



UPSURGE

26: Distorsiones activas

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SCRIPT
PANEL LAYOUT
COVER

PENCILS
INK

TRANSLATION
(SORRY, ENGLISH SPEAKERS)

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NOTE: JACOB AND CLARISSE SPEAK IN FRENCH. THE REST OF THE CHARACTERS IN THIS CHAPTER SPEAK EITHER SPANISH OR ENGLISH. IT IS NOT ESPECIALLY RELEVANT, SO IT WON'T BE MENTIONED AGAIN SO AS NOT TO HINDER THE READING.



SO, JACOB. WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR AN HOUR. YOU'RE NOT GONNA ASK ME THE QUESTION?

YOU MEAN ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY YOU'RE GOING TO...?

NO, NO.

ABOUT ELLE. YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLFRIEND.

SHE'S WITH A LAWYER NOW, RIGHT?

HAS A SON, ALREADY. AND A CHALET IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF PARIS, TOO. THEY COME TOGETHER, YOU SEE.



YOU'RE MOCKING ME.



I MEAN... JACOB.

YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT, IT'S HILARIOUS.

YOU TWO WERE THE WEIRD COUPLE FROM HIGH SCHOOL!

I'VE SEEN HER ON THE INTERNET TALKING ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF ATTACHMENT PARENTING, SO SHE'S NOT GOING BACK TO TEACHING PHILOSOPHY.

YOU QUOTED SARTRRE AND CAMUS, YOU HAD THAT DEER-LIGHTS STARE... AND LOOK AT HER NOW THAT SHE CAUGHT A LAWYER!





Transcript of recording #03/27/2012:

Essex: I see you have a penchant for these secret basements. At least I'm not a confused fucking orphan, this time.

Father Justo: Uh-huh. So that's where your animosity against the Cult of the One comes from. We had the audacity of taking care of you.

Essex: Yeah? Slapping my face red when I didn't wanna pray was part of my involuntary skincare routine?

Justo: ...you have a lot to explain, Essex. After what we just went through...

Essex: Yeah, yeah. I'm starting to know what it was about. I called Jacob... a friend, we work the same job. He knew what this is about, kinda. Last year, we were investigating a case... and he ran into a witch, who used black magic.

Justo: A witch?

Essex: And an American at that, too.

Justo: American? What was she doing here?

Essex: She wanted to go to Santiago, which meant that she needed the hand of Satan. Jacob told me he found some letters... in them, she talked about "controlling a beast"...

Essex: Hmm... Now that I think about it, according to Jacob, the woman died giving birth to the demon that killed Eliya.

Justo: What? Eliya Uwante, murdered? There were some suspicions, but I thought it ended up being just a heart att...

Essex: No. They unleashed a demon upon him.

Justo: But... did they use a demon from the astral plane or...?

Essex: No, they materialized it. They used a hexagram to bring the demon into the material plane.

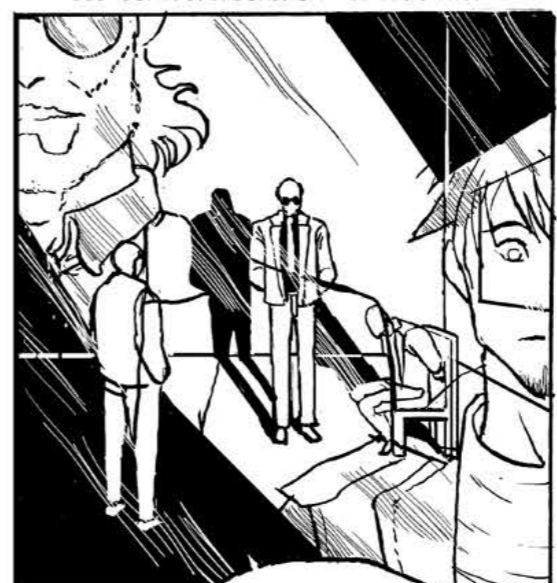
Justo: But the hexagram is a symbol of stability and peace... Who could corrupt such a symbol in that ma...

Essex: An asshole, father. An asshole.

Justo: ...so, I take it that our prisoner followed the trails of the place where the witch died and ended up here, seeking revenge...

Essex: Yes. According to the letters, the witch was part of something called "The Sigil of M", so we can assume that he's also part of that group.

Justo: The Sigil of M? The American cult?



HE'S THE HEAD OF THE INTERDIMENSIONAL DIVISION OF THE EBI*. STILL UNDER THE PARANORMAL BRANCH, OF COURSE.

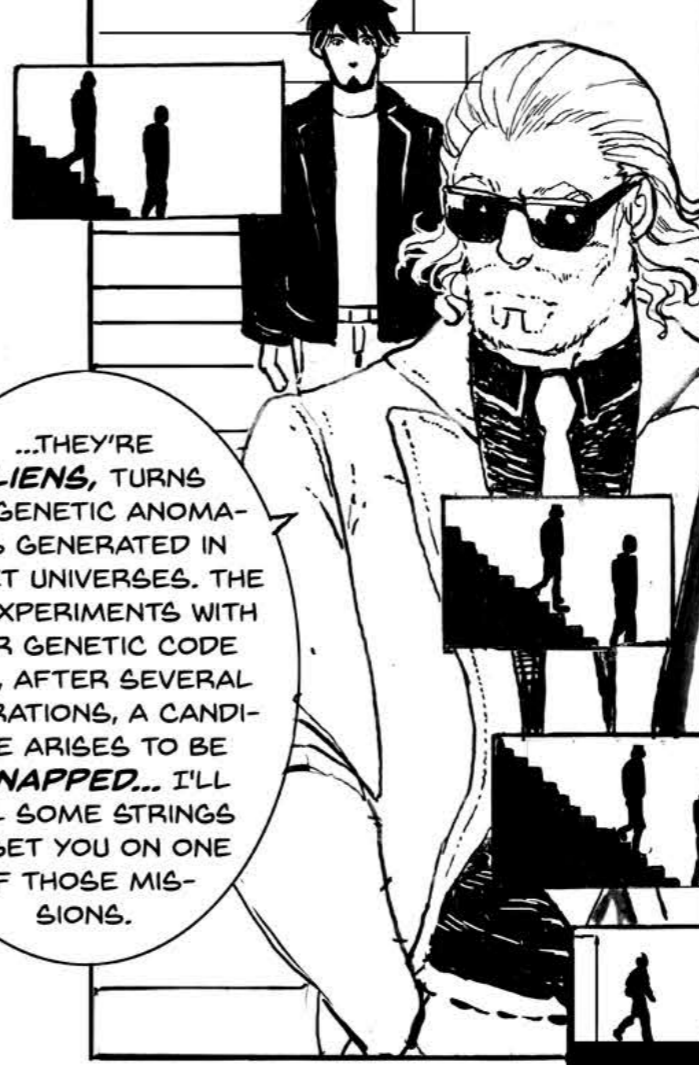


WHY DID YOU CAPTURE HIM?

WE WANTED TO KNOW HOW THEY GOT METAHUMANS LIKE 203 AND 1234...



AFTER ALL, THEY ARE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE OF SUPERMEN. THE UNITED STATES AND RUSSIA ARE LAGGING BEHIND...



...THEY'RE ALIENS, TURNS OUT. GENETIC ANOMALIES GENERATED IN POCKET UNIVERSES. THE EBI EXPERIMENTS WITH THEIR GENETIC CODE UNTIL, AFTER SEVERAL GENERATIONS, A CANDIDATE ARISES TO BE KIDNAPPED... I'LL PULL SOME STRINGS TO GET YOU ON ONE OF THOSE MISSIONS.

WHAT MORE DO YOU W... YOU! YOU'RE FROM THE EBI! HELP ME! PLEASE!



WE'RE TAKING HIM, GUYS.



SIGURD HAS TO REIGNITE HIS FAITH.



SEE THAT MAN, SIGURD?

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

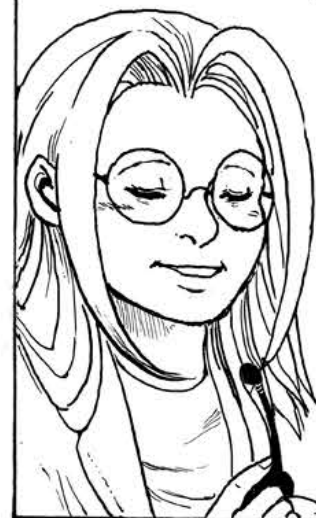
SIGURD, THEY HAVE EVERYTHING I KNOW. ARE THEY GOING TO LET ME GO?

IN A SE-COND. COME CLOSER.



I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE THE IDEA OF SPENDING AN HOUR IN HERE.

