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INJECTION™



ONE



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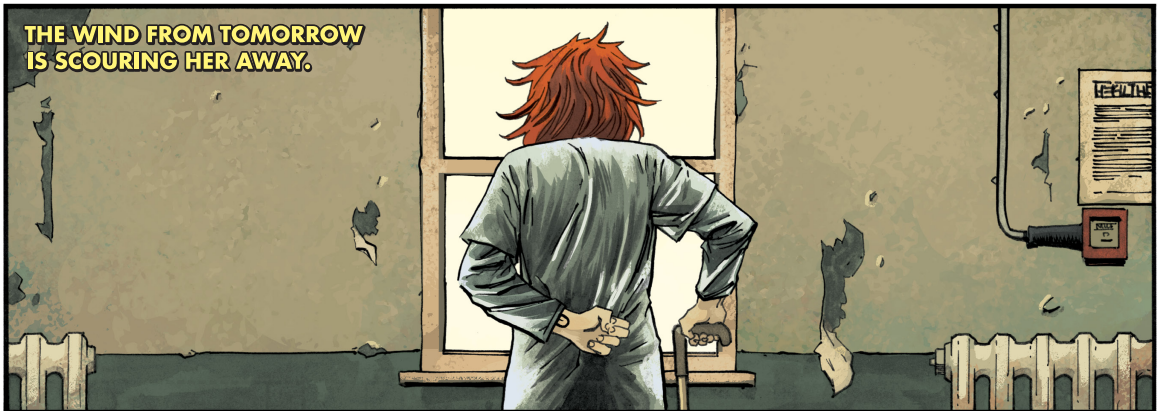
satirical purposes, are entirely fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead) or entities or events or places is coincidental.

DIGITAL EDITION.

**THERE'S NOT MUCH LEFT
OF MARIA.**

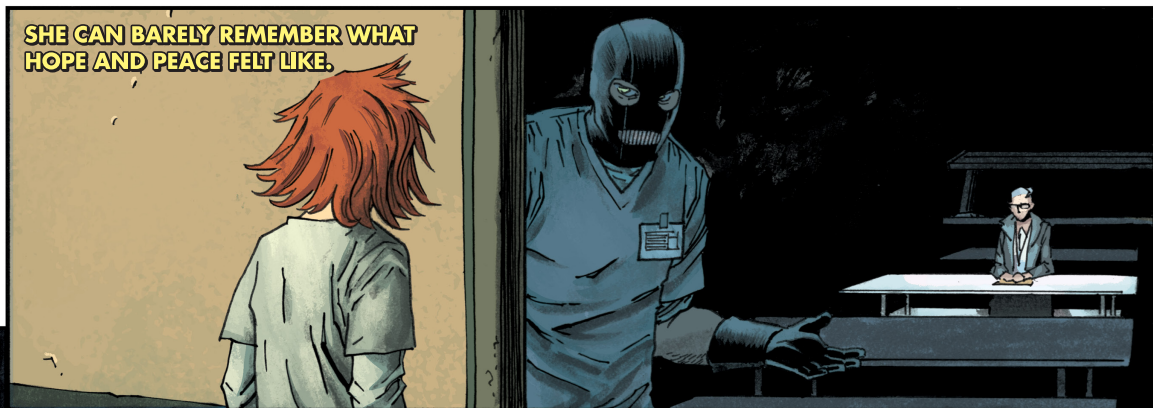


**THE WIND FROM TOMORROW
IS SCOURING HER AWAY.**





THE TALONS OF THE OLD WORLD
ARE REACHING UP OUT OF THE
DIRT FOR HER ANKLES.

