

I WAS THE CAT

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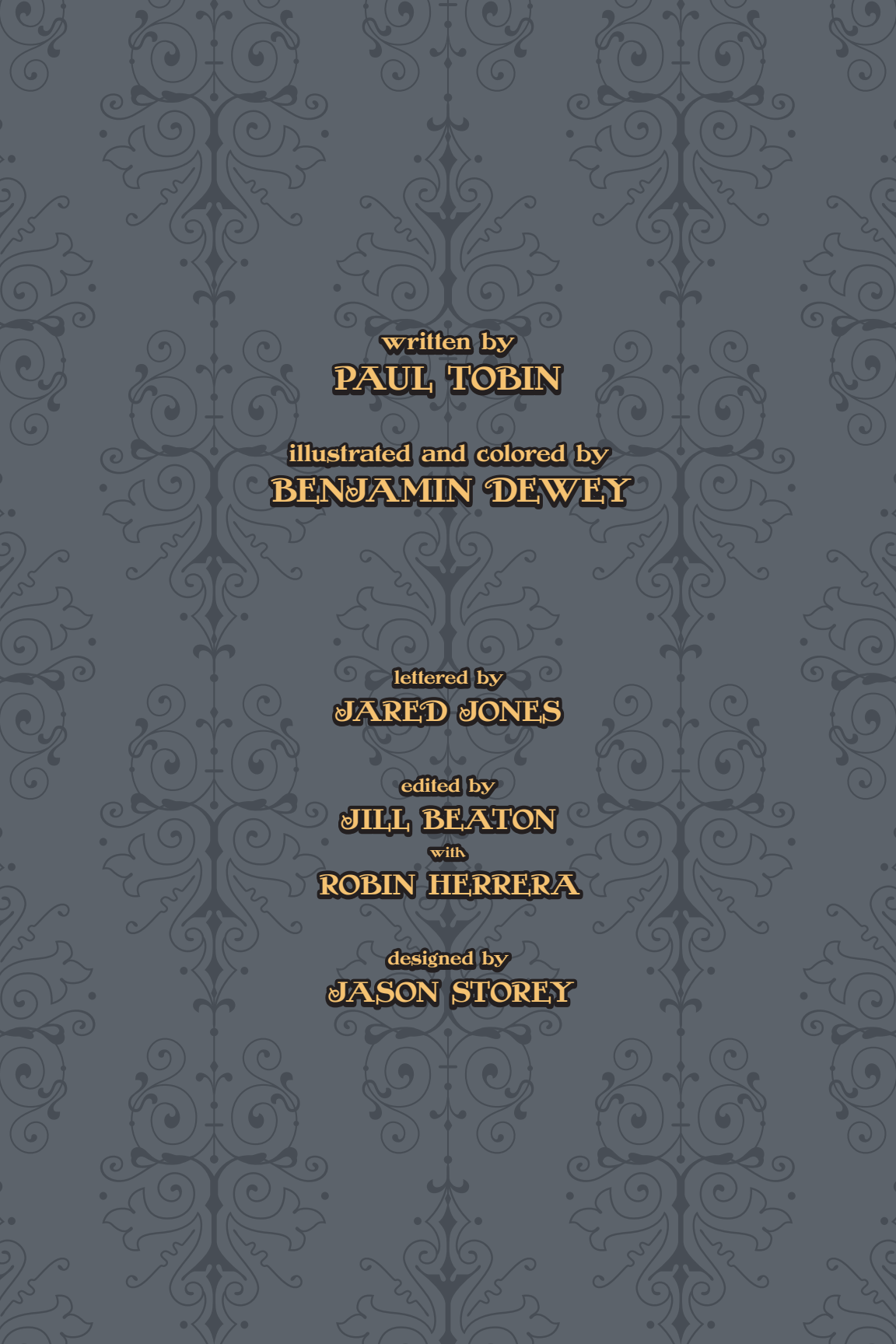




I WAS THE CAT



An Oni Press Publication



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I WAS THE CAT





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To Colleen Coover,
my partner Ben Dewey,
and Twinkle, the only
cat I ever loved.

-Paul

To my wife Lindsey,
my partner Paul,
my first feline friend, Smitty,
and to the memory of my
grandmother, Josephine Dover,
for being the ultimate
cat ambassador.

-Ben



CHAPTER



1







HE WAS PROBABLY
HIDEOUSLY DISFIGURED IN
A **MOB FIGHT**. **CARVED UP** BY
KNIVES. **BRASS KNUCKLES**.
OR **VENEREAL DISEASES**.

IN EXACTLY WHAT
KIND OF **MOB FIGHT**
DOES ONE CONTRACT A
VENEREAL DISEASE?



OR,
I'VE GOT IT,
ALLISON.



"I BET THIS GUY IS LIKE
THAT **ELEPHANT MAN**. WITH
THAT **ELEPHANT DISEASE**.



"OR HIS FLESH HAS
ROTTED AWAY FROM **DRUG**
USE. **METH**. **HEROIN**. **PAINT**
FUMES. **BRAIN FLUIDS**.



"OR HE WEARS THE
STOLEN PRESSES OF HIS LATEST
VICTIMS. FROM ALL THE **REASONABLY**
ATTRACTIVE GIRLS THAT WERE **LURED**
TO HIS APARTMENT DESPITE ALL THE
OBSVIOUS WARNING SIGNS!"



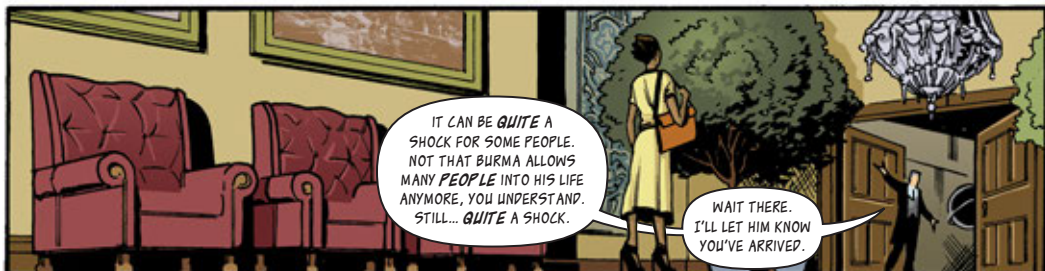
MAYBE HE'S
LIKE... SOME **PARK**
ELDRITCH GOD. A
SOUL EATER!

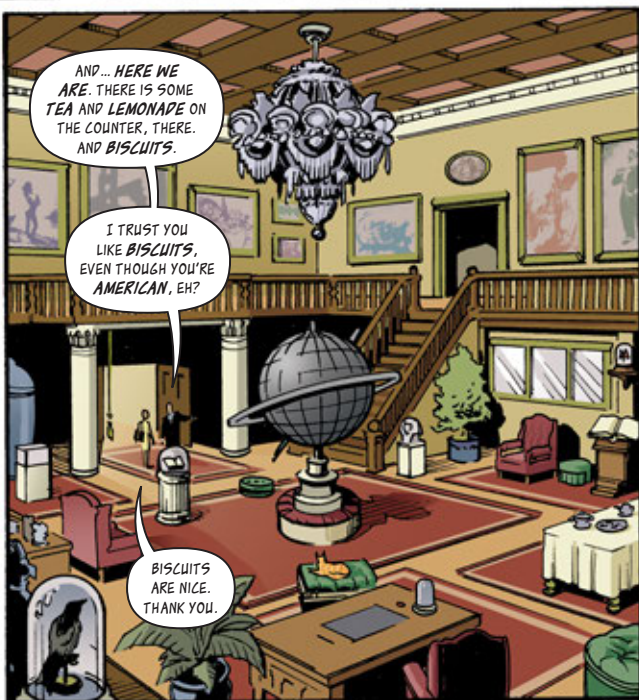
YOU DIDN'T
BRING YOUR **SOUL**.
DID YOU? YOU **REALLY**
SHOULDN'T HAVE! HE'S
GOING TO **TAKE IT!**



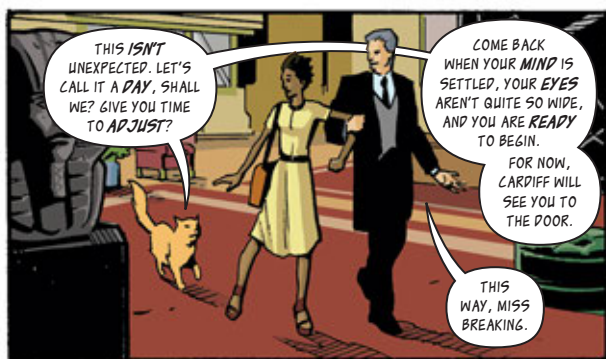
HE **MUST**
HAVE SOLD HIS
SOUL TO GET THIS
BUILDING. THIS
PLACE IS **NICE**.



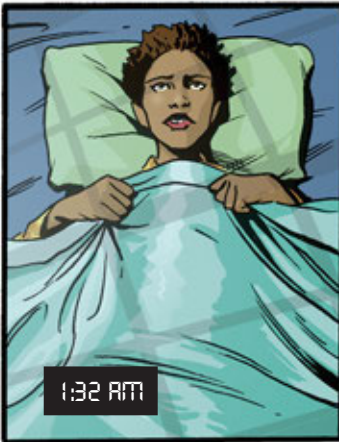


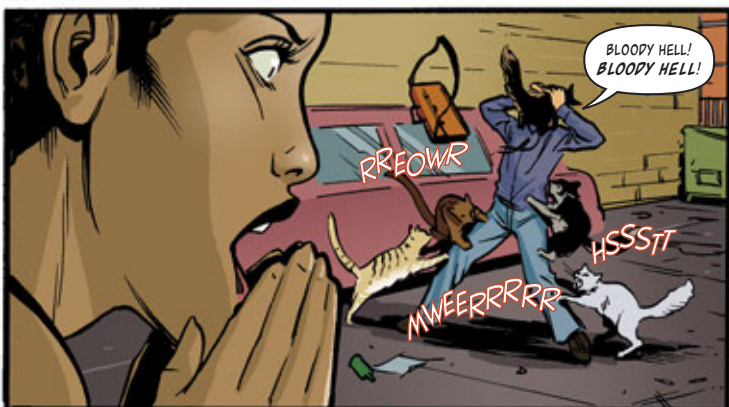




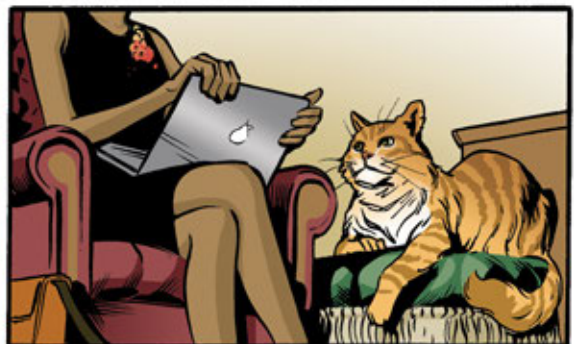












CHAPTER



2



OCTOBER 3RD, 1916.
THE SOMME.

"I WAS KEEPING MY
HAIR *SHORT*. ALL THE
MUD, YOU KNOW."



"THE MUD WAS
EVERYWHERE."



"OVER THE
YEARS, OVER
THE COURSE OF
MY LIVES, I'VE
HAD A NUMBER OF
LOOKS. I'D GO SO
FAR AS TO SAY
I'M A MASTER
OF DISGUISE.
SUCH CRAFTS
CERTAINLY HAVE
THEIR USES."

BURMA
1817

BURMA
1718

BURMA
1670

BURMA
1976

BURMA
1180 BCE



IN THE
SOMME, I
STAYED AWAY
FROM THE
FIGHTING.

HAND-TO-HAND
COMBAT ISN'T
EXACTLY MY
SPECIALTY,
YOU KNOW.

YOU DON'T
EVEN HAVE
HANDS.

TRUE. ANYWAY,
THE TRENCHES
AREN'T WHERE
A WAR IS WON.



"SUPPLY LINES AND
INTELLIGENCE. *THAT'S*
WHAT WINS THE WAR."



"I WAS RUNNING MESSAGES TO THE TROOPS."



"RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WERE ALL BUT *USELESS* THOSE DAYS. ALWAYS BREAKING DOWN. THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY THE MEN ON THE FRONT COULD KNOW ABOUT ENEMY TROOP MOVEMENTS, OR WHEN THEY MIGHT EXPECT SUPPLIES, OR REINFORCEMENTS."



"IT WAS *HAIRY* BUSINESS, BUT A CAT KEEPS A LOW PROFILE, OF COURSE."



SNEAKING PAST *SENTRIES*. AVOIDING THE *LAND MINES*. THE BULLETS WERE TOO HIGH FOR MY HEAD, OF COURSE.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN *TERRIFIED*.

YES. OF COURSE. THE *TERROR*.



"THE TERROR WAS **EVERYTHING**. IT WAS THE **SKY**. THE **GROUND**. IT SEEMED LIKE **ANYTHING** MIGHT EXPLODE.

"THE AIR **HUMMED** WITH BULLETS. THE NEAREST GAS MASK... YOU **ALWAYS** KNEW WHERE IT WAS. WE WERE **ALWAYS** WAITING FOR THE ALARMS.



"IF WE HAD ANY **TIME**, WE'D EAT. IF WE HAD ANY **FOOD**, THAT IS. AND IF BY CHANCE WE'D RECENTLY EATEN, AND NOTHING WAS **EXPLODING**, WE'D THINK ABOUT THE **WAR**, ABOUT WHAT THE **HELL** WAS HAPPENING.

"WAS THERE ANY **REAL** DIFFERENCE **BETWEEN** THE TWO SIDES? WAS IT **WORTH** THE COST IN **LIFE**?"



THE **HORROR** OF WAR IS THAT IT'S **NEVER** WORTH THE COST IN **LIFE**.

NO... THE **REAL** HORROR OF WAR IS THAT, SOMETIMES, IT **IS**.



"I THOUGHT OF MY **LIVES**. MY **DESTINY**. THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS IN A CAT'S HEAD, QUESTIONS ON IF WE HAVE **ONE** DESTINY... OR **NINE**."



"STILL... WATCHING JOHNNY SOLDIER AND BILLY DOUGHBOY WRITING THEIR BRIEF LIFE HISTORY... IT MADE ME THINK. THEIR LOVE NOTES WERE OF NO CONSEQUENCE, BUT THE DESPERATION OF BEING REMEMBERED, THAT STUCK WITH ME."



GRETA... DO NOT FORGET ME, OR FORGET THE LOVE...

HAH! HANS IS A WOMAN'S BITCH!

GIVE THAT BACK! GIVE THAT BACK!



THEY'RE COMING!
THEY'RE COMING!



NEIN! ICH ÜBERGEBE!

TAKE THE TRENCH, BOYS!
TAKE THE TRENCH!
A FEW MORE YARDS FOR THE QUEEN!

KÄMPF!
KÄMPF!

"AND WHEN THE BAYONETS CAME ON US, I REMEMBERED THE FIRST WAR OF MY LIFE, THE FIRST MEMORY OF MY LIFE, OR AT LEAST THE FIRST MEMORY THAT I'M WILLING TO TELL YOU."



WHICHEVER ONE, IT WAS IN EGYPT IN THE 20TH DYNASTY UNDER RAMSES THE THIRD... AROUND 1182 BCE IN YOUR CALENDAR.

WHAT? SERIOUSLY? YOU WERE ALIVE WAY BACK THEN?

IT WAS MY FIRST LIFE. I'VE GONE THROUGH EIGHT LIVES, NOW.



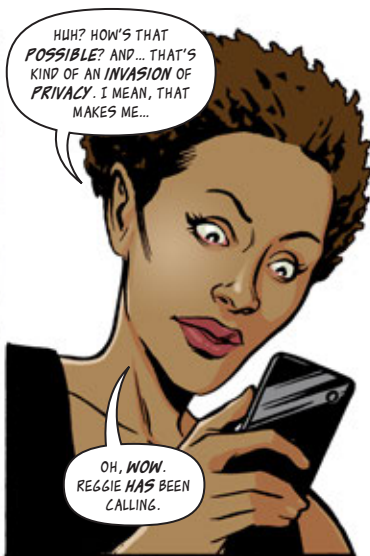
"EIGHT LIVES AND... EIGHT DEATHS."



SHOULD WE TAKE A BREAK FOR NOW? YOU MIGHT WANT TO CALL YOUR FRIEND REGGIE. SHE'S BEEN PHONING FOR YOU. YOUR PHONE IS OFF, BUT...

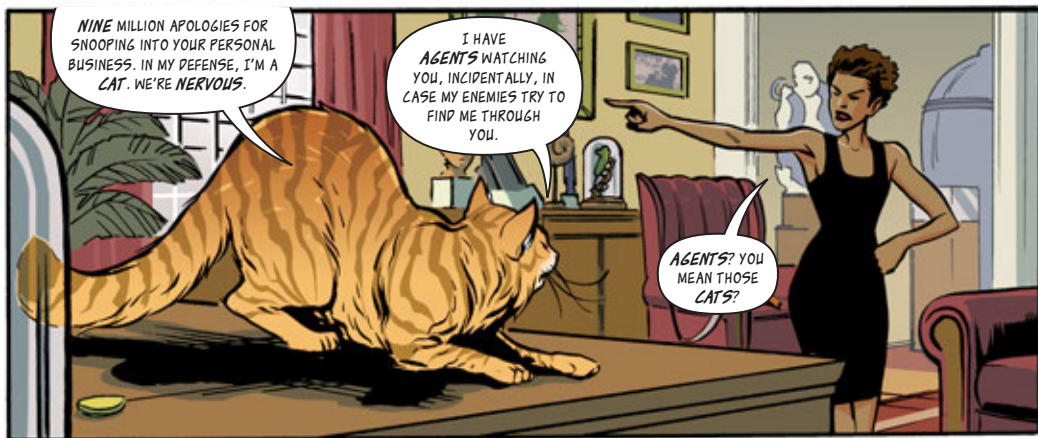
HMM? HOW DO YOU KNOW SHE'S BEEN CALLING?

