

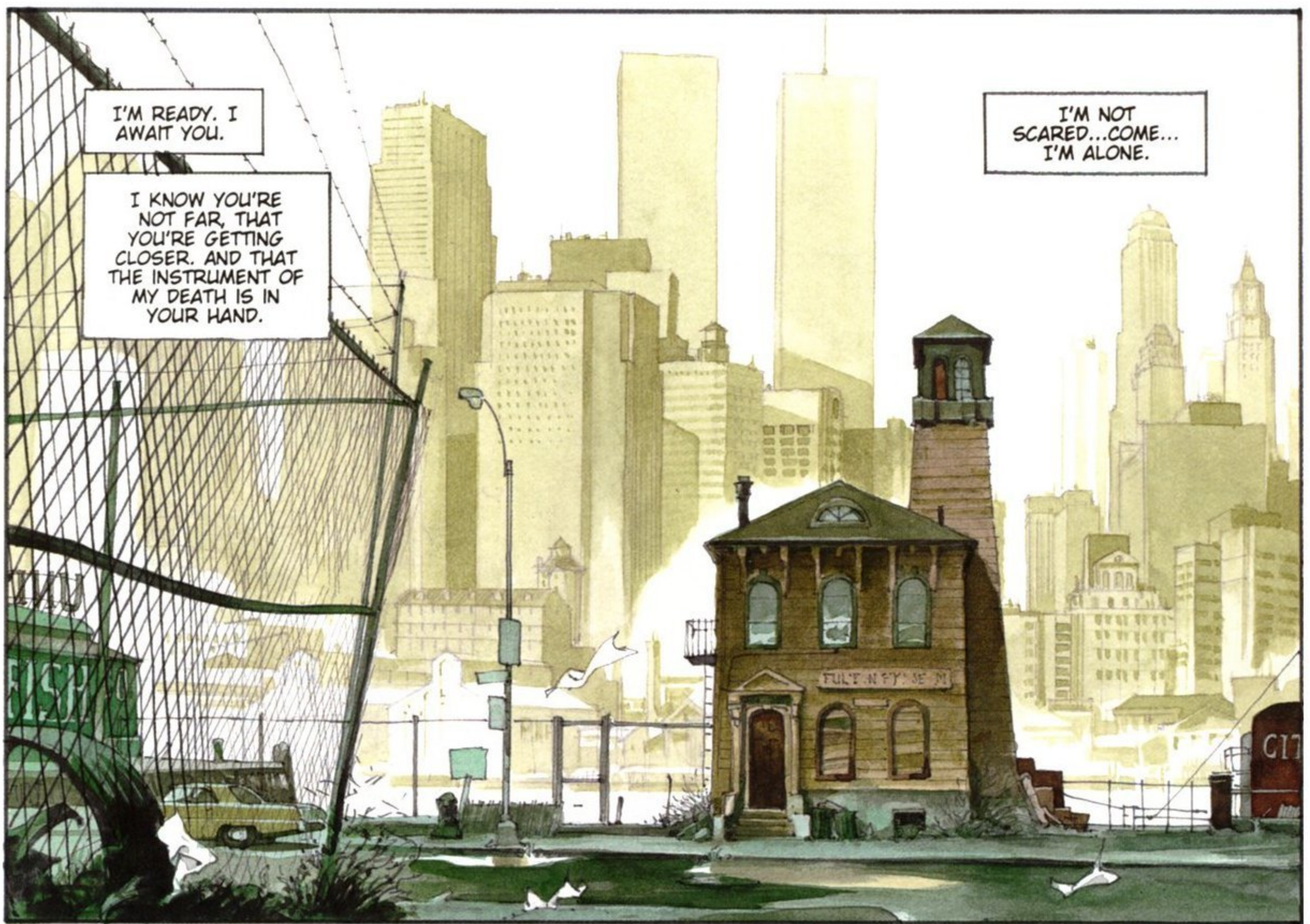
DUFAUX ~ MARINI

# RAPTORS

I







I'M READY. I  
AWAIT YOU.

I KNOW YOU'RE  
NOT FAR, THAT  
YOU'RE GETTING  
CLOSER. AND THAT  
THE INSTRUMENT OF  
MY DEATH IS IN  
YOUR HAND.

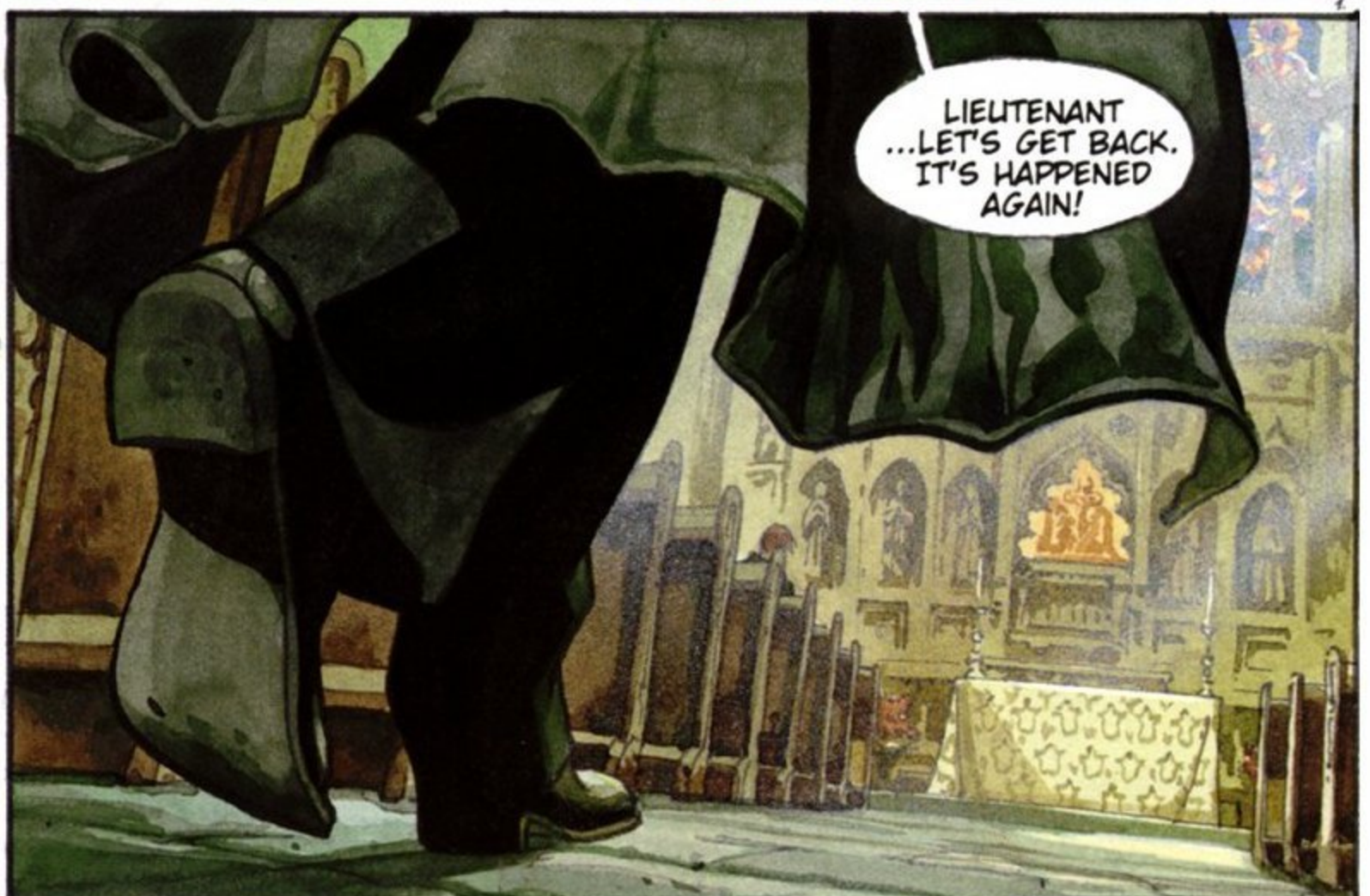
I'M NOT  
SCARED...COME...  
I'M ALONE.



NONE OF THE OTHERS  
KNOW...NOT YET.



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

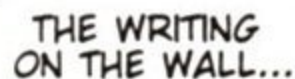


LIEUTENANT  
...LET'S GET BACK.  
IT'S HAPPENED  
AGAIN!

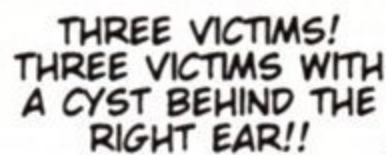








THERE'S A  
CYST, YES. JUST  
LIKE THE OTHER  
TWO. THE PIN POPPED  
THE CYST.



I KNOW.  
WHAT A CRAZY  
STORY!!



OH!!!?









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

COME IN...



YOU'RE SURPRISED?  
...YOU WERE EXPECTING AN  
INTERIOR DIFFERENT THAN  
THIS?...YOU MUSTN'T BE...I  
DIDN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO COME  
TO 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...



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, 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?...

