

JERRY STRATTON  
www.jerrystratton.com

NOH #3

Copyright © 1998 Jerry Stratton

"Life is a Dance"

Pages: 8 comic, 16 script

NOTE TO PENCILLER: This issue, you should be receiving the following reference works:

- 1) A drawing of a Hopi Indian mask.
- 2) A packet of tea: Wildforest Blackberry. Read the script before drinking it. Bet you wish Jenn drank Yakima Cider instead, hm?
- 3) A picture of a Japanese treasure ship.
- 4) Photos of the Hollywood Boulevard area.

NOTE TO LETTERER: Words that need to be emphasized are underlined.

PAGE 1

PANEL 1 takes up the whole page. PANEL 2 is a couple of probably circular insets (however many you want), coming from inside the NEWSPAPER. It's mid-afternoon, about three-thirty.

PANEL 1. A shot of a Los Angeles Times machine -- one of those where the sample newspaper is straight up and easily visible. It's at the edge of a curb, and a car's BUMPER sticker is visible beyond it: "Life is a Dance" in gold on pink, italicized script. There's a picture of Noh flying away from the last scene of last issue.

1. MAIN ARTICLE HEADLINE: HERO APPEARS: USHER CAPTURED!

2. TEXT OF ARTICLE:

A superhero appeared in Los Angeles. Noh, as he called himself last night, aided the LAPD in capturing the superpowered villain, the Usher, in Beverly Hills.

Police reaction to Noh was positive. Officers cheered him as he fought the Usher. Governor Wilson extended a markedly wary welcome to Noh last night (see related article, page A3). The Sentinels™ declined immediate comment.

3. HEADLINE: NOH NEW SUPERHERO!

4. TEXT OF ARTICLE:

So Los Angeles has a superhero. What can he do? He's certainly strong: he fought the Usher, after all, and won. Director Pierre Arman's home was heavily damaged in the match. Arman is currently in critical condition at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, although that was due solely to an attack by the Usher.

Noh can fly: when the battle was over, he flew away, despite calls for interviews and autographs. His speed did not seem to be of the level of Cosmic Kid.

And Noh can talk! From "Artists have a champion!" to "This poetry fights back," Noh made his intentions perfectly clear.

What happens next is anyone's guess

The article goes on, but is not visible below this point. You can cover up part of what's here with the insets, but leave most of it visible. Other headlines on this page are "DC STRANGLER STRIKES" and "HILLARY RESIGNS". The following texts can be used as needed.

5. HEADLINE: DC STRANGLER STRIKES

6. TEXT OF ARTICLE:

Another body has been attributed to the mysterious DC Strangler. William H. Ryan, federal judge, was strangled in his office Thursday evening.

## 7. HEADLINE: HILLARY RESIGNS

## 8. TEXT OF ARTICLE:

Hillary Clinton resigned as First Lady yesterday, following news that she is an undocumented alien, a problem that has been plaguing the Clinton administration since day one. First daughter Chelsea Clinton noted that she'll be missed, but there can be no appearance of impropriety in the important post of First Lady.

A leaked short list included Frank Mankiewicz, Jerry Garcia, Gary Hart, Colin Powell, and Hubert Humphrey as possible replacements. When asked why a dead person was on the list, an unidentified spokesperson said "The President has always been a fan."

NOTE TO ARTIST: This article, as a joke, will of course be ignored in *future* issues. If you end up showing President Clinton in *this* issue (and I don't see where that's going to happen but it's up to you), feel free to show him with anyone on the short list above.

PANEL 2. This panel is from the inside of the newspaper. Make that clear, with converging lines or what-not. It's a column showing celebrity reaction to Noh.

## 9. HEADLINE: WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT NOH?

## 10. TEXT OF ARTICLE:

Madonna: A hero for real values? For artistic freedom? You know I like it!

Jesse Jackson: Even our artists must take to the streets. We should all stand up, but be wary of the wolf in sheep's skin.

Governor Wilson: My stand on super heroes is a matter of public record. His help against the Usher was welcome, but vigilantism should be restricted to officers of the law.

