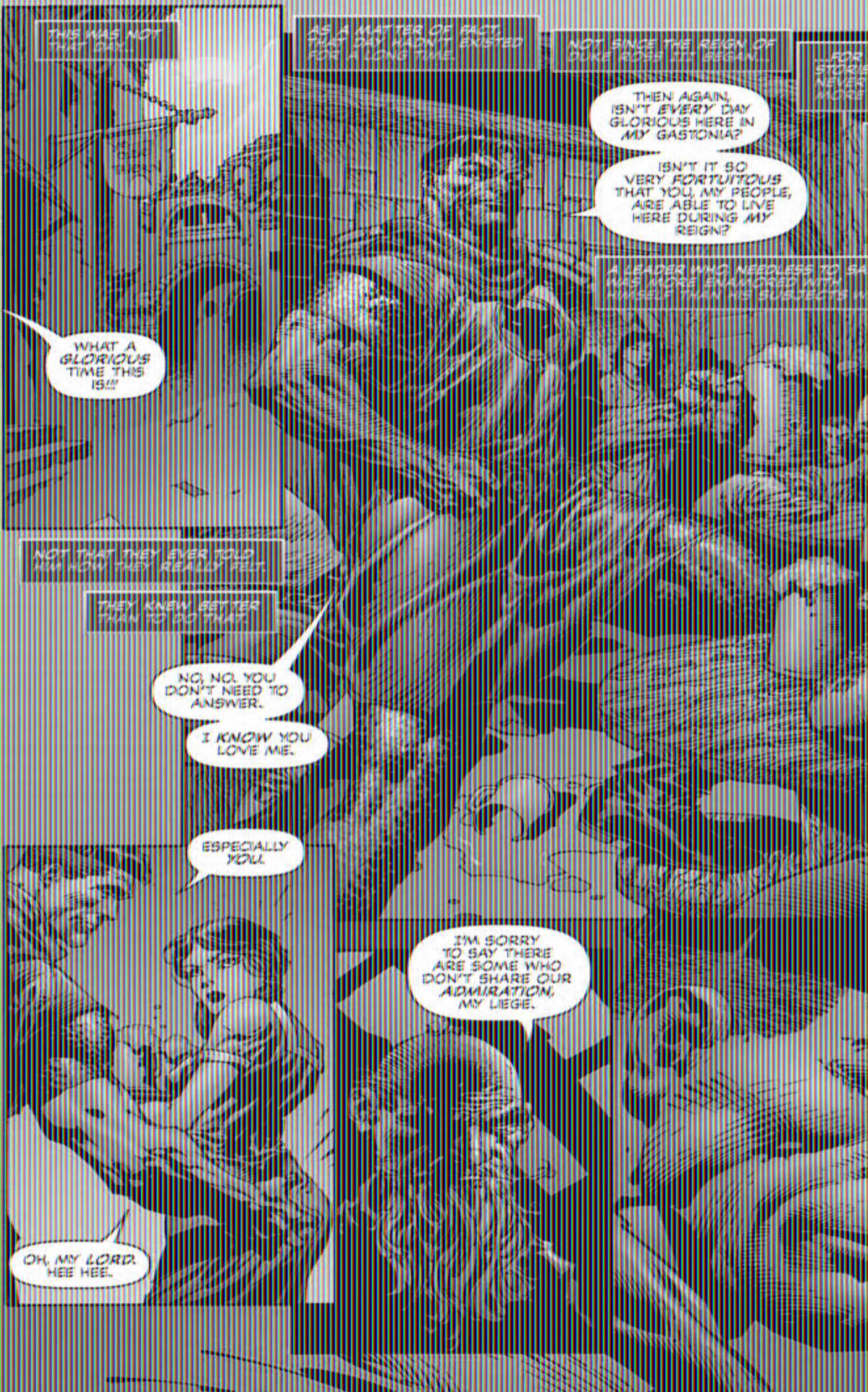
NO, NO. YOU DON'T NEED TO ANSWER.

I KNOW YOU LOVE ME.

ESPECIALLY YOU.

I'M SORRY TO SAY THERE ARE SOME WHO DON'T SHARE OUR ADMIRATION, MY LIEGE.

OH, MY LORD. HEE HEE.





EXPLAIN YOURSELF, OLD MAN.

GREAT ONE, I MEAN NO DISRESPECT, BUT THERE IS TALK AMONGST THE FOLK OF THE COUNTRYSIDE...

...OF A GREAT EVIL THAT IS OVERTAKING THE LAND.

LIVESTOCK HAS BEEN DISAPPEARING, ONLY TO BE FOUND LATER...

...EVICERATED.

AND WHAT DO THE COUNTRY FOLK SURMISE IS PLAGUING THEM?

WEREWOLVES? VAMPIRES? EVIL MINSTRELS?

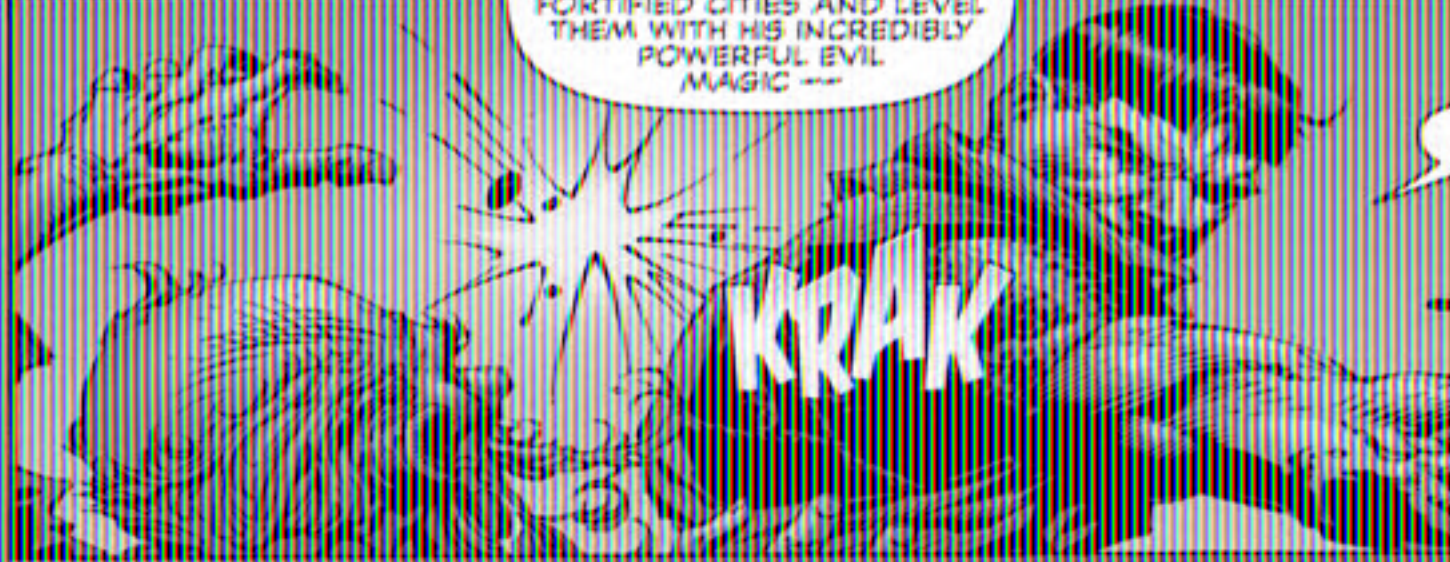


DEMONS, MY LORD.



