

SILK HILLS



BRIAN LEVEL • RYAN FERRIER
KATE SHERRON • CRANK!

SILK HILLS



AN ONI PRESS PUBLICATION



Written by
Brian Level & Ryan Ferrier

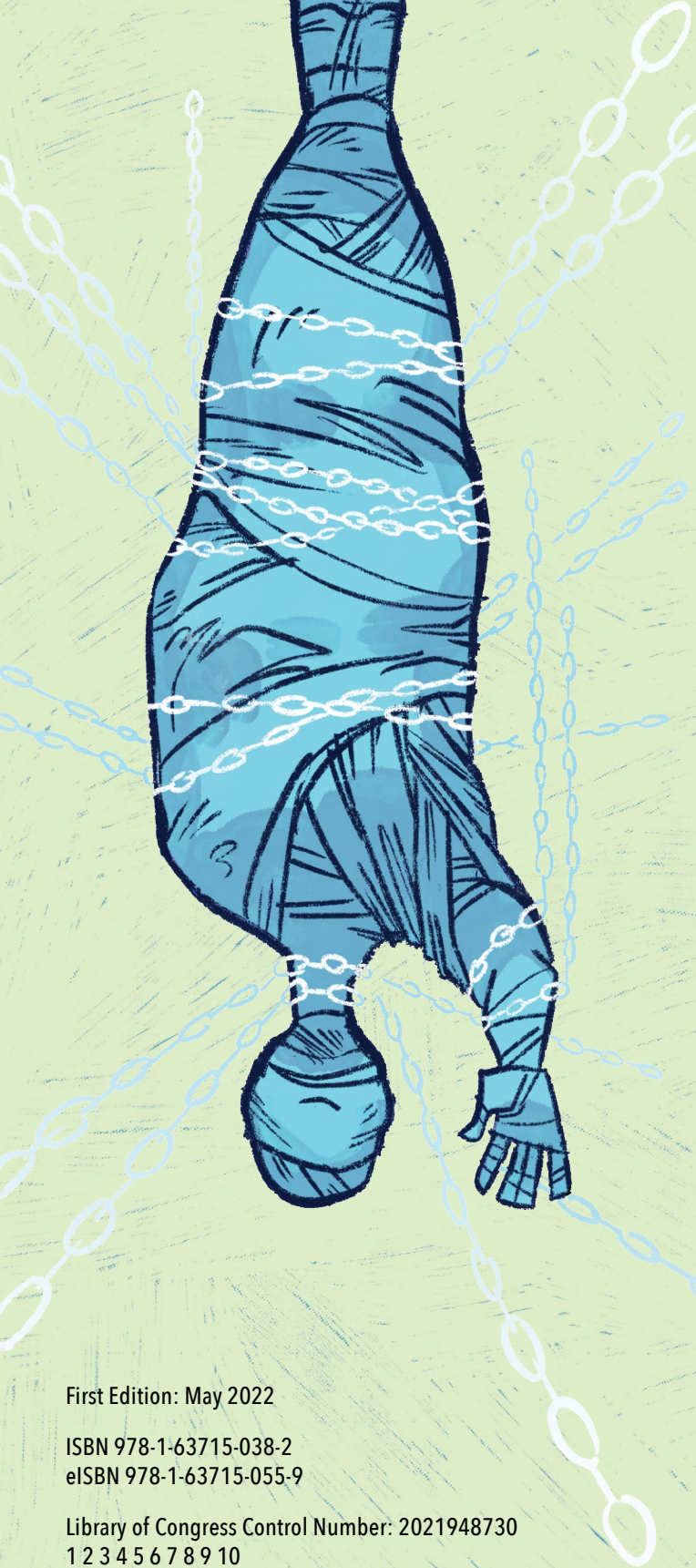
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WELCOME
TO
SILK
HILLS



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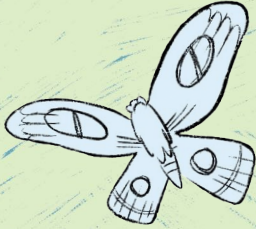
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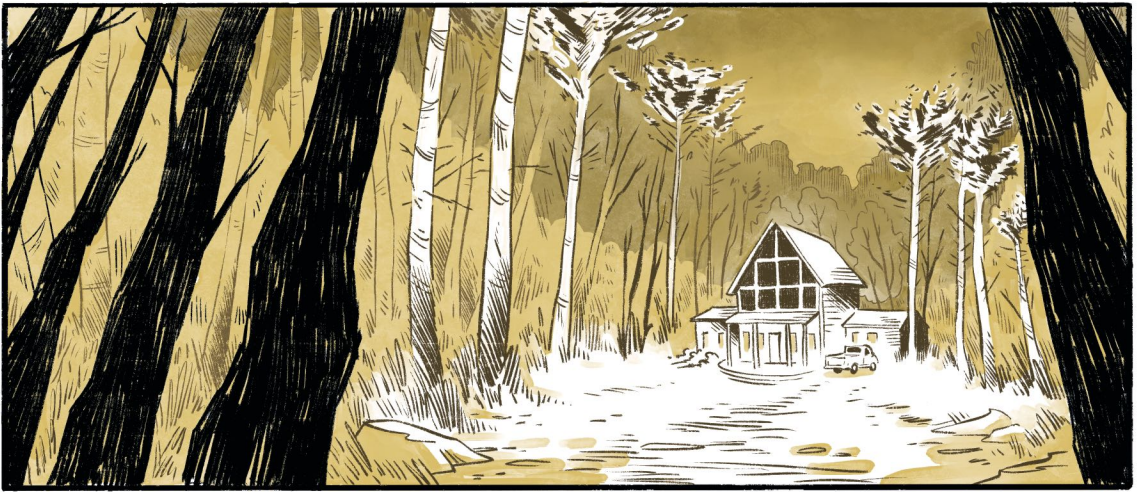
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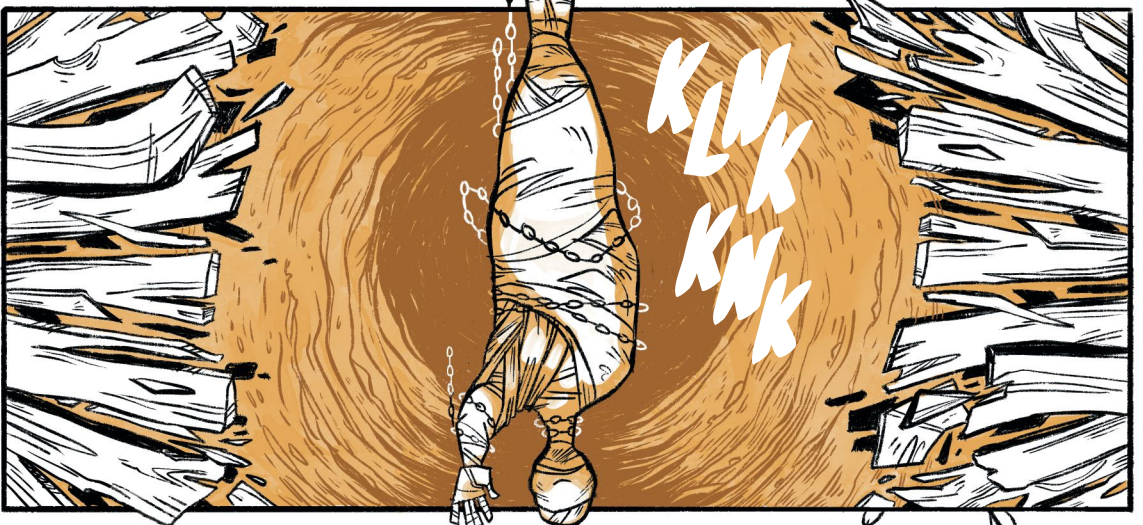
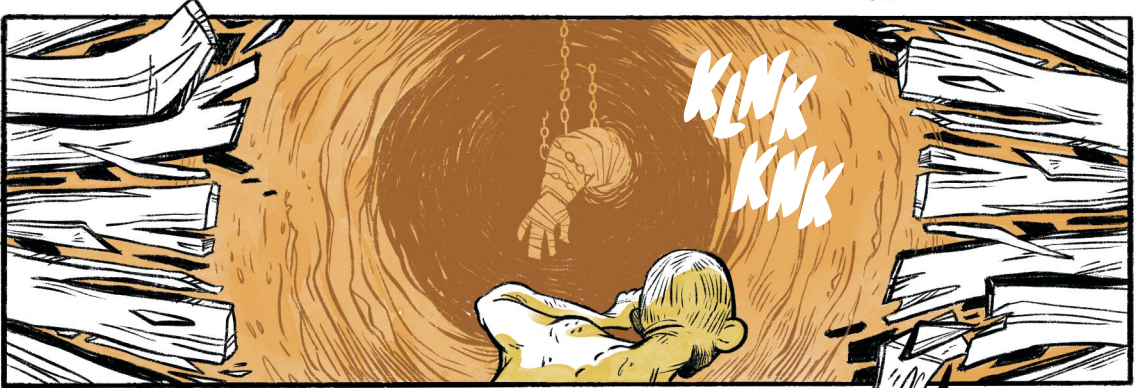
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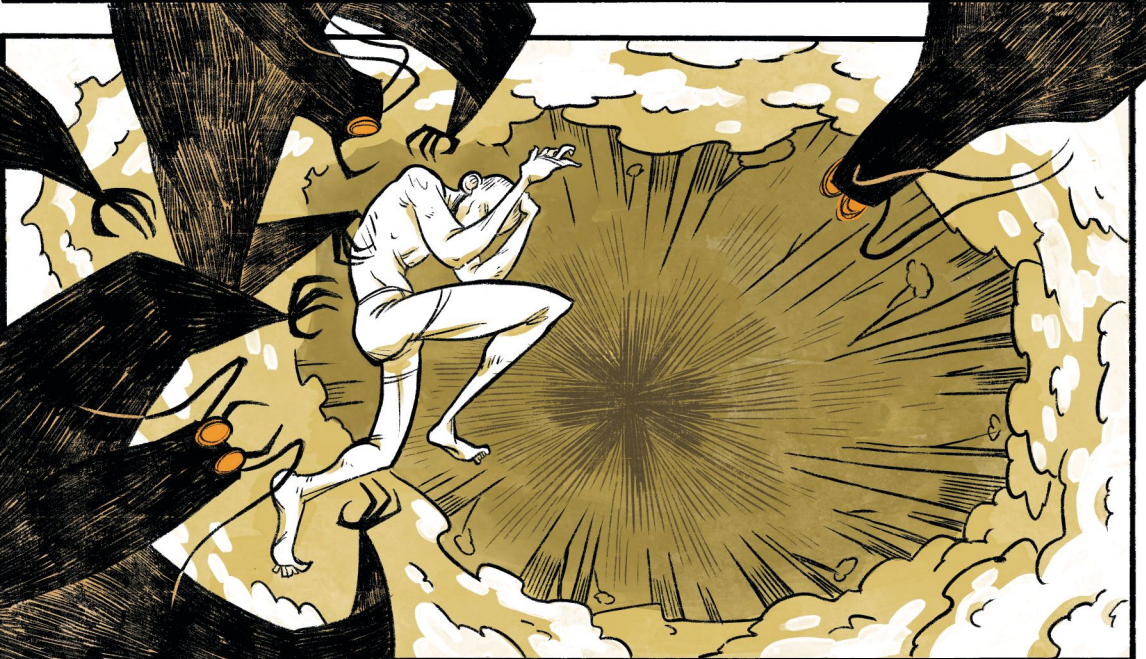


For June and James. You continue to live. **-Brian**

For my family, both blood and none. **-Kate**









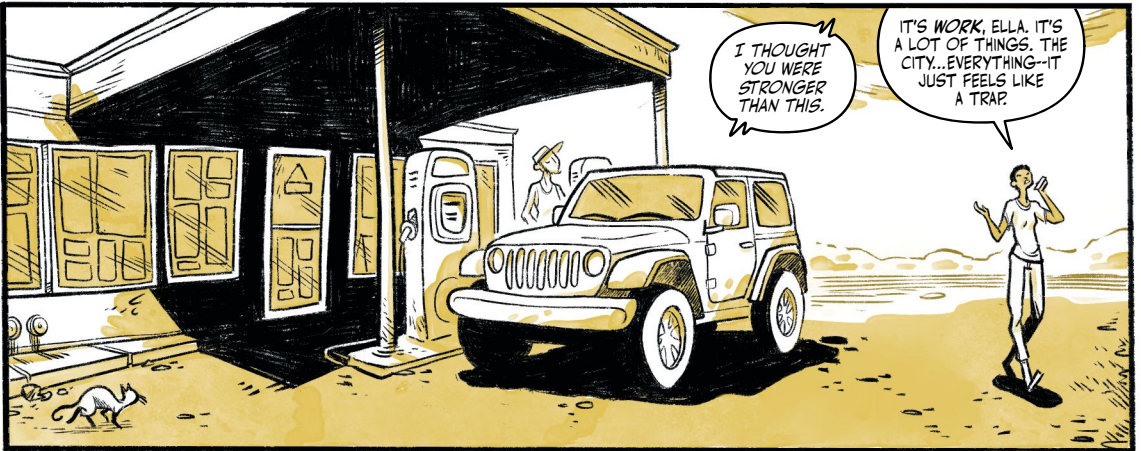
ARE YOU TRYING TO KID ME, OR YOURSELF?

IT'S NOT A "BREATHER," BETH. IT'S NOT A "CHANGE OF PACE."



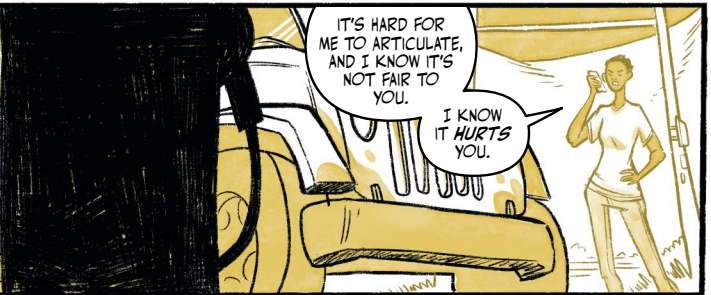
IT'S RUNNING AWAY.

YOU'RE GIVING UP ON US. YOU DON'T EVEN WANT TO FIGHT ANYMORE.



I THOUGHT YOU WERE STRONGER THAN THIS.

IT'S WORK, ELLA. IT'S A LOT OF THINGS. THE CITY...EVERYTHING-IT JUST FEELS LIKE A TRAP.



IT'S HARD FOR ME TO ARTICULATE, AND I KNOW IT'S NOT FAIR TO YOU.

I KNOW IT HURTS YOU.



YOU WEREN'T THE SAME WHEN YOU CAME BACK. MAYBE IT'S SELFISH TO WISH I COULD'VE BEEN THE ONE TO FIX IT.

I GOTTA GO. I'M SORRY.



WE BUY HOUSES
555-7226

YEAH. BYE FOR NOW. THEN. HOPE IT GOES OKAY... WHEREVER THE HELL YOU ARE.



EVERYTHING
AWRIGHT?

JUST
PEACHY.

HEADED
TO *SILK HILLS*,
DO YOU KNOW
IT?

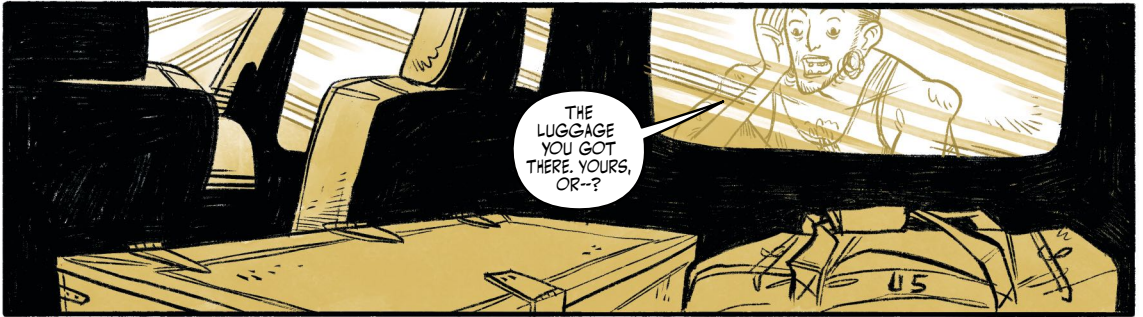


'COURSE. DON'T NEED
NO MAP, THOUGH. MAIN
ROAD GOES RIGHT
THROUGH IT.

PROB'LY
DON'T WANNA
STRAY TOO
FAR FROM
THAT.



I'M NOT TOO
WORRIED. I'M SURE
I'LL BE SEEING
ALL IT HAS TO
OFFER.



THE
LUGGAGE
YOU GOT
THERE, YOURS,
OR--?



IT'S MINE. *WAS*
MINE. MARINE CORPS.
SERGEANT. BEEN HOME
NOW ABOUT EIGHT
MONTHS.

HOW
ABOUT YOU.
HOW LONG
YOU BEEN
OUT?



OH, GOIN'
ON SIX YEARS NOW.
SHRAPNEL HIT WAS
THE STAMP ON THE
PAPERS.

IF YOU
DON'T MIND ME
ASKIN', WHAT TAKES
YOU ALL THE WAY
OUT HERE, SARGE?
NEW YORK PLATES
ON A NEWISH
JEEP... ISSUED
BAGS...

THERE
A WAR OUT
HERE I DON'T
KNOW ABOUT,
SOLDIER?



NA. HOPEFULLY LEFT ALL THAT BEHIND IN THE SANDBOX.

NAH, I'M WORKING. PRIVATE INVESTIGATION.

SAME THRILL, MORE MONEY, LESS SHRAPNEL.



AMEN T'THAT.

THANKS. KEEP THE CHANGE.

TELL Y'WHAT... HANG ON A SEC.



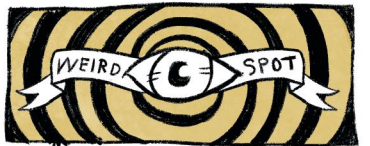
DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER BEEN, BUT NEW YORK IS LOUDER THAN AFGHANISTAN'S BUSIEST DAY.

IT MAY NOT BE PLEASANT WORK SOMETIMES, BUT I'LL TAKE SOME PEACE AND QUIET. Y'KNOW?



DING DING

GOT SOMETHIN'...



NICE MEETIN' YA. DRIVE SAFE NOW.

SEMPER FI.



OORAH.

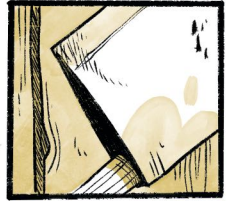
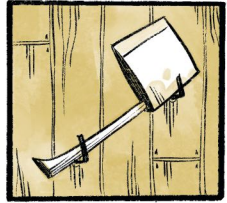


"SILK HILLS IS A FAMILY TOWN. THAT MUCH YOU NEED TO KNOW."

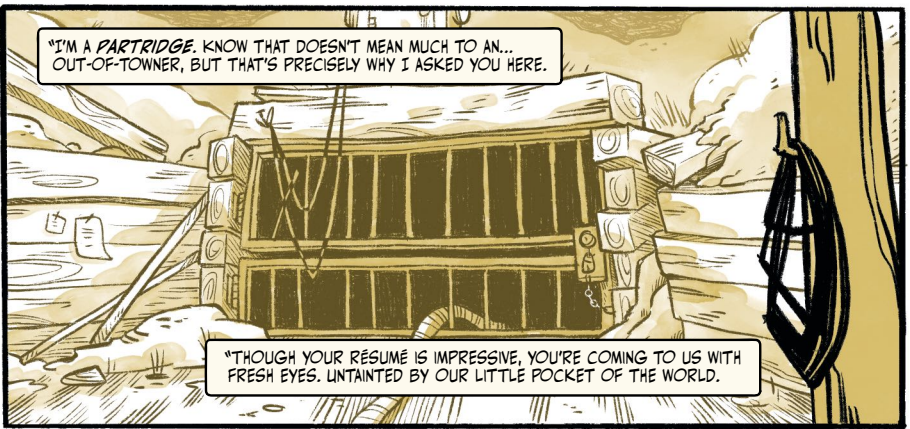


"WE DO THINGS DIFFERENT HERE. IT'S A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE. EXPECT YOU'RE IN FOR A BIT OF CULTURE SHOCK."

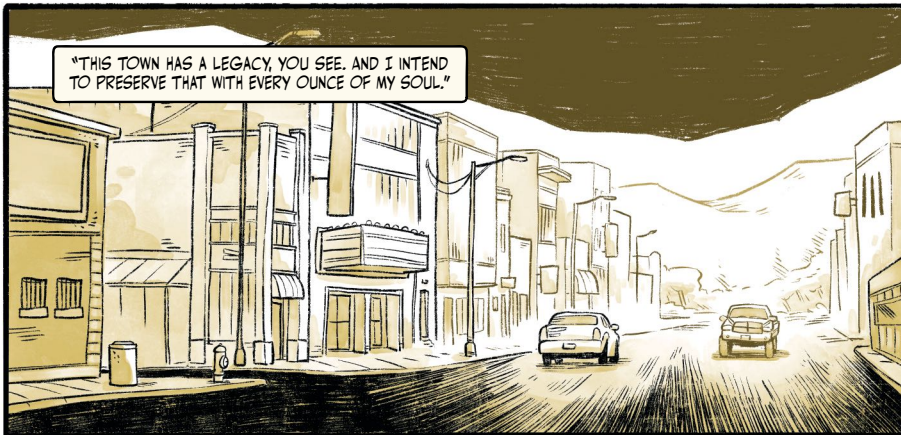
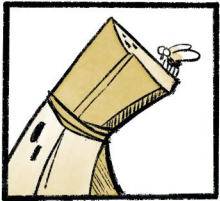
"WE HAVE TRADITION. VALUES. PRIDE."



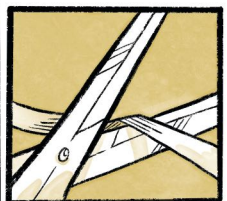
"I'M A *PARTRIDGE*. KNOW THAT DOESN'T MEAN MUCH TO AN... OUT-OF-TOWNER, BUT THAT'S PRECISELY WHY I ASKED YOU HERE."

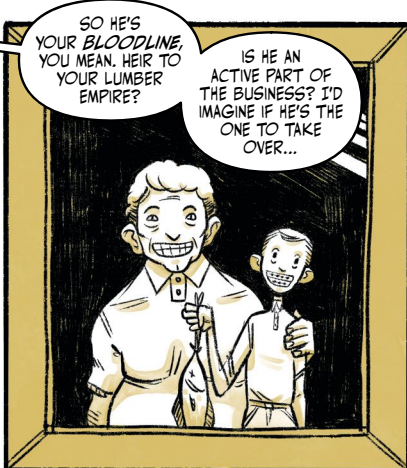
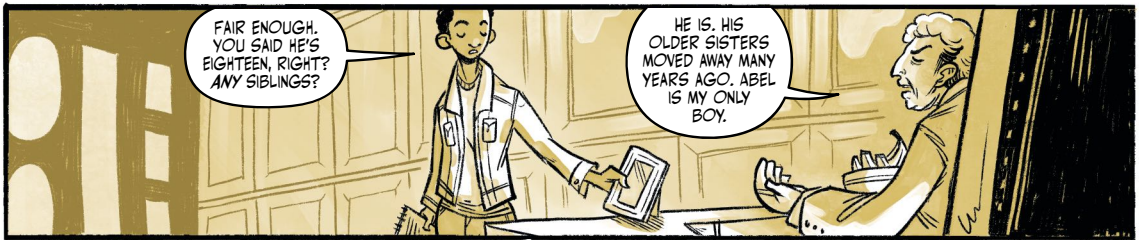
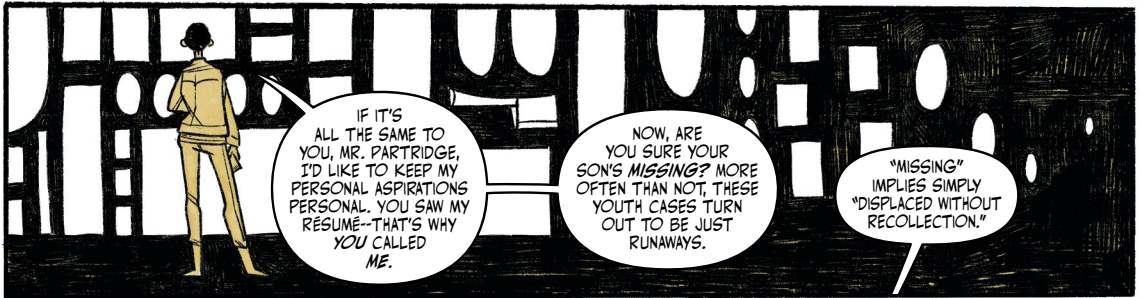
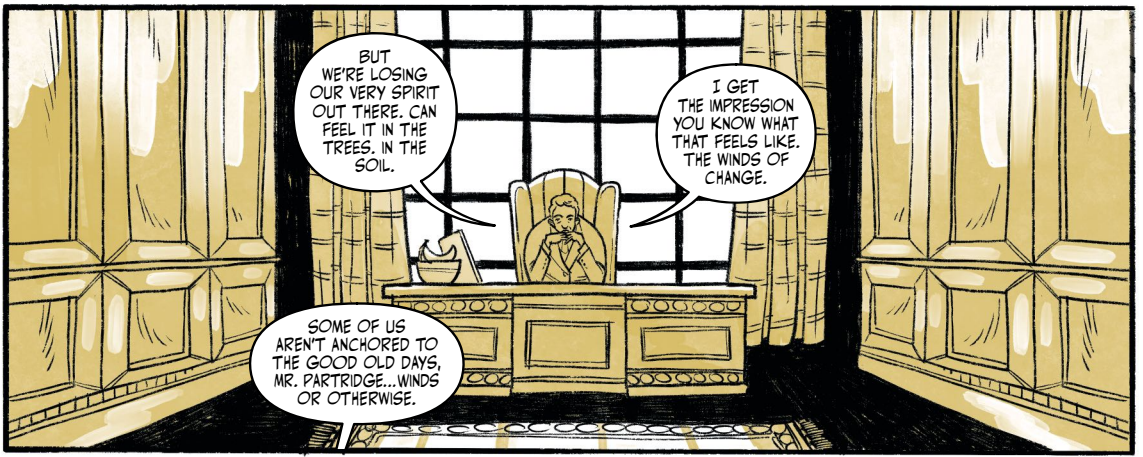


"THOUGH YOUR RÉSUMÉ IS IMPRESSIVE, YOU'RE COMING TO US WITH FRESH EYES. UNTAINTED BY OUR LITTLE POCKET OF THE WORLD."



"THIS TOWN HAS A LEGACY, YOU SEE. AND I INTEND TO PRESERVE THAT WITH EVERY OUNCE OF MY SOUL."









HELLO? ANYONE--



HELLO.

WERE YOU... JUST LYING DOWN?

I WAS, YES. BUT NOT NOW.



WAS PRETTY GOOD DOWN THERE, IF I'M HONEST.



OH.

OKAY.

SO... I'M STAYING AT THE MOTEL NEXT DOOR, BUT I CAN'T FIND AN OFFICE ANYWHERE?



HERE AT ZIP MART, WE BELIEVE IN CONVENIENCE WITH A SMILE.

THIS IS THE OFFICE. YOU'RE IN ROOM TWENTY-TWO, BETH.



I'M CELIA. WE SPOKE ON THE PHONE.

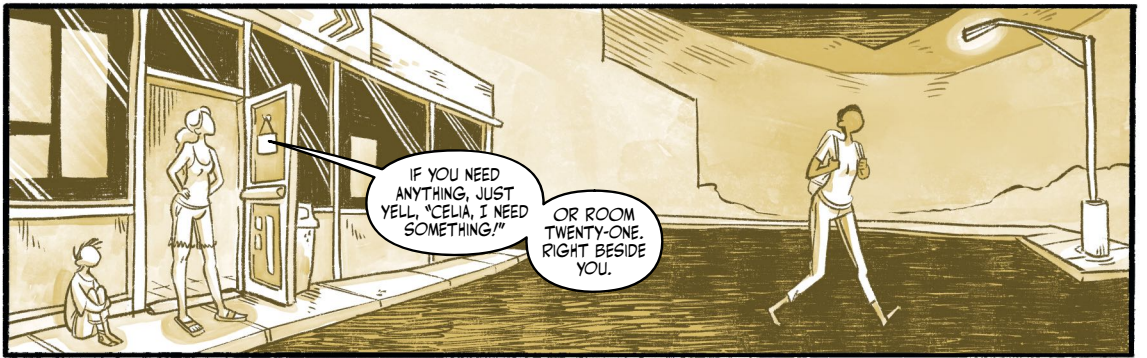
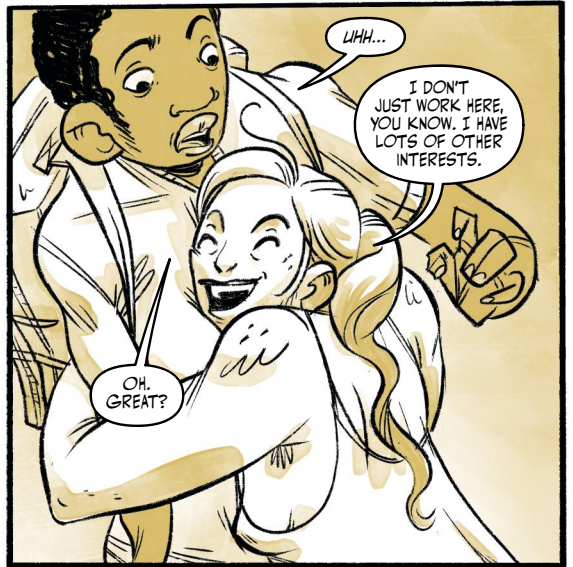
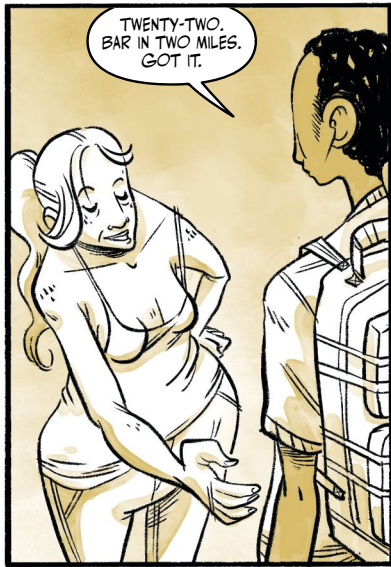
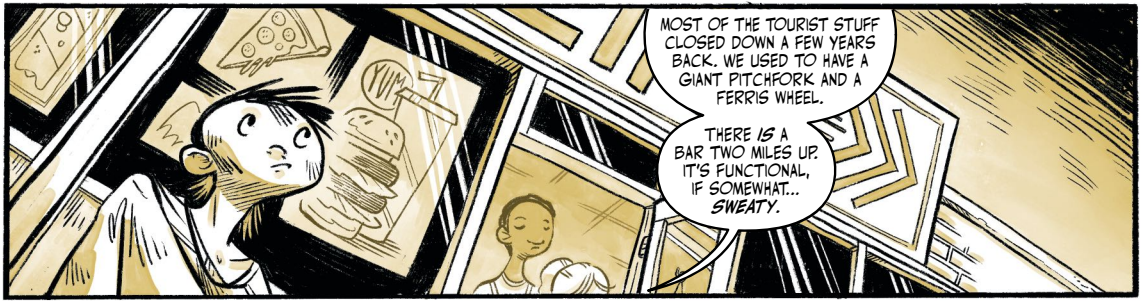
NO ONE BOOKS ONE NIGHT HERE, LET ALONE ONE WEEK. PRETTY WEIRD.

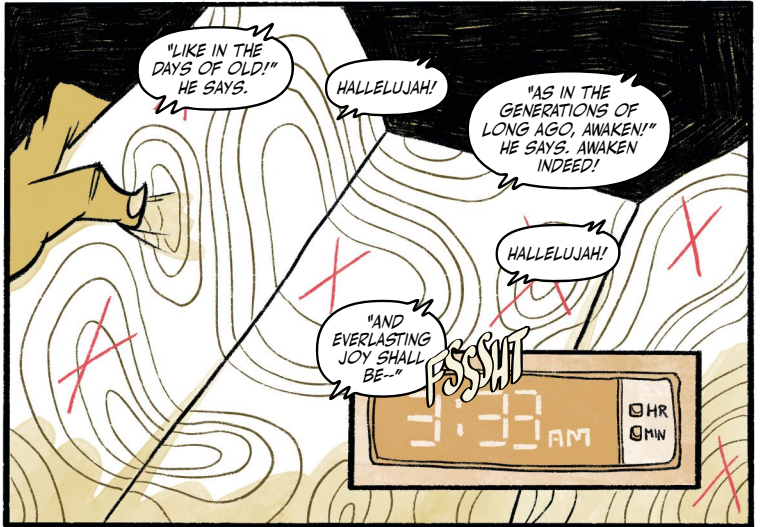
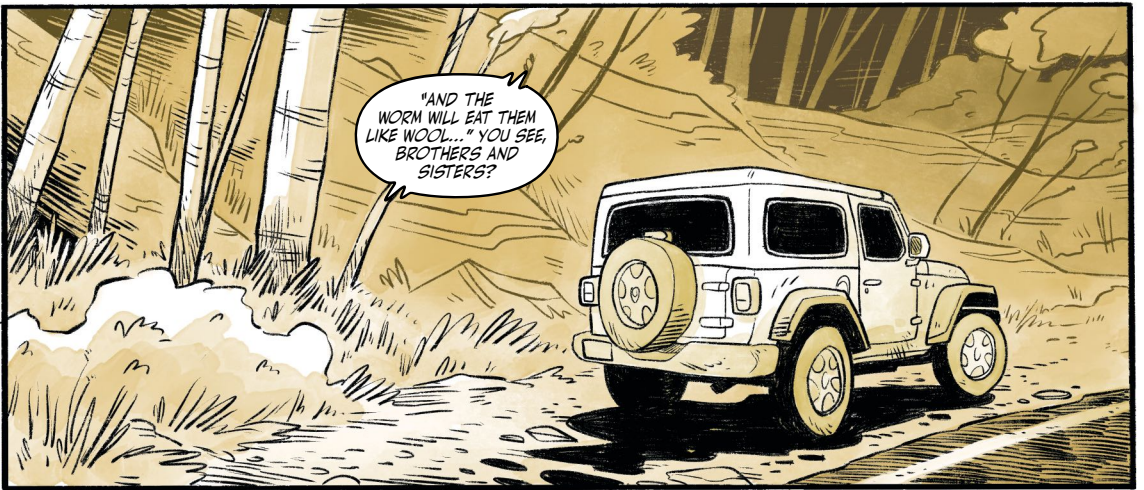


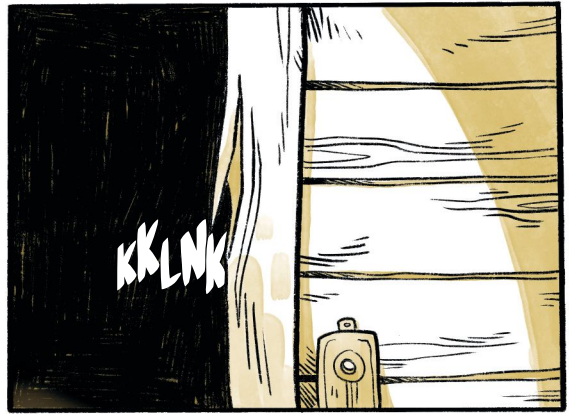
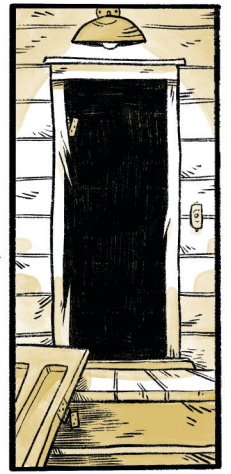
I DID CLEAN YOUR ROOM, SO THERE SHOULDN'T BE MANY BUGS.

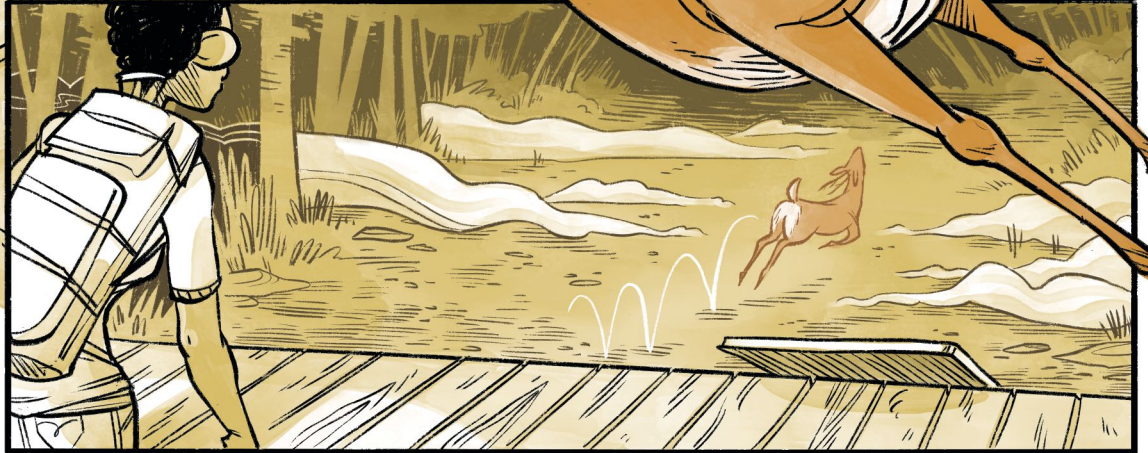
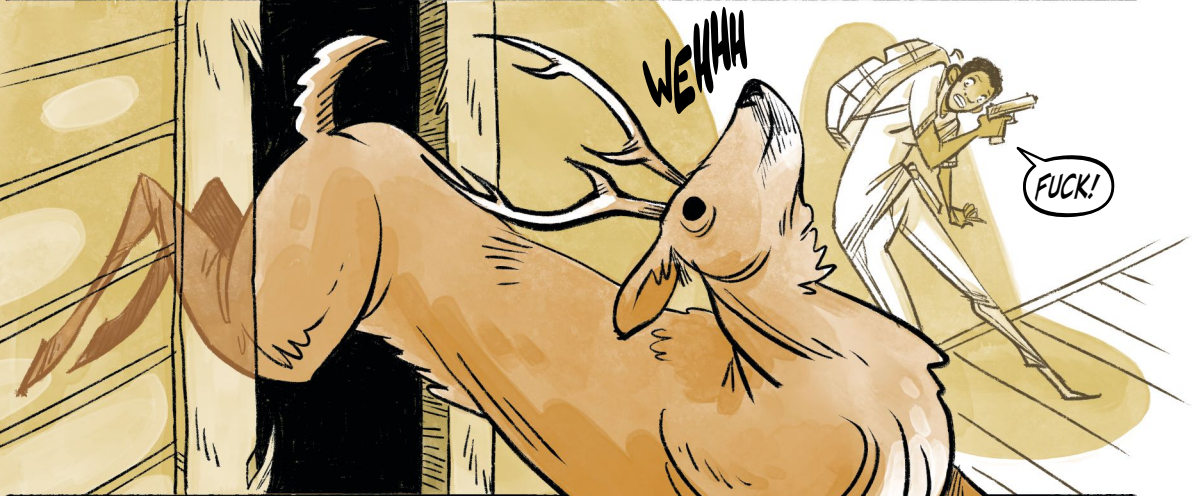
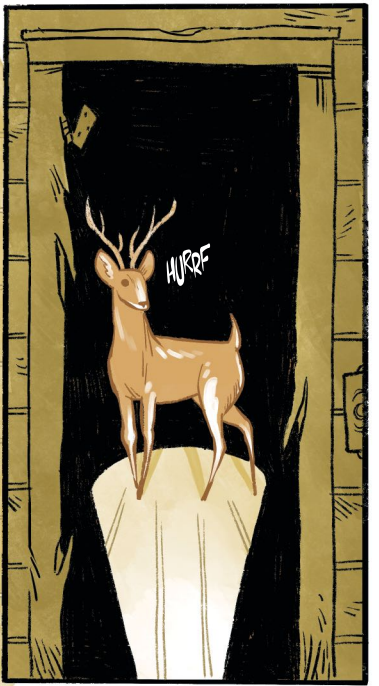
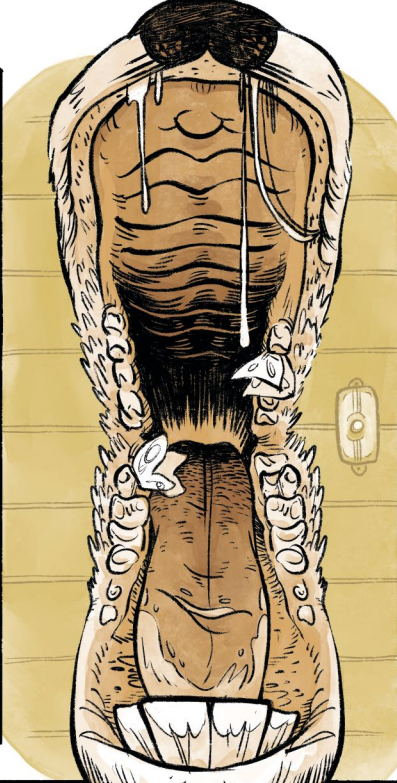
BUT IF THERE ARE BUGS, KINDLY GET ME. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM.

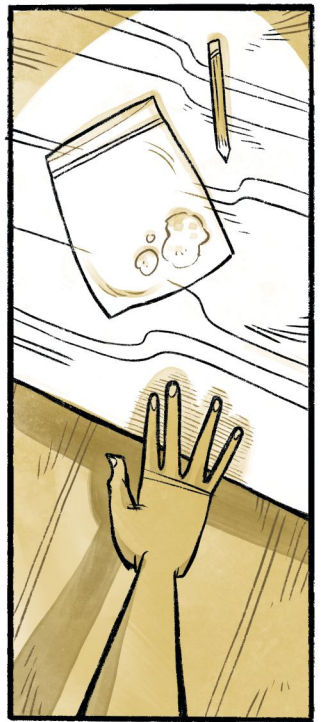
I'M IN TWENTY-ONE.

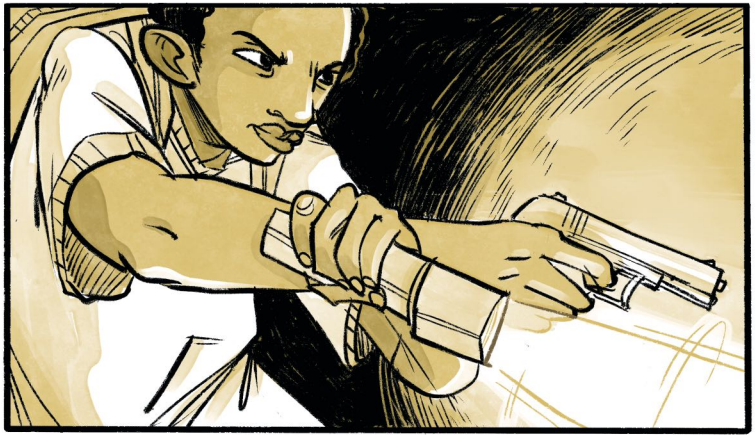


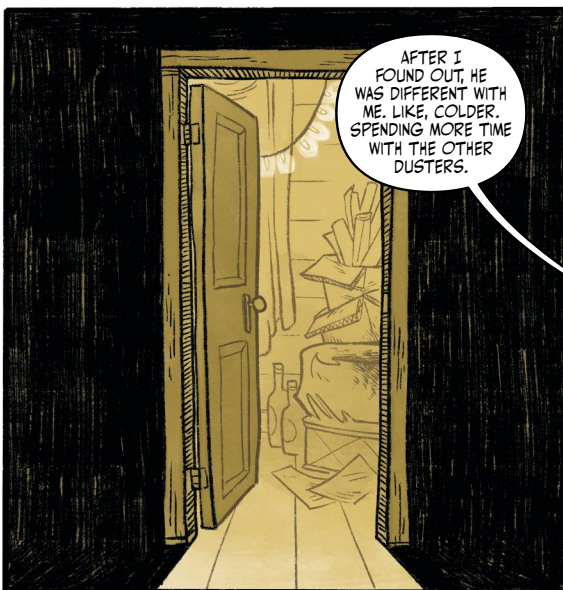
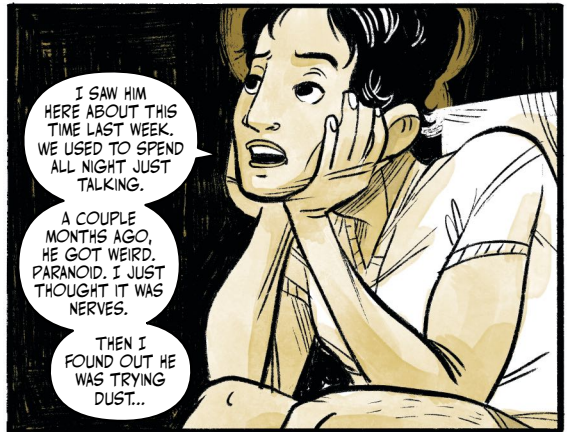
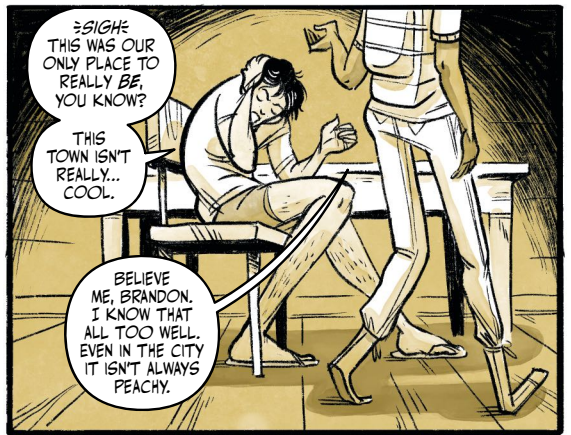


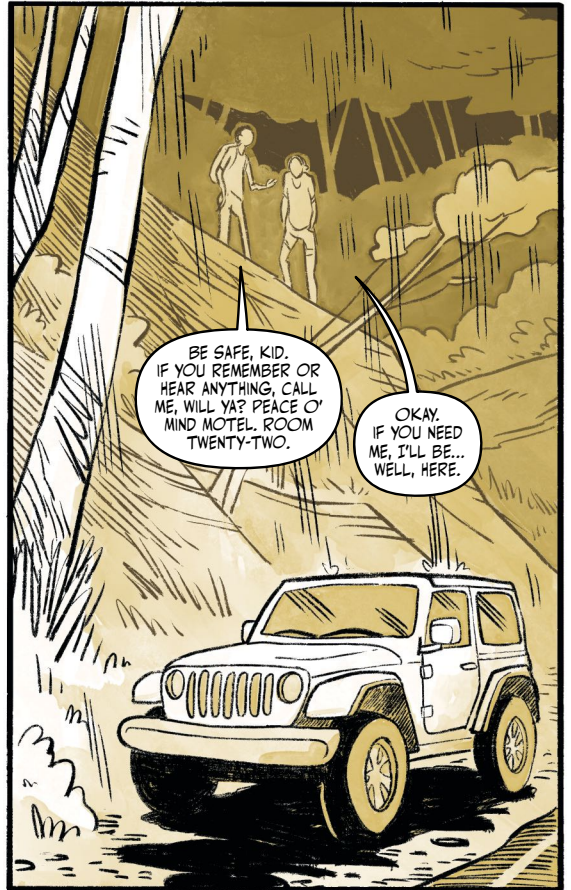
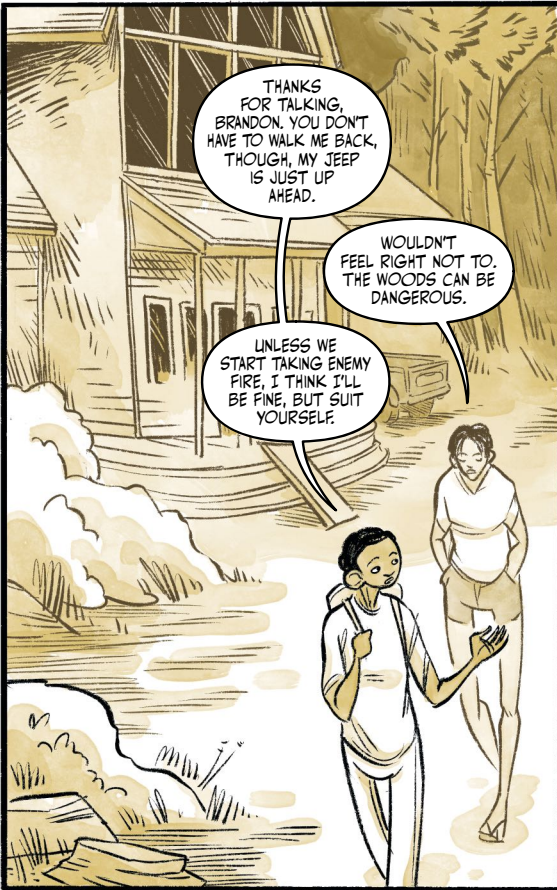














"C'MON, JUST ONE DRINK. I'M EARLY."



