

THE DEEP & DARK BLUE



BY
NIKI
SMITH

1917

SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

828 "I" Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

01/20

THE DEEP & DARK BLUE



About This Book

The illustrations for this book were done in Clip Studio Paint and Adobe Photoshop. This book was edited by Rex Ogle and designed by Ching Chan. The production was supervised by Erika Schwartz, and the production editor was Annie McDonnell. The text was set in Claire Hand, and the display type is Yana B.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Copyright © 2020 by Niki Smith

Cover illustration copyright © 2020 by Niki Smith. Cover design by Ching Chan.
Cover copyright © 2020 by Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Hachette Book Group supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact permissions@hbgusa.com. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Little, Brown and Company
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104
Visit us at LBYR.com

First Edition: January 2020

Little, Brown and Company is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc.
The Little, Brown name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content)
that are not owned by the publisher.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019941622

ISBNs: 978-0-316-48598-2 (hardcover), 978-0-316-48601-9 (paperback),
978-0-316-48602-6 (ebook), 978-0-316-48599-9 (ebook), 978-0-316-48597-5 (ebook)

PRINTED IN CHINA

1010

Hardcover: 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Paperback: 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

THE DEEP & DARK BLUE



Niki Smith



Little, Brown and Company
New York Boston

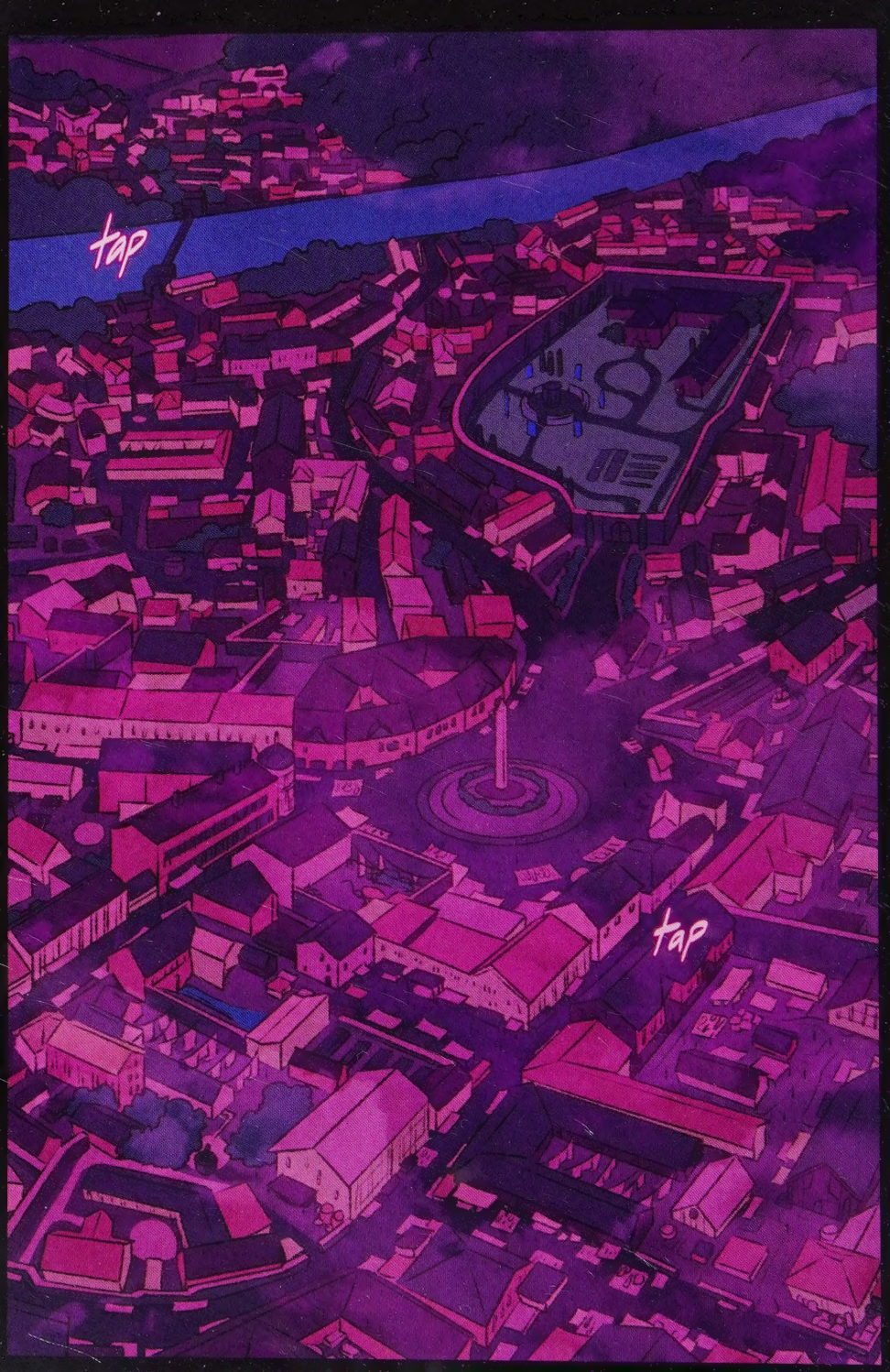
For my dad, who loved to dream.

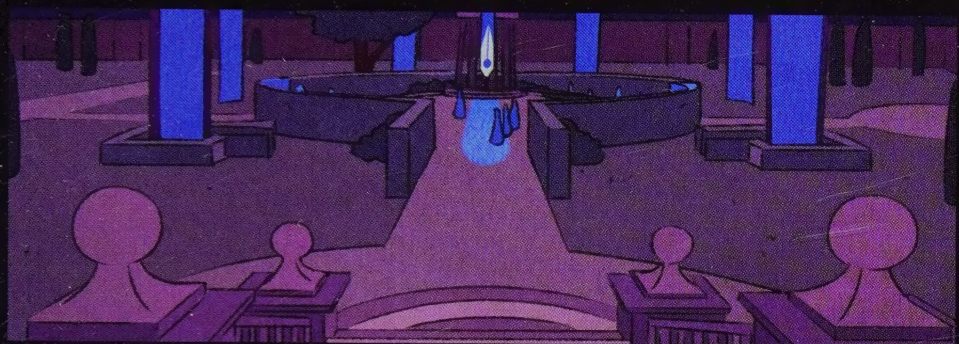
Thank you to Mey Rude, Jo Kreil, and
Sarah W. Searle, for all your help and guidance.

And thank you, Kiri, for everything.




CHAPTER I
COUP

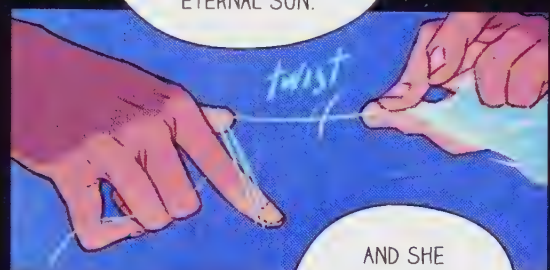










WHEN THE HOLY
MOTHER WOVE
THE WORLD ON
HER LOOM,



SHE WOVE
THE QUIET EARTH
BENEATH US, THE
STARS ABOVE, AND
THE LIGHT OF THE
ETERNAL SUN.



AND SHE
TAUGHT TO
US THAT MOST
SACRED GIFT...



...TO SPIN THE
THREADS THAT
BIND THE WORLD.



WE GATHER
HERE, SISTERS OF
THE COMMUNION OF
BLUE...

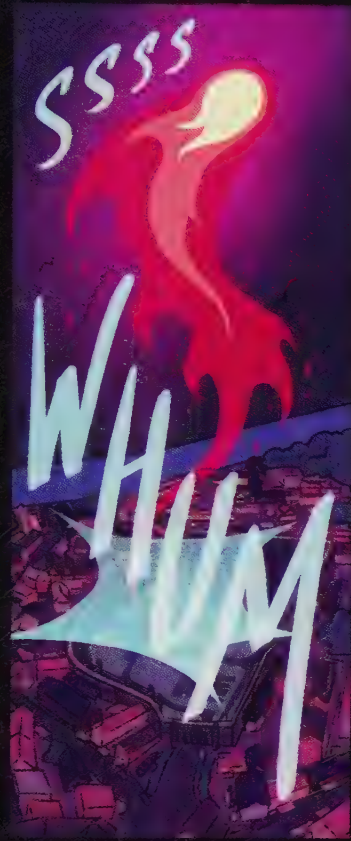


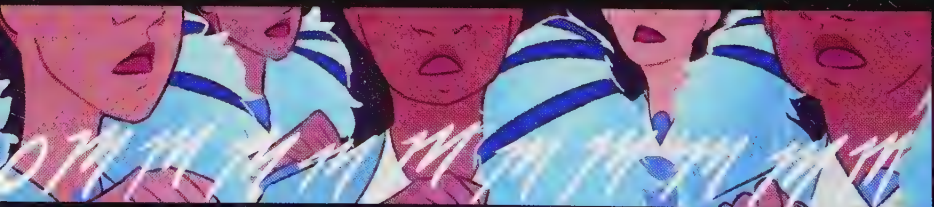
...TO GREET
THE SUN AS SHE
BEGINS HER HOLY
JOURNEY.

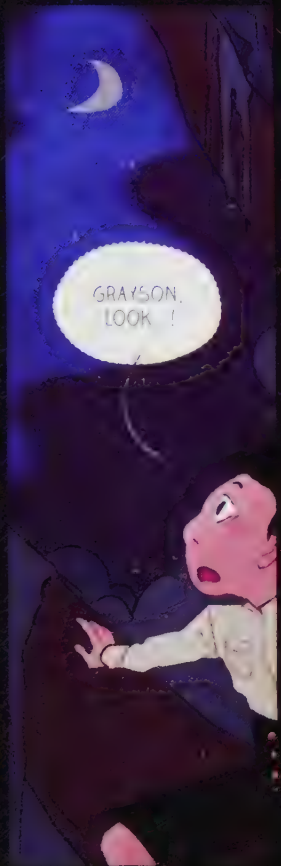


AND WE
SHALL GREET
THE SOLSTICE
DAWN...

...WITH FIRE.







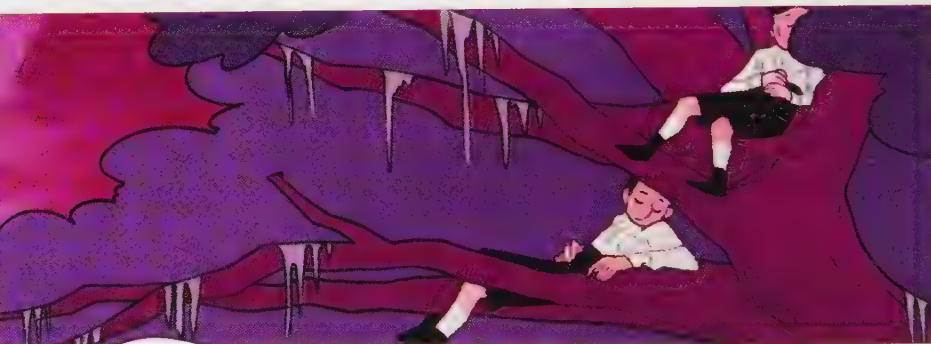
GRAYSON,
LOOK !



MAN, I WISH
I COULD DO
THAT !



YEAH







IT WAS
MY IDEA...

WE JUST
WANTED TO SEE
THE BLESSING.



PRETTY
INCREDIBLE
SHOW, HUH?



YEAH...



...THEY'RE
AMAZING.





YOUNG
REYDEN.



THE COMMUNION
OF BLUE THANKS
YOU FOR WELCOMING
US ON THIS MOST
SACRED OF DAYS.


OF COURSE.
IT'S ALWAYS AN
HONOR TO HOST
THE SOLSTICE
BLESSING.

BUT YOUR
THANKS SHOULD
GO TO LORD
HEYWOOD, NOT
TO ME.




HUMBLE
AS EVER.

IT MUST BE
COMMON KNOWLEDGE
BY NOW THAT YOUR
GRANDFATHER TRAINS
YOU AS HIS HEIR.



I THINK THE FORMAL
ANNOUNCEMENT IS
GOING TO BE PART OF
TONIGHT'S FEAST.



HE MIGHT BE
SURPRISED IF YOU
SPREAD THE WORD
BEFORE HE GETS
THE CHANCE!

*ha
haha*



THE BLESSING
REALLY WAS
BREATHTAKING —



I WAS
WORRIED THE
WEATHER WOULDN'T
HOLD, AFTER SO
MANY WEEKS OF
RAIN...

AH...YES.
WE DO WHAT
WE CAN.

BUT YOU
COULDN'T HAVE
ASKED FOR A
CLEARER SKY.



WITH THE
HOLY MOTHER'S
BLESSING, WE TUG
THE THREADS OF
THE WORLD...



WE
SPIN THE
WIND...

...AND SHE
ANSWERS.



THE WIND.



WITH THE BLESSING COMPLETE, I'M AFRAID WE MUST TAKE OUR LEAVE.

THE SOLSTICE IS OUR DAY OF INITIATION IN THE COMMUNION OF BLUE, AND THERE'S STILL MUCH TO PREPARE.

OH, NEW INITIATES!

OF COURSE—MY APOLOGIES FOR KEEPING YOU.



I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE NEW FACES AT THE WINTER'S BLESSING.

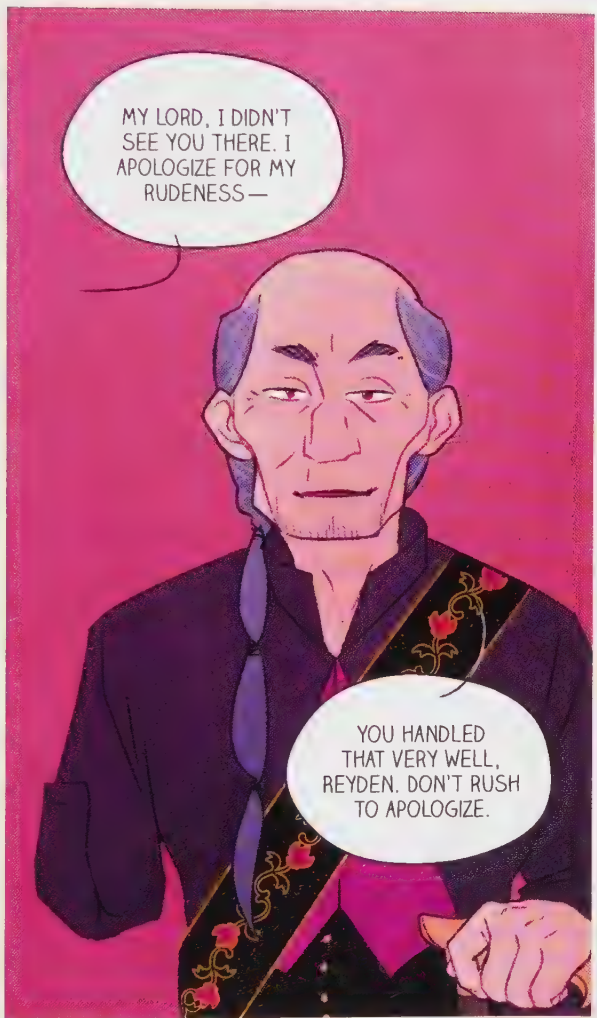
AS DO I!

TAKE CARE, YOUNG REYDEN.





GRANDFATHER!



MY LORD, I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE. I APOLOGIZE FOR MY RUDENESS—

YOU HANDLED THAT VERY WELL, REYDEN. DON'T RUSH TO APOLOGIZE.

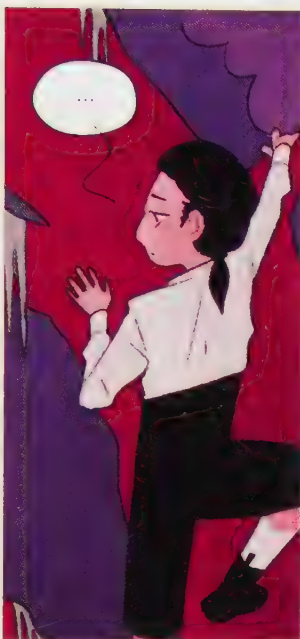


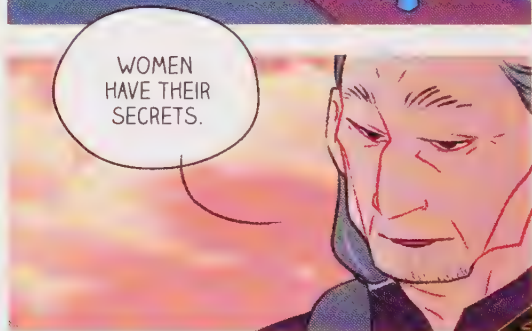
UH-OH...

AH—YES, SIR. THAT IS, I MEAN— THANK YOU, SIR.

GRAMPS..









NOW, THEN...



THIS OLD MAN NEEDS TO REST BEFORE THE FEAST.

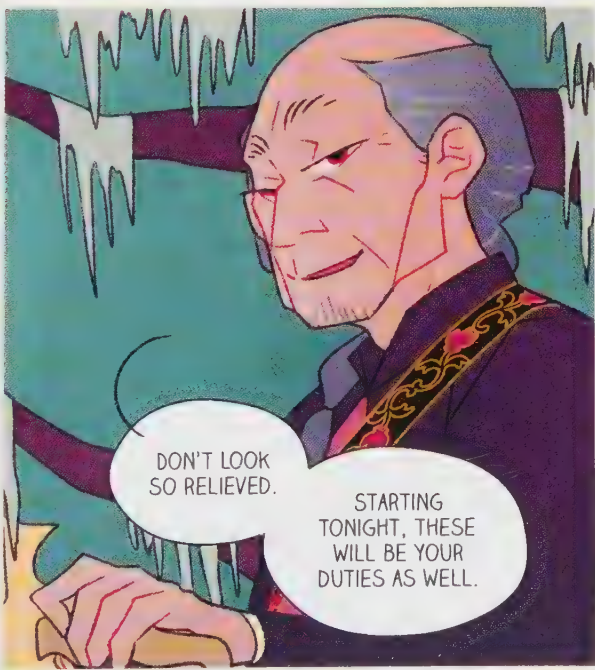
GO FIND THE REST OF YOUR COUSINS. KEEP THEM BUSY.

YES, MY LORD!



AND REYDEN...

SIR?

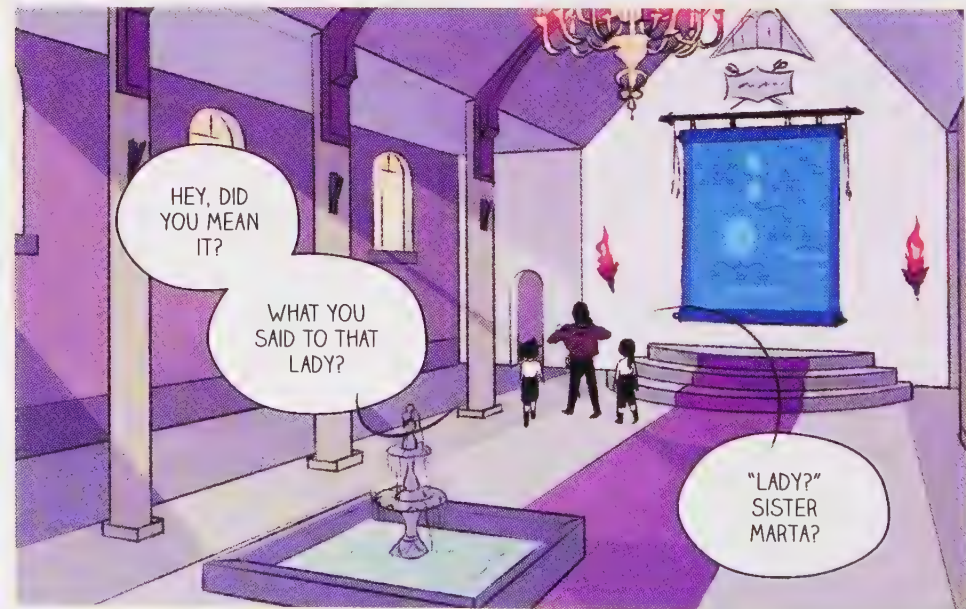


DON'T LOOK SO RELIEVED.

STARTING TONIGHT, THESE WILL BE YOUR DUTIES AS WELL.



OF COURSE, SIR.



HEY, DID YOU MEAN IT?

WHAT YOU SAID TO THAT LADY?

