

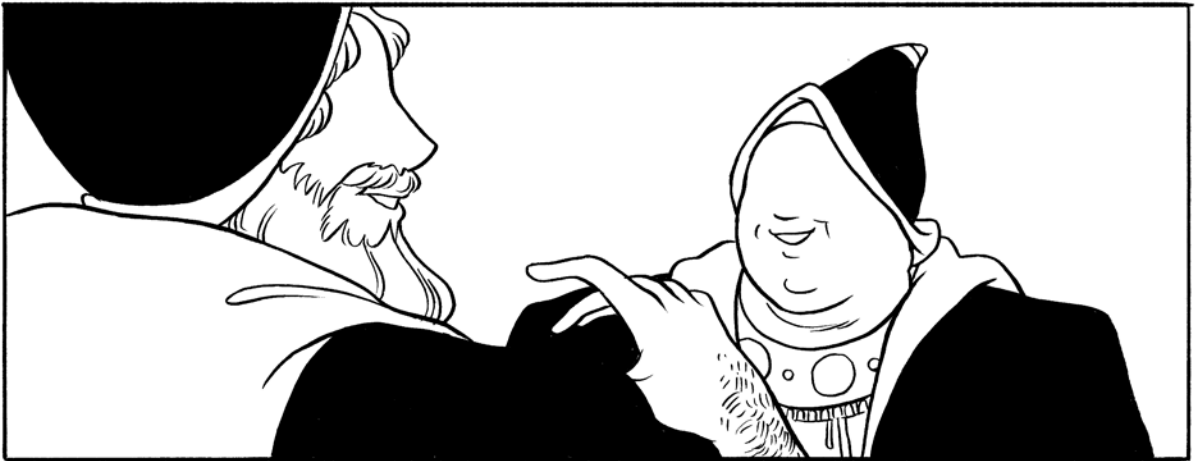
I AM
OF TWO
HEARTS

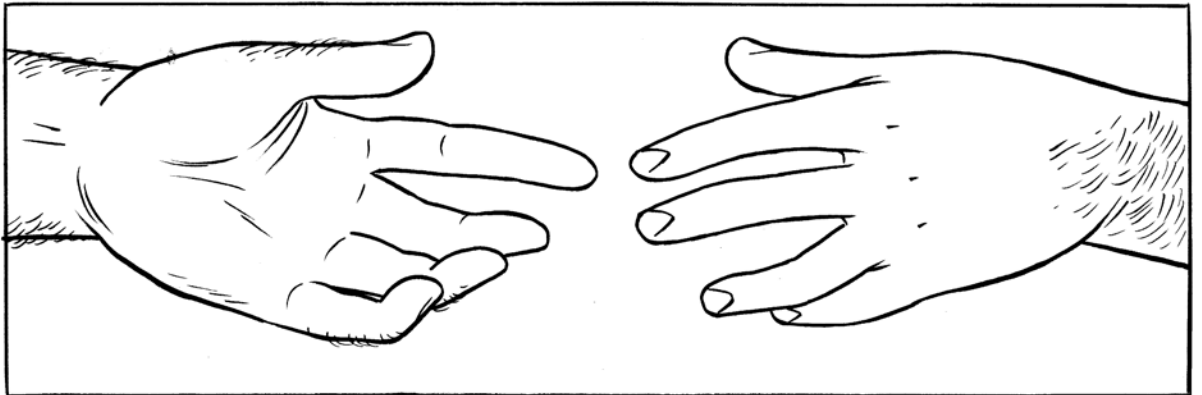
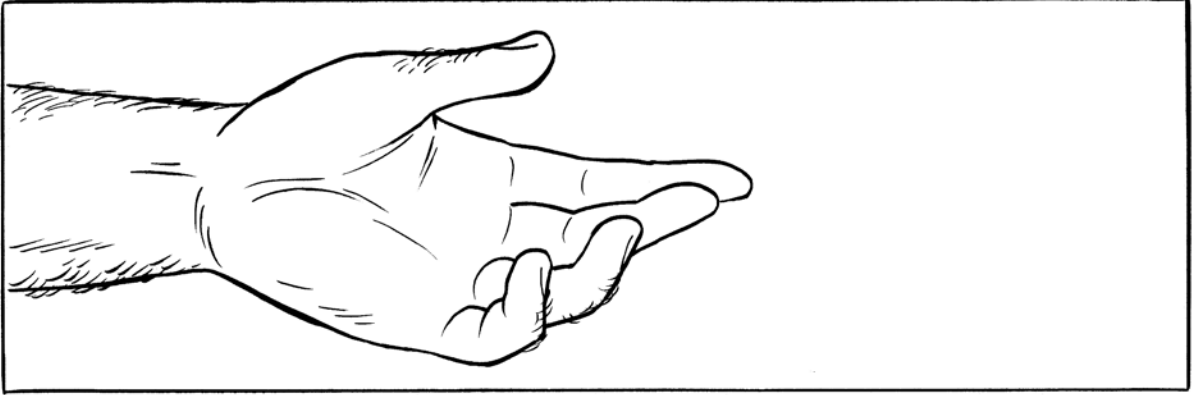
val wise

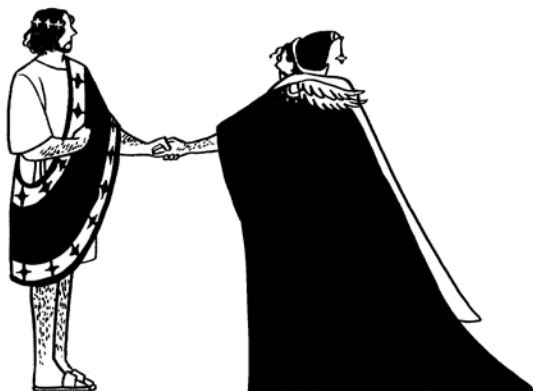
“...I was astonished to see how Redival had grown fat and lost her beauty. She talked, as of old, everlastingly, but all about her children, and asked after no one in Glome except Batta. Trunia never listened to a word she said, but he and I had much talk together.”

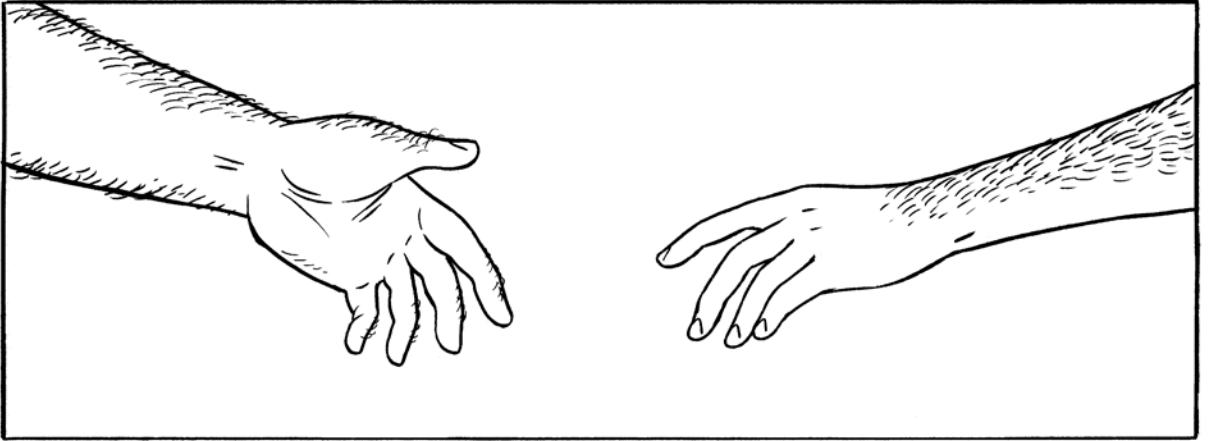
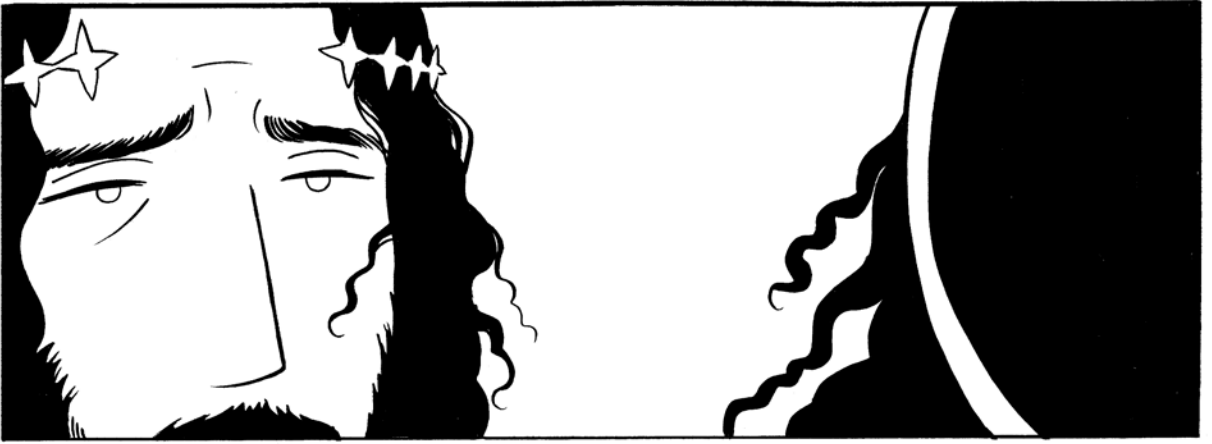
- C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*



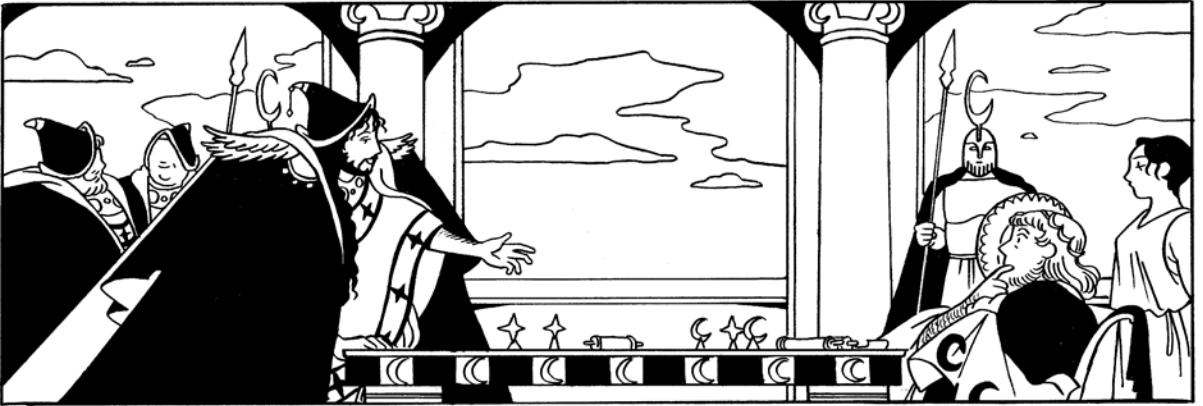








I AM



OF

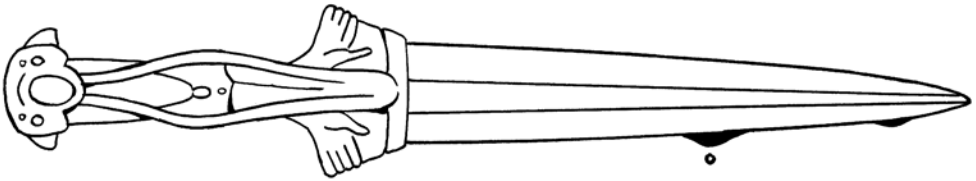


TWO

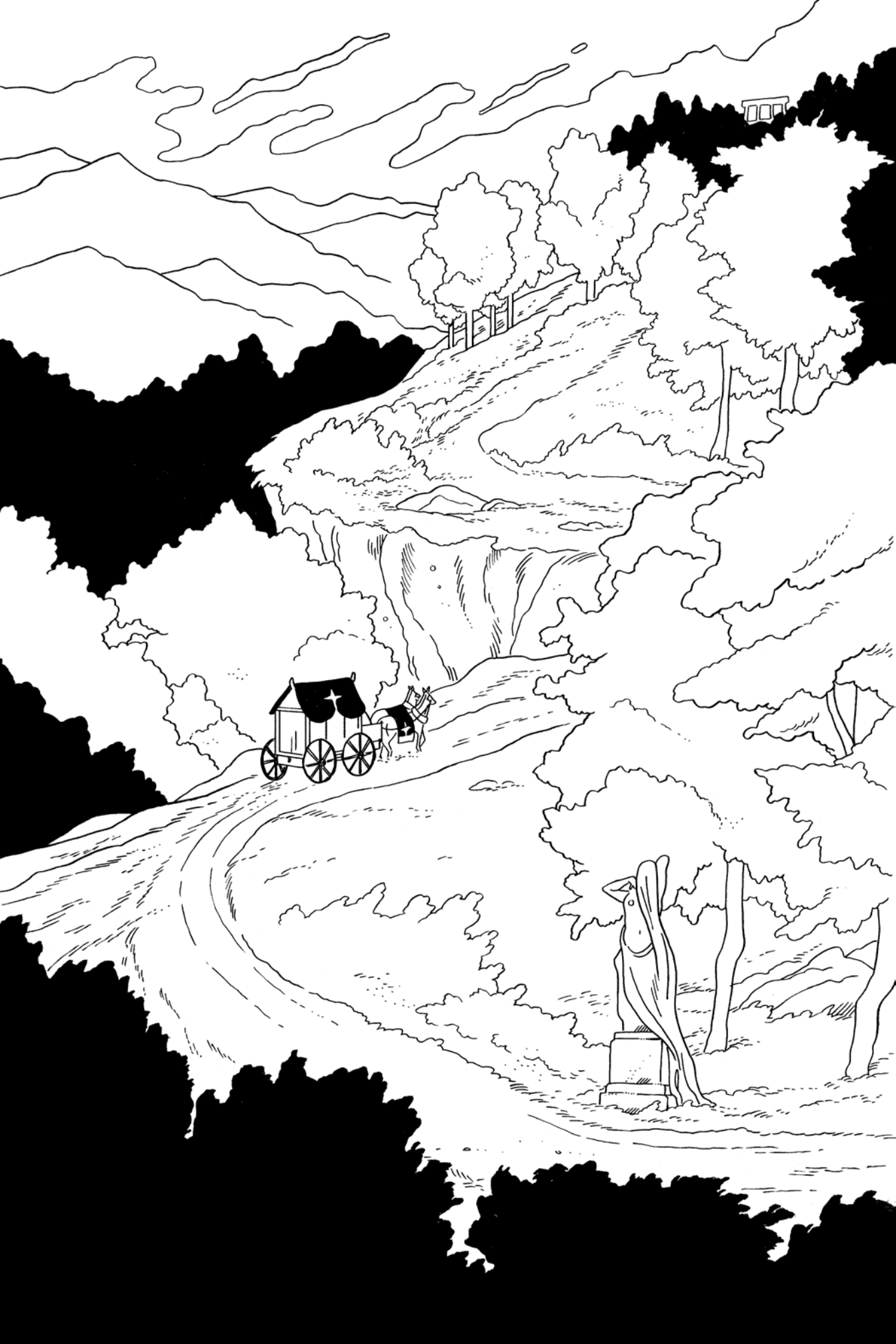


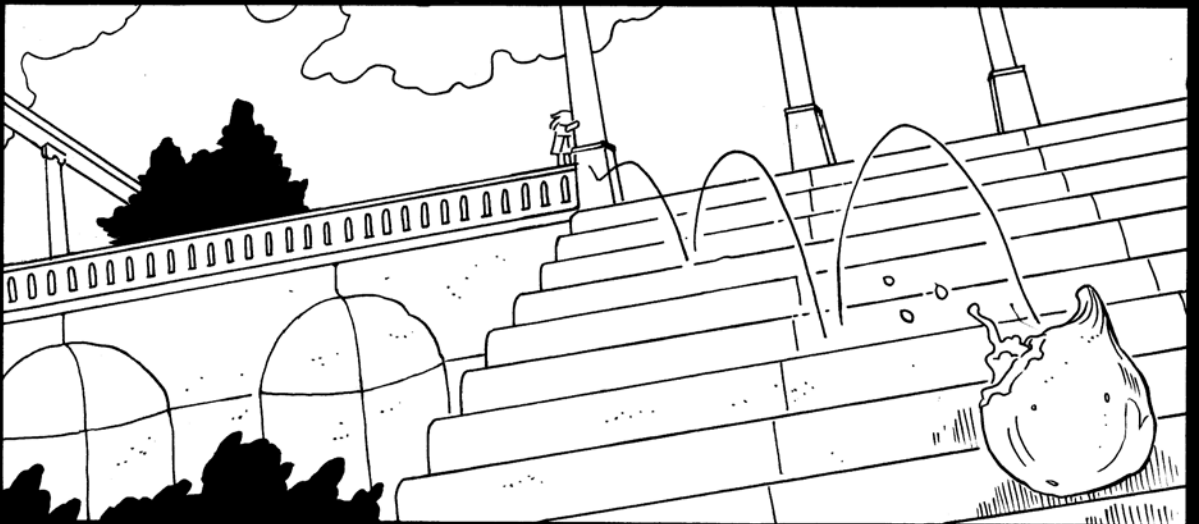
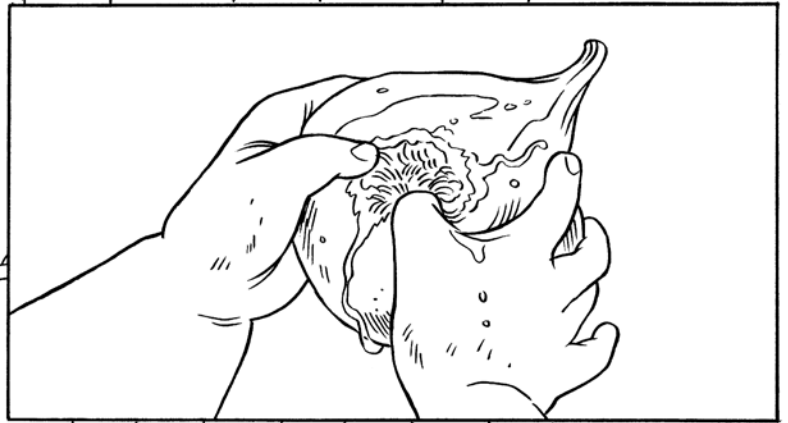
HEARTS