I MONITOR ALL CALLS THAT COME INTO THIS HOUSE. AND EVEN THE STREETS OUTSIDE.



HUH? HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? AND... THAT'S KIND OF AN INVASION OF PRIVACY. I MEAN, THAT MAKES ME...

OH, WOW. REGGIE HAS BEEN CALLING.



NINE MILLION APOLOGIES FOR SNOOPING INTO YOUR PERSONAL BUSINESS. IN MY DEFENSE, I'M A CAT. WE'RE NERVOUS.

I HAVE AGENTS WATCHING YOU, INCIDENTALLY, IN CASE MY ENEMIES TRY TO FIND ME THROUGH YOU.

AGENTS? YOU MEAN THOSE CATS?



"BUT THAT MAN WAS JUST TRYING TO STEAL MY COMPUTER BAG!"



PROBABLY. PROBABLY.

CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.



BUT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT YOUR *FRIEND*. DO YOU WANT HER TO *JOIN US*? SHOULD I SEND A *CAR* FOR HER?

HONESTLY? NO. I DON'T THINK SHE'S READY TO MEET YOU.

OH. WELL THEN, I GUESSED WRONG. THERE'S *ALREADY* A CAR ON THE WAY.



SHOULD I CALL IT *BACK*? I JUST DIDN'T WANT HER TO WORRY ABOUT YOU. BECAUSE... *LISTEN...*

...I UNDERSTAND I'M A *MYSTERY* AND THAT *CURIOSITY* KILLS A GOOD DEAL MORE THAN *CATS*. SO IF YOU'D LIKE HER TO COME AND KEEP YOU A BIT SAFER THEN I'VE NO WORRIES OR QUALMS ABOUT THAT.

I CAN'T VERY WELL SWEAR YOU TO *SECRECY* AMONGST YOUR FRIENDS AND IT'S ALMOST SUPPERTIME AND WE'RE HAVING *DUCK* TONIGHT.

HAS REGGIE EVER HAD *DUCK*?



CALL HER AND ASK IF SHE'S EVER HAD *DUCK*.



UMM...



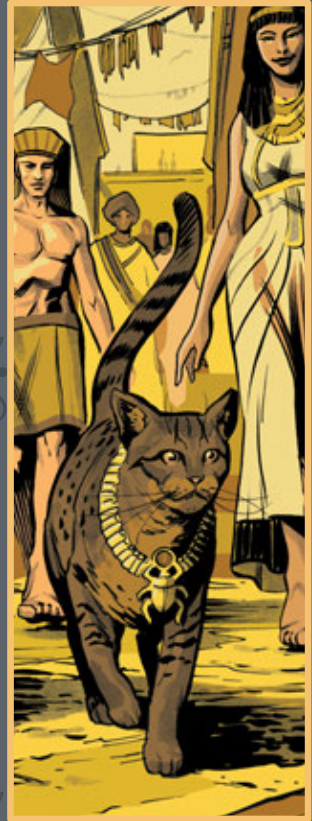
OKAY.







CHAPTER

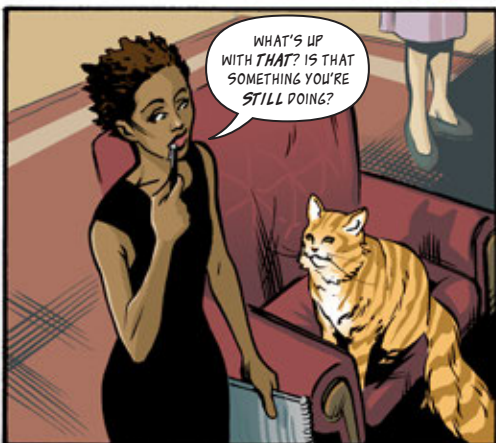


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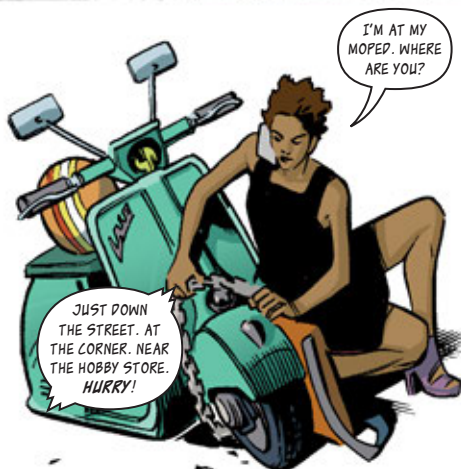


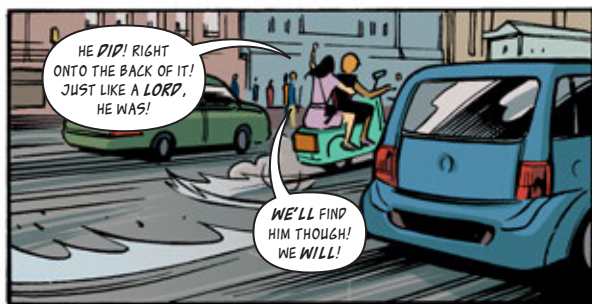
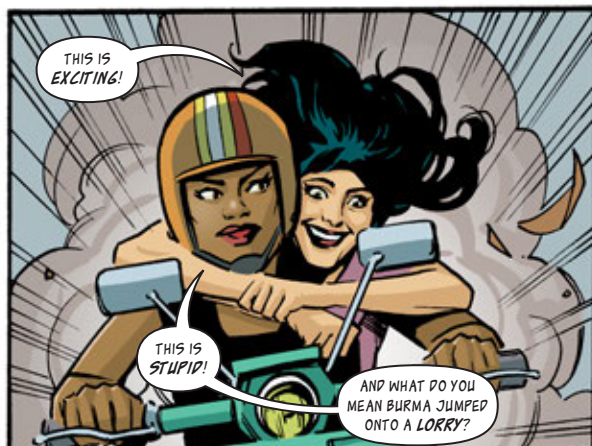














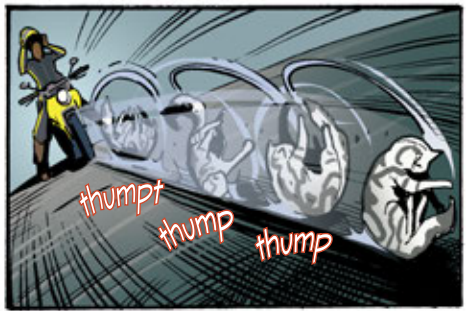




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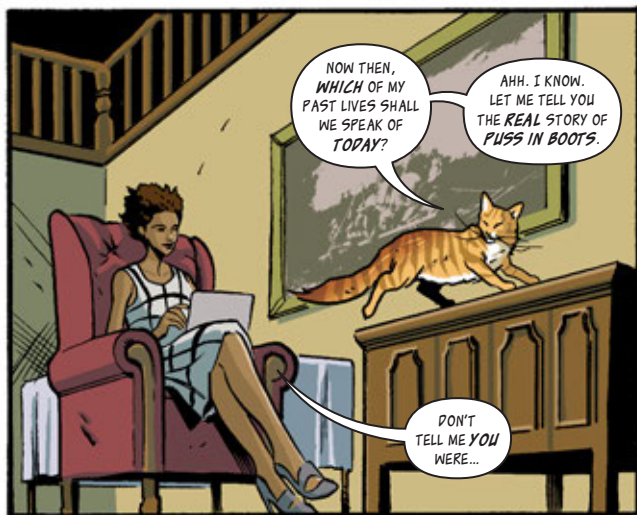


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NOW THEN,
WHICH OF MY
PAST LIVES SHALL
WE SPEAK OF
TODAY?

AHH. I KNOW.
LET ME TELL YOU
THE *REAL* STORY OF
PUSS IN BOOTS.

DON'T
TELL ME *YOU*
WERE...



I WAS.
I WAS. I WAS *THAT*
CAT AS WELL.

IT WAS
THE *FRENCHMAN*,
CHARLES PERRAULT,
WHO *FIRST* CHRONICLED
THE STORY, AND *HIS* RATHER
FANCIFUL VERSION HAS
REMAINED WITH US
EVER SINCE.



"HE HAD ME AS SOME
PANDY IN FINE CLOTHING.
WALKING *UPRIGHT*. I CAN'T
TELL YOU HOW MUCH THAT
WOULD HURT MY *BACK*."



"IN REALITY I WAS SIMPLY *HAIRLESS* AT THE TIME.
HAIRLESS, WITH SKIN LIKE A HUMAN. THE FRENCH OF 1670
HAD NEVER *SEEN* SUCH A CAT, AND BELIEVED I MUST BE
HALF-HUMAN. THUS THE *WAISTCOATS* AND THE *BOOTS*
WERE ADDED, AND THE MODERN TALE WAS BORN."

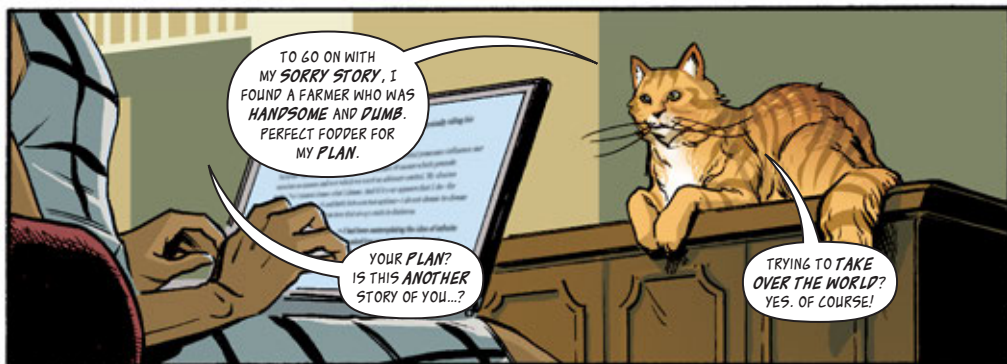


"BUT... MAY AS WELL CONTINUE
PERRAULT'S FARCE. YOU ARE
FREE TO ENVISION ME AS A
TINY NOBLEMAN IN BOOTS."



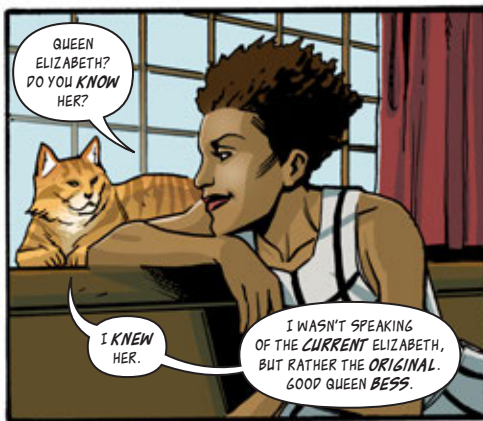
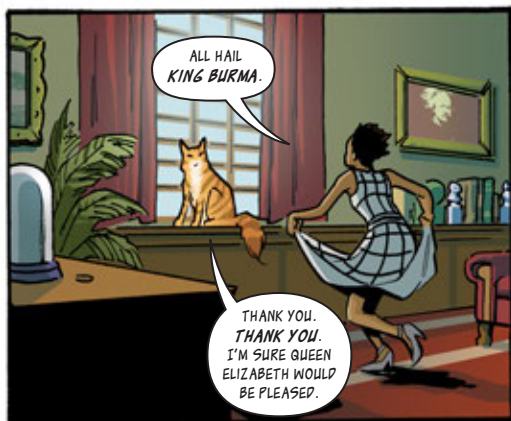
NO. NO
THEY ARE
NOT.

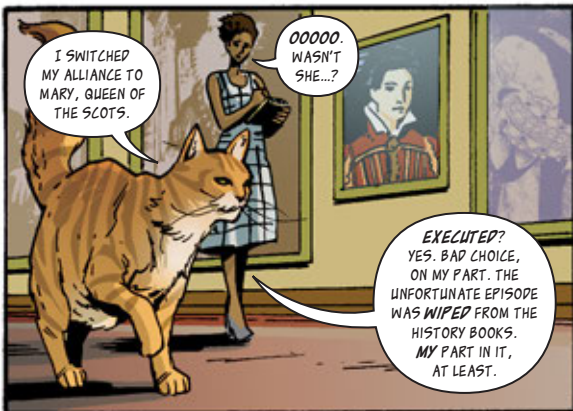
YOUR
PAWS DON'T
REALLY LOOK FIT
FOR *BOOTS*.













ROHAN? THIS IS BURMA. YOU'RE ON *SPEAKERPHONE*, AND *MS. BREAKING* IS PRESENT, SO *NONE* OF YOUR *VULGAR* LANGUAGE.

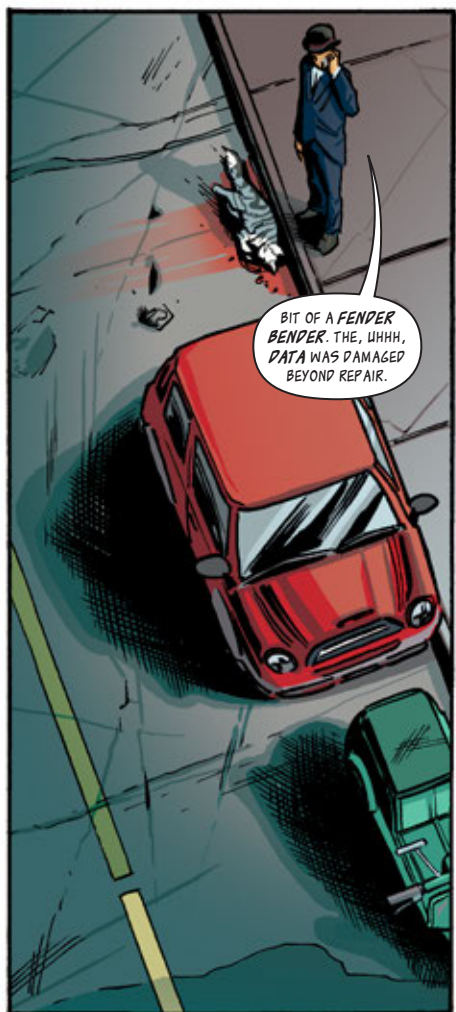
I UNDERSTAND *JUST* WHAT YOU MEAN, SIR. I'LL WATCH MY MOUTH.



THING IS, SIR... IT'S ABOUT THE *COURIER*. I'M AFRAID THERE WAS AN *ACCIDENT*. THE DATA WAS LOST.

LOST?

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR.



BIT OF A *FENDER BENDER*. THE, UHHH, DATA WAS DAMAGED BEYOND REPAIR.



UNFORTUNATE. WE'LL HAVE TO COMPILE NEW DATA FROM SCRATCH, THEN. ARE WE... *INSURED* FOR THE ACCIDENT?

ABSOLUTELY, SIR. I HAVE SOME OF OUR BEST... *INSURANCE AGENTS* ON THE WAY. THEY'LL LOOK INTO THE MATTER, MAKE SURE IT'S SETTLED.



MAKE *QUICK* WORK, ROHAN. WE HAVE *SCHEDULES* TO MAINTAIN.

NOW, I SUPPOSE IT'S BEST TO TALK WITH OUR OTHER... *SHIPPING MANAGERS*. I'LL PATCH YOU IN ALONG WITH THE REST.



EVERYONE. THIS IS **BURMA**. THERE HAS BEEN A **SETBACK**. A SLIGHT **MISHAP**.

WE'RE STILL **WELL** WITHIN OUR **GUIDELINES**, BUT I THINK IT'S BEST TO BE ON **GUARD**.

WORKPLACE **ACCIDENTS** ARE ALWAYS UNFORTUNATE, AND OUR **COMPETITORS** ARE **CONSTANTLY** SNIFFING FOR **WEAKNESS**.

LET'S BE **CAREFUL** OUT THERE.



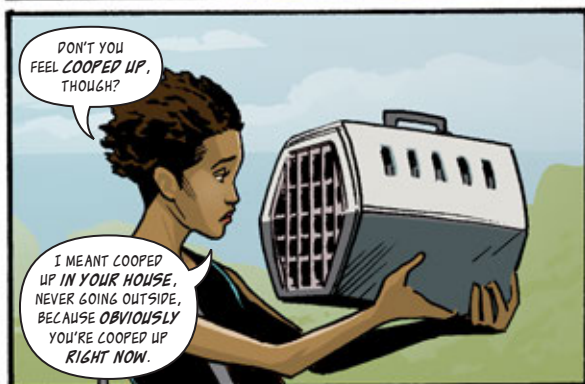


CHAPTER



5

HYDE PARK.





I ADMIT
BEING IN THAT
CONTRAPTION
WAS A LITTLE
STRANGE.

