



JAN 13 #2

GOLD DIGGER

FRED PERRY

Holidays Special



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I HATED JADE...



I HATED HOW THEY
DRAGGED ME TO JADE'S
"BALANCE CONCLAVE".

I HATED BRITTANNY
AND STREYPP AND
BRITTANNY'S FATHER.

I THOUGHT THEY
TOOK EVERYTHING
AWAY FROM ME.

SO I THOUGHT
ALL I HAD LEFT
WAS HATE!



I HATED MY
"BALANCE
COUNSELORS"...

...MAGES WHO SPECIALIZE
IN SENSING PSYCHIC,
PRIME MATERIAL AND
ETHEREAL IMBALANCES.

I HATED
COUNSELOR
MERIGOLD...

...I HATED
COUNSELOR
NAM...

...AND I REALLY HATED
HOW EASILY THEY GOT ME
TALKING ABOUT HATE!



IT WAS LIKE THEY
KNEW PRECISELY
WHICH COMBINATION
OF WORDS...

...AND THE EXACT
TIMING OF PHRASE
CAPACITY TO USE.

--GUS'S ALIAS'S DROOLING--
"MUUFFFFFINNN!"
"MUUFFFFIN!"
UGH!!
I HATE HER!!!!



I HATED HOW MUCH
I LIKED THE SUNSETS
IN THE GLADE...

I HATED HOW
EASY IT WAS FOR
ME TO FORGET I
WAS IN PRISON.



AND THEN THERE WAS THE TIME WE HAD TO EVACUATE THE CONCLAVE.

THEY USED STAIRS CAGES ON THE OTHERS...

...BUT NOT ON ME.

COUNSELOR MAY GAVE ME AN "APPRENTICE" ROBE AND TOLD ME TO FOLLOW HIM!

LIKE THEY'D DECIDED THAT I WASN'T GOING TO RUN AWAY!

I WOULD HAVE... BUT I WAS TOO WORRIED ABOUT WHERE COUNSELOR MERIGOLD HAD GONE...



WHEN WE SETTLED IN THE NEW BALANCE COUNSELOR CONCLAVE, COUNSELOR MAY GOT IT IN HIS HEAD THAT I WOULD MAKE A GOOD ASSISTANT FOR HIM.

LIKE HE EXPECTED ME TO TRAIN AS A COUNSELOR!

UGH!! I HATED THAT!!

I DON'T KNOW WHY I DIDN'T MAKE A BREAK FOR IT THEN.



THE THUS I HELPED MAY WITH WAS A MONSTER HUNTER...

...A RUNE-SWORD BATTLE MAGE WHO WENT ON A RAMPAGE IN A SMALL VILLAGE WHEN SHE LOST HER BOYFRIEND TO A RIVAL.

I HATED THAT BECAUSE SHE WALKED THROUGH THE POOR!

BUT I'LL BE DAMNED
IF SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE
SAME PROBLEMS I HAD!

I HAVE TO ADMIT...IT
FELT GOOD TO HAVE
SOMEONE WHOM I
COULD RELATE TO
UNEQUIVOCALLY!

SERIOUSLY!!!
HE DID NOT DO
THAT!!!

OH, YES, HE
DID!!!

AND THEN HE
EXPECTED ME TO
DIVINE HER LOST
BIRTH DATE!

OH, HELL,
NO!!!

YES, INDEED!

LISTEN...THAT
STUFF WOUNDS!

IT HURTS
LIKE HELL!

BUT WE'RE WAGES...
WHEN WE GET
HURT, WE WANT TO
START BLOWING
THINGS TO PIECES...

...BUT GUESS
WHAT? WRONG
BATTLEFIELD.

I LOST MY "WAR".
YOU LOST YOURS.

TROUBLE IS,
THEY DON'T TEACH
HEALING SPELLS
FOR HEARTS, SO
WE SUFFER...

MARCELLA CAME
IN WITH ETHER
BRACES...SHE LEFT
WITHOUT THEM.

I CAME IN WITH
A SORE MOOD...
I LEFT WITHOUT IT.

I KNEW WHAT
NAV DID--WE HAD
US "BALANCE"
EACH OTHER...

I WANTED TO
HATE HIM
FOR THAT...

...BUT FOR SOME
REASON, I DIDN'T.

INSTEAD, I
HATED NAV...

...BECAUSE
PATIENTS AND
COUNSELORS
CAN'T "LIKE"
EACH OTHER.

LOOKING
BACK, THAT
RULE WAS A
GOOD ONE.

PATIENTS ARE
VULNERABLE.

A PATIENT
NEEDS A
HELPING HAND...
A FRIEND...

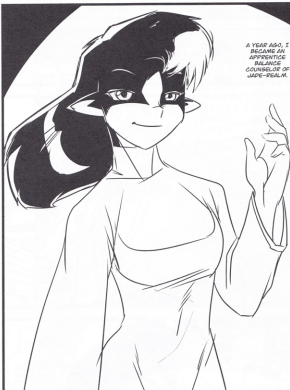
NOT A LOVER.

