

Mother's Day. By Paul Slade and ??????????????????

Page One

Large splash occupies top three-quarters of page. Single long thin panel beneath.

Panel 1: A Large Blue Butterfly, hovering in the English countryside. It's a glorious Spring day, and the rural surroundings are idyllic.

CAPTION: I LOVE **ALL** MY CHILDREN

CREDITS BOX: SCRIPT BY PAUL SLADE. ART BY ??????????????????

Panel 2: Seed pod interior. Two near identical caterpillars, locked in mortal combat. One of them is inflicting a moral wound on the other. This is clearly a savage, merciless world. Make their surroundings dark and hostile to contrast as sharply as possible with the bright sunshine of panel 1. The caterpillars themselves look like warring space monsters from an EC comic.

CAPTION: ...BUT I ALWAYS KNEW **SHE** WAS THE STRONGEST.

Page Two

Three tiers: two panels in the top one, two in the middle and one long one at the bottom.

Panel 1: Chow time. The victorious caterpillar is eating its defeated rival. Blood drools down its hideous jaws as it digs in. Perhaps we see another dead caterpillar in the background.

CAPTION: WHEN SHE FOUND HER BROTHERS SHARING THE SEED POD WHERE I HATCHED ALL THEIR EGGS, SHE WAS RUTHLESS. SHE KILLED THEM ALL, AND TOOK HER NOURISHMENT.

Panel 2: Tall thin panel to emphasise the falling motion. We see the caterpillar drop from the seed pod to the ground. Leaves and other debris litter the forest floor.

CAPTION: WHEN THE TIME CAME, SHE DROPPED FROM THE POD AND FOUND A COSY CRACK IN THE GROUND.

Panel 3: We see the caterpillar protruding from the crack where it rests. A single red ant approaches. Give him a distinguishing mark of some kind to distinguish him from the other ants who will arrive shortly.

CAPTION: SOON, AS SHE KNEW MUST HAPPEN, SHE WAS FOUND. BUT MY BRAVE GIRL WAS NOT AFRAID.

Panel 4: The caterpillar is now glistening with shiny liquid. The ant licks it with evident pleasure.

CAPTION: SHE SQUEEZED NECTAR FROM HER CLEVER, CLEVER GLANDS AND SEDUCED HER DISCOVERER IMMEDIATELY.

Panel 5: Long thin panel, running the width of the page. In the bottom left corner, we see a close-up of the ant still licking the caterpillar. Behind him, in the distance, other red ants are approaching.

CAPTION: BEFORE LONG, HIS PLEASURE WAS INTERRUPTED, AND HE KNEW HE MUST FIGHT FOR HER.

Page Three

Large splash panel occupies top half of page. Four panel grid beneath.

Panel 1: Massive ant fight, one against many. It's a Conan cover, but acted out entirely by ants. Play up the savagery for all it's worth.

CAPTION: IT IS ALWAYS THIS WAY.

Panel 2: The aftermath of the battle. The original ant is the only survivor. He's exhausted, and covered in tiny wounds, but still alive. He turns his attention back towards the caterpillar, who has tensed and curled her body into a half moon shape.

CAPTION: HAVING SELECTED HER CHAMPION, MY DARLING TENSED HER BODY TO THE SHAPE AND TEXTURE OF AN ANT LARVA. EXHAUSTED, AND STILL DRUNK FROM THE NECTAR, HE WAS EASY TO FOOL.

Panel 3: We watch from behind as the ant, now carrying the (still half moon shaped) caterpillar, limps off into the distance.

CAPTION: HE TOOK HER TO THE NEST. AND NOT JUST TO THE NEST...

Panel 4: The ant lays the half moon caterpillar down in the ant nest's nursery. There are ant grubs everywhere, in jelly-filled translucent sacs. They look both totally disgusting and heartbreakingly vulnerable. The chamber is like an alien world.

CAPTION 1: ...BUT TO THE NURSERY.

CAPTION 2: AND THAT WAS MY CLEVER GIRL'S PLAN.

Panel 5: The caterpillar unfolds itself and starts to gorge on the embryonic ant grubs all around it. There should be no adult ants in sight at this point.

CAPTION: BECAUSE, BY NOW, SHE WAS HUNGRY AGAIN.

Page Four:

Three tiers. Two in the top row, six panel grid beneath.

Panel 1: The caterpillar is now noticeably bigger relative to the ants. It continues to feed from the nursery, as they make futile attempts to stop it.

CAPTION: BY THE TIME THEY REALISED SHE WAS THERE, SHE WAS ALREADY TOO BIG TO STOP.

Panel 2: The caterpillar has grown still more, and the ants have given up trying to fight it. Still it eats.

CAPTION: SOON. SHE WEIGHED 100 TIMES AS MUCH AS THEIR STOUTEST WORKER, AND HAD EATEN MORE THAN A THOUSAND OF THEIR BABIES. BUT STILL IT WAS NOT ENOUGH.

