







I see you've  
been...busy? >

I couldn't sleep.  
So I cooked. >



I like this thing.  
Do we have  
to eat it?

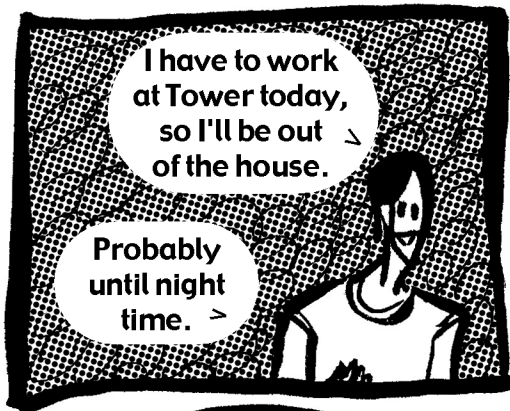
Can we  
preserve it  
instead?



It's a cupcake. >

Just eat it. >



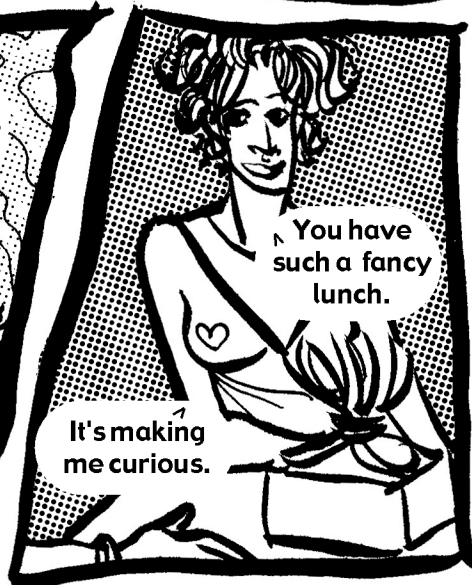
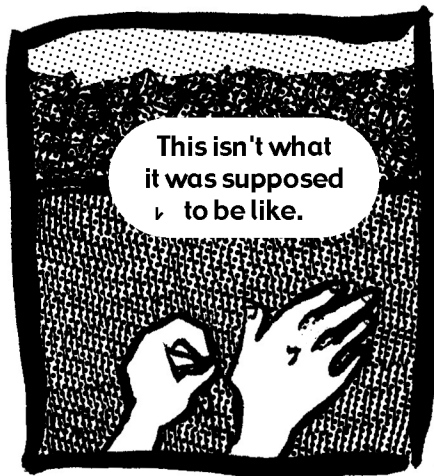


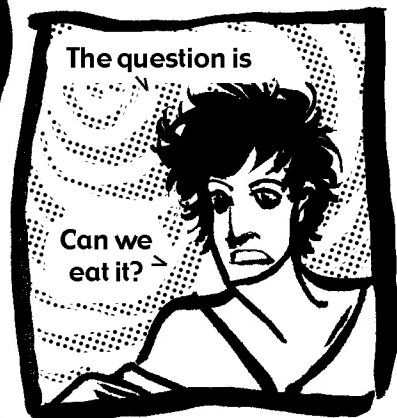
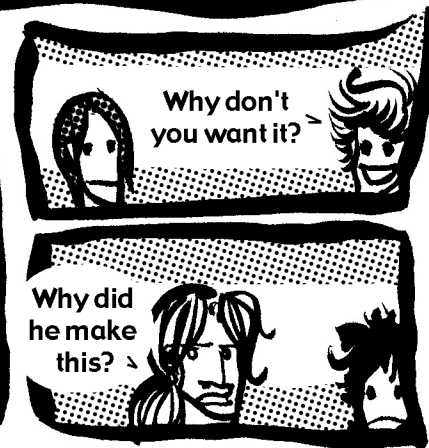
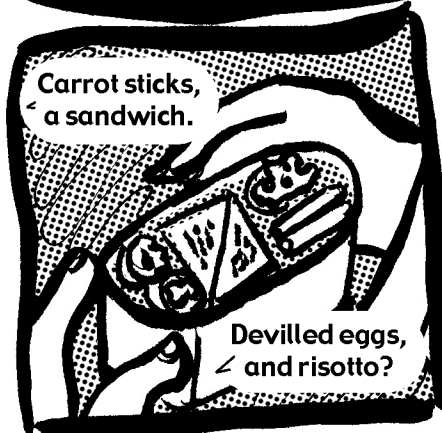




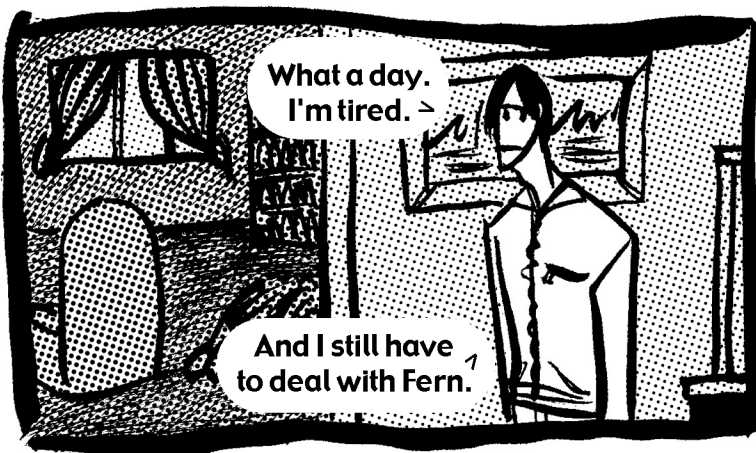
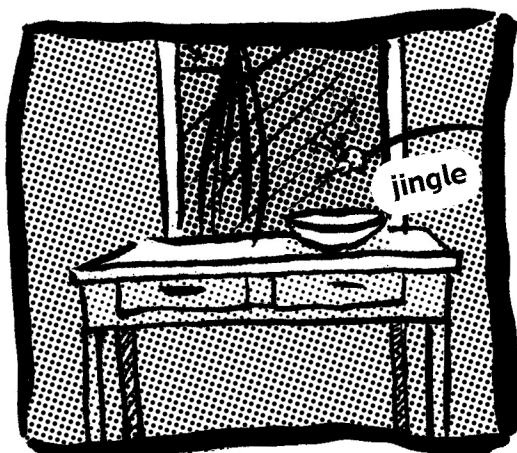














Why can't  
you answer  
my question?



I just got out  
of the shower.

Eat your  
dinner.



< This?

No.



Don't eat out  
of there.

I already set  
your place.



I made  
soup again.

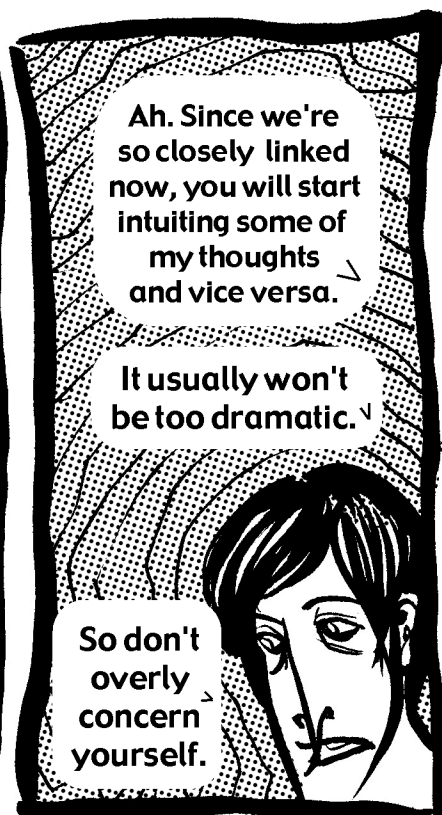


How...  
Nice.



It's funny.  
I somehow knew  
when you'd  
come home.

So I had the  
food ready  
right on time.

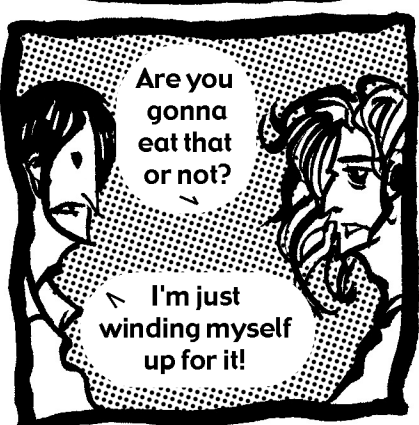
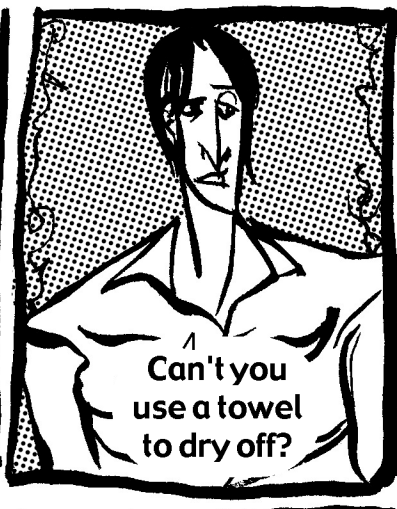


Ah. Since we're  
so closely linked  
now, you will start  
intuiting some of  
my thoughts  
and vice versa.

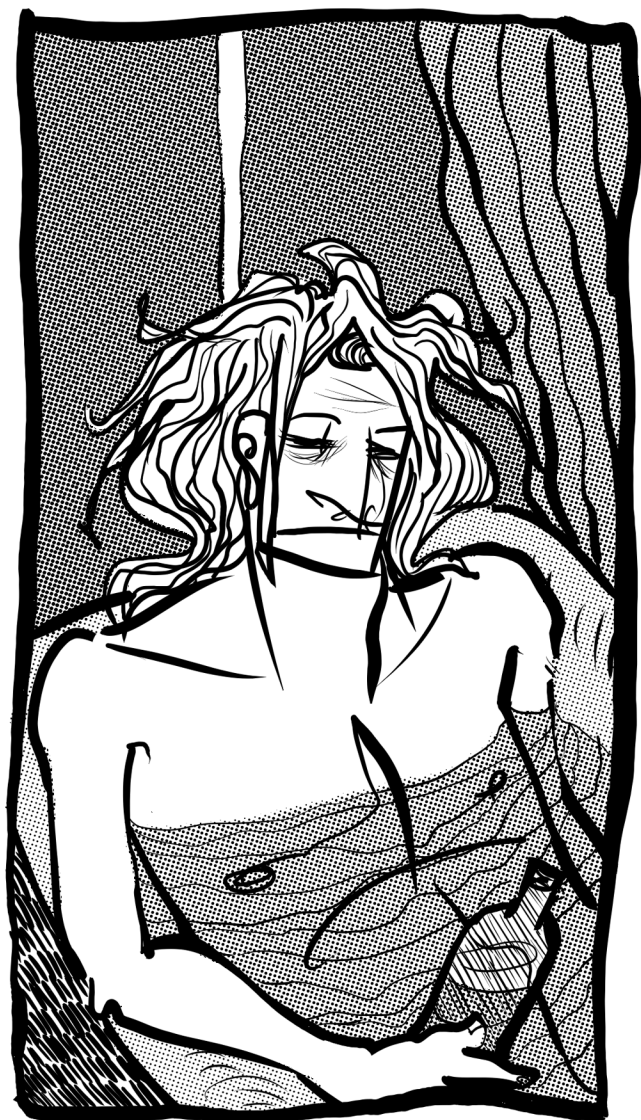
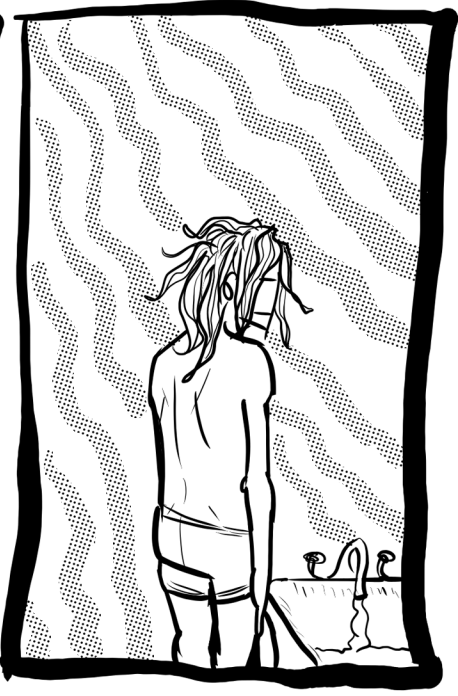
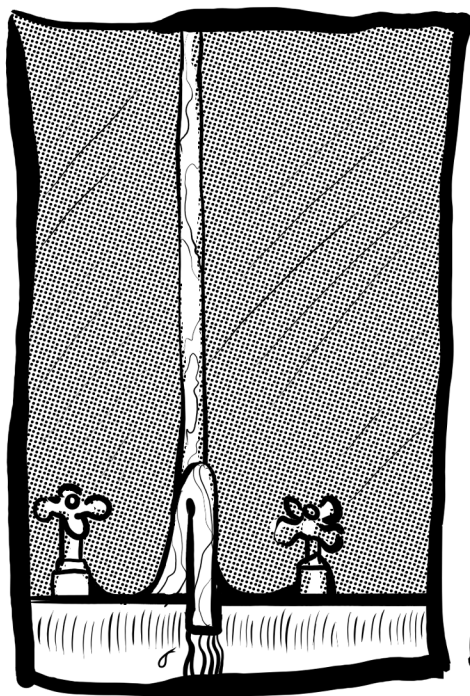
It usually won't  
be too dramatic.

So don't  
overly  
concern  
yourself.

