

La Celestina

Talavera de la Reina, Spain

1525

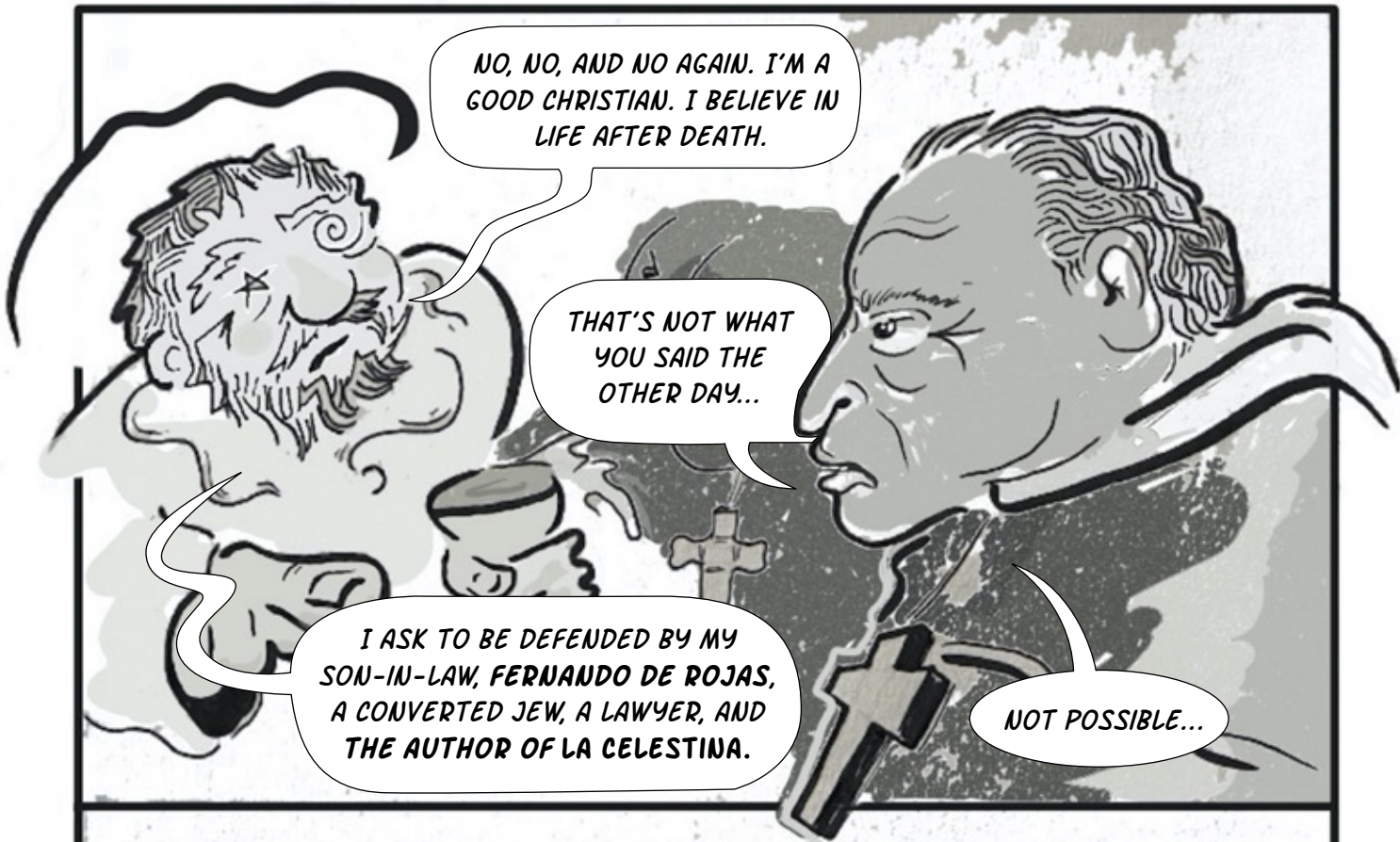


MY FATHER AGAIN! DEAR HUSBAND, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



HE WAS TAKEN BY THE INQUISITION AND IS NOW BEING QUESTIONED... HE TALKS AND DRINKS TOO MUCH.





NO, NO, AND NO AGAIN. I'M A GOOD CHRISTIAN. I BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH.

THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID THE OTHER DAY...

I ASK TO BE DEFENDED BY MY SON-IN-LAW, FERNANDO DE ROJAS, A CONVERTED JEW, A LAWYER, AND THE AUTHOR OF LA CELESTINA.

NOT POSSIBLE...



DON'T WORRY, I WILL FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING.



NOT AGAIN... THE INQUISITION.

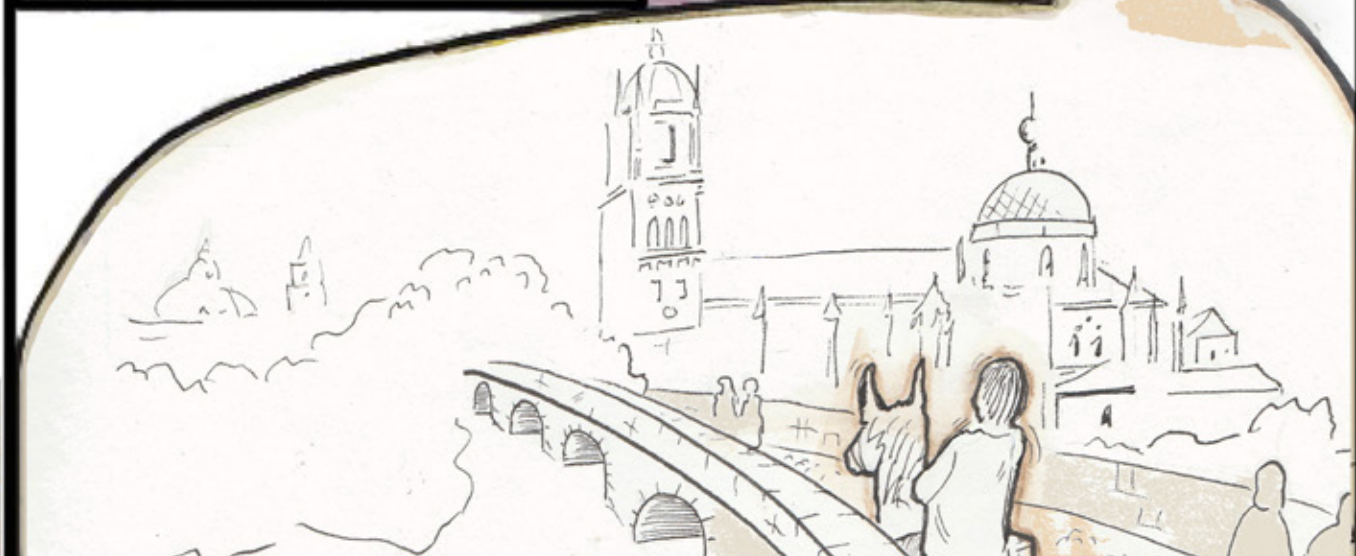


I HAVE TO PROVE AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT I'M A CHRISTIAN, A GOOD CHRISTIAN.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



Comedia Calisto y Melibea



A FEW YEARS AFTER 1492, THE YEAR IN WHICH THE LAST MOORISH KINGDOM OF GRANADA HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE CATHOLIC MONARCHS, THE YOUNG FERNANDO DE ROJAS, DESCENDANT OF A JEWISH CONVERSO FAMILY OF LA PUEBLA DE MONTALBÁN, IN THE TOLEDO AREA, ARRIVED IN THE REPUTED UNIVERSITY OF SALAMANCA TO STUDY LAW.



WHAT A CITY!

SO HAPPY TO LEAVE LA PUEBLA DE MONTALBÁN BEHIND...

IN THESE YEARS, THE CATHOLIC MONARCHS HAD CENTRALIZED PROSTITUTION, DEEMED AS A "LESSER EVIL," IN A FEW TOLERANCE HOUSES OUTSIDE THE CITIES TO PREVENT CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES THAT SURROUNDED THE WIDESPREAD AREAS OF SEXUAL COMMERCE WITHIN THE CITY.



THE MANY PROSTITUTES, PIMPS, AND PROCURESSES WERE COMPELLED TO LIVE IN THE DEDICATED DISTRICT, ALTHOUGH MANY KEPT THEIR BUSINESS INSIDE THE CITY UNDER SECRET.

LISTEN TO THIS, FERNANDO!

THIS IS SO GOOD... IT'S REAL AND PAINFULLY ACCURATE!

YOU SHOULD CONTINUE IT! WE'LL HELP YOU!

I HAVE LOTS OF IDEAS. WE CAN HAVE A LOT OF FUN WITH THIS. BUT NOW, LISTEN TO THE STORY.





AS THE PAINTER GOYA WALKED THROUGH THE STREETS OF MADRID, HE COULD SEE THE MANY SCENES OF DAILY LIFE IN WHICH YOUNG WOMEN OF LOWER CLASS PRACTICED PROSTITUTION WITH THE HELP OF AN OLD WOMAN WHO IN HER YOUTH HAD ALSO BEEN A PROSTITUTE. THIS WOULD BE THE INSPIRATION FOR SOME OF HIS ENGRAVINGS AND PAINTINGS THAT INCLUDE A CELESTINA CHARACTER.



