

I WAS THE CAT

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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



TAXI!

I'M GOING WITH YOU, ALLISON.



GOD, REGGIE, ARE YOU STILL WORRIED ABOUT ME? THIS IS PERFECTLY SAFE!

IT'S PERFECTLY CREEPY! YOU'RE MISSING ALL THE WARNING SIGNS!



I'VE HELPED PEOPLE WRITE THEIR MEMOIRS BEFORE. IT'S GOOD MONEY.

BEING A BLOGGING-TYPE REPORTER GIRL GIVES ME MY LOIS LANE FIX, BUT THE PAY IS KIND OF A JOKE. A JOKE MY LANDLORD DOESN'T THINK IS FUNNY.



BUT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO THIS GUY IS! AND HE WANTS TO PAY YOU THREE TIMES THE NORMAL RATE? FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS?

I SMELL A RAT.



DOUBT THAT, REGGIE. I DON'T THINK THERE ARE ANY RATS IN THIS PART OF TOWN.



STOP
HERE!



OKAY... SERIOUS
QUESTION... WHY DID
YOU HAVE HIM STOP?
THERE'S STILL LIKE, FOUR
BLOCKS TO GO.

WHICH
GIVES US TIME
TO TALK.



SURE. SHOULD
WE TALK ABOUT THE
WEATHER? YOUR LACK
OF BOYFRIEND? YOUR
PARANOIA?

NO. LET'S TALK
ABOUT THAT PART WHERE THIS
MYSTERIOUS CLIENT OF YOURS
SAID, "WHEN WE MEET... DON'T BE
ALARMED BY MY APPEARANCE;
I'M QUITE DIFFERENT FROM YOUR
AVERAGE CUSTOMER."



I WISH
I'D NEVER TOLD
YOU THAT.

THE POINT IS,
THIS GUY... WHAT'S
HIS NAME, BURMA. THIS
BURMA GUY IS OBVIOUSLY
A SERIAL KILLER.

OBVIOUSLY.



HE'S JUST TRYING TO
GET HIS CLAWS INTO YOU.
YOU ARE REASONABLY
ATTRACTIVE.

OH,
THANKS. I MEAN...
REASONABLE
THANKS.

NOT A PROBLEM.
SERIOUSLY THOUGH,
HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
HOW HIDEOUS THIS
GUY MUST BE?



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

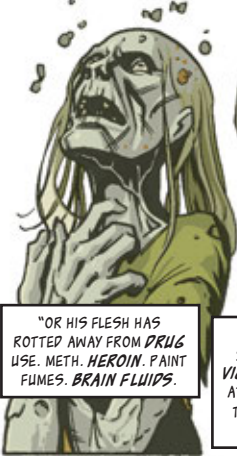
IN EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF **MOB FIGHT** DOES ONE CONTRACT A **VENEREAL DISEASE**?



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 DRESSES** OF HIS LATEST **VICTIMS**. FROM ALL THE **REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE** GIRLS THAT WERE **LURED** TO HIS APARTMENT DESPITE ALL THE **OBVIOUS 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**.





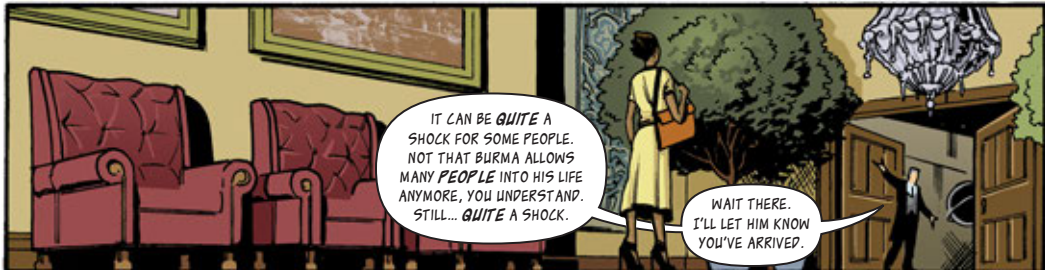
BURMA TOLD ME TO EXPECT YOU. THE MEMOIR WRITER. CORRECT? VERY EXCITING!

AND I DARE SAY YOU'LL FIND PLENTY OF MATERIAL WITH OUR DEAR BURMA.



NOW... HE DID TELL YOU THAT HE'S SOMEWHAT... DIFFERENT... IN APPEARANCE, YES?

UMM, YES?



IT CAN BE QUITE A SHOCK FOR SOME PEOPLE. NOT THAT BURMA ALLOWS MANY PEOPLE INTO HIS LIFE ANYMORE, YOU UNDERSTAND. STILL... QUITE A SHOCK.

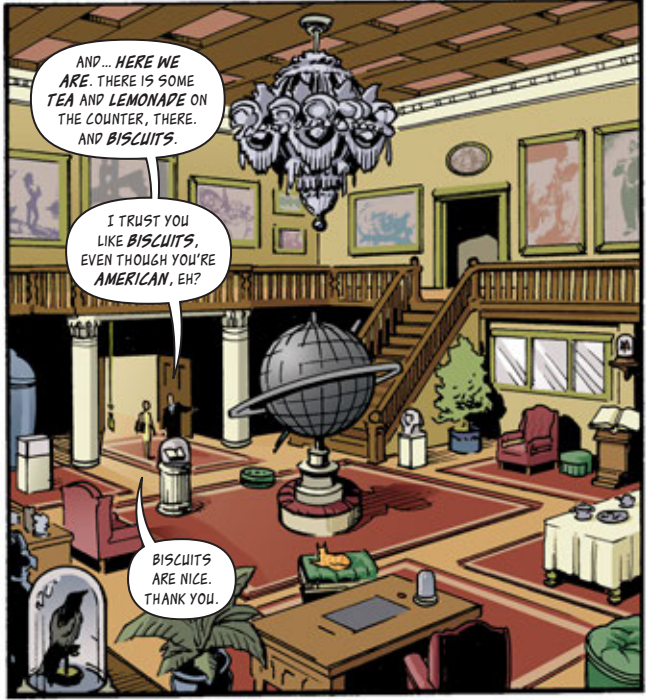
WAIT THERE. I'LL LET HIM KNOW YOU'VE ARRIVED.



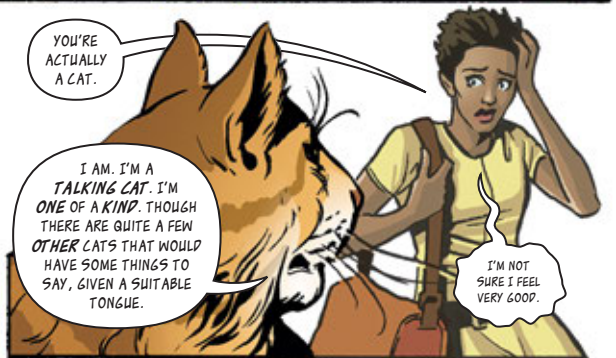
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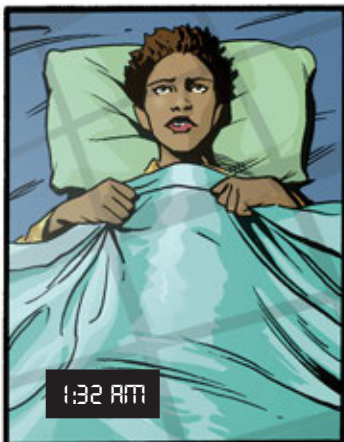
Haven't met him yet. BUT... butler just warned me AGAIN about his looks. Wish you hadn't made me so paranoid.

HMMMM.

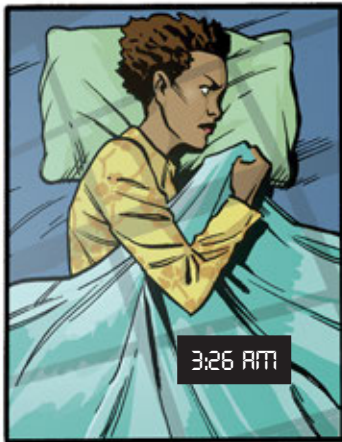








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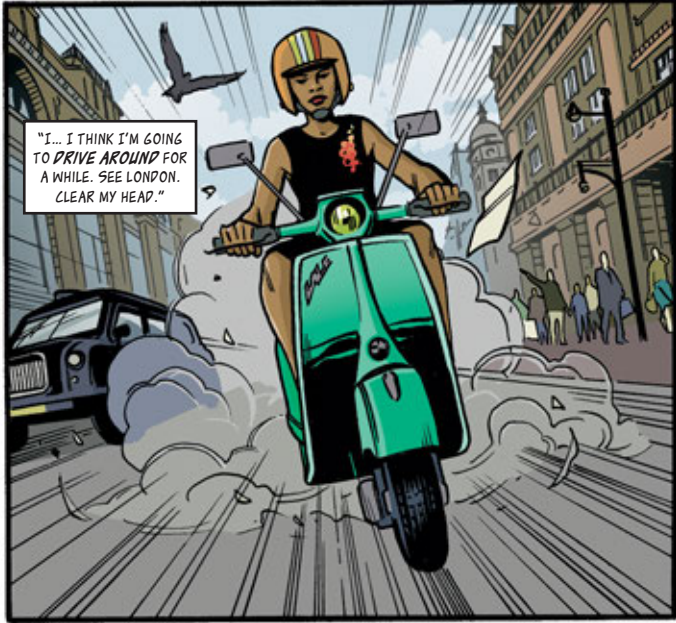


A CAT.
A... CAT.

DID THIS GUY...
DID HE MAYBE DRUG
YOU? DID YOU EAT OR DRINK
ANYTHING? ANYTHING AT ALL?
INHALE ANY SMOKE? LICK
ANY TOADS?



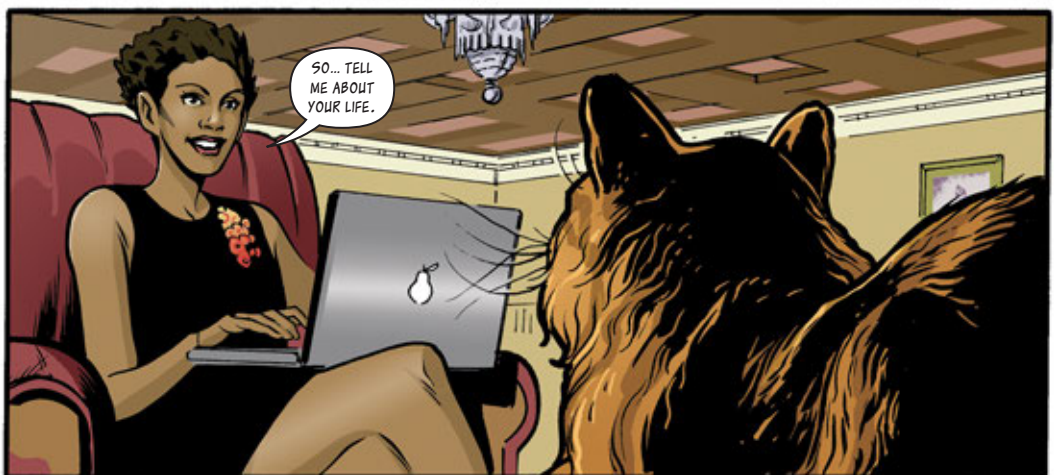
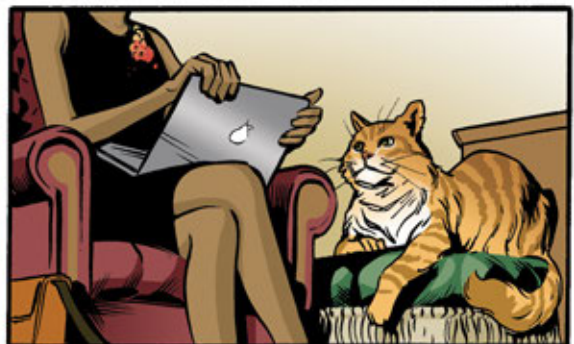
NO TOADS.
NOPE. NOTHING
LIKE THAT.



"I... I THINK I'M GOING
TO DRIVE AROUND FOR
A WHILE. SEE LONDON.
CLEAR MY HEAD."









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."



"ONE DESTINY FOR EACH LIFE."

"OR ONE DESTINY FOR ALL NINE."



BLIMEY!
WAS THAT...?

A CAT!
A BLEEDIN' CAT!



"NOT ALL OF US CATS USE OUR NINE LIVES OF COURSE, JUST AS SO MANY OF YOU HUMANS LAY ABOUT, DAY AFTER DAY, NOT EVEN USING THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN."

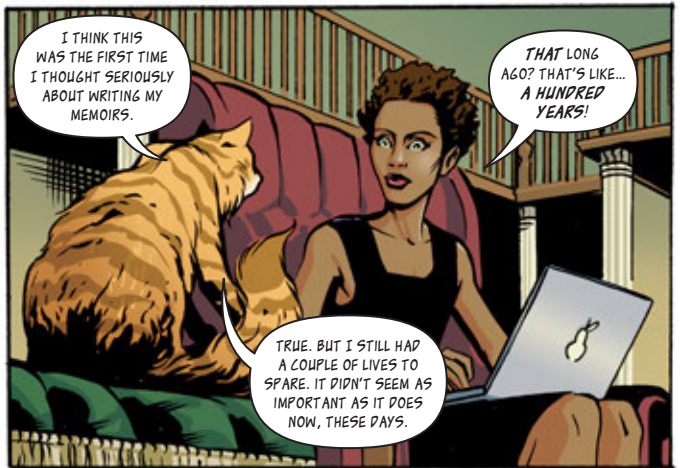
SHOULD WE KILL IT?

YES! OUR ORDERS ARE TO KILL EVERYTHING! EVERYTHING!



"THE WAR MADE ME THINK ABOUT MORTALITY... ABOUT FINAL MORTALITY... FOR THE FIRST TIME. I SUPPOSE WHEN YOU HAVE NINE LIVES YOU TAKE THE NEXT ONE FOR GRANTED."

"BUT... YES... YOU DO RUN OUT. ALL THINGS COME TO AN END."



I THINK THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I THOUGHT SERIOUSLY ABOUT WRITING MY MEMOIRS.

THAT LONG AGO? THAT'S LIKE... A HUNDRED YEARS!

TRUE. BUT I STILL HAD A COUPLE OF LIVES TO SPARE. IT DIDN'T SEEM AS IMPORTANT AS IT DOES NOW, THESE DAYS.

"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!

KAMFF!
KAMFF!

"AND WHEN THE BAYONETS CAME ON US, I REMEMBERED THE FIRST WAR 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.



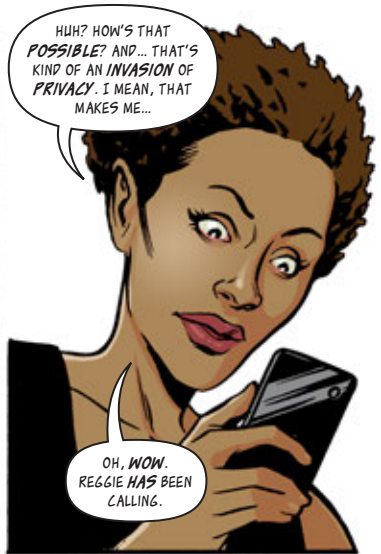
"EIGHT LIVES AND... EIGHT DEATHS."



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?

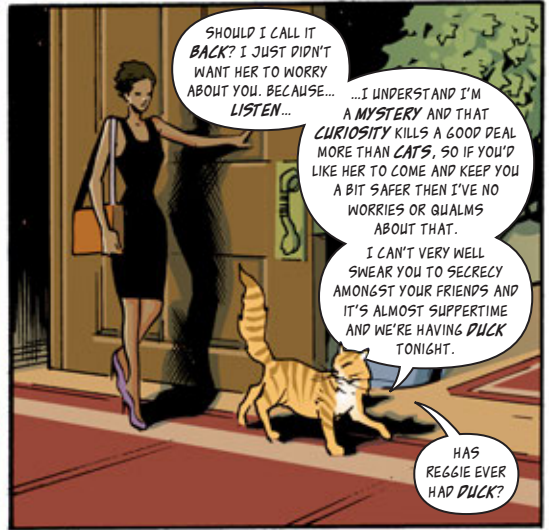


"BUT THAT MAN WAS JUST TRYING TO STEAL MY COMPUTER BAG!"



PROBABLY. PROBABLY.

CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.







LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING!

YOU CAN TELL THE CLIENT TO *STICK* IT, THEN!

UMMM.

MANCHESTER UNITED, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT. THEY WAS FANS.

HI, NATE. THIS IS JULIE. LISTEN. THAT PICTURE I JUST SENT OUT WAS *ONLY* SUPPOSED TO GO TO NITA. COULD YOU *DELETE* IT FROM YOUR PHONE?



