

# DAGON

#134, APA-Q DISTRIBUTION #52 (Two years, forsooth!)

10 September 1976

## STREAK GORDON - XXIII

(In his throne room in the Flying City, King Vulgar of the Hawkpersons is relaxing with two not altogether unwilling female prisoners - Dyke Ardent of Earth, and Princess Aroma, daughter and heiress very presumptive of Emperor Wang of Planet Porno. The King is sprawled in his throne, his back against one arm with his wings hanging over its back, and his legs over the other. Aroma is seated in his lap holding a nottle of aerophyte wine, and Dyke is sprawled on the floor by the throne, King Vulgar's right hand caressing her blond hair, a color unheard-of on that planet.)

KING VULGAR: So you're not going along with daddy's war?

AROMA: Politics is a bore, and I'd rather be bored in some other fashion. That's why I rescued that big blond Earthman from the arena and tried to hole up with him here.

KING VULGAR (under his breath): Oh, great. Just when Wang needed a nice unifying war for political purposes, this delicious idiot gives him an excuse for making the war against us.

AROMA: Whad'ja say, Kingie?

KING VULGAR: You, my dear, are a delicious little idiot. Howza'bout another glass of wine?

DYKE: Me too, Your Majesty?

(AROMA produces three glasses from a compartment in the throne, and does the honors. The camera pans away from the throne, and towards the secret panel behind which MOTHER LEADFEATHER is concealed. On the panel hangs a picture of the King's late father, King Aelfgar. In the grand tradition, the eyes of this picture are pierced to accomodate a camera and the microphone of a tape recorder. The camera pans right through the picture and panel, and reveals MOTHER L. operating them from a secret passage.)

MOTHER L.: The old boy is putting on a good act. With all his body weight in which to lose it, he'll be able to stow away booze while these two kids get stonkered. Wang won't be able to claim the Hawkfolk kidnapped his poor innocent daughter when these films get out. I think I'll print a few duplicates - if Wang wins after all, I'll be able to sell them under the counter in the more strait-laced parts of the planet for a nice piece of change.

(The camera gets back to the KING, DYKE, and AROMA. In the interim AROMA has shed her few remaining clothes, and is running her fingers through a great mat of black hair on the King's chest. DYKE has put the King's hand in a more agreeable spot.)

KING VULGAR: Now which of you little dears will get first chance at-  
(The visiphone rings.)

KING VULGAR: May all of the Great God Tao's sphincters loosen upon this idiot! (Rises and answers the phone.) King Vulgar here - this better be important!

(Science Minister AUSTRING appears, with DR. JERKOFF behind him; they are phoning from the laboratory.)

AUSTRING: It is, Your Majesty. But we can't see you - is the vision switch on?

(The KING rips out the switch.)

KING: No, something's the matter with it. Send someone over to look at it tomorrow - not today.

AUSTRING: Sire, the Earth scientist has a solution to the energy shortage.

KING (brightens up for the first time since the visiphone rang): What is it?

DR. JERKOFF (steps forward): Your Majesty, with the superb technical facilities you have here in the Flying City, I can convert those reactors so that they'll operate on heavy water instead of coal. This will give much more energy, and the manpower freed from stoking the reactors can go to the war effort.

KING: That's fine as far as it goes. But where would we get the water? We're thousands of kilohowards from the nearest ocean.

DR. JERKOFF: Condense it from the air, and separate out the heavy water. Recycle all the water in the Flying City and use that too. Then extract the heavy hydrogen chemically, and-

KING: That could have been done years ago. But my ancestors found that those stoking crews were an excellent form of social control.

DR. JERKOFF: Make peace with Wang on a status quo ante basis, and as a gesture of fealty send your criminals and malcontents to his arenas instead of to the stoking crews. That will give him the people he needs for the Games, and then he won't .. This is have to make war on you for political purposes. He

can represent these captives as prisoners taken in a  
victorious war, which will satisfy his peoples' de-  
sire for national prestige. Then you can represent  
yourself as the man who drove away the tyrant Wang,  
and thus solve your public relations problem.

KING: Great! Jerkoff, you'll get the Order of the Silver Jess for this, as soon as - Say, just a squampus!  
One of my officers just reported to me that you and  
Streak Gordon had tried to escape and been sent to the  
stoking crews?

DR. JERKOFF: Yes, that musclebound idiot forced me out of  
the lab, and I was with him when he was captured. It  
was being on the stoking crew that gave me my idea. Then he tried  
to escape again and got five prisoners killed. Captain Accipit was  
bringing us to you when Minister Austring met him and ordered me  
returned to the lab.

KING: So here's what you do. Austring, you see that Jerkoff has every-  
one and everything he needs to convert those reactors. Do them one  
at a time so we can keep 'em flying. As energy is released, put it  
into military use. Tell Azor at the Foreign Ministry to arrange a  
truce, and put the Earthman's suggestion to Wang - no, don't brace  
Wang until that increased energy availability starts showing re-  
sults. AND DON'T BOTHER ME AGAIN THIS EVENING!

(JERKOFF and AUSTRING ring off, and the visiscreen darkens. The

KING returns to his throne, where AROMA and DYKE have been keeping each  
other's steam up. He sits down and takes one on each knee. As he does,  
there comes a loud knock on the door.

ACCIPIT'S VOICE: Urgent business, Your Majesty! I've captured the es-  
caped Earth prisoner Gordon, but the stoking crews can't hold him.  
I don't want to take responsibility for an interplanetary incident,  
so I've brought him to you.

(KING VULGAR does a royal slow burn to fade-out.)

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DAGON is published on alternate Friday evenings by John Boardman, 234 E.  
19th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11226, for APA-Q and others.