

Stargazer Volume 2 by Von Allan von@vonallan.com

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For Sammy, again

Previously in Stargazer Volume One

In Volume One we are introduced to Marni, a young girl struggling to cope with the recent death of her beloved grandmother. Marni has been bequeathed her grandmother's favourite possession, a mysterious and somewhat unearthly artifact. With this treasure as a memento of her grandmother, and with the support of her two best friends, Sophie and Elora, Marni is just beginning to deal with her grief when suddenly her life takes a fantastical turn. While the three girls are examining the artifact on a backyard camping trip, the object suddenly transports the friends and their tent to a faraway place. When they recover from their initial shock, Marni, Sophie, and Elora discover that the artifact has vanished, leaving them all alone.

Once the the friends gather their courage and explore their surroundings, they find an alien and strangely empty world. Eventually, they spot a mysterious tower in the distance and decide to travel to it in the hopes of finding help. However, as they gather their belongings to start the trip, they are startled by a deafening roar from an unseen monster in the nearby woods. Terrified, they run for their lives, abandoning all of their belongings, except for the knapsacks on their backs. They escape the monster but are afraid to return to the area; they decide to leave the tent behind and press on towards the tower.

On this first leg of their adventure, the girls make a number of strange discoveries, including a mysterious robot and a seemingly endless supply of food in an otherwise empty building. The building's inhabitants are nowhere to be found and, since the robot seems friendly, the girls decide to sleep there rather than in the dark woods. That night, Marni has an unsettling night-time encounter with a silent and shadowy child. Marni is convinced the child is trying to communicate with her; however, the next morning, uncertain whether the experience was a dream or not, she decides to keep it to herself.

After leaving the shelter, this time accompanied by the friendly little robot, the girls stumble across an abandoned Viking-like longboat. While exploring its cargo hold, Marni discovers a sword and decides to keep it in case the monster comes back. Feeling safe on the boat, the girls agree that it also seems like a faster way to get to the far-off tower, so they set sail with the help of the robot. That night, Marni has another nighttime encounter with a dream-like figure; however, this time it's an older woman and Marni is convinced that this is her grandmother reborn.

As Volume One ended, the longboat was approaching the tower and the three girls were fervently hoping they would fine help there...and a way home.





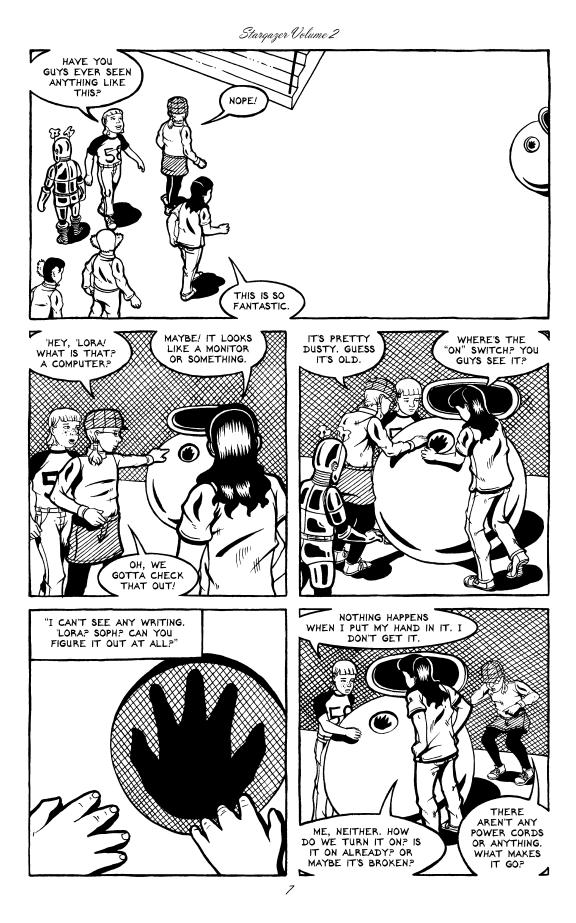














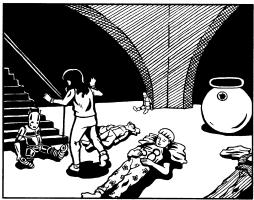




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"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?"

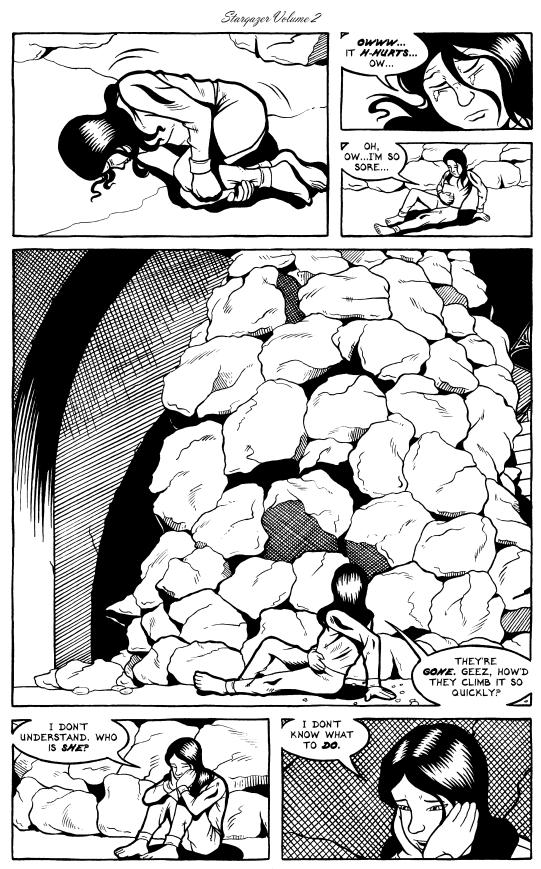


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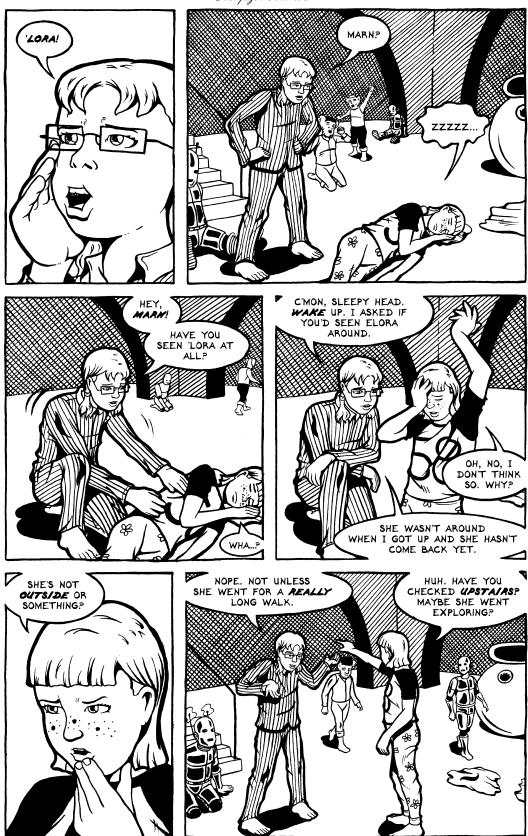


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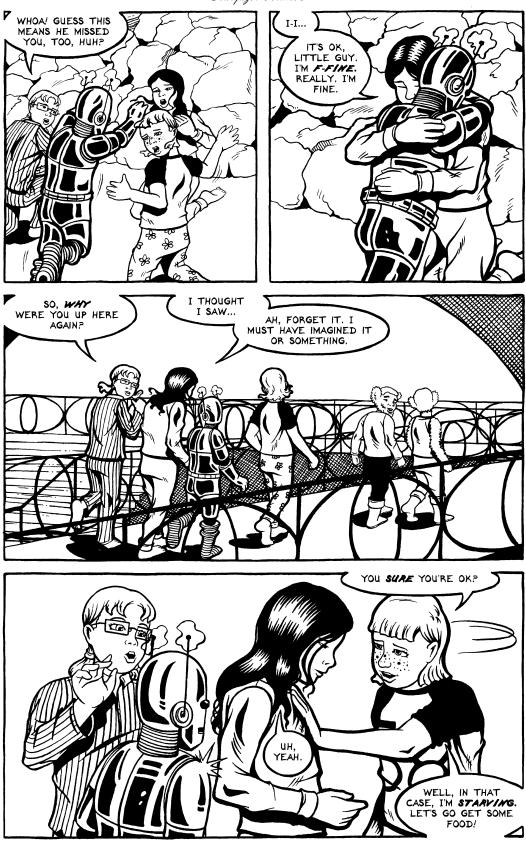


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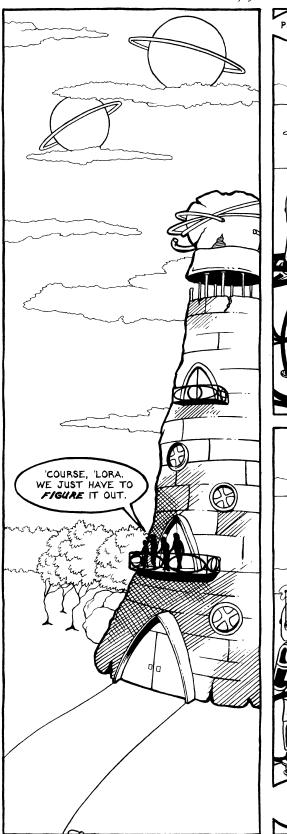