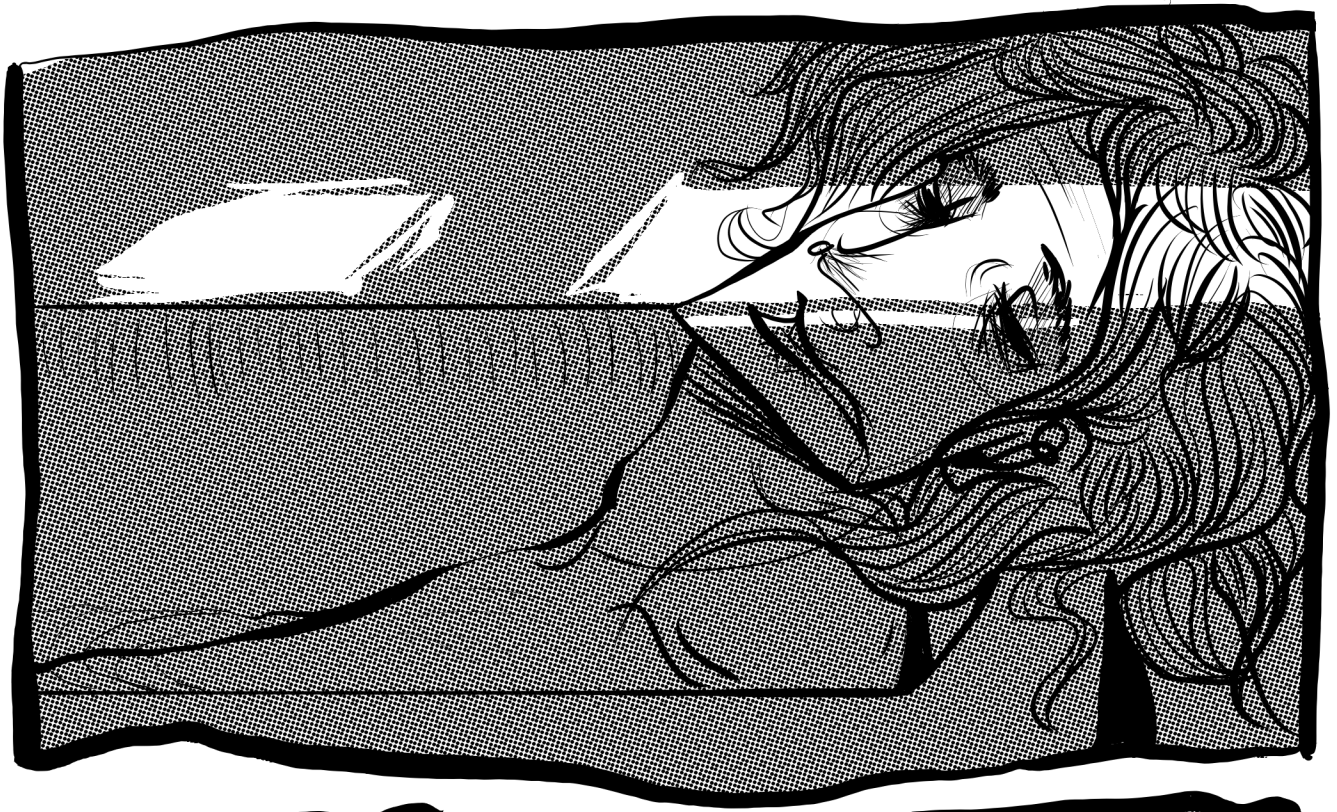












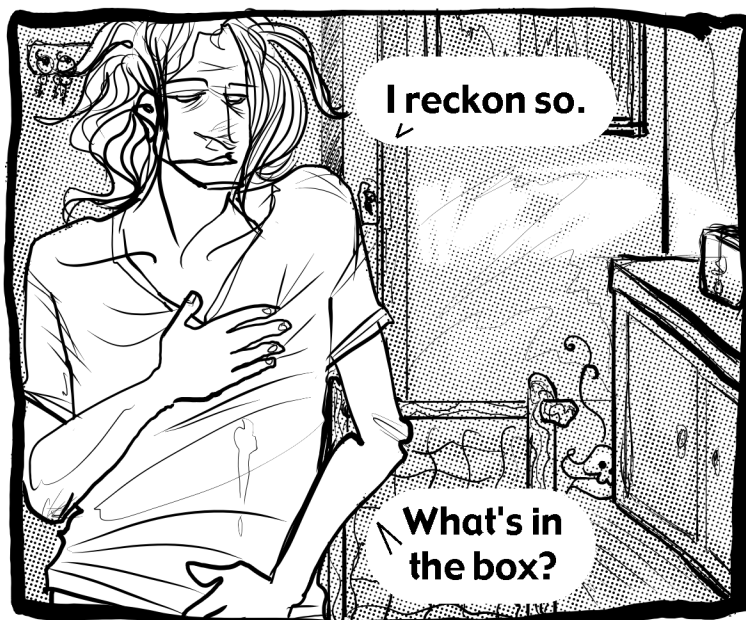
Uggh<sup>1</sup> what the shit



Maybe I  
need to  
pace  
myself  
better<sup>2</sup>



You look bad.



I reckon so.

What's in the box?



I'm annoyed it took so long, but it's finally here.

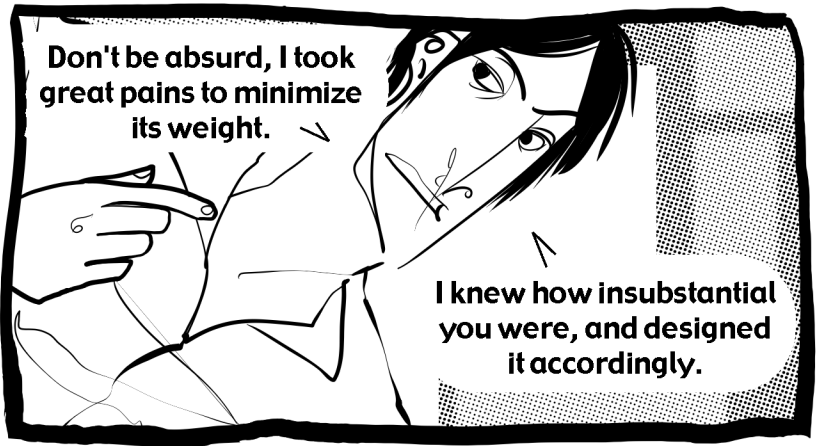


The fire-resistant coat I designed for you.

Because you keep screwing up your magic.

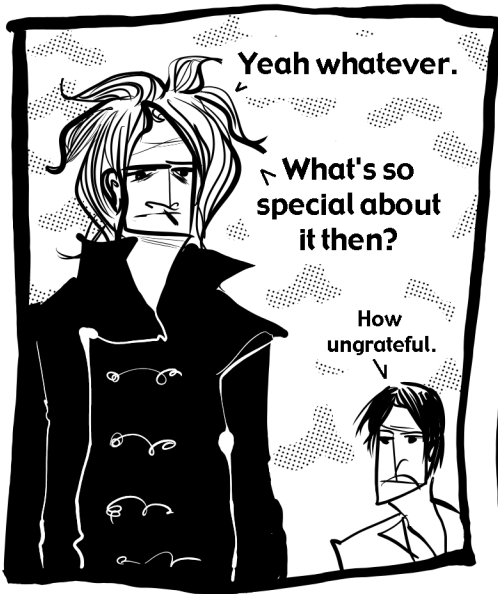


What does this thing weigh?  
Like a hundred pounds?



Don't be absurd, I took great pains to minimize its weight.

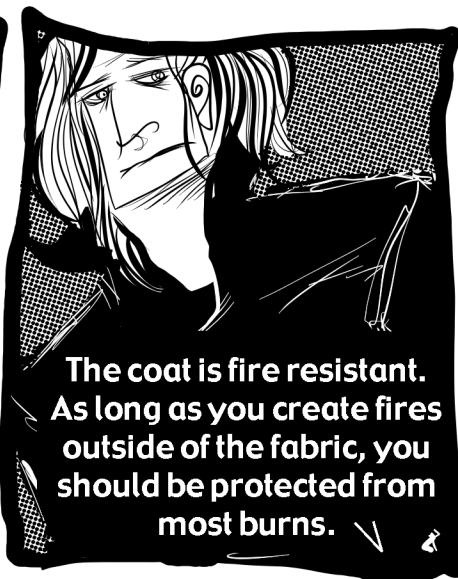
I knew how insubstantial you were, and designed it accordingly.



Yeah whatever.

What's so special about it then?

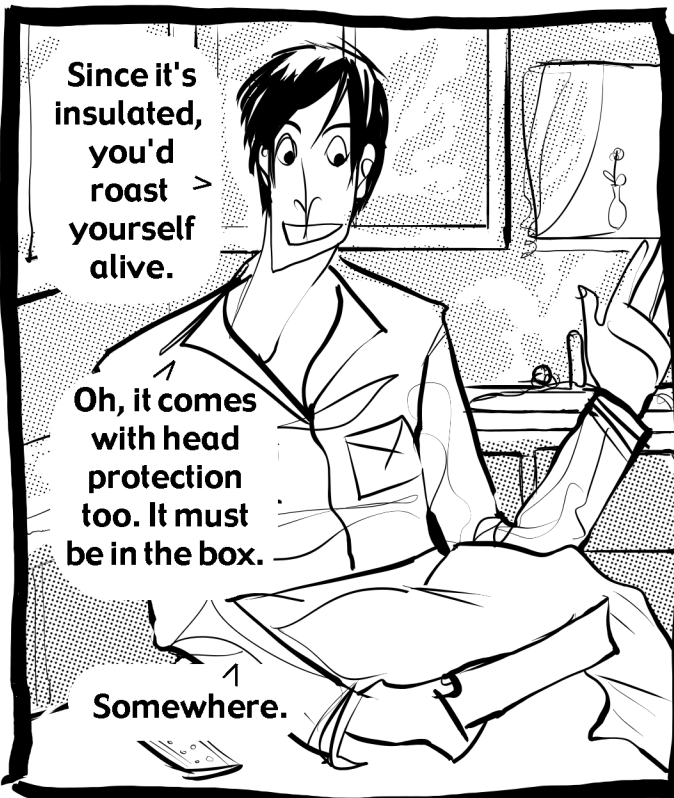
How ungrateful.



The coat is fire resistant. As long as you create fires outside of the fabric, you should be protected from most burns.



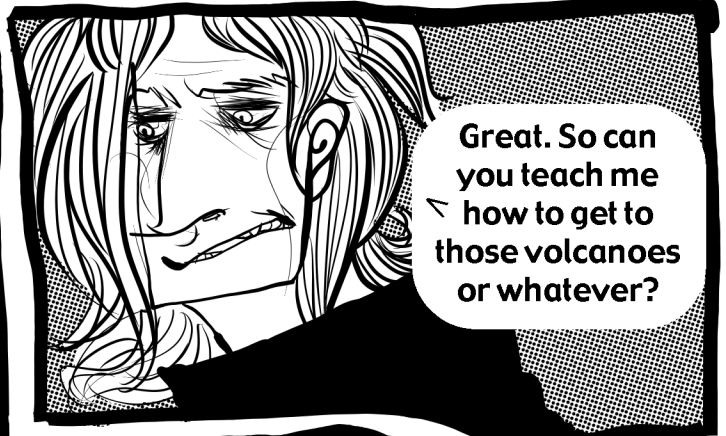
What if I start a fire inside the fabric?



Since it's insulated, you'd roast yourself alive.

Oh, it comes with head protection too. It must be in the box.

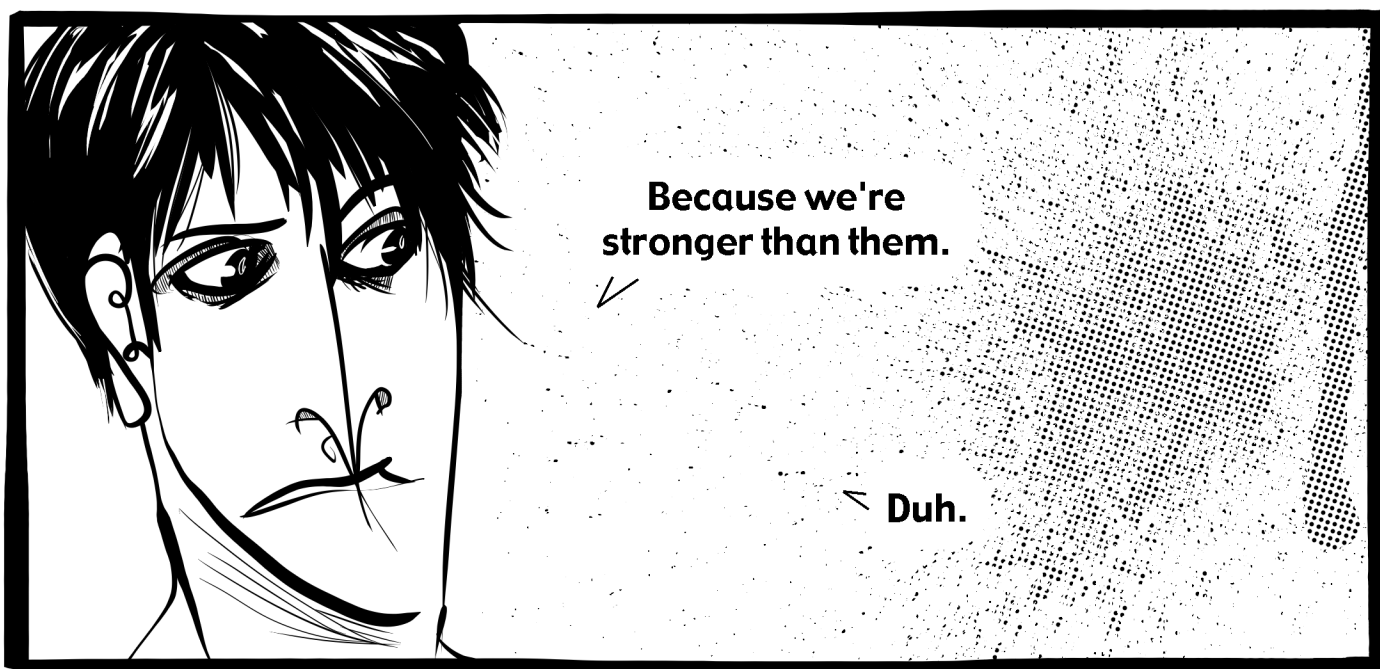
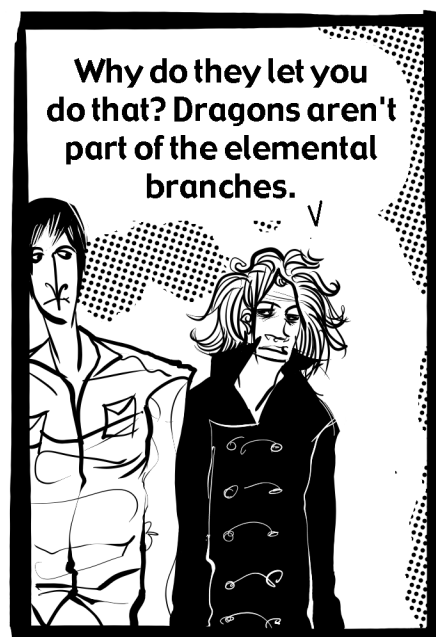
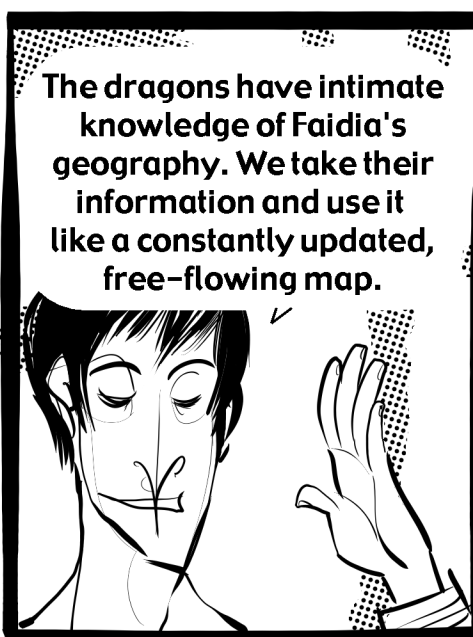
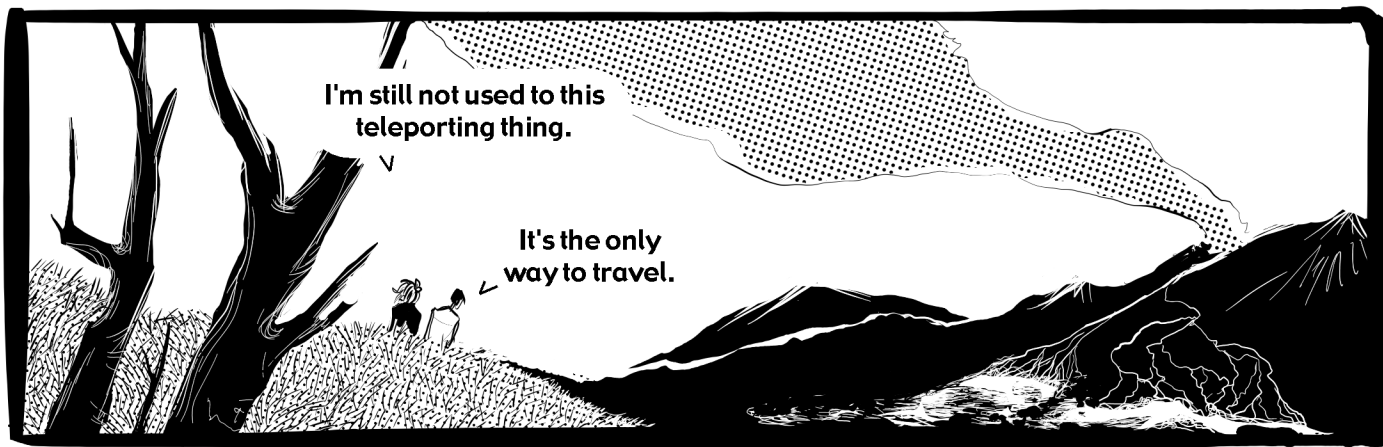
Somewhere.



