

THE LOST CITY OF HERACLEON™

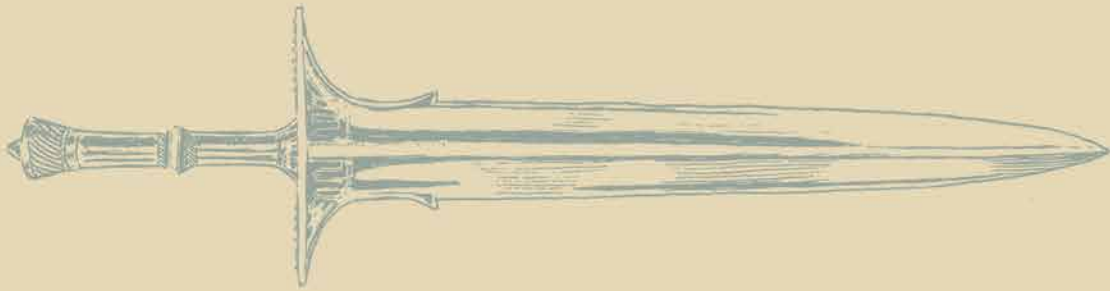


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THE LOST CITY OF HERACLEONTM



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MMXIX

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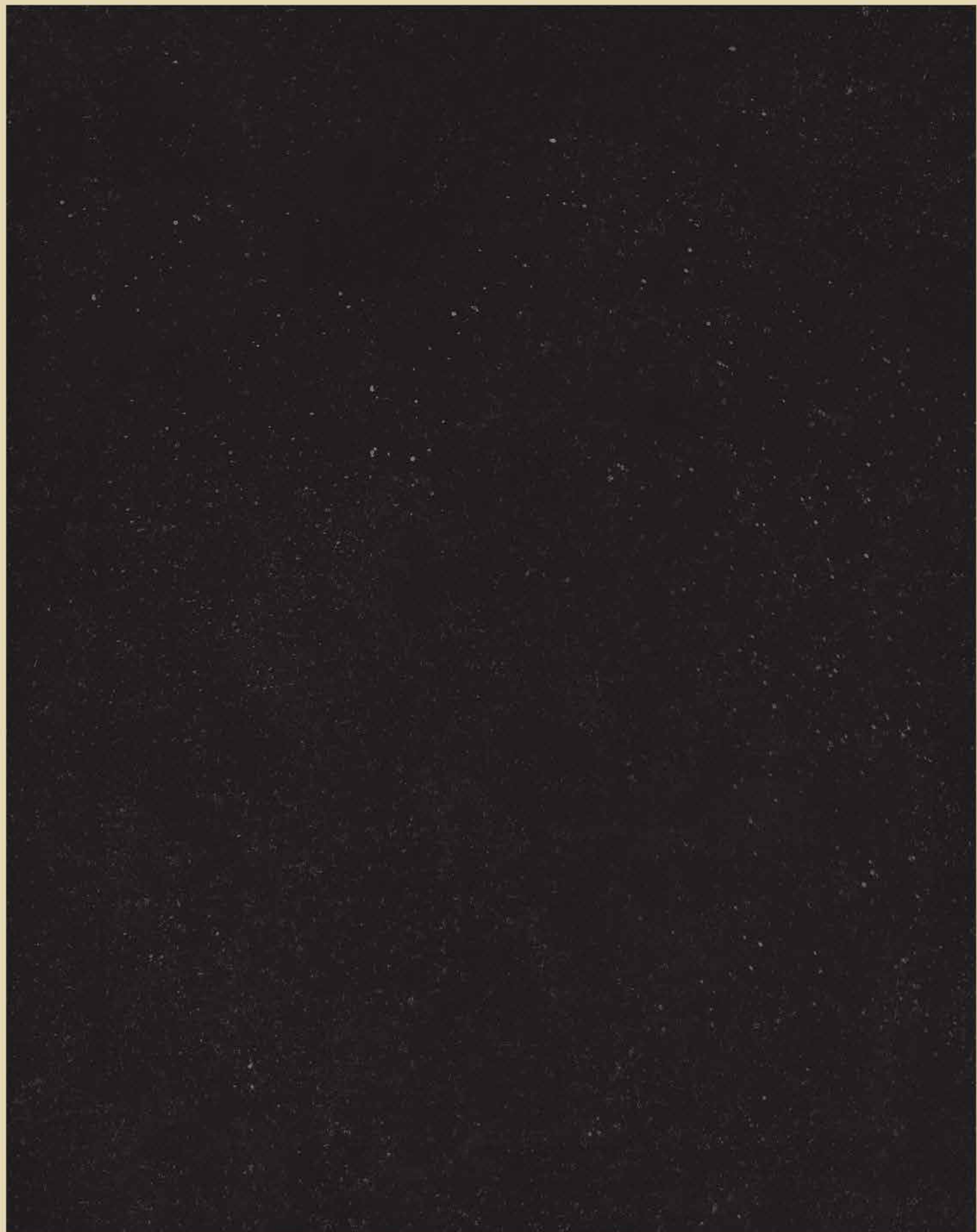
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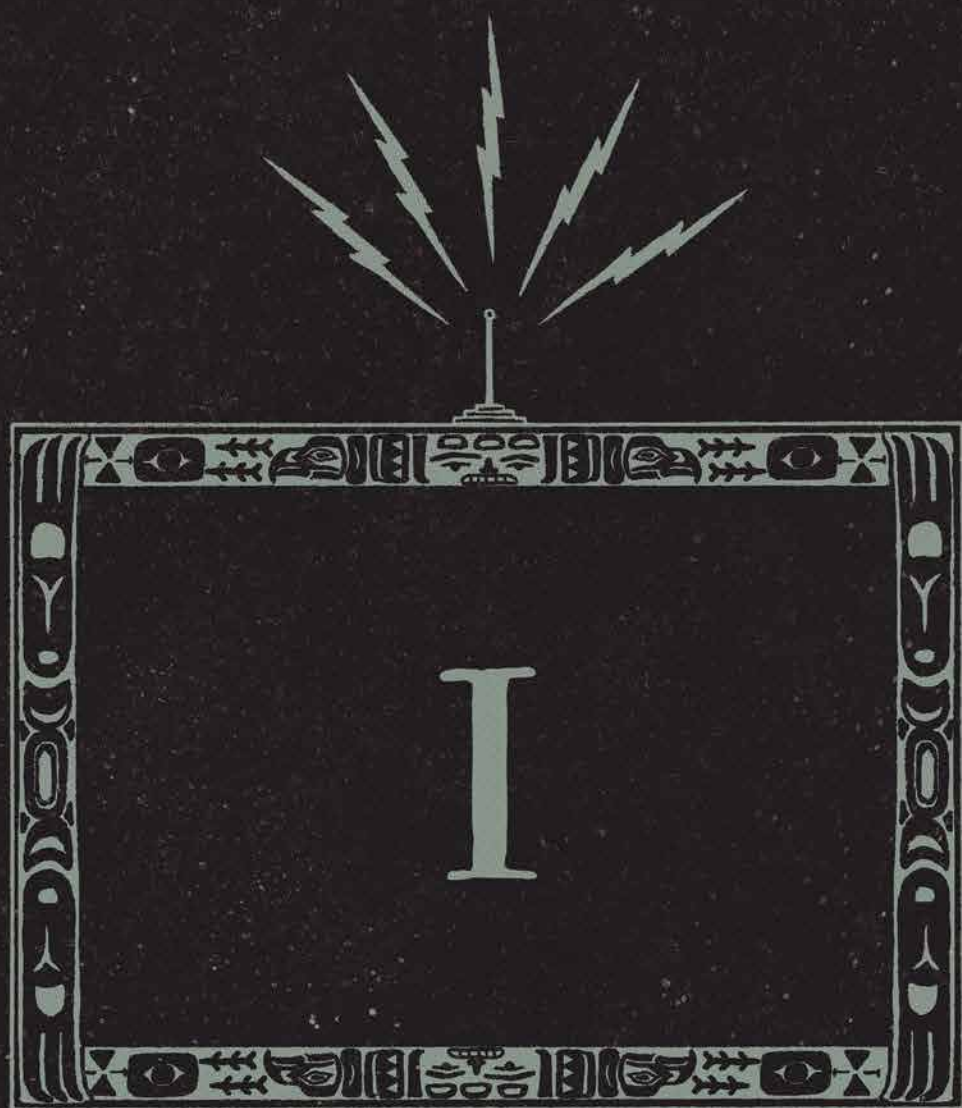
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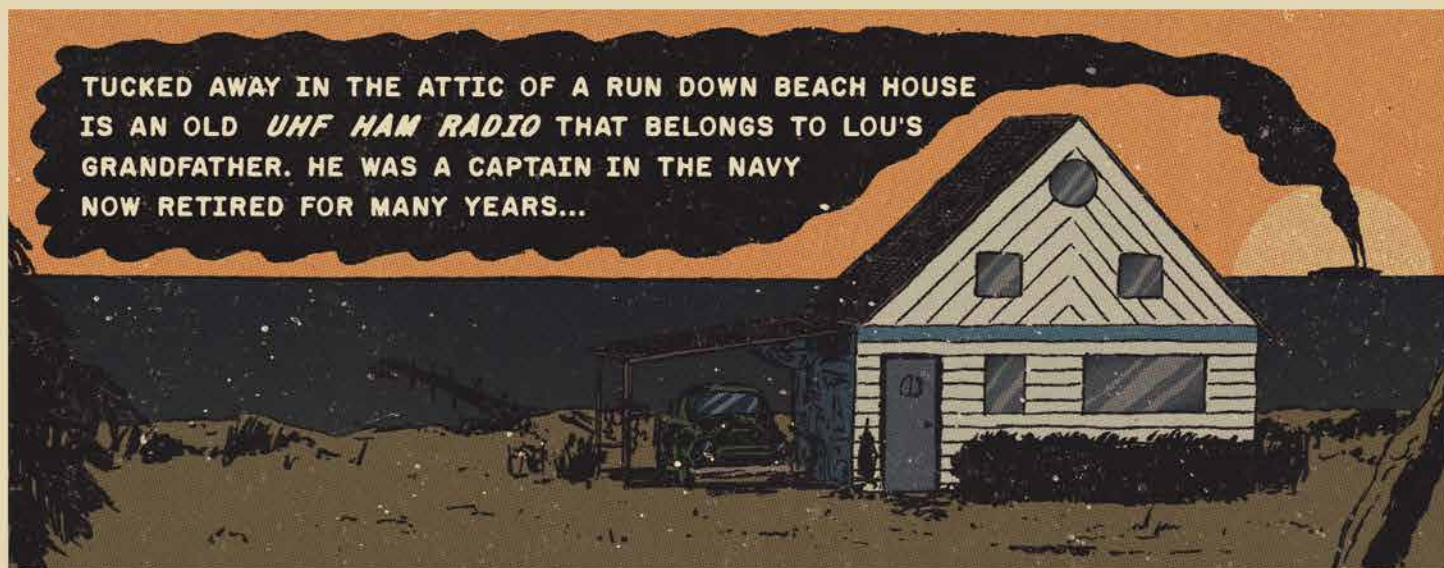


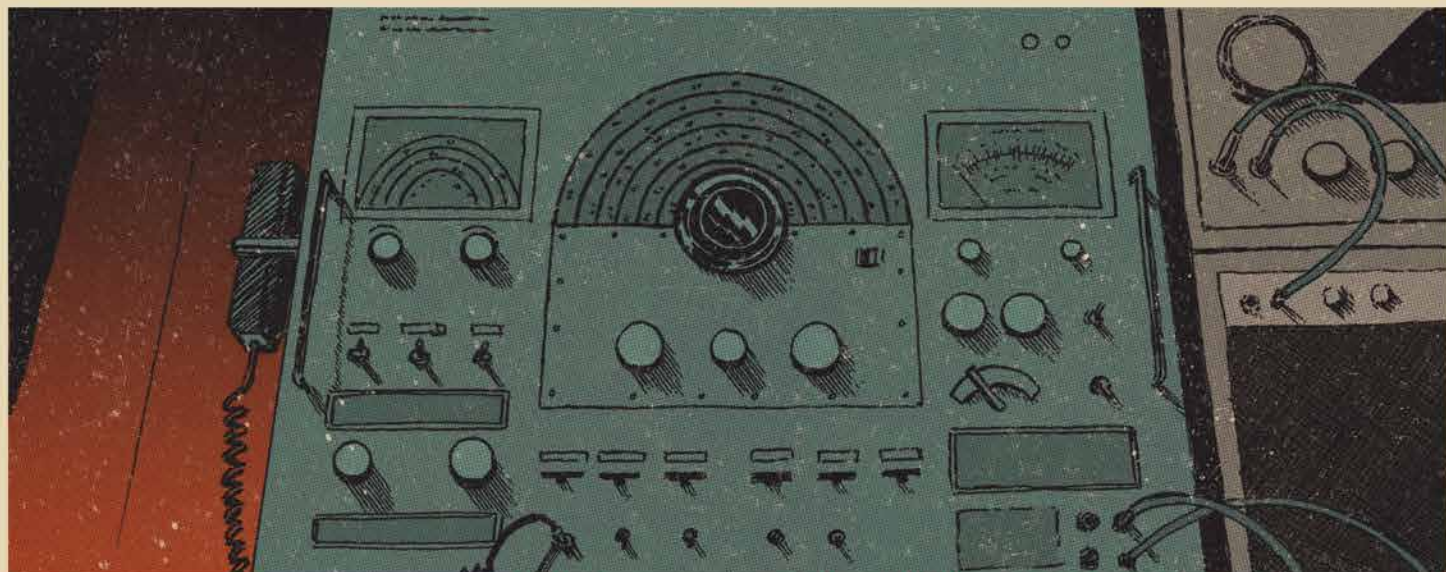




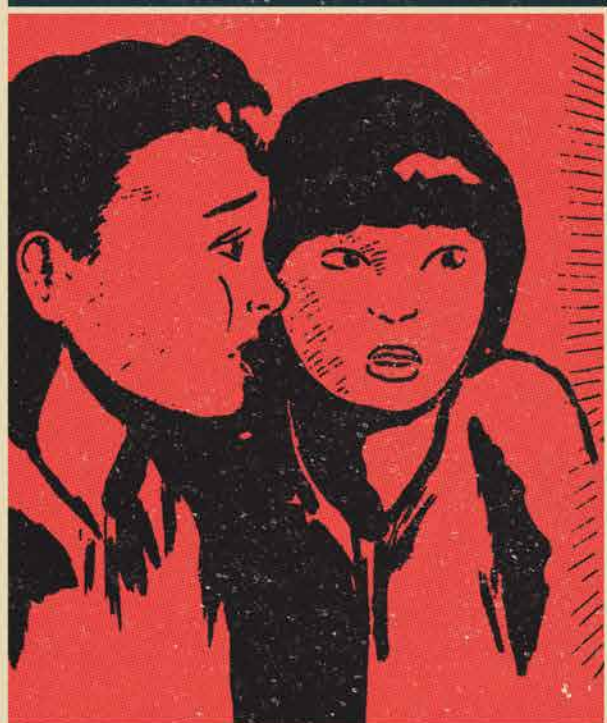


TUCKED AWAY IN THE ATTIC OF A RUN DOWN BEACH HOUSE
IS AN OLD *UHF HAM RADIO* THAT BELONGS TO LOU'S
GRANDFATHER. HE WAS A CAPTAIN IN THE NAVY
NOW RETIRED FOR MANY YEARS...





**COME IN ALL JUNIOR ADVENTURERS AND TOUGH GUYS...
LIFE'S GREATEST ADVENTURES AWAIT! BUT BEWARE
CALM SEAS DO NOT GOOD SAILORS MAKE. THOSE
THAT DO COME BACK WILL BE FOREVER CHANGED.
GET TO THESE COORDINATES!**



N 48° 13' 44.0544" W 123° 27' 12.1284"

**DIVE 65FT BELOW AND ENTER THE SUB FROM THE AFT.
LOOK FOR THE SIGN READING 'HIGH COMPRESSION CHAMBER'
TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY. I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU. OVER.**



WH.. WH..
W-H-O IS THIS??

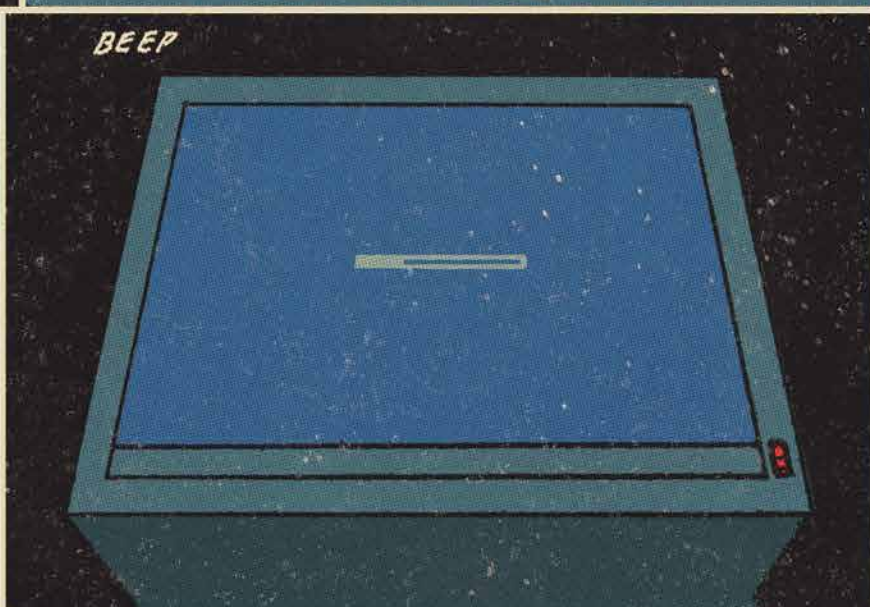
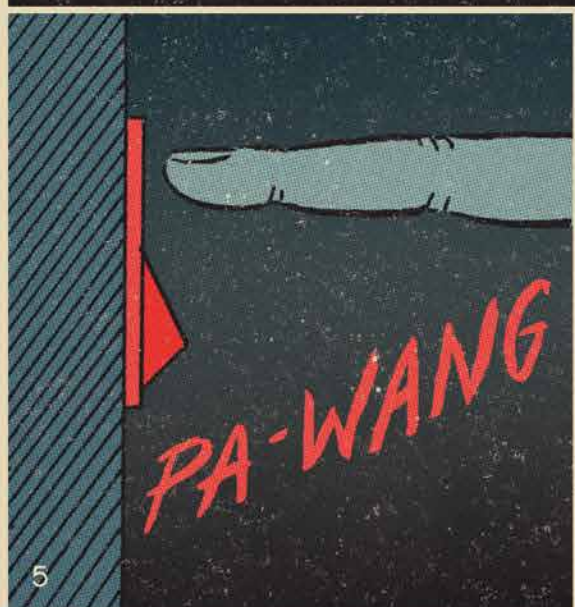
MY NAME IS
STEWART STUART
BUT MY CREW CALLS ME
CAPTAIN SHORTY. OVER.



WHAT KIND OF NAME IS THAT? YOU CAN'T
TRUST A PERSON WITH TWO FIRST NAMES.

I HAVE
TWO FIRST
NAMES.

OH
YEAH...

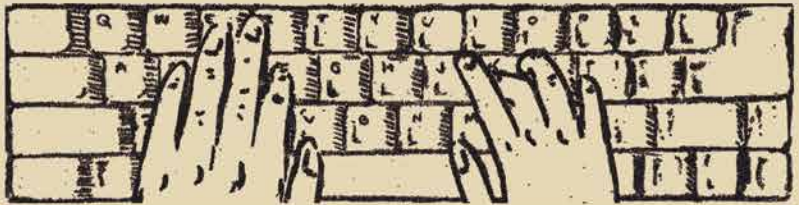


Ask
Hector



CAPTAIN STE

DIVE IN



TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK



CAPTAIN STEWART STUART LOCATES LOST CITY OF HERACLEON

NEWS.DISCOVERY.COM/LOST-CITY-HERACLEON

CAPTAIN STEWART STUART LOCATES LOST CITY OF HERACLEON IN A DRAMATIC NEWS CONFERENCE TODAY, CAPTAIN STEWART STUART ANNOUNCED THAT THE LOST CITY OF HERACLEON HAD BEEN LOCATED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THE ANCIENT CITY DATES BACK TO THE 8TH CENTURY BC.

PICTURES FROM LOST CITY SHOW ADVANCED ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

SMITHSONIAN.ORG/THE-LATEST/ANCIENT-CIVILIZATION

PICTURES FROM LOST CITY SHOW ADVANCED ANCIENT CIVILIZATION PHOTOGRAPHS DISPLAYED IN THE MUSEUM SHOW PART OF THE LARGEST TEMPLE EVER CONSTRUCTED, THE TEMPLE OF AMUN. AMONG THE RUINS OF THE TEMPLE ARE SEVERAL CURIOUS DEVICES. ONE DEVICE IN PARTICULAR IS KNOWN AS THE CODIX, WHICH CPTN STUART CLAIMS IS SOME KIND OF BASIC, WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY.

LOST CITY OF HERACLEON, LOST AGAIN. CAPTAIN STUART HUMILIATED

NEWS.NATIONALHISTORYMUSEUM.ORG/LOST-CITY-HOAX?/CAPTAINSTUART

LOST CITY OF HERACLEON LOST AGAIN! CAPTAIN STUART HUMILIATED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY, CPTN STUART ANNOUNCED THAT THE ANCIENT CITY OF HERACLEON WAS MISSING, AGAIN! SCIENTISTS AND SKEPTICS ACCUSED CPTN STUART OF FABRICATING THE STORY, EVIDENCE AND PHOTOGRAPHS. CPTN STUART, HUMILIATED, VOWED TO RELOCATE THE CITY, BUT NOBODY CARED.



SHIRO, DO YOU THINK
THIS IS WHAT
CAPTAIN SHORTY
MEANT BY LIFE'S
GREATEST TREASURES?

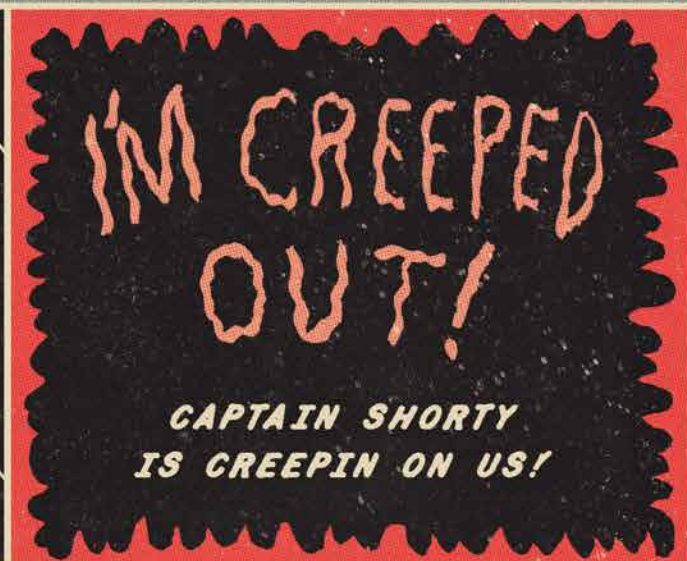
I HOPE SO.



GIVE ME THOSE COORDINATES.

TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK TK





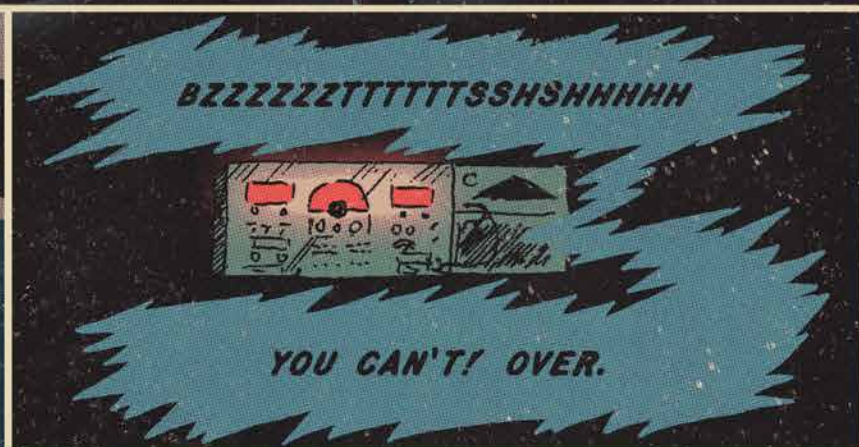


WHAT IF HE'S
SOME KIND OF
GHOST PIRATE???



MAYBE WE CAN GO
LATER, IN A FEW YEARS...

WHEN WE'RE
OLDER...

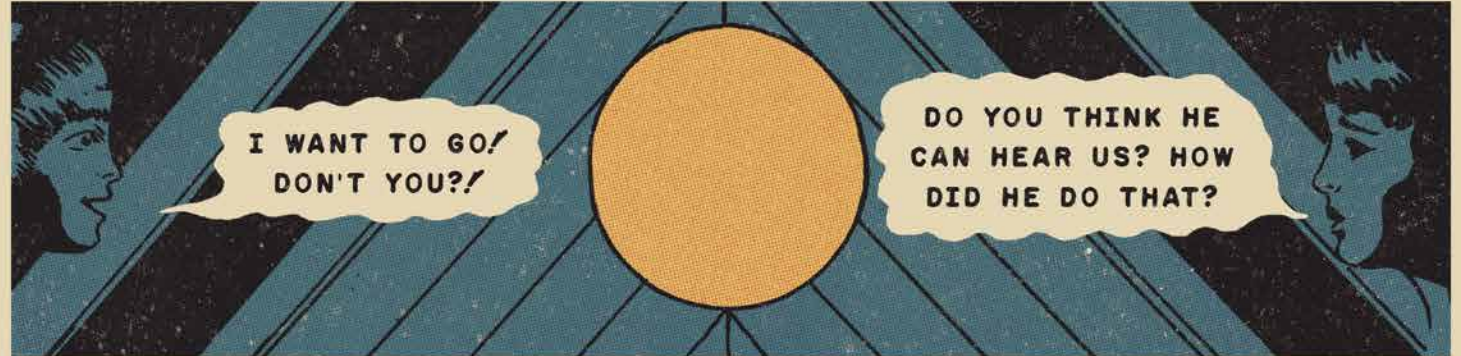


BZZZZZZZTTTTTTTSSSHSHHHHHH

YOU CAN'T! OVER.



IF YOU'RE COMING,
WE HAVE TO GO NOW.
I'M NOT COMING BACK, OVER.



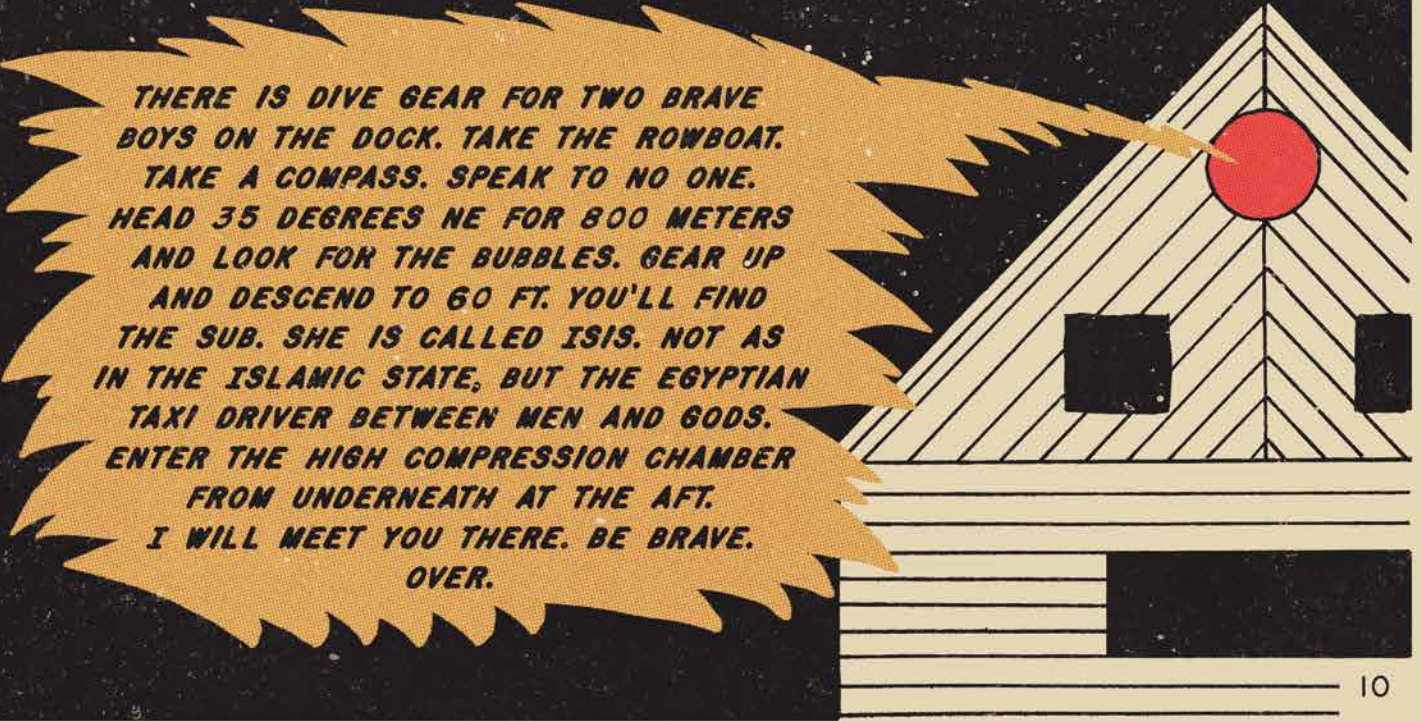
I WANT TO GO!
DON'T YOU?!

DO YOU THINK HE
CAN HEAR US? HOW
DID HE DO THAT?

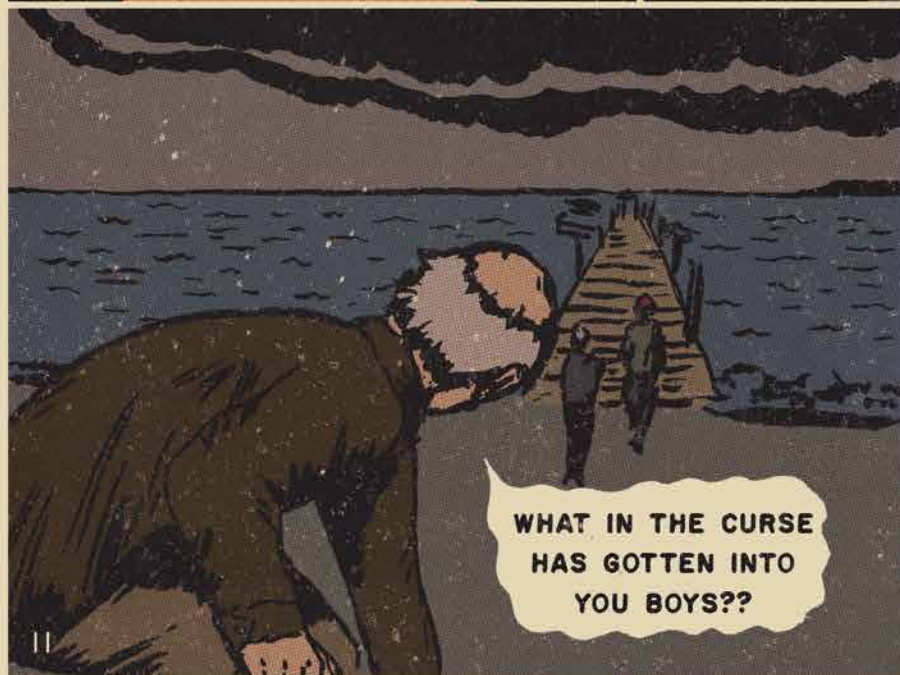


WHO CARES, I CAN'T
NOT GO, I'LL REGRET
IT FOR THE REST
OF MY LIFE IF WE
DON'T DO THIS!

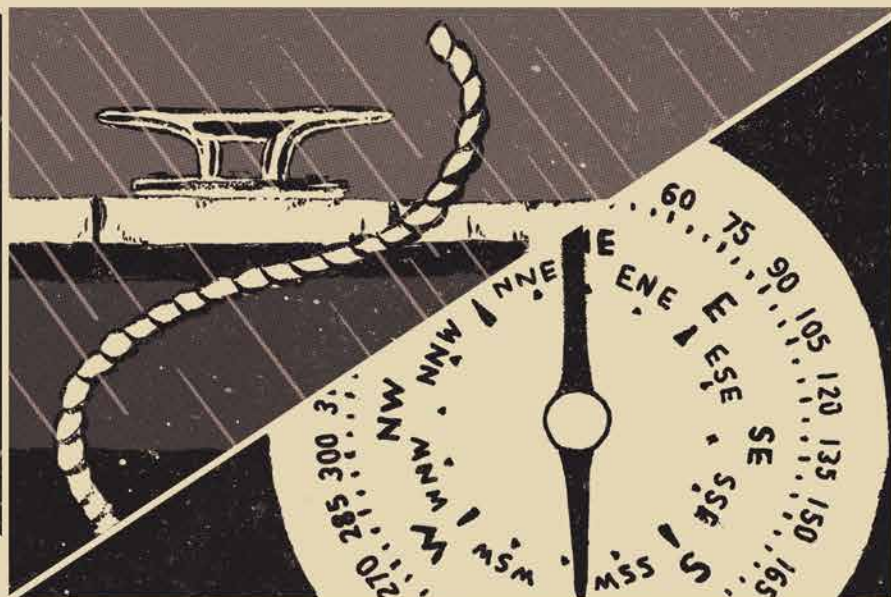
BRRRRRRRTZZZZSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHHSHSHSSSSSHSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

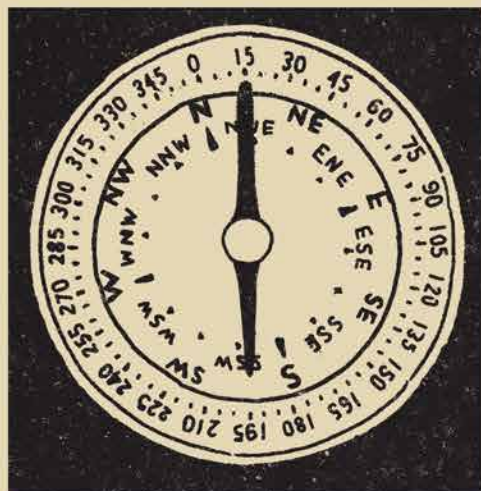


THERE IS DIVE GEAR FOR TWO BRAVE
BOYS ON THE DOCK. TAKE THE ROWBOAT.
TAKE A COMPASS. SPEAK TO NO ONE.
HEAD 35 DEGREES NE FOR 800 METERS
AND LOOK FOR THE BUBBLES. GEAR UP
AND DESCEND TO 60 FT. YOU'LL FIND
THE SUB. SHE IS CALLED ISIS. NOT AS
IN THE ISLAMIC STATE, BUT THE EGYPTIAN
TAXI DRIVER BETWEEN MEN AND GODS.
ENTER THE HIGH COMPRESSION CHAMBER
FROM UNDERNEATH AT THE AFT.
I WILL MEET YOU THERE. BE BRAVE.
OVER.









EAGER SHIRO TIRES QUICKLY IN THE STRONG WIND. LOU TAKES OVER ROWING AND SETS THE COMPASS TO 15 DEGREES TO MAKE UP FOR THE DRIFT.



***AFTER THIRTY MINUTES OF HARD ROWING,
THE BOYS START SEEING BUBBLES.***

B

BECAUSE

THEY QUICKLY GEAR UP AND DO THE BWARF BUDDY CHECK



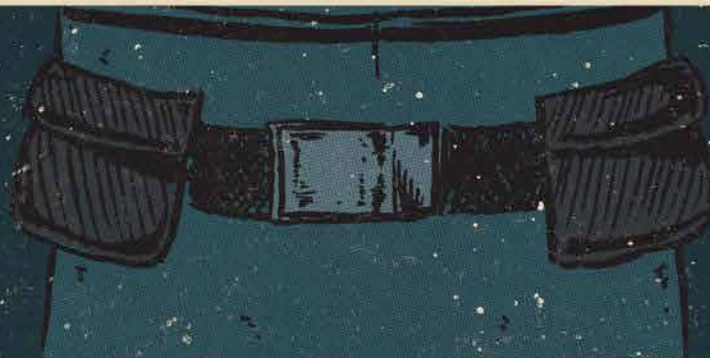
BUOYANCY
CONTROL
DEVICE

OPERATING
NORMALLY

CHECK!

W

WE



WEIGHTS

ON AND
BUCKLED

CHECK!

A

AREN'T



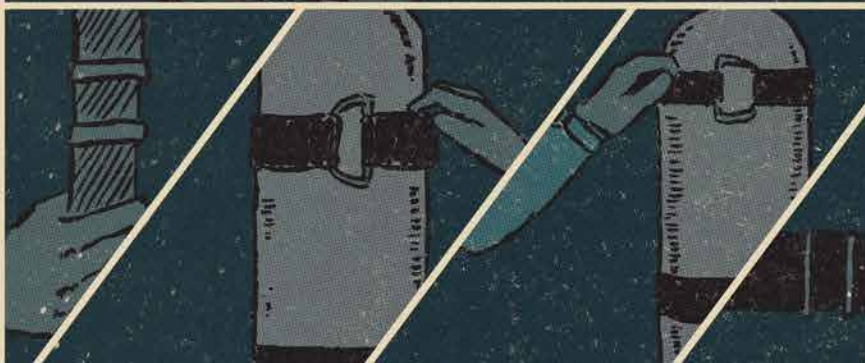
AIR

FUNCTIONING
NORMALLY

CHECK!

R

REALLY



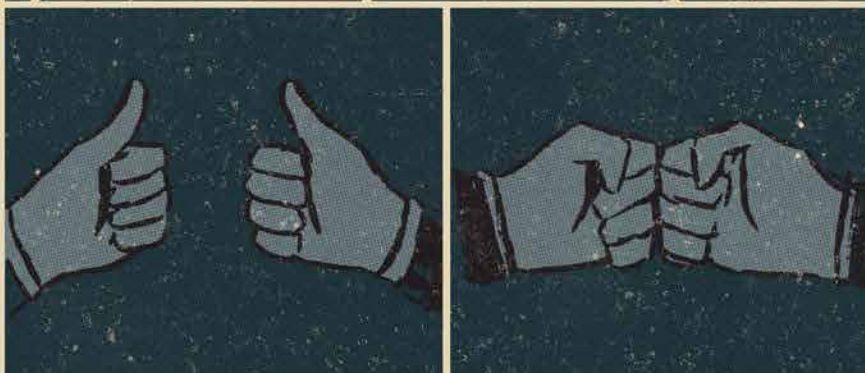
RELEASES

BUCKLED
AND TIGHT

CHECK!

F

FISH



FINAL OK

AND INTO
THE WATER

FINS UP!



*THE BOYS LEARNED HOW TO DIVE FROM LOU'S DAD.
THEY DOVE SO MUCH ONE SUMMER, THEY PREFERRED IT
TO WALKING. SHIRO THOUGHT OF HIM LIKE A FATHER.
LOU'S FATHER WAS A MASTER DIVER UNTIL HE WENT
MISSING A FEW YEARS BACK. IT IS ASSUMED HE WAS
SWEEPED AWAY IN A STRONG CURRENT. HE DESCENDED
ONE DAY AND NEVER RETURNED. BUT THE BOYS
DON'T TALK ABOUT IT VERY OFTEN.*



EVERYTHING IS SILENT AS THEY SLOWLY DESCEND AND EQUALIZE BY PINCHING THEIR NOSES THROUGH THE MASK AND GENTLY BLOWING. SHIRO IS THE FIRST TO TURN ON A SMALL DIVE FLASHLIGHT AND CHECKS HIS DIVE WATCH, THEY ARE AT A DEPTH OF 20 FT.

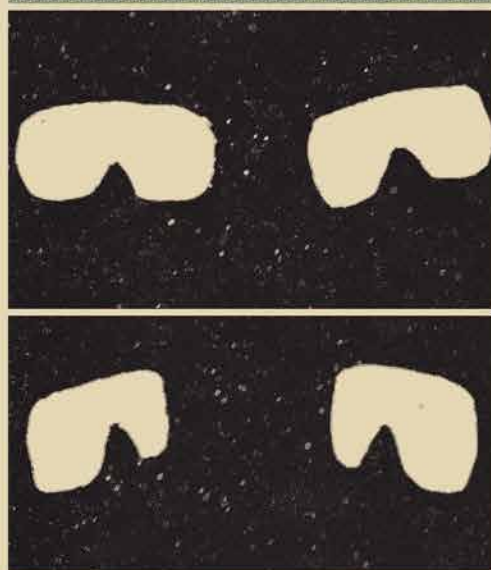




EXCITED AND APPREHENSIVE TO MEET CAPTAIN SHORTY, THEY CONTINUE THEIR DESCENT BY PUSHING THE AIR FROM THEIR LUNGS. LOU TURNS ON HIS DIVE LIGHT AND SHINES IT DOWN BENEATH HIS FINS. SUDDENLY THEY SEE THE LIGHTS FROM THE SUB TURN ON. THEY'RE REALLY CLOSE NOW, ONLY 20 FEET TO GO.



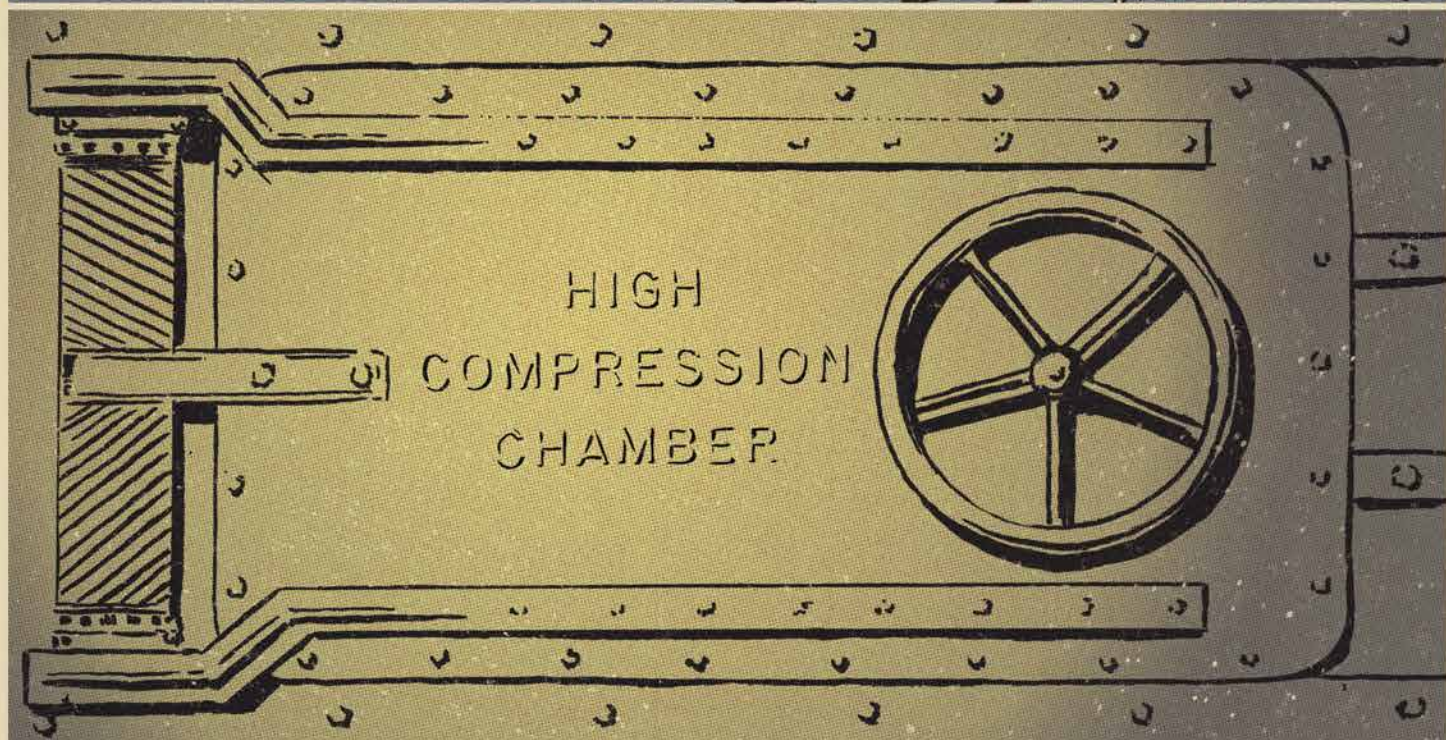
THE BOYS START SWIMMING TO THE LIGHTS. AS THEY GET CLOSER THINGS GET WEIRD. ALL THEY SEE IS LIGHT, THE SUB ISN'T THERE. LOU AND SHIRO LOOK AT EACH OTHER, UNABLE TO SPEAK, THEY MOVE IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK.

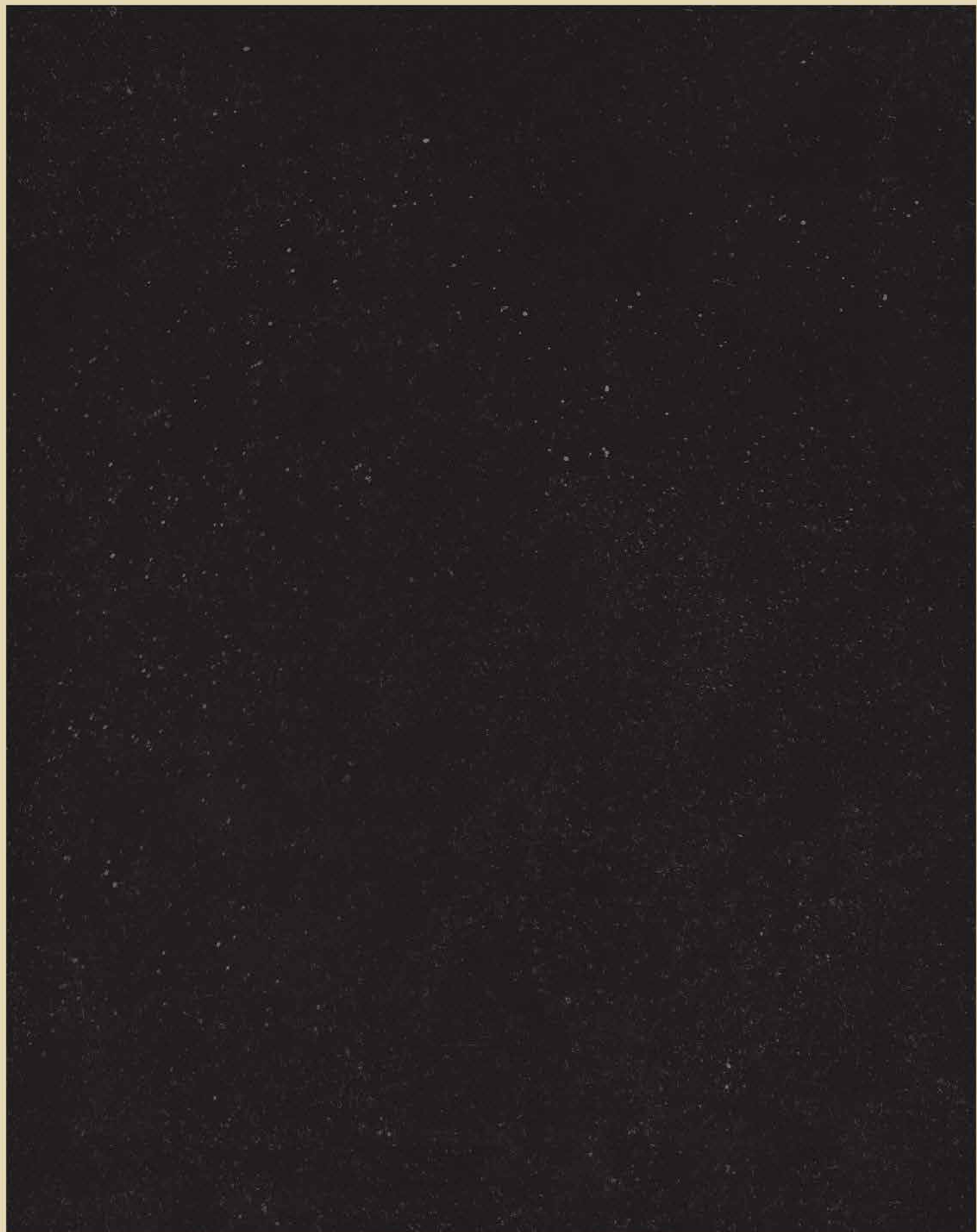


**K
O
L
K
N
Z
K!**

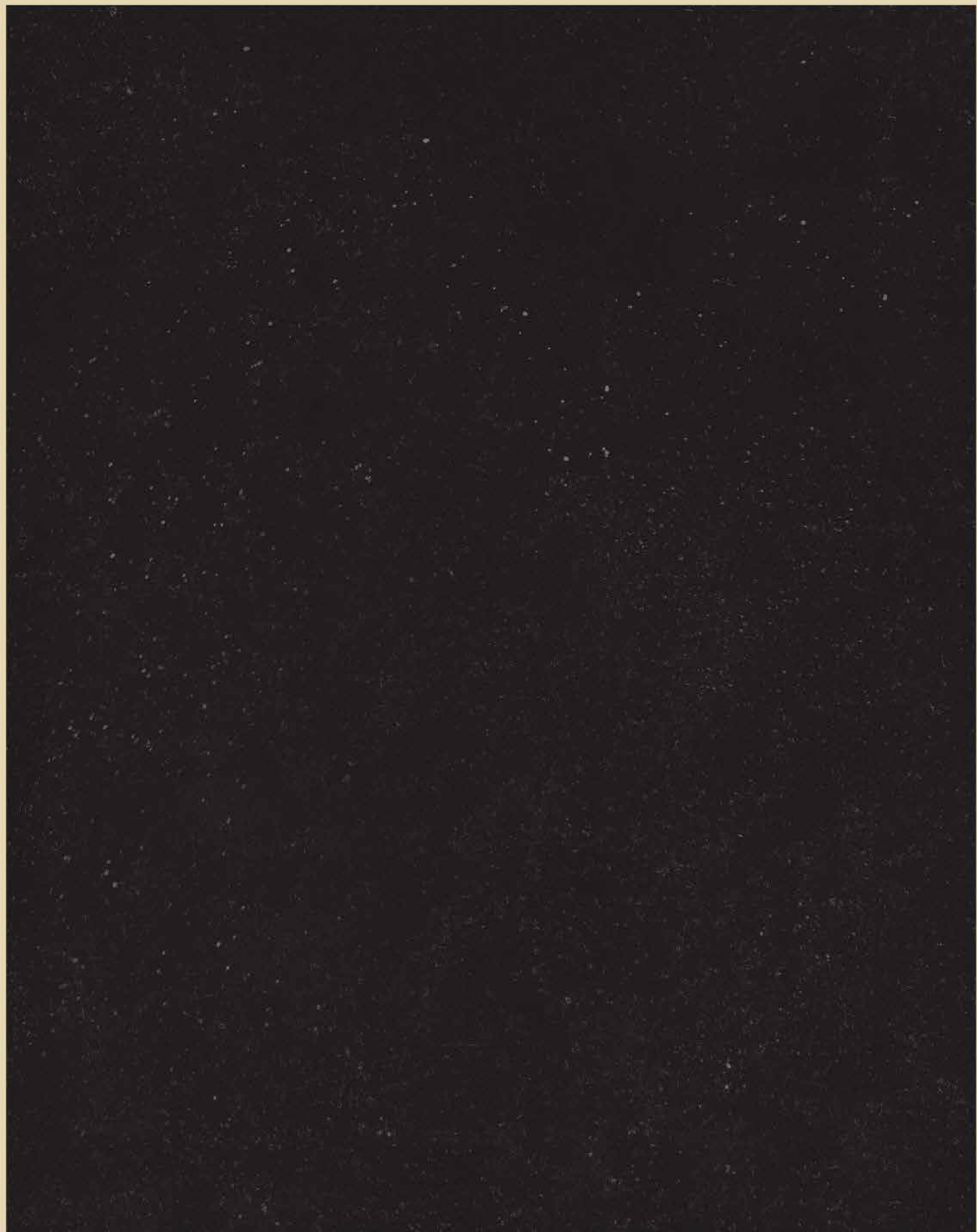


SHIRO COLLIDES WITH THE SUB, BANGING HIS HEAD RIGHT INTO HER BELLY. LOU SEES HIS REFLECTION IN HER. SHE'S MADE OF SOME KIND OF CHROME LIKE METAL, REFLECTING EVERYTHING AROUND IT LIKE A SAUSAGE SHAPED MIRROR. SHINING HIS LIGHT ON HER, SHIRO GETS A SENSE OF HER SIZE AND SHAPE AS THE LIGHT REFLECTS BACK BUT THE DARKNESS DOESN'T.