...AND THEN THEIR LEADER ARRIVED...

...A DIABOLIC MAN BORNE OF THE NIGHT WHO WAS ABLE TO INFILTRATE EVEN THE MOST FORTIFIED CITIES AND LEVEL THEM WITH HIS INCREDIBLY POWERFUL EVIL MAGIC --



KRAK

YOU'LL SCARE EVERYONE WITH TALK LIKE THAT.

STOP IT!!!

HE'S LUCKY THAT I DIDN'T STRIKE HIM HARDER.

AND YOU, LAD, SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WATCHING YOUR TONE WHILE ADDRESSING ONE SUCH AS MYSELF.

I'VE KILLED FOR LESS SEVERE AFFRONTS.

AND WHY SHOULDN'T I?

YOU'RE A MONSTER.

NO. I AM DUKE ROSS III.

I AM YOUR SOVEREIGN!

YOU SHOULD RESPECT ME...

...AS ALL OF MY PEOPLE SHOULD...AND DO.

STILL...

...I'LL BE MAGNANIMOUS.

A SHO...
TY...
N...
TI...
IS /

TRUTH TO BE TOLD, HE WAS PROBABLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT A POTENTIAL DISRUPTION IN THE ROYAL ROAST BEEF SUPPLY THAN ANY GOD-GIVEN DUTY...

...BUT REGARDLESS OF THE REASONS, HE DID SOON EMBARK...



LET'S...SHIC...
RIDE!

...AFTER SEVERAL
MORE LIBATIONS.



BONK

ARE YOU SURE, SIR, YOU'VE HAD
QUITE A FEW ---

SILENCE.

AS
WISH,
HIGHN

YA

OH...
SLOW DOWN...
I FEEL OUT OF
SORTS...

UGH...

YAY



12 MINUTES LATER...

OH, HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE NEED TO GO?

THIS RIDE HAS BEEN INTOLERABLE!!!

SURELY NO MANNER OF CREATURE COULD TREAT ME AS HARSHLY AS THIS RIDE HAS.

YOU SAID WE WERE ONLY TRAVELING A SHORT DISTANCE, LIEUTENANT.

I SHALL HAVE YOUR HEAD FOR THIS!!!

HAVE MY ROYAL CARRIAGE SENT FOR ME.

AND TELL THEM TO BRING MY EXECUTIONER!

WE ARE HERE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

AH. VERY GOOD.

TELL ME, MY SUBJECT, WHAT AILS YOUR LIVESTOCK?

OH, YOUR HIGHNESS, I AM BLESSED BY YOUR GRACIOUSNESS...BY YOUR CARING.

YES, YES, OF COURSE, BUT PLEASE GET TO THE POINT. THIS HAS TAKEN LONG ENOUGH!!!

MY APOLOGIES, SIR. IT'S MY EWES. I HEARD HER CRY OUT...AND...AND...SNIFFE...NOW I FIND HER LIKE THIS...

AND TO THE FOREST THEY WENT...

...HEEDLESS OF THE DANGER THEY WERE APPROACHING.

WELL, DUKE ROSS III WAS HEEDLESS...

HIS MEN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE DEVELOPING MORE THAN A BIT OF NEED.

SOME MIGHT SAY THEY WERE LOUSY WITH NEED...

...AND, LIKE ALL GREAT MEN, HE KNEW JUST THE WORDS TO MOTIVATE...

IF ANY OF YOU TRY TO RUN, I'LL SHOVE MY SWORD INTO YOUR BACK.

HIS MEN R...

...BECAUSE EVEN HE WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL OF FEAR...

...THOUGH HE DIDN'T SHOW IT...

...UNTIL...

3GASPS

H...HALT. DON'T MOVE.

PREPARE YOUR WEAPONS...



...HERE???

TOOTHPICK?

DIDN'T THINK SO.

WHAT GOOD'RE YOU, ANYWAY?

CHEW
CHEW
CHEW

YOU.

