



INTERVIEW WITH:

SIMON FURMAN &
LAURENT LEFEUVRE

AFTER GETTING SCRATCHED BY A RADIOACTIVE LEOPARD, YOUNG BILLY FARMER SOON DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD ACQUIRED THE STRENGTH, AGILITY AND SENSES OF THE MIGHTY JUNGLE CAT - AND SO HE BECAME THE LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET!

ORIGINALLY CREATED BY TOM TULLY, MIKE WESTERN AND ERIC BRADBURY, THE LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET IS A STAND OUT SUPER HERO FROM BRITISH COMICS HISTORY, SO IT'S QUITE RIGHT THAT HE SHOULD BE STARRING IN THE PAGES OF **MONSTER FUN!** WE CHATTED TO **SIMON FURMAN** AND **LAURENT LEFEUVRE** ABOUT HOW THEY HAVE REINVENTED THE LEOPARD OF LIME STREET FOR YOUNG READERS OF TODAY...

SO SIMON, LAURENT - I GUESS THE FIRST THING TO ASK IS WHY DID YOU WANT TO WORK ON THE LEOPARD OF LIME STREET?

SIMON FURMAN: FOR ME, IT'S REVISITING A STRIP I LOVED AS A YOUNGER COMICS FAN. HERE'S THE QUICK STORY: I WAS 15, AND COMICS WERE KIND OF BEHIND ME BY THEN. I'D MOVED ON TO MOVIES, BOOKS, AND (IN THEORY) GIRLS. BUT I SAW THE COVER THAT ANNOUNCED THE DEBUT OF LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT BACK IN THE DAY, AND JUST GOT PULLED BACK IN. I LOVED IT, WITH THOSE BRITISH VERSION OF SPIDER-MAN VIBES (ALL THE TROPES WERE THERE - KINDLY AUNT, ANGRY EDITOR, RADIOACTIVE-ANIMAL-CAUSING-POWERS ETC), AND JUST LOVED IT MORE FOR THAT.

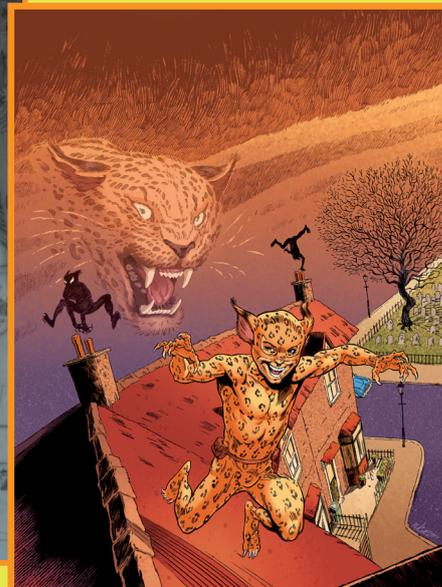
LAURENT LEFEUVRE: I DISCOVERED THE LEOPARD WHEN I WAS AROUND 7 OR 8 IN FRANCE, IN THE MID-80S (I WAS BORN AND STILL LIVE IN BRITANNY). LIKE MANY OTHER ENGLISH SERIES, THE LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET WAS THEN PUBLISHED IN SMALL BOOKLETS OF 130 PAGES, IN NOVEL FORMAT, WITH A COLOUR COVER. THESE FORMATS HAVE LONG PLAYED THE ROLE THAT MANGA EMBODIES IN THE CURRENT

MARKET: A POPULAR, INEXPENSIVE FORM OF BLACK AND WHITE COMICS. ANYWAY, I INSTANTLY FELT THE ENGLISH ASPECT OF THEM ALL, WHICH ADDED TO MY INTEREST. THIS IS HOW I DISCOVERED THE LEOPARD - AND I FOUND IT AMAZING!

SO, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM YOUR NEW VERSION OF THE LEOPARD?