LA CELESTINA... THE HUMAN CONDITION IS SO FASCINATING! I SEE CELESTINAS EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY.



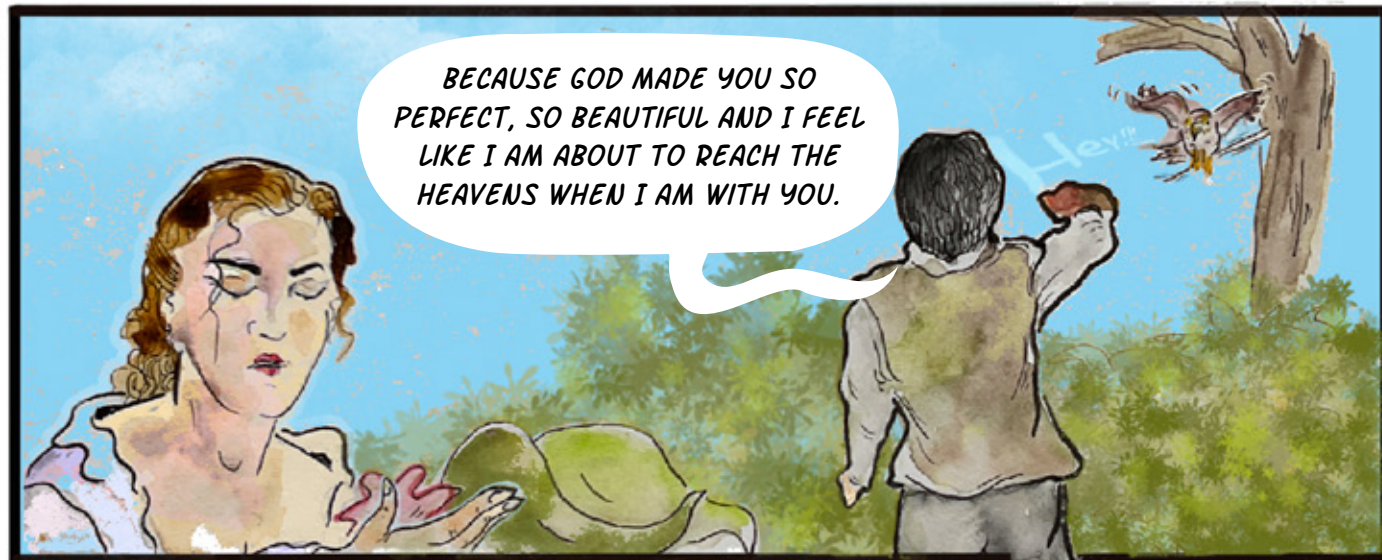
Chapter 1
CALISTO
AND MELIBEA



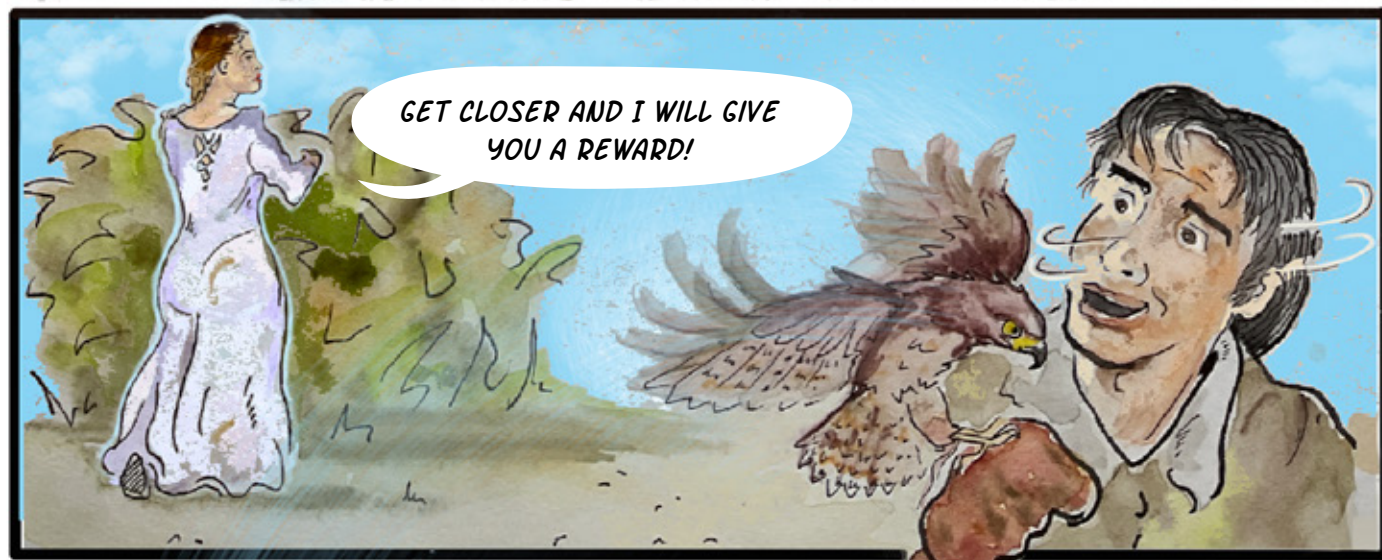


MELIBEA, LOOKING AT YOU I SEE WHY GOD IS GREAT.

HOW IS THAT, CALISTO?



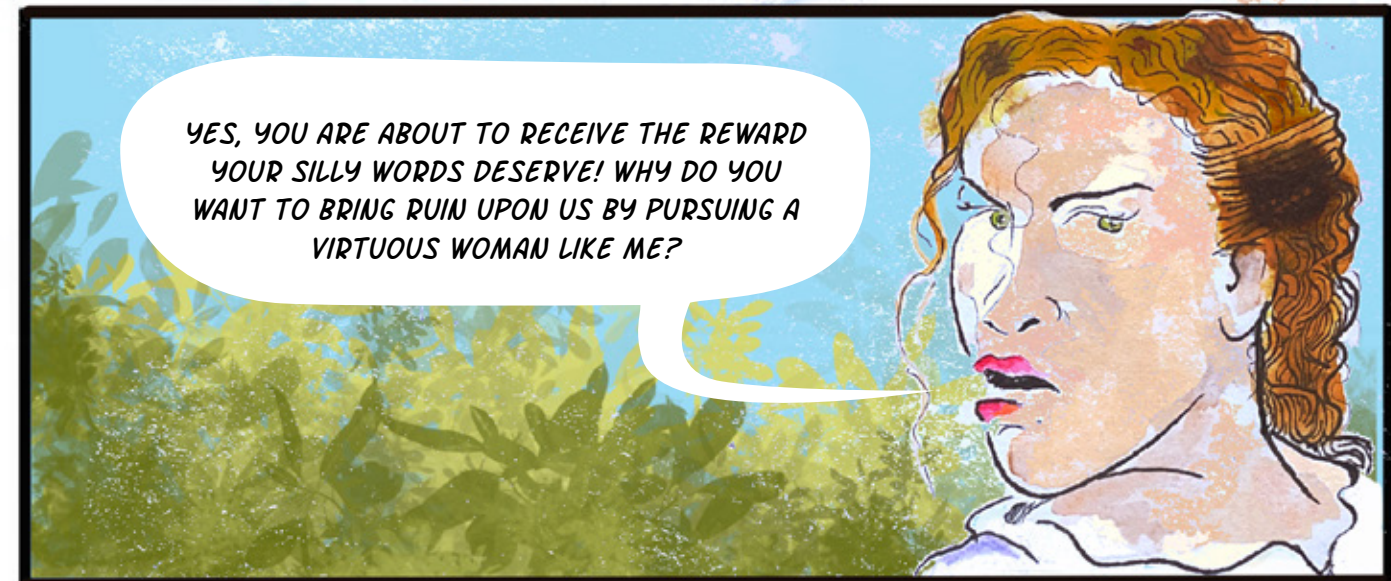
BECAUSE GOD MADE YOU SO PERFECT, SO BEAUTIFUL AND I FEEL LIKE I AM ABOUT TO REACH THE HEAVENS WHEN I AM WITH YOU.