HAVE FAITH, JACOB.



IT'S LIKE A COFFIN. FULL OF WATER, ON TOP OF THAT.

YEAH, SORRY. THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY IS IN A SEMI-LIQUID STATE...

IT'LL NEED THE WATER TO MOVE.

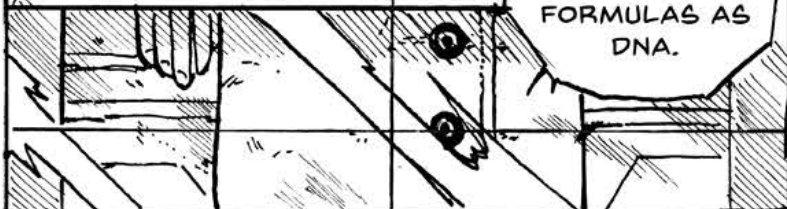
FANTASTIC. DOES IT MOVE ON ITS OWN?

YES, IT'S...

...AN INORGANIC SUBSTANCE, BUT IT IMITATES THE DRIVES OF A LIVING BEING...

WHAT?

IT FEEDS AND GROWS... WE'VE EVEN PUT MATH FORMULAS AS DNA.



...

WE'VE PROGRAMMED IT TO INITIALLY FEED ON YOUR OLDER IMPLANTS...

...THEN HE'LL ADAPT TO CONSUMING PROTEIN FROM YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM.

THAT ...

...DOESN'T SOUND POSSIBLE.

IT'S A JOINT STRUCTURE OF SILICONE AND A VERY PECULIAR SUBSTANCE...

...THE EBI CALLS IT THE *SHADOWGENE*, AND IT'S... VERY STRANGE. WE KINDA STOLE IT FROM THEM A LITTLE BIT.



WHAT?

THE EBI IS INVOLVED IN THIS?

WHO'S THAT?

YOU KNOW WHO I AM.

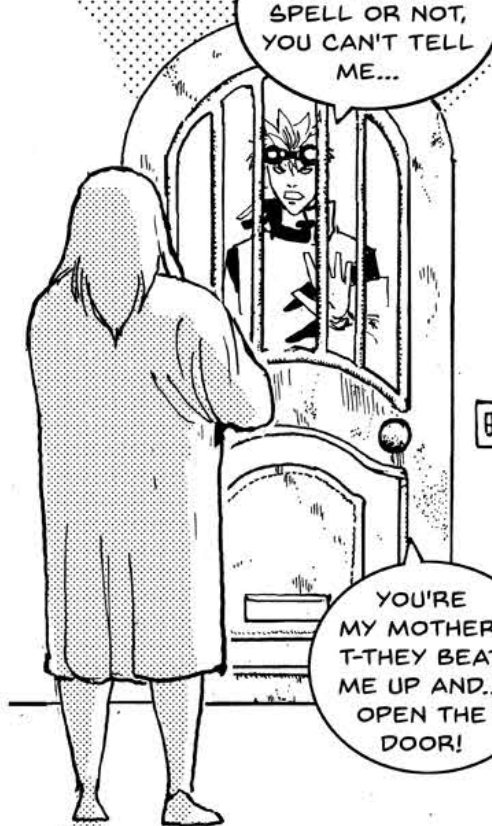


COME ON, MOM. DON'T DO IT.

MOM? I DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN.

YOU CAN'T... PROTECTION SPELL OR NOT, YOU CAN'T TELL ME...

YOU'RE MY MOTHER! T-THEY BEAT ME UP AND... OPEN THE DOOR!





NOT VOLUNTARILY. WE WORKED WITH THEM, AND KEPT SOME SAMPLES WHEN THEY DIDN'T LOOK...

NOT SURE I LIKE HOW THIS...

OH, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? WE'VE BEEN WANTING TO MAKE INORGANIC LIFE FOR A LONG TIME...

MAKE TECHNOLOGY ALIVE!

THEY INTERACT WITH YOUR BODY JUST LIKE REGULAR EYES. THEY EVEN INCREASE YOUR POWERS!

YOU INSPIRED ME.

THINK ABOUT IT, YOUR EYES...

HOW CAN YOU SAY THEY'RE NOT LIVING TISSUE?

WITH THE SHADOWGENE, THE SILICONE BEGAN TO FORM A FACSIMILE OF CELLS...

OKAY, OKAY. WILL I LOSE FUNCTIONALITY?

NOT THE BASIC ONES. YOU MAY EVEN REGISTER MORE INFORMATION WITH YOUR EYES. UNEXPECTED ACCIDENTS LIKE YOU EMITTING BRAIN WAVES... MAYBE.

I KNOW YOU SAID YOU HATED BARCELONA... THAT YOU WANTED TO COME BACK TO SEVILLA ONCE YOU RETIRED, AND IF I STAYED...

BUT I'VE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST.

...AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR US...



Justo: The Sigil of M... We have some information about them. Our priests in the United States investigated them... They believe that the group is protected, and probably formed, by very powerful families in the country. Aristocratic families, in fact; fled from the French Revolution.

Essex: Oh. Since the French helped the Yankees in their independence war...

Justo: There were affinities between the two countries, yes. The Americans probably helped them to settle there, but rumors say that, even taking that into account, they gained a lot of influence very quickly... but... something happened. At the beginning of the last century...

Essex: Wait, wait. Back up. The French revolution was at the end of the 18th century, wasn't it? You can't sum up two centuries in...

Justo: ...if I had more information, I'd give it. They are a very elusive group. Most people who know them fear for their lives, there is very little information. But as I was saying, at the beginning of the 20th century we have the first signs of its existence... a wave of satanic rituals, animals found dead in strange ways... they were attributed to the hysteria of the First World War, but it is from then on that the name of the group was publicly mentioned, in select circles... conjoined with rumours of a certain "southern beast", which could be heard roaring on red moon nights...

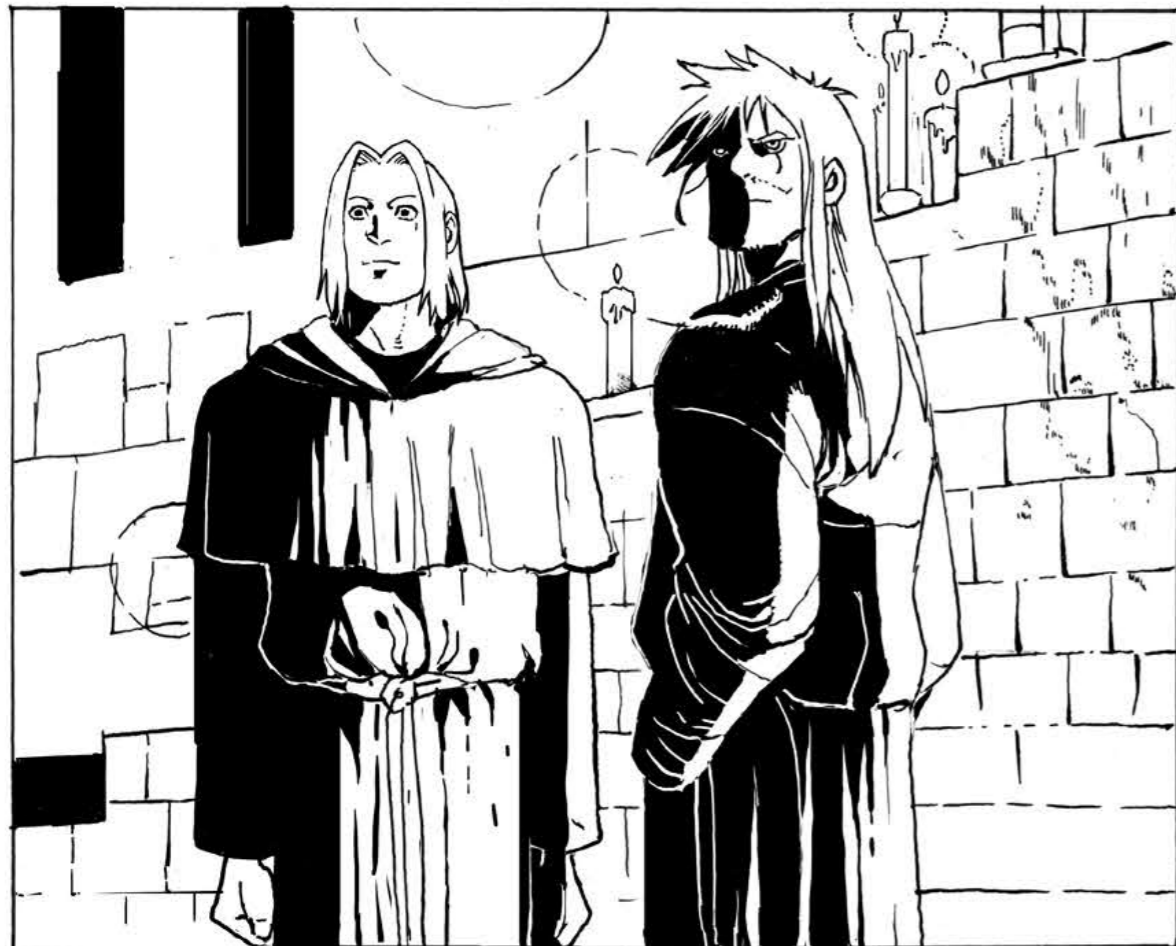
Prisoner: Ha. Singing our exploits! Very good. Very good! But don't sell us short, priest. The reason demons can't appear on the material plane? Us. The reason why the world is embroiled (sic) in materialism? Us. We have lengthened our lives beyond what is humanly possible, and we've brought the Antichrist into the world... I think that deserves bigger words from you, father!