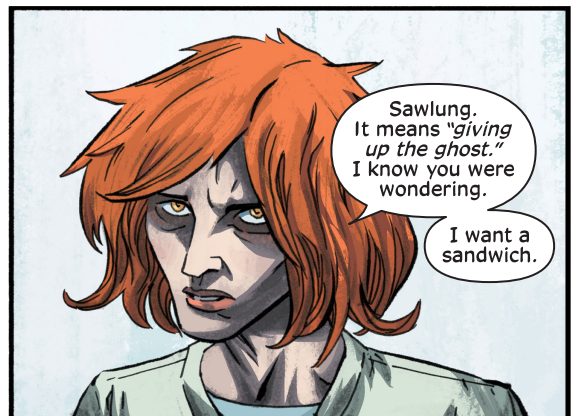
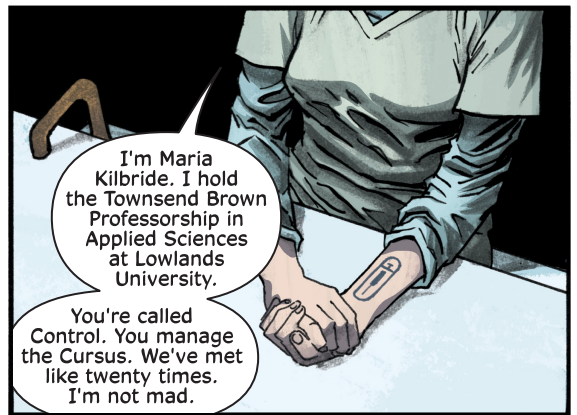
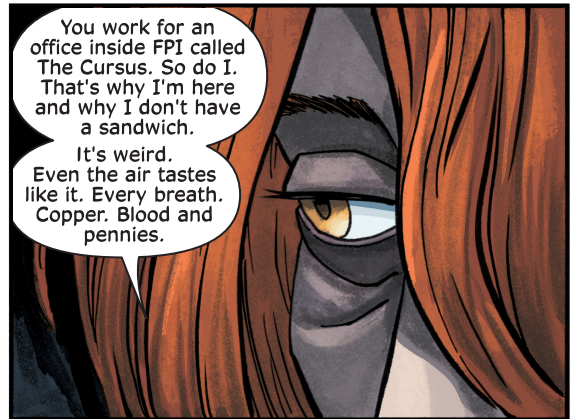
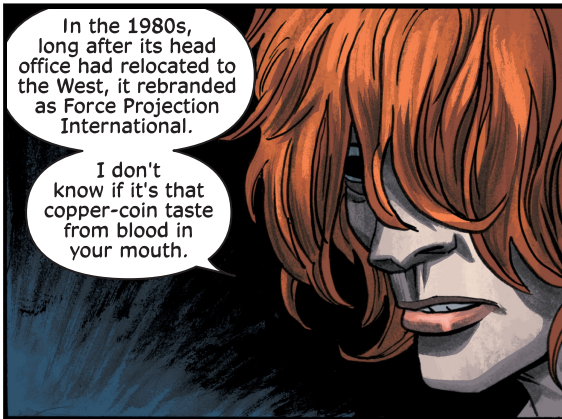


SHE CAN BARELY REMEMBER WHAT
HOPE AND PEACE FELT LIKE.

SHE DREAMS OF THOSE INFINITE CHILDHOOD AUGUSTS
WHEN SHE DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING AND NOTHING WAS
COMING, AND WAKES UP WITH COLD IN HER BONES.



Professor
Kilbride.

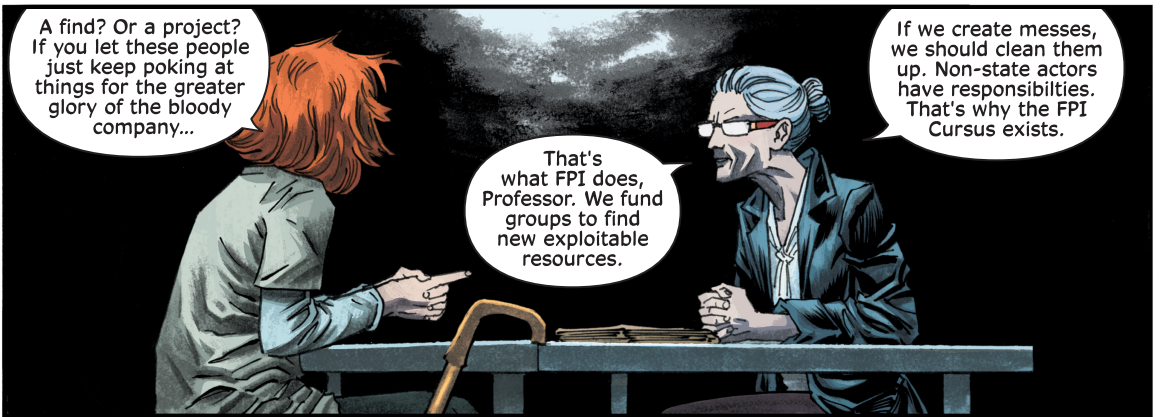




We have an actionable.

All I want right now is a sandwich.