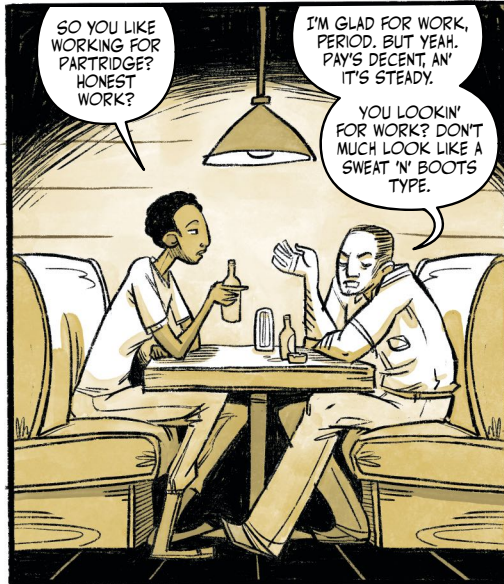
WELL YOU'RE TOO LATE WITH ME. I'VE GOT ONE, THANKS.

NO, THAT'S MY NAME. EARLY.

LEMME GET YER NEXT THEN. ANYTHING YOU WANT, BABE.



ANYTHING, HUH?



SO YOU LIKE WORKING FOR PARTRIDGE? HONEST WORK?

I'M GLAD FOR WORK, PERIOD. BUT YEAH. PAY'S DECENT, AN' IT'S STEADY.

YOU LOOKIN' FOR WORK? DON'T MUCH LOOK LIKE A SWEAT N' BOOTS TYPE.



WORRIED I'M GOING TO STEAL YOUR GIG AND DO IT BETTER?

HAH! YOU'RE FEISTY. I LIKE IT.

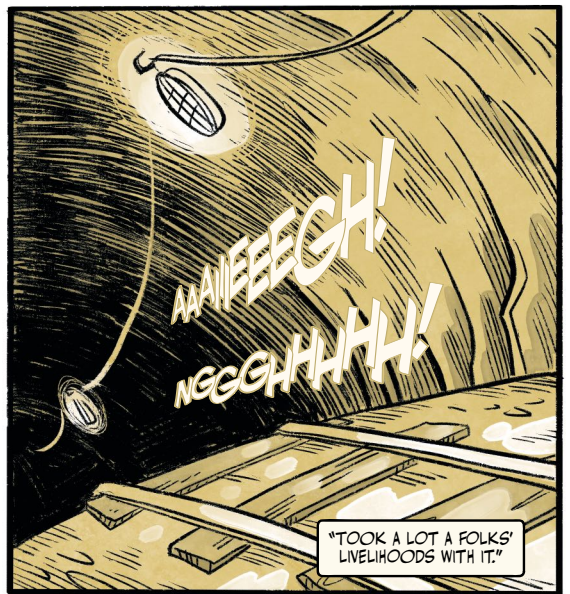


OLD MAN PARTRIDGE EVER PISS ANYONE OFF? I WON'T TATTLE.

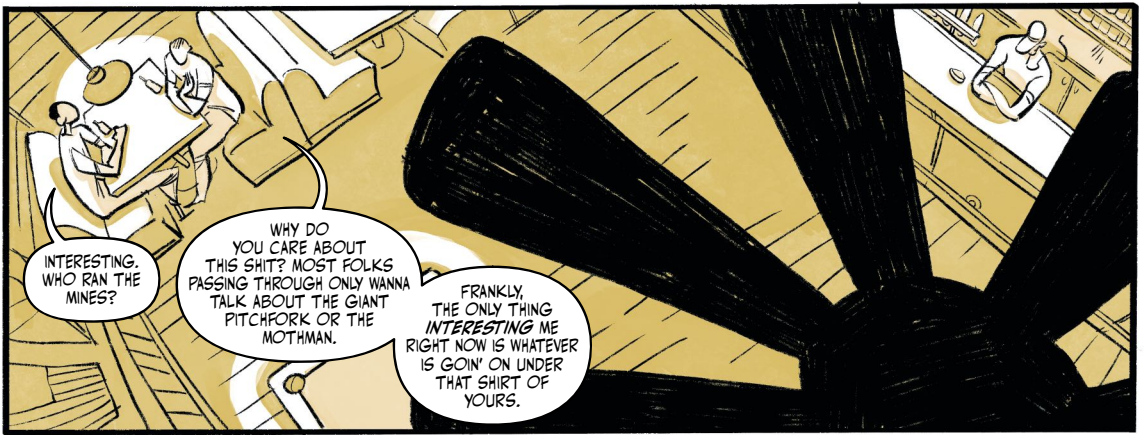
SUGAR, YOU KICK A CAN IN SILK HILLS AN' YER LIKELY TO HIT SOMEONE HE RUBBED WRONG.



PARTRIDGE KEEPS THIS TOWN ALIVE NOW, BUT WHEN THEM MINES COLLAPSED TO MAKE ROOM FOR HIS MILLS?



"TOOK A LOT A FOLKS' LIVELIHOODS WITH IT."



INTERESTING. WHO RAN THE MINES?

WHY DO YOU CARE ABOUT THIS SHIT? MOST FOLKS PASSING THROUGH ONLY WANNA TALK ABOUT THE GIANT PITCHFORK OR THE MOTHMAN.

FRANKLY, THE ONLY THING INTERESTING ME RIGHT NOW IS WHATEVER IS GOIN' ON UNDER THAT SHIRT OF YOURS.



BE EASY, EARLY. WHAT MOTHMAN?



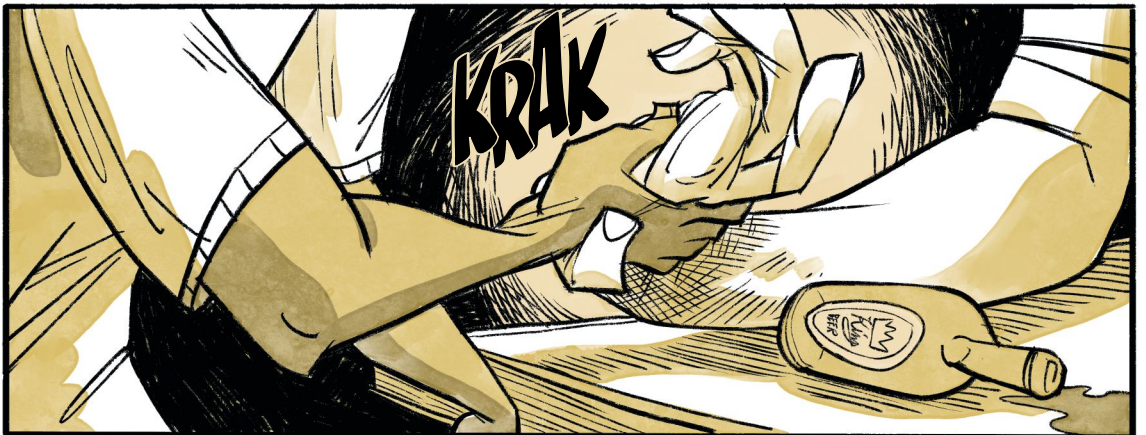
YEAH, YOU KNOW-- DUMB SHIT TO SELL KEYCHAINS AN' T-SHIRTS AN' SCARE LITTLE KIDS. DEVIL SHIT.

IF YOU WANT THE REAL SILK HILLS EXPERIENCE, MY TRAILER'S 'BOUT A MILE--



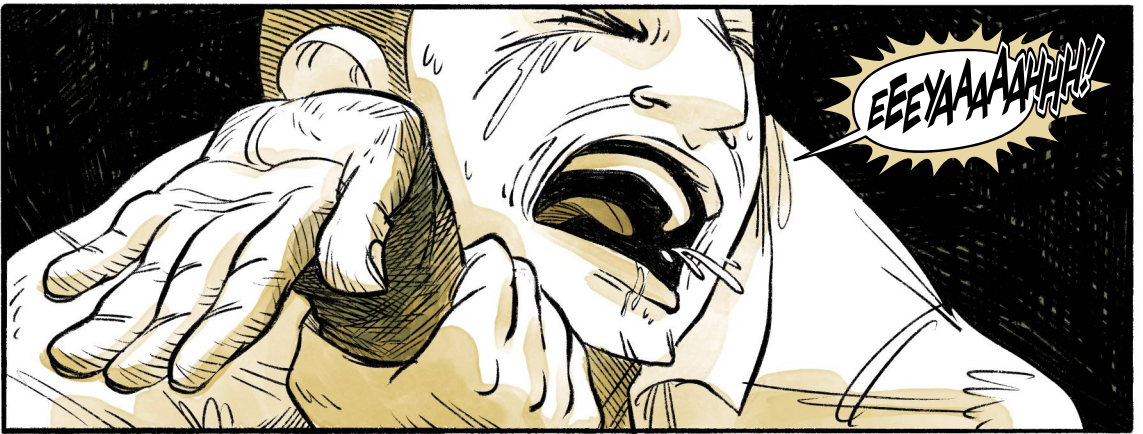
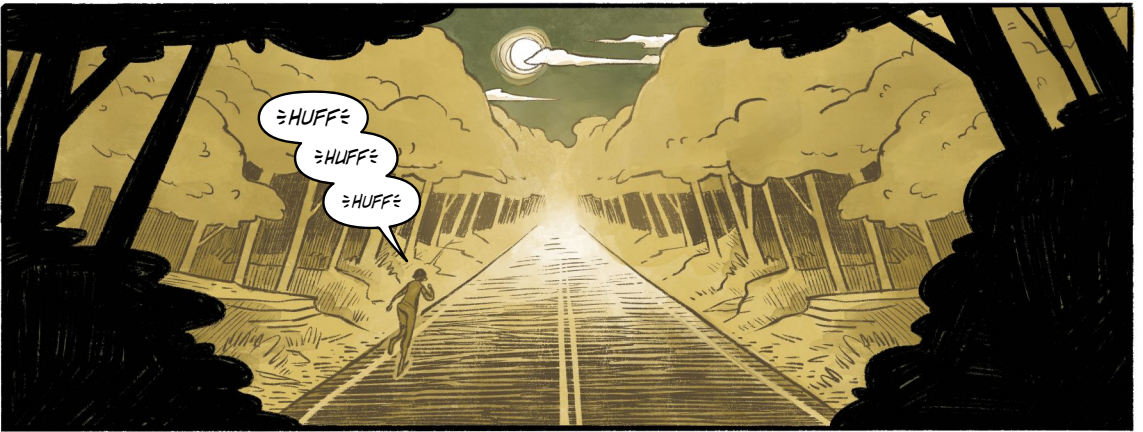
OKAY, WELL, THANKS FOR THE DRINKS, BUT NO--

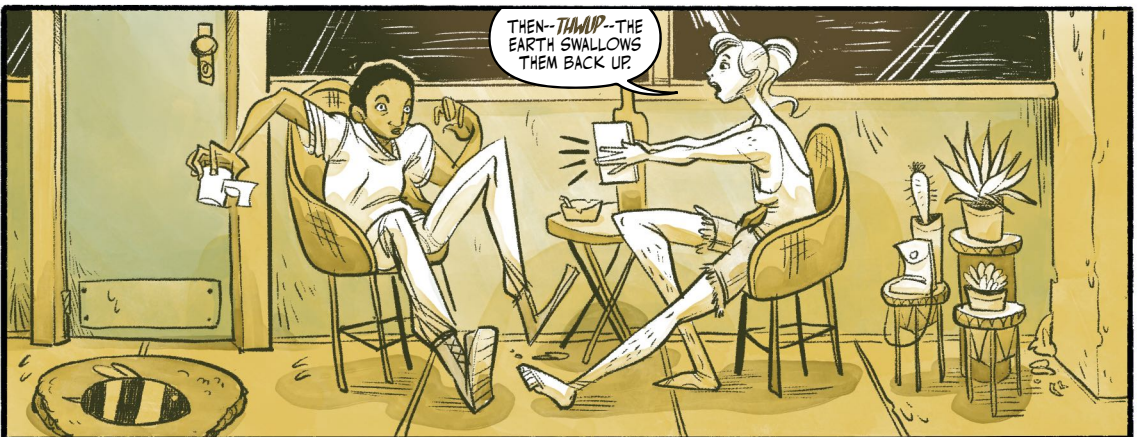
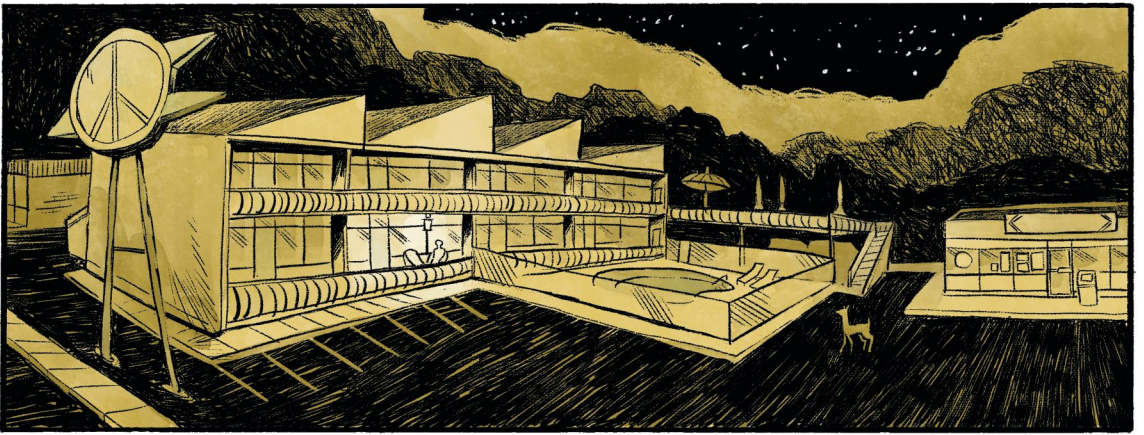
HEY, HOLD UP, COCK-TEASE...I BOUGHT YOU A FUCKIN' BEER!



KRAK









IS THAT WEIRD?
I DON'T KNOW SHIT
ABOUT BUGS...

I WILL SAY,
THIS PLACE HAS A
SORT OF... MAGNETISM.
AND IT'S ONLY GETTING
STRONGER. AFTER ALL,
HERE YOU ARE.



THIS JOB
SEEMED LIKE A WAY OUT.
OUT OF A PROBLEM I
COULDN'T SOLVE OR
SOMETHING...

MAYBE
I COULD SOLVE
SOMEONE ELSE'S,
Y'KNOW?



AMEN, SISTER. FOR AS WEIRD AS SILK HILLS
IS--AND TRUST ME, IT'S WEIRD--I'M GLAD
YOU DECIDED TO MOSEY UP HERE.

CUTEST GAL
I'VE EVER SEEN COME
THROUGH. IF YOU
DON'T MIND ME
SAYING.



WELL,
SHUCKS.

SO,
INSECTS...
YOU STUDY
THEM?

MISSING
KIDS... YOU
FIND 'EM?



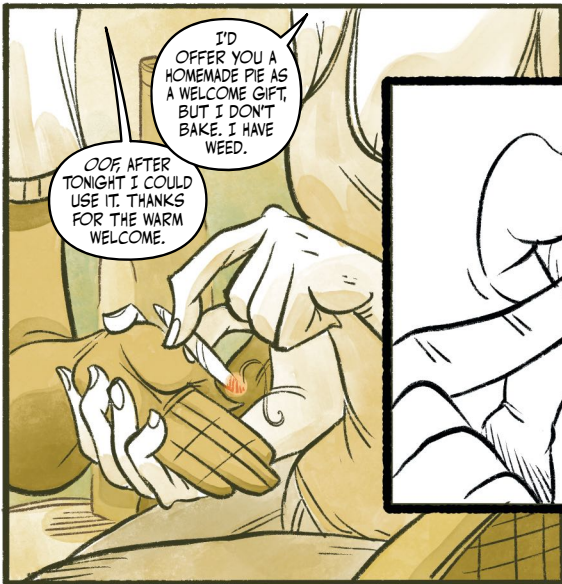
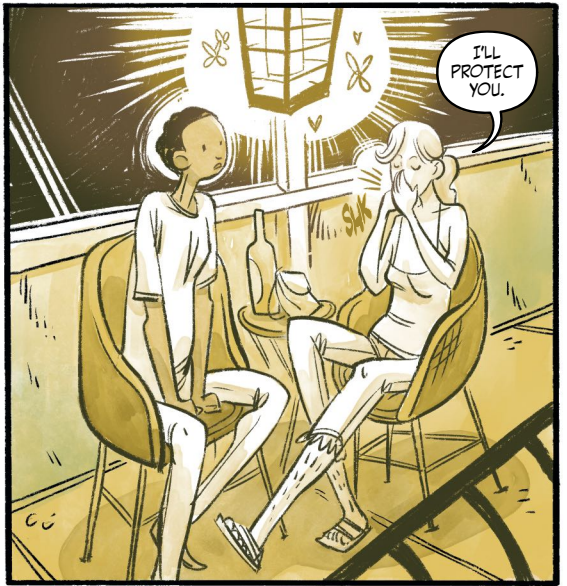
NOT ALL
THE TIME. DON'T
SUPPOSE YOU
KNOW ANYTHING
ABOUT IT?

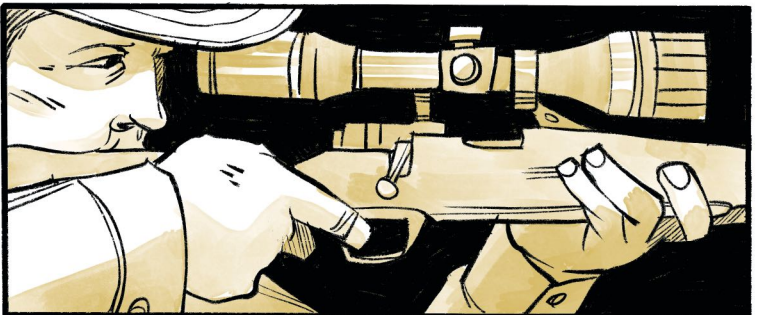
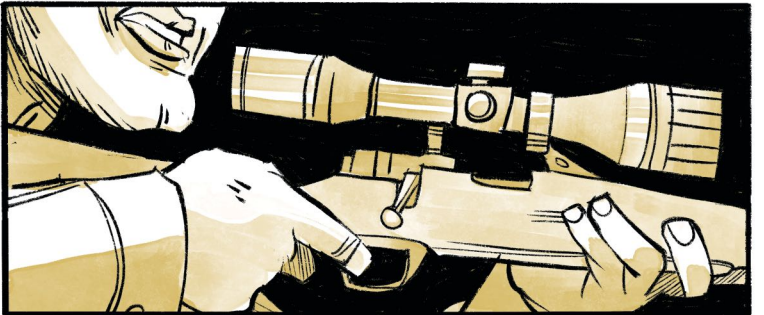
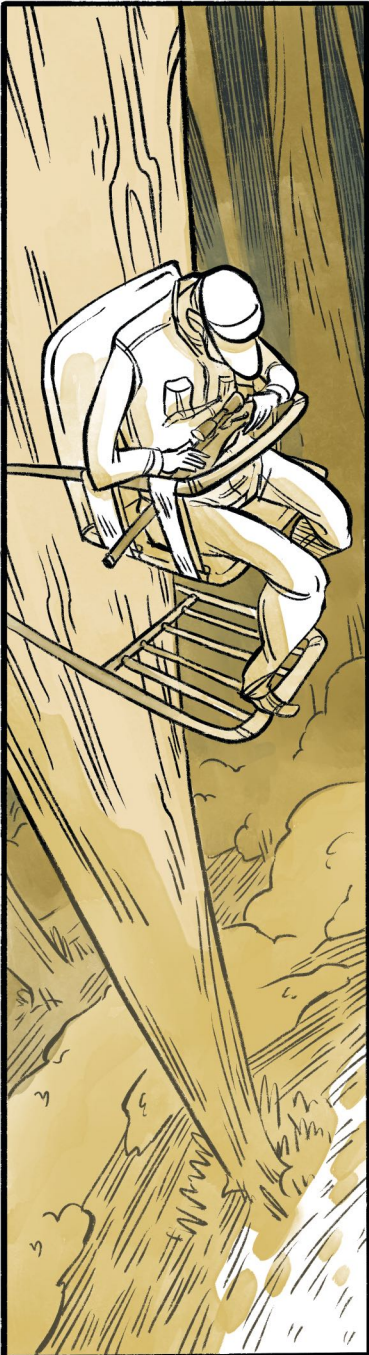
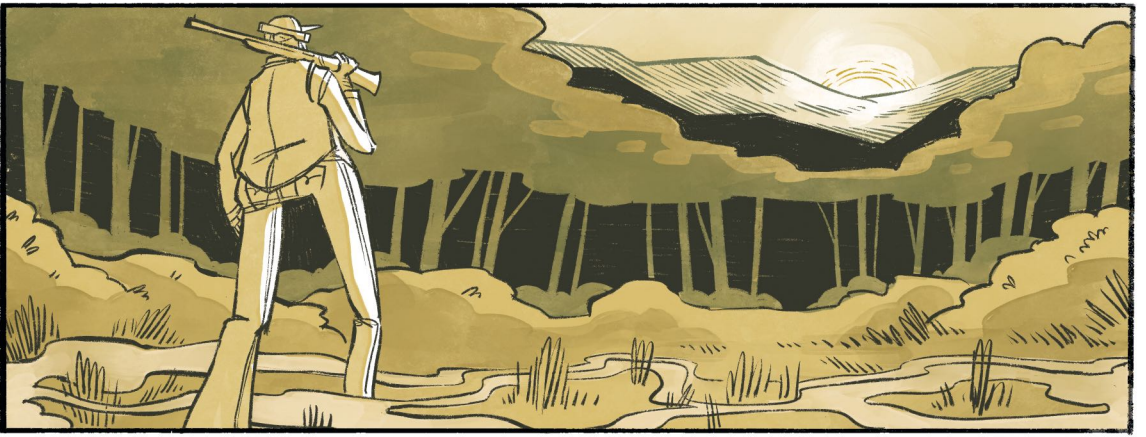
SUGAR,
MY EXCITEMENT
BEGINS AND ENDS
WITH A CRAPPY
MOTEL, A ZIP MART,
AND A RARE BUG
THAT GETS KIDS
HIGH--

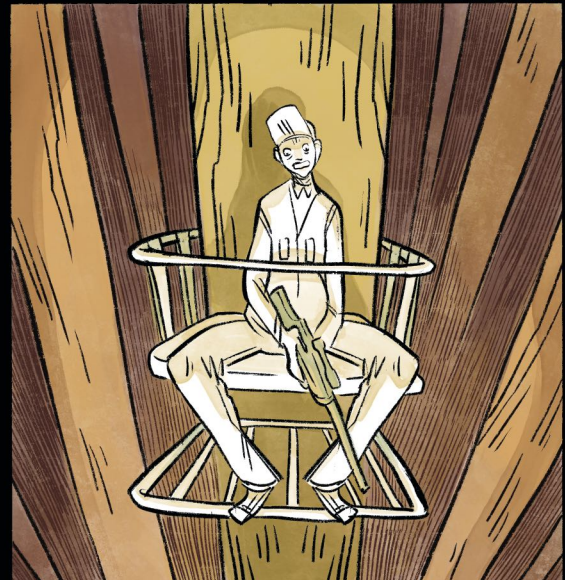
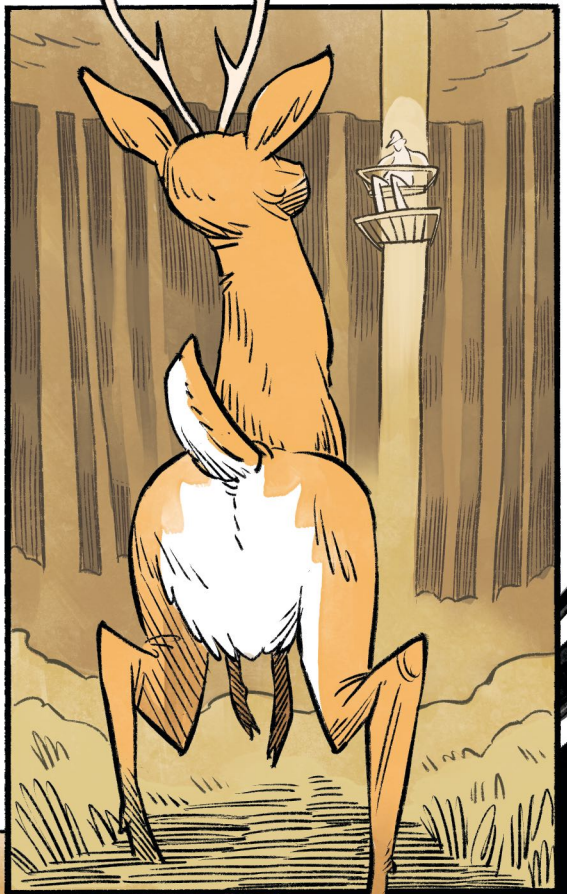


KLNK
KLNK

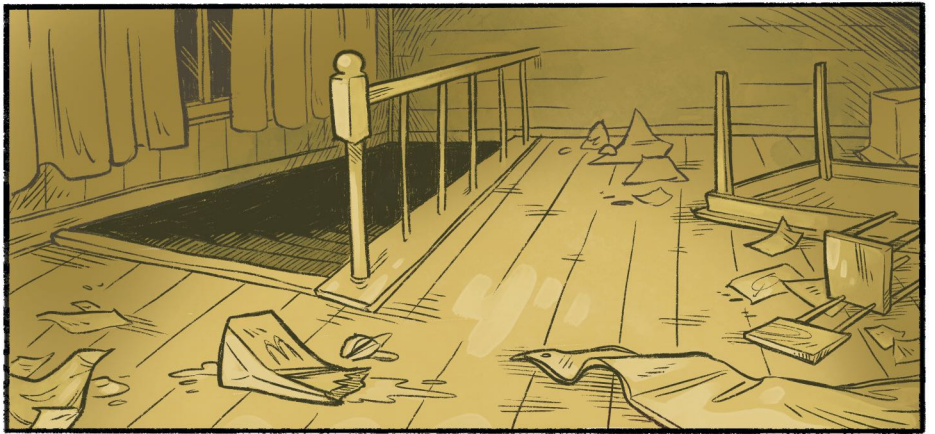
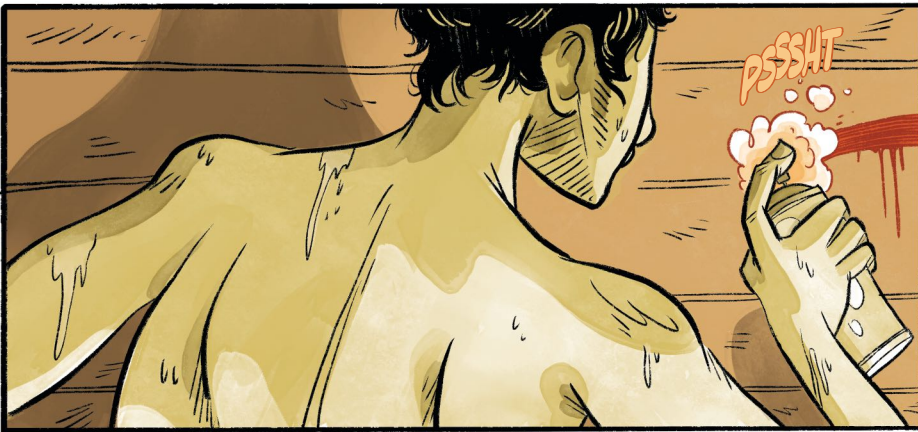
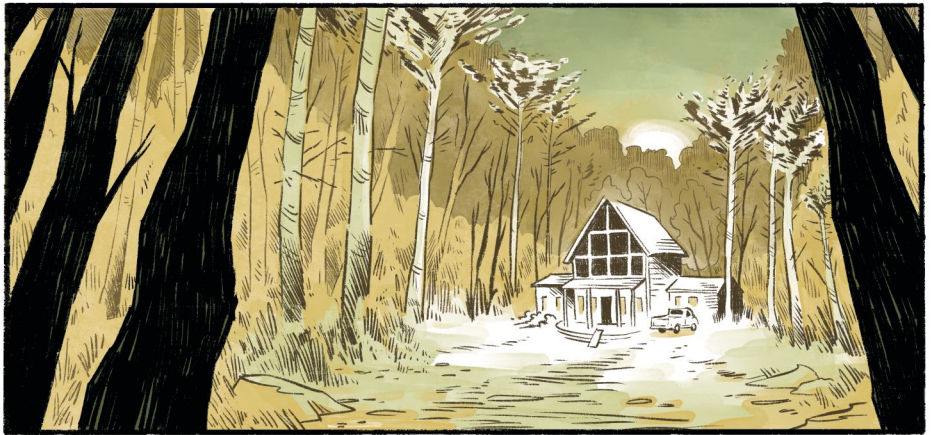
YOU HEAR
THAT...?

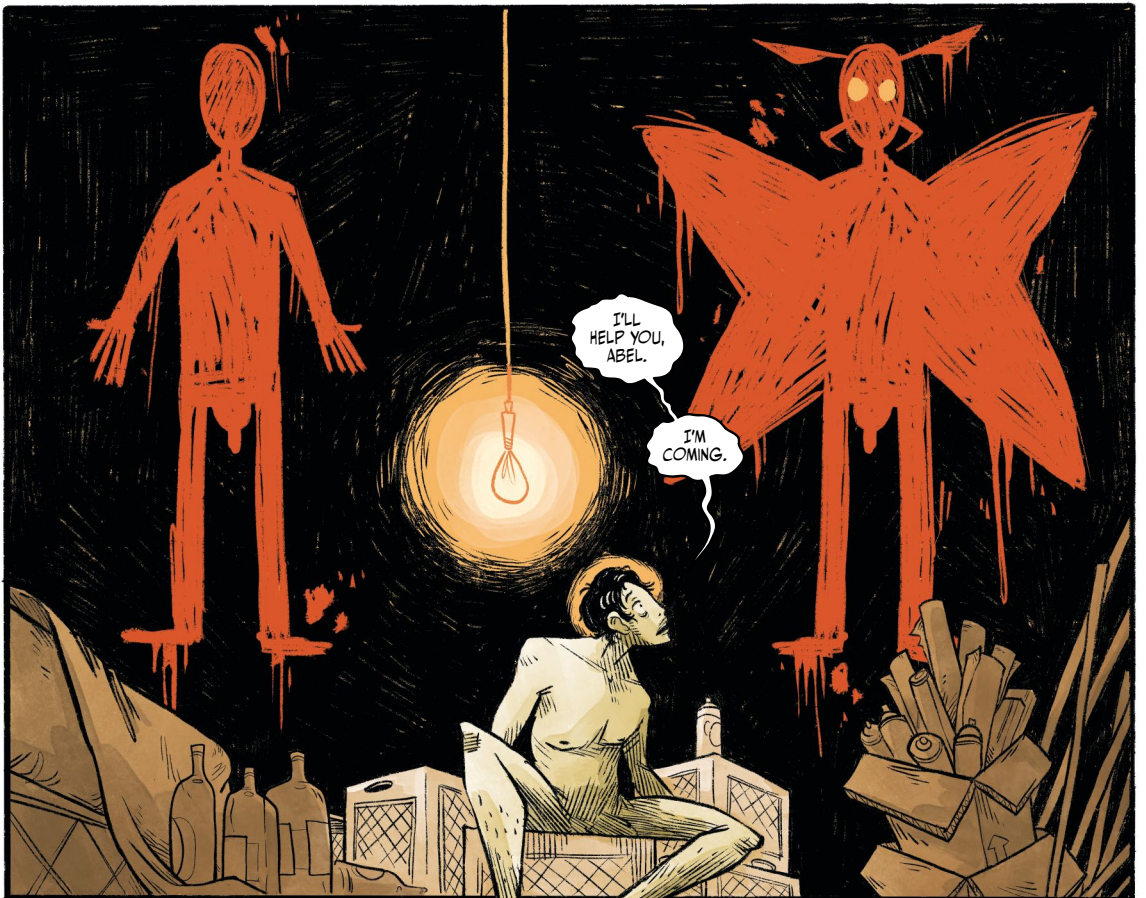
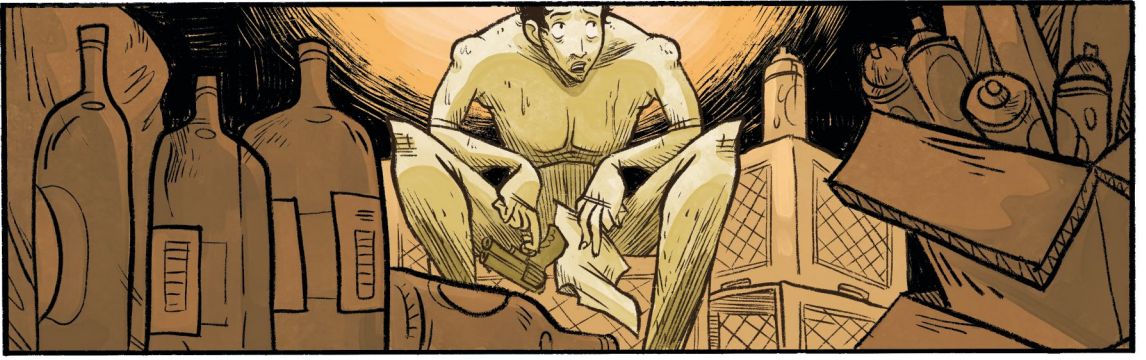


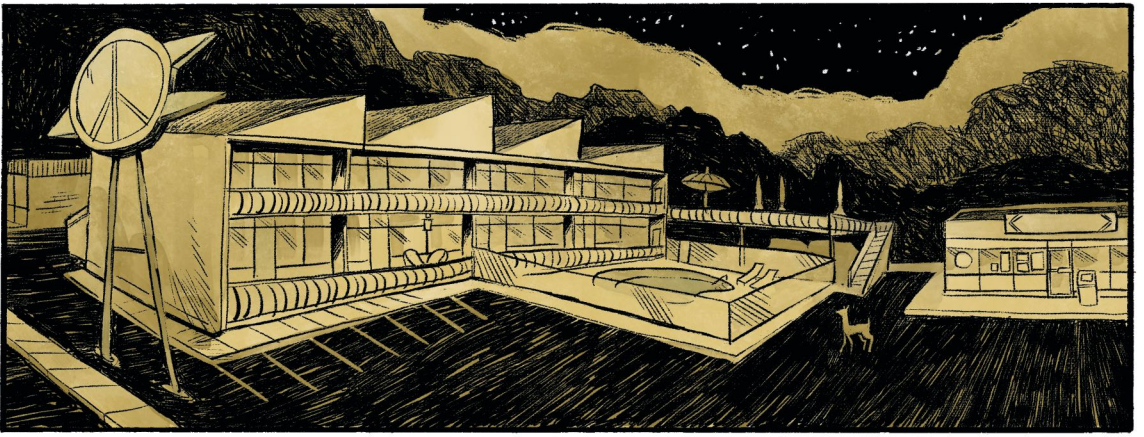


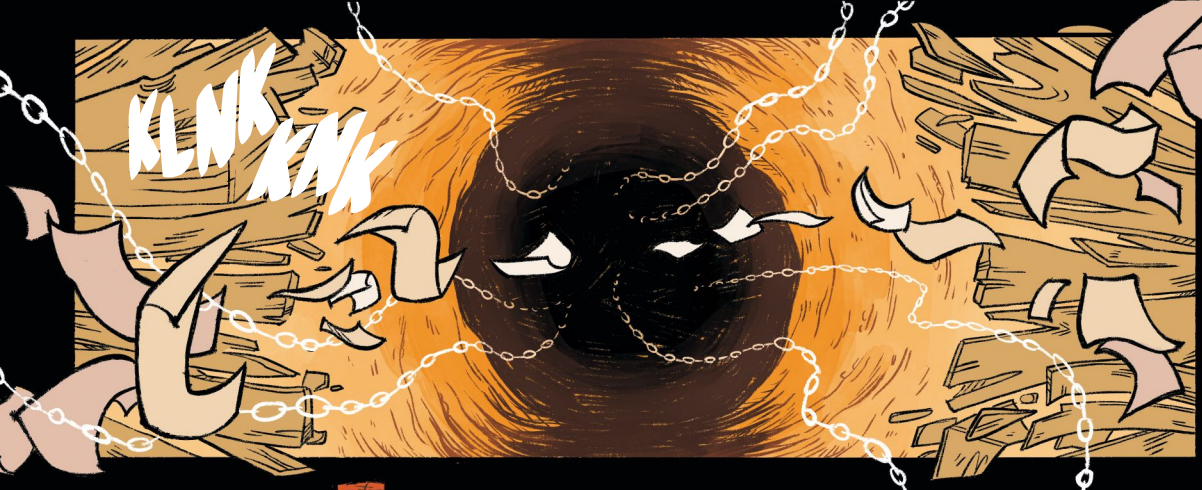
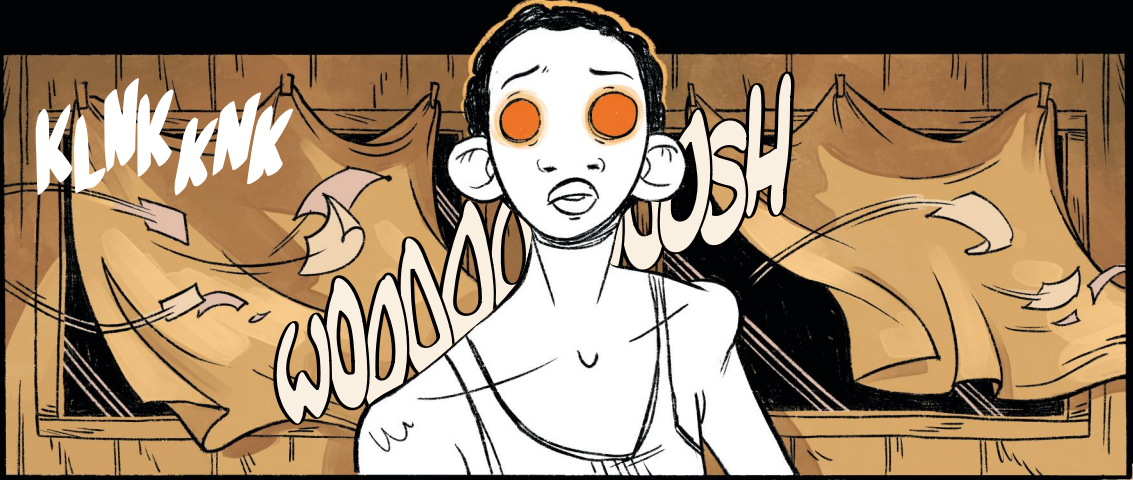


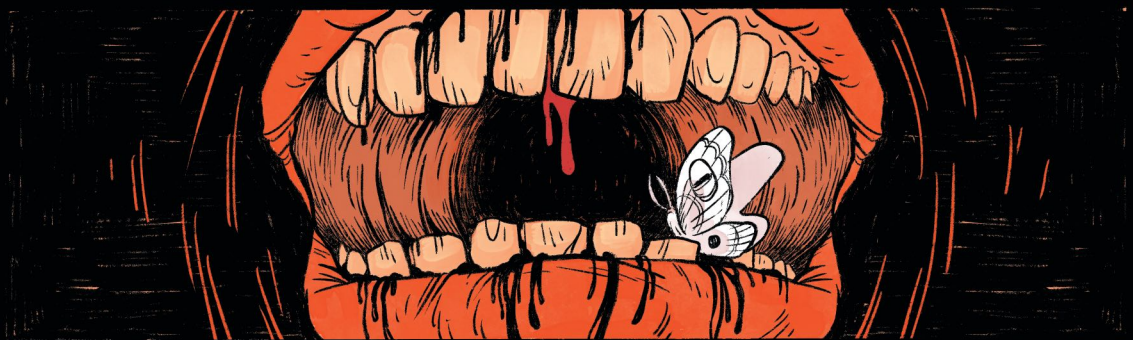
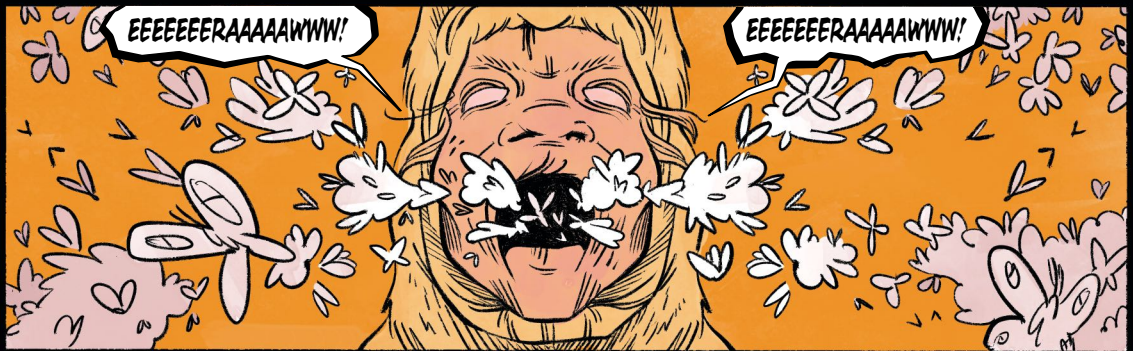


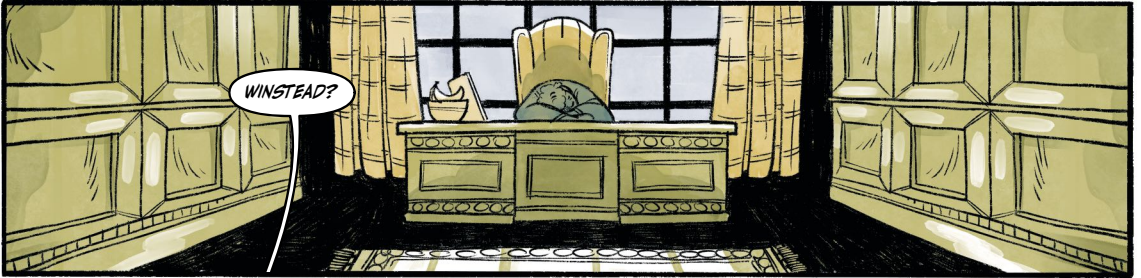
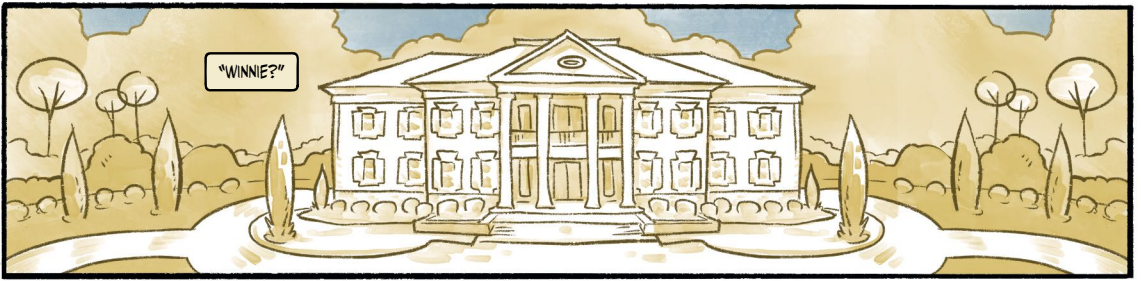


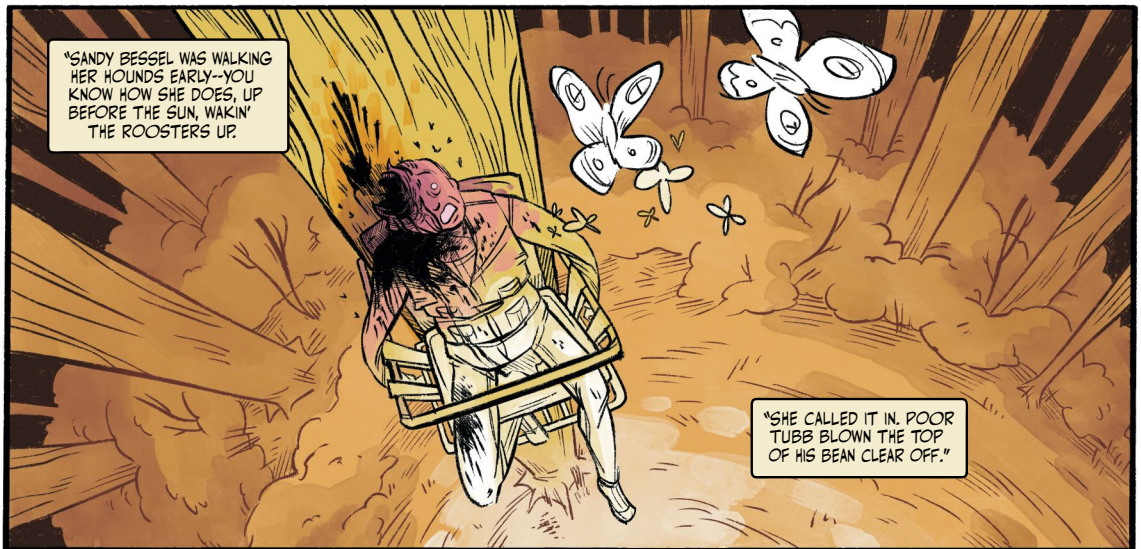






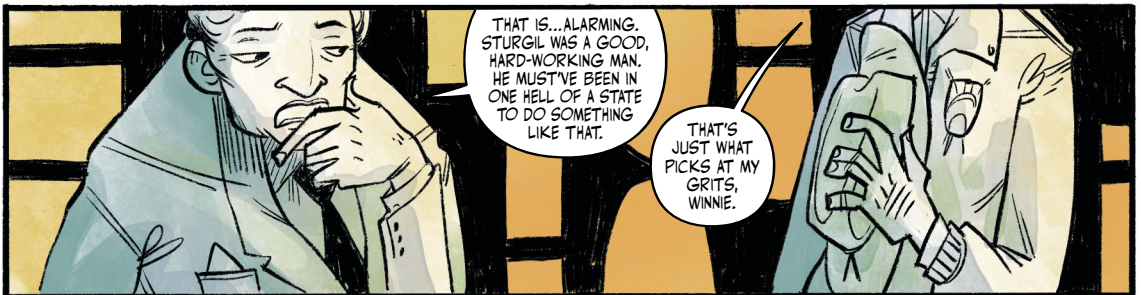






"SANDY BESSEL WAS WALKING HER HOUNDS EARLY--YOU KNOW HOW SHE DOES, UP BEFORE THE SUN, WAKIN' THE ROOSTERS UP.

"SHE CALLED IT IN. POOR TUBB BLOWN THE TOP OF HIS BEAN CLEAR OFF."