Great. So can you teach me how to get to those volcanoes or whatever?



Certainly! That's a great idea!





Still...Do we give  
them anything  
✓ in return?



They live on this  
planet, don't they?



They may not be  
politically affiliated  
with us, but they ↑  
still reap the benefits  
of our work.

But they don't  
really have a  
choice in that,  
do they? ↓



What?  
↓

Their ↑  
choices  
don't  
matter.

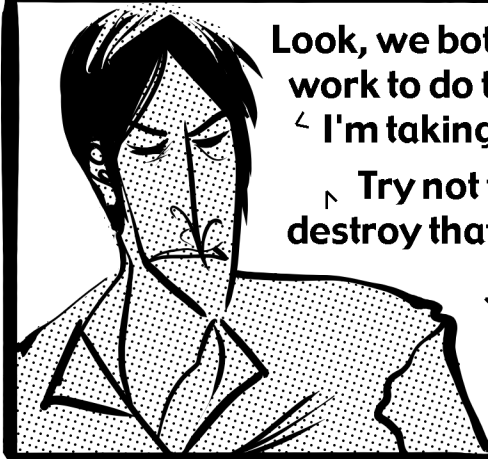
↖ Ours do.  
We run  
the show.

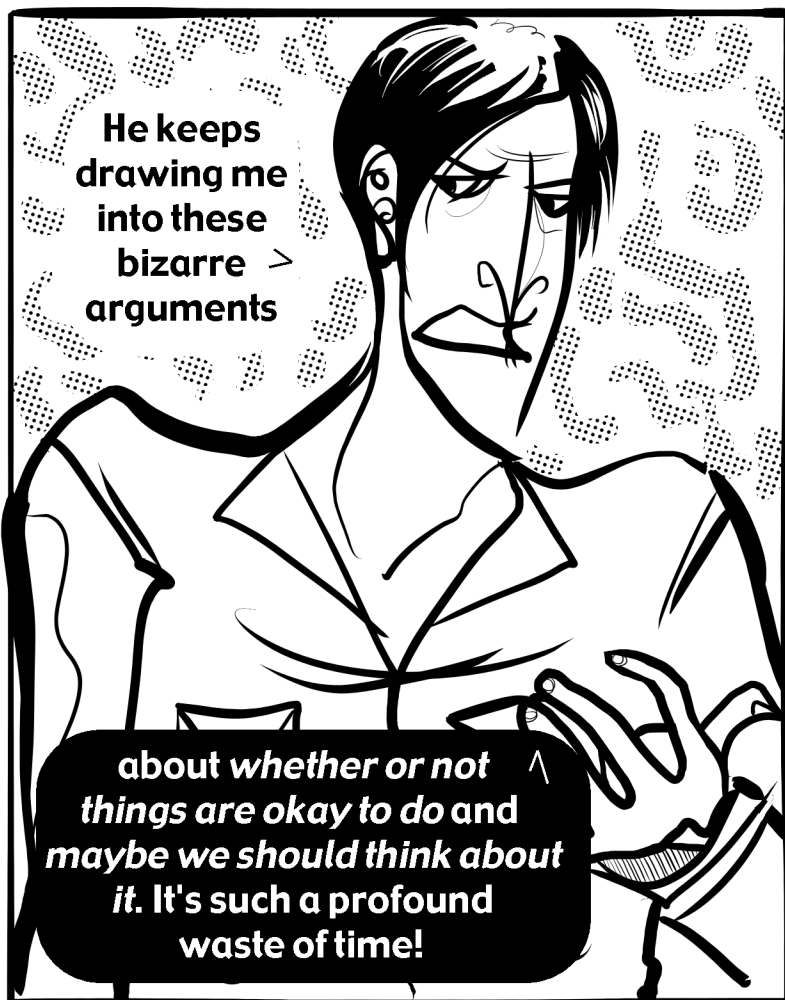
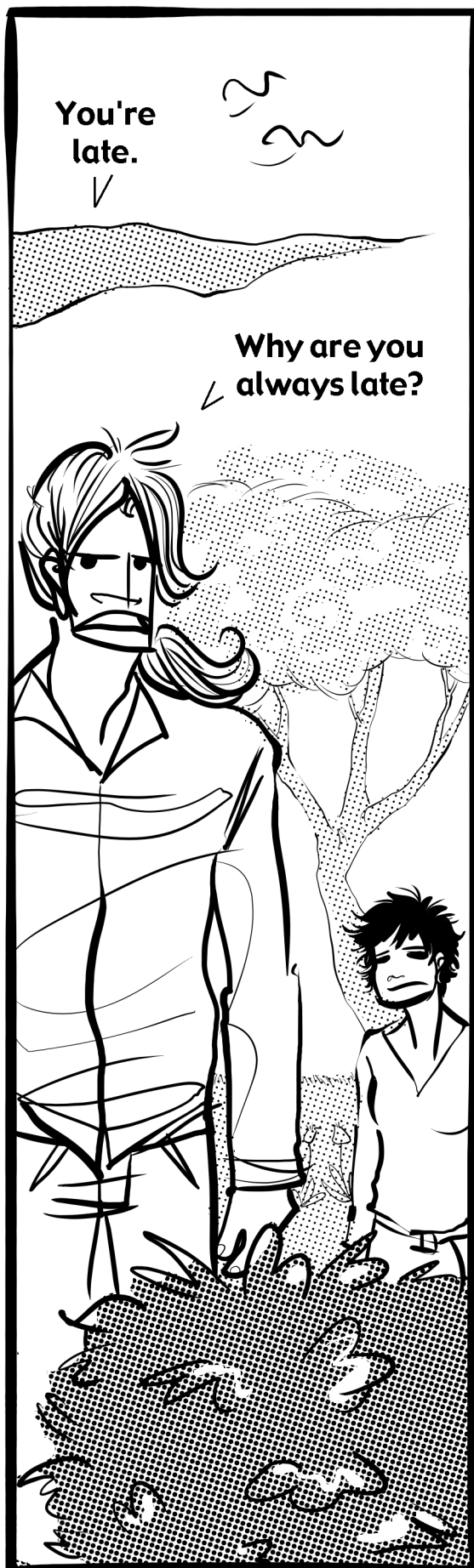


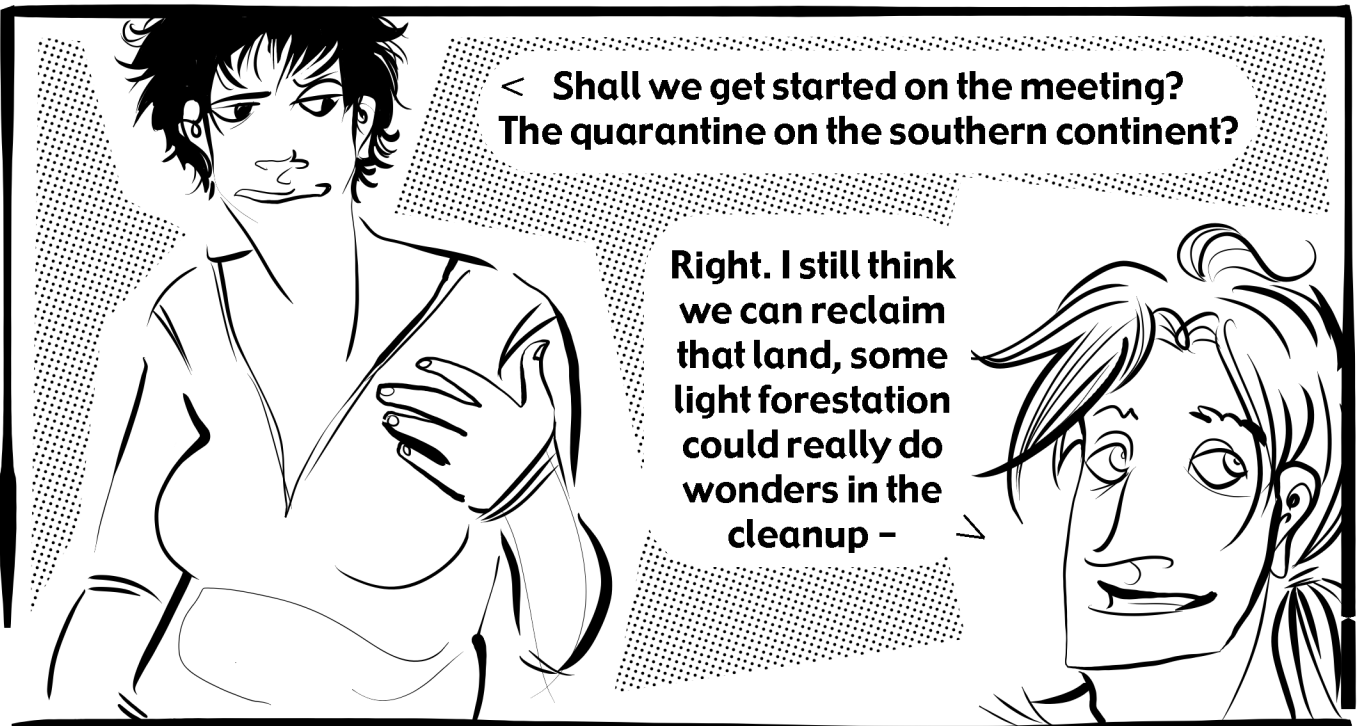
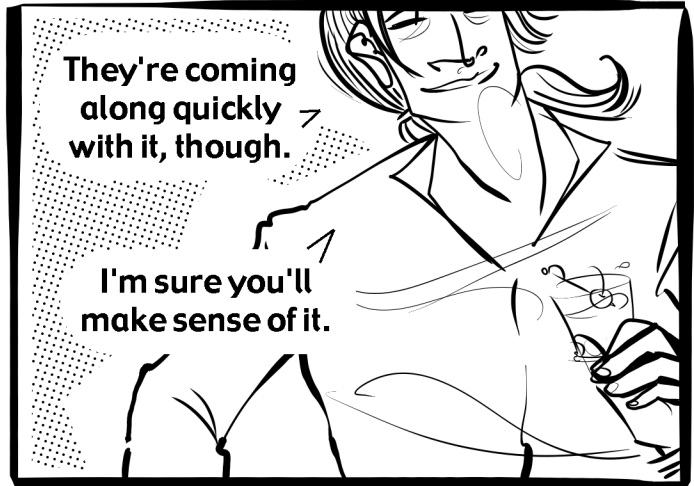
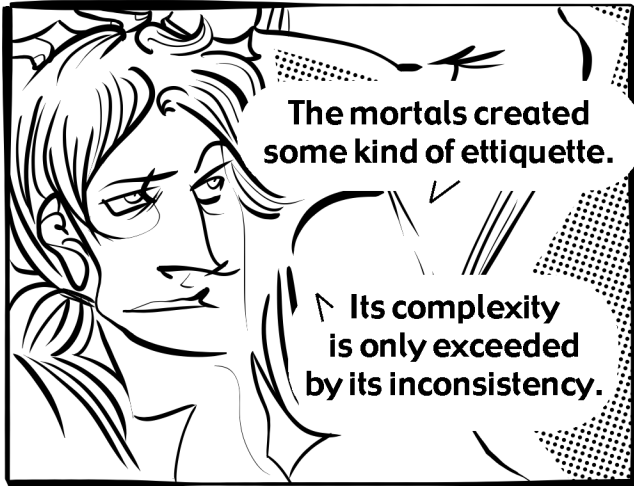
Look, we both have  
work to do today.  
↖ I'm taking off.

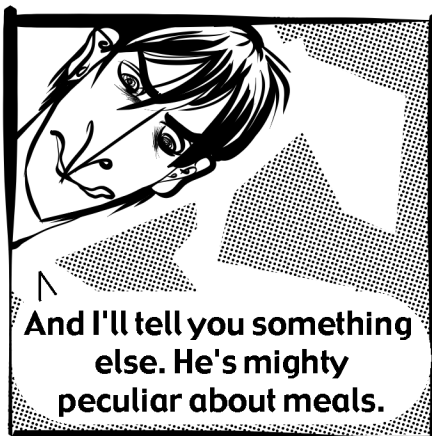
↑ Try not to  
destroy that coat.

↖ Later

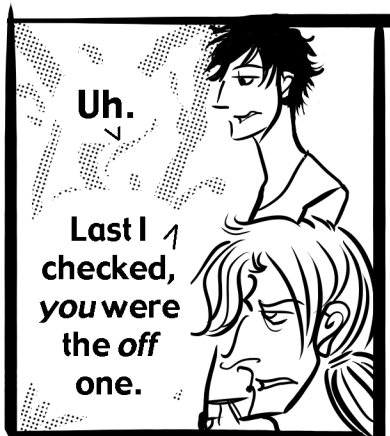
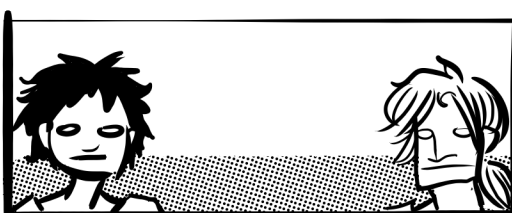






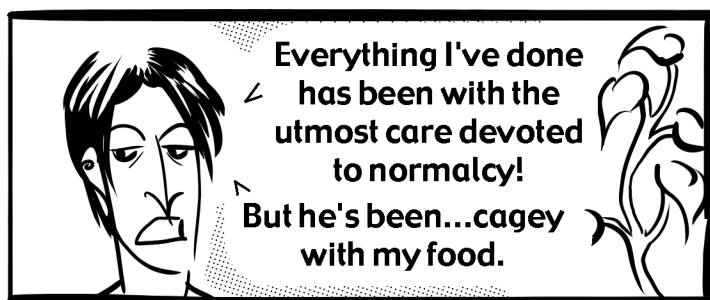


And I'll tell you something else. He's mighty peculiar about meals.