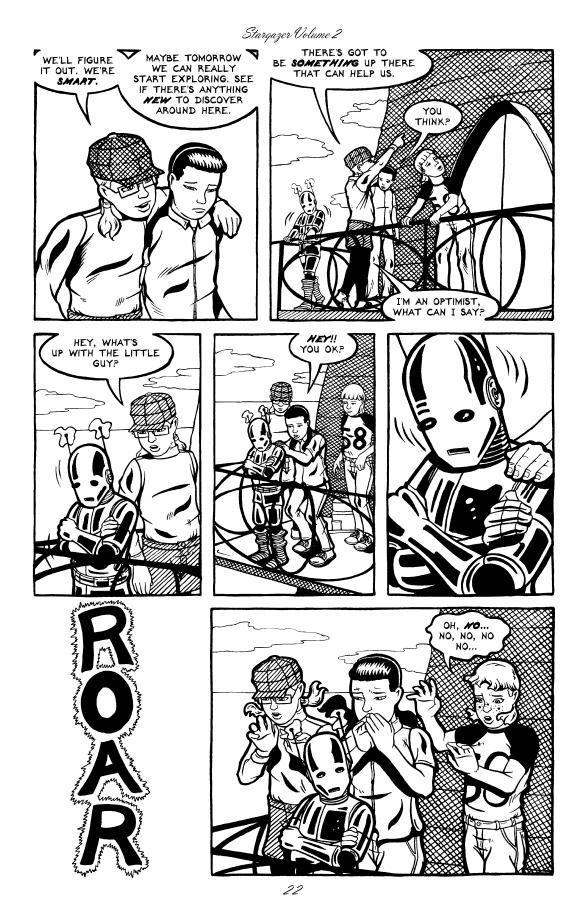
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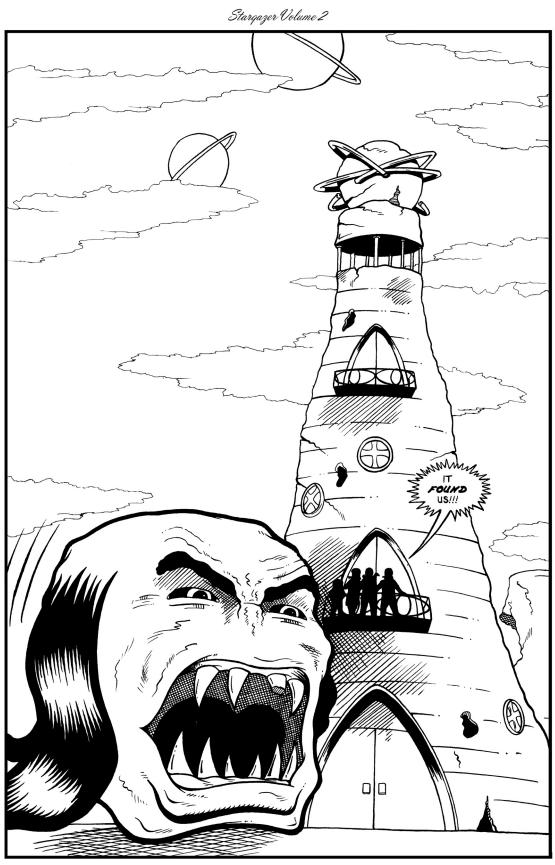
IT'S SUCH A STRANGE



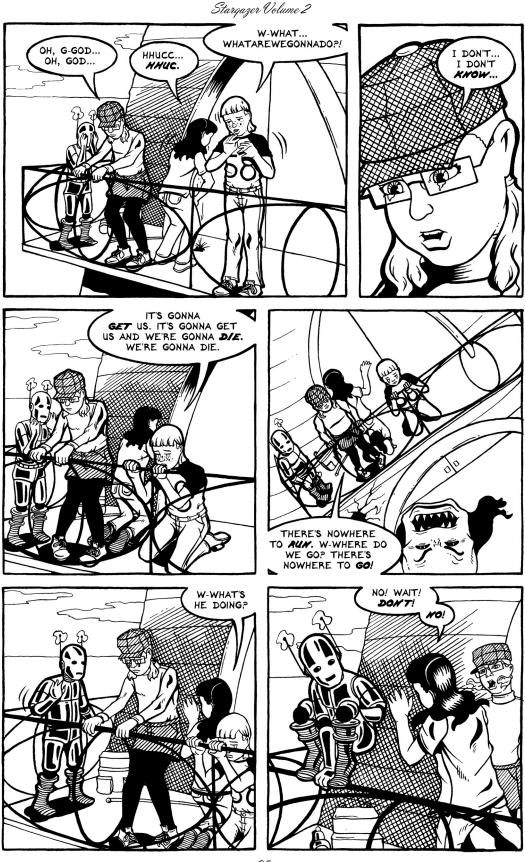






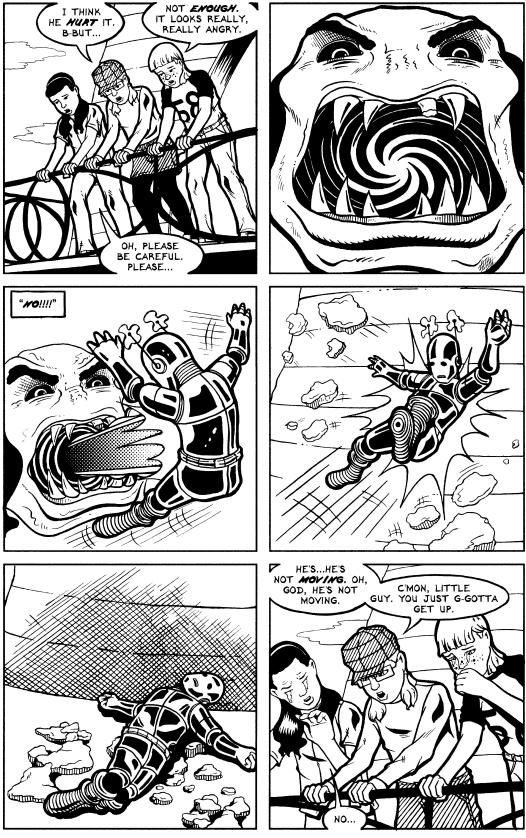








Starqazer Volume 2 NOT **ENOUGH.** IT LOOKS REALLY, REALLY ANGRY.







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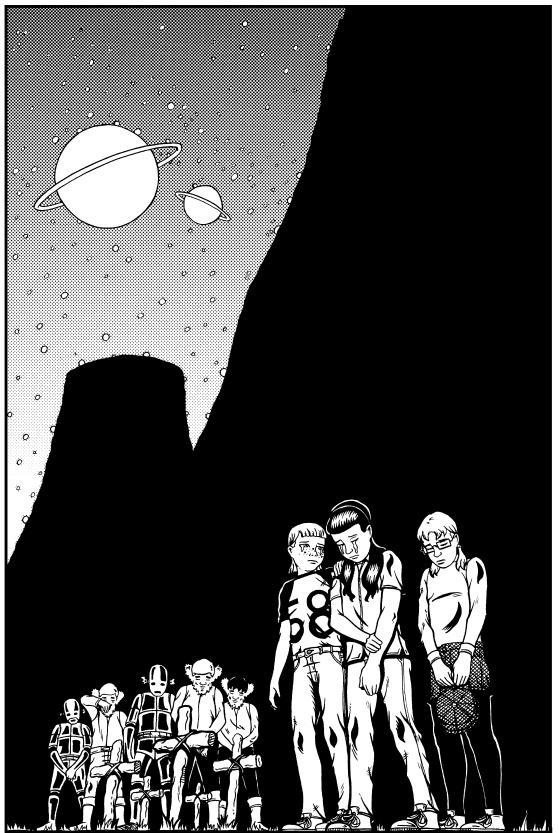
Starqazer Volume 2 and the second 300 <u>ئ</u> 3ms "LORA! MARN! I THINK... I THINK WE **D/D** IT!" J. Marina S a and the second sec "LOOK! IT'S RUNNING AWAY! olo MARNI, SOPH, YOU TWO WERE INCREDIBLE. YEAH, 'LORA! IT'S **GONE.** WE DID IT! -> MARN, YOU OKP YEAH... WE DID IT, GUYS. WE DID IT! W alo μh M M M ψ h