THAT IS...ALARMING. STURGIL WAS A GOOD, HARD-WORKING MAN. HE MUST'VE BEEN IN ONE HELL OF A STATE TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

THAT'S JUST WHAT PICKS AT MY GRITS, WINNIE.



"HIS FACE IS ALL CUT UP. LOOKED LIKE THE WORST KINDA BAR FIGHT. OR ANIMAL.

"I AIN'T NO DEATH DOCTOR, BUT I RECKON IT AIN'T WILDLIFE PICKIN' AT A FRESH MEAL. THEM'S DEFENSIVE WOUNDS."



FIGURED YOU'D WANNA KNOW, WINNIE. ESPECIALLY WITH EVERYTHING GOING ON RIGHT NOW WITH ABEL.

Y'KNOW I SAID I WOULD, AND I GOT MY KIN KEEPIN' THEIR EYES PEELED FOR HIM. DESPITE OUR HISTORIES, THEY'VE AGREED TO KEEPIN' A LOOKOUT. NO MAN SHOULD HAVE TO LOSE HIS SON.

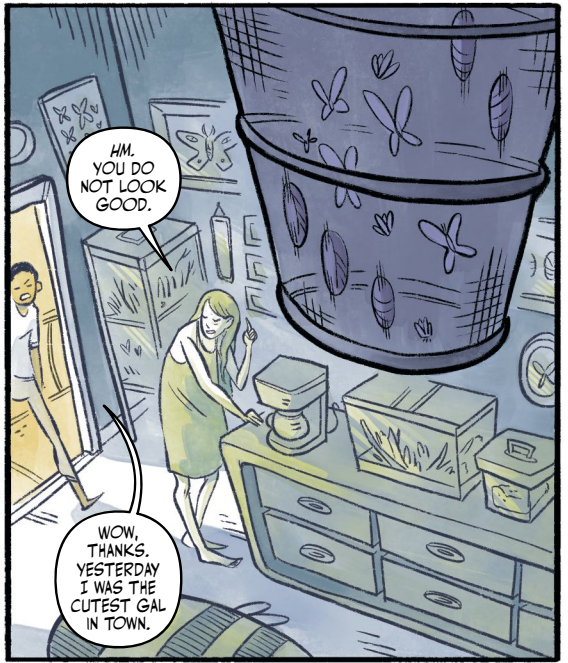
JUST DIDN'T WANT YOU HEARIN' NOTHIN' AND GETTIN' YOURSELF WORKED UP.

ANYWAY...



"... WHY ON EARTH WOULD A REG'LAR GUY LIKE STURGIL TUBB GO TO ALL THAT EFFORT OF DRAGGIN' HIS ASS OUTTA BED, HAULIN' THAT GEAR OUT TO WHITTLE CREEK, SETTIN' UP FOR A HUNT, ONLY TO SHOOT HISSELF?

"JUS' DON'T MAKE NO SENSE. LIKE I SAID, SOMETHIN' REAL OFF ABOUT IT."



"ANTRUM ANGELUS... THE CAVE ANGEL MOTH. ONLY BREEDS EVERY EIGHTEEN YEARS, AND ONLY HERE. SUPER POTENT DUST.

"TO BE FAIR, IT'S NOT TECHNICALLY DUST. IT'S SCALES, ACTUALLY.

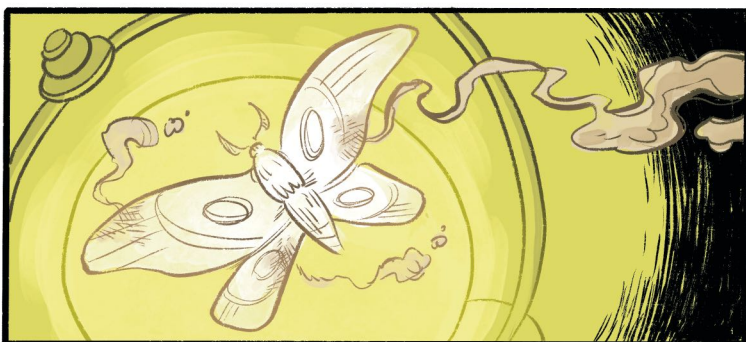
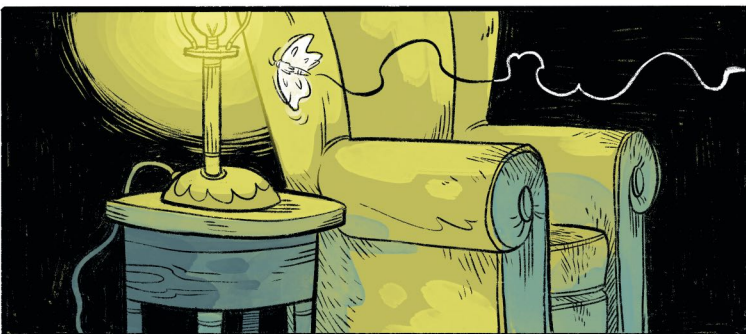
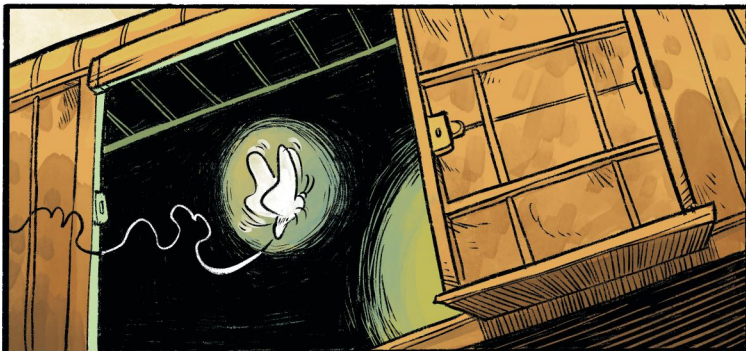
"AND OH LORD, IT CAN GET YOU HIGH. I'M TALKING OUTER-SPACE, VISION-QUEST HIGH.

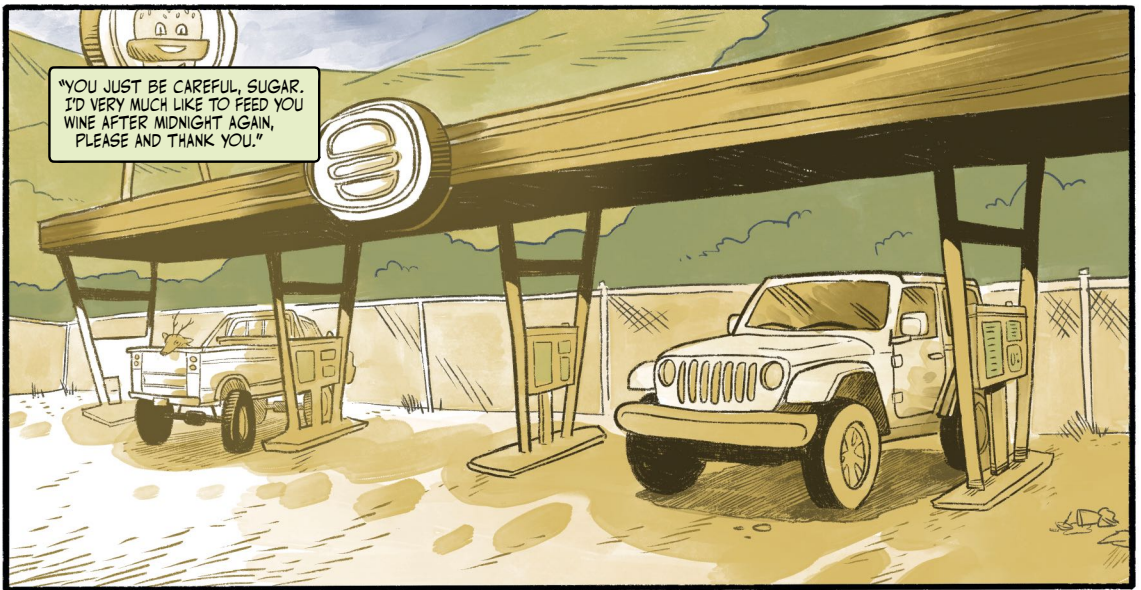
"EUPHORIA, DISSOCIATION, HALLUCINATIONS... A REAL TRIP. GOOD OR BAD, DEPENDING ON YOUR CUP OF TEA.

AND THAT'S WHY I'M HERE. WELL, NOT THE DRUGS--THE MOTH. I'M WRITING THE BOOK ON ANTRUM ANGELUS. PRETTY HUGE DEAL IN THE BUG BIZ.

"AS FOR FINDING THE DUST IN A CONVENIENT READY-TO-CONSUME MANNER? WILD ONES IS A PRETTY GOOD START. YOU CAN GET ANYTHING THERE EXCEPT A DECENT SCOTCH WHISKY.

"THE 'HARD STUFF' YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...THE UNCUT, RELIGIOUS-EXPERIENCE, GOOD-TIME STUFF... HAS TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE. AND THAT SOMEWHERE IS THE OLD TRAIN YARD."





"YOU JUST BE CAREFUL, SUGAR. I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO FEED YOU WINE AFTER MIDNIGHT AGAIN, PLEASE AND THANK YOU."

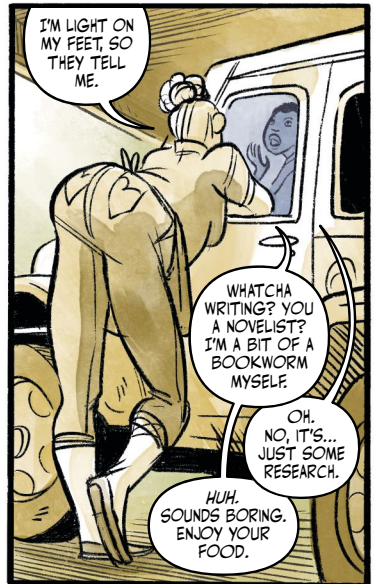


HALLWAY
MAN?
• CABIN
• CHAINS
• DEER
• METH



AND HERE'S YOUR MILKSHA--

OH MY GOD, YOU SCARED THE LIVING PISS OUT OF ME.



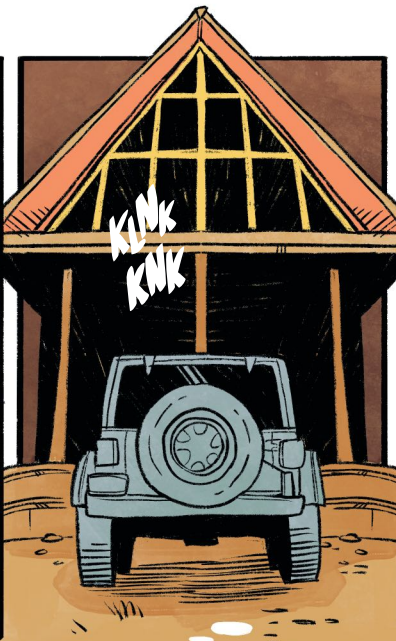
I'M LIGHT ON MY FEET, SO THEY TELL ME.

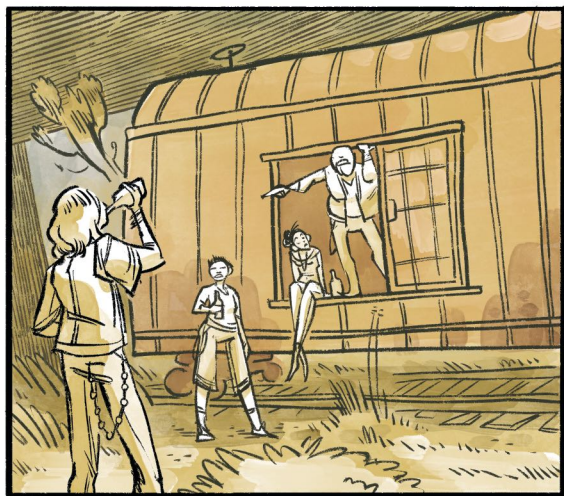
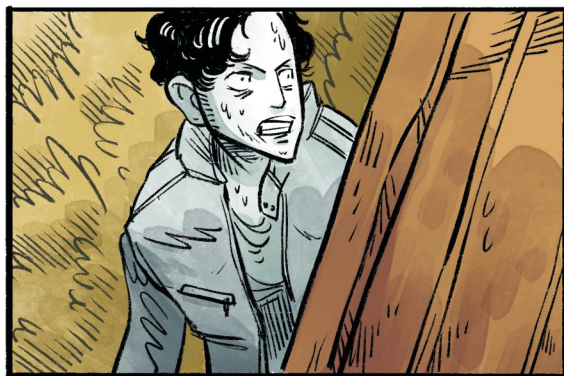
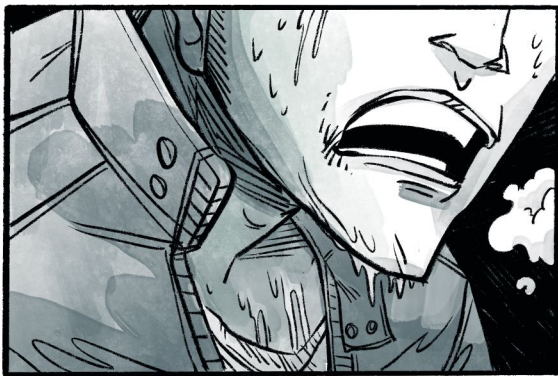
WHATCHA WRITING? YOU A NOVELIST? I'M A BIT OF A BOOKWORM MYSELF.

OH. NO, IT'S... JUST SOME RESEARCH.

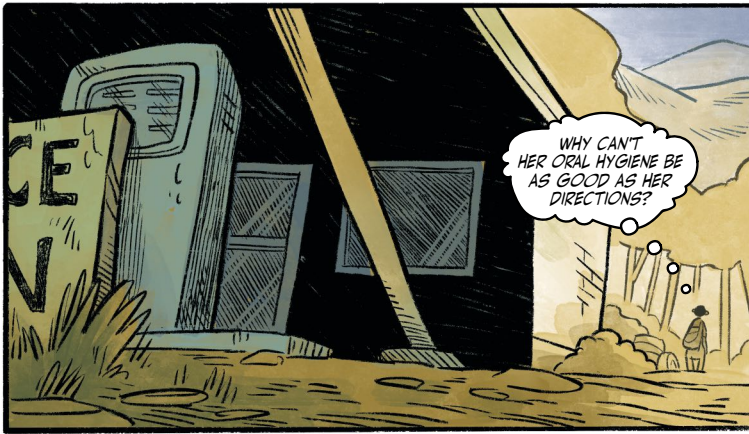
HUH. SOUNDS BORING. ENJOY YOUR FOOD.













YOU GOTTA GIVE ME SOMETHING, KID. YOU'RE MAKING IT REALLY HARD FOR ME NOT TO CALL THE COPS.



NO COPS. THEY KNOW. PLEASE NO COPS. THEY KNOW.



JESUS, BRANDON! GIVE ME THAT!

DID YOU SHOOT SOMEONE?

I... I NEVER SHOT ONE BEFORE.

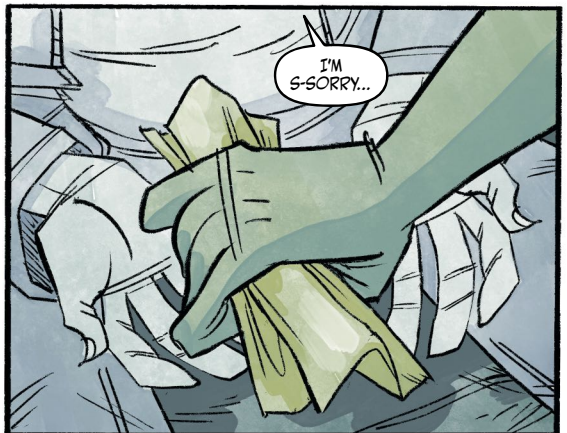


IT'S THEM, BETH. THE DUSTERS.

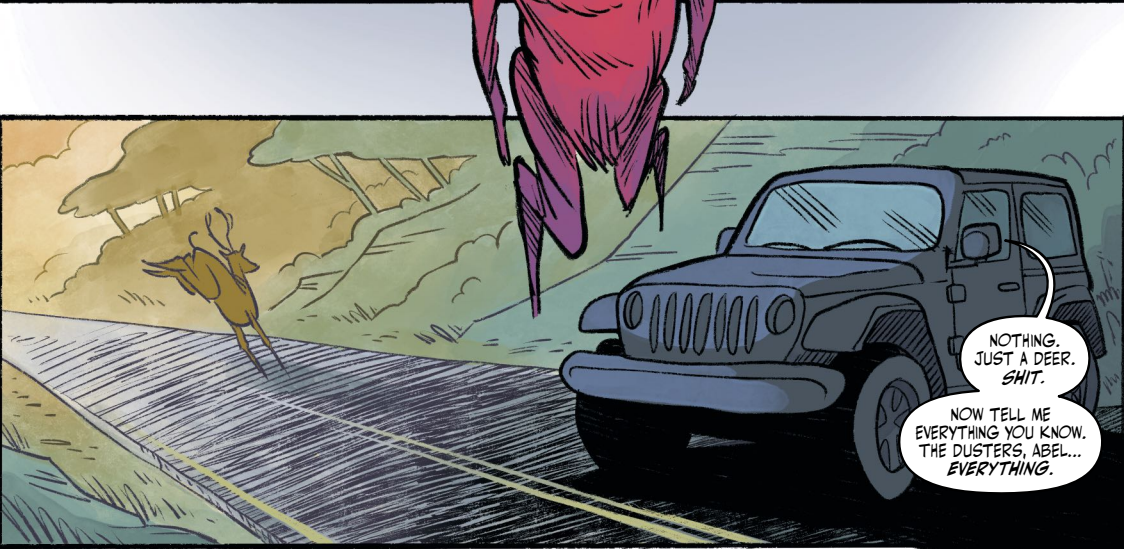
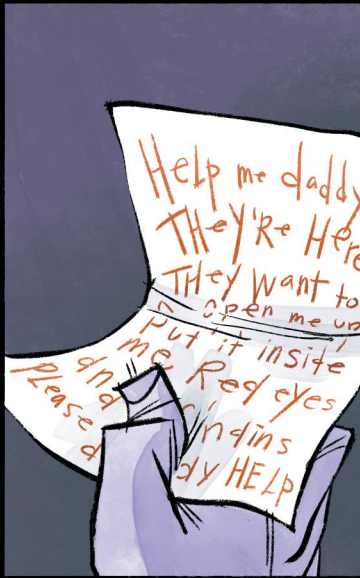
THEY HAVE ABEL. I JUST CAN'T GET TO HIM.

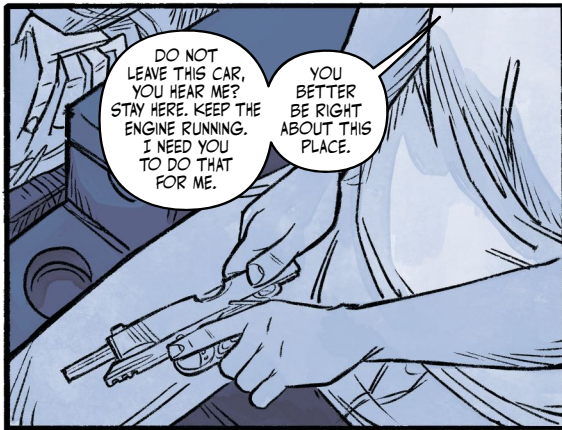
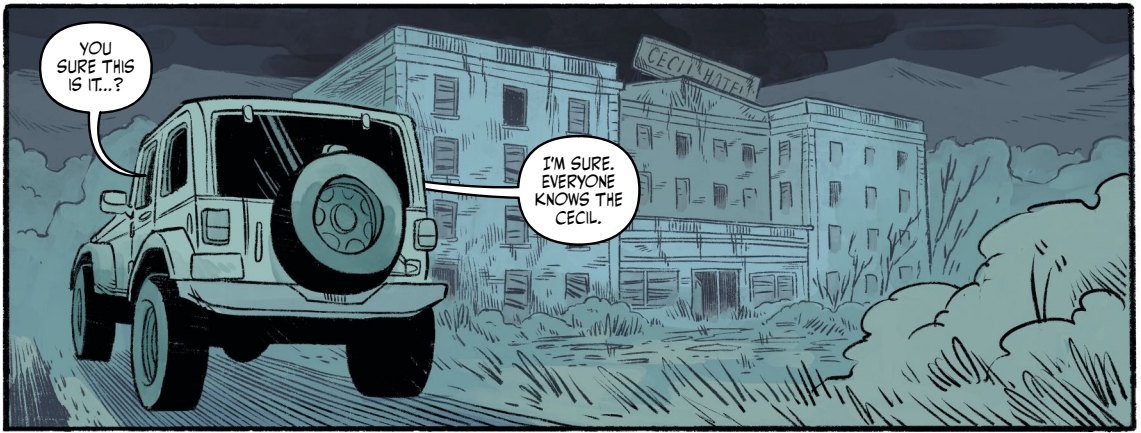


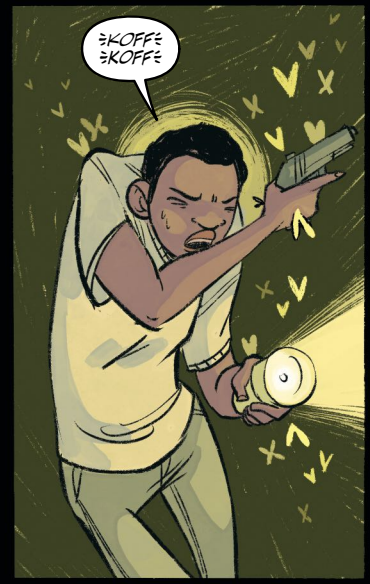
WHAT IS THAT? BRANDON... WHAT IS THAT NOTE?



I'M S-SORRY...





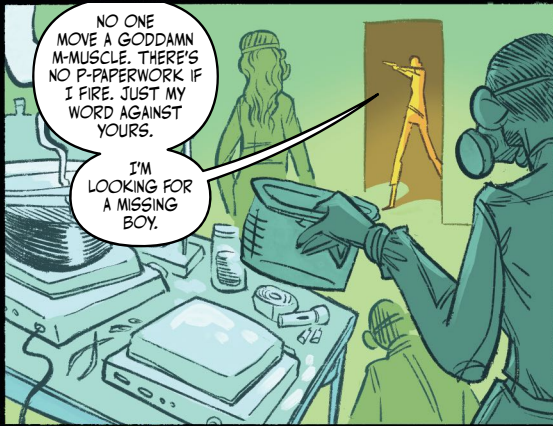




HOLD FAST, SOLDIER.
THE ONLY WAY OUT ENNIG IS THROUGH.



PASS ME THAT BIN.
JUST PASS IT. ASSHOLE.
I GOT MY HANDS FUCKIN' FULL HERE.



NO ONE MOVE A GODDAMN M-MUSCLE. THERE'S NO P-PAPERWORK IF I FIRE. JUST MY WORD AGAINST YOURS.
I'M LOOKING FOR A MISSING BOY.



HEH. YOU A LITTLE LOST, GIRL? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU LOST.
AIN'T NO BOY HERE. JUST US MEN. PUT THE GUN DOWN NOW 'FORE SOMEONE GETS HURT...



SHNNING!
OOOF!



FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU!



FUC--AMHHHH!







CUTT
CUTT

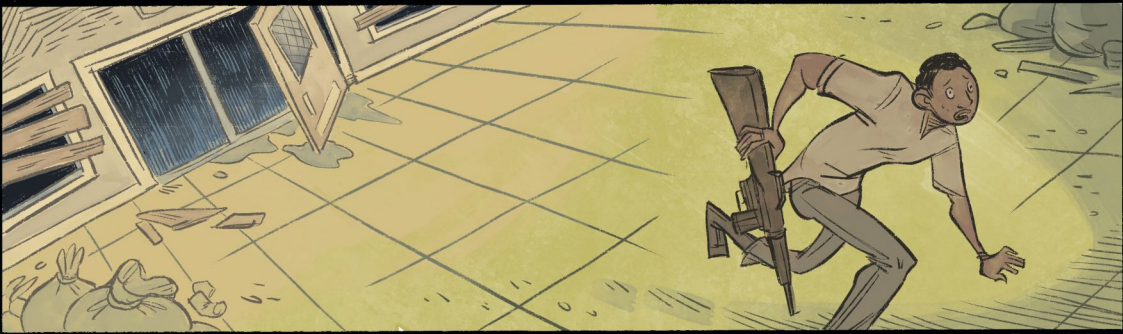


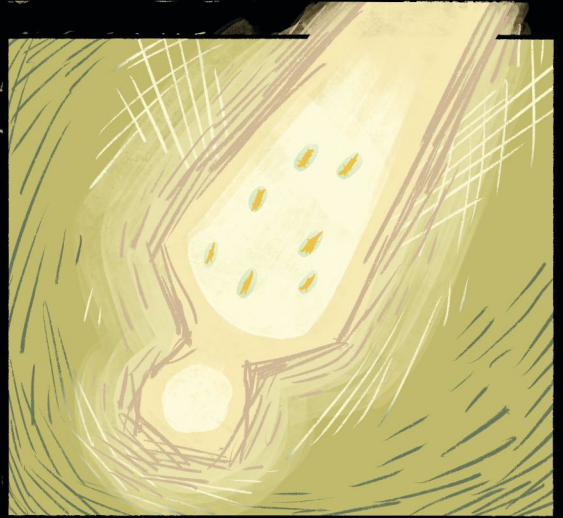
CUTT
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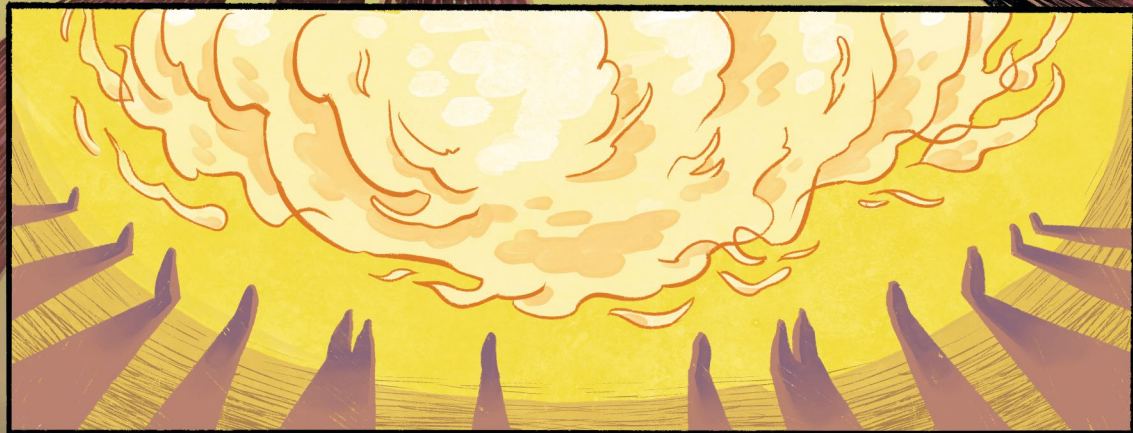
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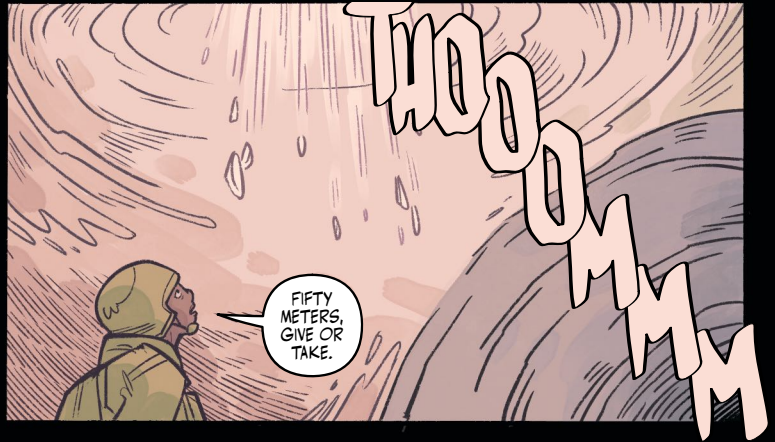
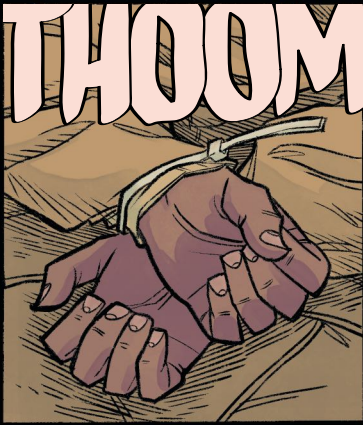
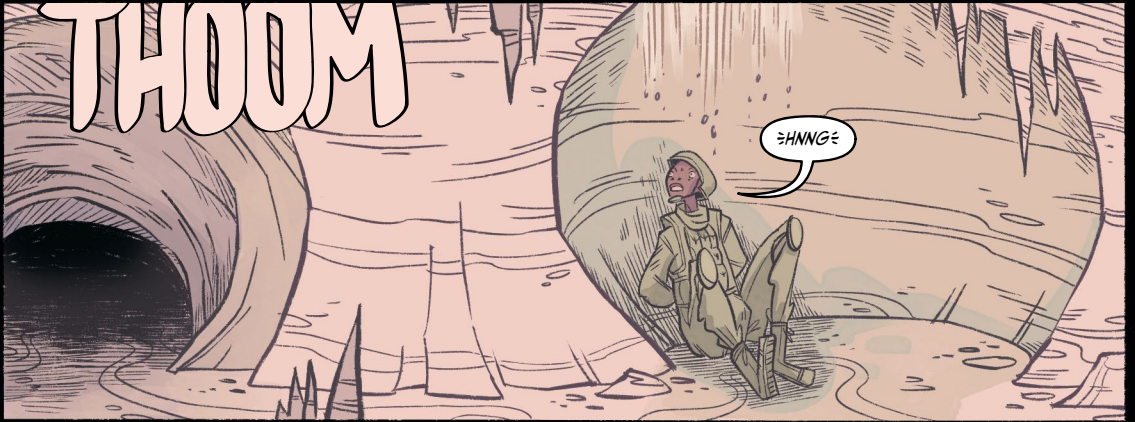


CUTT
CUTT

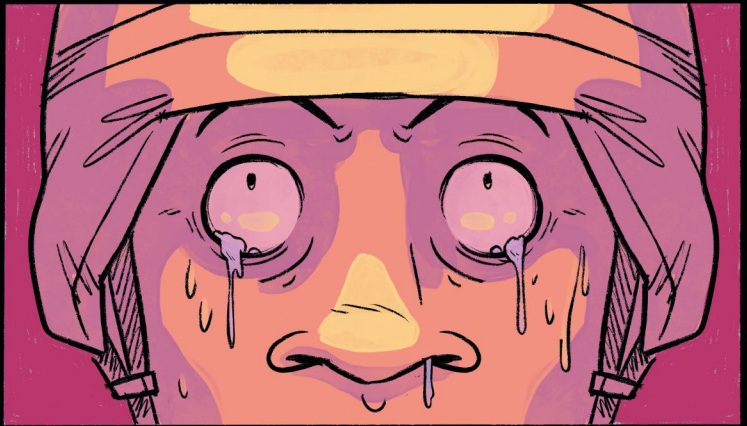


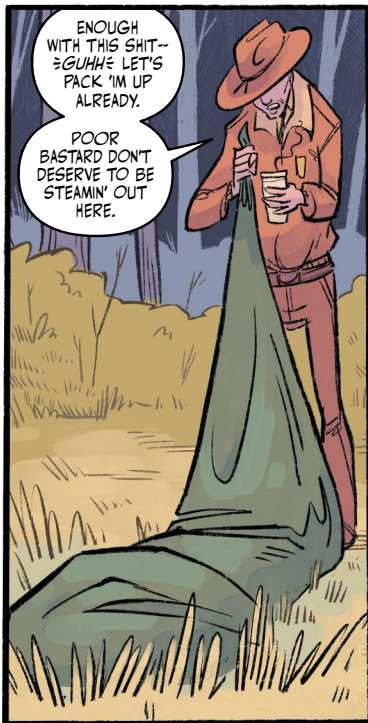
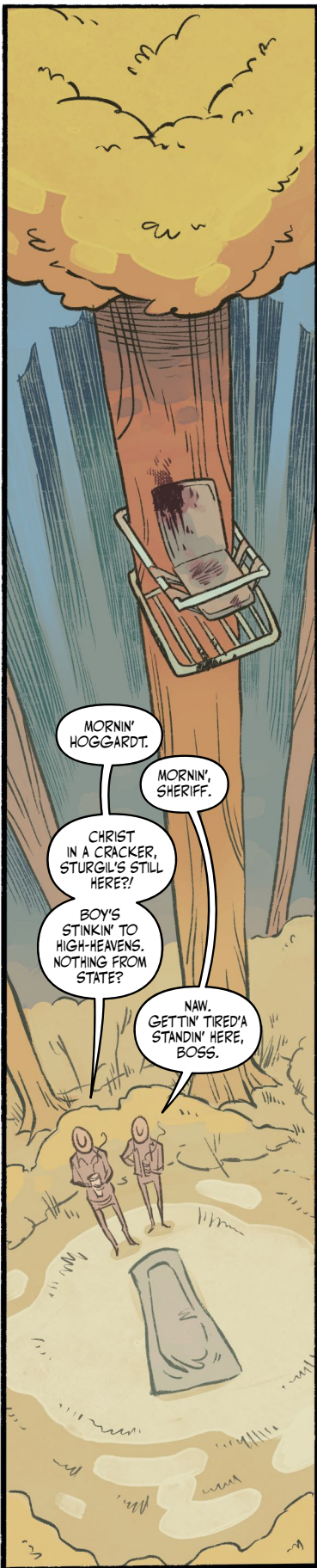


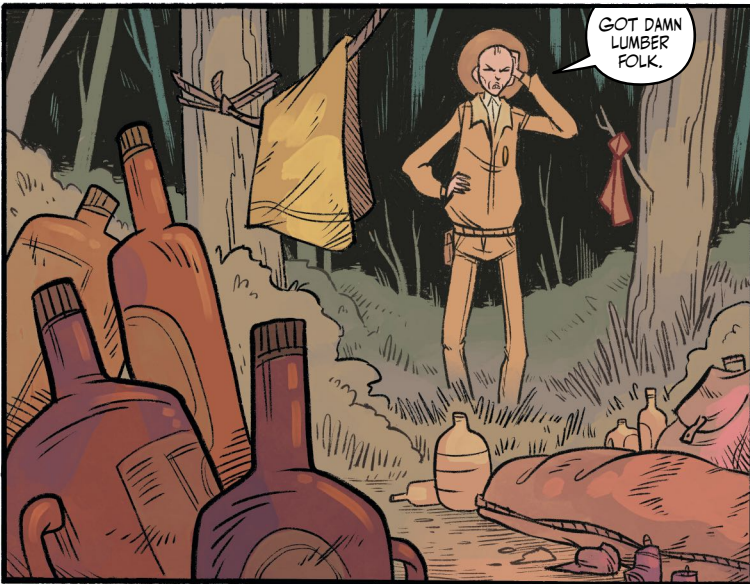


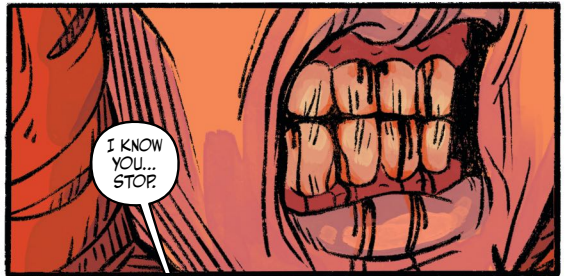
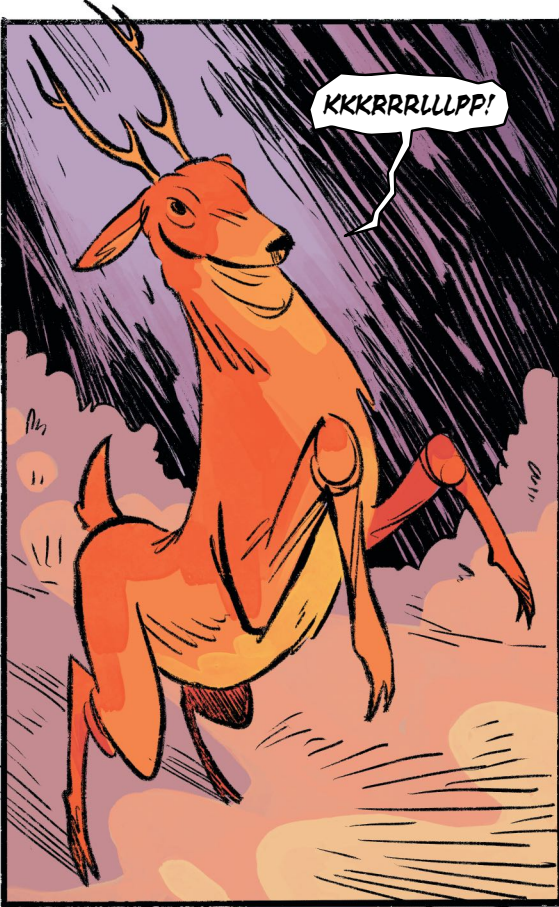




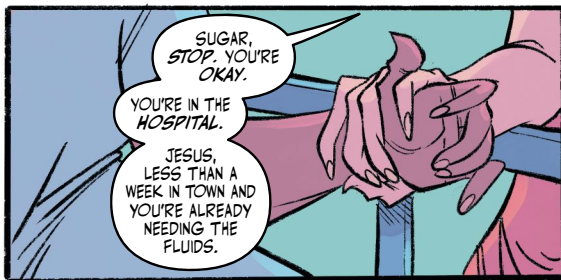


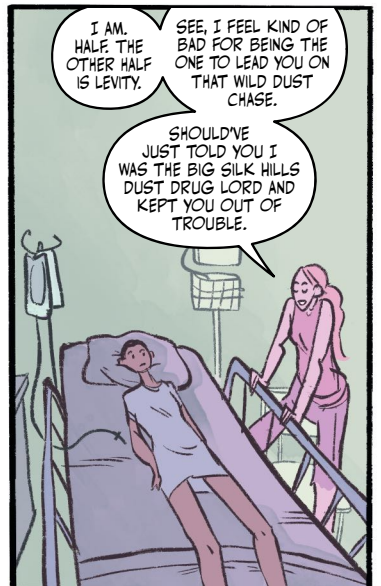
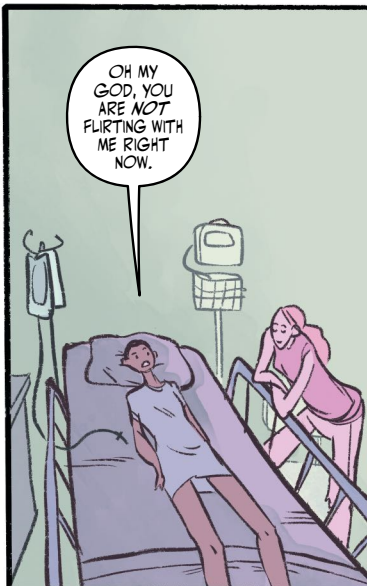
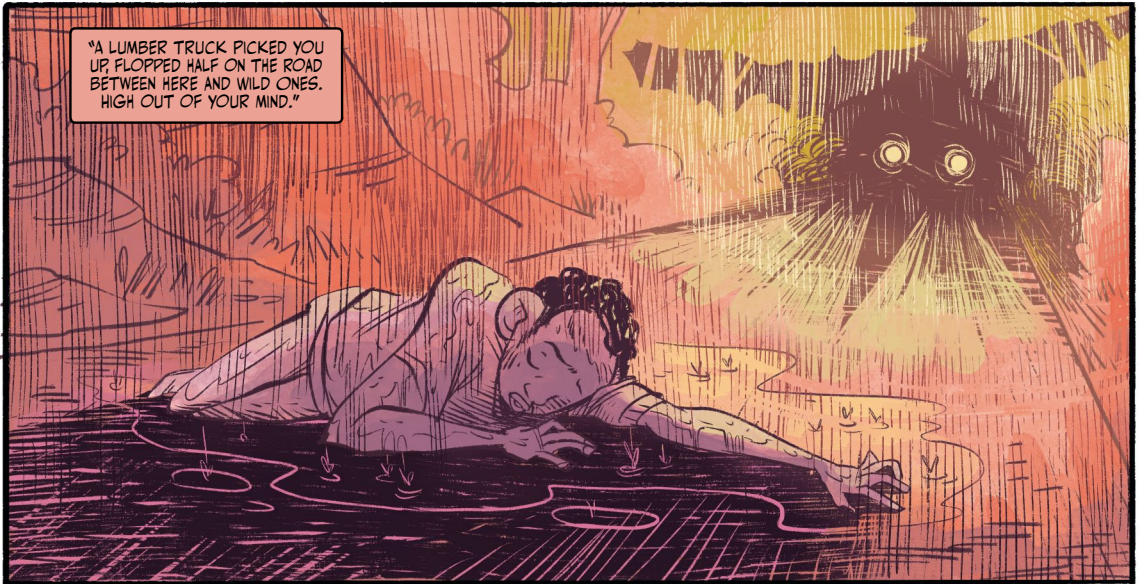
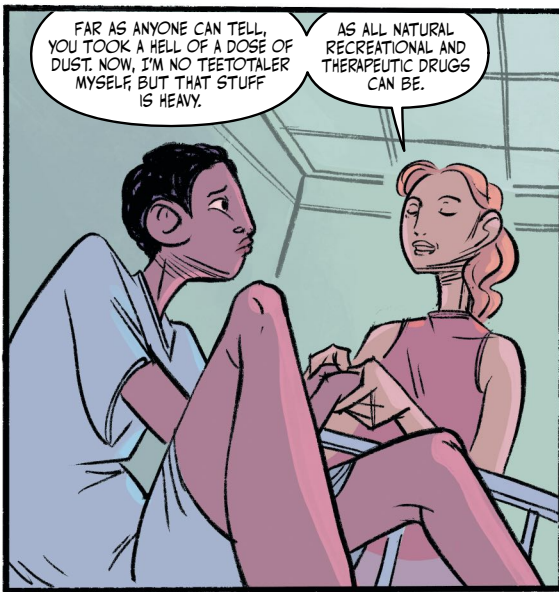


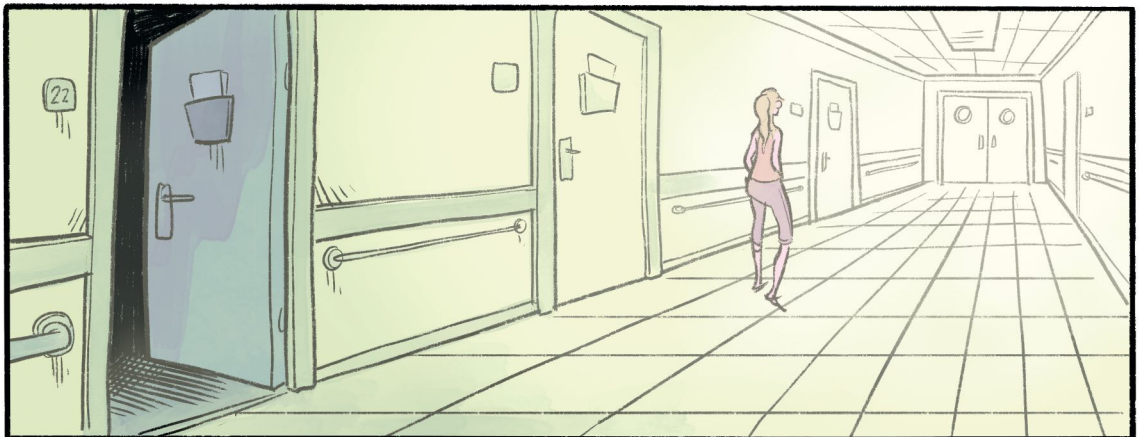




OH
NICE.









"SLEEP SWEET."



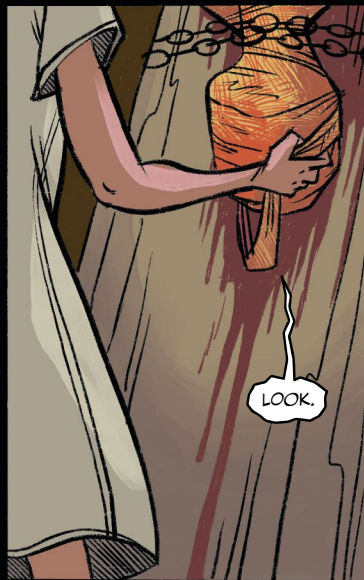
"SLEEP SWEET."

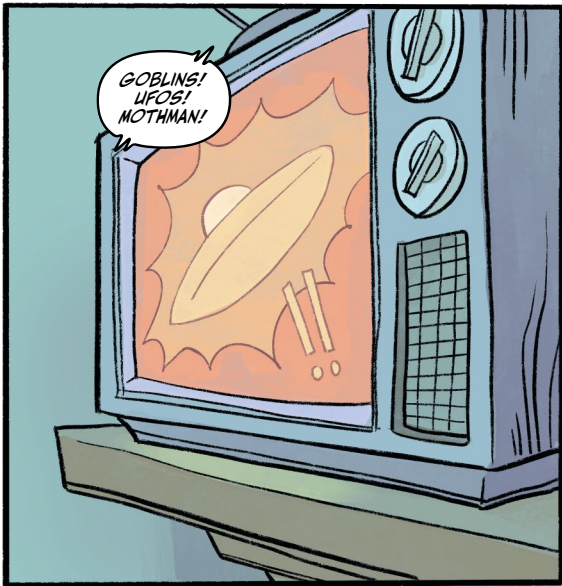
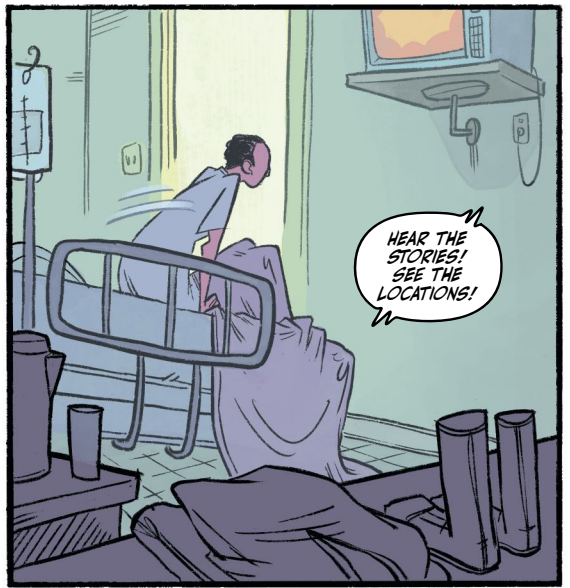


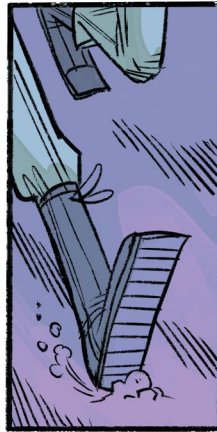
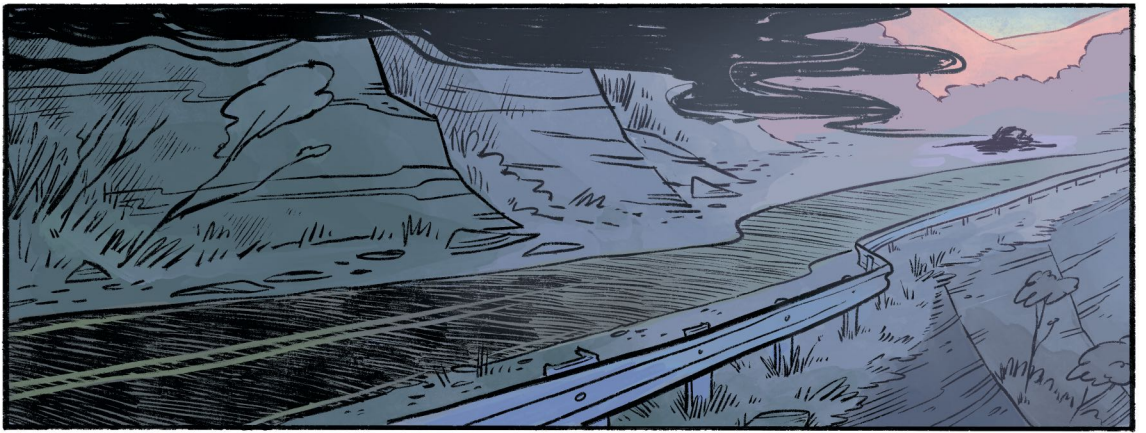
"SLEEP SW:ET."

