



SIMON M. ATANA S.

SCRIPT  
PANEL LAYOUT  
COVER

PENCILS  
INK

TRANSLATION  
(SORRY, ENGLISH SPEAKERS)

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WEBPAGE: WWW.UPSURGE.ES/ENGLISH

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YOU AND ESSEX WERE ALWAYS AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS, AND NOW HE'S NOT GETTING A SINGLE DECENT HAND.

BIT BOLD, NO? YOU'RE BARELY CONCEALING IT.



HERE WE GO.



HOW AM I TO BLAME FOR HIS PLAYS? HE'S ALWAYS BEEN IMPATIENT, AND POKER REQUIRES PATIENCE...

ANYONE'S BUYING A CARD?



ESSEX. DO YOU THINK ALL TEACHERS ARE YOUR ENEMIES?

THE MAGIC SIGIL WAS SUPPOSED TO ATTRACT AN ANCIENT COIN, AND WHAT YOU BROUGHT WAS A EURO FROM FRANCE. FISCHER WAS RIGHT.

PFFT. ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS THE RITUAL OF THE DOOR.

THE REST... DIVINATION, SIGILS... BAH.

MAKES YOU WEAK, THIS STUFF.

CARD.

FUCK YOUR "PATIENCE". I COULD BE PLAYING WITH MY HAND DISCLOSED AND IT WOULD MAKE NO DIFFERENCE!

I DIDN'T EXPECT TO WIN, BUT SHOWING ME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST...!

BUT HEY, YOU'RE CLEARLY CHEATING. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER I'LL LIMIT MYSELF TO UNCOVERING YOUR CRAP OR I'LL BEAT YOU TO A PULP FOR BEING A TRAITOR.



HAHAHAHA. ARE YOU THREATENING ME? THAT'S SO FUNNY. I STILL SEE THE KID IN YOU... HOW OLD WERE YOU, 20?

YOU DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, BOY.

TEN YEARS AGO, FRANCIS.

ESSEX, YOU HAD ALREADY OPENED THE FIRST DOOR BEFORE SIGNING UP, RIGHT?

CHANGING THE SUBJECT?

WERE YOU ALREADY PART OF THE EBI AT THAT TIME?

WERE YOU THE ONE WHO IMPLANTED THE MEASURES? MY VISION NEVER DETECTED THEM! HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

WAS IT A BULLET?

SOME THINGS ALWAYS ESCAPED YOU, JA...

A COLOR WE DIDN'T KNOW? THE BLACK BULLET?

YOU BETTER ANSWER OR THIS FARCE OF A GAME IS **OVER!** REMEMBER THAT THIS GAME IS SUSTAINED BECAUSE WE HAVE ABIDED BY YOUR RULES...!

I DON'T GIVE A FUCK IF YOU HAVE THE THIRD DOOR OR THE HUNDRETH OPEN! NOBODY MANIPULATES MY FUCKING MIND, TRAITOR!



HM. OR MAYBE YOU PARTICIPATE BECAUSE, DEEP DOWN, YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE ME AS AN ENEMY. A SENSIBLE DECISION, UNLESS, OF COURSE, I AM WHAT YOU SAY I AM.

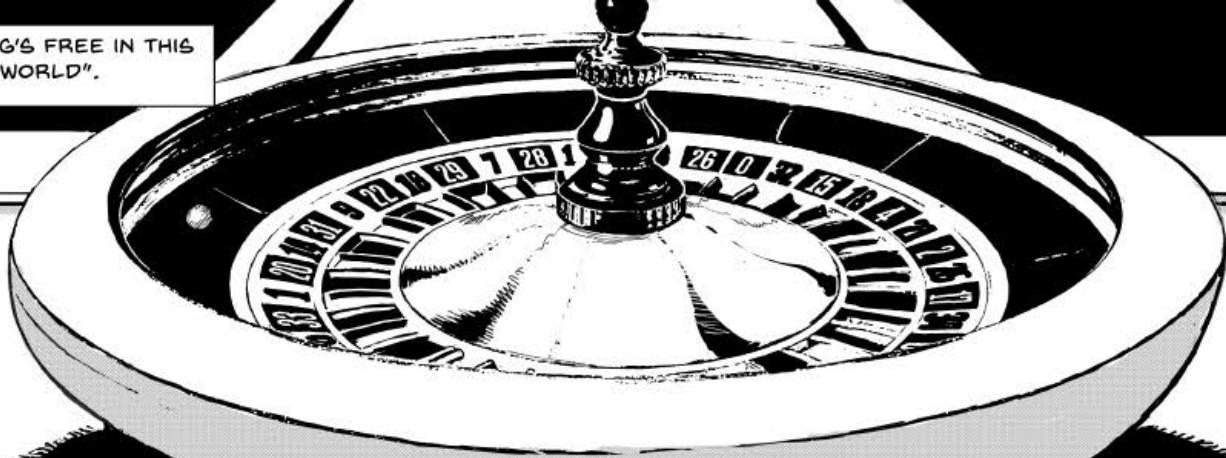
BUT THAT'S THE THING. THE PARANORMAL EBI WAS NEVER YOUR ENEMY. EVEN IF I DID WHAT YOU SAY I DID... HOW HAVE I BETRAYED YOU?

FOLLOWING STANDARD PROCEDURE IS TREASON? I MEAN, ONE COULD ARGUE THAT, PERHAPS, THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES A LEGAL MAGE LEGAL, AS OPPOSED TO ILLEGAL, IS THE CERTAINTY OF THE EBI THAT THEY WILL FOLLOW CERTAIN PROTOCOLS.

YOU WANTED TO BE LEGAL MAGICIANS AND, PERHAPS, THAT WAS PART OF THE PRICE.



