

DUFAUX ~ MARINI

RAPTORS

I



Europe
COMICS

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RAPTORS



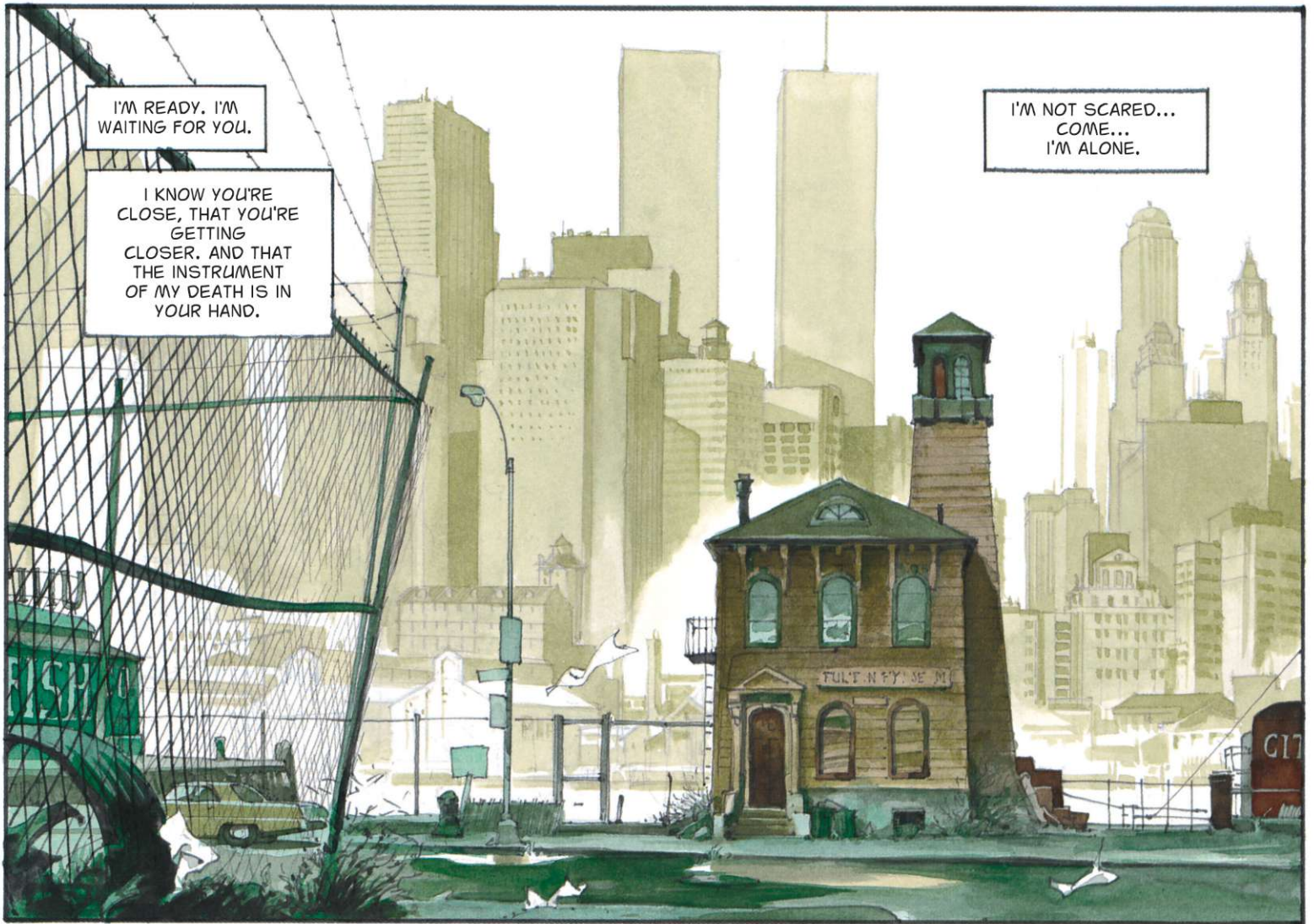
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DARGAUD





I'M READY. I'M WAITING FOR YOU.

I KNOW YOU'RE CLOSE, THAT YOU'RE GETTING CLOSER. AND THAT THE INSTRUMENT OF MY DEATH IS IN YOUR HAND.

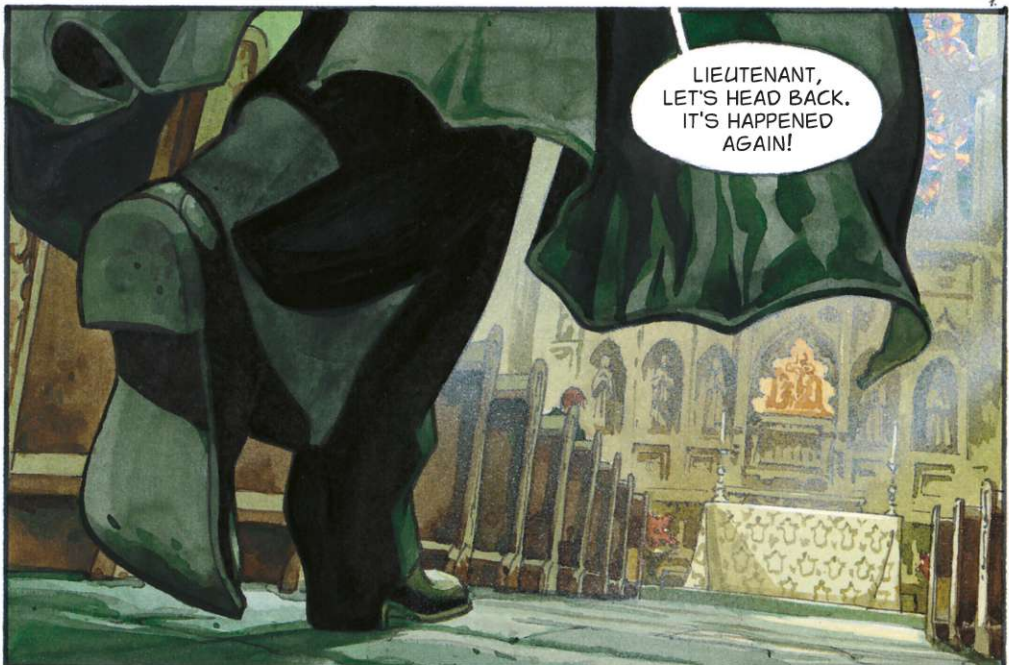
I'M NOT SCARED...
COME...
I'M ALONE.



NONE OF THE OTHERS KNOW...NOT YET.



LORD...
HELP ME! IT WON'T BE EASY. I'M AFRAID THAT I WON'T MEASURE UP TO THE TASK.



LIEUTENANT,
LET'S HEAD BACK. IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN!



QUIET DOWN, SPIAGGI. YOU SHOULDN'T SHOUT IN CHURCH! IT'S BAD MANNERS.



ALL RIGHT. I'M LISTENING.

IT'S THE SAME GUY. HE'S KILLED AGAIN. IT'S GOTTA BE HIM! BUT THIS TIME...



...HE'S STRUCK ON THE 123RD FLOOR OF THE RODGERS TOWER. THE 123RD FLOOR, WAY UP IN THE CLOUDS!



AND WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THE DOOR! BECAUSE THE DOOR WAS STILL LOCKED! FROM INSIDE! AN ARMORED DOOR, TOO.

THE DOORMAN HAD TO LET US IN.



SAME M.O.?

SAME M.O. WE GOT A PHONE CALL NOTIFYING US. A MAN'S VOICE GIVING US THE ADDRESS AND ALL THE DETAILS.



ALL THE DETAILS?

YEAH! I'M WARNING YOU...IT'S NOT A PRETTY SIGHT.



THE VICTIM?

LOUIS LAMOUR. I'M NOT MAKING IT UP. SECOND-RATE ACTOR. HE'S BEEN ON BROADWAY. SOME NIGHTCLUBS, TOO, THAT BROUGHT IN SOME DOUGH. LIVED ALONE. HE WAS FOUND IN HIS BED. EVERYTHING MATCHES UP.

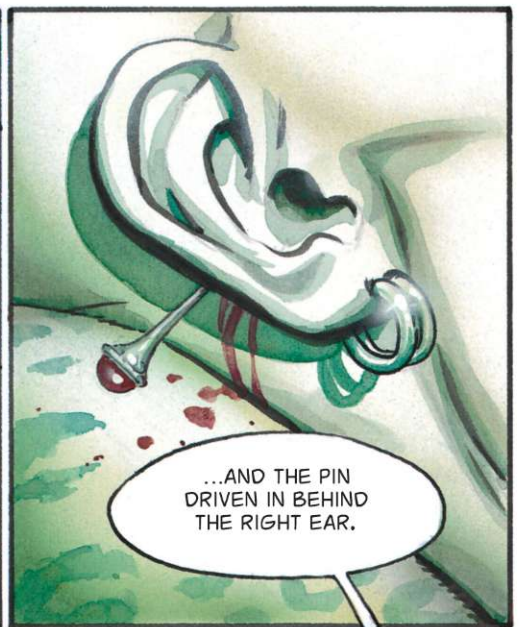
YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED



THE WRITING ON THE WALL...



...THE BODY COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD...



...AND THE PIN DRIVEN IN BEHIND THE RIGHT EAR.



BEHIND THE EAR?

THERE'S A CYST, YEAH. JUST LIKE THE OTHER TWO. THE PIN POPPED THE CYST.



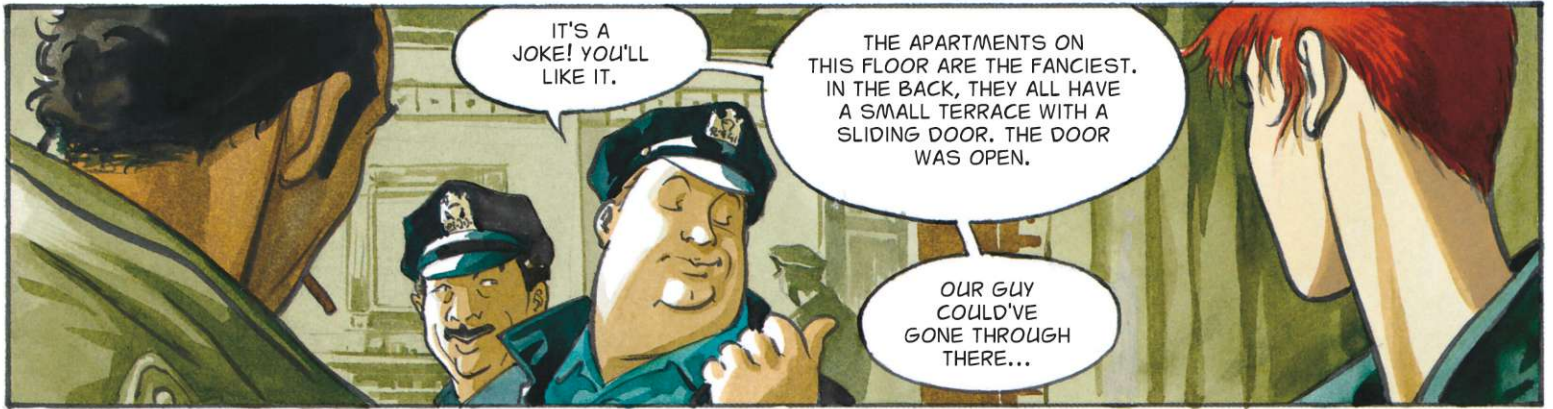
THREE VICTIMS! THREE VICTIMS WITH A CYST BEHIND THE RIGHT EAR!!

