

RIGHT: The brothers were also amateur musicians early in their careers, and the two formed several punk bands in the '80s (with Gilbert playing guitar and Jaime on bass). The first was called The Beer Guts, which Gilbert described as “kind of a joke band... but the music was serious: kind of post-punk rock and roll.”⁶⁹ That was followed by Suspicion and, finally, Nature Boy. In addition, around 1985, Gilbert played briefly with a band called VoiceText. Although none of these bands lasted very long, their names and logos are riddled throughout the series. Eventually both brothers gave up the rock ‘n’ roll fantasy, realizing that their true talents were in cartooning. Their younger brother, Ismael, however, found his calling in the punk scene and enjoyed a long career as the bassist for the band Dr. Know.



Reflecting on his own punk initiation, Gilbert recalled, “Well, the Pistols broke up in San Francisco [in January 1978] and a friend of mine bought the album because I hadn’t heard it yet... I liked it, but I was just completely cynical and pessimistic at the time — but in the wrong direction. Instead of *with* the punk thing, I just didn’t care. It was an apathy thing. It wasn’t until I heard the music more and thought, ‘I like the music, I like these riffs, I like this guy yelling,’ and it grew on me in a musical way instead of the big statements. They simply just kicked ass. Then the actual *meaning* of the music came through, and there was no turning back.”⁷⁰

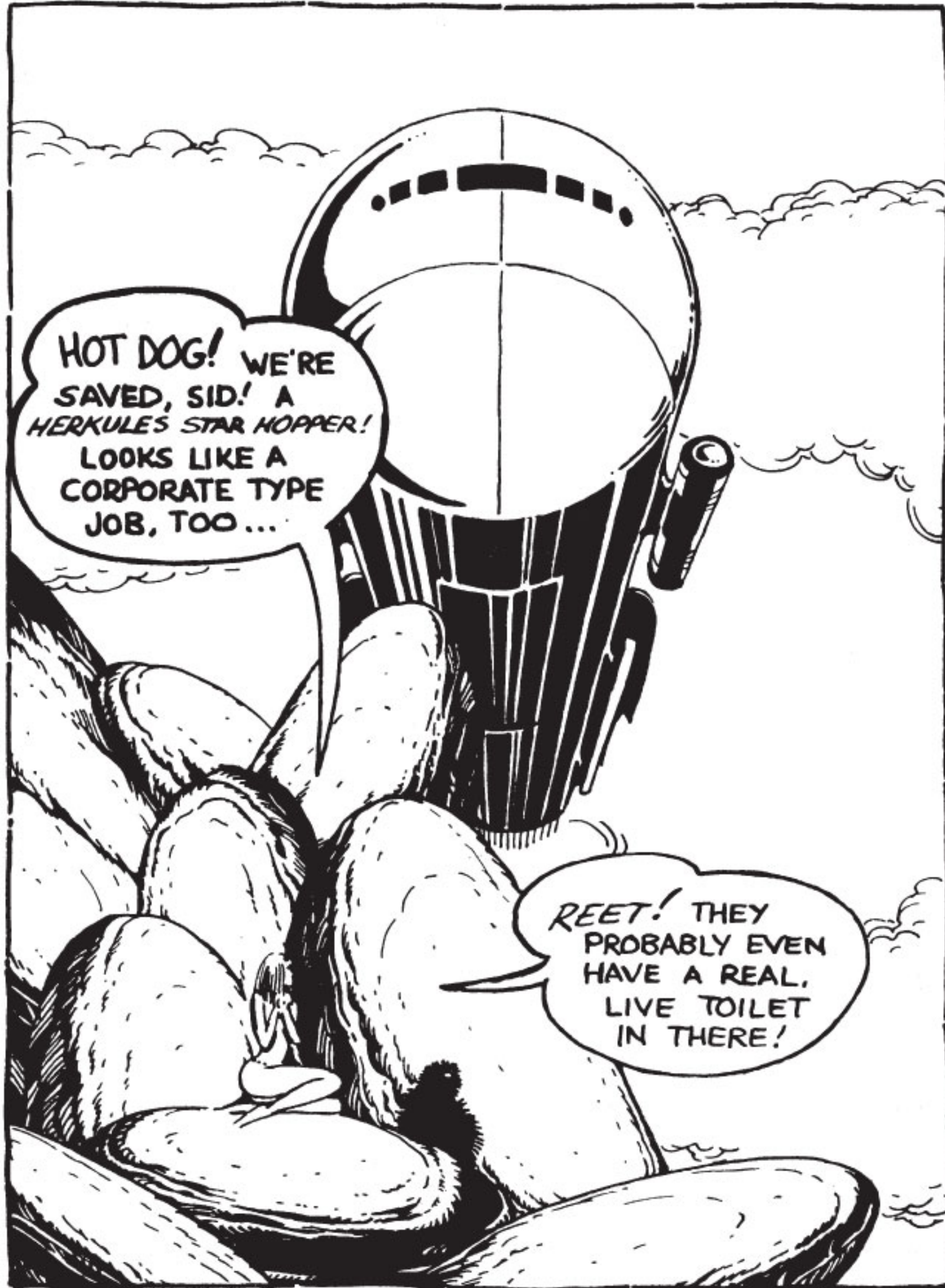
The impact punk had on both Gilbert and Jaime was transformative (Mario, older and already settled into a career, was not involved). The once directionless younger brothers had found a new and exciting *raison d’être*. “Just in the nick of time, punk came out,” Gilbert reflected. “For me, it was in the nick of time because I was 21 at the time [in 1978]. I was getting to that point where I was really settling into my ways and not opening up to new things.”⁷¹