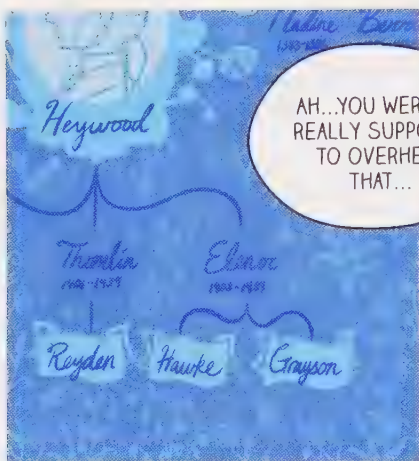
"LADY?"
SISTER MARTA?

HOUSE SUNDERLAY

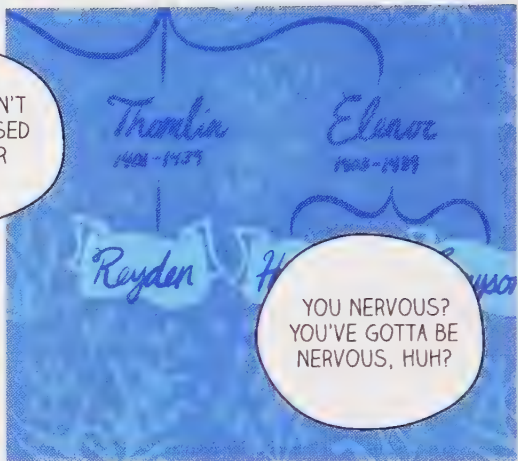


IS GRANDFATHER
REALLY INTRODUCING
YOU AT THE FEAST
TONIGHT?

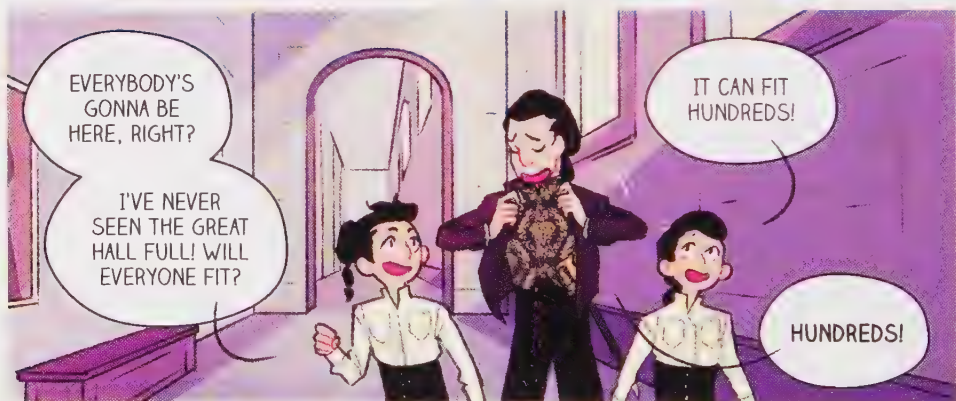
REYDEN,
HEIR TO HOUSE
SUNDERLAY!



AH...YOU WEREN'T REALLY SUPPOSED TO OVERHEAR THAT...



YOU NERVOUS? YOU'VE GOTTA BE NERVOUS, HUH?



EVERYBODY'S GONNA BE HERE, RIGHT?

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE GREAT HALL FULL! WILL EVERYONE FIT?

IT CAN FIT HUNDREDS!

HUNDREDS!



YOU ARE NERVOUS!

DO YOU WANT TO PRACTICE? WE SHOULD PRACTICE!



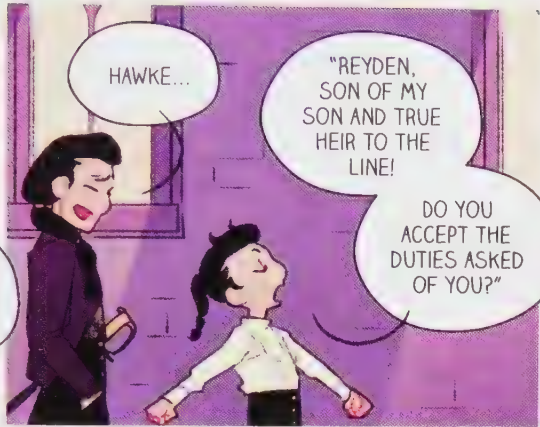
GRAYSON, YOU BE GRANDFATHER—

WHAAT, I DON'T WANT TO BE GRANDFATHER!

ha ha ha



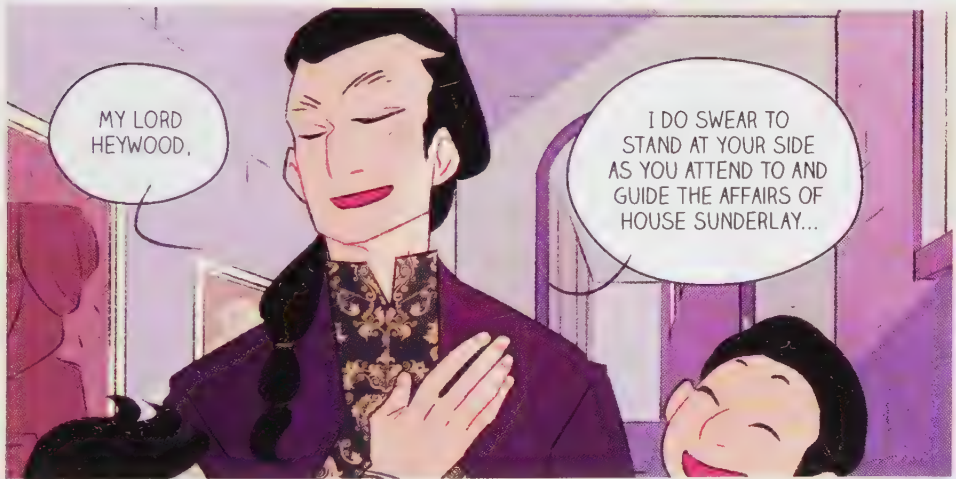
FINE, I WILL! I'D MAKE A GREAT LORD.



HAWKE...

"REYDEN, SON OF MY SON AND TRUE HEIR TO THE LINE!

DO YOU ACCEPT THE DUTIES ASKED OF YOU?"



MY LORD HEYWOOD.

I DO SWEAR TO STAND AT YOUR SIDE AS YOU ATTEND TO AND GUIDE THE AFFAIRS OF HOUSE SUNDERLAY...



...AND, IN TIME, TO TAKE YOUR PLACE...

...ON THE COUNCIL OF LORDS.

"MY LORD HEYWOOD...IT IS MY GREATEST HONOR TO—"



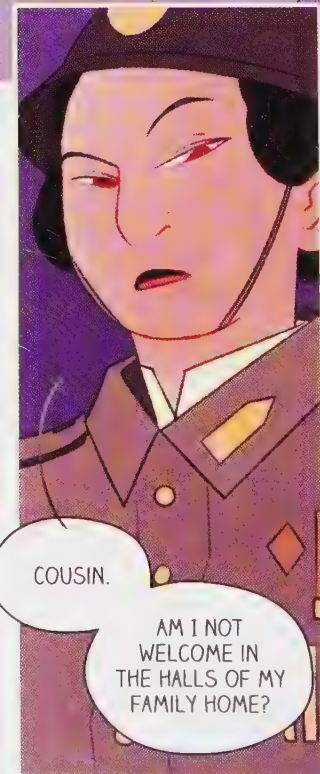
OOF!

OH...!



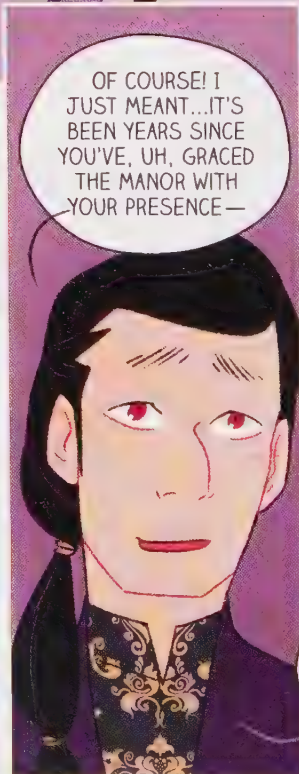
AH—

MIRELLE!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?



COUSIN.

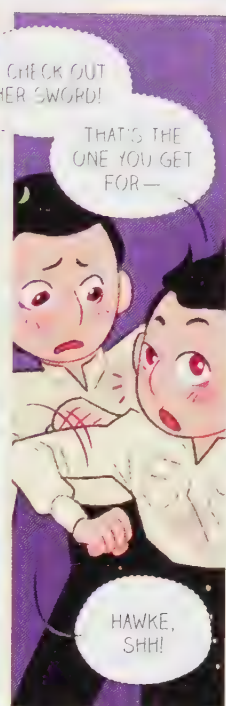
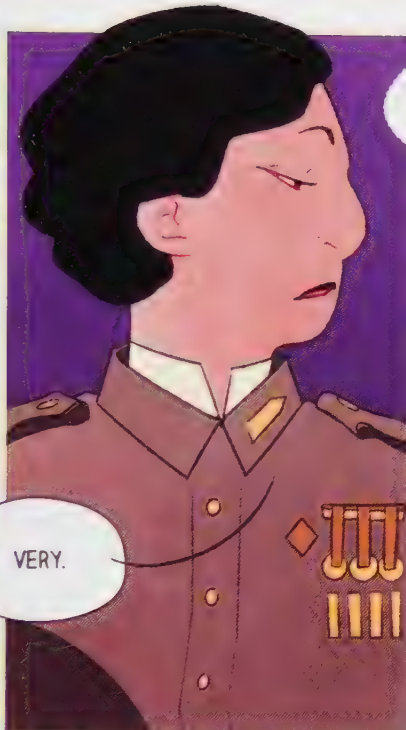
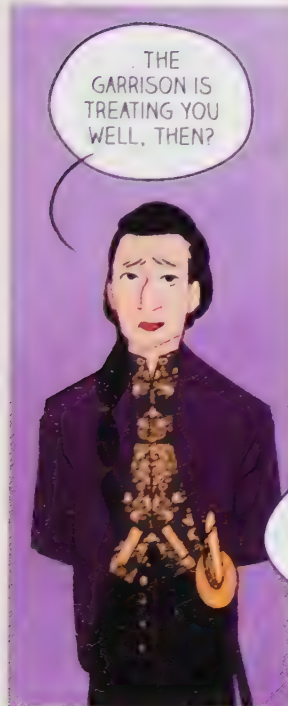
AM I NOT
WELCOME IN
THE HALLS OF MY
FAMILY HOME?



OF COURSE! I
JUST MEANT...IT'S
BEEN YEARS SINCE
YOU'VE, UH, GRACED
THE MANOR WITH
YOUR PRESENCE—



IT...DIDN'T SEEM
LIKE YOU HAD MUCH
INTEREST IN NOBLE
LIFE ANYMORE.

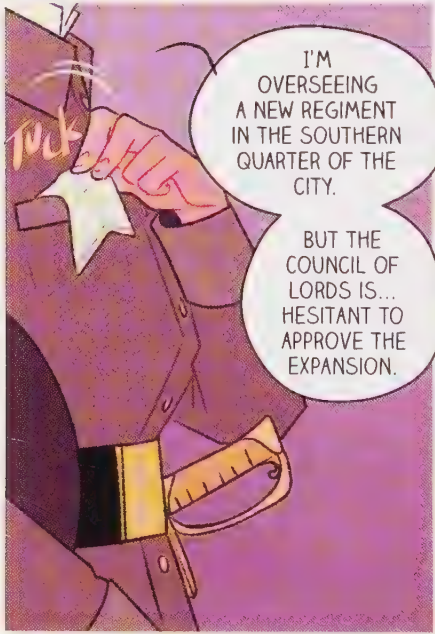




I'M AFRAID I MISSED IT. REYDEN'S CORRECT, I'M NOT HERE FOR FRIVOLOUS CEREMONY.

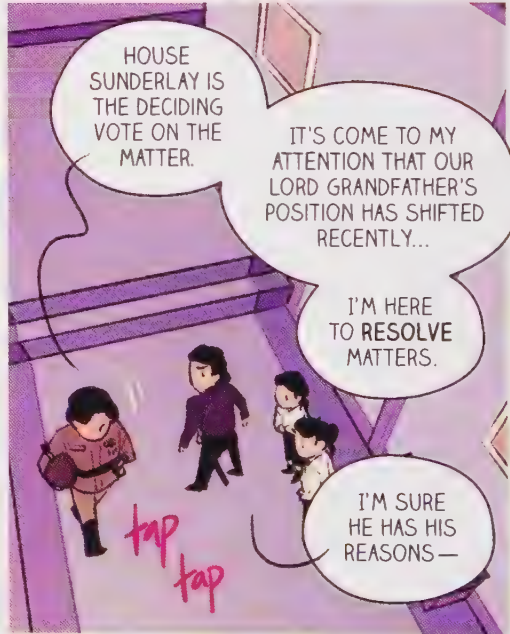


I'M HERE ON...HMM... BUSINESS.



I'M OVERSEEING A NEW REGIMENT IN THE SOUTHERN QUARTER OF THE CITY.

BUT THE COUNCIL OF LORDS IS... HESITANT TO APPROVE THE EXPANSION.



HOUSE SUNDERLAY IS THE DECIDING VOTE ON THE MATTER.

IT'S COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT OUR LORD GRANDFATHER'S POSITION HAS SHIFTED RECENTLY...

I'M HERE TO RESOLVE MATTERS.

I'M SURE HE HAS HIS REASONS—



I DON'T CARE WHAT HIS REASONS ARE! THE NAME OF HOUSE SUNDERLAY ONCE DEMANDED RESPECT, AND I INTEND TO SEE IT RETURNED TO ITS FORMER GLORY.

...




MIRELLE,
WHAT ARE
YOU—?




AH...

CAPTAIN...

HIS LORDSHIP
IS...SETTLED IN
THE GREAT HALL.




IS THAT SO?
LET'S NOT KEEP HIM
WAITING, THEN.



IF YOU'LL
EXCUSE ME.

CLACK



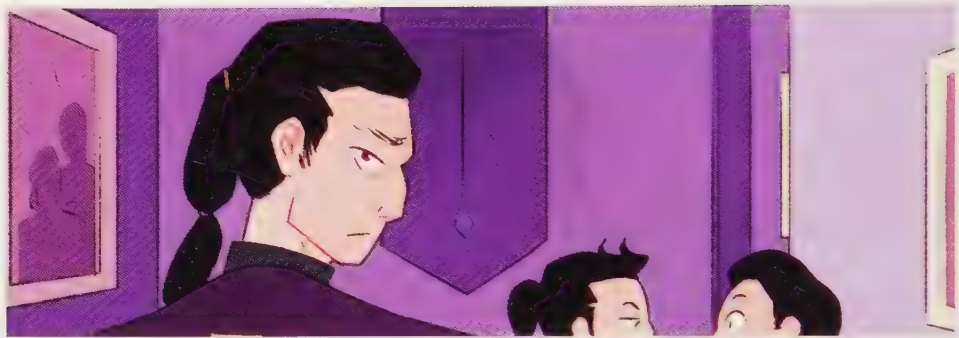
I'M SURE
WE'LL SEE EACH
OTHER AGAIN...

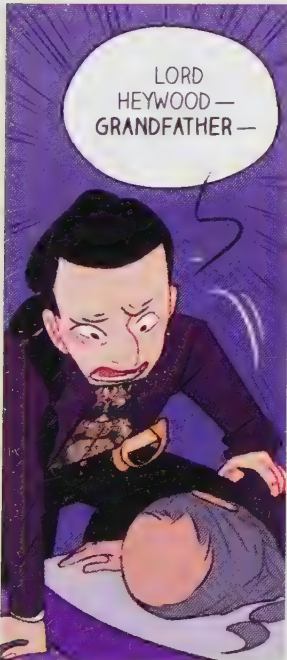
CLACK



...VERY
SOON.

CLACK CLACK





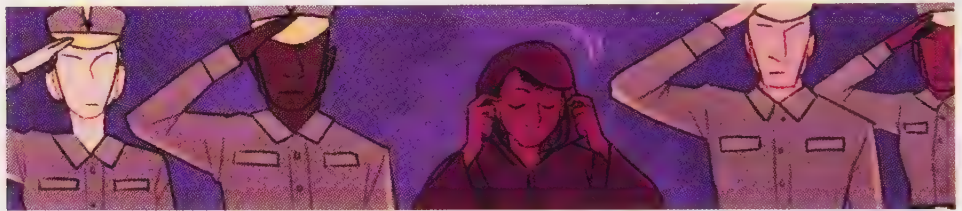


YOU'VE DONE IT?

WHAT...?!

CLINK

CLINK



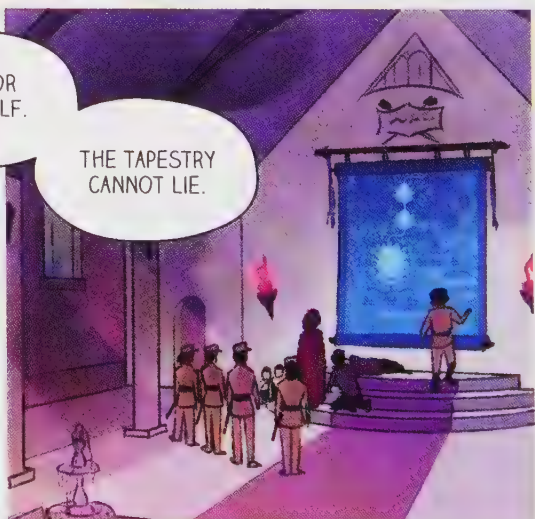
EXACTLY AS YOU ASKED.

THE MANOR BURNS...AND THE REST OF YOUR COUSINS WITH IT.

TAP

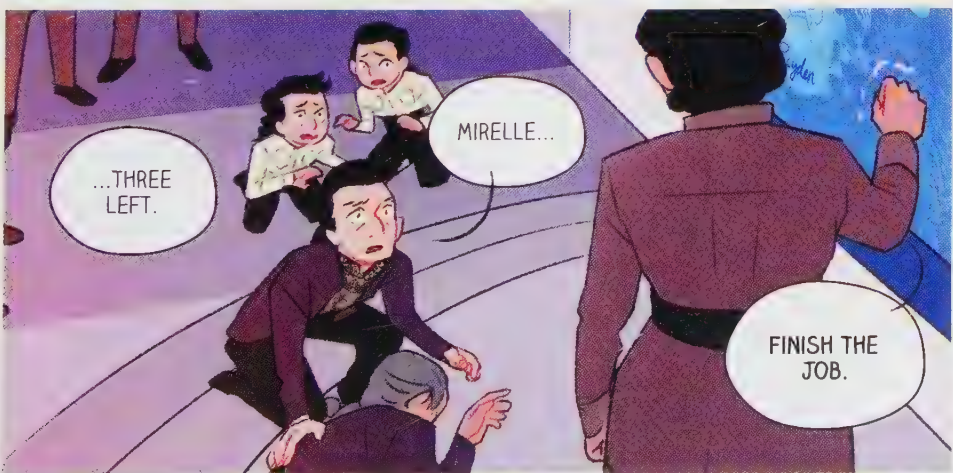
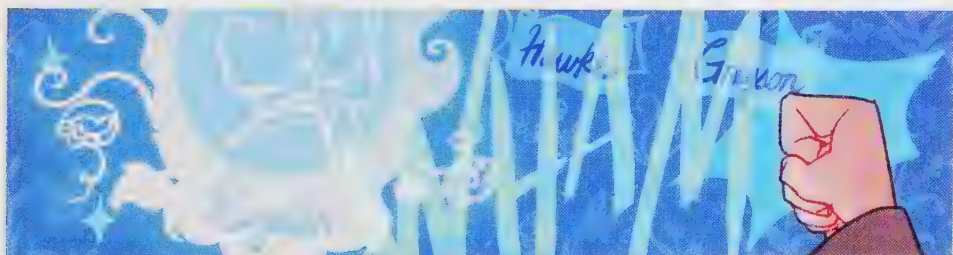


SEE FOR YOURSELF.



THE TAPESTRY CANNOT LIE.

glint





WHAT ARE YOU—

TRAITORS!

REYDEN—!

CLACK



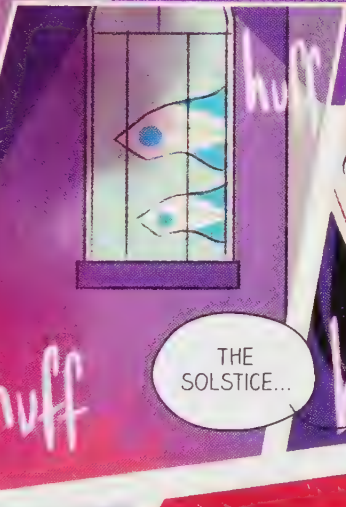
I'LL HOLD THEM OFF—

GET OUT OF HERE!

