



UE



SIMON M.

SCRIPT
PANEL LAYOUT
COVER

TRANSLATION
(SORRY, ENGLISH SPEAKERS)

+ Dream Backgrounds (75,68%)

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ATANA S.

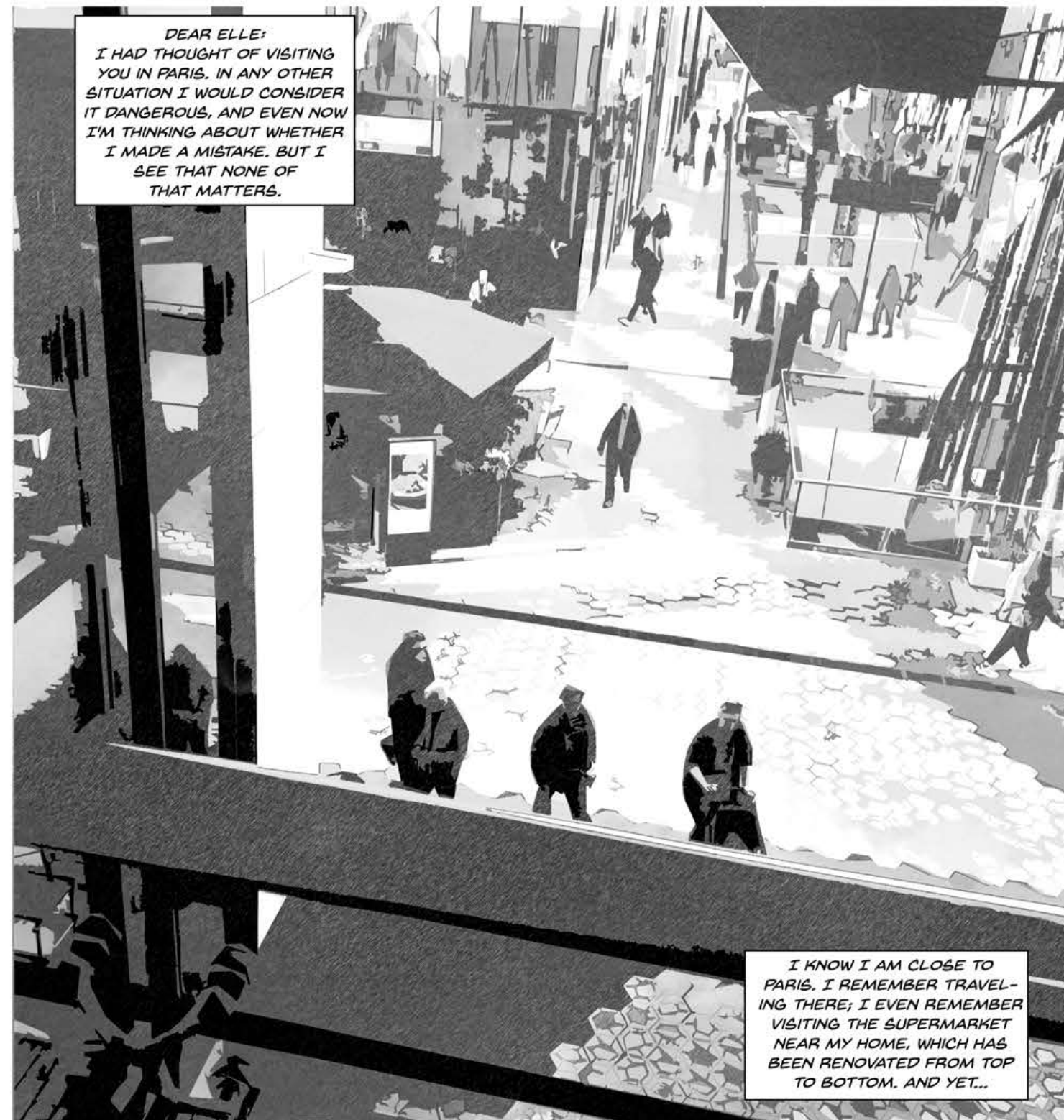
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DEAR ELLE:
I HAD THOUGHT OF VISITING
YOU IN PARIS. IN ANY OTHER
SITUATION I WOULD CONSIDER
IT DANGEROUS, AND EVEN NOW
I'M THINKING ABOUT WHETHER
I MADE A MISTAKE. BUT I
SEE THAT NONE OF
THAT MATTERS.



I KNOW I AM CLOSE TO
PARIS. I REMEMBER TRAVEL-
ING THERE; I EVEN REMEMBER
VISITING THE SUPERMARKET
NEAR MY HOME, WHICH HAS
BEEN RENOVATED FROM TOP
TO BOTTOM. AND YET...



...HERE I AM AGAIN.
IN BARCELONA. WELL,
A BARCELONA I'VE
BEEN DREAMING
ABOUT RECURRENTLY
THESE DAYS.



I'VE BEEN TALKING TO ESSEX ABOUT MY SITUATION -- I TOLD YOU ABOUT HIM, DIDN'T I? RIGHT AFTER I WAS ADMITTED INTO FRANKFURT UNIVERSITY...

BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ANYTHING?

I DON'T KNOW. I FELT HYPOCRITICAL AFTER BITCHING OVER YOUR WAY OF DOING IT.

AH, DON'T BE A CO-WARD. THIS IS SERIOUS. THE MANUALS ARE VERY VAGUE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLETE THE RITUAL...

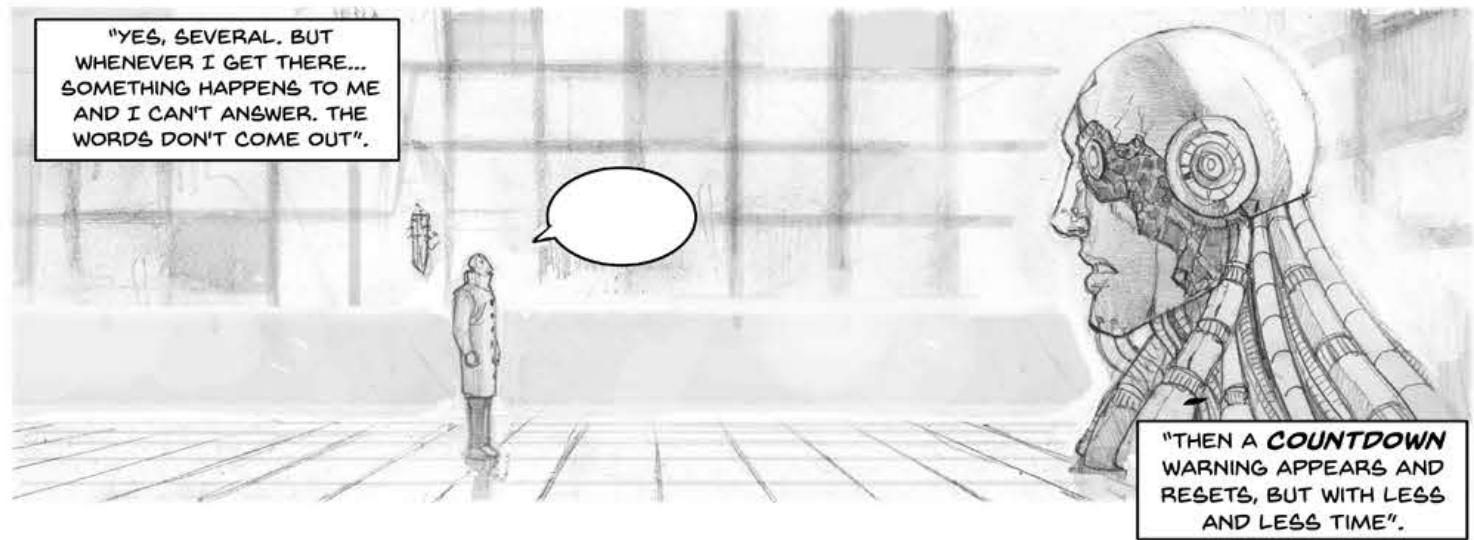
WELL, WHAT I UNDERSTOOD IS THAT, SINCE IT'S ALREADY QUITE AN ADVANCED INDIVIDUATION STAGE, REWARD AND PENALTY VARY ACCORDING TO THE PERSON, RIGHT?



I SUSPECT THAT MY LOSS OF CONTROL OVER MY POWERS IS PART OF THE...

YEAH, BUT THE PROBLEM IS YOUR NEW IMPLANT, ISN'T IT? YOU WERE AFRAID THAT, WITHOUT THE SECOND DOOR, YOU WOULDN'T INTEGRATE IT. WHAT IF YOU REJECT IT? CAN THE OLD IMPLANTS TAKE OVER ITS FUNCTION OR...? I MEAN, WHAT IF THAT SHIT DOESN'T...

YOU REALLY GOT NO ANSWERS FOR THE RITUAL?



"YES, SEVERAL. BUT WHENEVER I GET THERE... SOMETHING HAPPENS TO ME AND I CAN'T ANSWER. THE WORDS DON'T COME OUT".

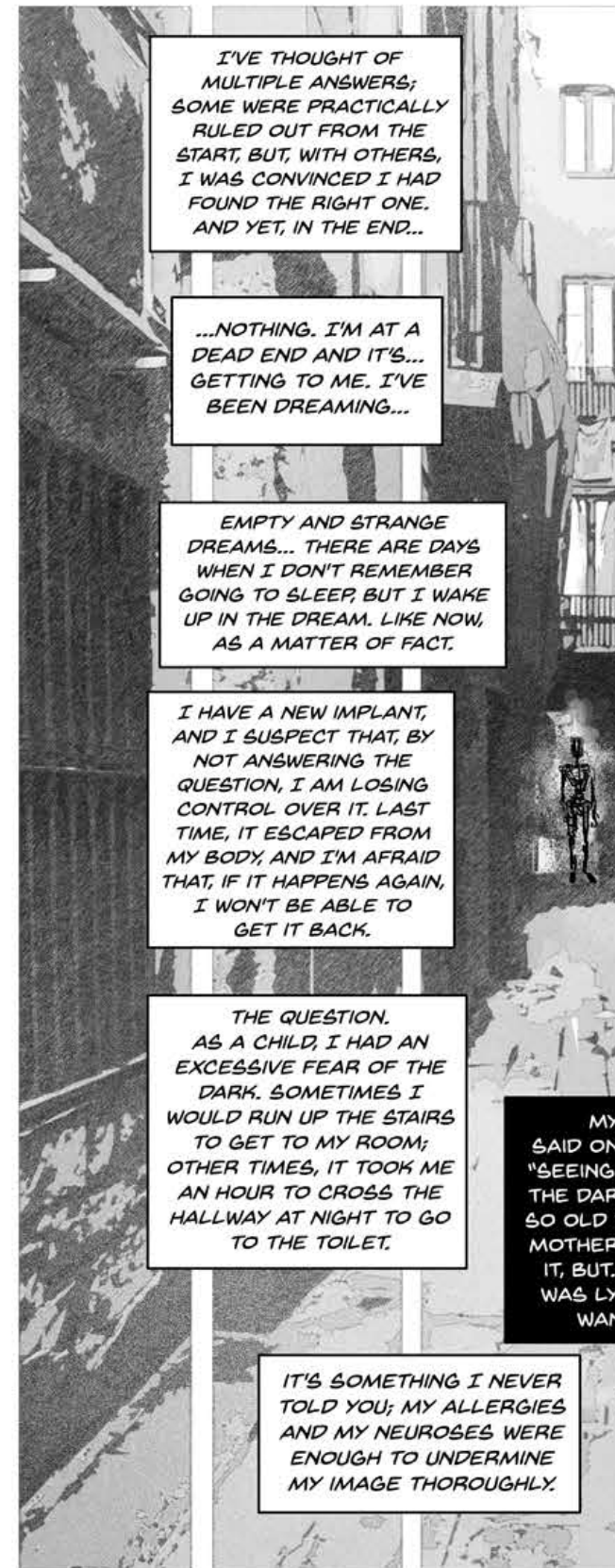
"THEN A **COUNTDOWN** WARNING APPEARS AND RESETS, BUT WITH LESS AND LESS TIME".



JACOB. WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG, YOU THOUGHT YOU SAW FICTITIOUS CREATURES IN THE DARKNESS, SUBDOMAIN "MONSTERS". YOU KNEW THEY WERE FICTION...

ELLE, THERE ARE MOMENTS THAT I FEAR THIS IS THE END FOR ME. I DID SOMETHING THAT FORCES ME TO ANSWER A QUESTION, BUT THE ANSWER DOESN'T COME.

...YET YOU FELT FEAR NONE-THELESS. SO THE QUESTION/TEST IS: WHAT DID YOU **SEE** IN THE DARKNESS?



I'VE THOUGHT OF MULTIPLE ANSWERS; SOME WERE PRACTICALLY RULED OUT FROM THE START, BUT, WITH OTHERS, I WAS CONVINCED I HAD FOUND THE RIGHT ONE. AND YET, IN THE END...

...NOTHING. I'M AT A DEAD END AND IT'S... GETTING TO ME. I'VE BEEN DREAMING...

EMPTY AND STRANGE DREAMS... THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I DON'T REMEMBER GOING TO SLEEP, BUT I WAKE UP IN THE DREAM. LIKE NOW, AS A MATTER OF FACT.