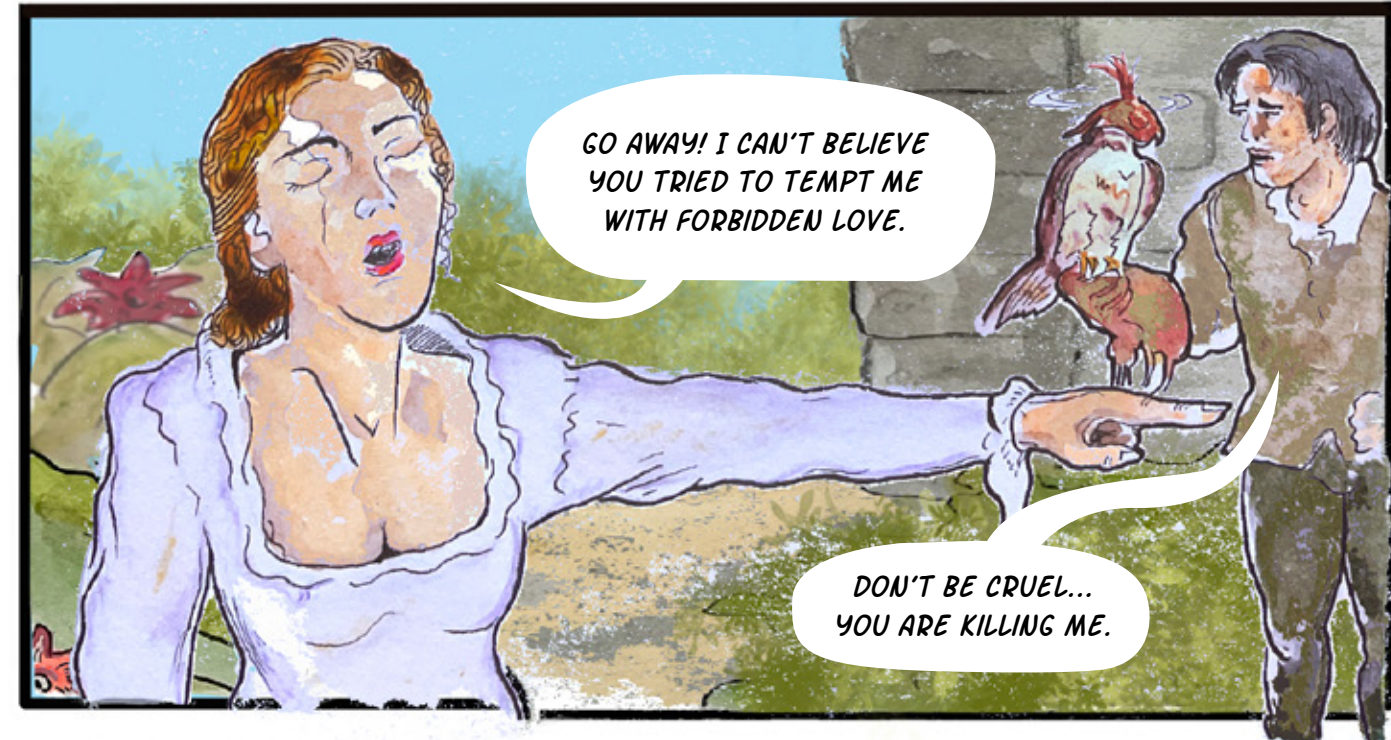
GET CLOSER AND I WILL GIVE YOU A REWARD!



AM I HEARING RIGHT? A REWARD FROM YOU?



YES, YOU ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE THE REWARD YOUR SILLY WORDS DESERVE! WHY DO YOU WANT TO BRING RUIN UPON US BY PURSUING A VIRTUOUS WOMAN LIKE ME?



GO AWAY! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TRIED TO TEMPT ME WITH FORBIDDEN LOVE.

DON'T BE CRUEL... YOU ARE KILLING ME.



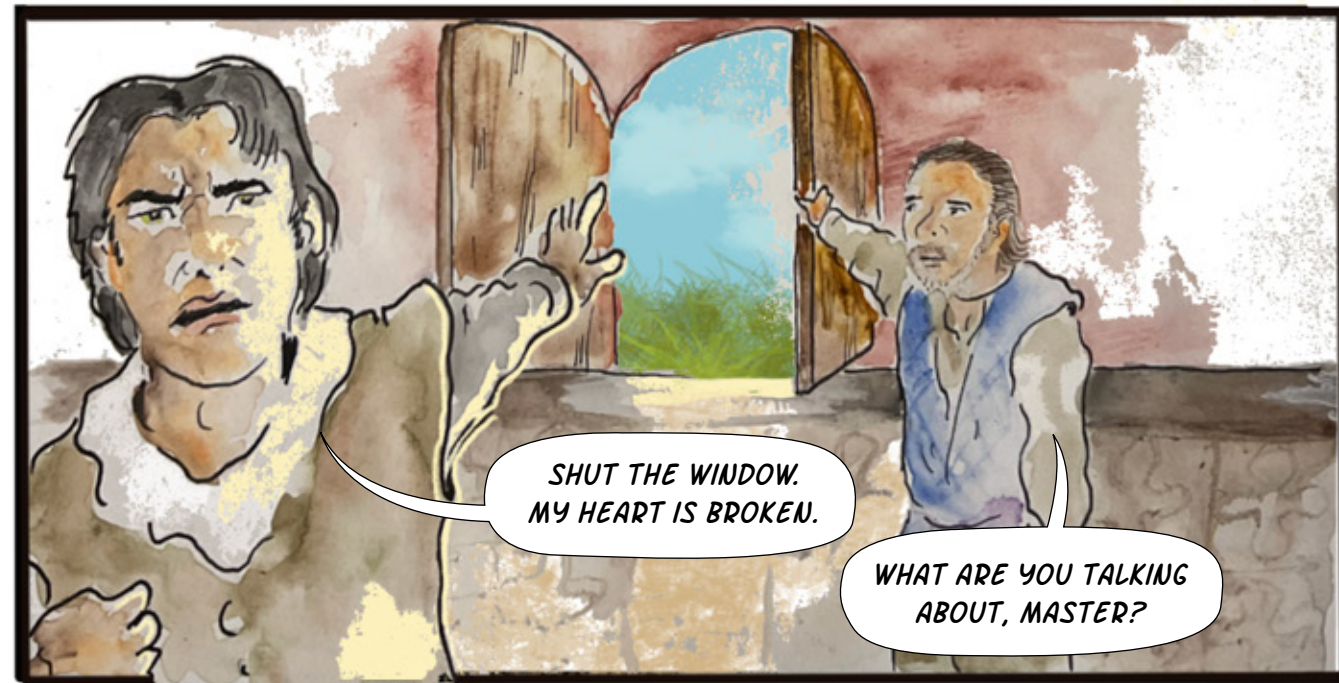
BACK AT HOME...



SEMPRONIO, SEMPRONIO,
WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

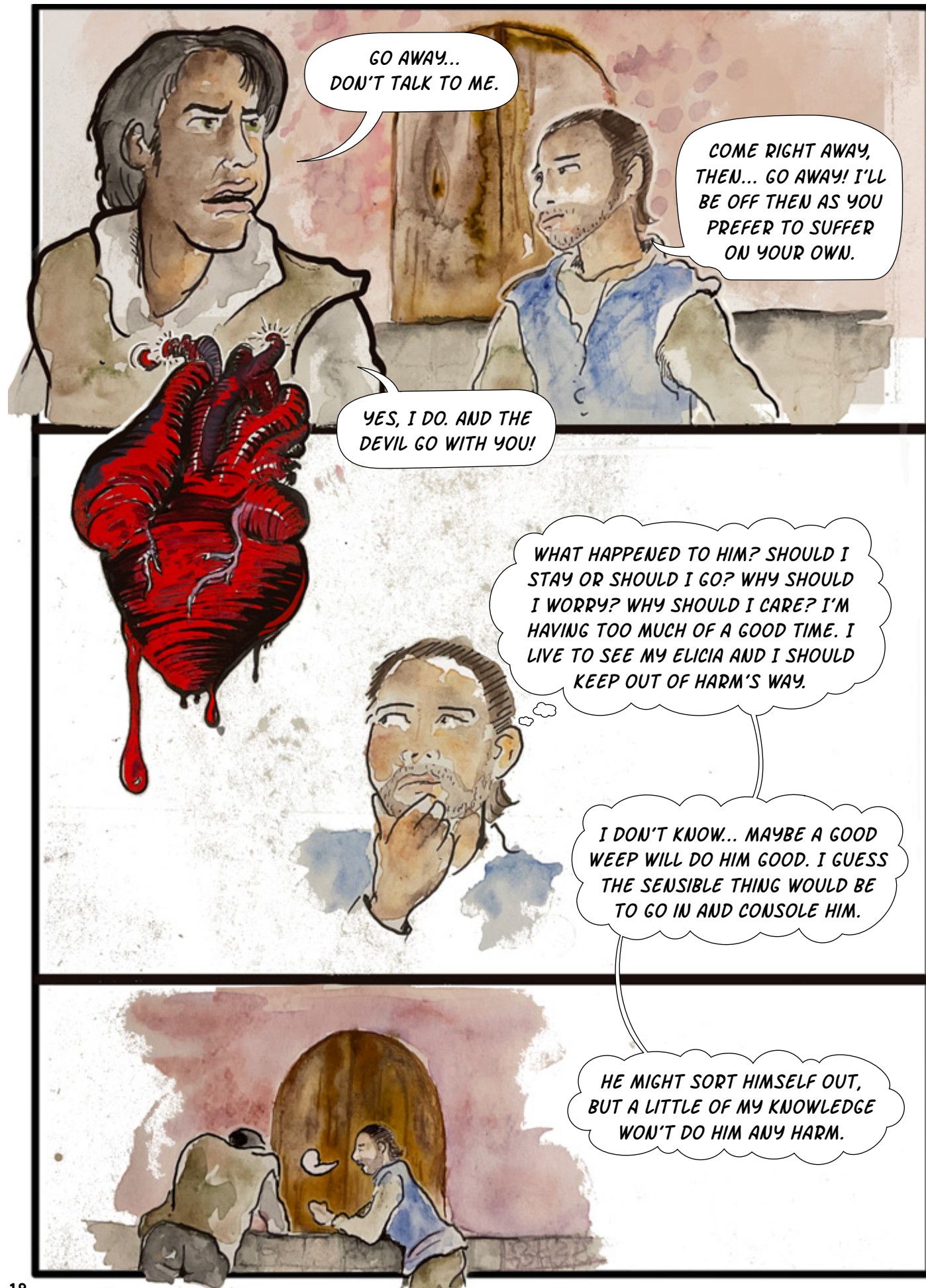
I'M COMING...
EVERYTHING IS URGENT.