ON THE DAY OF THE SOLSTICE, WE GREET THE DAWN... WITH FIRE.

NNGH...

CLACK





HAWKE...

GRAYSON...

FOLLOW THE WINDS!

YOU KNOW THE WAY—

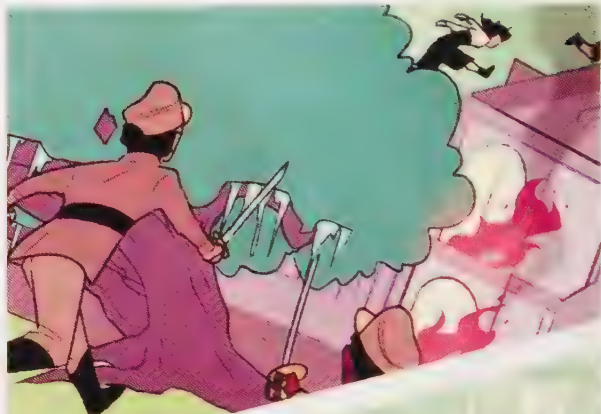


BUT—

BUT, REYDEN—!

GO!!



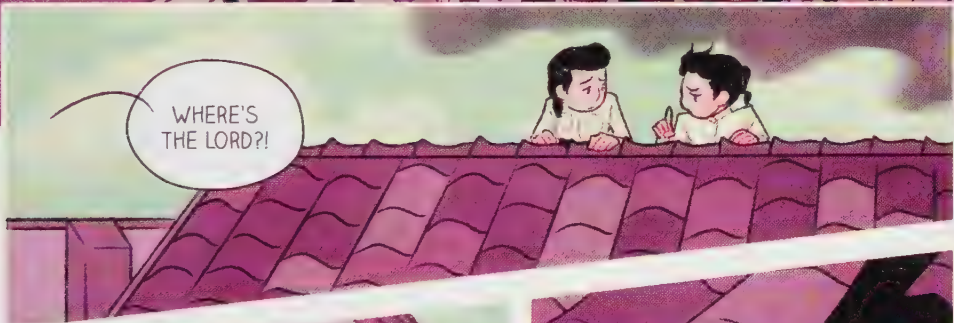




WHAT'S GOING ON?!

HOUSE SUNDERLAY IS BURNING!

WHERE'S LORD HEYWOOD?



WHERE'S THE LORD?!



AGH—!

CLATTER



HAWKE!

HAWKE

CLATTER
CRASH



THEY'RE
HERE!

GARRISON, TO
THE GATES!



HOLD.



THE CROWD
GATHERED
FASTER THAN
PLANNED...



FIND THE BOYS,
AND TAKE CARE OF
THEM... QUIETLY. IS
THAT UNDERSTOOD?



CAPTAIN.











HE WANTS US TO HIDE



AND I



I THINK I KNOW WHERE.



IT'S...IT'S THE HOLY DAY OF THE MOTHER, RIGHT?

THE COMMUNION OF BLUE ARE GOING TO ALL THE NOBLE HOUSES TO GIVE BLESSINGS FOR THE SOLSTICE —



AND...?



AND —




AND TODAY'S THE DAY ALL THE NEW INITIATES JOIN THE COMMUNION!

GRAYSON, YOU'RE A GENIUS!



THEY'LL NEVER THINK TO LOOK FOR US AS GIRLS—



DO YOU...DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS COULD WORK?

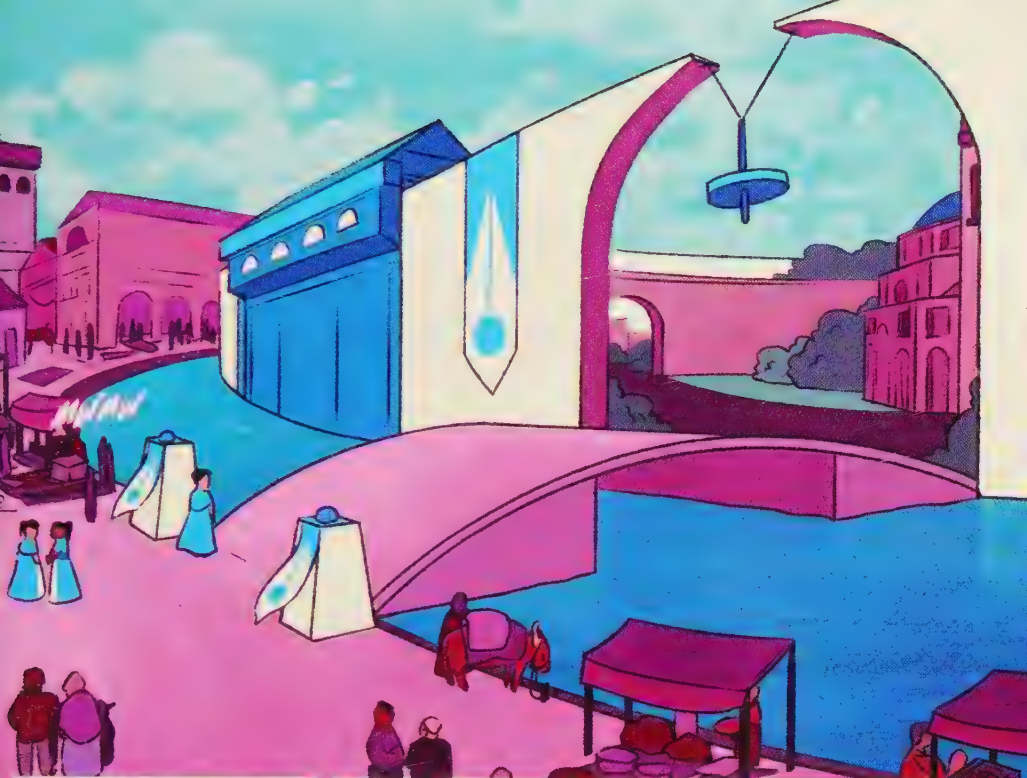


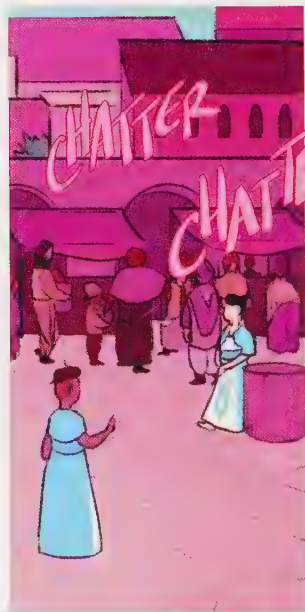
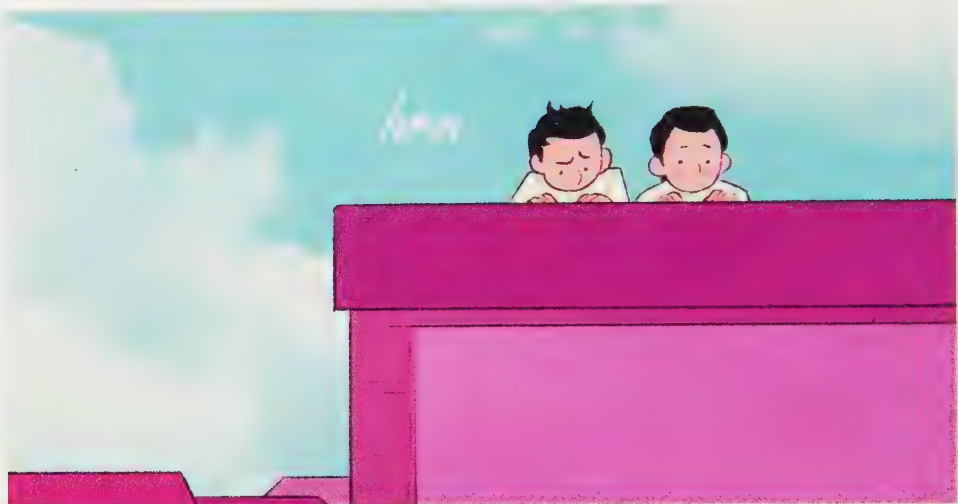
I DON'T KNOW.

BUT WE HAVE TO TRY.



COME ON.





THERE THEY ARE...



IS THIS REALLY GONNA WORK?



I HAVE NO
IDEA HOW TO
BE A GIRL!

DO THEY WEAR
MAKEUP? I DUNNO
HOW TO PUT ON
MAKEUP!



WHAT IF
THEY MAKE
US, LIKE, BATHE
TOGETHER?

WE'LL GET
FOUND OUT
IN NO TIME! I'LL
NEVER LIVE IT
DOWN!



IF WE GET
FOUND OUT, WE'LL
HAVE MUCH BIGGER
PROBLEMS TO
WORRY ABOUT.





THEY'RE CALLING ALL THE NEW INITIATES—

WE'VE GOTTA GET DOWN THERE.

NNGH...



THERE—

POUNING

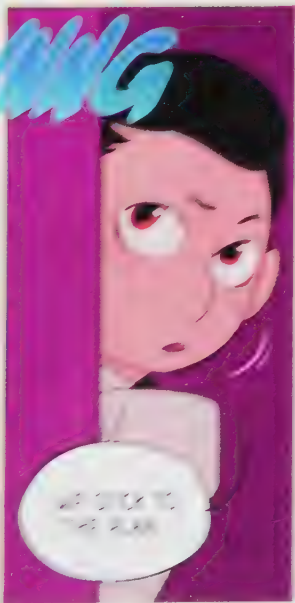
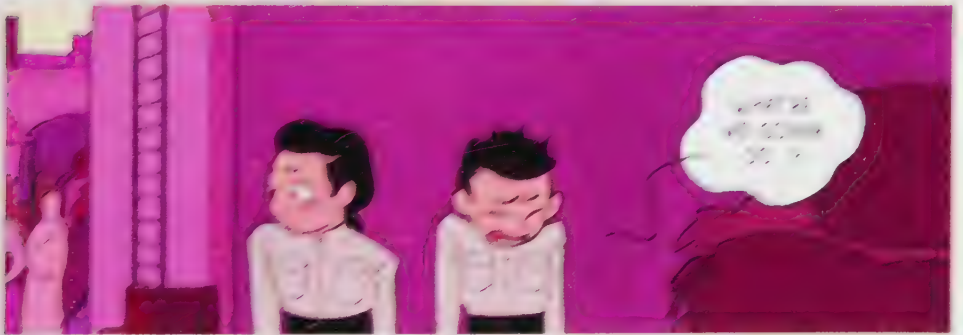


THAT'S OUR WAY IN.



WHAT?! I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO PUT ONE OF THOSE ON!












DOWNING



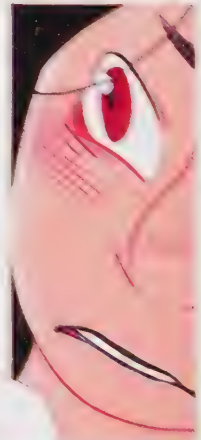
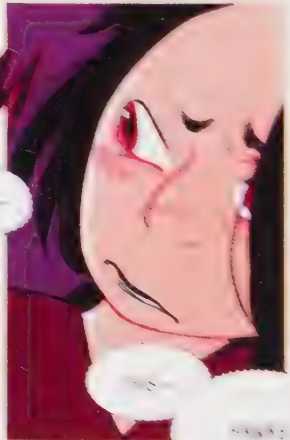


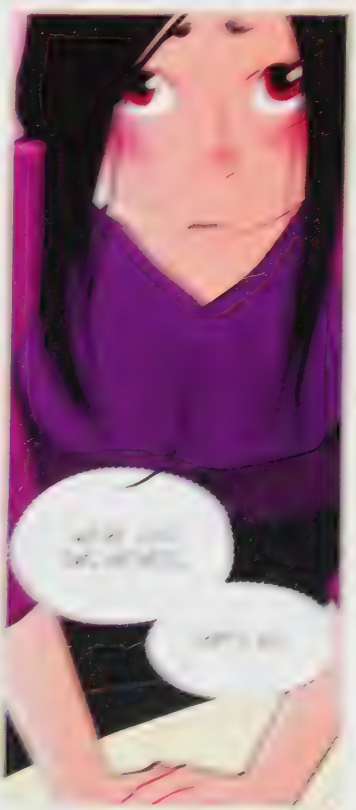
SISTERS OF
THE COMMUNION,
WE GATHER.



IN THE NAME
OF THE MOTHER,
THE WEAVER, WHO
GUIDES US.

IN SERVICE TO
HER, WE GATHER
AND WELCOME
THE CANDIDATES
BEFORE US.





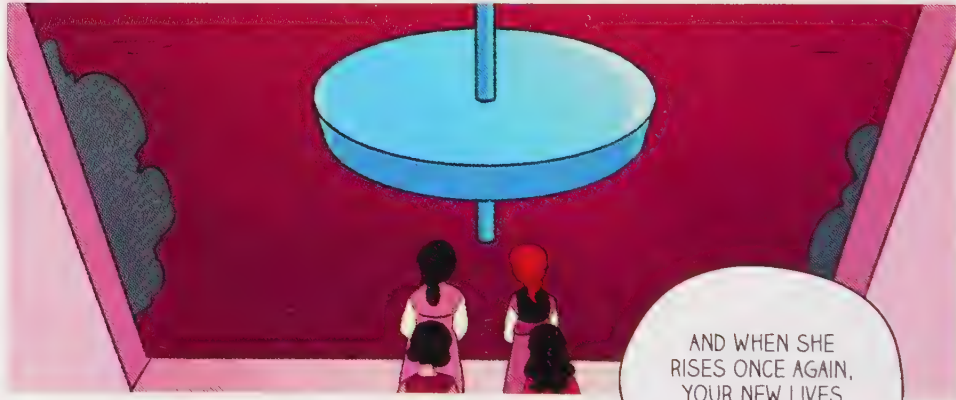




GIRLS.

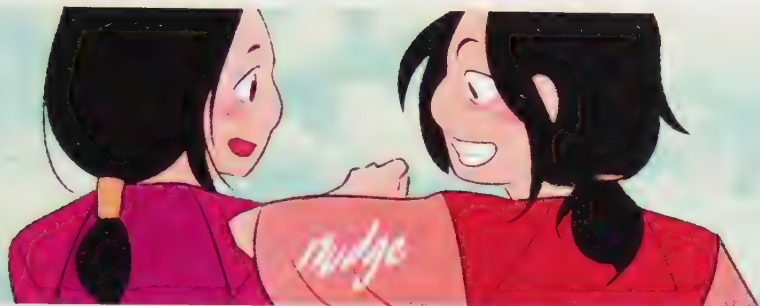


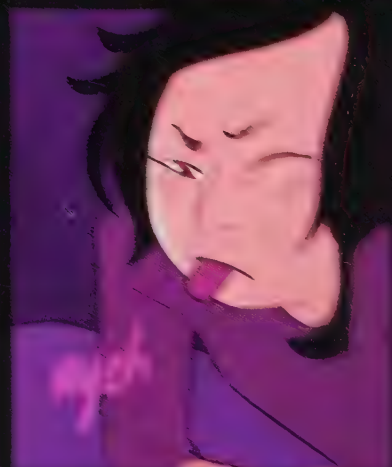
WITH THE
SETTING OF THE
SOLSTICE SUN, WE
WELCOME YOU,
INITIATES...



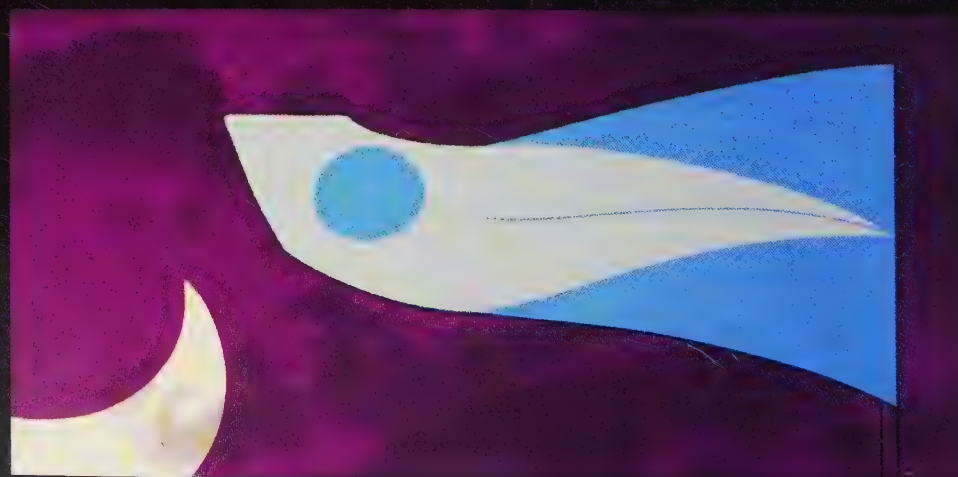
AND WHEN SHE
RISES ONCE AGAIN,
YOUR NEW LIVES
WILL BEGIN...











CHAPTER II
THE
COMMUNION
OF
BLUE







BLUE
THE RIVER THAT
CARRIES US



THE SKY ABOVE
THE WATER THAT
CLEANSES US



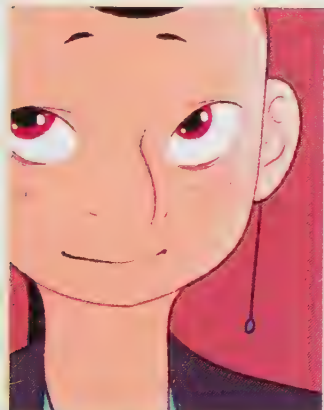
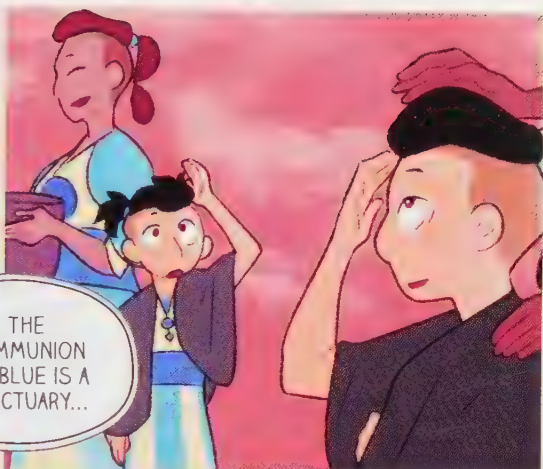
Splash



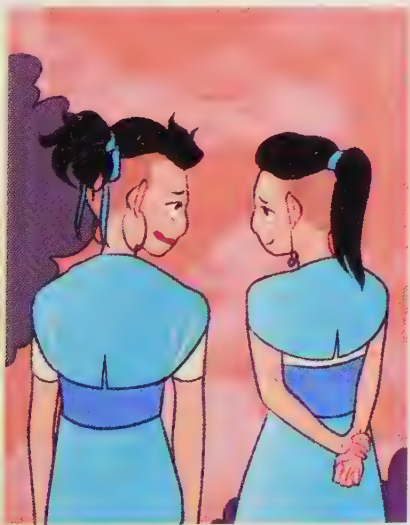
THE
ROBES WE
WEAR



THE
COMMUNION
OF BLUE IS A
SANCTUARY...



AND IT IS A
SISTERHOOD.





OH!

WELL
NOW...



IT'S BEEN A VERY
LONG TIME SINCE
WE HAD TWINS IN
THE COMMUNION
OF BLUE.



H-HEY—

...WASN'T
SHE AT THE—



AHI UM—
S-SISTER
MARTA?

UM-IT'S—
IT'S VERY NICE
TO MEET YOU!



IT'S A
PLEASURE
TO MEET YOU
BOTH.