Jaime described how punk inspired them to create their own comic book. “[Punk] was a really good philosophy to go by because there were no rules and I kind of liked that... I really

⁶⁹ Schutz 1984, 8.

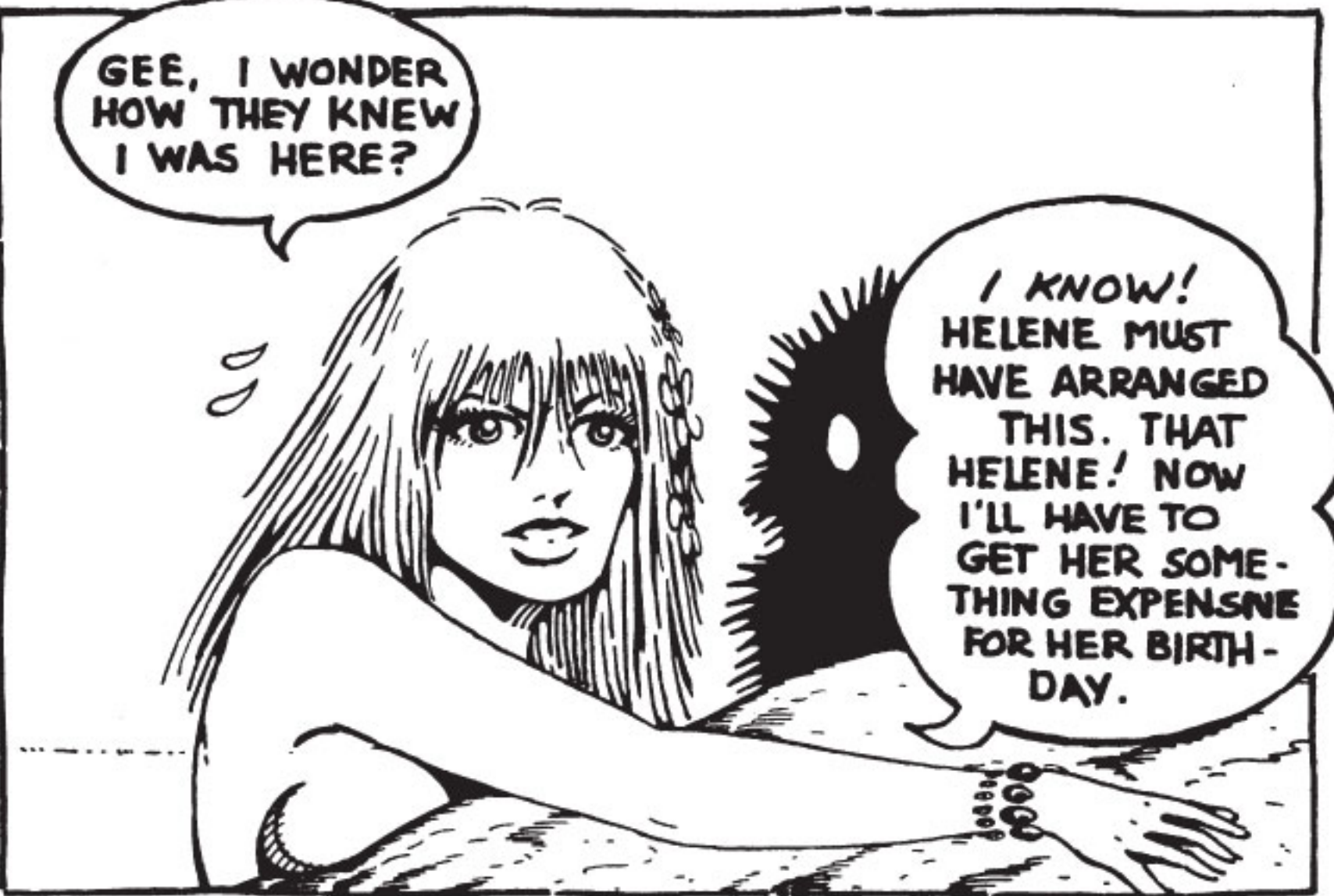
⁷⁰ Gaiman 1995, 110–111.