"NOTHING'S FREE IN THIS WORLD".



BLACK,  
10.



...



OH, YOU  
GOT THE DRINK  
ALREADY? THAT  
WAS FAST.

YOU SHOULD  
BE CAREFUL,  
WITH THOSE  
HEELS...



...YOU CAN'T AFFORD  
TOO MUCH ALCOHOL,  
CAN YOU? YOU'LL END  
UP FACEPLANTING ON  
THE FLOOR.

THAT SAID,  
WHAT NUM-  
BER DO  
YOU...?



UHM.



MY  
GOD.

YOUR FACE IS LIKE THE  
BALD ASS OF ONE OF  
THOSE MONKEYS.

OOPS.  
POKER. HOW  
LUCKY, HM?



72 POINTS.  
I THINK YOU'RE  
FUCKED.



READY  
TO TAKE THE  
BULLET? A DEAL  
IS A DEAL.

THE BULLET.  
AN UNDEFINED  
THREAT. ALMOST  
AS IF IT WERE...  
A RIDDLE.

FOUR EIGHTS.  
TWO ON THE  
TABLE, TWO IN  
HIS HAND. JUST  
ONE CARD  
DRAWN.



THE GAME... HE  
WOULDN'T LET US  
GET UP BECAUSE THE  
GAME HAD ALREADY  
STARTED, BUT HE  
HADN'T DEALT ANY  
CARDS.



EVERYTHING IS THERE  
TO BE SEEN. IS THE  
POKER GAME PART OF  
ANOTHER GAME?



I DON'T  
LIKE TO BE  
LIED TO,  
FRANCIS.

IS THE BULLET  
PART OF THAT  
GAME?

WAIT... WHAT DID  
ESSEX JUST SAY?

HM? ARE YOU  
IMPLYING THAT  
I'M CHEATING,  
ESSEX?



NO, NOT TALKING  
ABOUT THAT. YOU  
LAUGH WHEN I CALL  
YOU A TRAITOR,  
BUT...

...I'M REMEM-  
BERING ALL  
THESE MO-  
MENTS...

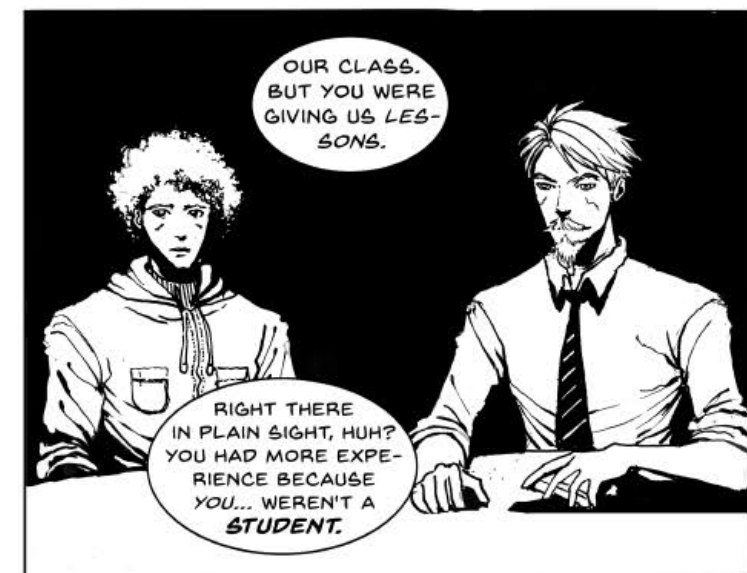




I JUST REALIZED... YOU WERE ALWAYS GIVING US LESSONS, GUIDING US IN OUR STUDIES. AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING OF IT BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, YOU WERE OLDER THAN US...

...BUT, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, WHAT DOES AGE HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR LEVEL OF MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE?

YOU WERE IN OUR CLASS.



OUR CLASS. BUT YOU WERE GIVING US LESSONS.

RIGHT THERE IN PLAIN SIGHT, HUH? YOU HAD MORE EXPERIENCE BECAUSE YOU... WEREN'T A STUDENT.



AND YOU, CRAIG. COLLABORATING WITH HIM.

?  
WHAT D-DO I...

DON'T PLAY DUMB!



I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO, BUT I HEAR THINGS, YOU ASSHOLES! YOU DON'T FOOL ME!



I'M HEARING FOOTSTEPS!

NEXT ROUND.

WE COULD NOT GET UP FROM THE TABLE BEFORE THE GAME HAD STARTED.

IN ORDER TO MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN A GAME, YOU NEED TO MAKE WINNING ATTRACTIVE...

...OR MAKE THEM FEAR DEFEAT. THE THIRD DOOR.

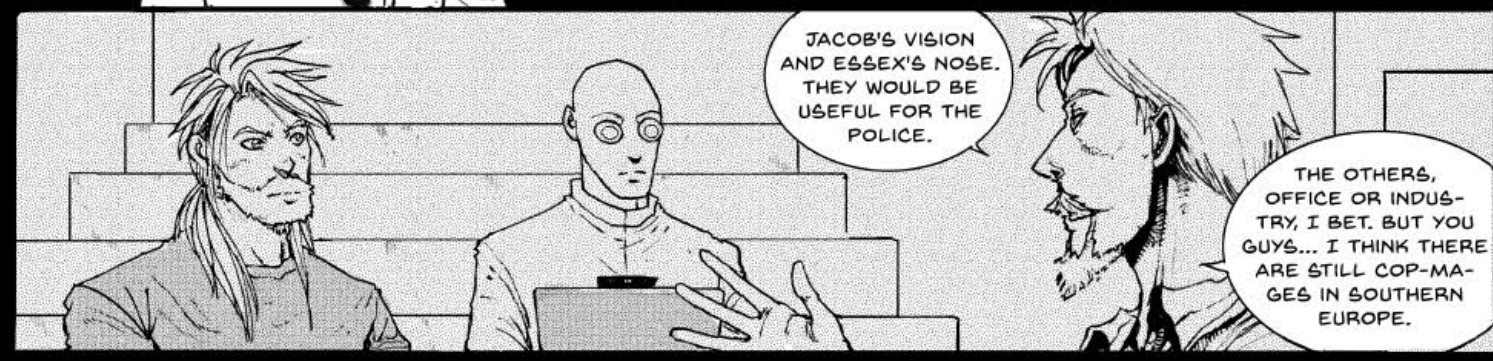
"YOU TWO HAVE TALENT".