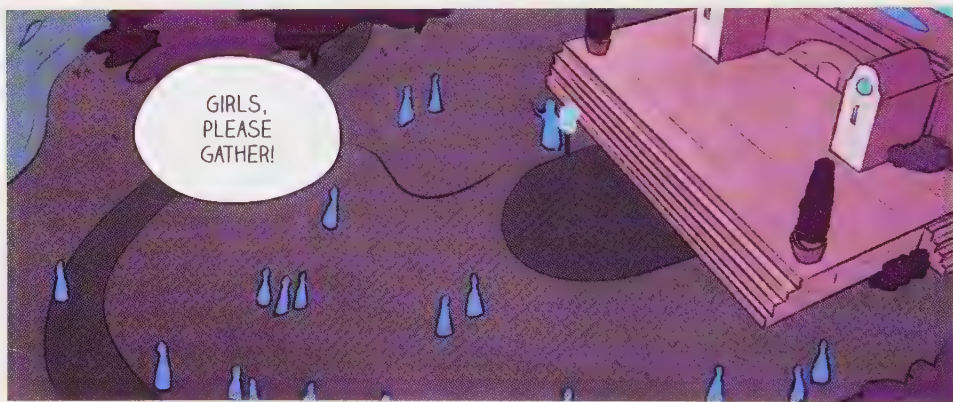




WELCOME,
GIRLS...



THE ROBES OF
THE ORDER FIT
YOU WELL.




GIRLS,
PLEASE
GATHER!



THE SOLSTICE
SUN HAS SET,
AND WE GREET A
NEW SEASON OF
INITIATES...

IT IS TIME TO
BEGIN YOUR
SORTING.



OVER THE
NEXT WEEK, YOU
WILL GET TO KNOW
EACH CHAPTER OF
THE COMMUNION
OF BLUE—

AND THEY
WILL GET TO
KNOW YOU.




THE
BACKBONE
OF THE
SISTERHOOD...

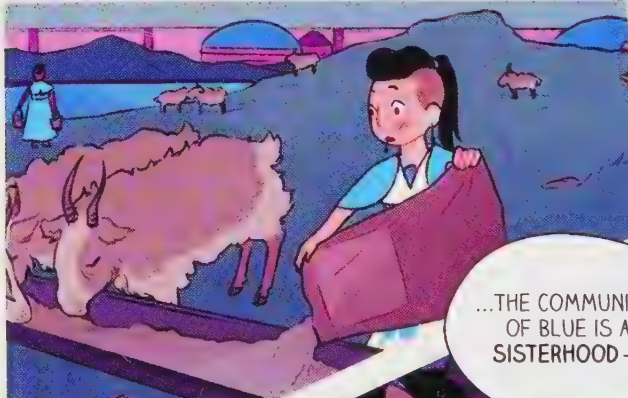
THE
SCHOLARS,
THE SHEPHERDS,
AND OUR LOYAL
GUARDIANS.

AND THOSE WHO
WORK THE SACRED
BLUE THAT IS OUR
NAMESAKE...

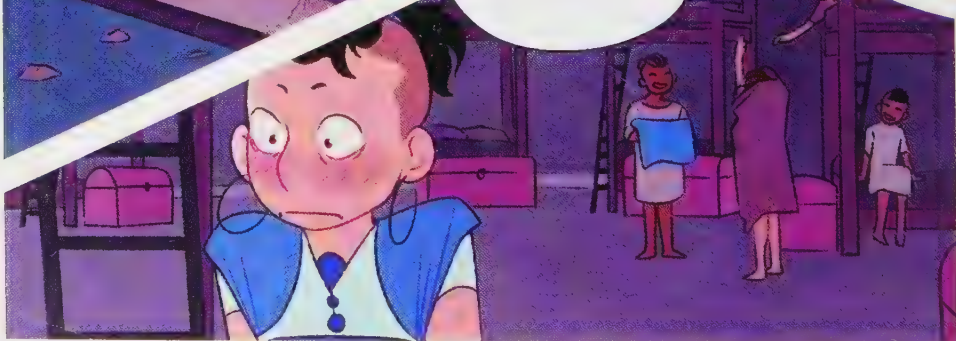
THE SPINNERS,
THE WEAVERS,
THE DYERS,
THE HEALERS.

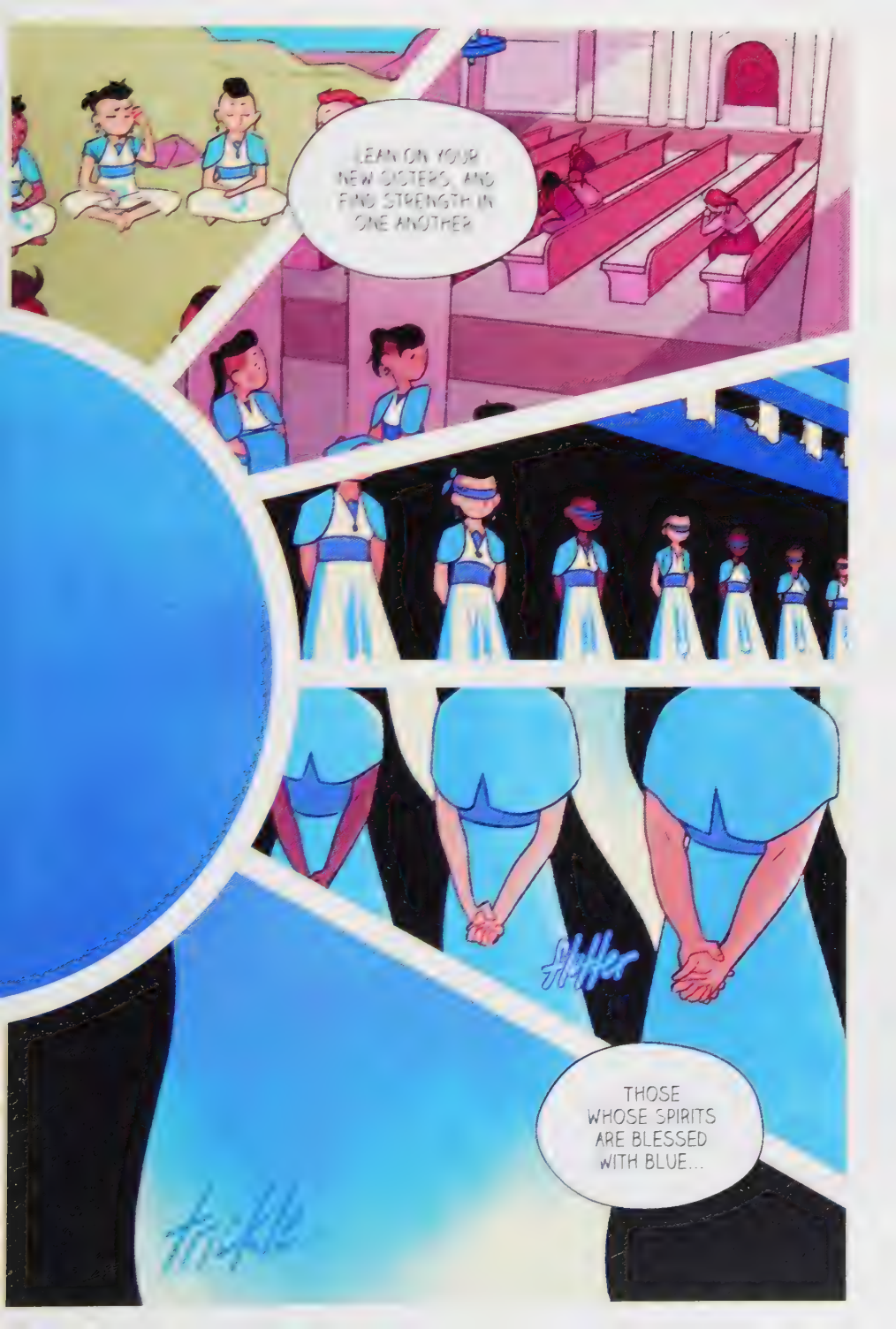


AS YOU ARE
TESTED IN THE
COMING DAYS,
REMEMBER...



...THE COMMUNION
OF BLUE IS A
SISTERHOOD —



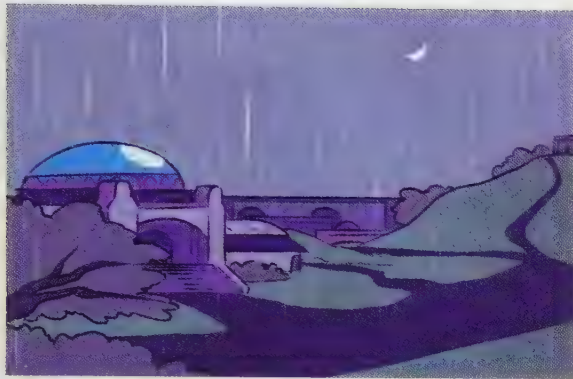


LEAN ON YOUR
NEW SISTERS, AND
FIND STRENGTH IN
ONE ANOTHER.

THOSE
WHOSE SPIRITS
ARE BLESSED
WITH BLUE...

..WILL BE
REVEALED.

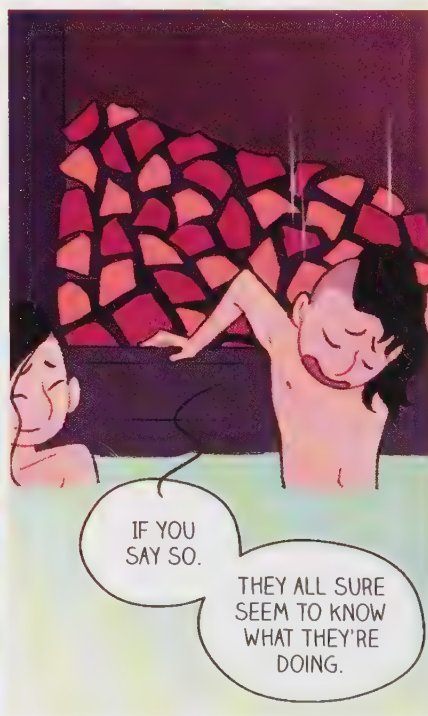




I THINK SO...THERE'S ONLY A FEW LIGHTS ON.

I DON'T THINK ANYONE ELSE IS GONNA USE THE BATHS TONIGHT.





YEAH...

A BUNCH OF GIRLS HERE HAVE SPUN THREAD SINCE THEY WERE LITTLE, AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING.

I WISH MOM WERE HERE.

MOM...

IF MOM AND DAD WERE ALIVE, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED.

MIRELLE WOULDN'T HAVE STOOD A CHANCE!

SPLASH

THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY QUESTION ABOUT WHO THE NEXT LORD IS.

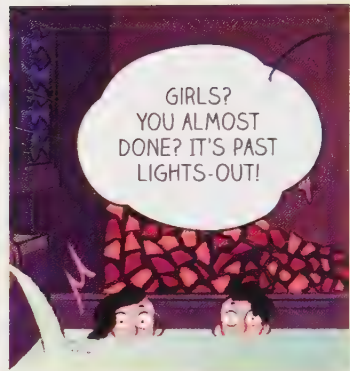
HAWKE...

SORRY... IT'S BEEN A LONG WEEK.

Sigh



I KNOW REYDEN SAID TO HIDE HERE... I JUST —



GIRLS? YOU ALMOST DONE? IT'S PAST LIGHTS-OUT!



JUST A MINUTE!

WE'LL — WE'LL BE RIGHT OUT!



ALL RIGHT! DON'T BE LONG, NOW!

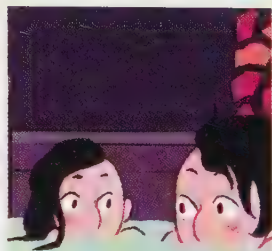
YOU'VE GOT AN IMPORTANT DAY AHEAD OF YOU.

OKAAAAY!



CLACK

CLACK



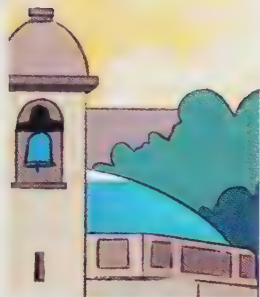
...



CLACK

CLACK





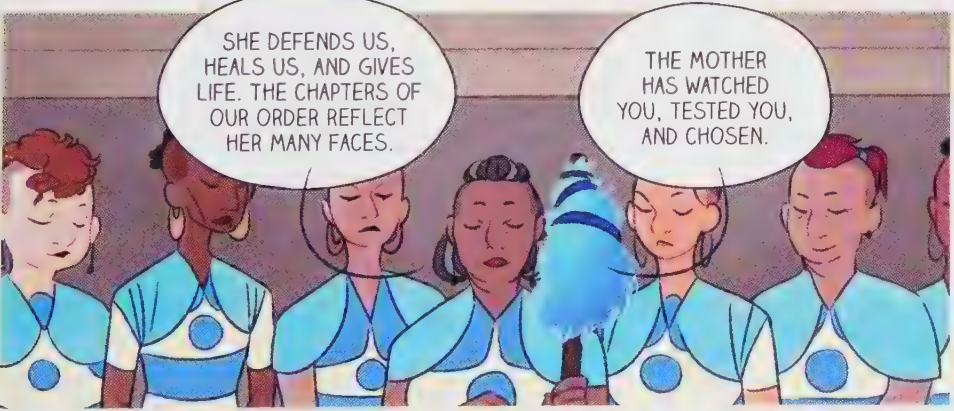
TRAINEES
MOTTE, TILLY,
AND HANNA.

STEP
FORWARD.



WE THANK THE
HOLY MOTHER FOR
HER BLESSING...

...AND WE PRAISE
HER FOR HER
WEAVING.



SHE DEFENDS US,
HEALS US, AND GIVES
LIFE. THE CHAPTERS OF
OUR ORDER REFLECT
HER MANY FACES.

THE MOTHER
HAS WATCHED
YOU, TESTED YOU,
AND CHOSEN.



AND WE WELCOME YOU...

...TO THE RANKS OF THE GUARDIANS.



...A GUARDIAN?
LIKE— WE GET TO FIGHT?



THE COMMUNION ALWAYS HAS NEED OF SISTERS TO PROTECT US.
DO YOU ACCEPT THE TITLE OFFERED TO YOU?



YEAH!
I MEAN, YES!
YEAH! THANK YOU!



WE'VE TRAINED WITH SWORDS FOR YEARS, I—



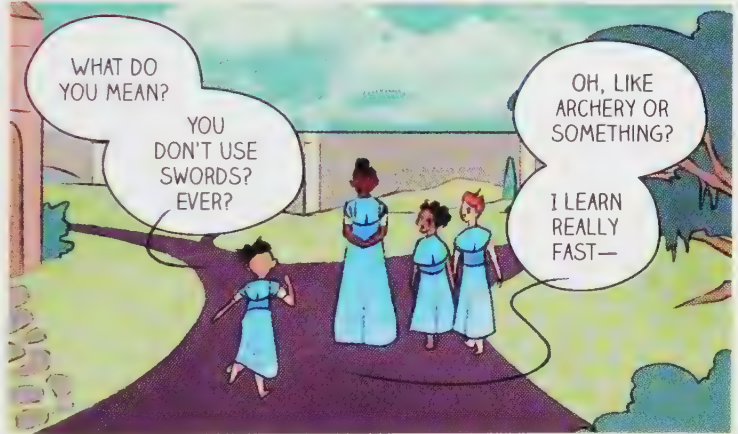
erik:

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.

COME, GIRLS! FOLLOW ME.



...HUH?



WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU DON'T USE SWORDS? EVER?

OH, LIKE ARCHERY OR SOMETHING?

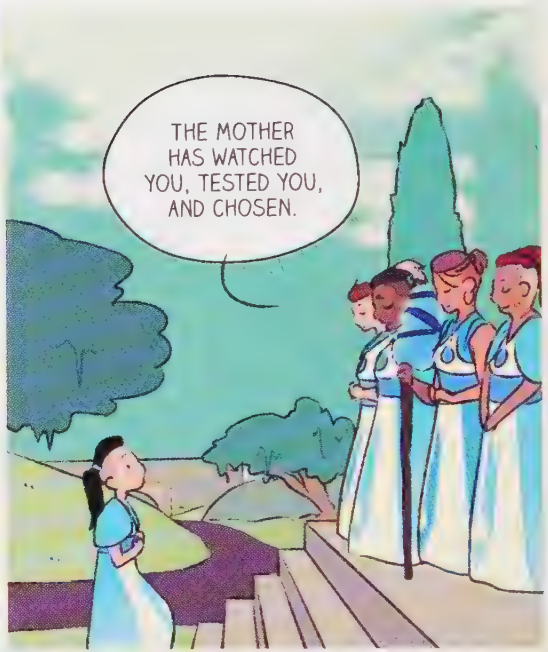
I LEARN REALLY FAST—



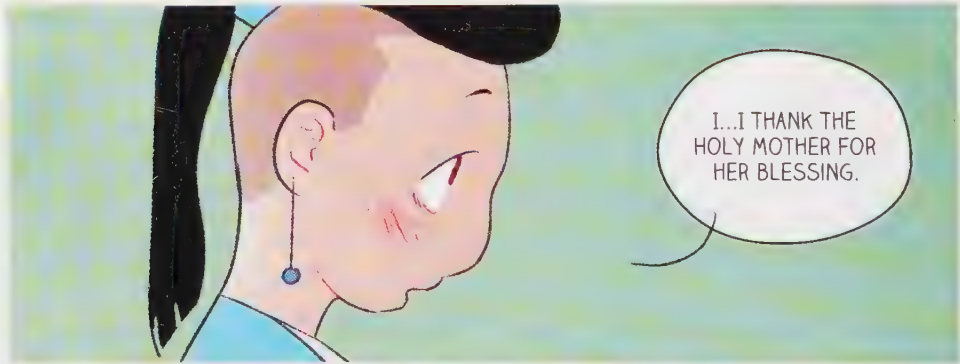
TRAINEE GRAYCE?



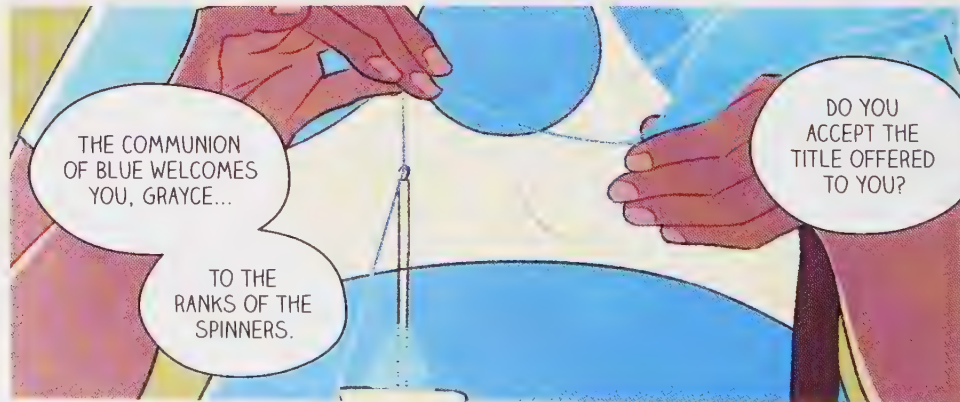
STEP FORWARD.



THE MOTHER HAS WATCHED YOU, TESTED YOU, AND CHOSEN.



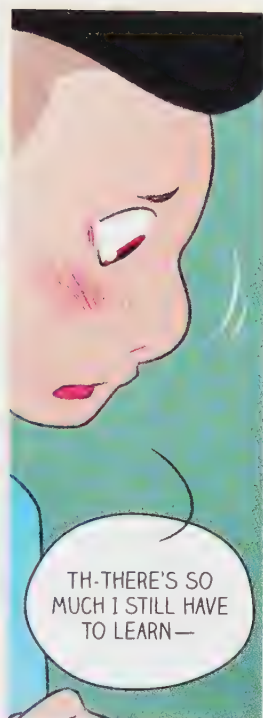
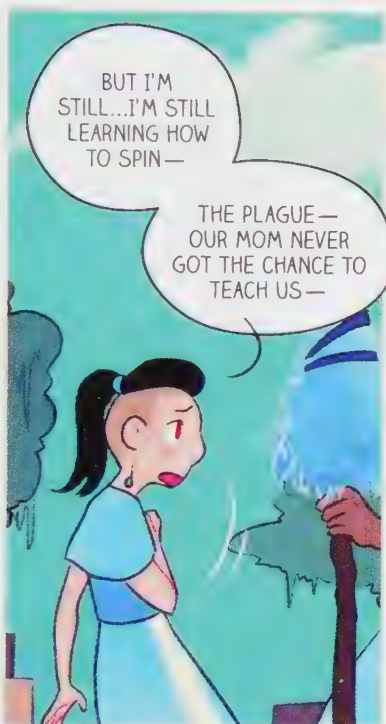
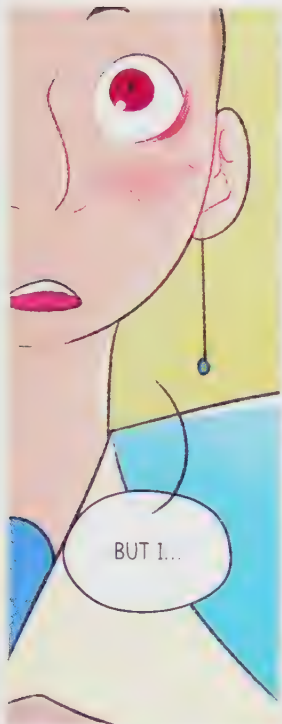
I...I THANK THE HOLY MOTHER FOR HER BLESSING.




