

SHARPBALL



EL SALADO

MIGUEL JIMÉNEZ & JOSÉ LUIS JIMÉNEZ

con sentimiento para nuestra agua viva,

*Betico y Pepita:
con el más profundo amor,
el mayor orgullo e
infinita inspiración, ¡nojoda!*

EL SALADO

PEACE THROUGH WATER

RESEARCH, STORY
& ARTWORK

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S H A R P B A L L

EL SALADO

A STORY BY

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A LONG TIME AGO.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING THERE WAS NIETHER DAY NOR NIGHT TO HELP KEEP TRACK OF TIME.

JUST AN EXTENSIVE AND ETERNAL **DARKNESS** THAT COVERED THE VOID FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

IN THIS DARK WORLD THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS, **THE OBSCURES***, WERE PERFORMING EXPERIMENTS ON THE INFINITE.

THEY PLACED STONES ON THE EARTH, BUT WERE IN NEED OF SOMETHING MORE. SOMETHING TO ENLIGHTEN AND FATHOM THE DEPTHS OF **THAT** IN WHICH THE WORLD RESTED: **THE LIVING-WATER** WHERE EVERYTHING LAY AFLOAT.

*THE FIRST APPEARANCES OF INDIGENOUS **ZENÚ** COSMOGONY.

THEY CREATED **THE CHARMS**: THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS, TO MEASURE THE SIZE OF THE WORLD, AND KEEP TRACK OF TIME; DAYS THAT ENDED AND NIGHTS THAT BEGAN.

AND SO **THE LIGHT** STOWED BY THE CHARMS WAS SENT TO THE LAND OF **THE FIRST MEN**. THOSE WHO HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF WATER.

FROM THAT LIGHT A DOVE BELONGING TO THE WORLD OF THE OBSCURES **FLED** AND MADE ITS WAY.

WITH THE FLAP OF ITS WINGS IT DISSOLVED THE MISTS AND CREATED THE WINDS. IT GAZED BELOW AND **WAS UPSET** BY THE EXCESS OF DARKNESS AND LACK OF WATER.

IT LANDED ON THE HIGHEST POINT IT COULD FIND, THE BRANCH OF AN OLD SAMAN TREE, AND UPON SEEING HOW THE LIGHT WITH WHICH IT CAME LIT THE LAND OF THE FIRST MEN IT **REJOICED**.

IT BECAME SO EMOTIONAL THAT **A TEAR** ROLLED FROM ITS EYE TO ITS BEAK...

AND **SLIPPED**.

IT **DROPPED** INTO THE DEEPEST BASIN THERE WAS AND **FILLED** THE VALLEY WITH WATER...

PLUNG

...BECOMING A BEAUTIFUL AND **SPRAWLING SWAMP**.

THOUSAND OF YEARS LATER IN **LOS MONTES DE MARÍA, EL CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR**.

WITH THE ARRIVAL OF LIGHT, THE FIRST MEN SAW **THEIR LAND** FOR THE FIRST TIME AND HOW FAR THE GLOW OF THE SUN, THE MOON AND THE STARS COULD REACH; FROM THE SWAMP TO THE VALLEY AND THE VALLEY TO THE MOUNTAIN, WHERE THE WORLD **SPLIT IN THREE** WHERE ALL WAS GENEROUS, RICH AND PLENTY. WHERE THE WATER WAS LIFE-GIVING.

AND BEFORE THE **ENCHANTMENT** OF THE CHARMS...

TOWNSHIP OF EL SALADO.



OH KIDDIES, IF YOU ONLY KNEW.

AND THEN?

WHAT US GRANDPAS SAY: "THEY WERE FULFILLED TO THE POINT OF..."



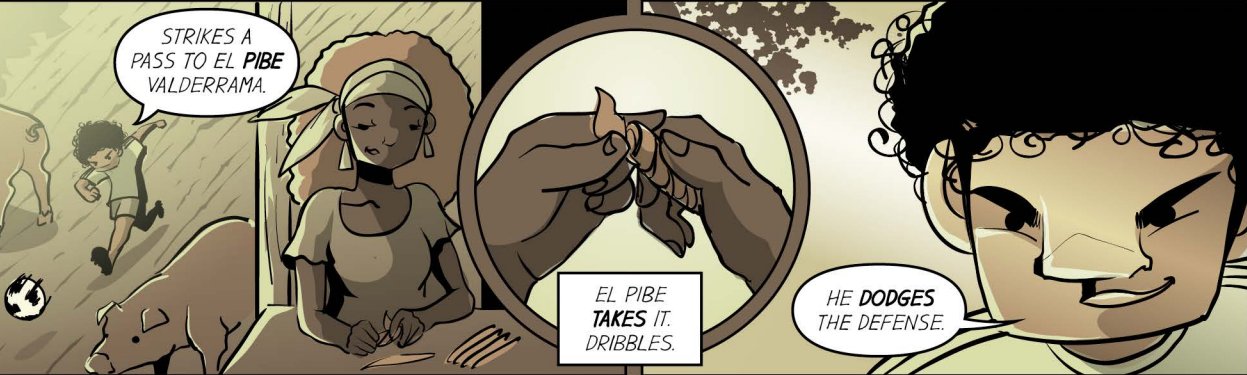
CAREFUL, OLD MAN!

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.! THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE BALL AND NOT WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU.

OK, OK! SORRY.

FRANK 'THE TANK' NÚÑEZ WITH THE BALL.

STRIKES A PASS TO EL PIBE VALDERRAMA.



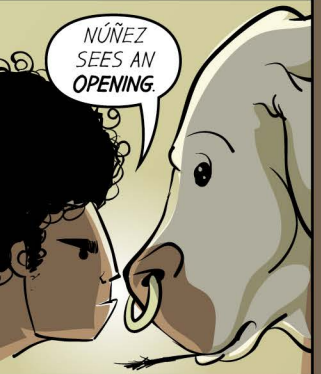
EL PIBE TAKES IT. DRIBBLES.

HE DODGES THE DEFENSE.



EL PIBE PLAYS IT TO NÚÑEZ WITH A HAT-TRICK.

NÚÑEZ SEES AN OPENING.



HE SLIDES STRAIGHT INTO THE BOX.



HE'S OPEN!



NÚÑEZ GETS READY TO TAKE IT DOWN WITH HIS CHEST AND...



TRIS



GOAL?



NAH... SUN GOT THE BEST OF ME. IT'S FEISTY.



REALLY? TOO BAD.

TRUTH IS THIS PIECE OF HEAVEN MAKES EVERYONE SOMEWHAT FEISTY.

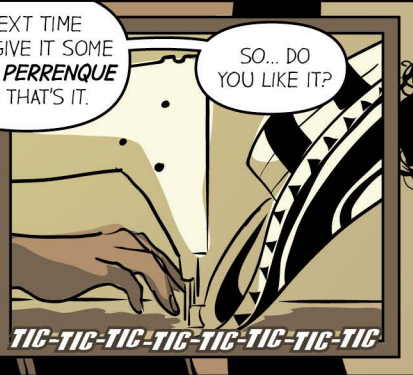
FEISTY LIKE A WORLD CUP.



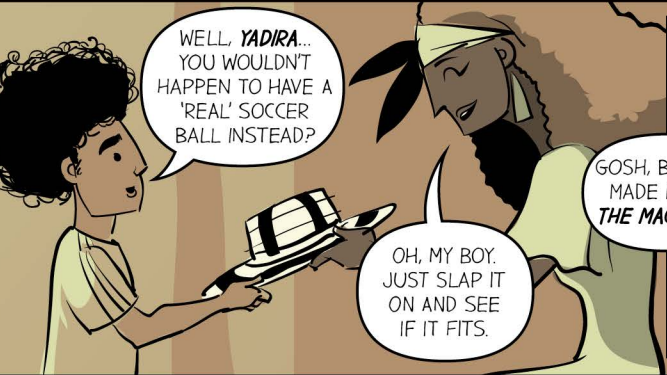
WELL...

...NEXT TIME JUST GIVE IT SOME MORE PERRENQUE AND THAT'S IT.