YE
TE

WA
K

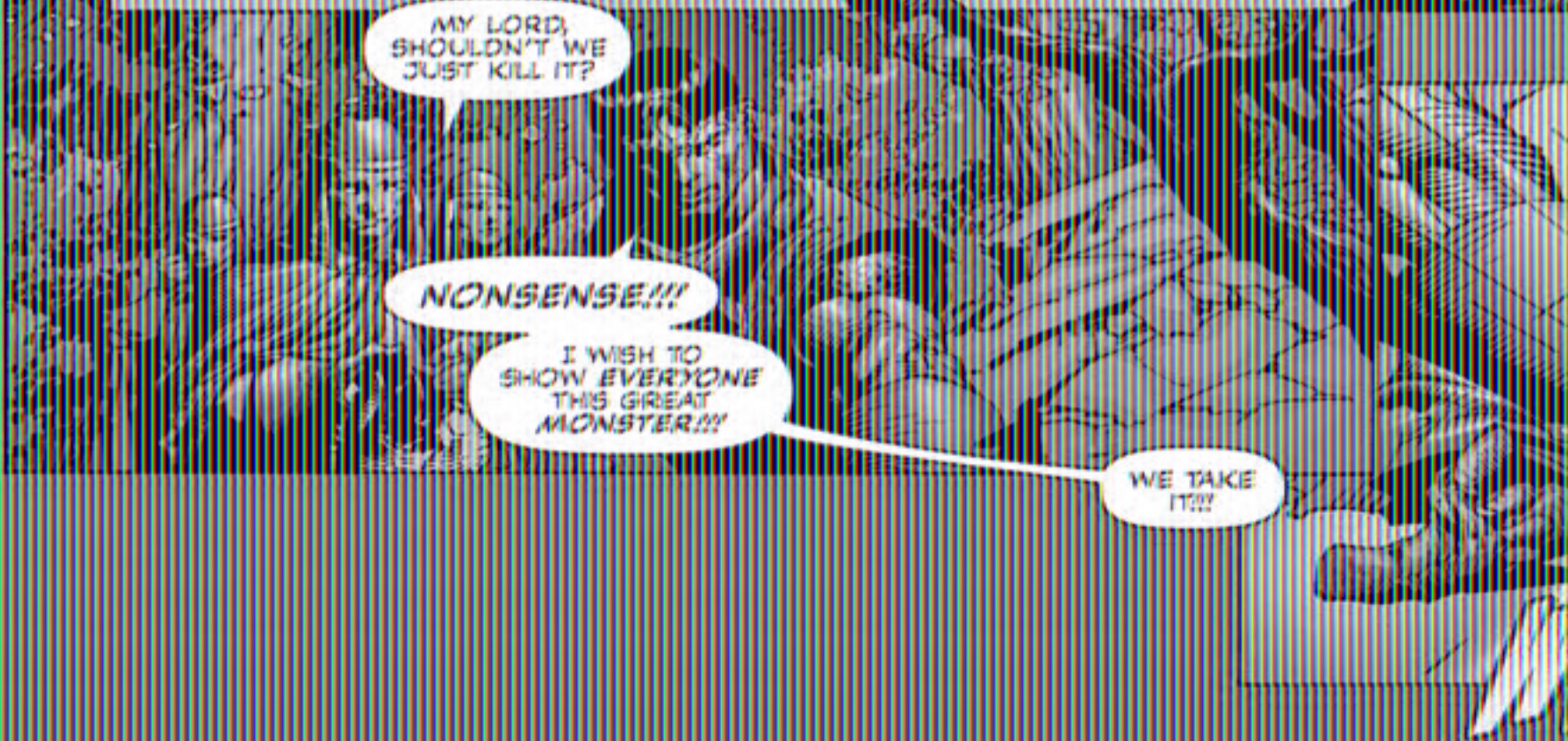


HAHAHA!!!

YOU ARE WITTY MY STRANGE FRIEND.

PERHAPS I SHALL MAKE YOU MY PET.

IF YOU GOT MORE CHICKEN, SIGN ME UP!!!



MY LORD, SHOULDN'T WE JUST KILL IT?

NONSENSE!!!

I WISH TO SHOW EVERYONE THIS GREAT MONSTER!!!

WE TAKE IT!!!



MY PEOPLE, I BRING YOU THE SCOURGE OF GASTONIA!!!
HAHAHAHAHA!!!!

QUITE TERRIFYING, ISN'T HE?

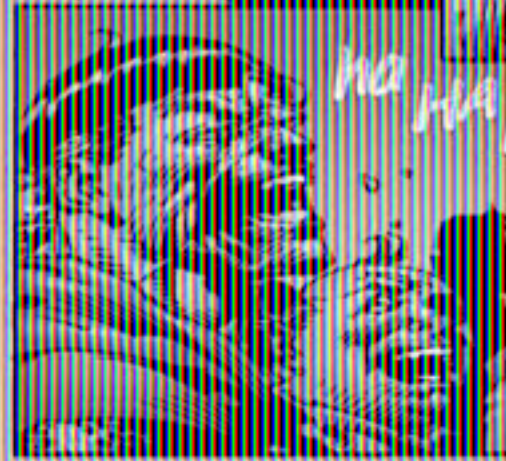
SO, OLD MAN, IS THIS WHAT YOU'D HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT?