MORE LIKE MANCHESTER UN-TIED... THE WAY THEY WERE *TYING* THEM ON.

WHAT? NO, YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL THEM WHERE TO *STICK* IT!

IS HE...?

NO. I MEANT I *WON'T* COME OVER. NOT AGAIN. NOT EVER AGAIN.

HI, GABBY. THIS IS JULIE. UMM... THAT PICTURE I JUST SENT WAS *ONLY* SUPPOSED TO GO TO NITA. COULD YOU *DELETE* IT FROM YOUR PHONE?



I THINK THEY'LL *KNOW* WHERE TO *STICK* IT! IT'S JUST BLEEPIN' *ASSUMED*!

WOW. I JUST...

REALLY? YOU *LIAR*. I'LL BE THERE IN AN HOUR. WHAT SHOULD I *WEAR*?

HI, FRANK. THIS IS JULIE, HERE. BIT EMBARRASSING... THAT PICTURE I JUST SENT WAS *ONLY* SUPPOSED TO GO TO NITA. DO US A FAVOR AND *DELETE* IT, PLEASE?



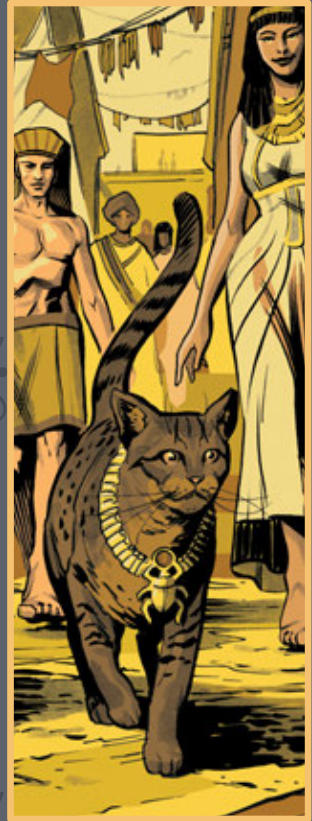
OH THAT'S NAUGHTY.

HI, MUM. SO... YOU JUST GOT A *PICTURE*, RIGHT? *DON'T* LOOK AT IT, OKAY?

OKAY. I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM.



CHAPTER



3

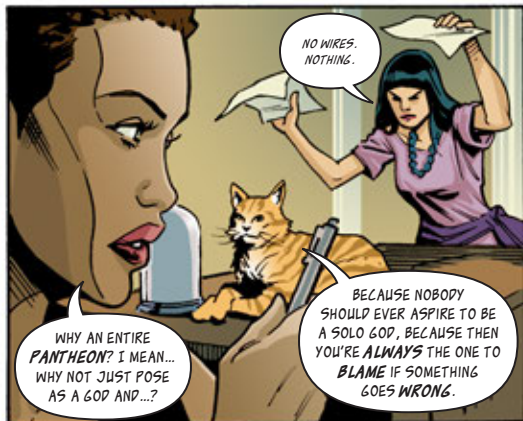




"THERE WERE ALREADY AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF GODS IN PLACE. THE ANCIENTS HAD A TENDENCY TO REVERE THEIR ANCESTORS BY REFERRING TO THEM AS DIVINITIES. IN TIME, WITHOUT TRUE HISTORICAL RECORD... THESE ANCESTORS *BECAME* GODS."



"I PUSHED THE PANTHEON, CREATED 'APPEARANCES' BY THEM."



WHY AN ENTIRE PANTHEON? I MEAN... WHY NOT JUST POSE AS A GOD AND...?

NO WIRES. NOTHING.

BECAUSE NOBODY SHOULD EVER ASPIRE TO BE A SOLO GOD, BECAUSE THEN YOU'RE ALWAYS THE ONE TO BLAME IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG.



"BEST TO SET YOURSELF UP AS THE ONE TO PRAISE AND KEEP THE OTHERS AS THE ONES TO BLAME."





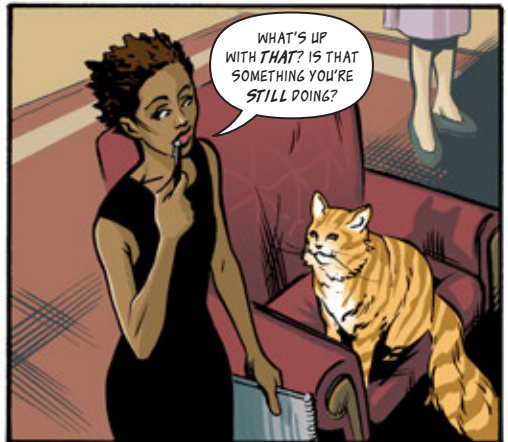
"YOU SEE, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO GODS, OR EVEN TO THOSE WHO SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF GOD, SO I..."



EXCUSE ME. CAN I CUT IN, HERE?

YES.

YOU SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD?



WHAT'S UP WITH THAT? IS THAT SOMETHING YOU'RE STILL DOING?



ALLISON, OH ALLISON. I THOUGHT YOU WERE A PROFESSIONAL. WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PRESENT?

WHEN WRITING A MEMOIR, ALWAYS START AT THE BEGINNING, AND YOU'LL REACH THE END QUICKLY ENOUGH.

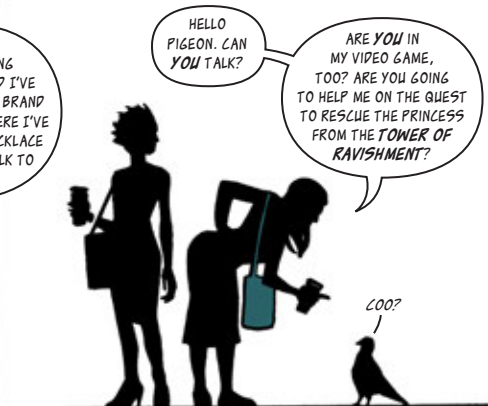
BESIDES... TAKE OVER THE WORLD? PLEASE. I NEVER EVEN LEAVE THIS HOUSE ANYMORE. WHAT USE WOULD I HAVE FOR THE WORLD?





I AM CURIOUS ABOUT ALL THIS, THOUGH. LATELY, IT FEELS LIKE THE EARTH SHIFTED, SOMEHOW, BENEATH MY FEET.

I FEEL LIKE I'M PLAYING A VIDEO GAME AND I'VE JUST OPENED UP A BRAND NEW LEVEL, ONE WHERE I'VE FOUND A MAGIC NECKLACE THAT LETS ME TALK TO ANIMALS.



HELLO PIGEON. CAN YOU TALK?

ARE YOU IN MY VIDEO GAME, TOO? ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME ON THE QUEST TO RESCUE THE PRINCESS FROM THE TOWER OF RAVISHMENT?

COO?



TOWER OF RAVISHMENT? EXACTLY WHAT VIDEO GAMES HAVE YOU BEEN...?

THERE IT GOES! THE QUEST IS ON!

LET'S FOLLOW IT!



I THOUGHT WE AGREED THAT BURMA IS THE ONLY ANIMAL THAT CAN TALK? WHY ARE WE FOLLOWING A PIGEON?

BECAUSE IT'S LONDON!



THAT'S... ACTUALLY NOT A REASON.

HURRY!



DOWN HERE!
WE HAVE TO HURRY!
NOT FAIR THAT CATS
CAN TALK BUT WE
CAN'T FLY!

I STILL DON'T SEE
WHY BEING IN LONDON
MEANS WE HAVE TO FOLLOW
A PIGEON. IS THERE SOME
SORT OF HISTORICAL
SIGNIFICANCE THAT...



DOWN!

HUH?



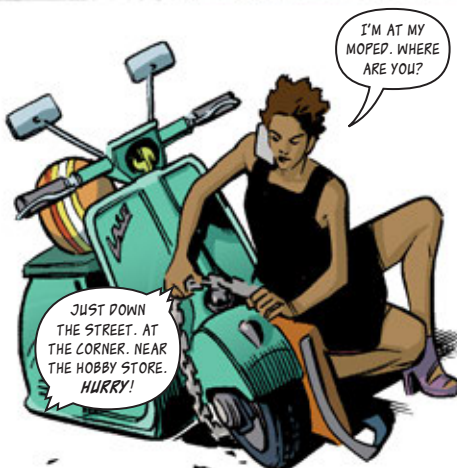
IS THAT...?
THAT'S BURMA...
ISN'T IT?



YES. I THINK
SO. AND THAT'S
HIS PLACE. BUT
WHY'S HE LEAVING
THE HOUSE?



"DIDN'T HE SAY HE NEVER LEAVES
HIS HOUSE ANYMORE? WHY WOULD
HE LIE ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING?"





GET ON!



THIS IS EXCITING!

THIS IS STUPID!

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN BURMA JUMPED ONTO A LORRY?



HE DID! RIGHT ONTO THE BACK OF IT! JUST LIKE A LORD, HE WAS!

WE'LL FIND HIM THOUGH! WE WILL!



THERE IT IS! THERE'S THE LORRY!

THOUGHT WE'D LOST IT FOR A TIME. LONDON STREETS ARE STRANGE.



SOME OF OUR STREETS WERE BUILT BEFORE CARS, YOU KNOW.

WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE HAS TINY PERSONAL AIRPLANES OR JETPACKS... YOUR AMERICAN STREETS WILL SEEM OUTDATED THEN.

IS THIS A WAREHOUSE OR SOMETHING?



LOOKS LIKE IT. *FOOD* OR SOMETHING.

MAYBE BURMA WORKS HERE AS *FORKLIFT OPERATOR*.



YOUR BRITISH HUMOR IS ALWAYS SO FULL OF WIT.



KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN. SOMEONE'S COMING.



AND SHE SAID THAT THIS *OTHER* BLOKE DOESN'T KISS LIKE HE'S A *SCRUB BRUSH*.

WHAT? SHE DOESN'T LIKE YOUR *MOUSTACHE*? SHE'S *CRAZY*. THAT GIRL IS.



I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE DOING THIS. IS THIS REALLY WHAT SPIES DO?

YOU MIND ME, BAILEY... YOU CAN FIND A NEW GIRL *TONIGHT*. THAT'S IN *ONE NIGHT*.

A *MOUSTACHE* LIKE YOURS TAKES *MONTHS* TO GROW. *YEARS*, EVEN. THAT'S A *COMMITMENT*.



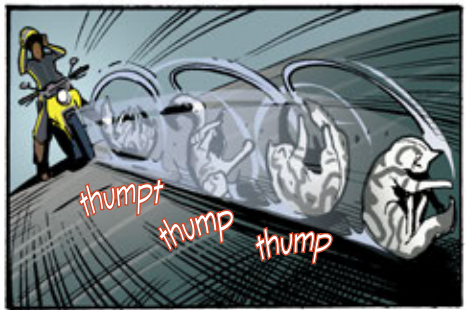




CHAPTER



4







...GARBLE ZHAGOHAL GAOHAR SUPPOSED TO BRING ME AGAORAN...



WONDER WHAT'S KEEPING HIM?

DANGEROUS BUSINESS?

USUALLY RELIABLE.

DAMNABLE DOGS.

UNCOVERED?



UMM, HELLO?

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT...

OH, BUT I SEE MY BIOGRAPHER IS HERE.



DIDN'T MEAN TO SNOOP. IT'S JUST THAT... THE DOOR WAS OPEN AND I DIDN'T WANT TO MISS OUR APPOINTMENT AND...

NO BOTHER. NO BOTHER AT ALL.

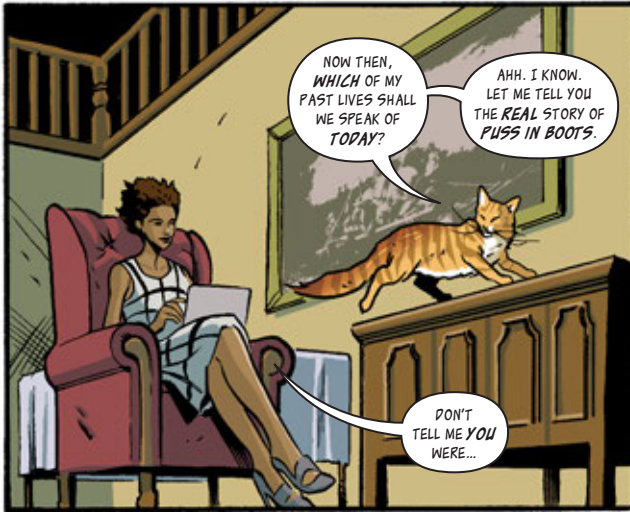
CARDIFF AND I WERE JUST DISCUSSING A TELEVISION PROGRAM.

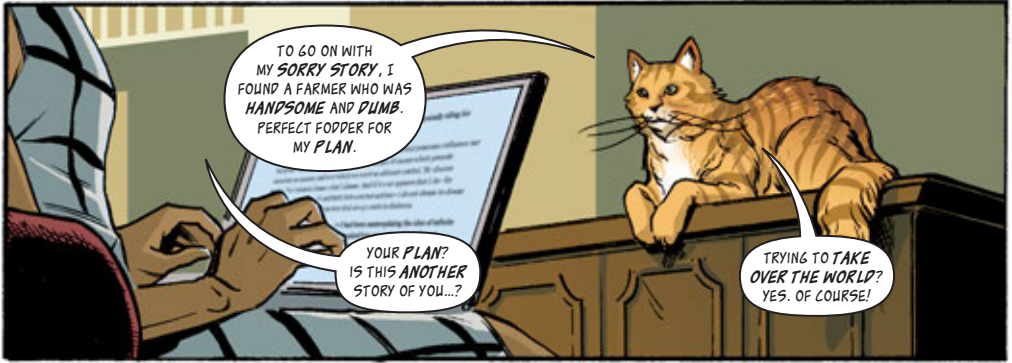


YES. I DO LOVE THE TELLY. DR. WHO AND MISS MARPLE AND ALL THAT.

SHOULD I BRING TEA, SIR?

THAT WOULD BE SPLENDID, CARDIFF.





TO GO ON WITH MY **SORRY STORY**, I FOUND A FARMER WHO WAS **HANDSOME AND DUMB**. PERFECT FODDER FOR MY **PLAN**.

YOUR **PLAN**? IS THIS ANOTHER STORY OF YOU...?

TRYING TO **TAKE OVER THE WORLD**? YES. OF COURSE!



"WHEN DEALING WITH PEOPLE, IT'S BEST TO REMEMBER THAT **PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING**."

HEY! IT'S THAT **DUMB FARMER BOY**!

IGNORE THEM.



"I OUTFITTED THE FARMER IN THE **BEST FINERY**, PARADED HIM THROUGH THE HEART OF THE CITY. LACKING TODAY'S **INTERNET**, I SIMPLY PAID A FEW INFLUENTIAL HARLOTS TO CALL OUT A FAKE NAME."

OOOH! THE **MARQUIS OF CARABAS!**

IGNORE THEM.



"THEN, FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, I HAD GIFT'S PRESENTED TO THE KING, **ALWAYS** IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS **DAUGHTER**, THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS."

IT'S ANOTHER GIFT FROM THE **MARQUIS OF CARABAS!** WHO IS THIS MAN?

SOME OF THE, UMM... **LOCAL GIRLS** TELL ME HE'S **QUITE HANDSOME!**



"THEN, I CONTRIVED A MEETING, PRETENDING TO A ROBBERY."

GASP... THE... THE MARQUIS? OH DADDY, THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! A BLANKET FOR THE MARQUIS! HE SHALL RIDE WITH US BACK TO THE CASTLE!

MY LORD, THE MARQUIS OF CARABAS HAS BEEN BATHING, AND ROBBERS HAVE ABSCONDING WITH HIS CLOTHING.



"NATURE TOOK ITS COURSE."

"AND WITH THE POWER OF THE KINGDOM IN MY GRASP, I WAS PREPARED FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF MY CONQUEST."