Mayor Bradley: It's time our town had a superhero, and a superhero to reflect its ethnic diversity.

Rush Limbaugh: [That's] not even an American art! Who cares?

Officer Doug Howard: The Usher deserved what he got. Did you see what that creep did to my car? And all the people he's killed, too!

PANEL 3. The CREDITS. Work this into the newspaper if you can.

## 11. CREDITS

## 12. SONG QUOTES COPYRIGHT:

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds ©1967 Northern Songs Unlimited

Punk Rock Girl ©1988 Golf Pro Music  
Life's a Dance ©1991 Nancy Kathryn Smith West

PAGE 2

PANEL 1. JENN is in her car. The traffic is heavy. It's a small car, a five-year old Metro (not really important, go with what you know, as long as it's small and cheap). The RADIO is talking about Noh, and she's reaching to turn it off.

2. RADIO: EVERYONE'S WONDERING WHO DOES NOH'S FUNKY COSTUME--
3. SFX (radio being turned off): CLIK
4. JENN (thought): IT'S NO COSTUME!

PANEL 2. JENN is on the set of *Mission Hills*, 92103. She's wearing a snappy dress, like a teenager would wear. She's talking to a HUNK of a guy, who's waiting for her to say her lines, but she's thinking about Yoshi. The director's chair says "P Arman" but the DIRECTOR is a middle-aged woman, average build, with gray-tinged long hair. She is sitting in the chair.

5. HUNK: HEY, ANDY, HOW'S YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
6. JENN (thought): I SHOULD CALL KYLE UP, MAYBE HE CAN HELP ME FIGURE THINGS OUT.

PANEL 3. JENN snaps out of her reverie, tries to remember her line, and fails. The DIRECTOR jumps out of her chair and yells to the cameraman. JENN turns her head down to swear.

7. JENN: DAMN. FORGOT MY LINE.
8. DIRECTOR (yelling): CUT!!!
9. HUNK: ANDY, I MEAN, JENNIFER, HA HA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

PANEL 4. JENN is at a public telephone on Hollywood Boulevard. Behind her is a McDonald's, and she's got a bag set down next to the phone, which she pulls french fries from. The bag has a cow's head on it, with little 'x's for eyes. Behind JENN, LACY roller-blades by. JENN is talking to KYLE Benson, on the phone.

10. CAP: "YEAH, I'LL BE FINE. THANKS."
11. JENN: KYLE, HEY, HOW'RE YOU DOING?
12. JENN: YEAH. LISTEN, COULD WE GO OUT TONIGHT? I'VE GOT--
13. JENN: YEAH, I'VE GOT SOME THINGS I NEED TO UNLOAD, YOU KNOW?
14. JENN: OKAY, THE BROWN DERBY. SEVEN O'CLOCK. THANKS, KYLE.

PANEL 5. LACY roller-blades past JENN, left side of the panel to the right side of the panel (reading direction). She's wearing a Walkman-style RADIO. She's very intent on her movement, deftly moving around people. There's some Noh-mask wake (see issue 1) just appearing behind her. It's faint, and she doesn't notice it.

15. LACY'S RADIO: ...punk rock girl, please look at me

PANEL 6. This panel should be half-and-half: half real and half psychedelic. She's moving into the Noh experience. Everything in the real world exists in the Noh experience, it's just crazy looking. Everything's alive, even the air. Arms, hands, fingers, nails, they all move of their own accord. The people are all wearing masks: most of them are expression-less masks, but one or two will be angry, or sad. No one is joyful. This is Hollywood. Lacy is surprised, but doesn't fall.

16. LACY'S RADIO: ...what do you see?

PAGE 3

Use a psychedelic-style layout for this page. Maybe a spiral on a Noh-mask (or collection of many theatre masks) background.

NOTE TO LETTERER: Use the song, *Punk Rock Girl*, following along whatever format the artist used. Yes, the radio is in mixed case. Have fun.

