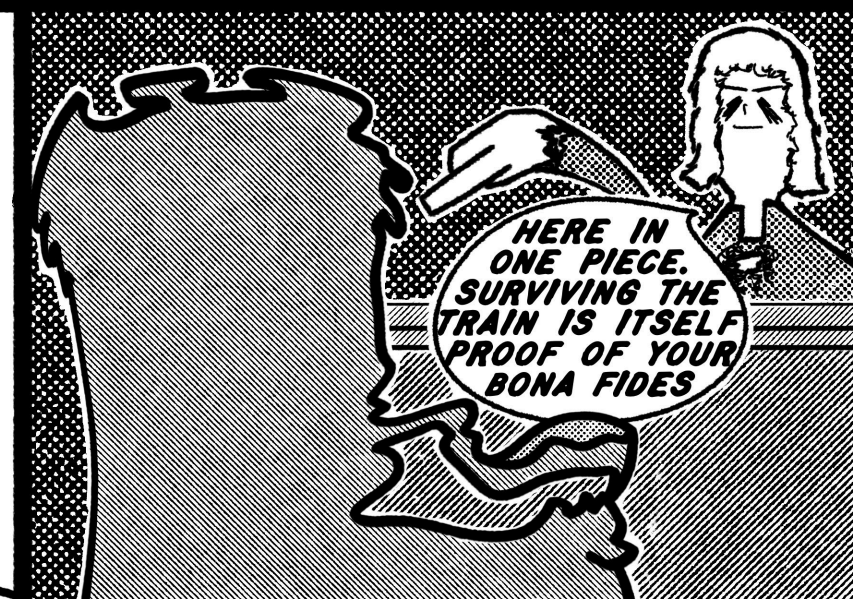
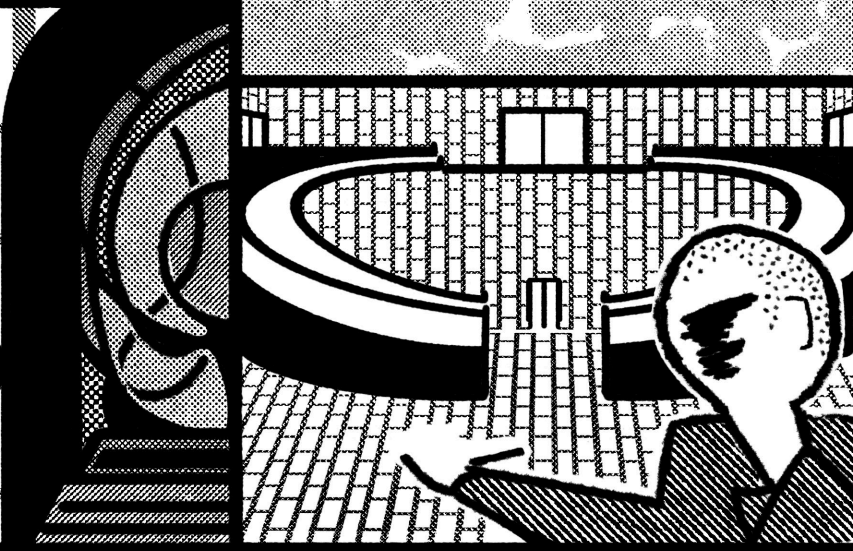


ALAMANDER









HERE IN
ONE PIECE.
SURVIVING THE
TRAIN IS ITSELF
PROOF OF YOUR
BONA FIDES

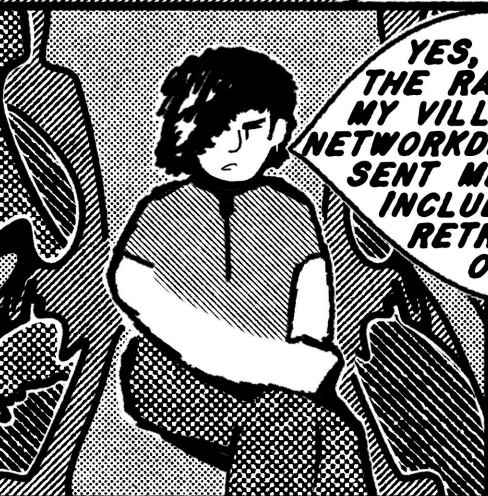


AS INFORMED,
YOUR CONTRACT
IS TO FULFILL A
BLOOD
REVENGE

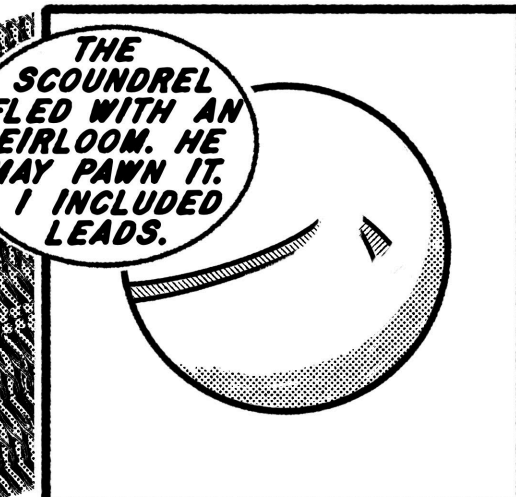
AS I AM TOLD
YOUR PEOPLE
HOLD LAW.



