

BOOK 19

GOSCINNY AND UDERZO

Asterix

and
Caesar's Gift



HODDER DARGAUD

OUR STORY OPENS MELODIOUSLY IN A BAR IN A DISREPUTABLE PART OF ROME. AS THEY USED TO SAY IN THE COLLOQUIAL IDIOM OF THE TIME, 'VINUM ET MUSICA LAETIFICANT COR'...

♪ AND WHEN I'M DEAD DON'T BURY ME AT ALL, ♪ JUST PICKLE MY BONES IN ALCOHOL, ♪ AN AMPHORA OF WINE AT MY HEAD AND FEET, ♪ AND THEN I'M SURE MY BONES WILL KEEP....

HIC!... DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM!

KISS ME GOODNIGHT, CENTURION... CENTURION, BE A MATER TO ME...

SHUT UP, TREMENSDELIRIOUS, YOU'LL BRING THE PATROL DOWN ON US!

PATROL? HUH! WHAT'SH THE PATROL MATTER? WE'RE FINISHED WITH PATROLSH!

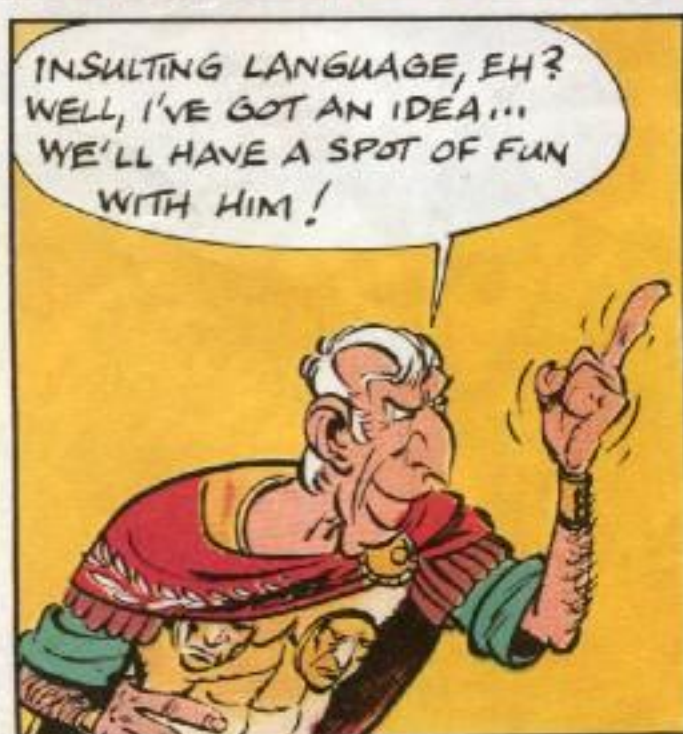
NOT QUITE, WE AREN'T, SO CALM DOWN!

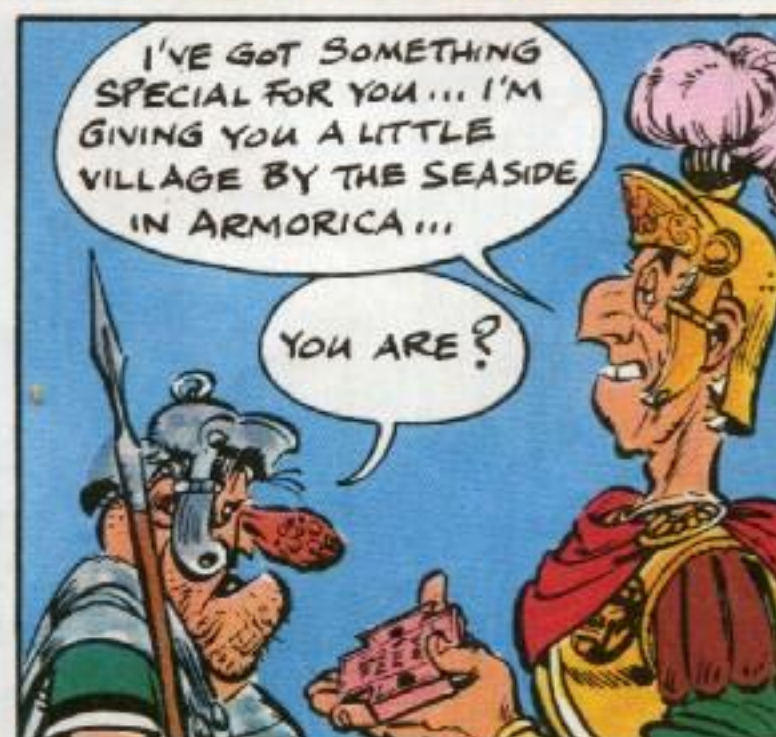
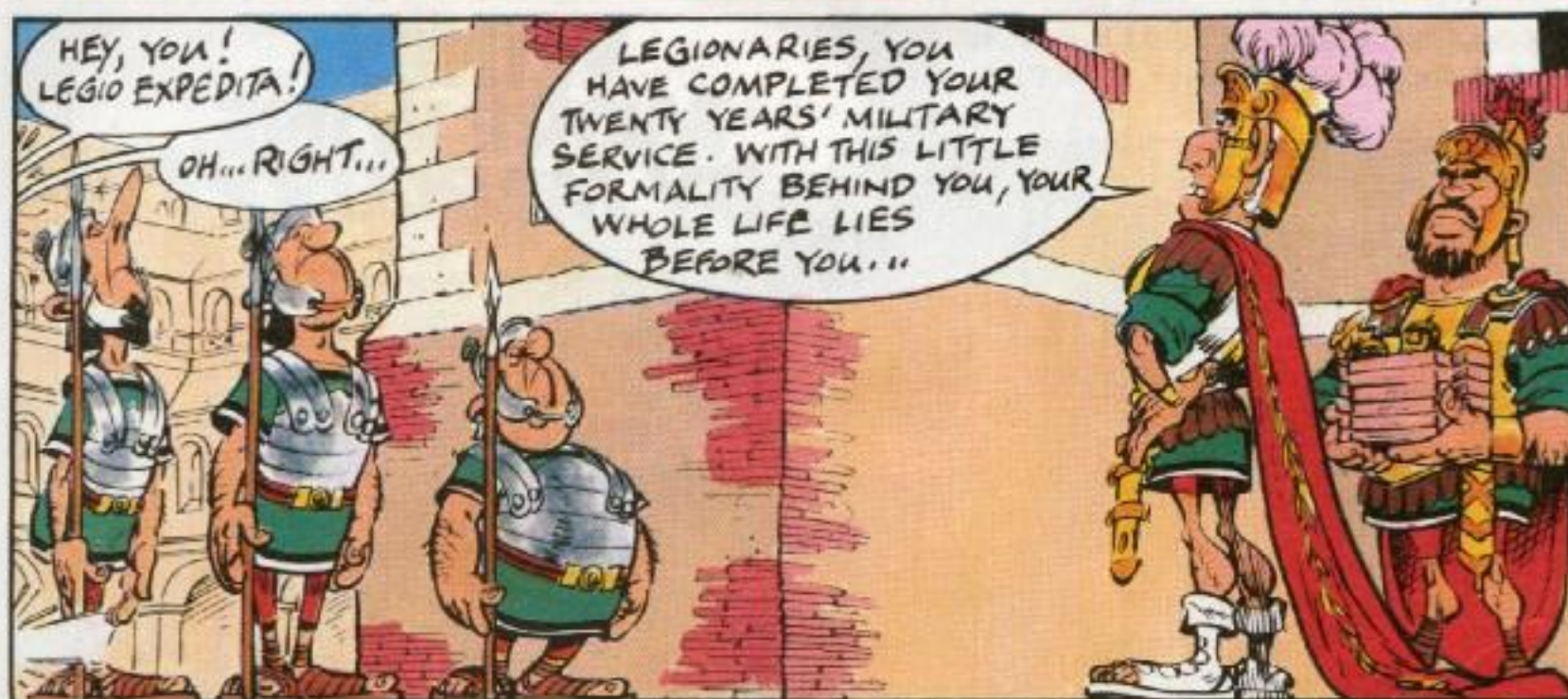
HOW LONG HAVE YOU DONE IN THE ARMY?

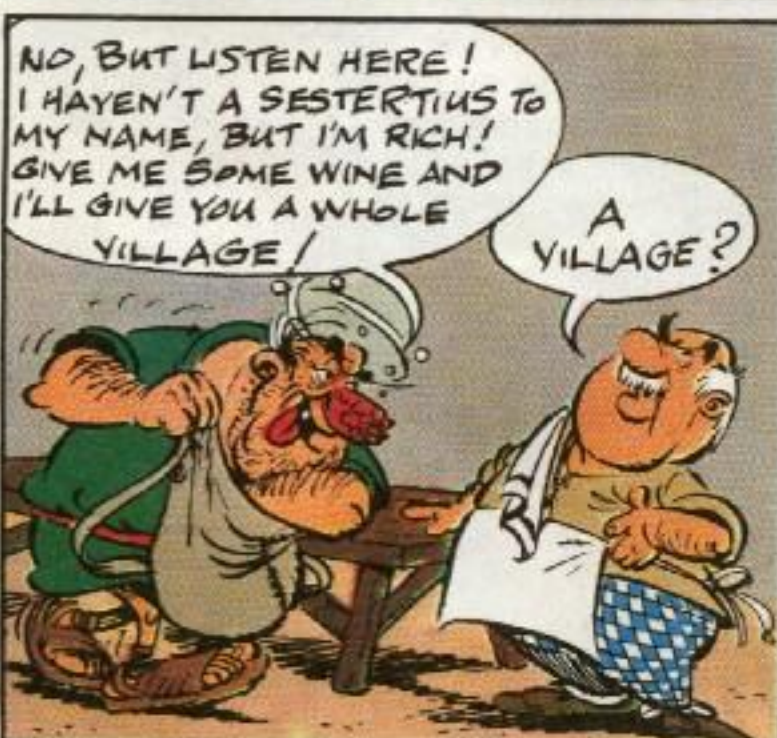
TWENTY YEARS, SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE. AND TOMORROW JULIUS CAESAR'S GIVING US OUR HONESTA MISSIO! * WITH A FREE GIFT OF A PLOT OF LAND TOO!

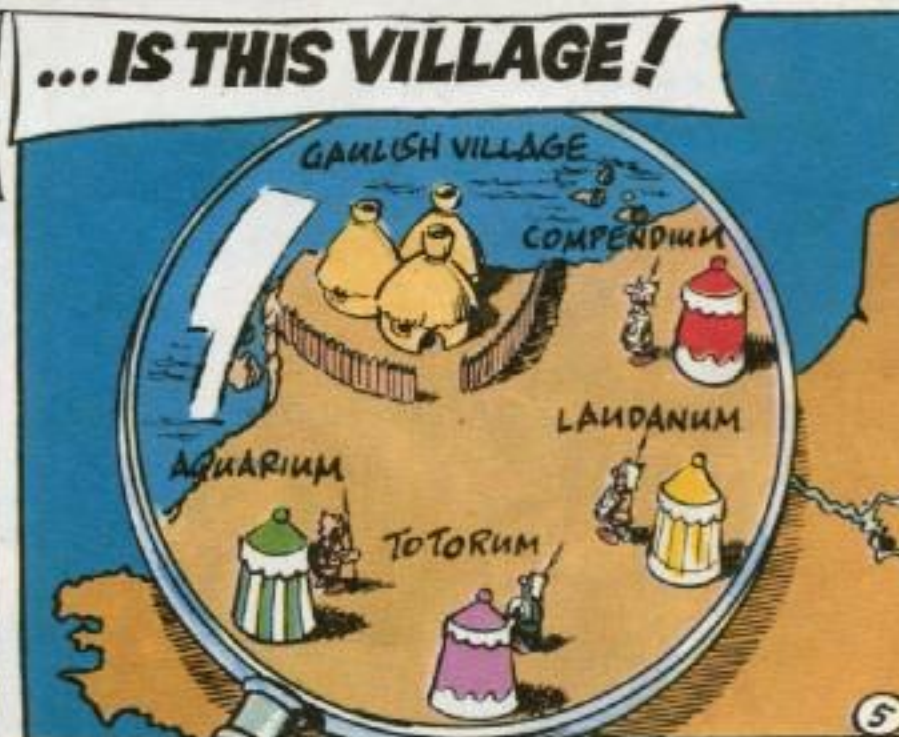
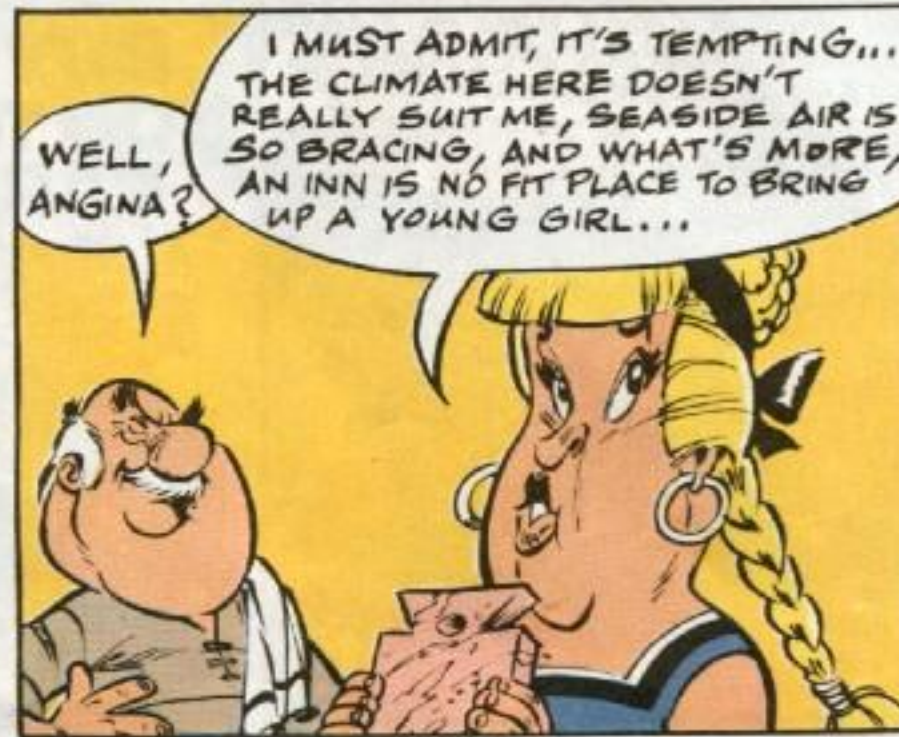
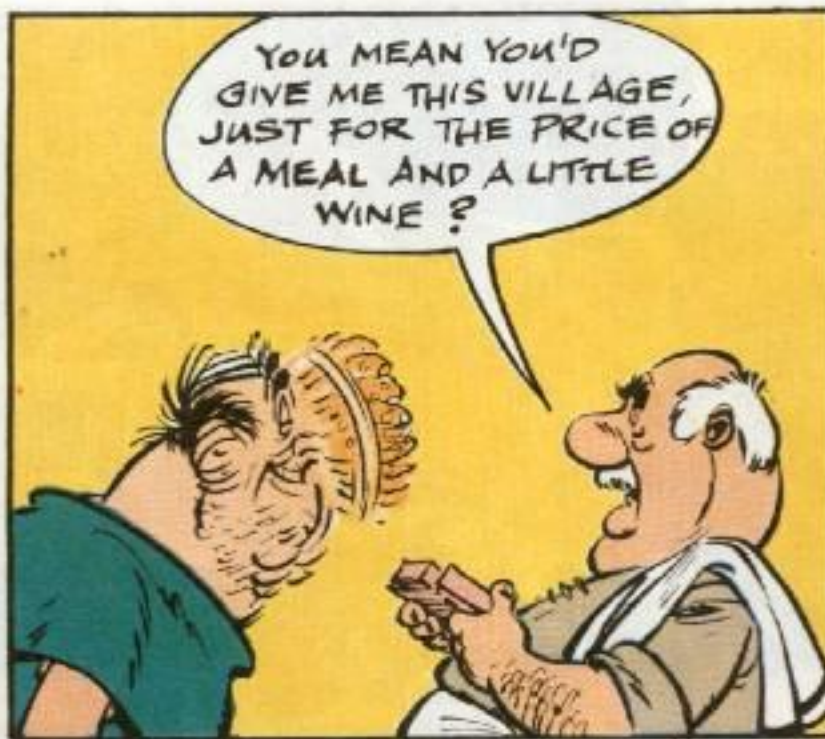
* DEMOB

JULIUSH CAESAR! HUH! WANT TO KNOW WHAT I THINK OF JULIUSH CAESAR?









YES, A TYPICAL LITTLE GAULISH VILLAGE,
COMPLETE WITH WARRIORS, CRAFTSMEN,
TRADESMEN, DRUID AND BARD...



... AND A CHIEF WHO IS EASY-
GOING, THOUGH INCLINED TO
STAND ON CEREMONY...

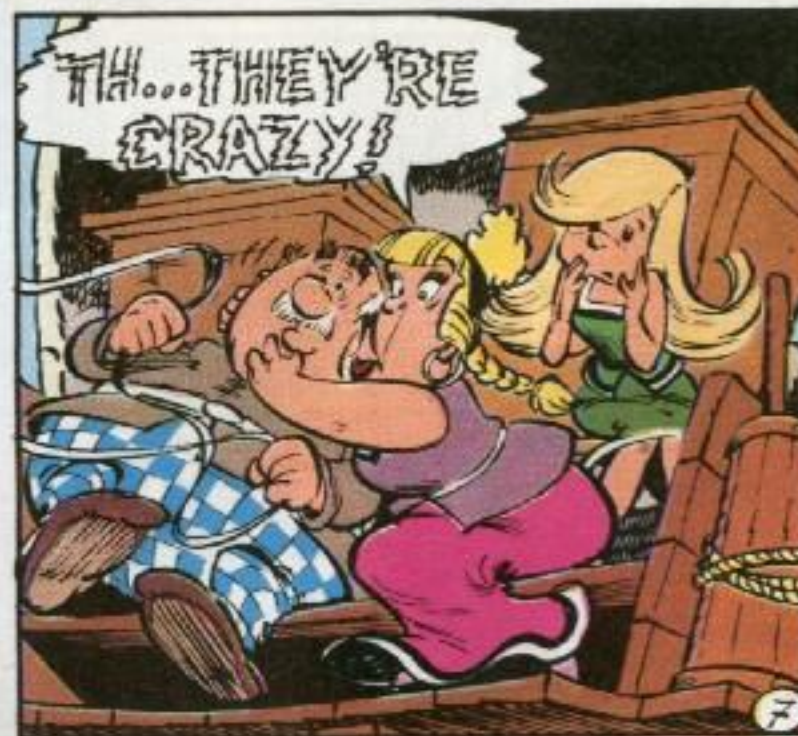
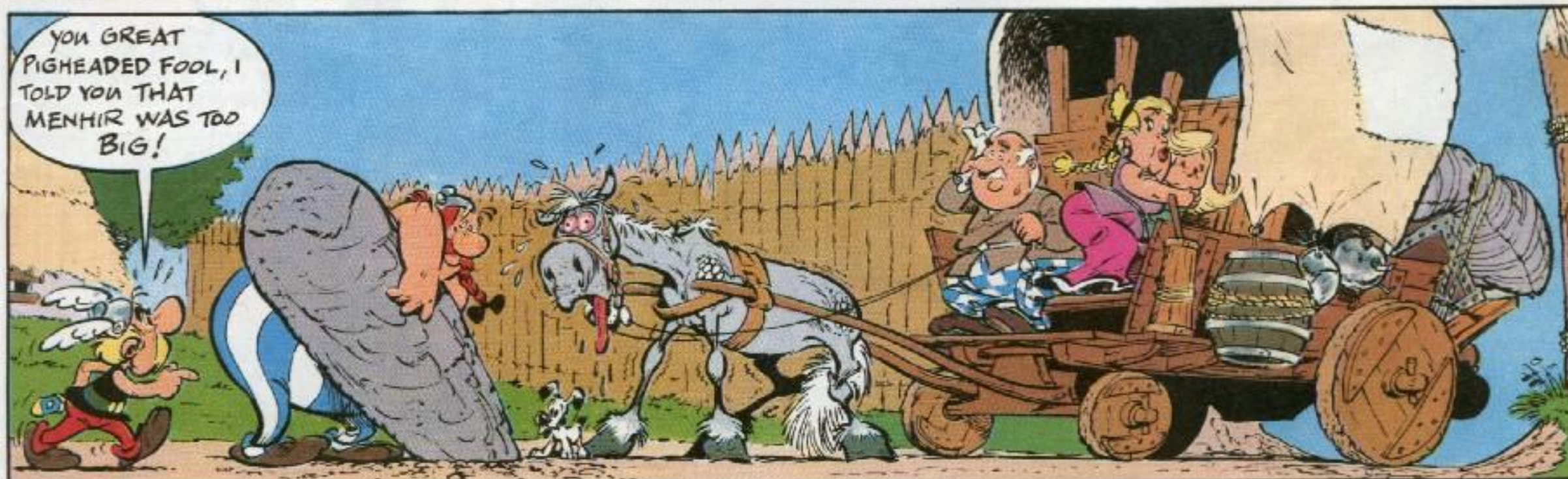
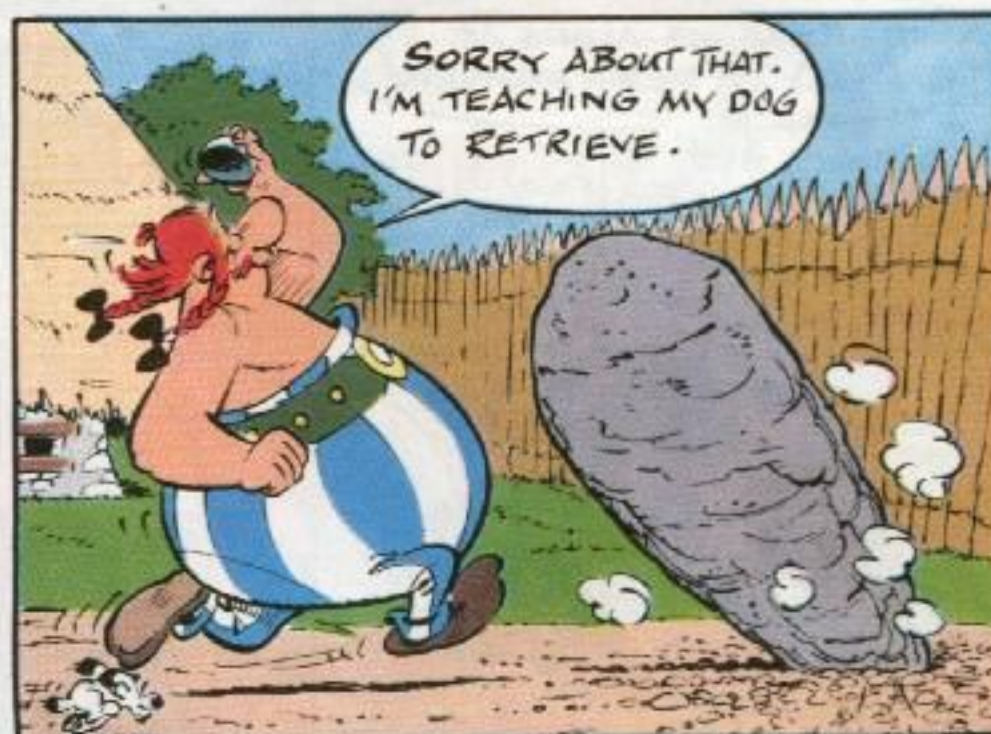
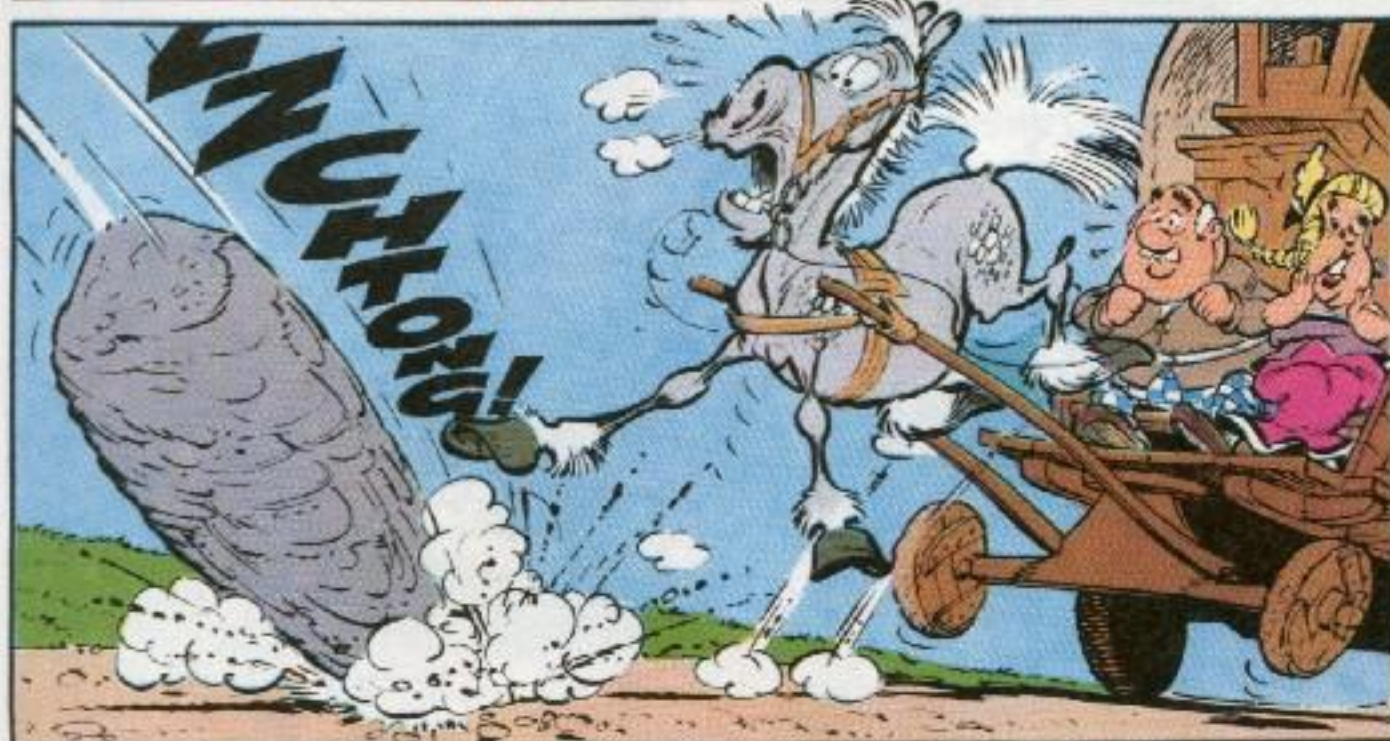
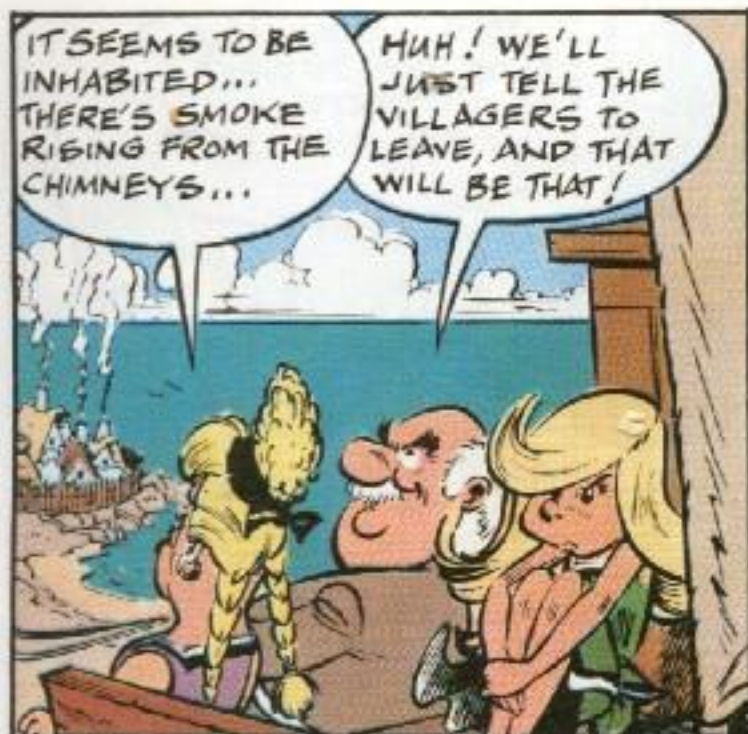