Essex: Wasn't he anesthetized?

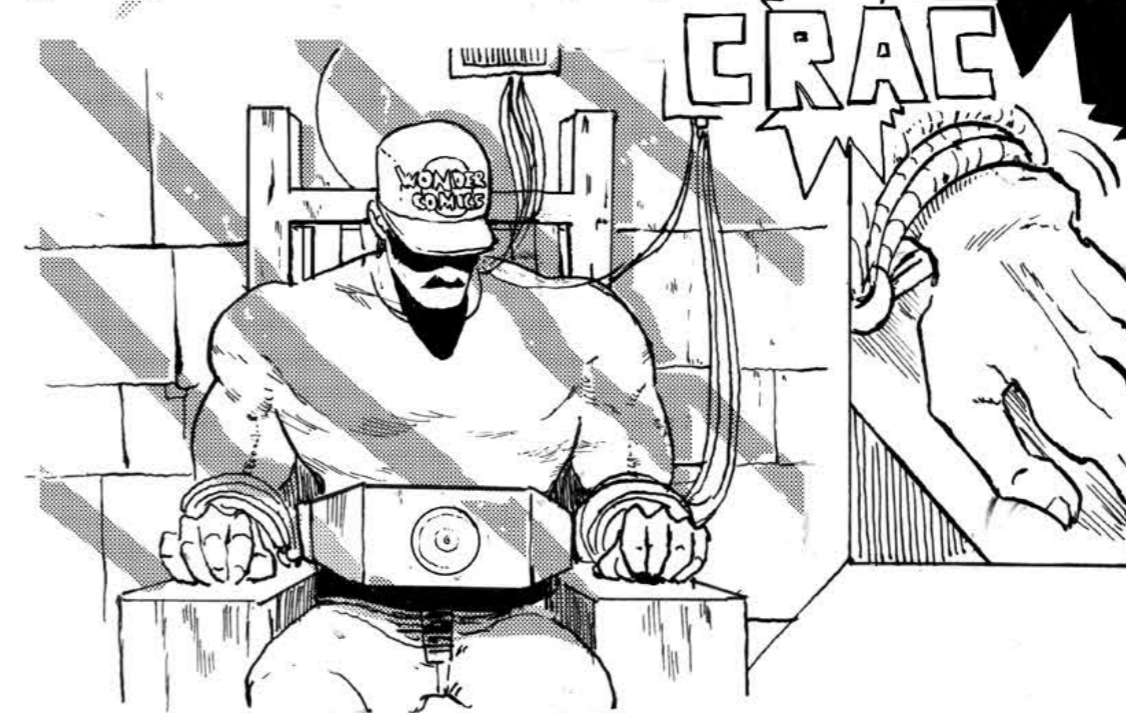
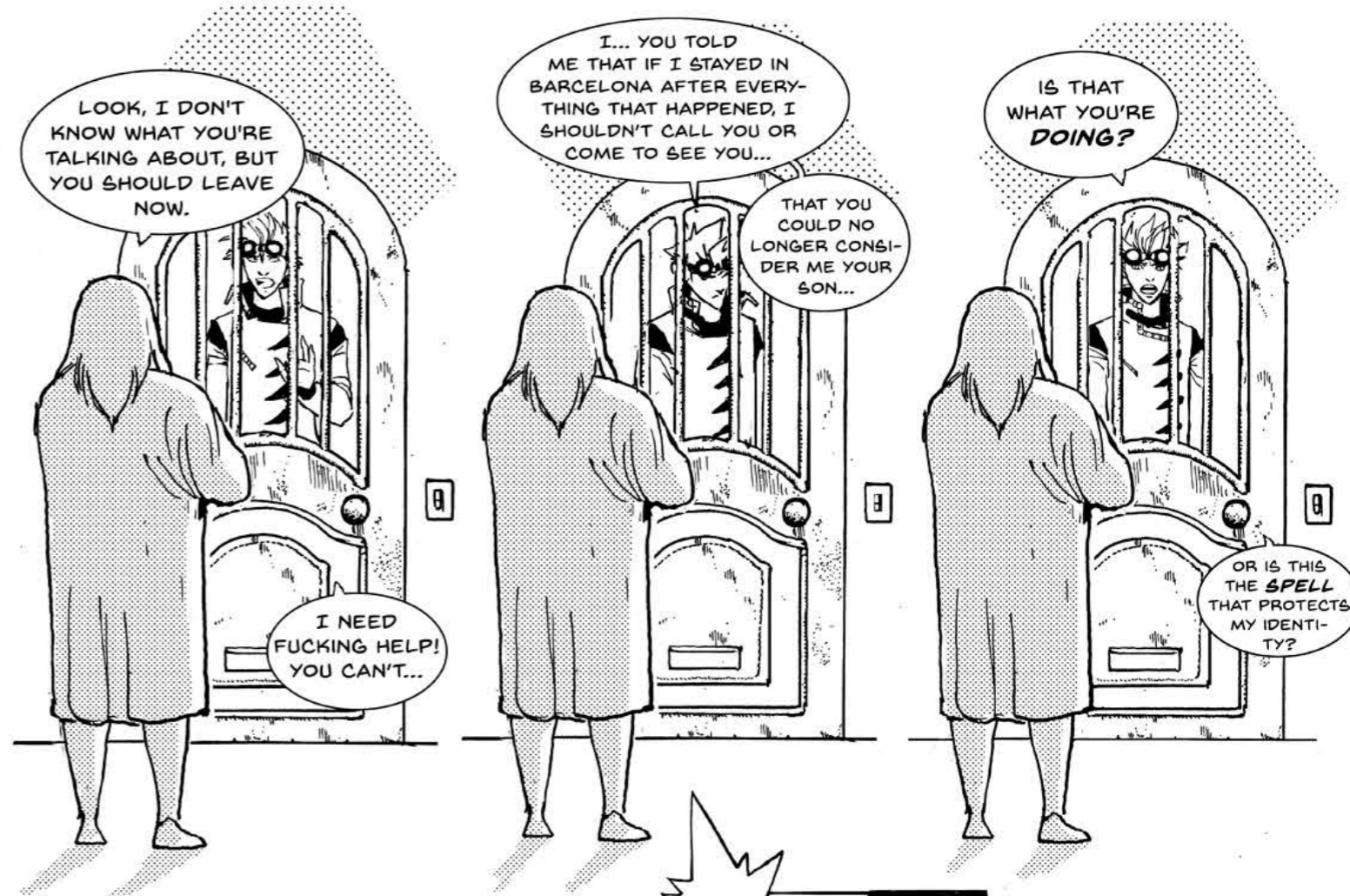
Justo: Yes. I don't understand...



Prisoner: Hmh. Fuck it! I'm going to tell you my story, why not. My name is Walter Raleigh. I was an explorer, a long time ago. I wanted to leave my mark on the world, literally: a fucking space on the map was going to be mine. But you know how it goes. You think you're going to make it, and then it all ends like a wet fart. So I ended up looking in those places where nobody wants to look. Those spaces that others believe to be non-existent; myths and legends. I had heard rumors that the Holy Grail was near some Mayan ruins... so I said to myself, fuck it. Let's give it a try.



Prisoner: I searched the ruins. Obviously, it wasn't there. I'll be brief: I ended up in the Amazon jungle, and there I found it. The so-called Holy Grail. It was a shitty medieval cup. A scam, at least the cup itself was. However... the cup had a bit of water. And it wasn't normal water. Most who dared to drink it died. However, if you had enough willpower to endure your insides burning... well... let's say the reaper is going to have to wait a long time to meet you.