⁷¹ Knowles 2001a, 45.



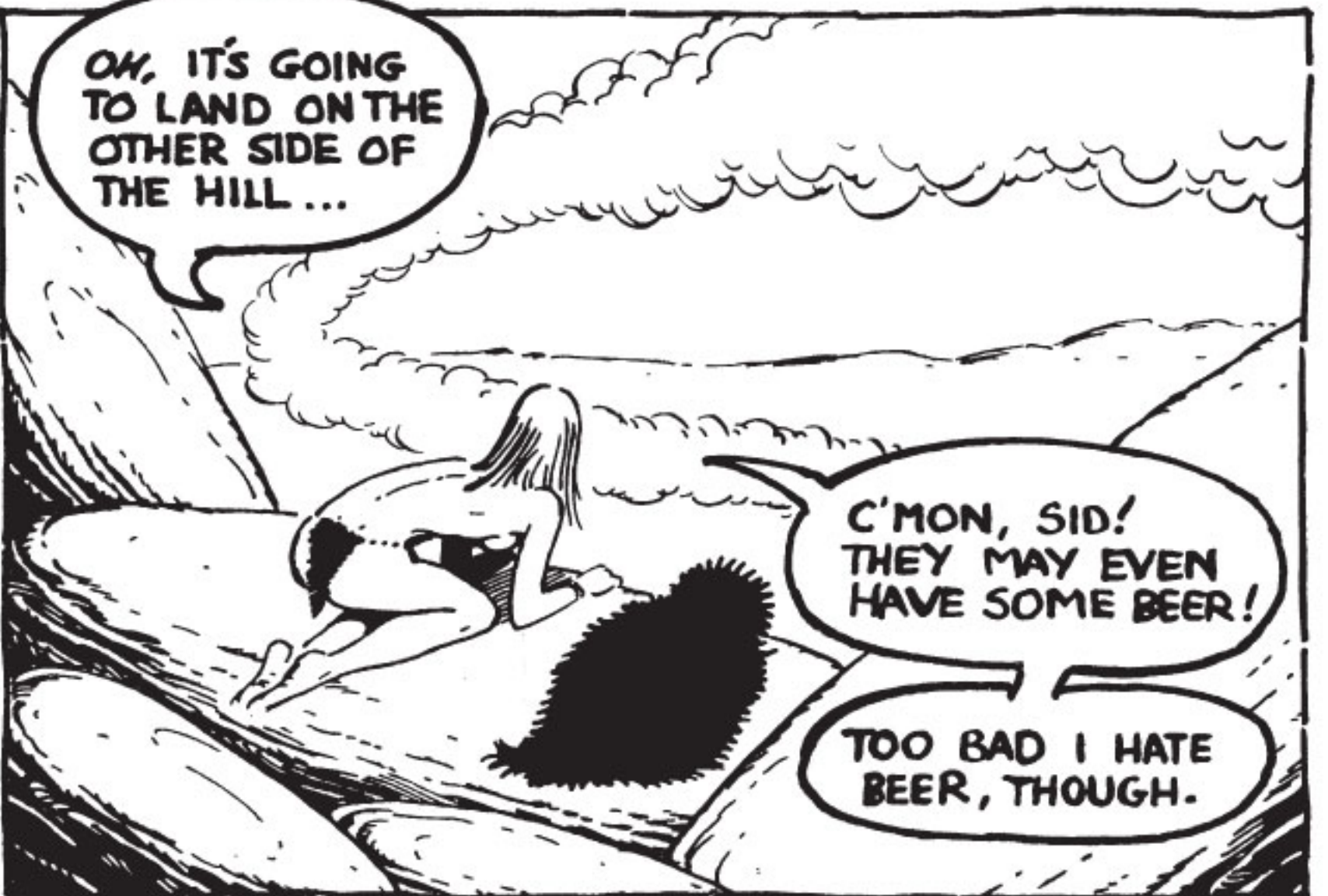
HOT DOG! WE'RE SAVED, SID! A HERKULES STAR HOPPER! LOOKS LIKE A CORPORATE TYPE JOB, TOO ...

