



BUREAU FOR PARANORMAL RESEARCH AND DEFENSE

B.P.R.D.

\$2.99

#1

**MIKE
MIGNOLA**

**JOHN
ARCUDI**

**GUY
DAVIS**



*The Universal
Machine*





DO YOU THINK
THOSE BOMBS WILL
REALLY MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE?

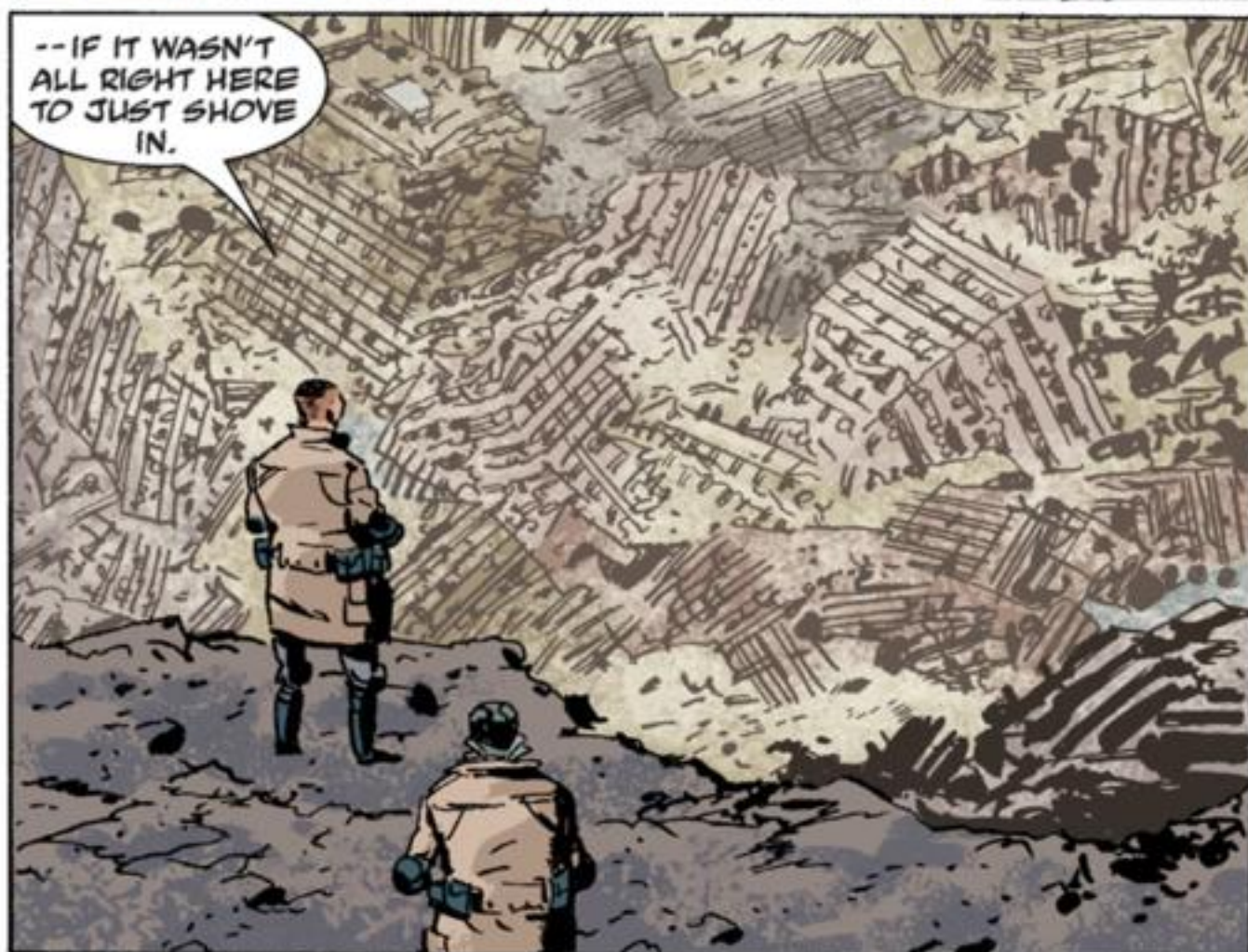
WE'D FEEL PRETTY SILLY IF
WE *DIDN'T* BOMB THAT HOLE
AND THAT *GIANT FREAK SLUG*
CAME CRAWLING OUT A *WEEK*
FROM NOW, WOULDN'T WE?