THE COMMUNION OF BLUE WELCOMES YOU, GRAYCE...

TO THE RANKS OF THE SPINNERS.

DO YOU ACCEPT THE TITLE OFFERED TO YOU?





STEADY
HANDS AND A
STEADY MIND.

A SPINNER MUST
SEE THROUGH THE
KNOTS THAT TANGLE
AROUND US.

WHEN YOU
SPIN THE
WIND...

OR THE
WAVES UPON
THE SHORES...


YOUR FINGERS
MUST NOT
FALTER.

EVERY TUG OF A
THREAD CREATES
ECHOES.



AND WHAT WAS
WOVEN TIGHT...

...MAY FRAY
WITH TIME.



YOUR
PATH MAY
DIVERGE FROM
THAT OF YOUR
TWIN.

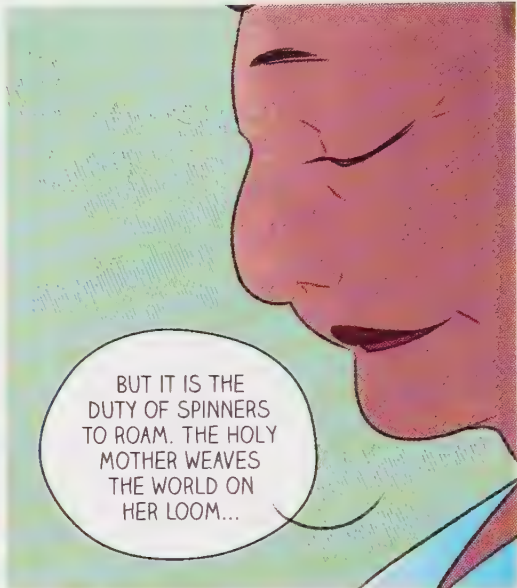
ARE YOU
PREPARED
FOR THAT?





DO NOT BE AFRAID. YOU WILL NOT BE SEPARATED SO SOON.

ALL NEW INITIATES SHARE THEIR FIRST YEARS IN THE DORMS.



BUT IT IS THE DUTY OF SPINNERS TO ROAM. THE HOLY MOTHER WEAVES THE WORLD ON HER LOOM...



...AND WE ARE HER MORTAL HANDS.

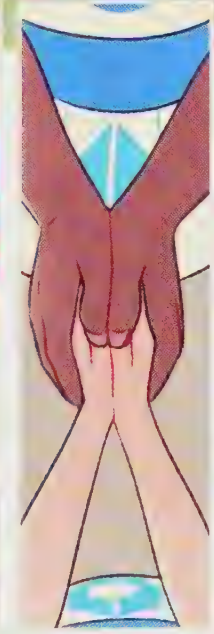


THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN YOU WILL LEAVE THE TEMPLE TO FIND THE THREADS THAT BIND ALL THINGS.



YOU CANNOT SPIN THE WIND WITH DOUBT IN YOUR HEART.

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT? TO SPIN BLUE AS A SISTER OF THE COMMUNION?



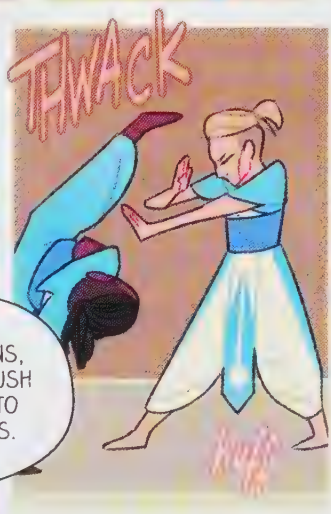
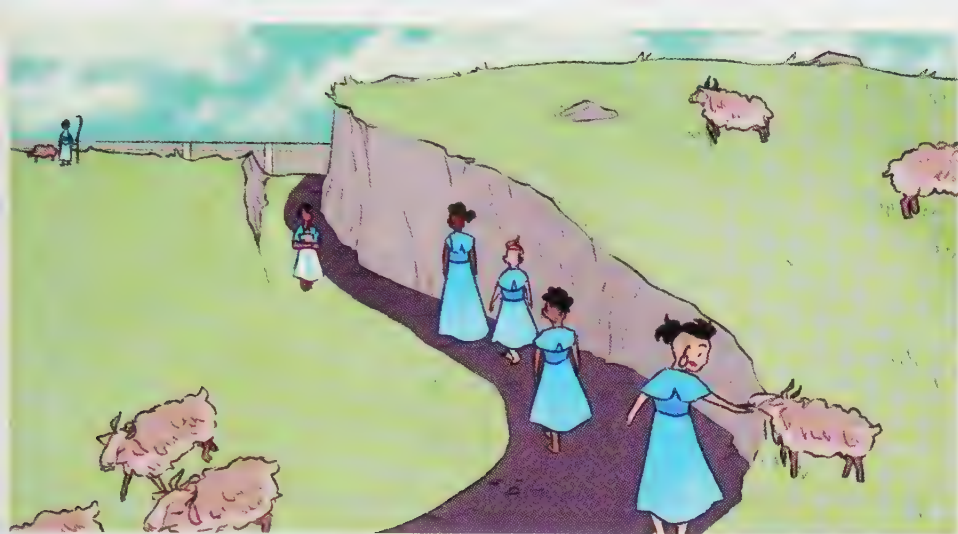
MORE THAN ANYTHING...
...YES.



THEN WELCOME, TRAINEE GRAYCE...



...TO THE
COMMUNION
OF BLUE.



AS GUARDIANS,
YOU MUST PUSH
YOURSELF TO
YOUR LIMITS.



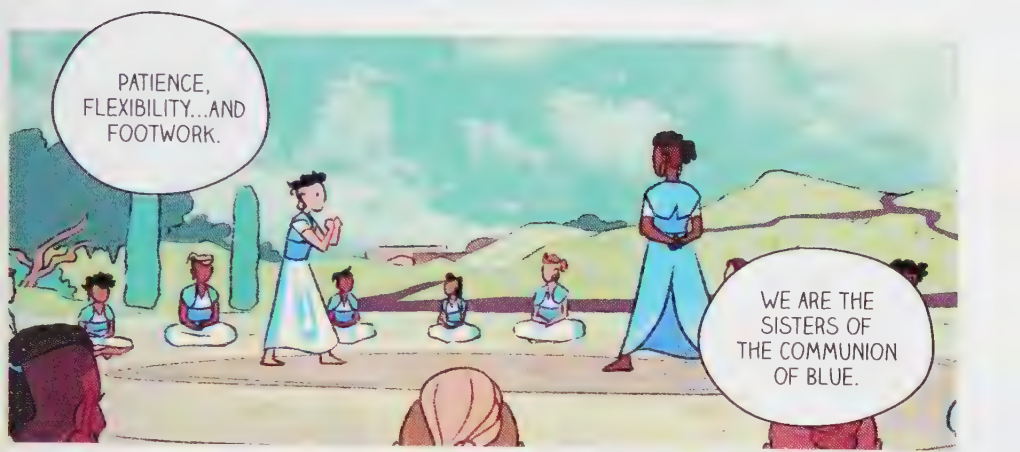
YOUR STRENGTH NO LONGER COMES FROM THE TIP OF A BLADE, BUT FROM WITHIN.



YOU MUST FORGET EVERYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT FIGHTING.



THOSE WHO HAVE TRAINED BEFORE MAY STRUGGLE MOST.



PATIENCE,
FLEXIBILITY...AND
FOOTWORK.

WE ARE THE
SISTERS OF
THE COMMUNION
OF BLUE.



WHEN WE
MOVE...

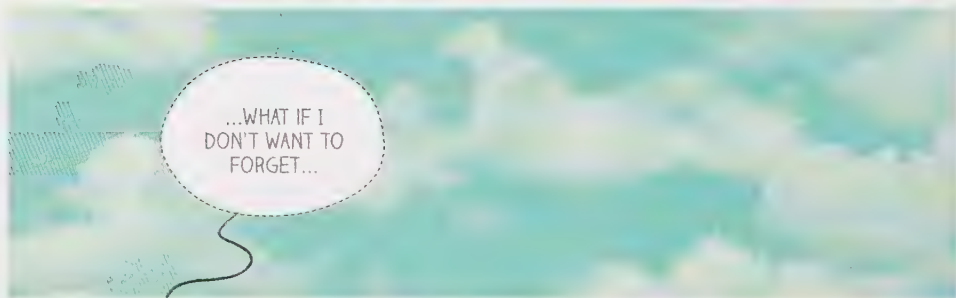


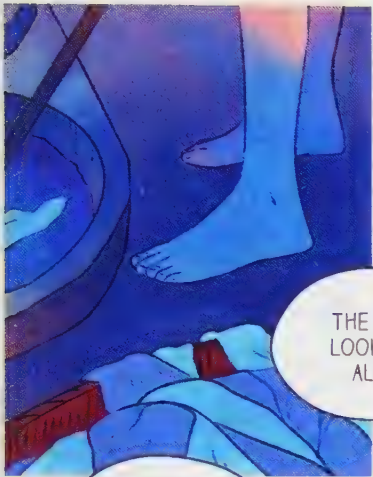
FWIP



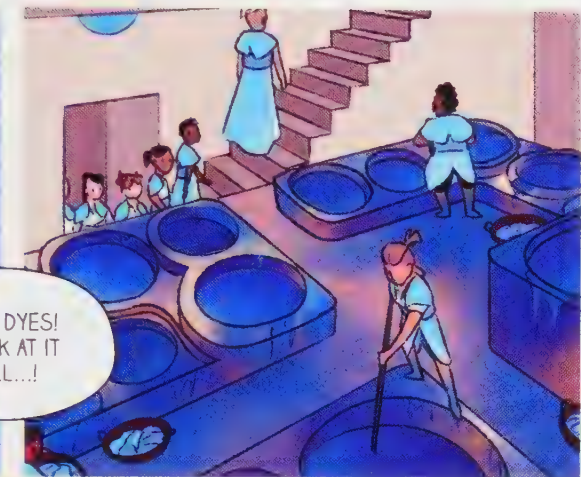
...WE
WEAVE.







THE DYES!
LOOK AT IT
ALL...!



WHERE DOES
IT COME FROM,
DO YOU THINK?

DO
THEY GRIND
UP BEETLES?
ALGAE?



WHAT? NO...!
IT'S A PLANT,
I THINK...?



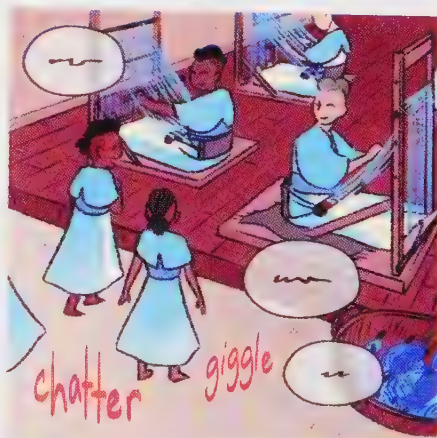
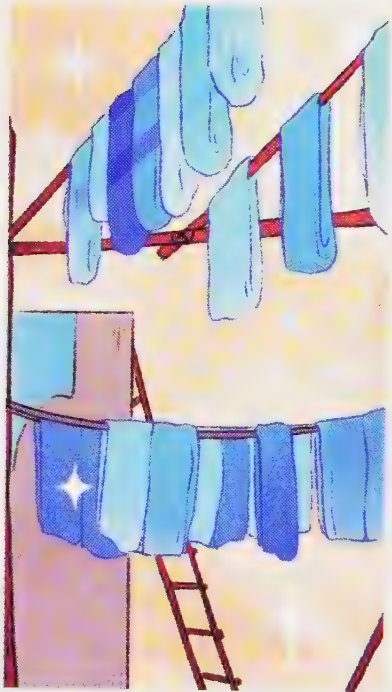
BUT IT HAS
TO COME FROM
SOMEWHERE!

DO YOU
THINK WE HAVE
SECRET FIELDS OF
BLUE OUTSIDE
THE CITY?



THEY HAVE
TO, RIGHT?
I MEAN...

OHHH...!





H-HELLO.

YOUR WEAVING IS VERY PRETTY.



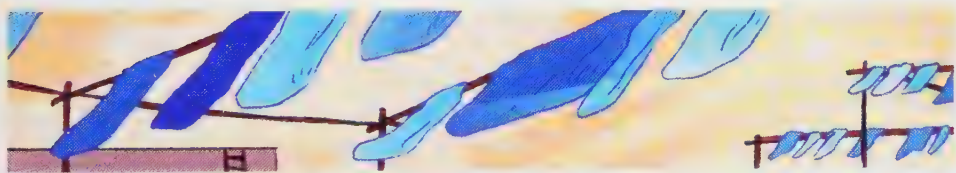
ISN'T SHE SWEET?

OH, WHAT A PROPER CURTSY!


WELCOME TO THE SISTERHOOD, DEAR!



blush




TODAY YOU MET ALL THOSE WHO WORK THE SACRED BLUE.




THE DYERS,
WHO IMBUE
THE WOOL.

THE HEALERS,
WHO STITCH
WOUNDS AND
KNIT BONES.

THE WEAVERS,
WHO WEAVE THE
PATTERNS OF LIFE
AROUND US.



AND, OF
COURSE...THE
SPINNERS.



WE WHO SPIN
THE THREADS OF
THE WORLD.



AS
TRAINEES,
YOU'LL LEARN
USING UNDYED
WOOL.

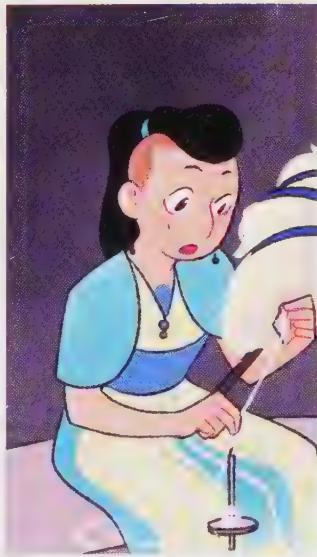


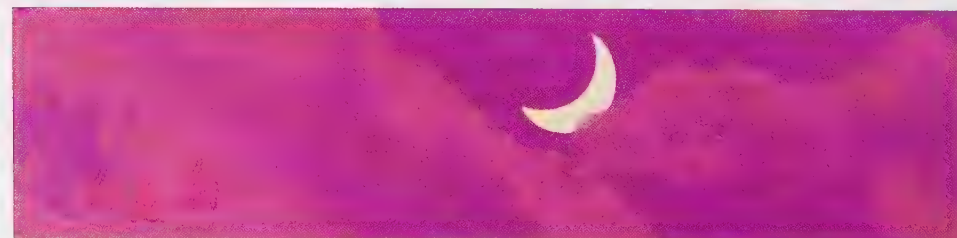
DRAFT
EVENLY...

A FIRM
TWIST...



DELICATE
THREADS WILL
COME LATER,
WITH TIME AND
PATIENCE.







...TOTALLY
CAME APART!



I DUNNO
WHAT'S GOING
WRONG...

I BET YOU
TWISTED THE
WRONG WAY!

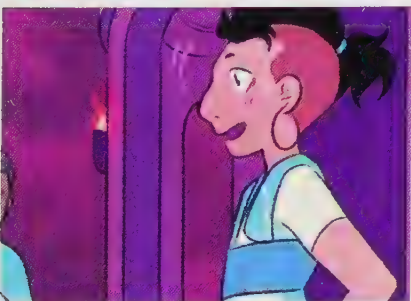
YOU
CAN'T SWITCH
DIRECTIONS
OR...



HMM?



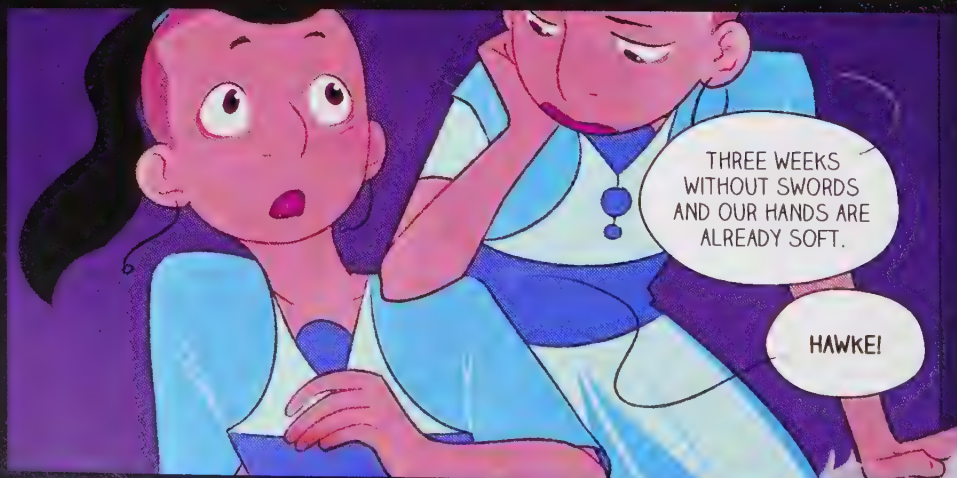
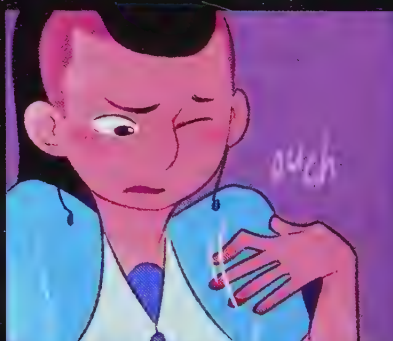
MEET UP
TONIGHT?




Urk!












...ARE WE
REALLY GONNA
DO THIS?

HIDE HERE
FOREVER?




IS IT
THAT BAD
HERE...?

THAT'S NOT
WHAT I MEAN!



WE'VE BEEN
TRAINING SINCE
WE WERE OLD
ENOUGH TO HOLD
SWORDS —



AND WE
JUST — WE
JUST RAN!

WE'RE JUST
GONNA HIDE AND LET
MIRELLE GET AWAY
WITH EVERYTHING?!

FWIP



WHAT ELSE
CAN WE DO?
SHE'S LOOKING
FOR US—

WE SHOULDN'T
EVEN BE TALKING
ABOUT THIS—



WE'RE NOT
SUPPOSED TO **BE**
HERE, GRAYSON!

WE'RE
NOBLE
SONS!



HAWKE!
SOMEONE WILL
HEAR YOU!



TOO LATE.



HEY, HAWKE.
HEY, GRAYSON.


I THOUGHT
THAT WAS YOU.



WHA—
WHO...




...CALIA?



I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS RIGHT!

I HEARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH HOUSE SUNDERLAY, BUT I HADN'T PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.



CALIA, JEEZ — WE HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN YEARS! SINCE —

SINCE —




SINCE I JOINED THE COMMUNION OF BLUE?

YEAH, NO KIDDING.



ha ha ha

BUT I'D SAY YOU TWO HAVE CHANGED MORE THAN ME!



I'M, UM...
I'M "GRAYCE"
NOW...


UGHH, RIGHT,
YOU'VE GOTTA
CALL ME—



"HANNA,"
RIGHT?

WHOOPS!

splash



I THINK THE
WHOLE SCHOLAR'S
HALL HEARD YOU
GETTING SHOUTED AT!
WHAT DID YOU DO, FALL
ASLEEP ON WATCH?

I'VE NEVER
HEARD THE
GUARDIANS SO
ANGRY!



AND...



I HEARD
ABOUT YOUR
GRANDFATHER...
I'M SO SORRY.

MY FATHER SAID
THE OTHER LORDS
ON THE COUNCIL WERE
COMPLETELY SHOCKED.
NO ONE SAW THIS
COMING.

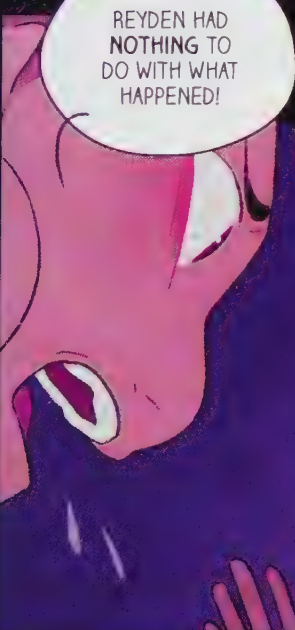


BUT WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
HERE?

