

# Chapter 1

# The Southerner

*Look to it  
for evil is  
before you*  
*The Bible*



Phillippe Carbajales d'Olhonce  
'The Southerner'

*I am not God. I do not confuse myself with God. But, as all men do, I have power over life and I have dared to embrace that power, to embrace death, as I have dared to embrace love. I say 'dare' because most people shrink from knowing the thing they are for fear of what might confront them, like a child who is afraid to look at some wild animal in a cage. Once, when I was a soldier, a priest berated me for killing a prisoner and he began to speak about love. I stopped him. 'Priest,' I said, 'I doubt if one man in ten thousand knows truly what love is. It is certainly not to be found in your clichés and theological summersaults'.*

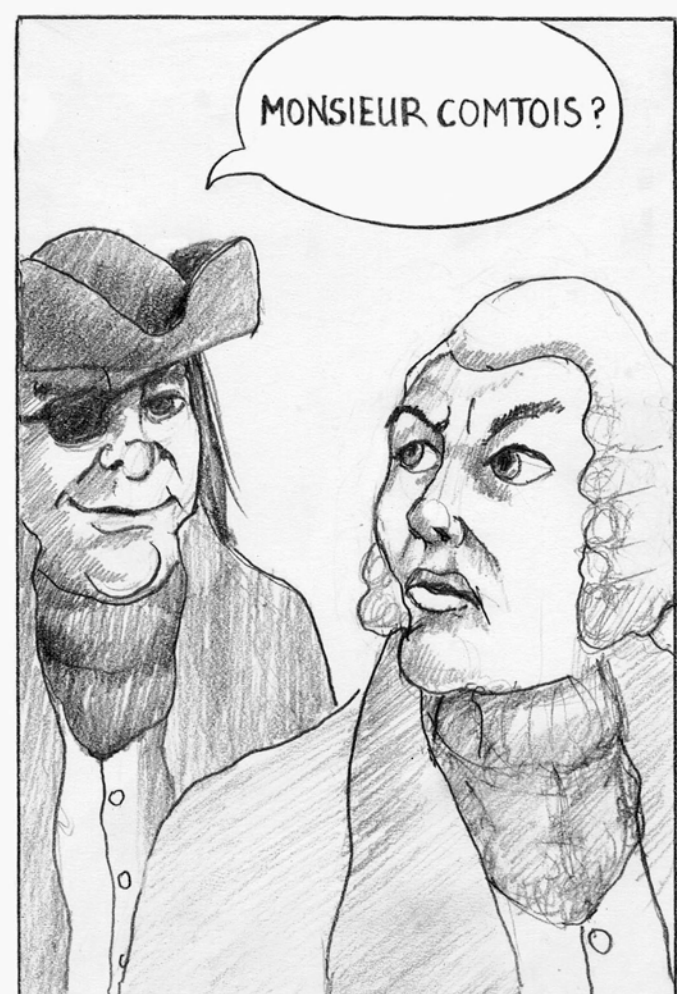
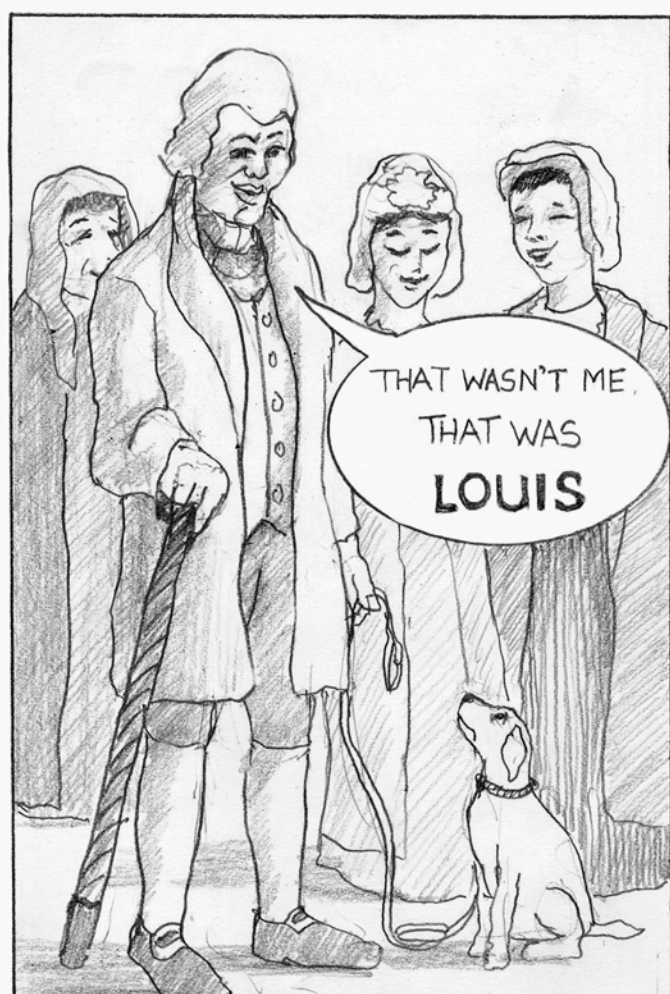
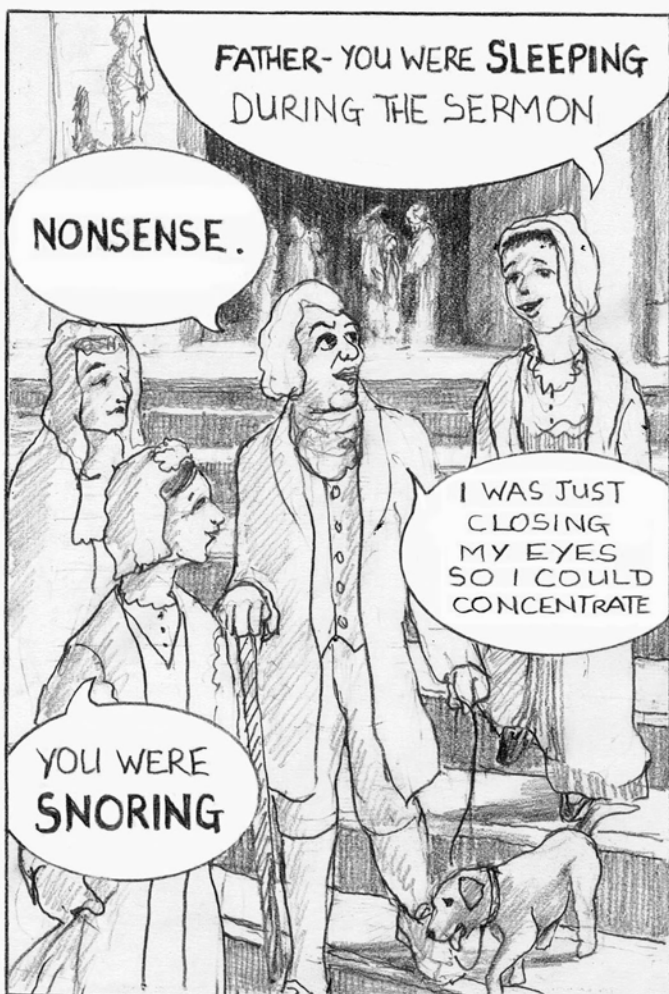
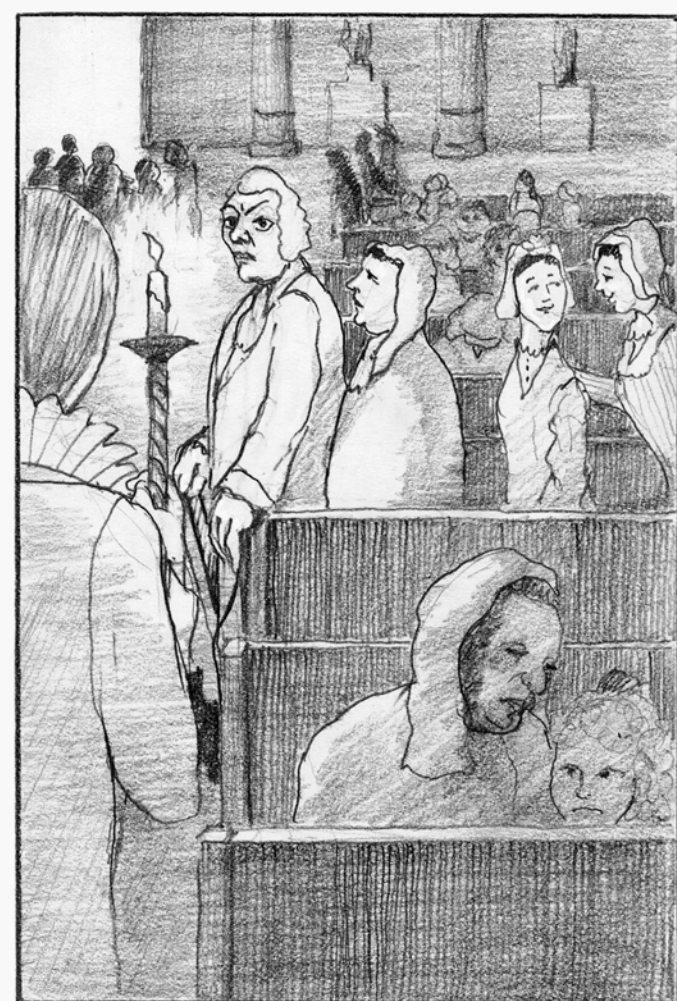
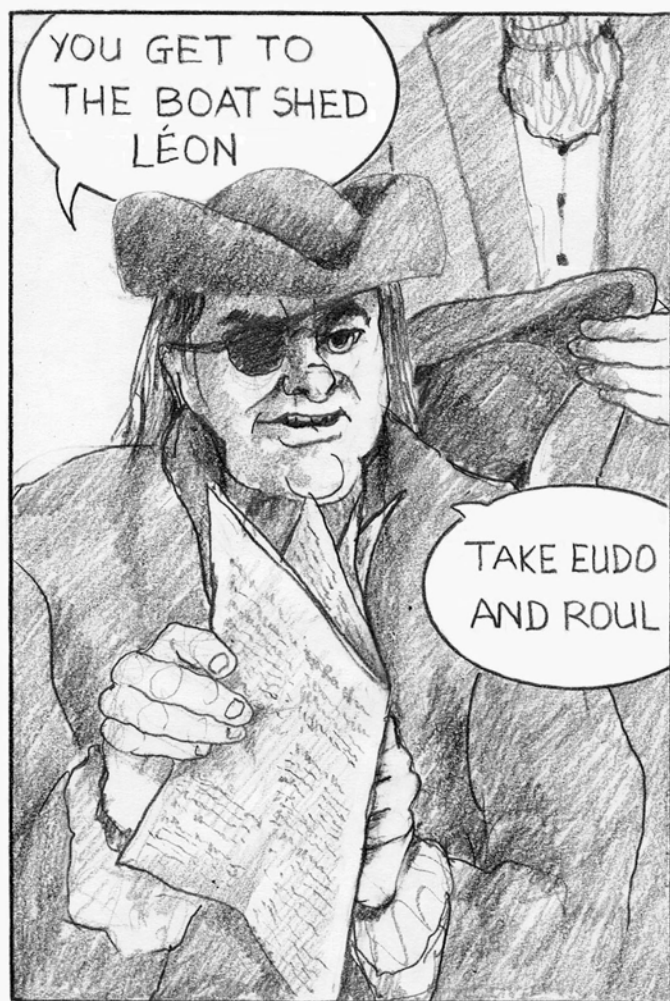
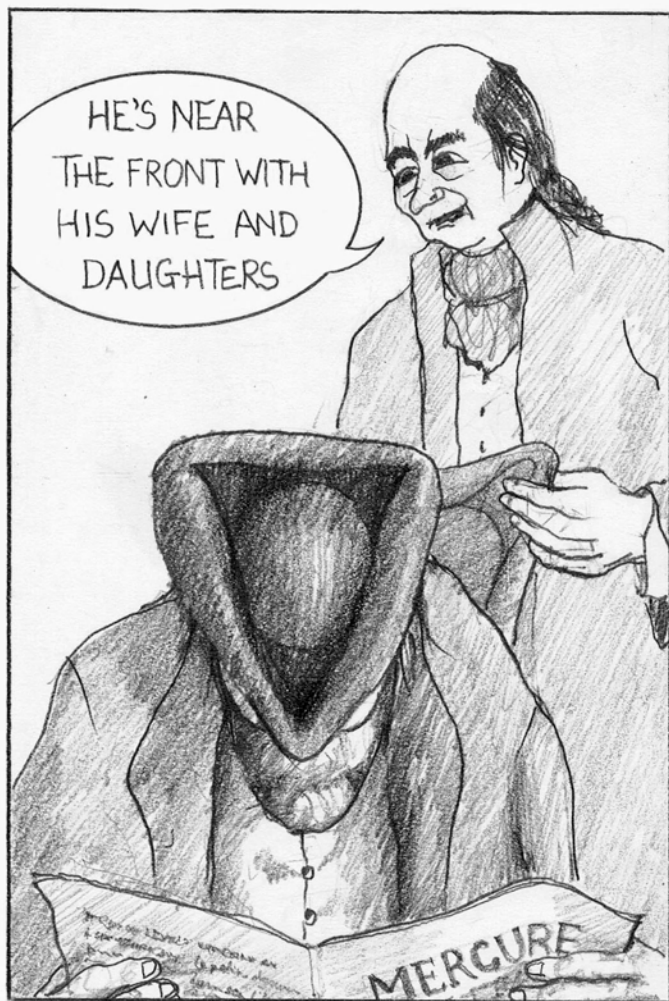
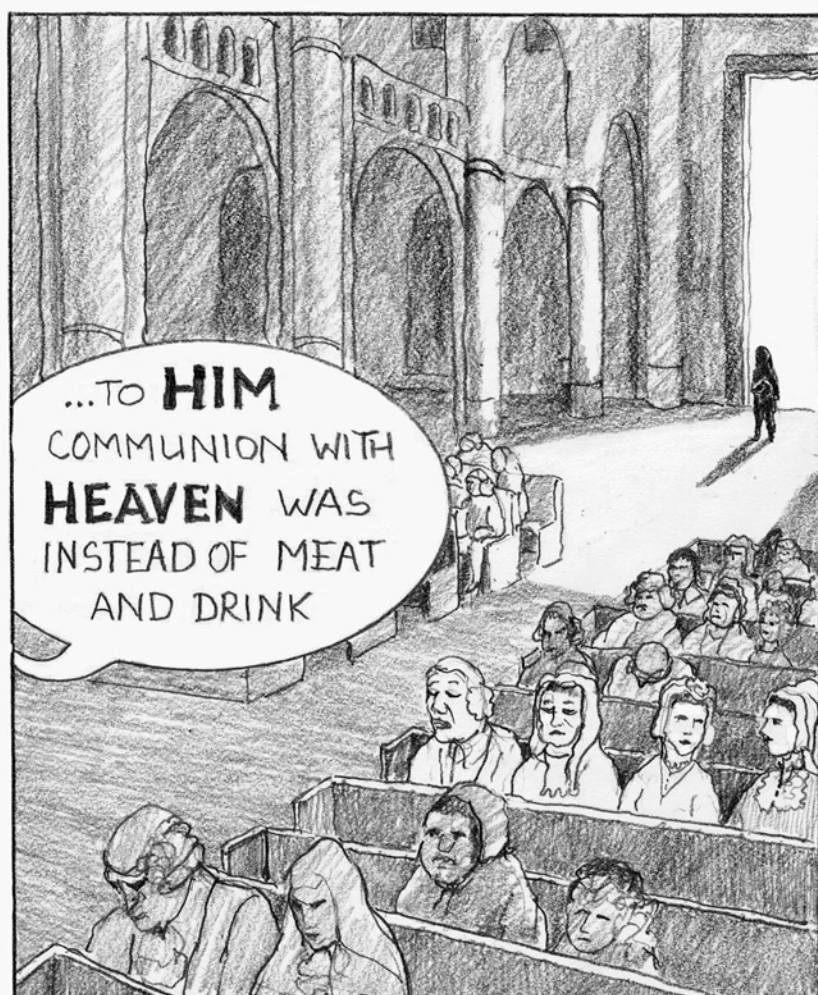
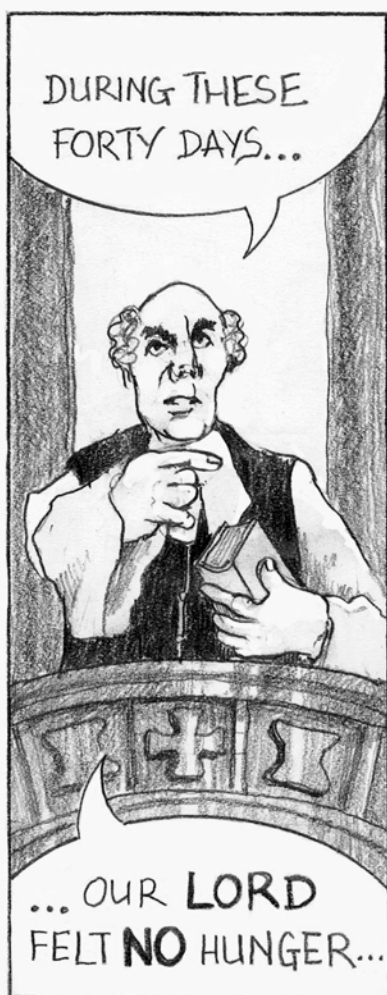
*When I was a very young child and too young to understand life and death my mother came to tell me that my grandfather had died. I was playing outside, turning a straw doll over in my hands while I watched an ant search around it. It was less than two weeks later when my grandmother also died. She had loved my grandfather too much and his death was hers.*