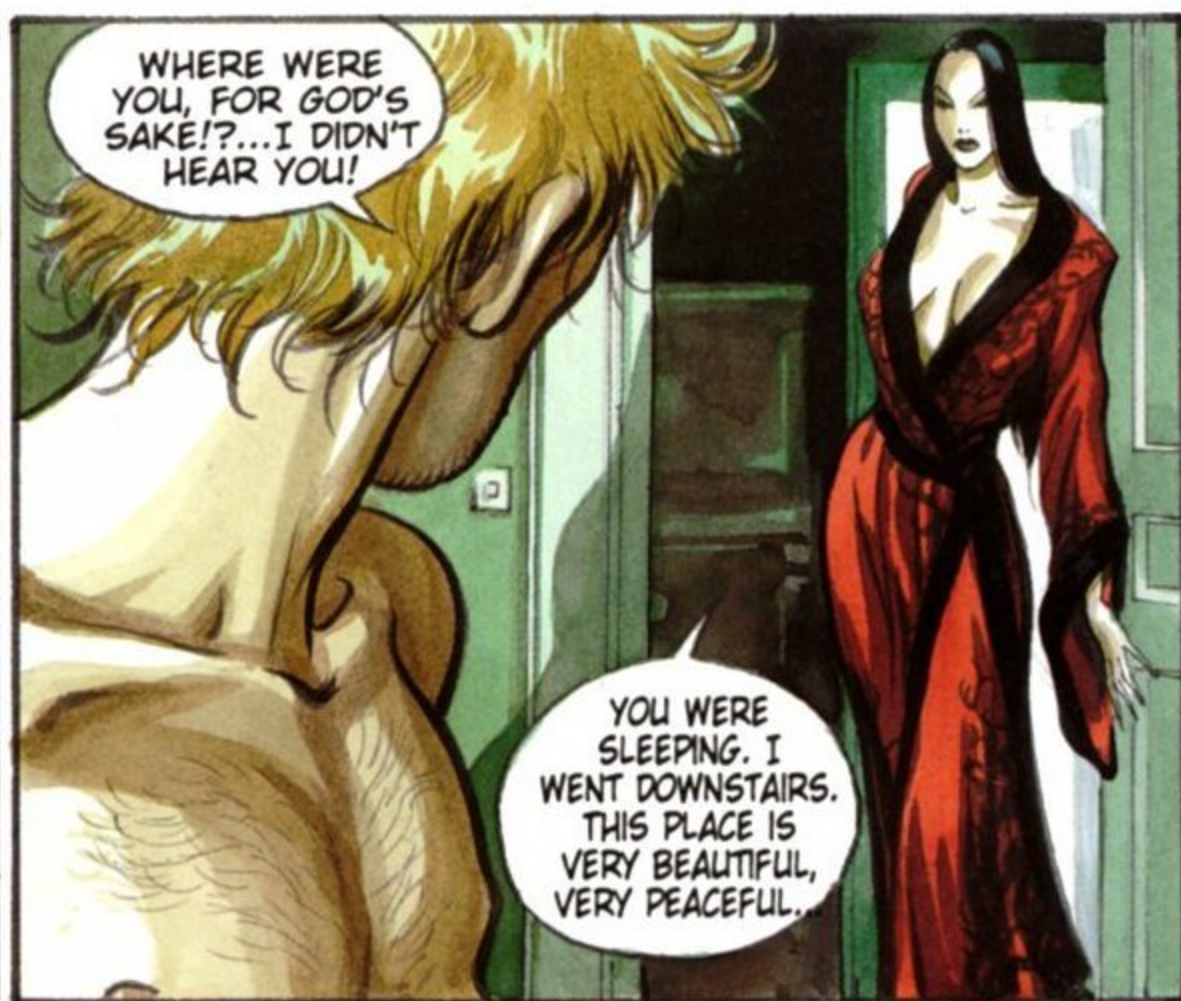
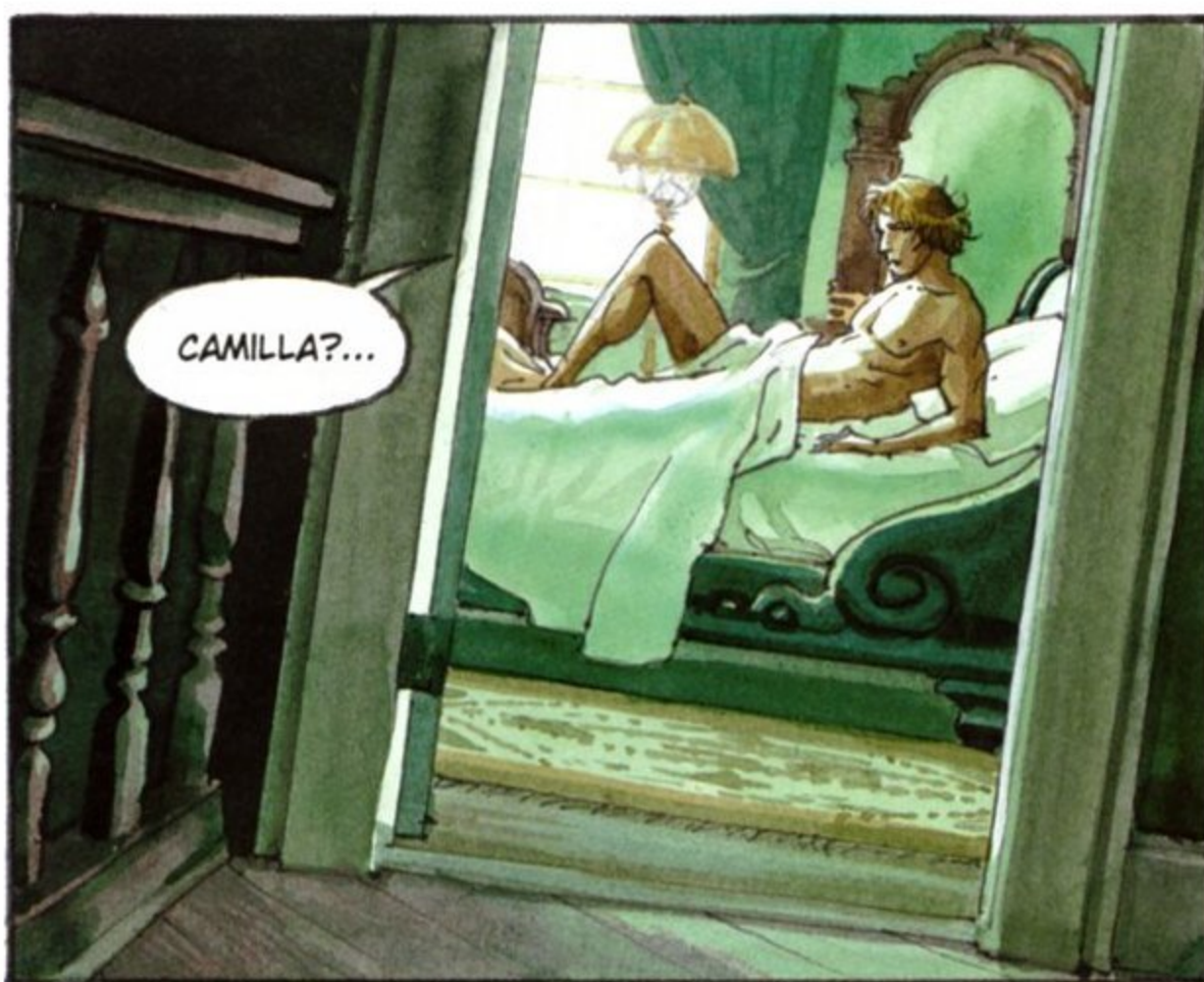


CAMILLA?...SHE'S LIKE ME...SHE'S HUNTING YOU ALL...MERCILESSLY...ONE AFTER THE OTHER...



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...









RIGHT. 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 MARKS OF ANY ILLNESS, BRUISES, SCARS, HEART OR KIDNEY PROBLEMS.



EVERY ORGAN, EVERY VISCERA WAS AS SPOTLESS AS A NEWBORN BABE'S WOULD BE. IT WAS AS CLEAN AND SPOTLESS INSIDE AS THAT OF A NURSING. AND THERE'S EVEN MORE! THE LAST VICTIM...

LOUIS LAMOUR...



YEAH. HELLUVA NAME. WELL, HE WAS SHOOTING UP. 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 WITH PEPSI I'D STILL BE ABLE TO FIND TRACES!

WOW!



THEN THERE'S THE PRESENCE OF THE 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, THIS KIND OF GROWTH ISN'T VISIBLE BECAUSE OF HAIR. BUT...

BUT...?



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

WHO'S THAT?



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

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



THERE!  
THAT'S HIS  
CAR FOR  
SURE...



BE CAREFUL!  
THERE ARE SEVERAL OF  
THEM BACK THERE. FIGEROA  
ARRIVED LAST. HE SEEMED  
VERY NERVOUS. I  
THINK WE'RE GOING  
TO ENCOUNTER  
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.  
JUST WHAT HAVE YOU  
GOT AGAINST HIM?



I DON'T HAVE  
ANYTHING AGAINST  
HIM. I'M ONLY  
INTERESTED IN A  
PARTICULARITY OF  
HIS PHYSIQUE.

I SEE!!  
WHAT'S  
THAT!?



WHAT HE'S HIDING  
UNDER HIS TOUPEE.

"YOUR  
KINGDOM  
IS DOOMED!"