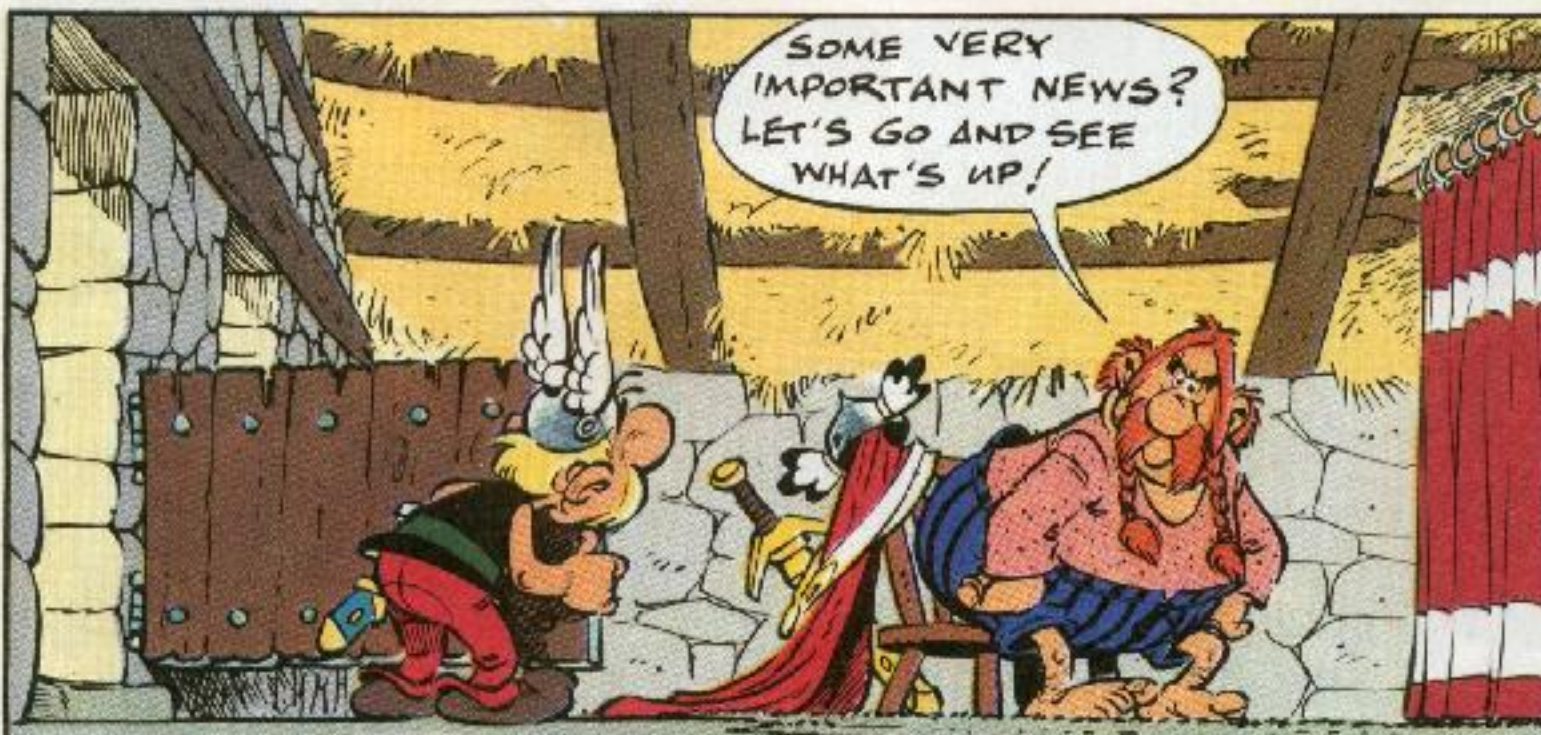
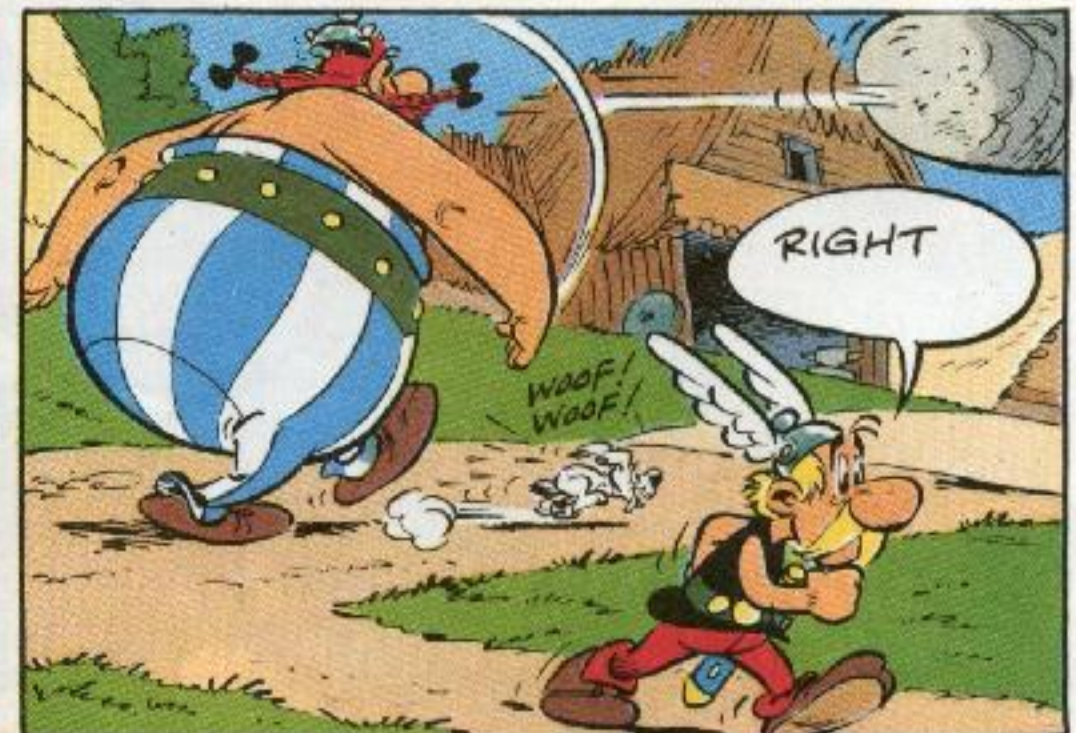
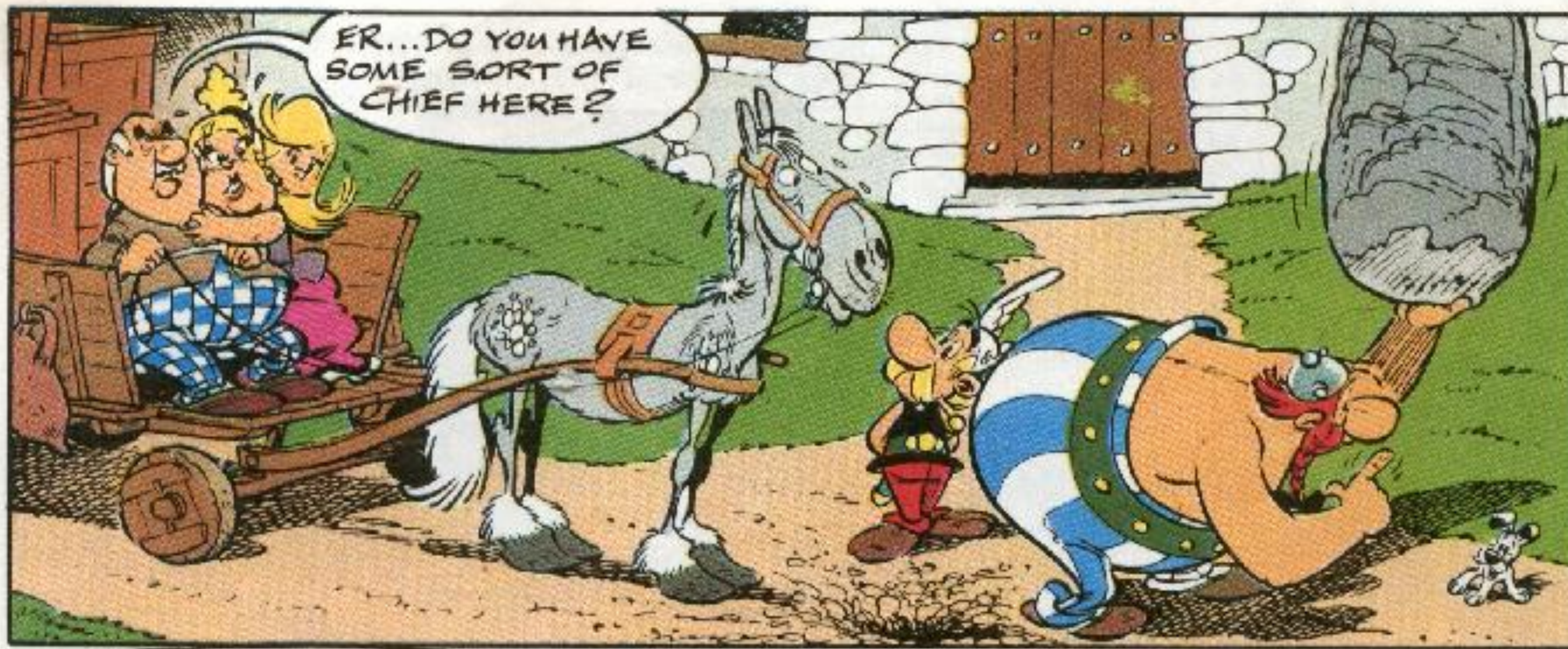
**BUT DIDN'T I FORBID
YOU TO SNEEZE WHEN
CARRYING ME?**



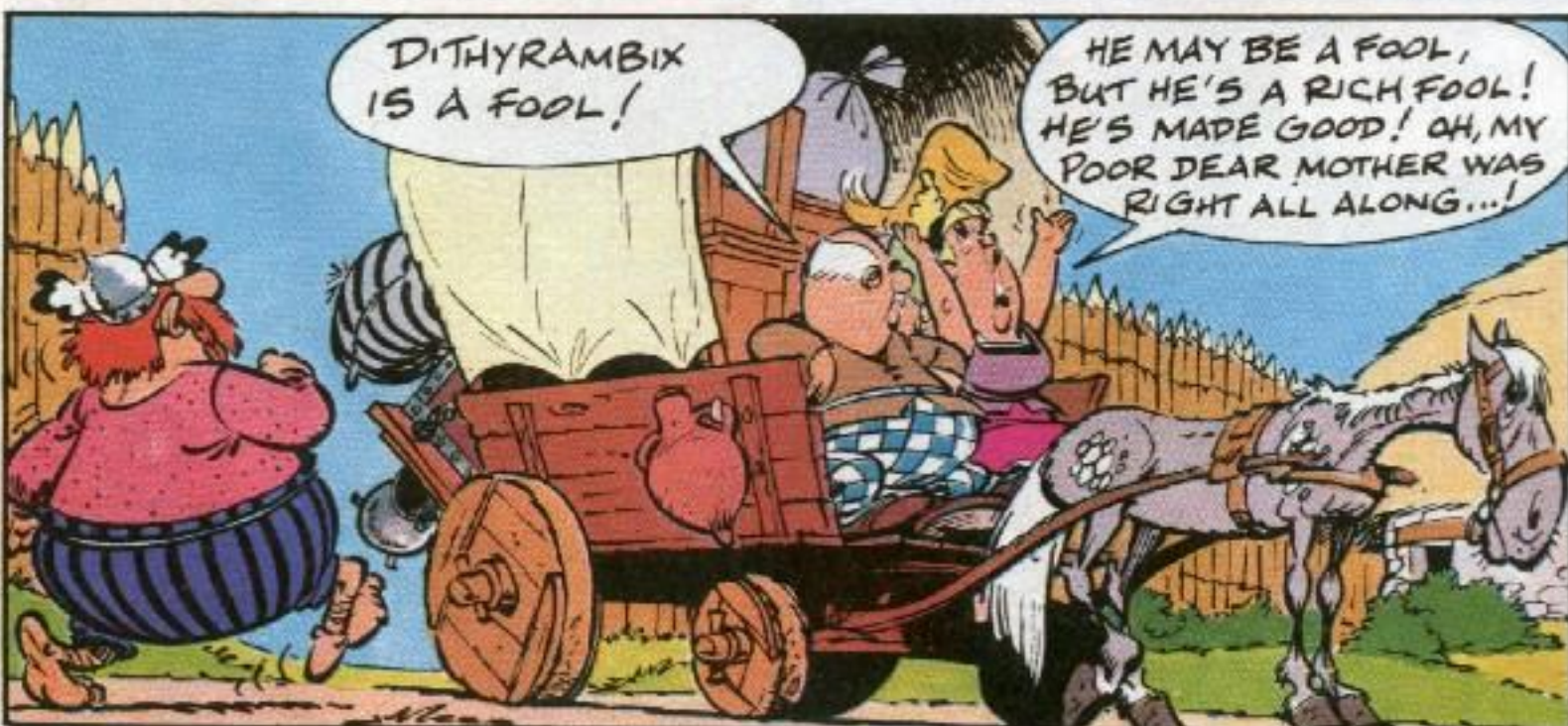
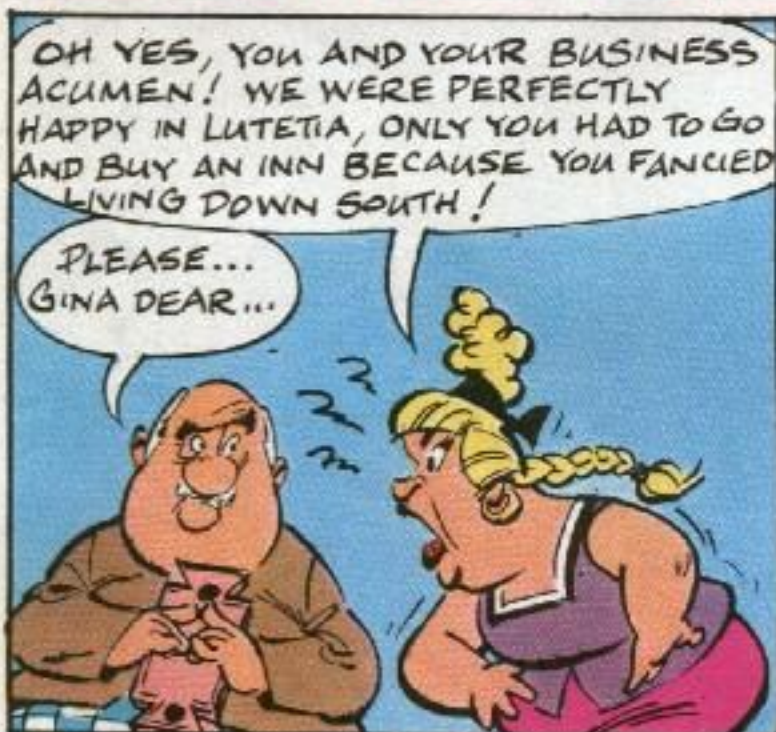
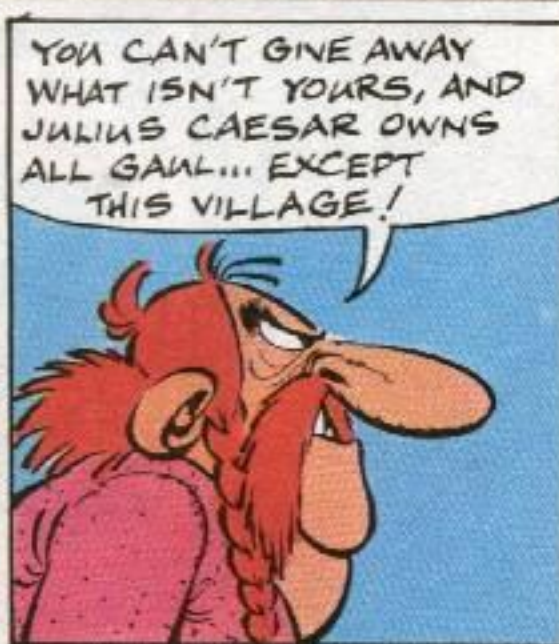
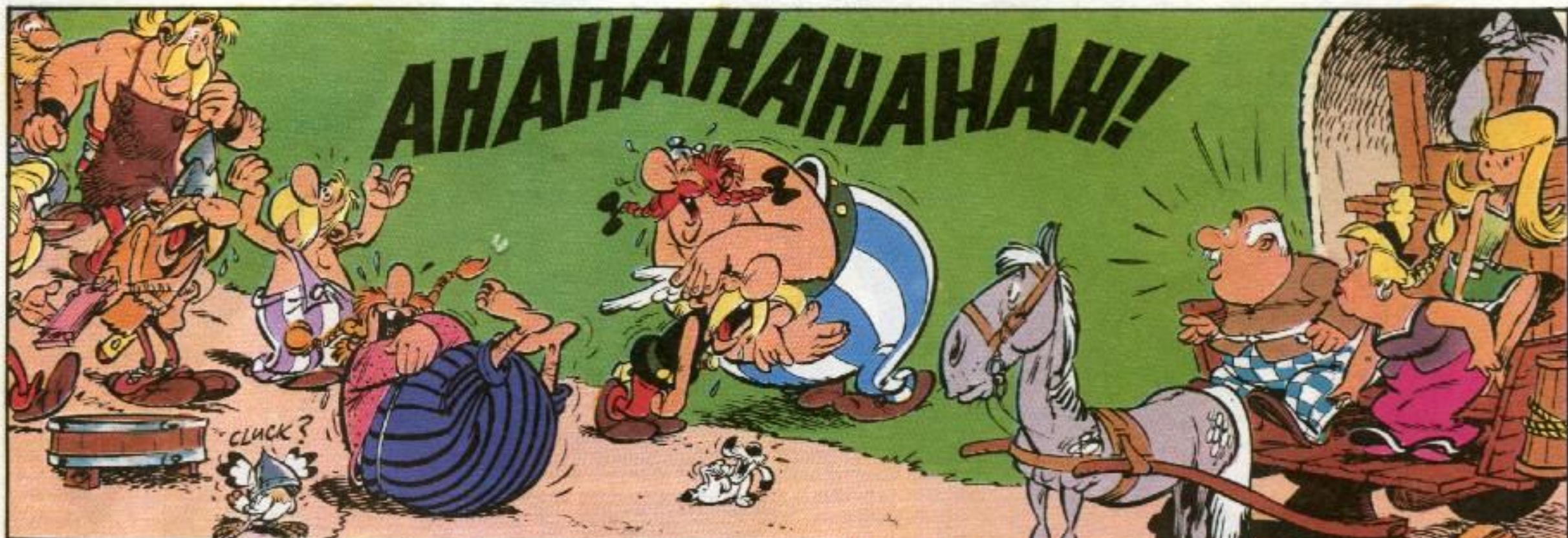
OFF
WE GO!