THE WAY HE'S TREATING ESSEX. THE BULLET. THE THIRD DOOR.



I'VE SEEN YOU IN THE FIELD TEST.

YOU ARE BETTER THAN I EXPECTED. YOU LOOKED LIKE... MORE THAN STUDENTS, YOU LOOKED LIKE DETECTIVES. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT IT?



JACOB'S VISION AND ESSEX'S NOSE. THEY WOULD BE USEFUL FOR THE POLICE.

THE OTHERS, OFFICE OR INDUSTRY, I BET. BUT YOU GUYS... I THINK THERE ARE STILL COP-MAGES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE.



"YOU BOTH SPEAK SPANISH, DON'T YOU?"

...I THINK...

...THAT THE GAME WE ARE PLAYING IS NOT WHAT WE THOUGHT IT WAS. EVERYTHING IS THERE TO BE SEEN...



...AND THE TRAPS ARE PART OF IT. AND HIS THREATS... ARE THE QUESTION MARK OF A QUESTION NEVER UTTERED.

WHAT IS THE GAME WE ARE PLAYING?

JACOB. CARD?

JACOB.

HEY.

I ALMOST GOT IT. IT'S WHAT ESSEX SAYS: HE WAS ALWAYS GUIDING US.





WHO...?

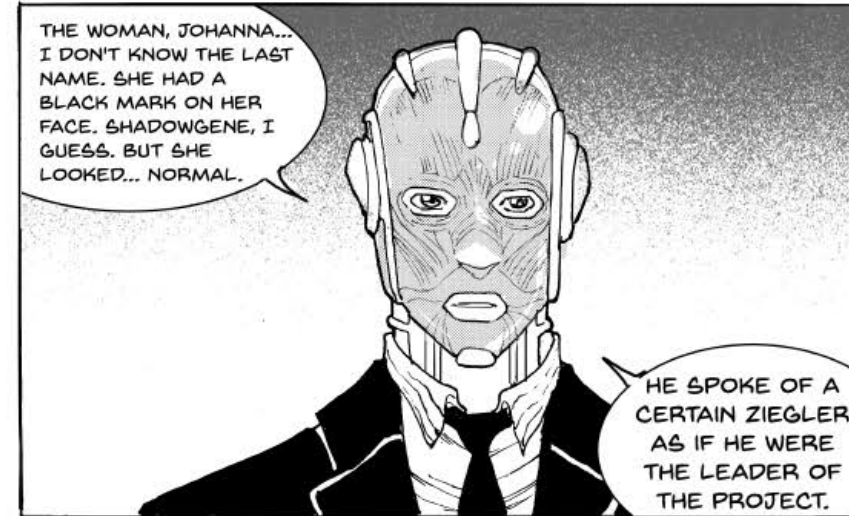
MY MEMORIES... ARE A BIT SCATTERED. THEY WERE MANIPULATED, I THINK...

...BUT THE PROJECT'S SUBORDINATE WAS A WOMAN, AND THE LEADER...



HE'S GIVING ME INFORMATION AND A PROFILE OF WHO MAY BE BEHIND THE SHADOWGENE PROJECT.

WHAT?



THE WOMAN, JOHANNA... I DON'T KNOW THE LAST NAME. SHE HAD A BLACK MARK ON HER FACE. SHADOWGENE, I GUESS. BUT SHE LOOKED... NORMAL.

HE SPOKE OF A CERTAIN ZIEGLER AS IF HE WERE THE LEADER OF THE PROJECT.



THESE ARE THE MOST RELEVANT BASES THAT I REMEMBER. IT ISN'T MUCH AND IT'S PROBABLY NOT RELIABLE, BUT...



ADAM, HAVE YOU FOUND SOME FRIEND IN THIS...?



HEY! COME, SIT DOWN. WE'RE IN LUCK.



THIS IS JOAKIM, AN EBI AGENT...



...AND SHADOWGENE EXPERIMENT.

OH.



SO IT'S TRUE. THIS IS A NEUTRAL ZONE. WE THOUGHT IT WAS DISINFORMATION... A TRAP TO CAPTURE CABALISTS.

HMM. WELL, THIS IS CONVENIENT FOR THE EBI. BUT NO, THE PLACE ISN'T A TRAP.



NO OFFENSE, BUT... WHY ARE YOU HELPING US? GIVEN YOUR CONDITION... THE EBI IS JUST ABOUT THE ONLY PLACE THAT CAN TREAT YOU IF YOU NEED CARE.



FUCK THEM. DON'T YOU SEE MY FACE?

ALL BECAUSE OF A JAW SURGERY.

WHAT?

THEY TRACK PEOPLE THEY CONSIDER TO BE CANDIDATES. ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE WAYS OF KIDNAPPING IS TO WAIT UNTIL YOU NEED SURGERY...

PRETEND YOU DIE DURING THE OPERATION.

EXACTLY.



EVERY DAY, AFTER THE  
BUCKETLOAD OF SLEEPING  
PILLS, I THANK GOD THAT  
MY FAMILY THINKS I'M  
DEAD.

