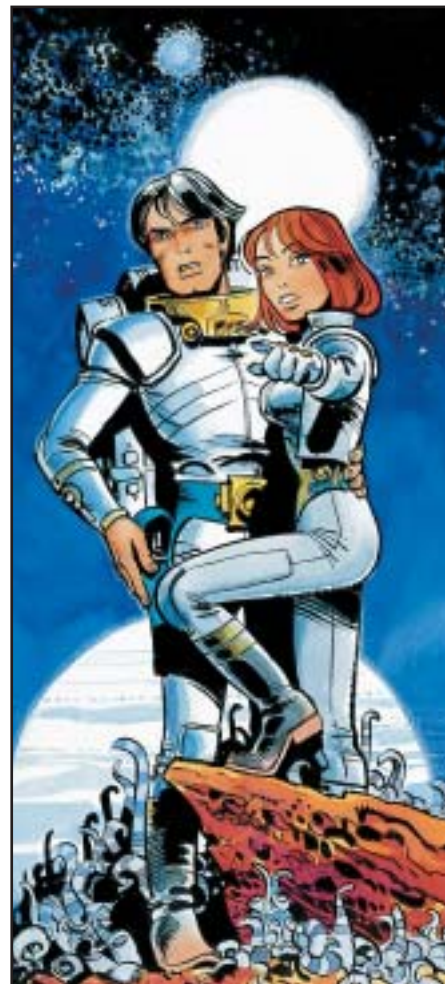




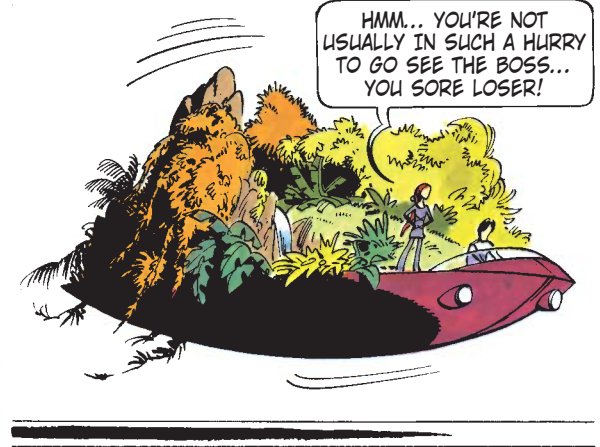
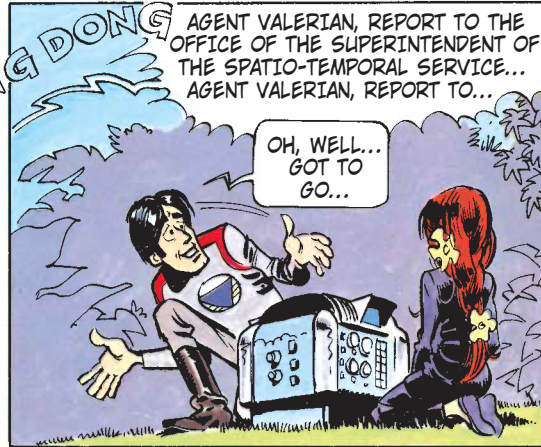
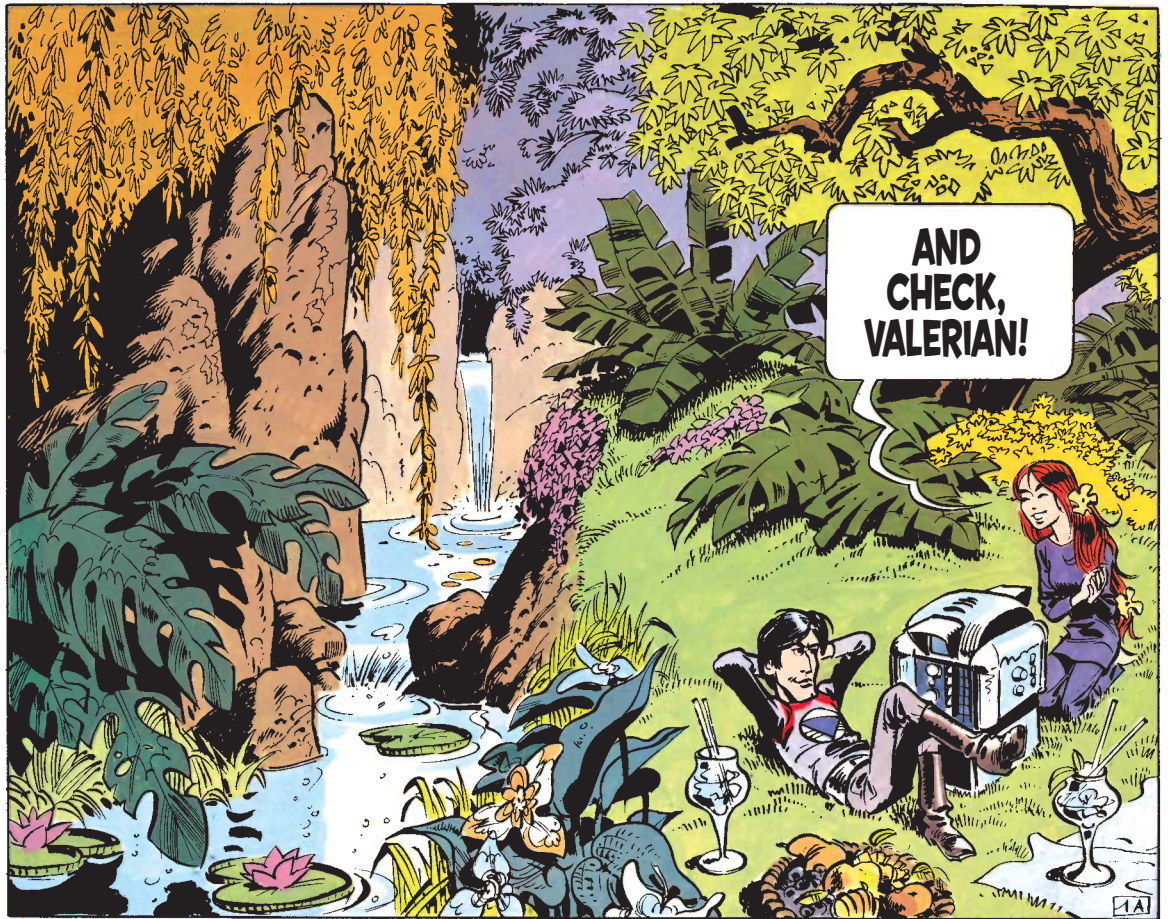
VALERIAN AND LAURELINE