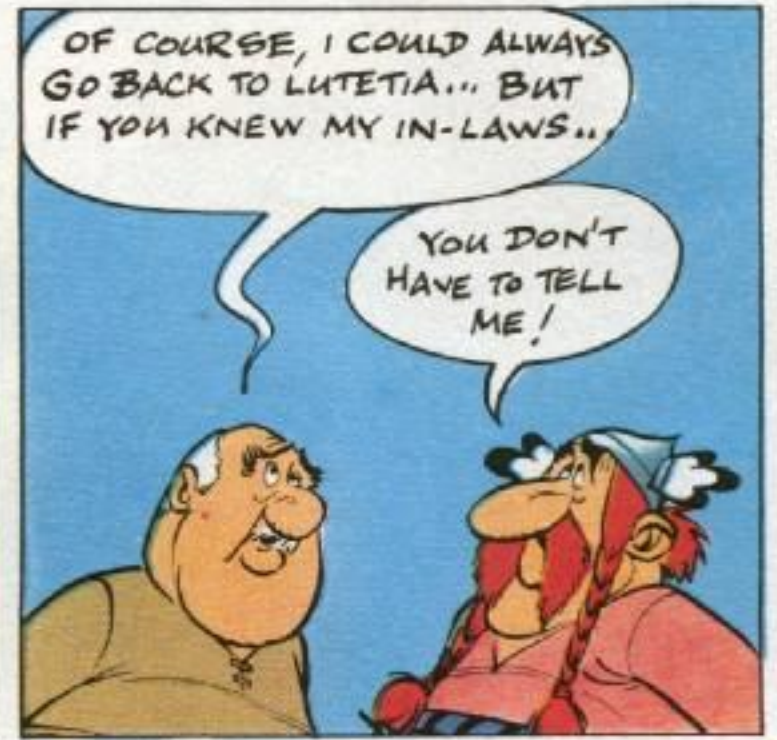














WHAT? YOU MEAN WE'VE LEFT OUR NICE INN AT ARAUSIO JUST TO OPEN ANOTHER IN THIS WRETCHED VILLAGE, WHEN THE WHOLE PLACE BELONGS TO US ANYWAY?



BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO GIVE US THE VILLAGE!

OH, LET'S GO BACK TO UNCLE DITHYRAMBIX IN LUTETIA!



NO, NO! WE SHALL BE VERY COMFORTABLE HERE... AND THE AIR'S SO BRACING!

BRACING? IT STINKS OF ROTTEN FISH!



WE'LL AIR THE HOUSE OUT... ANYWAY, THAT'S THE SMELL OF THE SEA!



IT'S SOME TIME SINCE ANY FISH SMELLING LIKE THAT SAW THE SEA!



IT'S FUN HAVING NEW PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE, ISN'T IT, GETAFIX?

WELL, I HAVE A NOTION WE SHAN'T BE BORED. EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT THEM, ANYWAY



SHE'S ALMOST AS LIGHT AS YOU DOGMATIX!

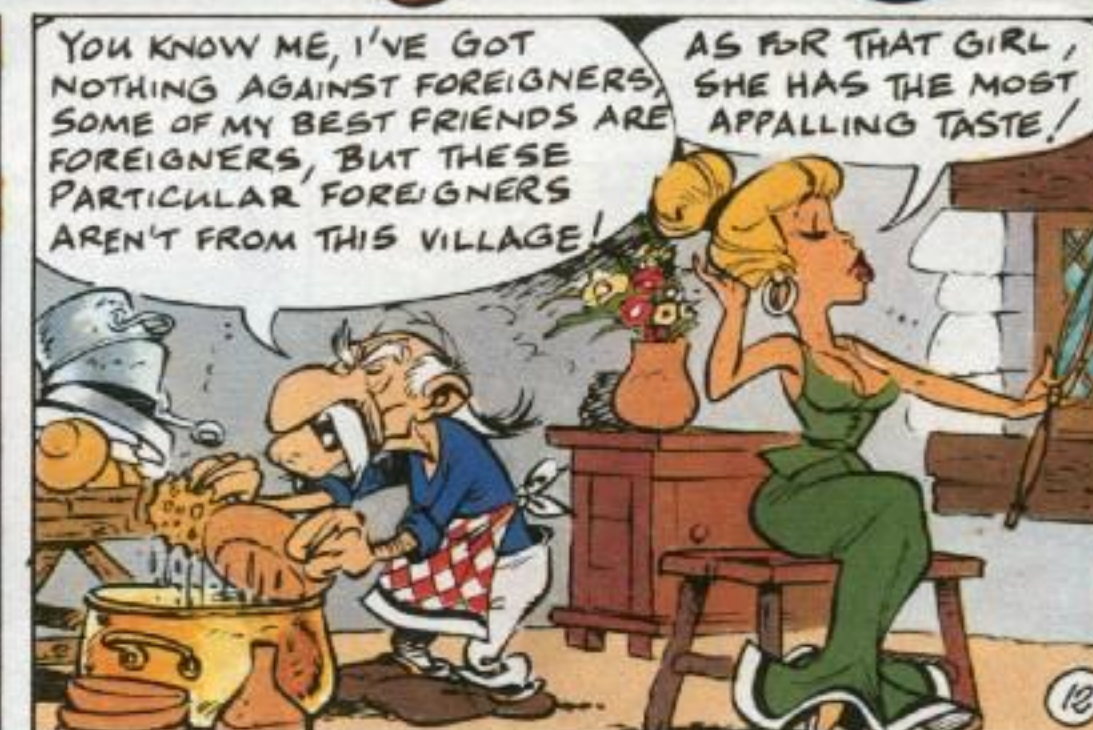


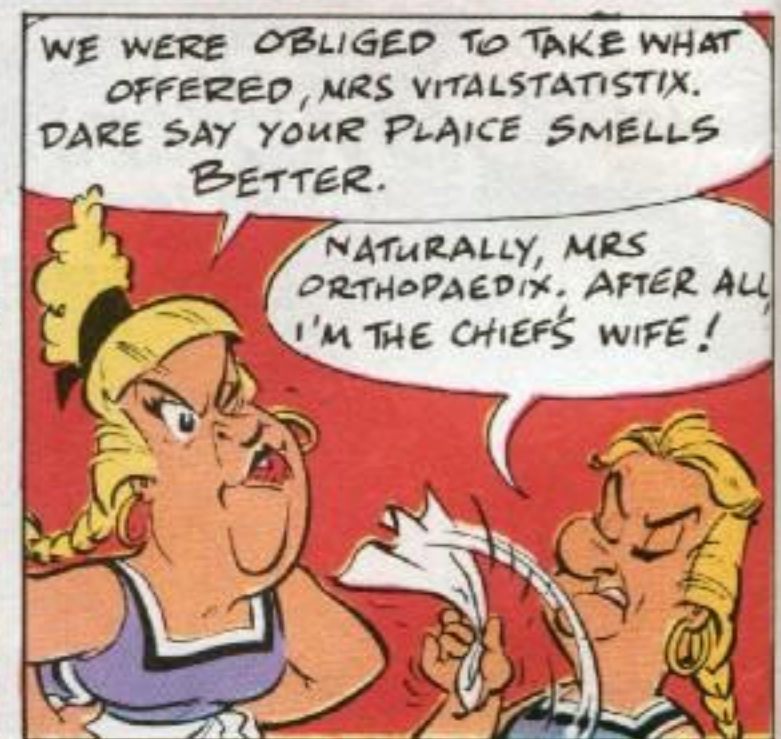
NEW PEOPLE? WHAT NEW PEOPLE?



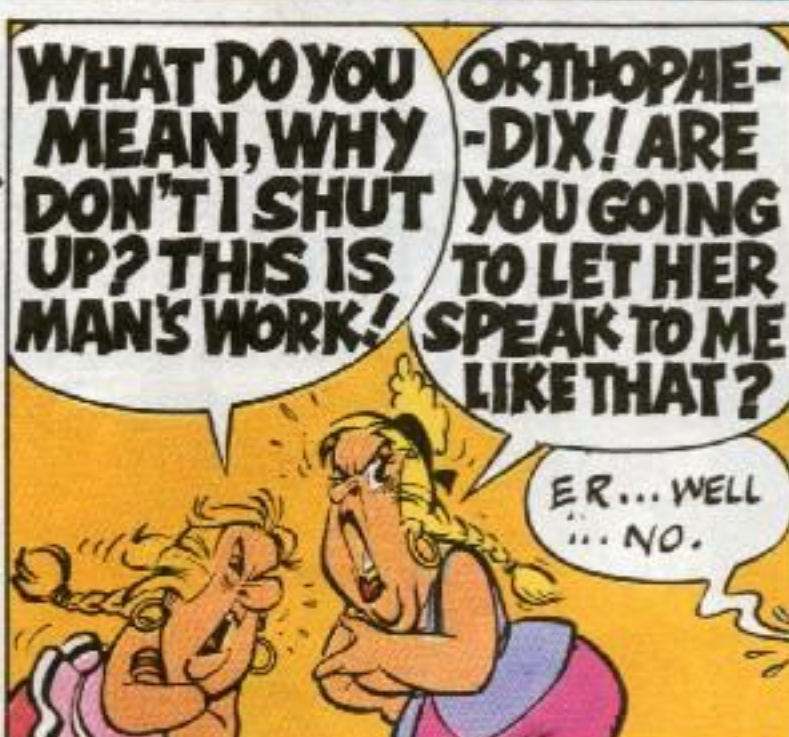
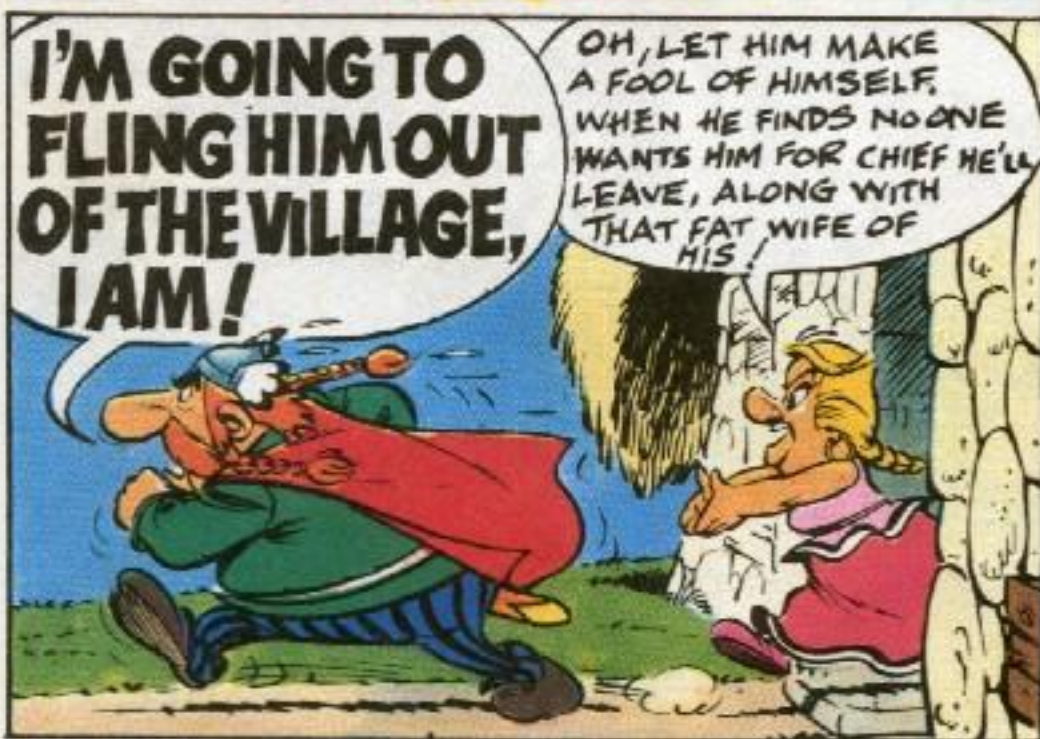
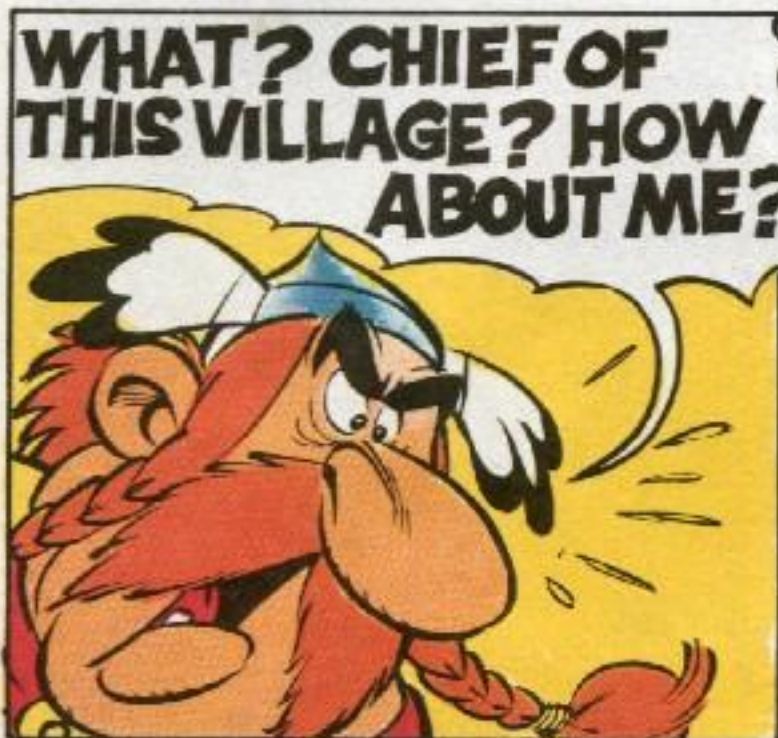
YOU KNOW ME, I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST FOREIGNERS. SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE FOREIGNERS, BUT THESE PARTICULAR FOREIGNERS AREN'T FROM THIS VILLAGE!

AS FOR THAT GIRL, SHE HAS THE MOST APPALLING TASTE!











YOU WANTED ME, VITALSTATISTIX?

THAT'S RIGHT, CACOPHONIX... I'VE GOT A LITTLE JOB FOR YOU...



IT'S NOT THAT I DOUBT THEIR LOYALTY, EXACTLY, BUT I'D LIKE YOU TO SOUND OUT OUR FRIENDS: SEE IF THEY WANT A CHANGE OF CHIEF.



LATER...



WELL, WHAT NEWS?



GERIATRIX IS BACKING YOU. HE SAYS HE'S GOT NOTHING AGAINST FOREIGNERS BUT THEY DON'T BELONG HERE. THE OTHERS DON'T MIND ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, SO LONG AS THEY STILL GET PLENTY OF BOARS AND ROMANS...



FULLIAUTOMATIX THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO SOUND HIM OUT IN SONG, SO HE KNOCKED ME OUT FIRST.



YOU HAVEN'T VOICED YOUR OWN OPINION YET...?

HUH! YOU DON'T LIKE MY VOICE ANY MORE THAN THE REST OF THEM!



WHAT, ME? I SIMPLY LOVE YOUR VOICE!

YOU DO? LISTEN TO THIS NEW PROTEST SONG I'VE JUST COMPOSED, THEN...



WE SHALL OVERCOME... WE SHALL OVER-COME...

*FREEDOM FIGHTERS THE WORLD OVER OWE THIS SONG TO CACOPHONIX. THE ORIGINAL TUNE HAS, OF COURSE, BEEN EXTENSIVELY REVISED...



STOP! I'M OVERCOME ALREADY! THIS IS A PROTEST... MARCH!

ALL RIGHT, ORTHOPAEDIX CAN HAVE THE BENEFIT OF MY SONG! MAYBE HE'LL APPRECIATE IT!!!