AURELIUS,
MY POOR KIN,
A BRIGHT FLAME
SNUFFED BY COLD BLOOD
WE REALLY WERE
PEAS IN A POD
AHAHAA

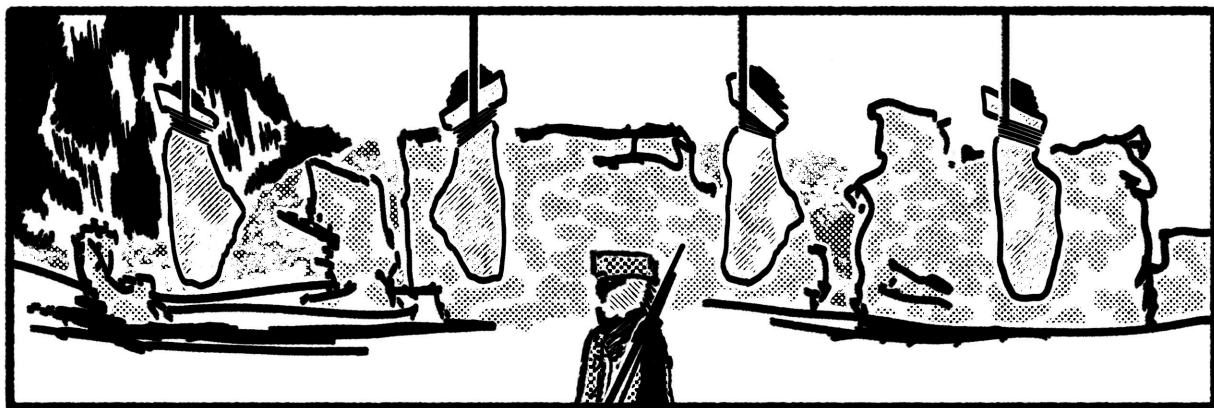
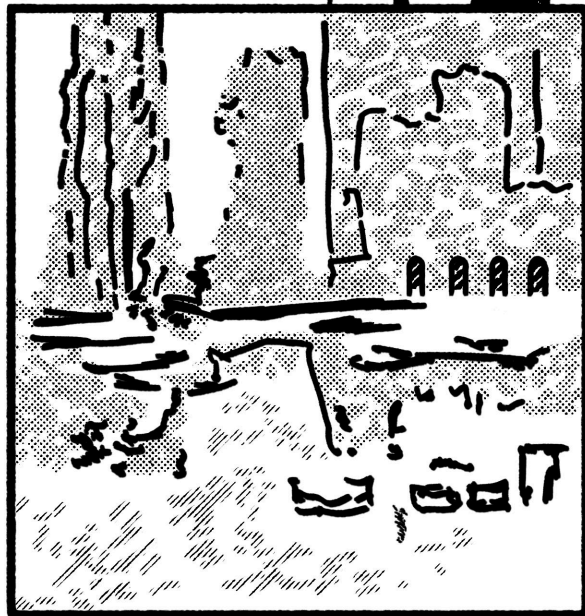
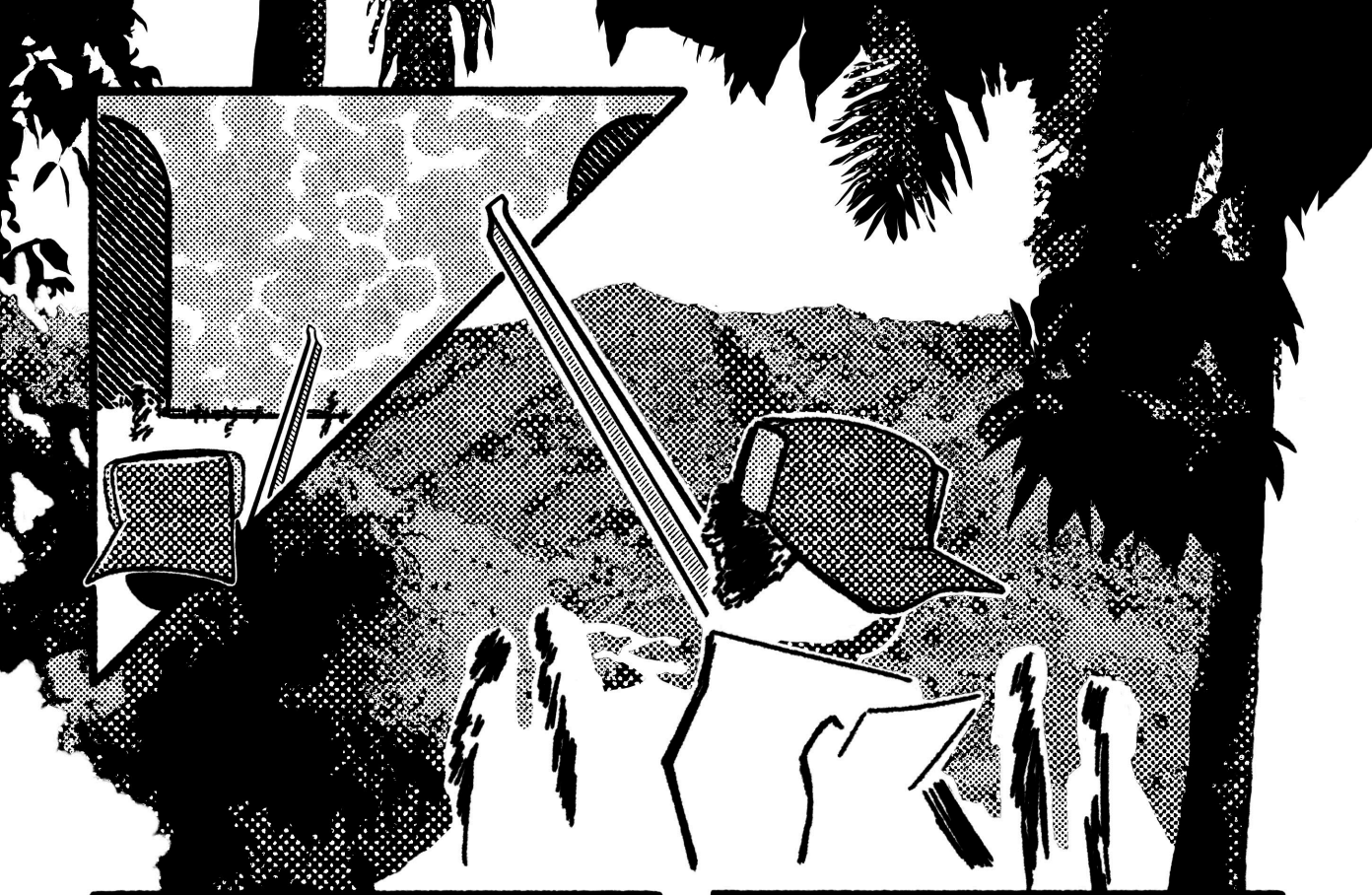