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





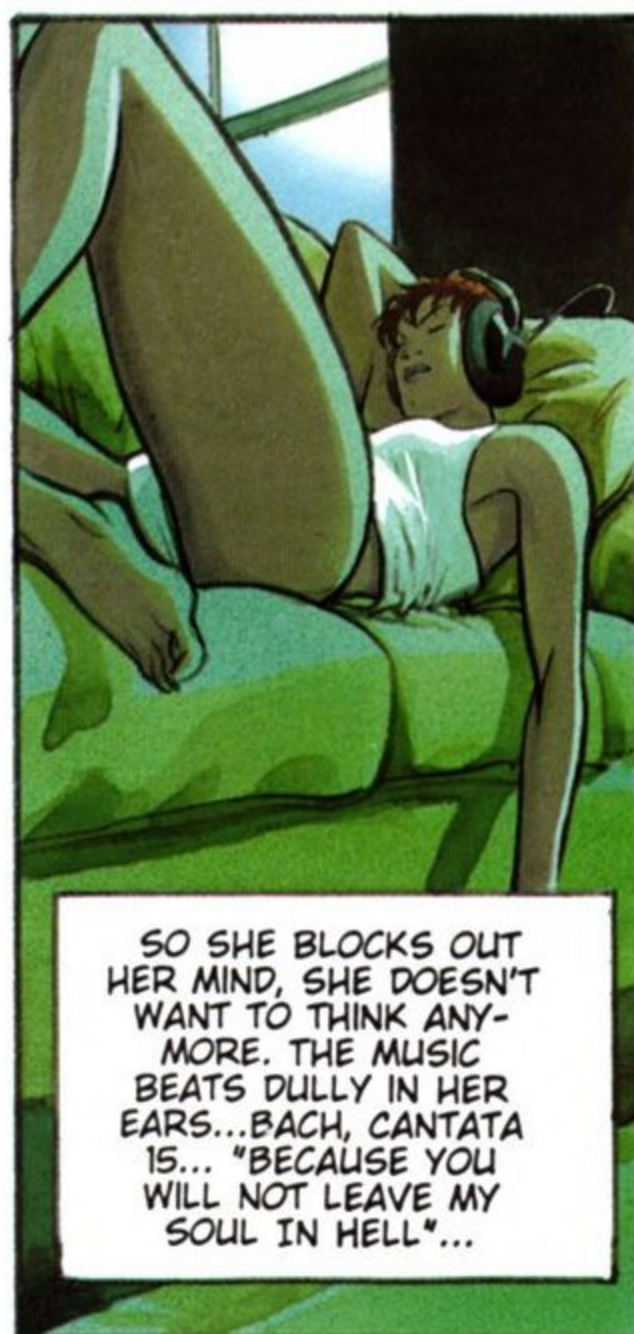












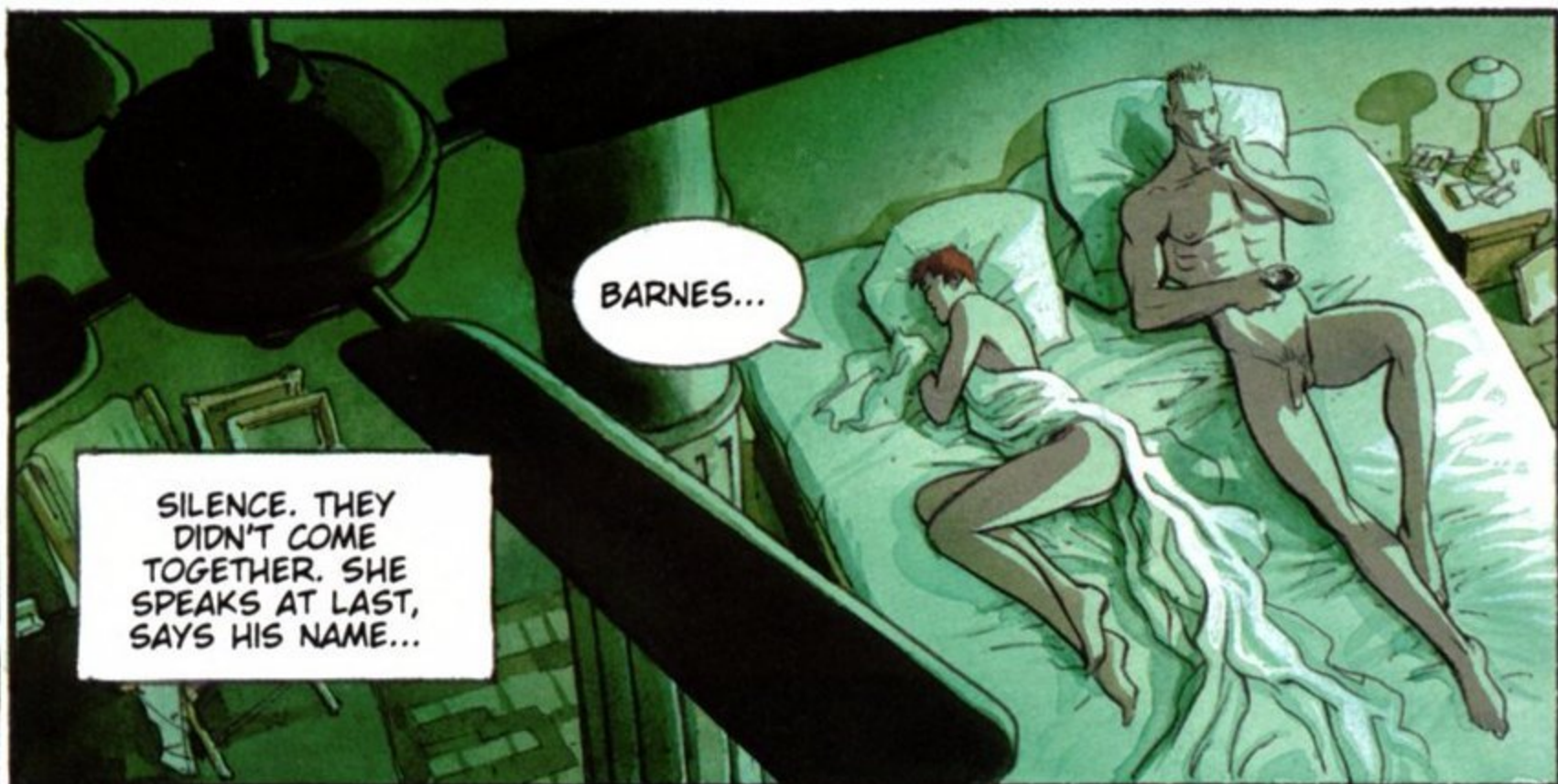




THE TRUST GIVEN  
BY A WOMAN  
NUDE. THE TRUST  
THAT LENORE  
USED TO HAVE  
FOR HIM.