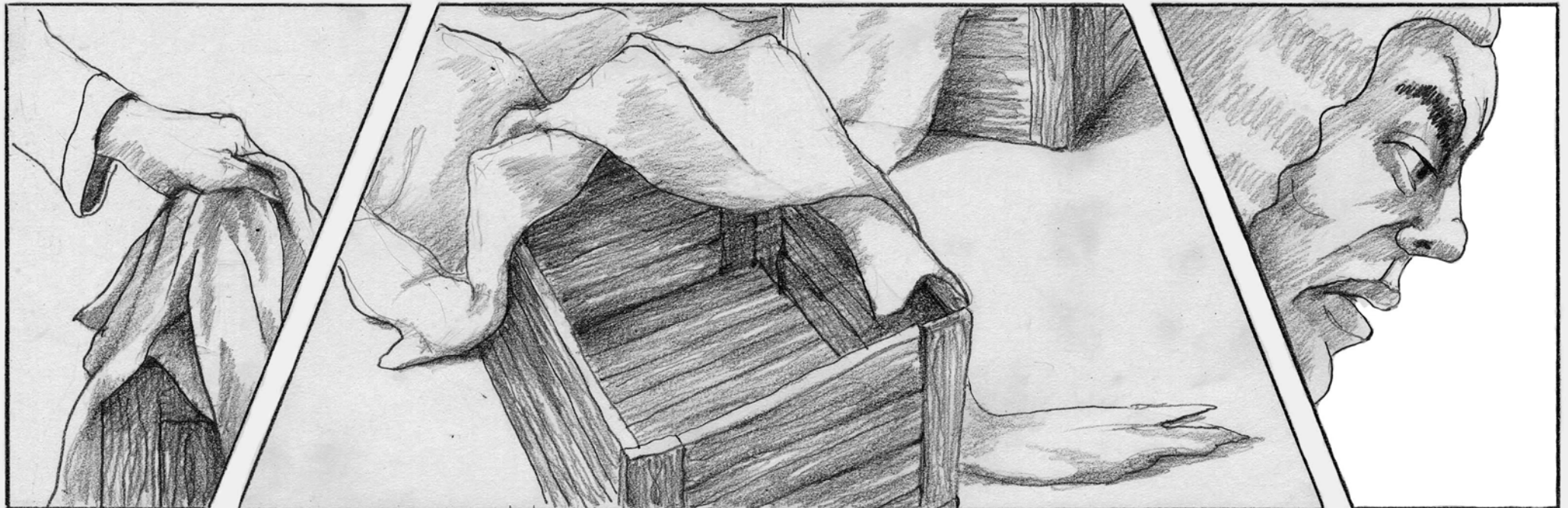
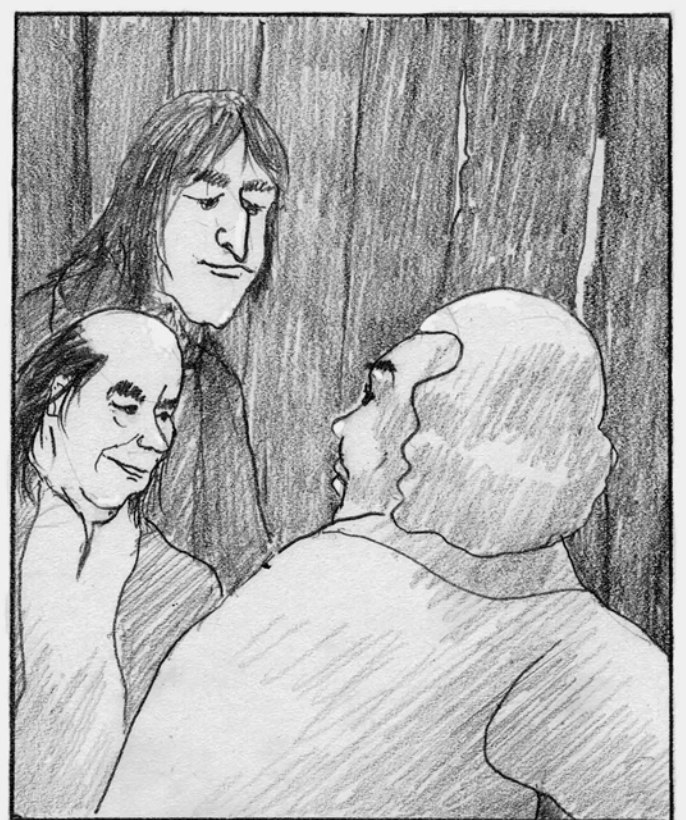
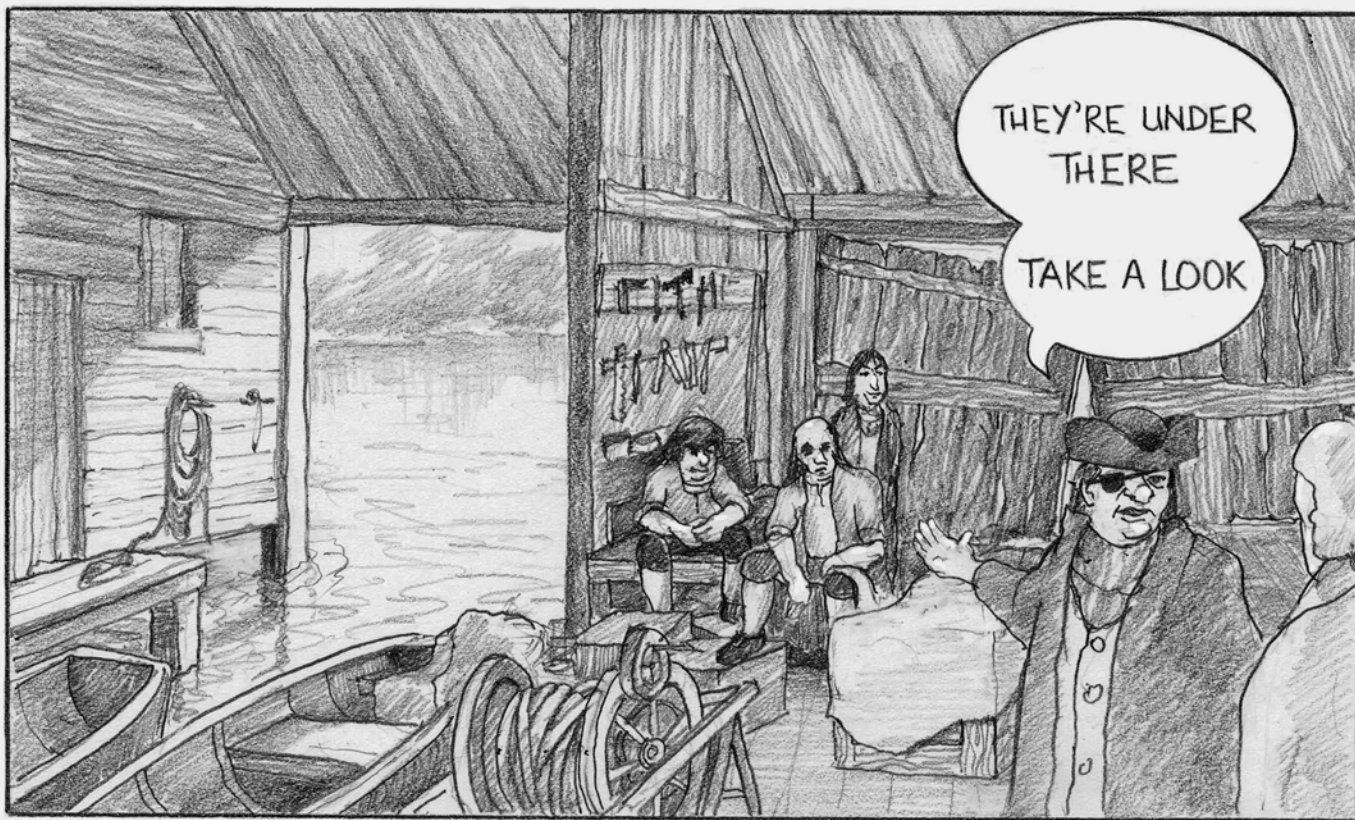
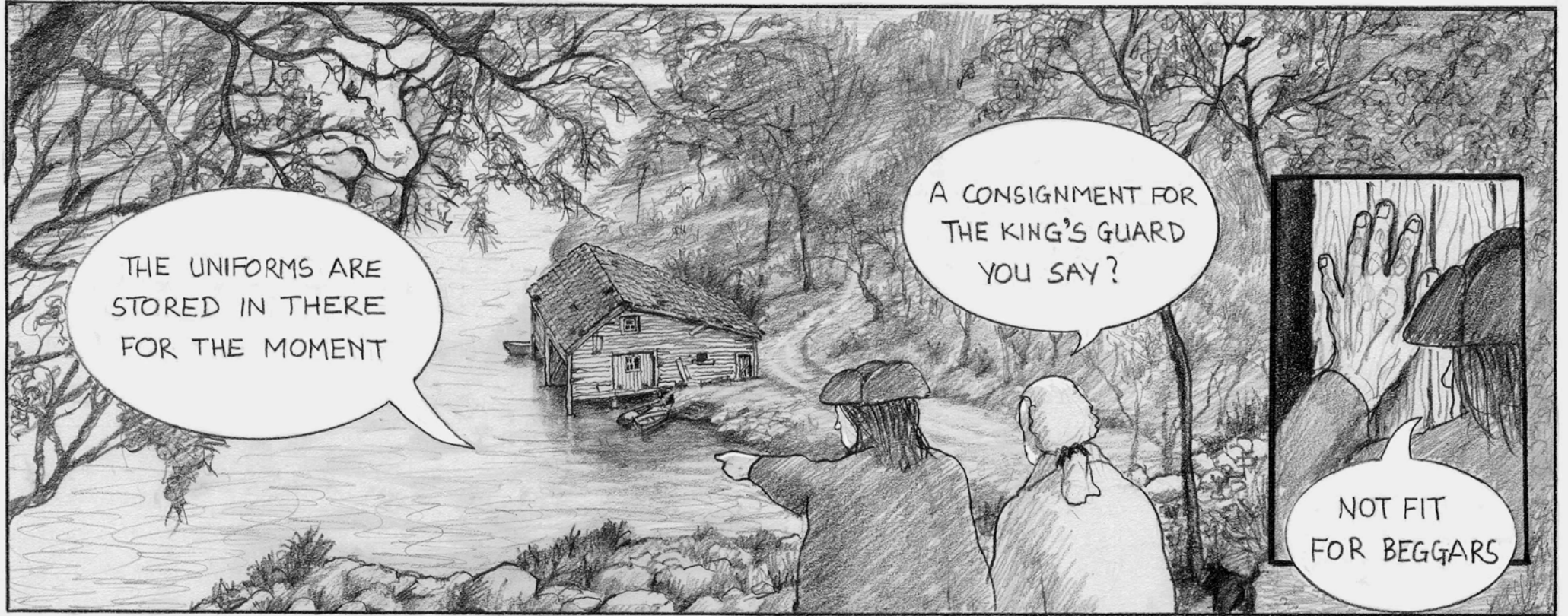
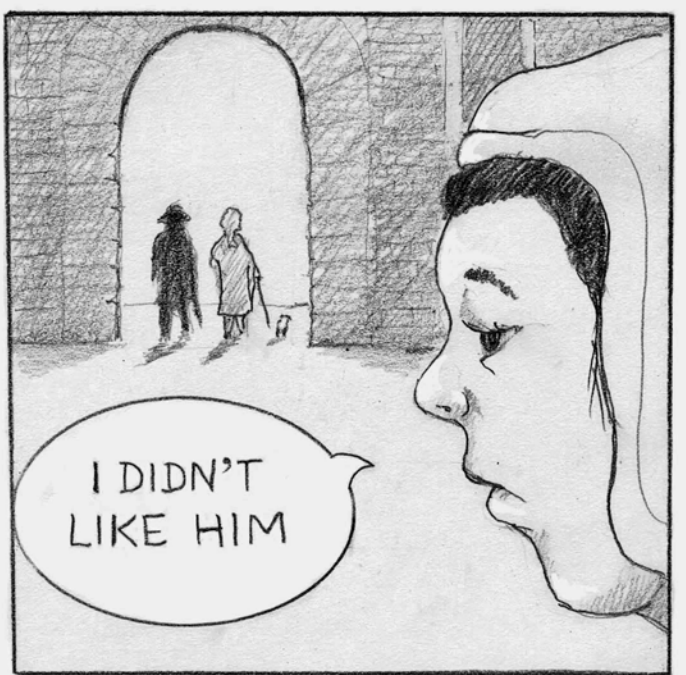
*At thirteen, it was my turn to experience love. She was the daughter of a servant and with her I lost myself. Together we became a place outside the world, of elation and abandonment. The time between each meeting and parting only ever seemed to be a moment while everything else was little more than a restless waiting for those moments to return.*