I KNOW. CRAZY STORY!!



WE JUST FIGURED OUT HOW THE KILLER GOT IN!

OH!?!?





IT'S YOU?...YES, IT'S YOU...
THE DOOR'S OPEN.

COME IN.



YOU'RE SURPRISED? YOU WERE
EXPECTING A DIFFERENT SORT
OF DECOR? YOU OUGHT NOT BE.
I WASN'T GOING TO WAIT FOR YOU
TO COME AND GET RID OF ALL
THE SUPERFLUOUS THINGS THAT
ENDED UP SMOTHERING US.

COME ON UP.
I'M WAITING.



YOU SEE,
I'M ALONE.
THE OTHERS
DON'T KNOW.
NOT YET.



LOOK HOW HANDSOME
YOU ARE! SO DEATH HAS
YOUR FACE, YOUR EYES...
YOUR MOTHER'S EYES...
I REMEMBER...IT WAS SO
LONG AGO.



HAVE A SEAT.
I WAS THINKING OF
YOUR MOTHER.

IT'S
TOO LATE TO
BE THINKING
OF HER.



YOU'RE LIKE
ALL THE OTHERS.
YOU DIDN'T HESITATE
TO SACRIFICE HER.

THERE WAS
NO CHOICE! SHE
DIDN'T WANT TO
FOLLOW US.



I HAVE HER PORTRAIT THERE. SHE WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL.

I THINK I WAS IN LOVE WITH HER... BUT SHE ALWAYS PREFERRED YOUR FATHER TO ME.



YOU CAN KEEP THE PICTURE, IF YOU WANT. IT WON'T BE OF MUCH USE TO ME NOW, I SUPPOSE.

YOU SUPPOSE CORRECTLY.



IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE REMAINED LIKE THE ONES FROM BEFORE? PURE... VIOLENT... SO... SO ANIMALISTIC?



MAY... MAY I FEEL?

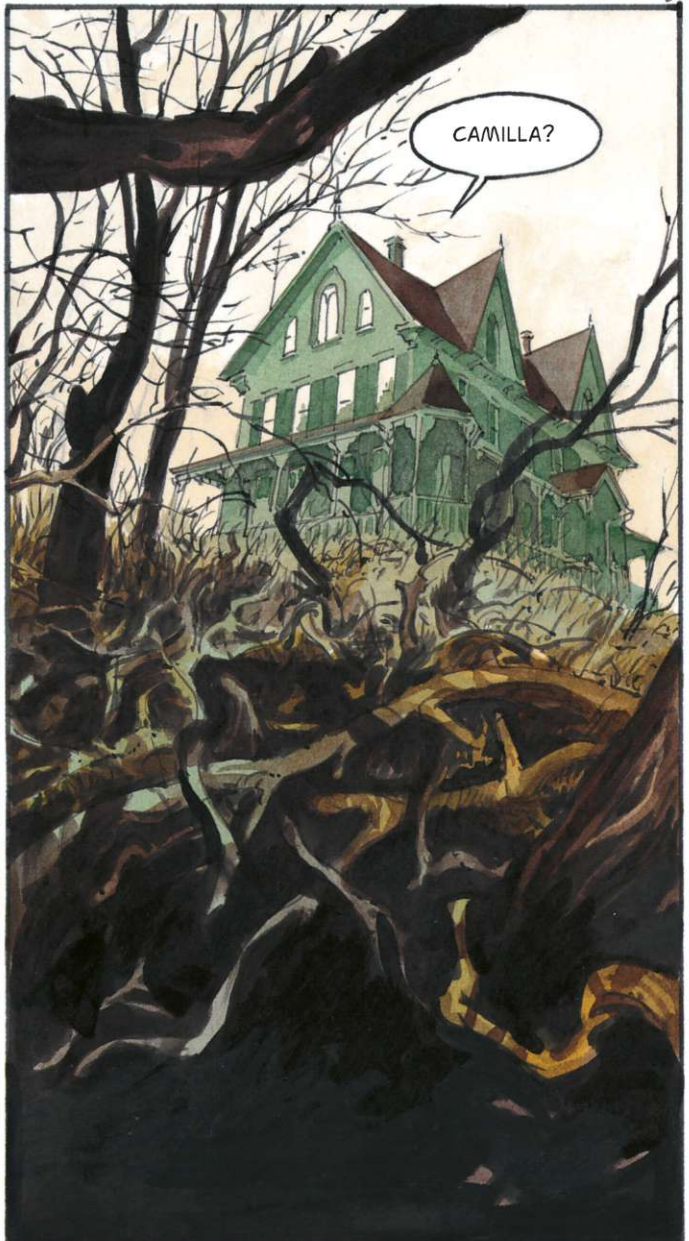
IF YOU LIKE.



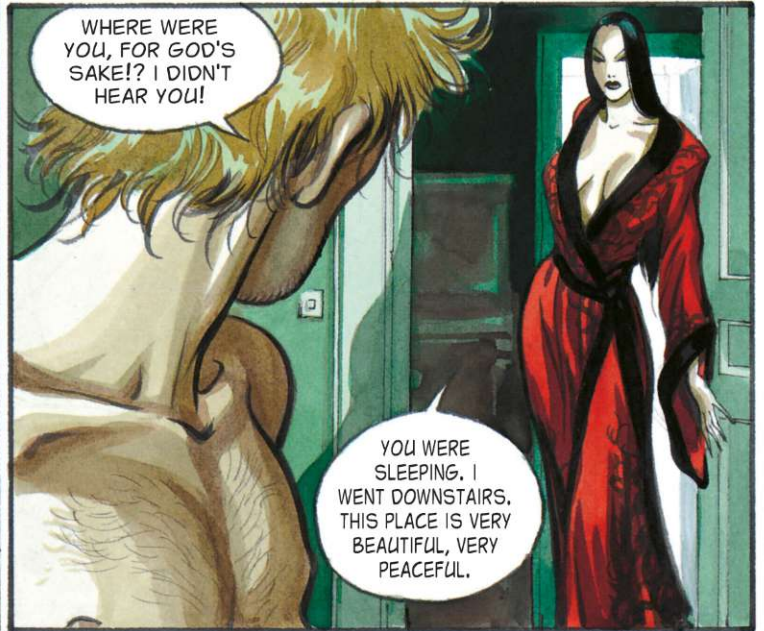
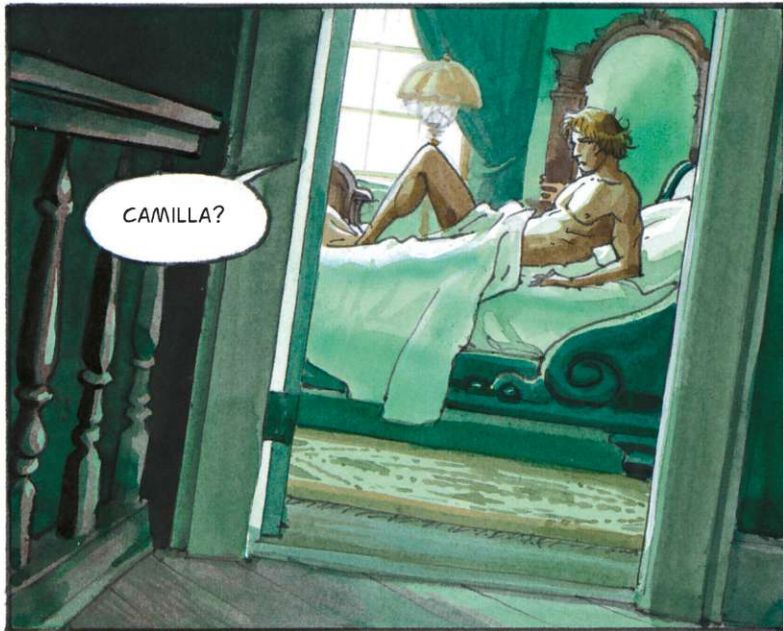
YES... YES... THE CYST HASN'T FORMED... IT'S EXTRAORDINARY! AND... AND... YOUR SISTER?



CAMILLA? SHE'S LIKE ME... SHE'S HUNTING YOU ALL... MERCILESSLY... ONE AFTER THE OTHER.

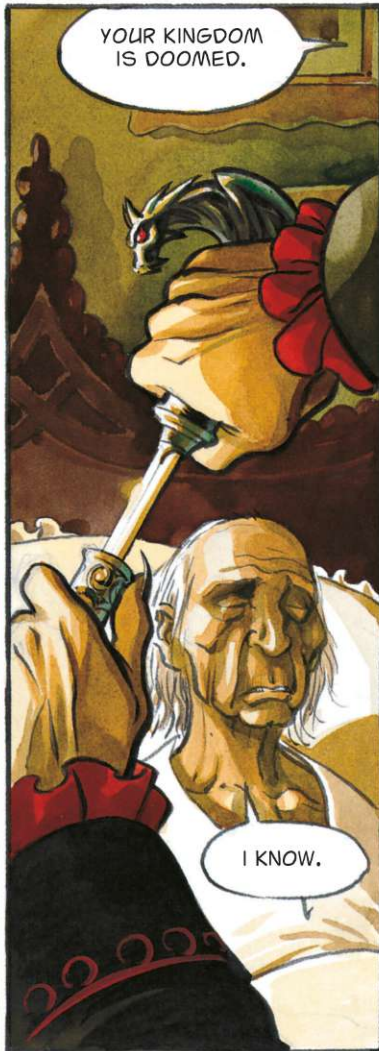


CAMILLA?





BECAUSE YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED!!!



YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED.

I KNOW.



A FEW MINUTES TILL HE COMES BACK TO LIFE. THAT'S ENOUGH TIME.



HURRY. MY LIFE IS COMING BACK. AND WITH IT, HOPE PERHAPS... IT WOULD BE TOO CRUEL... SPARE ME THAT.





ME NEITHER. I COULDN'T PUT EVERYTHING IN THERE. THAT'S WHY I ASKED TO SEE YOU.

CONFIDENTIAL, HUH? OKAY I'M LISTENING.