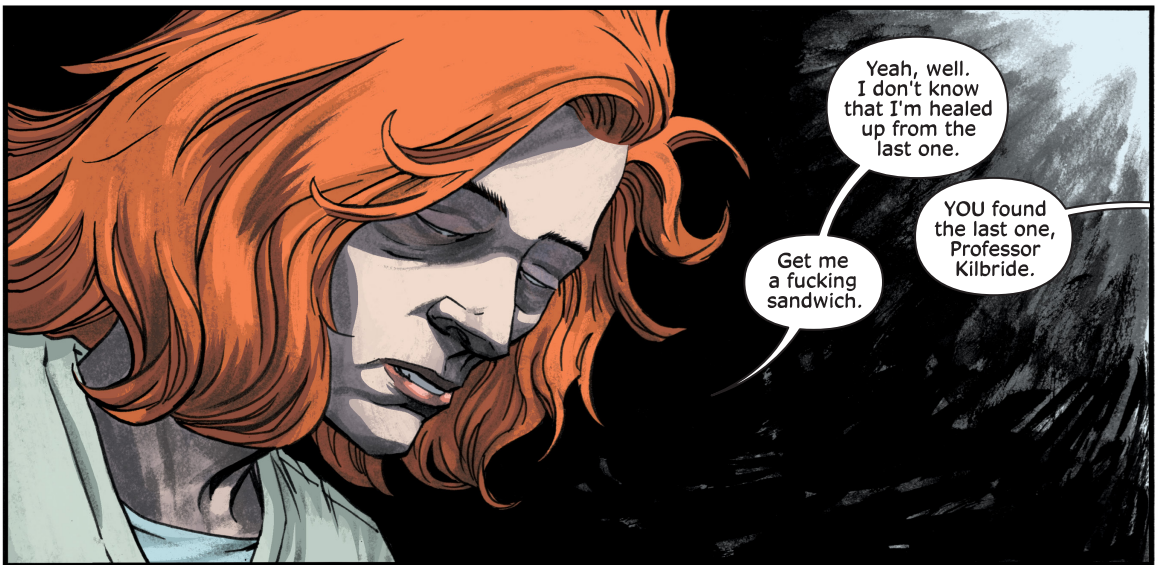
We have a missing person and a missing asset.



A find? Or a project? If you let these people just keep poking at things for the greater glory of the bloody company...

That's what FPI does, Professor. We fund groups to find new exploitable resources.

If we create messes, we should clean them up. Non-state actors have responsibilities. That's why the FPI Cursus exists.



Yeah, well. I don't know that I'm healed up from the last one.

Get me a fucking sandwich.

YOU found the last one, Professor Kilbride.



You know, someone from the awkward squad might suggest that these active finds began showing up after you and your friends dissolved the Cultural Cross-Contamination Unit.

CULTURAL
CROSS-
CONTAMINATION
UNIT

You
found
us!

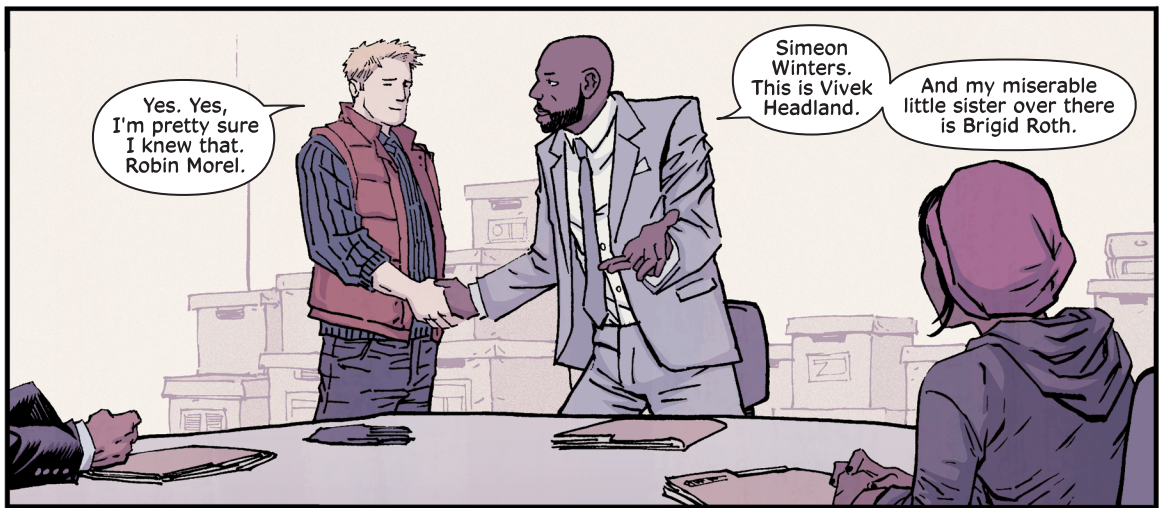
I did. Just about.
Given the funding
arrangement, I
wasn't expecting
the office to be above
a chip shop.