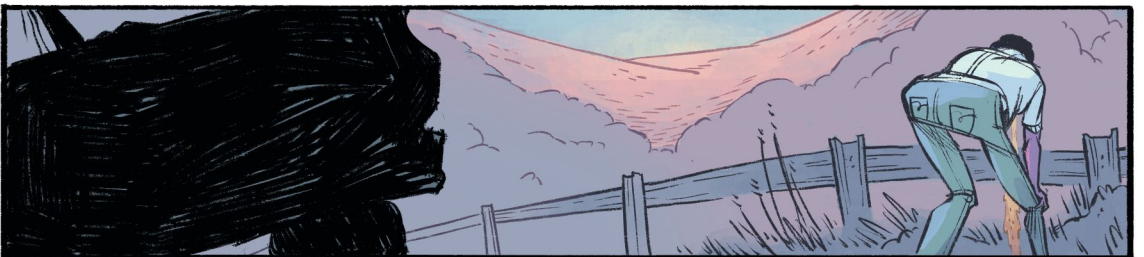
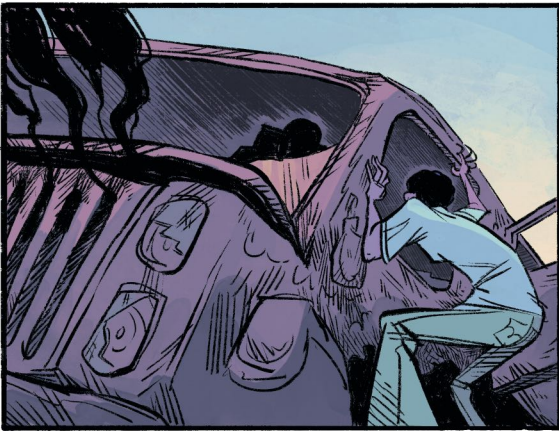
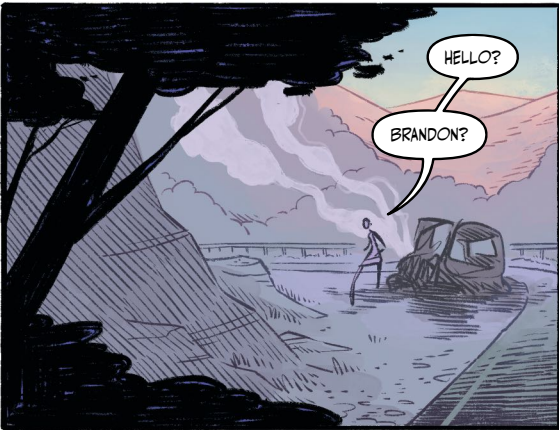
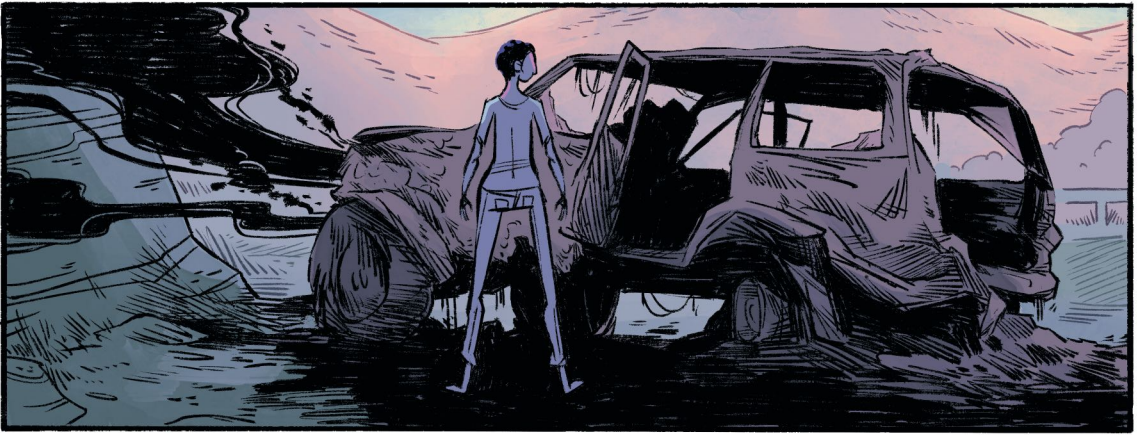


HELP.











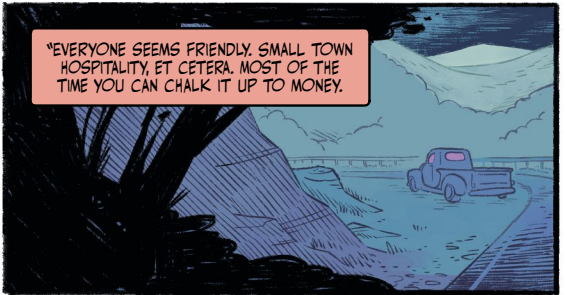


THEY KILLED HIM. BRANDON. I DON'T KNOW WHO-OR WHAT-BUT THEY DID. HE'S INSIDE THE JEEP.

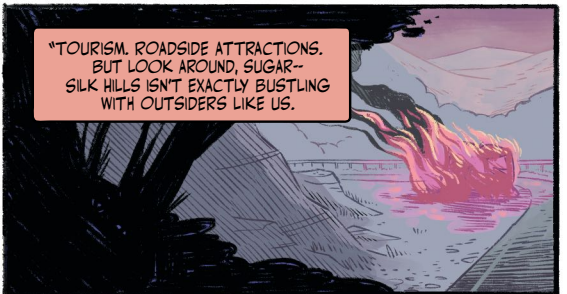
I'M NOT CRAZY. GO LOOK.



IT'S THIS TOWN. THIS PLACE.



"EVERYONE SEEMS FRIENDLY. SMALL TOWN HOSPITALITY, ET CETERA. MOST OF THE TIME YOU CAN CHALK IT UP TO MONEY.



"TOURISM. ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS. BUT LOOK AROUND, SUGAR-SILK HILLS ISN'T EXACTLY BUSTLING WITH OUTSIDERS LIKE US.



"IT'S ALL SUPERFICIAL, THAT POLITENESS. IT'S A REFLEX. A SHAME.



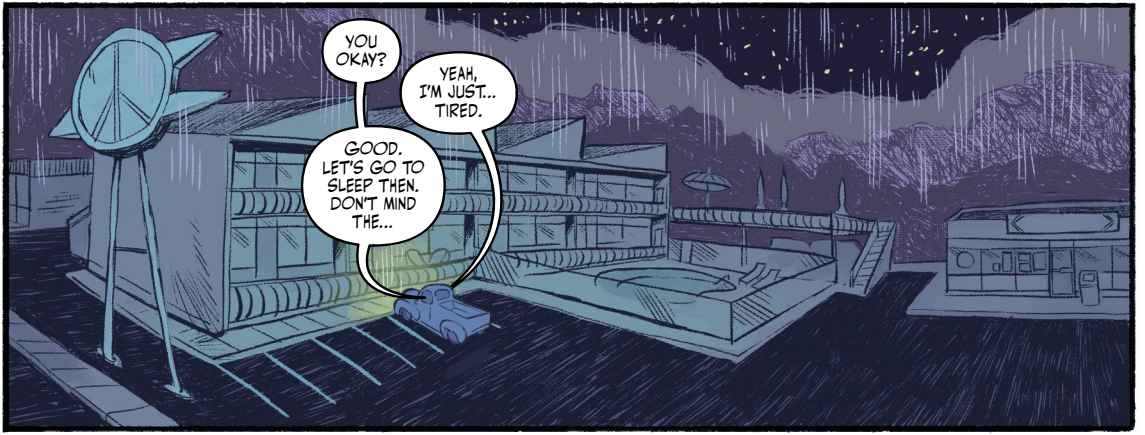
"THERE'S A DARKNESS HERE THAT SPREADS BEYOND TRADITION. SOMETHING OLDER."

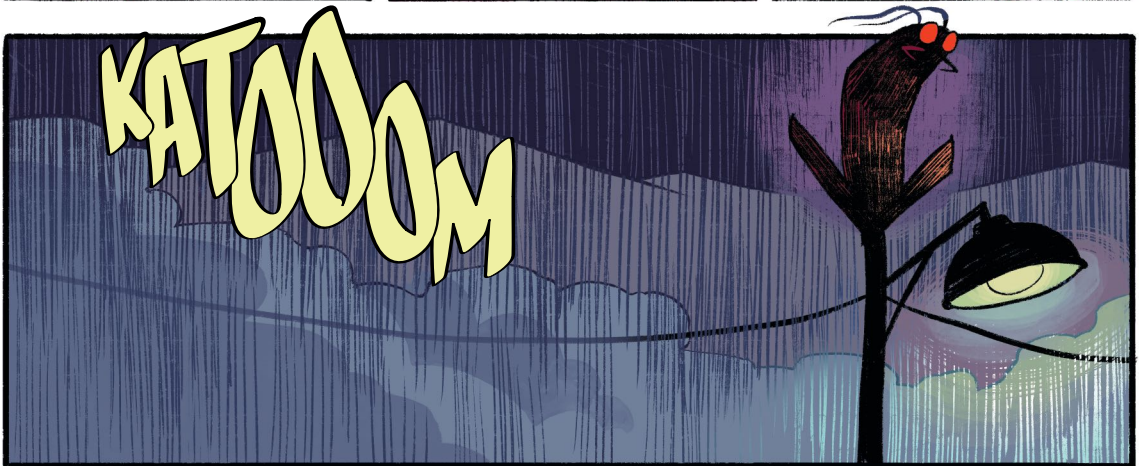
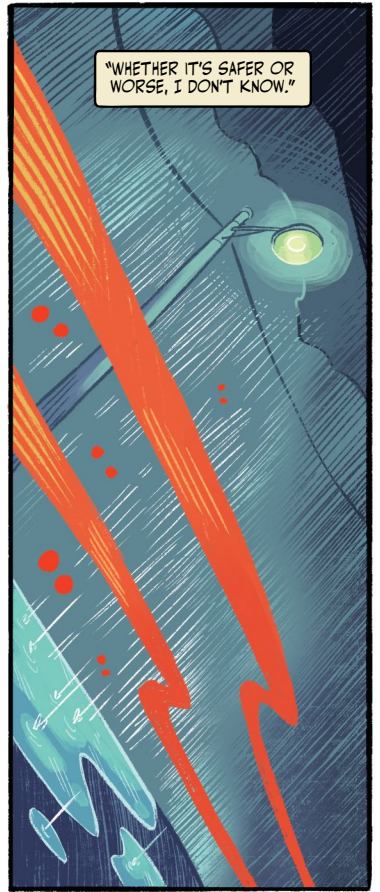
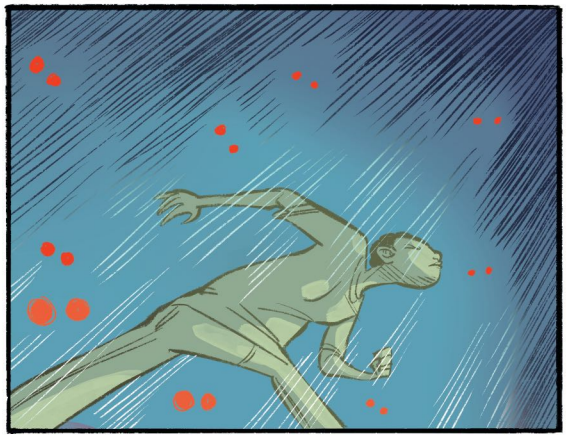
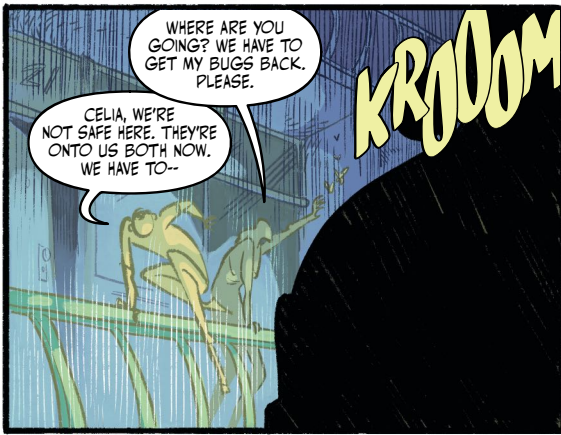
"THIS TOWN IS HIDING SOMETHING. SOMETHING OLD AND BAD...FROM BEFORE ANYTHING HAD A NAME..."

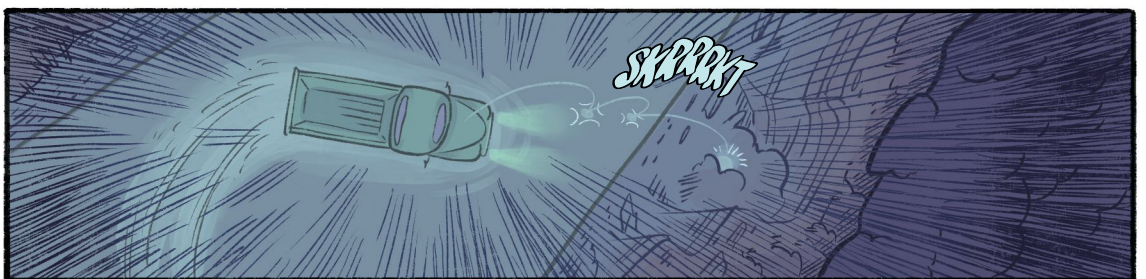
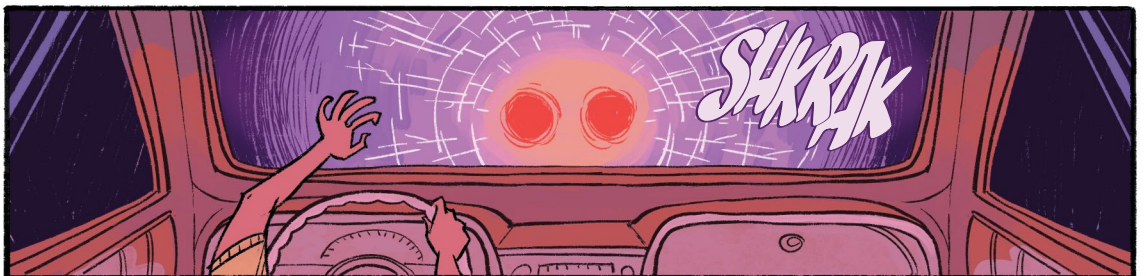
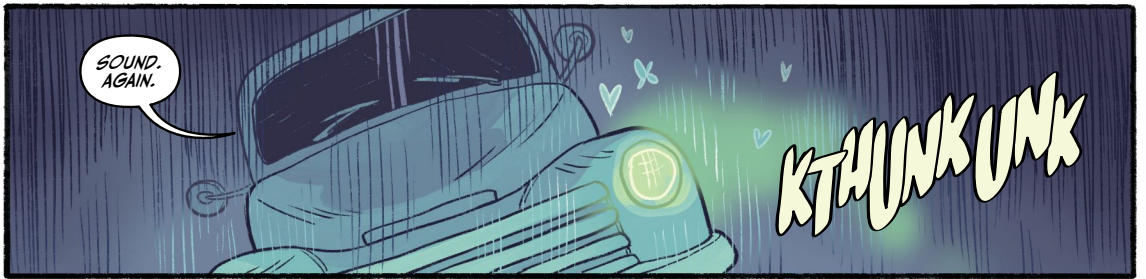
I JUST NEED TO FEEL YOU.

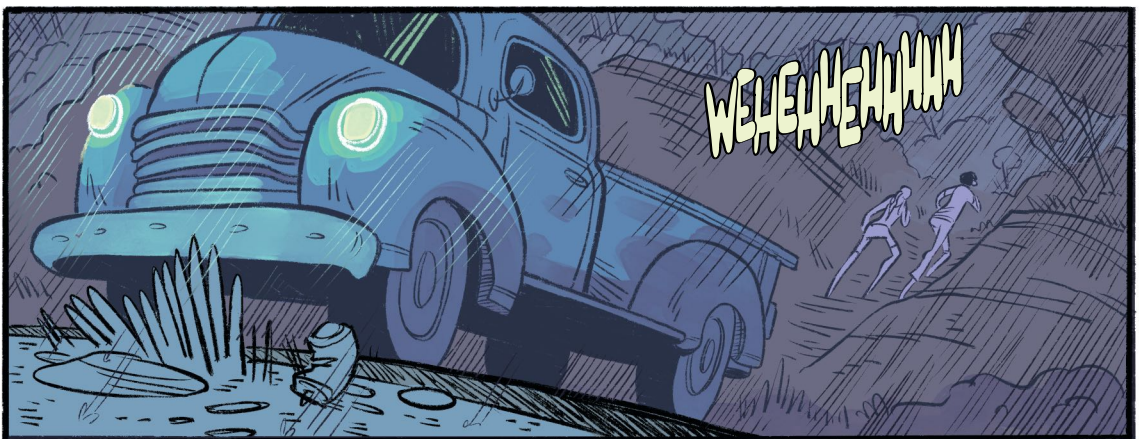
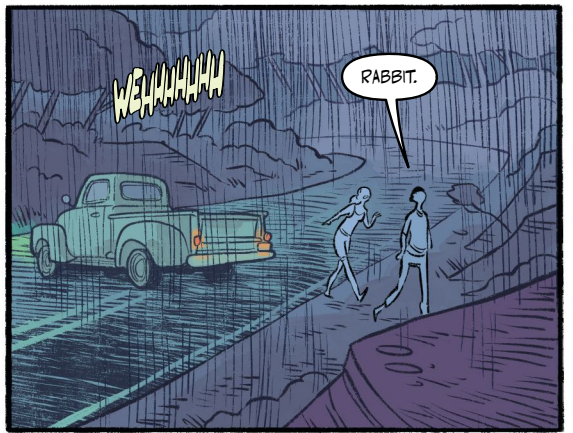
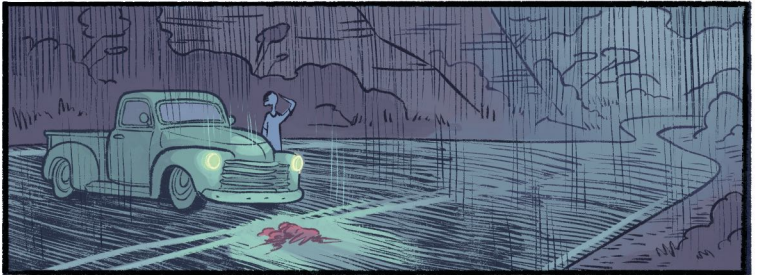
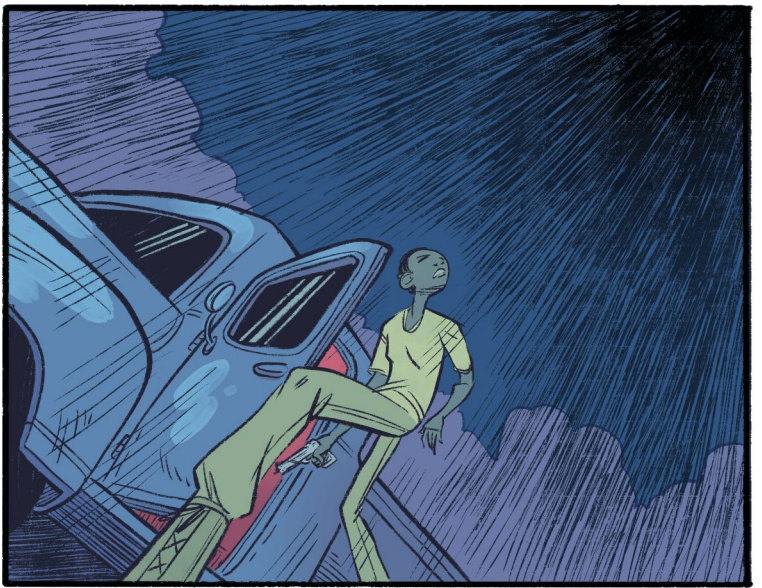
I NEED TO FEEL SOMETHING GOOD. JUST FOR RIGHT NOW.

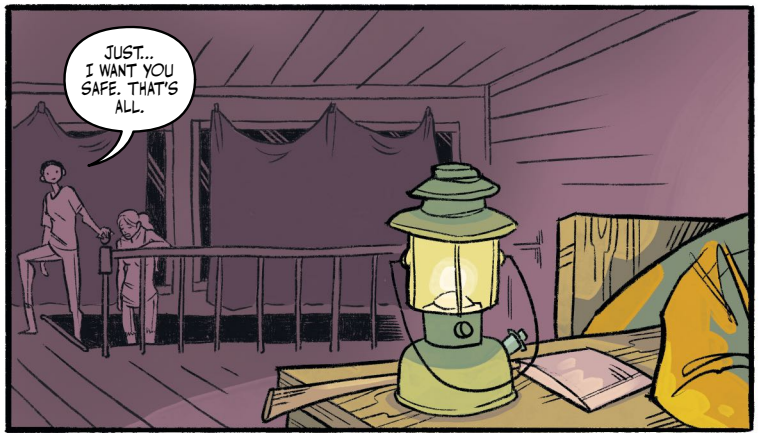
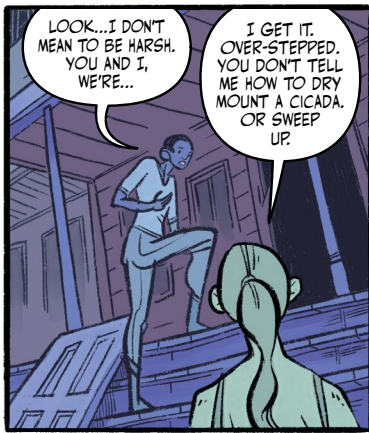
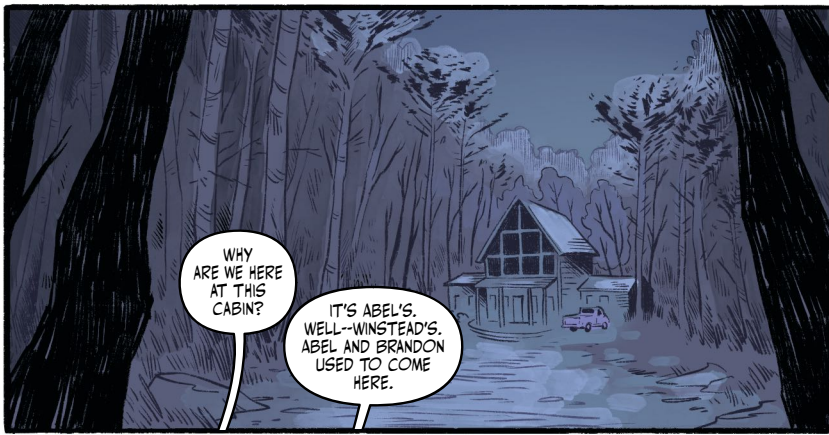


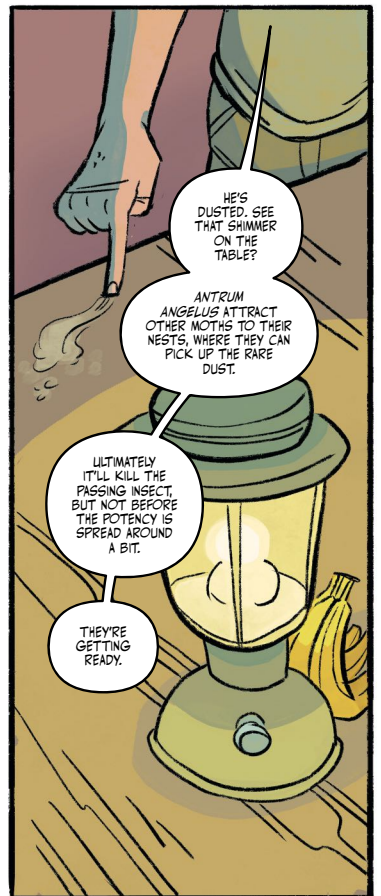
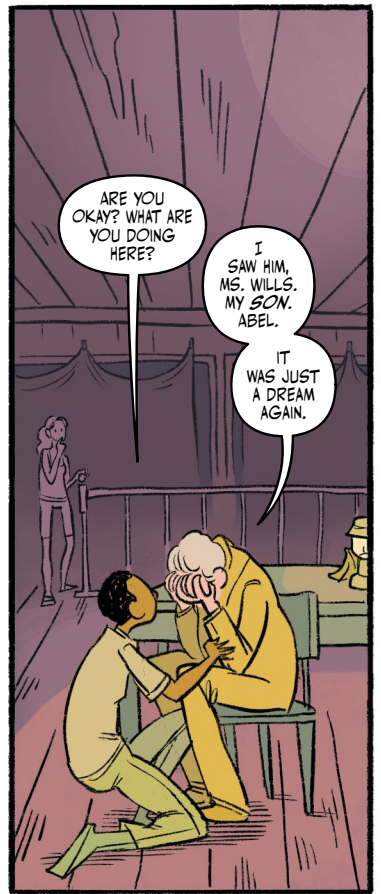


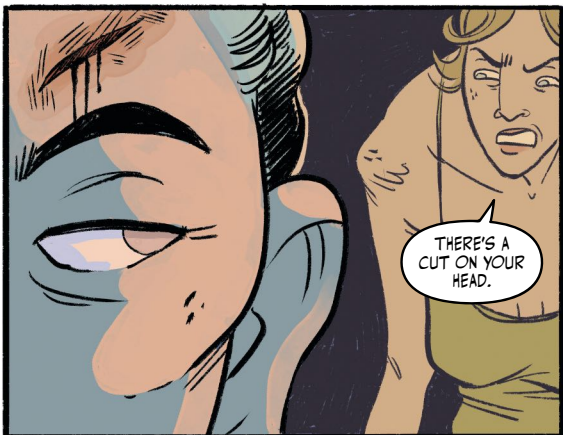
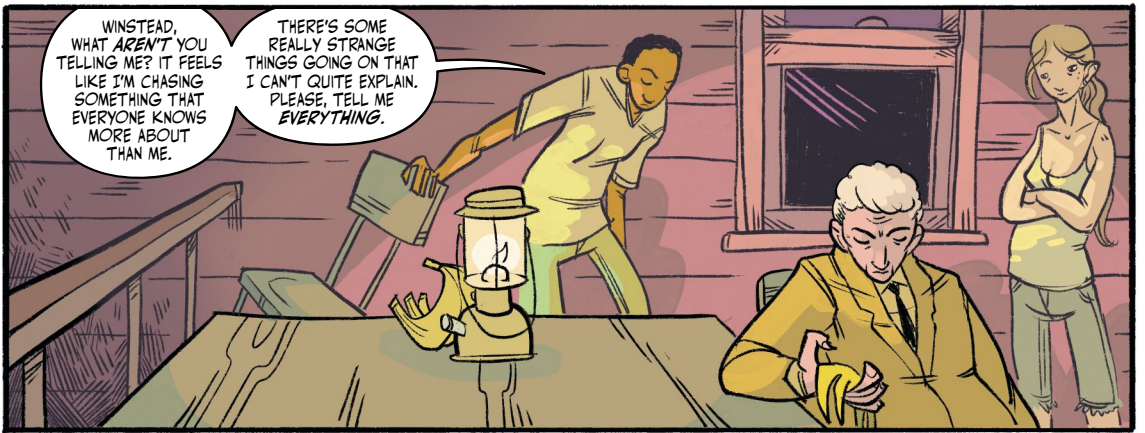




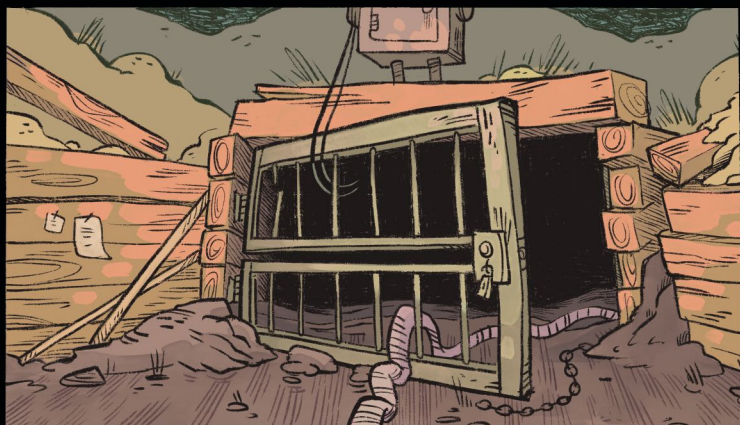




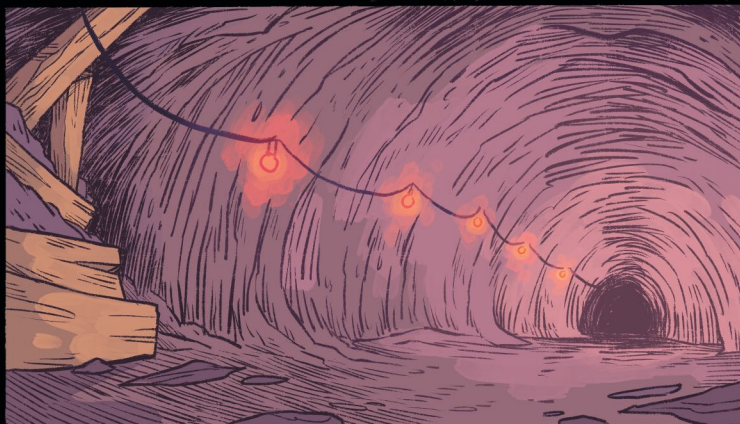




"I THINK YOU SHOULD
STAY HERE TONIGHT WITH
US, MR. PARTRIDGE."

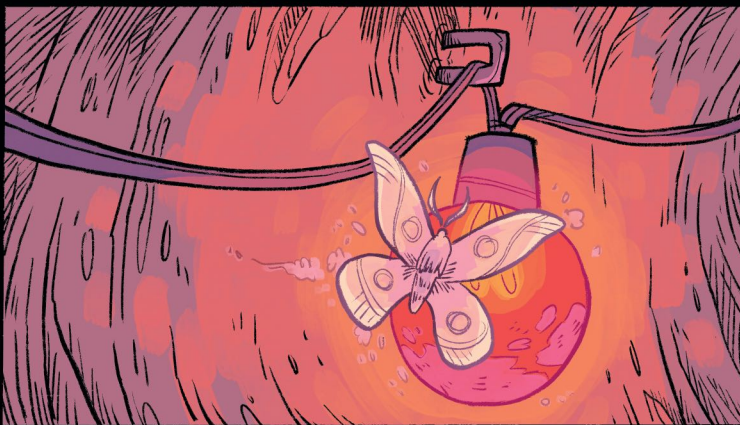


"YES. YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT,
MS. WILLS. THIS TOWN CANNOT
BE CONTROLLED ANYMORE."

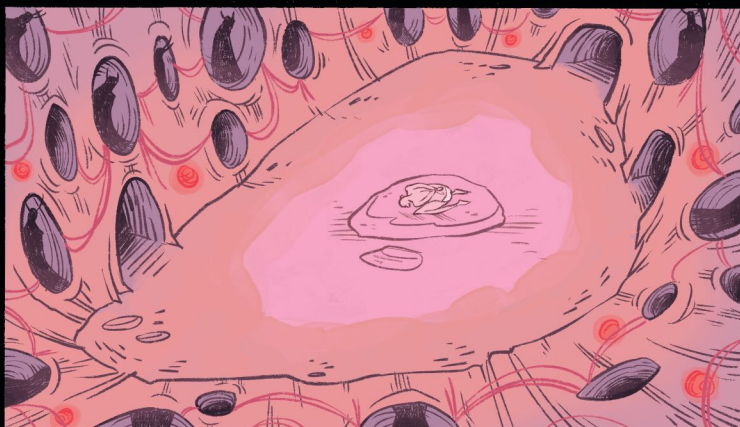


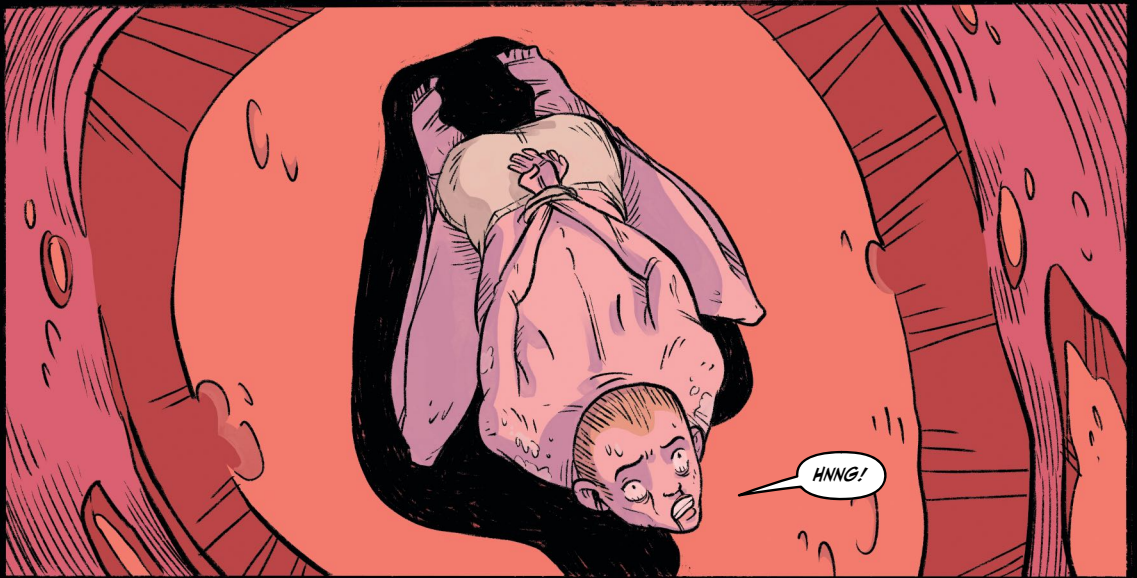
"NOT QUELLED OR
REASONED WITH."

"I JUST PRAY MY
SON IS STILL ALIVE,
AND STRONGER
THAN I HAVE BEEN."



"HOWEVER...SHOULD THE
THINGS I'VE SEEN IN MY HEAD
BE REAL, PERHAPS DEATH
WOULD BE A REPRIEVE."





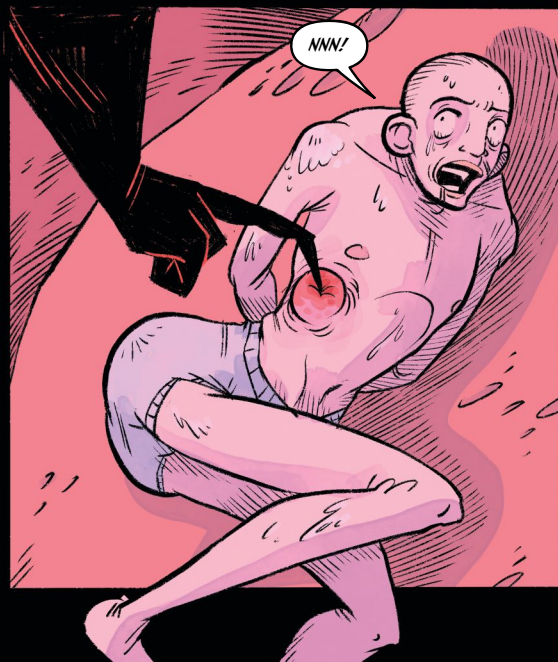


CHRRT...
CHRRRT...
CHITTT...



NO!
AHH! STOP!
GO--SHNNZ--
AWAY!

KRRT
KRRT...

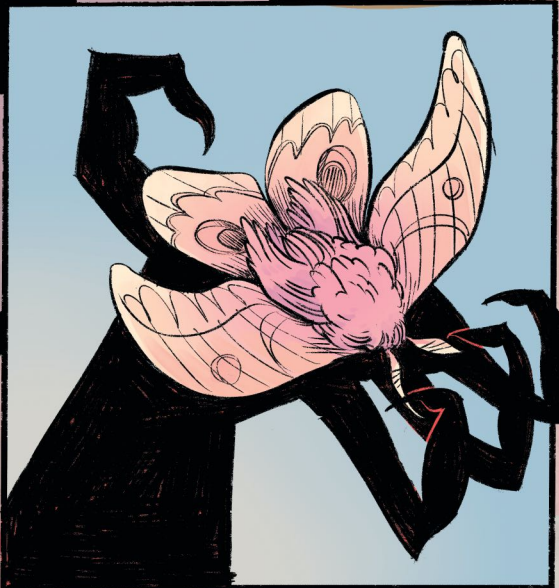


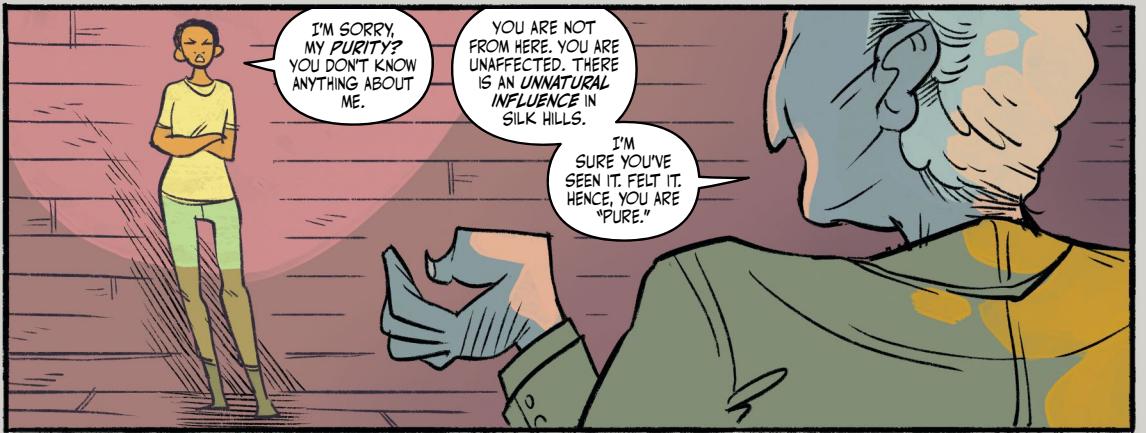
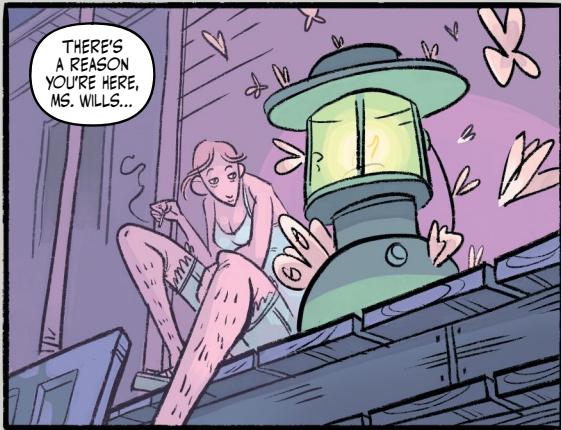
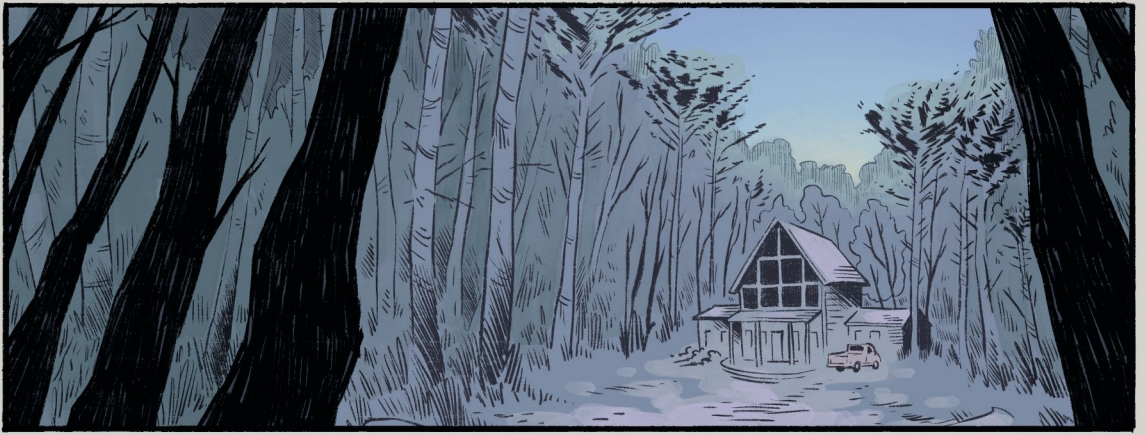
NNNN!



AHI! AHI!
AHHA!

SKLRRP







"I WASN'T ALWAYS A MAN WITH SUCH STATURE IN SILK HILLS. THIS WASN'T ALWAYS A PARTRIDGE TOWN.

"THERE WAS A BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY. QUIET AND POLITE AT FIRST--BLOODLINES RUN LONG AND DEEP IN THESE PARTS, MS. WILLS.

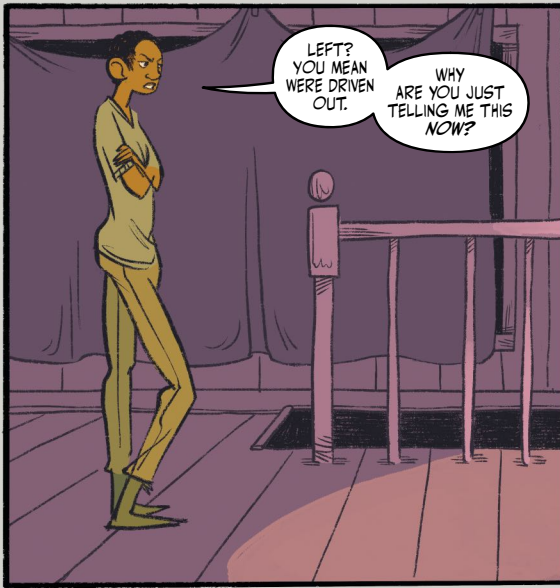
"THE PARTRIDGES AND THE KITTERS. THEY WERE MINERS. THIS WHOLE TOWN RESTS ON SOME OF THE MOST INTRICATE TUNNEL SYSTEMS YOU EVER SAW.



"FOR A LONG, LONG TIME, EVERYONE THOUGHT THE TWO FAMILIES COULD COEXIST. HELL, ANY BETTING MAN WOULD'VE PUT THEIR LAST RED CENT ON SILK HILLS STAYING A MINING TOWN.

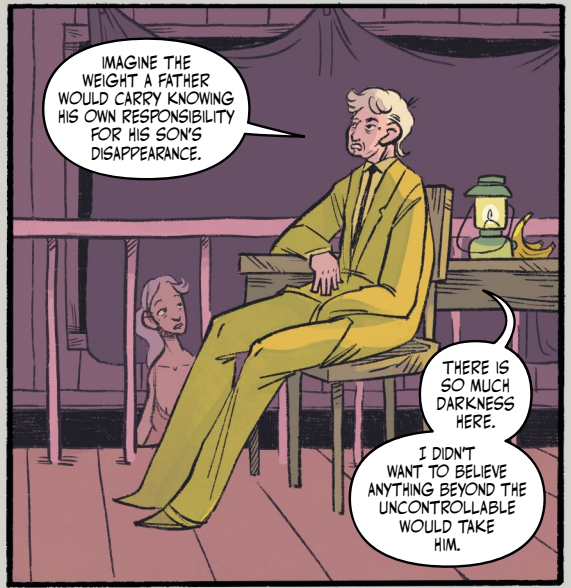
"BUT IT DIDN'T. I WAS SUCCESSFUL.

"I NEVER INTENDED THEIR RUINATION, THE KITTERS. LIVELIHOOD IS IN OUR BONES, SO I CANNOT BLAME THEM FOR THEIR GRUDGE WHEN THEY LEFT."



LEFT?
YOU MEAN
WERE DRIVEN
OUT.

WHY
ARE YOU JUST
TELLING ME THIS
NOW?



IMAGINE THE
WEIGHT A FATHER
WOULD CARRY KNOWING
HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY
FOR HIS SON'S
DISAPPEARANCE.

THERE IS
SO MUCH
DARKNESS
HERE.

I DIDN'T
WANT TO BELIEVE
ANYTHING BEYOND THE
UNCONTROLLABLE
WOULD TAKE
HIM.



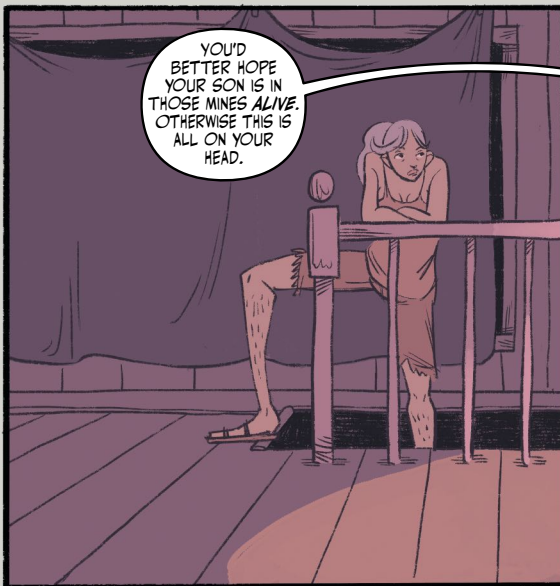
THEY
WENT TO
THE MINES,
WHERE THEY
STAYED.

WHERE THEY
BELONGED, SO
I THOUGHT.



YOU
HAD A POTENTIAL
SUSPECT ON A PLATTER
FOR ME THE DAY I
STEPPED FOOT IN YOUR
NIGHTMARE TOWN.
AND WHAT DID YOU
DO?

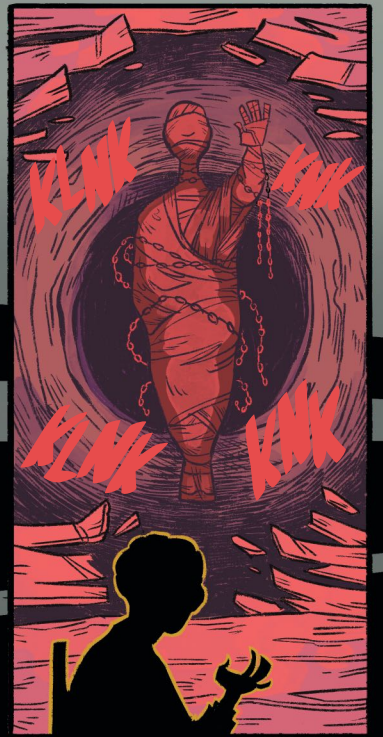
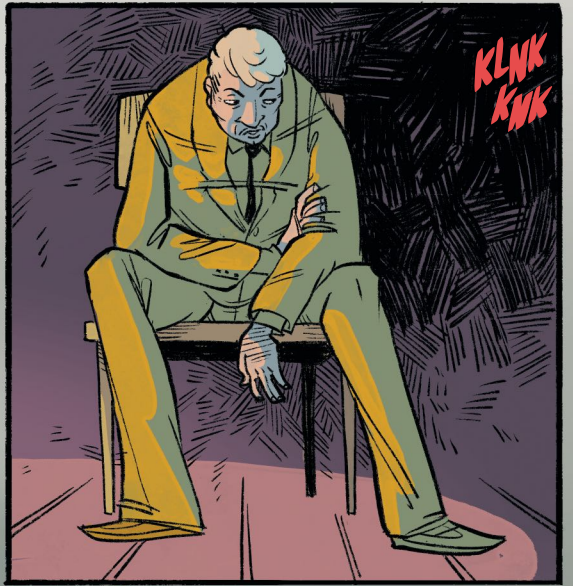
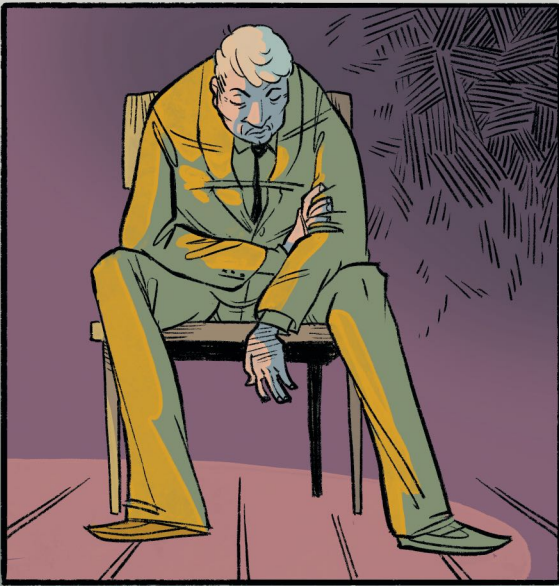
YOU
CONTINUED TO
GORGE YOURSELF
ON THE GUILT
YOU COOKED
UP.



