



Lackadaisy Volume 2

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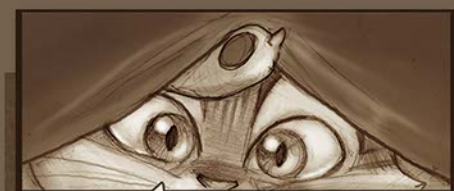
Printed in China

Tracy J. Butler

♣ LACKADAISSY ♣

Volume 2





PSST... HEY!

GOOD MORNING, CUPCAKE.



COME ON, RISE AND SHINE. SHOW A LEG, SHOW A LEG!

FLOOF



OH. ROUGH NIGHT, HUH?



YEAH. ME TOO.

BUT THEN I HAD AN EPIPHANY! WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS ALL WRONG!

HERE YOU'VE DONE THE WORLD A FAVOR AND WE'RE ACTING LIKE IT'S OUR FUNERAL. IT'S OPPORTUNITY.



NOW WE JUST HAVE TO GET YOU DRESSED ACCORDINGLY.

HMM. QUITE THE SWEATERVEST CONNOISSEUR, I SEE.

BUT WE NEED SOMETHING A BIT MORE---



AH! PINSTripES! THERE'S HOPE YET.



THIS'LL BE GREAT-- JUST LIKE WHEN WE WERE KIDS.



...WELL, BEFORE I GOT THE OLD, UNCEREMONIOUS BOOT.

WHAT ARE YOU STILL LOOKING SO GRUMMY ABOUT? BECAUSE RUNNING WITH THE BULLS IN BLUE DIDN'T WORK OUT?



NO, THAT'S NOT--



THEY DIDN'T MUCH CARE FOR THE

GRRRAHA-HAHA

-HUH?

NO.



WELL, IT'S THEIR LOSS. YOU ARE USEFUL - MORE THAN YOU KNOW.



NOW, WITH ANY LUCK, WE CAN MAKE THE BEST OF IT AND GET YOU A JOB... AND I CAN KEEP MINE.

OR WE COULD SIT
HERE AND MOPE AWHILE.
CONTEMPLATE TAKING UP
THE HOBO LIFE...

...RESOLVE TO TURN
OURSELVES IN... TELL YOUR
MOTHER FIRST, IF WE'RE
FEELING PARTICULARLY
MASOCHISTIC...

...THEN WE
COULD SING
SOME DIRGES
AND...

MOTHER MANIFESTS
OUT OF THIN AIR...

HELLO.

WHAT'S
THIS ABOUT
A JOB,
ROARK?

CLICK

OH, MY EMPLOYER
COULD USE A COUPLE OF
EXTRA EAGER HANDS IS ALL...
UH, AT THE CAFE.

I'D GO INTO
MORE DETAIL, BUT I'M
RUNNING LATE...

I OUGHTA GO
GET THE CAR STARTED
WHILE --

HOLD IT. POOR
EXCUSES AREN'T
GONNA GET YOU OUTTA
ANSWERIN' SOME
QUESTIONS.

YES, MA'AM, BUT I
REALLY GOTTA SCRAM.
IF YOU'RE GONNA GET
UPPITY ABOUT IT, THOUGH,
HOW ABOUT I GRANT YOU
ONE MORE QUESTION
FOR THE ROAD?

HURRY UP AND
GET YOURSELF
DRESSED,
DAPPER DAN,
BEFORE YOUR --

THUP

HOW ABOUT
YOU GRANT ME
SOME COURTESY
B'FORE I GRANT
YOU A COUPLA'
BLACK EYES?

AH, I'M AFRAID YOU'VE
USED YOUR ONE QUESTION.
YOU SHOULD'VE CHOSEN
MORE WISELY.

FINE. GO.

FWAK

TOUCHÉ.

THUD
THUD
WELL...
CRACK
...PLAYED.
TWUMP

...OH GOD,
MY SHINS.

WELL, NOW
Y'HAVE TIME
FOR A CHAT,
HM?

I SUPPOSE
I'VE GOT SOME
TIME TO KILL
WHILE I'M
WRITHING
AROUND ON
THE FLOOR...

WHAT
SORTA'
JOB IS
IT?



UH...
ERRAND BOY.

OF
SORTS.

PERFECTLY
HUMBLE.
IT'D SUIT
HIM.



WHAT ARE
THE HOURS
AND PAY?



ODD...
AND
RESPECTABLE?

YOU LOVE
YOUR COUSIN,
DON'T YOU?



LIKE MY OWN
LEFT FOOT.



DEAR TO
ME AS DIXIE
WAS TO LEE.



AND FOR
YOUR OWN SAKE,
KEEP IN MIND
YOU'VE ALREADY
SQUANDERED
YOUR SECOND
CHANCES.

OH,
DON'T WORRY ABOUT
ME. I'LL BE CAREFUL
NOT TO ERR TOWARD
FEELING TOO AT HOME
AROUND HERE
AGAI—



GOOD.
SINCE YOU'RE
JUST TELLIN' ME
WHAT I WANT T'HEAR,
MAYBE EMOTIONAL
BLACKMAIL'LL WORK
INSTEAD.

DON'T GO LEADIN'
HIM INTO TROUBLE
JUST BECAUSE HE'S THE
ONLY ONE IN ALL O' CREATION
WHO'D FOLLOW YOU.
IN FACT, THAT'S THE VERY
REASON Y'SHOULDN'T.
UNDERSTAND?



OOH!
MY LUCKY TIE!

YOUR
LAUNDRY.



AW,
LOOKIT YOU,
ALL RIBBONS
AND CURLS.

YOU CLEAN
UP WELL,
MCMURRAY.



IN FACT,
YOU *ALMOST*
LOOK THE PART.

BUT WHAT AM I
SUPPOSED TO DO?

WELL, YOU CAN
START BY TAKING THE
WHEEL SO I CAN GET
MY GLAD RAGS ON.

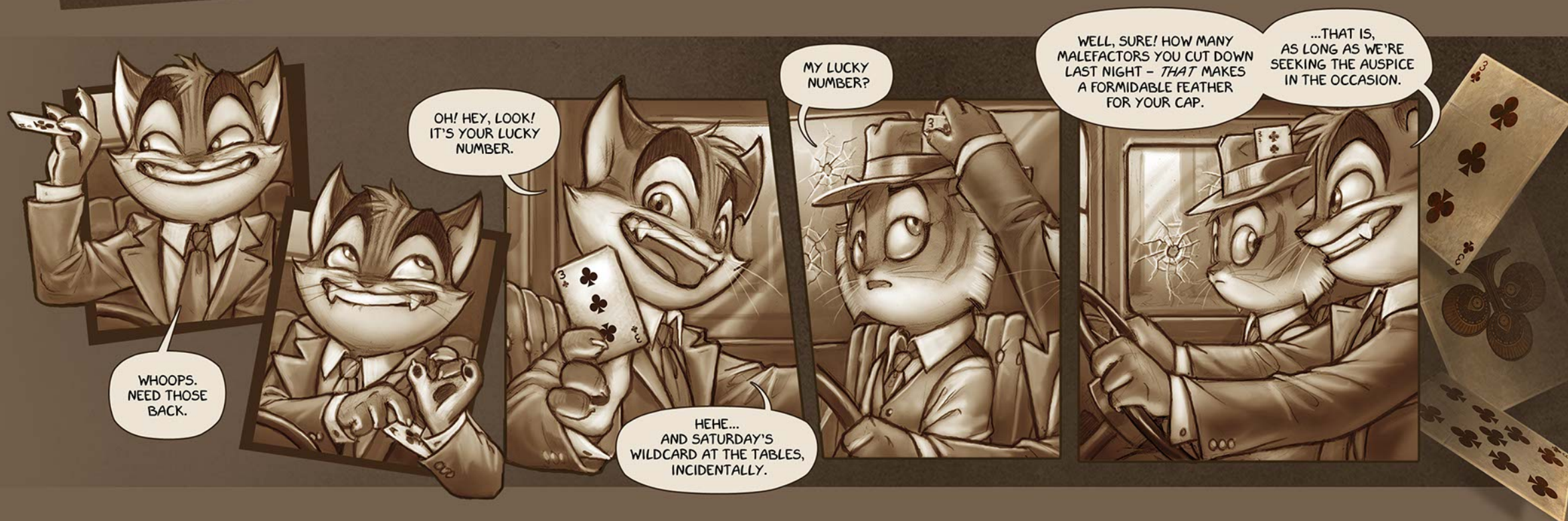


THE REST IS SIMPLE.
YOU'LL JUST TAG ALONG
WITH ME, HITHER AND THITHER,
PILLAR TO POST.

...TOTING THE
TOOLS OF THE TRADE TOO,
OF COURSE.

THAT'S IT?







THIS IS
ONE OF OURS,
ISN'T IT?

IT FOUND ITS
WAY HOME LAST
NIGHT BEFORE I
EVEN KNEW IT
WAS GONE.



NEEDLESS
TO SAY, MY
LITTLE SOIREE
WITH THE
MONEYBAGS
DIDN'T GO
EXACTLY AS
PLANNED.



IT WASN'T A TOTAL
LOSS... BUT I'M GOING TO
HAVE TO SIDETRACK TO
CONFRONT AN OLD FRIEND
ABOUT THAT WAYWARD
GOLDEN BOY OF YOURS.

I DON'T THINK WE'D
SURVIVE ANY MORE OF
HIS PARTING GESTURES.











I THINK YOU MAY BE LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACE FOR HEARTSTRINGS TO TUG ON, MY DEAR.

WELL, YOU ONLY KNOW SOMEONE UNTIL YOU DON'T, ASA.



I'VE BEEN SURPRISED BEFORE. ...BY THE LIKES OF YOU, NO LESS. YOU USED TO BE SO NICE TO ME.



HEY, I LIKE TO THINK I'M A PRETTY NICE GUY.

IN FACT, THAT'S WHY I'M HERE - WITH YOUR INTERESTS IN MIND - SUGGESTING YOU STEP DOWN. THERE ARE LESS DIPLOMATIC WAYS I COULD GO ABOUT IT.



...SUCH AS ANGRY RUSTICS WITH CHOPPERS... MY INTERESTS FIGURED INTO THAT?



YEAH, WELL, DISARMAMENT ALONE DIDN'T SEEM TO CLUE YOU IN.

IT WAS HAPPENSTANCE, ANYWAY. YOU'RE JUST ASKING FOR A BLOOD FEUD TANGLING WITH RABBLE LIKE THAT.

YOUR INFRINGING ON ALL OF OUR OLD TRADE ROUTES HASN'T LEFT ME MUCH CHOICE.

WHOSE BUSINESS ROUTES WERE WHOSE WAS AN UNDERSTANDING I HAD WITH ATLAS, NOT WITH YOU. I'M AT THE BEHEST OF MY EMPLOYER. I CAN'T GET AWAY WITH PRETENDING ATLAS IS STILL HERE.



IN ANY CASE, YOU NO LONGER HAVE THE MEANS TO PURCHASE THROUGH THOSE VENUES.

THERE'S A DISTINCT LACK OF BREAKFAST PASTRIES AVAILABLE HERE, AND I HAVEN'T GOT A PLAN B.



JUST ORDER THE MOST EXPENSIVE THING ON THE MENU, HONEY. WE HAVEN'T GOT THE MEANS, BUT ASA'S TREATING.



MAYBE I DON'T SOUND SERIOUS ENOUGH, MITZI... OR MAYBE YOU'RE CONFUSED BECAUSE WE MANAGED A FRIENDLY COEXISTENCE FOR SO LONG, BUT SOME THINGS HAVE CHANGED...

YOU'LL BE IN FAR OVER YOUR HEAD DRAWING ATTENTION TO YOURSELF IN THIS CLIMATE.



WARNED HIM? HE KNEW THE DANGER. WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU HAVE TO WARN HIM ABOUT?

I WARNED ATLAS OF MUCH THE SAME THING NOT SO LONG AGO.



I'LL HAVE THE FILET MIGNON MUSHROOM SAUTÉ WITH EXTRA SYRUP. ...AND TWO COFFEES. ...WITH EXTRA SYRUP.

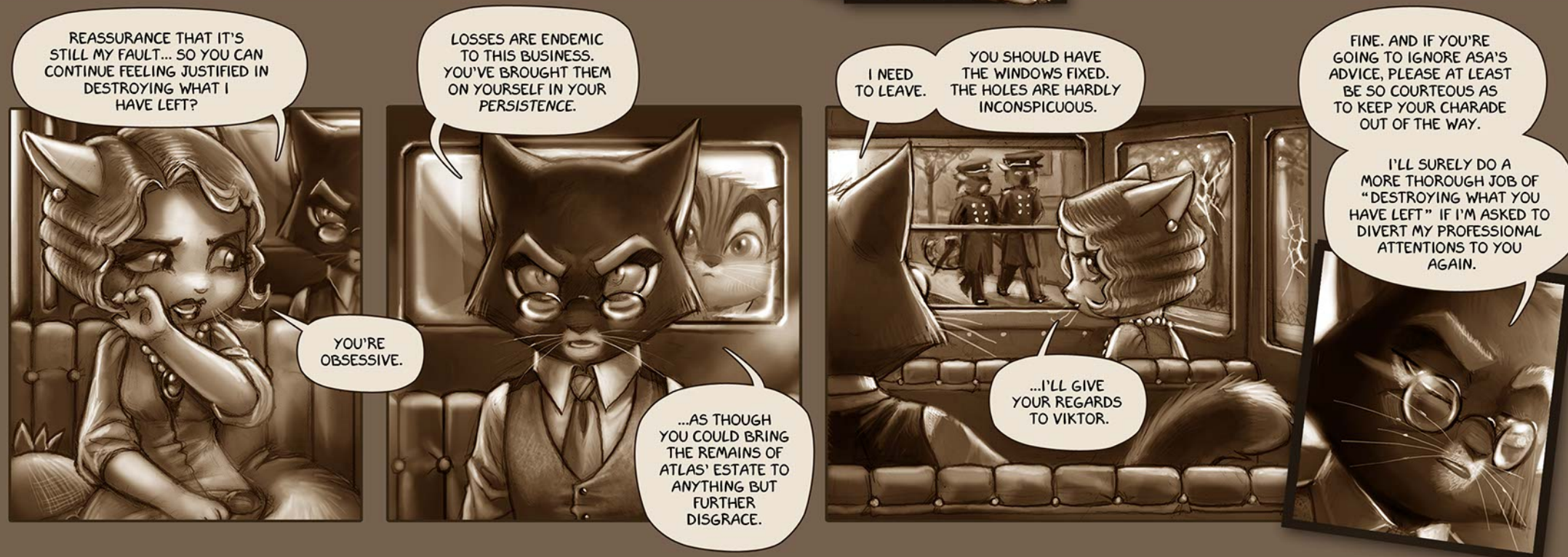
WITH... SYRUP?

DO YOU HAVE CHOCOLATE MILK?











HEY, MISS M. HOW'S THE WEATHER IN THERE?

MISS M.?



DID HE DO SOMETHING TO UPSET YOU? YOU WANT I SHOULD GO HAVE WORDS WITH HIM?

NO.

ARE YOU SURE? I HAVE A LOT OF THEM.



I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO USE "BEGRUMPED HAGGERSNASH" ALL DAY.



...OR I COULD JUST GO OFFEND HIM SOME MORE WITH MY FASHION SENSE.



THERE'S NOTHING TO BE GAINED FROM KICKING HORNETS' NESTS, HONEY.

...JUST MORE TO LOSE. PLEASE, KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.



SURE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO ASK TWICE, MISS M.

WHAT'S NEXT ON THE ITINERARY?



I NEED YOU TO FIND OUT WHERE IN THE MARKETPLACE WE CAN PURCHASE SOME DECENT WHOLESALE... AND FAST.

VIKTOR OUGHT TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.



OH, HE'LL BE SO HAPPY TO SEE ME.

ON YOUR WAY, YOU CAN DROP ME OFF AT WICK'S HOUSE.



SNAP

...THOUGH MAYBE I SHOULD STOP AT HOME FIRST AND CHANGE INTO SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS... MATRONLY.



WICK'S HOUSE?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM FOR? HE ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT ROCKS... AND HIS HEAD IS A FUNNY SHAPE... AND WHAT KIND OF A NAME IS SEDGEWICK ANYWAY?



A MONIED NAME, HONEY. I NEED TO BUY THE WHISKEY BEFORE I CAN SELL IT.



MONIED INDEED. DID I TELL YOU MY THEORY ABOUT THAT?

HIS PARENTS MUST HAVE BEEN EAST COAST ARISTOCRATS WITH STUFFY ACCENTS. THEY WERE PROBABLY TRYING TO NAME HIM CEDRIC, BUT THEY COULDN'T PWONOUNCE IT WIGHT.



IT'S A BOY, DAWWING. WE'W CAW HIM SEDGEWICK!

TRY TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN WHILE YOU'RE DRIVING, SWEETIE.



LACY!

COMING.



CAN YOU HELP ME FIND MY READING GLASSES? I CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING I'M TRYING TO WRITE

I FOUND THEM, MR. SABLE.

WHERE?



ON YOUR FACE, MR. SABLE.

...OH.

SIGH WHY DOES BLASTING GIANT HOLES IN THE EARTH REQUIRE SO MUCH PAPERWORK?

UM... NO REST FOR THE WICKED, I SUPPOSE.



APPARENTLY NOT. I GOT IN VERY, VERY LATE LAST NIGHT, BUT THE OLD GRINDSTONE IS UNSYMPATHETIC.



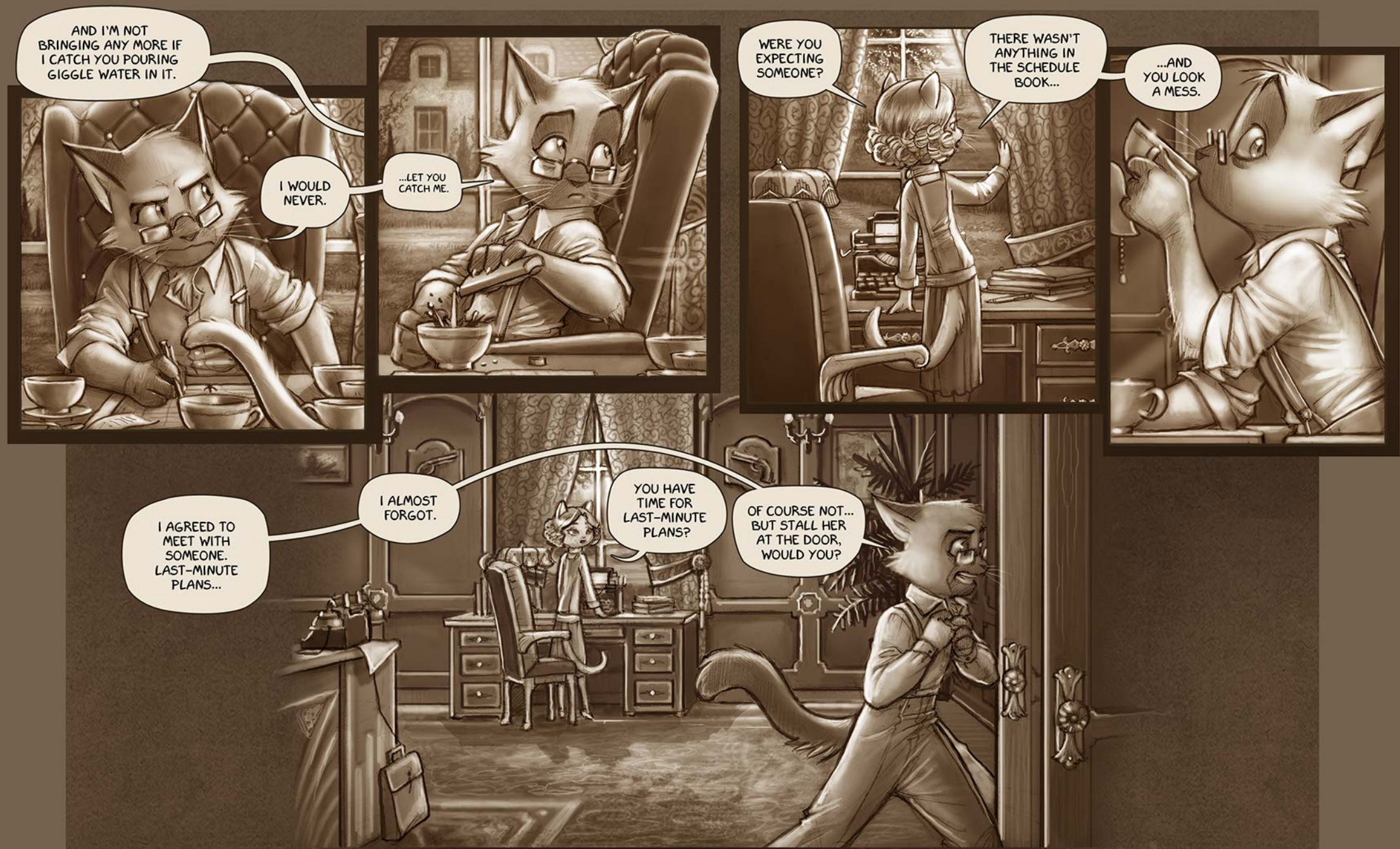
I HAVE TO HAVE THIS NEW FINANCIAL PROSPECTUS SONG AND DANCE ROUTINE READY TO PERFORM FOR THE SHAREHOLDERS BEFORE THE START OF THE WEEK.

...SO THANKS FOR BEING HERE ON WHAT'S TRADITIONALLY A DAY OFF FOR THE NOT-SO-WICKED.



MMHMM.

HERE'S YOUR COFFEE. TRY TO SAVOR THIS ONE. I DO HAVE *OTHER* WORK TO DO.





TOO
SUNNY FOR
YOU, WICK?



NO, IN FACT I THOUGHT
WE MIGHT INDULGE IN THE SUN
A BIT OVER AT FOREST PARK.
IT'S A HOLIDAY WEEKEND -
THERE OUGHT TO BE
SOMETHING GOING ON.

IF YOU'LL JUST
WAIT HERE IN THE
FOYER, I'LL BRING
THE ROADSTER
AROUND.



**WICK,
I FOUND YOUR
TIRE IRON!**



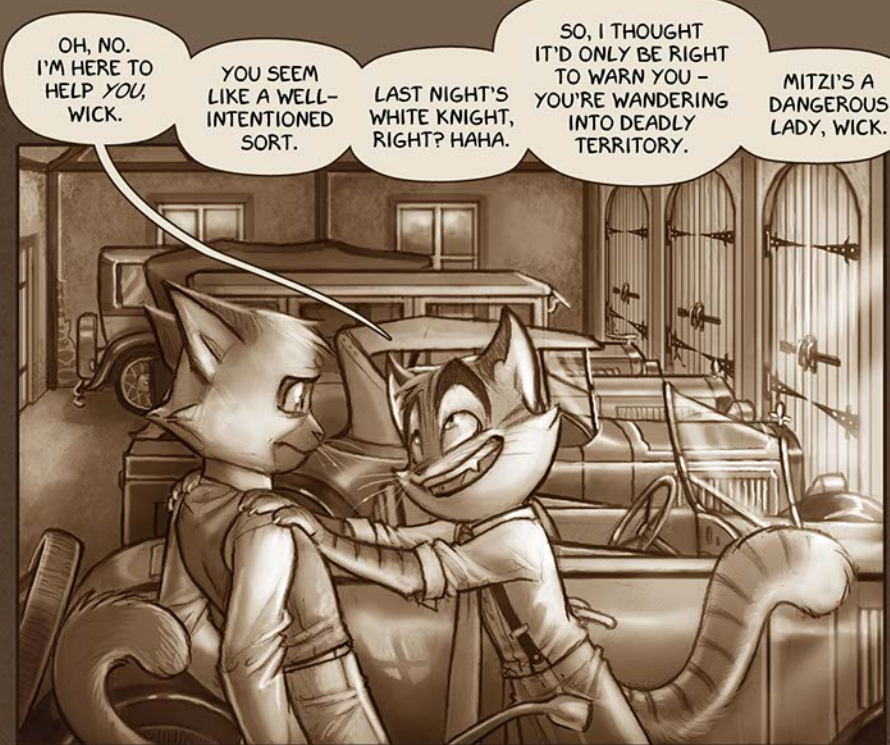
WH-A-A-A-UUGHHH OH, THANK YOU.



YOU'RE
AWFULLY JUMPY,
WICK.

I DRINK
A LOT OF
COFFEE.

IS THERE
SOMETHING I CAN
HELP YOU WITH
...ROCKY?



OH, NO.
I'M HERE TO
HELP YOU,
WICK.

YOU SEEM
LIKE A WELL-
INTENTIONED
SORT.

LAST NIGHT'S
WHITE KNIGHT,
RIGHT? HAHA.

SO, I THOUGHT
IT'D ONLY BE RIGHT
TO WARN YOU -
YOU'RE WANDERING
INTO DEADLY
TERRITORY.

MITZI'S A
DANGEROUS
LADY, WICK.



I HAVE IT FROM A
GOOD SOURCE THAT
SHE'S A BEARTRAP!

WHAT?

YEAH.
IN A BUNNY
BOX, SEE?

NO. WHAT
DOES THAT MEAN?

MAYBE YOU
SHOULD ASK
HER HUSBAND,
WICK.

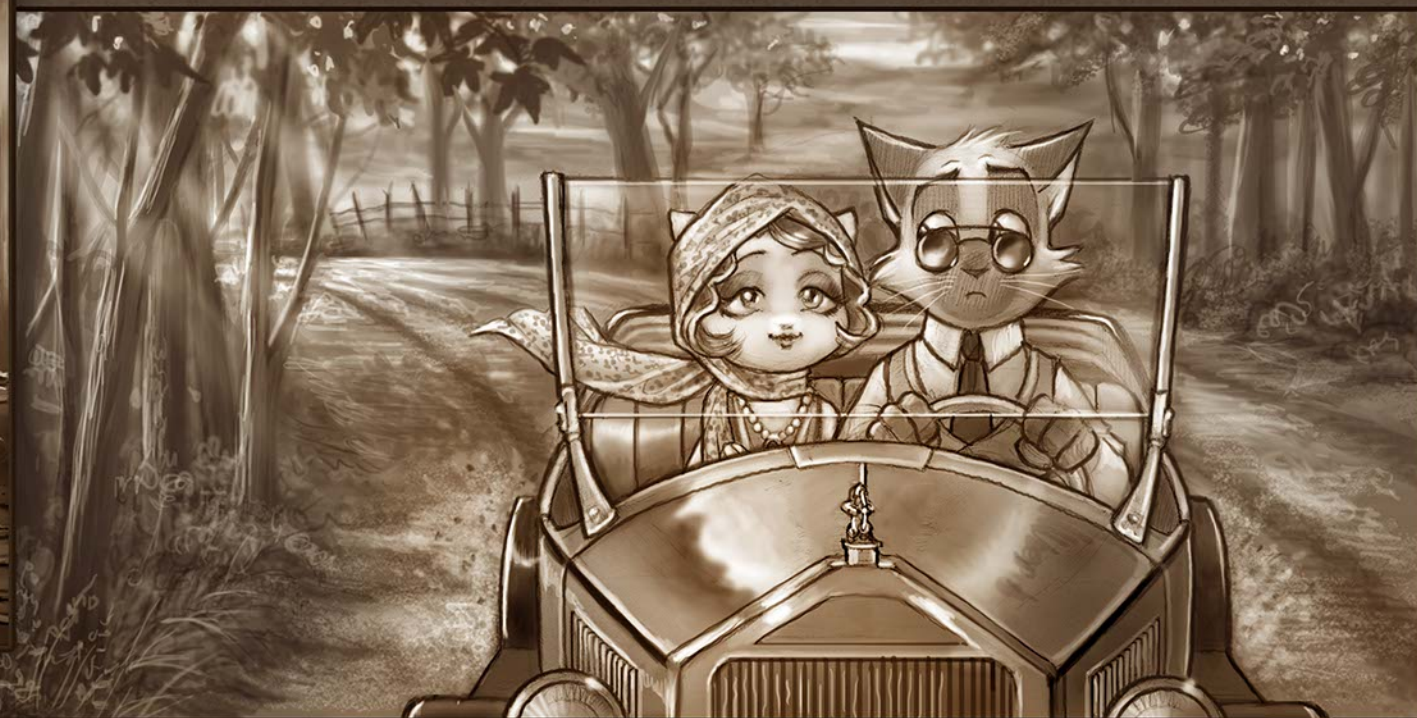


YOU CANT.

HE'S DEAD!

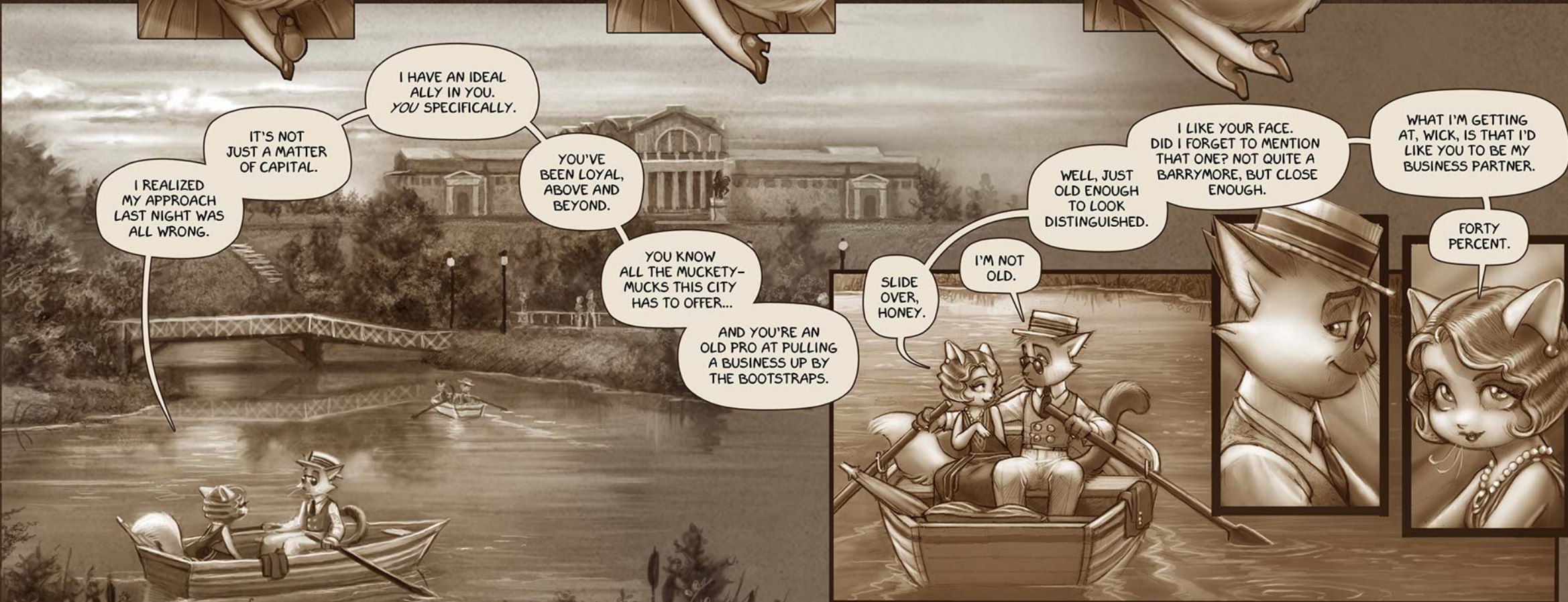
Q.E.D.

...WAIT.





LET'S TALK
BUSINESS,
WICK.



I REALIZED
MY APPROACH
LAST NIGHT WAS
ALL WRONG.

IT'S NOT
JUST A MATTER
OF CAPITAL.

I HAVE AN IDEAL
ALLY IN YOU.
YOU SPECIFICALLY.

YOU'VE
BEEN LOYAL,
ABOVE AND
BEYOND.

YOU KNOW
ALL THE MUCKETY-
MUCKS THIS CITY
HAS TO OFFER...

AND YOU'RE AN
OLD PRO AT PULLING
A BUSINESS UP BY
THE BOOTSTRAPS.

WELL, JUST
OLD ENOUGH
TO LOOK
DISTINGUISHED.

I LIKE YOUR FACE.
DID I FORGET TO MENTION
THAT ONE? NOT QUITE A
BARRYMORE, BUT CLOSE
ENOUGH.