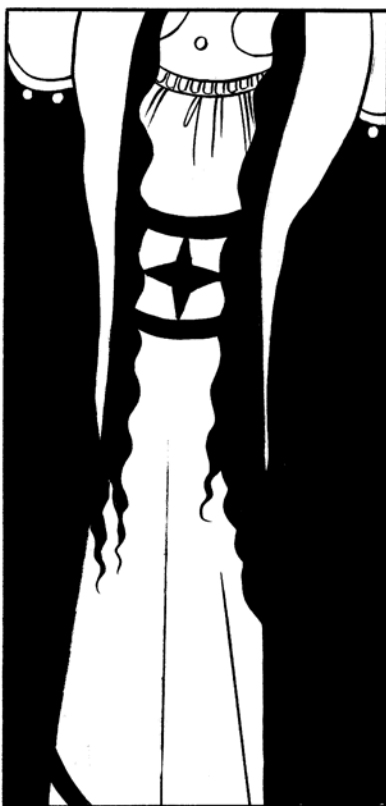
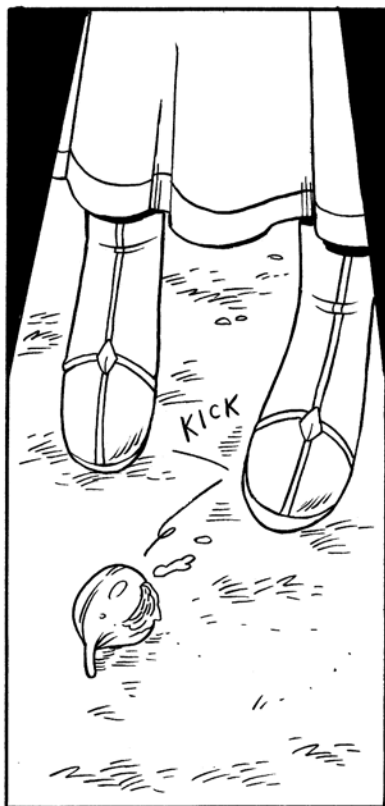
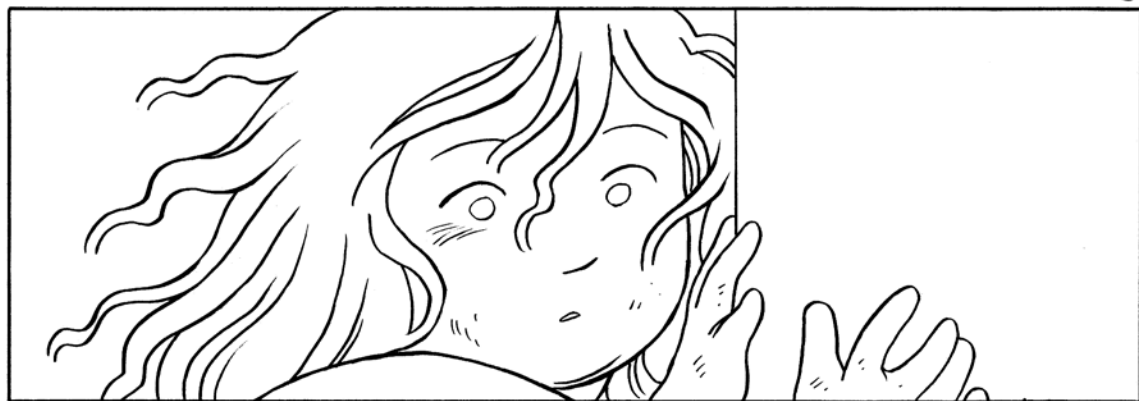
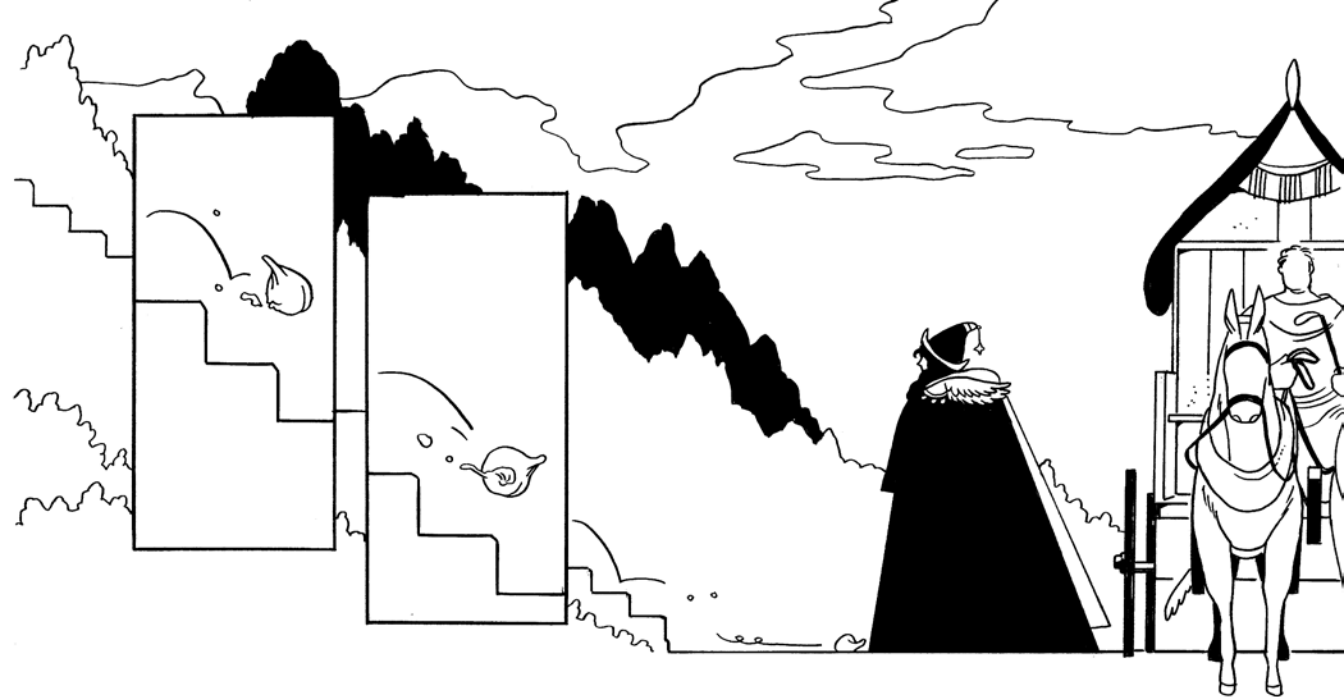




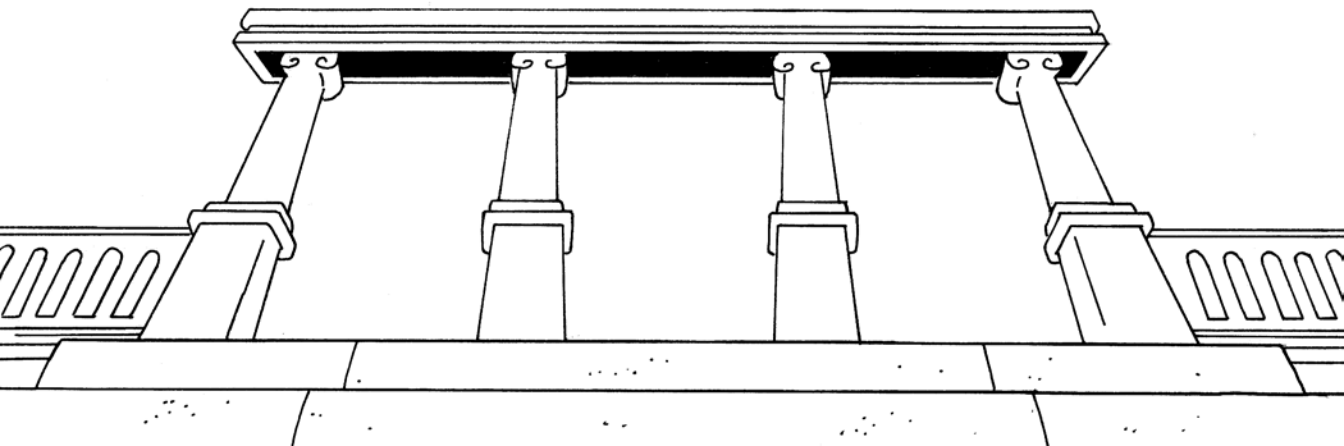
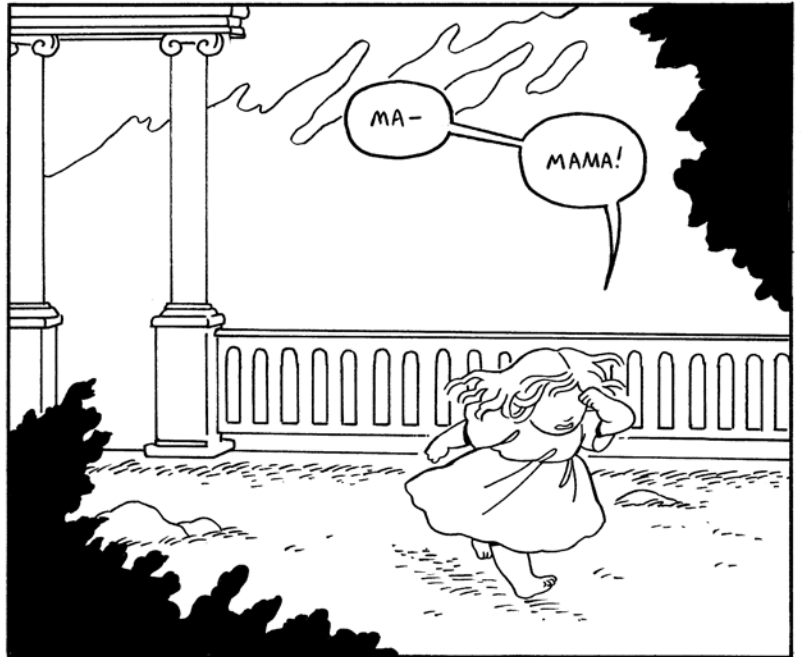
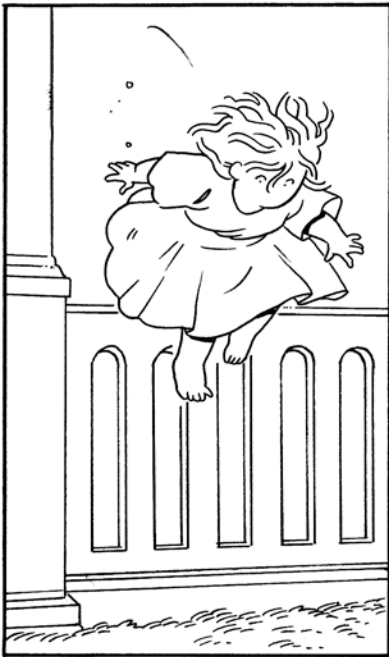
a story by val wise

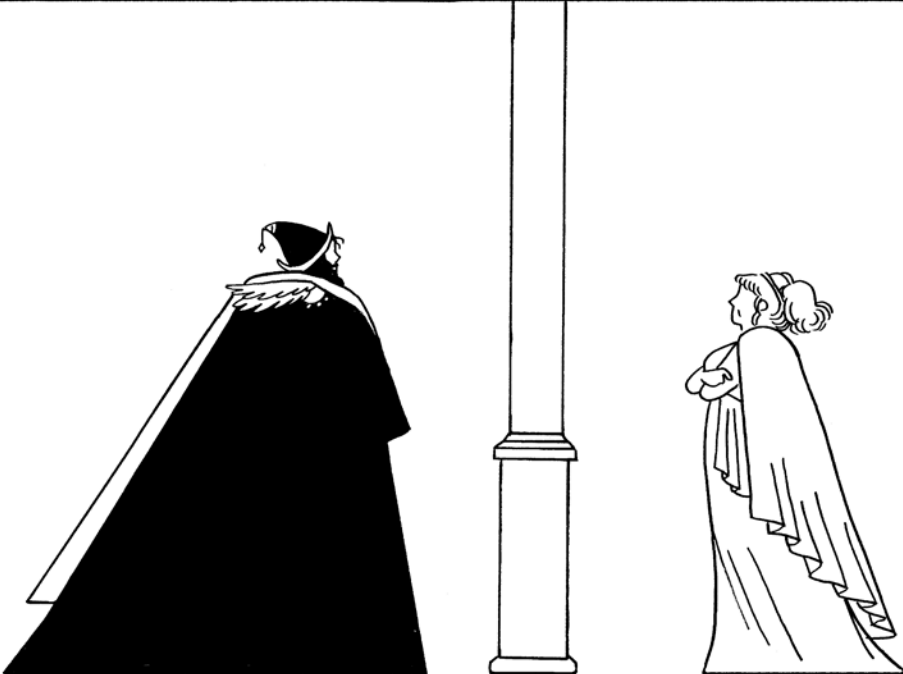
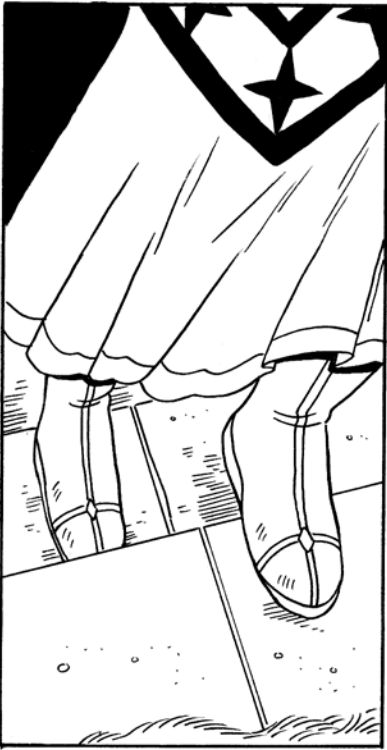














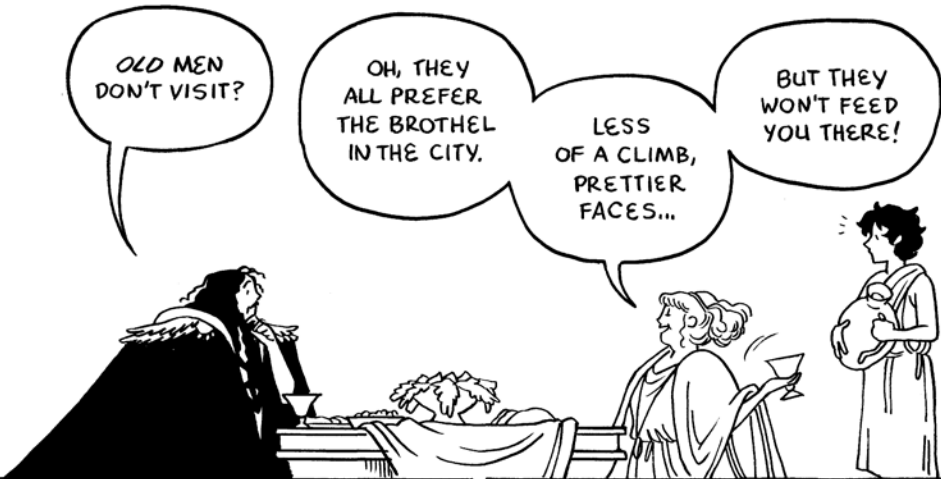


COME.



IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE WE'VE HOSTED A MAN!

OUR VIVACIOUS WERE ALL STOLEN FOR THE WAR.





I DON'T WANT TO MISLEAD YOU.



I'M NOT HERE FOR SEX.



...AH.

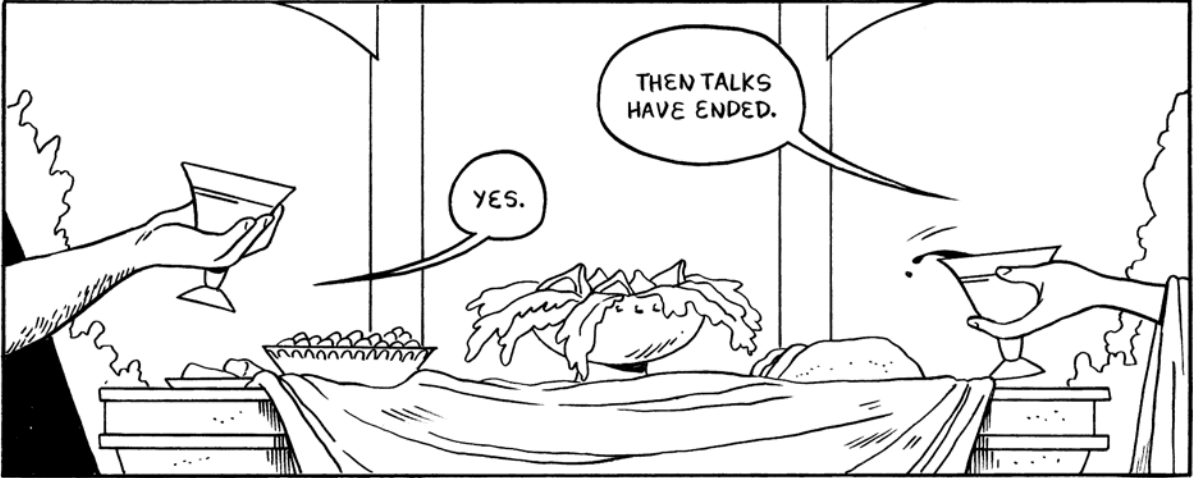


WELL, YOU'VE TRAVELED A LONG WAY.

YOU'RE STAYING IN THE CITY, YOU SAID?

I'M LEAVING TOMORROW, ACTUALLY.

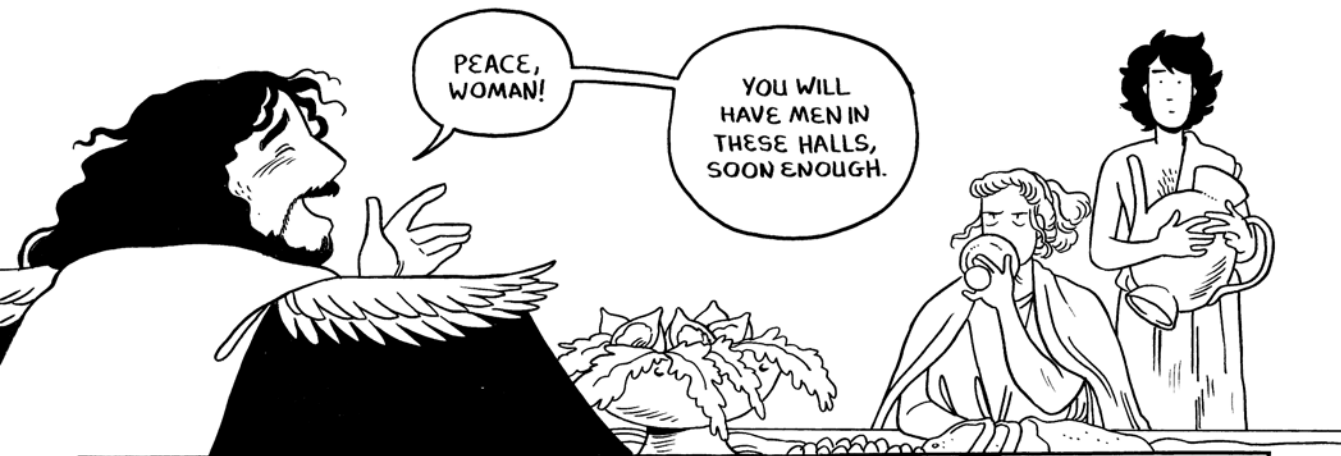
I WAS SENT AS EMISSARY SOME FIVE MONTHS AGO, TO NEGOTIATE WITH YOUR KING BASILIOS.



THEN TALKS HAVE ENDED.