I HAVE A NEW IMPLANT, AND I SUSPECT THAT, BY NOT ANSWERING THE QUESTION, I AM LOSING CONTROL OVER IT. LAST TIME, IT ESCAPED FROM MY BODY, AND I'M AFRAID THAT, IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN, I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET IT BACK.

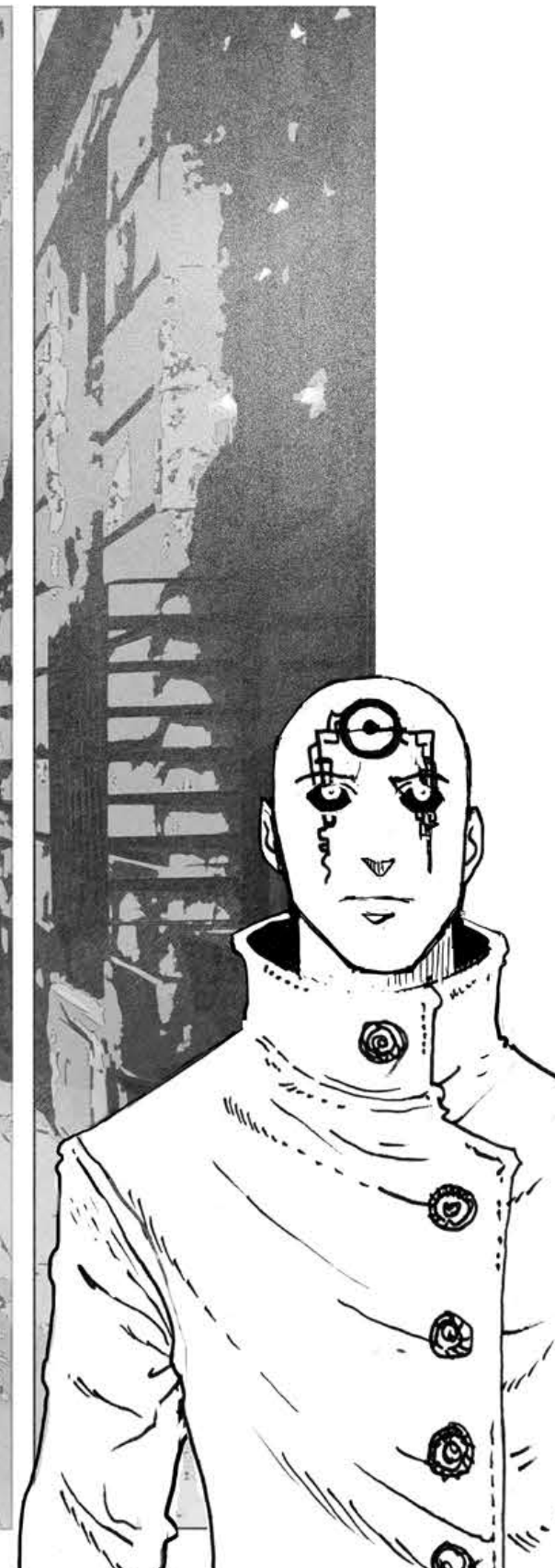
THE QUESTION. AS A CHILD, I HAD AN EXCESSIVE FEAR OF THE DARK. SOMETIMES I WOULD RUN UP THE STAIRS TO GET TO MY ROOM; OTHER TIMES, IT TOOK ME AN HOUR TO CROSS THE HALLWAY AT NIGHT TO GO TO THE TOILET.

IT'S SOMETHING I NEVER TOLD YOU; MY ALLERGIES AND MY NEUROSES WERE ENOUGH TO UNDERMINE MY IMAGE THOROUGHLY.



MY FATHER SAID ONCE THAT THIS "SEEING MONSTERS IN THE DARK" THING WAS SO OLD THAT EVEN MY MOTHER KNEW ABOUT IT, BUT... I THINK HE WAS LYING, HE JUST WANTED TO...

...BRING ME DOWN.





AND WHAT ARE YOU WRITING ME FOR?

YOU KNOW YOU WON'T SEND IT.

PLUS, ONLY MY HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES CALL ME ELLE ANYMORE.

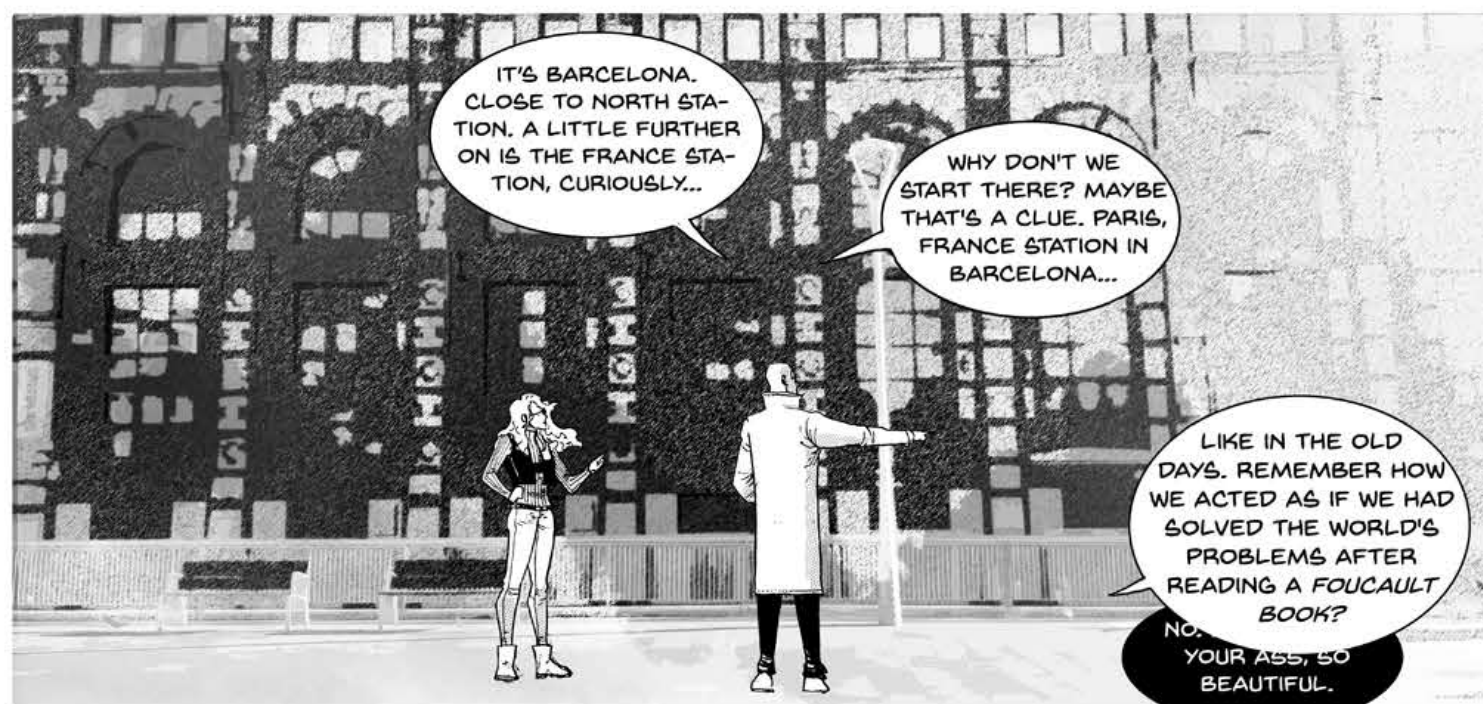
I HAVE A HUSBAND AND A SON, MAYBE EVEN 12. THE ONLY THING IS THAT IT WASN'T WITH YOU.



I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS I'M... I GUESS I'M SCARED. I'M IN PARIS. I REMEMBER TAKING OFF... I REMEMBER SAYING GOODBYE TO ESSEX, ADAM, AND THE PRIEST. MY "PLANE" LOOKS LIKE A SPACE-SHIP, ELLE. HA.

BUT HERE I AM. IT'S AS IF... AT FIRST, I HAD SIMPLY LOST CONTROL OF MY POWERS. THEN, MY "SHADOW" ESCAPED...

NOW... I CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN REALITY AND DREAM. I'M IN PARIS, BUT... THIS...
AT YOU?

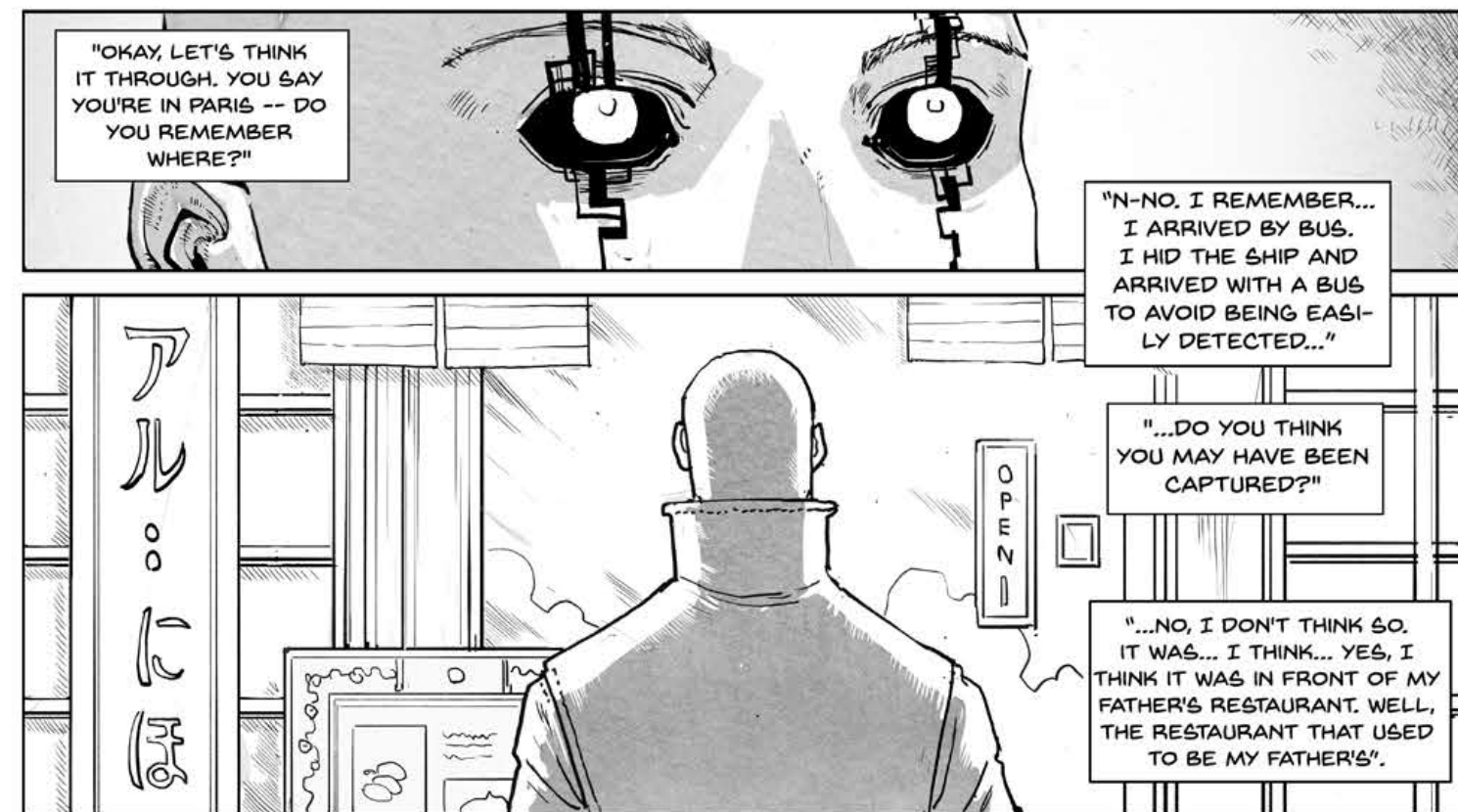


IT'S BARCELONA. CLOSE TO NORTH STATION. A LITTLE FURTHER ON IS THE FRANCE STATION, CURIOUSLY...

WHY DON'T WE START THERE? MAYBE THAT'S A CLUE. PARIS, FRANCE STATION IN BARCELONA...

LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS. REMEMBER HOW WE ACTED AS IF WE HAD SOLVED THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS AFTER READING A FOUCAULT BOOK?

NO. YOUR ASS, SO BEAUTIFUL.



"OKAY, LET'S THINK IT THROUGH. YOU SAY YOU'RE IN PARIS -- DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE?"

"N-NO. I REMEMBER... I ARRIVED BY BUS. I HID THE SHIP AND ARRIVED WITH A BUS TO AVOID BEING EASILY DETECTED..."

"...DO YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED?"

"...NO, I DON'T THINK SO. IT WAS... I THINK... YES, I THINK IT WAS IN FRONT OF MY FATHER'S RESTAURANT. WELL, THE RESTAURANT THAT USED TO BE MY FATHER'S".