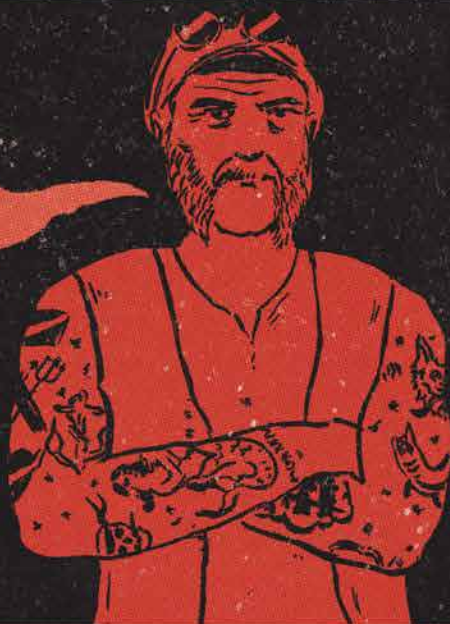
**SHIRO AND LOU SHIMMY OUT OF THEIR
WETSUITS AND PUT ON RED SHORTS, WHITE
CREW SHIRTS AND WHITE TENNIS SHOES.
THE BUZZER STOPS BUZZING, THE DOOR
STARTS CLANKING FROM THE OTHER SIDE.**

**GHOST PIRATE
GHOST PIRATE
GHOST PIRATE**

**CURSE
THIS DOOR!**

THUD

DON'T BE SCARED, SON. THESE ARE THE DAYS
WE TEST THE TIMBER OF YOUR HEART. NOW THAT
YOU'RE IN MY CREW, YOU ARE IN MY COMMAND.
WHAT YOU BOYS DO IN THE COMING DAYS WILL
MARK YOUR SOULS. YOU WILL SEE THINGS NO
MAN HAS EVER SEEN. YOU WILL DO THINGS YOU
WON'T BELIEVE... AND NOBODY ELSE WILL EITHER,
WHICH IS WHY YOU ARE ADVISED TO USE THE
UTMOST DISCRETION.



WHAT DOES DISCRETION MEAN?



IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS,
FOLLOW ME TO THE BRIDGE.
DOUBLE TIME!



OKAY.



WHAT DID
YOU JUST
SAY SAILOR?

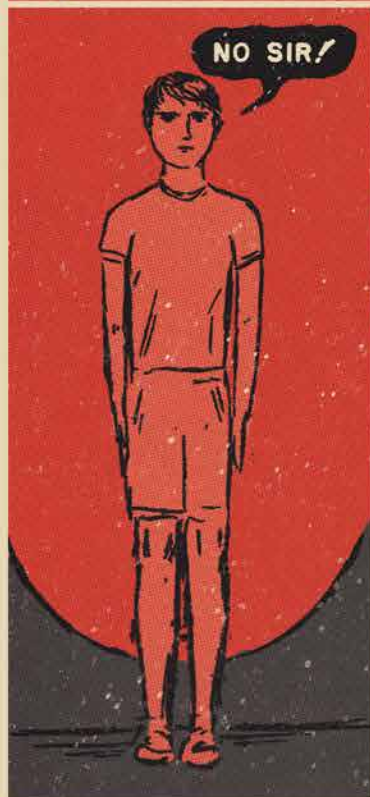




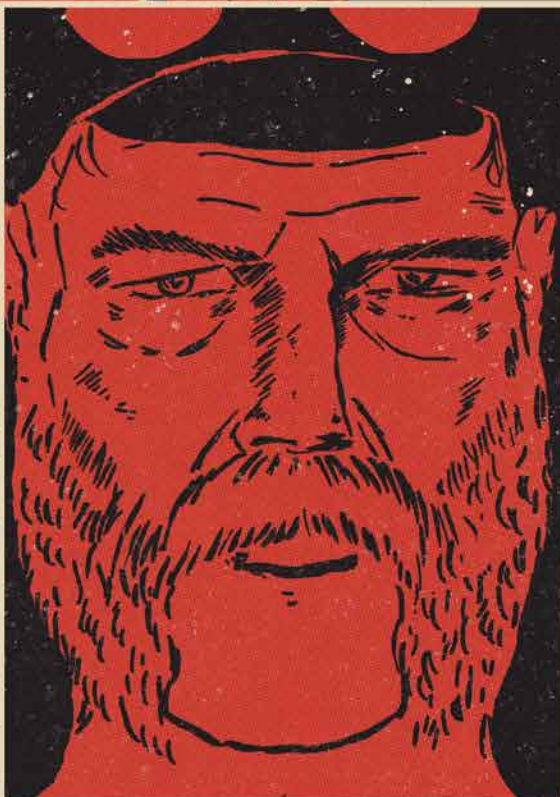
OKAY!!!



I THOUGHT I HEARD A
MOUSE... DID YOU HEAR
A MOUSE, SAILOR?



NO SIR!



NOW THAT'S
MORE LIKE IT!

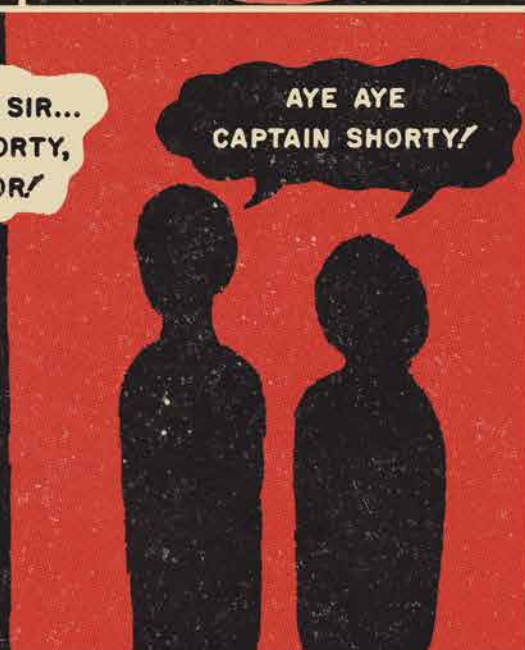
HOW 'BOUT YOU
SAILOR??



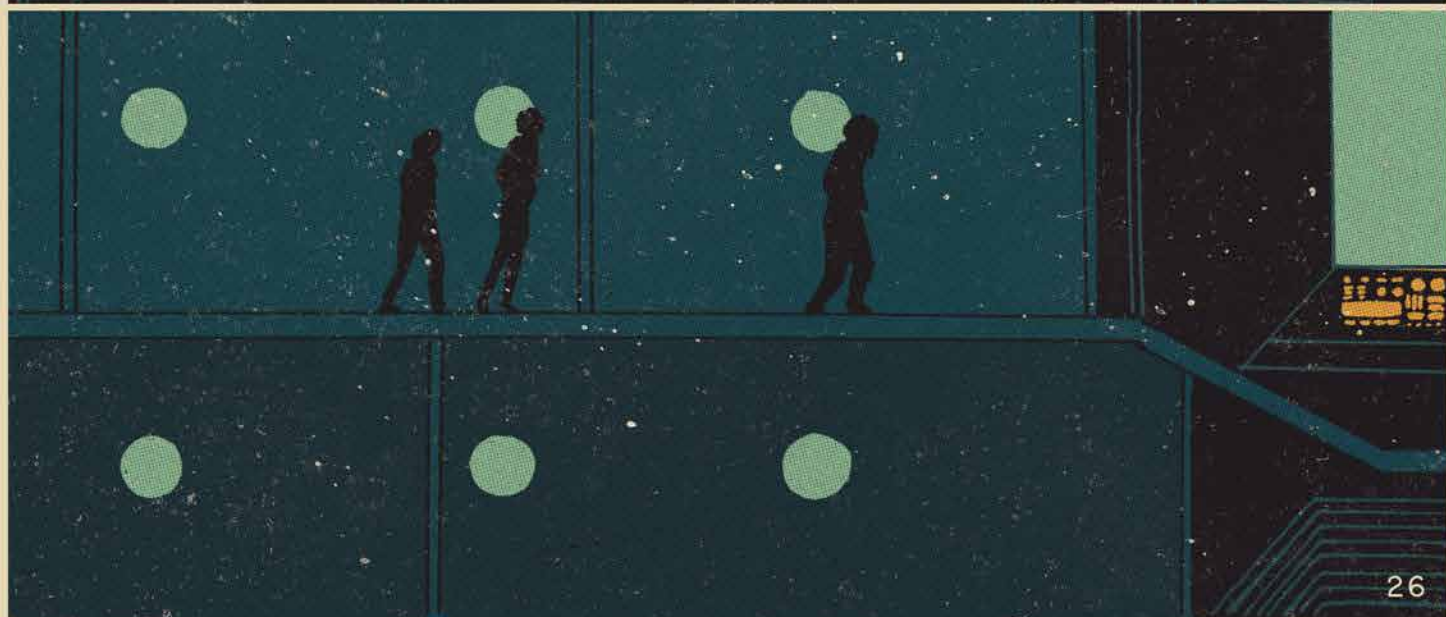
YES SIR!!!

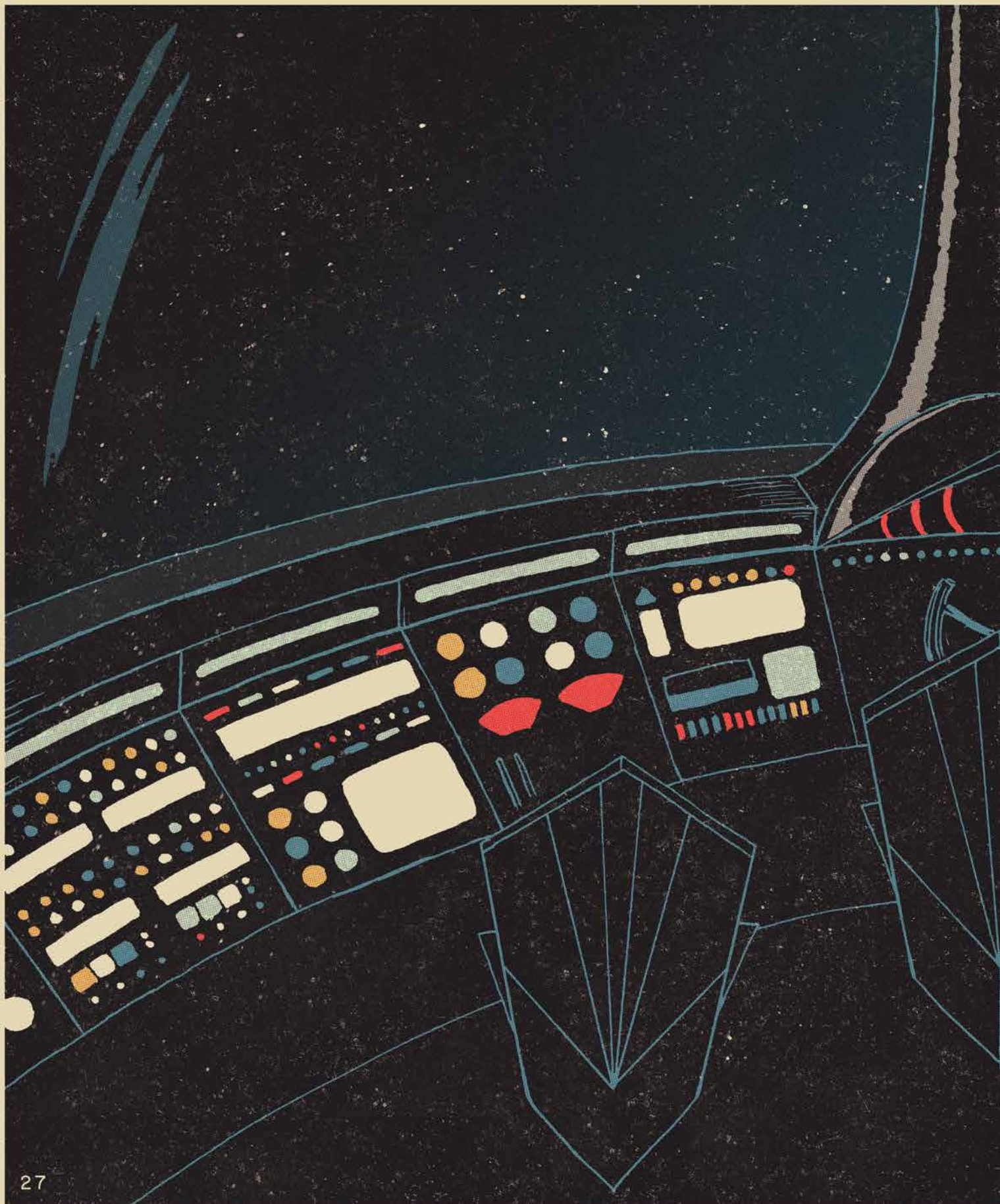


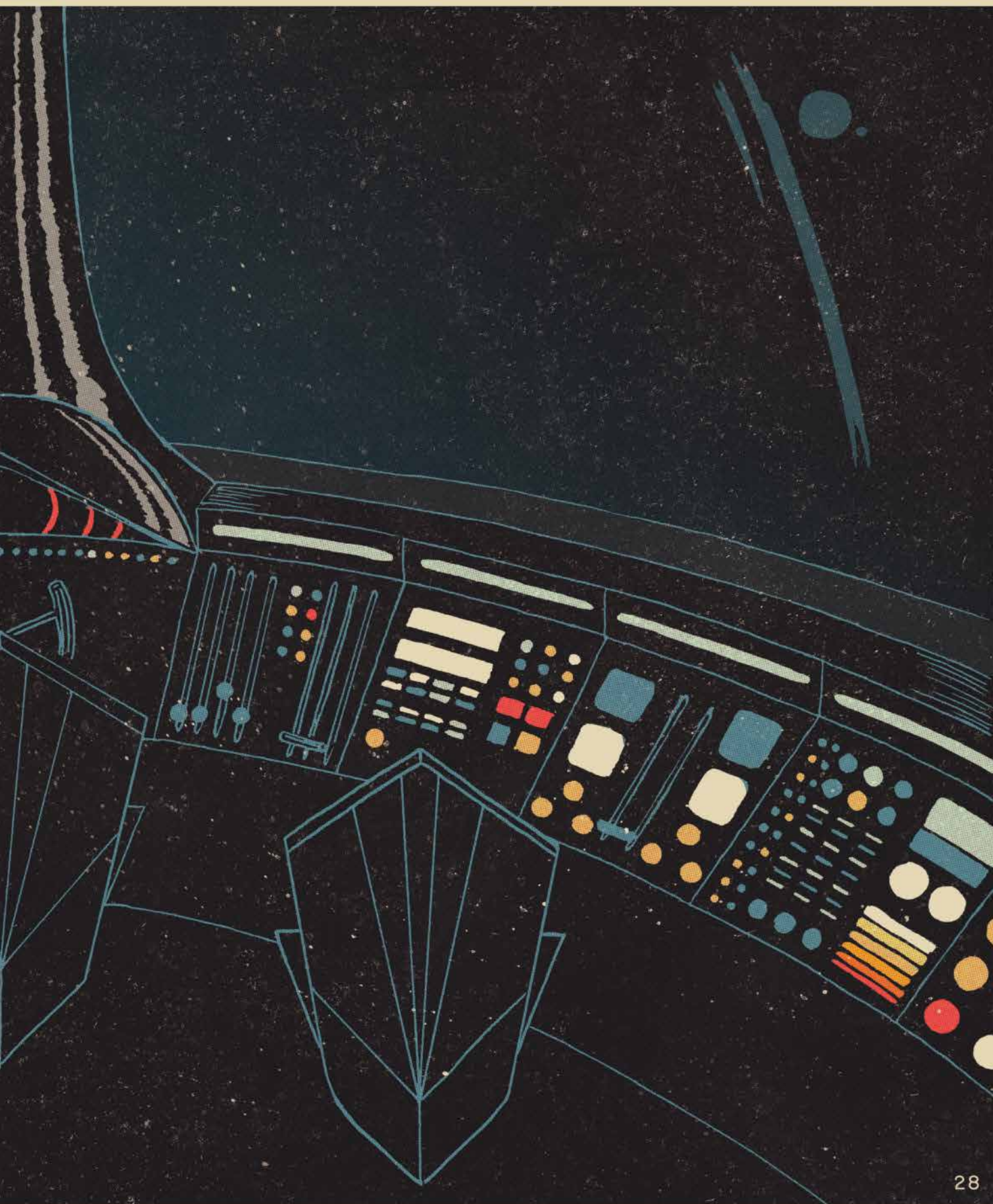
THAT'S AYE AYE SIR...
CAPTAIN OR SHORTY,
TO YOU, SAILOR!

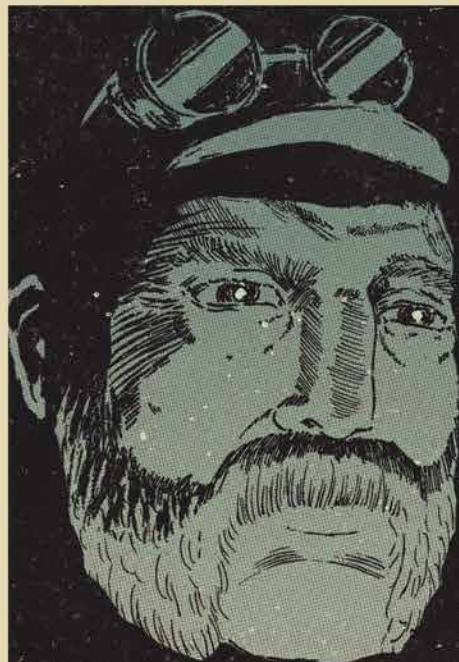


AYE AYE
CAPTAIN SHORTY!







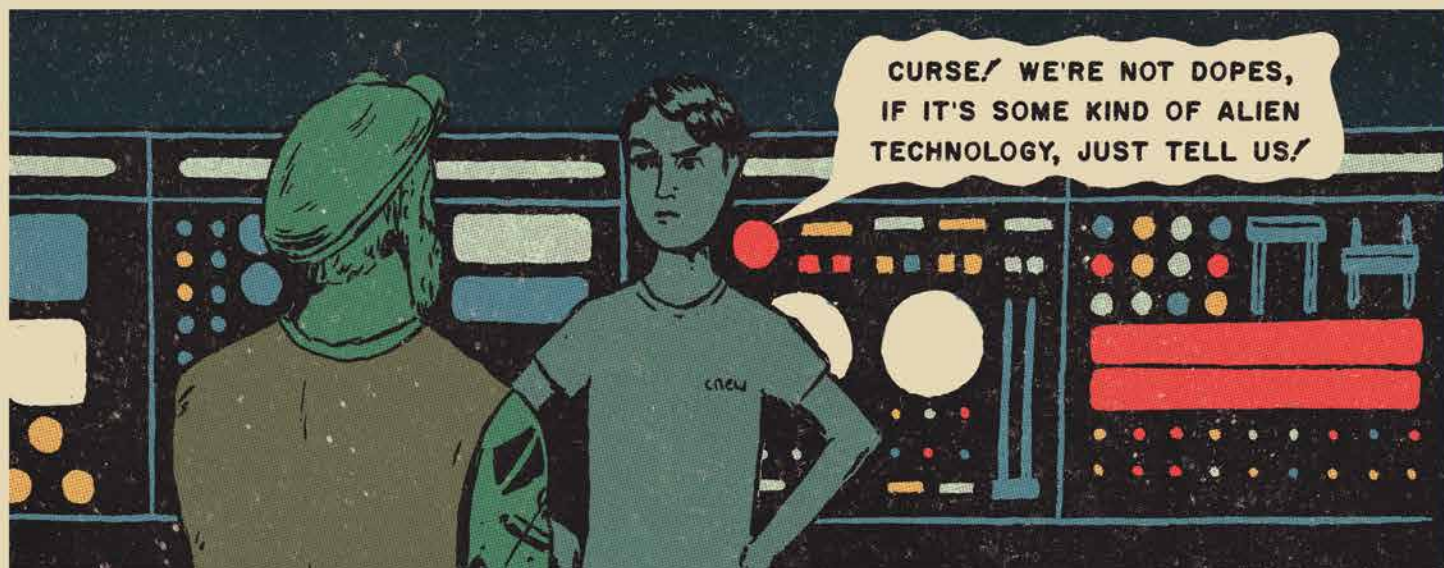


BEFORE WE GET UNDERWAY, I'M GOING TO FIT BOTH OF YOU WITH A 'CODEX'. IT'S A WEARABLE DEVICE THAT CONTAINS ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, AND A COMPLEX MACHINE THAT CAN TRANSFORM INTO MOST TOOLS AND APPARATUS YOU MAY REQUIRE ON YOUR JOURNEY.

WHAT KIND OF MAGIC IS THIS?

IT'S NOT MAGIC SON, IT'S UM...
IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.





YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET THIS GO ARE YOU?





IT'S A COMPUTER



A LIBRARY



A THEATER



A JACKHAMMER



A BODYGUARD



A FIRE EXTINGUISHER



A REBREATHER



A MICROSCOPE



A HOVERBOARD



A DIVE WATCH



A CAMP STOVE



A RAY GUN



A BASKETBALL



GRAVITY BOOTS



SNOW SHOES



ROPE



A GUITAR



*A SADDLE FOR
YOUR HORSE*



*A HELMET
IF YOU CRASH*



*AND A PILLOW
WHEN YOU SLEEP*

THREE YEARS AGO I SAID GOODBYE TO MY FATHER AND WENT TO WORK LIKE I HAD DONE TEN THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD BE THE LAST TIME I'D SEE HIM OR MY FAMILY...

MY ORDERS THAT DAY WERE TO ASSESS THE FUEL TANKS OF A SUNKEN VESSEL 60 KM FROM THE PORT OF VICTORIA. THE MERCHANT SHIP HAD BEEN DRIFTING FOR CURSE-NEAR 70 YEARS, BUT HAD COME TO REST ON A BANK 200 FT BELOW. IT WAS HIT BY A TORPEDO FROM A JAPANESE SUB DURING WWII. A DIVE THAT DEEP MEANT I HAD TO BREATHE NITROX, A MIXTURE OF NITROGEN AND OXYGEN. IT REALLY MAKES YOU TRIP OUT AND MESSES WITH YOUR MIND... MAKES YOU VERY VERY DISORIENTED AND HALLUCINATE...

SO I BEGAN MY DESCENT...





SO DARK...

THE SILENCE



TERRIFYING



YOU ARE NOT
MEANT TO BE HERE

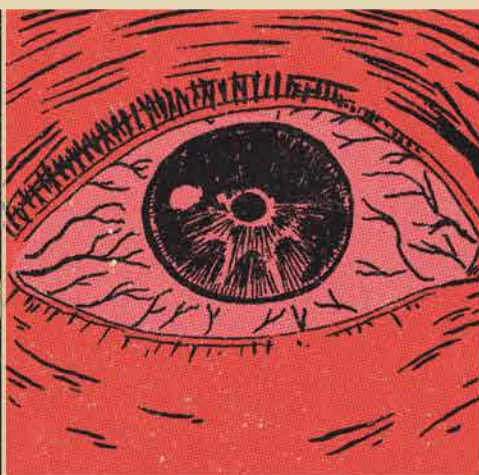


I KEEP HEARING SOFTLY...

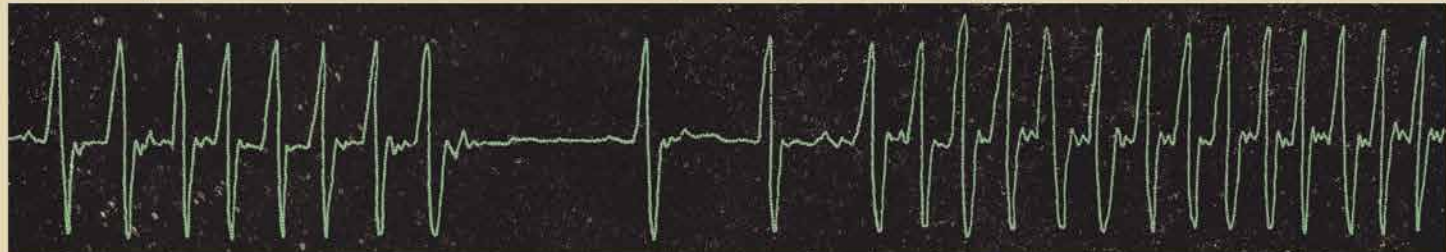
NOT TO BE
MEANT
YOU ARE
YOU



YOU ARE
NOT
NOT
MEANT
YOU
NOT HERE



I BEGIN TO PANIC. AT 220 FEET. OXYGEN TOXICITY. BLOOD FILLING WITH NITROGEN.



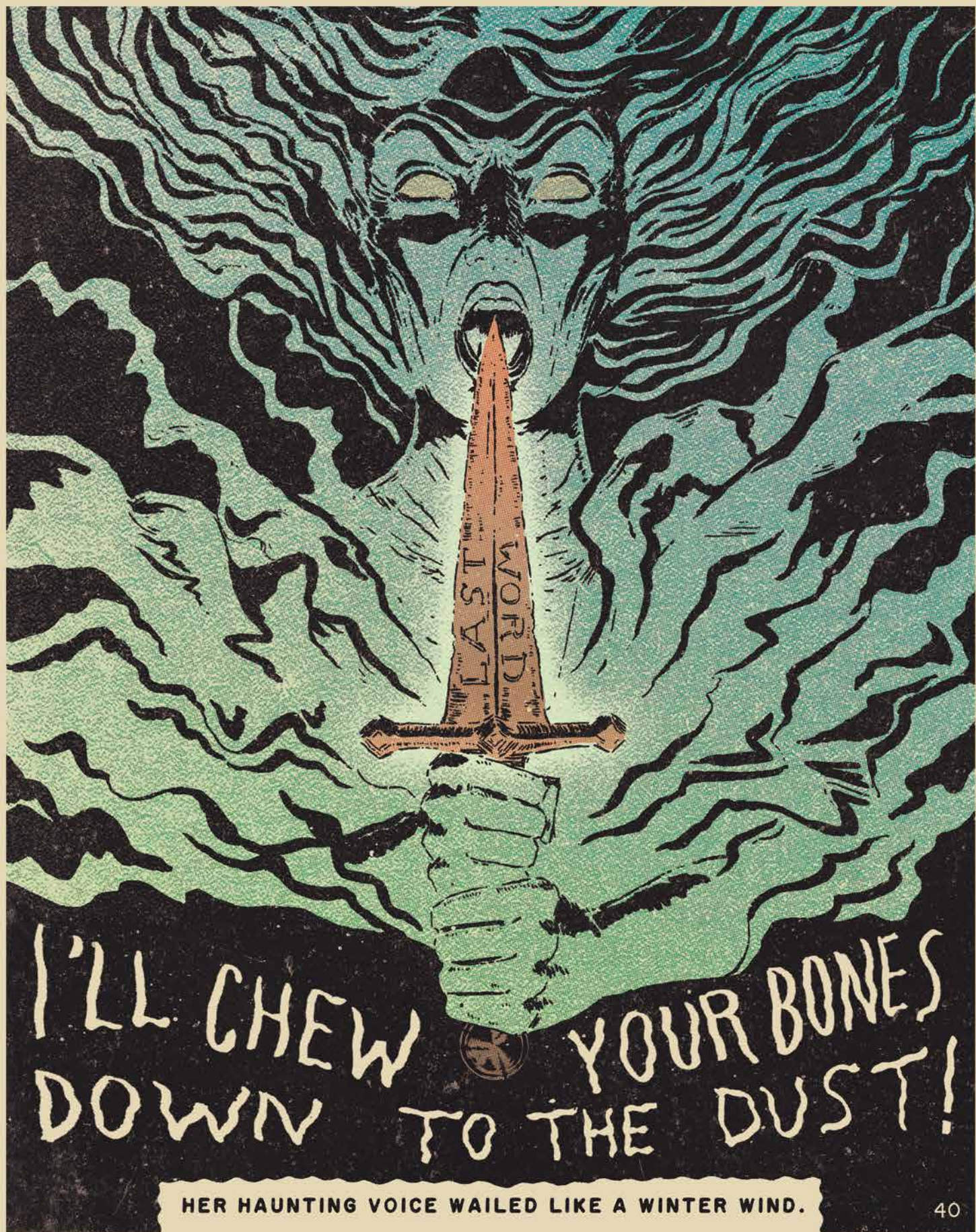
I'M GOING TO BLACK OUT SOON...

***JUST THEN I FIND
THE WOUNDED VESSEL***

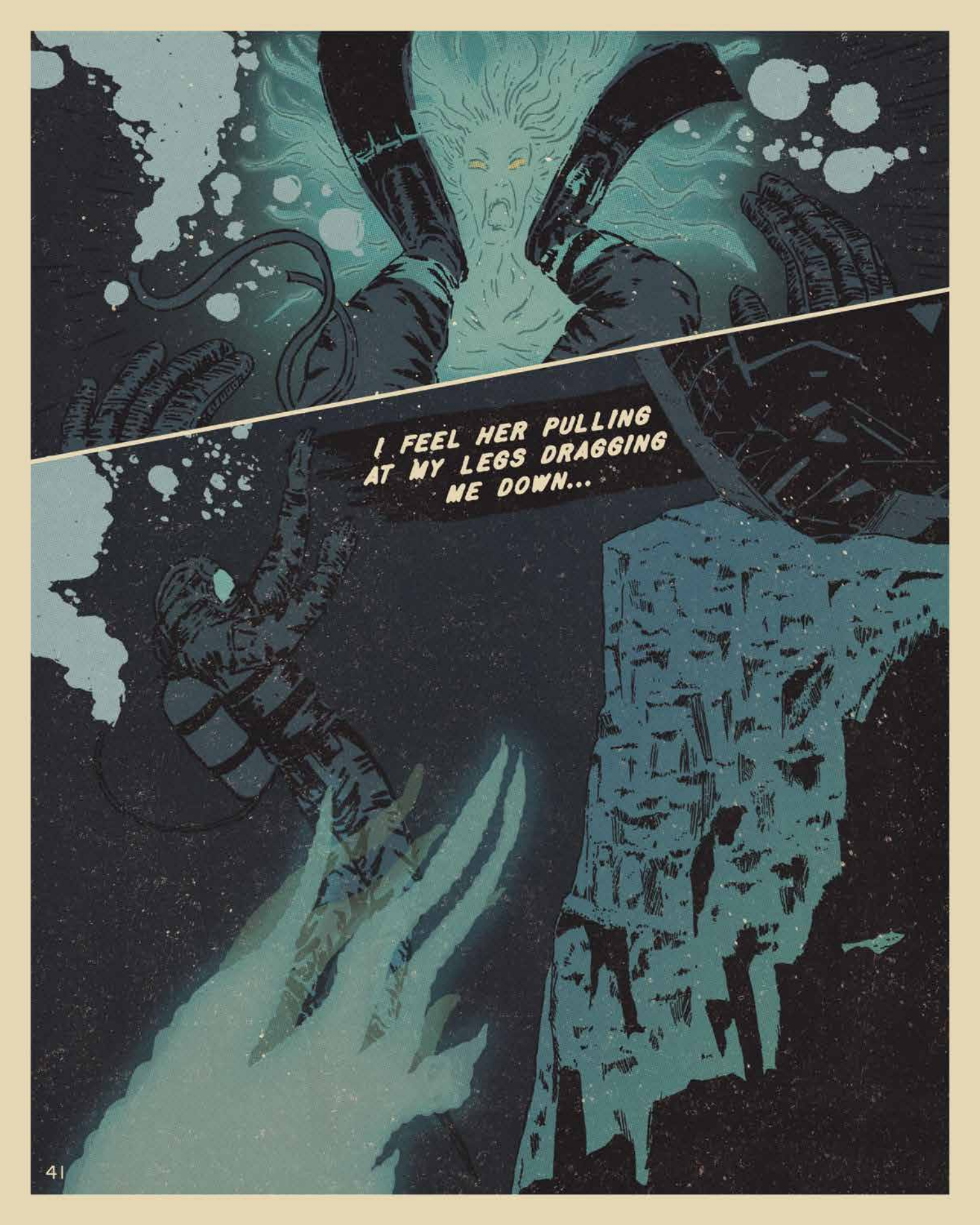


**I THINK I SEE AN OLD HAG'S FACE
IN THE REFLECTION... STARING AT ME...**



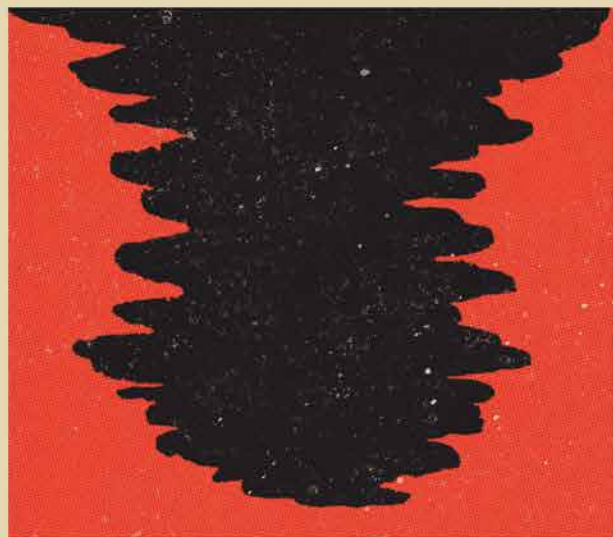


HER HAUNTING VOICE WAILED LIKE A WINTER WIND.



I FEEL HER PULLING
AT MY LEGS DRAGGING
ME DOWN...



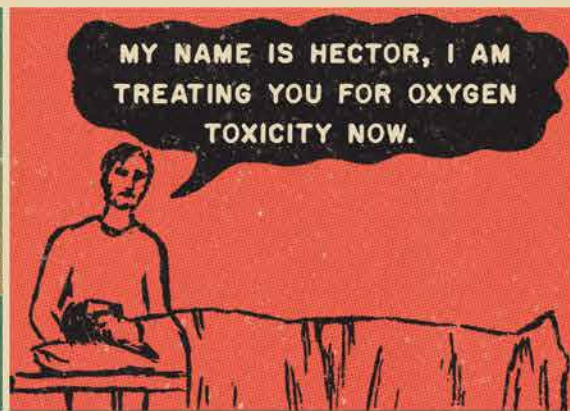


**THE NEXT THING I KNOW SOMEONE IS TAKING MY MASK OFF...
I HAD BEEN RESCUED.**





YOU'RE GOING TO
BE JUST FINE.



MY NAME IS HECTOR, I AM
TREATING YOU FOR OXYGEN
TOXICITY NOW.



I WAS HALLUCINATING.

YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL
FUZZY FOR THE NEXT
FEW HOURS, BUT IT
WILL PASS. YOU'RE
VERY LUCKY I FOUND
YOU WHEN I DID



HAH...
I THOUGHT
A BANSHEE
HAD ME.



SHE
DID.



AIBELL HAS BEEN HUNTING IN
THESE WATERS FOR A THOUSAND
YEARS. AND SHE WOULD HAVE YOU
TOO IF I HADN'T STOPPED HER!

HARDLY ABLE TO SPEAK, SHOCKED.

WHERE AM I?

YOU ARE ON BOARD
MY SUBMARINE, ISIS.

I HAD COME TO INVESTIGATE
THE SAME MERCHANT VESSEL
AS YOU, WHEN I HEARD THE
FAMILIAR WAILING OF AIBELL.
THAT'S WHEN I SAW YOU
SINKING PAST MY PORTHOLE.

WHAT WOULD YOU WANT WITH
A MERCHANT VESSEL?

WELL, THAT'S A COMPLICATED QUESTION, WITH
A COMPLICATED ANSWER. MY ANCESTORS BUILT
ISIS AS A WAY TO TRAVEL BETWEEN WORLDS.
NOT SO MUCH THE REALMS OF MEN AND, UH,
NOT-MEN... ALTHOUGH THAT IS POSSIBLE. IT'S
A SHIP THAT TAKES YOU BETWEEN TIME TO
DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS. I CAME HERE TO SEE
IF I COULD FIND AN OBJECT THAT IS SAID TO
BE ON THAT VESSEL. IF I COULD FIND IT AND
BRING IT BACK WITH ME, IT MAY PREVENT A
DEVASTATING CONFLICT.

WHY ARE YOU HERE, STEWART?

I WAS SENT TO FIND
OUT IF HER FUEL
TANKS WERE LEAKING.

AMAZING... BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO FIND
THIS THING WE'D BETTER GET MOVIN'.

AIBELL WILL
BE BACK
SOON...

FOR YOUR
BONES

WAIT HERE
AND DON'T
OPEN THE
HATCH UNTIL
YOU HEAR ME
TAP ON IT
LIKE THIS...

TAP
TAP
TAP

OKAY, GOT IT.

HECTOR SHOT OUT OF THE HATCH LIKE A BULLET.

**ALONE IN THE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER WITH MY OWN TOXIC THOUGHTS
I START TO PIECE THINGS TOGETHER.**

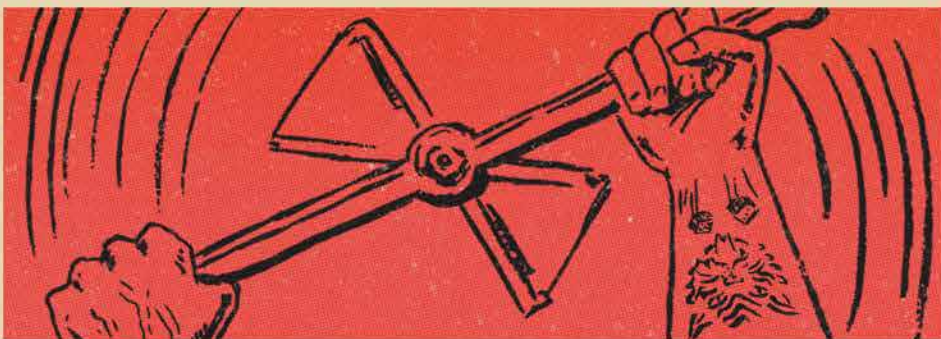


**A BANSHEE ALMOST KILLED ME...
MY LIFE WAS SAVED BY A MAN WHO CLAIMS TO TRAVEL TO ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS...
AND THERE'S SOMETHING ABOARD THAT SHIP THAT CAN STOP A WAR...
NONE OF THIS MAKES SENSE!**

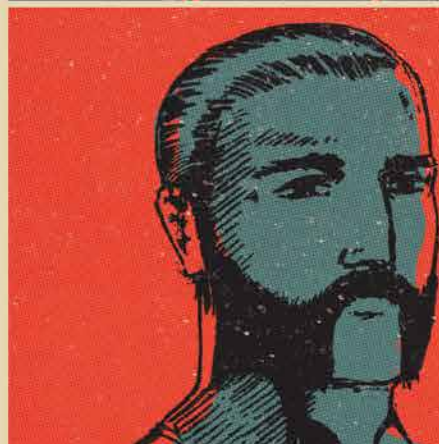


WHAT SEEMED LIKE
MINUTES LATER...

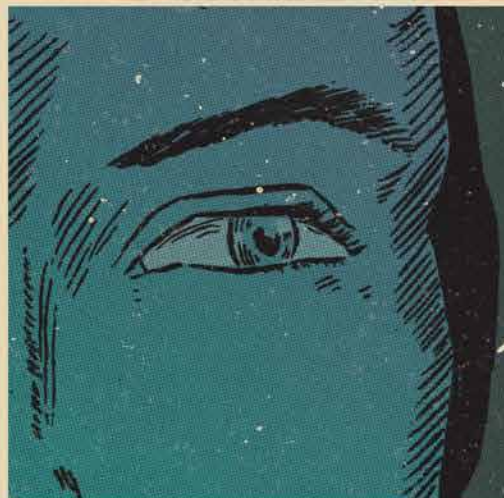
TAP TAP
TAP



GOT IT!



OH, AND THE
FUEL TANKS
AREN'T LEAKING.



LET'S GET OUT
OF HERE BEFORE
AIBELL COMES BACK.



ON THE BRIDGE HECTOR EXPLAINS HOW ISIS WORKS, BASIC INSTRUMENT OPERATION, NAVIGATION AND PILOTING BETWEEN TIME.

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to the right. The background consists of vertical lines, suggesting a window or a screen.

IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS, LET'S GET UNDERWAY.

WHERE ARE WE GOING??

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to the right. A woman with dark hair is visible on the left, looking towards him. The background consists of vertical lines, suggesting a window or a screen.

HAHA... TODAY MY NEW FRIEND, THERE IS NO DESTINATION, WE RIDE THE LIGHT BETWEEN TIME... AND ISIS, SHE TAKES US WHERE WE NEED TO BE!

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is looking slightly to the right. The background consists of vertical lines, suggesting a window or a screen.

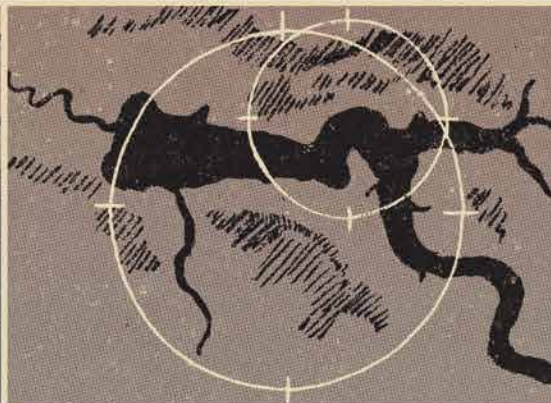
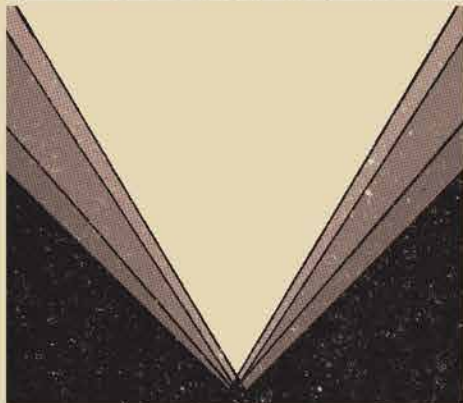
AND WHERE IS THAT EXACTLY?

A red hand with a black glove is shown. The hand is holding a black object. The background is red.

WE ARE GOING TO SEE

THE
BLACK
HAND

A CODEX OPENED UP AND PROJECTED INTEL ONTO THE GLASS.



Weather Forecast:

Showers Tonight; Fair Monday

By Special Weather Service

The Sun.

NUMBER 8211

SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 28, 1914.

PRICE ONE CENT.

SUNDAY EVENING
EDITION

THE BLACK HAND RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSASSINATION OF FRANZ FERDINAND

BOMB HURLED INTO CARRIAGE FAILS TO EXPLODE, USES PISTOL

Fires Several Shots, All of Which Lodged in Vital Parts, and Francis Ferdinand of Austria and Sophie Chotek, His Morganatic Wife, Were Found to Have Been Killed Instantly.

VIENNA, June 28.—The Archduke Francis Ferdinand and the archduchess were assassinated today as they were leaving the Sarajevo station. A Serb student of eighteen, first hurled a bomb into the carriage. This took no effect. He then opened fire on the royal couple with a revolver. He fired several shots, all of which lodged in vital points and the archduke and duchess were found to have been killed instantly.

The assassin was arrested after being attacked by a mob and has been banished from Bosnia.

MAY LEAD TO WAR



MURDERED ARCHDUKE.
The Archduke Francis Ferdinand

It is so feared that after the assassination of the archduke, the world will be plunged into a new era of the tragedy. The assassin, a Serb student, was arrested after being attacked by a mob and has been banished from Bosnia.

NO NOT THE
MUSICIAN, THE
ARCHDUKE OF
AUSTRIA-ESTE.



SEVEN PASSENGERS FLY THROUGH AIR WITH LIEUT. PORTER

Trans-Atlantic Flight Plans Advanced by Almost Perfect Behavior of the Marvel.

By LIEUT. JOHN CYRIL PORTER, R.N. Rapid and surprising progress was made by the crew of the America in the air. The first of the crew to fly through the air was the pilot, who was followed by the other passengers. The flight was a success, and the crew was able to land safely.

The flight was a success, and the crew was able to land safely. The flight was a success, and the crew was able to land safely. The flight was a success, and the crew was able to land safely.

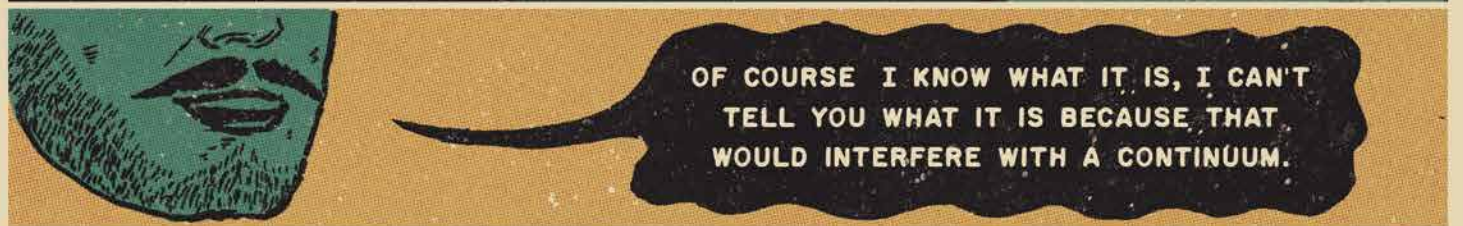
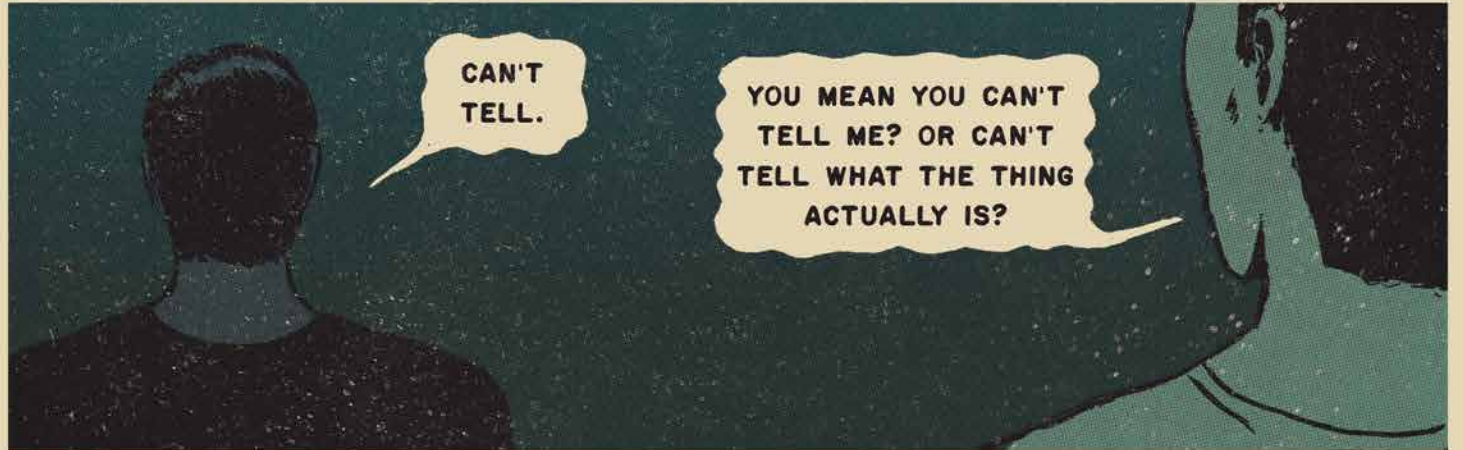
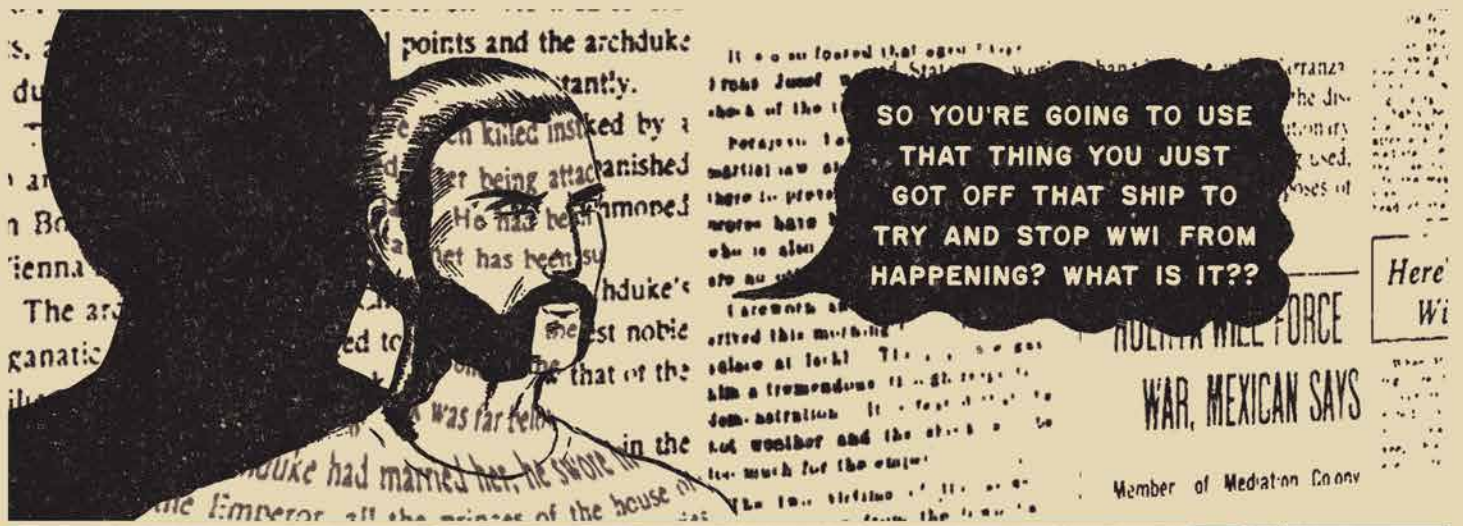
NEWMAN TO FILE MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL WEDNESDAY

Three Grounds for Setting Aside Verdict in Outer Suit Are Alleged.

A motion for a new trial of the late Newman's proceedings was filed today by the late Newman's counsel. The motion was based on three grounds: first, that the jury was improperly instructed; second, that the evidence was insufficient; and third, that the verdict was against the weight of the evidence. The motion was filed on Wednesday.



of a concerted plan in which... believed to have been the result of... 1906, against the policy of the Arch... of the royal party, and when the Bosnian diet met after the



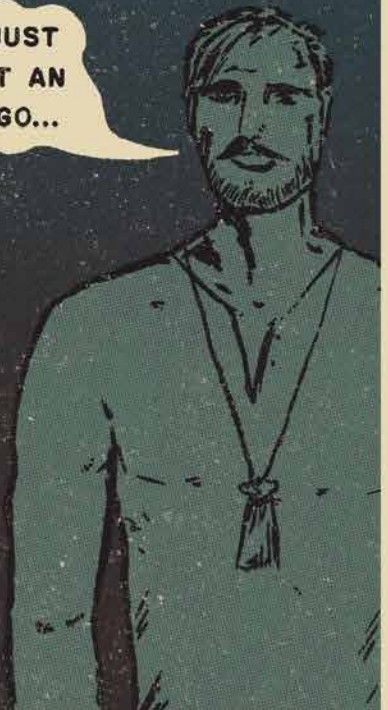
YES AND NO, YOU SEE YOUR CONTINUUM WOULD HAVE ENDED THERE WITH THE BANSHEE. SO THE WAY I SEE IT, THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU...



...SINCE YOU CAN NEVER GO BACK THERE AND I'M LOOKING FOR A CREW. STILL... TELLING YOU WHAT IT IS WOULD PUT YOUR LIFE IN JEOPARDY...



AND I JUST SAVED IT AN HOUR AGO...



WITH THAT EXPLANATION, I REALIZE HOW GRATEFUL I FEEL TOWARD HECTOR FOR SAVING ME FROM THE BANSHEE, AND MAYBE FROM MYSELF FEELING SLIGHTLY ASHAMED, I SHUT MY EYES AND DRIFT OFF TO SLEEP AS THE CHROME SAUSAGE BENDS ITS WAY ACROSS THE LIGHT, IN BETWEEN TIME.



HEY!
WAKE UP!

OH CURSE!

YOU SEE BOYS THE THING ABOUT SLIPPING BETWEEN TIME IS THE PROBABILITY YOU CHANGE IN SOME WAY. IN ANOTHER DIMENSION I MAY BE BE MUCH TALLER, MUCH YOUNGER, OR I COULD HAVE THE FACE OF A CAT, OR A CAT BODY WITH A MAN FACE... ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.



LIKE HAVING
SWORDS FOR
HANDS?



EXACTLY!



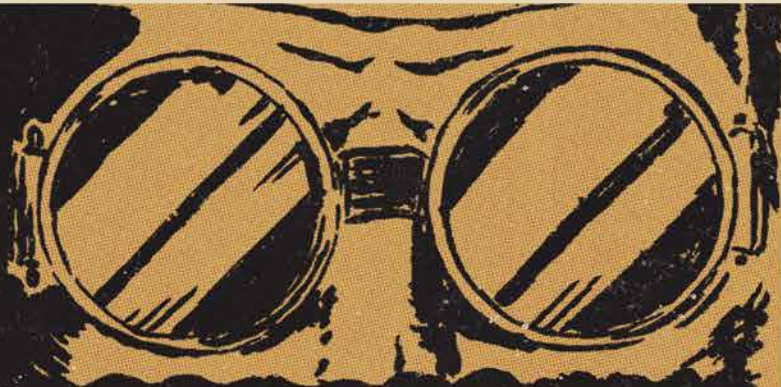


**THE BOYS LOOK AT EACH OTHER, FRIGHTENED. THEIR HEARTS
AFLAME AT THE POSSIBILITY OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!**





WHERE ARE
WE GOING?



TO HERACLEON. WE'RE GOING TO MEET
THE MAKERS OF ISIS, HECTORS ANCESTORS.

ASTEROIDS BEGIN TO BREAK THE SILENCE.



UM, AREN'T
THEY LIKE GODS
OR SOMETHING?
ARE YOU SURE
THAT'S A
GOOD IDEA?



YOUR FATHER
THOUGHT IT
WAS A GOOD
IDEA TWO
YEARS AGO
AFTER HECTOR
PICKED HIM UP
AND TRAPPED
HIM IN THIS
CURSED SUB!



WHAT!? MY FATHER'S ALIVE???