ANYWAY, NOW
THAT THE WHOLE
WORLD KNOWS ABOUT
THIS, WE GOTTA DO
SOMETHING.



A.C.E. TELLS ME IT WILL
TAKE OVER A *BILLION*
TONS OF MATERIAL TO
FILL THAT PIT. IT BEGARS
THE IMAGINATION.

YEAH. OR IT
WOULD--



--IF IT WASN'T
ALL RIGHT HERE
TO JUST SHOVE
IN.



OVER SEVENTEEN
HUNDRED DEAD IN THIS
CITY, AND STILL, ALL I
CAN THINK ABOUT IS
ROGER.





"I'LL BE RIGHT THERE."

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MEETING ALONE IN MY OFFICE LIKE THIS, DEVON.

I'M NOT USUALLY SECRETIVE, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO GET MY COLLEAGUES' HOPES UP.



AND I DON'T MEAN TO GET YOUR HOPES UP, DR. CORRIGAN.

BUT A FREELANCE AGENT CLAIMS TO HAVE DISCOVERED A COPY OF *FLAMMA RECONDITUS* IN A SMALL TOWN NEAR POLIGNY AMONG THE JURA FOOTHILLS--



THE SECRET FIRE, RIGHT. WE'VE ALREADY GOT A COPY OF THAT ONE. IT'S--

HE'S GOT ONE OF THE *HOLLANDUS** EDITIONS. THE COMPLETE TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK--



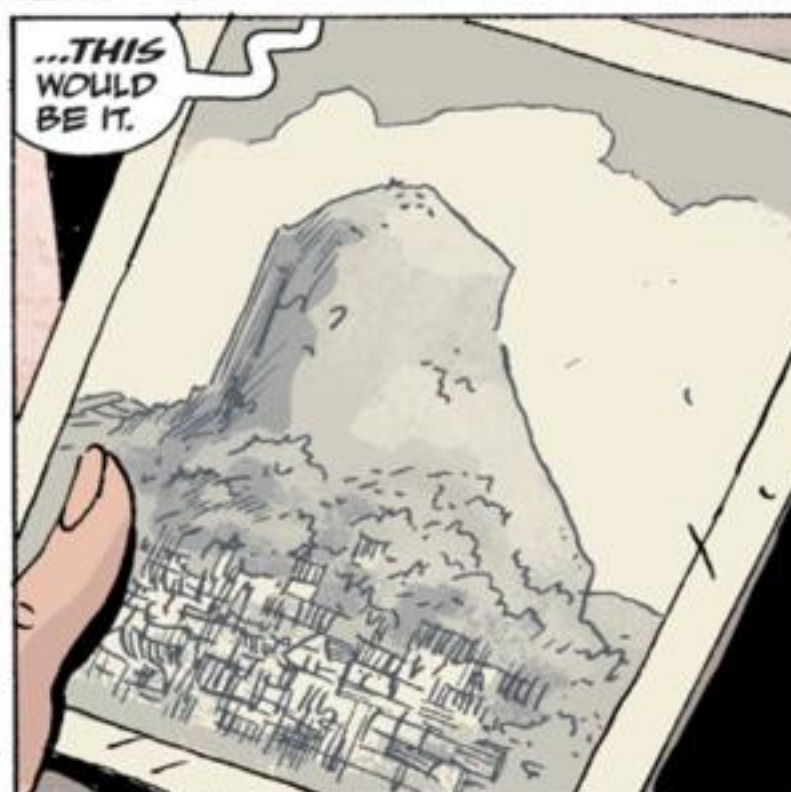
THAT BOOK'S A PHANTOM. NOBODY'S EVER SEEN ONE.

THE VATICAN LIBRARY SAYS THERE WERE FIVE PRINTED, AND MY GUY SAYS THIS IS ONE OF THEM.



"A TRUE RECORD OF THE WORKINGS OF THE UNIVERSAL MACHINE"...