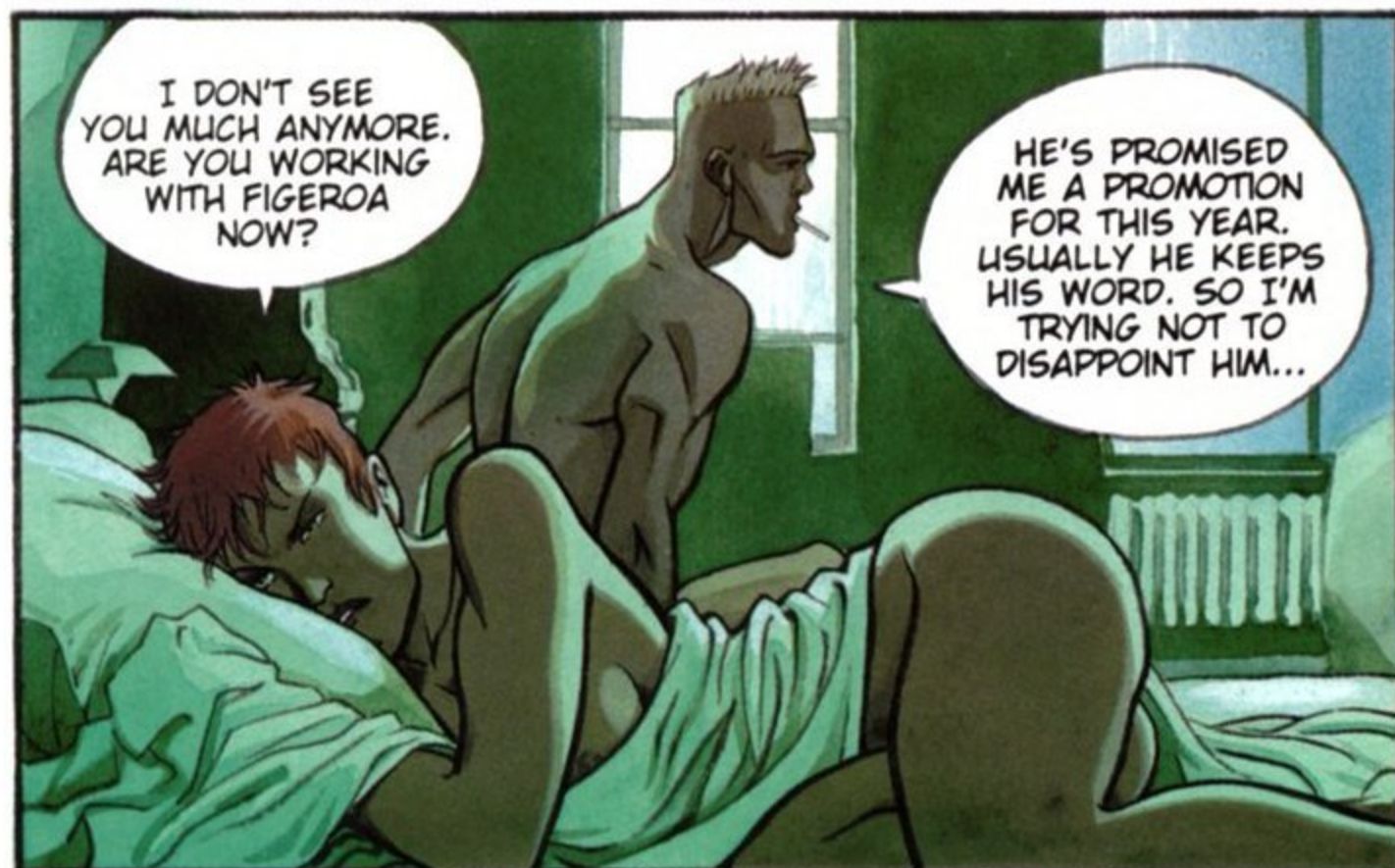


HE PENETRATES  
HER. LIKE A THIEF  
OF NIGHTS, OF HER  
NIGHTS. BUT THIS  
TIME, HE'LL LEAVE  
WITHOUT ANY  
BOOTY.



BARNES...

SILENCE. THEY  
DIDN'T COME  
TOGETHER. SHE  
SPEAKS AT LAST,  
SAYS HIS NAME...



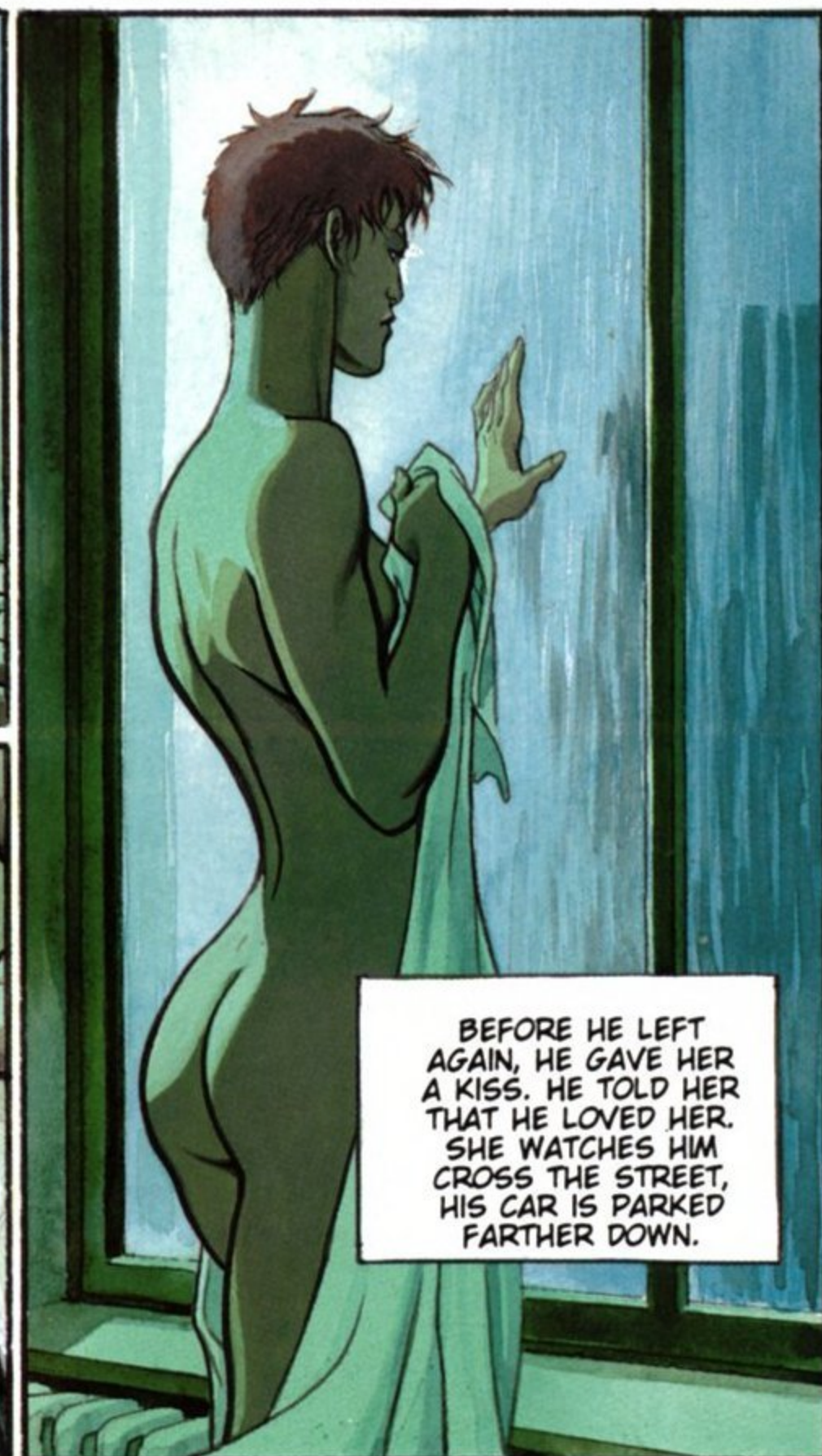
I DON'T SEE  
YOU MUCH ANYMORE.  
ARE YOU WORKING  
WITH FIGEROA  
NOW?

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



SO, YOU'RE  
DOING THE  
DIRTY WORK...

THAT DEPENDS  
ON WHAT YOU  
CALL "DIRTY WORK".



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





SHE COULDN'T  
KEEP HERSELF...  
WHILE HE WAS  
SNOOZING, SHE  
HAD CARESSED  
HIS HEAD.

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



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

FORGETTING...  
NOT TO THINK  
...NOT TO THINK  
ANYMORE.



HELLO! IS  
SOMEONE  
THERE!!?

COME ON  
UP!...WE'RE  
WAITING FOR  
YOU!



...ALL  
THESE STEPS...I  
DON'T UNDER-  
STAND...WHY AM  
I SO OUT OF  
BREATH?...









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



WHY?

TO PROVE ONE THING 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...



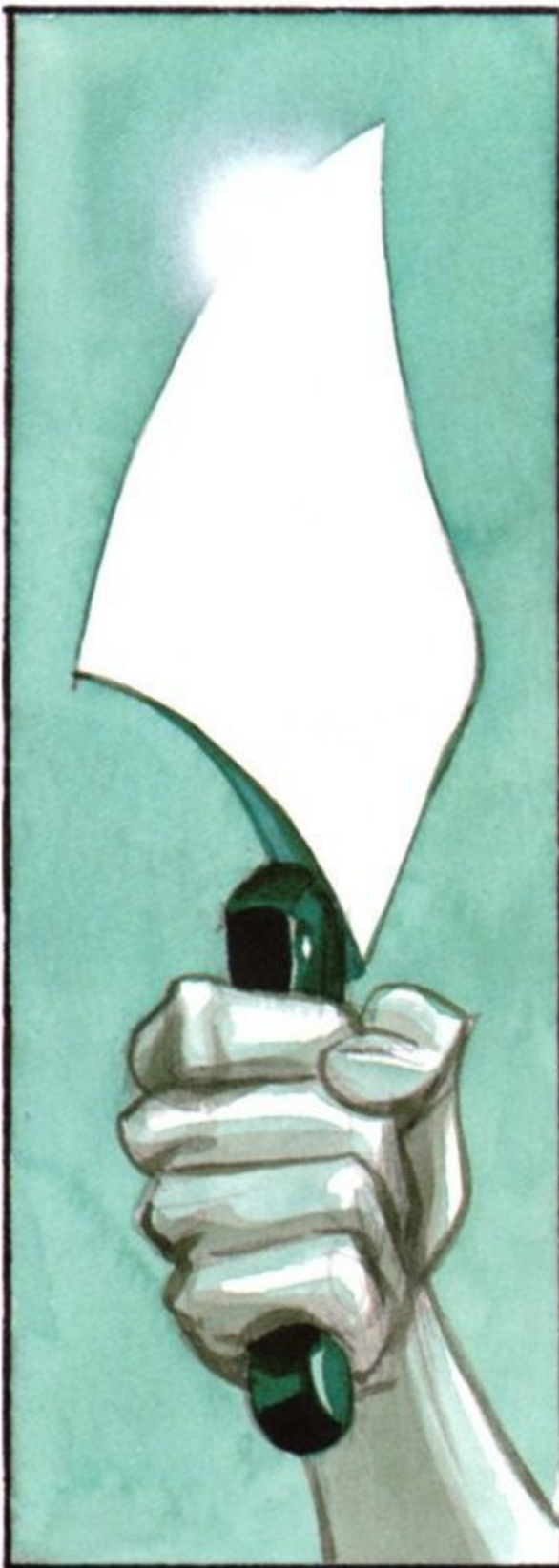
HE'S GUESSING... HE'S CATCHING ON.

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



AAAAHH!  
...MY HEART!