OF COURSE, HIS CONTINUUM WAS ABOUT TO END AND HECTOR TOOK HIM ON BOARD, SAME AS ME... AND NOW I'M THE ONE THAT'S TRAPPED IN HERE. YOU SEE, THERE'S A BOND WITH ISIS. ONCE SHE HAS YOU, SHE DON'T LET GO EASILY.

WHERE IS LOU'S FATHER NOW?

HE IS IN HERACLEON, LEADING THE REBELLION AGAINST TYRANNY AND CONSTANT MANIPULATION IN THE HUMAN WORLD BY HECTOR'S ANCESTORS. YOU SEE, THE WAY THIS WORKS IS HECTOR'S FAMILY SEES THE WAY THINGS ARE, THE WAY THEY COULD BE AND THE WAY THINGS OUGHT TO BE. IF THEY DECIDE TO TRY TO CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF SOMETHING THEY SEND HECTOR TO CHANGE IT AS THEY WISH IT SO.

HECTOR WANTS TO PROVE TO HIS ANCESTORS THAT MEN ARE INHERENTLY GOOD. WE CHOOSE LIGHT OVER DARK, RIGHT OVER WRONG, PLEASURE OVER PAIN, KETCHUP OVER MUSTARD... THAT SORT OF THING. HE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM THAT PEOPLE HAVE FREE WILL AND A DESTINY THAT SHOULDN'T BE INTERRUPTED, OR MANIPULATED. HE'S TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM TO LEAVE US ALONE SO WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN CHOICES... NO MATTER THE OUTCOME. YOUR FATHER, SYD, QUICKLY ROSE TO THE TOP OF THE RANKS OF HECTOR'S CREW AND NOW HE'S LEADING THE REVOLUTION... A FULL SCALE WAR BETWEEN MEN AND GODS...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MUSTARD?

WE'RE NEARLY THERE, ARE YOU GUYS READY?

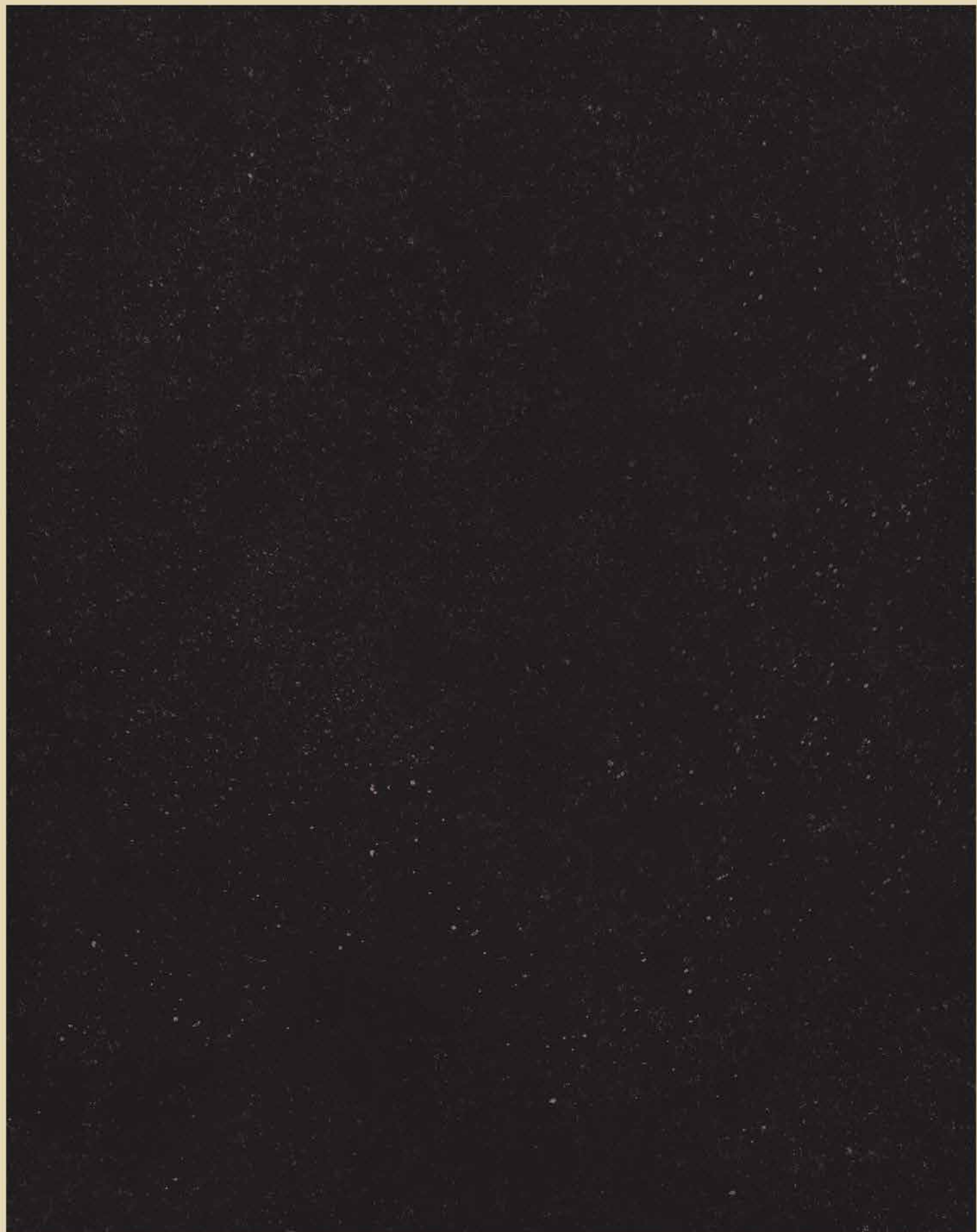


REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU BOYS ABOUT THE PROBABILITY OF CHANGING IN SOME WAY... CAUSE THIS IS GONNA BEND YOUR NOODLE... JUST DON'T THINK ABOUT CATS.



*LIGHT IS BENT. ISIS IS REMARKABLY SMOOTH AND QUIET AS SHE'S
RIPPING THE LIGHT UNTIL SUDDENLY ANYTHING THAT COULD BE,
ANY PROBABILITY BEGINS TO PRESENT ITSELF LIKE A SLOT
MACHINE RUNNING THROUGH ALL THE POSSIBILITIES OF WINNING,
EACH MILLISECOND EVERYTHING CHANGES, ALL THINGS COMING
AT ONCE. INDESCRIBABLE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE.*

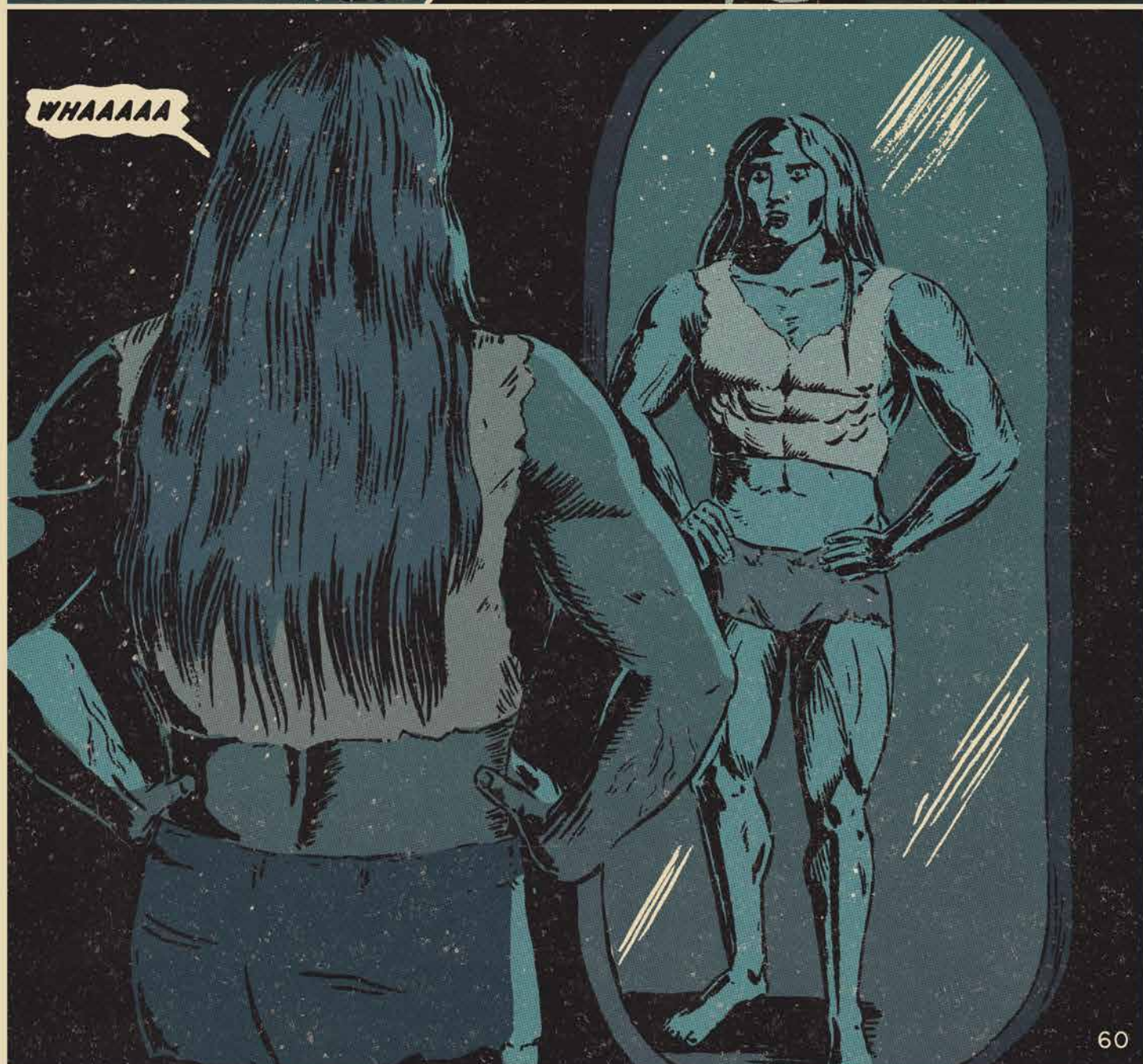






THEN SUDDENLY THE CHROME SAUSAGE STOPS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHAOS AS IF SHE'S TRYING TO GET THROUGH A CAVE THAT IS MUCH TOO SMALL FOR HER GIRTH. SHORTY, SHIRO AND LOU LURCH FORWARD, BUT ARE HELD INTO PLACE BY THEIR SAFETY HARNESSSES. THEY'VE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS TEMPORARILY. TIME SLIPPING IS HARD ON THE BODY AND HARDER ON THE COGNITIVE REASONING. LOU BEGINS TO OPEN HIS EYES.









WHAT THE CURSE!

TOLD YOU...



YOU WERE THINKING
ABOUT CATS
WEREN'T YOU?

...WAS NOT...

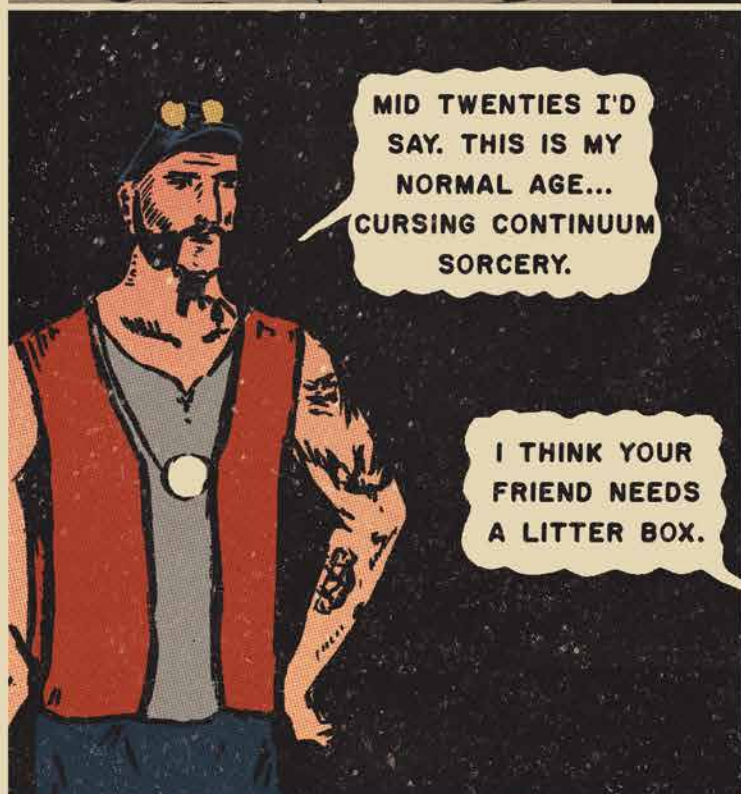




IT ISN'T POSSIBLE, IT'S RATHER IMPOSSIBLE. PROBABILITY DOESN'T FOLLOW ANY LAWS OR RULES. IT JUST DOES WHAT IT DOES. THE GODS ARE CRUEL I GUESS. JUST LIKE IN LIFE, HAVING ANY KIND OF GREAT POWER OFTEN IS FOLLOWED BY AN EQUAL, UM, SACRIFICE, SOMETIMES IRONIC. REMEMBER JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO I WAS TWO FEET SHORTER? THAT'S THE GOD'S CRUELTY AT WORK... SICK SENSE OF HUMOR IF YOU ASK ME...

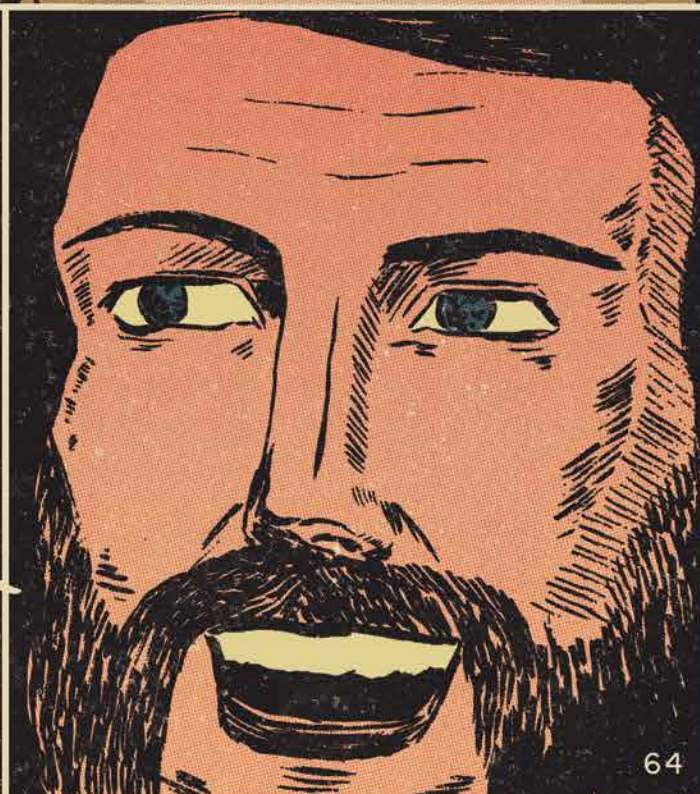


BUT WE'RE NOT JUST BIGGER... WE'RE OLDER.



MID TWENTIES I'D SAY. THIS IS MY NORMAL AGE... CURSING CONTINUUM SORCERY.

I THINK YOUR FRIEND NEEDS A LITTER BOX.





HOW ARE WE
SUPPOSED TO FIGHT
GODS THOUGH
SHORTY?



YOU DON'T. YOU NEEDN'T
WORRY ABOUT FIGHTING
GODS, IT'S THEIR UH,
LITTLE FRIENDS YOU
NEED TO WORRY ABOUT

HERE, PUT ON YOUR CODEXES!



NOW LETS GET
OUT OF HERE.
IT'S STARTING
TO SMELL LIKE
A CAT'S SANDBOX.



THE THREE CREW MEMBERS EXIT ISIS THROUGH THE DECOMPRESSION CHAMBER WITHOUT ANY SCUBA GEAR, THEIR CODEXES NOW PROTECT THEM, SENDING TUBES AND MASKS UP TO THEIR FACES, EVEN CHANGING THEIR CLOTHES INTO SOME KIND OF BREATHABLE KEVLAR MATERIAL TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE ELEMENTS, BLADES, TEETH AND CLAWS.











THAT'S GOT TO BE
100 MILES FROM HERE!
WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT
ON FOOT...

150, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, WE
WON'T MAKE IT ON FOOT. SO
WHAT'LL IT BE THEN BOYS?
ATV, DUNE BUGGY OR JEEP?

I KNOW... JETPAAACKS!

*THEIR CODEX'S LABOR TO PRODUCE PIPES, HANDLES AND HUDS
(HEAD'S UP DISPLAY) THAT SHOOT IN FRONT OF THEIR FACES LIKE AN
EX-GIRLFRIEND SHOWING YOU EVIDENCE OF WHY YOU'RE BREAKING UP.*

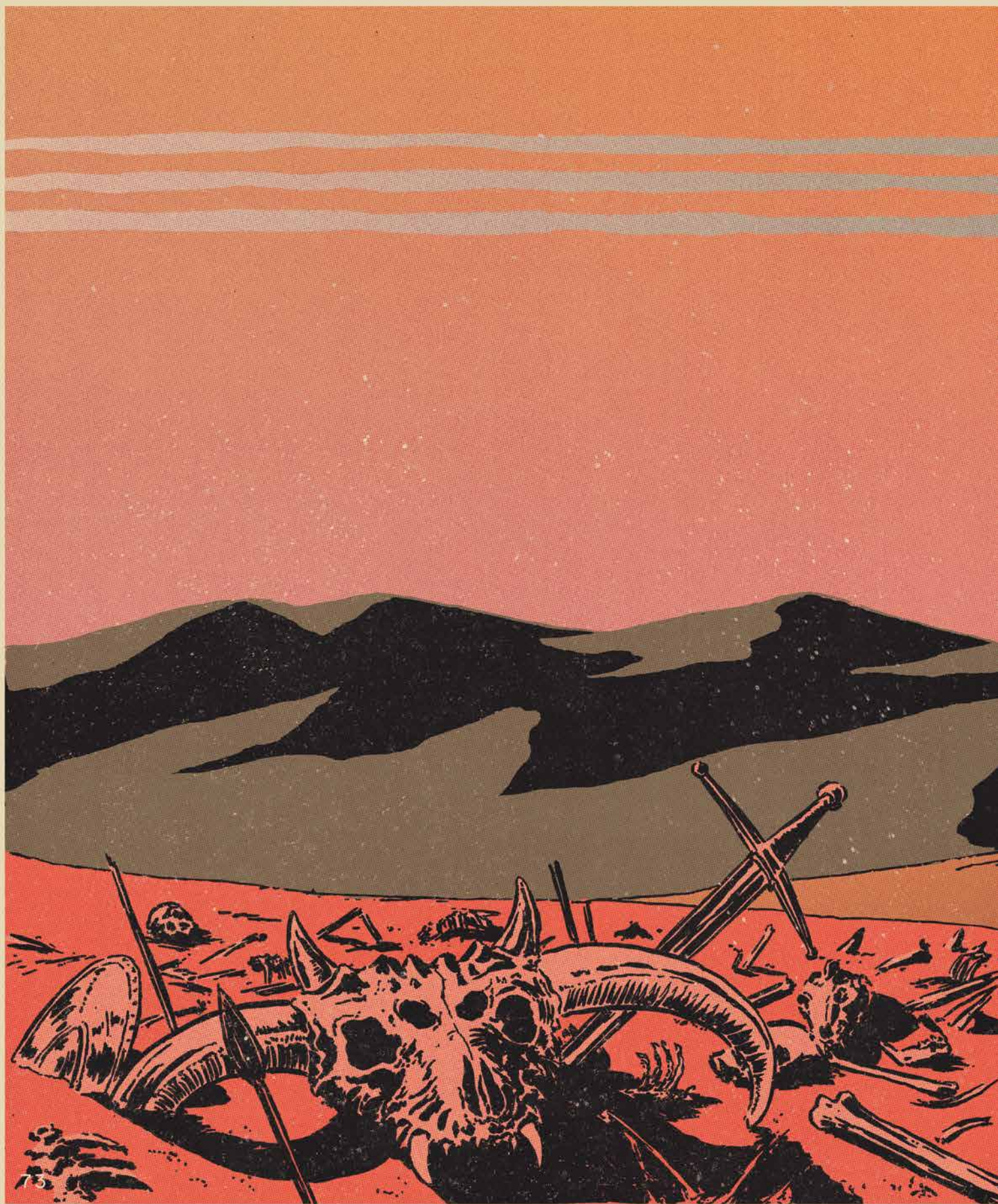


CLICK.

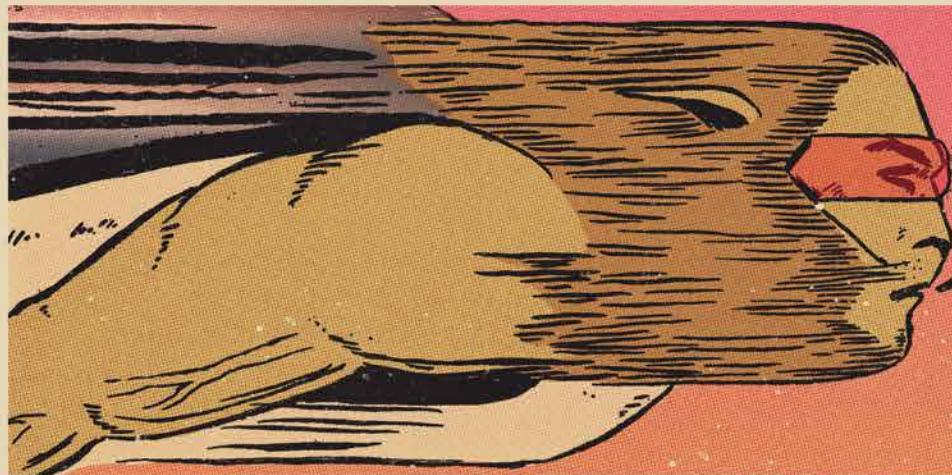


**THERE'S NO COUNTDOWN OR WAITING, THEY BLAST OFF ABOUT
300 FEET INTO THE AIR AND MAKE THEIR WAY WESTWARD.**







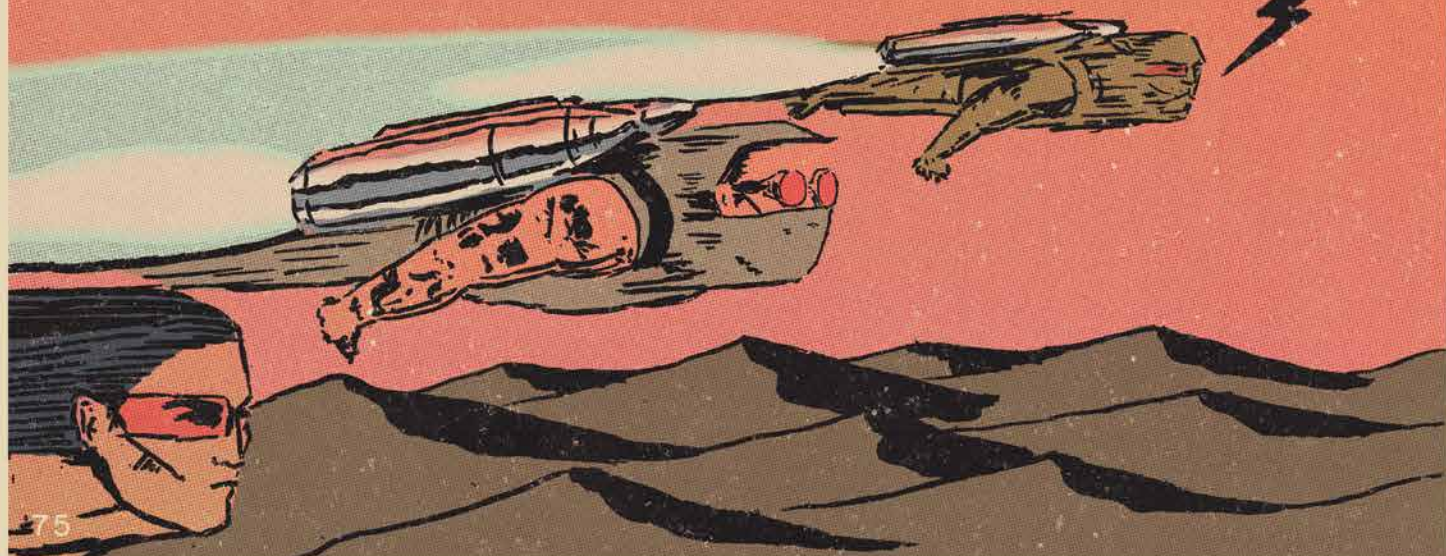


I CAN'T BELIEVE
YOUR FATHER'S
ALIVE LOU. AND
WE GET TO SEE
HIM AGAIN IN
ABOUT AN HOUR!

I'VE MISSED HIM SO MUCH, I
CAN'T GET THERE FAST ENOUGH!
I'M ALSO KINDA MAD IT TOOK HIM
TWO YEARS TO SEND SHORTY FOR
ME. NOW THAT I KNOW HE'S ALIVE,
THAT EMPTY FEELING I'VE BEEN
HAVING MAKES SENSE. IT FEELS
LIKE HE ABANDONED ME... LIKE
HE DIDN'T WANT ME ANYMORE.



YOU CAN'T KNOW THAT, IN A WAY HE DIED BECAUSE HIS CONTINUUM BROKE
AND HE COULD NEVER COME BACK. MAYBE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY HE COULD
GET TO YOU. MAYBE HE'S BEEN WORKING OUT A PLAN TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN
FOR ALL THAT TIME. I'M SURE HE FEELS AS BAD AS YOU DO, BUT
I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'D FEEL HURT. I MISS HIM TOO.



**IS THAT SMOKE?
ARE YOU GUYS SEEING
WHAT I'M SEEING?**

**I WISH I COULD SEE BETTER,
I CAN'T QUITE MAKE IT OUT.**

**JUST THEN THE CODEX ABIDES TO HIS WISH AND ENHANCES
THE HUD DISPLAY, 3X MAGNIFICATION. LOU'S HEART JUMPS
INTO HIS THROAT, HE FEELS LIKE HE'S GOING TO CRY, BUT
INSTEAD CHOKES IT BACK AND HAS A FULL FREAKOUT.**

ENHANCE 15X

HOSTILES
DETECTED

**WE'RE STILL AT LEAST 20 MINUTES
AWAY, WHAT IF THEY'RE GETTING
THEIR ASSES KICKED/? WHY
CAN'T THIS THING GO ANY FASTER?**

SHIRO AND SHORTY ARE SILENT,

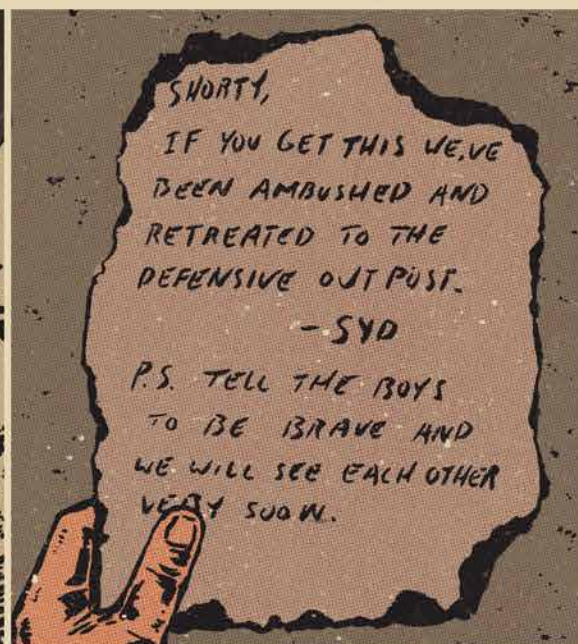
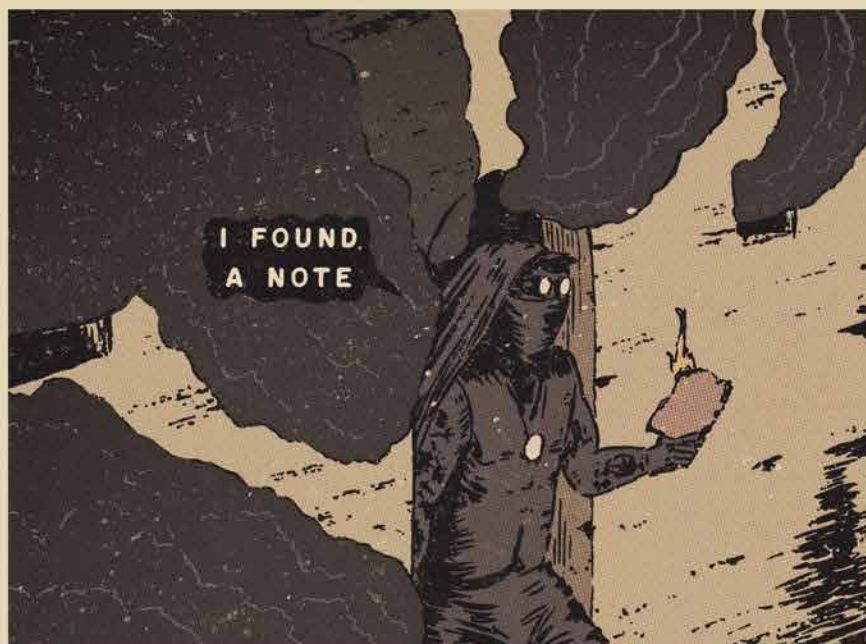
FEARING THE WORST.

ALLOWING THE WIND TO BLOW AWAY THEIR DREAD.

AFTER WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY, THEY ARRIVE AT THE REBEL CAMP, BUT IT'S ALL ON FIRE. EVERY MAKESHIFT STRUCTURE IS BURNING, THERE ARE SCORCHED BODIES OF MAN AND BEAST, AND PIECES OF THEM BEING PICKED AT BY SCAVENGING BIRDS. THE THREE LAND AT THE CENTER OF THE CAMP, THEIR CODEXES FOLDING AWAY AND CONCEALING ALL THAT WAS OF THE JET PACKS. LOU IS DEVASTATED.



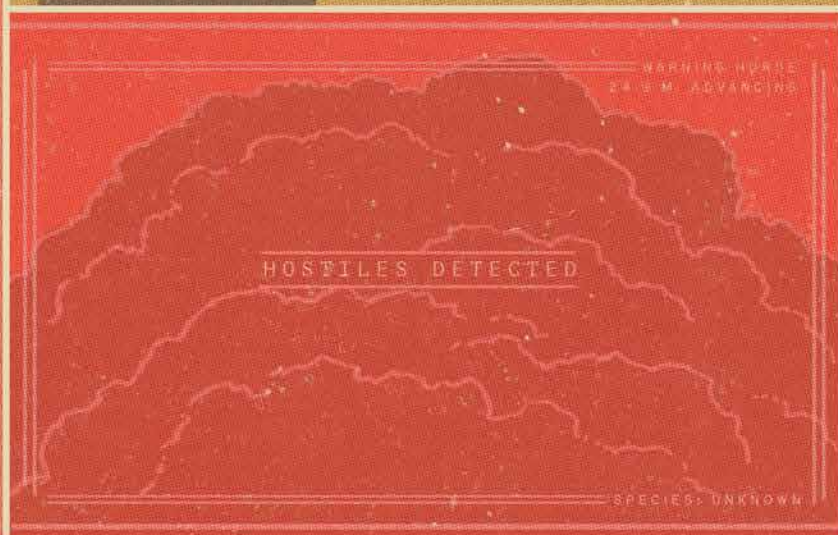
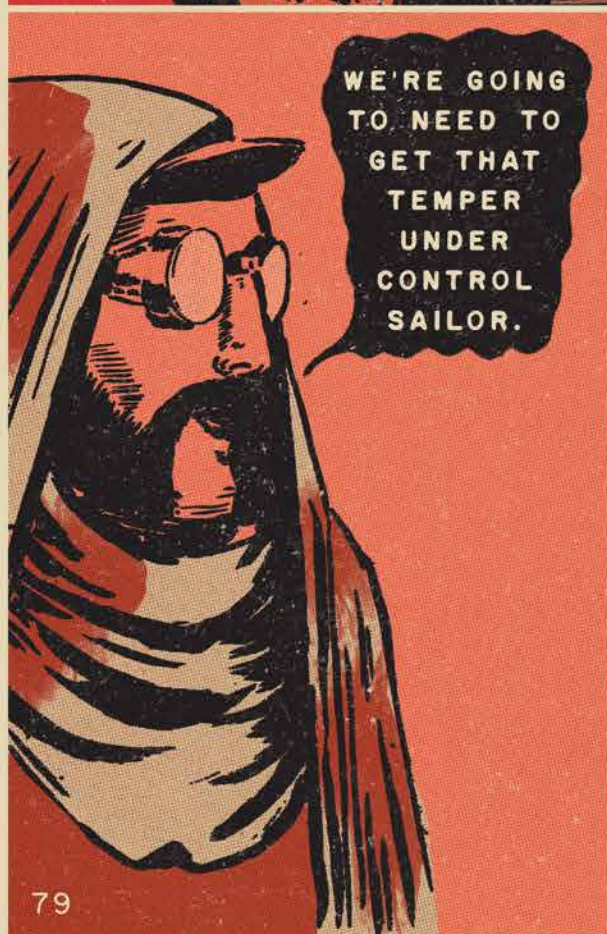
**WE'RE TOO LATE!
NO NO NO... THIS
ISN'T HAPPENING.**

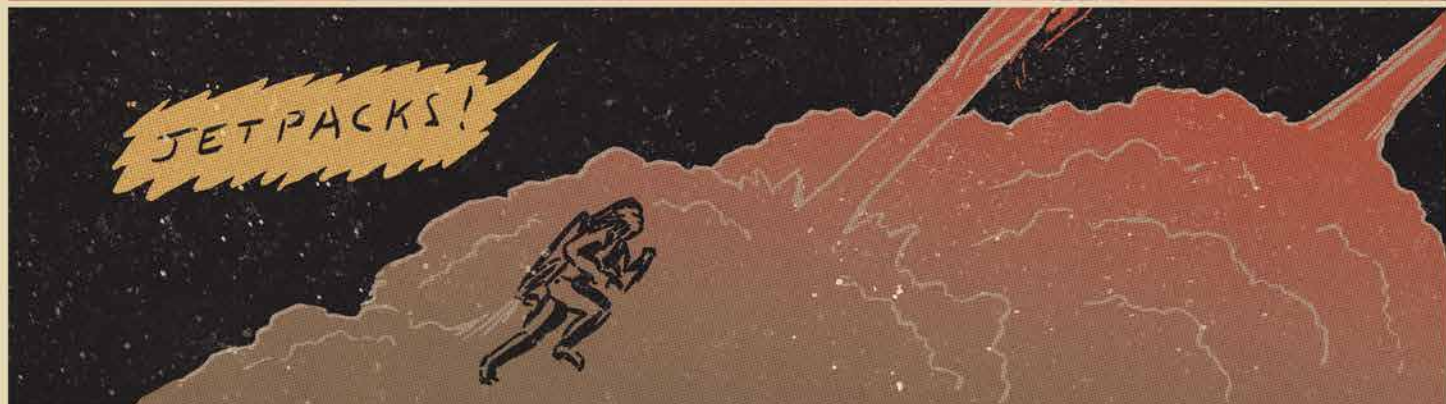


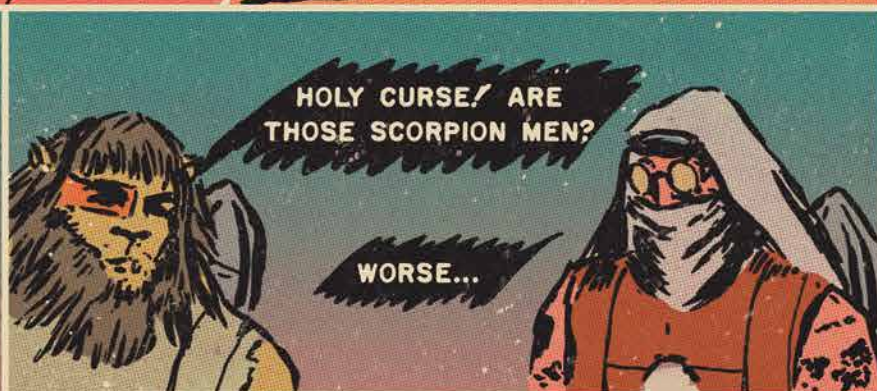
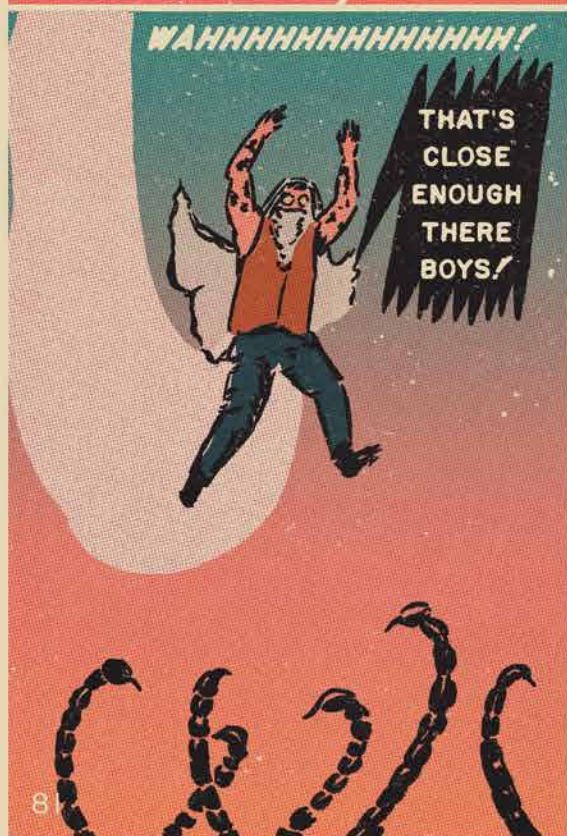
AS LOU GETS TO THE END OF THE NOTE, HE FEELS DEFEATED, FILLED WITH FRUSTRATION THAT HIS FATHER ISN'T THERE. HE LOOKS FOR SOMETHING TO THROW OR SMASH. HE PICKS UP, OF ALL THINGS, THE HEAD OF A BEAST AND GRABS IT BY THE FUR AND HURLS IT INTO THE AIR.



BOOM!







Three figures are shown floating in the sky against a teal background. On the left is a muscular, yellow-skinned figure with a lion's head. In the center is a figure in a red shirt, blue pants, and a white cape, wearing goggles. On the right is a figure in a brown shirt and blue pants, also wearing goggles.

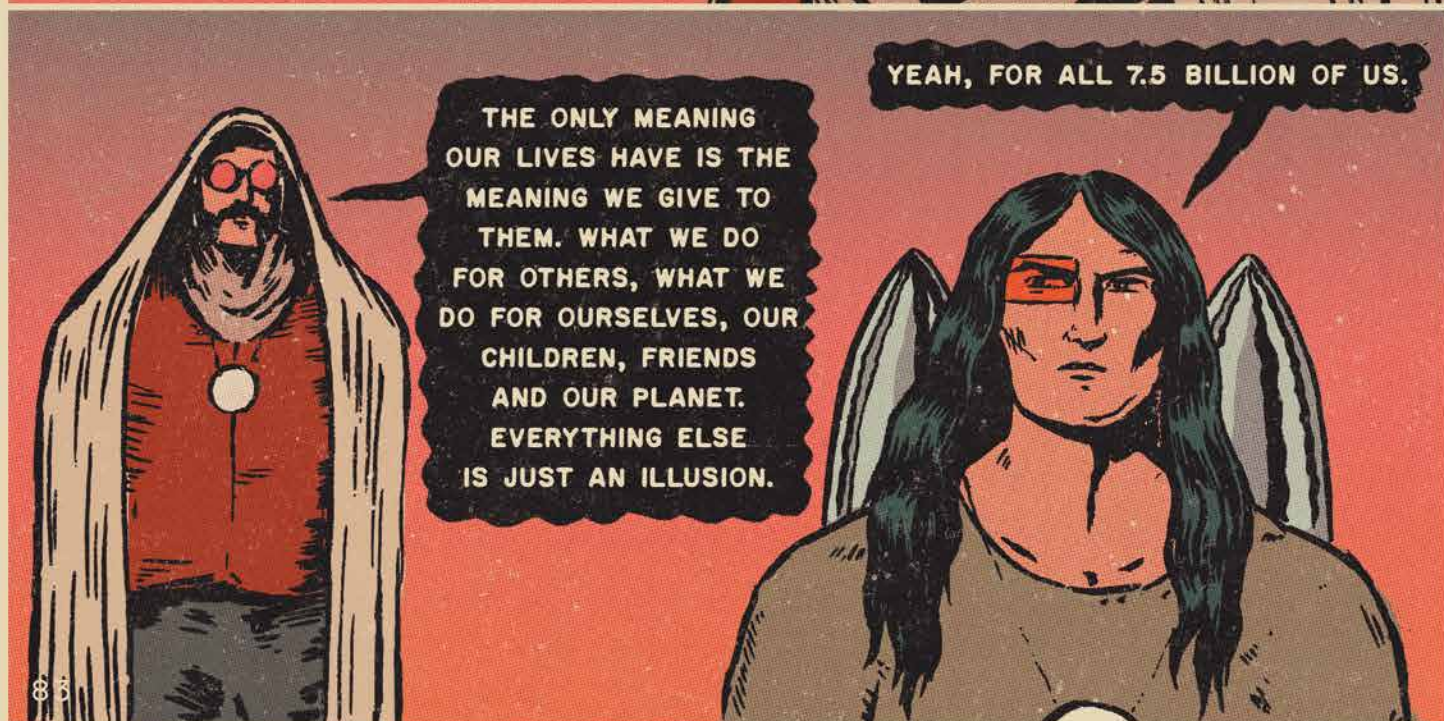
THEY'RE THE UNDEAD CREATION OF
THE HERACLEON SCIENCE OFFICER.
THEY HAVE NO NAME, NO HOME,
OR REFUGE, CREATED TO DESTROY,
SCAVENGE AND CLEANSE THE LAND
OF ANYTHING LIVING OR DEAD.





THERE'S NOTHING
LIKE THESE GUYS
FROM MYTHOLOGY
BOOKS, NOT IN
ANY CULTURE!

PSH, THOSE BOOKS ARE
HALF TRUTHS, THOUSANDS
OF YEARS OLD, WRITTEN BY
SUPERSTITIOUS WHACK JOBS
WHO THOUGHT THE WORLD
WAS FLAT AND THEIR LIVES
WERE ALL PLANNED OUT BY
SOME DIVINE ENTITY.



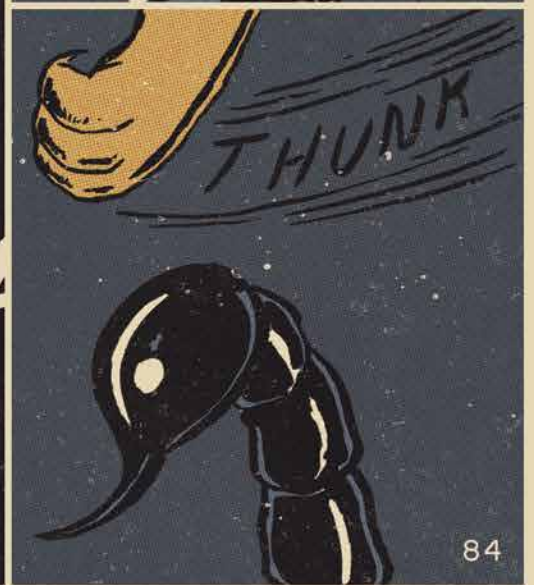
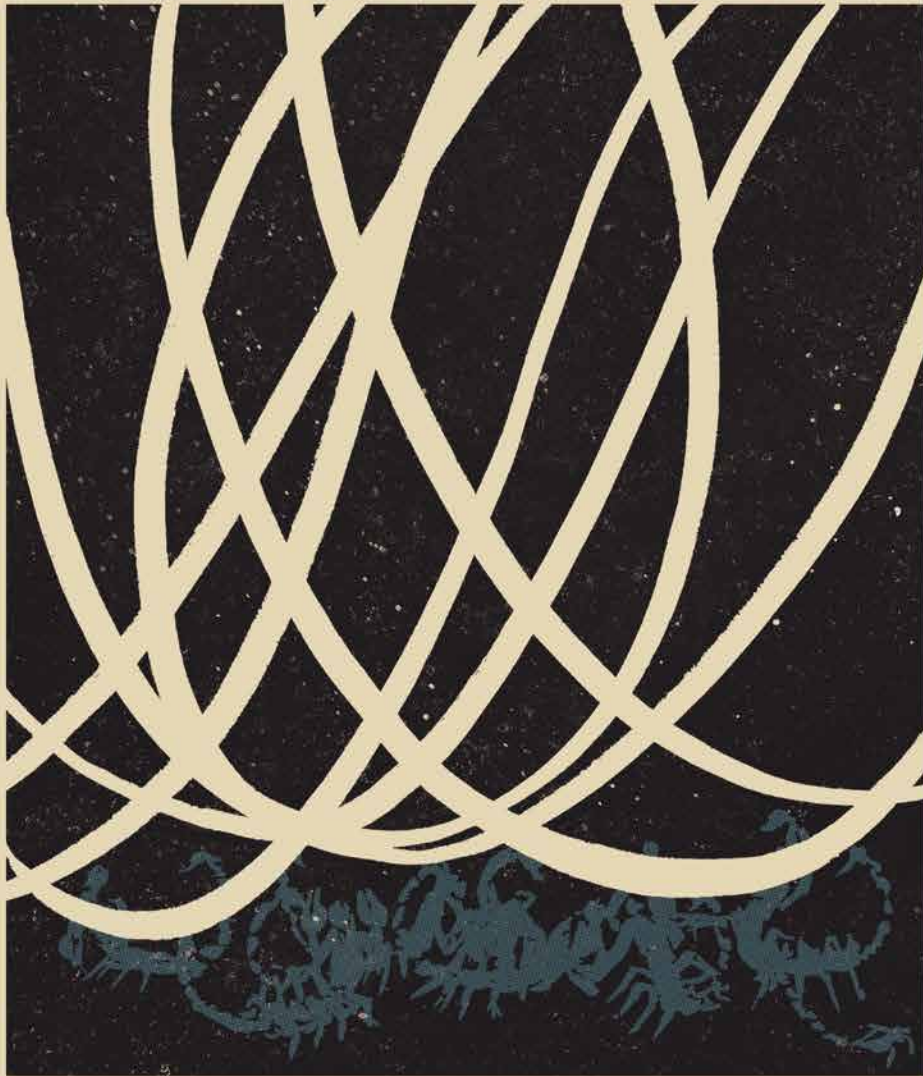
THE ONLY MEANING
OUR LIVES HAVE IS THE
MEANING WE GIVE TO
THEM. WHAT WE DO
FOR OTHERS, WHAT WE
DO FOR OURSELVES, OUR
CHILDREN, FRIENDS
AND OUR PLANET.
EVERYTHING ELSE
IS JUST AN ILLUSION.

YEAH, FOR ALL 7.5 BILLION OF US.





LOU, THE WARRIOR AND SHIRO THE CAT-MAN SWOOP DOWN TO THE CURSED, UNDEAD, MAN-SCORPIONS, SLAPPING THEM ON THE TOP OF THEIR ROTTING HEADS LIKE CROWS TRYING TO SNATCH A HALF EATEN HOT DOG, CARELESSLY BEING HELD BY AN UNSUSPECTING TODDLER. THIS REALLY PISSES THEM OFF, THEIR POISONOUS STINGERS AND CLAWS UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM THE AERIAL ATTACK.





YOU DING-A-LINGS ABOUT DONE
WITH YOUR LITTLE GAME?
WE HAVE A BATTLE TO WIN...
AND IT'S GETTING CLOSER.

THE RAGING SAND CLOUD AND LOW RUMBLING IS GAINING ON THEM.



IT MUST BE SOME
KIND OF MONSTER ARMY.

I'M AFRAID SO. THEY'RE FOLLOWING
OUR VAPOUR TRAILS AND WE'RE
LEADING THEM STRAIGHT TO THE REBELS.



WHAT DO WE DO?



KEEP MOVING! THEY ALREADY KNOW WHAT DIRECTION WE'RE HEADING... NOTHING WE CAN DO TO CHANGE THAT... WE HAVE TO REACH THE REBELS DEFENSIVE POSITION BEFORE THEY DO SO WE CAN WARN THEM TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

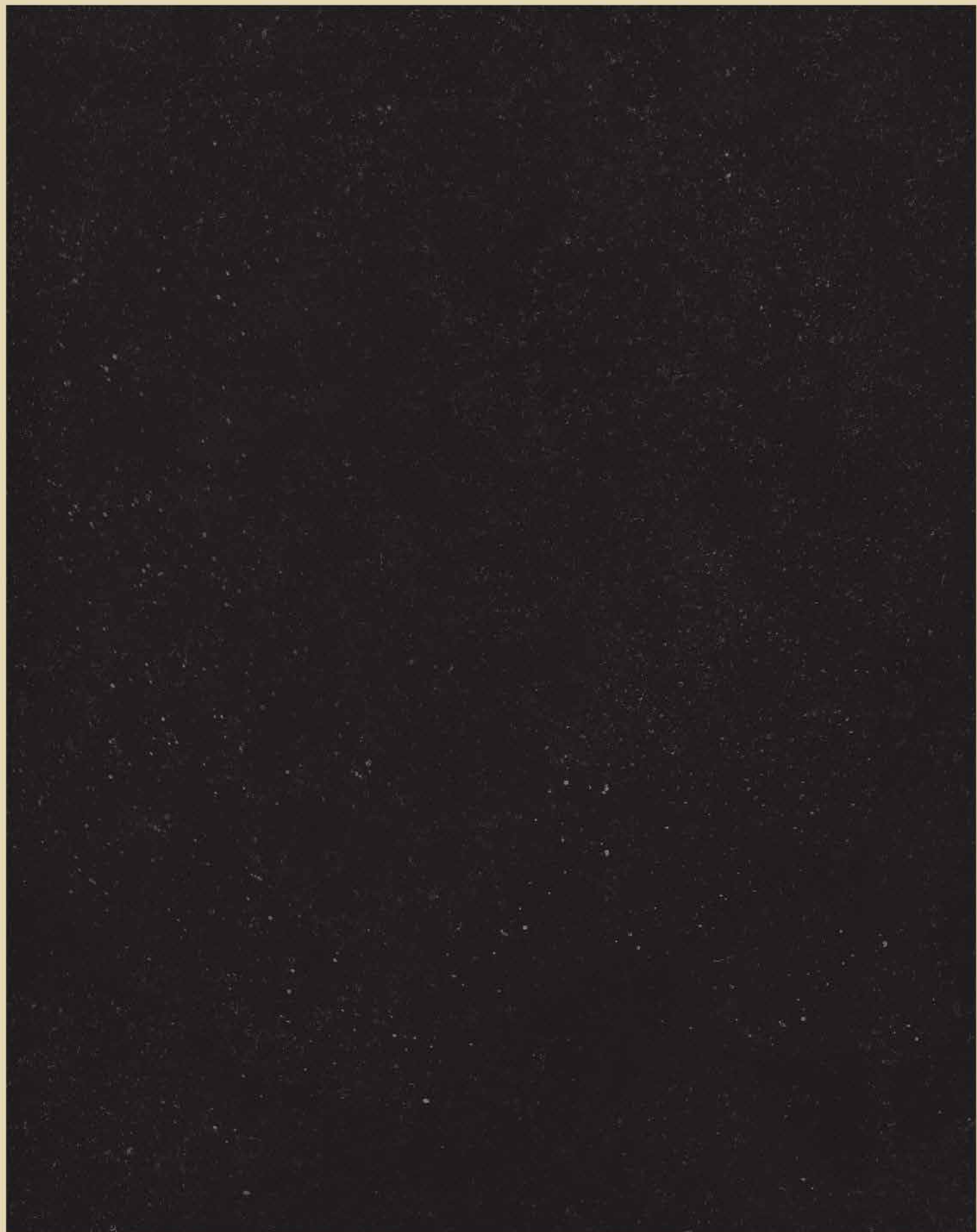


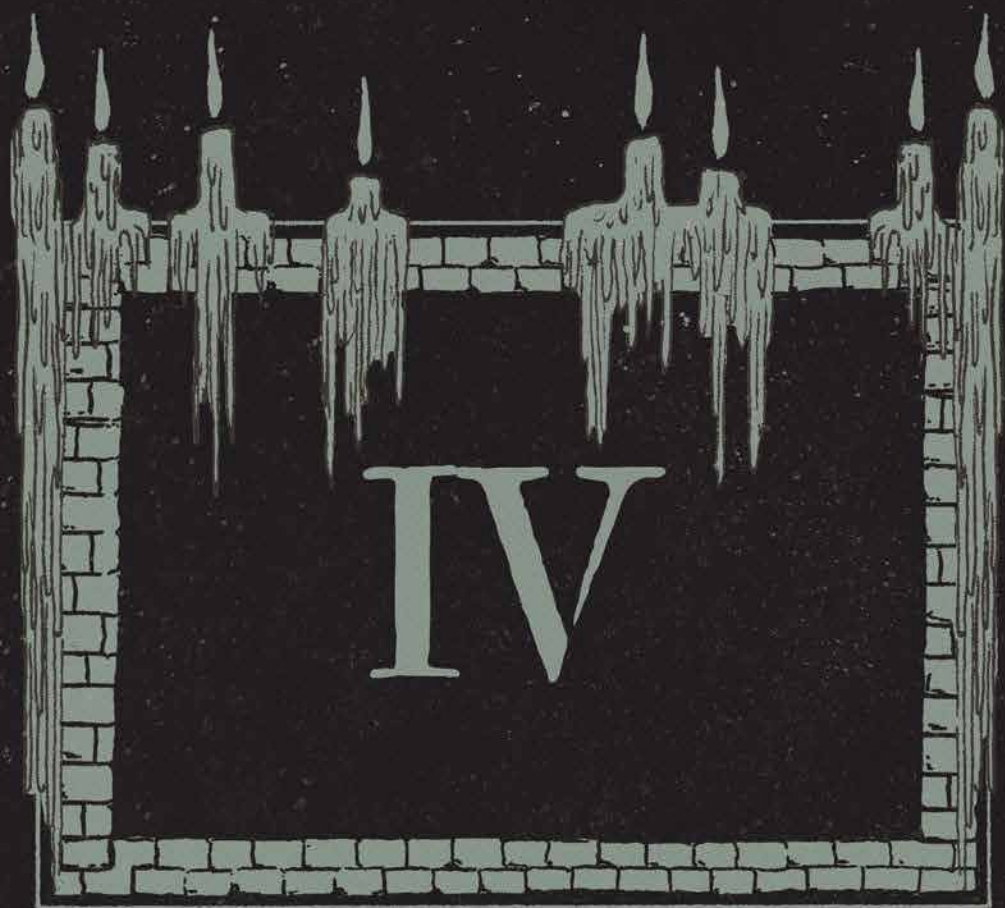
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

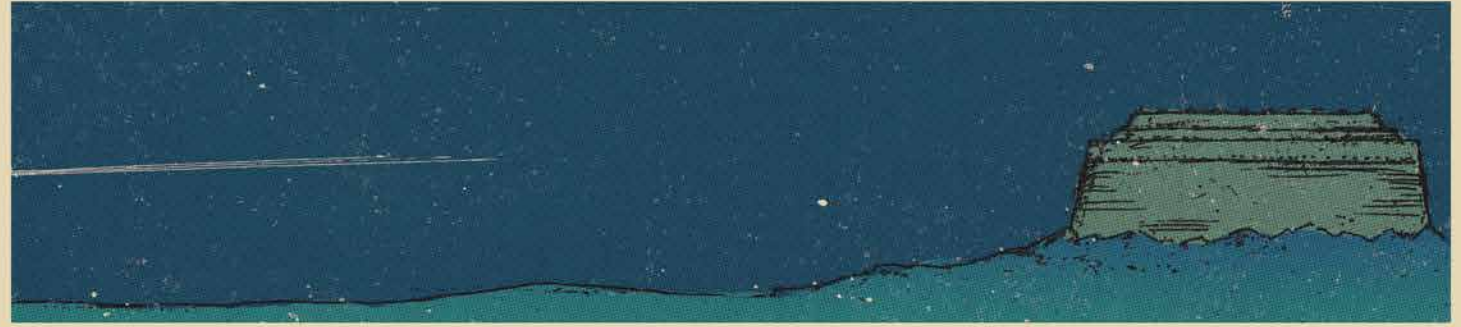


YEAH. KINDA. LET'S MOVE.