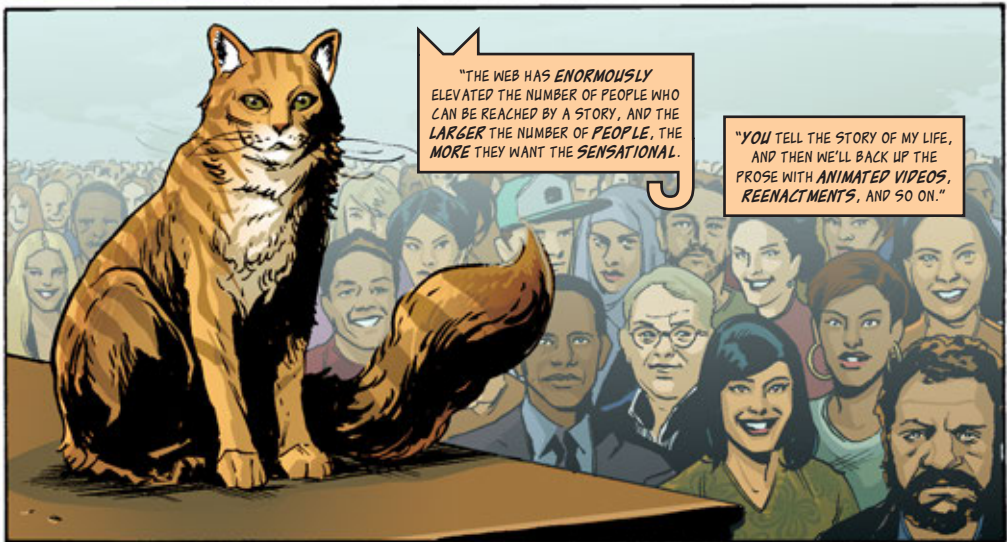
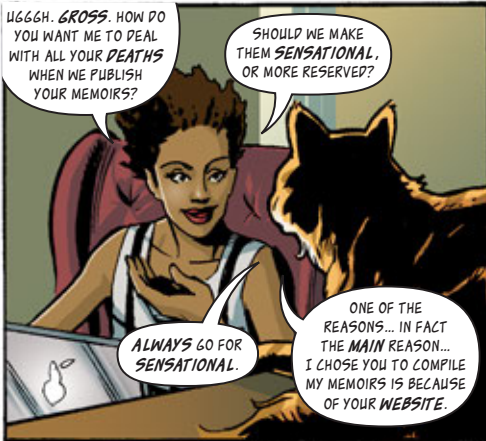
FIRST, I PLANNED TO DECLARE WAR ON A RIVAL KINGDOM, AND THEN, THEN... BUT... NO MATTER.

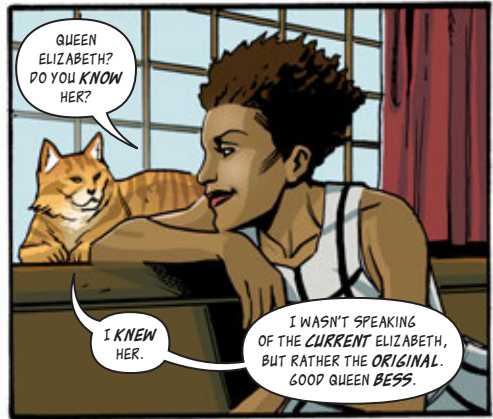


"I'D RECKONED WITHOUT THE KING'S HOUNDS. MET THEM ONE NIGHT WHEN STROLLING INTO THE KITCHEN FOR A SNACK DURING A LATE EVENING STRATEGY SESSION."



"AN UNFORTUNATE MEETING."







"IN THE END, THOUGH, SHE WAS TOO **PROBLEMATIC**. I COULD COUNSEL HER BEHIND THE SCENES, BUT LEFT TO HER OWN SHE WOULD **FALTER**."



I SWITCHED MY ALLIANCE TO MARY, QUEEN OF THE SCOTS.

OOOOO. WASN'T SHE...?

EXECUTED? YES. BAD CHOICE, ON MY PART. THE UNFORTUNATE EPISODE WAS **WIPE**D FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS. MY PART IN IT, AT LEAST.



JUST HOLD 'IM **DOWN**! HE'S ONLY A **CAT**!

HE'S SCRATCHING MY HANDS TO **BITS**. HE IS! AND YOU WATCH YOUR **AIM** WITH THAT **AXE**, MIND YOU!



THIS AXE, WHICH I FOUND IN THE ESTATE SALE OF AN ENGLISH NOBLEMAN'S CURIOSITY CABINET, IS THE **VERY** ONE THAT ENDED MY TIME WITH MARY.

EWWW. THAT'S **GROSS**.



THERE IS A **CALL** FOR YOU, SIR. I'VE PATCHED IT THROUGH TO YOUR DESK. IT'S **MR. ROHAN**.

THANK YOU, **CARDIFF**.



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.





CHAPTER

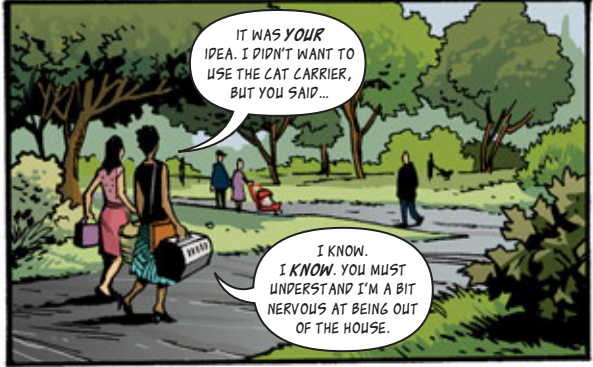


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HYDE PARK.

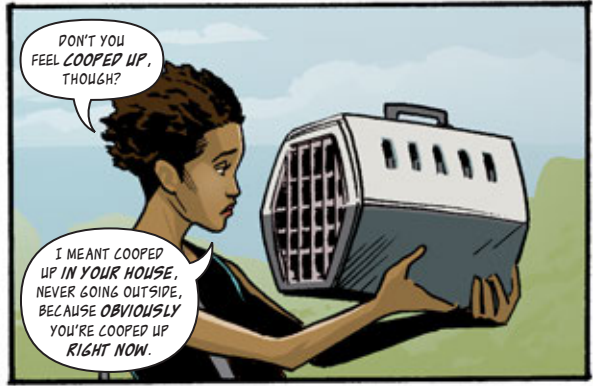


I FEEL RIDICULOUS.



IT WAS YOUR IDEA. I DIDN'T WANT TO USE THE CAT CARRIER, BUT YOU SAID...

I KNOW. I KNOW YOU MUST UNDERSTAND I'M A BIT NERVOUS AT BEING OUT OF THE HOUSE.



DON'T YOU FEEL COOPED UP, THOUGH?

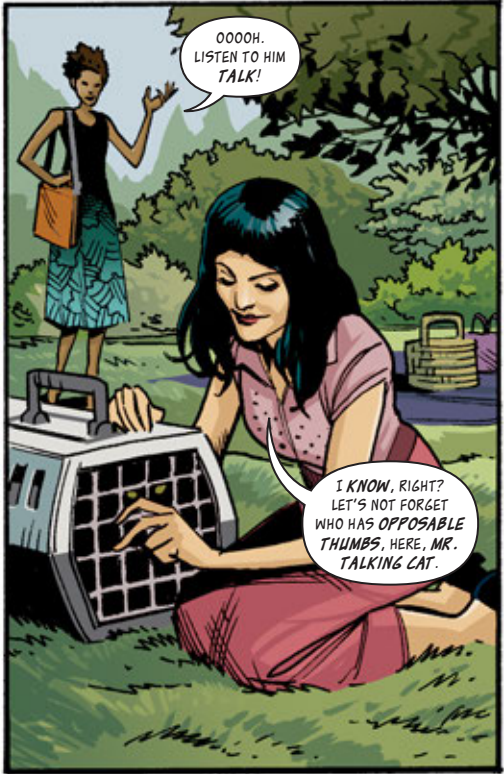
I MEANT COOPED UP IN YOUR HOUSE, NEVER GOING OUTSIDE, BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY YOU'RE COOPED UP RIGHT NOW.



AND IF YOU THINK YOU FEEL RIDICULOUS, HOW DO YOU THINK WE FEEL? YOU'RE LIKE A TINY PERSON, AND WE PUT YOU IN A CAGE.

YOU DIDN'T PUT ME HERE. I WENT IN BY MYSELF.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE A CAGE... IT'S MORE LIKE A PALANGWIN. YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL SLAVE GIRLS CARRYING THE KING.



OOOHH. LISTEN TO HIM TALK!

I KNOW, RIGHT? LET'S NOT FORGET WHO HAS OPPOSABLE THUMBS, HERE, MR. TALKING CAT.



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!



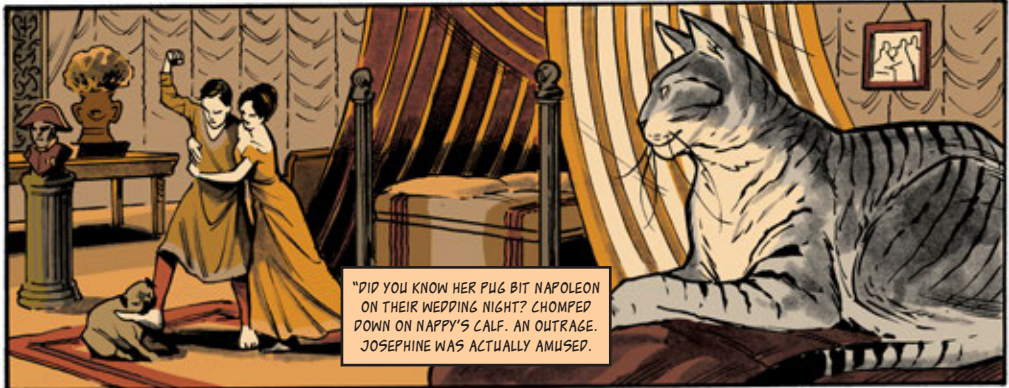
TWELVE LANGUAGES. TWELVE. AT LEAST REGGIE AND I STILL HAVE OUR OPPOSABLE THUMBS.

YOU SPEAK BATAK? I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT BATAK IS.

AN INDOONESIAN LANGUAGE. MY POINT IS, YES... I WAS ABLE TO SPEAK WITH NAPOLEON. HE WAS A GREAT MAN.



"NOT AN OUNCE OF HUMILITY IN HIM. NOT AN OUNCE. I MET HIM SHORTLY BEFORE HIS MARRIAGE TO JOSEPHINE. SHORTLY BEFORE HIS RUIN. THEN, IN A WAY. THE WOMAN WAS AN ABSOLUTE HORROR."



"DID YOU KNOW HER PUG BIT NAPOLEON ON THEIR WEDDING NIGHT? CHOMPED DOWN ON NAPPY'S CALF. AN OUTRAGE. JOSEPHINE WAS ACTUALLY AMUSED."



"I CONSTANTLY ADVISED NAPOLEON TO CUT HER FROM HIS TROOP D'AMOUR, BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN. JOSEPHINE SPENT THE NEXT FEW YEARS EMBARRASSING HIM INTO THE ROLE OF A CLUCKOLD, SPENDING ENORMOUS SUMS OF MONEY, TAKING LOVERS."



"NAPOLEON, OF COURSE, SPENT HIS NEXT FEW YEARS EMBARRASSING OTHER MEN'S ARMIES AND TAKING THE CROWN AS EMPEROR."



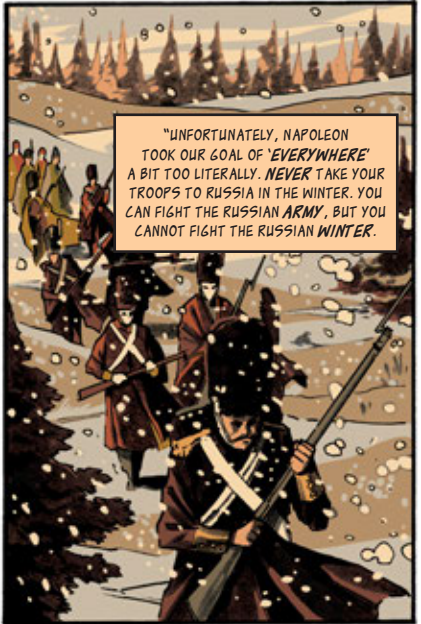
HE WAS THE WISEST GENERAL I'VE EVER KNOWN. NOT AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS. HE HAD *DARING*. THAT ONE DID.



"BETWEEN US, I DID THINK THE WORLD WAS IN REACH.

HERE, YOU THINK?

YES. *THERE*. AND THEN *EVERYWHERE ELSE*.



"UNFORTUNATELY, NAPOLEON TOOK OUR GOAL OF '*EVERYWHERE*' A BIT TOO LITERALLY. *NEVER* TAKE YOUR TROOPS TO RUSSIA IN THE WINTER. YOU CAN FIGHT THE RUSSIAN *ARMY*, BUT YOU CANNOT FIGHT THE RUSSIAN *WINTER*."



"SENSING WEAKNESS AFTER NAPOLEON'S FOOLHARPY ATTEMPT, THE REST OF THE WORLD BANDED TOGETHER IN THE BATTLE OF THE NATIONS, AT LEIPZIG. SOON AFTER, PARIS FELL."



NAPOLEON AND I WERE EXILED TO ELBA. A SMALL KINGDOM, IT SEEMED, FOR A MAN WHO WAS SO **GOOD** WITH TROOPS, AND SO **BAD** WITH WOMEN, AND WHO **REALLY** SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO MY ADVICE.

RUSSIA! IN THE WINTER! THAT **IDIOT!** I **STILL** HAVEN'T FORGIVEN HIM!



DIDN'T NAPOLEON **ESCAPE** FROM ELBA?

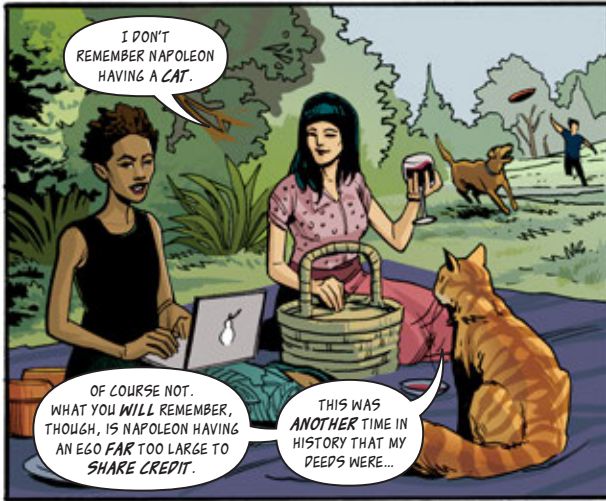
YES. OR RATHER, HE **SIMPLY LEFT** WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING. OUR BRITISH SENTINELS WERE **LAX**.



"STILL... THE DEPARTURE WAS RATHER SUDDEN. LOTS OF JOSTLING. CHAOS. THAT SORT OF THING. AT ONE POINT, HALFWAY BACK TO FRANCE, SEVERAL CRATES WERE KNOCKED OVERBOARD. UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS ON THE CRATES AT THE TIME, BASKING IN THE WARMTH OF THE SUN AND FREEDOM.



"MY DEPARTURE WENT **UNNOTICED**. AND I HAVE **NEVER** BEEN A VERY **GOOD** SWIMMER. IT WAS THE **END** OF MY CAMPAIGN. AND ANOTHER OF MY **LIVES**."









THERE. THAT'S THAT. WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE ME, ROHAN?



NOT AT ALL, SIR. I WOULDN'T HAVE RECOGNIZED YOU IF THAT DOG HAD GOTTEN YOU EITHER.

HE'D HAVE TORN YOU TO PIECES, QUICK AS A WICKET, SIR.

I SUPPOSE. BUT, ALL IN ALL, MY PLAN TO GET AWAY FROM THE GIRLS FOR A QUICK INSPECTION WORKED QUITE WELL. I ADMIT THE DOG WAS A BIT OF A SURPRISE, BUT A GENIUS USES THE MATERIALS HE'S GIVEN.



VERY GOOD SIR. THEN SHALL WE BE ABOUT THE CARTS?

JUST SO. PROGRESS GOING WELL?



WE'VE HAD TO SUSPEND THE POPCORN CART. COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE TASTE, DON'T YOU KNOW. BUT OUR ADDITIVES ARE BLENDING WELL, ELSEWHERE.

BURMA! BURMA!

CHECK OVER THERE!



ADD MORE BUTTER AND SALT TO THE POPCORN. DISGUISE IT THAT WAY.

ALREADY ON IT, SIR. WE'LL HAVE IT HUMMING SOON.



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

SERVE UP A DOG, WOULD YOU, HASKINS?



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. SPLENDID.



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.





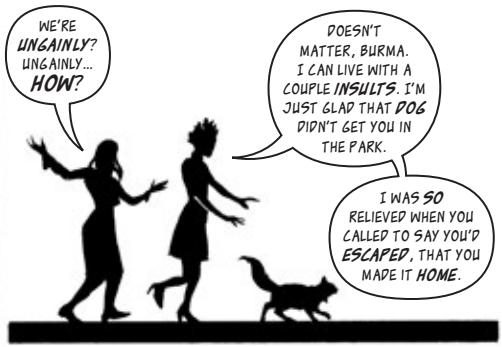
CHAPTER



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.