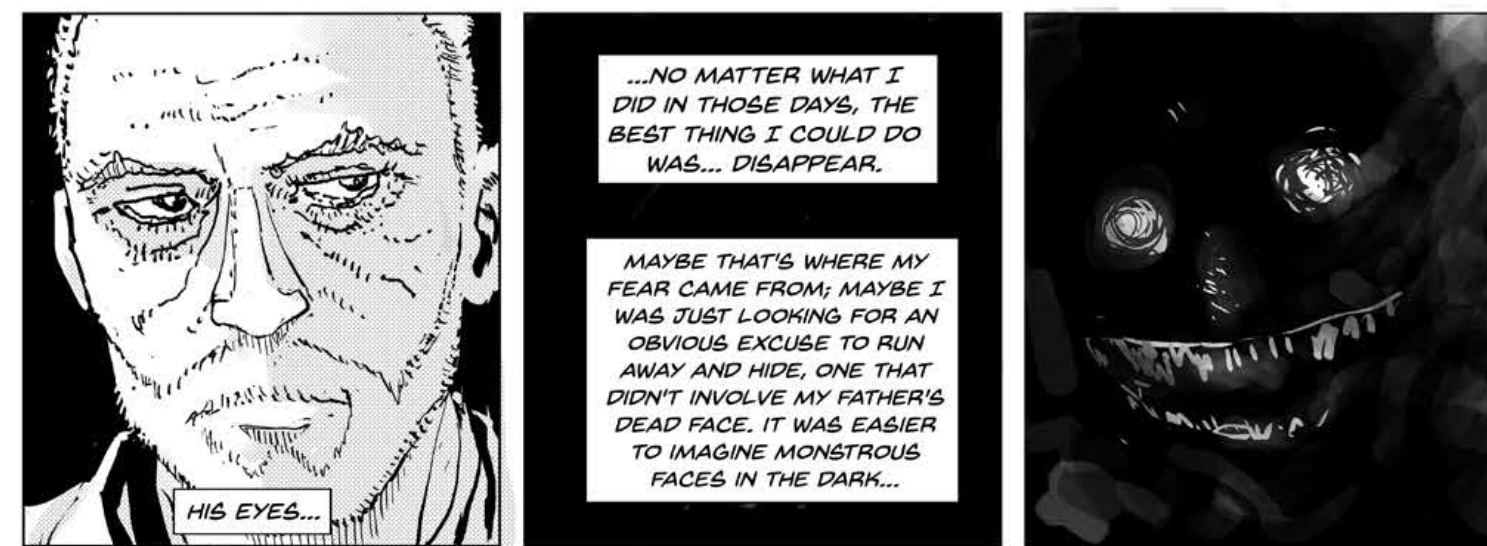
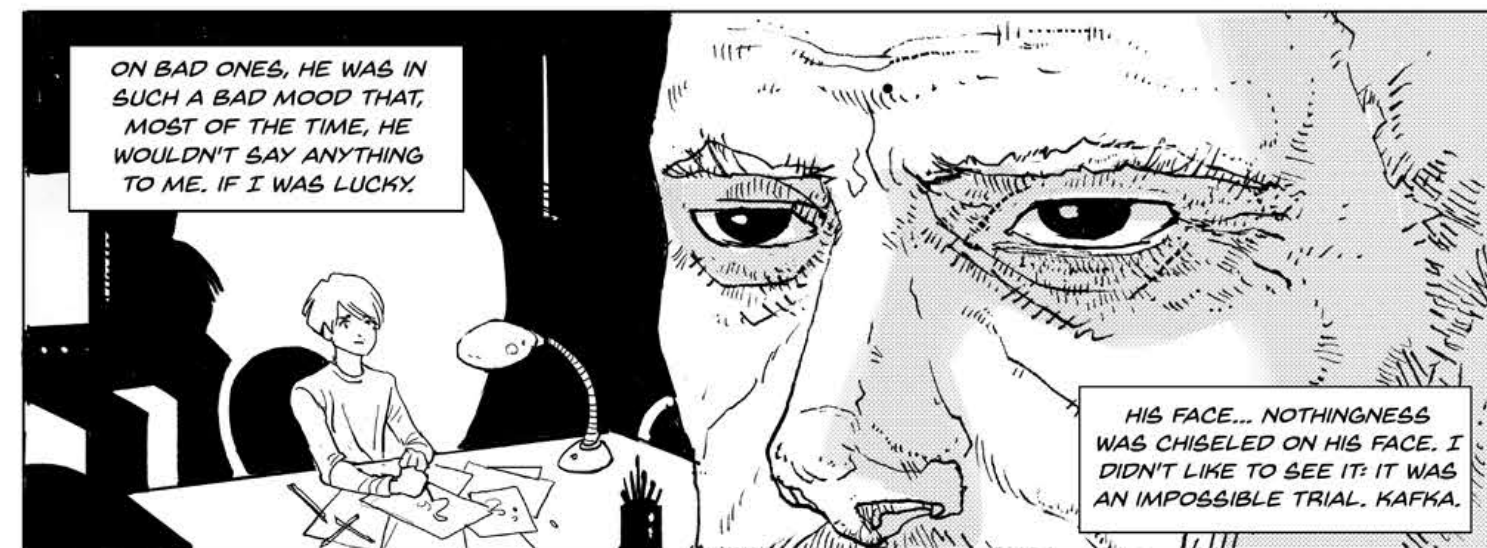
YES, I THINK... I HAD ARRIVED IN PARIS, AND, SOON AFTER, I WAS ON MY WAY THERE.

HRGM.

...WAIT. WEREN'T WE GOING TO FRANCE STATION?

YES. WELL, YOU WERE LEADING US. ISN'T THIS THE PLACE...?

NO, THIS... WE WENT PAST IT. BUT I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING IT. HOW DID WE MISS...?



I REMEMBER THE DAY HE WOKE ME UP ON THE SOFA; I'D FALLEN ASLEEP THERE, BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO GO UPSTAIRS. DO YOU REMEMBER THE JOKE HE MADE?

I THINK THERE WERE BULBS MISSING, SO THE AREA WAS DARKER THAN NORMAL.

THEN...

THE NEXT MORNING HE WOULD APOLOGIZE, WHILE SAYING SOMETHING LIKE HE WAS DOING IT PARTLY TO GIVE ME COURAGE.

...THE WORST DAYS. THEY'RE NOT AS FREQUENT AS... I REMEMBER THEM A LOT, BUT, IN REALITY, THOSE DAYS DIDN'T HAPPEN THAT MUCH.

THE THREAT OF THOSE DAYS HAPPENING WAS MORE REAL THAN THE DAYS THEMSELVES.

IT WAS WORSE WHEN HE WAS DRUNK. THOSE DAYS, THAT'S WHEN HE WOULD FORCE ME TO RUN TO THE BEDROOM; IF I STAYED BY HIS SIDE, IT WAS MY FAULT, FOR NOT PROTECTING MYSELF.

I MEAN, HE DIDN'T HIT ME OR ANYTHING. HE JUST...

...HE WAS LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO PLUNGE INTO MISERY WITH HIM. IF EVERYTHING ELSE FAILED...

...IN THE WORST DAYS...

ALTHOUGH... THERE WERE OTHER DAYS WHEN HE WAS SOBER, LIKE THE DAY I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE FANTASY BOOKS I WAS READING... HE WAITED UNTIL I HAD FINISHED TELLING HIM EVERYTHING I HAD READ BEFORE TELLING ME, WITH A SERIOUS FACE, HOW STUPID IT ALL SOUNDED.

...IT WAS WHEN, BETWEEN INSULTS AND MOCKERY, HE WOULD MENTION MY MOTHER.

MY MOTHER, THE HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS. EVEN NOW FEELS **SURREAL** TO WRITE IT.

I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT. YOU KNEW ABOUT HER. WATCHED HER MOVIES. SAW HER IN THOSE FASHION MAGAZINES.

A GHOST FROM FICTION. A HOME OF MOVIE AND TELEVISION SETS. FAR AWAY.

TALKING ABOUT A GHOST WITH ANOTHER GHOST.

JACOB! YOU'RE JACOB, RIGHT?

YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOUR EYES? IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE FACT THAT YOU'RE STANDING IN FRONT OF YOUR FATHER'S RESTAURANT...

WELL, YOUR FATHER'S OLD RESTAURANT, NOW IT'S AN ARGENTINEAN-JAPANESE FUSION RESTAURANT. HOW'S IT GOING?

EH... LUC? OH... I'M...

DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAP... I'M FEELING...

COUGH!

JACOB!

HEY...!

I WAS NEVER ABLE TO CONVEY HOW MUCH IT TURNED ME INSIDE OUT, THINKING ABOUT HER. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE EVERY WORD IN THAT DIRECTION CAME OUT MORE FLACCID THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE...

HE HATED HER FAME. HE HATED THAT HE HAD TO BE A SINGLE FATHER. HE HATED THE WORLD SHE EMBODIED: SUCCESS, ABANDONING BOTH HIM AND ME. HE HATED THAT SHE BECAME A DREAM, AND A DREAM OF A DREAM: THE WHAT IF HE WOULD BE COOKING FOR CELEBRITIES, NOW.

MY PARENTS MET WHEN SHE WAS A WAITRESS AT THE RESTAURANT WHERE MY FATHER WORKED. SHE FOUND STEADY WORK ON ONE OF THOSE COP-AND-LAW SHOWS... GUESS I WASN'T PLANNED.

BETWEEN SEASONS, WHILE THE TV SERIES WAS NOT BEING FILMED, SHE MADE A MOVIE. SHE WAS PROBABLY PREGNANT BY THEN. BETWEEN THE FILMING OF THE MOVIE AND THE PREMIERE, SHE DELIVERED ME.

THE MOVIE... IT'S ONE OF THOSE INNOCUOUS COMEDIES THAT THEY NO LONGER MAKE. NEVER SAW IT. NOT THAT ONE, NOT THE ONES THAT CAME AFTER. WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY MOTHER TOO MUCH, I FEEL LIKE THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SACK OF GARBAGE. BUT IT WAS AN OBVIOUS ANSWER FOR THE RITUAL: THE PAIN I WAS TOO YOUNG TO PROCESS BECAME A MONSTER HIDING IN THE DARK.

REMEMBER MY DEPRESSIVE MOMENTS, ELLE? I NEVER TOLD YOU, BUT WHENEVER I SAW A MOVIE POSTER WHERE THERE WAS AN ACTRESS THAT EVEN REMOTELY RESEMBLED HER... IT'S ABSURD, IT'S COMPLETELY ABSURD, BUT...

I WAS DISCARDED BETWEEN FRAMES. CUT IN THE EDITING ROOM. LOST FOOTAGE. MY WHOLE LIFE.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY WE WATCHED SO MANY SITCOMS AND MOVIES. THE NEW YORK OF LOS ANGELES: THE SETS, COZY PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY WERE FAKE... BECAUSE I KNEW THAT, BEHIND ONE OF THEM, MAYBE... SHE...

MY MOTHER... ACCORDING TO MY FATHER, SHE WAS INTO SUPERSTITIONS, ASTROLOGY, CRYSTALS. AND WHEN THE MOVIE BECAME SUCCESSFUL, HER MANIA WAS EXACERBATED. "YOU HAVE A NEGATIVE ENERGY", SHE WOULD SAY TO HIM, AND HE WOULD GET SO EXASPERATED HE COULDN'T EVEN SPEAK.

LUC, WE SHOULD TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL. YOU'RE RETIRED...

AH RIGHT, THEY MOVED THE HEART'S LOCATION SINCE I RETIRED. C'MON. YOU KNOW JACOB. IT'S STRESS.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER DURING EXAMS? HE WAS SO TENSE THAT HE COULDN'T SLEEP, AND THEN HE WOULD FALL ANYWHERE.

BUT, ANYWAY, SOMETHING HAPPENED. IT WAS YET ANOTHER ARGUMENT, WHICH I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT WAS ABOUT, BUT MY FATHER SAID "ENOUGH" AND WENT BACK TO EUROPE WITH ME. HE WAS SO ASHAMED OF HIS SEPARATION THAT, INSTEAD OF GOING BACK TO SPAIN, HE OPENED A RESTAURANT IN FRANCE.

MY MEMORIES ARE A LITTLE BIT... I COULD BE TWO YEARS OLD OR FOUR OR SIX AND... THIS IS STUPID. I ALREADY THOUGHT SO, TOO, THAT THE SUBJECT OF MY MOTHER COULD BE THE ANSWER. WAS SHE THE WITCH WHO I SAW IN THE DARK? BUT I'M STILL UNABLE TO SAY ANYTHING WHEN I GO TO CLOSE THE RITUAL...

WHY DO I HAVE TO DO THIS? SO MANY WORDS, ONLY TO END UP A MUTE IN FRONT OF A MECHANICAL HEAD.

GUESS I DESERVE IT, FOR ALL THE CRITICISM I GAVE ESSEX WITHOUT THINKING...

THIS IS JUST A DREAM. A NIGHTMARE. I'M GOING TO WAKE UP, I'M GOING TO WAKE UP SOON AND EVERYTHING WILL BE...

ELLE.