Prisoner: So, anyway. After that, I went to America and met that group you mentioned... They tried to kill me, in fact. Those rituals you talked about? They tried to kidnap my fucking dog, do their bullshit black magic shit on him...

Justo: Are you talking about the rituals during the First World War?

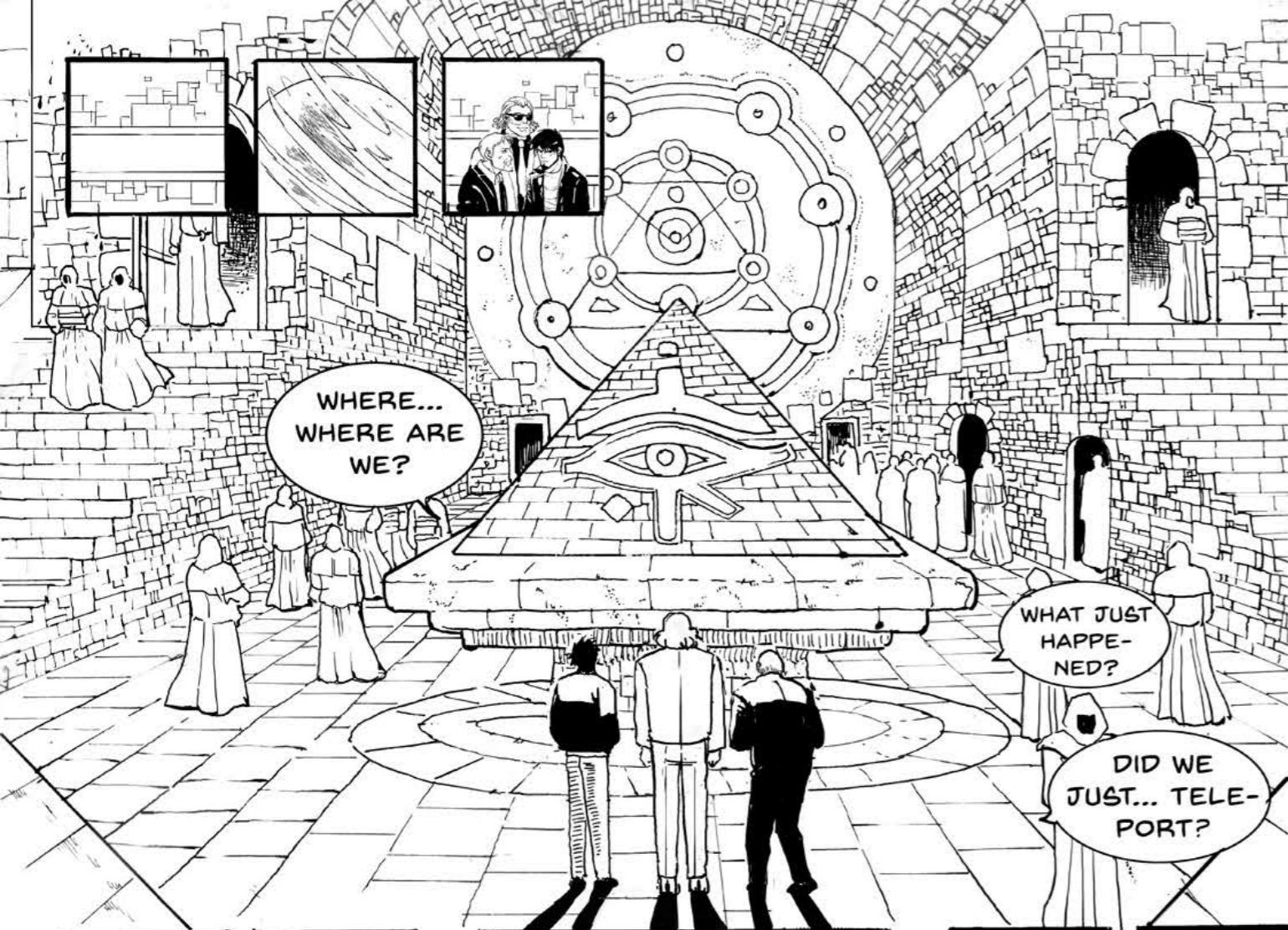
Essex: Hey. Hey! Those sounds... He's...!

Prisoner: They too discovered that it is not only death that has been altered in my biology.

Essex: He's breaking his bones! Or dislocating them!

Prisoner: Can you imagine living for millennia but doing it with the health of an ultra-elderly man? A bladder so old I piss dust? Nah, man.





WHERE... WHERE ARE WE?

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

DID WE JUST... TELEPORT?

WHAT, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SAY? THAT'S WHAT YOU DO! THE ROOM WITH THE SCORPIONS, THE "TRAINING SESSIONS", HAVING TO INCRIMINATE MY FRIEND...! AND FOR WHAT, HUH?

BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER, BECAUSE AN UN-TRAINED ASSHOLE LIKE ADAM, ACCORDING TO YOU, IS MORE **POWERFUL** THAN ME!

AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE DONE!

TO "STRENGTHEN MY WILL"?

WHERE...? SIGURD.

YOU'VE BEEN PATHETIC. WHAT?

SHOWING SO MUCH WEAKNESS. FORGETTING YOUR SACRED LOYALTY TO THE HERMITES.



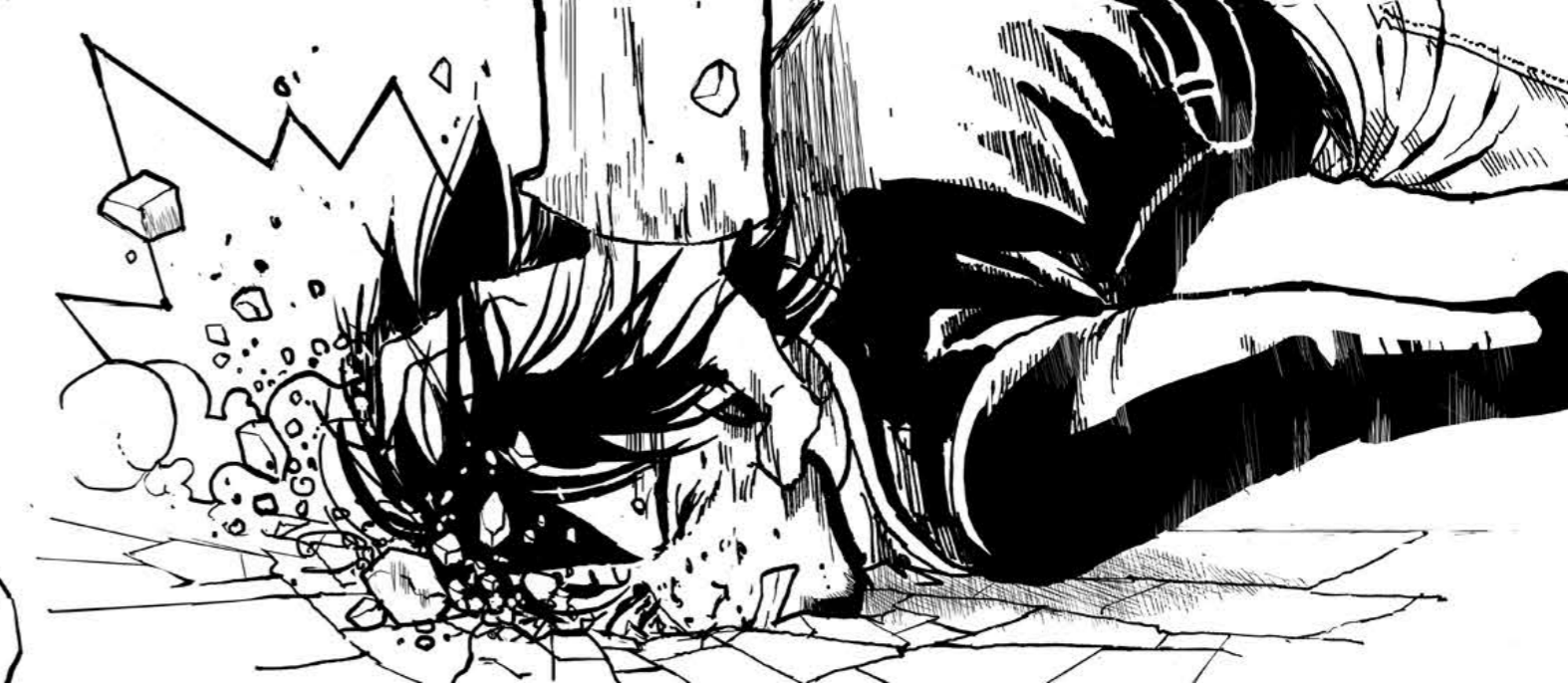
LOYAL? TO YOU? ALL YOU DO IS TORTURE ME.