HIS PASSING IS  
LIKE A DEATH-KNELL  
OF AN ERA. OF A  
CERTITUDE. OF A  
POWER...OUR OWN!

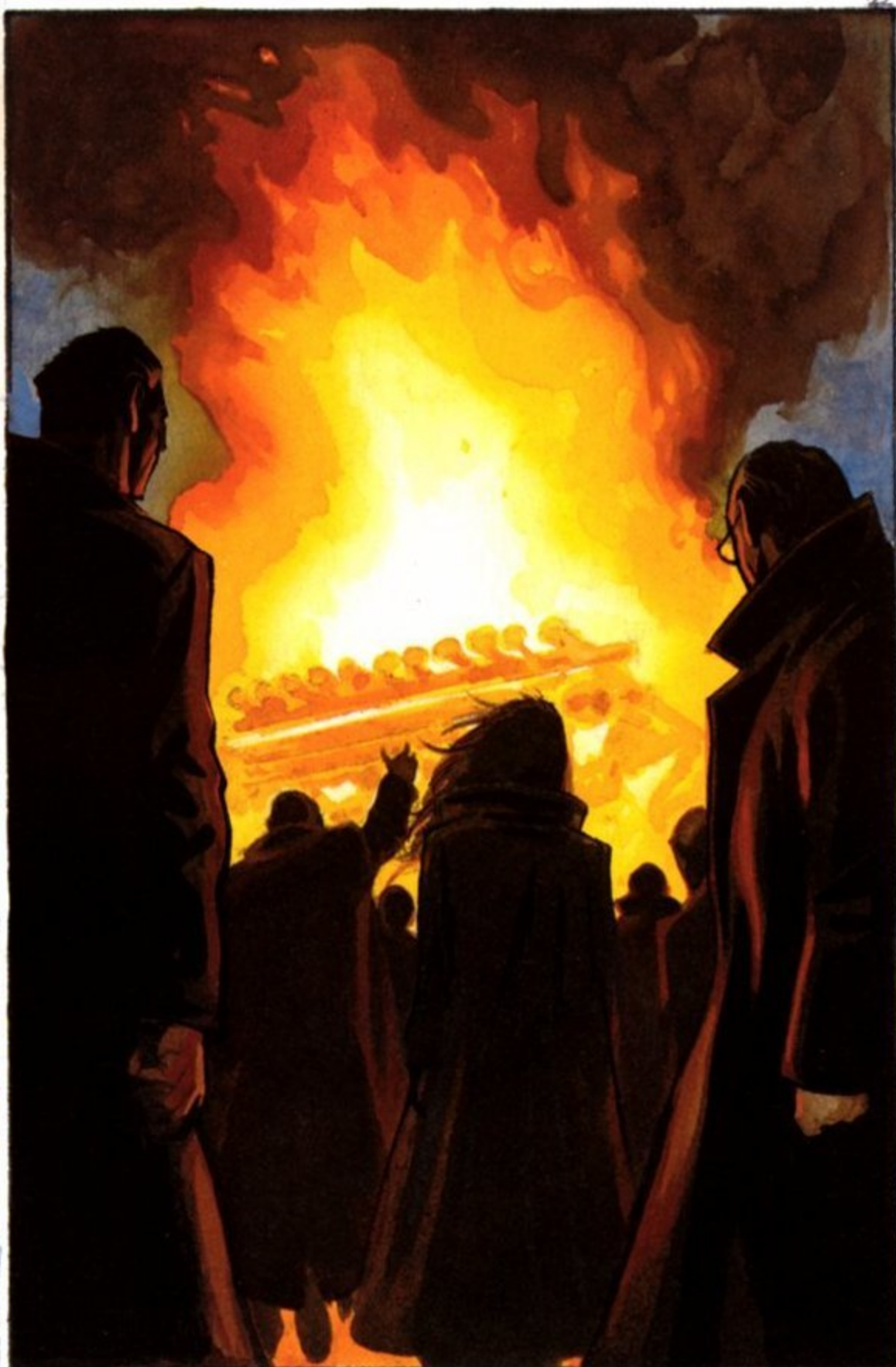
BECAUSE...DON'T  
BE FOOLED! THE DEATH  
OF MOSMAD SERGUILEV  
IS A WOUND FOR US ALL.  
THE FIRST BLOW, A  
FATAL WOUND!



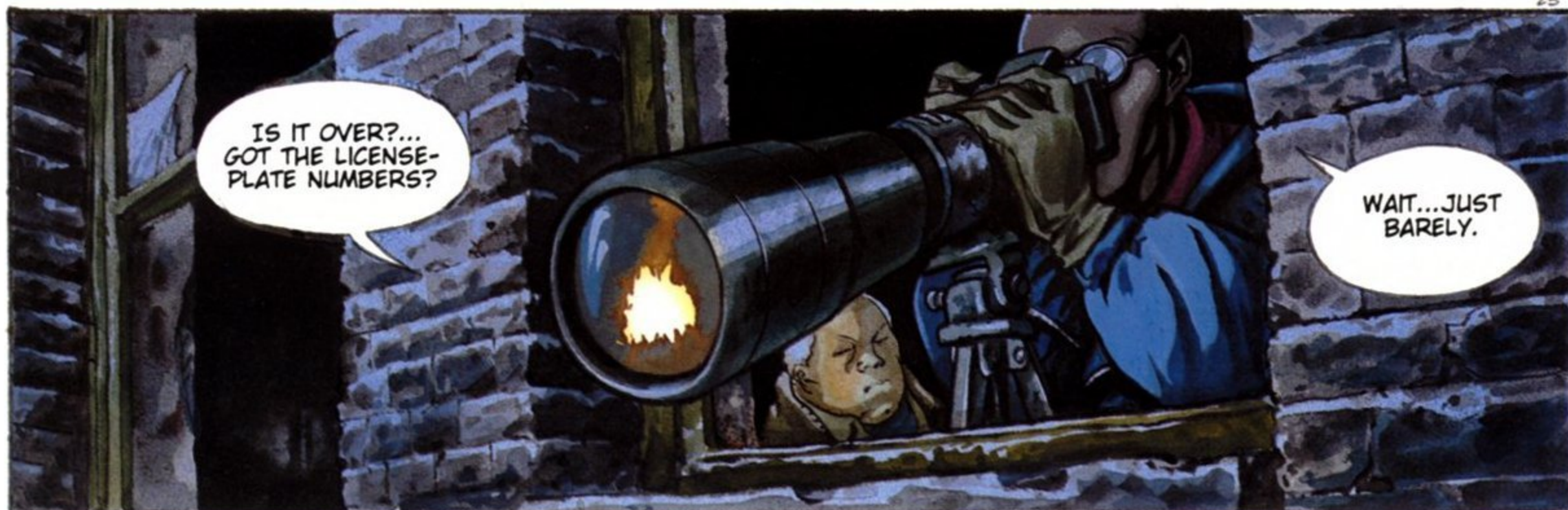
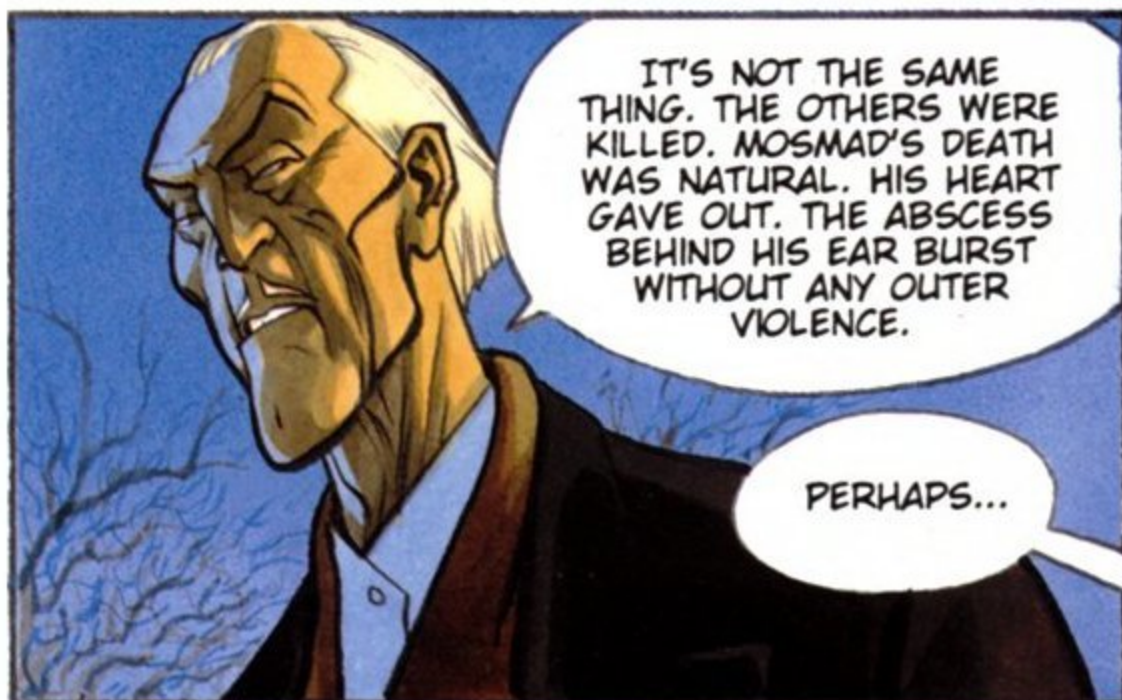
TO THE FIRST  
AMONGST US WHO  
LAID DOWN IN  
THE LIGHT. OIL  
AND FIRE.



