THOUGH I FACE MY FINAL TEST,
CLEAN MY HANDS AND LOOK MY BEST,
FOLLOW THE BEATING IN MY CHEST,
BEFORE AT LAST I'M LAID TO REST

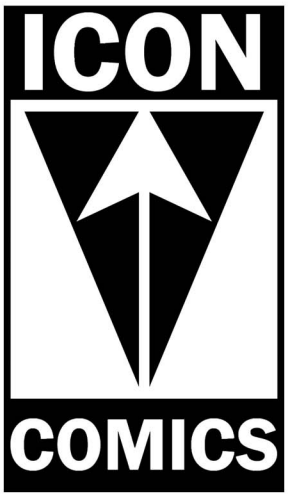
FOR MOST IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE A VIOLENT LIFE OF CRIME,

BUT NOT THIS GUY

-HE'S GOT IT FIGURED OUT. ALL YOU NEED IS A HORSE CALLED TOSH, AN ECCENTRIC PRIEST WITH PLENTY OF DISGUISES AND, OH YEAH-

-STAY AWAY FROM GUNS.

BUT LIFE NEVER TURNS OUT AS PLANNED...

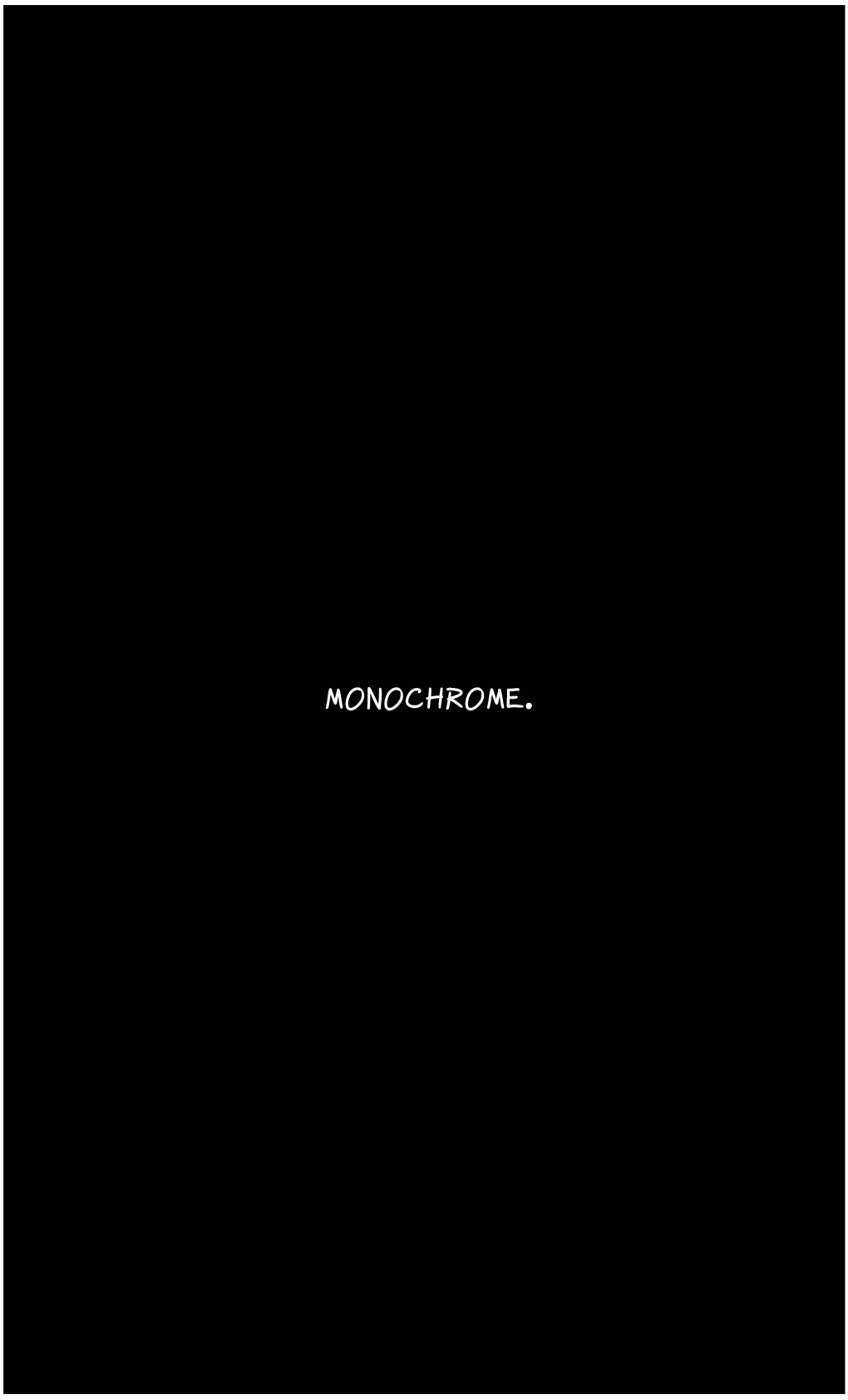


MONOCHROME



L.R LAWRIE

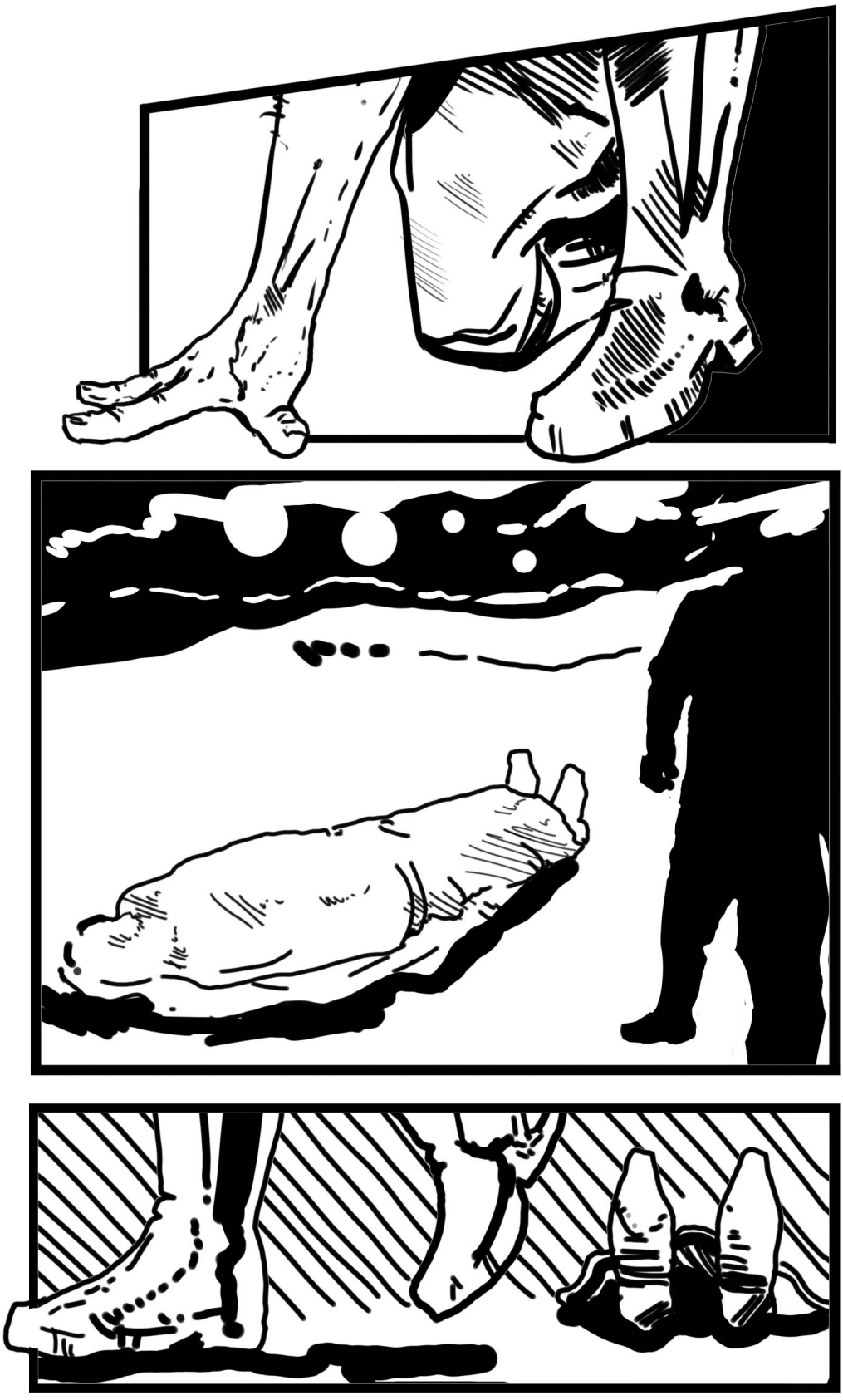
THE SECOND GRAPHIC
NOVEL FROM ICON COMICS...


MONOCHROME.

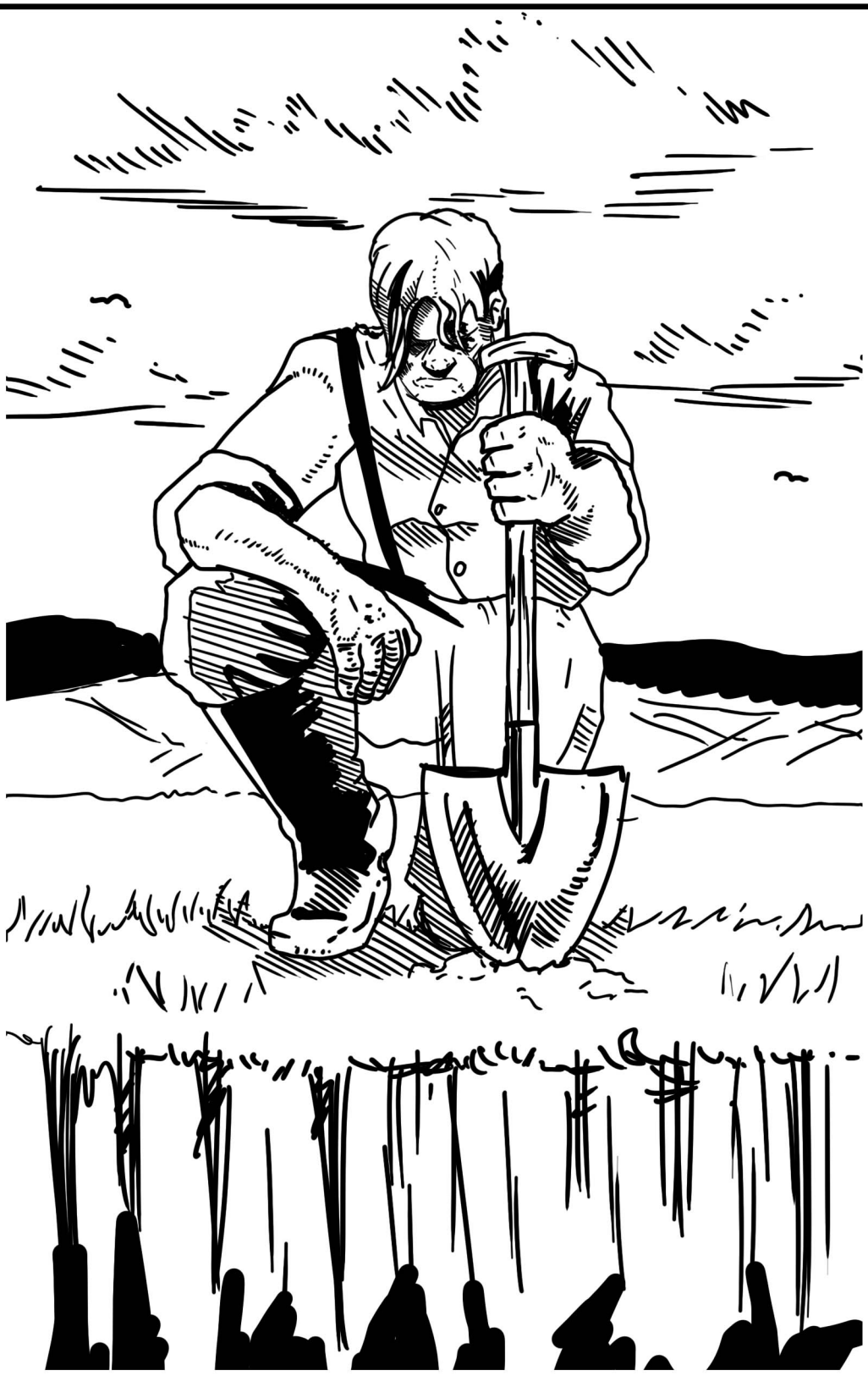


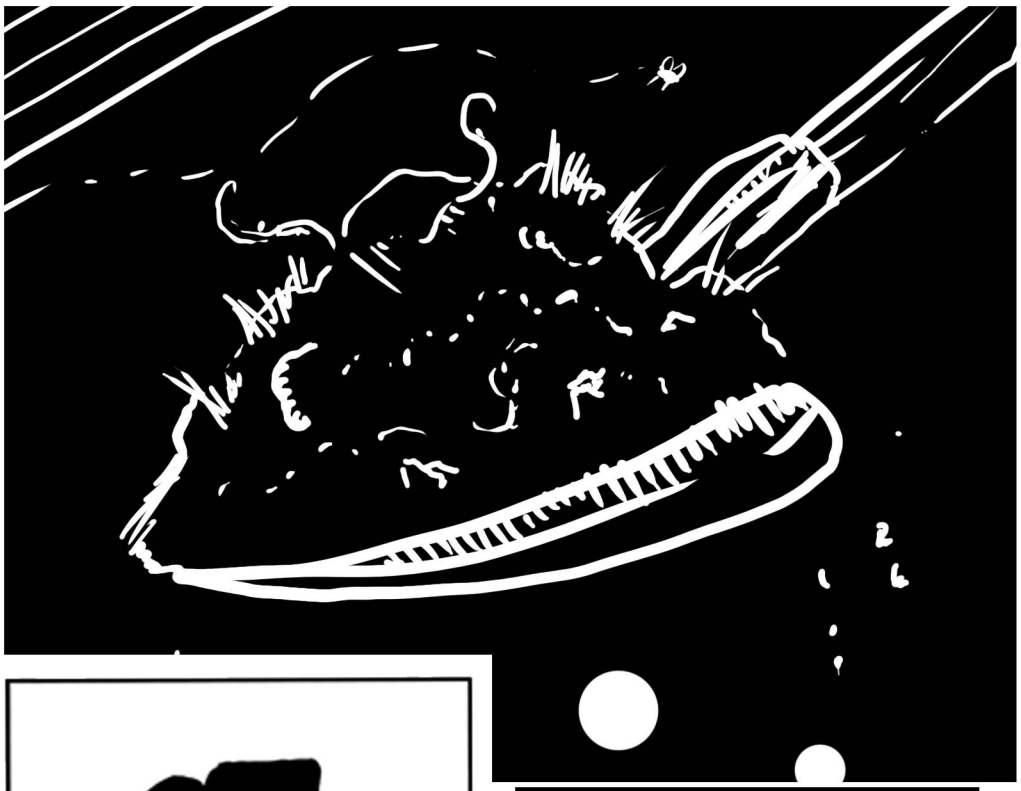



DIGGING A GRAVE IS
THE HARDEST THING...



IT'S DRY IN THE WINTER, AND A SHOVEL CAN BARELY BREAK GROUND



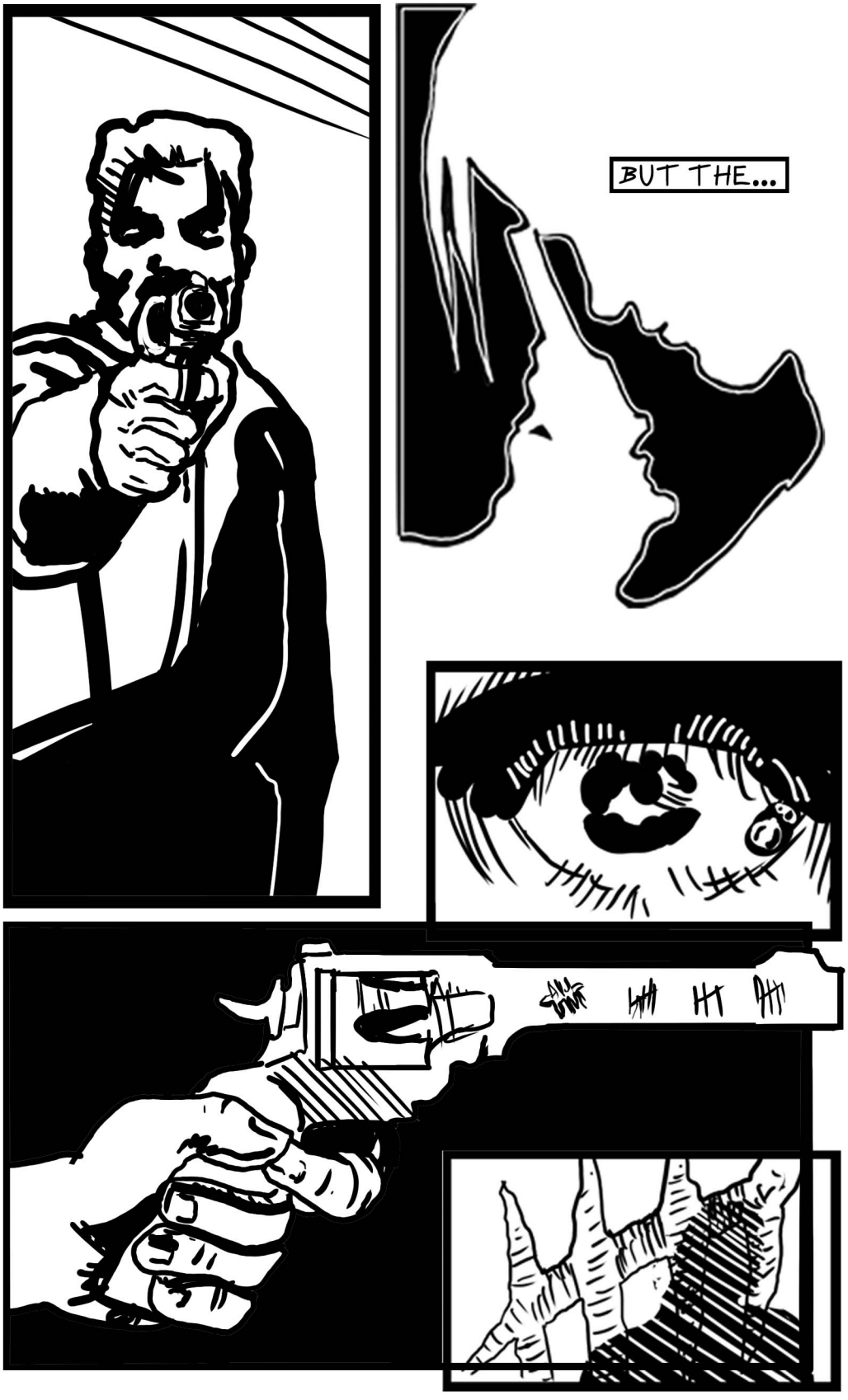


IN SUMMER, THE HEAT MAKES THE BODY STINK AND DRAW THE FLIES IN.



WHEN IT RAINS THE DIRT TURNS TO SLURRY: SOAKING ME TO THE BONE AND MAKING THE SHOVELLING OF DIRT SEEM POINTLESS IN THE PUDDLE.




BUT THE...


THE...



-BUT MORE THAN THAT I DETEST THE WORK



-I GET BLISTERED HANDS




THEY NEVER MADE ME BURY THE BODY BEFORE
THIS ONE...

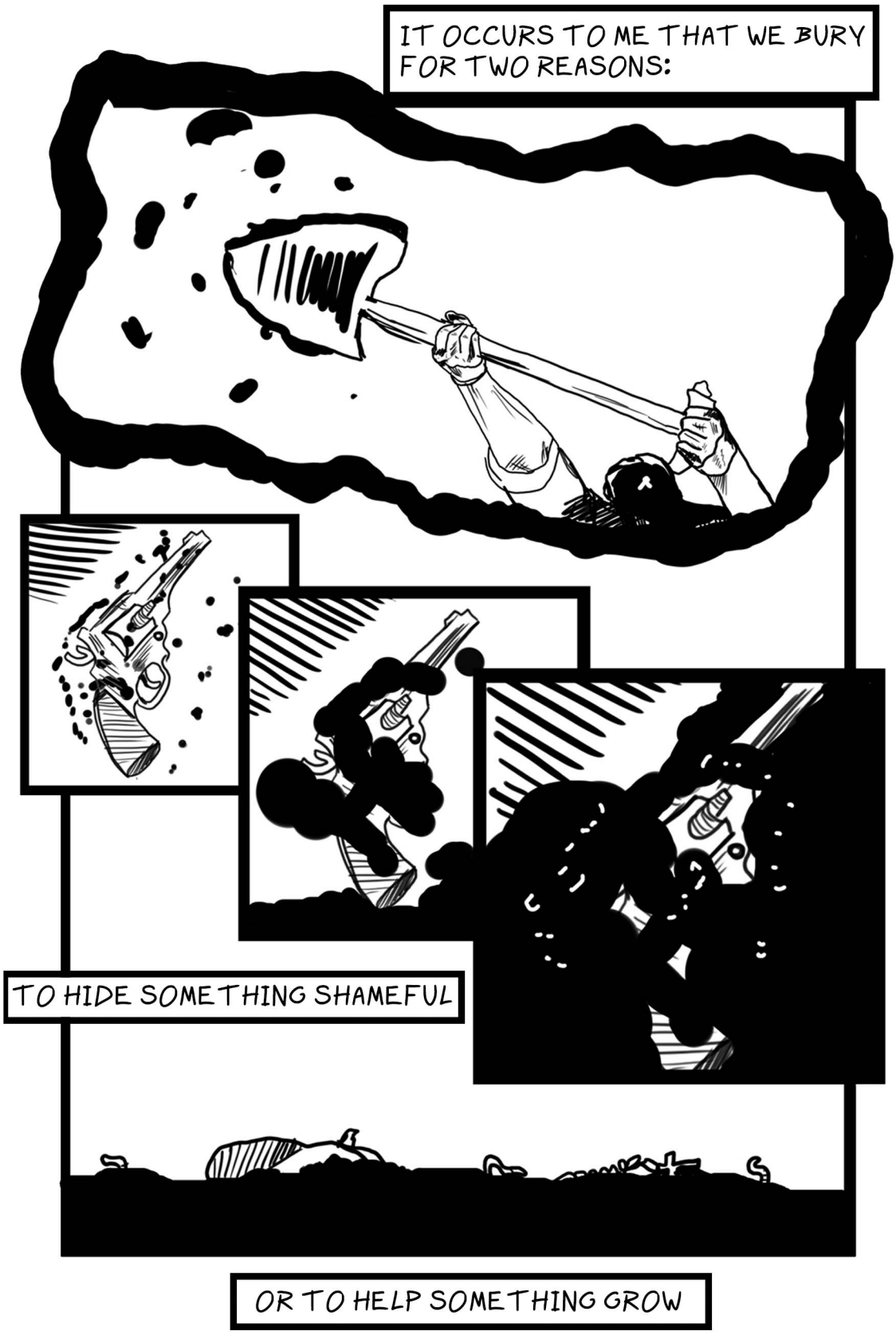








THIS ONE I MADE MYSELF...


IT OCCURS TO ME THAT WE BURY FOR TWO REASONS:
TO HIDE SOMETHING SHAMEFUL
OR TO HELP SOMETHING GROW

TAKE THE POTATO FOR EXAMPLE-WE BURY IT DEEP DOWN AND COVER IT WITH MANURE SO THAT IT CAN GROW, IT NEEDS SPACE...

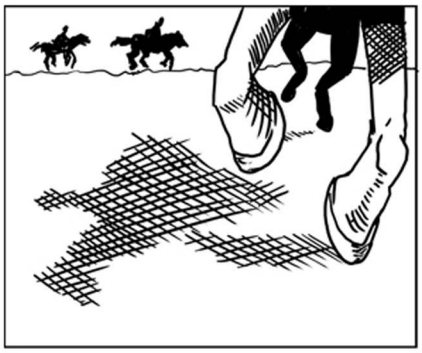


-IT NEEDS SPACE TO GROW

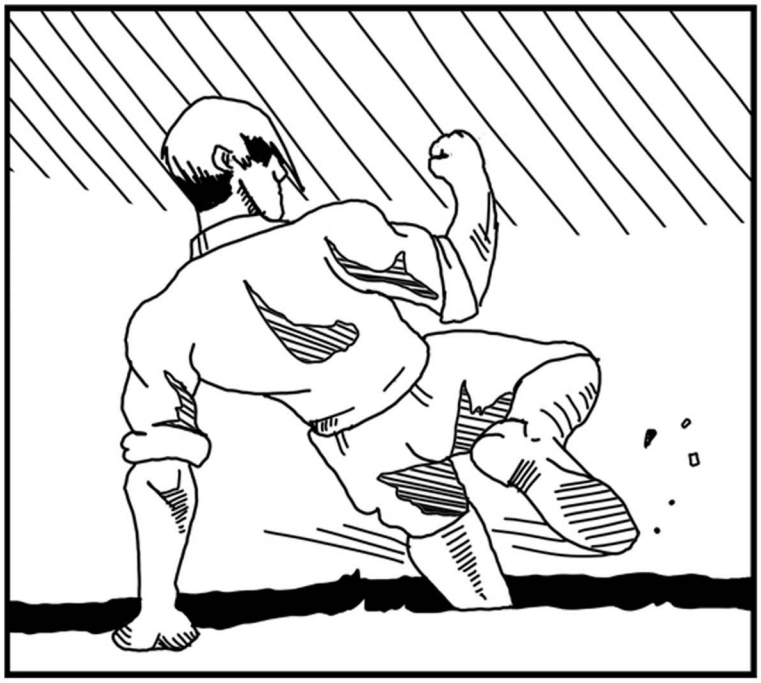



CLOP
CLOP
THEY'VE FOUND US...


DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS!



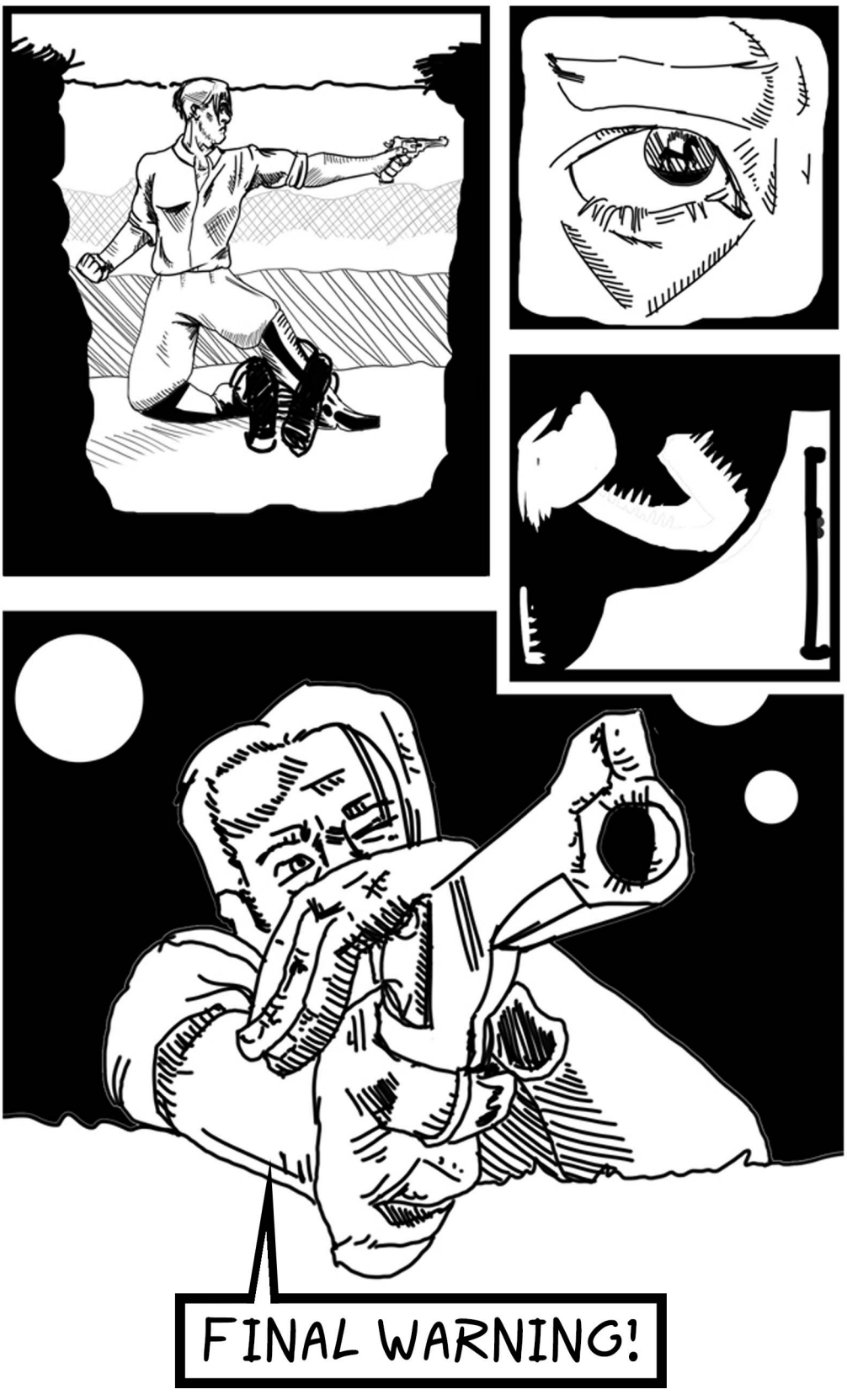


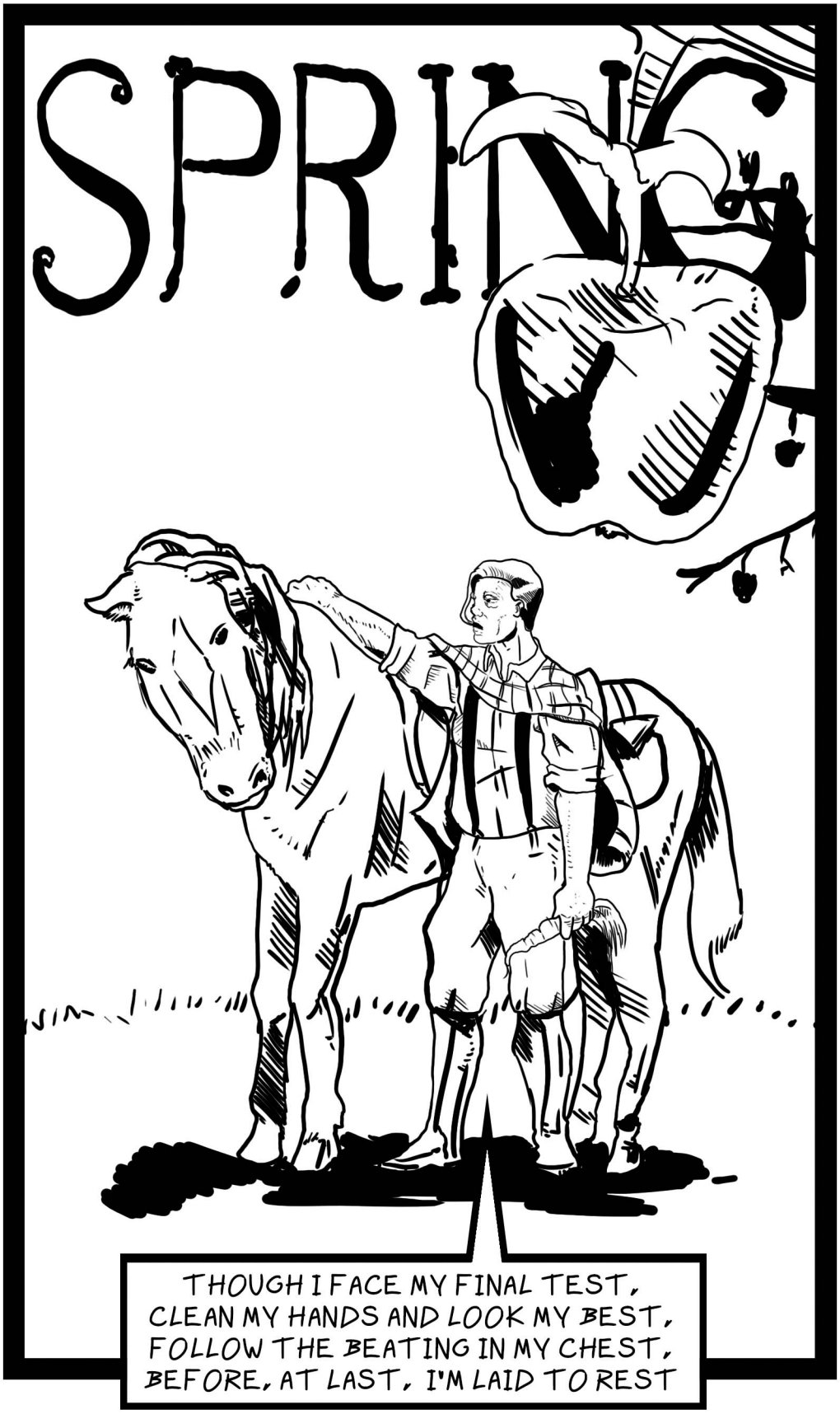






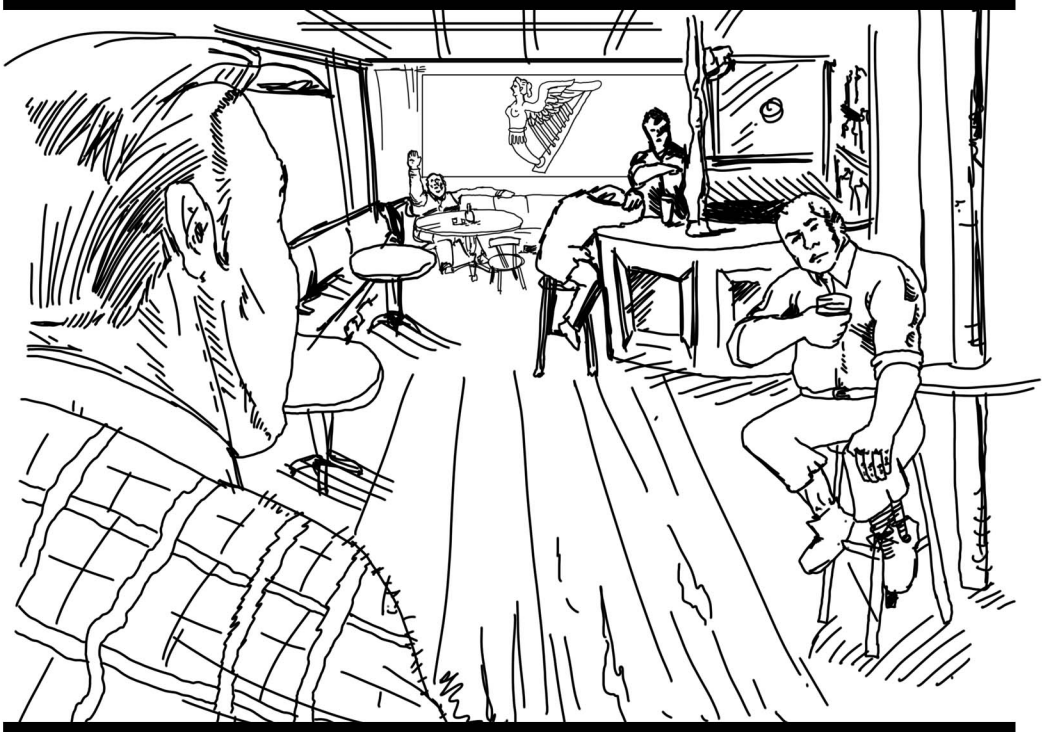

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!


FINAL WARNING!

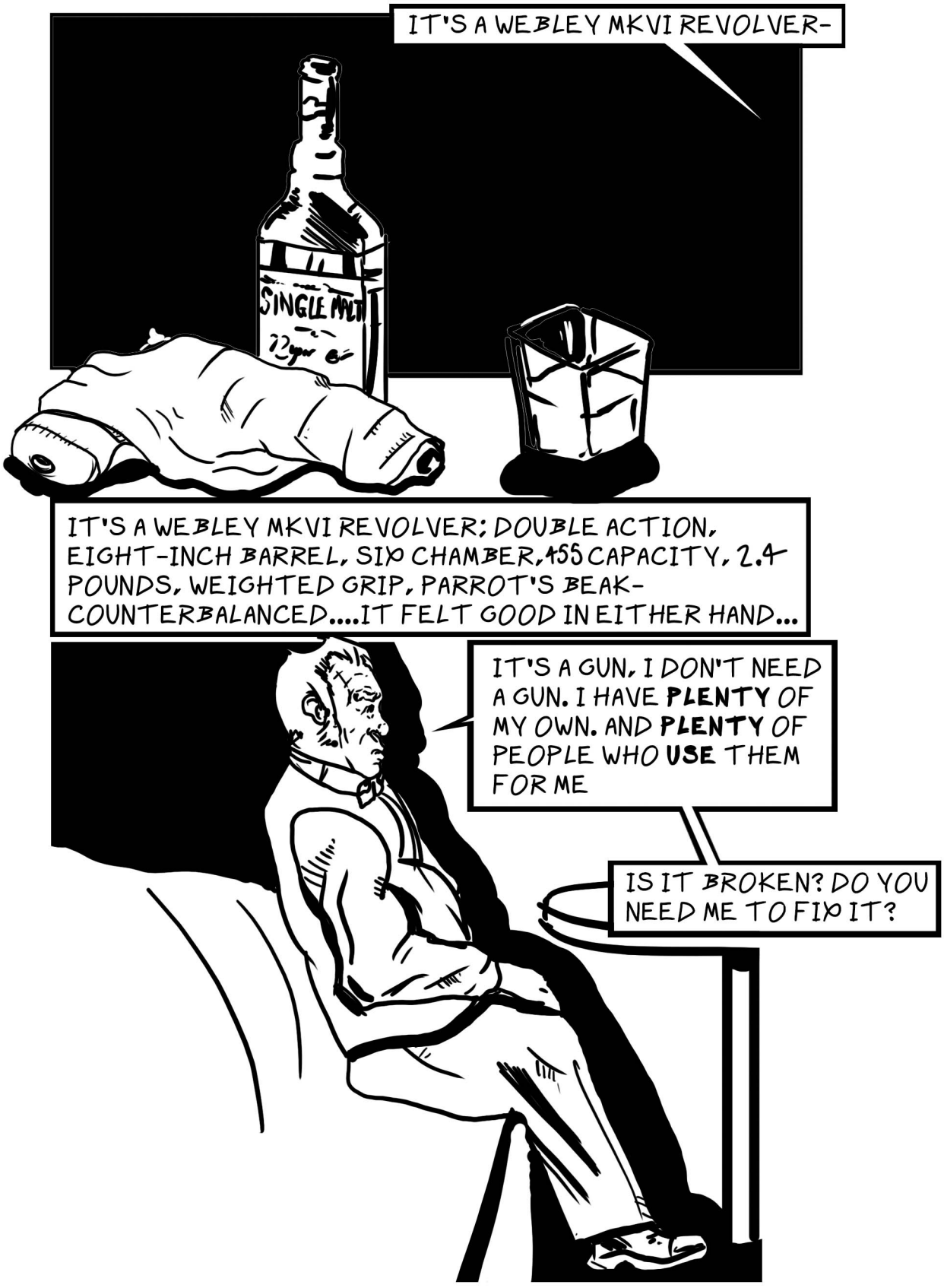

SPRING
THOUGH I FACE MY FINAL TEST,
CLEAN MY HANDS AND LOOK MY BEST,
FOLLOW THE BEATING IN MY CHEST,
BEFORE, AT LAST, I'M LAID TO REST


TIME TO GIVE CHURCHY THE BAD NEWS...
THE BROKEN SOLDIER






PAGE!
WHAT'S THAT?


IT'S A WEBLEY MKVI REVOLVER-
SINGLE MALT
IT'S A WEBLEY MKVI REVOLVER; DOUBLE ACTION, EIGHT-INCH BARREL, SIX CHAMBER, 455 CAPACITY, 2.4 POUNDS, WEIGHTED GRIP, PARROT'S BEAK-COUNTERBALANCED....IT FELT GOOD IN EITHER HAND...
IT'S A GUN, I DON'T NEED A GUN. I HAVE **PLENTY** OF MY OWN. AND **PLENTY** OF PEOPLE WHO **USE** THEM FOR ME
IS IT BROKEN? DO YOU NEED ME TO FIX IT?