Uh.

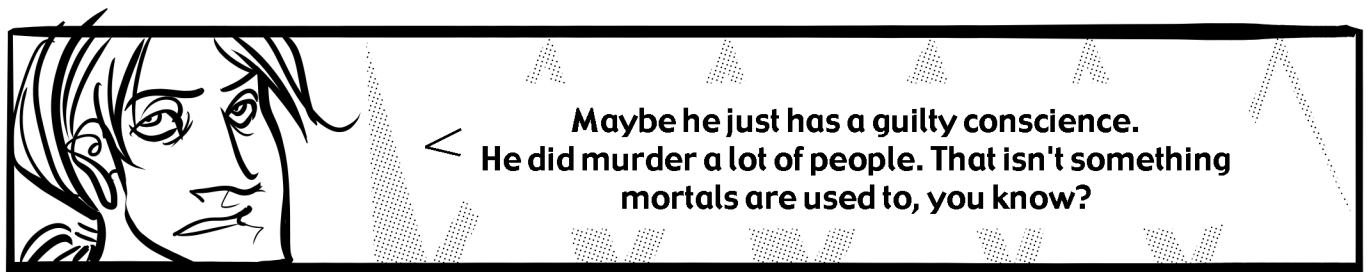
Last I checked, you were the off one.



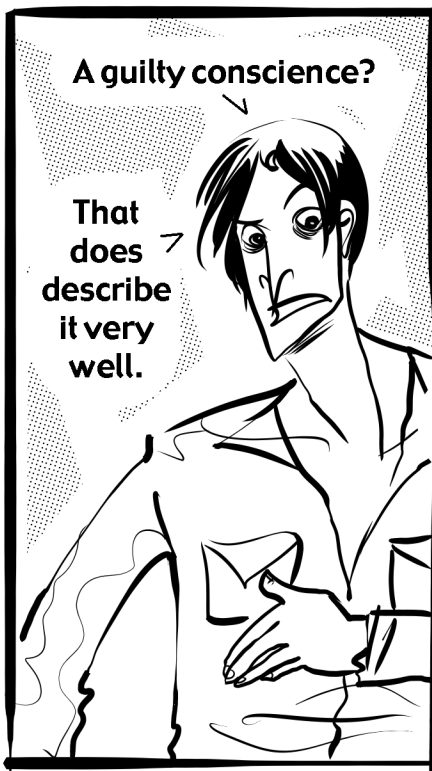
Everything I've done has been with the utmost care devoted to normalcy! But he's been...cagey with my food.



I'm very anxious and I don't know why.

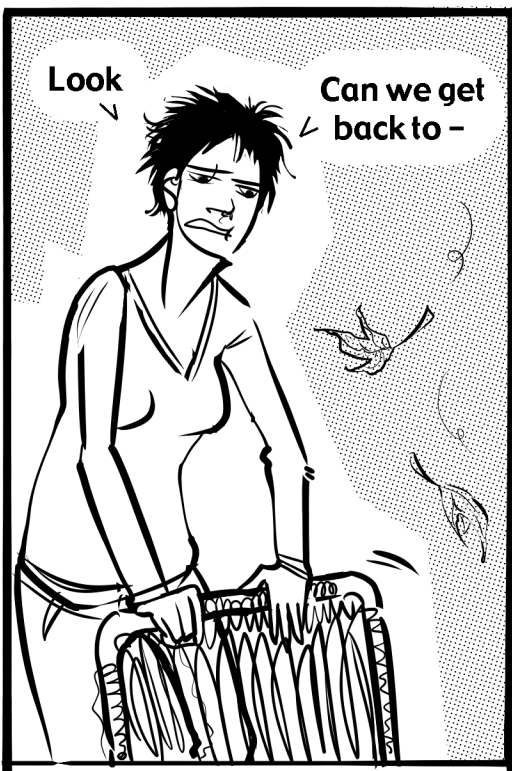


Maybe he just has a guilty conscience. He did murder a lot of people. That isn't something mortals are used to, you know?



A guilty conscience?

That does describe it very well.



Look

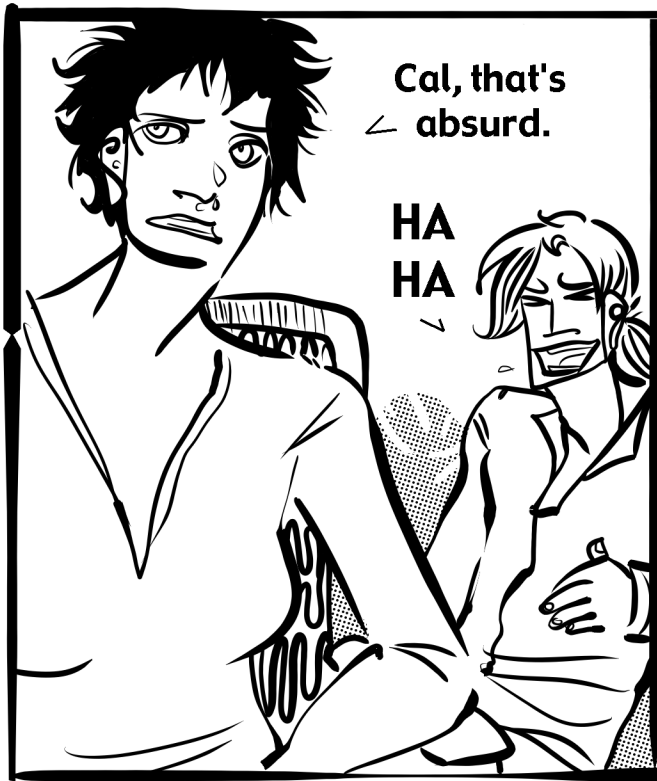
Can we get back to -



Poison!!!!

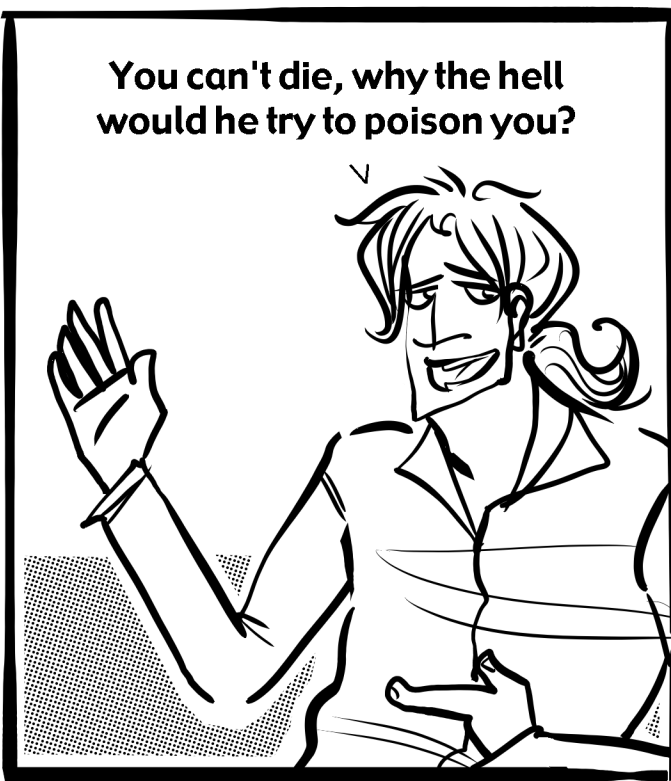
He's poisoning me!



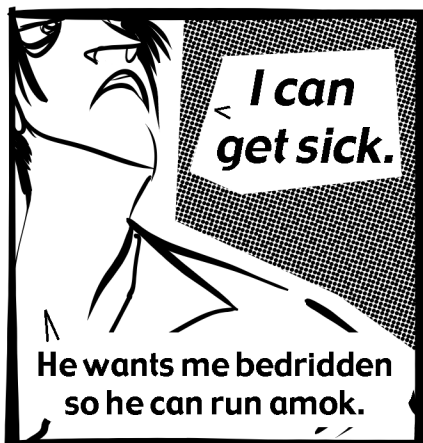


Cal, that's  
absurd.

HA  
HA

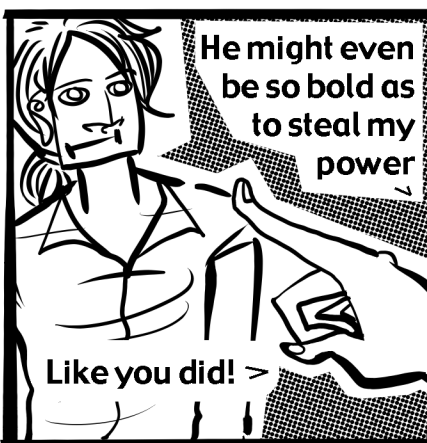


You can't die, why the hell  
would he try to poison you?



I can  
get sick.

He wants me bedridden  
so he can run amok.

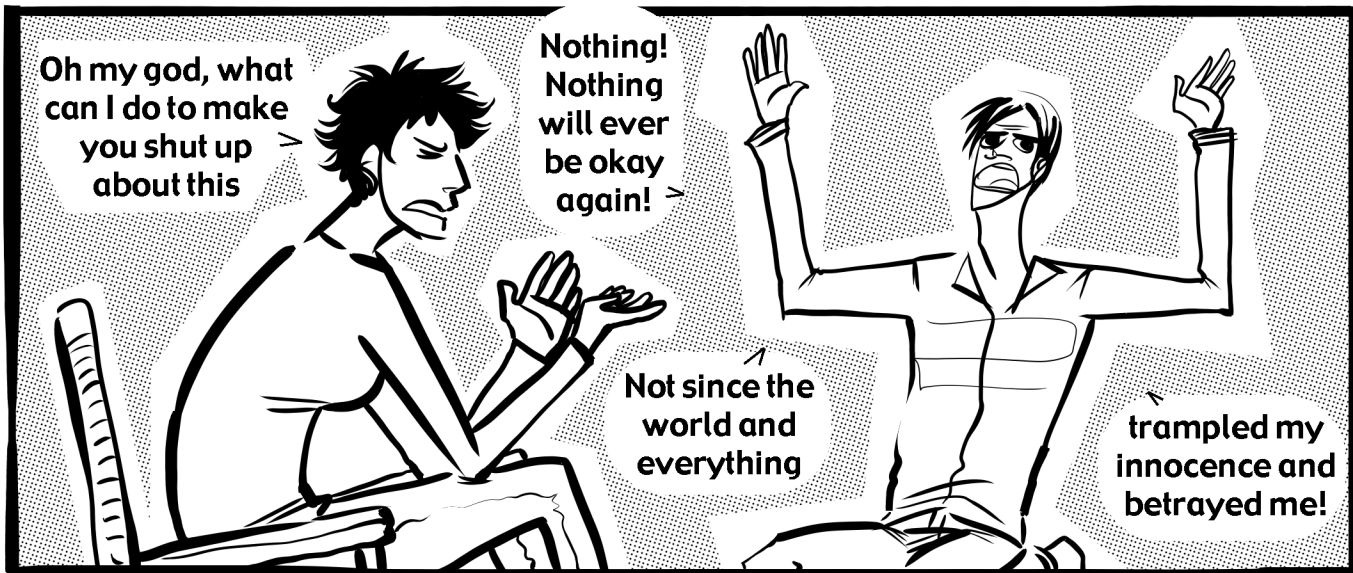


He might even  
be so bold as  
to steal my power

Like you did! >



And we've  
seen how  
that turned  
out



Oh my god, what  
can I do to make  
you shut up  
about this >

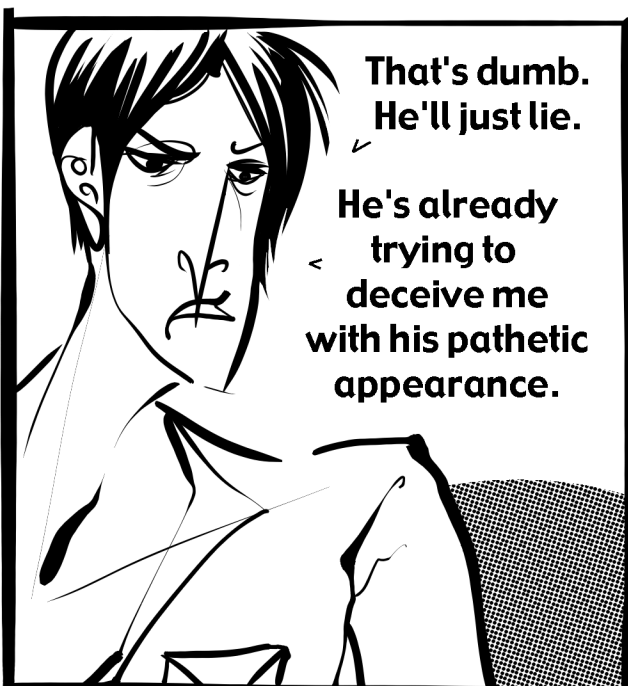
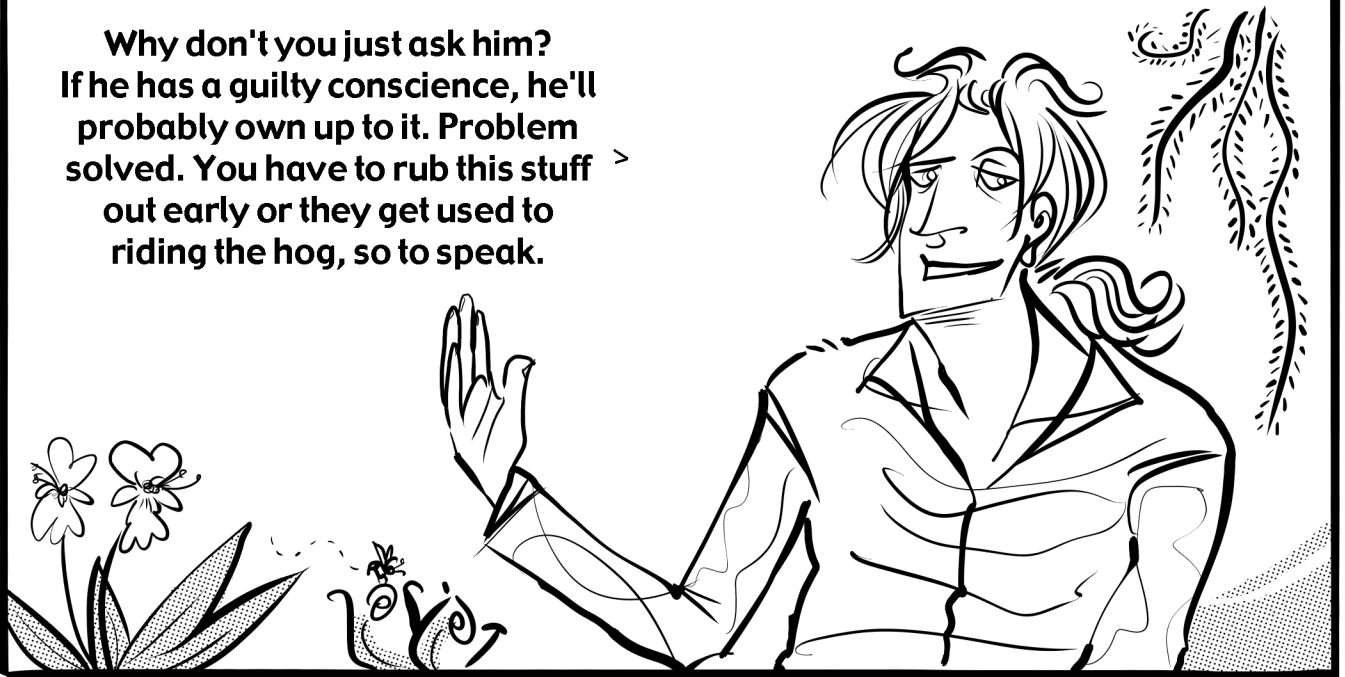
Nothing!  
Nothing  
will ever  
be okay  
again! >

Not since the  
world and  
everything

trampled my  
innocence and  
betrayed me!