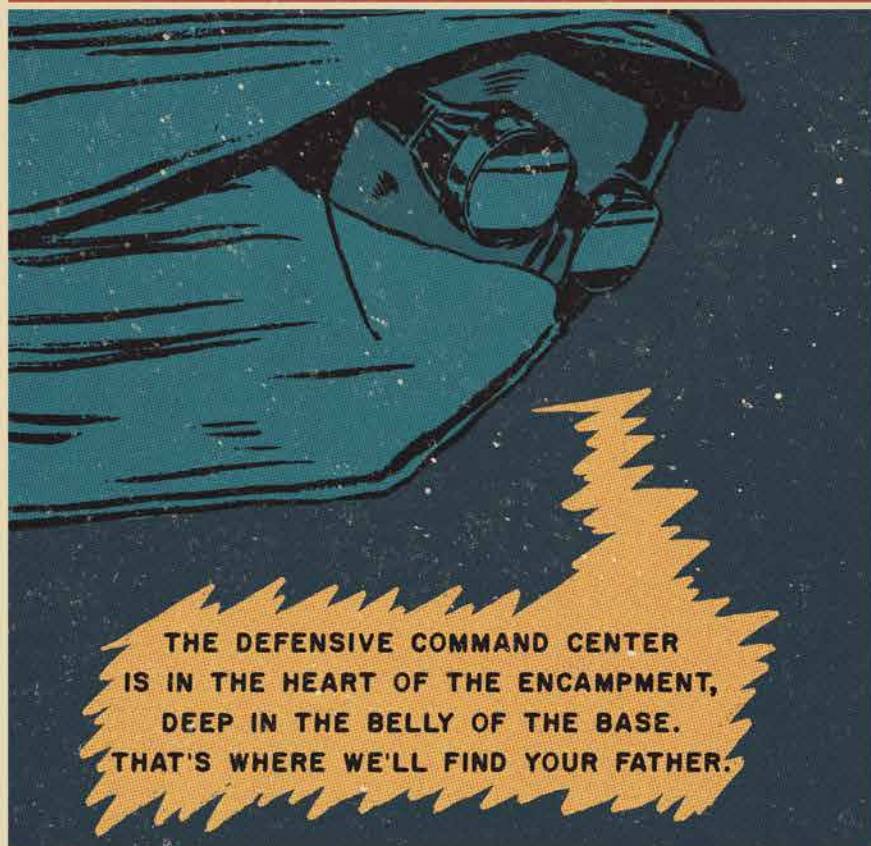
AS THEY APPROACH THE HILLS OF THE REBEL DEFENSIVE POSITION, THEY FIND A LARGE ENCAMPMENT THAT LOOKS MORE LIKE A SMALL CITY PROTECTED BY FORTIFIED STONE WALLS AT LEAST 200 FT. TALL... TURRETS WITH HEAVY GUNS, CATAPULTS, CAMOUFLAGE NETTING COVERING THE MOST POPULOUS AREAS, LOOKOUT TOWERS MANNED BY SNIPERS WITH ABSURDLY SIZED GUNS AND SCOPES, TAKING AIM AT THE DUST CLOUD THAT FOLLOWS THEM.





I WONDER HOW MANY
PEOPLE ARE IN THERE?

**THE CODEX PIPES UP: THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 27 BATTALIONS,
COMPRISED OF 10,472 HUMANS AND 3,006 NON-HUMANS STATIONED
HERE. MOST ARE COMBAT READY.**

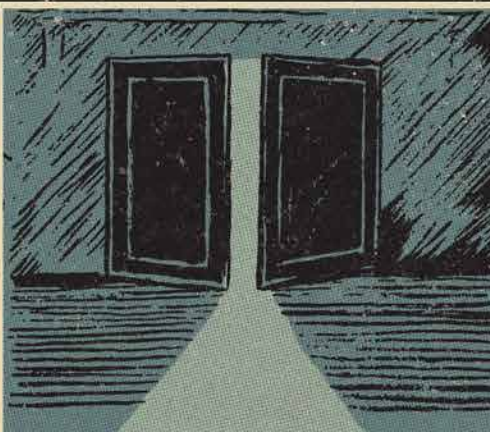


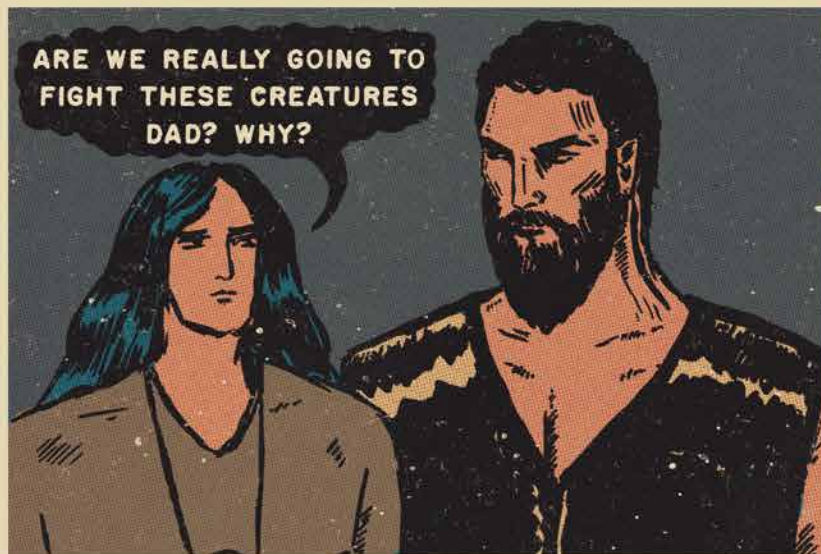
THE DEFENSIVE COMMAND CENTER
IS IN THE HEART OF THE ENCAMPMENT,
DEEP IN THE BELLY OF THE BASE.
THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND YOUR FATHER.





HUMAN AND HALF-BEAST ALLIES AND SYMPATHIZERS WAVE AND YELL WELCOMING WORDS AS SHORTY, LOU AND SHIRO LAND SOMEWHAT IMPERFECTLY IN THE CENTER OF AN OPEN SQUARE USED AS A SOCIAL/COMMUNITY AREA FOR THE INHABITANTS. TWO ENORMOUSLY TALL, REINFORCED DOORS FACING THE SQUARE OPEN SLOWLY ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR SIZE AND WEIGHT. A SEEMINGLY COLOSSAL MAN RUNS OUT FROM BEHIND AS SOON AS THERE'S ENOUGH ROOM FOR HIS MASSIVE FRAME TO PASS THROUGH. HE SPRINTS DIRECTLY TO THE BOYS, ARMS OPEN, OCCASIONALLY SHAKING HIS HEAD IN DISBELIEF, SCOOPING THEM UP WITH THE EMBRACE OF A FATHER WHO CHEATED DEATH IN ORDER TO BE WITH HIS SON. HE SAYS NOT A WORD, IN FACT EVERYONE PILING INTO THE SQUARE TO WITNESS THE REUNION IS REMARKABLY SILENT. ONLY THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, SHUFFLING IS BROKEN BY THE FATHER'S GENTLE SOBBING.





ARE WE REALLY GOING TO
FIGHT THESE CREATURES
DAD? WHY?



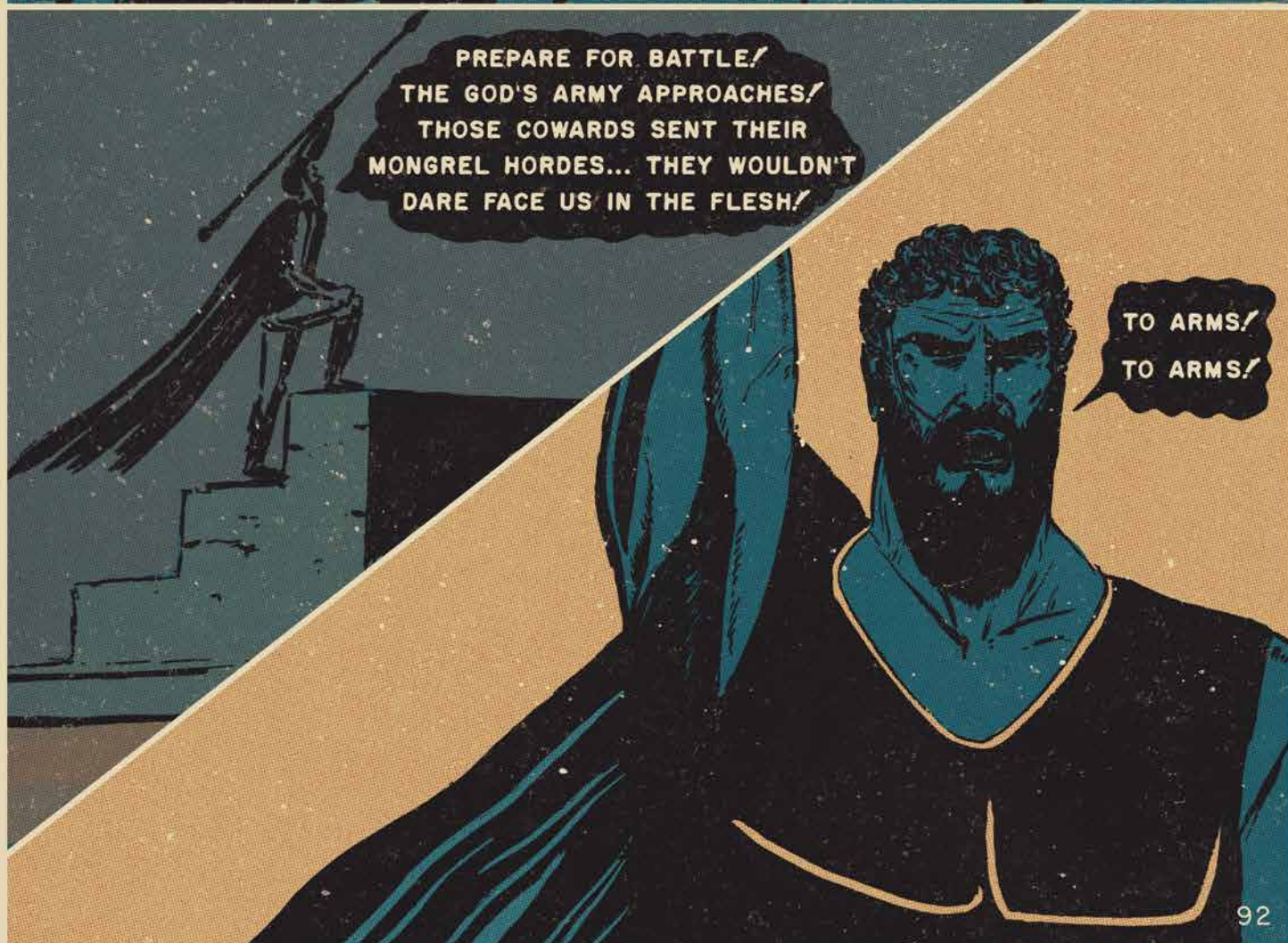
*LOU'S FATHER IS THE LEADER OF THE REBELS, THE GENERAL OF
STRONG WILLED PEOPLE AND CITIZENS OF HERACLEON WHO ANGERED
THE GODS BY REJECTING THEM... AND WERE BANISHED FROM THE CITY.
SYD RISES FROM ONE KNEE AND GENTLY PLACES HIS COLOSSAL HAND
ON LOU'S BACK AND SHIRO'S SHOULDER, SPEAKING TO THE CROWD
THAT'S GATHERED TO WITNESS THE MOMENT.*

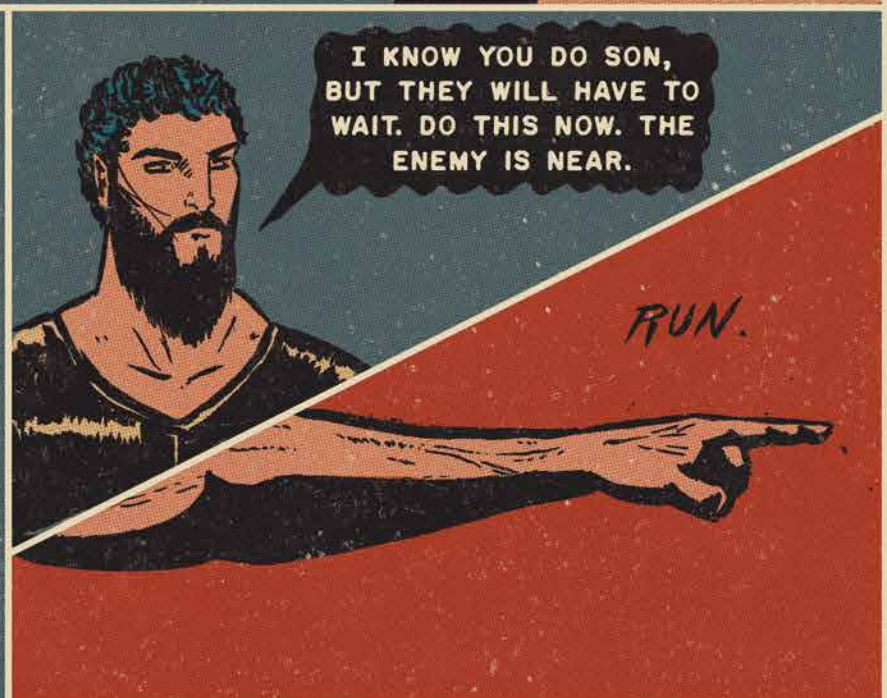


BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THESE ARE MY BOYS.
THEY HAVE COME SO FAR TO FIGHT BY OUR
SIDES. TODAY WE STAND TOGETHER AND SHOW
THE MAKERS THAT WE ARE PEOPLE OF FREE
WILL. WE MAKE OUR OWN CHOICES... WE HAVE
OUR OWN DREAMS... WE MAKE OUR OWN
DESTINIES... WE ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF OUR
OWN LIVES! WE ARE NOT TOYS FOR THEM TO
PLAY WITH! THEY WILL NEVERMORE TAKE OUR
CHILDREN FROM US. NEVERMORE TAKE OUR
MOTHERS, SONS AND DAUGHTERS...
NEVERMORE WILL THEY TAKE OUR FATHERS!!!



LOU GAZES AT THE ANGRY DEFIANT FACES OF MEN, WOMEN AND BEASTS WHO HAVE ALL SUFFERED UNDER THE HANDS OF THE MAKERS.





SHORTY BOLTS TOWARD A STAIRWELL YELLING "C'MON!" TO THE BOYS, WHO ARE TRYING TO KEEP UP NOT WANTING TO LEAVE THEIR FATHER. AS THEY TURN BACK TO LOOK, THEY CATCH A GLIMPSE OF SYD PICKING UP STAFF AND SHIELD AS HE FLIES STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR SO HIGH THAT HE NEARLY DISAPPEARS FROM SIGHT, WITHOUT THE AID OF A CODEX.

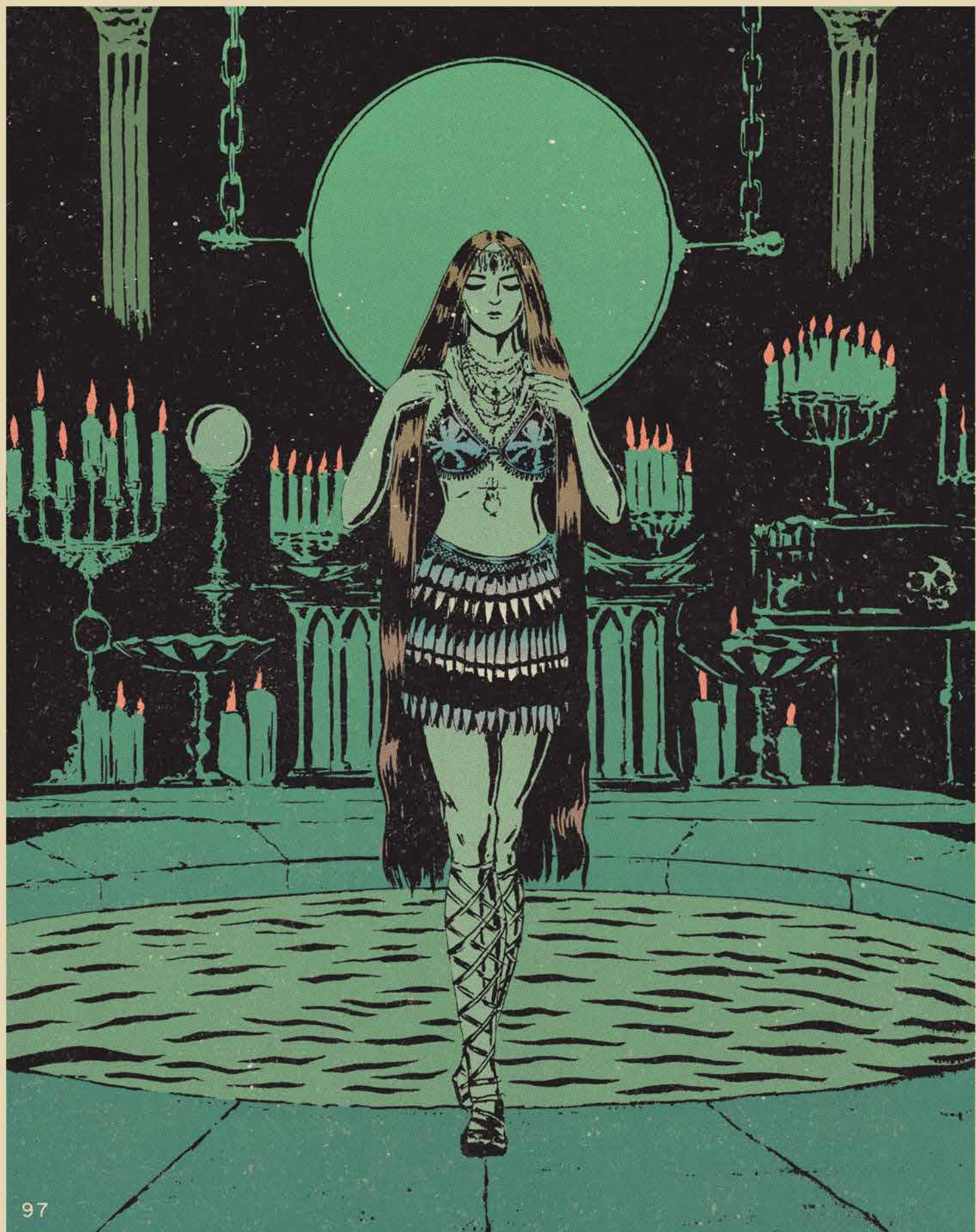


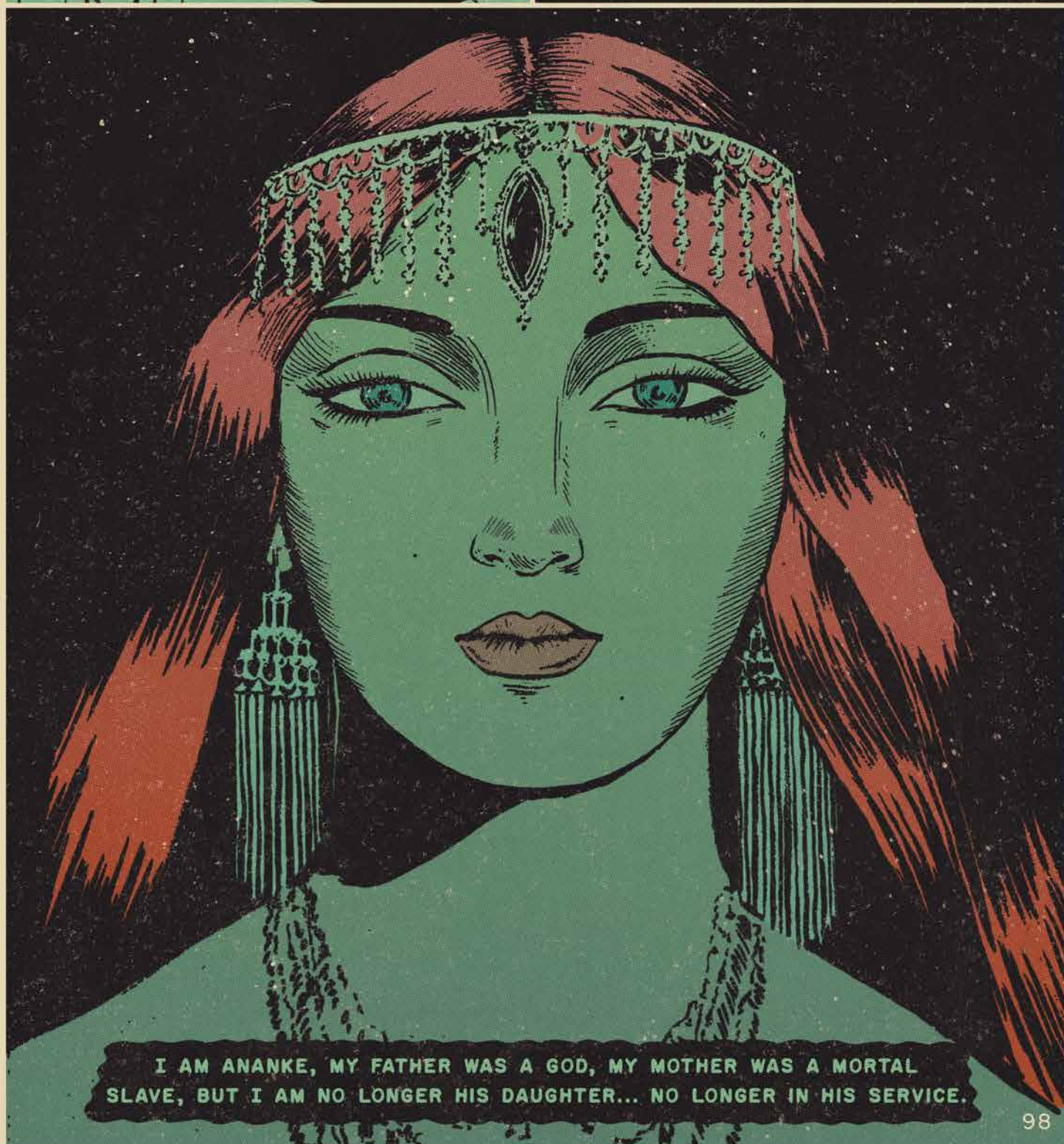
THE BOYS KEEP RUNNING, BUT LOOK AT EACH OTHER WITH HUGE SMILES ON THEIR FACES... SO PROUD OF WHAT HE HAS BECOME AND EXCITED TO SEE THE EMPATH.







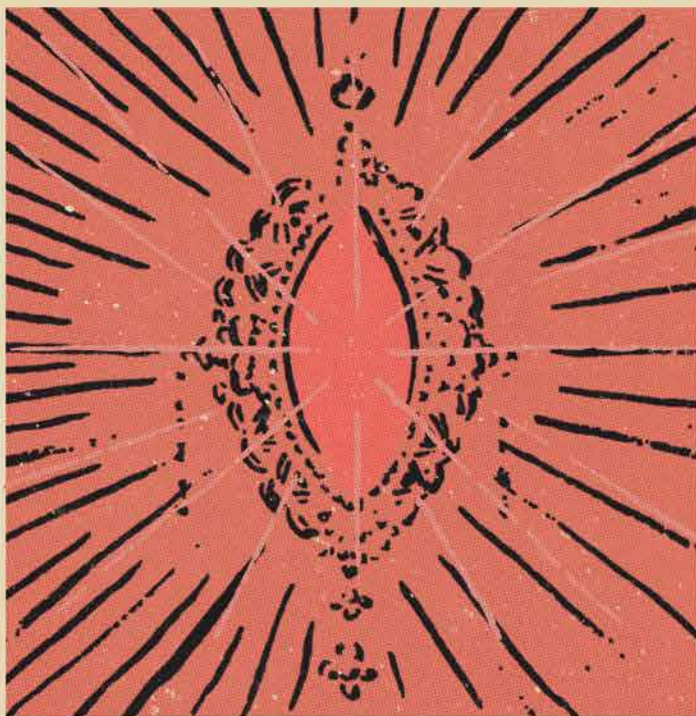






LOU STEP FORWARD.
YOUR FATHER HAS BEEN
WAITING FOR YOU.
HE IS A GOOD MAN...





I HAVE ENTRUSTED YOU WITH THE 'HUMAN PARTICLE.'
IT WAS STOLEN FROM THE MAKERS AND THEY MUST
NOT GET IT BACK. IF THEY DO, THE CONSEQUENCES
WILL BE IRREVERSIBLE. IT POSSESSES THE POWER TO
CREATE LIFE, CONTROL IT AND TAKE IT AWAY.



IT IS NOW EMBEDDED
IN YOUR SKULL.



BUT WHY
ME?



I WILL PERISH IN THIS PLACE, I HAVE SEEN IT.
WE MUST NOT LET IT BE CAPTURED OR ALL LIFE
WILL BE EXTINGUISHED. YOU MUST KEEP IT AWAY
FROM THEM. THE PARTICLE WILL PROTECT YOU
AND GIVE YOU UNNATURAL POWERS.
USE IT RESPONSIBLY.



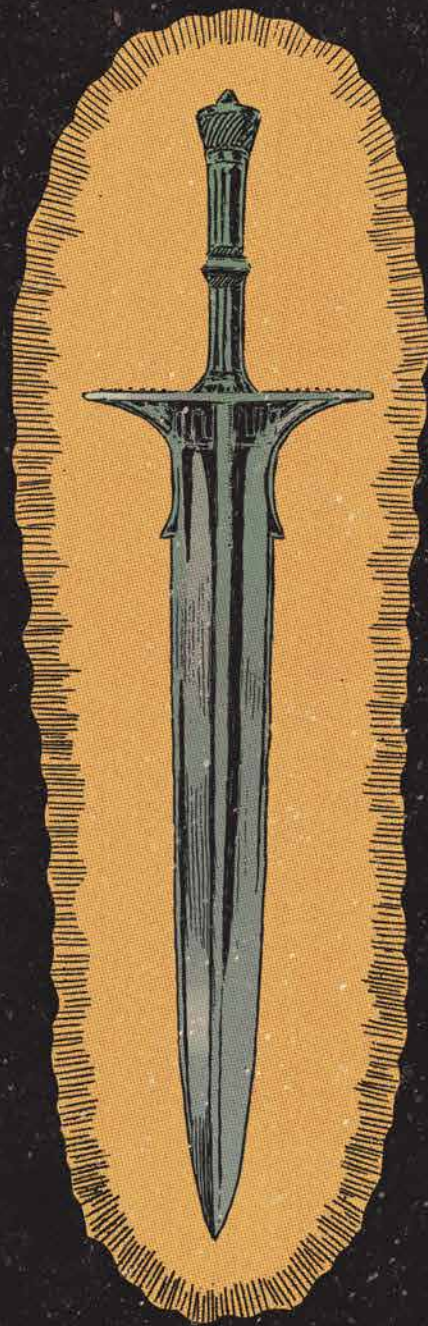
HEY, WHAT
ABOUT ME?



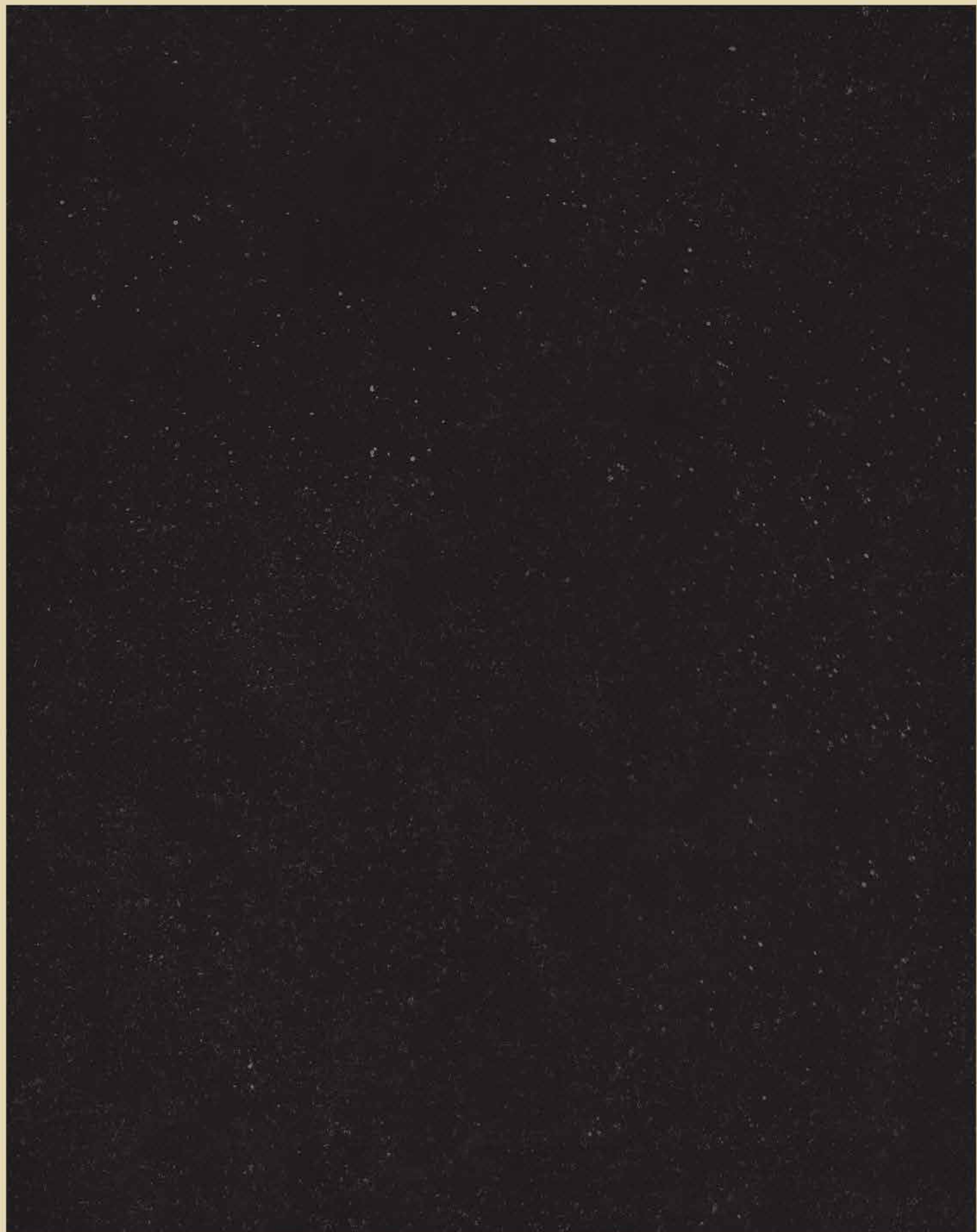
YOU ARE HALF LION.
YOU HAVE FANGS
AND CLAWS... AGILITY
AND STRENGTH BEYOND
YOUR IMAGINATION.



STEWART, ON YOUR BELT IS PELEUS
FORGED IN THE MAKER'S WELL OF SOULS.
IT IS ONE OF SIX KNOWN RELICS THAT
CAN DESTROY A GOD AND IT WILL
SURELY BE VICTORIOUS
ON THEIR BEASTS.

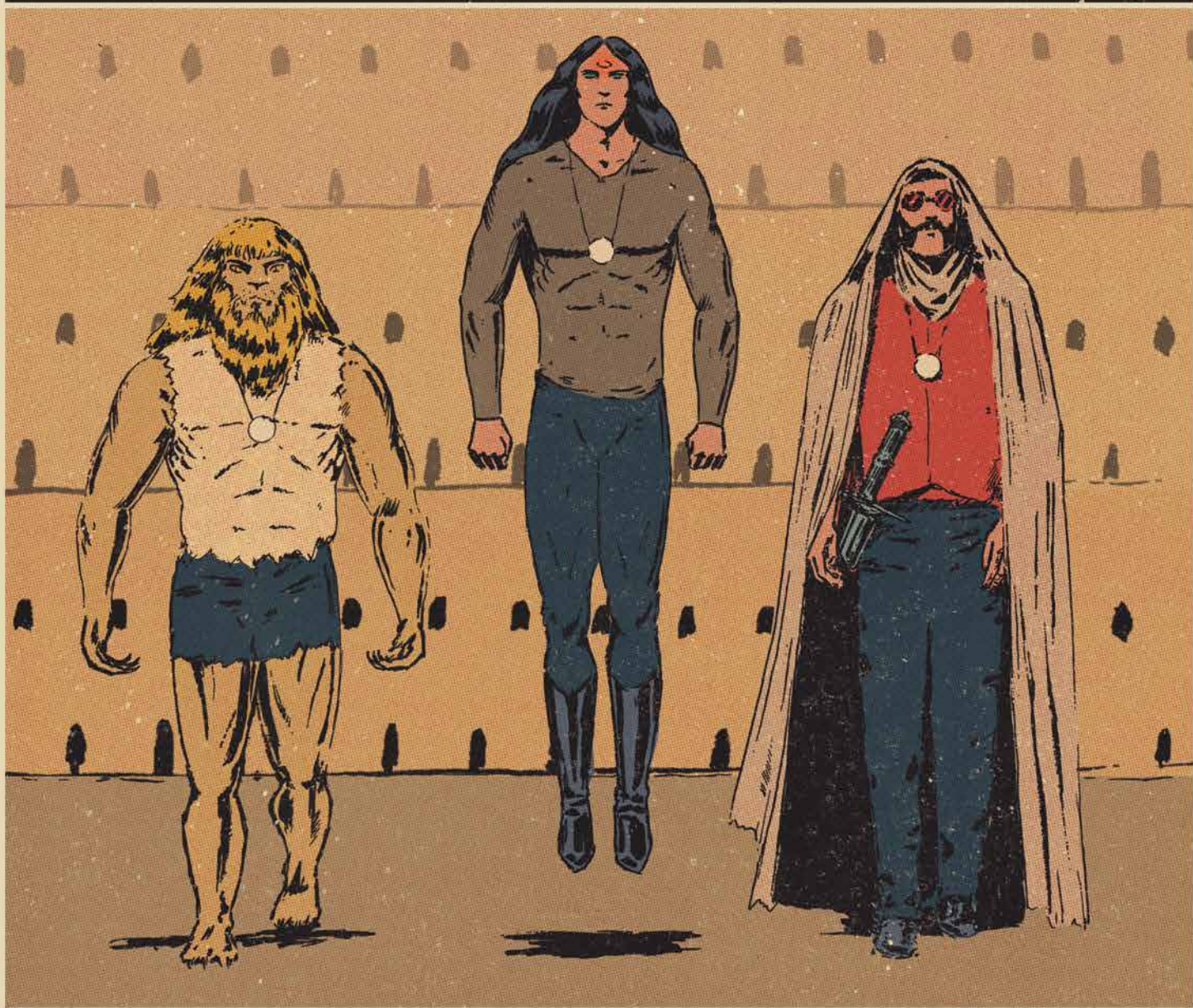


WE WILL MEET AGAIN, PERHAPS IN ANOTHER LIFE. IT HAS BEEN FORETOLD.



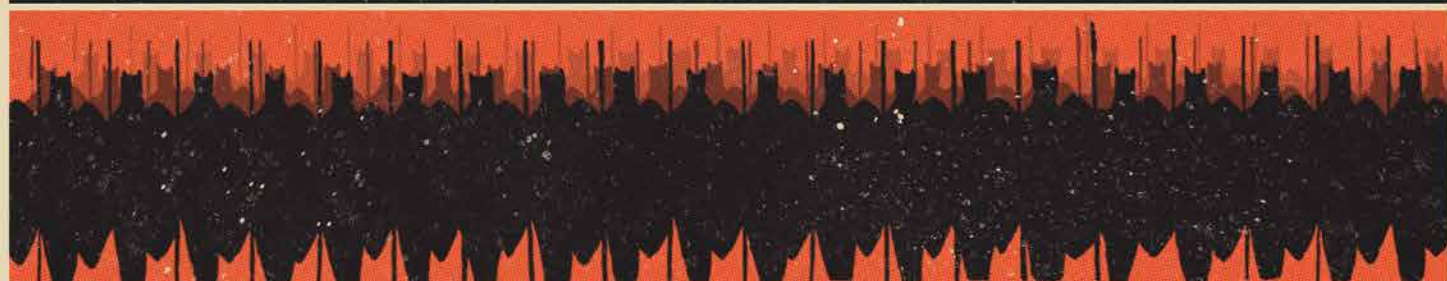


SHORTY, LOU AND SHIRO HEAD BACK TO THE SQUARE, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING REMARKABLY AND INEXPLICABLY DIFFERENT ABOUT THEM. THEY HAVE A CONFIDENCE AND SWAGGER THAT IS ONLY DELIVERED WITH ASS KICKING OR STAGE PRESENCE. LOU'S APPEARANCE IN PARTICULAR IS NOTICEABLY DIFFERENT AS HIS FOREHEAD CONTAINS AN ORANGE EMBER, THE PARTICLE OF HUMAN CREATION, WHICH LOOKS LIKE A TINY FLAMING SUN EMANATING LIGHT FROM HIS FOREHEAD. HIS EYES HAVE TURNED TO DEEP EMERALD AND HE HAS LOST THE NEED TO WALK, INSTEAD FLOATING SEVERAL INCHES ABOVE THE GROUND



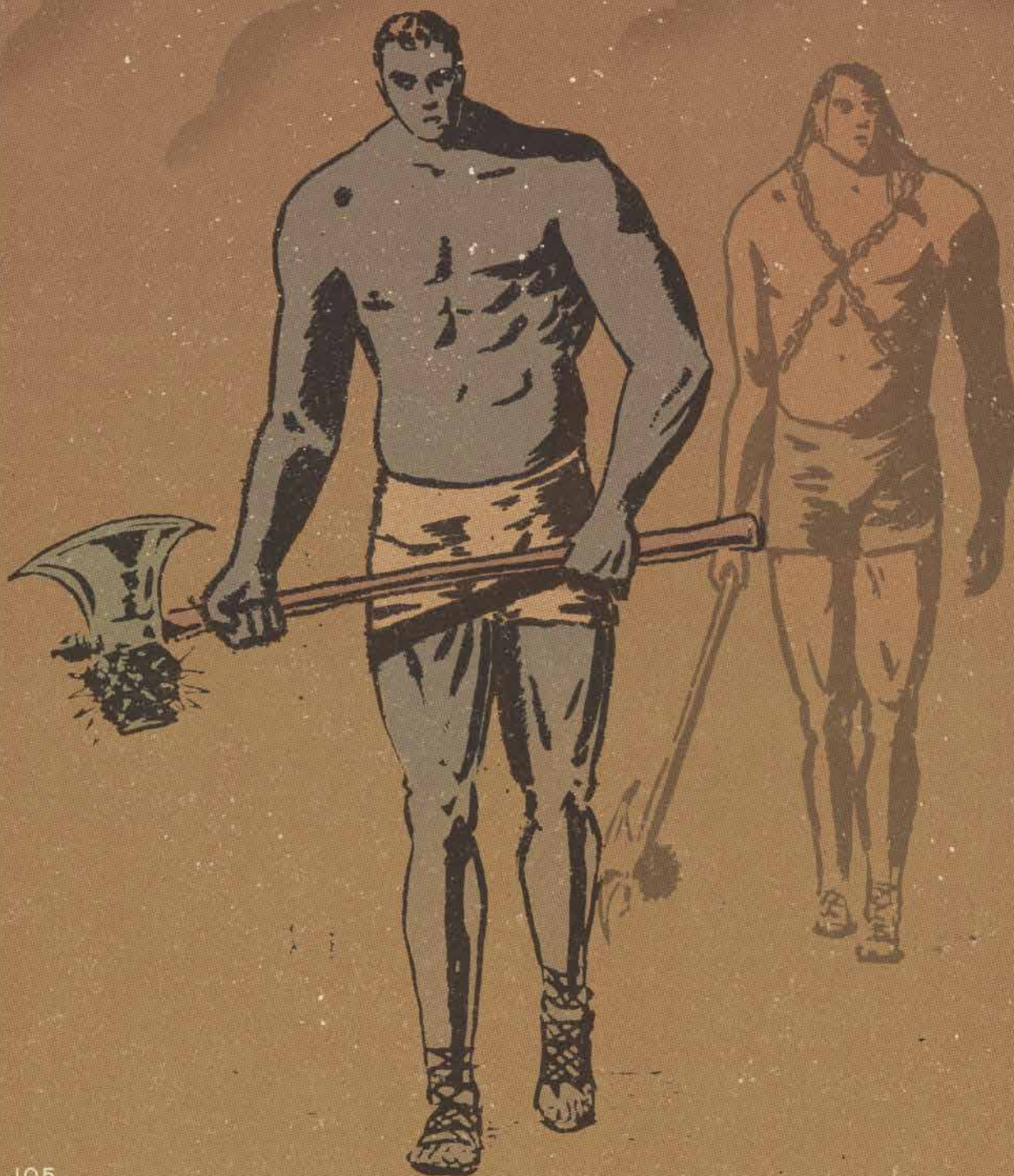
BOYS, WE ARE FORMING AN OFFENSIVE POSITION. I NEED YOU AT THE FRONT LINE, WITH ME. YOU TOO, SHORTY.

SYD'S IMPRESSIVE FRONT LINE IS NEARLY 3,000 STRONG... MEN AND BEASTS. SIDE BY SIDE. THE MOST FEROCIOUS ON THE LINE IS A SQUAD OF DOG-MEN, WITH POINTED EARS LIKE EGYPTIAN ANUBIS. THIS BREED IS MOSTLY HUMAN FROM THE NECK DOWN, BUT COVERED IN BLACK FUR, WITH POWERFUL ARMS AND LEGS, HANDS AND FEET... ESPECIALLY THEIR VICIOUS MOUTHS AND TEETH. THEY STAND OVER SEVEN FEET TALL, WIELDING SWORDS, STAFFS, SHIELDS AND BOWS. THIS PARTICULAR SQUAD OF TWENTY-FOUR IS LEAD BY CPTN. IGGY. THE ONLY WAY TO TELL IGGY FROM THE OTHERS IS OF COURSE SCENT, BUT SHE ALSO HAS BRINDLE FUR ON HER FOREARMS, THAT AND HER ARMOR IS GOLD, WHERE THE REST OF THE SQUAD'S IS SILVER.



**BOYS STAY
BEHIND IGGY.**

THE MURDEROUS SAND CLOUD IS UPON THEM. VISIBILITY IS SO BAD, THEY CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY TROOPS CAME TO KILL THEM. ON THE FRONTLINE FOR THE ENEMY ARE A ROW OF 30, OR SO TITANS, MASSIVE AND SLOW MOVING, BUT INCREDIBLY STRONG, WIELDING HALF HAMMER, HALF AXE. DEADLY IF YOU GET HIT.

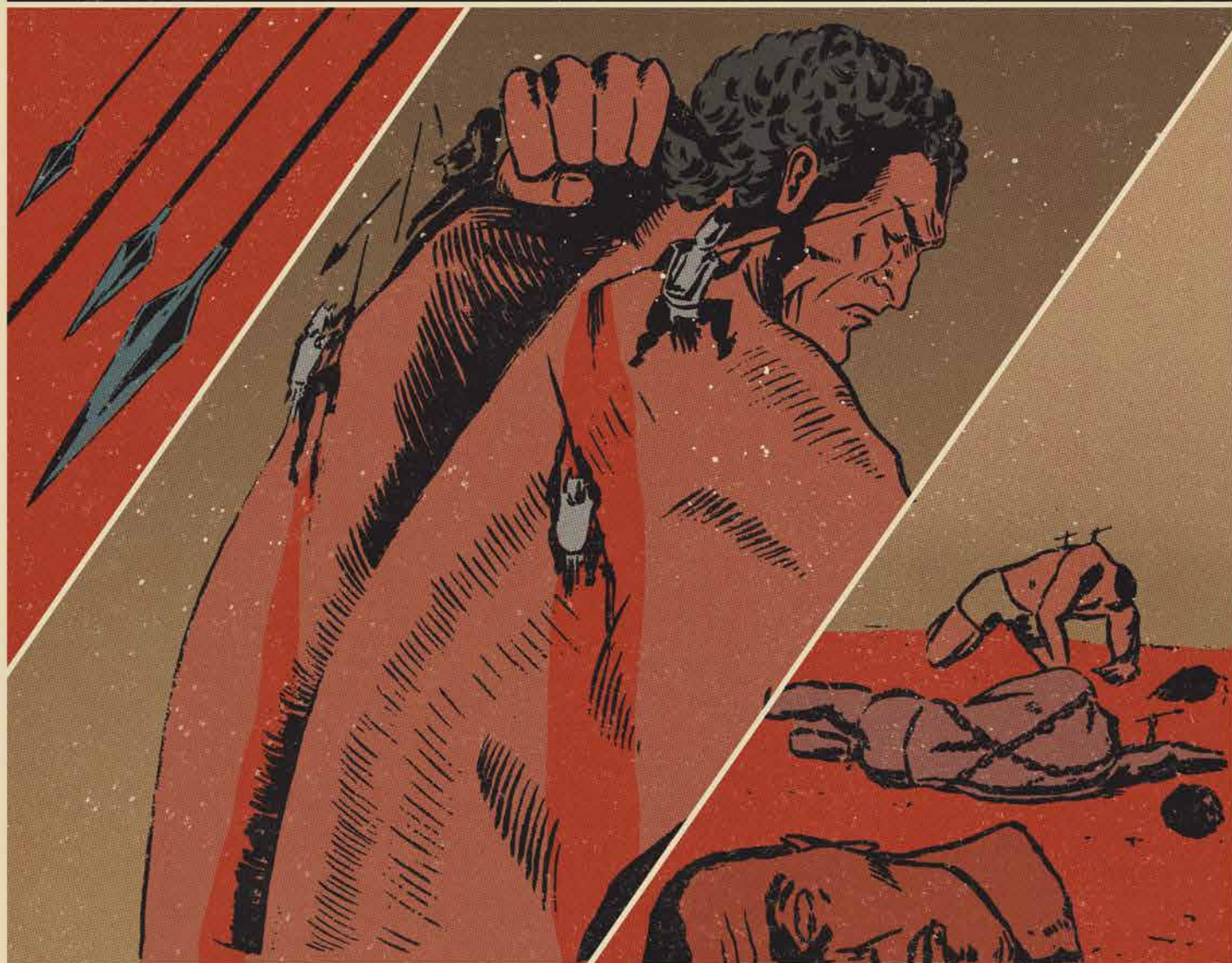






IGGY TURNS TO THE BOYS TO MAKE SURE SHE KNOWS THEIR EXACT LOCATION, SAYS NOTHING, THEN LETS OUT A BATTLE CRY THAT SENT CHILLS UP THEIR SPINES. SHE RUNS AHEAD WITH A SPEAR, DRAWING FIRST BLOOD... LEAPING UP AND BEHIND THE TITAN, STABBING HIM REPEATEDLY ON THE THIGHS AND BEHIND THE KNEE. SHE BRINGS HIM DOWN LURCHING FORWARD, WHERE SHE DELIVERS A FINAL BLOW, LAUNCHING HER SPEAR THROUGH HIS NECK, SEVERING HEAD FROM SPINE.

THE REST OF THE DOG-MEN ARE USING SIMILAR TECHNIQUES TO TAKE DOWN THE REST OF THE TITANS.



MOST OF THE MAKERS TROOPS ARE EASY KILLS BECAUSE THEY'RE STUPID. THE CREATURES WITH HALF-A-BRAIN AND SOME CONSCIOUSNESS LEFT THE CITY AND THEIR CRUELTY BEHIND... LIKE US... BUT THERE'S A LOT OF THEM, THEY HAVE STRENGTH IN NUMBERS. ONCE WE TAKE CARE OF THESE TITANS, YOU THREE ADVANCE WITH US.

JUST AS THE LAST TITAN FALLS, A WHIPPING SOUND OF FLYING ARROWS AND SPEARS BEGINS, WELL CAMOUFLAGED BY THE CLOUD OF SAND.



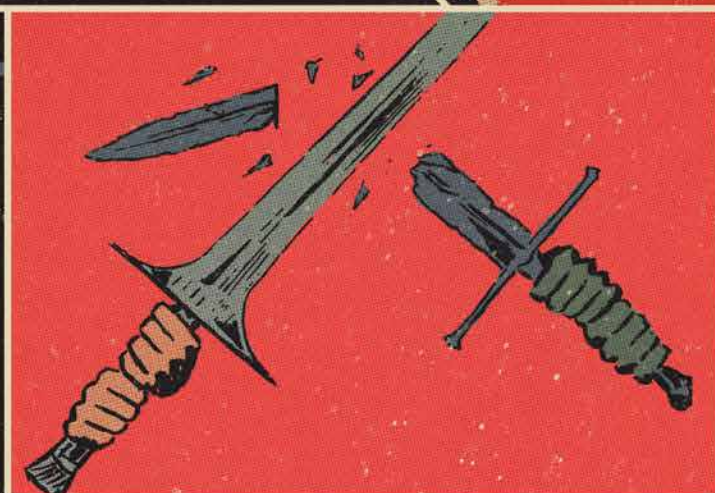
LOU GOES DOWN ON ONE KNEE AND HOLDS HIS PALMS UP OVER HIS HEAD. ORANGE LIGHT ENVELOPES EVERYONE AROUND HIM, DEFLECTING THE ONSLAUGHT OF INCOMING ARROWS. SAVAGE, FANGED, APE-LIKE BEASTS EMERGE FROM THE CLOUD, CHARGING THE LINE, WEARING ARMOR, CARRYING SWORDS AND SHIELDS.

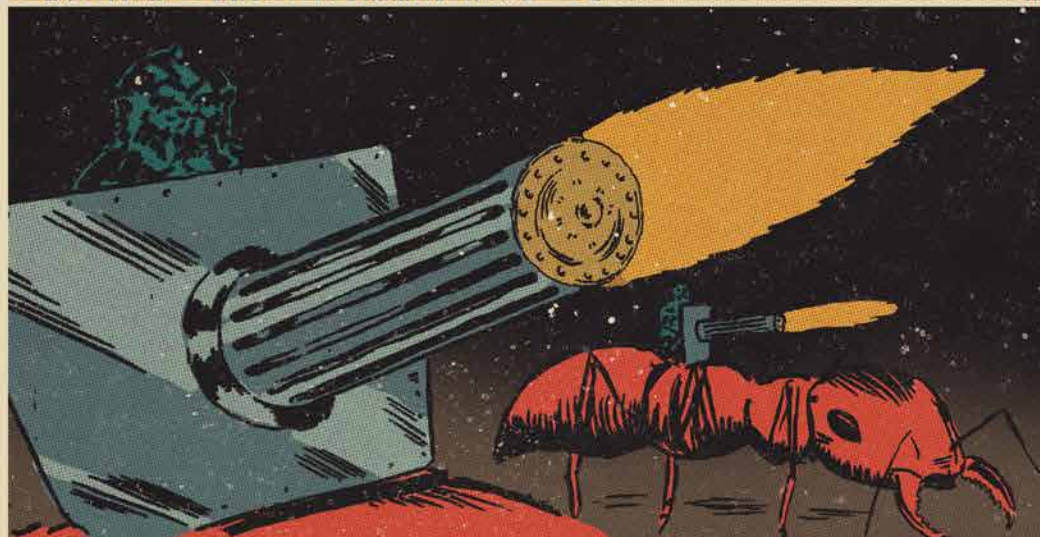


500 ARROWS ARE SENT AS A WAR TIME GIFT, ARCHING FROM THE REBEL FRONT LINE, FIFTH ROW, IN THE REAR OF THE FORMATION. SOME BOUNCE OFF ARMOR, SOME THROUGH HELMETS, TORSOS, ARMS AND LEGS. MANY FALL, AS MUCH AS HALF STILL, SOME ARROWS ARE CAUGHT BY THE BEASTS IN THEIR HATEFUL HANDS AND EAGER MOUTHS.