THAT'S WHY... YES,  
THE EBI IS THE ONLY  
THING I HAVE LEFT,  
BUT... THE EBI CAN  
LIVE WITHOUT THE  
FUCKING SHADOW-  
GENE.

WHEN I SAW  
YOU... IT WAS LIKE  
A **GIFT** FROM  
HEAVEN.

YOU HAVE BECOME  
**FAMOUS**, YOU KNOW,  
AMONG OUR PEOPLE.

REALLY?  
PEOPLE  
KNOW ME?

YES. THE THREE  
THAT YOU SAVED RE-  
CENTLY, YOUR ATTACKS TO  
THE LABS... THE AS-  
SAULT ON THE BASE IN  
FRANCE.

THE GIRL YOU RES-  
CUED... IS IT TRUE  
THAT SHE WAS  
YOUR EX?

HEY, HEY. YOU SURE  
YOU WANT TO DO THIS?  
UNLESS YOU'RE LYING  
TO US...

...YOU ARE  
RISKING YOUR  
LIFE.

MY LIFE?

HAH.

LOOK AT  
COLE. FULL  
HOUSE.

62 POINTS!  
WHO WOULD'VE  
THOUGHT.

CRAIG 68,  
JACOB 70.

AND  
ESSEX... A  
VERY WORTHY  
17 POINTS.

AND, FINALLY,  
MYSELF. 85  
POINTS.

DO WE  
NEED TO CONTI-  
NUE? WE CAN, IF  
YOU WANT, BUT...

...YOU'VE **LOST**. I'LL BE  
BENEVOLENT. I GIVE YOU TWO  
OPTIONS: GO ON 'TIL THE END,  
LOSE, AND EAT THE BLACK  
BULLET, WHOSE EFFECTS  
YOU DON'T KNOW...

...OR SURRENDER  
NOW, IN WHICH CASE I  
WOULD USE MY CONTACTS  
IN THE PARANORMAL EBI  
TO HAVE YOU RECRUITED  
UNDER SURVEILLANCE. A  
SEMI-AMNESTY.

YOU CAN DISCUSS  
IT. WITHOUT LEAV-  
ING THE TABLE, OF  
COURSE.

NO.

IS THIS WHAT HE  
WANTED? HE KNOWS  
WE'RE NOT GOING TO  
GIVE IN, RIGHT?

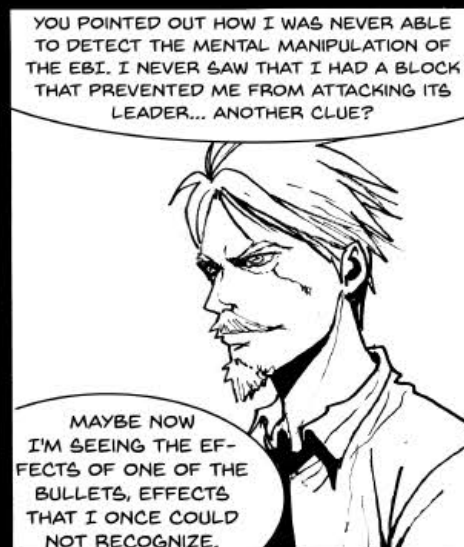
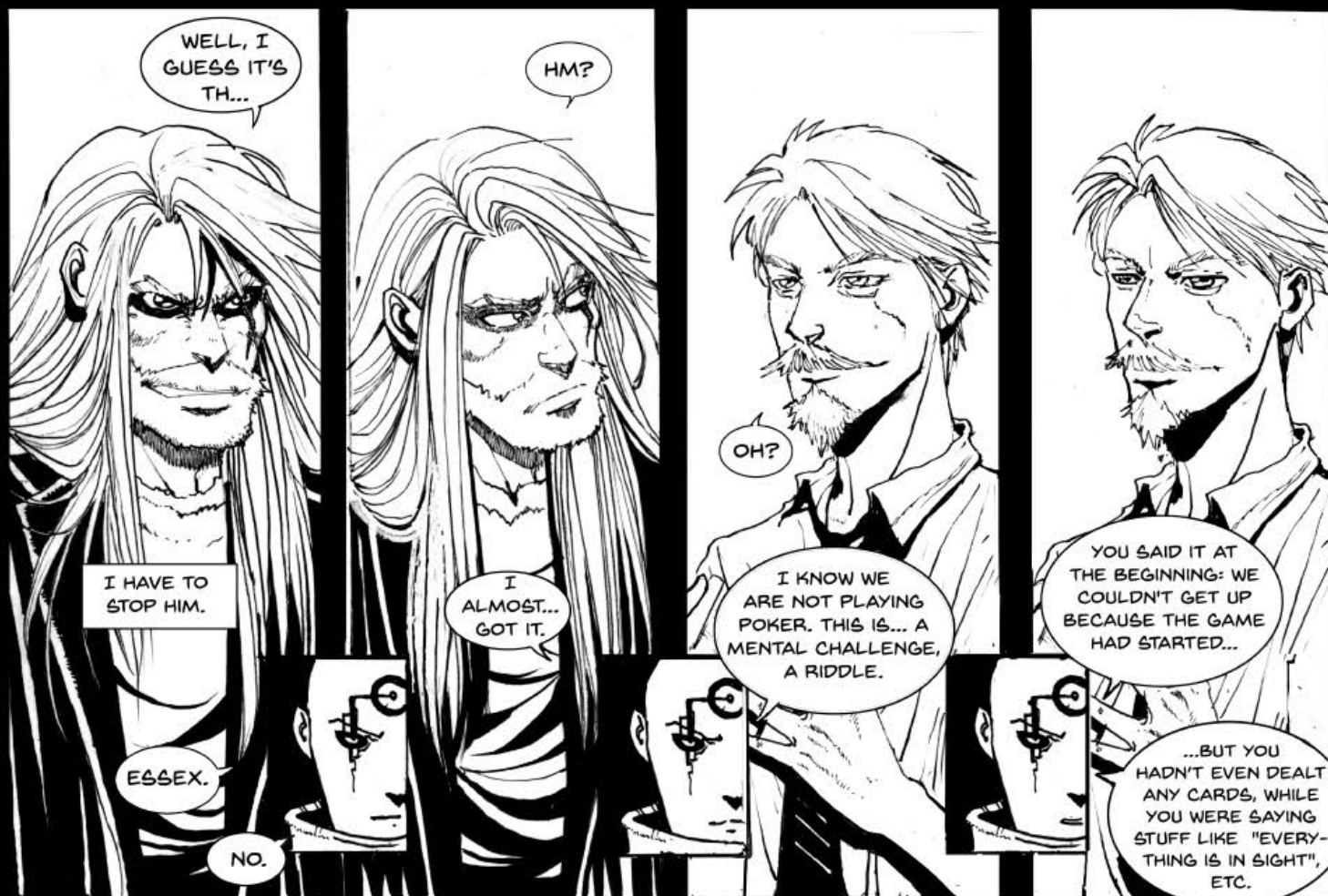
HE HASN'T  
EVEN SAID WHAT  
THE BULLET IS.  
HOW CAN WE  
ASSESS...?