SO... DO YOU LIKE IT?

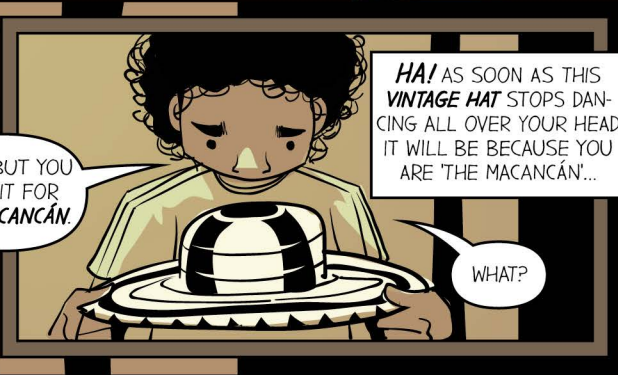


WELL, YADIRA... YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE A 'REAL' SOCCER BALL INSTEAD?



OH, MY BOY, JUST SLAP IT ON AND SEE IF IT FITS.

GOSH, BUT YOU MADE IT FOR THE MACANCÁN.



HA! AS SOON AS THIS VINTAGE HAT STOPS DANCING ALL OVER YOUR HEAD IT WILL BE BECAUSE YOU ARE 'THE MACANCÁN'...

WHAT?

YOUNG MAN, IF ONLY YOU KNEW THAT WHICH DRIVES ALL MEN CRAZY...

MORE THAN SOCCER.



WHAT?!

YOU'RE STILL TOO YOUNG.



WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GOT TO BE PURE RUBBISH, YADIRA.

BALL IS ALL, Y'KNOW? NOTHING CAN COMPARE.

YOU'LL SEE, FRANK...



...THERE'S AN OTHER KIND OF GAME THAT PLAYS WITH THE DREAMS OF MEN...

...AND THAT ONE NEEDS, ASIDE FROM PERRENQUE...

...CAÑAÑA.



DAMN.



YEE-HAW!

AND THEN THE **MINOR LEAGUE** TALENT SCOUT ARRIVES...

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

AND ME... FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR., THE **YOUNGEST**.

PLAYING LIKE **THE KING**, WITH HIS **MOJO ON**.

I.

...EL **TORO CRIOLLO** SALTA A LA ARENA...

SOME TRICKS **HERE**...

...A **GOAL THERE**...

'LLEGA LA FIESTA DE LA PATRONA, AHÍ VA LA CHICA **GUAPA Y MORENA**...

...Y EL MÁS COBARDE SE **ENGUAPETONA**...



...SCORES **EVERY-TIME**.

...LLEGA LA GENTE Y A **MANANTIALES**...

EASY THERE...

UH-HUH.

FIRST HALF IS **OVER** AND THE SCOUT **COMES** UP TO ME AND SAYS...

"HEY!

"HEY, **STAR**, THE TRIALS FOR THE **MAJOR LEAGUE** ARE TOMORROW".

GOSH! I TOLD YOU **THAT ONE** ALREADY?

FRANCIS, LET'S TAKE A BREATH. I'M GETTING **WOZZY**.

I MEAN **LOOK AT ME** CARRYING THIS **BALL**.

JUST A **BAZILLION** TIMES.

NO, NEVER.



...HERE'S **FRANK 'THE TANK'** READY TO TACKLE ANY **PICKLE**.

PLEEEASE, DON'T TALK 'BOUT **FOOD**...

...I'M EATING **FOR TWO** THESE DAYS.

HOW 'BOUT **CLEANING UP** THE MESS.

PIPE DOWN! I'M ON THE VERGE OF **EXPLODING**.

I EXPECT AT ANY GIVEN **MOMENT**...

SO YOU'RE **EXPECTING?**

HA... HA... **HUSH YOU!**

COME HERE, YOU. FEEL IT?

LET'S SEE.

I **HOP**E YOU'RE NOT THINKING 'BOUT...

THE GIRL **KICKS** LIKE A MULE, RIGHT?

GOD BLESS THE LORD, **MATILDA**...

...SHE'S A **STRICKER**.

BRUUU

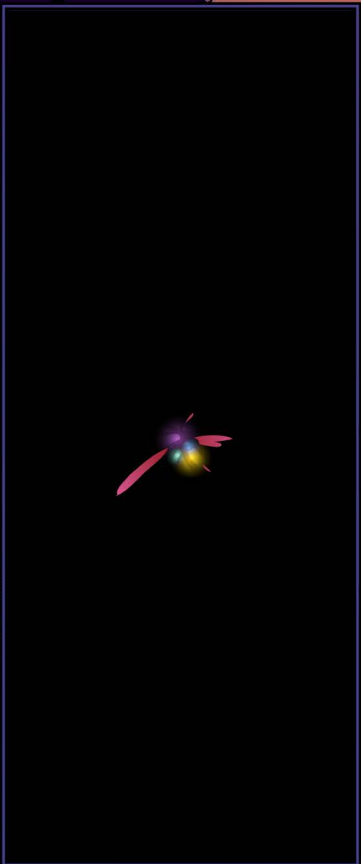
WHAT'S UP WITH THIS **CHILL?**

NO CHILL, BONITA.

...**CORREN LOS BESOS Y LOS RUMORES**...

IT'S JUST **HEATING UP**.

...Y UNOS **OJAZOS ENSOÑADORES**...



HERE COMES
THE ZAPEROCO

...NOS ASESINAN
COMO PUNALES!

TWO DAYS LATER

FRANCIS,
WE'RE MAKING
TOO MUCH NOISE.



JUST WHAT'S NECESSARY, PLEASE.

BUT WE NEED TO BE READY FOR THE **WORST**.



PLUS, WITH THAT **RACKET** THEY AIN'T GONNA HEAR A DAMN THING.

IT'S BEEN DAYS ALREADY, **MATILDA**...

...AND IT MIGHT BE WEEKS, OR YEARS... OUR ENTIRE LIFE!...



WHAT-EVER HELP THERE IS **IS NOT** ON IT'S WAY, AND **WHO** KNOWS ANYTHING?



SHOULD BE **ALL** THAT'S NEEDED...

Bienvenidos a El Salado

I'M SORRY, **BONITA**. IT'S JUST **WRONG**.

I KNOW IT AIN'T EASY.

I WISH I COULD DO MUCH MORE.

ALL OF US.

FORGIVE ME TOO.

OH, MY **BONITA**...

SO? SHOULD WE TURN BACK? SHOULD WE STAY? SHOULD WE PUT UP A **FIGHT**?



THE LORD, **FRANCIS**.

WELL, HE **BETTER** STEP ON IT AND MAKE AN APPEARANCE...



FRANCIS.

...AND **LET'S** HOPE IT'S HIS **ALL-MIGHTY** SELF...



FRANCIS.

...THE **MIRACLE-WORKER**...



AND HOW ABOUT A TRUCE?

OK?

FOR NOW WE DO **ALL** THAT'S **NECESSARY**.

FINE BY ME.

'CAUSE IF IT'S ABOUT **ALL** THAT'S NECESSARY.

WE'RE GONNA NEED **ALL** THE FAITH AND **ALL** THE HOPE OF **ALL** THESE FOLKS RIGHT HERE.



THE **LAST** THING WE LOSE, **FRANCIS**.

IF THERE'S **ANYTHING ELSE** WE CAN ACTUALLY LOSE...

...**ANYTHING MORE** TO LOSE...

FRANCIS.

iFRANCIS!



OK, OK. SORRY.

TRY 'N GET **SOME REST**, **BONITA**.

NOW GET OVER HERE, **FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR**.



iFRANCIS!

BUT, **BONITA**... **CAN** YOU HEAR THEM?



DANCING, SINGING AND DRINKING **WHILE** THEY'RE AT IT.

THEY'RE PARTYING!

WHAT MONSTERS.



YES, BUT... THERE'S **KIDS** AROUND, **FRANCISCO**.

SPEAK SOFTER.

WHY SCARE THEM **EVEN MORE**? REMEMBER...