SOMMMME-ONE HAS A CRUSH ON AUDREY!

YOU MEAN ME?

BECAUSE YOU *COULD* BE TALKING ABOUT ME.

I'D *TOTALLY* GO OUT WITH AUDREY HEPBURN.



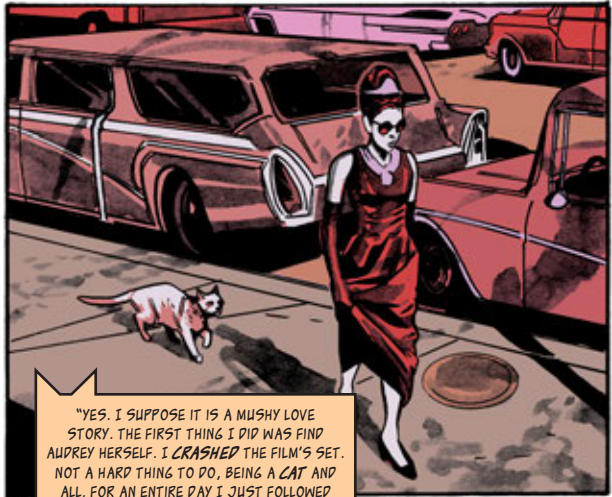
BUT IT IS CUTE THAT YOU WERE HEAD OVER PAWS FOR A WOMAN.

YOUR TAUNTS WILL NEVER...

AHHH! LEAVE MY WHISKERS ALONE!



SORRY. COULDN'T RESIST. PLEASE CONTINUE WITH YOUR MUSHY LOVE STORY.



"YES. I SUPPOSE IT IS A MUSHY LOVE STORY. THE FIRST THING I DID WAS FIND AUDREY HERSELF. I *CRASHED* THE FILM'S SET. NOT A HARD THING TO DO, BEING A CAT AND ALL. FOR AN ENTIRE PAY I JUST FOLLOWED HER AROUND. WATCHING HER.



"HANGING AROUND THE SET. WAITING FOR MY CHANCE."



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

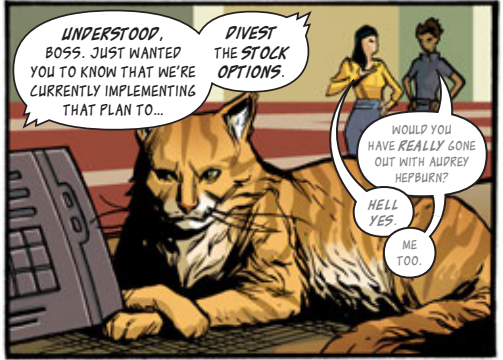
THRRRRNGG
THRRRRNGG



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.



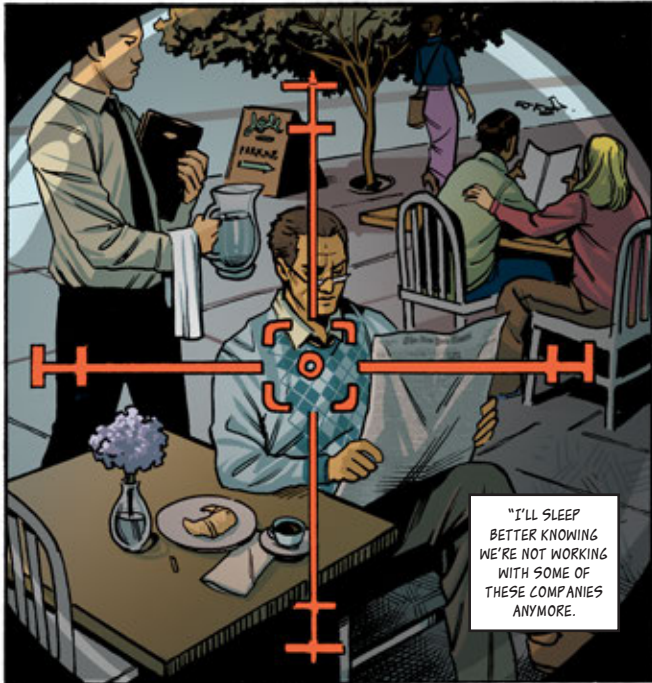
"I'M WATCHING THE TICKER RIGHT NOW. REPORTS ARE COMING IN. LOTS OF CLOSEOUTS."



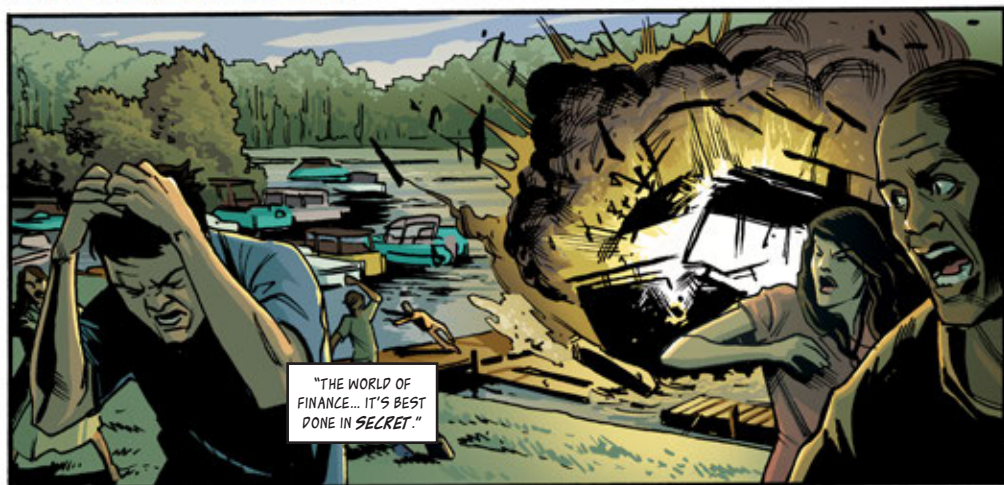
"AND I GOTTA SAY, BOSS, I'M GLAD THIS PAY IS HERE. SOME OF THESE... STOCKS... THEY WERE GETTING A BIT TOO CLOSE TO... UNDERCUTTING OUR, UMM, FINANCIAL STABILITY."



"LOT OF KNOWLEDGEABLE, ERRR, ACCOUNTANTS ON THE OTHER SIDE."



"I'LL SLEEP BETTER KNOWING WE'RE NOT WORKING WITH SOME OF THESE COMPANIES ANYMORE."



"THE WORLD OF FINANCE... IT'S BEST DONE IN SECRET."



SPLENDID, ROHAN. KEEP ME UP TO DATE ON THIS DIVESTMENT PROCEEDURE.

ALL I'M SAYING IS, IF I'D BEEN BURMA, I THINK I WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED AUDREY AROUND, TOO.

DO YOU HAVE A CAT COSTUME? BECAUSE...



SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION. ALLISON, LET'S RETURN TO MY MEMOIRS.

OF COURSE.

REALLY INTERESTED TO SEE HOW THIS TURNED OUT FOR YOU!



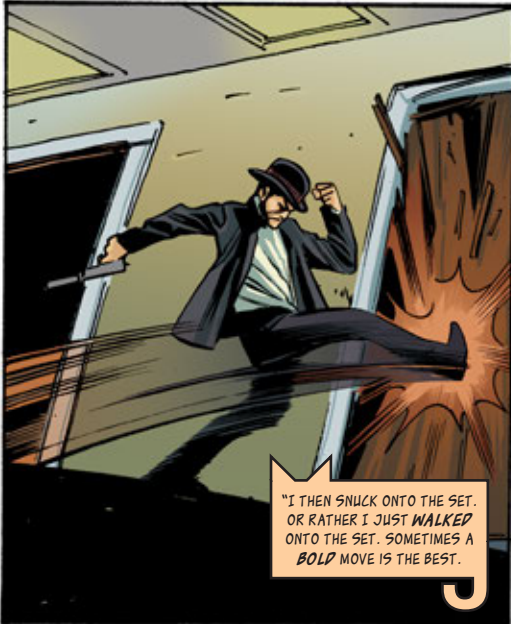
"IT WASN'T ONE OF MY BETTER PLANS, I'M AFRAID. IN FACT, THERE WAS NO PLANNING AT ALL. SOMETIMES THE ADVENTURE TAKES HOLD, YOU KNOW. ANYWAY, I MANAGED TO FIND MY WAY ONTO THE SETS."



"AND FROM THERE I CONVINCED THE LEAD ACTOR TO TEMPORARILY RETIRE."



"AND WITH THE APPLICATION OF A FEW HASTILY APPLIED COSMETICS, I WAS HIS DUPLICATE IN APPEARANCE."



"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."

ROWAN?
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."



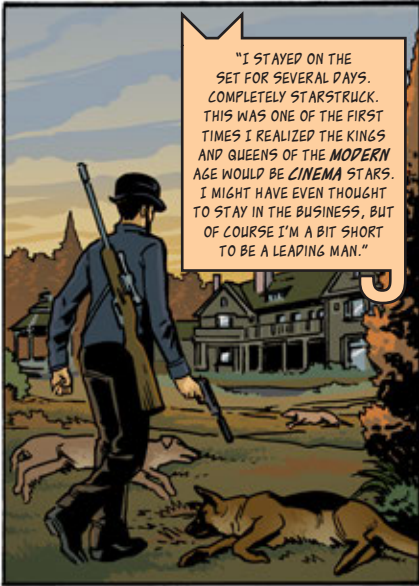
"ACT LIKE A **KING**, AND YOU WILL BE A **KING**."

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



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





"I STAYED ON THE SET FOR SEVERAL DAYS. COMPLETELY STARSTRUCK. THIS WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TIMES I REALIZED THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE MODERN AGE WOULD BE CINEMA STARS. I MIGHT HAVE EVEN THOUGHT TO STAY IN THE BUSINESS, BUT OF COURSE I'M A BIT SHORT TO BE A LEADING MAN."

SO, THAT WAS YOU IN THE BEDROOM SCENE?

IT WAS. I'M SO PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN IN THAT SCENE. BEDROOMS ARE PLACES OF INTIMACY. THERE'S SOMETHING VERY, EXCUSE THE WORD, HUMAN ABOUT A BEDROOM SCENE.



IT'S NOT JUST THE SEX.



"IT'S THAT YOU'VE ENTERED SOMEONE'S PERSONAL KINGDOM."



"FORGIVE ALL THIS TALK OF KINGDOMS, BUT ... RELATING MY MEMOIRS, I FIND MYSELF THINKING OF DAYS LONG GONE. THESE DAYS, OF COURSE, I'M VERY SEDATE."

THIS IS ROHAN. ANOTHER ONE DOWN. THREE TARGETS LEFT. MOVE IN HARD. STICK TO BURMA'S PLAN.



THE SCENE IN THE RAIN, AT THE END OF THE MOVIE, THAT'S MY FAVORITE. WAS THAT YOU?

IT WAS.

A MOST CONFOUNDING SCENE, I ADMIT.



"THE RAIN WAS MAKING THE DYE IN MY FUR RUN. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT GIVE AWAY THE GAME."



"AND I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF RAIN, ANYWAY. IT'S NOT ONLY COLD AND WET... IT OBSCURES THINGS. I LIKE TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON."

WE GOT TWO OF THEM, BUT... WHERE DID THE LAST ONE GO? ROHAN WON'T BE HAPPY IF THIS BASTARD GETS AWAY!



THIS WAY! I THINK I SAW SOMEBODY RUNNING THIS WAY!



"I REMEMBER NAPOLEON'S LESSON ABOUT THE RUSSIAN WINTER. I TRY TO AVOID BATTLING NATURE IF I CAN."

"OF COURSE, SOMETIMES SHOOTING SCHEDULES ARE WHAT THEY ARE, AND SCRIPTS MUST BE PLAYED OUT AS THEY'RE WRITTEN."



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.



THAT WILL BE ALL FOR THE PAY, I THINK.

I ENJOYED TALKING ABOUT AUDREY. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND THAT NOTHING VERY EXCITING HAPPENED IN TODAY'S RECOLLECTIONS.

IT WAS FASCINATING!

I THINK THIS WAS MY FAVORITE PAY OF WORKING ON YOUR MEMOIRS SO FAR.



GOOD. WELL, THEN... MIND THE PUPPLES. GOOD THING YOU BROUGHT YOUR GALOSHES.

ADORABLE UMBRELLA, THERE, REGGIE.



ADORABLE UMBRELLA, THERE, REGGIE.

AAARGH! GAHHH!

I TOTALLY FORGOT I HAD A CAT UMBRELLA! DID I BLUSH TOO RED? I PIP, DIDN'T I?



YOU PIP, SORT OF. BUT IT WAS CUTE.

LIKE... AUDREY HEPBURN CUTE?

WOW. LET'S KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE, HERE, OKAY?





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.



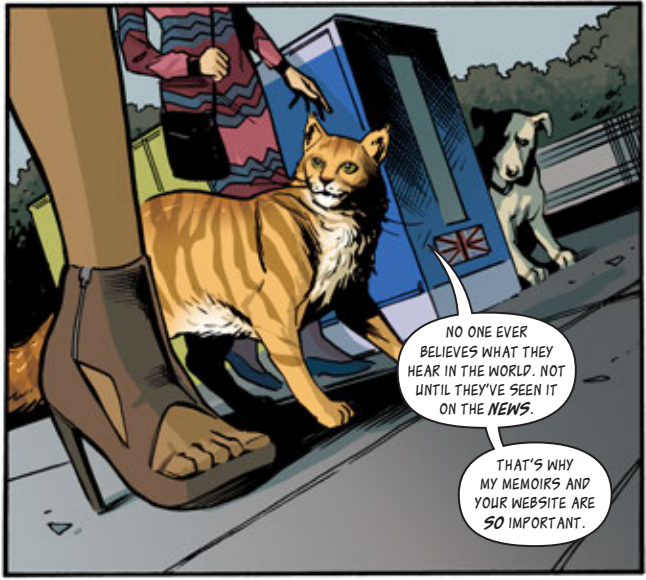
WE **ARE** DOING MY **MEMOIRS**. I'VE BEEN HAPPY WITH THE **PROGRESS** SO FAR. ABOUT **HALFWAY** DONE, I'D SAY.

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?



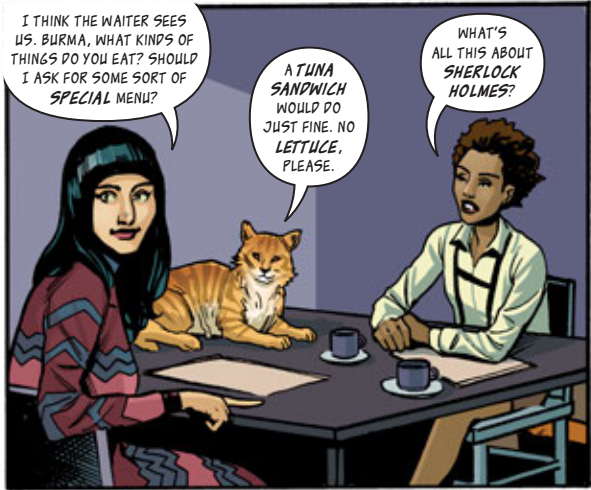
NO ONE EVER BELIEVES WHAT THEY HEAR IN THE **WORLD**. NOT UNTIL THEY'VE SEEN IT ON THE **NEWS**.

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



LET'S GET A TABLE. DO THEY HAVE SALADS?

LOOKS LIKE IT. BUT ALL I WANT IS SOME TEA, SOME CHEESE, AND A BAGUETTE THE LENGTH OF MY ARM.



I THINK THE WAITER SEES US. BURMA, WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DO YOU EAT? SHOULD I ASK FOR SOME SORT OF SPECIAL MENU?

A TUNA SANDWICH WOULD DO JUST FINE. NO LETTUCE, PLEASE.

WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT SHERLOCK HOLMES?



HI! COULD WE SEE...?

I'M SORRY, BUT WE CAN'T ALLOW PETS. CERTAINLY NOT ON THE TABLE.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY PETS.



YOU HAVE A CAT. WE DON'T ALLOW CATS.

CAN'T HAVE A CAT HERE? LOOK, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT BURMA IS VERY WELL BEHAVED.

SORRY. IT'S A HEALTH CODE THING THAT...



THE YOUNG LADY IS RIGHT. I'M VERY WELL-BEHAVED.