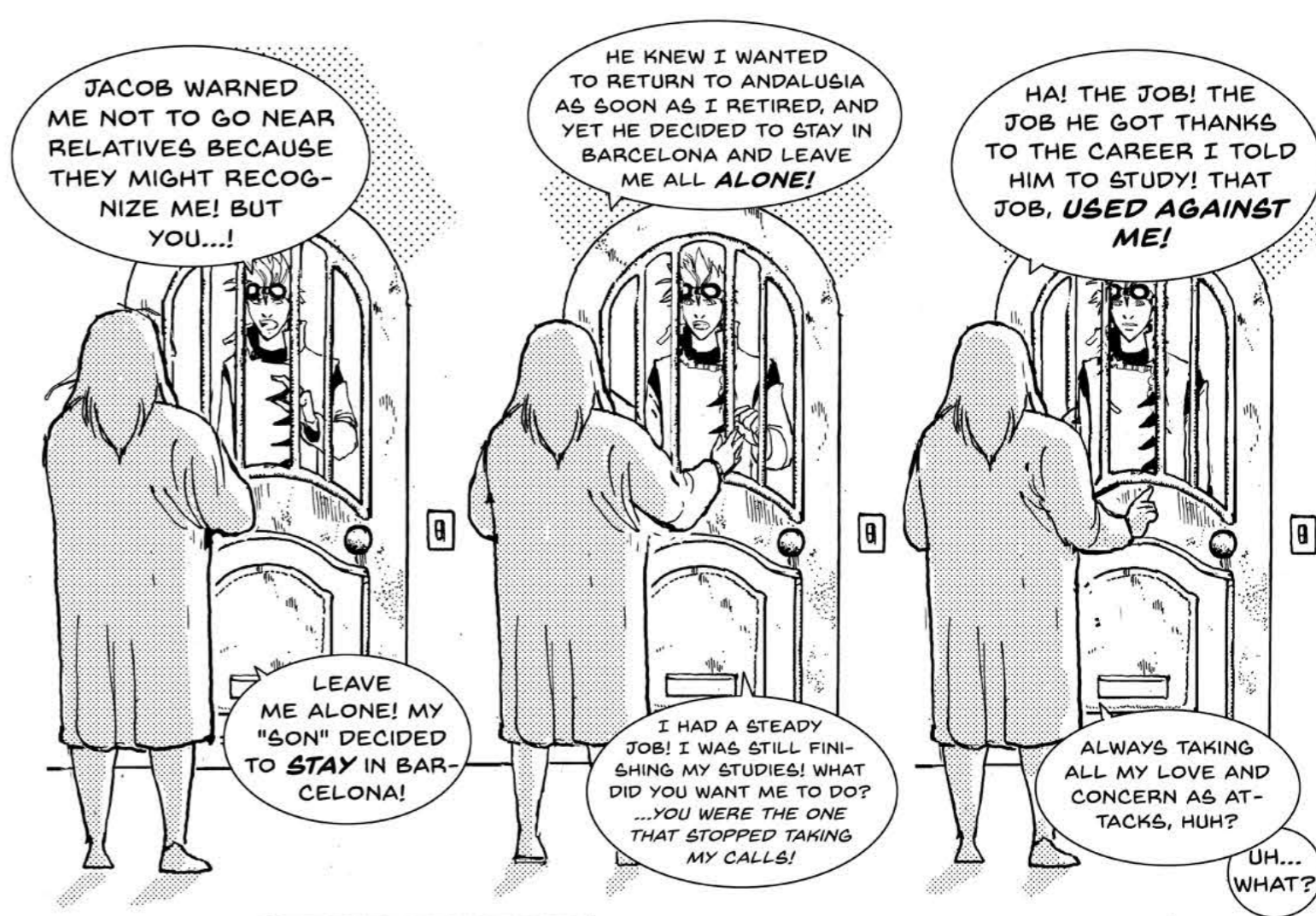
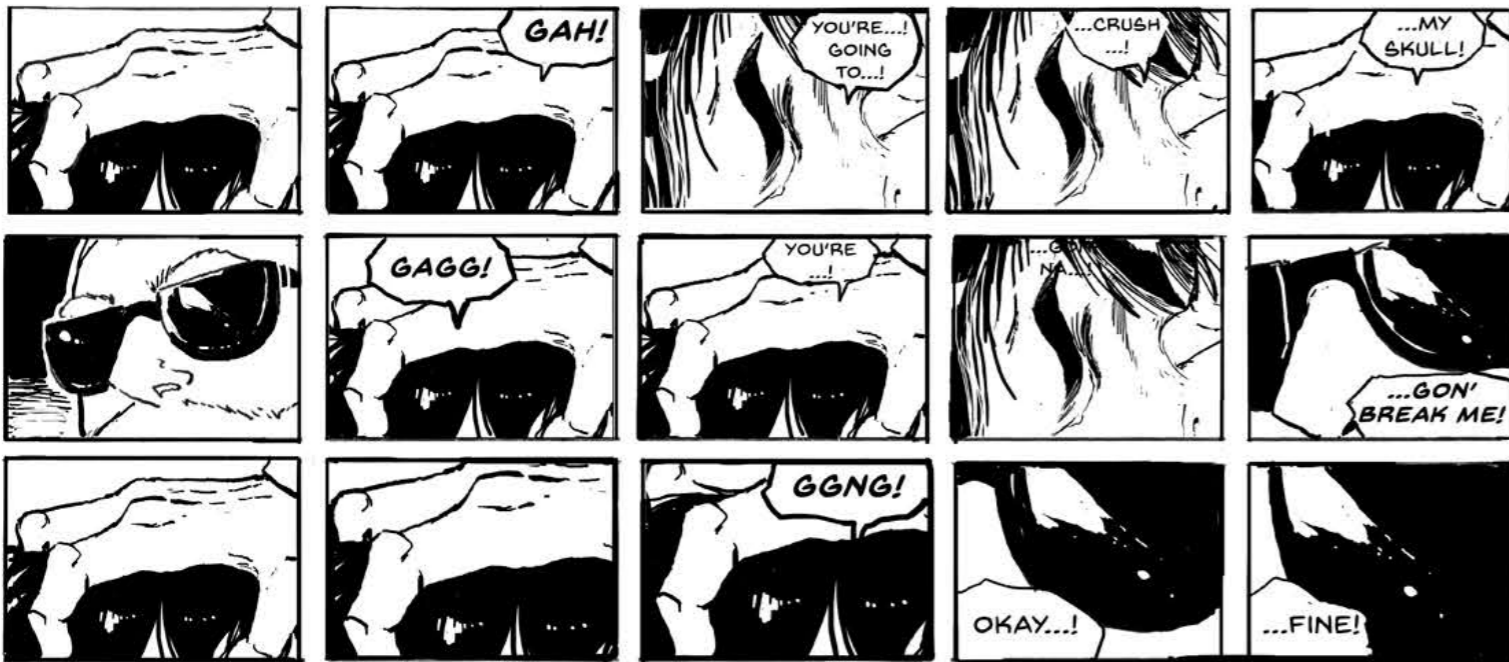


WHAT DID YOU SAY? YOU HEARD ME, FRANK.

AT LEAST HAVE THE BALLS TO ADMIT WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

ELECTRICITY? THAT I...? HOW CAN I DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT WITHOUT GETTING **BURNED**? THE IMPLANT GENERATES A SUBCUTANEOUS LAYER TO PROTECT YOU! WE'VE TESTED IT WITH **MICE**...





Justo: He's... he's reaching the street!

Essex: He hit me! How can he... his arms are broken...

Prisoner: Good-bye, you fucking cunts! Let's go get Jacob and the hand of Satan!



Essex: Not in a million fucking years!

Justo: Leave him! He's out in the streets, it's better to let him escape! He just said what he's looking for...

Essex: Are you that worried about losing reputation among your parishioners?!



Justo: Do you think someone who extracts power from demons would have trouble killing innocents? It's better to let him escape!

Essex: ...I'll do it alone, then.



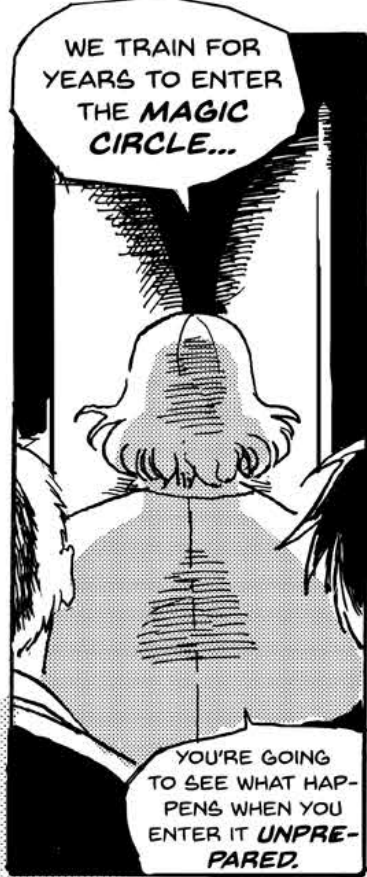
Justo: No!



