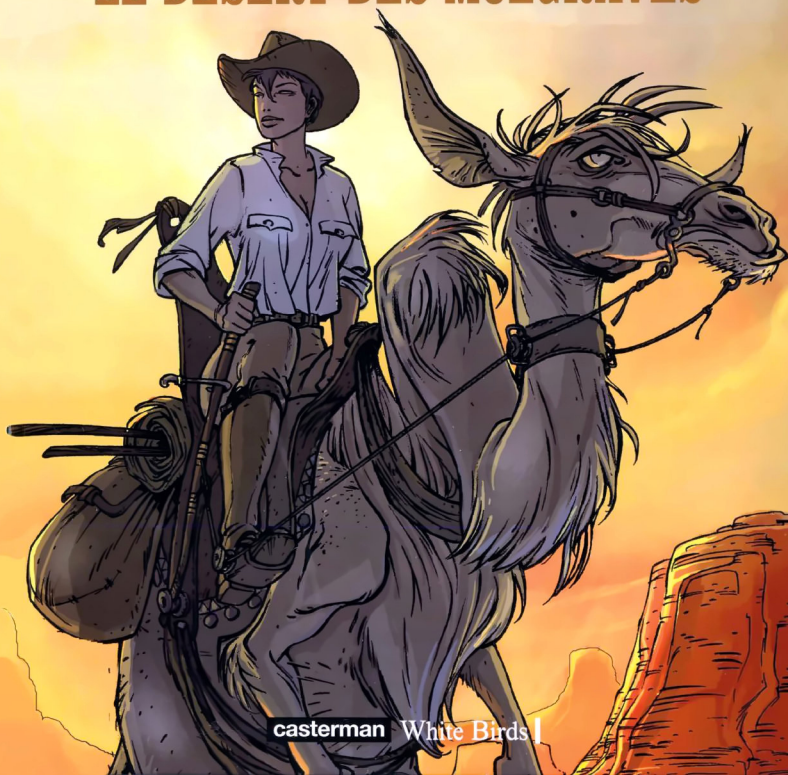


SOKAL

BINGONO

# PARADISE

LE DÉSERT DES MOLGRAVES



casterman White Birds!

**SOKAL**



**BINGONO**

# PARADISE

The Desert of the Molgraves

Mise en couleur de **JEAN-FRANÇOIS BRUCKNER**



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**casterman** White Birds |





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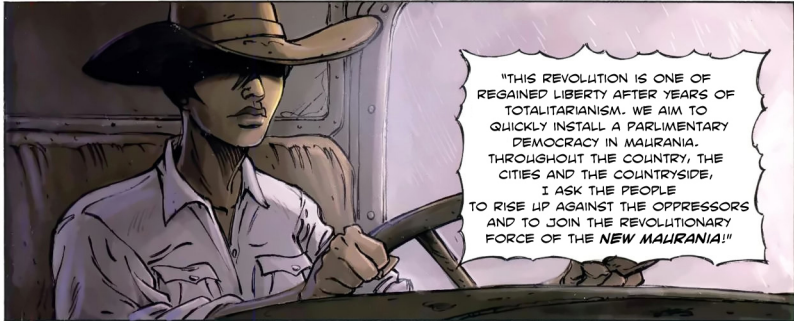
N°L20518



TURNING NOW TO THE  
NORTHERN PROVINCES:  
THERE IS WIDESPREAD  
MOVEMENT,  
A TRUE REVOLUTION LED BY  
THE HEAD OF THE OPPOSING  
MAURANIANS IN EXILE.



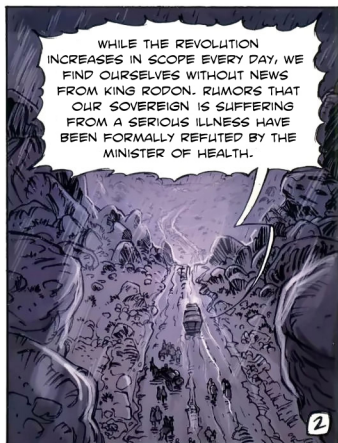
ONE OF OUR REPORTERS  
MET WITH CONRAD SIRI,  
AFTER HIS SECRET  
RETURN TO MAURANIA  
TO TAKE COMMAND OF  
THE REBEL ARMY.