I AM
BROKEN
YOU'RE WHAT?
HOW DO I FIX YOU THEN?
HOW ABOUT YOU HAVE A DRINK-WE CAN TALK THIS OVER, SORT SOMETHING OUT-
McKillum
SINGLE MALT
12 Years
1878.2


I'M DONE


WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'DONE'?
I'M DONE WITH THIS, I WANNA DO SOMETHING ELSE, I WANT TO BE A FARMER, OR A COBBLER-TO DO SOMETHING ELSE WITH MY HANDS.
WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS-


YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE, YOU'RE A KILLING MACHINE, I MADE YOU THAT WAY AND I CAN **UNMAKE** YOU.
TAKE THE MONEY AND **TAKE** THE NEXT JOB: YOU'LL LIKE THIS ONE-A REAL COLD-BLOODED KILLER--


I'M NOT TAKING THE NEXT JOB. I'M OUT. I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF ANYMORE, I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS

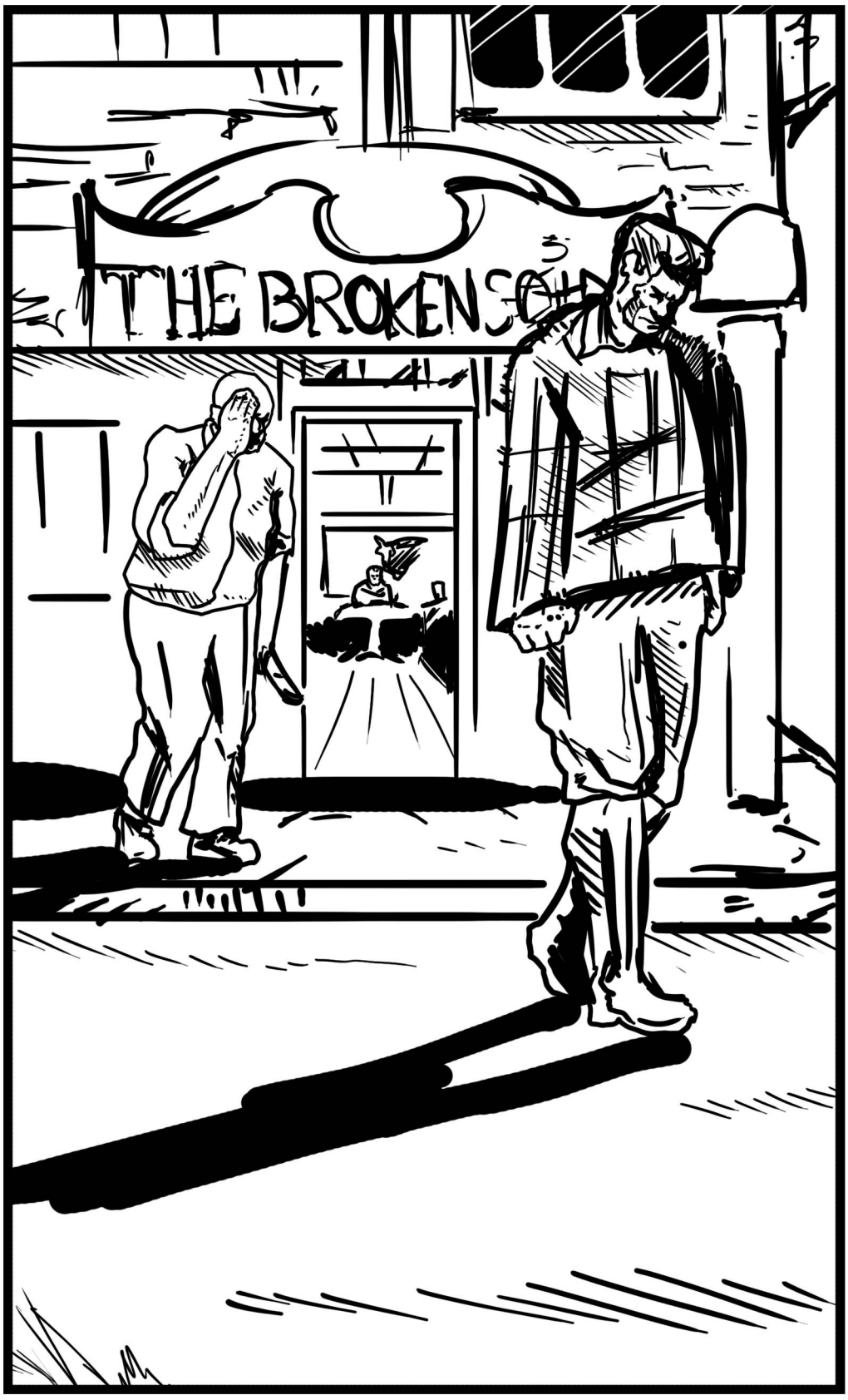

SO I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T WANT THE MONEY THEN-
POUND STERLING
DUBLIN
I'LL TAKE THE MONEY
BUT NOT BECAUSE I WANT TO


YOU'RE A KILLER, PAGE AND YOU **WILL** KILL FOR ME
I'M LEAVING

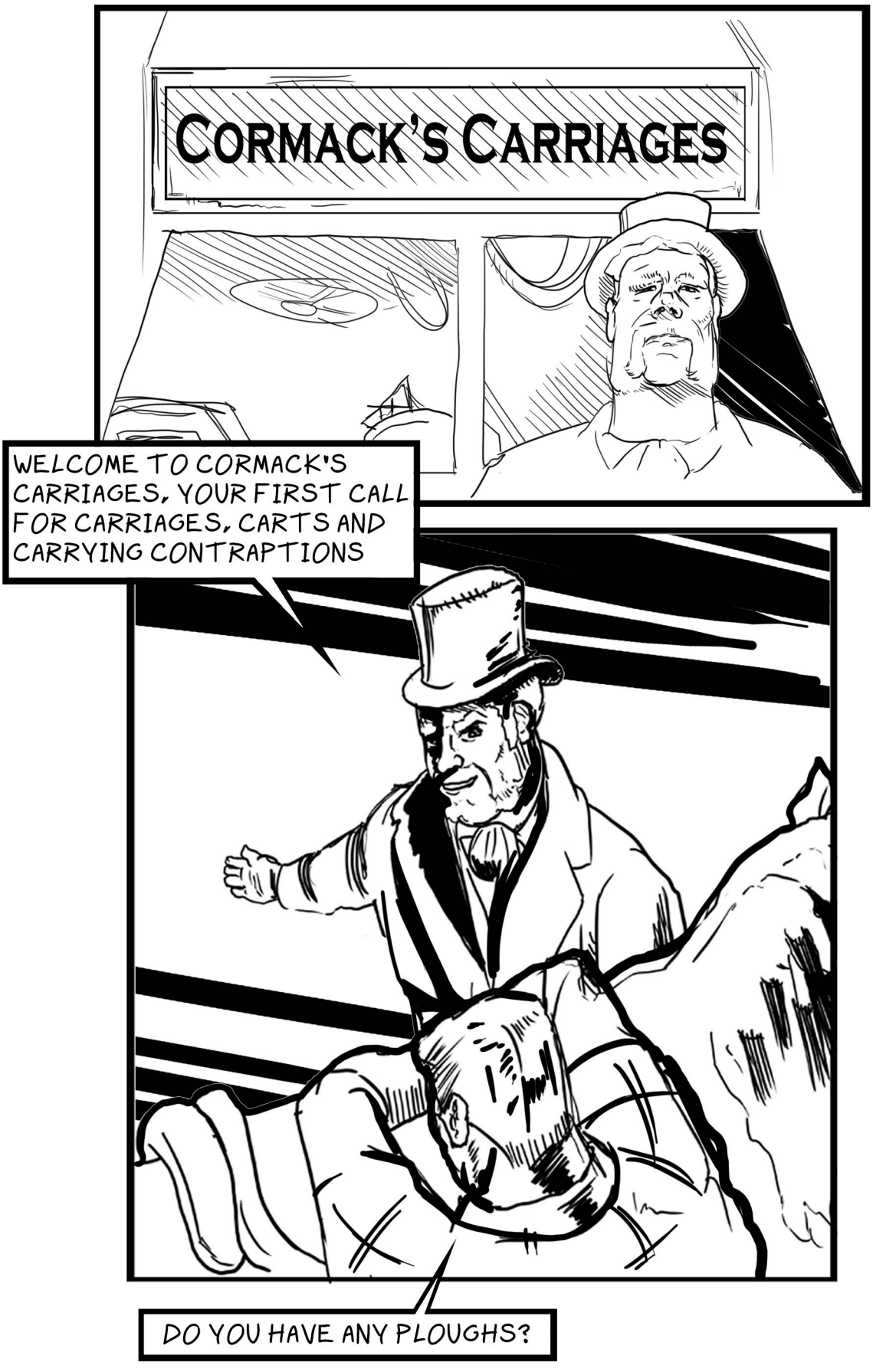

TAKE ONE STEP OUT THAT DOOR AND I'LL PUT A HOLE THROUGH YOUR CHEST!
TAKE THE GUN, OR TAKE THE BULLET
DON'T PUT A GUN IN THE HANDS OF A MAN YOU JUST THREATENED


SLOSH

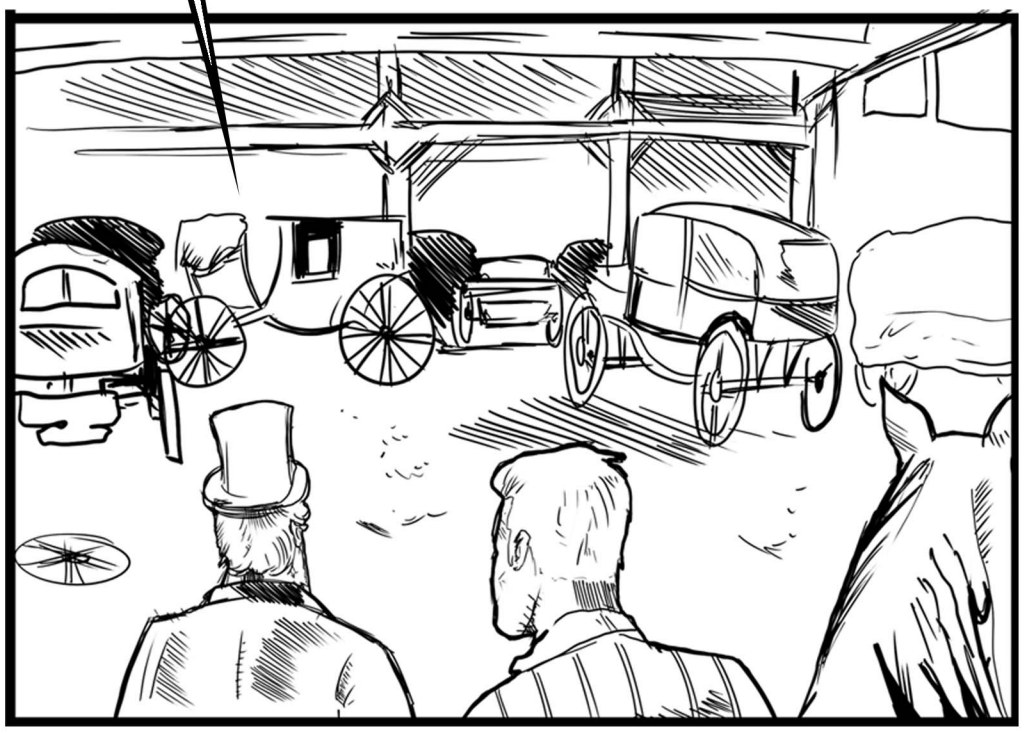

GOODBYE, CHURCHY


THE BROKEN


JUST YOU AND I, TOSH
I HOPE YOU CAN DRIVE A PLOUGH
THOUGH I FACE MY FINAL TEST...


CORMACK'S CARRIAGES
WELCOME TO CORMACK'S CARRIAGES, YOUR FIRST CALL FOR CARRIAGES, CARTS AND CARRYING CONTRAPTIONS
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLOUGHS?

AS YOU CAN SEE WE HAVE A WIDE RANGE OF PREMIUM CARRIAGES, OR I CAN NARROW DOWN OUR SELECTION TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS...





IF YOU HAVE THE FUNDING TO BACK SUCH AN ENDEAVOUR


I MAY BE ABLE TO TRADE THIS STEAD WITH YOU FOR A MULE AND A PRETTY TRAILER, I WAS LOOKING FOR A MOUNT FOR MY OWN CAR, WHAT IS HE, A WARHORSE?

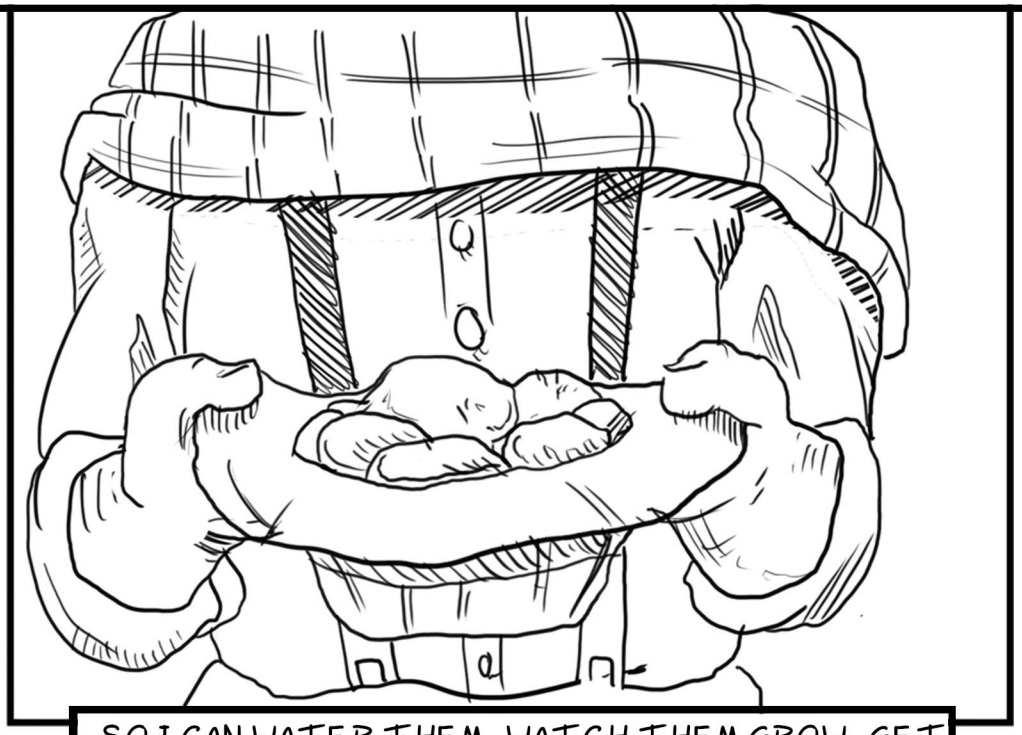

YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE HORSE BUT YOU MIGHT BE GETTING A KNIFE
I DON'T EVEN HAVE A KNIFE, DAMN.
WHAT?
NEVERMIND.
-WITH WHAT YOU'VE COLLECTED IN YOUT COFFER, I CAN OFFER YOU THIS COZY OLD CART THAT WE WERE GOING TO CRUSH AND DE-CONSTRUCT FOR COPPERS.


WITH ALL THE CORPSES I'VE CREATED I CAN BARELY BUY A CART TO CARRY THIS BURDEN
WAS I EVER PAID PROPERLY FOR MY SINS?
WAS IT MONEY I WAS LOOKING FOR?

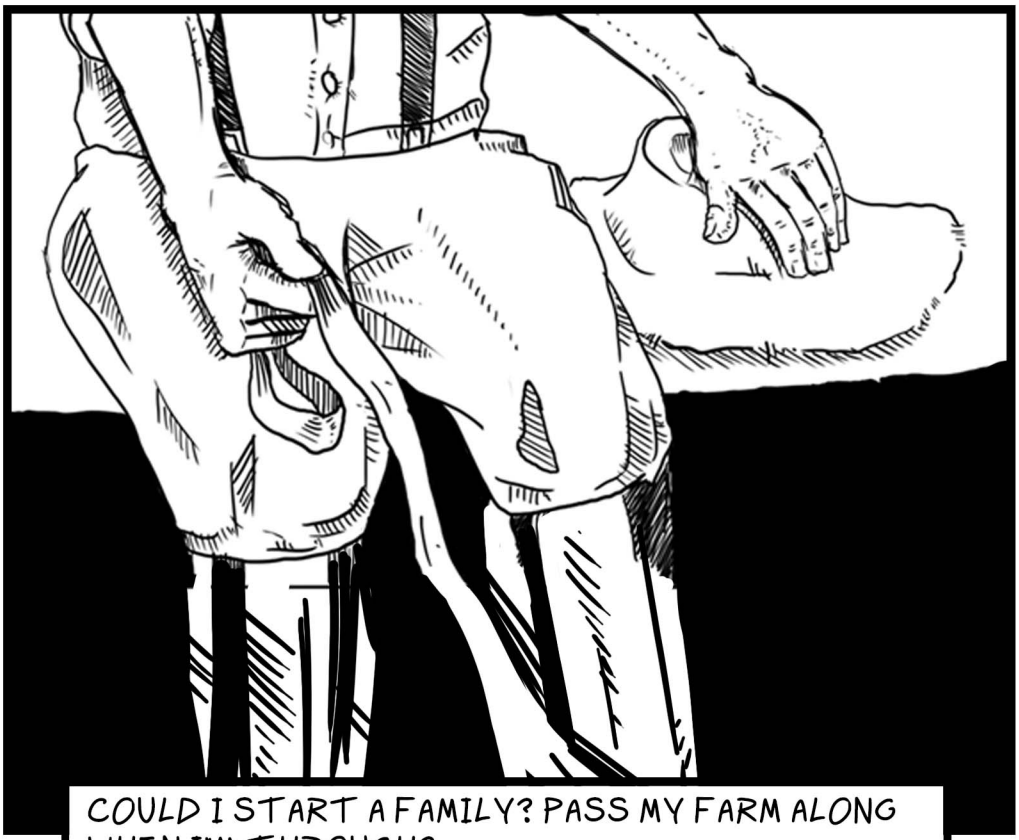

LOOKS LIKE I'M PLAYING THE POTATO FARMER
I JUST NEED SOME POTATOES...


GEORGE!
YOUR SUPPER IS GETTING COLD!
YEAH, THESE WILL DO.

NOW I JUST NEED TO FIND SOME LAND TO PLANT THEM ON...



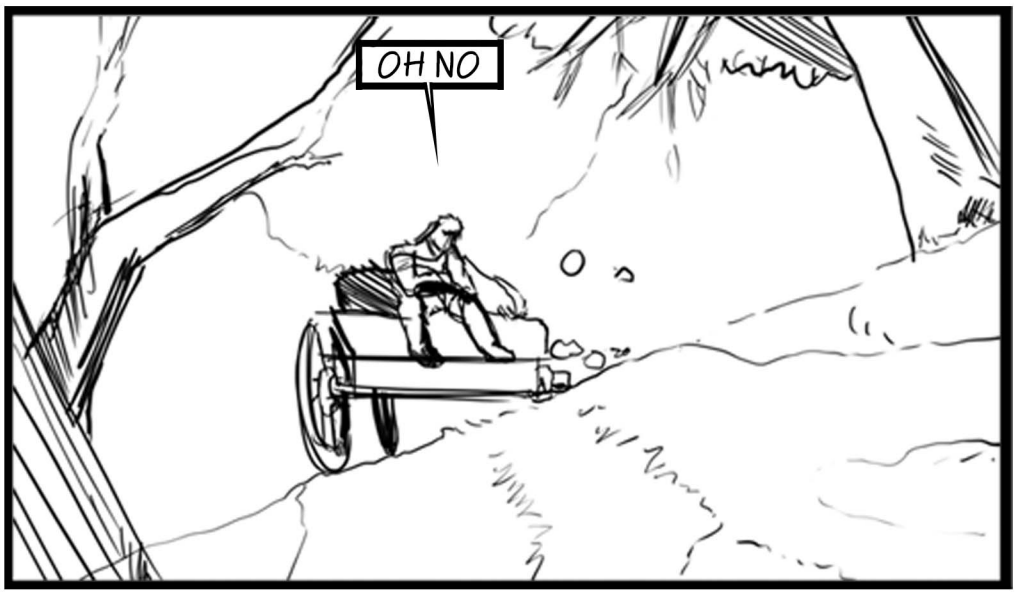
-SO I CAN WATER THEM, WATCH THEM GROW, GET SOME TREES GOING, SELL THE POTATOES...

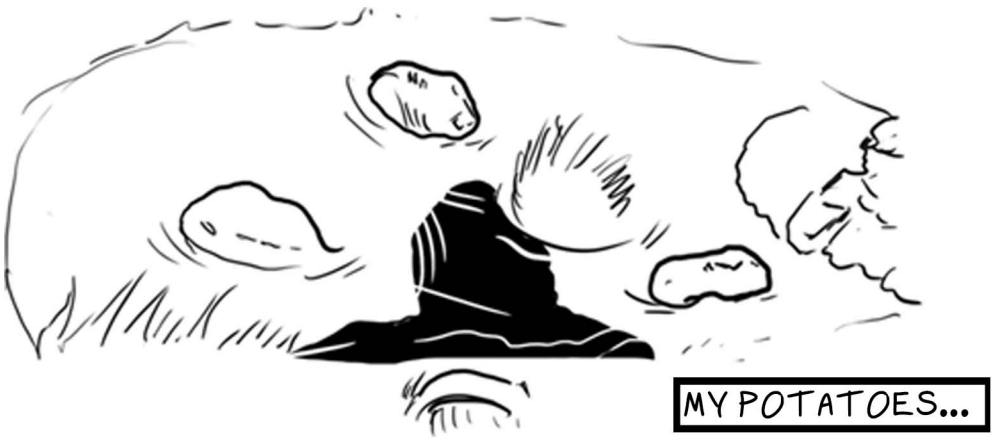


COULD I START A FAMILY? PASS MY FARM ALONG WHEN I'M THROUGH?


CRACK!
THAT CAN'T BE GOOD...
CRUNCH!

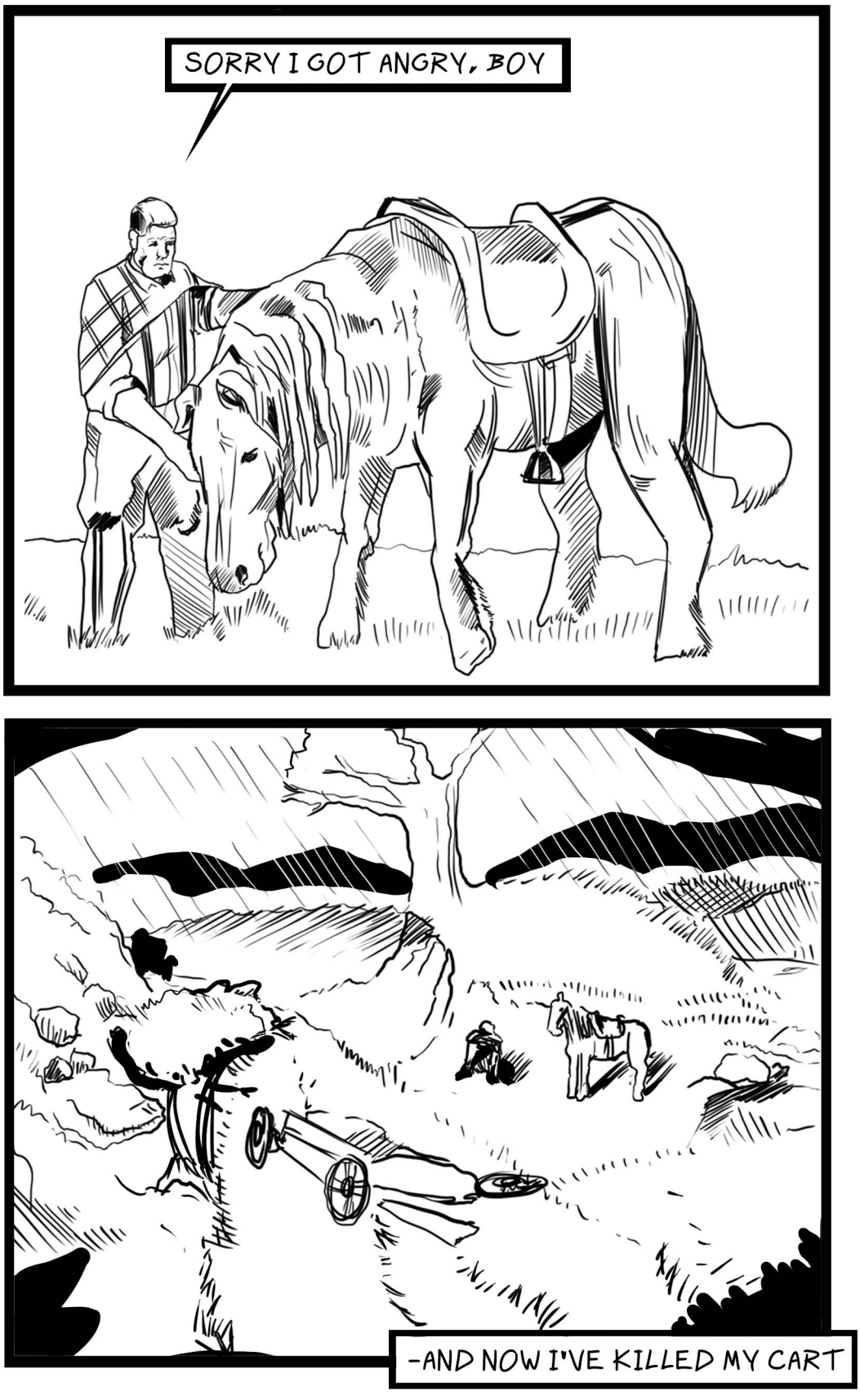



OH NO


MY POTATOES...


WHEN I SEE THAT CORMACK AGAIN I'M GONNA BREAK HIS BACK WITH MY BARE HANDS


BUT I CAN'T GO BACK
I CAN'T GO BACK TO CORMACK.
I CAN'T GO BACK TO CHURCHY.
AND I CAN'T FARM POTATOES.


SORRY I GOT ANGRY, BOY
-AND NOW I'VE KILLED MY CART

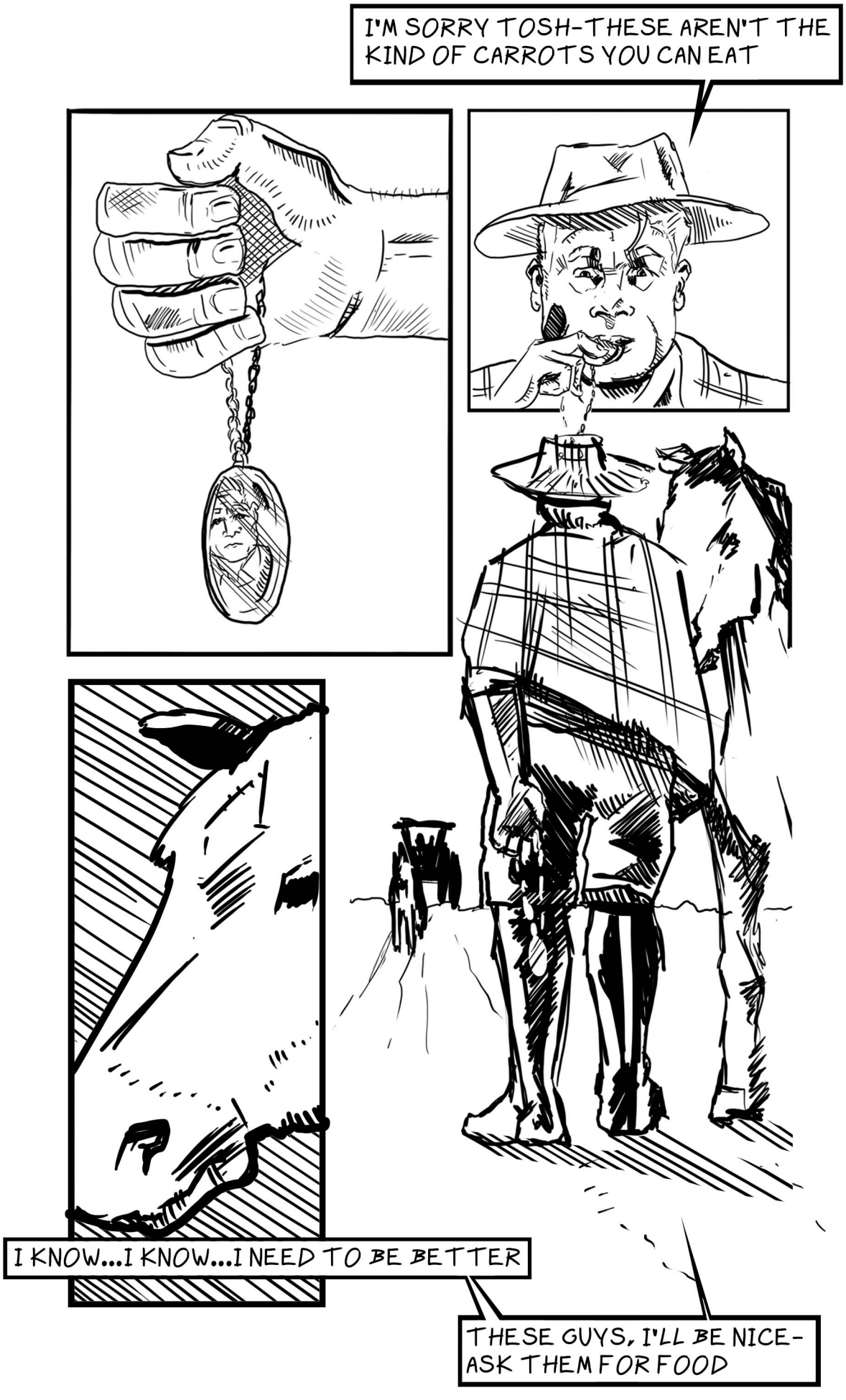

WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE ISSUE HERE?
CART BROKE DOWN?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

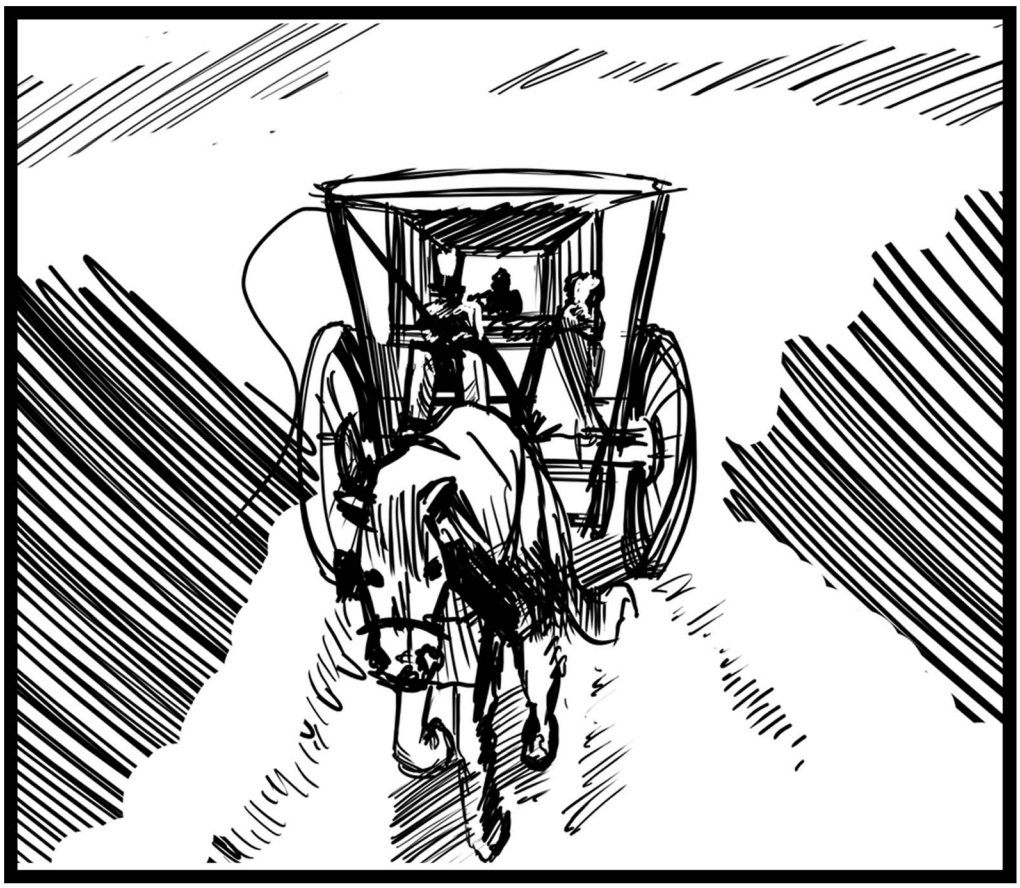

I KNOW MY WAY AROUND A CART, LET'S SEE HERE...


WHAT IS IT YOU DO LAD?
I'M A POTATO FARMER
*I WAS A POTATO FARMER
I USED TO TRANSPORT POTATOES TOO, NOW I SHIP MORE VALUABLE CARGO


THIS THING LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN ATTACKED BY AN ELEPHANT...
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
UH, MAYBE I CAN'T FIX THIS...
I DON'T HAVE THE...TOOLS
MORRIS & SONS
JEWELLERS
RUM


CAN I OFFER YOU A LIFT TO TOWN?
I'M FINE, I'VE GOT MY HORSE...WE'RE JUST GONNA STICK AROUND FOR A WHILE AND.....WATCH THE SUN SET.
WELL OKAY THEN, SAFE TRAVELS


I'M SORRY TOSH-THESE AREN'T THE KIND OF CARROTS YOU CAN EAT
I KNOW...I KNOW...I NEED TO BE BETTER
THESE GUYS, I'LL BE NICE-ASK THEM FOR FOOD






EVENING FOLKS, I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU COULD SPARE ANY FOOD FOR MY HORSE, HIS NAME IS MCINTOSH-


HOLD IT THERE PADDY, I'M NOT STUPID, I'VE BEEN ROBBED BY YOU PEOPLE BEFORE!
NO, NO, NO
I'M NO ROBBER!
CLICK!





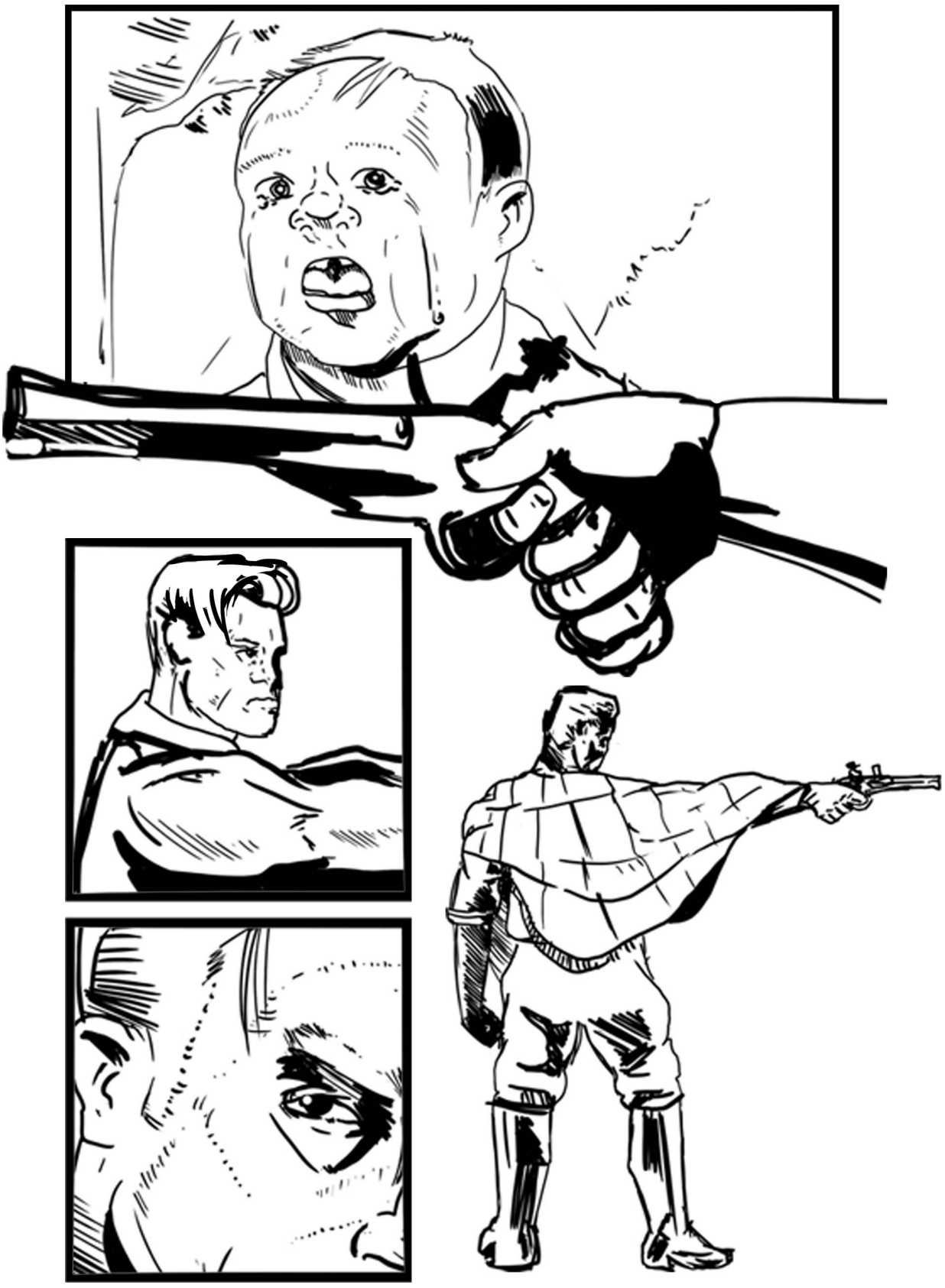



CLUNK


MY PISTOL JAMMED-


YOU WERE GOING TO SHOOT ME IN FRONT OF YOUR SON?
WHAT KIND OF MAN?...
WHAT KIND OF MAN DOESN'T PUT FLINT IN A FLINTLOCK PISTOL?
IT'S CALLED A **FLINT**-LOCK!


ALLOW ME TO EDUCATE YOU:
FLINT IN,
LOCK...
AND FIRE!




ON YOUR MERRY WAY!
I FOROT TO ASK HIM FOR FOOD...


I CAN'T KEEP THIS, BUT IT MIGHT BUY US A MEAL
CLEAN MY HANDS AND LOOK MY BEST...

SUMMER



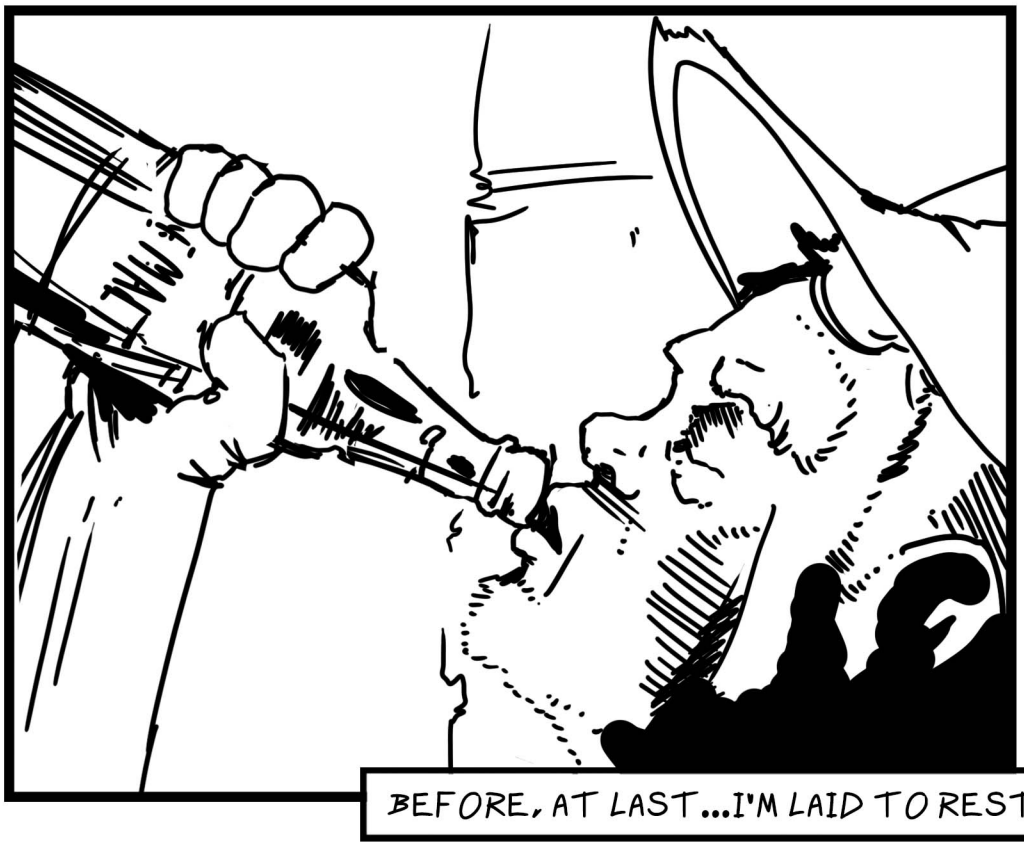
FOLLOW THE BEATING IN MY CHEST...

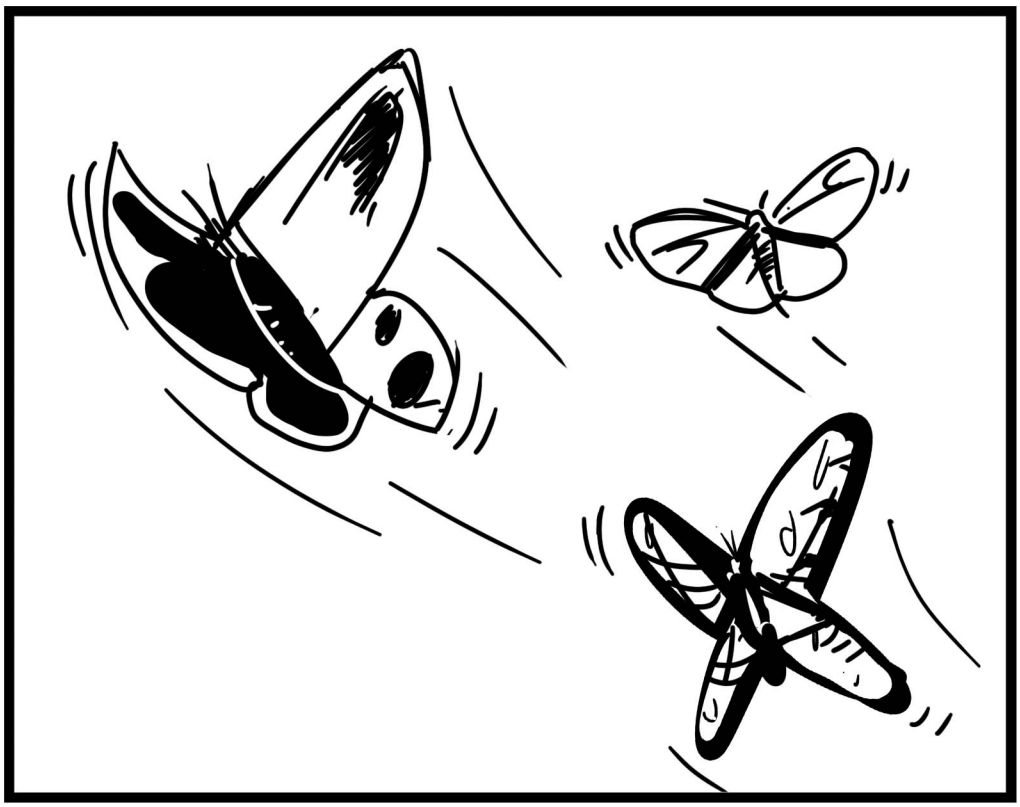

WONDER WHAT THIS MEANS?
WHOEVER BUYS THIS MIGHT WANNA MAKE SOME CHANGES
GENERAL STORE
NOT MY PROBLEM
UUH...NO, I'M SORRY, I CAN'T THIS
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
WE BUY ANYTHING

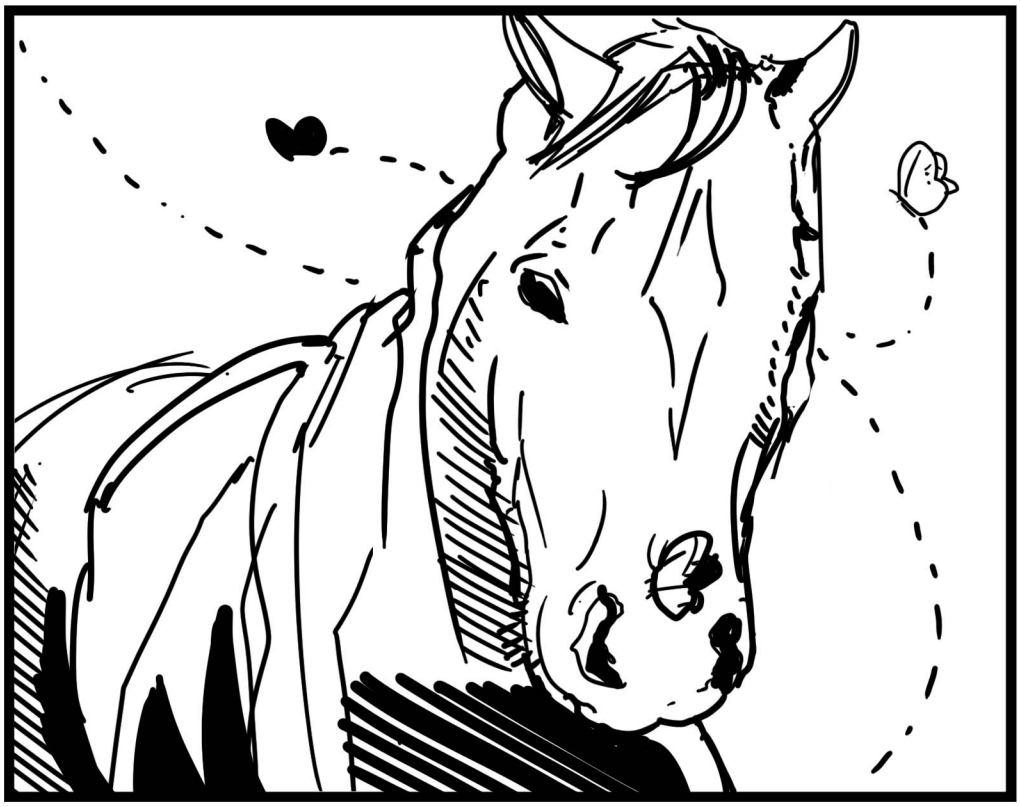

IT WOULDN'T REALLY SUIT ME-SORRY
WHAT A CURIOUS LITTLE TRINKET...
I'LL GIVE YOU ONE HUNDRED POUNDS FOR IT!
O/O
HOW MUCH FOR THE PICTURE OF THE LADY?