Why don't you just ask him?  
If he has a guilty conscience, he'll  
probably own up to it. Problem  
solved. You have to rub this stuff >  
out early or they get used to  
riding the hog, so to speak.

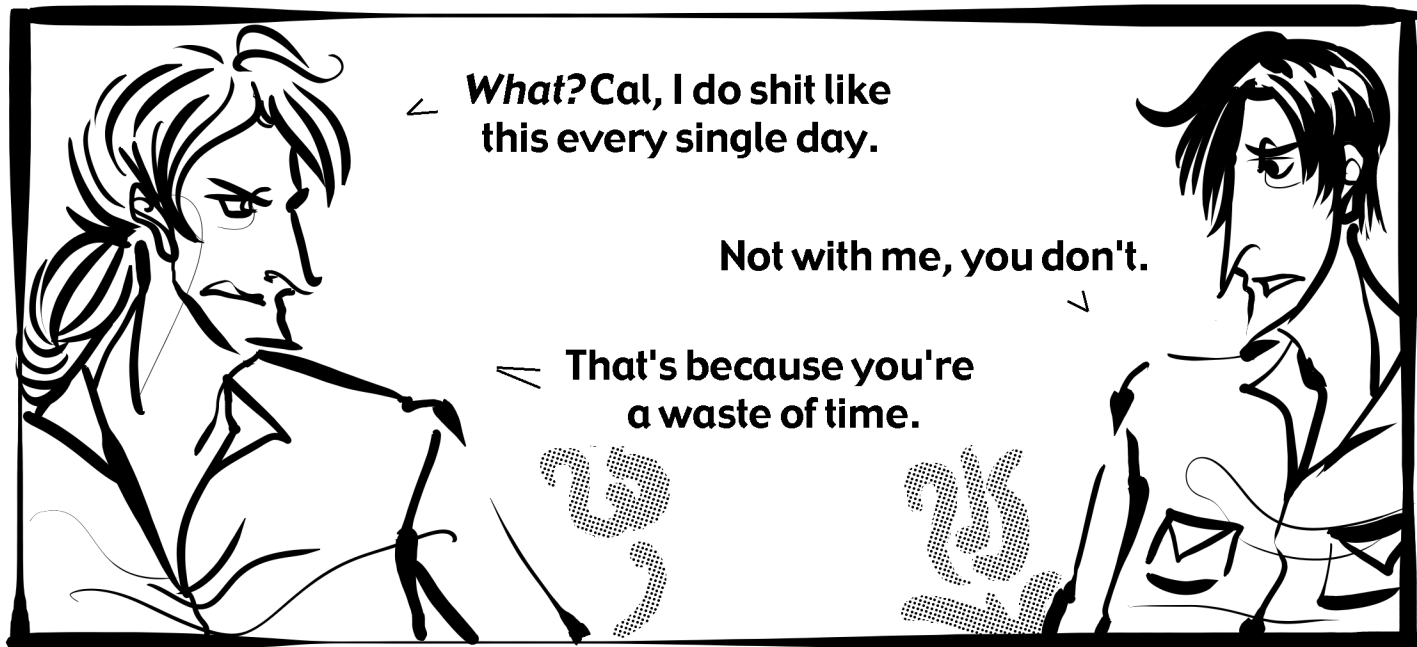
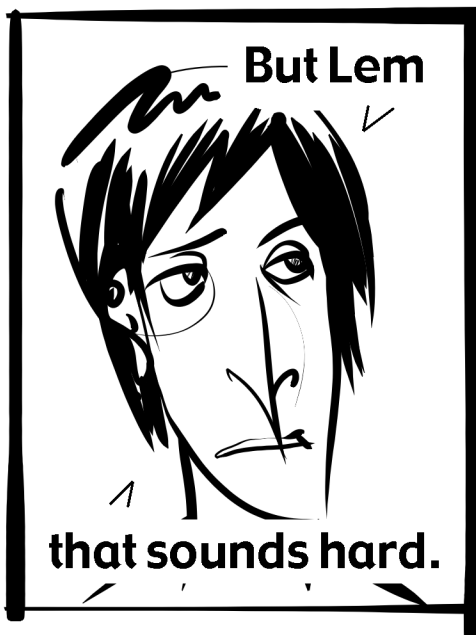


So what if he lies?  
Give him a chance to.

You'll be able to gauge  
whether he's telling the  
truth or not by his reaction.

Shaking  
things up  
will at least  
get us out  
of this  
standstill.

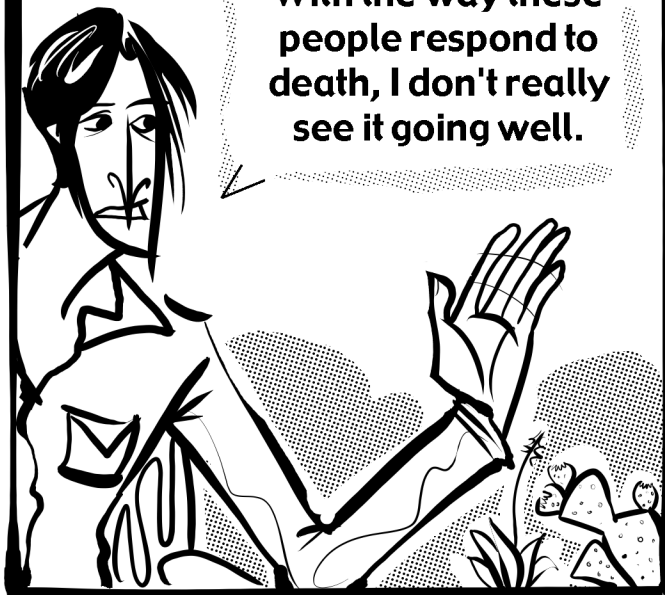




Back to our main topic I guess.  
I don't share your enthusiasm,  
Lem. The southern continent  
is a real mess, a bed of bones.  
Not suitable for sentient life  
for at least a century or so.



With the way these  
people respond to  
death, I don't really  
see it going well.



< Anyway, you have plenty  
of unspoiled land to work with.

I'm just trying  
to fix my mistakes.  
Is that so wrong?



That's appreciated, Lem,  
but you're rushing it  
for no good reason.

✓ The only thing  
that will fix this  
is time.



Oh. Well, we have time  
on our side now, no?

✓ We could just  
have Ell rapidly  
age the continent.

✓ A  
delightful  
shortcut!



✓ No, Lem. That would  
cause an imbalance  
of forces on the planet  
even worse than the  
one already present.



Oh.

✓ Yeah, I  
guess  
that's  
right.





Why don't we settle on planting grass and trees for the moment, and see what assistance the dragons are willing to give us.



No way on the dragons. They'll just claim the land and that'll be the end of it.

I say let them. It's brown lands. Good riddance.

We'd never get them back!



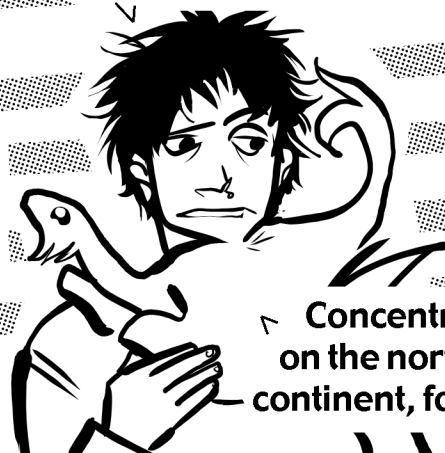
We can always make another deal if we really want them that bad. But I'm betting we won't. You're just being greedy. If we give them the land, they'll clean it up for us AND stop bitching endlessly about how we trashed it. It's a good move, politically.



We're just passing off our problems to other people. It's irresponsible, and I disapprove.



I don't like it either, Lem, but you've already taken on so many other projects, you can't devote the time.

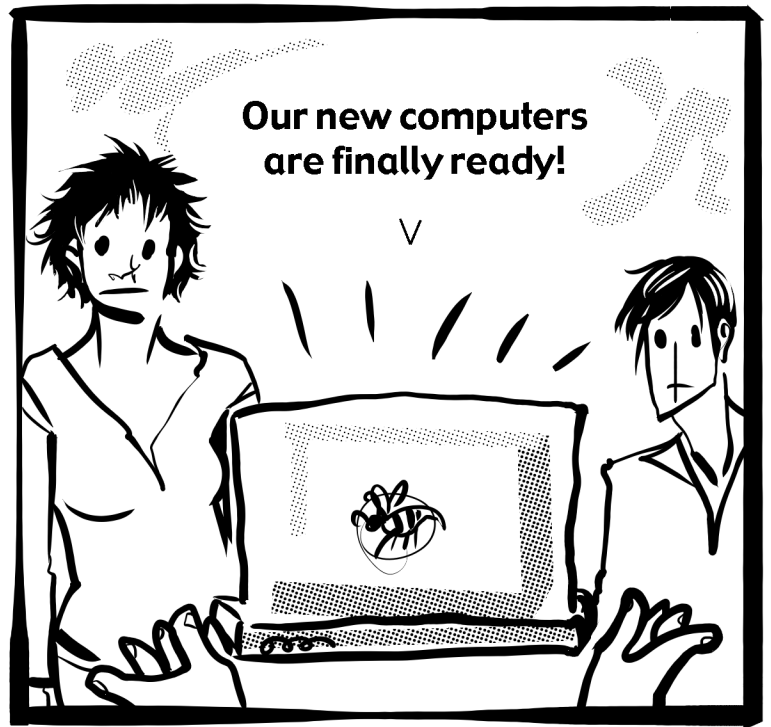


Concentrate on the northern continent, for now.

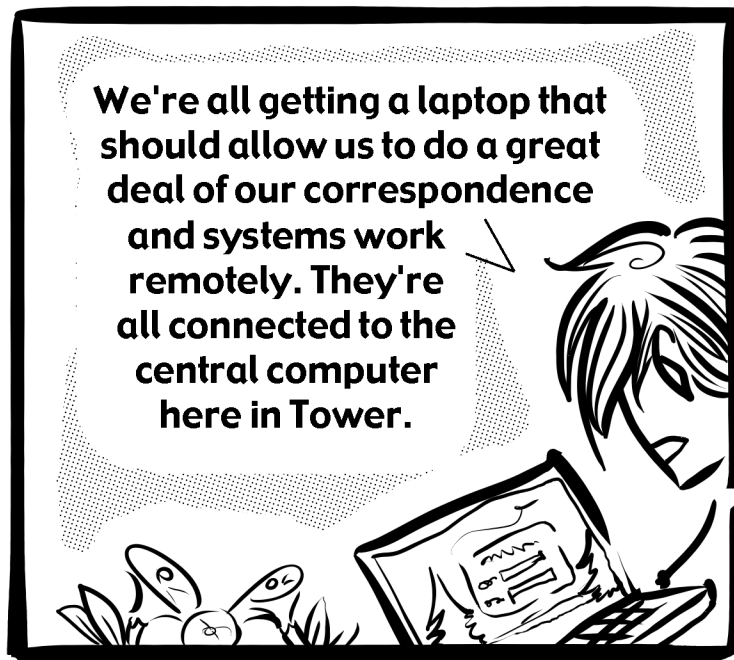


Okay. I'll see about the greenery, and send a dispatch to the dragons.

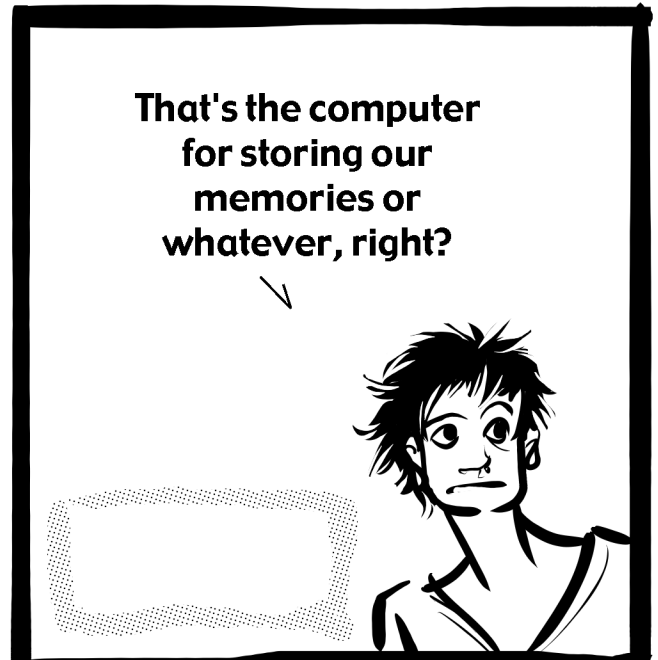
Speaking of communications...



Our new computers are finally ready!



We're all getting a laptop that should allow us to do a great deal of our correspondence and systems work remotely. They're all connected to the central computer here in Tower.