I MEAN, I
HEARD ABOUT
WHAT REYDEN
DID —




REYDEN...?




REYDEN HAD
NOTHING TO
DO WITH WHAT
HAPPENED!

OKAY,
WHOA!



I MEAN,
THINGS DID
SOUND KINDA
FISHY,
BUT I HAVEN'T
SEEN
YOUR FAMILY
IN A
FEW YEARS —



CALIA,
WHAT'S GOING
ON? WHAT ARE
THEY SAYING?



I...



THE RUMORS SAY...

crackle


YOUR GRANDFATHER DENIED REYDEN HIS PLACE AS HEIR...

REYDEN WENT MAD AND SWORE HE WOULD WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE LINE OF HOUSE SUNDERLAY...




HE BURNED THE TAPESTRY... HE ATTACKED EVERYONE...

...AND MIRELLE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD STOP HIS COUP.




IT WAS A
COUP ALL
RIGHT.

MIRELLE'S.
SHE HAS NO
RIGHT TO HOUSE
SUNDERLAY.




IT...IT
WASN'T A WILD
MASSACRE...

THE ONLY
PEOPLE KILLED
WERE THE ONES
AHEAD OF HER...



AHEAD OF
HER...?



MIRELLE
KILLED EVERY
MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY
AHEAD OF HER IN THE
LINE OF INHERITANCE
AND FRAMED REYDEN
FOR ALL OF IT.

SHE'S MADE
HERSELF HEIR.

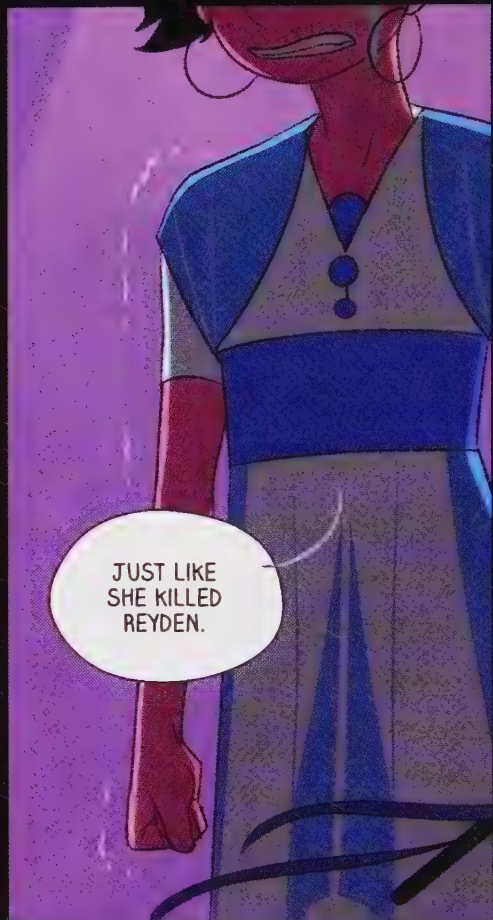


...SHE
DIDN'T GET
EVERYONE.



IF MIRELLE
FINDS US HERE,
SHE'LL KILL US.


JUST LIKE SHE
KILLED EVERYONE
ELSE.



JUST LIKE
SHE KILLED
REYDEN.




I—



I'LL—I'LL
TALK TO MY
FATHER—

HE'LL TALK TO
THE OTHER NOBLE
FAMILIES—THERE'S
NO WAY THEY'LL ALLOW
A TRAITOR ON THE
COUNCIL OF LORDS!

NO, YOU
CAN'T—YOU CAN'T
TELL ANYONE!




THIS WASN'T
SOME RANDOM
THING—EVERY
PART OF IT WAS
PLANNED.

SHE MUST
HAVE HAD
INSIDE HELP!



MY FATHER
WOULD NEVER—



THERE'S
NO WAY TO
KNOW!

SHE HAS THE
CITY GARRISON
BEHIND HER—

YOU CAN'T, CALIA!
IF YOU SAY ANYTHING,
SHE'LL FIGURE IT OUT,
SHE'LL KNOW WHERE
WE'RE HIDING—



MIRELLE WILL
FIND US.




IF IT'LL
KEEP YOU
SAFE...

OKAY.
YOU WIN.



I WON'T TELL
ANYBODY.




YOU LOOK
LIKE YOU'RE
FITTING RIGHT IN,
AT LEAST.

GRAYCE,
RIGHT?



EH?

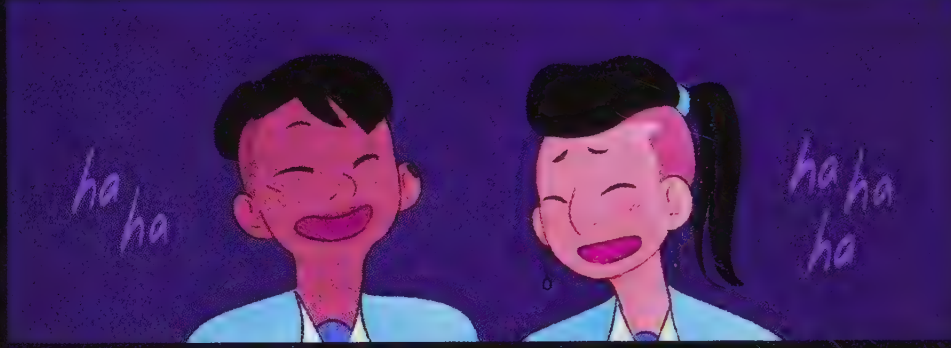


"HANNA,"
ON THE OTHER
HAND...

...COULD
USE SOME
WORK.



...HUH?



ha ha

ha ha
ha



LOOK, YOUR
SKIRTS ARE ALL
TWISTED.

YOU KNOW
THESE THINGS
HAVE POCKETS,
RIGHT?

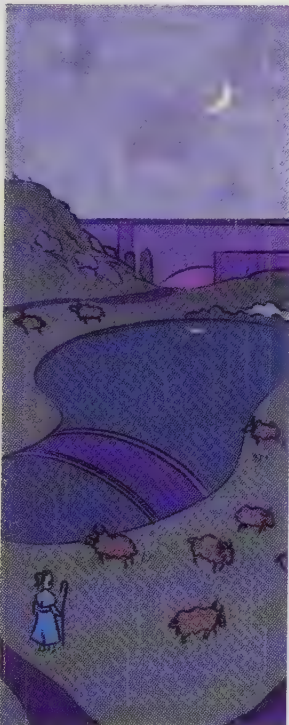
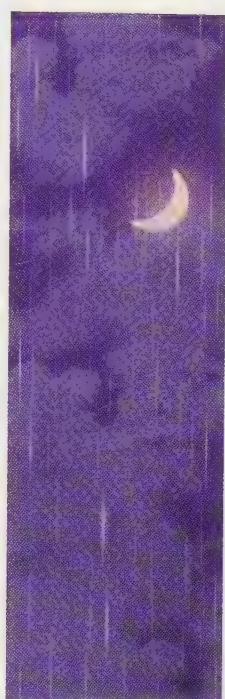
THOSE
BUTTONS ARE
THERE FOR A
REASON...

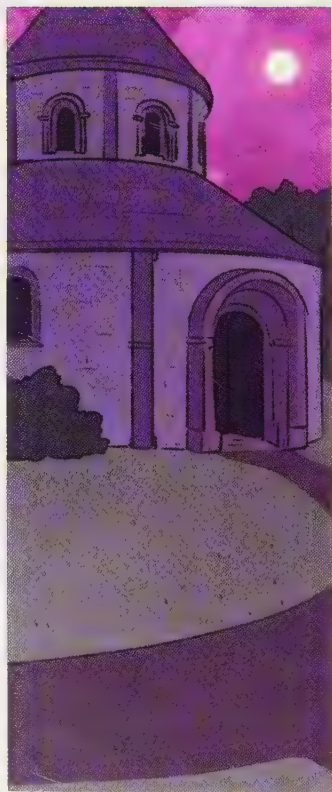
??

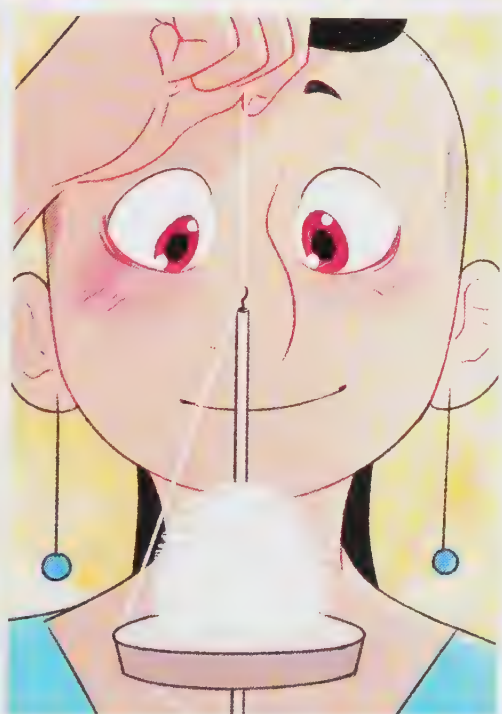
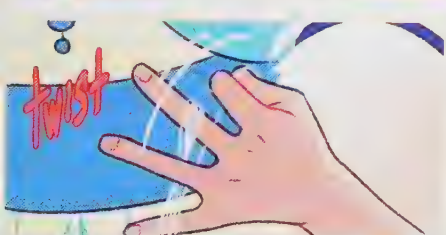
!/?

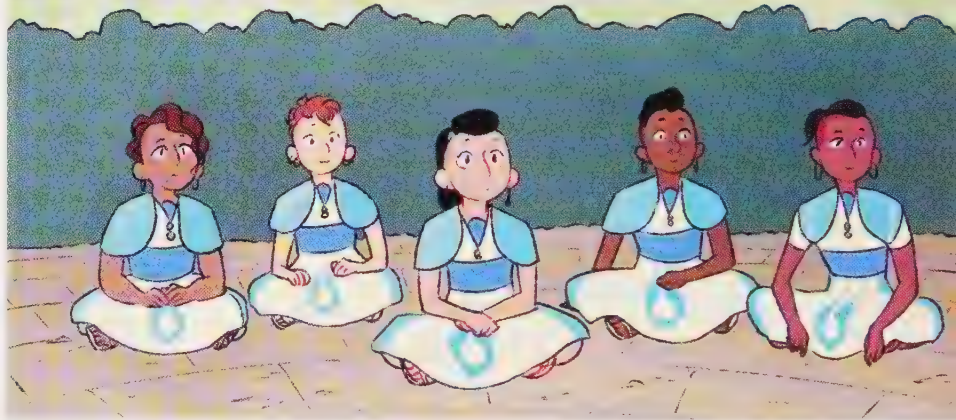
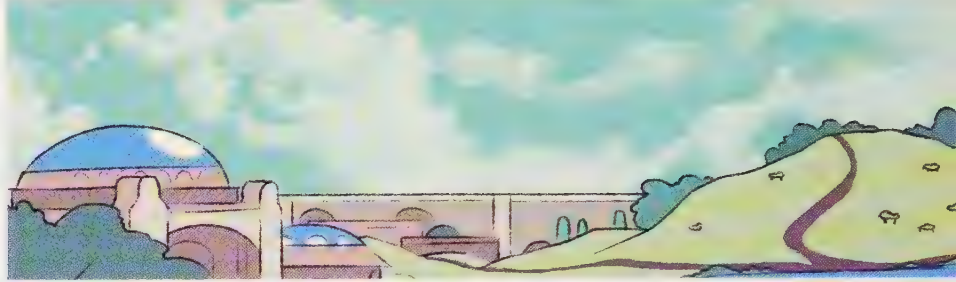
I TRIED TO
TELL HIM!













IT'S...IT'S THE
NAMESAKE OF THE
COMMUNION.



THAT'S RIGHT,
GRAYCE.

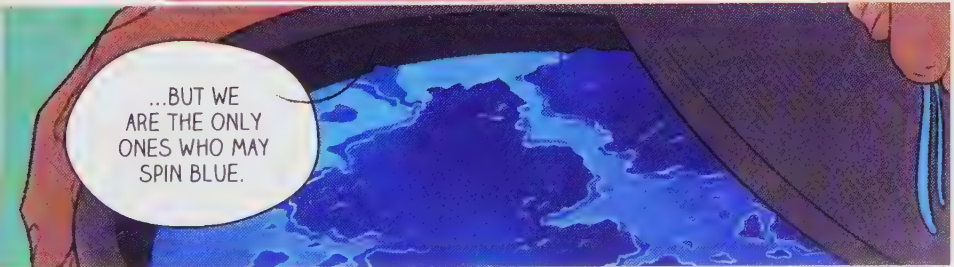
OUR
NAMESAKE...
AND OUR MOST
HONORED DUTY.




OUR CITY HAS
ALWAYS HAD A
CASTE OF DYERS
AND WEAVERS.

THEY SPIN
RED FROM THE
MADDER ROOT, AND
THE YELLOW PEEL OF
FRUITS FROM THE
SOUTH.

THEY SPIN
OCHRE, SCARLET,
AND DEEPEST
BURGUNDY...



...BUT WE
ARE THE ONLY
ONES WHO MAY
SPIN BLUE.



ON THE
FIRST OF ALL
DAYS, IT IS SAID,
THE HOLY MOTHER
SAW THE DEEP
BLUE SKY.


AND FROM THAT
PERFECT SKY, SHE
SPUN THREADS OF
BLUE SO FINE, NO
MORTAL HAND COULD
EVER MATCH HER.

AS NIGHT FELL,
THE HOLY MOTHER
BEGAN TO WEAVE
THE WORLD ON
HER LOOM...


...AND
THROUGH IT ALL,
THE THREAD OF
LIFE THAT BINDS
ALL THINGS.

HER FINGERS
BLED...HER BACK
GREW WEARY...


AND THE SALTED
SWEAT OF HER
BROW FILLED
THE SEAS.



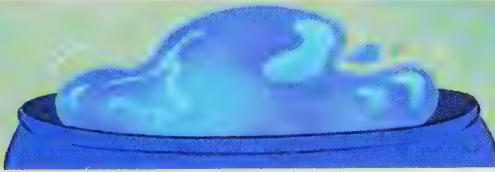
AS IN ANCIENT
DAYS, FROM MOTHER
TO DAUGHTER...




...WE PASS THE
ARTS OF SPINNING
AND WEAVING TO
THE WOMEN OF THE
COMMUNION.



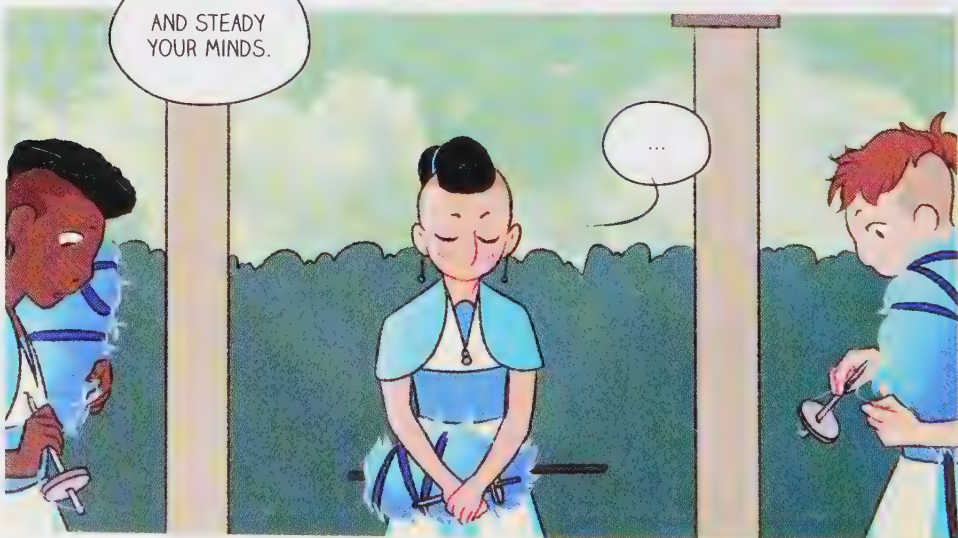
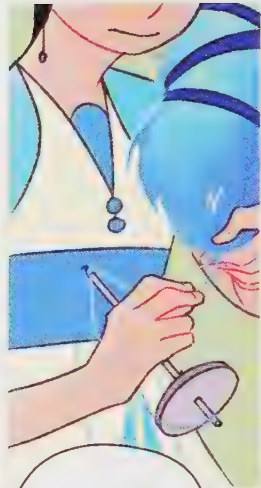
GUIDED BY
THE HAND OF THE
HOLY MOTHER, WE
SPIN THE THREADS
THAT BIND THE
WORLD...




...WE SPIN
BLUE.




TODAY, YOU
WILL WORK
BLUE FOR THE
FIRST TIME...



A person with short, curly blue hair is shown from the chest up. They are wearing a white top with a blue sash and blue shoulder pieces. They are holding a blue ball of yarn with both hands, and a small blue spinning wheel is attached to their sash. The background is a soft, yellowish-green.

IN SPINNING BLUE,
WE KNOW OUR
TRUE SELVES...

A close-up of a hand holding a spinning wheel. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, and the spinning wheel is on the right. The background is a vibrant blue with some white, cloud-like patterns at the bottom. The spinning wheel is a simple, dark-colored device with a central spindle and a small circular base.

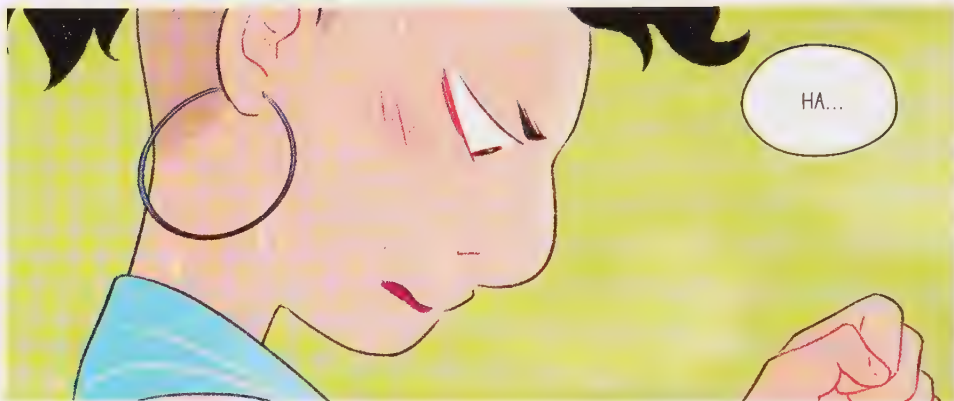
AND WE FIND
AND WEAVE THE
PATTERNS OF
THE WORLD.

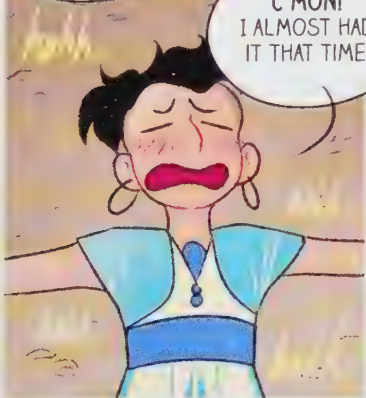
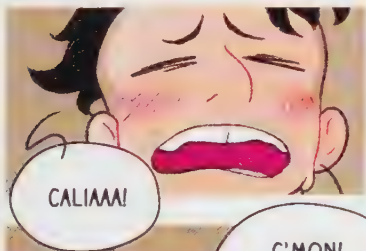


REACH
WITHIN, AND
TOGETHER...

YOU SHALL
SPIN THE
WIND.









"WORK ON
YOUR STANCE,
HANNA."

"FIND YOUR
CENTER OF
BALANCE,
HANNA."

"HANNA, YOUR
FOOTWORK IS A
TRAVESTY."



WELL...

I MIGHT'VE
TRIED TO TEACH THE
OTHER GIRLS TO USE
A SWORD INSTEAD OF
THIS DUMB WEAVING
FOOTWORK STUFF.



IT'S TRADITION!
THE COMMUNION
GUARDIANS HAVE ALWAYS
FOUGHT UNARMED...IT'S
SUPPOSED TO BE A NOD TO
WHEN WOMEN WEREN'T
ALLOWED TO CARRY
WEAPONS, I THINK.



WELL,
THAT WAS
AGES AGO.

I JUST
WANTED TO
SHOW 'EM THE
BASICS!



