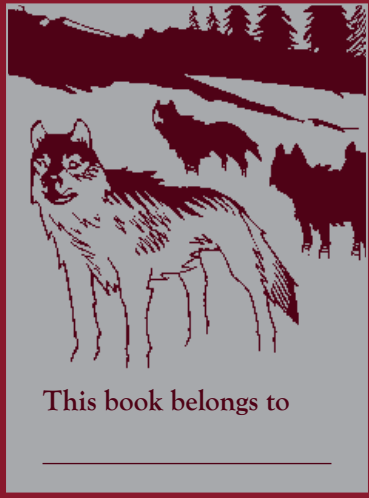


Courtney VOLUME FOUR Crumrin



Monstrous Holiday

— ❖ — TED NAIFEH — ❖ —



This book belongs to

Courtney
VOLUME FOUR
Crumrin

Monstrous Holiday





Courtney VOLUME FOUR Crumrin

Monstrous Holiday

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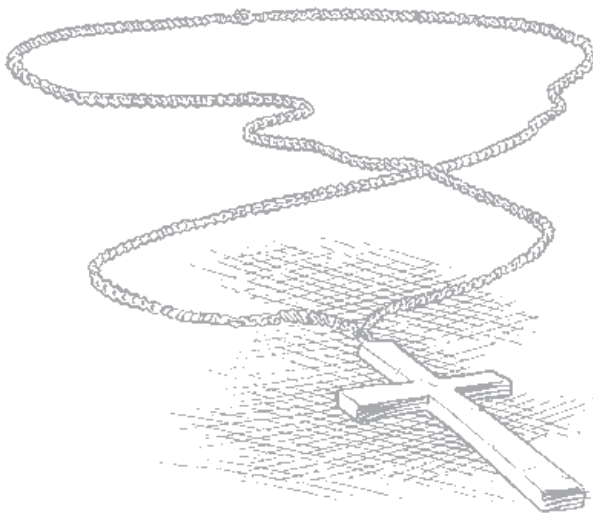
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For Kelly

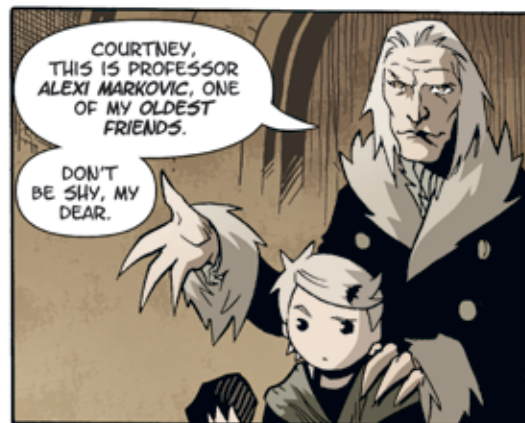
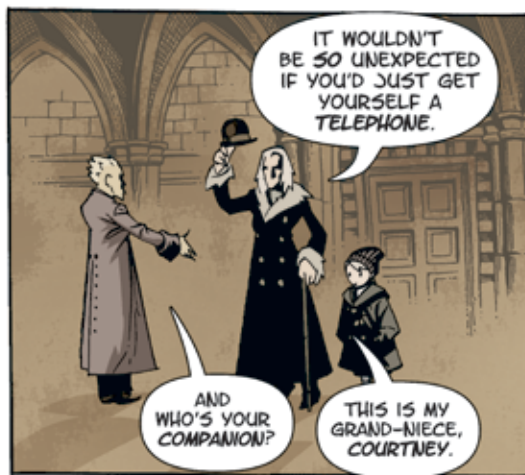


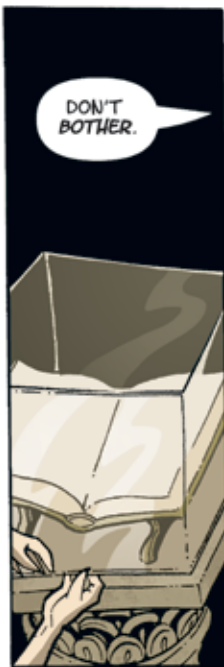
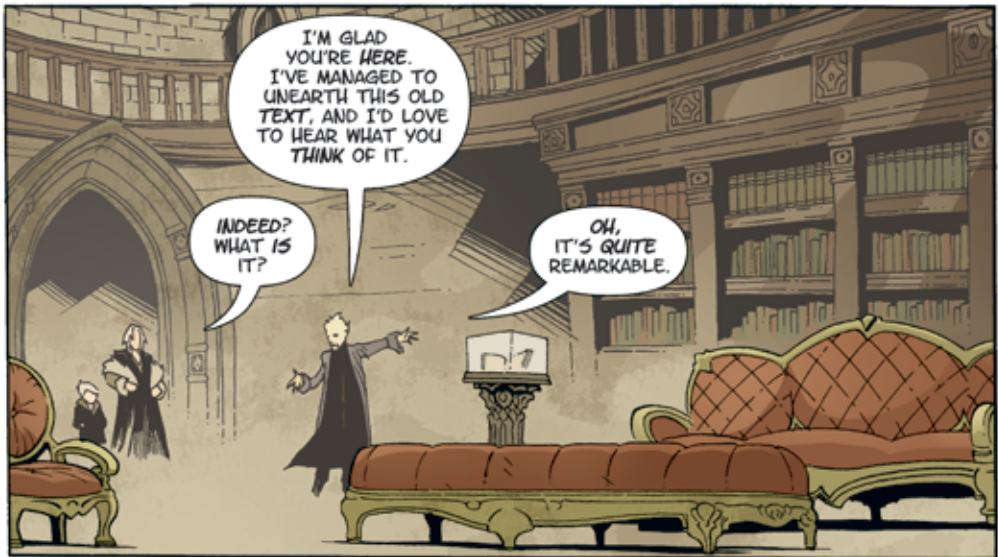
Chapter One

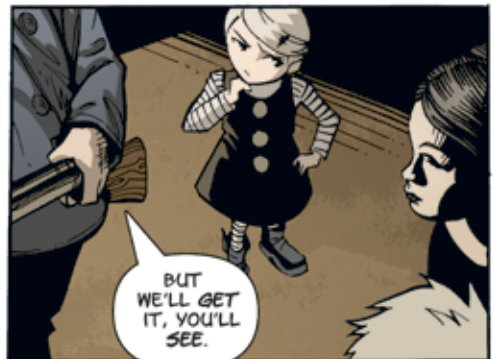


















COURTNEY HAD BEEN TRAVELING WITH HER UNCLE FOR ALMOST A WEEK. THEY DIDN'T TALK MUCH.



STILL, IT WAS THE HAPPIEST TIME COURTNEY COULD REMEMBER.

YEAH
YEAH, QUIT FUSSING.

YOU KNOW, FOR A GIRL WHO'S ABOUT TO GET MARRIED, THAT MAGGY ISN'T EXACTLY GLOWING.

WE ALL SHOW JOY IN OUR OWN WAY.



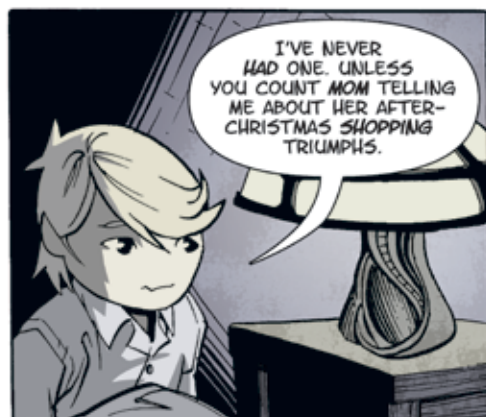
WHAT'S THIS?

JUST SOME BED-TIME READING I PICKED UP.



BUT I THINK I'M TOO TIRED.


STILL JETLAGGED, EH? I SUPPOSE YOU'RE TOO OLD FOR A BEDTIME STORY.



I'VE NEVER HAD ONE. UNLESS YOU COUNT MOM TELLING ME ABOUT HER AFTER-CHRISTMAS SHOPPING TRIUMPHS.




ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WERE TWO BROTHERS WHO LIVED IN THE FOREST.



IT WAS A TIME BEFORE CITIES AND CIVILIZATION, WHEN MEN WERE JUST ANOTHER ANIMAL IN THE FOREST, ALBEIT AN UNUSUALLY CLEVER ONE.

BUT THESE BROTHERS WEREN'T MEN. THEY WERE WOLVES.




IT WAS A DIRE WINTER. THERE WAS LITTLE TO EAT AND NO SHELTER FROM THE COLD.


THE BROTHERS WERE DYING.



ONE NIGHT, THEY CAME UPON SOMETHING CURIOUS.



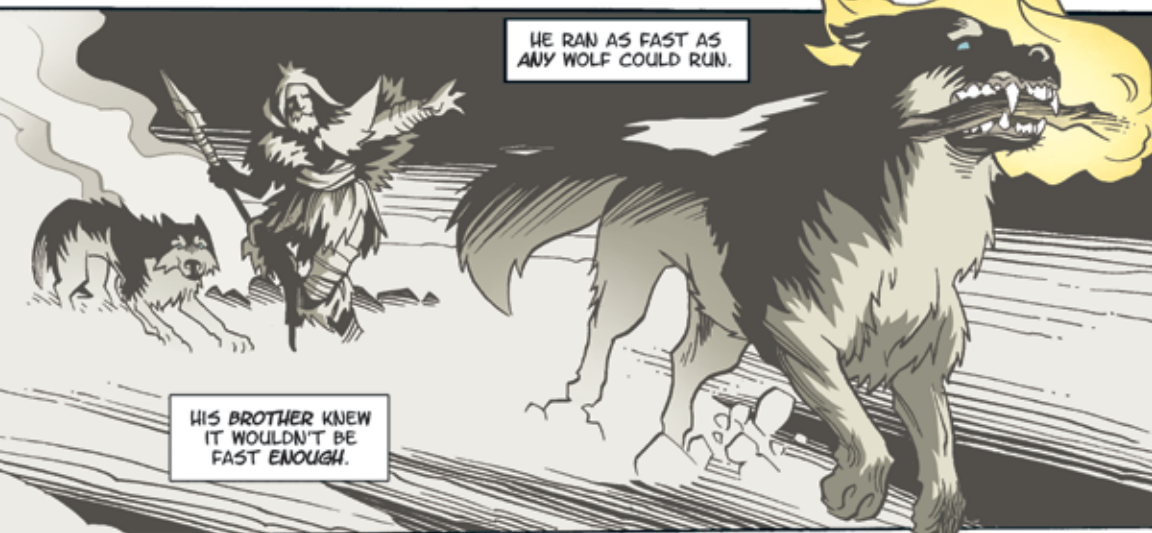
"THIS CREATURE HAS FOUND A LITTLE PIECE OF THE SUN," SAID THE YOUNGER BROTHER. "LET US SLAY HIM, AND THE WARMTH WILL BE OURS."



"NO!" SAID THE ELDER BROTHER. "THAT IS A MAN. HE HAS A LONG TOOTH THAT FLIES THROUGH THE AIR. OUR FATHER WAS SLAIN BY SUCH A BEAST, REMEMBER?"







HE RAN AS FAST AS ANY WOLF COULD RUN.

HIS BROTHER KNEW IT WOULDN'T BE FAST ENOUGH.



Aargh!



ALL THAT FOLLOWED HIM WERE THE CRIES AND WHIMPERS OF HIS BROTHER AS THE MAN BEAT HIM.



AND THUS, HE BECAME THE FIRST...



GOODNIGHT, LITTLE ONE.



COURTNEY'S
JETLAG NOT
ONLY MADE HER
SLUGGISH ALL
AFTERNOON...



