

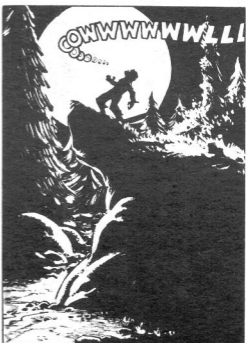
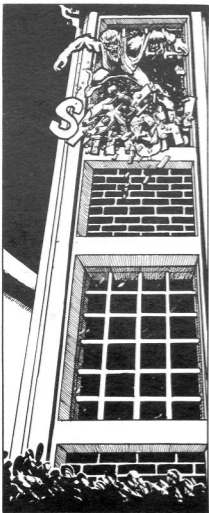


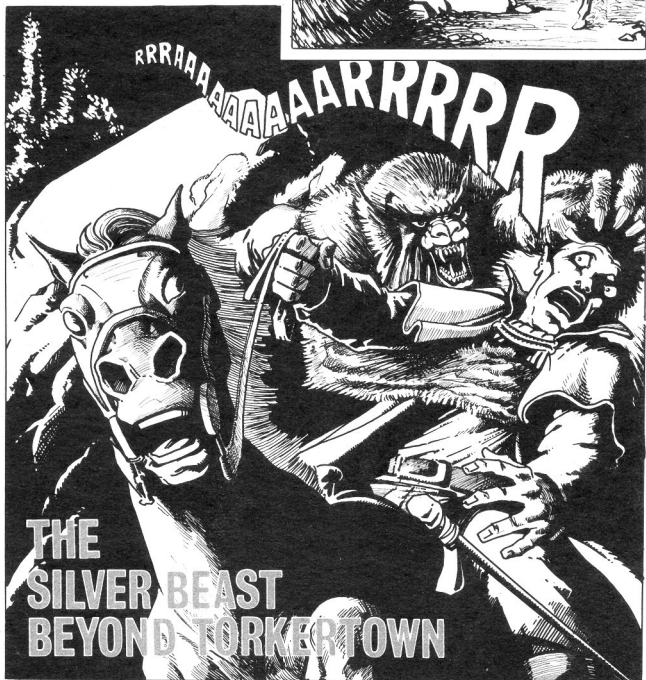
Solomon Kane was a danger-seeking English Puritan in the time of some four hundred years ago...

Travelling to the village of Torkertown, Kane encountered and fought a moor ghost ('Skulls in the Stars').

Later, still some miles from Torkertown, he witnessed the revenge of a necromancer against the man who betrayed him to the king's soldiers ('The Right Hand of Doom').

And now...







THE MAN'S FINAL SCREAM IS NEVER COMPLETED.

IT CHOKES SHORT...

REEEE RRR RRR

... BUBBLING AMONGST THE BLOOD FILLING HIS THROAT.



AND THEN A DIFFERENT SORT OF SCREAM FILLS THE TERRIBLE NIGHT...

...THE KEENING HOWL OF A BEAST, ITS LUST FOR GORE MOMENTARILY SATIATED.



IT LEAVES NOW, DRIPPING BLOOD, ITS BRISTLING HIDE BURNISHED SILVER BY MOONLIGHT...



...AND IT IS ONLY A SHORT WHILE BEFORE A SECOND RIDER APPEARS ON THE SHADOW-HAUNTED TRAIL.



HE IS A TALL, DOUR-FACED MAN, GAUNT BUT SLEEKY... A PURITAN BY NATURE...



...AND GRIM BY NECESSITY.

HIS EYES WARILY CAST THIS WAY AND THAT...



THEN, APPARENTLY SATISFIED, HE DISMOUNTS...

...TO INSPECT MORE CLOSELY THE GRISLY SIGHT WHICH HAS INTERRUPTED HIS JOURNEY.



THE WORK OF A WOLF, FROM THE LOOKS OF IT...



...WERE THE CLAW-MARKS NOT SPACED SO WIDELY...