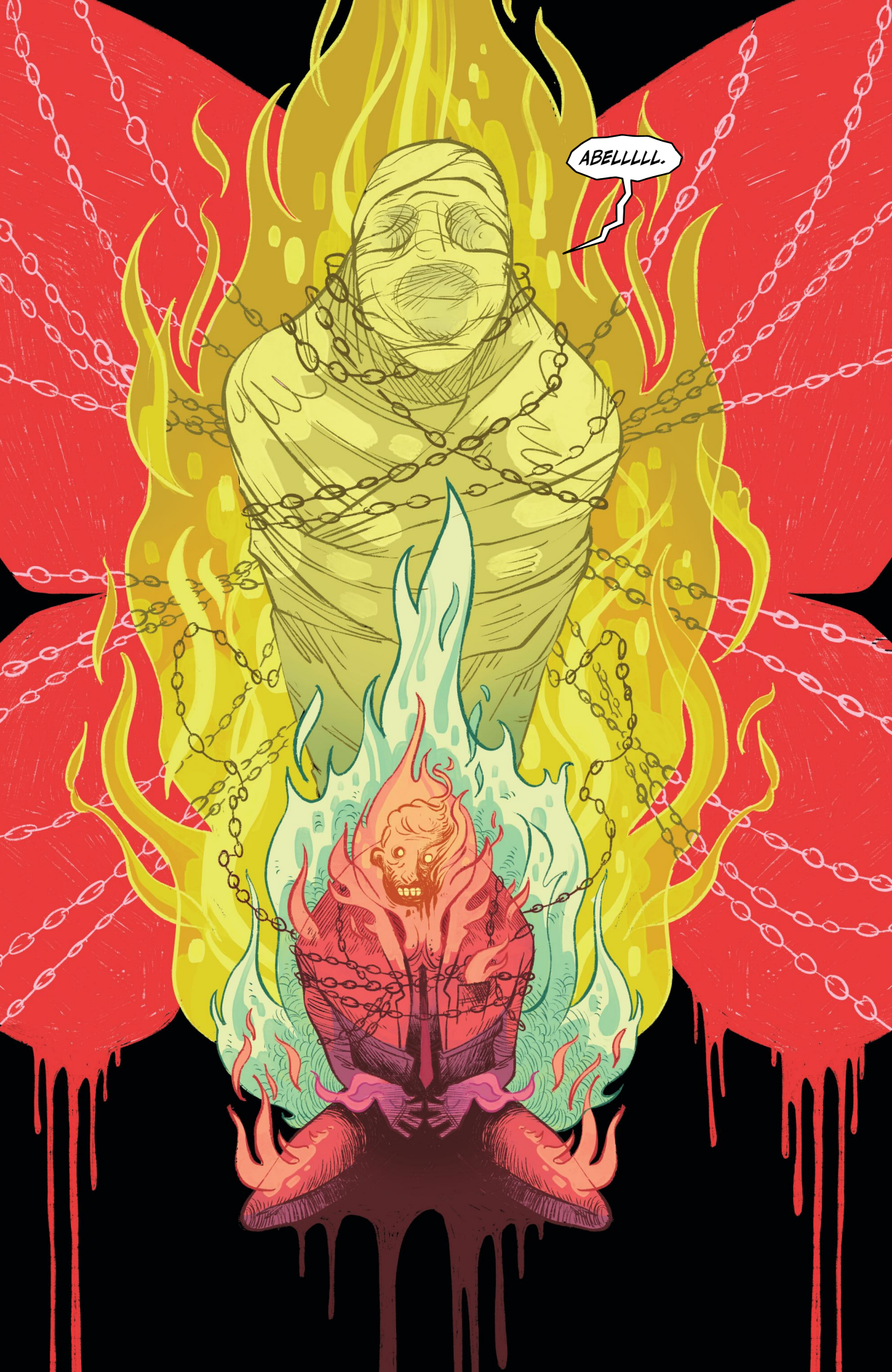
YOU'D
BETTER HOPE
YOUR SON IS IN
THOSE MINES *ALIVE*.
OTHERWISE THIS IS
ALL ON YOUR
HEAD.



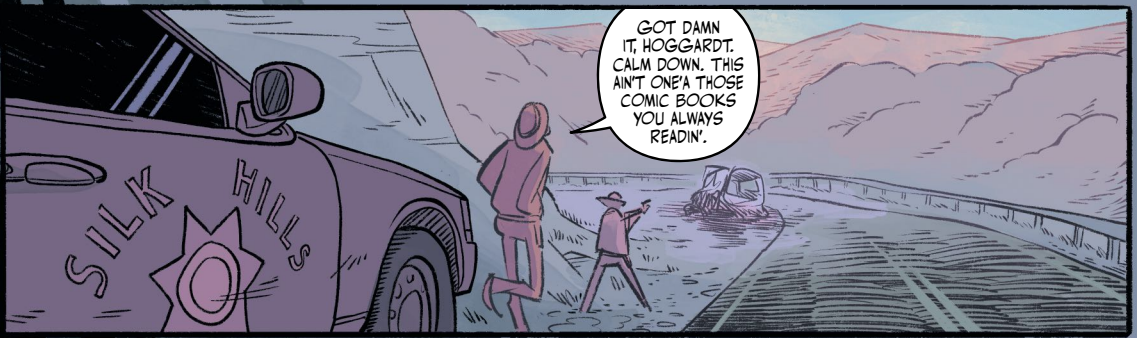
IT
ALREADY IS,
MS. WILLS.







ABELLLLL.

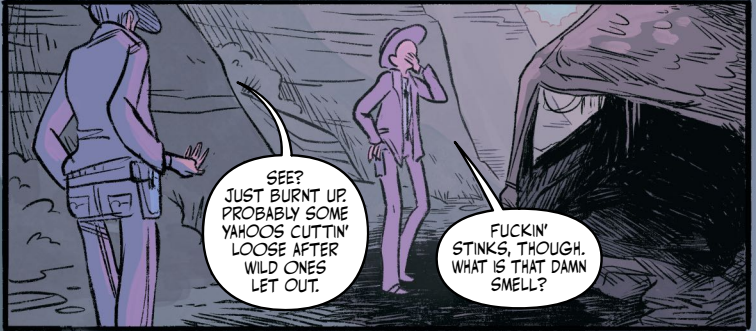


GOT DAMN IT, HOGGARDT. CALM DOWN. THIS AIN'T ONE'A THOSE COMIC BOOKS YOU ALWAYS READIN'.



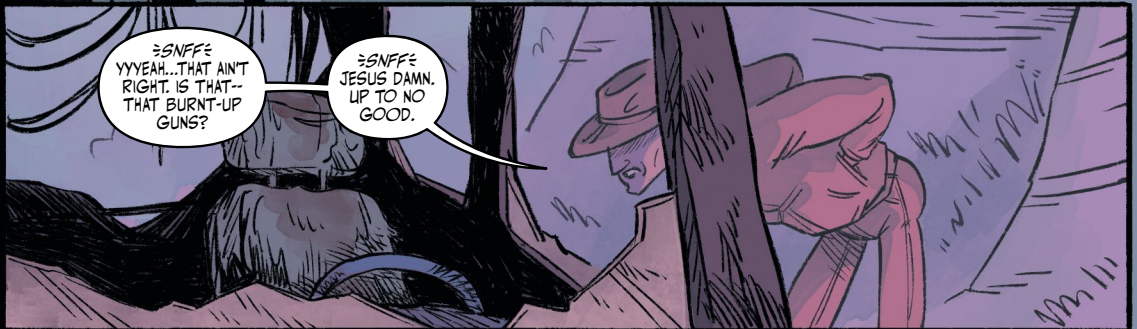
IT'S PREPAREDNESS, IS ALL, SHERIFF.

WHAT'RE YOU PREPARED FOR? STARVED RACOONS?



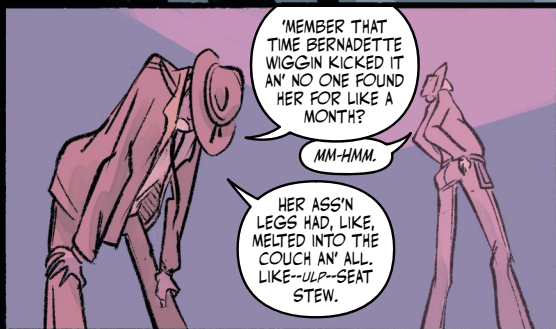
SEE? JUST BURNT UP. PROBABLY SOME YAHOOES CUTTIN' LOOSE AFTER WILD ONES LET OUT.

FUCKIN' STINKS, THOUGH. WHAT IS THAT DAMN SMELL?



SNFFF YYYEAH...THAT AIN'T RIGHT. IS THAT-- THAT BURNT-UP GUNS?

SNFFF JESUS DAMN. UP TO NO GOOD.



'MEMBER THAT TIME BERNADETTE WIGGIN KICKED IT AN' NO ONE FOUND HER FOR LIKE A MONTH?

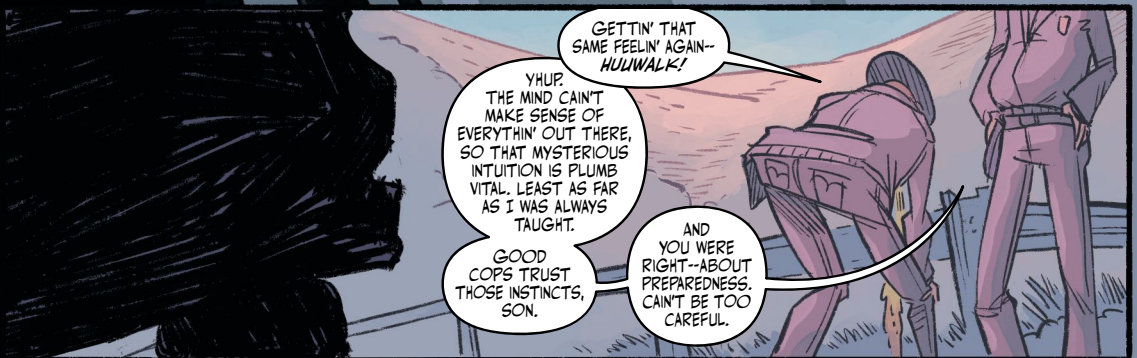
MM-HMM.

HER ASS'N LEGS HAD, LIKE, MELTED INTO THE COUCH AN' ALL. LIKE--ULP--SEAT STEW.



I WAS THERE. WHAT'S YER POINT?

WORSE'N THE SMELL I GOT. OF PURE...DEATH. THAT I SHOULDN'T BE THERE, SHOULDN'T BE SEEN' IT--HURK--ULP--

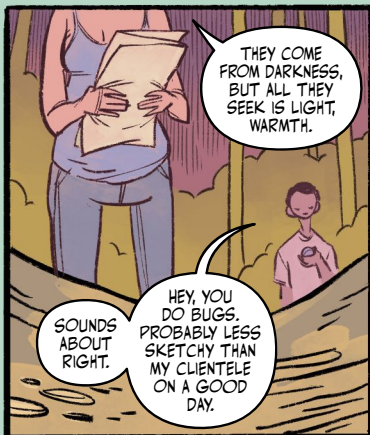
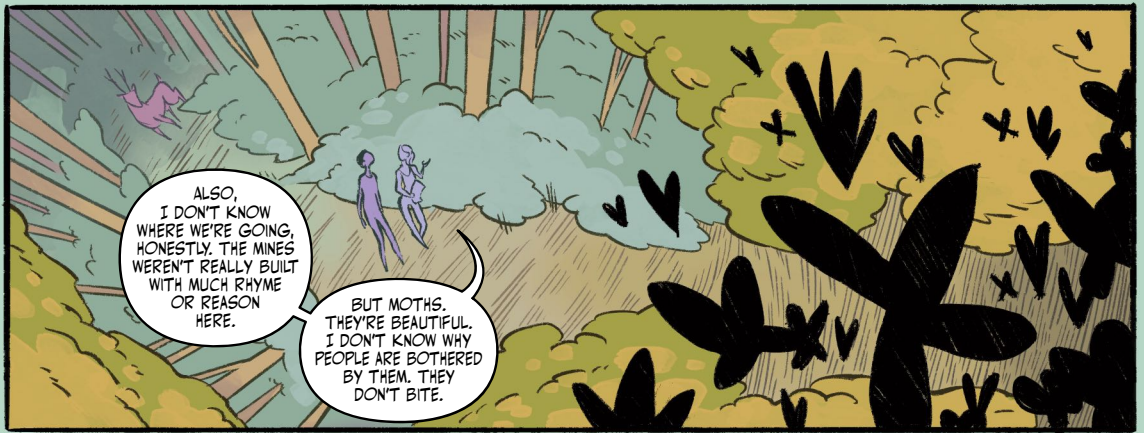


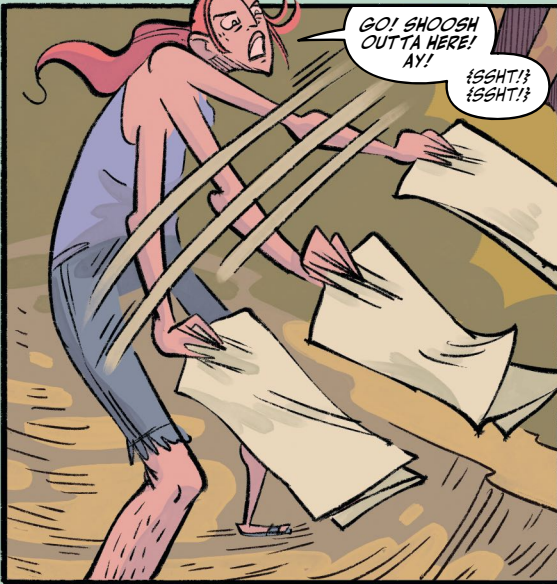
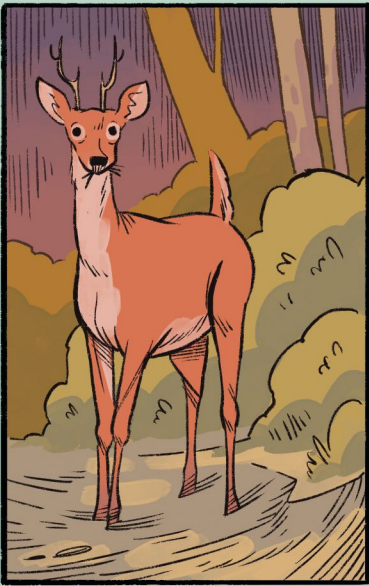
GETTIN' THAT SAME FEELIN' AGAIN--HULLWALK!

YHUP. THE MIND CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF EVERYTHIN' OUT THERE, SO THAT MYSTERIOUS INTUITION IS PLUMB VITAL. LEAST AS FAR AS I WAS ALWAYS TAUGHT.

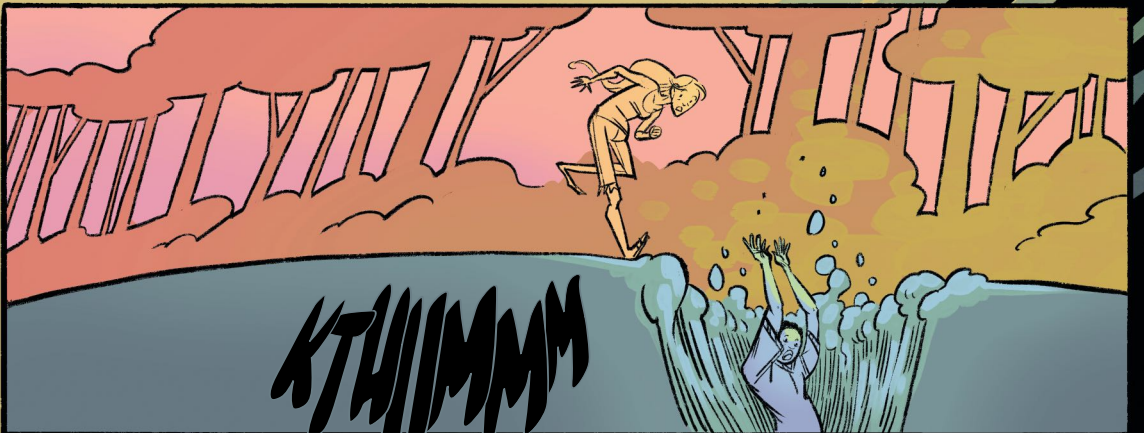
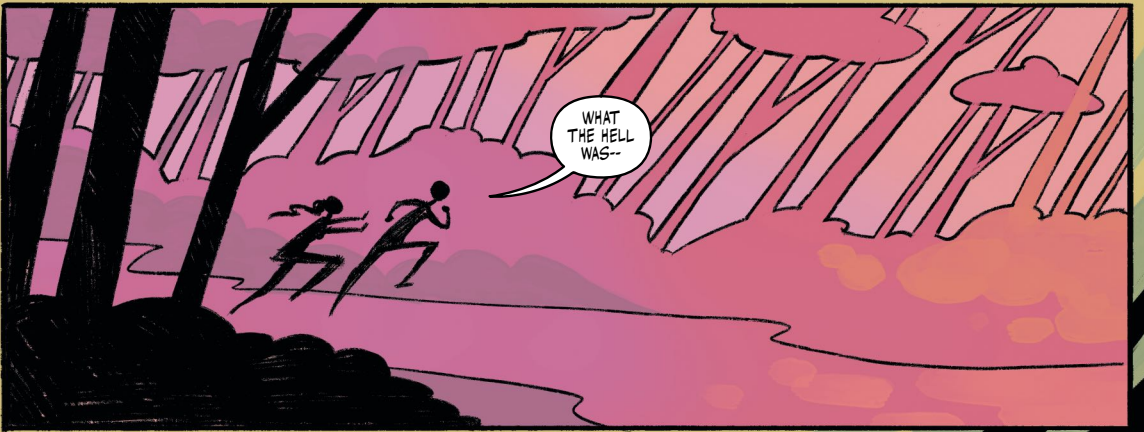
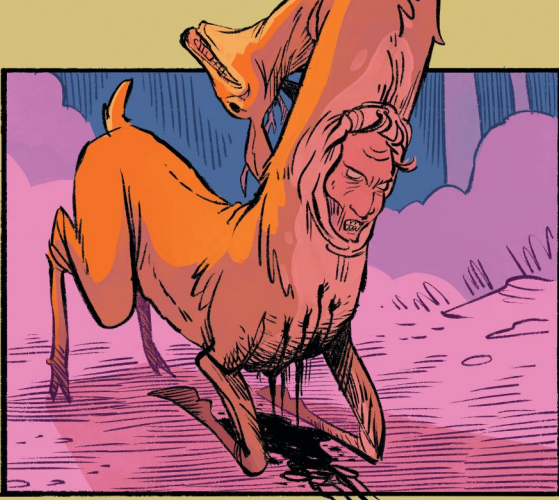
GOOD COPS TRUST THOSE INSTINCTS, SON.

AND YOU WERE RIGHT--ABOUT PREPAREDNESS. CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.











HOLY MOLY, YOU OKAY?

HNNG... YEAH. FINE.

THAT'S A MINE HOLE. YOU FELL INTO A MINE HOLE. FOUND ONE! THAT'S GOOD!



HOW SERENDIPITOUS.



WHAT'S THE PLAN NOW, SUGAR? GOING ALL-IN, OR...

UGH. CAN'T. STRUCTURE IS TOO WEAK. AND TIGHT AS HELL. WE NEED TO FIND A SERVICE ENTRANCE.

DO ME A FAVOR, WOULD YOU? HEAD BACK TO THE CAR, GET SOME ROPE OR SOMETHING.



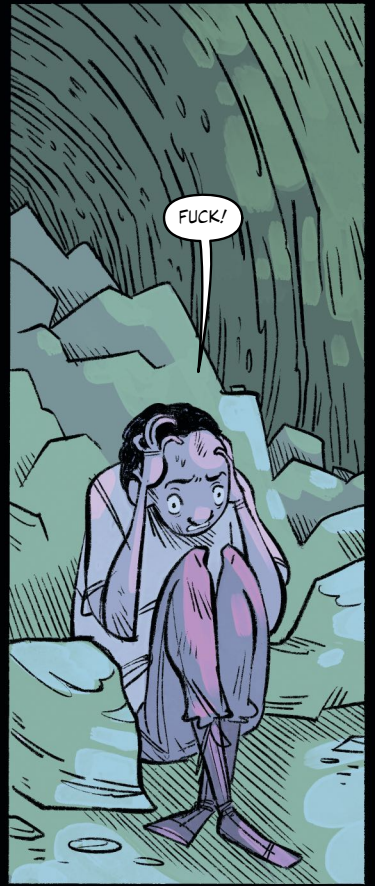
ROPE? I THOUGHT YOU ARMY KIDS COULD CLIMB--

I CAN'T FUCKING CLIMB IT! PLEASE GET ME SOME FUCKING ROPE! OR SOMETHING!

AND WATCH OUT FOR THAT THING...



ALL RIGHT, I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP. ROPE OR SOMETHING.



KLNK KNK

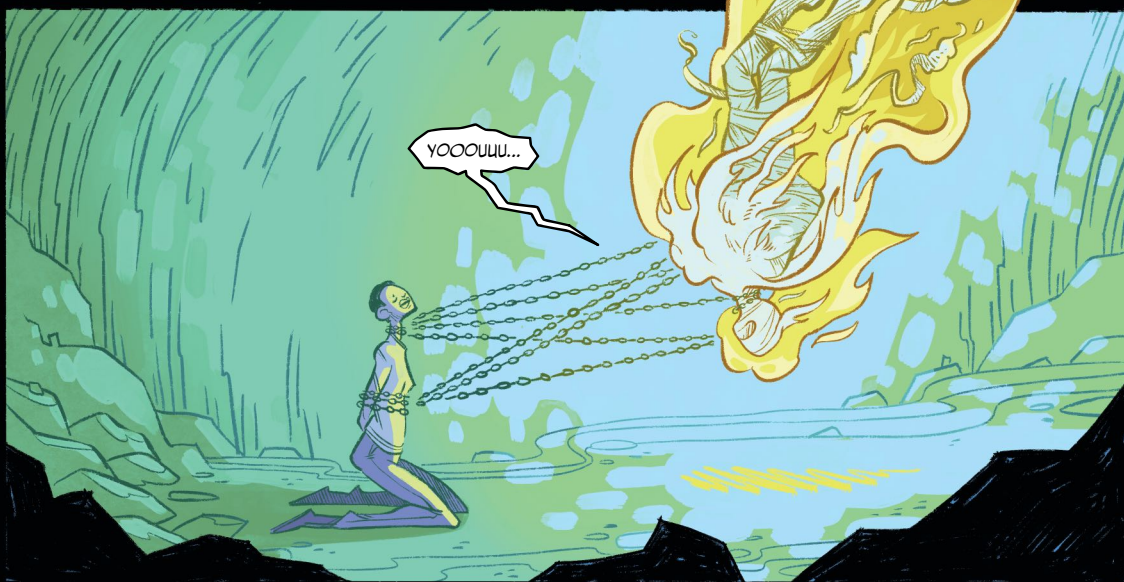


BETHHANNYYY.

KLNK KLNK
KLNK KLNK
KLNK KLNK



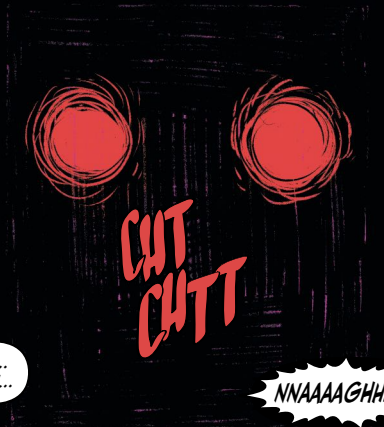
BETHHANNYYY.



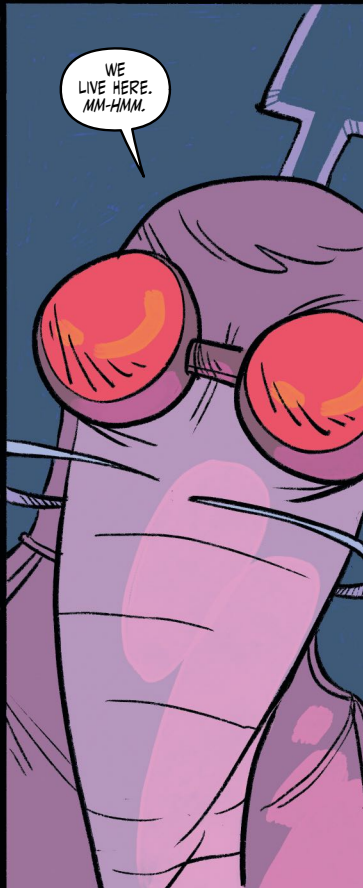
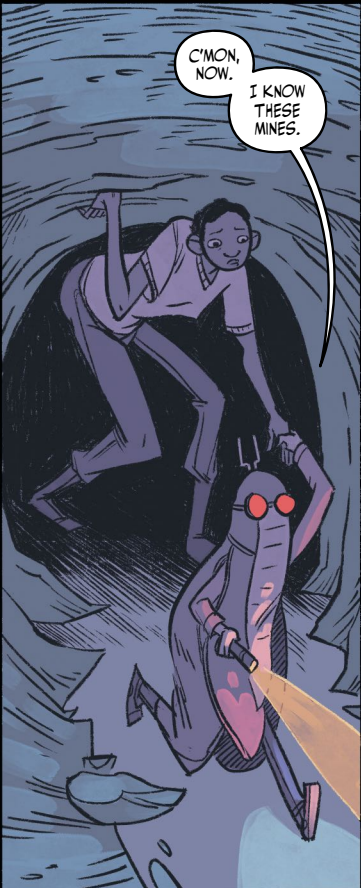
YOOOUII...

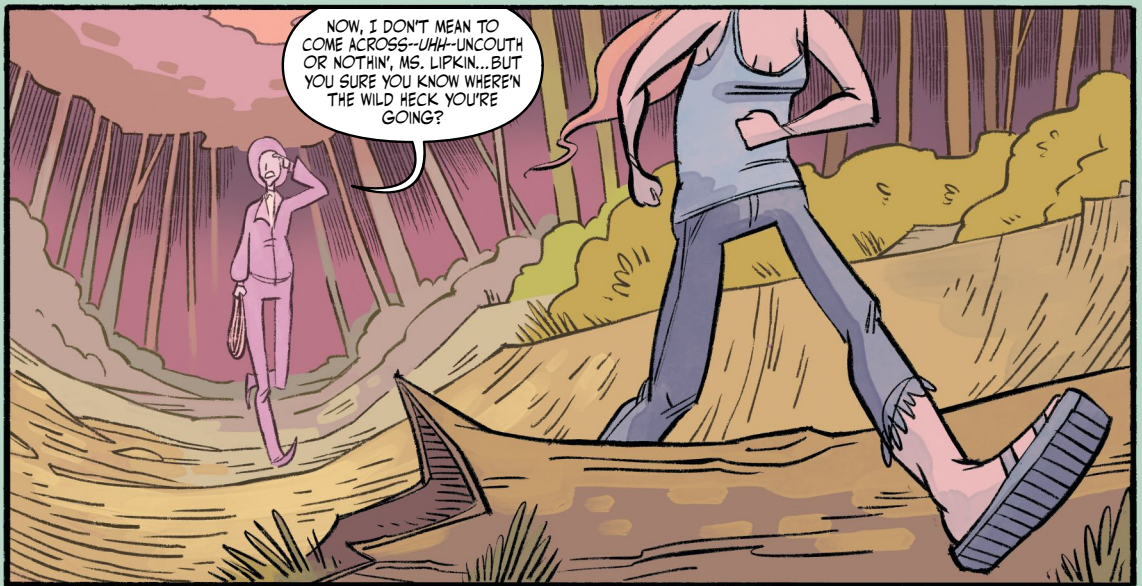


...H-HELP..
ABELL...

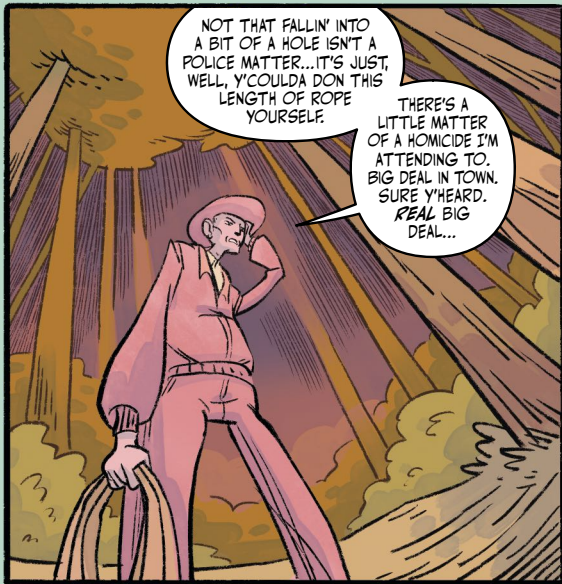






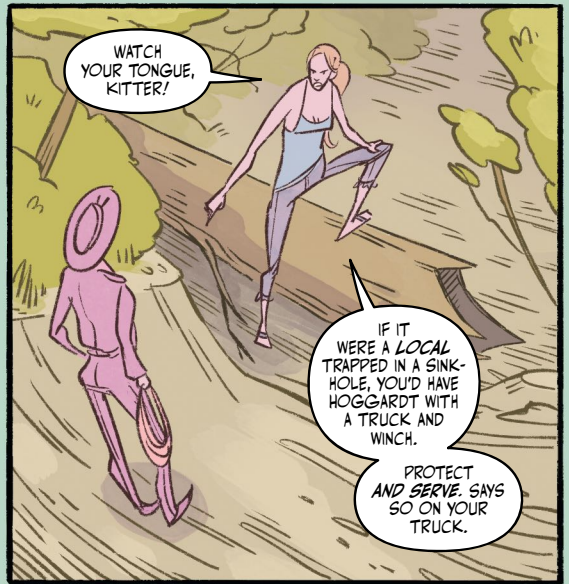


NOW, I DON'T MEAN TO COME ACROSS--UHH--UNCOUTH OR NOTHIN', MS. LIPKIN...BUT YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHERE THE WILD HECK YOU'RE GOING?



NOT THAT FALLIN' INTO A BIT OF A HOLE ISN'T A POLICE MATTER...IT'S JUST, WELL, Y'COULDA DON THIS LENGTH OF ROPE YOURSELF.

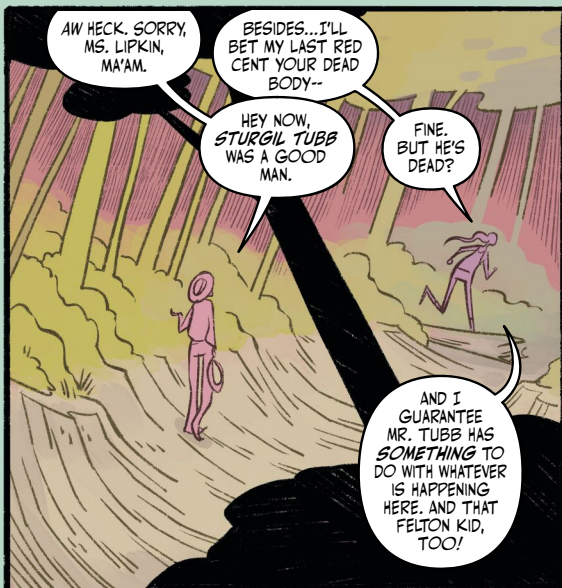
THERE'S A LITTLE MATTER OF A HOMICIDE I'M ATTENDING TO. BIG DEAL IN TOWN. SURE Y'HEARD. REAL BIG DEAL...



WATCH YOUR TONGUE, KITTER!

IF IT WERE A LOCAL TRAPPED IN A SINK-HOLE, YOU'D HAVE HOGGARDT WITH A TRUCK AND WINCH.

PROTECT AND SERVE. SAYS SO ON YOUR TRUCK.



AW HECK. SORRY, MS. LIPKIN, MA'AM.

BESIDES...I'LL BET MY LAST RED CENT YOUR DEAD BODY--

HEY NOW, STURGIL TUBB WAS A GOOD MAN.

FINE. BUT HE'S DEAD?

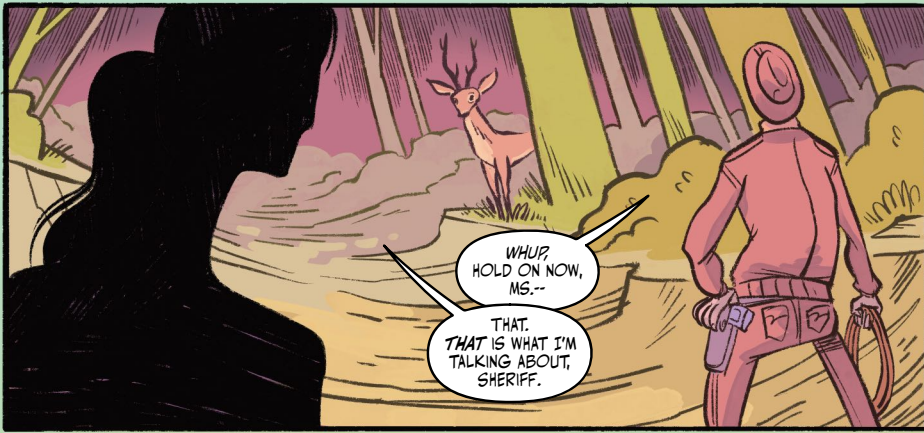
AND I GUARANTEE MR. TUBB HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHATEVER IS HAPPENING HERE. AND THAT FELTON KID, TOO!



PPFFT. BRANDON FELTON?

AND OL' STURGIL DIDN'T FALL IN NO DING-DANG SINKHOLE.

POOR GUY'S FACE LOOKED LIKE A RUN-OVER MOP. IF Y'ASK ME, I THINK--



WHUP?
HOLD ON NOW,
MS.--

THAT.
THAT IS WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT,
SHERIFF.



IT
ATTACKED
US.

ONE OF
'EM CAME
AT ME,
TOO.

WEEHHHH



MUST BE
IN HEAT OR
SOMETHING.

NUH-UH,
I'M TELLING YOU,
IT'S THE SAME
ONE.

NAW,
I SHOT
THE ONE
THAT--

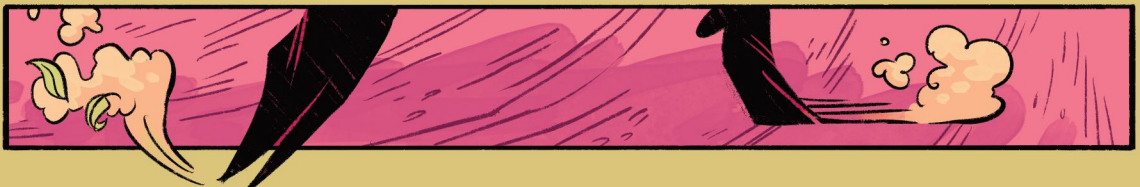
WEEHHHH



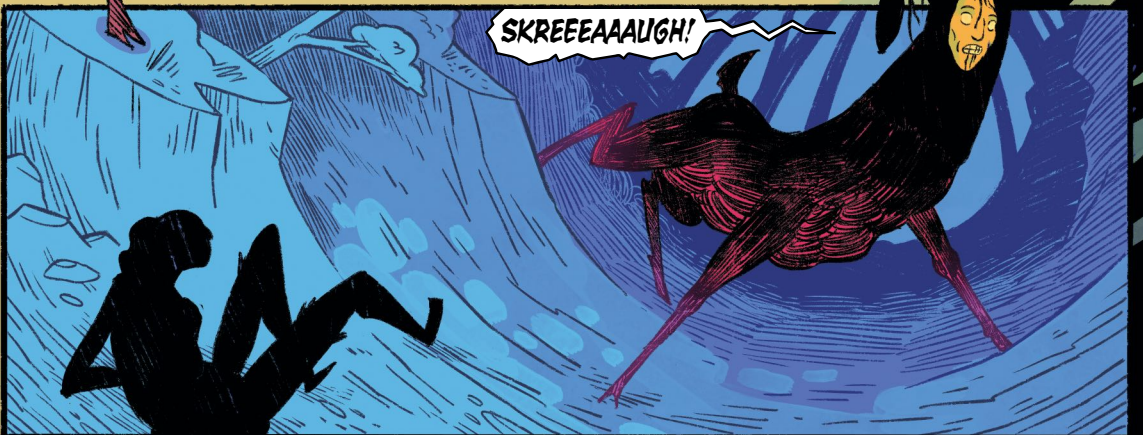
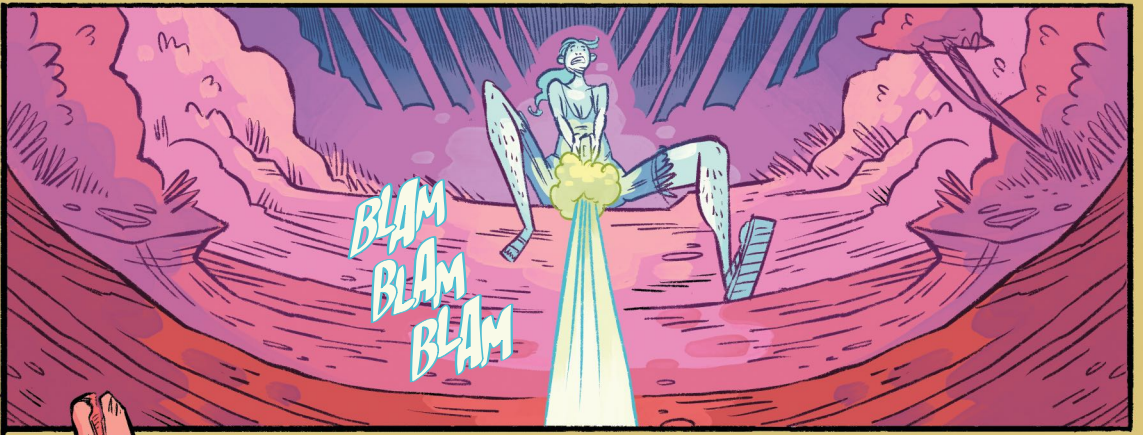
SKRAWW!



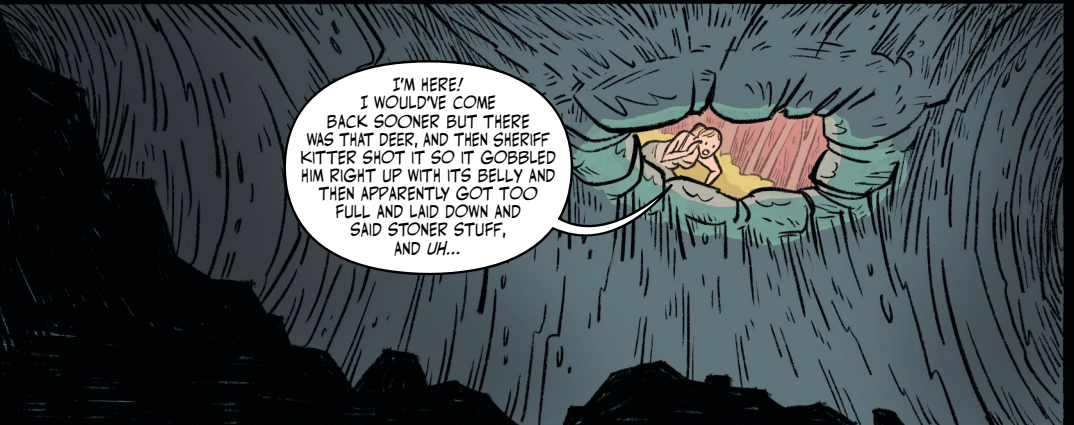
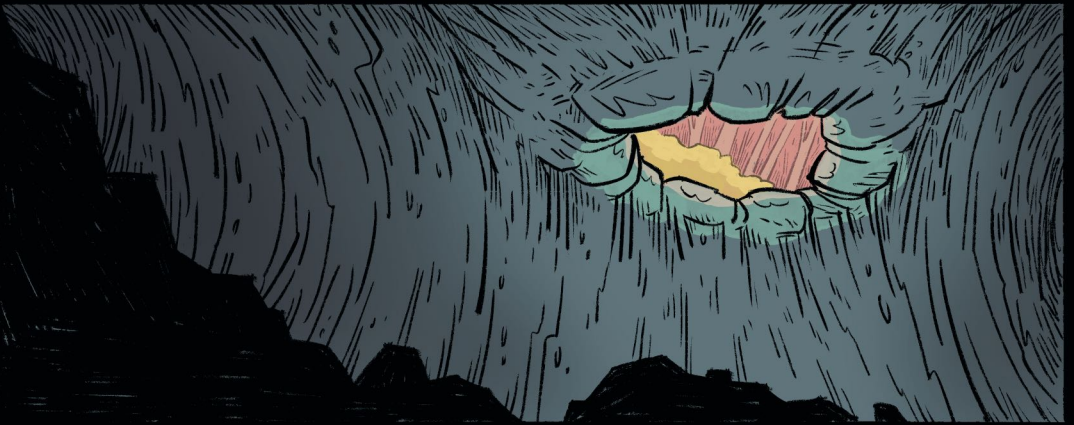
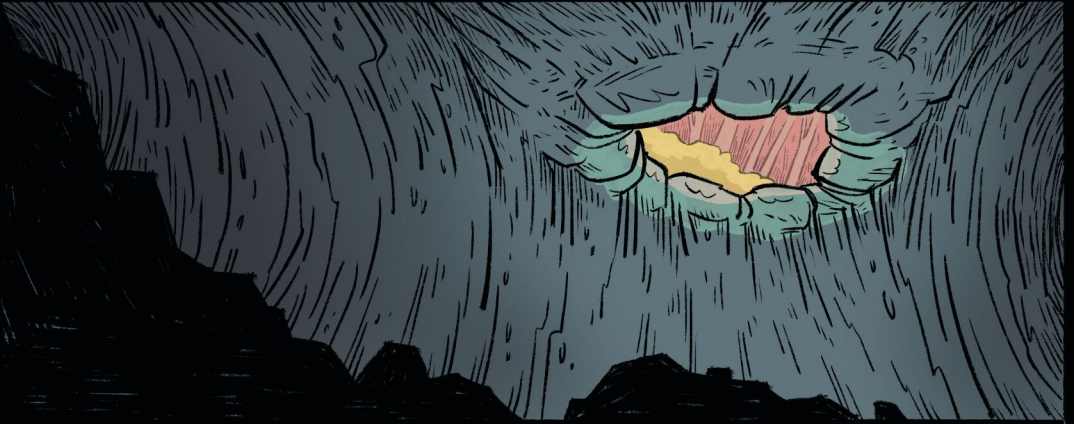
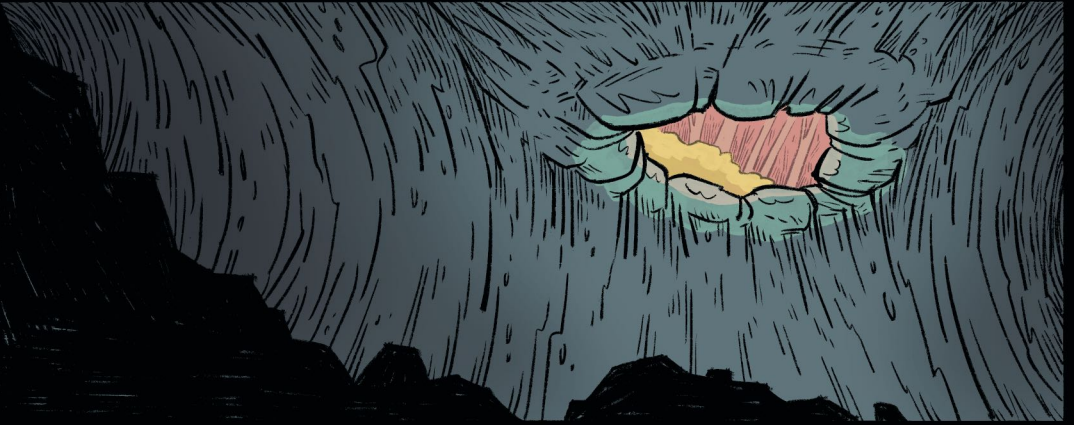
CAT
CAT
CAT!