I HOPE YOU DIE A
VIOLENT DEATH!



SHUT THE WINDOW.
MY HEART IS BROKEN.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT, MASTER?



GO AWAY...
DON'T TALK TO ME.

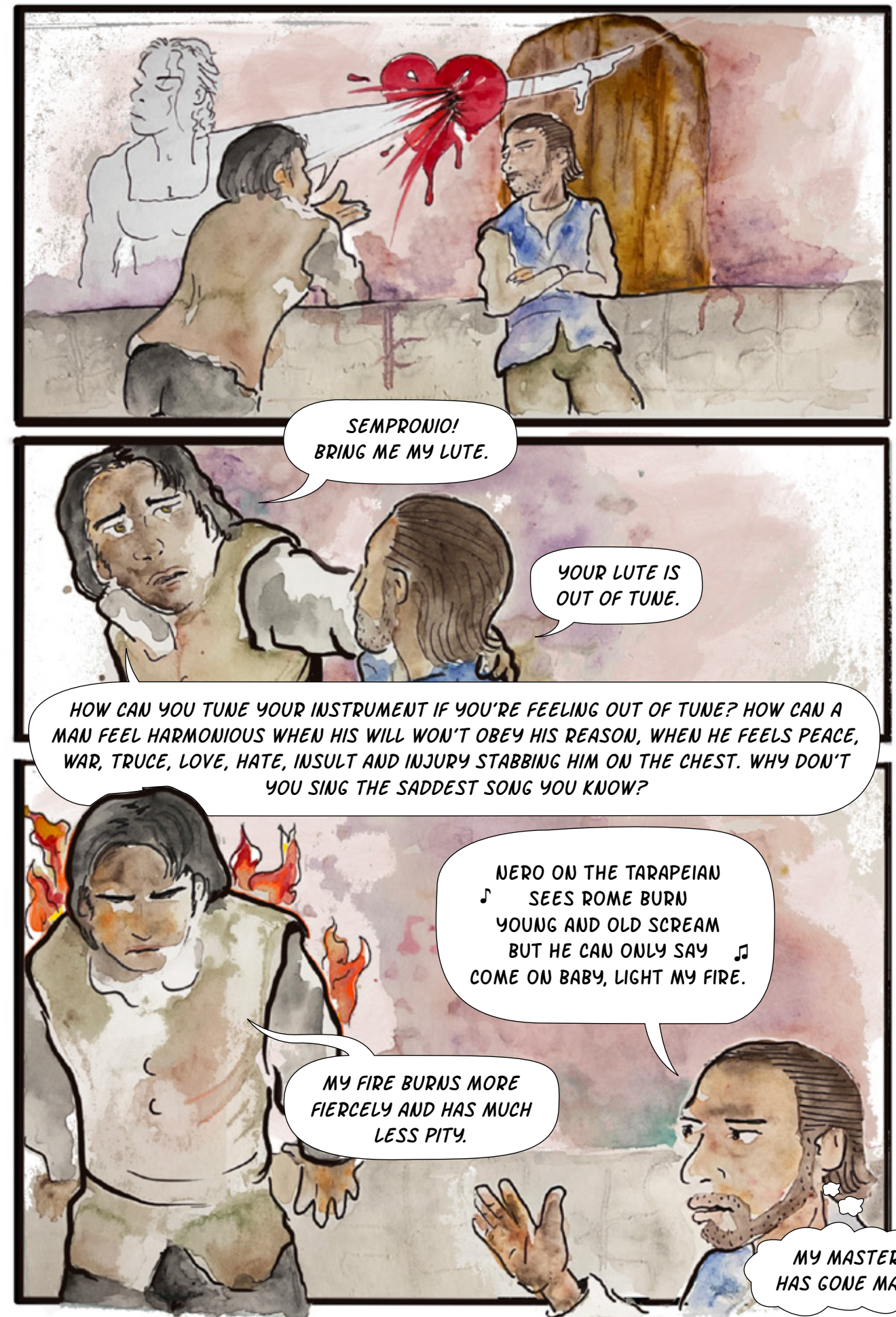
COME RIGHT AWAY,
THEN... GO AWAY! I'LL
BE OFF THEN AS YOU
PREFER TO SUFFER
ON YOUR OWN.

YES, I DO. AND THE
DEVIL GO WITH YOU!

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? SHOULD I
STAY OR SHOULD I GO? WHY SHOULD I
WORRY? WHY SHOULD I CARE? I'M
HAVING TOO MUCH OF A GOOD TIME. I
LIVE TO SEE MY ELICIA AND I SHOULD
KEEP OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE A GOOD
WEEP WILL DO HIM GOOD. I GUESS
THE SENSIBLE THING WOULD BE
TO GO IN AND CONSOLE HIM.

HE MIGHT SORT HIMSELF OUT,
BUT A LITTLE OF MY KNOWLEDGE
WON'T DO HIM ANY HARM.



SEMPRONIO!
BRING ME MY LUTE.

YOUR LUTE IS
OUT OF TUNE.

HOW CAN YOU TUNE YOUR INSTRUMENT IF YOU'RE FEELING OUT OF TUNE? HOW CAN A
MAN FEEL HARMONIOUS WHEN HIS WILL WON'T OBEY HIS REASON, WHEN HE FEELS PEACE,
WAR, TRUCE, LOVE, HATE, INSULT AND INJURY STABBING HIM ON THE CHEST. WHY DON'T
YOU SING THE SADDEST SONG YOU KNOW?

NERO ON THE TARAPEIAN
SEES ROME BURN
YOUNG AND OLD SCREAM
BUT HE CAN ONLY SAY
COME ON BABY, LIGHT MY FIRE.

MY FIRE BURNS MORE
FIERCELY AND HAS MUCH
LESS PITY.

MY MASTER
HAS GONE MAD!



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

NOTHING... I WAS ONLY WONDERING HOW A FIRE THAT STRIKES DOWN ONE INDIVIDUAL COULD POSSIBLY BE WORSE THAN ONE THAT BURNS A GREAT CITY AND ALL ITS INHABITANTS.

I'LL TELL YOU HOW. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRE IN YOUR SONG AND THE ONE BURNING ME IS AS GREAT AS THE GAP BETWEEN APPEARANCE AND REALITY, LIFE AND ARTIFICE. I'LL TELL YOU MORE, IF THE FIRE OF PURGATORY IS ANYTHING LIKE THIS, I'D PREFER MY SPIRIT TO FOLLOW THOSE BRUTE ANIMALS THAN CHOOSE THAT PATH ON MY WAY TO GLORY WITH THE SAINTS.

I WAS RIGHT, HE IS NOT ONLY MAD BUT ALSO A HERETIC.

WHAT? DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU GOT SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?



I SAID THAT WHAT YOU SAID IS A KIND OF HERESY. WATCH OUT!

WHY?

BECAUSE WHAT YOU SAID GOES AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

AND SO WHAT?