"THIS REVOLUTION IS ONE OF REGAINED LIBERTY AFTER YEARS OF TOTALITARIANISM. WE AIM TO QUICKLY INSTALL A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN MAURANIA. THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, THE CITIES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE, I ASK THE PEOPLE TO RISE UP AGAINST THE OPPRESSORS AND TO JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCE OF THE **NEW MAURANIA!**"



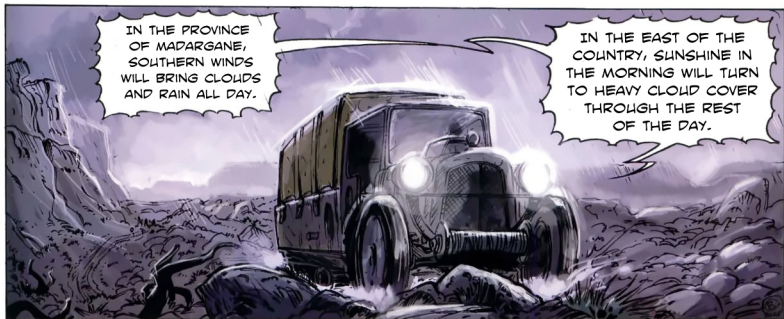
"I ASK THE LAST SUPPORTERS OF KING RODON TO LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS. I ASSURE YOU THAT YOUR GOOD WILL AND YOUR CIVIC SENSE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN."



WHILE THE REVOLUTION INCREASES IN SCOPE EVERY DAY, WE FIND OURSELVES WITHOUT NEWS FROM KING RODON. RUMORS THAT OUR SOVEREIGN IS SUFFERING FROM A SERIOUS ILLNESS HAVE BEEN FORMALLY REFUTED BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.



WE ARE SEVERAL DAYS INTO THE RAINY SEASON.



IN THE PROVINCE OF MADARGANE, SOUTHERN WINDS WILL BRING CLOUDS AND RAIN ALL DAY.

IN THE EAST OF THE COUNTRY, SUNSHINE IN THE MORNING WILL TURN TO HEAVY CLOUD COVER THROUGH THE REST OF THE DAY.



WE'RE EXPECTING CONTINUOUS RAIN FROM MID-DAY. EXTREMELY HEAVY RAIN IS FORECAST FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. ALREADY THE MAUR RIVER HAS RISEN TO FLOOD LEVELS.



IT IS INADVISABLE FOR TRAVELLERS TO USE THE TRADITIONAL FORDS ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROADS.





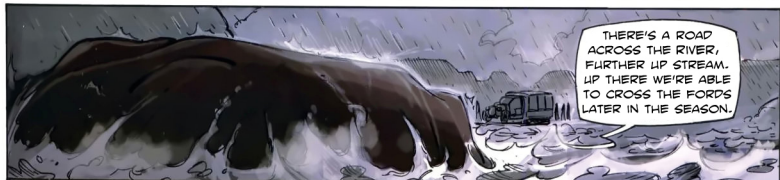




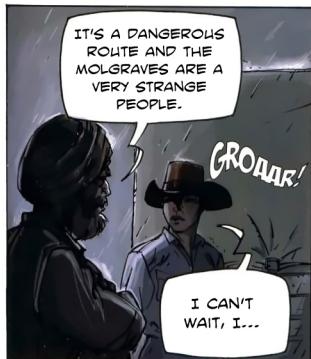
IS THERE NO  
OTHER ROAD  
HEADING SOUTH?



THROUGH  
THE DESERT...  
THE **MOLGRAVE**  
DESERT...



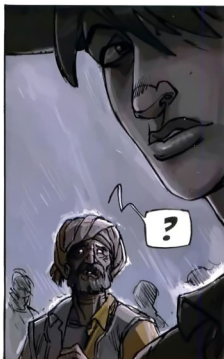
THERE'S A ROAD  
ACROSS THE RIVER,  
FURTHER UP STREAM.  
UP THERE WE'RE ABLE  
TO CROSS THE FORDS  
LATER IN THE SEASON.