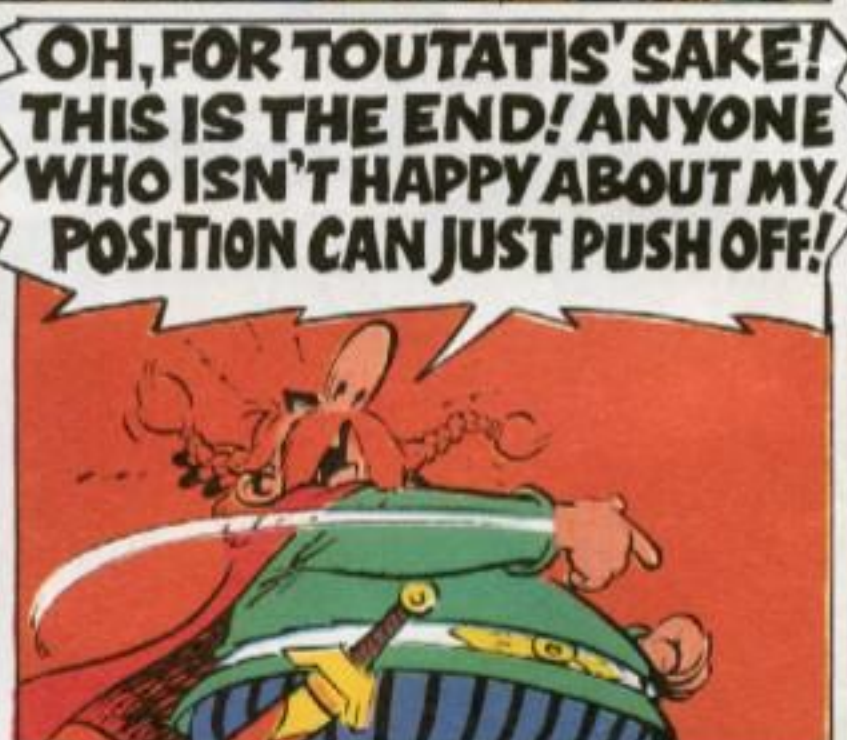


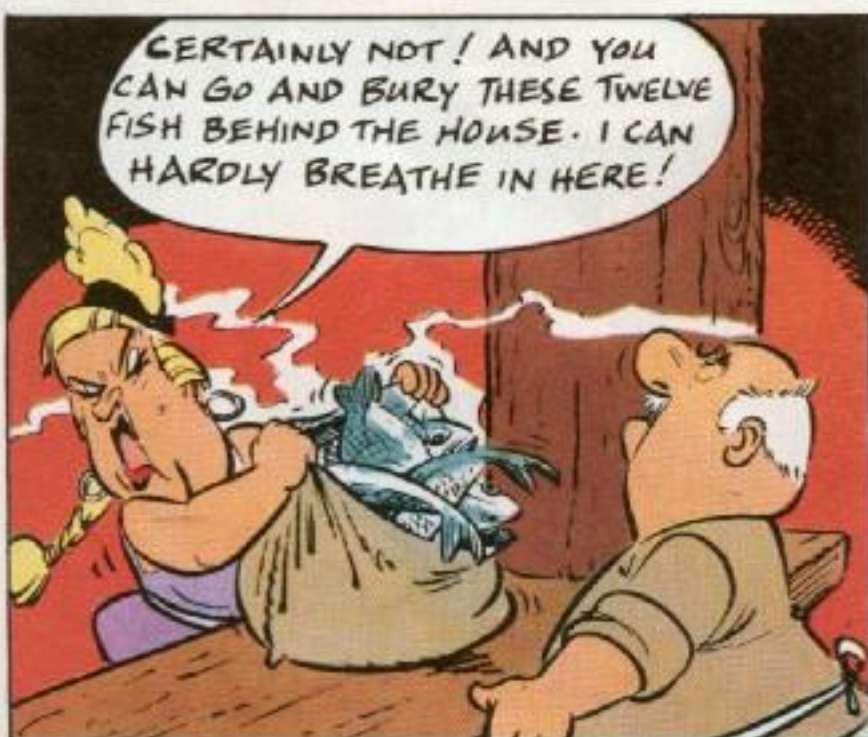
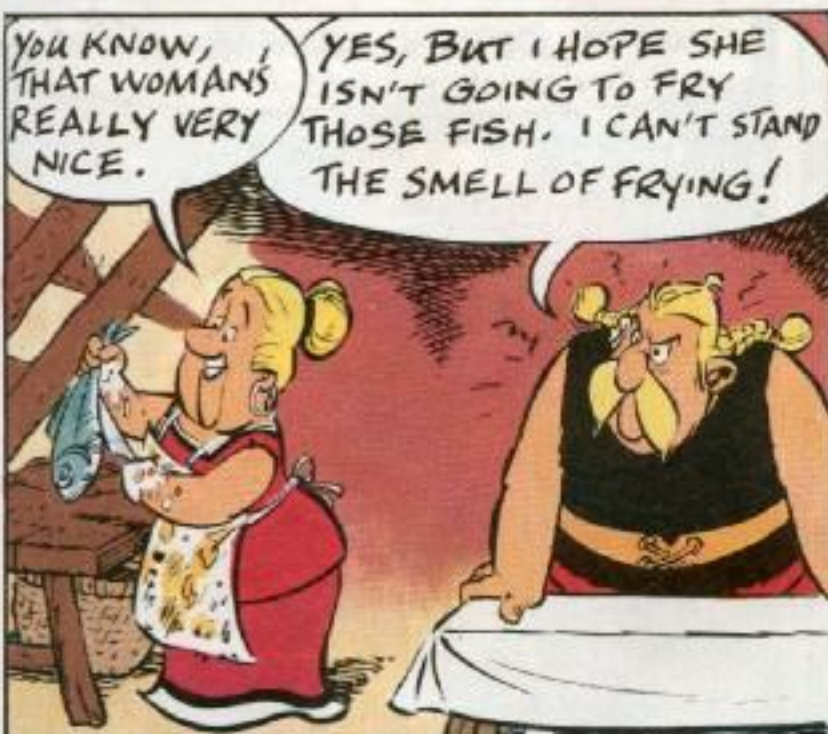
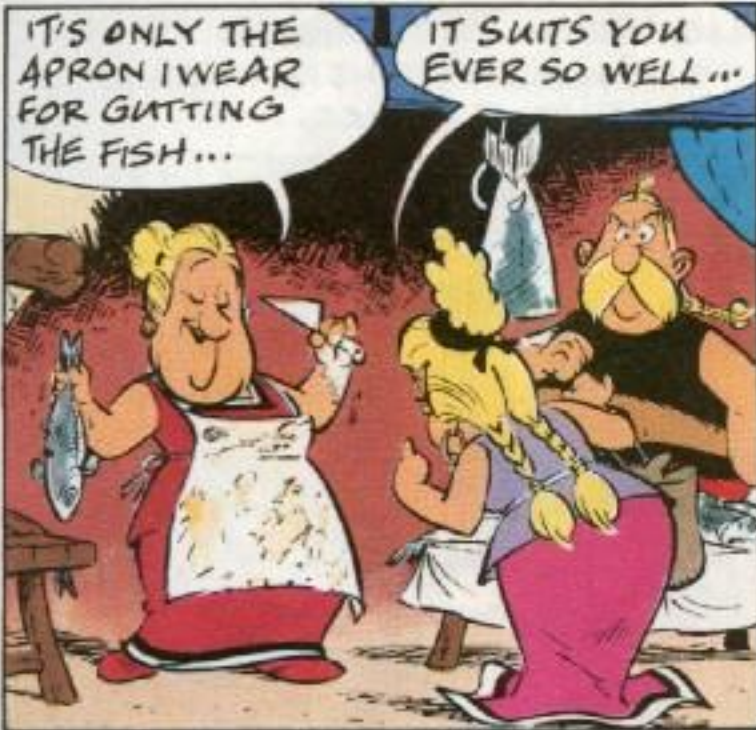
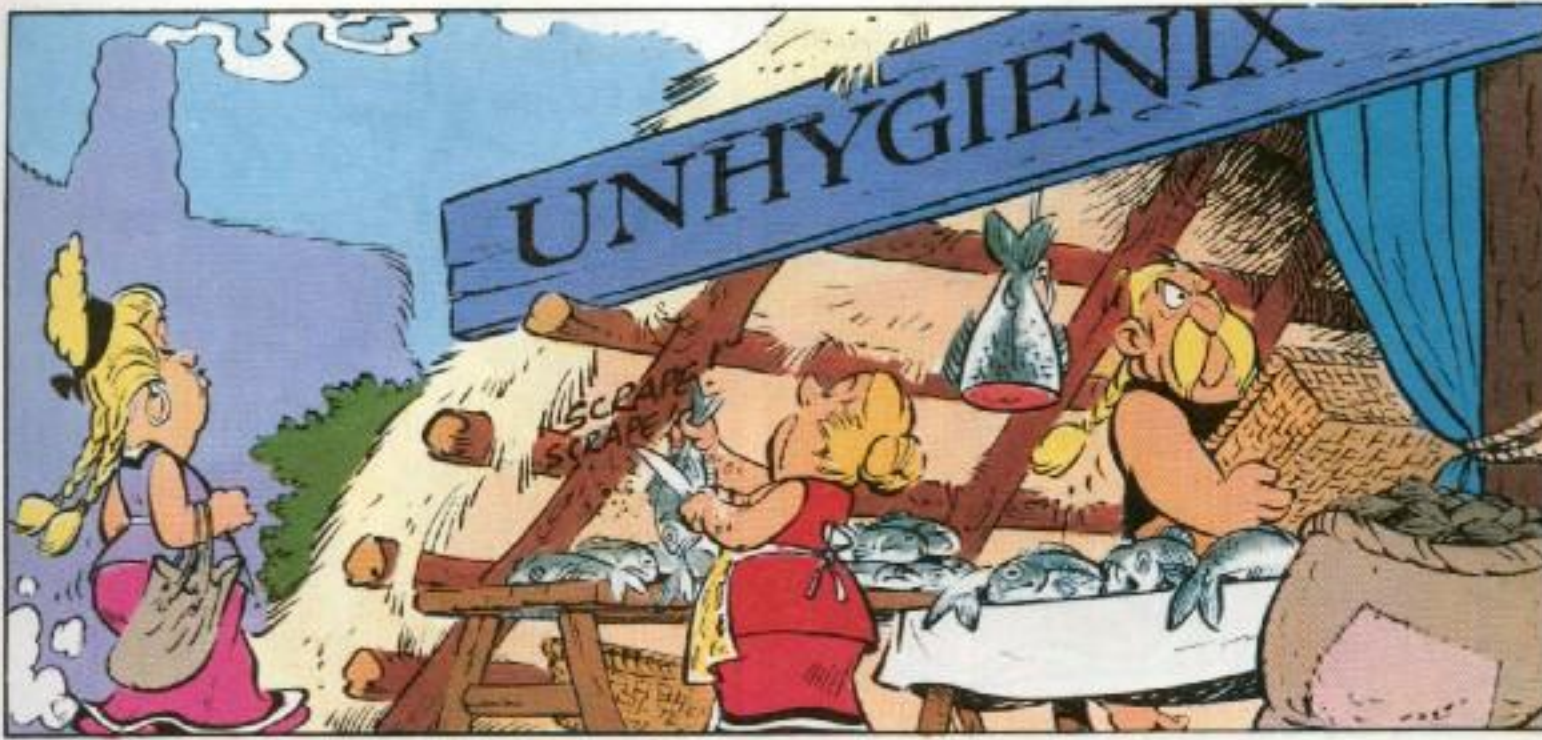
PEDIMENTA, I FEEL WE MAY HAVE MADE A MISTAKE... THAT'S ONE PROTEST VOTE ALREADY!

WHY NOT ADDRESS YOUR PEOPLE? ROUSE THEM UP A BIT?

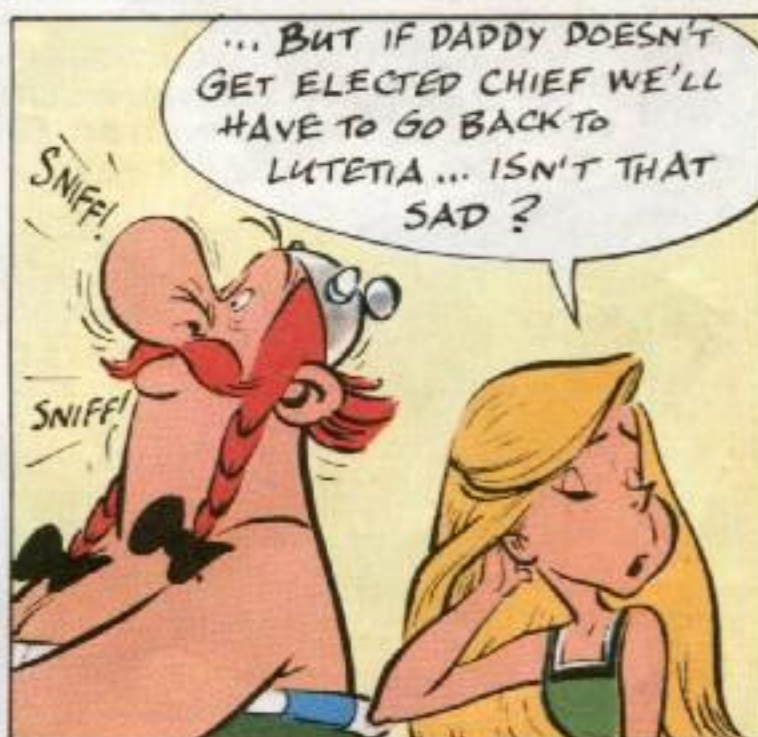
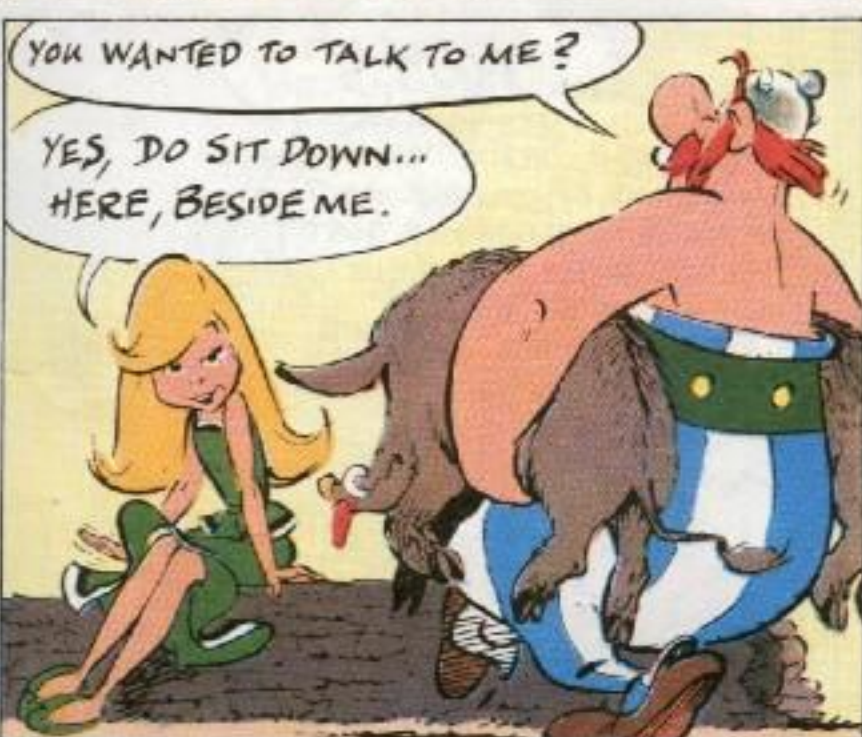
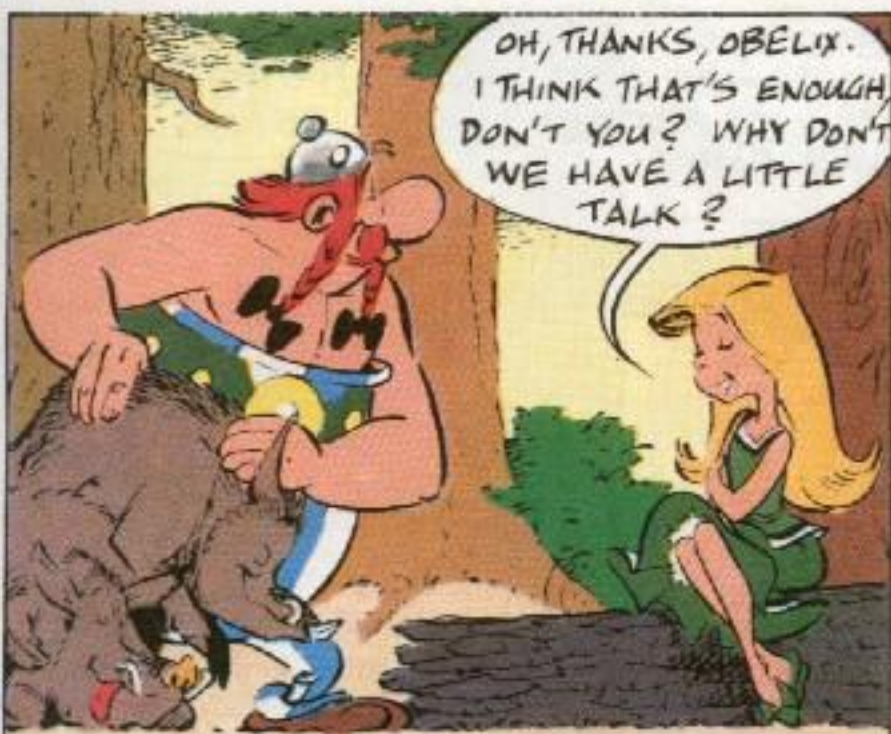


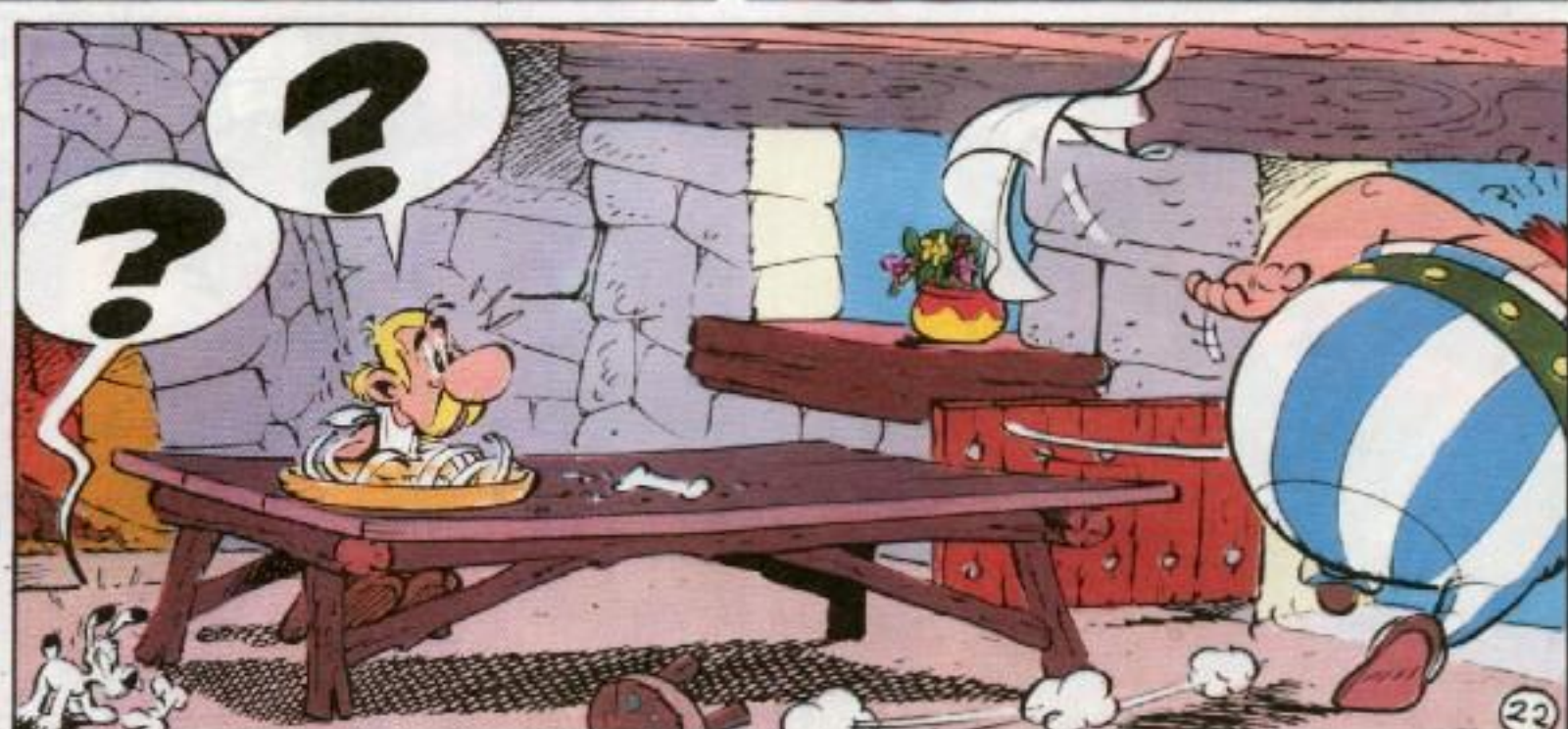
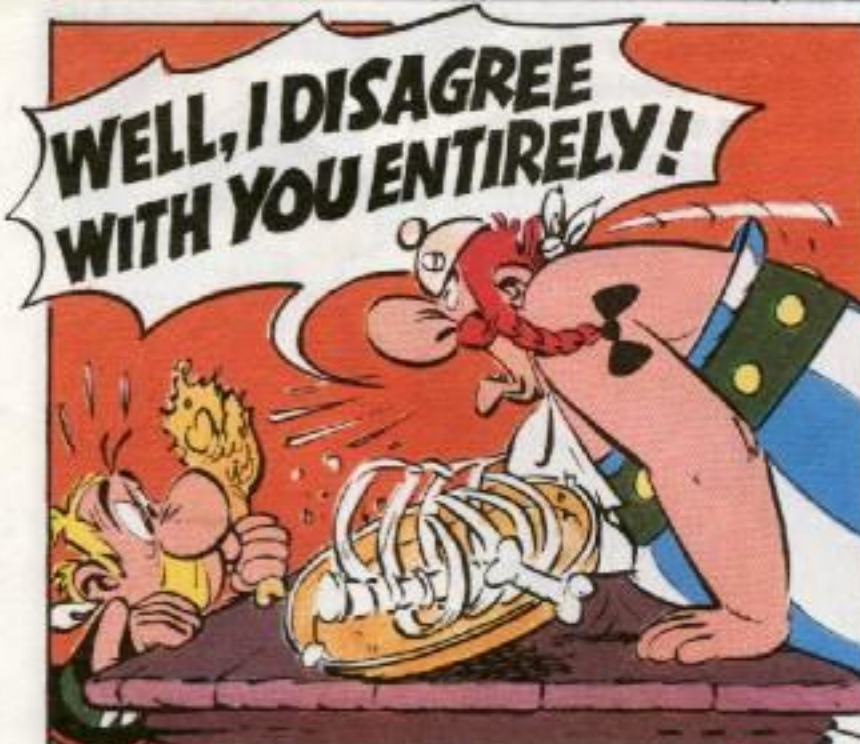
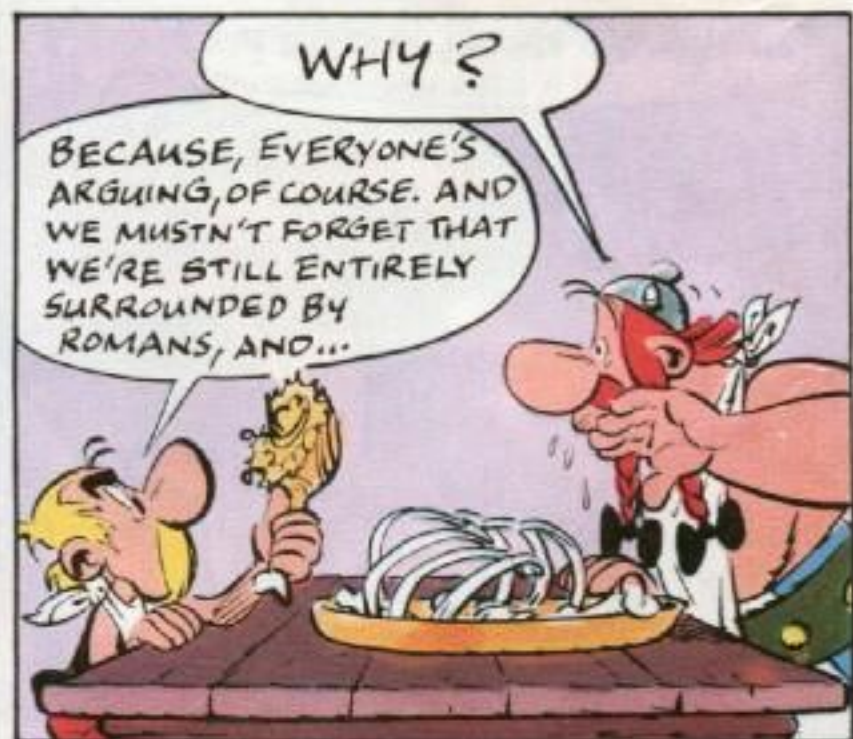
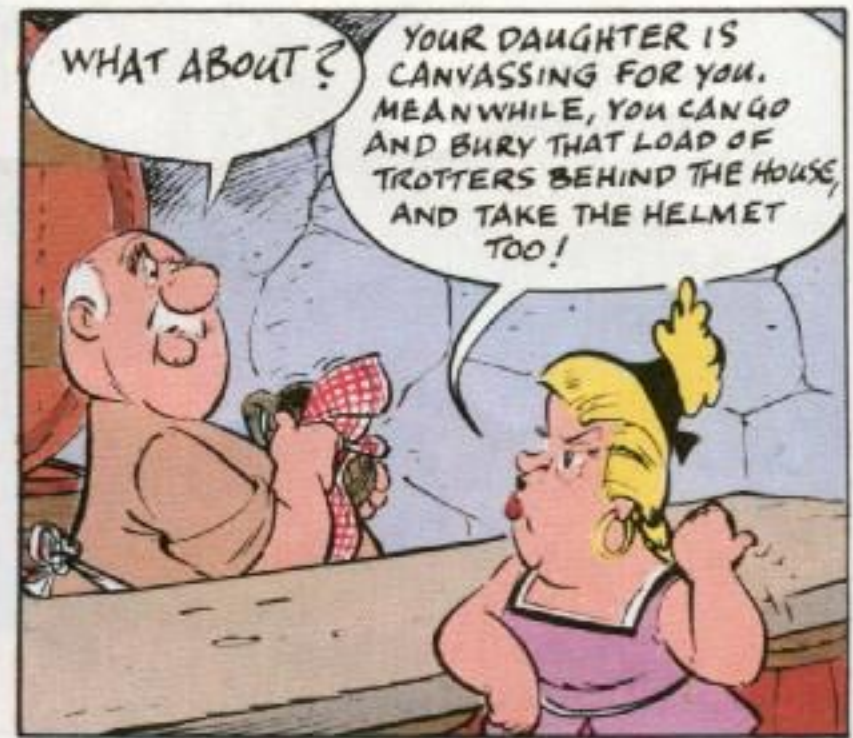
MY FRIENDS! CERTAIN PERSONS HAVE DARED TO SUGGEST A CHANGE OF CHIEF!! I KNOW YOU WILL THINK THIS AS FUNNY AS I DO...