~~AREN'T YOU A CHRISTIAN?~~

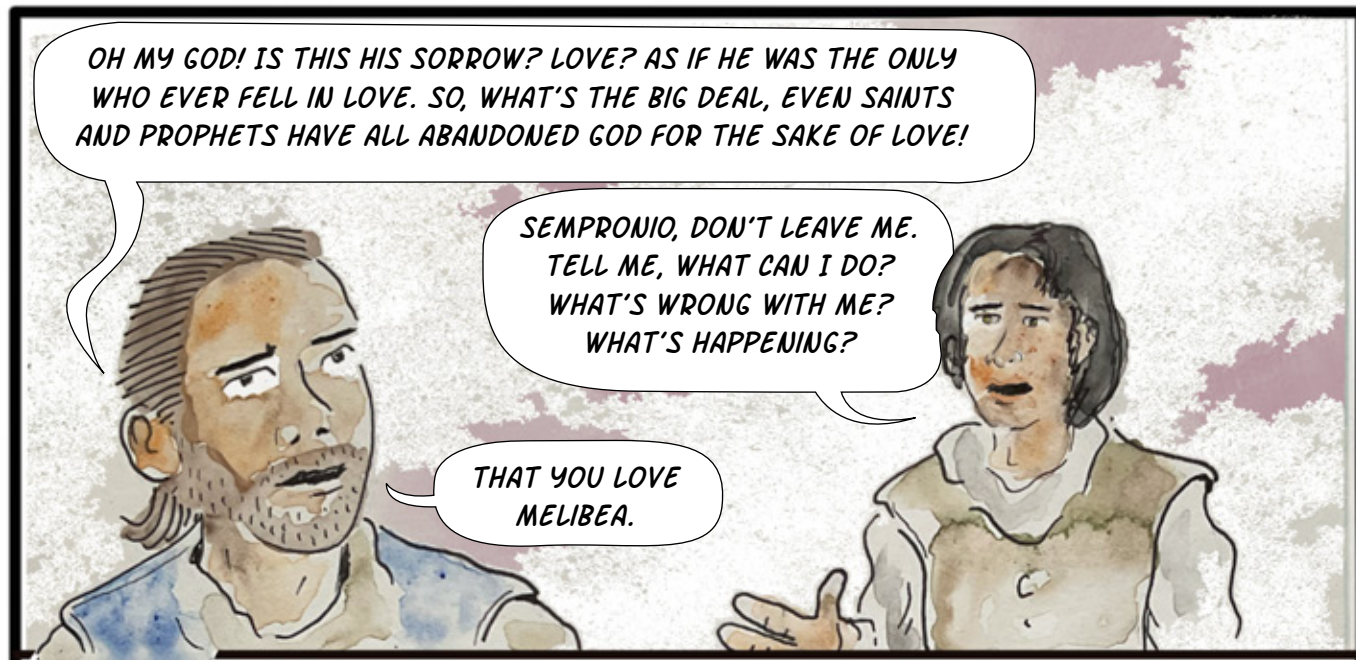
CENSORED

~~ME? NO, I'M A MELIBEAN, I WORSHIP MELIBEA, I BELIEVE IN MELIBEA AND I ADORE MELIBEA!~~

To be erased
Lapata
1632

ENOUGH SAID. I CAN SEE WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU AND I'VE GOT THE CURE.

DON'T PROMISE THE IMPOSSIBLE. AIN'T NO CURE FOR LOVE...



OH MY GOD! IS THIS HIS SORROW? LOVE? AS IF HE WAS THE ONLY WHO EVER FELL IN LOVE. SO, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, EVEN SAINTS AND PROPHETS HAVE ALL ABANDONED GOD FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE!

SEMPRONIO, DON'T LEAVE ME. TELL ME, WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THAT YOU LOVE MELIBEA.



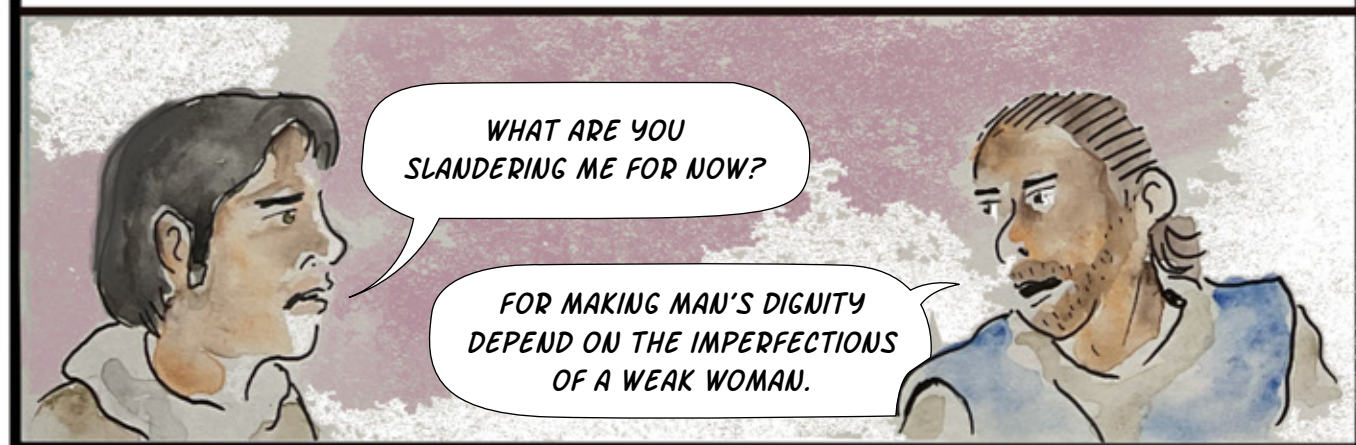
IS THAT ALL?

ISN'T THAT BAD ENOUGH, TO BE TIED UP AND CAPTIVATED BY JUST ONE WOMAN.



AREN'T YOU ALSO CAPTIVATED BY ELICIA, THAT FRIEND OF YOURS?

DO WHAT I SAY AND NOT WHAT I DO?



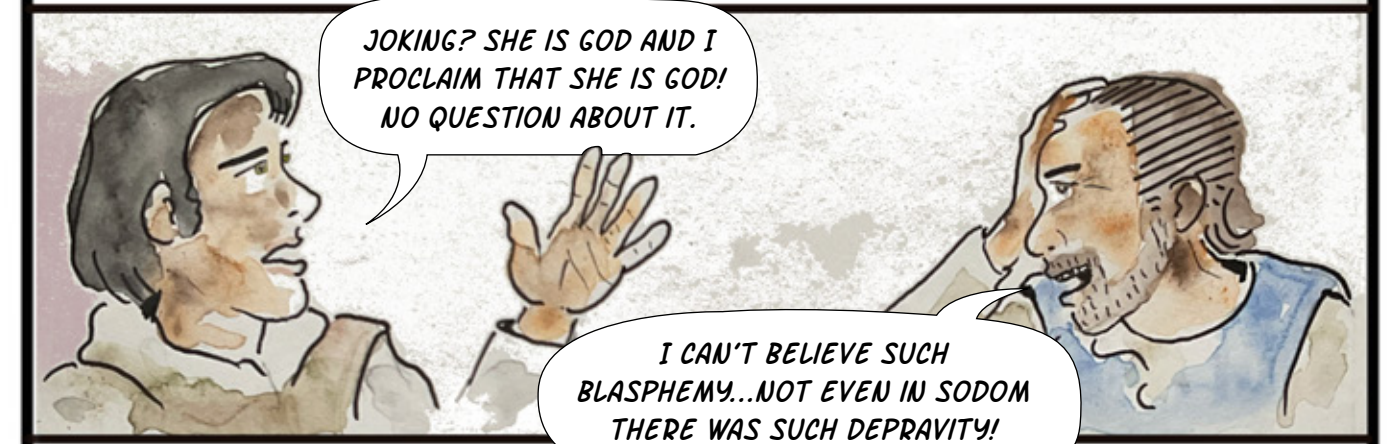
WHAT ARE YOU SLANDERING ME FOR NOW?

FOR MAKING MAN'S DIGNITY DEPEND ON THE IMPERFECTIONS OF A WEAK WOMAN.



A WOMAN? DON'T INSULT HER. SHE IS GOD!

YOU REALLY THINK SO? YOU MUST BE JOKING.



JOKING? SHE IS GOD AND I PROCLAIM THAT SHE IS GOD! NO QUESTION ABOUT IT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE SUCH BLASPHEMY...NOT EVEN IN SODOM THERE WAS SUCH DEPRAVITY!



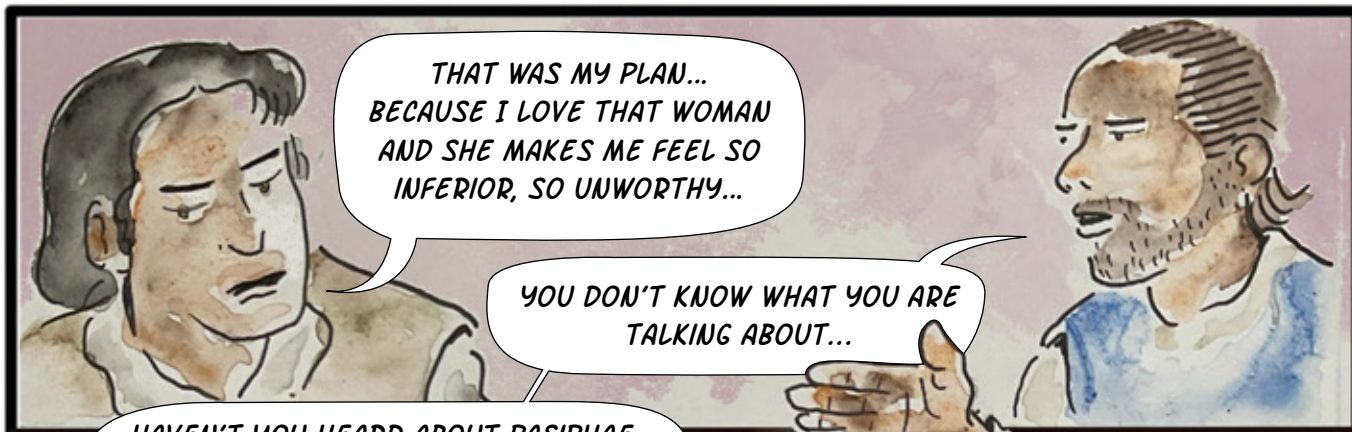
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, SODOMITES HAD ABOMINABLE ACTS IN MIND WITH THE ANGELS SENT TO SAVE THEM, BUT YOU GOT SOMEONE YOU CALL "GOD" IN MIND.