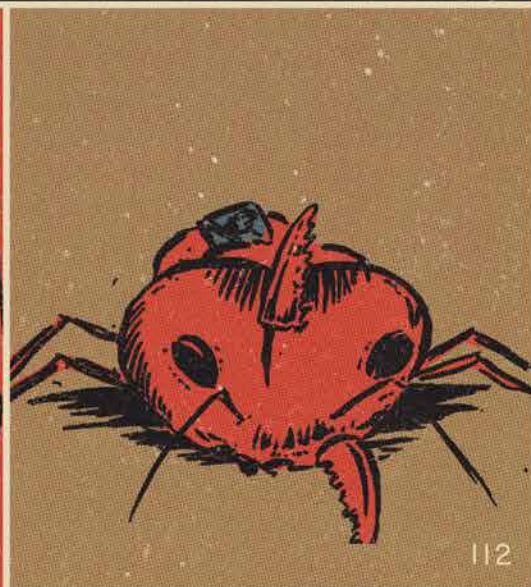


THESE ARE WILD AND NASTY, QUICK AND RUTHLESS. ONE IS BITING OUT THE THROAT OF A DOG-MAN, CONSUMING THE MEAT AS CPTN SHORTY RUNS HIS BLADE THROUGH IT'S STOMACH, WEDGING THE PELEUS UP AND INTO ITS' RIBCAGE, LIQUEFYING ALL CONTAINED ORGANS.





SHIRO IS NIMBLE, GRACEFUL AND LETHAL, GRABBING THE LAST ANT IN THE LINE BY THE MANDIBLE, FORCING ITS HEAD TO THE GROUND. IT BREAKS OFF AS SHIRO USES HIS OTHER PAW TO PRY OFF ITS THORAX AND REMOVE WHAT'S INSIDE. THE ANTS START SHOOTING. JUST THE SOUND OF THE GUNS WOULD KILL A MORTAL. BEYOND DEAFENING. NONE OF THE DOG-MEN ARE LEFT. ALL HAVE BEEN SHREDDED BY THE ANT'S BULLETS... EXCEPT IGGY WHO HAS BEEN ORDERED TO FALL BACK AND FLANK THEM.



**LOU AND HIS FATHER ARE
FLYING ALTERNATING PATTERNS,
CLEARING SWATHS OF ANTS,
LIKE FARMERS CUTTING HAY.
SYD IS HOLDING ONE OF
THE TITAN'S AXE-HAMMERS
SIDEWAYS, CLOTHES-LINING
THREE ROWS AT A TIME,
SEVERAL HUNDRED DEEP**



**THEY CAN'T SHOOT US IF WE
STAY HIGH AND AT THEIR SIDES.**



AFTER THE ANTS CAME A PACK OF CHIMERA. FIRE BREATHING LIONESSES WITH SNAKES AND A GOAT HEAD COMING OUT OF THEIR BACKS, WEIRD SPLICES OF HOOVED AND FANGED.



IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTACK FROM THE FRONT OR THE SIDE, EXCEPT FOR THE GOAT SIDE, AN OBVIOUS WEAKNESS THAT SHIRO EXPLOITS OPENING THEIR STOMACHS WITH A SINGLE CLAW, MOVING FREELY BETWEEN THEM LIKE INFLUENZA ON UNWASHED HANDS.



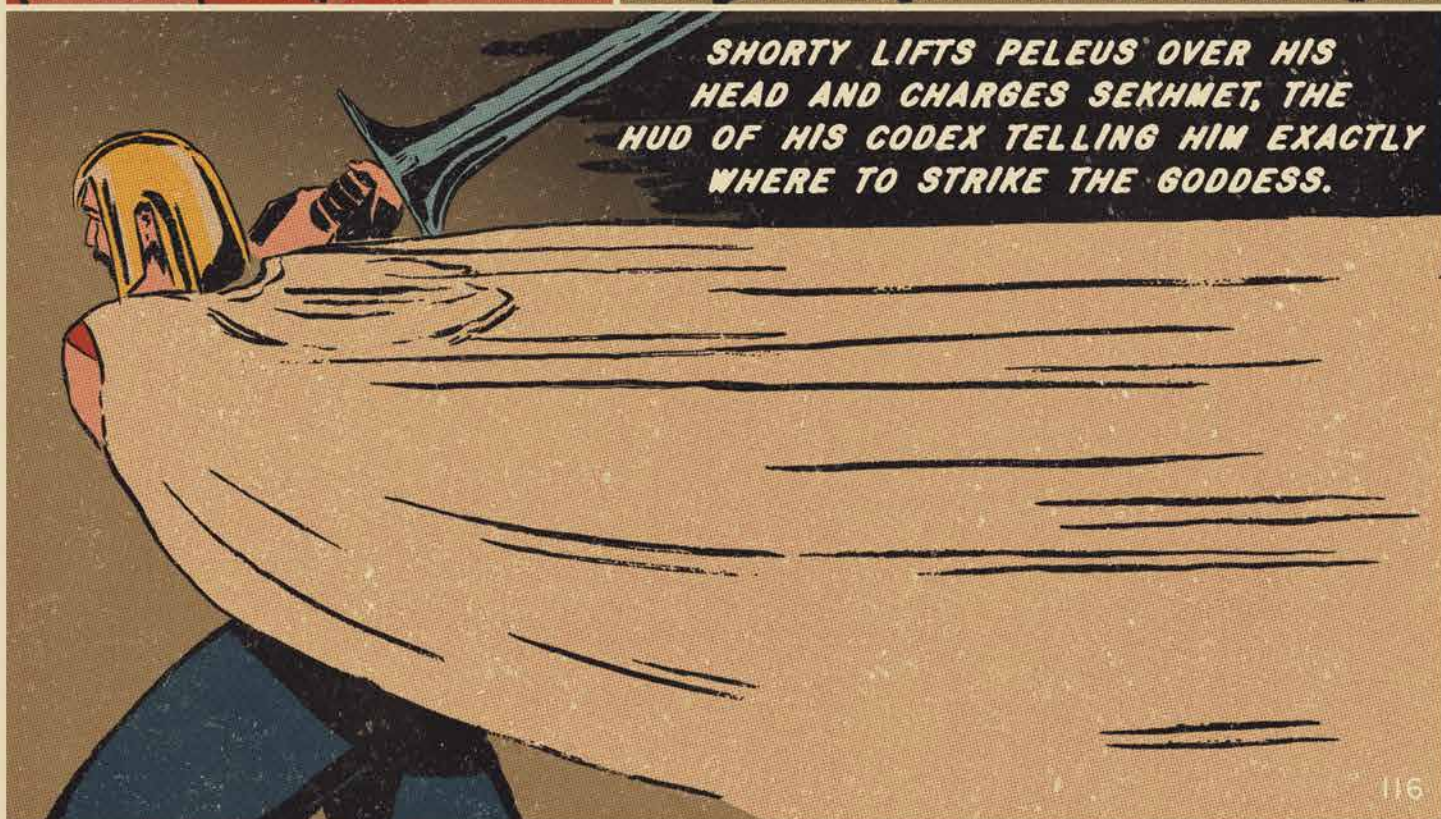




SEKHMET,
THE WAR
GODDESS.



I CAN KEEP HER BUSY,
BUT ONLY PELEUS
CAN DESTROY HER.



SHORTY LIFTS PELEUS OVER HIS
HEAD AND CHARGES SEKHMET, THE
HUD OF HIS CODEX TELLING HIM EXACTLY
WHERE TO STRIKE THE GODDESS.

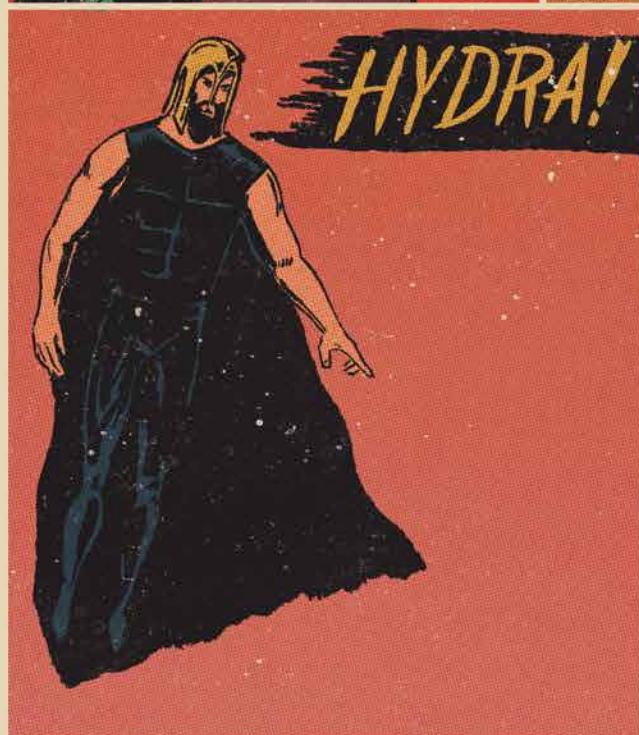


ALL IS CALM. THE SAND CLOUD SETTLES. SHORTY FEELS SOMETHING BITE HIS ARM. A SERPENT DISAPPEARS BACK INTO THE BILLOWING SAND.



CURSE!

A HYDRA, FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE GUARDIAN OF THE UNDERWORLD, HAS MANY HEADS OF SERPENTS. FOR EACH ONE CUT OFF, TWO GROW BACK. IT'S VENOM, IF STRUCK, IS TERMINAL BURNING ACID. WATER BORNE, NOBODY QUESTIONED WHY IT WAS THERE IN THE DESERT.



HYDRA!

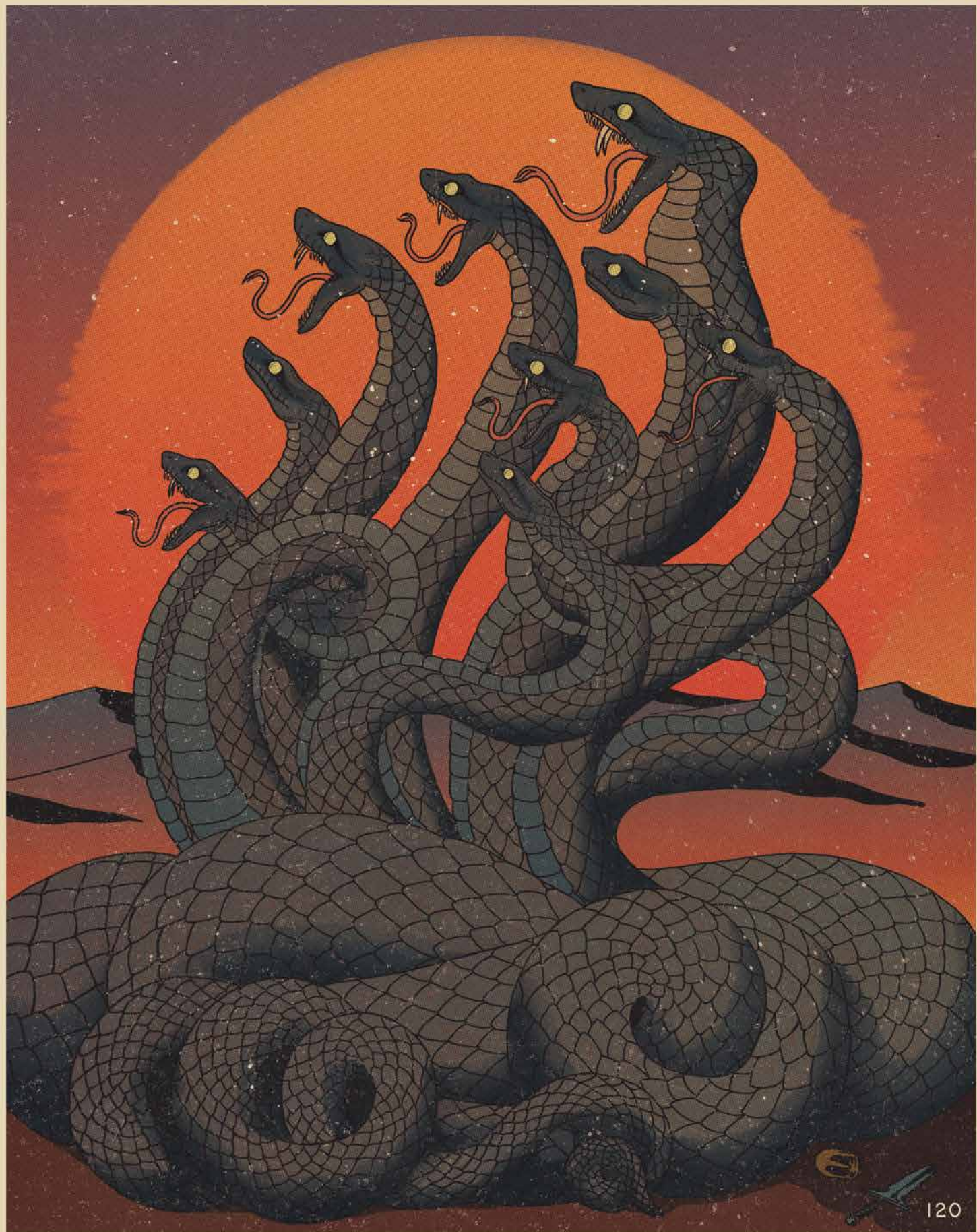


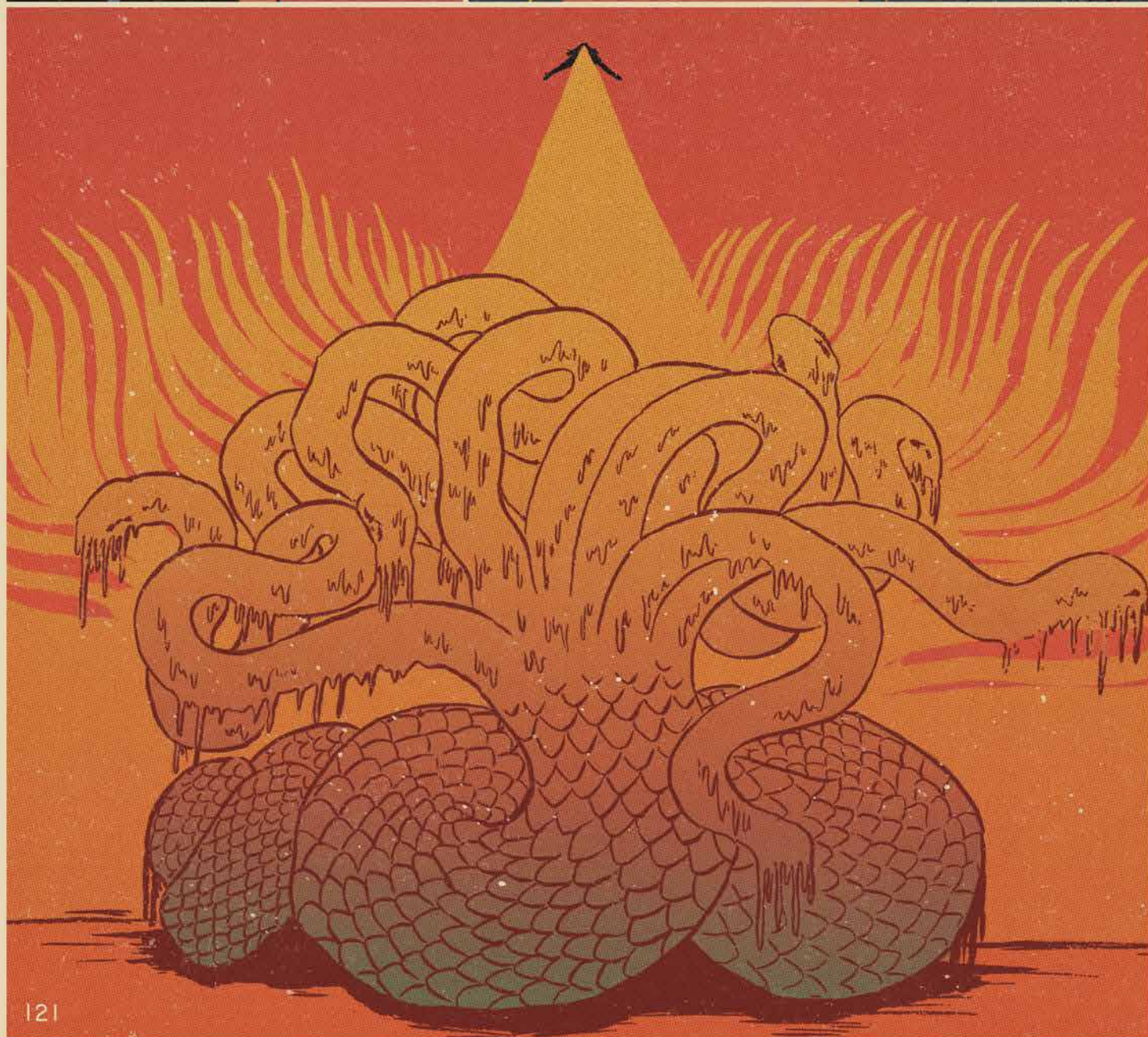
NOOOOOO!

AAAARRGH!

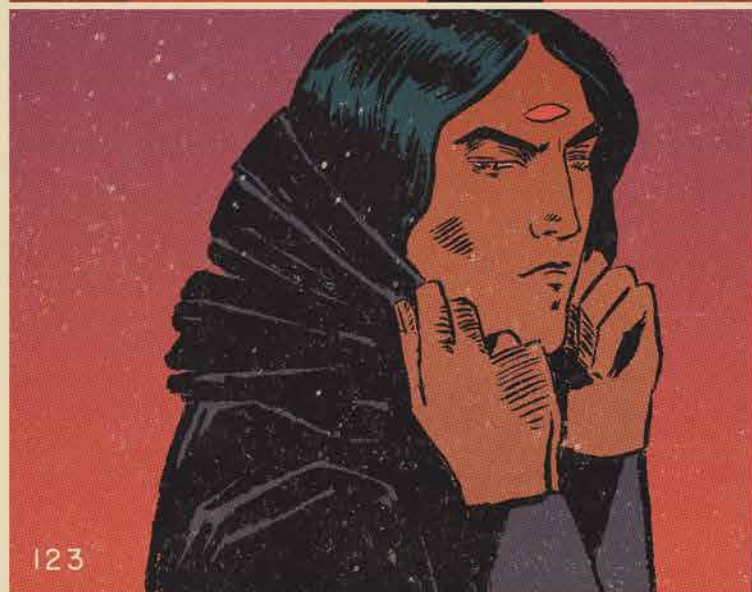
BOYS GET OFF THE GROUND!!!







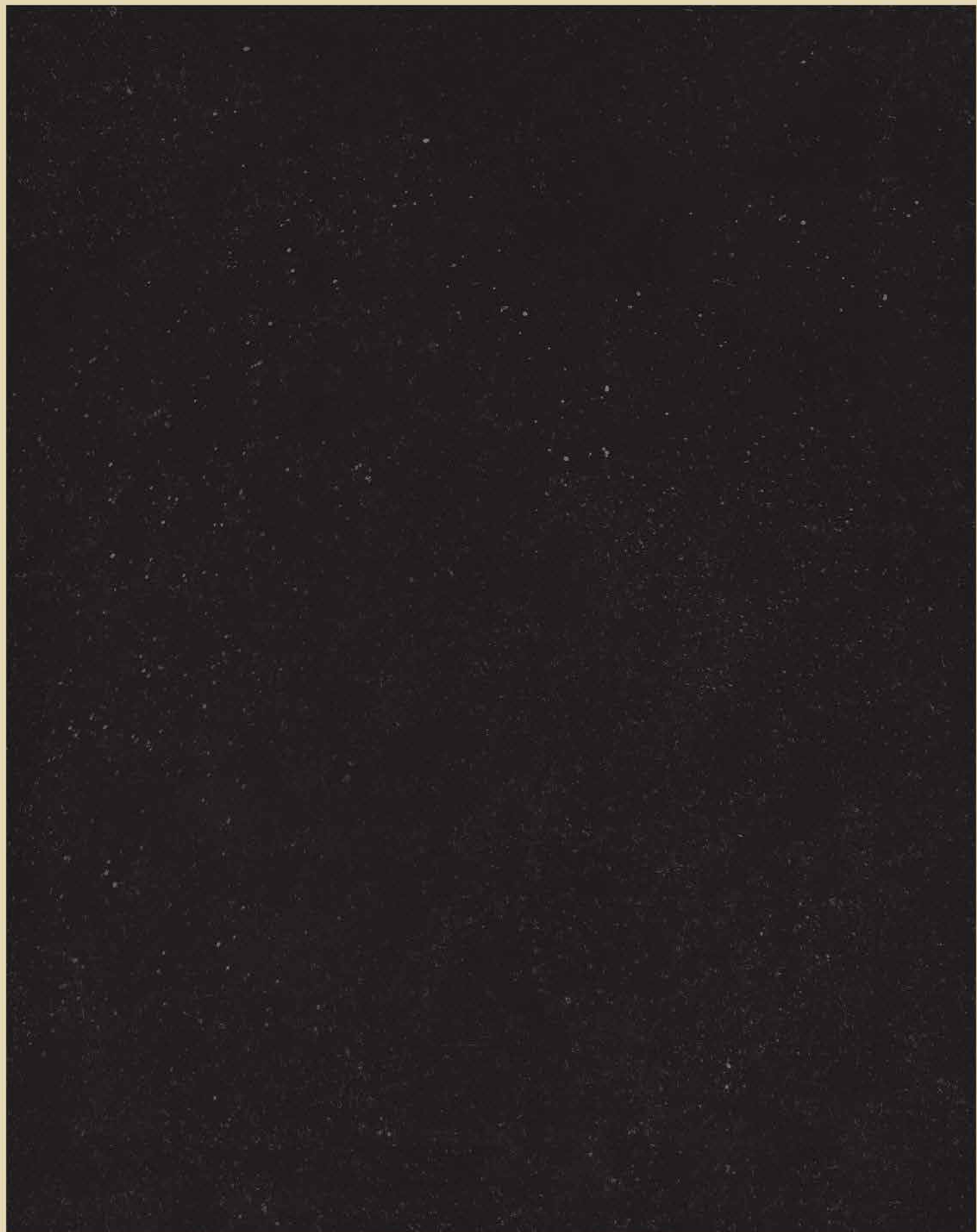






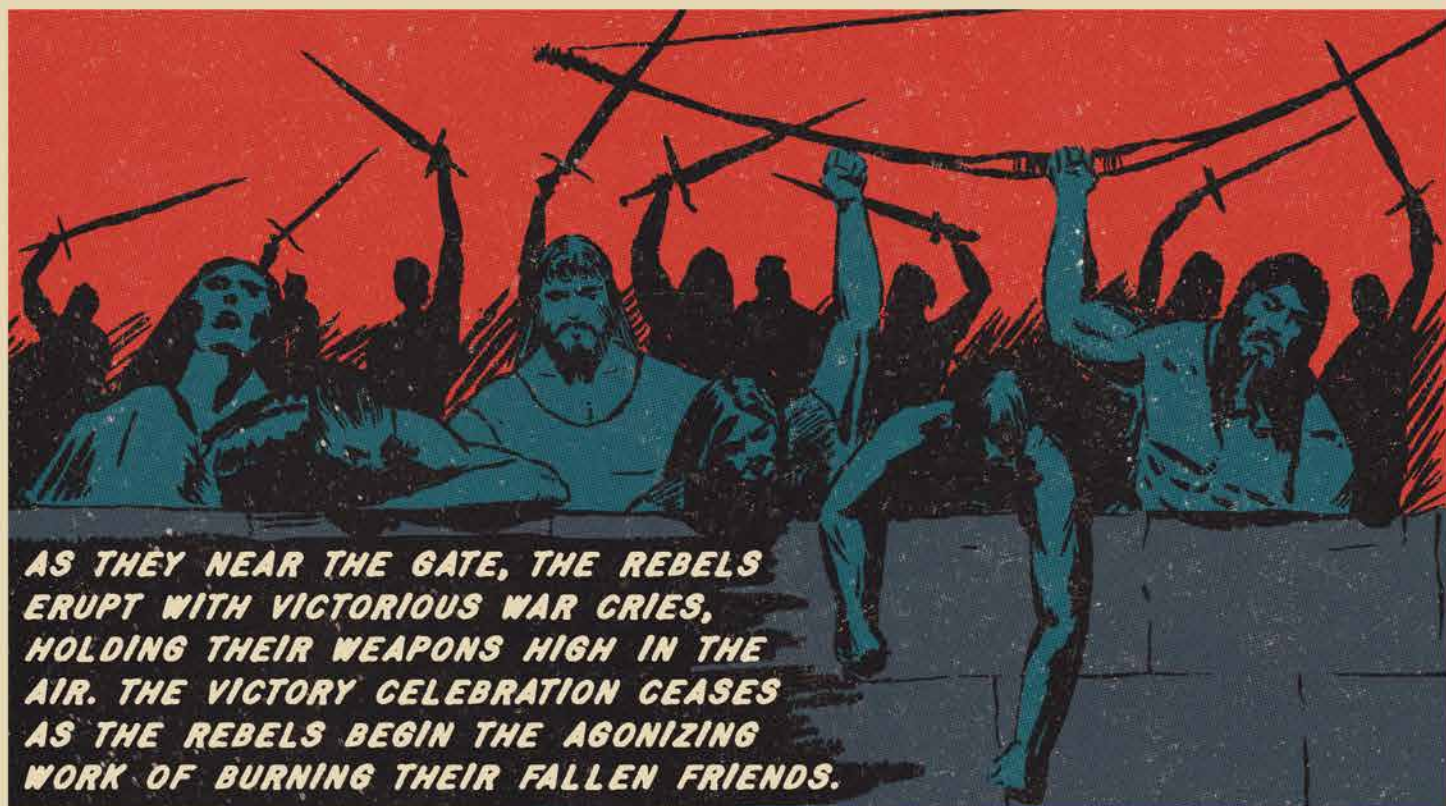
THE FOUR OF THEM WALK FOR THE REBEL ENCAMPMENT, SAYING NOTHING, THINKING ABOUT HOW COOL SHORTY WAS AND HOW MUCH THEY WILL MISS HIS FRIENDSHIP HE WAS ONLY ONE OF THE 1,971 CASUALTIES FROM THE REBEL SIDE, BUT BY FAR THE GREATEST LOSS TO SYD AND THE BOYS.





VI

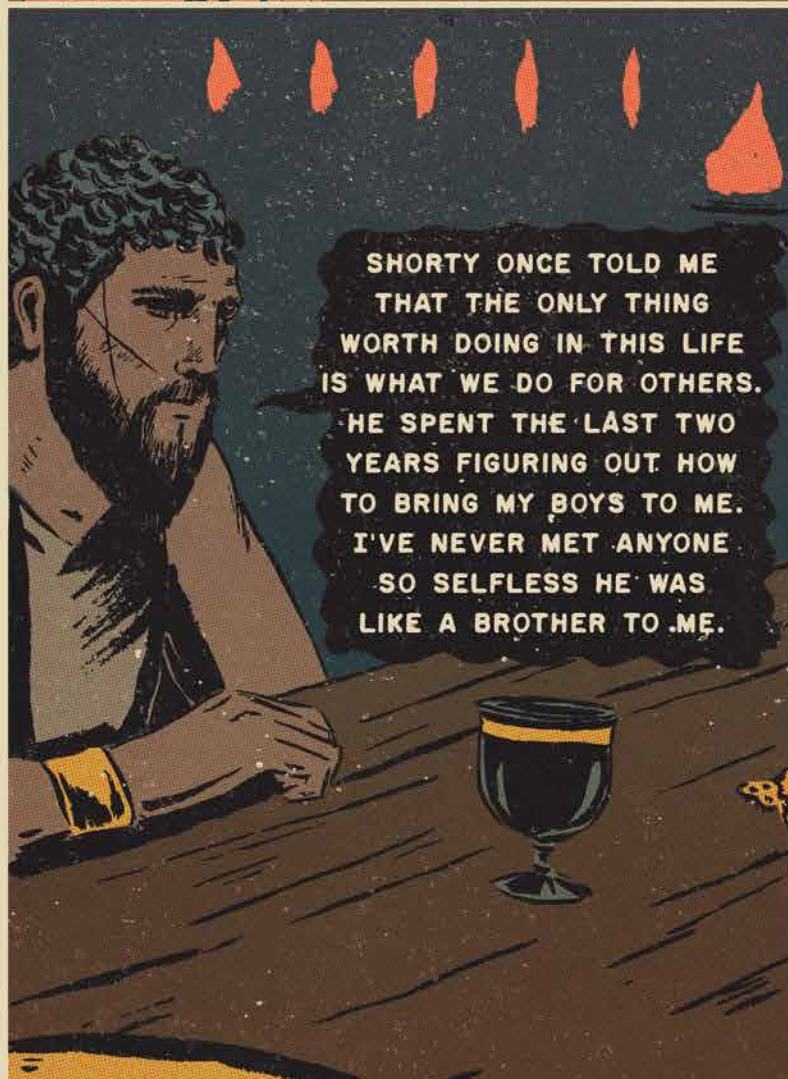




**AS THEY NEAR THE GATE, THE REBELS
ERUPT WITH VICTORIOUS WAR CRIES,
HOLDING THEIR WEAPONS HIGH IN THE
AIR. THE VICTORY CELEBRATION CEASES
AS THE REBELS BEGIN THE AGONIZING
WORK OF BURNING THEIR FALLEN FRIENDS.**



A WAKE IS HELD FOR SHORTY THAT NIGHT SO HIS FRIENDS COULD HONOR HIS LIFE. THE BOYS ARE SITTING BESIDE EACH OTHER AT A LONG TABLE, IN A DIMLY LIT PUB.



**SHORTY ONCE TOLD ME
THAT THE ONLY THING
WORTH DOING IN THIS LIFE
IS WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS.
HE SPENT THE LAST TWO
YEARS FIGURING OUT HOW
TO BRING MY BOYS TO ME.
I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE
SO SELFLESS HE WAS
LIKE A BROTHER TO ME.**



TO US!



**TO THOSE LIKE US/
DAMN FEW... AND
THEY ARE DEAD.**

AS THE SUN RISES THE NEXT MORNING, SYD GATHERS A FEW SUPPLIES, PACKING THEM IN A MAKESHIFT PACK AROUND HIS SHOULDER. HE WAKES LOU AND SHIRO BY TUSSLING THEIR HAIR GENTLY AND WHISPERING.



GOOD MORNING BOYS WHAT IF YOUR LIFE HAD NO MEANING? WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THAT ALL YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, STRUGGLES, EVERYTHING YOU WORKED SO HARD FOR, WAS NOT YOURS? WHAT IF YOUR DISAPPOINTMENTS AND TRAGEDIES WEREN'T YOURS EITHER? IT ALL BEGINS WITH CHOICE, AND WHEN THERE IS NO CHOICE, THERE'S NO POINT IN DOING ANYTHING.



GOOD MORNING DAD... ARE YOU SAYING THAT OUR LIVES WERE JUST SOME KIND OF ENTERTAINMENT FOR THEM? I THOUGHT WE DEFEATED THEIR ARMY YESTERDAY. I HOPED THIS WAS ALL OVER!



SADLY, THAT WAS ONE BATTLE. THEIR WAR COUNCIL IS PROBABLY MEETING RIGHT NOW TO COME UP WITH A NEW STRATEGY. IN ORDER FOR US TO KEEP THEM FROM SENDING MORE TROOPS, WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF A COUPLE OF THINGS.



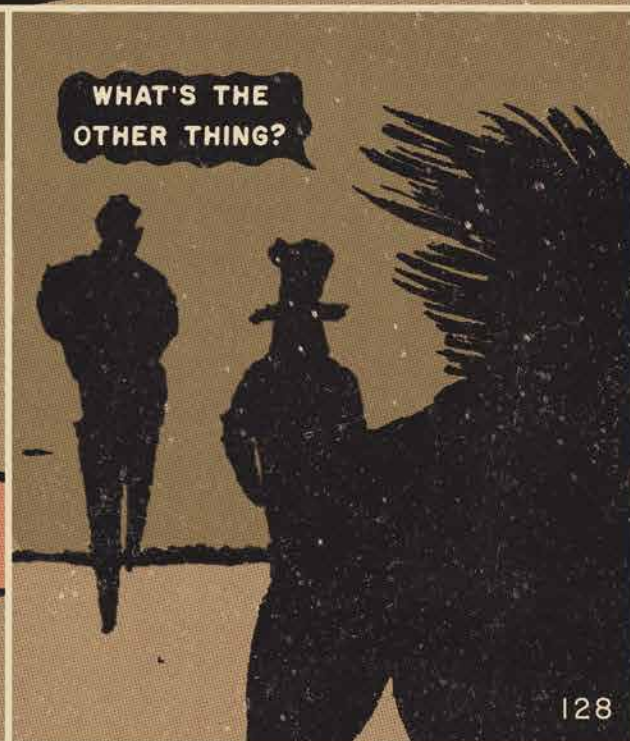
YEAH, WHAT'S THAT?



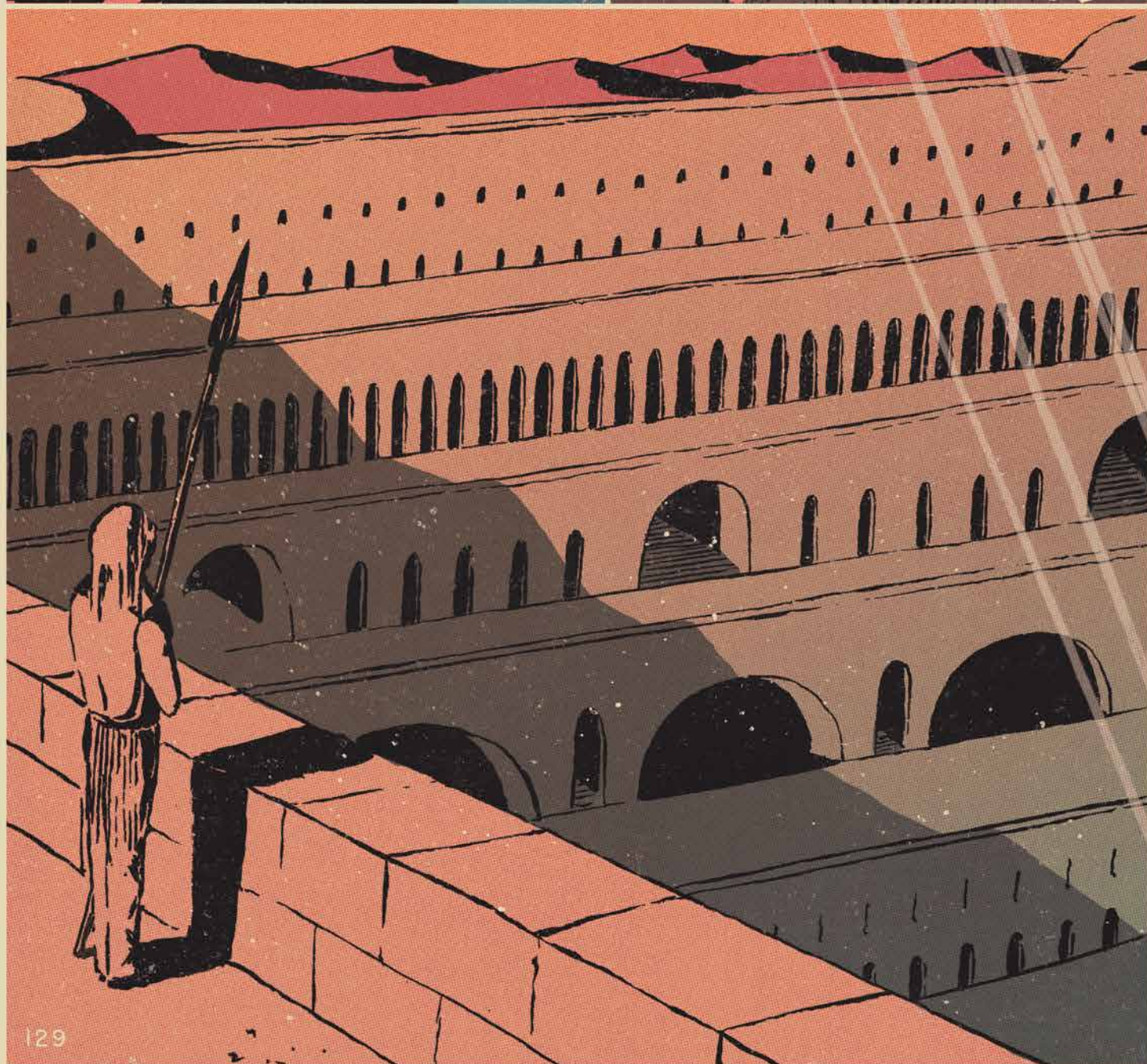
FIRST WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THEY DON'T FIND THE HUMAN PARTICLE.



I'LL JUST COVER IT UP WITH THIS.



WHAT'S THE OTHER THING?



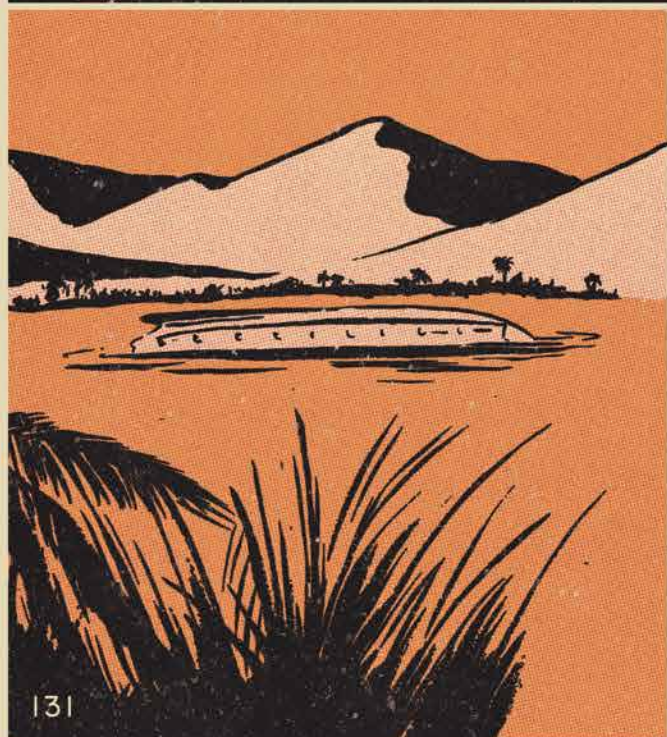


SYD AND THE BOYS FLY OFF ACROSS THE SAND TOWARD ISIS. THEIR HEARTS ARE FILLED WITH VENGEANCE AND ACUTE BLOODLUST THAT CAN ONLY BE HAD BY WATCHING THEIR FRIEND BE KILLED IN SUCH A GRUESOME WAY. SHIRO TRAILS BEHIND AS THE CODEX'S JETPACK CAN'T KEEP UP TO SYD AND LOU'S NEAR IMMORTAL FLIGHT ABILITIES.





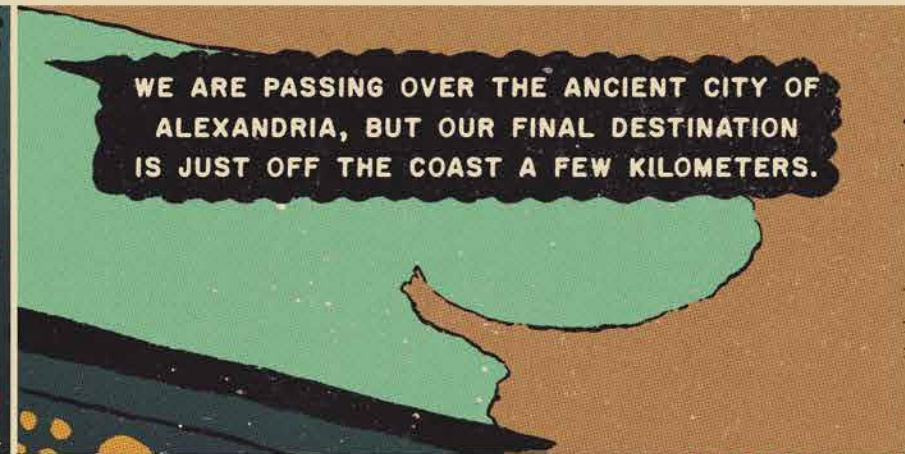
ISIS RUMBLES FROM HER WATERY HIDING PLACE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OASIS, BECOMING BUOYANT AND SURFACING BRIEFLY BEFORE TAKING FLIGHT. THE CHROME SAUSAGE BECOMES AIRBORNE, GAINING ALTITUDE WHILE SETTING COURSE FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.



WHAT'S OUR HEADING?



WE ARE PASSING OVER THE ANCIENT CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, BUT OUR FINAL DESTINATION IS JUST OFF THE COAST A FEW KILOMETERS.



WHAT IS OUR FINAL DESTINATION??

THE LOST CITY OF HERACLEON.



THAT'S SUICIDE!



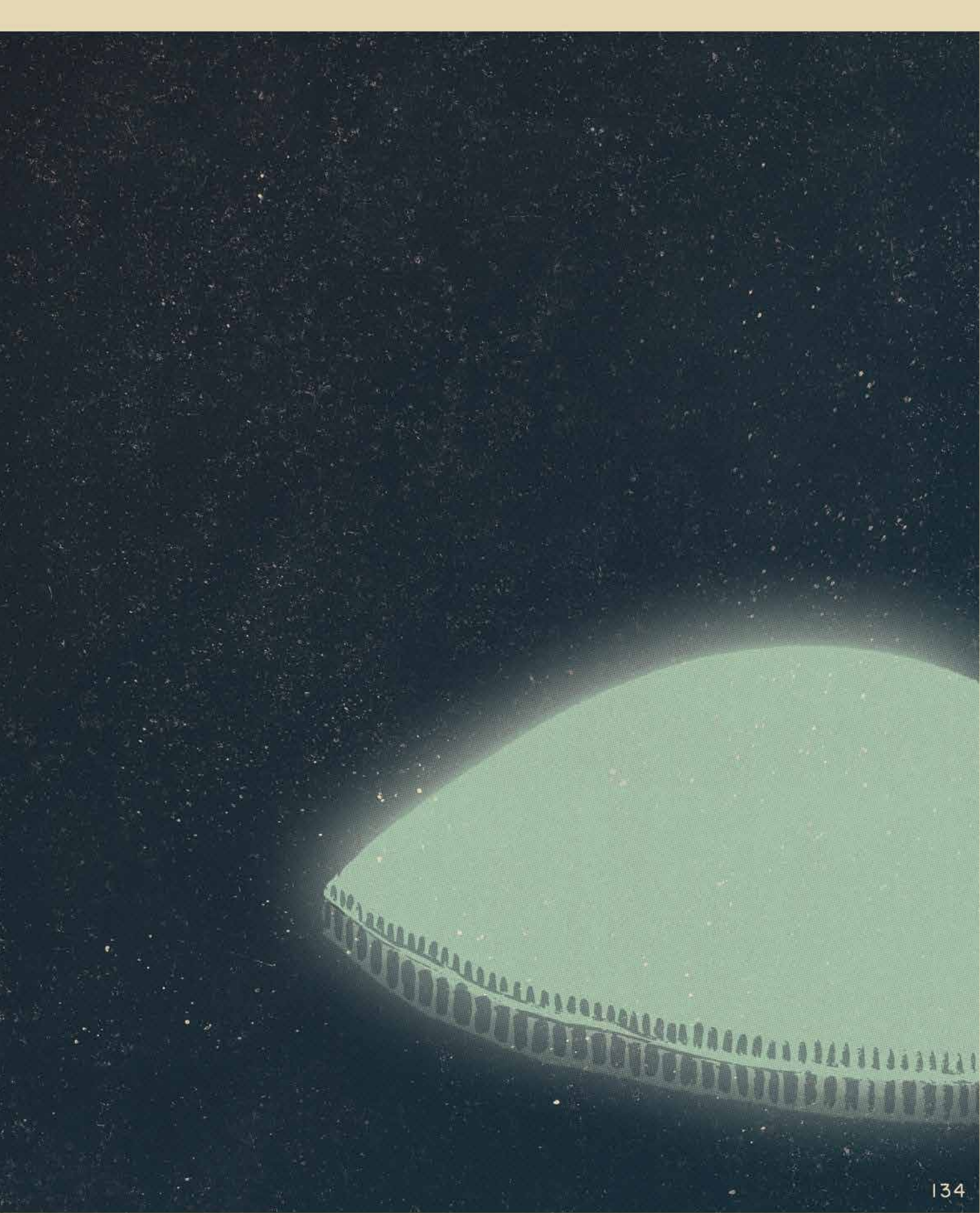
SUDDENLY ISIS STARTS TO DESCEND, BOW FIRST, HEADING DIRECTLY FOR THE SEA. ISIS PIERCES THE SEA WITHOUT MAKING AS MUCH AS A RIPPLE, HAVING NO PREFERENCE FOR AIR OR WATER, INDIFFERENT TO BOTH.

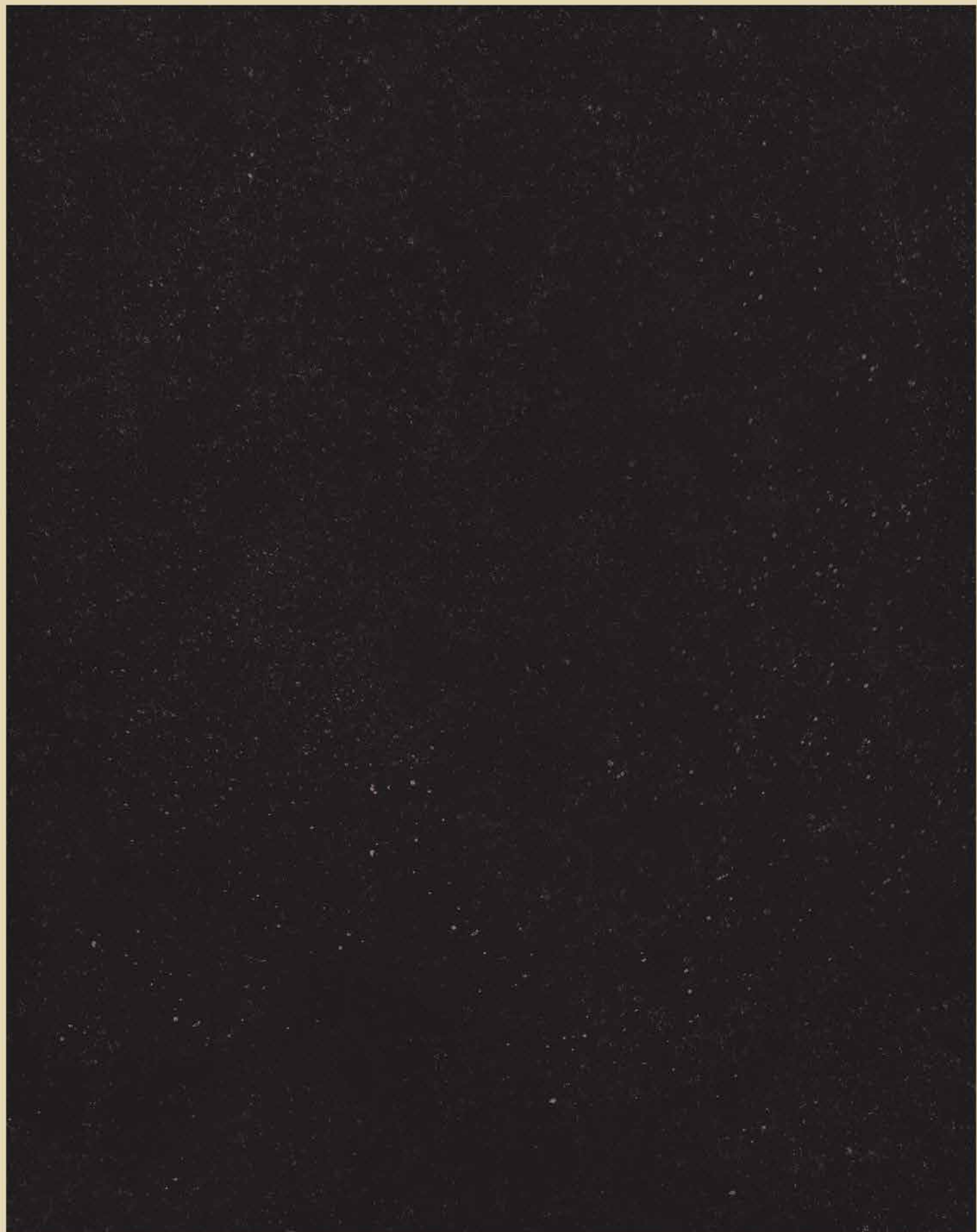
WHERE ELSE ARE WE GOING TO FIND HECTOR? HE'S EXPECTING US.





IN THE DARKEST OF DEPTHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA THE CREW IS UNABLE TO SEE, BUT THE VESSEL KNOWS WHERE TO GO. WITHIN A FEW MOMENTS A PULSING, BLURRY HAZE REVEALS A BUBBLE LIKE DOME STRUCTURE CONTAINING A BUSTLING CITY OF COLISEUMS, OPEN MARKETS, BUSINESSES, ELABORATE PRIVATE RESIDENCES AND MYTHOLOGICAL LOOKING STATUES. EVERYWHERE, THERE ARE MONUMENTS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP ONE BUILDING INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE NEXT, STARKLY WHITE AS IF MADE ENTIRELY OF SAND.





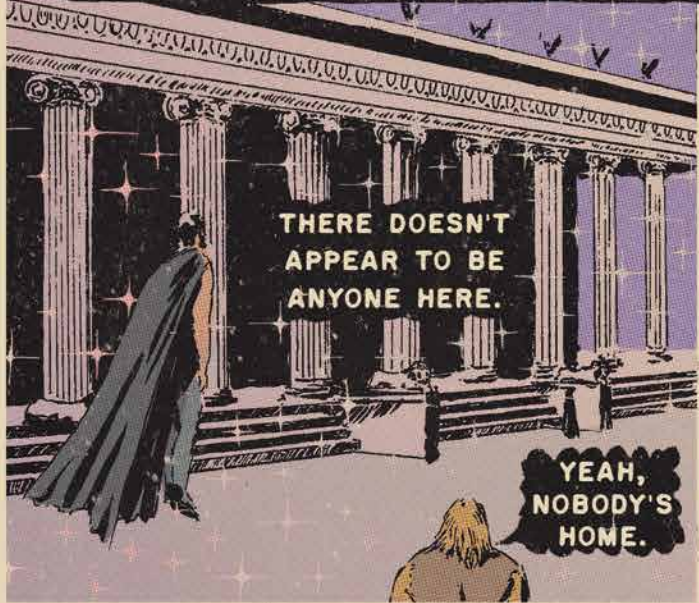




UPON ARRIVAL TO THE CITY, THEY ARE SURPRISED TO FIND THE STREETS DESERTED. NO PEOPLE, ANIMALS OR CREATURES ARE WALKING AROUND AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT. SYD, LOU AND SHIRO CAME READY FOR A FIGHT. INSTEAD, THE ONLY SOUND IS THEIR OWN FOOTSTEPS ON THE MARBLE FLOORS.



FINALLY THE SILENCE IS BROKEN BY SYD'S DEEP AND RASPY VOICE.