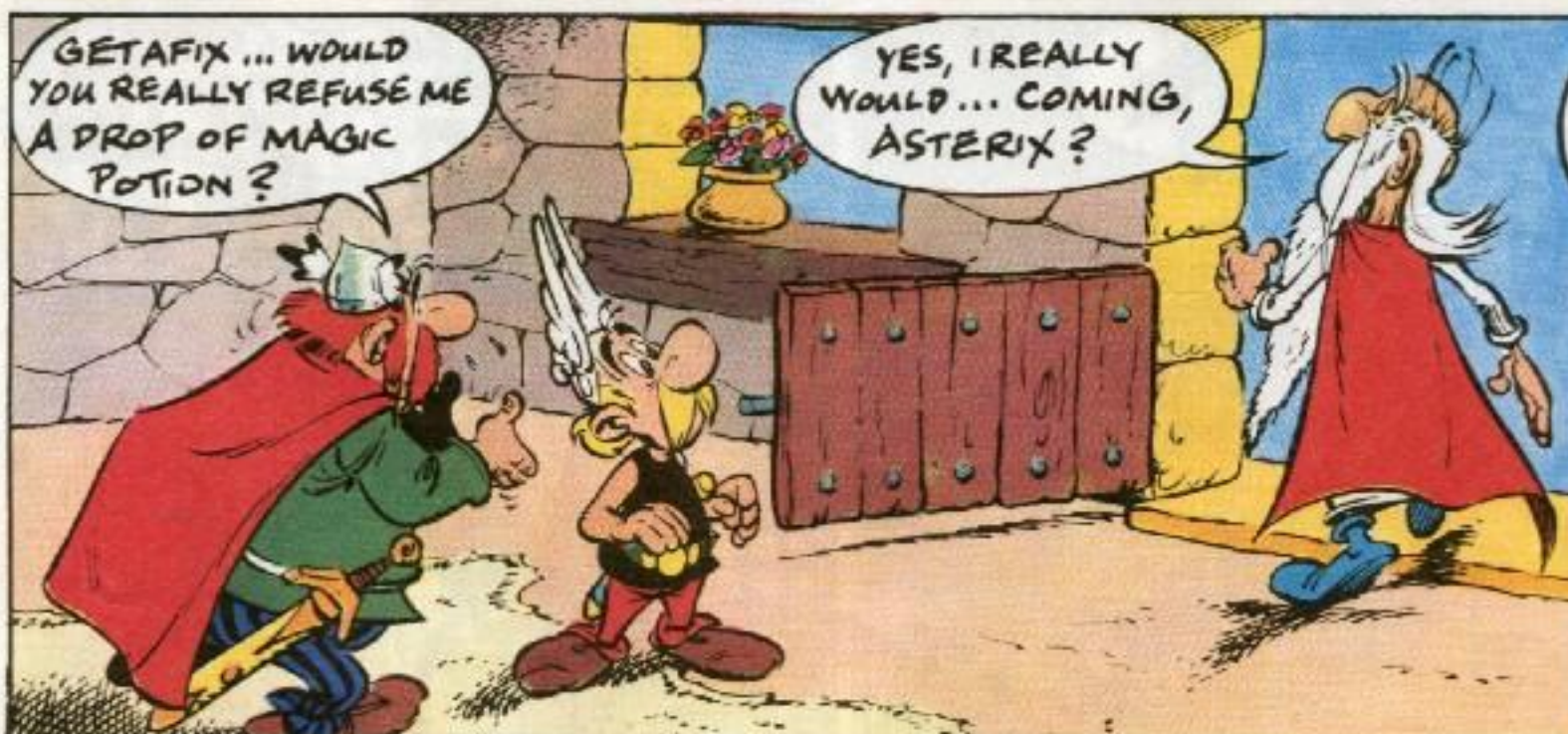
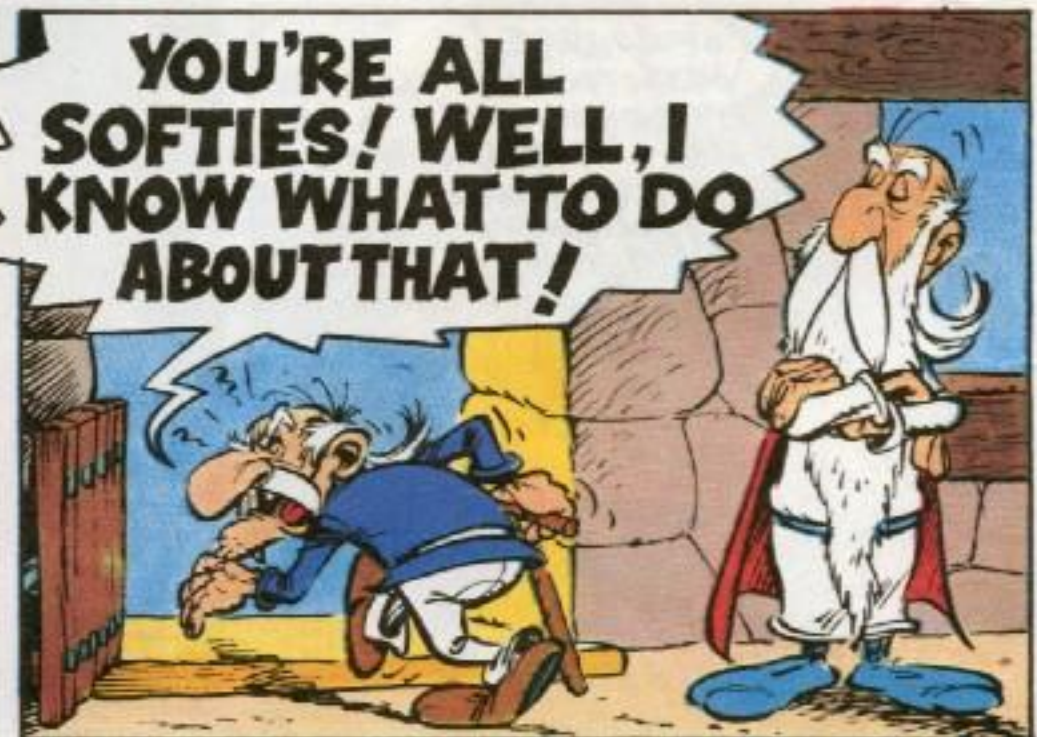
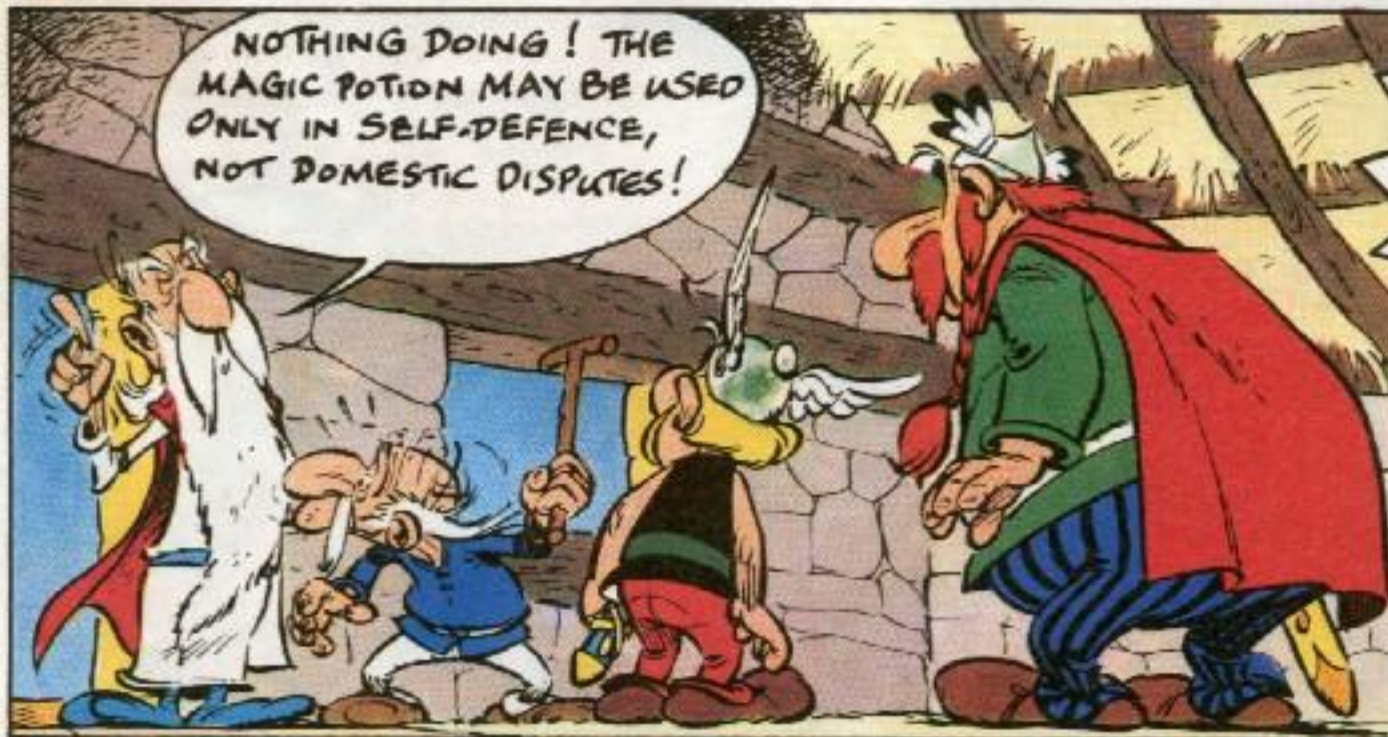
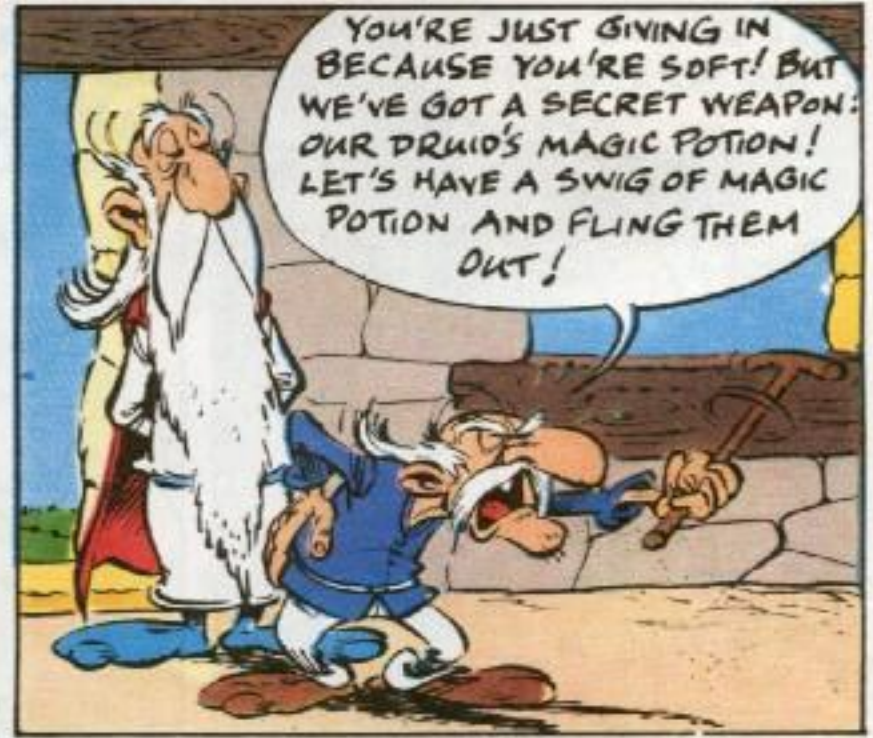


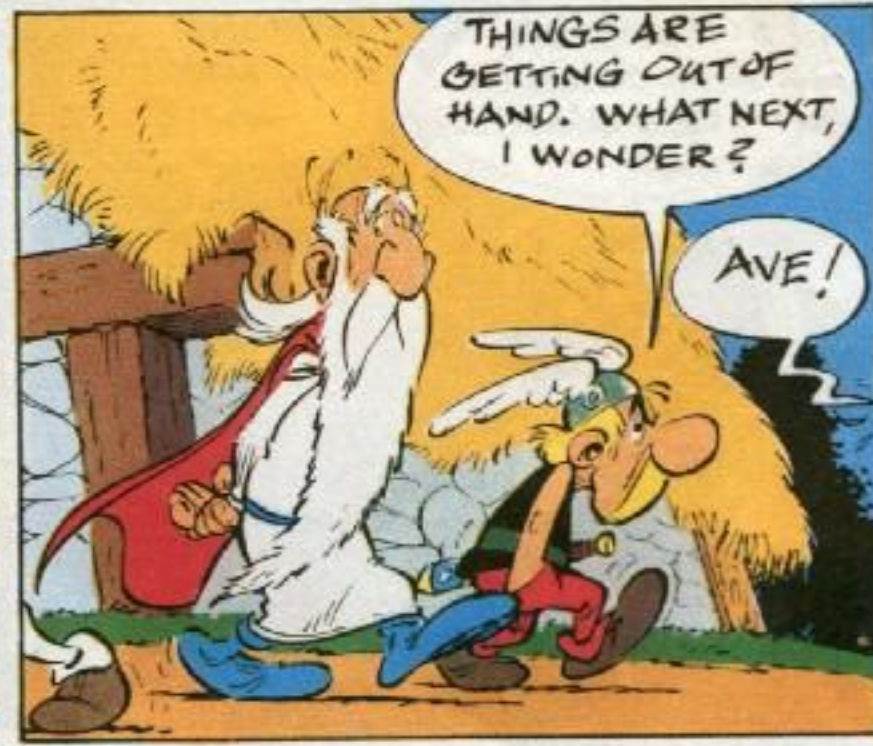


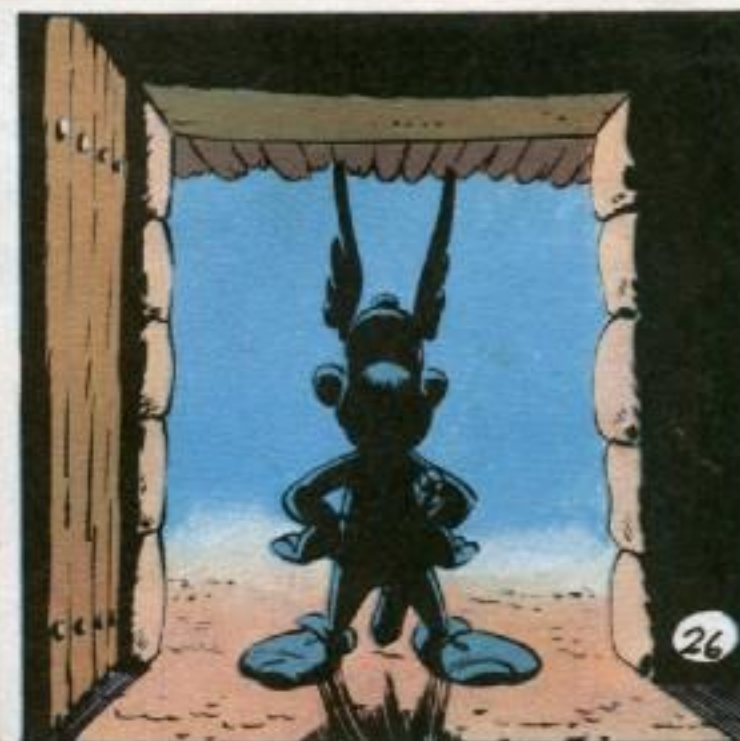
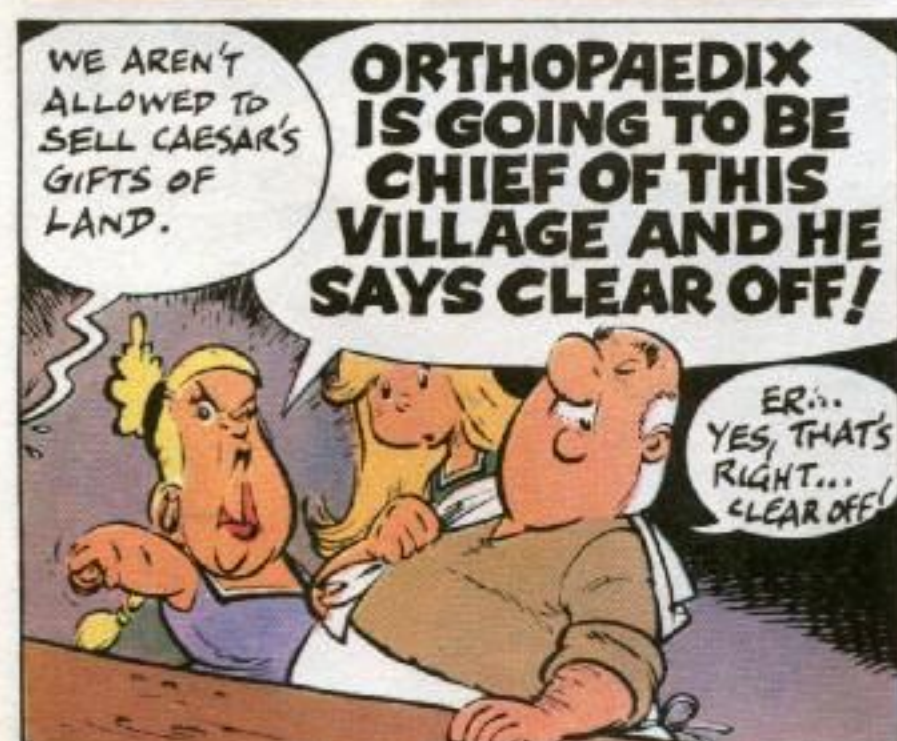
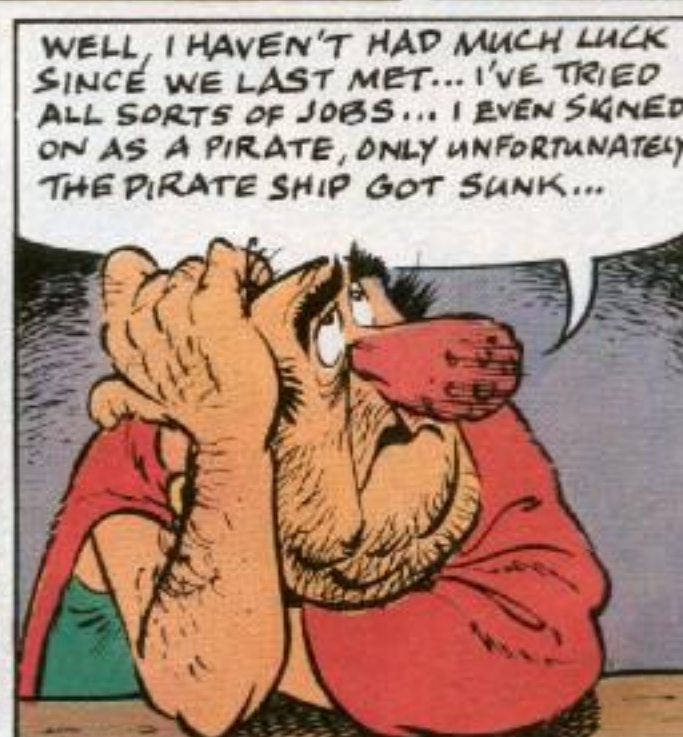
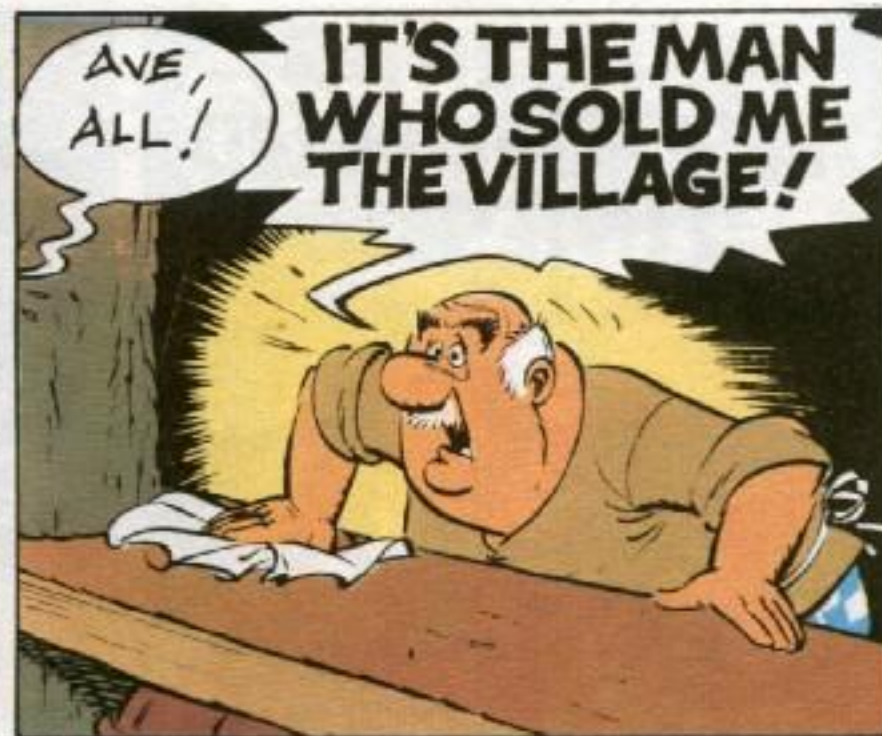