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



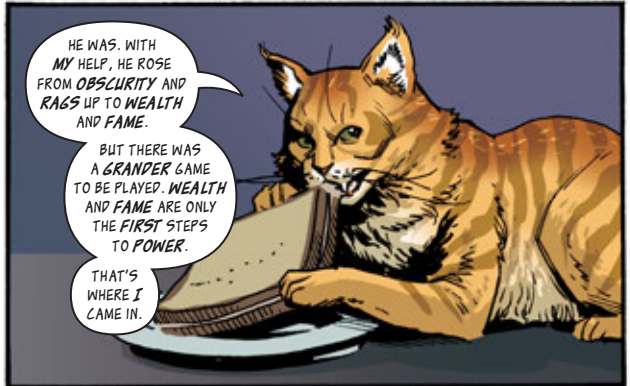
"THIS WAS LONDON. THE YEAR WAS... HMMM, I BELIEVE OUR ASSOCIATION STARTED IN 1712. I WAS MUCH DIFFERENT THEN, OF COURSE."

"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 GUY 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 ITS STOMACH, BUT THE REAL TRUTH IS THAT EVERYTHING, EVERY CREATURE IN ALL THE WORLD, MOVES ON ITS 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.



THIS WAS ONCE THE LOCATION OF THE **WOOD STREET COMPTER**. A DEBTORS' PRISON.

WILD WAS HELD HERE. A WOMAN NAMED **MARY MILLINER** WAS AMONG THE OTHER PRISONERS.



"THEY MET HERE. FORMED A BOND. DECIDED TO TEAM UP ONCE THEY WERE RID OF THE PLACE."

WELL, WOT NOW?

THERE'S NOTHING FOR IT. BACK AT THE **OLD GAMES**, I SUPPOSE.

"I'M AFRAID THE STORY IS **SORDID**. THEY TOOK UP RESIDENCE TOGETHER, ACTING AS MAN AND WIFE, **DESPITE** HOW THEY WERE BOTH **ALREADY MARRIED**."



I'M STARTING TO WONDER WHERE **REGGIE** AND I STAND IN THE MORAL HIERARCHY OF YOUR FRIENDS.

QUITE HIGH. QUITE HIGH INDEED.

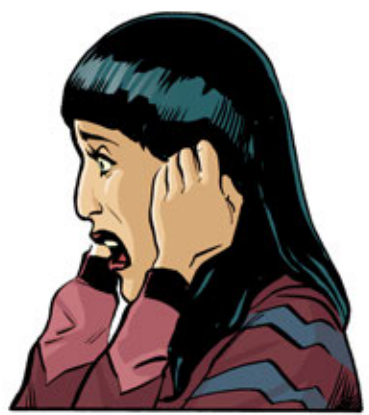
JONATHAN AND MARY WERE, I'M AFRAID, RATHER NEAR THE **BOTTOM**.



"SHE WAS A **NIGHTWALKER**. JONATHAN ACTED AS HER BODYGUARD WHILE SHE WAS ON THE JOB."



"MARY WAS SOON RUNNING A STABLE OF HER OWN GIRLS, WHILE JONATHAN WAS FENCING STOLEN GOOFS. THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS **UNSTABLE**. HE EVENTUALLY LEFT HER. CUT OFF HER EAR TO MARK HER AS A PROSTITUTE."



"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 AMAZING WHAT SOMEONE WILL TELL HIS SERVANTS."

BRUSH UP THE CARRIAGE, WILL YOU? I'M TAKING A TRIP TO VISIT THE HAVERSTOCK DAUGHTER. THAT'S A SECRET, JIM.

OF COURSE, GUV'NER.



"AND IT'S MORE AMAZING THE SCANDAL THAT ARISES WHEN PEOPLE THINK THEY'RE ALONE."



"AND SIMPLE WORD ON THE STREET IS ALWAYS EFFECTIVE."

NOT HIS CHILD? LORD ABOVE! YOU CAN'T MEAN...!

RIGHT AS RAIN, DEARIE. AND HIM BEING THE BARON AND ALL.

WHAT HE'S DONE TO THAT CHILD... I SHIVER... SIMPLY SHIVER!



"MY INFORMANTS KEPT THE PRESSES HUMMING. IT'S A WONDER THEY DIDN'T BURST INTO FLAME."

IT'S ASTONISHING, WHAT THIS BURMA FRIEND OF YOURS FINDS OUT. WE'D LOVE TO MAKE HIM AN OFFER TO JOIN OUR STAFF.

NONE 'A THAT GUV. NONE 'A THAT. HE'S A PRIVATE MAN, HE IS. YOU JUST KEEP ON WIT' PRINTIN' WHAT WE GIVES YOU.



IN THOSE DAYS, THOUGH, MY MORALS WERE LAX.

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 GALLOWES BY HIS TESTIMONY.

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

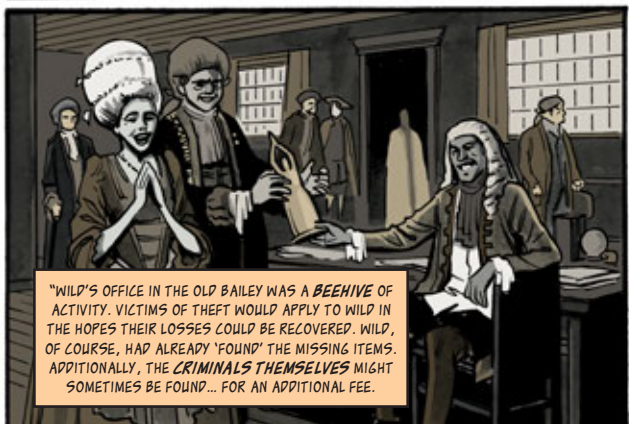
MEAT PACKING SCANDAL! READ THE LATEST!

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

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



"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."



I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WERE DOING ALL THIS! THESE MEMOIRS ARE GOING TO BE GREAT! ALTHOUGH, I'M NOT SURE I CAN EVER TRUST A CAT AGAIN.

I NEVER REALLY TRUSTED CATS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

MOST CATS HAVE NO MORE ASPIRATIONS THAN A WINDOWSILL AND A FULL DISH OF FOOD. I, OF COURSE, WANTED MORE.



"BY 1720, WILD'S FAME HAS RISEN TO THE POINT THAT THE PRIVY COUNCIL CONSULTED WITH HIM ON POSSIBLE METHODS OF CONTROLLING CRIME. WILD, OF COURSE, RECOMMENDED A SUBSTANTIAL RAISE OF THE REWARDS FOR TURNING IN THIEVES.



"IN TURN, THIS AMOUNTED TO A SUBSTANTIAL PAY INCREASE FOR WILD. AND, BY ASSOCIATION, FOR MYSELF.

"WE HAD WEALTH AND ACCLAIM, AND WE HAD NEWSPAPERS TO ANCHOR OUR POSITIONS. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE WE COULD CONTROL THE NOBILITY, AND TAKE STEPS TO CONTROL THE WORLD."



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.



DAMN IT, WILD. NOT THIS AGAIN.

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





I HATE MISSING CALLS.

HERE. ALMOST HOME.

FOLLOW ME, AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT THE PUBLIC THOUGHT OF WILD.



OOOO. PUPPETS?

WHAT ARE THESE FOR?

PUPPET SHOWS. FROM WILD'S TIME. IT WAS A POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT. LARGELY SATIRICAL.

WILD BECAME A FIGURE OF INCREASINGLY SCATHING PUBLIC REVIEW.



"THE PUBLIC WAS PARTICULARLY AMUSED OVER WILD'S 'CRIME-FIGHTING' ACTIVITIES."

HOW SPLENDID. MR. WILD! YOU'VE FOUND MY MISSING BROOCH. WHEREVER DID YOU FIND IT?

OOOO. I HAPPENED TO BE WANDERING THROUGH YOUR ROOM ONE NIGHT, AND FOUND IT IN YOUR JEWELRY BOX!

ARE THESE THE REAL PUPPETS? I MEAN, THE ACTUAL PUPPETS FROM WAY BACK THEN?

YES. TRUE ANTIQUES. I SOMETIMES FIND MYSELF NOSTALGIC.

NOT FOR WILD, OF COURSE. THE PUPPETEERS MIGHT AS WELL HAVE MADE HIM RESEMBLE AN ASS.

"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.

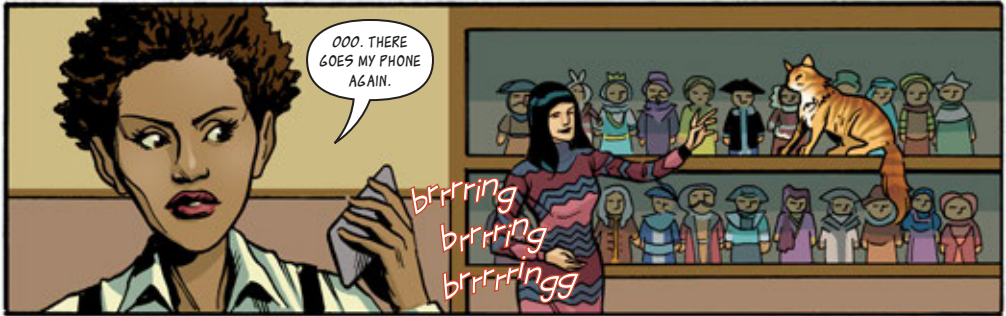
HERE NOW, HERE NOW! GET AWAY FROM THERE!

"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.





WHO WAS IT?

SOME WEIRDO. THEY HUNG UP.



WOULD YOU LIKE ONE OF THESE PUPPETS?

REALLY? YES! THAT WOULD BE INCREDIBLE! THESE MUST BE EXPENSIVE!



I'D LIKE TO KEEP THE PUPPET OF WILD, BUT YOU CAN HAVE ONE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE.

THE RABBLE AREN'T NEARLY THE WORTH OF A MAJOR PLAYING PIECE. NOT INDIVIDUALLY, ANYWAY.

ALL NATURAL FOOD?



THIS ONE'S NICE.

I'M GOING TO NAME HER MARGARET.

SO WHAT HAPPENED WITH WILD?



YEAH, LUV. DID YOU TWO KISS AND MAKE UP? TELL US THE TRUTH, NOW. GUV'NOR!

KISS AND MAKE UP? HARDLY.

AND, IN FACT, WE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE.



"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."



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

"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."



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



"AND SO, ON MAY 24, 1725, IT WAS A COMATOSE WILD WHO WAS TAKEN TO THE GALLOWS. I'VE HEARD THE CROWD WAS IMMENSE. BOISTEROUS. JUBILANT."





BYE, BURMA!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR THE PUPPET!

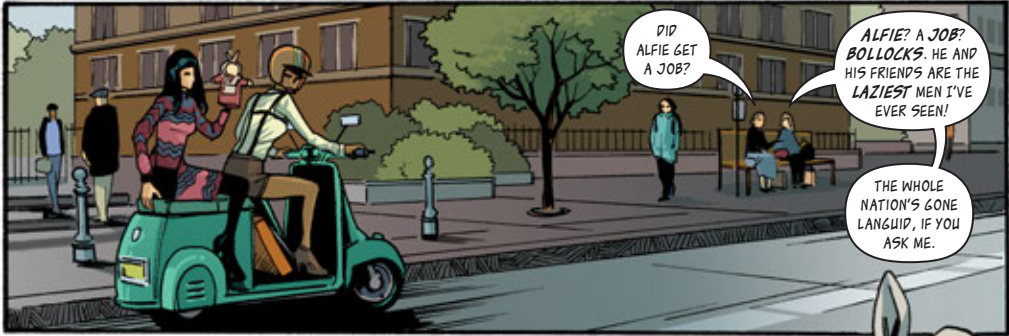


THE SCOOTER IS JUST UP HERE.

HMMM. WE'RE TAKING THE SCOOTER? IS THERE ROOM FOR MY PUPPET?

BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITHOUT MARGARET.

I'M SURE THERE'S ROOM. NO WORRIES.



DID ALFIE GET A JOB?

ALFIE? A JOB? BOLLOCKS. HE AND HIS FRIENDS ARE THE LAZIEST MEN I'VE EVER SEEN!

THE WHOLE NATION'S GONE LANGUID, IF YOU ASK ME.



IT'S LIKE PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO WORK ANYMORE. WHERE'S THE DRIVE?

MY FATHER'S GENERATION, WE WEREN'T LIKE THIS. I'LL TELL YOU, I WILL...



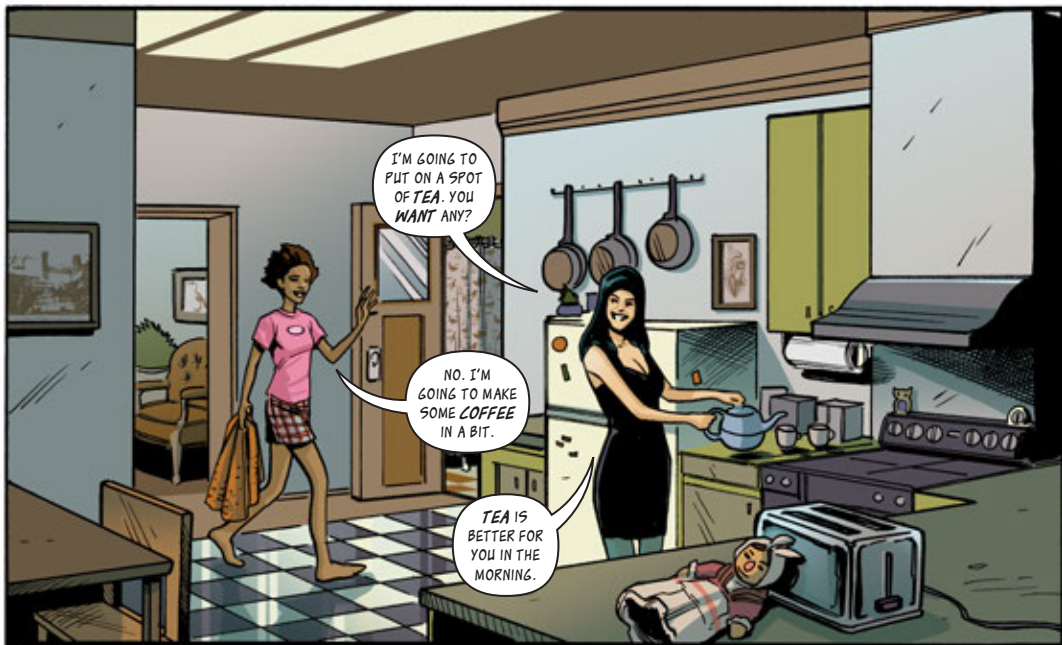
"LATELY I'VE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT THE COMMON MAN."



CHAPTER



9



I'M GOING TO PUT ON A SPOT OF TEA. YOU WANT ANY?

NO. I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME COFFEE IN A BIT.

TEA IS BETTER FOR YOU IN THE MORNING.



NOTHING IS BETTER FOR ME IN THE MORNING THAN COFFEE AND A SHOWER.

COFFEE? YOU THINK IT'S SOOP FOR YOU?

KEEP DREAMING. AMERICAN GIRL.

I'LL GET YOU INTO THE TEA HABIT YET.



I'LL JUST GO AHEAD AND MAKE AN EXTRA CUP IN CASE YOU BECOME CIVILIZED WHILE YOU'RE IN THE SHOWER.



SO... WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BURMA?

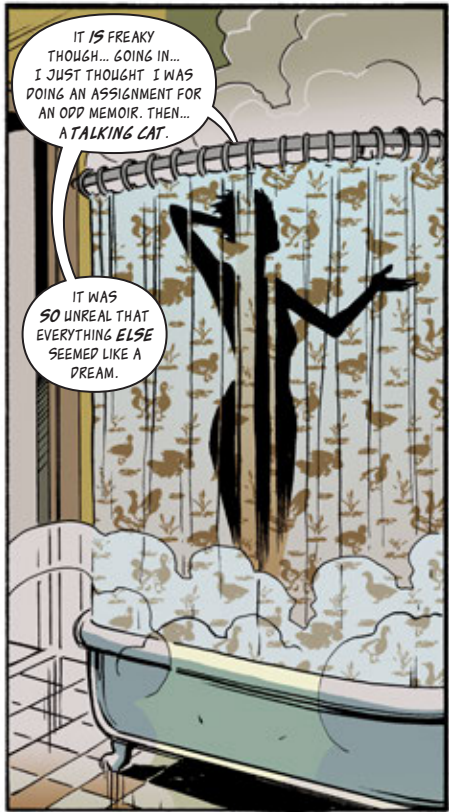
THE CAT? WELL... HE'S A TALKING CAT. AIN'T HE?



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.