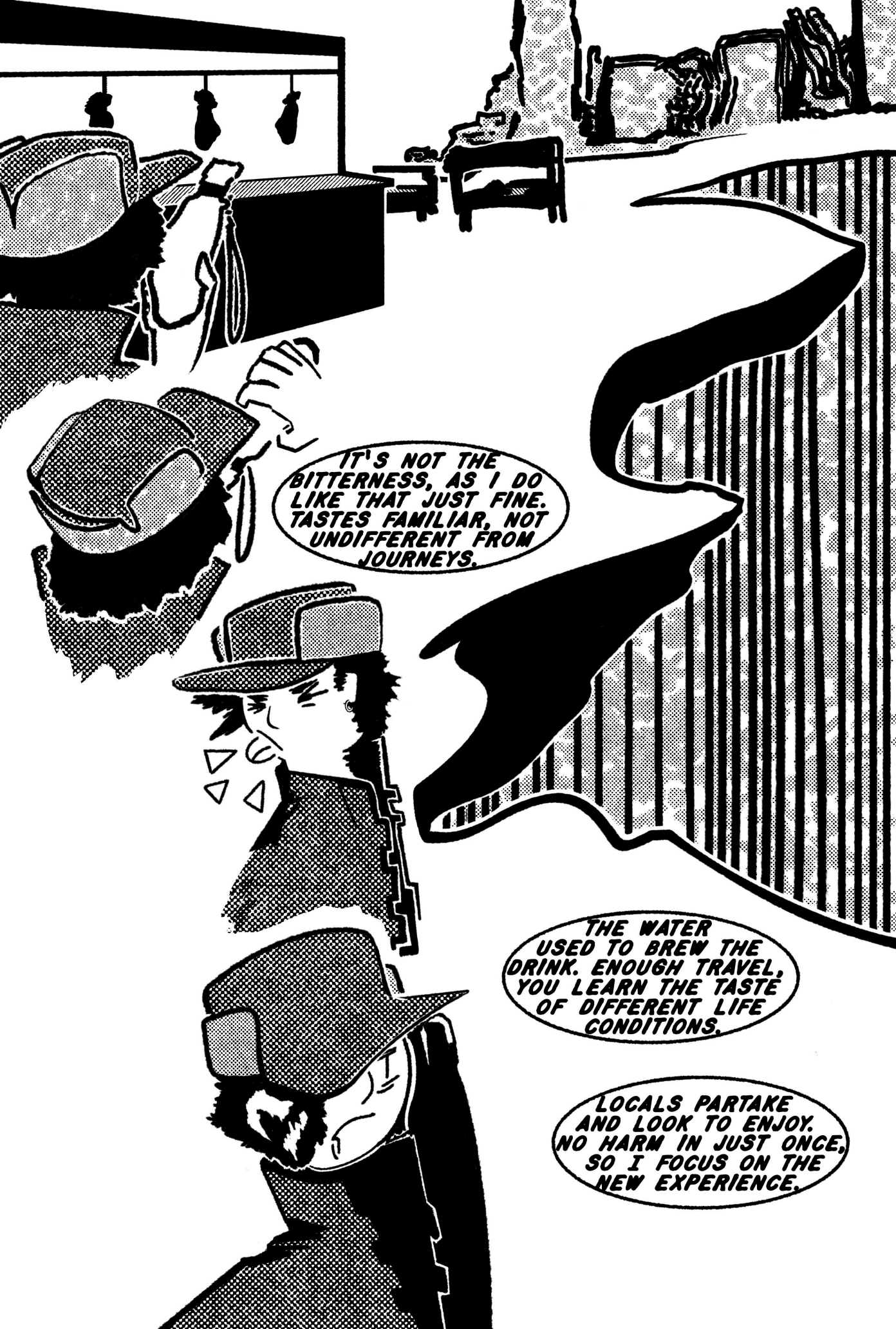
YES, AND
THE RADITEX
MY VILLAGE'S
NETWORKDELEGATE
SENT ME ALSO
INCLUDED A
RETRIEVAL
ORDER.



THE
SCOUNDREL
FLED WITH AN
HEIRLOOM. HE
MAY PAWN IT.
I INCLUDED
LEADS.

OOHHH
AND I MUST
STRESS THAT THE
SLIMEY WRETCH IS
KINFOLK TO THE
SALAMANDERS.
BEWARE, THESE
GHOULS ARE NOT
BEREFT OF
ALLIES.