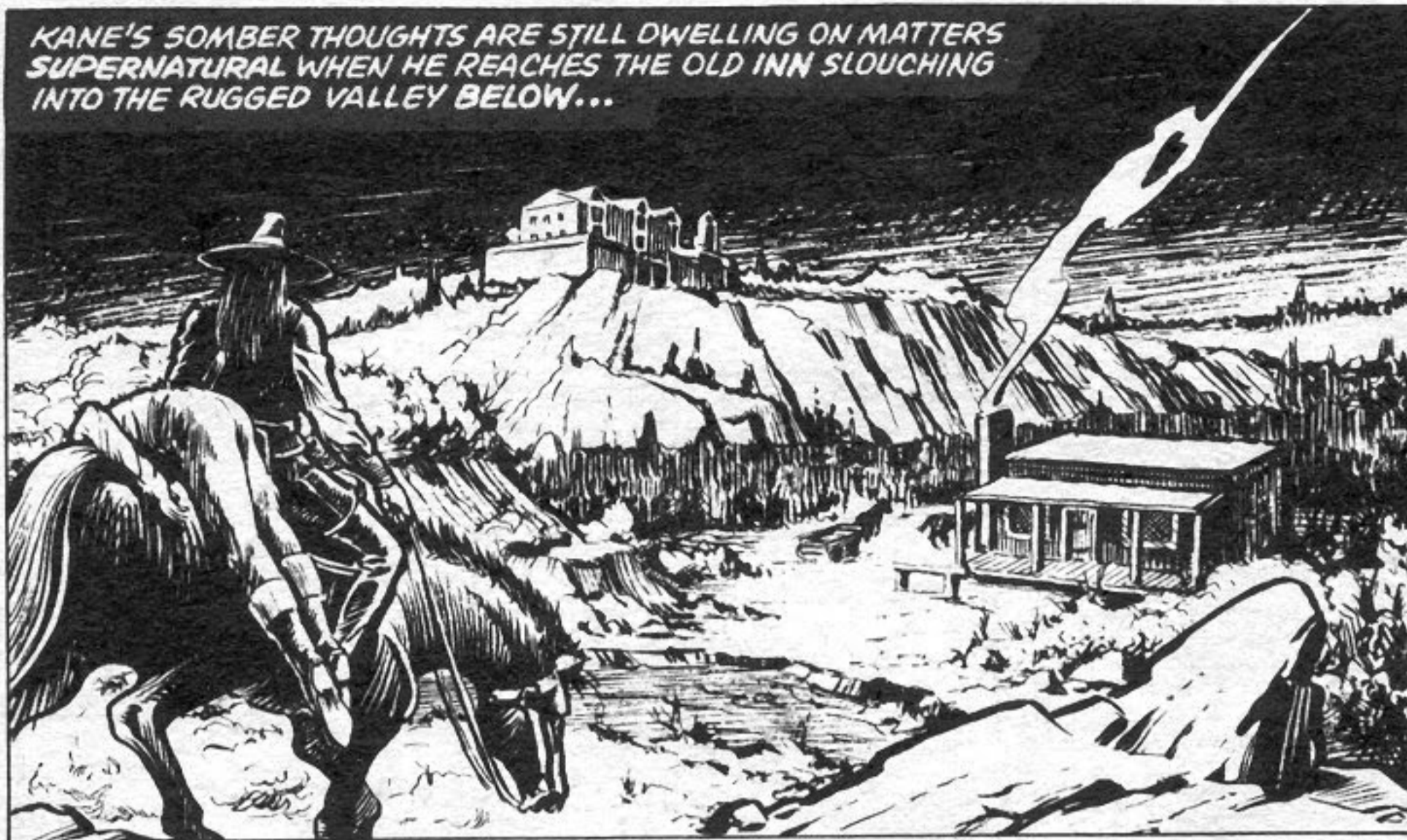
...AND THE BITE'S TOO BROAD FOR THE NARROW SNOUT OF A WOLF.



GRUNTING SOFTLY--

SOLDAMON KANE RESUMES HIS NOCTURNAL JOURNEY, HIS NEW TRAVELING COMPANION IS STILL WARM.

KANE'S SOMBER THOUGHTS ARE STILL DWELLING ON MATTERS SUPERNATURAL WHEN HE REACHES THE OLD INN SLOUCHING INTO THE RUGGED VALLEY BELOW...



STRAINING TO DISCERN THE WORDS OF A STRIDENT VOICE WITHIN, HE HEFTS THE CORPSE FROM HIS STEED...