YES.





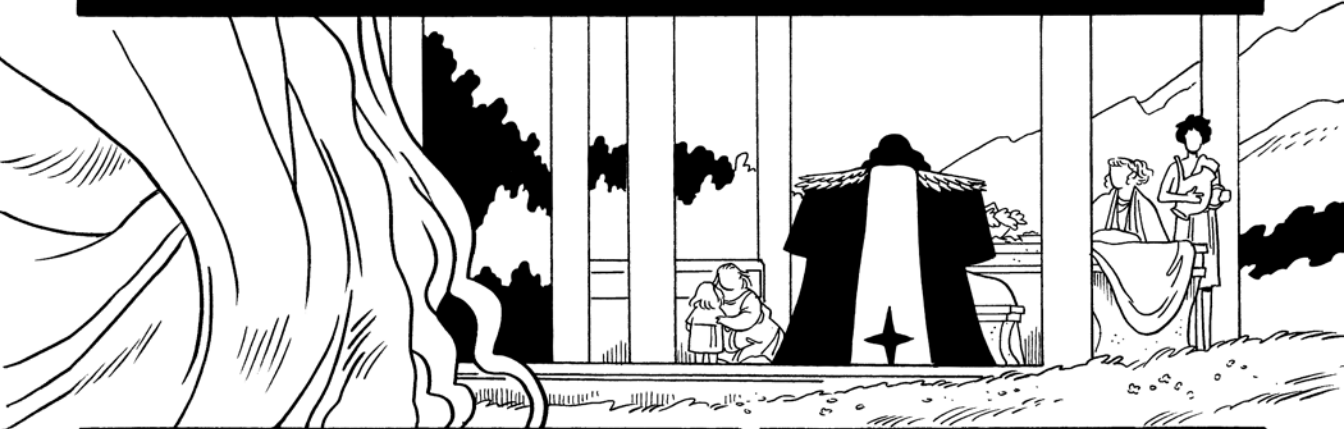


AND WHEN I RETURN TO HIM.

BEARING SACRED WORD FROM THE BATTLEFRONT,



HE WILL HAVE ME EXECUTED.



THAT, I CANNOT SAY.

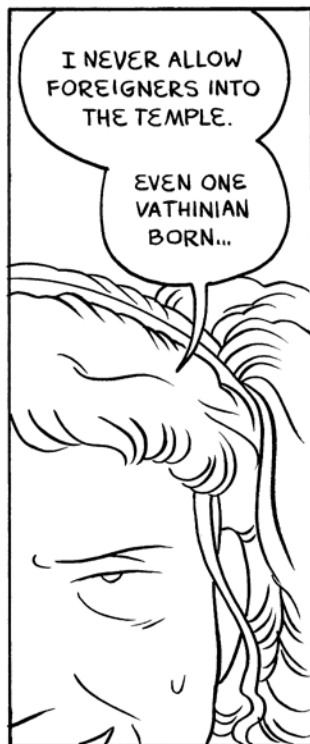
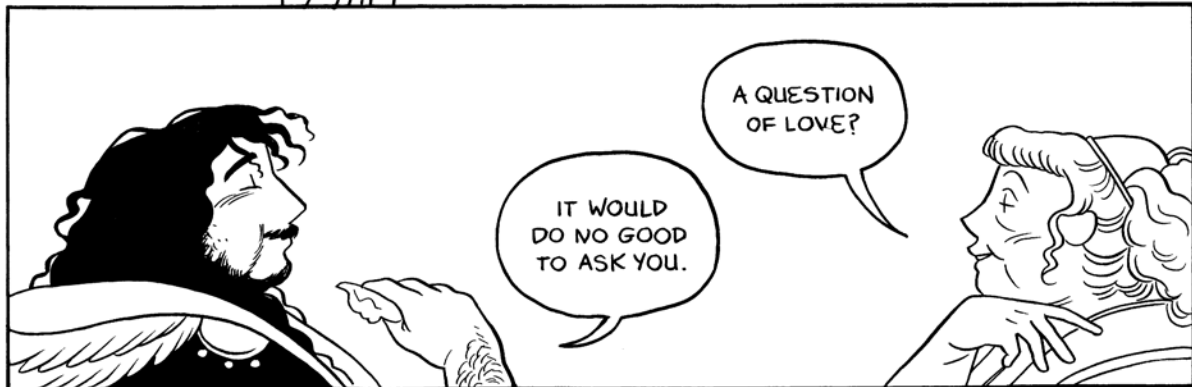
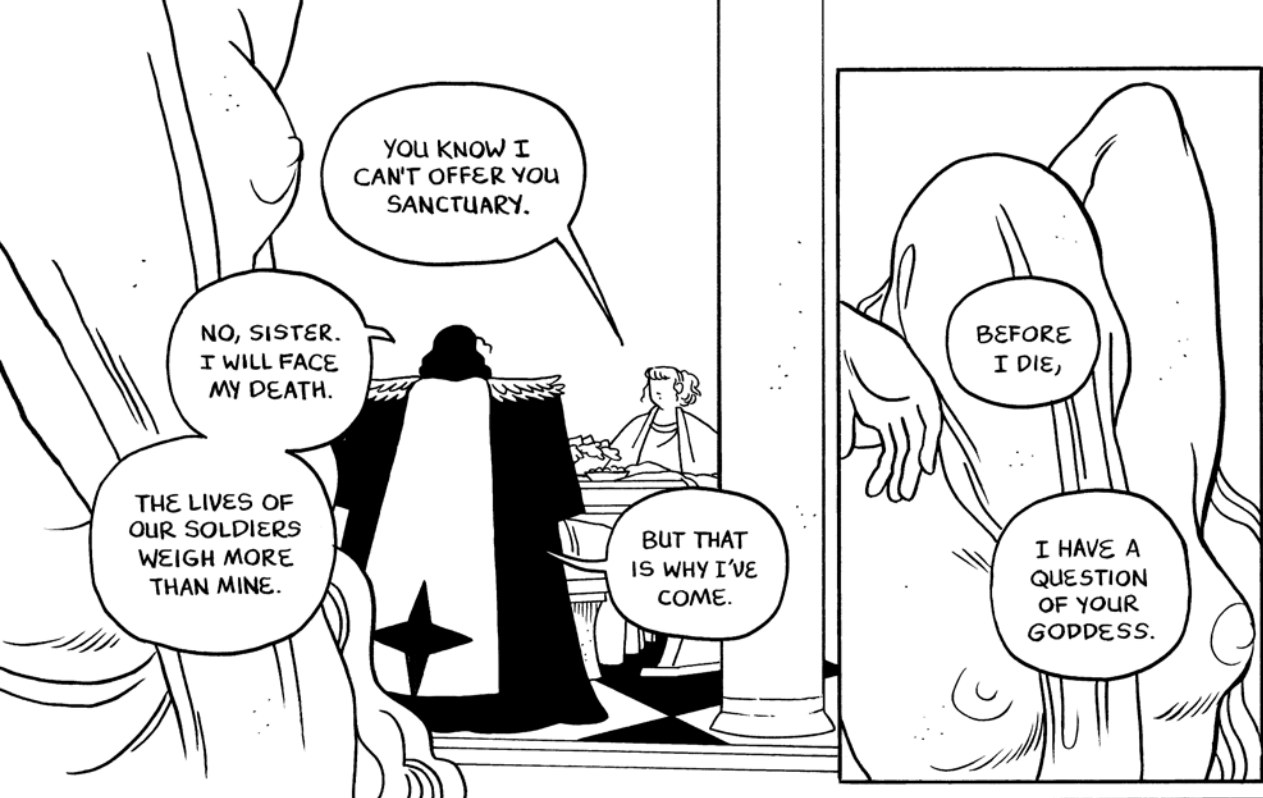
WHAT FOR?

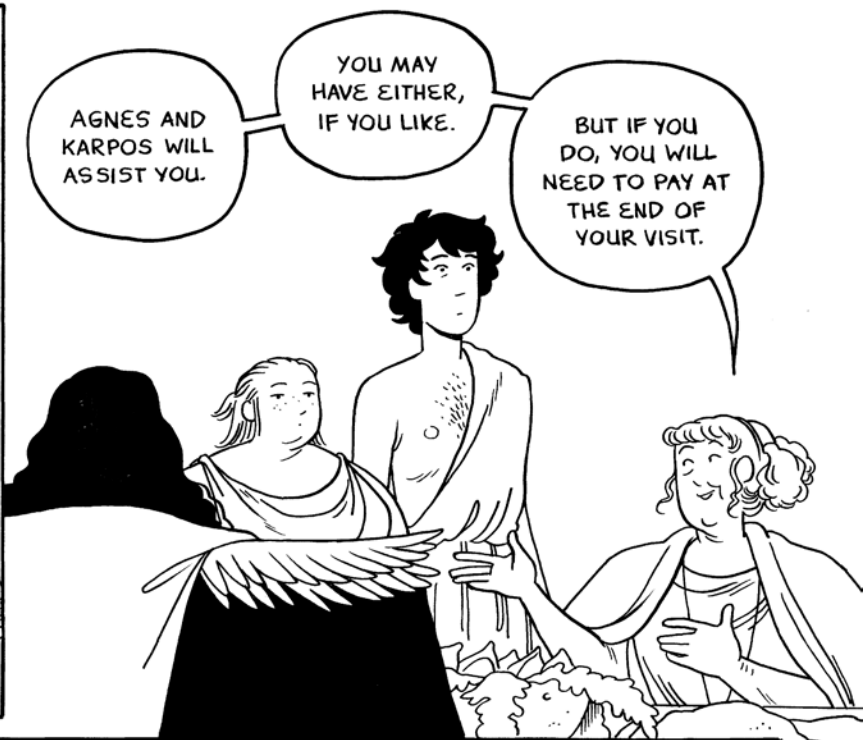
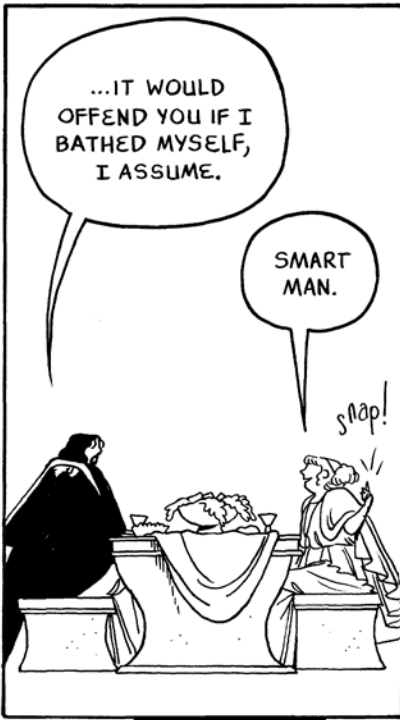
YOU DEEM ME TOO DELICATE.

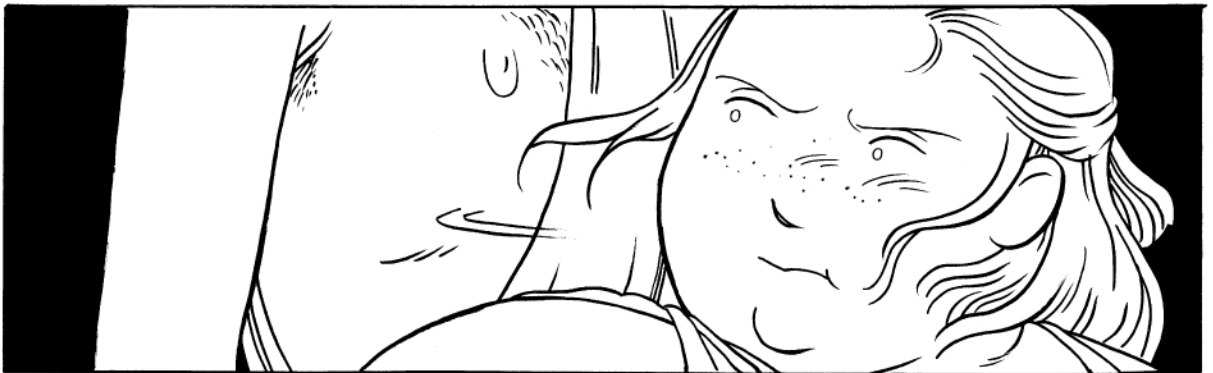
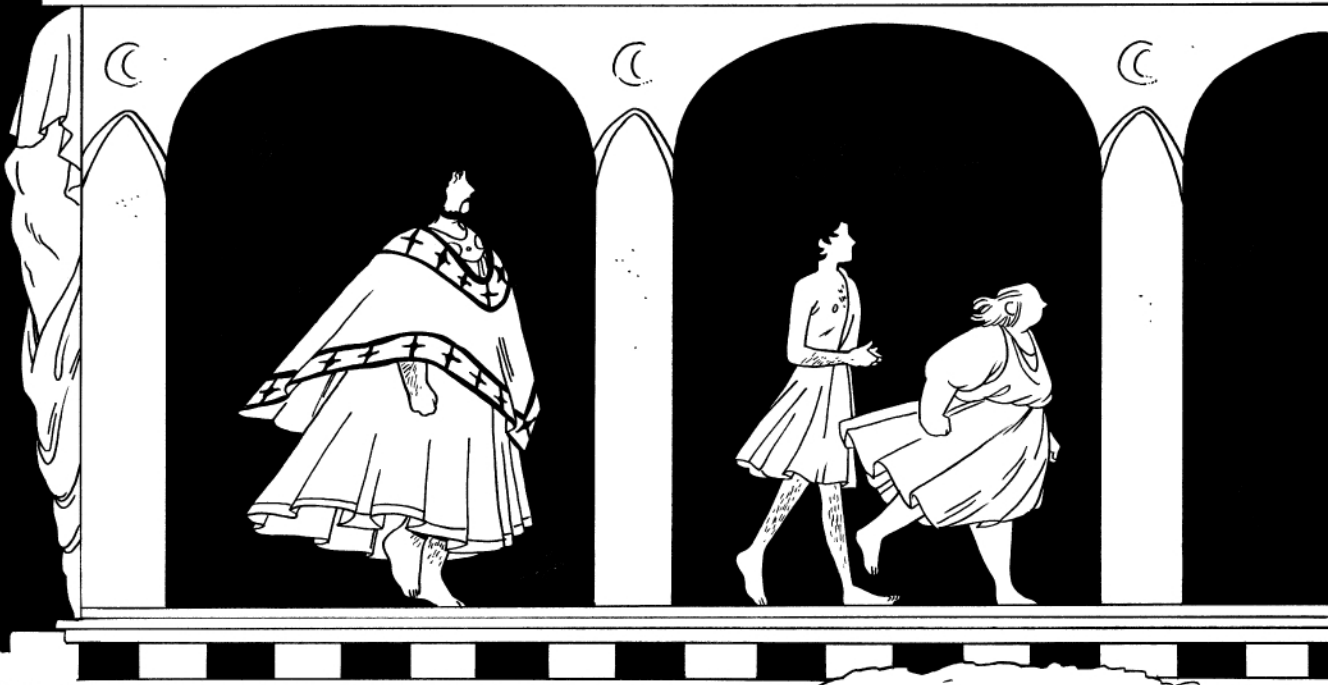


IT IS NO MATTER OF WAR.

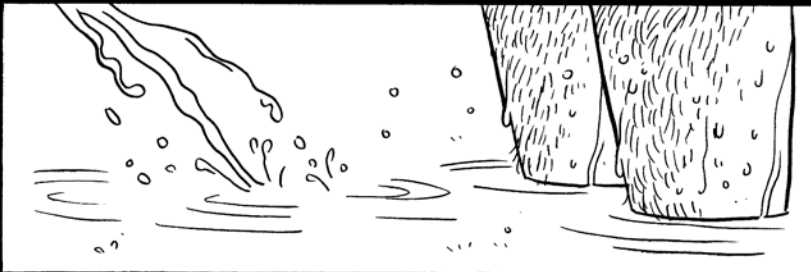
I HAVE DAMAGED SOMETHING DEAR TO HIM.



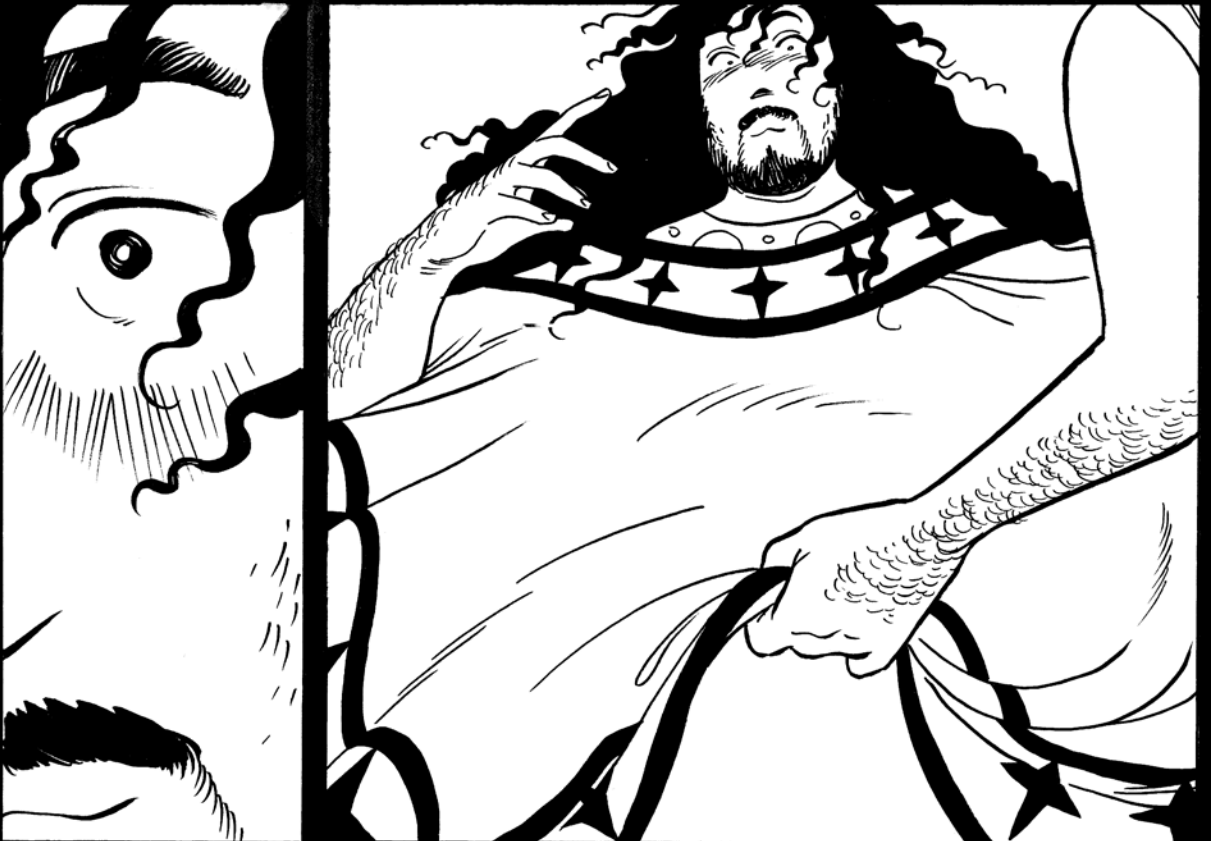
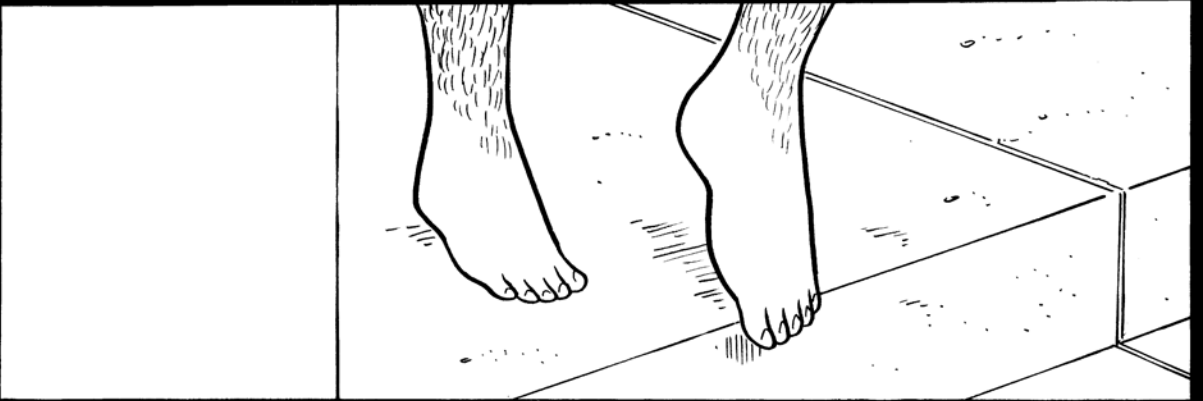