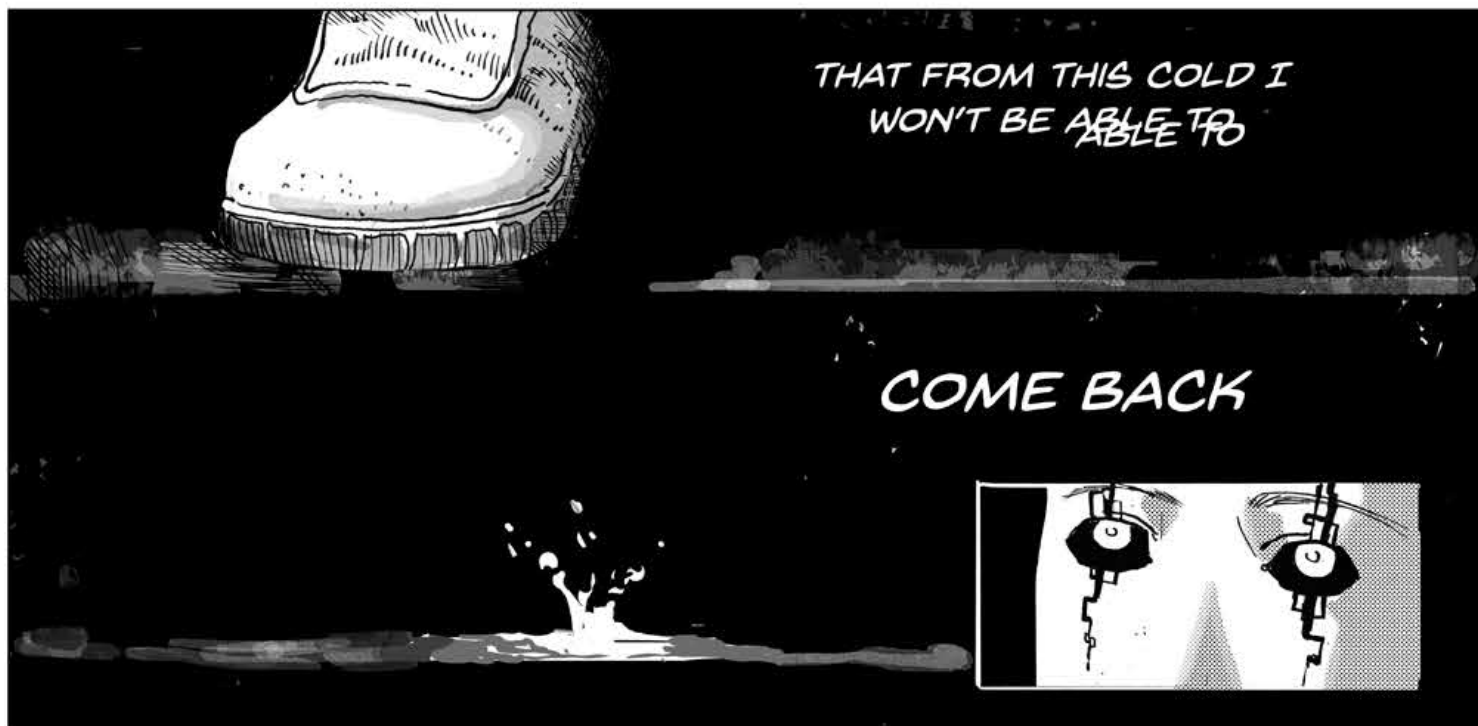
I WISH I COULD TELL YOU HOW COLD IT FEELS HERE.



DEAR ELLE
DEAR ELLE
DEAR ELLE
DEAR ELLE

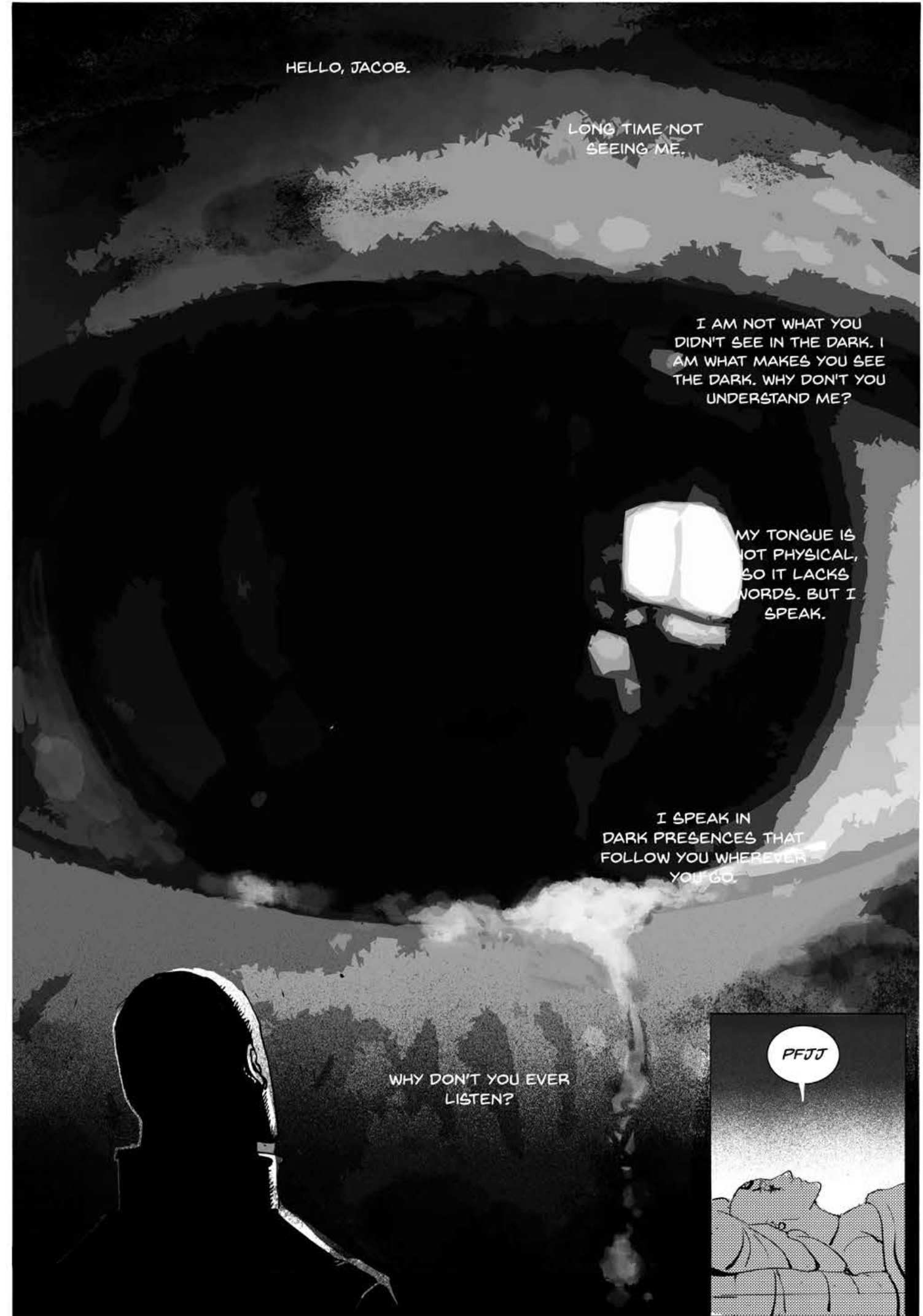
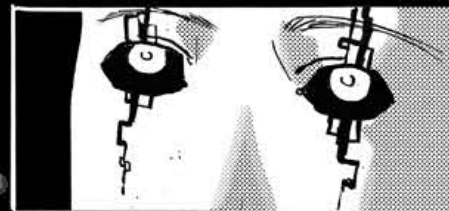
DEAR ELLE

I'M AFRAID



THAT FROM THIS COLD I
WON'T BE ABLE TO

COME BACK



HELLO, JACOB.

LONG TIME NOT
SEEING ME.

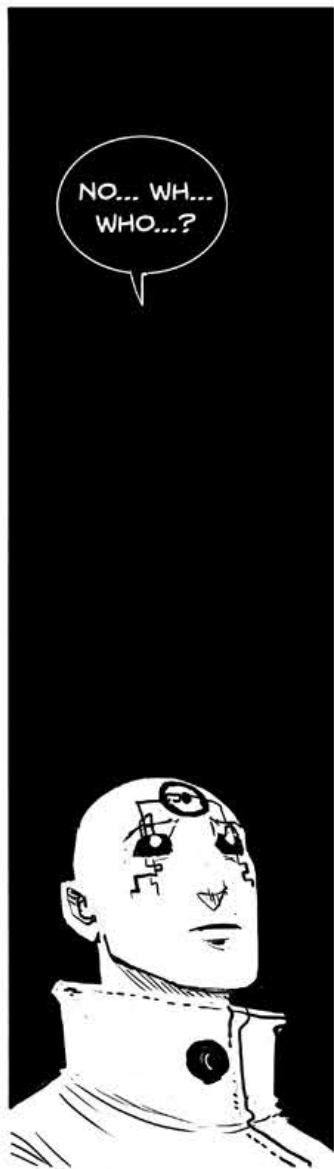
I AM NOT WHAT YOU
DIDN'T SEE IN THE DARK. I
AM WHAT MAKES YOU SEE
THE DARK. WHY DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND ME?

MY TONGUE IS
NOT PHYSICAL,
SO IT LACKS
WORDS. BUT I
SPEAK.

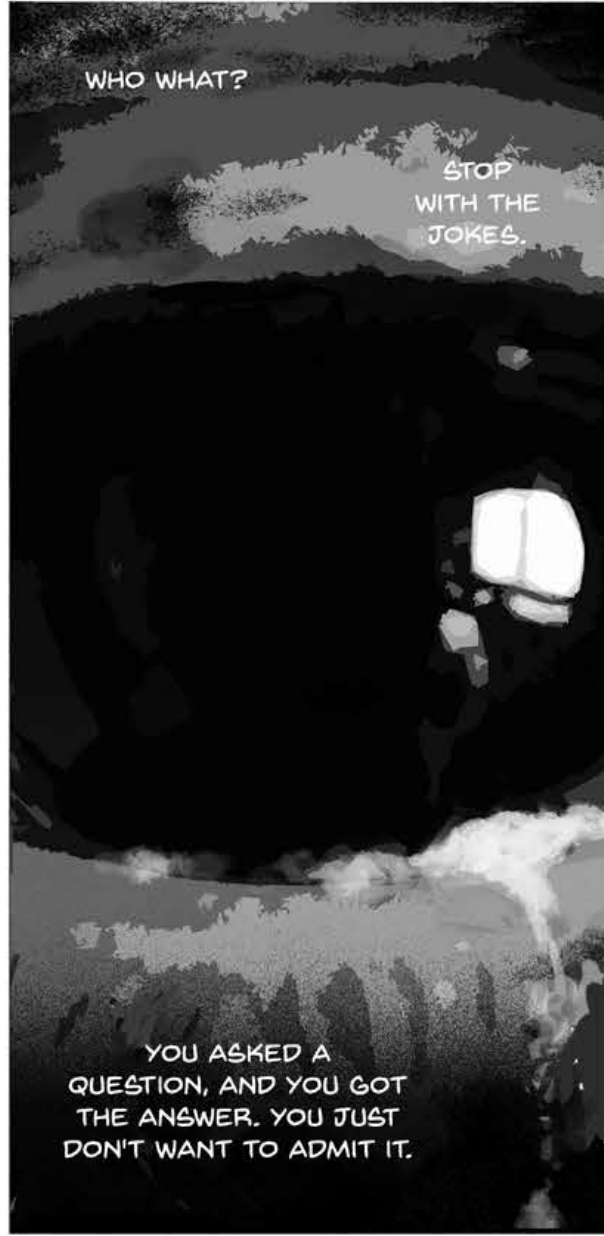
I SPEAK IN
DARK PRESENCES THAT
FOLLOW YOU WHEREVER
YOU GO.

WHY DON'T YOU EVER
LISTEN?

PFJT



NO... WH...
WHO...?



WHO WHAT?

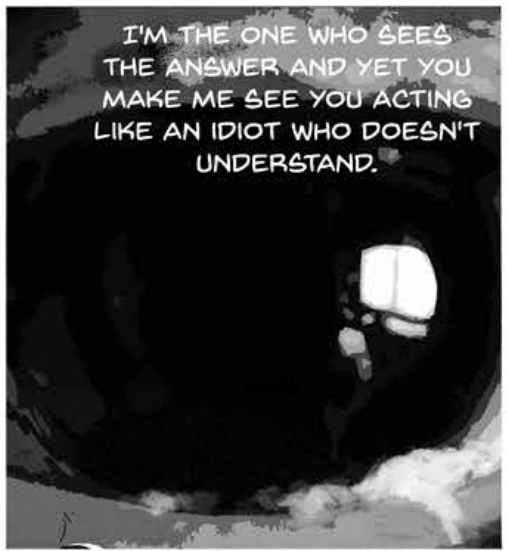
STOP
WITH THE
JOKES.

YOU ASKED A
QUESTION, AND YOU GOT
THE ANSWER. YOU JUST
DON'T WANT TO ADMIT IT.