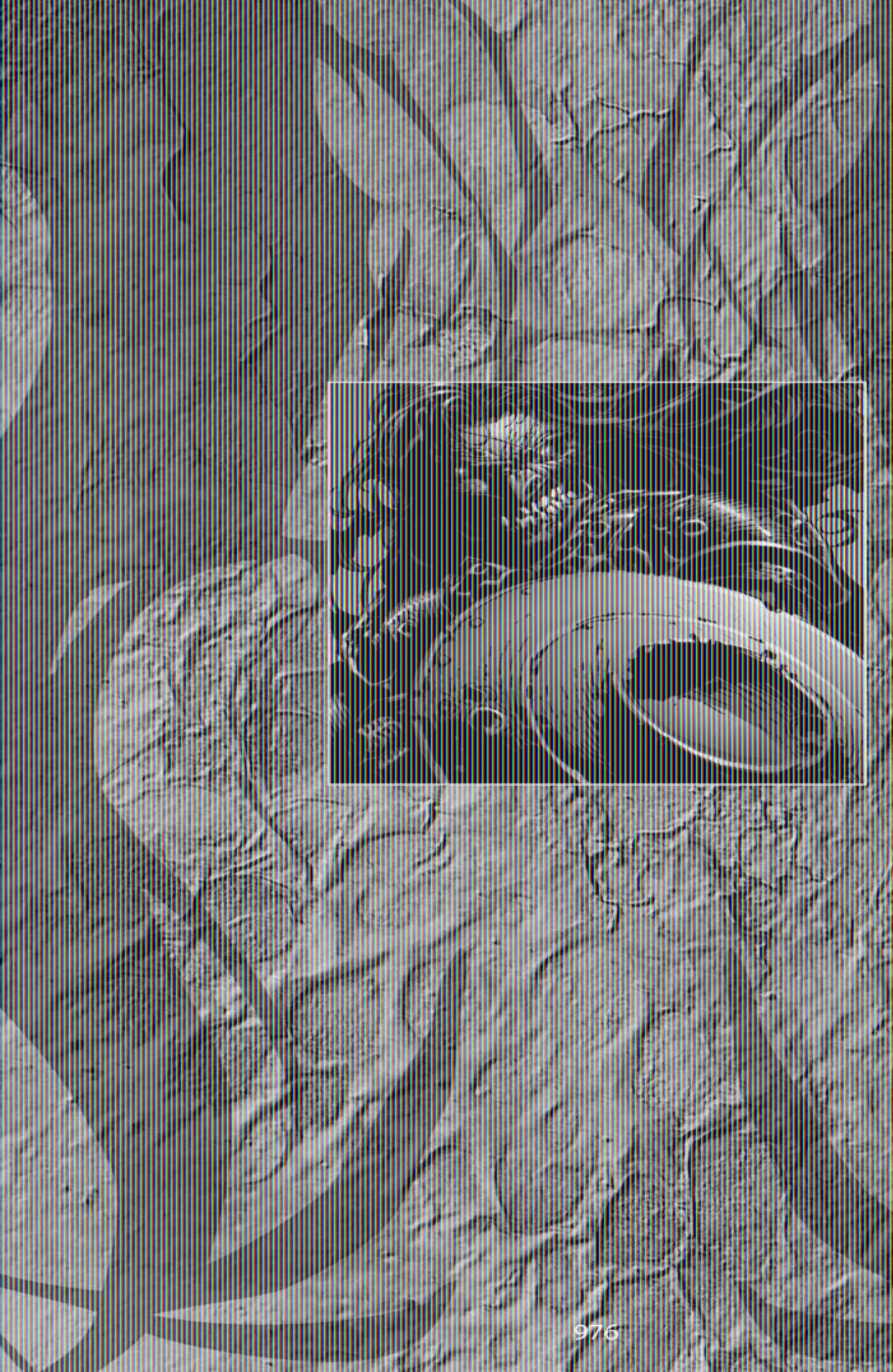
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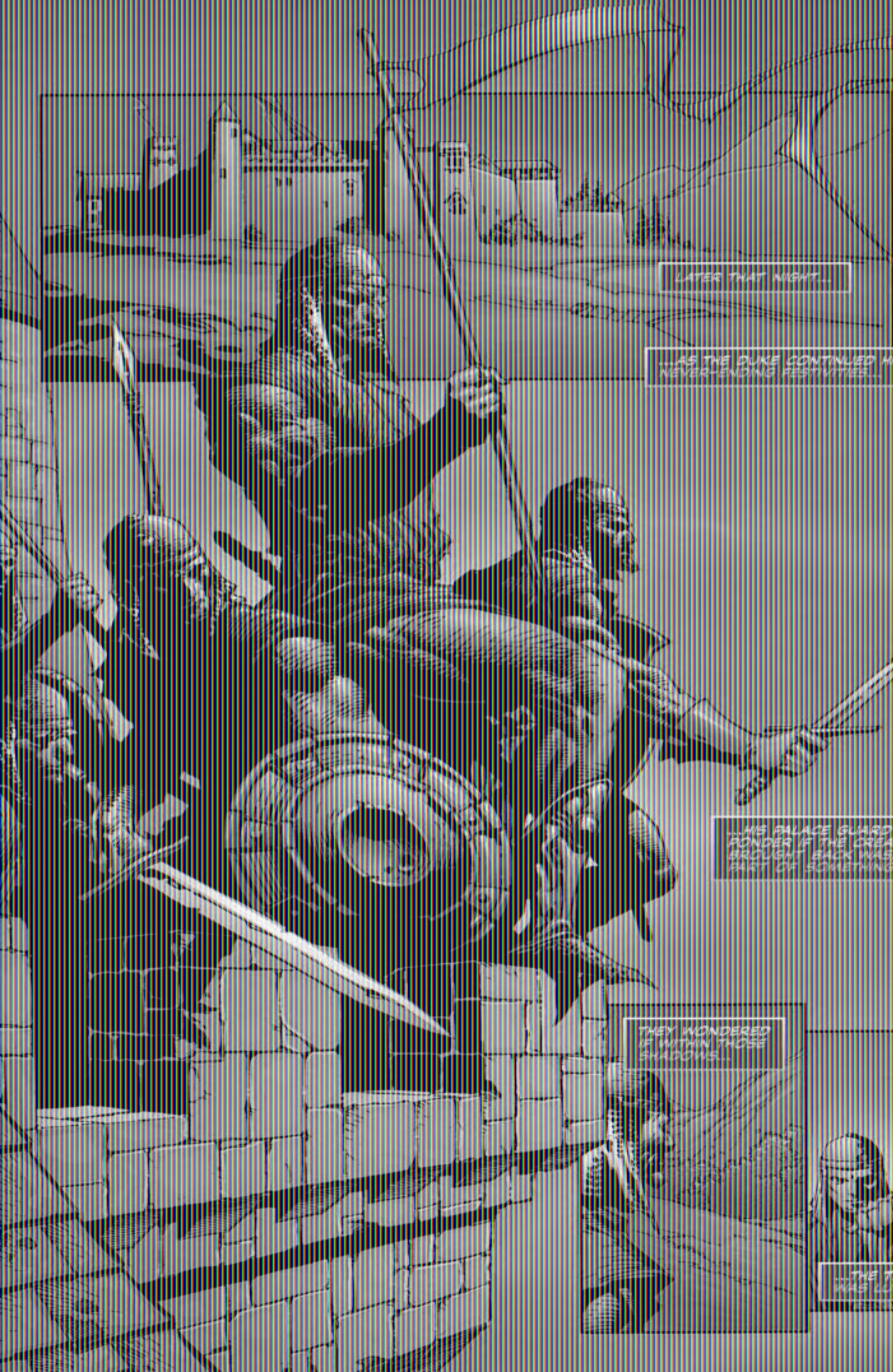
BOO!!!

IS THE BIG, BAD MONSTER PREPARING TO ARRIVE IN YOUR WAKE?

IS THIS GEEZER CORRECT?







LATER THAT NIGHT...

...AS THE DUKE CONTINUED HIS NEVER-ENDING FESTIVITIES...

...HIS PALACE GUARD Ponder if the creature brought back was part of something

THEY WONDERED IF WITHIN THOSE SHADOWS...

