

BOOK ONE

EARTHWORLD!



BUT THERE IS *LIFE* AMONG
THE ROOFTOPS OF THESE
HUDDLED BUILDINGS...



...LIFE WHICH MOVES
AS SILENTLY AS THE
SHADOWS THEMSELVES.



OR NEARLY
SO...

SKATCH



TARRA-?



MEN CALL IT DARKSPIRE CASTLE, THEY WHO DARE SPEAK OF IT AT ALL.

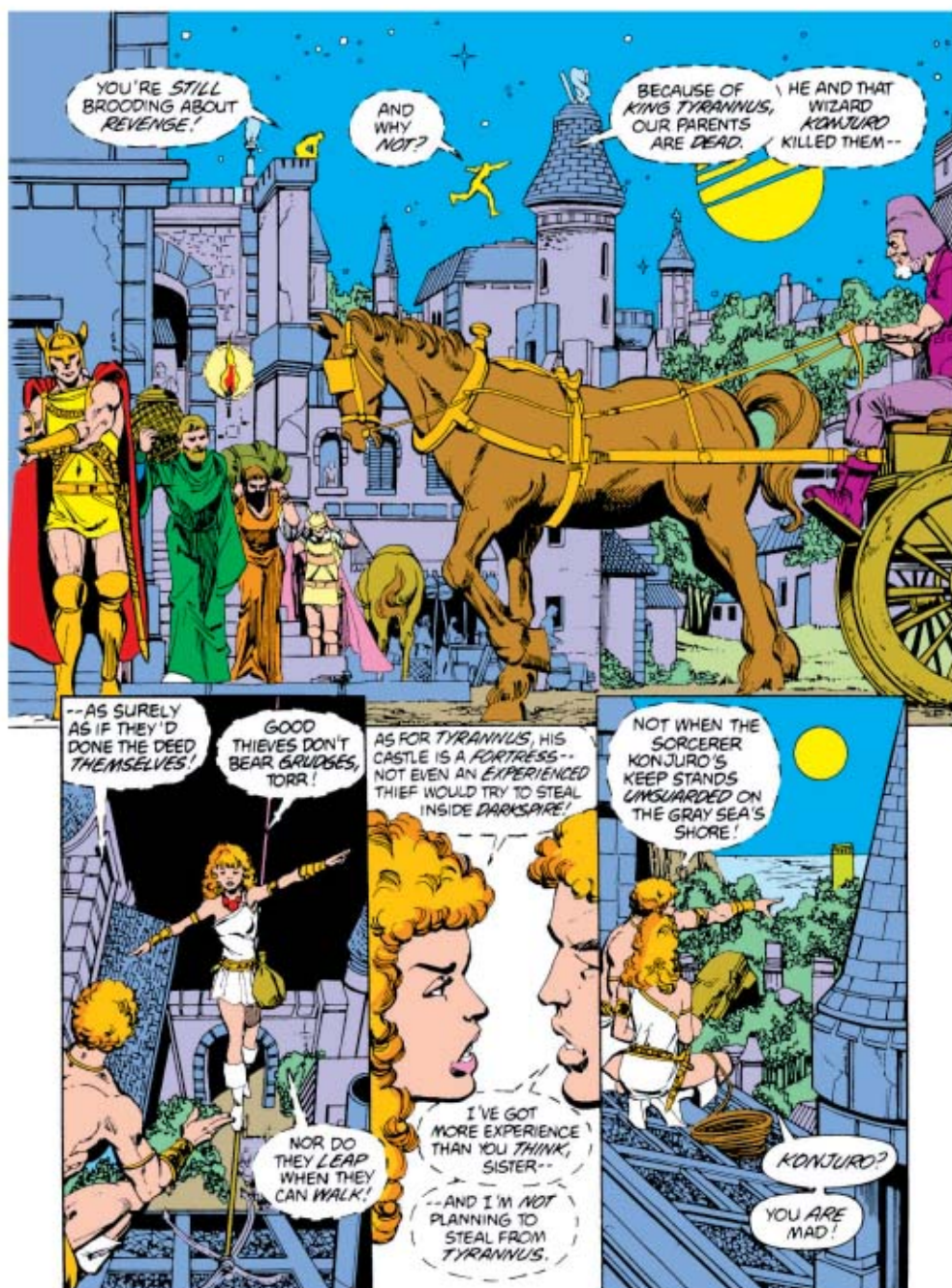
LIKE A GREAT BLACK SPIDER IT BROODS ATOP MOUNT MANDRAGON, HIGH ABOVE THE MEDIEVAL CITY WHOSE LESSER BUILDINGS DOT THE THREE SEAWARD SIDES OF THE MASSIVE PEAK.

WHO ELSE, DEAR BROTHER?

I FOLLOWED YOU AFTER YOU SLIPPED OUT OF OUR ROOM.

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED YOU'D COME HERE.

A THIEF HAS TO STEAL TO EAT, TARRA. BUT EATING ISN'T ALL YOU'VE GOT ON YOUR MIND, IS IT, TARRA?

















--AND AGAINST STEEL SPEARS
AND IRON-TIPPED LANCES, A
NOBLE HEART MADE POOR
ARMOR INDEED.



BEFORE YOU
BEGIN GLOATING,
YOUR MAJESTY,
MIGHT I REMIND
YOU... MOTHER
AND CHILDREN
YET LIVE.



A TEMPORARY
CONDITION, AT
WORST. YOU
MEN--
FIND THE MOTHER
AND BRING THE
CHILDREN TO ME.
AND THE
MOTHER--?

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK,
FOOL?



"SLAY HER WHERE
SHE STANDS!"

AH, BUT FIRST THEY HAD TO
FIND HER, AND IN A DARKENED
CITY FILLED WITH BLACK MOON-
SHADOWS, THAT TASK MIGHT
PROVE MORE DIFFICULT THAN
IT MIGHT SEEM...

THE
KING'S
GUARDS!

THAT
CAN ONLY
MEAN...
TARR IS...

SHE CHOKED BACK A SOB; THIS WAS NO TIME FOR TEARS.

AS THE CHATTER OF HORSEHOOVES BEAT A HUNTER'S MARCH ON THE COBBLES OF THE CITY, GROWING FAINT AND LOUD BY TURNS, SHE LET MEMORY GUIDE HER TO A SMALL HOUSE JUST INSIDE THE CITY'S WALLS...



FREEMAN GARTH, YOU WERE ONCE MY HUSBAND'S FAITHFUL SCOUT.

ARE YOU FAITHFUL STILL?

EH? 'PON MY SOUL, IT'S LADY WYLA!

YOU SHOULDN'T BE SEEN HERE, MILADY, NOT IN THE HOUSE OF A THIEF!

LET HER IN, GARTH-- CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S TERRIFIED?

IT'S YOU WHO SHOULDN'T BE SEEN WITH ME, FREEMAN. LISTEN...

WORDS TUMBLED OUT, AND NOW THE TEARS COULD NOT BE HELD BACK...

MILORD TARR KILLED?

STAY, MILADY, AND I'LL GET MY DASSER--

I DON'T THINK SHE CAME HERE SEEKING THAT KIND OF HELP, HUSBAND.



IT'S THE CHILDREN... ISN'T IT, MILADY?

YES...

...WITH ME, THEY ARE MARKED FOR DEATH.

BUT IN YOUR HOUSE, RAISED AS YOUR SON AND DAUGHTER...

AYE, IT'S WORTH A TRY.



WE ALWAYS WANTED YOUNG 'UNS... BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, MILADY?