OIL  
AND FIRE.











SO?...IT WAS WORTH THE TROUBLE, WASN'T IT?



IS THE HEAD HONCHO THERE?

FIGEROA? YEAH. BUT WHAT WAS THAT CRAZY-ASS CEREMONY? THEY BURNED UP SOME GUY...YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS THE MIDDLE AGES.



NO NEED TO GO BACK TO THE MIDDLE AGES. THERE ARE STILL SOME COUNTRIES WHERE PEOPLE DISPOSE OF THE DEAD LIKE THAT. LET'S JUST SAY IT'S NOT OUR CUSTOM HERE. WE FLAME THEM DIFFERENTLY.











DURING THE DAY, NOTHING OF NOTE. 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.







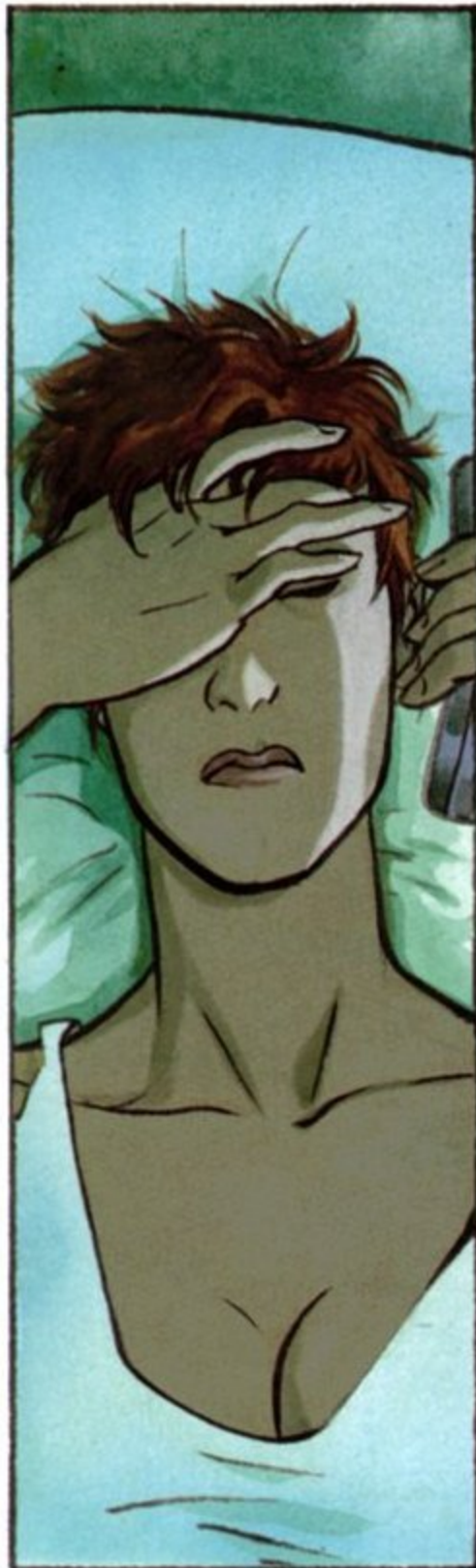
UH...THERE'S  
SOMETHING  
ELSE.



I'M  
LISTENING...



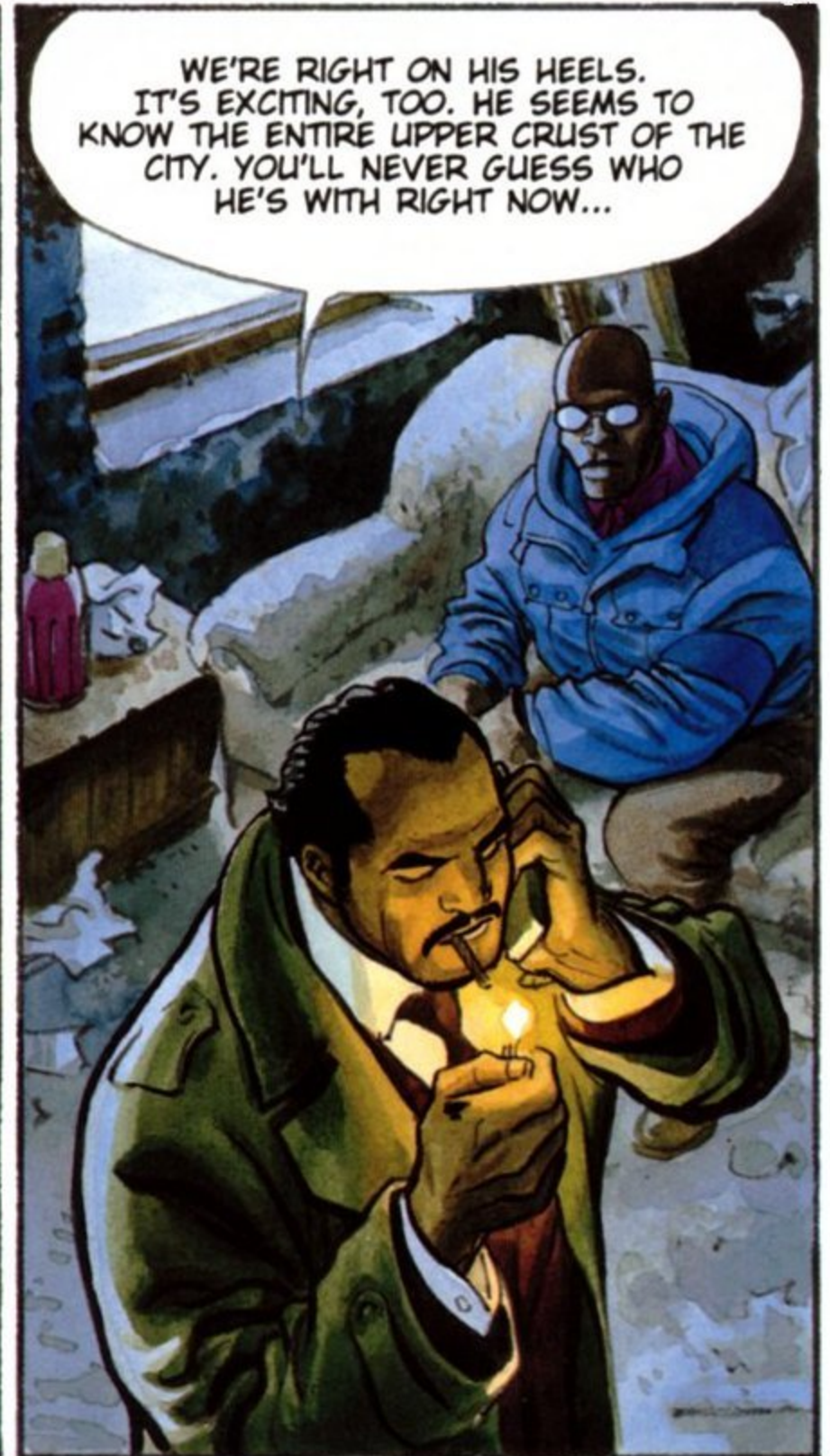
BARNES...UH...HE  
MEETS GIRLS  
THERE, TOO, IF YOU  
KNOW WHAT  
I MEAN...



LENORE?...  
LENORE!!?



YEAH, YEAH,  
I GOTCHA. AND  
FIGEROA?



WE'RE RIGHT ON HIS HEELS.  
IT'S EXCITING, TOO. HE SEEMS TO  
KNOW THE ENTIRE UPPER CRUST OF THE  
CITY. YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO  
HE'S WITH RIGHT NOW...



DO SANTO IN PERSON.  
THE BIG MAN OF THE  
CITY! NOT BAD, EH, FOR  
A COP WHO, SUPPOSED-  
LY, 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.