Panel 3: Close up of the caterpillar screaming an order. The strange characters which emerge from its mouth are alien and unrecognisable, but somehow we know they represent a language.

CAPTION 1: NOW THEY MUST **WORSHIP** HER.

CAPTION 2: SO SHE LEARNT TO IMITATE THEIR **QUEEN**.

Panel 4: The caterpillar is now luxuriating in its new surroundings – monarch of all it surveys. Several ants are bringing it food, while other lick at the nectar which it is once more exuding from its pores.

CAPTION: NOW SHE HAS A THOUSAND SLAVES.

Panel 5: The Large Blue Butterfly again, still fluttering in brilliant sunshine.

CAPTION: AND SOON WE WILL BE TOGETHER. ALREADY SHE IS BUILDING HER CHRYSALIS

Panel 6: Back in the ant hill. A Large Blue Butterfly (our caterpillar-as-was) is bursting out of its chrysalis, loosing a torrent of the alien speech like that we saw earlier. The ants look on in awe. Add an effect to the panel border to indicate this is happening only in the mama butterfly's imagination.

CAPTION: IN THE SUMMER, SHE WILL EMERGE AND LEAVE THEIR NEST FOREVER. WE WILL BE TOGETHER IN THE SKY.

Panel 7: Same effect in the panel border. Two Large Blue Butterflies fluttering together in the sunshine, in a setting every bit as idyllic as the one we opened with.

CAPTION 1 : IT WILL BE A **GLORIOUS** DAY!

CAPTION 2: BUT... WAIT.

Page Five:

Three tiers. Three panels in the top row, two large horizontal panels beneath.

Panel 1: Suddenly, we're back to grim reality, so the panel borders revert to normal. In the foreground, we see a wasp flying through the air, as the mama butterfly watches helplessly from the distance. The wasp is sleek, vicious-looking, a terrifyingly efficient killing machine.

CAPTION: WHAT'S THAT? OH GODS, NO!

Panel 2: The wasp makes a vertiginous swoop towards the ant's nest, which we can now see below. The butterfly chases frantically behind, but with no hope of catching it.

CAPTION. A WASP! I KNOW WHAT THEY ARE! I **KNOW** WHAT SHE'LL DO!

Panel 3: The wasp is in the ants' nest now, flying fighter-style over their heads down a narrow corridor and spraying the angry ants with liquid as it goes.

CAPTION: THEIR DEFENCES WILL BE USELESS. SHE'LL MAKE THEM TURN ON EACH OTHER.

Panel 4: As the wasp disappears into the distance, the ants fall to fighting among themselves. Somewhere in the crowd, we see our first ant, still identifiable by his distinguishing mark.

CAPTION: SHE'LL FIND MY DARLING.

Page Six

Three tiers. Two on the top, three in the middle, two on the bottom.

Panel 1: Close-up on the caterpillar working on its chrysalis. In the background, we see the wasp, coming in fast.

CAPTION: SHE'LL **FIND** HER. AS SHE WORKS.

Panel 2: Silhouette shot. The wasp and the caterpillar locked together on the chrysalis. They're either fucking or fighting, but we can't tell which. I'm being deliberately vague here, because I have no idea of the mechanics involved.

CAPTION: SHE'LL PLACE HER FILTHY EGG IN MY DARLING'S TUMMY.

Panel 3: The caterpillar completes its chrysalis, enclosing itself completely inside.

CAPTION: SHE WON'T EVEN KNOW IT'S THERE. BUT AS SHE SLEEPS...

Panel 4: We're inside the chrysalis now, and it's very dark. Just the barest highlight to let us see the caterpillar's outline.

CAPTION: IT WILL DEVOUR HER FROM WITHIN.

Panel 5: Exterior of the chrysalis. An unidentifiable "arm" is poking open a crack from within. Something's getting ready to emerge.

CAPTION: AND THEN, WHEN THE CHRYSALIS OPENS, WHAT EMERGES WILL NOT BE **MY** CHILD...

Panel 6: The chrysalis bursts open, revealing a young wasp, even sleeker and more deadly-looking than the one we saw earlier. It is exultant, triumphant at its survival. Panic-stricken ants flee from the sight.

CAPTION: BUT **HERS**.

Panel 7: The mama butterfly again, still in the air. But now her wings seem to droop in despair. The weather is darkening too, with black clouds now visible where once there was only sun.

CAPTION 1: AND MY CHILD...

CAPTION 2: **MY** CHILD WILL BE DEAD.

ENDS

NOTE TO ARTIST: Please feel free to ignore anything in the above script if you see a better way of doing it. I can point you to still photographs and a TV clip of this whole process in action if you want (both online), but I'm more interested in getting the emotional power and the drama of the story across than sticking rigidly to the facts.