REET! THEY PROBABLY EVEN HAVE A REAL, LIVE TOILET IN THERE!



GEE, I WONDER HOW THEY KNEW I WAS HERE?

I KNOW! HELENE MUST HAVE ARRANGED THIS. THAT HELENE! NOW I'LL HAVE TO GET HER SOMETHING EXPENSIVE FOR HER BIRTHDAY.



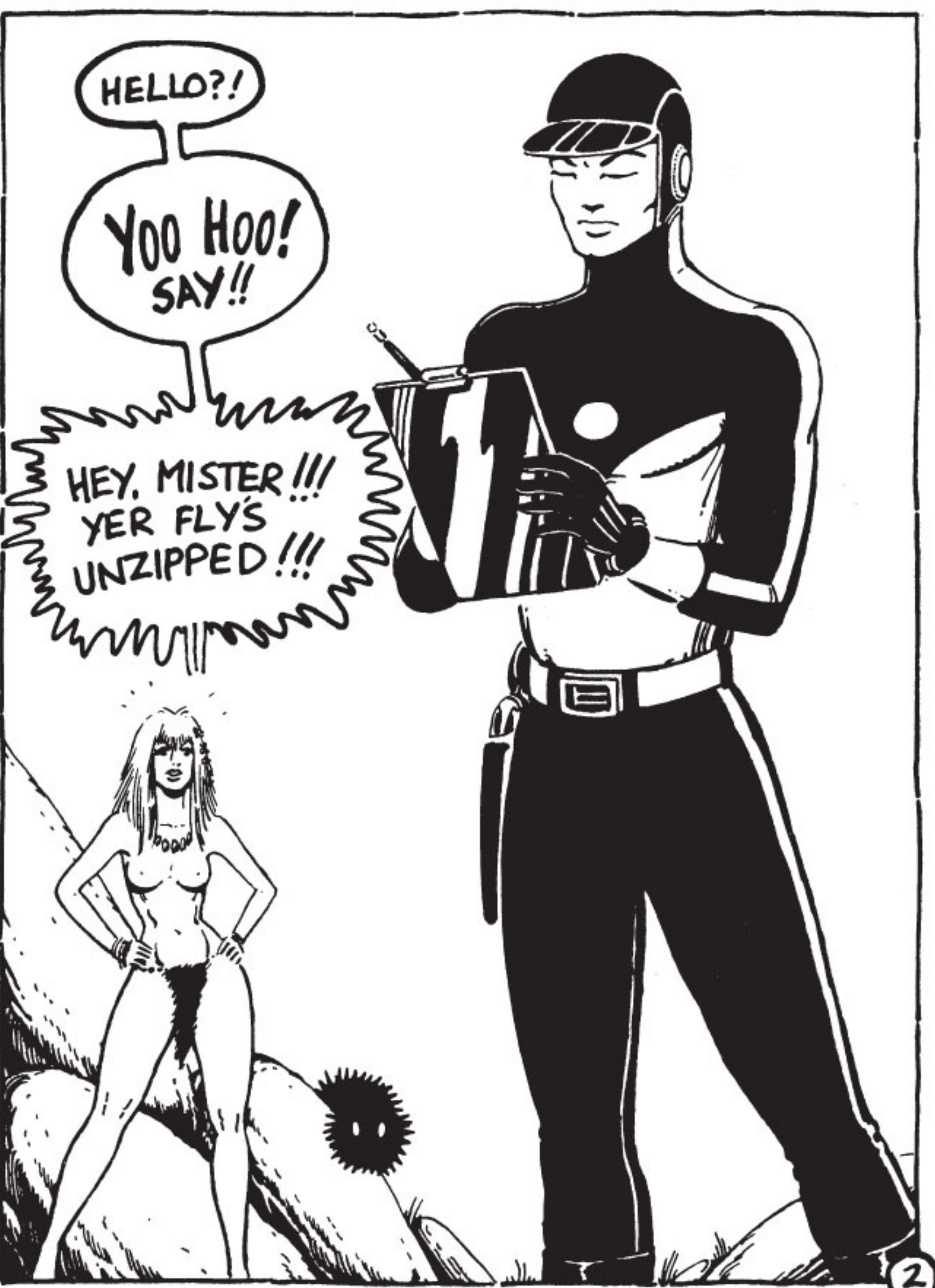
OH, IT'S GOING TO LAND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL ...