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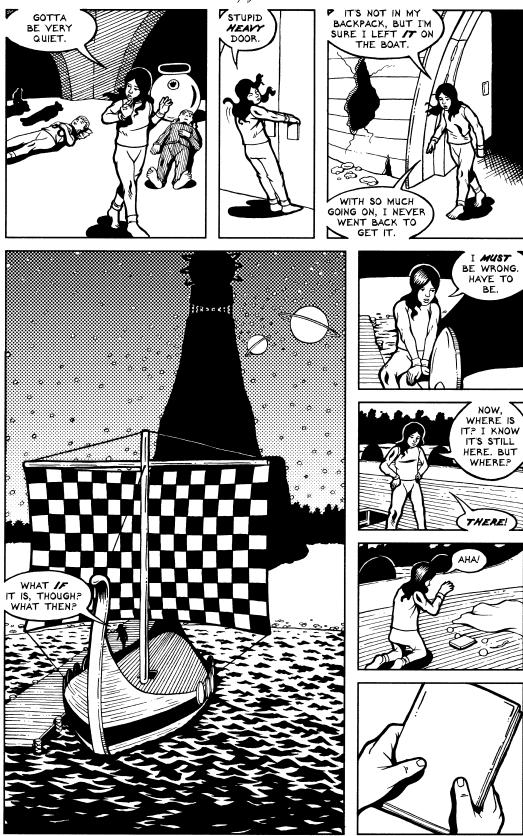




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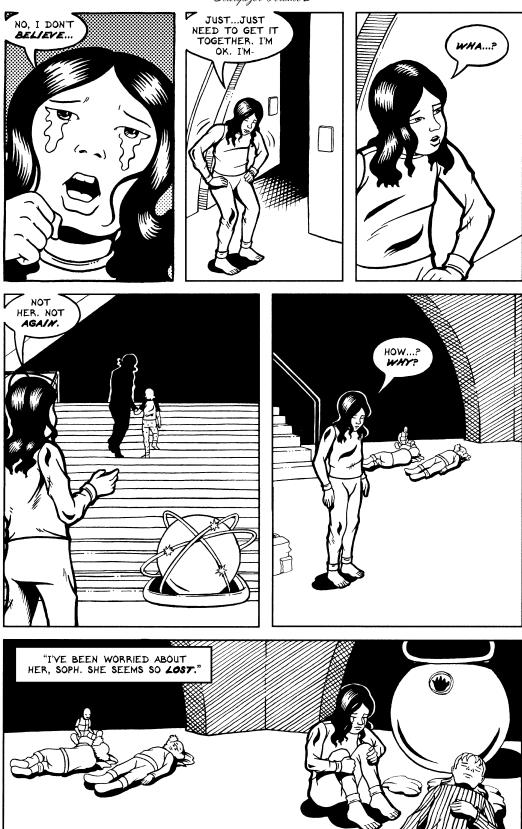
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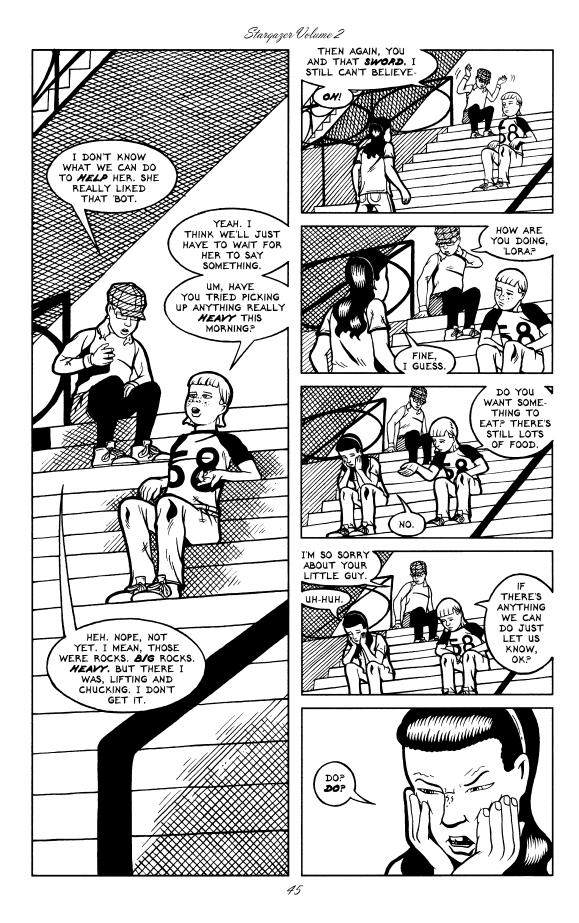


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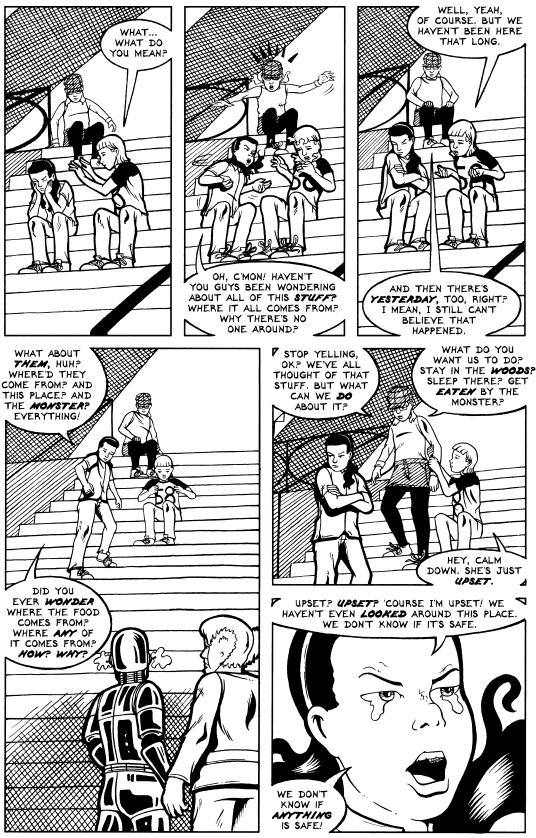


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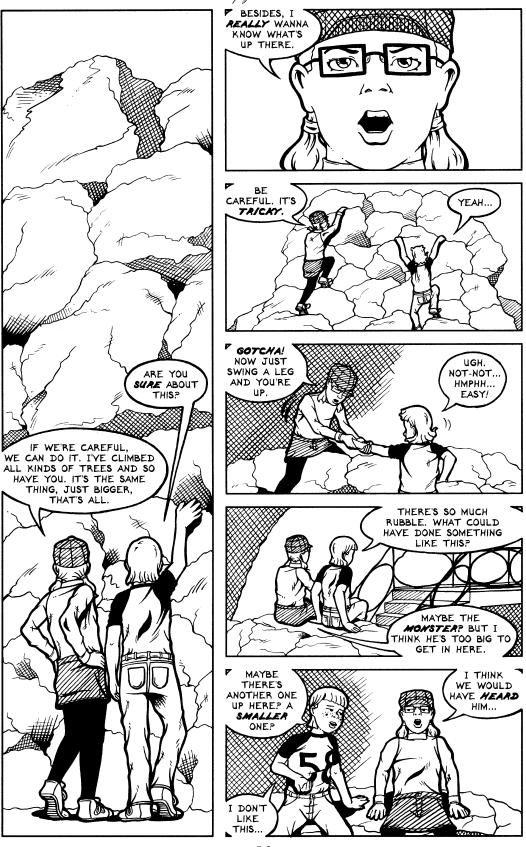


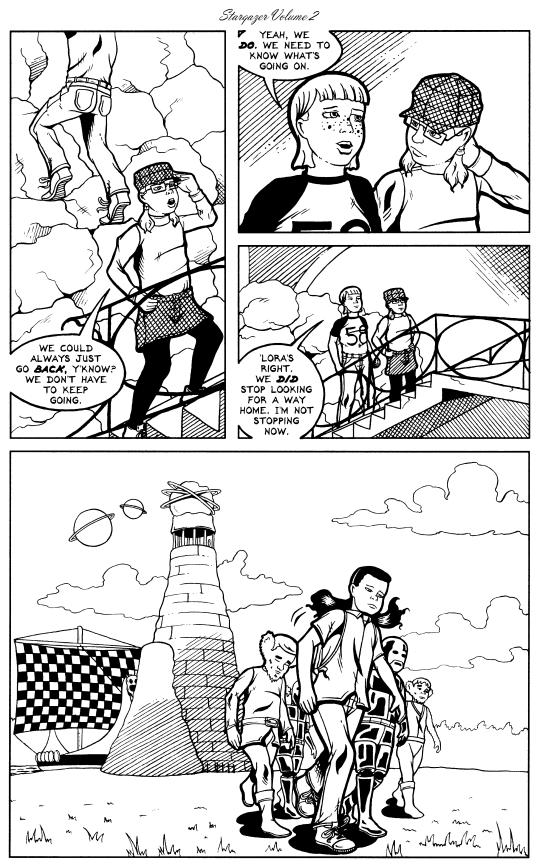
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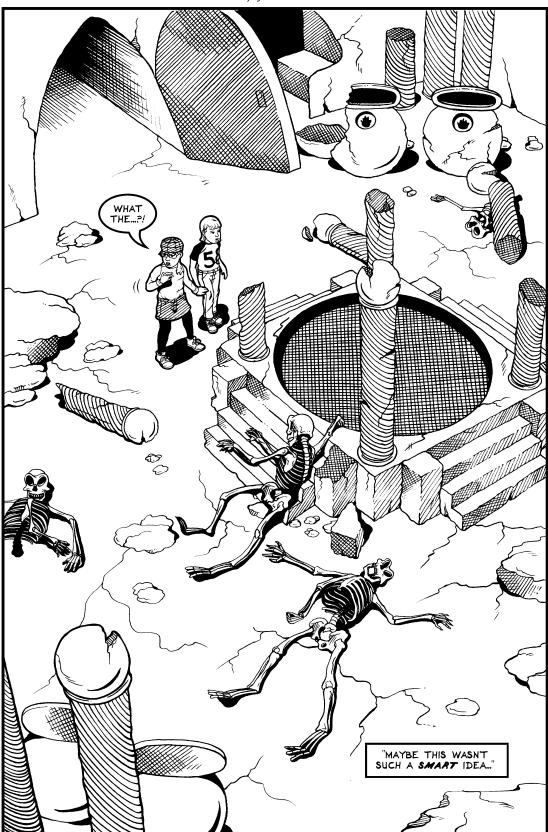


