

THE MIRACLE of LIFE

HERE AT THE BOTTOM OF TROPICAL
SEA EVERYTHING IS CALM...TOO CALM..



SUDDENLY, A POWERFUL ARMADA OF ARMORED AMPHIBIANS SHATTERS THE AZURE SILENCE. THE TURTLES ARE ABOUT TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR BIOLOGICAL MISSION.



THE OPERATION HAS A CODE NAME: "OVERLORD", WHICH IN TURTLE LANGUAGE MEANS: OPERATION LAYING EGGS. RIGHT NOW WE ARE AT HOUR "H" DAY "J", MINUTE "1". AS THE ELDEST GIVES THE SIGNAL, ALL THE TURTLES BEGIN TO EMERGE. OPERATION OVERLORD HAS BEGUN...



HUNDREDS OF TURTLES SURFACE A FEW YARDS FROM THE BEACH: A LARGE EXPANSE OF SAND WILL HAVE TO BE STORMED. A GLANCE ALL AROUND AND THE SITUATION IS IMMEDIATELY ASSESSED: EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT.



LANDING TAKES PLACE AT "I" HOURS, AS PLANNED. EGG LAYING MUST TAKE PLACE AT "H" HOURS, AT LOW TIDE. THEY WILL HAVE TO ADVANCE INTO OPEN TERRAIN.



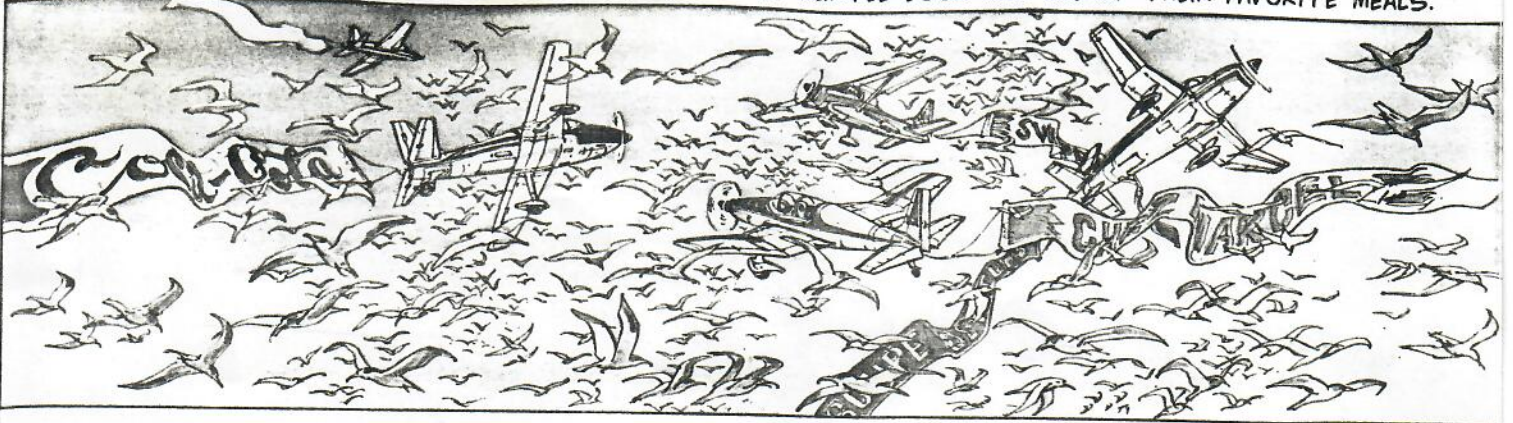
OTHER PROBLEMS WILL FACE THEM HERE. CONCEIVED FOR RAPID MOVEMENT IN THE WATER, TURTLES HAVE A MUCH REDUCED AUTONOMY ONCE THEY ARE ON LAND. THEY ARE ABOUT AS FLEXIBLE AS A STARCHED DRESS ON ICE SKATES.



THEY MUST PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE SMALLEST OBSTACLE, AVOID THE TINIEST GREASY BIT OF PAPER OR TUBE OF SUNTAN LOTION. PROGRESS IS SLOW OVER THE INERT BODIES THAT STRETCH ALONG THE BEACH.



UP IN THE SKY, BIRDS OF PREY FOLLOW THEIR PROGRESS. TURTLE EGGS ARE ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE MEALS.



MANY HOURS GO BY BEFORE EACH TURTLE FINDS THE IDEAL PLACE FOR THE EGGS TO INCUBATE IN COMPLETE SAFETY. NOW THE "RELEASE" PHASE BEGINS. A PROCESS OF CAMOUFLAGE GIVES THE EGGS THE LOOK OF PING-PONG BALLS.