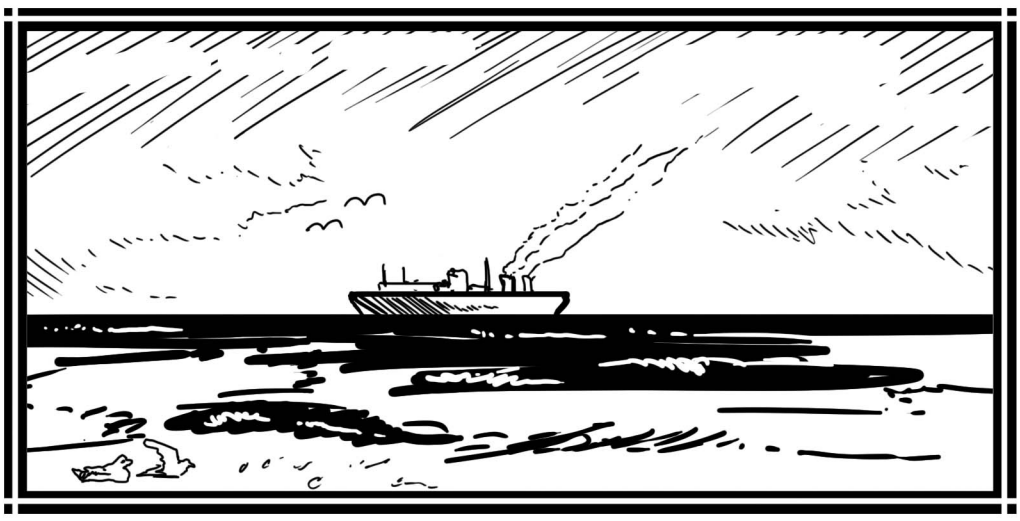

BEFORE, AT LAST...I'M LAID TO REST.

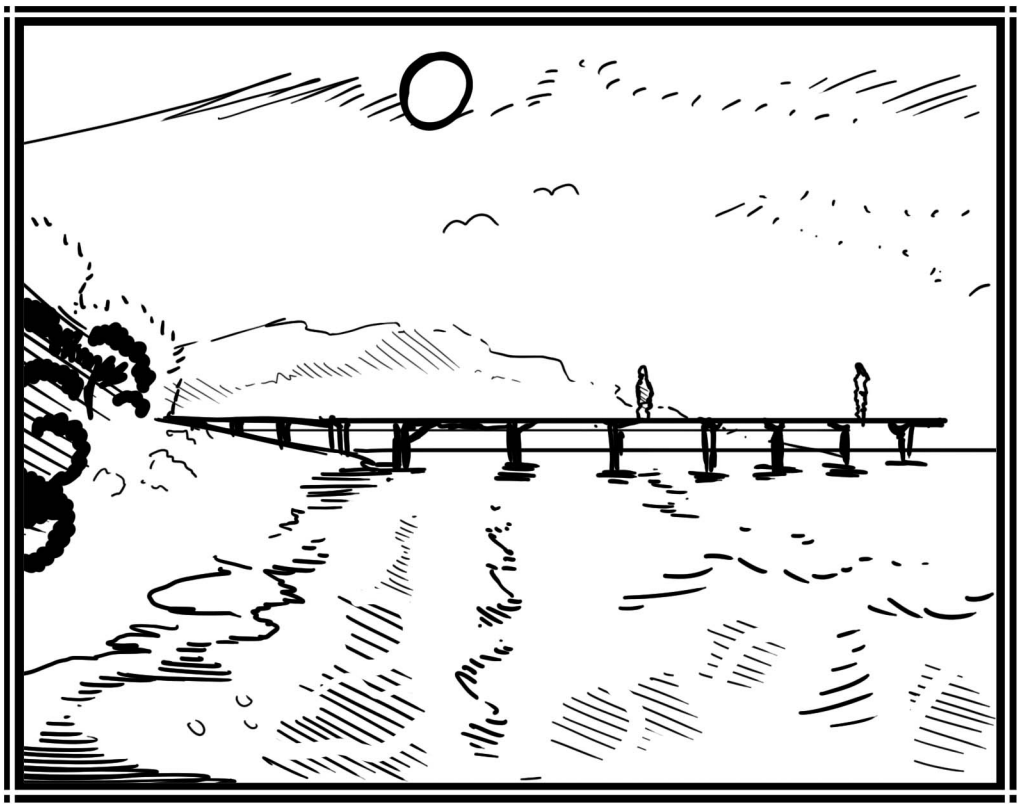


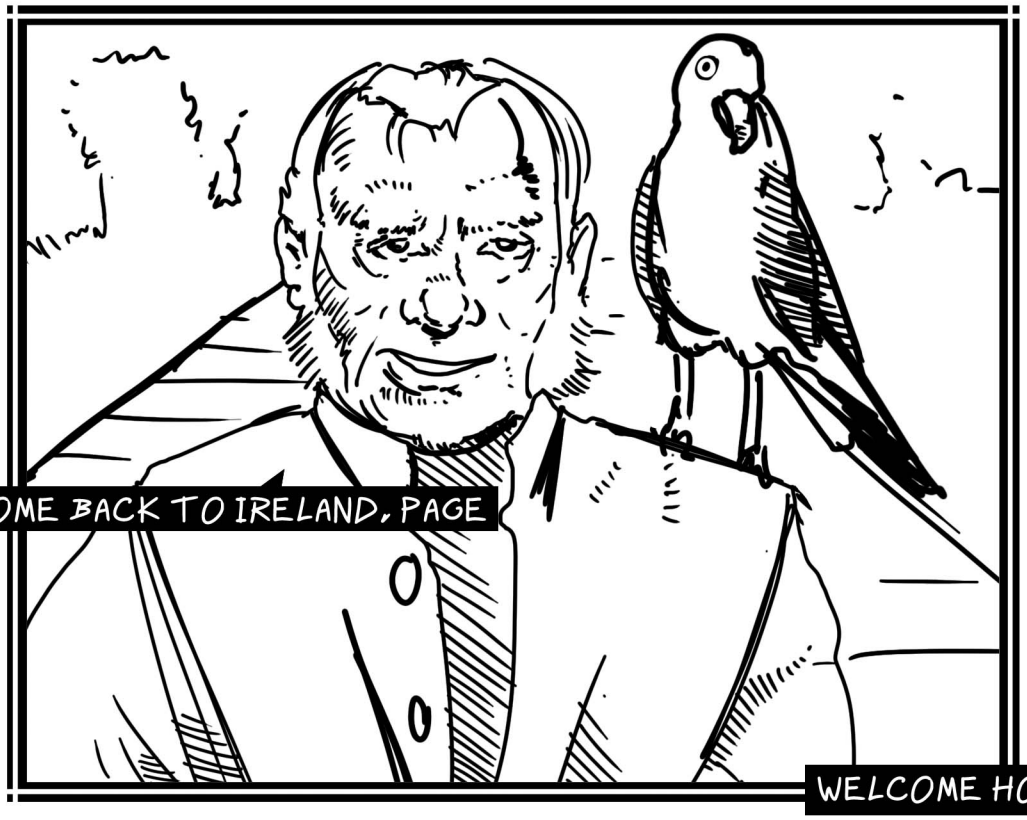


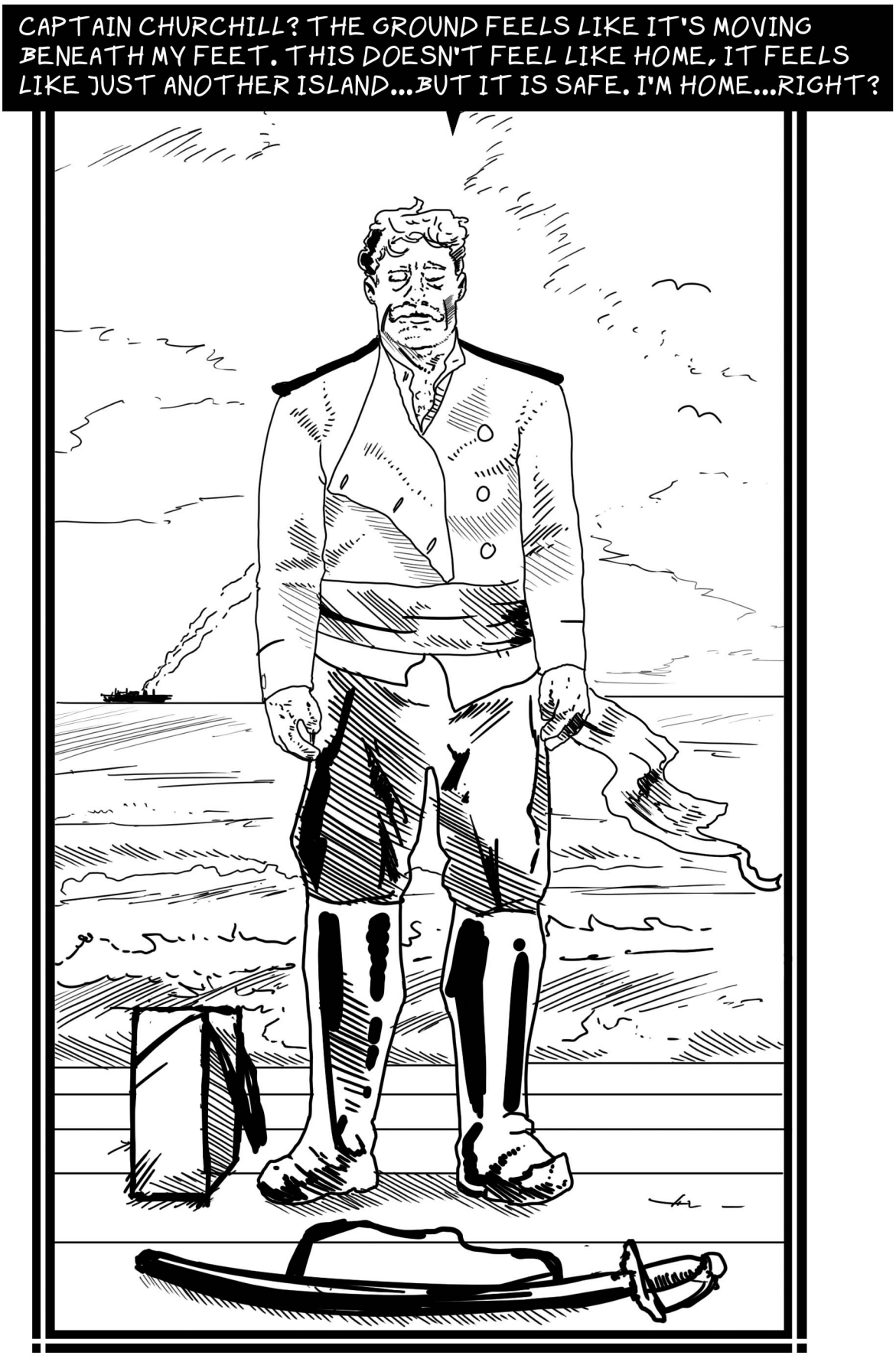









WELCOME BACK TO IRELAND, PAGE
WELCOME HOME

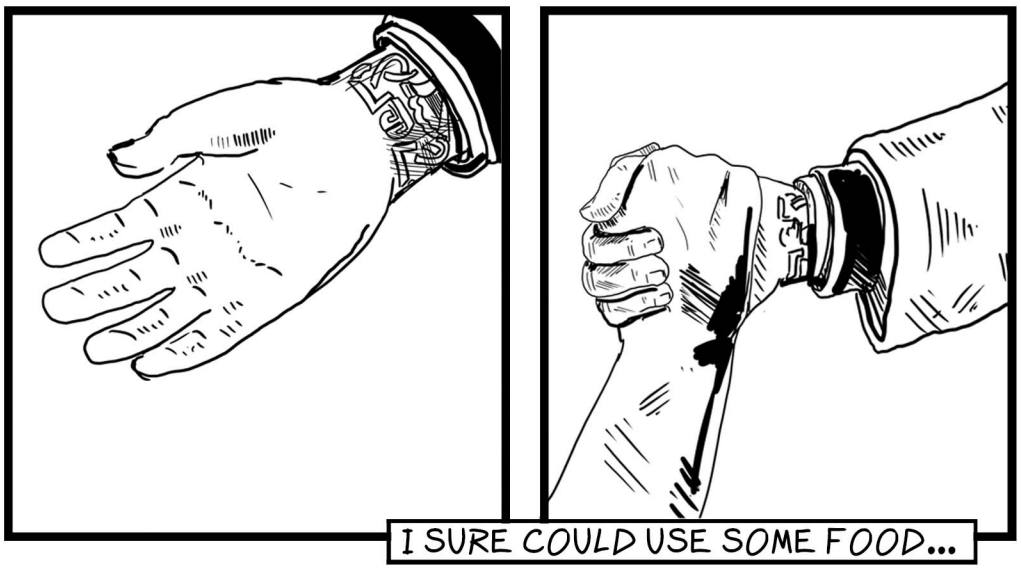

CAPTAIN CHURCHILL? THE GROUND FEELS LIKE IT'S MOVING BENEATH MY FEET. THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HOME, IT FEELS LIKE JUST ANOTHER ISLAND...BUT IT IS SAFE. I'M HOME...RIGHT?

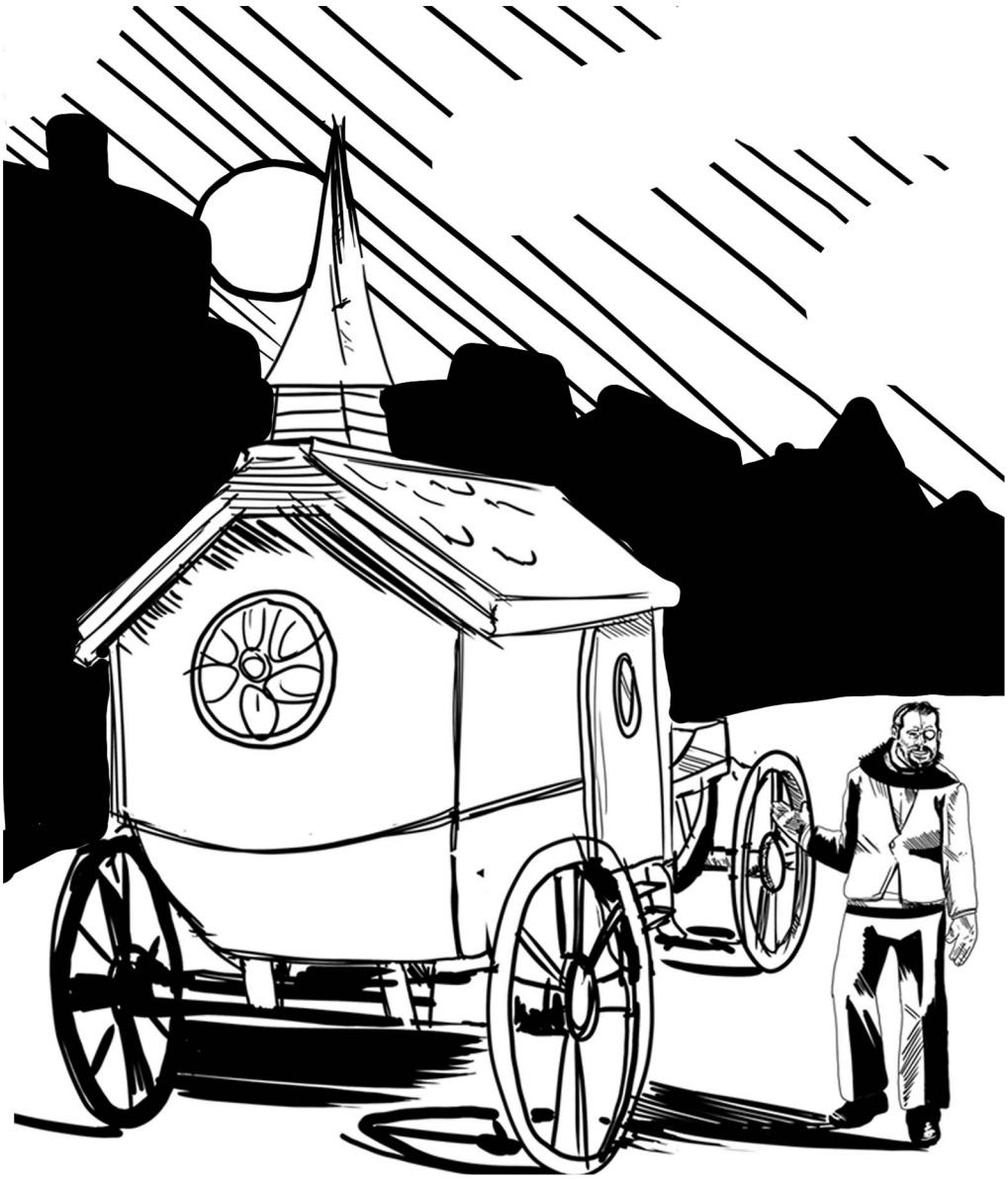

NOW THAT I'M BACK, I CAN START FRESH, START NEW...
SURE THING
-HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO KILL PEOPLE FOR MONEY?


WORD ROUND TOWN IS THAT A STRANGER HAS COME SELLING A LOCKET FOR CASH...
THAT WOULD BE ME



STRANGER, EYEPTACH, HOOD, CARRIAGE...FOOD?



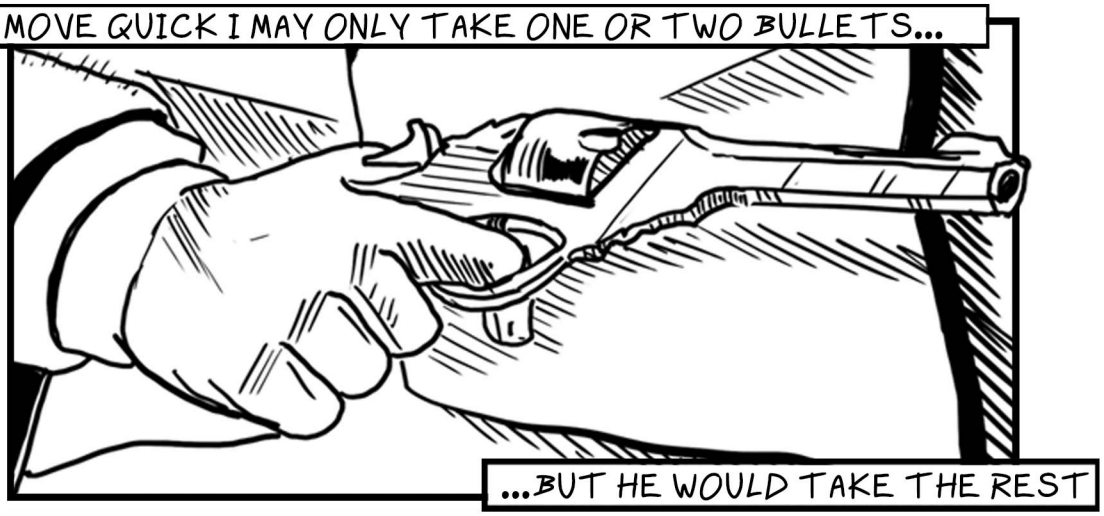

STRANGE CARRIAGE, LOOKS LIKE A-

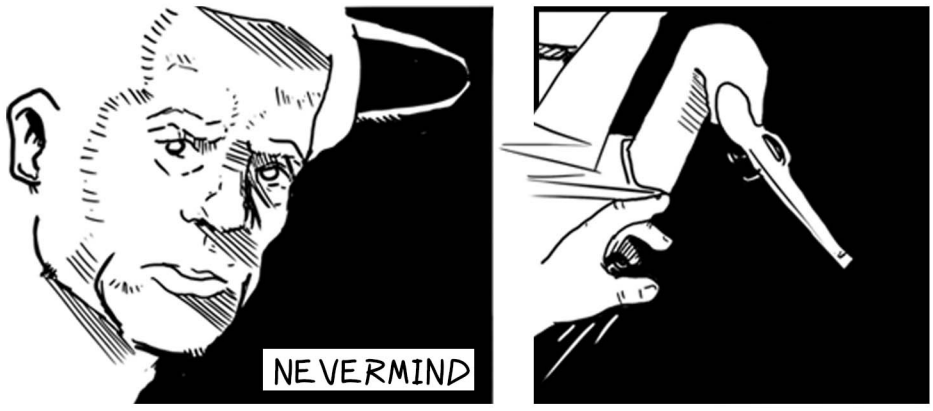

GET IN-NOW
NO FAST MOVEMENTS

PAGE YOU STUPID, STUPID MAN-CHURCHY WAS RIGHT.



IF I MOVE QUICK I MAY ONLY TAKE ONE OR TWO BULLETS...





CAREFUL WITH THAT CIARA, WHAT DID I SAY ABOUT GUNS?

IT'S NOT EVEN LOADED, DA

-WELL YOU DIDN'T KNOW THAT! I TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU AREN'T TO TOUCH FLINTLOCK PISTOLS...

-NOT AFTER LAST TIME...

I'M GOING TO TELL YOU SIMPLE: I WON'T KILL YOU BECAUSE IT'S AGAINST MY BELIEFS...

AND I CAN'T TURN YOU IN-I'M NOT ON THE BEST TERMS WITH THE AUTHORITIES HERE.

SO I'M LEFT WITH ONE OPTION:


YOU CAN BE MY PASSENGER, AS ME AND MY LASS HEAD TO CORK. YOU WILL BE FED AND GIVEN WORK-I'LL EVEN PAY YOU WHEN WE GET THERE. HONEST WORK.
A PRISONER?
IF YOU CHOOSE TO VIEW IT THAT WAY...
I CAN SEE OTHER PEOPLE VIEWING YOU AS A STRONG YOUNG MAN WHO PROTECTS THE OLD, YOU WILL BE MY EMPTY PISTOL.
-SEE THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD TRY AND STOP MY JOURNEY. BUT IT IS INEVITABLE


I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SLIP OUT AFTER I'VE EATEN
NO EYEPTACH, NO BEARD...
I TRAVEL WITH AN ACTOR; DID I TRY AND KILL THIS MAN BEFORE? WHAT IS HIS GAME?


CIARA DEAR, FETCH US SOME FIREWOOD
-AND TAKE A TORCH
-AND DON'T STRAY FAR FROM THE FIRE
-AND DON'T GO TOO LONG
WE MAY HAVE BEEN SEEN TOGETHER, PRECAUTIONS MUST BE TAKEN...


JESUS SON! I ONLY WANTED TO CUT YOUR HAIR!
NO HAIR OR NO FOOD- YOUR CHOICE!
STRANGE MAN...


HERE YOU GO, THE MEAT IS TOUGH SO YOU MIGHT NEED THIS...


-AND NOW HE HAS ARMED ME....
IT'S A BREADKNIFE, BUT IT'S A KNIFE. DOES HE WANT ME TO GIVE HIM A REASON TO SHOOT OR IS THIS A SIGN OF TRUST?


TIME FOR BED, CIARA
I'LL ONLY SLEEP AFTER YOU TELL ME A STORY. OH, HOW ABOUT THE ONE WITH THE OGRE AND THE CRYSTAL.
OKAY, OKAY-YOU DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A KNIGHT, AND HE CLIMBED THE WALLS OF A TALL TOWER TO FREE A PRINCESS FROM HER IMPRISONMENT...



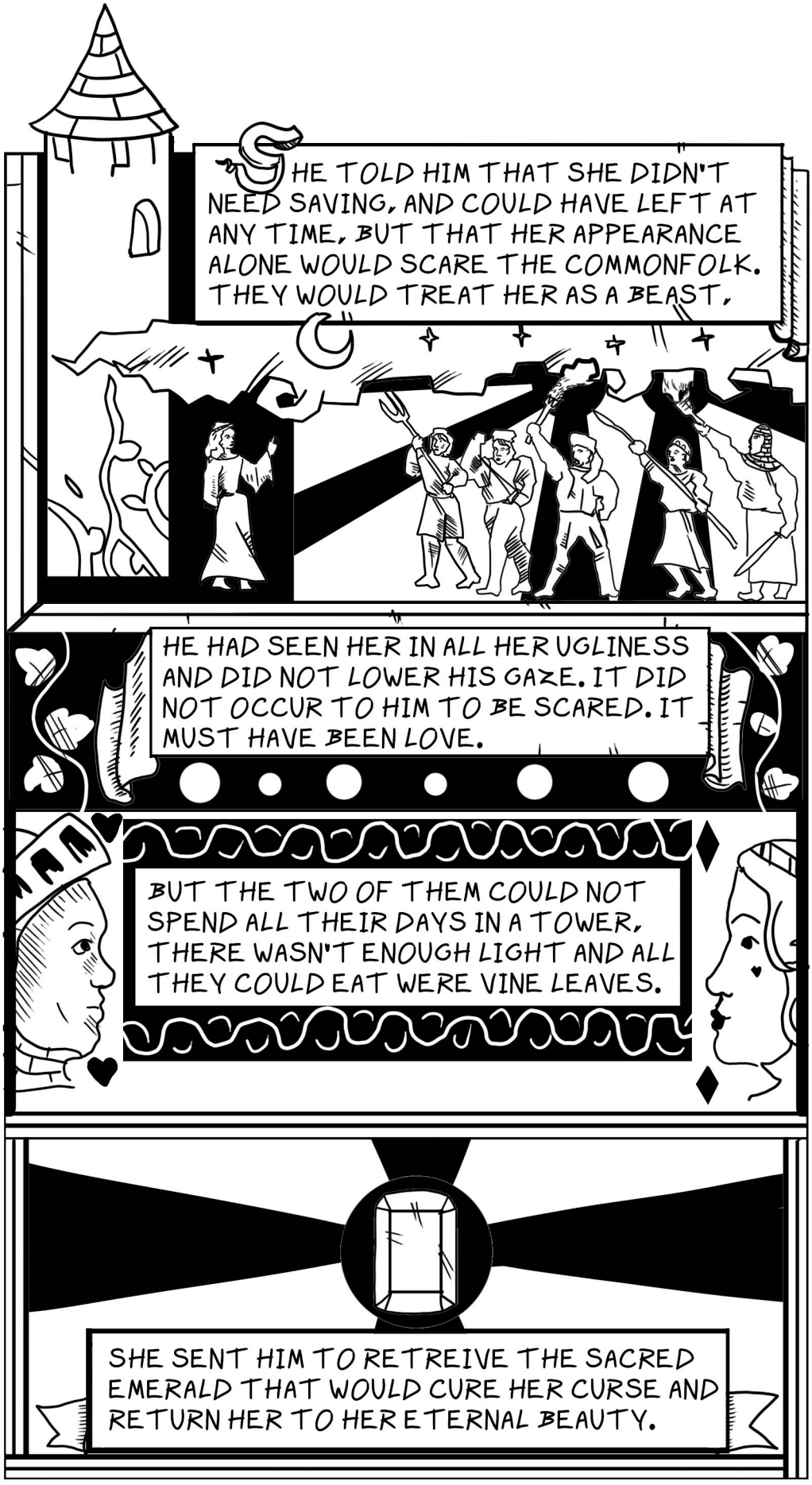
THE KNIGHT FOUND HER ASLEEP IN A ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS OR MIRRORS

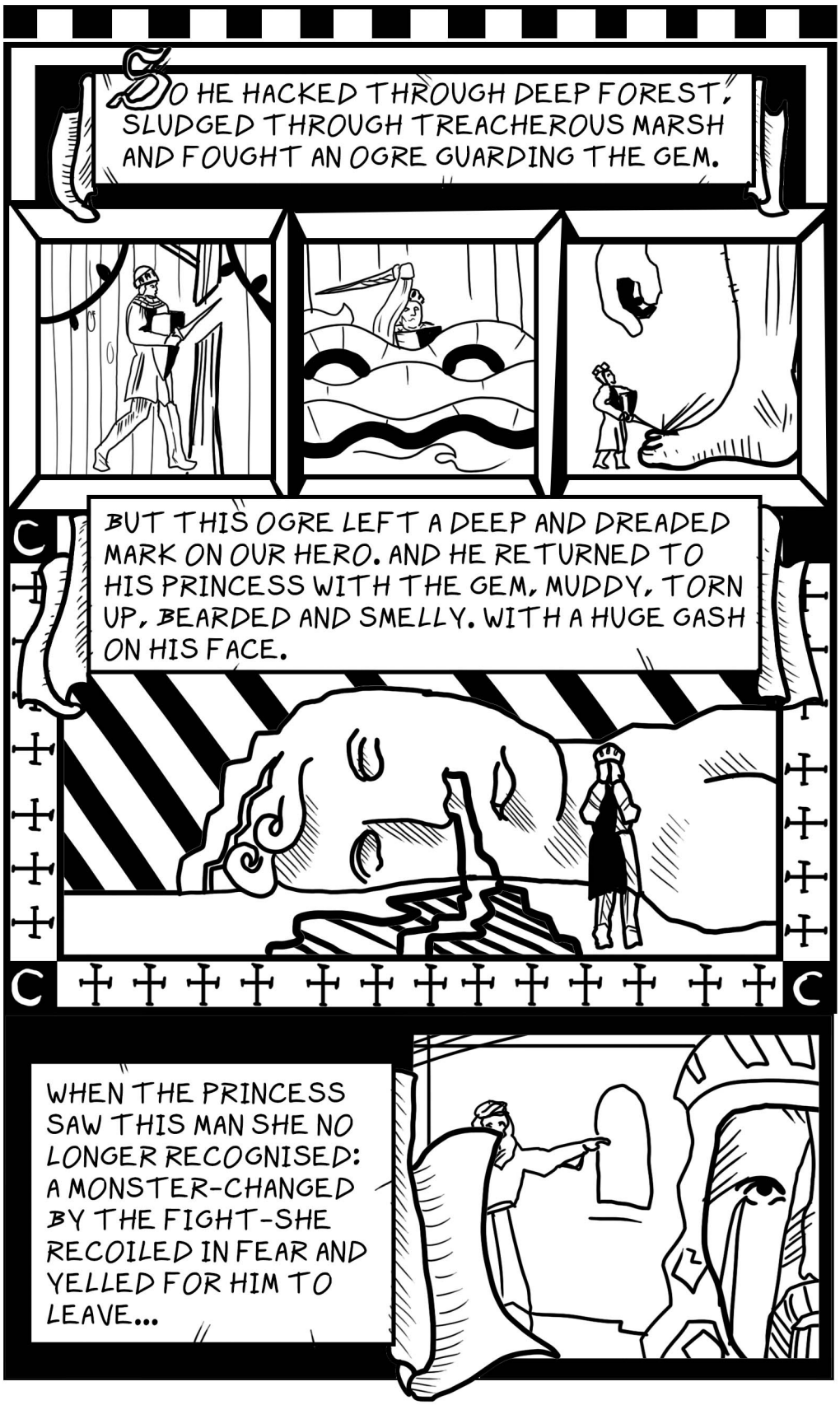


SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL TO HIM BUT TERRIBLE TO LOOK UPON. HE KISSED HER GENTLY TO WAKE HER FROM SLUMBER.

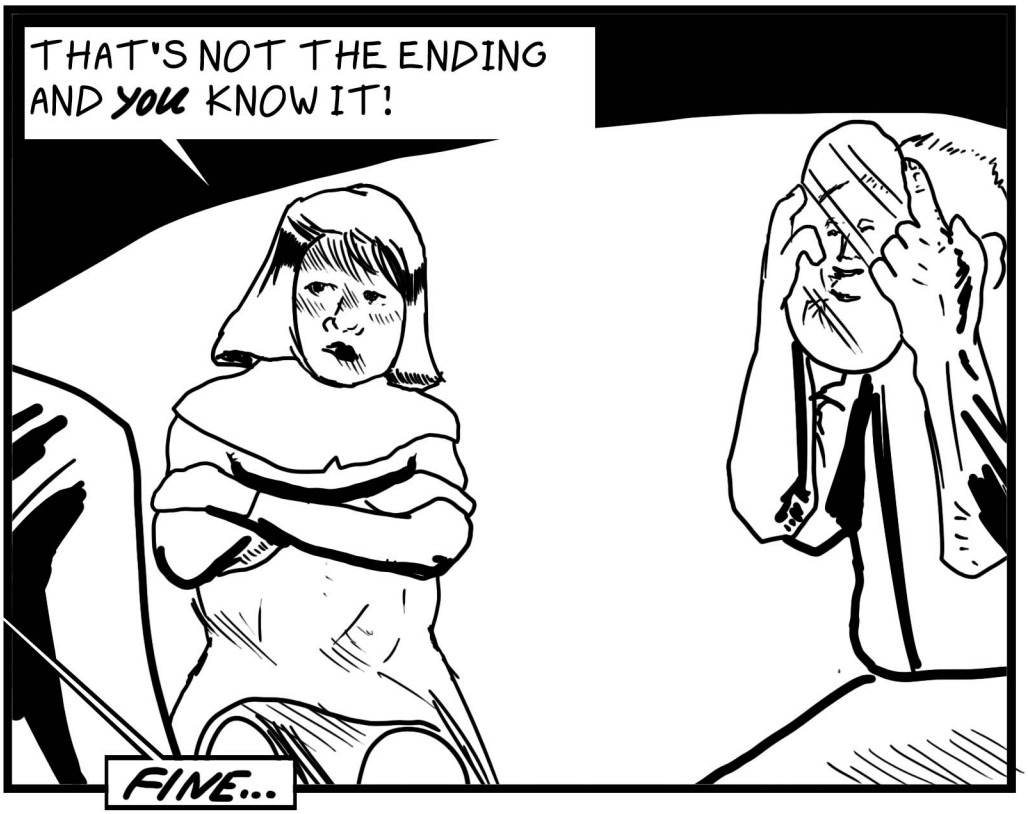


SHE SUDDENLY AWOKE AND SLAPPED THE PRINCE BECAUSE HE HAD KISSED HER WITHOUT PERMISSION


SHE TOLD HIM THAT SHE DIDN'T NEED SAVING, AND COULD HAVE LEFT AT ANY TIME, BUT THAT HER APPEARANCE ALONE WOULD SCARE THE COMMONFOLK. THEY WOULD TREAT HER AS A BEAST,
HE HAD SEEN HER IN ALL HER UGLINESS AND DID NOT LOWER HIS GAZE. IT DID NOT OCCUR TO HIM TO BE SCARED. IT MUST HAVE BEEN LOVE.
BUT THE TWO OF THEM COULD NOT SPEND ALL THEIR DAYS IN A TOWER, THERE WASN'T ENOUGH LIGHT AND ALL THEY COULD EAT WERE VINE LEAVES.
SHE SENT HIM TO RETREIVE THE SACRED EMERALD THAT WOULD CURE HER CURSE AND RETURN HER TO HER ETERNAL BEAUTY.


SO HE HACKED THROUGH DEEP FOREST, SLUDGED THROUGH TREACHEROUS MARSH AND FOUGHT AN OGRE GUARDING THE GEM.
BUT THIS OGRE LEFT A DEEP AND DREADED MARK ON OUR HERO. AND HE RETURNED TO HIS PRINCESS WITH THE GEM, MUDDY, TORN UP, BEARDED AND SMELLY. WITH A HUGE GASH ON HIS FACE.
WHEN THE PRINCESS SAW THIS MAN SHE NO LONGER RECOGNISED: A MONSTER-CHANGED BY THE FIGHT-SHE RECOILED IN FEAR AND YELLED FOR HIM TO LEAVE...


THE END


THAT'S NOT THE ENDING AND YOU KNOW IT!
FINE...

BUT AS SOON AS HE PRODUCED THE EMERALD SHE UNDERSTOOD. HE WAS HER PRINCE IN RAGS, AND HIS COURAGE SHONE BRIGHTER THAN ANY STAR, ANY STATUESQUE FEATURES OR POWDERED FACE, ANY FLOWING ROBES OR SHINING ARMOUR. THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER UNTIL THE END OF DAYS.


THE END - THE REAL END.
ANY STORIES FOR US PAGE?


HEY HARRY?
WHAT IS IT PETER?
NICE SHOES.


I'M NOT GOOD WITH HAPPY ENDINGS...


THAT'S FINE, I'M SURE THERE ARE PLENTY OF STORIES THAT LIE AHEAD


HIS GUN...IT'S TALKING TO ME
I COULD REACH OUT AND TOUCH IT...
IT'S THE OLD MAN'S FAULT FOR THINKING I SLEEP.

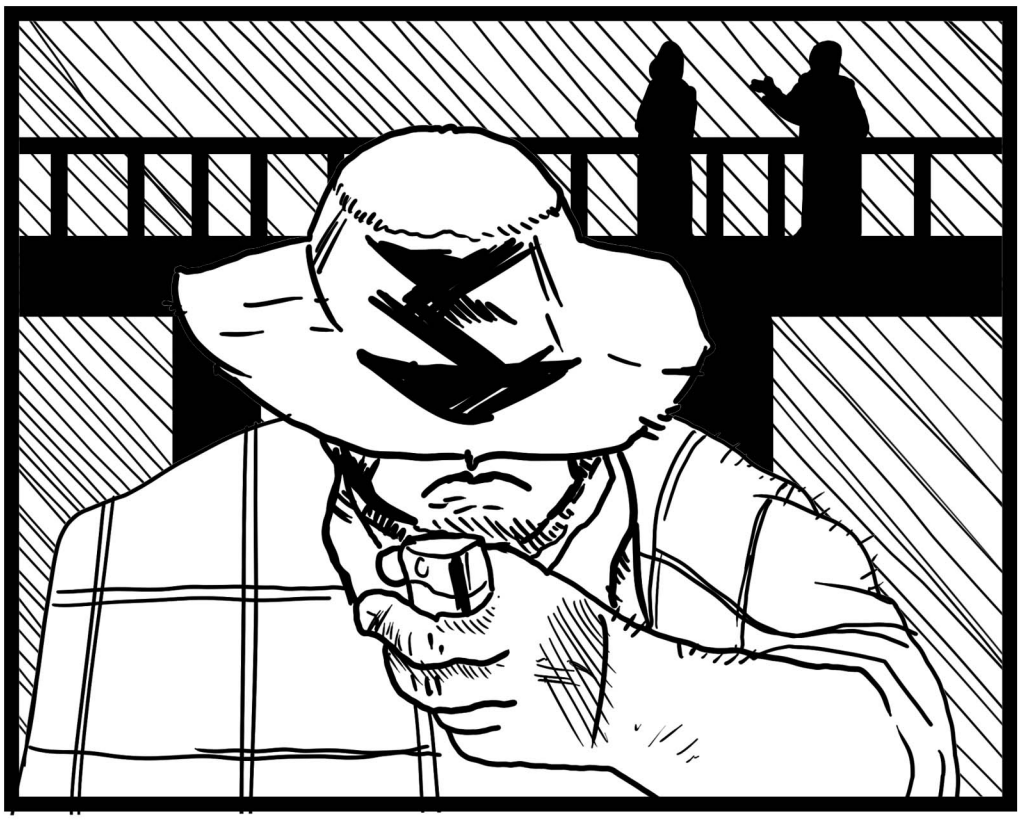

WHAT'S YOUR HORSE CALLED MR.PAGE?
OH, HIS NAME IS TOSH...MCINTOSH
LIKE THE APPLE?
YEAH...LIKE THE APPLE
OUR DONKEY IS CALLED MUD BECAUSE HE'S BROWN AND LIKES TO SPLASH IN MUD
HAHA

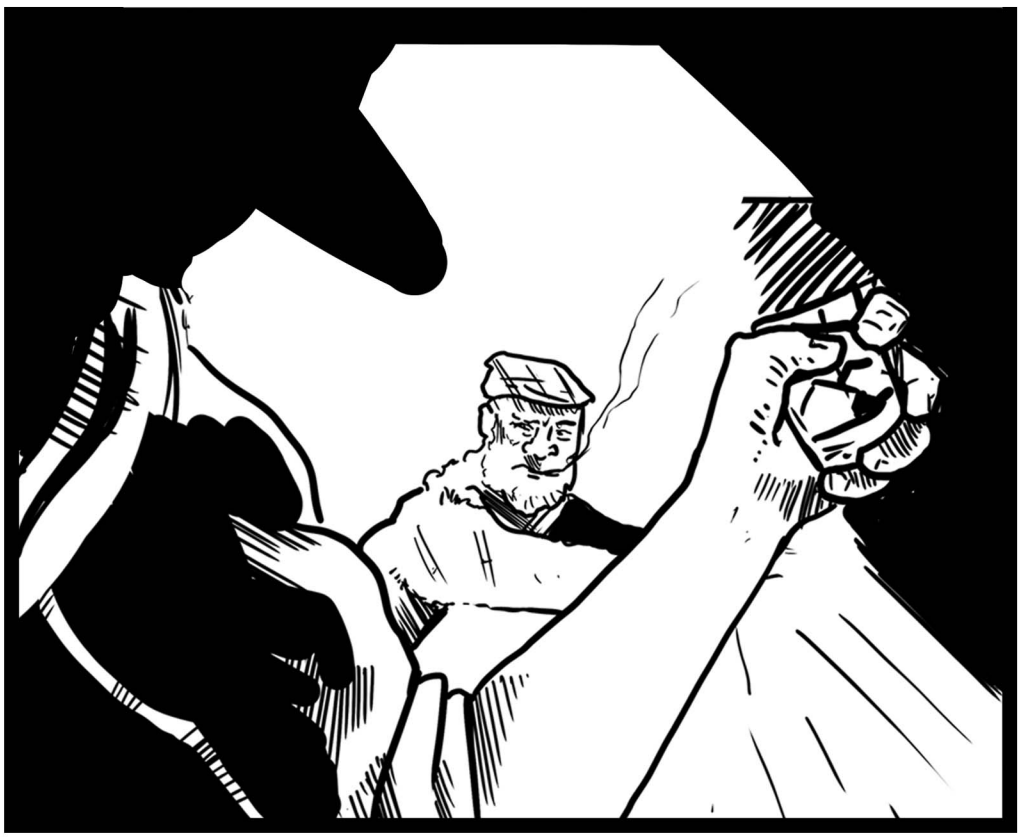

ALRIGHT! HERE'S OUR STOP
I HAVE TO TALK TO THE CHEMIST, WHEN I HAVE THE OINTMENT WE CAN LEAVE


DRINK


GET YOURSELF A DRINK PAGE, I WON'T BE TOO LONG...