THOSE THREE STIFFS, WELL THEY'RE NOT LIKE US! I CHECKED THEM OUT DOWN TO THE BONES. NO SIGN OF ANY ILLNESS, BRUISES, SCARS, HEART OR KIDNEY PROBLEMS. NOTHING!



EVERY ORGAN, EVERY VISCUS, WAS AS FRESH AS A NEWBORN'S WOULD BE. EACH BODY WAS PERFECT INSIDE...AS IF IT HAD BELONGED TO AN INFANT. AND THERE'S MORE: THE LAST VICTIM—

LOUIS LAMOUR.



YEAH. HELLUVA NAME. WELL, HE WAS A COKEHEAD. AND BIG TIME...EXCEPT HE DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT. THE COCAINE DIDN'T LEAVE A SINGLE TRACE IN HIS BODY. ABSORBED LIKE IT WERE PEPSI! AND EVEN PEPSI WOULD HAVE LEFT A TRACE!

WOW!



THEN THERE ARE THESE FUCKING CYSTS BEHIND THEIR RIGHT FUCKING EAR.



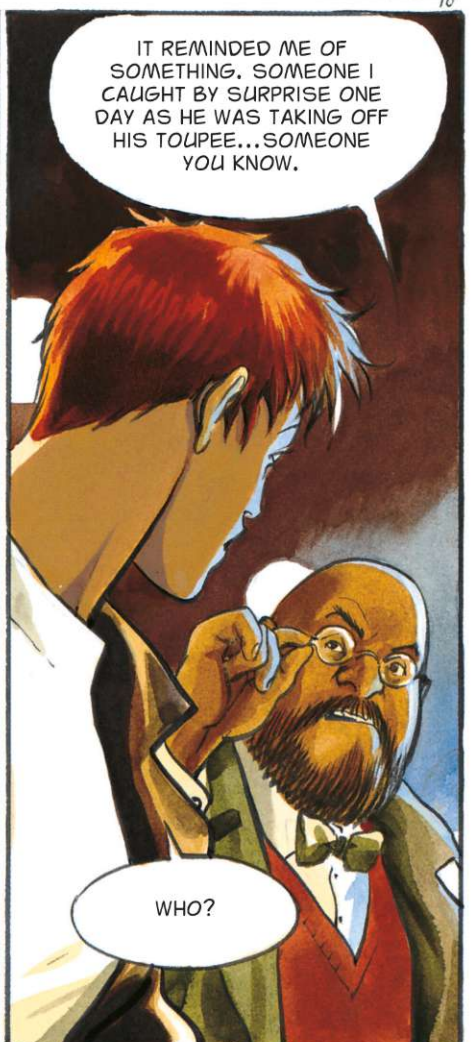
DO YOU HAVE A CYST BEHIND YOUR EAR?

NO. DO YOU?



NO, NOT THAT I KNOW OF. USUALLY YOU CAN'T SEE THIS KIND OF GROWTH BECAUSE THERE'S HAIR IN THE WAY. BUT...

BUT...?



IT REMINDED ME OF SOMETHING. SOMEONE I CAUGHT BY SURPRISE ONE DAY AS HE WAS TAKING OFF HIS TOUPEE... SOMEONE YOU KNOW.

WHO?



YOUR BOSS!
OUR FUCKING BOSS. YEP...
GOOD OL' JACK FIGEROA.

HE HAS THE SAME
KIND OF GROWTH BEHIND
HIS RIGHT EAR.



THERE!
THAT'S HIS CAR
FOR SURE.



BE CAREFUL!
THERE ARE A FEW OF
THEM BACK THERE. FIGEROA
WAS THE LAST TO ARRIVE.
HE SEEMED VERY NERVOUS.
I THINK WE'RE GOING
TO HAVE A FEW
SURPRISES.

GOOD.



THIS WAY!
HURRY UP!



ONE MOMENT, LENORE!



I'VE BEEN TAILING FIGEROA FOR SEVERAL DAYS, JUST LIKE YOU ASKED. I'D LIKE TO KNOW. WHAT EXACTLY HAVE YOU GOT AGAINST HIM?



I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST HIM. I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT HIS BODY.

I SEE!! WHAT'S THAT!?



WHAT HE'S HIDING UNDER HIS TOUPEE.



THE THREE VICTIMS WERE OUR OWN...THEY'RE SENDING ME A SIGNAL! THEY WANT ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT, TELL THE FAMILY. AND, THERE'S THIS MESSAGE.

"YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED!"









CHAOS! THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET USED TO IT AGAIN, THE POOR THINGS. IT WON'T BE EASY FOR THEM!



NOTHING WILL BE EASY FOR THEM ANYMORE! NOW THEY HAVE NO FUTURE... JUST A PAST. OUR PAST.



THE NIGHT DIDN'T GET LENORE THIS TIME. SHE MADE IT BACK HOME. SEVERAL DAYS WENT BY. DAYS THAT WERE NECESSARY TO CHOKE BACK THE PAIN, THE ANGER.

A NAME HAD BEEN MENTIONED. ONE NAME TOO MANY.



SO SHE CLEARS HER MIND. SHE DOESN'T WANT TO THINK ANYMORE. THE MUSIC BEATS DULLY IN HER EARS. BACH, CANTATA 15. "YOU WILL NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL".



SHE'S JUST HEARD A NOISE. IT CAN ONLY BE HIM. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS A KEY TO HER APARTMENT.



THE WARMTH OF A MAN LEANING OVER. THE SOUNDS OF BACH DYING AWAY.



HE ENTERS A ZONE OF TRUST.



THE TRUST THAT IS GIVEN BY THE NAKED BODY OF A WOMAN. THE TRUST THAT LENORE USED TO HAVE FOR HIM.



HE PENETRATES HER. LIKE A THIEF OF NIGHTS, OF HER NIGHTS. BUT THIS TIME, HE'LL LEAVE WITHOUT ANY SPOILS.



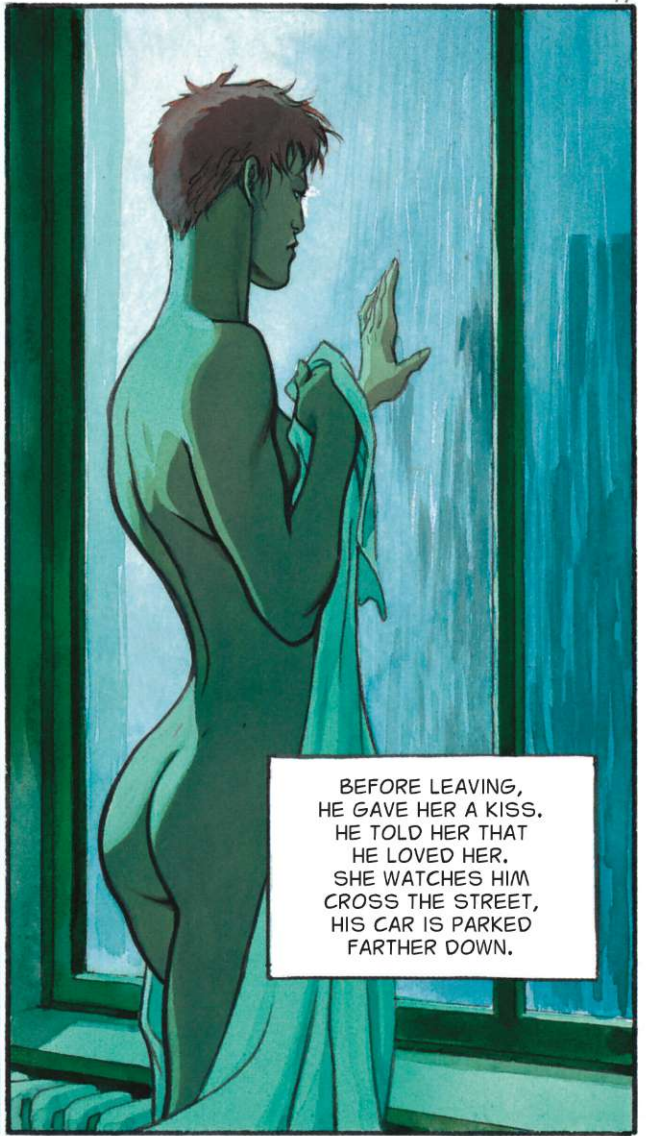
BARNES...

SILENCE. THEY DID NOT COME TOGETHER. SHE SPEAKS AT LAST, SAYS HIS NAME.



I DON'T SEE YOU MUCH ANYMORE. ARE YOU WORKING WITH FIGEROA NOW?

HE'S PROMISED ME A PROMOTION FOR THIS YEAR. HE NORMALLY KEEPS HIS WORD. SO I'M TRYING NOT TO DISAPPOINT HIM.

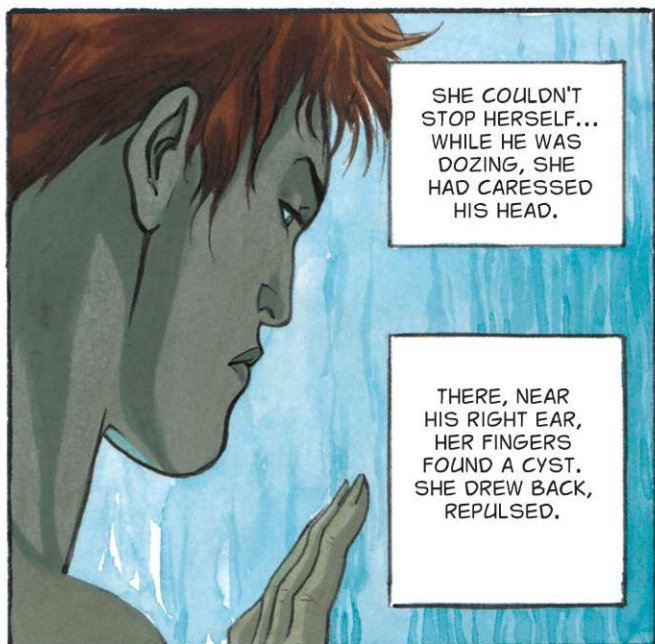


BEFORE LEAVING, HE GAVE HER A KISS. HE TOLD HER THAT HE LOVED HER. SHE WATCHES HIM CROSS THE STREET, HIS CAR IS PARKED FARTHER DOWN.



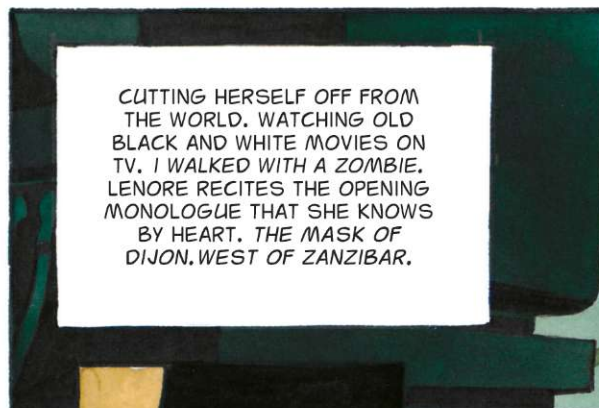
SO, YOU'RE DOING HIS DIRTY WORK.

THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU CALL "DIRTY WORK".



SHE COULDN'T STOP HERSELF... WHILE HE WAS DOZING, SHE HAD CARESSED HIS HEAD.

THERE, NEAR HIS RIGHT EAR, HER FINGERS FOUND A CYST. SHE DREW BACK, REPULSED.



CUTTING HERSELF OFF FROM THE WORLD. WATCHING OLD BLACK AND WHITE MOVIES ON TV. I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE. LENORE RECITES THE OPENING MONOLOGUE THAT SHE KNOWS BY HEART. THE MASK OF DIJON. WEST OF ZANZIBAR.

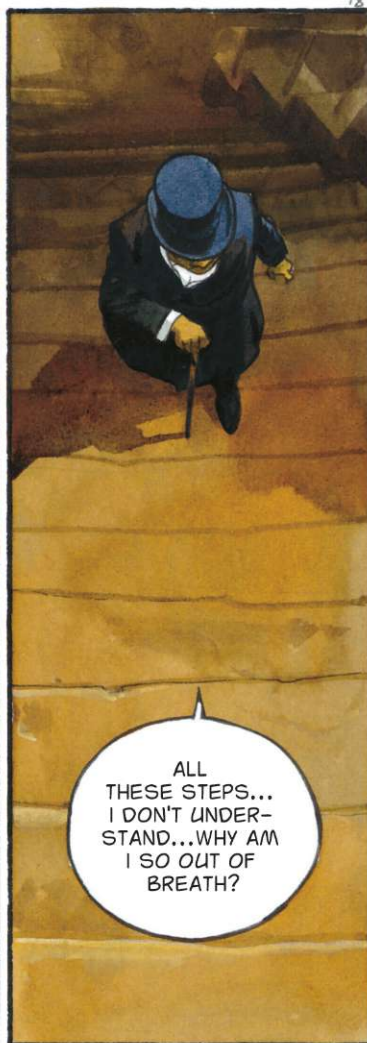
FORGETTING. NOT THINKING. NOT THINKING ANYMORE.



HELLO! IS SOMEONE THERE!?!?



COME ON UP! WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU!



ALL THESE STEPS... I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHY AM I SO OUT OF BREATH?



COME FORWARD!

IT'S RIGHT HERE, YOUR HONOR. DON'T BE AFRAID. COME IN.



LOOK, MY SISTER. YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU THE HONORABLE **MOSMAD SERGUILEV**, THE MASTER OF US ALL, HE WHOSE ROOTS DIG THE DEEPEST IN OUR HISTORY...



...TO CENTURIES AGO, WHEN WE WERE THE MASTERS OF THE FOREST, OF THE LAKES AND SPRINGS. OUR CRY WAS FEARED BACK THEN. THE NIGHT WAS OUR SHROUD.



WE WERE MERCILESS. WITH THE TASTE OF BLOOD AND FLESH ON OUR LIPS.



AFTER YOU, YOUR HONOR. NO? YOU CAN'T ANY LONGER...HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?



WHY?

TO PROVE SOMETHING TO YOU, YOUR HONOR. YOUR TIME IS OVER...YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED...YOU HAVE BETRAYED YOUR RACE!



BUT...WHO ARE YOU? WHY THIS MEETING?



IT ISN'T POSSIBLE... YOU'RE NOT...

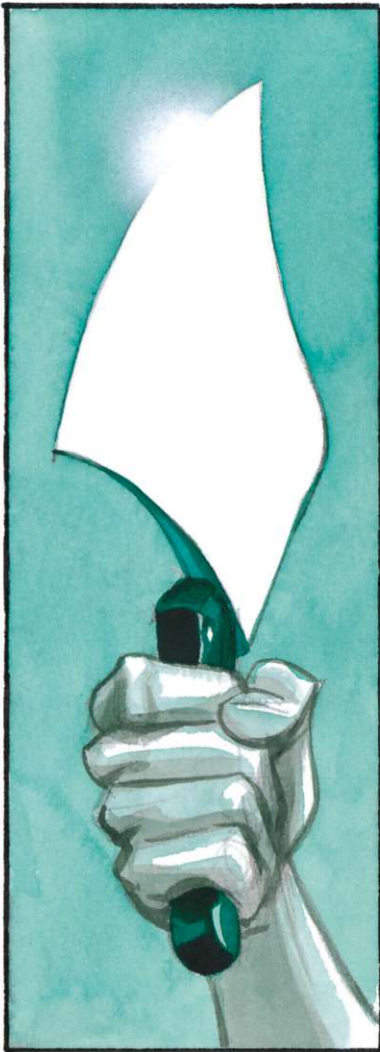


HE'S FIGURING IT OUT. HE'S CATCHING ON.

THE TASTE OF FLESH... THE TASTE OF BLOOD.



AAAAHH! MY HEART!





HIS PASSING MARKS
THE END OF AN ERA, OF
CERTAINTY, OF POWER...
OF OUR POWER!

FOR, MAKE NO
MISTAKE, THE DEATH
OF MOSMAD SERGIULEV
IS A WOUND FOR US ALL.
THE FIRST BLOW.
A FATAL WOUND!

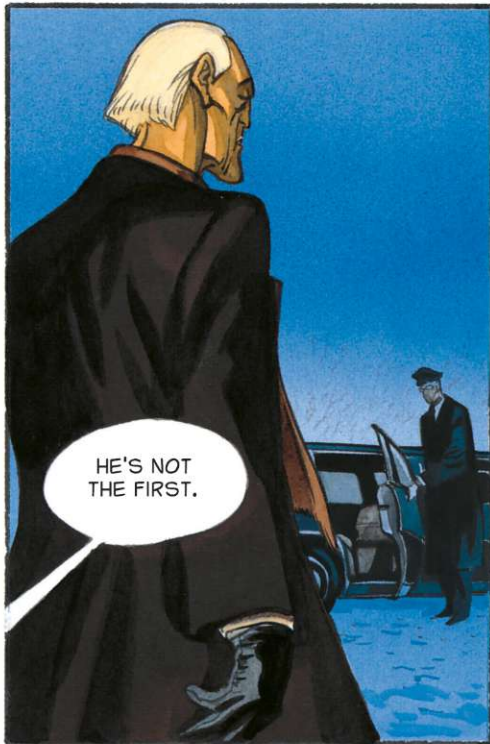


TO THE FIRST
AMONG US WHO
LAID DOWN IN THE
LIGHT. OIL AND
FIRE.



**OIL
AND FIRE.**



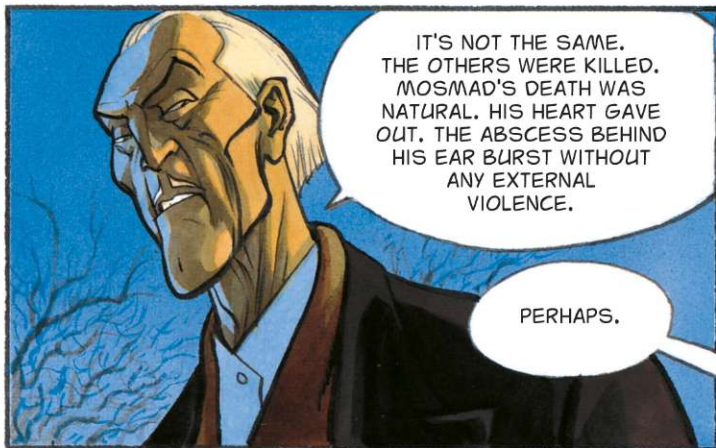


HE'S NOT THE FIRST.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HE ISN'T THE FIRST TO HAVE LAID DOWN IN THE LIGHT. THREE OF US HAVE ALREADY MET THEIR DEATH. IT'S STARTING TO ADD UP!



IT'S NOT THE SAME. THE OTHERS WERE KILLED. MOSMAD'S DEATH WAS NATURAL. HIS HEART GAVE OUT. THE ABSCESS BEHIND HIS EAR BURST WITHOUT ANY EXTERNAL VIOLENCE.

PERHAPS.



EMERGENCY. A WORD THAT HAD DISAPPEARED FROM OUR VOCABULARY. I FEAR THAT OUR FORGETFULNESS IS COSTING US DEARLY AT PRESENT.



AND THOSE CRIMES YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT, ARE YOU MAKING PROGRESS?

I TRUST MY AGENTS. ONE OF THEM ESPECIALLY.



IT'S ALL THE MORE TROUBLING.

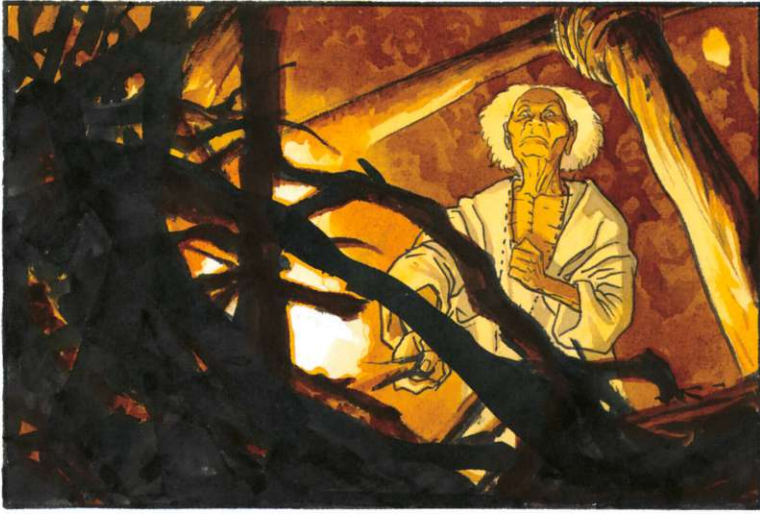
THAT'S WHY I CALLED FOR AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE GREAT COUNCIL.



GOT IT? GOT THE LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS?

HOLD ON. JUST ABOUT.







YEAH?



IT'S SPIAGGI, LIEUTENANT. IT'S ABOUT YOUR BOYFRIEND. I FOLLOWED HIM, AS PLANNED...AND I DISCOVERED SOMETHING INTERESTING...



DURING THE DAY, NOTHING INTERESTING. AGENT BARNES CARRIES OUT HIS WORK NORMALLY. MOSTLY ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS THAT TAKE HIM FROM ONE END OF THE CITY TO THE OTHER.