... AND ENTERS TO THE LACING SCENTS OF ALE, GREASE, AND GARLIC...



-- BUT YOU MUST STOP HIM, I TELL YOU-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YOU MUST--!

... AND TO THE IGNORED SOUNDS OF URGENCY.

HE KICKS THE DOOR SHUT BEHIND HIM, THE SOUND DRAWING ALLEYES...



NO!

YOU SEE--?! I TOLD THE TRUTH-- MY BROTHER HAS SLAIN A MAN!

GOD REST HIS SOUL...! HE SCOFFED AT MY FEARS AND WARNINGS-- AS HE LEFT HERE LESS THAN AN HOUR PAST! AND NOW LOOK AT HIM--!

LOOK WHAT'S BECOME OF HIM!

WHERE, GOOD SIR? WHERE DID YOU FIND THE BODY? WAS IT CLOSE--?



A MILE DOWN THE SOUTH ROAD...

THEN PERHAPS HE'LL KEEP GOING-- FARTHER AWAY-- PERHAPS I'M SAFE NOW AND--

THE SOUND IS CLOSE.



OOOOWWWW WLLLLL

NO-- HE'S HERE-- HE'S COME FOR ME--!

SLAY HIM, MAN-- YOU MUST SLAY MY BROTHER BEFORE HE COMES FOR ME...!



KANE ENTERS THE TREES SLOWLY...

THE HOWLING-- IT'S STOPPED. PERHAPS HE'S GONE... OR PERHAPS THE STRANGER HAS SLAIN HIM...



AYE-- AND PERHAPS HE'S MERELY--

...BUT IT IS CAUTION, AND NOT FEAR, WHICH MARKS HIS STEALTHY GAIT.



--WAITING.

NOOOOO!

THE WOMAN'S SHRIEK SPLITS THE NIGHT...

...CLUTCHING KANE'S SOUL WITH ICY DREAD.



HE BOLTS FOR THE INN, SILENTLY CURSING HIMSELF.



HE IS TOO FAR FROM THE WOLF-DEMON...

...AND IT IS TOO CLOSE TO THE WOMAN.

ROHRRR

EEEEEE



BUT THE CHAIR...



IT SHATTERS, INEFFECTUALLY...

URRR

...A DESPERATE GAMBIT, AT BEST, BUT AT LEAST CLOSE AT HAND.

...BUT THE BEAST TURNS, BALEFUL EYES BRIMMING HATE.



AND NOW IT LUNGES FOR NEW PREY.



KANE SIDESTEPS--

--DRIVING THE POMMEL OF HIS SWORD INTO THE BEAST'S SKULL.



IT IS DOWN, NOW AND SO QUICKLY...

A SINGLE SLASH WILL SEVER THE HIDEOUS HEAD FROM ITS--



BUT NO--THE SLASH IS HALTED BEFORE IT BEGINS.

AHRRRR

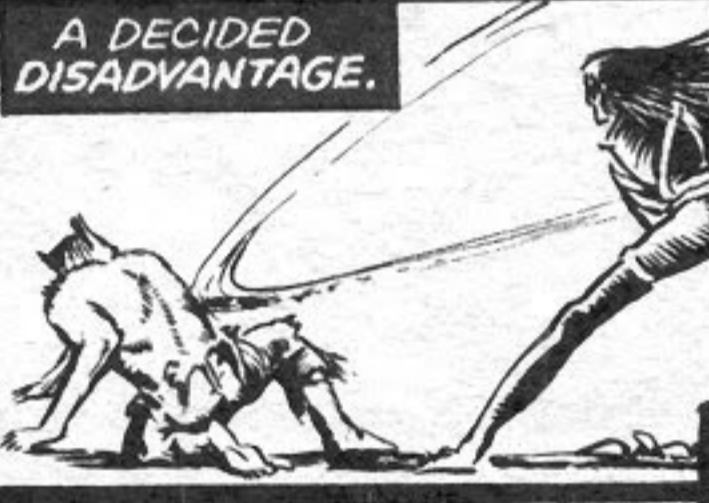
RAGED TALONS RUIN KANE'S RIGHT SHOULDER, AND PAIN SEARS HIS VISION...



HE MUST BY NEEDS WIELD THE BLADE IN HIS LEFT HAND NOW...