...JUST WHAT'S **NECESSARY**.



OK, NOW, **MY LOVE**, WISH PAPA A GOOD NIGHT'S REST TOO.

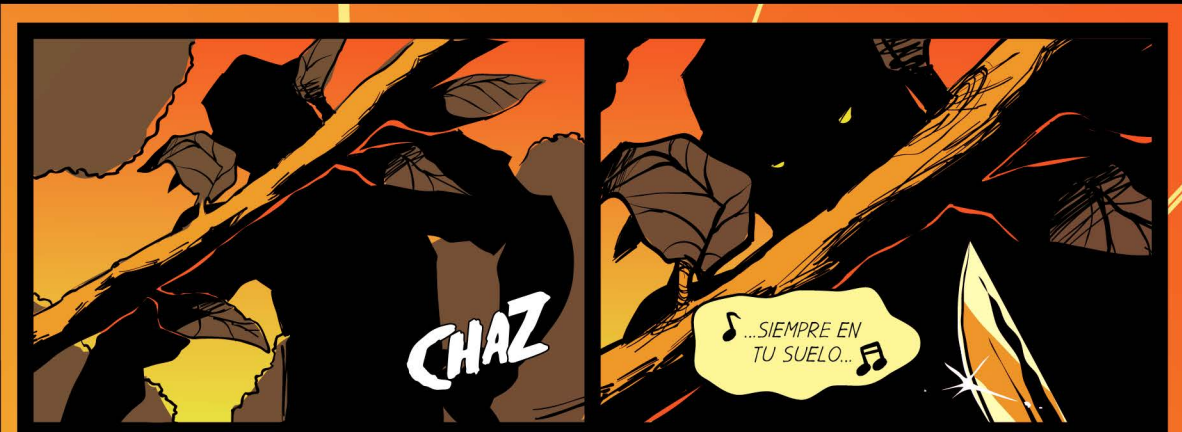
DAMN! SHE'S SO STRONG. SHE'S GOING TO MAKE THE **STARTING 11**...

FRANCIS.

OK, OK. SORRY.

SWEET DREAMS, MY DEAR **CARMEN**.

TWO YEARS LATER.



*ANCIENT INDIGENOUS CITY AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE FROM THE SIERRA NEVADA OF SANTA MARTA.



...CIS!!!

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE HOUSE!



WHAT THE...?



IS ANYONE THERE?!



HEY!



ANYTHING?

NOTHING, BONITA. DIDN'T FIND A THING..



DEAR LORD, FRANCIS. THIS IS TOO WEIRD. THERE'S NO WAY WE'RE SPENDING THE NIGHT HERE, ESPECIALLY WITH LITTLE CARMEN.

YEAH. WE NEED TO SCRAM. LET'S MAKE THE MOST WHILE IT'S EARLY.

THIS TOWN'S STILL HAUNTED. I'M OFF.

OK, OK. WELL, SINCE THERE AINT ANY MORE OPTIONS...

...I'M STAYING WITH THE OLD MAN, BONITA.



WHAAAT?!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, FRANCIS, THE THINGS YOU DO TO US.



EASY THERE, BONITA. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT. HERE'S FRANK 'THE TA...

NOT NOW, FRANCIS. PLEASE.

JUST SIMMER DOWN. WHY SHOULD WE BE SAYING GOOD-BYE ALL SHOOK UP?

BUT WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

WELL AT LEAST A LITTLE SMOOCH SO I CAN GET SOME SHUT-EYE.

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR., YOU'RE UNBELIEVABLE.

BUT WITH SOME LOVE.

OK, OK. HERE.

AND ONE FOR THE ROAD.

...MMM...

HOW 'BOUT ONE FOR THE BABY...

LORD, GIVE ME PATIENCE.

AND ONE MORE TO DREAM WITH YO...

STOP MESSING AROUND!

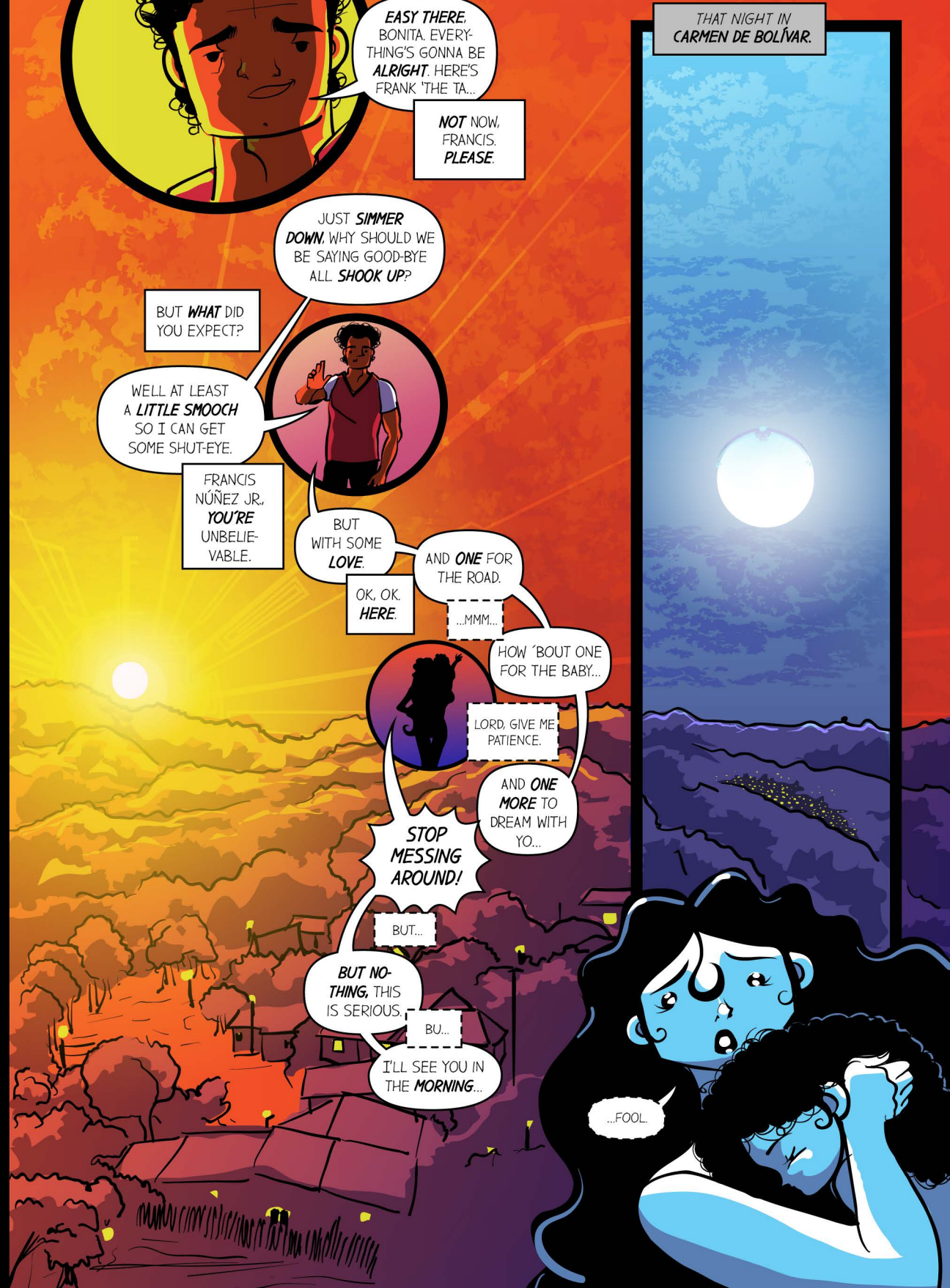
BUT...

BUT NOTHING, THIS IS SERIOUS.

BU...

I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING...

THAT NIGHT IN CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR.



...FOOL



MEANWHILE IN EL SALADO.

NO WAY, OLD MAN. AGE BEFORE BEAUTY. THE YEARS DON'T COME CHEAP, YOU KNOW.

iHA! I BET THIS OLD MAN SHAKES THE HIPS LIKE YOU NEVER COULD.