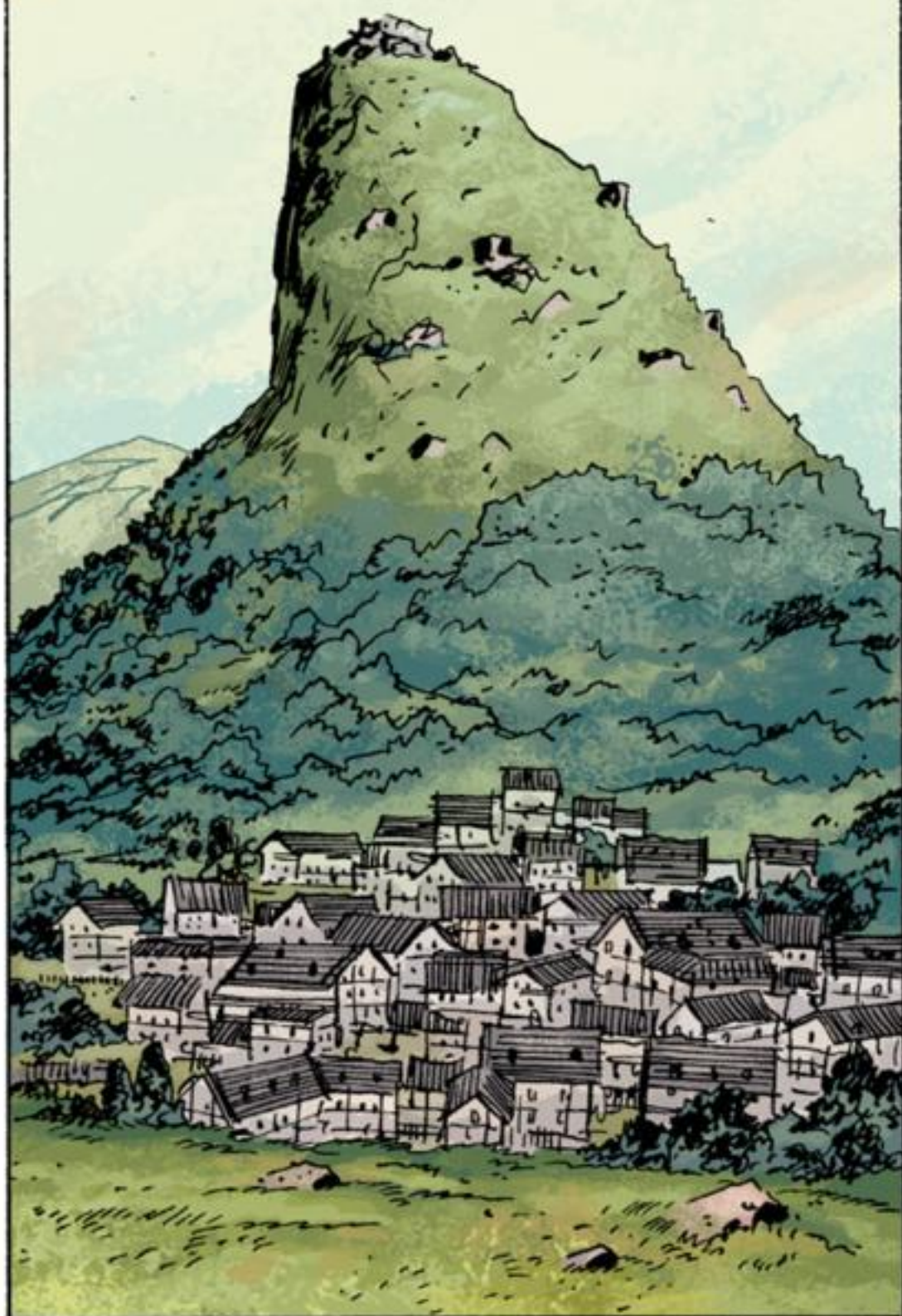
IF ANY BOOK HAS A FORMULA FOR REGROWING A HOMUNCULUS...



...THIS WOULD BE IT.

*JOHN ISAAC HOLLANDUS, A 16TH-CENTURY DUTCH ALCHEMIST.

ABLEBEN, FRANCE,
TWENTY-SEVEN
HOURS LATER.



WHEW!
FINALLY!

I DID WARN YOU
ABOUT THE TERRAIN,
DR. CORRIGAN. AND I
WOULD HAVE BEEN
HAPPY TO HANDLE
THIS ALONE.



NO, DEVON. THAT DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE. YOU DON'T
HAVE THE **HISTORY**
BACKGROUND I DO.

NO,
OBVIOUSLY,
BUT IS THAT
REALLY WHAT'S
NEEDED HERE?
I JUST PAY THE
COLLECTOR
WHAT HE WANTS,
AND I'M
OFF.

YOU
HEARD THE
GUY ON THE
PHONE. HE'S
CAGEY AS
HELL.



NEGOTIATIONS ARE A TRICKY
THING. YOU'VE GOT TO BE MORE
THAN A **BUYER**. YOU HAVE TO
BE A **FRIEND**.

AND
HISTORIANS
MAKE GOOD
FRIENDS?