ALMOST THERE, SIGURD.

GET READY.

WHY?



WE TRAIN FOR YEARS TO ENTER THE **MAGIC CIRCLE**...

YOU'RE GOING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ENTER IT **UNPREPARED**.



MOST OF THEM CAN'T STAND THE CONTACT OF THE **OLD ONES**.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE SUCH PURITY NATURALLY...

MY PARTNER WAS A PRIEST OF THE ONE... WE MADE HIM GO INTO THE CIRCLE, AND HE ACCEPTED THE TOUCH...



THE **OLD ONES** MADE HIM A HERMITE, RIGHT THEN AND THERE. NO TRAINING WHATSOEVER.

DUDE, WHAT THE FUC...

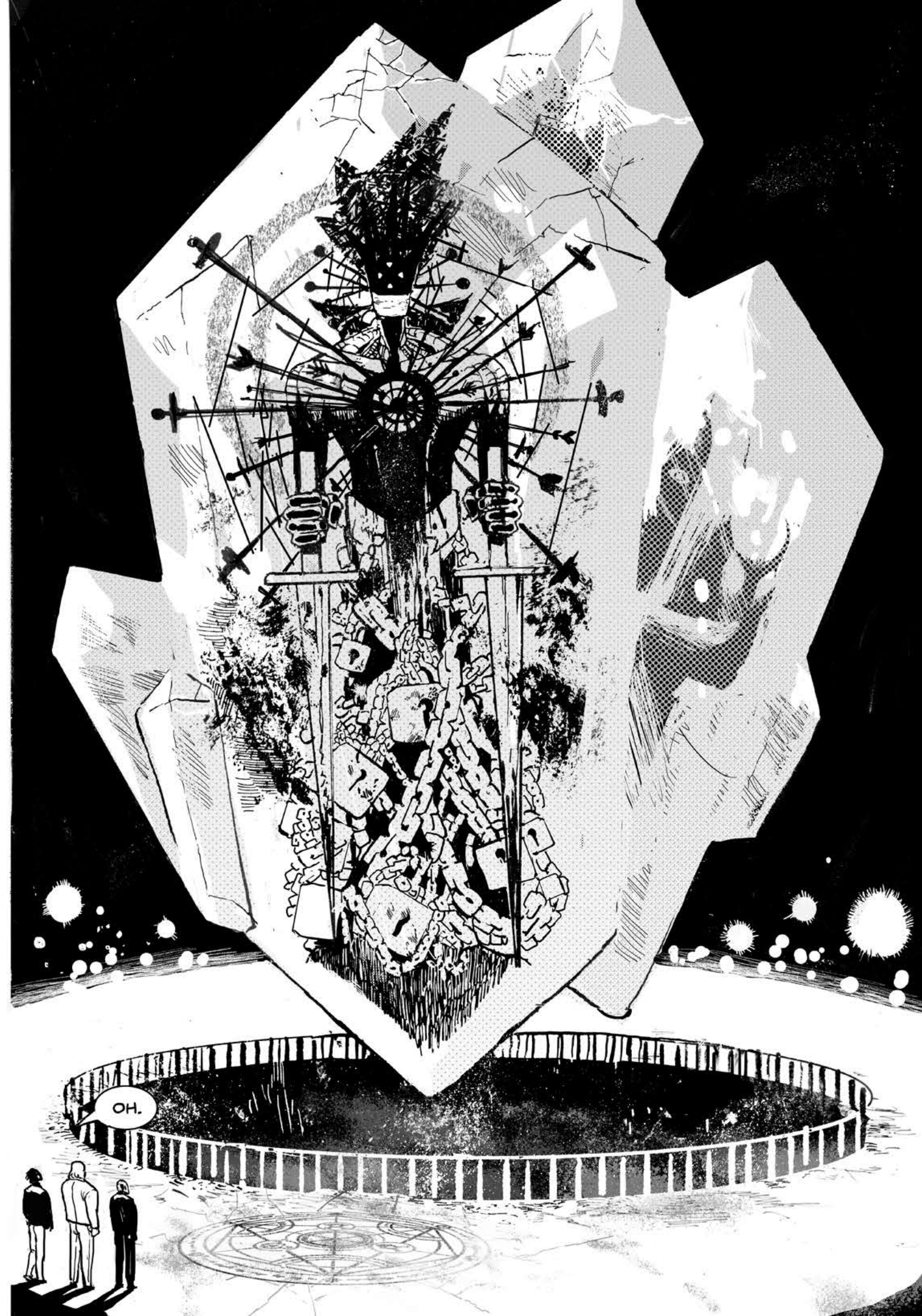
WAIT, YOU... THAT LOOK... YOU RECOGNIZE ME!

YOU KNOW WHO I AM!

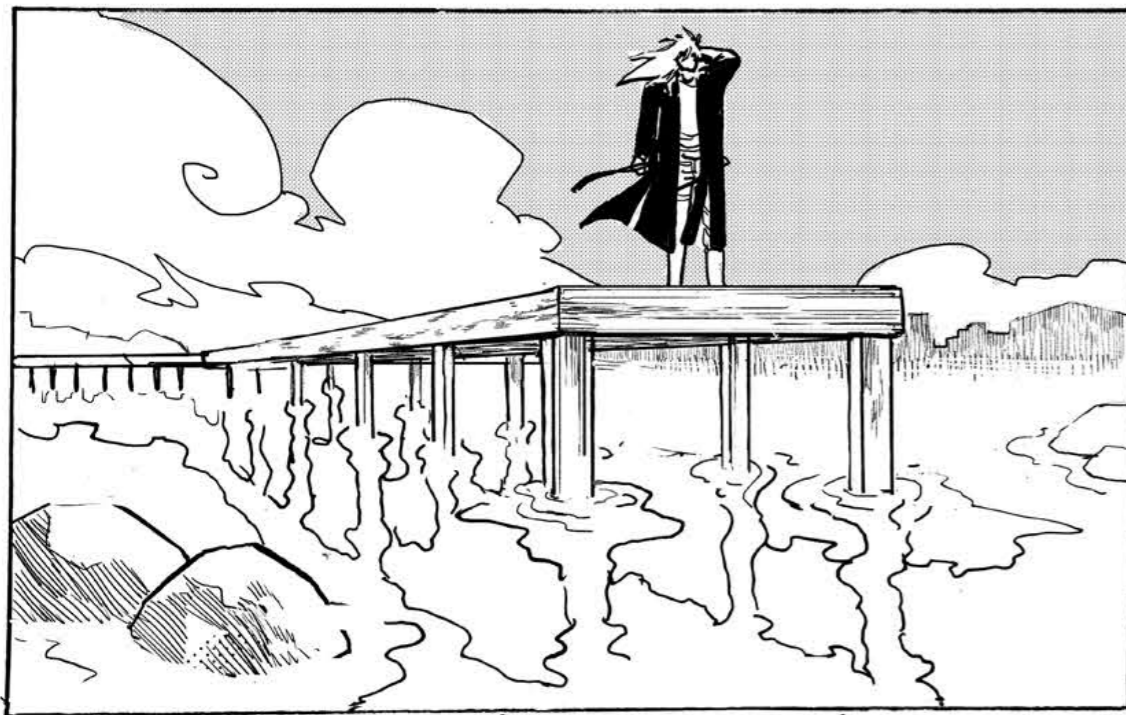
WHAT? YOU'VE LOST YOUR MIND, YOUNG MAN.

YOU'RE PLAYING ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR **GAMES**!

THAT'S IT! I **DON'T KNOW YOU!** I DON'T HAVE A SON! I'M CALLING THE **POLICE!**



OH.



Justo: You return empty-handed.

Essex: ...