THE CITY OF SHIFTING WATERS

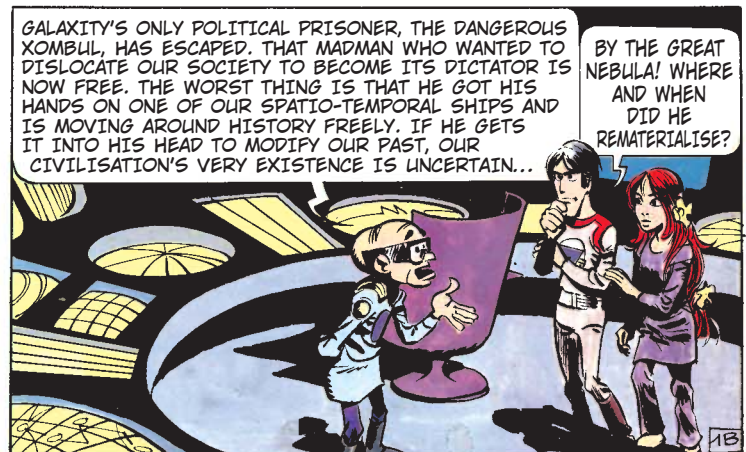
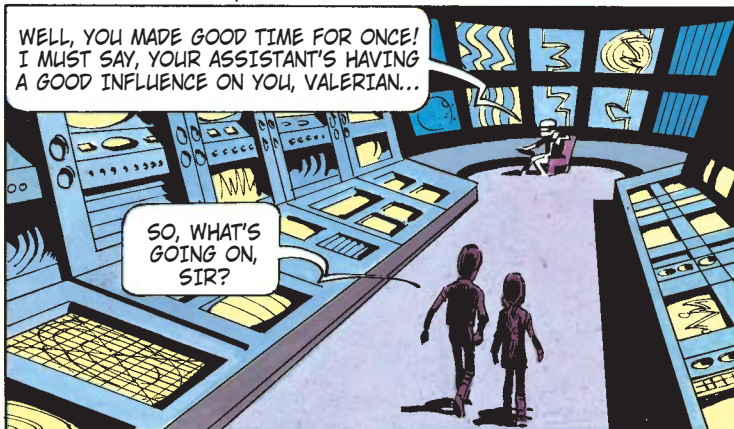
J.-C. MÉZIÈRES AND P. CHRISTIN
COLOUR WORK: E. TRANLÉ AND J.-C. MÉZIÈRES

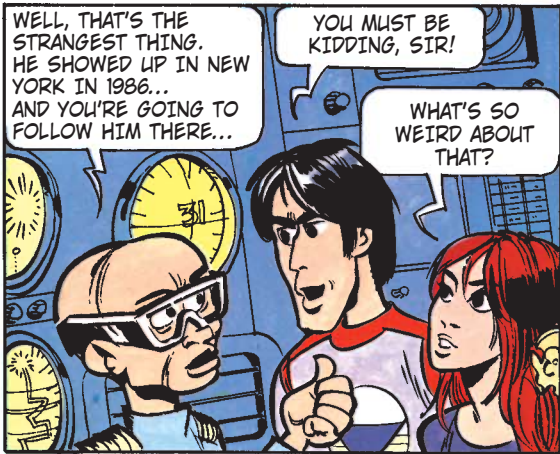


GALAXY, METROPOLIS OF THE FUTURE AND CAPITAL OF THE TERRAN GALACTIC EMPIRE. WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTANT SPACE-TIME TRAVEL, THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY HAS CHANGED. THE AGE OF LEISURE HAS COME FOR GOOD; BUT THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL AGENTS SERVICE—TO WHICH VALERIAN AND LAURELINE BELONG—IS IN CONSTANT ACTIVITY. THE AGENTS' MISSION IS TO PATROL BOTH HISTORY AND THE UNIVERSE TO SAFEGUARD EARTH AND ITS EMPIRE. FOR NOW, THE TWO YOUNG AGENTS ARE ON HOLIDAY AFTER A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE MISSION IN THE HYDROPONIC FARMS OF VENUS. A GAME OF 3D CHESS IS RAGING; THE COMPUTERS ARE WORKING AT FULL CAPACITY...