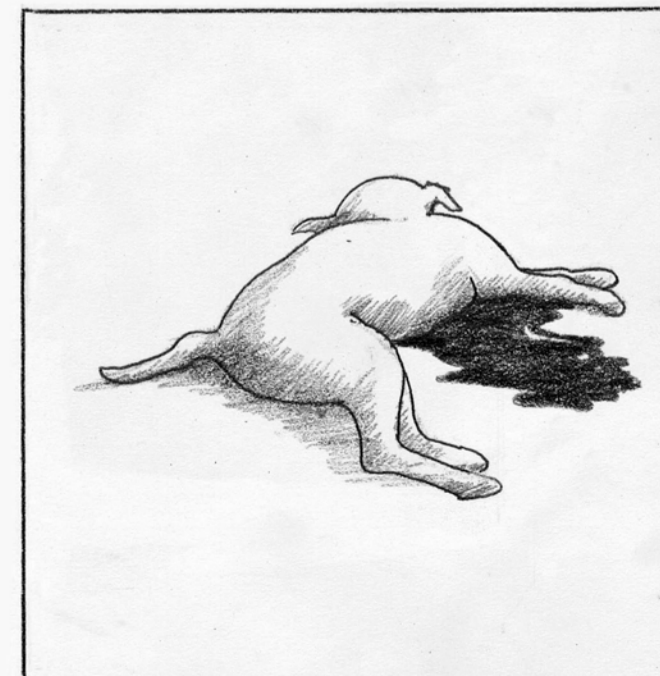
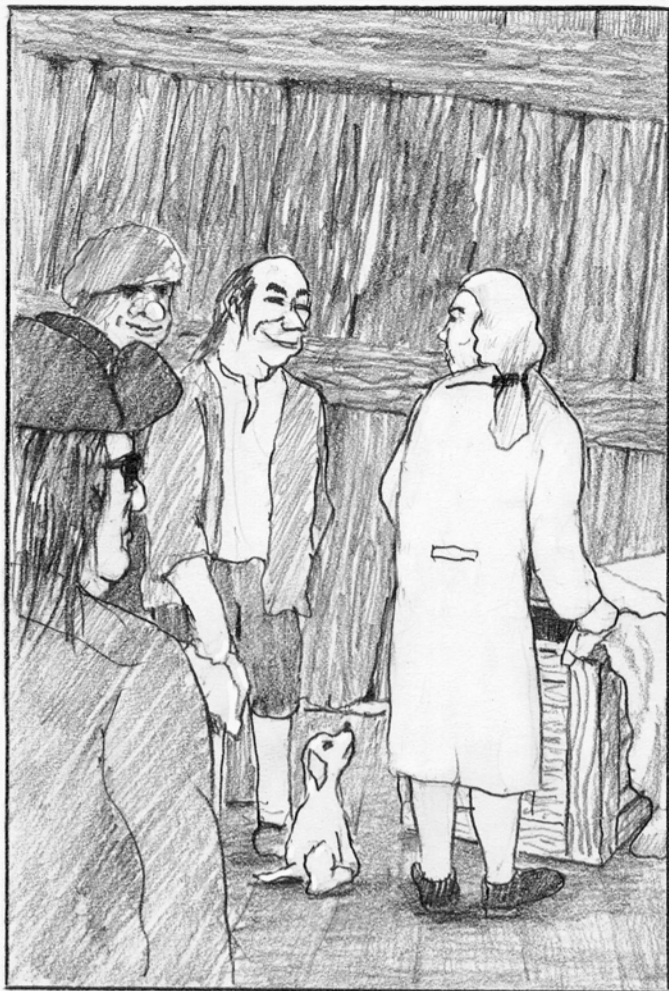
*And when I was fourteen that is how I felt when I killed a man: the same gnawing anticipation; then the euphoria; then, in the following weeks, the growing hunger and impatience.*