I'VE STARTED TO  
SEE THE PLAN, BUT  
I STILL...

IS HE REALLY  
THREATENING US?

ESSEX'S GOING TO  
ATTACK. BUT THE  
THIRD DOOR... WE  
DON'T KNOW WHAT  
IT CAN DO.









C'MON

THINK

FIT ALL THE CLUES...

TSK.



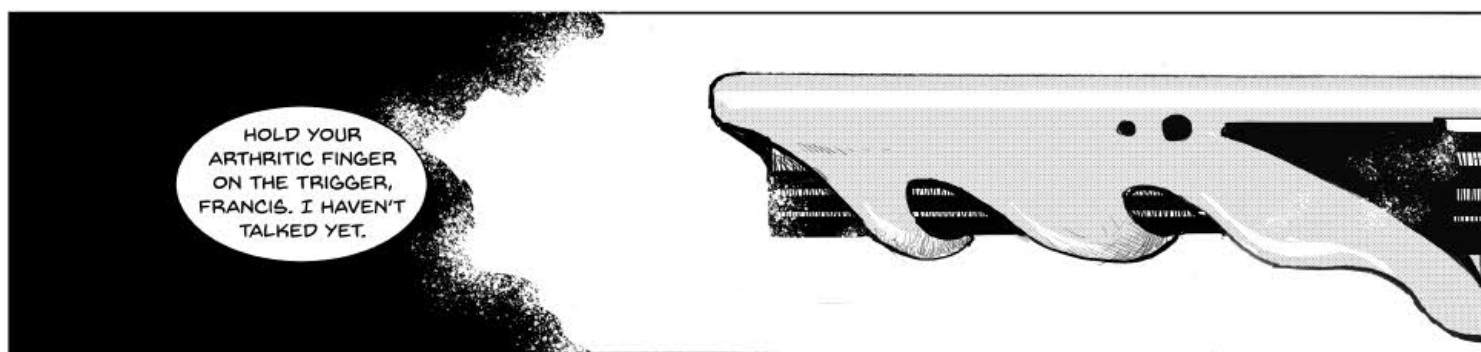
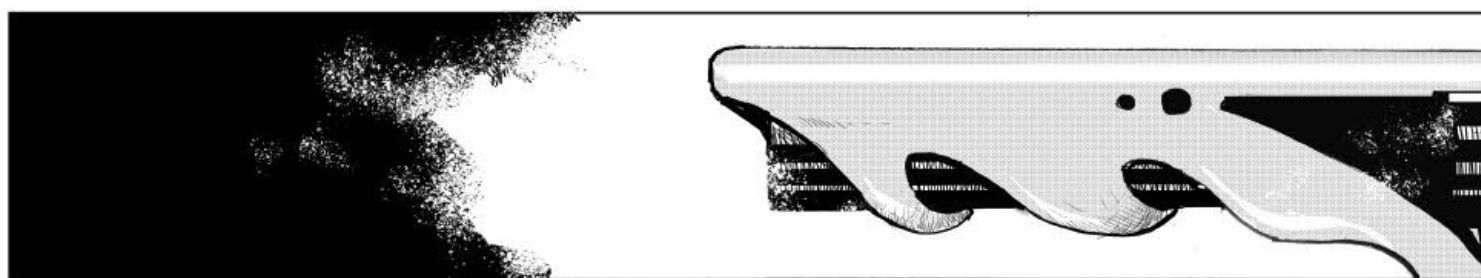
LET'S DO IT QUICK, THEN.

WE CAN CONTINUE PLAYING...

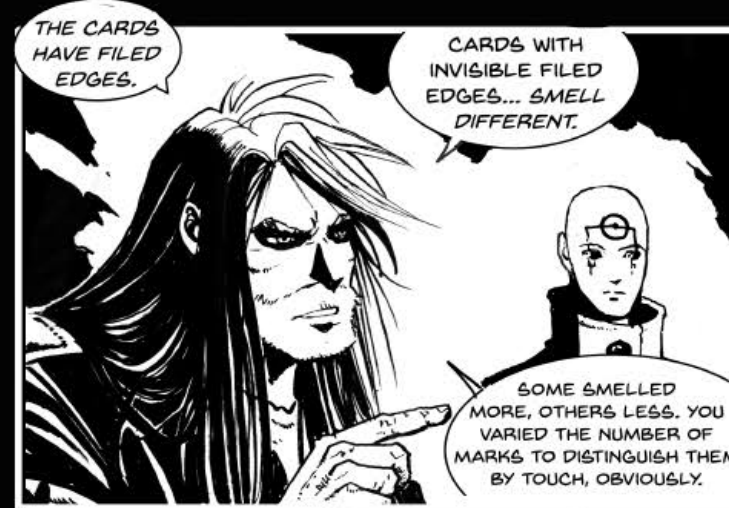
FRANCIS!