OKAY
-BUT NOT BECAUSE I'M HIS PET
-THIS IS MY CHOICE.
-I LIKE WHISKEY.





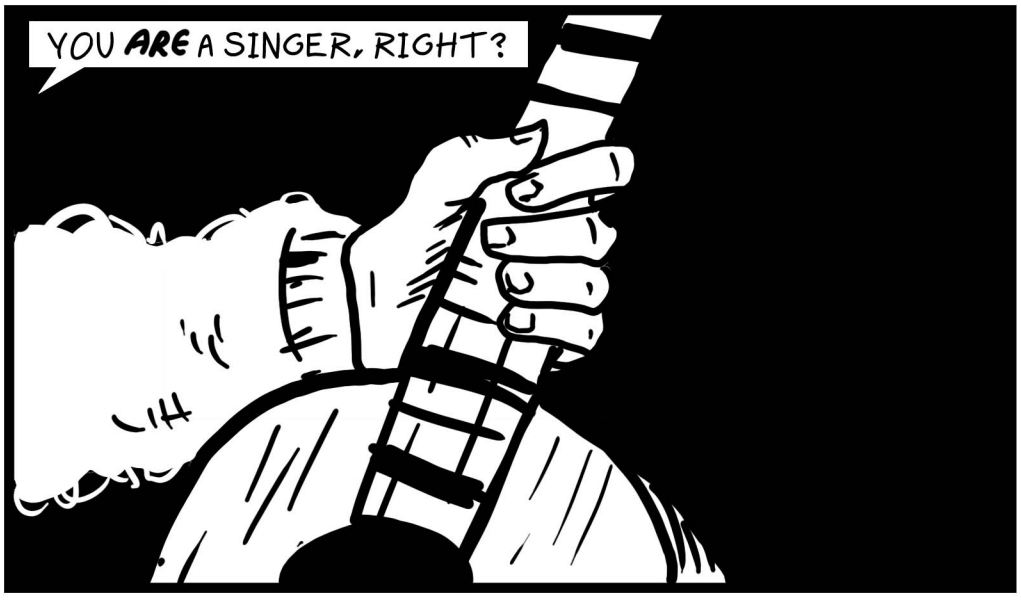

THIS GUY'S A STRANGER-COULD BE A DANGER.
I'M NOT HIS DOG, HE'S NOT MY PROBLEM.


HEY...YOU LOOK FAMILIAR
YOU ARE MISTAKEN, FRIEND


NO I KNOW YOU...
PLEASE, DON'T
I MADE A PROMISE
I NEED YOU TO DO A JOB FOR ME


I CAN'T GO BACK...
-BUT I CAN'T GO FORWARD...
-IT'S A QUICK ONE,
I HAVE THE INSTRUMENTS
I'VE GOT DANCERS AND-



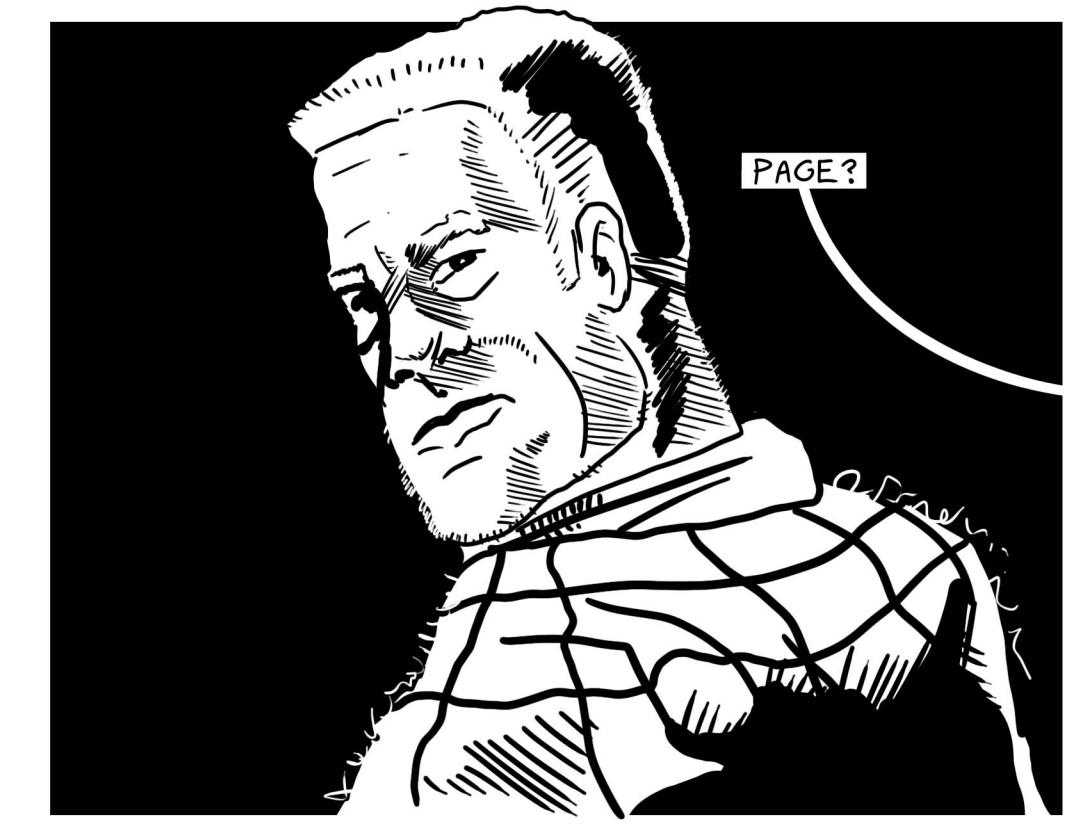

YOU ARE A SINGER, RIGHT?


YOU WERE GOING TO KILL HIM, PAGE...
WITH A BREADKNIFE?
-HOW ABOUT A GUITAR STRING?
-JUST TO HEAR HIM CHOKE ON BLOOD...

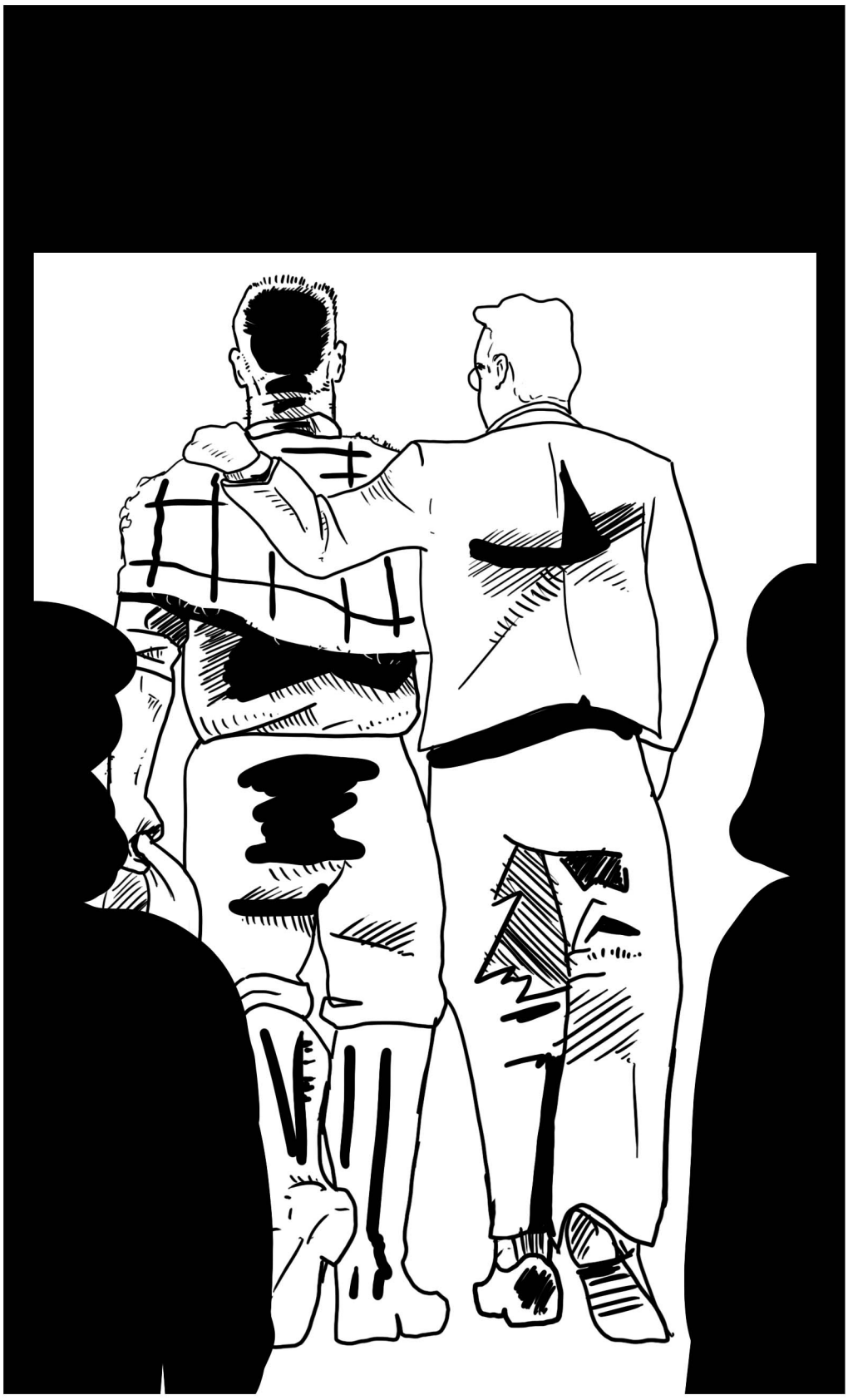

WOULD YOU PRETEND TO BE A MUSICIAN?
PRETEND...
...LIKE YOU PRETENDED TO BE HARRY?
PRETEND...
...LIKE YOU PRETENDED TO BE A POTATO FARMER?
PRETEND...
...LIKE YOU PRETENDED TO BE NORMAL.


PAGE


PAGE!!!

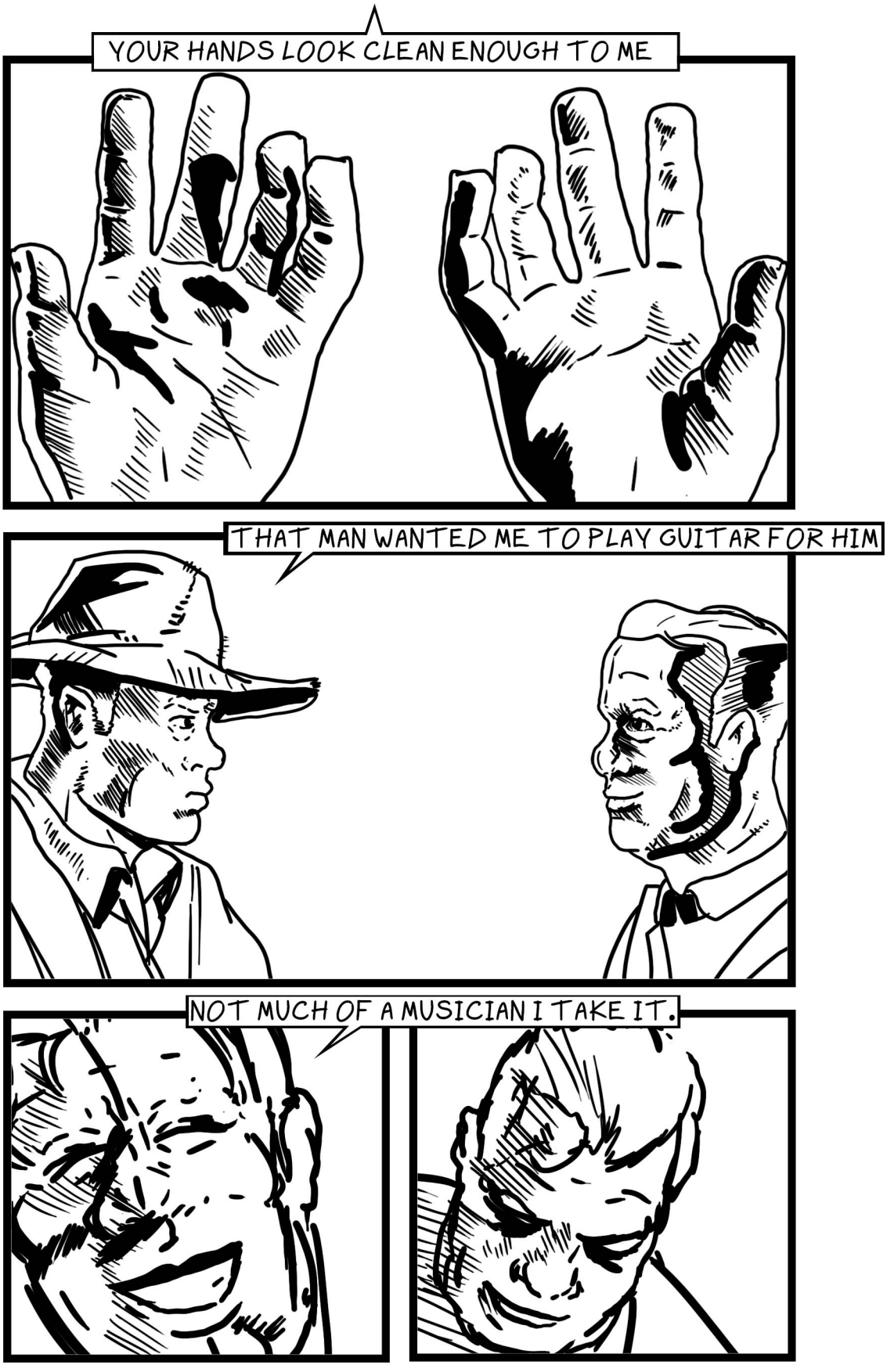

PAGE?

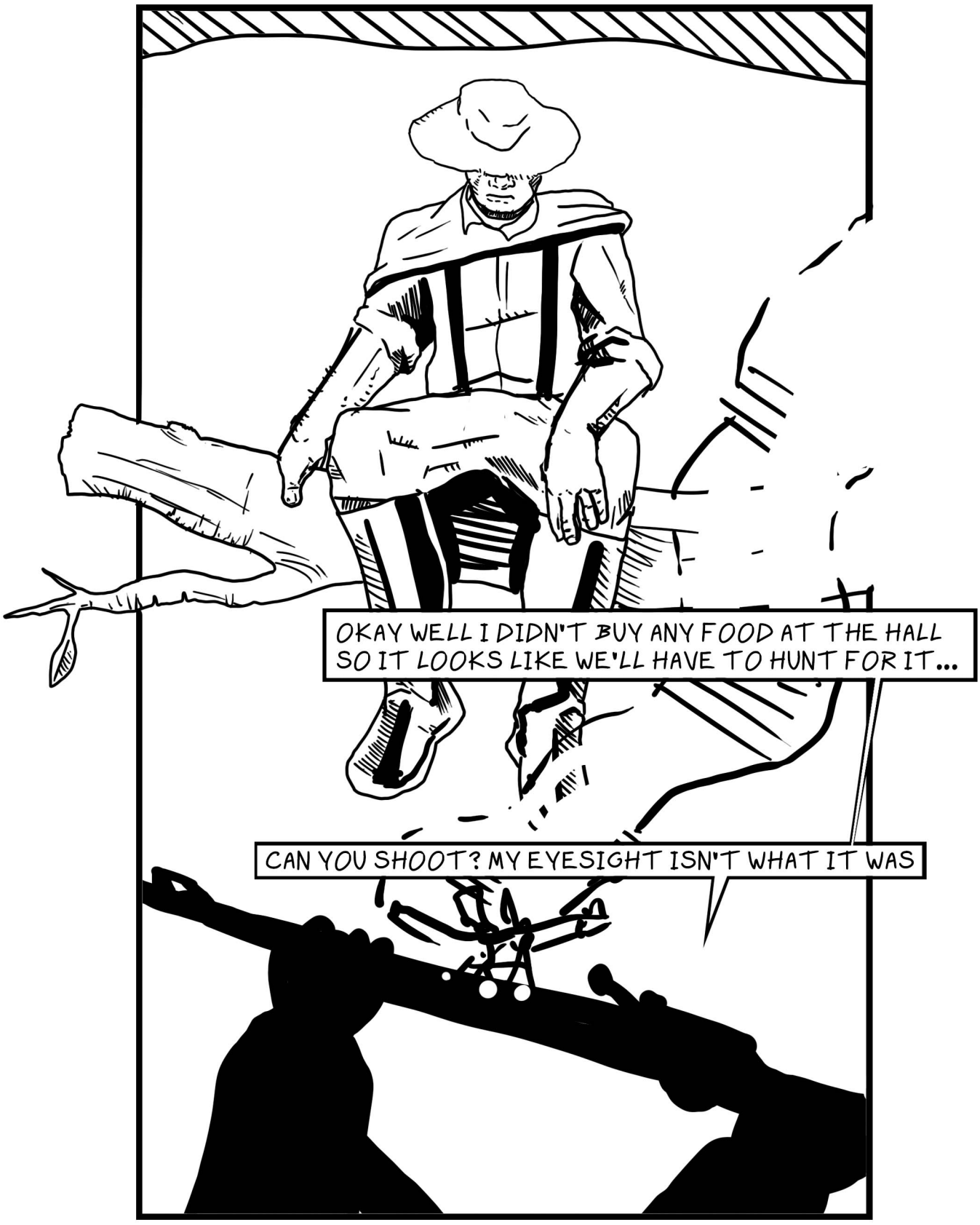

I HAVE THE OINTMENT, TIME TO GO

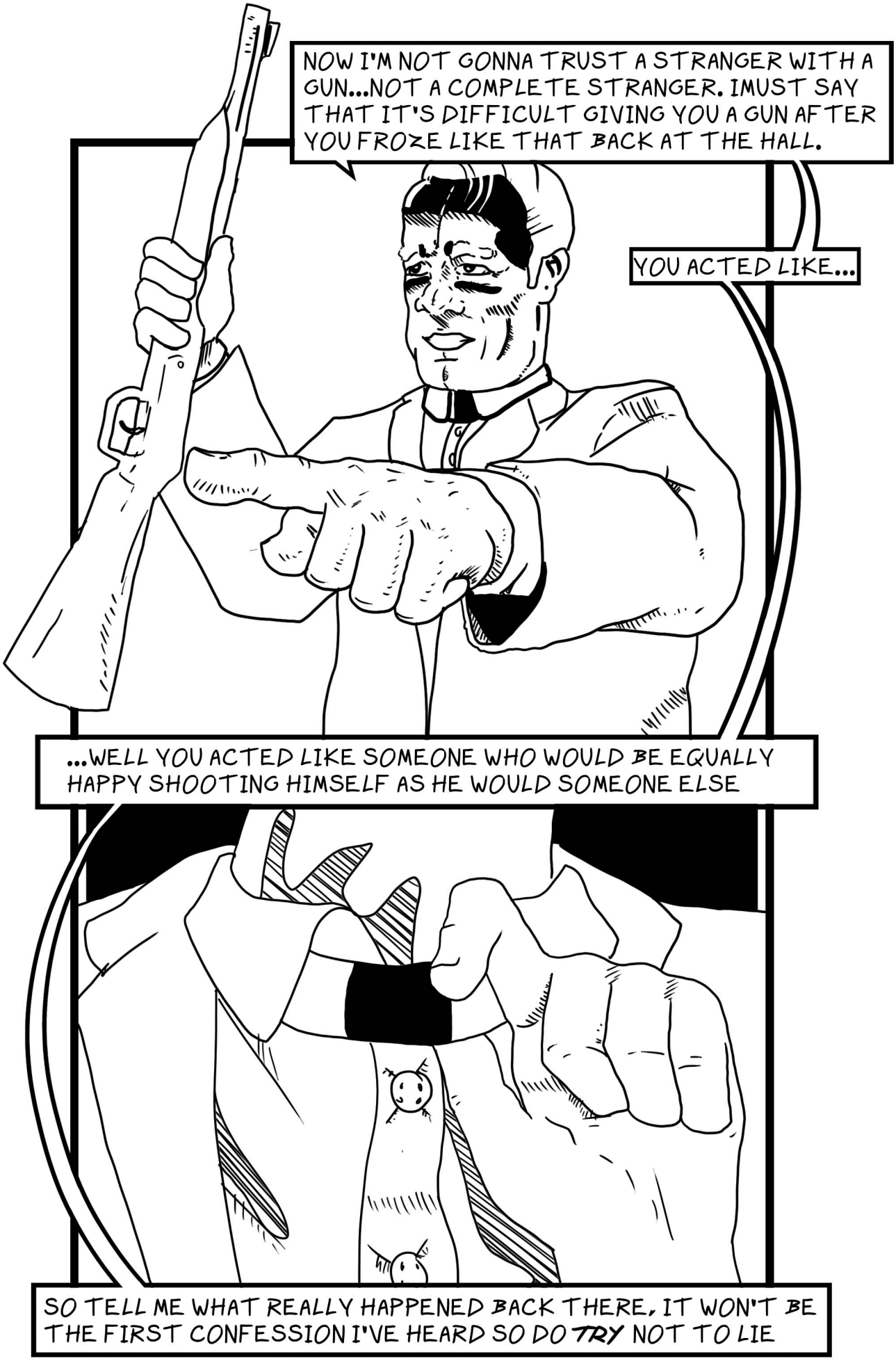



WHAT WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT?


YOU LOOKED AS PALE AS A CORPSE WHEN I FOUND YOU, MUMBLING ABOUT CLEANING YOUR HANDS, DRESSING UP...


YOUR HANDS LOOK CLEAN ENOUGH TO ME
THAT MAN WANTED ME TO PLAY GUITAR FOR HIM
NOT MUCH OF A MUSICIAN I TAKE IT.


OKAY WELL I DIDN'T BUY ANY FOOD AT THE HALL SO IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO HUNT FOR IT...
CAN YOU SHOOT? MY EYESIGHT ISN'T WHAT IT WAS

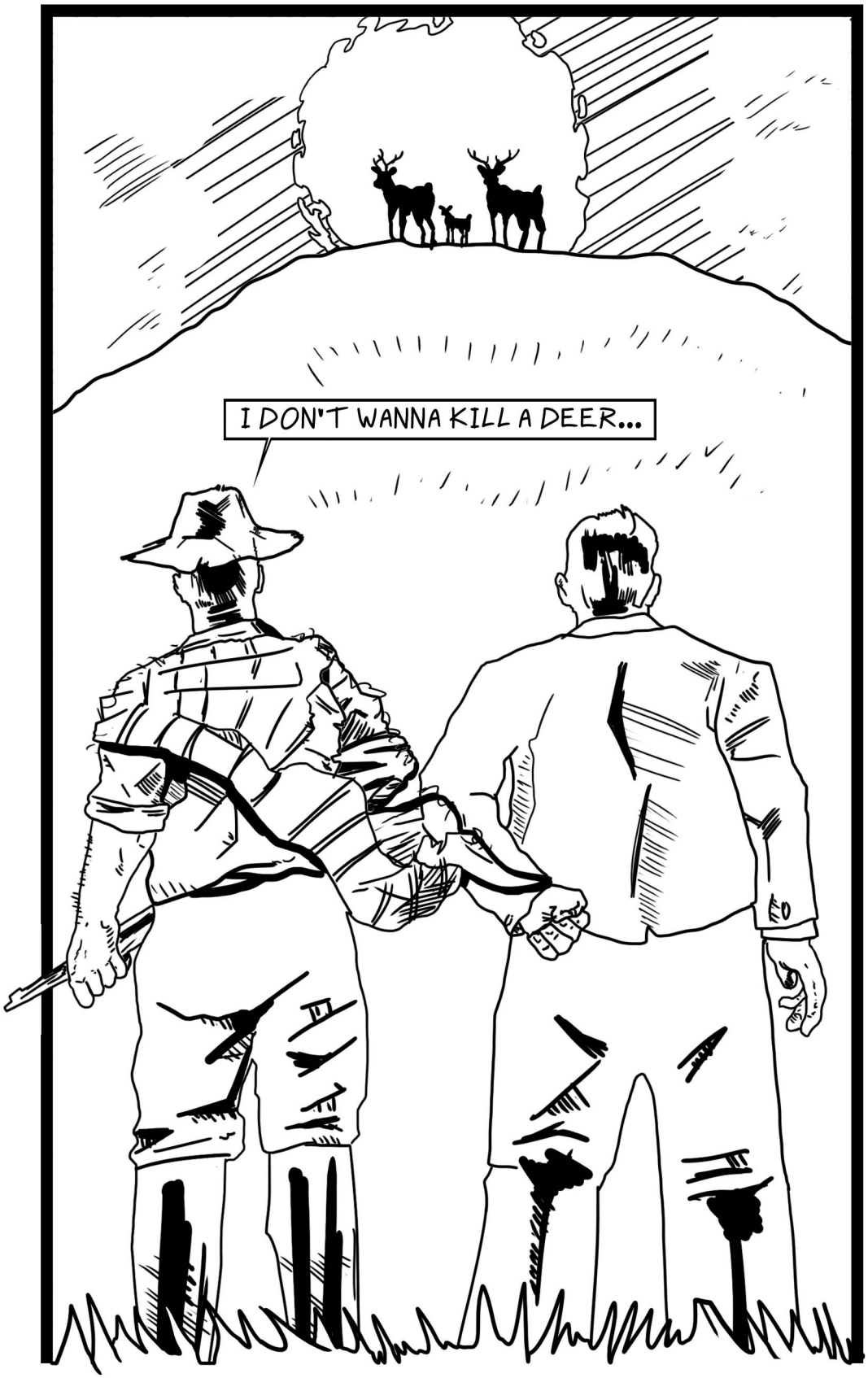

NOW I'M NOT GONNA TRUST A STRANGER WITH A GUN...NOT A COMPLETE STRANGER. IMUST SAY THAT IT'S DIFFICULT GIVING YOU A GUN AFTER YOU FROZE LIKE THAT BACK AT THE HALL.
YOU ACTED LIKE...
...WELL YOU ACTED LIKE SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE EQUALLY HAPPY SHOOTING HIMSELF AS HE WOULD SOMEONE ELSE
SO TELL ME WHAT REALLY HAPPENED BACK THERE, IT WON'T BE THE FIRST CONFESSION I'VE HEARD SO DO TRY NOT TO LIE


OH GOD...-NO THIS IS MY GOD, MY GOD IS THE GUN
A GOD THAT OBEYS THE COMMAND OF MY TRIGGER...
I DON'T WANNA...
YOU CAN DO THIS, PAGE.



I WAS IN THE ARMY A LONG TIME, I'M NOT HAPPY WITH HOW IT TURNED OUT AND I'D RATHER LEAVE THE PAST BEHIND. WHEN THAT MAN ASKED ME TO PLAY, I DIDN'T THINK HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE GUITAR.


THAT WASN'T TOO HARD-NOW, PLAY A TUNE FOR ME
OH THIS FEELS LIKE A THIRD ARM
AM I DROOLING? I FEEL LIKE I'M DROOLING...


I DON'T WANNA KILL A DEER...


-THAT'S FINE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KILL THE DEER
...JUST DON'T MAKE ME RUN AFTER IT


Bang!
Bang!
Bang!

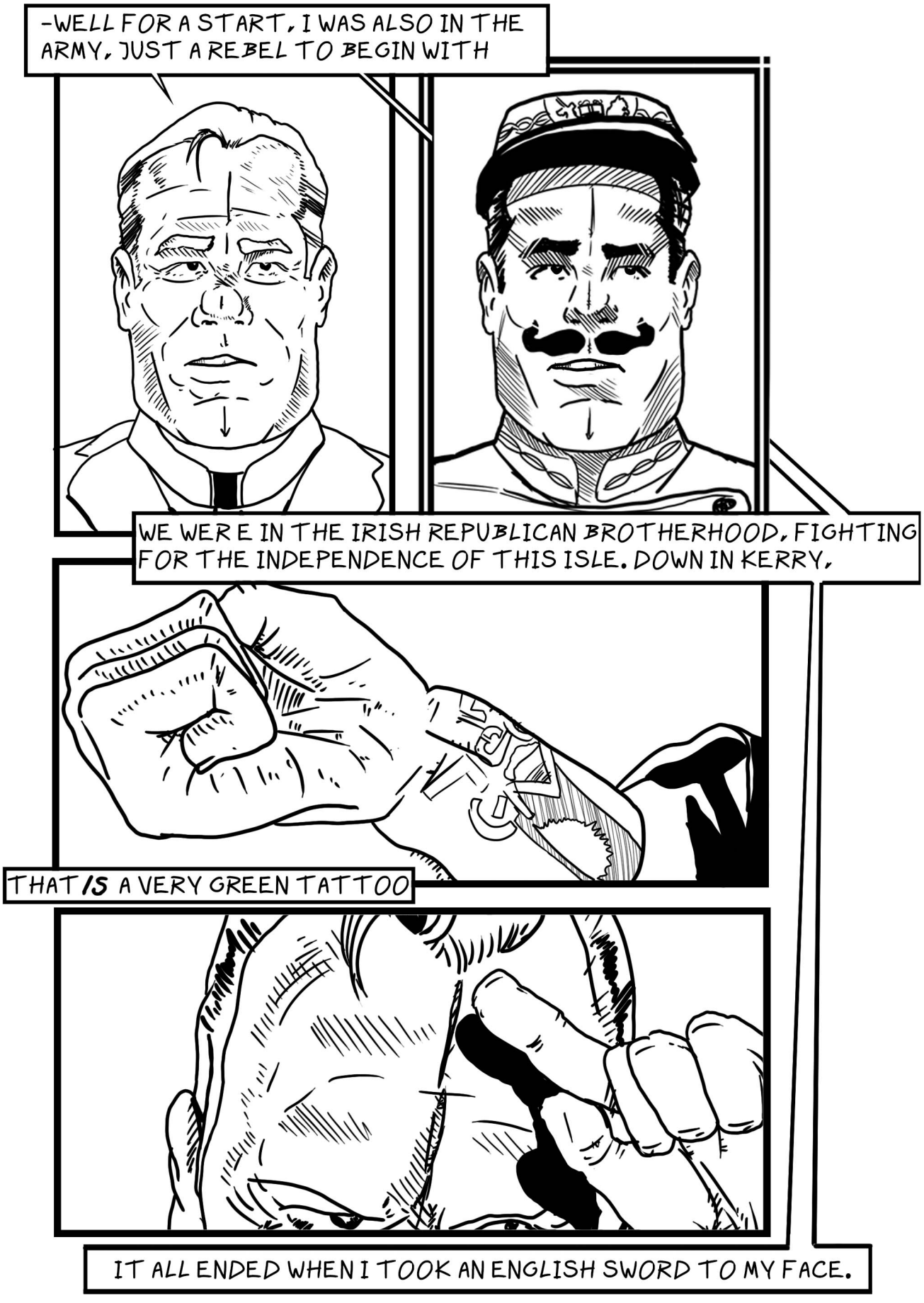

JESUS SON,
WE ONLY NEEDED ONE.


SUCH A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE
THE DEATH MUST BE GIVEN MEANING
CLICK!
PIP!


DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHY MY GUN ISN'T LOADED?
IT WAS IN TIPPERARY
IT WAS BEFORE I MET YOU


SEEMS YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES:
KILL ME AND STEAL MY THINGS, GO ON AND KILL AND KILL AND FAIL AT MOST ELSE
-OR GIVE ME MY BULLETS BACK AND WE CAN MOVE ON


I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE JUST GONNA SHOOT ME WHEN I GIVE THE GUN BACK
WOULD YOU BLAME ME?
NO.
-SO TELL ME A SECRET ABOUT YOURSELF TOO, IT'S HARDER TO SHOOT SOMEONE YOU KNOW


-WELL FOR A START, I WAS ALSO IN THE ARMY, JUST A REBEL TO BEGIN WITH
WE WERE IN THE IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD, FIGHTING FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THIS ISLE. DOWN IN KERRY,
THAT IS A VERY GREEN TATTOO
IT ALL ENDED WHEN I TOOK AN ENGLISH SWORD TO MY FACE.


SO ARE YOU GONNA SHOOT ME?
NO.
THUMP


OKAY, WE'RE HERE




YOUR MONEY, AS PROMISED

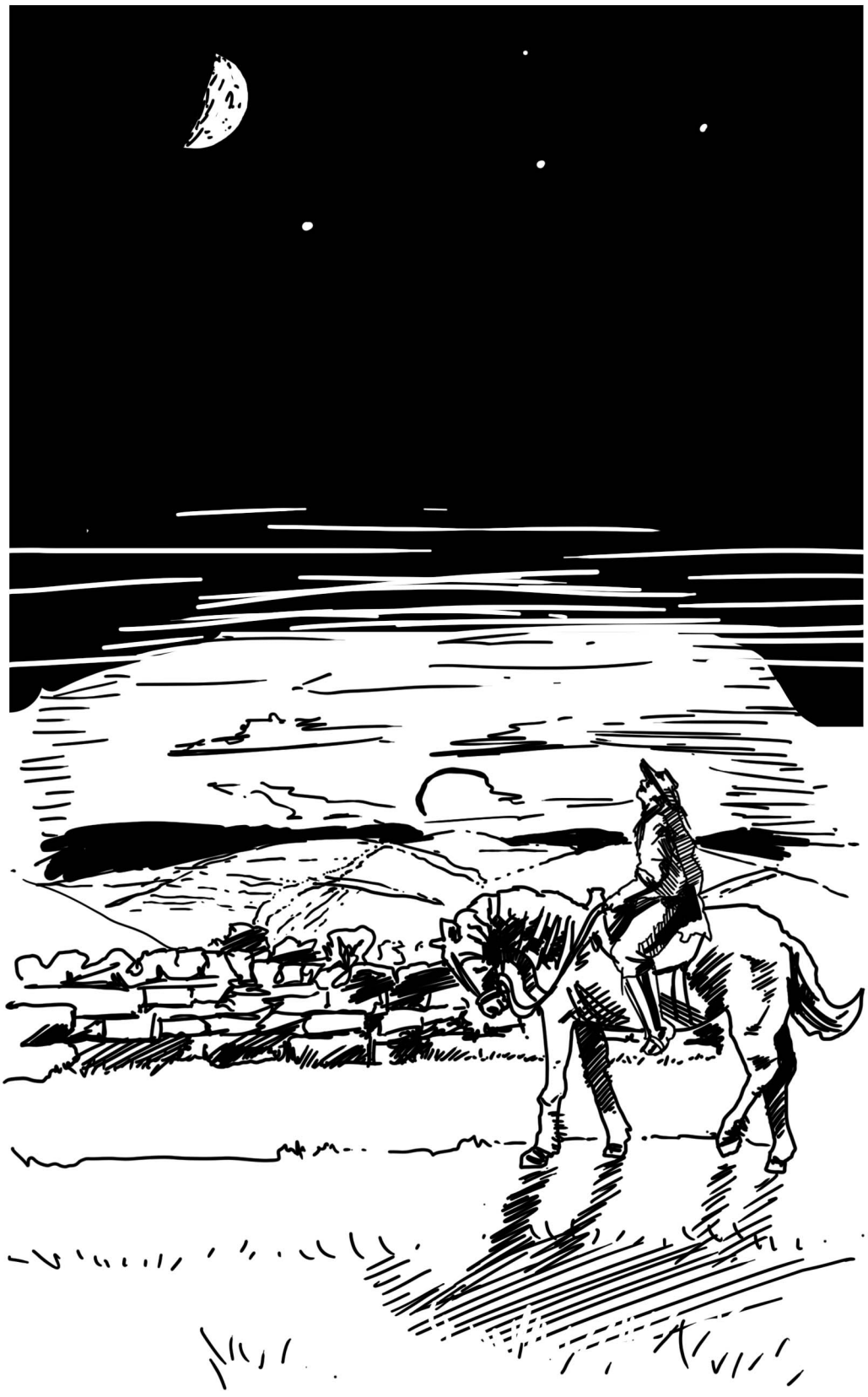

E10




SO GO, AND SEE WHAT ELSE THE WORLD THROWS AT YOU, OR YOU CAN COME WITH ME, HELP ME DO SOME GOOD


I CAN'T STAY, THIS DOESN'T WORK FOR ME












HALT!
WE KNOW THE OLD MAN PAID YOU, THAT MONEY IS OURS NOW.


SWOOSH
THNK
BFF
CLICK!

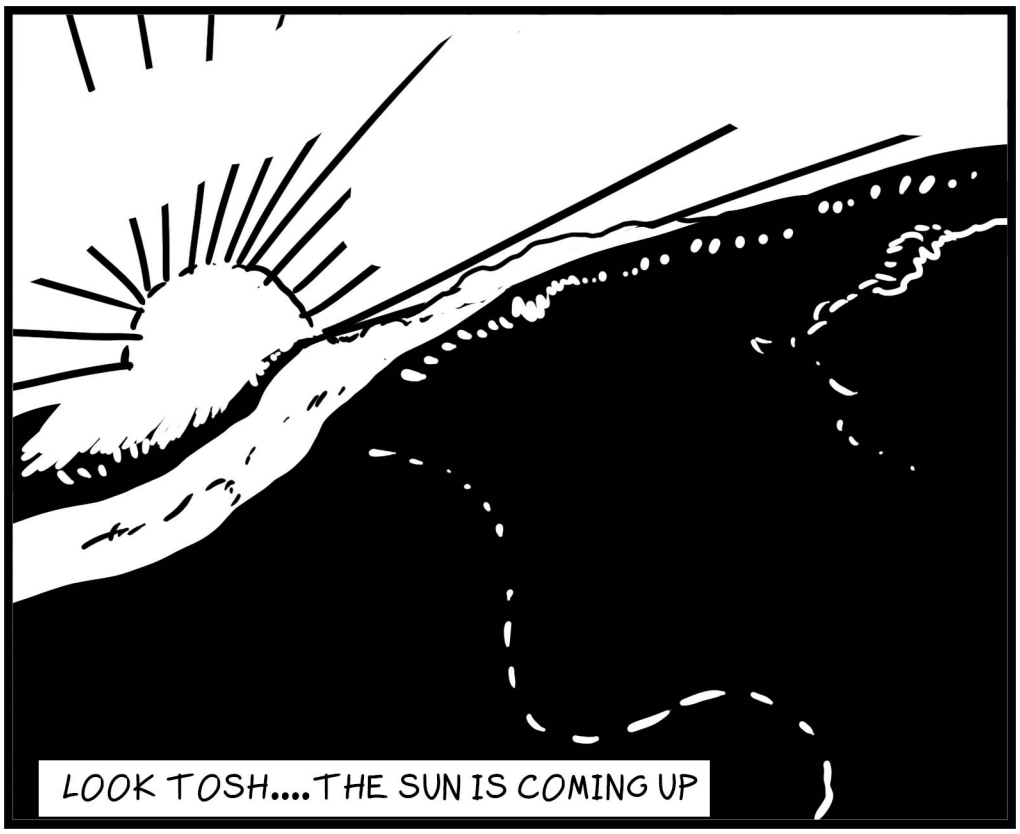


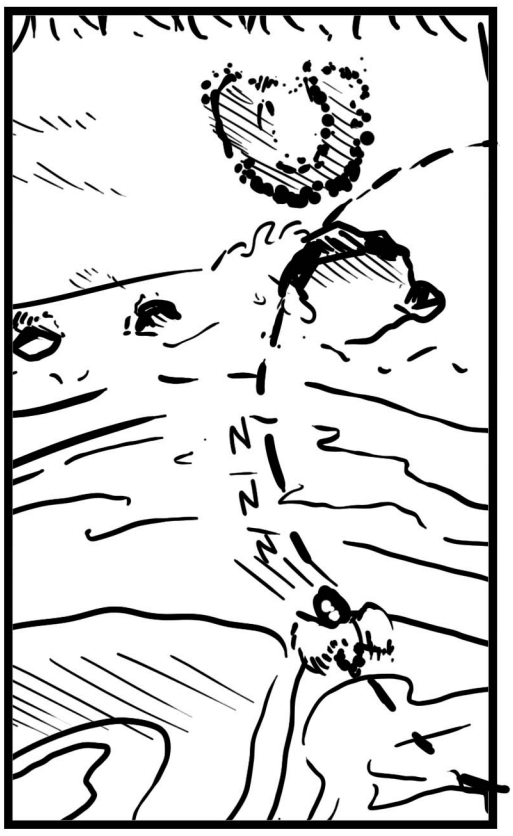

GET THAT HORSE! WE CAN'T HAVE HIM FOLLOW US!
URGHHm

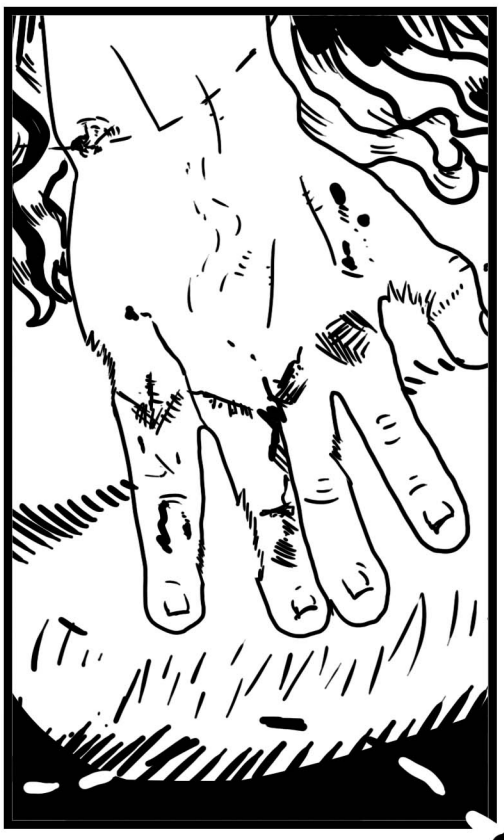

NOOOOOOOOOOO!




I'M SORRY...I CAN'T
I'M HERE BUDDY...
I'M HERE BOY...
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE...