LOOK
AT THAT
BUILDING.



WOW, THOSE
STONES ARE
HUGE. RIVER
ROCK?

NO.



"ABLEBEN USED TO BE THE DUCHEE OF FABRE, NAMED FOR MARQUIS ADOET DE FABRE."



"HIS HOME-- A CASTLE, REALLY-- WAS BUILT ON THAT PEAK."

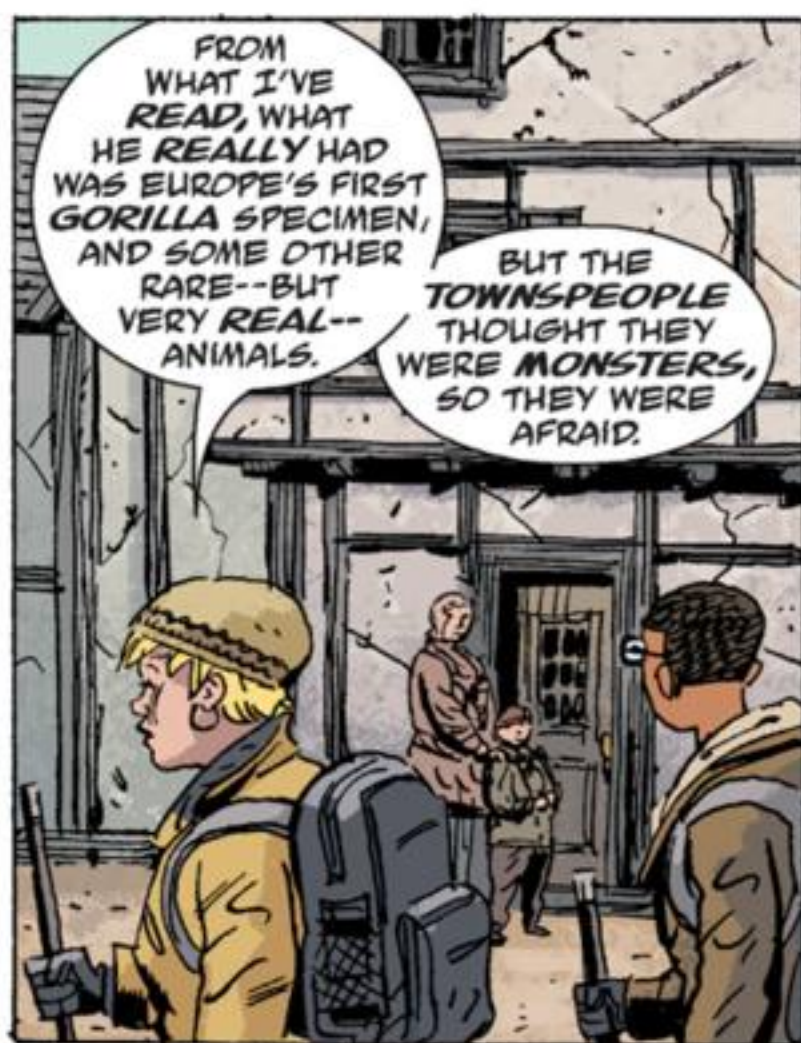
RIGHT THERE?



YEP. SEE, THE MARQUIS HAD AN IMPRESSIVE MENAGERIE FOR HIS TIME, SUPPOSEDLY INCLUDING A WEREWOLF.

FROM WHAT I'VE READ, WHAT HE REALLY HAD WAS EUROPE'S FIRST GORILLA SPECIMEN, AND SOME OTHER RARE--BUT VERY REAL--ANIMALS.

BUT THE TOWNSPEOPLE THOUGHT THEY WERE MONSTERS, SO THEY WERE AFRAID.



"IN THE SUMMER OF 1491, WHEN CHILDREN STARTED DISAPPEARING, PEOPLE BLAMED THE MARQUIS."

"HE WAS FEEDING HIS MONSTERS WITH THEIR YOUNG, THEY DECIDED."



"AND THEY THOUGHT THEY'D DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT."





JUST LIKE IN
FRANKENSTEIN
MOVIES.

YEAH,
DEVON.

JUST
LIKE
IT.



"ANYWAY, AT
SOME POINT IN
THIS STRUGGLE, A
MASSIVE **STORM**
HIT THE TOWN --



"--AND THE CASTLE
WAS **ANNIHILATED**."



A **STORM**
TOOK DOWN A
CASTLE?