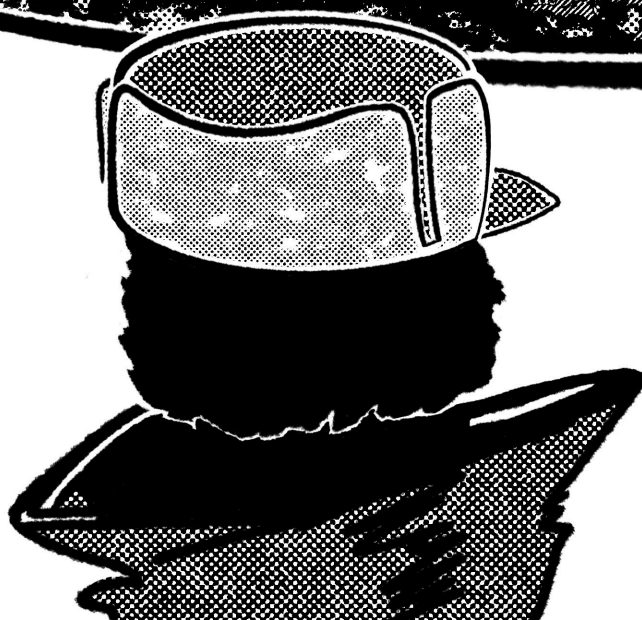




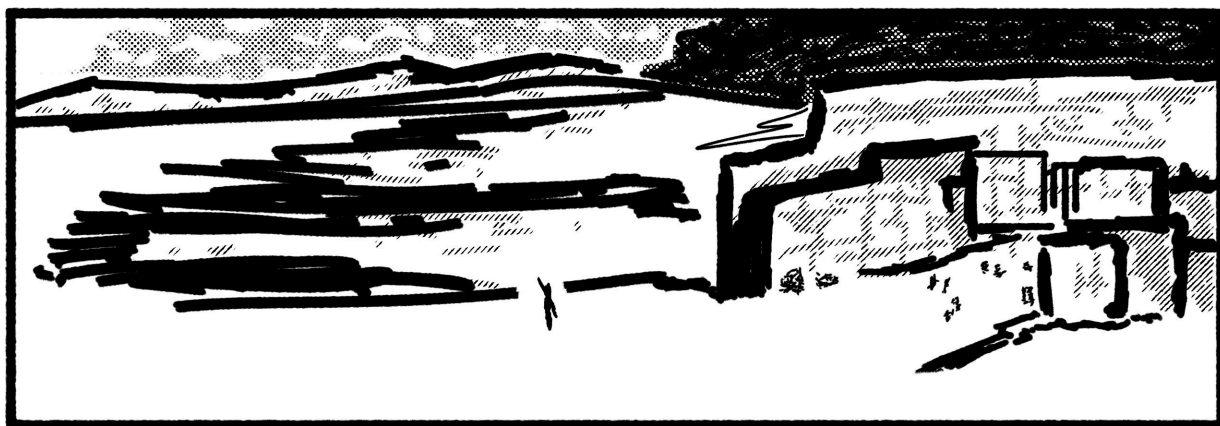
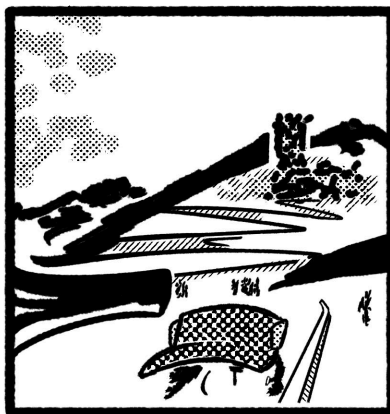
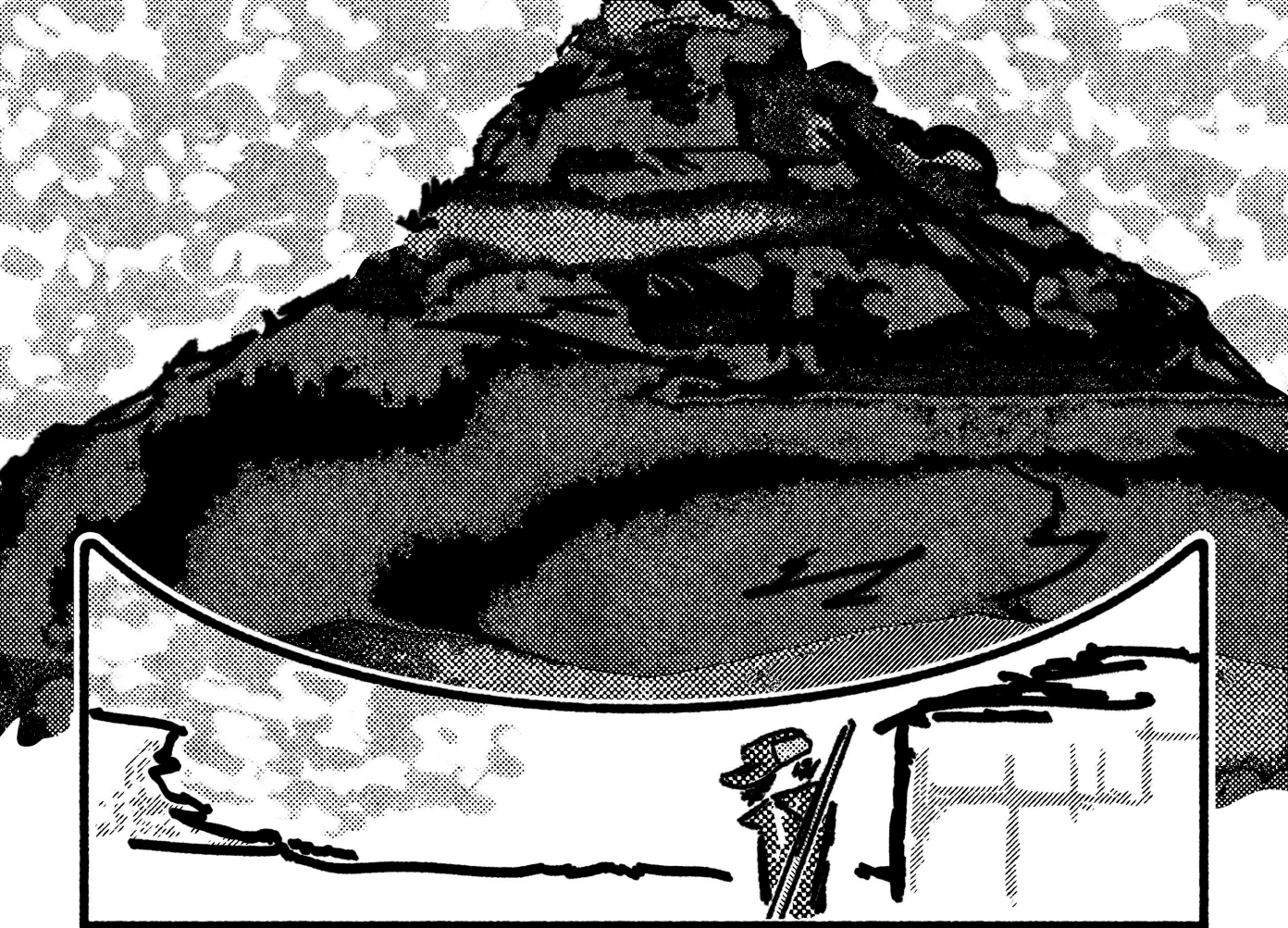
IT'S NOT THE BITTERNESS, AS I DO LIKE THAT JUST FINE. TASTES FAMILIAR, NOT UNDIFFERENT FROM JOURNEYS.