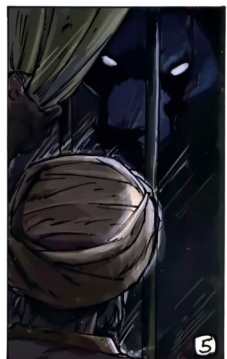
IT'S A DANGEROUS  
ROUTE AND THE  
MOLGRAVES ARE A  
VERY STRANGE  
PEOPLE.

GROWL!

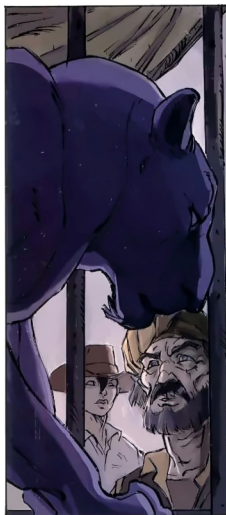
I CAN'T  
WAIT, I...



?



G



MEANWHILE,  
FURTHER SOUTH...

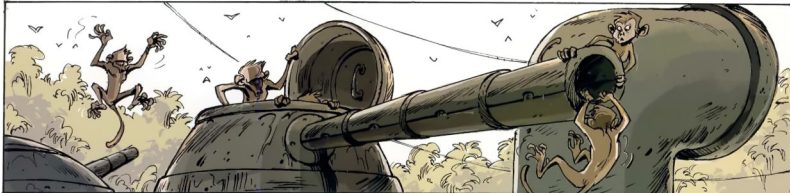
WHY AREN'T  
WE MOVING?

WE'VE RUN UP  
ON A SAND BANK,  
RODON!



ALL RIGHT, ORDER  
THE MEN TO GRAB  
THEIR SHOVELS AND  
DIG OUT THE BOAT!



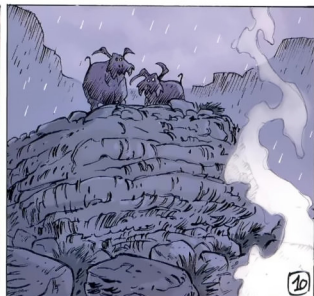
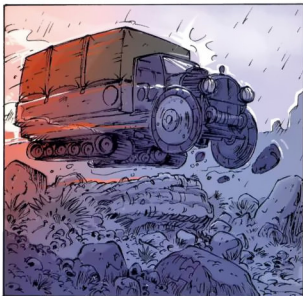
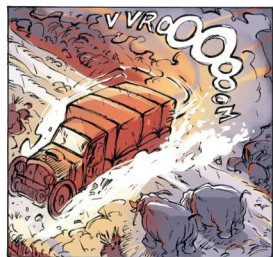


NO, I'M  
WAITING FOR  
MALKIA!

WE HAVEN'T HEARD  
ANYTHING OF YOUR  
DAUGHTER, RODON.







...CRRRR... MID-DAY, THE WALLS  
OF MADARGANE FELL UNDER THE  
ATTACKS OF COLONEL SIRI'S  
REBELS... ...CRRRRR...



...WHILE THE SOLDIERS,  
DRUNK WITH BLOOD,  
SWARM THE STREETS.



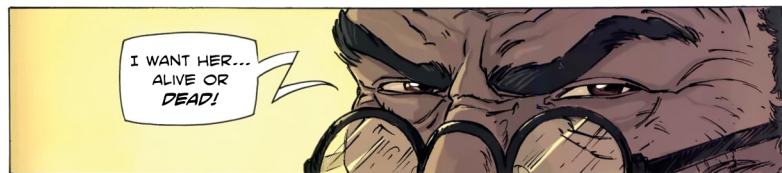
YES, DEAR LISTENERS. NOW IN  
MADARGANE, THEY RAPE,  
PILLAGE, AND MURDER. WHERE  
ARE MAURANIA'S LIBERATORS?  
WHERE ARE THESE MESSENGERS  
OF PEACE AND LIBERTY?