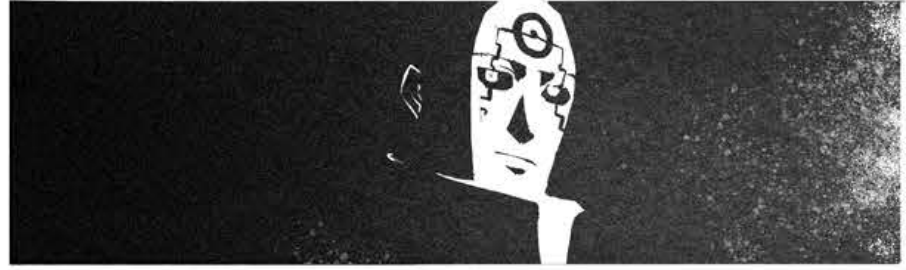


GFFF!

I'M DONE.
AT LEAST HAVE
THEM COME
HERE.



I'M THE ONE WHO SEES
THE ANSWER AND YET YOU
MAKE ME SEE YOU ACTING
LIKE AN IDIOT WHO DOESN'T
UNDERSTAND.



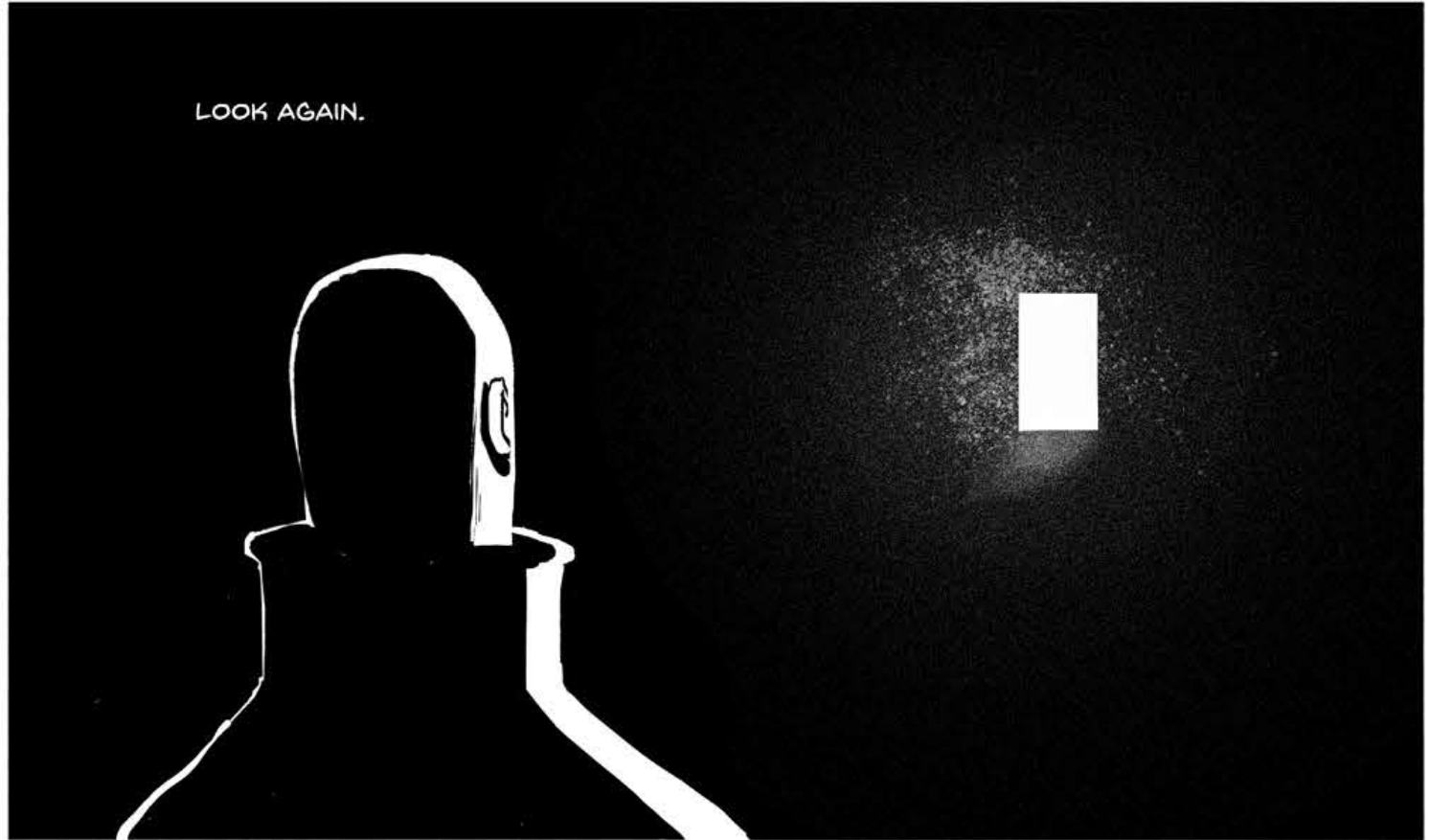
DEAR ELLE;
I AM TRAPPED IN A
DREAM FROM WHICH
I CANNOT ESCAPE.

IN THIS MALL,
AN AMALGAM OF
SEVERAL...

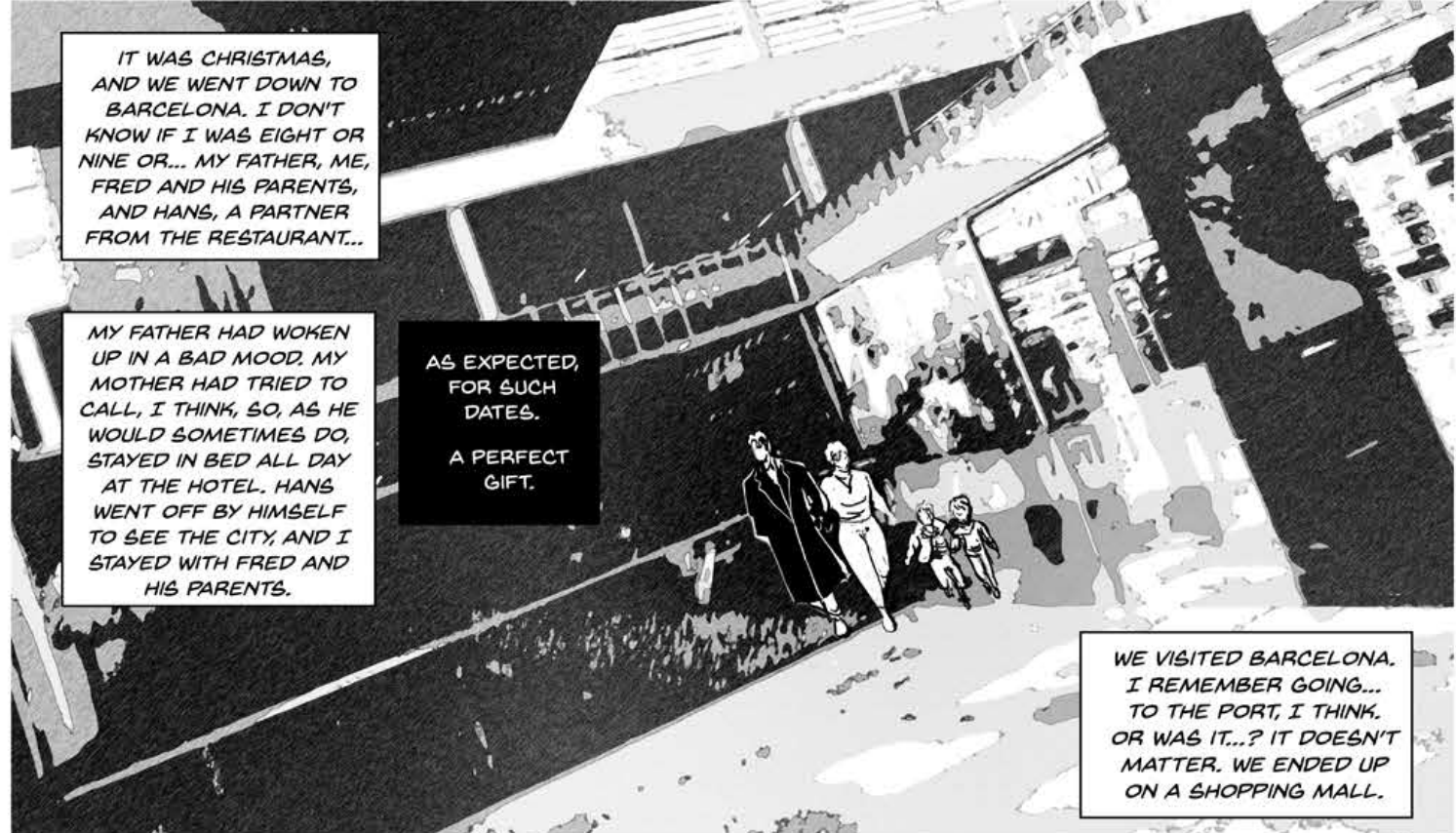
...ALL FROM
BARCELONA.

AMALGAM OR
NOT, YOU KNOW
THAT THEY ALL
REPRESENT...

...THAT MOMENT,
YEARS AGO, WHEN
I WAS A KID.



LOOK AGAIN.



IT WAS CHRISTMAS,
AND WE WENT DOWN TO
BARCELONA. I DON'T
KNOW IF I WAS EIGHT OR
NINE OR... MY FATHER, ME,
FRED AND HIS PARENTS,
AND HANS, A PARTNER
FROM THE RESTAURANT...

MY FATHER HAD WOKEN
UP IN A BAD MOOD. MY
MOTHER HAD TRIED TO
CALL, I THINK, SO, AS HE
WOULD SOMETIMES DO,
STAYED IN BED ALL DAY
AT THE HOTEL. HANS
WENT OFF BY HIMSELF
TO SEE THE CITY, AND I
STAYED WITH FRED AND
HIS PARENTS.

AS EXPECTED,
FOR SUCH DATES.
A PERFECT
GIFT.

WE VISITED BARCELONA.
I REMEMBER GOING...
TO THE PORT, I THINK.
OR WAS IT...? IT DOESN'T
MATTER. WE ENDED UP
ON A SHOPPING MALL.



IT WAS A VERY NICE EVENING. GARLAND GLITTER AND SUGARY CAROLS MADE WARM A COLD WEATHER, AND SINCE I WAS IN A FOREIGN LAND, EVERYTHING SHONE BRIGHTER.

FRED'S PARENTS TOOK US TO VISIT ALL THE TOY STORES, AND EVEN BOUGHT US SOME STUFF RIGHT THERE -- ONE OF THOSE TOYS THAT YOU FIRST HAVE TO DISSOLVE IN WATER TO REVEAL WHAT THEY ARE...

IF ONLY, YOU THOUGHT, I COULD BE THE ONE TO DISSOLVE IN THAT GLASS.

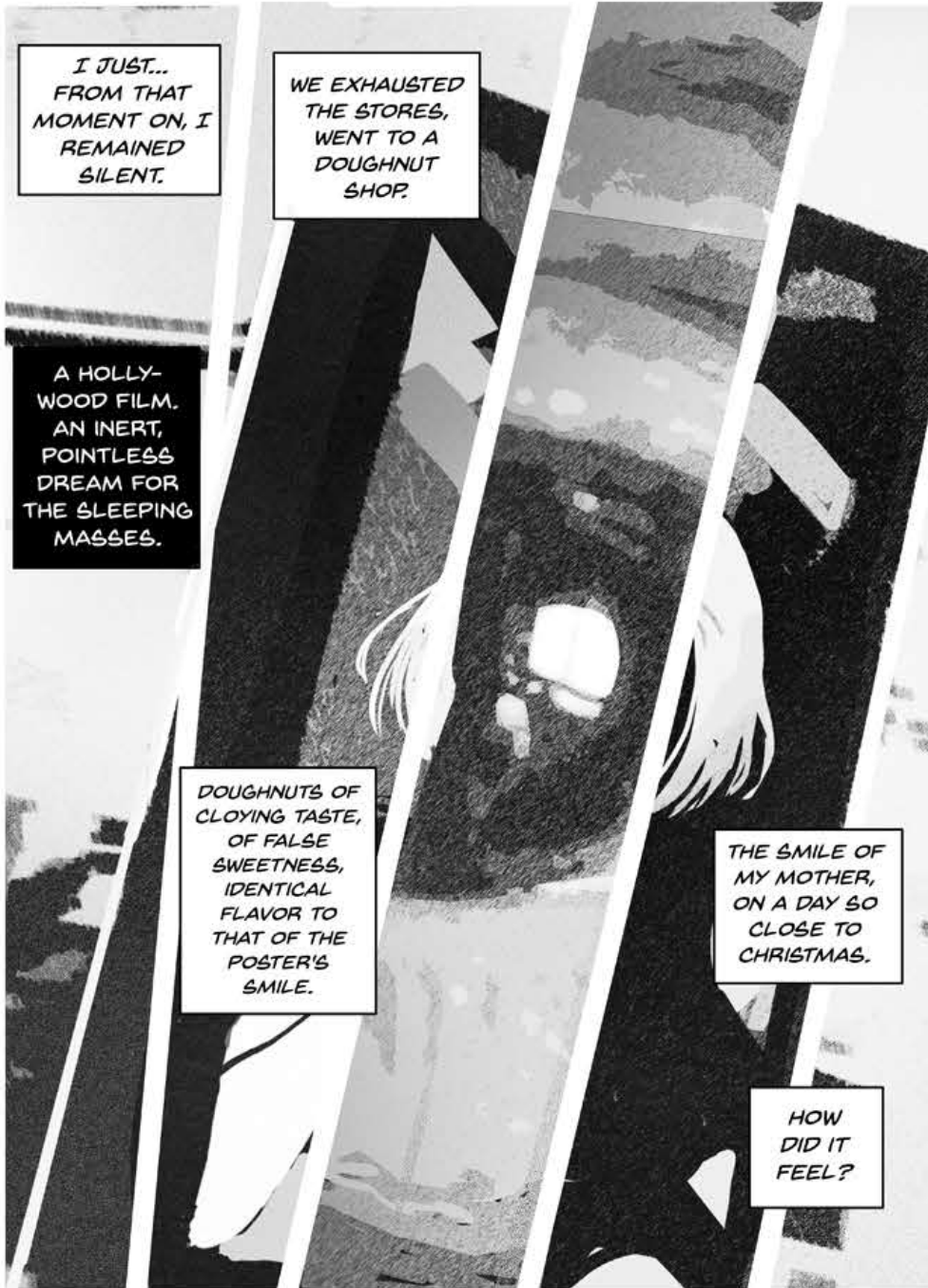
IT WASN'T EVEN A SPECIAL AFTERNOON. THAT WAS THE WORST OF IT, IT WAS A MUNDANE AFTERNOON IN A COUNTRY SIMILAR TO MINE, CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS.