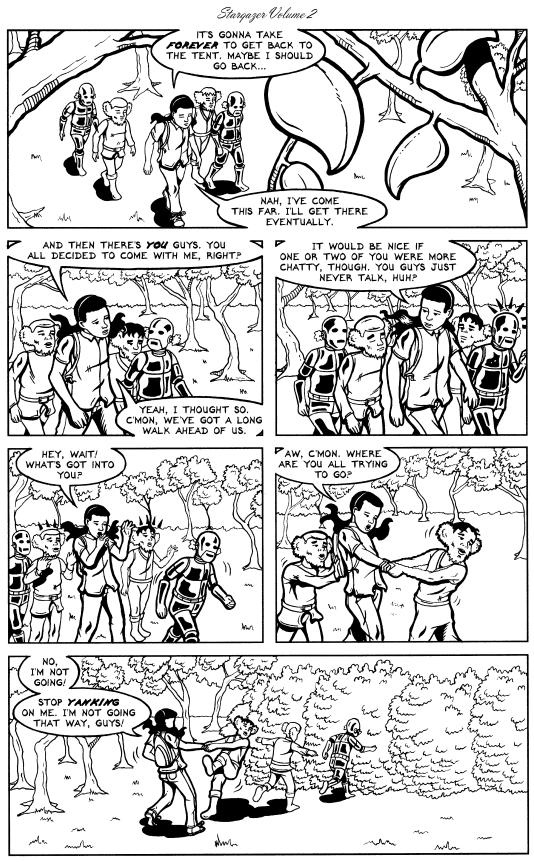






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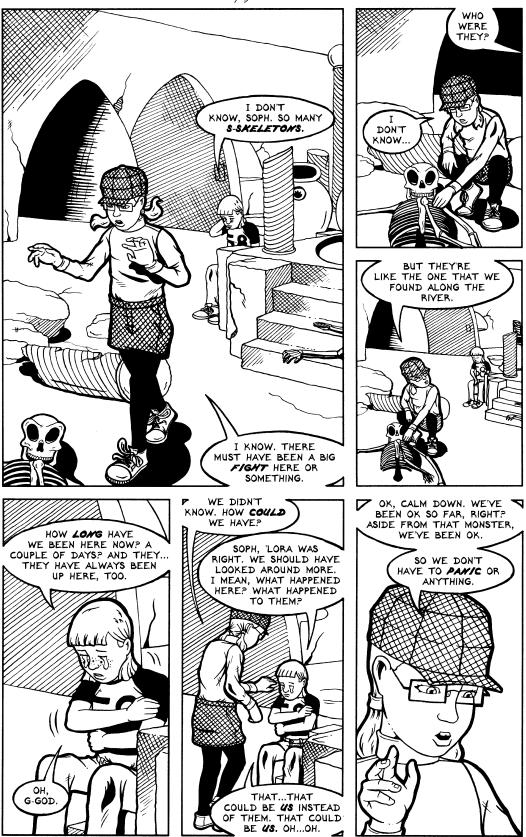


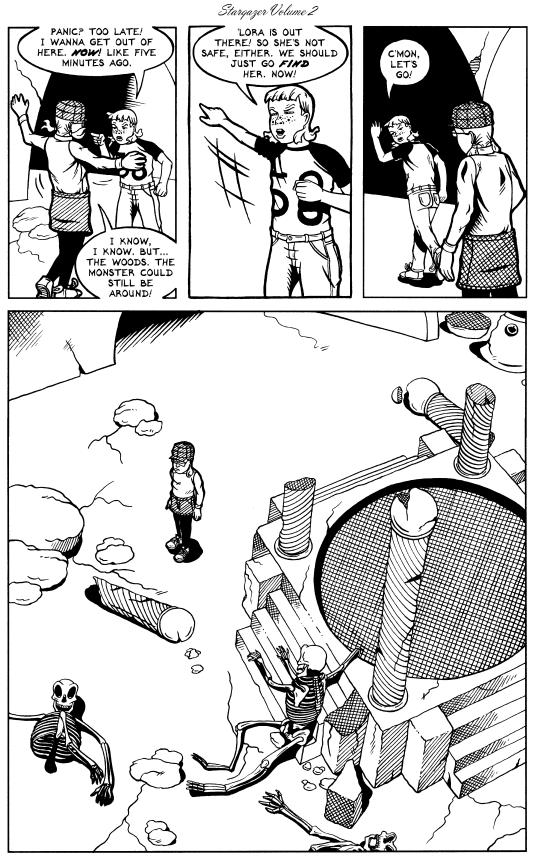




Starqazer Volume 2 BUT YOU'RE D-DEAD. WE FOUND YOU AT THE TOWER. 41 mi a har and a start ٤ Ę z, En were WE Wy have here FOUND w. IT YOU. CAN 7 BE. 42 لاسر **B**SF R Ð Z м 5. \mathcal{M}^{n} (J. 41, Л, M M m mm 3=14 Ence Upher 44 MA and the - 5 white a I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW DID YOU...? "ARE YOU OK?" et. 9 01 Mm mm 6 59

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Starqazer Volume 2 UM, WE SHOULD... WE SHOULD TAKE SOME FOOD ALONG WITH US, RIGHT? വി OH, IT'S NOT YOU. IT'S THIS **PLACE**. EVERYTHING. THE BOAT. THE TOWER. THE SWORD. AND NOW SKELETONS AND STUFF. IT WAS JUST A COOL ADVENTURE. LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A BOOK, NOW I JUST...I JUST WANT TO GO **HOME.** I...I'M SORRY. он, NO. ME тоо anus 1 Ę

"W-WHERE IS IT? all

V7/

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ESPECIALLY WITH

DADDY IN THE SHOP ALL THE TIME, WORKING AWAY ON ALL THOSE OLD CARS.

I'D JUST SIT THERE, DOODLING

AND DREAMING STUFF UP. I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER

WHAT. I JUST KNOW I DID IT.

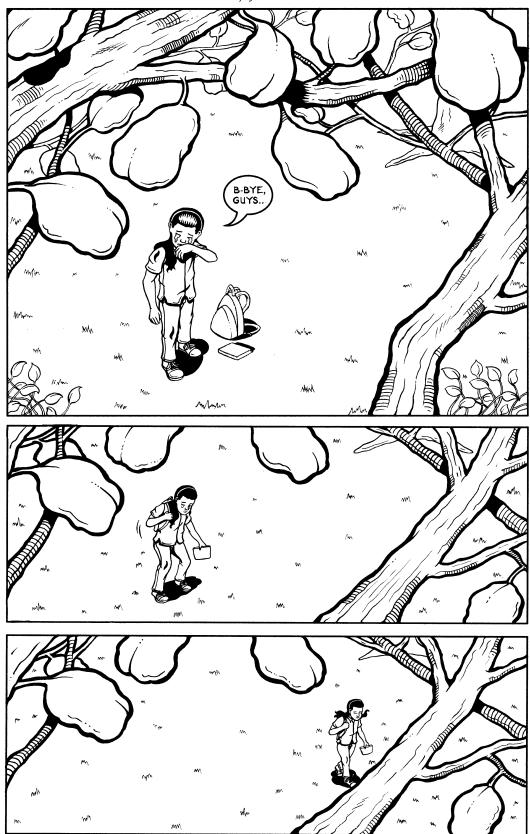
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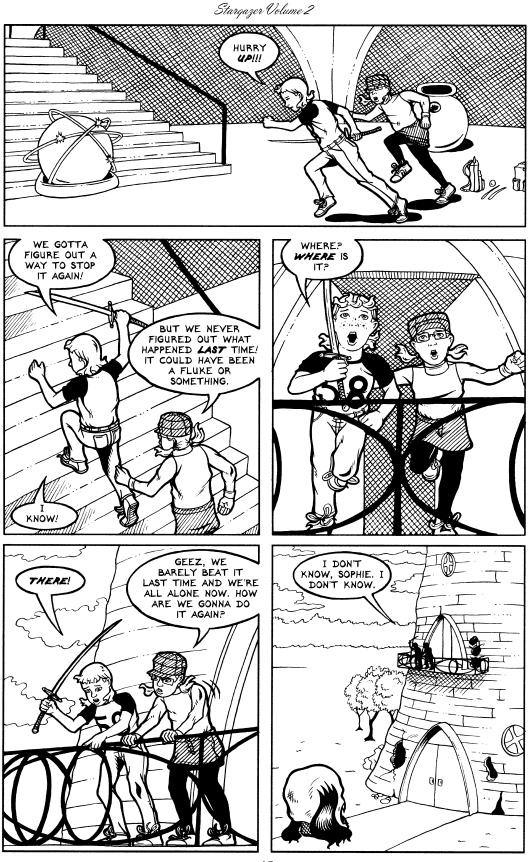