DAMMIT... YOU MADE ME LAUGH... AND THAT WASN'T WHAT I HAD IN MIND!

WELL, I HOPE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO CRY ALL DAY!



THAT WAS MY PLAN...
BECAUSE I LOVE THAT WOMAN
AND SHE MAKES ME FEEL SO
INFERIOR, SO UNWORTHY...

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE
TALKING ABOUT...

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT PASIPHAË
ROAMING WITH HER BULL OR MINERVA'S
LIAISON WITH A DOG?



DON'T BELIEVE
SUCH GOSSIP.

AND... WHAT ABOUT WHAT YOUR
GRANDMA DID WITH A MONKEY?
WAS THAT GOSSIP TOO? SAME AS
WHAT HAPPENED LATER WHEN
YOUR GRANDPA FINISHED THE
MONKEY WITH HIS KNIFE?

SHUT UP!

I'VE TOUCHED A RAW NERVE,
HAVE I?

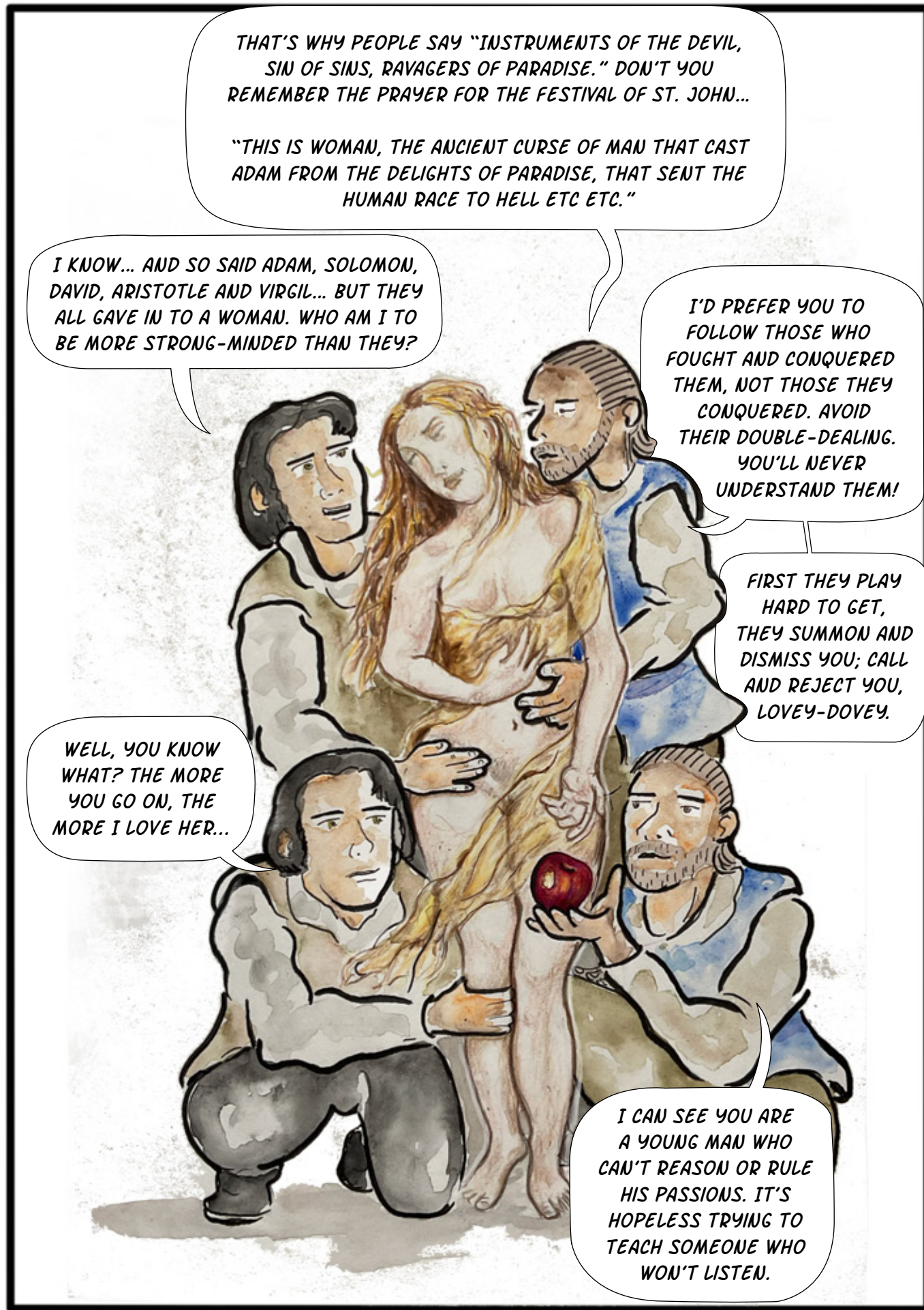


READ THE HISTORY BOOKS, STUDY THE
PHILOSOPHERS, LOOK AT THE POETS.
THEIR BOOKS ARE FULL OF WOMEN'S
VILE DEEDS AND THE DISASTERS THEY
HAVE BROUGHT UPON MEN WHO SANG
THEIR PRAISES LIKE YOU.

LISTEN TO SOLOMON, TAKE
ADVICE FROM SENECA, LISTEN
TO ARISTOTLE. GENTILES, JEWS,
CHRISTIANS AND MOORS ALL
AGREE ON THIS AT LEAST.

NOT ALL WOMEN ARE BAD. THERE
WERE AND STILL ARE SOME
VIRTUOUS AND SAINTLY WOMEN...
BUT WHO COULD EVER FIND TIME
TO RECOUNT THE MISDEEDS OF
THE OTHER SORT!

THEIR SCHEMING,
ARROGANCE, VAINGLORY,
GREED, WANTON LUST,
WITCHERY, INGRATITUDE AND
IMPENITENT WHORING!



THAT'S WHY PEOPLE SAY "INSTRUMENTS OF THE DEVIL, SIN OF SINS, RAVAGERS OF PARADISE." DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE PRAYER FOR THE FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN...

"THIS IS WOMAN, THE ANCIENT CURSE OF MAN THAT CAST ADAM FROM THE DELIGHTS OF PARADISE, THAT SENT THE HUMAN RACE TO HELL ETC ETC."

I KNOW... AND SO SAID ADAM, SOLOMON, DAVID, ARISTOTLE AND VIRGIL... BUT THEY ALL GAVE IN TO A WOMAN. WHO AM I TO BE MORE STRONG-MINDED THAN THEY?

I'D PREFER YOU TO FOLLOW THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND CONQUERED THEM, NOT THOSE THEY CONQUERED. AVOID THEIR DOUBLE-DEALING. YOU'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND THEM!

FIRST THEY PLAY HARD TO GET, THEY SUMMON AND DISMISS YOU; CALL AND REJECT YOU, LOVEY-DOVEY.

WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT? THE MORE YOU GO ON, THE MORE I LOVE HER...

I CAN SEE YOU ARE A YOUNG MAN WHO CAN'T REASON OR RULE HIS PASSIONS. IT'S HOPELESS TRYING TO TEACH SOMEONE WHO WON'T LISTEN.



SEMPRONIO, WHAT DO YOU KNOW? WHO EVER TAUGHT YOU?

WHO? THEY DID, OF COURSE. AS SOON AS THEY LET THEIR HAIR DOWN, THEY LOSE ALL SHAME!

WHAT'S ALL THIS GOT TO DO WITH ME?

WITH YOU? FIRST YOU'RE A MAN AND A TALENTED ONE AT THAT, A MAN NATURE ENDOWED WITH THE BEST SHE HAD: LOOKS, WIT AND STRONG MUSCLES.

INTO THE BARGAIN, LADY LUCK DEALT YOU EQUAL SHARES OF RICHES IN YOUR HEAD AND IN WHAT'S ON DISPLAY FOR EVERYONE TO SEE. IN TERMS OF WEALTH, NOBODY COULD BE MORE BLESSED THAN YOU. YOUR STARS MAKE YOU EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE.

BUT NOT MELIBEIA'S, SEMPRONIO. MELIBEIA SURPASSES IN EVERY WAY WHATEVER YOU'VE JUST PRAISED IN ME.