C'MON, SID! THEY MAY EVEN HAVE SOME BEER!

TOO BAD I HATE BEER, THOUGH.



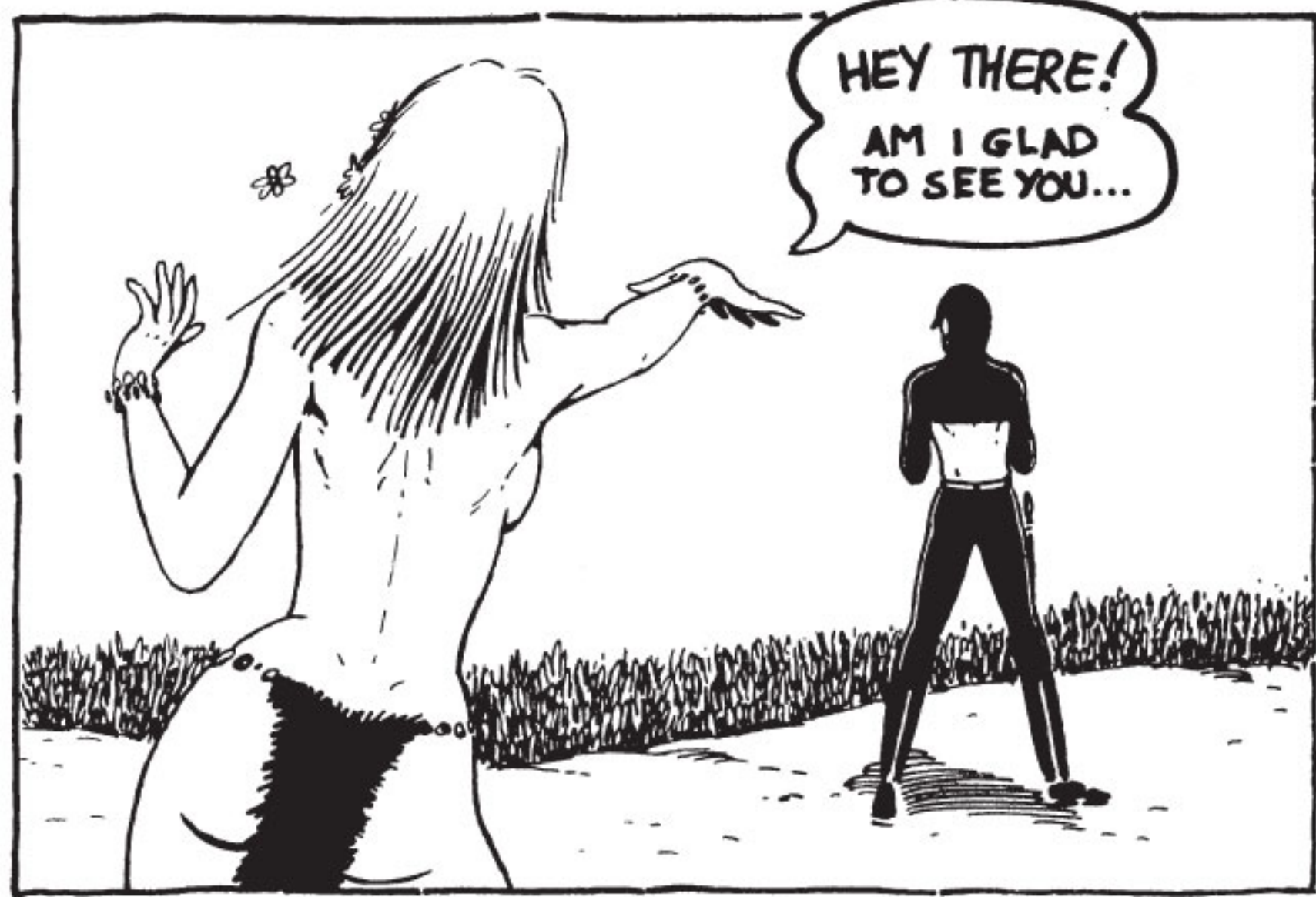
WELL, THAR SHE BLOWS, SID. THE MEANS TO MY SALVATION; AND THERE'S MY SAVIOUR ...