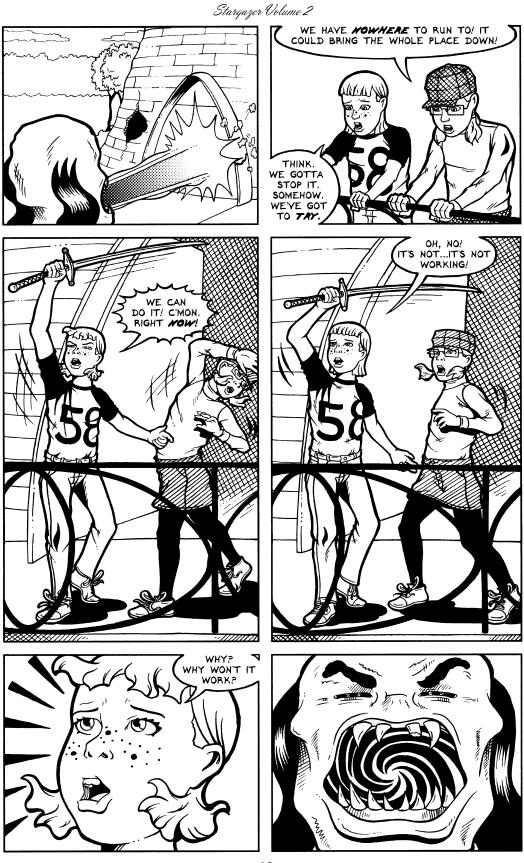




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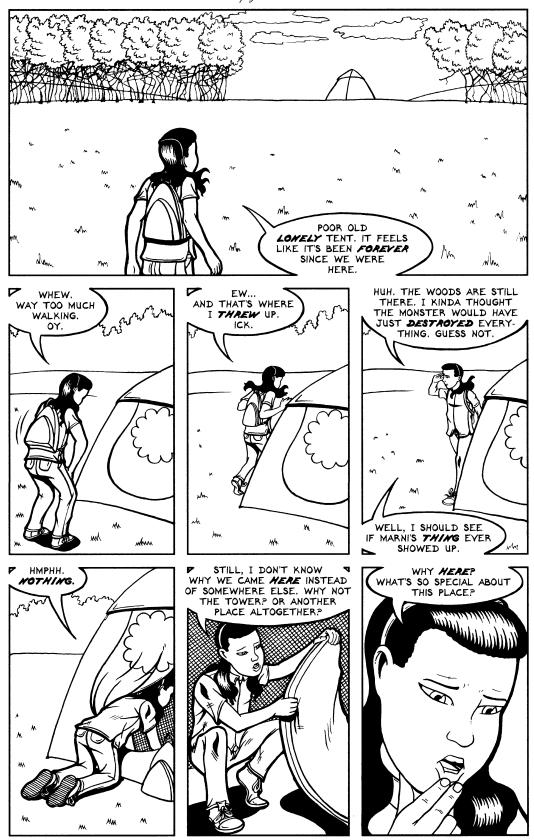


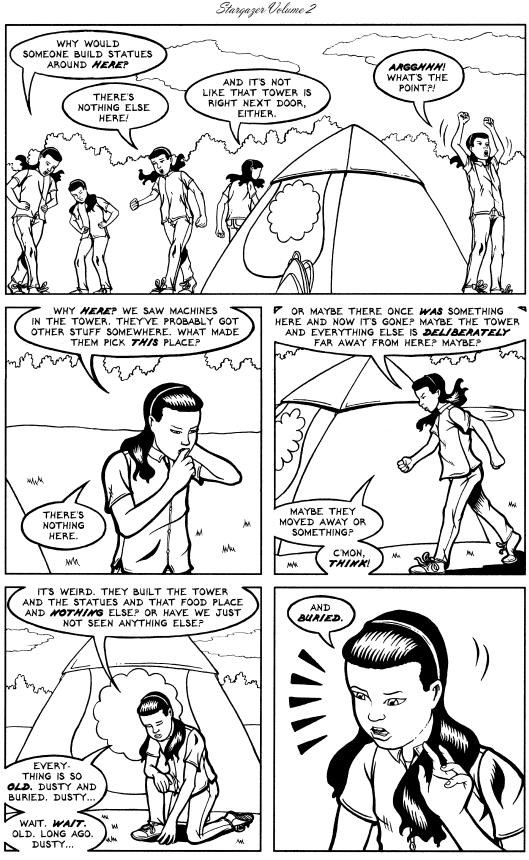








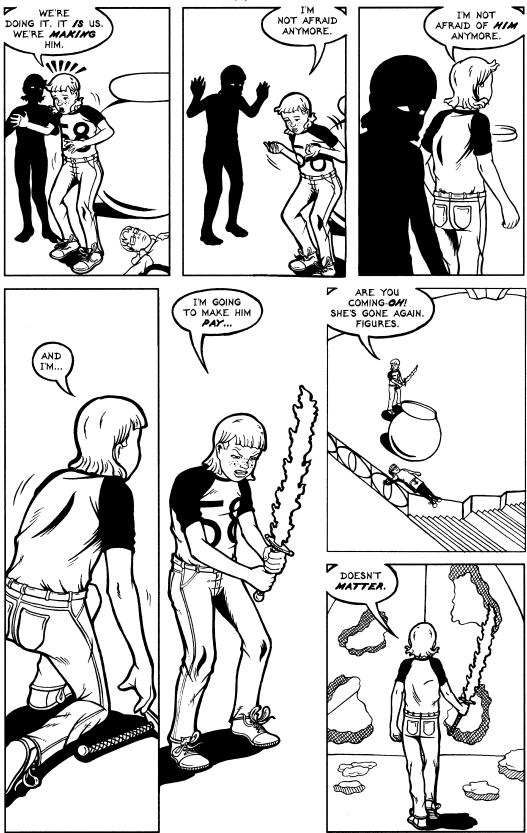


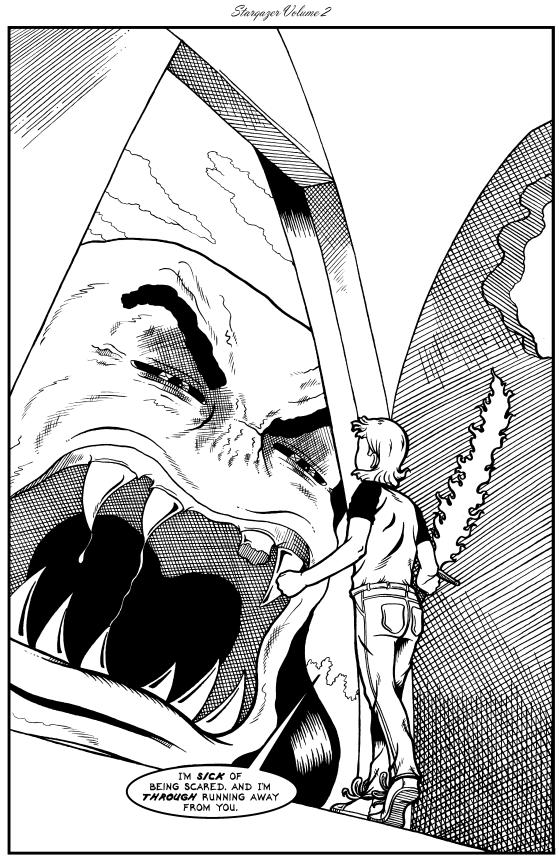






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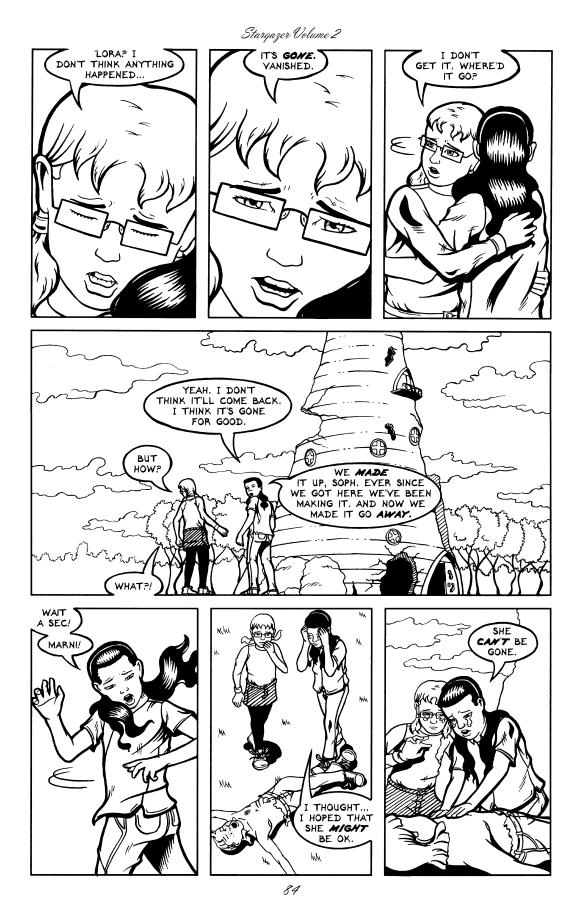