AND CONTINUE TO FIGHT...



A DECIDED DISADVANTAGE.

STILL, IF GOODNESS IS TO TRIUMPH OVER THE RAVAGES OF FOUL DEPRAVITY, THEN KANE MUST FIGHT.



BLEEDING FROM THREE MORTAL WOUNDS, THE CREATURE RISES, UNDAUNTED...

...THE FIRE OF ITS SAVAGE SPIRIT UNDIMINISHED.

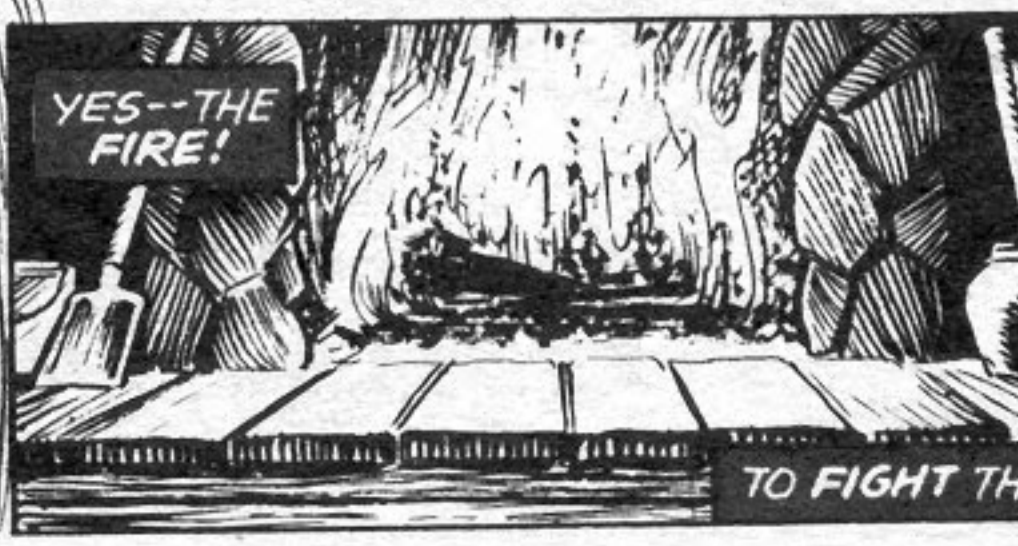


IT IS AS KANE FEARED. THE BEAST IS A SUPERNATURAL ENTITY, AND THUS IMMUNE TO THE NATURAL DEATH INFLICTED BY COLD STEEL.

...EMPLOYING ALL THE RESOURCE HE COMMANDS.



UNLESS...



YES--THE FIRE!

BUT KANE HIMSELF IS ALL TOO VULNERABLE TO DEATH, NATURAL OR SUPERNATURAL, AND THE DOUR PURITAN KNOWS HE MUST EMBRACE THE WORST OF THOSE TWO DEATHS IN THE NEXT MOMENT...

TO FIGHT THE FIRE OF THE BEAST'S SPIRIT...



IF HE CAN BUT MANEUVER HIM-  
SELF INTO THE PROPER  
POSITION...

...AND  
TAUNT  
THE  
THING...



...LURE IT...



...INVITE IT TO  
SPRING AT HIM--

-- AND TO DASH  
HEADLONG INTO THE  
BLAZING HEARTH.



THANK  
THE LORD...  
IT IS OVER. YOU  
MAY COME  
FORTH N--



**RRROWRRRR**

**NO!!**

THE BEAST IS THE  
DEVIL HIMSELF--!!



**AHRR**

A WEAPON, YOU  
FOOLS! PROVIDE ME WITH  
A WEAPON-- OR FACE THE  
THING YOURSELVES WHEN  
IT'S DONE WITH ME--!!



YES...A  
WEAPON...!

STRANGER--!  
HERE!



UHHH--!



**RUHRR-RAIEEEET**

IT FEELS PAIN THIS TIME--THE MORTAL  
AGONY KANE'S SWORD COULD NOT INFLICT--!





AND, IN AGONY...

...IT DIES.

AND, IN DYING...

...BECOMES THE MORTAL FLESH OF MAN.

NO...OH, NO...  
NO...NO...!