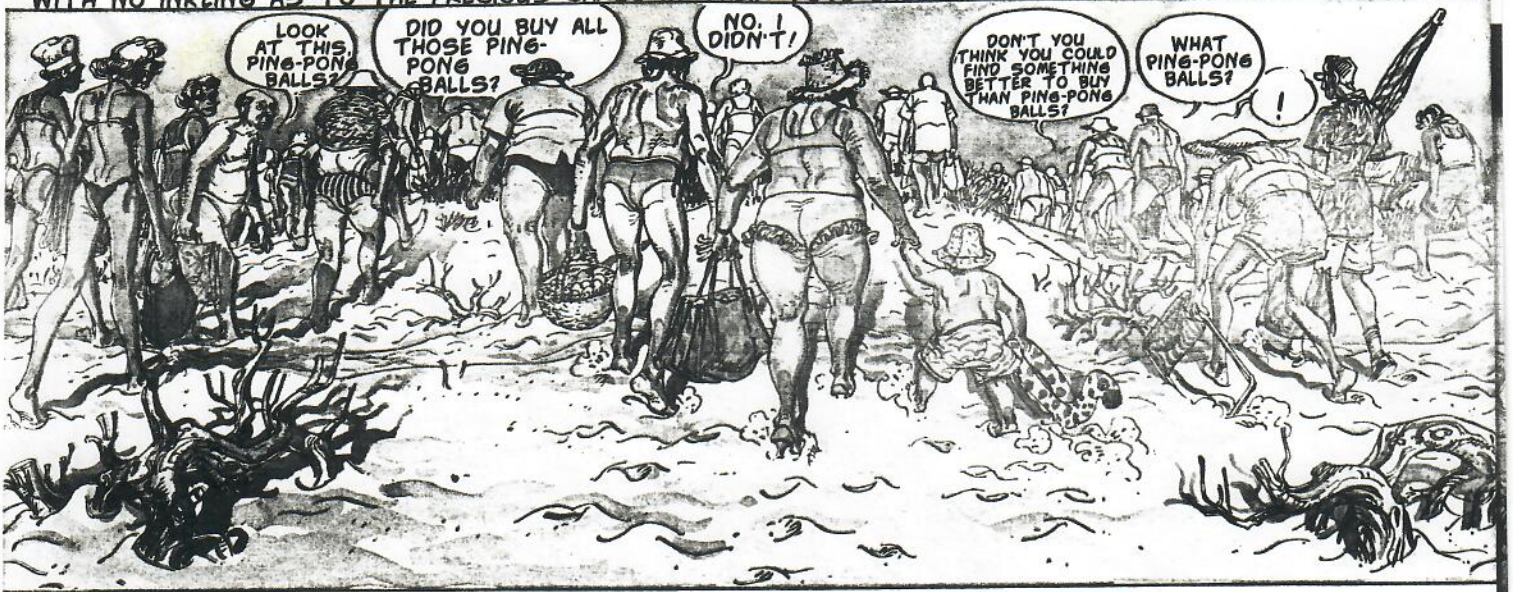
OPERATION OVERLORD IS SUCCESSFUL. THE EXHAUSTED TURTLES WADDLE BACK TO THE SEA, THEIR HEARTS FULL OF JOY, LIKE MEN WHO KNOW THEY WILL MAKE LOVE AND HAVE PLENTY OF ALE.



THE MID-AFTERNOON BREEZE DISPELS THE SOPORIFIC EFFECT OF THE HOT SUN AND GIVES THEIR STRENGTH BACK TO THOSE WHO SPEND THEIR VACATION ON THEIR BACKS.



LEAVING NATURE BEHIND, THEY RETURN TO CIVILIZATION RESPONDING TO THE APPEAL OF A THREE PIECE SUIT, WITH NO INKLING AS TO THE PRECIOUS CARGO IN THEIR TOTE BAGS.



LOOK AT THIS PING-PONG BALLS?
DID YOU BUY ALL THOSE PING-PONG BALLS?
NO, I DIDN'T!
DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD FIND SOMETHING BETTER TO BUY THAN PING-PONG BALLS?
WHAT PING-PONG BALLS?

THE FRIGATE BIRDS GRADUALLY COME TO REALIZE THAT SOMETHING UNUSUAL IS GOING ON AND VENT THEIR ANGER WITH FOUL LANGUAGE.



WHERE THE HELL DID THEY HIDE THOSE DAMNED EGGS?
THOSE TRICKY SLUTS!
WELL BOYS WHAT'S THE VERDICT?
NOTHING YET BOSS!
I'VE A STRANGE FEELING...
THEY MIGHT HAVE HAD HYSTERICAL PREGNANCES!
CAN'T FIND A TRACE OF THEM!
THOSE BASTARDS!