**THERE DOESN'T
APPEAR TO BE
ANYONE HERE.**



**YEAH,
NOBODY'S
HOME.**



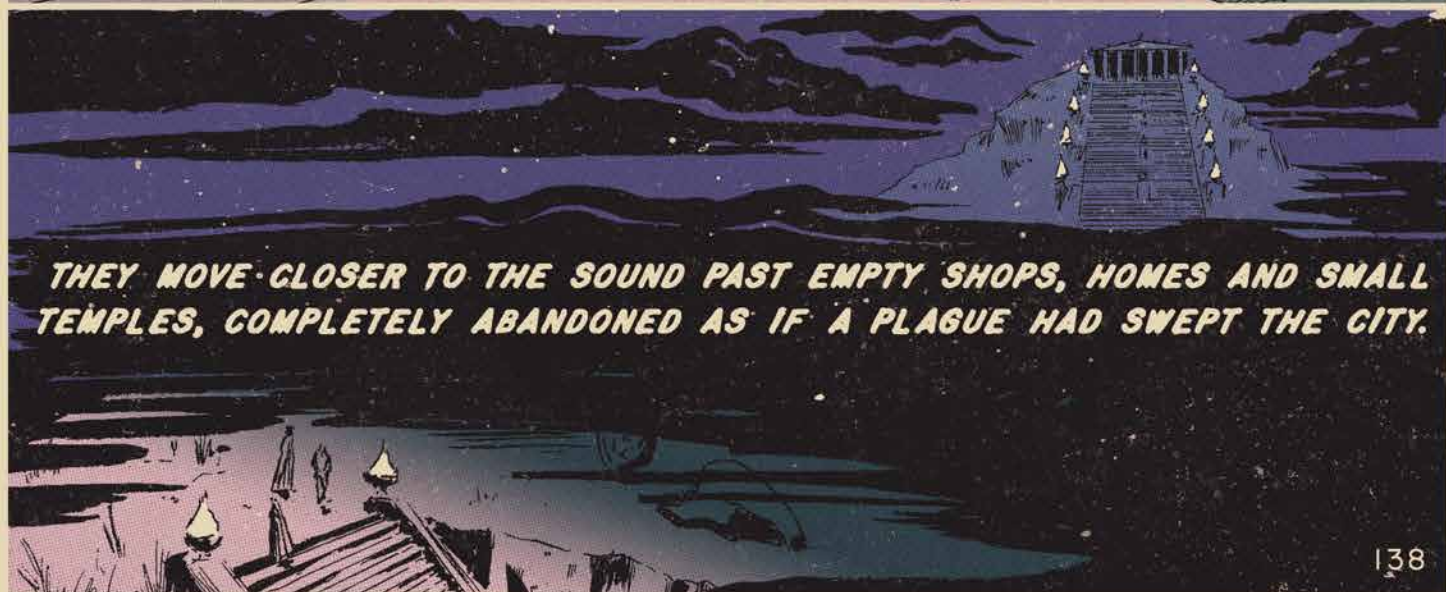
**IT DOESN'T MAKE
ANY SENSE, WHERE
DID EVERYONE GO?**

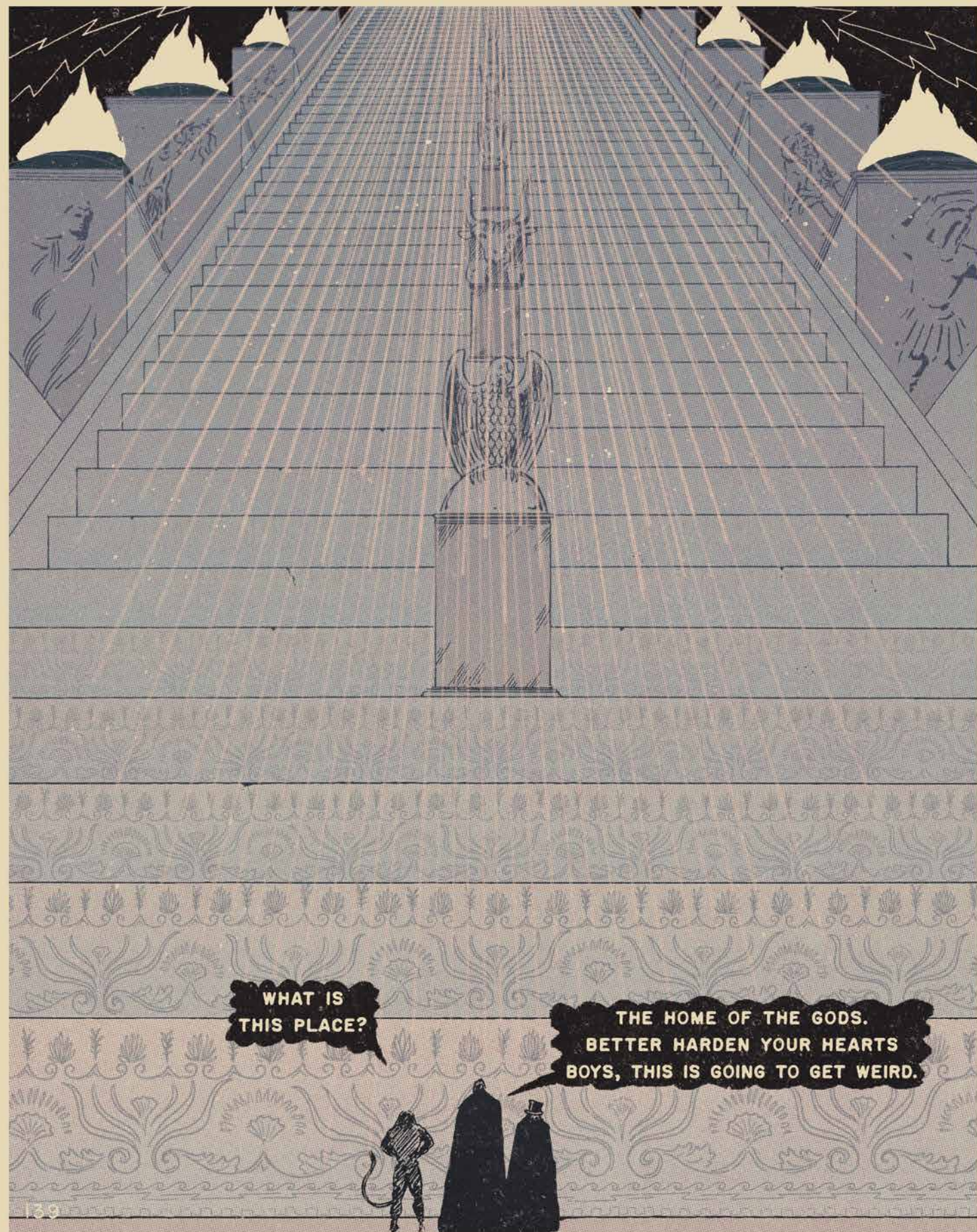
JUST THEN THEY HEAR A TREMENDOUS THUNDERCLAP!

CLAP!



**COME ON
BOYS!**





WHAT IS
THIS PLACE?

THE HOME OF THE GODS.
BETTER HARDEN YOUR HEARTS
BOYS, THIS IS GOING TO GET WEIRD.



HRRR!

CURSE THIS,
I'M FLYING.



SEE YOU
AT THE TOP!

THEY MAKE A SOLID ATTEMPT AT CLIMBING BEFORE DECIDING TO FLY. SYD JOINS LOU IN FLIGHT. SHIRO STARTS TO BOUND UP THE STAIRS TWO AT A TIME, IN FULL 'CAT METHOD. BUT HE CAN'T KEEP UP

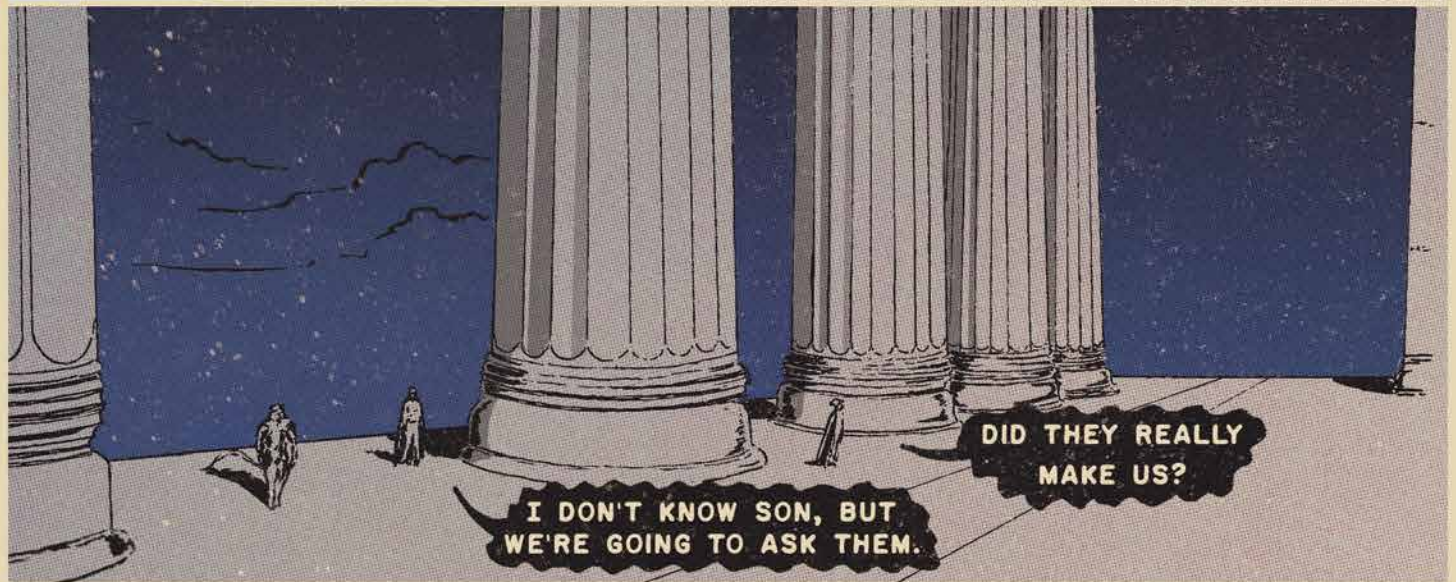


HEHH HEHH
HEHH

WHY DIDN'T YOU
SAY JETPACK?

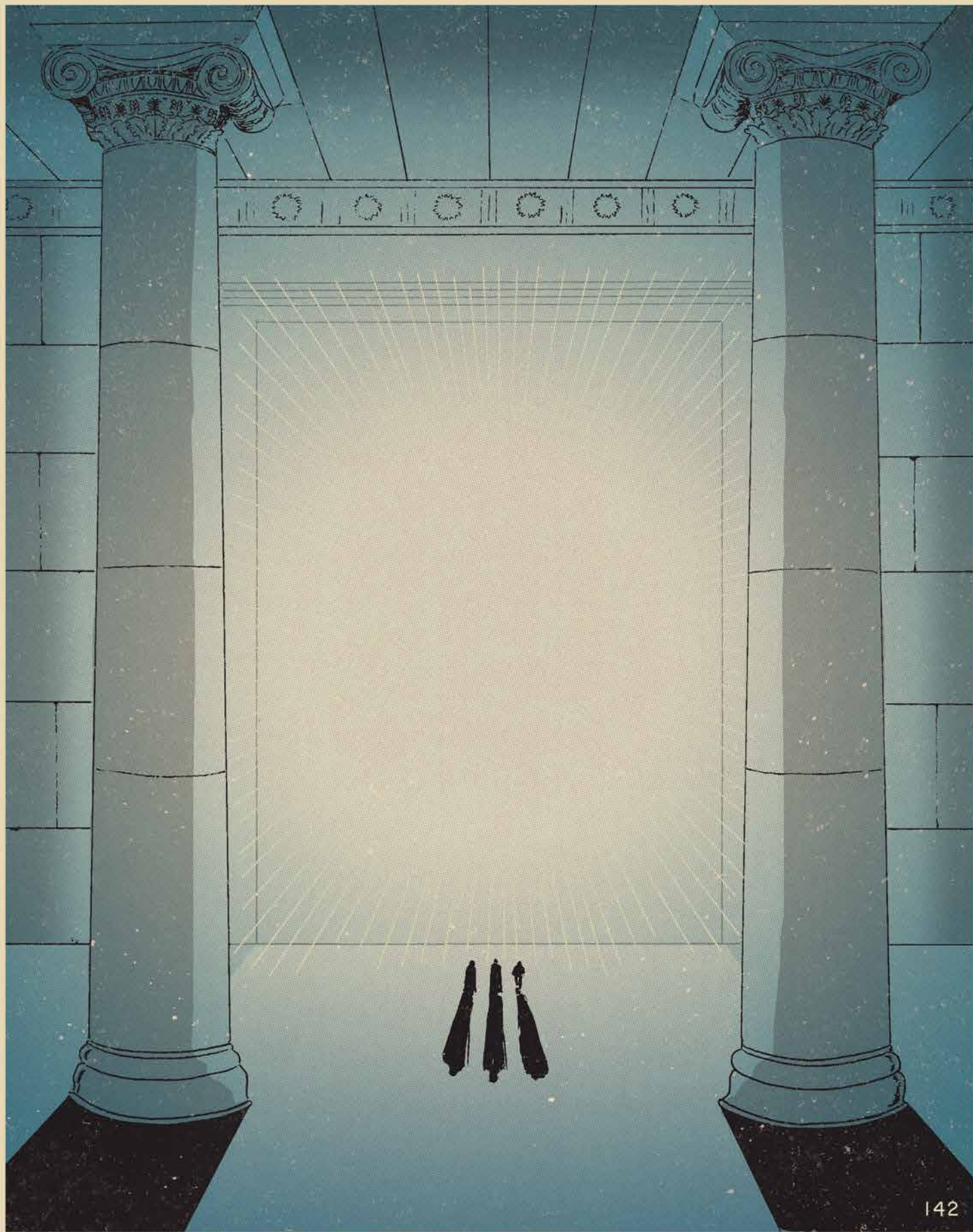


CURSE!



FILLED WITH DREAD THEY CAUTIOUSLY APPROACH THE ENTRANCE. TO THEIR SURPRISE IT'S WIDE OPEN, NO GUARDS ON POST OR ANY OTHER SECURITY.













IF ONLY THEY WOULD HAVE LISTENED!
WE COULD HAVE TALKED SOME
SENSE INTO THEM!



I'LL SHOW THEM HOW
TO LISTEN! I'LL GET
THEM TO LISTEN!



WHY DON'T THEY
CARE ANYMORE?



'CAUSE
YOU SUCK!
THAT'S WHY!







I AM SYD. THESE ARE
MY BOYS LOU AND SHIRO.



BOW DOWN BEFORE HERACLES AND ZEUS!

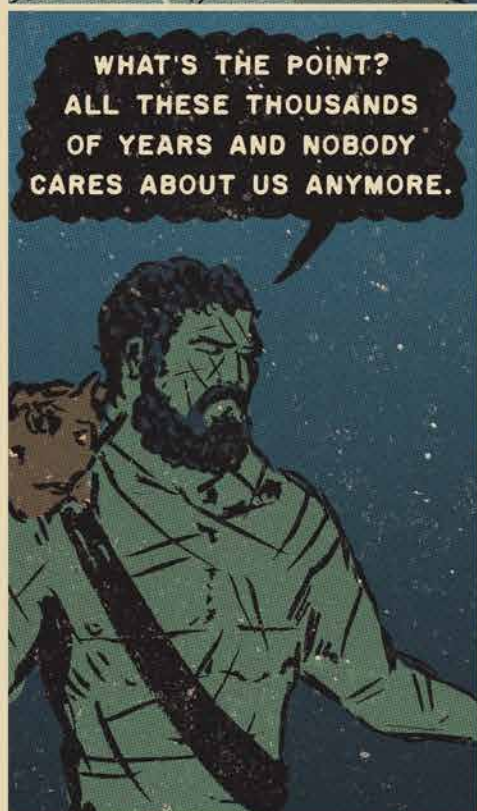


WE WILL NOT.



SÉE?

...I
KNOW.





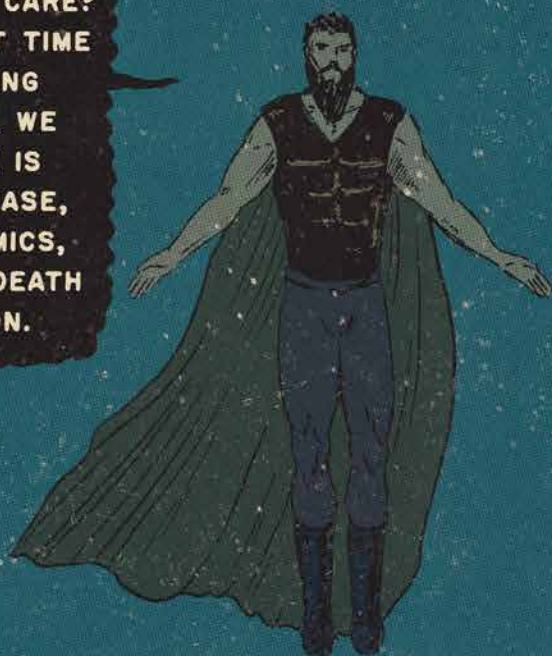
THEY'RE ACTING
LIKE CHILDREN.

WHAT
SHOULD
WE DO?



LET ME
HANDLE
THIS.

WHY WOULD ANYONE CARE?
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME
YOU DID SOMETHING
BENEVOLENT? ALL WE
AS HUMANS HAVE IS
WAR, FLOODS, DISEASE,
DROUGHTS, PANDEMICS,
MASS EXTINCTION, DEATH
AND DESTRUCTION.



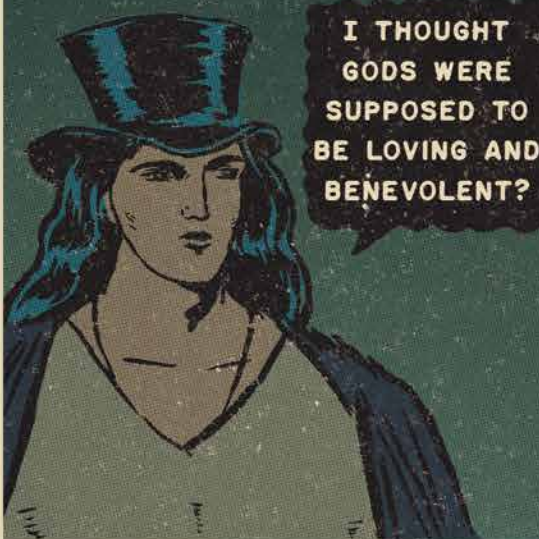
SYD, MY SON YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING. THE WARS YOU MAKE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH US. DISEASE IS A RESULT OF THE ENVIRONMENT HUMANS MANIPULATE AND THE CHOICES YOU'VE MADE. PANDEMICS ARE A NATURALLY OCCURRING CLEANSING OF THE WEAK. NONE OF THESE THINGS YOU SPEAK OF HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH US. IT MAY SEEM CRUEL AND UNFAIR, BUT THAT'S THE WAY WE ARE. CONFLICT IS IN OUR NATURE WE HAVE A NEED TO FIGHT FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IS RIGHT, INSTEAD OF UNDERSTANDING THAT IT'S POSSIBLE OTHER PEOPLE AND CULTURES HAVE DIFFERENT BELIEFS AND ACCEPT THEY'RE OK. THE NEED TO BE RIGHT IS STRONGER THAN ANY OTHER FOR HUMANS. IT TRUMPS EVERY OTHER NEED AND IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL YOUR PROBLEMS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.



OH. WELL, IF THAT'S TRUE, WHY DID YOU SEND YOUR ARMIES TO KILL US ALL? YOUR MONSTERS KILLED MY BEST FRIEND.

WE WANTED YOU TO PAY ATTENTION TO US. WE WANTED YOU TO SEE THAT WE MADE YOU, WE'RE ALL POWERFUL, YOU SHOULD RESPECT AND WORSHIP US.





I THOUGHT
GODS WERE
SUPPOSED TO
BE LOVING AND
BENEVOLENT?



YOU KILLED SEKHMENT AND
SOME OF MY FAVORITE PETS.
WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT

I GUESS NOT...

WHAT WOULD MAKE MEN
RESPECT US AGAIN?



WELL, YOU'RE LARGELY FORGOTTEN,
IF NOT HATED IN OUR SOCIETY. TO
BE HONEST MEN FEEL ALONE MOST
OF THE TIME. GODS HAVE BECOME
IRRELEVANT. WE DON'T REALLY KNOW
YOU'RE THERE. IF YOU STOPPED
PEOPLE'S SUFFERING FROM TIME
TO TIME OR PREVENTED THE ODD
DISASTER, PEOPLE MIGHT START
PAYING ATTENTION AGAIN.



HEY, WHERE IS
EVERYONE ANYWAY?

I TAKE YOUR POINT.

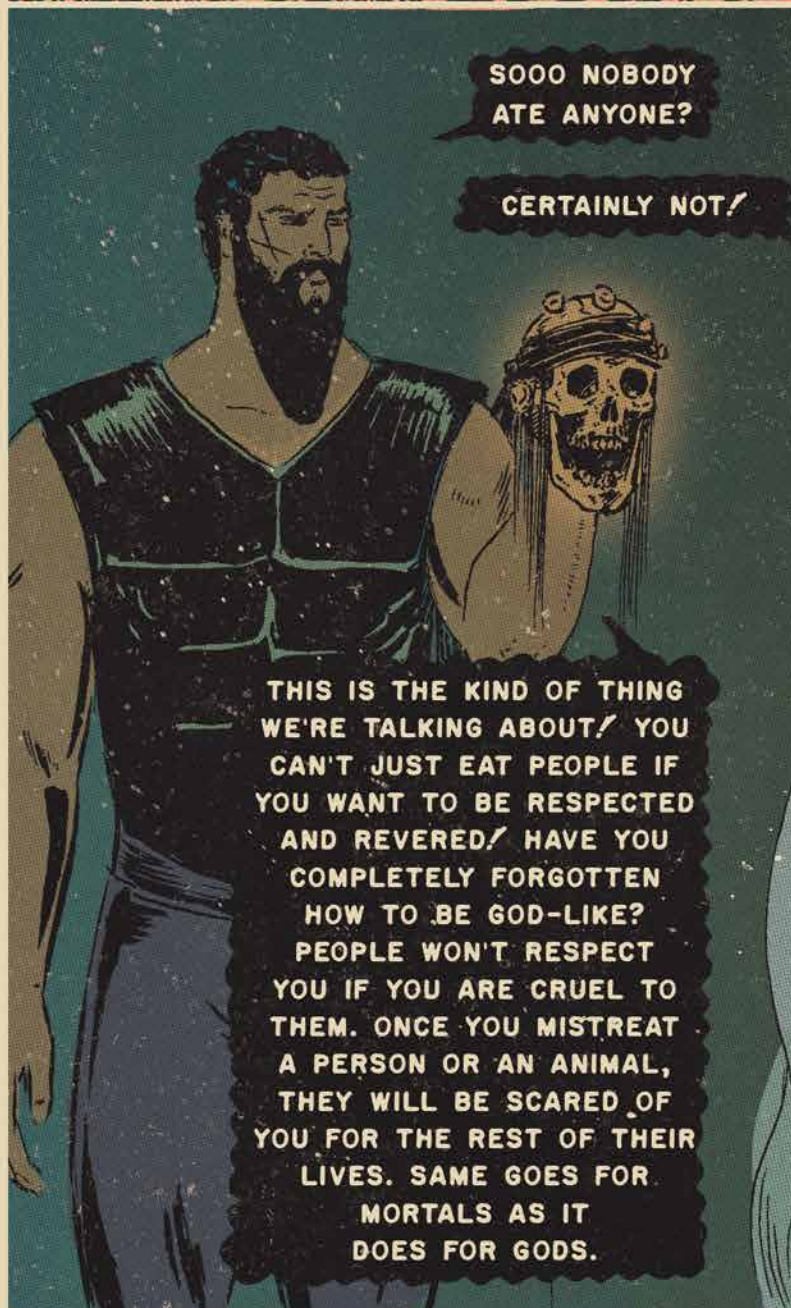
MANY LEFT THE CITY
BECAUSE WE WERE RUNNING
OUT OF FOOD. WE WERE ALL
HUNGRY AND OUR NUMBERS
BECAME LESS AND LESS.



WHY ARE THERE
ALL THESE
PILES OF BONES
EVERYWHERE?



WE WERE ALL
FIGHTING OVER
THE LAST SCRAPS
OF FOOD, IT WAS A
TERRIBLE THING.



SOOO NOBODY
ATE ANYONE?

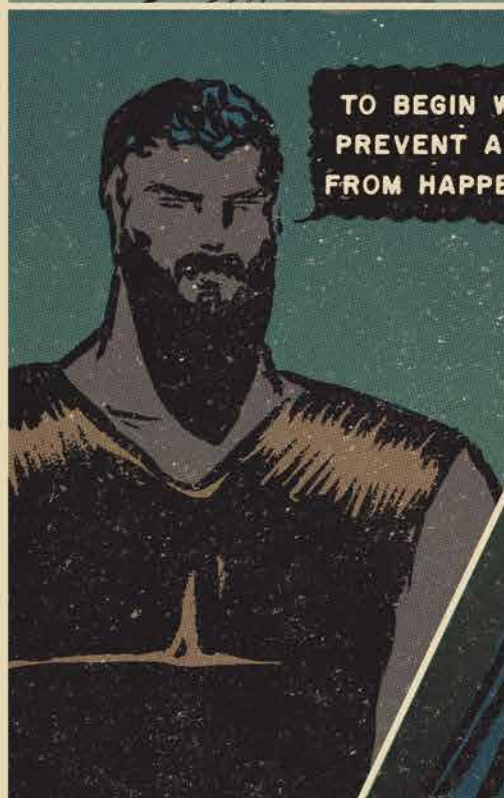
CERTAINLY NOT!

THIS IS THE KIND OF THING
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! YOU
CAN'T JUST EAT PEOPLE IF
YOU WANT TO BE RESPECTED
AND REVERED! HAVE YOU
COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN
HOW TO BE GOD-LIKE?
PEOPLE WON'T RESPECT
YOU IF YOU ARE CRUEL TO
THEM. ONCE YOU MISTREAT
A PERSON OR AN ANIMAL,
THEY WILL BE SCARED OF
YOU FOR THE REST OF THEIR
LIVES. SAME GOES FOR
MORTALS AS IT
DOES FOR GODS.





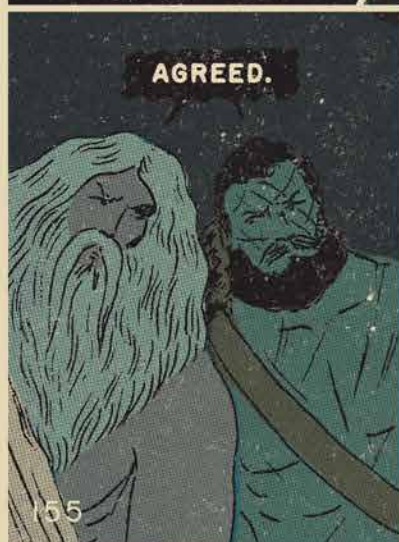
OKAY SYDNEY, WHAT
WOULD YOU HAVE US
DO TO BEGIN OUR
RECONCILIATION
WITH MORTALS?



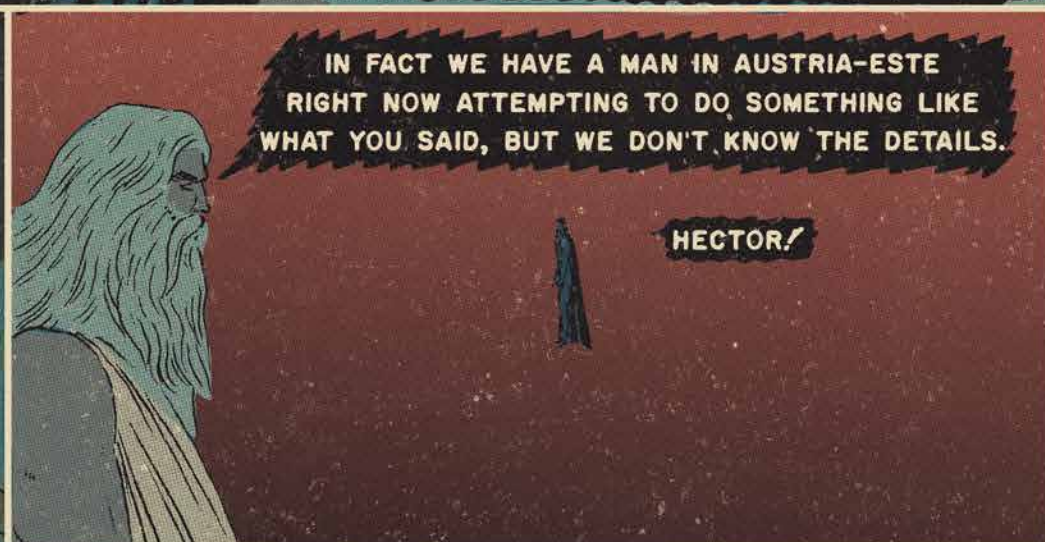
TO BEGIN WITH,
PREVENT A WAR
FROM HAPPENING.

IF WE PREVENT
IT NOBODY WILL
KNOW IT WAS US
THAT HAD ANYTHING
TO DO WITH
ITS PREVENTION.

A TRUE GIFT IS ONE THAT SOMEONE
DOESN'T KNOW THEY RECEIVED. THINK
OF IT AS YOUR NEW PRACTICE OF
BENEVOLENCE. YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE
TO GET SOMETHING OUT OF IT ZEUS.



AGREED.



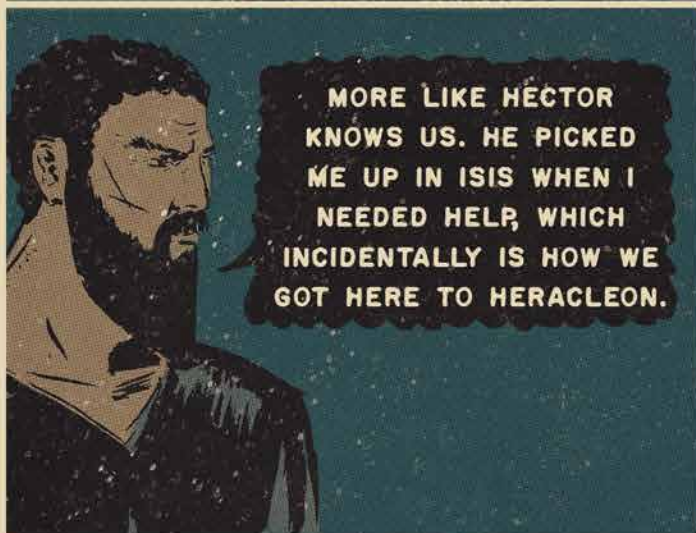
IN FACT WE HAVE A MAN IN AUSTRIA-ESTE
RIGHT NOW ATTEMPTING TO DO SOMETHING LIKE
WHAT YOU SAID, BUT WE DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS.

HECTOR!



YOU KNOW
HECTOR?!

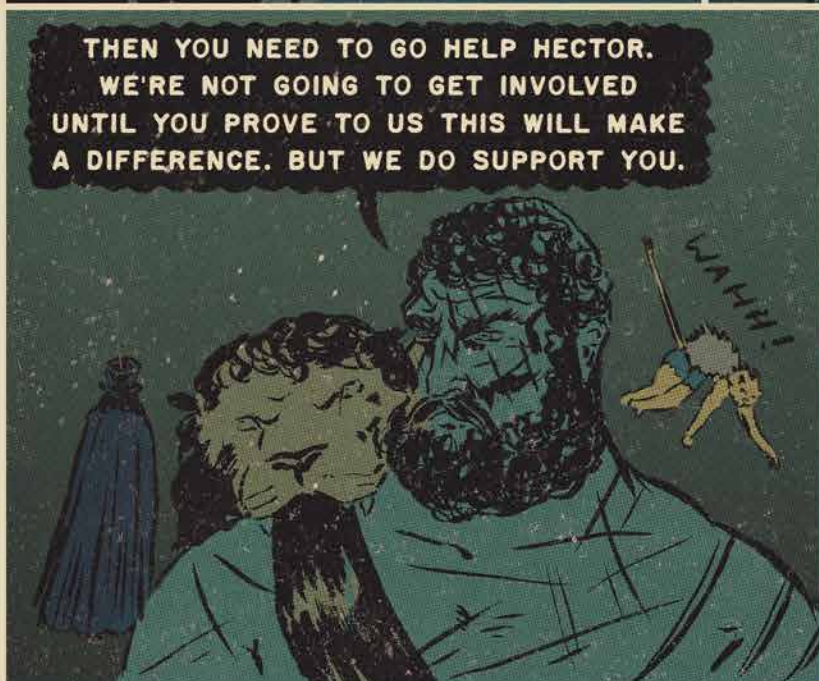
OF COURSE
THEY KNOW
HECTOR...



MORE LIKE HECTOR
KNOWS US. HE PICKED
ME UP IN ISIS WHEN I
NEEDED HELP, WHICH
INCIDENTALLY IS HOW WE
GOT HERE TO HERACLEON.



CURSE!



THEN YOU NEED TO GO HELP HECTOR.
WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET INVOLVED
UNTIL YOU PROVE TO US THIS WILL MAKE
A DIFFERENCE. BUT WE DO SUPPORT YOU.



OH YEAH?
HOW'S THAT?



LIKE A STARTLED CAT AND AT ONE WITH THE CODEX, SHIRO LEAPS INTO THE AIR WITH FULL JETPACK SPEEDING TOWARDS THE EXIT, SYD AND LOU ARE RIGHT BEHIND HIM.



GUYS WAIT UP!

THEY FLY THROUGH THE DESERTED CITY STREETS IN FULL PANIC. AS THEY APPROACH THE CHROME SAUSAGE THEY HEAR A VOICE CALLING OUT SOMETHING INAUDIBLE. THEY LAND IN FRONT OF ISIS AND TURN BACK TO SEE A FIGURE IN THE DISTANCE RUNNING TOWARD THEM.





NO WAY!



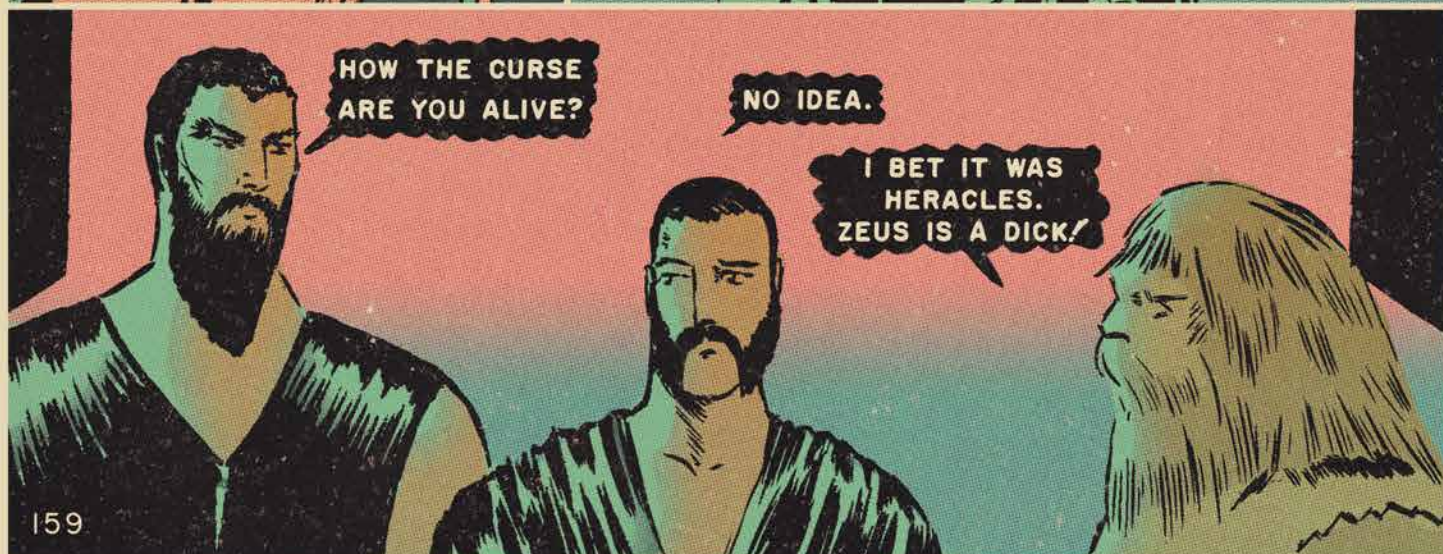
IS THAT
SHORTY??



TAKE
THIS.



HERE, TAKE
THIS TOO...



HOW THE CURSE
ARE YOU ALIVE?

NO IDEA.

I BET IT WAS
HERACLES.
ZEUS IS A DICK!



NOW I KNOW
WHY THEY
CALL YOU
SHORTY.



SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?

WE NEED TO FIND HECTOR AND HELP HIM PREVENT
WWI SO THESE GODS WILL START ACTING LIKE GODS AGAIN.

DO YOU THINK THEY
ACTUALLY WOULD, EVEN
IN THE OFF CHANCE
WE CAN STOP THIS
WAR FROM HAPPENING?

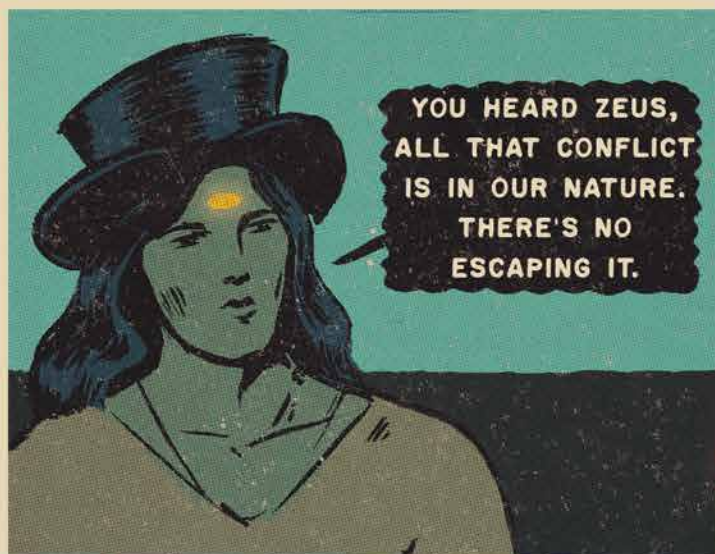
WE HAVE A CHOICE TO CHANGE
THINGS. WE COULD GO HOME NOW...
BACK TO GRANDPA AND TRY TO
PRETEND NONE OF THIS HAPPENED...

OR WHAT?



WE WORK TOGETHER AND FACE THIS
THING HEAD ON TO REVERSE THE
COURSE OF CIVILIZATION. THINK OF
THIS BOYS - IMAGINE A WORLD
WHERE SOMETIMES THERE ISN'T A
GOOD GUY AND A BAD GUY... THERE'S
NO SIDES TO CHOOSE, PEOPLE
RESPECT EACH OTHER, THEIR BELIEFS
AND CHOICES. I HAVE TO BELIEVE
A WORLD LIKE THAT CAN EXIST...

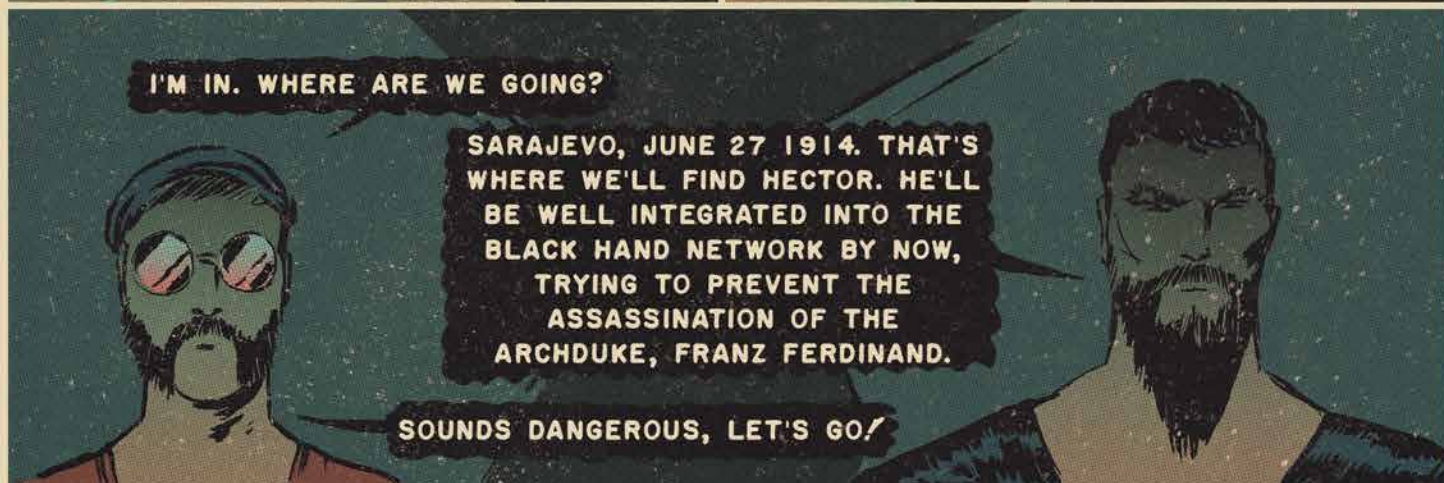




YOU HEARD ZEUS,
ALL THAT CONFLICT
IS IN OUR NATURE.
THERE'S NO
ESCAPING IT.



I NEED TO TRY.

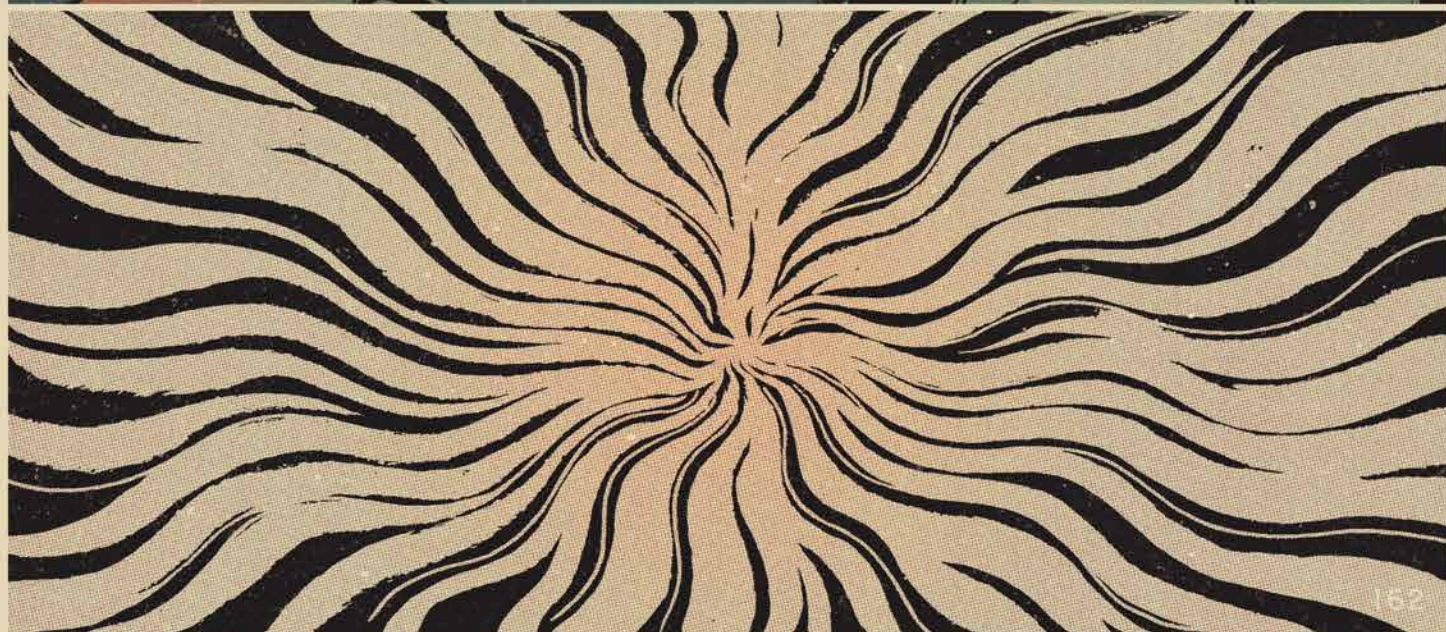
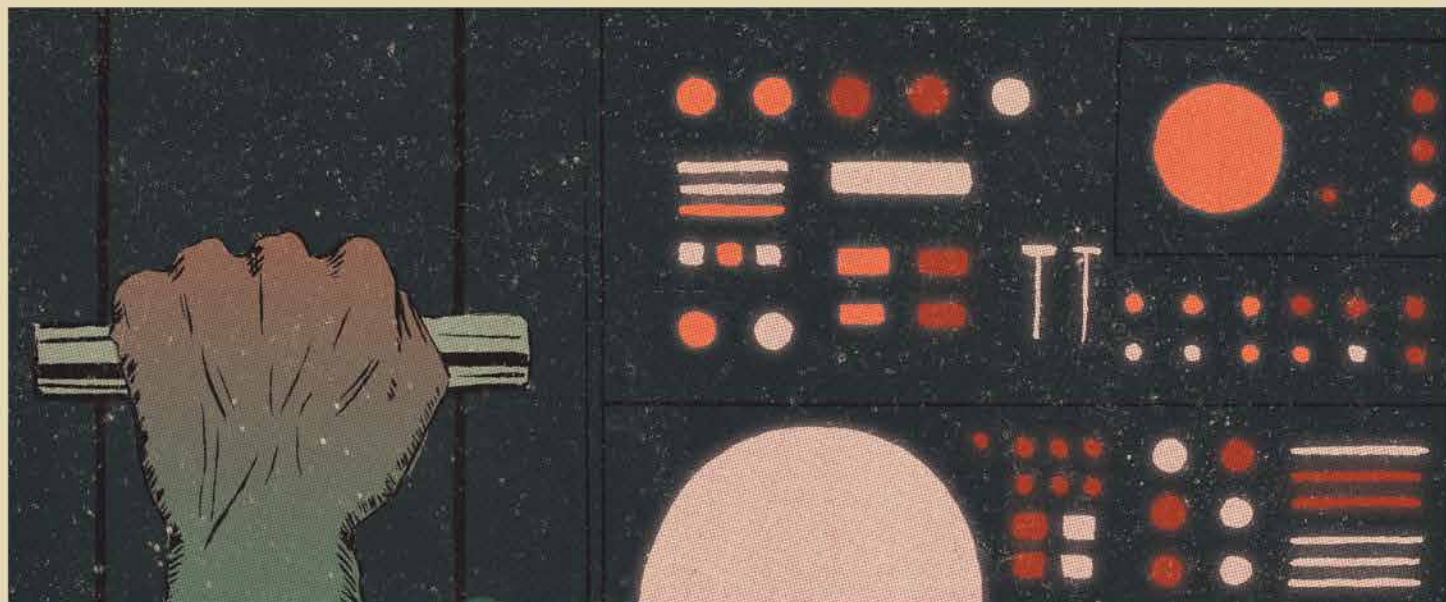


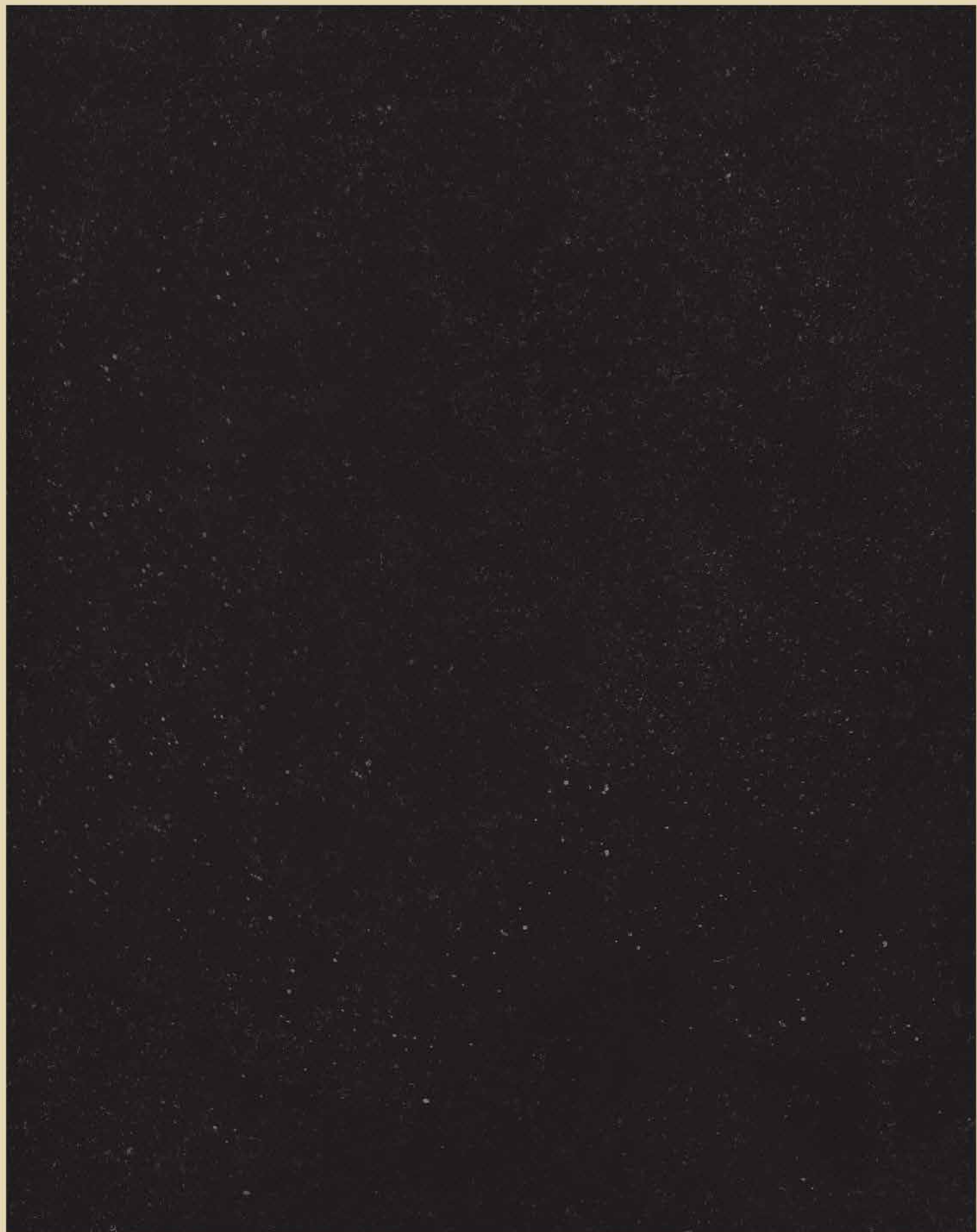
I'M IN. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

SARAJEVO, JUNE 27 1914. THAT'S
WHERE WE'LL FIND HECTOR. HE'LL
BE WELL INTEGRATED INTO THE
BLACK HAND NETWORK BY NOW,
TRYING TO PREVENT THE
ASSASSINATION OF THE
ARCHDUKE, FRANZ FERDINAND.

SOUNDS DANGEROUS, LET'S GO!







A decorative rectangular border with a repeating geometric pattern of interlocking diamonds and lines, surrounding the central text.

VIII

ISIS RUMBLES IN THE DEEP AND CUTS THROUGH THE SEA WITH NO RESISTANCE AS SHE STARTS TO BEND LIGHT IN BETWEEN TIME. SHOOTING FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, ISIS SLIPS NORTH OVER GREECE, MACEDONIA, COMING TO REST IN MODRAL LAKE IN ORDER TO HIDE HER WHEREABOUTS FROM REBELS AND LOYALISTS.



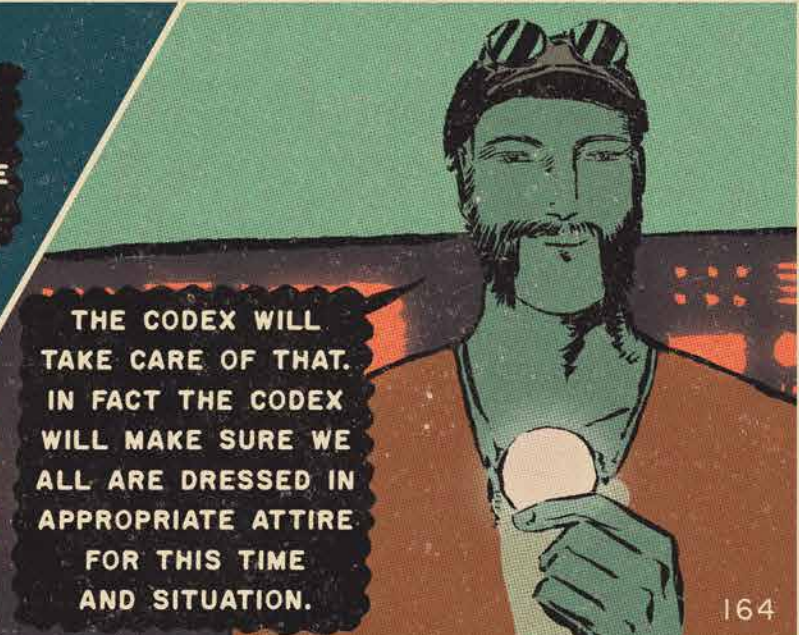
A comic book panel showing three characters from the chest up. On the left is a man with a beard and a headband. In the center is a man with a beard. On the right is a woman with long dark hair and a yellow mark on her forehead. They are all looking towards the right. The background is dark with red and blue lines and small star-like specks.

YOU DID IT AGAIN KID!

DONT TEASE HIM SHORTY,
WE'LL NEED HIS STRENGTH.

A profile view of a woman with long dark hair and a yellow mark on her forehead, looking towards the right.

YEAH, I KNOW, BUT
HOW ARE WE GONNA
HIDE THAT TAIL, THOSE
PAWS AND INCISORS?

A man with a beard and a headband with goggles, holding a glowing white orb in his hand. He is looking towards the left. The background is dark with red and blue lights.

THE CODEX WILL
TAKE CARE OF THAT.
IN FACT THE CODEX
WILL MAKE SURE WE
ALL ARE DRESSED IN
APPROPRIATE ATTIRE
FOR THIS TIME
AND SITUATION.

THE CODEXES SEMALESSLY MANUFACTURE WOOL SUITS, CAPS AND SCARVES FOR SYD, SHORTY, LOU AND SHIRO.



HECTOR IS LOCATED AT THE HOTEL GRAND,
APPROXIMATELY 80 MILES SOUTH OF OUR CURRENT
POSITION. THE TRAIN STATION IS ONE MILE TO THE EAST.

WHAT? WHY
CAN'T WE FLY?

PEOPLE WOULD
SEE US, OUR
COVER WOULD
BE BLOWN.