PANEL 1 and up. Lacy is moving through the psychedelic sidewalk, amidst the mask. She is very scared, and screaming.

1. RADIO: ...we got into a car, away we started rollin'  
I said how much you pay for this,  
nuthin' man it's stolen  
Punk rock girl, you look so wild,  
let's have a child  
we'll name her Minnie Pearl, just you and me,  
eat fudge banana swirl!  
just you and me—

PANEL Second-to-Last. Lacy moves out of the experience. Half of this panel is psychedelic, the other half normal. A lot of people are looking at her like she's crazy.

2. RADIO: we'll travel 'round the world,

PANEL Last. LACY leans up against a wall. The few people on the sidewalk are ignoring her, now. LACY is using the wall to keep the world from spinning. (Like when you spin around for a few minutes, and then stop.)

1. LACY: MY GOD, I'M FREAKING!

2. RADIO: just you and me, punk rock girl.

PAGE 4

The MUSES are masks—the tragedy/comedy masks seen last issue. The area they're in alternates between a sunny field of poppies and a cloudy cypress grove. MELPOMÉNE is tragedy, and THALIA is comedy.

PANEL 1. MELPOMENE and THALIA are in the field of poppies. Their voices are not inside balloons. Attribution must be indicated by location in the panel.

1. THALIA: SHE'S GOING TO LEAVE HIM. WHAT WILL THAT DO TO THE CORPOREAL MASK?
2. MELPOMÉNE: THE MASK IS ALREADY STRANGELY BOUND. IF THE LIVING BOND DOES NOT RESTRAIN IT, I FEAR IT WILL GO DANGEROUSLY AFIELD OF ITS PURPOSE.

PANEL 2. Now, they're in the cypress grove.

3. THALIA: MELPOMÉNE, WE MUST PREVENT THAT. REMEMBER THE LAST MASK, THE LAST NOH.
4. MELPOMÉNE: REMEMBER AS WELL, THALIA, THE LAST TIME YOU INTERFERED.

PANEL 3. The poppy-field again. A woman in a tie-die dress is dancing in the background, far away. She has flowing, multi-colored hair.

5. MELPOMENE: BEWARE YOU DON'T UNRAVEL THE THREAD MORE THAN YOUR SISTERS DESIRE.
6. THALIA: THE MOIRÉ CLAIM WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE THREAD ANYWAY. BUT I WILL DO WHAT I CAN.

PANEL 4. The grove. THALIA is moving away, and where she is, it's the poppies. The tie-die woman is gone.

7. MELPOMÉNE: GOOD FORTUNE, BLOSSOM. BUT YOU ARE NO SEAMSTRESS.

PANEL 5. THALIA is moving from the poppy field to a reverse-color field, and then to the land of masks. The land of masks has many different masks (like Noh's wake). Here, we see the start of the hall of masks, which includes many theatre-type masks: tragedy and comedy, expressionless, blank mask, monster masks, ballroom masks, etc. The Hall is old, and Greek: faded (white) marble columns and arches. There are no walls; between the columns are the masks, and behind the masks is empty space, and an occasional pinpoint of light.

PAGE 5

The panels pretty much alternate between LACY and THALIA. Don't put borders around the THALIA panels—make it look like this is sort of happening 'behind' the real world.

PANEL 1. LACY is sitting in a McDonald's, on Hollywood Boulevard. Mann's Chinese Theater (the one with the dragons everywhere; yeah, yeah, I'll see if I can find a picture) is across the street, in case it ever shows up in the shot. It is early evening. LACY has her head in her hands. She's worried, of course, because she thinks she's freaking out.

1. LACY (thought): I THOUGHT FLASHBACKS WERE A MYTH! THAT WAS SCARY—

PANEL 2. THALIA is moving down the Hall of Masks, past a Hopi Indian mask (see picture), a Groucho Marx mask (the glasses, fake nose, and cigar), a gorilla face, a white-face with red cheeks, and any other theatre masks you may feel like adding. And, in the distance, a mask that looks just like the one that Yoshi found in the theatre in the first issue.