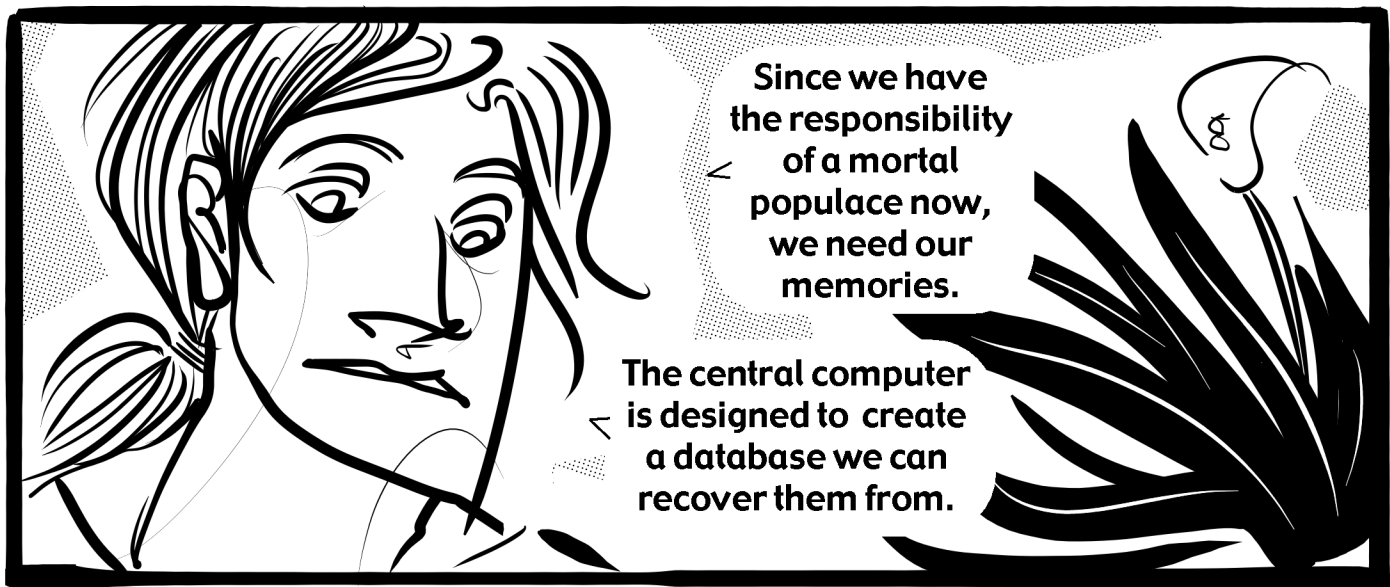


That's the computer for storing our memories or whatever, right?



Yes, the computer is a safeguard against Cal's prediction that our minds

will start to decay in time, since we are limited by the capacity of these mortal, physical bodies.



Since we have  
the responsibility  
of a mortal  
populace now,  
we need our  
memories.

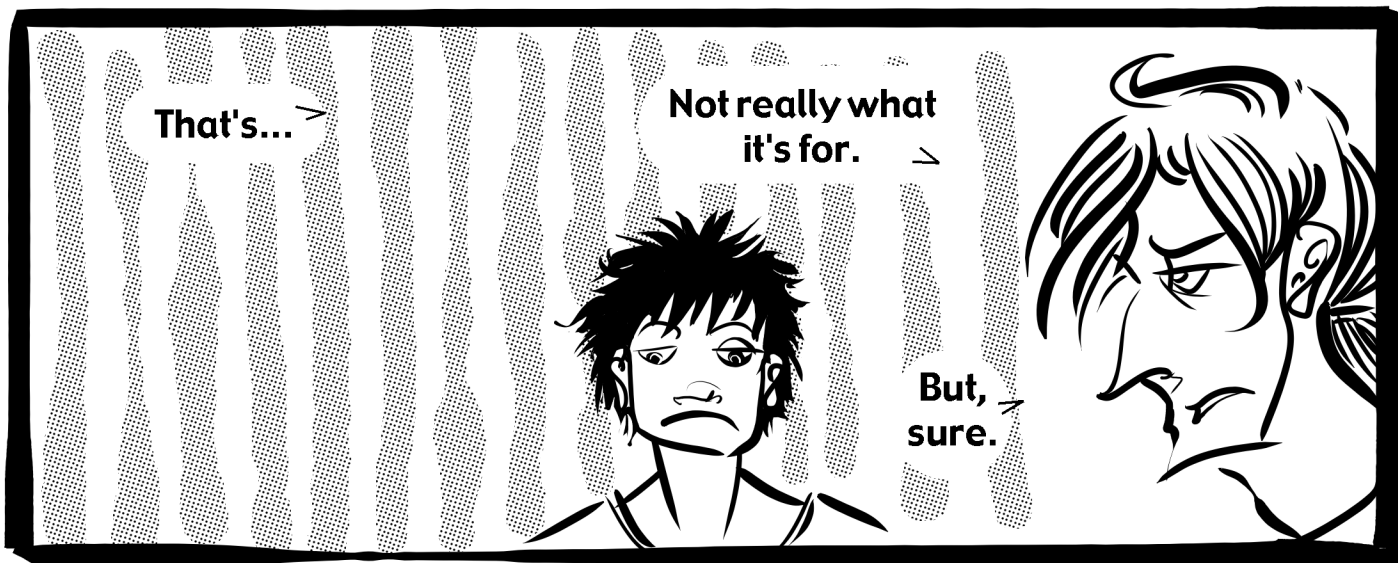
The central computer  
is designed to create  
a database we can  
recover them from.



Well,  
yeah.

So wait, if I use  
this computer to  
do my job, I don't  
have to leave  
my house?

Fucking boss.  
I'm never  
leaving my  
bedroom again!



That's...

Not really what  
it's for.

But,  
sure.

I'll use it however I want. You're the one who wanted all these stupid things.

At least I actually have ideas for the planet



that don't involve cancelling existence, or never leaving my own house because all I care about is family.

What's that rumbling noise?

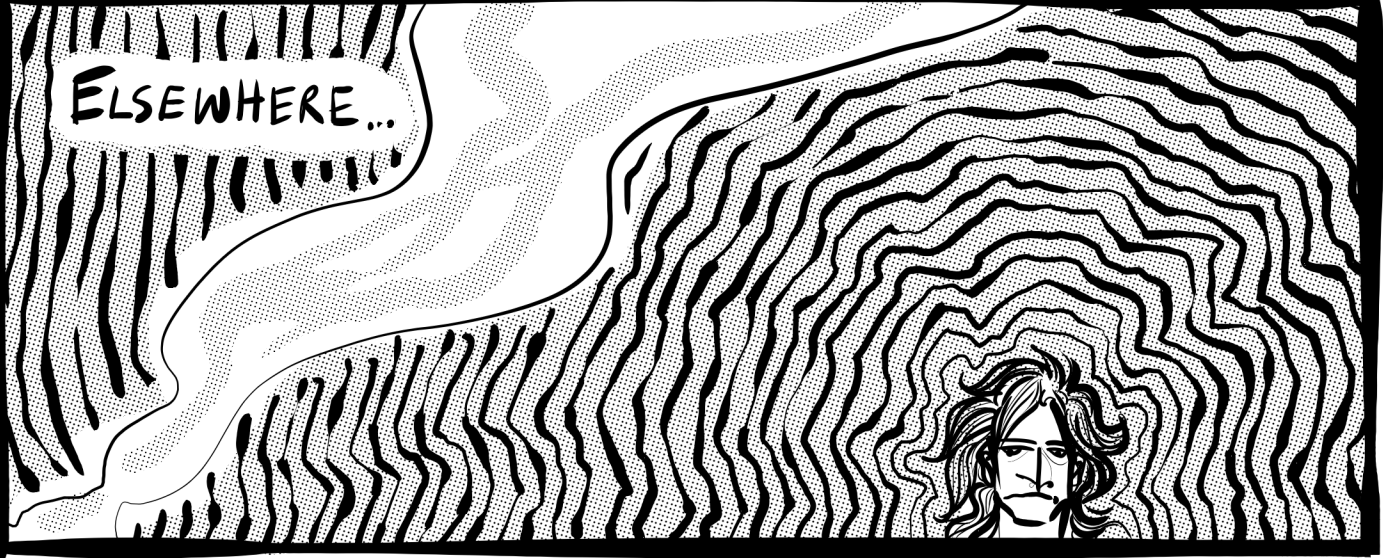
It's the carmors going to sleep. It means the sun is going down.

Nice meeting. Maybe next time less squabbling?

Nah.?



ELSEWHERE...



I need to challenge myself. I need to make some stuff up. Play around. Right?

But I can't think of anything to do! This job requires more imagination than I possess.

No use bitching, no one can tell me how to do this.

I hate taking orders, but I can't really think for myself.

This doesn't bode well for my future.





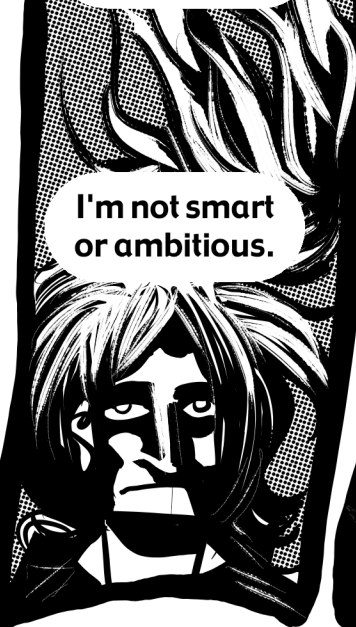


This shit is  
so difficult  
to control



I don't know  
why I'm here.

I'm not smart  
or ambitious.



And doing  
this stuff  
makes  
my head  
hurt.

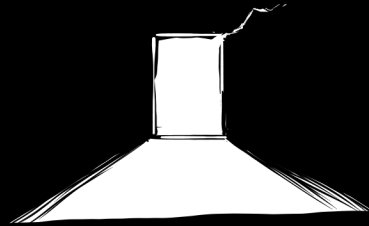


And the more  
it hurts

the more  
I start  
thinking

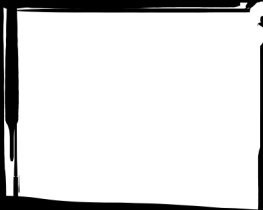


About this door,  
the only thing  
I can remember



Maybe it used  
to be shut, but  
now it's always  
open

It's letting  
things in



But it's  
too small



I think it's natural to wonder where the back door to your own mind leads to

Isn't that natural?

Maybe I'm not supposed to

But I don't care

If I tried

I could make this door bigger



It's already  
so torn

A little more  
won't hurt



and a little  
more is all  
I need

I'm so  
close to  
everything

An ocean  
of light

It's not even  
just beautiful



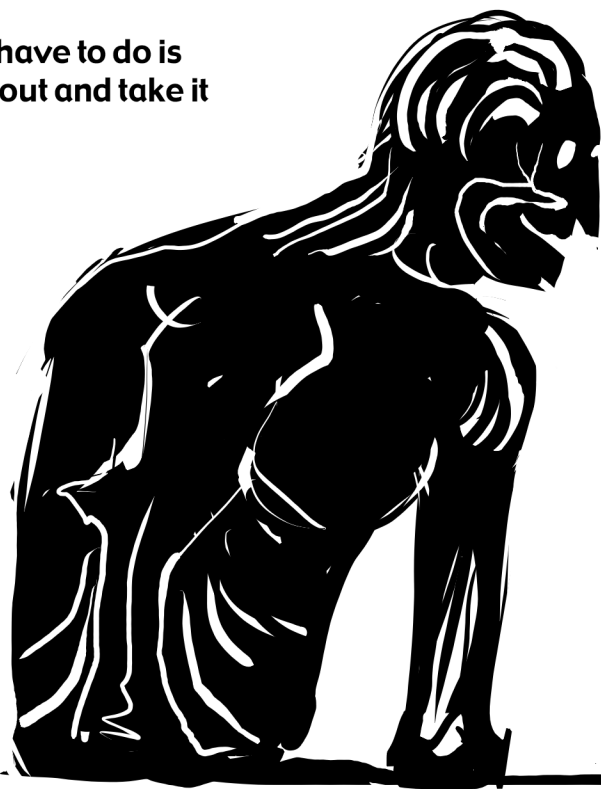
It's the  
rest of  
myself

It's the rest  
of everything

and it's mine



All I have to do is  
reach out and take it



sometime

when I'm done  
looking at it

Dude what the  
fuck are you  
doing



Stand here all you like  
but don't look at it

Never look at it



How do you know

Who are you




I don't fucking know

I can't remember who I am in here  
and neither can you

All we can know

Is that you're the chump  
staring straight into the sun





**This thing is ... the sun?**

**Well, not the literal sun that  
our planet orbits around,  
obviously**

**This is the fount of  
all the energy in  
our universe**

**and since all  
this energy  
originated in  
the sun, we  
call it the sun**

**or just the  
reservoir**

**sometimes  
the lagoon**

**Whatever,  
stop looking  
at it already**



**What harm is there  
in looking at it?**

**It feels great to  
be here**



**Only the dead appear in this place**

**and only  
temporarily**

**I can hang  
out here  
because I  
don't exist**



**But you DO exist, and if  
you expect to return,  
you need to leave**

**through that  
opening you  
made**

**right now**





What if I  
don't want  
to leave

What if I  
just take  
all of this,



What

You

can't  
do that



Oh yes  
I can





But


why?



WHY?!

WHY?!

BECAUSE  
THEN I  
WOULD BE  
IN CHARGE!



Even if you  
could do this  
(which you  
can't)