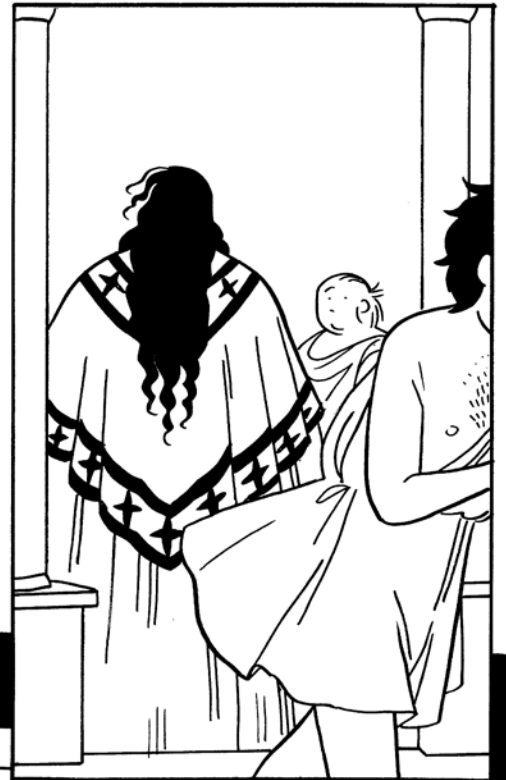


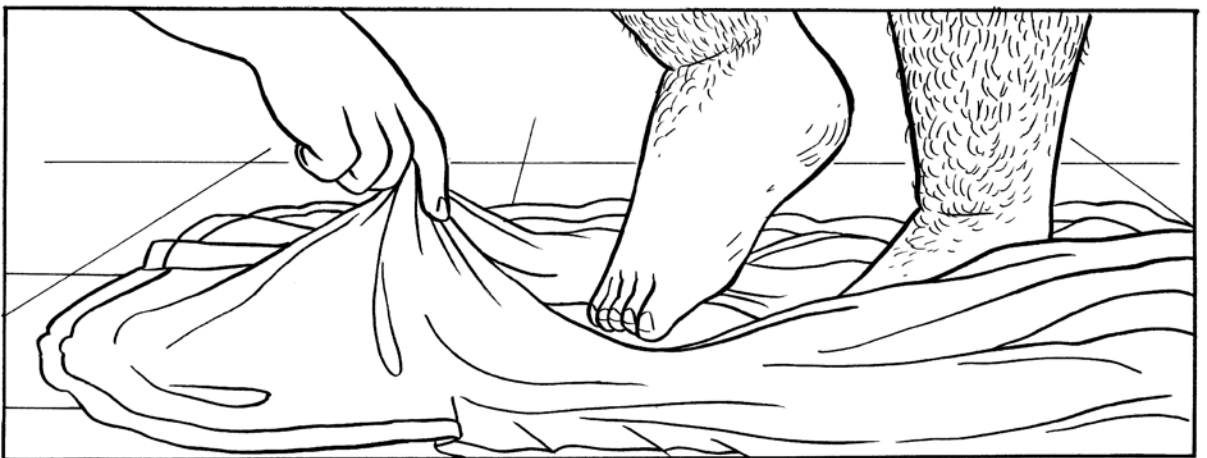
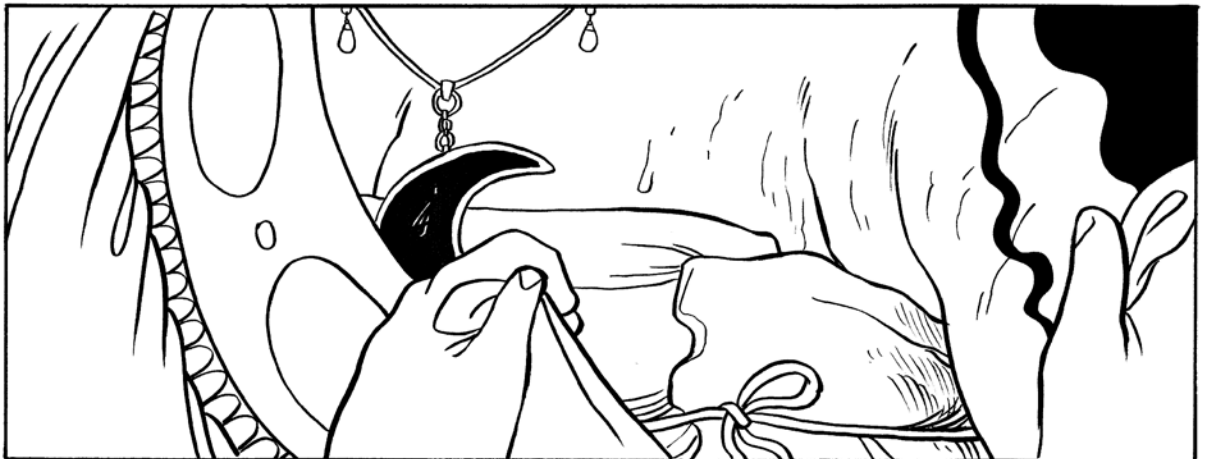




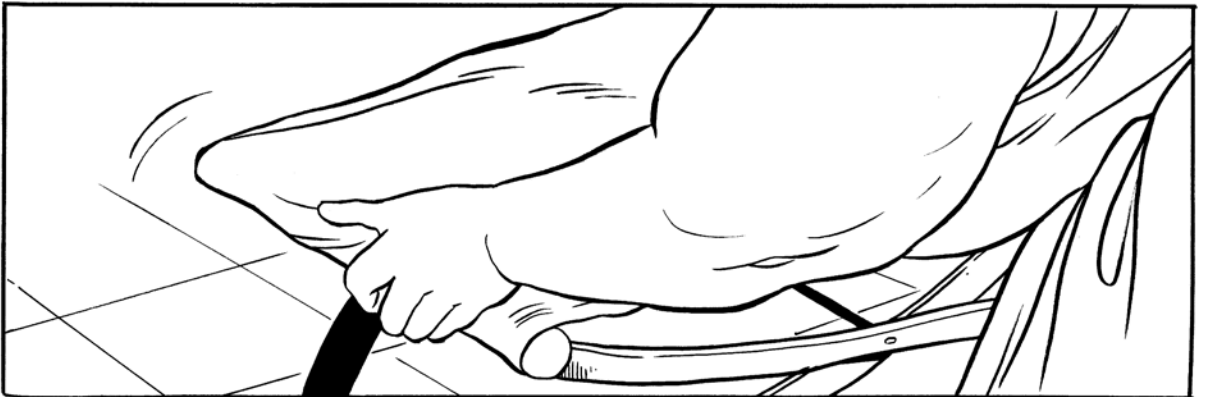
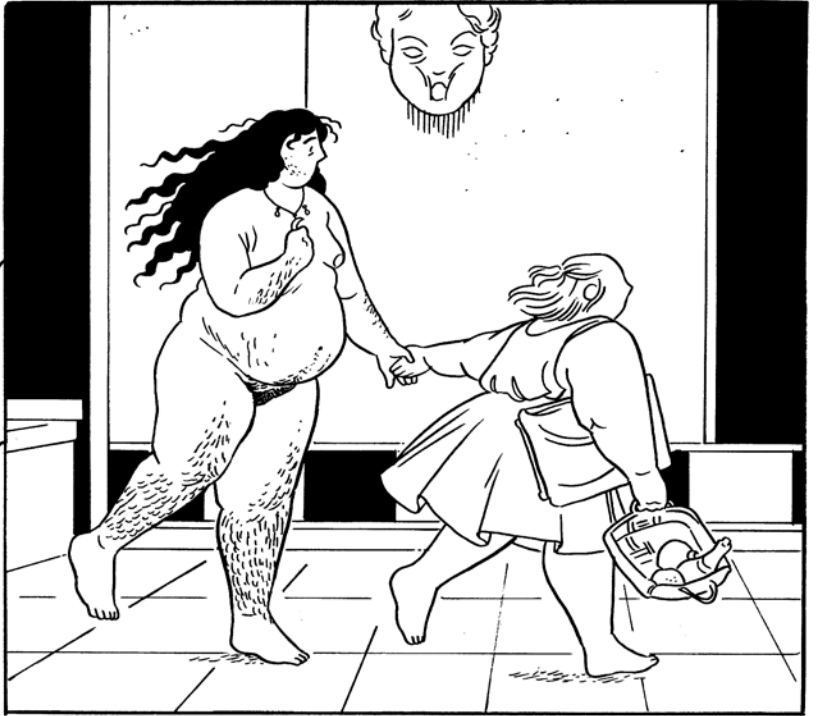


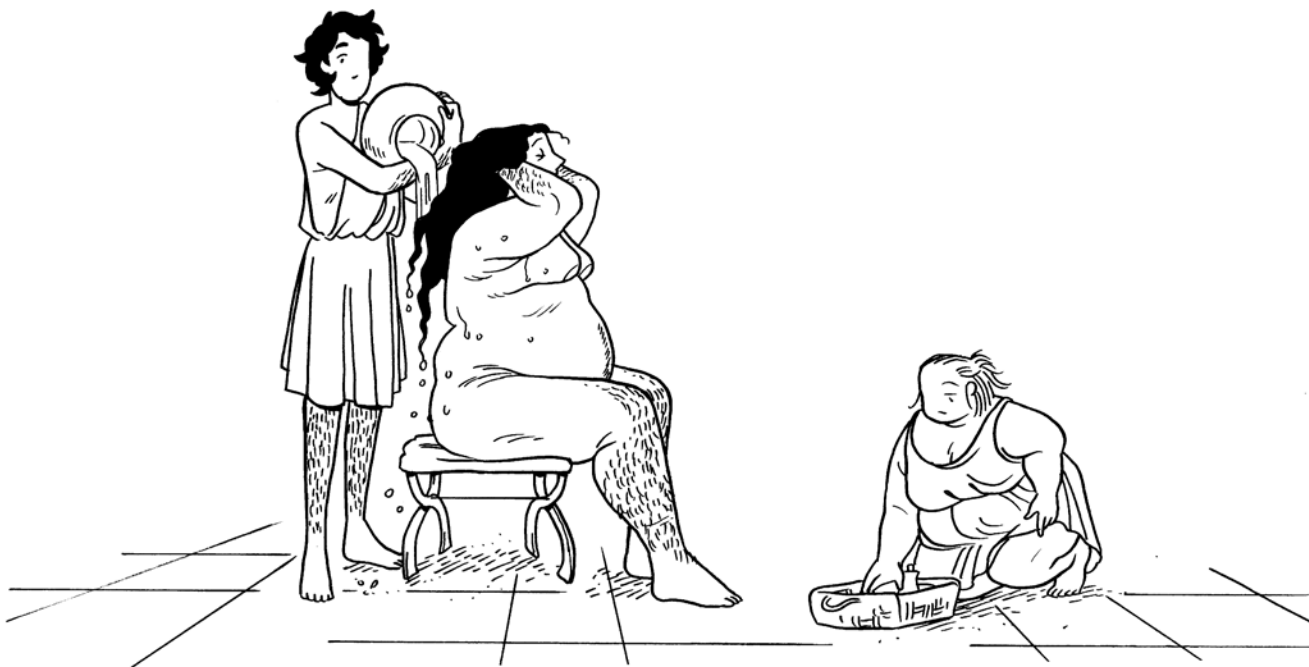
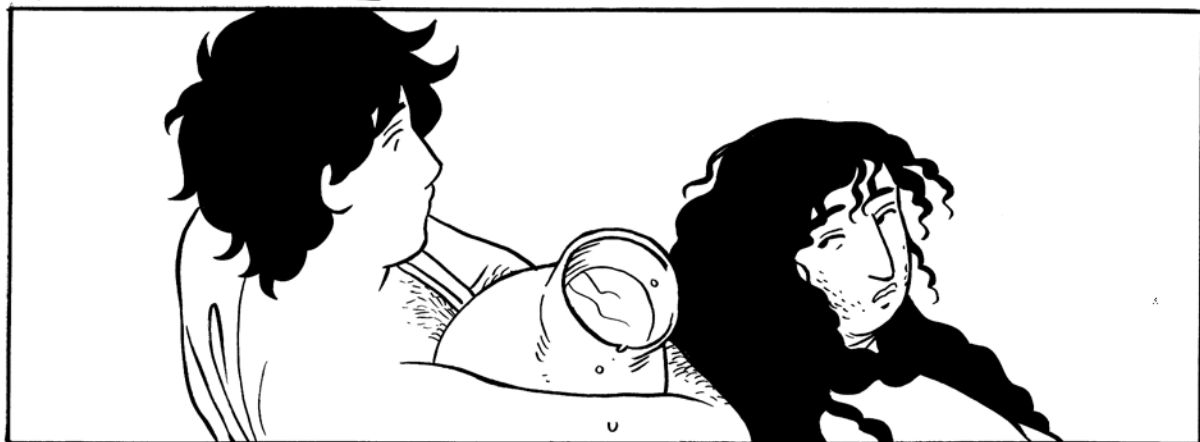
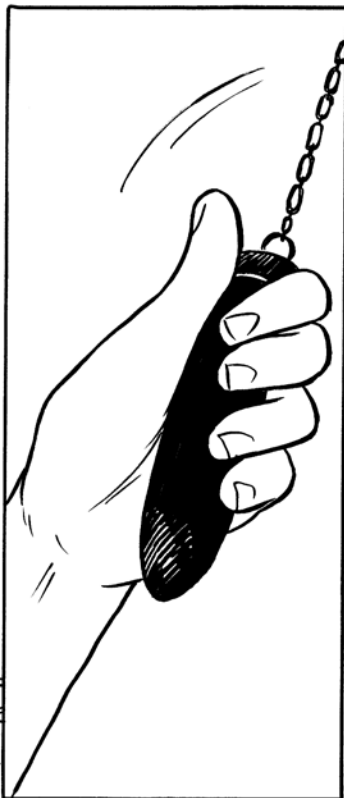


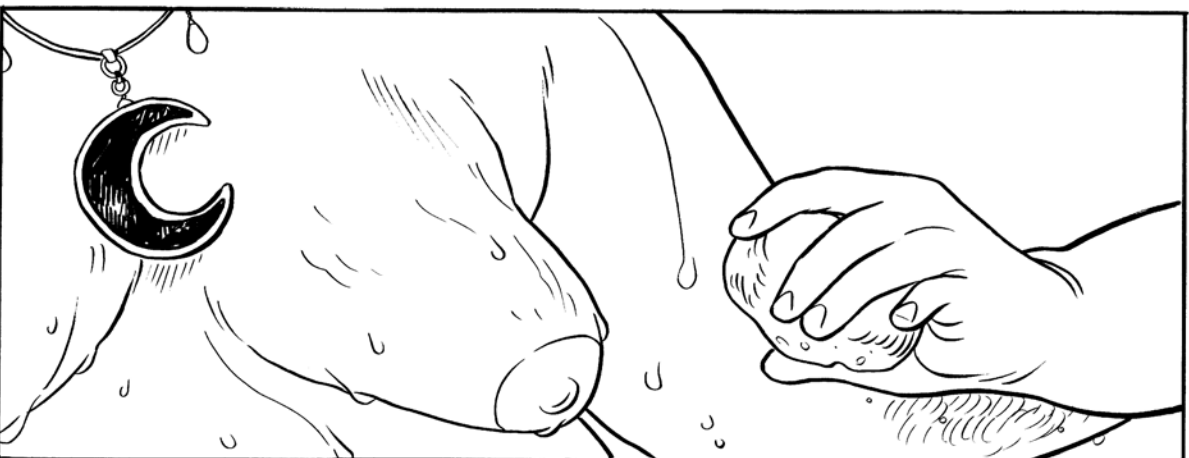
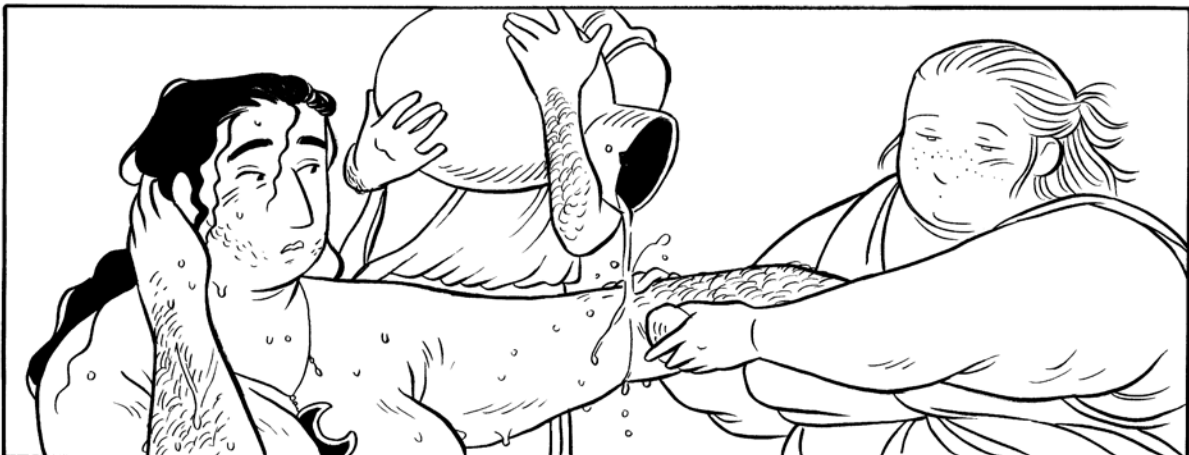
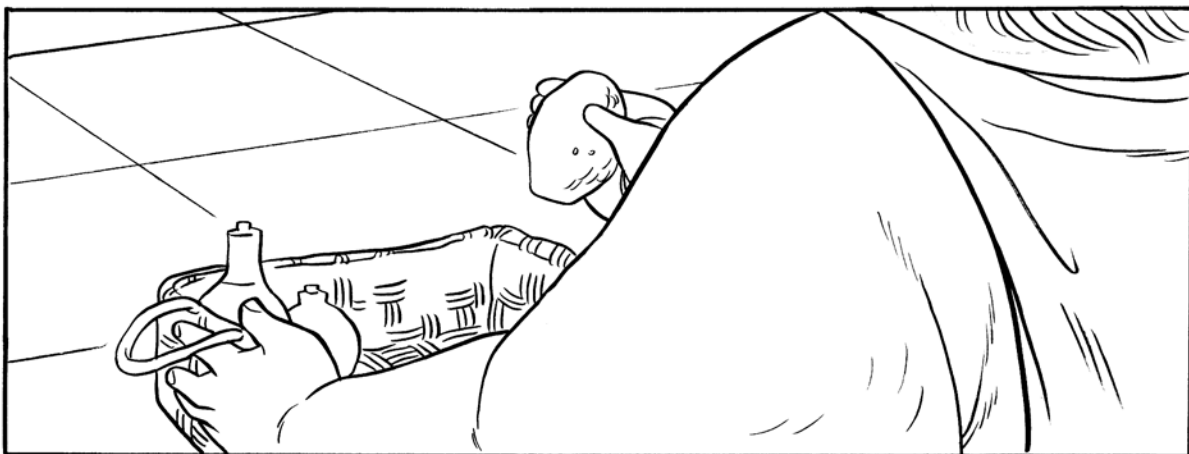