2. CAP: "BUT IT SURE FELT GOOD!"

3. THALIA: AH, THERE IS THE NOH! THIS IS EASIER WHEN THE SPIRIT IS BOUND TO ONE MASK.

PANEL 3. LACY is eating her burger. THALIA's voice is disembodied.

NOTE TO LETTERER: Make sure you keep the format of the lines intact, as these are vaguely in the style of Japanese court poetry from the 9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Also, use some cute little flowery script for THALIA all the way through this page.

4. THALIA: Trade places with me!  
I need to enter your world.

PANEL 4. LACY is looking around, but there's no one there. She's only a *little* self-conscious about this. Some people are looking at her—they hear LACY talking, but not THALIA.

5. LACY: HUH? WHERE ARE YOU?

6. THALIA: I am not in your world.  
I am in the Hall of Masks.  
I must trade places with you.

PANEL 5. The people who were looking at LACY are ignoring her. A few different people are staring at her now, probably including a few kids pulling on their mothers pant legs and pointing at this girl talking to herself. LACY is completely absorbed in talking to this disembodied voice.

7. LACY: WHY ME?

8. THALIA: I am somewhere else.  
Let me through, and you'll see things,  
Things you've never imagined.

PANEL 7. LACY's eyes widen. There are McDonald's employees coming towards her, behind her (she's facing out towards the street, now). They're worried—dealing with weirdoes is *not* in the job description, even in Hollywood.

9. LACY: I'VE...

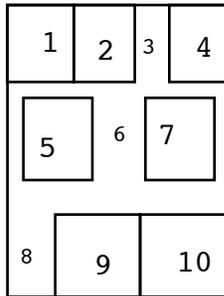
10. LACY: THINGS I'VE NEVER IMAGINED? I'VE IMAGINED A LOT, BUT...

11. LACY: IT ALWAYS SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING'S MISSING.

12. CAP: picture yourself in a boat on a river...

PAGE 6.

JENN and KYLE Benson are at the Brown Derby, a sit-down restaurant/bar on Hollywood & Vine (although you won't be able to see outside). The Derby no longer looks like a hat. See the Hollywood photos. It's your everyday, boring restaurant. The walls are done in wood, there are plants in various strategic locations, and little salt and pepper shakers on the wood tables.



&lt;---- Sample Page Layout

Put this page on a background of LACY skating through the streets (yeah, put some palm trees in there, cars, etc.) LACY is leaving inspiration behind (in this case, inspiration looks decidedly like rainbow colors and comix-like flowers) her as she skates. Don't worry, people are still honking at her. The background should be visible between the panels here, and includes panels 3, 6, and 8. These 'background' panels shouldn't have a border—they're to be as if in the background. They should also be thinner than the other panels. LACY should look as if she's going behind the 'real' panels. Note that at this point, LACY is really THALIA.

PANEL 1. JENN and KYLE are seated at a corner table, well secluded. JENN is looking at her food, a soup and salad. She's shy about talking about her personal life right now. KYLE has a hamburger and onion rings. They both have a glass of red wine. The food is half gone.

1. KYLE: JENN, WHY CAN'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HE'S DONE?
2. JENN: OH, GOD, IT'S JUST... HE'S CHANGED. I CAN'T EVEN BELIEVE IT.

PANEL 2. KYLE has an intense look on his face. He's holding his wine glass as sort of a marker to what he's saying.

3. KYLE: DON'T TALK LIKE THAT. IF HE'S DONE SOMETHING BAD, BELIEVE IT. OTHERWISE YOU'LL JUST END UP BLAMING YOURSELF, AND PUTTING UP WITH MORE AND MORE BULLSHIT.

PANEL 3. LACY is blading down Lanewood Avenue. There are large palm trees every fifteen feet or so. All of the buildings are two to four story apartment buildings, most with underground garages. LACY'S on the left hand side (that's right, facing traffic). There are two cars coming towards her, and one on the other side of the street. There are also parked cars, of course. She *isn't* blading very well—THALIA hasn't quite got the hang of it yet. But she's not really noticing how badly she's doing, she's quite happy just to be here. She also expects the cars to get out of her way (which they do, but not without a few honks and yells). Don't forget the hearts and flowers. Show the honks, if you can, with wavy lines or something, showing 'angry cars.' I don't want any lettering in this panel, other than the hearts and flowers.