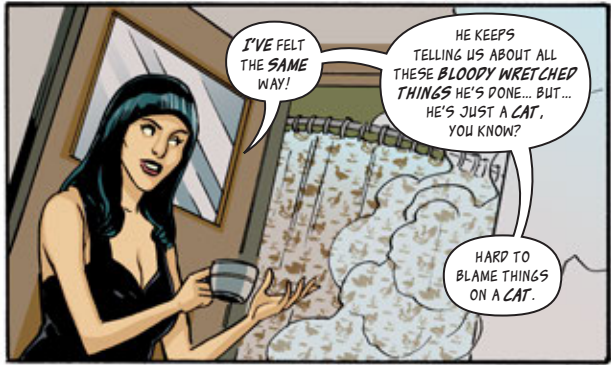


IT IS FREAKY THOUGH... GOING IN... I JUST THOUGHT I WAS DOING AN ASSIGNMENT FOR AN ODD MEMOIR. THEN... A TALKING CAT.

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.









OUT OF WORK, DON'T YOU KNOW.

ANY LUCK FINDING A JOB?

AIN'T BEEN LOOKING.



ME EITHER. SEEMS LIKE A WASTE OF TIME. BETTER THINGS TO DO.

I HEAR THAT, DUDE. SEEMS LIKE...



LOOK OUT!

UFFFF!

WOT HELL?



AHH, SHIT!





I'LL HAVE THIS GUN IF YOU DON'T...

AGHHH!

SPAKKKT



UGH-HUH!

SPAKKKT

DAMN IT!



OH MY GOP!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

A MURDER!

A MAN'S BEING KILLED!



HERE NOW! ENOUGH OF THAT!

KRAKKT

GHH!







CHAPTER



10





THEY **HAVE** GROWN A BIT UNCOMFORTABLE, HAVEN'T THEY? THAT CAT **SURE** SEEMED LIKE HE WANTED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.

HE **SURE** DID.

NOW **HUSH** FOR A BIT. NO **GOSSIPING**. I'M LETTING HIM KNOW ABOUT TAKING THE DAY OFF.



HEY. SORRY, BURMA, BUT I WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE IT TODAY. REGGIE AND I WILL BE AT A HOSPITAL. A **NURSERY**, ACTUALLY, BECAUSE...

I'M NOT SURE. I'LL **CHECK**.



HE WANTS TO KNOW **WHAT** HOSPITAL.

GRAND HEALTH CENTRE.



IT'S **GRAND HEALTH CENTRE**. ANYWAY, I SUPPOSE I WON'T BE ABLE TO...

WHAT? UMM. **REALLY?**



IF YOU WANT. **SURE**.

BUT I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T...?



WELL, OF COURSE. THE **BABIES** THEY ARE CUTE.

OKAY. SEE YOU THEN. **BYE**.



BURMA IS GOING TO MEET US THERE.

WHAT?

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.







I SUPPOSE. I'M NOT SURE I COULD AFFORD A BABY ON WHAT I MAKE THESE DAYS.

THAT'S WHY YOU NEED A RICH HUSBAND. QUIT TALKING TO ALL THE BOYS IN THE SPORTS JERSEYS.

NOT SURE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO.



WE HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR THE BABY BUT IT'S LIKE TOMMY DOESN'T CARE. NOT LOOKING FOR A JOB AT ALL.

LOTS OF PEOPLE SEEM LAZY THESE DAYS, THAT'S WHAT MY DAD SAYS.

IF YOU REALLY WANT A BABY, YOU COULD ALWAYS GET A HIGH-PAYING JOB.



FIRST, I DON'T REALLY WANT A BABY.

SECONDLY, THERE'S JUST AN AMAZING ARRAY OF HIGH-PAYING JOBS FOR THE TAKING HERE IN LONDON.



I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. THE JOB SITUATION ISN'T SO WONDERFUL IN AMERICA, EITHER.



ALL OUR POLITICIANS, THE PRESIDENT, EVERYONE... THEY KEEP TALKING ABOUT SOLVING THE JOB MARKET, BUT NOTHING COMES OF IT.



AHH. AMERICAN PRESIDENTS. I'VE HAD MY TERMS IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

NOT POSSIBLE. I'D REMEMBER IF WE'D EVER ELECTED A CAT.



I DIDN'T SAY I WAS PRESIDENT. JUST IN THE WHITE HOUSE. THE FIRST TIME WAS WITH THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

YOU KNEW TEDDY ROOSEVELT?



WE WERE ACQUAINTANCES FOR A TIME.

IN THOSE DAYS I WAS KNOWN AS SLIPPERS. I AFFECTED A SIMPLE DISGUISE.

A CHANGE OF COLOR. AND I ATTACHED AN EXTRA TOE TO EACH OF MY PAWS.



"NONE OF MY ENEMIES COULD HAVE POSSIBLY RECOGNIZED ME. THEY WERE TOO FOCUSED ON THE DISTRACTION OF THOSE EXTRA TOES."



WHAT ENEMIES DO YOU HAVE? DO YOU SERIOUSLY GO AROUND IN DISGUISE THE WHOLE TIME? IS THIS REALLY EVEN WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE?

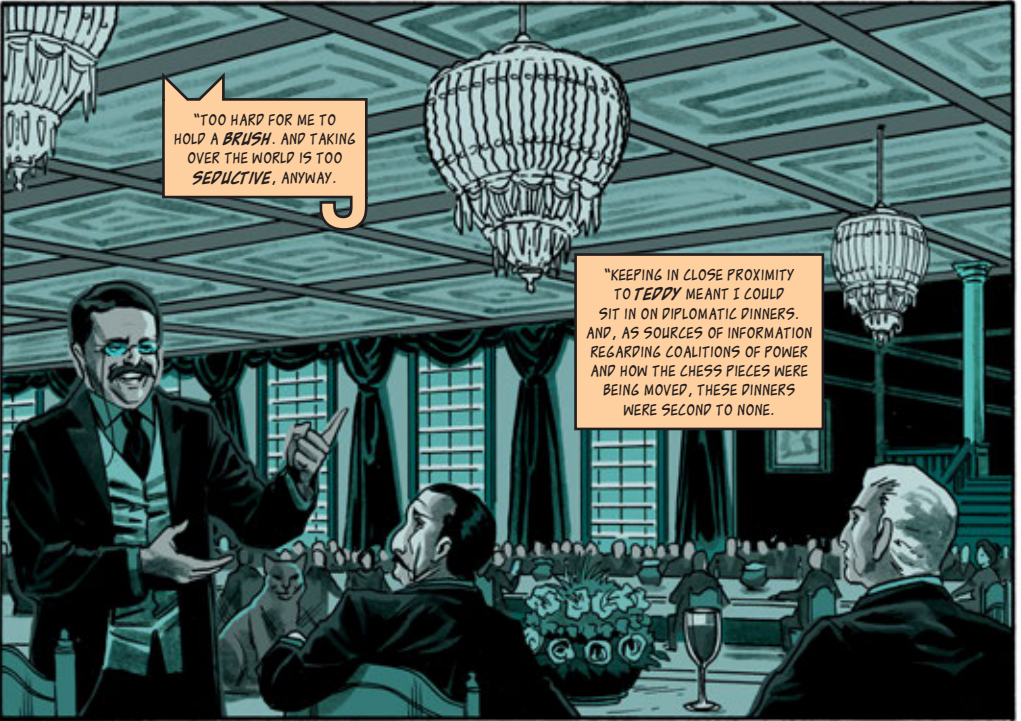
OWWWW. YES. OWWW. THIS IS WHAT I... OWWW... LOOK LIKE.



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 SEPUUCTIVE, ANYWAY."

"KEEPING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO TEDDY 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 THEODORE, 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.



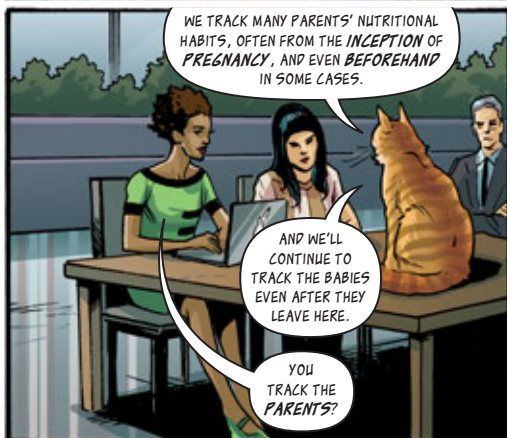
"NOT BAD, IN SOME WAYS. BUT HIS POLICIES, AGAINST MY ADVICE, LED THE UNITED STATES INTO THE GREAT DEPRESSION, ENDING AMERICA'S ECONOMIC JUGGERNAUT, AND ALL OF MY SCHEMES."



THE SOUP LINES? YEAH... I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE SOUP LINES.

IT WAS **DETESTABLE**. NUTRITION IS THE MOST VITAL PART OF HEALTH.

WHICH IS WHY **NUTRITION** PLAYS SUCH A **HUGE** PART IN THIS HOSPITAL.



WE TRACK MANY PARENTS' NUTRITIONAL HABITS, OFTEN FROM THE **INCEPTION** OF **PREGNANCY**, AND EVEN **BEFOREHAND** IN SOME CASES.

AND WE'LL CONTINUE TO TRACK THE BABIES EVEN AFTER THEY LEAVE HERE.

YOU TRACK THE PARENTS?



"YES. WE KNOW **WHAT** THE PARENTS ATE... **HOW MUCH** OF IT... **WHEN** THEY ATE IT... AND SO ON. ALL FROM **QUESTIONNAIRES**."



HEY! I REMEMBER MY FRIENDS **TALKING** ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRES. THEY **LOVED** THEM!

OF COURSE.

PEOPLE WHO FILL OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVE **SUBSTANTIAL** DISCOUNTS ON BOTH NUTRITIONAL FOODS AND HOSPITAL TREATMENTS, AS LONG AS WE RECEIVE THEIR FORMS ON A WEEKLY BASIS.



WHY DOES THE HOSPITAL, OR, RATHER, WHY DO YOU DO ALL THIS? WHAT'S WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRES?



"SIMPLE. I OWN A FOOD CONSORTIUM. NINTH WORLD ENTERPRISES."

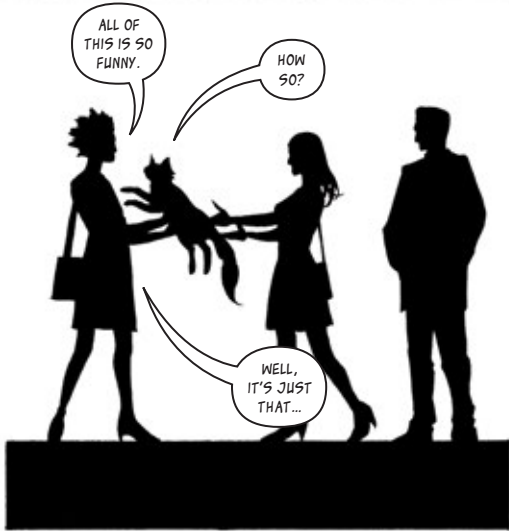


"AND THE MORE I KNOW ABOUT NUTRITIONAL HABITS, AND HOW TO SHAPE THEM FOR THE COMMON GOOD, THE MORE MY BUSINESS WILL PROFIT."



MORE PROFIT MEANS A GREATER CAPABILITY TO GUIDE THE WORLD'S POPULACE TOWARDS PROPER EATING HABITS.

WOW. THE MENU HERE IS REALLY HEALTHY.



ALL OF THIS IS SO FUNNY.

HOW SO?

WELL, IT'S JUST THAT...



"... 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."

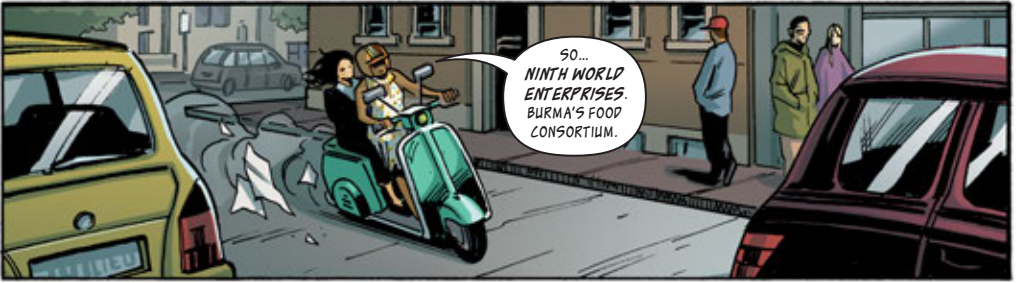


"OR, YOU KNOW, THE OTHER PAW."

CHAPTER



11



SO...
NINTH WORLD
ENTERPRISES.
BURMA'S FOOD
CONSORTIUM.



WHAT
ABOUT IT?

I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT
RESEARCHING IT.

IS THAT
WHY YOU HAVE
BAGS UNDER
YOUR EYES?



YES. THANK
YOU. BEAUTY TIPS
LATER. COLD HARD
REALITY NOW.

COLD HARD
REALITY?



FIRST...
NINTH WORLD
ENTERPRISES WAS
REALLY HARD TO
RESEARCH.

THEY
STAY WELL
BELOW RADAR.
CODED MATERIAL.
PASSWORD
PROTECTION.
ENCRYPTED
FILES.

I'VE NEVER
SEEN SO MUCH
SECURITY.



THEN HOW
DID YOU MANAGE
TO FIND OUT
ANYTHING?

PLEASE,
REGGIE. YOU'RE
TALKING TO ALLISON
BREAKING. OF BREAKING
NEWS. I'VE BEEN KNOCKING
OVER FIREWALLS SINCE
I WAS IN FIFTH
GRADE.



AHH, THE LADIES.

BURMA IS IN HIS OFFICE. HE'LL BE SO PLEASED TO SEE YOU.



SO WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT?

REALLY SHADY THINGS. THE COMPANY WAS FOUNDED DURING NAZI GERMANY.

FOUNDED BY NAZIS?



NO. BUT... THE SAME TIME PERIOD. AND THE COMPANY WAS BIG INTO EXTREMELY UNETHICAL EXPERIMENTS.

THEY WERE LIKE, THE EXTREME SPORTS OF NUTRITIONAL EXPERIMENTATION. A LOT OF TEST ANIMALS DIED. AND PEOPLE, TOO.



IT'S TRUE THAT BURMA, OUR BURMA, WASN'T PART OF THE COMPANY BACK THEN, BUT...

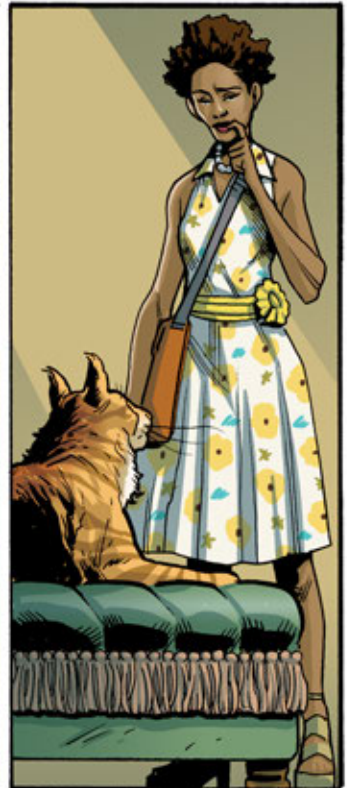
ALLISON. YOU ARE CREEPING ME OUT.

YOU ARE TOTALLY CREEPING ME OUT AND I NEED TO FEE.



DON'T TALK TO BURMA ABOUT THIS UNTIL I GET BACK. DON'T. YOU NEED BACKUP.

BUT RIGHT NOW, I NEED A BATHROOM.

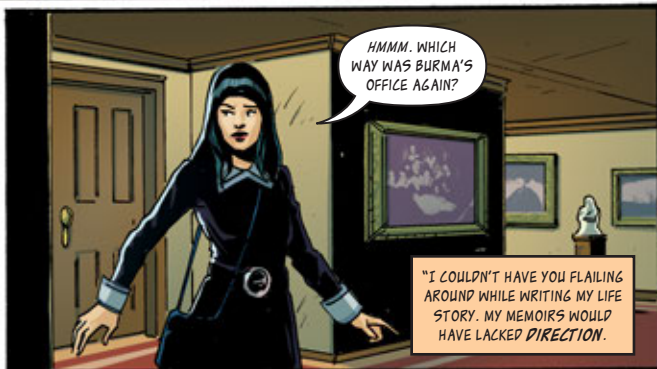




"BECAUSE YOU SEE, MS. BREAKING... I WAS **WELL AWARE** OF YOUR COMPUTER INTRUSION LAST NIGHT."