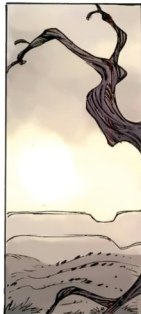
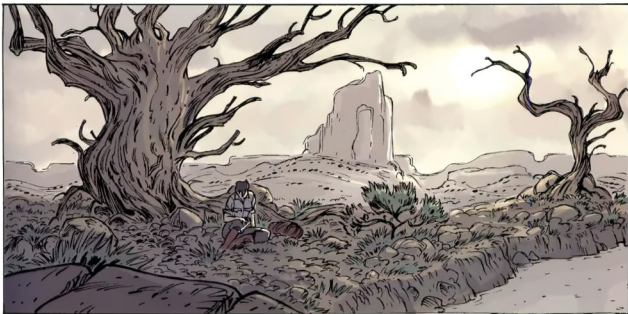
ALL WE SEE TODAY ARE  
HORDES OF BARBARIANS  
RUNNING WILD IN MADARGANE,  
THE MARTYR CITY...















GOODMORNING?

ALAS, IT'S THE ONLY  
WORD OF ENGLISH I  
WAS ABLE TO TEACH  
THE INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLE.  
THESE SAVAGES  
THOUGHT IT WAS  
MY NAME!



ARE YOU BY ANY  
CHANCE RELATED TO  
THE FAMOUS  
ADVENTURER,  
MISS SMITH?

NO... I...  
I DON'T  
KNOW.



MY NAME IS  
ANN SMITH.

PLEASURE TO  
MEET YOU, MISS  
SMITH! YOU SHARE  
A NAME WITH  
A WELL-KNOWN  
EXPLORER OF THIS  
GOD FORSAKEN  
COUNTRY.



HMM... IT SEEMS  
WHAT WE HAVE HERE  
IS A CRIME.  
MISS SMITH.  
CARRIED OUT BY  
A LEOPARD!

A...  
A LEOPARD?



HE'S NEVER  
HUNTED IN HIS  
LIFE, OR AT  
LEAST NOT IN  
A LONG TIME.




USUALLY, THE  
LEOPARD HOISTS  
ITS PREY INTO  
THE TREES SO  
THAT HYENAS  
CAN'T GET TO IT.



BUT THE BEAST THAT  
CONCERNS US HAS  
ABANDONED THE  
REMAINS OF ITS  
PREY ON  
THE GROUND.


AFTER ALL  
THIS TIME IT  
MUST HAVE  
FORGOTTEN  
ABOUT HYENAS.






IT'S EATEN JUST ENOUGH TO SATIATE ITS HUNGER. IT DIDN'T COMPLETELY FILL ITS STOMACH LIKE WILD BEASTS WHO ARE NEVER SURE OF FINDING ANOTHER MEAL THE NEXT DAY. THIS ANIMAL IS USED TO BEING FED REGULARLY, MISS SMITH.

...ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY IT'S TIME?



I'M AFRAID THIS ANIMAL IS MY RESPONSIBILITY, MAJOR.

GOOD GOD, MISS! YOU SHOULDN'T LET THIS ANIMAL WANDER IN THE BRUSH!

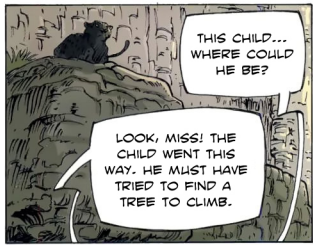


THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER! YOUR LEOPARD HAS KILLED A **GAZELINE**, AND WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ITS OWNER!



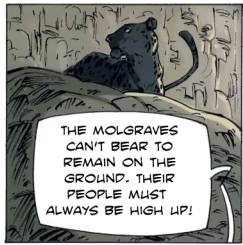
THIS... THIS POOR BEAST HAD A RIDER?

**A CHILD!!**  
MOLGRAVE CHILDREN RIDE AT NIGHT ON THE BACK OF THEIR GAZELINE. NIGHTTIME IS THE BEST FOR HUNTING...




THIS CHILD... WHERE COULD HE BE?


LOOK, MISS! THE CHILD WENT THIS WAY. HE MUST HAVE TRIED TO FIND A TREE TO CLIMB.