PANEL 4. JENN is worried that KYLE is taking this the wrong way, but she's just not willing to say what *really* happened. KYLE is taking a drink of wine. JENN is taking a bite of salad.

4. JENN: IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, KYLE.

5. KYLE: THEN WHAT IS IT? JENN, I'M WORRIED. YOU'RE CLOSING YOURSELF UP.

PANEL 5. JENN takes a sip of wine. She's less worried, and is hoping that KYLE is willing to let things be.

6. JENN: OH, KYLE. I REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU. BUT... THANKS FOR BEING HERE?

7. JENN (thought): I CAN'T TELL HIM THAT YOSHI IS A SUPERHERO.

PANEL 6. LACY is blading up La Brea (towards the Hollywood Hills in the distance). If you want, you can put her at the corner of La Brea and Hollywood Blvd. There are tall office buildings and small restaurant-malls all around. On a brick wall somewhere, there's some graffiti that says "Thor is a goober grape." LACY is blading more determinedly now, more skillfully, and happily gapping at the city lights.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 7. KYLE puts his hand on JENN'S. Remember that, while it may look like it to the reader, KYLE is not being romantic, and neither is JENN.

8. KYLE: WELL, YOU'VE DONE THE SAME FOR ME, JENN.

PANEL 8. LACY is climbing up some stairs, holding her roller-blades in her hand. She's feeling the wall as she goes up; it's covered in carpeting. What's carpeting called when it's on a wall? Whatever it is, it's here. You've never showed the stairs in JENN's apartment yet, but this is where LACY is.

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 9. JENN is at her apartment, opening the door. She's got the key in the lock. LACY is coming at her from the shadows. LACY is still joyous, but this won't be obvious from her silhouette—don't show any features of LACY. If you can get her shadow in there, make it a comedy mask. (In this scene only.)

NO DIALOGUE

PANEL 10. JENN is surprised by LACY. JENN has just opened the door (which stands slightly ajar), and has dropped her keys. JENN feels she recognizes LACY.

NOTE TO LETTERER: Do not use the 'cute and flowery' script from PAGE 5, but do use lower case where indicated.

9. JENN: YOU STARTLED ME! DO I KNOW YOU?

10. LACY: YES, YOU HAVE.  
BUT NOW I'VE COME  
TO SPEAK OF NOH.

PAGE 7

PANEL 1. JENN's expression is one of surprised comprehension. She's kneeling down, picking up her keys. LACY is almost glowing, as if morning sunlight were diffused around her.

NOTE TO LETTERER AND PENCILLER: LACY's words are powerful words, and fill the page. They have an almost physical effect on JENN.

1. JENN: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT NOH? WHO ARE YOU?
2. LACY: IN THE PARLIAMENT OF MASKS  
NOH HAS BEEN BOUND.  
WITH EYES AND WITH HANDS.  
I HAVE TRAVELED THROUGH THE MASK  
FROM THE MOUNTAIN.  
YOU KNOW ME.  
I AM THALIA, DAUGHTER OF SKY, EARTH, AND MEMORY.  
I AM CHARIS, HORA, AND MUSA.  
THE MOIRAE ARE MY SISTER.  
JENNIFER.  
WE MUST SPEAK OF YOUR LOVER  
YOSHIMASA.

PANEL 2. JENN is stunned by the force of LACY'S speech. LACY is back to normal, looking like a seventeen year old punker high school student. She's still THALIA, though.

3. JENN: I... I... UH...
4. JENN: WOULD YOU... WOULD YOU LIKE SOME, UH, TEA?
5. LACY: THANK YOU.

PANEL 3. JENN and LACY are sitting at a small, round table, made of light wood. The tea is Celestial Seasonings Wildforest Blackberry (see enclosed packet, you lucky dog, you).