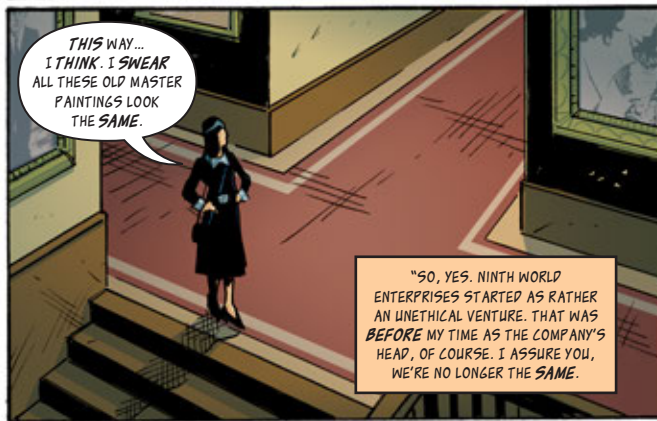


"I COULD HAVE STOPPED YOU AT **ANY** TIME, OF COURSE. BUT I DECIDED YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW **NOW**, AS OPPOSED TO **LATER**."



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**."



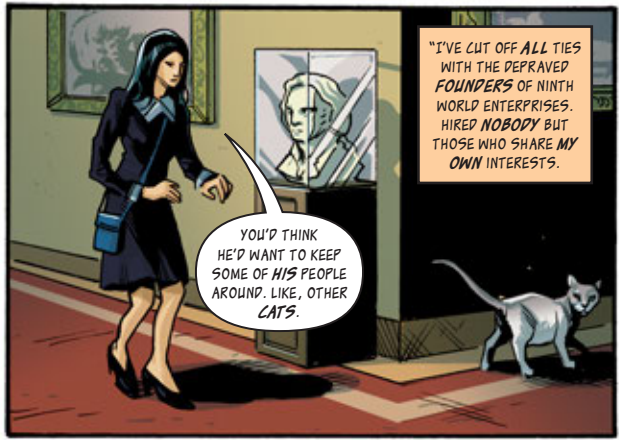
HMMM?

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



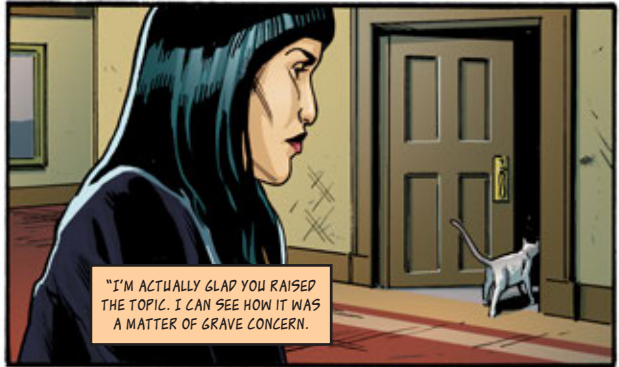
"WE NOW WORK FOR *OUR* BELIEFS. FOR THE *BETTERMENT* OF ALL HUMANITY. AND THE *WORLD*."

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*."



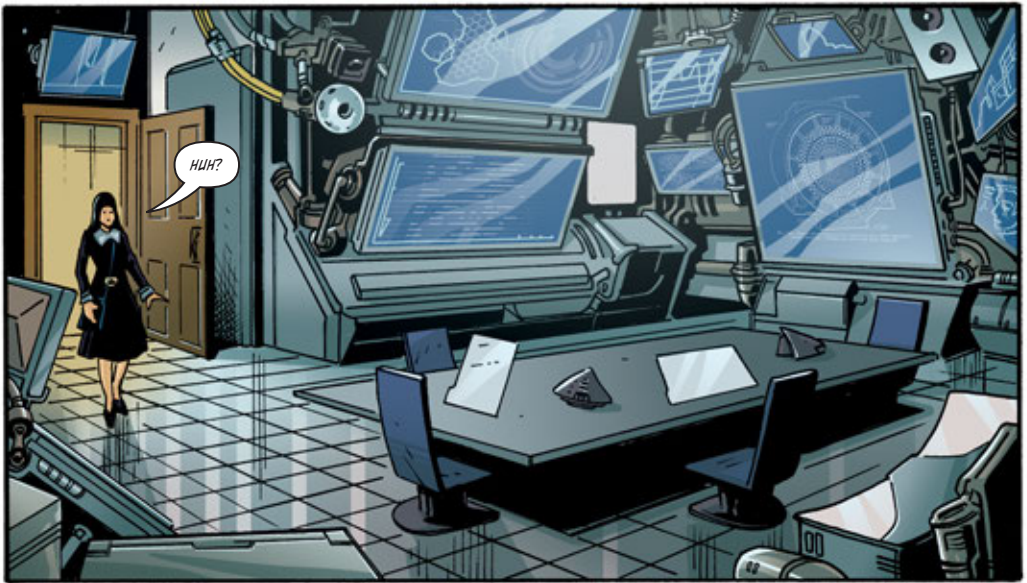
"I'M ACTUALLY GLAD YOU RAISED THE TOPIC. I CAN SEE HOW IT WAS A MATTER OF GRAVE CONCERN."



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



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?

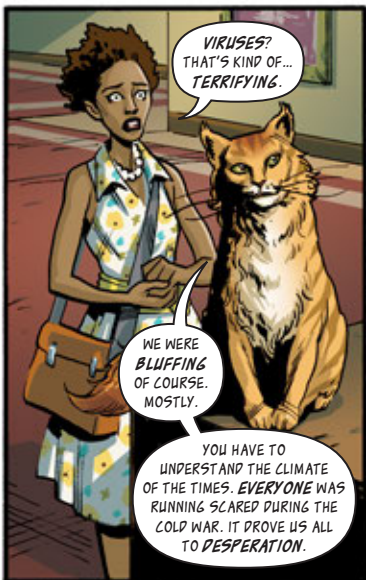
"HARDLY. OR RATHER,
THE MOVIES WERE
BASED ON REAL LIFE
INCIDENTS. SOMEWHAT
TONED DOWN FOR THE
MASSES, OF COURSE. THE
WORLD WOULD BE TRULY
HORRIFIED TO LEARN
WHAT REALLY WENT ON IN
THOSE HOLLOWED-OUT
VOLCANOES AND
NUCLEAR CONTROL
ROOMS."



"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**.



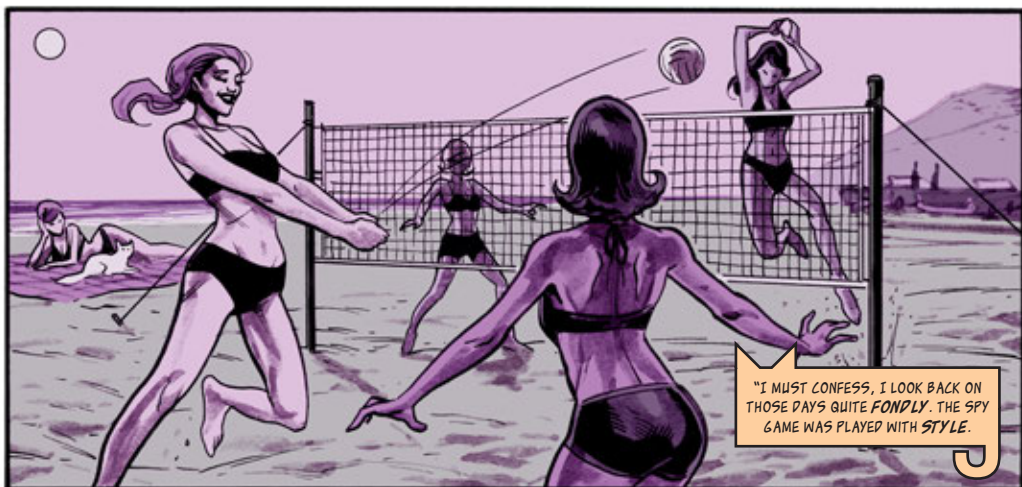
"TAKING OVER THE WORLD SEEMED ALMOST LIKE A **POLITICAL STATEMENT**, RATHER THAN A POWER GRAB."



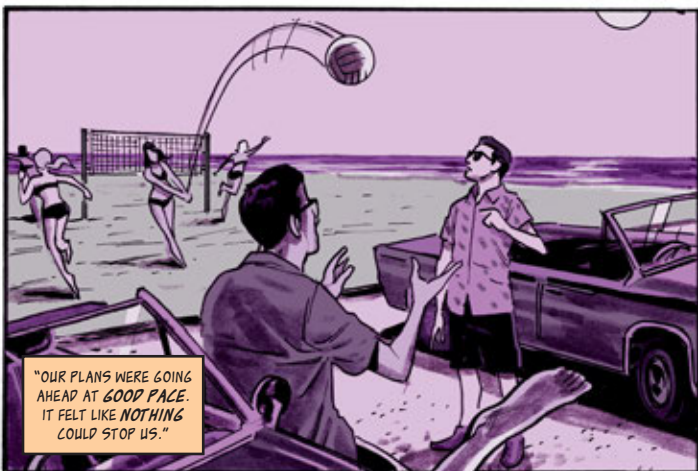
"WE WERE GIVING PEACE A CHANCE."



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



"I MUST CONFESS, I LOOK BACK ON THOSE DAYS QUITE *FONDLY*. THE SPY GAME WAS PLAYED WITH *STYLE*."



"OUR PLANS WERE GOING AHEAD AT *GOOD PACE*. IT FELT LIKE *NOTHING* COULD STOP US."



**KRAAA-
KOOOOOOOM**



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



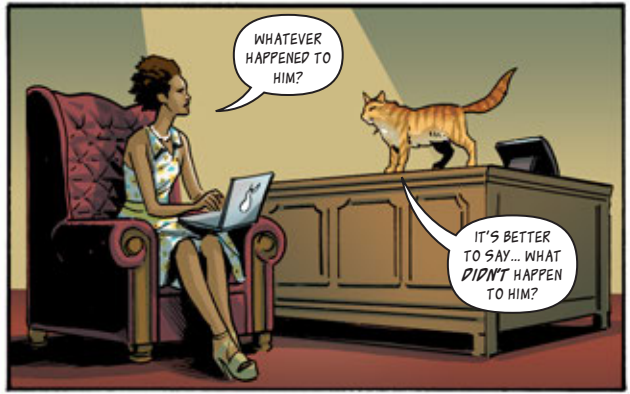
"HALF OF OUR AGENTS HAD A COMPLETE INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT HIM."



"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



OH NO.



HSSST

RAWWRRRR

MWRRR



STAY BACK!

BAD KITTIES!

DO ANY...
CAN ANY OF
YOU TALK?



OH GOD.
OH SHIT.

PLEASE...
IF ANY OF YOU
CAN...









WHAT JUST HAPPENED IN THERE?

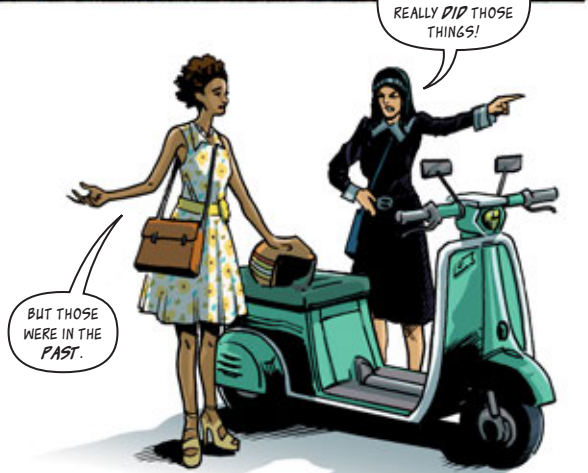
IT'S ALL TRUE!



WHAT'S ALL TRUE?

BURMA! TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD! ALL THOSE THINGS HE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT!

THEY'RE NOT JUST STORIES! HE REALLY DID THOSE THINGS!



BUT THOSE WERE IN THE PAST.



NO. HE'S STILL DOING IT. I FOUND HIS LAIR, HIS, I DON'T KNOW... HIS SECRET HEADQUARTERS. GUNS EVERYWHERE. A COMMAND CENTER. DEAD SPIES ON MONITORS.

THERE WERE CATS. BIG CATS.



THEY WERE GOING TO KILL ME.

BUT...

ALLISON, THEY WERE GOING TO KILL ME. CARDIFF SAVED MY LIFE. IF HE HADN'T SAVED ME... I'D BE DEAD RIGHT NOW. RIGHT NOW.



"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**."



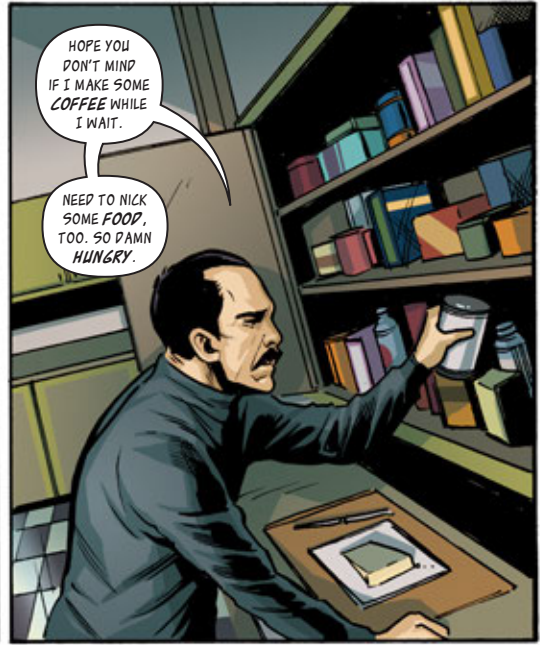
"THERE WERE APPARENTLY **MORE** OF THEM. A LOT MORE **SPIES**, I MEAN. BUT **BURMA** HAD THEM **DEALT WITH**. DO YOU **UNDERSTAND?** **DEALT WITH.**"



"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."







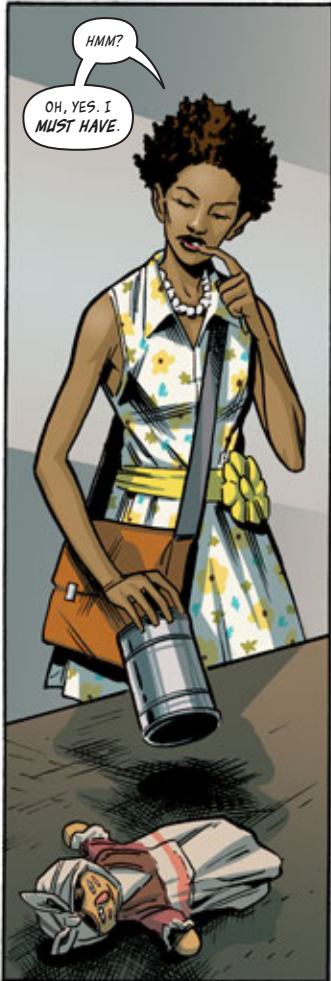
REALLY?
JUST TALK
TO HIM?

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.



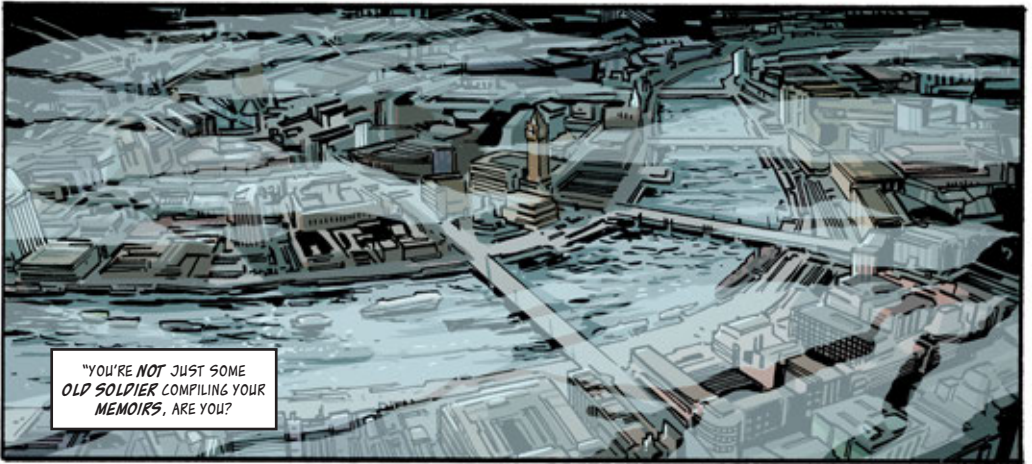
"IT'S HARD TO
BELIEVE HE'D
HURT ANYONE,
REALLY."

Allison -
You don't
know me

CHAPTER



13



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



"THIS *HASNT* BEEN ABOUT ALL THE TIMES YOU TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD IN THE *PAST*."



"THIS IS ABOUT *NOW*, ISNT 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.