MY BROTHER...MY  
POOR BROTHER...HE DID  
NOTHING...NOTHING TO  
DESERVE THIS...

NOTHING  
TO INVITE  
SATAN'S  
TOUCH...!

WHY--?!

AHRR

UHNNN



YOUR BROTHER HAS GONE ON TO  
HIS PEACE NOW, GOOD WOMAN.  
IT IS BETTER THAT HE HAS  
DONE SO.

DO NOT GRIEVE  
OVER THE  
DECISION OF  
PROVIDENCE,  
AND COME--I  
WILL ESCORT  
YOU TO YOUR  
HOME.

NO...



NO, THAT WILL NOT BE  
NECESSARY...GOOD SIR.  
THE DANGER HAS PASSED  
...AND I MAY REACH  
MY HOME IN SAFETY,  
NOW, BY MYSELF...

BARKEEP...IF YOU WOULD  
BRING MY BROTHER'S...BODY  
IN THE MORNING...?

OF COURSE,  
MISS HARKINS  
--I WILL  
ATTEND TO IT  
MYSELF.



WHO WAS HE, BARKEEP?

GIDEON  
HARKINS.  
LIVED IN  
THE MANSION  
ON THE  
HILL.

BUT UNTIL  
THIS  
NIGHT, I  
NEVER EVEN  
KNEW HE  
HAD A  
SISTER UP  
THERE.

I SEE--AND  
THIS IS THE  
FIRST TIME THE  
COUNTRYSIDE HAS  
BEEN RAVAGED BY  
A FIEND OF  
THIS KIND?

THIS IS A GOD-FEARING REGION, STRANGER--  
NO AGENTS OF THE DEVIL WOULD DARE PREY  
AROUND HERE--EXCEPT FOR TONIGHT, ANYWAY.



AND THIS CARVING KNIFE--  
IT IS GENUINE SILVER...?

MY SILVER FOR  
YOURS, THEN. MINE  
IS NOT PURE--

THERE IS  
ONLY THE  
BEST IN MY  
TAVERN.

THEN THE  
LEGENDS ARE TRUE.  
MIGHT I MELT THIS  
DOWN INTO FODDER  
FOR MY RIFLE?

FOR A PRICE,  
YOU MAY DO WHAT-  
EVER YOU LIKE  
WITH IT.

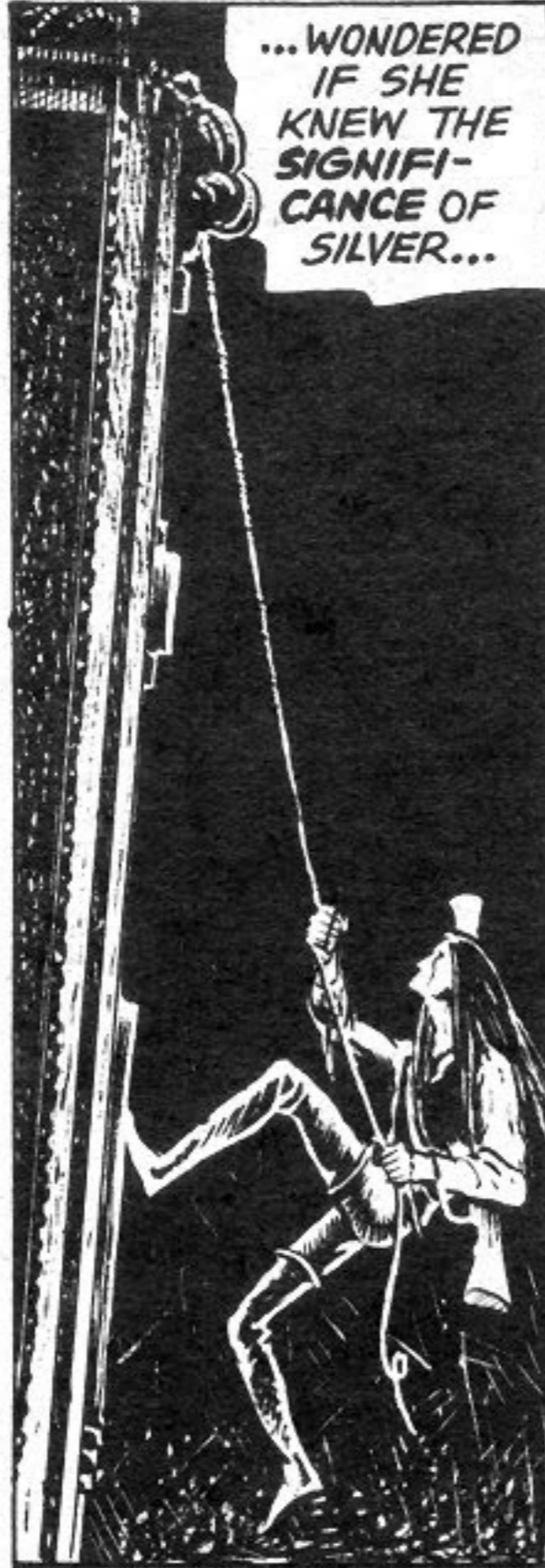
-- BUT THEN,  
IT WILL BUY  
YOU TEN SUCHLIKE  
KNIVES WHICH ARE.