WHAT I'M GETTING
AT, WICK, IS THAT I'D
LIKE YOU TO BE MY
BUSINESS PARTNER.

FORTY
PERCENT.

SLIDE
OVER,
HONEY.

I'M NOT
OLD.

HMM?
WHY SO
QUIET?

YOU LOST
INTEREST
OVERNIGHT?

UH, NO...
I APOLOGIZE.
IT'S JUST THAT
IT'S A LOT TO
CONSIDER...

AND I'M
A LITTLE
TIRED.

AWW.

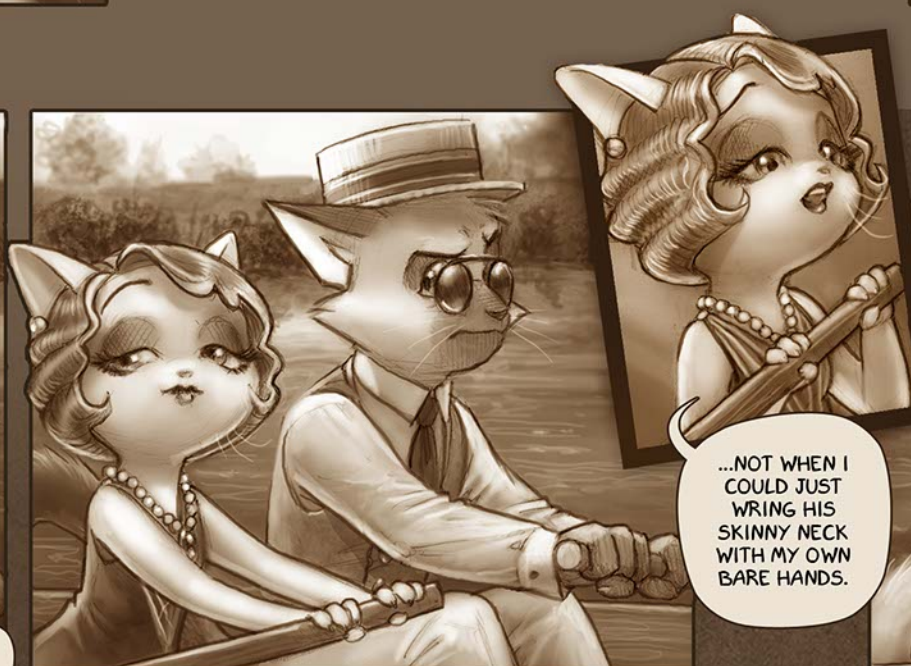
NOT
HITTING
ON ALL SIXES
TODAY,
I'M AFRAID.

POOR
BUNNY.

...WHAT BUNNY?
LIKE IN A BOX?

I MEAN...
JUST WHAT KIND
OF BUNNY DO YOU
TAKE ME FOR,
MADAM?







SO ALL THE TALK OF CONSPIRED HOMICIDE, HIRED GUNS, AND YOU IS INDEED AS FICTIONAL AS IT SOUNDS?

OF COURSE. I LOVED ATLAS.

WHY ALLOW THE AIR OF MYSTERY TO LINGER ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED, THEN? THE SPECULATION ECHOING FROM THE PEANUT GALLERY CLEARLY HASN'T HELPED YOUR CAUSE.

NOT IN THE LEAST.

I JUST... DON'T LIKE TO DISCUSS IT. IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO, YOU KNOW?

I SUPPOSE I COULD TELL YOU ABOUT IT... SOMEDAY, IF YOU REALLY --

I'M SORRY TO HAVE EVEN MENTIONED IT.

...DULY ASHAMED TO BOOT.

YOU DON'T OWE ME THAT.



AHEM, WHAT DO YOU SAY WE, UH, CUT OUR LOSSES FOR TODAY AND HEAD BACK?

I'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO ATTEND TO ANYWAY. AND I LEFT MY POOR SECRETARY STRANDED AT THE HOUSE...

WHAT'S THIS?

SOME SORT OF NEWFANGLED PHOTOMAJIG?

- SO
- GREET
- FAMILY
- IDENTIF



- Exc
- frie
- Portrait enlargements are available.



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8 POSES
PICTURES

25¢



Photomaton



CAN WE GET
BACK TO THAT
BUSINESS WE
WERE TALKING
ABOUT?

ACTUALLY,
I WAS THINKING
OF RUNNING AWAY,
SCREAMING.



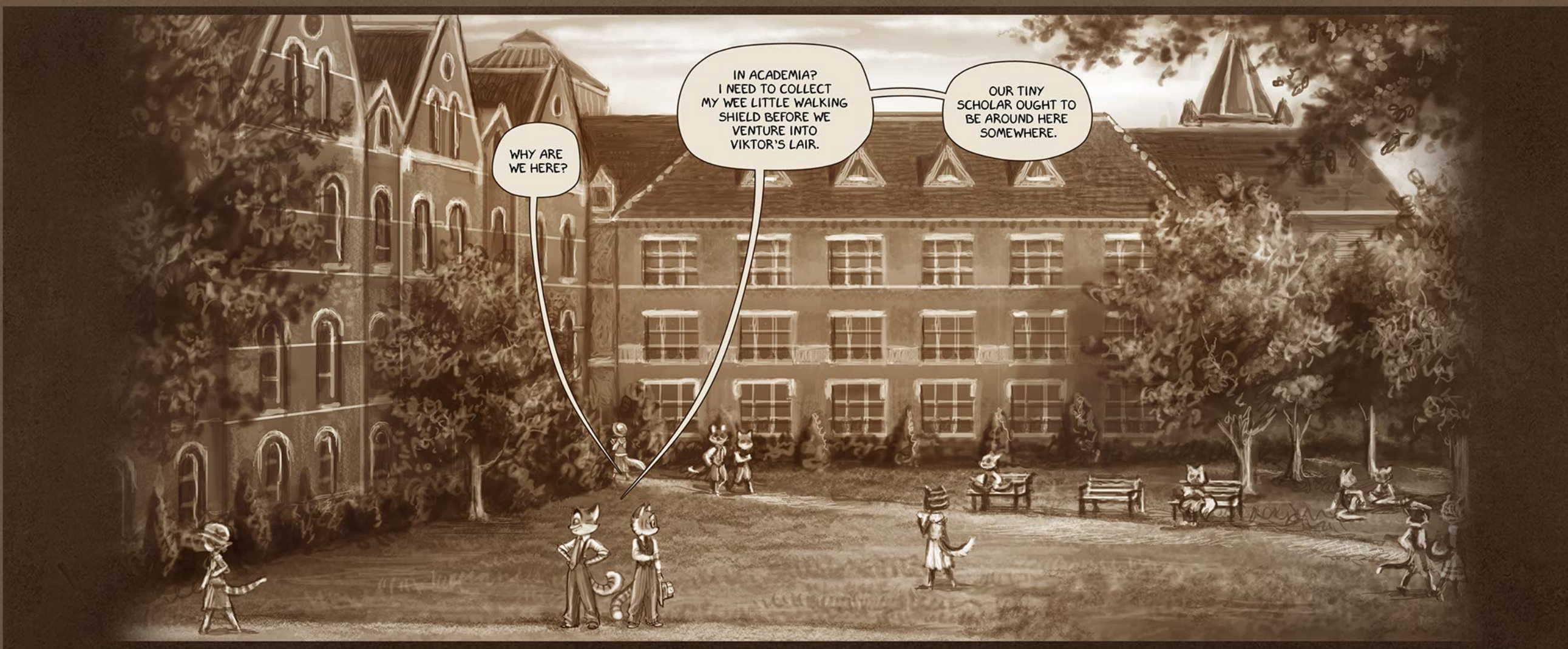
THAT WAS
RUTHLESS.

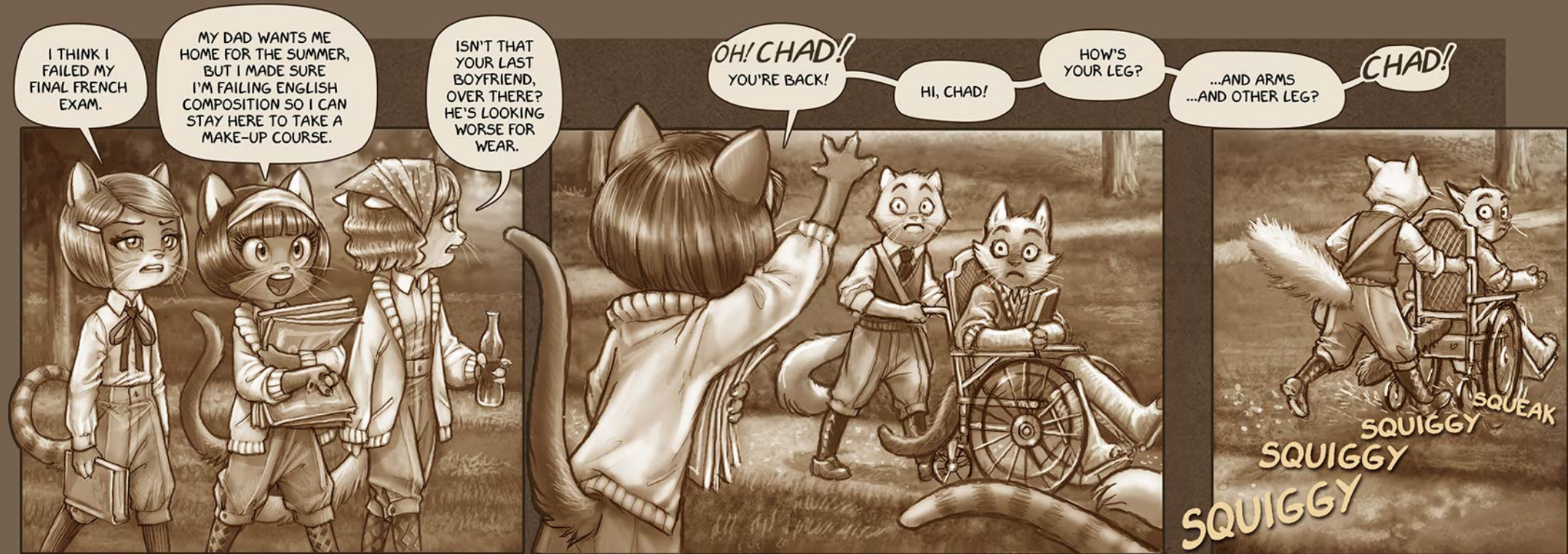


...AND CERTAINLY
DIDN'T LEAVE ME IN
AN ADVANTAGEOUS
NEGOTIATING
POSITION.

STILL, I'D HATE
TO DISRUPT
OUR AUDIENCE
LIKE THAT.









~RUSHING DOWN THE MUSHER'S TRAIL~
BARK! BARK! BARK!

~THROUGH FRIGID CLIMES OF SNOW AND HAIL~
JINGLE JINGLE

~COMES THE TASTE OF ZERO, CELSIUS SCALE:

BRRRRRRR!

SNOPEK'S FROSTY-PALE GINGER-ALE!~



YESSIR - ESKIMO-FLAVORED
JUST THE WAY THE BOYS HERE
AT THE BILLY MCGILLICUTTY
BIG BANJO ORCHESTRA
VARIETY HOUR LIKE IT.

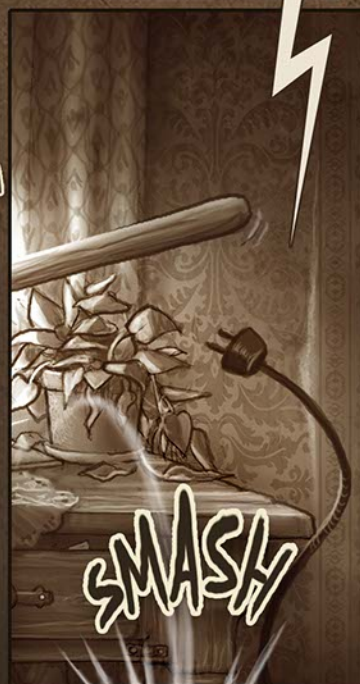
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOYS?

YOU BETCHA!

SAY, WHERE'D YOU
FIND A BANJO THAT
BIG ANYW--

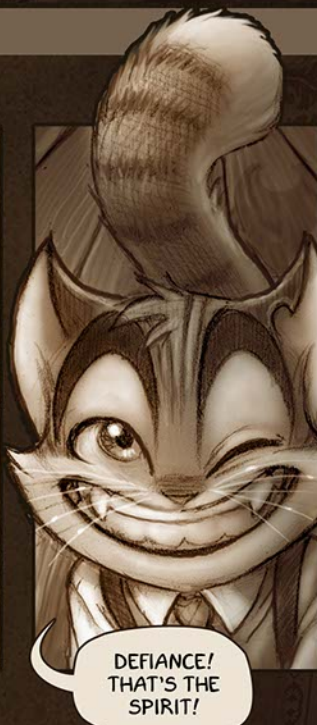
**STRUM-A-LUMMA-A-
TIDDLE-LIDDLE-LUM-TRUM**

SMASH











I THINK
I FOUND THE
PROBLEM.

THERE'S
SOMETHING
JAMMED INTO
THE TRAP.

HMM.
AND THERE'S
SOMETHING I'M
CURIOUS TO KNOW, NOW
THAT I FINALLY HAVE
YOU ALONE FOR
A MOMENT...

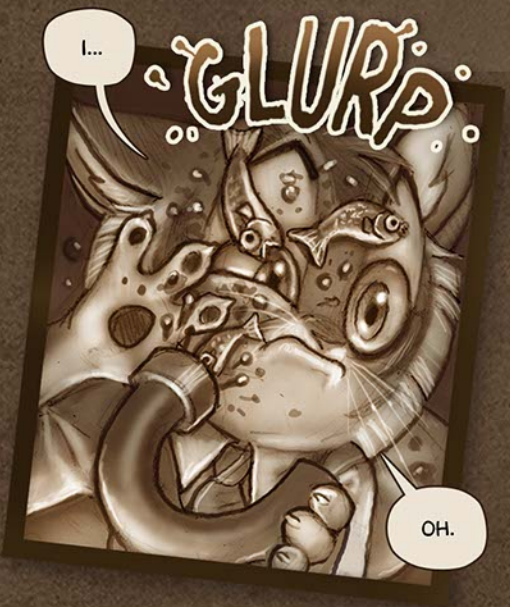


IS IT TRUE YOU ICED
THOSE MOONSHINERS
WHO STORMED IN AND
CAUSED ALL THE RUCKUS
LAST NIGHT?



...SORT OF.

OPRAVIL SI TO?



I...

GLURP

OH.



HHHHUUHH

I CAN'T
BREATHE UNDER
HERE!



...BECAUSE I'M
HAVING TROUBLE
PICTURING IT.



GASP
GASP



OHHHHHH.



WELL, THE BOYS ARE OFF TO WHATEVER ILLICIT ERRANDS THEY HAVE LEFT ON THEIR SCHEDULE TODAY.

I WAS THINKING I COULD LINGER AROUND AND READ YOU THE LATEST WODEHOUSE OR SOMETHING.

BUT YOU STILL HAVE TRACES OF THAT LOOK ON YOUR FACE.

THAT LOOK YOU GAVE MY NEW FRIEND...

LIKE YOU WERE TRYING TO LIGHT HIM ON FIRE WITH YOUR EYEBALL...

IT LEADS ME TO WONDER, VIKTOR...

IF YOU'RE THE REASON CHAD IS AFRAID OF ME!

IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?

WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

CHAD VAS...

BAD.

OH, REALLY? AND CLAUDE? THAT WAS YOUR WORK TOO?

CLAUDE VAS...

LET ME GUESS - FLAWED?

YA.

AND CECIL?

HE VAS, UHH...

OH, DON'T BOTHER ANSWERING THAT.

NOTHING RHYMES WITH CECIL ANYWAY.

TERRIBLE NAME.

AND ALSO HE VAS NO GOOD.

WHAT'S NO GOOD IS YOU SABOTAGING MY SOCIAL LIFE. I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!

NO.

NO!?

YOU HAVE ALWAYS THESE REASONS FOR STAYING HERE YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE AROUND HERE AT ALL.

LAST NIGHT--

YOU MEAN AT LACKADAISY?

BUT I WENT TO ALL THAT TROUBLE SO I COULD STAY FOR THE SUMMER.

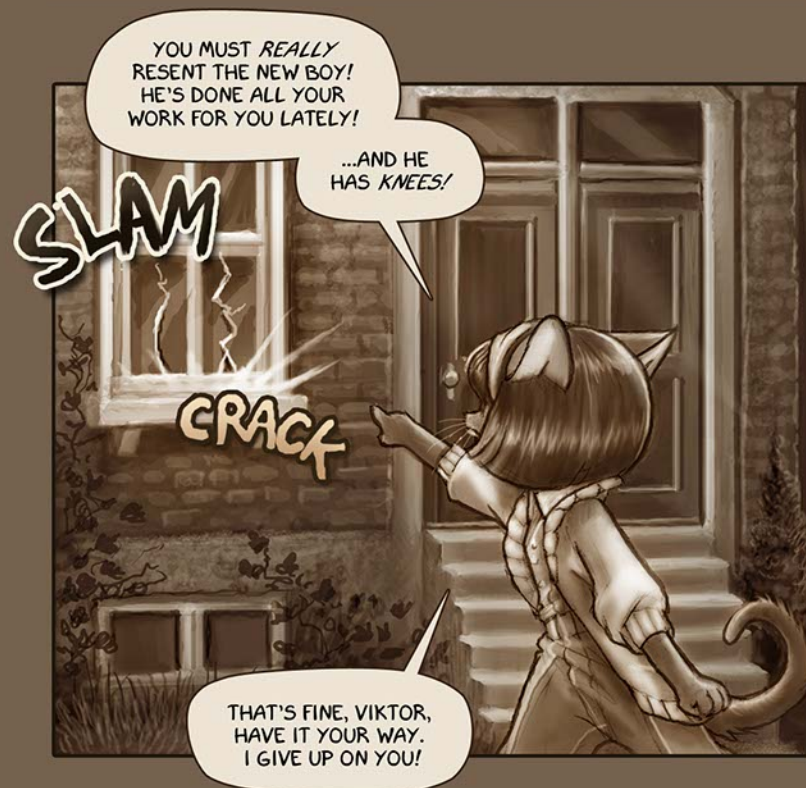
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT? YOU'RE BORED BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DO ALL THE HORRIBLE THINGS YOU USED TO DO, SO NOW YOU'RE PLAYING CONCERNED PATRIARCH?

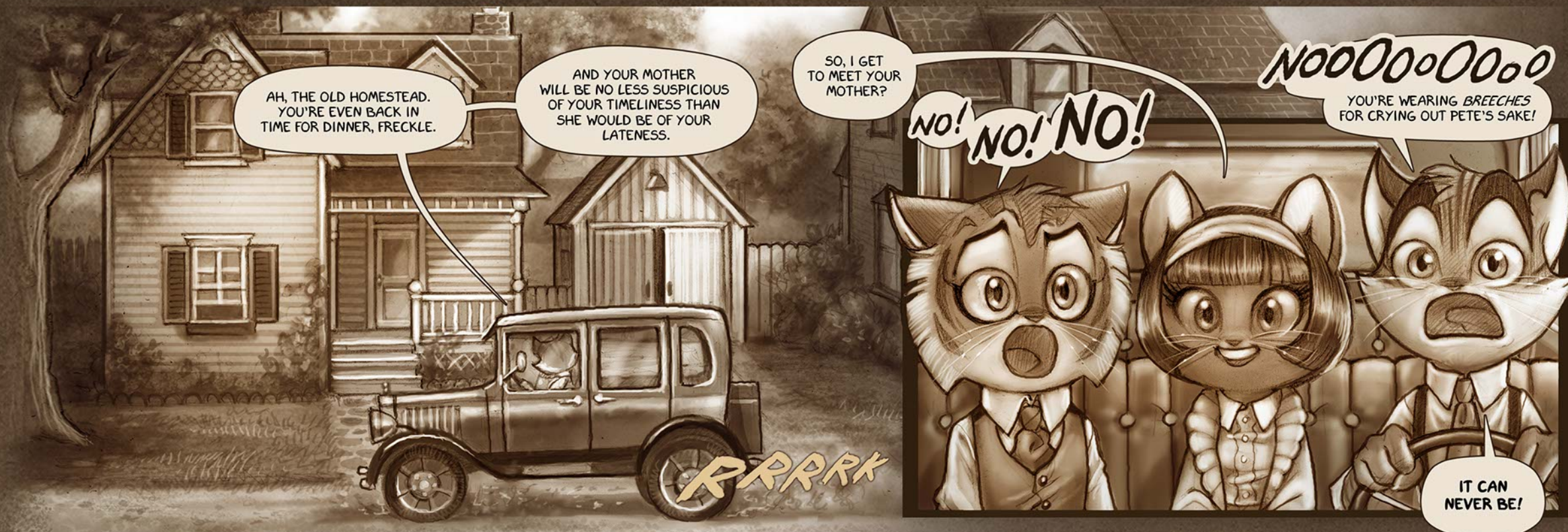
WELL, EITHER WAY, YOU'RE JUST A MONSTER.

SPLUK

HERE. YOUR NEIGHBOR MADE YOU A QUESTIONABLE SANDWICH.

YOU CAN EAT IT BY YOURSELF.





AH, THE OLD HOMESTEAD. YOU'RE EVEN BACK IN TIME FOR DINNER, FRECKLE.

AND YOUR MOTHER WILL BE NO LESS SUSPICIOUS OF YOUR TIMELINESS THAN SHE WOULD BE OF YOUR LATENESS.

SO, I GET TO MEET YOUR MOTHER?

NO! NO! NO!

Nooooooooooooo
YOU'RE WEARING BREECHES FOR CRYING OUT PETE'S SAKE!

IT CAN NEVER BE!

RRRRK



OOHHH THE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.

UM, OKAY.



WELL, GOODBYE!

DON'T FORGET YOU OWE ME A DA--

BYE.

IN FACT, GET DOWN! HIDE!

SHE'S PROBABLY LURKING AROUND OUT HERE WITH HER GARDENING SHEARS, JUST WAITING FOR ME TO MESS UP.



BONK



WAIT, FRECKLE! I MADE YOU SOMETHING. JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER ...RENDERED IN HORRIFIC GRAPHIC DETAIL.

TAKE HEED, BECAUSE WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO TOMORROW NIGHT. YOU'LL HAVE TO SNEAK OUT. I'LL PICK YOU UP ON THE CORNER HERE BEFORE MIDNIGHT.

AND BRING A BIG COAT.

ROCKY! Y JUST MASH MY FACE IN THE GEAR SHIFT!



IT'S WARM OUT.

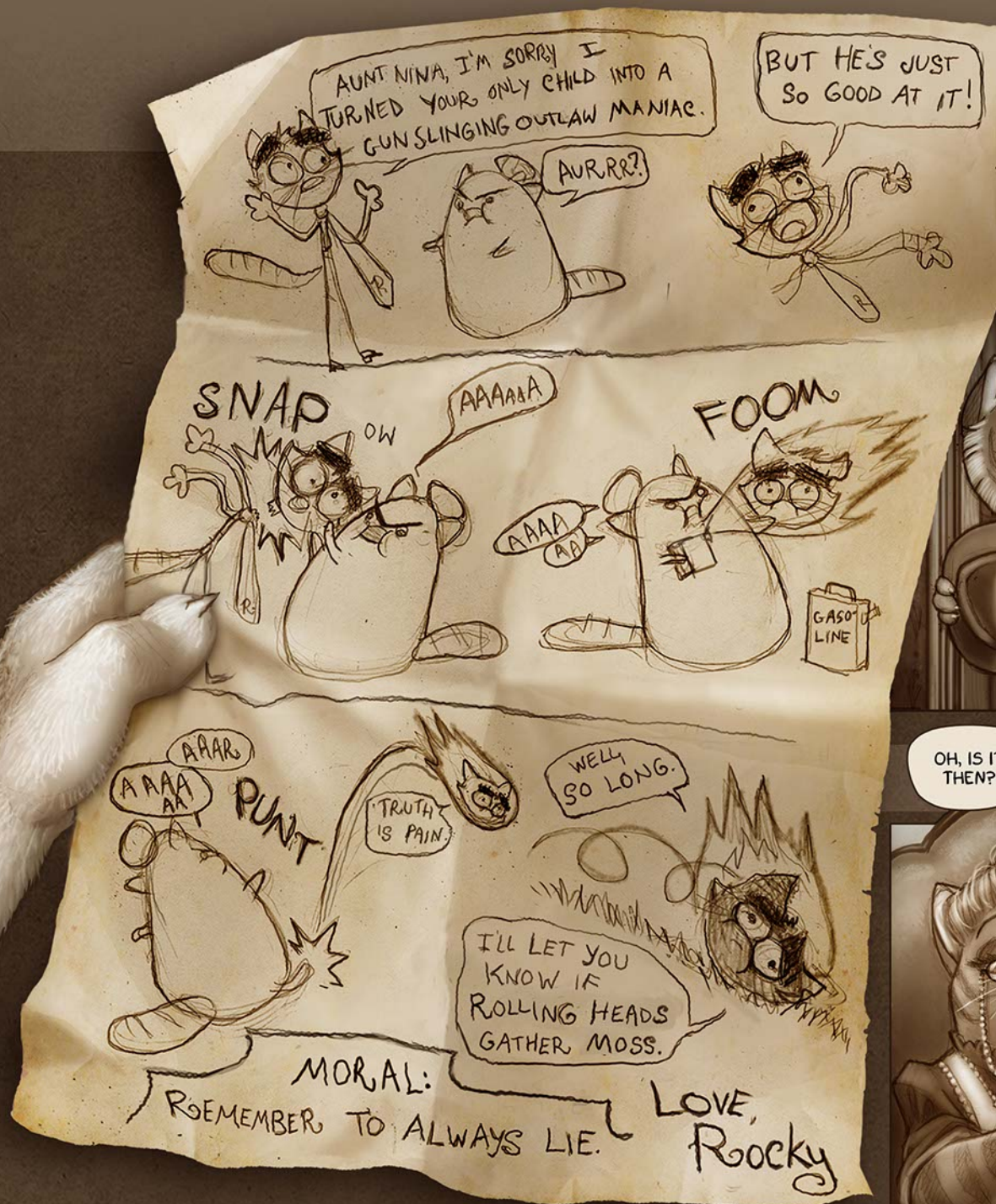


YOU WON'T NEED IT FOR THE WARMTH...

IF YOU DON'T LET ME UP RIGHT NOW, I'LL GIVE YOU SUCH A PINCH!

...YOU'LL NEED IT FOR THE HEAT.

BOFF





FRECKLE,
RIDING THE MO-PACIFIC
I WAS RELUCTANT
TO HEAD FURTHER
WEST AT FIRST...
10-21-21

FRECKLE
WRITING FROM MY
UNCLES IN KANSAS.
TENDING THE GROUNDS TO
EARLY MY KEEP. A LOT
OF WORK BUT I'LL SOON
BE LEARNING TO DRIVE
THE TRACTOR. SOMETHING
I'LL TALK ABOUT IT
WITH YOU.
Rocky
JULY 1921

DEAR FRECKLE - FACE
I'M WRITING TODAY
FROM ANOTHER OLD
FARM. HOPE YOU
ARE DOING WELL.

FRECKLE,
THIS IS A NAPKIN AND I
AM A GRILL COOK.
MEAT CATCHES ON FIRE
EASIER THAN I WOULD
GUESSED. SO DO I, A
TURNS OUT, BUT THAT
ONLY HAPPENED TWICE.
FAR. WISH ME LUCK
ALOE VERA AND HELP
HELP ME!
1-30-1922

FRECKLE,
I'VE JOINED A CIRCUS
ROUSTABOUT SEEMED LIKE A PROPER
OCCUPATION FOR A PROPER GADABOUT
AFTER ALL, BUT A PROPER GADABOUT
OF EVENTS AND INSTEAD
AND INSTEAD OF A DOOR
CAR TO A CONSTABLE
I SLIPPED FRECKLE
THE HOSTLER MAKE A NAT
MIGHT MAKE A NAT
ESCAPIST OWING TO MY
"STRING BEAN" P
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE
MY OWN ACT
SEND YOU TICKETS
3-10-1923

HOW ART THOU FRECKLE?
REGRETTABLY THE CIRCUS WENT SOUTH
TO INVITE ME ALONG, BUT
HOBONIA TRAIN
THE DAKOTAS AND
BEQUEATHED ME
OLD FIDDLE! UPON
ITS REMAINING STRINGS
OVERED THAT A TROOP
RESIDENCE INSIDE. KNOWING YOUR
FEELINGS TOWARD WASPS AND BEES I'LL
SPARE YOU THE GRIZZLY DETAILS
EXCEPT TO SAY THAT THEY HAD
NO PERCEVABLE AFFINITY FOR MUSIC,
NEITHER IRISH REEL NOR VIVALDI. STILL
EVEN WITHOUT AN AGREEABLE AUDIENCE,
IT'S GOOD TO PLAY AGAIN. REMINDS ME OF
BEING IN THE LITTLE PARLOR IN YOUR HOUSE
AROUND CHRISTMASTIME. O, FIDDLESTICKS
OUT OF PAPER
Rocky
8-1923

FRECKLE-LAD, MY MOST
FAVORITE POTATO-EATER,
AM ROUGHLY OVER
YONDER OKLERHONEY
FIND BUGGER.
MY HAT?
IT THERE??
YOU SEEN HIDE OR HAIR
YDAD? HE HASN'T
EEN WRITING BACK.
FAITHFULLY COUSINFULLY
Rocky
1-30-1922

FRECKLE,
THIS IS A NAPKIN AND I
AM A GRILL COOK.
MEAT CATCHES ON FIRE
EASIER THAN I WOULD
GUESSED. SO DO I, A
TURNS OUT, BUT THAT
ONLY HAPPENED TWICE.
FAR. WISH ME LUCK
ALOE VERA AND HELP
HELP ME!
1-30-1922

FRECKLE,
I'VE JOINED A CIRCUS
ROUSTABOUT SEEMED LIKE A PROPER
OCCUPATION FOR A PROPER GADABOUT
AFTER ALL, BUT A PROPER GADABOUT
OF EVENTS AND INSTEAD
AND INSTEAD OF A DOOR
CAR TO A CONSTABLE
I SLIPPED FRECKLE
THE HOSTLER MAKE A NAT
MIGHT MAKE A NAT
ESCAPIST OWING TO MY
"STRING BEAN" P
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE
MY OWN ACT
SEND YOU TICKETS
3-10-1923



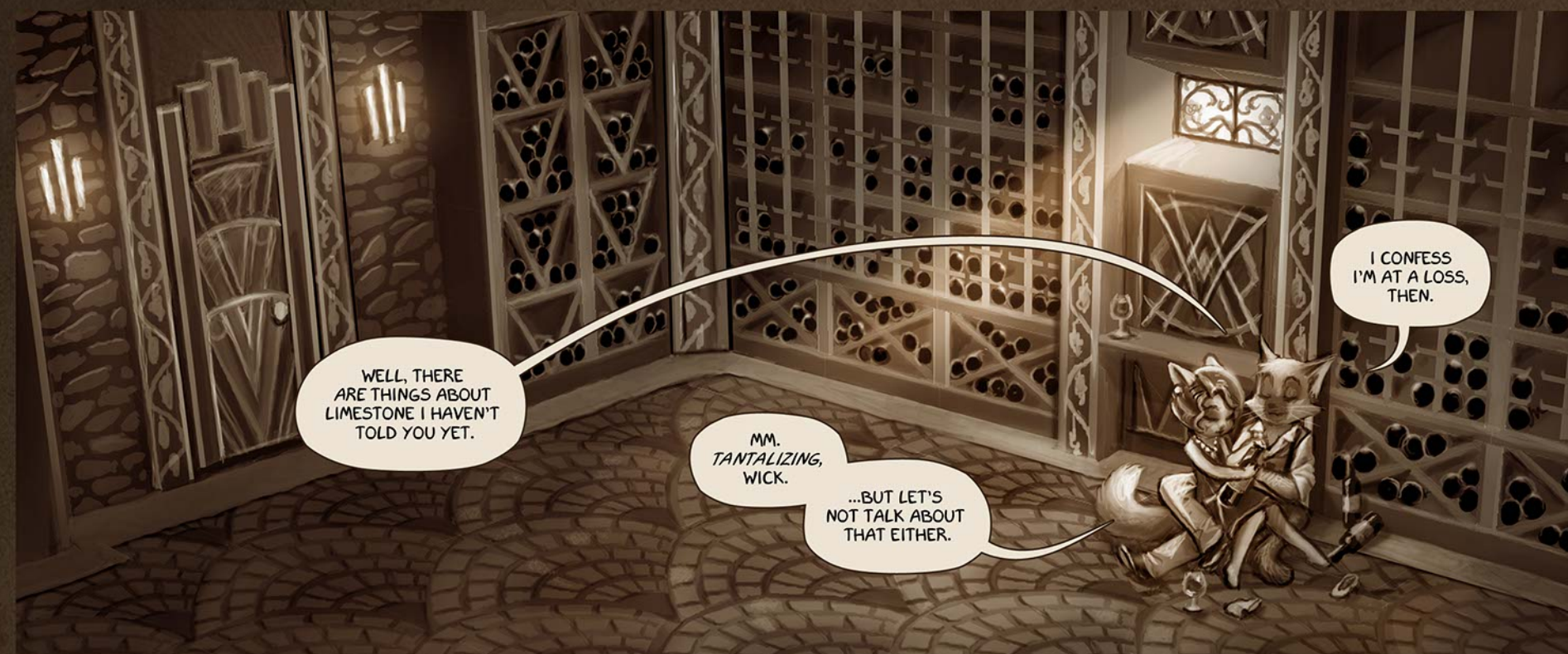
A 1919
BORDEAUX?
LET'S TRY
THIS.