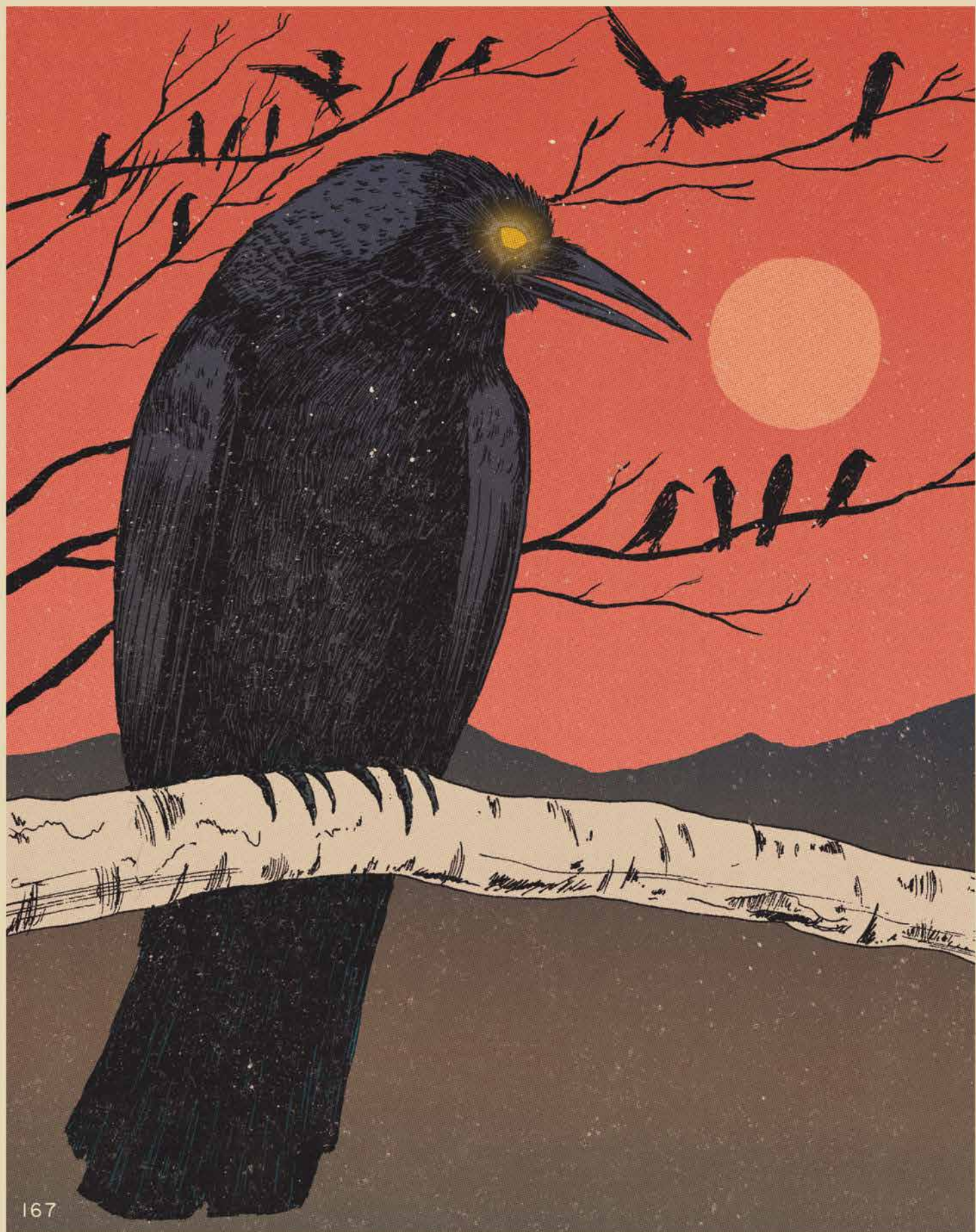
NO POWERS, NO FLYING,
WE HAVE TO BLEND IN.
THE CODEX WILL
TRANSLATE
FOR US. JUST SPEAK AS
YOU NORMALLY WOULD THE
CODEX WILL TAKE CARE OF
THE REST.

THANKS CODEX.

WHERE'D YOU GET THAT
SWEET CANE OLD MAN?

IT'S ACTUALLY
PELEUS.

GOTTA LOVE
THAT CODEX.





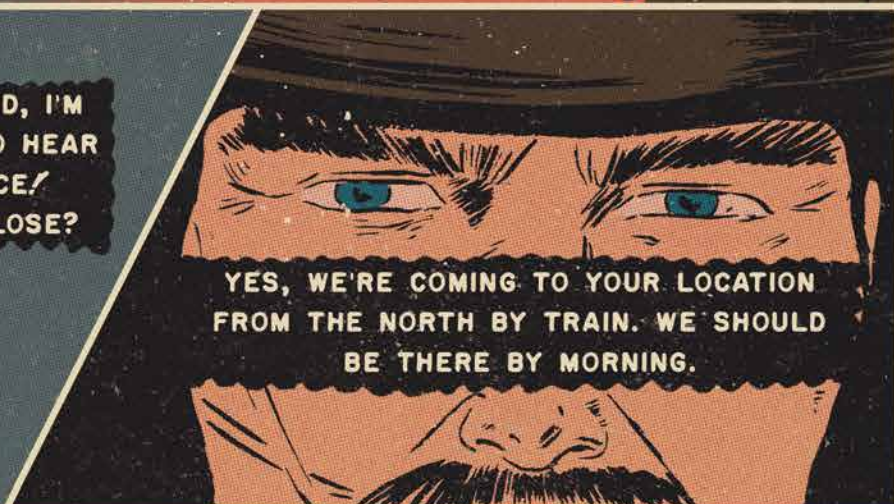
I'VE LOCATED HECTOR AND DETERMINED
THAT HE IS ALONE AT THE MOMENT.
SHOULD I OPEN A COMMUNICATION CHANNEL?

YES, BUT KEEP IT QUIET,
MINIMUM VOLUME.

HECTOR, IT'S SYD,
CAN YOU TALK?



OH WOW, SYD, I'M
SO HAPPY TO HEAR
YOUR VOICE!
ARE YOU CLOSE?



YES, WE'RE COMING TO YOUR LOCATION
FROM THE NORTH BY TRAIN. WE SHOULD
BE THERE BY MORNING.



GREAT! WHO IS WE?

ME, SHORTY, LOU
AND SHIRO.

CURSE NO, THIS IS NO PLACE FOR
KIDS. DON'T GET ME WRONG, I'M HAPPY
YOU FOUND YOUR SON, BUT IT'S GOING
TO GET DANGEROUS HERE REAL FAST.

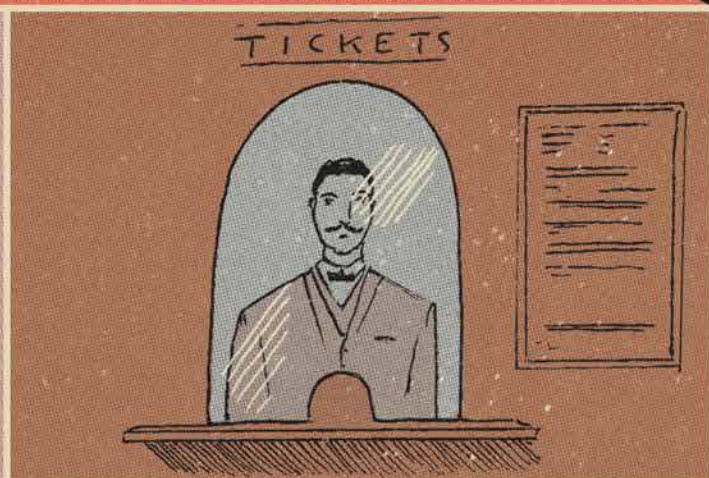
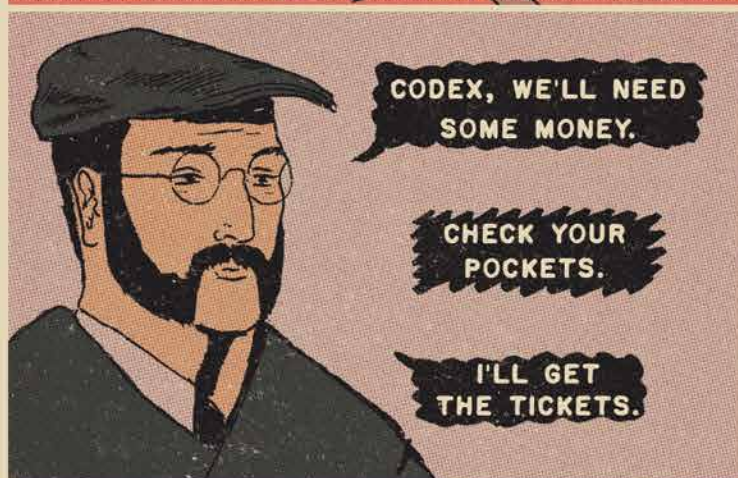
WELL THAT'S THE COOL THING HECTOR,
ISIS CHANGED THEM, WE FOUGHT A
BATTLE WITH THE BEASTS TOGETHER.
THEY'RE FIERCE WARRIORS NOW.

OH YES? WHO WON?

WE DID, OBVIOUSLY.

RIGHT, DUH. SEE YOU SOON MY FRIEND.
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE
HOTEL. ROOM 13.



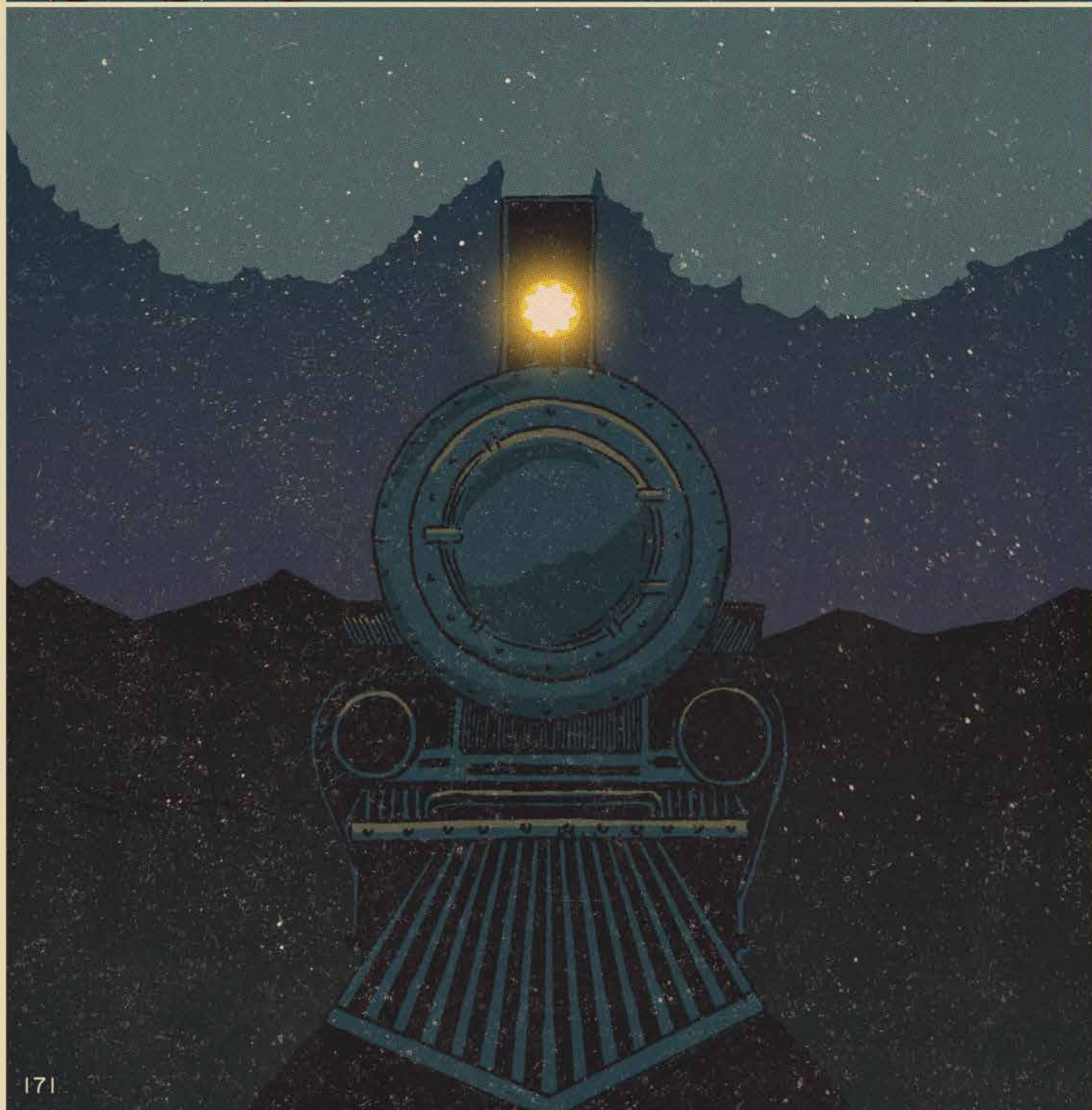


ALL SET, LET'S GET ON BOARD.



FIRST CLASS





THE TRAIN ARRIVES IN SARAJEVO LATER THAT NIGHT...



OH CURSE. THAT'S A LOT OF GUNS
AND I'M NOT BULLETPROOF.

ACTUALLY YOU MOSTLY
ARE, BECAUSE OF ME.

ALL OF THE GARMENTS
I MADE CAN WITHSTAND
GUNFIRE, BLADES TOO.

WHY DID YOU SAY
MOSTLY??

IT'S YOUR FACE.

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH MY FACE?

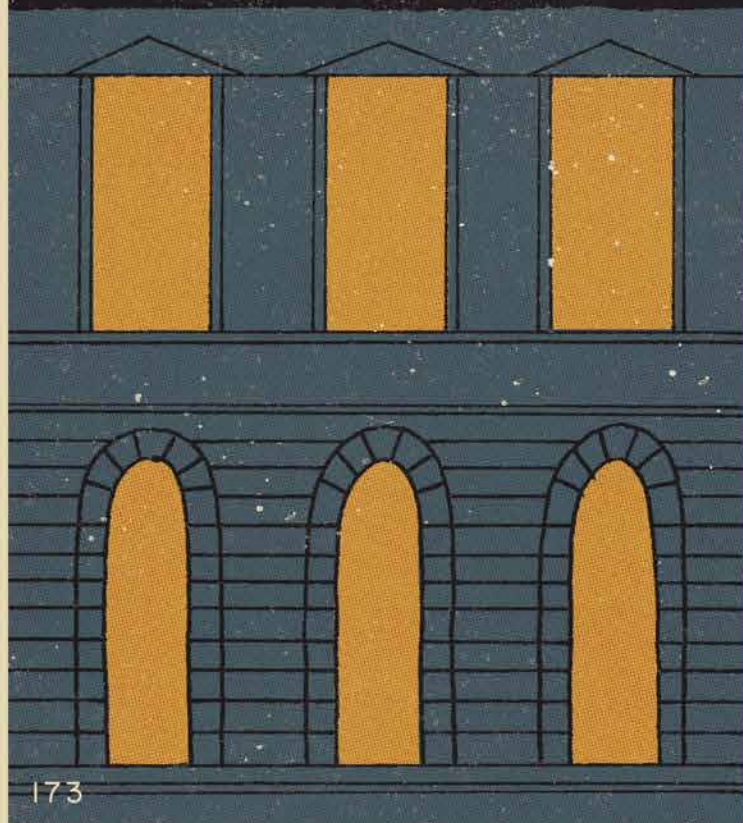
BESIDES LOOKING LIKE
THAT, NOTHING.

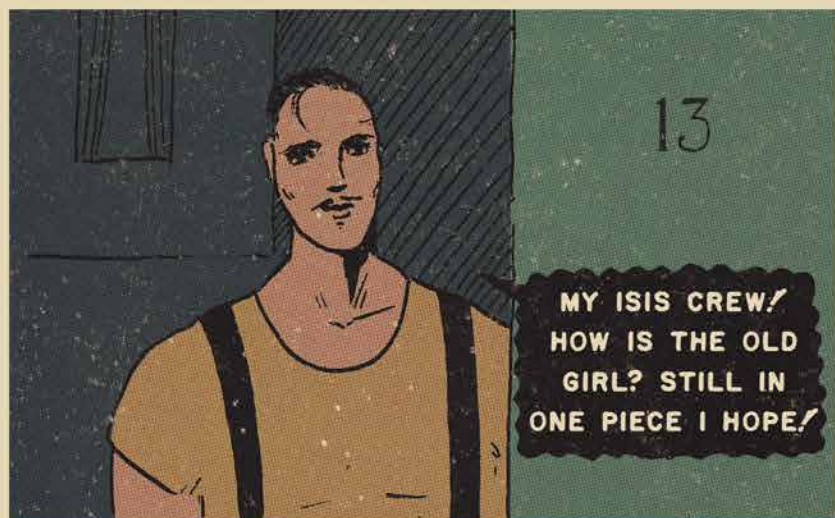
OH GREAT, THE CODEX
GOT ALL "AI" ON US GUYS.

JUST KEEP MOVING, ACT NATURAL. UP THE STAIRCASE TO THE LEFT AND OF THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE TO EXIT THE STATION.



THE CODEX GIVES THEM STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS LEADING THEM TO THE HOTEL, THROUGH THE LOBBY AND DIRECTLY TO HECTOR'S ROOM. SHORTY USES THE SAME KNOCK HECTOR USED TO GET ON BOARD ISIS.





13

MY ISIS CREW!
HOW IS THE OLD
GIRL? STILL IN
ONE PIECE I HOPE!



WE HID HER IN
A LAKE JUST
NORTH OF HERE.



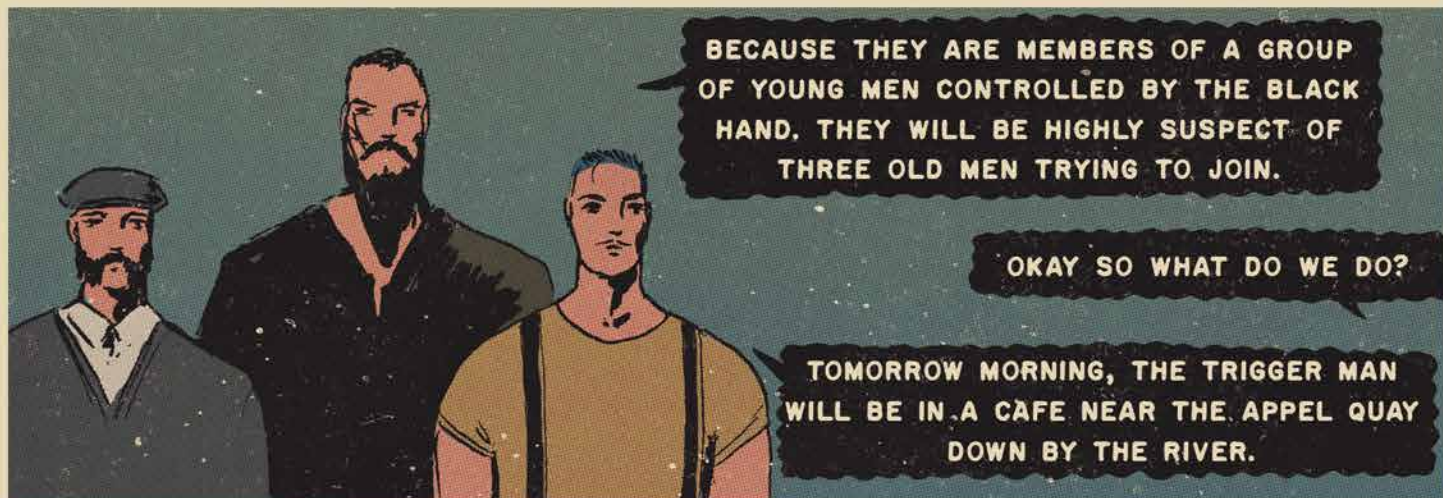
GOOD. LISTEN. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. THE ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND IS SET FOR TOMORROW BY A YOUNG BOSNIAN, WHICH WILL SET OFF A CHAIN OF EVENTS, STARTING WWI. HE'S NAMED AFTER THE ARCHANGEL GABRIEL. TOUGH AS NAILS AND MEAN TOO. A REAL REVOLUTIONIST! THE PLAN REQUIRES SOME BACKSTORY... FRANZ FERDINAND IS JUST ONE OF 70 ARCHDUKES, BUT BY FAR THE MOST FORWARD THINKING ONE. THE OTHER GUYS ARE HATE MONGERS. FRANZ IS ABOUT TO GET BEHIND THE IDEA OF A TRIPARTITE STATE, WHICH IS A STATE THAT'S SHARED BY 3 PARTIES. SO THERE WOULD BE AUSTRIA, HUNGARY AND THE UNION OF SLAVIC PEOPLE. ALL WITHIN THE CURRENT BORDERS. IF HE IS KILLED, HE'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.



WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO KILL HIM IF
FRANZ IS TRYING TO HELP THE SLAVS?

WAIT WHY
US?

THEY DON'T KNOW
HE'S TRYING TO
HELP.. YET.
THAT'S WHERE
YOU TWO COME IN.



BECAUSE THEY ARE MEMBERS OF A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN CONTROLLED BY THE BLACK HAND. THEY WILL BE HIGHLY SUSPECT OF THREE OLD MEN TRYING TO JOIN.

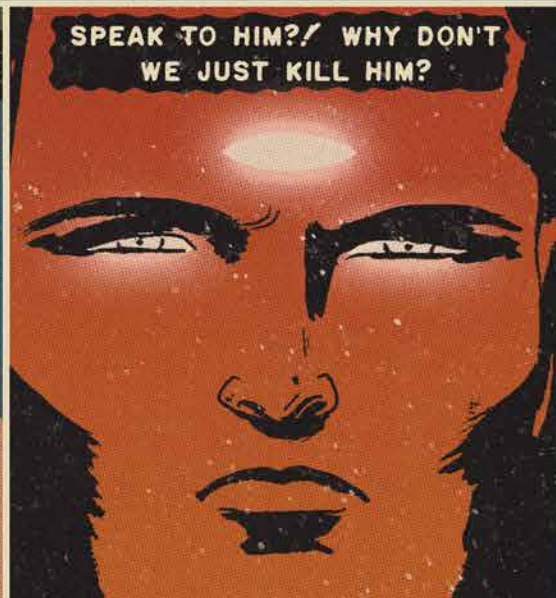
OKAY SO WHAT DO WE DO?

TOMORROW MORNING, THE TRIGGER MAN WILL BE IN A CAFE NEAR THE APPEL QUAY DOWN BY THE RIVER.

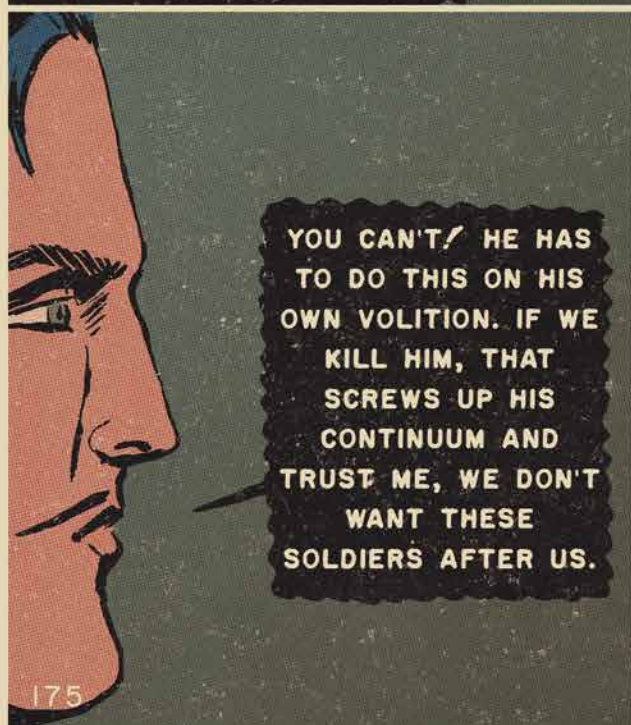


AND?

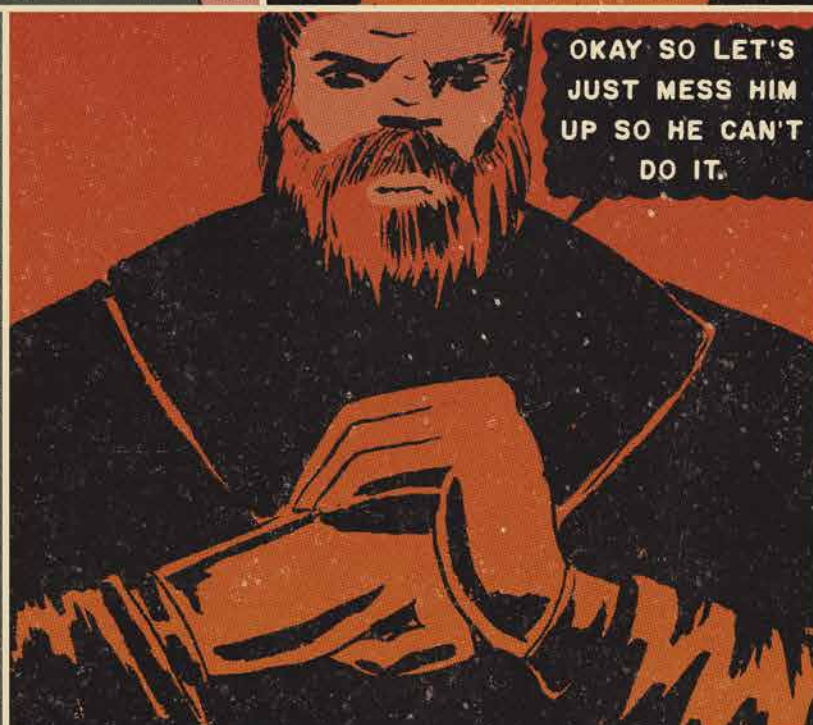
YOU MUST GO THERE AND SPEAK TO HIM.



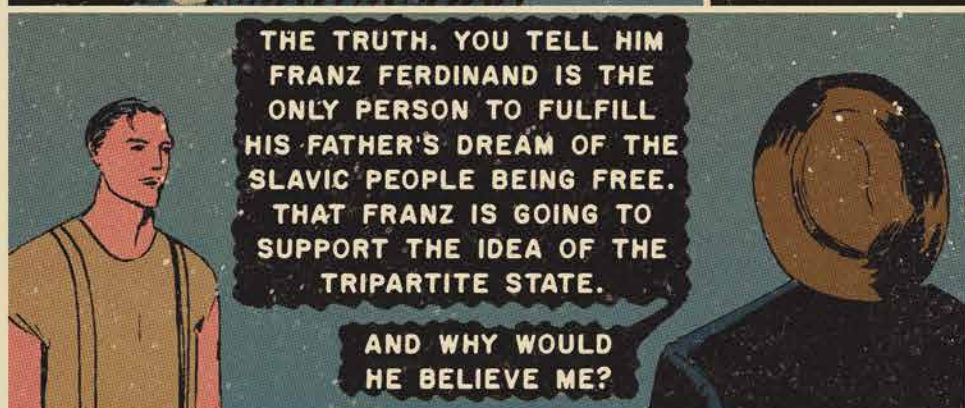
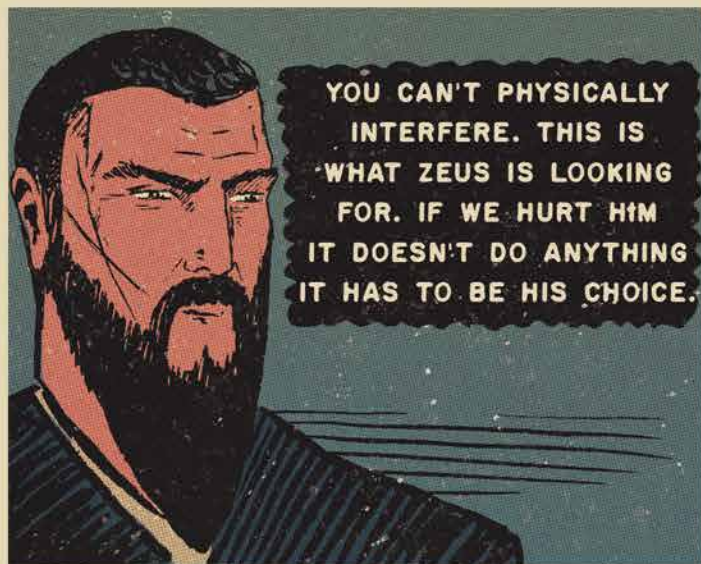
SPEAK TO HIM?! WHY DON'T WE JUST KILL HIM?

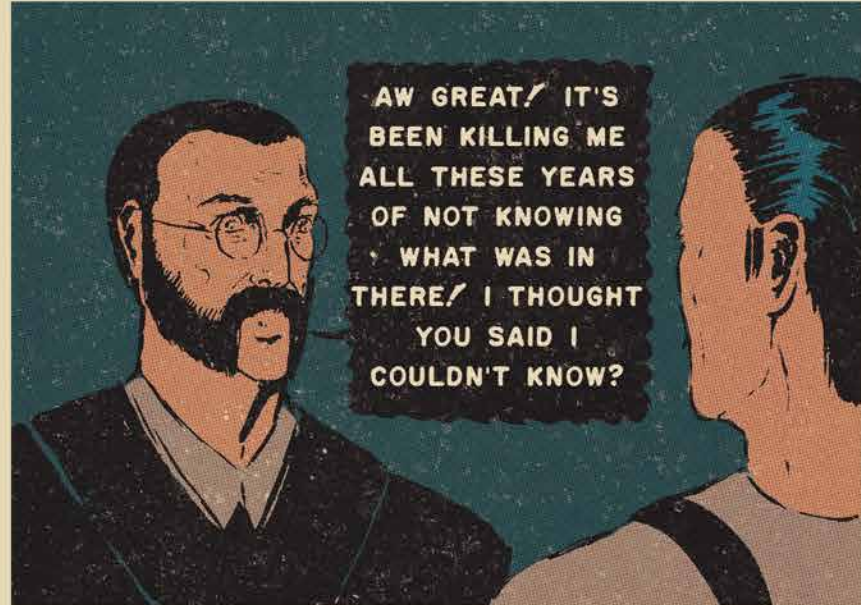


YOU CAN'T! HE HAS TO DO THIS ON HIS OWN VOLITION. IF WE KILL HIM, THAT SCREWS UP HIS CONTINUUM AND TRUST ME, WE DON'T WANT THESE SOLDIERS AFTER US.



OKAY SO LET'S JUST MESS HIM UP SO HE CAN'T DO IT.





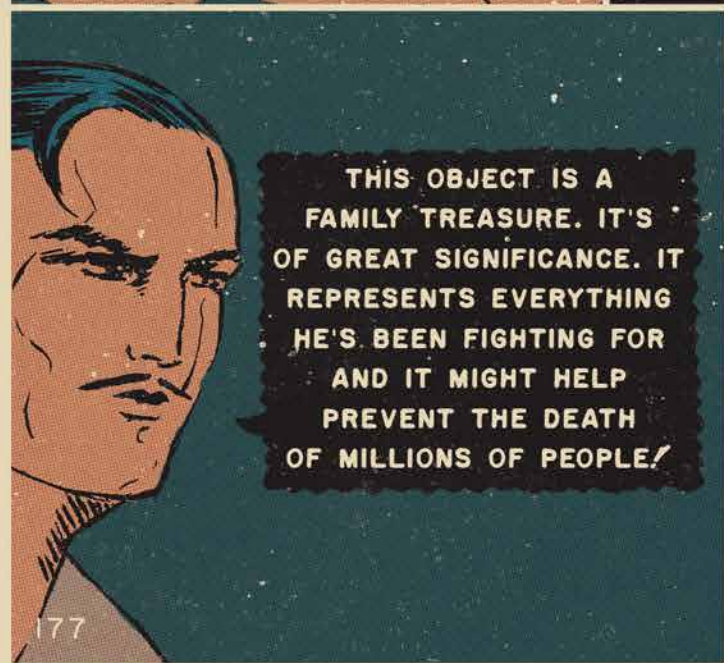
AW GREAT! IT'S
BEEN KILLING ME
ALL THESE YEARS
OF NOT KNOWING
WHAT WAS IN
THERE! I THOUGHT
YOU SAID I
COULDN'T KNOW?



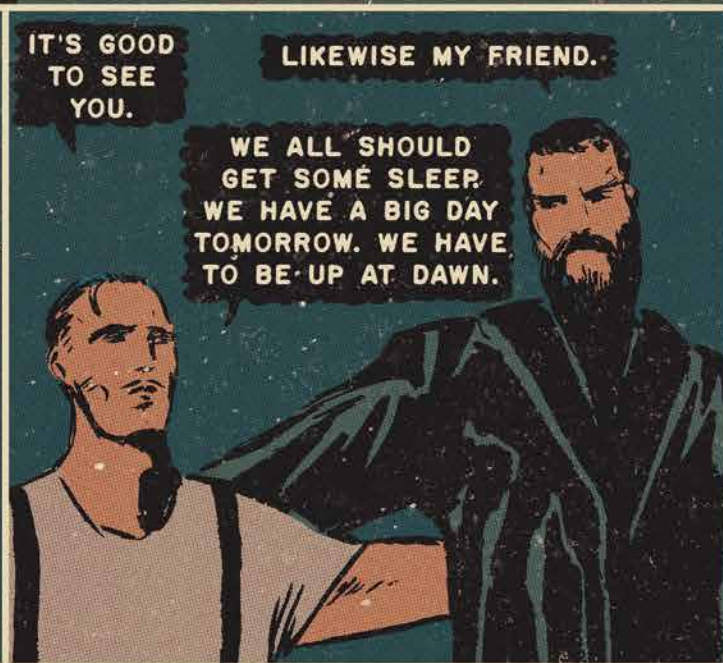
WE ARE
BEYOND
THAT
NOW.



THAT'S IT?
WHO CARES?



THIS OBJECT IS A
FAMILY TREASURE. IT'S
OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. IT
REPRESENTS EVERYTHING
HE'S BEEN FIGHTING FOR
AND IT MIGHT HELP
PREVENT THE DEATH
OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE!

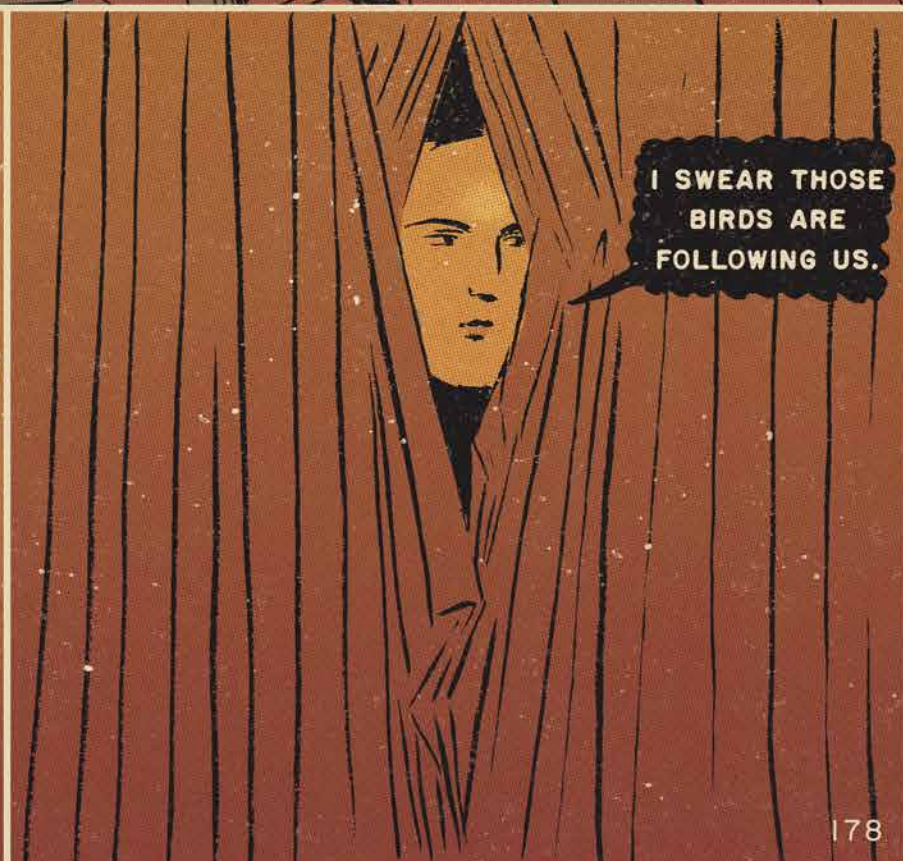
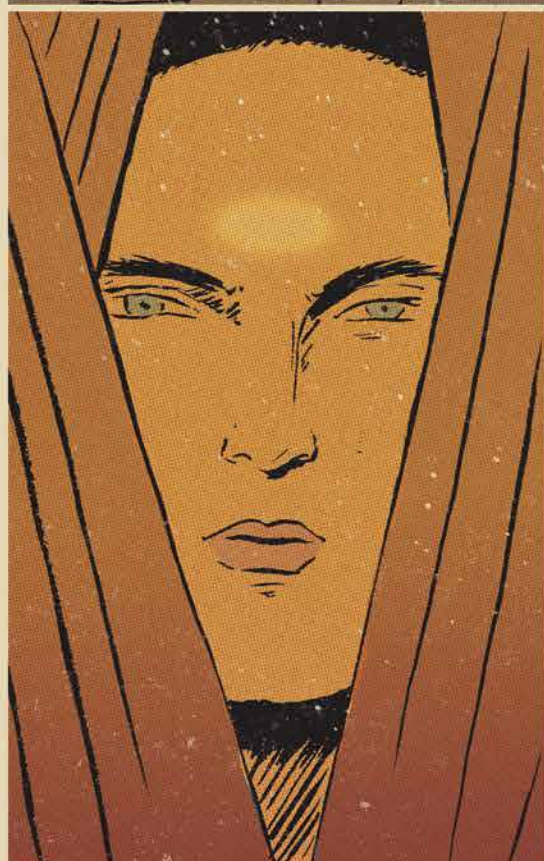


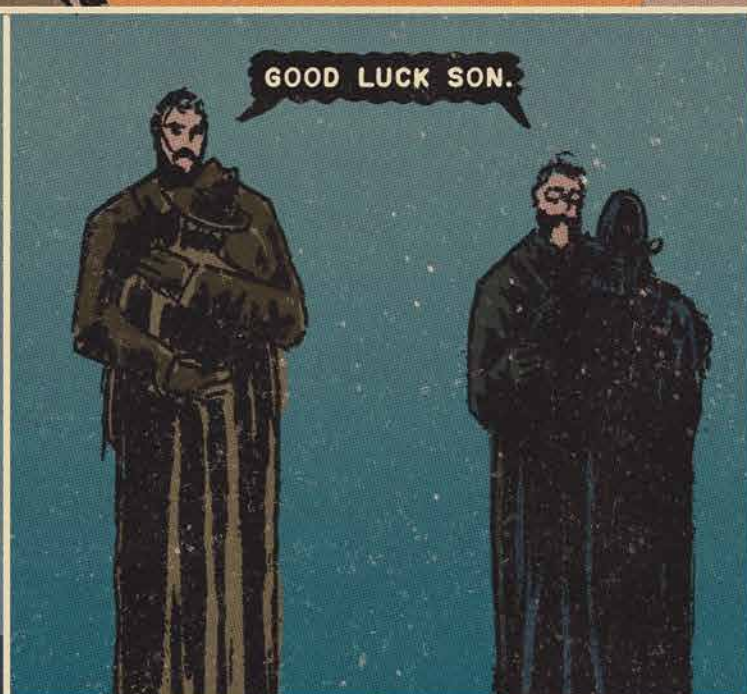
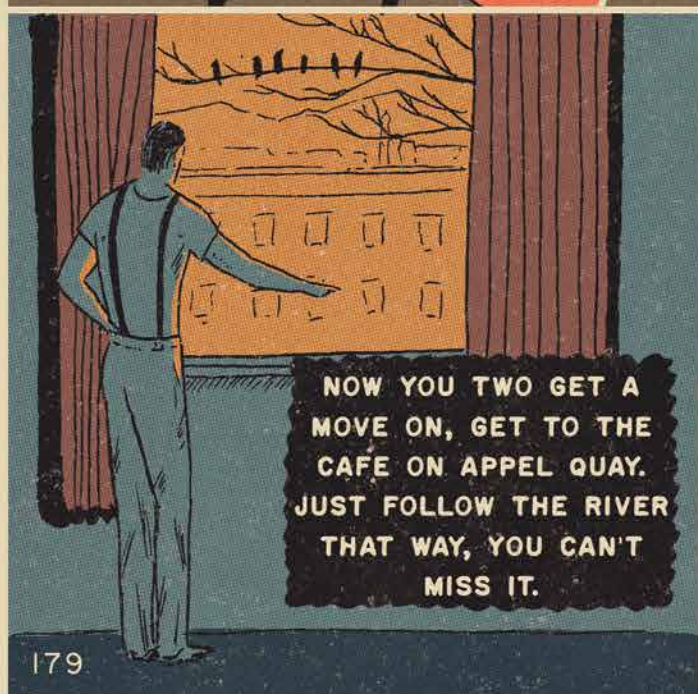
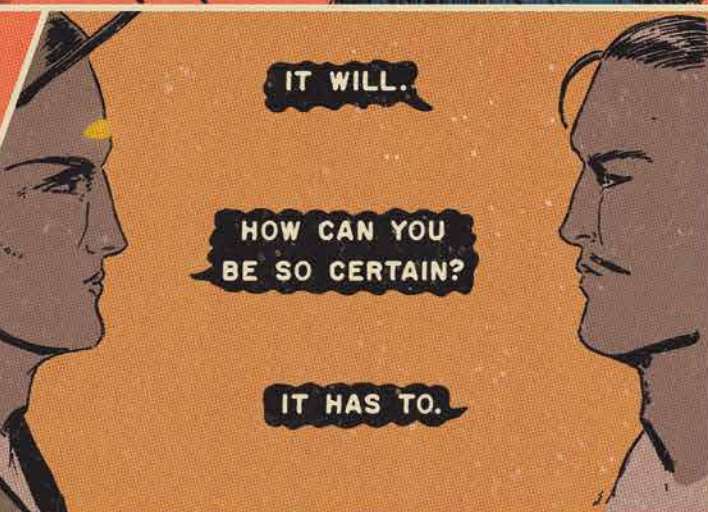
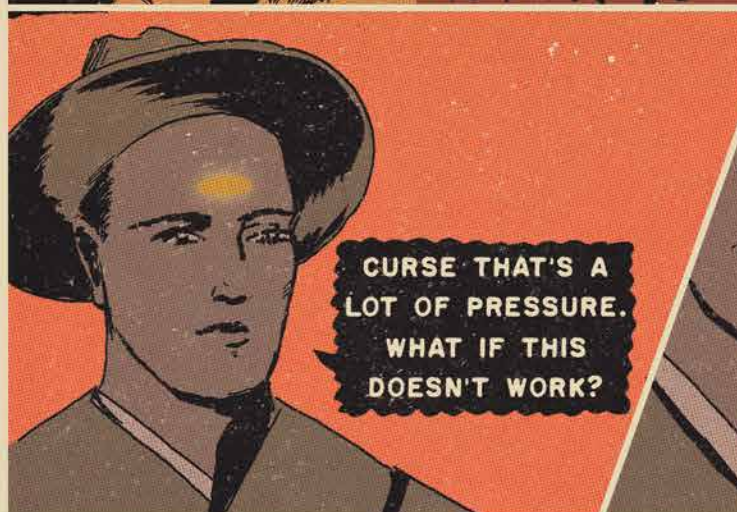
IT'S GOOD
TO SEE
YOU.

LIKEWISE MY FRIEND.

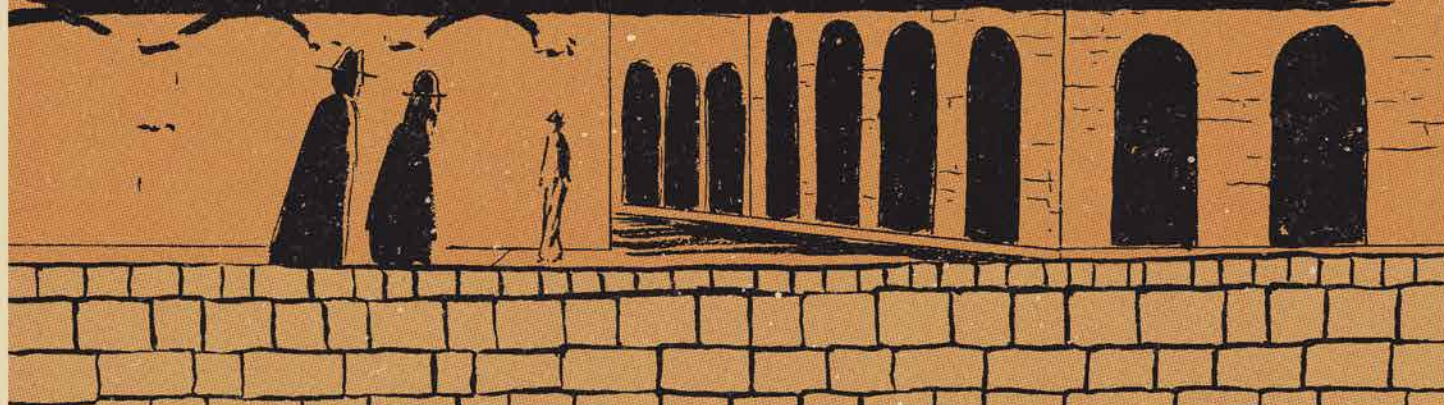
WE ALL SHOULD
GET SOME SLEEP.
WE HAVE A BIG DAY
TOMORROW. WE HAVE
TO BE UP AT DAWN.

**AS THE SUN RISES OVER SARAJEVO, THE
CROWS KEEP WATCH OUTSIDE OF THE HOTEL.**





LOU AND SHIRO WALK ALONG THE RIVERBANK TOWARD APPEL QUAY
IN SILENCE. AS THEY APPROACH THE CAFE THEY NOTICE THE CROWS
IN THE TREES, BUT PRETEND NOT TO.



INSIDE THE CAFE THEY SIT DOWN AT A TABLE IN THE CORNER
WHERE THEY CAN SEE WHO'S COMING. THEY ORDER ESPRESSOS
AND CASUALLY SIP THEM AS THEY WAIT FOR GAVRILO.



I'VE NEVER HAD COFFEE BEFORE...



THIS STUFF IS INCREDIBLE.



AFTER SEVERAL MORE COFFEE BEVERAGES THE BOYS ARE WIRED, EDGY AND NERVOUS. LOU GETS UP TO GO TO THE BATHROOM, GETS INTO THE AVAILABLE STALL, CLOSES WHAT'S LEFT OF THE CRAPPY BROKEN DOOR AND PEEES. HE HEARS WEeping IN THE NEXT STALL FOLLOWED BY THE INAUDIBLE MUTTERINGS OF A PERSON IN DISTRESS.



GAVRILO?

THE WEeping STOPS WITH A GASP FOLLOWED BY THE C-CLICK OF A REVOLVER BEING COCKED.



WHO'S THERE?!

I WAS SENT HERE TO ASK YOU NOT TO DO THIS.



GAVRILO FUMBLES IN THE STALL TRYING TO GET OFF THE TOILET SEAT AND OPEN THE DOOR WHILE HOLDING A GUN.

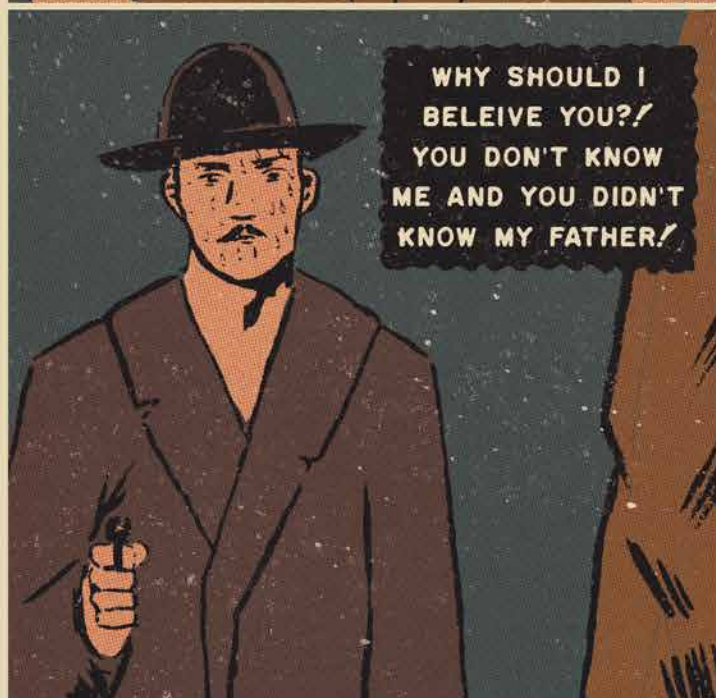


DO WHAT EXACTLY?

THERE'S GOOD IN YOU. YOUR FATHER WOULDN'T WANT THIS FOR YOU.



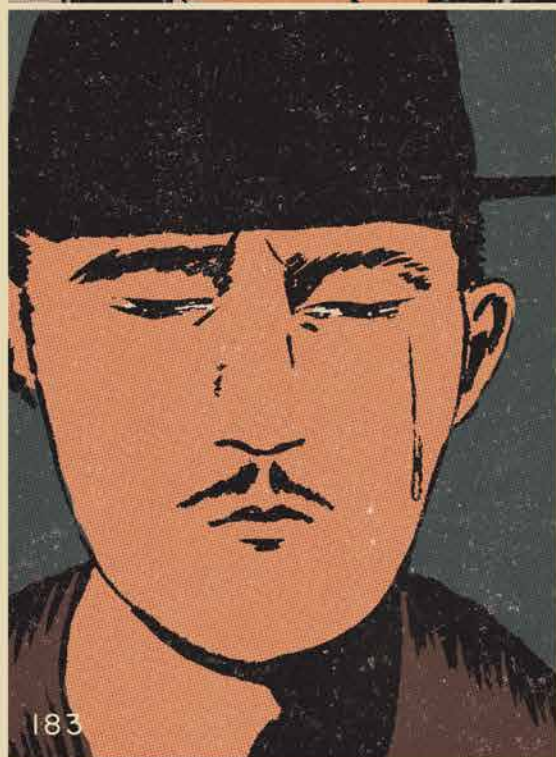
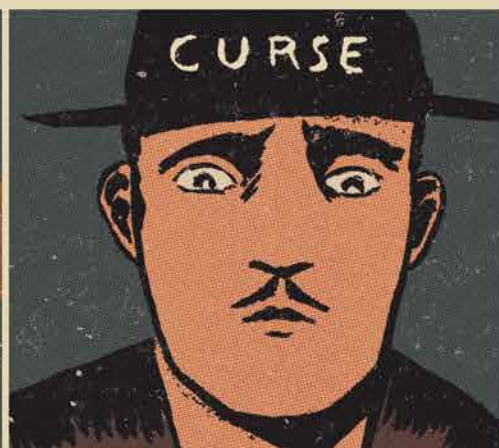
HE BELIEVED THAT YOUR PEOPLE WOULD SOMEDAY UNITE AND SHARE THIS LAND WITH THE AUSTRIANS AND THE HUNGARIANS IN A REPUBLIC. THE ONLY WAY TO FREEDOM IS BY LETTING THE ARCHDUKE CREATE THE TRIPARTITE STATE. IF YOU KILL HIM, HE WON'T GET THE CHANCE TO DO IT. AND THINGS GET WORSE FROM THERE.



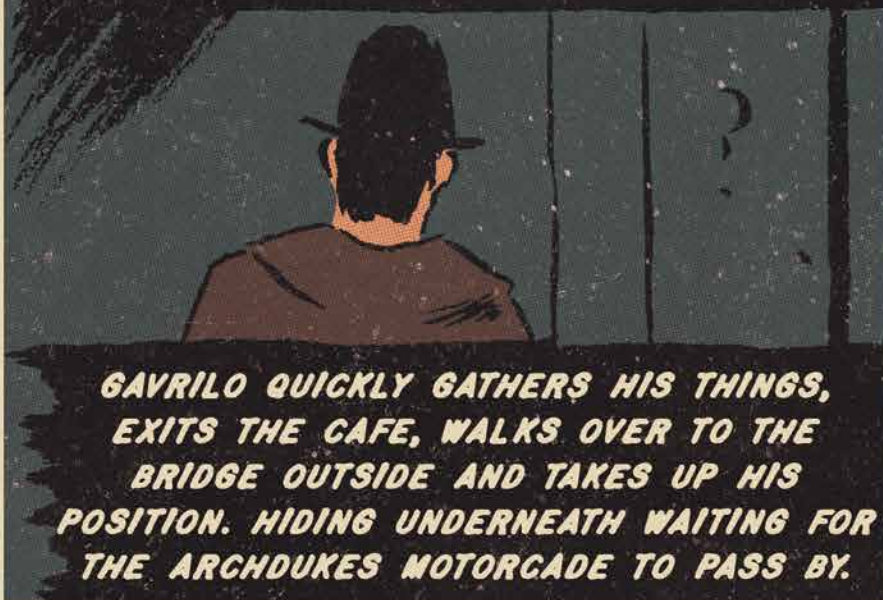
WHY SHOULD I BELEIVE YOU?/ YOU DON'T KNOW ME AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW MY FATHER./



THAT'S TRUE, BUT BEFORE YOU DECIDE, I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.



**HE LOOKS UP TO ASK LOU HOW HE
OBTAINED THE AMULET BUT LOU WAS GONE.**



**GAVRILO QUICKLY GATHERS HIS THINGS,
EXITS THE CAFE, WALKS OVER TO THE
BRIDGE OUTSIDE AND TAKES UP HIS
POSITION. HIDING UNDERNEATH WAITING FOR
THE ARCHDUKES MOTORCADE TO PASS BY.**



LOU AND SHIRO WATCH DISCREETLY FROM A NEWSSTAND ACROSS THE STREET. THE MURDER OF CROWS BEGINS ARRIVING ONE BY ONE. INCONSPICUOUS TO EVERYONE EXCEPT LOU.