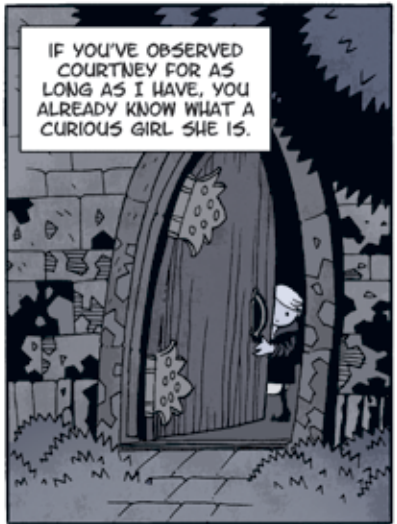
...IT ALSO WOKE HER
LONG BEFORE THE SUN.

THAT'S HOW SHE
HEARD THE HOWLING
START AGAIN.



AND THAT'S HOW
SHE ALSO SAW...

HUH...



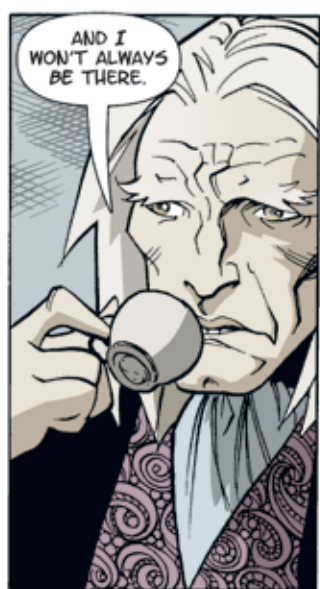
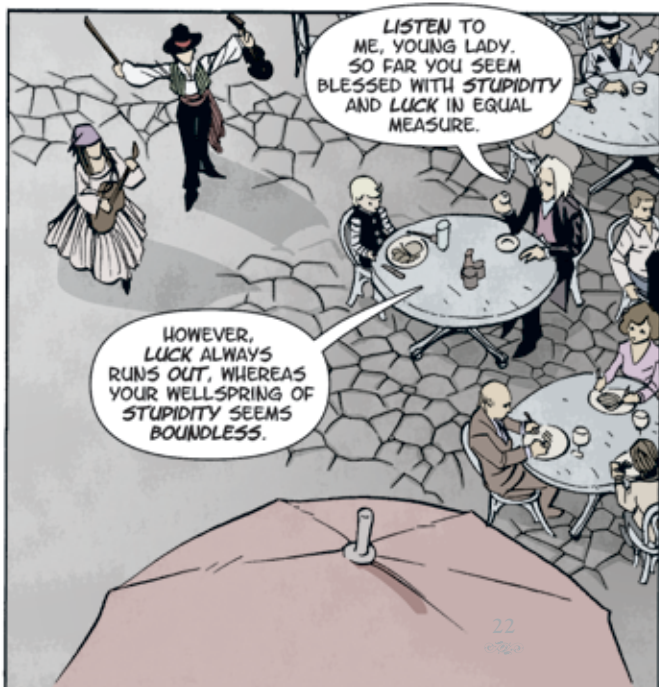
IF YOU'VE OBSERVED
COURTNEY FOR AS
LONG AS I HAVE, YOU
ALREADY KNOW WHAT A
CURIOUS GIRL SHE IS.



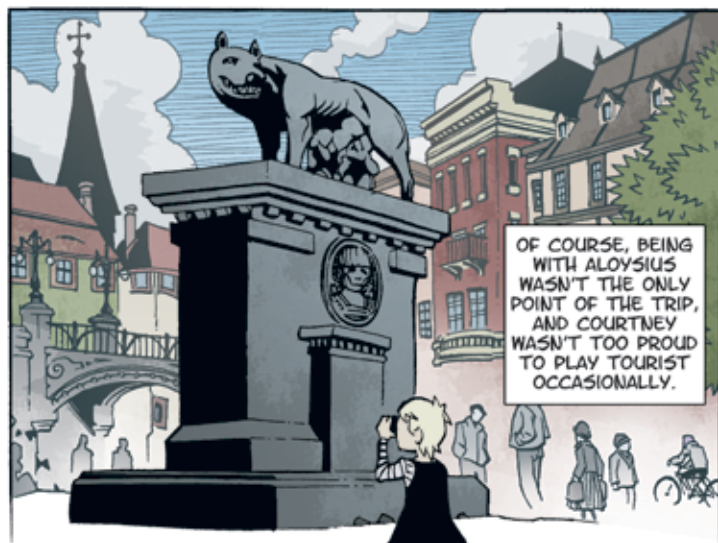
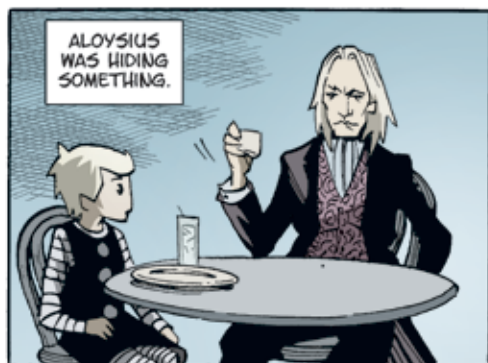
IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, THE
WORD "BUSYBODY" WOULDN'T
BE TOO STRONG.





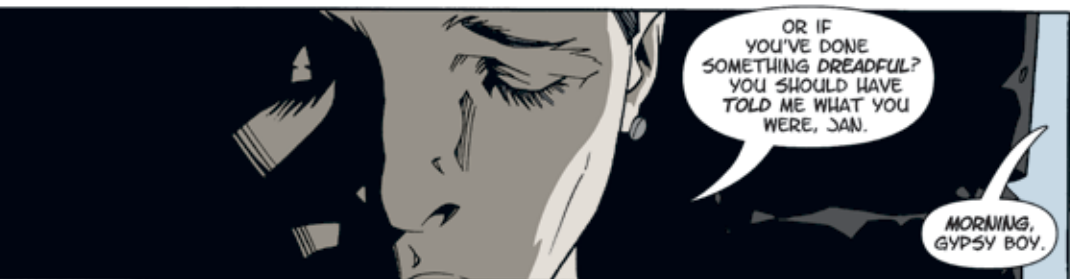






SHE'D SEEN PLACES THAT SIMPLY TOOK HER BREATH AWAY.







IF THAT'S THE CASE, CAN YOU GUYS SHOW ME WHERE THE CATHEDRAL IS? I NEED TO CONFESS MY SINS.



UMM...

LISTEN PETRU, MAYBE WE SHOULD'NT...

I KNOW YOU, DON'T I?

YES, OF COURSE. THE AMERICAN SORCERER'S GRANDCHILD.

NIECE.

TRYING TO INTERFERE, EH? I KNOW OLD CRUMRIN IS FRIENDLY WITH THESE DEVILS.

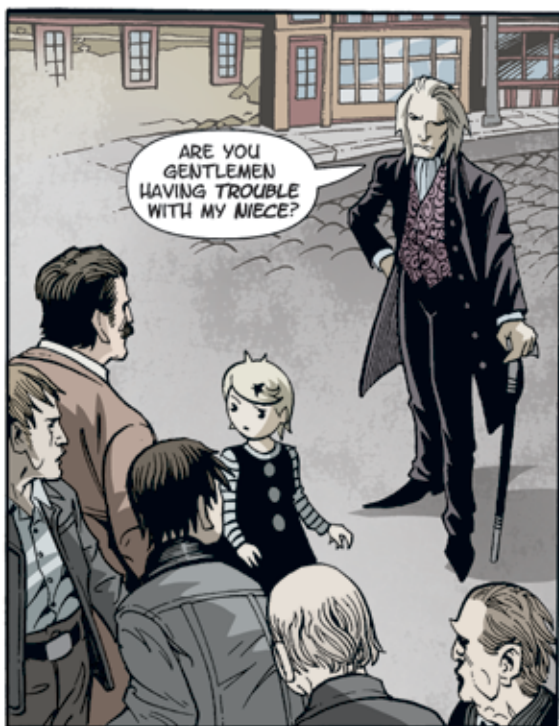


LISTEN, YOU BETTER JUST BACK OFF.

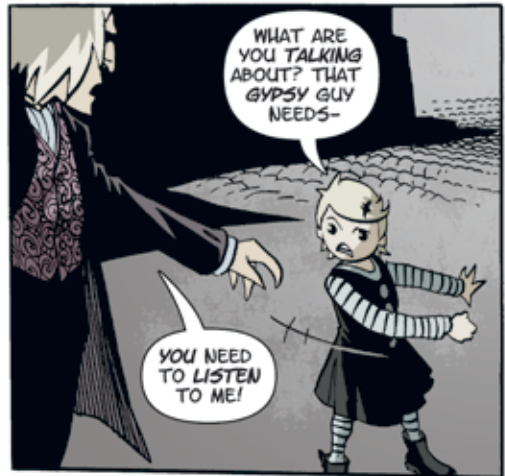
OR YOU'LL HEX ME, EH?



YOU SEE, GENTLEMEN, HOW THE LITTLE WITCH USED THE EVIL EYE?









A SULLEN SILENCE SETTLED BETWEEN COURTNEY AND HER UNCLE. HE HARDLY SEEMED TO NOTICE, WRAPPED UP IN TALK WITH THE OLD PROFESSOR ABOUT DUSTY BOOKS AND MYSTICAL MUMBO-JUMBO.

Knock
knock
Knock



I ASSURE YOU, SAINT LUCIAN'S POWERS WERE WELL DOCUMENTED. HE BROUGHT SOLDIERS BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH WITH JUST A TOUCH.

OH YES? AND HOW, PRAY, DID HE DO THAT?



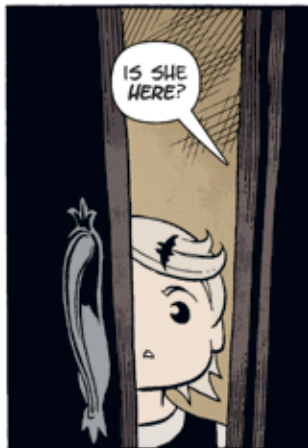
Knock
knock
Knock

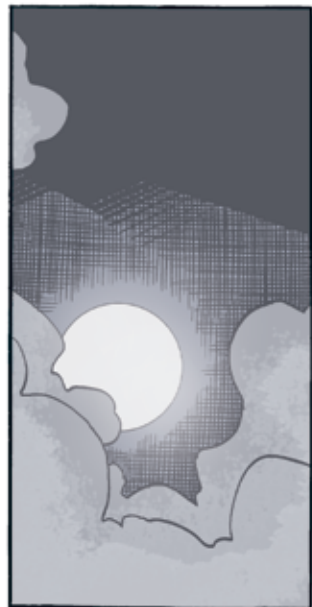
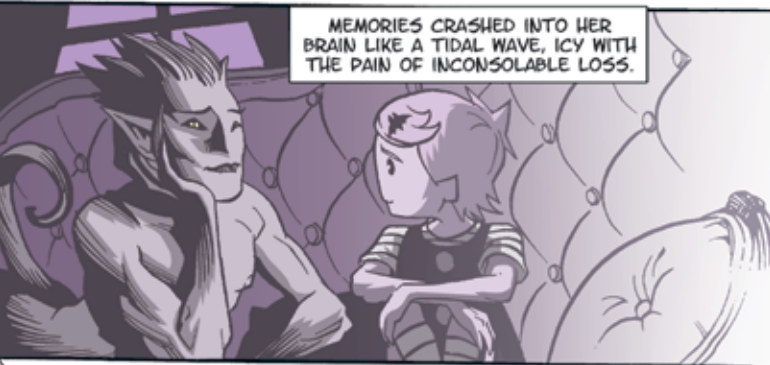
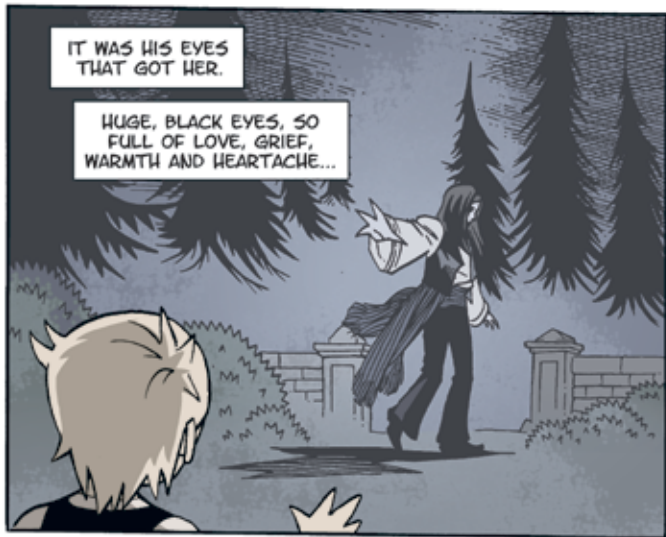
WHY, FAITH, SIR, OF COURSE.