YES, WE COULD.

BUT SEEING HOW YOU'RE SO FAR FROM THE SOLUTION, JACOB... WOULD BE TEDIOUS TO DRAG THIS OUT WHEN I KNOW THE OUTCOME.



HOLD YOUR ARTHRITIC FINGER ON THE TRIGGER, FRANCIS. I HAVEN'T TALKED YET.



THE CARDS HAVE FILED EDGES.

CARDS WITH INVISIBLE FILED EDGES... SMELL DIFFERENT.

SOME SMELLED MORE, OTHERS LESS. YOU VARIED THE NUMBER OF MARKS TO DISTINGUISH THEM BY TOUCH, OBVIOUSLY.



THAT REMINDED ME... A FRIEND OF MINE, HE LIKES THIS "MAGIC" STUFF, HE SHOWED ME VIDEOS OF PENN AND TELLER, TAMARIZ, DAORTIZ...

HE SHOWED ME A VIDEO OF A... HE WAS A BLIND GUY, WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

THIS GUY... HE MANIPULATED THE CARDS AS HE WISHED.

HE IDENTIFIED THE CARDS BY TOUCH AND COULD MOVE THEM WITH INTENTIONALITY. HE WOULD MAKE YOU THINK HE WAS GIVING YOU THE FIRST CARD IN THE DECK, BUT HE WAS ACTUALLY GIVING YOU THE SECOND ONE, ETC.

I DON'T KNOW ALL THE TRICKS, BUT BASICALLY, IF THE DUDE WANTED TO GIVE YOU A TWO, YOU'D GET A TWO.



SEEING HOW YOU HANDLE THE CARDS... THE HAND GESTURES... YOU'VE CLEARLY LEARNED A TRICK OR TWO. HOWEVER... SOMETHING DIDN'T ADD UP.

I KEPT HEARING THOSE NOISES... THAT'S WHAT THREW ME OFF. IF YOU CAN MANIPULATE THE CARDS, WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THE NOISES?



JACOB MADE ME UNDERSTAND. I REALLY THOUGHT WE WERE ALL PLAYING INDIVIDUALLY... BUT THAT'S NOT THE CASE.

I THOUGHT COLE WAS JUST A MORON, BUT WHEN JACOB SAID HE'S IN TRANCE, I GOT IT. HE AND CRAIG ARE PUPPETS -- CRAIG WILLINGLY, SINCE HE'S WHORING HIMSELF FOR A STUPID JOB.

THAT'S THE SHOE THING YOU'VE BEEN DOING. YOUR SIGNAL FOR THEM TO ASK FOR CARDS...



...BECAUSE YOU'RE PATHETIC AT CARD MANIPULATION AND YOU NEED EXTRA PEOPLE TO MOVE THE CARDS AROUND AND NOT GIVE US GOOD HANDS. MY THEORY IS THAT ORIGINALLY YOU DIDN'T WANT TO INVOLVE CRAIG, SINCE HIS REWARD INVOLVES ASKING THE FBI FOR FAVORS, BUT COLE IS TOO INCONSISTENT; I DON'T REMEMBER HIM ASKING FOR CARDS RELIABLY...



# EBI

YOU REALLY DON'T DRINK, HUH?

HAHA. LIKE MY DAD. HE WOULDN'T EVEN TOUCH COFFEE; HE HATED ANYTHING THAT COULD ALTER HIS BEHAVIOR.

HM? SORRY, I WAS FAR AWAY. WHAT DID YOU SAY?

...

NOTHING.

HAPPY DAY, RIGHT?

DEPENDS ON HOW THEY DO.

THEY'LL WIN.

YES, I DON'T NEED TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR MY HAND TO LOSE CONTROL.

YOU...!

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHA...?

I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF ASSUMING THAT YOU WANTED TO ELIMINATE YOUR MENTAL CONDITIONING. NOW YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ATTACK FREI, ALTHOUGH I DON'T RECOMMEND IT.

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU WON.

BLUE BULLETS. VIRTUALLY UNDETECTABLE.

ONCE INSIDE OF YOUR MIND, THAT CRYSTAL WORKS AS IF IT WAS A THOUGHT OF YOUR OWN. THAT'S WHY YOU COULDN'T DETECT IT, JACOB.

I DIDN'T EXPECT **ESSEX** TO BE THE ONE TO FIGURE OUT MY PLAN... TO THE EXTENT THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE WERE PLAYING AS A TEAM.

CRAIG JOINS THE PARANORMAL EBI IN TWO DAYS. WHETHER HE WON OR NOT. THE REST WAS THEATER.

TRANSPORTS AND IMPLANTS ASTRAL OBJECTS WHEREVER THE BULLET HITS. THE EBI TELEPATHS BUILT A NICE CRYSTAL OF DETERRENT THOUGHTS TO PREVENT YOU FROM ATTACKING THE EBI LEADER.

SO... I WAS RIGHT.

THIS WASN'T A CARD GAME. THIS WAS A GAME OF DEDUCTION. YOU WERE TESTING US.

HONESTLY? I DON'T KNOW.