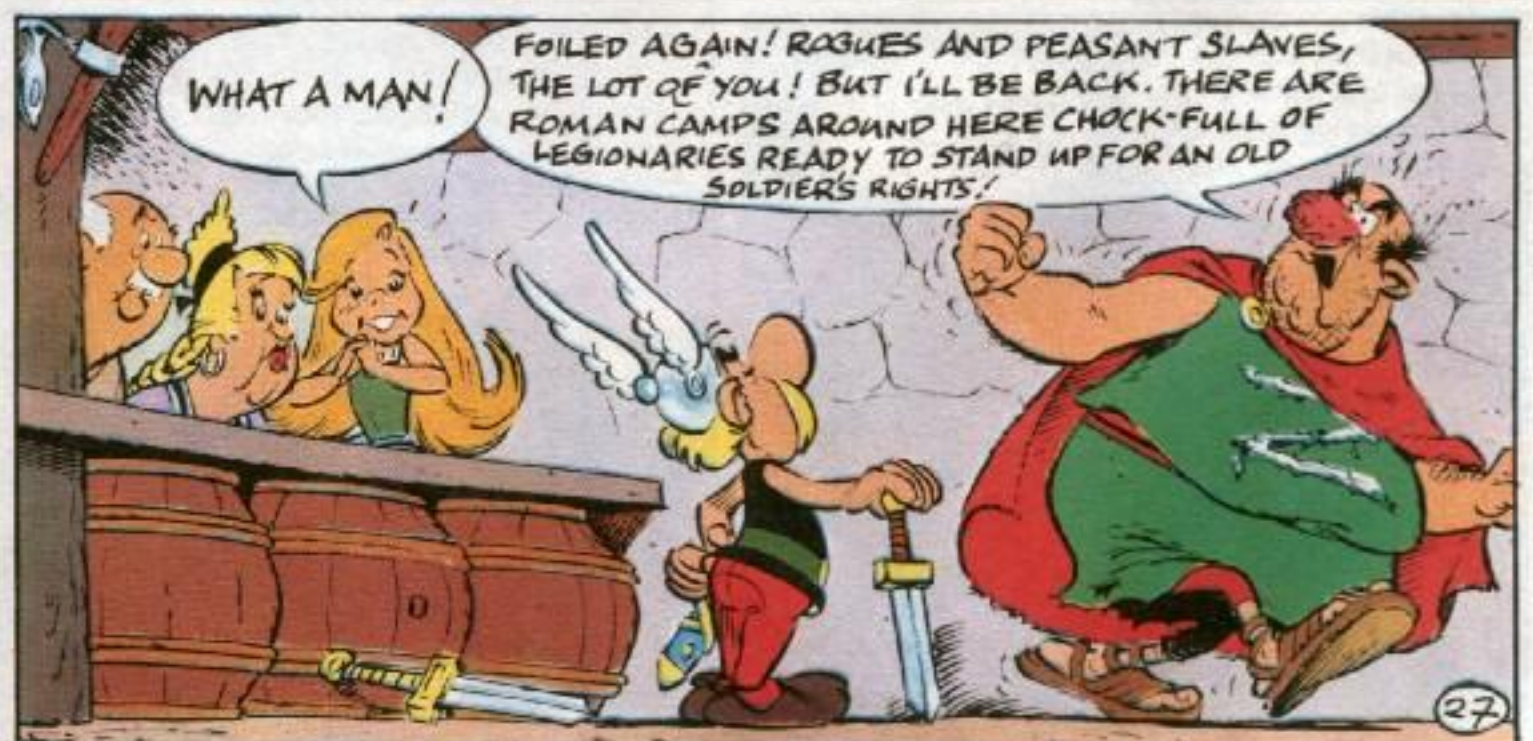


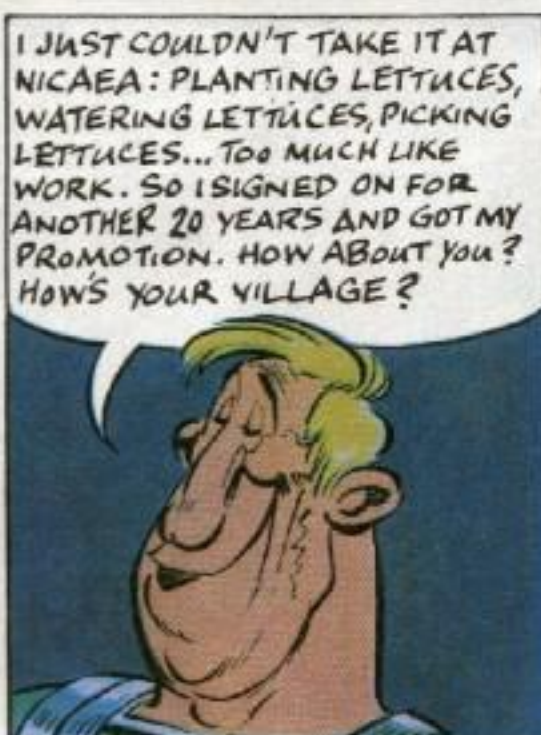
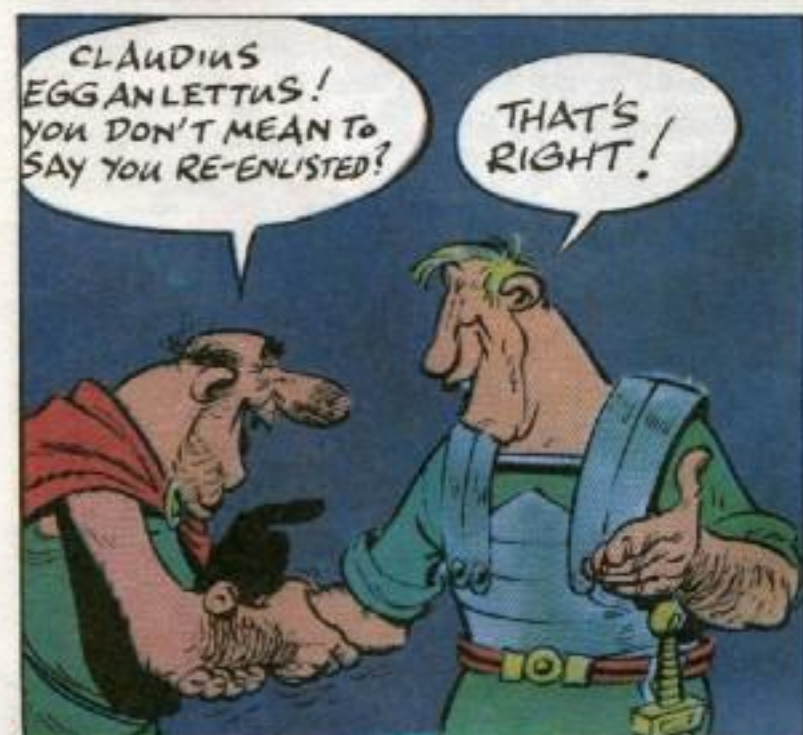
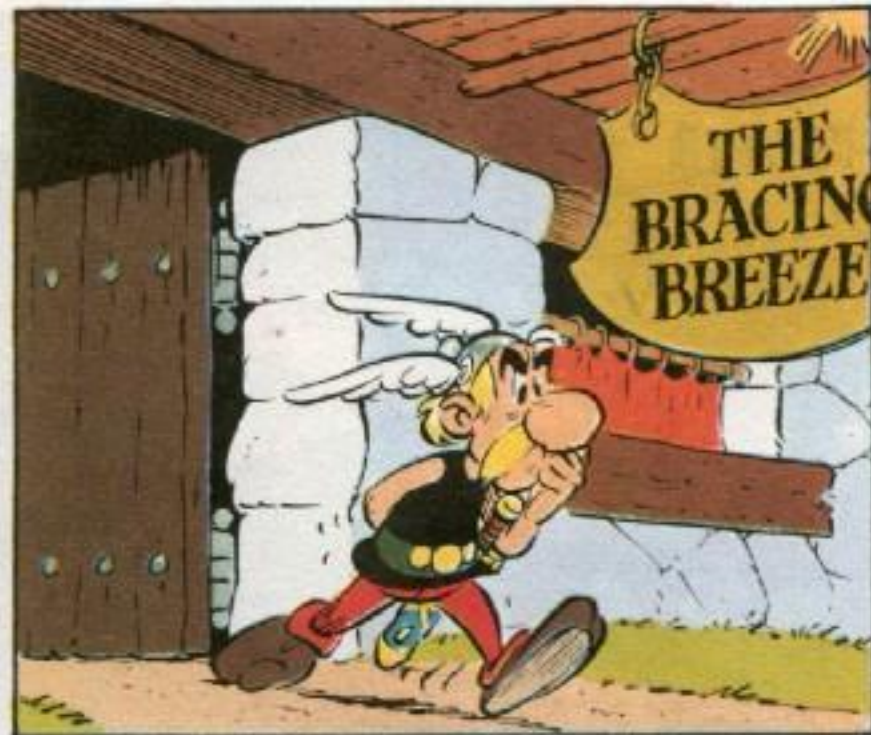














AVE, CENTURION TONSILLITUS! THERE'S AN OLD SOLDIER HERE TO SEE YOU!

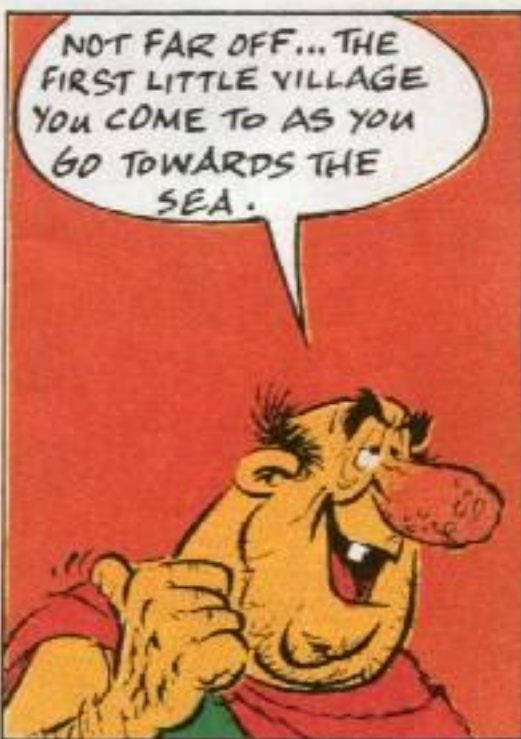
SEND HIM IN!

BONG!



IT'S ABOUT THIS GAUL WHO STOLE THE PLOT OF LAND JULIUS CAESAR GAVE ME WHEN I WAS DEMOBLED.

DISGRACEFUL! WE'LL SOON PUT THAT RIGHT! WHEREABOUTS IS YOUR LAND?



NOT FAR OFF... THE FIRST LITTLE VILLAGE YOU COME TO AS YOU GO TOWARDS THE SEA.

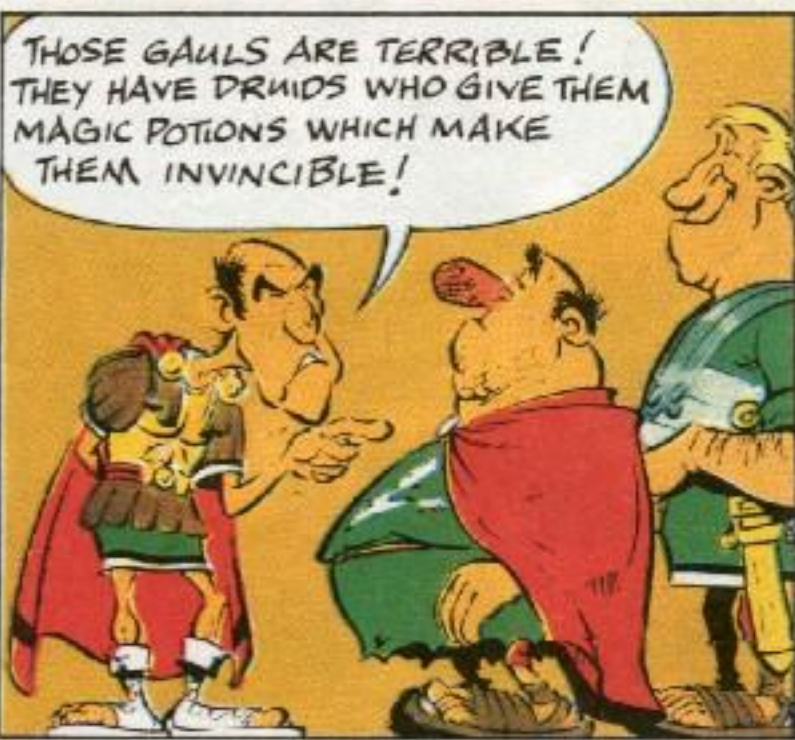


WHAT? THE VILLAGE FULL OF MADMEN? CAESAR GAVE YOU THAT VILLAGE FULL OF MADMEN?!



THAT'S RIGHT; I WAS THERE.

WHEN I WANT YOUR OPINION, OPTIO, I'LL ASK FOR IT!



THOSE GAULS ARE TERRIBLE! THEY HAVE DRUIDS WHO GIVE THEM MAGIC POTIONS WHICH MAKE THEM INVINCIBLE!



YOU'D BETTER FORGET THE WHOLE THING... WHY NOT RE-ENLIST LIKE THIS OTHER IDIO... LIKE YOUR FRIEND HERE?

NO! I WANT MY VILLAGE!



CAESAR WOULDN'T LIKE TO THINK OF GAULS GETTING THE BENEFIT OF THE GIFTS HE GIVES HIS OLD SOLDIERS.

THAT'S RIGHT. WHEN I TELL HIM, HE WON'T LIKE IT ONE LITTLE BIT!



OH, ALL RIGHT. WE'LL GET READY... LUCKILY I'VE JUST GOT SOME NEW SECRET WEAPONS IN.

THANKS, CENTURION!



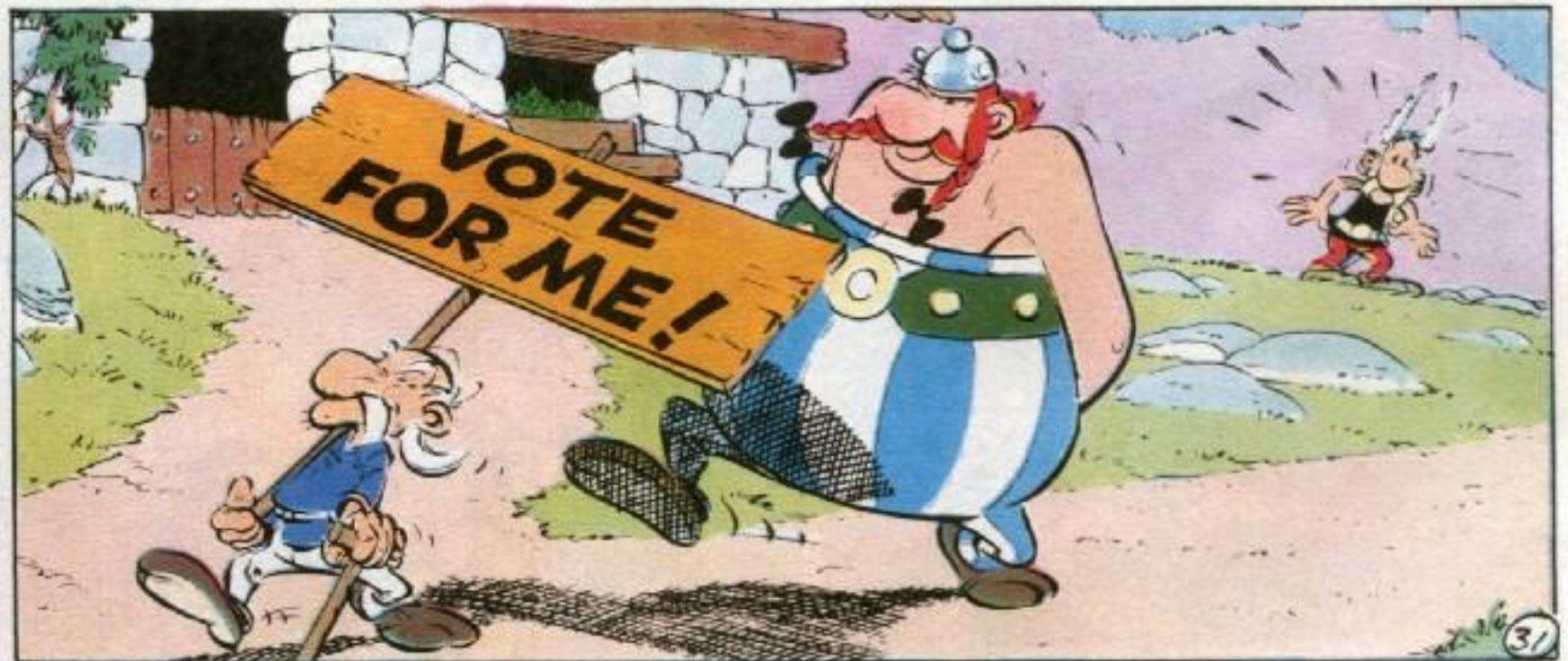
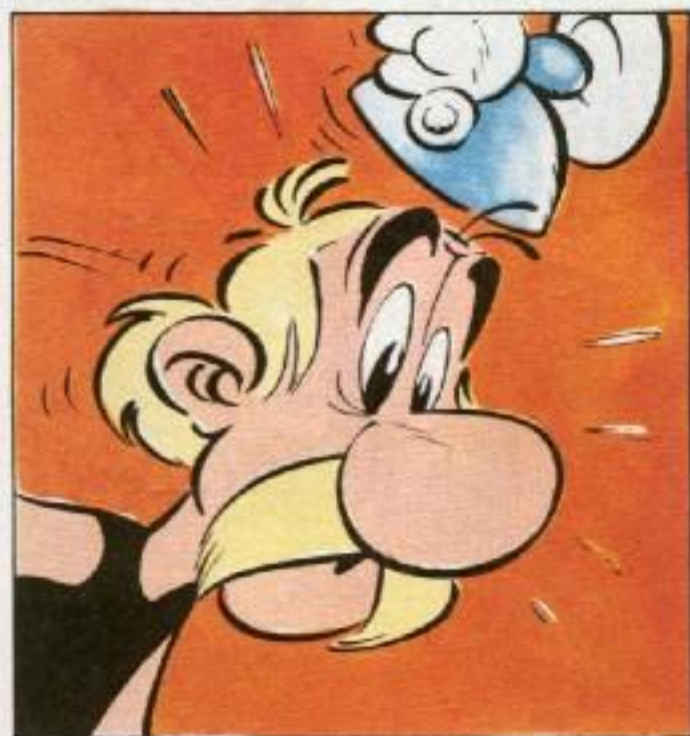
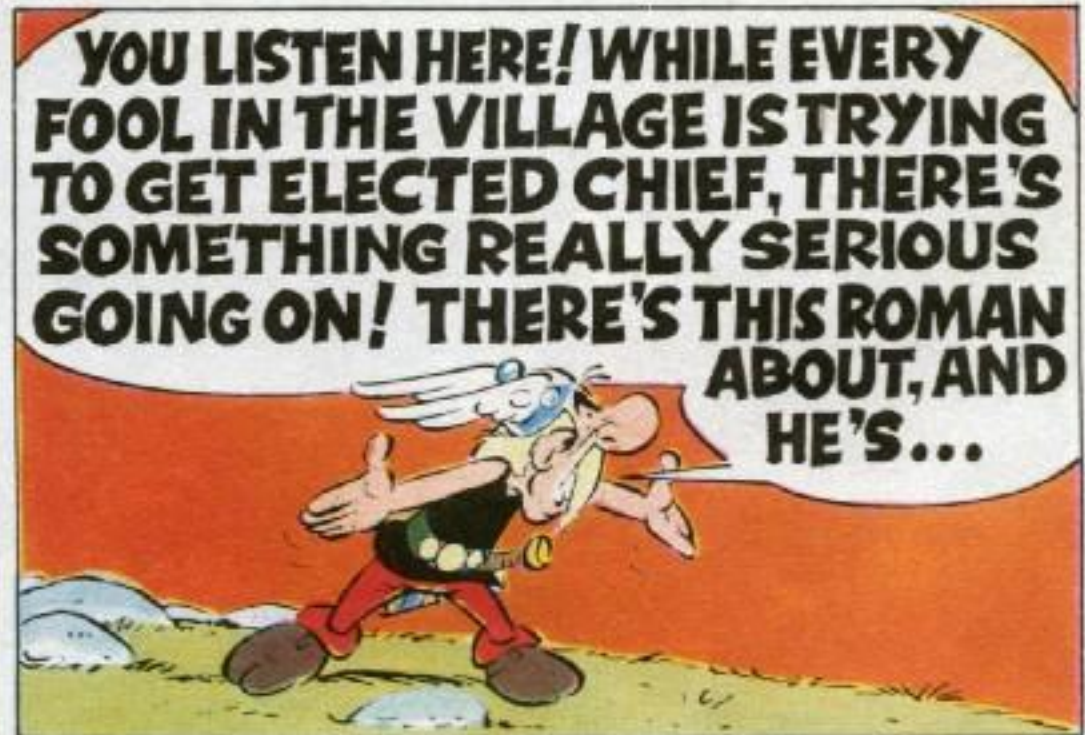
OH, AND BY THE WAY, OPTIO...