THE MOLGRAVES CAN'T BEAR TO REMAIN ON THE GROUND. THEIR PEOPLE MUST ALWAYS BE HIGH UP!

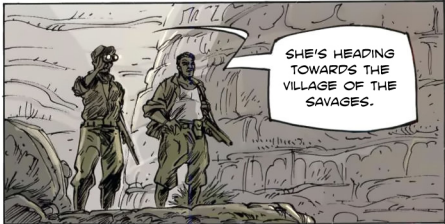


MISS SMITH, I MUST SEE TO THE YOUNG BOY. HE IS MOST LIKELY HURT.

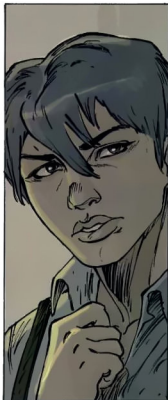


ALL THIS IS MY FAULT! I'LL GO TO THE MOLGRAVES AND EXPLAIN TO THEM...

THE MOLGRAVES, THEY'RE PROUD AS PEACOCKS AND JUST AS BAD TEMPERED. WHAT'S MORE, THEY'RE INCAPABLE OF SPEAKING A WORD OF ENGLISH! BUT, UNDENIABLY, THEY ARE THE LORDS OF THIS LAND, AND WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, MISS SMITH.

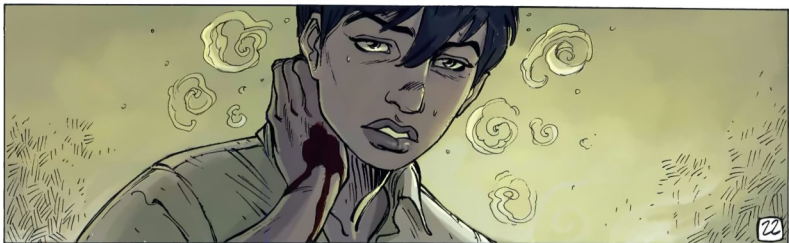




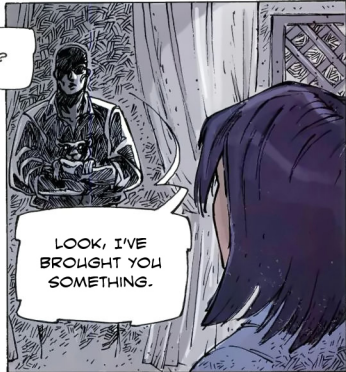


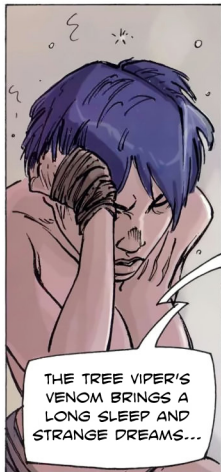






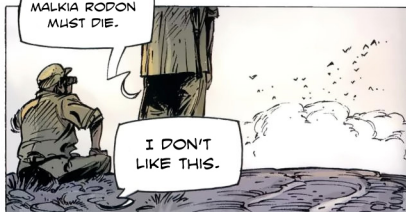
















THE QUEEN  
IS NOT HAPPY.

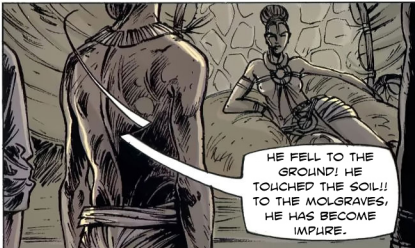


AND YOU ARE  
NOT WELCOME  
HERE.

I CAN  
GUESS...



IT WAS THE YOUNG  
PRINCE, THE SON OF  
OUR QUEEN, WHO  
RODE THE GAZELINE  
THAT YOUR LEOPARD  
KILLED.



HE FELL TO THE  
GROUND! HE  
TOUCHED THE SOIL!!  
TO THE MOLGRAVES,  
HE HAS BECOME  
IMPURE.



A MOLGRAVE  
NEVER PUTS HIS  
FOOT TO THE  
SOIL...

...IT MAY BE  
THAT THE PRINCE  
MAY NEVER  
RETURN AMONG  
HIS PEOPLE.