THE TRUTH IS THAT I'M NOT SURE MYSELF. INITIALLY, THIS WAS MY PLAN TO FORCE YOU TO COME TO YOUR SENSES. I SHOOT THE BLACK BULLET AT YOU, WHICH WOULD TEMPORARILY TAKE AWAY YOUR **FREE** **WILL...**

...AND I WOULD MAKE SOME KIND OF DEAL WITH THE EBI. AT LEAST THAT WAY, YOU WOULD BE SAFE FROM YOUR OWN STUPIDITY.

BUT... THAT WOULD MEAN DOING FOR THE SECOND TIME SOMETHING I DIDN'T LIKE THE FIRST TIME. AND... THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT... IN MY DAY, NO ONE QUESTIONED THE EBI. I WONDERED, WHAT IF SOMEONE HAD GIVEN ME A **CHANCE?**



A CHANCE FOR WHAT?

TO BUILD A WORLD WHERE WE DON'T NEED SHELTERS PAID FOR WITH BLOOD TO LIVE IN PEACE. I'M NOT AN IDIOT, ESSEX. I REALIZE HOW PATHETIC AND SMALL MY LEGACY IS.

NO ONE TOLD ME THAT I COULD ASPIRE TO MORE. MAYBE THIS CASTLE IS ALL THERE IS. MAYBE NOT.

MADE ME THINK HOW MANY "OLD GUYS" LIKE ME DISGUISE THEIR SHORTCOMINGS AND FAILURES AS LESSONS THAT THE NEW GENERATIONS NEED TO INTERNALIZE...

...LIKE A SUR-REPTITIOUS ATTEMPT TO BRING OTHERS DOWN SO THAT THEY WON'T PROVE YOU WRONG.

YOUR PATH IS... DANGEROUS. BUT **HONORABLE.**

SO, MY GIFT TO YOU: 10,000 EUROS IN CASINO CREDIT.

RELAX A LITTLE! YOU'RE NOT IN DANGER. SAVOR THE MOMENT...

...SINCE I STILL CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE YOU GUYS REGULARLY WITHOUT THE EBI GETTING PISSY.

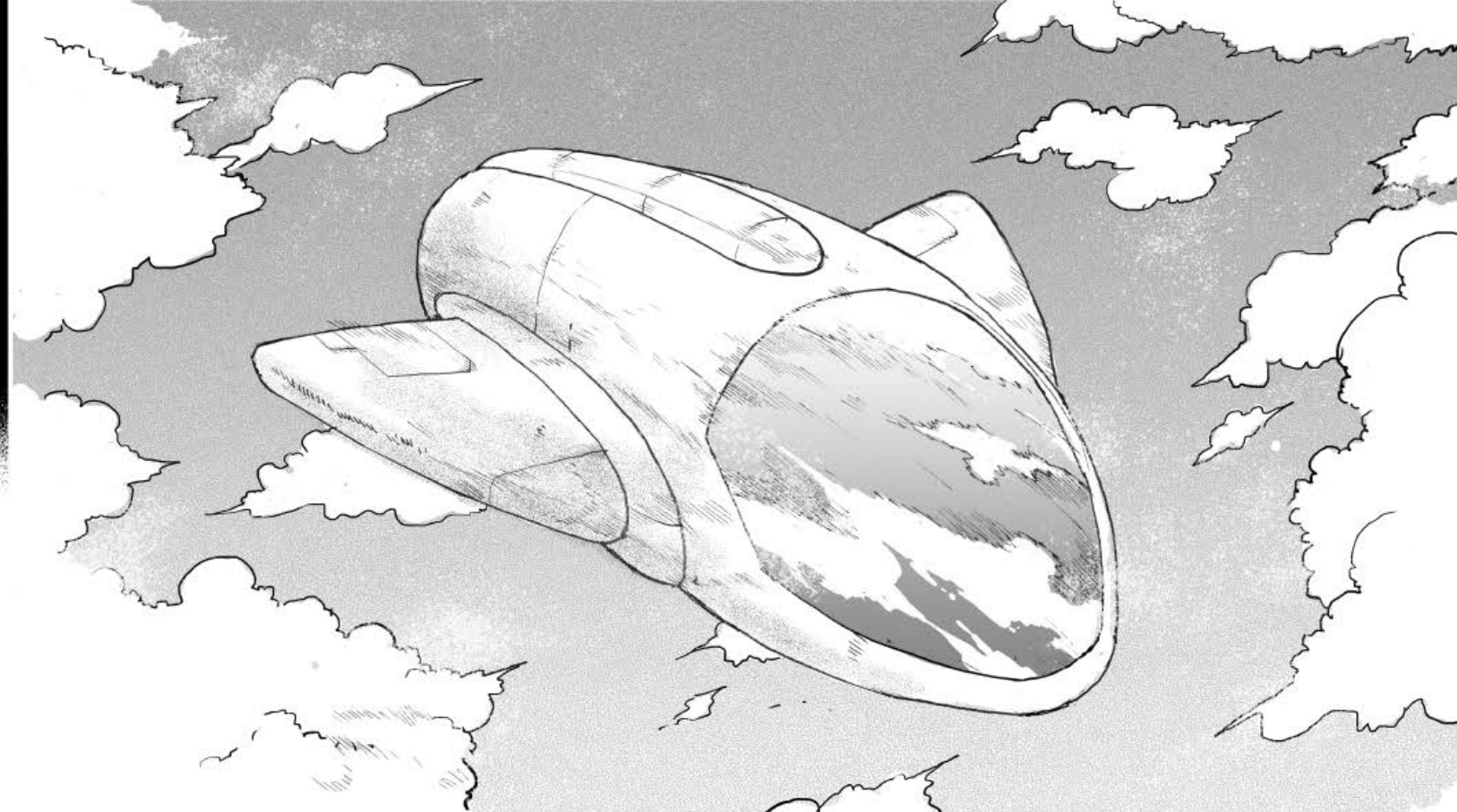
AS IF I WANTED TO COME BACK HERE ANYWAY, OLD MAN.