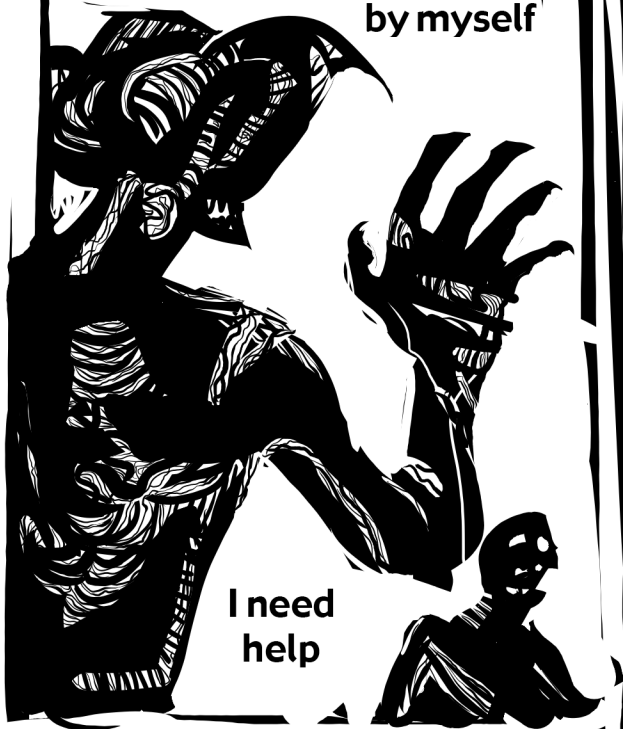
it would  
be pointless



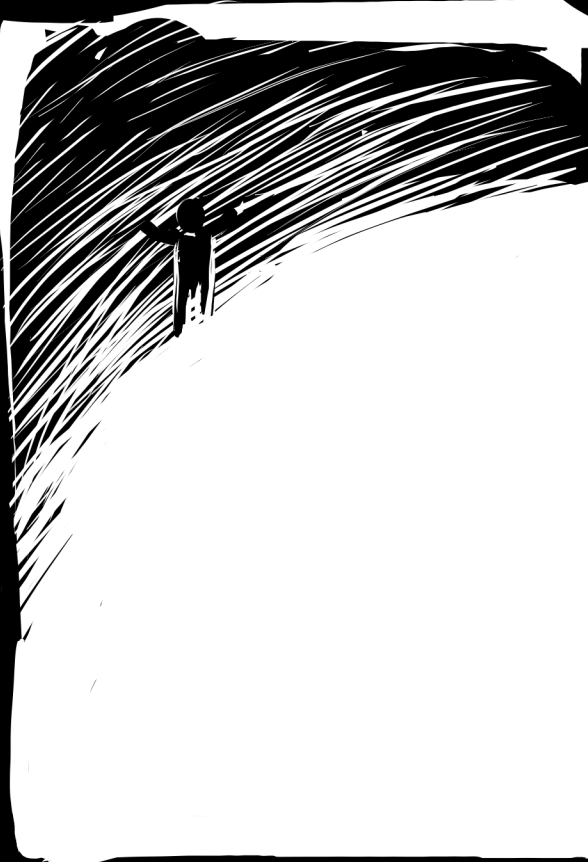
I don't care  
I'm taking it

I  
want  
it  
and I  
can

I can't stop this guy  
by myself



I need  
help



Oh

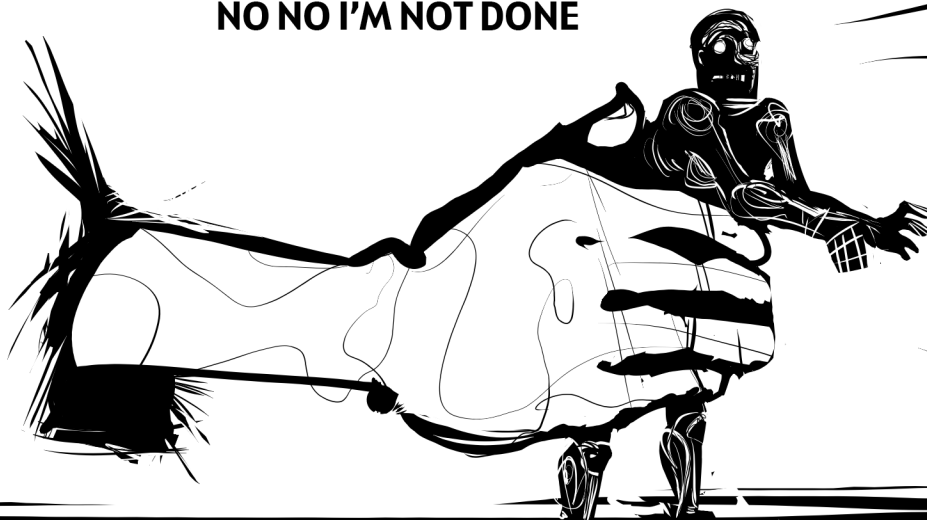




That's the guy, get him

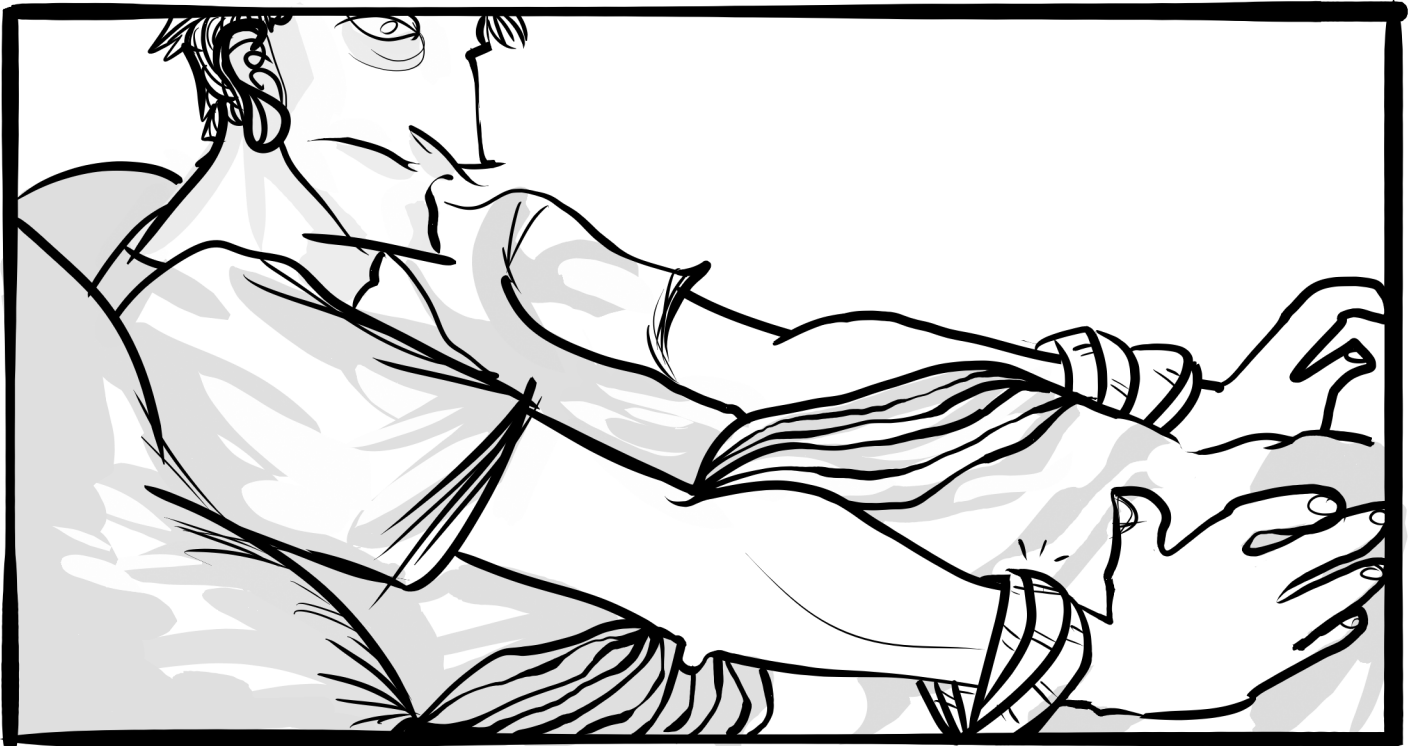
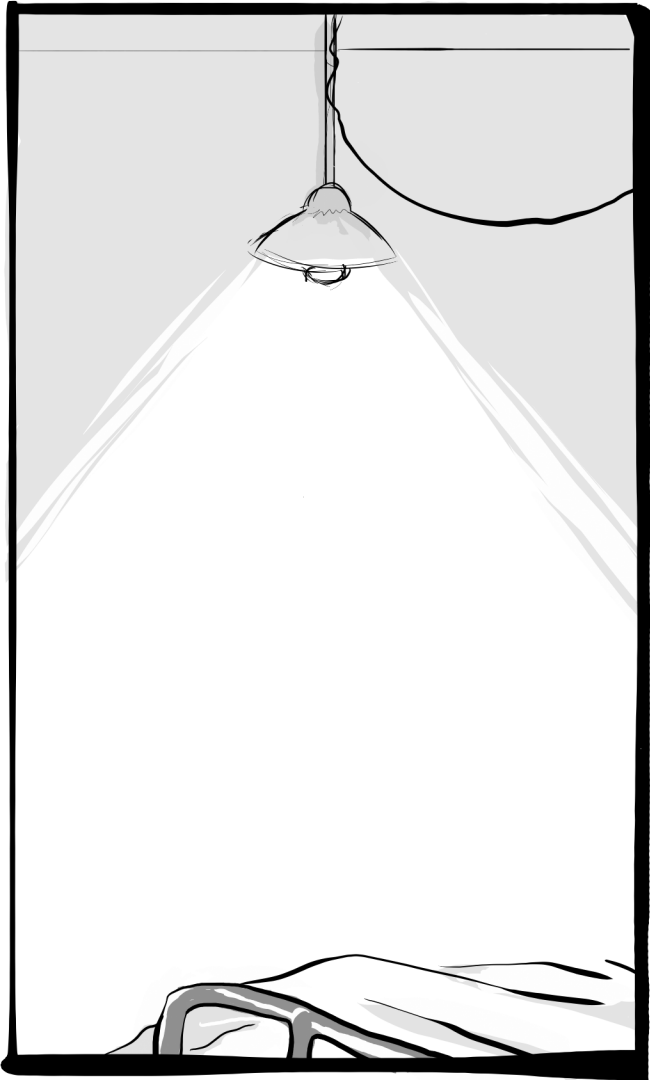


NO NO I'M NOT DONE

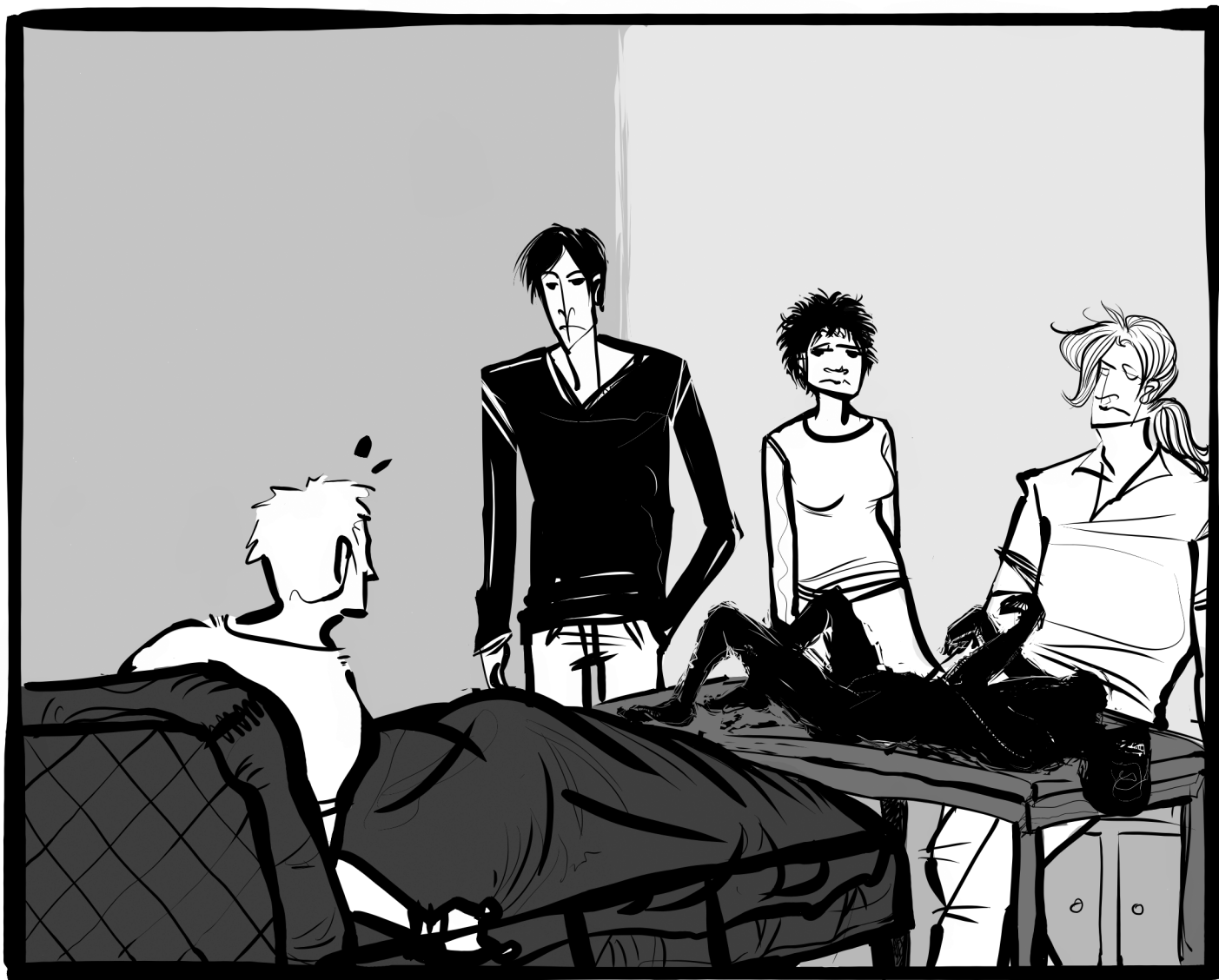
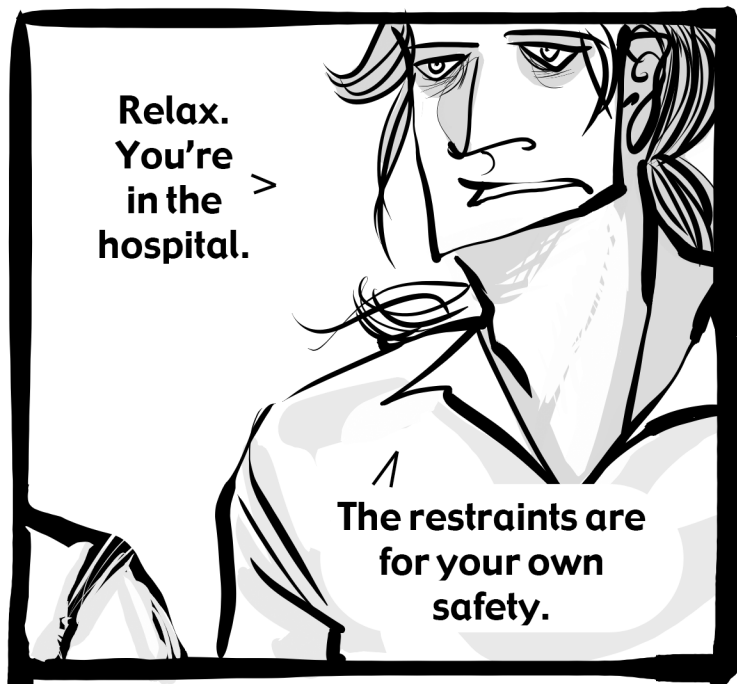


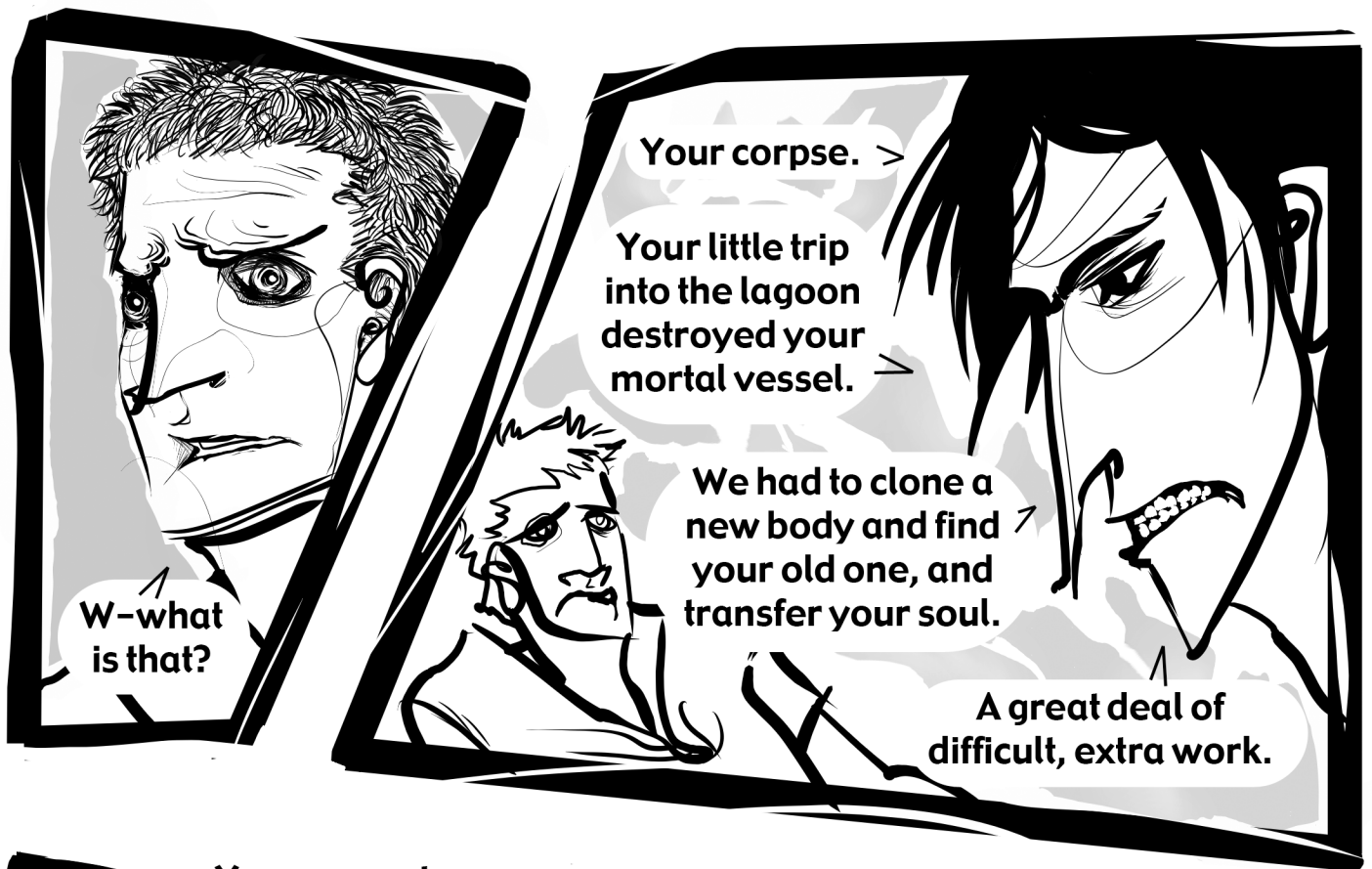
Well that was  
interesting











W-what  
is that?