HELLO?!

YOO HOO! SAY!!

HEY, MISTER!!! YER FLY'S UNZIPPED!!!




HEY THERE! AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU...

HALLOWEEN NIGHT & HALLOWEEN NIGHT
ANGELIC UPSTARTS
 SOCIAL DISTORTION ILL REPUTE MIA

COSTUME PARTY SUNDAY OCT. 31
 \$8 PRIZES FOR BEST COSTUME!!
 5679 HOLLISTER
 GOLETA COMMUNITY CENTER
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT: ROCK-PALM RECORDS (SANTA BARBARA) TURNING POINT (SANTA BARBARA) MESSING SLIDE (MESA) THE MUSIC STORE (MESA) RECORDS (MESA)


PRESENTING ... HALLOWEEN NIGHT
FEAR
 CH 3 AGRSSION 2% DR KNOW ILL REPUTE MIA

COSTUME PARTY OCT 31
 5679 HOLLISTER
 GOLETA COMMUNITY CENTER
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT: ROCK-PALM RECORDS (SANTA BARBARA) TURNING POINT (SANTA BARBARA) MESSING SLIDE (MESA) THE MUSIC STORE (MESA) RECORDS (MESA)

ORALE, IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SEE
CIRCLE JERKS
 CIRCLE ONE AGRSSION ILL REPUTE MIA (OXNARD'S)
 RED SCARE SUICIDAL TENDENCIES
 DR KNOW ILL REPUTE MIA (OXNARD'S)
 MEET US IN THE PARK AND WE'LL "TALK" IT OVER. & SABES? AYE TE WATCHO.
 FRI. OCT. 29 \$6.50 7 PM

 HUMONGUS SHOW NEXT DAY. SAME PLACE. SAME PRICE. 10 AM-1 AM
 BLACK FLAG • CH 3 • BAD RELIGION • SHATTERED FAITH • PLUS 20 MORE

CIRCLE ONE 7 SECONDS
STALAG 13
 SHATTERED FAITH
 KENT STATE
 FRI FEB 18 \$6 7:30 PM

MANDIOLA'S BALLROOM 6130 PACIFIC BLVD. HUNTINGTON PARK
(101) SOUTH TO (11) SOUTH HARBOR FREEWAY TO SLAUSEN EXIT RIGHT ON SLAUSEN RIGHT ON PACIFIC
 JAIME 83

DR KNOW
 AND
PULL
 FROM VENTURA WITH WALTER STOWE BACK FROM NEW YORK (HE EATS LUNCH WITH ENO)
THE SHACK IN GOLETA
 JULY 15-16 THURSDAY & FRIDAY
 9 PM \$2 AT THE DOOR
 MUST BE = 21 =