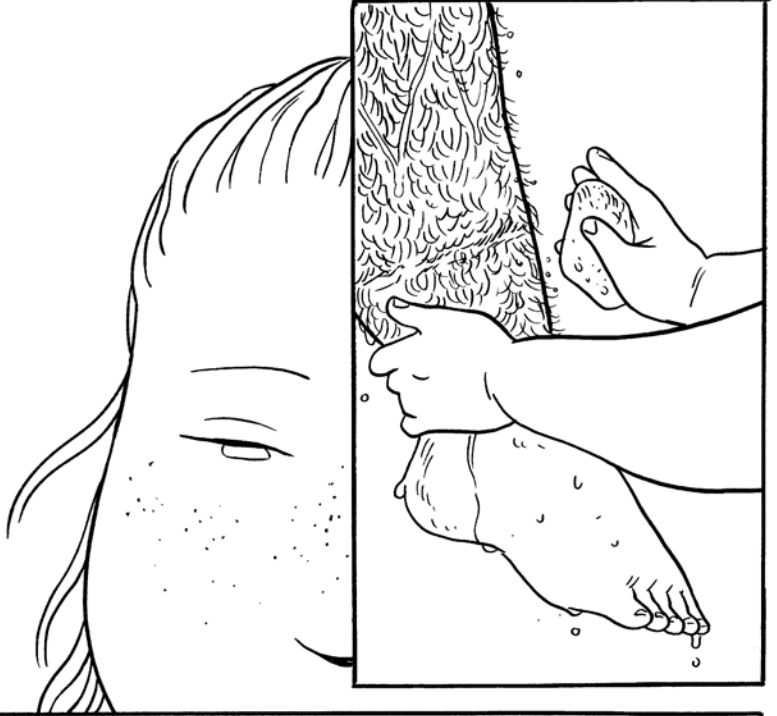


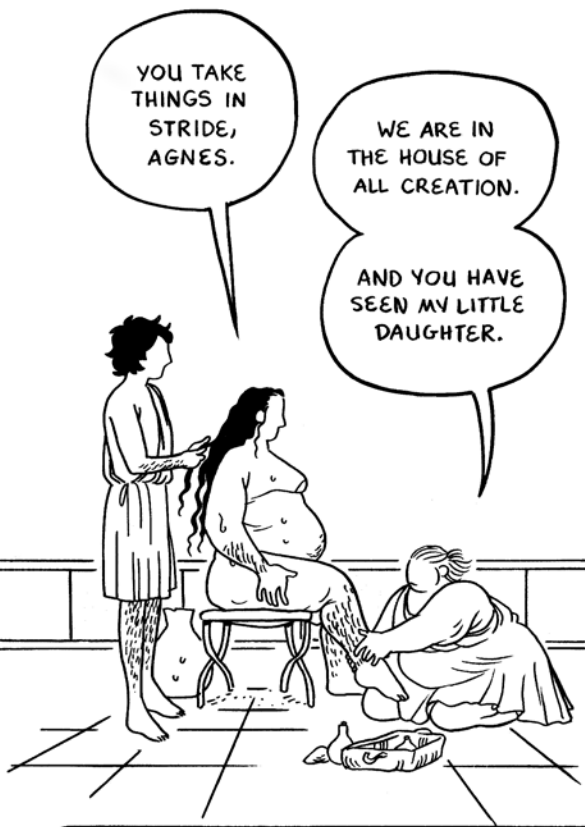








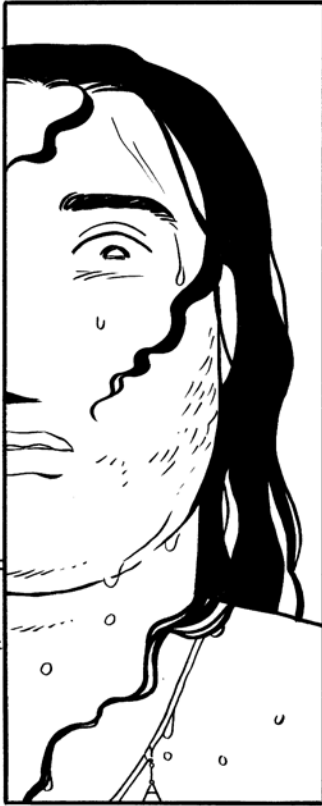




YOU TAKE THINGS IN STRIDE, AGNES.

WE ARE IN THE HOUSE OF ALL CREATION.

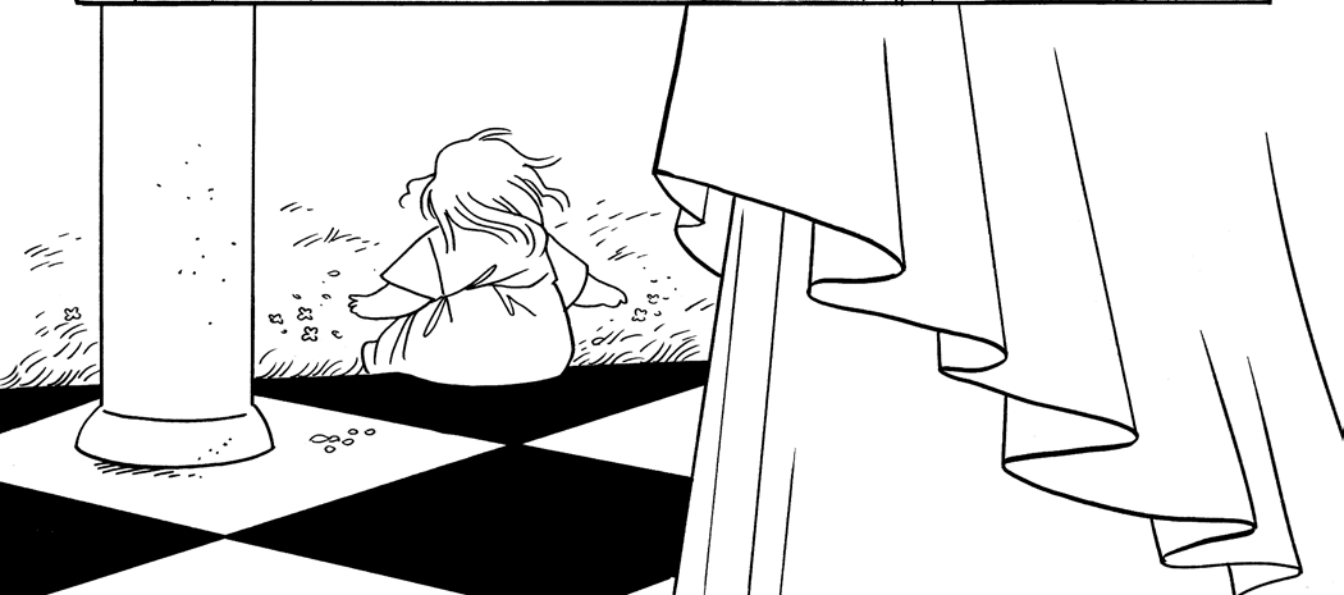
AND YOU HAVE SEEN MY LITTLE DAUGHTER.



THAT TROUBLE-MAKER!

I CAN SEE IT NOW - SHE'S CERTAINLY YOURS.

SHE IS THE PRIESTESS'S.





I CARE FOR MANY WOMEN LIKE YOU.

RIGHT AT THE TIME WHERE IT GETS DIFFICULT AGAIN.



USUALLY THEY ARE NOT PRETENDING TO BE MEN.



I DO NOT PLAY PRETEND.



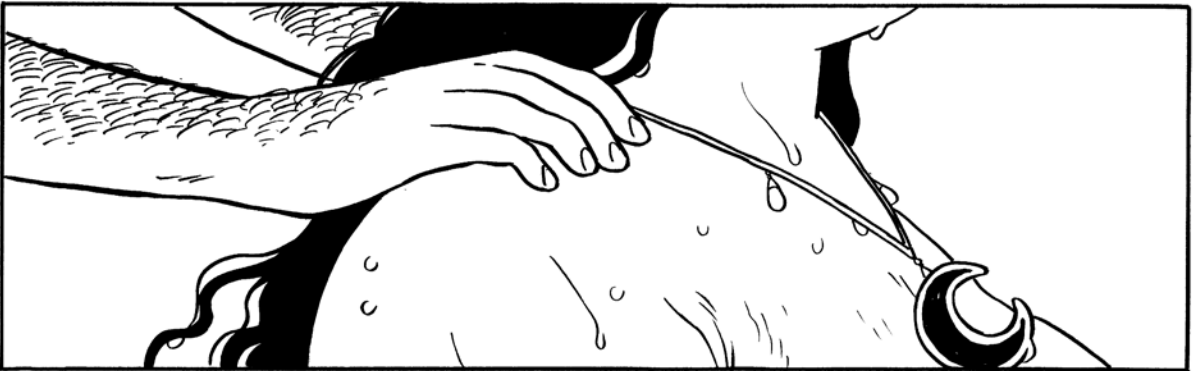
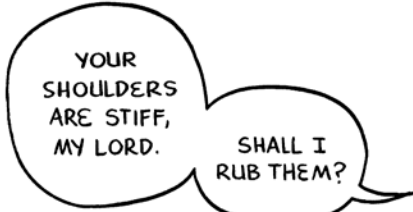
I FEAST WITH MEN. I RIDE WITH MEN.

I GIVE COUNSEL TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.



AND, LIKE A MAN UPON THE BATTLEFIELD,

I WILL DIE GLADLY FOR MY PEOPLE.





FEELING BETTER?

NO.

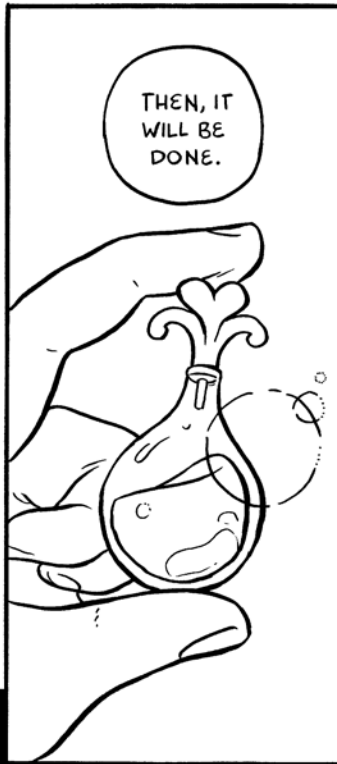


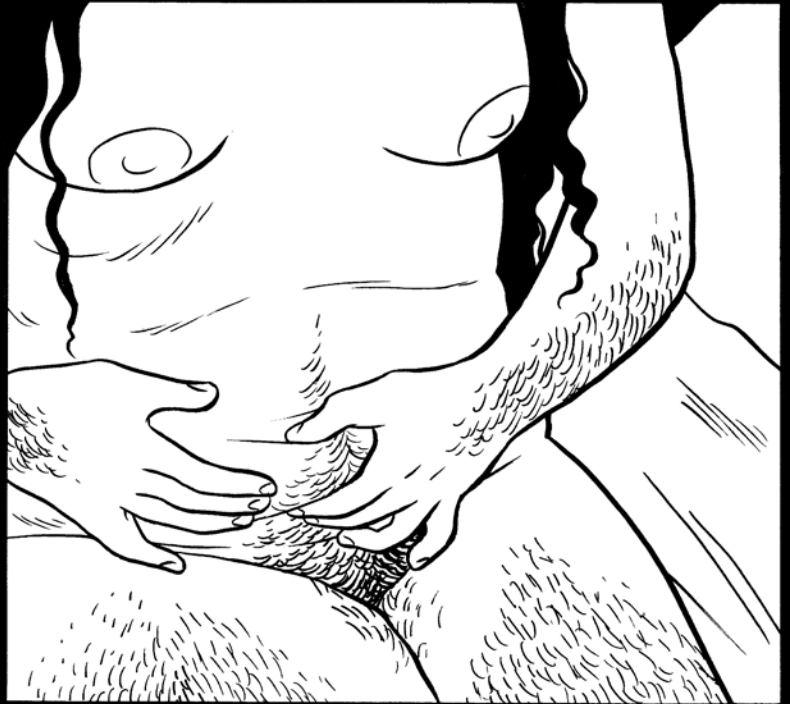
DRINK, THRESA.



THE PAIN, THE SICKNESS...

...IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE.

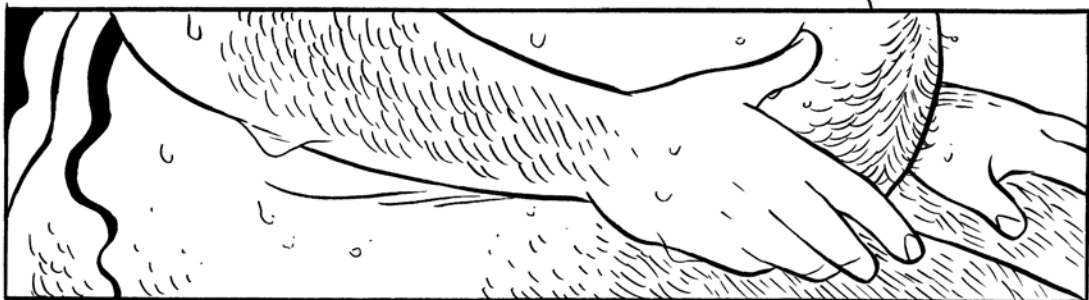
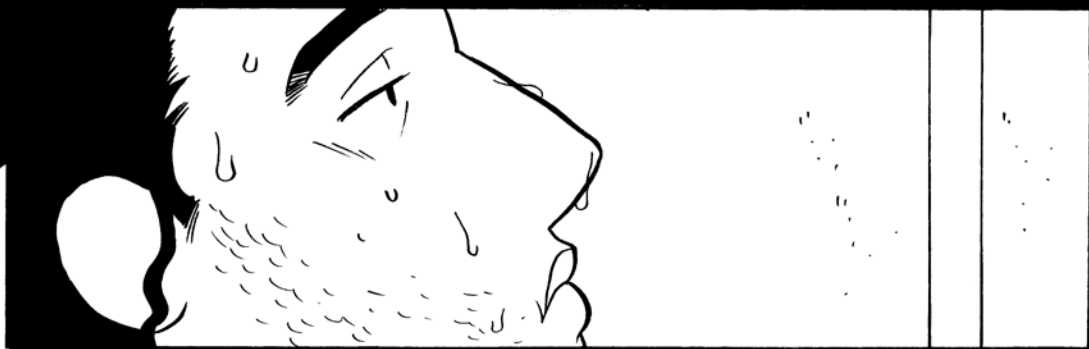


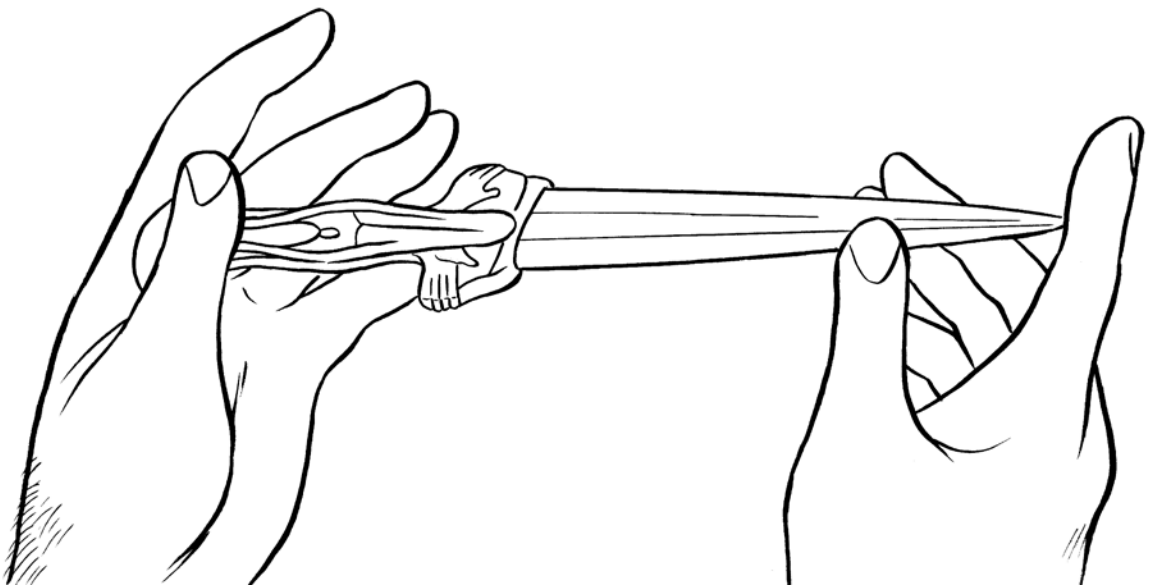


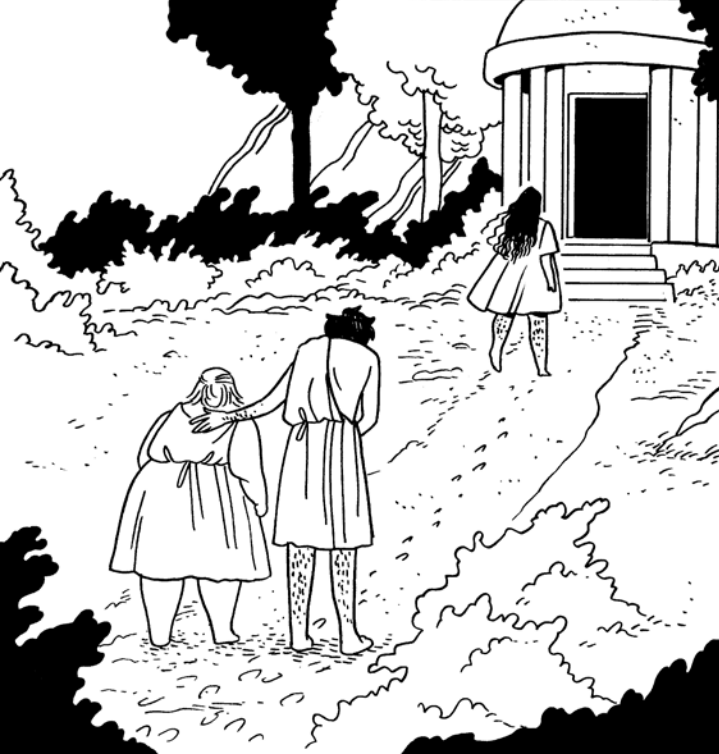
WHAT
WILL YOU
DO?