THEY MADE ME LOOK, FRANCIS... WATCH EVERYTHING THEY DID TO US.



BUT OF COURSE. AND RATTLE LIKE A BAG OF BONES.

KID, THAT'S WHAT THE PUDGY THINK. THAT THE SKINNY DON'T EAT.

LOOK AT YOU. CAN BARELY GET OFF THE HAMOC. GOTTA LAY OFF THE AREPAEHUEVO*, A PAIR OF HORNS AND YOU'LL LOOK JUST LIKE AN OX.

*COUSINE. TYPICAL FRIED SNACK OF THE CARIBBEAN COAST.

DON EMILIANO, LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND. COME HERE. I'LL DO THE SHIFT.

LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

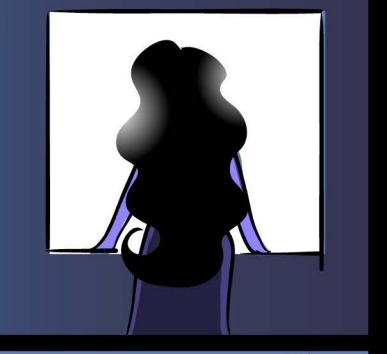
THANKS, KID. YOU DO KNOW HOW LUCKY YOU ARE, RIGHT?



THAT SOP I'D RATHER BE STRONG LIKE AN OX THEN SLOW LIKE A FOX.

LATE FOR YOUR OWN BIRTH. HUH? IT'S SWIFT LIKE A FOX, BLOCKHEAD.

ALRIGHT, FRANCIS. NOW GET SOME REST, AND REMEMBER THAT IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE...



YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, FRANCIS. THE YEARS DON'T COME CHEAP.

YOU SURE, OLD MAN?

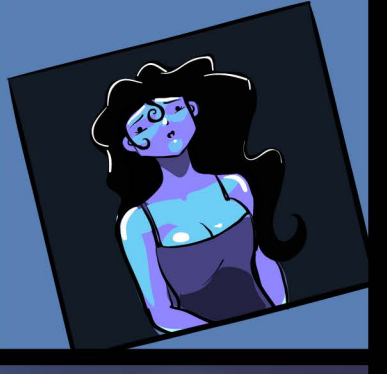
LISTEN TO THE OLD MAN. GET SOME REST 'CAUSE TOMORROW'S WORK IS NOT EASY.

I'LL DO THIS SHIFT... TRUTH BE TOLD, SINCE THAT MOMENT I'M BARELY SLEEPING.

IS THIS ABOUT WHAT MATILDA THINKS SHE SAW?

...WE NEED TO KILL THE FEAR.

OF COURSE, OLD MAN. COUNT ON IT. GOOD NIGHT AND THANKS... FOR EVERYTHING.



NO, FRANCIS. AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED, NOTHING IN THIS WORLD CAN SCARE ME...

...BUT I'M AFRAID OF MY DREAMS: TO LET MY GUARD DOWN, CLOSE MY EYES AND HAVE MY MIND TAKE ME BACK TO THAT MOMENT WHEN...

OLD MAN?

...YOU'RE...WEL... ..CO. ZZZ...zzz...

GOOD NIGHT, MY LOVES



THE NEXT DAY.

4:45 A.M.



7:00 A.M.



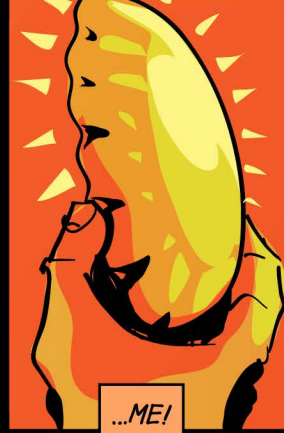
11:30 A.M.



12:30 P.M.



*AREPAHUEVO



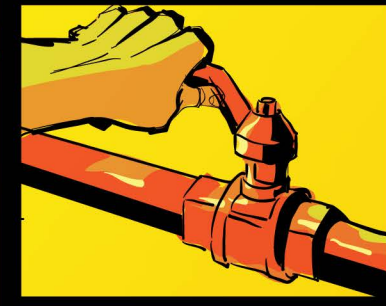
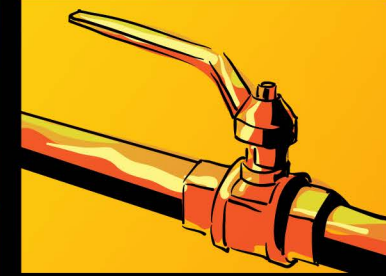
1:30 P.M.



3:00 P.M.



5:00 P.M.



6:00 P.M.



WHAT THE...

...@#*:\$%!&@#*:\$%!&



TIME WENT BY AMIDST THE ADVERSITY UNTIL...



ALRIGHT, FOLKS, EVEN
THOUGH THIS GIVES
ME *THE SHIVERS*
THERE'S SOMETHING
WE AIN'T DONE YET...

...AND IT'S
A *MUST*.

AND SO, THAT'S WHEN YOU LOOK ONE WAY...

...BUT TWIST THE HIP THE OTHER WAY...

...AND THEN YOU LEAVE EVERYONE LOOKING FOR THEIR OWN SHADOW.

THAT'S WHAT I CALL DANCING YOUR WAY OUT OF A FACE-OFF.

FRANK CAN I PLAY?

WHAT DO WE SAY?

PLEASE?

YEAH! GO GET 'EM, GIRL.

YAY! THANKS.

DAMN. REALLY?

THE TANK?

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.?

YUP, REALLY.

WHAT DID I MISS?

A TALE THAT DON EMILIANO KNOWS LIKE YOU AND I.

WHICH ONE?

THE DAY THAT FRANK 'THE TANK' CRIED EL SALADO A RIVER.

DON EMILIANO, TELL US THE STORY.

COME ON!

HA!

I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY...

HERE WE GO AGAIN.

EASY NOW, FRANCIS... THIS HERE IS A TALL TALE FOR THE BOOKS.

ALRIGHT, FOLKS...

...GATHER UP!



WINTER WAS ALIVE AND KICKING, AND WE WERE ROUNDING-UP THE HORSES TO GO LOOK FOR THE CATTLE THAT LADY CARMENZA HAD LOST UPON WAKING UP. AND SINCE FRANCIS HAD ALREADY STARTED TO FLIRT WITH HER DAUGHTER, AND COULDN'T MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY AND IMPRESS HER, WELL "THE TANK" JOINED THE SEARCH PARTY. BUT BEWARE... HA! THE KID DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE ABOUT HORSEBACK RIDING, BUT HE DIDN'T LET HIS SECRET SLIP. I SUSPECTED BY THE WAY HE TRIED TO 'MOUNT' BABIECA AND DECIDED TO STEP-IN TO AVOID A CATASTROPHE. SO INSTEAD, I TOLD HIM TO GET ON TOP OF RUCIO, THE MULE. AND THANK GOD, IN SPITE OF HIS STUBBORNNESS, HE TOOK MY ADVICE.

AND SO WE LEFT. LADY CARMENZA ON PALOMO, MATILDA ON BABIECA, FRANCIS ON RUCIO, AND MYSELF ON ROCINANTE. AND WE WENT LOOKING FOR THE CATTLE. I TURNED BACK EVERY NOW AND THEN TO CHECK ON FRANCIS AND COULD SENSE THE POOR BOY'S WORRIES. BOY WAS HE SHOOK UP. HE PATTED AND PATTED HIS CHEST, PRESSING HIS HANDS AGAINST HIS SHIRT'S LEFT POCKET. I SWEAR IT WAS THE NERVES, BUT IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN... TURNS OUT FRANCIS HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT: HE WENT TO YADIRA'S AND ORDERED A CUSTOM-MADE CIGAR, THE SIZE OF A PRETTY GIRL'S RING FINGER, AND PUT ON IT A BEAUTIFUL RING HE HAD BROUGHT ALL THE WAY FROM CARTAGENA. NOW THE REST OF HIS PLAN, AT LEAST IN THEORY, MADE PERFECT SENSE. SINCE MATILDA DESPISED WHEN FRANCIS SMOKED, ALMOST AS MUCH AS THE THICK AND HEAVY BEARD HE USED TO SPORT IN THE DAY, AND WAS USED TO PULLING THE TOBACCO STRAIGHT OUT OF HIS MOUTH; FRANCIS WAS GOING TO WAIT UNTIL SUNSET TO PULL OUT THE CIGAR AND LIGHT IT UP, AND AS SOON AS MATILDA GRABBED IT, SHE WOULD NOTICE IT WAS... HMMM... LET'S SEE... ENGAGED! BUT OH, FOLKS, IF ONLY YOU KNEW...