 5796 DAWSON AVE. TAKE 101 NORTH GET OFF AT UCSB-GOLETA GET OFF ON HOLLISTER AND MAKE RIGHT AND MAKE THE FIRST LEFT AFTER THE COMMUNITY CENTER, THEN FIRST RIGHT ON DAWSON
 JAIME 82

IN ADDITION TO COMICS, both brothers, but particularly Jaime, also drew flyers and album covers for local bands in the Oxnard scene. "Flyers [were] a key part of the DIY aesthetic... because most punk shows [could] not rely on traditional means of advertising (due to police regulations, lack of money, or simply because the show [was] in someone's basement)..."⁸⁵ Many of these handbills, which were often commissioned by Ismael, were reprinted in the first *Love and Rockets Sketchbook*.

85 Cogan 2008, 84.



LEFT: The final “chaotic gig scene,”¹⁷⁹ with Jaime lurking in the background, is one of the series’ early compositional masterpieces, capturing the raw energy and power of a live punk show.

younger brothers of the female lead characters. The early version of Joey in this story bears little resemblance to the character that would develop later in the series, but Speedy was a fully realized character from the start. Reflecting on these early appearances, Jaime explained



that “I was making up people like that, because I knew I’d bring them in later. Then you’d say, ‘Oh, that’s the guy they’re talking about!’ And it almost makes it like you’ve known that guy for a while, and you’re comfortable with it.”¹⁷⁸

Together, Jaime’s three stories in the first issue of *Love and Rockets* (“Mechan-X,” “How to Kill A...” By Isabel Reubens,” and “Locas Tambien”) demonstrated his impressive command of anatomy and composition, keen ear for dialogue (which he attributed, in part, to his love of Lewis Carroll’s classic, *Alice in Wonderland*, the film adaptation of Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and old *Dennis the Menace* comics), and astute grasp of psychology and characterization.

LEFT: According to Jaime, Izzy’s younger brother, Speedy “had been made up long before the comic. His name was Steve, though. I changed it to Speedy because I also wanted this Mexican guy, this home-boy, like guys I knew when I was growing up.”¹⁸⁰ Jaime modeled Speedy’s distinctive eyebrows on The Sex Pistols’ Sid Vicious.

¹⁷⁸ Groth, Fiore, and Powers 1989, 78.

¹⁸⁰ Groth, Fiore, and Powers 1989, 78.

¹⁷⁹ Hignite 2010, 99.