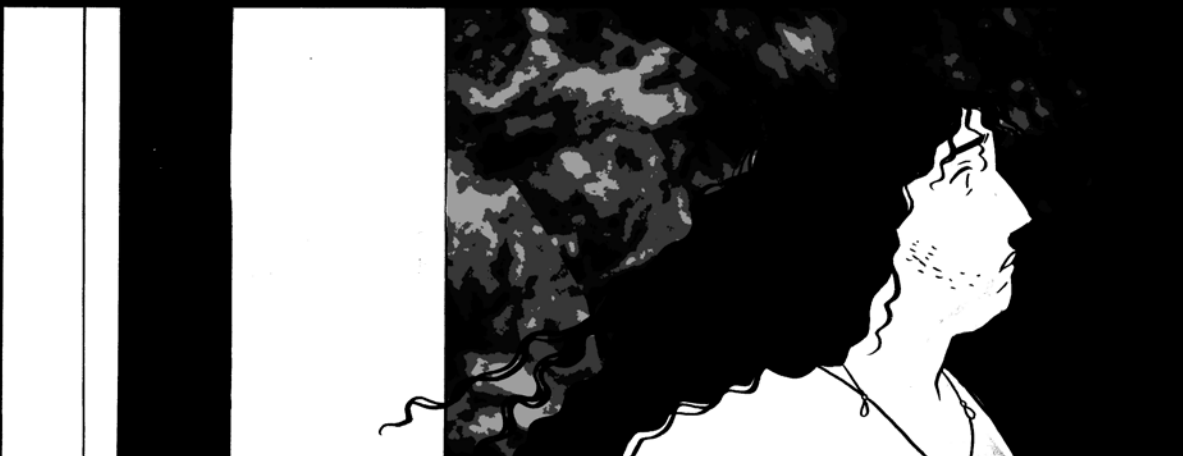


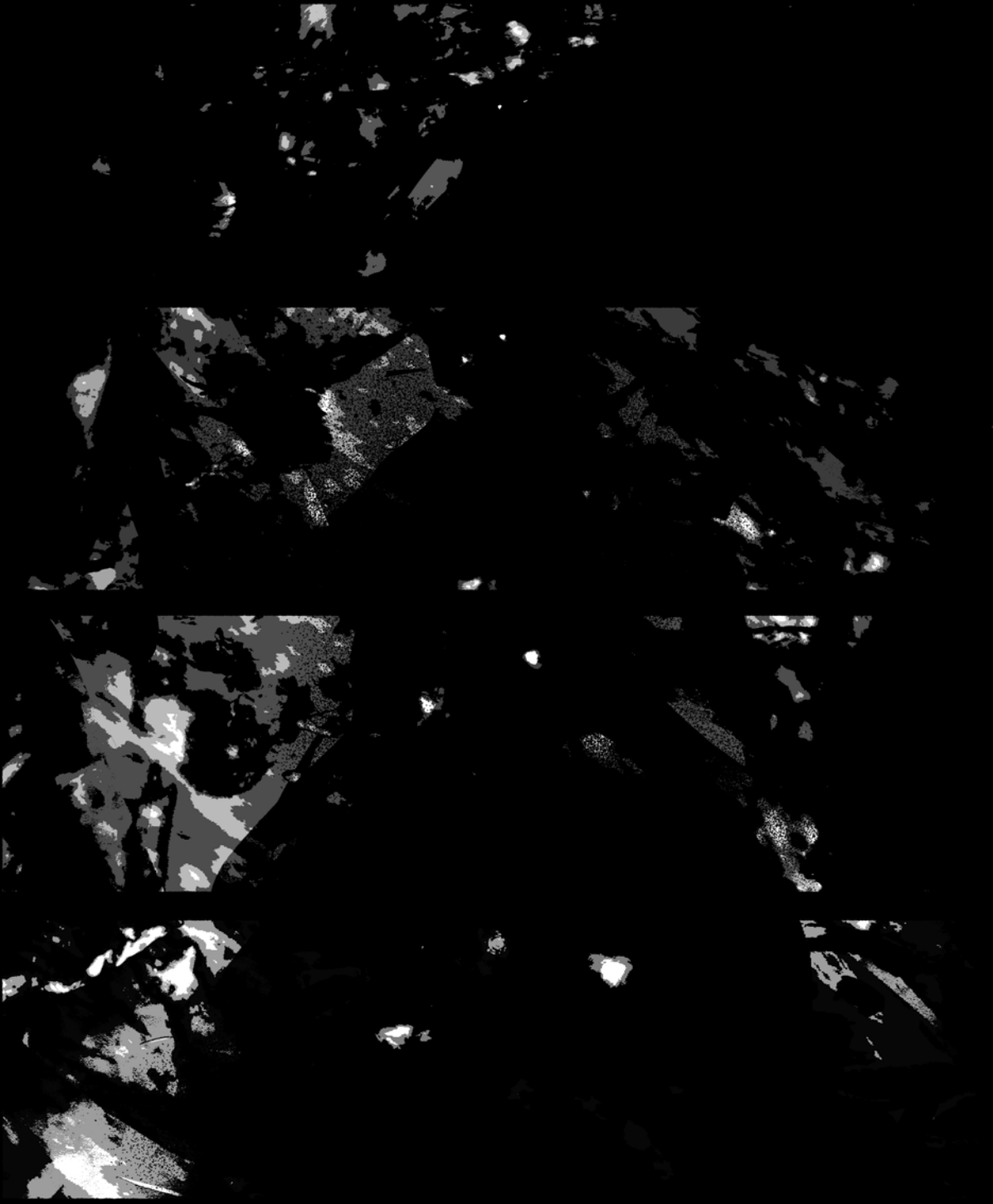
IF IT
DOESN'T
TAKE?







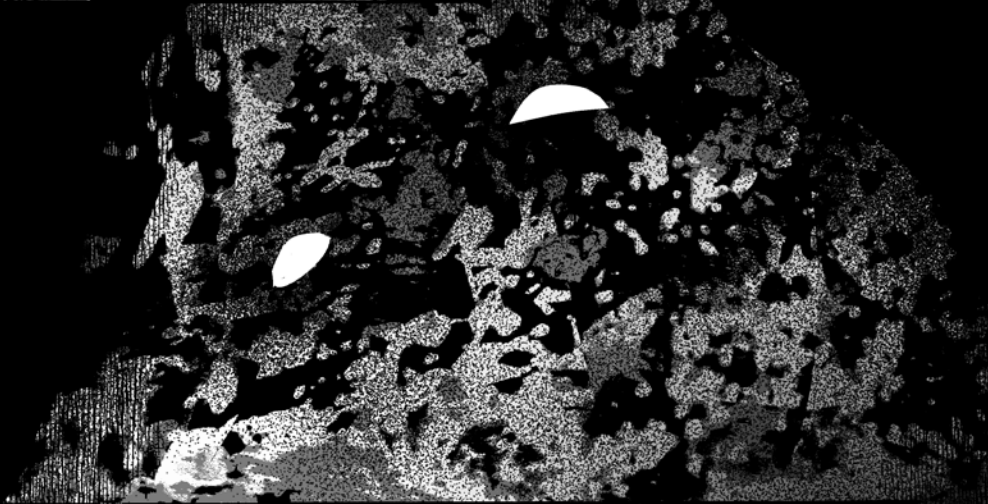








MM-!



I AM
THRESA, BORN
PHILOMENA.

MY MOTHER
BORE ME IN
THIS HOUSE.



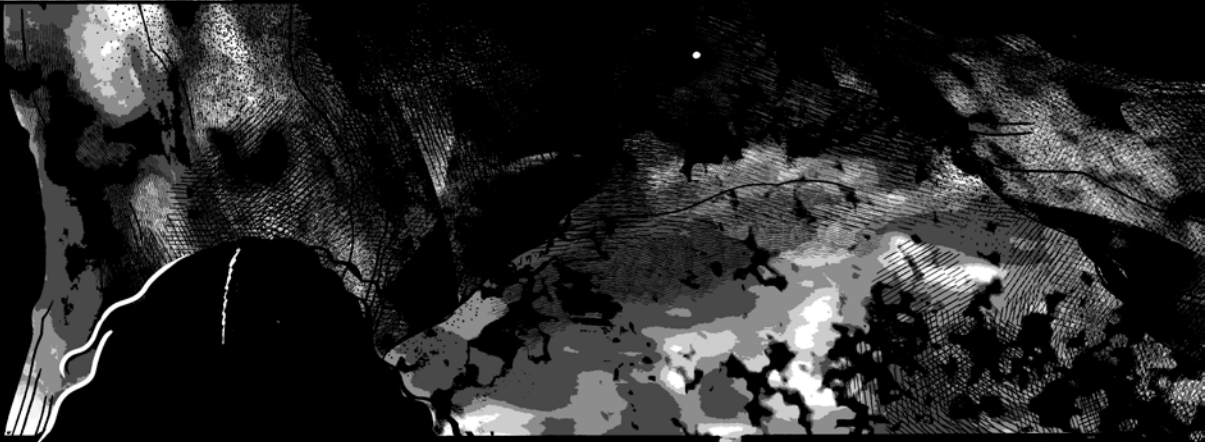
THUS, I
AM NAMED
FOR YOU.

MY FATHER
WAS OSTRACIZED
FROM THIS LAND
15 YEARS AGO.

I BREAK
NO LAW IN
RETURNING.

I ONLY
WISH YOU TO
UNDERSTAND WHY
MY VOICE IS OF
TWO PLACES...

...AND I
OF TWO
NAMES.



...A DOZEN
TIMES, PESNA
HAS SPILLED
HIMSELF IN ME.





I THOUGHT I WAS BARREN!

I THOUGHT BECAUSE I WAS TRULY A MAN, THE GODS HAD NOT CARVED A FULL WOMB IN MY CLAY.



PESNA THOUGHT SO, TOO.



THAT GAVE ME TIME TO COME HERE AND BEAR MY CHILD IN SECRET.

TALKS WERE MEANT TO GO THROUGH WINTER.

I WOULD HAVE FACED MY KING ALONE.




A BOY'S PLAN. PUH!

I WILL NOT MOCK THE GODS WITH TENDER FOOLERY.



OH,
GODDESS -

YOU HAVE
ABANDONED
ME!




I, WHO FIRST
TOOK BREATH
AT YOUR FEET,


WHO PRAYED
TO YOU WHERE
NO ONE COULD
HEAR —

I HAVE BEEN
LOYAL, ALWAYS,
DESPITE MYSELF.
DESPITE MY
KING.

WAS
IT NOT
ENOUGH?



...HAVE I
WRONGED
YOU?



I AM NOT
UNGRATEFUL.

YOU CARRIED ME
FROM STINGING
GIRLHOOD AND
SWADDLED ME
IN MEN'S ROBES.

I FEARED YOU
WOULD LEAVE
ME THEN, BUT
YOU DID NOT.

I KNOW
YOU DID
NOT.

I WALKED
NAKED INTO MY
KING'S CHAMBERS
AND I WAS NOT
AFRAID.

I AM
AFRAID
NOW.



I HAVE
BEEN
SELFISH.

I HAVE CRAVED
THE FRUITS OF
MANHOOD AND
WOMANHOOD
ALIKE.

RIGHTLY YOU
SHALL STARVE
ME OF BOTH.



BUT I AM
AFRAID!




...YOU
TORMENTOR.

YOU
BITCH.


I CAN
SEE IT
NOW.

YOUR FALSE
AFFECTION WAS
A LURE TO MY
CAGE.

YOU DO
NOT LOVE
ME.




I HAVE
GUIDED YOUR
IDIOT KING GLADLY,
AND MINE WILL EAT
WELL FROM MY
WORK.




I HAVE DONE
THIS WHILE MY BODY
ACHED AND SWELLED
AND TAUNTED ME WITH
DISOBEDIENT FLESH.

O, GODDESS,
YOU MEANT TO
MAKE ME
SUFFER!



BUT I HAVE
LOVED EVERY
FAT INCH OF WHAT
CONDEMNS ME.



SO DO NOT
MOCK ME WITH
EXECUTION.

I GO NOW,
MY MESSAGE
WITH ME.

WAR WILL
DEVOUR THIS
LAND AND HIS

AND I SHALL
BE THE BEAST
WHO MADE IT SO!