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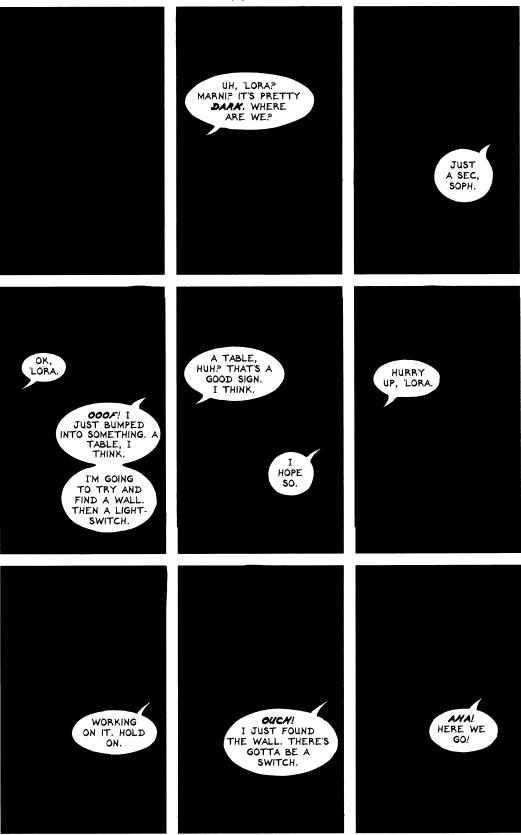




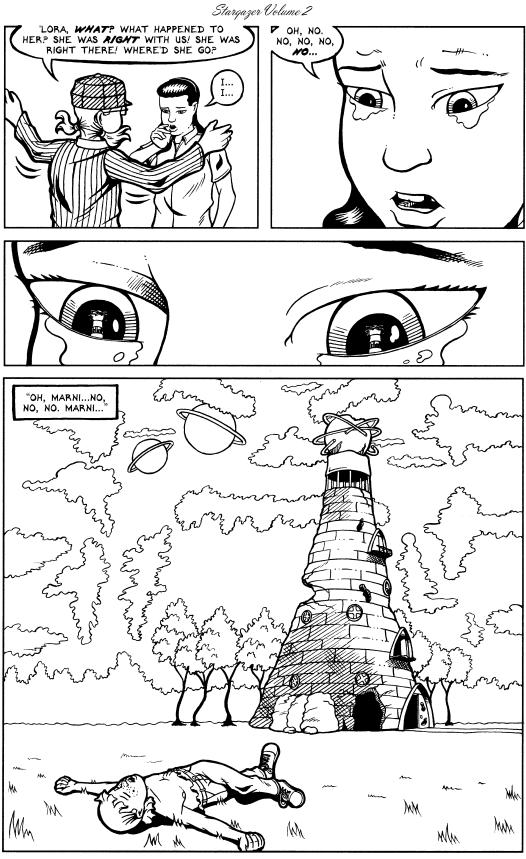




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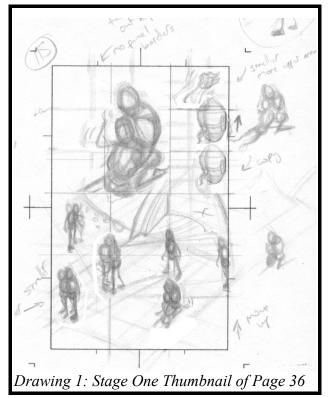


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<u>Thumbnailing</u>

In Stargazer Volume One I discussed how I approached writing the story and I presented some concept art and pinups. This time I wanted to show you how I approach drawing a page. I want to clarify one thing right off the bat, though: I don't believe there are any hard and fast rules when it comes to creating comics; there are multiple approaches and no single way is correct. I think the best advice is to learn everything you can and then figure out, through trial and error, which approach works best for you. In other words, much of learning to draw involves learning to use tools rather than learning hard and fast rules.

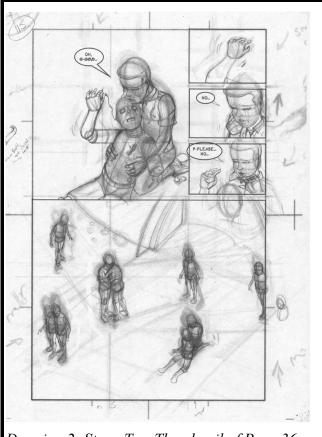
Most artists I know of (and this applies to many kinds of visual art and not just



comics) try to thumbnail a page first. All this means is doing a small drawing (often many small drawings) in an attempt to work out what will be on the final page before completing a final drawing. Thumbnails should be very loose and typically very small. The script describes what's happening on the page and then the artist needs to visualize it and put it down on paper. What you don't want to do is start drawing the final page without figuring things out first. Why? Well, if you run into a problem with the page, you may have to discard it and start all over again, which is a lot of time wasted. With thumbnails, if you make a mistake or if you simply change your mind, you can start over again without too much trouble.

There are many approaches to thumbnailing but it generally involves sketching out little stick figures with loose perspective to try and get a feel for the final page. Always keep the script in mind but try to get things down on the page quickly, simply, and clearly. A good example of this is the above thumbnail from page 36. This is small (approximately 1.75" by 2.75") and very loose, but there's lots of information in it. I really try to focus on composition and narrative at this stage. Making sure that things are "explained" visually is very important to me and, despite the simplicity of the drawing, in many ways I find that thumbnailing is where I do the hardest work; the most thinking, figuring, and problem solving. As you can see in the example, I also often make a few notes on my thumbnails. Once I'm happy with a thumbnail, I scan it into my computer and blow it up to a larger size. The notes I make allow me to make some changes digitally rather than erasing something or simply starting over with a new drawing.

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Drawing 2: Stage Two Thumbnail of Page 36

Stage Two Thumbnails

Once I've scanned in the little thumbnail and blown it up so that it will fit on a standard piece of paper (i.e.: 8.5" by 11"), I start to figure out a number of things, including the panel borders and the dialogue and speech balloons. For simplicity's sake, I prefer doing it at this stage rather than on the final page. By doing it this way I can figure out if a particular panel has too many words or if the art is too big (or small) in relation to both the dialogue and the panel. And so on. I also apply the little notes I made in the first thumbnail. Basically, I move elements around, resize figures and objects, and "muck around" until I'm happy with it.

Once I'm happy with all of that, I print the revised thumbnail out and start drawing right on top of the printout. That's what you can see in the example on this page. It's still loose and simple, but it's tighter and more complete than

what was in the earlier thumbnail. Once I'm happy with it, I scan it *back* into my computer and blow it up once again. This time I make it large enough to fit on the final page, a sheet of Bristol board, which is where I do my pencilling and inking.

Recall that I mentioned "tools and not rules." Doing two stages of thumbnails, working digitally to move things around, even scanning, it all took me awhile to figure out. When I did my first graphic novel *the road to god knows…* I didn't know any of this and I worked very differently. I would typically do only one thumbnail and I did it on tracing paper. It was about the size of the stage two thumbnail above, but I didn't scan it in. Instead, I would just put it beside my drawing board and try to copy it onto Bristol board. It didn't work very well. I was still struggling with drawing and this approach made things far more complex. It was also time consuming since I'd have to re-draw so much. My approach on *Stargazer* works much better for me. Live and learn.

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Stage Three Pencils and Inks

This is the final art board now pencilled and inked. This is done on a sheet of Bristol board that measures approximately 13" by 19." That's a little bigger than the typical 11" by 17" but I wanted to work a bit bigger on Stargazer. That decision was also based on my experiences with the road to god knows... I felt hampered by working smaller and the larger size gave me more room to work. Everything is printed in blue but, since this graphic novel is printed in black and white, the blue lines show up as grey. You'll have to use your imagination to see the blue! Once I've finished the tight blue pencilling, I then ink the page using my trusty brush and black ink. Sometimes people ink with pens (either nib pens or technical pens) and sometimes people ink digitally. Occasionally people even draw digitally and avoid using pencils

and paper altogether; there is no right way, just the right way for *you*. Again, it takes a lot of trial and error to figure out the best approach for you; keep an open mind and don't be afraid to go back and try things you've previously abandoned. Sometimes something you hate at one point becomes something you love a few years later. Learning through experimenting, playing, and thinking is an excellent approach; it worked for me and could do the same for you!

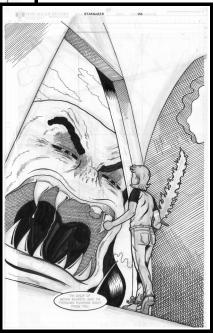


The same methodology applies to splash pages as well as pages with a large number of panels. For instance, Page 77 detailed the final confrontation between Marni and the Monster. The first stage thumbnail is where I spent a lot of time figuring things out; I wanted the page to be dynamic and with good composition, but the emotion had to be right. Marni's confidence mixed with the fear that the Monster hopefully invokes. It's tough to know how well I accomplished the latter (that depends on you), but I think the page is dynamic. There are really no absolutes in art. So much of it, at least in my own case, is based on gut feelings about what I'm working on and the emotions I'm trying to evoke.