ADMIRABLY SIMPLE. THOUGH FOR MY PURPOSES, MORE CONCRETE INSTRUCTIONS WOULD BE PREFERABLE.

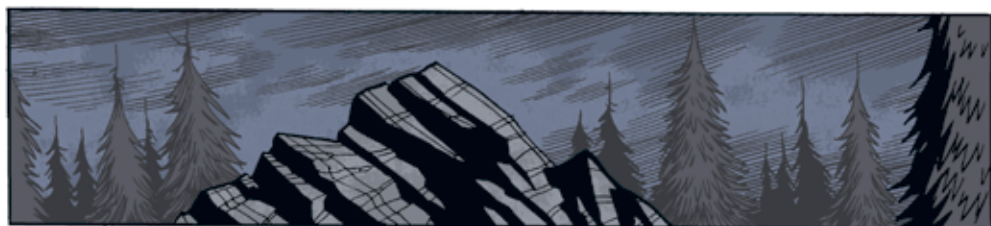


ISN'T ANYONE GOING TO GET THAT?

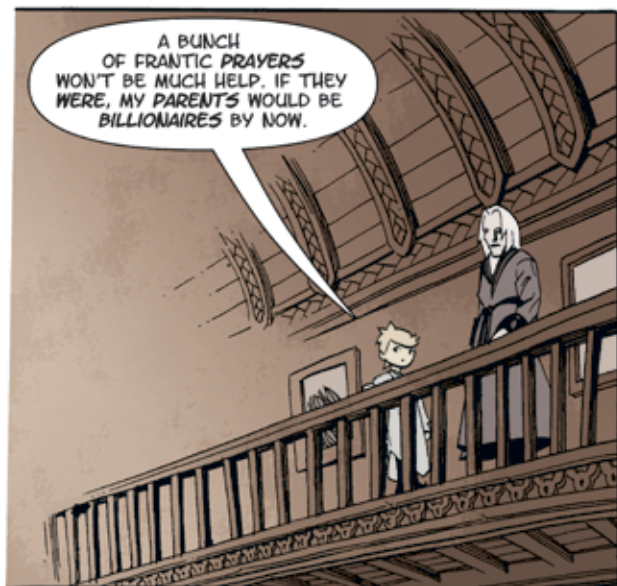


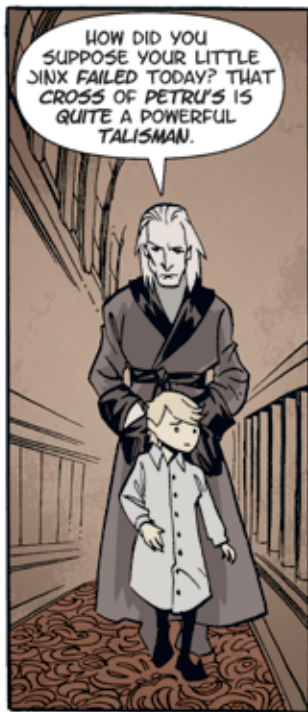


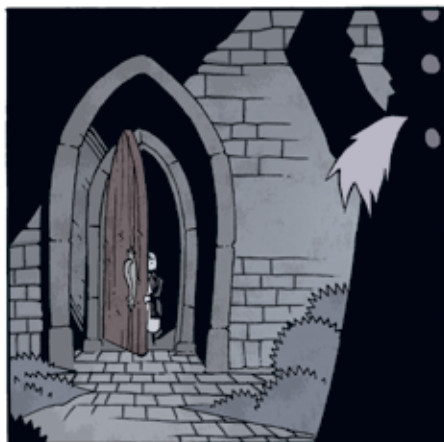












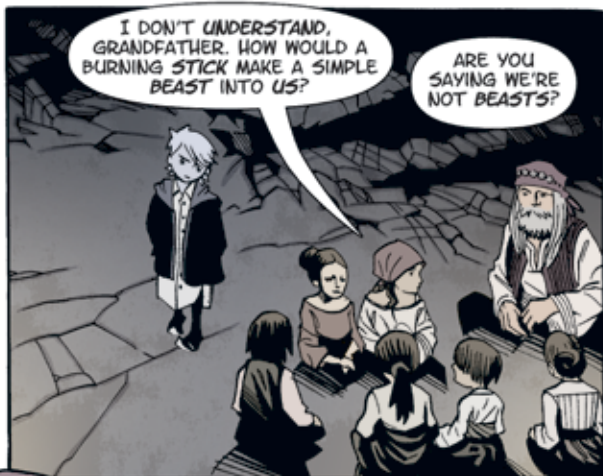
WHAT SHE FOUND INSIDE WAS THE VERY LAST THING SHE EXPECTED.

AND SO HE BECAME THE FIRST OF US.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND, GRANDFATHER. HOW WOULD A BURNING STICK MAKE A SIMPLE BEAST INTO US?

ARE YOU SAYING WE'RE NOT BEASTS?



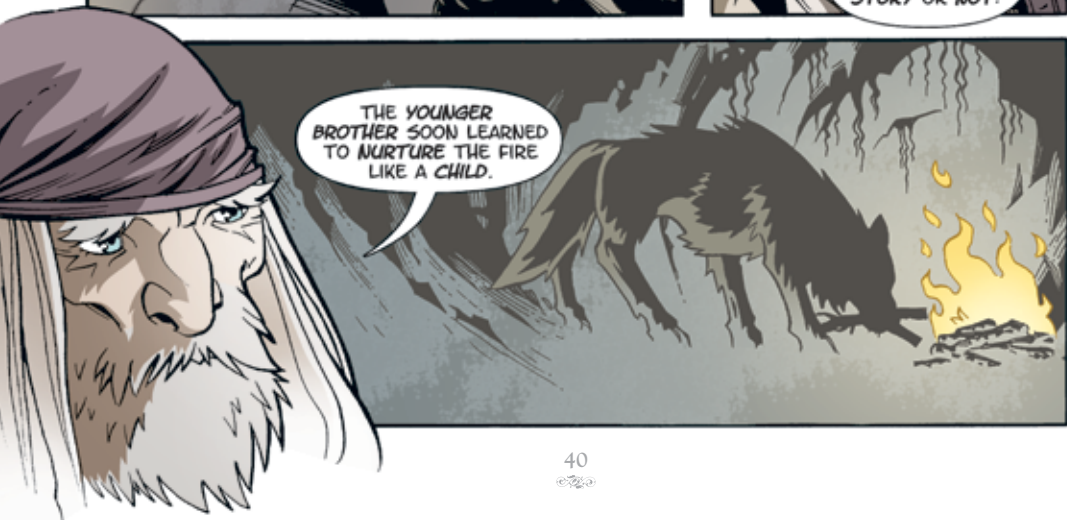
DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE HUMAN?

NO, BUT WE'RE NOT LIKE REGULAR WOLVES.



DO YOU WANT TO HEAR THE REST OF THE STORY OR NOT?

THE YOUNGER BROTHER SOON LEARNED TO NURTURE THE FIRE LIKE A CHILD.













I'M SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT. BUT A FATHER MUST PROTECT HIS CHILDREN.



THOUGH I FEAR THIS LITTLE ONE TOOK HIS WORST WOUND ALREADY.



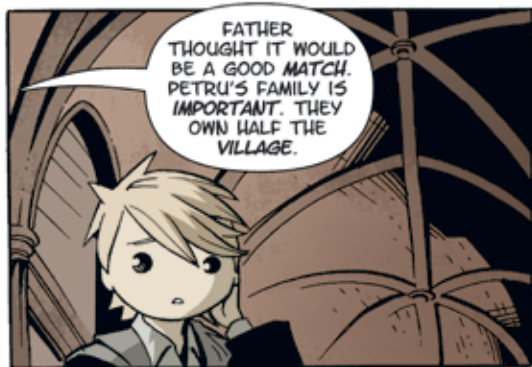
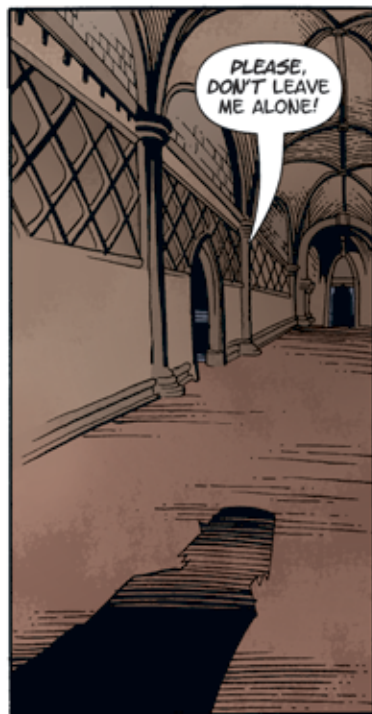
SHE COULD THINK OF NOTHING WORTH SAYING, SO SHE REMAINED SILENT.



YET, AS WITH OTHER ADVENTURES, TO SEE WHAT SHE'D SEEN MADE HER FEEL SOMEHOW BLESSED.



BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN SHE WANTED TO PRESS HER LUCK.





NOW
HE'S TAINTED.
HIS WEALTH, HIS
NAME, THEY'LL
MEAN NOTHING.



WHAT AM
I SUPPOSED
TO DO? I CAN'T
REJECT HIM
NOW!

WHY
NOT?



WHY NOT
DO WHAT YOU
WANT TO DO?



YOU'RE
JUST A
CHILD.



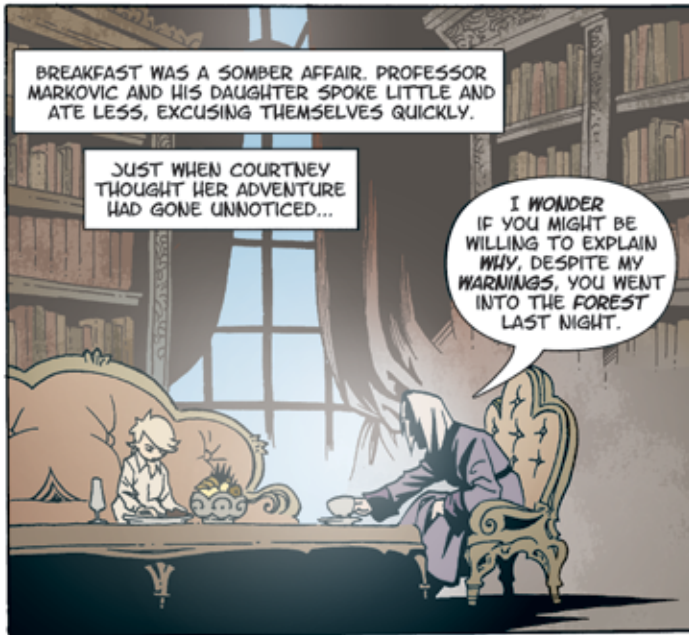
YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND.