A YEAR AGO, MAY
RETIRED FROM
COUNSELING.



A YEAR AGO, I
BECAME AN
APPRENTICE
BALANCE
COUNSELOR OF
JADE-REALM.

I HATED
SAYING
GOODBYE.





ONE MINUTE
SHY OF ONE
YEAR AGO...

...I LET GO
OF MY HATE.

RIGHT HERE AT
THE TRISAC MOON
GATE...WHERE WE
PARTED WAYS.

MM...



WELL, WELL...
YOU REMEMBERED.

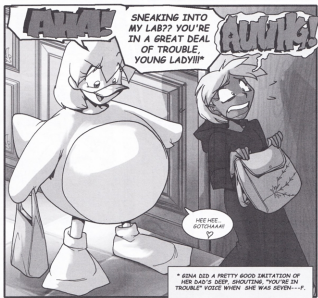
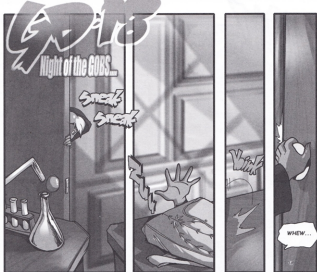
AM I
LATE?

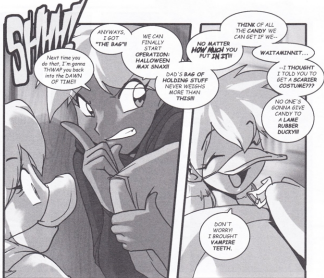


NO.
HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY.



ALTHOUGH...
I'M GOING TO
HATE SEEING
THIS PAY END...



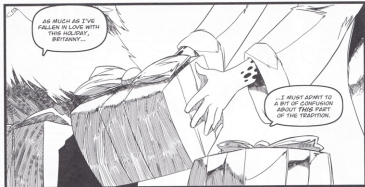














THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY DISGUISES, SO I RECOGNIZED THEM AND FIGURED OUT WHAT THEY WERE UP TO STRAIGHT OFF!

KIND OF SPOILED THE WHOLE SANTA CLAUS THING FOR ME THAT CHRISTMAS EVE.

BUT IF THEY CATCHES US PUTTING OUT CHRISTMAS PRESENTS NOW...

...THEY'LL BE CAUSE FOR REASONABLE DOUBT!

AFTER ALL, SANTA JUST MIGHT HAVE DISGUISE MAGIC TO HELP HIM GET PAST SOME FOLKS' SECURITY SYSTEMS!



OKAY, THAT EXPLAINS THE BEARD AND COATS.

BUT DOES SANTA WEAR TIGHT COTTON LEGGINGS TOO?

BALLET TIGHTS.

AND, YES. YES, HE DOES.

BEY' HAS A THING FOR MALE BALLET ATTIRE NOW?!

AAAAH! IT MAKES SITTING IN "SANTA'S" LAP...

...SOOO MUCH MORE FUN!!!







A MEGASTORM
OVER QUEBEC?

AT 49,000
FEET?

WHAT'S THE
UPDRAFT
SPEED?

HURRICANE
FORCE?

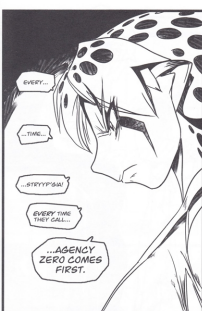
ALL RIGHT.

HOW LARGE
ARE THE
HAILSTONES?

ONE HUNDRED
POUNDS?!

RIGHT.
I'M ON
MY W--







BRITTANY,
I'M NOT LEAVING
FOR THE AGENCY.

NOT TO ANSWER
A CALL FOR DUTY
OR HONOR.



I'M GOING BECAUSE
THERE'S A FAMILY OUT
THERE...ONE JUST
LIKE OURS!

ONE OF THOUSANDS
WHO ARE IN MORTAL
DANGER!

FOR THEM,
THERE'S NO
ONE ELSE TO
TURN TO.

NO ONE
BUT ME!!!



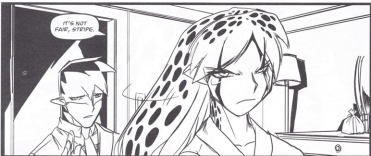
YOU CAN'T
SAVE **EVERYBODY**,
STRIPES.

AND I'M NOT
TRYING!

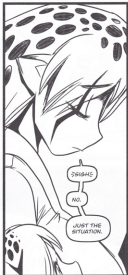
BUT SOMETIMES,
TIMES JUST LIKE
RIGHT NOW...

...I CAN KEEP
SOMEONE, A FAMILY,
A NEIGHBORHOOD OR
CITY FROM GETTING
HURT OR DYING
WHEN NO ONE
ELSE CAN.