SUPERNATURAL
FORCES ARE SUPPOSED
TO HAVE BEEN AT WORK--
OR IT **MIGHT** HAVE BEEN
A BOMB BUILT BY THE
VILLAGERS.

THE MOST
ELUSIVE PARTS
OF HISTORY ARE
THE FACTS.



"ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS LATER, THE CURSE OF THE MARQUIS DE FABRE WAS EXPLUNGED BY POPE SIXTUS V, AND PEOPLE RETURNED TO REBUILD THE CITY--"



--USING THE MOST READILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS.

AHH, GOTCHA. HELL OF A STORY.



NOT A STORY. HISTORY.

AND KNOWING IT WILL MAKE ME OUR COLLECTOR'S FRIEND.

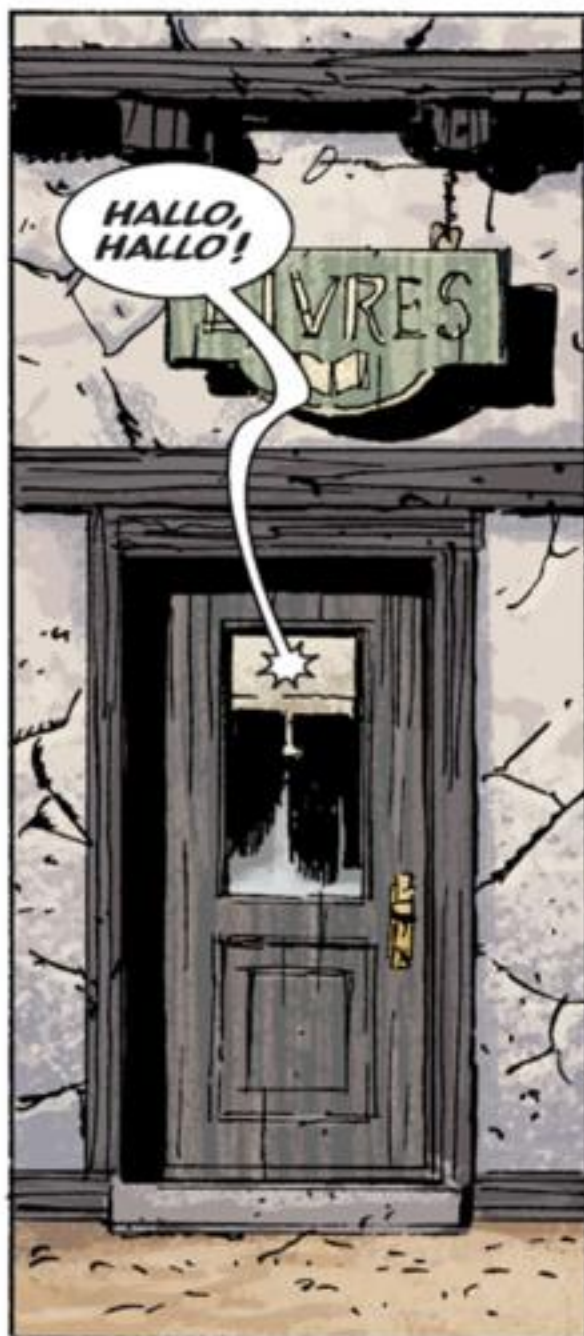
SURE.