DURING THE RIDE UP THE HILL, KANE HAS WONDERED...



...WONDERED IF THE WOMAN KNEW THE KNIFE TO BE PURE SILVER...

...WONDERED IF SHE KNEW THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SILVER...



...WONDERED WHY SHE HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE, WHY THE WERE-BEAST HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN...

AND NOW, AS HE CLAMBERS THRU THE SHATTERED WINDOW--

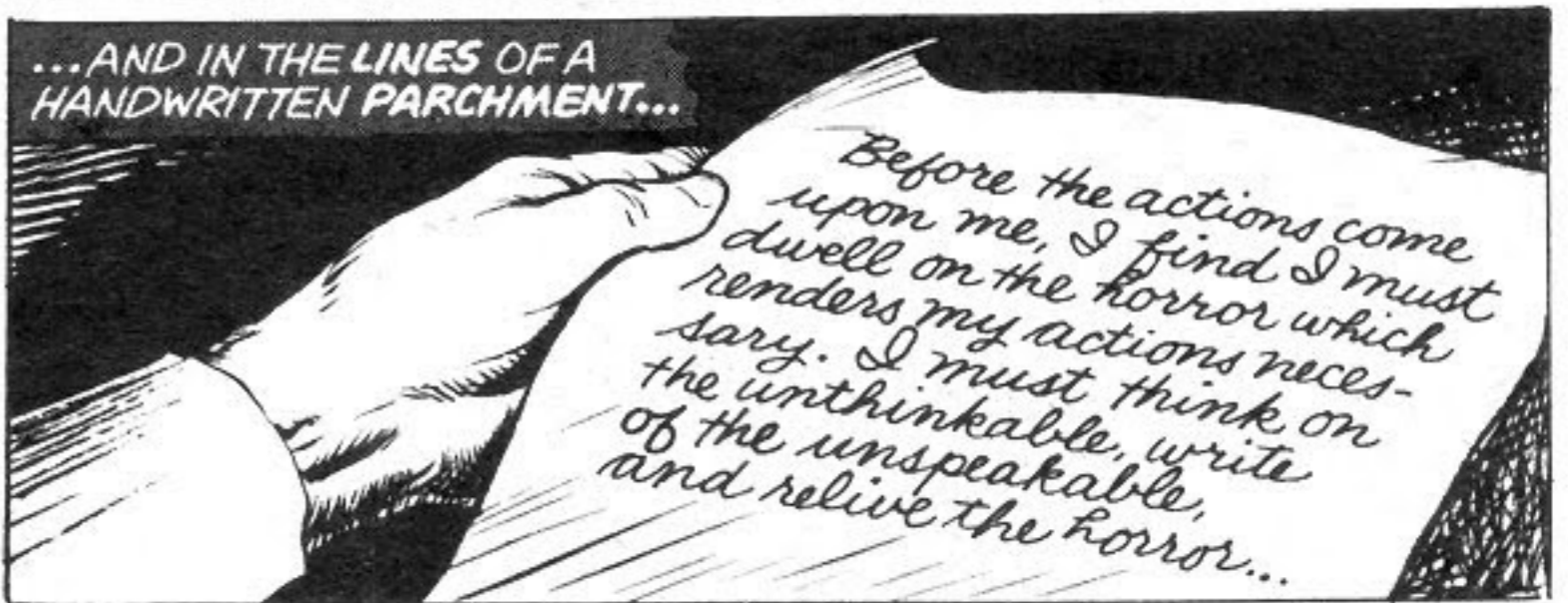


--KANE MEANS TO WONDER NO MORE.