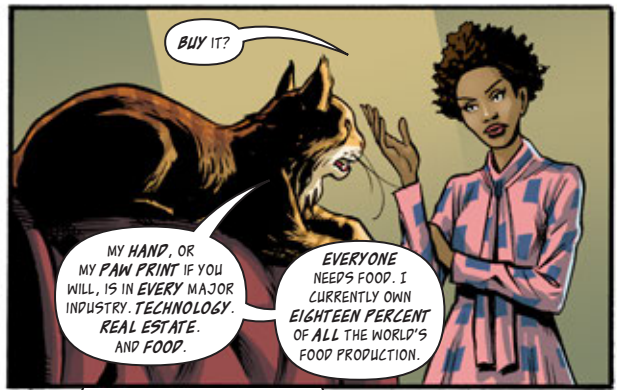


WHERE'S THE GAME IN THAT?



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

THAT'S FOR DREAMERS, NOT RULERS.





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?

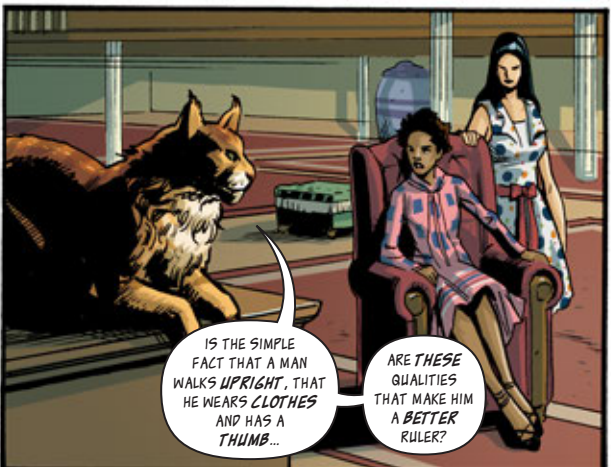
IF I NAMED THE WORLD'S TEN MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE, YOU WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE A SINGLE NAME. AND YET, TOGETHER, THEY RULE THE WORLD.

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



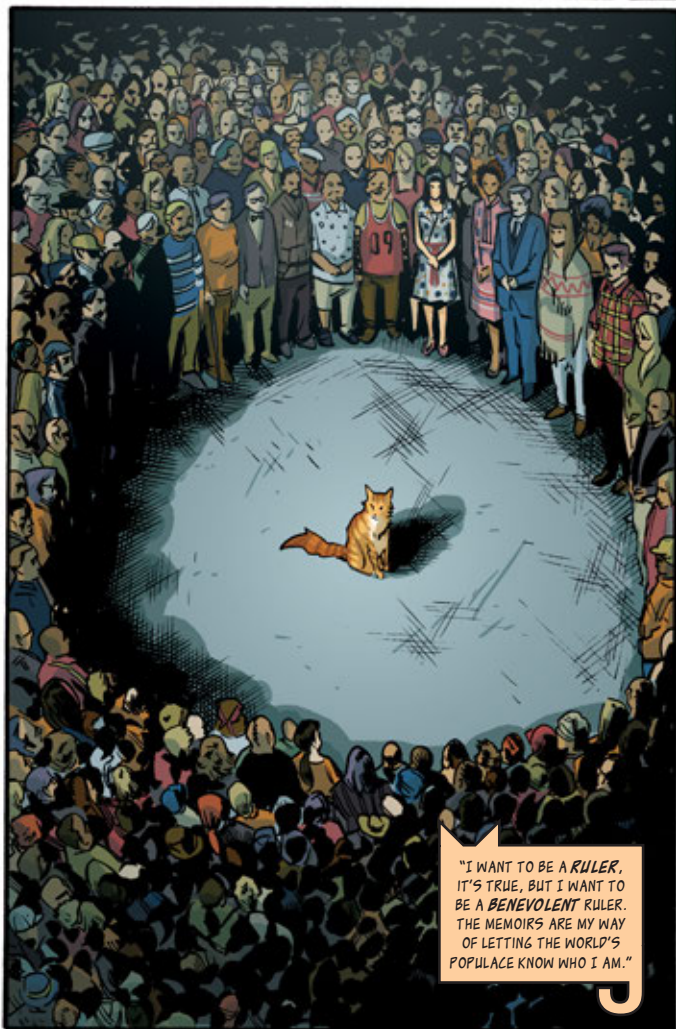
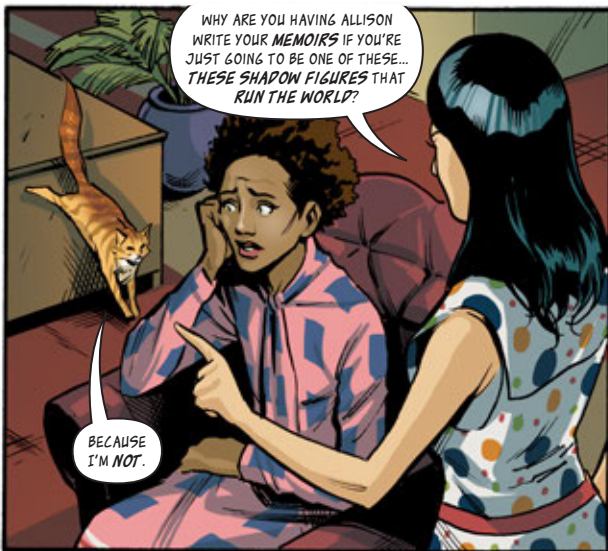
THIS WORLD IS NOT RUN BY THOSE DEPICTED ON THE MONEY; IT'S RUN BY THOSE WHO HAVE THE MONEY.

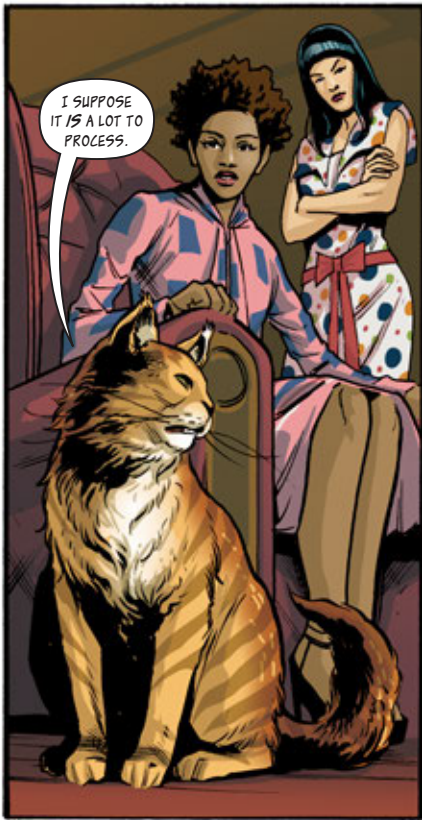
CAN YOU REALLY TELL ME THAT YOU WOULD PUT YOUR FAITH IN ANY OF THESE TEN UNKNOWN SHADOWS, RATHER THAN A CAT?



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?





I SUPPOSE
IT IS A LOT TO
PROCESS.



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 THING
WITH THE EXTRA
LIVES. ARE ALL CATS
REALLY LIKE YOU? DO ALL
CATS HAVE EXTRA
LIVES?

NO. THIS IS
ANOTHER AREA
IN WHICH I AM
UNIQUE.



THEN HOW
DO YOU KNOW
YOU'RE ON YOUR LAST
LIFE? WHAT ARE YOU
MEASURING
AGAINST?

I CAN FEEL
IT. I CAN FEEL
THE TRUTH OF IT IN
EVERY BREATH
I TAKE.

MY TIME
ON EARTH
IS NEARLY
DONE.



THIS IS MY
LAST GIFT TO
MYSELF. THE LAST
PRESENT I'LL EVER
OPEN.



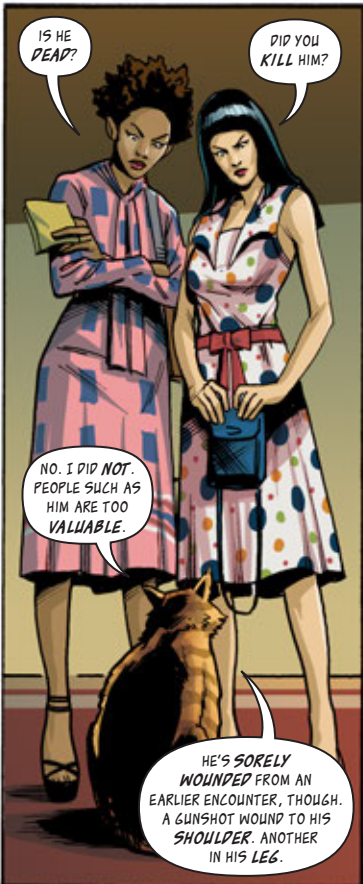




WELL.

WELL.

RATHER A *NICE* LETTER. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW WHO IT WAS FROM?



IS HE DEAD?

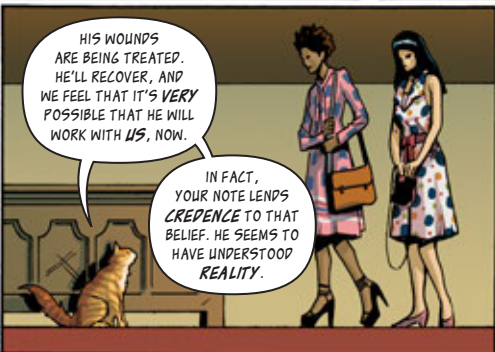
DID YOU KILL HIM?

NO. I DID *NOT*. PEOPLE SUCH AS HIM ARE TOO VALUABLE.

HE'S *SOLELY* WOUNDED FROM AN EARLIER ENCOUNTER, THOUGH. A GUNSHOT WOUND TO HIS *SHOULDER*. ANOTHER IN HIS *LEG*.



"ROHAN, A PARTNER OF MINE, WAS ABLE TO INJECT HIM WITH A *SEDATIVE*. THIS HAPPENED IN YOUR APARTMENT, REGGIE. I'M AFRAID."



HIS WOUNDS ARE BEING TREATED. HE'LL RECOVER, AND WE FEEL THAT IT'S *VERY* POSSIBLE THAT HE WILL WORK WITH *US*, NOW.

IN FACT, YOUR NOTE LENDS *CREDENCE* TO THAT BELIEF. HE SEEMS TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD *REALITY*.



NOW... I'VE ANSWERED *YOUR* QUESTION. YOU ANSWER *MINE*.

ARE YOU WILLING TO COMPLETE MY *MEMOIRS*?





"I KNOW. I'VE SEEN THEM. ALL OVER. THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME TO DECIDE. TO MAKE A CALL. THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME TO DO WHAT A REPORTER **NEEDS** TO DO."



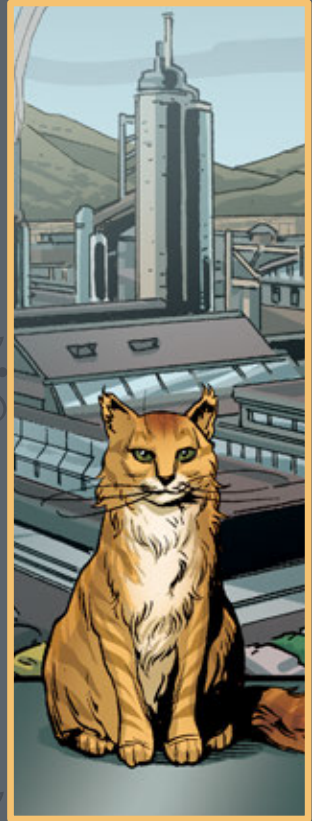


I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.

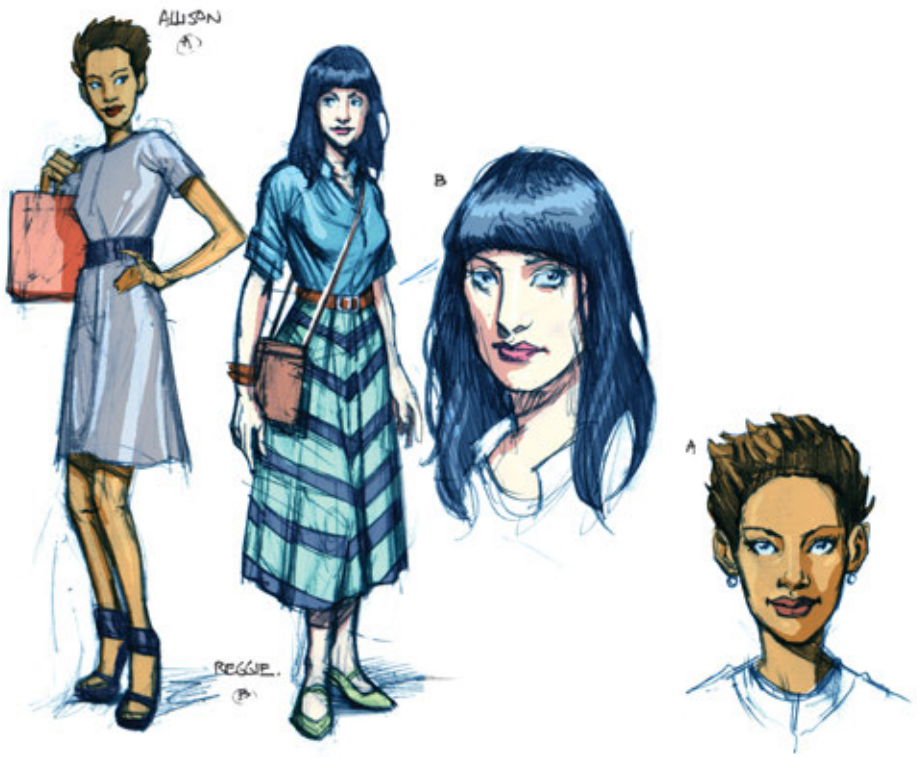
THE END.



EXTRAS



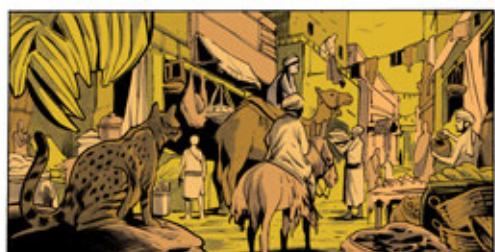
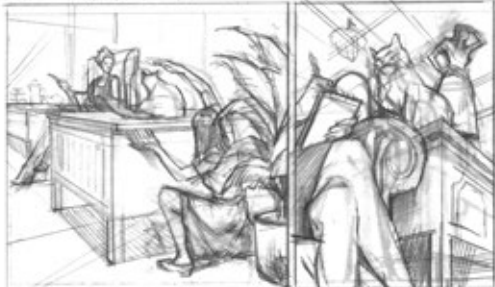
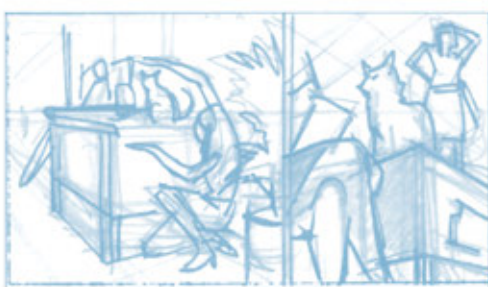
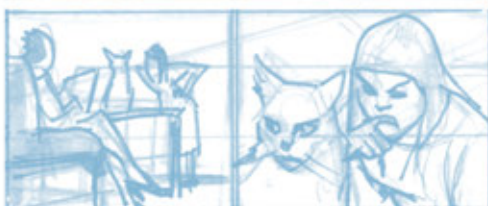
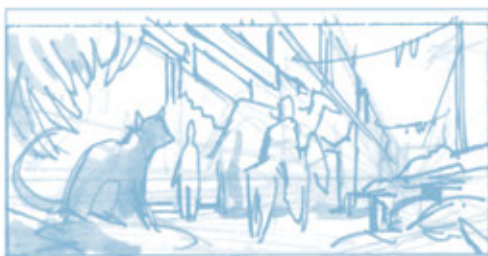
BONUS
MATERIAL



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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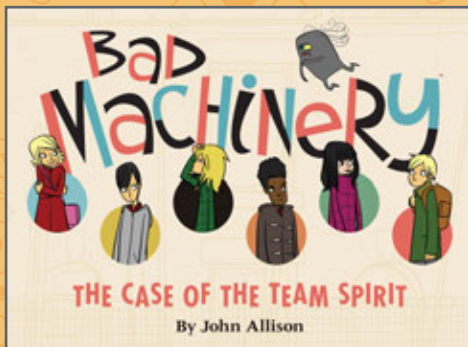


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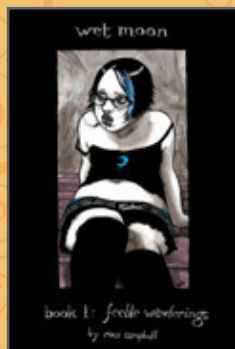


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THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG.



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.