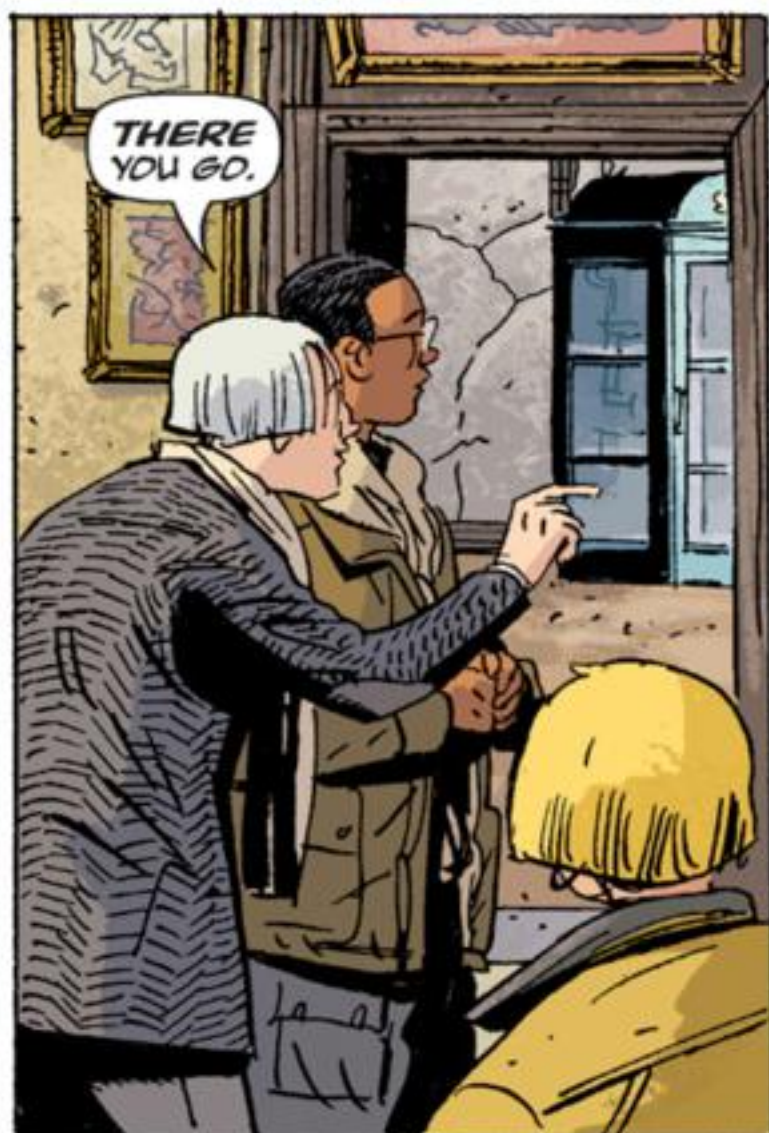
IF WE CAN FIND HIM.

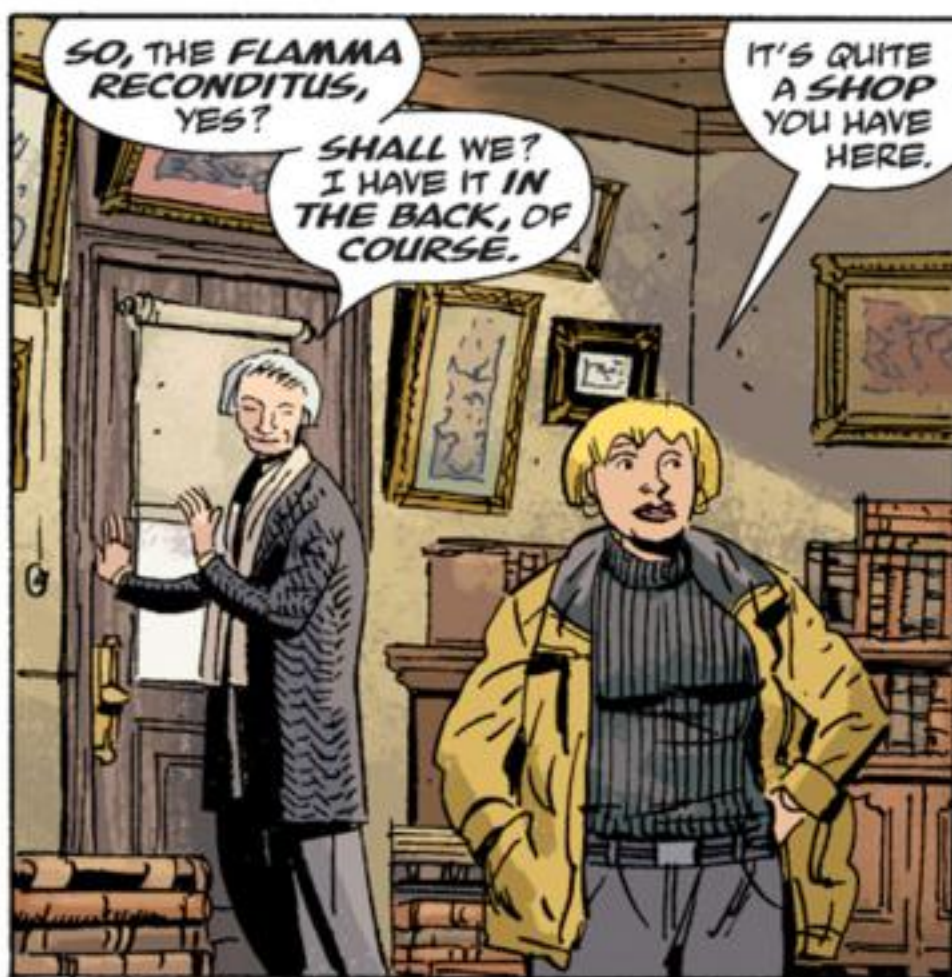












SO, THE FLAMMA RECONDITUS, YES?