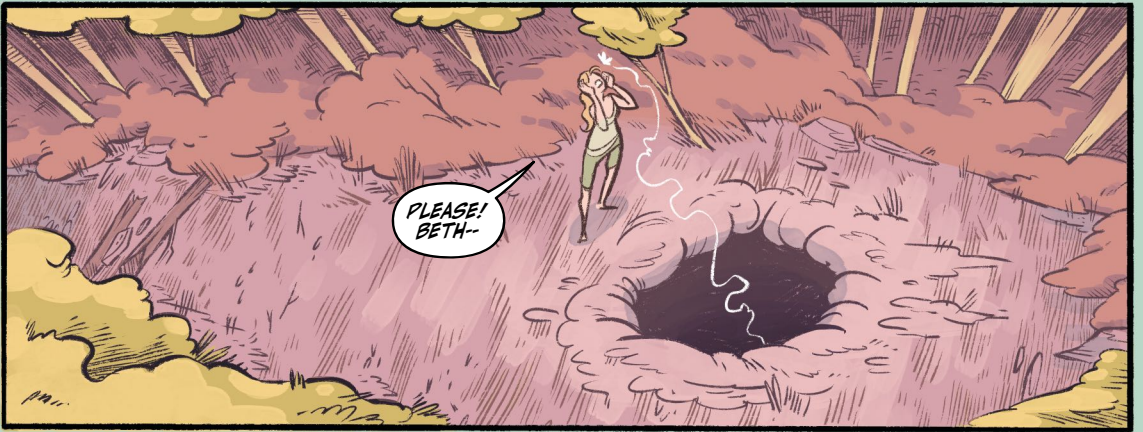
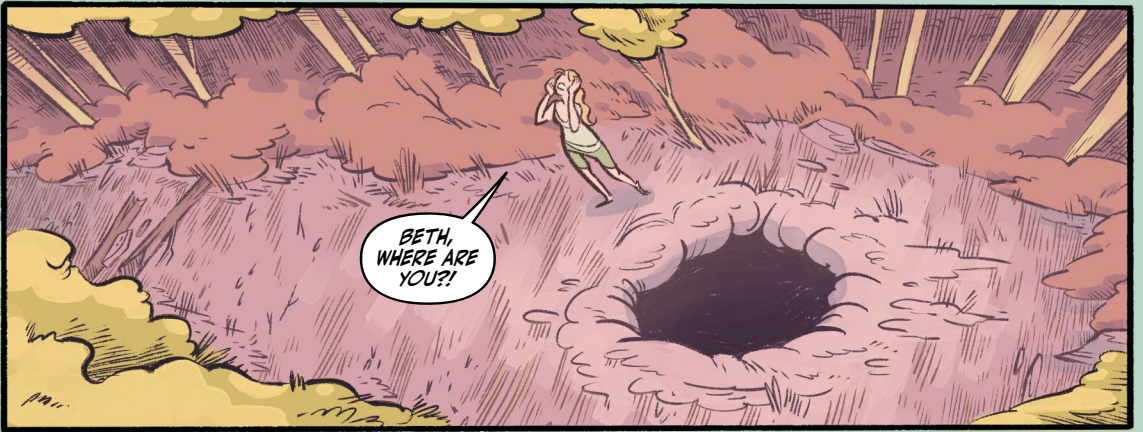
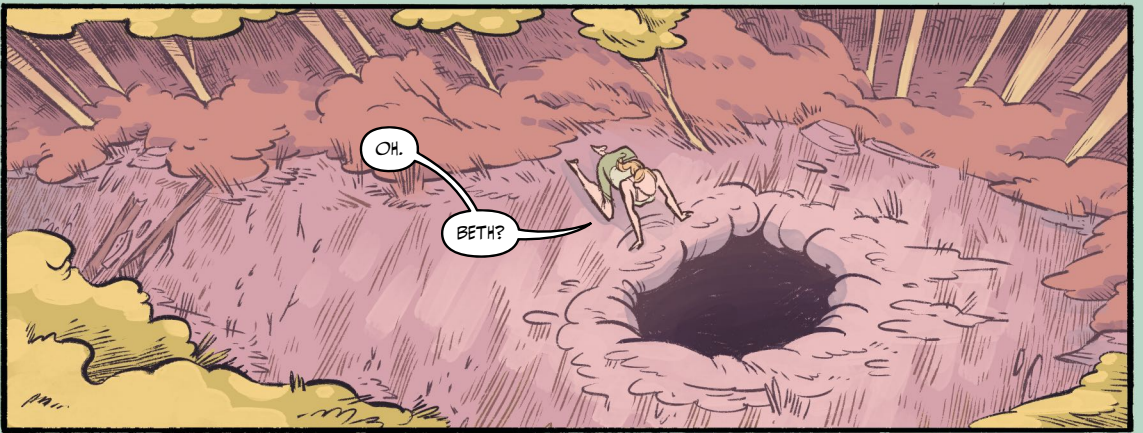
WEEHHHH

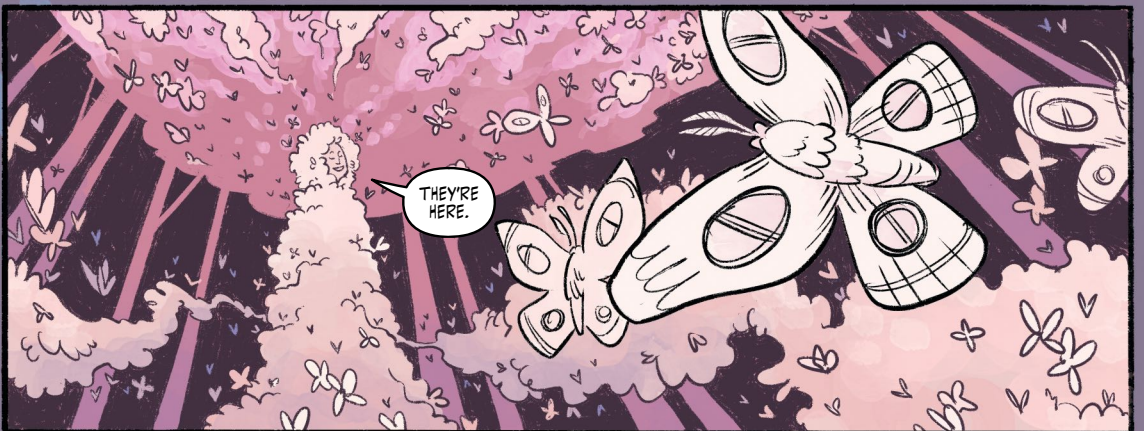
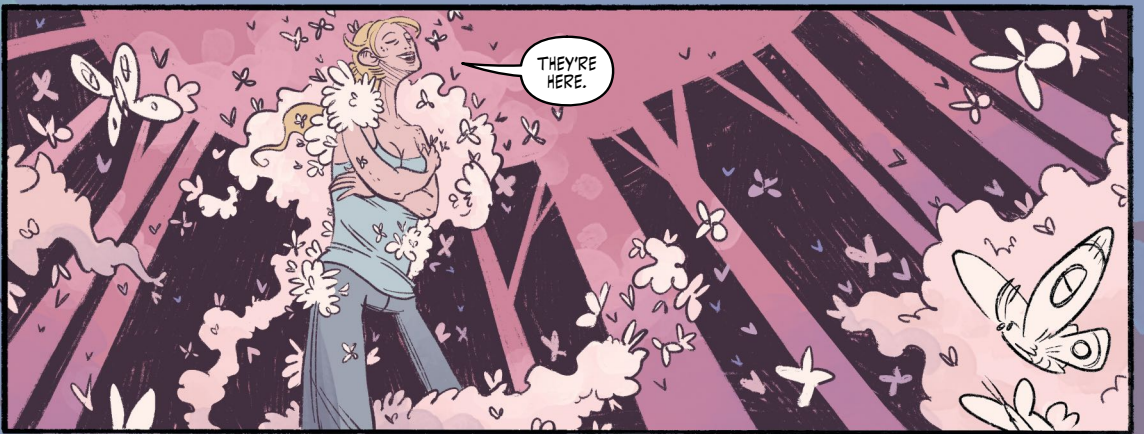
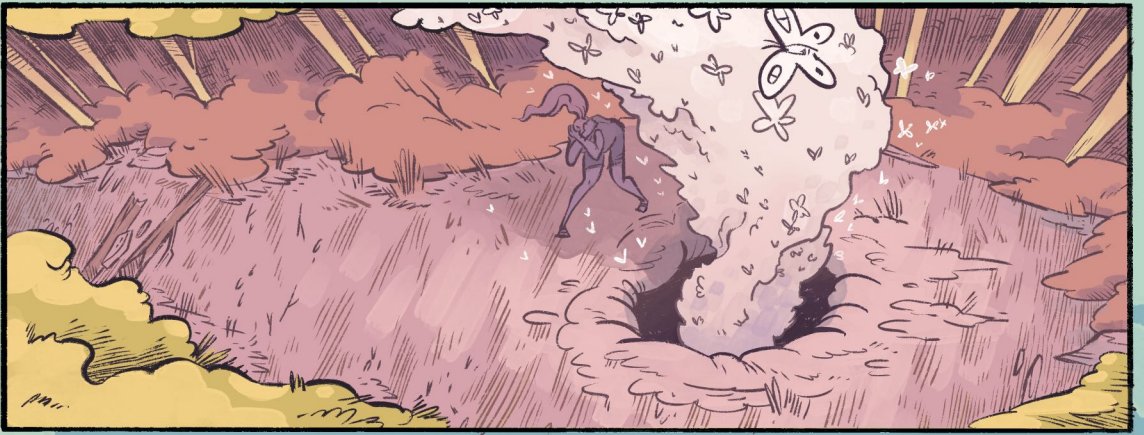


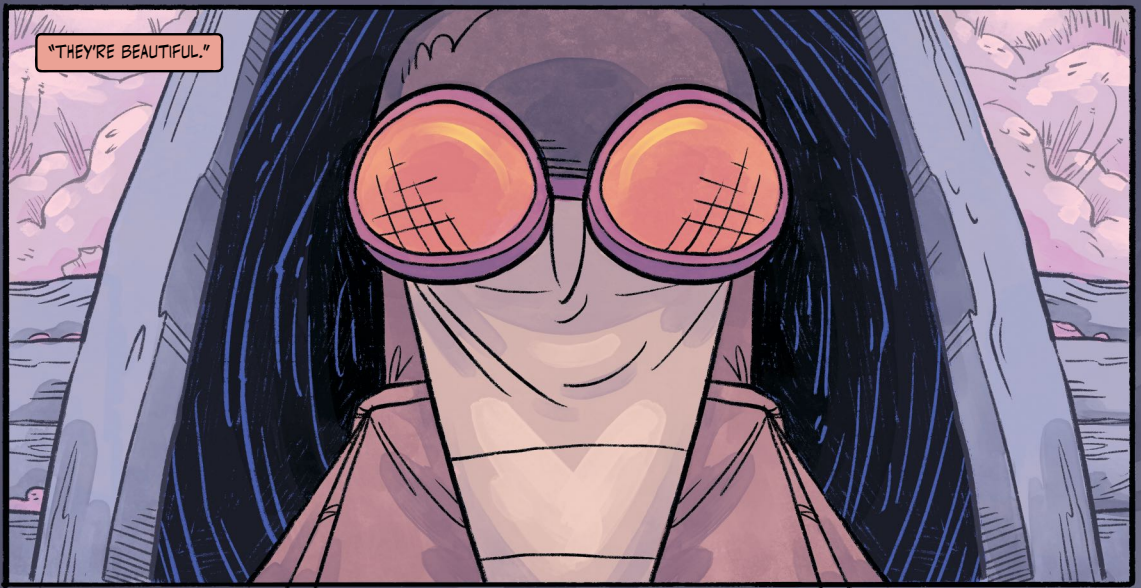




I'M HERE!
I WOULD'VE COME
BACK SOONER BUT THERE
WAS THAT DEER, AND THEN SHERIFF
KITTER SHOT IT SO IT GOBBLED
HIM RIGHT UP WITH ITS BELLY AND
THEN APPARENTLY GOT TOO
FULL AND LAID DOWN AND
SAID STONER STUFF,
AND UH...







"THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL."



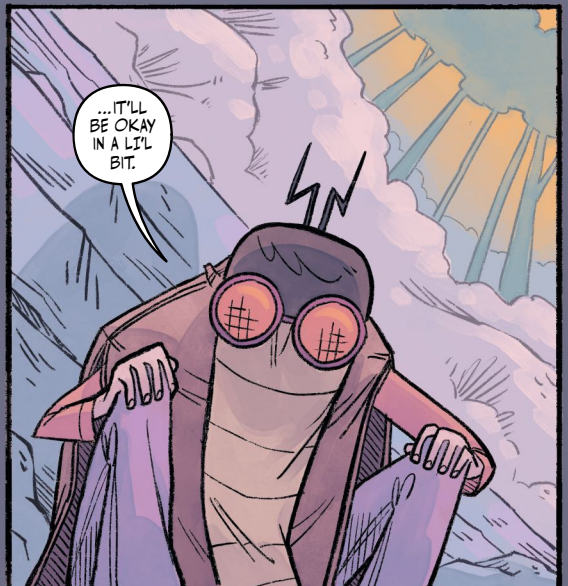
THIS ONE IS A DEAD END. BETTER ONE IS DOWN THE HILL FROM HERE.



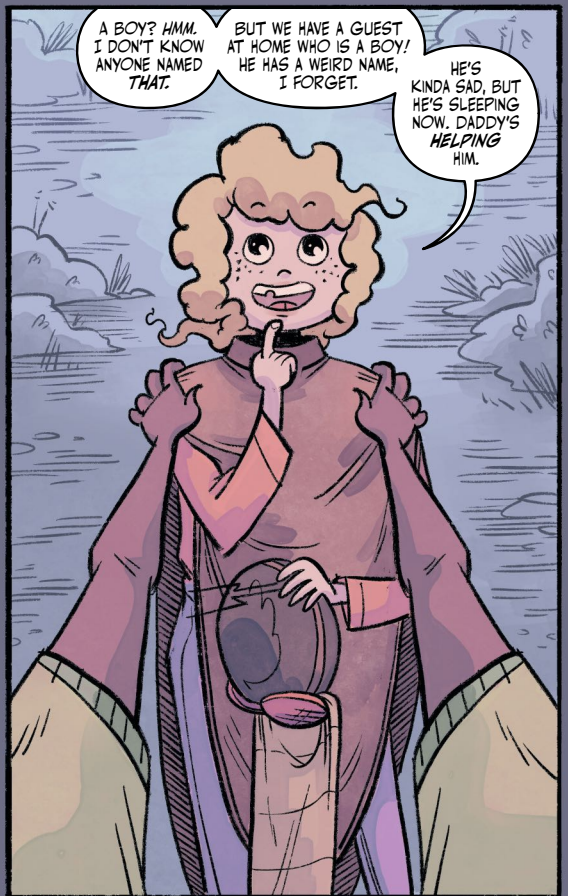
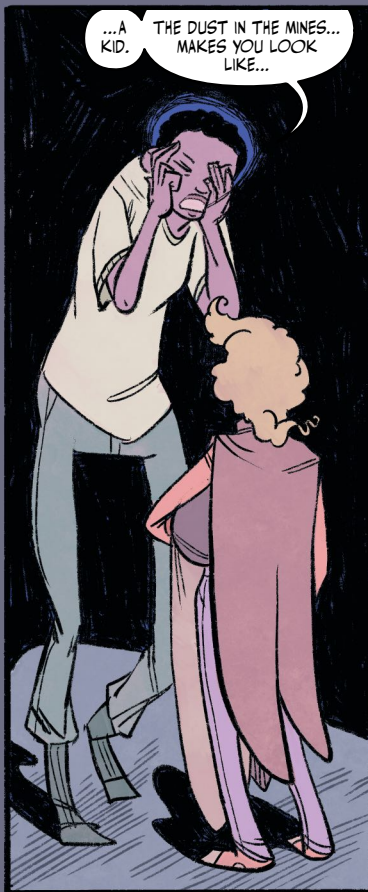
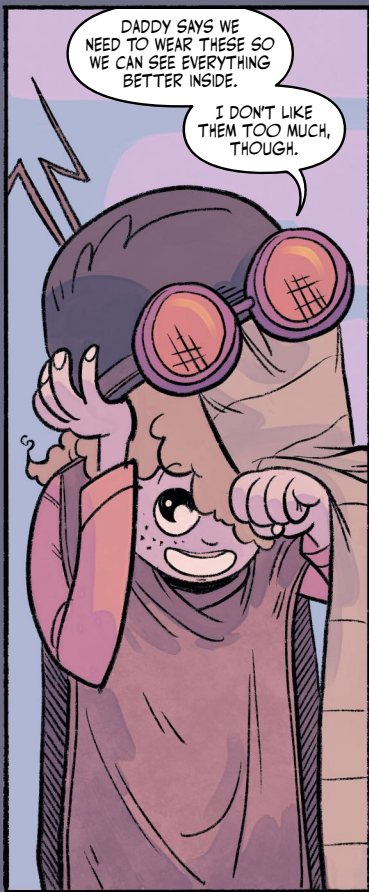
YOU... YOU'RE...
...UGH-THE DRUGS...

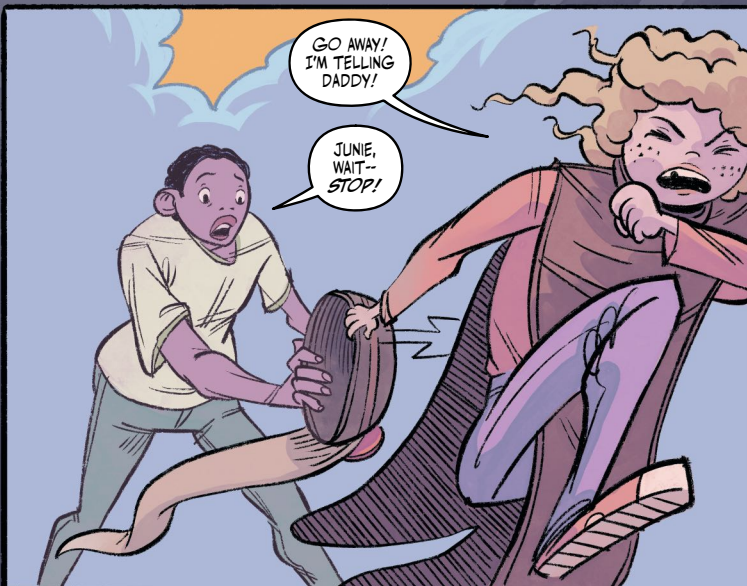


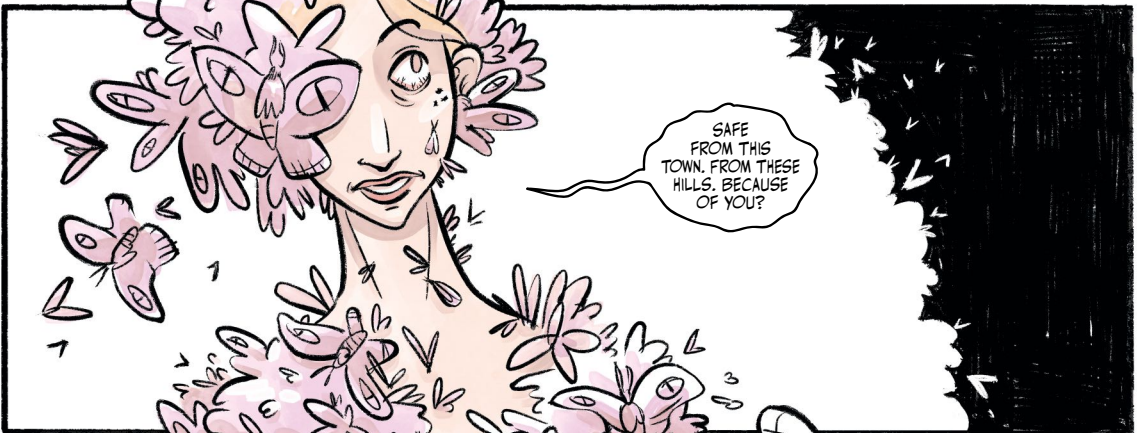
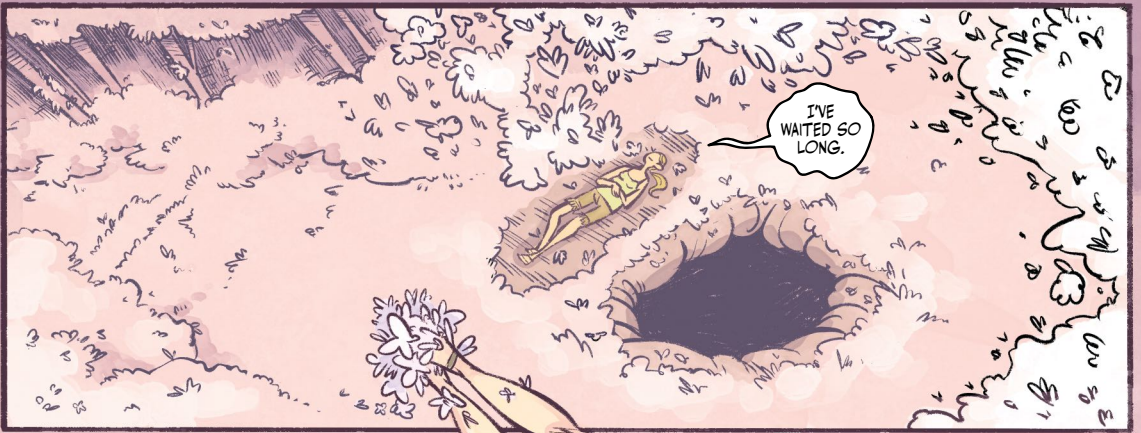
OH, YUP. THE MINES MAKE YOU DIZZY...



...IT'LL BE OKAY IN A LIL BIT.







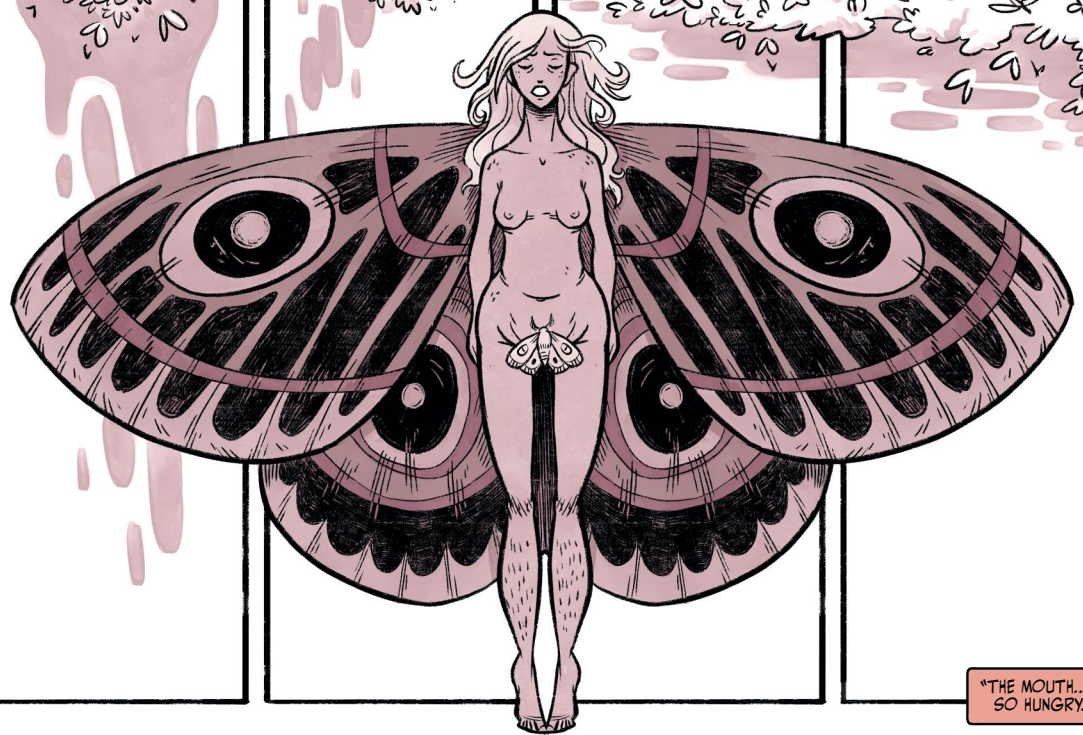
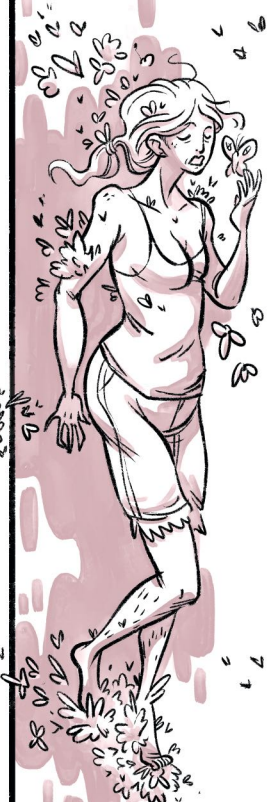
"I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW SO CLEAR."

"SILK HILLS IS ALIVE. THE MOTHS ARE HOW IT FEELS."

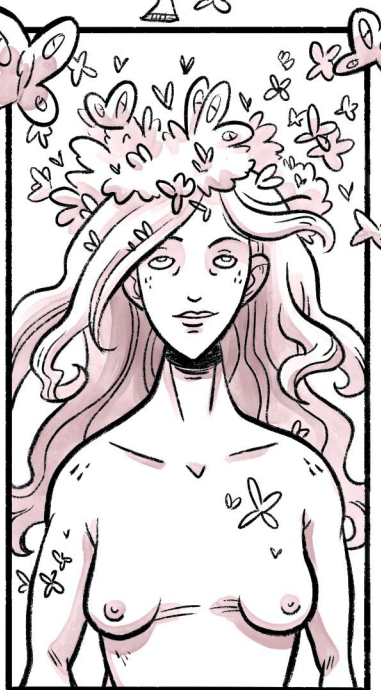
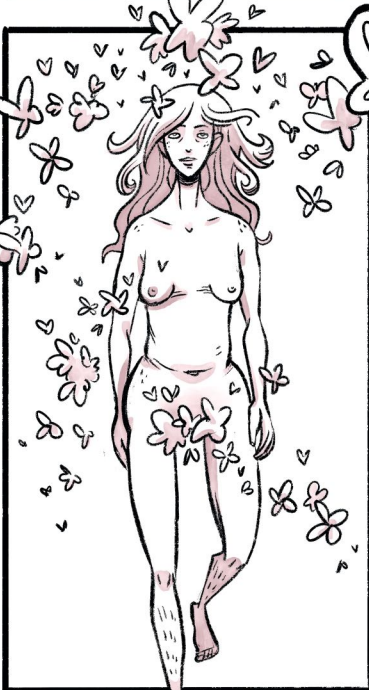
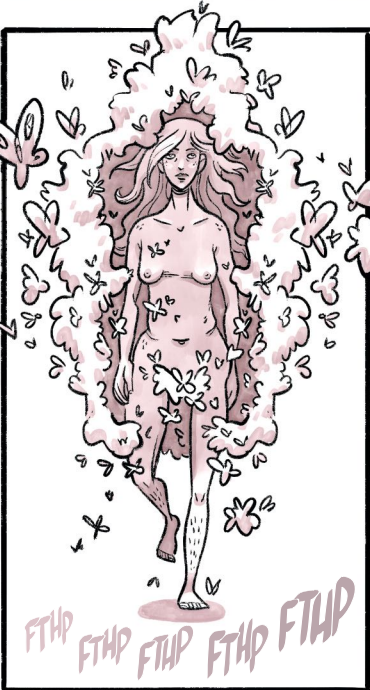
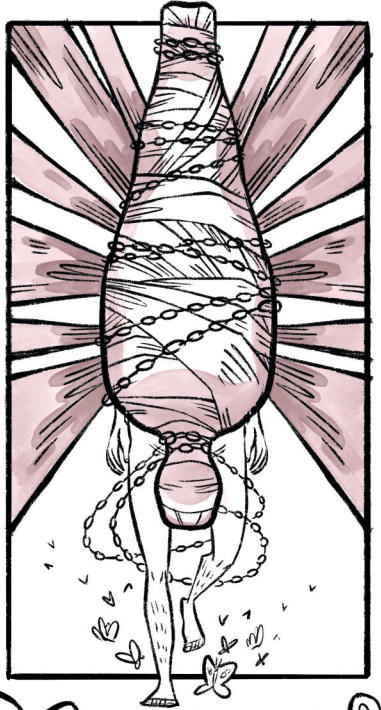
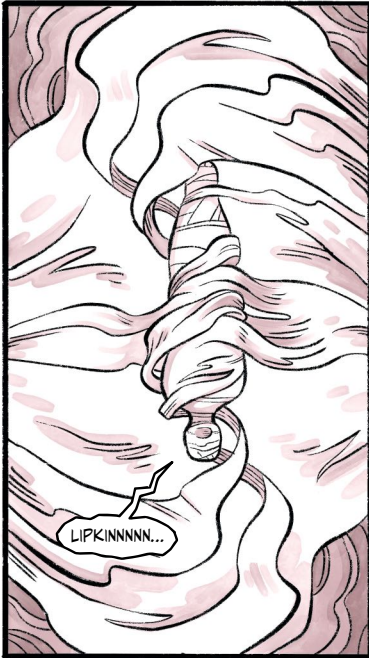
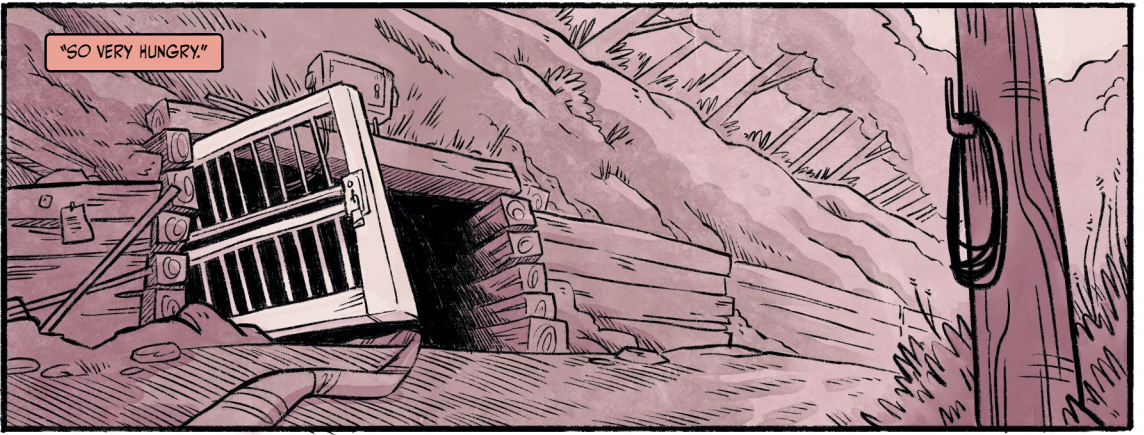
"A BODY..."

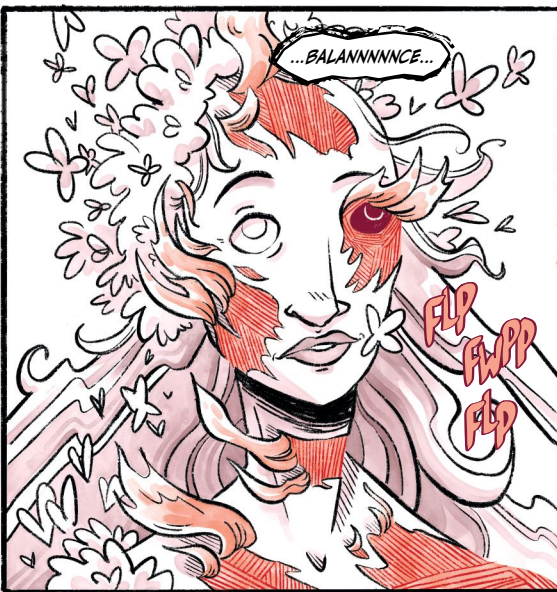
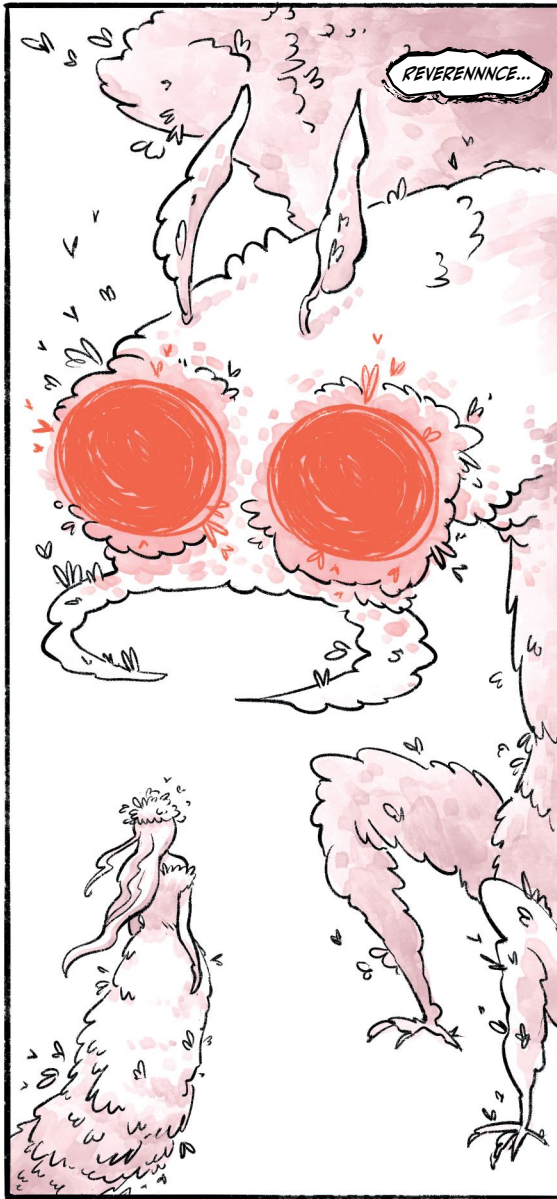
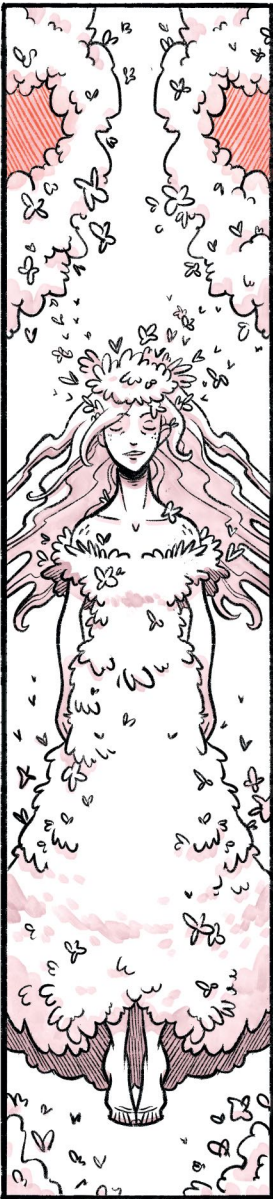
"IT KEEPS SUCH A DELICATE BALANCE..."

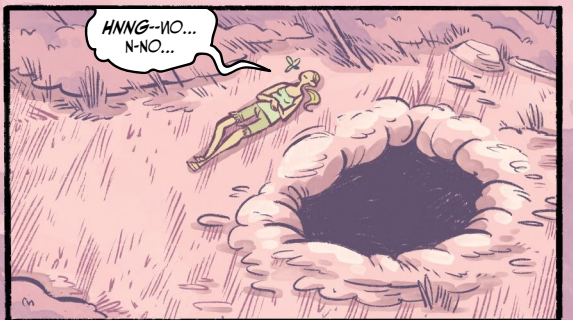
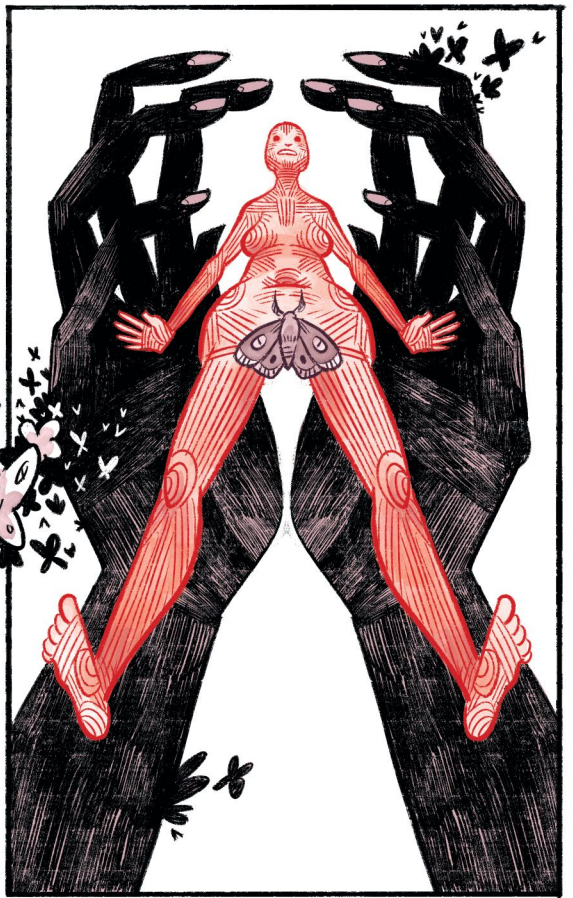
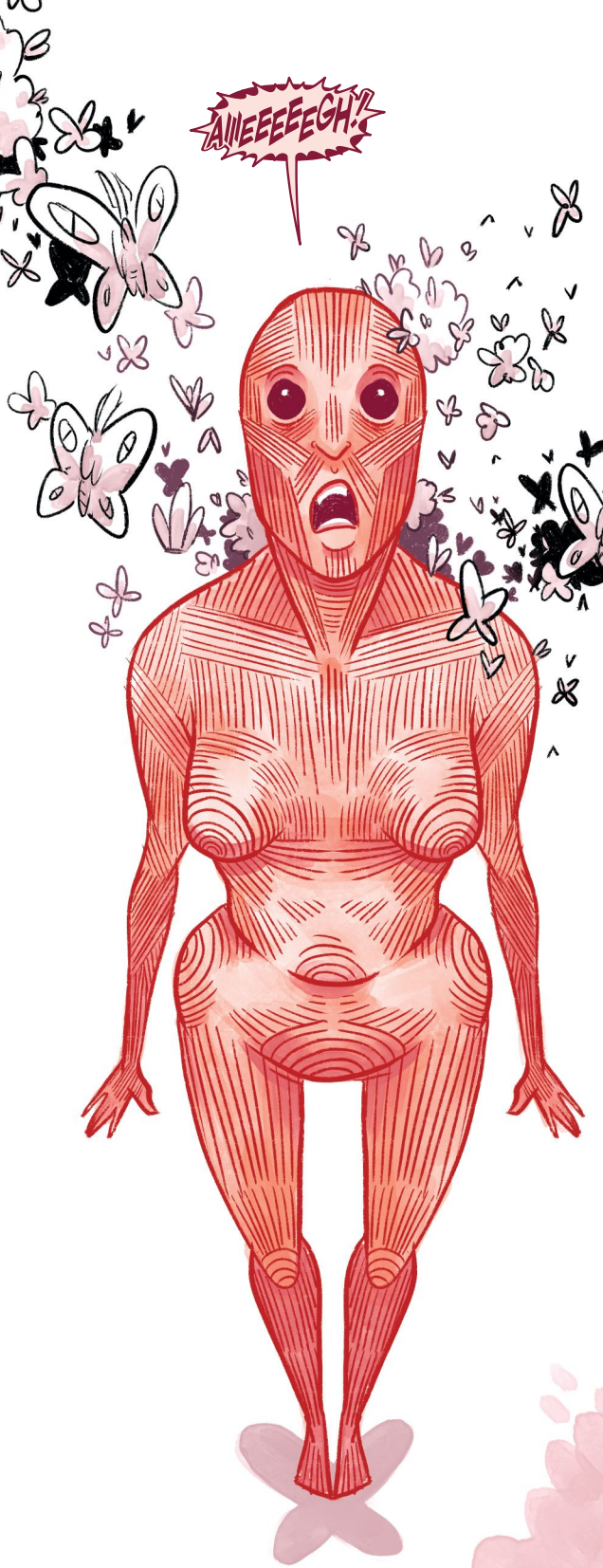
"WE... WE'RE JUST THE FOOD."



"THE MOUTH... IT'S SO HUNGRY..."











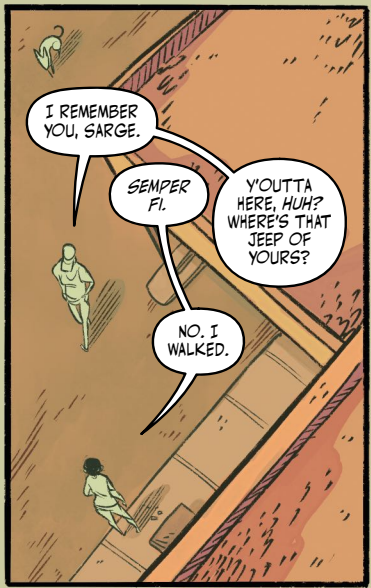
NOT MUCH OF A FAIR FIGHT, IFN YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR ONE.

OH, OH MY GOD, I'M SO SORRY, I'LL PAY FOR--



PFFFT--DON'T GIVE TWO SHITS. AIN'T NO ONE USIN' THAT THING MAYBE BUT ONCE A YEAR. EVEN THEN PROBABLY JUST TO DO CRIMES.

HELL, USED'TA BUST HER OPEN BACK IN THE DAY MYSELF. GOVERNMENT CASH TRAP, IF YOU ASK ME.



I REMEMBER YOU, SARGE.

SEMPER FI

'YOU'TTA HERE, HUH? WHERE'S THAT JEEP OF YOURS?

NO, I WALKED.



HUH. EXCITING STAY?

MAYBE.

I HEAR YA.



C'MON IN THE SHOP. DON'T WANT NO PHONE POLICE CATCHIN' YOU ALL RED-HANDED.

THANKS, UHH--

DERICK.



I'M BETH.

GOOD TO MEET YOU PROPER.

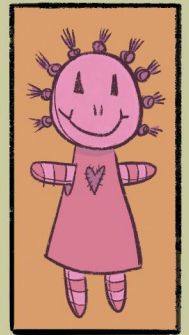
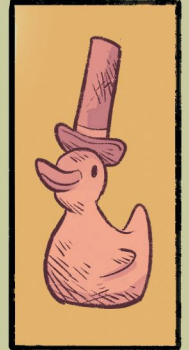
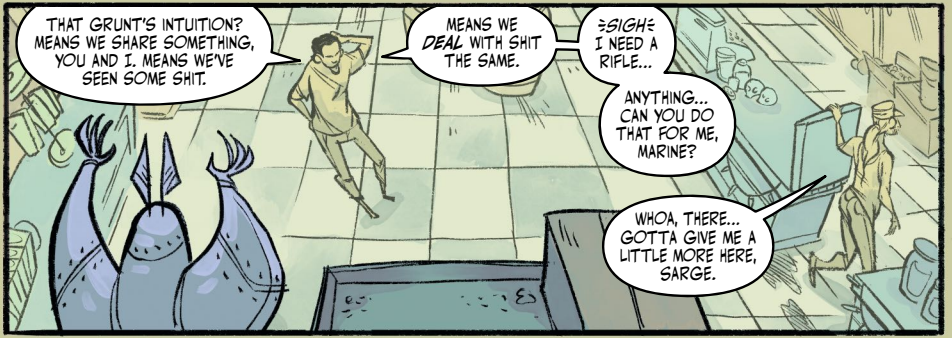
LOOK, I HATE TO EVEN SAY THIS, BUT...I'M...LAST TIME A GUY TRIED ANYTHING...

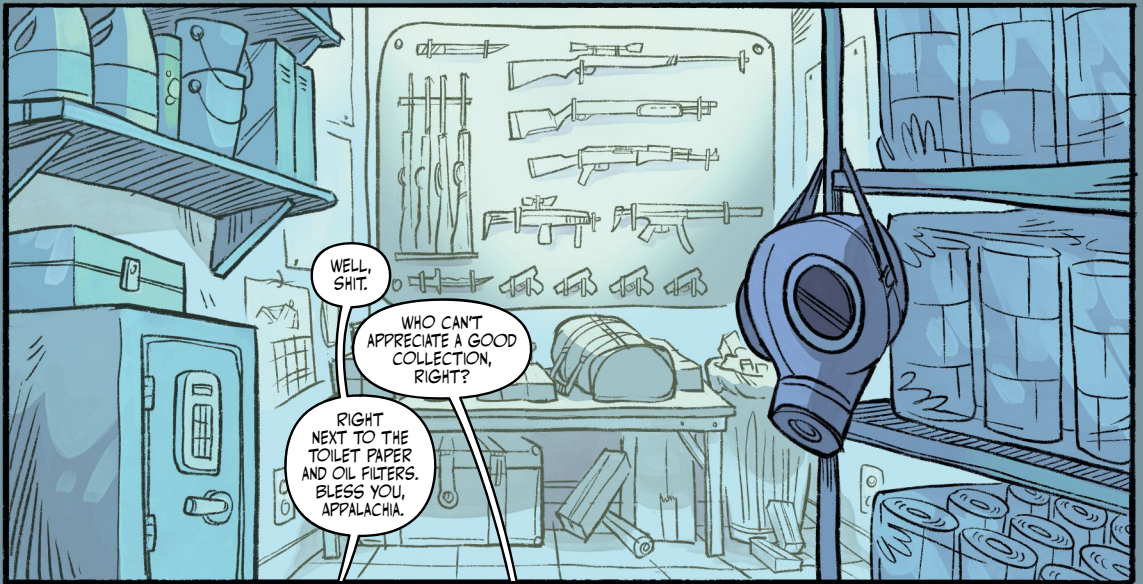
HA.



SAY NO MORE, NOT LIKE THAT, YOU'RE FINE.

CALL IT A GRUNT'S INTUITION.





WELL, SHIT.

WHO CAN'T APPRECIATE A GOOD COLLECTION, RIGHT?

RIGHT NEXT TO THE TOILET PAPER AND OIL FILTERS. BLESS YOU, APPALACHIA.



HONESTLY, I BEEN LOOKIN' TO GET RID'A SOME OF THESE FOR A WHILE NOW. THEY'RE... UNDOCUMENTED, SEE?

NOT LIKE IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. WONT GIVE IT OUT TO JUST ANYONE, THOUGH.

THAT'S THE PROBLEM. 'SPECIALLY IN THE HILLS.



HARD TO FIND FOLKS TO TRUST 'ROUND HERE, Y'KNOW?

YOU ENLISTED, SARGE. YOU GET IT.



SURE.

LISTEN, I DONT KNOW IF I CAN PAY YOU FOR ALL--

I'M NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF DEALIN' FIREARMS, BETH.



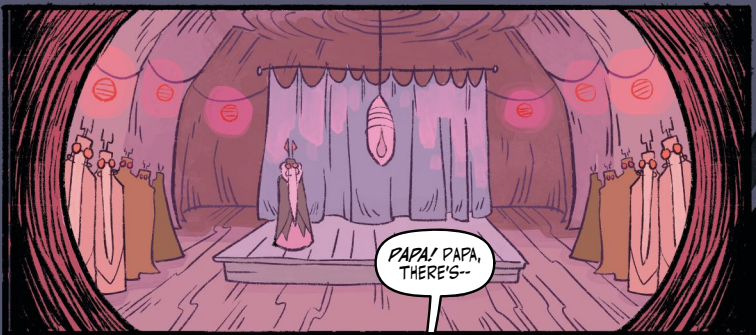
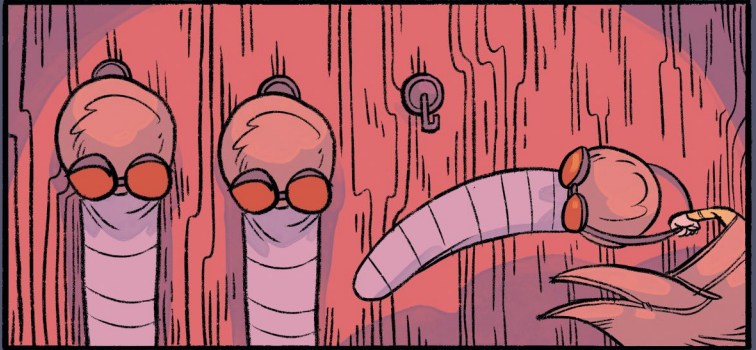
YOU'RE FIXIN' TO DO SOMETHIN' BAD. AND KNOWIN' SILK HILLS, I TRUST THAT BAD SOMETHING IS WELL-DESERVED.

WAY I SEE IT, IT EVENS OUT...

"...BUT ONCE YOU DO WHAT YOU ARE FIXIN', KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T BE PART OF SILK HILLS NO MORE."



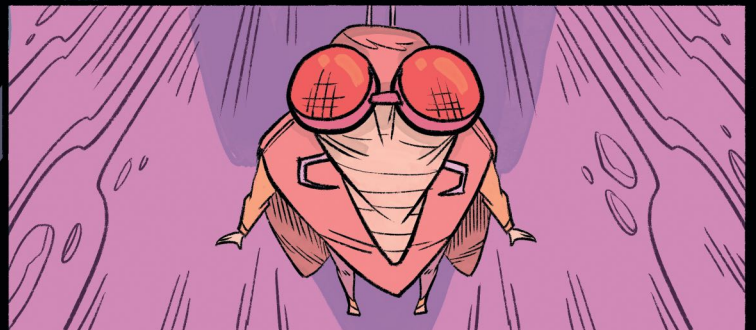
"I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT TO BE. DON'T THINK SILK HILLS WANTS ME, EITHER."