A SHORT WHILE LATER, SPATIO-TEMPORAL SERVICE OFFICES...

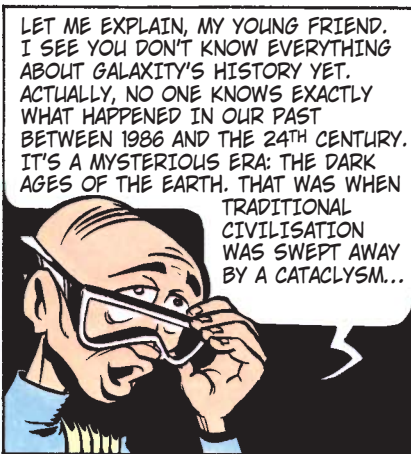




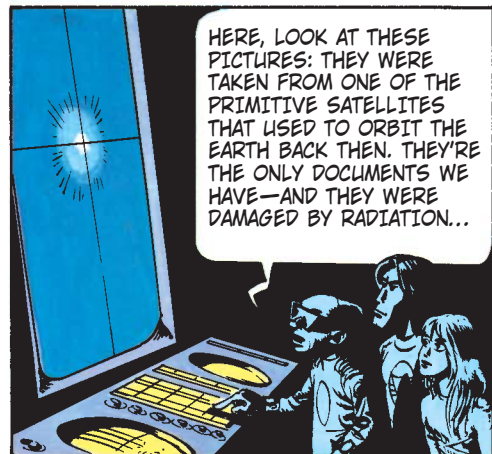
WELL, THAT'S THE STRANGEST THING. HE SHOWED UP IN NEW YORK IN 1986... AND YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW HIM THERE...

YOU MUST BE KIDDING, SIR!

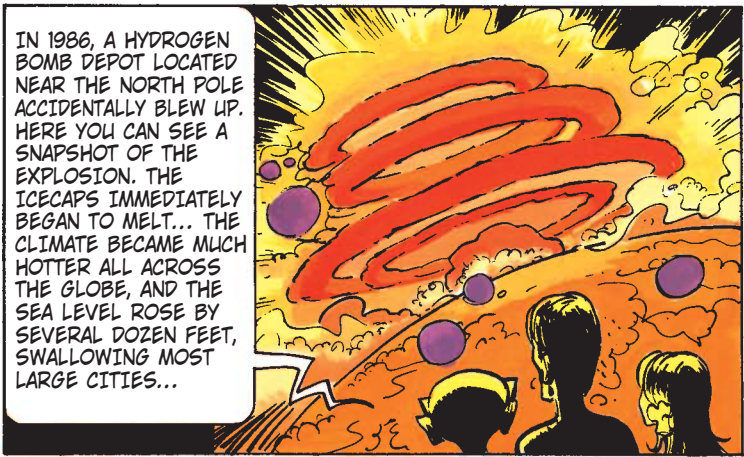
WHAT'S SO WEIRD ABOUT THAT?



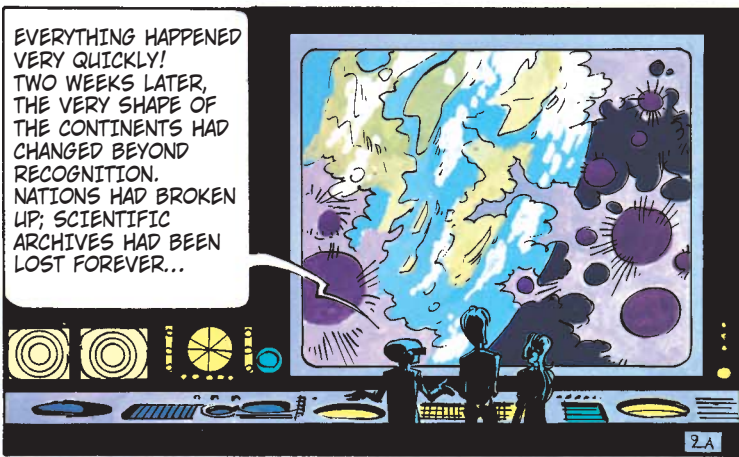
LET ME EXPLAIN, MY YOUNG FRIEND. I SEE YOU DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT GALAXY'S HISTORY YET. ACTUALLY, NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED IN OUR PAST BETWEEN 1986 AND THE 24TH CENTURY. IT'S A MYSTERIOUS ERA: THE DARK AGES OF THE EARTH. THAT WAS WHEN TRADITIONAL CIVILISATION WAS SWEEPED AWAY BY A CATAclySM...