THE WATER USED TO BREW THE DRINK. ENOUGH TRAVEL, YOU LEARN THE TASTE OF DIFFERENT LIFE CONDITIONS.

LOCALS PARTAKE AND LOOK TO ENJOY. NO HARM IN JUST ONCE, SO I FOCUS ON THE NEW EXPERIENCE.



THAT'S WHEN I
STARTED MENTAL NOTES,
WHEN I BEGAN TO SEE THE
FACES AROUND ME AND STUDIED
THE PEOPLE I PASSED BY ON
THE REST OF MY WALK TO
MOUNT SAINT FOREST.
"THE TOWER"





**DISPARITY
WAS OPENLY VISIBLE.
PART OF MY CONTINENT
CRASHED INTO ANOTHER,
IT HAS BEEN SINCE:
THE LAND OF
STARK CONTRASTS**

**I NOW SEE
EVEN STARKER**

**POVERTY,
AGITATION,
MUTTERING,
DELERIUM**

**MANY WHO HAVE
BEEN BADLY MAIMED.
I'D BELIEVE MOST
IN TOWN ARE,
IF NOT MENTALLY**

**THE TOWER,
A VINE
BEARING MISERY
FOR THIS LAND'S
DENIZENS.**

COORDINATES TO CHECK
BROUGHT A MEETING WITH AN
ELDER BEHIND A SHOP COUNTER
WHO SMOKED A FRAGRANT PIPE
AND SPOKE QUIETLY.

DIFFERENT THAN
STRANGERS ENCOUNTERED
IN THE CITY OR THIS TOWN.
THE MOST COMPOSED.