THE
LAST TIME I
CAN REMEMBER BEING
CARRIED IN SOMETHING
SIMILAR WAS... HMMM...
PERHAPS BACK
IN 1795.

1795?



"AT THE TIME, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
WAS WELL ON HIS PATH TO HIS CONQUESTS.
AT THE SAME TIME, HE WAS ACQUIRING A VAST
ZOO. EVERYWHERE HE WENT, HE CAPTURED
THE STRANGEST ANIMALS."



AND HE CAUGHT
YOU, RIGHT? THAT'S
WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH
THIS? BECAUSE... YOU ARE
AN ANIMAL, AND YOU
ARE STRANGE.

REGGIE!

WHAT?
IT'S TRUE,
ISN'T IT?



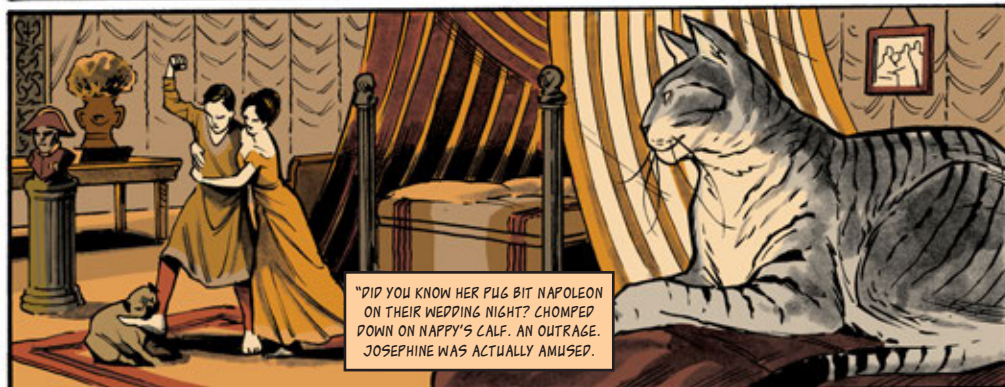
"ABSOLUTELY TRUE.
EXCEPT I WASN'T ACTUALLY
CAPTURED. I VOLUNTEERED,
IN A WAY. I WANTED TO MEET
NAPOLEON, AND THIS SEEMED
THE EASIEST WAY."



COULD YOU TALK WITH NAPOLEON? DO
YOU SPEAK FRENCH? PLEASE TELL ME YOU
DON'T SPEAK FRENCH. NO OFFENSE, BUT I
DON'T WANT A CAT TO SPEAK MORE
LANGUAGES THAN I DO.

I SPEAK TWELVE
LANGUAGES. ENGLISH.
FRENCH. SPANISH. MANDARIN.
BATAK. ARABIC. GERMAN.
JAPANESE.

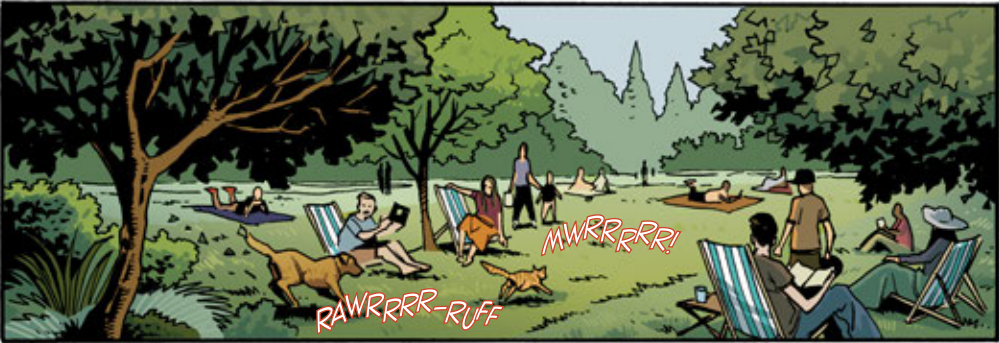
STOP!
STOP!

















ROHAN.
BURMA, SIR.
GOOD AFTERNOON
TO YOU BOTH.

SERVE UP A
DOG, WOULD YOU,
HASKINS?

THE
WORLD
HOT
DOGS
THEY'RE
OUT OF THIS
WORLD!



RIGHT YOU ARE,
SIR. BUT I WOULDN'T
EAT IT, UNLESS... WELL,
YOU KNOW OF COURSE.
THE ADDITIVES.

WOULDN'T
DREAM OF
TASTING ONE OF
THESE. NO OFFENSE
INTENDED.



NO. I'LL JUST
HAVE A *SNIFF*.
MY *NOSE* WILL TELL
ME *ALL* I NEED
TO KNOW.

AND...
YES. SPLENDID.
SPLENDIP.



ALL THE
REST OF THE
CARTS DOING
WELL?

ABSOLUTELY!
COTTON CANDY.
PRETZELS. HOT DOGS.
LEMONADES. FISH AND CHIPS.
CHIPS AND CHEESE.
ELEPHANT EARS.

ALL THE
CARTS ARE
ROARING, SIR!
ABSOLUTELY
ROARING!



IS IT HAVING
THE *DESIRED*
EFFECT?

SO FAR...
THE RESULTS
ARE GOOD. IT'LL TAKE
WEEKS AND WEEKS, OF
COURSE, BEFORE THE
EFFECTS *REALLY*
SET IN.

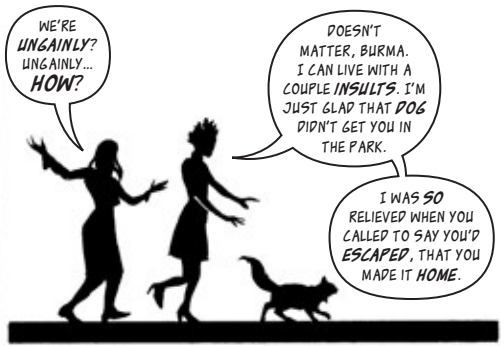
CHAPTER



6



NORMALLY, I DON'T MUCH GO FOR HUMANS. YOU'RE *UNGAINLY*. BUT THIS ONE... THIS ONE HAD GRACE.



WE'RE *UNGAINLY*?
UNGAINLY...
HOW?

DOESN'T MATTER, BURMA. I CAN LIVE WITH A COUPLE *INSULTS*. I'M JUST GLAD THAT *DOG* DIDN'T GET YOU IN THE PARK.

I WAS *SO* RELIEVED WHEN YOU CALLED TO SAY YOU'D *ESCAPED*, THAT YOU MADE IT *HOME*.



I WAS REALLY *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU!

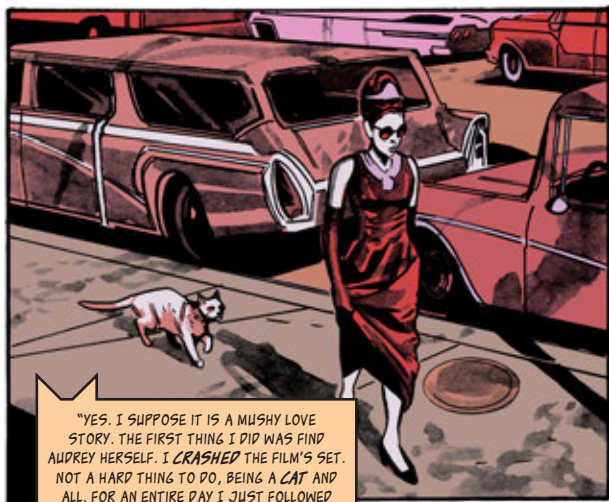
YES. IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO SLIP BETWEEN THE HEDGES AND EVADE PURSUIT. *DOGS* AREN'T VERY *SMART*, YOU KNOW.



"BACK TO MY MEMOIRS, THOUGH... AND TO AUDREY HEPBURN. I'D SEEN SEVERAL OF HER MOVIES. ROMAN HOLIDAY. LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON. FUNNY FACE. SUFFICE TO SAY I WAS A FAN."



SO WHEN I FOUND OUT SHE WAS MAKING A FILM WHERE A *CAT* WOULD BE A PART OF THE CAST... I SIMPLY *HAD* TO HAVE THE ROLE.





OH. YOUR PHONE. AND JUST WHEN WE WERE GETTING TO THE GOOD PARTS.

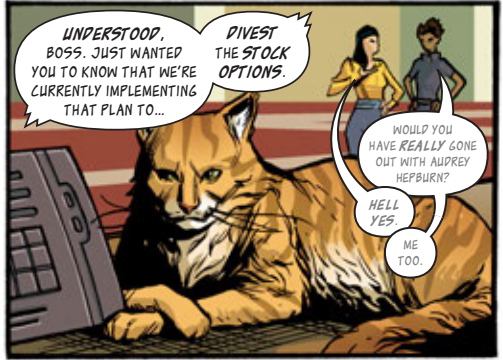
THRRRRNGG
THRRRRNGG



BOSS? IT'S ROHAN.

I WONDER IF BURMA EVER SPOKE TO AUDREY?

I HAVE YOU ON SPEAKER, ROHAN, AND THERE ARE LADIES PRESENT. RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE ONLY, PLEASE.



UNDERSTOOD, BOSS. JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT WE'RE CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING THAT PLAN TO...

DIVEST THE STOCK OPTIONS.

WOULD YOU HAVE REALLY GONE OUT WITH AUDREY HEPBURN?

HELL YES.

ME TOO.

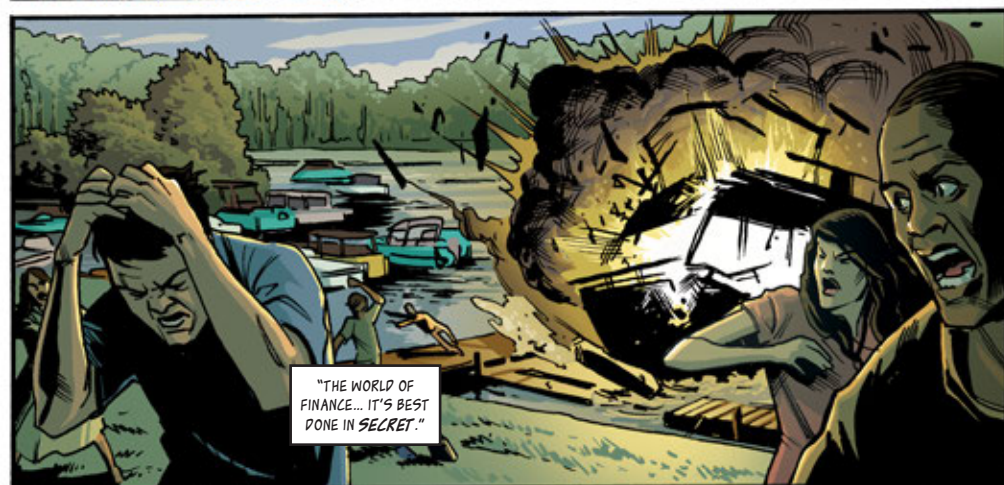
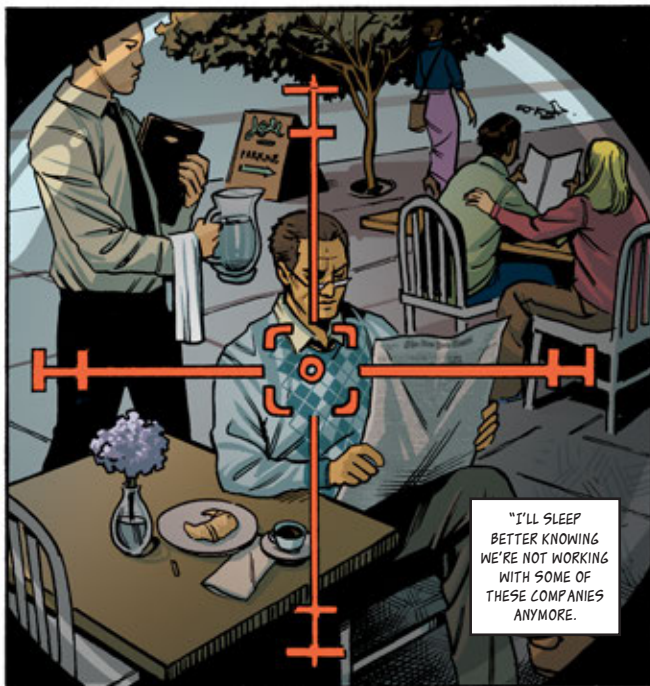


VERY GOOD, ROHAN. CLOSEOUT THE STOCKS COMPLETELY.

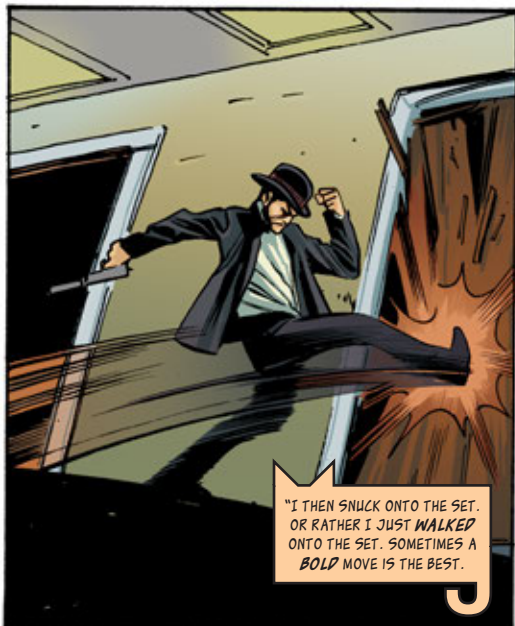
DON'T WORRY, BOSS. NONE OF THOSE BAD STOCKS WILL AFFECT OUR BOTTOM LINE ANYMORE.



"I'M WATCHING THE TICKER RIGHT NOW. REPORTS ARE COMING IN. LOTS OF CLOSEOUTS."







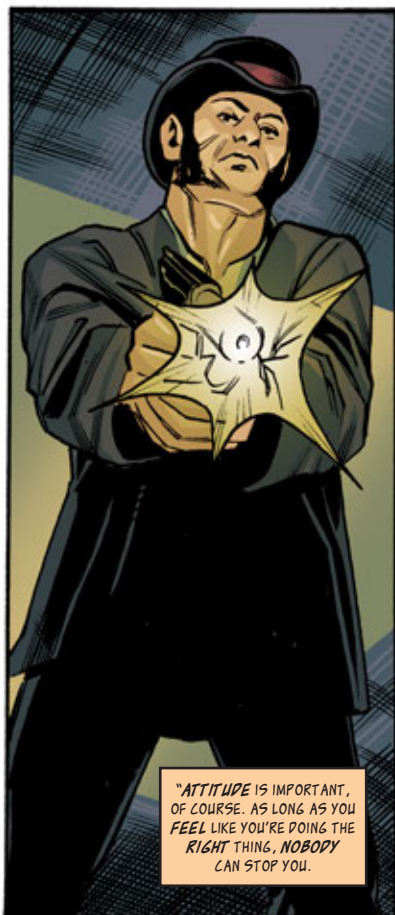
"I THEN **SNUCK** ONTO THE SET. OR RATHER I JUST **WALKED** ONTO THE SET. SOMETIMES A **BOLD** MOVE IS THE BEST.



"WHAT'S IMPORTANT, IS THAT I WANTED TO LOOK LIKE I **BELONGED**.

"THAT I WASN'T JUST SOME... **SPY** PRETENDING TO BE PART OF THE CAST. I **DETEST** SPIES.

ROHAN?
NO! I WASN'T GOING TO TELL **ANYBODY** THAT...



"**ATTITUDE** IS IMPORTANT, OF COURSE. AS LONG AS YOU **FEEL** LIKE YOU'RE DOING THE **RIGHT** THING, **NOBODY** CAN STOP YOU.



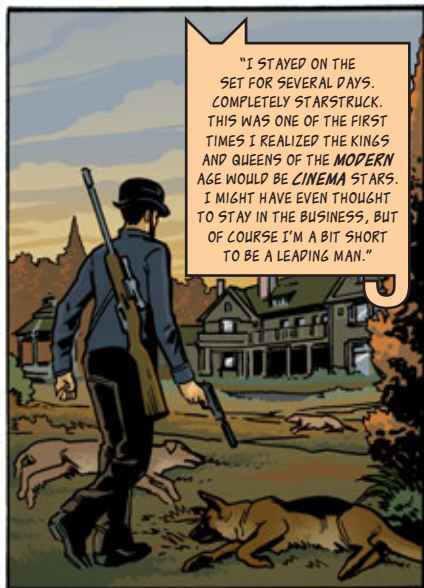
"ACT LIKE A **KING**, AND YOU WILL **BE** A KING.

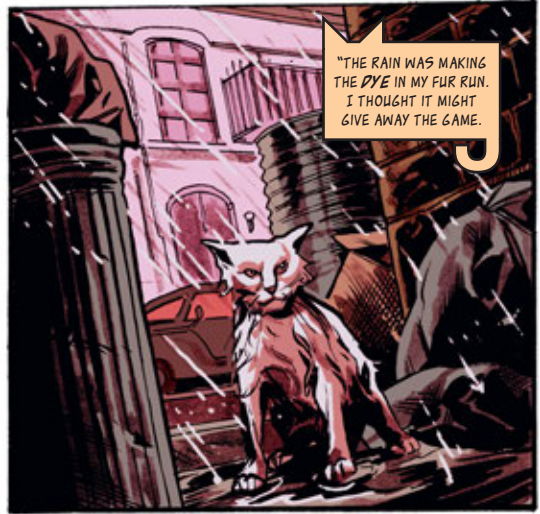
WHO'S A PRETTY KITTY?
WHO'S A PRETTY KITTY?