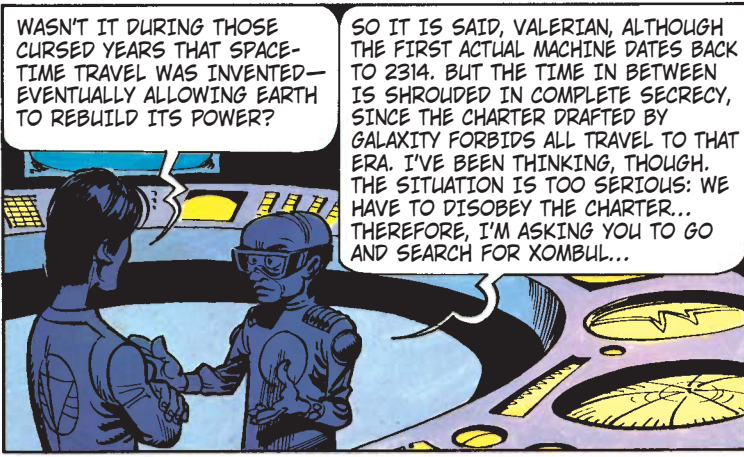
HERE, LOOK AT THESE PICTURES: THEY WERE TAKEN FROM ONE OF THE PRIMITIVE SATELLITES THAT USED TO ORBIT THE EARTH BACK THEN. THEY'RE THE ONLY DOCUMENTS WE HAVE—AND THEY WERE DAMAGED BY RADIATION...



IN 1986, A HYDROGEN BOMB DEPOT LOCATED NEAR THE NORTH POLE ACCIDENTALLY BLEW UP. HERE YOU CAN SEE A SNAPSHOT OF THE EXPLOSION. THE ICECAPS IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO MELT... THE CLIMATE BECAME MUCH HOTTER ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE, AND THE SEA LEVEL ROSE BY SEVERAL DOZEN FEET, SWALLOWING MOST LARGE CITIES...



EVERYTHING HAPPENED VERY QUICKLY! TWO WEEKS LATER, THE VERY SHAPE OF THE CONTINENTS HAD CHANGED BEYOND RECOGNITION. NATIONS HAD BROKEN UP; SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES HAD BEEN LOST FOREVER...

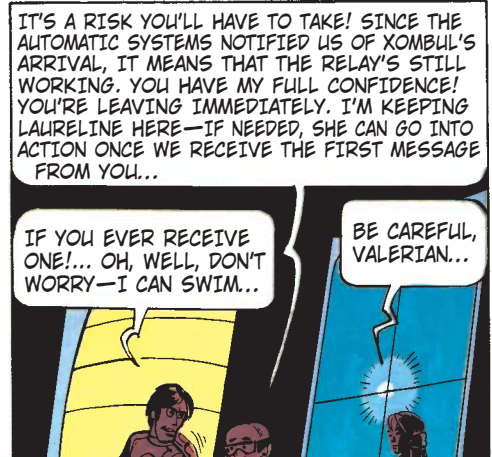


WASN'T IT DURING THOSE CURSED YEARS THAT SPACE-TIME TRAVEL WAS INVENTED—EVENTUALLY ALLOWING EARTH TO REBUILD ITS POWER?

SO IT IS SAID, VALERIAN, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST ACTUAL MACHINE DATES BACK TO 2314. BUT THE TIME IN BETWEEN IS SHROUDED IN COMPLETE SECRECY, SINCE THE CHARTER DRAFTED BY GALAXY FORBIDS ALL TRAVEL TO THAT ERA. I'VE BEEN THINKING, THOUGH. THE SITUATION IS TOO SERIOUS: WE HAVE TO DISOBEY THE CHARTER... THEREFORE, I'M ASKING YOU TO GO AND SEARCH FOR XOMBUL...



BUT... SIR, THE ZONE IS FORBIDDEN; WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SHAPE THE RELAYS ARE IN! WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF MY SPACE-TIMER MATERIALISES UNDER 200 FEET OF WATER?



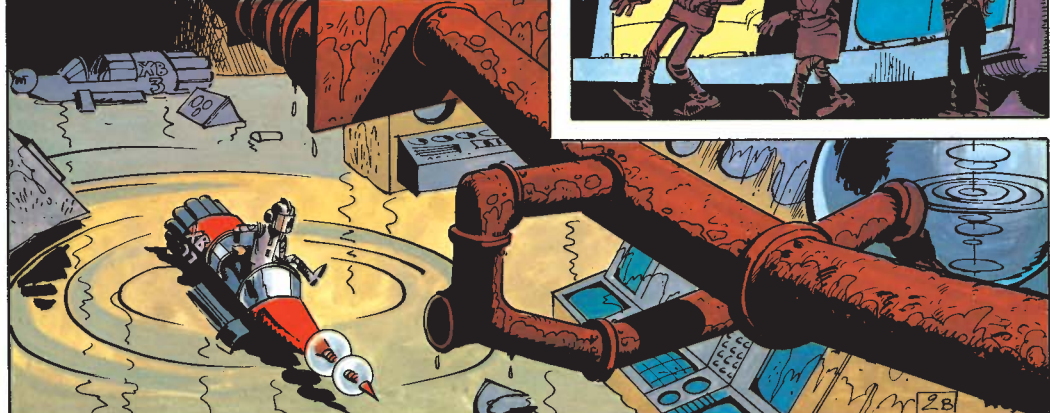
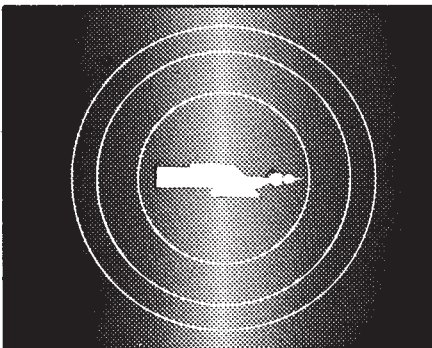
IT'S A RISK YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE! SINCE THE AUTOMATIC SYSTEMS NOTIFIED US OF XOMBUL'S ARRIVAL, IT MEANS THAT THE RELAY'S STILL WORKING. YOU HAVE MY FULL CONFIDENCE! YOU'RE LEAVING IMMEDIATELY. I'M KEEPING LAURELINE HERE—IF NEEDED, SHE CAN GO INTO ACTION ONCE WE RECEIVE THE FIRST MESSAGE FROM YOU...