WAS IT
A GOOD
YEAR?

WELL, THAT'S
A TRAGIC ONE.
THEY WERE ALL
GOOD YEARS
BEFORE 1920,
WEREN'T
THEY?

...EXCEPT FOR
WHEN THE PHYLLOXERA
INFESTATIONS DECIMATED
EUROPE'S VINEYARDS,
THAT IS, BUT THAT--

OH, YOU DON'T
WANT TO TALK
ABOUT THAT, HUH?



WELL, THERE
ARE THINGS ABOUT
LIMESTONE I HAVEN'T
TOLD YOU YET.

MM.
TANTALIZING,
WICK.

...BUT LET'S
NOT TALK ABOUT
THAT EITHER.

I CONFESS
I'M AT A LOSS,
THEN.

I JUST DON'T KNOW
HOW TO ENTERTAIN
A LADY WHO DOESN'T
WANT TO HEAR ABOUT
ROCKS AND BUGS.







...NOT IF IT'S CONTINGENT ON A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP.

YOUR BUSINESS WOULD BE BAD FOR MY BUSINESS, MITZI. I HAVE A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD... AND NOT JUST BECAUSE I'M VAIN.

THERE ARE INVESTORS TO PLEASE AND... CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO RELY ON ME FOR THEIR LIVELIHOOD...

I SEE. YOU WANT TO KEEP ENJOYING THE SPOILS WITHOUT GETTING YOUR MITTS DIRTY. ...LIKE A PROPER HYPOCRITE.

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THOSE UNBECOMING SCRUPLES? YOU'D MAKE A GREAT BOOTLEGGER OTHERWISE.

AND YOU WERE LEADING ME ON. YOU'RE JUST A ROTTEN, YANKEE ROBBER BARON, WICK.

I DON'T KNOW, MEPHISTOPHELES. WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ALL THOSE CURVES?



OH, SEE? YOU CAN EVEN BE A LITTLE MEAN WHEN YOU WANT TO.

WHAT A WASTE OF TALENT. ARE YOU SURE I CAN'T CONVINCE YOU?

COUGH
COUGH
COUGH

I'M STILL NOT CONVINCED YOU AREN'T TRYING TO KILL ME, MITZI.



...ALBEIT THE UNCONVENTIONAL WAY.

THAT'S IT, THEN? NO DEAL?

AHEM. AFRAID SO.

WELL, I GUESS IT'S TIME TO BRING ME HOME TOO.



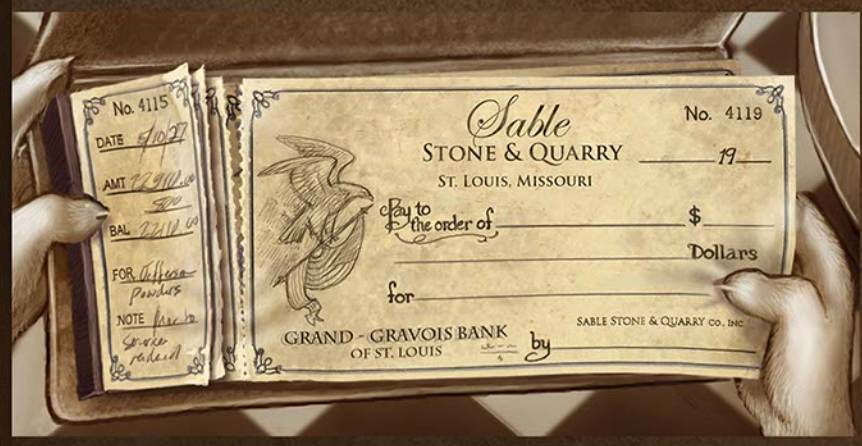
I'VE GOT ALL THE NEW SURVEY DATA ORGANIZED INTO THESE FOLDERS BY LOCATION FOR YOU.

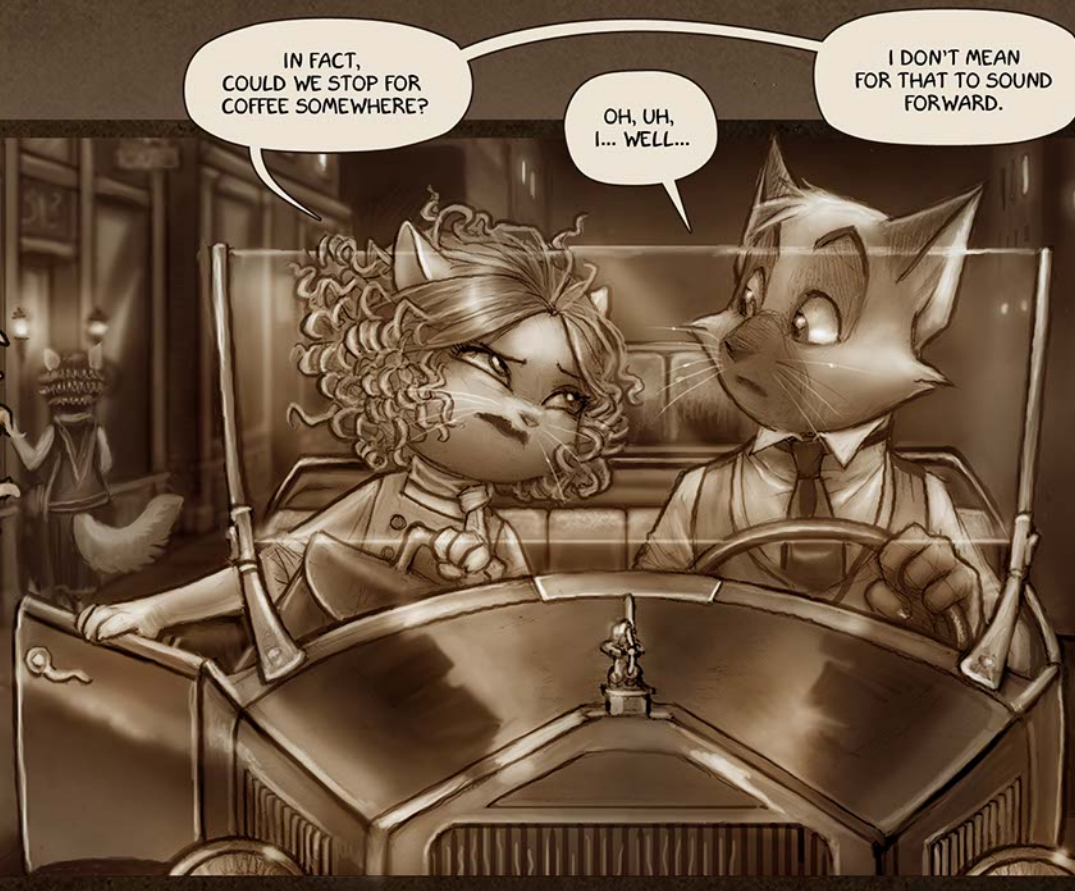
PRELIMINARY LABOR, POWDER AND EQUIPMENT ESTIMATES ARE INCLUDED.

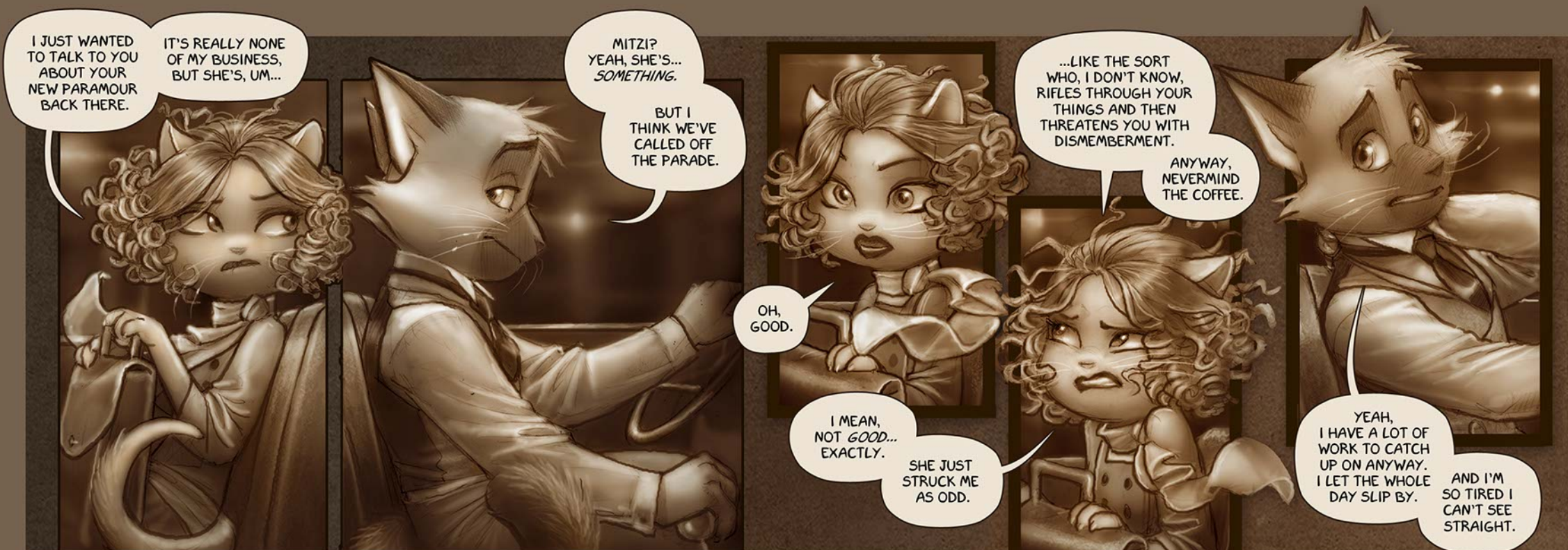
AND PAYROLL IS FIGURED FOR THE FIRST OF THE MONTH.

OH, AND I'VE GOT THE LEDGER AND CHECKBOOK WITH MY THINGS SINCE YOU'D JUST FORGET TO BRING THEM TO THE OFFICE.

SO DON'T PANIC AND CALL ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT BECAUSE YOU CAN'T FIND THEM.









MY, THAT WAS A CHILLY DEPARTURE. NOT EVEN A GOODNIGHT KISS?

SIGH I'LL TAKE THE SMUGNESS AS A SIGN YOU APPRECIATE MY EFFORTS TO SAVE THIS SINKING SHIP.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THIS EARLY ANYWAY? IT'S HARDLY EVEN DARK OUT.

COULDN'T SLEEP AFTER LAST NIGHT'S FIREWORKS... SO I FIGURED I'D PRACTICE SITTING AROUND LOOKING TROUBLED AND PENSIVE.

WELL, YOU'VE SUCCEEDED IN LOOKING LIKE A GRIMY DOORMAT.



ALL PART OF MY ARTISTS' MYSTIQUE I'M CULTIVATING.



YOU'RE FERMENTING IN ARTISTS' MYSTIQUE, ZIB.

...BUT SO LONG AS YOU'RE SEMI-CONSCIOUS, MAYBE YOU COULD COME WITH ME?

I HAVE TO GO TAKE CARE OF SOMETHING ON THE SLEAZY SIDE OF TOWN.

...AND I'M A LITTLE TIPSY.



WHAT'S THIS? MARTINI MITZI IS TIPSY?

HOW DID THAT COME TO PASS? I'VE SEEN YOU DRINK CATS TWICE YOUR SIZE UNDER A TABLE.



NOT THAT ONE. I WISH I HAD KNOWN HE WAS SOME KIND OF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION BEFORE I STEPPED IN THE RING.

WELL, ALL RIGHT, THEN. FAR BE IT FOR ME TO REFUSE AN INVITATION TO SLEAZY TOWN.

THAT'S WHERE ALL THE SLEAZE HAPPENS.



...ALWAYS SUCH A GENTLEMAN.

THIS ERRAND OF YOURS COULDN'T WAIT UNTIL YOU COULD WALK IN A STRAIGHT LINE AGAIN?

NO. IF I STOP NOW, MY SENSE OF SHAME MIGHT CATCH UP WITH ME.

I SEE. WELCOME TO THE RACE, THEN.

HEY! WHADD'YOU GOT? GIMME WHATEVER YOU GOT OR I'LL --

WHOA!

HOLD ON! SETTLE DOWN. I -- OH.

NO. YOU CAN'T ROB US WITH A CAN OPENER, VIRGIL.

BUT IT'S POINTY.

UURGH

UHH, I'M NOT SURE IF THE SHADOWY AMBUSH ROUTINE IS WORKING OUT FOR YOU. MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST... GET YOURSELF A CAN.

I'D DONATE A NICKEL TO THE CAUSE IF I HAD TWO TO RUB TOGETHER, BUT I'M IN THE SAME RICKETY, IMPOVERISHED, OLD BOAT AS YOU, FRIEND.

AS IT TURNS OUT, CRIME NEVER PAYS.

YES IT DOES.

...IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE.

"SABLE STONE AND QUARRY" - A BLANK CHECK?

HUH, ADDING FORGERY AND THEFT TO YOUR REPERTOIRE TONIGHT, ARE WE?

...AND TO PAY THE REST OF THE BAND... AND FIX THE CAR...

AND PAY BACK THE TAXES ON THE PROPERTY, REPAIR THE BAR, RESTOCK THE ARMORY, AND BUY SOME RESPECTABLE HOOCH, OF COURSE...

OH, DON'T GIVE ME THAT LOOK AFTER YOU'VE PRODDED ME FOR YOUR WAGES.

I'LL REPAY IT ALL. EVENTUALLY.

I'M ONLY TAKING A LITTLE - JUST ENOUGH TO SPARE YOU FROM STARVATION, YOU POOR THING.



YEAH.
SURE. WHAT ARE
YOU GONNA DO
WHEN HE CATCHES
YOUR LITTLE PAWS,
MITZI - YOU KNOW,
BEFORE EVENTUALLY
ROLLS AROUND?



WICK?
DON'T WORRY.
HE'S TOO NICE
TO GO SEEKING
REPRISALS.



HI!!!
YOU CASH
CHECKS HERE,
RIGHT?

COULD I
TROUBLE YOU
FOR A PEN?

OH, WHY,
THANK YOU.
MY HERO.

EXCUSE ME
A MOMENT, WILL
YOU, HANDSOME?
I JUST NEED TO
PUT MY LITTLE
ENDORSEMENT
ON THIS.

...OH, GOD.
SO DRUNK.

SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE



SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

AAURGH!
WHAT DOES
HIS SIGNATURE
LOOK LIKE??



WHAT? YOU'RE PLAYING HARD TO GET NOW?

I THOUGHT THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED?



YEAH. I GUESS I WAS JUST HOPING TO GET IT WITHOUT THE EXTRA SLATHERING OF MORAL TURPITUDE.



TALBOTS

YOU SAID IT WASN'T GONNA BE LIKE THAT - CASHING IN FRIENDS LIKE POKER CHIPS, I MEAN.



IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE, BUT THINGS DIDN'T GO THE WAY I PLANNED AND I'M RUNNING SHORT ON OPTIONS.

I'VE ALREADY PAWNED AND SOLD EVERYTHING I COULD TO KEEP EVERYONE FED. THE BIG HOUSE, THE CARS, EVEN MY WEDDING CHINA - IT'S ALL GONE.



ALL OF IT?

HOW ABOUT THOSE MARBLES AROUND YOUR NECK?



THIS... I COULDN'T LET THIS GO. IT'S THE FIRST THING ATLAS EVER GAVE ME.

HE PUT IT AROUND MY NECK JUST AFTER I'D BEEN SHIMMYING ALL OVER STAGE FOR THE MATA HARI SONG, REMEMBER?



I WAS STANDING THERE PANTING, HALF-EXPOSED IN THAT RIDICULOUS, BAWDY DRESS...

BUT SOMEHOW THIS JUST COVERED UP EVERY TAWDRY BIT OF IT ALL.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE SOMEONE LIKE HIM HAD ANY INTEREST IN SOMEONE LIKE ME. I FELT LIKE A LADY.



YEAH, I REMEMBER IT, LADY.

I JUST FIGURED NOW THAT HE'S GONE, YOU MIGHT STOP WEARING IT LIKE A LEASH.

ZIB, DON'T TOUCH--



SNAP



OH!

OH.



NO.
WHY DID YOU
DO THAT?

...YOU
PULLED AWAY.
I'M SORRY.



THEN WHY
ARE YOU JUST
STANDING
THERE?

HELP ME.

I CAN
PUT IT BACK
TOGETHER.



THEY'RE
ROLLING AWAY!
HURRY!



ZIB, PLEASE.
HELP ME.



HEY.
WHY DON'T
YOU JUST
LEAVE IT?

WE COULD
JUST LEAVE IT,
MITZI.



I JUST KEEP
THINKING THIS
CAN'T END WELL
FOR ANYONE
HERE.



SO THAT TRAIN
OUT OF TOWN I'VE
BEEN TALKING ABOUT -
IT WOULDN'T REALLY
BE SO TRAGIC,
YOU KNOW?

NOT IF
THE *WHOLE*
BAND WENT.



IT'S NO GOOD
BEING STUCK IN
ONE PLACE
ANYWAY.

WE COULD
GO GYPSYING
AROUND LIKE REAL
MUSICIANS AGAIN.

BOTH OF US -
REAL MUSICIANS
AGAIN.



...I'D HAVE TO
STIPULATE THAT THE
BAWDY MATA HARI GETUP
COMES ALONG TOO, THOUGH.
NON-NEGOTIABLE.



HMM. WELL,
THAT WAS A
DRESS SIZE
OR TWO AGO,
I'M AFRAID.

IT'D HAVE
TO BE YOUR
TURN TO PLAY
MATA HARI.



WHAT ARE *THOSE*?
ARE THOSE *PEARLS*?



IT'S A
PEARL!

YYAAA

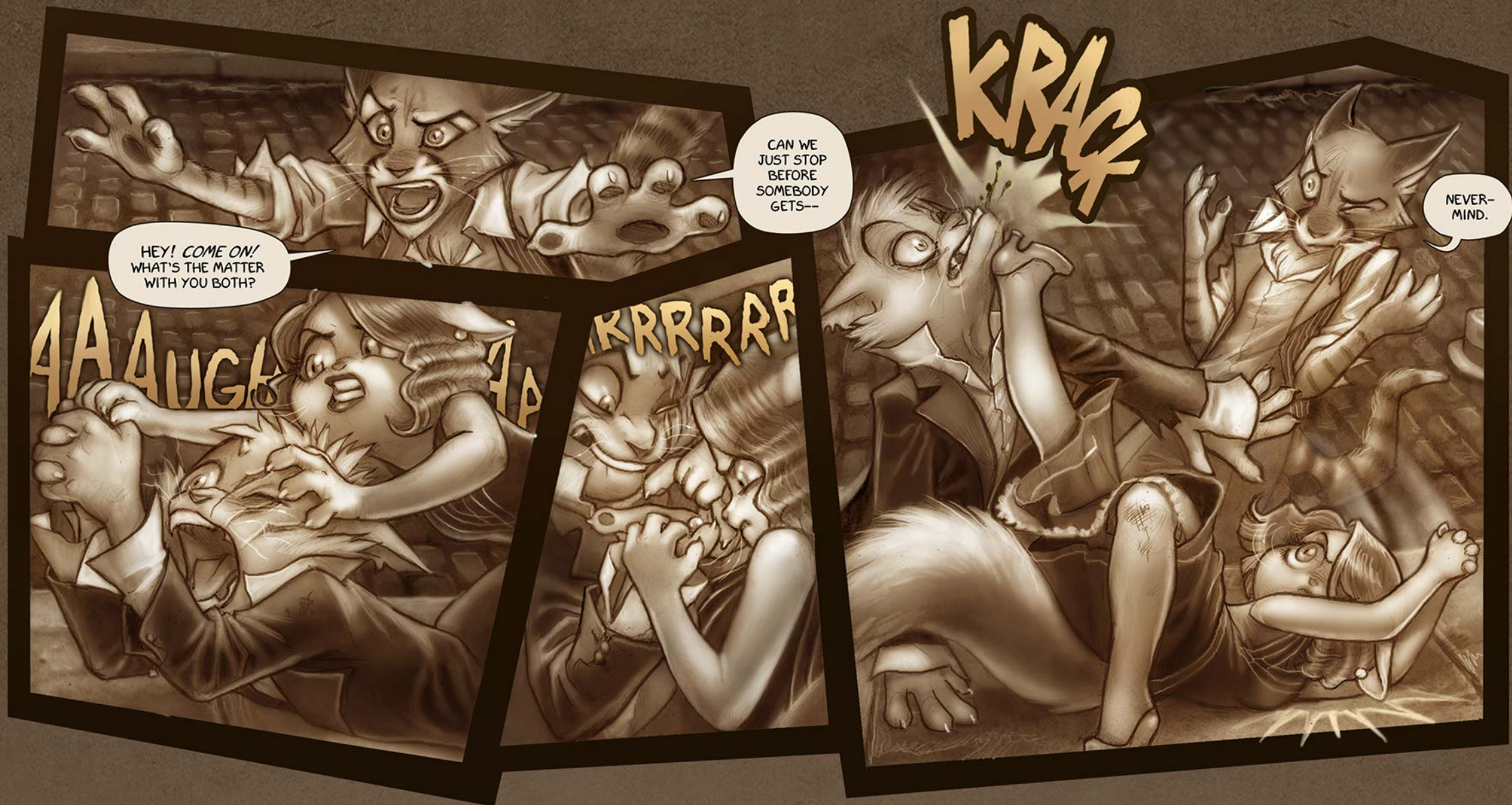


DON'T YOU DARE,
YOU FILTHY --

LET GO!

NO!
I FOUND IT!









I HATE HIM
FOR KNOWING
I'D STICK AROUND
BECAUSE *SHE'D*
STICK AROUND,
YOU KNOW?

ATLAS HAD
A TALENT FOR
COLLECTING
STRAYS, I MUST
ADMIT.

ALL OF US - JUST
THE RIGHT KIND OF
DESPERATE. AND HE
WAS SOME SORT OF
SOLID GROUND.

BUT NOW
WE'RE STRANDED,
TRYING TO LIVE
ON THE MEMORY
VAPOR.

...BOUND TO
WINK OUT ANY
MINUTE.

WHY DOESN'T
ANYONE ELSE
KNOW WE'LL
DISAPPEAR
ALONG WITH
IT?

I GOTTA GET
OUTTA HERE,
VIRGIL!

...AS SOON
AS I FIND THE
VOLITION TO
STAND UP.

I'M SO
THIRSTY.

WELL, YOU'VE LISTENED
TO ME MOAN. THE LEAST I CAN
DO IS OFFER SOME OF THIS
WATERED-DOWN SWILL, IF YOU--

YES
YES

OKAY, HOLD ON.
I DON'T WANT
YOUR BLOODY
DROOL ALL OVER
THIS. WE'LL NEED
AN ALTERNATE
APPROACH.

WHAT'S THE
RUMPUS, BOYS?

WE HEARD ABOUT SOME IDIOTS INVOLVED IN A SCUFFLE ALL OVER THIS SHOPKEEPER'S DOORSTEP. SO WE HURRIED ON OVER.

I'M GLAD WE MADE IT IN TIME FOR COCKTAIL HOUR.

YOU WANNA HAND OVER THE FLASK AND GIVE ME THE IDIOT-STORY ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE?

UH, WELL... THERE WAS, UHH... BUT I DIDN'T...

UHHHHHHHHH NOPE.

I'M NOT GOING TO BOTHER TRYING TO EXPLAIN THIS.



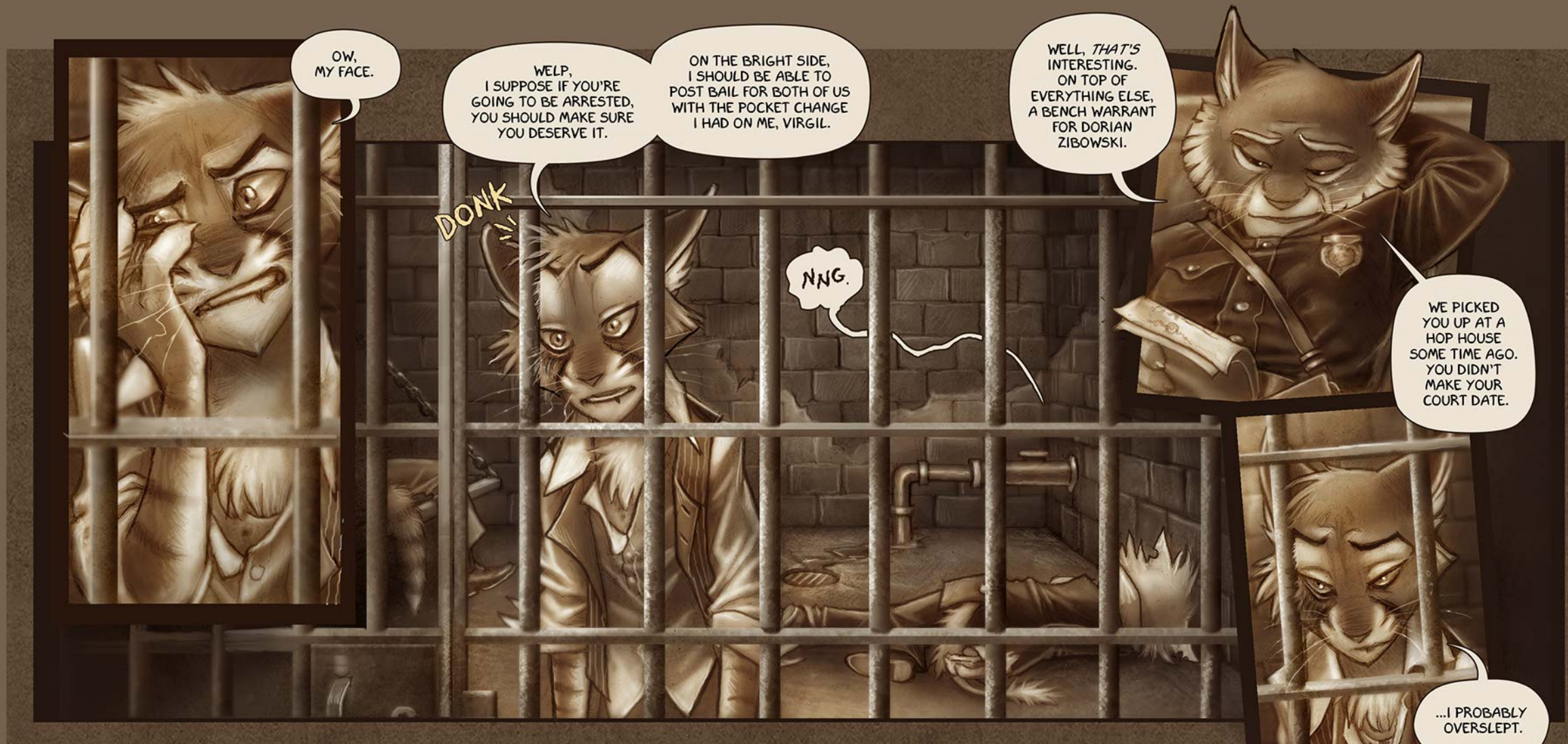
ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE JUST MAKING A BIGGER PROBLEM FOR YOURSELF, SON.

NO. YOU CAN DO SIMPLE SUBTRACTION IN YOUR HEAD, CAN'T YOU? I'M SOLVING THE PROBLEM.

SEE? NOW THERE'S NO PROBLEM LEFT.

EXCEPT THE PROXIMITY OF YOUR UGLY FACE, SON.





YOU MIGHT AS WELL
MAKE THE BEST OF IT
AND COOL YOUR HEELS
SOME, THEN.

YOU AREN'T
LIABLE TO FIND A
JUDGE TO ARRAIGN
YOU UNTIL AFTER THE
HOLIDAY WEEKEND,
ANYWAY.

YOU'LL GET
YOUR MONEY
BACK, THOUGH.

WON'T HE,
BOYS?

ASSUMING IT'S
ON THE LEVEL, THAT IS.
YOU LOOK DOWN
ON YOUR LUCK.

DOES IT
SHOW?

WE'RE
LIKE
TWINS.



WHAT I MEAN IS,
IT'S A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS -
SOMEONE CARRYING THAT
MUCH CASH AROUND,
LOOKING LIKE THAT.

DOING
WHAT?

YEAH, WELL, IT
MAY NOT LOOK
IT, BUT I AM
GAINFULLY
EMPLOYED.

I PROVIDE
PEOPLE WITH NOISE
FROM A SAXOPHONE.
IT'S MY ONE REDEEMING
QUALITY.

OH? DOES
THE WORD
MARIGOLD
MEAN
ANYTHING
TO YOU?

YOU
ON THAT
PAYROLL BY
CHANCE?

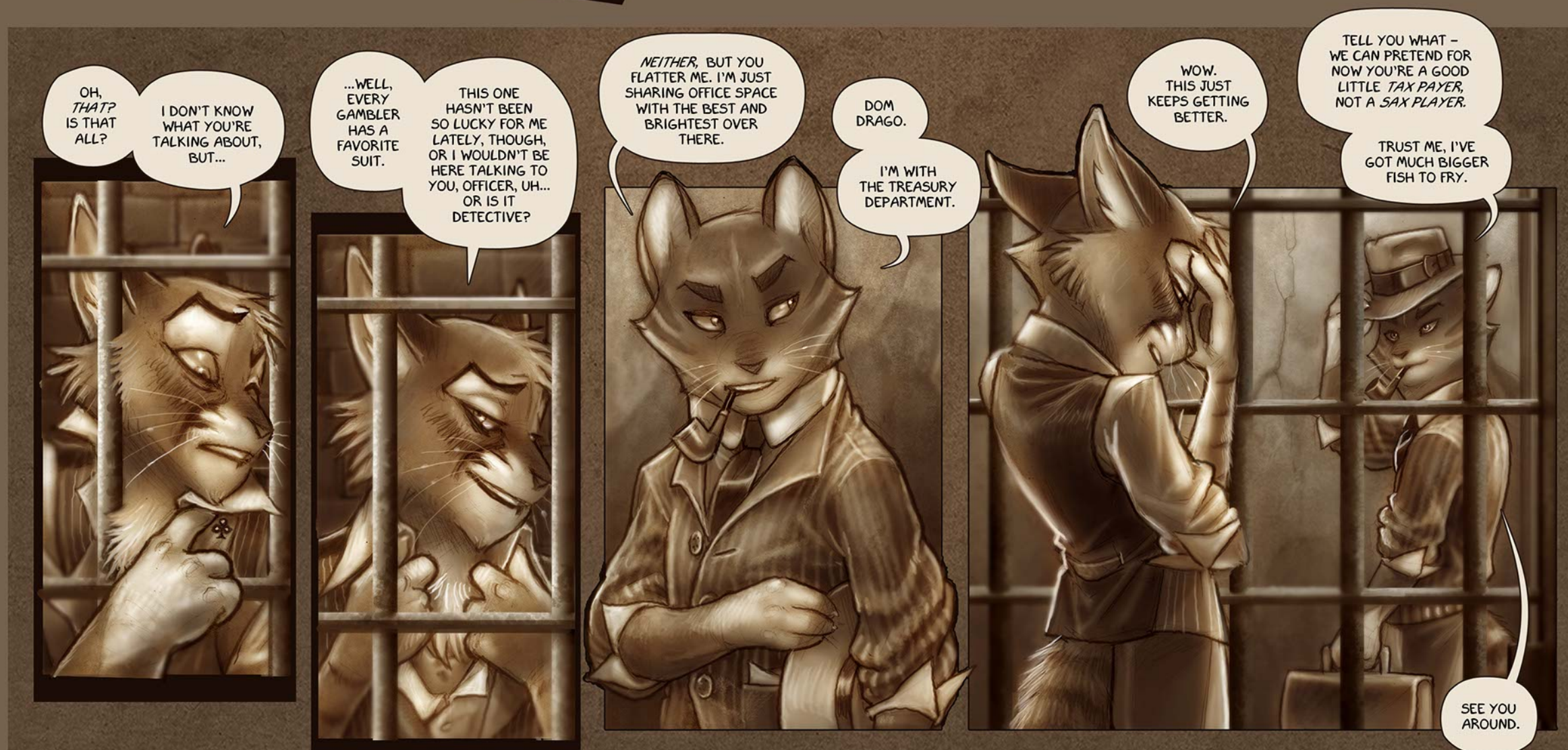
WHAT? NO, NO.
HOW'D WE JUMP TO
THE CONCLUSION
THAT I--

WORK AT
A GIN JOINT?
WHERE ELSE DOES A
SCRUFFY, GOW-HEAD
HORNBLOWER
FIND EMPLOYMENT
AROUND HERE?