"ACT LIKE A **SPY**, AND YOU WILL **BE TREATED** LIKE ONE."









CAT! CAT!

"IN THE END,
IT WAS ALL
WORTH IT."



"YOU CAN'T GET WHAT YOU WANT
WITHOUT GETTING YOUR FEET WET."



HERE... MY LOBBY
CARDS. ALL SIGNED
BY AUDREY HERSELF.
OF ALL THE MEMENTOS OF
MY PAST, IT'S *THESE*
THAT I MOST
TREASURE.



THERE IS
SUCH BEAUTY IN
THIS WORLD.





CHAPTER



7



LET'S TALK ABOUT **SHERLOCK HOLMES**.



SHERLOCK HOLMES? I THOUGHT WE WERE WORKING ON YOUR **MEMOIRS**, TODAY?

SHERLOCK IS A **FICTIONAL** CHARACTER, YOU KNOW.



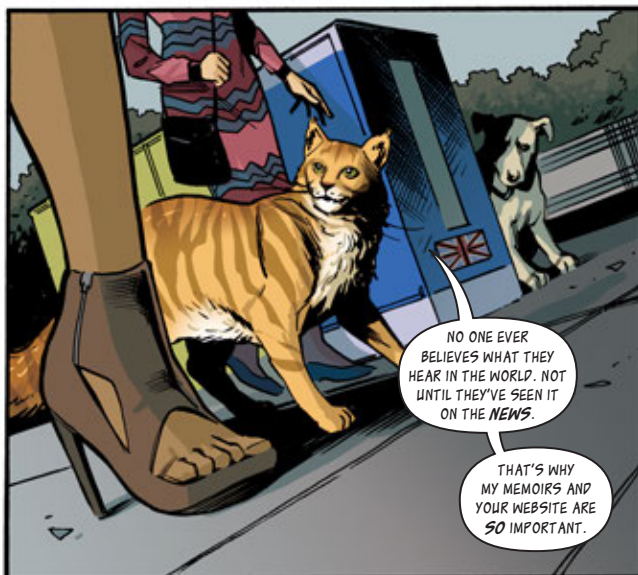
WE **ARE** DOING MY **MEMOIRS**. I'VE BEEN HAPPY WITH THE **PROGRESS** SO FAR. ABOUT **HALFWAY** DONE, I'D SAY.

AND THEN THE **BOOK** WILL GO **ONLINE**, AND TO **PRESS**, AND MY **STORY** WILL BE **SPREAD** VIA YOUR EXCELLENT **BREAKING NEWS** WEBSITE.



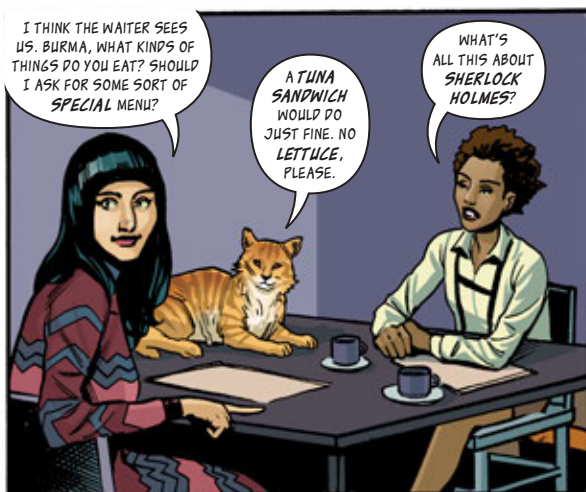
ALLISON BREAKING. THAT'S HER!

UMMM, **BURMA**... SHOULD YOU BE TALKING RIGHT OUT IN **PUBLIC** LIKE THIS?



NO ONE EVER BELIEVES WHAT THEY HEAR IN THE WORLD. NOT UNTIL THEY'VE SEEN IT ON THE **NEWS**.

THAT'S WHY MY **MEMOIRS** AND YOUR **WEBSITE** ARE **SO** IMPORTANT.







"SECONDLY... IT WASN'T ACTUALLY *MORIARTY*, EITHER, BUT RATHER *JONATHAN WILD*... ONE OF THE MEN ON WHOM *MORIARTY* WAS *BASED*."



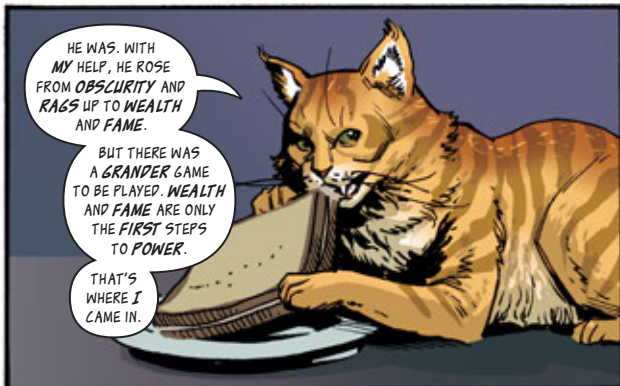
"THIS WAS LONDON. THE YEAR WAS... HMMM, I BELIEVE OUR ASSOCIATION STARTED IN 1712. I WAS MUCH DIFFERENT THEN, OF COURSE."

"AS ALWAYS, I LIKE TO *CHANGE* MY LOOKS, AND LONG FUR WAS *BOTHERSOME* IN LONDON'S MUCK OF THE TIME."



I SHOULD BE TAKING THIS DOWN.

AND THIS *GUUY* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, IF *MORIARTY* WAS BASED ON HIM, HE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME SORT OF *CRIMINAL GENIUS*, RIGHT?



HE WAS. WITH MY HELP, HE ROSE FROM *OBSCURITY* AND *RAGS* UP TO *WEALTH* AND *FAME*.

BUT THERE WAS A *GRANDER* GAME TO BE PLAYED. *WEALTH* AND *FAME* ARE ONLY THE *FIRST* STEPS TO *POWER*.

THAT'S WHERE I CAME IN.



"OR, RATHER, I CAME IN *EARLIER*, SEEING HIS *POTENTIAL*."

EXCUSE ME. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD TALK.

WOT HELL? DID THAT *CAT* JUST TALK, LUV?

EITHER 'E *DID*, OR THE *DRINK* IS TALKING TO US *BOTH*.



GIVE 'EM A
DRINK THERE, MARY.
IF N' A CAT CAN TALK,
'E CAN **DRINK**!

"HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE
WHORING DRUNKARD WAS TO BECOME
A MUCH-BELOVED POLICEMAN WHO WAS,
IN TRUTH, THE LEADER OF A VAST CRIMINAL
NETWORK. BUT... A **SHAPELESS LUMP** OF
THE FINEST CLAY IS STILL THE FINEST CLAY."

AHH HA
HA HA!



HMMM. **GOOD** TUNA.
FOOD IS **SO** VERY
IMPORTANT, DON'T
YOU THINK?

WELL, YEAH.
I MEAN... **FOOD**
AND **AIR**, WE ALL
NEED IT, RIGHT?



ABSOLUTELY. THEY SAY
THAT AN ARMY MOVES ON
IT'S **STOMACH**, BUT THE REAL
TRUTH IS THAT **EVERYTHING**.
EVERY CREATURE IN **ALL**
THE WORLD, MOVES ON
IT'S **STOMACH**.

THIS **BREAD**
IS **GOOD**, TOO.
BUT... THIS **JONATHAN**
WILD GUY? WHAT
HAPPENED?



VERY MUCH
HAPPENED. LET'S
WORK OFF A FEW OF
THESE **CALORIES** NOW,
THOUGH. **LETHARGY**
IS A **DEVIL**,
YOU KNOW.

WITH
OUR MEALS
DONE, I THINK
WE CAN MOVE A
BIT THROUGH
TOWN.

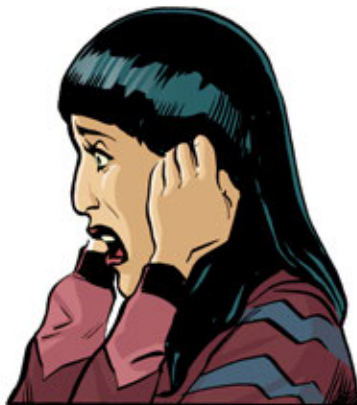


WILD, YOU
UNDERSTAND,
WALKED THESE SAME
STREETS HUNDREDS
OF YEARS AGO.

MUCH
HAS CHANGED
SINCE THEN. LESS
TRASH, FOR ONE THING.
EVEN A BETTER
QUALITY OF
TRASH.

WORKS
GREAT





"HITCHEN WAS A GOOD MAN. WELL, GOOD ENOUGH, I SUPPOSE. BUT IN WILD I SAW MORE MALLEABILITY, WILES AND RAW DETERMINATION."





"NEWSPAPERS BEGAN TO RULE THE POPULACE, YOU SEE. AND WITH THEM CAME A BURGEONING INTEREST IN *CRIME*, BOTH FROM THOSE WHO WANTED TO *ABOLISH* IT, AND OTHERS WHO WERE *FASCINATED*."

THERE'S BEEN *ANOTHER* MURDER!

HOW DELICIOUS!

TUPPENCE, YOUR LORDSHIPS! *DAILY COURANT!* THE NEWS! THE NEWS!



"NEWSPAPERS, OF COURSE, NEED *BOTH* NEWS AND FANFARE. A BLENDING OF *GOSSIP* AND TRUTH."

CRIME SOARING! MURDERS! THIEVES! IS FOREIGN INVADERS T' BLAME? TUPPENCE! TUPPENCE FOR A PAPER, GUV'NOR!



"WILD'S RAPIDLY RISING CAREER WAS BASED ON A SECRET MANIPULATION OF *VICE*, SANCTIONED BY MY OWN MANIPULATION OF *TRUTH* AND *GOSSIP*."

TWO PENCE HA'PENNY! THIEF TAKER ON THE JOB!! IS LONDON SAVED?



THIS IS ALL REALLY JUICY. AND MILDLY *DISTURBING*. WERE YOU REALLY ALL THAT BAR?

AND HOW WERE YOU... WHAT DID YOU SAY... MANIPULATING ALL THE *TRUTH* AND *GOSSIP*?



"*INFORMATION* IS KEY. AND MY SQUAD OF INFORMATION GATHERERS WAS SECOND TO NONE. THEY WERE CHAMPIONS AT BEING *OVERLOOKED*."





IT'S **CALLOUS** HOW YOU WERE PLAYING WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES.

MEAT PACKING SCANDAL! READ THE LATEST!

IN **THOSE** DAYS, THOUGH, MY MORALS WERE LAX.

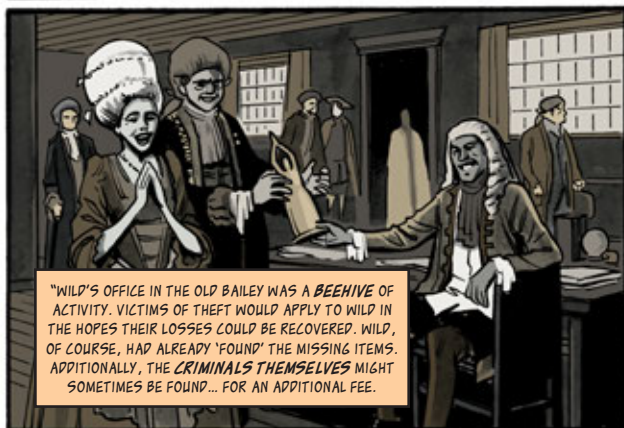
I AGREE. I CAN OFFER **NOTHING** BUT THE **PITIFUL EXCUSE** OF HOW I WAS CAUGHT UP IN THE TIMES.

I ASSURE YOU, **THESE** DAYS, I WOULD NO MORE RUIN A RIVAL THAN I WOULD RUIN ONE OF MY NAPS.

IN 1718, **WILD**, AT MY ADVICE, BEGAN CALLING HIMSELF THE **THIEF TAKER GENERAL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**. OVER **SIXTY** THIEVES WERE SENT TO THE GALLOWS BY HIS TESTIMONY.



"MEANWHILE, **BENEATH** THE PUBLIC RADAR, WILD AND HIS MINIONS WERE STEALING THE PUBLIC BLIND, EVEN AS WILD PRESENTED A VERY **PUBLIC** FACE OF BEING **THEIFDOM'S GREATEST ENEMY**."



"WILD'S OFFICE IN THE OLD BAILEY WAS A **BEEHIVE** OF ACTIVITY. VICTIMS OF THEFT WOULD APPLY TO WILD IN THE HOPES THEIR LOSSES COULD BE RECOVERED. WILD, OF COURSE, HAD ALREADY 'FOUND' THE MISSING ITEMS. ADDITIONALLY, THE **CRIMINALS THEMSELVES** MIGHT SOMETIMES BE FOUND... FOR AN ADDITIONAL FEE.



"I WAS GUIDING ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE."





CHAPTER



8

SO,
YOU AND THIS
JONATHAN WILD
CHARACTER, IT
DIDN'T WORK
OUT?



WE'D BEEN
USING THE MEDIA
AS A **TOOL**. IT
TURNED **AGAINST** US.
AND TOOK LONDON
WITH IT.

"WILD BEGAN USING
HIS POWER TO TAKE DOWN
HIS RIVALS. **ANY** RIVALS.
NOT ONLY **THREATS**,
BUT **IRRITANTS**."



THIS IS A
WASTE OF VALUABLE
TIME. YOU'RE BOTHERING
WITH **PETTY** SATISFACTIONS
WHEN THERE ARE **HUGE**
SATISFACTIONS
TO BE HAD.

YOU
WOULDN'T
UNDERSTAND.
YOU'RE JUST A
CAT, AFTER
ALL.

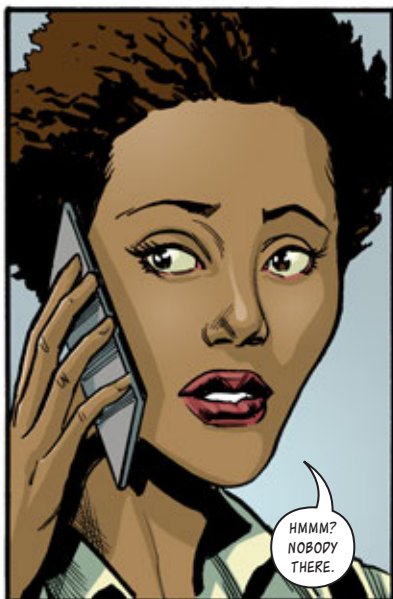
DON'T BE A
FOOL. IT MAKES LITTLE
DIFFERENCE IF AN ENEMY
STEALS A **COIN**, AS LONG
AS YOU CONTROL HIS
PURSE.

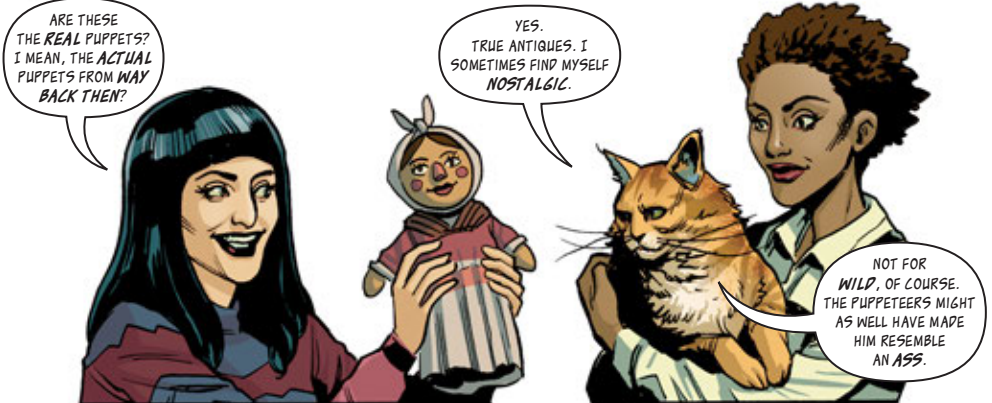


PAMN IT,
WILD. NOT **THIS**
AGAIN.

"WE BEGAN TO **CLASH**.
OUR DIFFERENCES WERE
TOO LARGE. HIS GOALS,
HIS INTELLIGENCE,
TOO VULGAR."







"A TURNING POINT WAS THE JACK SHEPPARD INCIDENT. A WORKING CLASS HERO WHO KEPT ESCAPING FROM PRISON. THE PUBLIC LOVED HIM.



JONNY, LAD.
YOU CAN'T BE
SERIOUS!

"WILD KEPT CATCHING HIM. EVENTUALLY CONDEMNING HIM TO DEATH. THEY'D BEEN PARTNERS IN THE PAST.



MEAT PACKING
SCANDAL! READ
THE LATEST!

"AS PART OF THE ARRESTS, WILD CONVICTED ONE OF SHEPPARD'S CONFEDERATES, JOSEPH 'BLUESKIN' BLAKE. BLAKE PLEADED TO HAVE HIS SENTENCE REDUCED FROM DEATH, BUT WILD REFUSED. IT WAS MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO KILL HIS OLD FRIENDS, SO THEY COULDN'T SPREAD TALES.



YOU'LL
GET *YOURS*,
WILD!