BUT HOW?
THERE'S NO WAY
YOU COULD'VE
SNUCK A SWORD
IN HERE —



ONE OF THOSE
DISTAFF THINGS
THE SPINNERS USE!
I SNAGGED ONE A
FEW WEEKS AGO.

ANYWAY, ANYBODY
ATTACKING THIS PLACE
IS **GONNA** HAVE A SWORD.
THEY'RE TOTALLY NAIVE IF
THEY THINK THEY COULD
WIN AGAINST A SOLDIER.



NAIVE,
HUH...



YOU KEEP
COMPLAINING,
BUT I CAN SEE
IT'S WORKING.



...WHA—?

WHAD'YA
MEAN?



I MEAN I
CAN SEE IT.

YOU'RE
NOT THE KID I
PLAYED TAG WITH
ANYMORE.



AND HEY,
UH...

THEY GAVE
YOU A KNIFE,
RIGHT? AS PART OF
THE COMMUNION'S
INITIATION THING?

WELL...YOU
SHOULD THINK
ABOUT USING IT.
SHAVING, I MEAN.



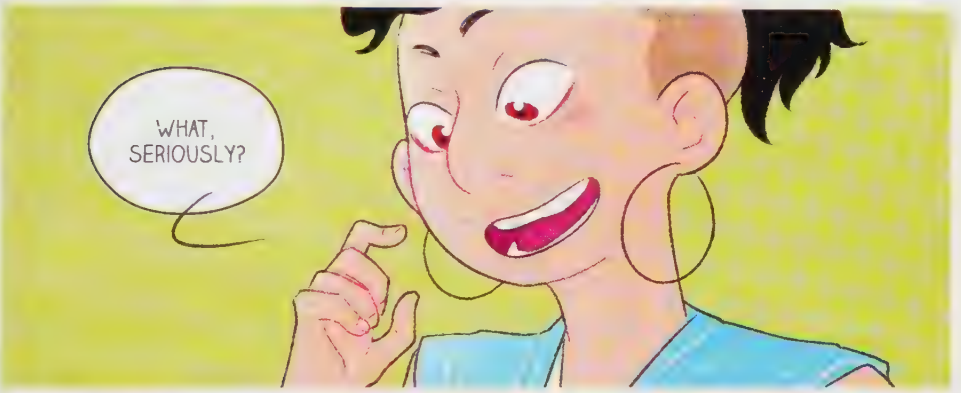
HUH? WE ALL
SHAVED AGAIN
LAST WEEK.



NOT YOUR HEAD, DUMMY!



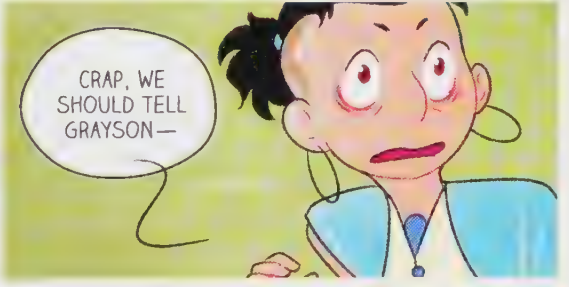
YOU'RE, Y'KNOW, GETTING KINDA SCRUFFY!



WHAT, SERIOUSLY?



YES, YOU IDIOT. SERIOUSLY. AND IT'S GONNA GET YOU CAUGHT IF YOU DON'T TAKE CARE OF IT.



CRAP, WE SHOULD TELL GRAYSON—



...WE'VE BEEN TALKING.
I THINK SHE KNOWS.



I DON'T GET HIM...GRAYSON SEEMS FINE LIKE THIS, LIKE THIS IS ALL OKAY!

LIKE HE'S OKAY JUST HIDING—

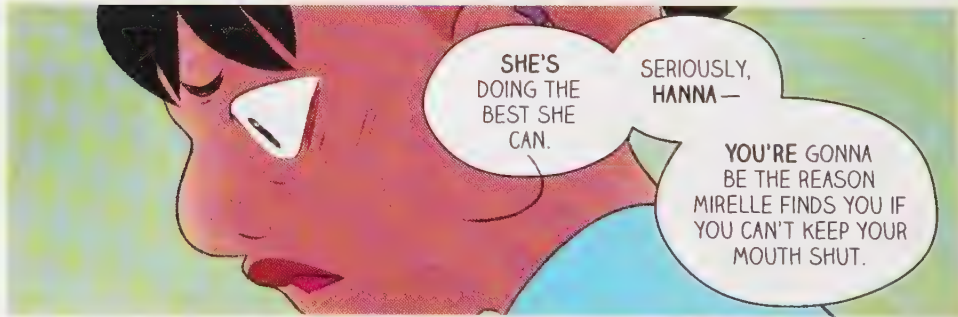


GRAYCE IS TRYING TO MAKE A LIFE FOR HERSELF.



YEAH, BUT LIKE THIS? HIDING FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES?

HE'S—



SHE'S DOING THE BEST SHE CAN.

SERIOUSLY, HANNA—

YOU'RE GONNA BE THE REASON MIRELLE FINDS YOU IF YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.



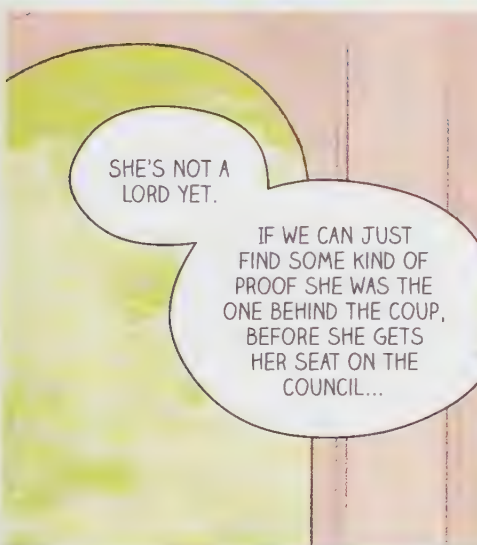
I JUST...



THERE'S STILL TIME, I KNOW IT! MIRELLE CAN'T —

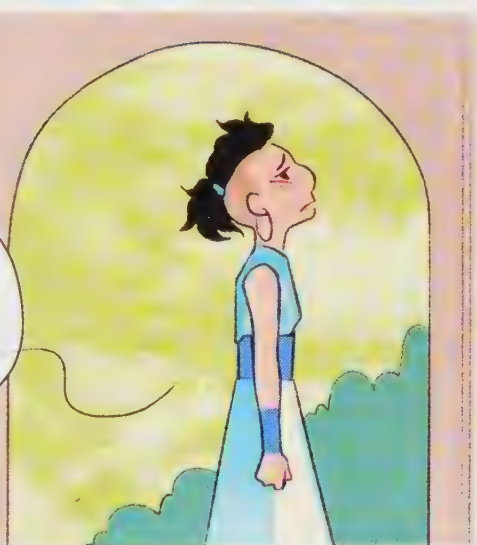


SHE CAN'T BE CORONATED UNTIL GRANDFATHER'S MOURNING RITES ARE OVER.



SHE'S NOT A LORD YET.

IF WE CAN JUST FIND SOME KIND OF PROOF SHE WAS THE ONE BEHIND THE COUP, BEFORE SHE GETS HER SEAT ON THE COUNCIL...



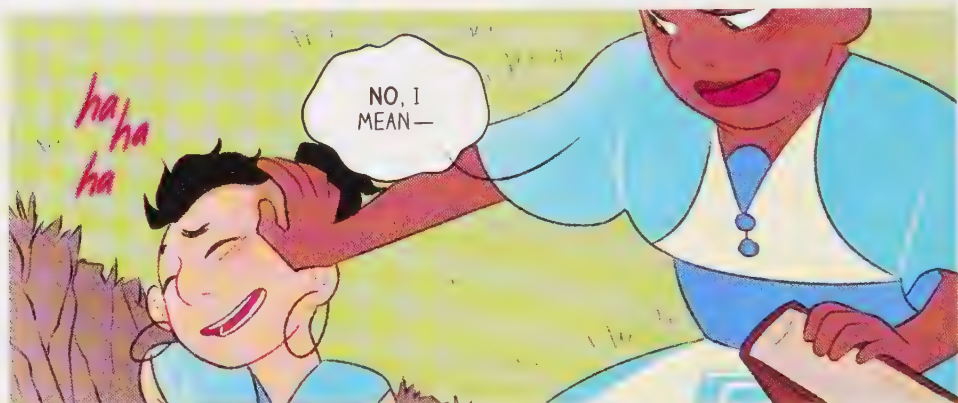
...



THE BLESSING FEAST IS IN A FEW DAYS...



DON'T REMIND ME— THEY'VE GOT ALL THE FIRST YEARS ON SERVING DUTY!



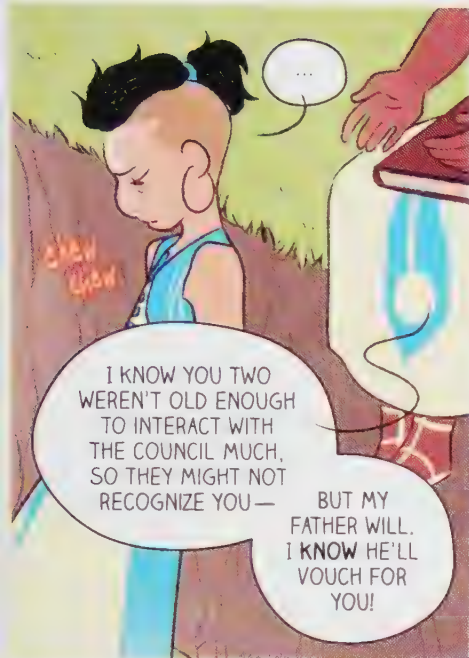
NO, I MEAN—



THEY FIXED THE MANOR AFTER THE FIRE...THE CORONATION IS GOING TO BE AT HOUSE SUNDERLAY.

BUT THE NIGHT BEFORE, THE LORDS OF ALL THE NOBLE HOUSES WILL BE HERE TO SEE MIRELLE GET HER BLESSING FROM THE COMMUNION.

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE—



...

I KNOW YOU TWO WEREN'T OLD ENOUGH TO INTERACT WITH THE COUNCIL MUCH, SO THEY MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE YOU —

BUT MY FATHER WILL. I KNOW HE'LL VOUCH FOR YOU!



IF WE CAN GET HIM ALONE TO TALK...OKAY.

BUT DON'T TELL GRAY —



GRAYCE.

HE'S GOT ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH. HE'S ALREADY FREAKED OUT THAT MIRELLE MIGHT RECOGNIZE HIM WHEN THEY'RE UP THERE DOING THE BLESSING.

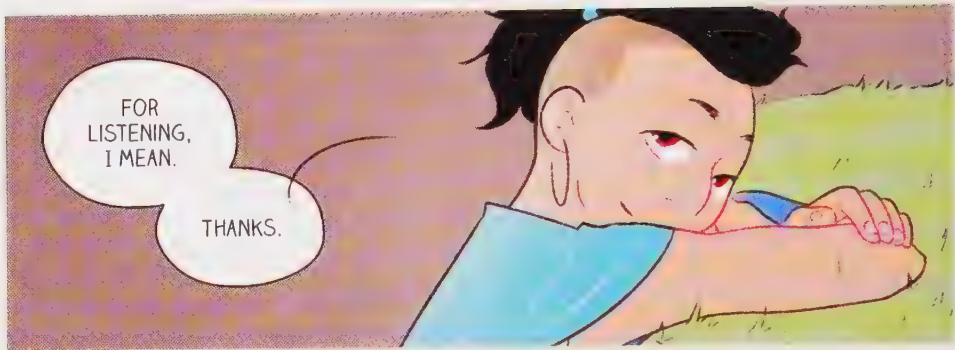


AH...RIGHT.

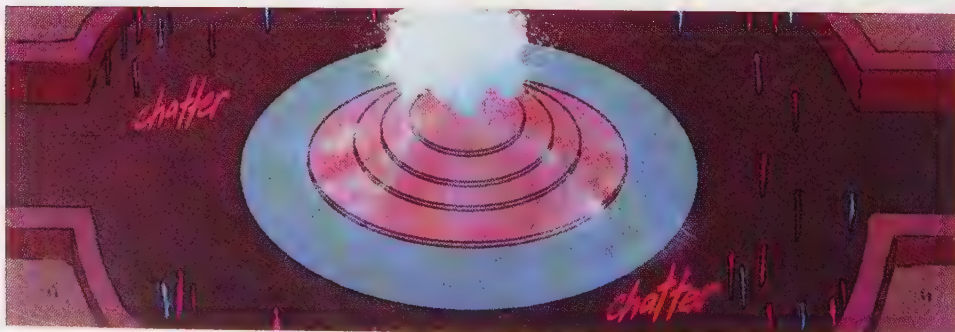
BUT, CALIA...

THANKS.

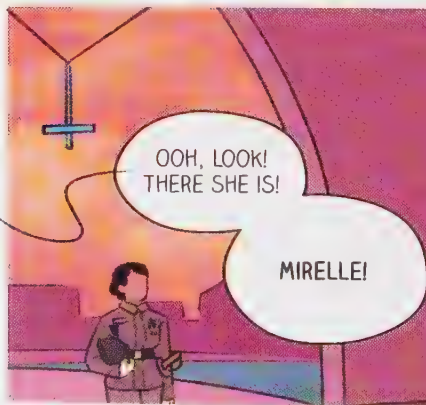




CHAPTER III
HOME









SHE LOOKS SO REGAL —

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE GET TO GIVE HER THE BLESSING TONIGHT —

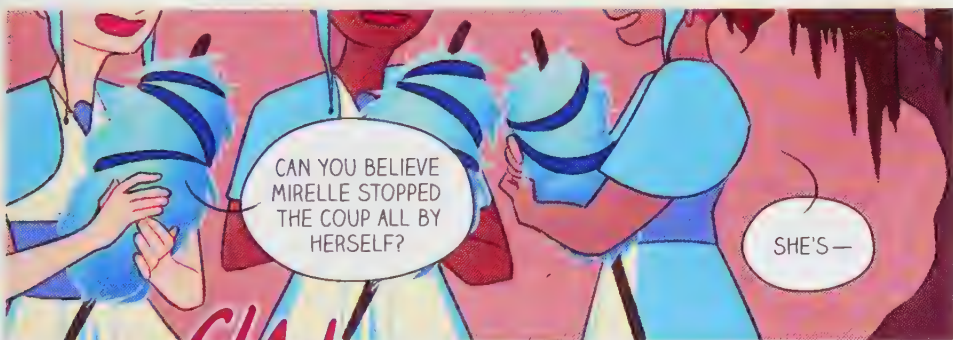
clack... clack...



I'M SO NERVOUS ABOUT SPINNING BLUE WITH THE ELDERS!

THEY MAKE IT LOOK SO EFFORTLESS...

clack...



CAN YOU BELIEVE MIRELLE STOPPED THE COUP ALL BY HERSELF?

SHE'S —

clack...



SISTERS.



MY THANKS FOR TONIGHT'S CEREMONY. I'M HONORED TO RECEIVE THE COMMUNION'S BLESSING.

CAPTAIN MIRELLE, WELCOME.



AND OF COURSE... IT'S OUR PLEASURE.

IT SEEMS YOU'VE ADAPTED WELL TO YOUR NEW ROLE AS ACTING LORD.



IT HAS BEEN A LONG SEASON OF MOURNING FOR MY LATE LORD GRANDFATHER.



MY HANDS HAVE BEEN TIED MORE THAN I EXPECTED. I ADMIT I LOOK FORWARD TO MAKING THE TRANSITION OFFICIAL.



THEY SAY YOU INTEND TO REMAIN A CAPTAIN IN THE GARRISON... WON'T THAT CREATE CONFLICTS WITH THE COUNCIL OF LORDS?



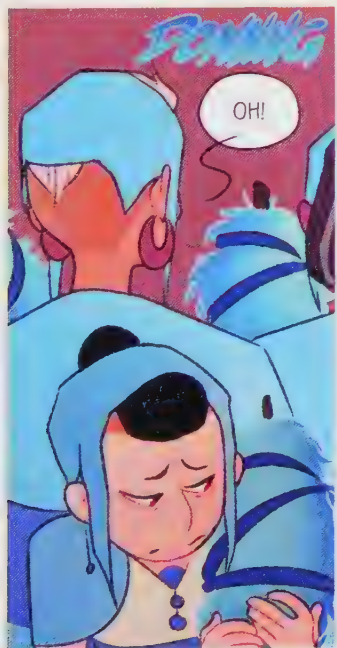
I'M HOPING FOR THE OPPOSITE, ACTUALLY.

IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HAD A VOICE IN THE RUNNING OF THE CITY.



THE BUDGET FOR THE GARRISON IS APPALLING — MY UNIT IS STUCK USING THE CELLARS OF SUNDERLAY MANOR AS PRISON CELLS!

PRISONERS! I THOUGHT EVERYONE IN THE COUP WAS —



OH!



IT SEEMS I'VE KEPT YOU.







THERE SHE IS.



WHAT'S SHE UP TO?
THE BLESSING'S GONNA START SOON...

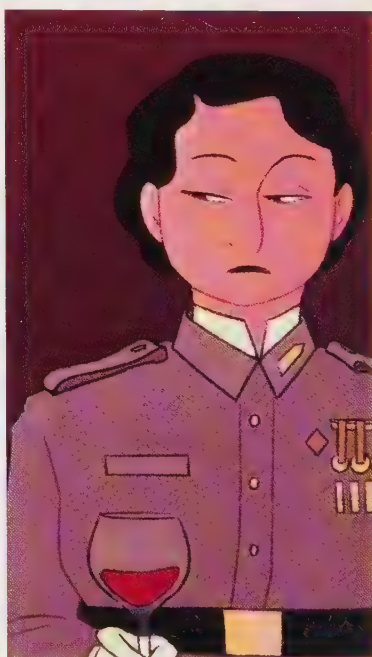


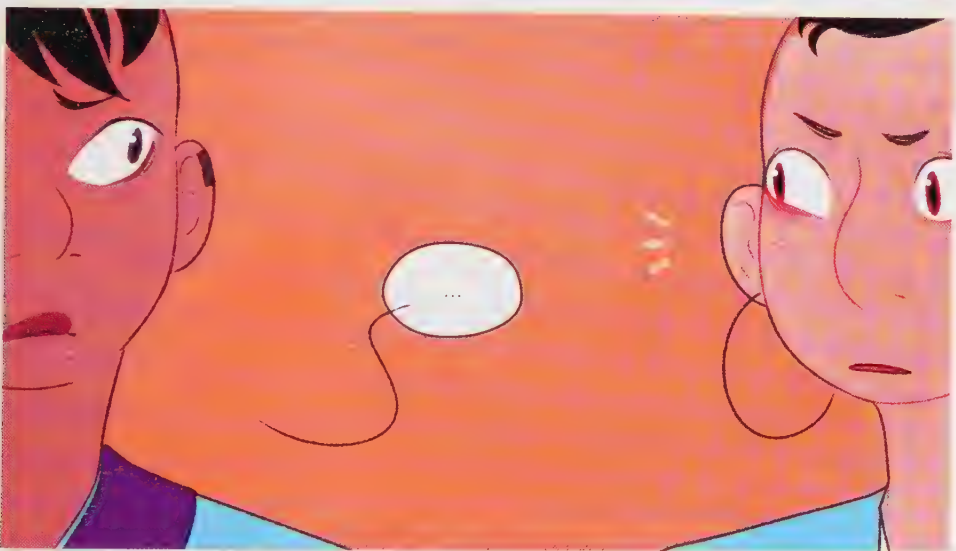
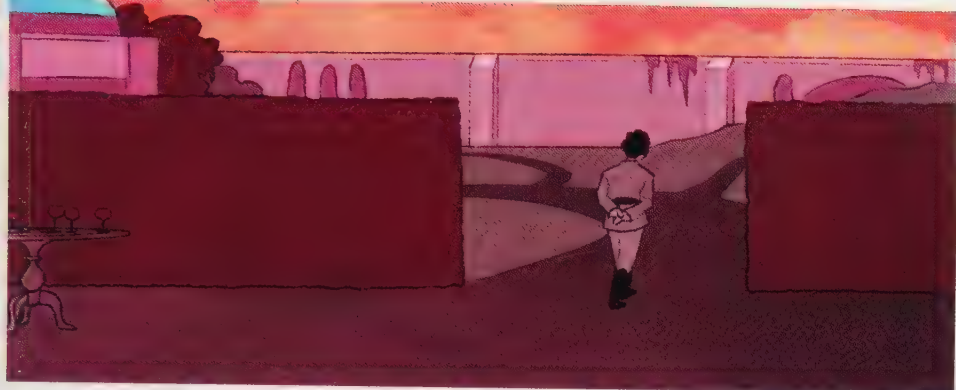
I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE EVEN AGREED TO THIS. SHE HATES PARTIES.