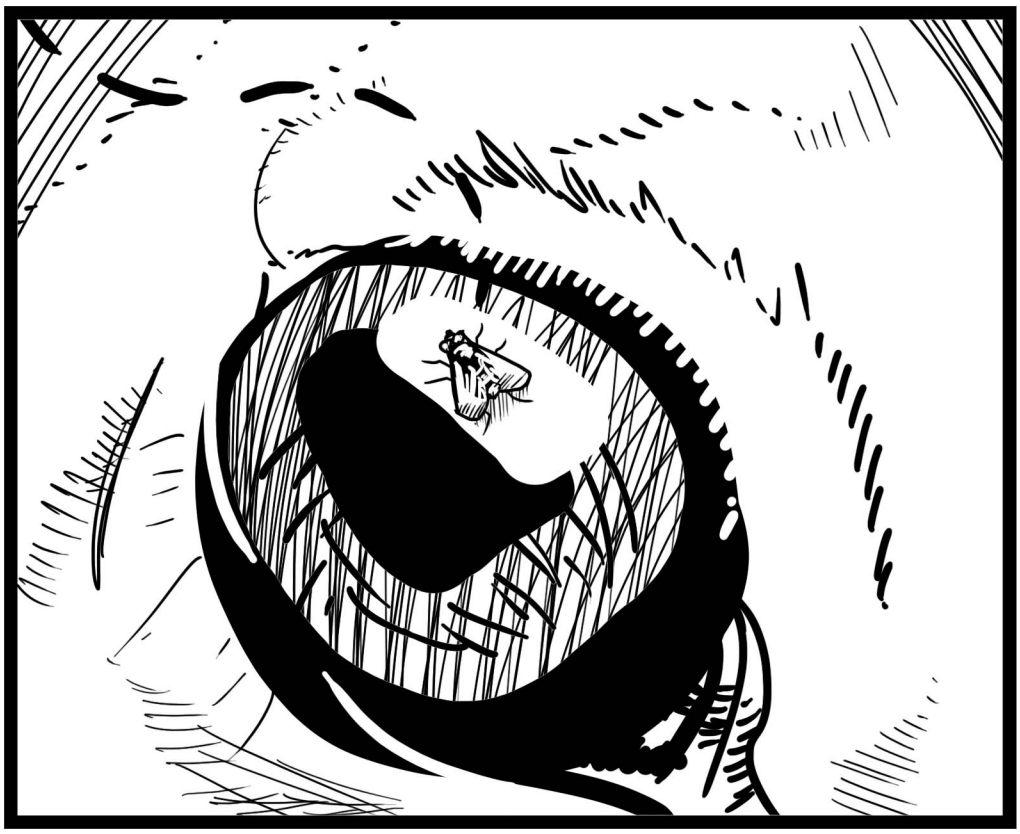

LOOK TOSH....THE SUN IS COMING UP

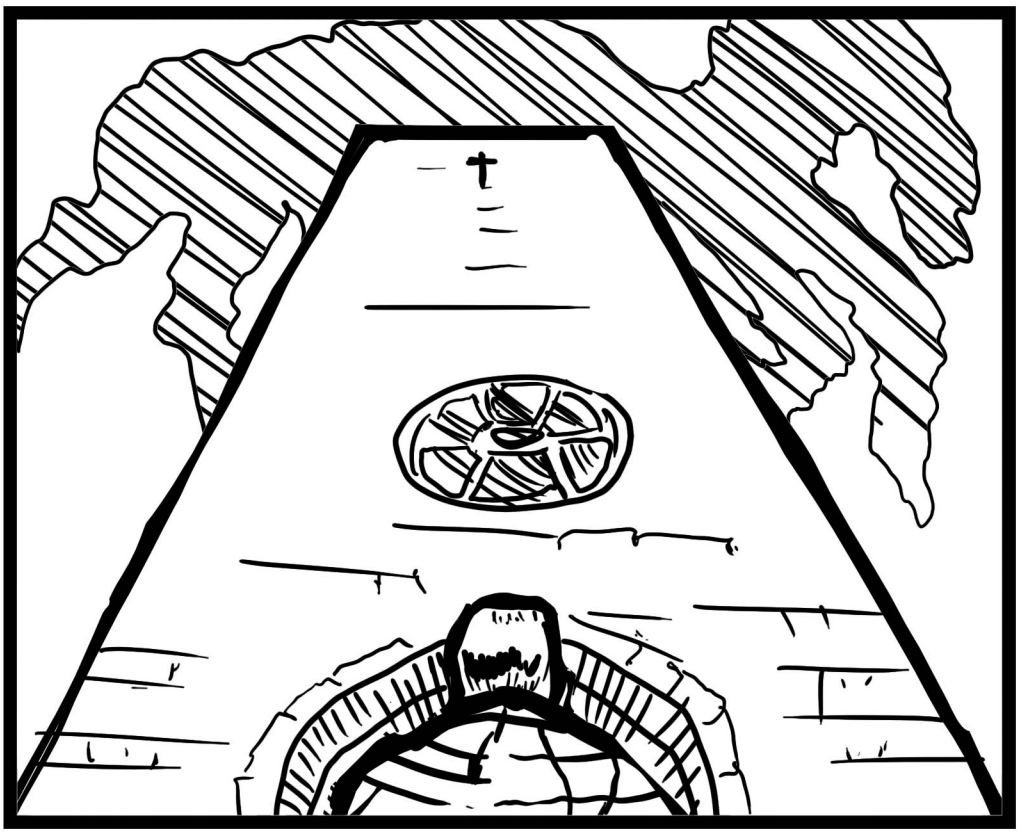

TZZZZZ




Bzzzzz


Bzzz
NNNN
NNN






TOSH IS DEAD



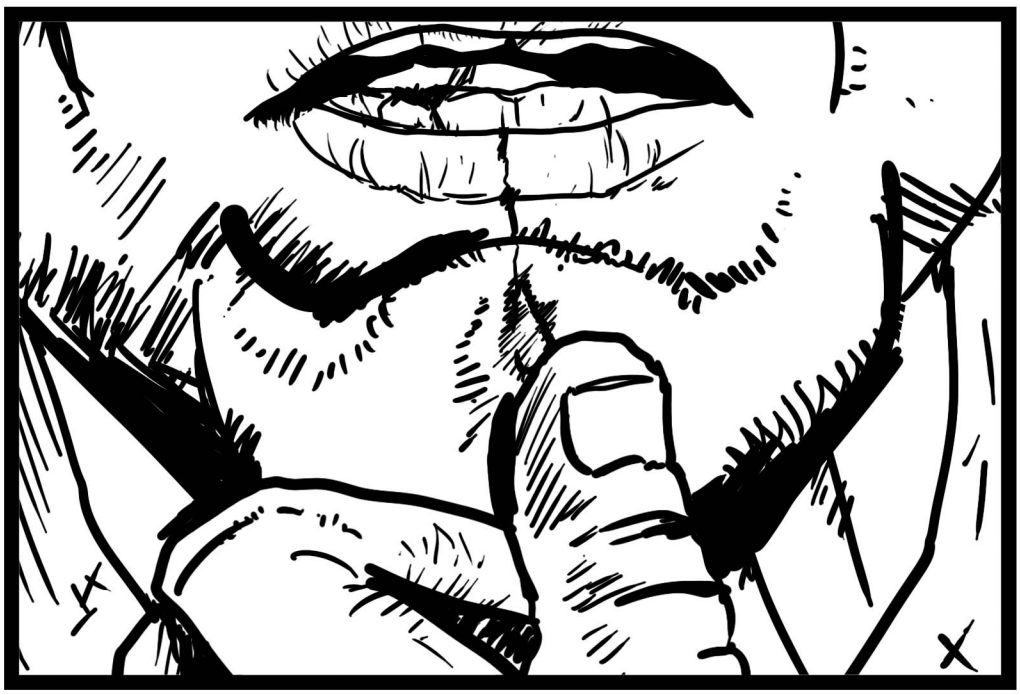

I JUST WATCHED HIM, I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL HIM...HE WAS DYING AND I WATCHED HIM
HE WAS MY FRIEND AND THE LAST THING HE WILL REMEMBER IS THE AGONY THAT I WOULD NOT END FOR HIM


I LIED

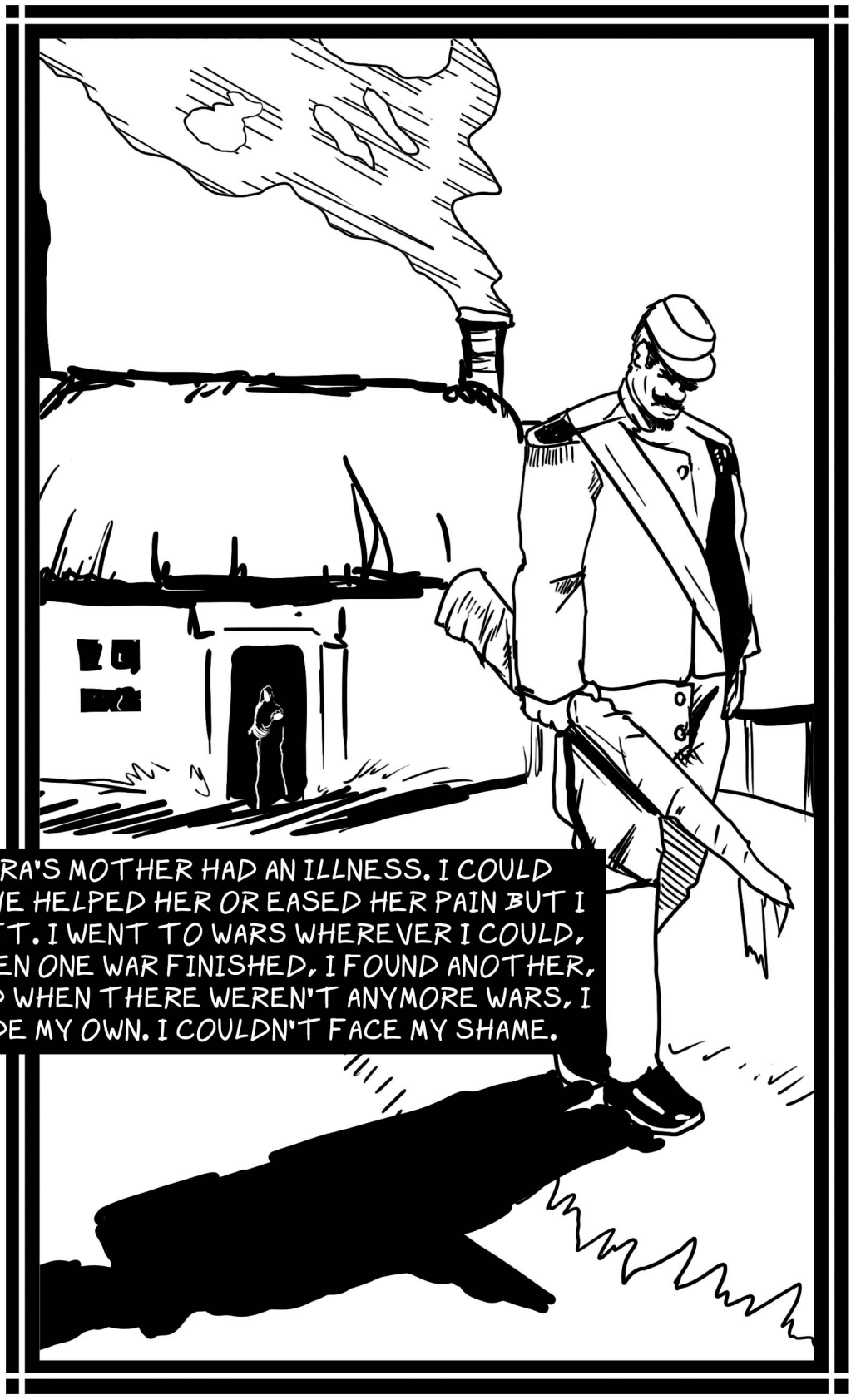


I LIED WITH THE GUN, FOR THE BULLETS, I SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED YOU

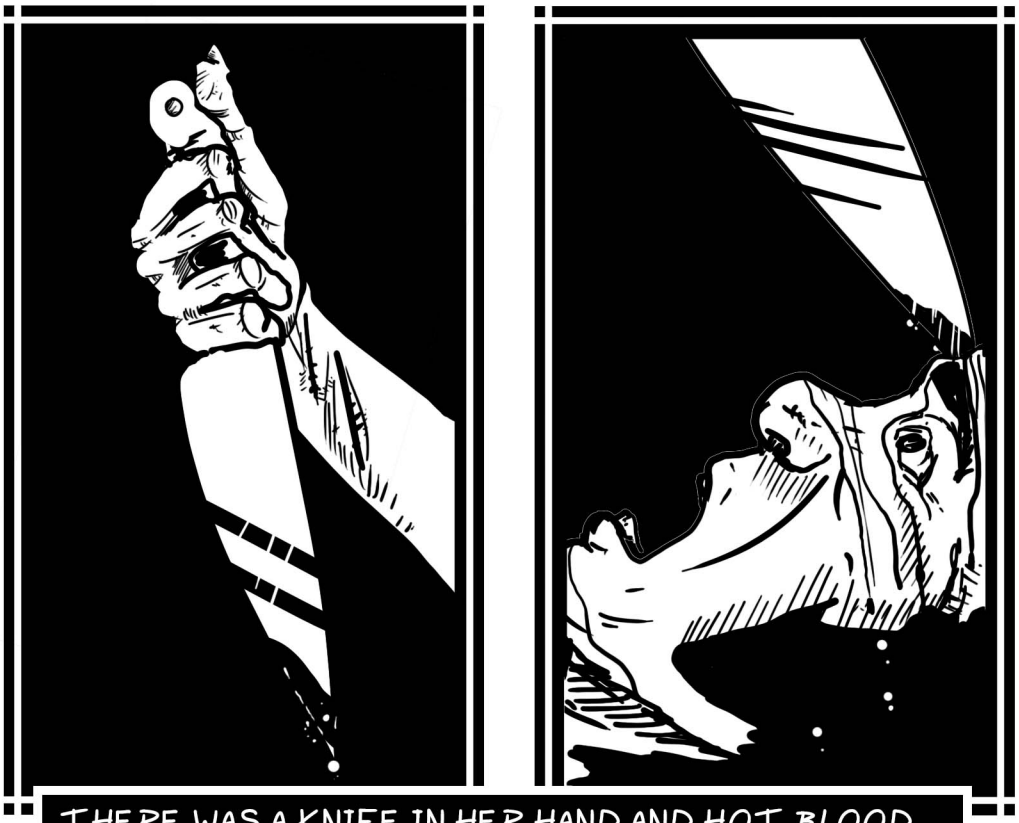




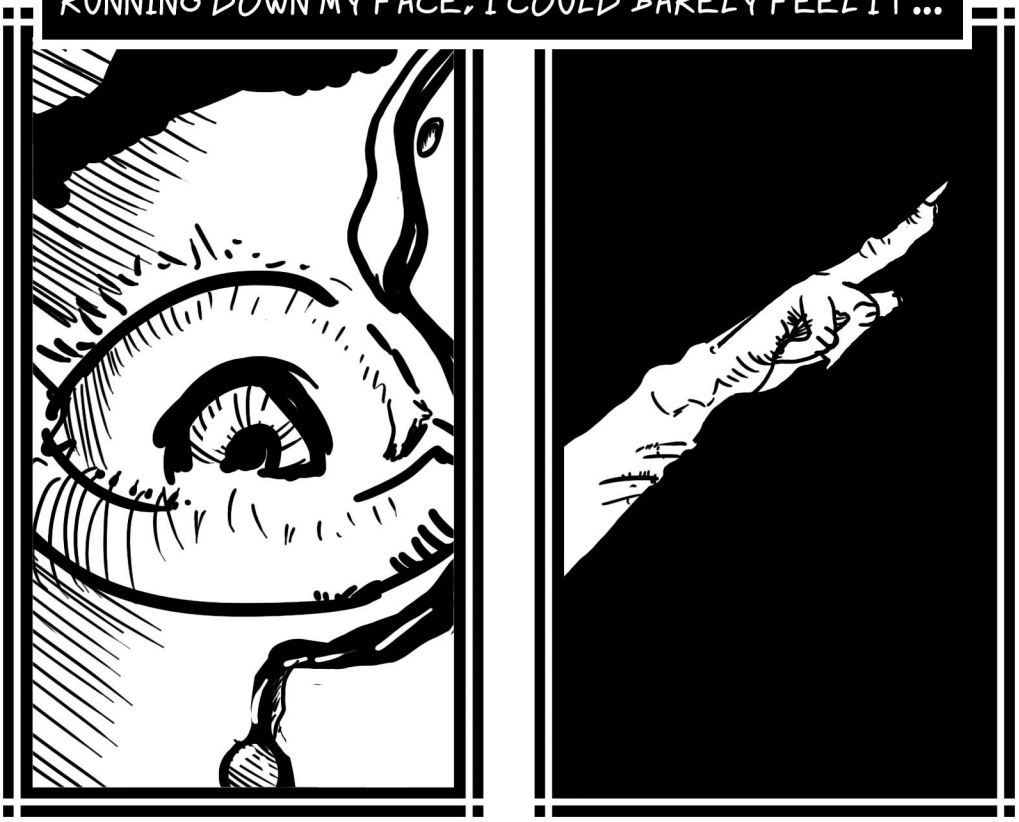
I DIDN'T GET THIS SCAR IN THE WAR...


CIARA'S MOTHER HAD AN ILLNESS. I COULD HAVE HELPED HER OR EASED HER PAIN BUT I LEFT. I WENT TO WARS WHEREVER I COULD, WHEN ONE WAR FINISHED, I FOUND ANOTHER, AND WHEN THERE WEREN'T ANYMORE WARS, I MADE MY OWN. I COULDN'T FACE MY SHAME.

ONE DAY I WOKE UP TO HER...



THERE WAS A KNIFE IN HER HAND AND HOT BLOOD RUNNING DOWN MY FACE, I COULD BARELY FEEL IT...



SHE TOLD ME THAT SHE WAS LEAVING, AND THAT IF I EVER WANTED TO SEE HER AGAIN I SHOULD LOOK IN THE MIRROR-

SHE WANTED ME TO SUFFER AS SHE SUFFERED. I WANT TO BE BETTER, I'VE TRIED TO BE BETTER. AND SO I'M RAISING CIARA HOW SHE WOULD HAVE WANTED.

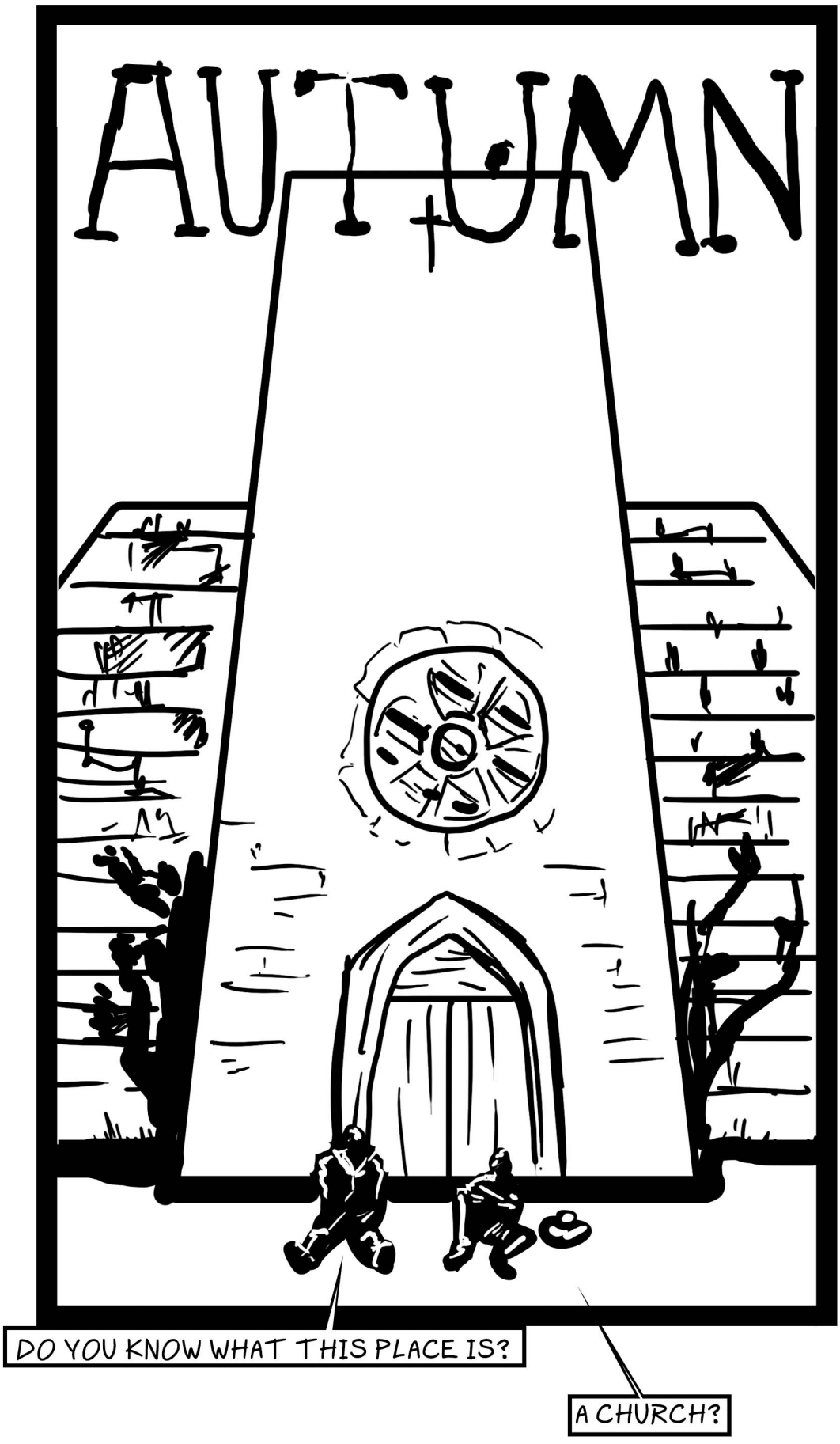


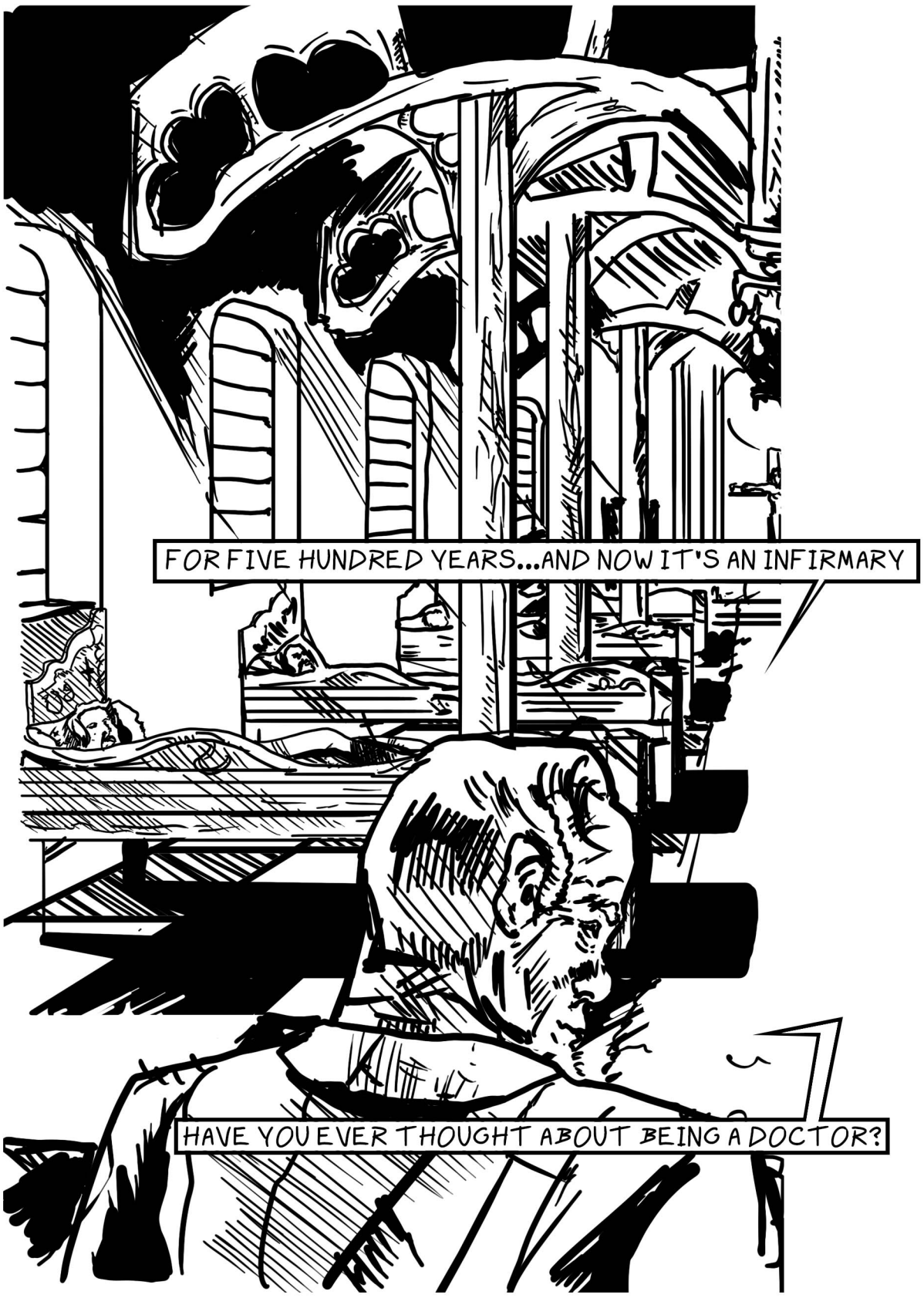



WHAT??
I DIDN'T STOP KILLING AFTER I LEFT THE WAR, I JUST GOT PAID MORE THIS WAY. BUT IT'S OVER, I LEFT THAT LIFE.
I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT DOING SOMETHING-CHANGING THE WORLD WITH A KNIFE, OR A GUN, OR MY BARE HANDS...

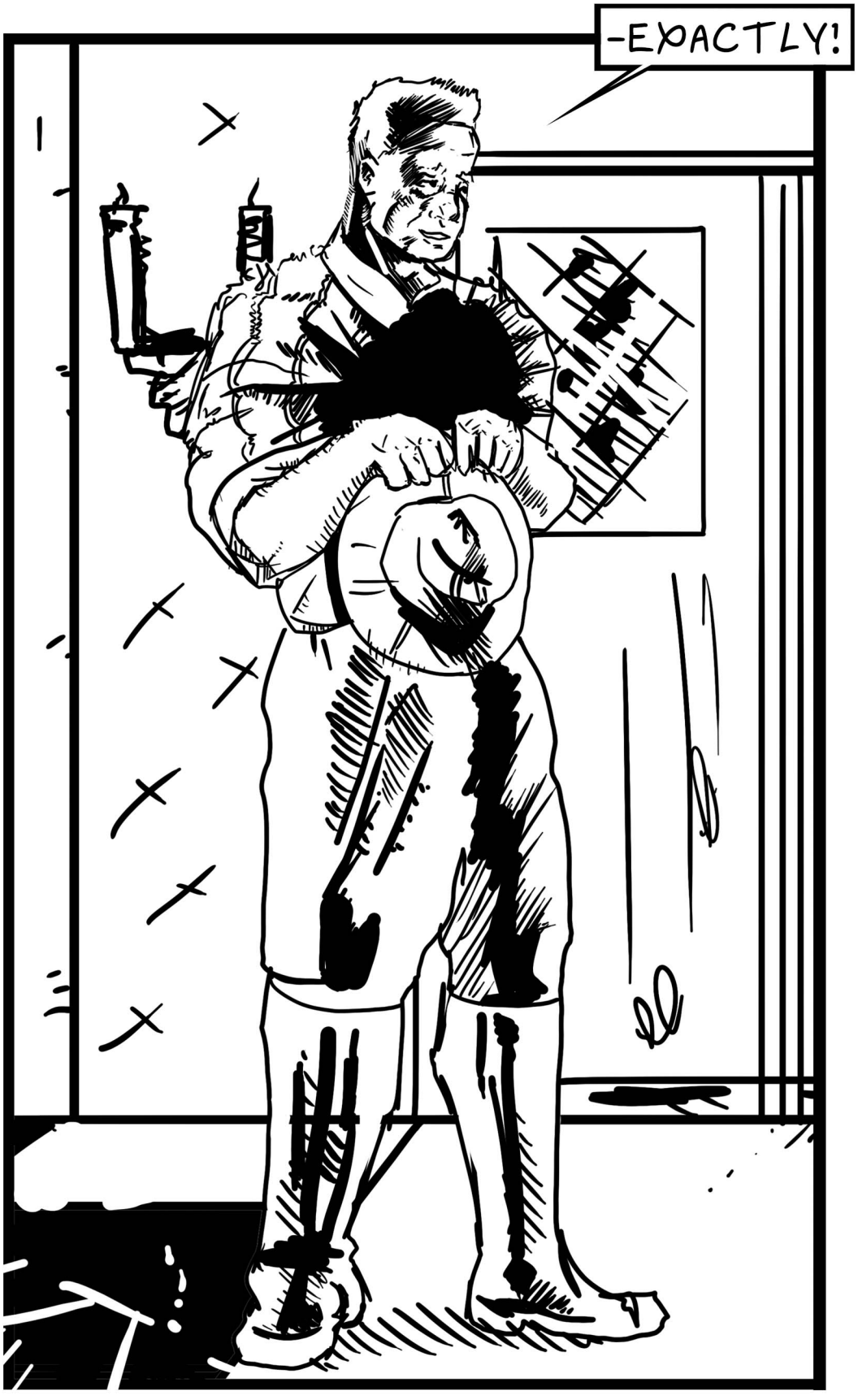

HEY IF YOU'RE HERE TO KILL ME OR CIARA, I'D SAY YOU ARE DOING A PRETTY AWFUL JOB OF IT!
I GAVE YOU A GUN


TRUTH IS...I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M HERE
YES YOU DO- YOU CAME BACK BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T KILLED ANYONE SINCE YOU'VE BEEN WITH US.
AT LEAST I DON'T THINK SO, WE'D PROBABLY BE IN JAIL RIGHT NOW
I DIDN'T STOP BECAUSE I WAS BAD AT IT


AUTUMN
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS PLACE IS?
A CHURCH?


FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS...AND NOW IT'S AN INFIRMARY
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BEING A DOCTOR?


I THOUGHT ABOUT BEING A POTATO FARMER...


-EXACTLY!


A DOCTOR IS A BIT LIKE A POTATO FARMER, YOU CAN BRING LIFE INTO THE WORLD-
AND, LUCKILY FOR YOU-MOST DOCTORS ARE KILLERS FROM MY EXPERIENCE...
I SHOULD REALLY INTRODUCE YOU TO THE CHILDREN. THE REAL REASON WE DO THIS...


PAGE


THIS IS TOMMY, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIS FACE WHEN I TOLD HIM ABOUT TOSH-HE LOVES HORSES


IS IT TRUE YOU HAVE A HORSE, MISTER PAGE?
YEAH, WELL I HAD A HORSE
WHAT HAPPENED?
HE DIED
OH NO! I HOPE HE DIDN'T SUFFER
THEY SHOT HIM IN THE LEG-HE TOOK ALL NIGHT TO DIE...HE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER
OH.
OH.

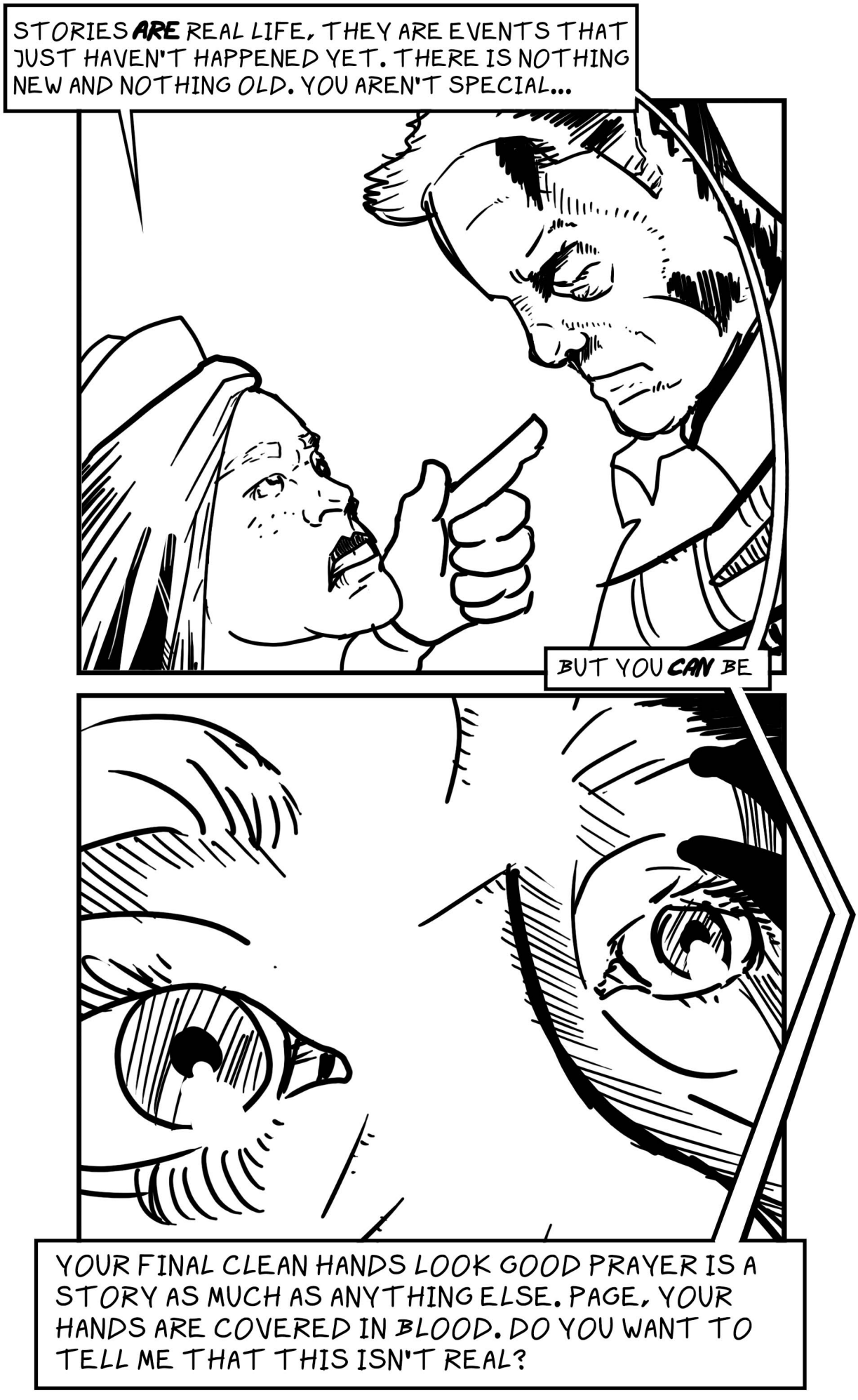

I LIKE STORIESABOUT HORSES, I LIKE ENDINGS WHERE THEY'RE ALIVE...I HATE WHEN HORSES DIE
UM YEAH-ME TOO


WE SHOULD CHANGE THE SUBJECT:DO YOU HAVE ANY STORIES FOR US PAGE? MAYBE SOME THAT AREN'T ABOUT DEATH?
WHY ARE YOU AND YOUR DA SO OBSESSED WITH STORIES? IN REAL LIFE PEOPLE DIE, HORSES DIE-
I'LL DIE, YOU'LL DIE-THIS KID WILL DIE SOON
YOU DON'T THINK HE KNOWS THAT?



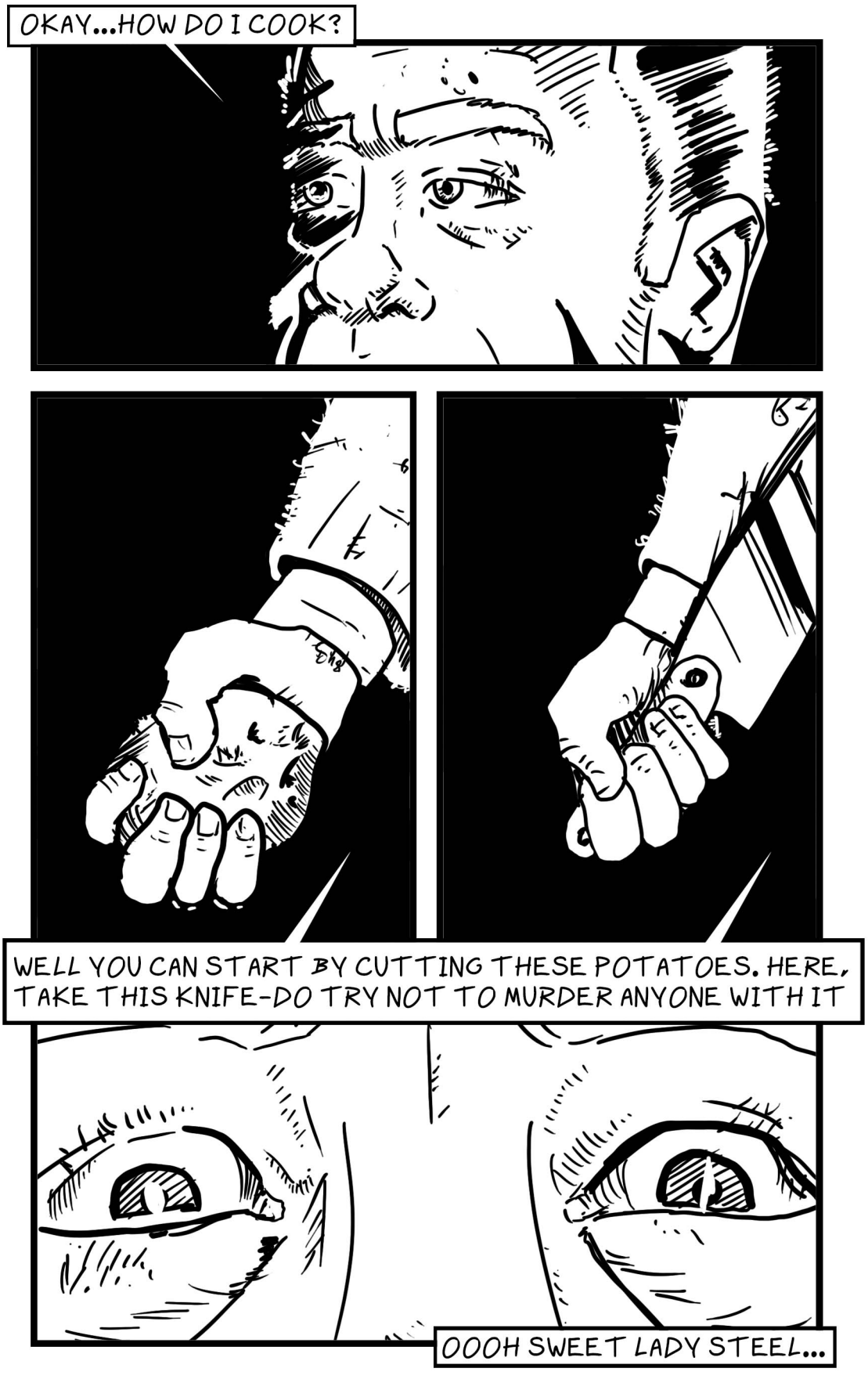


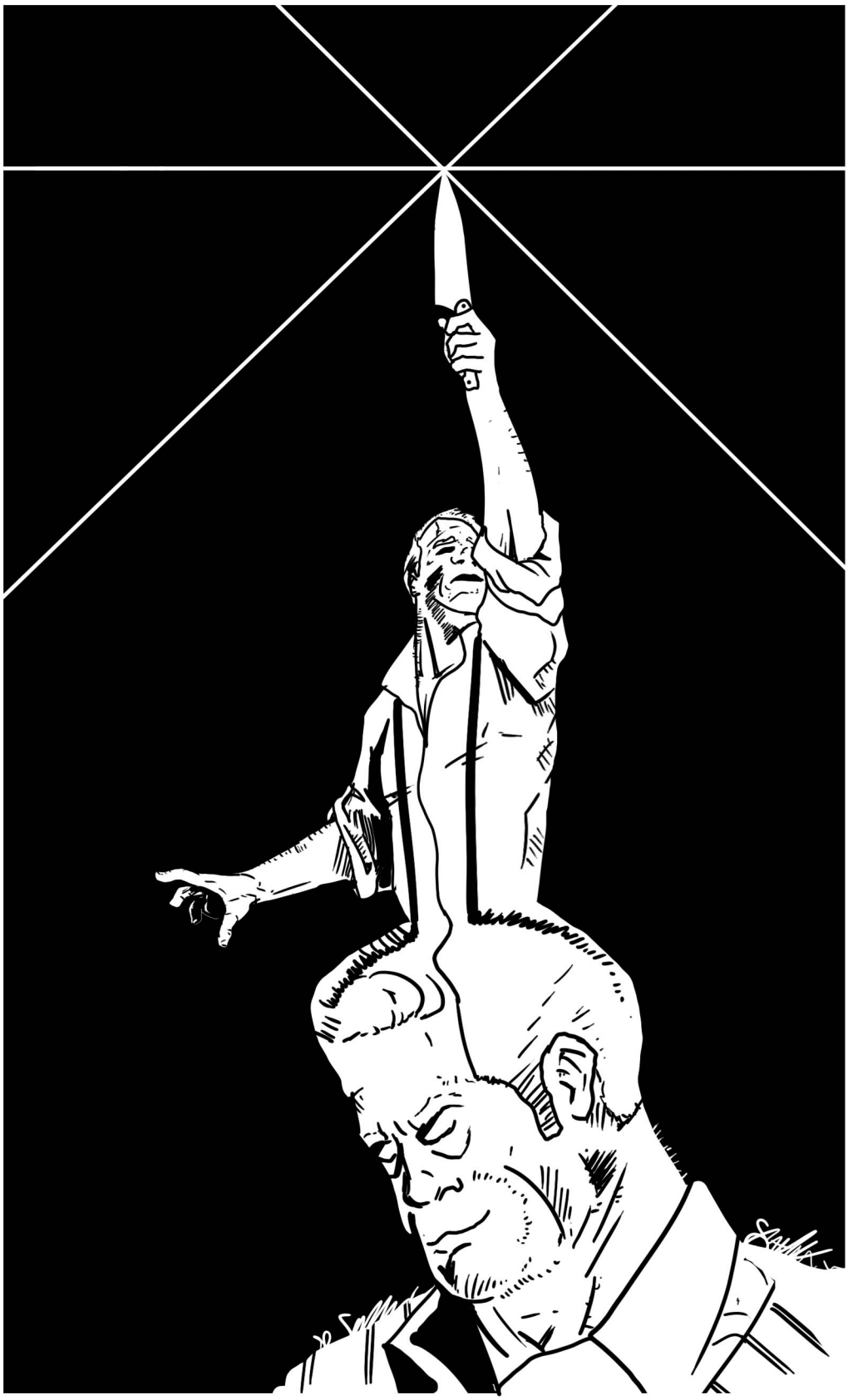
I'M 'OBSESSED' WITH STORIES BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING NEW ANYMORE, THE WORLD IS A SCARY PLACE AND SOMETIMES THERE IS NO ANSWER. I DON'T KNOW WHY MY MA LEFT, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOUR HORSE DIED AND I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU CAN'T LOOK FORWARD TO THINGS.