OKAY,
SOMEONE
ELSE DOES
MATH IN HIS
HEAD TOO.

ANYWAY, I
DOUBT I'D MEET
THEIR DRESS
CODE.





GOD, I
HOPE NOT.

BUT THANKS
FOR BEING THE ONLY
ONE NOT TO HIT ME OR
ATTEMPT TO ROB ME
THIS EVENING.

PLEASURE
WAS ALL
MINE.

YOU'RE
TOO KIND.

I DO
MY BEST.

YEP.
WELL, STAY
OUT OF
TROUBLE.

DAMMIT.





DEFIANCE IS A PRETTY BOLD NAME FOR A CORNFIELD-MOSQUITO-RANCH IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

YOU'RE SURE THIS IS THE PLACE VIKTOR TOLD YOU ABOUT?

SURE AS A GOOSE IN GALOSHES.

...THAT IS, HE SHOULDN'T HAVE PUNCHED ME IN THE HEAD IF HE EXPECTED ME TO REMEMBER *EVERYTHING* HE SAID.

OH. WELL, GALOSHES WOULD BE NICE. WE'RE STANDING IN A CRICK OR SOMETHING.

OOH! WHAT'S *THAT*?



WELL, BEGORRA! THERE'S A PROPER FAIRY MOUND IF I EVER SAW ONE.

THERE AREN'T ANY FAIRIES HERE - *AUGH!* JUST A LOT OF STUPID CICADAS.

OKAY. WHADDID YOU FIND? A WEED LUMP WITH A DOOR?

IT'S AN OLD SPRINGHOUSE. I'D WAGER IT'S A HIDING PLACE TO BOOT.

UHH, ASK HIM ABOUT THE CARDINALS.

HMM.

WOBBLE

...OR THE BROWNS, OR-- AH!

HOW VERY MYSTERIOUS.

HEY, SPEAKING OF WHICH, HOW DO I GET YOUR CAGEY COUSIN TO TALK TO ME?









...WELL, EXCEPT
FOR ALL THE
POINTY THINGS.







HM.
THAT WAS...



...NOT
ESPECIALLY
HELPFUL.
SORRY.



RIGHT. AT LEAST
YOU'RE THOROUGH,
ABELARD. THAT'S
FOUR TIRES WRECKED.
THERE'S A LONG
WALK HOME IN
OUR FUTURE.

HELP ME
PUT THIS
PIPELINE BACK
TOGETHER
FIRST.

MMM. DID
YOU SEE WHICH
DIRECTION THEY
VANISHED IN?

NO.
I LOST TRACK
WHEN MY LIFE
STARTED FLASHING
BEFORE MY EYES
ON THE DOWNHILL.

BUT DON'T
WORRY, I'M SURE
THEY'VE SCURRIED
OFF WITH THE
FEAR OF THE HOLY
GHOST IN THEM.

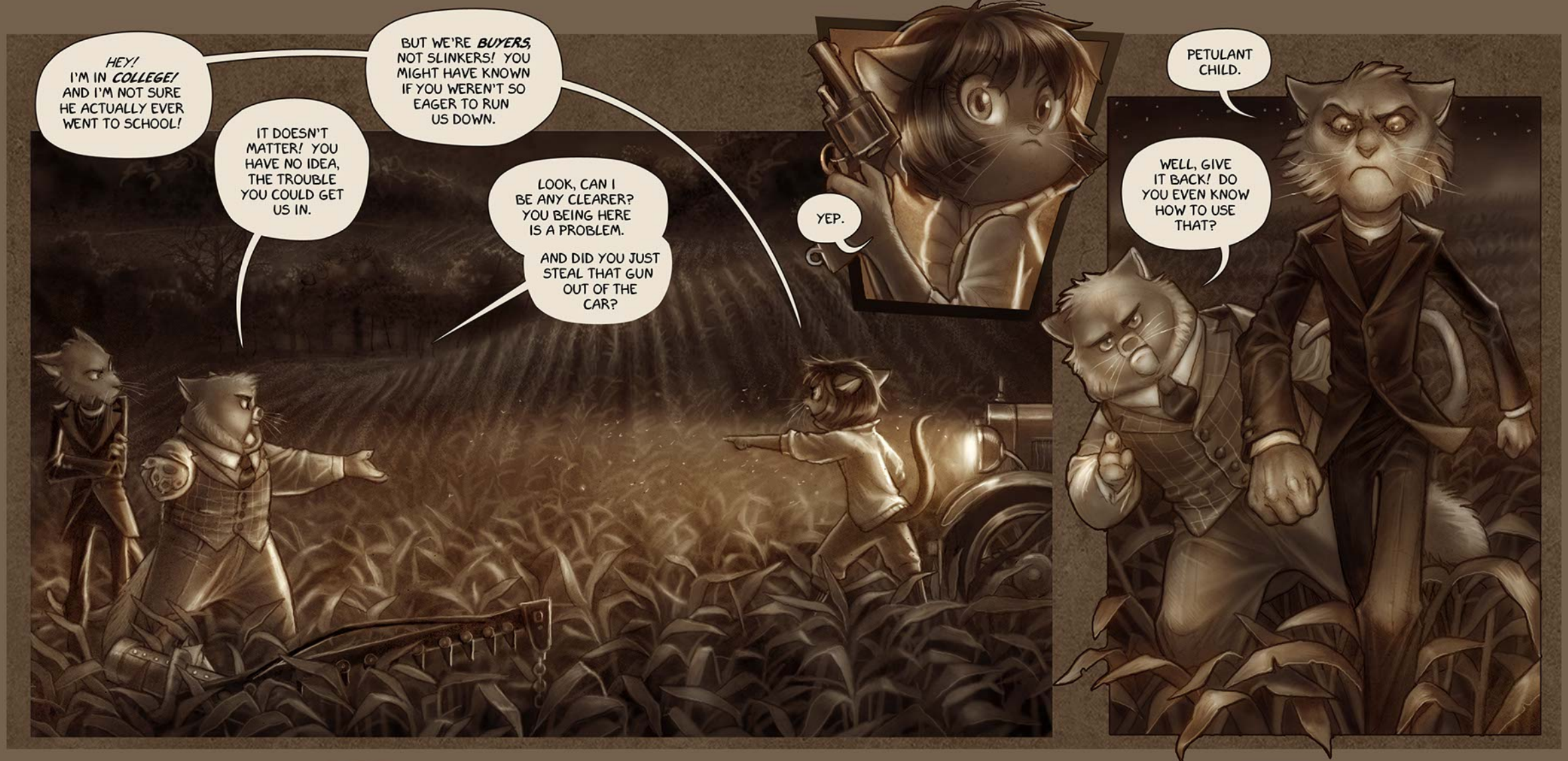
...OR AT LEAST THE
FEAR OF UNHINGED
CLERGY IN LARGE
AUTOMOBILES.

WELL,
I THOUGHT I
JUST HEARD
VOICES.

JUST NOW?
I FIGURED YOU'D
BEEN HEARING
THEM ALL
ALONG.







BECAUSE IN THAT
SEA, THERE'S NO SURFACE,
NO CHANCE OF UNBURDENING
BREATH, NO VINDICATING
SUN!

AND EVERY STUMBLE AND
MISDEED MADE THEREAFTER,
IN THAT BITTER DEEP, IS ANOTHER
HOT IRON RING ABOUT YOUR NECK
TO SPEED YOUR DESCENT INTO THE
BOILING BLACK PIT!

AAUGH! NO! NOOO!

BAM
BAM
B-KLANG

BAM

GUH!
YOU LOOK
LIKE A GIANT
SPIDER!

DON'T
DO THAT.

BUT...
HELLFIRE.

HE *DOES* LOOK
LIKE A GIANT SPIDER,
BUT DON'T TAKE IT
OUT ON THE HEARSE.
WE *NEED* THAT.

WELL, YOU DON'T
GROW UP AROUND A
BUNCH OF SCOUNDREL
BOOTLEGGERS WITHOUT
LEARNING HOW TO
SHOOT, DO YOU?

SHOULD I
KEEP SHOOTING
THINGS?

I MEAN,
WHAT'LL IT
TAKE TO
CONVINCE YOU
WE'RE ON THE
SAME SIDE?

WELL, NOT *THAT*.
...*MAYBE* THAT.
I DON'T KNOW!

I'VE NEVER HAD
ANYTHING THAT
SQUEAKY PULL
A GUN ON ME
BEFORE.

SIGH
AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT.
IF IT'LL MOMENTARILY
STOP YOU PUTTING MORE
HOLES AND DENTS
IN MY LIVELIHOOD...

...JUST *WHICH*
SCOUNDREL
BOOTLEGGERS
ARE WE TALKING
ABOUT?



ARTERIAL FLUID?

YOU AREN'T CUTTING THE LIQUOR WITH THIS STUFF, ARE YOU?

THAT WAS THE PROBLEM WITH OUR LAST SUPPLIER.



WHAT'S THIS? AN ORGAN PULPER?

I THOUGHT YOU GUYS WERE IN THE BOOZE BUSINESS. WHAT DO YOU NEED ALL THESE MORBID DOOHICKEYS FOR?

WELL, WE'RE IN THE DEATH BUSINESS TOO.

THERE'S SOME AMOUNT OF OVERLAP.



WHAT'S THIS? A BLOOD SUCKER?

...YES.

BOBBY...

...WHAT SORT OF TROUBLE
ARE YOU DRAGGING INTO
THE HOUSE NOW?

ROADKILL.

COURTESY
OF YOUR
BROTHER.

TRIFLING PROBLEM,
THOUGH. MY TRADE
REQUIRES THIS TO BE
RATHER MORE DEAD
THAN IT SEEMS TO BE.
IT KEEPS BLEEDING.

WHAT'S THE
POOR THING
DOING DOWN
HERE, THEN?

I DIDN'T WANT
TO RUIN THE PARLOR
UPHOLSTERY.

...AND I FIGURE IF HE WAKES
UP ON AN EMBALMING TABLE,
WE CAN ALL JUST HAVE A
GOOD, LONG LAUGH ABOUT
THE WHOLE SITUATION.

SO... MAYBE
YOU CAN PUT
HIS HEAD BACK
TOGETHER?



ELSA.
SHE'S A
NURSE.

FORMER
NURSE.

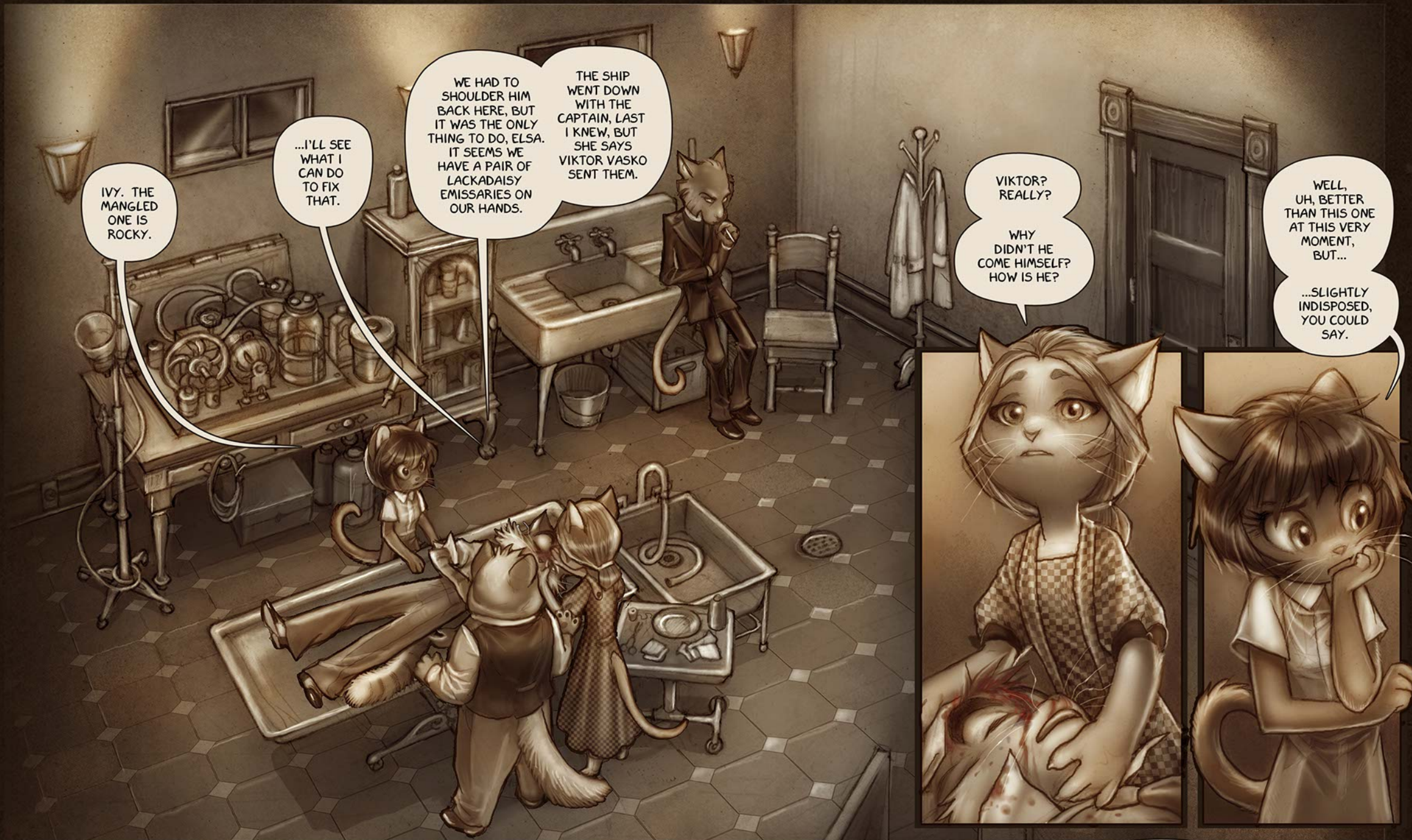
I MET HER
OVERSEAS JUST
AFTER THE
WAR.

I HAD
TRENCH FOOT AND
SHE HAD A HOTSY-
TOTSY LITTLE

WHAT'S YOUR
NAME, DEAR?

WHAP





MANY TIMES!
ESPECIALLY IN THE
EARLY DAYS WHEN
VOLSTEAD WAS
THE NEWEST CRAZE,
AND ATLAS WAS
CARVING OUT
A Foothold.

CONTRARILY, OUR POST-
MORTEM SERVICES WERE
A BIT SLOWER TO CATCH ON
IN THE WILD. PROFIT WAS A
PITTANCE... BUT ALL ATLAS
SAW WAS THE HALO OF
POTENTIAL.

SEE, THESE HINTERLANDS ARE
DOUBLY BLESSED WITH A DEARTH
OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AN MKT
RAIL DEPOT. ATLAS - LIKELY WITH
THE AID OF YOUR DAD - DID SOME
STRING PULLING TO MAKE SURE
THE TRAIN ARRIVED BURDENED
WITH BOTTLES.

ANYWAY, AS YOU
SELDOM GET A SIDEWAYS
LOOK LOADING LONG BOXES
OFF A TRAIN AND INTO A
HEARSE, IT WAS OUR PLACE
TO PICK IT UP AND STORE
IT, FOR A BROKER'S
PERCENTAGE.

...UNTIL SOME LOCAL
CATTLE RUSTLING,
TRAIN ROBBING
RABBLE FIGURED
ON LIQUOR BEING
EASIER TO RUSTLE,
AND CHAPS LIKE
US BEING EASIER
TO ROB.

THEY SHOT
OUR ORGAN
PLAYER.

AND THAT
THEY DID.



IT WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEN
ATLAS FIRST BROUGHT LEFTY
AND RIGHTY UP HERE TO
SORT THINGS OUT.

THEY JUST SAT THEMSELVES
DOWN AT THE ONE GENERAL STORE
IN TOWN AND PLAYED CHESS UNTIL,
INEVITABLY, ONE OF THOSE
ROUGHNECKS SHOWED UP,
NEEDING SUPPLIES.

HE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY
RETICENT CONCERNING THE
WHEREABOUTS OF HIS MATES...

...BUT DISCOVERED HE HAD A
GOOD MANY THINGS TO DISCUSS
FROM THE INTERIOR OF A
PRE-OCCUPIED PINE BOX.



IT WOULD
PROBABLY BE
IN YOUR BETTER
INTERESTS TO
STOP SCREAMING
AND START
ENUNCIATING...
...WHILE WE
CAN STILL
HEAR YOU.



MEFAAAAUGHMMETALKNGAHYES!

KRNCH



THAT'S WHEN THINGS GOT *REALLY* INTERESTING. IT TURNED OUT THIS LOT WAS PLAYING COWBOYS AND GANGSTERS WITH SOME BOYS FROM THE CITY, PEDDLING TO *THEM* WHAT THEY STOLE FROM *US*.

THIS CITY GANG - SOME SICILIANS OR SOMETHING - WELL, ATLAS HAPPENED TO KNOW THEY WERE IN THE MIDST OF A TURF WAR WITH A THEN-BLOSSOMING ESTABLISHMENT YOU MIGHT KNOW AS MARIGOLD.

AND THERE WAS THIS LODGE UP IN THE HILLS HERE WHERE

DON'T TELL HER THESE AWFUL STORIES, BOBBY.

IT'S A BLOODY GOOD STORY! BESIDES, SHE ALMOST BLEW US AWAY EARLIER.

I MEAN, YOU KNOW WHAT'S WHAT, DON'T YOU?

UH, Y-- OF COURSE I--

TELL ME MORE.

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT. WHAT WAS I GETTING AT? OH - THE LODGE TUCKED BACK HERE, IN THE NOWHERE. THE COUNTRY MICE AND CITY MICE HAD BEEN MEETING THERE TO MAKE THEIR EXCHANGES.

NEWLY PRIVY TO THAT, ATLAS DECIDED HE'D MAKE A RATHER BOLD GESTURE OF CONFRONTING OUR NUISANCE *AND* DOING MARIGOLD AN UNSOLICITED FAVOR.

IN A BUSINESS OF BITTER ENEMIES, IT DOESN'T HURT TO MAKE A FRIEND, YEAH?

ANYWAY, IN THAT SPIRIT, THE CAPTIVE CATTLE THIEF WAS RETURNED TO *HIS* FRIENDS...



YOU GONNA JUST STAND THERE IN THE THRESHOLD?

BEHIND ME. BEHIND ME.

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU SMELL LIKE DEATH.

WHAK

...WITH A SOUVENIR FROM THE WAR.

BOOM



THEN VIKTOR AND MORDECAI
MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE
PLACE LIKE A MINOR TORNADO.

BAM BLAM



VIKTOR WAS
SOMETHING OF A REMNANT
FROM THE WAR HIMSELF...



...AND MORDECAI... WELL, COME
TO THINK OF IT, HE COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH OLDER
THAN YOU AT THE TIME.



HE'D HAD AN EARLY START, THOUGH - SUPPOSEDLY STILL IN KNEE PANTS WHEN HE BEGAN KEEPING BOOKS FOR GRIFTERS AND GAMBLERS IN NEW YORK.



BUT THINGS MUST'VE SOURED FOR HIM THERE. ATLAS SAID WHEN HE CROSSED HIS PATH, HE WAS LOOKING RATHER WORSE FOR WEAR...

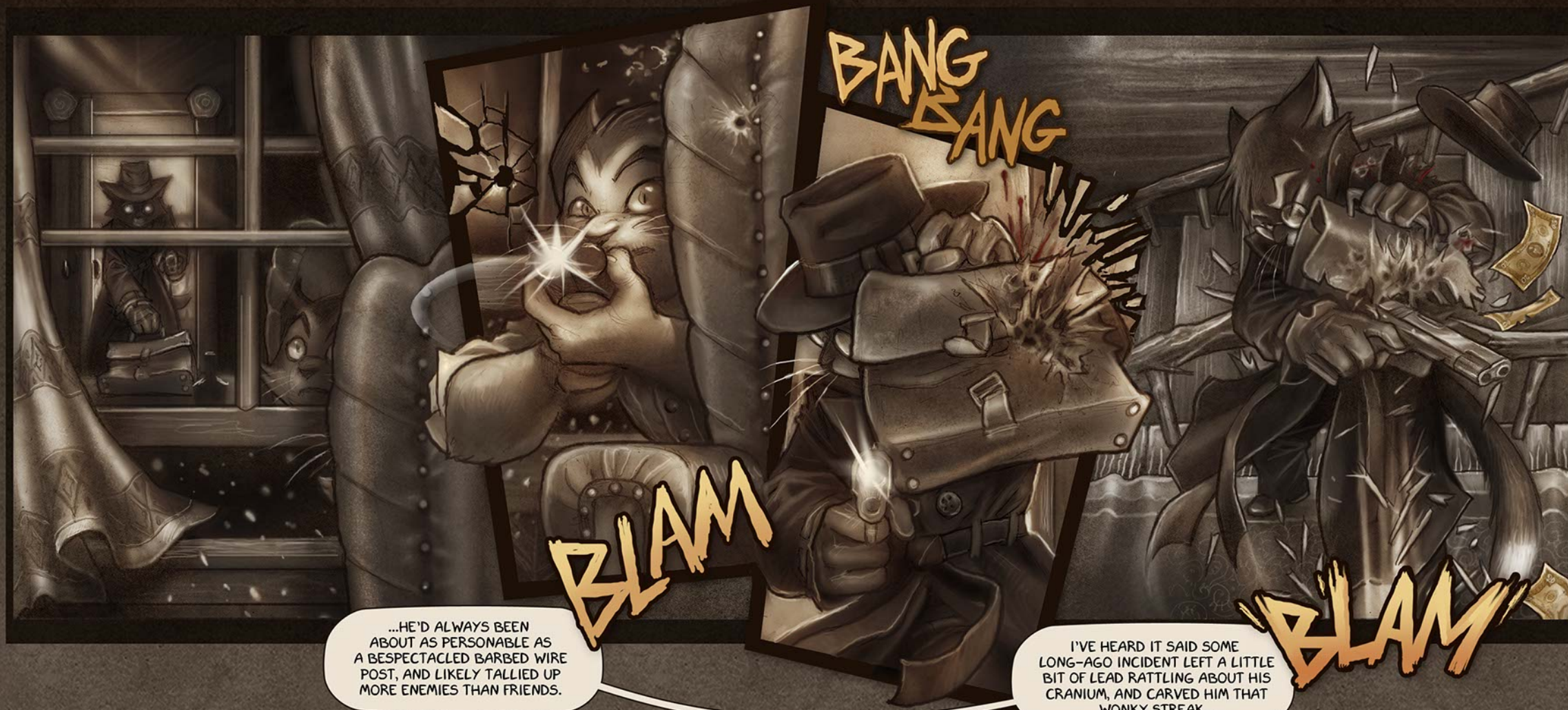
...RIDING A GETAWAY TRAIN TOWARD CHICAGO OR DETROIT WITH SOME DEEPLY UNHAPPY ASSOCIATES ON HIS HEELS.



IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME TO LEARN THAT, LEFT TO HIS OWN AGENCIES, HE'D BROUGHT HIS TROUBLES ON HIMSELF.

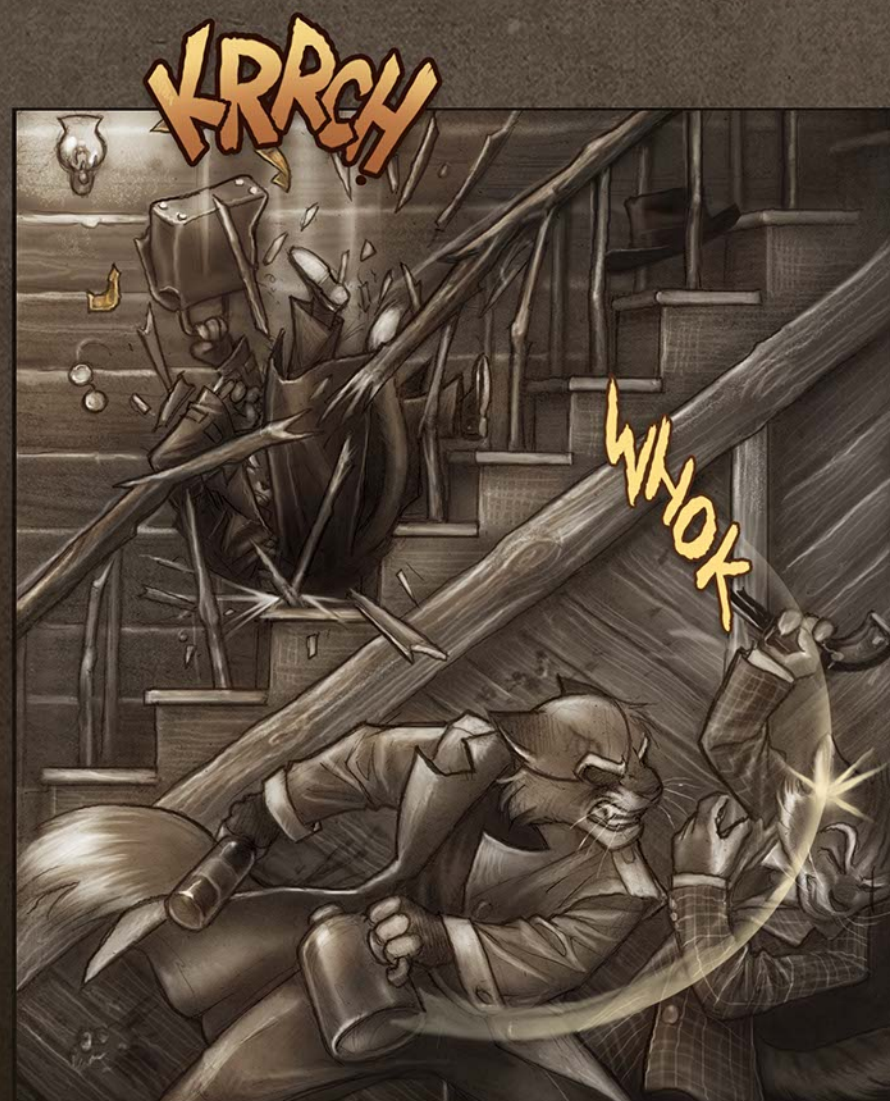


FOR ALL HIS QUALIFICATIONS WITH BOOKS AND ODDS AND PERCENTAGES AND WHAT...



...HE'D ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT AS PERSONABLE AS A BESPECTACLED BARBED WIRE POST, AND LIKELY TALLIED UP MORE ENEMIES THAN FRIENDS.

I'VE HEARD IT SAID SOME LONG-AGO INCIDENT LEFT A LITTLE BIT OF LEAD RATTLING ABOUT HIS CRANIUM, AND CARVED HIM THAT WONKY STREAK...



...BUT I NEVER HAD THE GALL TO ASK HIM MYSELF IF THAT WAS TRUE.



I CAN TELL YOU ATLAS DIDN'T SEE THE, UH, PERSONALITY PROBLEM AS A PROBLEM SO MUCH AS A FACILITY WORTH FOSTERING, HOWEVER.



SO, AS THE STORY I KNOW GOES, ATLAS SETTLED SOME OF HIS PURSUING GRIEVANCES, GAVE HIM THE VERITABLE SHIRT OFF HIS BACK, PLACED HIM ON HIS FEET, SET HIM TO WORK...



...AAND FROM WHAT I GATHERED, THE BOY HAD BEEN LEARNING FAST.



OKAY?

GET OUT NAOW.

I MEANT TO DO THAT.

VIKTOR I FIGURED FOR MORE A BUNDLE OF NERVES THAN A CRACKBRAIN. IF HE WAS ANYTHING LIKE MY MATES - THE ONES WHO WEREN'T NUMBED OR SHELL-SHOCKED -

HE'D GONE HOME FROM THE FRONT AND BACK TO WORK RESEMBLING ELECTRIC WIRE WITH ALL THE SHEATHING STRIPPED OFF.



AND THAT MUST'VE MADE WHATEVER LABOR CONFLICT ERUPTED AROUND HIM INTO SOMETHING OF A POWDER KEG SITUATION...

...BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME BARRELING INTO SOME POLITICAL TURMOIL - THE SORT THAT COMES TO BLOWS.

AS I UNDERSTAND IT,
THE DOCKWORKER'S FACTION OF
THE GREAT UNWASHED HE'D SETTLED
IN WITH THREW AN UNHAPPY PARTY
WHEN PALMER RAIDS COST THEM
SOME UNION LEADERS.

THE STRIKEBREAKERS
AND THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVED
UNINVITED, OF COURSE, AND
THEY ALL HAD THEMSELVES
A GREAT BIG ROW.



THAT'S HOW HE LOST THE EYE -
TOSSING THE CONSTABULARY ABOUT
LIKE RAGDOLLS. IT TOOK A WELL
AIMED PRY BAR TO PUT THAT FIRE
OUT LONG ENOUGH THEY COULD
SUBDUE HIM.

...OR SO ATLAS RECOUNTED.
WHATEVER BUSINESS HE HAD
AT THE RIVERFRONT THAT DAY
WAS SUPERSEDED BY THE EVENT,
SO HE'D JOINED THE SPECTATORS.



VIKTOR'S PERFORMANCE
MUST'VE LEFT AN IMPRESSION, AS
ATLAS WENT TO SOME TROUBLE
TURNING UP A LAWYER FOR HIM...



...ONE WHO HELD ALOFT VIKTOR'S
NATIONAL SERVICE - AGAINST HIS FORMER
COUNTRYMEN NO LESS - TO ALLAY ANY
SILLY IDEAS HE REPRESENTED SOME
FOREIGN BREED OF ANARCHIST MONSTER.



IT MUST HAVE WORKED, BECAUSE HIS LITTLE SOJOURN TO PRISON WAS CURSORY COMPARED TO SOME OTHERS. AFTERWARD, HE REUNITED WITH ATLAS TO WORK OFF THE DEBT.



BY THE TIME HIS INDENTURE WAS UP, WELL, I SUPPOSE HE'D CROSSED SOME LINES INTO NO MAN'S LAND.

WITHOUT ANY PROSPECTS AHEAD OF HIM, OR MUCH REMAINING OF WHATEVER HE HAD LEFT BEHIND...



...HE STAYED ON WITH ATLAS WHERE HE HAD SOME PLACE AND PURPOSE.

AND LUCKY FOR US.

TEA.

HE'D BEEN MOST OF THE MUSCLE BEHIND THE MOMENTUM THAT GOT US OFF AND RUNNING IN THOSE EARLY YEARS...



...AND WITH THAT,
THE FRAY AT THE LODGE WAS
MORE A PROPER SLAUGHTER.
ATLAS GOT HIS LOST LIQUOR
BACK - WELL, MOST OF IT.