THE MUSIC ALMOST GOT ME. THE CHRISTMAS JINGLES, MAKING ME FEEL LIKE CHRISTMAS WAS GOING TO BE MORE LIKE THE ONE I SAW ON TV THAN THE ONE I ACTUALLY LIVED...

THEN I SAW THE POSTER. OF COURSE, AN AD FOR A MOVIE. A COMEDY. WITH HER...

ELIZABETH MEADOW. STAGE NAME. I COULD SEE HER FROZEN SMILE BEHIND THE GLASS...



I JUST... FROM THAT MOMENT ON, I REMAINED SILENT.

WE EXHAUSTED THE STORES, WENT TO A DOUGHNUT SHOP.

A HOLLYWOOD FILM. AN INERT, POINTLESS DREAM FOR THE SLEEPING MASSES.

DOUGHNUTS OF CLOYING TASTE, OF FALSE SWEETNESS, IDENTICAL FLAVOR TO THAT OF THE POSTER'S SMILE.

THE SMILE OF MY MOTHER, ON A DAY SO CLOSE TO CHRISTMAS.

HOW DID IT FEEL?



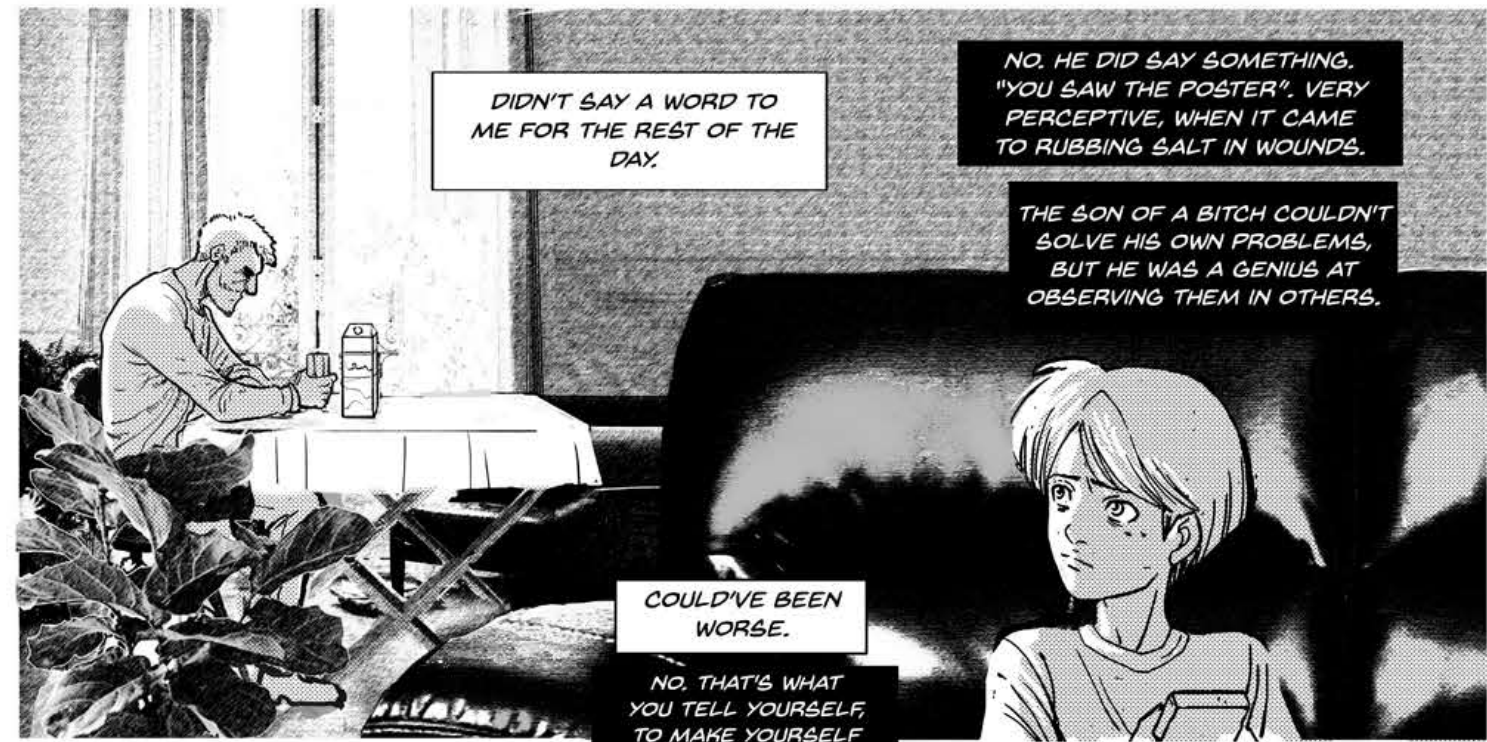
LIKE A SMILE THAT WAS FOR EVERYONE EXCEPT ME.



WE WENT BACK TO THE HOTEL. THE EVENING LIGHT WAS IN ITS LAST THROES.



I REMEMBER FRED'S PARENTS SAID SOMETHING TO MY FATHER ABOUT ME; THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED. MY FATHER WASN'T IN THE MOOD FOR MULTI-SYLLABIC REPLIES, SO HE MURMURED SOMETHING SHORT AND UNINTELLIGIBLE.



DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

NO. HE DID SAY SOMETHING. "YOU SAW THE POSTER". VERY PERCEPTIVE, WHEN IT CAME TO RUBBING SALT IN WOUNDS.

THE SON OF A BITCH COULDN'T SOLVE HIS OWN PROBLEMS, BUT HE WAS A GENIUS AT OBSERVING THEM IN OTHERS.

COULD'VE BEEN WORSE.

NO. THAT'S WHAT YOU TELL YOURSELF, TO MAKE YOURSELF FEEL BETTER.



I THINK THAT DAY...
I UNDERSTOOD WHAT I
HAD SEEN IN THE DARK
ALL MY LIFE.



...YOU'RE
RIGHT, LUC.



...ESPECIALLY
WITH HIS HISTORY
OF STRESS...



...I'D WAIT
UNTIL TOMOR-
ROW, I THINK IT'S
NOTHING.



BUT I DIDN'T WANT
TO ACCEPT IT. I
WAS AFRAID.



UHM. SPONTA-
NEOUS ENTRY INTO
THE VISUALIZED
SPACE...

WELCOME, JACOB.
I GATHER YOU HAVE
COME FOR ANOTHER
ATTEMPT TO CLOSE
THE RITUAL OF THE
SECOND DOOR.

OH, TESSERA.
HELLO.

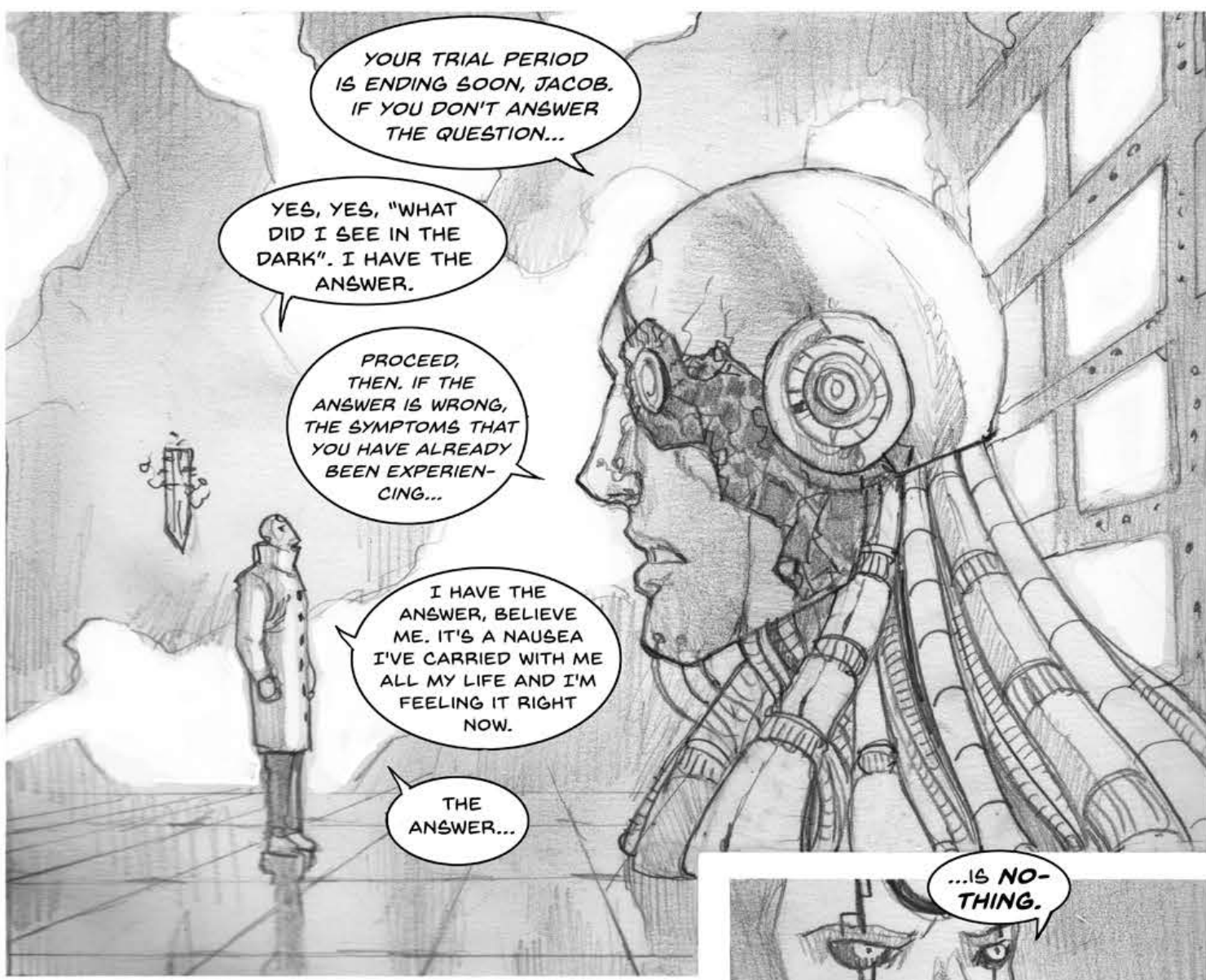
I AM HERE
TO ATTEST.



THIS WAY.



USER
JACOB. YOU
HAVE REOPENED THE
PROCESS OF THE
SECOND DOOR
RITUAL.



YOUR TRIAL PERIOD
IS ENDING SOON, JACOB.
IF YOU DON'T ANSWER
THE QUESTION...

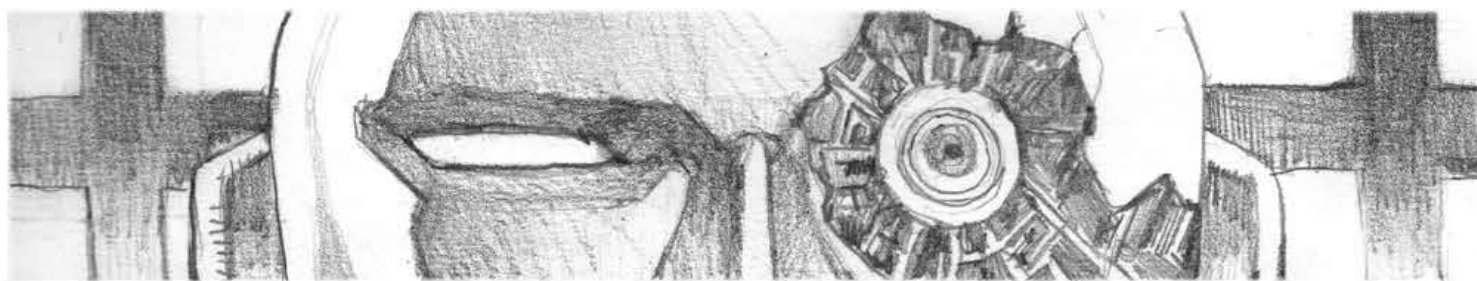
YES, YES, "WHAT
DID I SEE IN THE
DARK". I HAVE THE
ANSWER.