*The power of love and the power over life are not so different.*

*It was inevitable, I suppose, that death should become my trade. I followed my father as an officer of the Chevaux-Leger de la Garde du Roy and war was my apprenticeship. I built up a reputation and quickly became sought after. For the past twenty years rarely have I been unemployed.*







5th January 1757

Ironic you should end up imprisoned on the day you arrived.

Two months and five days.  
Venice to Paris via Munich

Eight hundred miles.  
And in winter.

You'll be out soon enough though.

Not bad for a man on the run.

Regaling the world with your adventures and charmed life.

The man who escaped from the 'unescapable' prison. Who lodged with the wife of the chief of police while he was out hunting for you.

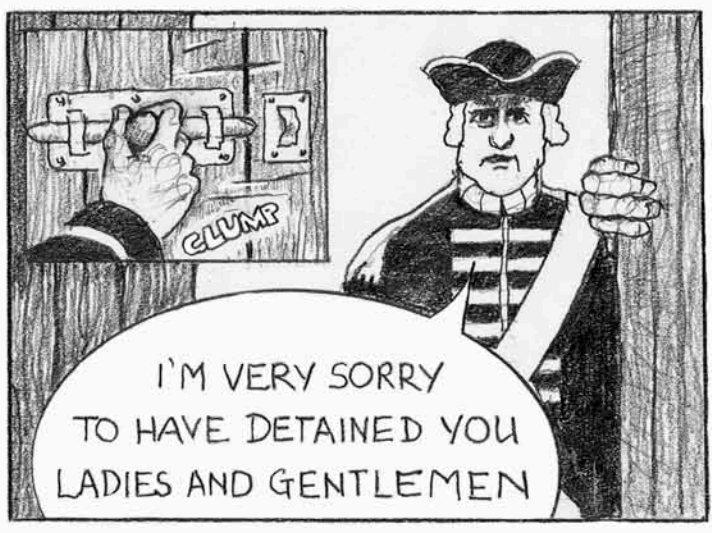
The two-faced friends who would not help you in your time of need.  
The churches and monasteries that sheltered you.  
The generosity of strangers.  
Your un-wanted re-union with Father Balbi.  
The elderly Countess of Coronini who spoke on your behalf to the Elector of Bavaria.

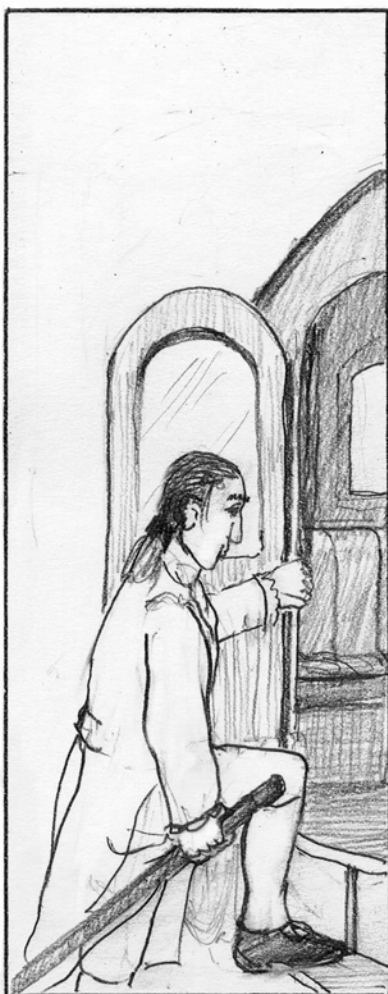
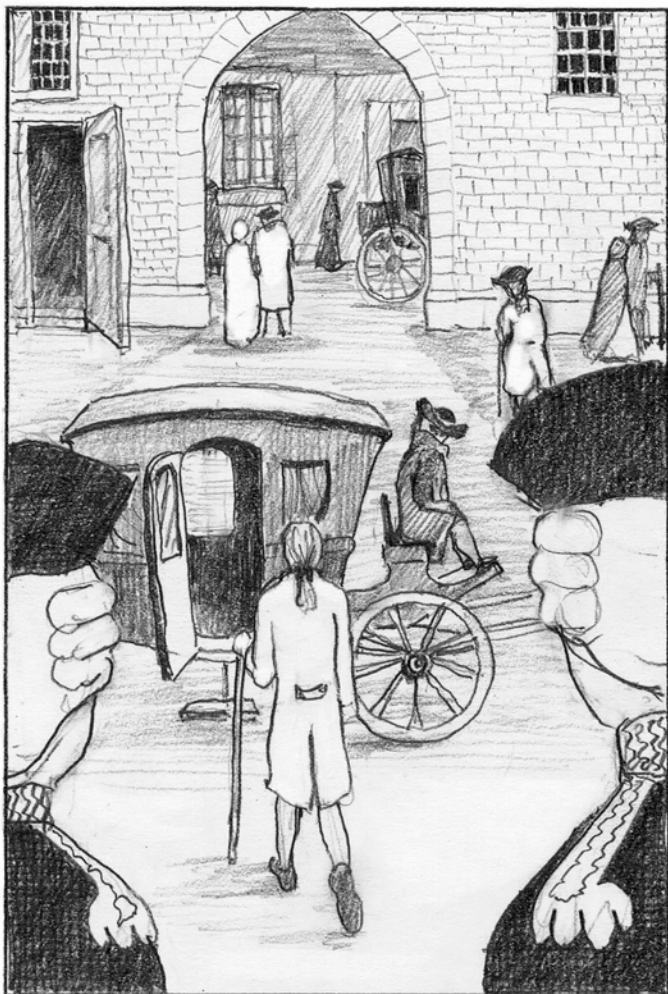
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THEY'RE ROUNDING UP SUSPECTS

WHAT DO YOU MEAN SUSPECTS?

SOMEONE HAS ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE THE KING





Your name had become famous here  
before you even arrived

If ever there was a man who could  
feed on this opportunity.

That sense of yourself.

That old confidence.

The most important thing is  
**outward show,**  
isn't it Giacomo?

The very day of your arrival in Paris  
fate has contrived to make conspicuous.

History has marked you  
with its favour,  
hasn't it Giacomo?

Growing.

You can feel it.



You need to dress the part.  
That is how one is always judged.

It's the same  
in all large towns.

**But first you need funds.**

De Bernis will help you.

After Venice.

He'll give you money . . .

. . . and introductions.

He knows what drives you.



He understands you.

What you are.