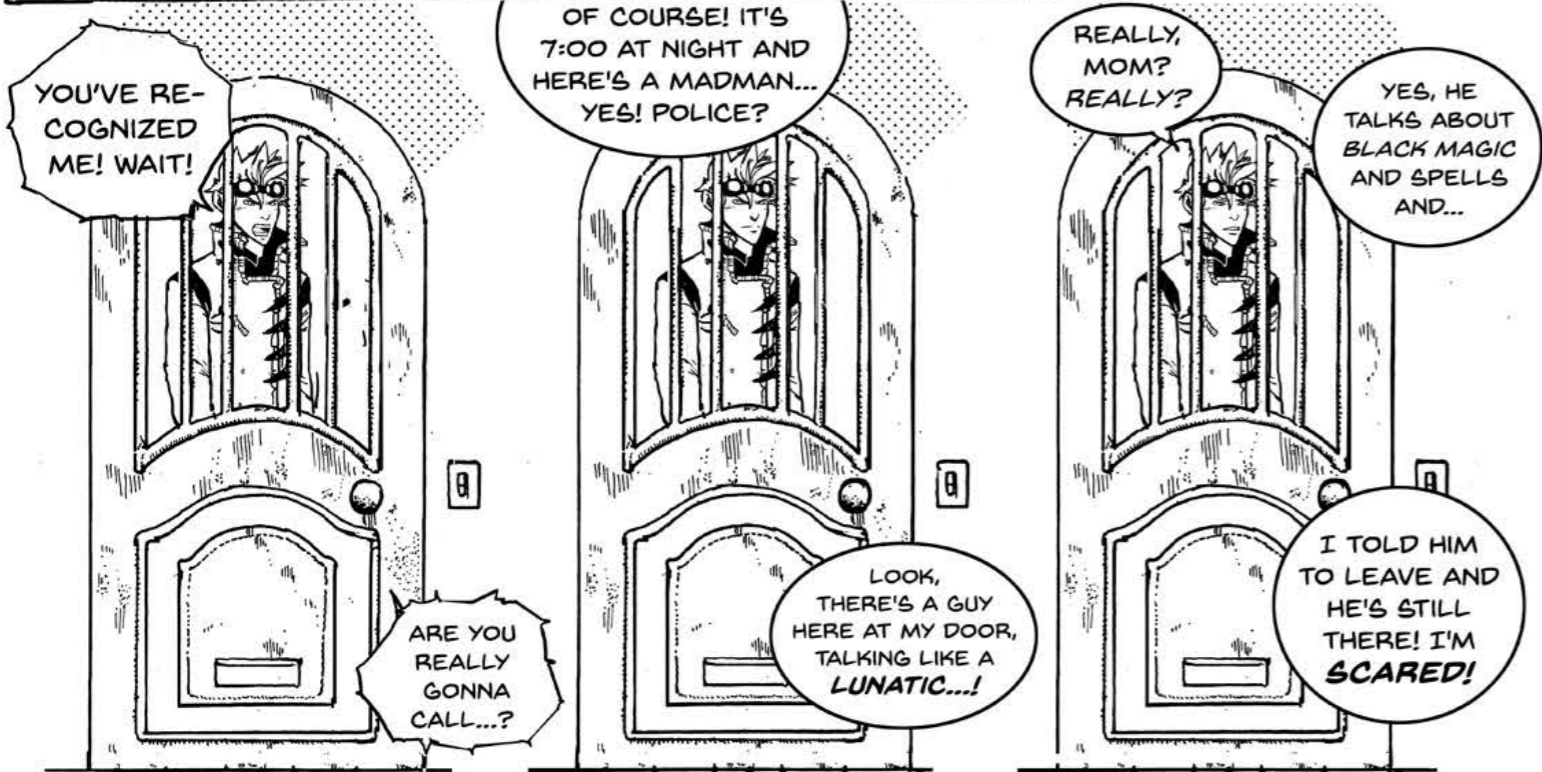
Justo: What happened?

Essex: I followed his trail to the dock. I lost it there, so he probably jumped into the water.

Justo: Heh.

Essex: Nice smirk ya got. You realize that if we both went after him immediately...

Justo: ...We would've put innocents in danger.



YOU'VE RECOGNIZED ME! WAIT!

OF COURSE! IT'S 7:00 AT NIGHT AND HERE'S A MADMAN... YES! POLICE?

REALLY, MOM? REALLY?

YES, HE TALKS ABOUT BLACK MAGIC AND SPELLS AND...

ARE YOU REALLY GONNA CALL...?

LOOK, THERE'S A GUY HERE AT MY DOOR, TALKING LIKE A LUNATIC...!

I TOLD HIM TO LEAVE AND HE'S STILL THERE! I'M SCARED!



SEE WHY YOU HAVE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WILL?

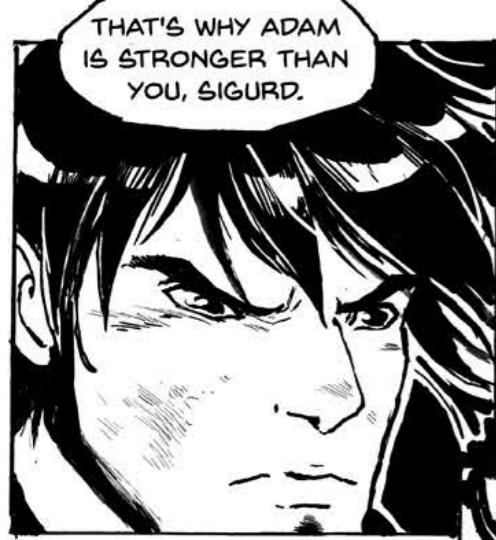
LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT POOR EBI AGENT.



LOOK AT HIM. HIS ORGANIZATION WANTS TO CONTROL MAGIC... REDUCE IT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. THAT CREATES WEAK AGENTS, UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE CONTACT.



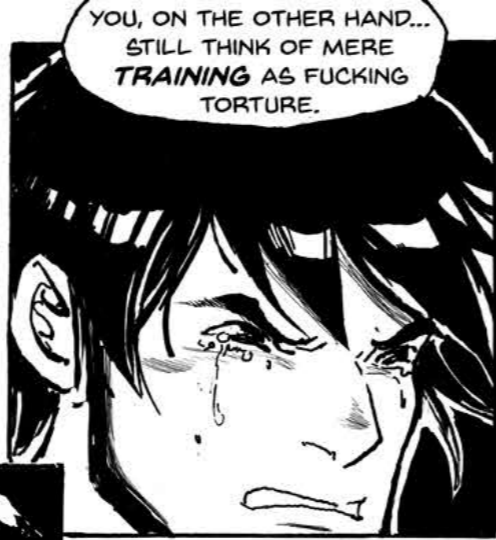
DO YOU WANT TO END UP LIKE THIS, SIGURD? DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW HOW MUCH WE'VE CARED ABOUT YOU?



THAT'S WHY ADAM IS STRONGER THAN YOU, SIGURD.



HE'S GIVEN UP EVERYTHING TO REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH HIS SIMPLISTIC MORALITY...



YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND... STILL THINK OF MERE TRAINING AS FUCKING TORTURE.

"IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO OPEN YOURSELF TO THE POWER WE'RE OFFERING..."



MY GOD... GENERATE ELECTRICITY? BUT, IF WHAT CLARISSE SAYS IS... IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE... THOUGH... ESSEX, HE NOW HAS HUGE STRENGTH...

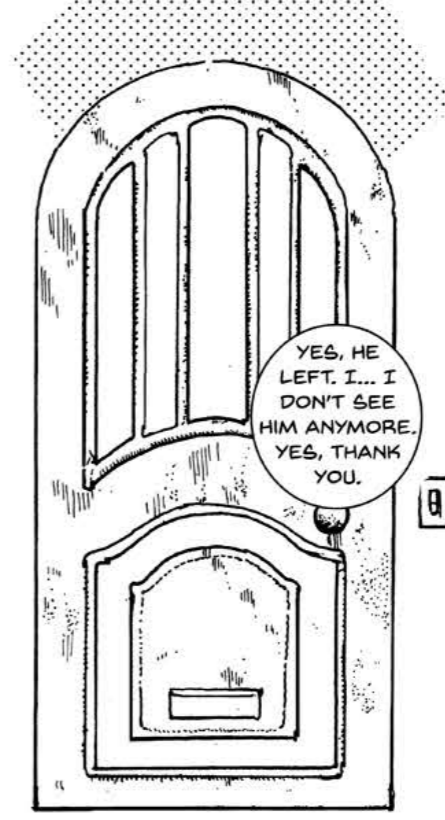


...I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO HOLD THAT LEVEL OF POWER IN THIS STATE... IT'S A DISTORTION TOO FAR OUT OF ESTABLISHED REALITY...