YOU'LL GET
YOURS *RIGHT*
NOW!

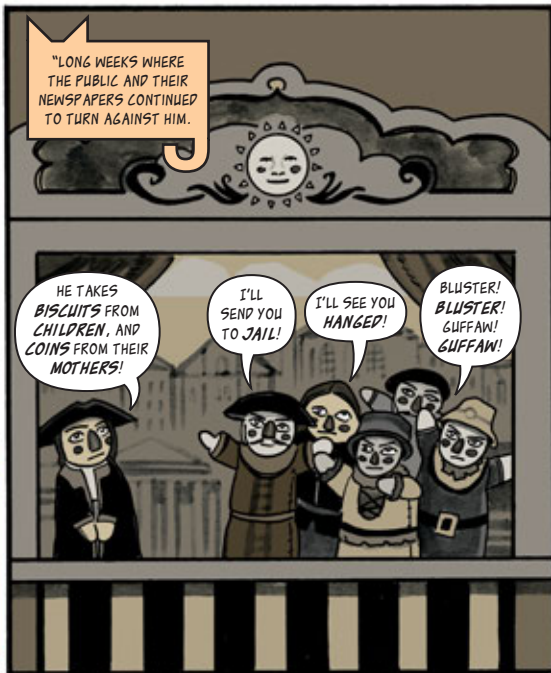


"BLAKE FOUGHT BACK,
ATTACKING WILD IN COURT,
SLASHING HIS THROAT.
WILD BARELY SURVIVED."



OUCH. I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT WILD NEEDING TO WATCH HIS OWN NECK.

JUST SO. IT TOOK WILD LONG WEEKS TO RECOVER.



"LONG WEEKS WHERE THE PUBLIC AND THEIR NEWSPAPERS CONTINUED TO TURN AGAINST HIM.

HE TAKES BISCUITS FROM CHILDREN, AND COINS FROM THEIR MOTHERS!

I'LL SEND YOU TO JAIL!

I'LL SEE YOU HANGED!

BLUSTER! BLUSTER! GUFFAW! GUFFAW!



"WE LOST THE NEWSPAPERS. ONE SHOULD *NEVER* ENTIRELY RELY ON THE *LATEST TECHNOLOGIES*, BECAUSE NOBODY YET KNOWS HOW THEY WILL *TURN* ON YOU.

GET 'CHER *DAILY COURANT!* THE NEWS! THE NEWS! JONATHAN WILD!

IS HE BOTH THIEF-TAKER AND... THIEF?

TUPPENCE FOR A PAPER, YER LORDSHIPS!



"I BECAME VERY BUSY TRYING TO MAKE SURE NO COMMONERS COULD WRITE ARTICLES OR POST BROADSIDES, BUT THAT QUICKLY FALTERED.

HERE NOW, HERE NOW! GET AWAY FROM THERE!

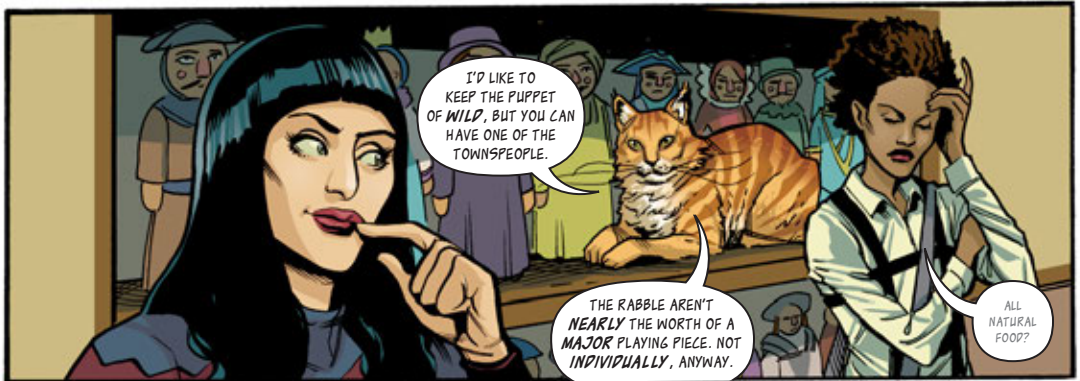
"I TURNED INSTEAD TO SLANDER LAWS... TRYING LEGAL MEANS AGAINST ANYONE WHO PRINTED OR EVEN *SPOKE* ANYTHING BAD ABOUT MY PUPPET... JONATHAN WILD. BUT IT WAS LIKE FIGHTING THE OCEAN WITH DAGGERS OF WATER."



MY LEGALITIES HAD NO STING...

BEYOND THAT OF BRINGING WILD'S CRIMES INTO EVEN LARGER SOCIAL FOCUS.







"LONDON, AT THE TIME, WAS A TOWN FULL OF FILTH."



"AND FILTH BRINGS DISEASE."



"RUNNING AROUND, TRYING TO CONTROL THE EMPIRE I'D BUILT FOR WILD, IT TOOK ITS TOLL ON ME. MY BODY WAS WEAK. DISEASE, AS ALWAYS, SEEKS OUT THE INFIRM."



"THE FILTH OF THE CITY PROVE ME DOWN. I SUCCUMBED. DIED."



BROUGHT DOWN BY A MICROSCOPIC VIRUS WHEN THE ENTIRETY OF THE WORLD WAS IN MY GRASP.

"WITHOUT MY GUIDANCE, WILD QUICKLY FOUND HIMSELF ADRIPT. HE STUPIDLY ATTEMPTED TO BREAK SOME OF HIS OWN MEN OUT OF PRISON. A GREAT FOLLY, WHEN THE PUBLIC EYE WAS ALREADY FOCUSED ON HIM."



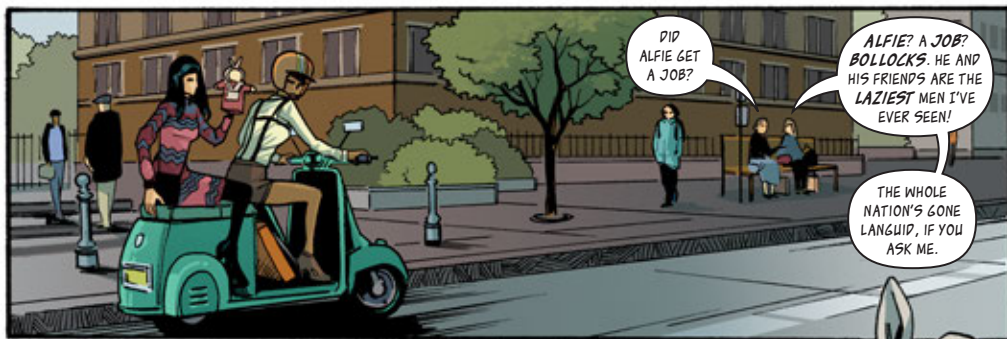
"WILD WAS ARRESTED FOR HIS CRIMES, AND CONVICTED. WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FOR HIM, A VERITABLE AVALANCHE OF HIS OLD GANG MEMBERS BEGAN TO TURN EVIDENCE AGAINST HIM."

STAY IN LINE
YA' BLEEDERS! YOU'LL
GET YER BLEEDIN'
CHANCE!



"WILD TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE BY INGESTING LAUPANUM. THE ATTEMPT FAILED, BUT IT DID SINK HIM INTO A COMA."





CHAPTER



9

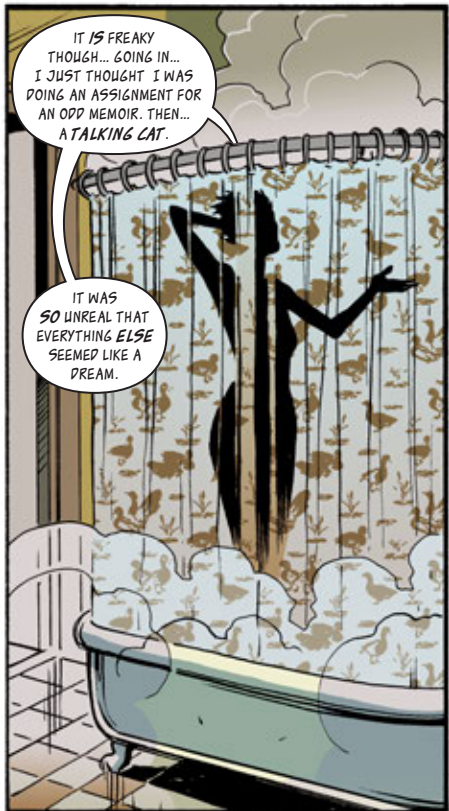




I KNOW,
AT THE START,
BEFORE WE KNEW
HE WAS A **CAT**, I WAS
REALLY SUSPICIOUS
OF THE WAY HE
HIRED YOU.

DO YOU
MEAN YOU WERE
COMPLETELY
PARANOID?

YES.
THAT.

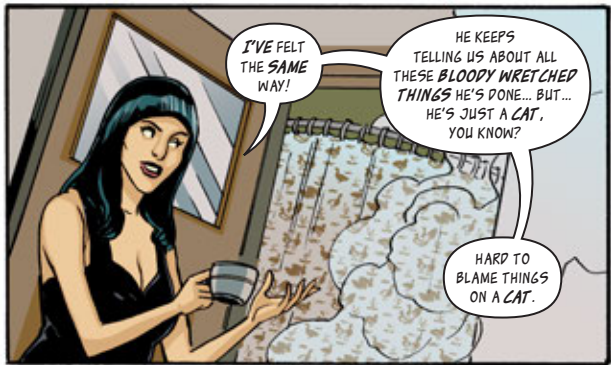


IT IS FREAKY
THOUGH... GOING IN...
I JUST THOUGHT I WAS
DOING AN ASSIGNMENT FOR
AN ODD MEMOIR. THEN...
A **TALKING CAT**.

IT WAS
SO UNREAL THAT
EVERYTHING **ELSE**
SEEMED LIKE A
DREAM.



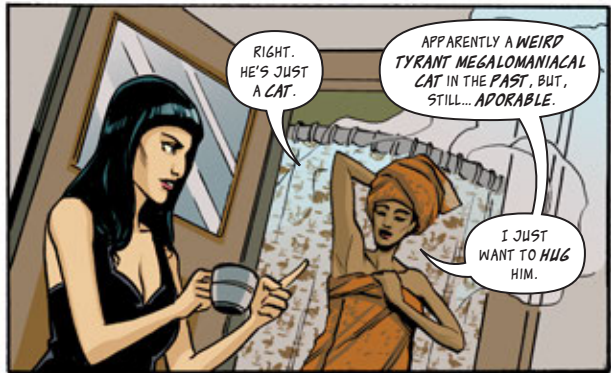
IT'S LIKE... **NOTHING**
HE SAID COUNTED ANYMORE.
I'VE BEEN HAVING A **WEIRD**
DISSOCIATION.



I'VE FELT
THE **SAME**
WAY!

HE KEEPS
TELLING US ABOUT ALL
THESE **BLOODY WRETCHED**
THINGS HE'S DONE... BUT...
HE'S JUST A **CAT**,
YOU KNOW?

HARD TO
BLAME THINGS
ON A **CAT**.



RIGHT.
HE'S JUST
A **CAT**.

APPARENTLY A **WEIRD**
TYRANT MEGALOMANIACAL
CAT IN THE PAST, BUT,
STILL... **APORABLE**.

I JUST
WANT TO **HUG**
HIM.





















CHAPTER



10





THIRTY MINUTES LATER.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SHY ABOUT LEAVING YOUR HOUSE? AND OF COURSE I'M GLAD YOU CAME ALONG, BUT...

...I DON'T THINK A HOSPITAL WILL ALLOW A CAT TO BE ROAMING AROUND, SO...

Grand Health Centre
We bring sunshine to your world.
A division of Ninth World Enterprises.

OH, I THINK I CAN PROBABLY SWING IT.

AFTER ALL, I OWN THIS HOSPITAL.

YOU WHAT?

HELLO, MR. CARDIFF.

THIS HOSPITAL. I OWN IT. IT'S ONE OF MY PROPERTIES.

WE DO QUITE WELL, HERE. OUR BIRTHING CENTRE IS RATHER PROGRESSIVE.

HIGHEST-RATED HOSPITAL IN ALL OF EUROPE, I'M PROUD TO SAY.

WHY DO YOU OWN A HOSPITAL?

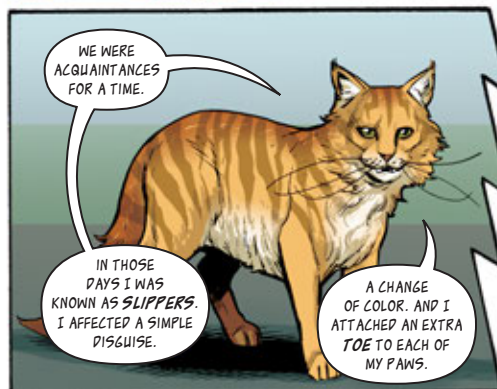
BECAUSE HEALTH IS IMPORTANT. AND WE DO MAKE A PROFIT.

HELPING PEOPLE AND MAKING MONEY AT THE SAME TIME; ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

SURE. SURE. I'M JUST SURPRISED.





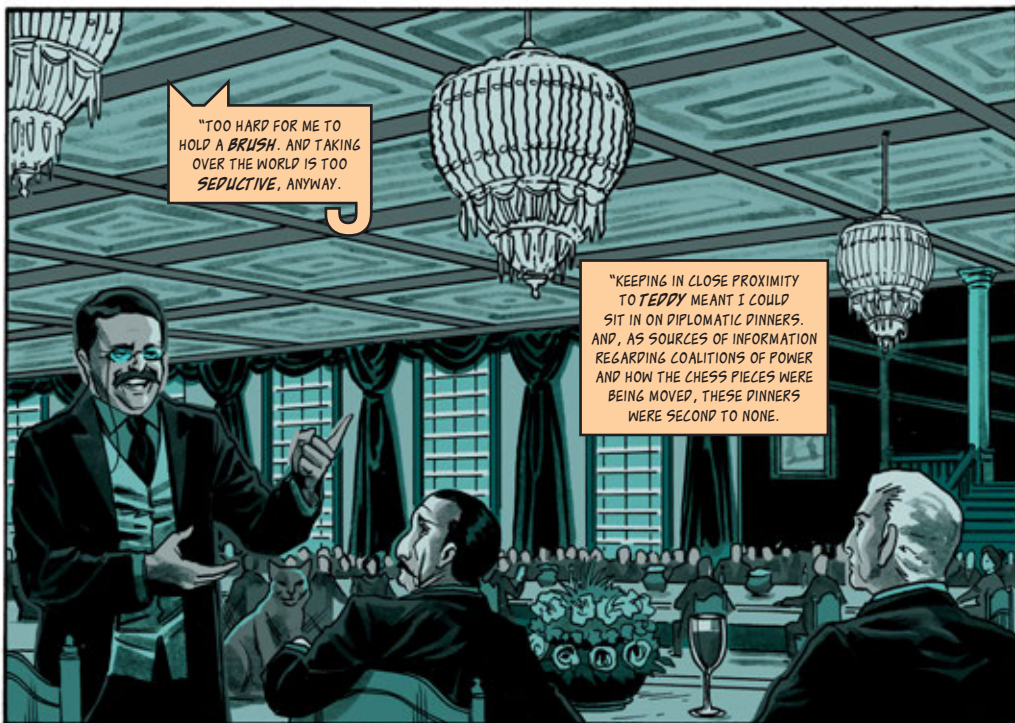




BUT IN THOSE
DAYS MY ENEMIES WERE
MANY. AFTER ALL, I WAS
TRYING TO TAKE OVER
THE WORLD AND...

OH GOD! AGAIN?
REALLY?

YOU
SERIOUSLY
NEEDED A NEW
HOBBY! MAYBE...
PAINTING?



"TOO HARD FOR ME TO
HOLD A **BRUSH**. AND TAKING
OVER THE WORLD IS TOO
SEPUCTIVE, ANYWAY."

"KEEPING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY
TO **TEPPY** MEANT I COULD
SIT IN ON DIPLOMATIC DINNERS.
AND, AS SOURCES OF INFORMATION
REGARDING COALITIONS OF POWER
AND HOW THE CHESS PIECES WERE
BEING MOVED, THESE DINNERS
WERE SECOND TO NONE."



"AS WERE THE
MEALS THEMSELVES,
INCIDENTALLY."



DID YOU **TALK**
WITH ROOSEVELT,
OR WERE YOU JUST
PRETENDING TO
BE A **CAT**?

WELL, I DON'T
HAVE TO **PRETEND**
TO BE A CAT. THAT'S
WHAT I AM.

AS FAR
AS TALKING
TO THEOPHORE,
I **DID**, BUT
ONLY **ONCE**.



"IT DIDN'T GO WELL."



WHAT THEN?

I MOVED ON.
BUT NOW I HAD
A TASTE FOR THE
WHITE HOUSE.

I BIDED
MY TIME, AFFECTED
A NEW DISGUISE, AND
AFTER SOME
YEARS...



"I WAS BACK IN THE
WHITE HOUSE. THIS
TIME POSING AS A
MERE PET TO CALVIN
COOLIDGE. A CAT
NAMED TIGER."



TIGER?

CORRECT.
AND NO LAUGHING
ABOUT MY
NAME.

I DON'T REMEMBER
THE COOLIDGE
WHITE HOUSE AS
BEING ALL THAT
EFFECTIVE.