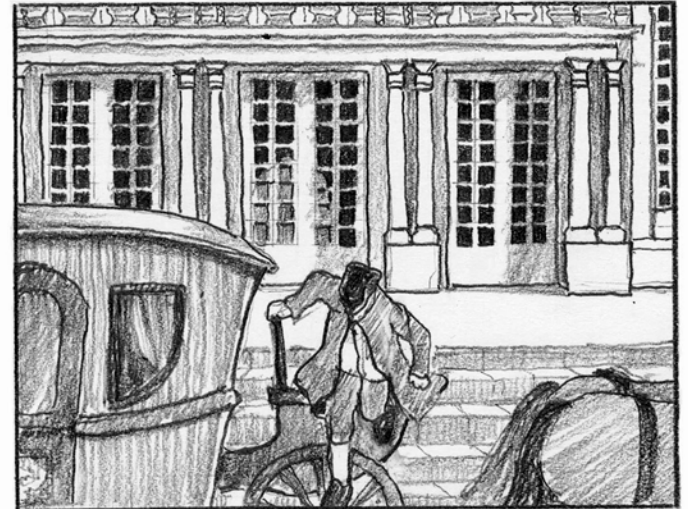
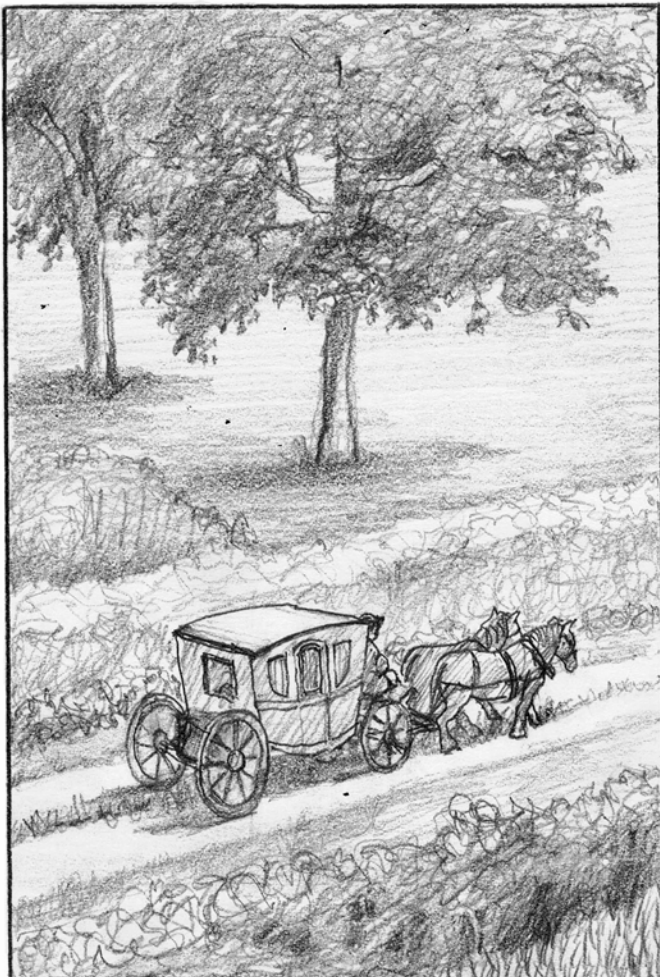
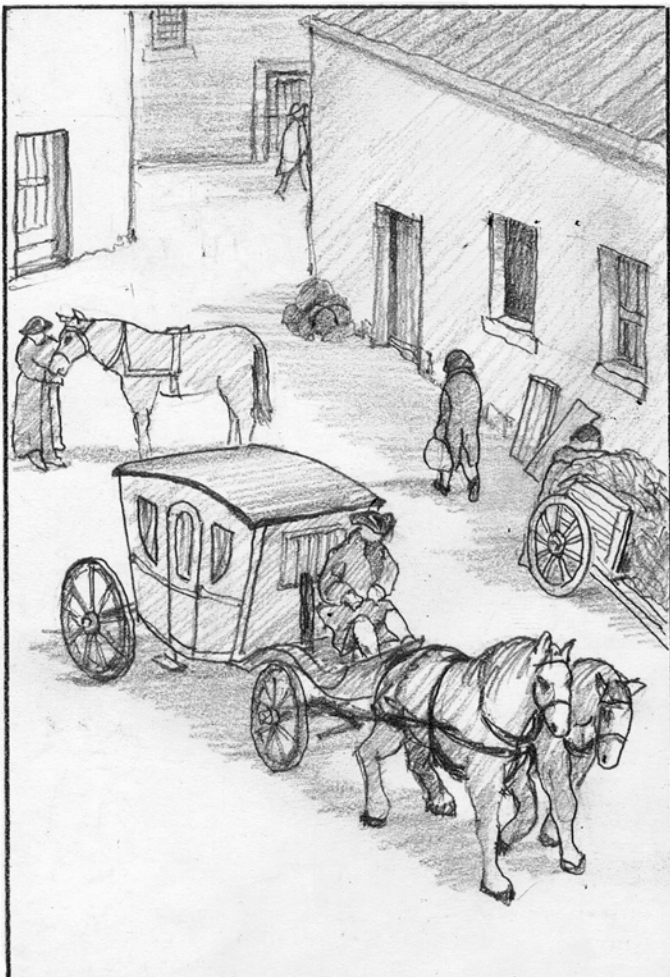
And de Bernis and  
their curiosity will  
bring them to you.

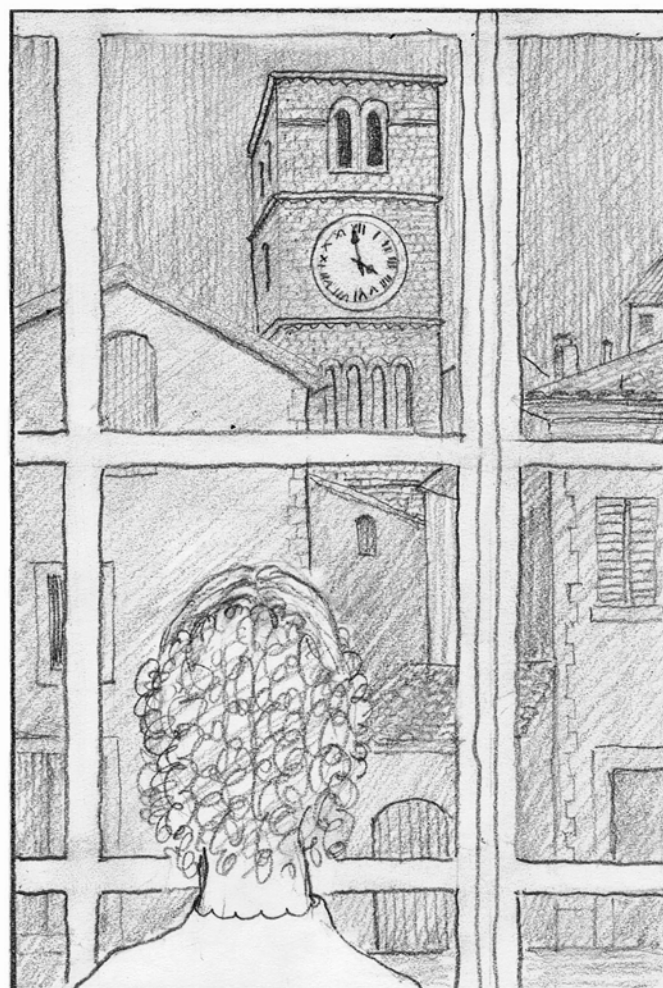
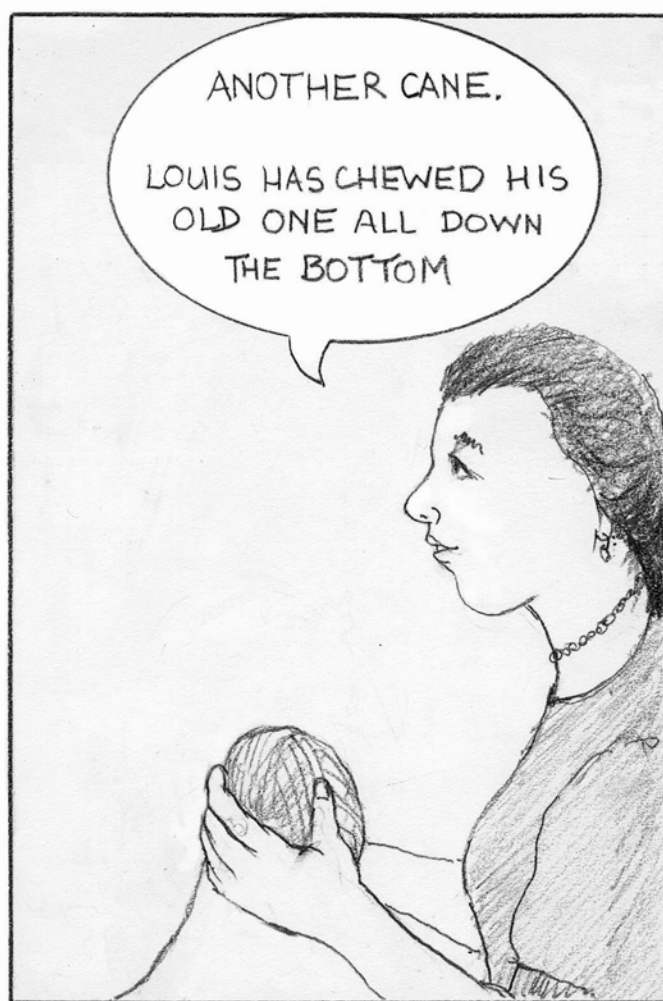
More conquests.  
More dupes.

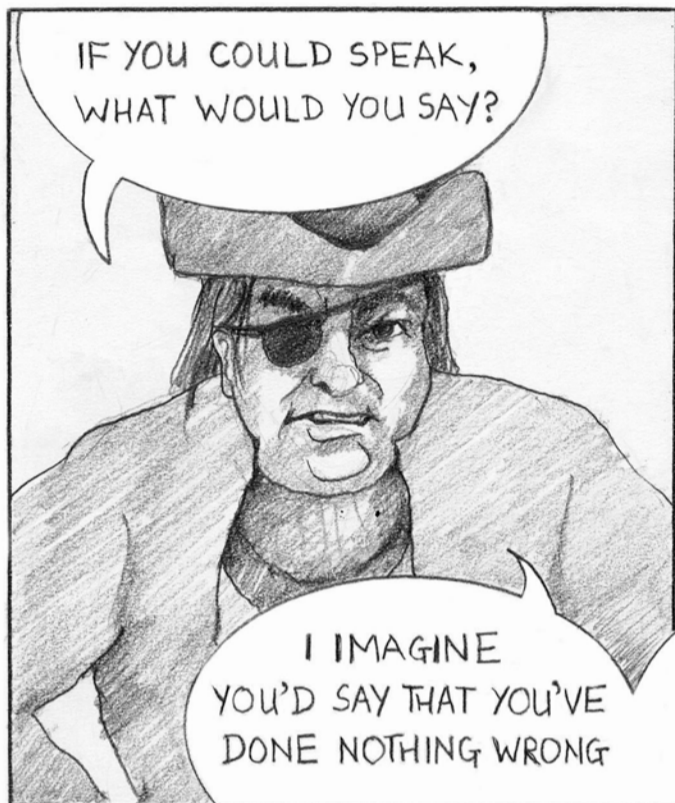
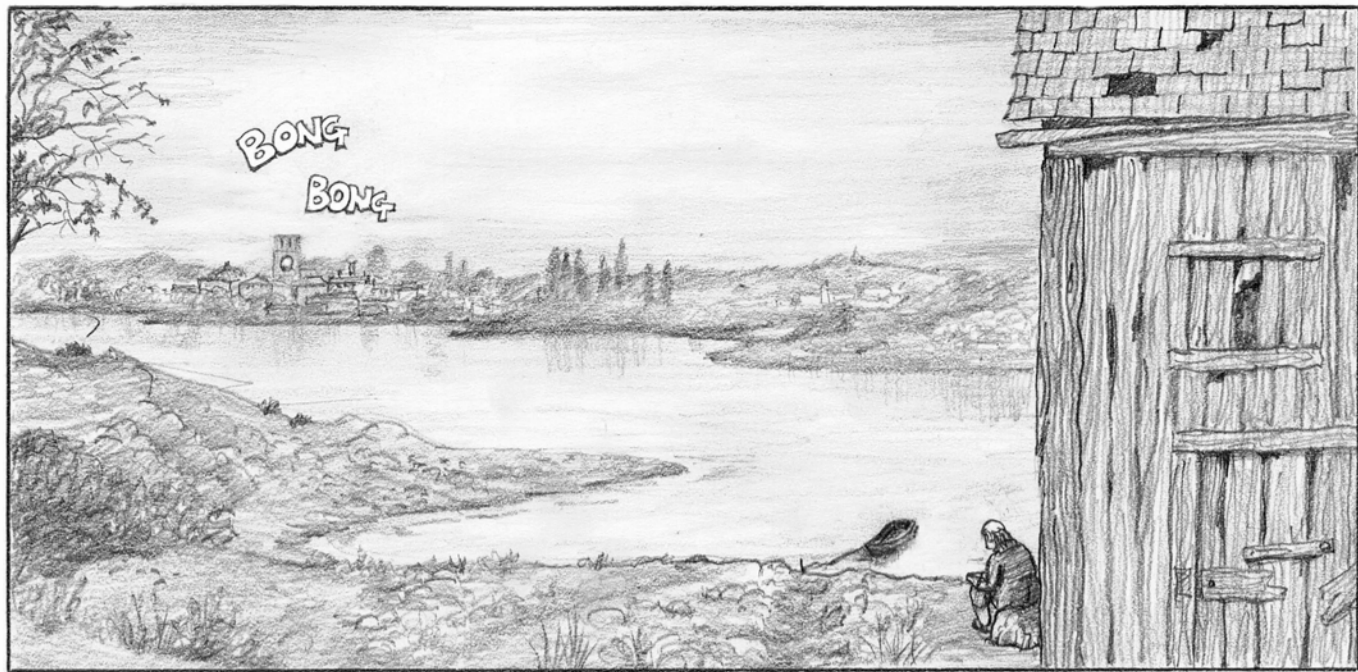
Like old times.