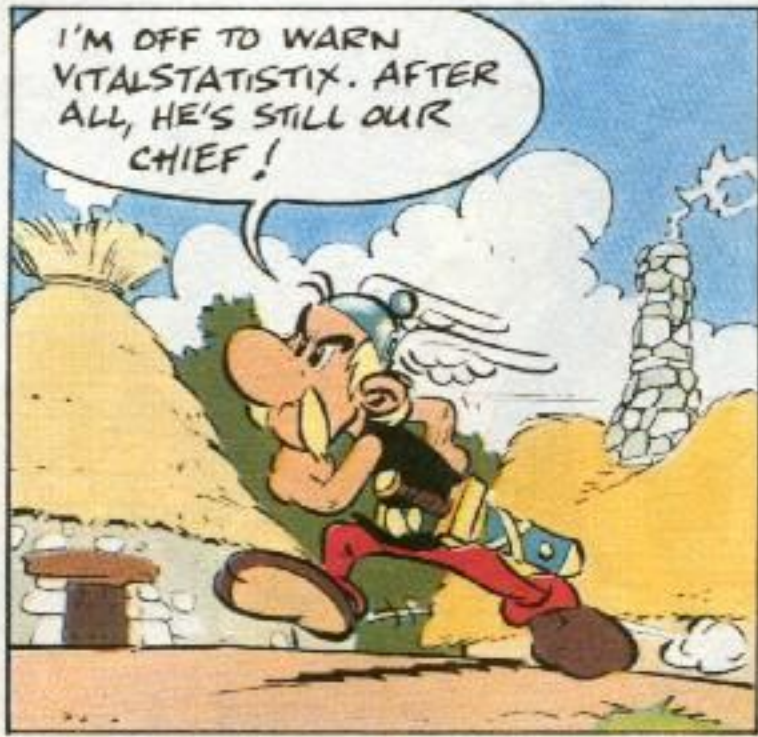
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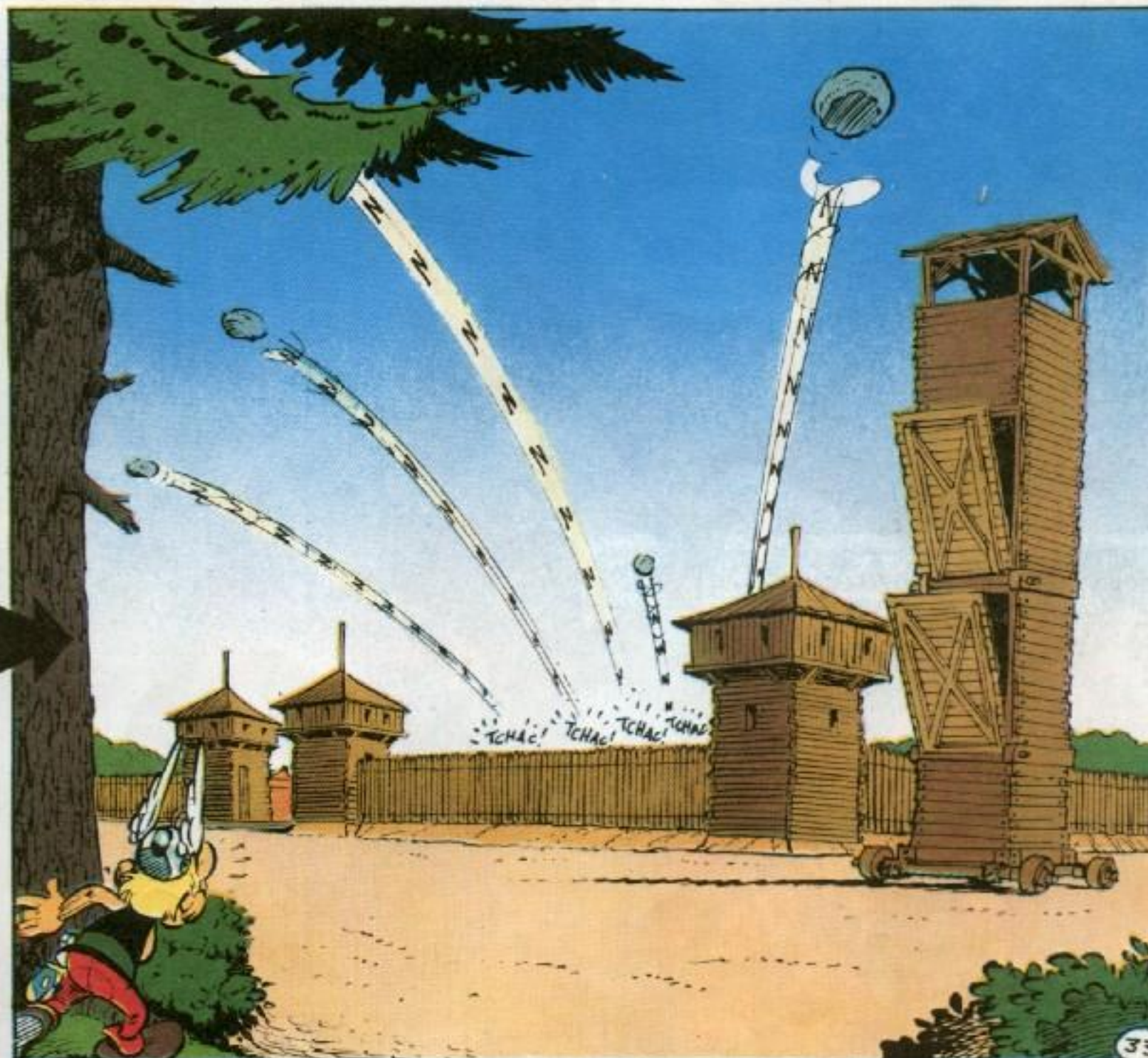
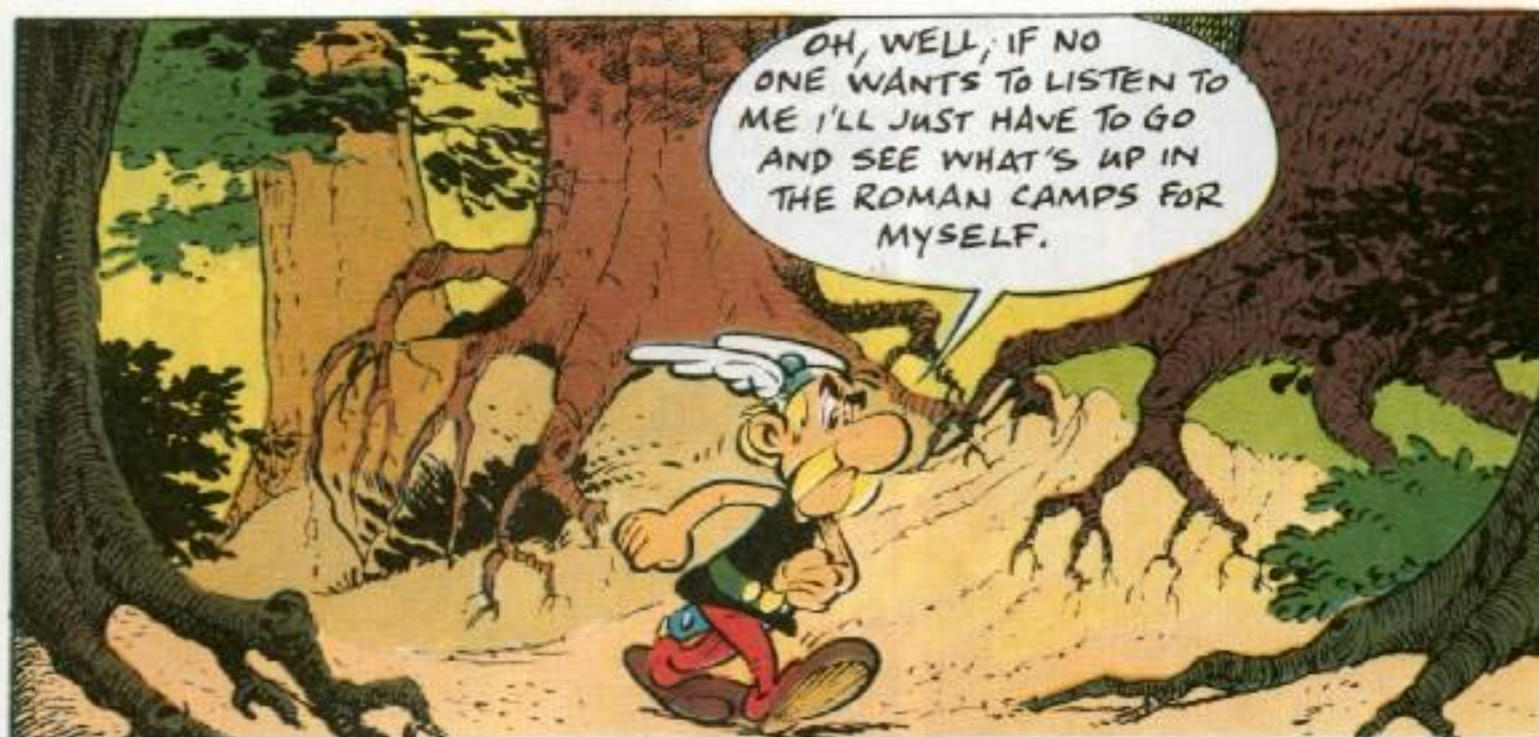


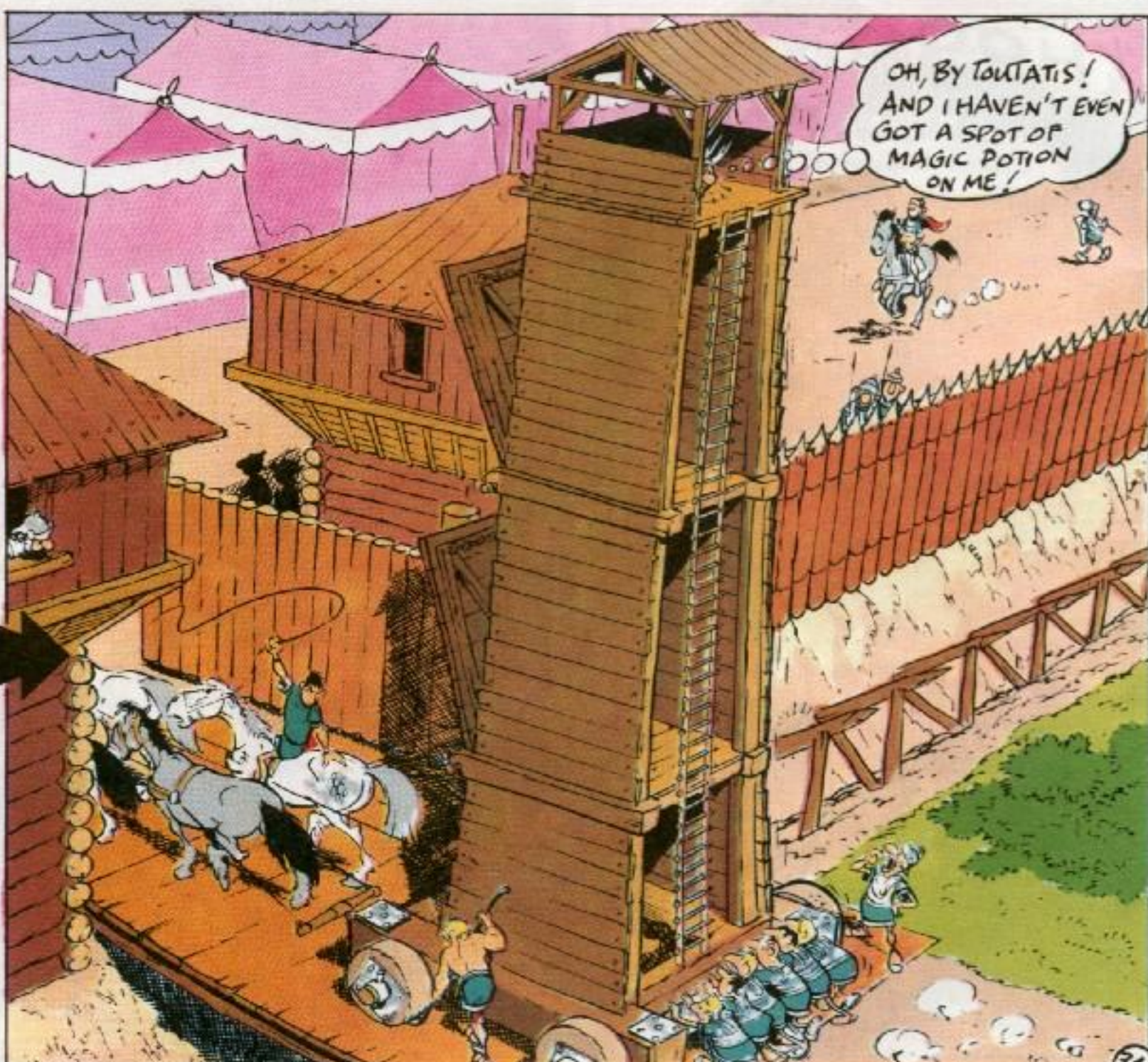
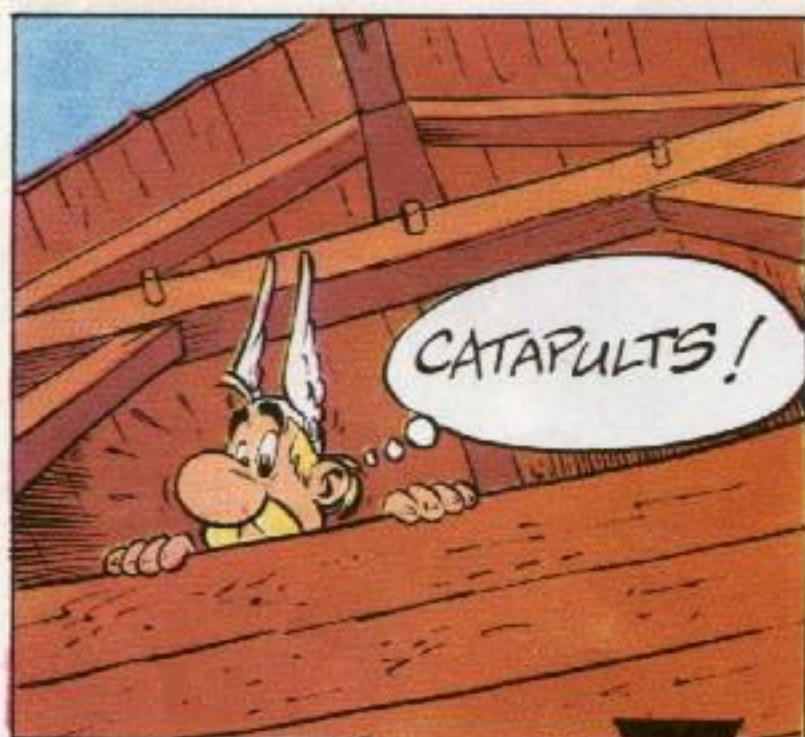
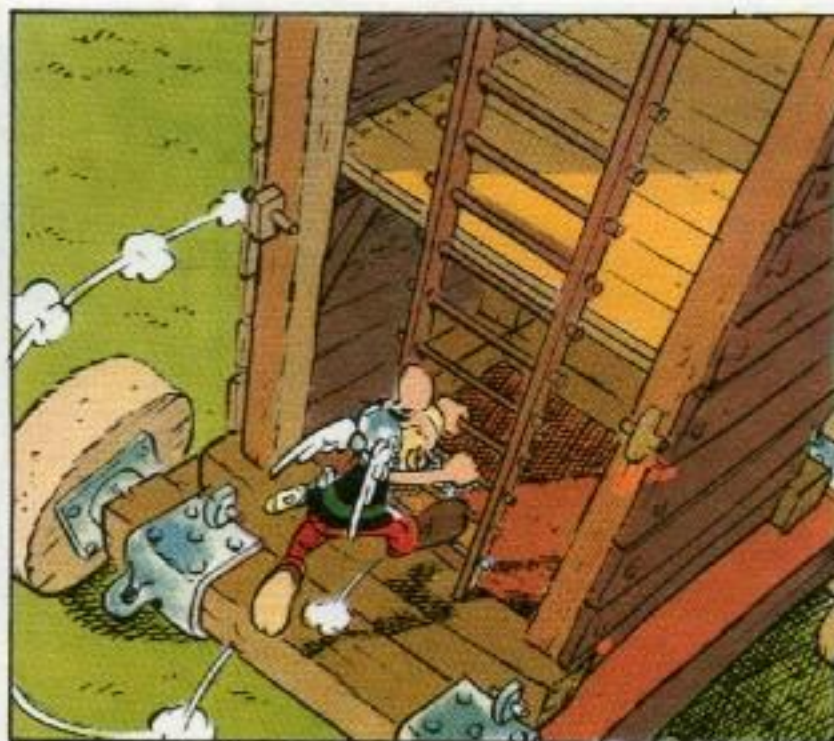
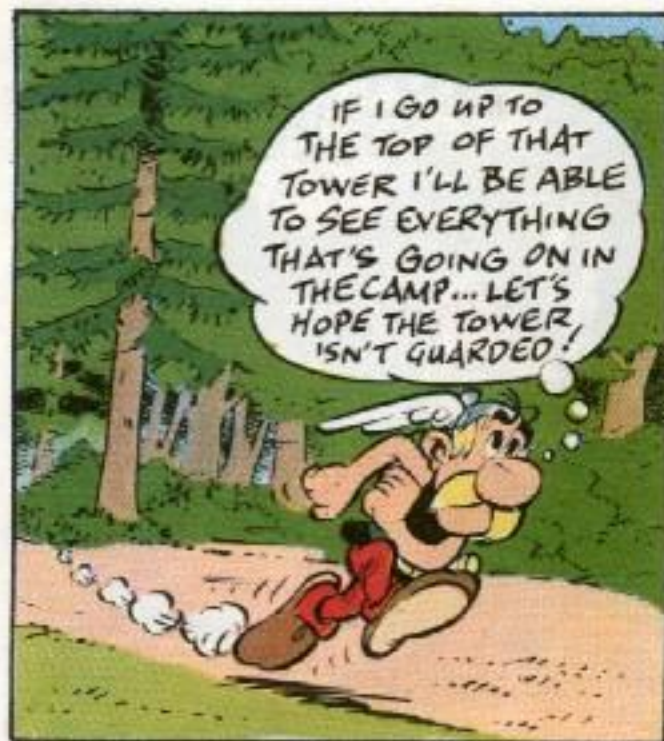
YOU'RE NOT AN OPTIO ANY MORE, YOU'RE DEMOTED TO LEGIONARY, SECOND CLASS.

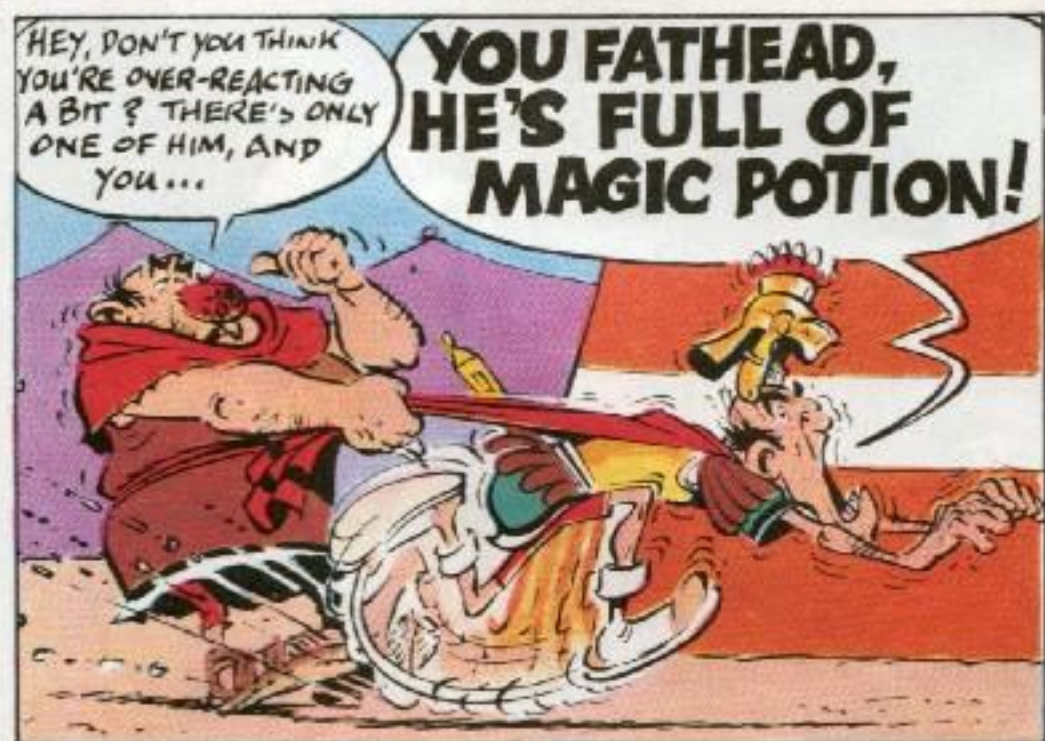
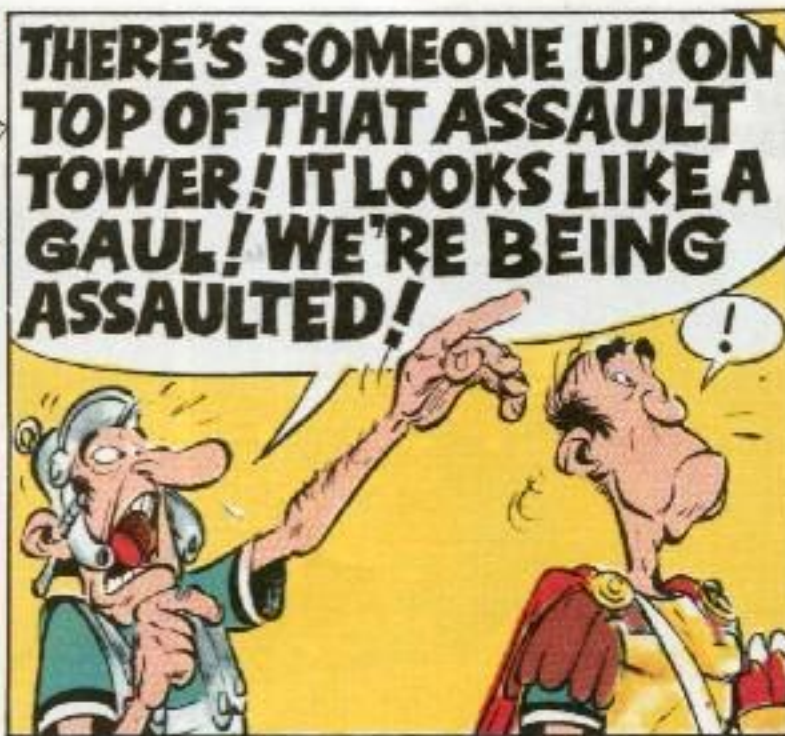


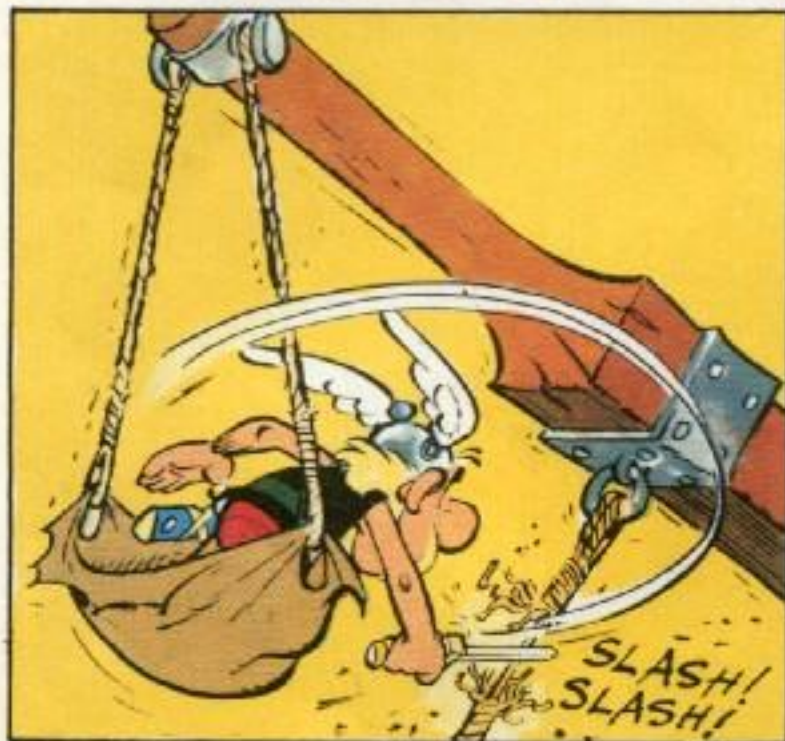


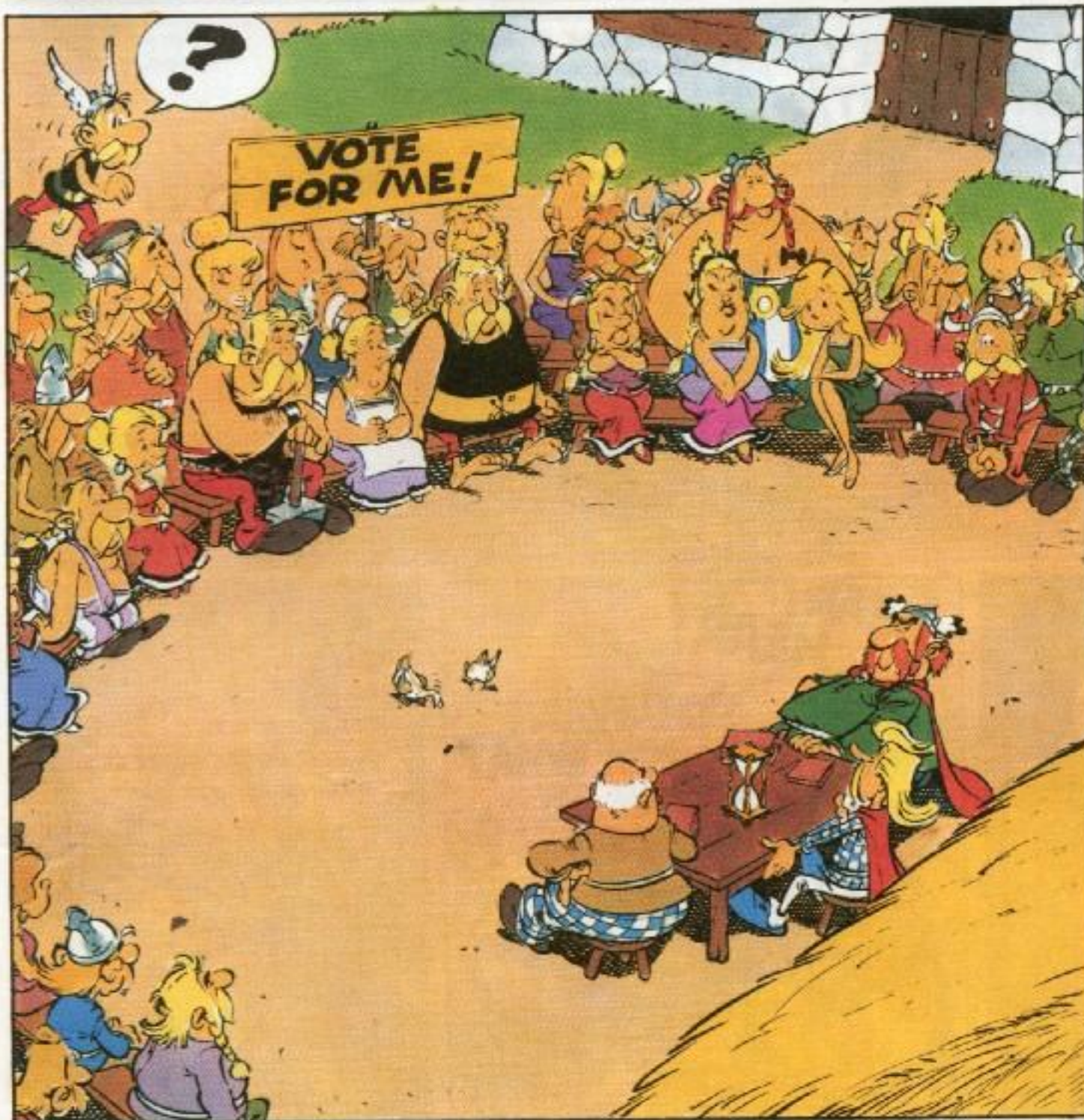












WILL YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME? THE ROMANS...