IF ONE DAY YOU EVICT THEM FROM YOUR RECTUM, MAYBE WE WOULD STOP BY AGAIN. SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR DIAPERS.

WHEN DOES HE RECOVER?

IN 24 HOURS.

IT'S MY MOST POWERFUL BULLET, JACOB.



AND IT WAS YOUR **FUCKING VIDEOS** THAT GAVE ME THE IDEA!



CHARIOT?

YES. DID YOU MAKE THE DECISION?

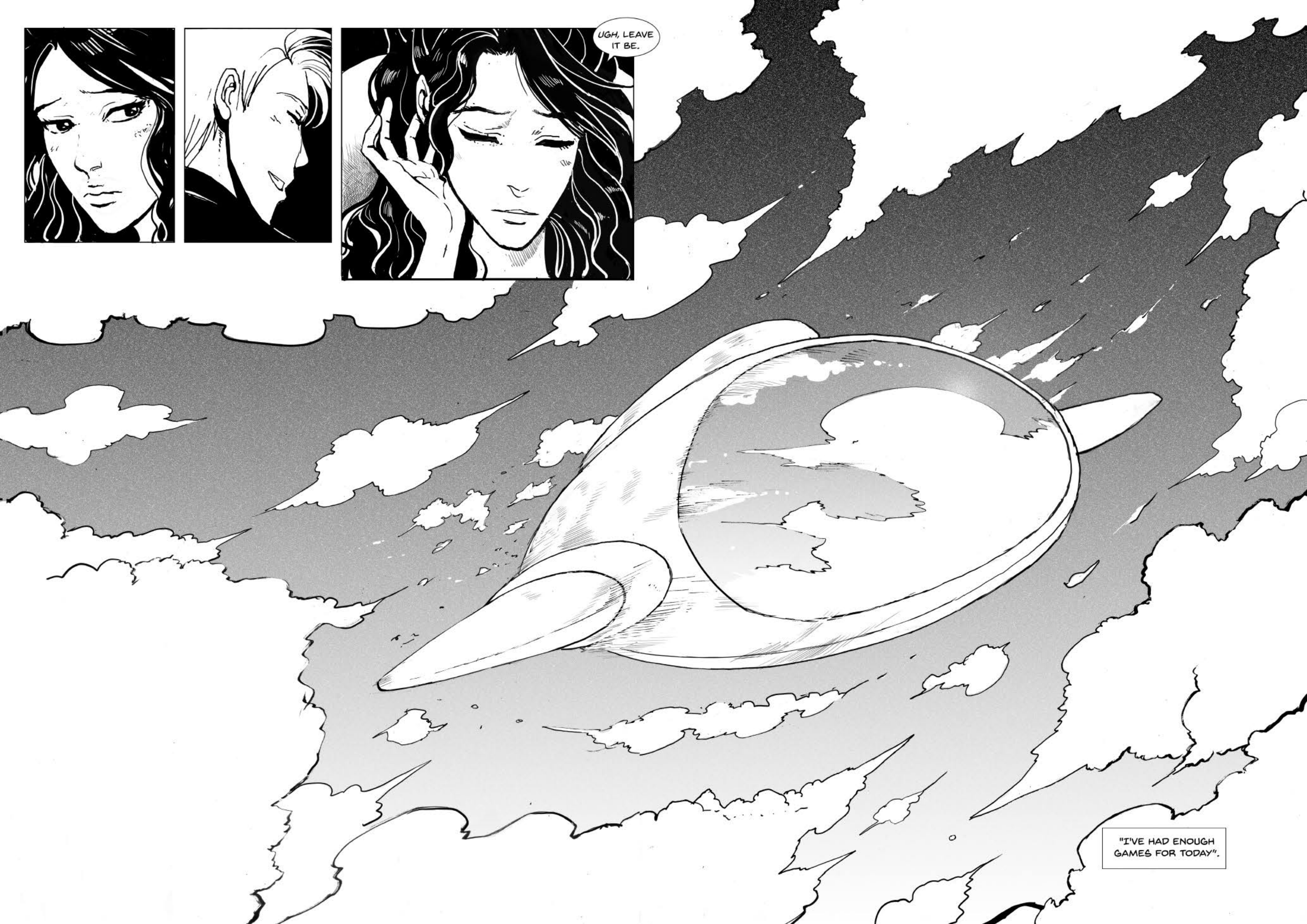
SO?







UGH, LEAVE  
IT BE.



"I'VE HAD ENOUGH  
GAMES FOR TODAY".



# **...TO BE CONTINUED**

UPSURGE IS AN ALMOST MONTHLY (40 DAYS) SERIES THAT STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO TO REACH THE INTENDED ENDING. HOWEVER, WE CAN'T KEEP DOING IT FOR "FREE" INDEFINITELY.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HELPING US WHILE ALSO GETTING **EARLY ACCESS** TO AN ISSUE, **PREVIEWS** OF FUTURE EPISODES, OR **VIDEOS** AND TEXTS ABOUT OUR CREATIVE PROCESS, PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING US THROUGH PATREON AT THE 3\$ PLEDGE LEVEL (LINK BELOW). IF WE HAVE ENOUGH HELP, WE'LL TURN UPSURGE INTO A **MONTHLY** SERIES. THANK YOU!

## **LINKS:**

OUR PATREON -> **PATREON.COM/UPSURGE**

OUR FACEBOOK -> **FACEBOOK.COM/UP-SURGECOMIC**

THROW SOME PEANUTS TO THE APE -> **TWITTER.COM/SIMONOGATARI**