Audiences for your stories and your wit  
and your supernatural revelations.

Won't you ever learn  
Giacomo?

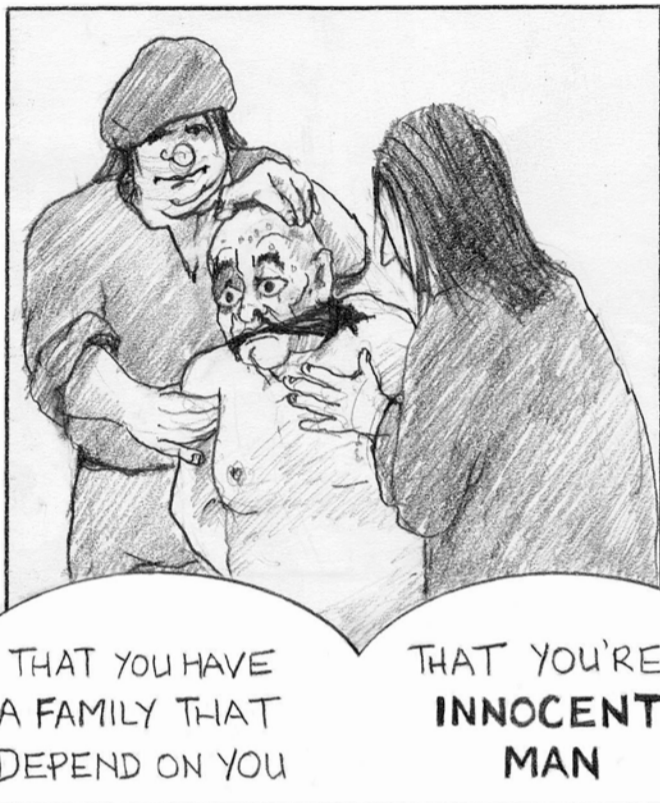






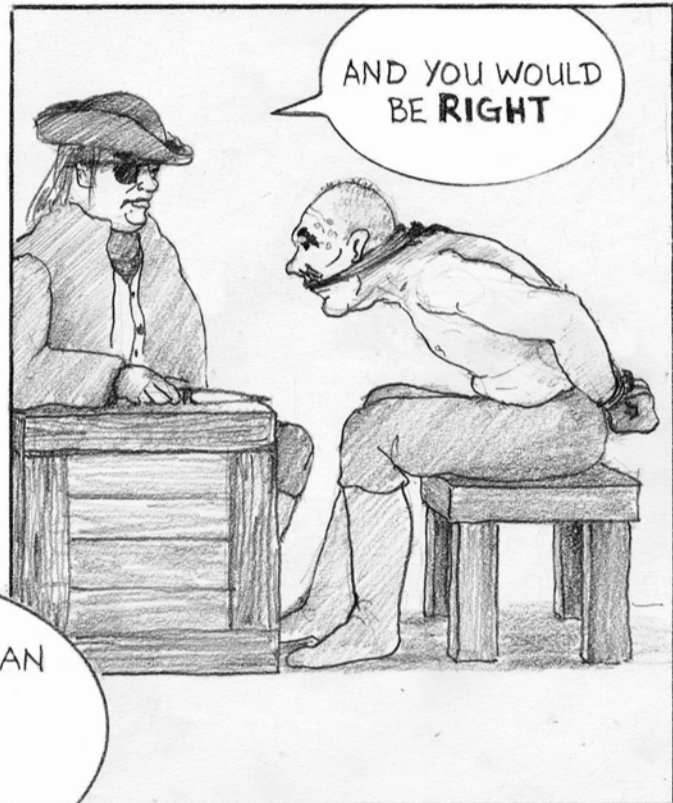
IF YOU COULD SPEAK,  
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