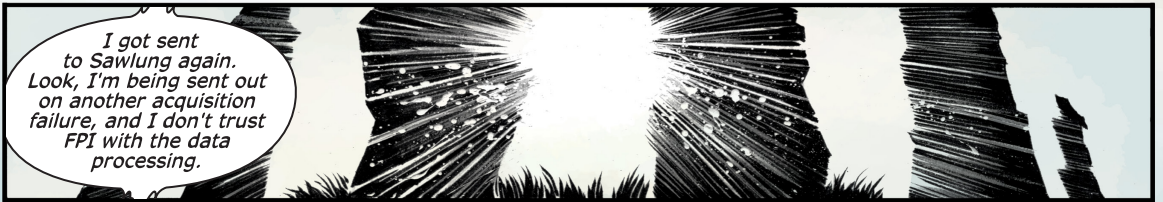
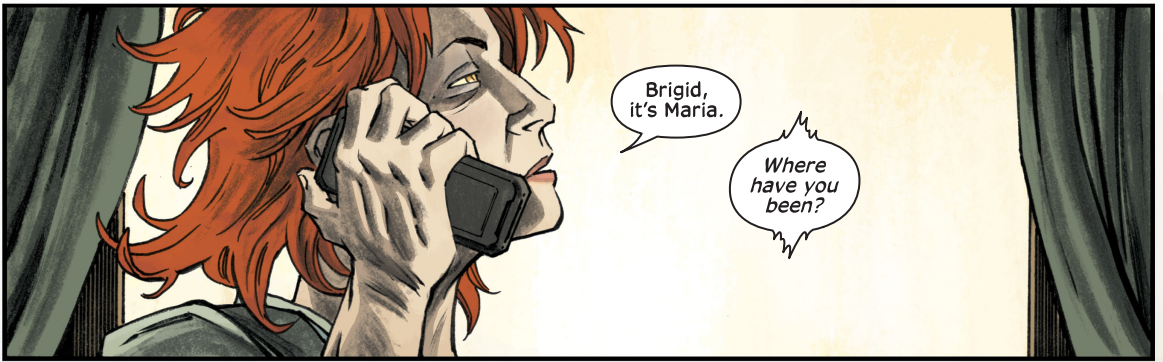
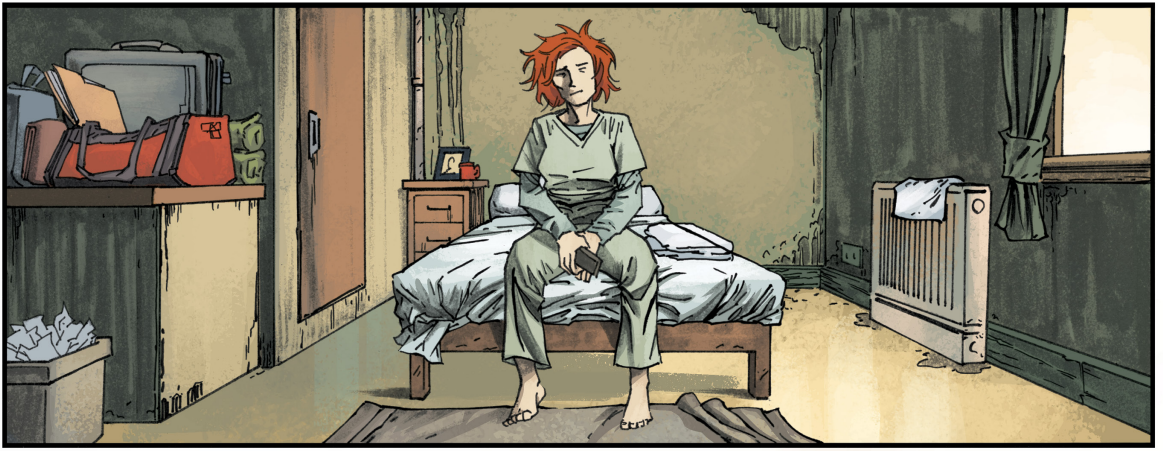
Not that I really
understand the
funding. Anyway.
I'm Robin Morel.

Maria Kilbride.
It's a genuine
pleasure.

And, so we're all clear,
we have been brought
together by Lowlands
University in partnership
with the Ministry of Time
and Measurement
and FPI.

Welcome to
the Unit.







Maria. You can't look at everything and think --

Actually, I can. Because that's what it does. That's what we built it to do.

You think this has something to do with The Injection.



Don't call me paranoid.

I didn't.

You were going to.

That's...



Go on. Say it.

...paranoid.

See? I knew it. Fuck you.



Look. I'll help. We'll all help, Maria. But I have to drive into Dublin, and I don't have the strength to deal with your brain damage. All right?

All right. All right.

But did you know that Robin isn't answering his phone?