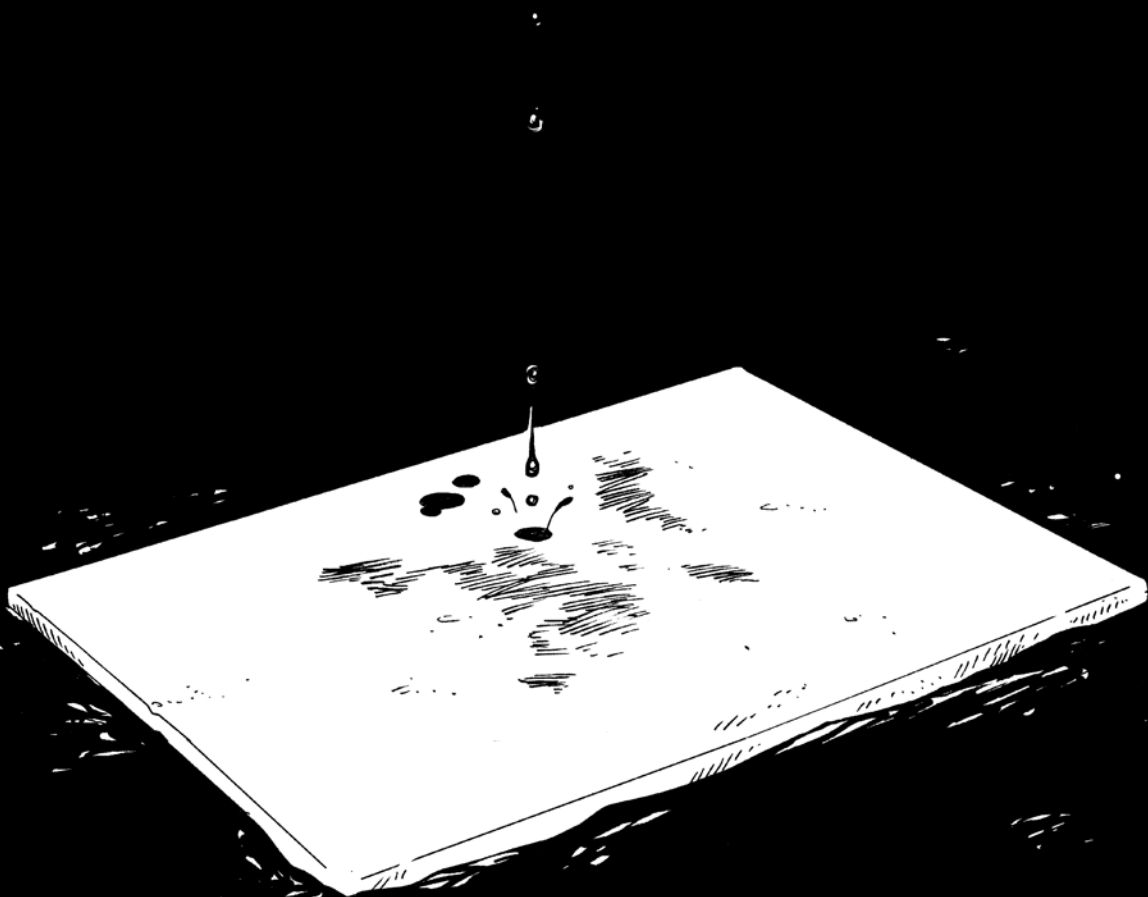


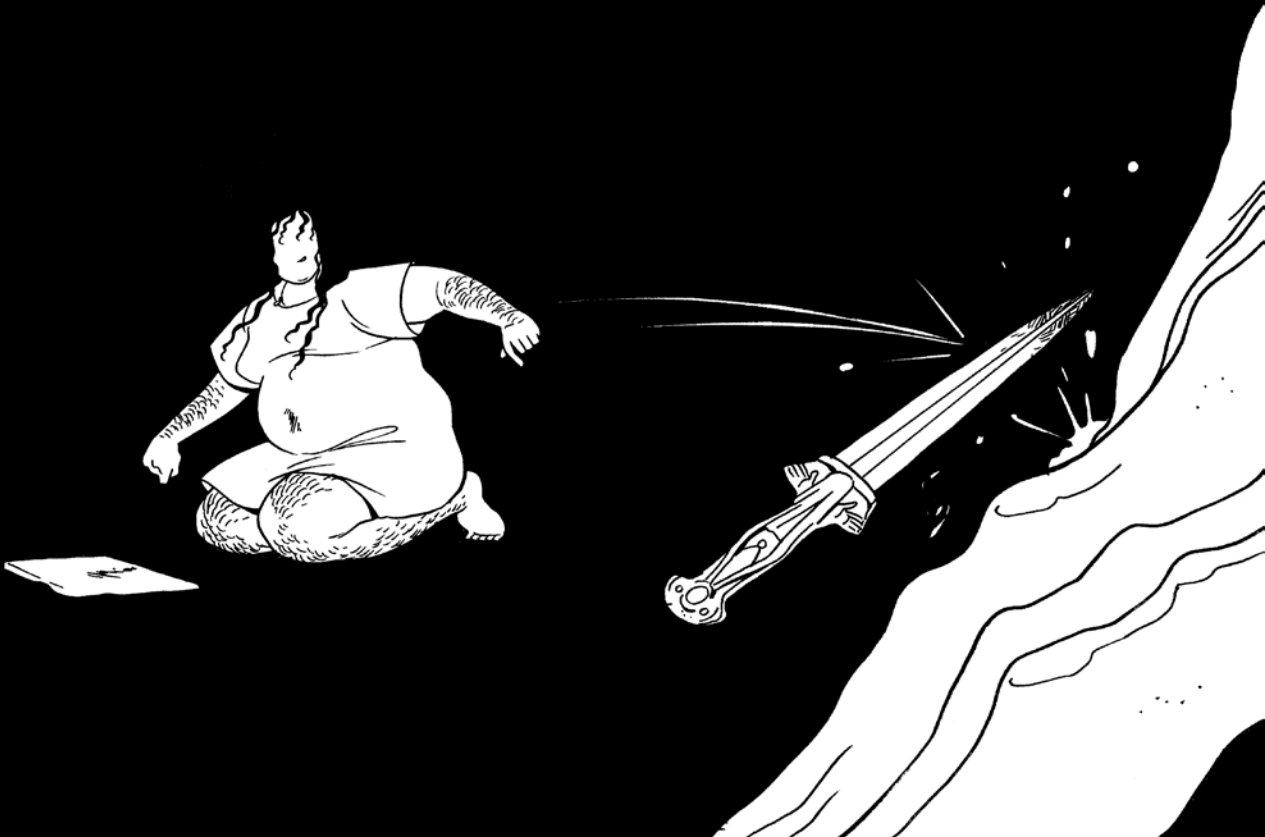
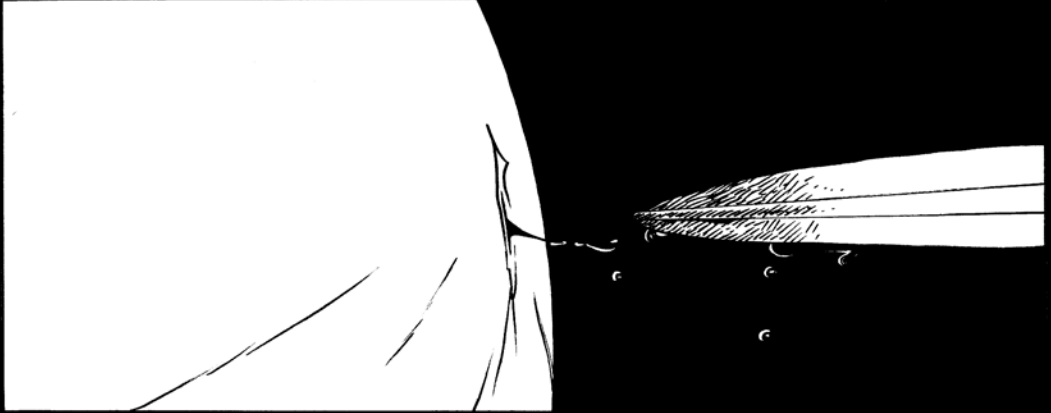
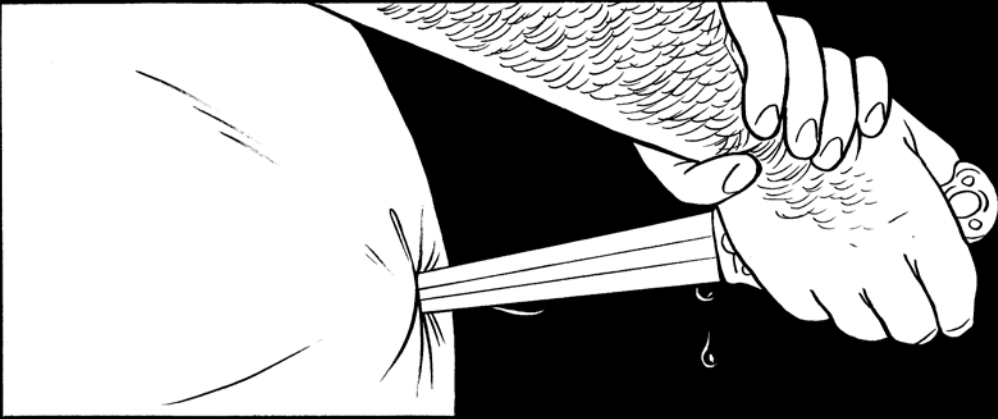














OH,
NO...

OH, MY
LOVE...



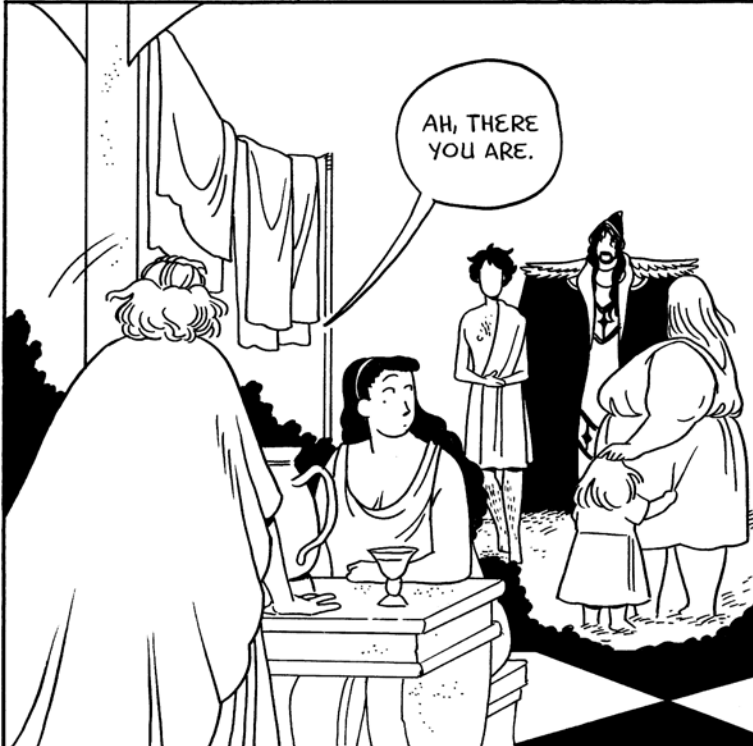
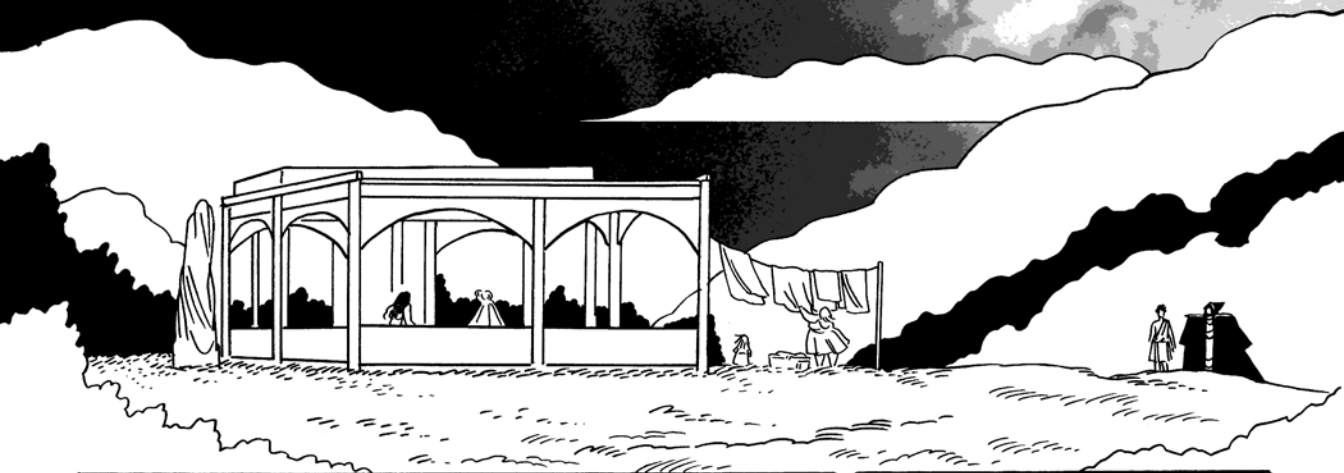
I'M
SORRY

I'M
SORRY

IT'S
ONLY MINE,
SEE?

JUST
MINE...





AH, THERE YOU ARE.



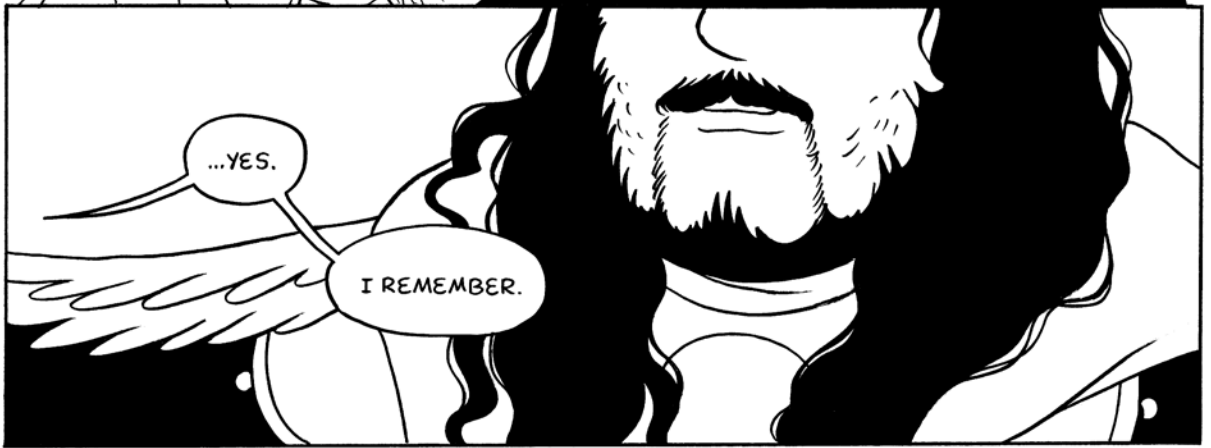
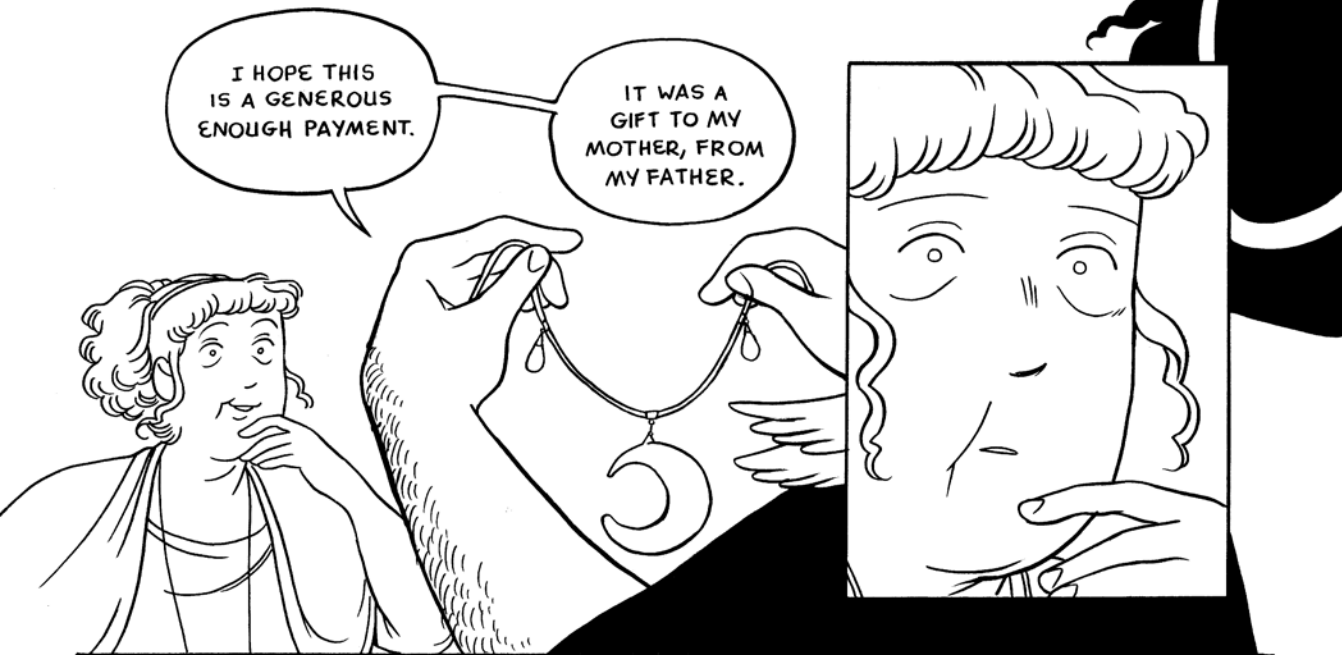
DID YOU GET YOUR ANSWER?



I DID NOT JOIN WITH KARPOS OR AGNES,

BUT THEY WERE VERY GOOD TO ME.

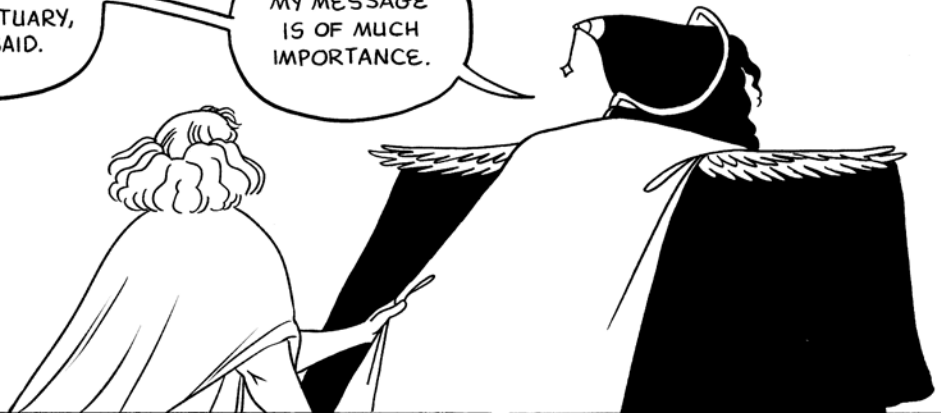
FOOLISHLY, I LEFT MY COIN PURSE IN THE CITY.





I DO NOT SEEK SANCTUARY, I SAID.

MY MESSAGE IS OF MUCH IMPORTANCE.

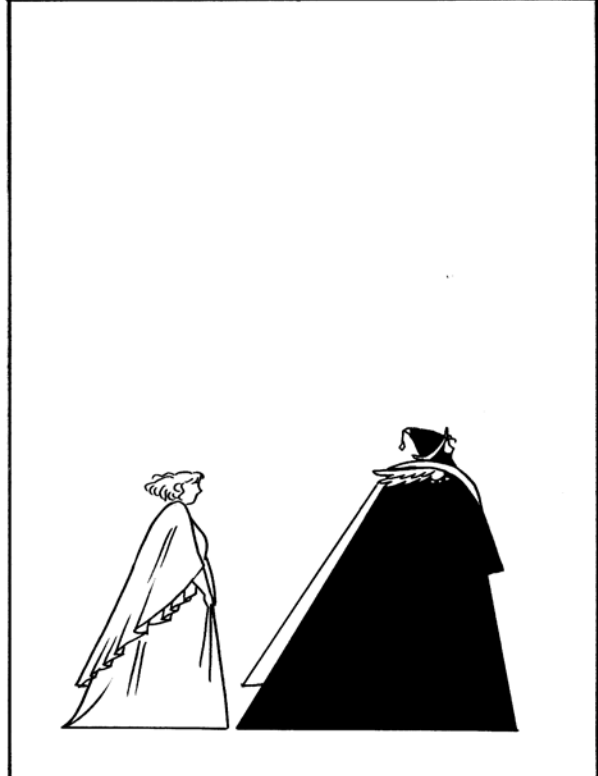
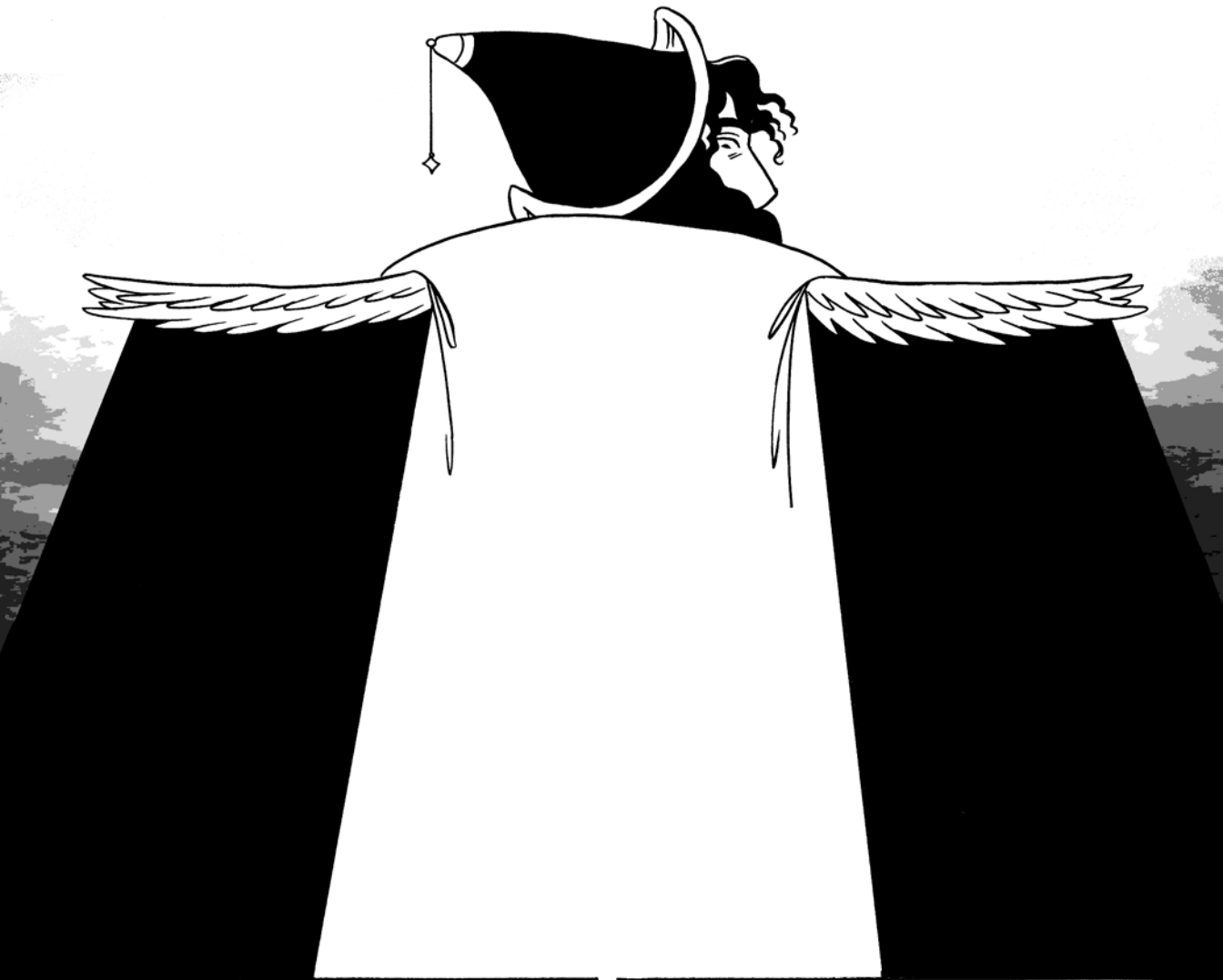


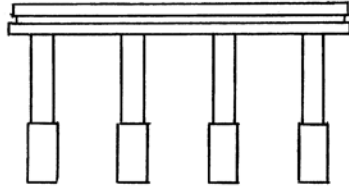
KARPOS WILL GO IN YOUR PLACE.