IF YOU EVER RECEIVE ONE!... OH, WELL, DON'T WORRY—I CAN SWIM...

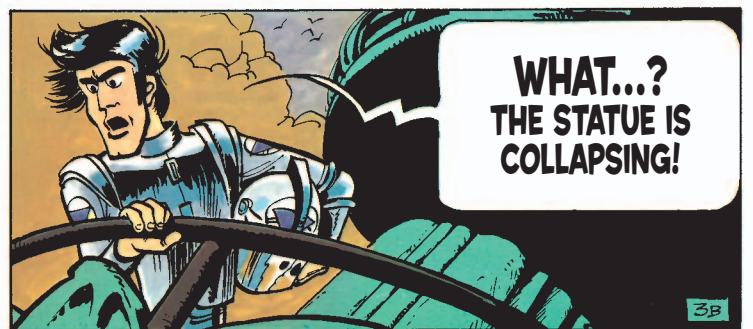
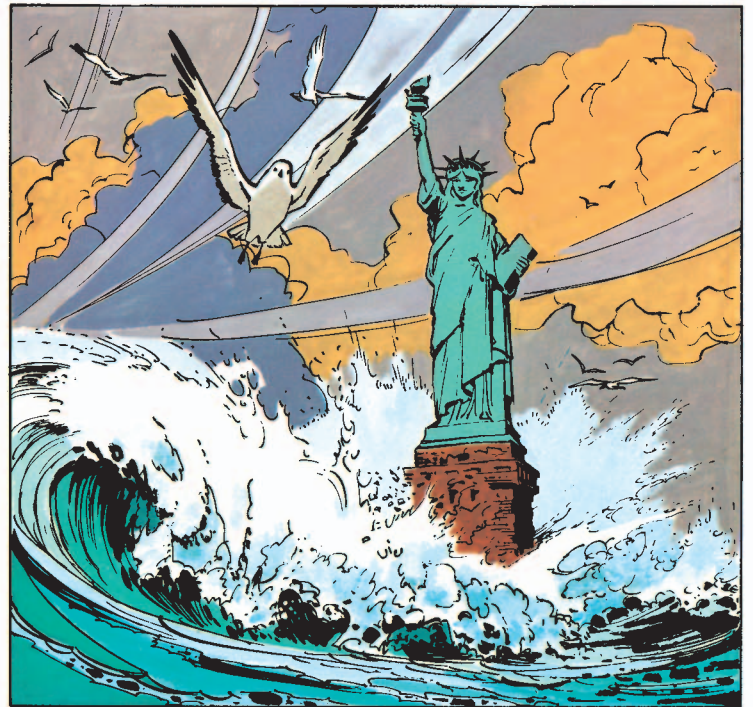
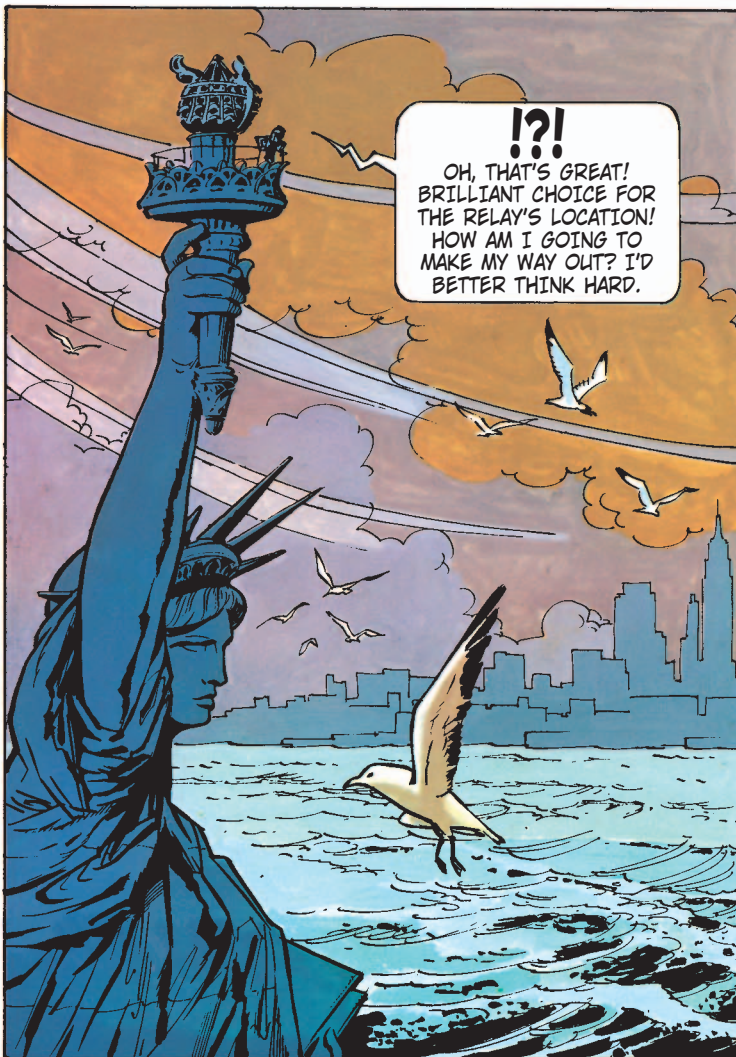
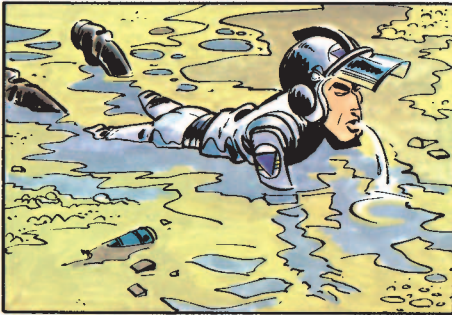
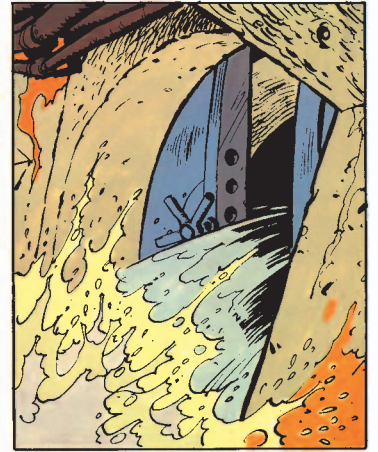
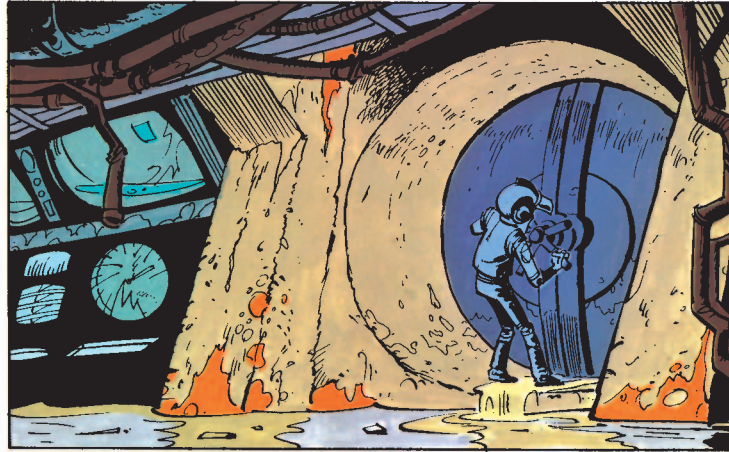
BE CAREFUL, VALERIAN...