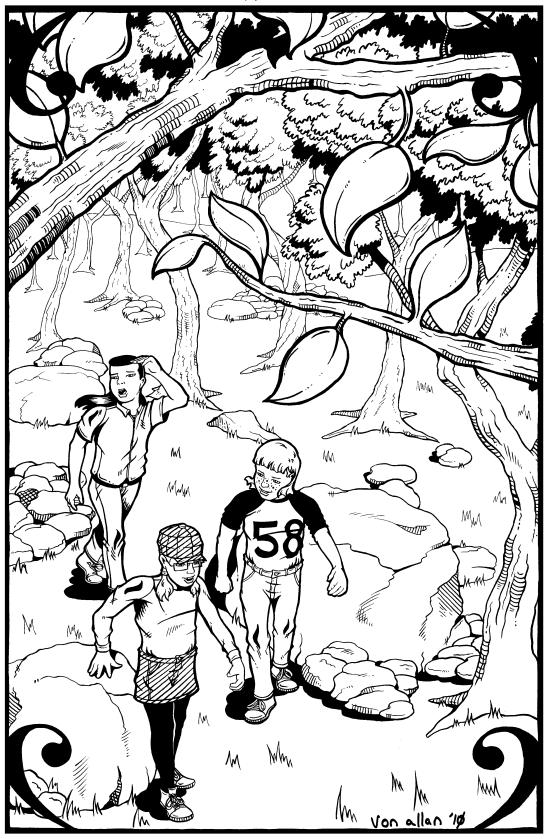


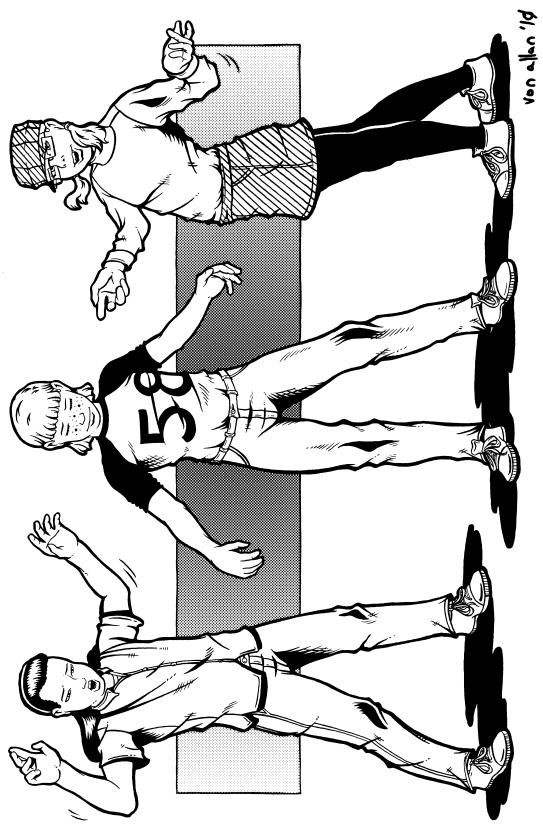
The final page has all of the actual inking and whatnot and I think it came together pretty well. While this page wasn't all that complex to draw, the emotion and narrative of the page *was*. Fundamentally it's the story that makes comics *comics*.

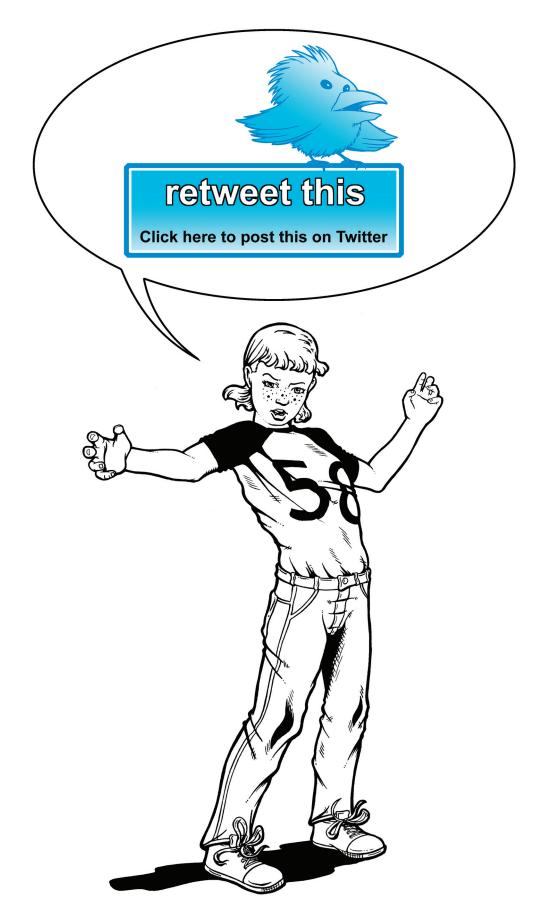
The second stage thumbnail served to tighten everything up. Of course, at this point I wasn't worried about panel borders since the page didn't call for them, so I was really only concerned with Marni's dialogue and the corresponding speech balloon.



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Purchasing Physical Copies!

Stargazer is an independently published two volume graphic novel series that is now available from better bookstores, comic book stores and online retailers world-wide. If you enjoyed the ebook versions, please consider purchasing a physical copy of each volume. And please help spread the word through social media to as many people as possible.

There are a variety of ways to purchase a copy and I've outlined them below.

Ordering Through Comic Book Stores

A list of comic book stores that were known to have ordered physical copies of *Stargazer* are listed on the following pages. Please note that any store can and will order a copy of either volume for you if they are sold out. It's very easy for them to do. Both volumes of *Stargazer* are distributed to comic book stores through <u>Diamond Comic Distributors</u>. Diamond creates a unique order code for each and every item and retailers use these codes to order for their shelves. The order code for *Stargazer Volume One* is AUG111260 and the order code for *Stargazer Volume Two* is AUG111259.

Ordering Through Book Stores

Both volumes of *Stargazer* are easily orderable through bookstores. One thing you can do to make the process even easier is provide your local bookstore with each volumes ISBN. They should have no problem finding them through any online database. *Stargazer Volume One's* ISBN is 978-0-9781237-2-7 while *Volume Two's* is 978-09-781237-4-1.

Ordering Online

Each volume of *Stargazer* is available through a wide variety of online retailers, including Amazon (.com, .ca, .co.uk, .de, .fr, .co.jp, etc..), <u>Barnes & Noble</u> in the United States, <u>Chapters/Indigo</u> in Canada, <u>The American Book Center</u> in The Netherlands, <u>The Book Depository</u> in the United Kingdom, <u>Booktopia</u> in Australia, and so on. You can find each volume easily by searching for the ISBN on any online retailer's website (*Stargazer Volume One's* ISBN is 978-0-9781237-2-7 while *Volume Two's* is 978-09-781237-4-1).

List of Retailers

The following is a list of retailers who were *known* to be carrying *Stargazer Volume 1* and *Stargazer Volume 2*. Please note that this is not a complete list so if you don't see your local retailer here that doesn't mean they aren't carrying it or, if they've sold out, that they can't order it for you.

To find a comic book store in your area that's not on this list, please use the <u>Comic</u> <u>Shop Locator</u> service.

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United States of America

California

<u>Atlantis Fantasyworld</u>, 1020 Cedar Street, Santa Cruz, California, 95060. Phone: 831-426-0158

<u>Flying Colors Comics</u>, 2980 Treat Boulevard, Concord, California, 94518. Phone: 510-825-5410

Comics Unlimited, 16344 Beach Blvd., Westminster, California, 92683. Phone: 714-841-2407

<u>Comix Experience</u>, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, California, 94117. Phone: 415-863-9258.