...THE T WAS LU

FOR JUST
THE PRICE



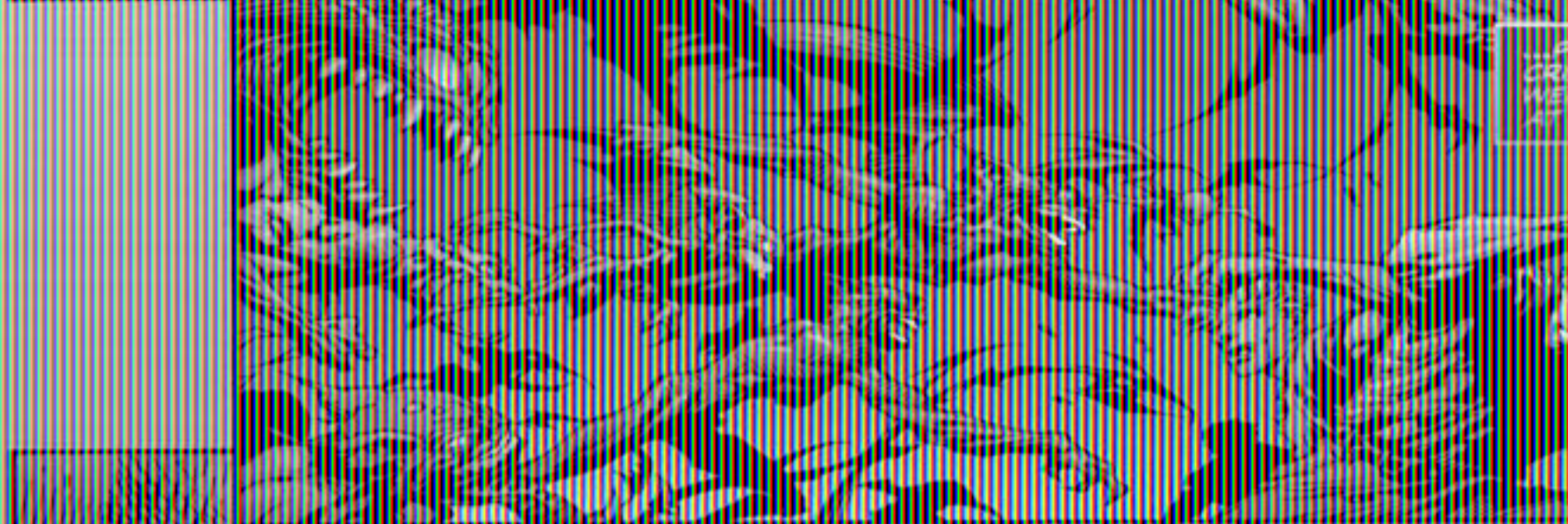
OH



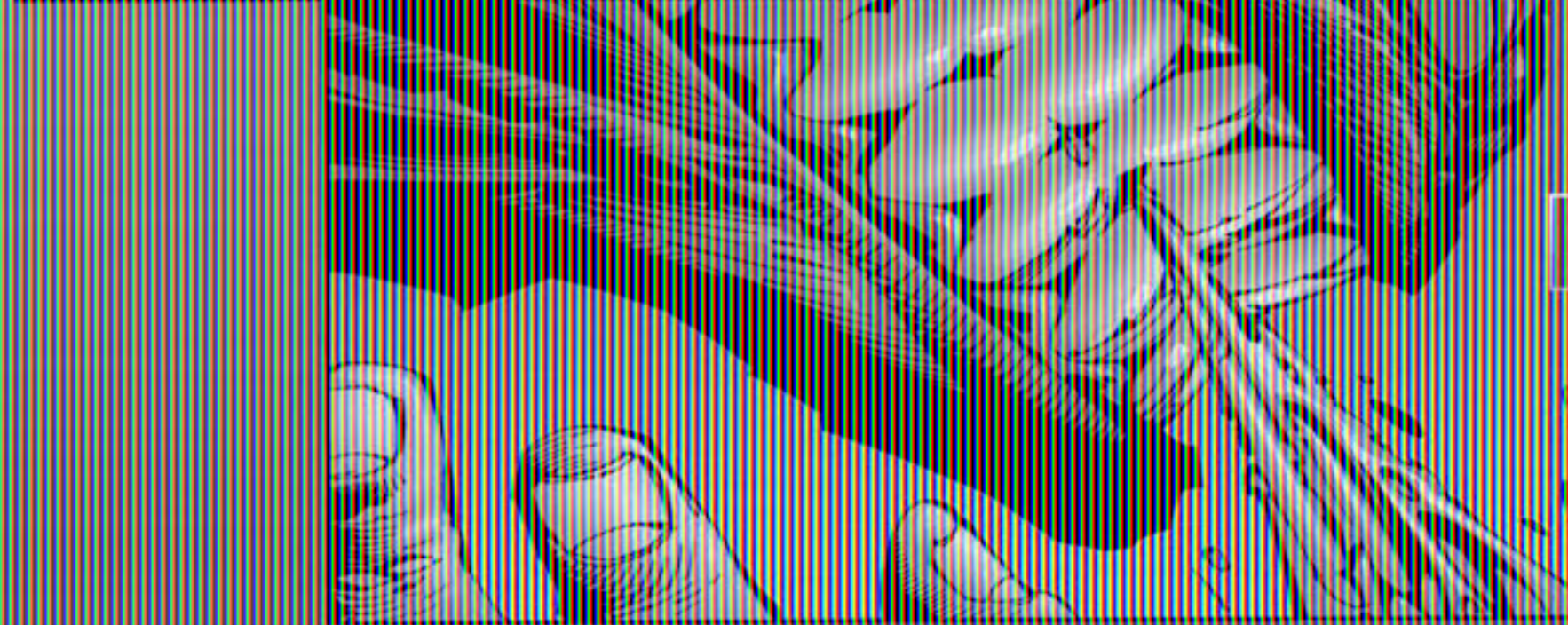
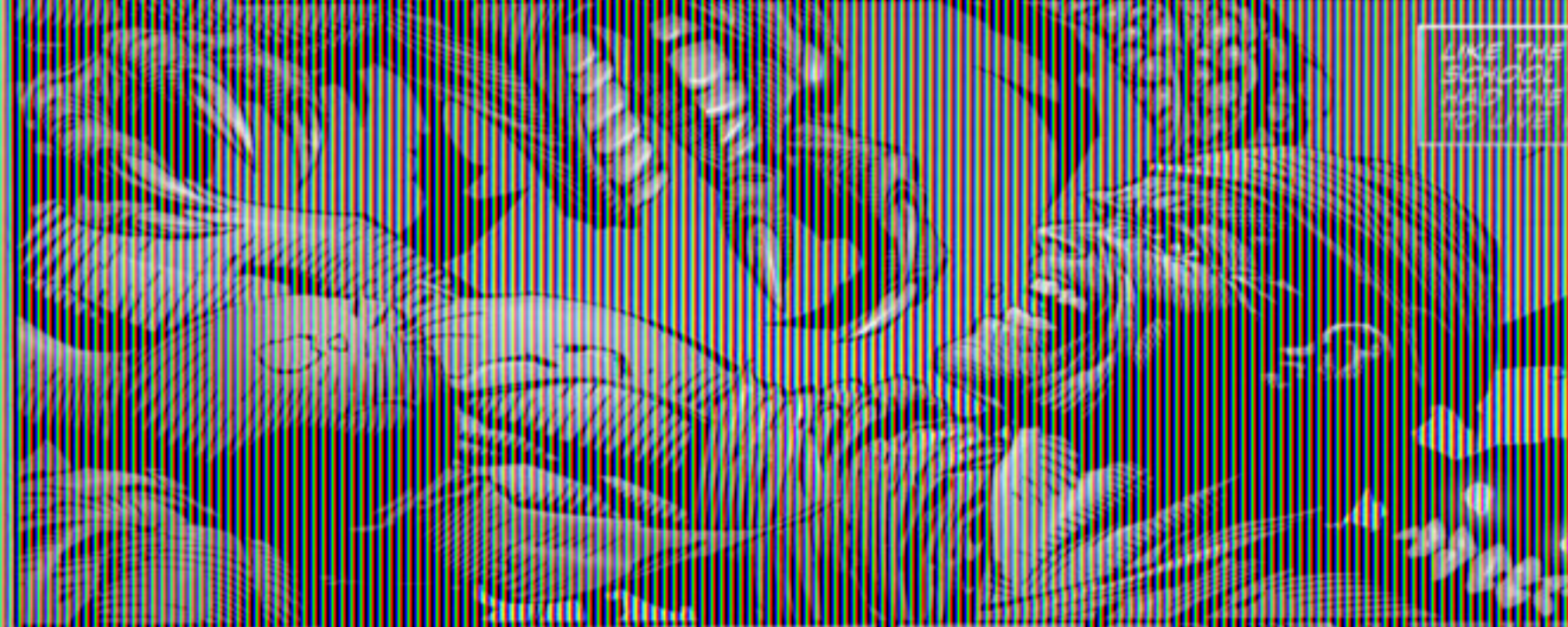
AND SADLY
LIKE MOST
CAUTIONARY
TALES...