...WHERE  
IS HE  
NOW?

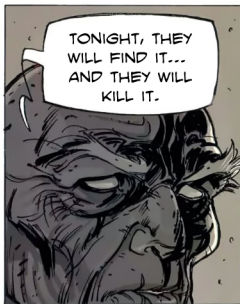
HE'S HURT.  
MAJOR GOOD-  
MORNING IS  
CARING FOR HIM.



TSSSCCV...

WHAT DID  
SHE  
SAY?

THE QUEEN  
WISHES THAT YOU  
LEAVE HERE  
QUICKLY.







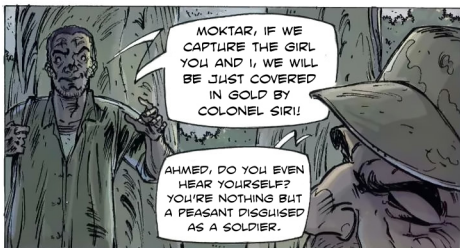


I'M TELLING YOU,  
AHMED. I DON'T  
LIKE IT HERE.



THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP.  
THESE SAVAGES ARE SO  
COCKY THAT THEY DON'T  
FEEL THE NEED TO  
POST GUARDS AT THE  
GATES OF THEIR VILLAGE.

WE'RE  
ONLY TWO  
MEN.



MOKTAR, IF WE  
CAPTURE THE GIRL  
YOU AND I, WE WILL  
BE JUST COVERED  
IN GOLD BY  
COLONEL SIR!

AHMED, DO YOU EVEN  
HEAR YOURSELF?  
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT  
A PEASANT DISGUISED  
AS A SOLDIER.



YOU'RE JUST  
DAYDREAMING  
AGAIN.

SHUSH! OVER  
THERE, THE  
LIGHT!



IT'S  
HER!

SHE'S TALKING  
WITH THE  
OLD ENGLISH  
SOLDIER.



AH, A WHISKY AT  
TWILIGHT ON A WOODEN  
VERANDA. CERTAINLY  
THE BEST MEMORY I  
HAVE OF MAURANIA,  
MISS SMITH.

HM.  
THAT'S NOT  
MY NAME.  
YOU KNOW  
THAT.

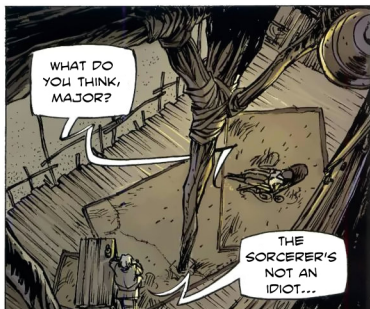




I SPOKE WITH THE SORCERER. HE THINKS I AM THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING.



MALKIA RODON... THE NAME MEANS NOTHING TO ME. I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING.



WHAT DO YOU THINK, MAJOR?

THE SORCERER'S NOT AN IDIOT...



AND YOU MUST HAVE A DAMN GOOD REASON FOR COMING HERE TO MAURANIA, ESPECIALLY NOW.

YES, THAT'S FOR SURE... WELL, TELL ME ABOUT THIS KING, MAJOR.



...AND GIVE ME ANOTHER GLASS.

HM, WELL, ONCE UPON A TIME...



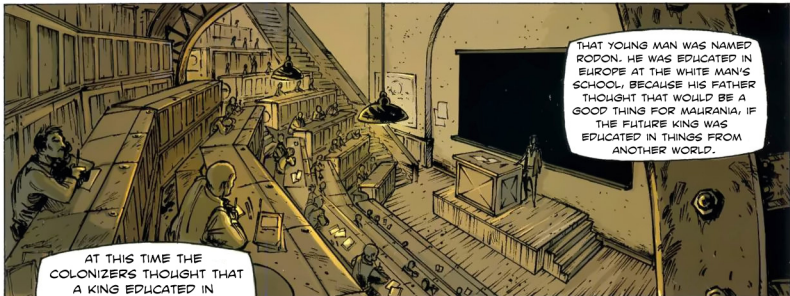
ONCE UPON A DAMN LONG TIME.