WHAT?



iJA!

BECAUSE THE GROUND HAD BEEN SO **PUNISHED** BY THE RAIN OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, THE HORSES WERE WALKING, BUT WITH A **HEAVY STEP**. AND SINCE MATILDA HAD HER WAY WITH THE BEASTS, ALMOST AS MUCH AS CARMENZA, THEY DIDN'T MIND **DOUBLING** THE PACE. I WAS KEEPING UP, BUT I COULD FEEL THE BOY BEING LEFT BEHIND, SO I TURNED BACK TO TAKE A LOOK. FRANCIS, WAY BACK AND ANXIOUS AS HELL, DECIDED TO **MAKE HIS MOVE**. HE LOOKED DOWN, **LET GO** OF THE REINS WITH ONE HAND AND PUT IT IN THE POCKET OF HIS SHIRT. BUT WHEN HE PULLED UP HIS FACE... SEE, KID? THAT'S WHY YOU ALWAYS LOOK AT WHAT'S AHEAD...

AND SO?!

AND SO... HOLD YOUR HORSES, FOLKS. HE HEAD-BUTTED A **HORNET'S NEST**, AND GOT THE BUGGERS STINGING. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE HE WAS COVERED IN A CLOUD OF WASPS, PASSING US AT **FULL-SPEED** AND TRYING TO GET A HOLD OF RUCIO. BUT **THE BEAST TRIPPED** IN THE MUD, AND WITH A FIERCE **JOLT**, YOUNG FRANCISCO NÚÑEZ JR. RICOCHETED HEAD-FIRST INTO A **PUDDLE**. AND IF THAT AIN'T ENOUGH BAD LUCK, THE LITTLE MULE CAUGHT MOMENTUM, DID A CART-WHEEL, ROLLED OVER AND ULTIMATLEY BURIED HIM INSIDE **THE SLUDGE**, BEFORE GETTING UP AND LEAVING **RIDER-LESS** BY ITSELF. GOSH, AND LADY CARMENZA, INSTEAD OF FEELING SYMPATHY FOR THE POOR BOY'S PHYSICAL INTEGRITY, **SCREAMS** AT THE TOP OF HER **I'M-NOT-THIS-MAN'S-MOTHER-IN-LAW-JUST-YET** LUNGS: "FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR. FOR GOD'S SAKE GET UP AND GET THAT MULE! **THAT SADDLE'S** WORTH A FORTUNE..."

I TOOK ONE FOR 'THE BOY' AND WENT FOR RUCIO. WHEN I CAME BACK, BOTH MATILDA AND LADY CARMENZA WERE AWE-STRUCK. I SAY THAT NO ONE, **EVER**, HAD SEEN HIM LIKE THIS: KNEES DRIVEN INTO THE MUD, WAVING HIS HANDS INSIDE **THE MUCK**... DESPERATE, SAD AND WORRIED... WITH EYES LIKE **AN OVERFLOWING DAM**, BUT WITHOUT SHEDDING A TEAR. THE SUN BEGAN TO SET AND MATILDA WAS NOW GETTING WORRIED. SUDDENLY, FRANCIS FROZE. HE WAS STILL FOR A FEW SECONDS **PETRIFIED**, AND THEN STARTED TO **LAUGH LIKE A LOON**. I SAID TO MYSELF: "THAT'S IT, HE'S LOST IT. KID'S GONE CRAZY". THE PROMISE FOR **LOVE** HAD **DEFEATED HIM**. MATILDA CLOSED IN ON HER HORSE, ASKED HIM IF HE WAS ALRIGHT AND THIS IS YOUR PART, MY GIRL...

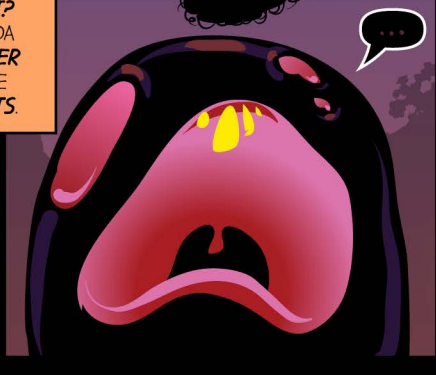
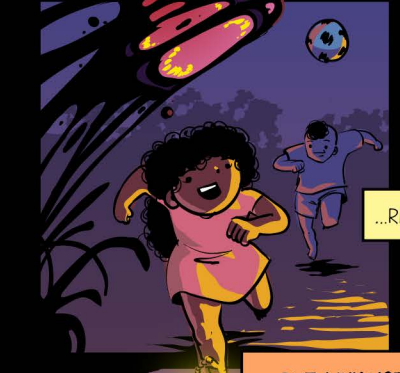
WELL, **THE BEST PART** OF THE STORY: FRANCIS **LOOKS UP** AT ME, COVERED IN MUD FROM **HEAD TO TOE**...

...WITH HIS FACE LIKE A **PINEAPPLE** FROM ALL THE STINGS, AND SAYS TO ME, **CONFIDENT** LIKE NO ONE ELSE...

"WHAT THE HELL! THE ONLY THING THAT AIN'T A PAIN IN THE ASS IS THAT I'M ALREADY ON MY KNEES".



THEN HE **PULLED** HIS HANDS OUT OF THE MUD AND SHOWED THEM OFF, BUT ALL WE COULD SEE WAS A **BIG BALL OF MUD**. **POOR KID**. IF MATILDA COULDN'T MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF IT, MISS CARMENZA, WHO WANTED TO **BEAT HIM SILLY**, HAD NO CHANCE. BUT RIGHT AT THAT MOMENT, HE TURNED HIS HANDS, JUST A **TINY LITTLE BIT**, AND WITH THE LAST RAY OF LIGHT, A SPARKLING GLOW LEFT US **BLIND**. ALL OF US. IT WAS THEN WHEN WE HEARD HIM SAY...



*POPULAR LEGEND OF COLOMBIAN FOLKLORE. A FIERCE AMPHIBIOUS CREATURE THAT BARES THE APPEARANCE OF A HAIRY TOBACCO-SMOKING MAN THAT CAPTURES WOMEN TO OFFER THEM GOLDEN PRESENTS.

WHAT? YOU JEALOUS BUNCH.

HA! ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT *NOW* TRUTH IS HATS OFF TO YOU, SIR FRANCISCO NÚÑEZ JR., THE *MOCKERY* IS INDEED CAUSED BY JEALOUSY, BUT OF THE GOOD KIND. 'CAUSE...

...*SOME* HAVE A CRYSTAL CROWN AND THEY ALL HAVE PEARLS FROM THE SEA, *BUT* IN MY HEART YOU'LL SEE...

...YOU ARE THE QUEEN.*

*TÚ ERES LA REINA, DIOMEDES DÍAZ.

NEVER TO BE FOUND.



NO, PLEASE STOP IT. I'M BLUSHING.

HEY, WAIT... AND THE CATTLE?

TRUE. *WE ASKED* HERE AND THERE, BUT ALL WE WERE TOLD WAS TO *STOP* LOOKING FOR THEM *AT ALL*.

LET'S SAY THEY GOT LOST...

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE WE FOUND THAT DAY.

WHAT?

WELL, A WAY TO *STAY TOGETHER* WHEN THE *TIMES ARE TOUGH*.