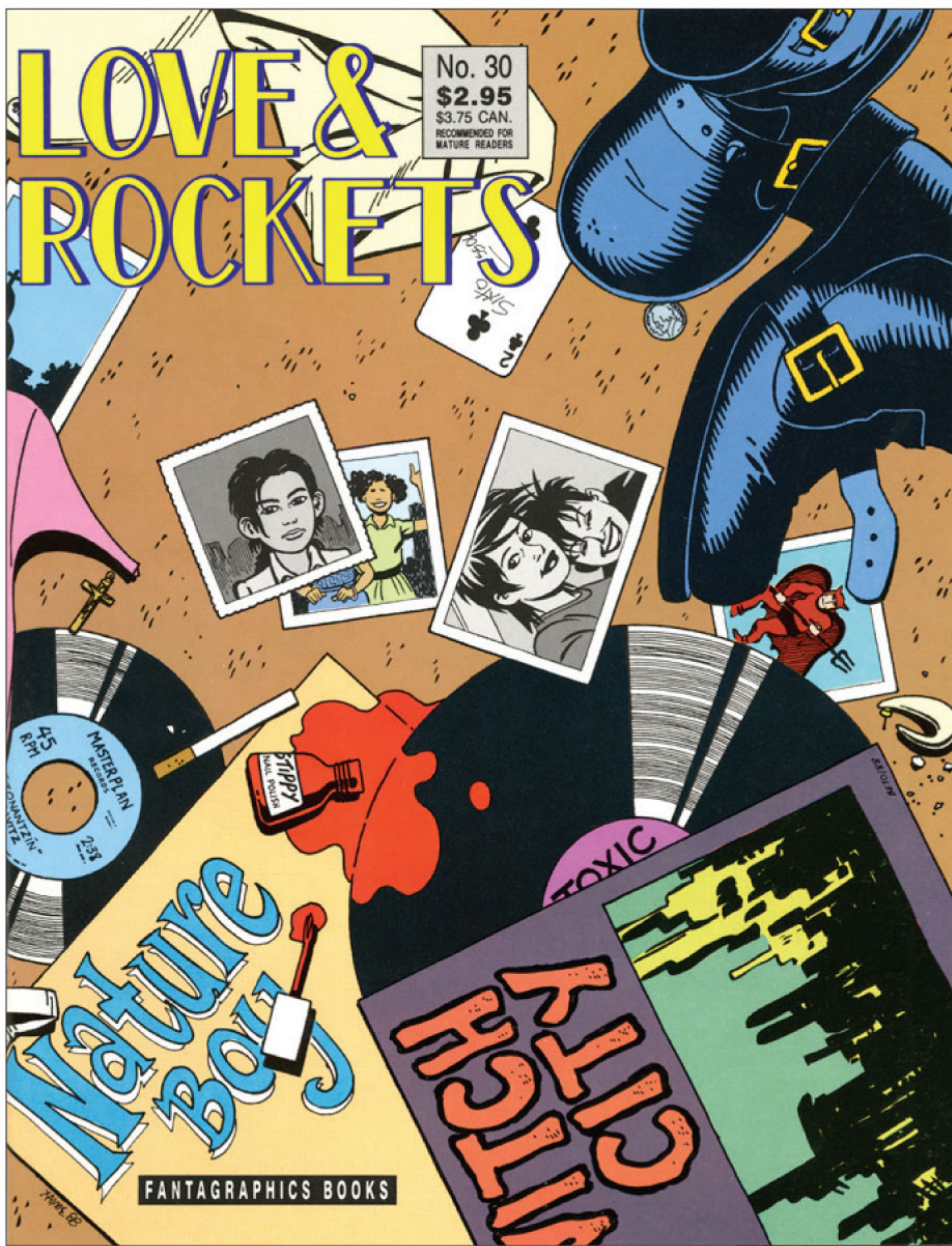


HERMANA/SISTER



way until “Locos” in the 7th issue, but this time it was her brother, Speedy, discussing his sister’s eccentricities with a friend, which provided insight into her character. In this pivotal four-page story, we learned that Izzy was one of the original founders of a gang known as the “Widows” (which explained the spider tattoo on her arm), but after she was stabbed in a prison fight, she cleaned herself up and went to college on a

teaching scholarship. At school she decided to become a mystery writer, despite her father’s wishes, and fell in love with her professor, a “white dude” named Jack Ruebens, whom she married, though he was twice her age. However, their marriage only lasted a year and after the divorce, Izzy became obsessed with morbid things like “dead babies and dancing skeletons” and eventually fled to Mexico.



Like the two previous “decade” milestone issues, *Love and Rockets* #30 featured a wraparound cover jam by both brothers, this time depicting the scattered belongings of various characters. The objects reflected many of the series’ familiar themes (music, comics, literature, and fashion). The Nature Boy album on the front cover was not only a reference to the Hernandez brothers’ mutual love of wrestling (“Nature Boy” was the ring name of Buddy Rogers, the world heavyweight champion in the ’60s, as well as the 16-time world champion, Ric Flair, who used Rogers’ nickname and signature moves), but it was also the name of one of Jaime and Gilbert’s short-lived punk bands in the ’80s. *Nature Boy* was also the title of a brief superhero series from Charlton Comics, created by Jerry Siegel (co-creator of *Superman*) and John Buscema in 1956.

Reflections in a Golden Eye by Carson McCullers, which was prominently featured on the back cover, was a controversial novel that first appeared in 1941 in *Harper’s Bazaar* magazine. The book focused on an unusual love triangle between a husband and a wife, both in love with the same man. Besides its taboo themes of homosexuality and infidelity, which were not easily digested in the ’40s, the book also sparked controversy by featuring gay men in the military. A 1967 film adaptation of the book was directed by John Huston (director of dozens of classic movies, including *The Maltese Falcon*, *The African Queen*, and, notably for comics fans, the screen adaptation of *Annie*) and starred Marlon Brando and Elizabeth Taylor.