"NOT BAD, IN SOME
WAYS. BUT HIS POLICIES,
AGAINST MY ADVICE, LED THE
UNITED STATES INTO THE
GREAT DEPRESSION, ENDING
AMERICA'S ECONOMIC
JUGGERNAUT, AND ALL OF
MY SCHEMES."







"... FOR CENTURIES, EVEN FOR
MILLENNIA, SOME ANIMALS
HAVE BEEN LOOKING TO
HUMANITY FOR FOOD.



"I MEAN, WE'VE BEEN
PUTTING FOOD IN FRONT
OF *CATS* FOR THOUSANDS
OF YEARS, RIGHT?

AHHH!
DAMN IT.

GAHHH!

HURTS.



DAMN.

"BUT, NOW, WITH WHAT *YOU'RE*
DOING WITH THIS *HOSPITAL* AND
NINTH WORLD ENTERPRISES...



"... IT'S LIKE THE
SHOE IS ON THE
OTHER FOOT."

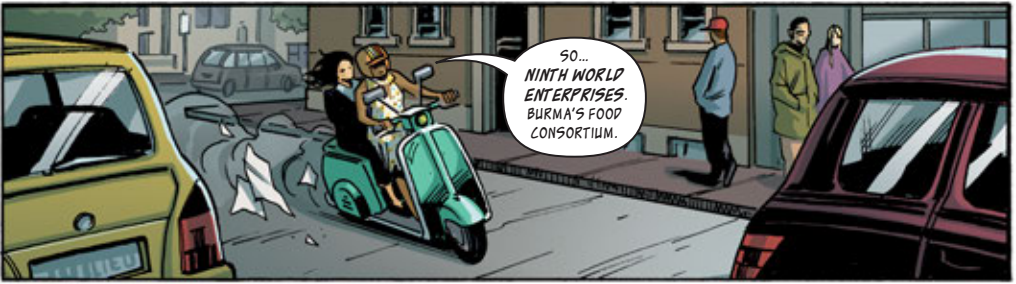


"OR, YOU KNOW,
THE OTHER *PAW*."

CHAPTER



11









"BECAUSE YOU SEE, MS. BREAKING... I WAS **WELL AWARE** OF YOUR COMPUTER INTRUSION LAST NIGHT."

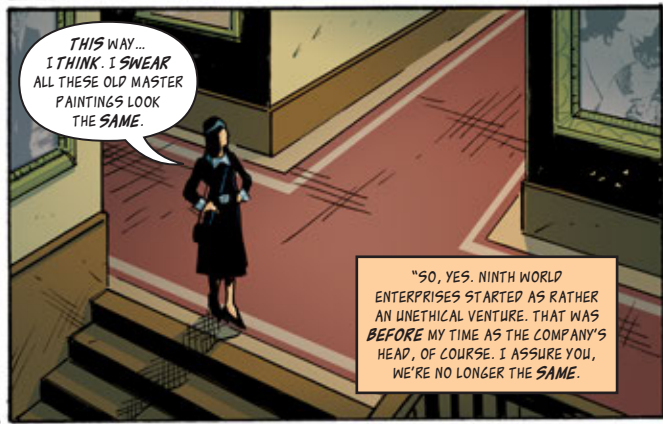


"I COULD HAVE STOPPED YOU AT **ANY** TIME, OF COURSE. BUT I DECIDED YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW **NOW**, AS OPPOSED TO **LATER**."



HMMM. WHICH WAY WAS BURMA'S OFFICE AGAIN?

"I COULDN'T HAVE YOU FLAILING AROUND WHILE WRITING MY LIFE STORY. MY MEMOIRS WOULD HAVE LACKED **DIRECTION**."



THIS WAY... I THINK. I **SWEAR** ALL THESE OLD MASTER PAINTINGS LOOK THE **SAME**."

"SO, YES. NINTH WORLD ENTERPRISES STARTED AS RATHER AN UNETHICAL VENTURE. THAT WAS **BEFORE** MY TIME AS THE COMPANY'S HEAD, OF COURSE. I ASSURE YOU, WE'RE NO LONGER THE **SAME**."



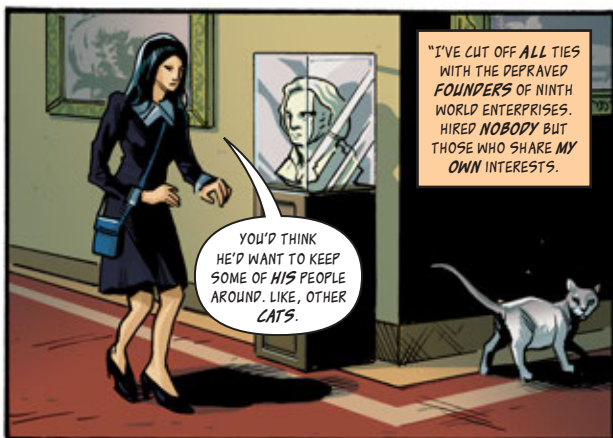
HMM?

"I'VE LED THE COMPANY IN **OTHER DIRECTIONS**."



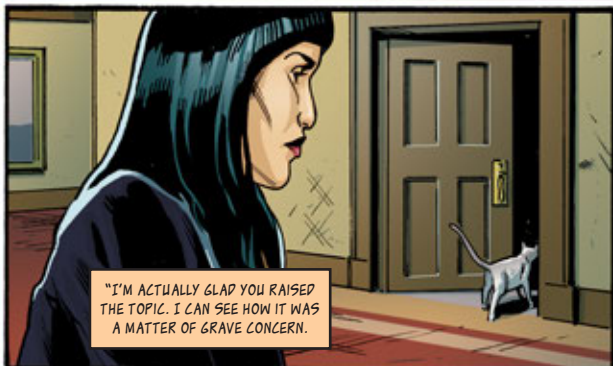
"WE NOW WORK FOR *OUR* BELIEFS. FOR THE *BETTERMENT* OF ALL HUMANITY. AND THE *WORLD*."

STRANGE. I HAVEN'T SEEN *ANY* CATS IN HERE EXCEPT *BURMA*.



"I'VE CUT OFF *ALL* TIES WITH THE DEPRAVED *FOUNDERS* OF NINTH WORLD ENTERPRISES. HIRED *NOBODY* BUT THOSE WHO SHARE *MY OWN* INTERESTS."

YOU'D THINK HE'D WANT TO KEEP SOME OF *HIS* PEOPLE AROUND. LIKE, OTHER *CATS*."



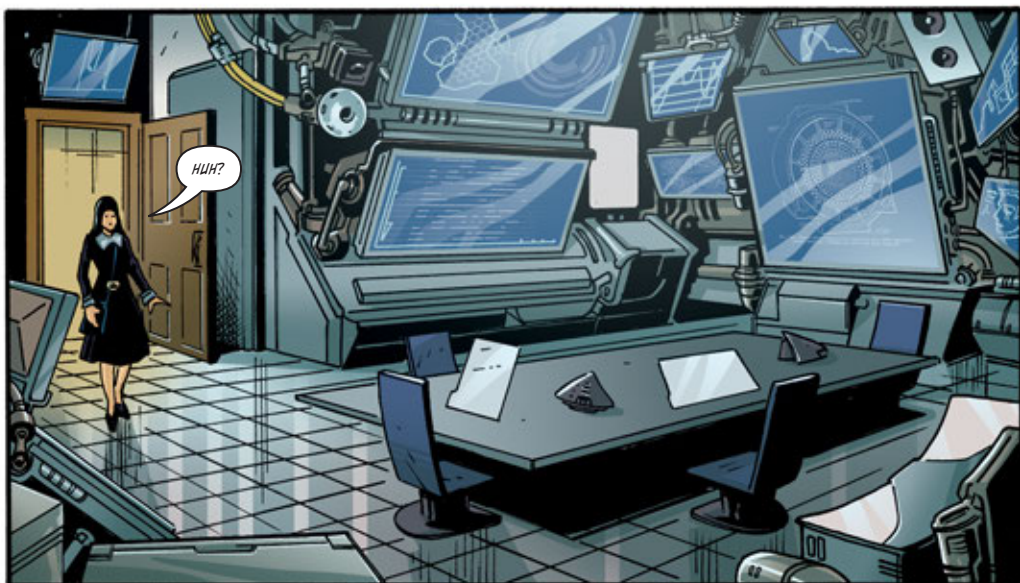
"I'M ACTUALLY GLAD YOU RAISED THE TOPIC. I CAN SEE HOW IT WAS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN."



"AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU IN THE *PARK*."



click





SPIES?

EXACTLY.
SPIES, AND
PERHAPS MY MOST
PUBLIC ROLE.

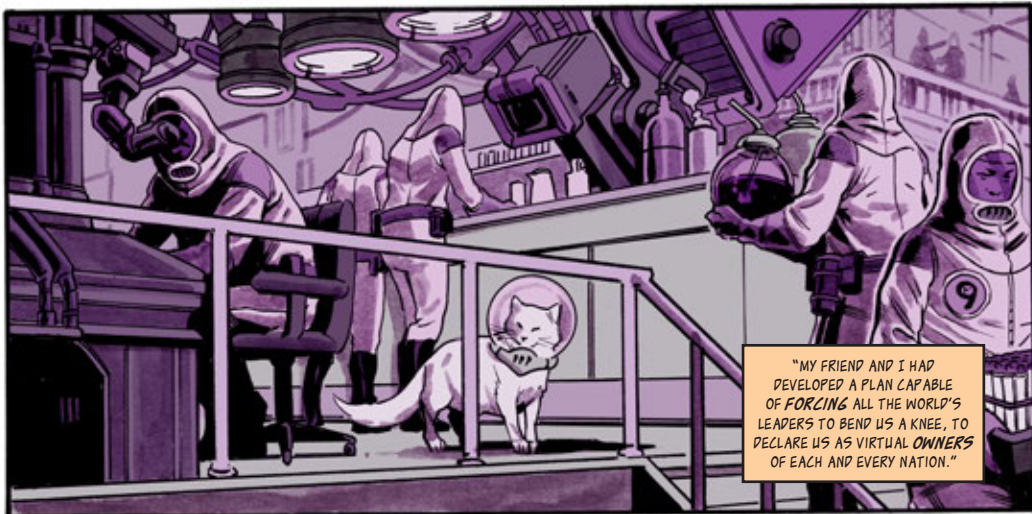


AND... HERE
WE ARE.

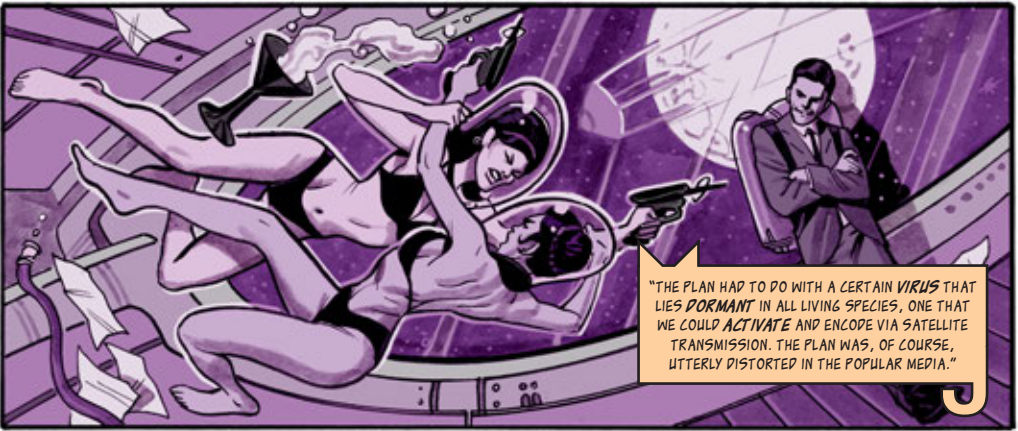
THIS? YOU'RE
KIDDING ME!

THAT'S
JUST IN THE
MOVIES, THOUGH,
RIGHT?

"HARDLY. OR RATHER,
THE MOVIES WERE
BASED ON REAL LIFE
INCIDENTS. SOMEWHAT
TONED DOWN FOR THE
MASSES, OF COURSE. THE
WORLD WOULD BE TRULY
HORRIFIED TO LEARN
WHAT REALLY WENT ON IN
THOSE HOLLOWED-OUT
VOLCANOES AND
NUCLEAR CONTROL
ROOMS.



"MY FRIEND AND I HAD
DEVELOPED A PLAN CAPABLE
OF FORCING ALL THE WORLD'S
LEADERS TO BEND US A KNEE, TO
DECLARE US AS VIRTUAL OWNERS
OF EACH AND EVERY NATION."



"THE PLAN HAD TO DO WITH A CERTAIN *VIRUS* THAT LIES *DORMANT* IN ALL LIVING SPECIES, ONE THAT WE COULD *ACTIVATE* AND ENCODE VIA SATELLITE TRANSMISSION. THE PLAN WAS, OF COURSE, UTTERLY DISTORTED IN THE POPULAR MEDIA."



"VIRUSES? THAT'S KIND OF... TERRIFYING."

"WE WERE *BLUFFING* OF COURSE, MOSTLY."

"YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE CLIMATE OF THE TIMES. *EVERYONE* WAS RUNNING SCARED DURING THE COLD WAR. IT DROVE US ALL TO *DESPERATION*."



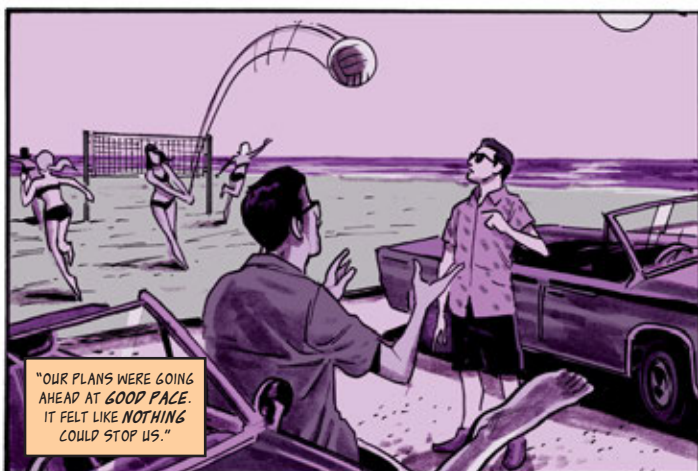
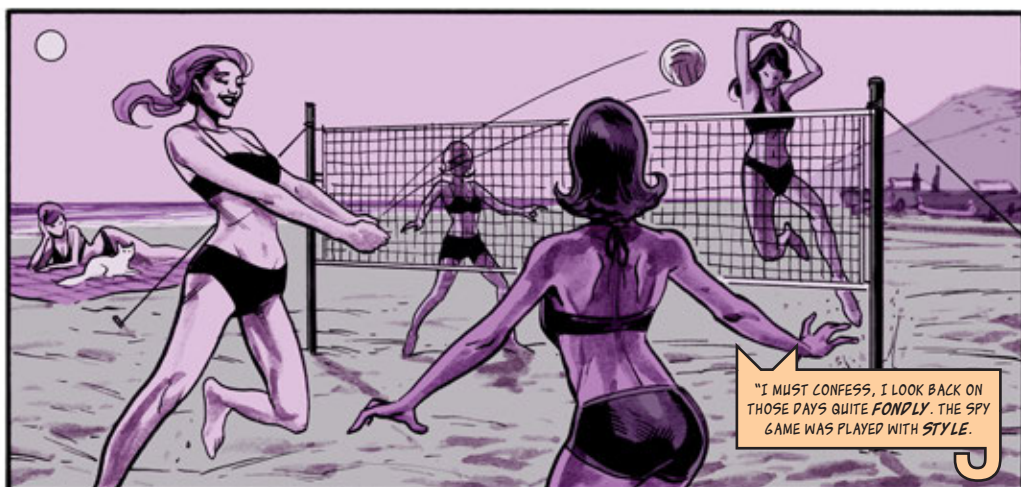
"TAKING OVER THE WORLD SEEMED ALMOST LIKE A *POLITICAL STATEMENT*, RATHER THAN A POWER GRAB."



"WE WERE GIVING PEACE A CHANCE."



"ADMITTEDLY, IT WAS *OUR* PEACE. AND *EVERYONE ELSE'S* LAST CHANCE."





"NOTHING, THAT IS, EXCEPT ONE IRRITATING AND SEEMINGLY INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN."