I IMAGINE  
YOU'D SAY THAT YOU'VE  
DONE NOTHING WRONG

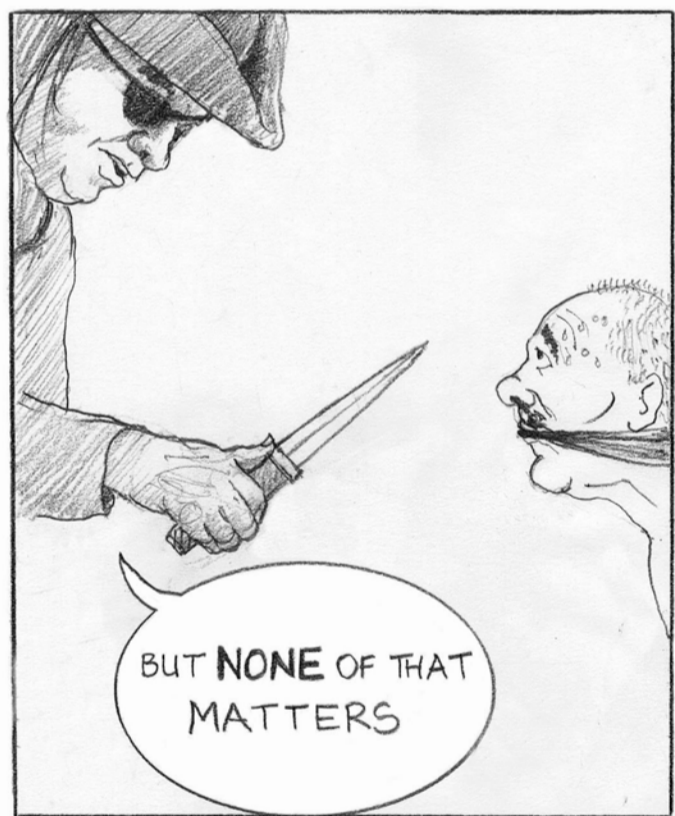


THAT YOU HAVE  
A FAMILY THAT  
DEPEND ON YOU

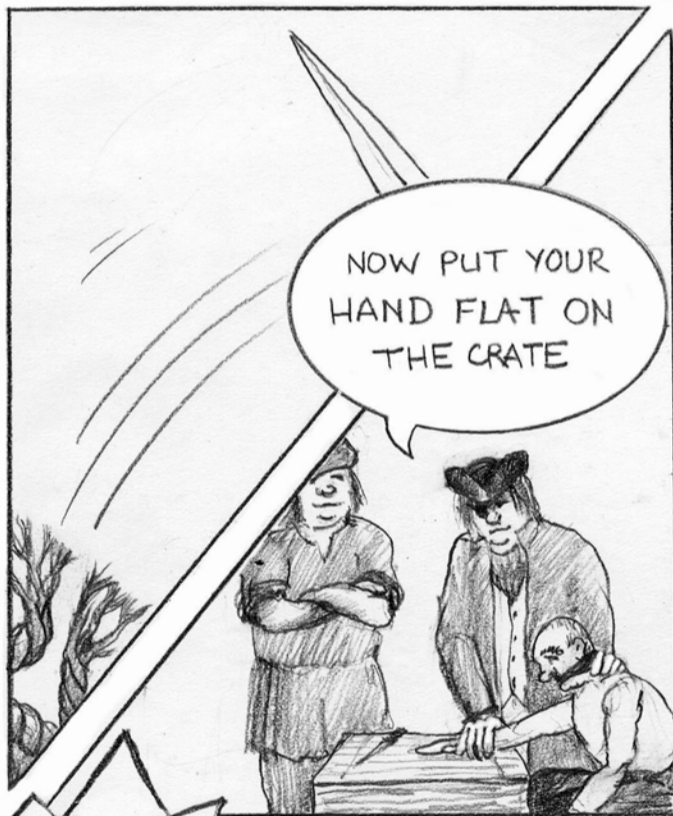
THAT YOU'RE AN  
**INNOCENT**  
MAN



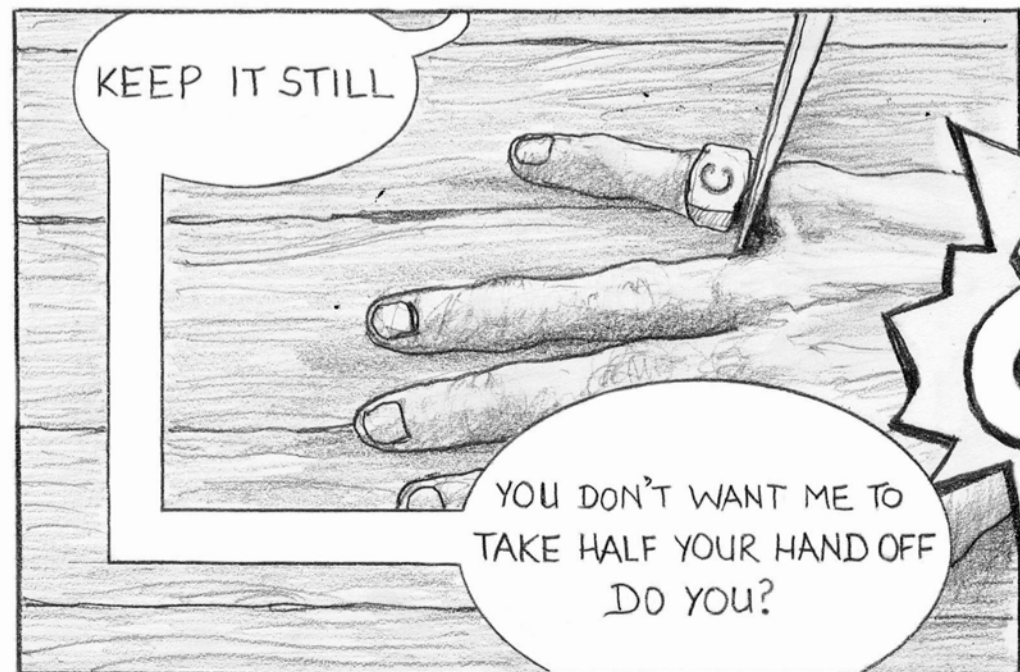
AND YOU WOULD  
BE **RIGHT**



BUT **NONE** OF THAT  
MATTERS



NOW PUT YOUR  
HAND FLAT ON  
THE CRATE



KEEP IT STILL

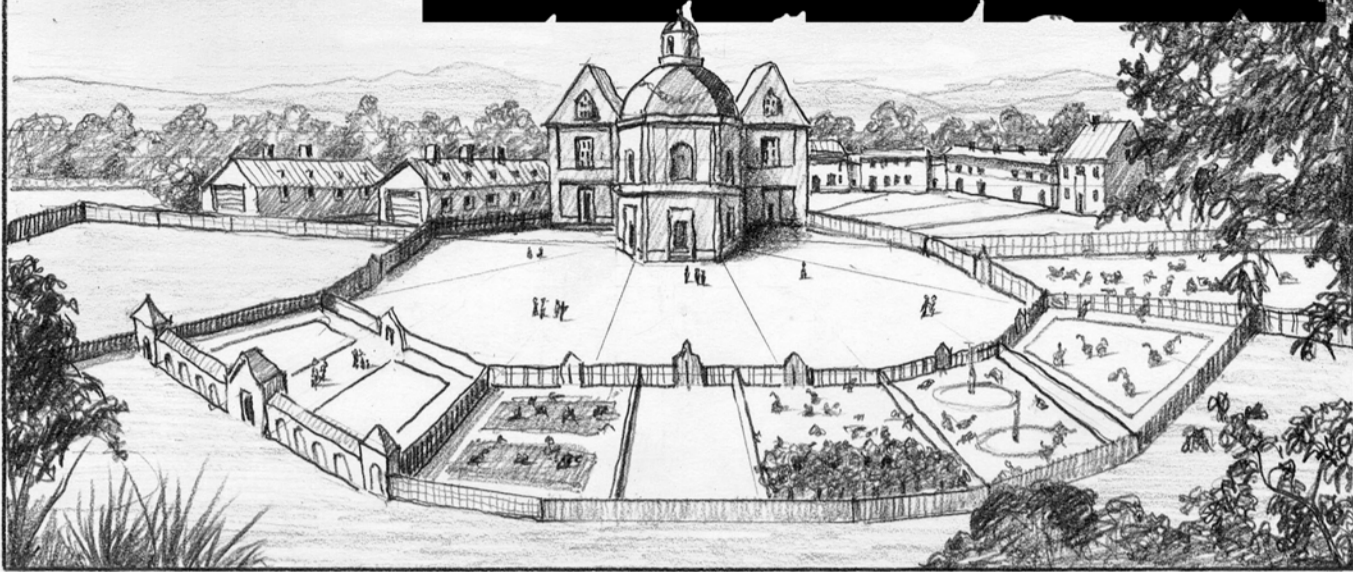
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO  
TAKE HALF YOUR HAND OFF  
DO YOU?



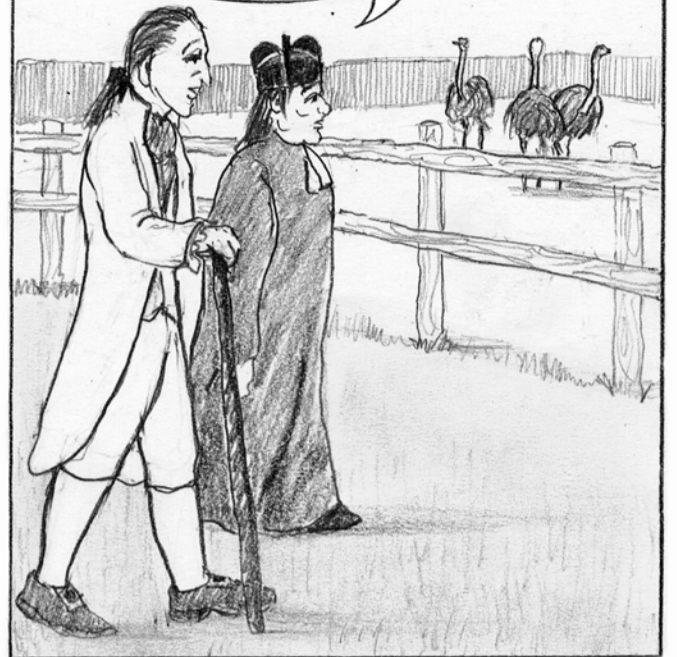
MENAGERIE OF  
VERSAILLES

So here you are then, begging for favours  
from your dear old unscrupulous friend  
Monsieur **Abbe de Bernis** himself.

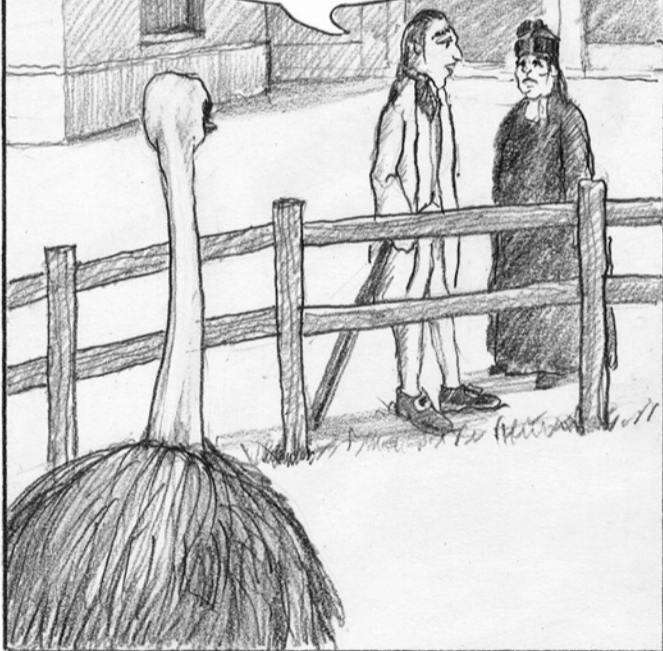
Special adviser to **God, the Devil  
and the King. Ha!**



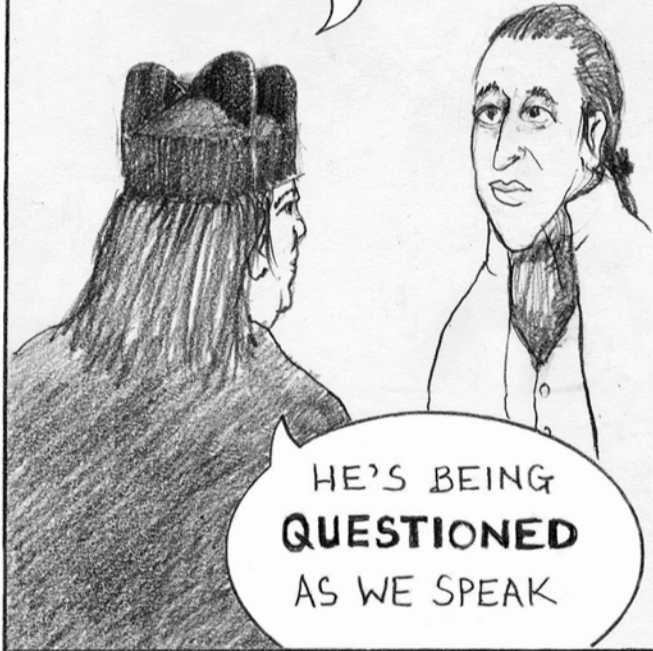
I WONDERED WHEN  
YOU'D TURN UP.  
YOU'VE BEEN QUITE  
A TALKING POINT.



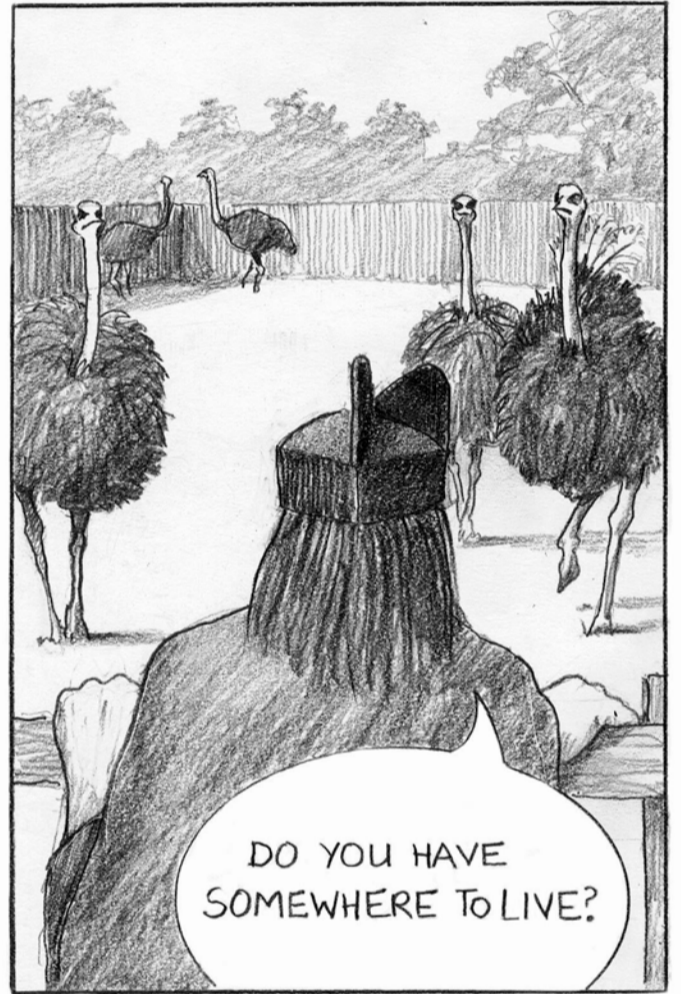
I WOULD HAVE BEEN  
HERE EARLIER.  
I WAS CAUGHT UP IN THE  
PANIC ABOUT THE KING.



IT APPEARS IT WAS THE  
WORK OF A **RELIGIOUS  
EXTREMIST**



HE'S BEING  
**QUESTIONED**  
AS WE SPEAK



DO YOU HAVE  
SOMEWHERE TO LIVE?