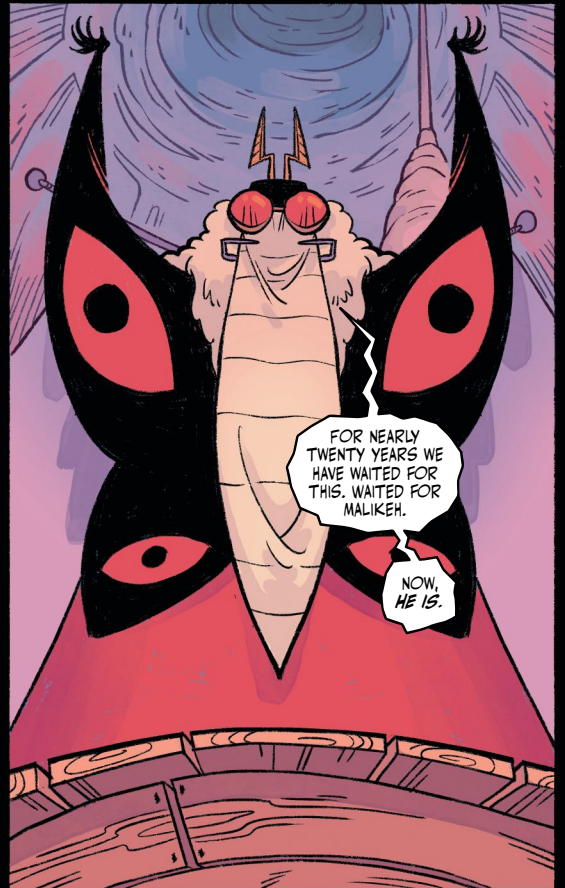
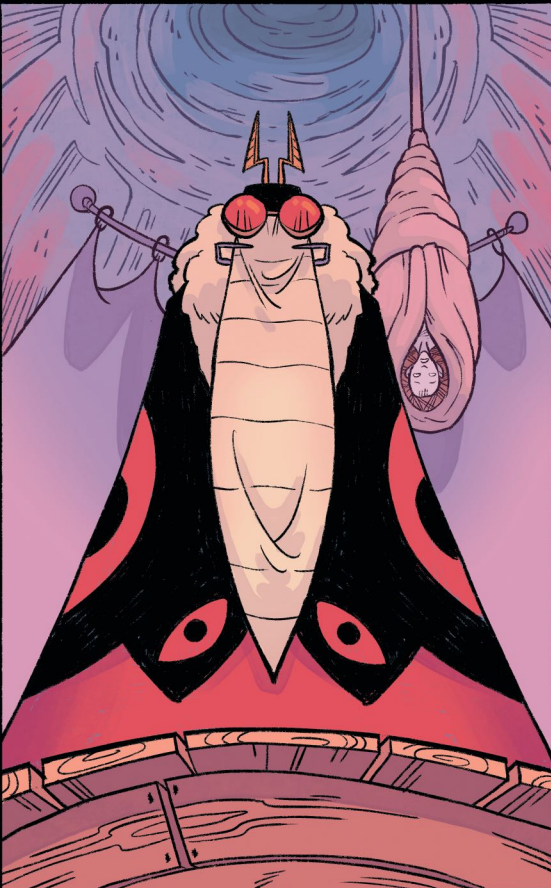
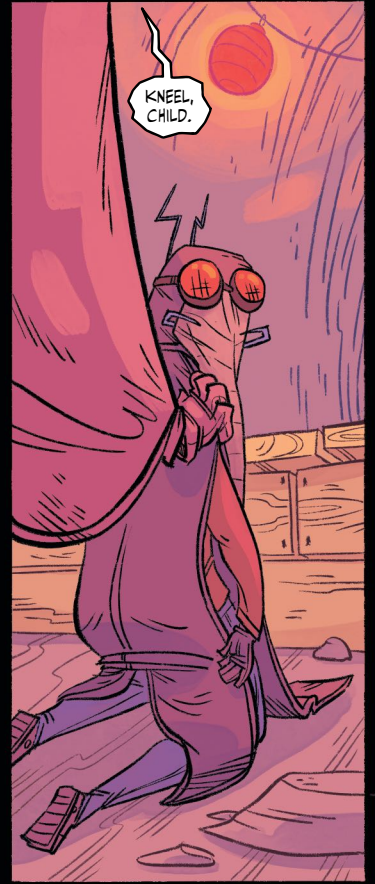


PAPA! PAPA, THERE'S--



"THIS TOWN HAS A HARD TIME FORGETTIN' THINGS, SEE. EVEN HARDER FORGIN'."

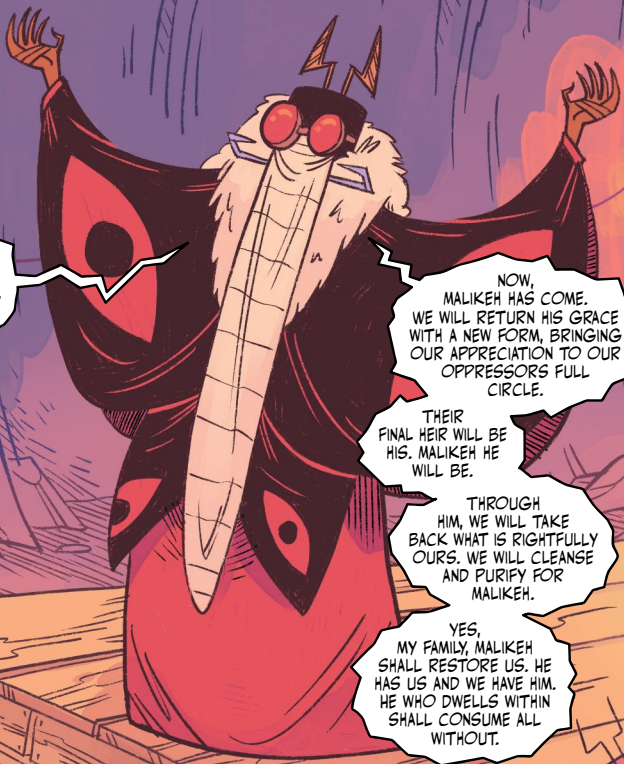




WE WERE
DRIVEN OUT OF
OUR HOMES BY GREED.
BY POWER. WE WERE
SHAMED. LEFT TO BE
DESTITUTE. IN SPITE OF
SUCH ATROCITIES, WE
LIVED ON. WE SURVIVED.
FOUND A GREATER
CALLING.

A TRUE
PURPOSE.

THOSE WITH
THE POWER KNEW NOTHING.
BANISHMENT WAS OUR BIRTHRIGHT.
A GIFT FROM HE WHO DWELLS WITHIN.
THOSE WHO TRIED TO BURY US ONLY
GUIDED US FURTHER TO HIS
WILL, AND HIS GREAT
EXHUMATION.

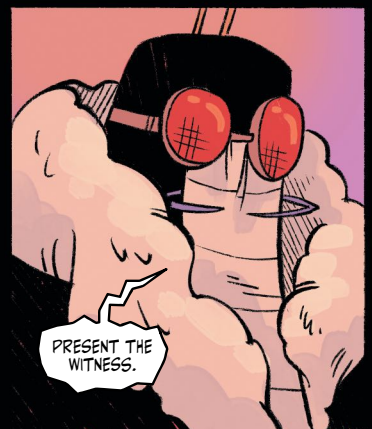
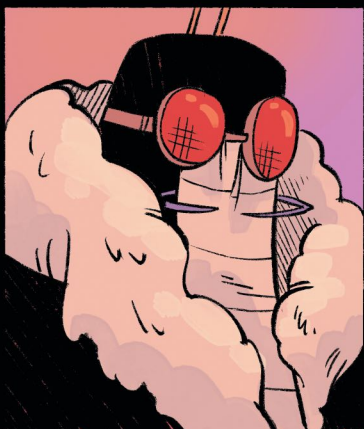
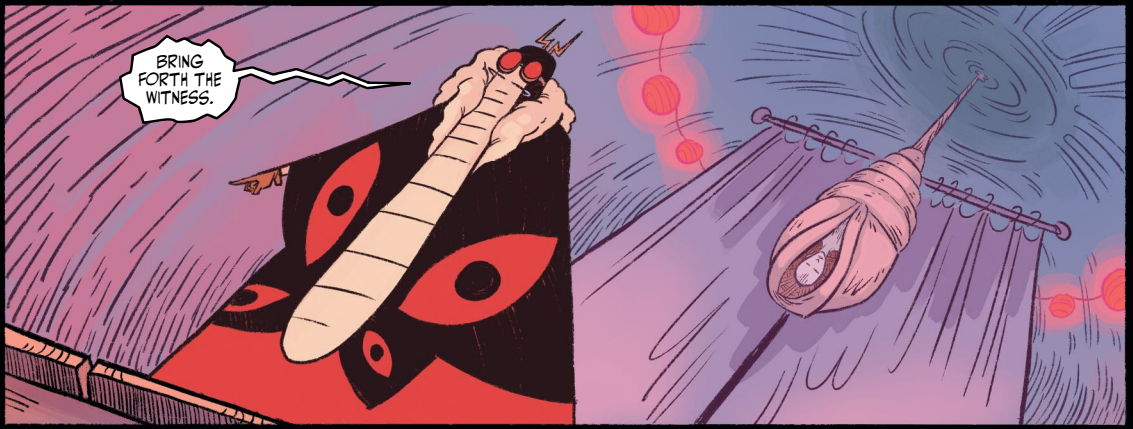


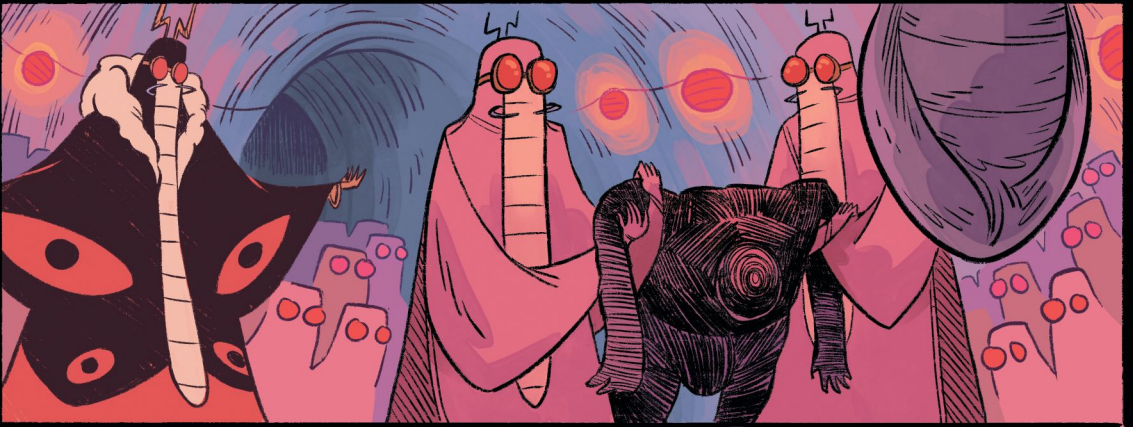
NOW,
MALIKEH HAS COME.
WE WILL RETURN HIS GRACE
WITH A NEW FORM, BRINGING
OUR APPRECIATION TO OUR
OPPRESSORS FULL
CIRCLE.

THEIR
FINAL HEIR WILL BE
HIS. MALIKEH HE
WILL BE.

THROUGH
HIM, WE WILL TAKE
BACK WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY
OURS. WE WILL CLEANSE
AND PURIFY FOR
MALIKEH.

YES,
MY FAMILY, MALIKEH
SHALL RESTORE US. HE
HAS US AND WE HAVE HIM.
HE WHO DWELLS WITHIN
SHALL CONSUME ALL
WITHOUT.



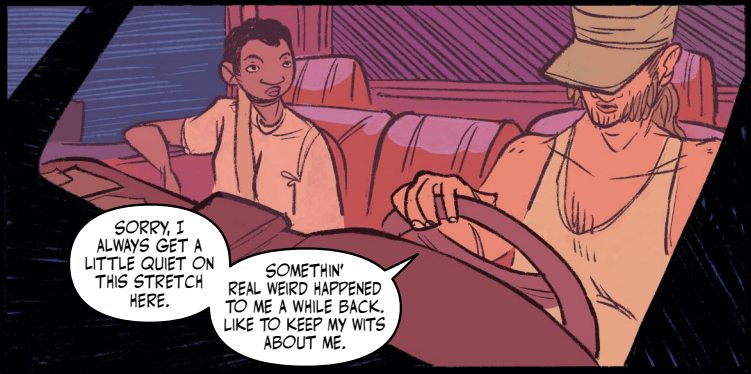




THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. YOU CAN DROP ME OFF JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN, THOUGH. I DON'T WANT TO GET YOU...INVOLVED IN ANYTHING.

...

MM-HMM.



SORRY, I ALWAYS GET A LITTLE QUIET ON THIS STRETCH HERE.

SOMETHIN' REAL WEIRD HAPPENED TO ME A WHILE BACK. LIKE TO KEEP MY WITS ABOUT ME.



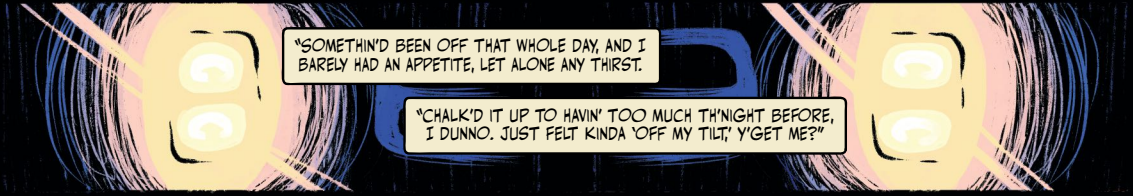
WHAT KIND OF WEIRD?



HA. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME. BUT I'LL BITE.

IT WAS A FEW YEARS AGO NOW. HAD A NIGHT OUT WITH SOME OL' ARMY PALS CAME THROUGH ON A FISHERY TRIP.

NORMALLY'D TIE ONE ON TO THE POINT WHERE I COULDN'T DRIVE, BUT NOT THAT NIGHT, NO.



"SOMETHIN'D BEEN OFF THAT WHOLE DAY, AND I BARELY HAD AN APPETITE, LET ALONE ANY THIRST.

"CHALK'D IT UP TO HAVIN' TOO MUCH TH'NIGHT BEFORE, I DUNNO. JUST FELT KINDA 'OFF MY TILT,' Y'GET ME?"



YYEEAH.

SO I WAS JUST DRIVING HOME LATE THIS ONE NIGHT AND...

AND WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?



YOU EVER SEE
SOMETHING THAT
JUST **SCARES**
YOU?

NOT
LIKE NORMAL
SCARED.

SOMETHING
WORSE. SOMETHING
MAGICAL.



THERE.
IN THE GLOVE
BOX.

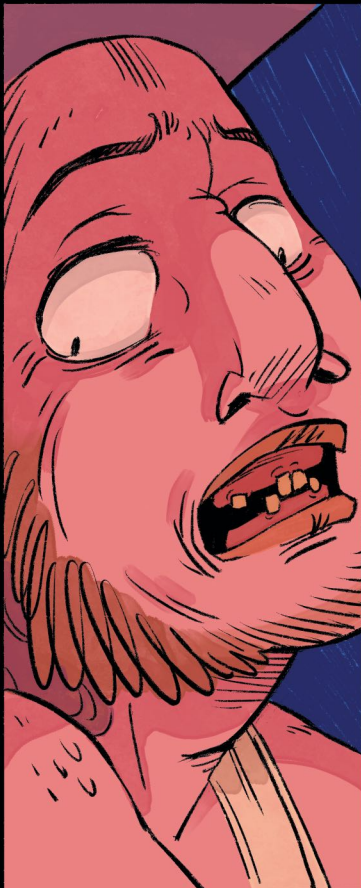


WHAT AM I
LOOKING--

YEAH.
THERE. SEE?
IT'S IN
THERE.



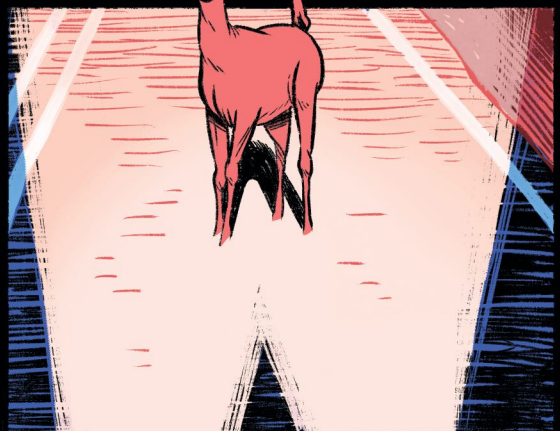
JESUS.



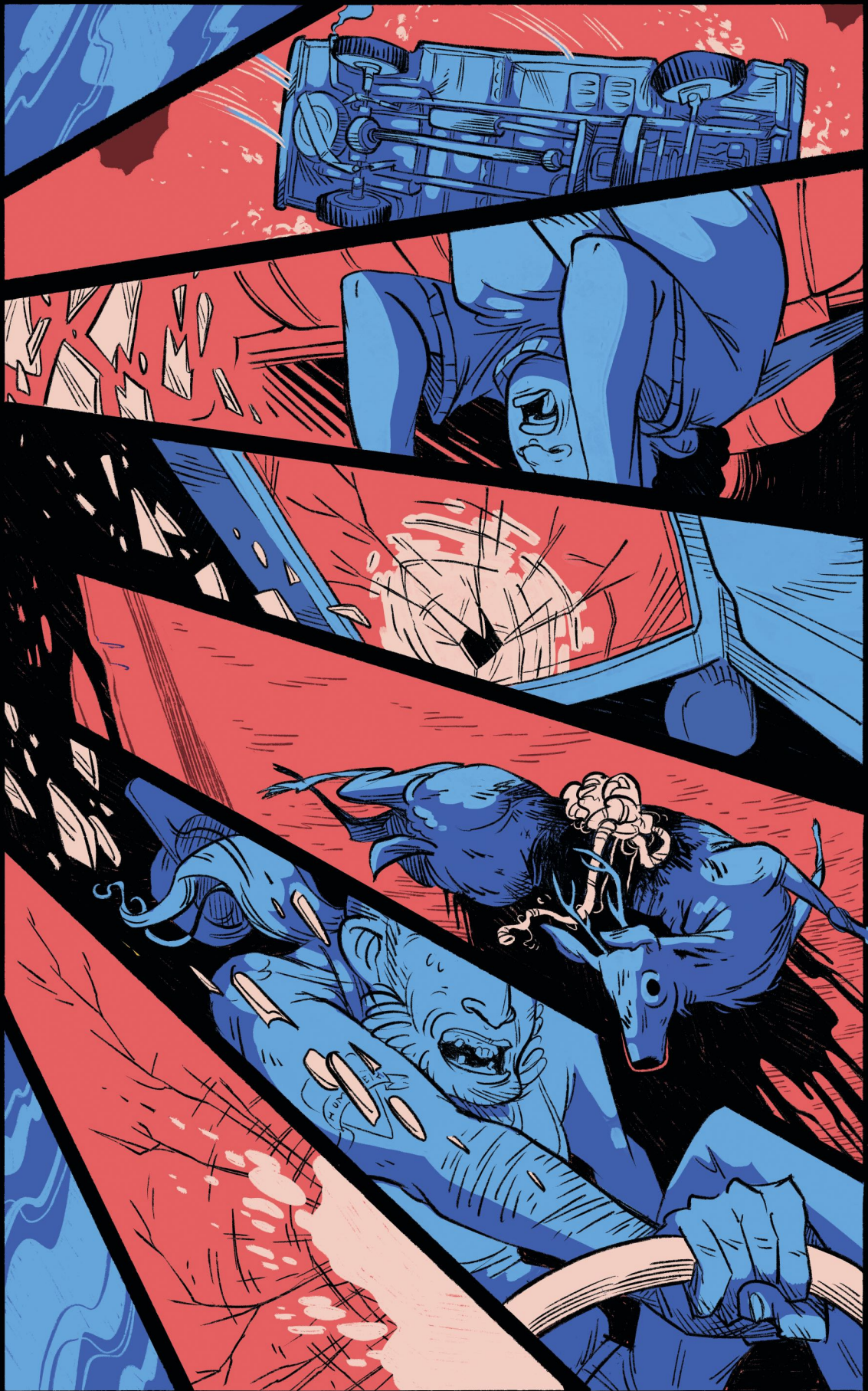
*COULD SEE IT DOWN THE
ROAD SO I STOPPED. DAMNED
THING DIDN'T MOVE.



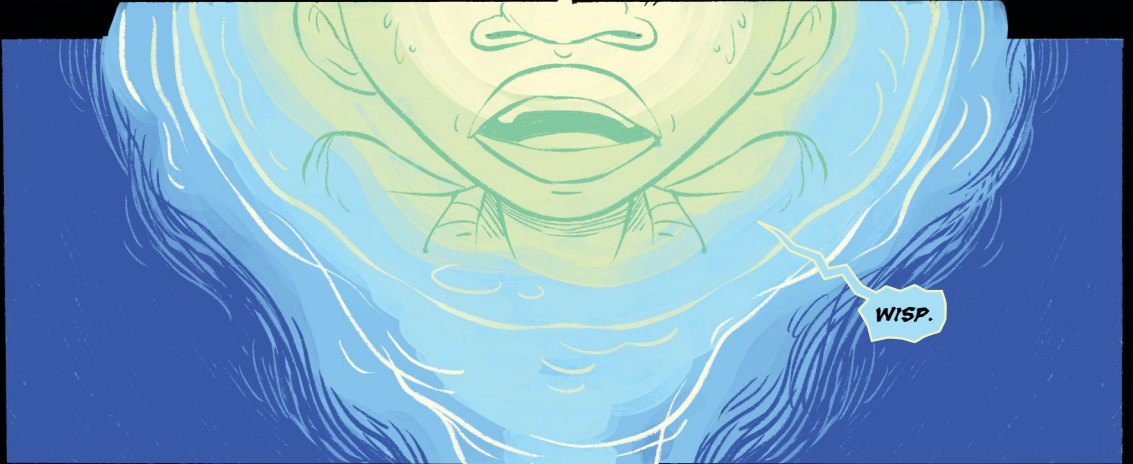
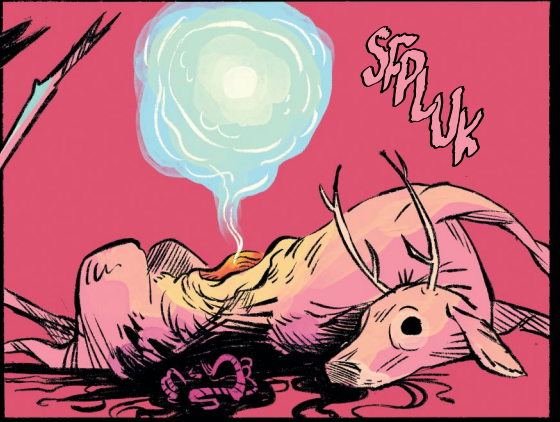
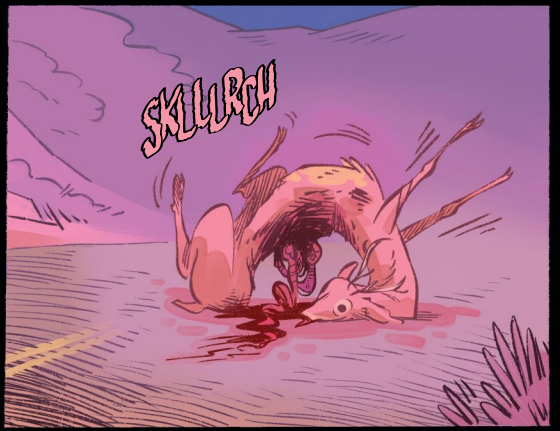
*AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT
WAS INJURED; SOMEONE'D
HIT IT--BUT THEN IT..."

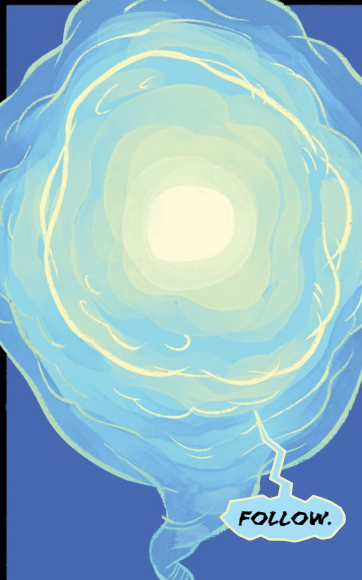
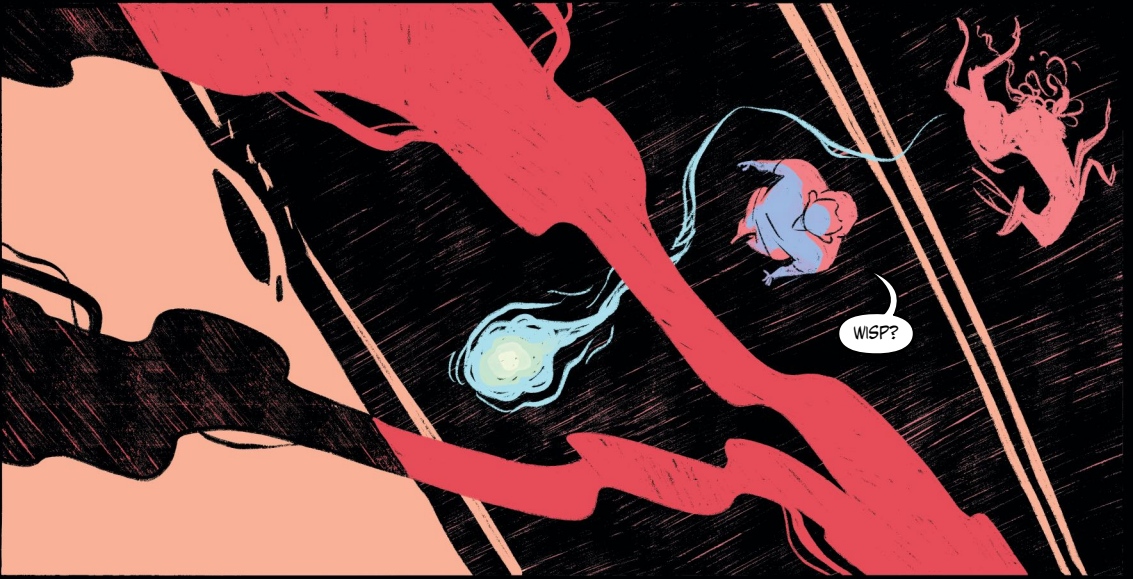


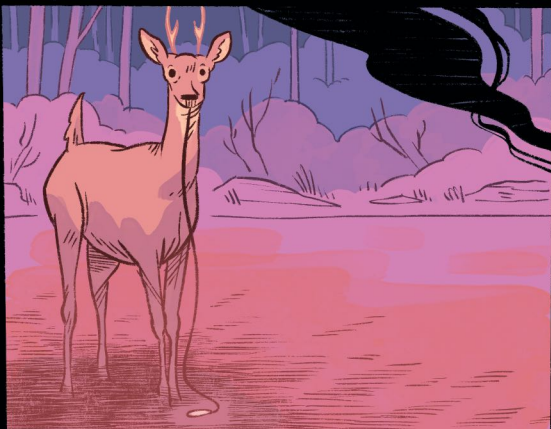
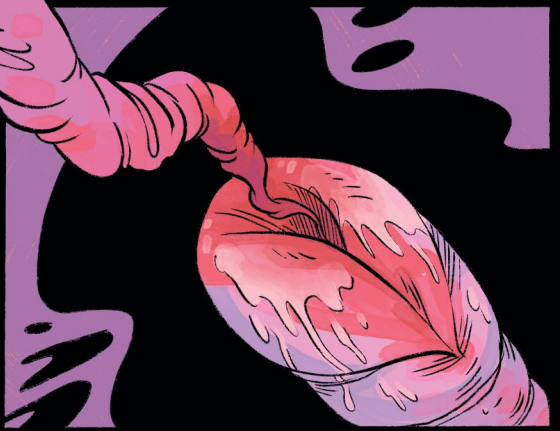
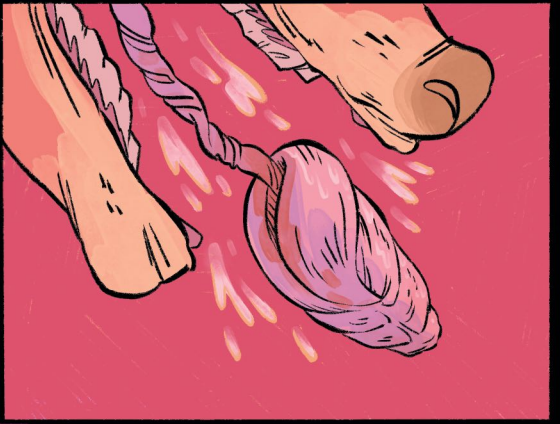
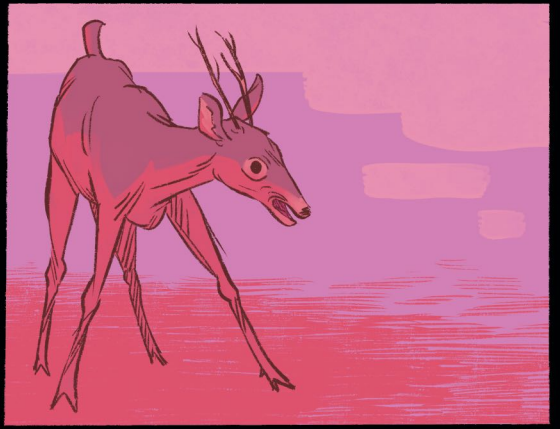


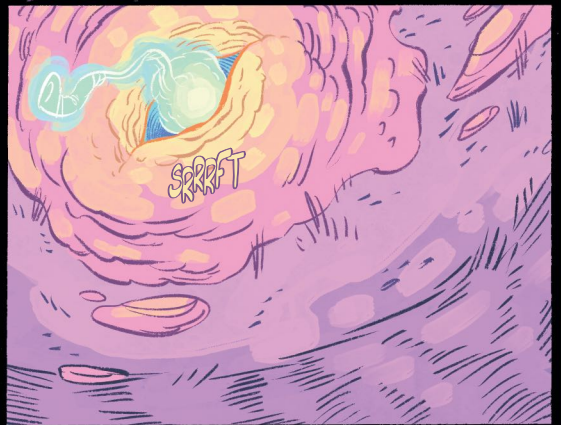
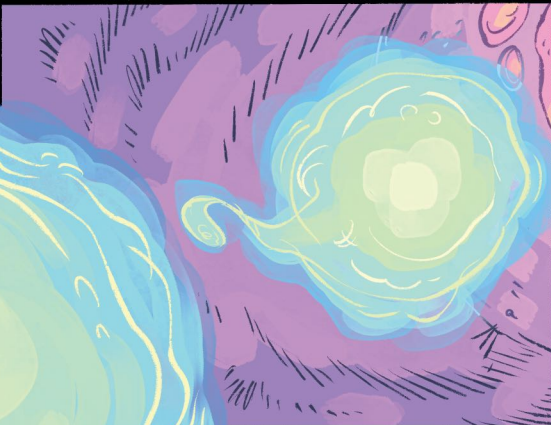
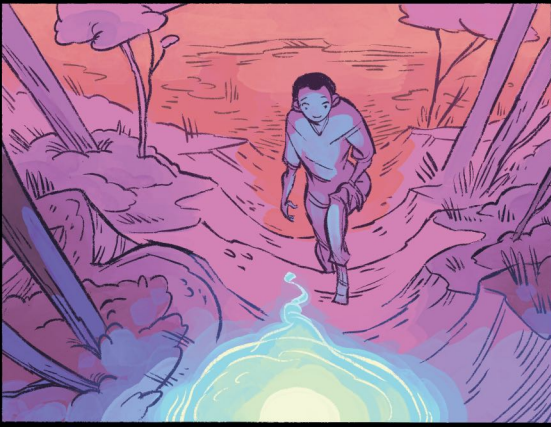


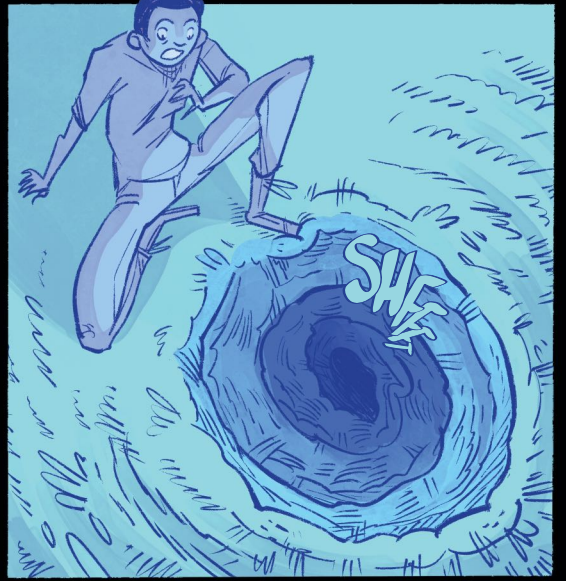
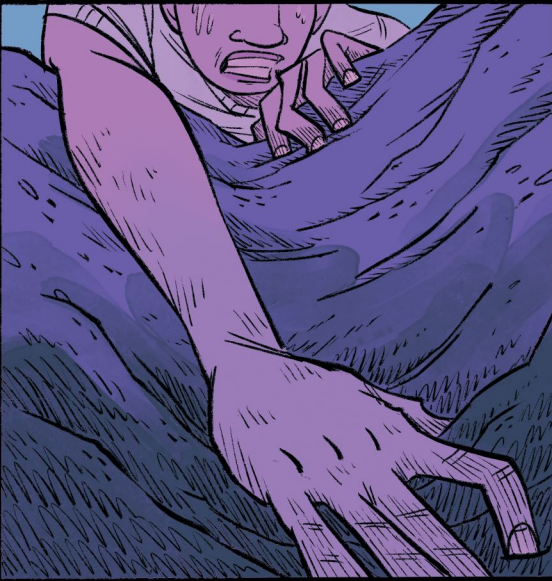


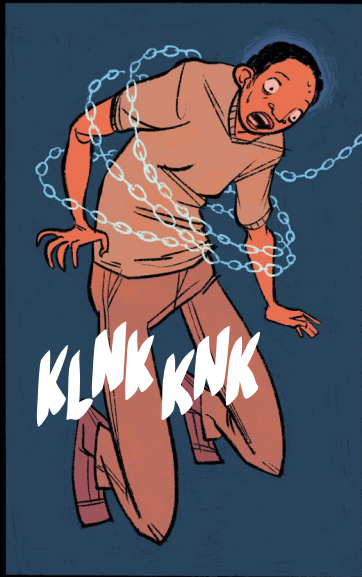
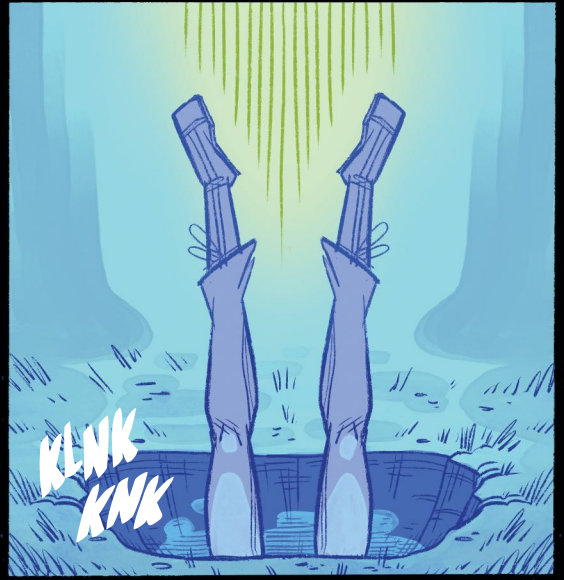


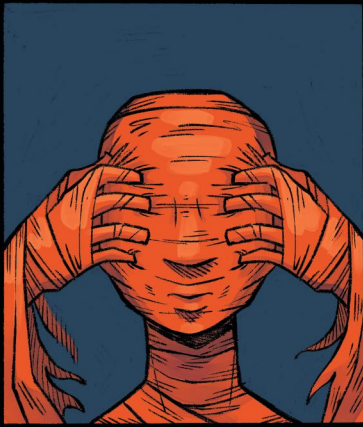












I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* I AM. ALL I KNOW IS WHERE-- WHICH IS NOWHERE, AS IT WERE.



THE FIRE--

TOOK ME HERE. YES. HE VISITED WITHIN, DURING DREAMS. NOW STAYING.

WHY ARE YOU HIM NOW? THE MAN FROM THE HALLWAYS.

HE WAS *ALWAYS* HIM. ASLEEP, BUT TRAVELING ELSEWHERE. CONNECTED BY A SILVER CHAIN.



IT'S DIFFICULT TO RECALL...MY TIME ABOVE. I REMEMBER THE GUILT THAT RACKED MY BONES AND THE LOVE I HAD FOR MY SON...

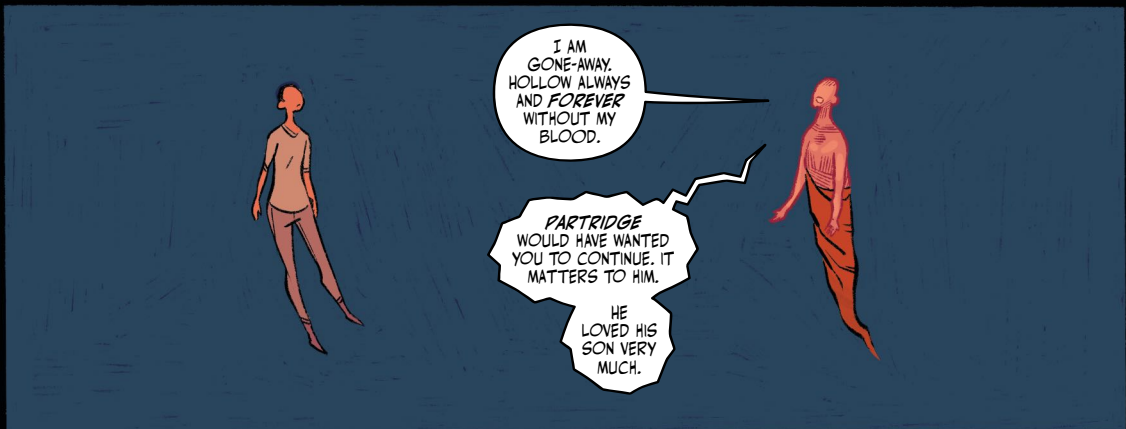
...I WAS SO DESPAIRED THAT I USED OUR FAMILY'S GIFT AND I LEFT MYSELF.



I WAS DESPERATE. ANGRY. AFRAID.

HIS SON, TOO, COULD LEAVE HIMSELF EMPTY. HE HOPED HE COULD REACH HIM IN THE HALLWAY.

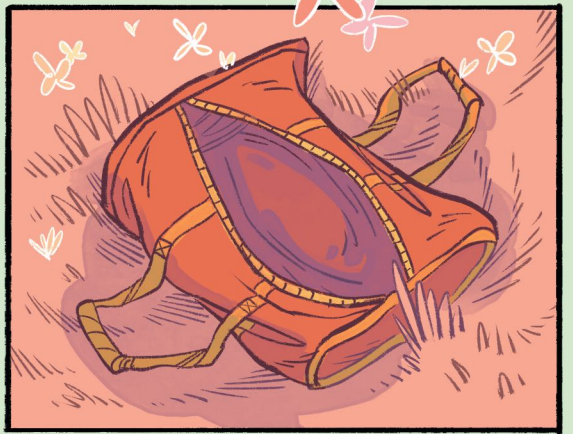
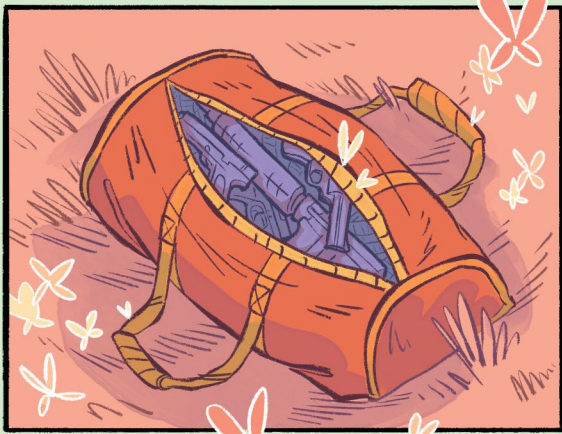
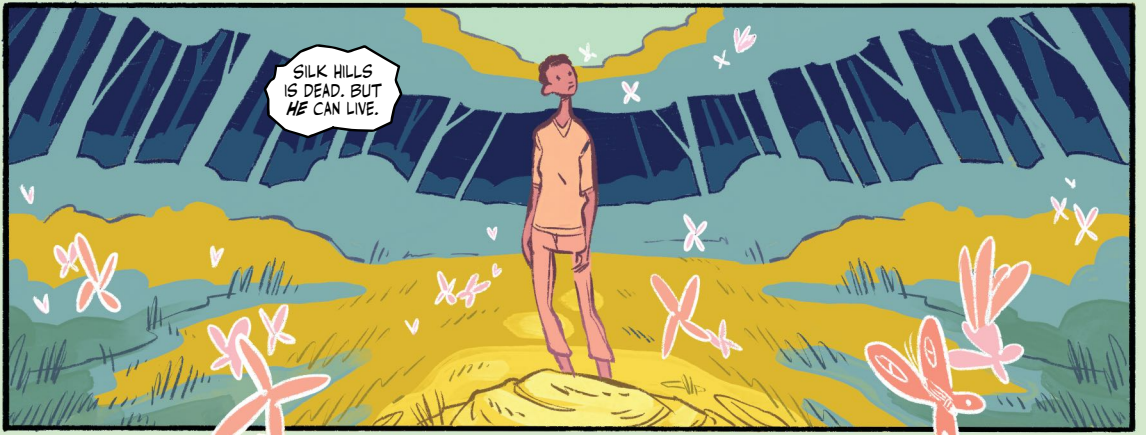
AND NOW HERE. I AM. I WILL ALWAYS BE. HIM. IT. PARTRIDGE, ASLEEP. TRAVELING.

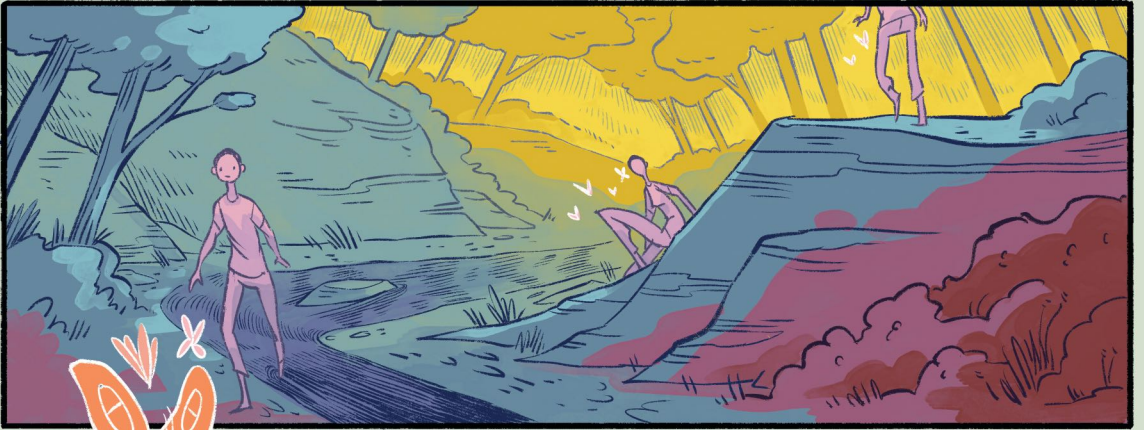


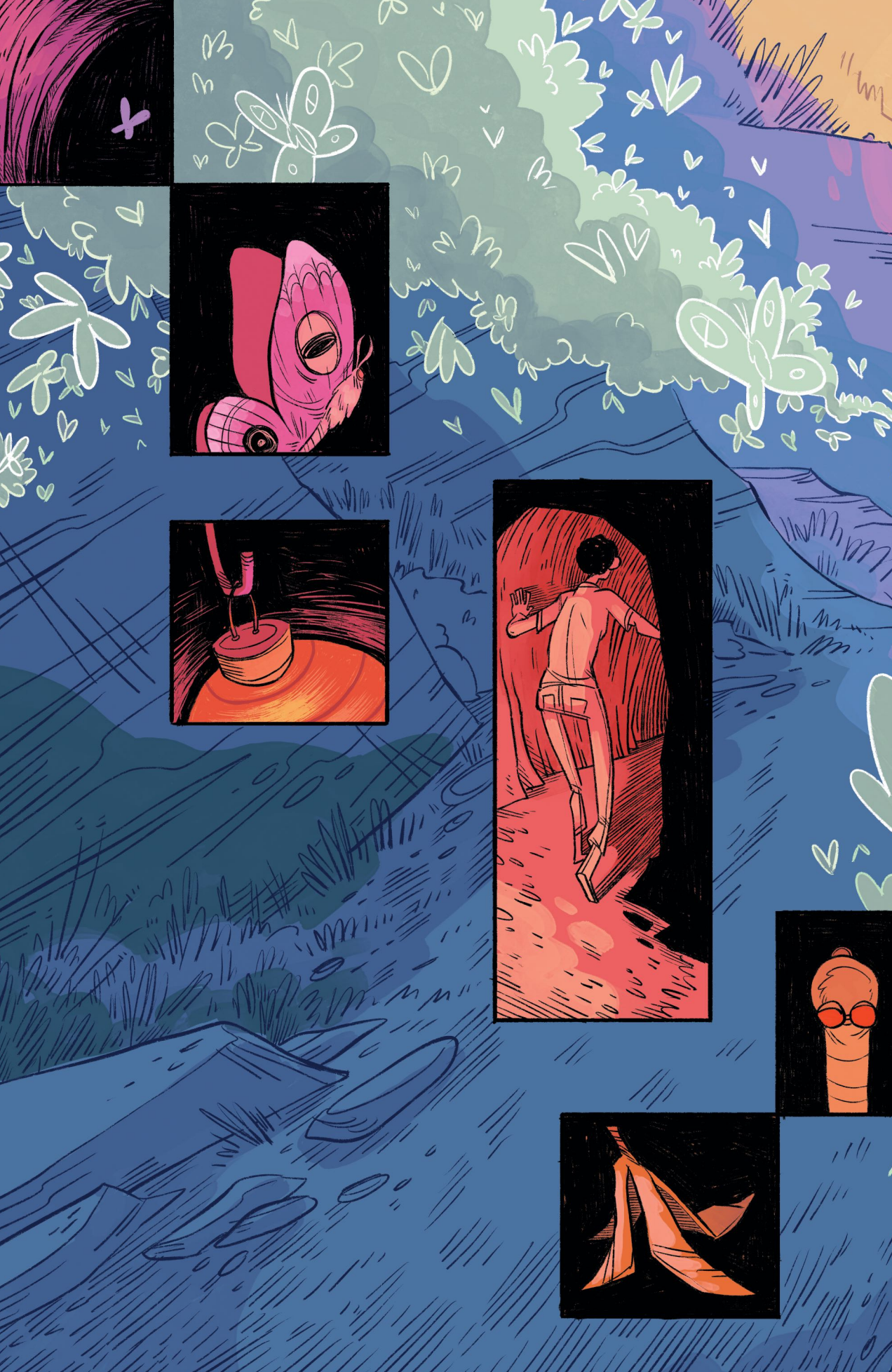
I AM GONE-AWAY. HOLLOW ALWAYS AND *FOREVER* WITHOUT MY BLOOD.