MADE OFF WITH OUR
ROBBERS' WOULD-BE PROFITS
AND A SMALL FLEET OF DEAD
MEN'S VEHICLES TOO.

THANK
YOU.

AFTER THAT, MORDECAI
FOLLOWED ATLAS BACK TO
THE CITY LIKE HIS FEROCIOUS
LITTLE SHADOW.

AT THE MARIGOLD
ROOM, ATLAS BUSIED HIMSELF
LEVERAGING GOOD WILL WITH
AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE AMONG
THE MANAGEMENT...

...AS WELL AS INDULGING
SOME PERSONAL INTERESTS.
I DO BELIEVE THAT'S WHERE
HE MET HIS WIFE.

VIKTOR STAYED WITH US
A WHILE, ACCOMPANYING
US ON PICK-UPS...



...AND KEEPING THAT ONE EYE
ON THINGS AROUND HERE IN
CASE WE HAD ANY TROUBLE
WITH LINGERING LOOSE ENDS.

WHAT TROUBLE WE
HAD WAS LITTLE TROUBLE
INDEED. THE REVEREND
AND I OWE HIM A DEBT

OH, FOR THE
LOVE OF--

STOP

AT IS, HE'S
ACTICALLY
FAMILY

TALKING.



WELL...
YOU'LL DO BUSINESS
WITH US AGAIN,
THEN!

GOOD GOD,
NO.
NOOOOO NO.
NO. NO!



AHEM
SINCE ATLAS
DEPARTED US,
WE'VE HAD A NEW
BUYER. I'M AFRAID
THEY RATHER
INSIST ON THEIR
EXCLUSIVITY.



HM.
MARIGOOOLD.



YEAH. AND WHATEVER'S
GIVING THEM THE NERVOUS TWITCH
LATELY IS MAKING *ME* NERVOUS.
FIRST, I HEAR THEY'VE TAKEN UP SOME
AGGRESSIVE SPRING CLEANING, THEN
THEY START SKULKING ABOUT HERE,
SQUINTING AT US WITH MORE
EYES THAN USUAL...



...SO, MATTER
OF POLICY, UNLESS
YOU'RE HERE FOR AN
HONEST TO GOODNESS
FUNERAL, WE'VE GOT
NAUGHT TO DO
WITH IT.

HENCE THE
SLIGHTLY
OVERZEALOUS
VEHICULAR
ACROBATICS.



WE CAN'T DO
BUSINESS FOR
NOSTALGIA'S
SAKE, *SMALL*
CHILD.



WELL, IF NOT
FOR NOSTALGIA,
HOW ABOUT AMENDS
FOR *THIS*?



WHAT?
DIDN'T I JUST --
WERE YOU LISTENING?
BESIDES, LOOK AT
HIM!



HE'S GOOD
AS NEW!

HE LOOKS
PRECISELY LIKE HE
GOT HIT IN THE FACE
WITH A HEARSE.



AND WHAT WOULD
VIKTOR THINK OF THIS --
THE *GRIEVOUS* WOUNDING
OF HIS DEAR, *DEAR*,
BELOVED PROTÉGÉ?

UHHU
WHUUH
HAUUH?

GASP
YOU BROKE HIM.
WILL HE EVER TALK
SENSE AGAIN?!

I KNOW ON TOP OF
YOUR OTHER TROUBLES,
THE *LAST* THING YOU NEED IS
AN ENEMY LIKE VIKTOR, BUT
I'M NOT SURE HE'LL LET THIS
GO UNANSWERED.

PUT YOUR
HEAD BACK
DOWN.



AWRIGHT. IN
THE SPIRIT OF
FRIENDSHIP...

AND
DURESS.

...WE'LL
DISCUSS THE
POSSIBILITY...

GRUDGINGLY.

...OF A
VERY MINOR
ARRANGEMENT.

EVIL
INCARNATE.



PAT
PAT

BEFORE
YOU GET LOST
IN NEGOTIATIONS,
PERHAPS YOU CAN
ACCOMPANY ME
UPSTAIRS FOR A
MOMENT, MISS
PEPPER.





THIS MUST ALL
BE VERY EXCITING,
HMM?

YOU SEEM
SO MUCH IN YOUR
ELEMENT, DOING THIS.
I HAVE TO WONDER...

...WHAT *EXACTLY*
IS IT YOU THINK
YOU'RE DOING?
SAY IT
OUT LOUD,
PLEASE.



I...
UH, WELL,
CIRCUMSTANCES
WHAT THEY ARE,
I GUESS I'M
BROKERING A
PURCHASE...
OF ALCOHOL...

...FOR AN UNDER-
GROUND CRIMINAL
ESTABLISHMENT?

BUT JUST
A SMALL ONE,
THOUGH!



DON'T FORGET
GUNSLINGING.

I JUST WANTED
TO MAKE SURE YOU'D
TAKEN THESE THINGS
INTO CONSIDERATION,
CLEVER MISS.



WELL, I'VE
REALLY ONLY
EVER SHOT FOR
SPORT BEFORE.
I JUST--



AND VIKTOR
CERTAINLY DIDN'T
SEND *YOU* HERE.



YOU KNOW
VIKTOR *THAT*
WELL, HUH?
TIMES ARE HARD
RIGHT NOW AND
WE... WE'RE--

WELL ENOUGH TO
KNOW HE'D JUST AS
SOON SEND HIS OWN
DAUGHTER.

SIGH
HE SENT ROCKY.
I TAGGED ALONG.
I'M USUALLY
JUST THE
CASHIER.

BUT THIS IS
VIKTOR'S DOING,
ANYWAY. IF HE HADN'T
LAID WASTE TO MY SOCIAL
LIFE AND MY AFTERNOON,
I WOULDN'T BE HERE.

...METAPHORICAL
DAUGHTER?

DAUGHTER
DAUGHTER.

P-TTHHHH
WHAT? WHERE?

I SUPPOSE
WHEREVER HIS
WIFE IS...

SSNRK
UUAH! WED
UB BY DOSE.

GASP
COUGH

WHY AREN'T
THEY AROUND?
AND WHY DO YOU
KNOW ALL THIS,
AND I DON'T?

I RIFLED
THROUGH ALL
HIS STUFF!

OH, MY...
WHY SO MUCH
CONCERN?

...I ...UH.

I GUESS I THOUGHT
SOMEONE SHOULD
BE CONCERNED.
A LITTLE BIT. BUT
I DIDN'T KNOW...

WE HAD
SOME COMMON
GROUND,
IS ALL.

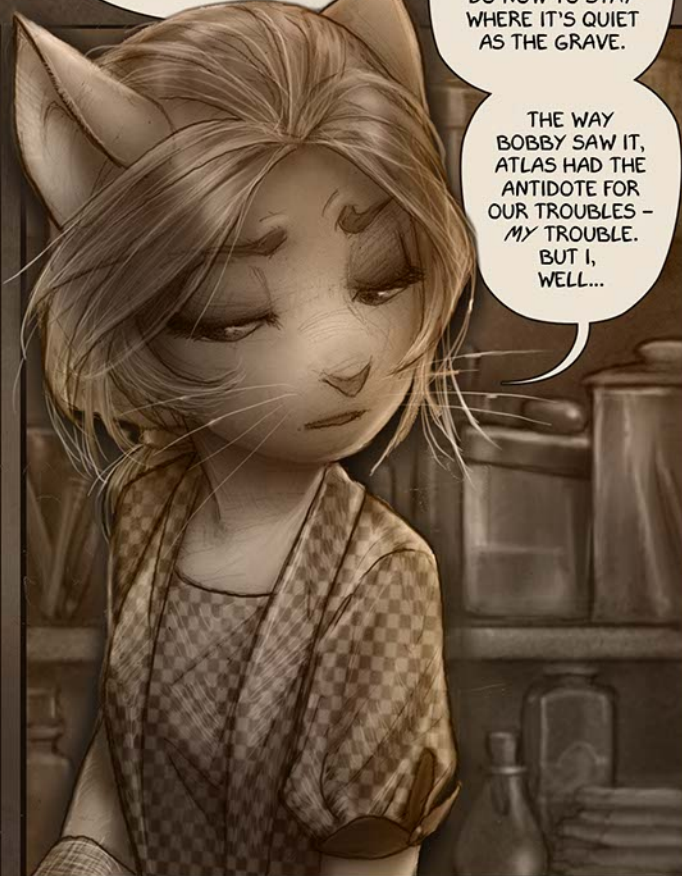
AND THEY'RE
NOT AROUND BECAUSE...
I THINK MAYBE THAT'S THE
BEST THAT COULD BE DONE
AMID ALL THE MISTAKES
AND BAD TURNS THAT BRING
PEOPLE LIKE HIM TO
PLACES LIKE THIS.

WHAT
BROUGHT
YOU, THEN?

OH. WELL, THE
FUNERARY BUSINESS IS
THRIVING IN THE CITY - BUT
ALL THE PEOPLE, THE NOISE -
I HAD NO TOLERANCE.
NOT AFTER THE WAR.

WE RESORTED TO
DOING WHAT WE
DO NOW TO STAY
WHERE IT'S QUIET
AS THE GRAVE.

THE WAY
BOBBY SAW IT,
ATLAS HAD THE
ANTIDOTE FOR
OUR TROUBLES -
MY TROUBLE.
BUT I,
WELL...



...I JUST
HOPE SOMEONE
LIKE YOU WOULD
HAVE NO SUCH
REASONS TO
BE HERE.

AND WOULD
BE SMART
ENOUGH NOT
TO INVENT
ANY.

INHOSPITABLE AS
IT SOUNDS, IT'LL BE
SAFER FOR EVERYONE
IF YOU LEAVE AS SOON
AS YOU'RE DONE, AND
YOUR FRIEND IS
ON HIS FEET.

HE'LL BE HURTING
LATER - THIS WILL
HELP. HERE'S EXTRA
DRESSING. KEEP
THE WOUND CLEAN
WITH THIS.

I KNOW DOCTORS AREN'T
ALWAYS AN OPTION IN THESE
SITUATIONS, BUT IF HE LOSES
CONSCIOUSNESS AGAIN, HAS
UNEVENLY DILATED PUPILS, A
LOT OF ONGOING CLUMSINESS,
INCOHERENT SPEECH, OR
DRAMATIC MOOD SWINGS...

...AT LEAST
DROP HIM OFF AT
A HOSPITAL.



SOMEONE
SHOULD HAVE
DROPPED HIM
OFF AT A
HOSPITAL A
LONG TIME
AGO.



... *THEN* SHE PULLS ME ASIDE AND TELLS ME VIKTOR HAS SOME ESTRANGED FAMILY SOMEWHERE.

BY THE WAY, IF ANYONE ASKS, YOU'RE PRACTICALLY THE SON HE NEVER HAD.

...AAAND THAT'S YOUR CUE TO SAY SOMETHING THAT MAKES NO SENSE SO I KNOW YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

YOU DRIVE?

OF COURSE!

ONCE OR TWICE.

...MOSTLY WE'RE ROLLING DOWNHILL.



IT SEEMS LIKE THIS WOULD BE EASIER IF I COULD REACH THE PEDALS AND SEE OVER THE WHEEL AT THE SAME TIME.





ANYWAY,
WHERE TO,
MISTER?

WHERE DO
YOU LIVE?

WE'RE
ALREADY
THERE.



WELL... THAT
EXPLAINS SOME
THINGS.

BUT IT WON'T DO
FOR TONIGHT. I'M SURE
MISS M. WOULD LET YOU
SLEEP ON THE OFFICE
COUCH.



NO.

OH, NO. CAN'T
LET MISS M. SEE THIS.
SHE'LL KNOW I RUINED
EVERYTHING.

...WHAT
DID I RUIN?



ACTUALLY,
WE GOT A LITTLE
SOMETHING WORKED
OUT. YOU LOOKED
SO PATHETIC, YOU
MADE A GOOD
BARGAINING CHIP.
SO, GOOD JOB!

HOW ABOUT I
TAKE YOU TO
YOUR AUNT'S?
WE CAN INVENT
AN EXCUSE FOR
YOUR FACE.



NO,
HUH?



NO EXCUSE
FOR MY FACE
THERE. IT'S
ONLY ABIDED
IN SMALL
DOSES.



WELL, YOUR
COUSIN'S CLEARLY
AN ALLY. I WOULD
THINK IT'D BE LIKE
A SECOND
HOME.



A LONG TIME AGO.
WHEN MOM WAS CHASING
RED DEATH AND DAD WAS
...WORKING ON
THE RAILROAD...

...IT WAS
HOME MORE
THAN HOME
WAS.

BUT THEN CAME
ONE OF THOSE LITTLE
FAMILY TRAGEDIES...
AND IT HAD AN AUTHOR...
AND WITH ALREADY
INK-STAINED HANDS,
I SIGNED MY
NAME ON IT.

IT WON ME A LONG
TRIP, SO THE RELIABLE
LAD COULD FINISH
SCHOOL UNDISTURBED...
AND SO TIME COULD
DULL MY FRESH
REMINDER FACE.



OH. THAT'S HOW YOU ENDED UP TRAVELING OUT WEST? ALL THAT ADVENTURING ABOUT MUST HAVE SUITED YOU, THOUGH!

WORKING ON A BOAT AND AT A FARM AND A CIRCUS AND--

SHOOT! STALL! WHAT DID I DO WRONG NOW?

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. I SLIP THE CLUTCH ALL THE TIME AND WORE IT OUT.

RRRRRR TAK TAK TAK TAK



BECAUSE I'M A HORRIBLE PERSON.

WHY?

OH...

TRY GIVIN' IT MORE GAS WHEN YOU LET THE CLUTCH OUT.

AAAGH!

WHAT ARE YOU KIDS DOIN' OUT HERE IN THE STICKS THIS TIME OF NIGHT, ANYWAY?

WE'RE... LOST?



OH, YEAH? YOU HEADIN' TOWARD SAINT LOUIE?

Y-YEAH.







OLIVIA. HELEN.

IIIVY.



HURRY UP.
THE GAWKERS
ARE CONVERGING.



ONE MINUTE.
I JUST NEED TO REASSURE
MISS M. THAT EVERYTHING'S...
SOMETHING.



HELLO?

...ZIB?



H-HELLO?
MISS M? I'M
CALLING TO--
HOW ARE YOU?
YOU SOUND LOW.

OH, ROCKY. FINE,
SWEETHEART.
ARE YOU OKAY?
YOU SOUND
STRANGE...ER
THAN USUAL.











LATER...



NO, SIR. WE DON'T
APPEAR TO HAVE ANY
SAVOYS REGISTERED
HERE AT THIS TIME.

TRY THE
SPELLING
S-A-V-O-I-E.

SORRY,
SIR--

WELL,
THEY'RE ASTUTE
ENOUGH TO USE
AN ALIAS... EVEN IF
TIME ELUDES THEM.

SIR?



PERHAPS YOU'D KNOW WHOM I WAS REFERRING TO IF I DESCRIBED THEM AS A PAIR OF SUPPOSED SIBLINGS SPEAKING A SORT OF CAJUN-CREOLE PATOIS RIFE WITH FRANCOPHONE INTERJECTIONS AND ENOUGH INTER-DENTAL FRICATIVES CONVERTED TO STOPS TO STAGGER A NEW YORKER?



YES, THEY ARE A BIT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.



W-WELL, I COULD GO ASK MY MANAGER IF HE KNOWS ABOUT ANY CAJUN... DENTAL... FIXATIVE.



THEY'RE ALSO LOUD.



MAYBE THERE'S A ROOM OR SUITE ABOUT WHICH YOU RECEIVE AN INORDINATE NUMBER OF NOISE COMPLAINTS?



OH! NOISE LIKE DRUM BEATS? AND CHICKENS?



PEEKON, YOU FOUN' US!



YES, WELL, YOU'RE HARDLY...



...INCONSPICUOUS.





LOOK, OUR
PETITE HACHE
SHOWN UP FO'
DE BALL,
SERAFINE.

I'M NOT SHOWING
UP FOR THE BALL. I'M
RETRIEVING YOU FROM IT.
I REALIZE TIME--

~ALLONS AU BAL, COLINDA
ALLONS DANSER, COLINDA

POUR FAIRE FÂCHER LES VIEILLES FEMMES
C'EST PAS TOUT LE MONDE A DANSER

TOUTES LES VIEILLES VALSES A DEUX TEMPS

HI.

TIME DOESN'T FACTOR
INTO YOUR BACKWARD
PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY,
BUT WE HAVE A--

WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.
YOU WERE SUPPOSED
TO MEET ME AT--

TANDIS TA MÈRE TE VOIT PAS
ALLONS DANSER, COLINDA ~

YOU WERE TO
MEET ME AT 6TH AND
WASHINGTON AT--

BARK!

YEAH.
BUT YOU
WOULDN' COME
HERE IF WE
JUS' INVITED
YOU.

WE ENJOYIN'
WATCHIN' YOU
DANCE, BUT
YOU BETTER SET
DOWN BEFORE
YOU FALL OVER.

BROK!

BOK BRK BRK

DON' WORRY.
YOU MISSED
MOST DE FUN
PARTS.

THE FUN
PARTS OF
WHAT,
EXACTLY?

A FÊTE
EXACTLY,
PEEKON.

FOR OUR PATRON,
MAITRE CARREFOUR.

...THE
CHICKEN?




BEHIND DAT.

DE LOA.

ONE OF
YOUR SWAMP
SPIRITS?

WELL, WE'VE QUICKLY
STUMBLED ON SOMETHING
THAT MAKES EVEN *LESS*
SENSE THAN A CHICKEN
PARTY.





IT MAKES SENSE IF
YOU KNOW *ANYTHING*.
AND HE AIN'T JUS' A
SWAMP SPIRIT.

HE IS ALL AROUND, IN
BETWEEN-PLACES.

OFF TRODDEN PATHS,
AWAY FROM STREET
LIGHT, WHERE ALL'S
DIM AND DANGEROUS.

...WHERE DE
STRANGE ANIMALS
ARE. WHERE PEOPLE
LIKE *US* LIVE.

AND YOU BEST
ACKNOWLEDGE IT
WHEN HE BEEN
GOOD TO YOU.

WE WAS BÉBÉS
WHEN HE SAVED US,
ME AND NICODEME.

*LA SOCIÉTÉ DE
NOTRE DAME DE BIENFAISANCE*—
DEY WAS GONNA SEPARATE US.

BOYS OVER HERE,
GIRLS OVER DERE.

I TOL' DE SISTERS
TO CUT MY HAIR - I'LL
JUS' BE A BOY AND WE CAN KEEP
TOGETHER. NOBODY WOULD
LISTEN. DEY GOTTA PUT WALLS
UP AND DRAW LINES AROUND
EVERYTHING, LIKE DEY AFRAID OF
HOW IT'S ALL TANGLED
TOGETHER.

NOBODY *COULD*
LISTEN CAUSE SHE WAS
YELLIN' LIKE A COYOTE
IN A TRAP.

I DIDN'T TINK
SHE WAS EVER
GONNA EAT AGAIN
IF WE STAYED.

MAIS,
WE LEFT
DAT PLACE.



FOR A TIME WE WAS LOST IN DE CITY,
LOST ON DE ROADS, AND DEN LOST IN DE BAYOU.
WE DIDN'T KNOW IT, BUT WE SLIPPED INTO MAITRE
CARREFOUR'S TWILIGHT PLACE, BETWEEN PLACES.



HE SAW US HALF-STARVED IN OUR PIROGUE, AND TOOK
PITY ON US AND SENT US A GUIDE - A GATOR DAT GLOWED
LIKE A FULL MOON, AND SHOWED US A WAY IN DAT
DARK-WATER MAZE.

HE BROUGHT US TO MAMAN EULALIE
AND DE VOODOOENNES OF DE
NOWHERE ISLES.

SO WE STAYED AND LIVED DERE AND
LEARNED ABOUT HOW TO SURVIVE IN MAITRE
CARREFOUR'S SHADOWS, DOIN' WHAT'S
IN OUR BLOOD...

...DE BLOOD OF
LAVEAU AND
LAFITTE!





WHAT?
CONGREGATION?



OUI. ALL
OF US.

EXCEPT NOT
DAT ONE.



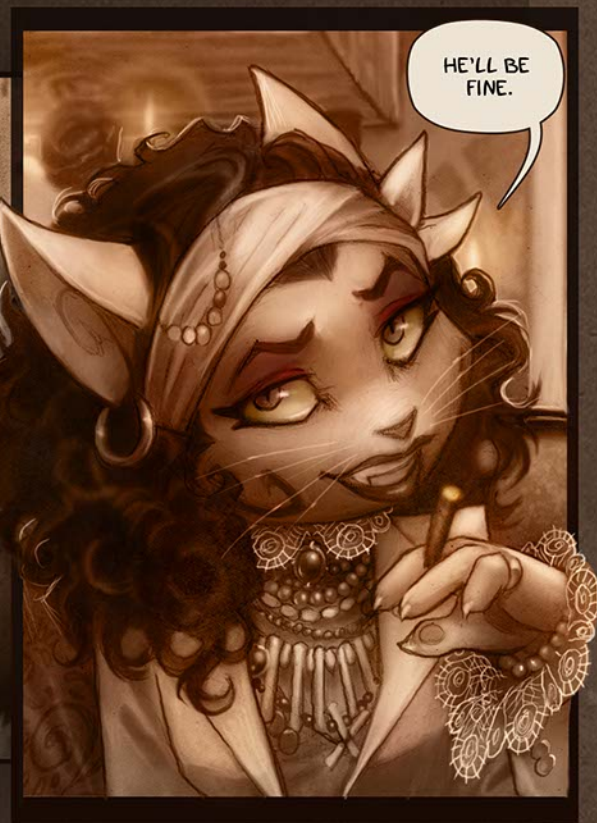
HE INVITED
HIMSELF.



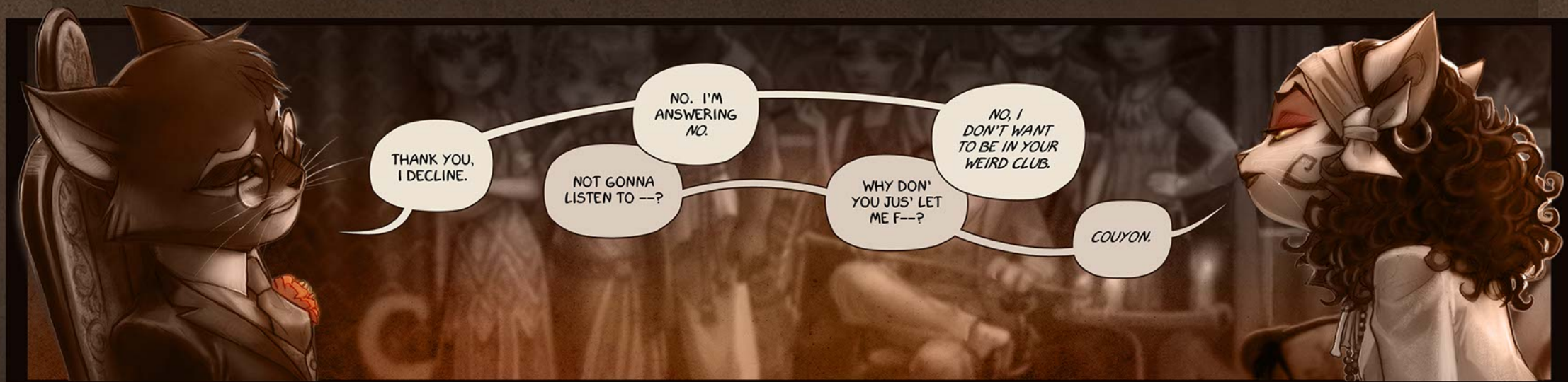
AND WHAT
ABOUT THAT ONE?
IS HE *ALIVE*?
HE DOESN'T
BLINK.



SNAP
SNAP



HE'LL BE
FINE.



THANK YOU,
I DECLINE.

NOT GONNA
LISTEN TO --?

NO. I'M
ANSWERING
NO.

WHY DON'
YOU JUS' LET
ME F--?

*NO, I
DON'T WANT
TO BE IN YOUR
WEIRD CLUB.*

COUYON.





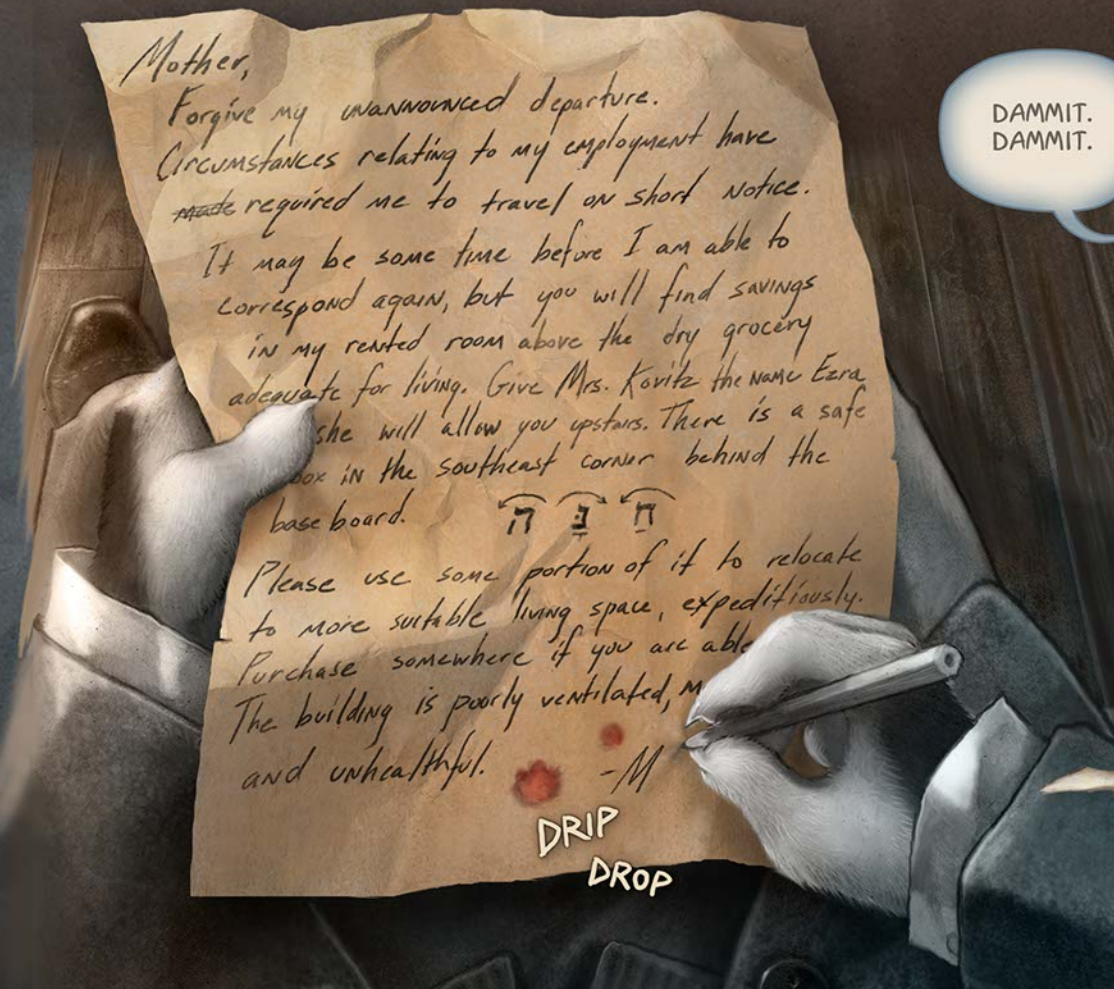
BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW - MAITRE CARREFOUR, HE SET US ON DIS CRISS-CROSS PATH.

HE SAYS HE KNOWS YOU. YOU MET HIM BEFORE.



ON A LONELY ROAD SOMEWHERE. IN AN ALLEY. BY DE TRACKS.

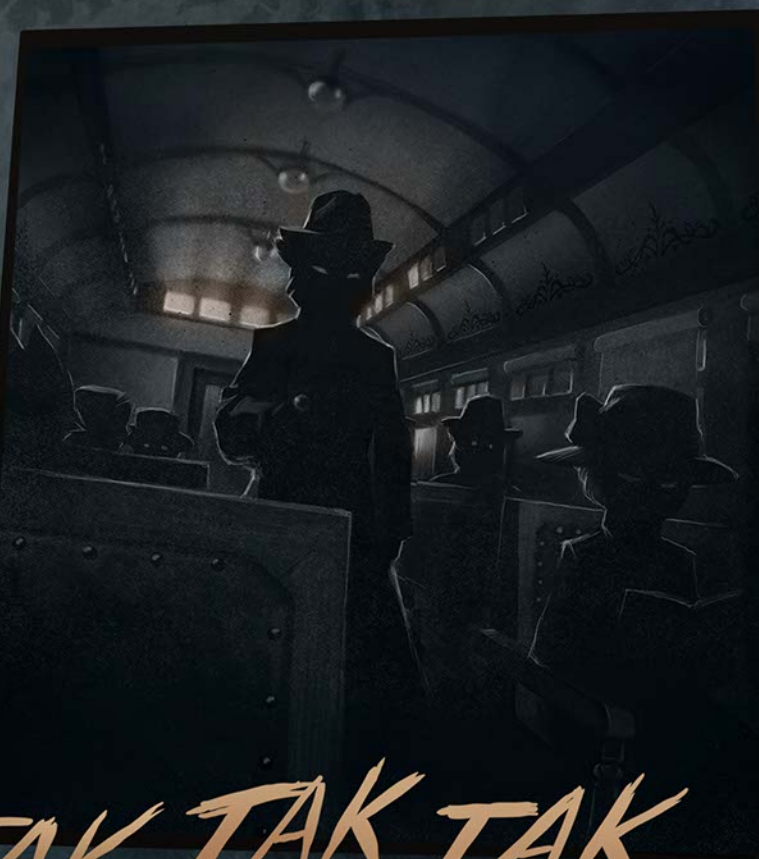
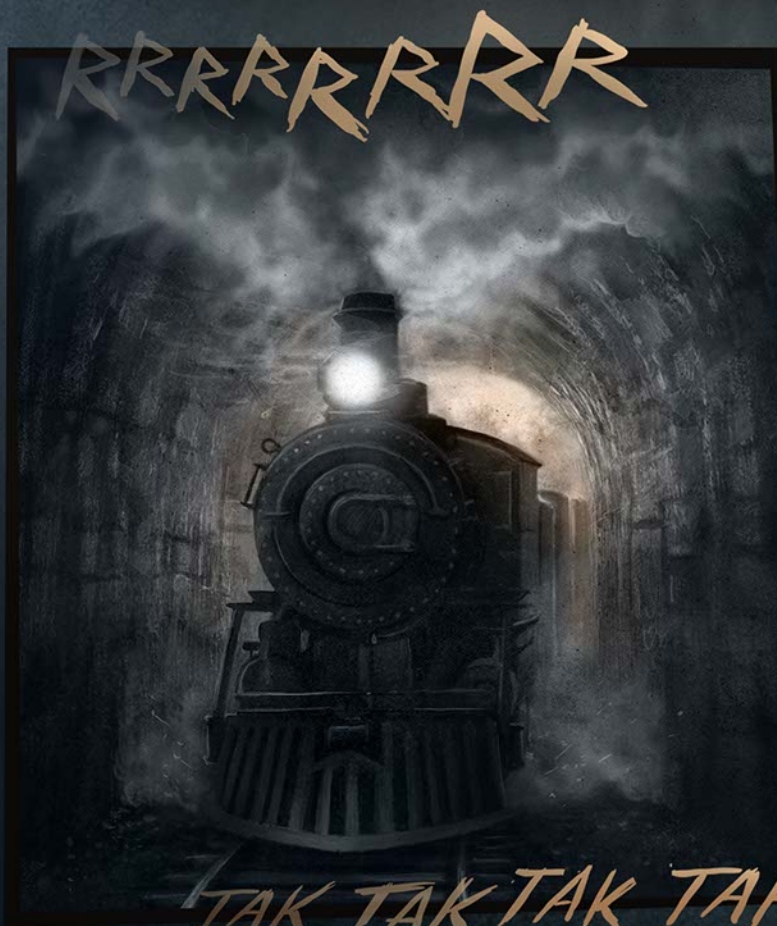
WHEN YOU WAS IN DAT SAME LITTLE BOAT AS US. WHEN YOU WAS LOST.



DAMMIT. DAMMIT.







TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK



TAK TAK TAK TAK VWMM TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

RIGHT AT DE LAST MOMENT,
RIGHT AT DE *RIGHT* MOMENT,
HE COME RIGHT OUT
DE SHADOWS...



IN ONE FORM OR DE OTHER,
LIKE A STRANGE LIGHT...

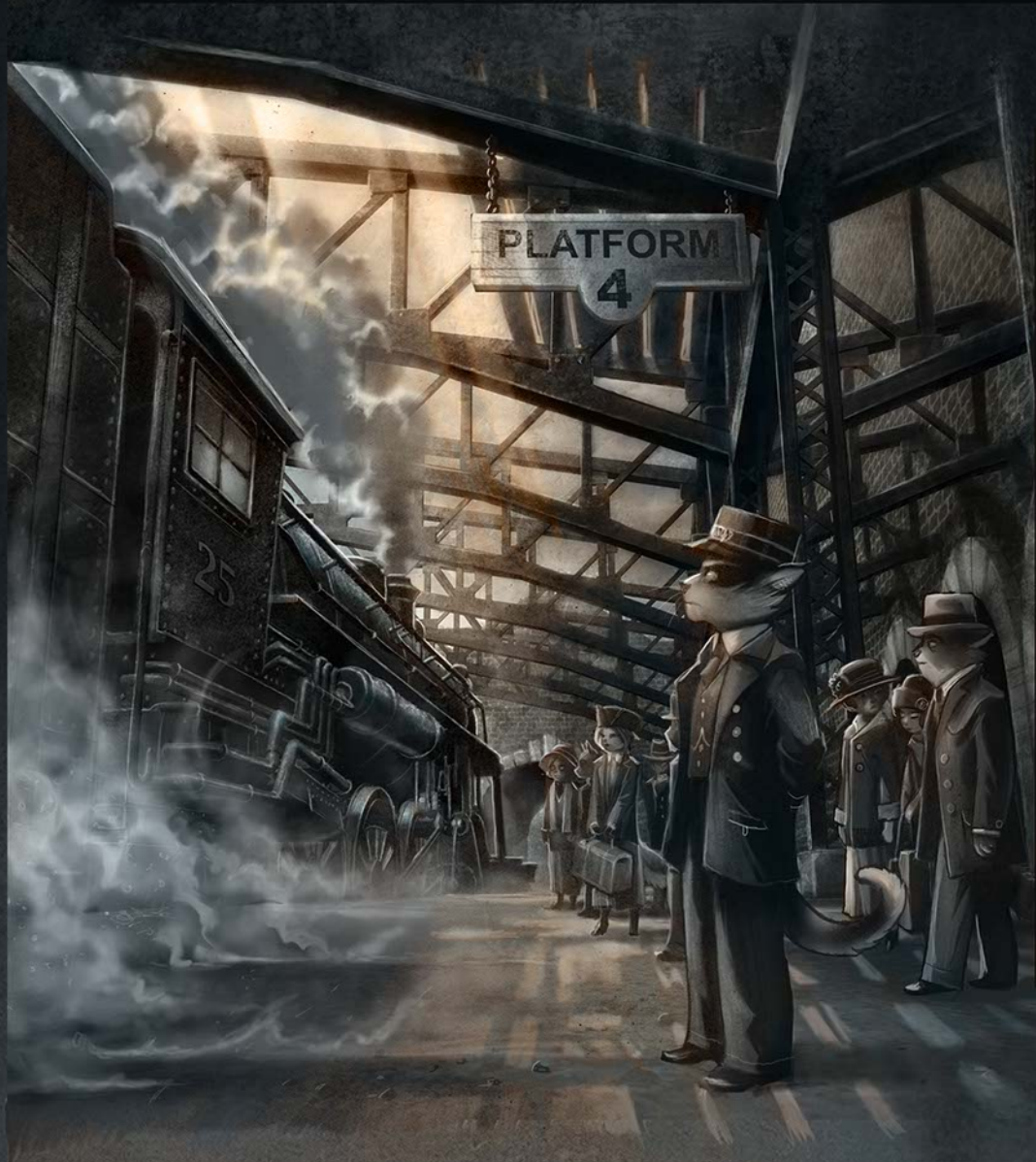
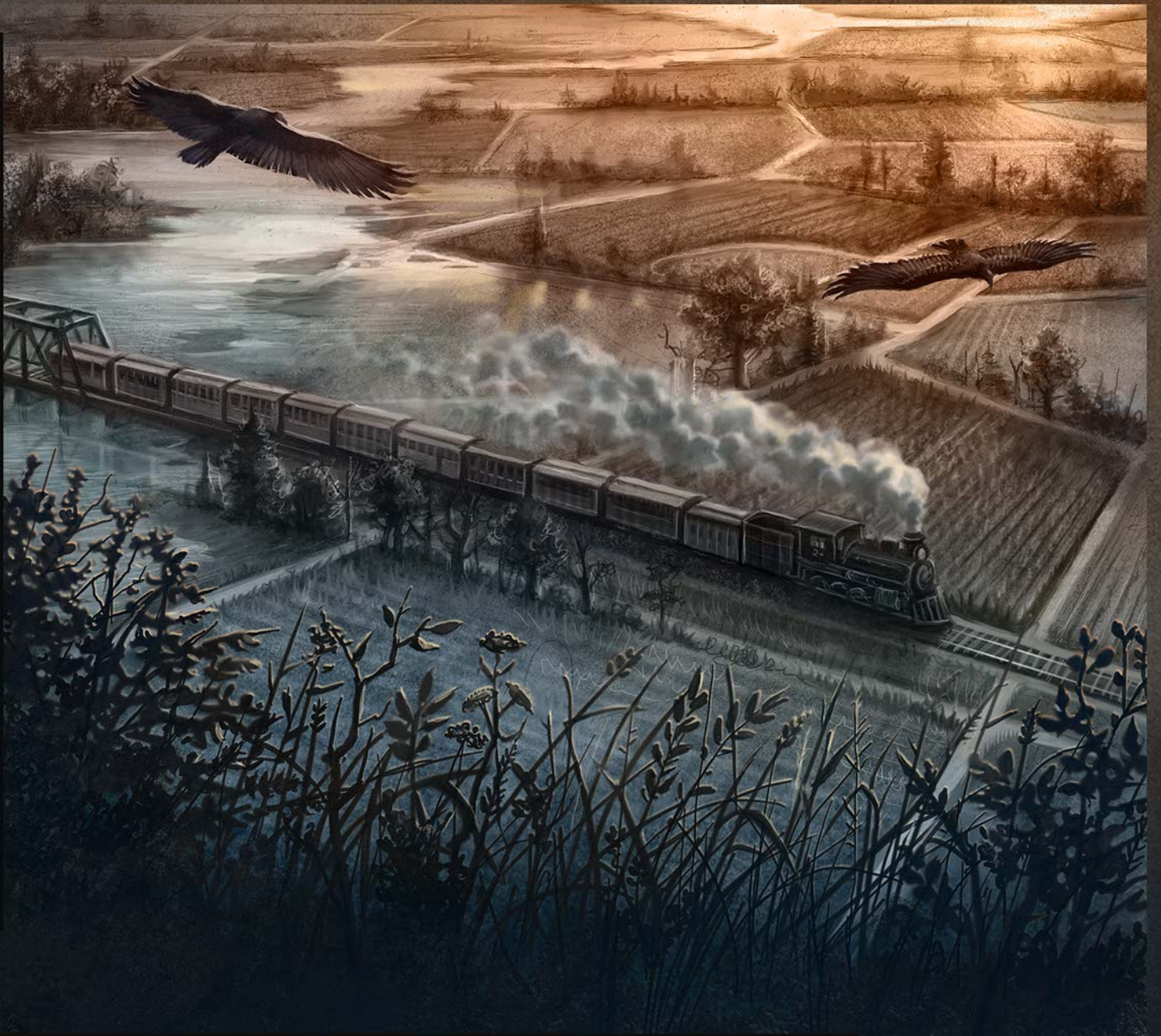


LIKE HE BEEN
WATCHIN' ALL DE TIME...



'CAUSE HE WAS.







AND LIKE DAT, HE'S LIT UP
A PATH OUT DE BLACK MIRE
YOU GOT YOURSELF IN.



SHININ' A
DIRECTION FOR YOU,
REAL CLEAR.

HIS
DIRECTION.



BUT ONCE YOU
TAKE DAT DIRECTION,
ONCE DAT LIGHT IS
ON YOU, DAT'S
ALL YOU GOT.

DE OTHER
PATHS GONE
FOREVER. DE OTHER
LOA LEAVE YOU.

YOU
ARE OBLIGED
TO HIM ONLY,
ALWAYS.



OR ELSE
YOU ARE
LOST AGAIN.



ALONE IN DE DARK, NOT
SURE IF YOU COMIN' OR GOIN',
DEAD OR ALIVE...



BUT YOU ARE WHERE
YOU SUPPOSE TO BE, HERE - WHERE
HE WANTED YOU, SO WE CAN
TAKE UP DE PATH TOGETHER.

NOW,
YOU WANT TO
KNOW WHERE
IT GOES?



TOWARD PROFESSIONAL
COMPLICATIONS? MORE FORTUNE
TELLING? YOU'RE LESS INERT IN
YOUR OFF HOURS THAN I SUPPOSED,
BUT WHATEVER YOUR PLANS
FOR THIS MENAGERIE OF
ODDITIES, CONSIDER ME
UNINVOLVED.

I HAVE MY OWN
PATH LAID OUT. IT
INCLUDES DOING MY JOB
TONIGHT, WHETHER YOU'RE
COMING OR NOT.

IF YOU'LL
EXCUSE ME...



RRRRK

MISS, PLEASE
DON'T TOUCH--

STAY A LITTLE
LONGER. WE HAVE
SOMETHING FOR
YOU.



WE'LL PUT
IT RIGHT HERE.



I FIGURE
DIS ONE, HE'LL
WANNA TINK
IT OVER.

SO WE GONNA
SEND A GIFT WID
YOU, TO WATCH OUT
FOR YOU - GIVE YOU A
LITTLE TIME AND HELP
YOU GET YOU
MIND RIGHT.

DE SAME GIFT
MAITRE CARREFOUR
SENT TO WATCH
AND GUIDE US -
OUR *DIABLE*.

LEBLANC
L'ANCIEN.

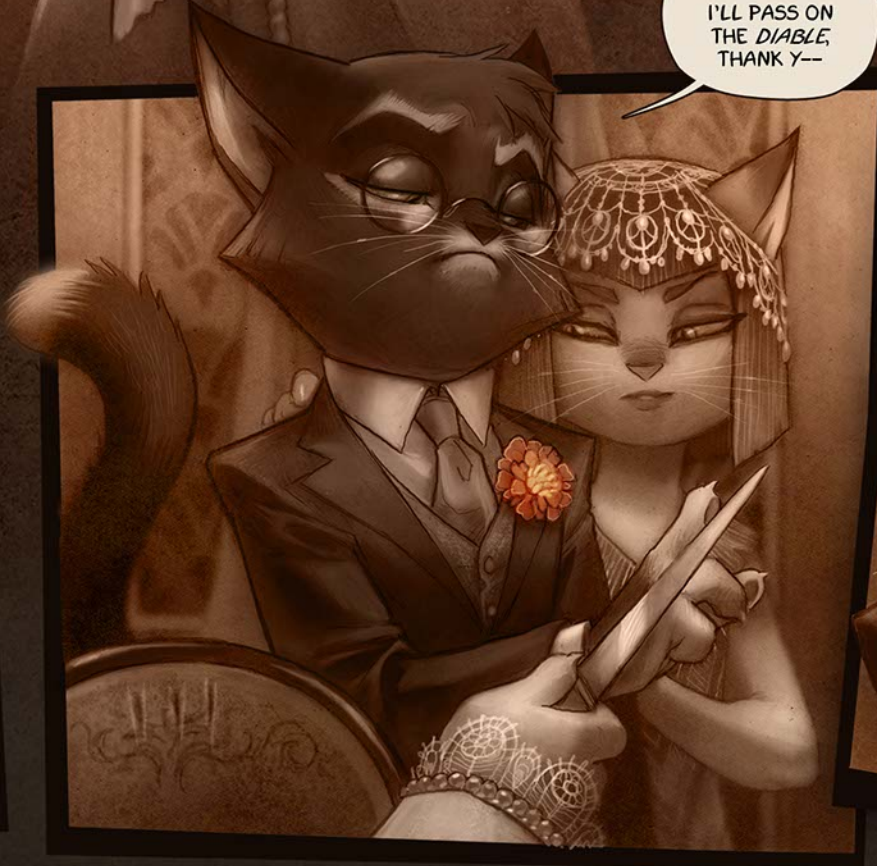
CLAK

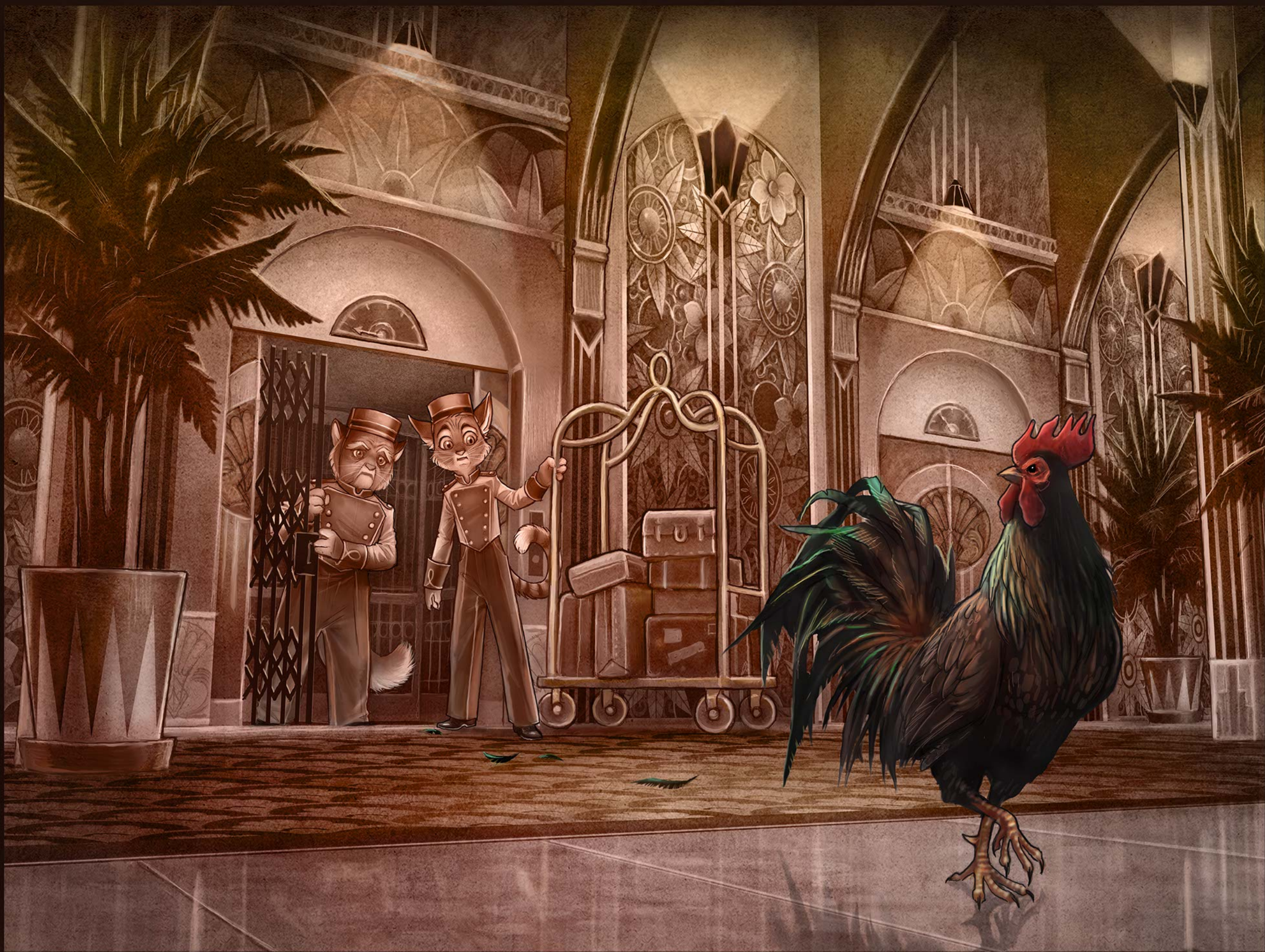
CLINK
CLINK

AH...
I'LL PASS ON
THE *DIABLE*,
THANK Y--

THIS'LL BE
IN THE WAY.

AND YOU
CAN CALL ME
ZULIE IF YOU
LIKE.





SO WHO YOU
TINK LIT UP DAT
PIG FARM?

MUSTA BEEN
DEM PIGS.

I SAW
RÉVOLUTION IN
DOSE BEADY
EYES.

OH, WHY?
DEY WAS SO
WELL FED.

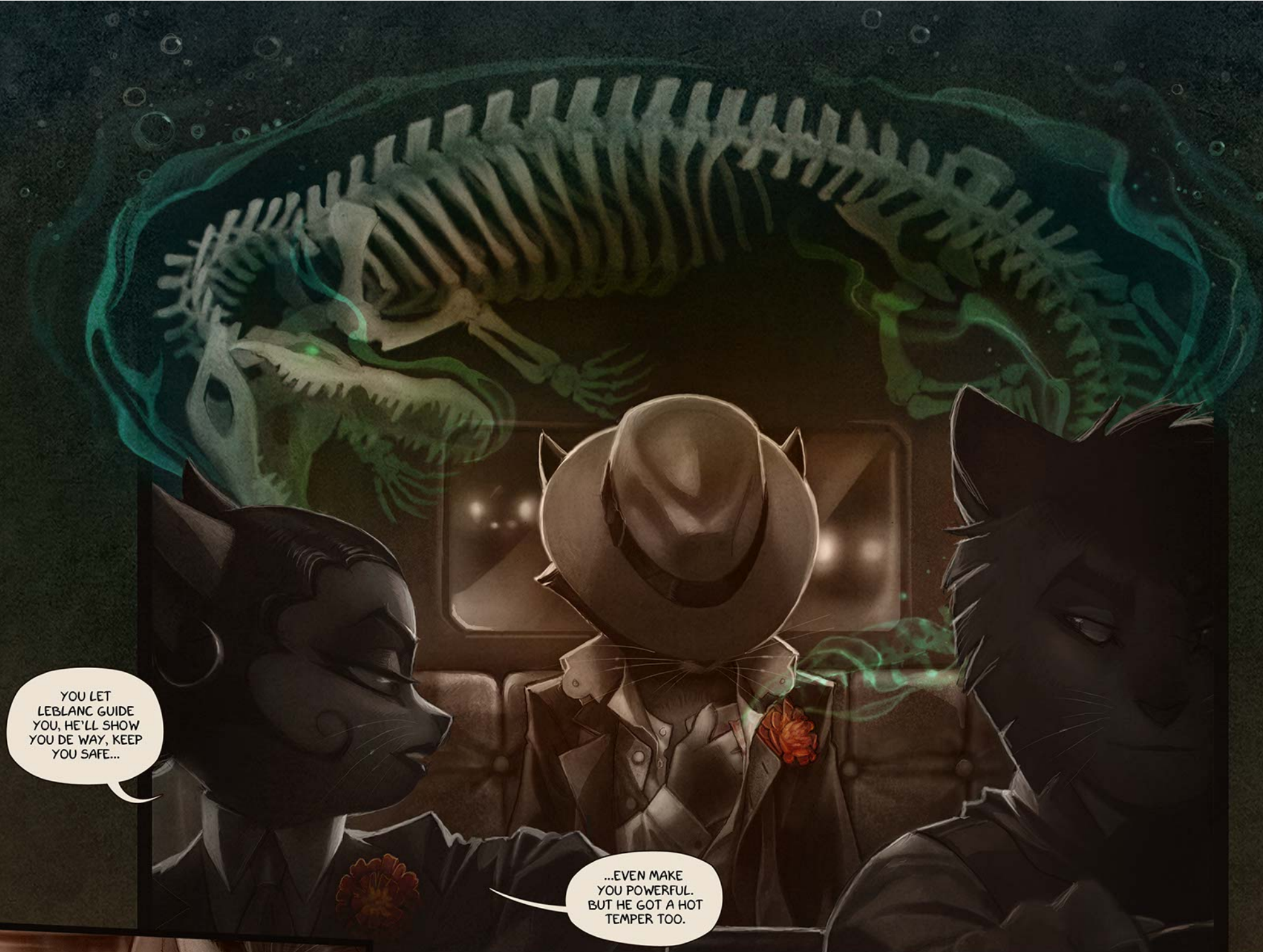
DOSE FARM BOYS WAS
FEUDIN' WID SOMEBODY.
ALL I KNOW, DEY TAKE SOME
GUNS AN' NEVER COME BACK.

MAIS NON!
DEY RUSHED IN.
DAT REVENGE
BUSINESS...

YOU GOT TO
TAKE TIME.

YOU KNOW
DAT, BUT DON'
GET IDEAS.

WHAT I GAVE
YOU, YOU'LL
SEE DAT'S A
GOOD TING.



YOU LET
LEBLANC GUIDE
YOU. HE'LL SHOW
YOU DE WAY, KEEP
YOU SAFE...

...EVEN MAKE
YOU POWERFUL.
BUT HE GOT A HOT
TEMPER TOO.



SO DON'
CROSS HIM
OR HE'LL
EAT YOU FROM
INSIDE OUT.



YOU'RE
CONFUSING
GERMS FOR
SPIRITS.



WHAT'S
DIS WORK
WE SUPPOSED
TO BE DOIN'
TONIGHT?

YOU GOT
ANUDDER HATCHET
JOB IN STORE?

NO.

I'VE BROUGHT
MORE PRECISE
INSTRUMENTS
THIS TIME.



ELSEWHERE





WE DIDN'T
HOLD THE
MAY DAY BALL
THIS YEAR.

MISS M.?

COME ON
BACK TO THE
ARTISTS' LOUNGE
WITH ME. WE'VE
GOT TO RALLY
THE POOPS.

NOTHING TOO
INSPIRATIONAL,
THOUGH. THEY'RE
LIABLE TO
SPOOK.

NEVERMIND
HONEY.

COMING.



ZIB ISN'T
HERE?

DID YOU
FINALLY DECIDE
TO PUT HIM OUT
OF HIS MISERY?

SIIGH

IT'D TAKE
MORE THAN THIS TO
SEPARATE HIM FROM HIS
BELOVED MISERY.



HE HASN'T
SHOWN. DOESN'T
LOOK LIKE WE'RE
OPENING TONIGHT,
ANYWAY.

ALL DISASTERS
CONSIDERED,
WE FIGURED IT'S TIME
TO START PACKING
OUR THINGS.

WELL...
FOR *THAT*
GUY TO START
PACKING OUR
THINGS.



NO,
ZIB WILL
TURN UP.
EVENTUALLY.

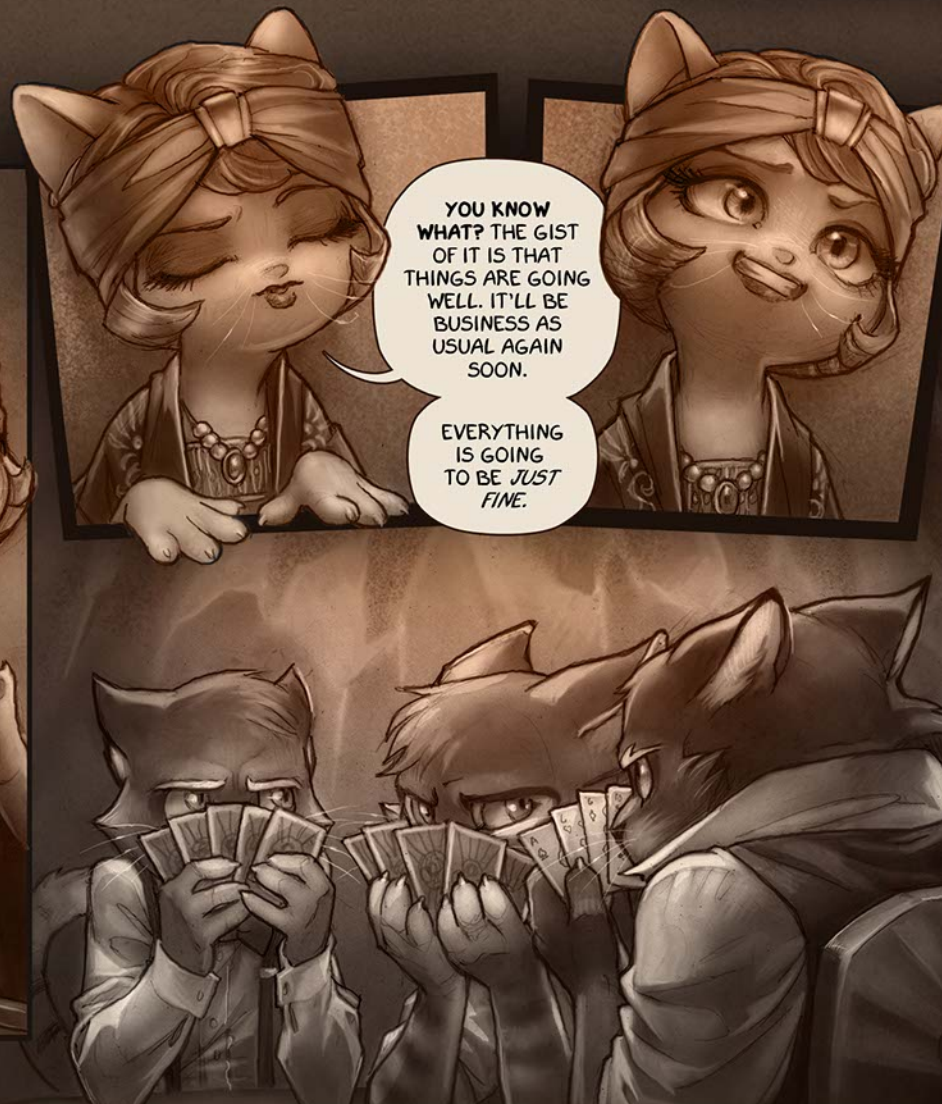
I'M SURE...



MEANWHILE, WE
AREN'T OPENING TONIGHT,
BUT WE AREN'T
CLOSING EITHER.

THERE'S
PLENTY TO DO.
CLEANING, FOR
INSTANCE.







COME ON, NOW. ARE THINGS REALLY ANY WORSE THAN PLAYING SHOWS WHEN WE ALL HAD GRIPPE...

OR GETTING LOST ON A MOUNTAIN, ON FOOT, WITH ALL OF OUR INSTRUMENTS... MORE THAN ONCE, SOMEHOW?

I'M JUST ASKING FOR A LITTLE BIT OF WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT LEFT - SOME CONVICTION, SOME GUMPTION...

A FEW OLD-TIME'S-SAKES, MOZZIE?

SY.

BEN.

...THAT GUY.

WALTER. I PLAY THE DRUMS SOMETIMES... FOR THE PAST FOUR MONTHS. IT MIGHT BE A BAD TIME TO SET UP, BUT I PAID YET--

ANYTHING, BOYS.



WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY OF THOSE THINGS LEFT. ALL WE HAVE ARE THESE BOTTLE CAPS, SOME SHELL CASINGS, A COUPLE FILLINGS, AND THIS BUTTON.

IT'S A PRETTY NICE BUTTON.

MAYBE WE CAN TRADE IT FOR A PRETTY NICE SANDWICH.

OKAY. I KNOW YOU'RE WEARY, DIS-ENCHANTED, FEARFUL, A BIT PECKISH... AND MY WORDS WON'T CHANGE THAT...

BUT IT MIGHT AT LEAST INTEREST YOU TO KNOW THAT AN ANGEL OF AN INVESTOR HAS COME THROUGH FOR US.

WHAT? HOW DID--?

TOO MANY QUESTIONS, MOZZIE.

SO... WE ARE STILL IN BUSINESS.

I'LL BE DAMNED.

WE'LL ALL BE DAMNED TOGETHER.





THAT THERE'S A
MAD VISCOUNT CONSPIRING
TO POISON YOU IN ORDER TO
SUBVERT YOUR ORDAINED
POLITICAL ASCENDANCY?



COME
ON. YOU'RE
LEAVING.

...OF
BASKETS.

YES, THAT, IN CASE
I FORGET. AND DON'T
PUT ALL YOUR DUCKS
IN ONE ROW...



ALL RIGHT.
WELL, YOU
REMEMBER
WHAT I TOLD
YOU TOO.

...ABOUT
WHY YOU
SHOULDN'T
DRINK
RADIATOR
FLUID.



OFF TO
GREENER
PASTURES
ALREADY?

YEAH. WHAT'S
THAT SAYING? - THE
WHEELS OF JUSTICE
TURN, UH, WHEN THEY
FEEL LIKE IT.

DID THEY
LET YOU
MAKE A
PERSONAL
CALL?

HE CAN
USE THE
PHONE ON MY
DESK BEFORE
HE GOES,
KINSLEY.

STOP BEING
FRIENDLY. IT'S
JARRING.

ANYWAY,
I'LL PASS. I'M
JUST GONNA
LET THIS PLAY
ITSELF OUT
NATURALLY.

LIKE A
LEAVE OF
ABSENCE.

SUIT
YOURSELF...
ZIBOWSKI,
WAS IT?

WHY? ARE
YOU LOOKING
FOR A PRISON
PEN-FRIEND?

NAH.
YOU'RE JUST
GOING TO THE
HOOSEGOW. YOU
HAVE TO TRY
HARDER TO
GET INTO
PRISON.

I'M NOT
AMBITIOUS.





HELLO?

RUSTLE

RUSTLE CRNCH

CRUNCH

CRUNCH

CRUNCH



HI THERE, MISSUS. THESE WERE JUST GROWIN' BY THE PORCH HERE.

I SAW YOU ALL LIT UP IN THE WINDOW WITH THE FLOWERS AND THOUGHT YOU'D PROB'LY LIKE THESE TOO.



OH, YOU PULLED THEM UP. THAT'S... SWEET.



YEAH. SO, IS THAT LIMEY... UH, YOUR HUSBAND AROUND?

THAT LIMEY, MY HUSBAND, IS BUSY WITH HIS OTHER WORK. IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH, MR.-- I'M SORRY, WE WEREN'T REALLY INTRODUCED.

HA!

OH, YOU CAN CALL ME WES.

WEASEL FACE.



I MEAN THAT'S WHAT THE BOYS CALL HIM... I MEAN AS LONG AS WE'RE...

BEIN'... FUNNY. AHM.



ALL RIGHT. I JUST WANTED TO CHECK IN AND MAKE SURE NO ONE HAD BEEN UP HERE BOTHERIN' YOU - SNOOPING ABOUT, ASKIN' STRANGE QUESTIONS, AND WHAT.

WELL, NO ONE UNUSUAL, MR... WEASELFACE?
WES.



I SAW A CAR PARKED UP ON THE ROAD LATE LAST NIGHT. TOO LATE FOR FUNERALS.

YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WHO THAT WAS?