JUST THEN, THE MOTORCADE ROUNDS THE CORNER ON APPEL QUAY, PAST THE CAFE TOWARD THE BRIDGE. THERE ARE THREE CARS. THE FIRST CAR AND THE LAST CAR CARRY SOLDIERS. THE MIDDLE CAR CONTAINS THE ARCHDUKE, FRANZ FERDINAND, THE DUCHESS AND TWO SENIOR OFFICERS. THE FIRST CAR CROSSES THE BRIDGE BUT THE SECOND CAR HAS STALLED BEFORE CROSSING.



UNDER THE BRIDGE, GAVRILO HAS HIS BACK AGAINST THE STRUCTURE TRYING TO STAY AS CLOSE TO IT AS POSSIBLE SO HE ISN'T SEEN. AFTER A DEEP BREATH AND A LONG SIGH HE POCKETS THE PISTOL, CLIMBS UP FROM HIS HIDING SPOT AND NONCHALANTLY WALKS THE OPPOSITE WAY FROM THE ARCHDUKE'S MOTORCADE.



THE DRIVER OF THE STALLED CAR TRIES TO GET IT STARTED AS THE EVER WATCHING BIRDS ARE STARTLED AND TAKE FLIGHT. THEY CIRCLE ONCE AND BEGIN TO DIVE TOWARD THE BRIDGE, ALMOST IN ATTACK FORMATION.



THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE SENDS EVERYONE TO THE GROUND LOOKING FOR COVER.



P-T OOOOOOOOM!

THERE'S A SNIPER IN THAT WINDOW!
AND HE'S GETTING READY TO TAKE
ANOTHER SHOT!



P-T OOOOOOOOM!

A LIFELESS BLOODY CROW FALLS TO THE GROUND BEFORE THE ARCHDUKE.



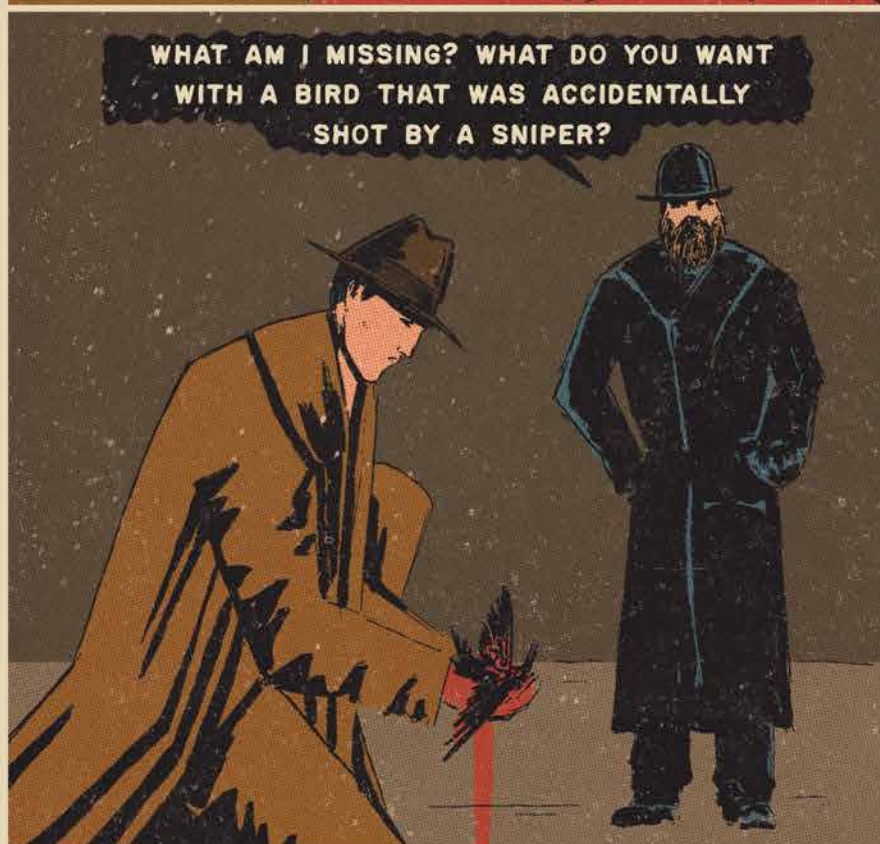
THE CAR CARRYING THE ARCHDUKE IS FINALLY STARTED AND THEY CONTINUE OVER THE BRIDGE ONLY MUCH FASTER THAN BEFORE.



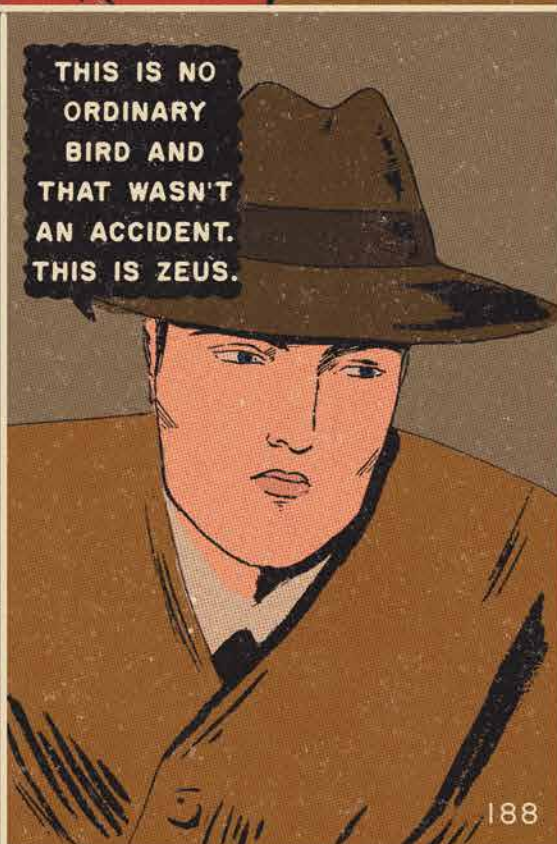
**WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THAT'S SO GROSS!**



**WHAT AM I MISSING? WHAT DO YOU WANT
WITH A BIRD THAT WAS ACCIDENTALLY
SHOT BY A SNIPER?**



**THIS IS NO
ORDINARY
BIRD AND
THAT WASN'T
AN ACCIDENT.
THIS IS ZEUS.**



WAIT SO ZEUS GOT IN FRONT OF A BULLET TO SAVE FRANZ FERDINAND?

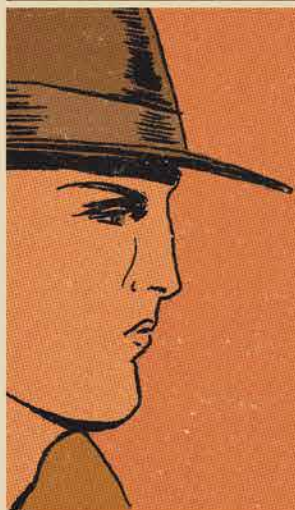


NOT EXACTLY,
I THINK HE DID
IT FOR US.



BUT NOBODY WAS
SHOOTING AT US!

I MEAN HE DID IT
FOR US, AS IN
MORTALS. I THINK
HE UNDERSTOOD IN
THAT MOMENT AND
MADE HIS FIRST ACT
OF BENEVOLENCE
IN A LONG TIME,
TO PROTECT WHAT
HE LOVES.



OH.



BACK IN THE ROOM HECTOR, SYD AND SHORTY ARE WAITING...

I'M VERY PROUD OF YOU.



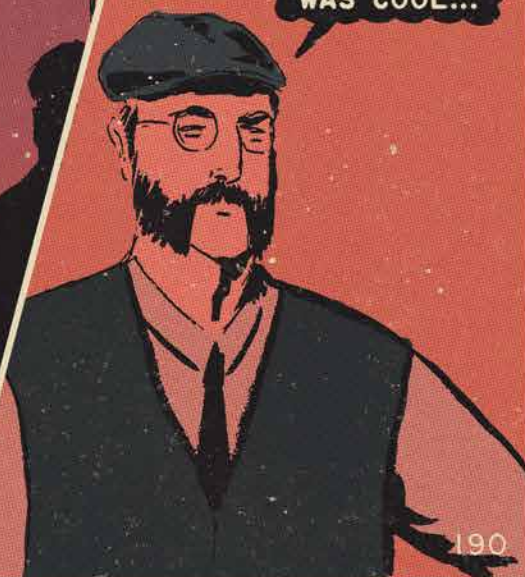
HE GOT IN FRONT OF
THE SNIPERS BULLET
TO SAVE THE ARCHDUKE.

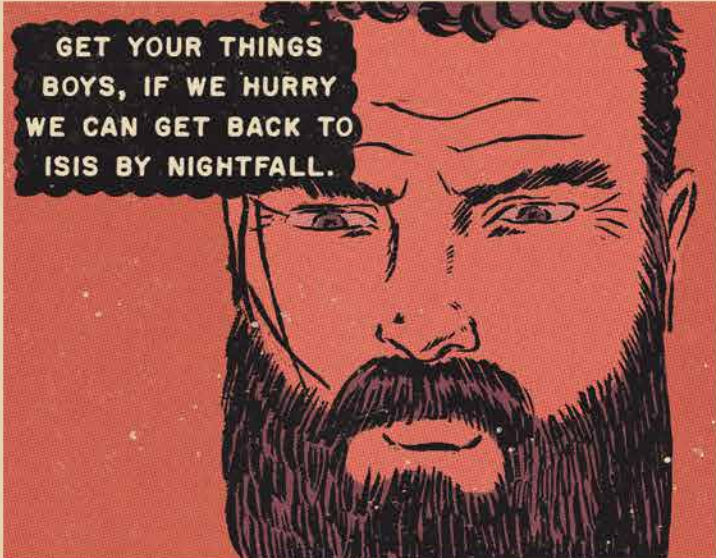


I SAW... BUT I THINK HE DID IT
TO SAVE US FROM OURSELVES,
NOT THE ARCHDUKE.



CURSE THAT
WAS COOL...





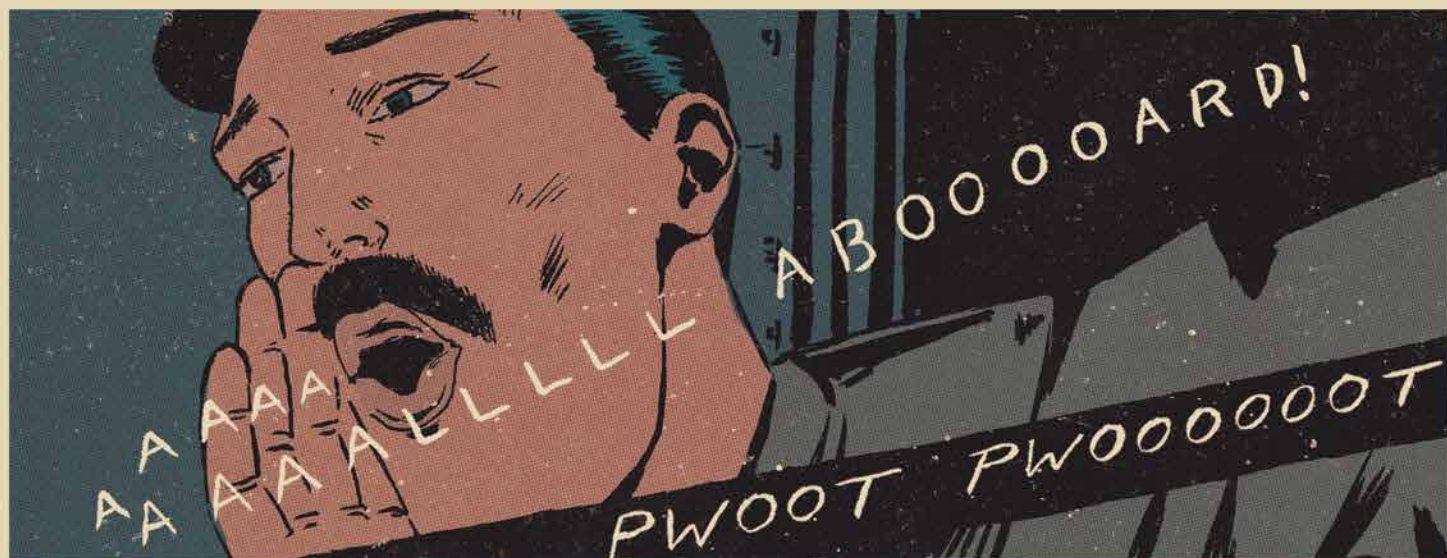
GET YOUR THINGS
BOYS, IF WE HURRY
WE CAN GET BACK TO
ISIS BY NIGHTFALL.



WHERE ARE
WE GOING?

HOME.

*THE FIVE MEN EXIT THE HOTEL AND HEAD DOWN THE STREET,
THE CODEX GUIDING THEM BACK TO THE CENTRAL TRAIN STATION.
SHORTY BUYS THE TICKETS TO THE STOP CLOSE TO THE LAKE
AS THEY MANEUVER THEIR WAY BACK THROUGH THE CROWDED
STATION. SINGLE FILE, WEAVING THEIR WAY THROUGH LUGGAGE
AND SOLDIERS. EVERYONE IS ON HIGH ALERT LOOKING FOR
ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY. THE FIVE MEN ARE VERY
OUT OF THE ORDINARY...*



THE MEN SPRING TOWARD THE TRAIN, LOU LOOKS BACK TO SHIRO TO SEE HIS LONG CAT TAIL HAS WORKED IT'S WAY OUT FROM HIS COAT.





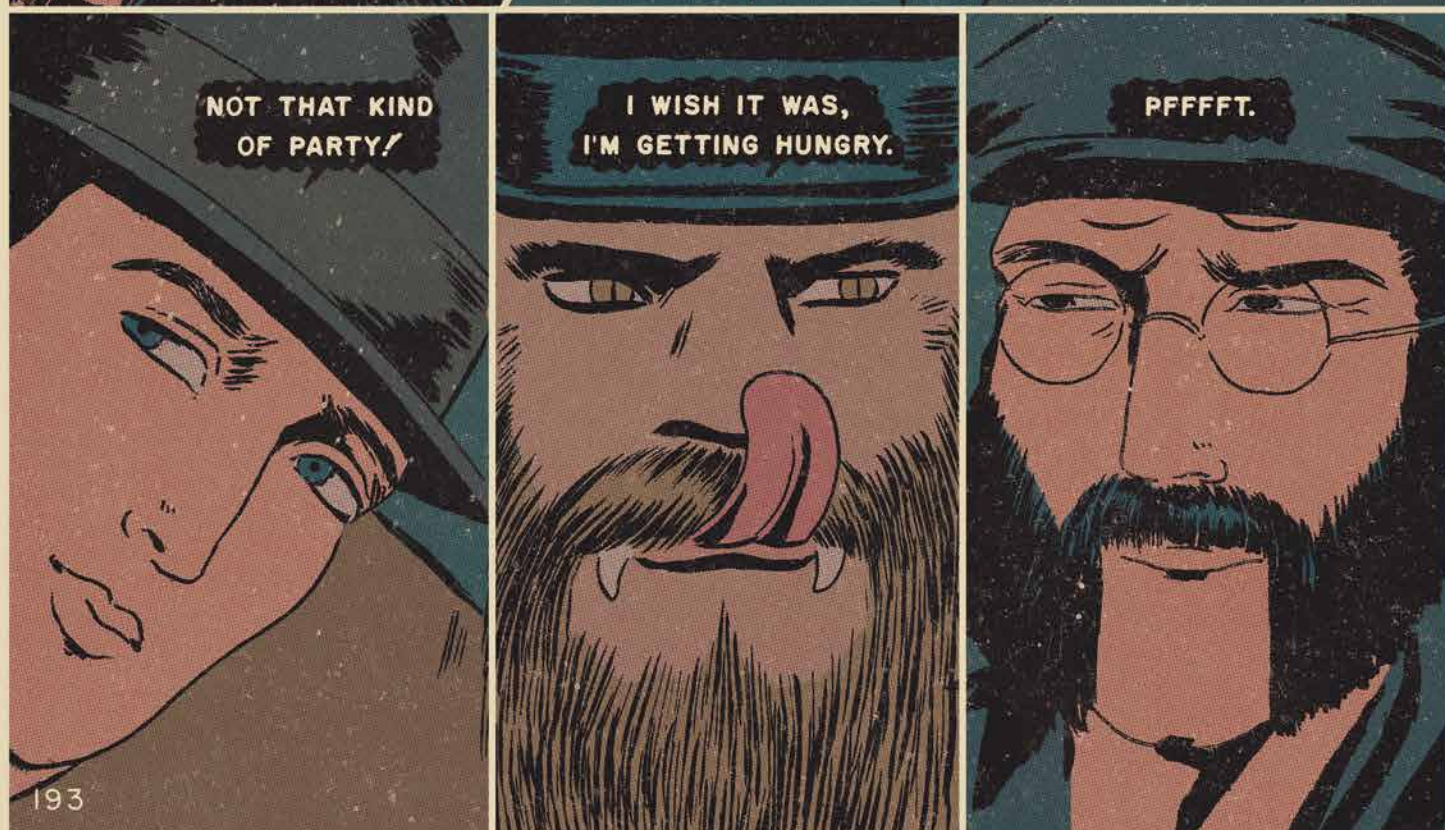
GET THAT TAIL AWAY.

THAT WAS CLOSE.



THEY'LL BE PLANNING
A LITTLE PARTY FOR US
AT THE NEXT STATION.

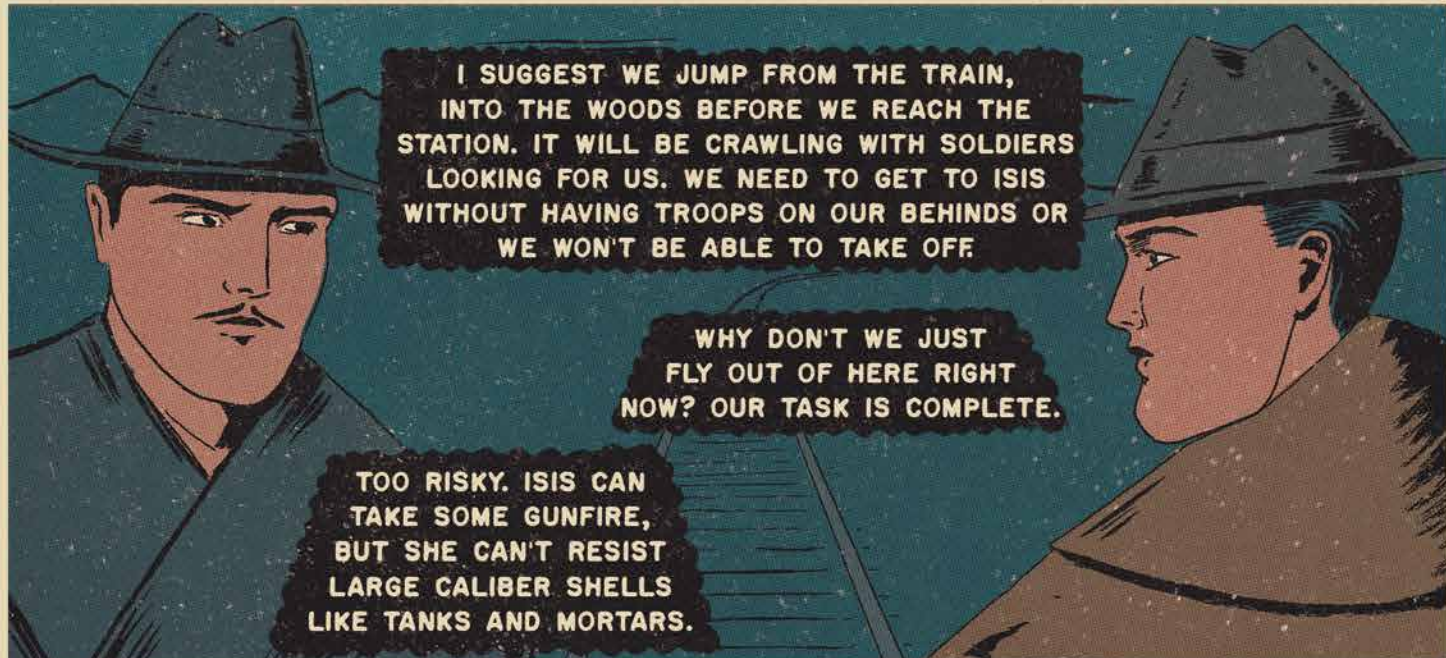
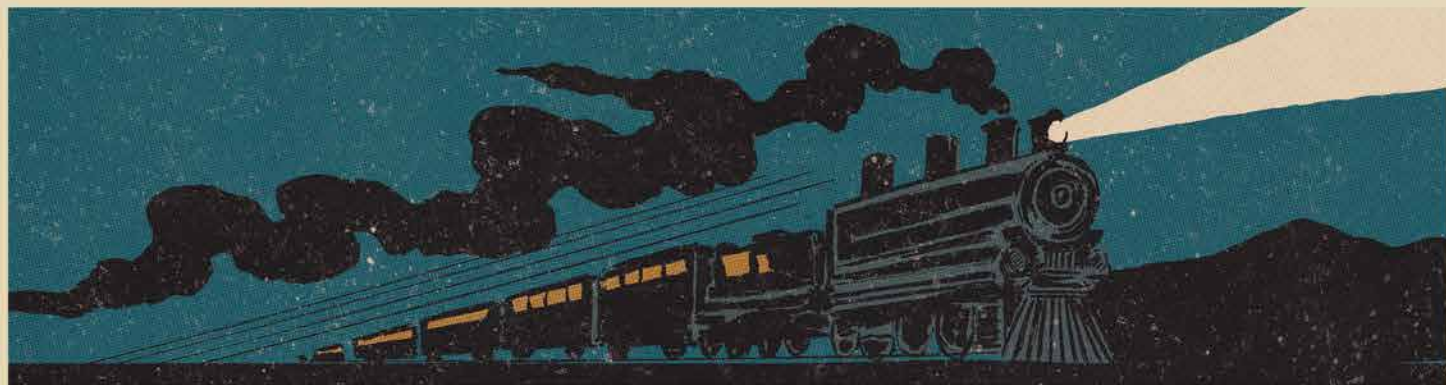
OOOOOOOOOOOOO,
I LOVE PARTIES!



NOT THAT KIND
OF PARTY!

I WISH IT WAS,
I'M GETTING HUNGRY.

PFFFFT.



I SUGGEST WE JUMP FROM THE TRAIN,
INTO THE WOODS BEFORE WE REACH THE
STATION. IT WILL BE CRAWLING WITH SOLDIERS
LOOKING FOR US. WE NEED TO GET TO ISIS
WITHOUT HAVING TROOPS ON OUR BEHINDS OR
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF

WHY DON'T WE JUST
FLY OUT OF HERE RIGHT
NOW? OUR TASK IS COMPLETE.

TOO RISKY. ISIS CAN
TAKE SOME GUNFIRE,
BUT SHE CAN'T RESIST
LARGE CALIBER SHELLS
LIKE TANKS AND MORTARS.

*FOR THE DURATION OF THE TRAIN RIDE THEY REMAIN OUTSIDE ON
THE BACK OF THE CABOOSE, LEANING AGAINST THE RAILING IN ANTICIPATION.*

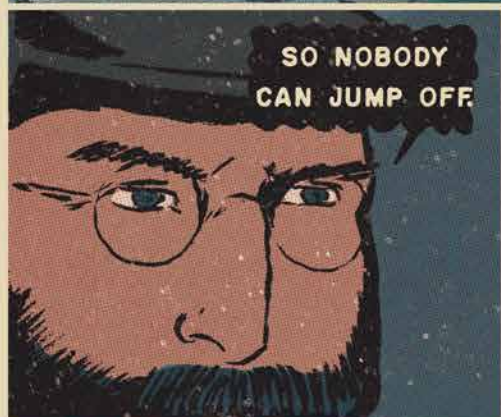




WE'RE GETTING
CLOSE. GET READY.



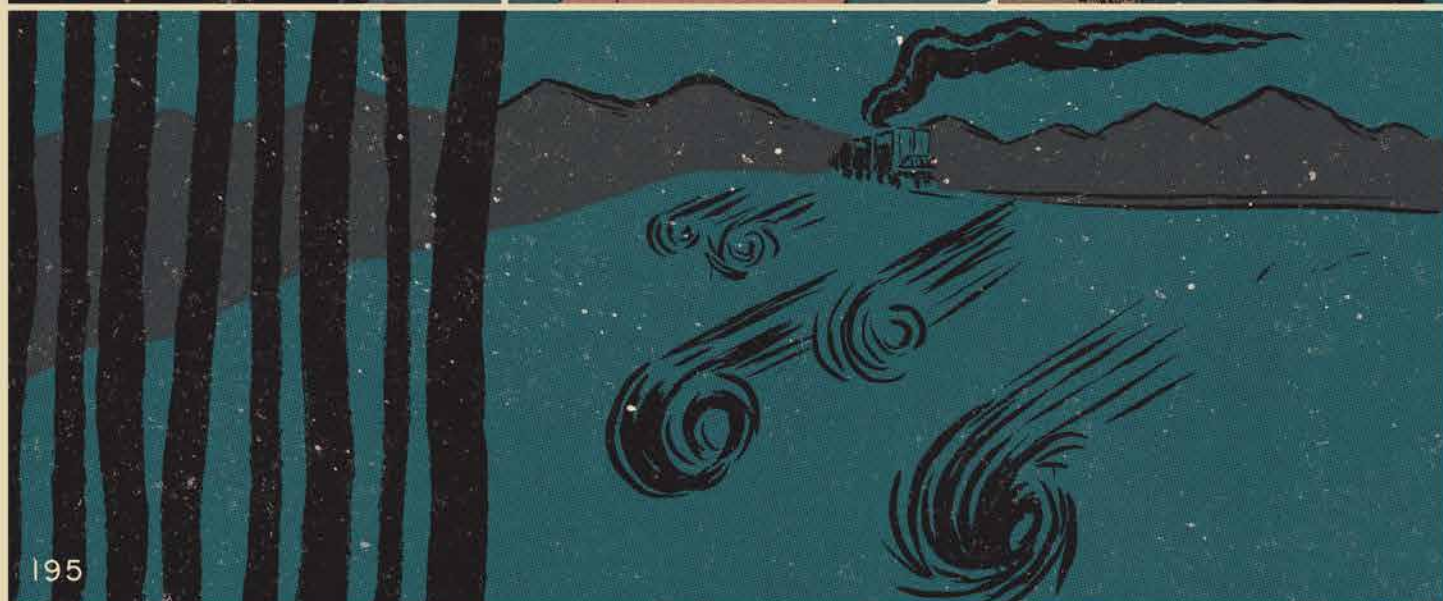
WHY IS THE TRAIN
GOING SO FAST?



SO NOBODY
CAN JUMP OFF



NOW!

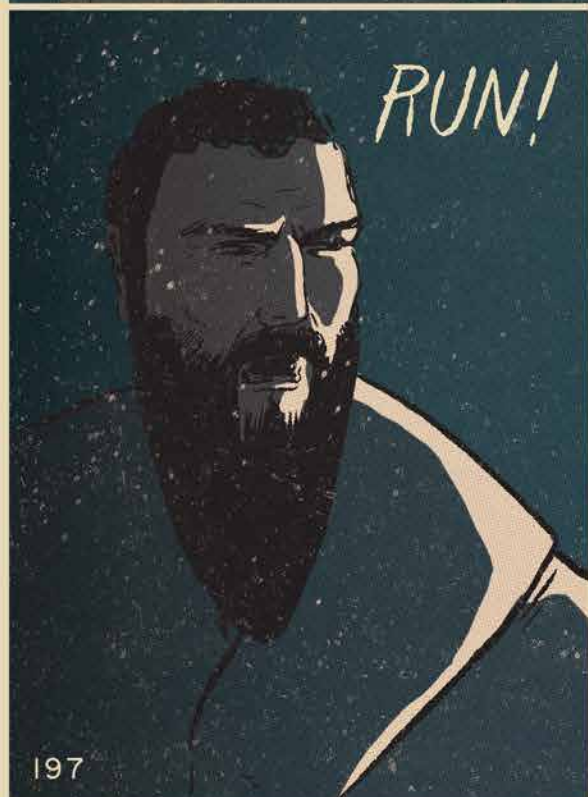
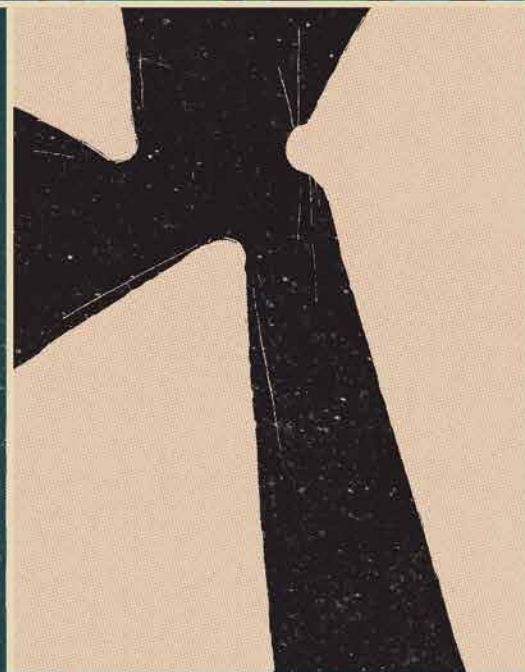




SHIRO CAN SEE AND HEAR BETTER THAN EVERYONE ON ACCOUNT OF BEING HALF CAT. HE SMELLS THE SOLDIERS FEAR AND POUNCES.



NICE WORK SHIRO, NOW LET'S MOVE.



AS THEY GET CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF THE LAKE THE CODEX REPLACES THEIR FANCY DISGUISES WITH WESUITS JUST BEFORE THEY ALL DIVE IN.



THANKS CODEX!



THEY SWIM DOWN AND ENTER ISIS FROM THE AFT AND RUN TO THE BRIDGE.

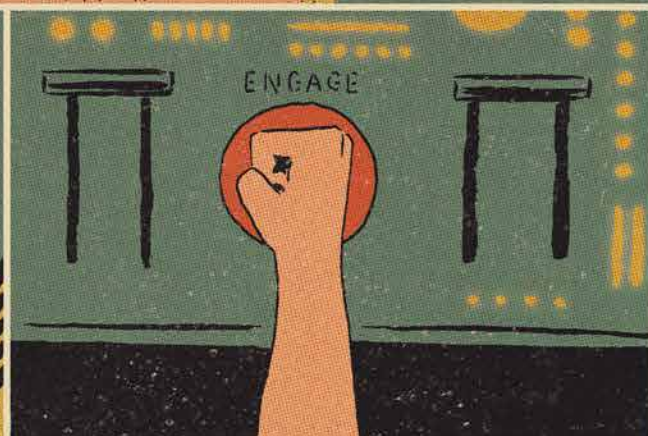


**HECTOR AND SHORTY POWER UP AND SET COURSE FOR HOME.
THE SAME DAY THE BOYS LEFT ON THIS JOURNEY.**



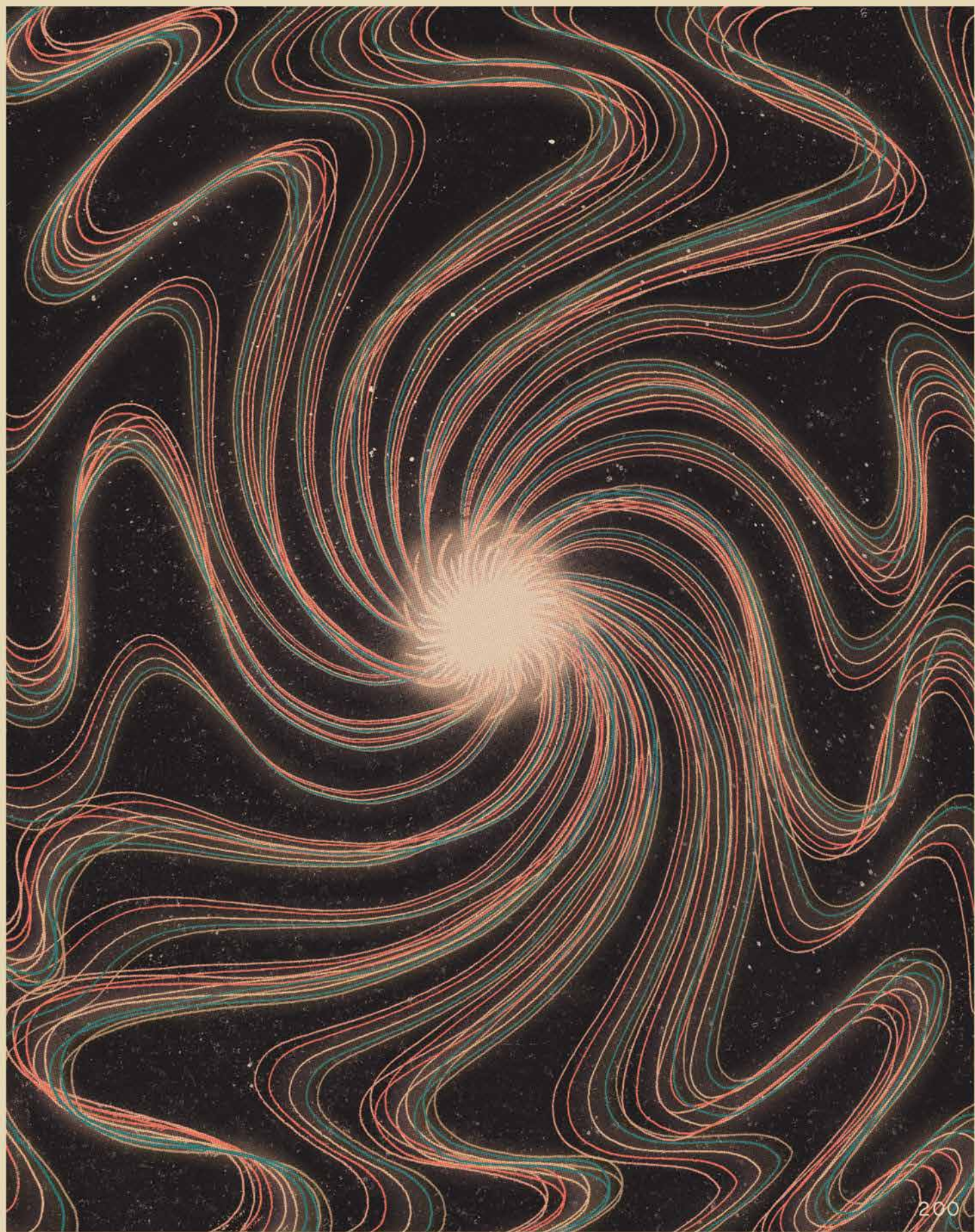
**OH, I MISSED
YOU OLD GIRL...**

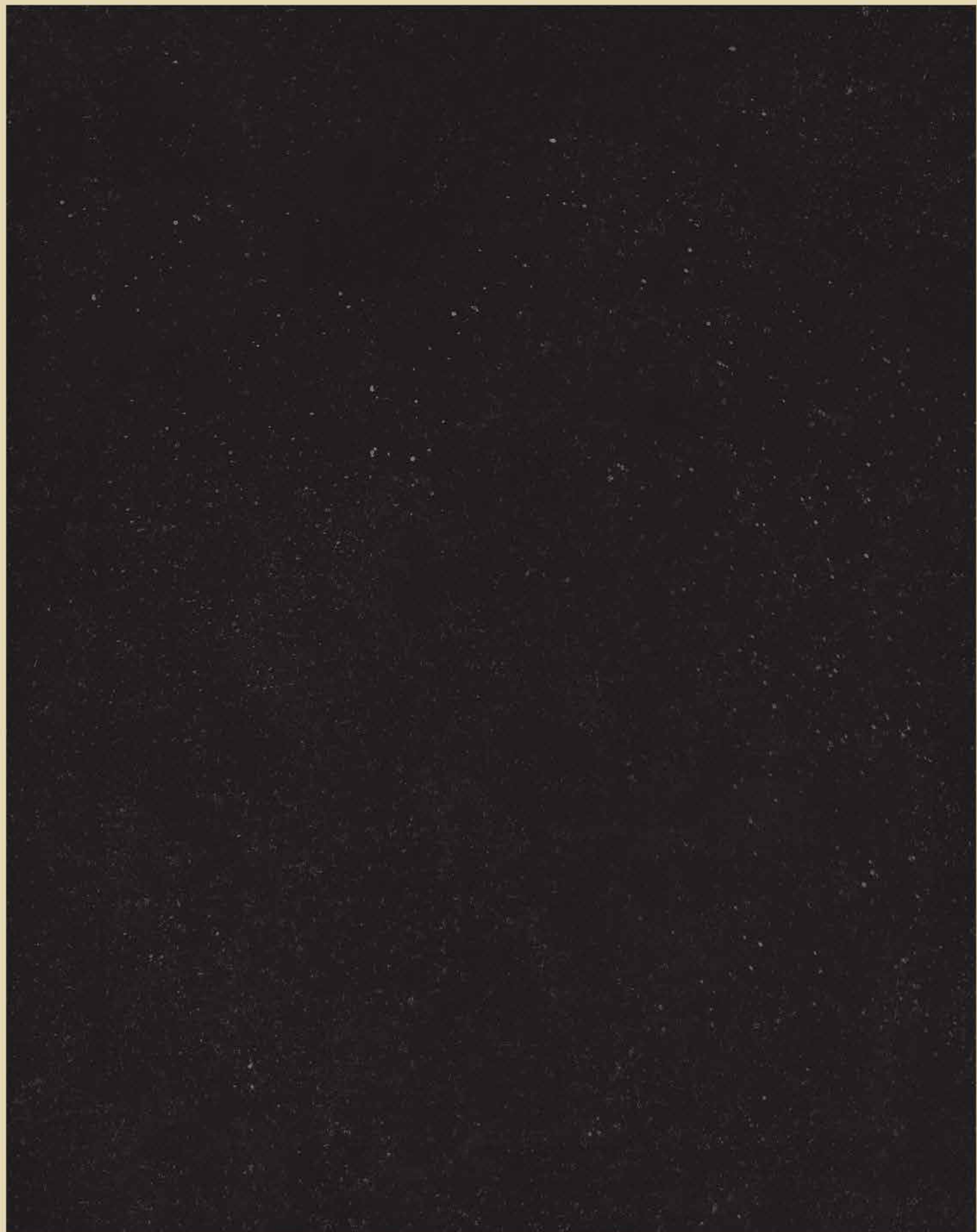
**EVERYONE BUCKLED
IN? SAFETY FIRST.**



**ISIS RUMBLES AND LIFTS OFF, SHOOTING OUT OF THE LAKE AND INTO
THE SKY LIKE A MISSILE. LIGHT BENDS AS THEY START RIPPING
BETWEEN TIME ON THEIR JOURNEY HOME.**



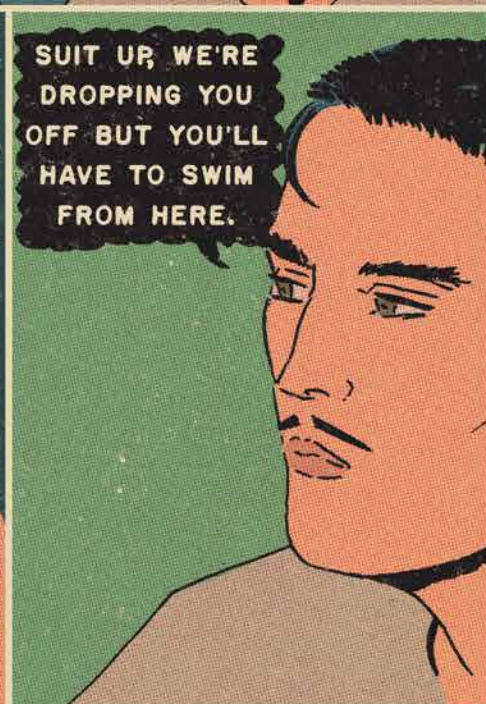
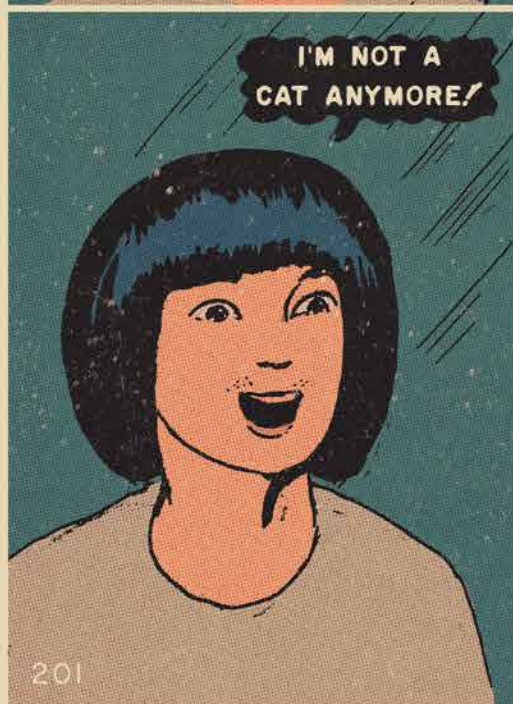






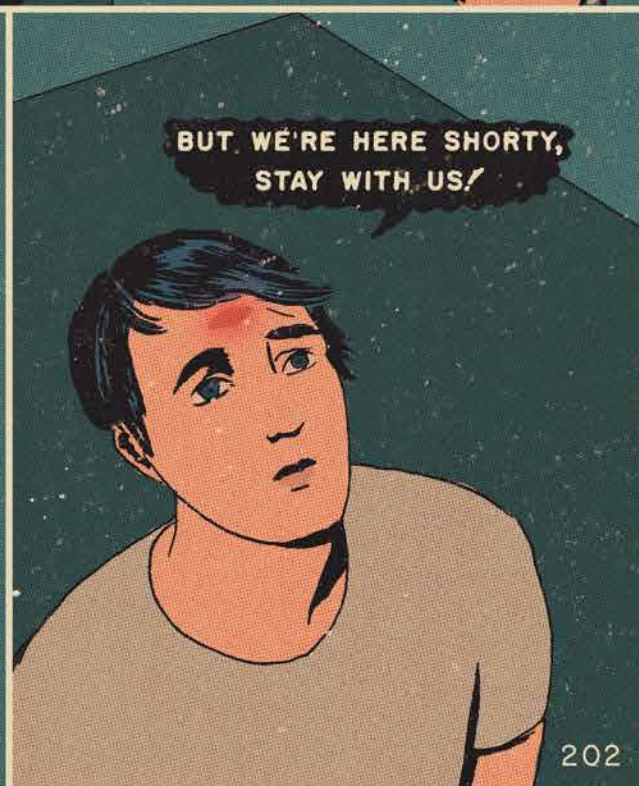
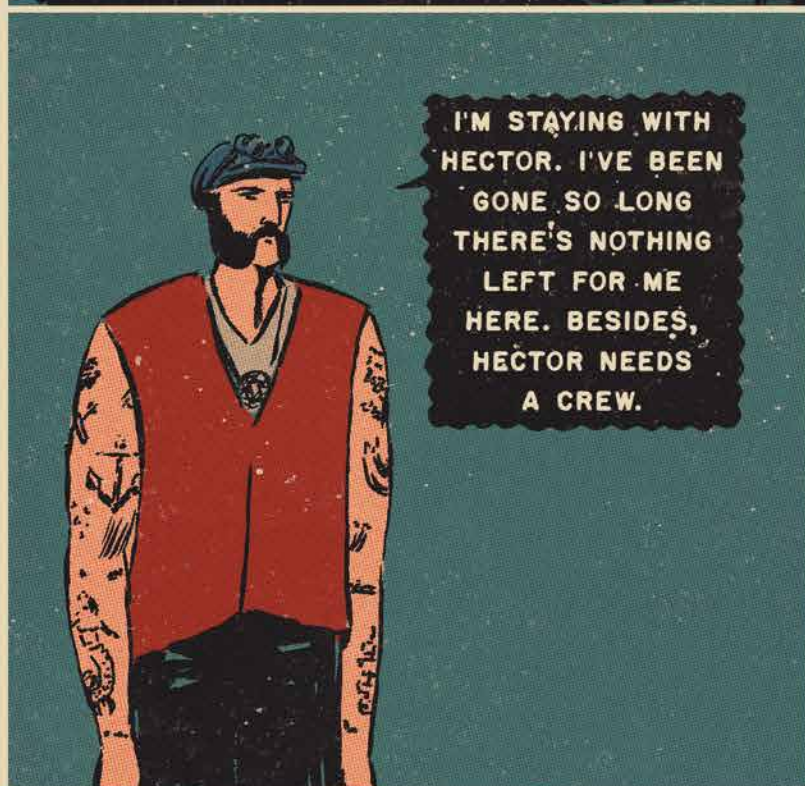


THE BOYS WAKE FROM A DEEP SLEEP, CONFUSED BUT ELATED TO FIND THEY HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR ORIGINAL, REGULAR SIZES.





EVERYONE PUTS ON WETSUITS THANKS TO THE CODEX EXCEPT FOR HECTOR AND SHORTY...



I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN SOMETIME.
WHEN WE FIGURE OUT WHAT TO
DO WITH THAT THING.



UNTIL THEN, YOU BETTER
START A REAL NICE HAT
COLLECTION.



THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME
MY SON, OLD FRIEND.

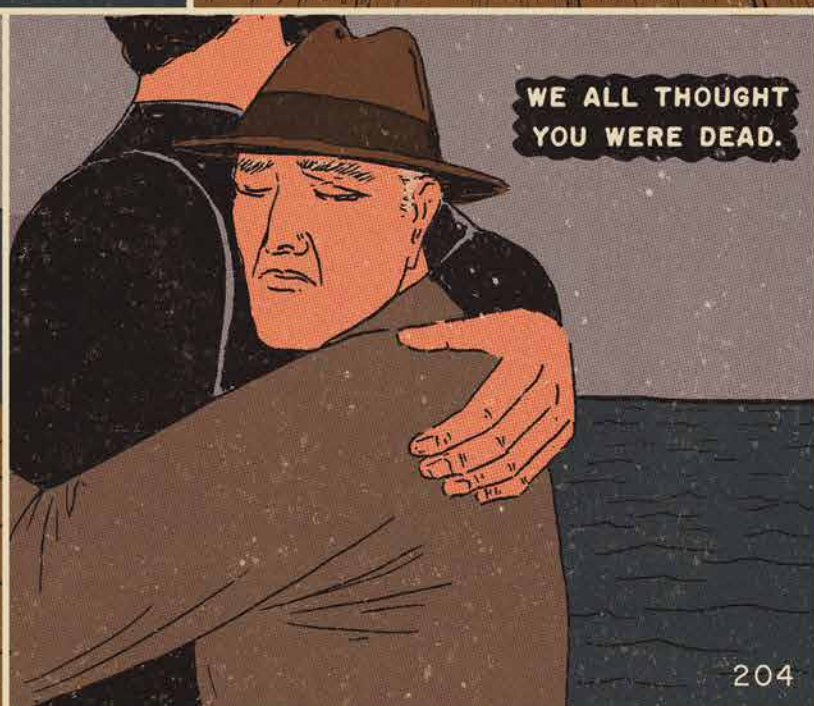


THANKS FOR
SAVING HUMANITY.



ADIEU,
ADIEU,
ADIEU.



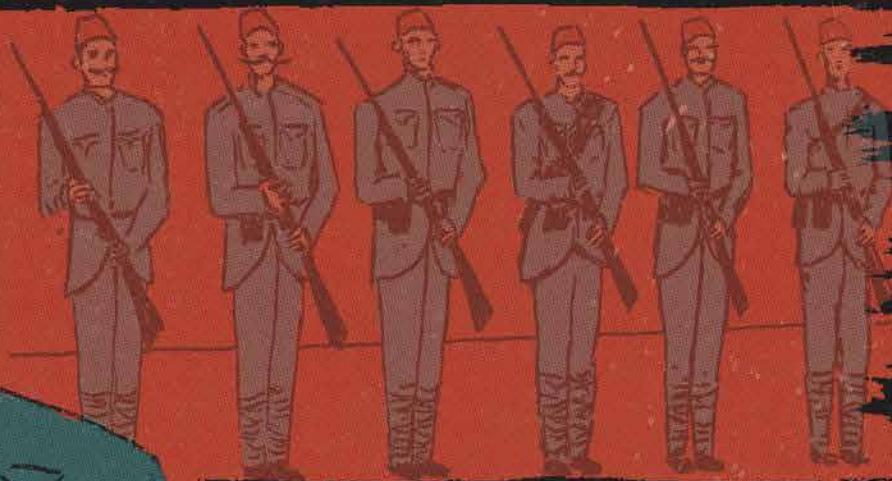
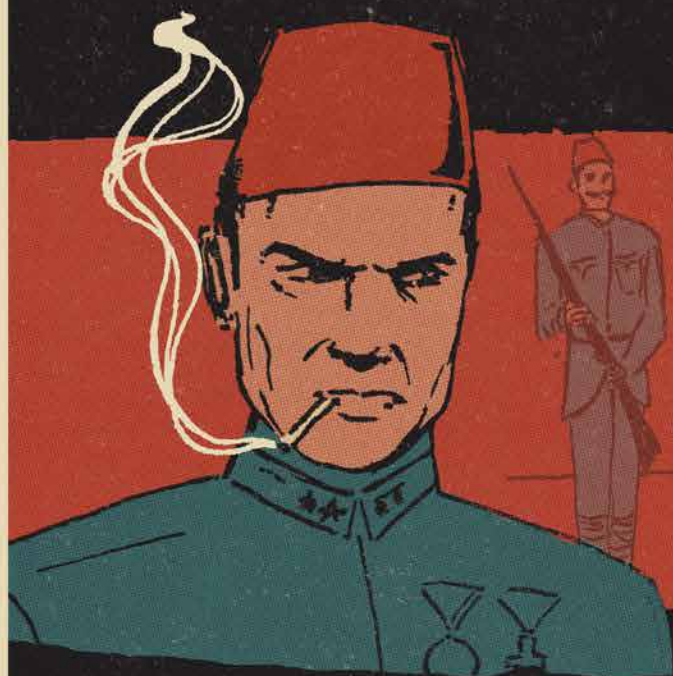


WHERE'S MY DANG ROWBOAT?!!



The End

WRITTEN BY
BRUCE LIVINGSTONE



ILLUSTRATED BY
MIKE WILLCOX



BRUCE LIVINGSTONE WAS THE CEO AND FOUNDER OF ISTOCK.
HE ALSO CO-FOUNDED SAATCHI ART, STOCKSY UNITED
AND EXLIBRE APPAREL. HE LIVES IN VICTORIA, BC CANADA
WITH HIS SON SOZE, HIS DAUGHTER MINA AND THEIR
GERMAN SHEPHERD NAMED IGGY.
HE'S ALSO QUITE FUN AT PARTIES.

HE CAN BE REACHED AT BITTER@ME.COM

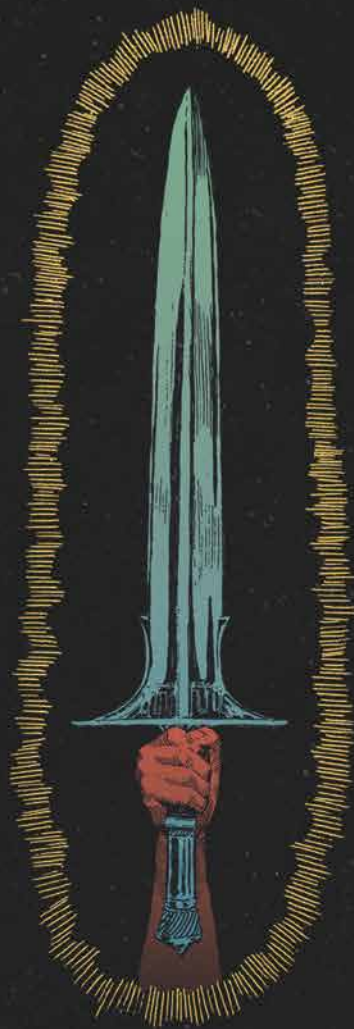
MIKE WILLCOX IS A SELF TAUGHT MULTI-DICIPLINARY ARTIST.
CURRENTLY HE LIKES MAKING ART DÉCO PAINTINGS WORKING
WITH SYMBOLISM TO HEAL AND BRING HARMONY TO THE
SUBCONCIOUS, UNCONSCIOUS, AND CONCIOUS MIND.
HE ALSO MAKES CHILL SURFY MUSIC UNDER THE NAME BEACH WIZARD.
HE ALSO LIKES WOODWORKING. AND METAL WORKING. AND SCULPTING,
AND FILM MAKING, AND WRITING, AND COMEDY.
MIKE LIKES MAKING THINGS.

FIND HIM ON INSTAGRAM @MIKEWILLCOX
HE CAN BE REACHED AT MWXXART@GMAIL.COM

THE LOST CITY OF

HERACLEON





Called to adventure, young boys Lou and Shiro find themselves on an inter-dimensional submarine captained by an off-the-hinges old man. They soon discover Lou's missing father might still be alive as they are transformed into fully grown warriors headed straight for the battlegrounds of Ancient Egypt, the Lost City, and 1914 Sarajevo. As the gods tinkering with fate become reckless and apathetic, the boys become part of a legion hell-bent on restoring balance to humanity.

Writer **Bruce Livingstone** and artist **Mike Willcox** present an epic adventure across space and time. Bringing forth the power of family and what it means to fight for what you love most!