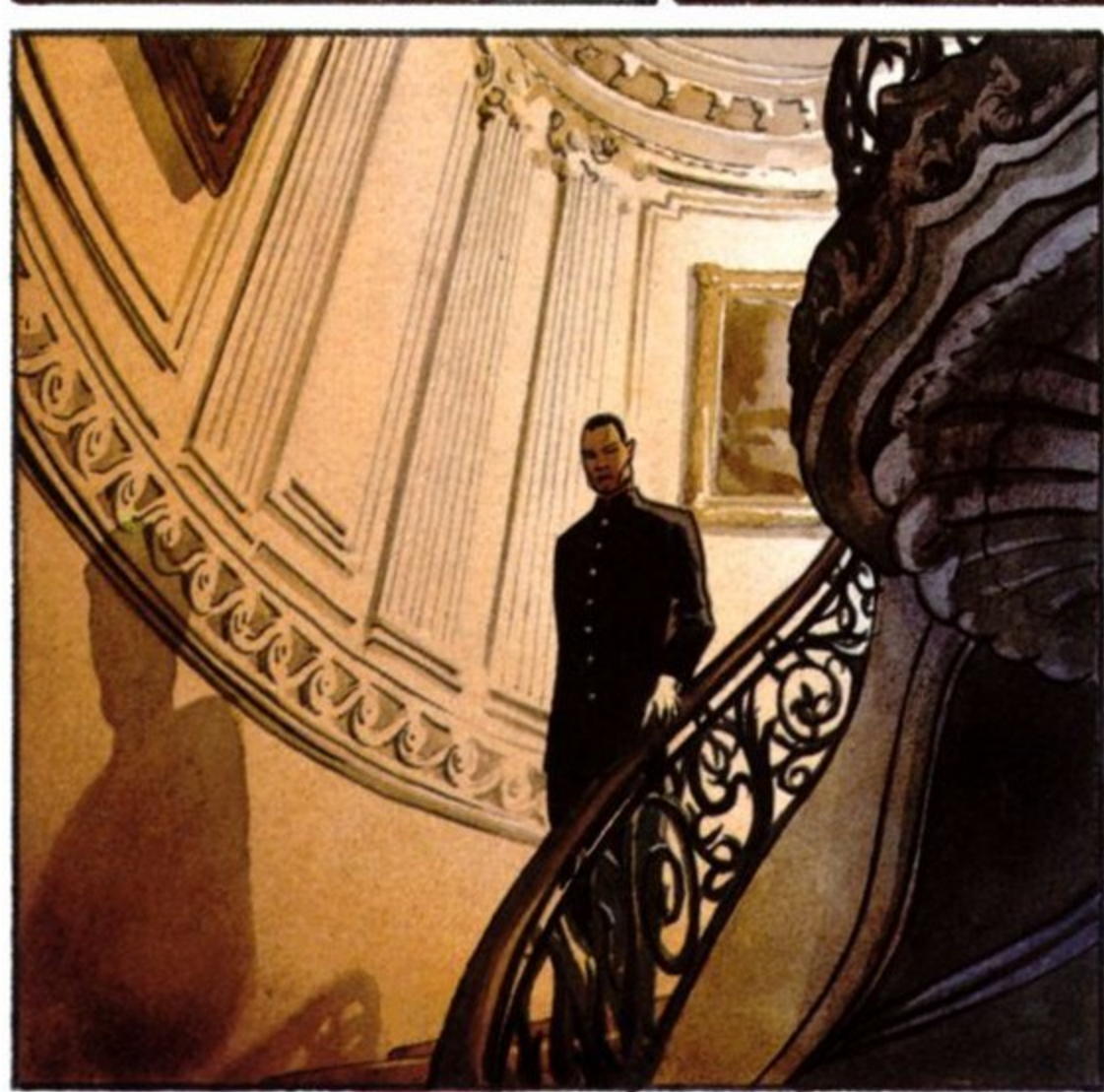
WELL...  
OBVIOUSLY  
SOMEONE DID!

YOU MAY  
LEAVE, THANK  
YOU.

AS YOU  
WISH, SIR.

OF  
COURSE!













THE KILLER, OR KILLERS, WERE RECRUITED AT THE LOST DOGS, A NIGHTCLUB BLASETTI OWNS. I'M WAITING FOR A WARRANT TO START A SEARCH.

!!!?



THERE WE GO!  
THE BAIT'S OUT!  
NOW IT'S SINK  
OR SWIM!



ARE YOU SURE  
OF YOUR SOURCES,  
LENORE? WHOM DID  
YOU CONTACT?

SORRY, CHIEF,  
BUT IN THIS  
MATTER, I'M  
FOLLOWING  
THE RULES.



EVERY COP  
PROTECTS HIS  
INFORMANTS.  
OTHERWISE  
THERE'D BE  
A STAMPEDE.  
WE'D LOSE  
CONTACT.



YEAH! I'LL SEE  
ABOUT THE WARRANT.  
IN THE MEANTIME, DON'T  
NEGLECT ANY OTHER  
LEADS. BECAUSE I  
DON'T THINK YOUR  
BLASETTI IS IT.

YES,  
CHIEF.

BARNES!  
I'LL SEE YOU  
IN MY OFFICE.



WHY?  
...SHOULD  
I HAVE?



UH  
...CHIEF!



VICKY! FOR  
GOD'S SAKE.  
YOU DIDN'T  
MENTION  
ANY OF THAT  
TO ME!













SHE'S ALONE!  
IN THAT  
GET-UP? SHE'S  
UNCONSCIOUS!



WAIT  
HERE! I'LL  
SEE IF WE CAN  
TAKE HER  
WITH US.



HI!

HI!



I'VE BEEN  
WATCHING YOU  
FOR A WHILE  
NOW.

I KNOW.  
I WONDERED  
WHEN YOU  
WOULD MAKE  
UP YOUR  
MIND.



THE TWO  
OF US. IN  
THE CAR.  
HOW MUCH?



YOUR  
LIFE.



!!?

















GOOD EVENING.  
AM I EARLY?



UHH...NO...I...THAT'S  
A GREAT OUTFIT YOU  
HAVE THERE.

IT'S  
CHANEL.  
IT'S  
FRENCH.



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

UHH  
...IT SMELLS  
GOOD, YES.



WHEW!  
WHAT  
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?



A LOT. FOR  
THAT KIND OF  
THING, I'M VERY  
MUCH THE  
GOURMET!

ALL THE  
BETTER! BECAUSE  
THERE ARE NO OTHER  
GNOCCHI IN THE  
WORLD LIKE THE  
ONES I MADE  
FOR YOU!





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

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



ADD 4 TABLESPOONS  
OF CREAM AND A DOZEN  
LEAVES OF SAGE, FRESH  
ONES, EH! NONE OF THOSE  
PRODUCTS BOUGHT IN A BAG  
AT THE SUPERMARKET. YOU  
ADD A PINCH OF SALT AND  
LET THE SAUCE COOK DOWN.



COUNT OUT 7  
OUNCES OF SPINACH  
GNOCCHI PER PERSON AND  
DUMP THEM INTO BOILING  
WATER. THE GNOCCHI WILL  
BE READY WHEN THEY RISE  
TO THE SURFACE. ADD  
PARMESAN AND SERVE IT.  
SIMPLE, NO?!



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

STOP IT,  
MAMA!



AH, THAT'S  
HOW MY SON  
IS! PEOPLE THINK  
HE'S CRUDE, BUT,  
IN FACT, HE'S SENSITIVE!  
LIKE HIS FATHER!  
THE PROBLEM IS THAT  
HE DOESN'T TAKE CARE  
OF HIMSELF...HE  
EATS POORLY!



YES, YES, EXACTLY  
....DON'T DENY IT,  
BENITO...ALWAYS HAM-  
BURGERS, CHINESE  
NOODLES, THOSE PIZZAS  
WHOSE DOUGH GETS  
STUCK BETWEEN YOUR  
TEETH AND YOU CAN'T GET  
IT OUT...AND HOW CAN YOU  
KISS A GIRL AFTER  
THAT, EH!!?



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

REALLY?







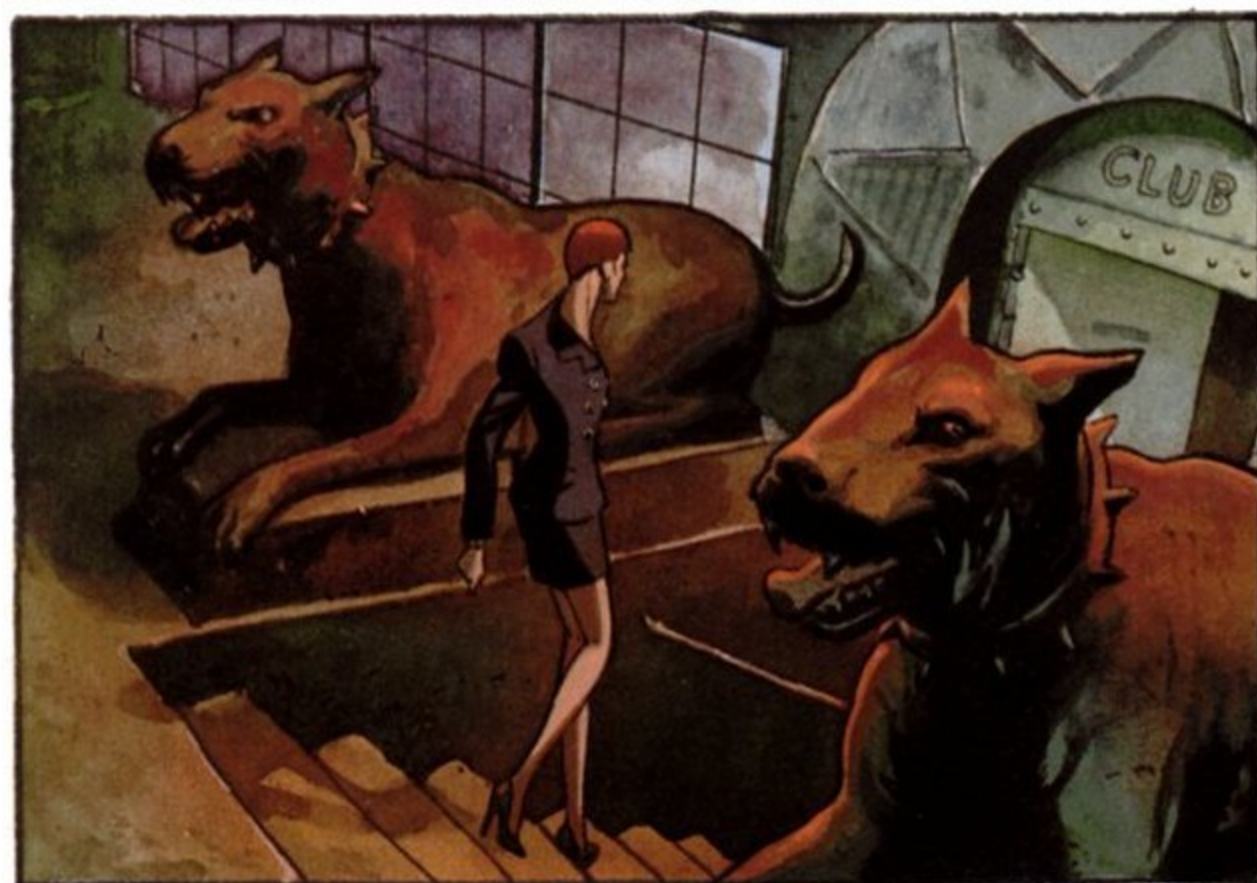








WE'LL STAY IN TOUCH. AT THE LEAST SIGN OF TROUBLE, WE'LL STEP IN.