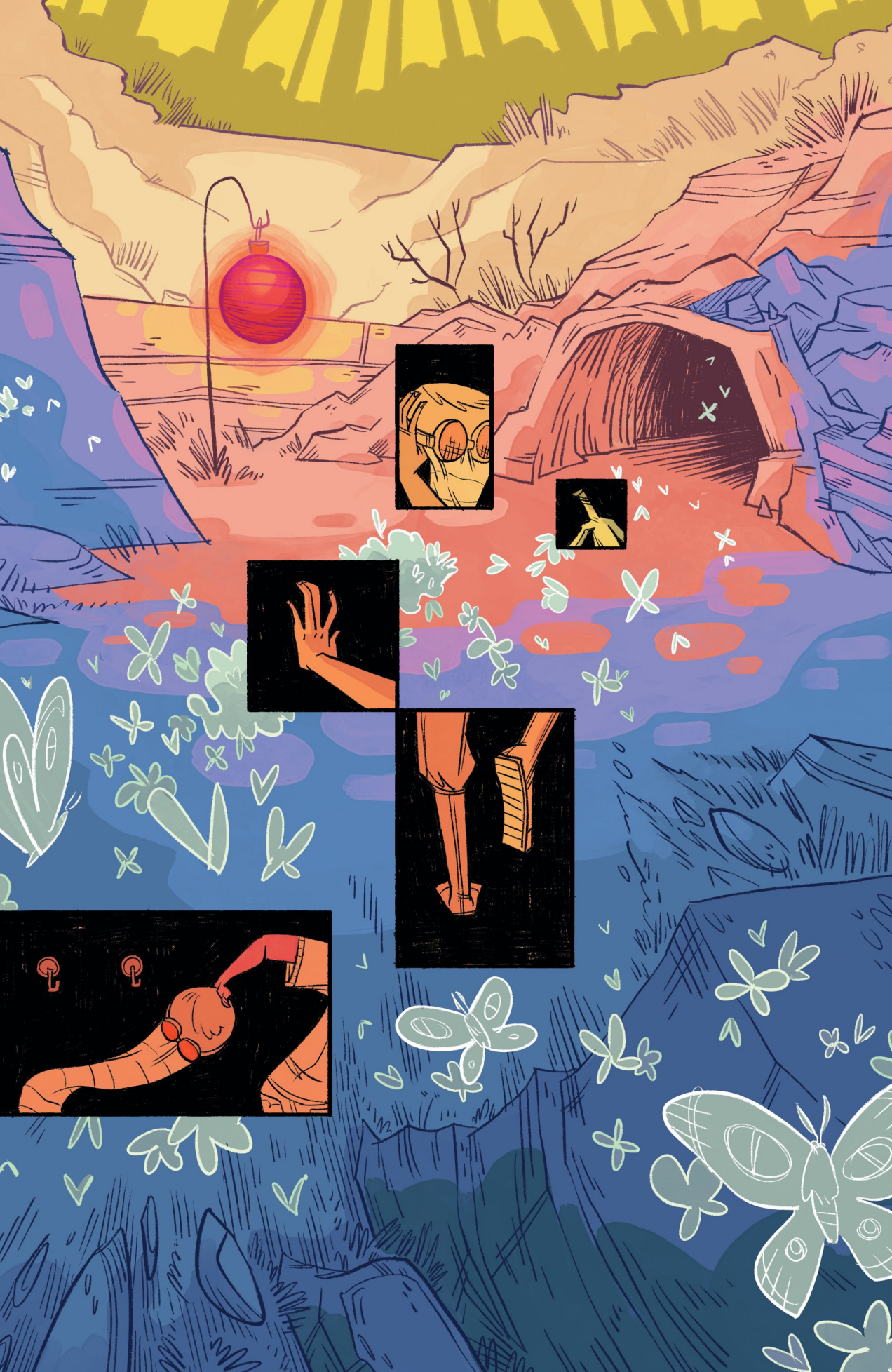
PARTRIDGE WOULD HAVE WANTED YOU TO CONTINUE. IT MATTERS TO HIM.

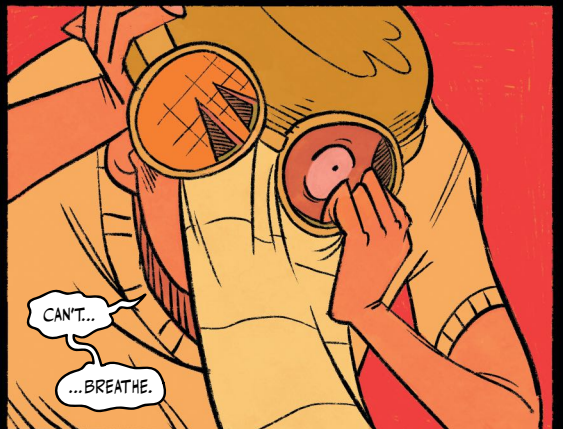
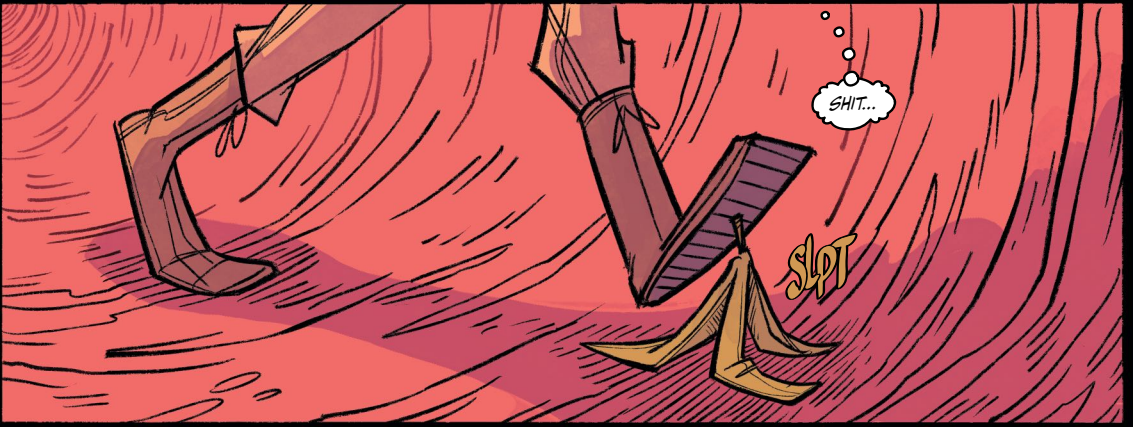
HE LOVED HIS SON VERY MUCH.











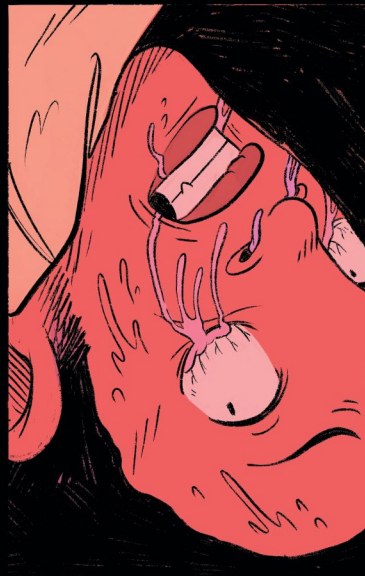
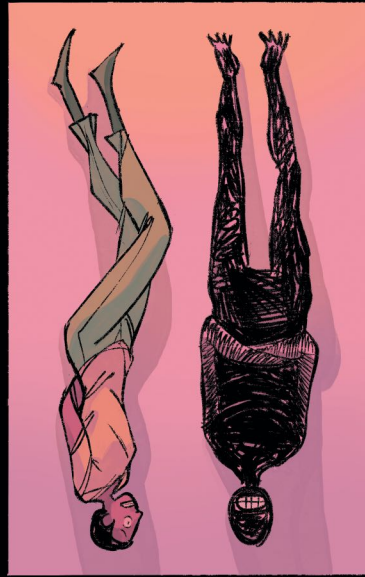
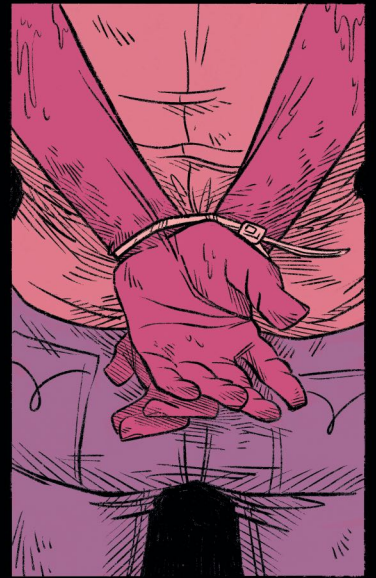


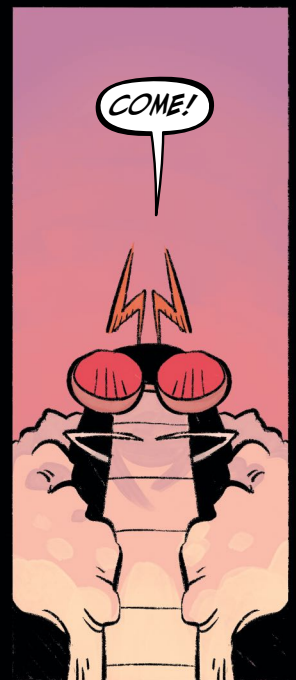
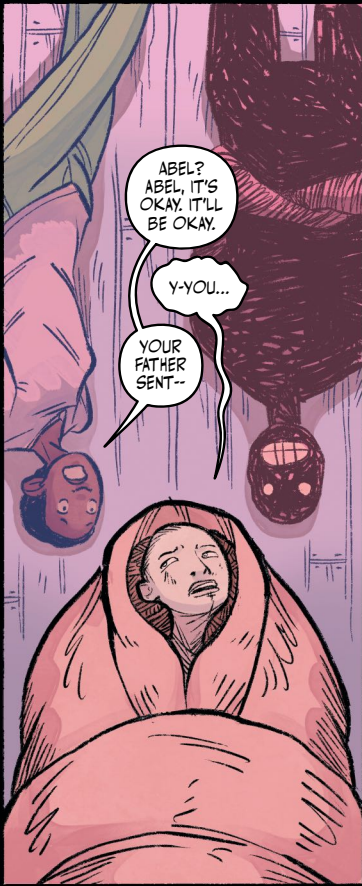
*COME,
MALIKH.*

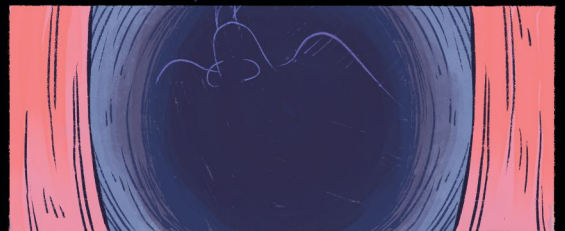
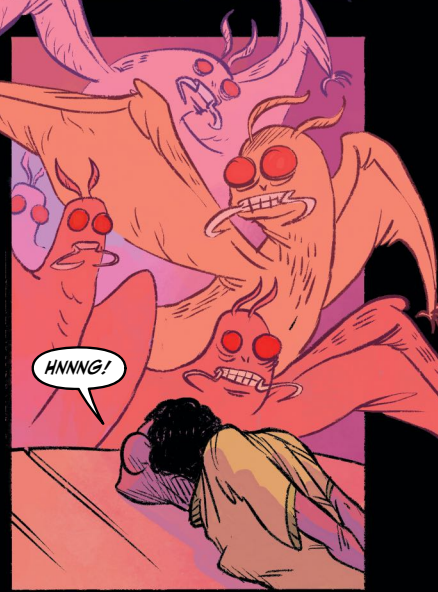
*SO WE
MAY FOLLOW
YOU.*

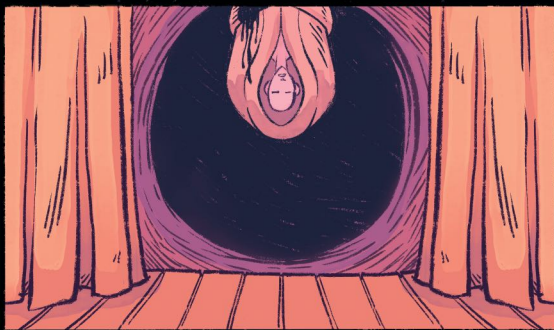
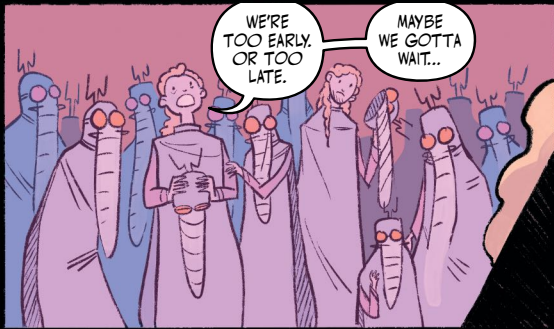
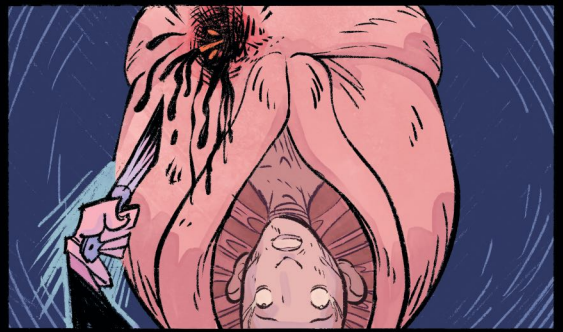
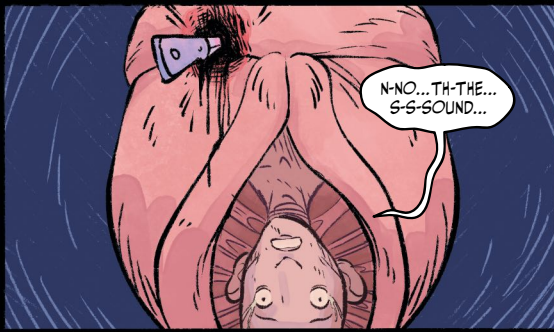
*INTO
FIRE.*

*SO ALL
CAN FINALLY
SEE.*











NOT ONE OF YOU MOTHERFUCKERS COMES NEAR ME OR I WILL SHOOT, I SWEAR TO GOD.

I'LL LIGHT THIS PLACE UP LIKE FUCKING NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NOT THINK TWICE.

I'LL GO DOWN WITH EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU SICK HILLBILLY PSYCHO FUCKS.

SO GET FUCKING BACK!



JUNIPER!

D-DADDY?



ENOCH!
SHIT, SHE GOT
ENOCH!



I'M
SORRY, BABY.
YOU NEED TO
GO. NOW.

YOUR
FAMILY... YOU...
YOU'RE NOT...



GRRRAAH!



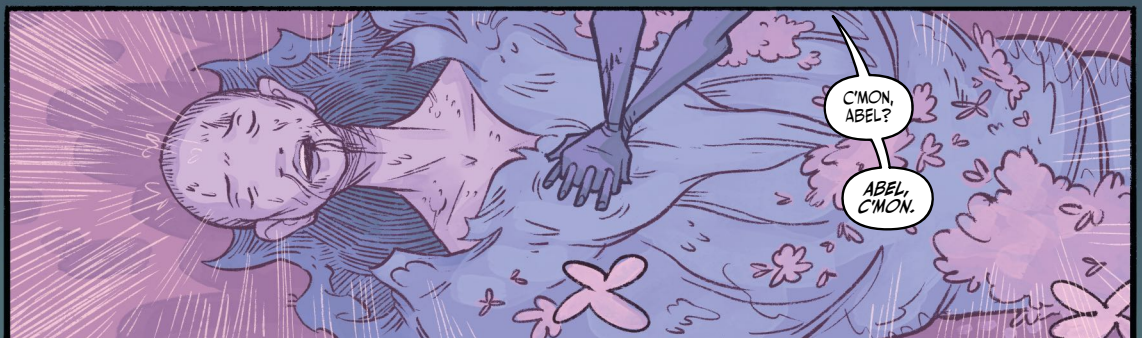
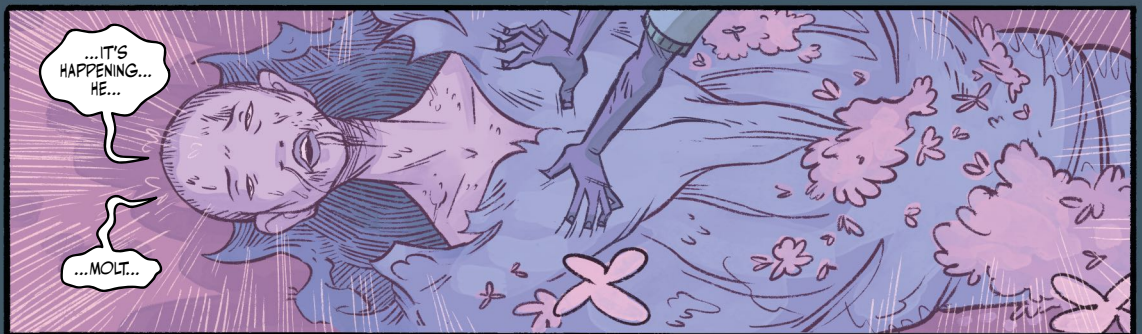
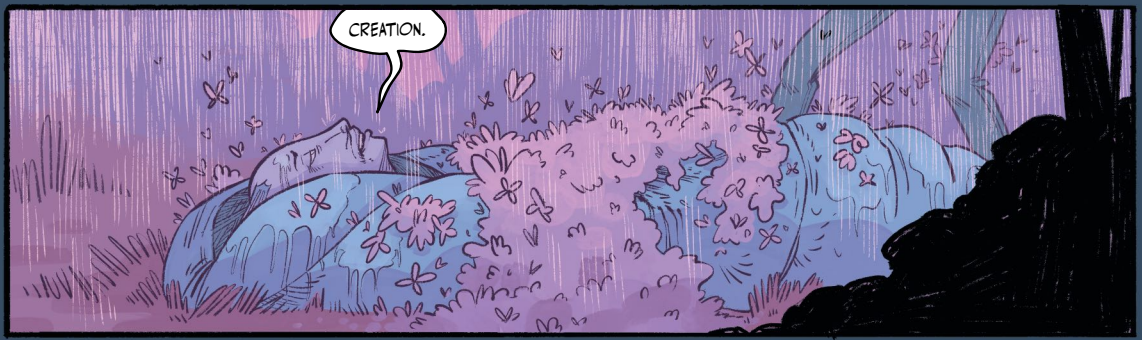
PEAK



IT'S NOT
FUCKING
REAL!







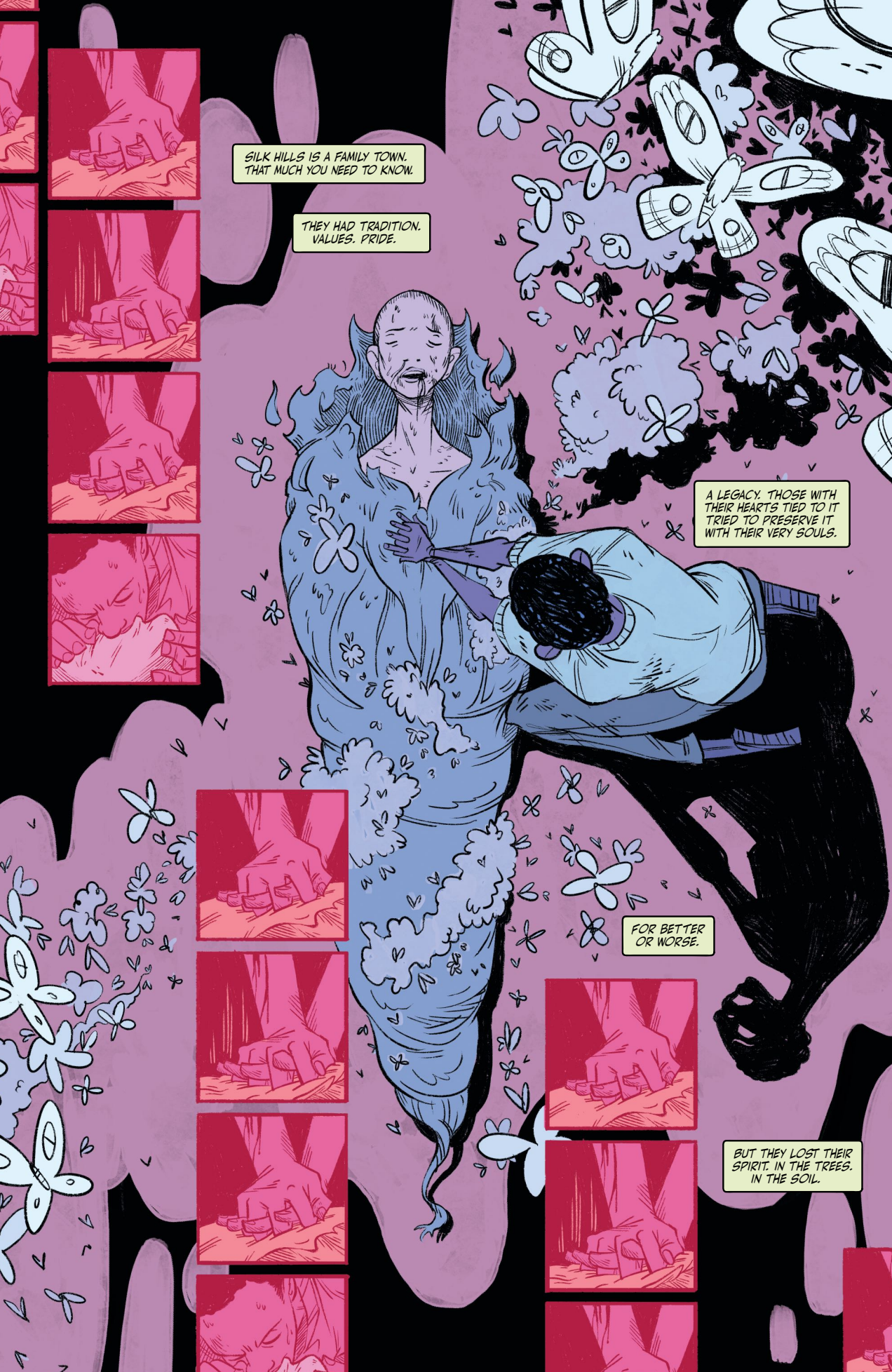
SILK HILLS IS A FAMILY TOWN.
THAT MUCH YOU NEED TO KNOW.

THEY HAD TRADITION.
VALUES. PRIDE.

A LEGACY. THOSE WITH
THEIR HEARTS TIED TO IT
TRIED TO PRESERVE IT
WITH THEIR VERY SOULS.

FOR BETTER
OR WORSE.

BUT THEY LOST THEIR
SPIRIT. IN THE TREES.
IN THE SOIL.



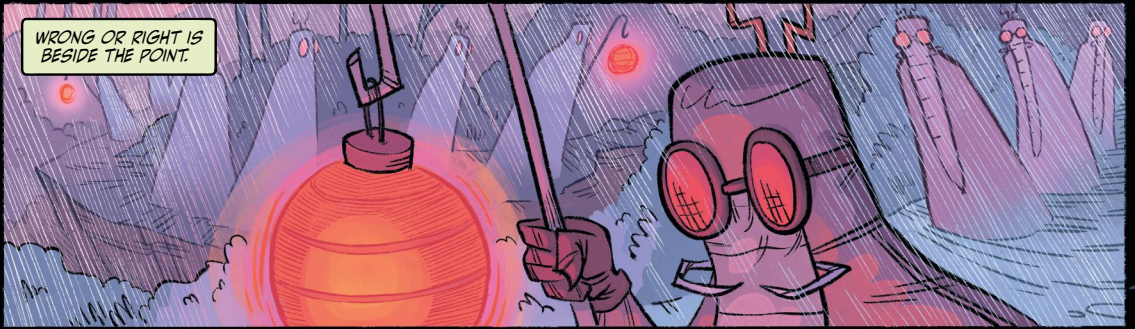
SILK HILLS LOST ITS SPIRIT
TO SOMETHING UNEARTHLY.
SOMETHING EVIL.



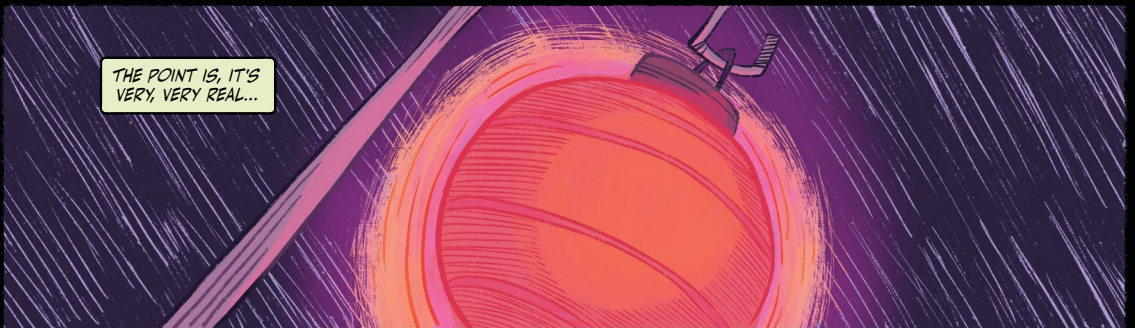
SOMETHING ANCIENT.



WRONG OR RIGHT IS
BESIDE THE POINT.

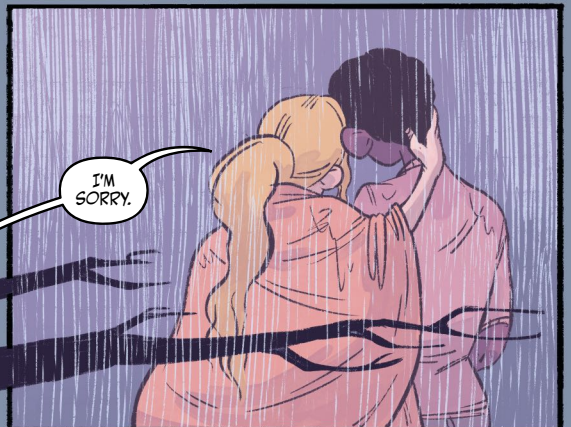
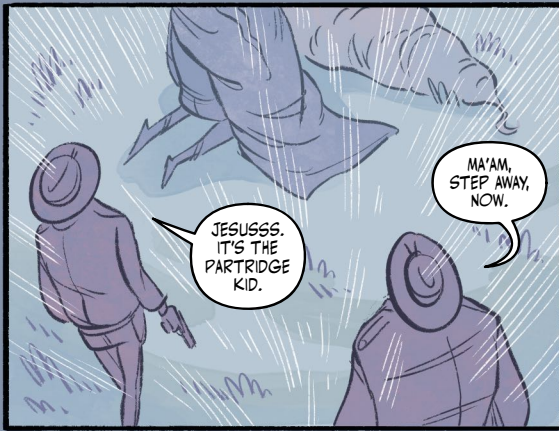
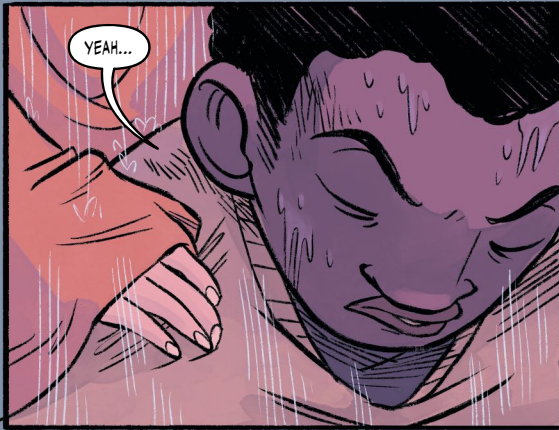
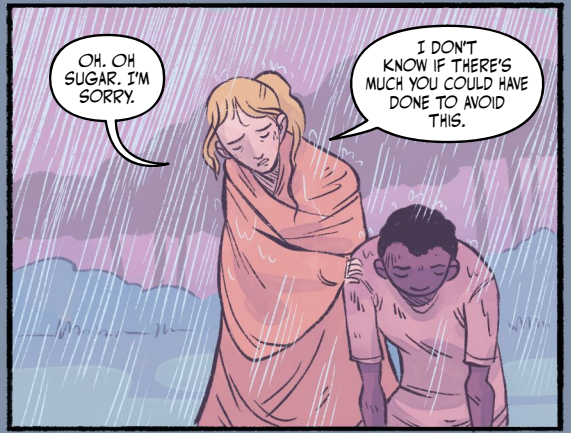
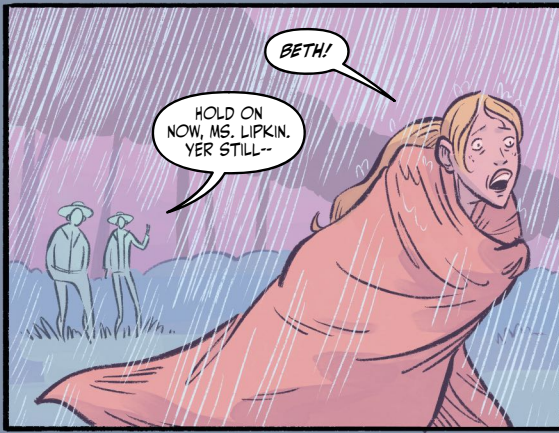


THE POINT IS, IT'S
VERY, VERY REAL...

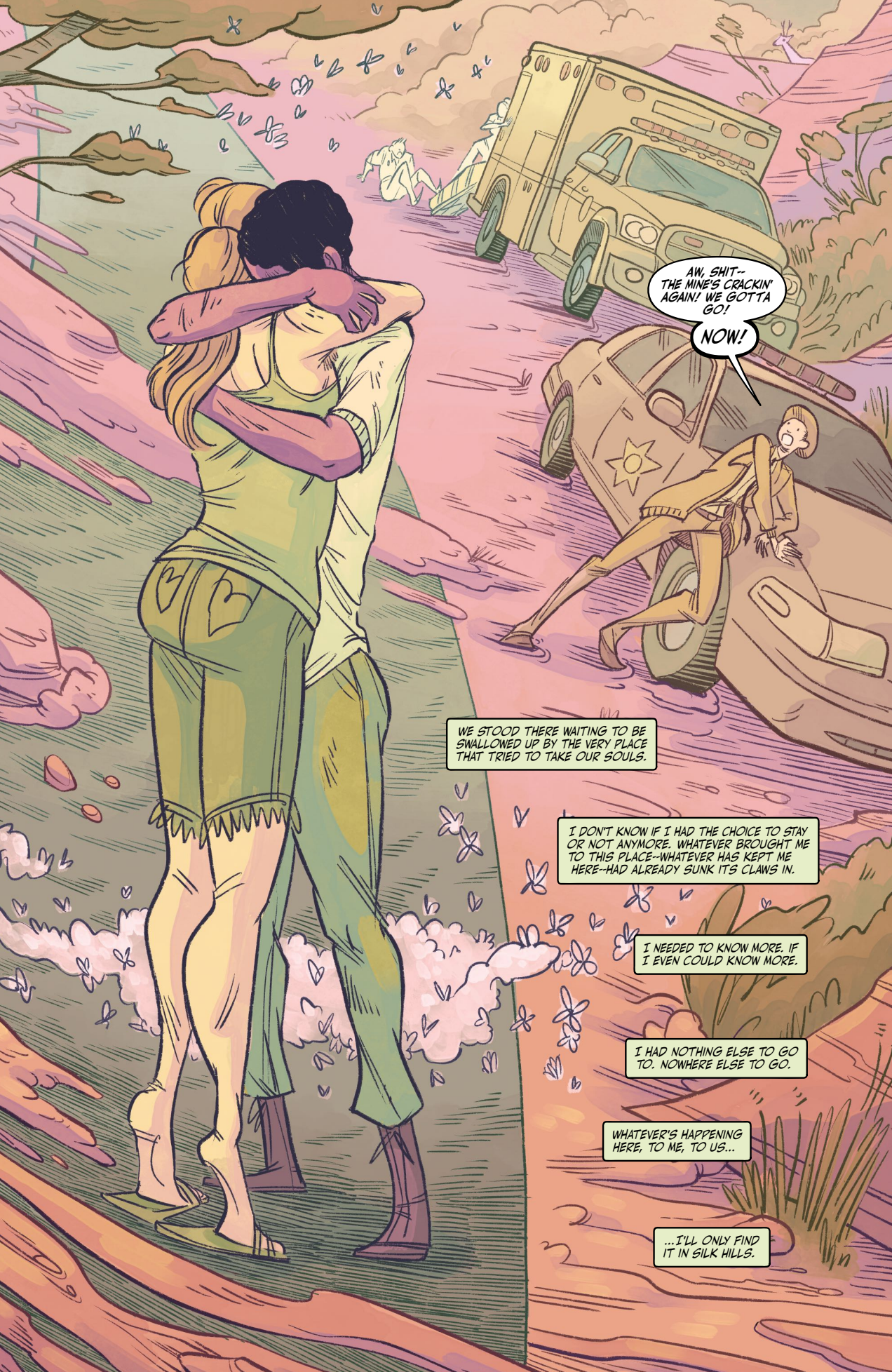


...AND IT CAN TOUCH
ANYTHING IT WANTS.









AW, SHIT--
THE MINE'S CRACKIN'
AGAIN! WE GOTTA
GO!

NOW!

WE STOOD THERE WAITING TO BE
SWALLOWED UP BY THE VERY PLACE
THAT TRIED TO TAKE OUR SOULS.

I DON'T KNOW IF I HAD THE CHOICE TO STAY
OR NOT ANYMORE. WHATEVER BROUGHT ME
TO THIS PLACE--WHATEVER HAS KEPT ME
HERE--HAD ALREADY SUNK ITS CLAWS IN.

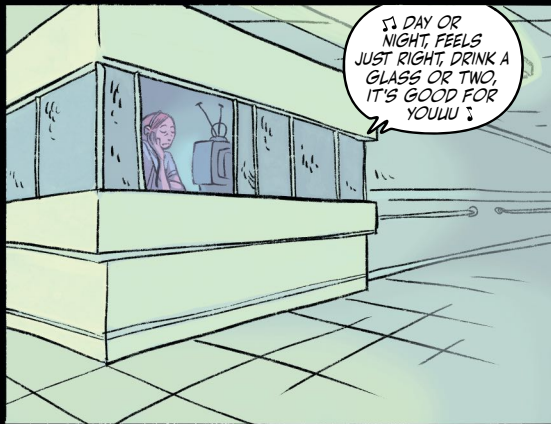
I NEEDED TO KNOW MORE. IF
I EVEN COULD KNOW MORE.

I HAD NOTHING ELSE TO GO
TO. NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.

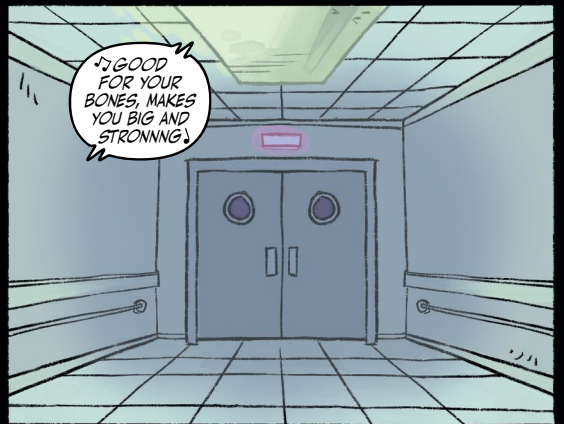
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING
HERE, TO ME, TO US...

...I'LL ONLY FIND
IT IN SILK HILLS.

EPILOGUE



♪ DAY OR NIGHT, FEELS JUST RIGHT, DRINK A GLASS OR TWO, IT'S GOOD FOR YOUUU ♪



♪ GOOD FOR YOUR BONES, MAKES YOU BIG AND STRONNING ♪

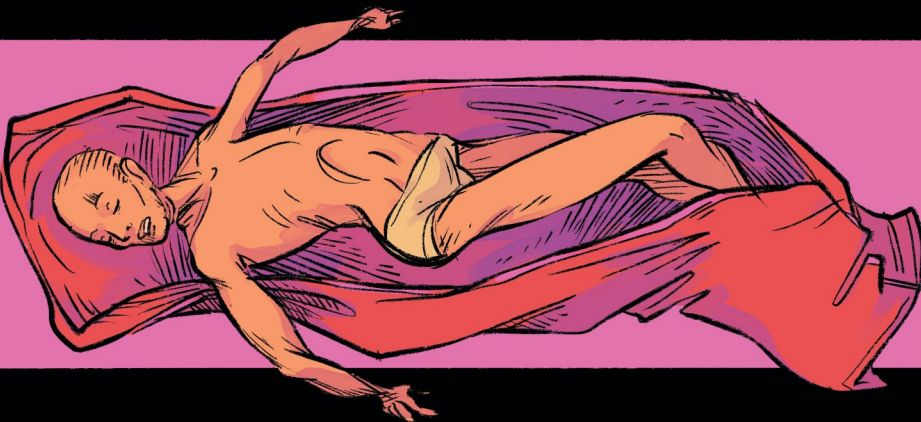
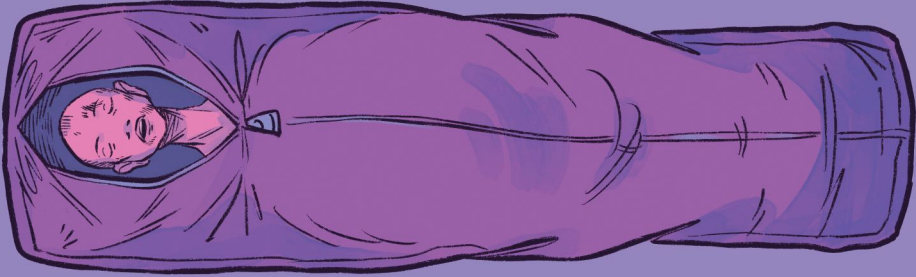
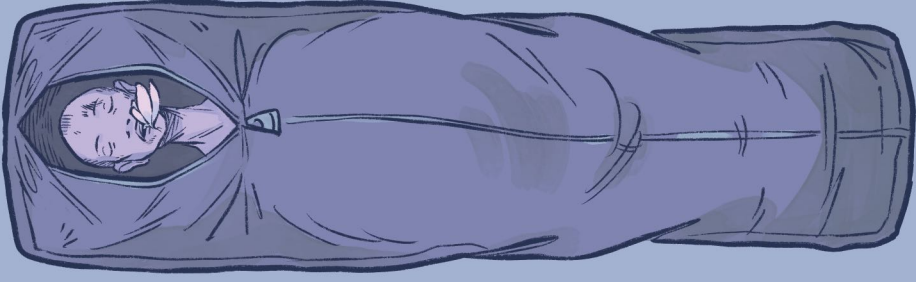


♪ SO TREAT YOUR BODY RIGHT ♪

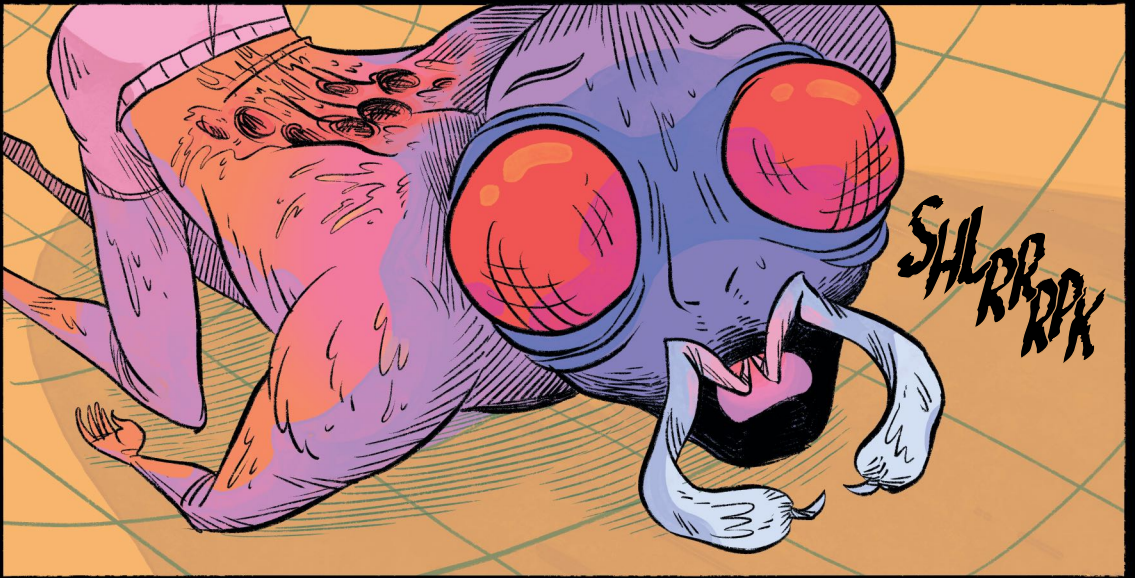


♪ WITH A NICE BIG GLASS OF MILK ♪

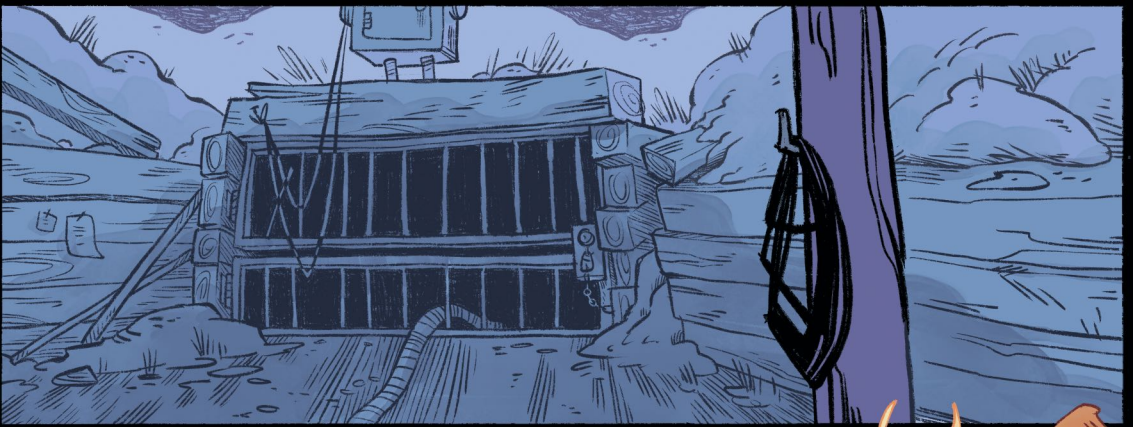




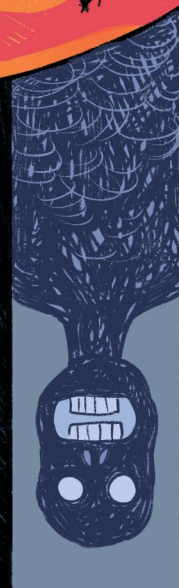








SSSKRRRAA! AA! AA! AA! AA! W!





"SILK HILLS IS CHANGING, BETH."



"I'M NOT SURE INTO WHAT."



fin

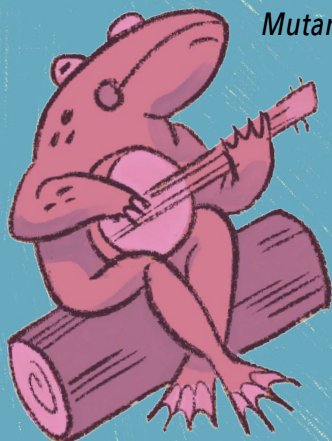


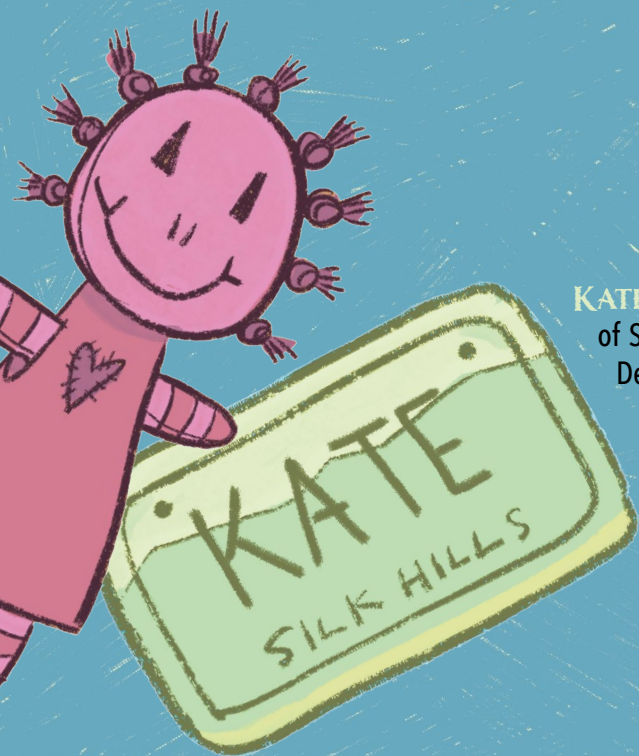
BRIAN LEVEL is a cartoonist, tattooer, and writer who has contributed to premiere comic books including *Star Wars*, *Batman*, *Spider-Man*, *Avengers*, and *Deadpool*. His work has been internationally recognized for over fifteen years. He was born from dust, and to the dust he shall return. Until then, he lives with his family in the greater Cincinnati area, where he makes stories and operates Illuminaut Tattoo.

🐦 @brian_level 📷 @illuminauttattoo



RYAN FERRIER is a Canadian comic-book writer, published by every major North American comics company, and best known for his original comic series such as *Kennel Block Blues*, *Death Orb*, *I Can Sell You A Body*, the highly celebrated DAVE trilogy, and the acclaimed graphic novel *Criminy*. Ryan has also written for some of pop culture's most beloved properties, including *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Marvel's Deadpool*, DC's *Batman*, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, *G.I. Joe*, and *Planet of the Apes*. He is an avid fan of black coffee, hard-core music, professional wrestling, and fat pets.



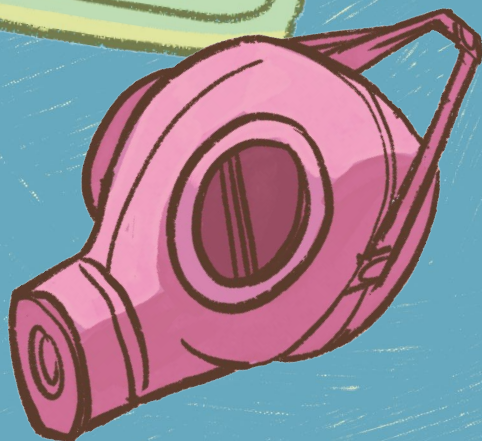


KATE SHERRON is an artist, writer, and professor of Sequential Art at Savannah College of Art and Design. She currently lives and works in Savannah, GA. Her credits include *Chained to the Grave*, *My Little Pony*, *Invader Zim*, *Amazing World of Gumball*, and more.

  @katesherron

CHRISTOPHER CRANK (CRANK!) has lettered a bunch of books put out by Image, Dark Horse, Oni Press, Dynamite, and elsewhere. He also has a podcast with comic artist Mike Norton and members of Four Star Studios in Chicago (crankcast.com), and makes music (sonomorti.bandcamp.com).

  @ccrank





SILK HILLS

When Beth Wills comes to Silk Hills, a quirky Appalachian town that's seen better days since the mines were abandoned, she expected a bit of culture shock...but not like this! Beth is someone who has a talent for finding people who don't want to be found, and when she's called to Silk Hills by a local titan of industry, she can tell that *something's* not right.

LITTLE DOES SHE KNOW...

The town may have once been booming, but the only reason people tend to come through town anymore is to buy Mothman merchandise. Before long, Beth finds out just how *wrong* things can get in the woods, as her search for a missing youth finds her running afoul of the local underworld, too-friendly creepers, a very sinister deer, and a drug the locals call "moth dust."

...WHO IS HALLWAY MAN?

Silk Hills is a terrifying, transformative, and psychedelic journey, thanks to writers Brian Level (*Batman vs. Bigby! A Wolf in Gotham* and *Deadpool*) and Ryan Ferrier (*I Can Sell You a Body* and *DAVE*), artist Kate Sherron (*My Little Pony* and *Chained to the Grave*) and letterer Crank! (*Rogue Planet*).

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—Marie Enger (*Nosferatu*, *The Bones of This Place*)

Horror

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