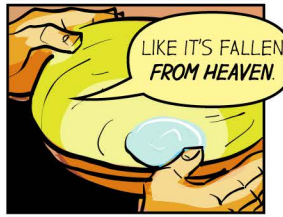
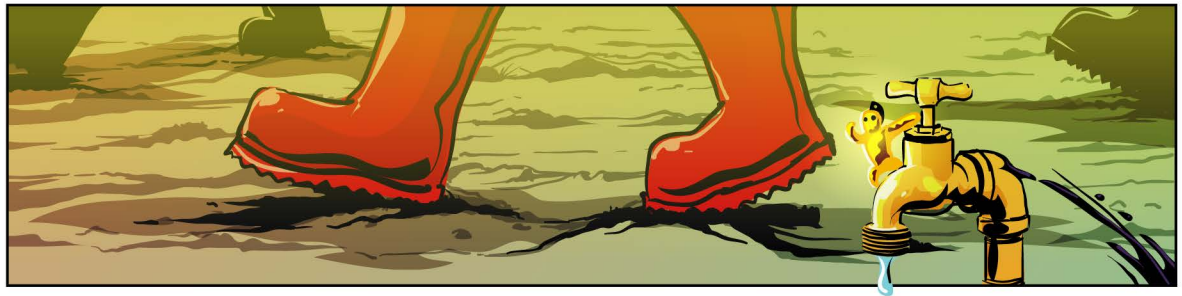
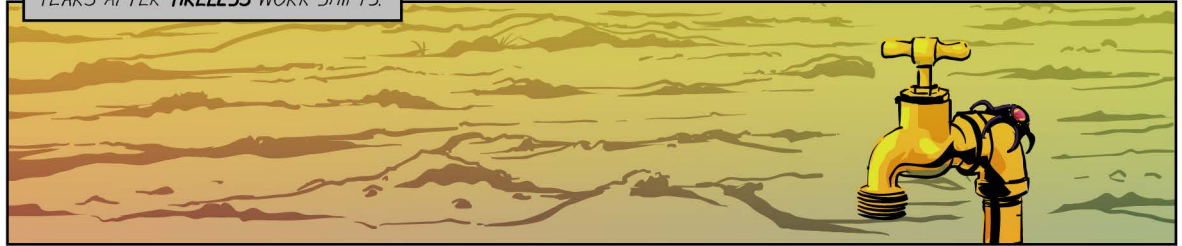
'CAUSE IN THIS WORLD YOU CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH JUST *BY YOURSELF*. RIGHT?

RIGHT.

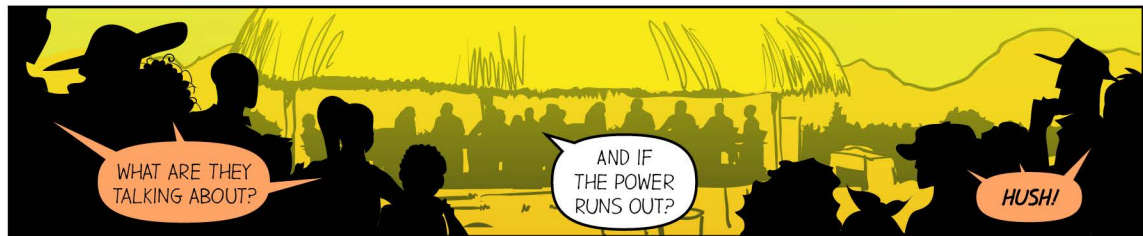
LET'S DO THIS.



YEARS AFTER *TIRELESS* WORK SHIFTS.



ALMOST, OLD MAN. ALMOST.



WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?

AND IF THE POWER RUNS OUT?

HUSH!



THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO BACK IT UP WITH SOME SOLAR ENERGY PANELS.

TODAY THIS IS YOURS, BUT FROM TOMORROW ONWARDS IT WILL BE FOR YOUR CHILDREN, AND AFTER THAT, THE CHILDREN OF YOUR CHILDREN.

BUT YOU HAVE TO PREPARE AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INSTALLATION, THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.

IT'S A SUSTAINABLE METHOD OF POWERING THE NEW PIPE SYSTEM.

FROM THIS DAY FORTH...

FOR US?



BY ALL OF US.

SO?



WE HAVE TO BREAK THE PIGGY BANK.

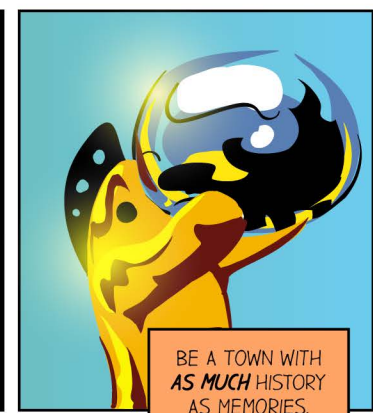
HOW COME?



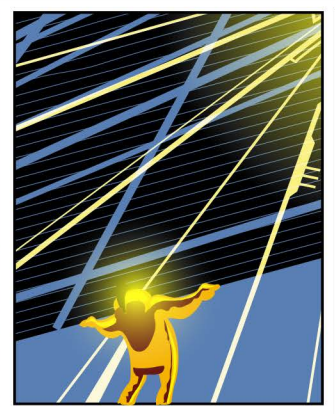
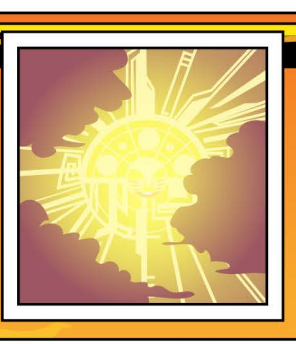
BECAUSE WE HAVE TO?!



NO, 'CAUSE ONLY LIKE THIS CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



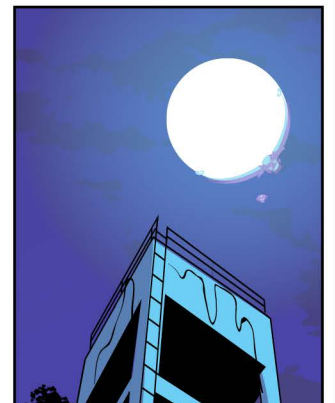
BE A TOWN WITH AS MUCH HISTORY AS MEMORIES.



WHAT A SIGHT.

A PIECE OF HEAVEN, AM I RIGHT?

YUP, IT'S BEAUTIFUL.



CAN SOMEONE TELL US WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT?

HA! FRANCIS, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT?

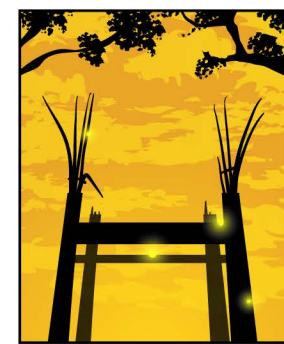
DO YOU HAVE THE PAINT?

YEAH. AND THE CAMERA TOO. THE TIME'S PERFECT.

IT'S A BIT HIGH, DON'T YOU THINK?

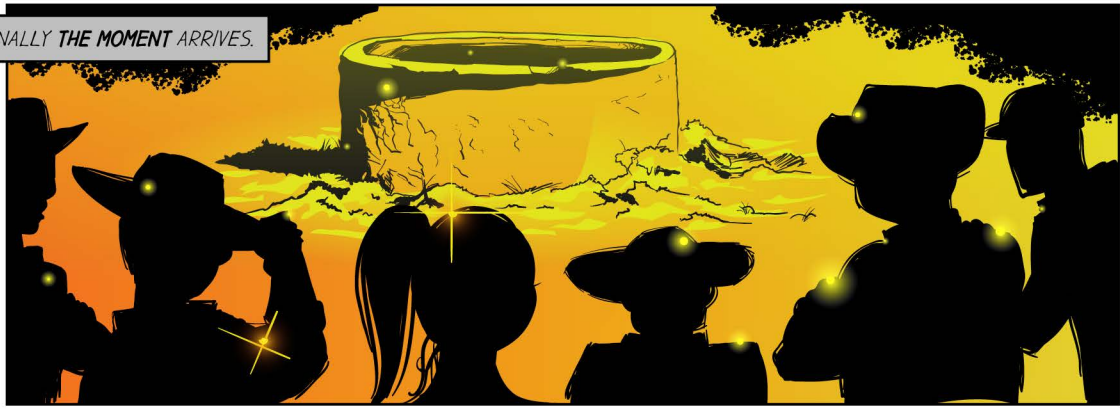
LET'S SEE.