SHALL WE? I HAVE IT IN THE BACK, OF COURSE.

IT'S QUITE A SHOP YOU HAVE HERE.



AAHH, YES. I AM SO PROUD OF MY COLLECTION, WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN SO LITTLE OF. BUT LOOK.

THIS I'M SURE YOU KNOW. THE VERY BRASS HEAD WHICH SPOKE TO POPE INNOCENT III.



THIS, THIS IS RARE.

PAINTED BY THE DUCHESS EFFINA OF ENGLAND.



YES. SHE WAS BLIND FROM BIRTH. SO THIS IS ONE OF HER PORTRAITS OF THE MEN KILLED IN THE CRUSADES?



TOO EASY, TOO EASY. I SEE THAT NOW.

BUT HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF ANDIRAN?



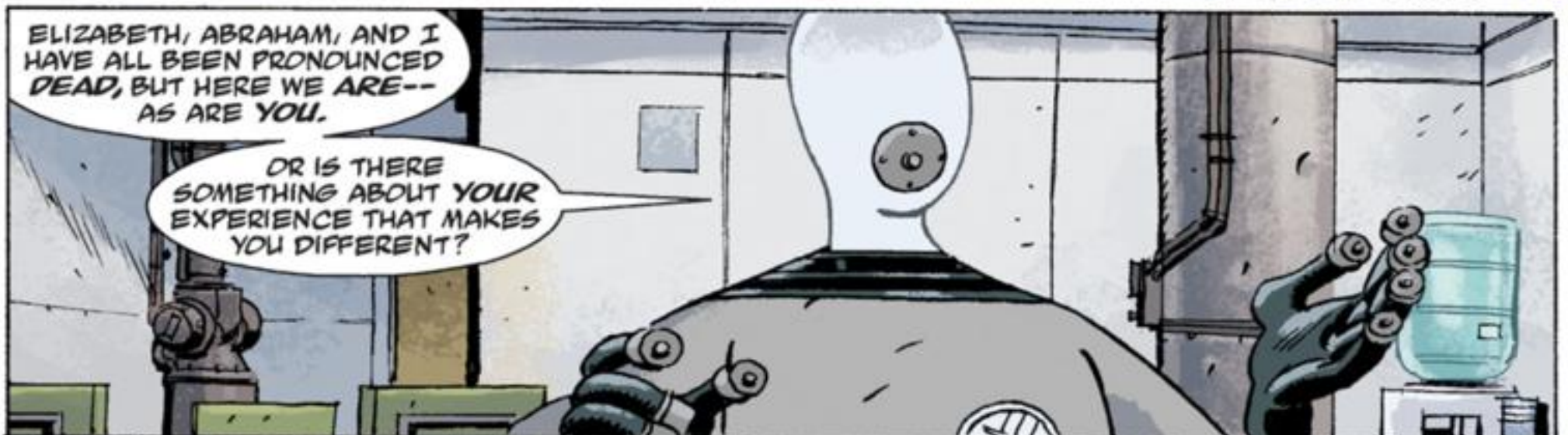
THE HUMAN CLOCK. HE KNEW THE TIME AT EVERY MOMENT BECAUSE HE WAS CONSTANTLY COUNTING...



...WHILE SERVING IN THE COURT OF CHARLES THE FAT, HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK--AT ELEVEN YEARS OLD.

SO, I CANNOT STUMP YOU.