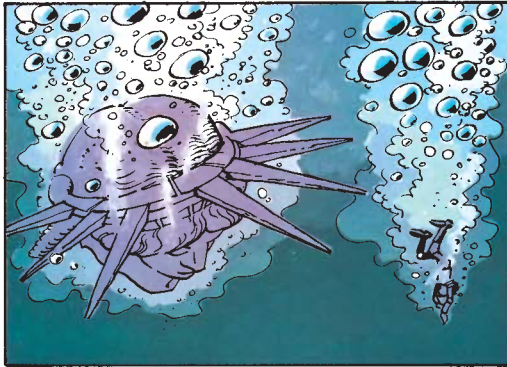
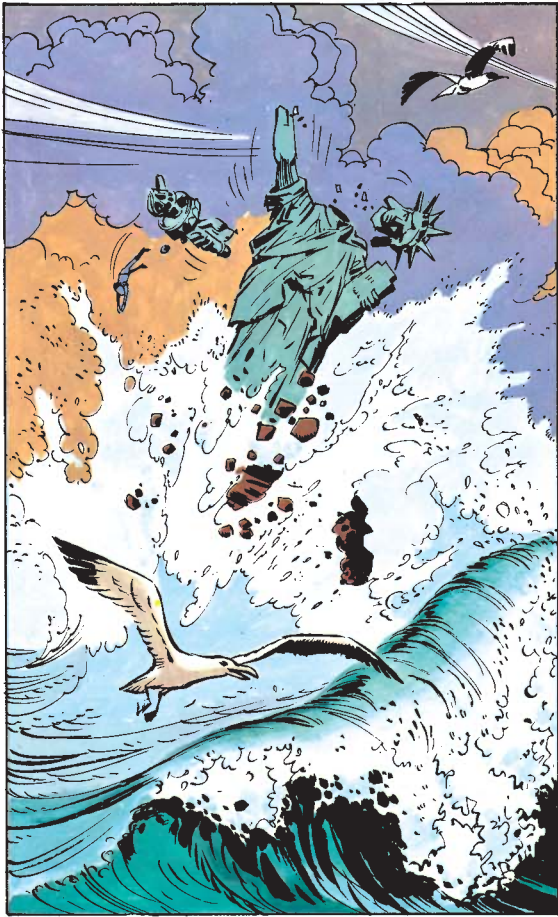
AND AFTER SOME QUICK PREPARATIONS, IN AN INSTANT VALERIAN'S SPACE-TIMER CROSSES THE CENTURIES SEPARATING GALAXY FROM...