THE FUTURE, MY FRIENDS.

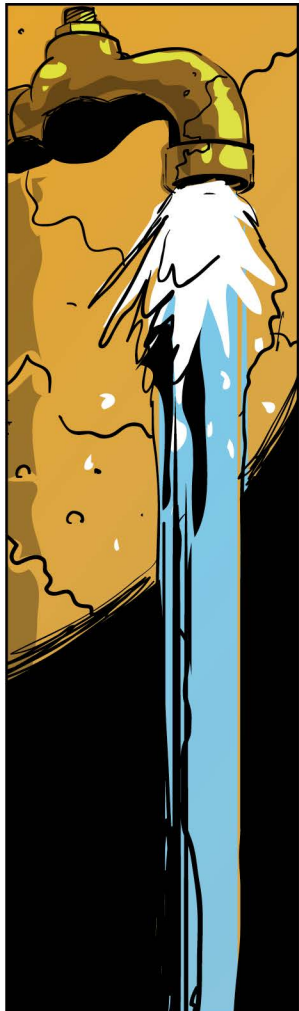


CAN WE COME DOWN NOW?

FINALLY THE MOMENT ARRIVES.



DO YOU THINK...?



QUIET.



YES, GOD... DAMN!!!

TRAS

@#*!\$%

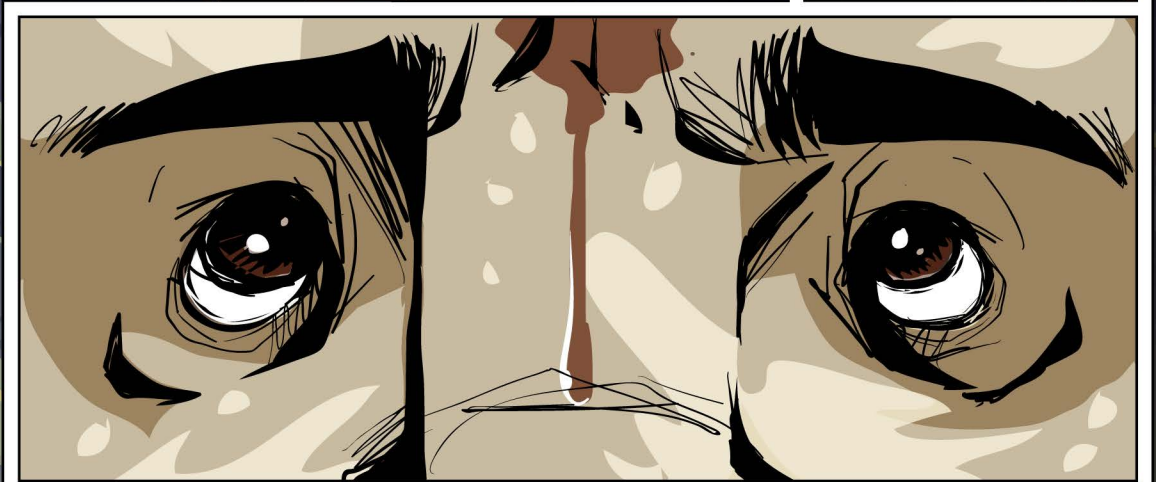
WHAT WAS THAT?!

COULD IT BE?

NOT AGAIN.



THAT IS THAT WINTER IS HERE, FOLKS.



NEVER IN MY LIFE HAVE I SEEN IT RAIN LIKE THIS.

MMM... LET'S SEE... I'M FEELING SATISFYING.*

HOW DO YOU FEEL, KID?

IS THAT...?

*PHRASE COINED BY ALEJO DURÁN, MUSICIAN AND VALLENATO LEGEND.



LOOK AT HER. I THINK SHE GOT THE BEST OF THEM BOTH.

SHE REMINDS ME SO MUCH OF HER.

GETS PRETTIER BY THE DAY, RIGHT?

WHO? ME?

HA! YOU STILL NEED TO HEAR IT FROM TIME TO TIME. RIGHT, MY GIRL?

WHY NOT?!



IT'S THE MOVES, RIGHT?

IN-DEED.



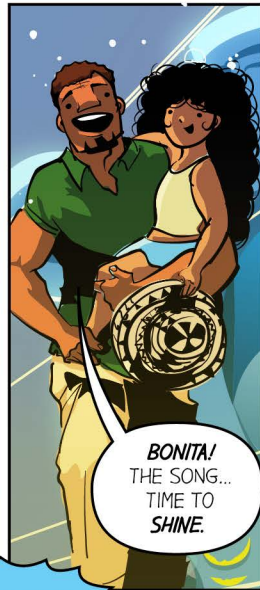
AND THE TOBACCO ROLLING AND VUELTAIO* KNITTING.

EVERY-THING.

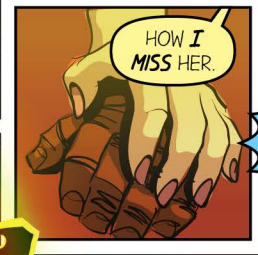


ME TOO, DON EMILIANO. ALL OF US.

MY YADIE...



BONITA! THE SONG... TIME TO SHINE.



HOW I MISS HER.

*COMO LAS MIELES QUE DAN SUS CAÑAS...

*THE TRADITIONAL COASTAL HAT.



DON EMILIANO, WOULD YOU TELL CARMEN A STORY WHILE I HIT THE DANCE FLOOR WITH OL' FRANKIE?



DEPENDS, MY GIRL. THE WORD DOES WONDERS AND RHYMES WITH EASE.

MOOOM! PLEASE.

HEAR HER, DON EMILIANO? SO YOUNG AND ALREADY LECTURING ME.

>COUGH< PLEASE.

WITH PLEASURE, MY GIRL. BUT ON ONE CONDITION.



SAY NO MORE, DON EMILIANO.



YOU GIVE ME THE NEXT DANCE.

DEAL.



GOSH, SONG'S ALMOST OVER! DAMN, MATILDA.

FRANCIS NÚÑEZ JR.! WATCH YOUR MOUTH IN FRONT OF THE GIRL.



FRANK.



OK, OK. SORRY. AFTER YOU, BONITA.

AND PARDON ME, MILLIE OL' MAN.



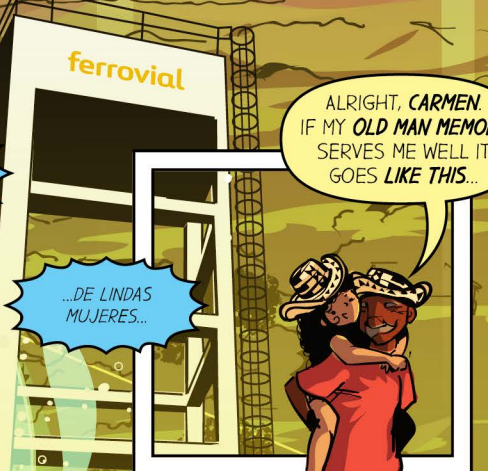
...TIENEN TUS HEMBRAS LOS LABIOS ROJOS...

...TODA LA FIEBRE DE TUS MONTAÑAS...

...LAS LLEVAN ELLAS DENTROE LOS OJOS...

...TIERRA DE PLACERES, DE LUZ, DE ALEGRÍA...

...DE LINDAS MUJERES...



ALRIGHT, CARMEN. IF MY OLD MAN MEMORY SERVES ME WELL IT GOES LIKE THIS...