SF: OUR FOCUS IS ON IT BEING JUST A YEAR OR TWO INTO THE LIFE OF BILLY FARMER AS THE LEOPARD, AND WE PICK UP HIS ADVENTURES (AS BOTH) AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WITH A SOMEWHAT CREEPY AND SUPERNATURAL THREAT TO THE STORYLINE.





WHY DID YOU WANT TO WORK ON THIS RELAUNCH OF LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET FOR TODAY'S NEW READERS?

SF: FOR ALL THE ABOVE REASONS AND THE FACT THAT THROUGH THE TREASURY OF BRITISH COMICS COLLECTIONS OF CLASSIC LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET I'D ALREADY RE-IMMERSED MYSELF IN THE WORLD OF BILLY FARMER/THE LEOPARD. I WAS RARING TO GO WITH SOME NEW MATERIAL AND GRABBED THE CHANCE WITH BOTH PAWS!

THE FIRST INSTALMENT IN THIS NEW TAKE FOR TODAY'S READERS IS A VERY HALLOWEENY EPISODE OF LEOPARD, AND ONE THAT DEFINITELY LEAVES US WITH A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF BILLY'S POWERS!

SF: AT THE TIME OF WRITING THE MONSTER FUN HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR STORY, TOTEM, I HAD NO IDEA IF IT WOULD END UP A ONE-OFF OR THE START OF SOMETHING BIGGER. BUT MY INSTINCT IS JUST TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHARACTER (AND OFTEN GO RIGHT BACK TO THE BEGINNING). Y'KNOW, I LOVE THE LEOPARD'S ORIGIN, BUT A RADIOACTIVE LEOPARD? REALLY? IT'S KIND OF HOKEY BUT I HAD NO INTENTION OF MESSING WITH THAT. JUST... LOOKING BEYOND IT A BIT AND, AS YOU SAY, POSING SOME SEARCHING QUESTIONS. DID I HAVE HALF AN EYE ON BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE THAT STORY? OF COURSE.

WHAT SORTS OF THINGS CAN YOU TEASE US WITH FOR FUTURE STORIES? WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FOR BILLY?

SF: DEFINITELY MORE CREEPY BAD GUYS (AND GALS), DEFINITELY PEELING BACK MORE LAYERS OF BILLY'S PAST AND HIS POWERS. SERIOUSLY, I HAVE SOME GAME-CHANGING STUFF UP MY SLEEVE, WHICH I THINK (HOPE) WILL SERVE TO EXPAND THE WORLD/CAST/REACH OF THE LEOPARD OF LIME STREET.

LL: AND I MUST SAY THAT I CAN'T WAIT TO DRAW MORE! I TRY TO LAY THE PAGE OUT WITH BOXES OF ALL SHAPES, AS IF THE LEOPARD WAS TOO WILD TO BE CONSIDERED TO NEAT LITTLE BOXES!



WHEN FIRST WRITING THE NEW LEOPARD OF LIME STREET COMIC STRIP FOR THE MONSTER FUN HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR, DID YOU KNOW THIS WOULD BE THE START OF AN ONGOING STORY?

ON THAT NOTE, LAURENT, HOW DO YOU WORK? WHAT'S YOUR PROCESS?

LL: SO, AFTER TRANSLATING SIMON'S SCRIPT INTO FRENCH, I REREAD IT SEVERAL



TIMES TO MAKE SURE I'VE UNDERSTOOD IT. I MUST SAY THAT IT IS AMAZING TO HAVE SOMEONE WHO WRITES WITH SUCH A RICH AND EVOCATIVE VOCABULARY BECAUSE HE IMMERSSES ME IN THE RIGHT MOOD, THE RIGHT TONE!

FIRST, I VISUALISE KEY IMAGES THAT I TRY TO PROJECT ONTO THE PAPER WHILE TRYING TO INSERT A COHERENT READING MOVEMENT SO THAT THE READER'S EYE MOVES FROM ONE IMAGE TO ANOTHER. THIS IS THE ROUGH SKETCH STAGE, SO A TIP FOR ANY BUDDING YOUNG ARTISTS OUT THERE: YOU MUSTN'T CENSOR YOURSELF, TRY THINGS OUT, WITHOUT DETAILING, AND IF IT IS A BIT WEAK, THEN REWORK IT UNTIL YOU GET IT RIGHT. I FIND I HAVE TO BE CONCENTRATED, AND DO THIS IN ABSOLUTE SILENCE!