THIS WAY, VICKY! COME HAVE A DRINK.



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

NOT REALLY.



WILLIAM! A DOUBLE DOG FOR OUR FRIEND. SHE KNOWS HOW TO KEEP HER DISTANCE.



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 OPENED UP AT YOUR FEET.



IT CAN STILL OPEN UNDER FOOT. ONE STEP MORE AND IT'S TAKE A FALL. HAVE YOU DECIDED TO FALL, VICKY?



I CAN STAND ON MY OWN LEGS, THANK YOU. ONE COULDN'T SAY AS MUCH FOR YOU.

OH ME!...I CARRY OUT ORDERS, THEY SHOW ME A PERSON, I PUSH HER IN THE BACK. SHE FALLS. THERE'S A SMALL CRY, NOBODY HEARS A THING.



WHY DID YOU HIDE FROM ME THAT YOU WERE INVESTIGATING FIGEROA? I THOUGHT WE TOLD ONE ANOTHER EVERYTHING.

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



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

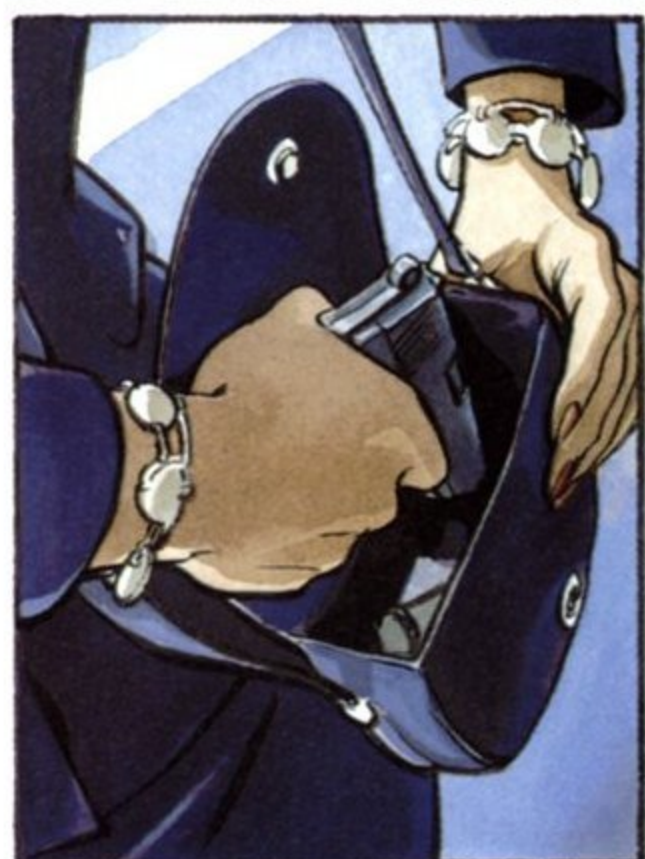


THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE A CYST BEHIND YOUR RIGHT EAR.



BUT EVERYONE HAS ONE. DON'T YOU?













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...LOST  
DOGS...THEY...  
THEY'RE GOING TO  
DESTROY EVERY-  
THING...NO MORE  
PROOF...NOTHING.



SO?

ELIMINATED.  
YOU CAN  
GO AHEAD!



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

AS  
PLANNED.



DONE. THE  
MEAT CAN  
ROAST.





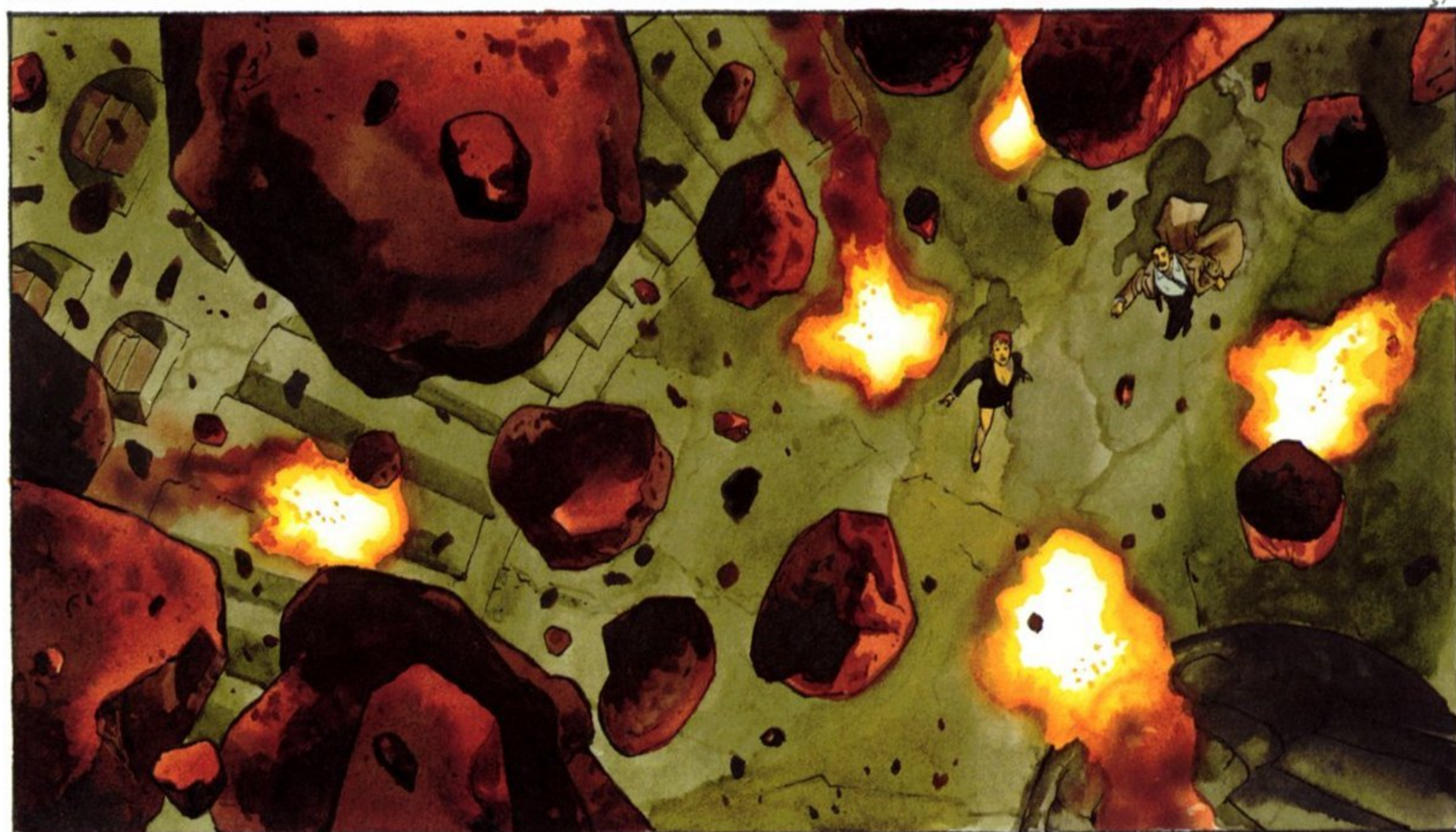


















THE GREAT COUNCIL WILL MEET IN TWO DAYS. I'LL HAVE TO TELL THEM OF A FAIT ACCOMPLI: FOR THE SECOND TIME IN OUR HISTORY, WE ARE THREATENED, SERIOUSLY THREATENED.

BUT BY WHOM???!...

IN PART, BY OURSELVES. IN PART, SOMETHING FORGOTTEN, STILL INTACT. A PART THAT WE WERE UNABLE TO HEAR... THAT'S TAKING ITS VENGEANCE.

IF THE GREAT COUNCIL GIVES ME AUTHORIZATION, I'LL CALL UPON THE ONE WHO HAD KEPT HIS POWER...

...AZNAR AKEBA.

SO?

BARNES HAS BEEN PROMOTED. HE'S RUNNING THE SERVICE FOR THE MOMENT. AS FOR US, WE'VE BEEN DECLARED MISSING. A MAN-HUNT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN...

THEY'LL FIND US.