A YOUNG, STRONG MAN BECAME KING OF ALL THE COUNTRY. HIS FATHER WAS KING; HIS GRANDFATHER WAS ALSO KING, AS WAS HIS GREAT GRANDFATHER. HE WAS PART OF A VERY OLD FAMILY OF KINGS.

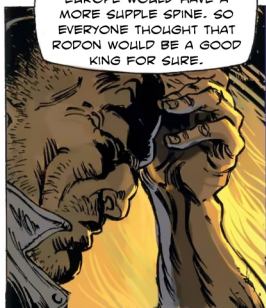
NO ONE IN MAURANIA COULD REMEMBER ANOTHER FAMILY OF KINGS QUITE LIKE THIS. BECAUSE IT WAS A FAMILY OF KINGS, THEY WERE WISE AND JUST, AND NO ONE WANTED THAT TO CHANGE.





THAT YOUNG MAN WAS NAMED RODON. HE WAS EDUCATED IN EUROPE AT THE WHITE MAN'S SCHOOL, BECAUSE HIS FATHER THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE A GOOD THING FOR MAURANIA, IF THE FUTURE KING WAS EDUCATED IN THINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD.

AT THIS TIME THE COLONIZERS THOUGHT THAT A KING EDUCATED IN EUROPE WOULD HAVE A MORE SUPPLE SPINE. SO EVERYONE THOUGHT THAT RODON WOULD BE A GOOD KING FOR SURE.



FOR YEARS, RODON WAS THE BEST KING MAURANIA HAD EVER KNOWN. BUT SOON, THINGS CHANGED. LITTLE BY LITTLE. TODAY, ACCORDING TO MANY PEOPLE, HE'S NO LONGER A GOOD KING. HE'S BECOME BROODING AND PENSIVE, LIKE AN OLD LION WITH A SORE TOOTH.



THEY SAY THE QUEEN, HIS WIFE, FLED ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO, AND TOOK THEIR ONLY DAUGHTER WITH HER.

WE NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN.

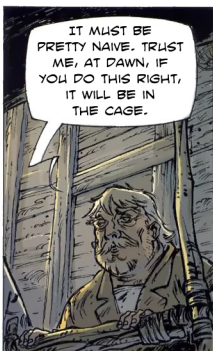
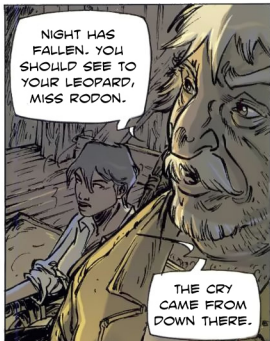


KING RODON SENT HIS MEN EVERYWHERE IN MAURANIA, EVEN HERE THE SOLDIERS CAME.

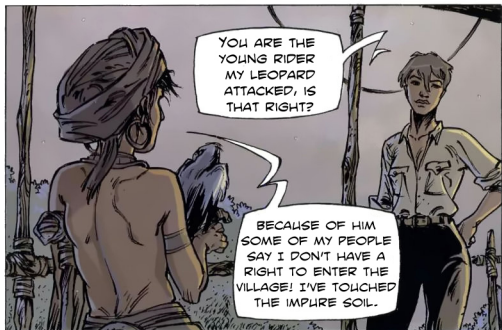


I KNOW. THEY WERE LOOKING FOR A YOUNG GIRL, WITH A SCAR...

...LIKE THE CLAWS OF AN ANIMAL.









LATER

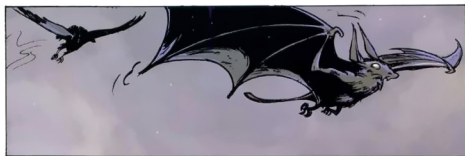
YOU SPEAK  
OUR LANGUAGE  
VERY WELL,  
BAKA.

THE MAJOR SAID THAT  
BEING A MOLGRAVE  
ISN'T A JOB FOR  
THE FUTURE,  
SO HE TAUGHT ME.

THESE POLO-  
POLOS ARE A  
FINE MEAL FOR  
A LEOPARD.