BRITTANY...THOSE
ARE THE TIMES THE
AGENCY CALLS ME.







THEY'RE PROBABLY GOING TO ASK DADDY TO USE HIS PYROKINETIC **FLAME RAKER** AS THE HEATING ELEMENT OF AN ATMOSPHERIC CONVECTION OVEN SET AT 40 DEGREES.

THEY'RE GOING TO GENTLY COOK THE HALSTONES IN THE AIR.

ATMOSPHERIC WHAT?

WELL, ICE NORMALLY MELTS SLOWLY.

THAT'S BECAUSE THE ICE IS PROTECTED.

NO
SOON
ICE
BALL
THAWING

THERE'S USUALLY A LAYER OF CHILLED AIR SHIELDING THE SURFACE.

BUT IN THIS CASE, THE CONVECTION WILL BE THE MOVEMENT OF AIR AT A NICE, WARM TEMPERATURE...

...INSTANTLY STRIPPING OFF THE INSULATING LAYER OF COLD AIR.

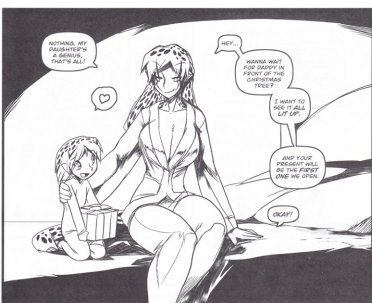
IT'LL BE THE REVERSE OF WIND CHILL.

WITHOUT THE PROTECTION OF THAT INSULATING LAYER, ICE MELTS PRETTY FAST.

50000...

...DAD SHOULD BE DONE IN AN HOUR, AND BEFORE THE FIRST HALSTONE HAS A CHANCE TO FALL!

WHAT?



HUH?

THAT GOLD
CARD WASN'T ON
THE CHRISTMAS
TREE BEFORE!

WHOA!
YOU'RE
TALENTED,
SMART AND
OBSERVANT,
TIFFY!

MAYBE
STRIFE
LEFT IT?

Dear Mrs. 'Giu.

Speaking for all of us
here at the Agency, I'd
like to express my most
sincere appreciation and
gratitude for your
patience with us who
have all too often
requested the assistance
of your husband on
behalf of those in
dire distress.

We understand that our efforts
have placed a harsh burden on
your shoulders, and we're working
hard to change these conditions
for the better every minute of
every single day.

Mr. 'Giu's strength has saved
countless lives, and we realize
that strength is drawn from the
loving family you support as
its foundation.

Thank you, Mrs. 'Giu.

Sincerely, Director Agent "M"

... I NEEDED THAT.

THEY AREN'T JUST CALLING HIM AWAY FOR NOTHING.

AND... THEY ARE TRYING TO FIND OTHER SOLUTIONS BESIDES "LET'S GET STRIPE'S HELP FOR THIS."

YEAH.

I REALLY NEEDED TO KNOW THAT.

THIS... WAS A REALLY GOOD PRESENT, AGENT "M".

MAMA?

THERE'S A GIFT CARD ON THE BACK.

IT SAYS: "REDEEM FOR A ONE-HOUR-LONG, UNLIMITED SHOPPING SPREE AT ANY GIORGIO ARMANI, BILIAN OR GUCCI FASHION BOUTIQUE."



O-O-KAY... "M"?

THIS PRESENT'S PRETTY NICE TOO!

Merry Christmas! -F.



pg. 18 presents

HALLOWEEN CANDY

DOUBLE-DASH!!!!

IT'S HALLOWEEEEEEN!

SUPERBAT-GIRL
AND FRANKEN-
BUNNY... NORMALLY
ARCHENEMIES...
HAVE JOINED
FORCES!

AND NOT FOR
GOOD OR FOR
EVIL!

BUT FOR
TREATS!

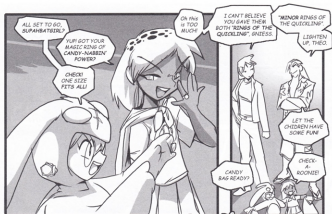
BECAUSE ONLY WITH
THEIR COMBINED HALLOWEEN
SUPERPOWERS CAN THEY
ACCOMPLISH THEIR
MUTUAL GOALS!

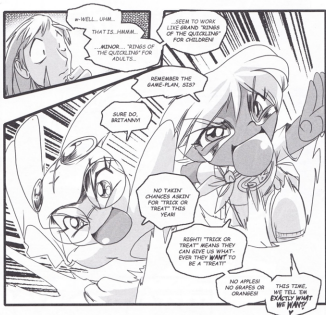
CANDY

CANDY
FROM EVERY
LAST HOUSE
IN THE WHOOOLE
NEIGHBORHOOD!

AND WOE TO THE
POOR SLEBS WHO EVEN
THINK ABOUT SEVEN
APPLES THIS YEAR!

ready...START!











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