6. JENN: I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO ASK. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON.
7. LACY: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOSHIMASA?
8. RADIO: (make it quite small): Life's a dance...

PANEL 4. JENN looks down at her tea. LACY leans forward towards JENN.

9. JENN: YOSHI? HE CARES FOR ME. I DON'T KNOW IF HE LOVES ME...
10. LACY: BUT HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HIM?
11. JENN (very quietly): I LOVE HIM.
12. RADIO: you learn as you go,

PANEL 5. JENN is looking up at the ceiling. LACY is looking straight at JENN.

13. JENN (quiet):           WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

14. LACY:   HIS IS A SPECIAL THREAD. BUT HE'LL NEED MORE STRENGTH THAN  
          A SINGLE PERSON OWNS.

15. RADIO:   sometimes you lead,

PANEL 6. JENN has a wry smile on her face. They've both just taken a drink of tea and are putting their cups down.

16. JENN: SO, YOU'RE SAYING HE NEEDS ME, HUH?

17. RADIO:   sometimes you follow..

PAGE 8

The panels where LACY is in the Land of Masks are, once again, supposed to look like they're in the background. No borders on those panels. If you can make those panels look like they're in slow motion, go for it.

NOTE TO LETTERER: Use a different font for the SOUNDTRACK in the Hall of Masks than you do for the RADIO in JENN's apartment. The SOUNDTRACK (Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds) should be colorful. The RADIO (Life's a Dance) should be more standard. Both should be quite small.

PANEL 1. LACY is in the Hall of Masks. It looks different now—very colorful. The Classical Greeks were tasteless bastards: just about everything was painted some gaudy color. Use purples, reds, and blues in excess on the arches and columns, if we have color for this page. Otherwise, do what you can. LACY is wearing what she was wearing before, but it's amplified: the leather is slicker, the chains are shinier and bigger, the roller-blades are *radical*, dude. LACY is in front of the NOH mask, where THALIA was on PAGE 5, PANEL 2.

1. RADIO: tangerine trees...

PANEL 2. LACY is serious now. JENN is back to feeling sort of sorry for herself.

2. LACY: HE NEEDS SOMEONE, AND HE CARES FOR YOU, DOESN'T HE?

3. JENN: I... HOPE HE DOES.

4. JENN: BUT... WHAT ABOUT... NOH?

5. RADIO: don't worry 'bout what you don't know

PANEL 3. LACY is wandering and gawking at the masks. Use page 5 as a reference, but remember that things are much more colorful.

6. RADIO: ...and marmalade skies.

PANEL 4. LACY is leaning towards JENN. JENN is very confused.

7. LACY: NOH IS BOUND TO HIM FOR A PREDESTINED TIME. NOH IS A SEED, AND HEADSTRONG. IT MUST BE REIGNED IN. ALLOWED TO... BLOSSOM.

8. JENN: WHAT?

9. LACY: DO NOT LET YOSHIMASA ALLOW THE NOH TO CONTROL HIM.

10. LACY: I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW.

11. RADIO: life's a dance—

PANEL 5. LACY's perspective opens into THALIA's meadow. It is a mind-expander. In overview, nothing should be greatly out of the ordinary, but there are subtle, weirdly happy differences. Some flowers are interesting shades of their correct colors, some animals seem strangely warped. Any animals you want can be used. (But only two or three, and they should be unobtrusive.) A Japanese treasure ship (see enclosed picture) is parked beside an oak tree. A crane and tortoise are visible. The crane is riding on the tortoise. The ship, crane, and tortoise are in Japanese style.

12. RADIO: somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly...

PANEL 6. JENN is sitting over her tea. There's still steam rising from LACY's tea, although LACY is no longer there. The telephone rings. Both cups are about half empty.

13. SFX (Door closing): CLICK

14. SFX (telephone): RING

15. JENN (thought): WHAT IF IT'S YOSHI. WHAT DO I SAY?

16. RADIO: ...you learn as you go.