... NEW YORK, 1986!

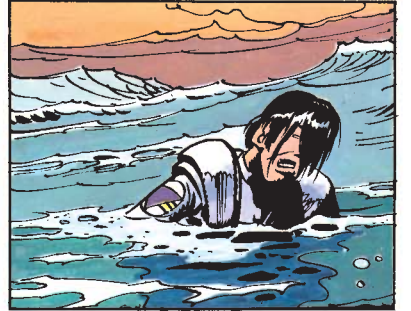


WELL, THE RELAY'S NOT QUITE A FISH TANK YET, BUT IT'S WELL ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING ONE! I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE QUICK...

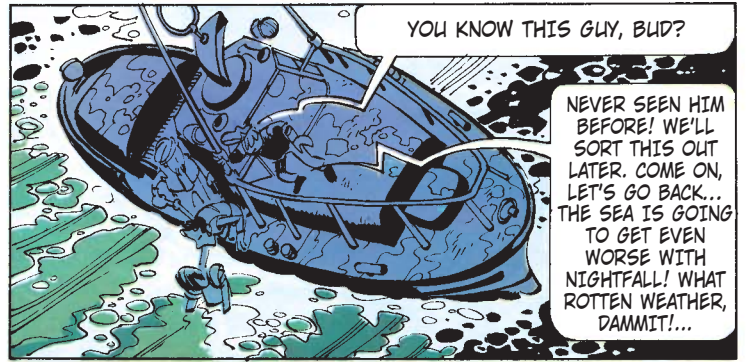
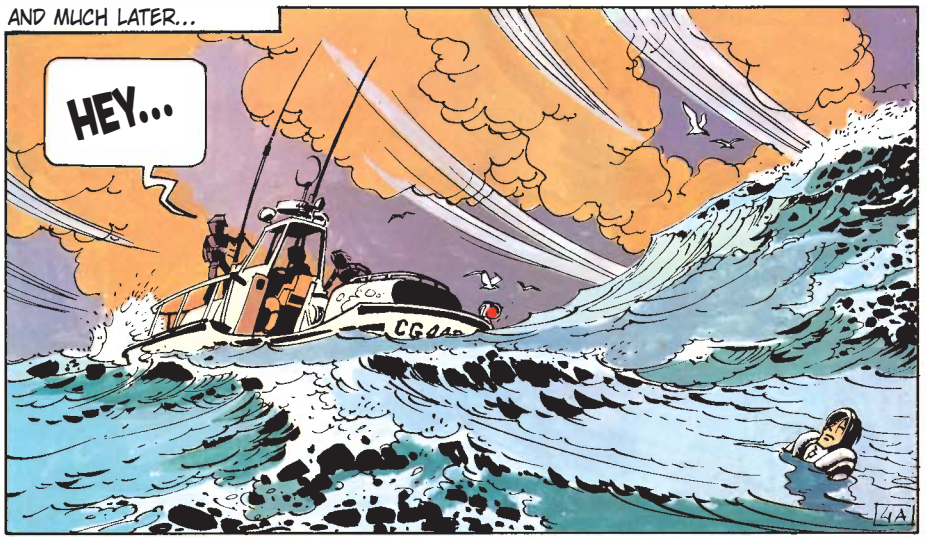




KNOCKED OUT BY THE IMPACT WITH THE WATER, VALERIAN OWES HIS SURVIVAL TO THE LIFE PRESERVER BUILT INTO HIS UNIFORM...



AND MUCH LATER...



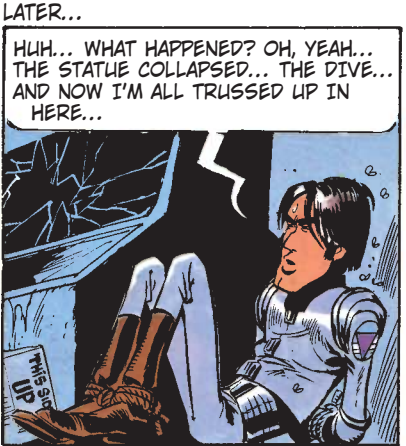


IN THE FLOODED STREETS OF NEW YORK, THE LAUNCH SLOWLY THREADS ITS WAY THROUGH THE UNHEALTHFUL VEGETATION THAT FLOURISHES IN THE SWELTERING HEAT...