**IT'S IN THE BLOOD AND
THE GRISTLE.**



**THESE ARE THE VEINS AND
ARTERIES OF BRITAIN.**



**YOU CAN'T ESCAPE YOUR GENES, HE THINKS,
ANY MORE THAN YOU CAN ESCAPE YOUR
OWN HEART AND VESSELS.**

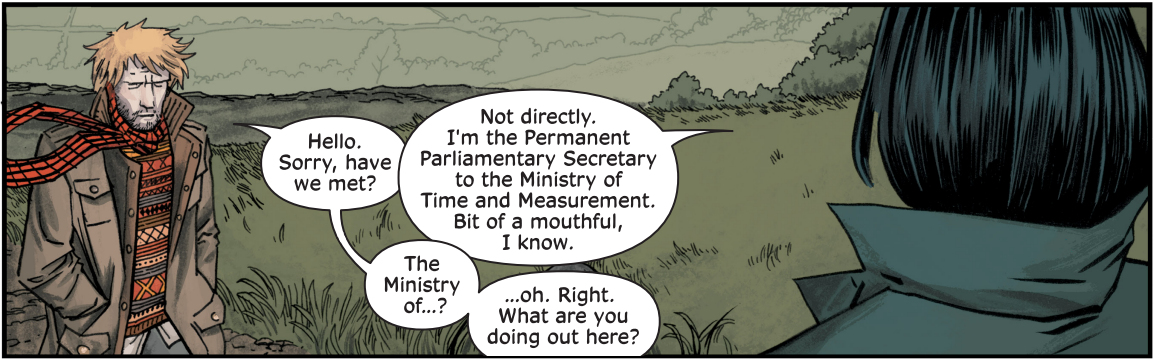


**JUST TEND TO THEM. JUST LISTEN TO
YOUR PULSE. BUT DON'T MISTAKE IT FOR
A DRUMBEAT. DON'T MARCH TO IT.**





Dr Robin Morel?



Hello. Sorry, have we met?

Not directly. I'm the Permanent Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Time and Measurement. Bit of a mouthful, I know.

The Ministry of...?

...oh. Right. What are you doing out here?



Are you enjoying your holiday?

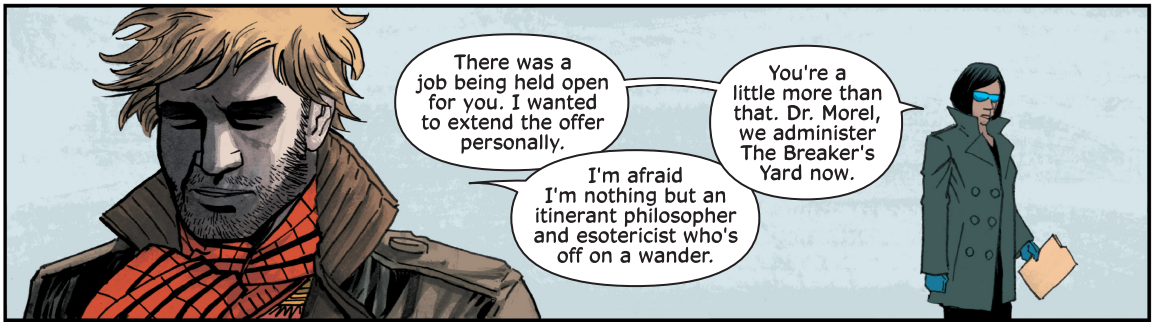
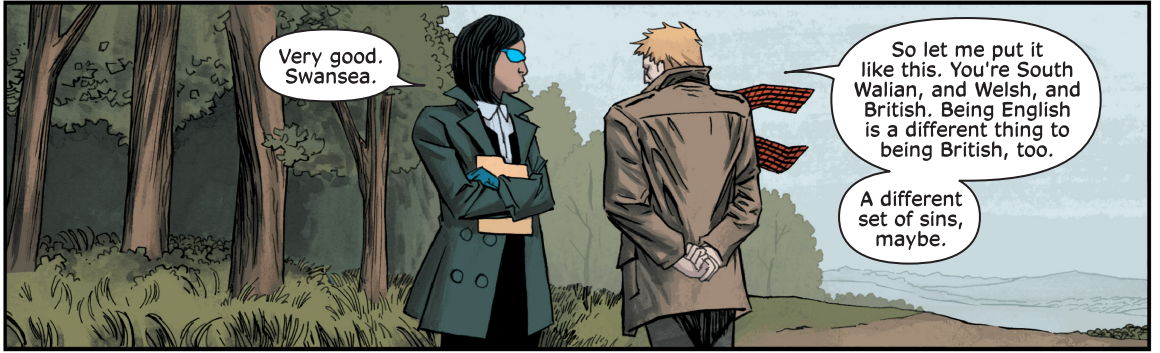
"Holiday" doesn't really fit. I felt the need to walk the Ridgeway. Reconnect with the country.