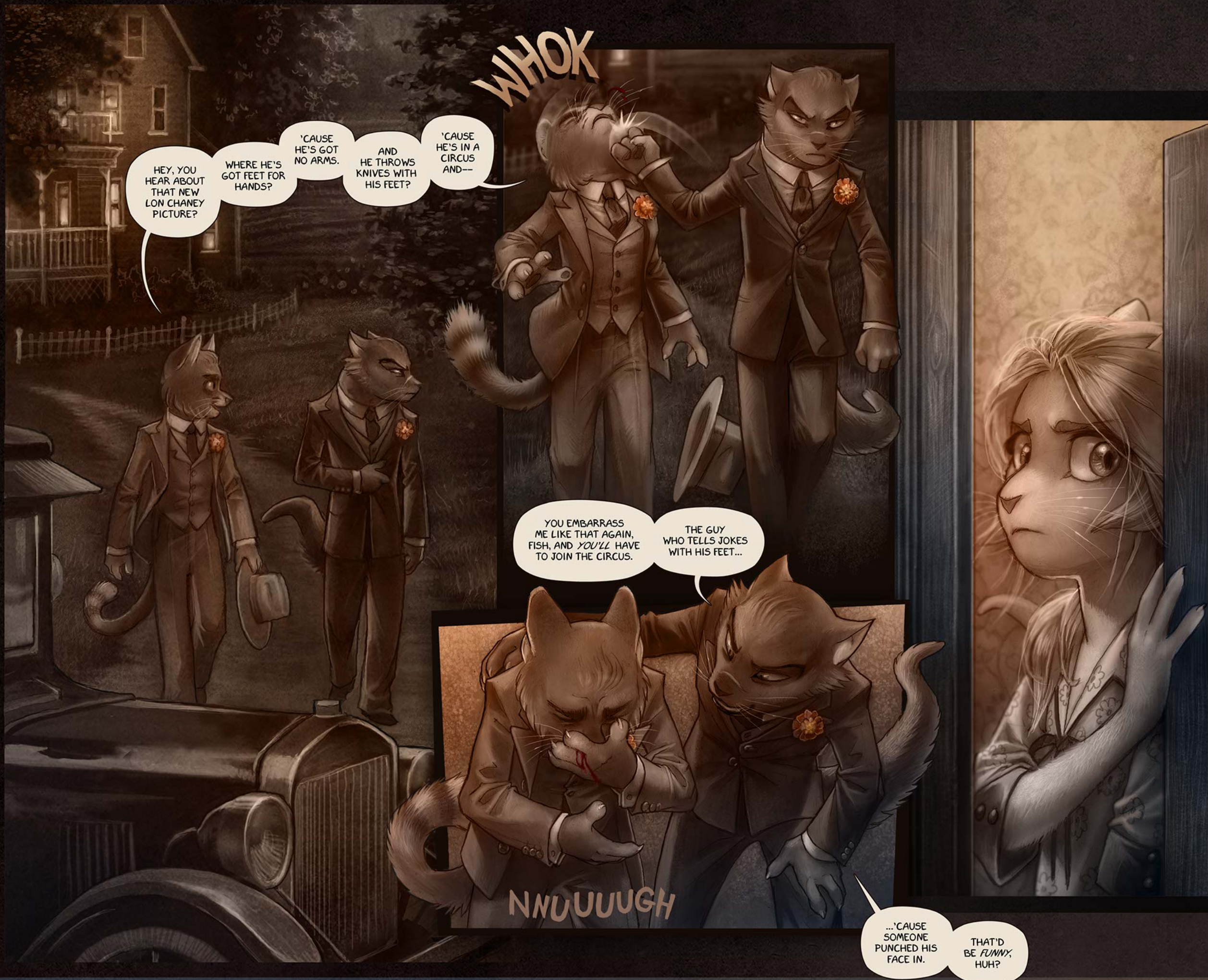
OH, KIDS FROM TOWN, PROBABLY. THEY PASS GHOST STORIES AROUND AND COME UP HERE LOOKING FOR THE OLD CHURCH AND THE LOST LITTLE CEMETERIES.

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, I'M SURE.



GOODNIGHT, MA'AM.

OKAY. WELL, YOU HAVE A GOOD NIGHT, THEN. AND REST EASY. WE GOT AN EYE ON THINGS.



HEY, YOU
HEAR ABOUT
THAT NEW
LON CHANEY
PICTURE?

WHERE HE'S
GOT FEET FOR
HANDS?

'CAUSE
HE'S GOT
NO ARMS.

AND
HE THROWS
KNIVES WITH
HIS FEET?

'CAUSE
HE'S IN A
CIRCUS
AND---

WHOK

YOU EMBARRASS
ME LIKE THAT AGAIN,
FISH, AND YOU'LL HAVE
TO JOIN THE CIRCUS.

THE GUY
WHO TELLS JOKES
WITH HIS FEET...

NNUUUGH

...'CAUSE
SOMEONE
PUNCHED HIS
FACE IN.

THAT'D
BE FUNNY,
HUH?



PROSÍM?

HELLO.
I'M SORRY TO
CALL SO LATE. I'M
TRYING TO REACH
VIKTOR, IF --

ACH, ÁNO,
VIKTOR!



BÝVA V
SPODNEJ ČASTI
DOMU.

TAKÝ PORIADNE
VYSOKÝ.

MOMENTÁLNE
SA NECITÍ DOBRE,
ALE STARAM SA
O NEHO.

OHHHHH.
CHUDÁK CHLAPEC.
CHUDÁK VIKTOR.



OH...
WE'RE
TALKING
ABOUT
VIKTOR.

MAY I
SPEAK TO
VIKTOR?



VARÍM
POLIEVKU.
PRIDEM
NESKÖR.

HELLO?



...HELLO?

DODDER
DODDER







HM-HMM-HM-HM-HM THE KILMOGANNY MOUNTAIN
LA-LA CAPTAIN FARRELL AND HIS MONEY HE WAS COUNTIN'



I FIRST PRODUCED ME PISTOL
AND THEN PRODUCED ME RAPIER
SAYING STAND AND DELIVER
FOR I AM A BOLD DECEIVER



MUSHA-RING DUMMA-DO-DUMMA-DA
WHACK FOR THE TARRY-OOH, BOYO,
LOOK AT THIS ROILING,
BOILING SKY.



WELL,
ARE YOU
COMING?

WE'RE
AFTER A PRIZE
TONIGHT!



AND WE
WOULDN'T
WANT TO KEEP
MISS PEPPER
WAITING.

SHE'S
COMING
TOO?

WELL, SHE'S
GONNA HITHER
WHILE WE
YON...

BUT DAISY
DEADLY IS
COMING
ALONG.







♣ LACKADAISSY ♣



SKETCHBOOK







Blueblood



Demon-rum



Perennial





Evergreen



Glimmer-light



Sun Spot

LACKADAISY : MINI-COMICS AND Q&A

Q. "Are the eyebrows in Lackadaisy a big part of the character designs? Because Zib's, Mordecai's, Rocky's and Serafine's are pretty intense."

A. Yes. In fact, before Lackadaisy, they joined forces briefly in an ill-fated facial feature themed crime-fighting venture as:

The League of Extraordinary Eyebrows



Q. "So, why did you choose cats? Can you try drawing the characters as something else?"

A.



Q. "Were Mitzi and Zib ever together in the past?"

A. The way they interact is intended to imply a certain familiarity - often bitter, sometimes affectionate. I've been asked this question so many times, though, I fear I've failed to communicate what I meant to communicate by way of comic. It's bad form to respond this way, but things weren't always platonic.



Q. "Is it strange that i'm infatuated with rocky? with a CAT!?"

A. That he's a cat is probably the least worrisome factor in this development.

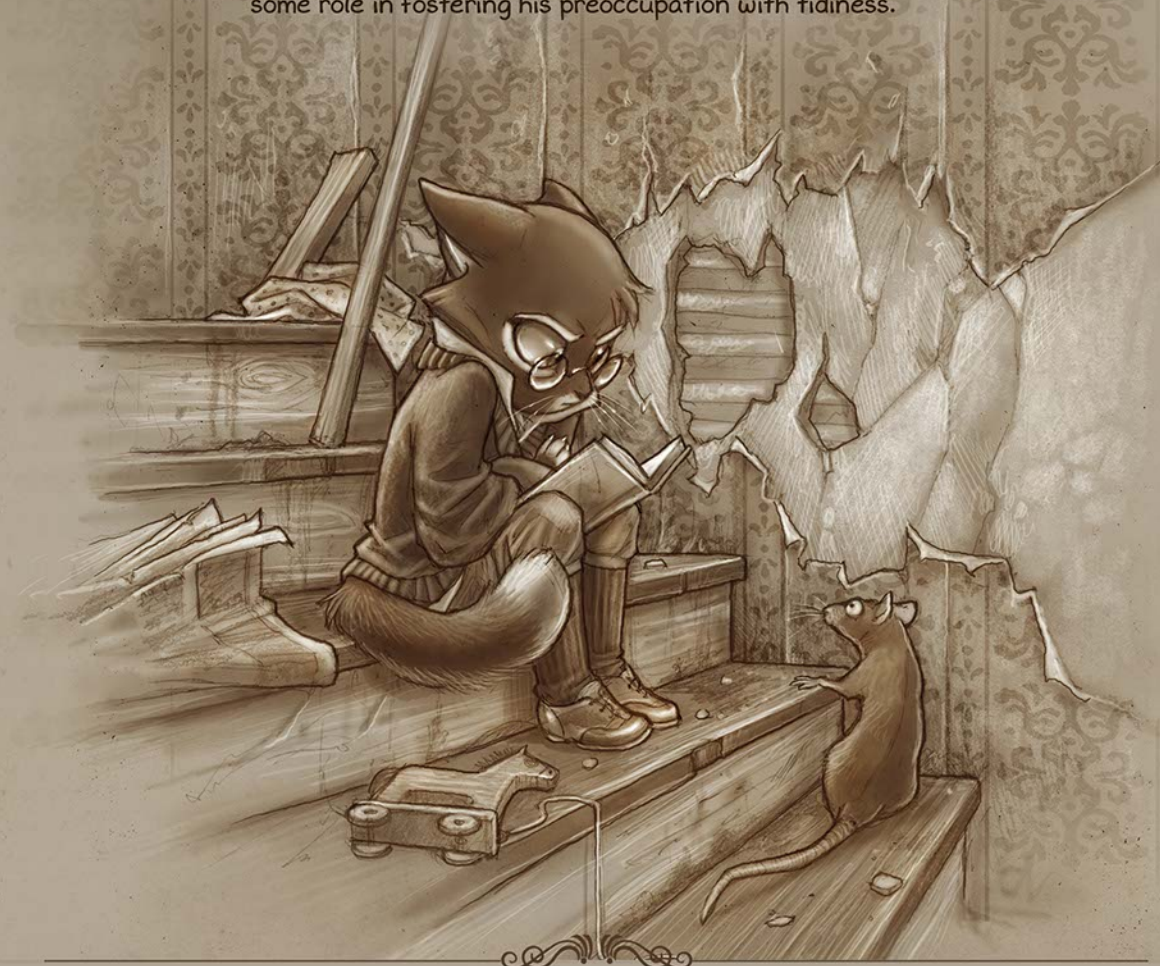
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN,
BETS ARE CLOSED.

READY?



Q. "I'm wondering, did Mordecai ever present sociopathic traits as a kid?
As well as for his "tidyness"- did he have that as a kid, and if not,
what caused him to develop it?"

A. In pre-adolescence, he was nerdy, sullen and desperately in need of personal space, but not profoundly maladjusted. Tenement living conditions probably played some role in fostering his preoccupation with tidiness.



Q. "I must say that one of my favorite characters has to be Mrs. Bapka. I find her absolutely charming and hilarious. Though I am curious as to what language she is speaking?"

A. Aw, I'm glad! I wish I had all the time in the world so that I could also draw a comic about the incomprehensibly senile adventures of Mrs. Bapka. She speaks Slovak.

Q. "So I see that Zib plays the clarinet- why is he never depicted with one? There are certain aspiring jazz clarinetists out there dying to know."

A. Vanity. He prefers being pictured with the sexyphone. (Though if you ask me, playing any sort of musical instrument is pretty sexy...with the possible exception of nose flutes, didgeridoos, and kazoos).



Q. "Is Wick a good shooter?"

A. Well, he shot a duck once...

...but it's haunted him ever since.



QUACK

YOU SAID
YOU WANTED
THIS FROM ME.

QUACK

WHY DO YOU
KEEP COMING BACK?
DO YOU HAVE
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
IN THIS REALM?

QUACK

UHH, I'M
TRYING TO DO
MY JOB. IN THIS
OFFICE... REALM.

QUACK QUACK
QUACK

I CANNOT
UNDERSTAND ANY
OF THE THINGS YOU
ARE TELLING ME.

THIIIS

QUACK QUACK QUACK

IS

THE

SUUURVEY

QUACK

SO, YOU'RE
JUST HERE TO
TORTURE ME
WITH YOUR
INFERNAL
QUACKING?

QUACK

...GONNA
LEAVE
NOW.

I'M SORRY!
I'M SORRY!

THEY TOLD
ME YOU WERE
JUST A DUMB
ANIMAL WITH
NO FEELINGS!

QUACK QUACK

JUST LEAVE
ME IN PEACE!

ALREADY
LEAVING!

NO, WAIT!
LACY, WAIT! I
WASN'T YELLING
AT YOU.



I WAS
YELLING AT
THE DUCK.

LEAVING
FASTER.



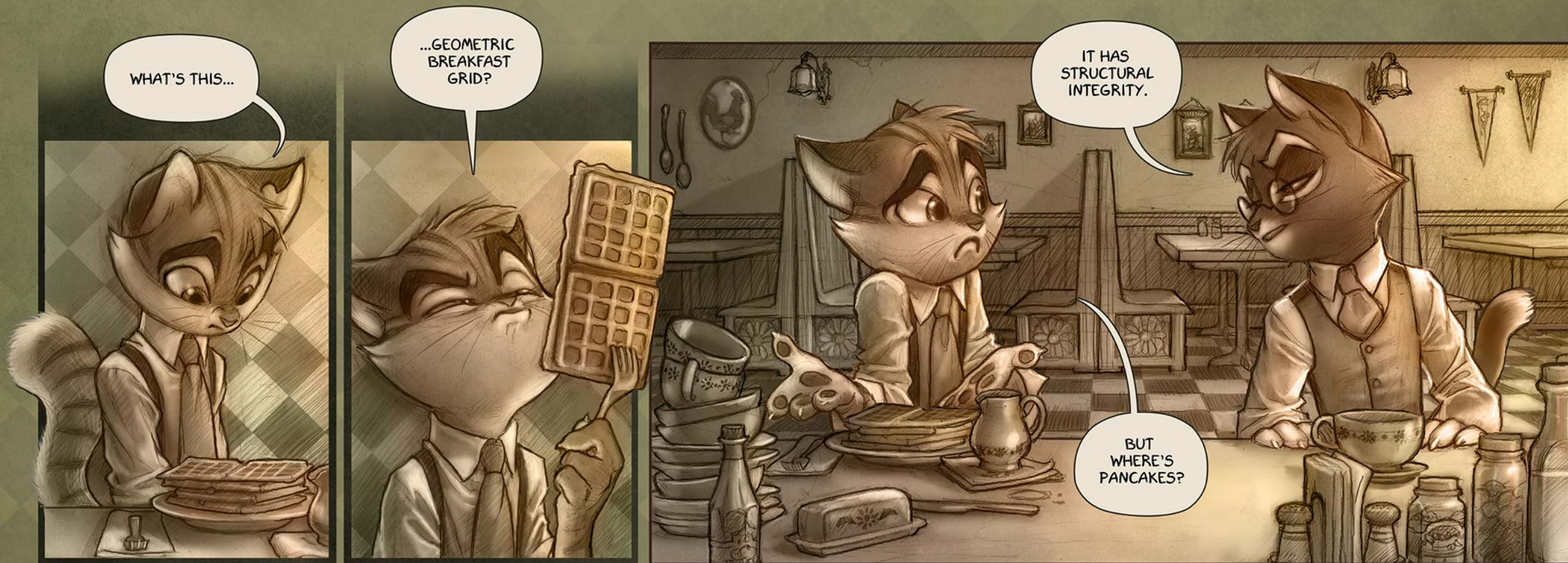
Q. "Why does Rocky like pancakes so much?"

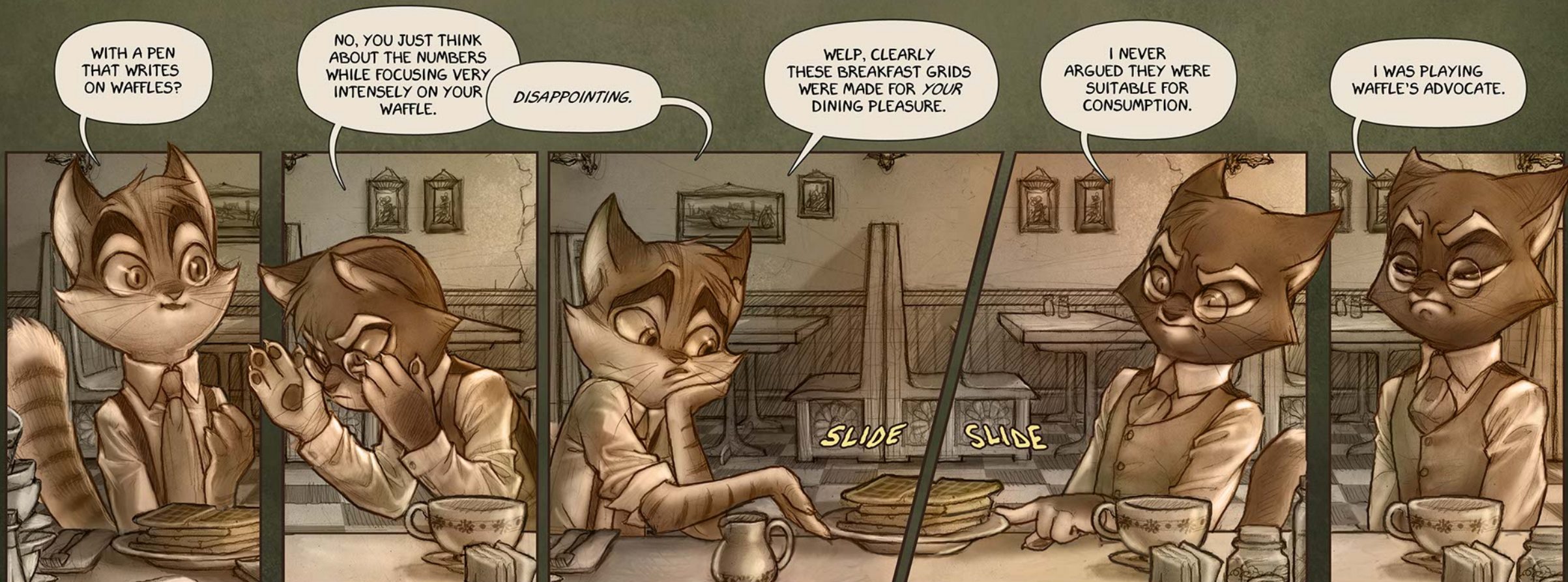
A. Some sort of genetic abnormality allows him to metabolize them rapidly and with extraordinary efficiency...



Q. "What would happen if Rocky tried waffles instead of pancakes?"

A.





WAFFLING
ON WAFFLES, HM?
WAFFLE APOLOGISTS
ARE LIARS, EH?
WAFFLES IS
LIES?

YOU'RE
GONNA
DRIVE ME TO
DRINKIN'.
MORE SYRUP.

YOU HAVE
ME DEAD TO
RIGHTS. WHAT YOU
SAY IS TRUE.

...AND IF *THAT'S* TRUE, THEN IT'S FALSE -
I'M LYING. SO, YOUR ARGUMENTS ARE TRUE,
HENCE MINE ARE FALSE, WHICH IS TO SAY,
SO ARE YOURS, AND I SPEAK THE TRUTH AFTER
ALL. IT FOLLOWS THAT YOU'RE RIGHT - MY
POSITIONS ARE FALSE, SO YOU'RE WRONG,
AND SO ON...

...WHEREIN
YOU SHOULD PREFER
WAFFLES TO PANCAKES,
PANCAKES TO WAFFLES,
WAFFLES TO PANCAKES,
AD INFINITUM.

WE MAY HAVE
STUMBLED ON
A SORT OF...
BREAKFAST
PARADOX.

TO WIT...

...THERE IS
NO ANSWER.

ONLY
ABSURDITY.

AND
FRENCH
TOAST.



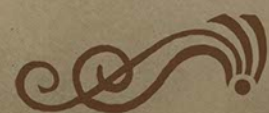
Epilogue



Q. "I keep wondering about Mordecai's motives for cleaning up after he's robbed the Lackadaisy of their firearms. Was that just due to his tidy nature, or was there some other motivation behind it?"

A. As a professional, discretion is important...





That is, uhh, he doesn't want to talk about it.



Q. "What if Mitzi gave Rocky a compliment?"

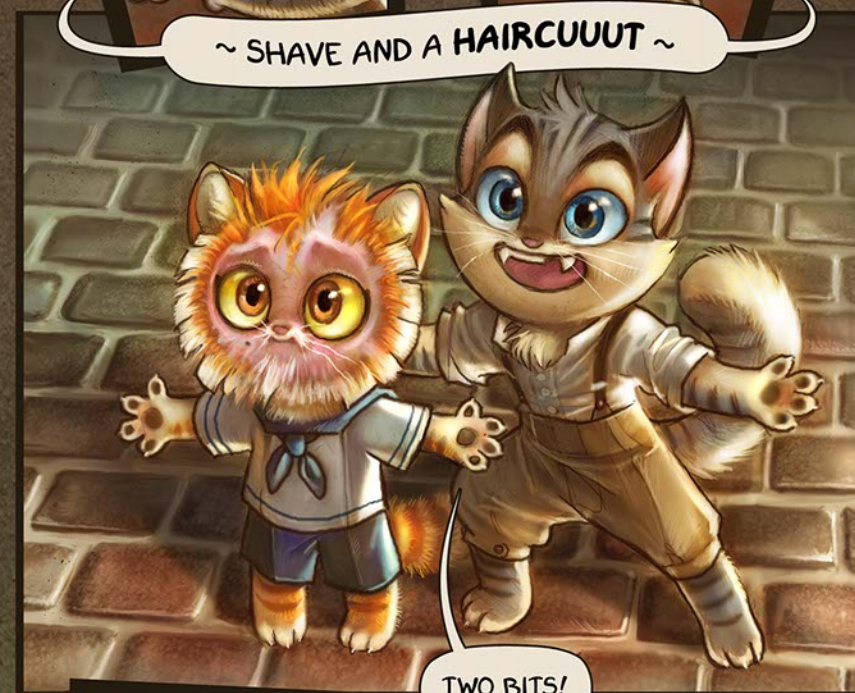
A.



NO SURVIVORS.

Q. "What does Freckle look like with a shaved face?"

A.



Q. “Do you have long conversations with your characters in your head sometimes?”

A. Nah. I just eavesdrop on their conversations.



SEE?

OKAY, I'M SORRY.
I WON'T LEAP TO ANY
HASTY CONCLUSIONS NEXT
TIME SOMEONE'S POURING
WHISKEY INTO HIS SCRAMBLED
EGGS AND TELLING ME ABOUT
THE UNDERCOVER GREMLIN
WHO RECORDS HIS
CONVERSATIONS.



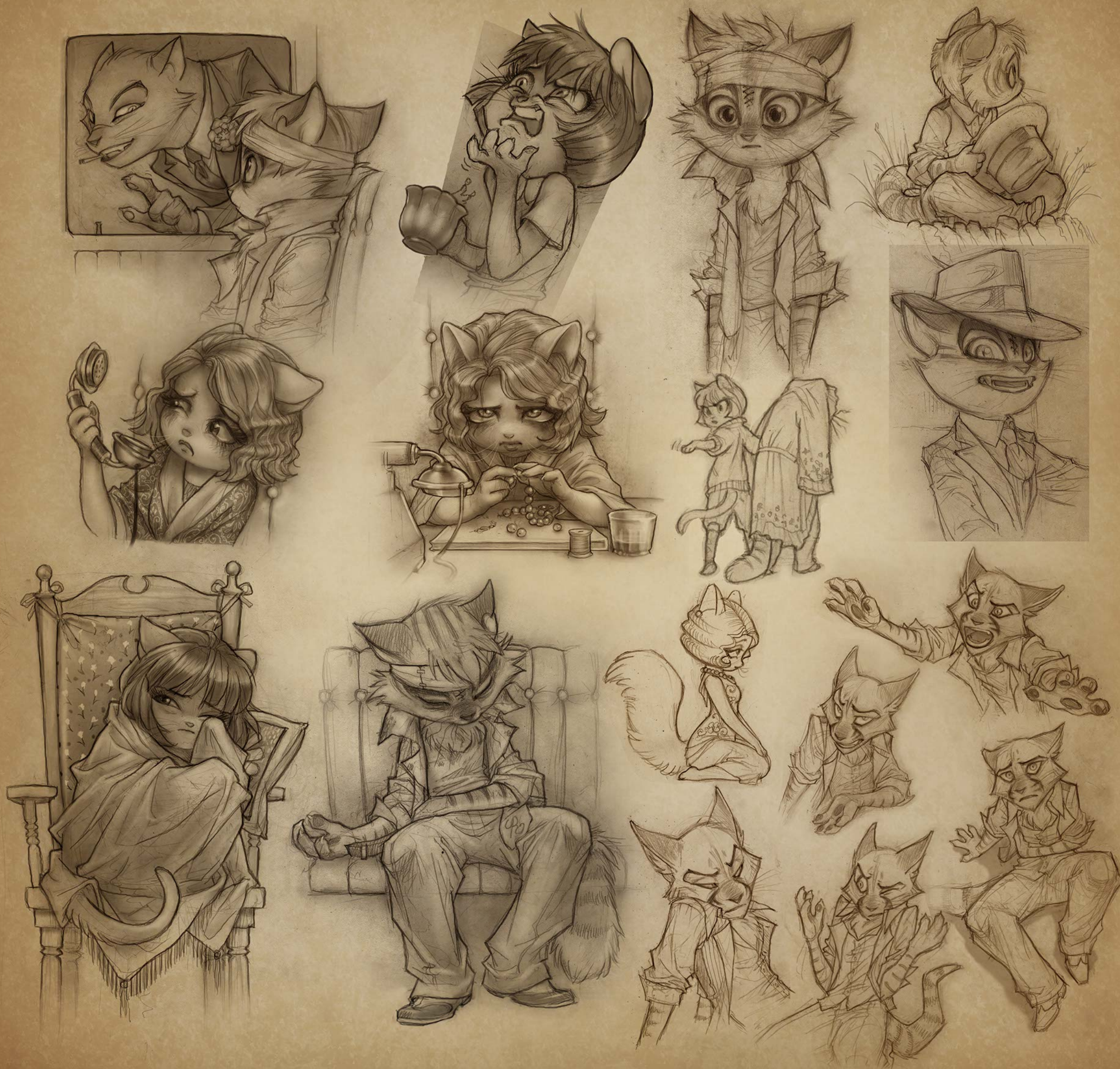
Q. “Dear Tracy. Do you look in a mirror when you do extreme expressions? Sorta like the artists at Disney?”

A. Mugging in the mirror has its uses. So does observing expressions other people make on a more natural basis. Making the expression you're drawing while you're drawing it is vital, though. I don't know why. It just is.



Throw in some sound effects too.
It's like acting for shut-ins.

LACKADAISY : DEVELOPMENT



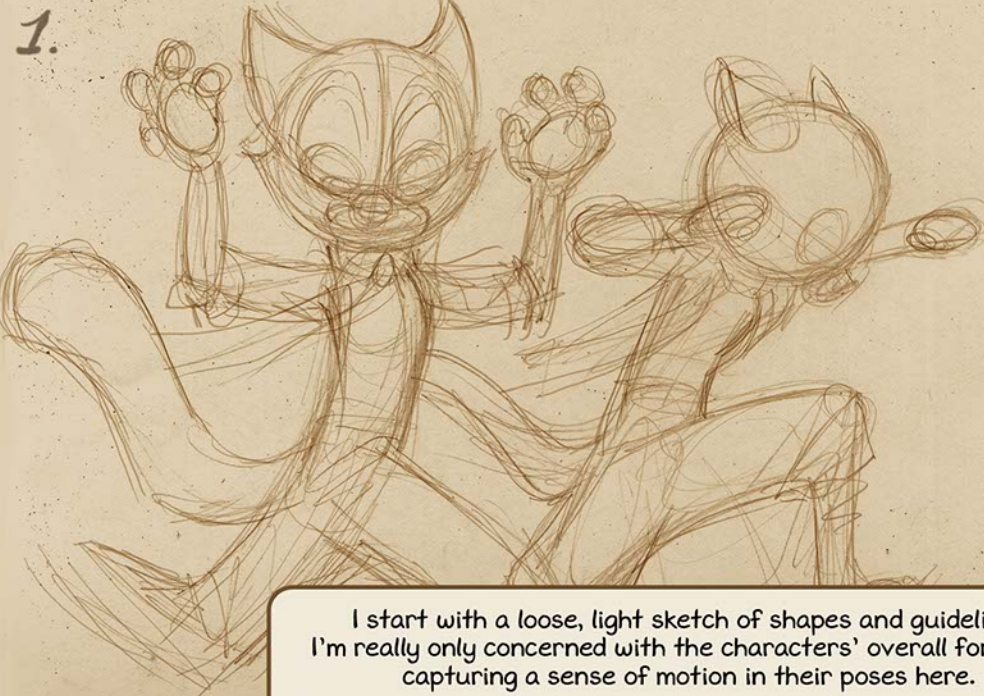
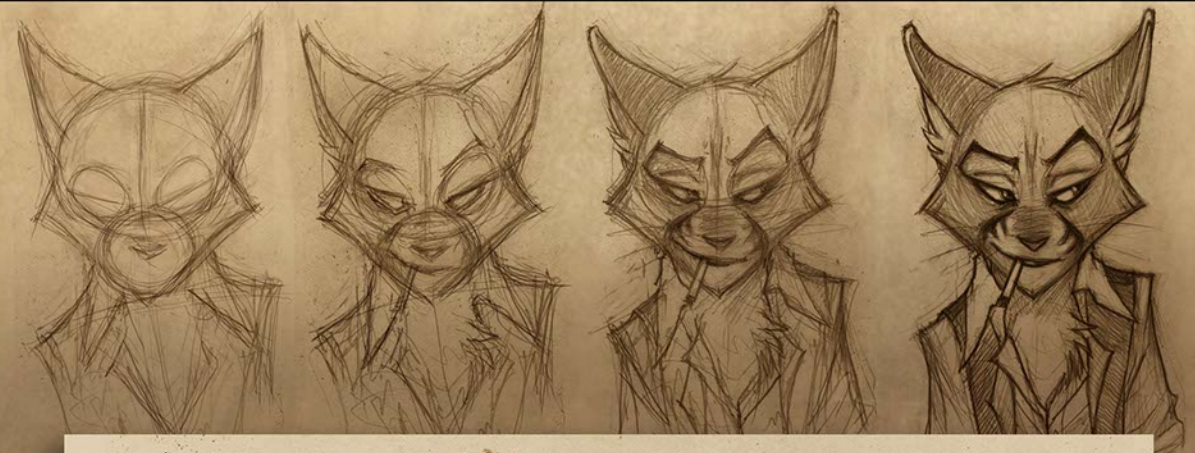


LACKADAISY : TUTORIALS

Q. “Do you have a very very rough sketch of how you start a drawing anywhere please? Like, circle shapes, triangles and building the character on top? I'd love to try and develop my own style but could do with some pointers from a person who knows how to draw extremely cute things.”

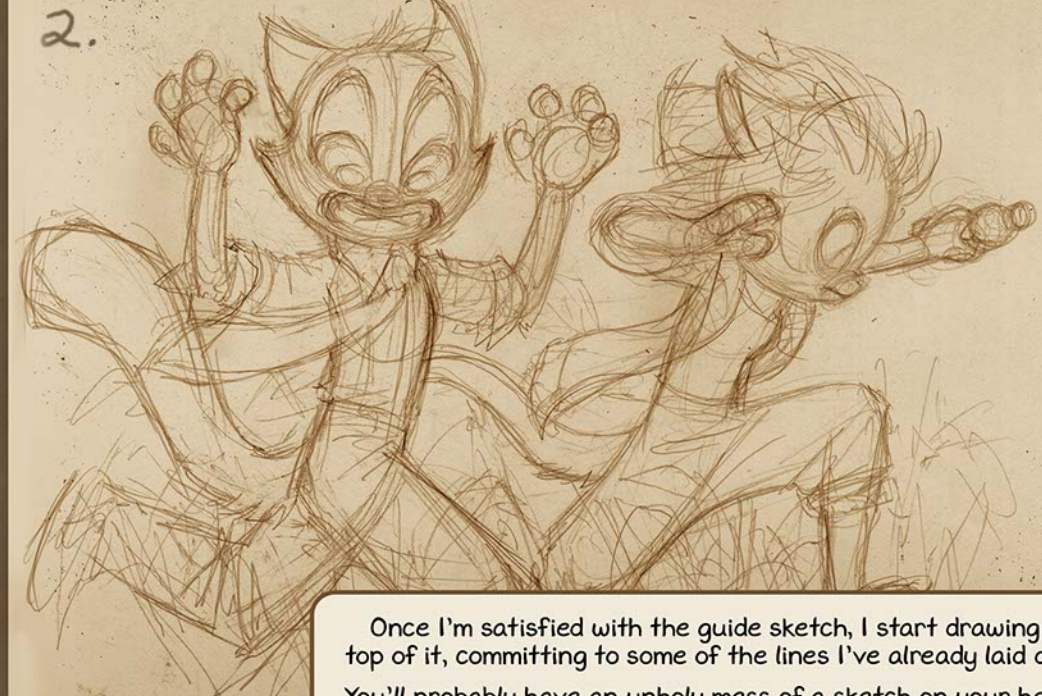
A. The idea is to work from the general form toward the details, beginning with a map of basic shapes and guides.