NO.

MAGDA?
IS THAT
YOU?





BUT SHE HAD HER ANSWER READY.

I SAW YOU GO OUT, AND I FIGURED ANYTHING THAT CAUTIOUS, RESPONSIBLE UNCLE A WOULD DO COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE DANGEROUS.



BREAKFAST WAS A SOMBER AFFAIR. PROFESSOR MARKOVIC AND HIS DAUGHTER SPOKE LITTLE AND ATE LESS, EXCUSING THEMSELVES QUICKLY.

JUST WHEN COURTNEY THOUGHT HER ADVENTURE HAD GONE UNNOTICED...

I WONDER IF YOU MIGHT BE WILLING TO EXPLAIN WHY, DESPITE MY WARNINGS, YOU WENT INTO THE FOREST LAST NIGHT.



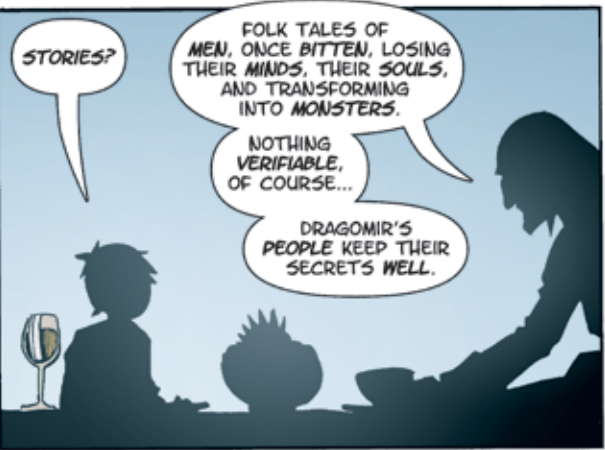
I SEE.



WILL PETRU REALLY TURN INTO A WOLF?



WHO KNOWS? I'VE HEARD STORIES, OBVIOUSLY. WE ALL HAVE.



STORIES?

FOLK TALES OF MEN, ONCE BITTEN, LOSING THEIR MINDS, THEIR SOULS, AND TRANSFORMING INTO MONSTERS.

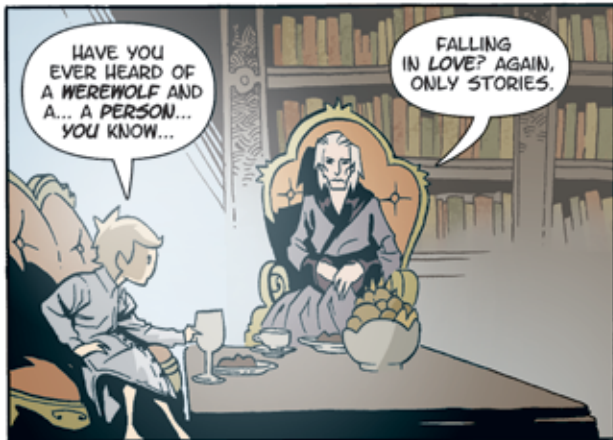
NOTHING VERIFIABLE, OF COURSE...

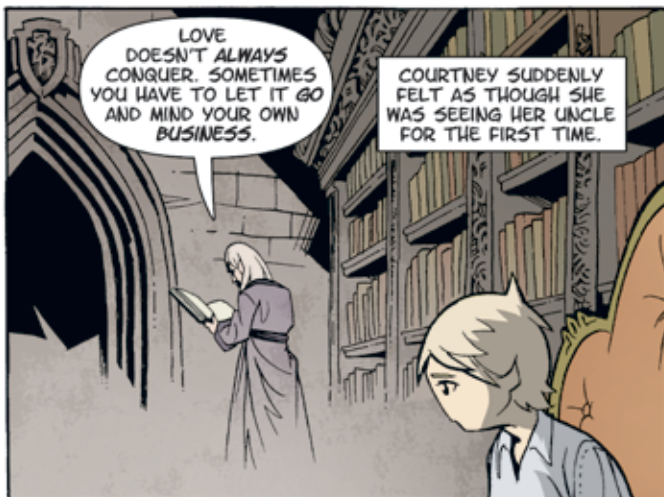
DRAGOMIR'S PEOPLE KEEP THEIR SECRETS WELL.



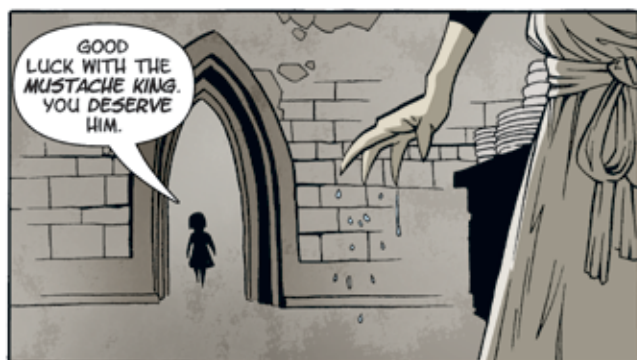
SO, HE'LL BECOME A MONSTER?

FATHER MARKOVIC CAST A PURGING SACRAMENT. IT MIGHT WORK, OR IT MIGHT NOT.

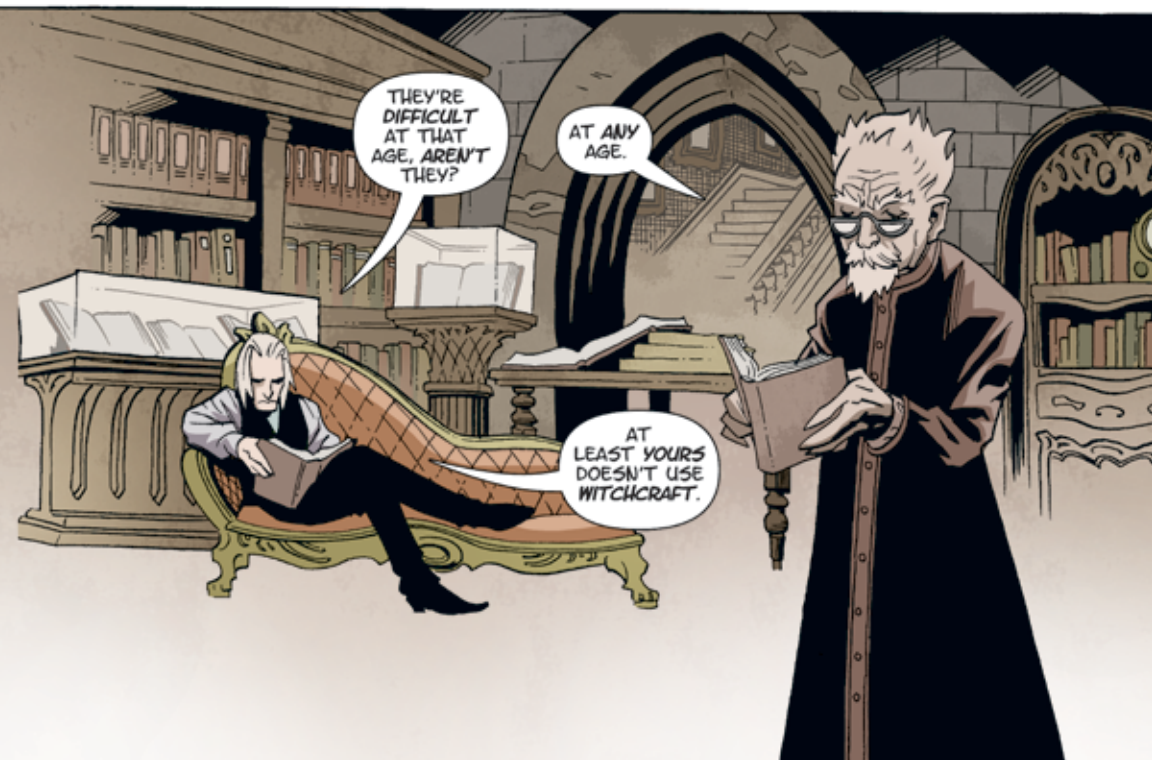












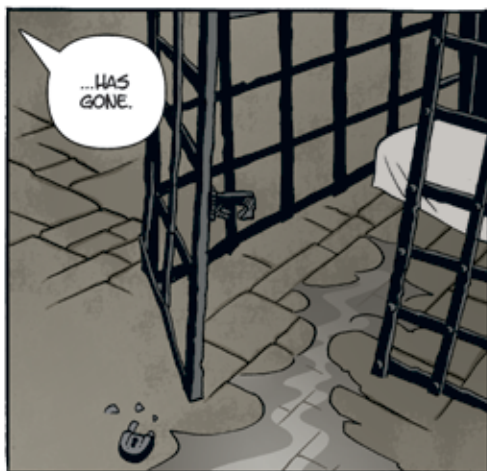






















BUT THEY MIGHT.



GET AWAY, YOU ANIMALS!

LORD, PROTECT ME!



DON'T BOTHER.



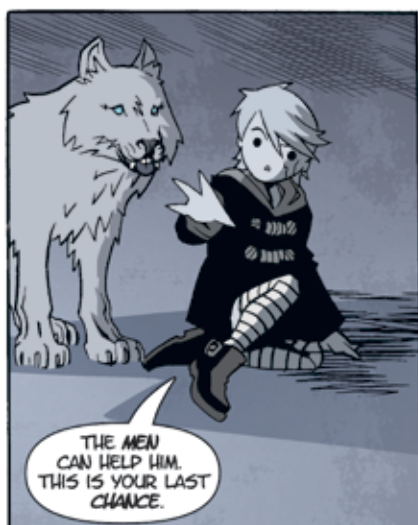
SUCH PROTECTION IS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS.



NOT THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS.





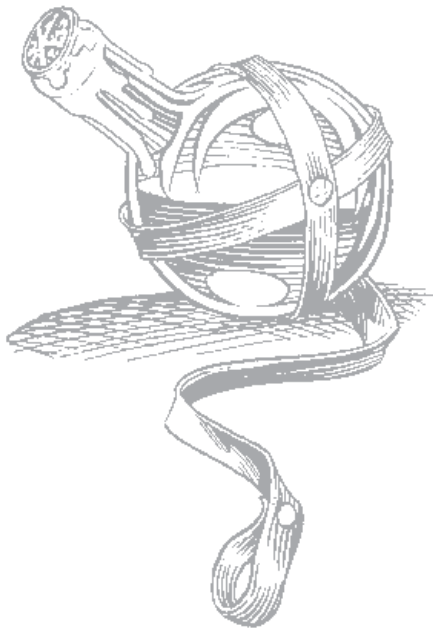


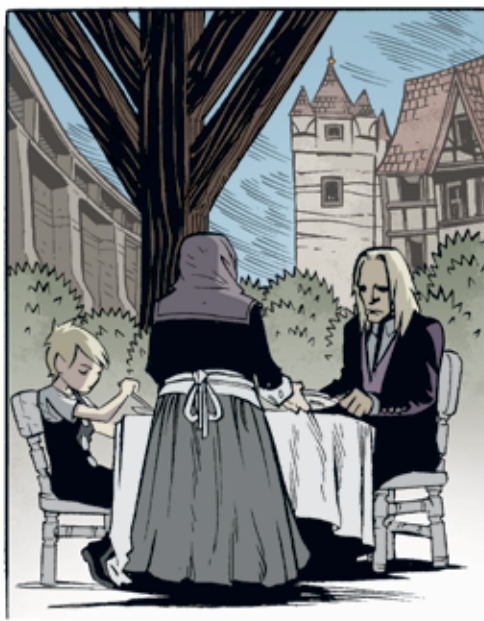
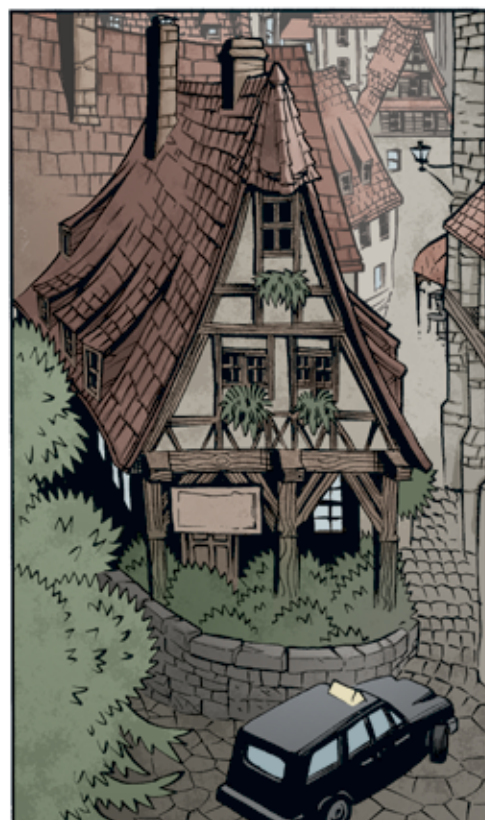