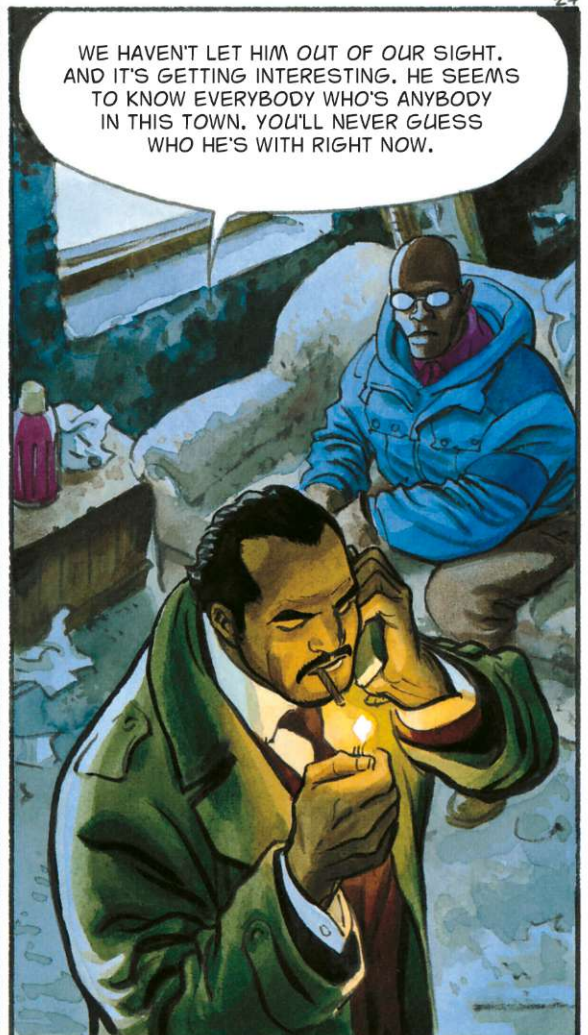
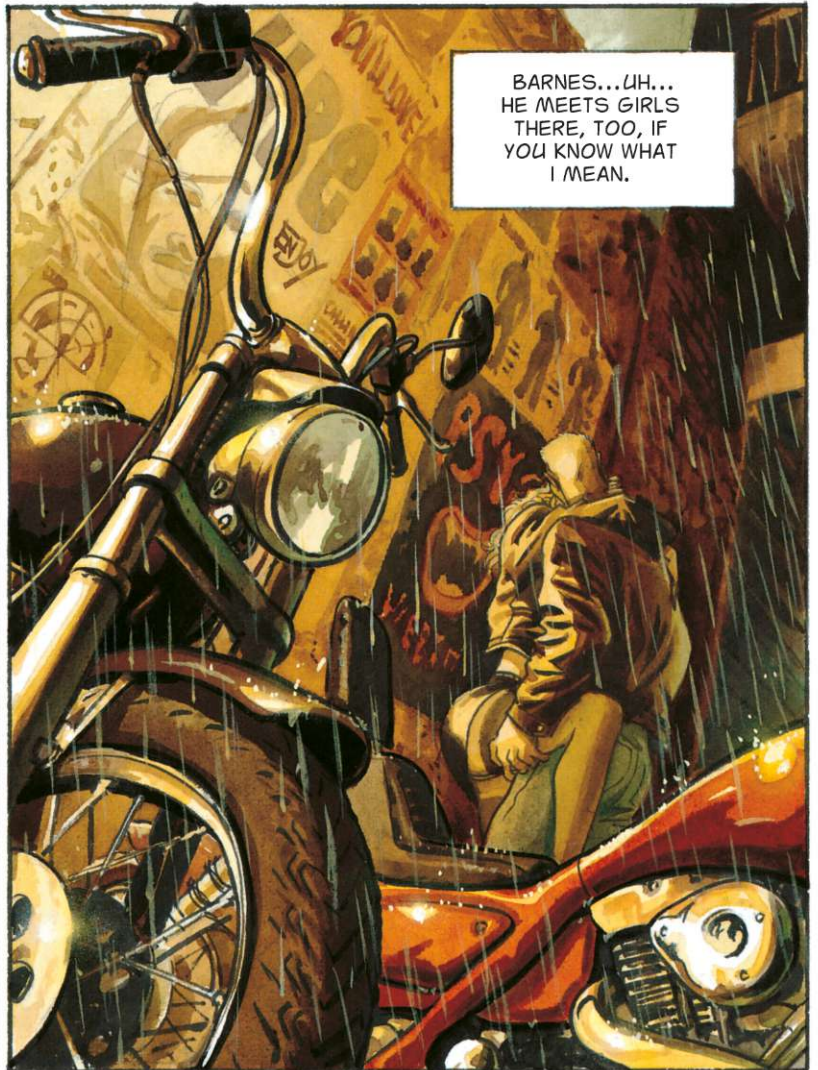
HE NEVER CHECKED TO SEE IF HE WAS BEING FOLLOWED OR NOT.



AT NIGHT IT'S DIFFERENT. OUR GUY GOES TO THE SAME PLACE EVERY TIME. A NIGHTCLUB IN THE BRONX. **THE LOST DOGS.** HE HANGS OUT WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE THERE...



INCLUDING BLASETTI. THE CLUB BELONGS TO HIM. A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE, DON'T YOU THINK?





DO SANTO IN PERSON.
THE BIG MAN OF THE CITY!
NOT BAD, EH, FOR A COP
WHO SUPPOSEDLY
DOESN'T BENEFIT FROM
ANY PRIVILEGE!



THIS BOX?...
WHO BROUGHT
IT?

I...I DON'T KNOW,
SIR. YOUR APARTMENTS
HAVE REMAINED CLOSED.
NOBODY COULD HAVE
COME IN.



WELL...
OBVIOUSLY
SOMEONE DID!



YOU MAY
LEAVE, THANK
YOU.

AS YOU
WISH, SIR.



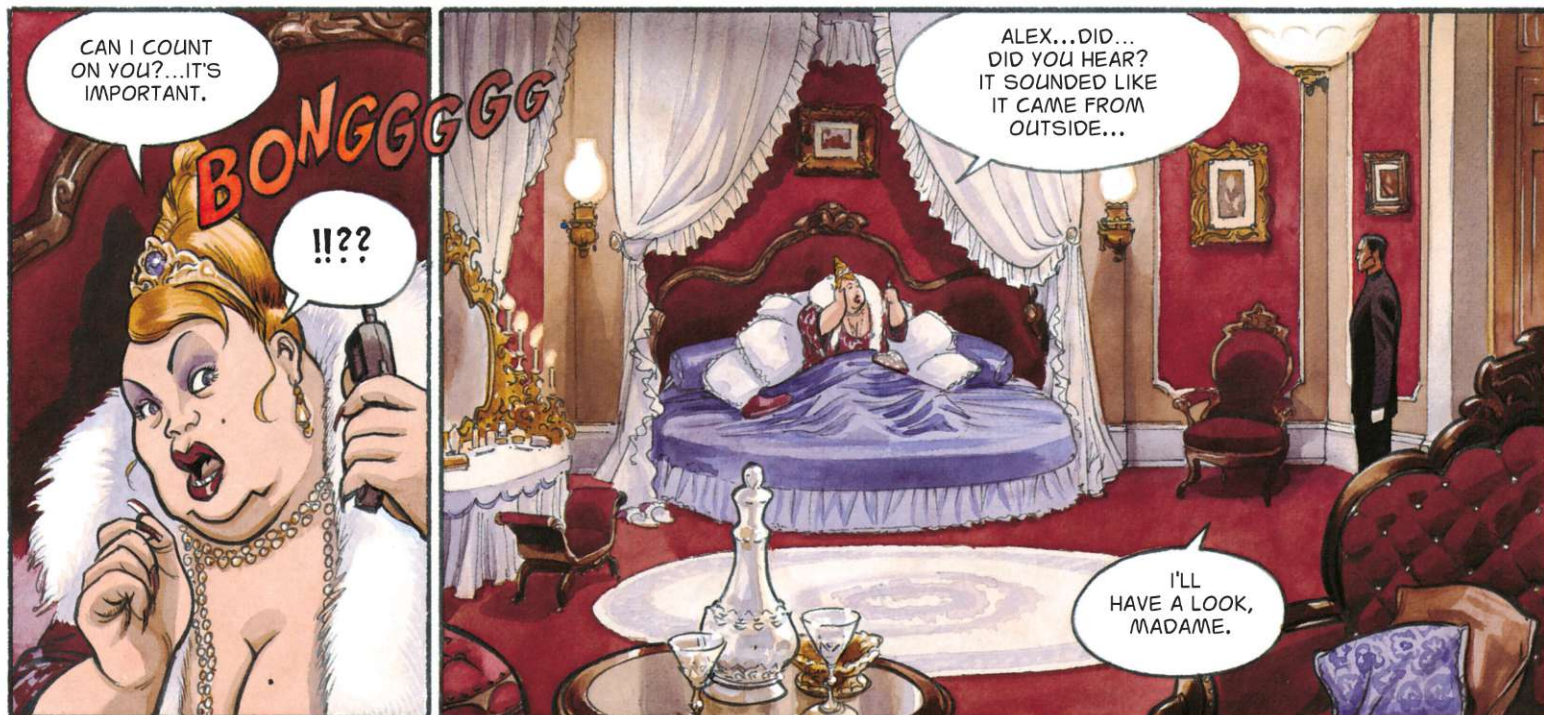
OF COURSE!



TRIIING

DO SANTO...AH! IT'S YOU, DEAR FRIEND... WHAT? A THREAT... WHAT KIND OF THREAT?

IT'S...IT'S A FEELING. BUT YOU KNOW ME. MY INSTINCT NEVER FAILS ME. I...I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME CLOSER PROTECTION. COULD YOU TALK TO SOMEONE TRUSTWORTHY?