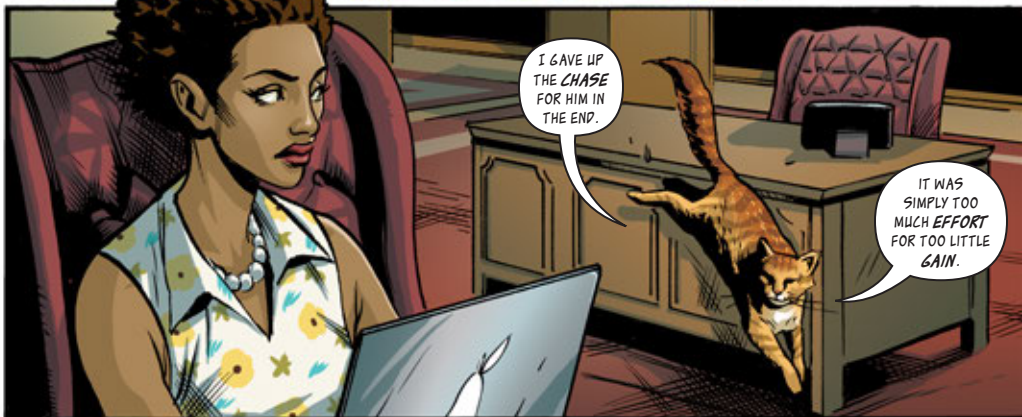
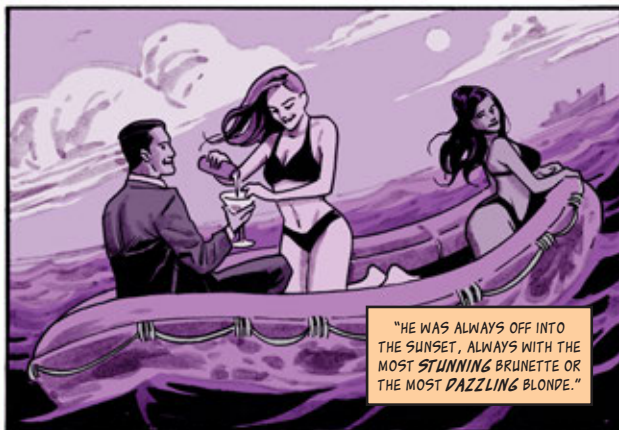
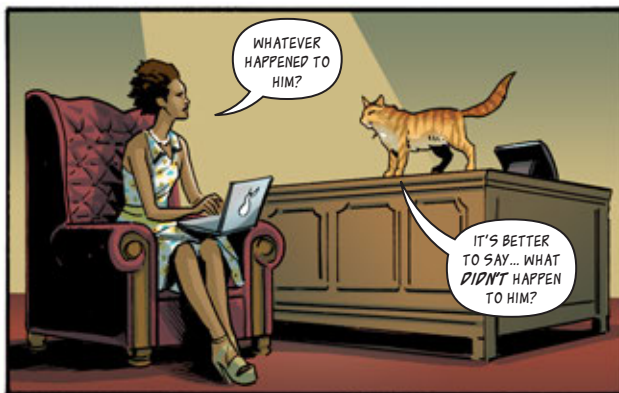
"HALF OF OUR AGENTS HAD A COMPLETE INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT HIM."



"WHILE THE OTHER HALF OF OUR OPERATIVES WERE DOING EVERYTHING TO HIM."



"HE ALWAYS SEEMED TO KNOW WHICH WIRE TO CUT."



"IT'S SURPRISINGLY
DIFFICULT TO
CORNER A SPY."



CHAPTER



12













"AND CARDIFF TOLD ME EVERYTHING WAS **TRUE**. THIS ISN'T SOMETHING I'M **MAKING UP**. THIS IS SOMETHING **BURMA IS DOING**."



"CARDIFF WAS PART OF A **SPY ORGANIZATION**. A **SPY ORGANIZATION** FOR THE **GOOD GUYS**."



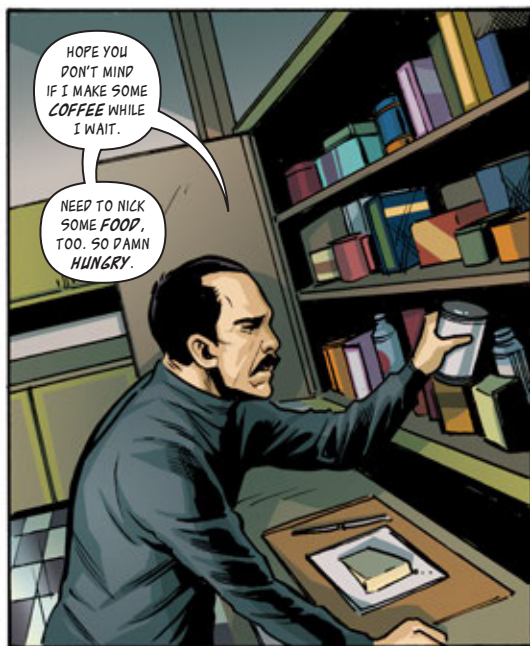
"THERE WERE APPARENTLY **MORE** OF THEM. A LOT MORE **SPIES**, I MEAN. BUT BURMA HAD THEM **DEALT WITH**. DO YOU **UNDERSTAND?** **DEALT WITH.**"



clikt+

SO, THIS IS WHERE YOU GIRLS LIVE.

NOT A BAD LITTLE PLACE, REGGIE.

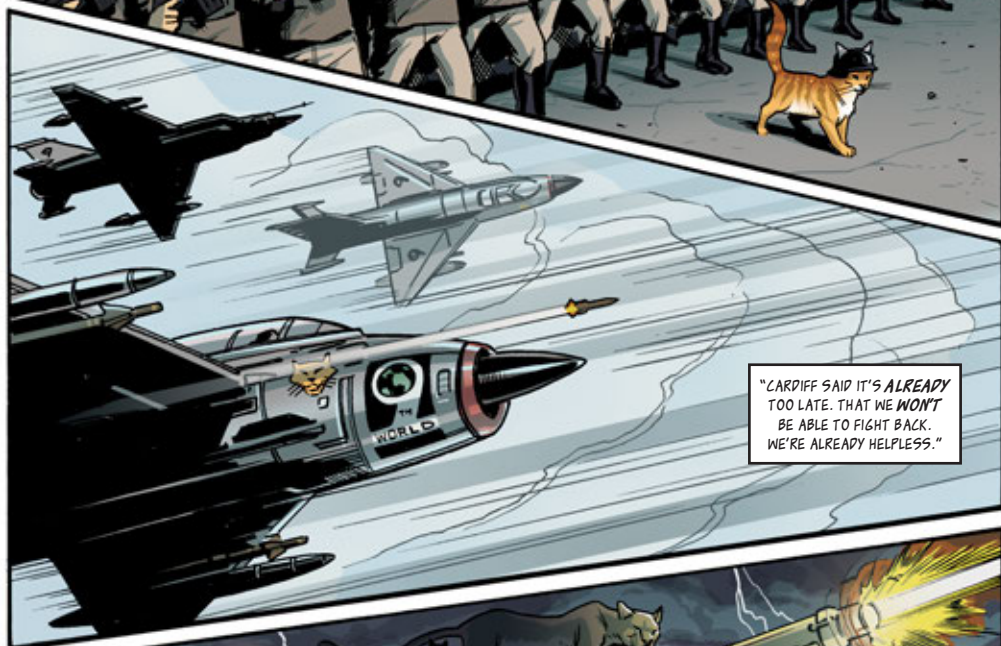






YOU **SHOULD**
BE SCARED, ALLISON.
YOU DIDN'T SEE THE **GUNS**.
NOT THE WAY I DID. YOU
DON'T **KNOW** WHAT
COULD HAPPEN.

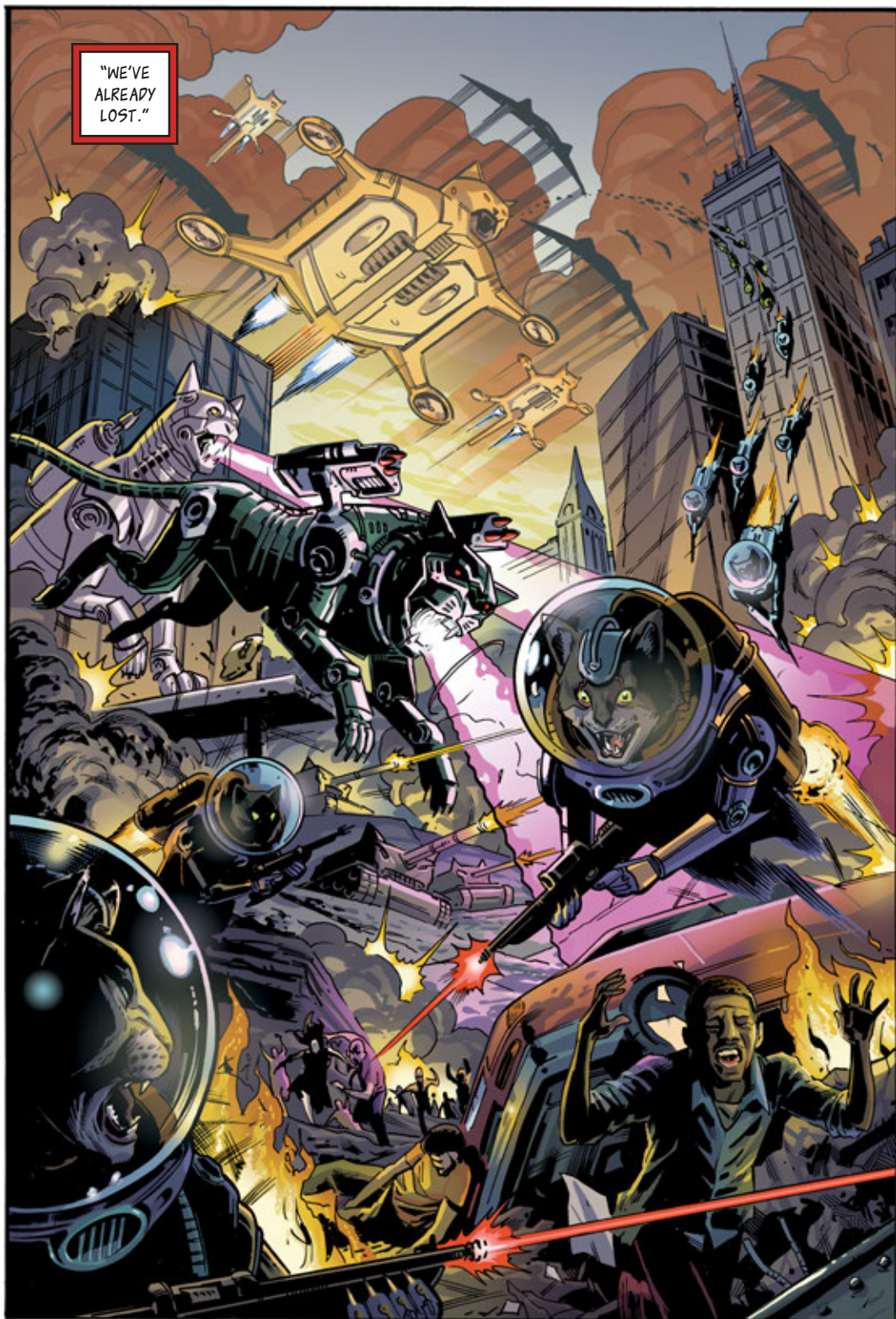
THERE'S
GOING TO BE A
WAR. AND **WHO KNOWS**
WHAT FORCES BURMA
ALREADY HAS ON
HIS SIDE?

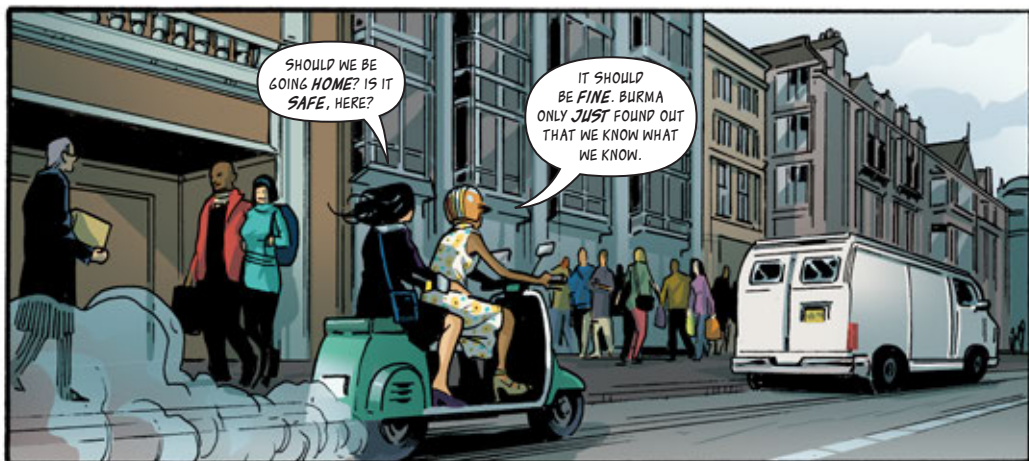


"CARDIFF SAID IT'S **ALREADY**
TOO LATE. THAT WE **WON'T**
BE ABLE TO FIGHT BACK.
WE'RE **ALREADY** HELPLESS."



"WE'VE
ALREADY
LOST."







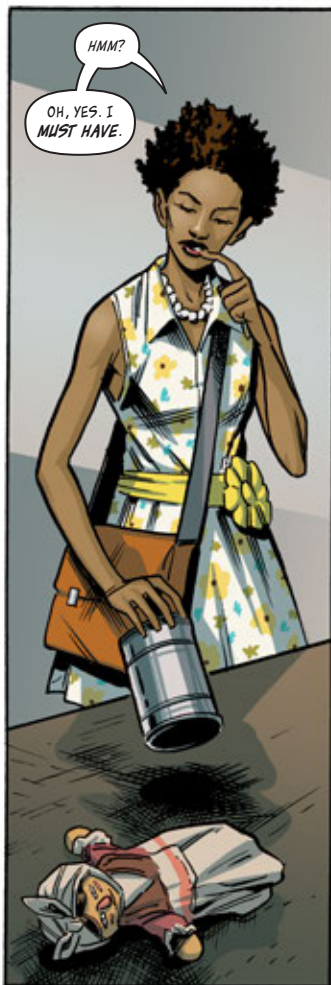
REALLY?
JUST TALK
TO HIM?

I DON'T
KNOW. WHAT
ELSE CAN
WE DO?



GOD, I CAN'T
THINK. I NEED
SOME COFFEE OR
SOMETHING.

IT'S THERE
ON THE TABLE.
YOU MUST HAVE
LEFT IT OUT THIS
MORNING.



HMM?

OH, YES. I
MUST HAVE.



SO... TALKING
TO BURMA. DO YOU
THINK THAT WOULD
DO ANY GOOD?

I'M NOT SURE.
BUT I DON'T KNOW
WHAT ELSE TO DO.
AND I DON'T THINK
HE'D HURT US.

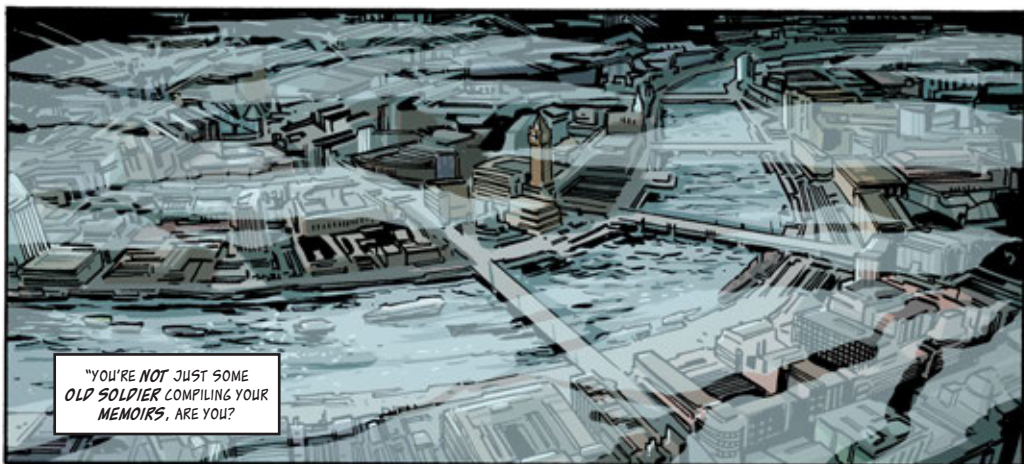


"IT'S HARD TO
BELIEVE HE'D
HURT ANYONE,
REALLY."

CHAPTER



13



"YOU'RE *NOT* JUST SOME
OLD SOLDIER COMPILING YOUR
MEMOIRS, ARE YOU?"



"THIS *HASN'T* BEEN ABOUT ALL
THE TIMES YOU TRIED TO TAKE
OVER THE WORLD IN THE *PAST*."



"THIS IS
ABOUT *NOW*,
ISN'T IT?"



"YOU'RE STILL
ACTIVE."



"YOU'RE *STILL*
TRYING TO TAKE
OVER THE
WORLD."



COMPLETELY TRUE. ALL OF IT COMPLETELY TRUE.

THAT IS INDEED WHAT I'M DOING.



TO BE HONEST, THE PLAN HAS BEEN IN MOTION FOR SOME TIME. I'VE BEEN MANIPULATING HUMANITY THROUGH FOOD ADDITIVES.

NINTH WORLD ENTERPRISES DISTRIBUTES FOODS THAT MAKE HUMANS... HOW SHALL I PUT THIS? LESS ACTIVE? MORE INCLINED TO STAY ON THE COUCH?



I'M PROUD TO SAY WE'RE THE WORLD'S **SECOND LARGEST FOOD DISTRIBUTOR**. AT LEAST WHEN YOU INCLUDE ALL OUR VARIOUS COVER OPERATIONS. STILL, THE ADDITIVES WON'T REACH **EVERYONE**.

BUT THAT'S FINE. QUITE FINE. I DON'T WANT TO GET EVERYONE.



WHERE'S THE GAME IN THAT?



BESIDES, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS **ONE HUNDRED PERCENT CONTROL**.

THAT'S FOR DREAMERS, NOT RULERS.