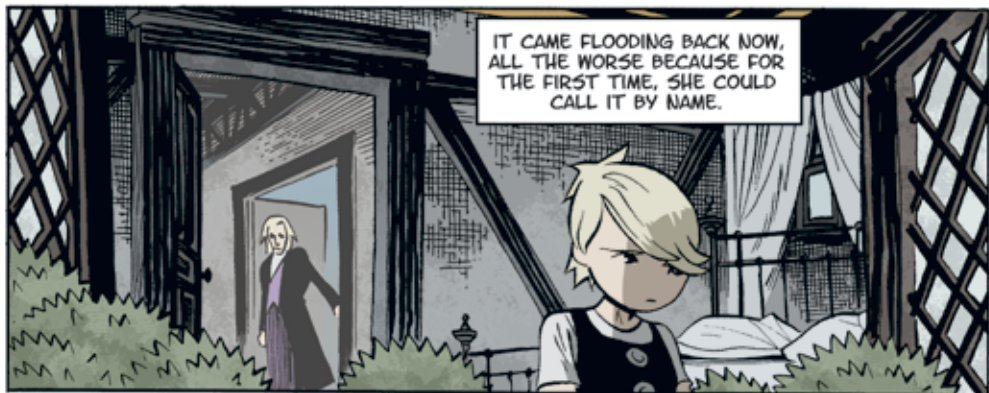
Chapter Two







THIS FEELING HAD BEEN COURTNEY'S CONSTANT COMPANION FOR AS LONG AS SHE COULD REMEMBER.





IT VAS
VONCE ZER
RULING SEAT
OFF ZE HERZOGEN,
ZE DUCAL FAMILY
UFF KRUMRHEIN
VALLEY.



HERE
VE HEFF
HER GRACE,
ZER DUCHESS
ISOLDE VON
KRUMRHEIN...

WHO
RULED IN ZE
15TH UNT 16TH
ZENTURIES, UNT
ISS VERHEBS ZE
MOST VAMOUS
OFF ZER
HERZOGEN.



OR SHOULT
I ZAV ZE MOST
INVAMOUS?

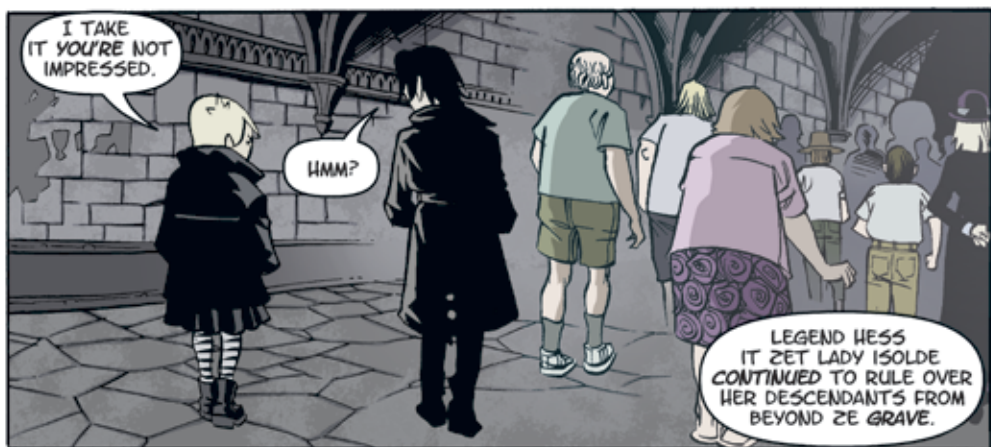


ZIS VAS
PAINTED JUST
AFTER ZER
DEATH
UFF HER
HUSBANT,
HERZOG
LEOPOLT
VON
KRUMRHEIN.

LADY ISOLDE,
ZEN AT ZE AGE
OFF
TVENTY,
BECOME
OBSESSED
MIT ZER
IMMORTALITY...

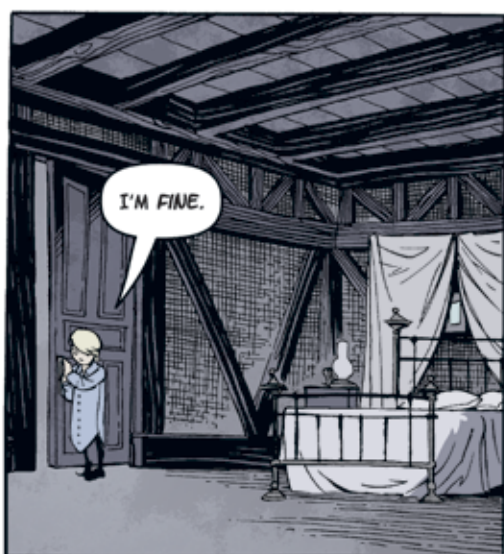


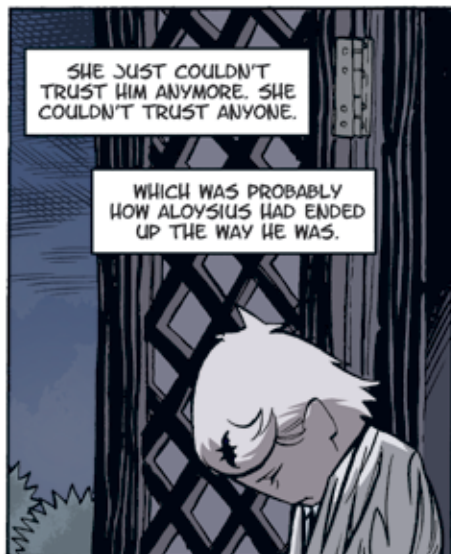
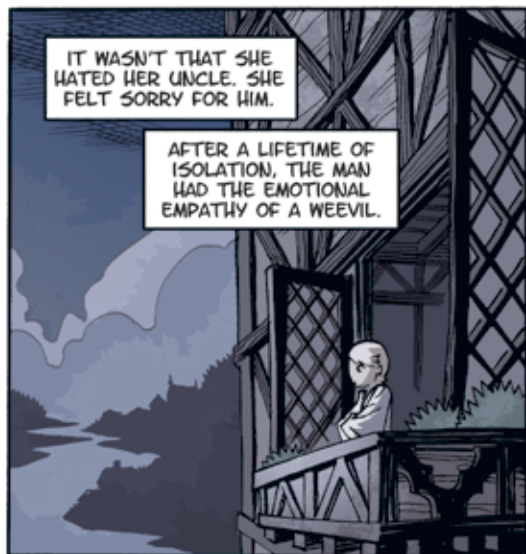
...ZURROUNDING
HERSELF MIT ZE
ALCHEMISTS UNT
DARK ZORCERERS IN
A DESPERATE QVEST
FOR ZER ZECRET
UFF EVERLASTINK
LIFE.







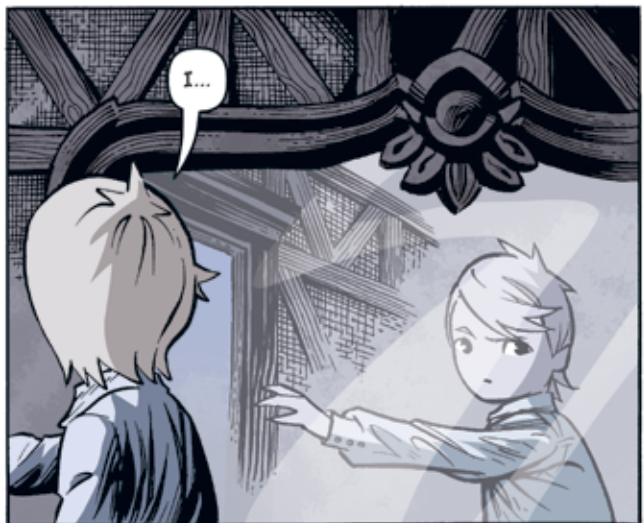
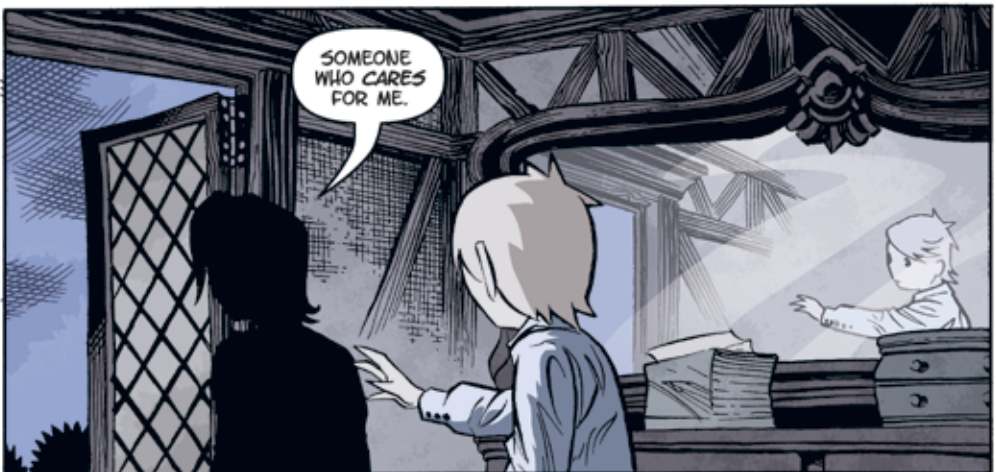




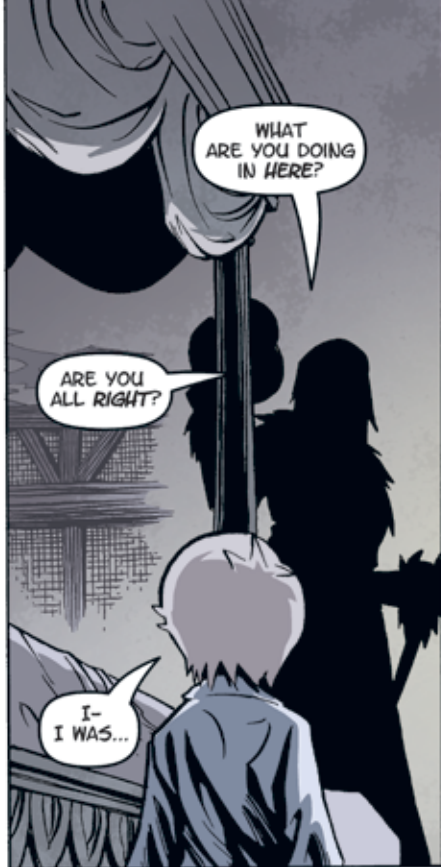












WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I- I WAS...