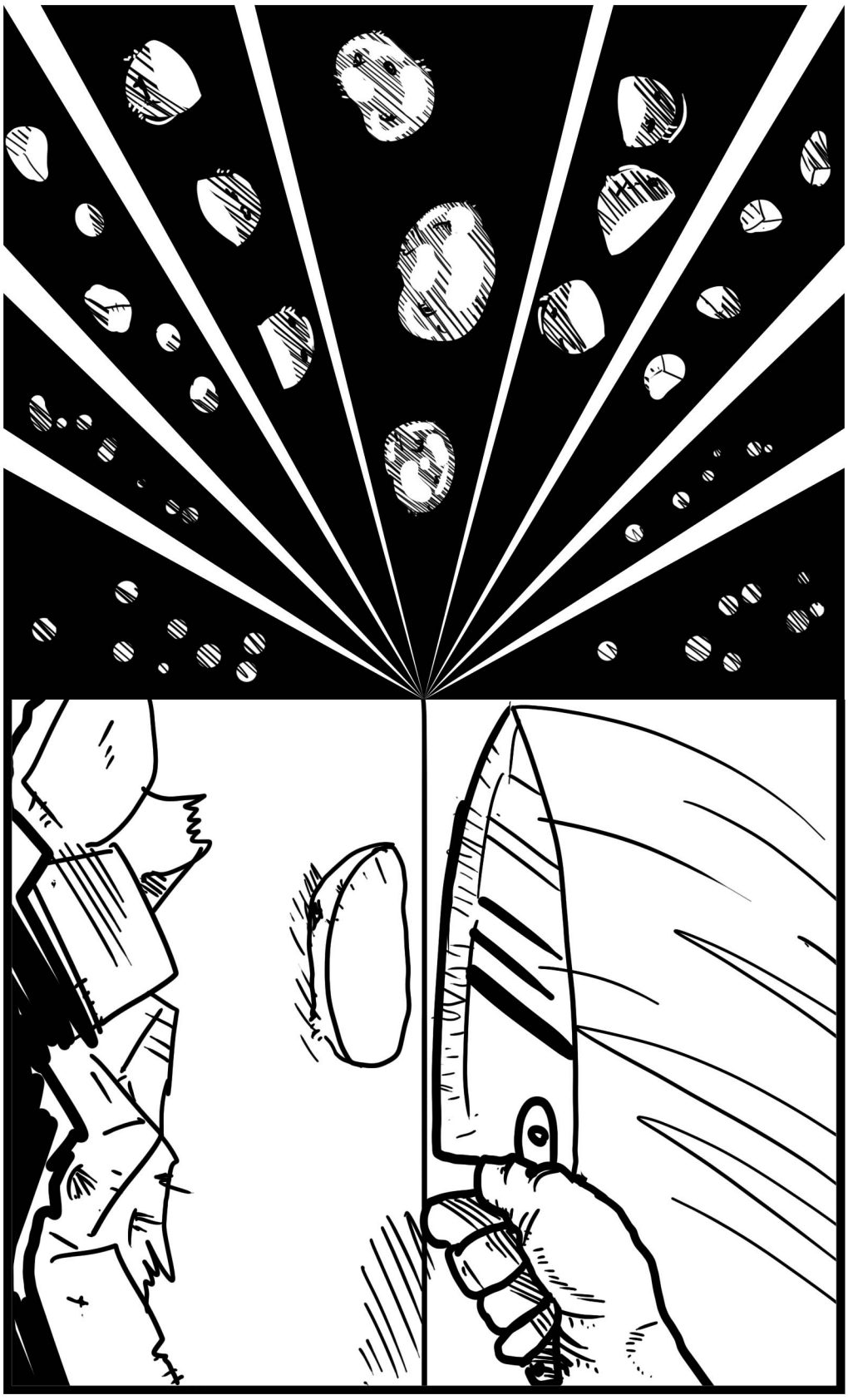

STORIES ARE REAL LIFE. THEY ARE EVENTS THAT JUST HAVEN'T HAPPENED YET. THERE IS NOTHING NEW AND NOTHING OLD. YOU AREN'T SPECIAL...
BUT YOU CAN BE
YOUR FINAL CLEAN HANDS LOOK GOOD PRAYER IS A STORY AS MUCH AS ANYTHING ELSE. PAGE, YOUR HANDS ARE COVERED IN BLOOD. DO YOU WANT TO TELL ME THAT THIS ISN'T REAL?


-SORRY, I GET DEFENSIVE AROUND TOMMY
THANK YOU CIARA
SHUT UP AND EAT YOUR BEANS TOMMY!
I'M ALL OUT
GO GET US SOME BEANS, PAGE, AND MAKE SURE YOU COME BACK WITH A STORY-YOU NEVER KNOW, IT MIGHT EVEN HELP YOU.


THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
BETTER MAKE SOME MORE THEN, SOLDIER.

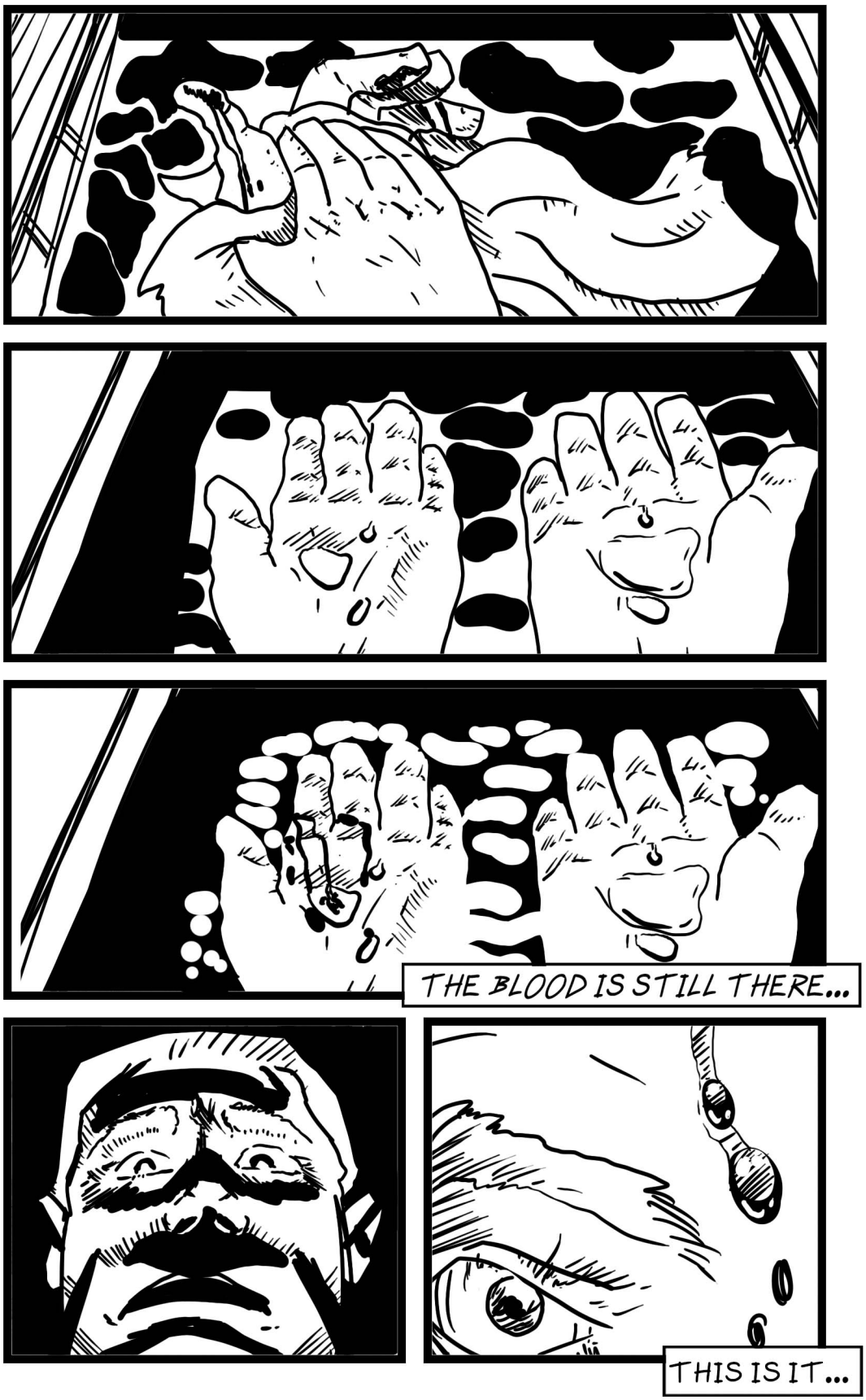

OKAY...HOW DO I COOK?
WELL YOU CAN START BY CUTTING THESE POTATOES. HERE, TAKE THIS KNIFE-DO TRY NOT TO MURDER ANYONE WITH IT
OOOH SWEET LADY STEEL...



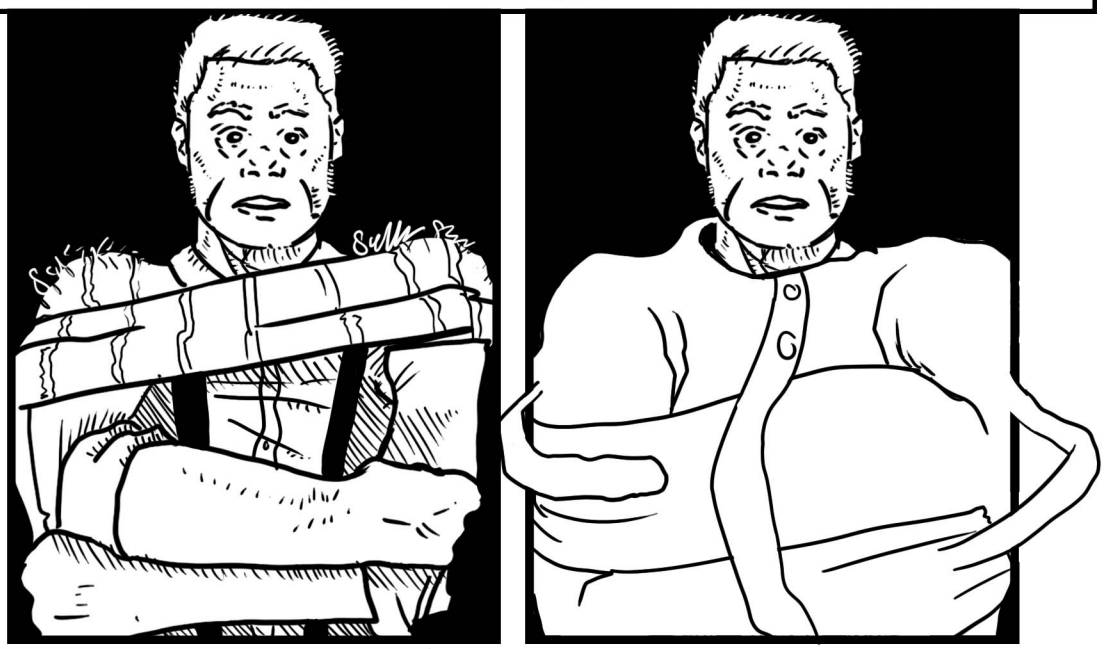



WOW, YOU'RE DONE? THAT WAS FAST
OH, YOU MISSED ONE
MAYBE WE'VE FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING YOU'RE GOOD AT
CHOP CHOP CRUNCH

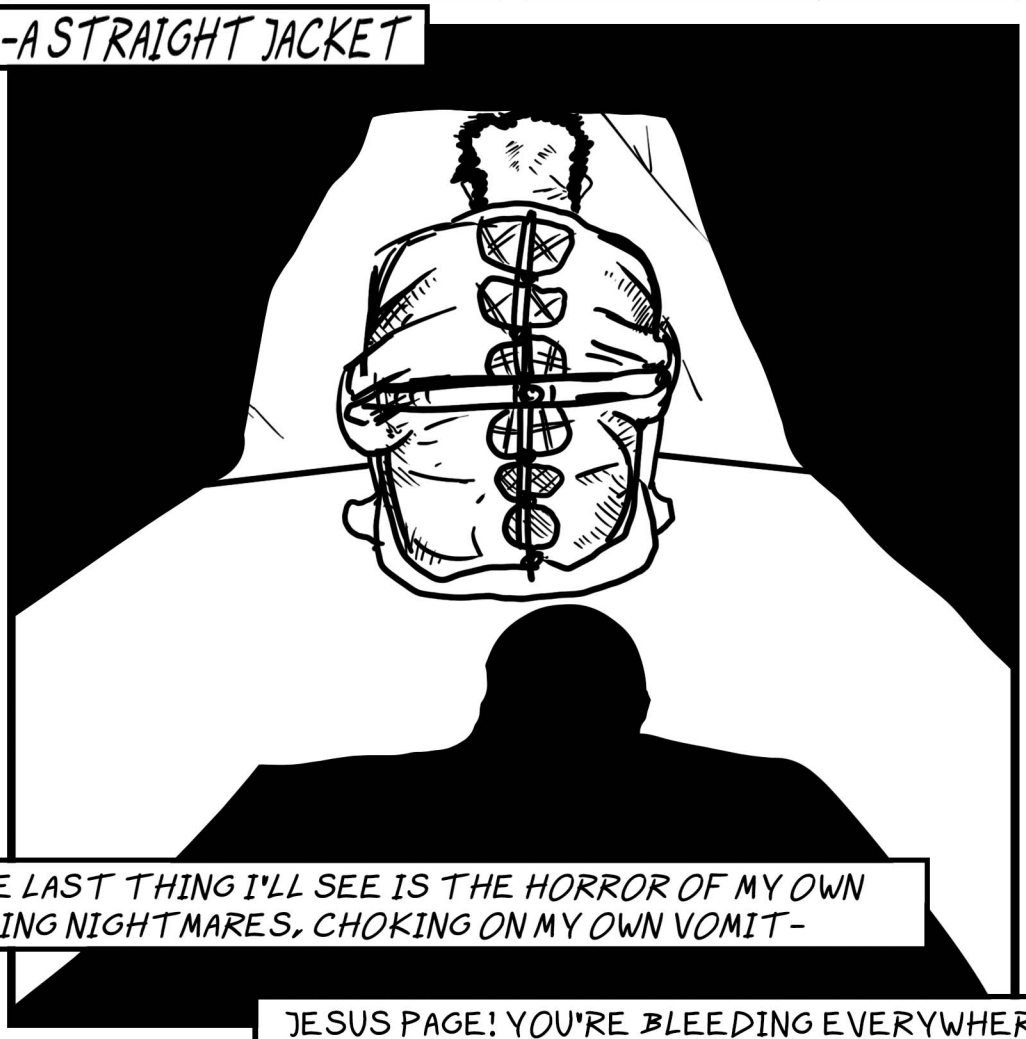

THAT'S STRANGE-THERE'S STILL BLOOD ON MY HANDS...I MUST NOT HAVE WASHED THEM PROPERLY...
IT'S STILL THERE...
WHY IS THERE STILL BLOOD ON MY HANDS!?


THE BLOOD IS STILL THERE...
THIS IS IT...

THIS LIFE I'VE BEEN LIVING HAS FINALLY DRIVEN ME MAD, MY FINAL JOB WILL HAVE A UNIFORM..WITH MY OWN JACKET...



-A STRAIGHT JACKET



THE LAST THING I'LL SEE IS THE HORROR OF MY OWN WAKING NIGHTMARES, CHOKING ON MY OWN VOMIT-

JESUS PAGE! YOU'RE BLEEDING EVERYWHERE!


I'M BLEEDING?
OBVIOUSLY, YOU'VE NEVER BEEN CUT BEFORE

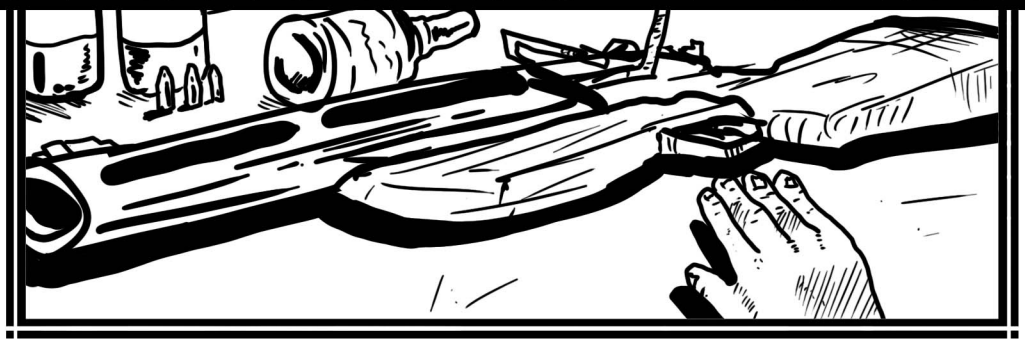

-OH, WELL I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO SEW IT UP-CONSIDER IT LESSON ONE OF SAWBONES CLASS
CAN YOU NOT CALL IT...THAT?


THERE, NOT SO HARD-IT'S ALL ABOUT A STEADY HAND- I'VE SEEN YOU SHOOT-SO I KNOW YOU HAVE IT IN YOU.
YOU WON'T DIE
-AND THAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL HERE




OKAY...I THINK I MIGHT HAVE A STORY
IT ISN'T ABOUT DEATH-DON'T WORRY
SO ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A LITTLE KID...

ONE DAY HE PICKED UP A POTATO AND BECAME A POTATO FARMER



SOON HE WAS FARMING POTATOES IN HIS BACK YARD
THAT WERE BIGGER THAN ANYBODY EXPECTED





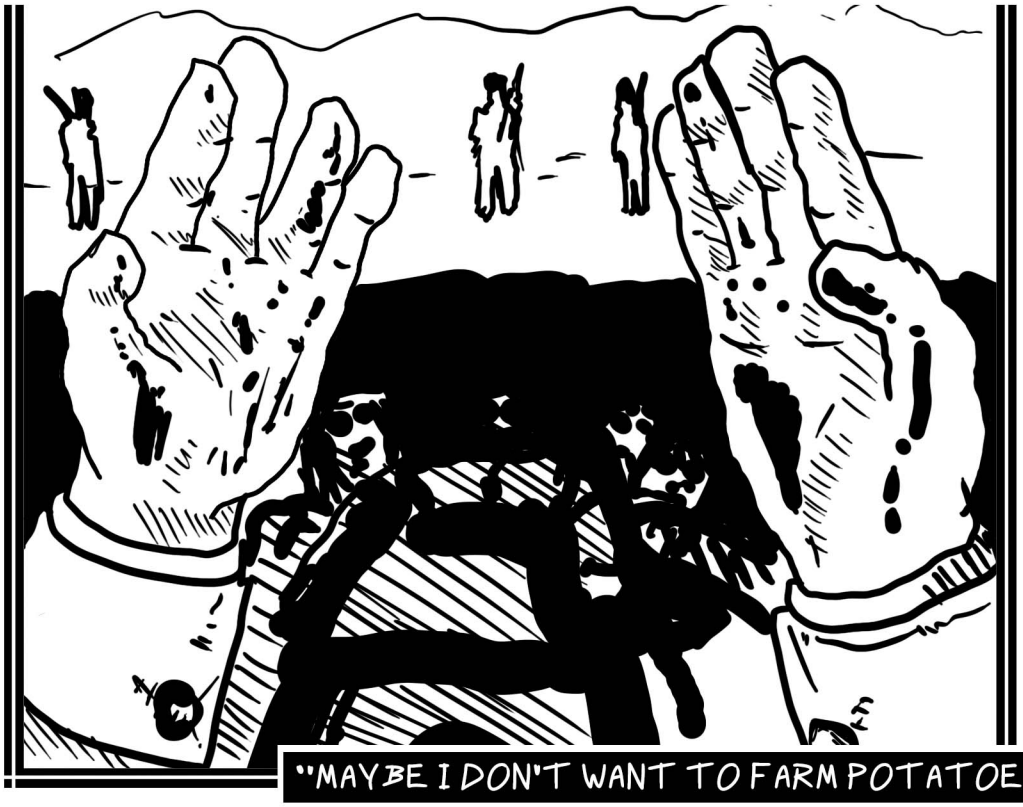


THEN HIS PARENTS FOUND OUT, BUT THEY
WEREN'T UPSET-THEY SAW THE POTENTIAL...

-THEY SENT HIM AROUND THE WORLD WITH PROFESSIONAL FARMERS, MAKING BIGGER AND BIGGER POTATOES



ONE DAY HE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS HANDS AND THE MUD AND POTATO-BLOOD THAT COVERED THEM AND HE HAD A THOUGHT:

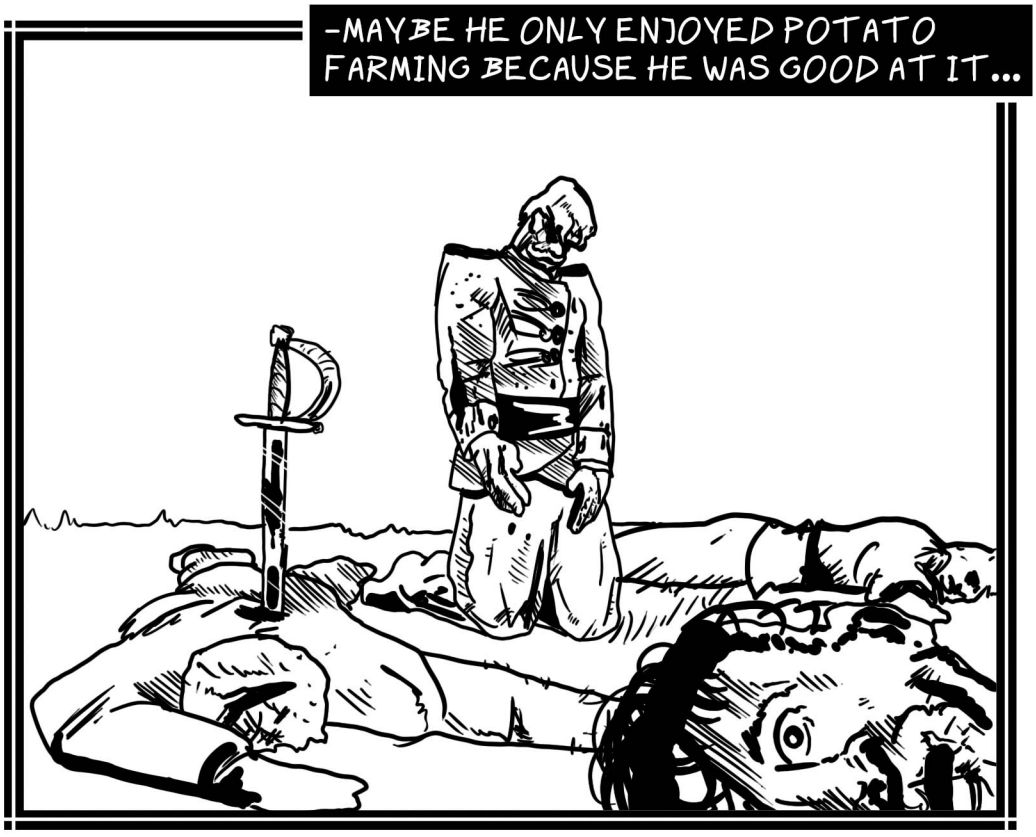


"MAYBE I DON'T WANT TO FARM POTATOES"

-MAYBE HIS PARENTS THOUGHT THEY COULD LIVE OFF HIS POTATO FARMING, LIVING RICH OFF HIS POTATO MONEY...



-MAYBE HE ONLY ENJOYED POTATO FARMING BECAUSE HE WAS GOOD AT IT...




HOWEVER, HE SOON FOUND A KNIGHT AND A PRINCESS...
-HOW ABOUT A DRAGON? DRAGON'S ARE MORE COMPELLING-THERE'S MORE DRAMATIC TENSION...
OKAY-A KNIGHT AND HIS DRAGON

THE KNIGHT AND THE DRAGON TAUGHT HIM THAT HE COULD DO A LOT MORE THAN FARM POTATOES. HE COULD CUT THEM, BAKE THEM, AND SEW THEM BACK TOGETHER WITH NEEDLES



THIS MADE THE POTATO FARMER HAPPY AS HE BECAME MORE THAN HIS JOB, AND HIS NAME WASN'T POTATO FARMER, IT WAS...



IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HIS NAME WAS-AND ALSO HE LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.



THAT'S THE STORY.


IT WAS GOOD - MAYBE YOU CAN TELL A GOOD STORY.
WHAT DO YOU THINK TOMMY?



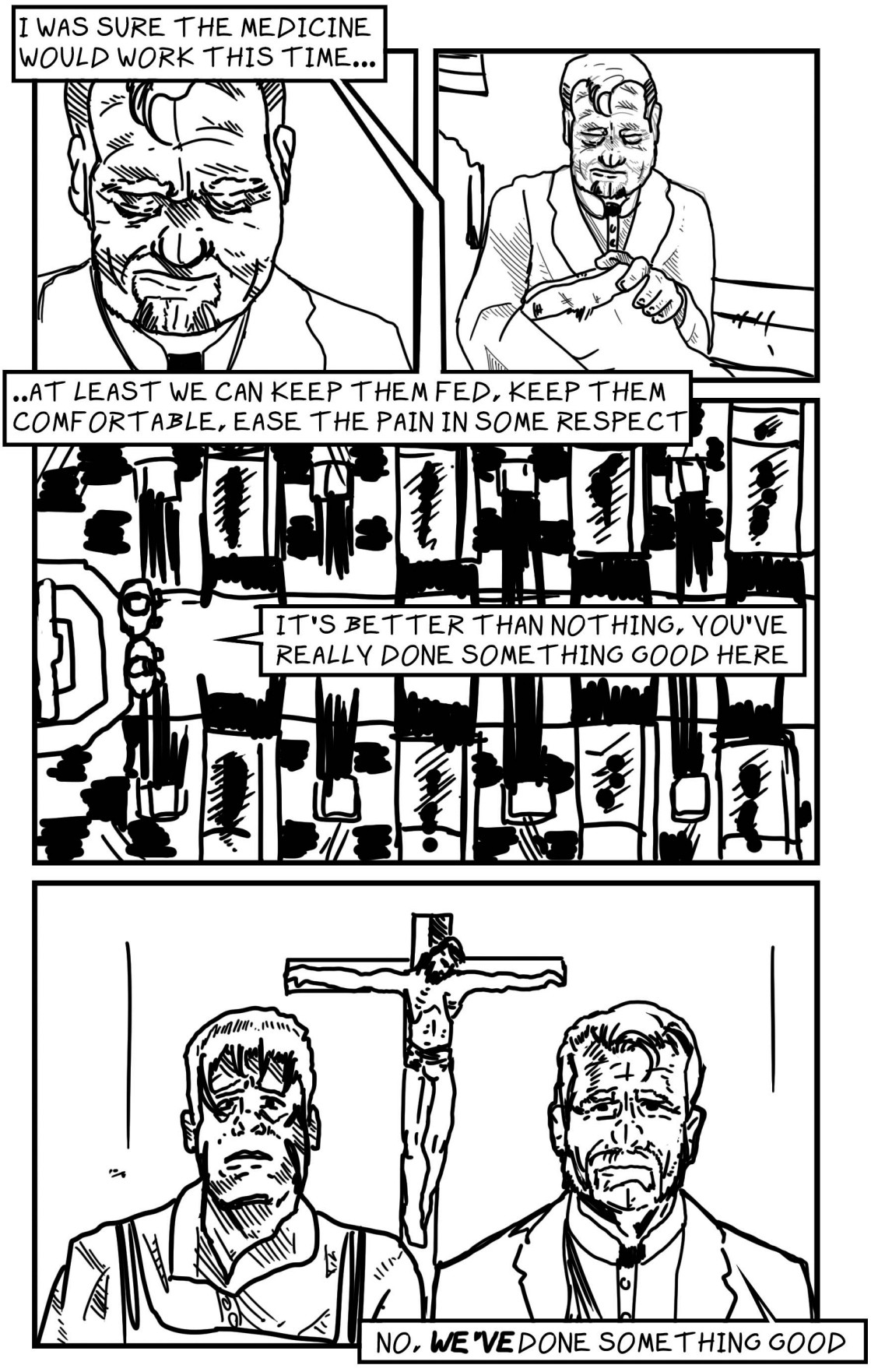

THOUGH I FACE MY FINAL TEST...
FOLLOW THE BEATING IN MY CHEST...


CLEAN MY HANDS AND LOOK MY BEST...
BEFORE I'M LAID TO REST...


GETTING SOME MORE FOOD FOR THE LAD?


YEAH
I BROUGHT YOU HERE TO LEARN AND HEAL AND ALL YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO IS KEEP THEM FED
IT HURTS
-WANTING TO HELP AND NOT KNOWING HOW


IT HURTS SEEING THIS PLACE SO EMPTY


I WAS SURE THE MEDICINE WOULD WORK THIS TIME...
..AT LEAST WE CAN KEEP THEM FED, KEEP THEM COMFORTABLE, EASE THE PAIN IN SOME RESPECT
IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING, YOU'VE REALLY DONE SOMETHING GOOD HERE
NO, WE'VE DONE SOMETHING GOOD


CAN I SEE THAT MEDICINE? I NEED TO DOSE THIS FOOD
-IT'S JUST ON THE SIDE
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
YOU'VE BEEN HERE FOUR WEEKS AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MEDICINE LOOKS LIKE? MAYBE I HAVEN'T DONE MY JOB PROPERLY
-IT'S ON THE SHELF-BLUE LABEL


HYDROPOLY-
ILROYNOXIDE
12fl.oz.
1878.1


WHAT WILL I DO?
WHAT WILL I DO?

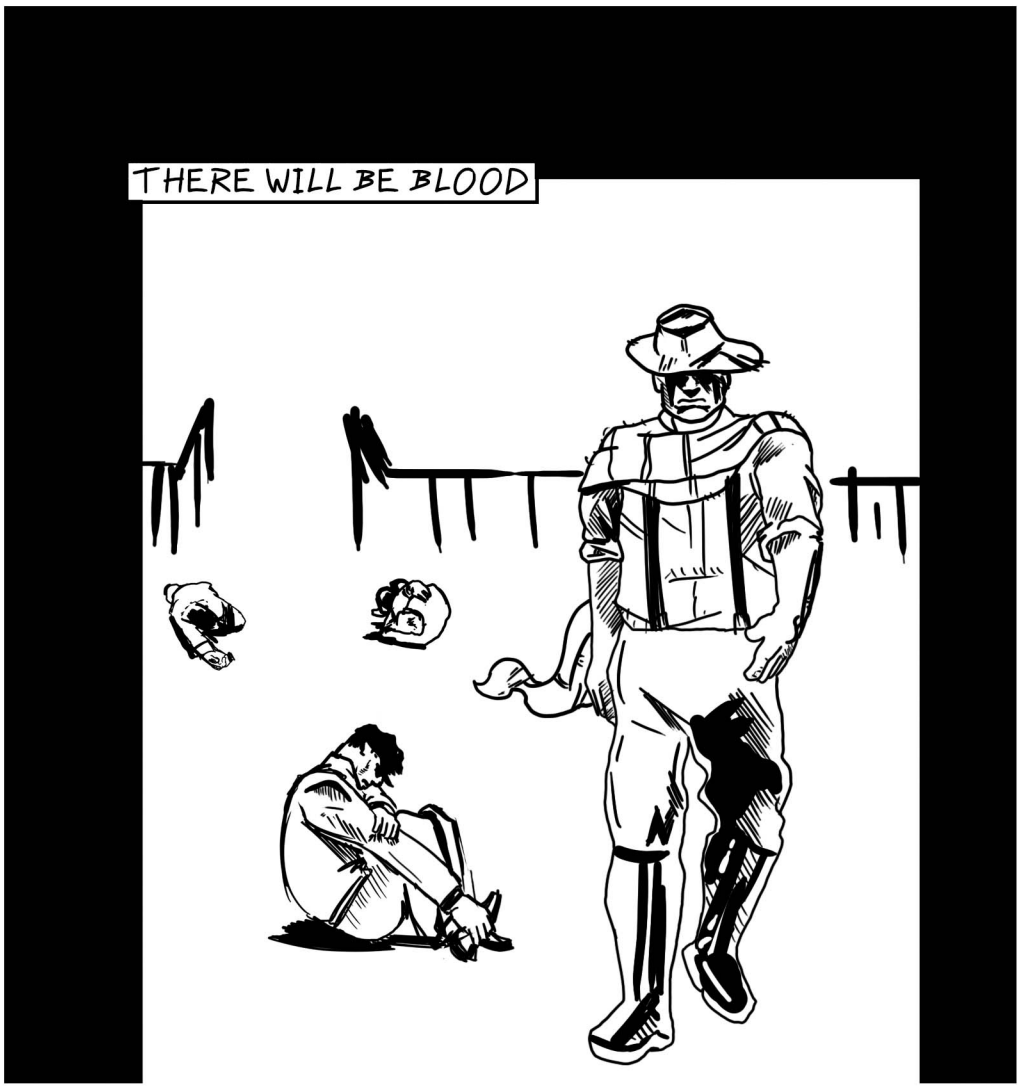

I'LL DO WHAT I PROMISED NOT TO...
I WILL GO BACK


I WON'T NEED WEAPONS,
I'LL BORROW ONE OF THEIRS
KRAA!
-AND TRADE IT FOR A BULLET IN THE SHOULDER.

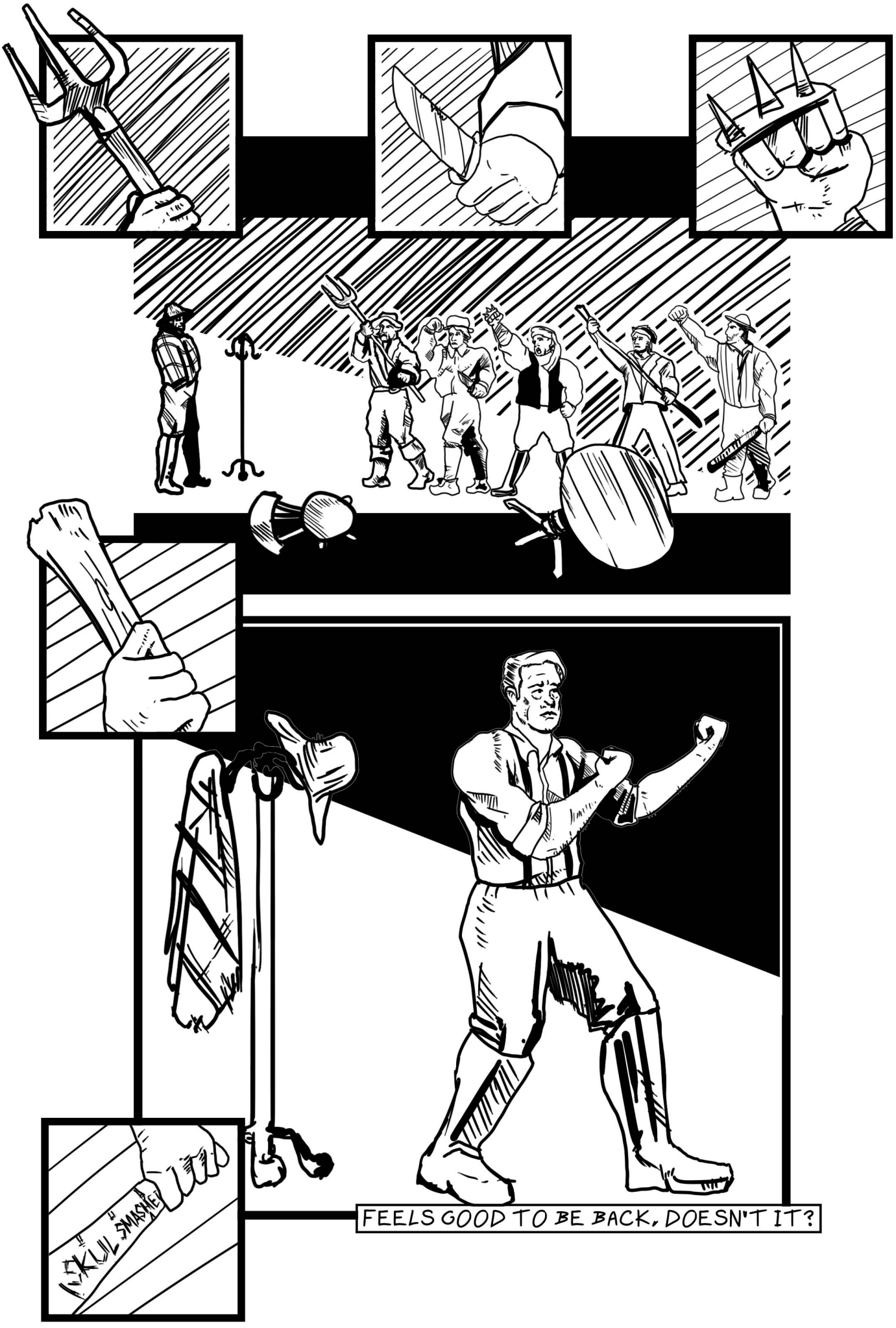

THERE COULD BE SOME 'ACCIDENTS'
COULD BE THEY'RE STANDING TOO CLOSE...
AND GUNS ARE...
LOUD.


...I SAID 'BORROW' THE GUN


..I'LL GIVE IT BACK
BLAM!
ANOTHER 'ACCIDENT'...
ARGH!


THERE WILL BE BLOOD


IT WILL BE JUSTIFIED.


SKULL SMASHER
FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK, DOESN'T IT?


WHHP!
FUGH


THUD!

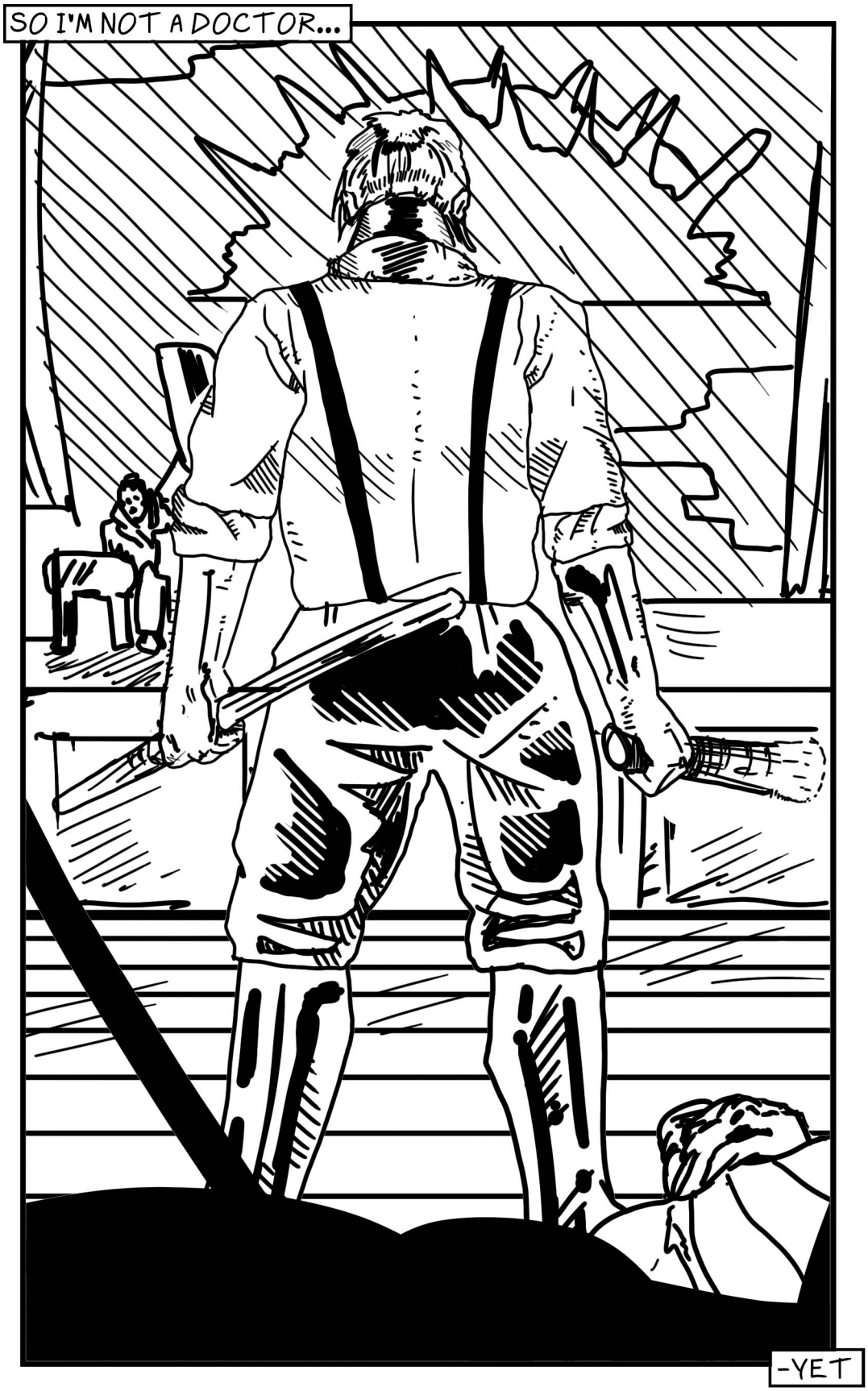

SWOOSH
UFG!

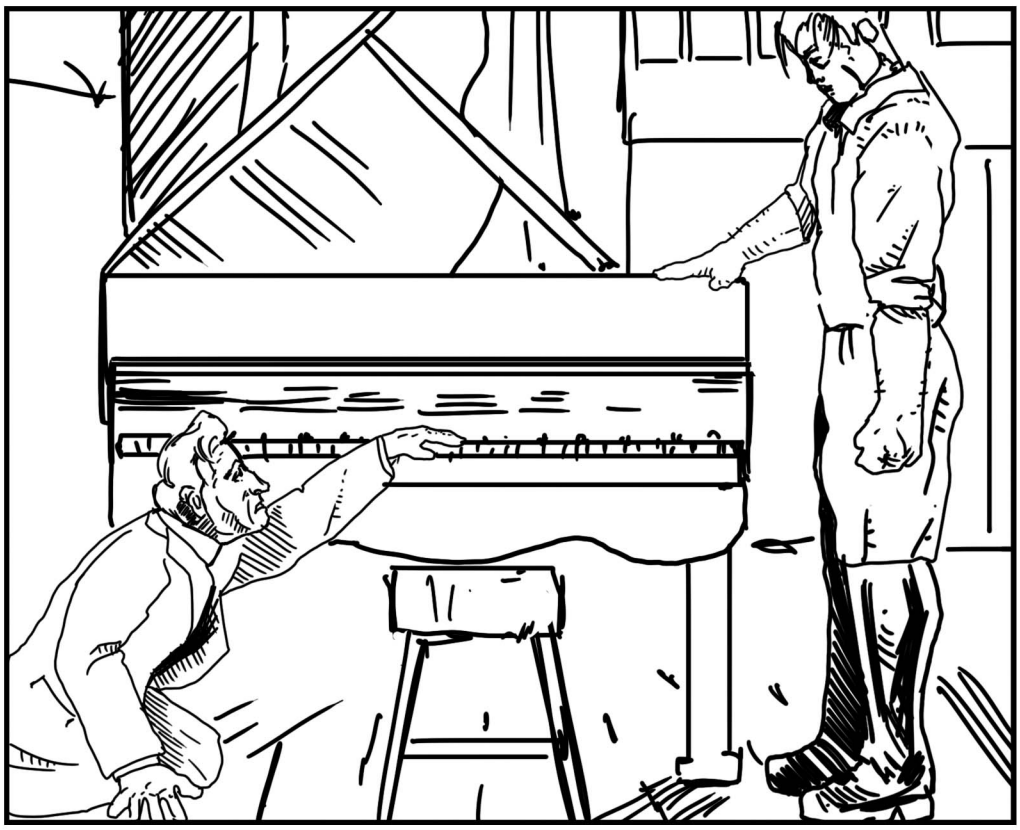

CRCK!


TUGH!


CRCK!
HUGHH!