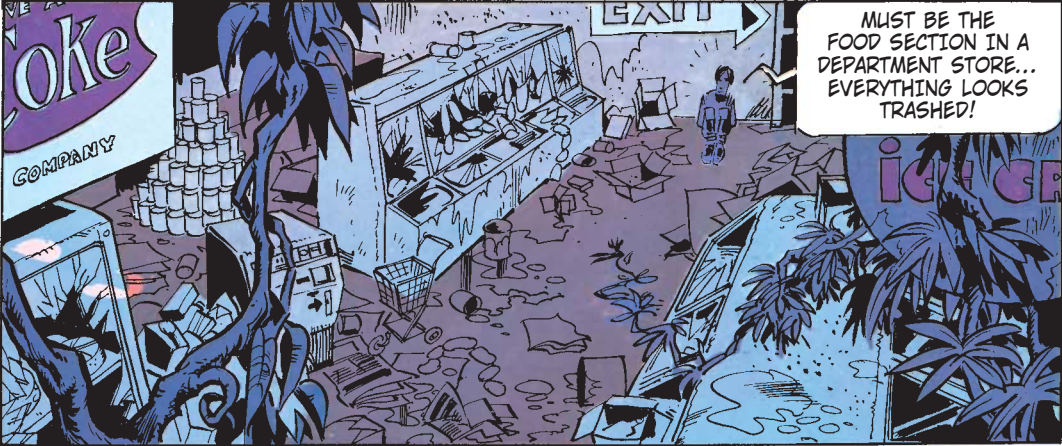


ALFONSO, YOU TIE HIM UP AND LEAVE HIM IN THE TWELFTH-FLOOR STOREROOM... WE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM LATER! WE'RE LEAVING IN TWO MINUTES TO FINISH THE WORK...

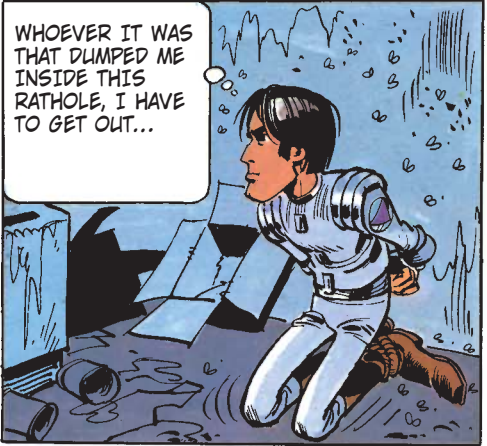
OK, BUD, WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK!



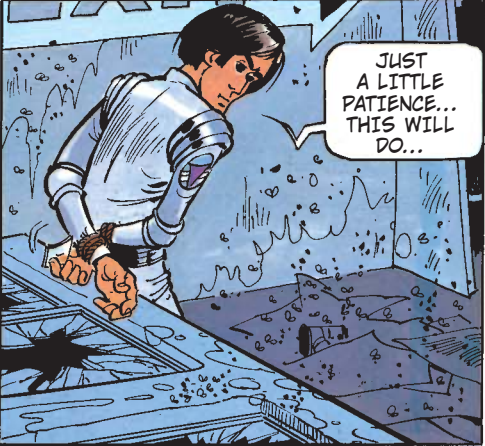
LATER...
HUH... WHAT HAPPENED? OH, YEAH... THE STATUE COLLAPSED... THE DIVE... AND NOW I'M ALL TRUSSSED UP IN HERE...



MUST BE THE FOOD SECTION IN A DEPARTMENT STORE... EVERYTHING LOOKS TRASHED!



WHOEVER IT WAS THAT DUMPED ME INSIDE THIS RATHOLE, I HAVE TO GET OUT...



JUST A LITTLE PATIENCE... THIS WILL DO...



A FEW MINUTES LATER...
THERE, THAT'S DONE! AND IT SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS JUST IN TIME—I'M ABOUT TO HAVE GUESTS...

SO! WE CAN HAVE A LITTLE CHAT WITH OUR FLOATING SURVIVOR AT LAST...

WITH ANY LUCK, I'LL FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT...

HEY, NUTS: ALFONSO TOLD YOU THAT'S WHERE HE'D LEFT THE GUY, RIGHT?... SO WHERE IS HE???

WHAT?! YOU DON'T REMEMBER?! MAN, YOU'RE LOSING IT COMPLETELY, NUTS!... I'M WARNING YOU...

FORGET IT, BUD! IF WE WANT TO FINISH CLEANING UP THE FIFTH AVENUE JEWELLERS TODAY, WE'D BETTER GET A MOVE ON!

GOT IT... THESE CLOWNS ARE RANSACKING THE CITY! NOTHING TO DO WITH XOMBUL...

... I'M OUT OF HERE! HEY!

WHOA! LOOK AT THE STRANGE RATS YOU FIND AROUND HERE!!!

LET'S GET HIM!!!

ANOTHER FLOOR OR TWO AND I SHOULD BE AT WATER LEVEL. PERHAPS I'LL MANAGE TO SHAKE THEM OFF!

DIVING SUITS UP

MOMENTS LATER AND A FEW FLOORS DOWN...

MACYS 4th FLOOR UP

BUD! I SAW SOMETHING PASS BY THE WINDOW... HE MUST HAVE DIVED!

WHERE THE HELL DID THAT GUY GO?

THERE! THAT'S HIM!

LET'S GET THE LAUNCH!!

TWO FLOORS UP...

THEY BOUGHT IT! NO NEED TO THROW ANOTHER DUMMY... ESPECIALLY A BRIDE... AND NOW, LET'S VAMOOSE!

DAMN! A DUMMY IN A WEDDING TUX!

WE'VE BEEN HAD!

NO! LOOK OVER THERE!