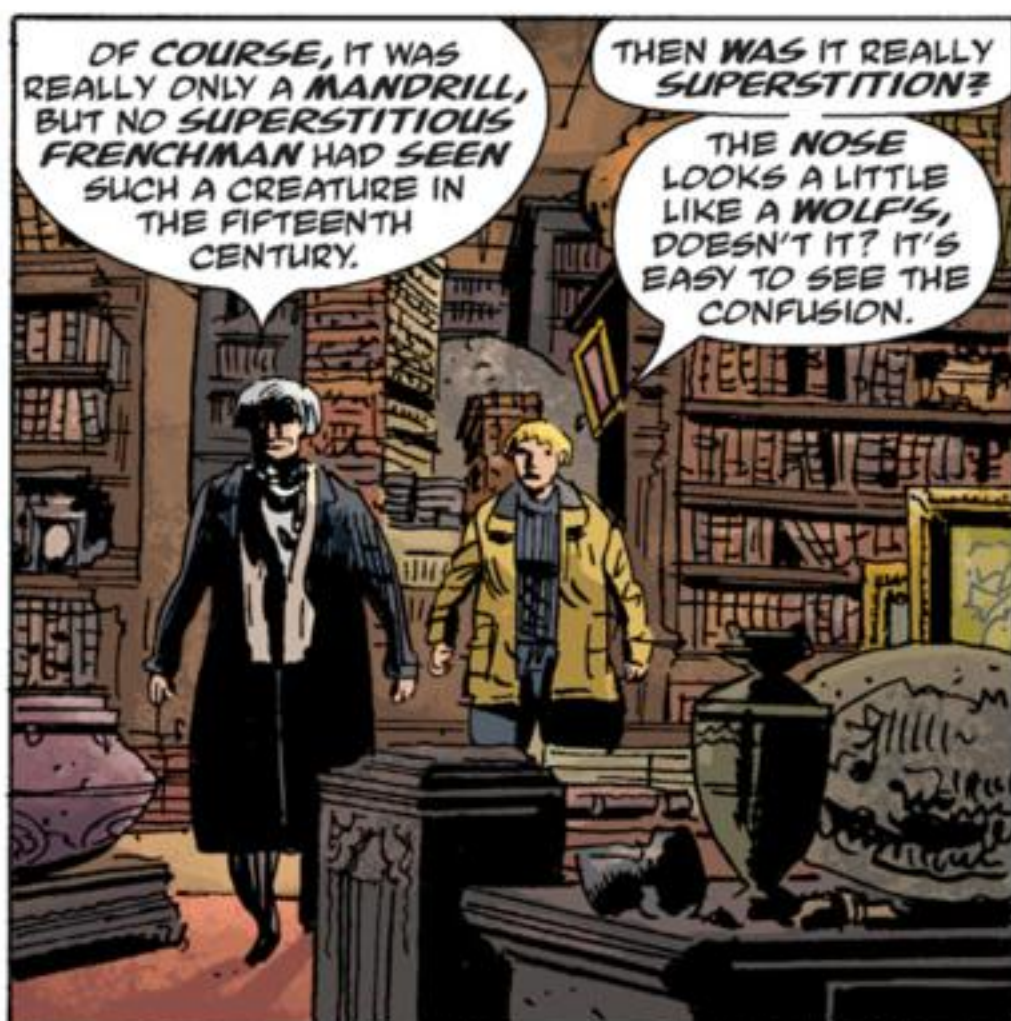






YES, A "WEREWOLF" FROM THE MENAGERIE OF THE MARQUIS ADOET DE FABRE.

I CONCEDE YOUR EXCEPTIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD, DR. CORRIGAN.



OF COURSE, IT WAS REALLY ONLY A MANDRILL, BUT NO SUPERSTITIOUS FRENCHMAN HAD SEEN SUCH A CREATURE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THEN WAS IT REALLY SUPERSTITION?

THE NOSE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE A WOLF'S, DOESN'T IT? IT'S EASY TO SEE THE CONFUSION.



IGNORANCE DOESN'T EQUAL SUPERSTITION.

THEY SIMPLY WERE GRAPPLING WITH A STRANGE WORLD, USING THE BEST MEANS AVAILABLE TO THEM AT THE MOMENT TO UNDERSTAND IT.



EVERY TIME NEW DATA EMERGES THAT OVERTURNS ALL CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, I THINK THAT WE'RE NOT SO VERY DIFFERENT.

WORDS EXPRESSIVE OF A TRULY ENLIGHTENED MIND, IF ANYONE WANTS MY OPINION.



AH, BUT WE HAVE A BOOK TO FIND.





OF COURSE, THE PROBLEM WITH BEING A COLLECTOR IS FINDING THE ROOM, YES?

YOU APPEAR TO BE DOING OKAY HERE. THIS SHOP IS A LOT BIGGER THAN IT LOOKS FROM THE OUTSIDE.



TRUE, TRUE, BUT ANY SPACE IS FINITE.

AND THERE IS SO MUCH TO HOLD MY FASCINATION ON THIS EARTH.



OF COURSE, IF I COULD ONLY THINK OF THE WORLD AS STORAGE FOR ALL THINGS, THEN "MY" COLLECTION COULD FINALLY BE COMPLETE, YES?



BUT THAT REQUIRES A VERY COMMUNAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, NO?



AND I MUST CONFESS, IT IS NOT IN MY NATURE TO SHARE.