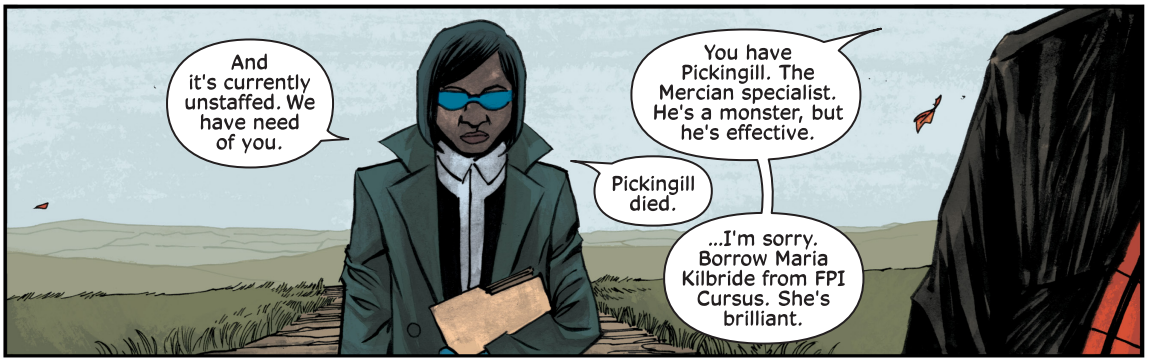
Reconnect? I'm afraid I don't follow.

We're standing on the Ridgeway right now. It's probably the oldest road in Britain.

Five thousand years ago, it connected the South with the East, like the life line in your right palm. Think of it as a way for an Englishman to recharge his Englishness.







And it's currently unstaffed. We have need of you.

You have Pickingill. The Mercian specialist. He's a monster, but he's effective.

Pickingill died.

...I'm sorry. Borrow Maria Kilbride from FPI Cursus. She's brilliant.



Professor Kilbride is in hospital.

Oh, god. Really? What happened?

I'll tell you if you take the job. It's practically your birthright, Dr Morel. I don't see the problem.



If you know my background, you know what the Breaker's Yard has cost my family.

My mother. My sister. My grandfather. I am not going to be a fucking Breaker for --



Sorry. That was rude of me.

But I don't do that work.



Dr Morel. You are a Cunning Man. It is ridiculous that your skills are not placed in service of your country.

But it is rankly absurd that the skills and knowledge of your line are similarly closed to us. You have a responsibility.



A responsibility?

Really? Is that what you want to say to me?



Interesting.



Sorry.

My family, unto Cunning Morel in the 1800s and back and beyond, may have been cunning-folk.



But I'm not a cunning man.

It was nice to meet you.

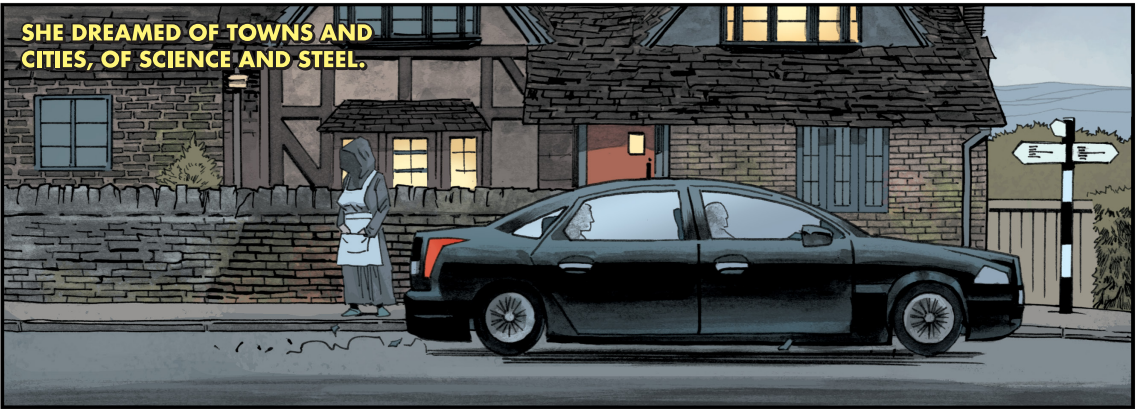
MARIA KILBRIDE HAS SPENT TWO YEARS IN CARS LIKE THIS. IT FEELS LIKE A FACT-FINDING TOUR OF HELL.



SHE GREW UP IN VILLAGES LIKE THIS, BETWEEN HEDGEROWS AND HENCES.