SILENCE!

SSH!

SIT DOWN!

SHUT UP!

OH, FOR GOODNESS' SAKE!

VC FOR

YOU HAVE BEEN THE CHIEF OF THIS VILLAGE FOR A LONG TIME. NOW, WHAT EXACTLY HAVE YOU DONE? HAVE THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF YOUR PEOPLE BEEN REALIZED? HAS ANY NEW INDUSTRY BEEN CREATED...?

RIGHT, MY GO... **AND IF YOU SO MUCH AS TOUCH THAT EGG-TIMER IT'LL BE THE WORSE FOR YOU!**

THIS ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE AN IMPARTIAL UMPIRE IS TYPICAL OF SOME PEOPLE'S APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT,

A HIT, A VERY PALPABLE HIT!

A LITTLE DIGNITY, IF YOU PLEASE!

YOU ASK WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR INDUSTRY? I HAVE HERE SOME STATISTICS... THIS YEAR WE HAVE SOLD XII ANVILS, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF C% ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

YOU CAN MAKE STATISTICS PROVE ANYTHING YOU LIKE!

AND HOW ABOUT BUSINESS? BUSINESS IS ROTTEN! TAKE THE FISH TRADE, FOR INSTANCE...

OH, LET'S BE SERIOUS!

VOTE FOR ME!

HEAR! HEAR!

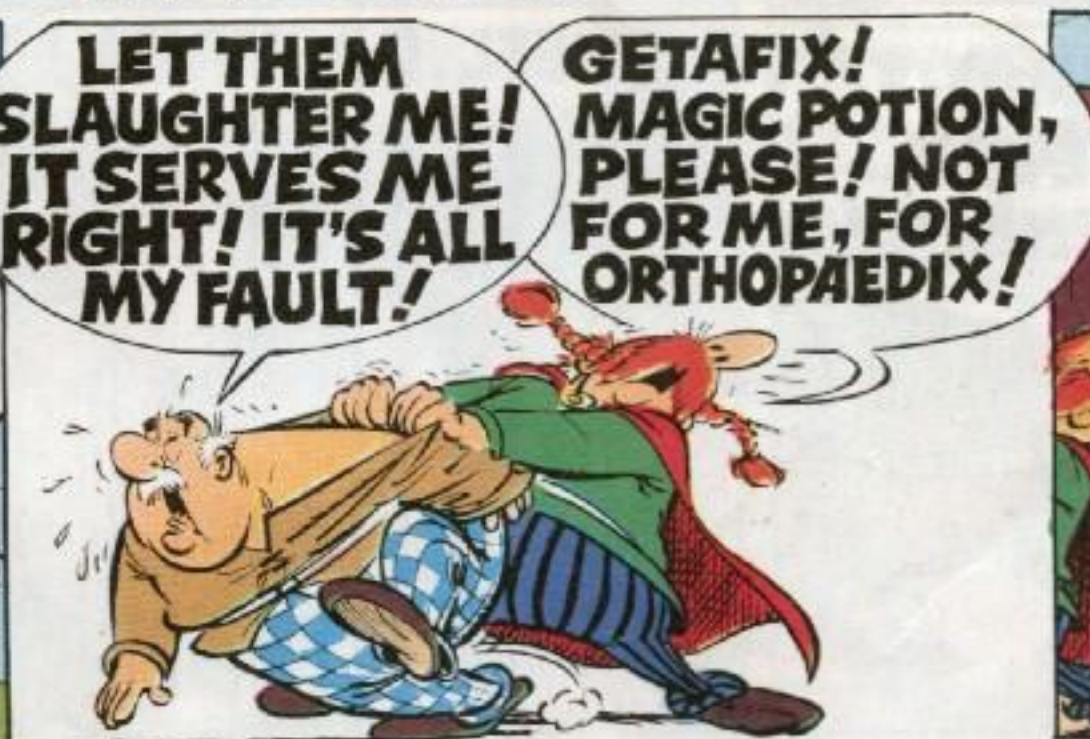
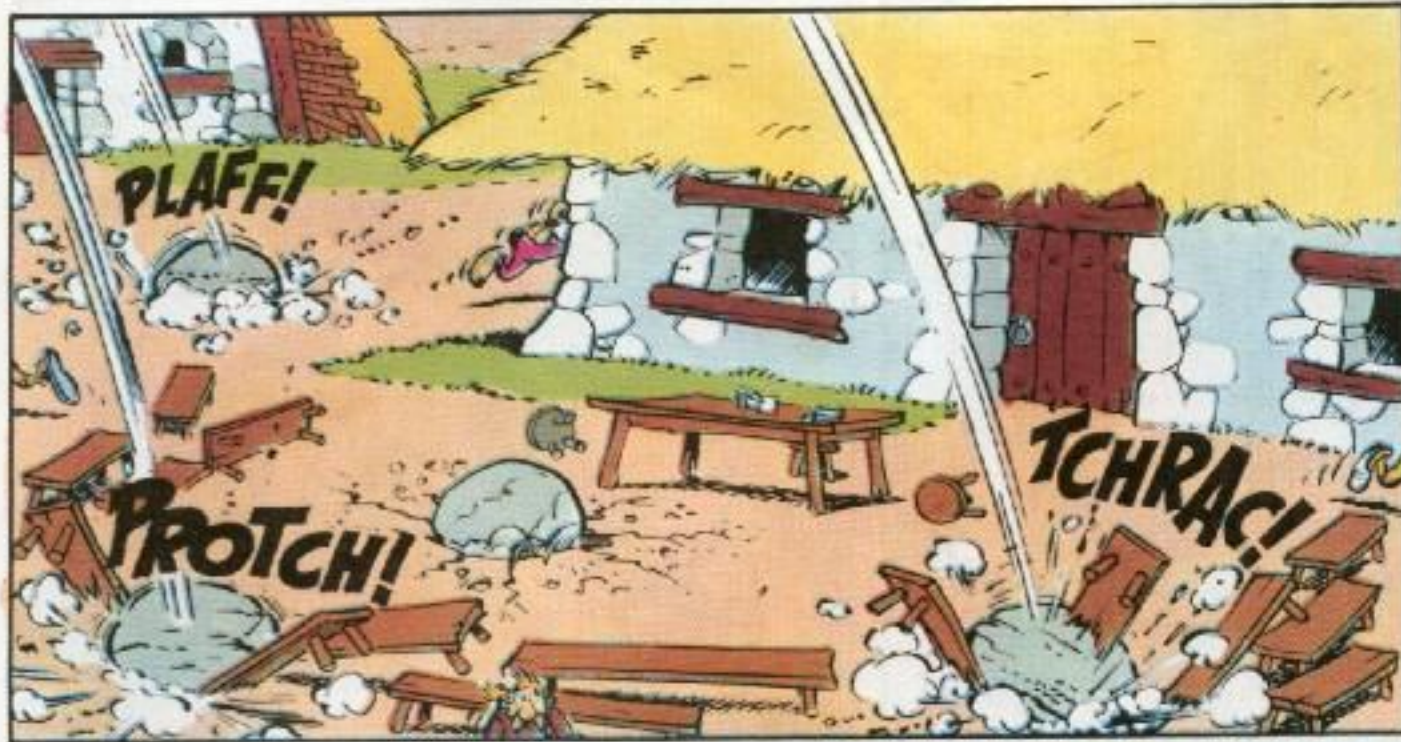
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I THINK OF YOUR FISH?

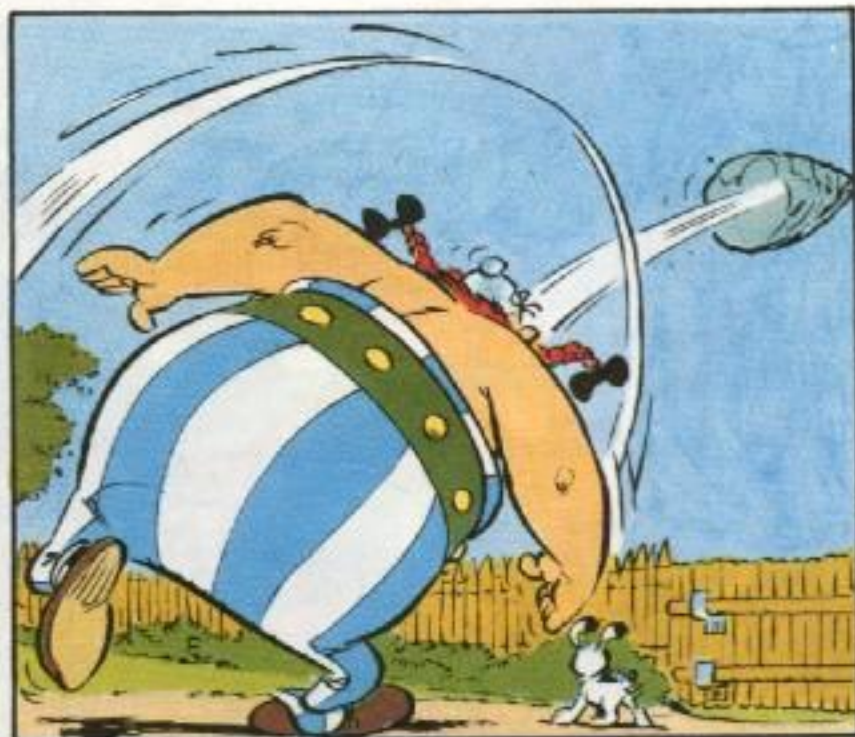
WOOOOOSH

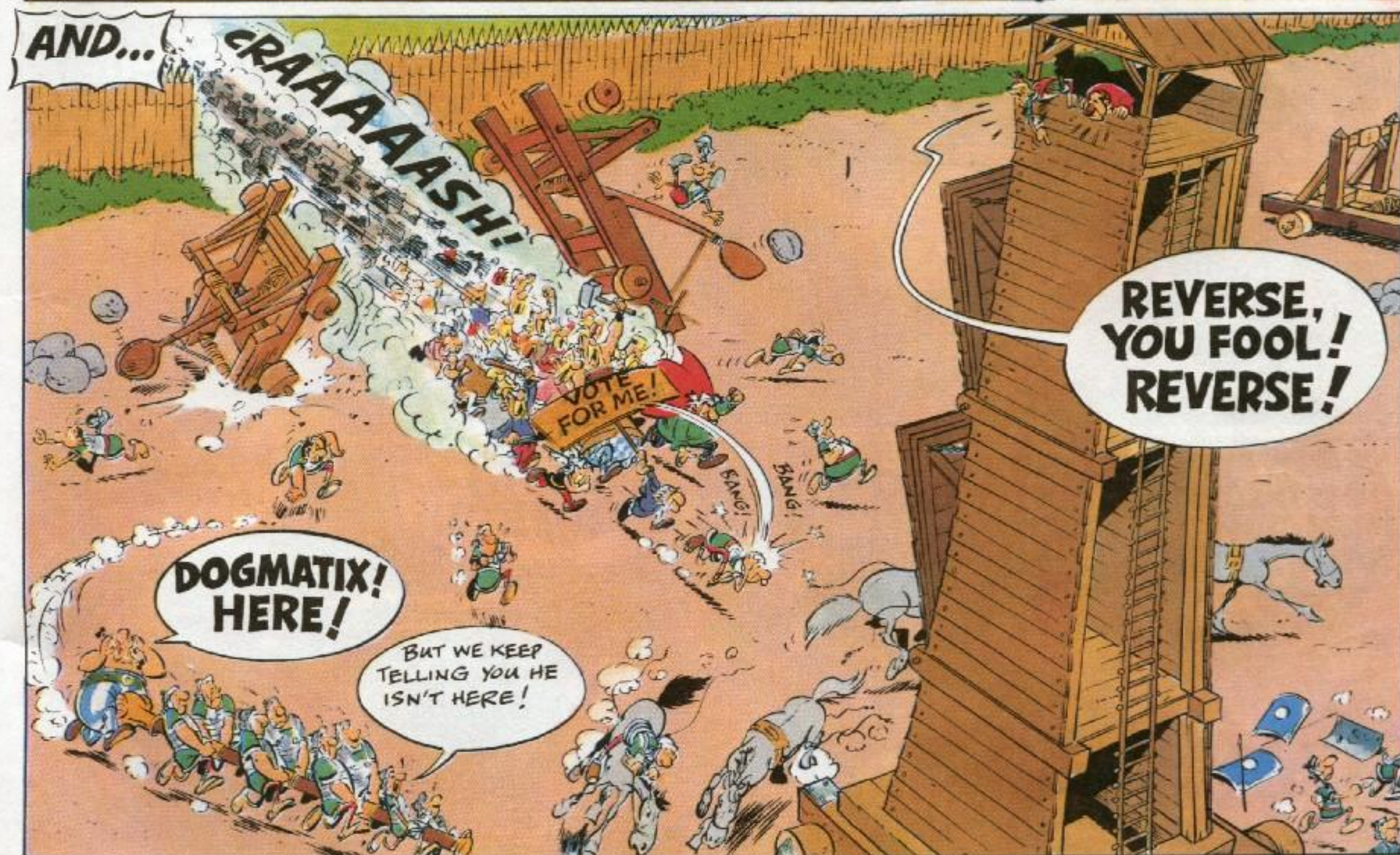
OH, CHUCK IT! PEDIMENTA! DON'T LET'S CAST THE FIRST STONE!

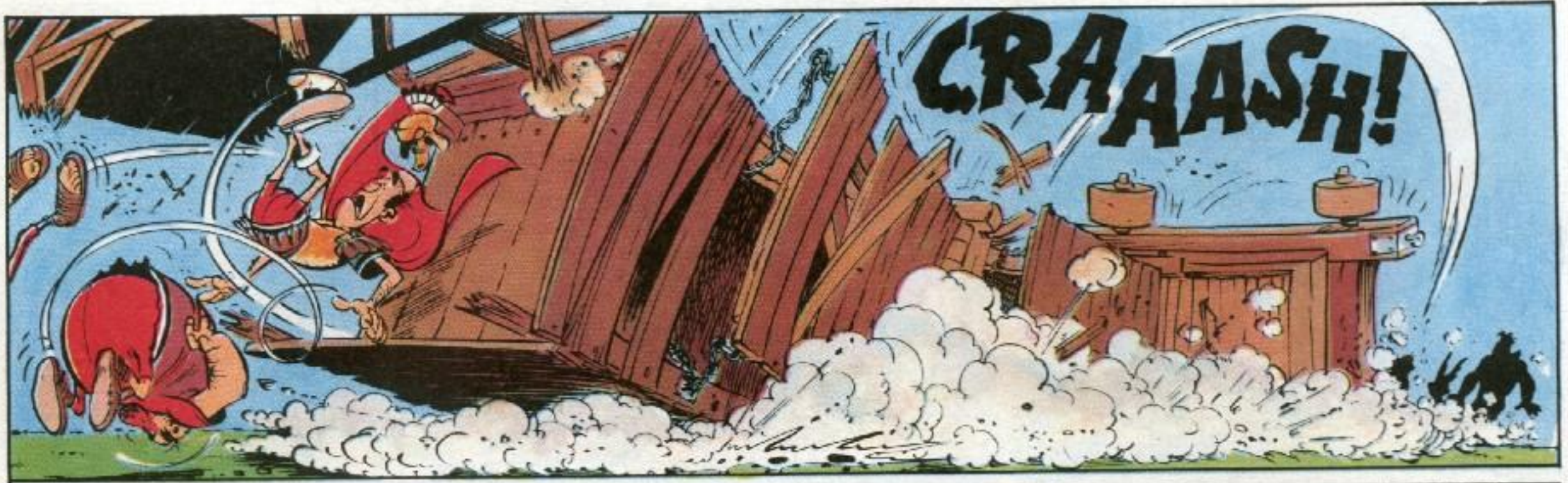
BRAUM!

MADAM, YOU GO TOO FAR!









DON'T HURT ME! I'M A CIVILIAN! IF YOU WANT TO FIGHT, GO AND FIGHT THE SOLDIERS! FIGHT MY FRIEND OVER THERE ... HE RE-ENLISTED!



I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU, FAR FROM IT. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU BACK YOUR PROPERTY ...

Caesar's Gift!



SO NOW ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH CHIEF VITALSTATISTIX AND HIS MEN!

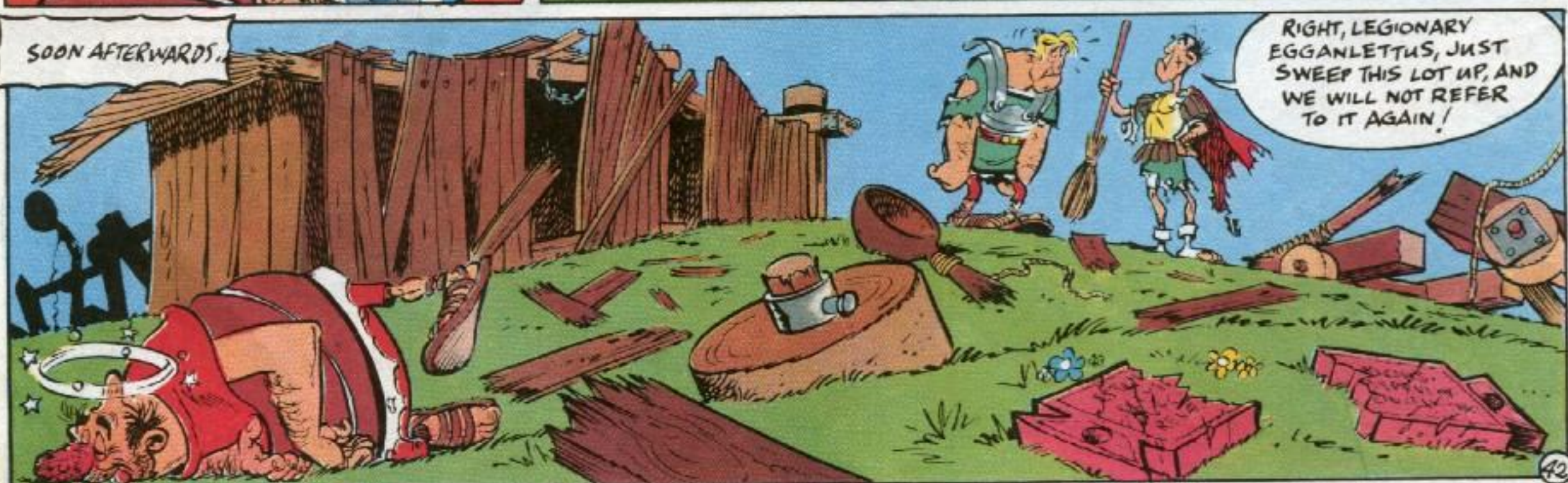


HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! YOU WOULDN'T DO A THING LIKE THAT TO AN OLD FRIEND, WOULD YOU?

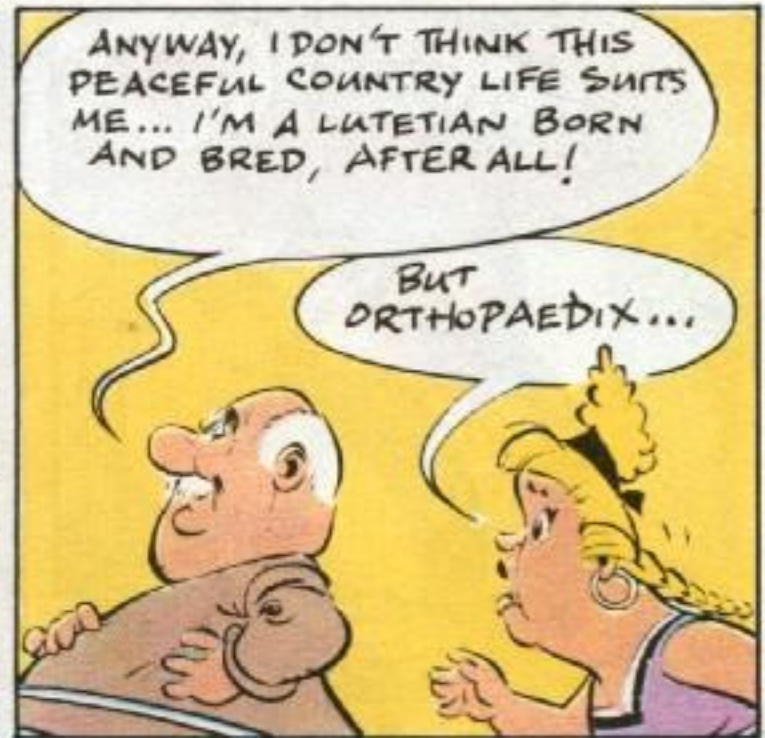


COME ON, LET'S GO HOME!

SOON AFTERWARDS...



RIGHT, LEGIONARY EGGANLETTUS, JUST SWEEP THIS LOT UP, AND WE WILL NOT REFER TO IT AGAIN!





IN FACT, EVERYONE IS FRIENDS AGAIN. UNDER THE STARRY SKY, ALL PARTIES ARE RE-UNITED AROUND THE TABLE. ALL PARTIES... FOR WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THIS HAPPENED VERY LONG AGO, ABOUT 50 BC, AND IN THOSE DAYS SUCH MATTERS WERE NOT SO VERY IMPORTANT...