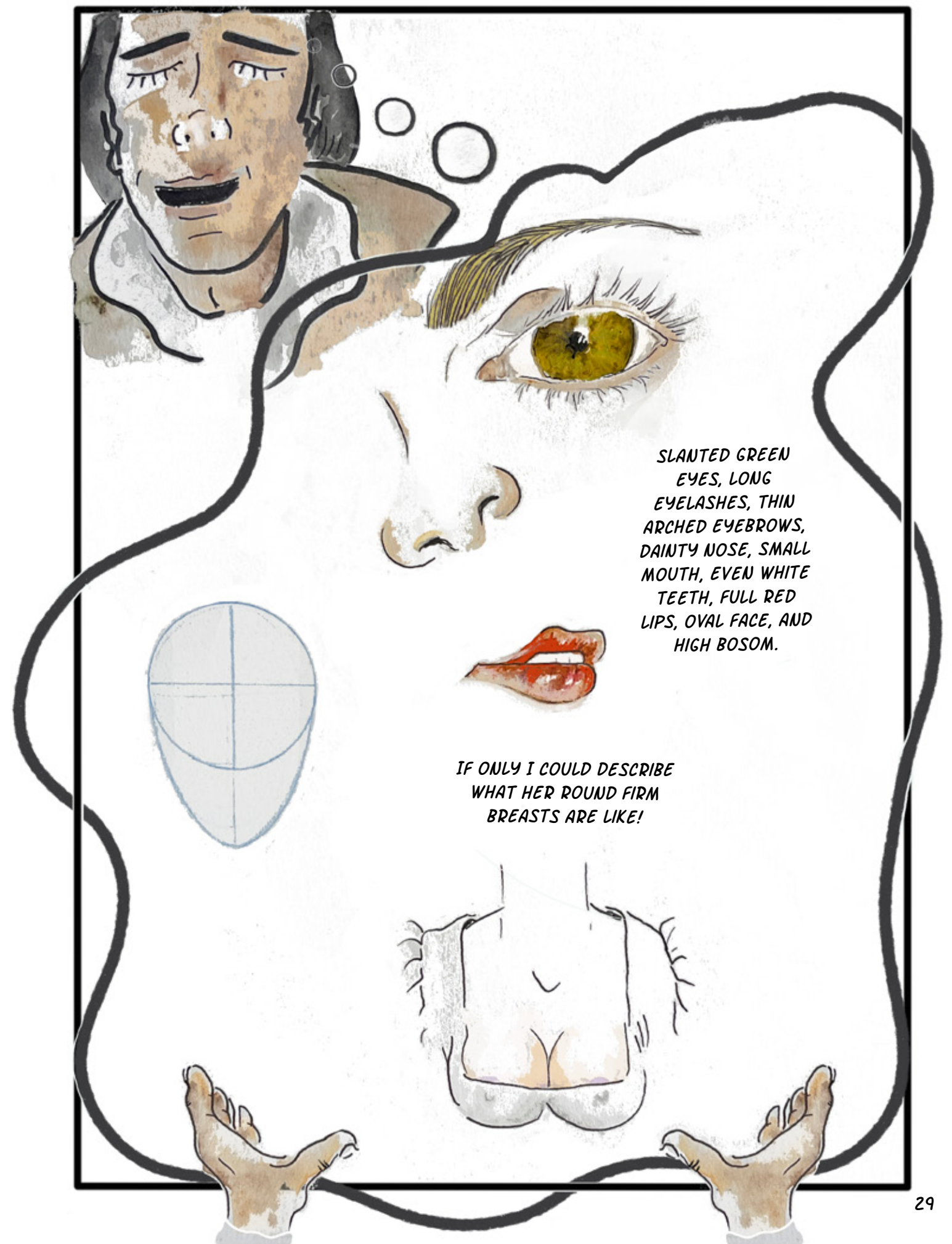
LOOK AT THE NOBILITY AND ANTIQUITY OF HER LINEAGE, HER FAMILY'S WEALTH, HER WIT, VIRTUE, GRACE AND BEAUTY. AND I'M ONLY TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S VISIBLE...

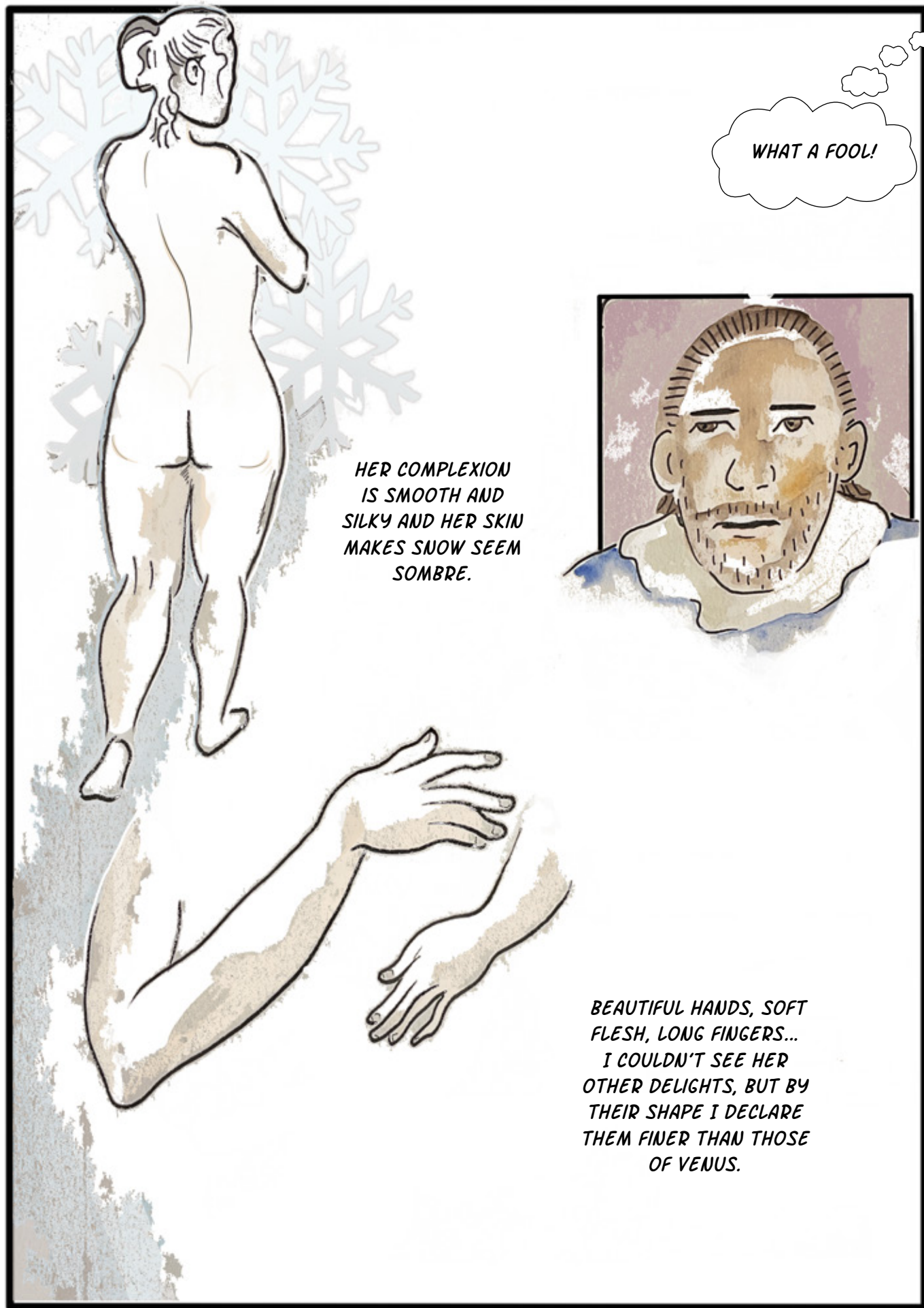
WHAT KIND OF CRAP IS HE TALKING ABOUT NOW?

WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID?

I SAID, GO AHEAD, I'LL BE HAPPY TO HEAR.

THIS IS NO FUN...





WHAT A FOOL!

HER COMPLEXION IS SMOOTH AND SILKY AND HER SKIN MAKES SNOW SEEM SOMBRE.



BEAUTIFUL HANDS, SOFT FLESH, LONG FINGERS... I COULDN'T SEE HER OTHER DELIGHTS, BUT BY THEIR SHAPE I DECLARE THEM FINER THAN THOSE OF VENUS.



ARE YOU DONE?
I TRIED TO BE BRIEF.

ALL OF THIS MAY BE TRUE, BUT YOU DESERVE MORE.

HOW COME?

HOW COME? SHE IS IMPERFECT AND AS A RESULT DESIRES AND YEARNES AFTER YOU.

DIDN'T YOU EVER READ ARISTOTLE WHERE HE SAYS, "AS MATTER YEARNES AFTER FORM, SO WOMAN YEARNES AFTER MAN."

WHEN WILL IT BE LIKE THAT BETWEEN MELIBEA AND ME?

ONE DAY PERHAPS, ALTHOUGH WHEN YOU HAVE HER AND SEE HER THROUGH OTHER EYES, YOU MAY COME TO HATE HER AS MUCH AS YOU LOVE HER NOW.



WHAT OTHER EYES?

EYES THAT SEE CLEARLY. AND AS I DON'T WANT YOU GETTING SUICIDAL, I'LL HELP YOU GET WHAT YOU DESIRE.