HUH! WELL,  
WHAT ARE WE  
WAITING FOR?

LOOK!



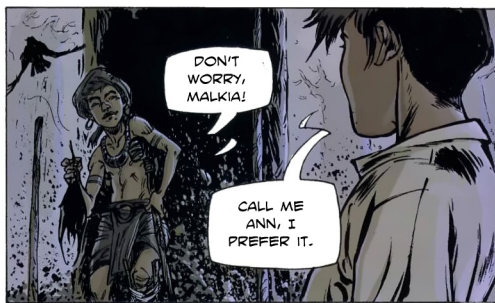


POLO-POLOS ARE  
INCREDIBLY UGLY,  
BUT THEIR MEAT  
IS FULL OF  
FLAVOR!



WITH THIS  
YOUR LEOPARD  
WILL GO RIGHT  
INTO THE TRAP!  
HA HA!

I DON'T  
WANT TO  
HURT HIM.



DON'T  
WORRY,  
MALKIA!

CALL ME  
ANN, I  
PREFER IT.



MEANWHILE

RRRR...



CLIC

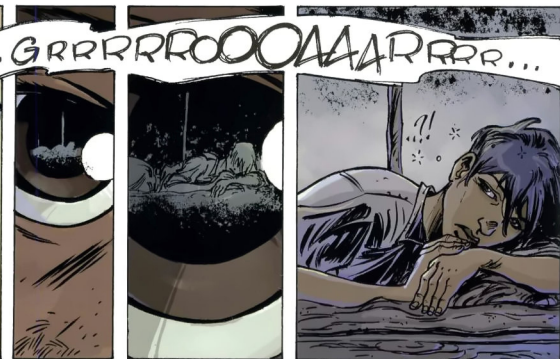
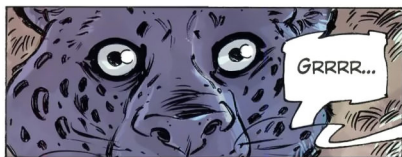


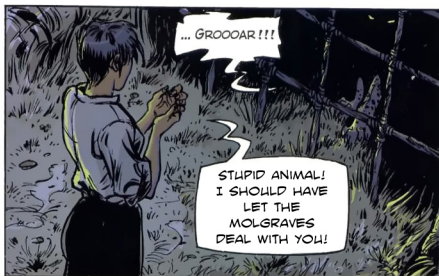
WHERE'S  
THE GIRL?

HUH?  
WHAT?





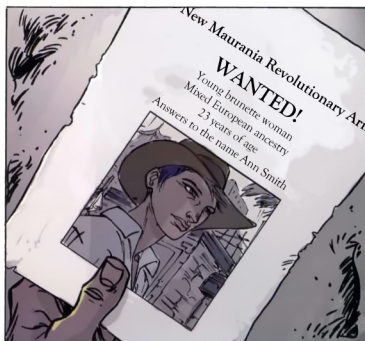


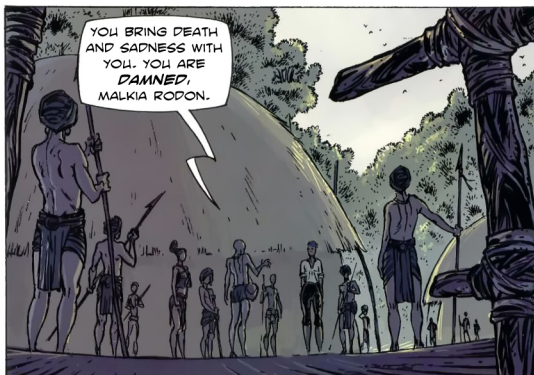
















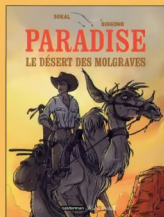




... MALKIA  
RODON!







« Pendant des années, Rodon a été le  
meilleur roi que la Mauranie  
ait jamais connu...  
Aujourd'hui, il est devenu sombre et  
pensif comme ces vieux lions  
qui ont mal aux dents...  
On dit que la reine, son épouse, s'est  
enfui(e) voici douze années,  
avec leur fille unique !  
On ne les a jamais retrouvées. »



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