PERHAPS HERE, ON THE DESK, UNDER THE GLOW OF A STILL-BURNING LAMP...

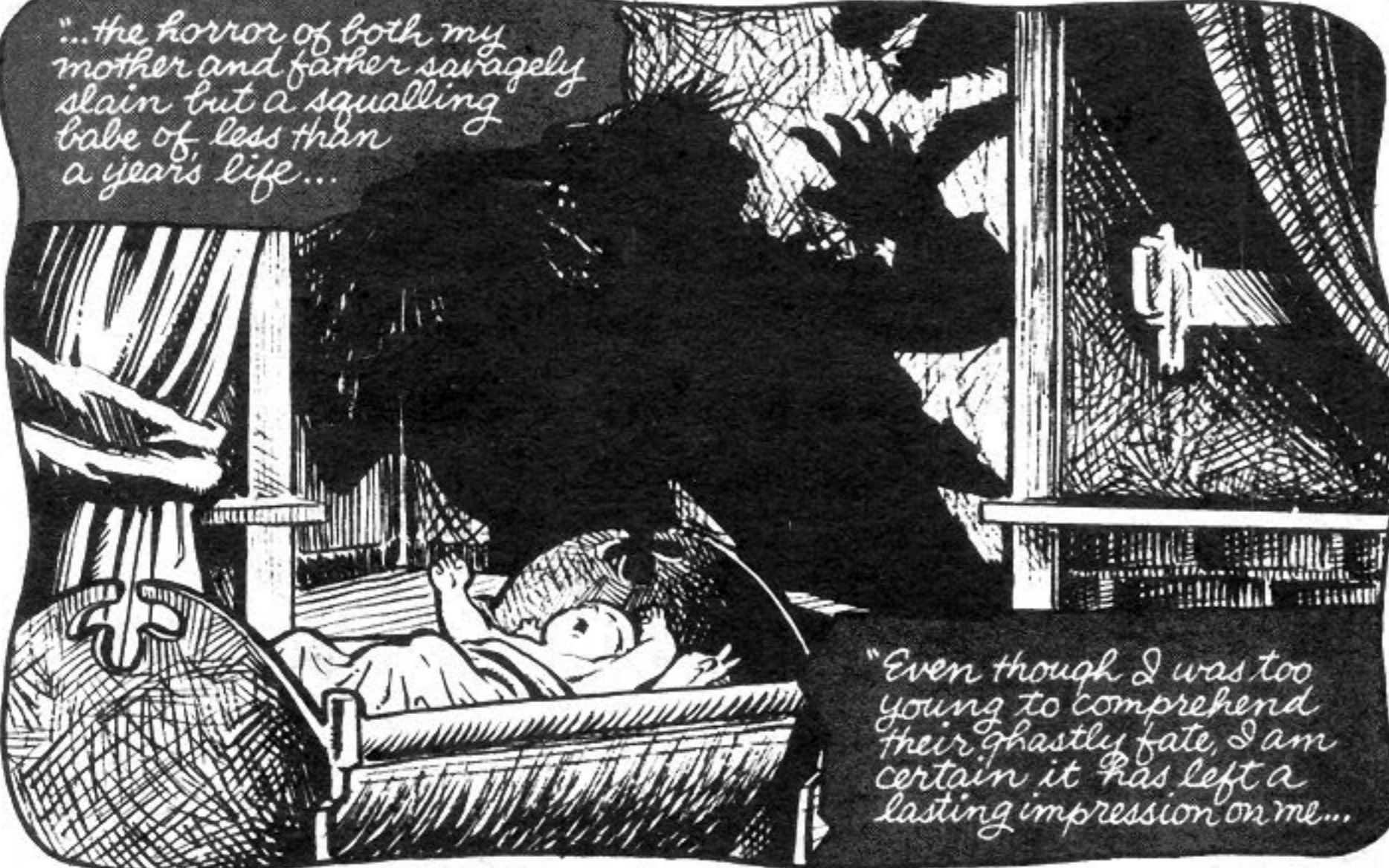


...AND IN THE LINES OF A HANDWRITTEN PARCHMENT...