PROCEED,
THEN. IF THE
ANSWER IS WRONG,
THE SYMPTOMS THAT
YOU HAVE ALREADY
BEEN EXPERIEN-
CING...

I HAVE THE
ANSWER, BELIEVE
ME. IT'S A NAUSEA
I'VE CARRIED WITH ME
ALL MY LIFE AND I'M
FEELING IT RIGHT
NOW.

THE
ANSWER...

...IS NO-
THING.



I'VE KNOWN IT ALL MY LIFE. WHEN I WENT TO THE HOMES OF MY SCHOOL FRIENDS, WHEN I VISITED THE NEIGHBOURS...



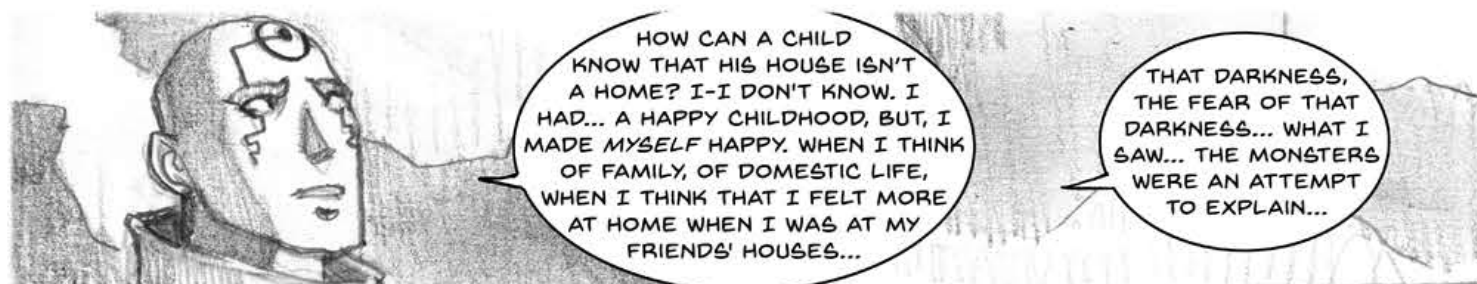
I HAD A CHILDHOOD... I WAS HAPPY, BUT... WHEN I LOOK AT MYSELF AND EVERYONE ELSE... I KNOW THAT THEY HAVE A HOME. A PLACE TO RETURN TO.

MY FATHER... MY FATHER WAS NOT A FATHER. HE WAS... A WEATHER CONDITION THAT I ADAPTED TO; SOMETIMES THERE WERE SUNNY DAYS, SOMETIMES THERE WERE RAINY DAYS.



HE... HE DIDN'T LOVE ME. HE WAS TOO BROKEN INSIDE TO LOVE. AND MY MOTHER...

MY MOTHER IS A GHOST OF FICTION.



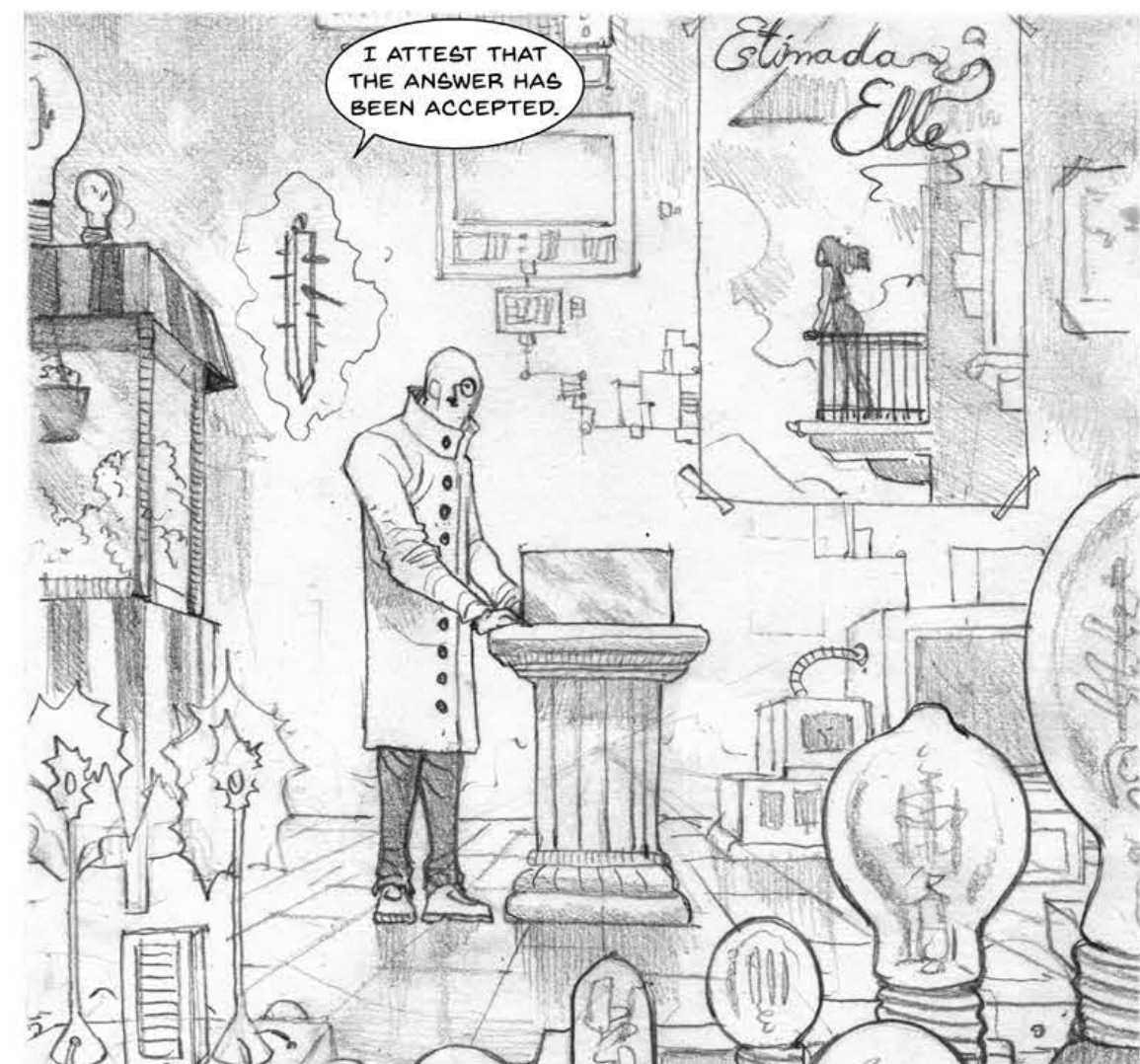
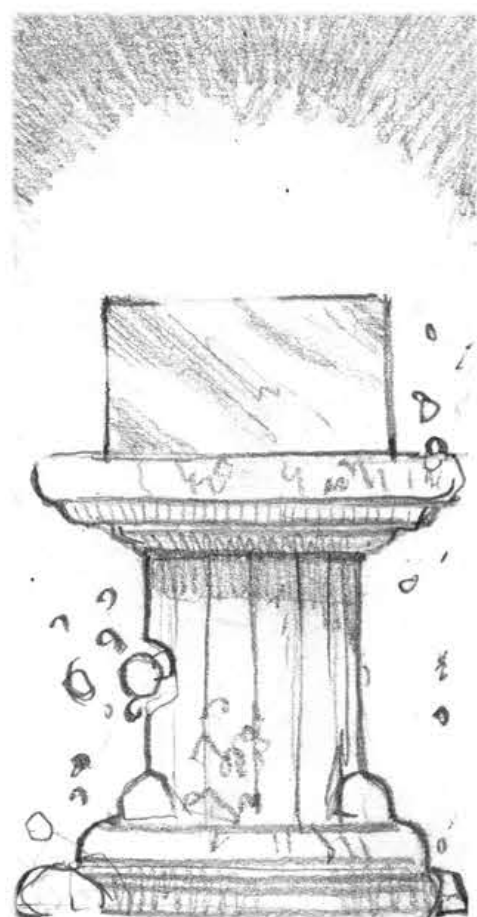
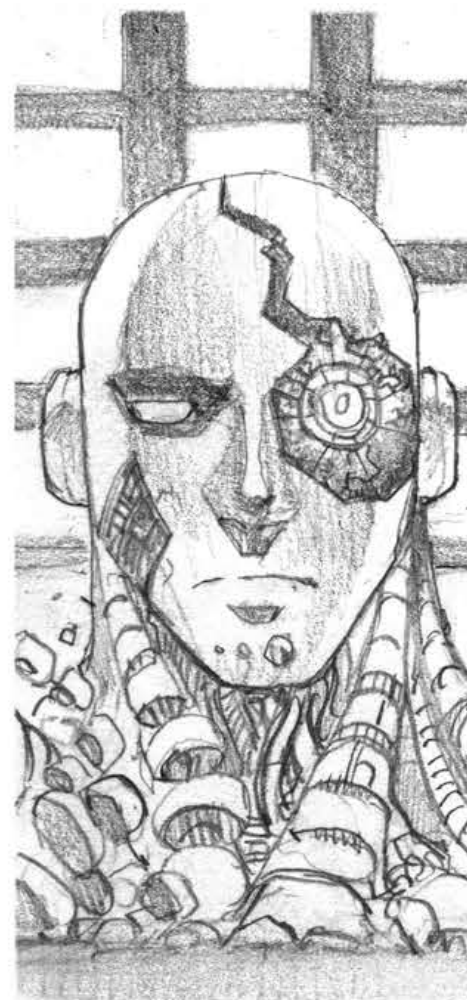
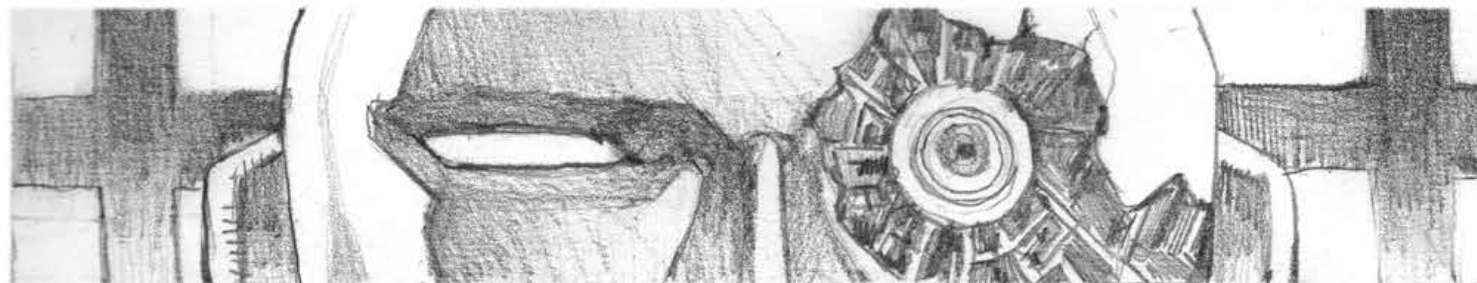
HOW CAN A CHILD KNOW THAT HIS HOUSE ISN'T A HOME? I-I DON'T KNOW. I HAD... A HAPPY CHILDHOOD, BUT, I MADE MYSELF HAPPY. WHEN I THINK OF FAMILY, OF DOMESTIC LIFE, WHEN I THINK THAT I FELT MORE AT HOME WHEN I WAS AT MY FRIENDS' HOUSES...

THAT DARKNESS, THE FEAR OF THAT DARKNESS... WHAT I SAW... THE MONSTERS WERE AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN...