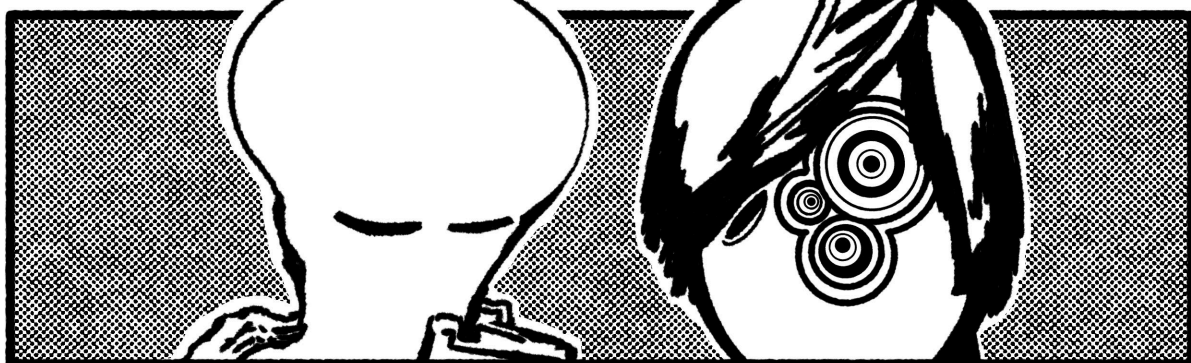
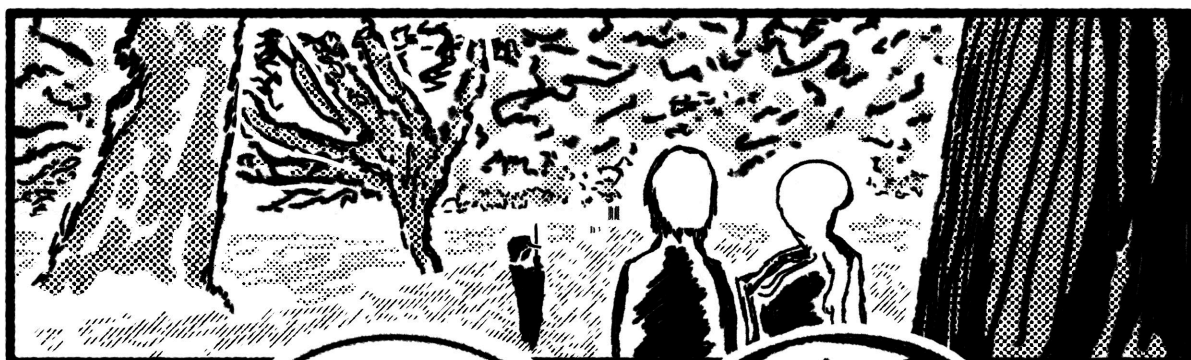
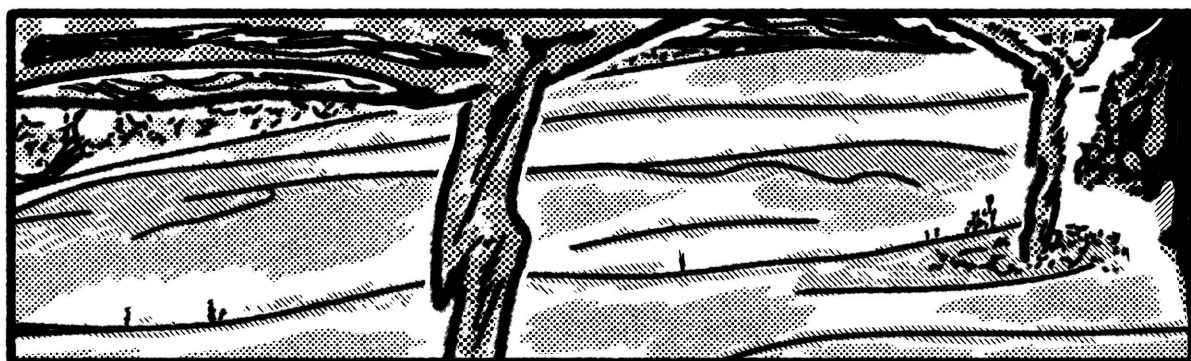
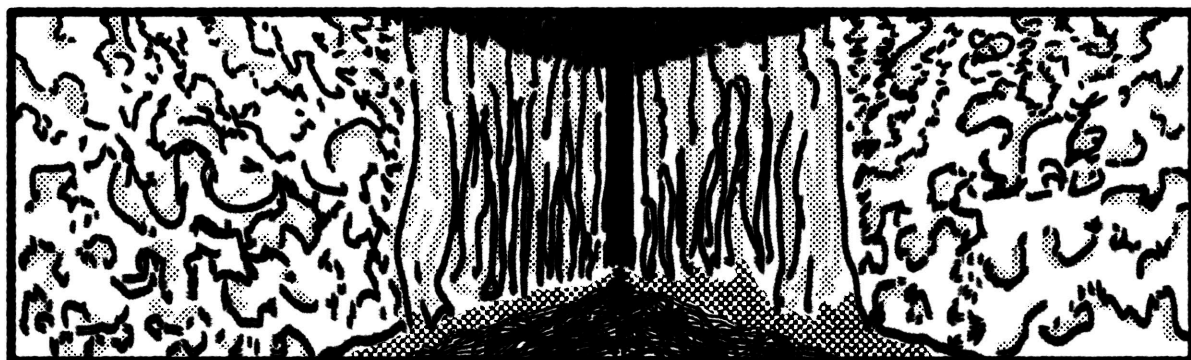
SHE SEEMED TO KNOW
WHY I WAS THERE
AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT
SHE WAS NOT SIDED WITH
THE OLIGARCHS OF
FABRICATION FACTIONS.

THEN SAID
THERE ARE ALWAYS
COMPLEX CIRCUMSTANCES.
SHE HAD ADVICE.

MY BOUNTY IS
INSIDE THE TOWER
AND EVEN WITHOUT ME
IT WON'T END WELL.
I WILL FIND NO
WELCOME OR SOUND
CONCLUSION.

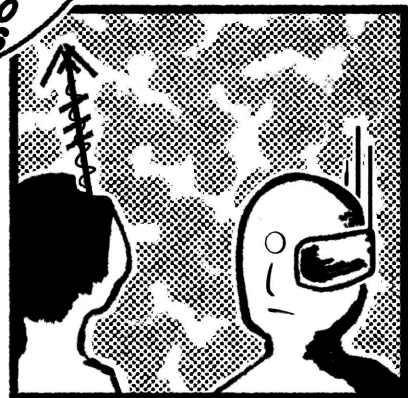
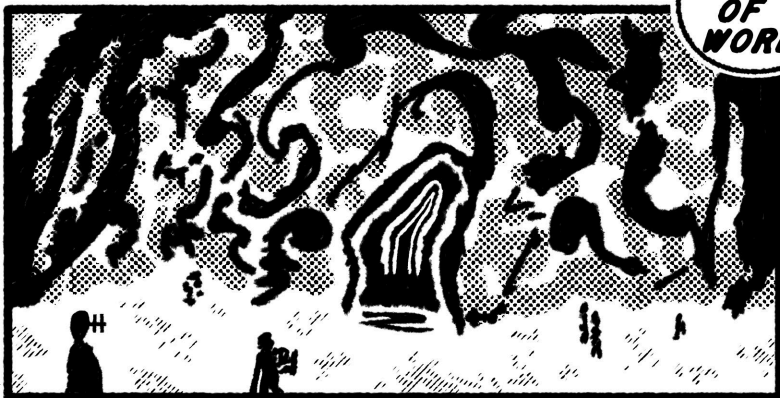
THE TOWER FORMED
ITS OWN DWELLERS.
SEE THE VILLAGE
AT THE ROAD'S END,
JUST INSIDE
THE MEMBRANE.