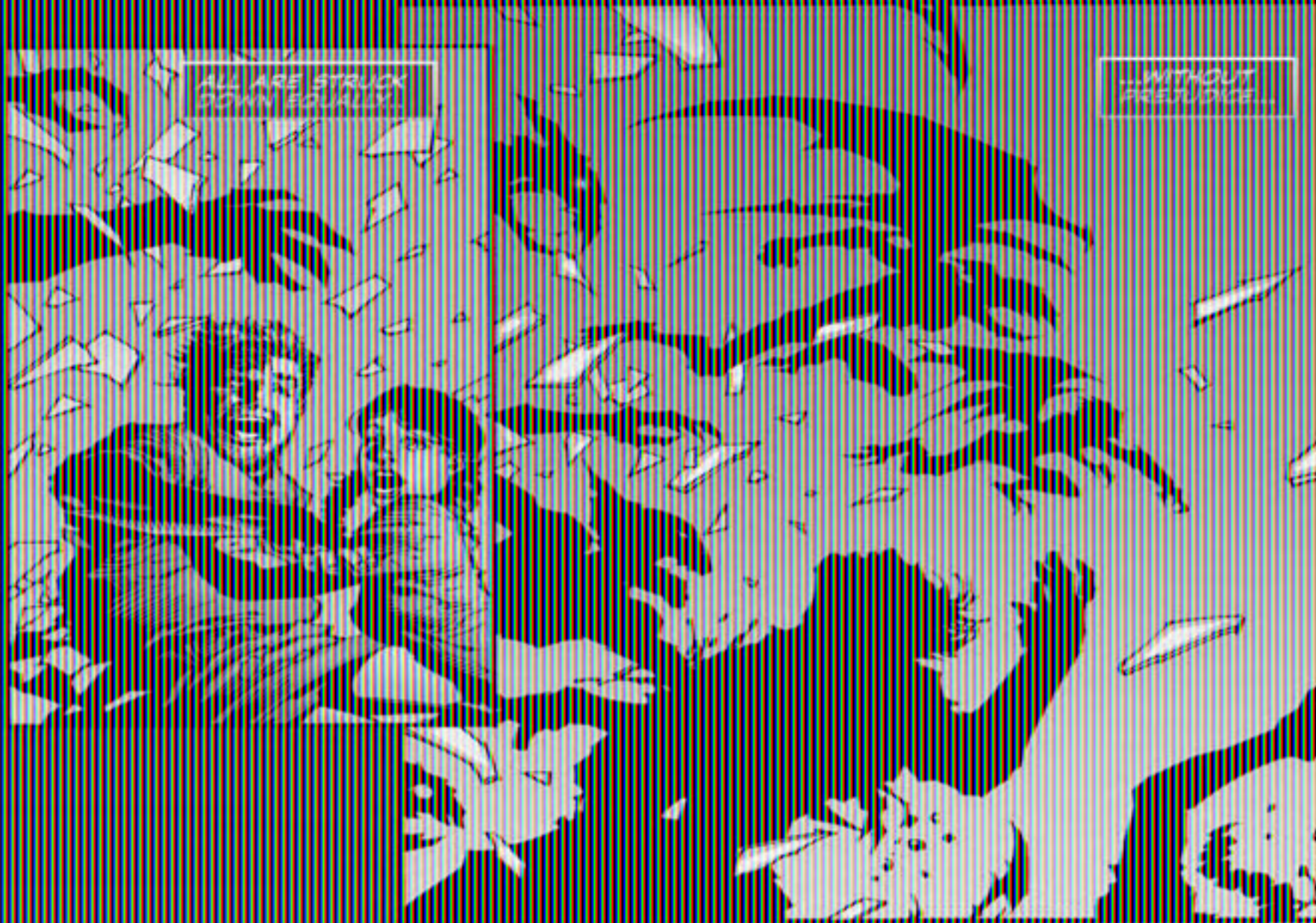
...OURS
INCLUDES
SHARE OF
INNOCENT
VICTIMS...

...THE
GRAND
WE...