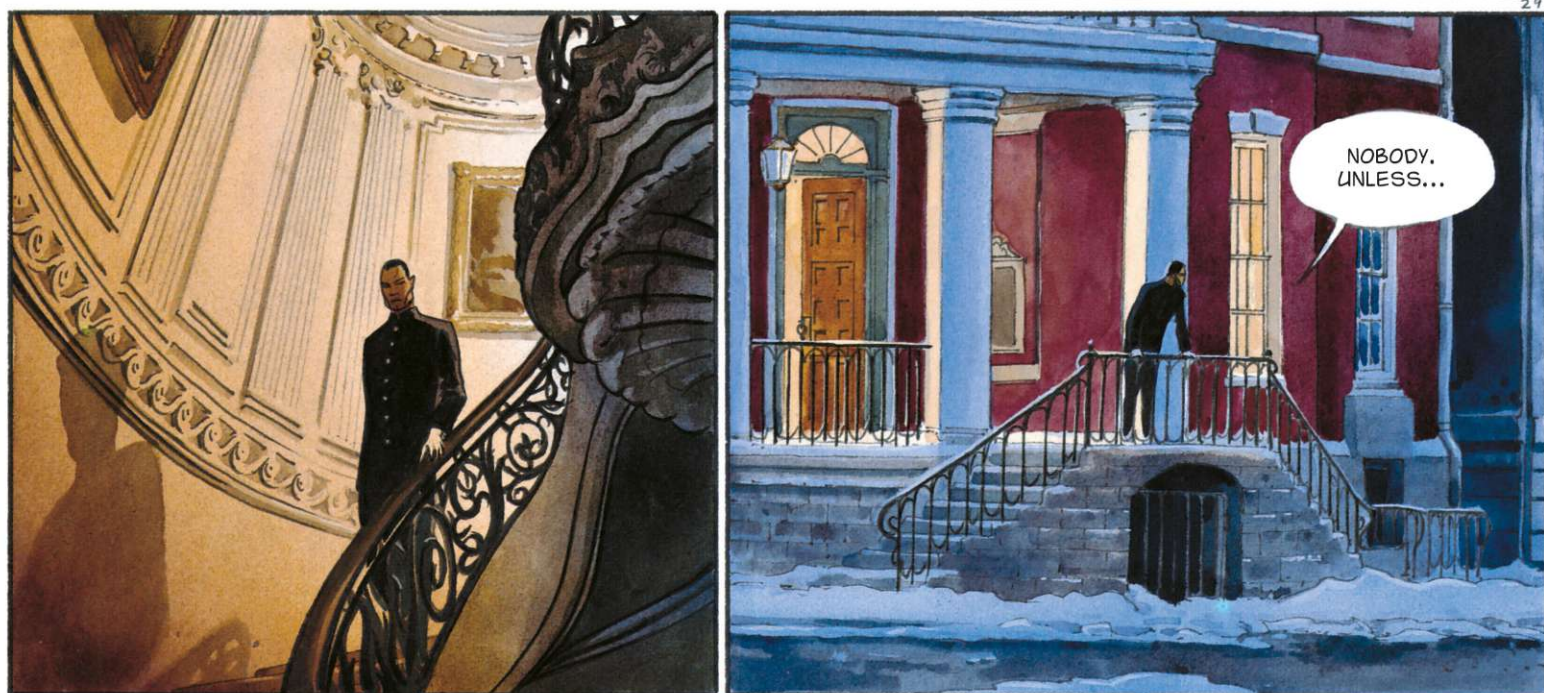
CAN I COUNT ON YOU?...IT'S IMPORTANT.

BONGGGGGG

!!??

ALEX...DID... DID YOU HEAR? IT SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM OUTSIDE...

I'LL HAVE A LOOK, MADAME.



NOBODY. UNLESS...



THE ALLEY?

LIFE IS BUT A DREAM, MY BROTHER!



HER NAME WAS BORODIAN. FOUND DEAD IN HER BED. A PIN STUCK BEHIND HER RIGHT EAR.

HER BUTLER, ALEX KURVITZ, ALSO DEAD, FOUND IN AN ALLEY NEXT TO THE HOUSE. NO SIGN OF A BREAK-IN, NO ROBBERY, NOTHING.



SHIT! THAT'S ANOTHER ONE! ANY NEW CLUES?

BLASETTI.

I'VE HAD MY INFORMANTS WORKING ON IT. THEY'VE GIVEN ME A NAME...

HUH!!!





I...I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOU. BUT NOT HERE. IT'S...PRIVATE.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?



SOMEONE... SOMEONE'S SETTING A TRAP FOR YOU, CHIEF... IT'S NOT RIGHT.... I COULDN'T GO ALONG WITH IT.



AND NOW WE WAIT.

IT'LL HAPPEN, AND SOON.



WHICH LEAVES US LITTLE TIME TO...

TO...?



TO GIVE YOU AN INVITATION. MY MOTHER WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU OVER FOR DINNER TOMORROW EVENING. I...I SPOKE TO HER... ABOUT YOU...AND I... I THINK THAT IT'D MAKE HER HAPPY IF YOU ATE WITH US.

REALLY!



I—

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, JUST SAY. I'LL UNDERSTAND.



NO, IT'S NOT THAT. I'M SURPRISED, THAT'S ALL. BUT I ACCEPT. I'M SURE THAT YOUR MOTHER COOKS LIKE AN ANGEL.

SHE'S THE BEST! THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!



UH... THERE'S JUST ONE THING...



WHAT'S THAT?!

YOUR CLOTHES... I MEAN...MY MOTHER DOESN'T REALLY LIKE SLOPPINESS...



SLOPPINESS!! YOU THINK I'M SLOPPY!?!?

NO, IT'S NOT THAT...BUT... IF YOU COULD WEAR A DRESS OR A SKIRT, YOU KNOW, SOMETHING MORE FEMININE!



A DRESS...!

MY MOTHER'S PRETTY OLD-FASHIONED.



ARE YOU SURE IT'S THIS WAY?

SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE ANYWAY. SHE SOMETIMES CHANGES STREETS, BUT NEVER REALLY GOES FAR.



BINGO! THERE SHE IS!

WHERE?

THERE! AGAINST THE PARKING LOT FENCE.





YOUR
TURN, MY
SISTER!



??
"MY
SISTER"
!!!



HEEEY!!!



HELP!!!



HE'S ALL
YOURS.



SOMEONE
HELP ME!!







GOOD EVENING.
AM I EARLY?



UHH...NO...I...THAT'S
A GREAT OUTFIT YOU'VE
GOT THERE!

IT'S
CHANEL.
IT'S
FRENCH.



SAME AS
THE PERFUME.
IT'S DIOR. DO
YOU LIKE IT?

UHH...
IT SMELLS
GOOD,
YEAH.



WHEW!
THOSE LEGS!
BUT WHERE
DID SHE GET
ALL THOSE
CLOTHES
AND THOSE
JEWELS!?!?



MAMA, THIS
IS VICKY LENORE.
WE WORK
TOGETHER.

AAAAHHHHH!
VICKY!



YOU LIKE
GNOCCHI,
I HOPE?



YES A LOT.
I'M ACTUALLY
QUITE PARTIAL
TO THEM!

EXCELLENT!
BECAUSE YOU
WON'T BE ABLE
TO FIND GNOCCHI LIKE
THESE ANYWHERE
ELSE!



MMMMM... DELICIOUS! HOW DO YOU MAKE THEM?

AH! LET ME TELL YOU... YOU SHELL TWO DOZEN ALMONDS AND SLICE THEM INTO FINE PIECES. LET THEM BROWN IN SOME BUTTER.



ADD 4 TABLESPOONS OF CREAM AND A DOZEN SAGE LEAVES -FRESH ONES, THOUGH! NONE OF THAT STUFF YOU GET IN A BAG AT THE SUPERMARKET. ADD A PINCH OF SALT AND LET THE SAUCE COOK DOWN.



COUNT OUT 7 OUNCES OF SPINACH GNOCCHI PER PERSON AND PUT THEM INTO BOILING WATER. THE GNOCCHI WILL BE READY WHEN THEY RISE TO THE SURFACE. ADD SOME PARMESAN AND IT'S READY TO SERVE. SIMPLE, RIGHT?!



BENITO! YOU'RE NOT EATING! DID YOU LOSE YOUR APPETITE? IS IT BECAUSE YOUR FRIEND IS HERE? DOES SHE HAVE THAT MUCH OF AN EFFECT ON YOU?!

STOP IT, MAMA!



AH, THAT'S MY SON FOR YOU! PEOPLE THINK HE'S A BIT OF A BRUTE, BUT HE'S ACTUALLY QUITE SENSITIVE! JUST LIKE HIS FATHER! THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT HE DOESN'T TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF... HE EATS SO POORLY!



YES, YES, IT'S TRUE... DON'T DENY IT, BENITO! IT'S ALWAYS HAMBURGERS, CHINESE NOODLES, THOSE PIZZAS WITH THE DOUGH THAT GETS STUCK BETWEEN YOUR TEETH AND YOU CAN'T GET OUT...AND HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO KISS A GIRL AFTER THAT, HUH?!



YOUR JACKET IS PRETTY. YOU CAN SEE RIGHT OFF THAT IT'S A GOOD IMITATION!

REALLY?



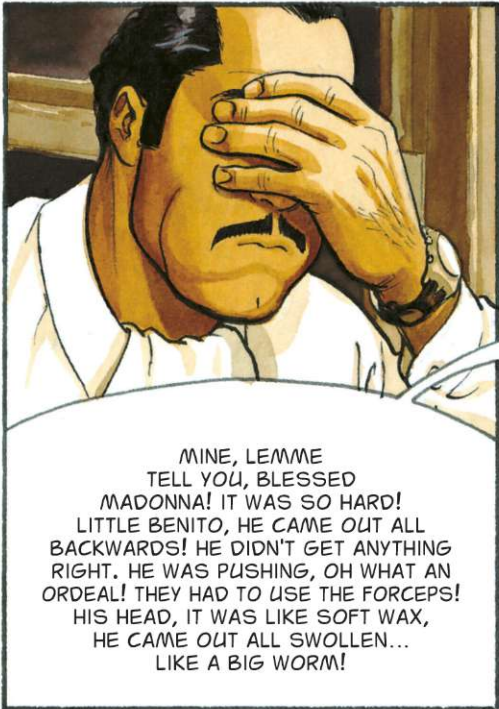
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON YOUR PLATE! COME, COME...WE HAVE TO FINISH IT ALL! YOU NEED FILLING OUT! A WOMAN HAS TO WATCH HER FIGURE!

WELL, ACTUALLY...



SHE NEEDS THIGHS AND A CHEST FOR CHILDREN, YOU UNDERSTAND? HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT CHILDREN YET? SURELY YOU WANT SOME? BECAUSE A WOMAN WITHOUT ANY CHILDREN IS LIKE A TREE WITHOUT ANY LEAVES!

UHH...



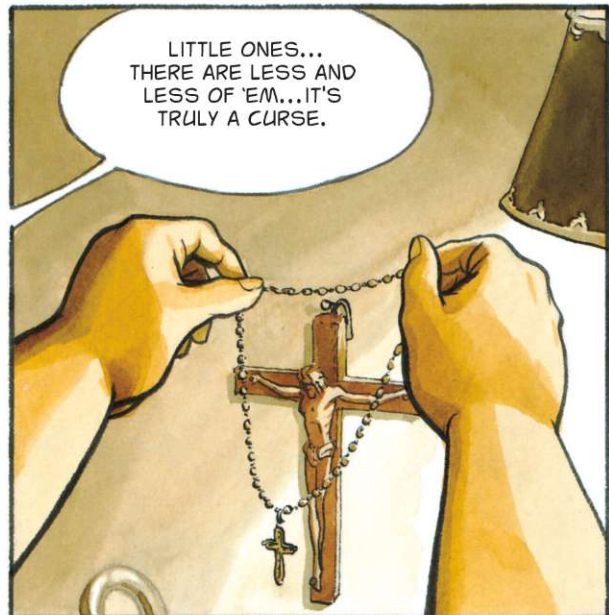
MINE, LEMME TELL YOU, BLESSED MADONNA! IT WAS SO HARD! LITTLE BENITO, HE CAME OUT ALL BACKWARDS! HE DIDN'T GET ANYTHING RIGHT. HE WAS PUSHING, OH WHAT AN ORDEAL! THEY HAD TO USE THE FORCEPS! HIS HEAD, IT WAS LIKE SOFT WAX, HE CAME OUT ALL SWOLLEN... LIKE A BIG WORM!