A FEW MONTHS LATER, FAR FROM A HOSTILE NATURE AND PREDATORY BEAKS, THE PING-PONG BALLS WILL BLOSSOM IN THE COMFORTABLE SURROUNDING OF MIDDLE CLASS HOMES. OH, WHAT A MIRACLE IS LIFE!



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH ALL THOSE PING-PONG BALLS?
I DON'T KNOW, THEY COULD COME IN HANDY SOMETIME.
BUT I'M TELLING YOU I DIDN'T BUY THEM!
AS IF WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH JUNK ALREADY! WHERE AM I GOING TO PUT ALL THOSE BALLS?

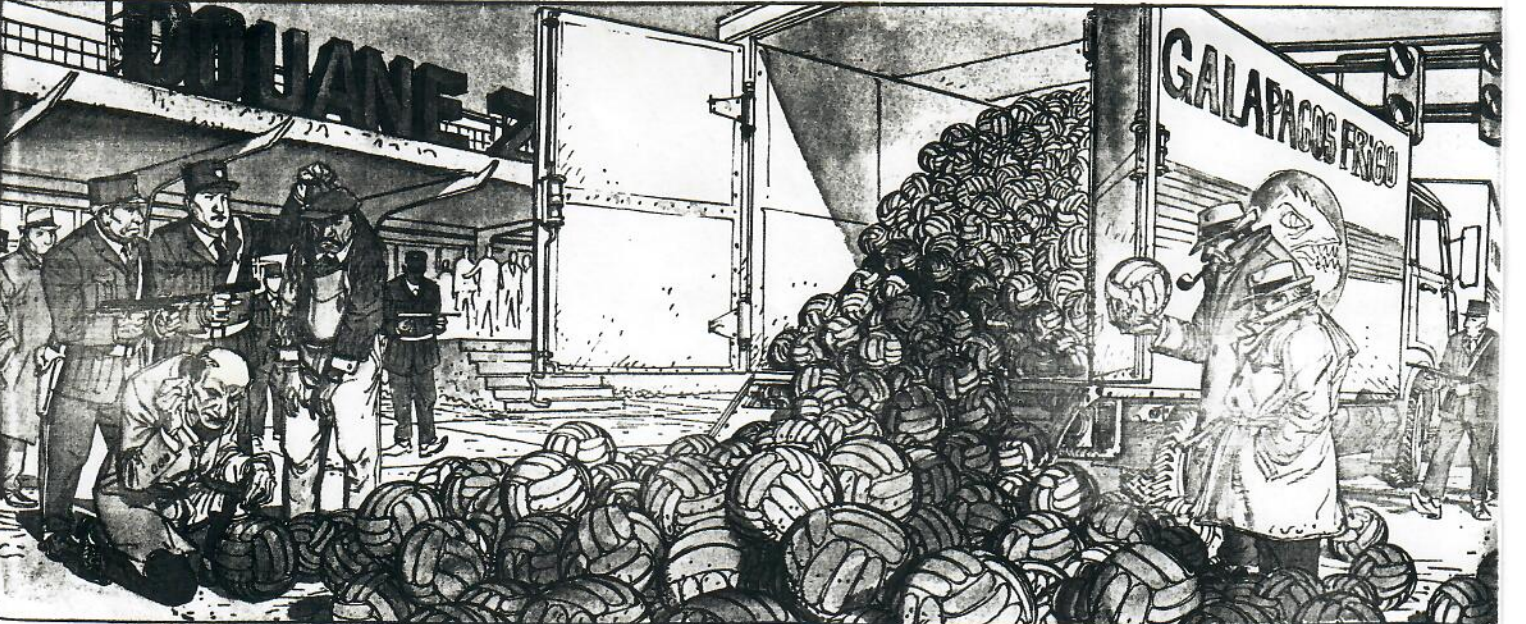
THE SURPRISING COINCIDENCE OF BIOLOGICAL MECHANISMS AND VACATION RESORTS HAS STOPPED THE PROCESS OF EXTINCTION FOR THE MARINE TURTLE. BUT THE PRICE IS HIGH! OF COURSE, THE TURTLES SEEM TO HAVE ADAPTED FAIRLY WELL TO FAMILY LIFE, THANKS TO THEIR SOULFUL EYES, WHICH UNFAINGLY INSPIRES COMPASSION IN ALL THOSE AROUND THEM.



BUT IN OTHER SECTORS A STRANGE SLACKENING OF ACTIVITY AND PRODUCTION HAS BEEN NOTICED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES...



...SUCH AS AN EMBARGO ON THE IMPORT OF PING-PONG...



THE RECENT DISCOVERY, HOWEVER, OF A CLANDESTINE CARGO OF SOCCER BALLS INSIDE REFRIGERATED TRUCKS COMING FROM THE GALAPAGOS MAKES US FEAR THE WORST.

THE END