<u>Illusive Comics & Games</u>, 2725 El Camino Real Suite 105, Santa Clara, California. Phone: 408-985-7481

Mission: Comics and Art, 3520 20th St. Suite B, San Francisco, California, 94110. Phone: 415-695-1545

Colorado

<u>Time Warp</u>, 3105 28th Street, Boulder, CO 80301. Phone: 303-443-4500 (1-800-552-9108 (toll-free))

Delaware

<u>Captain Blue Hen Comics</u>, Talleyville Shopping Center, Wilmington, Delaware 19810. Phone: 302-479-5242

Captain Blue Hen Comics, 280 E Main St. Suite 101, Newark, Delaware 19711. Phone: 302-737-3434

Florida

<u>Coliseum of Comics Orlando</u>, 4722 South Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando, Florida, 32839. Phone: 407-240-7882

Coliseum of Comics Kissimmee, 3159 W. Vine St. (US Hwy. 192), Kissimmee, Florida, 34744. Phone: 407-870-5322

<u>Coliseum of Comics Fashion Square Mall</u>, 3201 E. Colonial Drive, Orlando, Florida, 32803. Phone: 407-228-1210

Coliseum of Comics Seminole Towne Center, 177 Towne Center Circle, Sanford, Florida, 32771. Phone: 407-324-1800

<u>Coliseum of Comics Downtown Lakeland</u>122 W. Main Street, Lakeland, Florida, 33815. Phone: 863-686-1350

Georgia

Dr. No's Comics & Games Superstore, 3428 Canton Road, Marietta, Georgia, Phone: 770-422-4642

Illinois

<u>Challengers Comics + Conversation</u>, 1845 North Western Avenue 2R, CHICAGO, Illinois 60647. Phone: 773-278-0155

Comix Revolution, 115 West Central Road, Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056. Phone: 847-506-0800

Comix Revolution, 606 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201. Phone: 847-866-8659

Louisiana

Excalibur Comics, Cards and Games, 802 E. 70th Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, 71106. Phone: 318-868-4389

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, Maine, 04101. Phone: 207-780-1676

<u>Casablanca Comics</u>, Don Rich Plaza, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, Maine, 04062. Phone: 207-892-0056

Maryland

<u>Third Eye Comics</u>, 45 Old Solomon's Island Road, Suite 102, Annapolis, Maryland, 21401. Phone: 410-897-0322

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue #13, Boston, Massachusetts, Phone: 617-266-4266

The Outer Limits, 437 Moody Street, Waltham, Massachusetts, Phone: 781-891-0444

Larry's Comics, 66 Lakeview Avenue, Lowell, Massachusetts, Phone: 978-459-5323

<u>That's Entertainment</u>, 56 John Fitch Highway, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 01420. Phone: 978-342-8607

<u>That's Entertainment</u>, 244 Park Avenue, Worcester, Massachusetts, 01609. Phone: 508-755-4207

<u>The Million Year Picnic</u>, 99 Mt. Auburn Street (downstairs), Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02138. Phone: 617-492-6763

Michigan

Fanfare Sports & Entertainment, 4415 S.Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 49008. Phone: 269-349-8866

<u>Green Brain Comics</u>, 13210 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan, 48126. Phone: 313-582-9444

Minnesota

Source Comics & Games, 1601 Larpenteur Avenue, Falcon Heights, Minnesota, 55113. Phone: 651-645-0386

Montana

Muse Comics & Games, 2100 Stephens #107, Missoula, Montana 59801. Phone: 406-543-9944

Nevada

<u>Alternate Reality Comics</u>, 4110 S. Maryland Pkwy. #8, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119. Phone: 702-736-3673

New Jersey

The Record Store, 6299 Route 9 North, Howell, New Jersey, Phone: 732-905-9056

New York

Bergen Street Comics, 470 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, New York 11217. Phone: 718-230-5600

Jim Hanley's Universe, 4 West 33rd Street, New York, New York (opposite The Empire State Building), 10001. Phone: 212-268-7088

Jim Hanley's Universe, 325 New Dorp Lane (at the corner of Lawson Avenue), Staten Island, New York 10306. Phone: 718-351-6299

<u>Midtown Comics Times Square</u>, 200 W 40th Street (Corner of 7th Avenue), New York, New York 10018. Phone: 212-302-8192

<u>Midtown Comics Grand Central</u>, 459 Lexington Avenue (Corner of 45th Street), New York, New York 10017. Phone: (as above)

St. Mark's Comics, 11 St. Mark's Place, New York, New York, 10003. Phone: 212-353-3300.

St. Mark's Comics, 148 Montague Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11201. Phone: 718-935-0911.

North Carolina

Acme Comics, 2150 Lawndale Drive, Greensboro, North Carolina, 27408. Phone: 336-

574-2263.

Ohio

<u>Super-Fly Comics & Games</u>, 132 Dayton Street, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387. Phone: 937-767-1445

Pennsylvania

<u>Pittsburgh Comics</u>, 113 East McMurray Rd, McMurray, Pennsylvania, 15317. Phone: 724-941-5445

<u>Steve's Comic Relief</u>, 4153 Woerner Avenue, Levittown, Pennsylvania, 19057. Phone: 215-945-7954

Texas

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 4910 Burnet Rd., Austin, Texas, 78756. Phone: 512-454-2399

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 117 Louis Henna Blvd., Round Rock, Texas, 78644. Phone: 512-279-8888

Lone Star Comics, 1215 South Cooper Street, Arlington, Texas, 76010. Phone: 817-265-0491

Lone Star Comics, 6780 Abrams Rd. #109, Dallas, Texas, 75231. Phone: 214-553-2555

Lone Star Comics, 3501 Gus Thomasson Rd. #51, Mesquite, Texas, 75150. Phone: 972-681-2040

Lone Star Comics, 4001 W. Green Oaks Blvd., Suite 153, Arlington, Texas, 76017. Phone: 817-563-2550

Lone Star Comics, 931 Melbourne Road, Hurst, Texas, Phone: 817-595-4375

Lone Star Comics, 5429 South Hulen Street, Fort Worth, Texas, 76132. Phone: 817-346-7773

Lone Star Comics, 3100 Independence Parkway #318, Plano, Texas, Phone: 972-985-1593

Utah

Night Flight Comics, 210 East 400 South (@Library Square), Salt Lake City, Utah,

84111. Phone: 801-532-1188

Night Flight Comics, 6222 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84107-7227. Phone: 801-263-1940

Washington

DreamStrands Comics, 115 N. 85th Street, Seattle, Washington 98103. Phone: 206-297-3737

Comic Book Shop, 1401 North Division Street, Spokane, Washington, 99202. Phone: 509-326-7018

Zanadu Comics, 1923 3rd Avenue, Seattle, Washington, 98101. Phone: 206-443-1316

Zanadu Comics, 1307 NE 45th, Seattle, Washington, 98105. Phone: 206-632-0989.

Wisconsin

Neptune Comics, 2120 East Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, Wisconsin. Phone: 262-544-2008

United Kingdom

Amazing Fantasy, 19 Anlaby Road, Hull, HU1 2PJ. Phone: (01482) 210530

<u>Australia</u>

Kings Comics, 310 Pitt Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia. Phone: (02) 9267 5615

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Alberta

Another Dimension Comics, 424B - 10 Street NW, Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1V9. Phone: 403-283-7078

Happy Harbor Comics, 12226 - Jasper Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T5N 3K3. Phone: 780-452-8211

Happy Harbor Comics, 180 Manning Crossing, Edmonton, Alberta, T5A 1A5. Phone:

780-478-8211

Saskatchewan

<u>8th Street Books & Comics</u>, 1006 8th Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7H 0R9. Phone: 306-343-6624

Ontario

Big B Comics, 1045 Upper James St., Hamilton, Ontario, L9C 3A6. Phone: 905-318-9636

The Beguiling, 601 Markham St., Toronto, Ontario, M6G 2L7. Phone: 416-533-9168

Labyrinth, 386 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, Phone: 416-840-4506

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Silver Snail Ottawa, 391 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1Y3. Phone: 613-232-2609

The Comic Book Shoppe, 1400 Clyde Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2G 3L2. Phone: 613-228-8386

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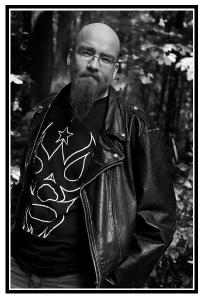
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Von Allan was born redheaded and freckled in Arnprior, Ontario, just in time for *Star Wars: A New Hope.* Von currently lives in Ottawa, Canada, with his writer/editor geek wife, Moggy; a husky dog, Rowen; and two feisty cats, Bonny and Reilly.

Von loves to hear from people who've read and (hopefully!) enjoyed his work. Feel free to write him at von@vonallan.com.

Von's website is at http://www.vonallan.com and is the best place to go for updates, art, essays and the like. There's a dedicated website for *Stargazer* at http://stargazer.vonallan.com. Von can also be found online in the following places:

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In the concluding volume of *Stargazer*, Marni, Elora, Sophie and their new-found robot friend finally reach the distant tower they spotted earlier in their adventure. Expecting to find help at the tower, the girls are stunned to discover that it is not only old and heavily damaged, but also clearly abandoned. As the friends are dealing with their disappointment and starting to plan their next move, they suddenly find themselves surrounded by an odd assortment of little creatures, similar to the robot. While not necessarily the help the girls wanted, the silent but friendly alien friends are nonetheless welcome companions.

Once inside the ruined tower, the girls make a few discoveries, ranging from curious to downright ominous. While Elora goes off on her own, looking for answers to her own questions, Sophie and Marni are convinced that many of the answers they need can be found on the upper levels of the tower, on the other side of a long-ago landslide of rubble and boulders.

With the return of the monster that threatened them at the start of their adventure, the girls must unite to face their fears and fight for their lives. Can the power of friendship and imagination get them safely home? And does their magical quest have a fairytale ending?

Praise for Volume One

"Stargazer is a story of wonder, exploration, determination, and inward as well as outward challenge, and is highly recommended for readers of all ages." - The Midwest Book Review

"Von Allan has instilled his Stargazer with enough layers to appeal to anyone who gives it a chance. So please, give it a chance and be so appealed." - Zedura Magazine

"The art is amazing (although I'm thinking future volumes will give Von more of a chance to flex his artistic muscles), the writing was excellent overall and I can't wait to see what happens next, so that sure sounds like a success to me." - **Optical Sloth**