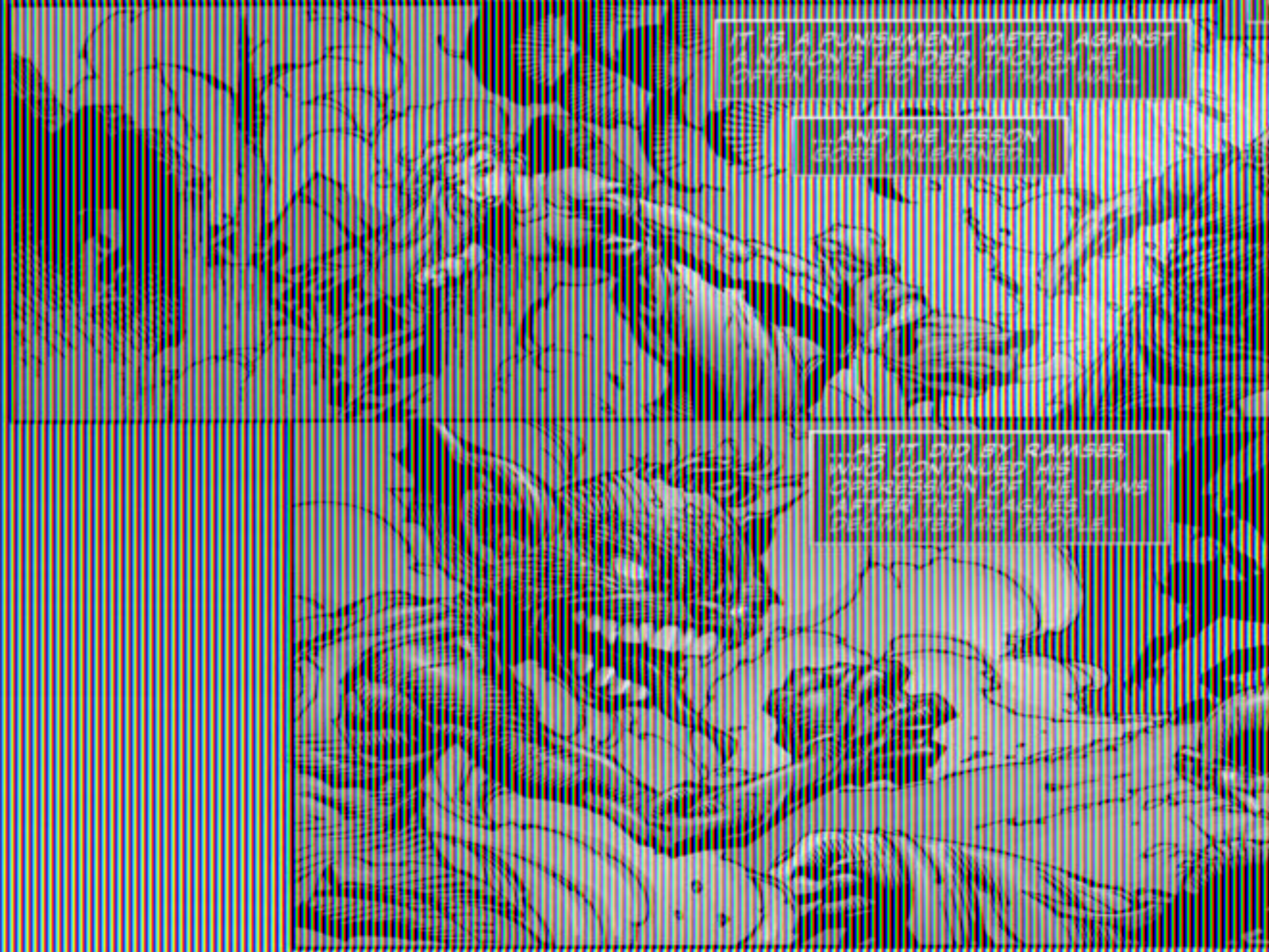
LIKE THE
SCHOOL
HAD THE
TO LIVE





ALL ARE STRUCK
DOWN EQUALLY...

...WITHOUT
PREJUDICE...

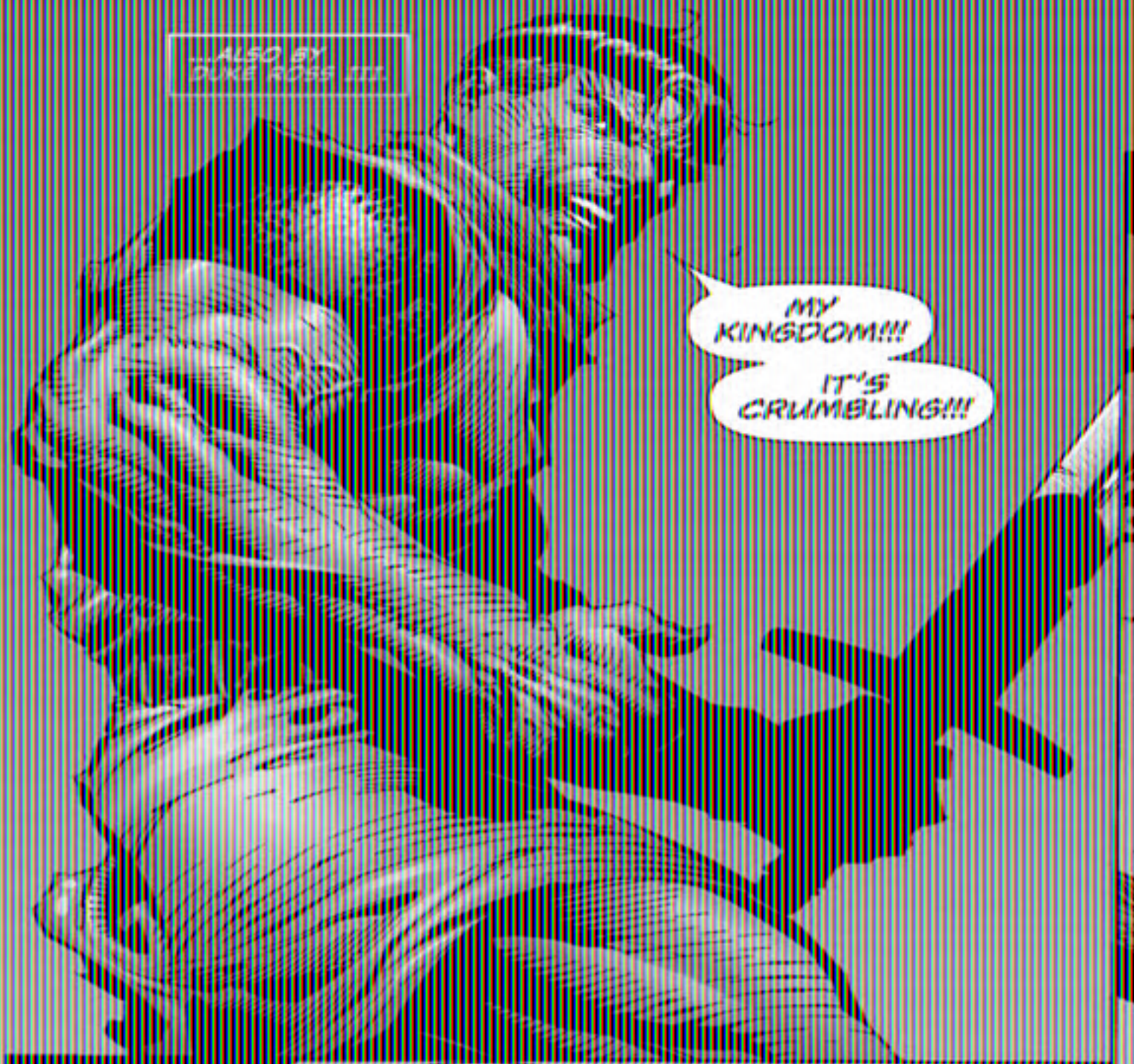


IT IS A PUNISHMENT METED AGAINST
A NATION'S LEADER, THOUGH HE
OFTEN FAILS TO SEE IT THAT WAY...

...AND THE LESSON
GOES UNLEARNED...

...AS IT DID BY RAMSES,
WHO CONTINUED HIS
OPPRESSION OF THE JEWS
AFTER THE PLAGUES
DECIMATED HIS PEOPLE...

...ALSO BY
DUKE ROSS III.