FRACTURED CHEEKBONE, POSSIBLE BLINDNESS...
DISLOCATED WRIST-MAYBE ARM?
CONCUSSION, NOSEBLEED AS AN EXTRA?-FOR USING A BLADE?
THIS GUY ONLY HAS MINOR BRUISES, PLAYING DEAD-MUST HAVE SEEN THE LAST GUY GO DOWN
CONCUSSION, SKULL FRACTURE
-NOT DEAD
NONE OF THEM ARE-YET.


SO I'M NOT A DOCTOR...
-YET




REMEMBER THIS?
ILROXIDE
1%


IER...WHAT?
OH YEAH, THAT-WHAT'S WRONG? DID IT NOT WORK? IS IT EXPIRED?
IT WORKED JUST WELL ENOUGH...FOR POISON


THAT'S GREAT TO HEAR, IF YOU'D LIKE TO RELEASE MY FINGERS THEN I CAN MAKE YOU SOME MORE-IF THEY EVEN WORK ANYMORE!
I DON'T WANT MORE, I WANNA KNOW WHY YOU SOLD THE OLD MAN POISON...
WELL YOU SEE I'M NOT A GIN SALESMAN; WHEN A MAN ORDERS POISON FROM ME HE GETS THE BEST...OOOOOOO ICAN'T FEEL MY FINGERS

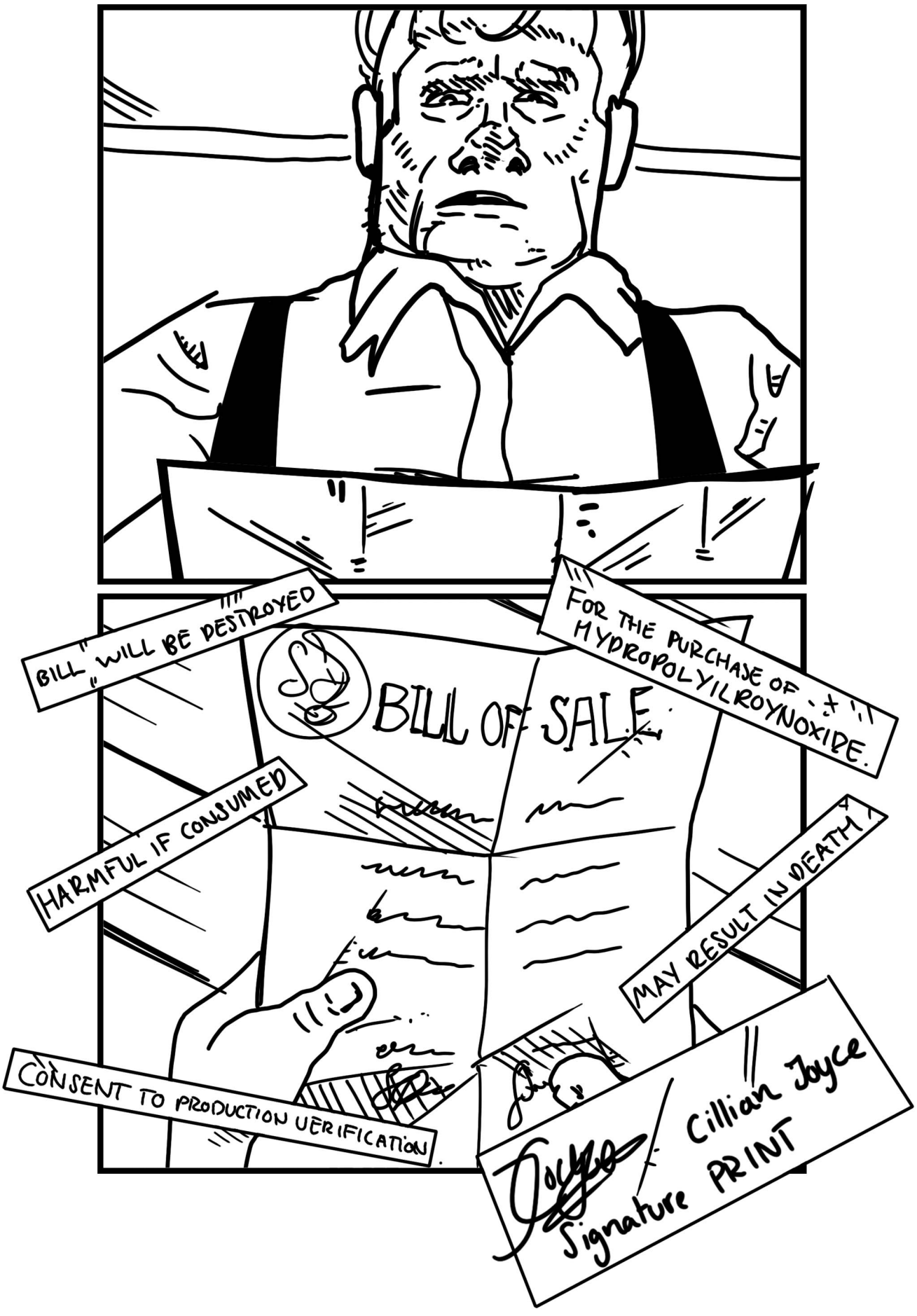

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'M SAYING HE ASKED FOR POISON SO I GAVE IT TO HIM... CAN YOU PLEASE LET MY FINGERS GO!?
HIT ME WITH A PITCHFORK OR SMACK ME IN THE FACE, I REALLY NEED MY FINGERS, THEY'RE GETTING DANGEROUSLY COLD!
LIE TO ME AND I'LL FREE YOU WITH THIS KNIFE
I'M NOT LYING-SEE THIS GUY HAS SOME STRANGE BELIEFS, I HEARD FROM SOME PEOPLE HE DROVE HIS WIFE MAD, AND NOW HE WANTS TO KILL SOME KIDS, BUT WHAT DO I CARE? I DON'T ASK QUESTIONS...

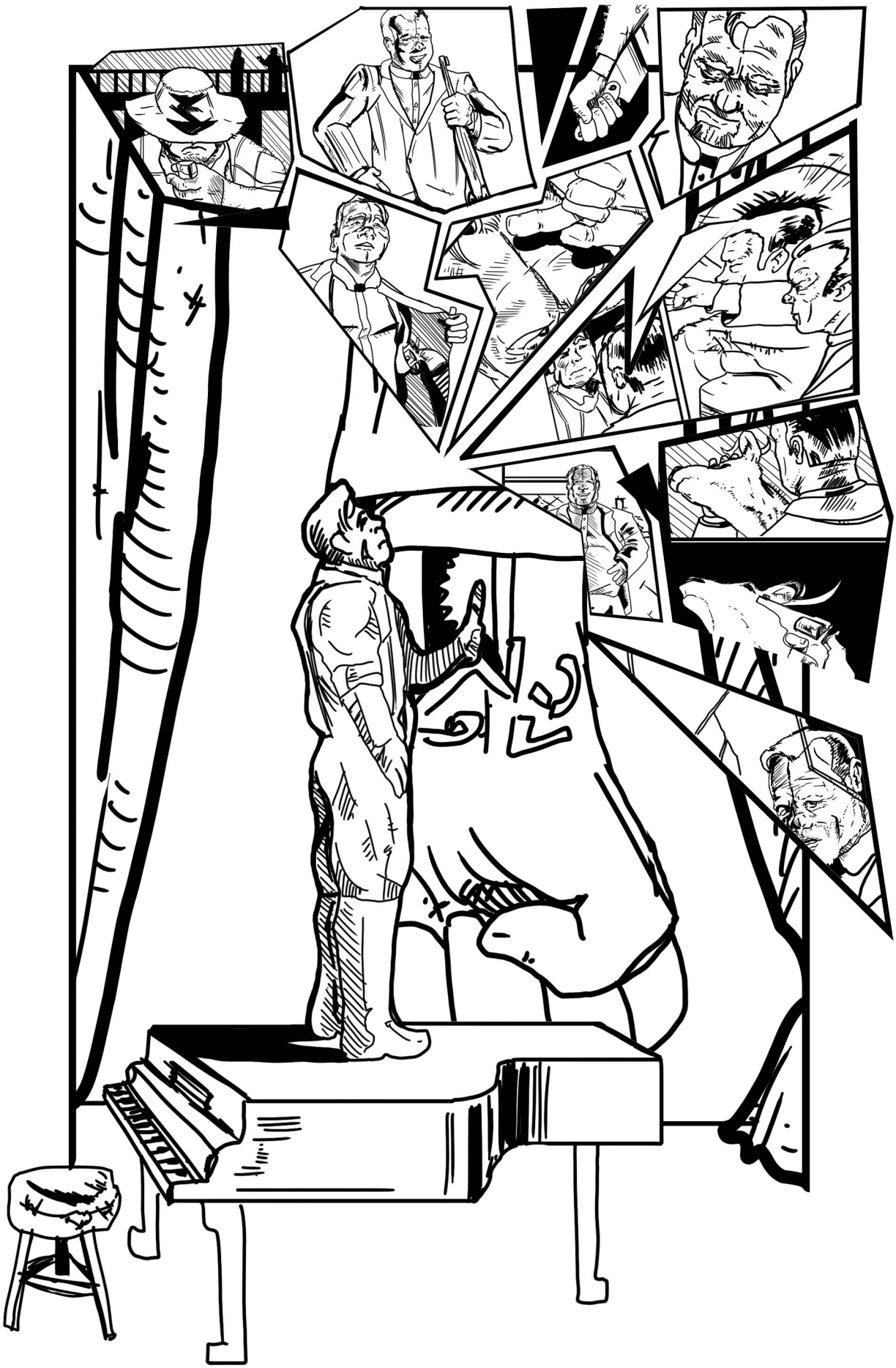
NO...NO, I TOLD YOU TO STOP

I HAVE A BILL OF SALE RIGHT HERE- I KNOW IT'S STRANGE BUT I LIKE TO KEEP RECORDS IN CASE I HAVE TO MAKE A DEAL...

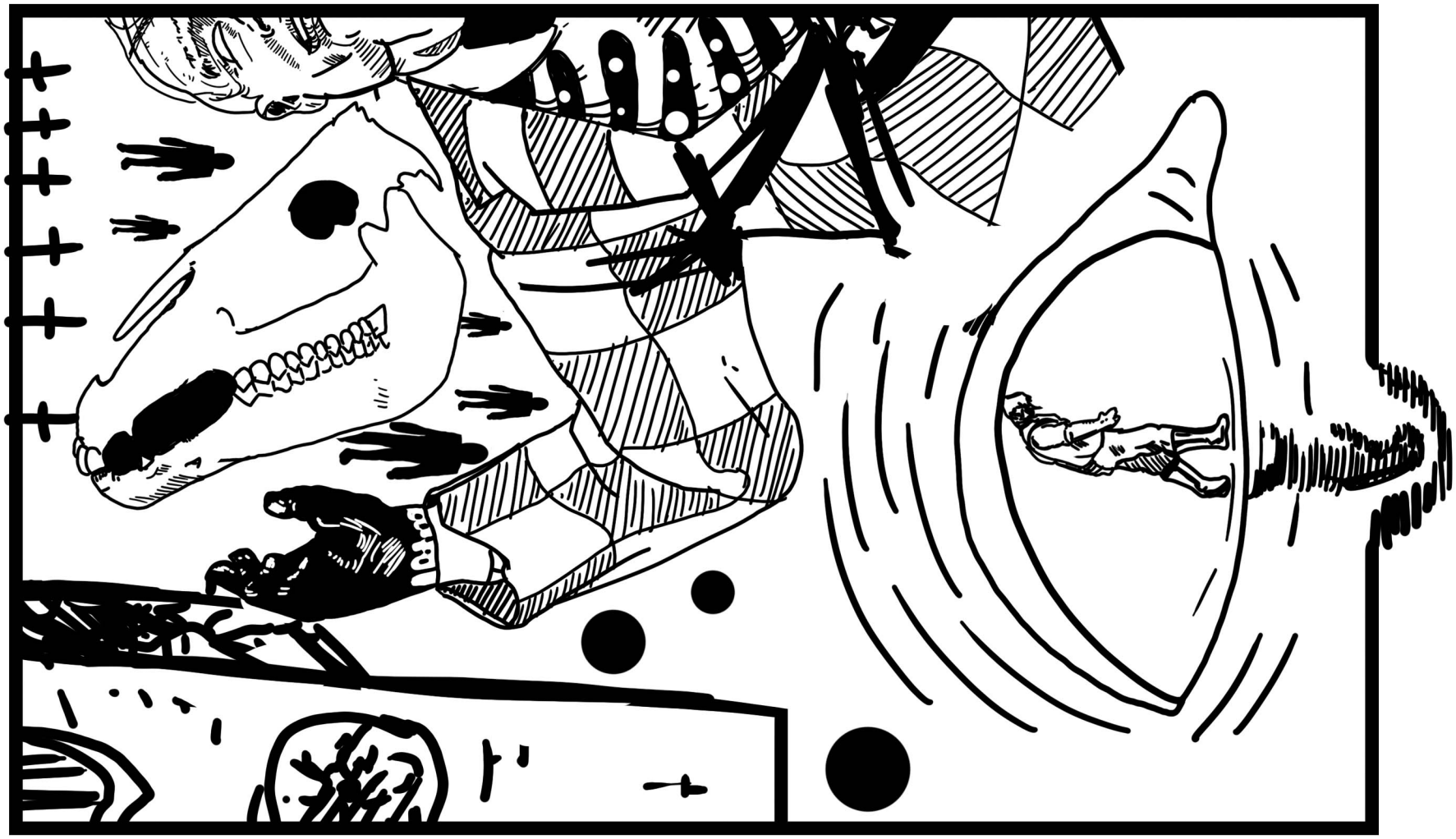




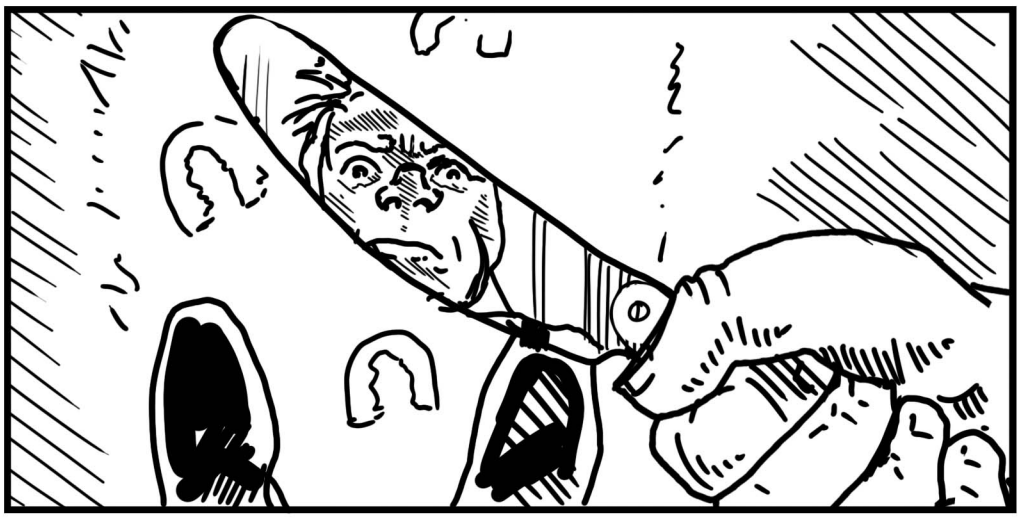

BILL WILL BE DESTROYED
FOR THE PURCHASE OF
HYDROPOLYILROYNOXIDE.
BILL OF SALE
HARMFUL IF CONSUMED
MAY RESULT IN DEATH
CONSENT TO PRODUCTION VERIFICATION
Cillian Joyce
Signature PRINT




DRINK
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
DRINKS

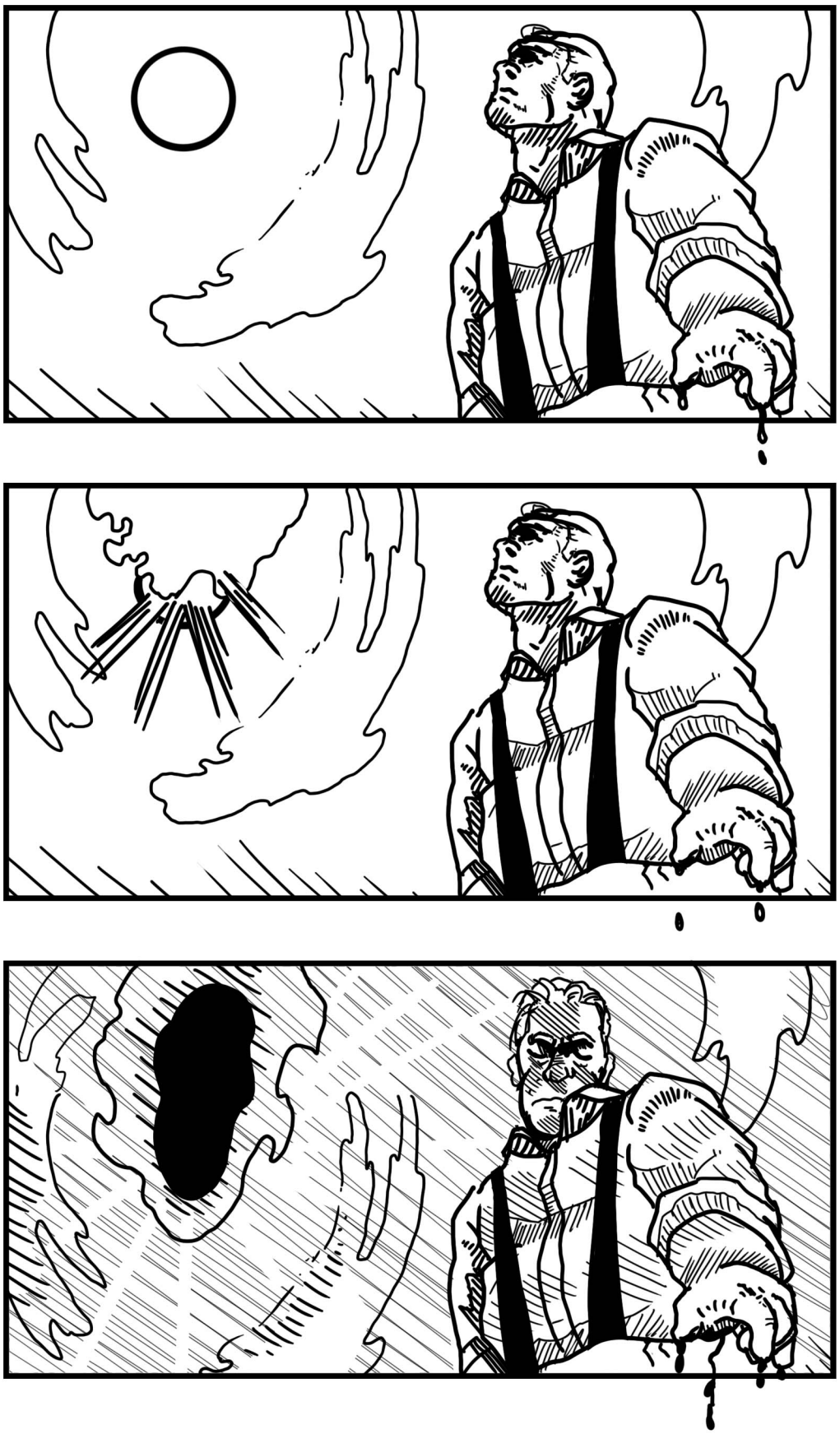


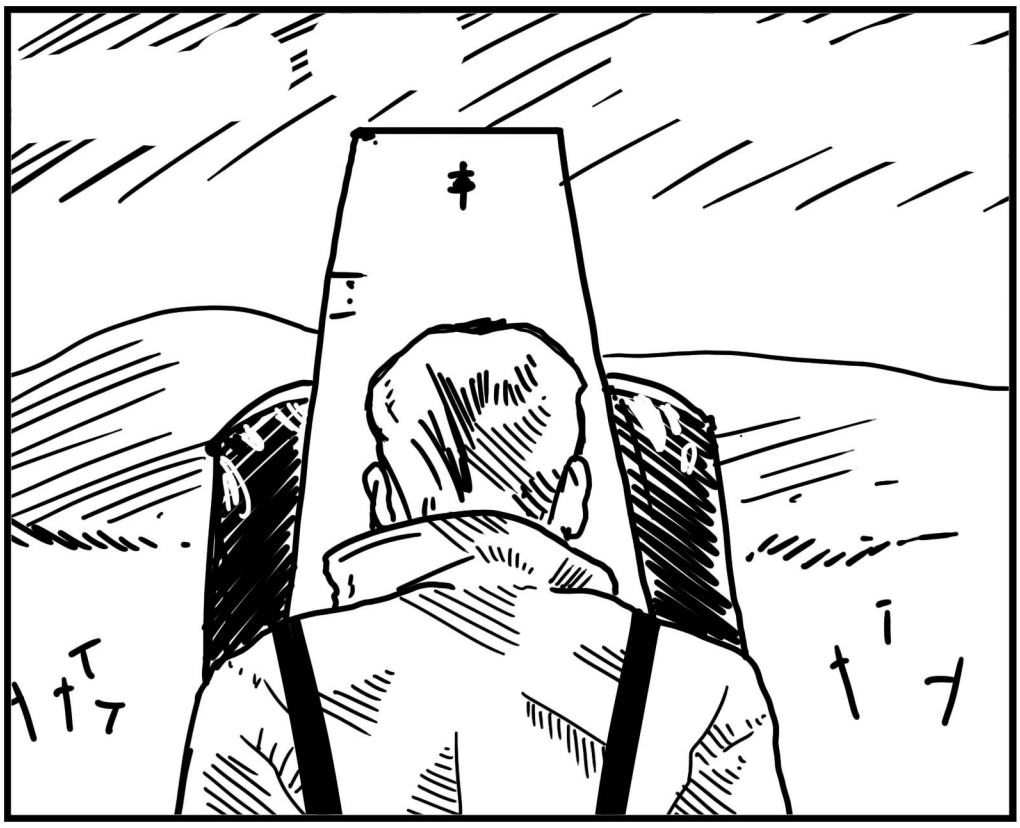


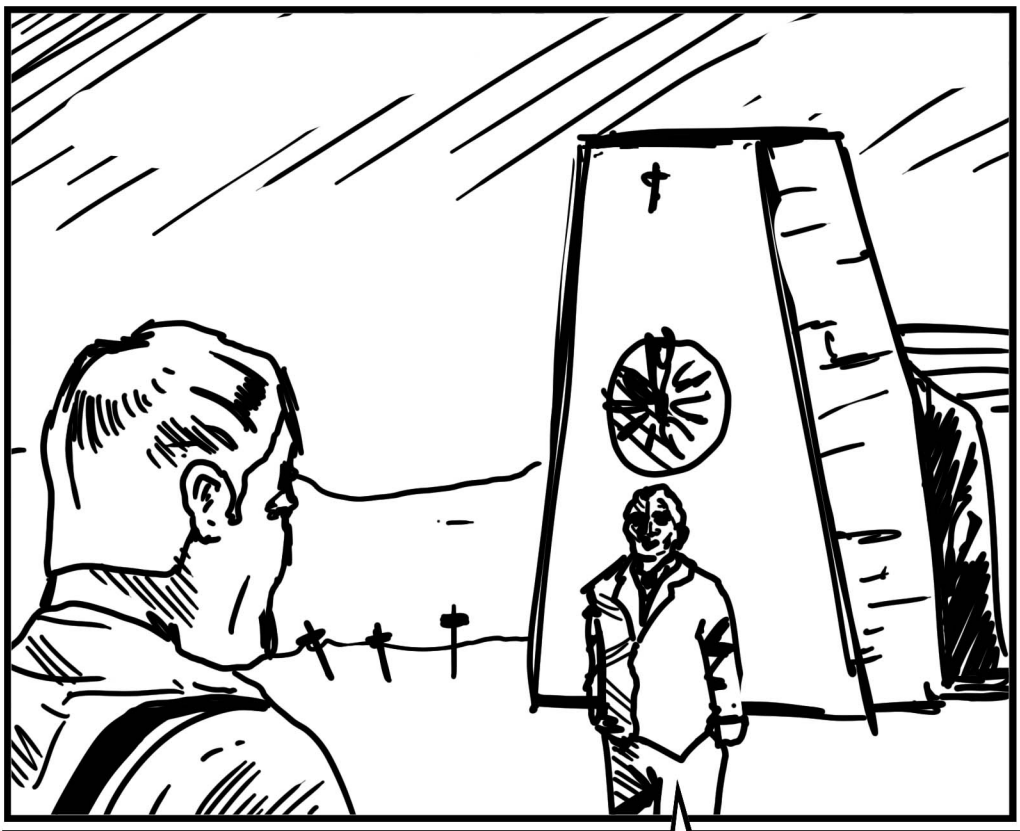












PAGE! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? CIARA'S SICK AND SHE NEEDS THAT MEDICINE...I NEED THAT MEDICINE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO...

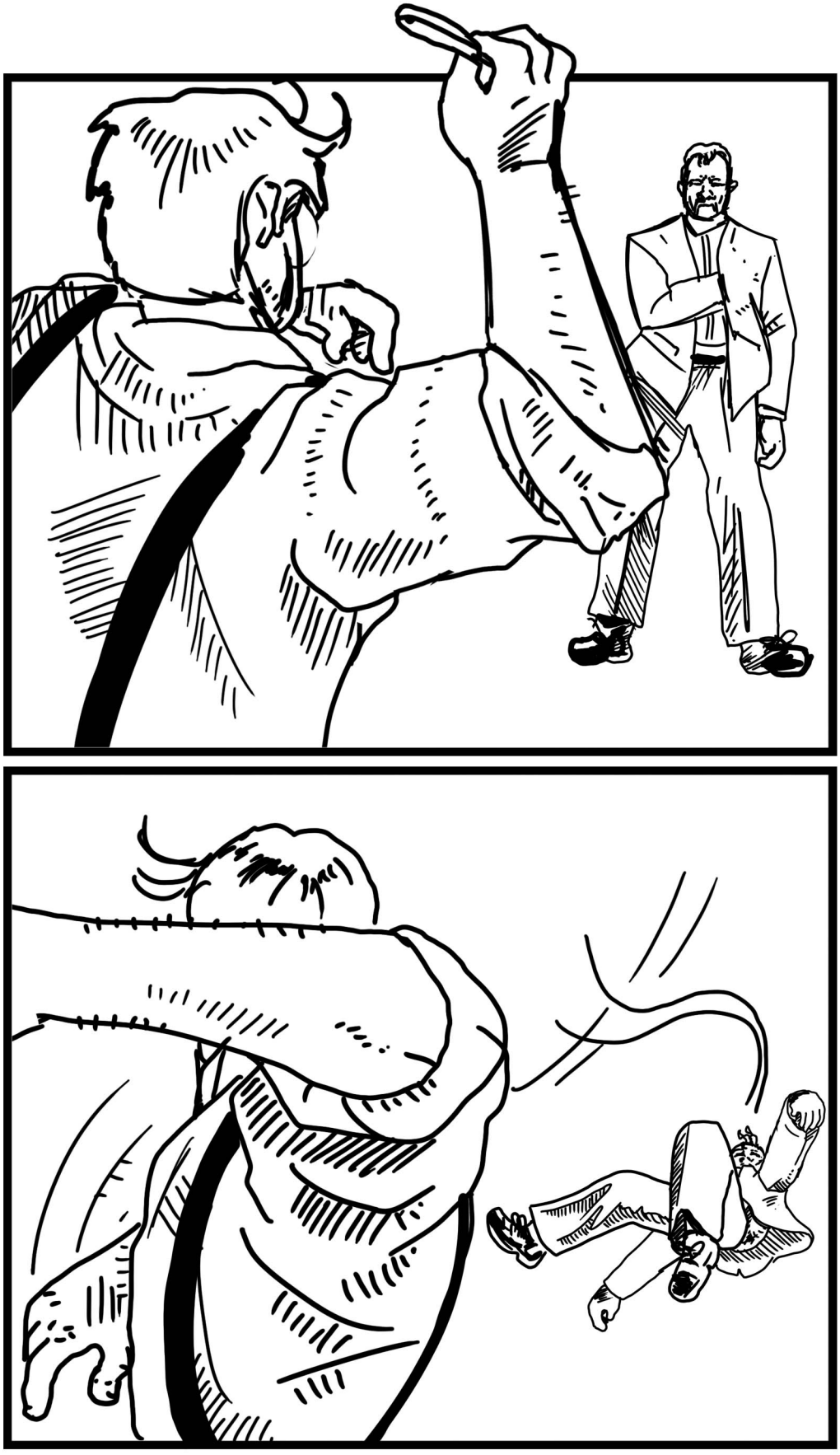

DO YOU HAVE YOUR GUN?
WHAT?
YOU'RE GOING TO WANT A GUN FOR THIS


AND WHY IS THAT, PAGE?
BECAUSE YOU TAUGHT ME TO HELP THE SICK
ONLY A SICK MAN WOULD POISON CHILDREN-PUNISHING THEM FOR HIS OWN MISTAKES


POISON? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT...
YOU'VE BETRAYED ME
I COULD SAY THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU.
BUT IF YOU WANT THE TRUTH...


-THE TRUTH IS THAT PART OF ME KNEW THIS WAS COMING, I KNEW THAT DEATH WAS TRAVELLING WITH ME, I JUST DIDN'T ANTICIPATE ITS FORM.
-I KNOW YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF CIARA FOR ME...
JUST TELL HER I DIDN'T LEAVE...





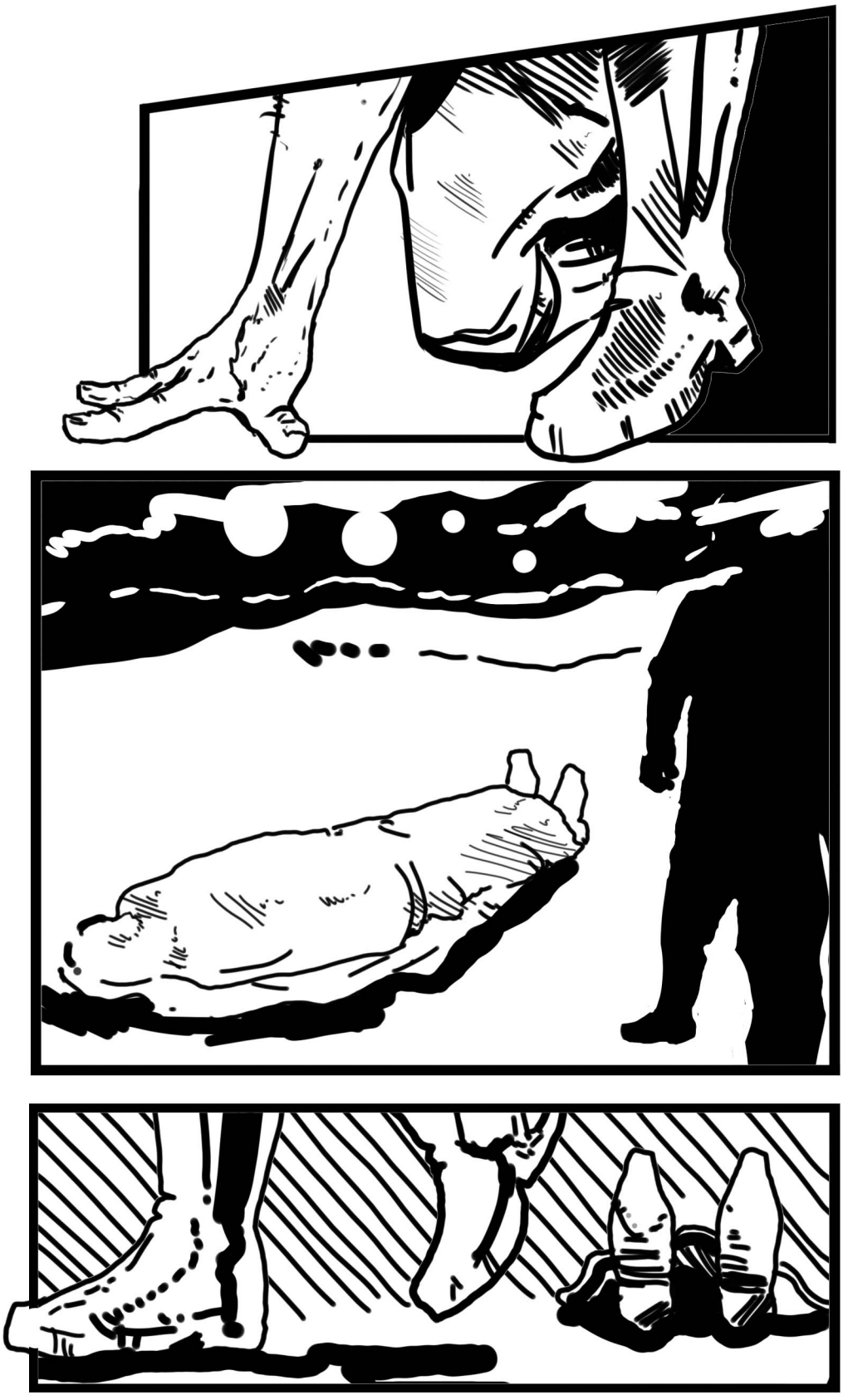














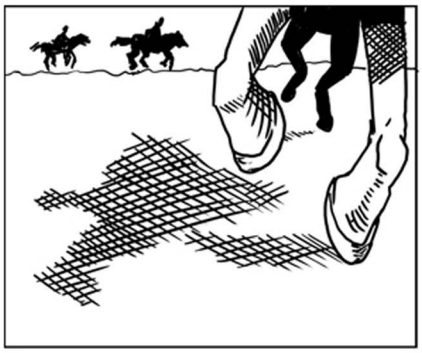




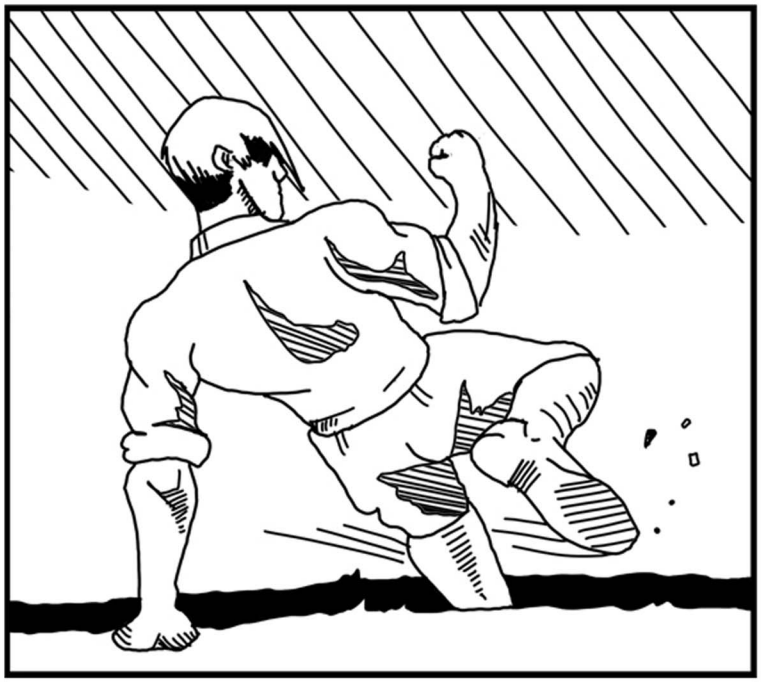





I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS!



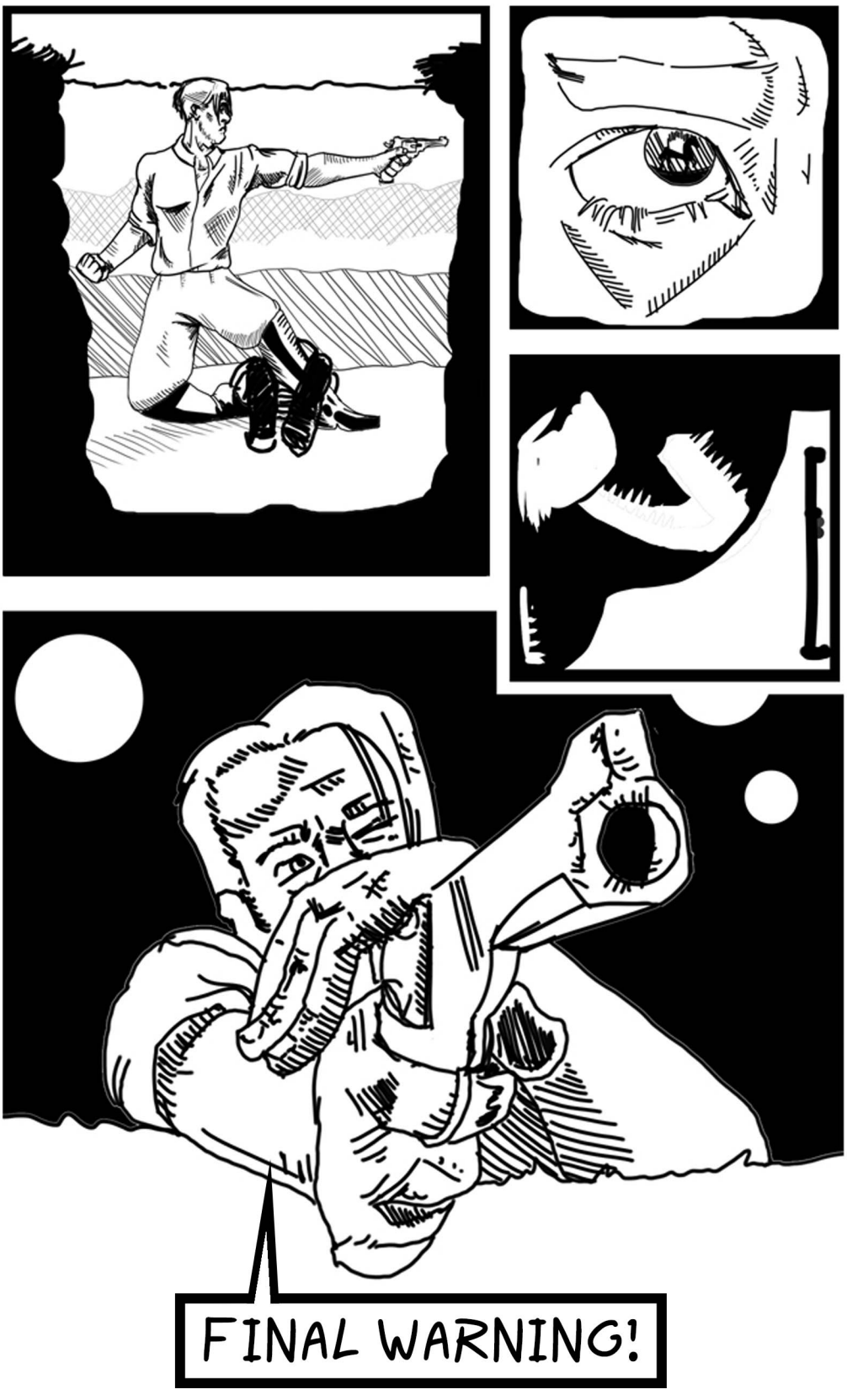









IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!


FINAL WARNING!


CLICK!
CLICK!
CLICK!
WHAT THE F-




I TOLD YOU YOU'D KILL FOR ME


HE'S MADE THE KILL, WE DON'T NEED HIM.
PLEASE LET ME KILL THIS MAN CHURCHY!
I'M AFRAID THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN AFFORD
-NEXT TIME DON'T LET HIM DISARM YOU


YOU WERE DIFFICULT TO BARGAIN WITH, PAGE
I THOUGHT A FORGED BILL WOULD BE OVERKILL
-BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE DONE THE JOB


HERE'S YOUR PAY
HE DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS POISON!?