I GOT SCARED. WHERE WERE YOU?



SCARED? YOU? I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE.



WHAT COULD THE NIGHT HOLD THAT'S MORE FRIGHTENING THAN COURTNEY CRUMRIN?

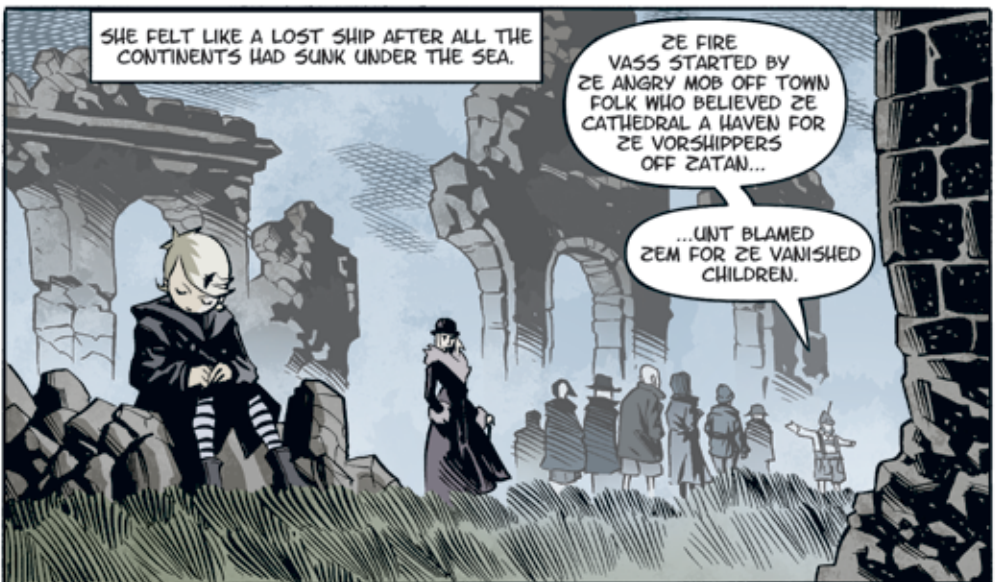
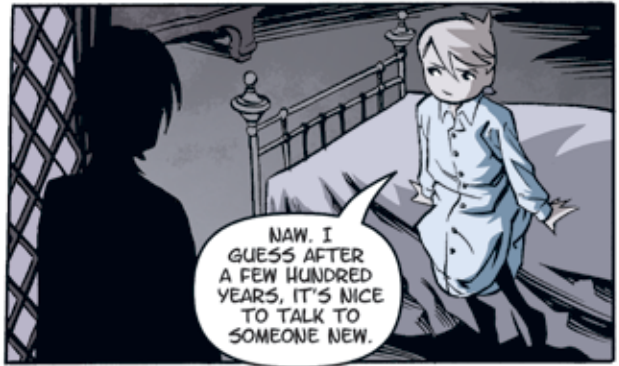
HE HAD A POINT, OF COURSE. YET SOMEHOW, THIS WASN'T THE REACTION COURTNEY WAS HOPING FOR.

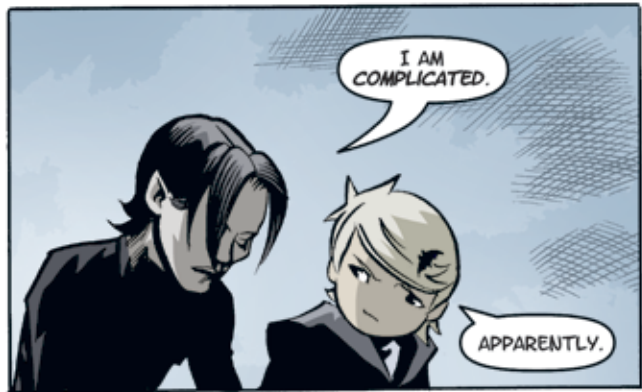
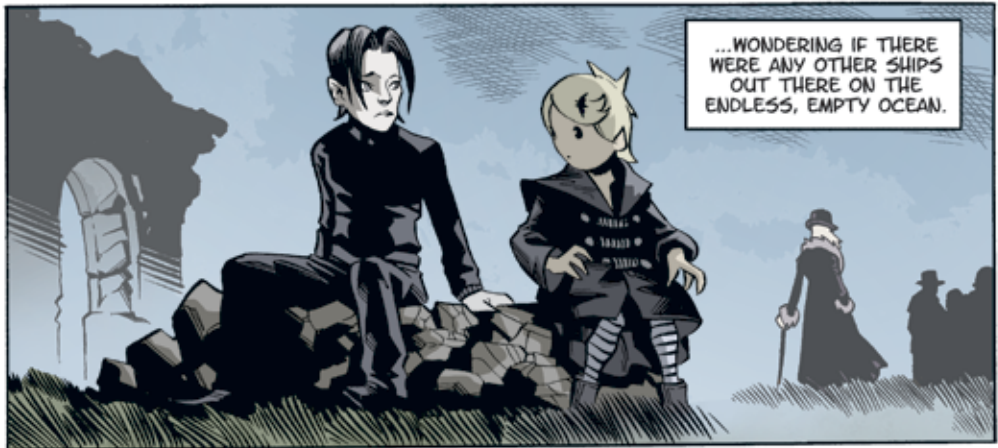
YEAH, RIGHT. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.



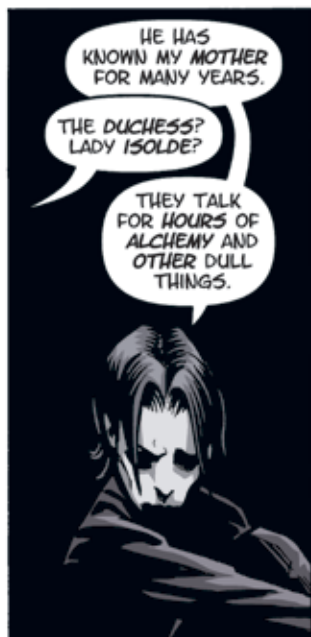
OKAY, MISTER SMOOTH-TALKER GHOST GUY. I HOPE YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH.



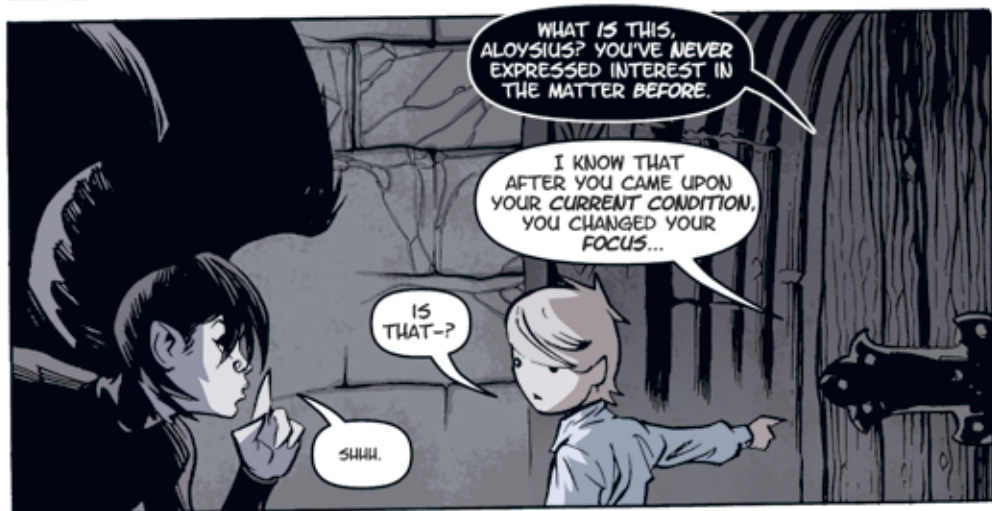


















...IS THE ONLY CURE FOR MORTALITY.

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.



I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I'LL HAVE NO PART OF...

...THAT FORM OF IMMORTALITY.



YOU SMEER, MY ARROGANT CHILD. YET YOU COME TO ME AGAIN AFTER THREE DECADES...

AS DESPERATE AS I ONCE WAS.

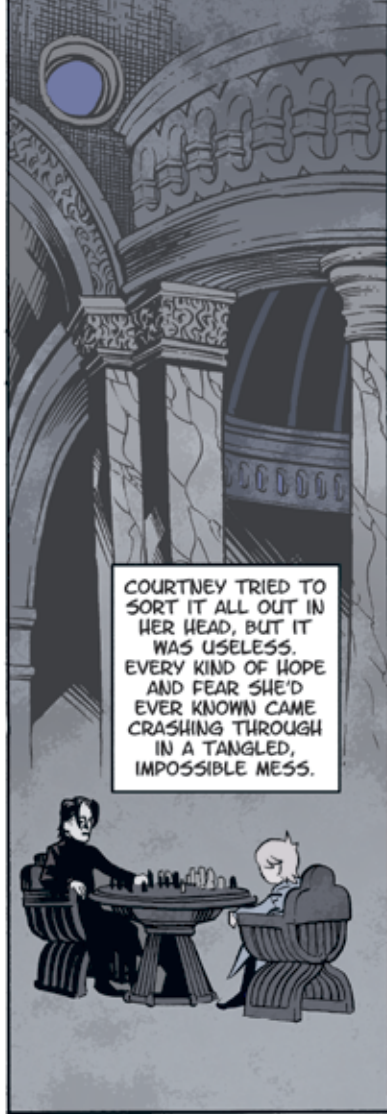


WHAT DRIVES YOU HITHER, IF NOT VANITY?







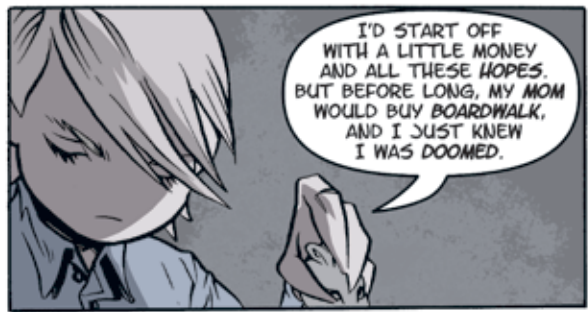


COURTNEY TRIED TO SORT IT ALL OUT IN HER HEAD, BUT IT WAS USELESS. EVERY KIND OF HOPE AND FEAR SHE'D EVER KNOWN CAME CRASHING THROUGH IN A TANGLED, IMPOSSIBLE MESS.



MY FOLKS USED TO MAKE ME PLAY MONOPOLY WITH THEM. THEY WERE REALLY GOOD AT IT.

BETTER THAN I WAS, ANYWAY.



I'D START OFF WITH A LITTLE MONEY AND ALL THESE HOPES. BUT BEFORE LONG, MY MOM WOULD BUY BOARDWALK, AND I JUST KNEW I WAS DOOMED.

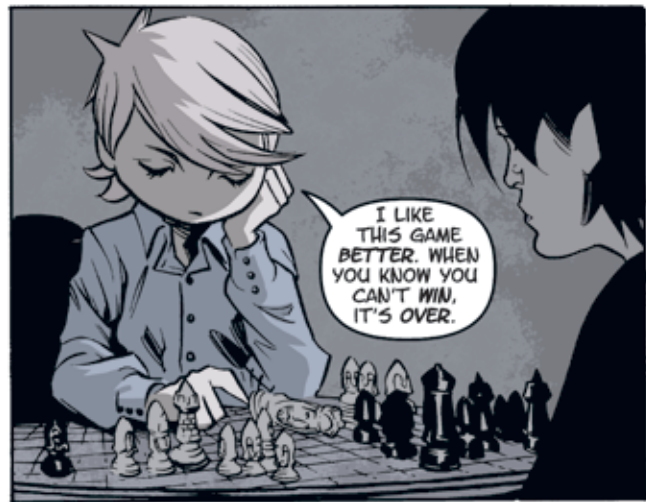


THING IS, THE GAME WOULD KEEP GOING AND GOING FOR HOURS.