AND ONCE LIFE SETTLED IN THE LAND OF THE FIRST MEN, THE OBSCURES DIVIDED THE WORLD INTO THREE: A **CELESTIAL WORLD** OF THUNDER, LIGHTNING, RAIN AND HURRICANES WHERE THE CHARMS WOULD ROAM; AN **EARTHLY WORLD** SCATTERED WITH THE MEN AND WOMEN OF EACH AND EVERY COLOR, THE GOLDEN ANIMALS AND THE SPIKEY PLANTS; AND THE **UNDERWORLD** OF ENDLESS HOLLOW TUNNELS THAT CONNECTED EVERYTHING WITH THE EVER-FLOWING **LIVING WATER**, WHERE EVERYTHING WAS BORN AND NEEDED TO FEED OF IT TO LIVE. AND WHEN THE MEN AND WOMEN OF EACH AND EVERY COLOR, THE GOLDEN ANIMALS AND THE SPIKEY PLANTS FELT THAT **WATER** WAS THAT WHICH SURROUNDED THEM...

WELL... THEY **FELL** UNDER THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE CHARMS, AND JUST LIKE US GRANDPAS SAY...

WHAT?

...AH, MY GIRL, IF YOU ONLY KNEW.

THEY WERE FUL-FILLED TO THE POINT OF FULFILLMENT.*

DAMN!

CARMEN!

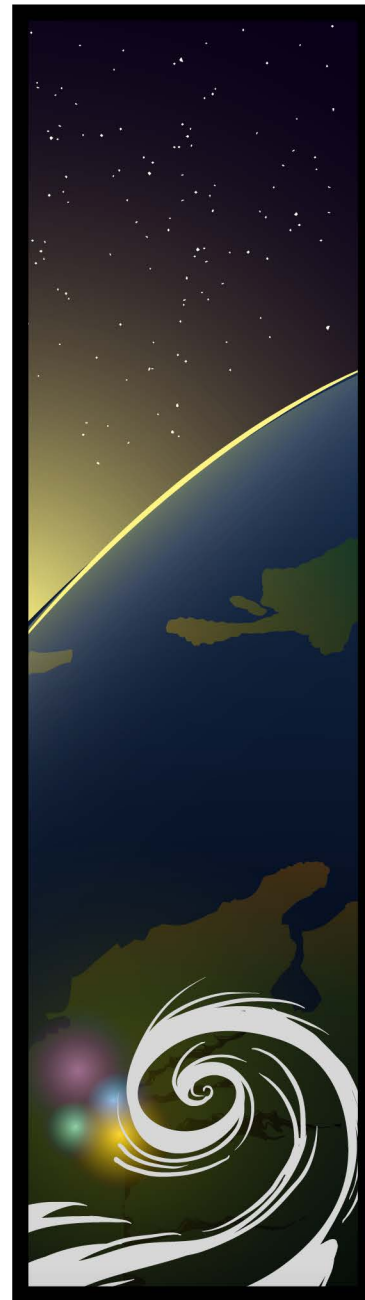
...CARMEN, TIERRA MÍA**

YEE-HAW!

NOW.

*ADAPTED FROM JUAN SÁBALO. LEOPOLDO BERDELLA DE LA ESPRIELLA.

**CARMEN DE BOLÍVAR. LUCHO BERMÚDEZ.



THE AUTHORS THANK

José Luis García Guaita, Astrit Fernández Orozco, Arantazu Gulias Valverde, Gonzalo Sales Genovés, Luis Torres, Nancy Montes, Albert Padilla, Abimael Hernández, Milena Cárdenas, Jaqueline Cohen, Neida Narváez, Delcy Méndez, Karen Langton, Manuel Chamorro, Yair Martínez, Reynaldo Mena, Kristian Mena, Yirley Velasco, Sebastián Patiño, Carlos Smith, HIERROanimación, Andrés Cruz Barrera, Felipe González, Laguna Libros, Óscar Pantoja, Neil Romero, Cohete Cómic, Andrea del Pilar Cetina, Israel Cetina, Angélica Hernández, Leonor Cipagauta, Érika Piñeros, Ricardo Maldonado, Daniela Salas, Jaime Ortega, Juan Francisco Polo, Cristina Moral, Diego Rodríguez, Javier García Mellado, Eloy González, Craig Lawless, Ferroval, Álvaro Fernández, Elegra, Javier Domingo, Kike Valdenebro, Muskae, Ayuda en Acción, Fundación Semana, the community of the township of El Salado at El Carmen de Bolívar, the Communitarian Museum of San Jacinto, and to all the folks we crossed paths with in our encounter with the real story of this tale: the region of Los Montes de María, Zenú culture, coast folklore and the Caribbean mythology of Colombia.

¡Enhorabuena!

GLOSSARY*

Atravesado	Reckless, daring, bold.
Avispado	Smart, shrewd, cunning.
Bulla	Noise, hullabaloo.
Camello	Work.
Cañaña	Courage, desire.
Carreta	Lie, unlikely story.
Cipote	Reaffirm the size of something.
Cotudo con paperas	Expression of redundancy.
Cule	Reaffirms the action.
Chicharrón	Problem, mess.
Enguarapados	Tearful, weeping.
En pila	Attentive.
Erda	Expression of dislike.
Fogueo	Ability to face adversity.
Huesera	Something boring, bad or uninteresting.
Jodido	Difficult, complicated to solve.
Levante	Couple. Hook-up.
Macancán	Person of great stature and strength.
Nojoda	Expression of disbelief/admiration.
Párale bolas	Pay attention.
Parranda	Party, celebration.
Pegote	Upstart, impertinent, burden.
Perrenque	Courage, desire.
Salar	Spoil.
Turruleteo	Stunned. Like crazy.
Vacilar	Hesitate. Annoy. Goofing around.
Viendo un polvo	Unfit. Left cold.
Yeyo	Temporary discomfort, fainting.
Zaperoco	Problem, mess, fuss.

*complement for the Spanish version

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ferrovial

Ferrovial is a global operator of transport infrastructure and services for cities, focused on operational excellence and innovation within its projects. Through its Social Programs, the company sees investment in the Community as a strategic instrument for the development of society. Their projects seek to train and promote the mobilization of the community in favor of care and access to water.

In its project to improve the availability and access to quality drinking water in the town of El Salado (Colombia), Ferrovial participates with the NGO Ayuda en Acción and its partner Fundación Semana. The objective is to help the inhabitants of this population enjoy a continuous supply of quality water.



SHARPBALL

SHARPBALL is a company created by The Brothers Jiménez with the aim of conceptualizing, developing and producing original content for different transmedia entertainment outlets that's inspired by Colombian cultural customs.

Their catalog ranges from illustrations of intentional circulation to celebrated graphic novels, passing through unforgettable animated shortfilms, risky music videos and, most recently, daring film productions.

Currently their work is recognized for a healthy and genuine balance between conceptual identity, narrative challenges, artistic ambition and notorious messages of social awareness.

They're known under the alias of the creative pit.



JOSÉ LUIS



Tunja, Boyacá, Colombian natives José Luis and Miguel began their career in the arts from an early age. Attracted by an innocent luring towards action figures, comic strips and animated films, they went astray in the multidisciplinary tasks of the creation of universes; drawing of characters, writing of scripts and performing the soundtracks for the tricks of their minds.

Over the years and marked by the dailies of living in Colombia, their style begins to brood a fatal but hopeful tone, characteristic of the duality of the country's news. They exhibit it in their first book "The Eleven", an undertaking celebrated by critics, which is followed by the theatrical release of the animated shortfilm "The Nabbing", the publication of the successful graphic novel adaptation of "The Vortex" by José Eustasio Rivera and, currently, the live-action short film "One Of These Nights".

When they are not attending the customs of everyday life, they deal with the creative pit's alter ego, the extreme metal band A.C.P.

They are known under the alias of the cultural dealers.



MIGUEL



The people of El Salado lived in an earthly paradise, between the blessings of nature and the care of The Charms, until the day they were displaced by the arrival of a violent and fearsome invader, the horrifying Zaperoco. Years later, in the middle of an aggressive drought, Francis and Matilda return with their family and the rest of the town to face their biggest fears and, with unexpected help, bring harmony back to their land.

10 ANS

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B
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