BUT IT WAS WORTH THE EFFORT... FOR THE CHILDREN. THE DEAR LITTLE ANGELS.



OH...OH, ALL I ASK IS THAT THE GOOD LORD KEEP THEM IN HIS BLESSED CARE!



LITTLE ONES... THERE ARE LESS AND LESS OF 'EM...IT'S TRULY A CURSE.



HERE, VICKY. THIS IS FOR YOU TO KEEP EVIL AWAY. THIS CROSS WAS BLESSED BY FATHER ANSELMO, THE PRIEST OF OUR VILLAGE IN MY PARENTS' TIME. IN COSTANZA. PUT IT ON.

MA'AM, I... I COULDN'T!





LENORE!



THIS IS VALENCE, FROM THE FBI. HE'S RUNNING THE OPERATION. EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE.

PERFECT. SO YOU'VE FAMILIARIZED YOURSELF WITH THE FILE?



OUR OFFICE WILL TAKE CARE OF IT. WE'VE BUGGED FIGEROA'S AND BARNES'S HOMES. BARNES CALLED YOU DURING THE NIGHT. HE'S WAITING FOR YOU AT THE LOST DOGS. IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S GOT SOME THINGS TO TELL YOU.

IT'S TIME. LET'S GO!



MULBY, YOU'LL STAY WITH AGENT VALENCE.



HEY! MULBY'S CAR! HE CAME LOOKING FOR LENORE?!!



YOU'LL BE WEARING A WIRE. BARNES MADE IT CLEAR THAT YOU MUSTN'T BE SURPRISED. THE CLUB IS CLOSED TONIGHT.



YOU'LL GO IN THROUGH THE BACK. YOU'LL FIND A METAL DOOR. IT'LL BE OPEN.

WE'LL STAY IN TOUCH. AT THE LEAST SIGN OF TROUBLE, WE'LL STEP IN.



THIS WAY, VICKY! COME HAVE A DRINK.



WOWWWW! HOW CLASSY! DID YOU DRESS LIKE THAT FOR ME?

NOT REALLY.



WILLIAM! A DOUBLE DOG FOR OUR FRIEND. SHE CAN HANDLE IT.



LIKE MRS. ZELDA? SHE ALWAYS HAD THREE OR FOUR BEFORE LEAVING US.



ZELDA?

MRS. FITZGERALD. SHE AND HER HUSBAND USED TO COME OFTEN AT ONE TIME.

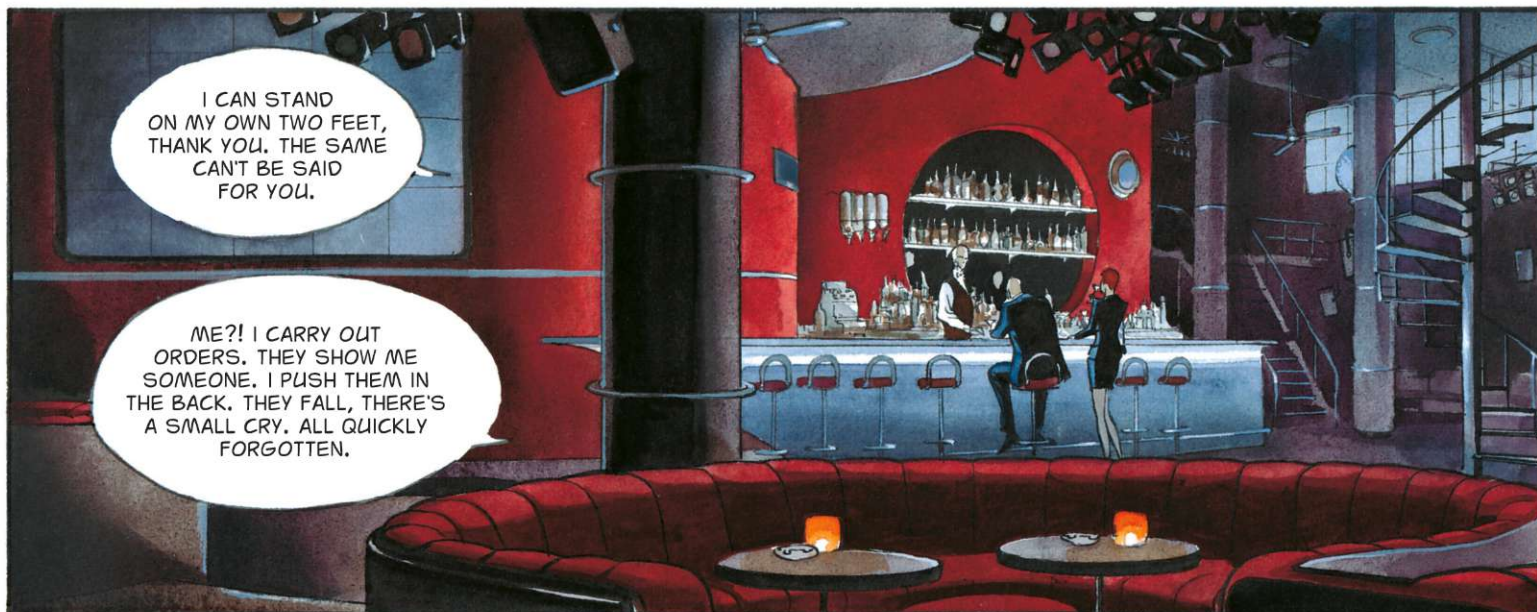


HER HUSBAND!! YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT F. SCOTT FITZGERALD!? YOU KNEW THEM?

THEY APPRECIATED MY SERVICE. TIME WAS MEANINGLESS. A FEW GLASSES OF DOG AND HELL WOULD OPEN UP AT YOUR FEET.

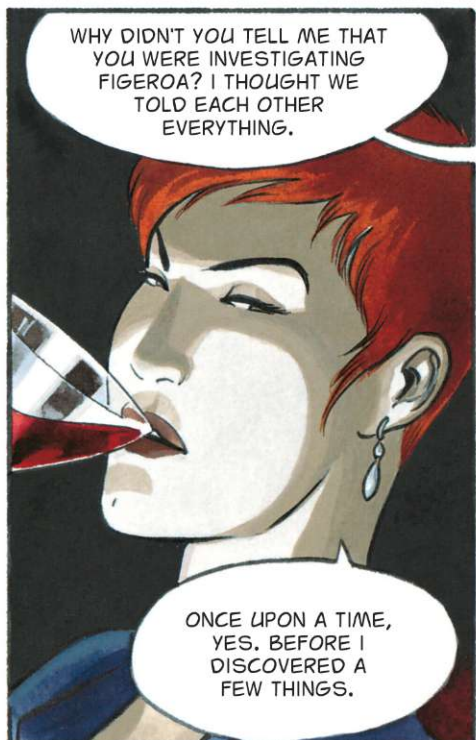


IT CAN STILL OPEN UNDER FOOT. ONE MORE STEP AND YOU WILL FALL. HAVE YOU DECIDED TO FALL, VICKY?



I CAN STAND ON MY OWN TWO FEET, THANK YOU. THE SAME CAN'T BE SAID FOR YOU.

ME?! I CARRY OUT ORDERS. THEY SHOW ME SOMEONE. I PUSH THEM IN THE BACK. THEY FALL, THERE'S A SMALL CRY. ALL QUICKLY FORGOTTEN.



WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT YOU WERE INVESTIGATING FIGEROA? I THOUGHT WE TOLD EACH OTHER EVERYTHING.

ONCE UPON A TIME, YES. BEFORE I DISCOVERED A FEW THINGS.



A FEW THINGS... FOR EXAMPLE...?



THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE A CYST BEHIND YOUR RIGHT EAR.



BUT EVERYONE HAS ONE. DON'T YOU?



FIGEROA!!

DID WE MEET SOONER THAN YOU EXPECTED, AGENT LENORE?



YOU WANTED TO LAY A TRAP FOR US. YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE SMARTER THAN US, HUH?

WAIT! THE CLUB'S UNDER SURVEILLANCE... I...I ALERTED THE FBI!!



THE FBI!
HA, HA, HA!
THE FBI!

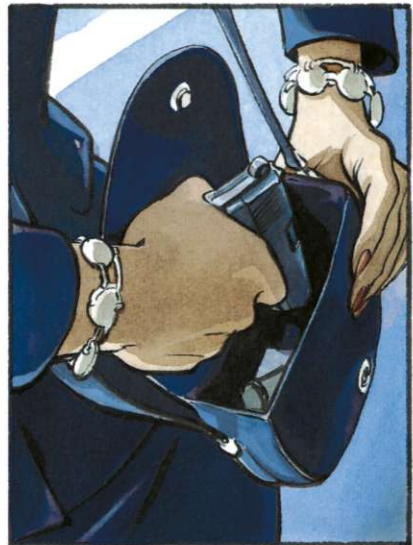


HA, HA, HA!

WHAT THE...!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE!



OH, IT IS!



YOU TRIED TO SCREW US,
BITCH!





SHIT!



BOTTO! WAIT!
DON'T MOVE!
WE'LL GET YOU
OUT OF HERE.

NO... I'M
FUCKED... THEY,
THEY TOOK MY
BLOOD... I...
I'M SORRY.



I'M SO SORRY...
JUST WANTED TO DO
MY DUTY AS A COP.
COULDN'T BETRAY...
THEY... THEY
KNOW...



AT THE...
LOST DOGS...
THEY... THEY'RE
GOING TO DESTROY
EVERYTHING. NO
MORE PROOF...
NOTHING...



WELL?

ELIMINATED.
GO AHEAD!



YOU... YOU THINK
THE FIRE WILL MAKE IT
TO THE BASEMENT?

AS
PLANNED.



DONE. THE
MEAT CAN
ROAST.





I'M FUCKED!
I CAN'T GET OUT
OF THESE ROPES!



THIS WAY,
LENORE.

SPIAGGI!



WE'LL KISS
AFTERWARDS,
OKAY?



FIRST LET'S
FIND A WAY OUT.
I CAME IN THROUGH
THE BACK, BUT
IT ALL CAVED IN
BEHIND ME!



WATCH OUT!



LENORE!!!







EVERYTHING WAS BURNED. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT. THIS MEANS WE HAVE LOST ANOTHER "WAREHOUSE".



AND FIGEROA?

DISAPPEARED, POOF. THEY DIDN'T EVEN FIND HIS BODY.