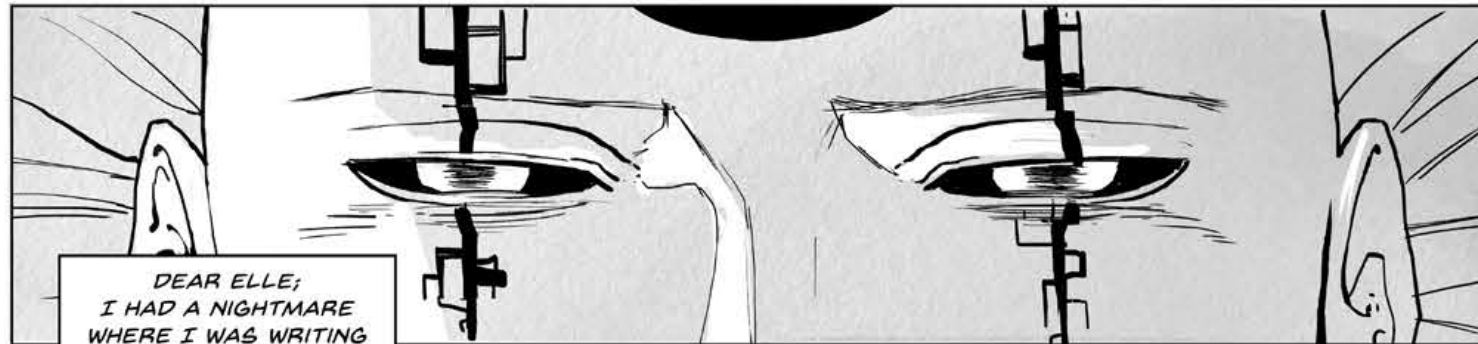
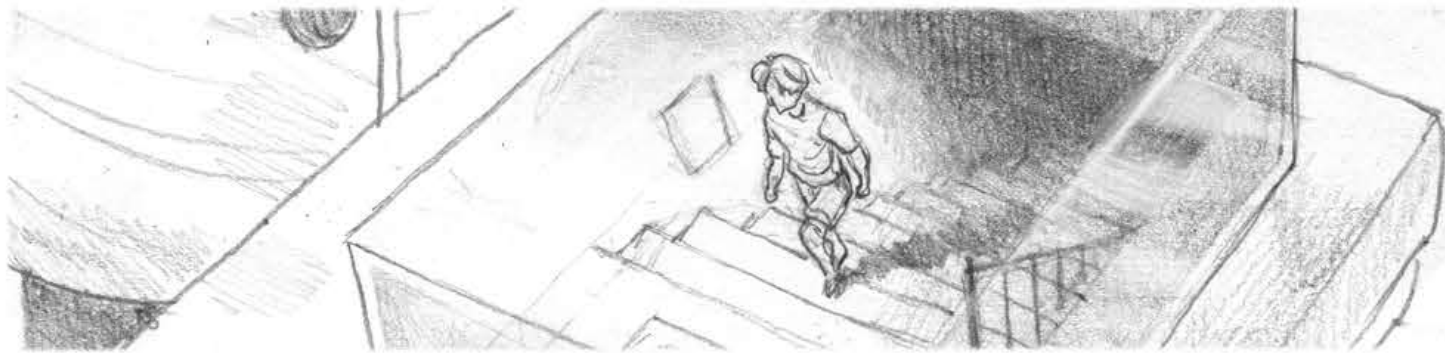
...WHY I FELT SO **ABANDONED**. WHEN YOU ARE A CHILD, YOU CAN'T EVEN CONCEIVE THAT YOUR HOME IS NOT NORMAL, THAT IT IS EMPTY OF EVERYTHING THAT MAKES IT WARM... THAT, IN IT, THERE'S NOTHING.

...THAT NOTHINGNESS, AS A CHILD, WAS EASIER TO ATTRIBUTE TO SOMETHING I COULD UNDERSTAND: MONSTERS ROAMING IN THE DARK.



I ATTEST THAT THE ANSWER HAS BEEN ACCEPTED.

Estimada Elle



DEAR ELLE;
I HAD A NIGHTMARE
WHERE I WAS WRITING
YOU A LETTER. SO I AM
WRITING YOU ONE NOW
THAT I WILL NEVER SEND.

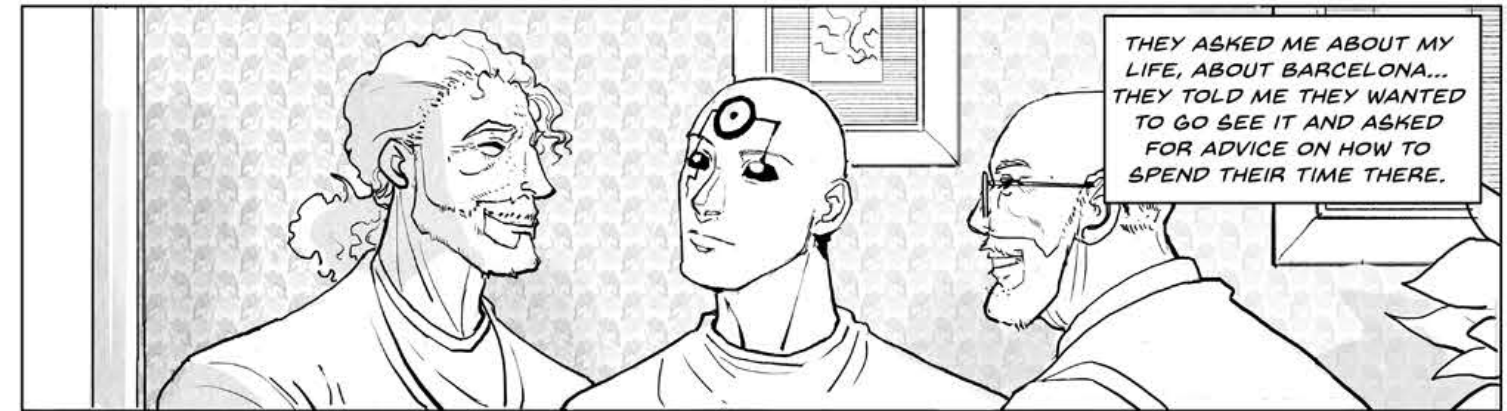


WHEN I WOKE UP, I DIDN'T KNOW
EXACTLY WHERE I WAS, BUT I
SMELLED COFFEE AND COULD
HEAR A QUIET BREAKFAST CON-
VERSATION IN THE OTHER ROOM.

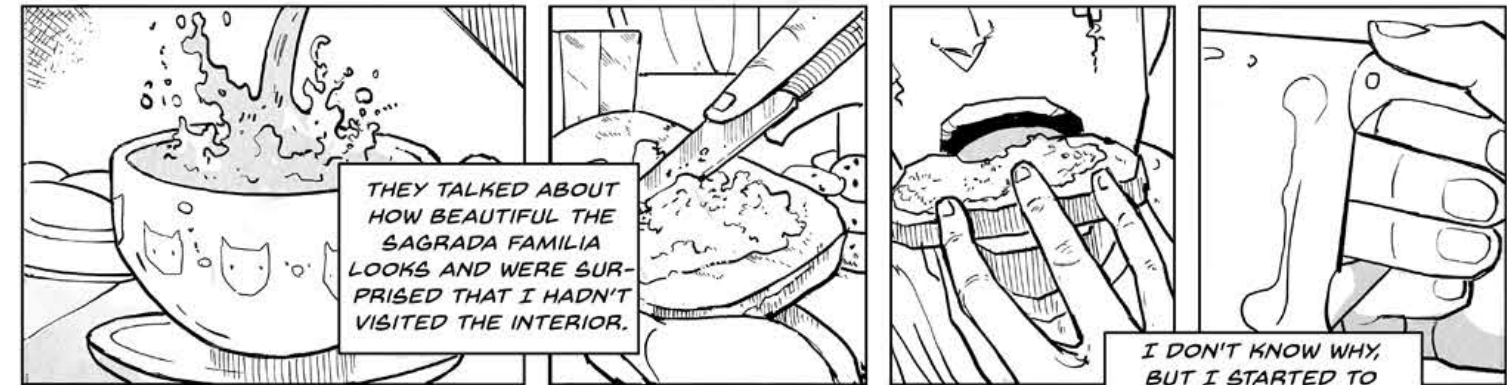


IT WAS LUC AND PIERRE, THE
NEIGHBORS. THEY TOLD ME WHAT
HAPPENED; THEY LIVE NEAR WHAT
USED TO BE MY FATHER'S RESTAU-
RANT, AND SAW ME COLLAPSE IN
FRONT OF THE PLACE.

THEY EVEN HAD A
FELLOW DOCTOR COME
IN TO MAKE SURE I
WAS OKAY...



THEY ASKED ME ABOUT MY
LIFE, ABOUT BARCELONA...
THEY TOLD ME THEY WANTED
TO GO SEE IT AND ASKED
FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO
SPEND THEIR TIME THERE.



THEY TALKED ABOUT
HOW BEAUTIFUL THE
SAGRADA FAMILIA
LOOKS AND WERE SUR-
PRISED THAT I HADN'T
VISITED THE INTERIOR.

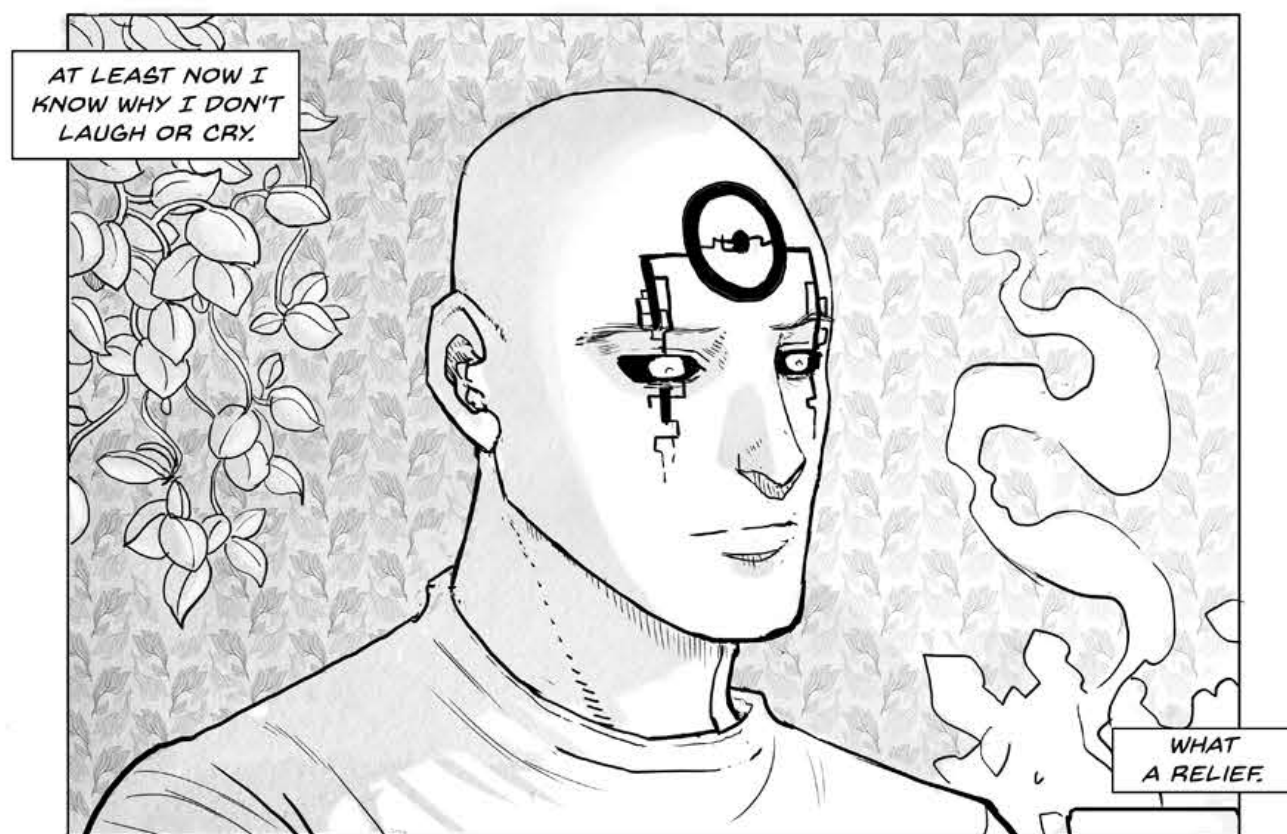
I DON'T KNOW WHY,
BUT I STARTED TO
TELL THEM ABOUT
GAUDÍ AVENUE, THE
STREET THAT LEADS
TO SAGRADA FAMILIA.
THERE WAS A TIME
WHEN I USED TO GO
THERE REGULARLY,
TO GO TO THE GYM.



IN AUTUMN, I PASSED
BY WHEN IT WAS ALREADY
DARK. GOING DOWN THE
AVENUE WITH THE LIGHTS
OF THE PIZZERIAS AND
KEBABS GAVE IT A BIT
OF A MOVIE SET FEEL,
ONE OF THOSE FROM THE
EIGHTIES THAT IMAGINED A
FUTURE OF DIRTY STREETS
LIT BY NEON. THE CENTER
OF THE AVENUE, WHICH IS
PEDESTRIANIZED, HAD A
STRANGE STRUCTURE, A
HOLLOWED OUT "ROOF"; I
NEVER KNEW WHAT
IT WAS FOR.

PERHAPS THEY
HUNG A TARP OVER IT
ON RAINY DAYS.

I TOLD LUC AND PIERRE
THAT IT WAS THE LIGHTS
AND THE CHARM OF THE
STORES, WHAT I LIKED, BUT,
IN REALITY, IT WAS THE
ROOF, THAT ROOF THAT
WASN'T A ROOF, NEXT TO
THE WOODEN TOY STORE
AND THE PIZZERIAS, FILLED
ME WITH A STRANGE NOS-
TALGIA. IT WAS... COZY, A
SECRET LOST EVEN TO ME.



...TO BE CONTINUED

SEE YOU IN ABOUT ~~40~~⁵⁰ DAYS (IDEALLY; SOME ISSUES IT'S 60 OR, UHM, MORE). WE KEEP THE RELEASE DATE UPDATED ON THE FACEBOOK FIXED POST. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING US SO WE CAN GET ISSUES OUT FASTER AND GET **DRAWINGS/SKETCHES** OF FUTURE ISSUES, **EARLY ACCESS** TO A WORK-IN-PROGRESS VERSION OF THE NEXT ISSUE, OR **VIDEOS** SHOWING HOW WE DRAW A PAGE, PLEASE CONSIDER HELPING US THROUGH PATREON (LINK BELOW). IF WE GET ENOUGH HELP, WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE UPSURGE A MONTHLY SERIES. THANKS!

— ah I wish...

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