To clarify, here's a wordier version of events featuring some idiots running through a cornfield.

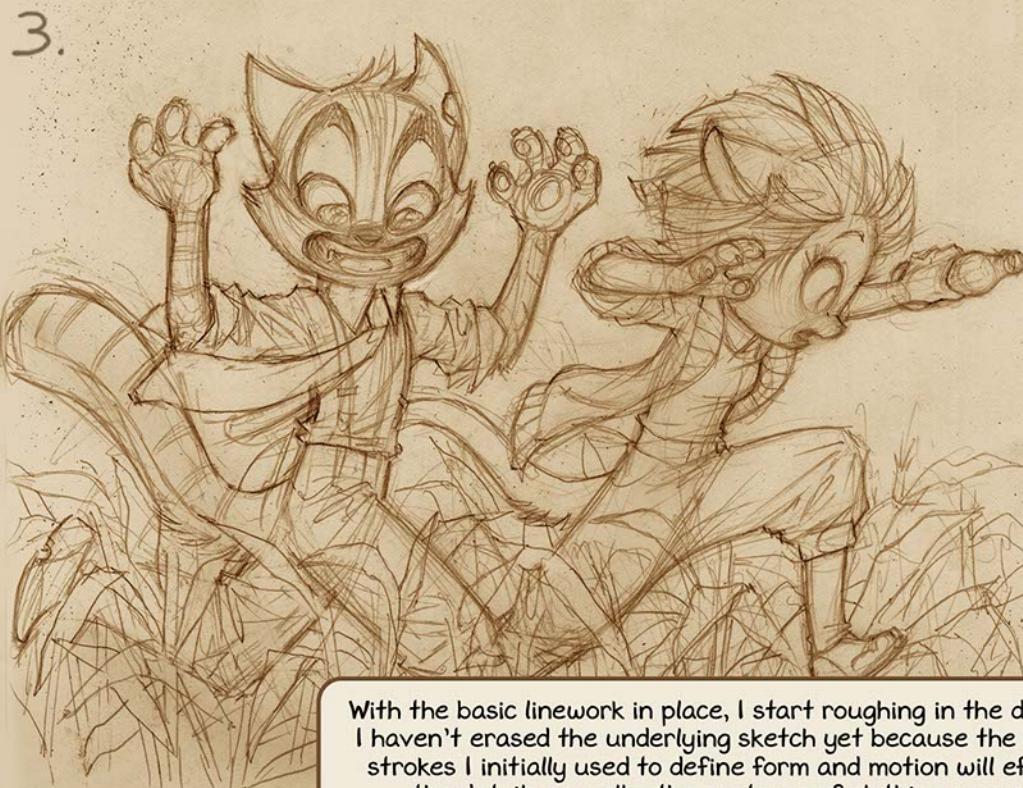


I start with a loose, light sketch of shapes and guidelines. I'm really only concerned with the characters' overall forms and capturing a sense of motion in their poses here.

Avoid vague gestures, unnatural poses, awkward proportions and bad composition by sketching out the whole drawing first.



Once I'm satisfied with the guide sketch, I start drawing on top of it, committing to some of the lines I've already laid down. You'll probably have an unholy mess of a sketch on your hands at this point...because you're a dirty, slovenly, filthy artist. Don't worry, though. That's normal.



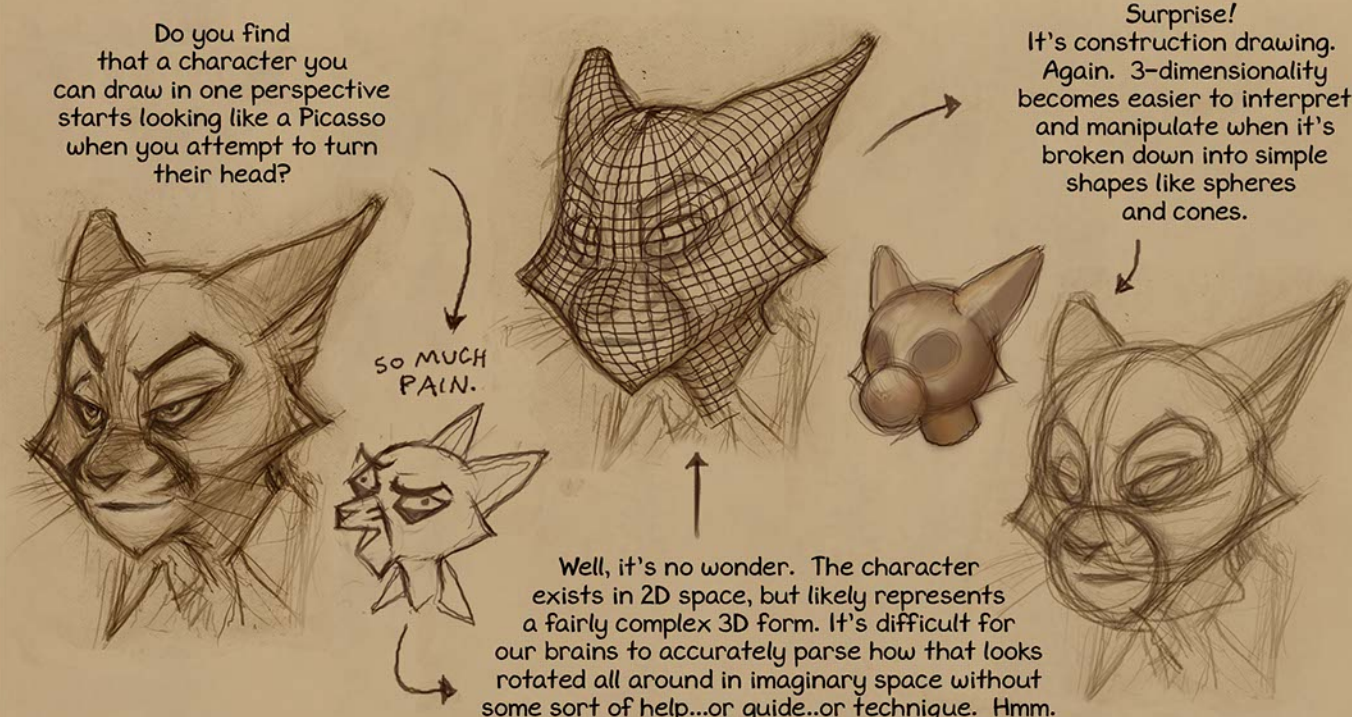
With the basic linework in place, I start roughing in the details. I haven't erased the underlying sketch yet because the guide strokes I initially used to define form and motion will effect the details as well - the contours of clothing seams, the flow of fabric wrinkles, where hair and fur tufts attach to the underlying figure, and so forth.



Here I've erased the vestiges of the guidelines, then smoothed and solidified the final linework. I prefer working in pencil for this phase, but inking the drawing and then erasing all of the pencil work is another common way to go about it.

Q. "Here's my question: I tend to have silent tantrums when I try to draw a character more than one time, because they always end up looking different. How on earth do you manage to make your characters look the same on every panel?"

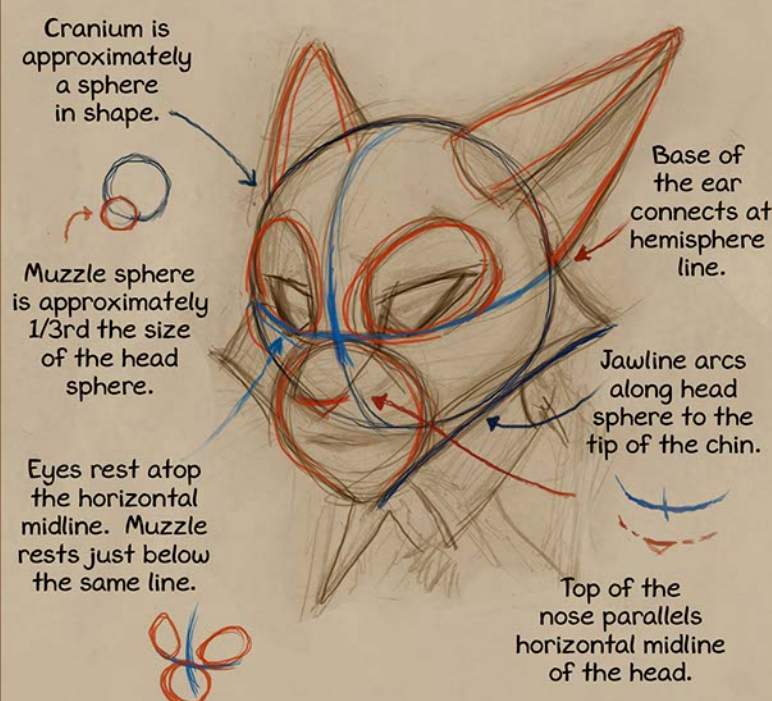
A.



So, use simple shapes as you sketch to figure out how to rotate and foreshorten a character's anatomy when the visual angle changes.

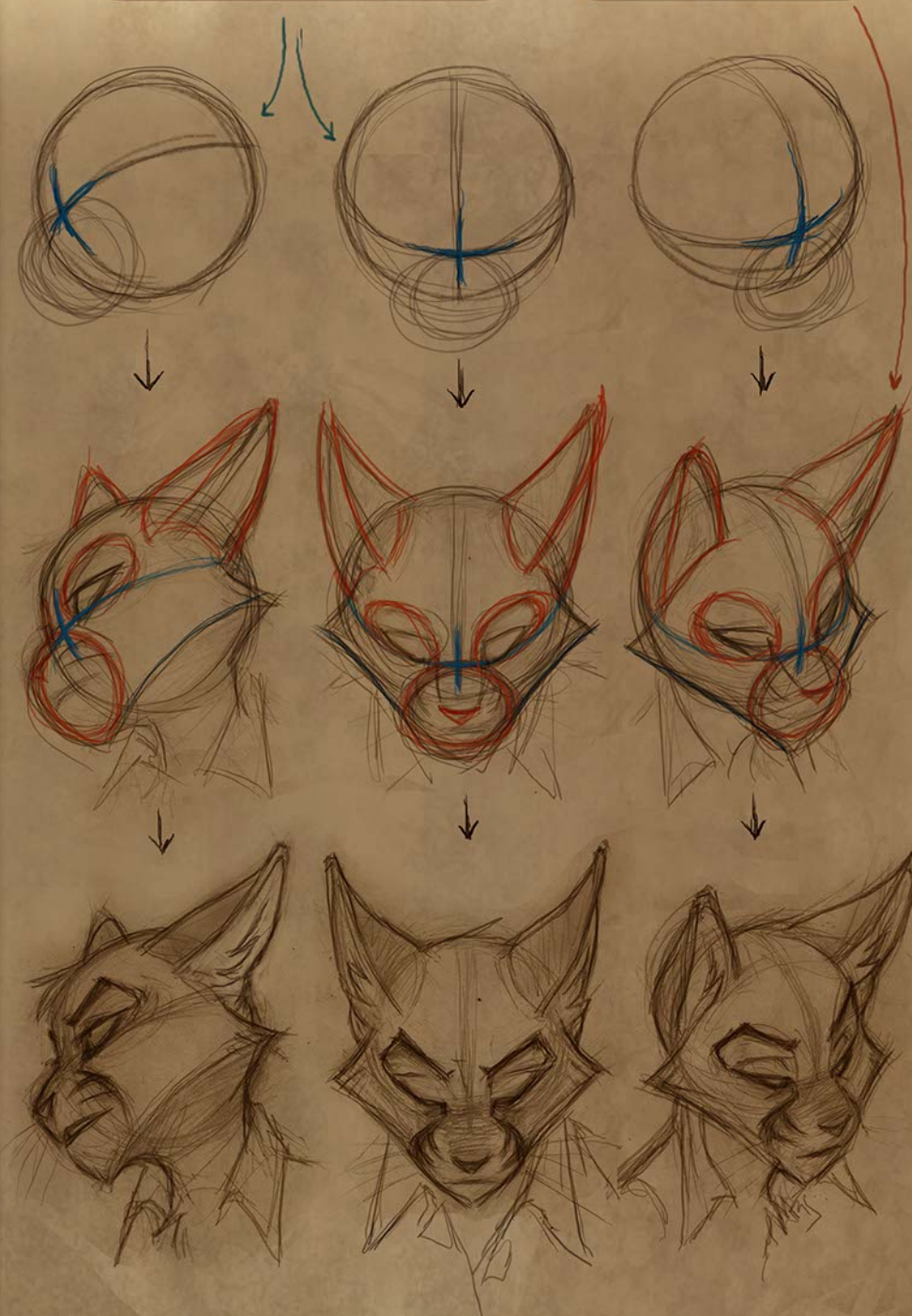


It becomes more intuitive than formalized with practice, but if you think of the shapes comprising your character as landmarks that exist in relation to each other, you have a pattern you can learn to reproduce. For instance:



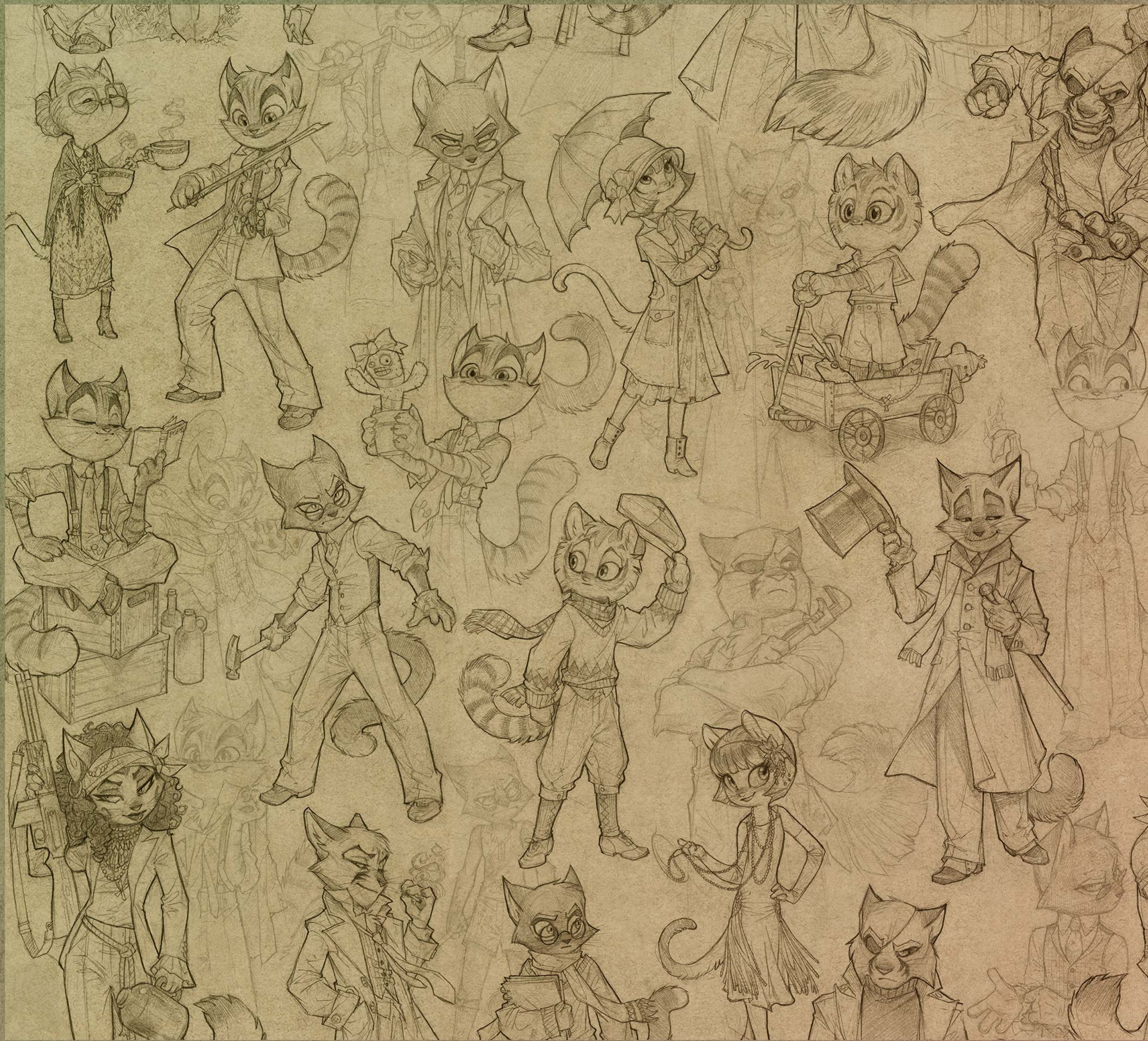
These few lines that approximate the head shape and mark out the midlines are all I need in order to know where all of the other shapes go.

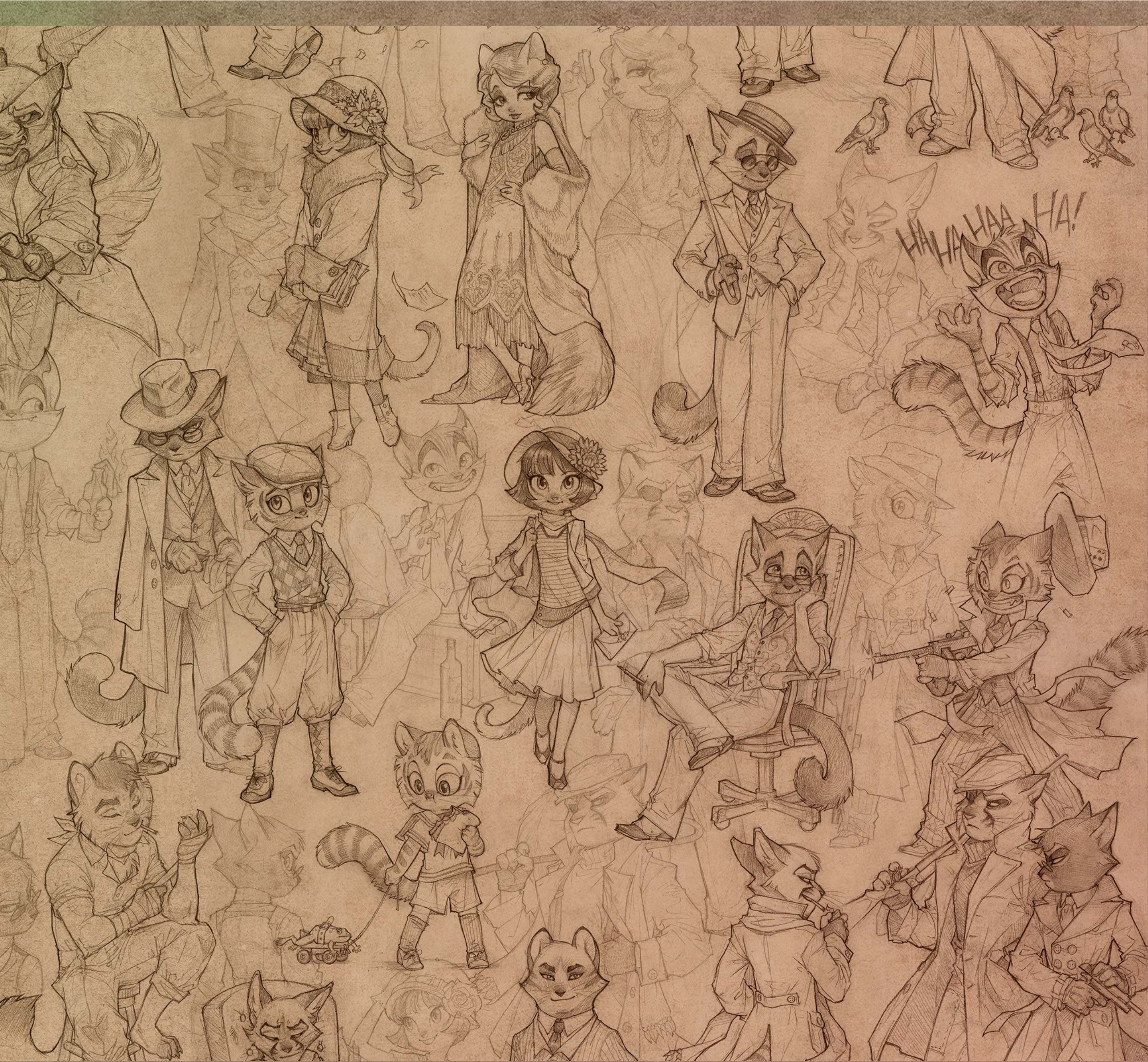
No matter what position the head takes, all the same rules of shape inter-connection apply.



Lastly, bear in mind that while techniques like this may help facilitate progress, nothing suffices for practice. Don't give up if this doesn't work especially well the first time you try it... or the ninety-eighth time you try it.

Glance back at first attempts now and then to remind yourself that you've made progress. Most importantly, just keep drawing.





NOTES AND REFERENCES

Page 5 - Depiction of 4th Street with part of the Planters Hotel and the Old Courthouse visible. In present day, the Old Courthouse is part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the same park grounds upon which the Gateway Arch stands. The University of Missouri St. Louis Digital Library and Dick Lemen Collection of Old St. Louis Photographs were my sources of historic visual reference.

Page 8 - Venetian blinds were not a new invention at the time, but were newly popular as office window dressing in the early 20th century.

Page 10 - The Bevo Mill is an iconic St. Louis restaurant built in 1917 by August A. Busch (of Anheuser-Busch fame) and situated in a historically German part of the city. My visual references were primarily from the Thomas Kempland collection of J.R. Eike photos of old St. Louis (although the structure looked much the same then as it does today).

Page 11 - Bevo was an Anheuser-Busch brand of near-beer (or non-alcoholic beer) produced in St. Louis.

Page 14 - Bakelite was one of the first synthetic plastics. Despite its multitude of uses in industry and early electronics, it's perhaps best known as the "Materia Nova" of Jazz Age fashion, linking it inextricably with Art Deco. In the 1920s, popularized by designers like Coco Chanel, myriad articles of jewelry, clothing, accessories and decor were made or adorned with bakelite.

Page 18 - The exterior of Wick's house is styled after the Desloge "Vouziers" Mansion, built in 1926 in Florissant, Missouri.

Page 20 - Forest Park in St. Louis is one of the largest urban parks in the United States. In 1904, it was host to the World's Fair (The Louisiana Purchase Exposition) and the Summer Olympics.

Page 20 - The "tire iron", as it originally appeared in the webcomic, looked like a post WWII style tool. To correct the anachronism, it's been altered here to more closely resemble a lug wrench from the sorts of tool kits that came standard with vehicles like the Model T Ford.

Page 22 - Depiction of the Grand Basin at the foot of Art Hill in Forest Park. Atop the hill is the St. Louis Art Museum (formerly known as the Palace of the Arts).

Page 22 - "Barrymore" refers to the famous family of screen and stage. Most notable in the era of silent film were actors Lionel, Ethel and John Barrymore. John in particular was known for his distinct profile.

Page 24 - The automated photo booth kiosk that was to become known as the Photomaton was the creation of Russian-born Anatole Josepho. These booths first debuted in New York City in 1925, and thereafter began appearing in cities nationwide.

Page 25 - I should probably be fined for gratuitous use of photo booth, but I'll attempt to excuse myself on the basis that photographs are a running theme in the story. Picture-taking was becoming a much less formal affair in the 1920s, which has added a certain extra degree of intrigue and delight to all my photo-based research. With the popularization of things like the photo booth and Brownie camera, private photography was no longer relegated to dour-faced portraiture and memento mori (one sort easily being confused for the other at a glance). Life seems suddenly more acutely present in picture-relics of that era. I should note that the dimensions of the photos in the artwork are not accurate, however. As a matter of artistic license, I fudged them.

Page 27 - Reference for the architecture here was St. Louis University's DuBourg Hall. College life for American girls in the 1920's was in some ways surprisingly progressive. Enrollment was much higher than in any previous decade, but courses of study were still largely restricted to nursing, teaching and "euthenics" (home economics). Like many modern-day pillow forts, much of the demesne of the arts and sciences still had a "no girls allowed" policy.

Page 30 - The radio programming is a rather thinly veiled allusion to the *Clicquot Club Eskimos*, who graced the very early NBC radio of the 1920's and 30's. I like Harry Reser's music personally, but it seemed like just the sort of thing Viktor'd be inclined to smash on the floor.

Page 30 - The radio itself is a bit of an anachronism. All-in-one cathedral style tabletop radios (tubes and speaker combined) were very popular starting in about 1930, but prior to that, tabletops generally consisted of a coffin-style box and a separate speaker. Also missing from the picture is the copper wire antenna that would probably need to run out the window and up to the roof for proper reception.

Page 32 - Mrs. Bapka is speaking Slovak (which is also Viktor's native tongue).

Page 34 - Defiance is a small, mostly rural Missouri town west of St. Louis.

Page 35 - There were laws prohibiting the stuffing of food products down one's drain before the advent of the garbage disposal unit. Apparently even Mrs. Bapka is a hardened criminal. Drain pipe diameters for sinks were also smaller at the time than what's depicted here.

Page 38 - "Struggle buggy" is slang for a car, or more accurately, a tactless euphemism for potential goings-on in the backseat. There's a fun, circa 1929 King Oliver recording of a song by the same name.

Page 42 - "Phylloxera" was the aphid suspected of causing the Great French Wine Blight of the 1850s.

Page 45 - At the time, a checkbook would more typically consist of full sheets of 3 stacked, detachable checks.

Page 47 - Before about the 1940's, DUI laws were pretty loosely defined and loosely enforced in the US, and up until about the 70's and 80's, driving under the influence still wasn't taken as seriously as it is today. Even during the Prohibition years, it seems to have been regarded as more of a faux pas than a potential felony.

Page 50 - Check cashing seems to have really blossomed as a business in the early 20th century as employers were more regularly paying employees by check.

Page 51 - US paper currency was quite a bit larger in the past than it is today. In 1929, new, smaller notes (such as we're accustomed to today) were released with nationwide standardized designs.

Page 52 - Some artistic license has been taken with the pearl necklace. Because pearls are strung with knots between them to hold them in place, a necklace would generally not break apart so dramatically.

Page 53 - Mata Hari was a courtesan and dancer executed on charges of espionage during the Great War. She remains a sort of iconic femme fatale despite the probability that she was more scapegoat than spy.

Page 58-59 - Something as innocuous as a hip flask generally would not result in an arrest during Prohibition. Depending largely on the circumstances and the officer involved, it might simply be confiscated. Public drunkenness - or something resembling it - could certainly get you in some trouble, though.

Page 59 - A bench warrant is a type of arrest warrant, frequently issued for someone who has failed to appear at a mandated court date.

Page 61 - The Bureau of Prohibition was part of the Department of the Treasury. More specifically, it was initially part of the IRS, becoming its own bureau within the Treasury Department by 1927. During the span of Prohibition, it employed between about 1,500 and 2,500 agents (often called prohis or revenueurs) to investigate illicit alcohol trade and enforce the 18th Amendment across the nation. (It was later moved to the Justice Department, then to the FBI. Today, it exists in a transmogrified capacity as the ATF.)

Page 63-64 - The alcohol is stashed in a springhouse - a small stone structure built over running water which serves as a sort of natural refrigerator. Overgrown with ivy and kudzu, springhouses often blend seamlessly into the rural landscape.

Page 72-73 - Religious revivals weren't on high in the United States in the 1920s. The tide of moralism that had helped enact Prohibition had waned while the country was enjoying certain prosperity. Popular preachers like Billy Sunday still embodied much of that spirit of fiery evangelism, though. (The dialogue here is a little more reminiscent of an 18th century Jonathan Edwards brand of fire and brimstone, in any case).

Page 74 - Alcohol was big business in the 1920s, of course, but so was death in many ways. Around the turn of the century, funerals and wakes were still traditionally held in the home, but by the 20's, death culture was changing, and funeral homes were becoming the more common location for services. Also, it's not an organ pulper. It's embalming equipment.

Page 77 - The MKT (Missouri-Kansas-Texas) is more commonly known as the Katy Railroad. Defiance did have a depot, but it was miniscule, and few photos of it as it existed in 1920 seem to be available. The structure here is actually styled more after the St. Charles MKT depot. It too has been long defunct, but exists in a restored state in Frontier Park as one of the area's sentimental reminders of just how integral the railroads once were to American life and business.

Page 78 - Mk1 and Mk2 time fuse fragmentation grenades were a product of the Great War. It probably goes without saying the war spurred a myriad of weapon technology advancements. Many of those new weapons (most famously, the Thompson sub-machine gun) and surplus arms subsequently became entangled in the culture of crime stirred up by National Prohibition.

Page 79 - Viktor's weapon is a Winchester Model 1897, a pump-action shotgun, also known by the moniker 'trench gun' for its effectiveness in close-combat situations in WWI trenches.

Page 83 - The Palmer Raids were something of an extension of the Red Scare and a brand of xenophobia stoked by the Great War. In 1919 and 1920, under then Attorney General Alexander Palmer, thousands of individuals were arrested, detained and in some cases deported, often for mere association with leftist organizations.

Page 95 - The Old St. Charles Bridge once connected St. Louis and St. Charles counties across the wide Missouri River. Such bridge crossings in the area were sparse at the time. The bridge was demolished in 1998.

Page 101 - The St. Louis Riverfront. Historical visual references were from the Thomas Kempland Collection of J.R. Eike Glassplates.

Page 103 - "Interdental fricatives converted to stops" refers to the phonetic replacement of sounds like /th/ with hard consonant sounds like /d/ and /t/ in speech. Common to many English dialects and regional accents, *this* and *that* sound like *dis* and *dat*.

Page 104 - The Calinda is a dance with roots tracing back to African martial arts. It appears to have made its way to the American South with the slave trade where it intermingled with Creole and Cajun cultures and developed a new reputation as a bawdy, forbidden dance with implications of Voodoo practice. In side-long reference to the Calinda dance, a girl named Colinda occasionally appears in Louisiana folk songs - the popular Cajun tune "*Allons Danser Colinda*" among them. The lyrics are pulled from the oldest (yet uncredited) version of the song I could find. (Speakers of continental French may note that Cajun French plays by some of its own rules.)

Page 105 - The powder-drawing on the floor is a veve (or vèvé), a symbol used to summon or invoke a loa (one of Voovoo's pantheon of spirits). Each loa has his or her own individual veve.

Page 106 - Maitre Carrefour (Master Crossroads, also called Kalfu) is a loa of Haitian origin, considered to be an aspect of Legba, the intermediary between the human and spirit realms.

Page 108 - “Laveau and Lafitte” refers to New Orleans Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau and the pirate Jean Lafitte (to whom Serafine is claiming some dubious relation).

Page 112 - Mordecai is using the Hebrew spelling of a name to try to convey a safe combination to his mother in semi-encoded fashion, as the letters also have numeric value.

Page 120 - "Diable" (or "djab") in Voodoo refers to a spirit and carries a somewhat different connotation than 'devil' or 'demon' in more common contexts.

Page 123 - In Haitian Voodoo (and New Orleans Voodoo by extension), it's believed that a spirit may be invoked as a garde (or gad) for an individual through various ritualistic methods, sometimes involving branding or scarification. Of course, it's generally a much more voluntary rite than Serafine seems to have made it here.

Page 129 - “Grippe” is an old-fashioned word for the flu.

Page 130 - The handcuffing might appear awkward here, but mundane police procedure of yore is difficult to pin down. I fell back almost entirely on photo reference for lack of more official material. At the time, a prisoner might be cuffed in front, cuffed behind the back, or even cuffed to an officer's wrist (something that'd be frowned upon today) for escort.

Page 135 - The "picture" referenced is The Unknown, a 1927 Chaney-Browning horror film.

Page 138 - The lyrics are from “Whiskey in the Jar”, an old Irish traditional song (albeit one that remains popular to this day).

Page 139 - “Firing on six sixes” is Rocky’s odd combination of two idioms meaning the same thing - “firing on six cylinders” and “firing on all sixes”.





UNTIL NEXT TIME...