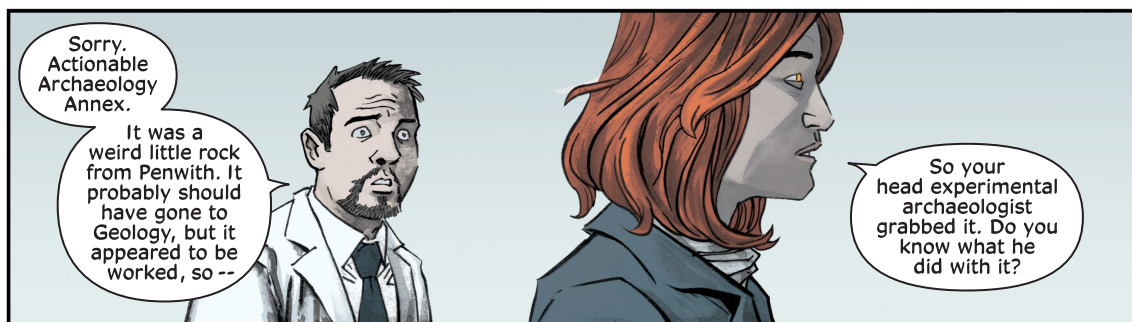
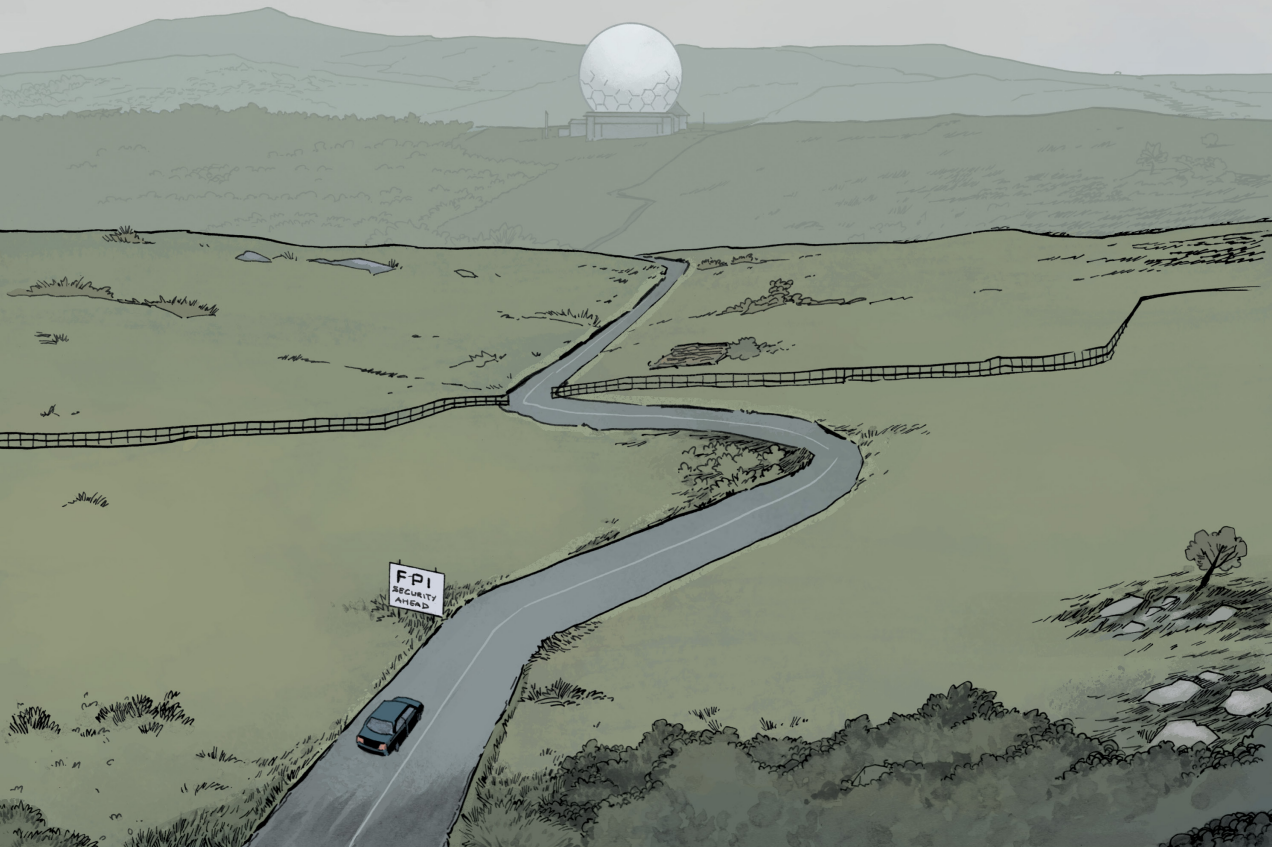