THE POINT IS, I'M TAKING OVER THE WORLD BY **MONEY** MEANS.

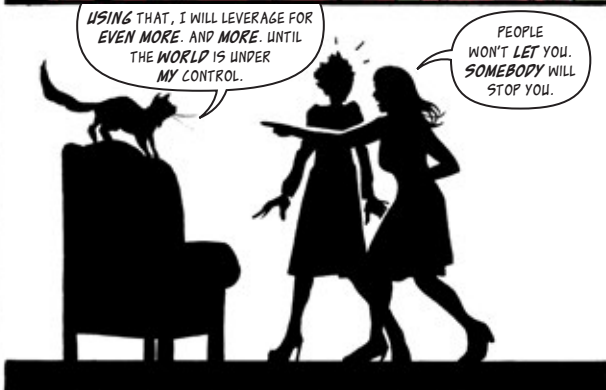
I'VE SQUANDERED **EIGHT** LIVES TRYING TO **STEAL** THE WORLD. THIS TIME, I'M JUST GOING TO **BUY** IT.



BUY IT?

MY HAND, OR MY **PAW PRINT** IF YOU WILL, IS IN **EVERY** MAJOR INDUSTRY. **TECHNOLOGY. REAL ESTATE. AND FOOD.**

EVERYONE NEEDS **FOOD**. I CURRENTLY OWN **EIGHTEEN PERCENT** OF ALL THE WORLD'S **FOOD PRODUCTION.**



USING THAT, I WILL LEVERAGE FOR **EVEN MORE. AND MORE.** UNTIL THE **WORLD** IS UNDER **MY CONTROL.**

PEOPLE WON'T LET YOU. **SOMEBODY** WILL STOP YOU.



NO. **THIS** FIGHT IS ALREADY SETTLED. THERE WILL, IN FACT, BE **NO FIGHT** AT ALL.

NO ONE WILL STOP ME. MY **FOOD ADDITIVES** DIMINISH THE **IRE** OF THE MASSES. THERE WILL BE **NO DEMONSTRATIONS.** NO OUTRAGE. ONLY **SUBMISSION.**



BUT THE **GOVERNMENTS...**

...ARE RUN BY **PEOPLE WITH MONEY.**

THE TIME WHEN AN **IDEOLOGY** CAN RUN A COUNTRY IS LONG GONE. IT'S **MONEY** THAT RUNS COUNTRIES NOW.

THE **GREED** OF THOSE IN POWER... **THAT'S** WHAT TURNS THE WHEELS.

AND I OF COURSE, REPRESENT AN **IMMEASURABLE** SOURCE OF **MONEY.**



THIS... THIS **CAN'T** BE. YOU HAVE TO BE **WRONG!**

THERE'S **NO WAY**. **NO WAY.**



I **WON'T** BELIEVE THIS. A **CAT** CAN'T RULE THE WORLD.

REALLY? WHAT DOES IT **MATTER?**

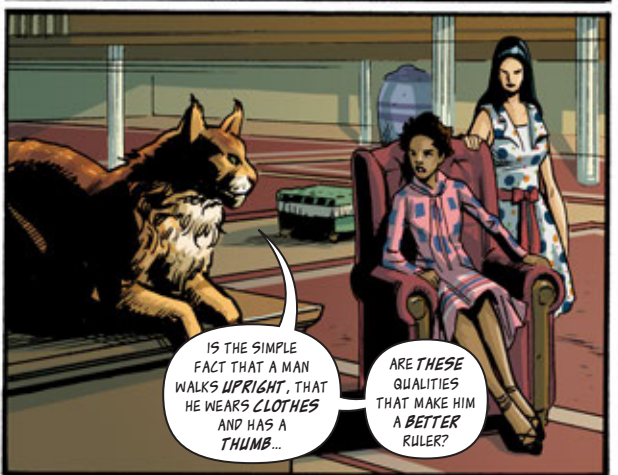
IF I NAMED THE WORLD'S **TEN MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE**, YOU WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE A **SINGLE NAME**. AND YET, TOGETHER, THEY RULE THE WORLD.

ARE THEY **BLACK? WHITE? MEN? WOMEN?** YOU DON'T KNOW. THIS WORLD, ALLISON, IS CONTROLLED BY **SHADOW FIGURES**, NOT **PRESIDENTS OR KINGS**.



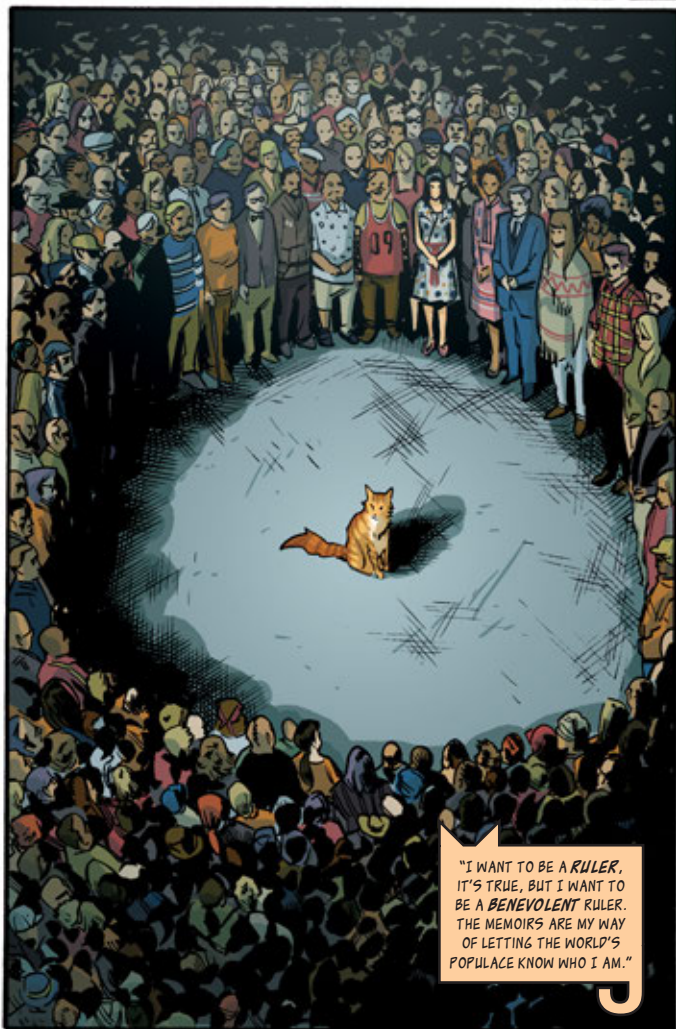
THIS WORLD IS NOT RUN BY THOSE **DEPICTED ON THE MONEY**; IT'S RUN BY THOSE WHO **HAVE** THE MONEY.

CAN YOU **REALLY** TELL ME THAT YOU WOULD PUT YOUR FAITH IN ANY OF THESE **TEN UNKNOWN SHADOWS**, RATHER THAN A **CAT?**



IS THE SIMPLE FACT THAT A MAN WALKS **UPRIGHT**. THAT HE WEARS **CLOTHES** AND HAS A **THUMB...**

ARE **THESE** QUALITIES THAT MAKE HIM A **BETTER** RULER?



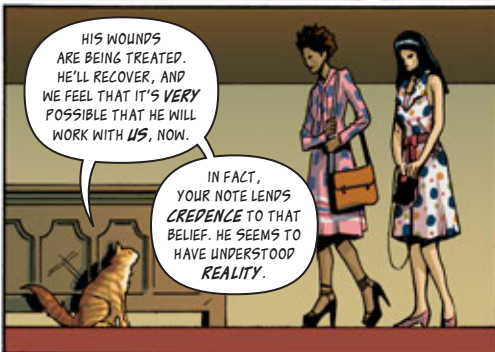
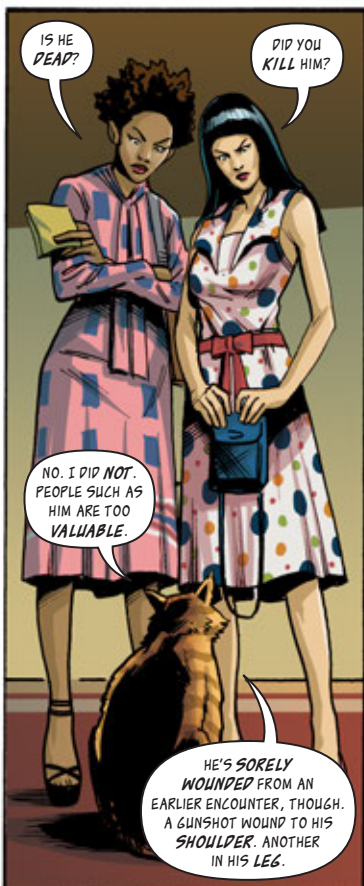


EVEN THOUGH
I HAVE THE PERSPECTIVE
OF **EIGHT EXTRA LIVES**, I
GET LOST IN THE MINUTIAE
OF HOW I CAME TO BE AT
THIS POINT.











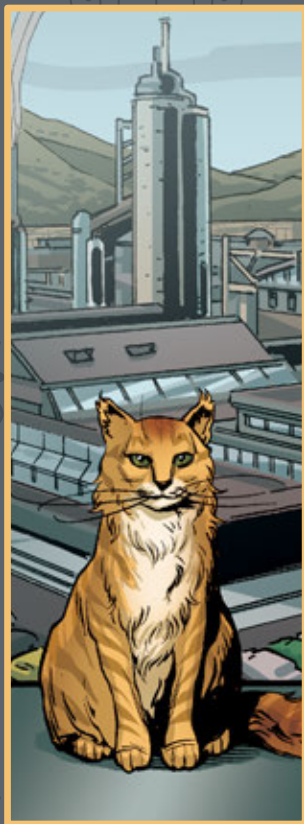




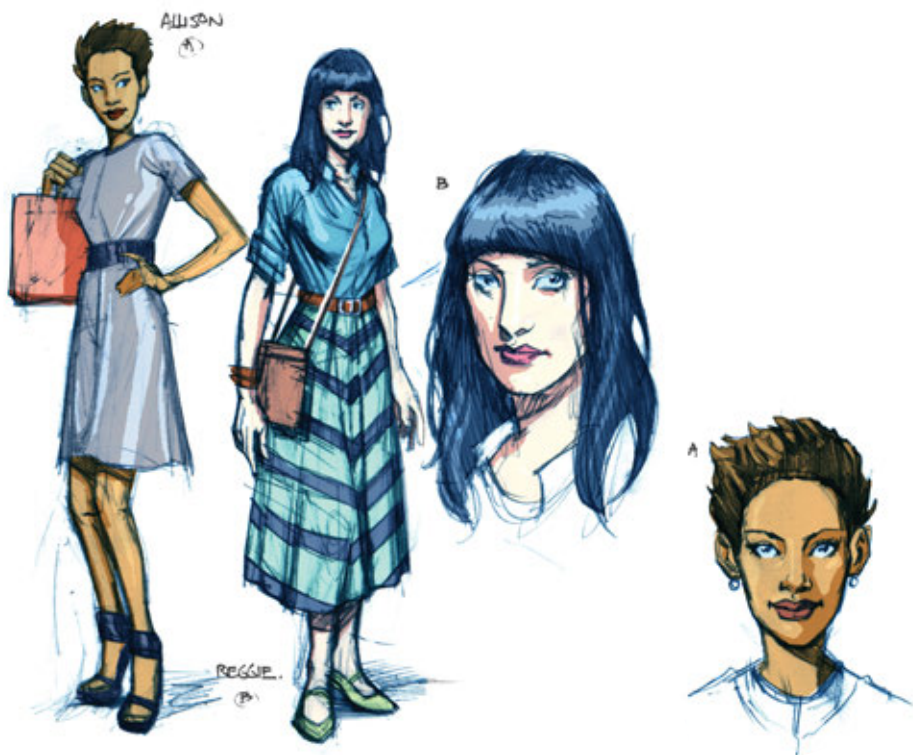
THE END.



EXTRAS



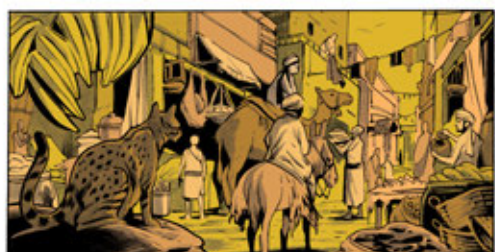
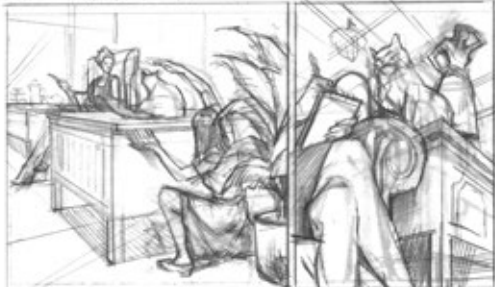
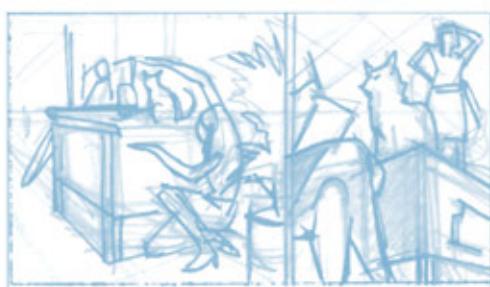
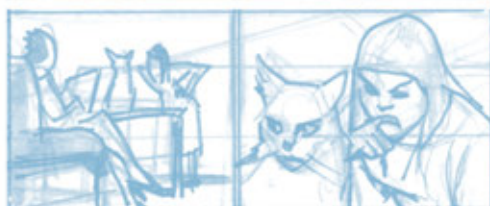
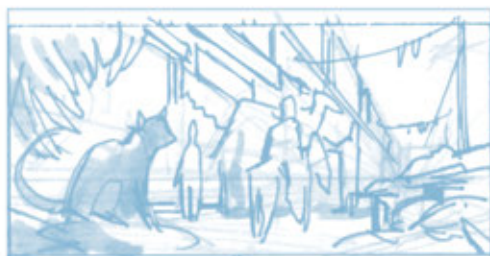
BONUS
MATERIAL



Early sketches of Allison and Reggie.



Early sketches of Burma the cat.



Benjamin Dewey's process art for page 37



Paul Tobin

Benjamin Dewey

Paul Tobin lives in Portland, Oregon, and is the author of a multitude of comics in a wide variety of genres, having written hundreds of comics for such publishers as Marvel, Dark Horse, DC, Top Shelf, Fantagraphics, and Oni Press, including the Eisner-Award-Winning *Bandette*, an ongoing series with his wife, artist Colleen Coover. Other highlights include his creator-owned *Colder* horror series from Dark Horse, and his first novel, *Prepare To Die!* More novels and many more comics are on the way, depending on his sanity, for which he pretty much rolls the dice every day.

Paul is bald, enjoys burlesque shows, and when he was young he had a cat that, due to a particularly vibrant case of polydactylism, had 42 separate and distinct toes. These factors have shaped him as a human being.



Benjamin Dewey came to Oregon all the way from Cleveland, Ohio to build a life making comics and rocking out. He met a girl named Lindsey, got two cats, joined Periscope Studio, married Lindsey, and in the process of it all, fulfilled his dreams. Ben loves science, coffee, the 19th century, breakfast food, and both slide and shred guitar.

He has two creator-owned titles coming out soon which continue the thread of talking animals running through his work: *Tooth and Claw* for Image comics (written by Kurt Busiek) and a complete collection of his long-running webcomic *The Tragedy Series* by Thomas Dunne books via Macmillian publishers. He stands by the statement that “there is no number of cats he considers ‘crazy’ to have living in one’s home.”

Ben thanks Chris, Lynette, Lexi and Liz Martin for making this northwestern trajectory possible in the first place. He also thanks his wife Lindsey, brother Zach and mentor Steve Lieber for their countless hours of help, support and encouragement, without which this project would not have been possible.

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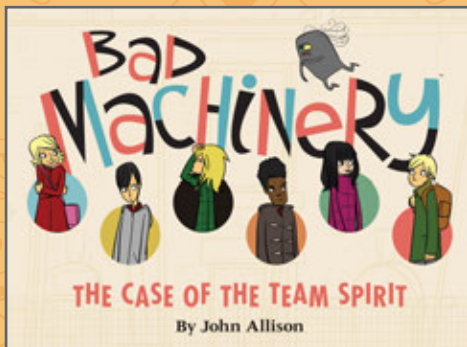


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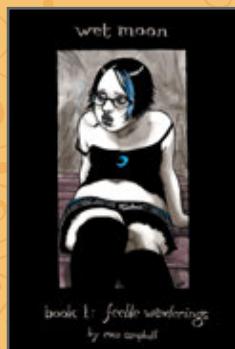


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THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG.



Allison Breaking is a talented journalist with her own blog and a lot of bills to pay, so when she receives an offer from a mysterious stranger named Burma to write his memoirs, it's an offer she can't refuse, not even with all the red flags popping up. But Burma is quite literally unlike any man Allison's ever known—because he's a cat. And this cat has stories to tell about how he (over the course of a few lifetimes) has shaped the world—and another, darker, story that Allison must risk all to uncover... a story of what this particular cat has been doing with the LAST of his nine lives.

From writer Paul Tobin (*Bandette*, *Colder*) and illustrator Benjamin Dewey (*The Tragedy Series*) comes the tale of a most remarkable cat and his nine extraordinary lives.