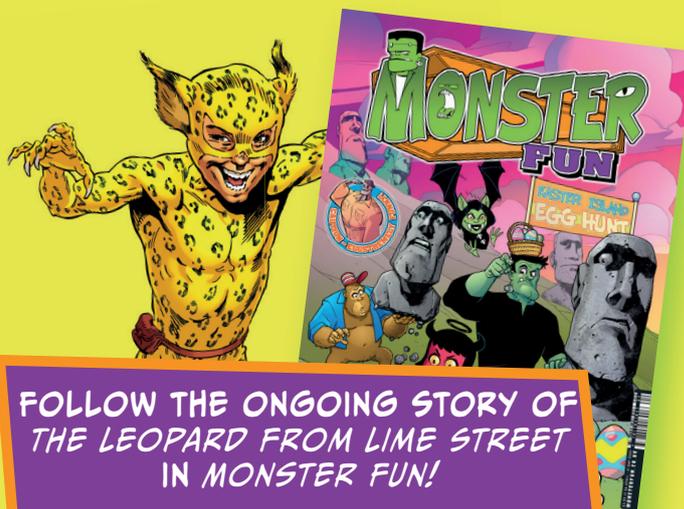
THEN I REWORK MY COMPOSITIONS DIGITALLY, EVEN ADDING THE FIRST SEMBLANCE OF INKING TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF THE MASSES OF BLACK, OPTICAL GREYS, AND WHITES THAT WILL BLEND WITH THE TEXT. I CAN THEN LISTEN TO THE RADIO, AND RELAX A LITTLE! I'M NOT INVENTING ANYTHING, THESE ARE METHODS THAT ALLOW A NARRATIVE TO BE DEVELOPED STEP BY STEP THROUGH DRAWING, WHILE CORRECTING AT EACH STAGE THE PROBLEMS OF MOVING FROM ONE PANEL TO ANOTHER, FROM ONE SEQUENCE TO ANOTHER.

THEN I DRAW THE BORDERS OF THE BOXES, DRAW THE SPEECH BUBBLES, DEFINE THE LETTERING, AND DO FINAL INKING. THEN I MOVE ON TO COLOUR! THE COLOUR HELPS TO BRING EVERYTHING TO LIFE (MOVEMENT, ATMOSPHERE, CLARITY...). I THINK OF THE COLOUR STAGE AS THE MUSIC IN A FILM:

EVERYTHING CAN BE NUANCED, AMPLIFIED... OR RUINED! FAR FROM SIMPLE COLOURING, IT IS LITERALLY THE EMOTIONAL DRESSING OF A SEQUENCE.

WITH MONSTER FUN BEING THE FIRST BIG NEW CHILDREN'S COMIC FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW, HOW HUGE IS IT TO BE A PART OF IT RIGHT FROM THE START?

SF: HUGE! IT'S GREAT TO BE PART OF A COMIC (FOR KIDS SPECIFICALLY) THAT'S MORE ABOUT THE CONTENT, CHARACTERS, AND STORIES INSIDE THAN THE LATEST TRENDS AND RUBBISH FREE GIFTS. BEING ABLE TO PICK MONSTER FUN UP ON SHOP SHELVES IS SO GREAT, WHERE A NEW GENERATION OF KIDS CAN DISCOVER THEIR FAVOURITE CHARACTERS FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT WILL INSPIRE THEM AS THEY GROW UP! I THINK CHILDREN TODAY REALLY NEED MORE MONSTER FUN (AND LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET) IN THEIR LIVES.



FOLLOW THE ONGOING STORY OF THE LEOPARD FROM LIME STREET IN MONSTER FUN!