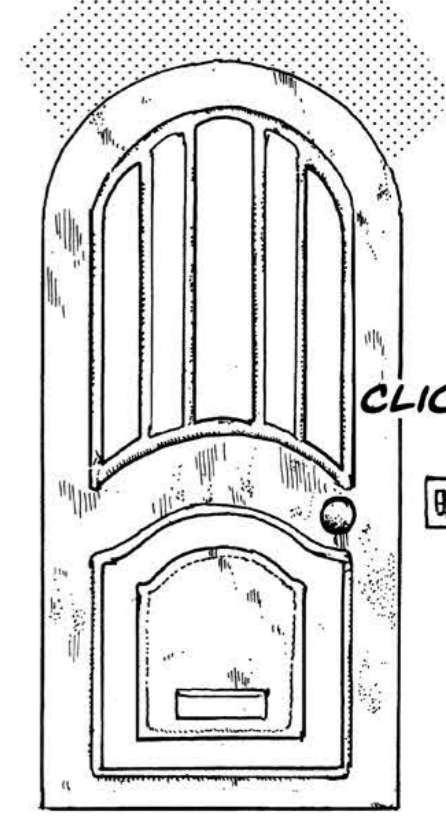


...HE'S GONE.

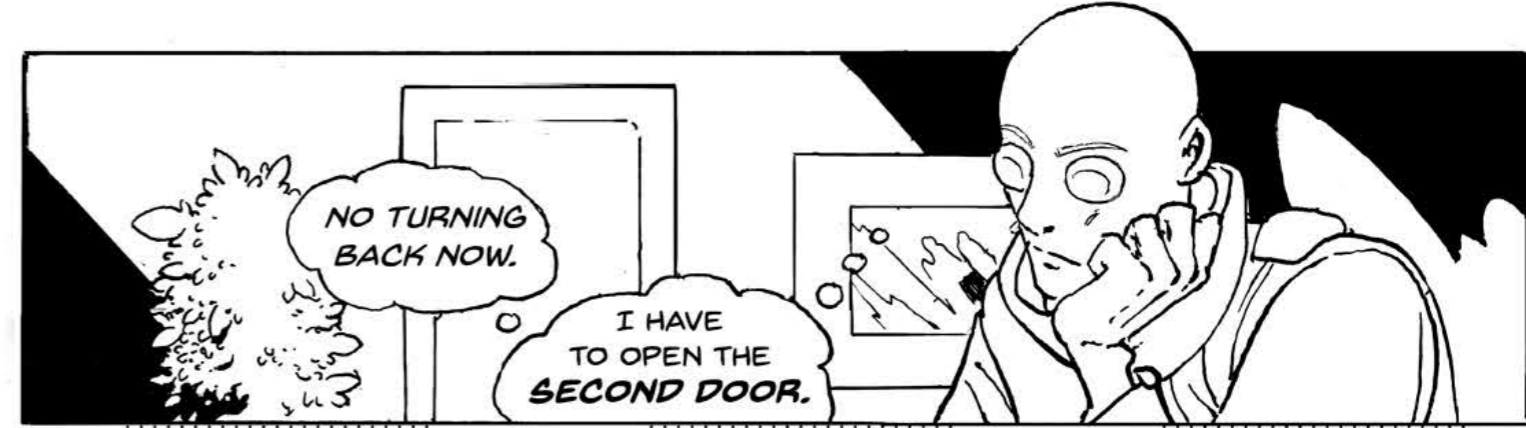
SEE YOU NOW!



YES, HE LEFT. I... I DON'T SEE HIM ANYMORE. YES, THANK YOU.



CLICK



NO TURNING BACK NOW.

I HAVE TO OPEN THE SECOND DOOR.



YES, HE SAYS STRANGE THINGS AND... OF COURSE HE'S INTIMIDATING ME, WHAT KIND OF Q...!

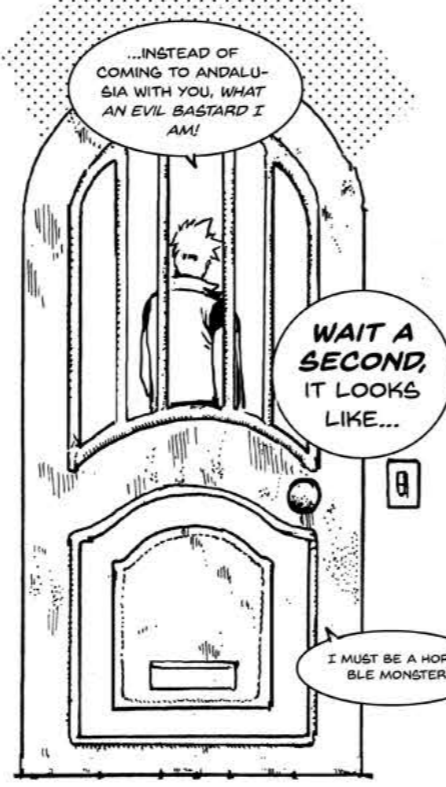
...IT'S FINE, MOM. I'M LEAVING.

HE DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT IN THE HEAD, HE THINKS I'M...



I'M LEAVING! YOU DON'T NEED THE COPS TO KICK YOUR SON OUT OF YOUR HOME! SEE? BYE!

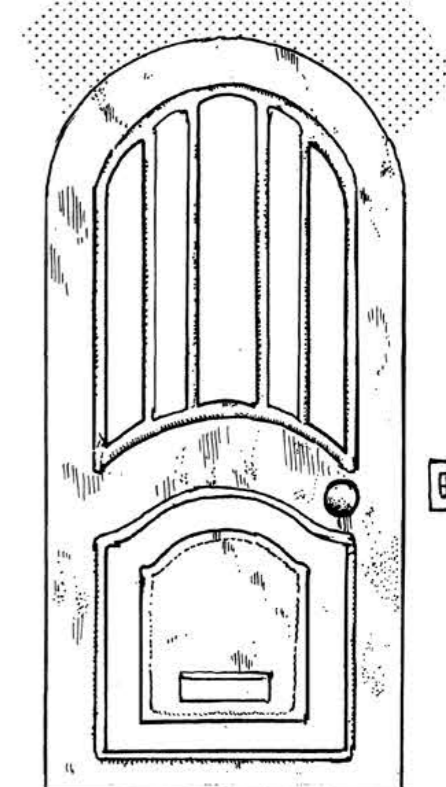
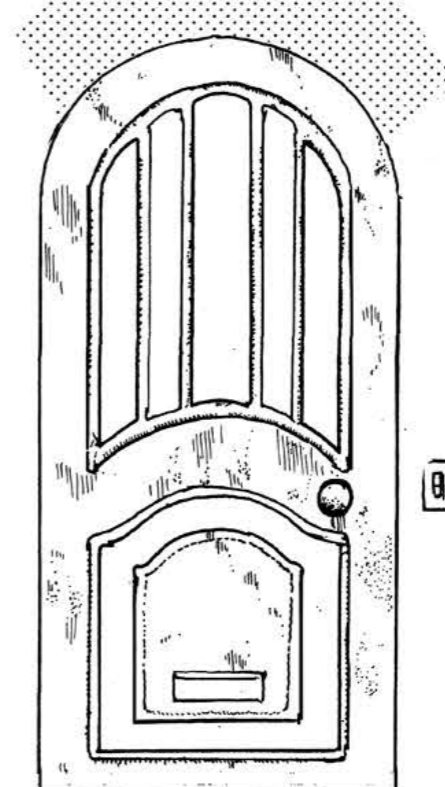
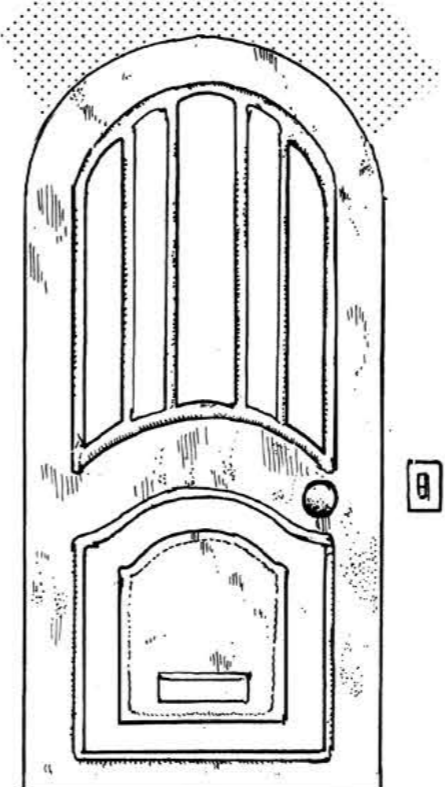
I HAD THE AUDACITY TO STAY IN BARCELONA IN THE JOB YOU WANTED ME TO HAVE...



...INSTEAD OF COMING TO ANDALUSIA WITH YOU, WHAT AN EVIL BASTARD I AM!

WAIT A SECOND, IT LOOKS LIKE...

I MUST BE A HORRIBLE MONSTER!



...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!

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