Your corpse. >

Your little trip  
into the lagoon  
destroyed your  
mortal vessel. >

We had to clone a  
new body and find  
your old one, and  
transfer your soul. >

A great deal of  
difficult, extra work.



You may not  
recall this

No!

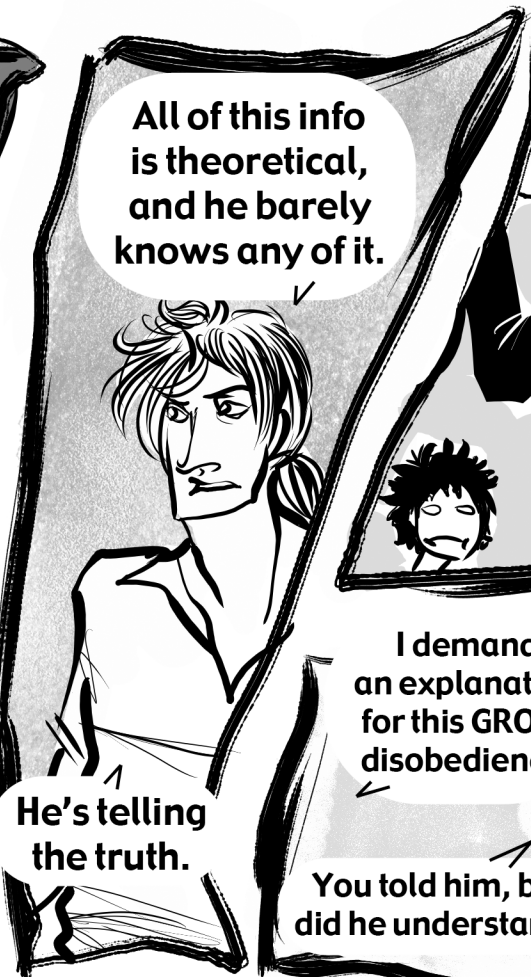
I remember!  
I didn't forget!  
But I don't know  
what came  
over me, I  
swear it!

But you nearly  
caused the end  
of the world  
as we know it.

I don't understand  
what happened.  
why did I try to  
do that?!



^  
You try to  
usurp all the  
power in the  
known universe  
and you think  
I'll accept that  
dumb story?!



All of this info  
is theoretical,  
and he barely  
knows any of it.

^  
He's telling  
the truth.

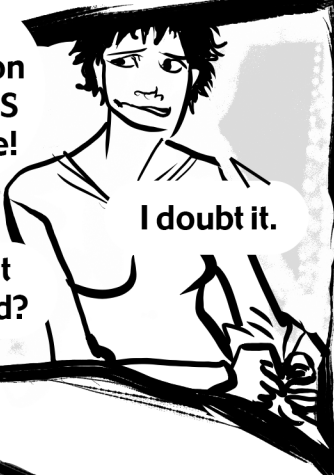


I told him  
his aperture  
was torn.

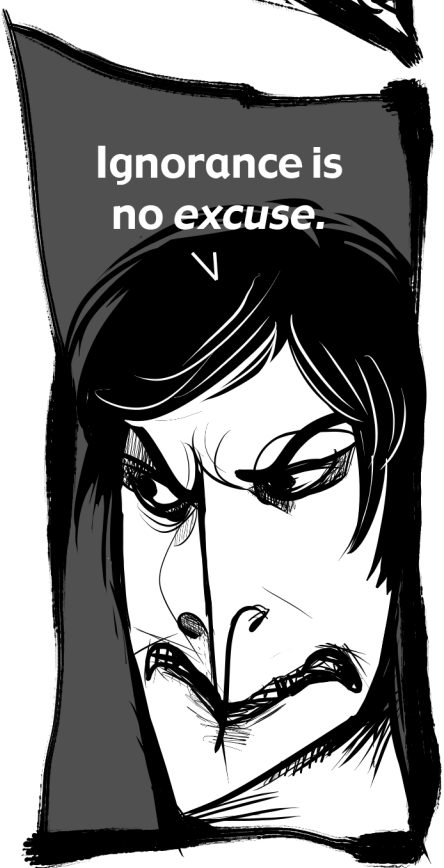


I demand  
an explanation  
for this GROSS  
disobedience!

^  
You told him, but  
did he understand?



I doubt it.



Ignorance is  
no excuse.



Yeah, and  
your profound  
negligence  
IS an excuse,  
I suppose?



What did  
you say?!

We've all made mistakes  
here. I'm sure we can  
avoid making this worse  
than it already is.



Fern, do you think you  
can resist slipping through  
your aperture again?

Please, just  
leave me alone

I don't  
know.

I don't know  
anything.

Leave you  
alone?

Leave you  
alone?!





How DARE you  
ask to be "left  
alone" >

after what you  
did! You also  
ruined the  
coat! ↓



Do you have  
any idea how  
much went  
into making  
that coat, all  
for YOUR  
benefit!?

Uh. Hold up.  
The coat is  
hardly - >



< You're an ungrateful, greedy,  
snivelling little worm, do you  
realize that?!

I'll do better, I swear >

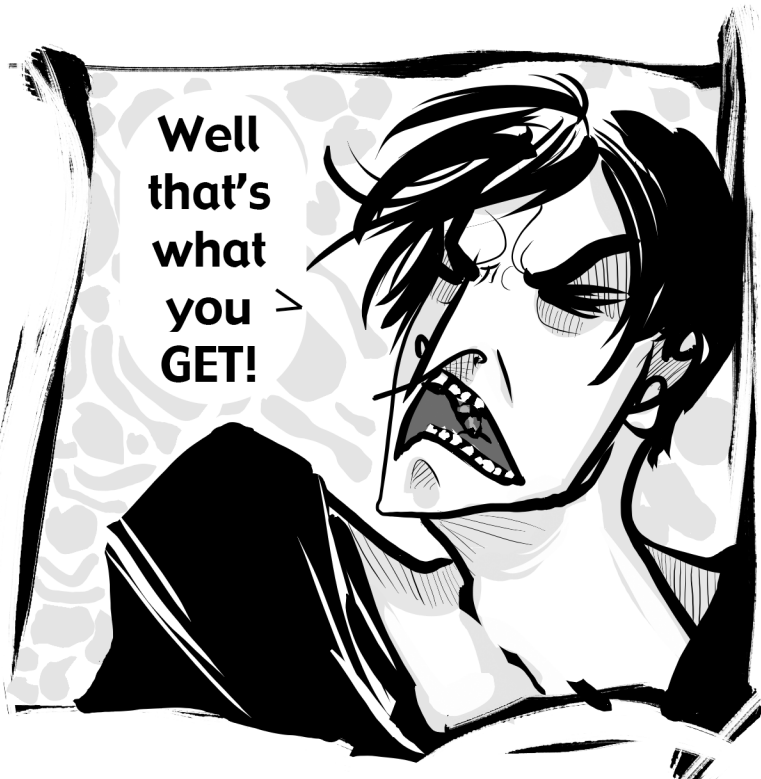


I'd like to know  
how you'll "do  
better" when >  
you're as STUPID  
as you are and  
still can't function

even when everyone  
is bending over backwards  
to accomodate you!

Fuck this.

crumble



Well  
that's  
what  
you >  
GET!



I'm LEAVING!  
✓



Did that... >

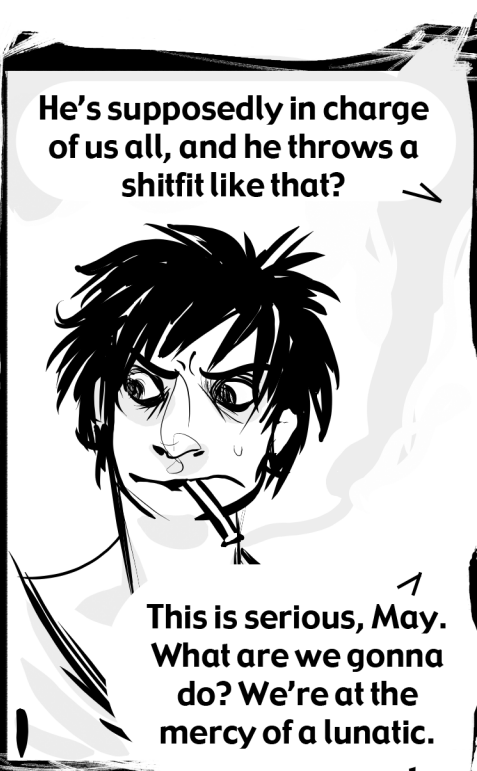
...just happen?  
✓



He's insane. ▽

He's completely nuts. ▽

Did you see that? ▽



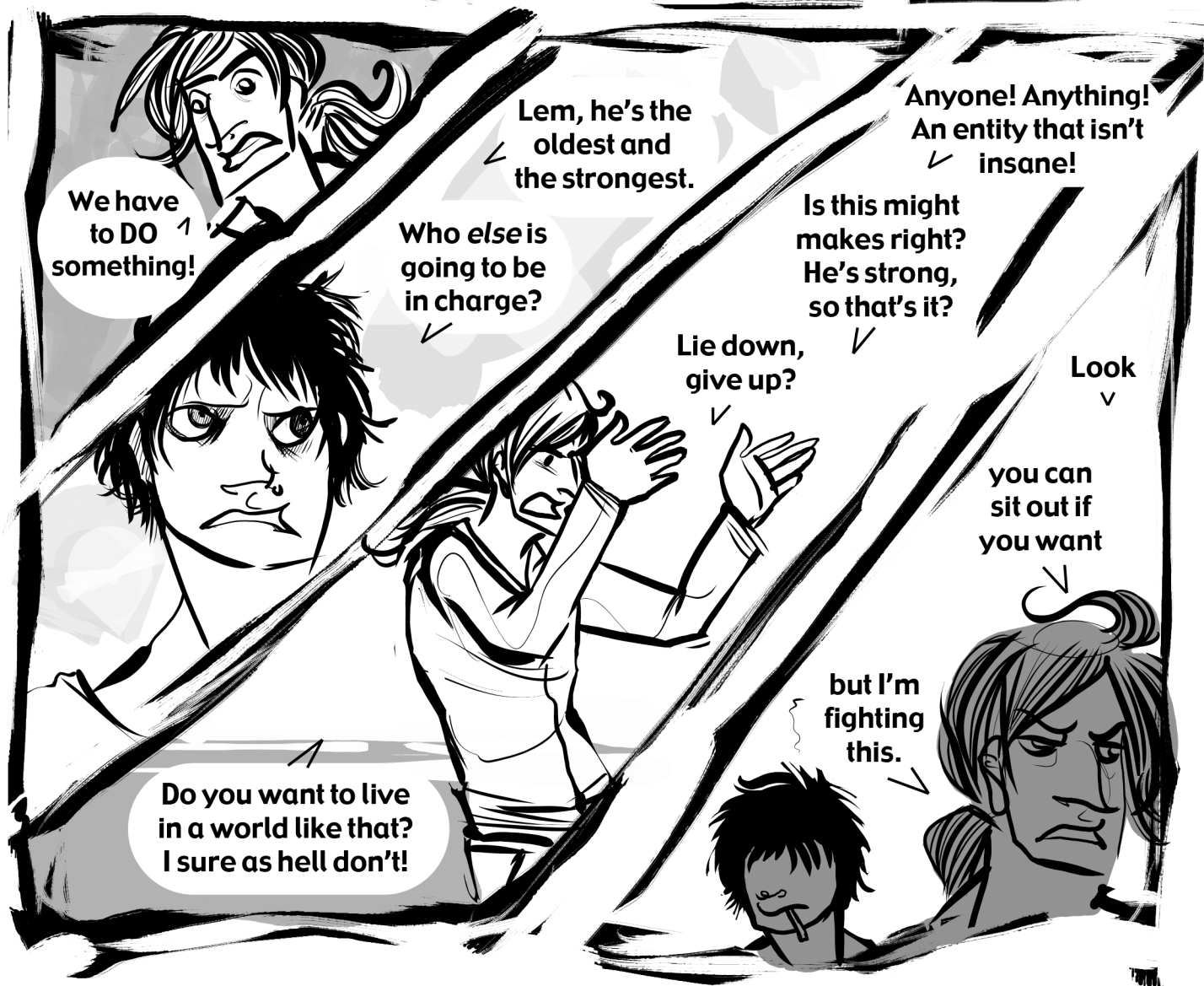
He's supposedly in charge of us all, and he throws a shitfit like that? ▽

This is serious, May. What are we gonna do? We're at the mercy of a lunatic.



Are you listening?! Say something! ▽

I dunno, ▽ Lem



We have to DO something! ▽

Lem, he's the oldest and the strongest. ▽

Who else is going to be in charge? ▽

Anyone! Anything! An entity that isn't insane! ▽

Is this might makes right? He's strong, so that's it? ▽

Lie down, give up? ▽

Look ▽

you can sit out if you want ▽

but I'm fighting this. ▽

Do you want to live in a world like that? I sure as hell don't!



Do us all a favor.



Next time you have an  
opportunity to destroy  
the world as we know it



Don't hesitate. 7