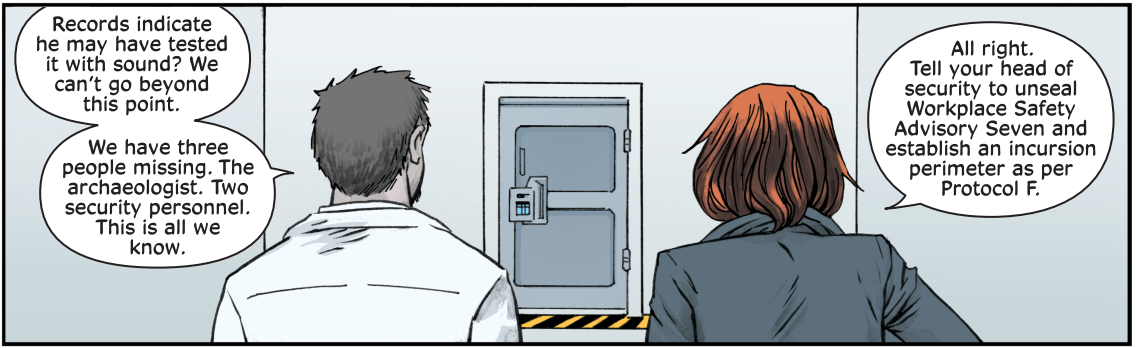
SHE DREAMED OF TOWNS AND CITIES, OF SCIENCE AND STEEL.

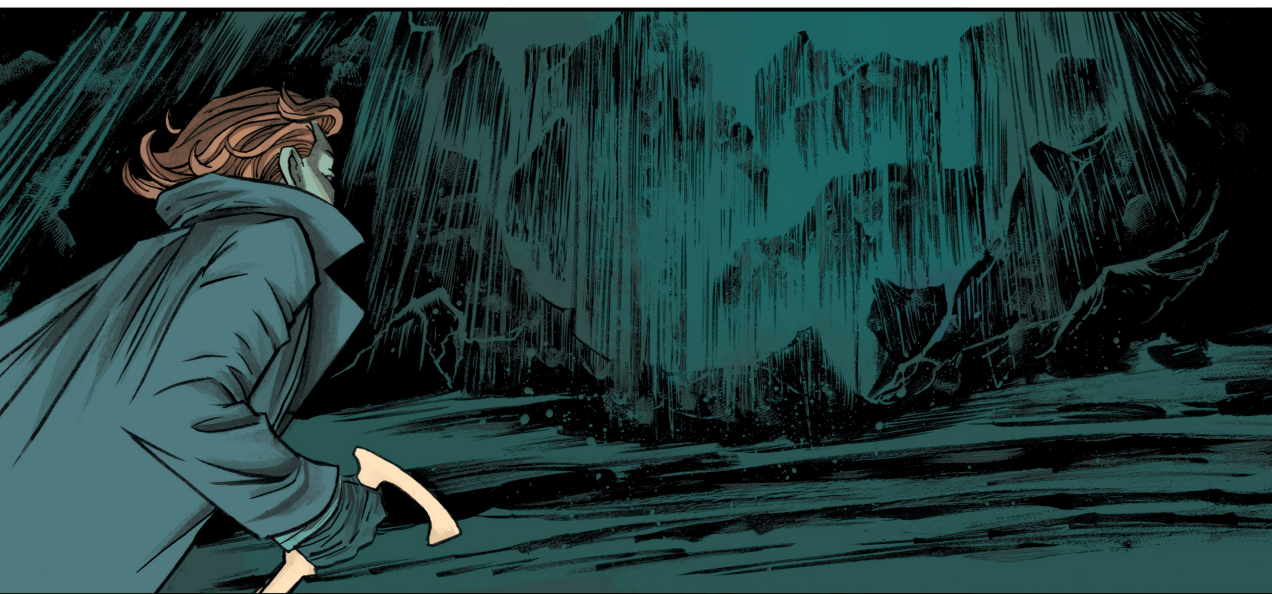


THE MATTER OF BRITAIN HAS A DESPERATE, CLAWED GRAVITY.











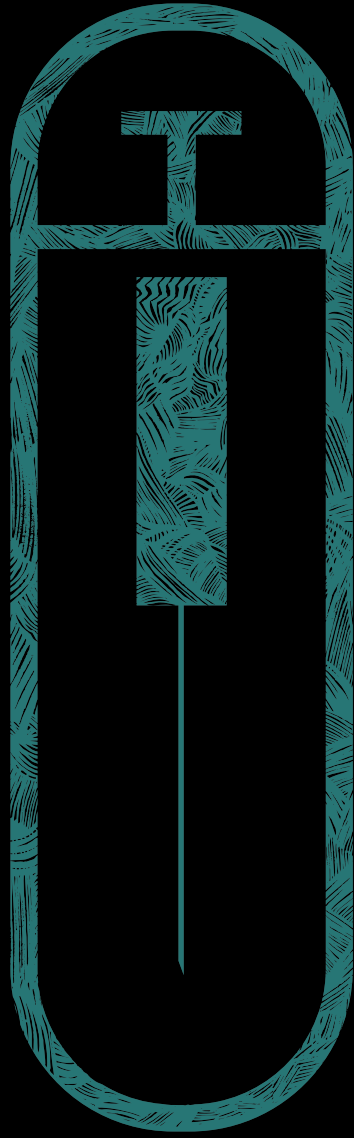






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