I KNOW OF A PLEASANT SET OF APARTMENTS  
THAT YOU'RE WELCOME TO



I ALSO IMAGINE  
THAT YOU'RE IN  
NEED OF FUNDS



I'VE SOME  
FRIENDS IN  
PARIS

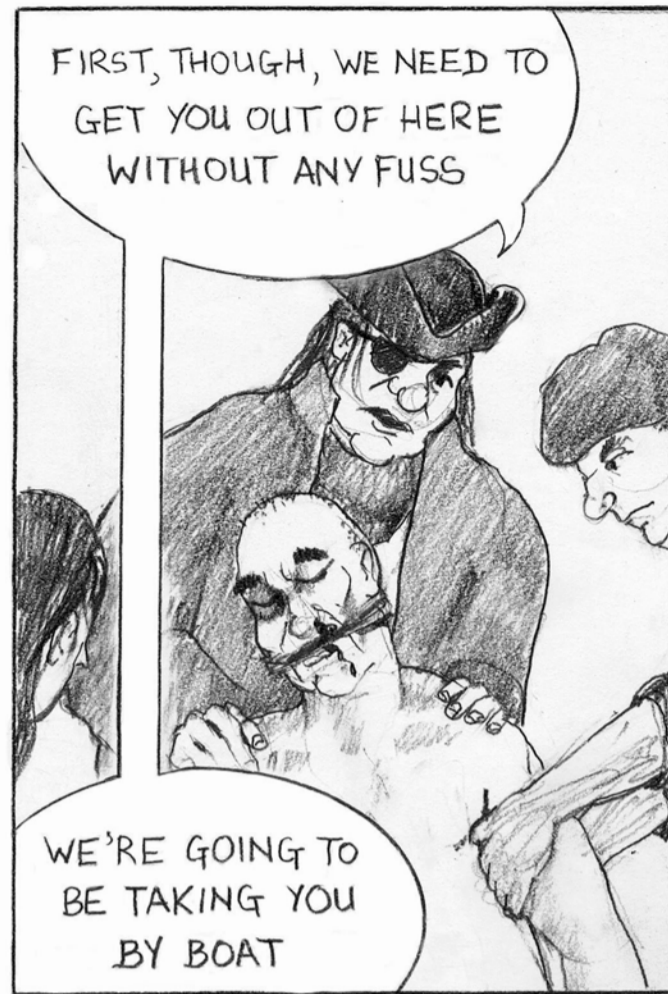
ONCE YOU'RE SETTLED,  
WE'LL TALK SOME MORE



DELIVER IT TO MONSIEUR PARIS-DUVERNEY

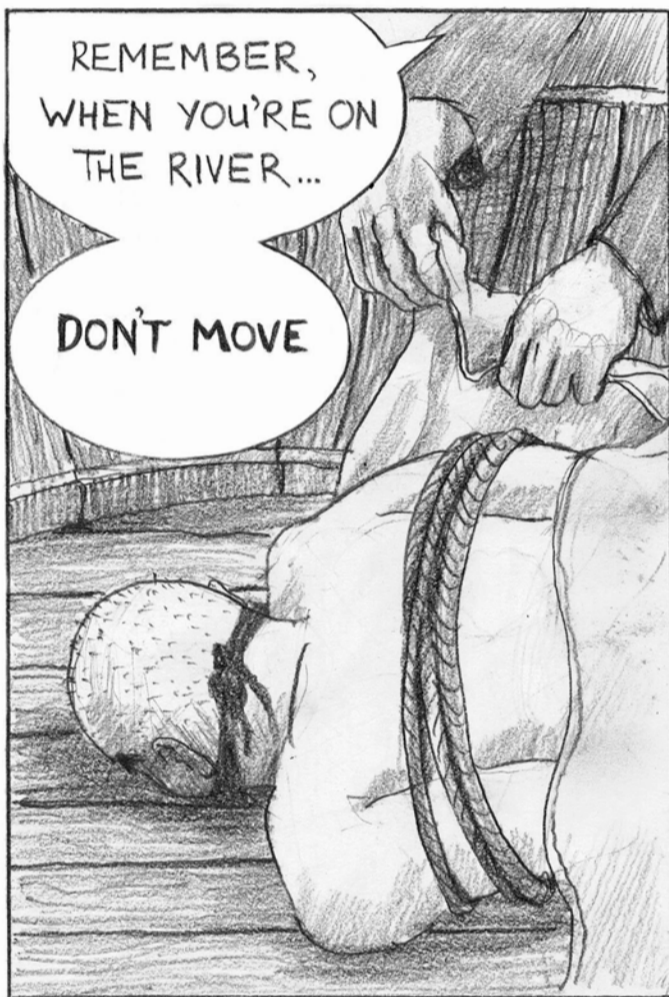


IT'LL SOON BE OVER AND YOU'LL BE BACK WITH YOUR FAMILY



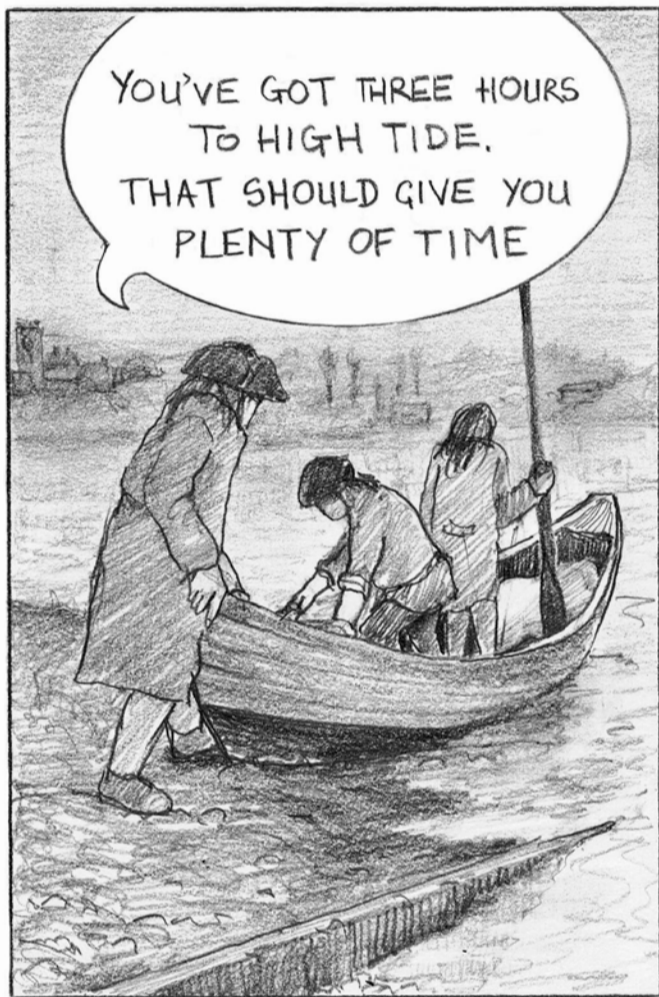
FIRST, THOUGH, WE NEED TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE WITHOUT ANY FUSS

WE'RE GOING TO BE TAKING YOU BY BOAT

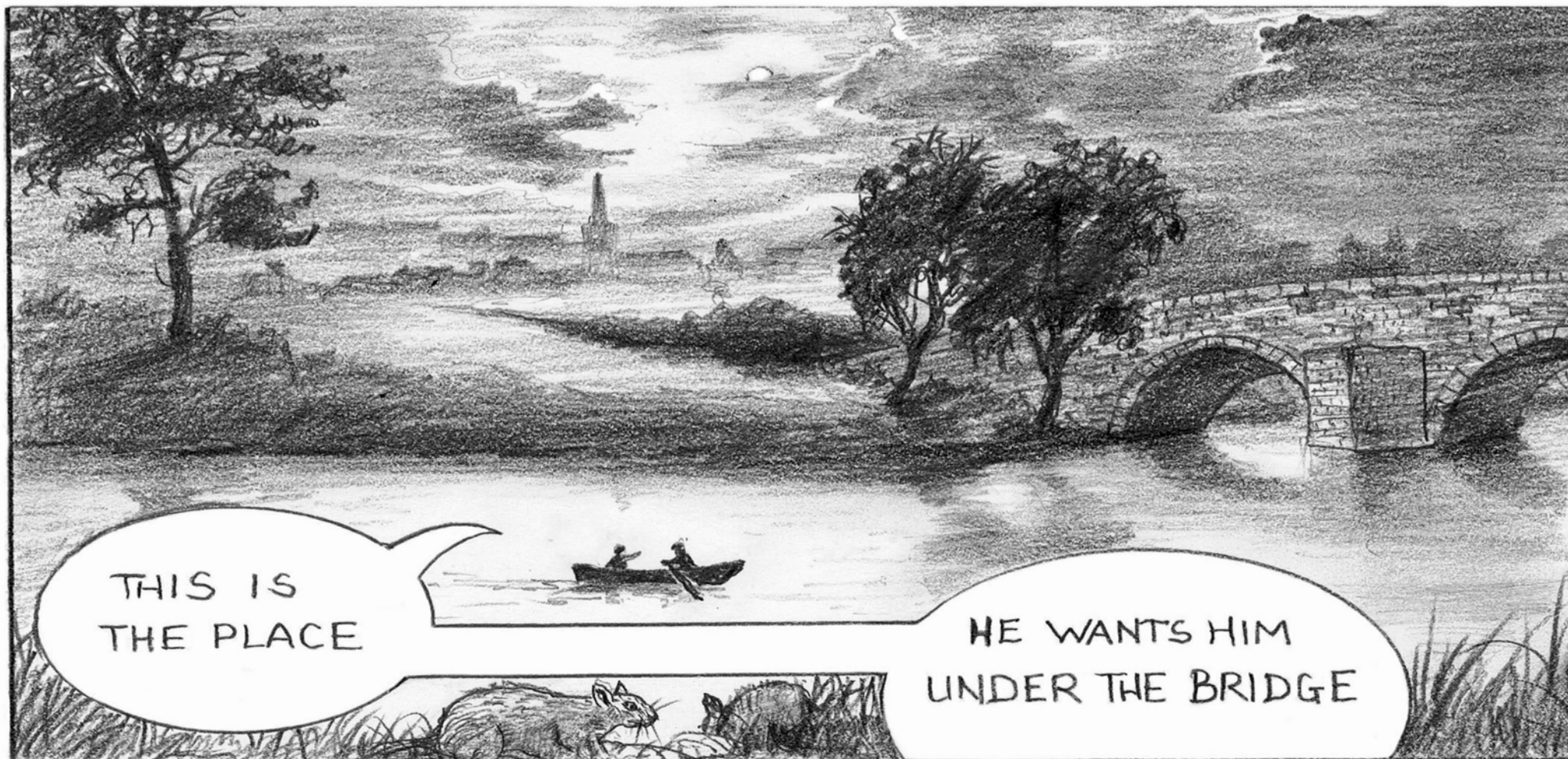


REMEMBER, WHEN YOU'RE ON THE RIVER...

DON'T MOVE



YOU'VE GOT THREE HOURS TO HIGH TIDE. THAT SHOULD GIVE YOU PLENTY OF TIME



THIS IS THE PLACE

HE WANTS HIM UNDER THE BRIDGE