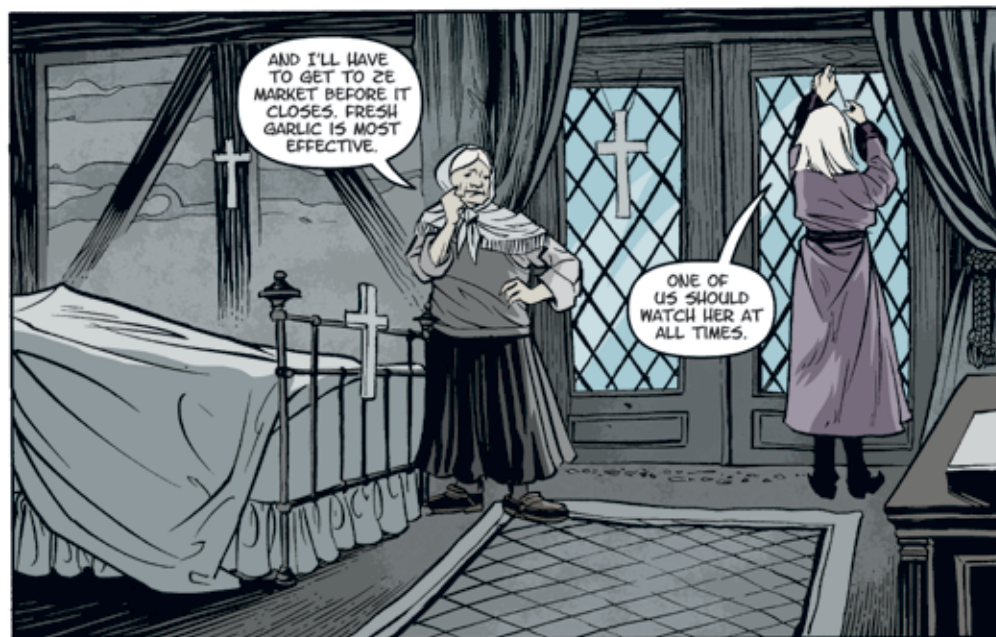
I'M WATCHING MY MONEY DWINDLE, MY DEBT'S PILE UP, MY LITTLE TRIUMPHS GETTING SOLD OFF...

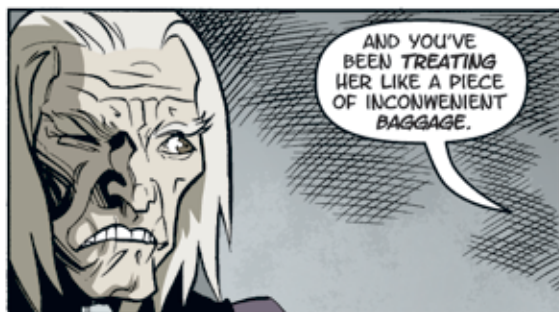
...AND MY FOLKS SMIRKING.

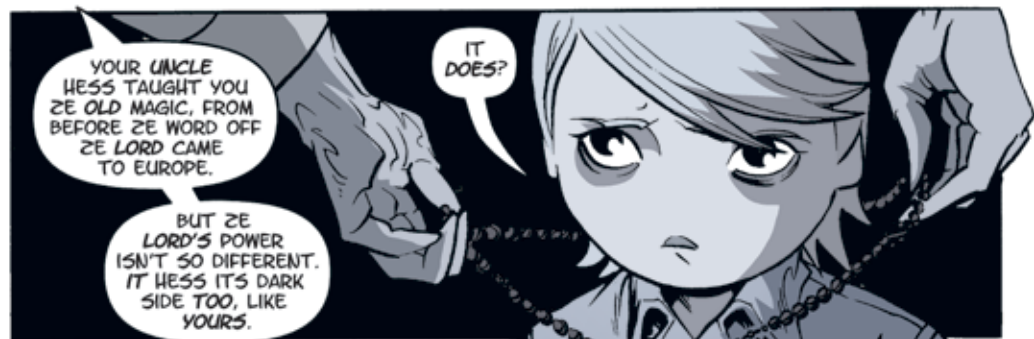


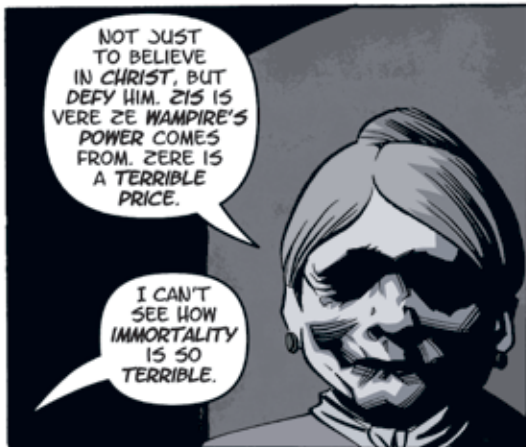
I LIKE THIS GAME BETTER. WHEN YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WIN, IT'S OVER.

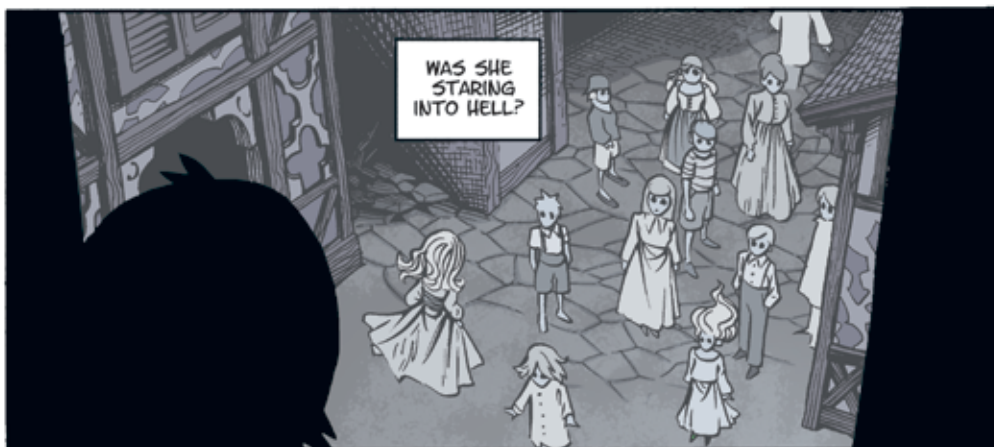














OR WAS THIS WHAT
THE WORLD REALLY
LOOKED LIKE?



IT DIDN'T
SEEM TO MATTER.



THE GAME
WAS OVER.



ARE YOU
READY TO
GO?









OF COURSE I CAN FLY, YOU NINCOMPOOP. I'M A WARLOCK.



...



YOUR CONCERN WAS TOUCHING, I MUST SAY. THOUGH I FEAR YOUR PLEAS FELL ON DEAF EARS.



NO KIDDING.
I WASN'T TALKING
TO HIM.

IT ISN'T
OVER. HE
VON'T STOP
NOW.



WE CAN
BE GONE BY
NIGHTFALL
TOMORROW.

SHE'S IN
NO SHAPE
TO TRAVEL.
BESIDES, IT
VON'T METTER.
HER BLOOD
CALLS TO
HIM.



HE'LL FOLLOW
HER ACROSS ZE
WORLD. UNLESS HE'S
DESTROYED.

OR SHE
FORSAKES HIM
UTTERLY.



COURTNEY,
YOU SAW WHAT HE
IS. YOU DON'T WANT
ANYTHING TO DO
WITH HIM. DO
YOU?



JUST
CLOSE YOUR
HEART TO HIM,
AND IT'LL BE
OVER.



GO TO
HELL.





>SNORT<







TOO BAD YOU'RE SUCH A POOR STUDENT.

STOP IT!



LEAVE HIM ALONE, PLEASE! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S ALREADY HURT!?!



COURTNEY! YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE!



SO YOU CAN PLAY YOUR LITTLE GAMES IN SECRET? LIKE IN ROMANIA?

I ONLY MEANT TO KEEP YOU OUT OF DANGER. I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE THIS.

SEE WHAT? THAT YOU'RE A BULLY?



LOOK, YOU'VE WON. YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE IT WORSE.







MY POWERS
MAY BE ONLY
SORCERY AS
YOU SAY...



BUT I'VE
HAD CENTURIES
TO HONE THEM.

VERY
WELL.



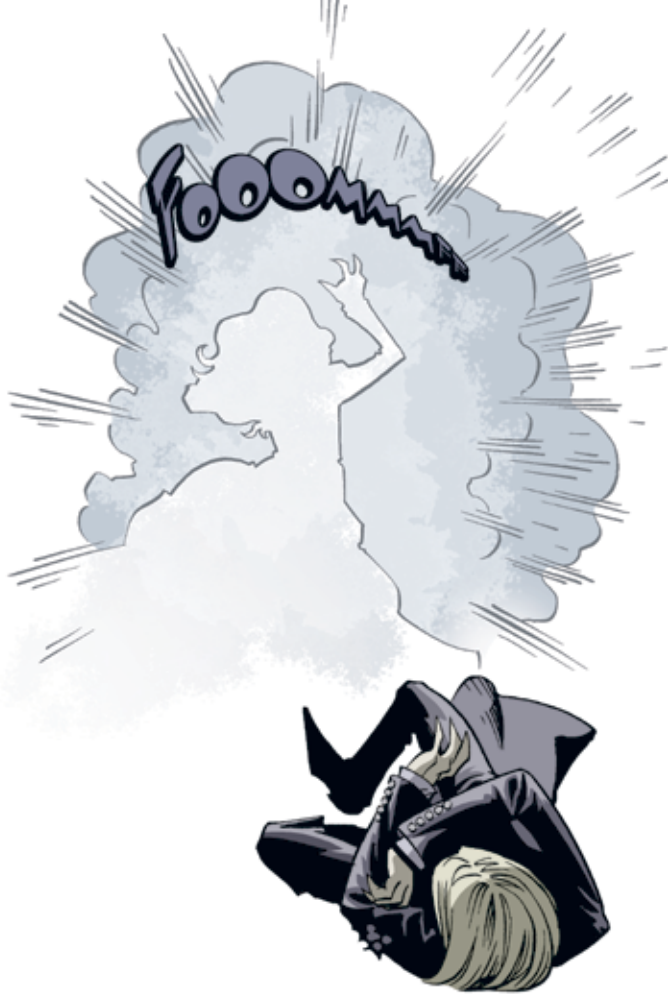
LET US
SEE WHO'S
THE BETTER
SORCERER.



YOU
TRICKY...