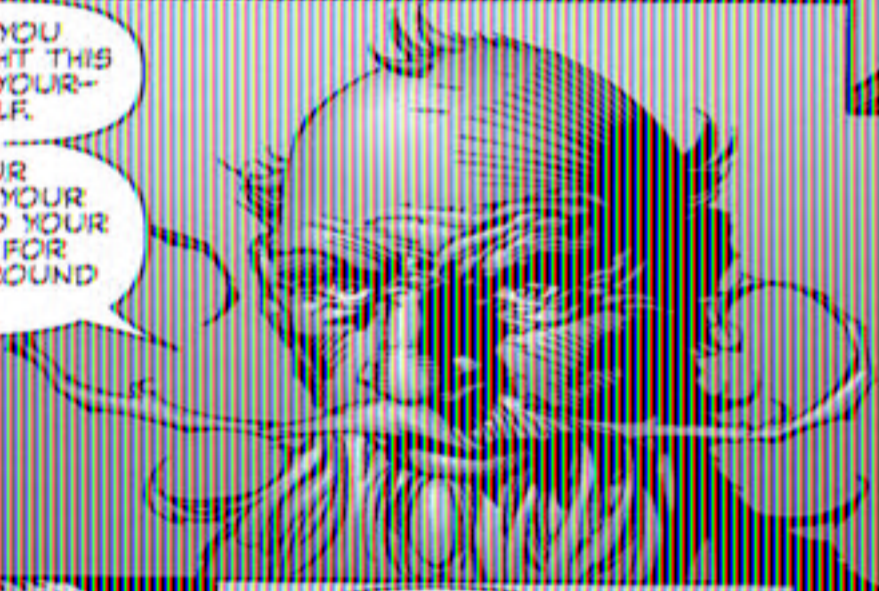
MY KINGDOM!!!

IT'S CRUMBLING!!!

NO, YOU BROUGHT THIS UPON YOURSELF.

WITH YOUR GREED, AND YOUR TYRANNY, AND YOUR DISREGARD FOR EVERYONE AROUND YOU.

HOW DARE YOU!



DO YOU REMEMBER WHO I AM?



WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU?

I AM SURE HE DOES.



EVERYONE DOES.





BUT MY QUESTION FOR YOU IS...

...DO YOU KNOW THE NAMES OF ANYONE IN YOUR KINGDOM?

YOU KNOW -- YOUR PEOPLE, YOUR SUBJECTS.

THE PEOPLE THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SERVING?

ANYONE?

WELL...I...

I THINK...

COULD...UH... YOU GIVE ME A MOMENT?

NO.

THEN THE
HUMANITY
CEASED.

...AND THE MAN...

...THE CREATURE...

...THE...

DARKNESS





HE, OF COURSE, IS LONG DEAD...

...SO I, ALONE, REMAIN TO TELL THE TALE...

...SO THAT OTHERS MAY NOT SHARE A SIMILAR FATE.



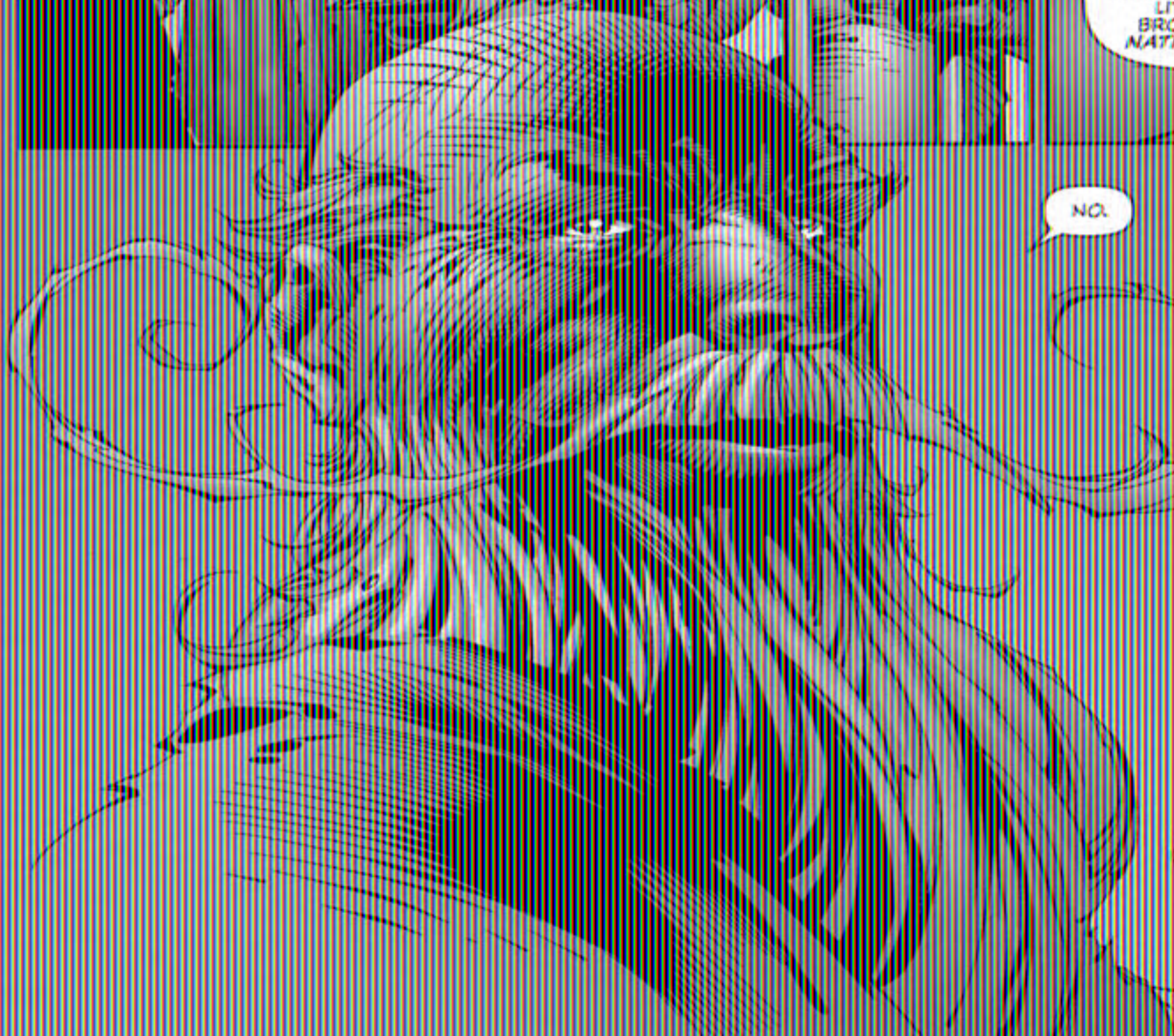
BRAVO!!!

...THOROUGHLY ENTERTAINING.

AGREED!!!

HAHAHA!
A FINE STORY,
OLD MAN...

TRUE
BELIEV
LIT
BRO
NATI



NO.