ALONG WITH SAYING,
"KNOW THE REASON
WHY AN ENEMY'S ALLY
HAS LOYALTY",
WHEN I ASKED ABOUT
THE SALAMANDERS.





YOU
APPROACH
THE VILL
OF NO
WORDS



**THESE HUDDLED SOULS ARE TOWER DWELLERS
WITHOUT HEARING OR SPEECH YOU COULD PERCEIVE.
MANY OF THEM KNOW YOUR KIND'S THOUGHTS ALREADY.
MY PLACE HERE IS FOR TALKING TO SOULS LIKE YOU.**

**ALL DWELLERS ARE SEEN AS UNWELCOME,
A PESTILENCE INSTEAD OF AFFLICTED PEOPLE.
AT TIMES THEY ARE EVEN HUNTED OR USED LIKE BEASTS.**

**THE RESHAPED DESCENDANTS OF THIS LAND
WHO HAVE ONLY THE SALAMANDERS TO TRUST.
THEY TOO ARE THE LAND BUT ESCAPED THE MUTATION.**

**YOUR PREY IS ON THEIR OWN HUNT,
HEADING DEEPER INTO THE TOWER,
WITHOUT CARE OF YOURS.**







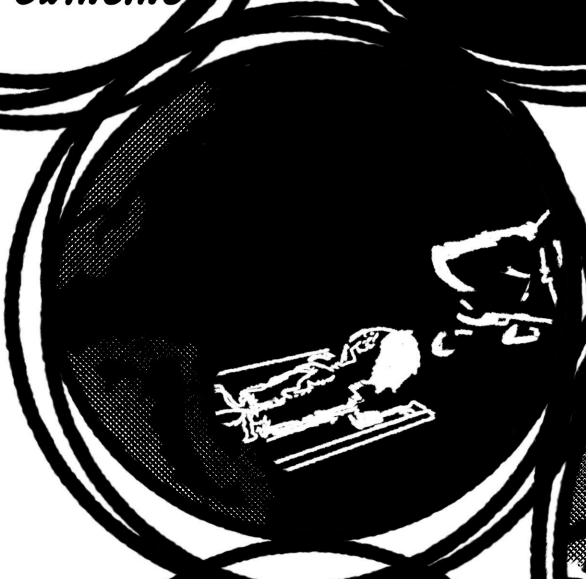
INSTEAD OF A
SELF-LIT PASSAGE,
LIKE SO MUCH OF
THE TOWER, I FOUND
DARKNESS. THE ROOM
BEGAN TO HEAT. THE
ENERGY CONDENSER
INSIDE MY GAUSS
RIFLE WENT
INERT.



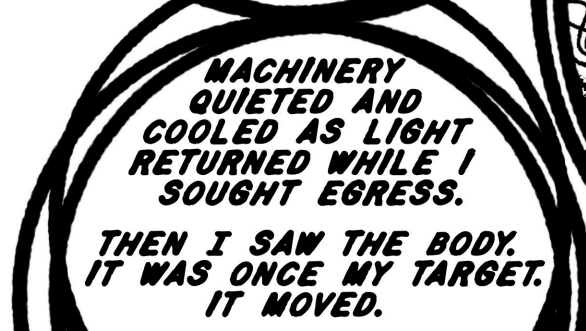
MY HEAD
FELT FUZZY.

THOUGHTS
AND MEMORIES
LOST ROOT,
REPEATED BACK,
LOOPED.