PERFECT. HIS INCOMPETENCE WAS BECOMING IRRITATING. WHO WILL REPLACE HIM?



BARNES. I THINK WE CAN COUNT ON HIM. HE HAS EVOLVED FULLY OUR WAY.



EVOLVED? THAT MAY BE THE PROBLEM. WE HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW TO EVOLVE.

WATCH!



I'VE BEEN PRACTICING THIS LITTLE EXERCISE FOR A WHILE.



MY FINGERS NO LONGER FEAR FLAME.

EVEN BETTER, THEY SHOW NO TRACE. I TRULY THINK WE HAVE FORGOTTEN TO EVOLVE.



THE GREAT COUNCIL WILL MEET IN TWO DAYS. WE HAVE NO CHOICE: FOR THE SECOND TIME IN OUR HISTORY, WE ARE THREATENED, SERIOUSLY THREATENED.

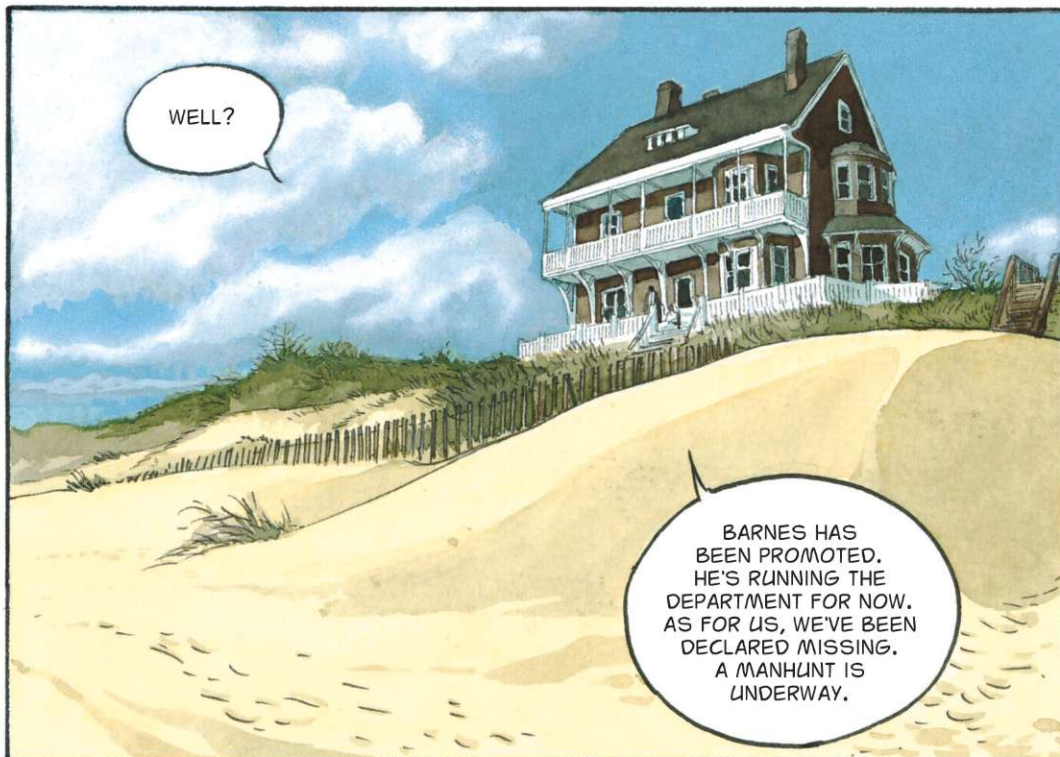
BUT BY WHOM??!

A PART OF OURSELVES. SOMETHING FORGOTTEN, FROM LONG AGO, UNTOUCHED, INTACT. SOMETHING WE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO... AND WHICH IS TAKING ITS REVENGE.

AZNAR AKEBA.

IF THE GREAT COUNCIL GIVES ME AUTHORIZATION, I SHALL CALL UPON HE WHO HAS KEPT HIS POWER.

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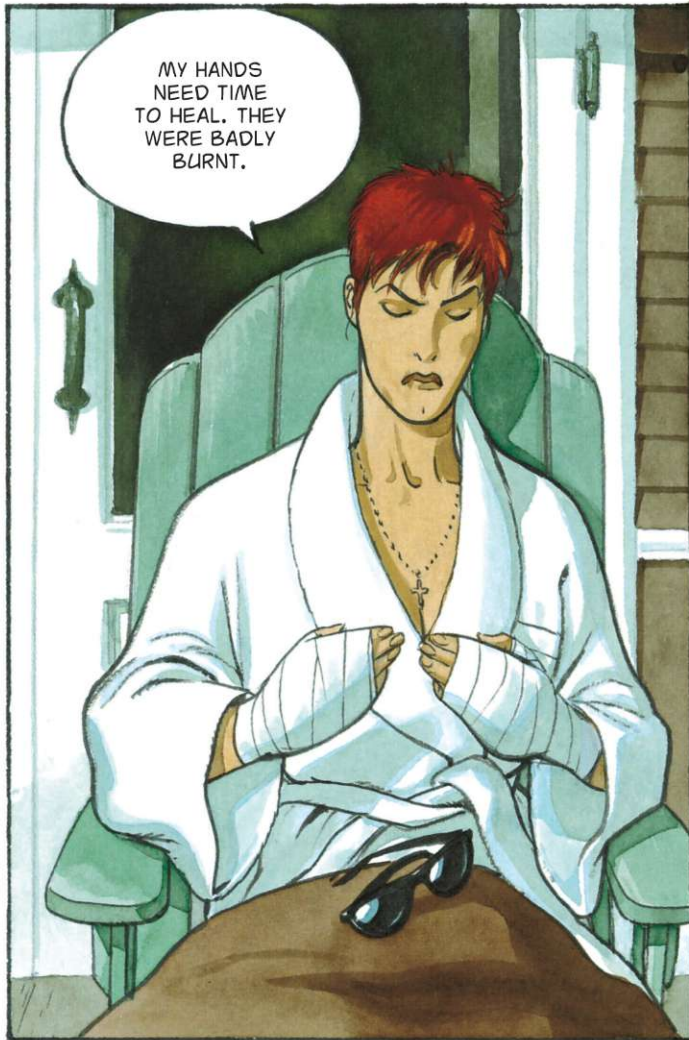


WELL?

BARNES HAS BEEN PROMOTED. HE'S RUNNING THE DEPARTMENT FOR NOW. AS FOR US, WE'VE BEEN DECLARED MISSING. A MANHUNT IS UNDERWAY.



THEY'LL FIND US.



MY HANDS
NEED TIME
TO HEAL. THEY
WERE BADLY
BURNT.

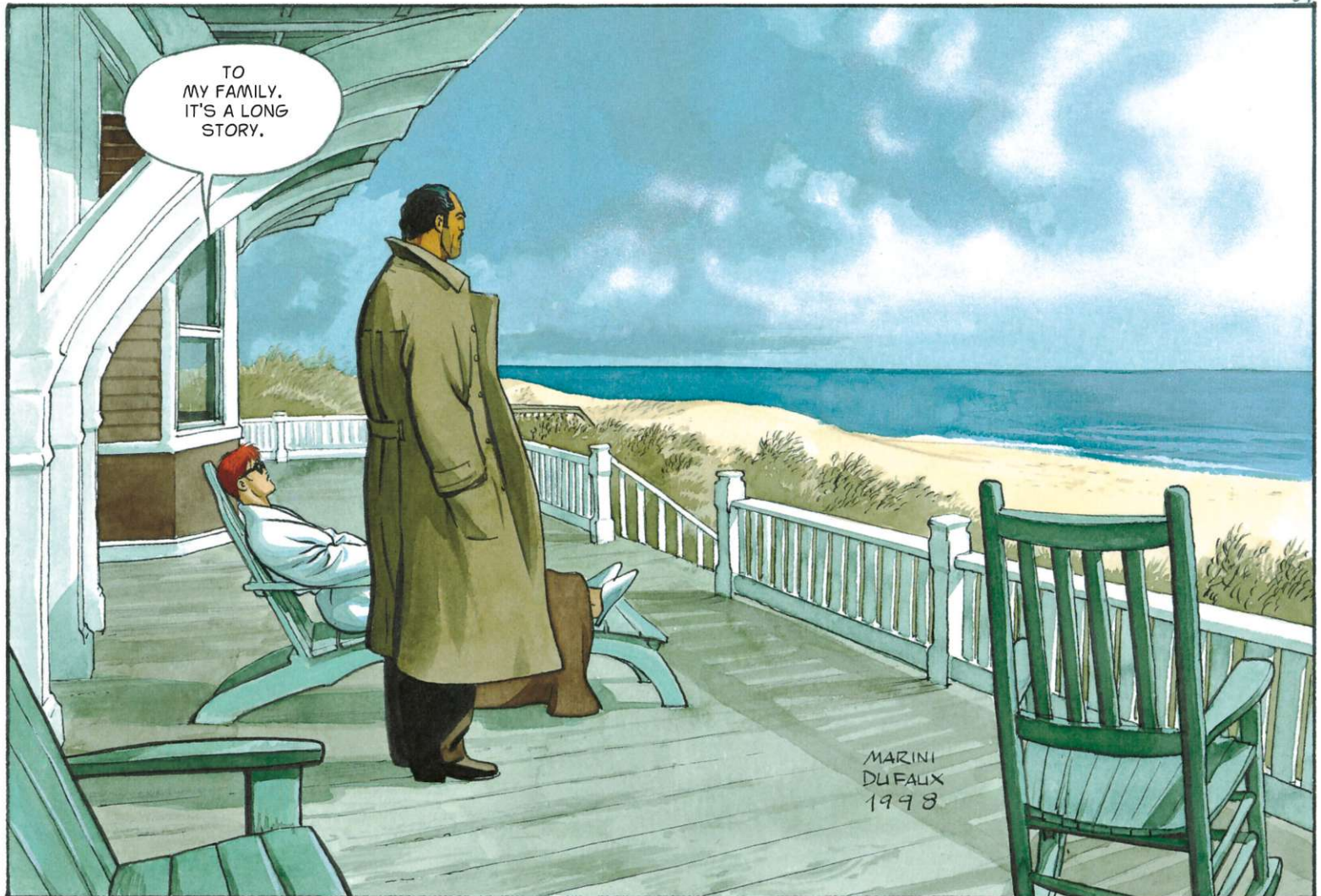


IT'S GONNA BE
DIFFICULT. WE ONLY HAVE
A VERY SMALL CHANCE.
IF WE STRIKE FIRST.

WE WILL
STRIKE FIRST.



LENORE...
WHERE ARE WE?
WHO DOES THIS
HOUSE BELONG
TO?



TO
MY FAMILY.
IT'S A LONG
STORY.

MARINI
DUFAUX
1998



YOUR KINGDOM IS DOOMED

RAPTORS



DUFaux

MARINI

I