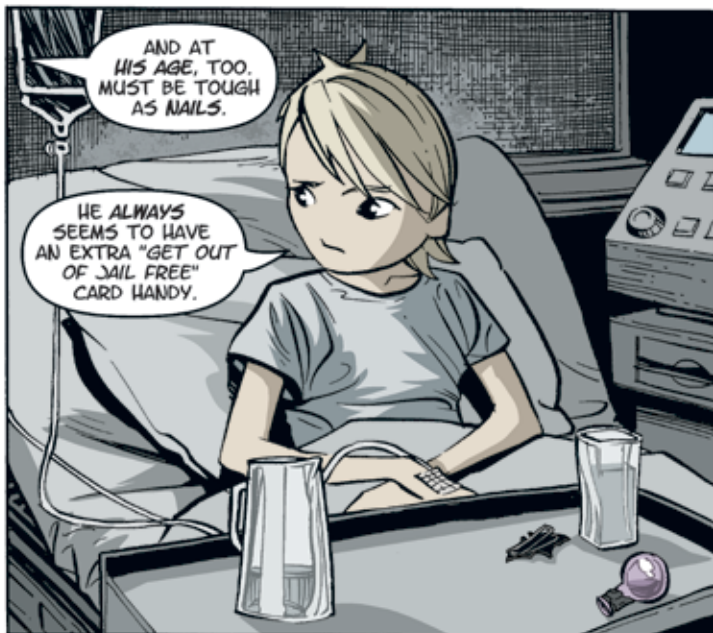
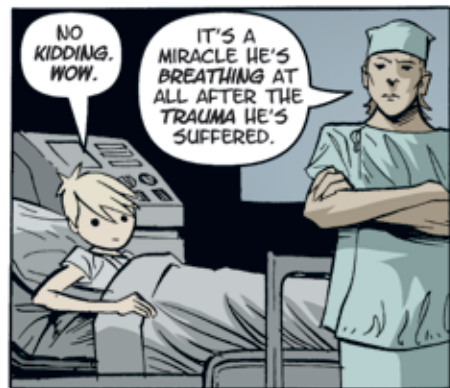












Courtney VOLUME FOUR Crumrin

Monstrous Holiday

Bonus Material & Cover Gallery





Cover artwork for the *The Fire Thief's Tale*.



Cover artwork for the *The Prince of Nowhere*.



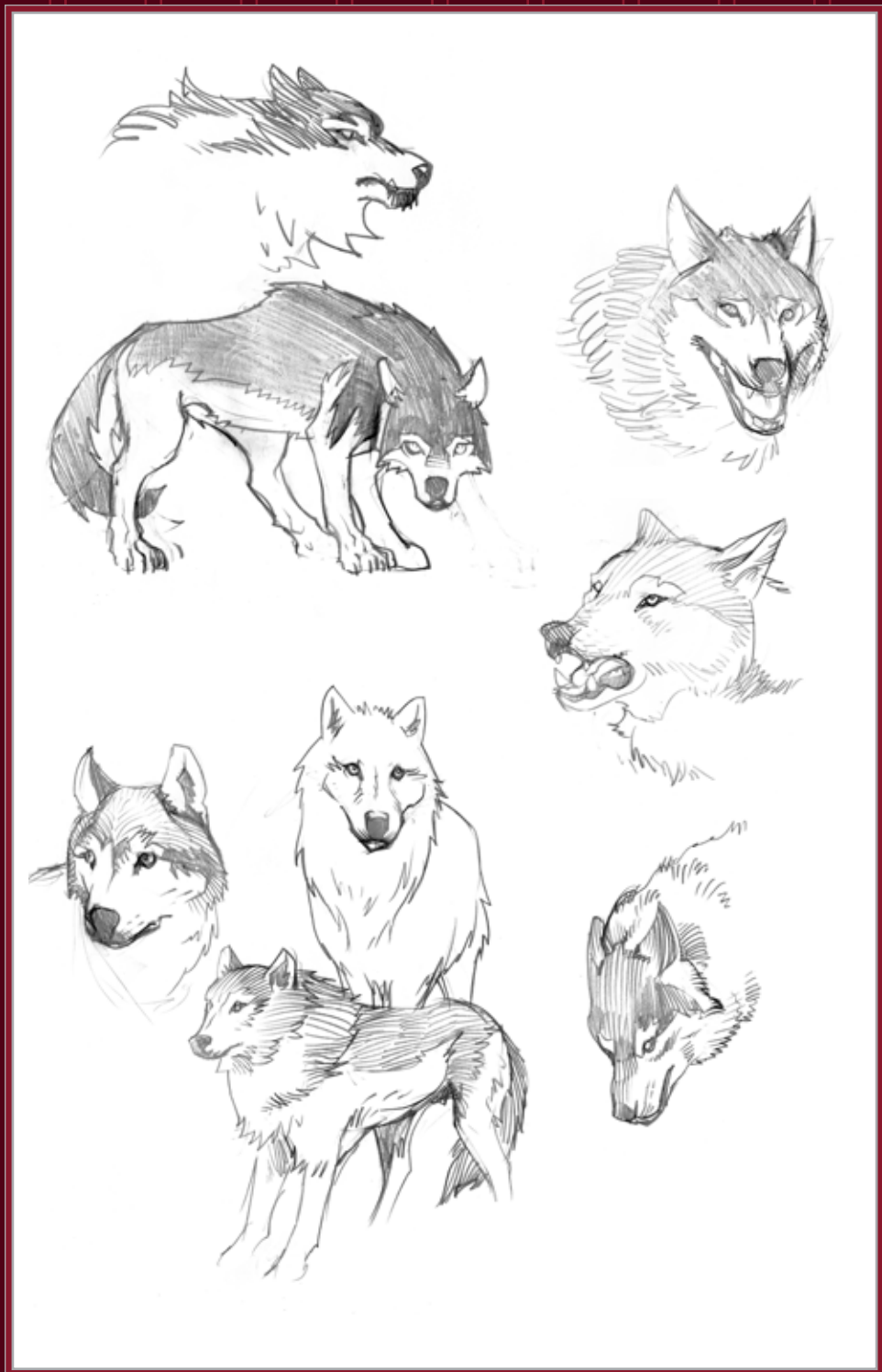
Cover artwork for the original softcover collection of *Monstrous Holiday*.



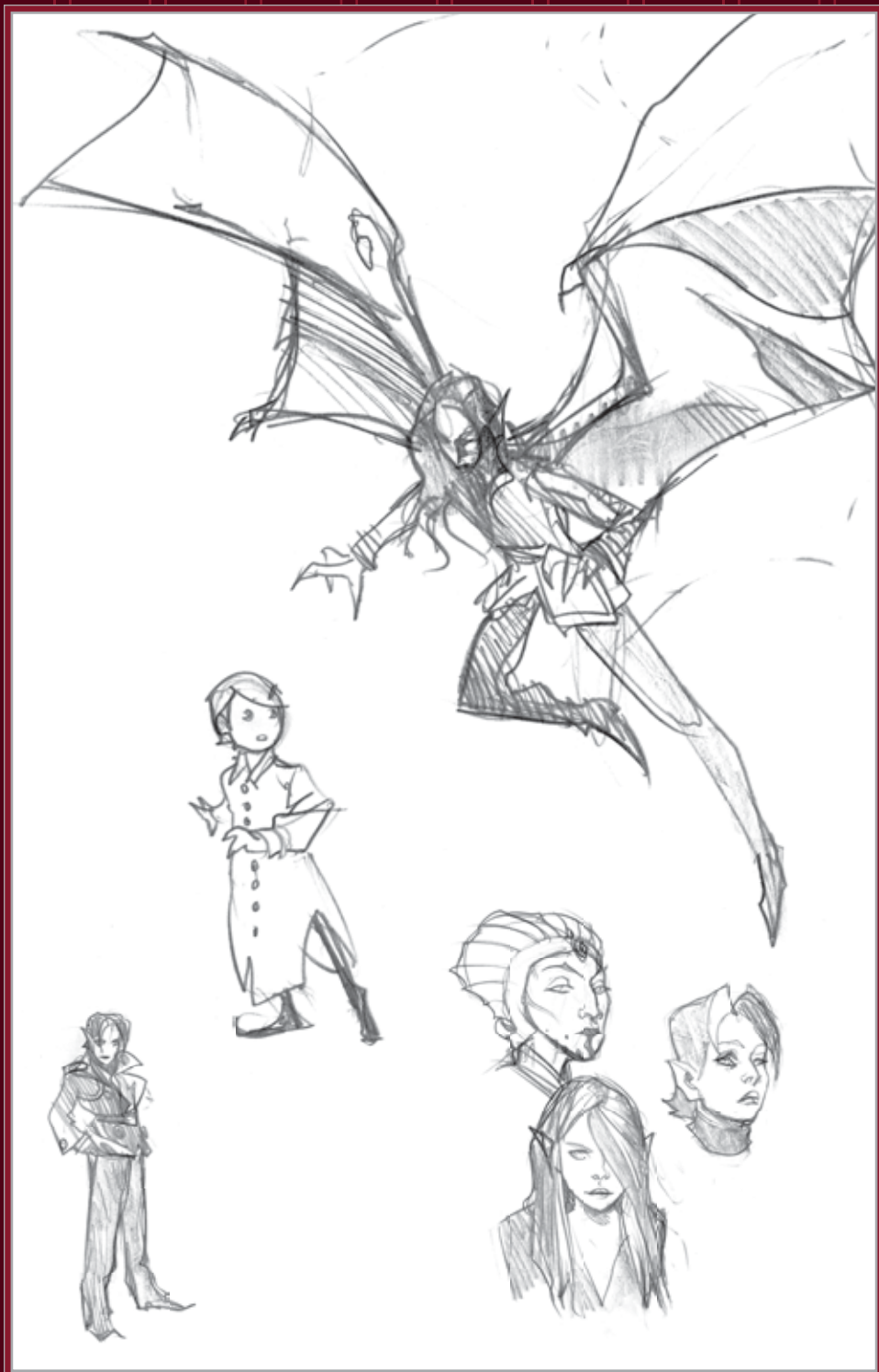
A promo image created for the *Courtney Crumrin* art exhibit at the Galerie Arludik.



Pencil concept sketches to work out Courtney's European look.



Pencil sketches to work out the look of the wolves.



Early pencil sketches for the *Prince of Nowhere*.

— ✦ • TED NAIFEH • ✦ —

Ted Naifeh first appeared in the independent comics scene in 1999 as the artist for *Gloomcookie*, the goth romance comic he co-created with Serena Valentino for SLG Publishing. After a successful run, Ted decided to strike out on his own, writing and drawing *Courtney Crumrin and the Night Things*, a spooky children's fantasy series about a grumpy little girl and her adventures with her Warlock uncle.

Nominated for an Eisner Award for best limited series, *Courtney Crumrin's* success paved the way for *Polly and the Pirates*, another children's book, this time about a prim and proper girl kidnapped by pirates convinced she was the daughter of their long-lost queen.

Over the next few years, Ted wrote four volumes of *Courtney Crumrin*, plus a spin off book about her uncle. He also co-created *How Loathsome* with Tristan Crane, and illustrated two volumes of the videogame tie-in comic *Death Junior* with screenwriter Gary Whitta. More recently, he illustrated *The Good Neighbors*, a three volume graphic novel series written by *New York Times* best-selling author Holly Black, published by Scholastic.

In 2011, Ted wrote the sequel to *Polly and the Pirates*, and illustrated several *Batman* short stories for DC Comics. In 2012, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Courtney Crumrin*, he wrote and illustrated the final two volumes of the series.

Ted lives in San Francisco, because he likes dreary weather.



Courtney BY TED NAIFEH Crumrin

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"Courtney Crumrin is one of my absolute favorite characters. She's got brains, guts, and a dash of magic. Ted Naifeh has crafted an irresistible heroine." –Jennifer L. Holm, The New York Times best-selling author and co-creator of Babymouse.

Courtney VOLUME FOUR Crumrin

Monstrous Holiday

Courtney and Uncle Aloysius' European vacation takes them through the dense forests of Romania and the cobble streets of old Germany! And what better place for Courtney to learn about her talents than the rich, mystic history of Eastern Europe? And there's plenty to learn, too, if only Uncle Aloysius will let her in on some of his closed-door conversations with the old friends they've stopped in to see.

With Courtney left to her own devices, she begins to unravel the mysteries of the small towns that she and her uncle visit. Deep within those secrets are potent magic and even larger moral ambiguities. But just as Courtney's starting to get a handle on her sorcery, she discovers that the answers to life's difficult questions aren't always so clear.



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