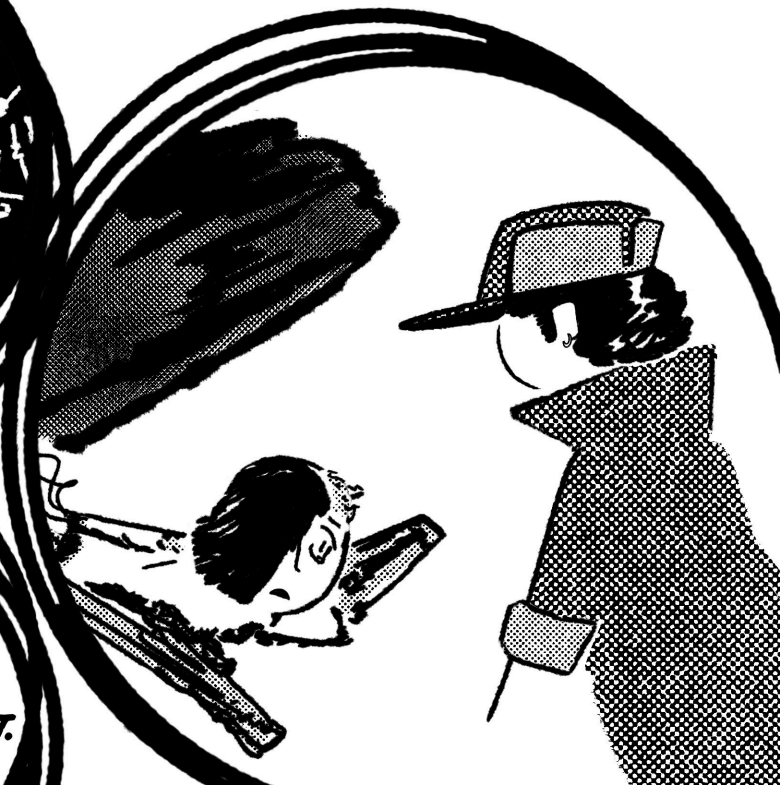
I BEGAN
COLLAPSING
AND SWINGING



MACHINERY
QUIETED AND
COOLED AS LIGHT
RETURNED WHILE I
SOUGHT EGRESS.



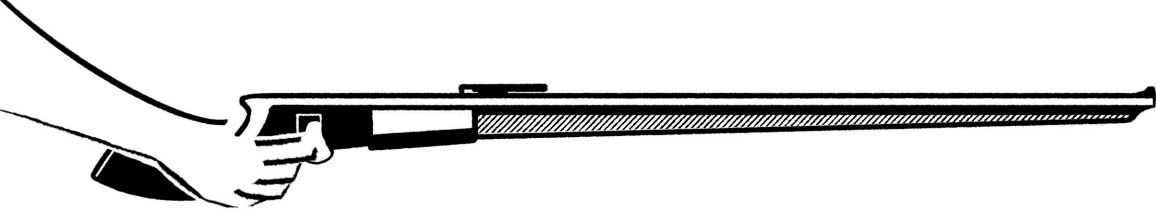
THEN I SAW THE BODY.
IT WAS ONCE MY TARGET.
IT MOVED.



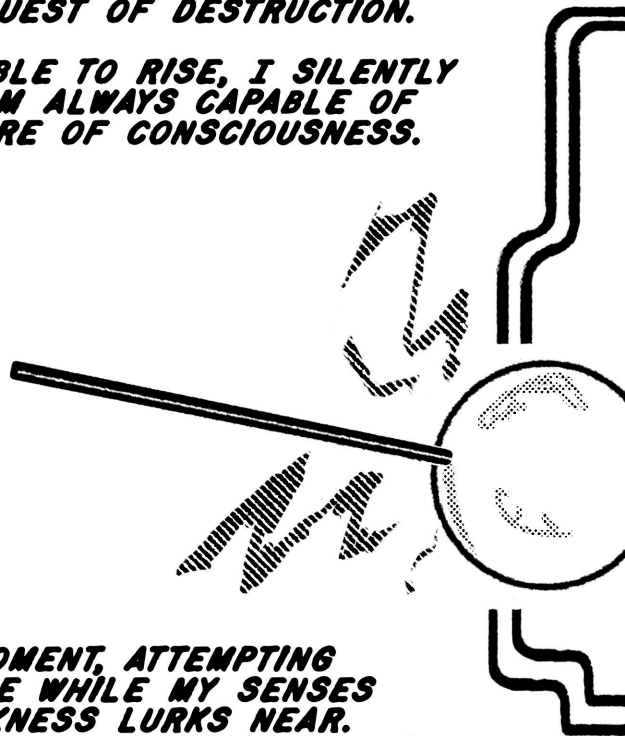
**THE HALF-CARCASS SPOKE:
HE WAS A SALAMANDER, IMPRISONED BUT FREED UNDER CONDITION.
THE OLIGARCHS SEEK A COMPONENT OF THIS CARNIVOROUS ROOM
AND NEED SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE TOWER.**

**HE INTENDED TO DESTROY THE OBJECT OF DESIRE, KNOWING
HE WOULD BE DEAD UPON RETRIEVAL OR NOT, BUT HE FAILED.**

**HE FIGURED A HUNTER WOULD COME NEXT
AND HE GOT A LAST MESSAGE TO THE SALAMANDERS PRIOR.**



**HE BEGS ME TO FINISH HIS QUEST OF DESTRUCTION.
BARELY PARSING AND BARELY ABLE TO RISE, I SILENTLY
AGREE TO THE ONE THING I AM ALWAYS CAPABLE OF
AS LONG AS I HAVE A MEASURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.**



**I TRY TO STAND FOR A MOMENT, ATTEMPTING
TO REGAIN SOME COMPOSURE WHILE MY SENSES
ARE STILL DULL AND WEAKNESS LURKS NEAR.
I SEE FIGURES COMING AS I SLOWLY GET BACK OUT
WHILE WHAT REMAINS OF MY TARGET IS DRAGGED DEEPER IN.
THEY MUST BE HIS PEOPLE.**



**I'VE BEEN AFFECTED
BY WHATEVER IS HAPPENING ALL THE WAY OVER HERE.**

**ALTHOUGH I LIVE TO HUNT GAME, AND WILL HUNT
PEOPLE WHEN ASKED WITH GOOD REASON BY THE
RIGHT PARTIES, THAT IS NOT THE KIND OF NAIL THIS
HAMMER IS MEANT FOR.**

**I CAUGHT ONLY A GLIMPSE, BUT AN EYEFUL,
OF WHY THIS CONTINENT IS CALLED
THE WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS.**

**I NEED TO
LEARN FROM THESE PEOPLE.**

I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THEIR LAND



ALAMANDER



**SALAMANDER COUNTRY
EPISODE #2 THE HUNTER**

**STORY & ART BY
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