*Before the actions come upon me, I find I must dwell on the horror which renders my actions necessary. I must think on the unthinkable, write of the unspeakable, and relive the horror...*

...the horror of both my mother and father savagely slain but a squalling babe of less than a year's life...



"Even though I was too young to comprehend their ghastly fate, I am certain it has left a lasting impression on me..."



...and is responsible for the perpetual nightmares which, to this day, I dread...

"I was twelve and my grandmother finally told me how my parents had died, how they had been slain by a terrible supernatural creature called The Silver One..."



CHOK!



...and how she had put them to final peace on that awful night eleven years earlier...

...thus preventing their resurrection as similar monsters...

"Thus, as I grew from youth to manhood, I became a stranger to my own home a lonely wanderer combing the countryside in search of vengeance..."



"It was less than a month ago when I located the gypsy camp, identical to a dozen others I had visited and departed with my obsession still burning..."



"And yet there was something different about this camp, and I sensed that here my desperate mission would at last conclude..."

"Thus, grasping the spike of solid silver given to me by dying grandmother some eight years past, I crept stealthily among the caravan wagons..."



"... Only to spin horrified and see it hurtling from the shadows, seeking to another victim to its--"



WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY BROTHER'S STUDY--?!

ATTEMPTING TO LEARN WHY I WAS FORCED TO SLAY HIM, WOMAN-- AND WHY HE BECAME WHAT HE WAS.

THROUGH THIS PARCHMENT, I HAVE LEARNED WHY-- AND IN SO DOING, I HAVE ALSO LEARNED THAT HE WAS NOT YOUR BROTHER.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN--?!



WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MAN?



GIDEON HARKINS HAD NO BROTHERS OR SISTERS. HIS PARENTS DIED BEFORE HE WAS A YEAR OLD, AND--

--YOU KILLED THEM.

THE ILLUSION IS DESTROYED NOW. SHRIEKING, SHE RIPS OFF THE WIG OF FALSE BLACK HAIR, REVEALING A WILD MANE OF PURE SILVER...



YES, I KILLED THEM-- AND TRIED TO KILL HIM, TOO!



HE HAD TO DIE! FOR EIGHT YEARS HE HUNTED AND HOUNDED ME-- HUNTED MY FELLOW CREATURES OF THE NIGHT...!

AND FOR EIGHT YEARS I RESISTED THE URGE TO REND HIS FLESH WITH FANG AND CLAW...



...KNOWING THAT IN SLAYING HIM, I WOULD ONLY TRANSFORM HIM INTO A CREATURE STRONGER THAN MYSELF...



...AND THIS HIS LUST FOR VENGEANCE COULD NOT BE DOMINATED BY THE SWAY OF THE FULL MOON--OR THE TAIN OF THE SILVER ONE!



SO HE HAD TO DIE--JUST AS YOU MUST NOW D--

--YAAH!!

SHE CATCHES THE PELLET OF MELTED SILVER IN MID-LEAP!

THEN, IN THE TAVERN, SHE HAD BEEN AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SILVER...



...AND IS EVEN MORE SO ...NOW.



*know I will change tonight, know I will slay tonight...*



*...but the good Lord willing, let me slay The Silver One, and not some innocent, that my revenge may be done.*

KANE BROODS DARKLY. THE BLOOD HAD COVERED IT ALL, EVENTUALLY...



AND UGLY SIGHT, ESPECIALLY WITH THE WOMAN LOOKING MORE AND MORE INNOCENT WITH EACH SPILLED DROP. BUT PERHAPS IT WAS FITTING...



THE SILVER ONE'S BLOOD HAD BEEN GIDEON HARKINS'SOLE REASON FOR LIFE--HAD BEEN HIS VENGEANCE...



AND NOW THAT IT WAS DONE, BETTER THAT THE BLOOD OF HIS VENGEANCE--

--SHOULD FOREVER BLOT OUT HIS TESTAMENT OF VENGEANCE.