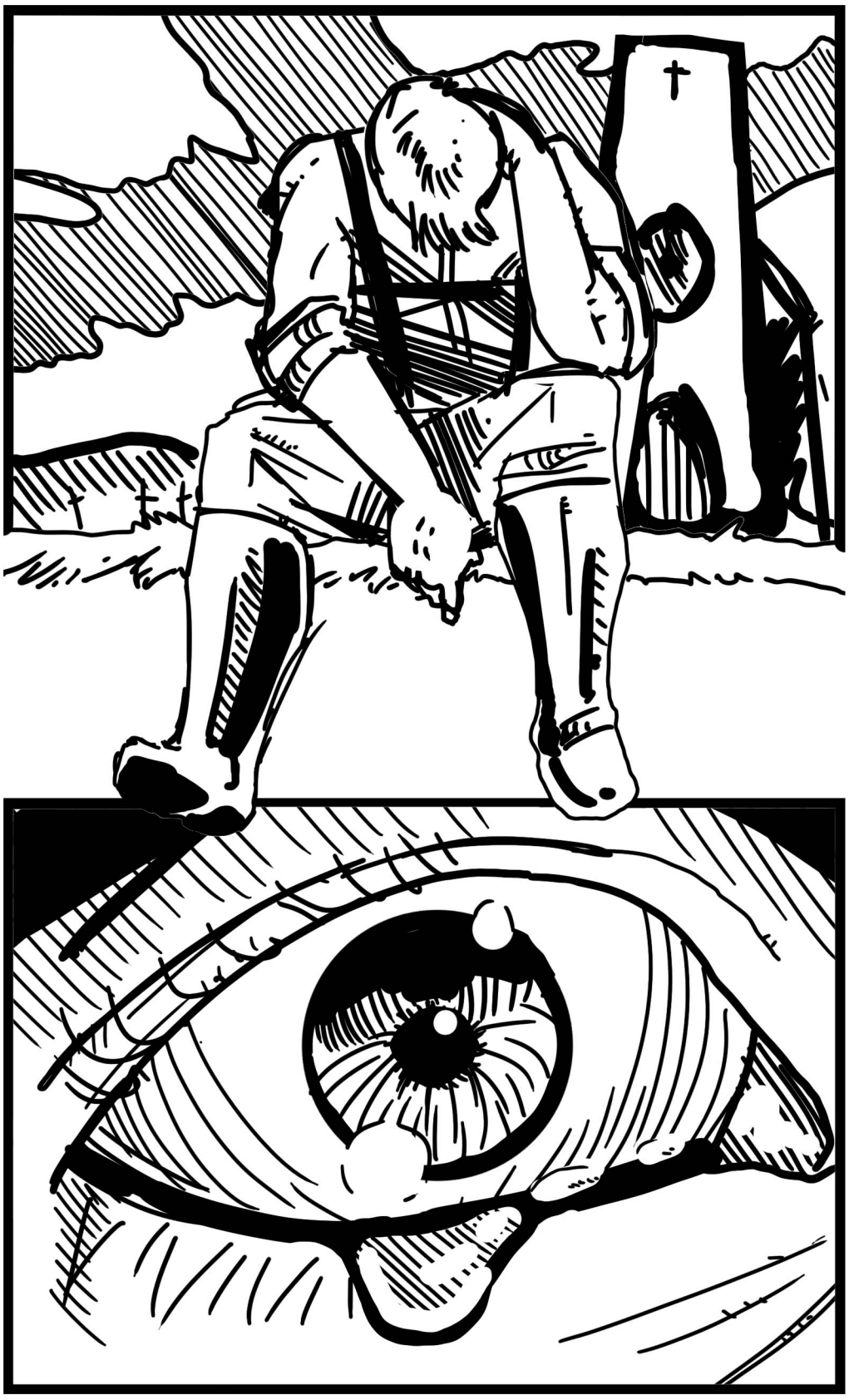

WHY DID HE HAVE TO DIE?
I DON'T...I CAN'T REMEMBER THE CONTRACT
OH YEAH, I THINK HE WAS LUTHERAN

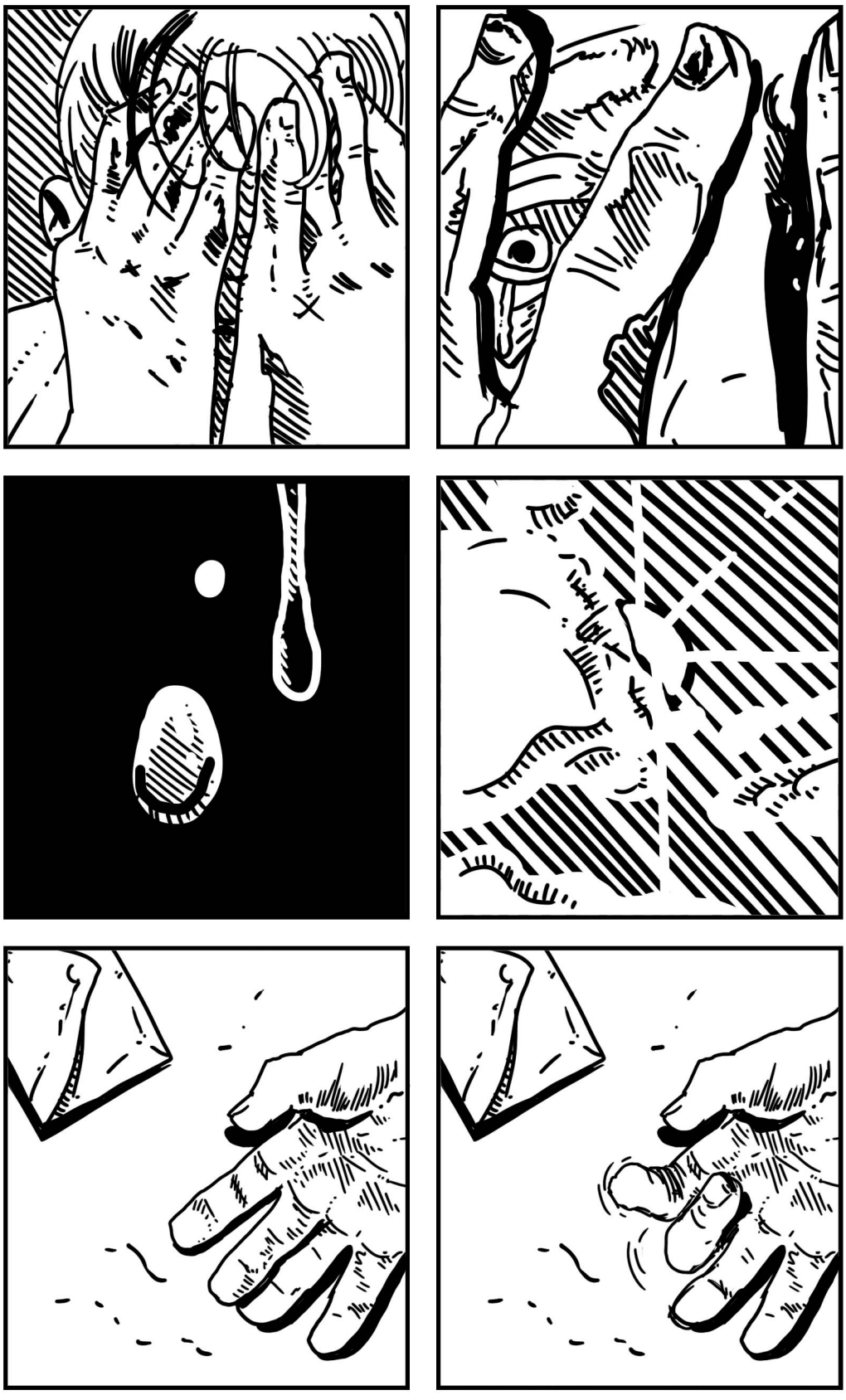


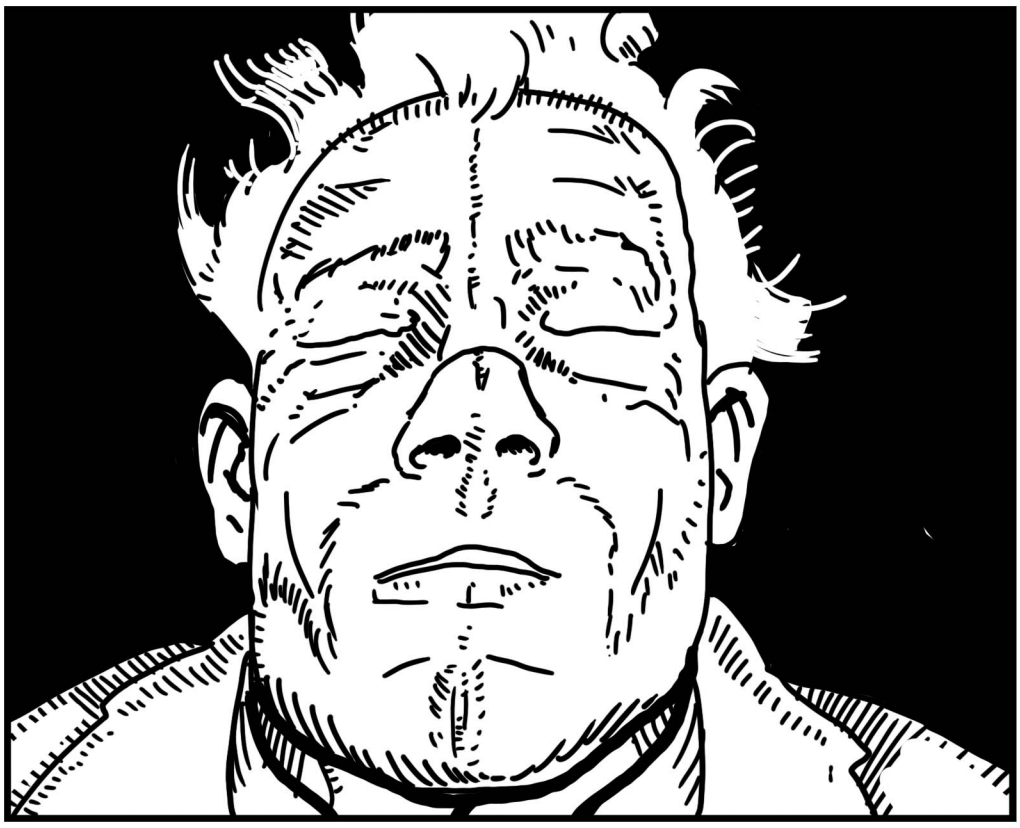

I'M GOING TO KILL YOU


I'M SURE YOU WILL
BUT UNTIL THEN...

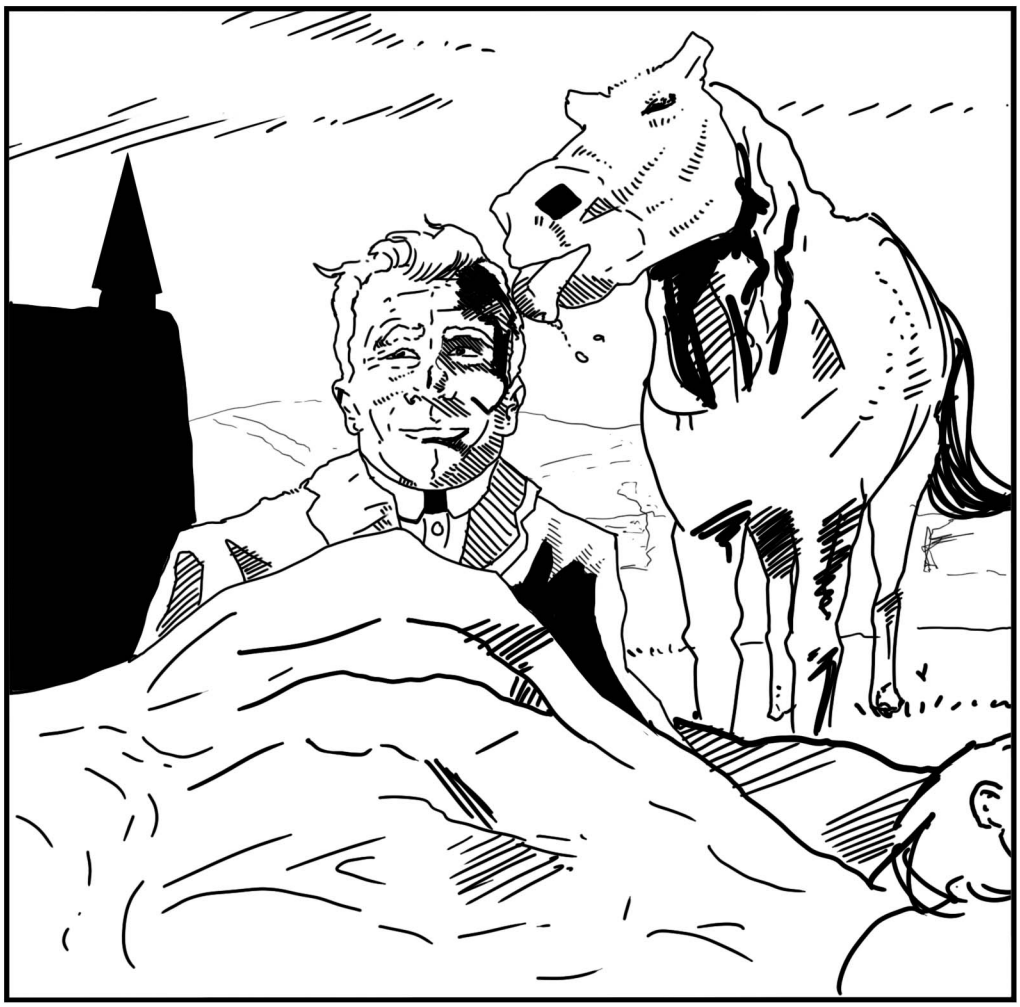


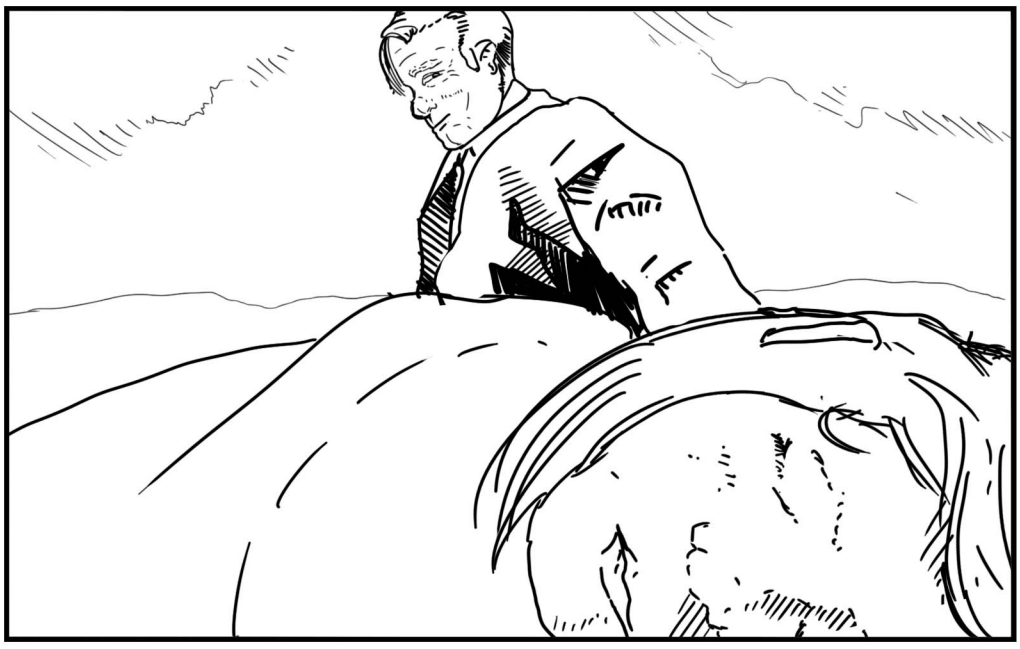


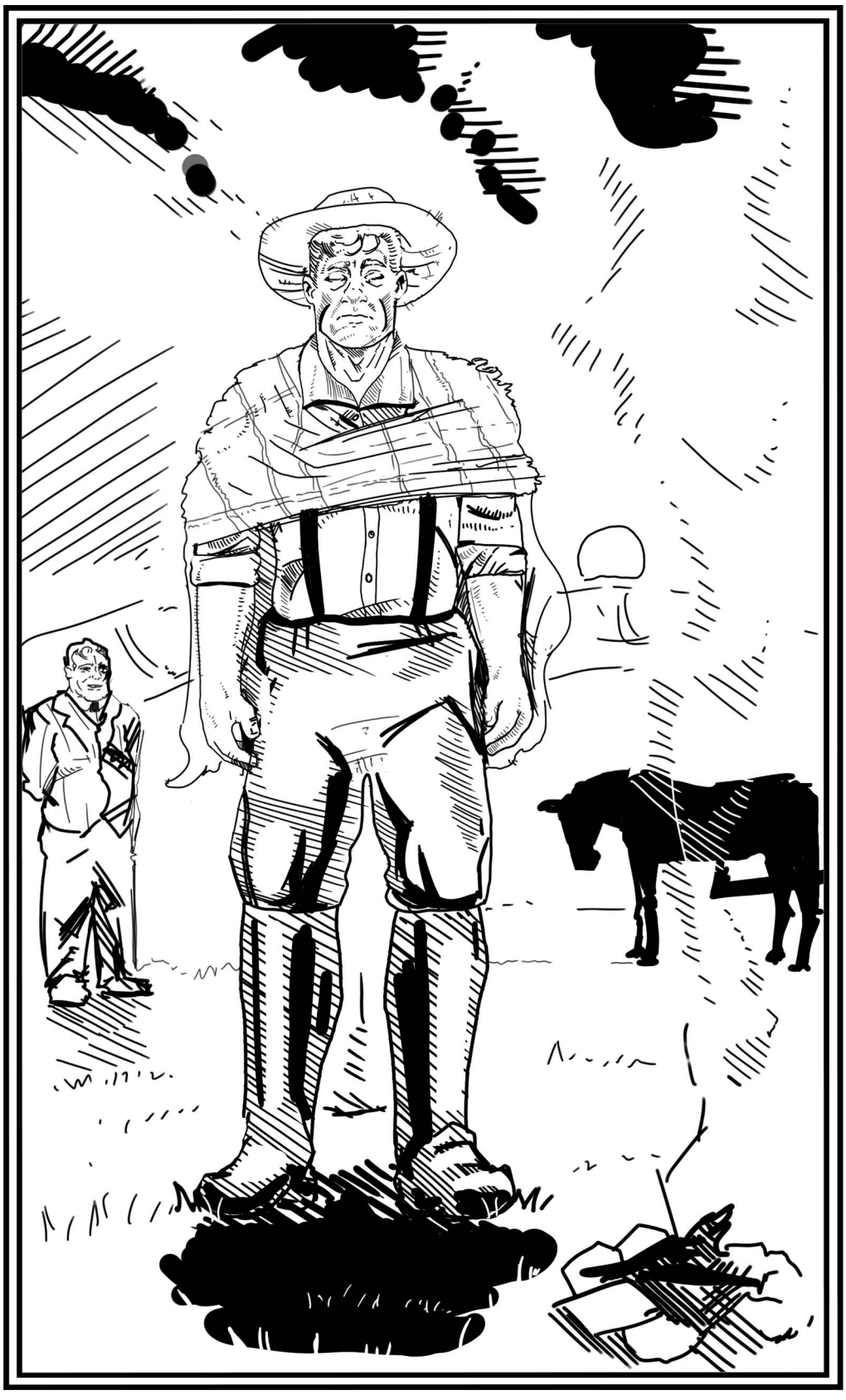


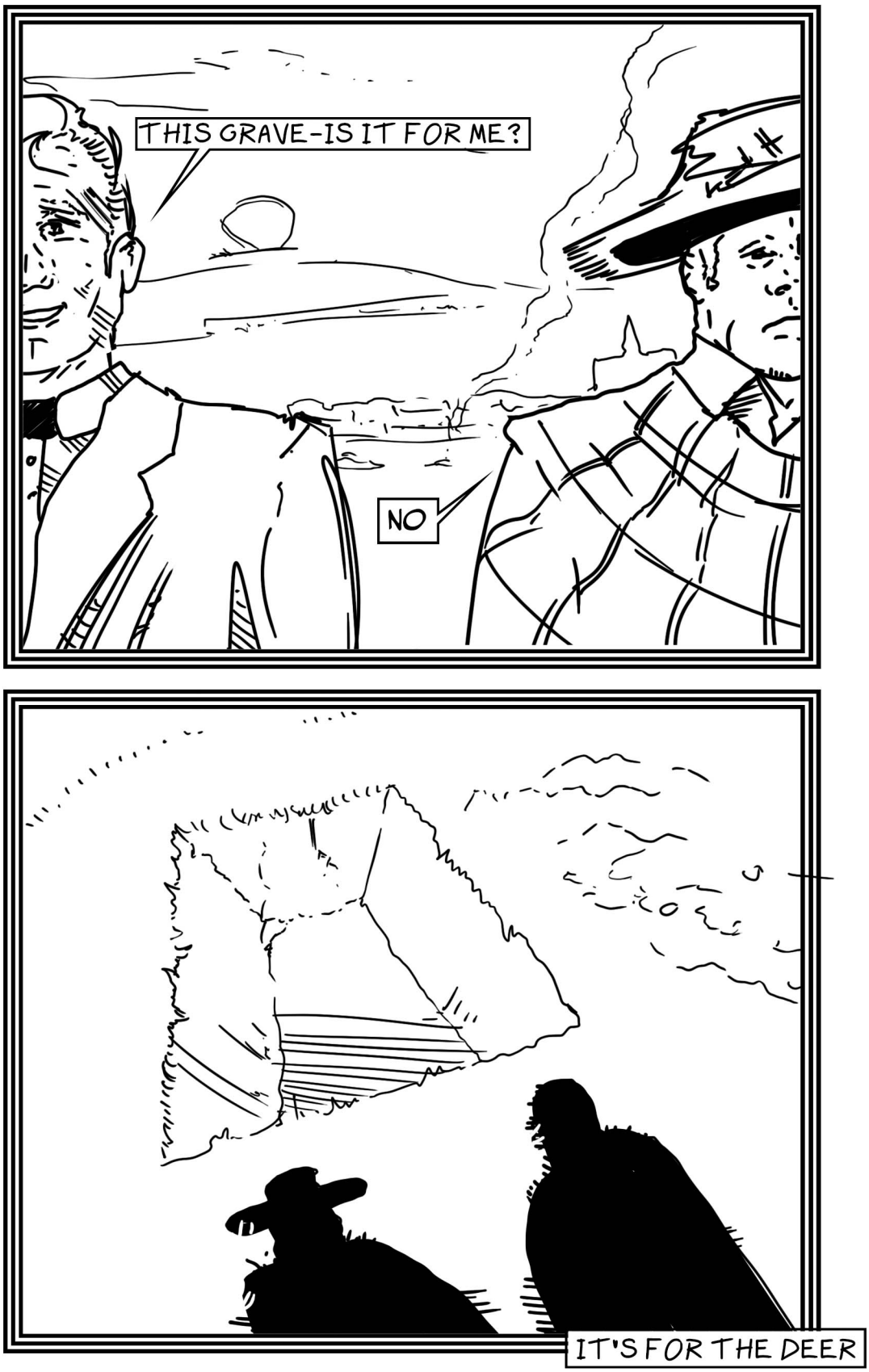


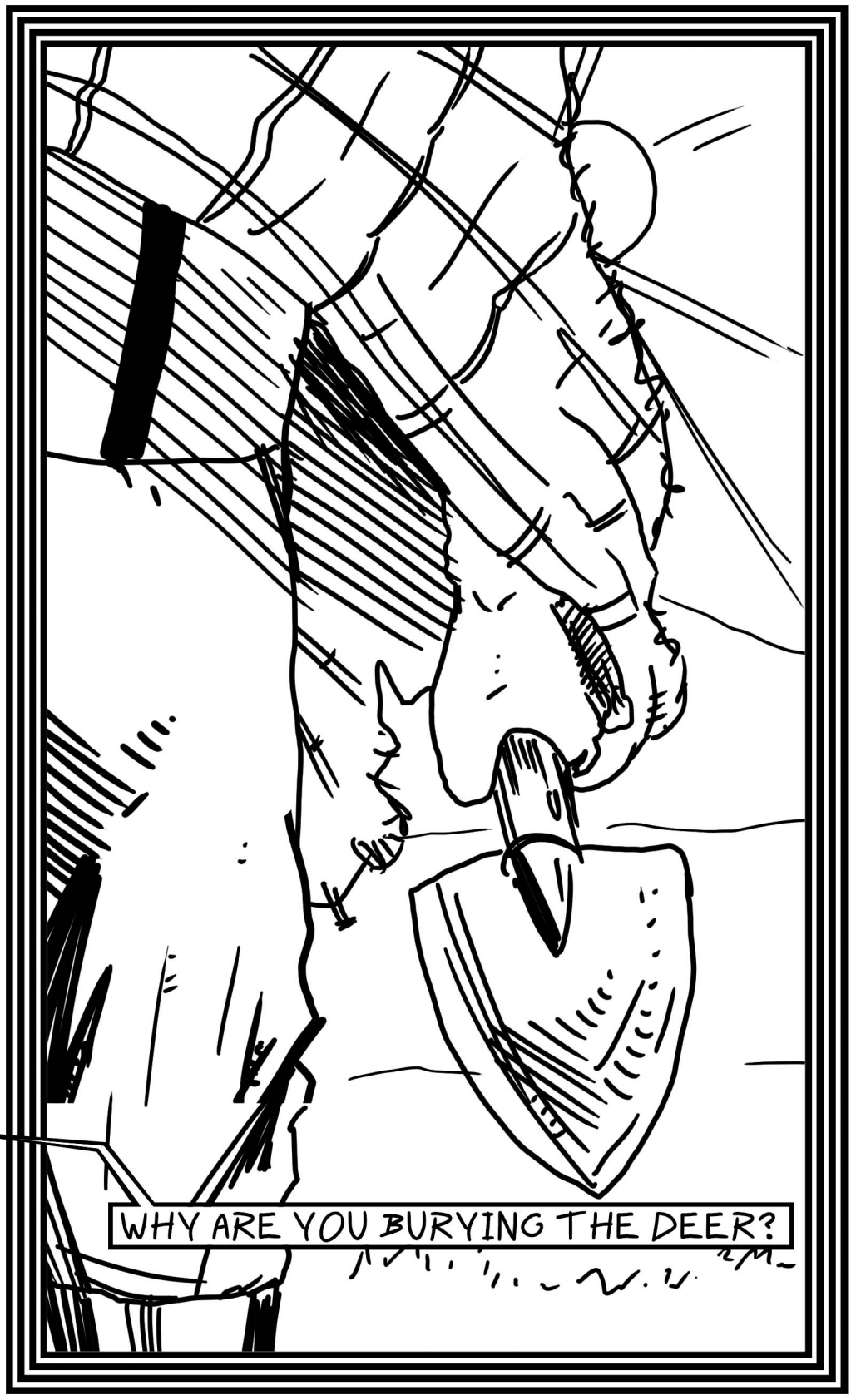


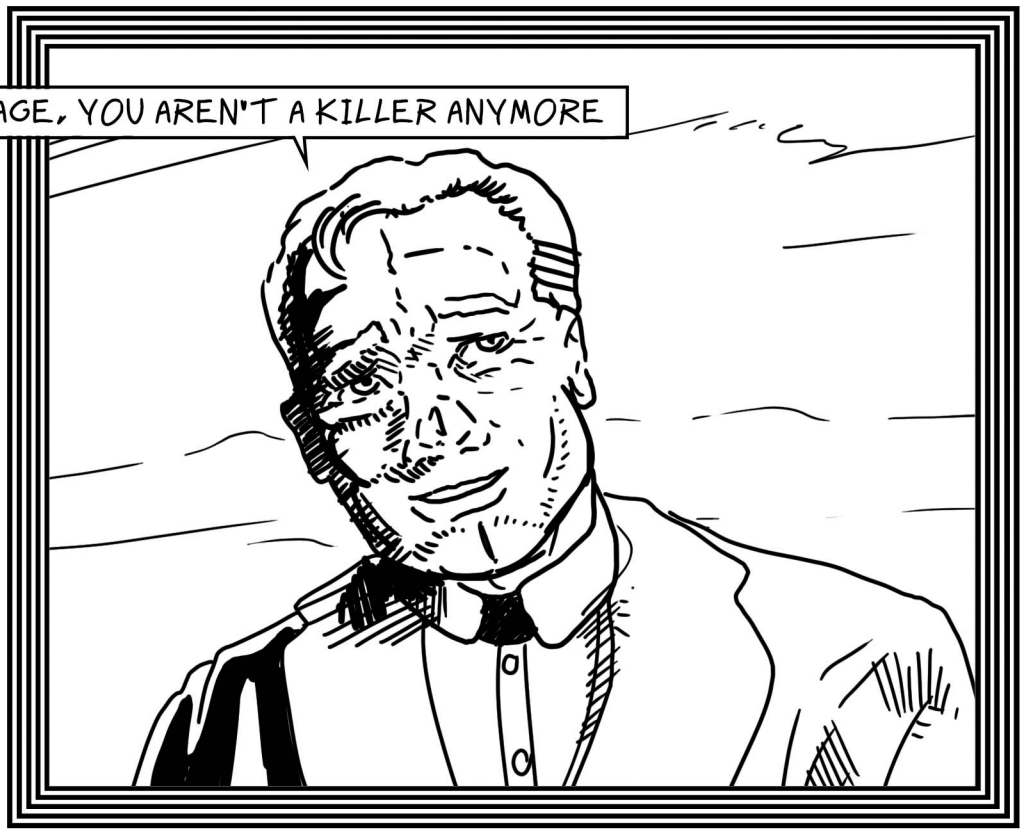






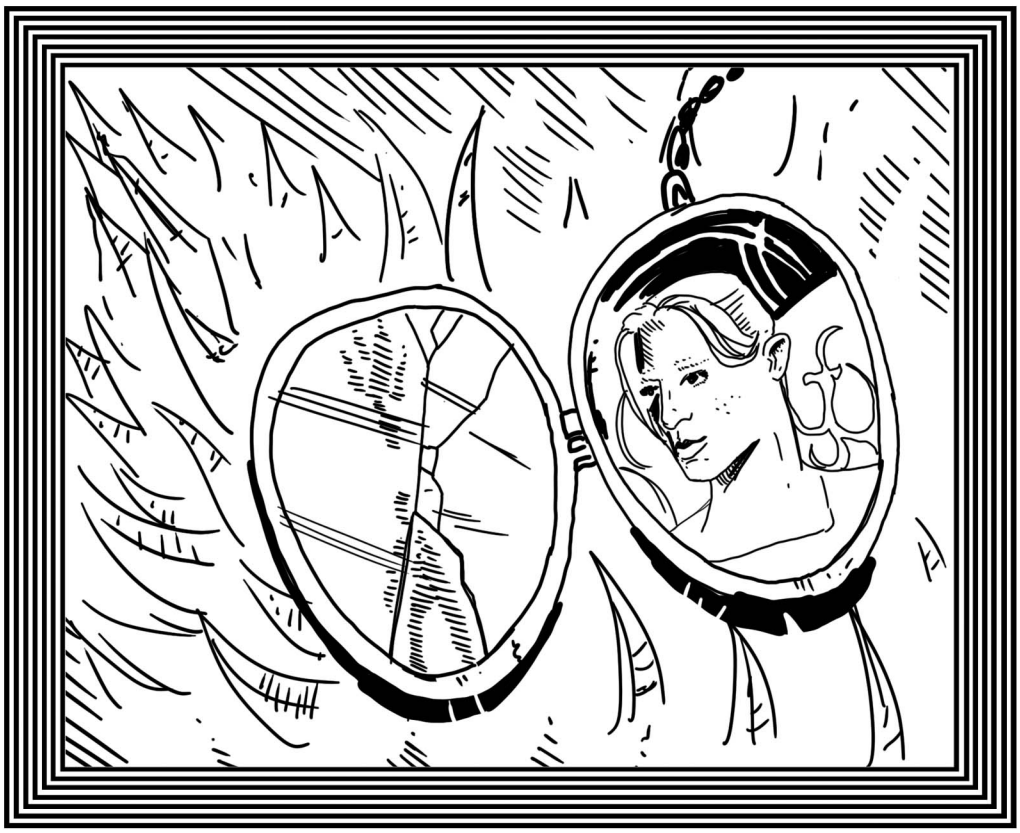

THIS GRAVE-IS IT FOR ME?
NO
IT'S FOR THE DEER

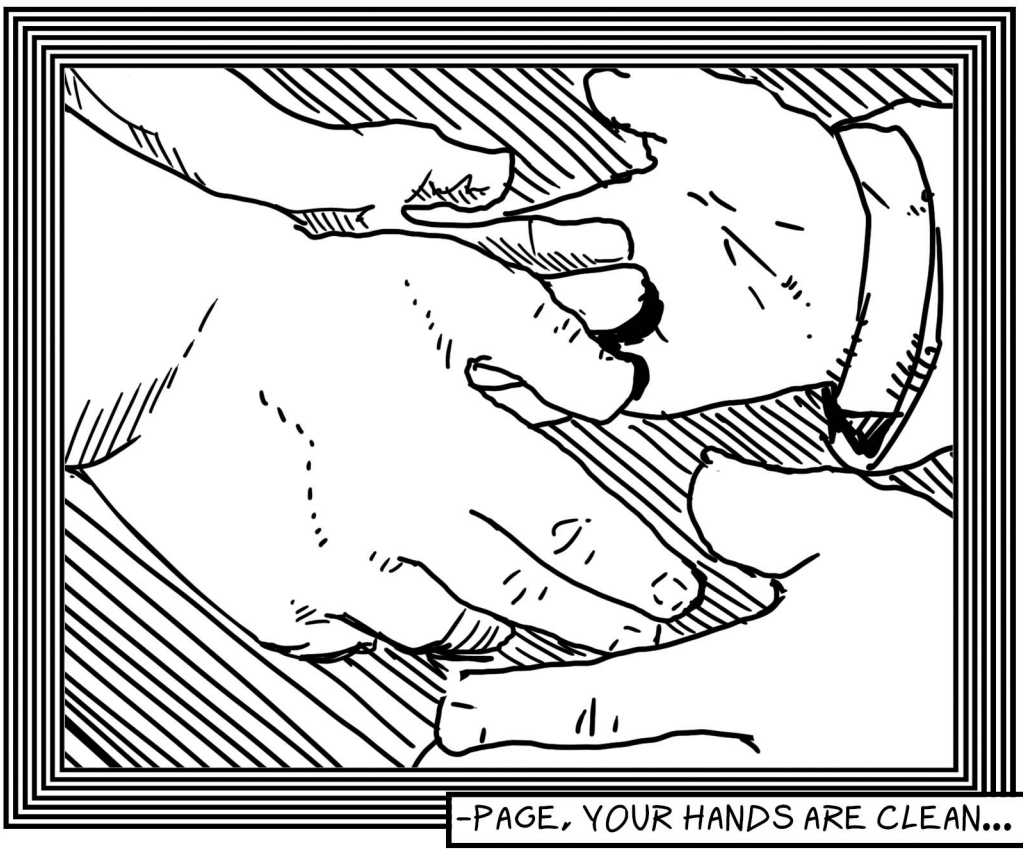

WHY ARE YOU BURYING THE DEER?


PAGE, YOU AREN'T A KILLER ANYMORE

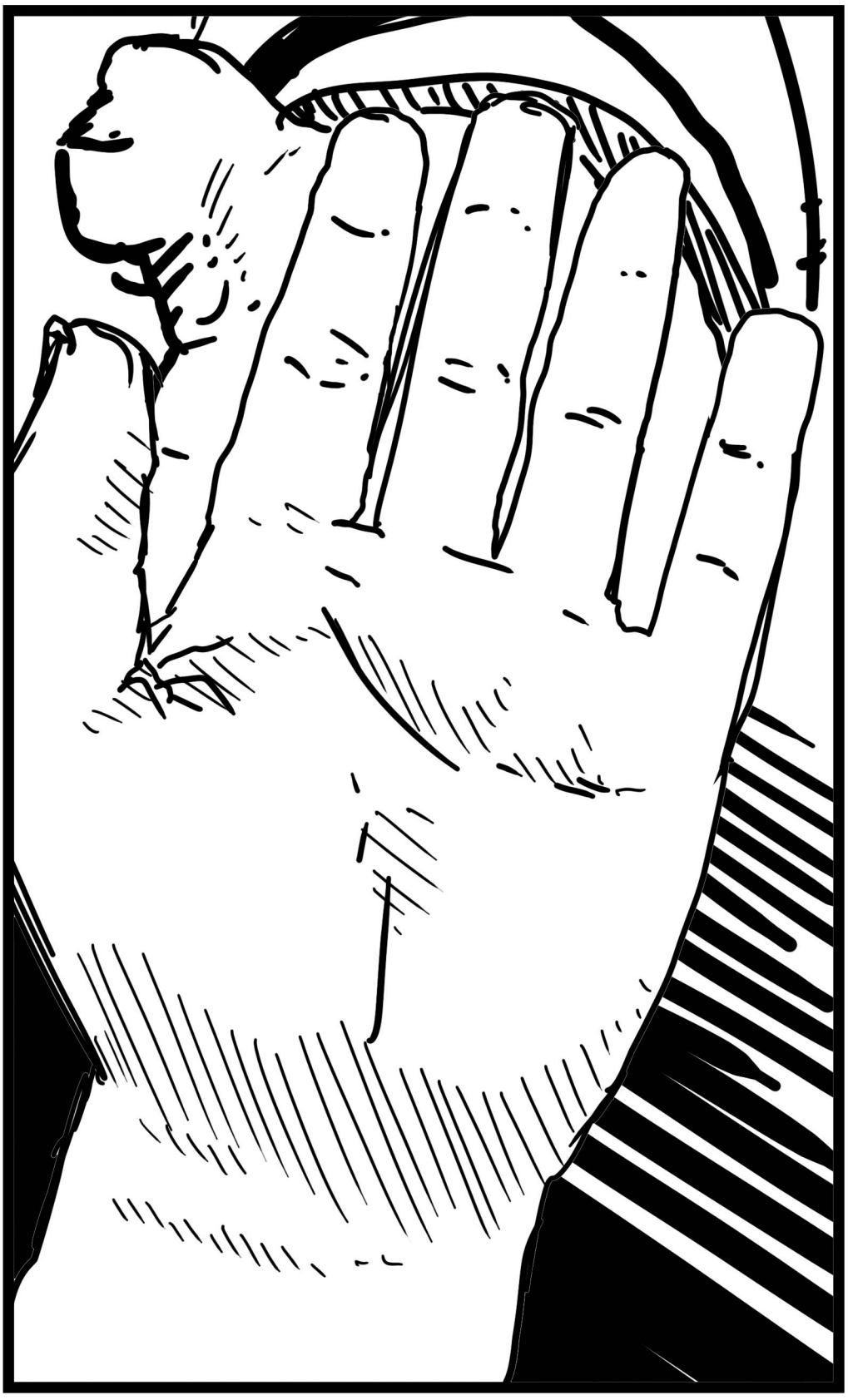

-AND YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FOR A LONG TIME

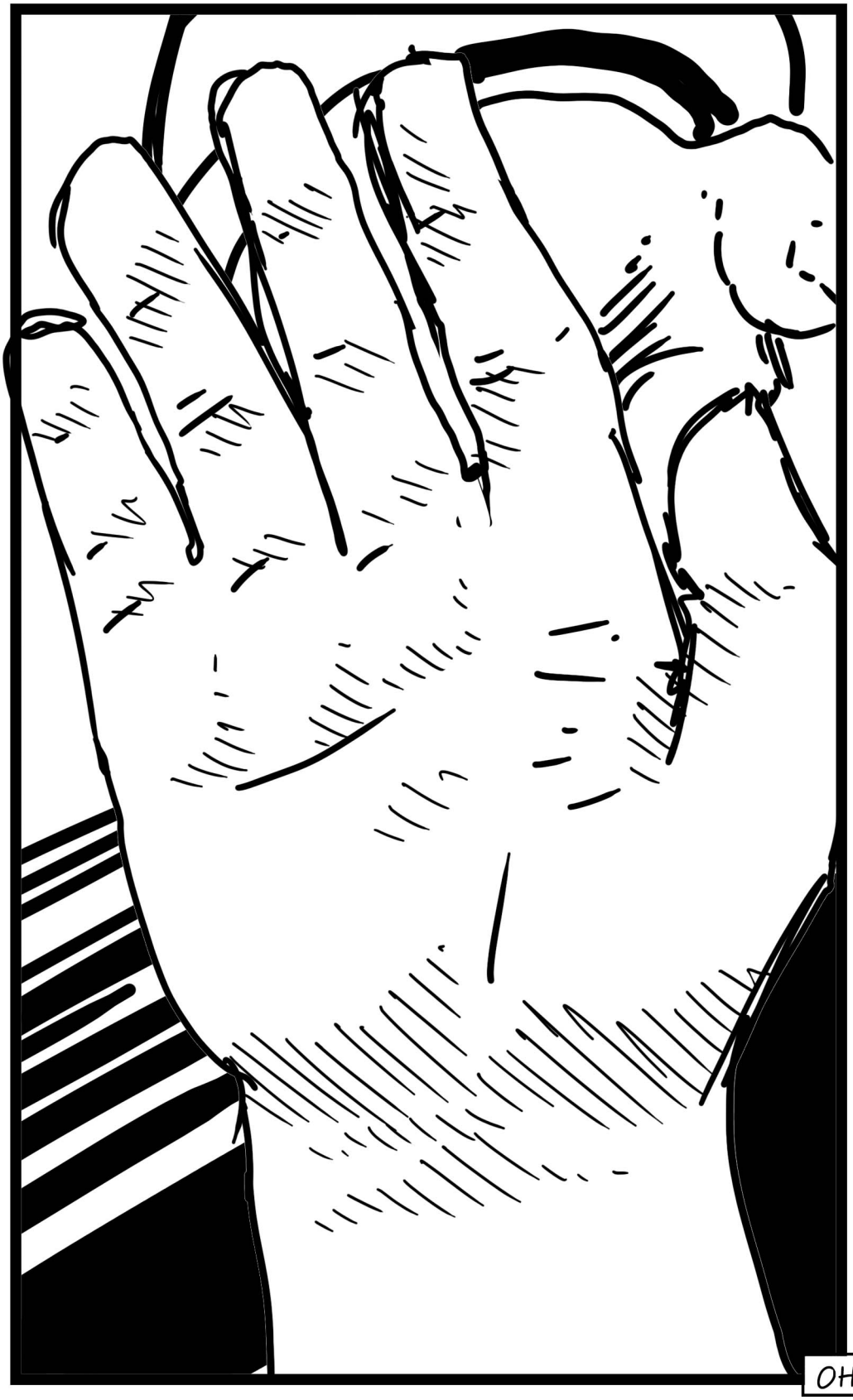

THOSE DEER ARE DEAD BECAUSE OF ME-I SHOT THEM
BUT...THEY'RE DEER

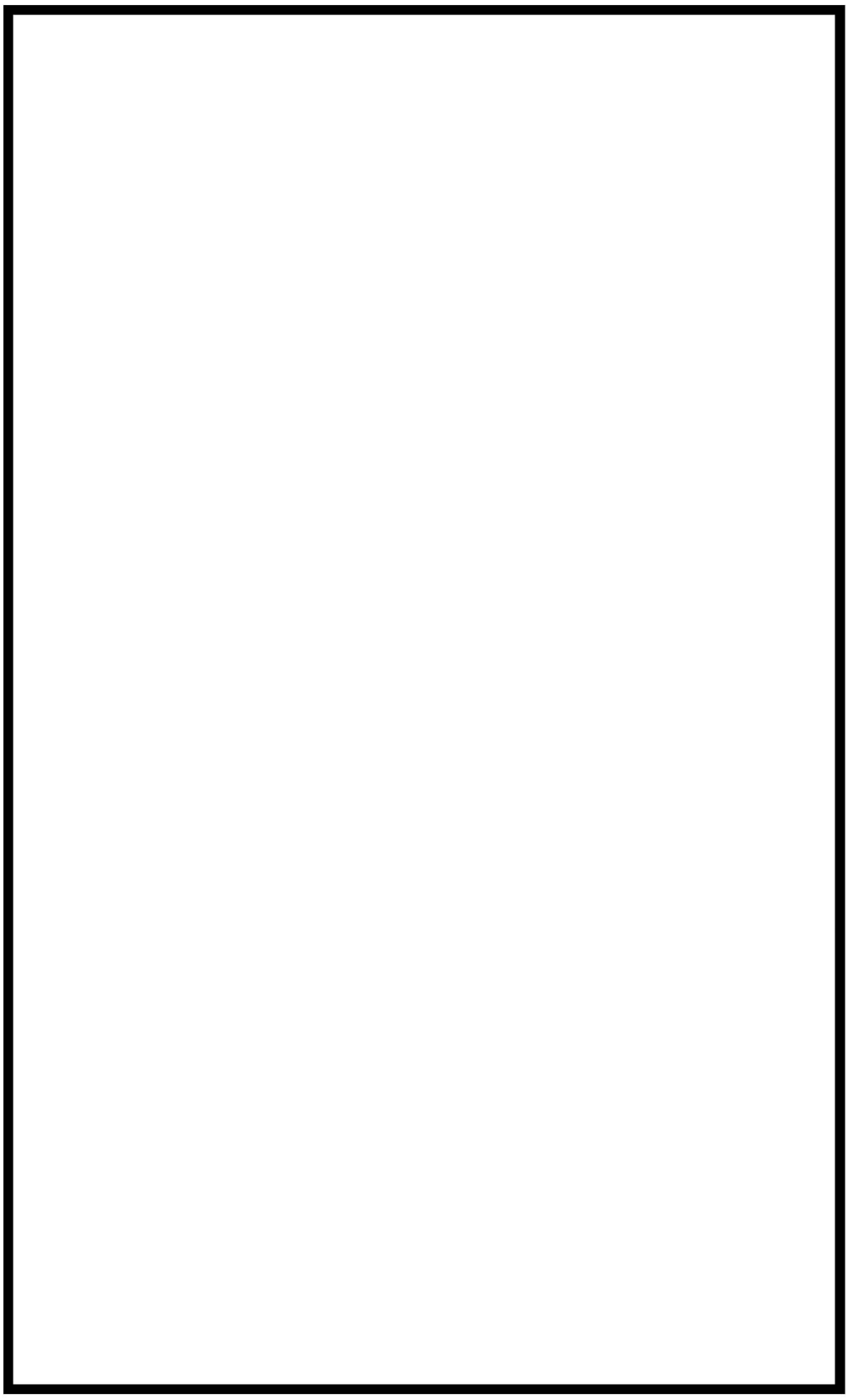




-PAGE, YOUR HANDS ARE CLEAN...




OH.



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

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