MAY GOD GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU DESIRE, BUT I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO DELIVER.

ON THE CONTRARY, I WILL.

BE ON YOUR WAY, SEMPRONIO, AND THE BROCADE DOUBLET I WAS WEARING YESTERDAY IS YOURS!



WHAT A GENEROUS GIFT. THANK YOU!

AND YOU SHALL GIVE ME MANY MORE WHEN I GET HER INTO YOUR BED!

TELL ME... HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DO THIS?

I'LL TELL YOU HOW. A LONG TIME AGO I BUMPED INTO A BEARDED LADY AT THE FAR END OF OUR STREET BY THE NAME OF CELESTINA, A CUNNING DABBLER IN THE MAGIC ARTS AND EVERY OTHER KIND OF EVILDOING.



I RECKON SHE'S MADE AND UNMADE MORE THAN FIVE THOUSAND VIRGINS IN THIS CITY. SHE CAN FIRE ROCKY CRAGS WITH LUST, IF SHE PUTS HER MIND TO IT.



WHEN CAN I TALK TO HER?

I'LL BRING HER HERE AND BE GENEROUS WITH HER SO SHE CAN SOON COME UP WITH A CURE.



GO, SEMPRONIO, GO QUICK SO I CAN TURN MY PAIN INTO PLEASURE.



BE AWARE THAT IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE THAT WE ARE DISCUSSING, THE PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS IN THE LAWSUIT WERE FAR FROM STRANGERS, THEY KNEW EACH OTHER. COURTSHIP IS NOT EXEMPT OF PROBLEMS.



WAS THERE A BREACH OF PROMISE TO MARRY BY THE DEFENDANT IN THIS CASE?



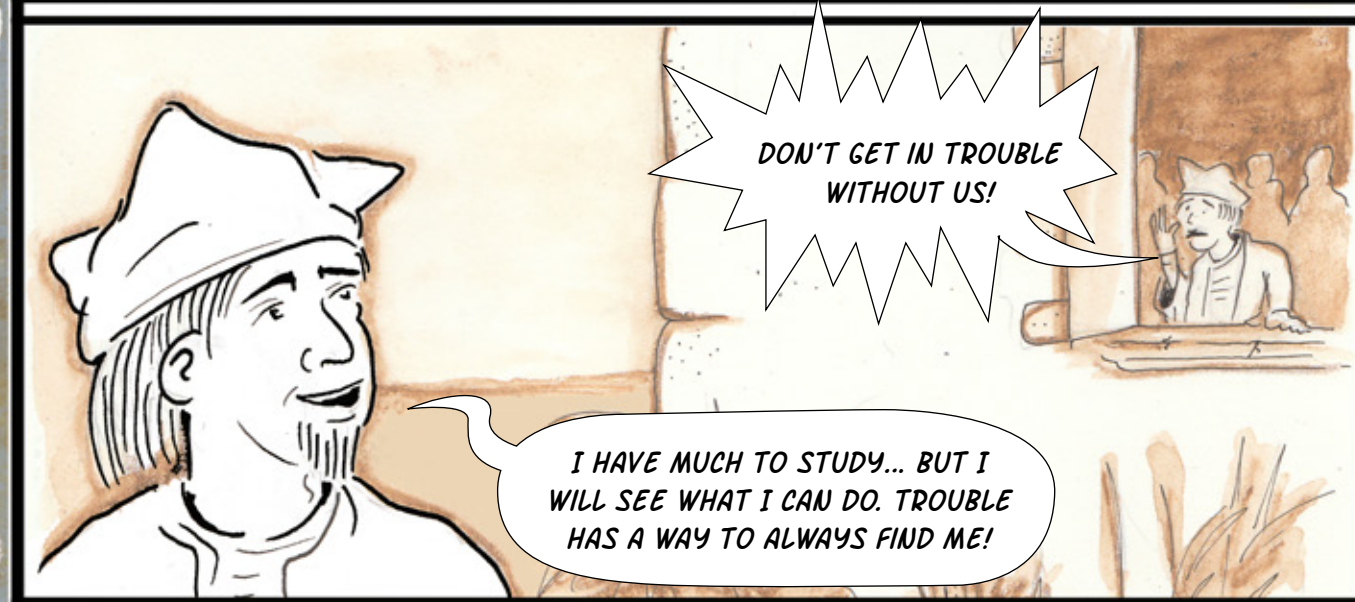
YES, THIS IS A ROUTINE LAWSUIT INVOLVING THE FORM OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT KNOWN AS ESTUPRO, THIS IS THE LOSS OF VIRGINITY IN UNMARRIED WOMEN.



I KNOW SOME OF THESE... THE CITY IS FULL OF THEM.



GOODBYE, MY FRIENDS. I WILL MISS HAVING DRINKS WITH YOU AND THE PRETTY GIRLS...



DON'T GET IN TROUBLE WITHOUT US!

I HAVE MUCH TO STUDY... BUT I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. TROUBLE HAS A WAY TO ALWAYS FIND ME!



THIS IS SO GOOD! THE PAGES ARE ALIVE, THESE ARE PEOPLE I CAN RECOGNIZE. IT REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING WE WERE TALKING ABOUT IN CLASS THE OTHER DAY...

**XX CENTURY.
SPAIN AT THE BRINK OF THE CIVIL WAR.**



SPANISH DIPLOMAT IN
NEW ORLEANS AND
CELESTINA'S SCHOLAR
(HE FOLLOWED THE LEAD
IN ROJAS TESTAMENT TO
LOCATE AND RECOVER
HIS REMAINS)

LUIS CAREAGA



RESIDENT OF TALAVERA
AND ADMIRER OF ROJAS
WORK AND LEGACY. FERVENT
CATHOLIC AND ONE OF
THE ONLY RIGHT WING
MEMBER OF THE
LEFT WING LOCAL
GOVERNMENT (CITY
HALL MEMBER)

JOSÉ GARCÍA VERDUGO



ACCORDING TO HIS
TESTAMENT HE WAS BURIED
IN THE CHURCH OF THE
MONASTERY MADRE DE DIOS.

LET'S SEE WHAT WE FIND
THERE, NOBODY IN TALAVERA
KNEW FERNANDO DE ROJAS
REMAINS WERE THERE.



WELL, ACCORDING TO THIS HIS TESTAMENT
THAT'S WHERE HE IS, WE MUST CHECK. I
ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO EXHUME THE
BODY. DR. JOSÉ FERNÁNDEZ SANGUINO MUST
BE WAITING FOR US ALREADY. HE WILL HELP
WITH THE FORENSIC EXAMINATION.







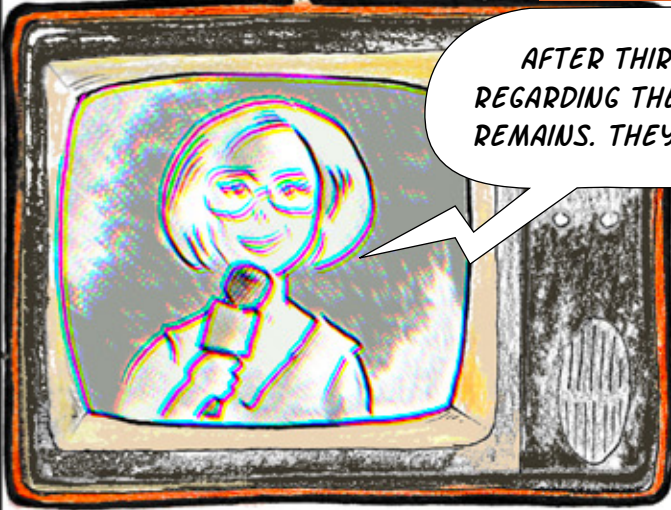
(My grandfather's brother)
Republican teacher and Celestina
admirer, Modoaldo Garrido Diez
was executed in August

And José García Verdugo, fervent
catholic, Celestina admirer and part
of the entourage who found Rojas'
remains, was killed in October.



MAY 1968

AFTER THIRTY YEARS OF SILENCE AND CONFUSION REGARDING THE WHEREABOUTS OF FERNANDO DE ROJAS' REMAINS. THEY ARE FINALLY RECOVERED BY HIS FAMILY.



WE CAN SEE THE PROCESSION ON ITS WAY TO THE CITY HALL WHERE OUR CELEBRATED AUTHOR WILL WAIT ONCE AGAIN FOR HIS FINAL RESTING PLACE. AS A CURIOSITY, JUST TWENTY HOURS PRIOR TO THE RECOVERY OF ROJAS, THE REMAINS OF LOPE DE VEGA, SPAIN MOST PROLIFIC PLAYWRIGHT WERE FOUND IN MADRID

MAY 1980

ONLY IN SPAIN THEIR MOST CELEBRATED AUTHORS ARE NEGLECTED!

TWELVE YEARS AFTER HIS BONES WERE TAKEN TO THE CITY HALL OF TALAVERA, FERNANDO DE ROJAS WILL RECEIVE A FINAL BURIAL AT THE COLEGIATA DE SANTA MARIA.