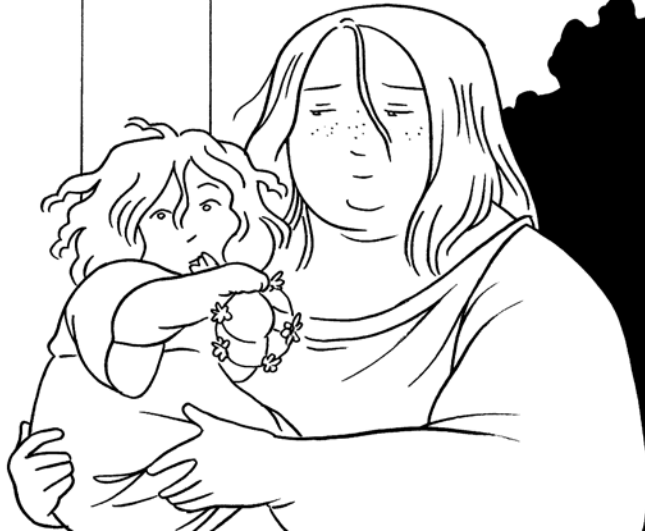
PLEASE, I MUST INSIST —

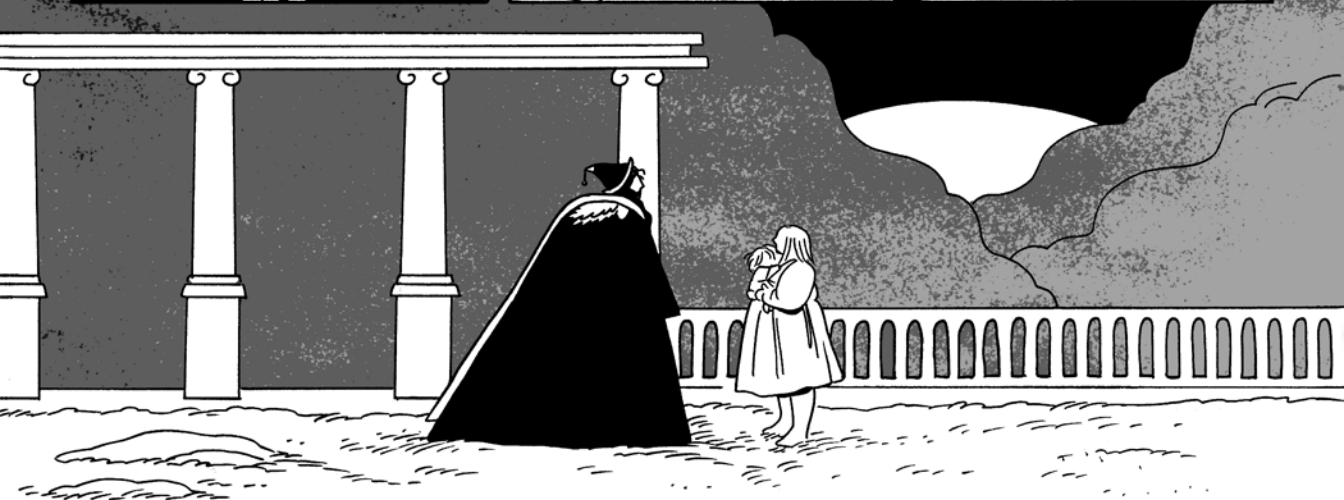


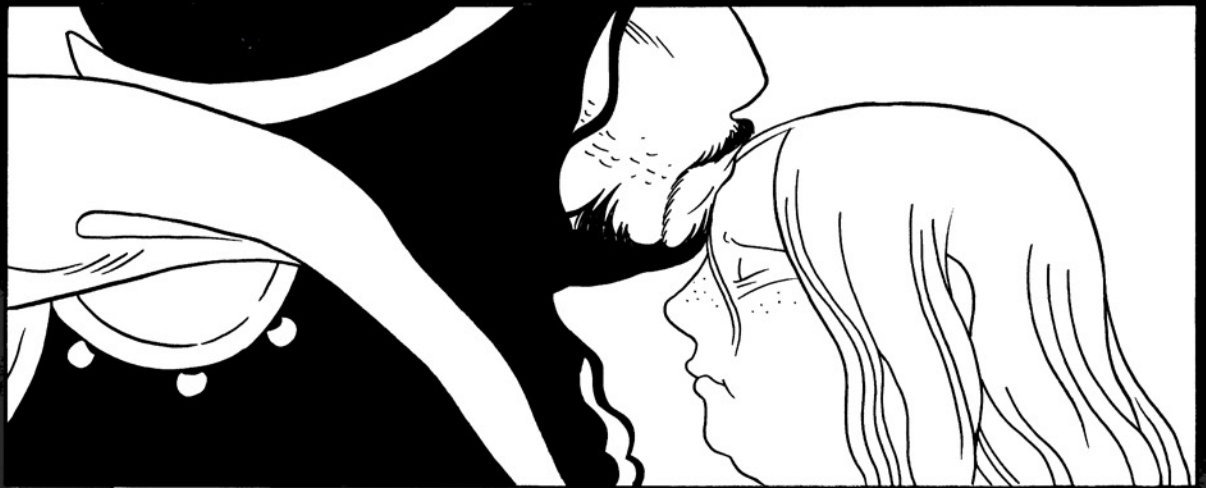
PLEASE, SISTER!

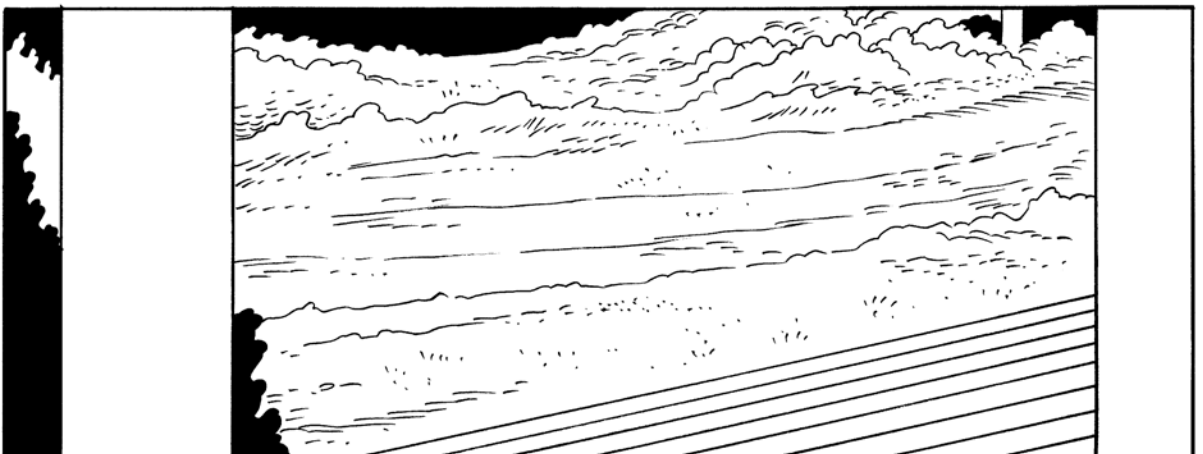
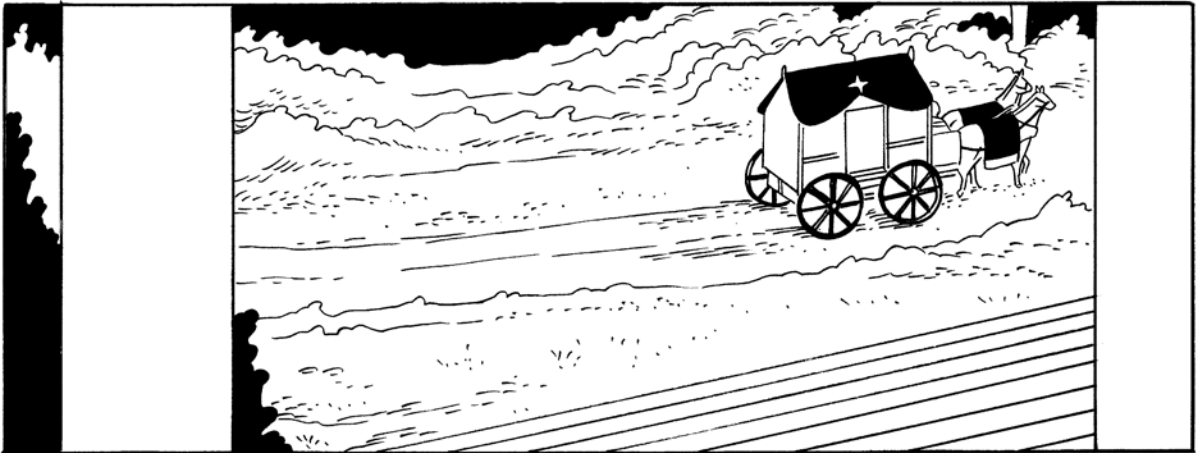
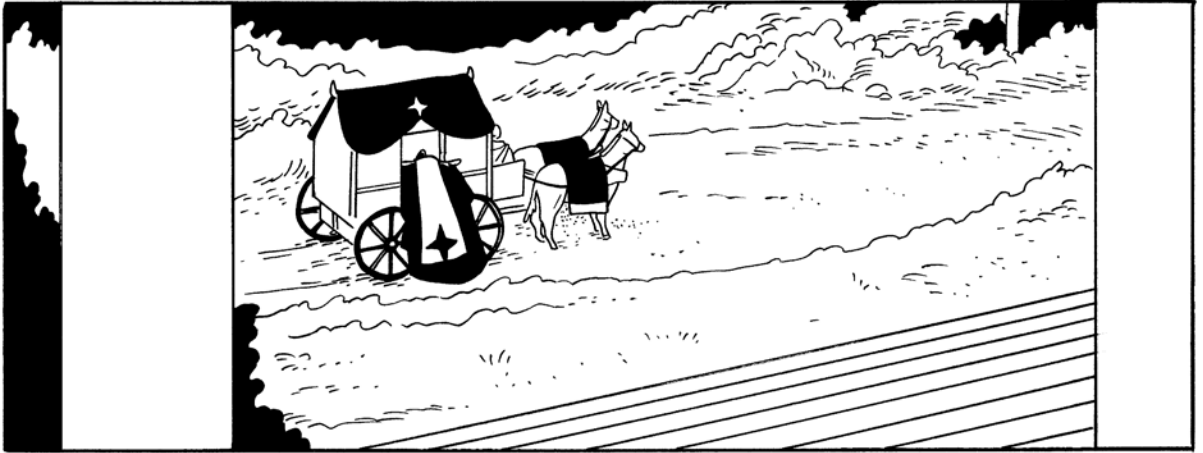
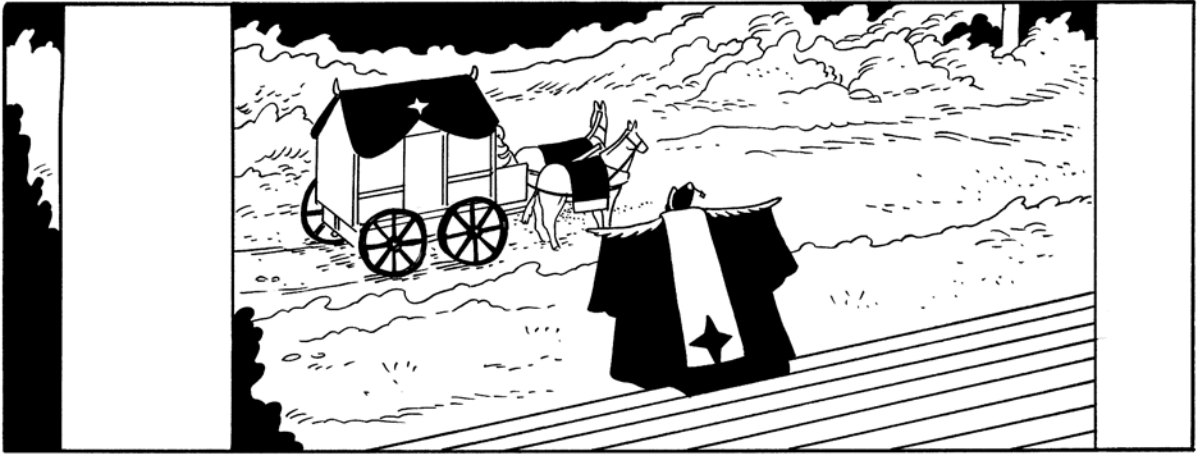


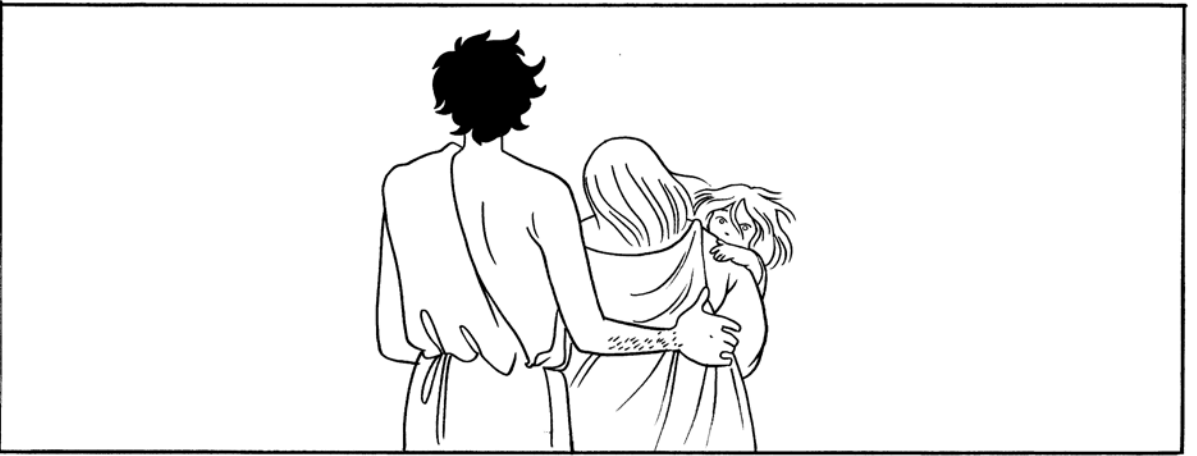
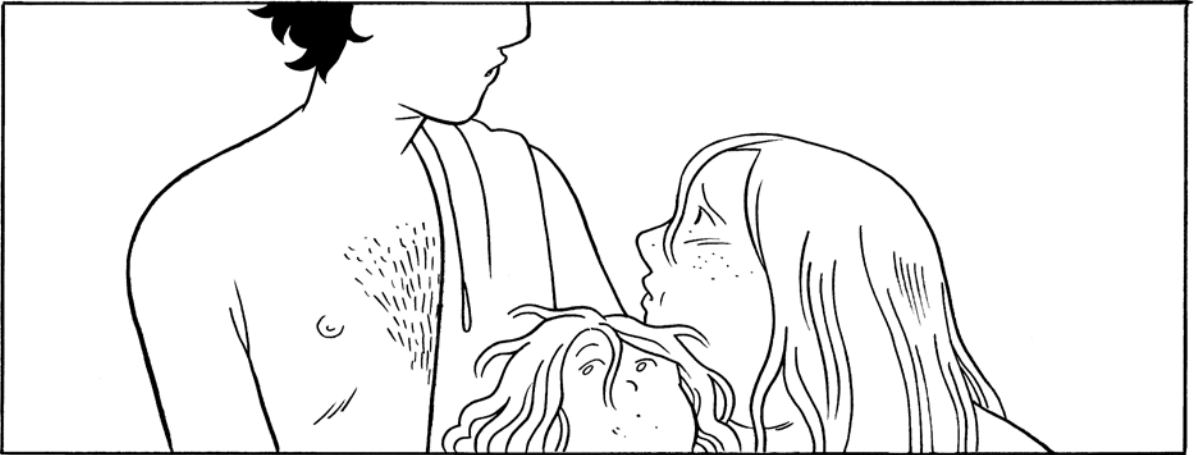
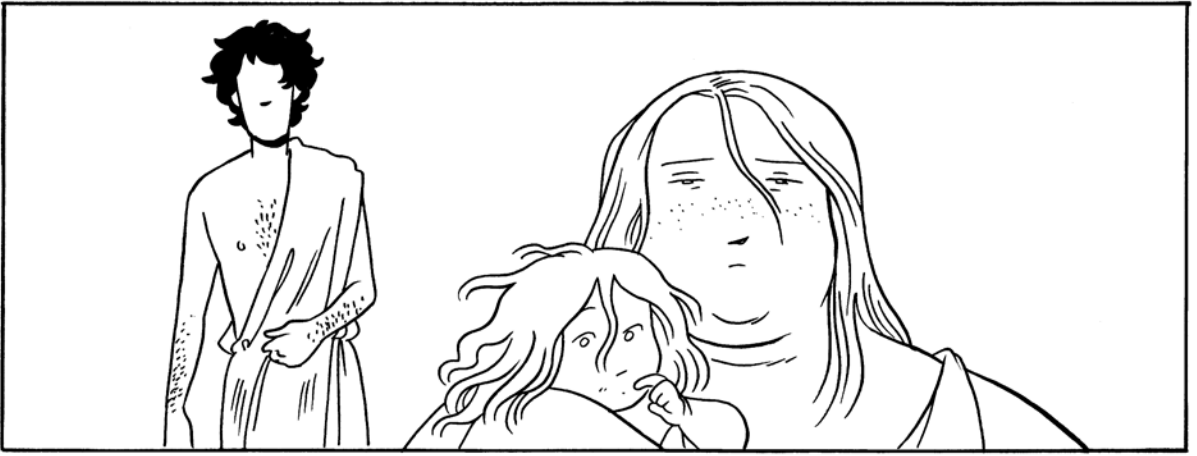






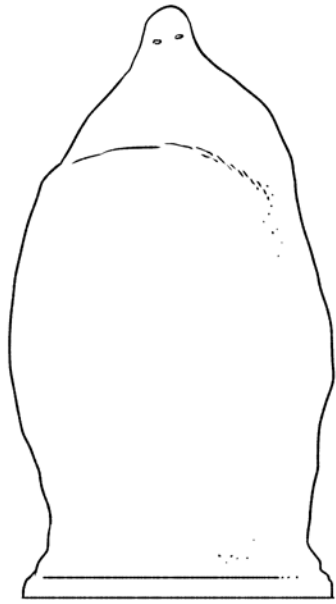












ASSETS

Cover fabric texture provided by Kit Seaton

Fruit/plant assets are from Boy with a Basket of Fruit and Basket of Fruit, painted by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio in 1593 and 1599 respectively.

Figurative photography used is of myself and my husband, photographed by us both.

Non-figurative photography used is my uncle's, David Wise's, taken on a trip to France and Italy in 1985. My dad compiled all of the slides and gifted them to me for Christmas a couple of years ago. He hoped they'd be useful reference material. This is probably not what he had in mind.

Rest in peace, Uncle David. Your art continues to inspire me. I wish I could have known you better.