BET NOBODY WANTS TO TALK TO HER.



BET THEY CAN TELL HOW BIG A FAKER SHE IS. SHE'S—







I'LL SEE YOU
AT THE FEAST.
THERE'S SOMEONE
I WANT YOU TO
TALK TO...

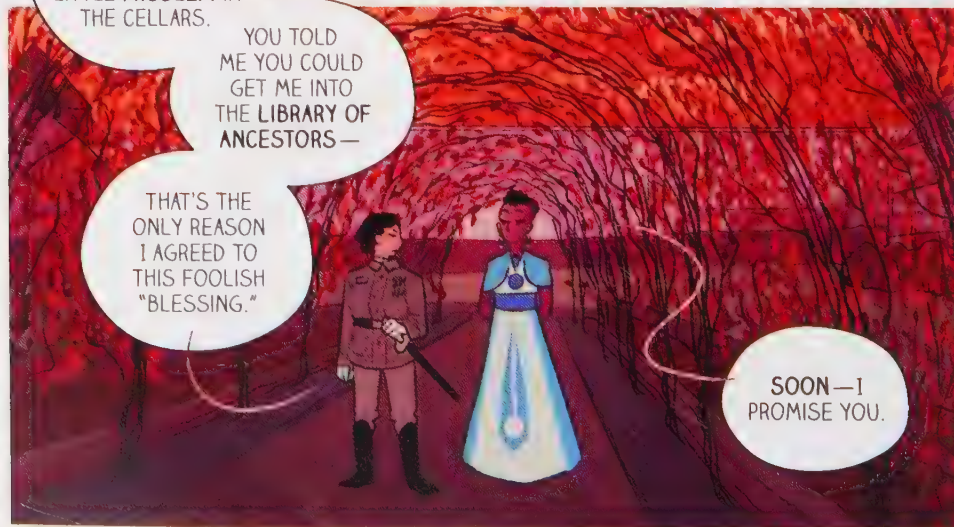


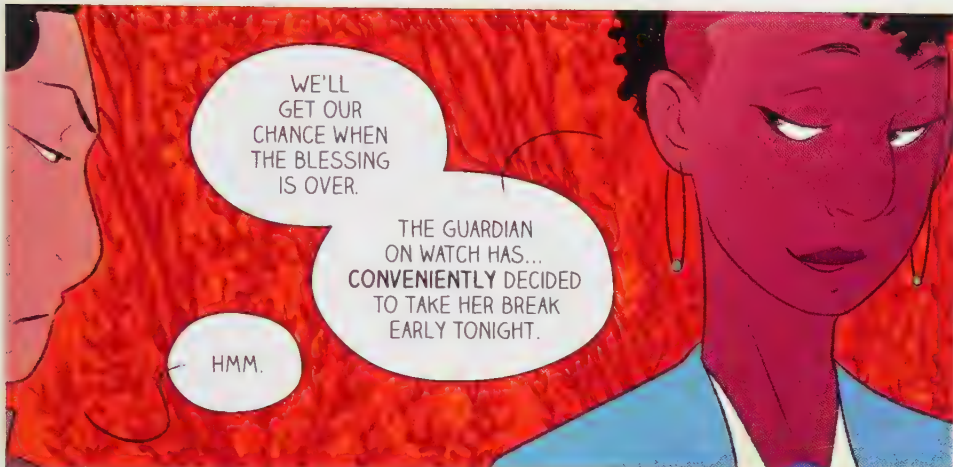
...I SHOULD BE
AT THE MANOR,
TAKING CARE OF THAT
LITTLE PROBLEM IN
THE CELLARS.

YOU TOLD
ME YOU COULD
GET ME INTO
THE LIBRARY OF
ANCESTORS —

THAT'S THE
ONLY REASON
I AGREED TO
THIS FOOLISH
"BLESSING."

SOON — I
PROMISE YOU.





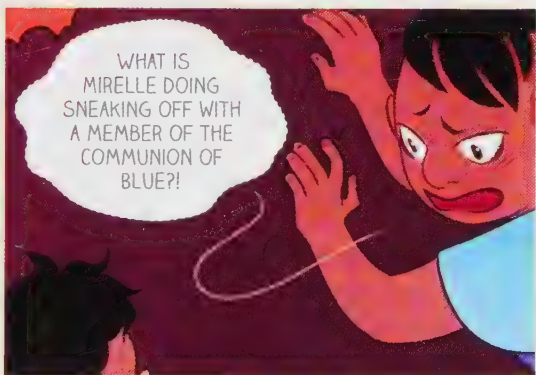
WE'LL
GET OUR
CHANCE WHEN
THE BLESSING
IS OVER.

THE GUARDIAN
ON WATCH HAS...
CONVENIENTLY DECIDED
TO TAKE HER BREAK
EARLY TONIGHT.

HMM.



YOU'LL BE
EXPECTED TO PLAY
POLITICIAN A LITTLE
LONGER. BIDE
YOUR TIME.



WHAT IS
MIRELLE DOING
SNEAKING OFF WITH
A MEMBER OF THE
COMMUNION OF
BLUE?!



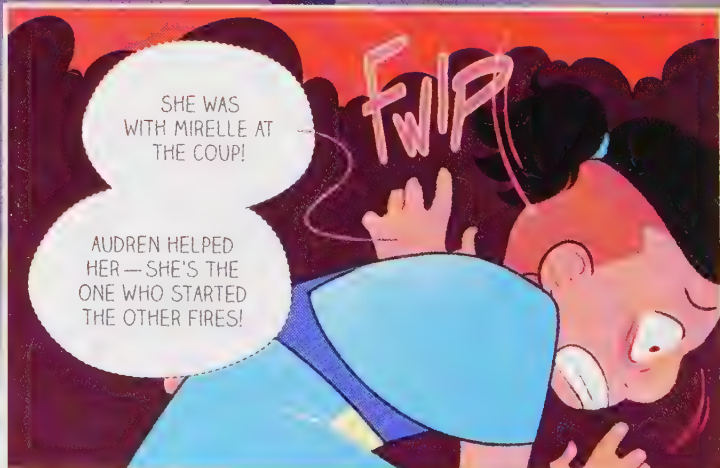
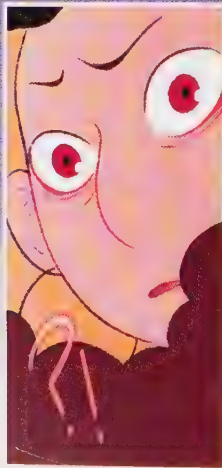
WHO IS THAT?
I'VE NEVER
SEEN HER IN THE
TEMPLE —

AUDREN...?
I THINK?

A LOT OF THE
COMMUNION SISTERS
ARE ADVISORS TO THE
NOBLE HOUSES... I DON'T
REMEMBER WHICH ONE
SHE WORKS WITH.



I SWEAR
I'VE SEEN HER
BEFORE...





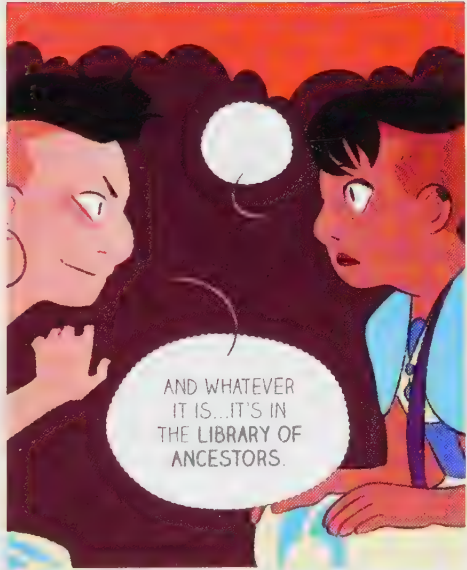
WHAT?! A
MEMBER OF THE
COMMUNION?

DID MIRELLE
FIGURE OUT YOU'RE
HERE ?! SHE'LL
KILL YOU!



NO.


YOU HEARD
THEM...THEY'RE
AFTER SOMETHING
ELSE



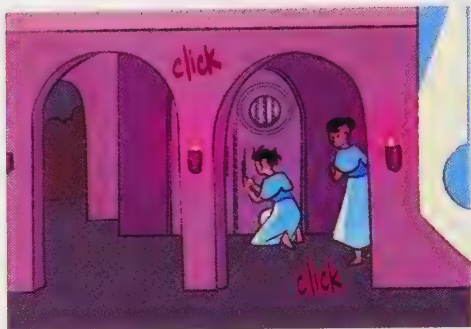
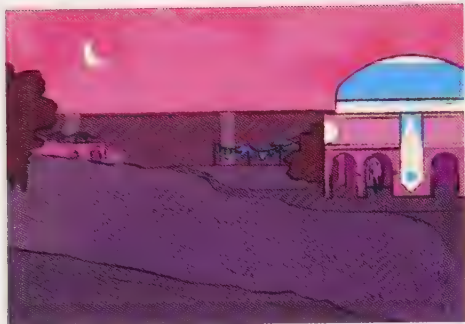
AND WHATEVER
IT IS...IT'S IN
THE LIBRARY OF
ANCESTORS.



C'MON.



WE'LL JUST
HAVE TO GET
THERE FIRST.





THEY'RE TAPESTRIES. IT'S A LIBRARY OF ALL THE CITY'S NOBLE BLOODLINES.



LOOK! THESE TAPESTRIES GO BACK FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS!

BACK BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF LORDS, BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR!

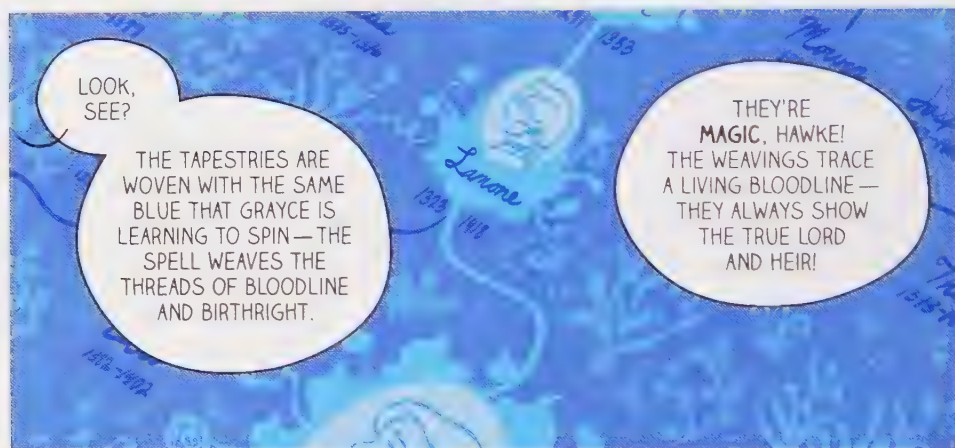
THERE ARE NOBLE FAMILIES HERE THAT DIED OUT AGES AGO — THEY'RE ALL HERE! THIS IS INCREDIBLE!



OKAY...THEY'RE A BUNCH OF DUSTY TAPESTRIES. WHAT'S THE POINT OF KEEPING THEM LOCKED UP HERE IN THE DARK?



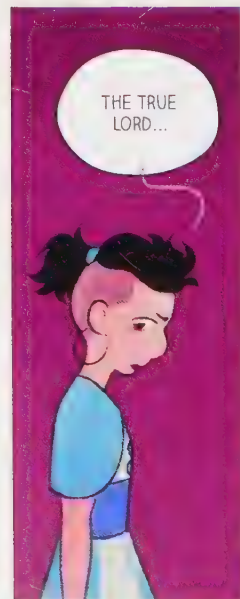
SUNLIGHT IS BAD FOR THE WEAVING — IT BLEACHES THE DYES.



LOOK, SEE?

THE TAPESTRIES ARE WOVEN WITH THE SAME BLUE THAT GRAYCE IS LEARNING TO SPIN — THE SPELL WEAVES THE THREADS OF BLOODLINE AND BIRTHRIGHT.

THEY'RE **MAGIC**, HAWKE! THE WEAVINGS TRACE A LIVING BLOODLINE — THEY ALWAYS SHOW THE TRUE LORD AND HEIR!



THE TRUE LORD...



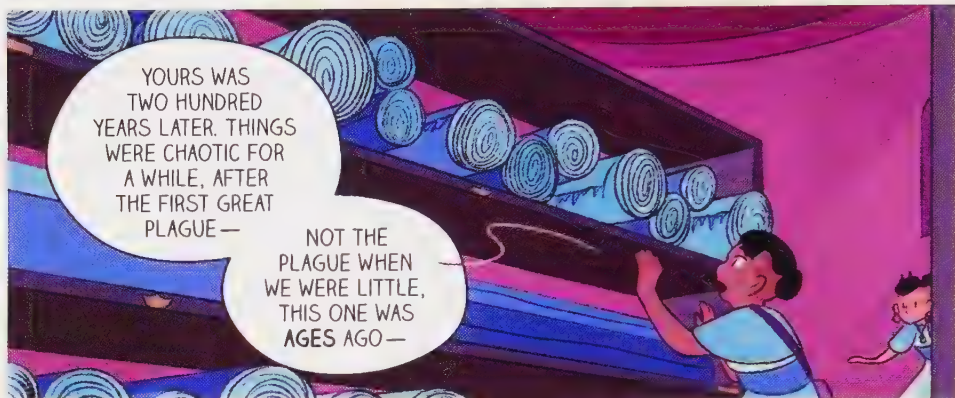
CALIA, THE FIRE DURING THE COUP... MIRELLE WASN'T TRYING TO INTIMIDATE US.

SHE WANTED HOUSE SUNDERLAY'S TAPESTRY DESTROYED.



—AND SHE FIGURED OUT THE COMMUNION OF BLUE HAS A COPY, AND SHE WANTS TO DESTROY IT TOO!





YOURS WAS TWO HUNDRED YEARS LATER. THINGS WERE CHAOTIC FOR A WHILE, AFTER THE FIRST GREAT PLAGUE —

NOT THE PLAGUE WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, THIS ONE WAS AGES AGO —



AH, SORRY — YOUR PARENTS... RIGHT...



WELL...WELL, ANYWAY, THE FOUNDING WAS AFTER THE GREAT SPLIT ON THE COUNCIL, I THINK —

IT'S ACTUALLY REALLY FASCINATING.

CALIA...



HERE!



...THIS IS IT.

THE TWIN OF THE TAPESTRY BURNED IN THE COUP.



THE COMMUNION OF BLUE MUST MAKE A COPY OF EVERY TAPESTRY THEY WEAVE, JUST IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS!

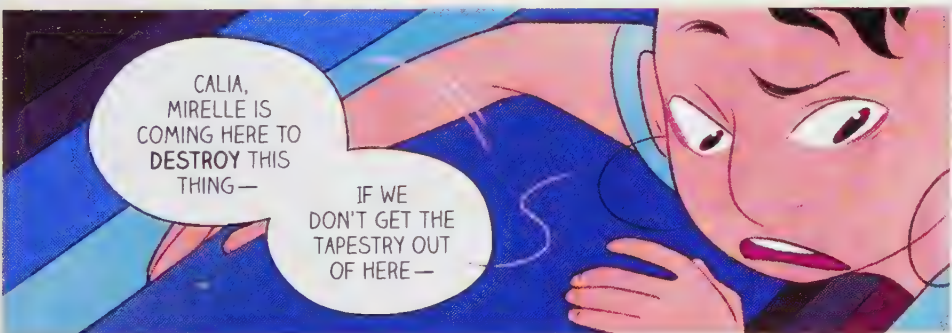
LOOK HOW DELICATE THE WEAVING IS —

THIS IS INCREDIBLE! THE HISTORY IN THIS ROOM —



OOF!

WAIT, HAWKE —!



CALIA, MIRELLE IS COMING HERE TO DESTROY THIS THING —

IF WE DON'T GET THE TAPESTRY OUT OF HERE —

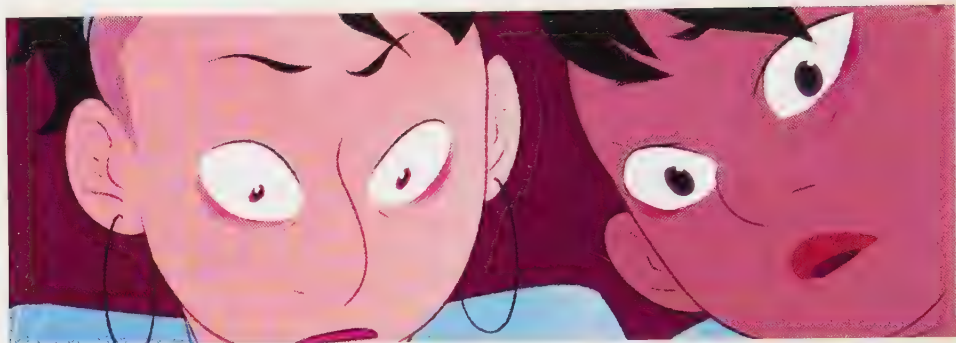


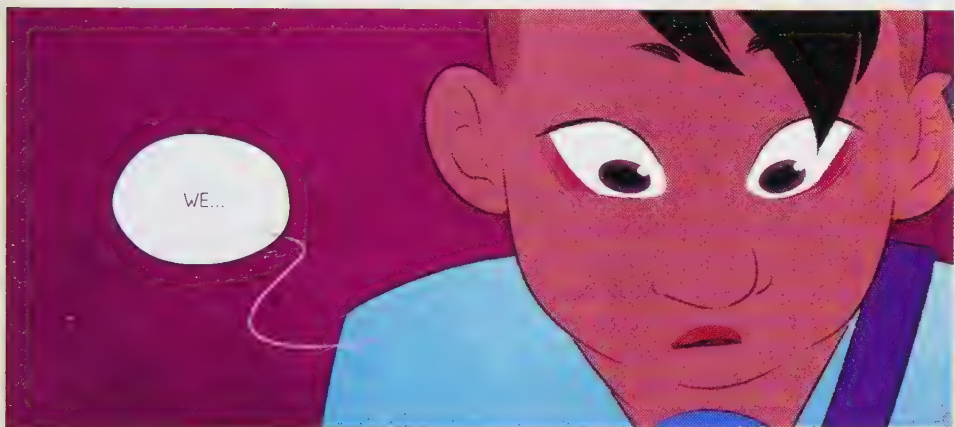
R-RIGHT.




BUT...JUST BE CAREFUL?

WE DON'T... KNOW...








REYDEN'S
STILL ALIVE—


THEY'VE
GOT HIM
SOMEWHERE!



BUT I
STILL DON'T
UNDERSTAND—
HOW? WHY?

MIRELLE
TOLD EVERYONE
HE DIED DURING
THE COUP.

HOW...



THE — THE
MANOR! THE
CELLARS!

I HEARD MIRELLE
TALKING ABOUT
PRISONERS —



!

SO DID
WE!



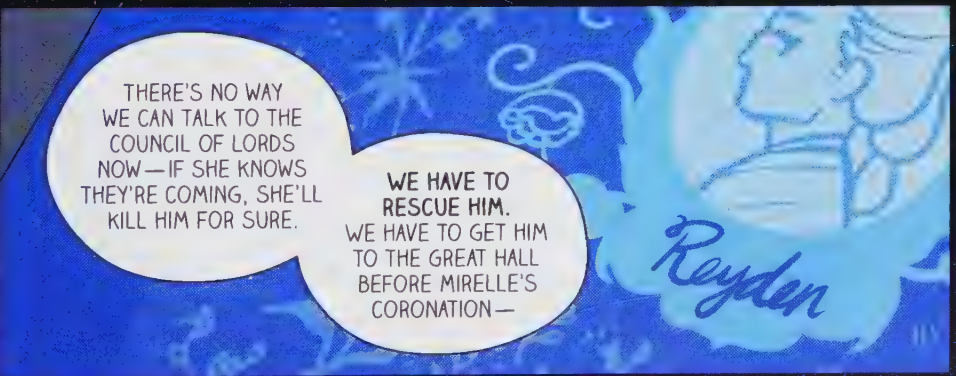
IF HE'S
ALIVE —

WHAT IF SHE
WANTS REYDEN TO
TELL HER WHERE
WE'RE HIDING?

HAWKE, WHAT
IF THEY'VE BEEN
TORTURING HIM?!



THEN SHE'LL
REGRET IT.



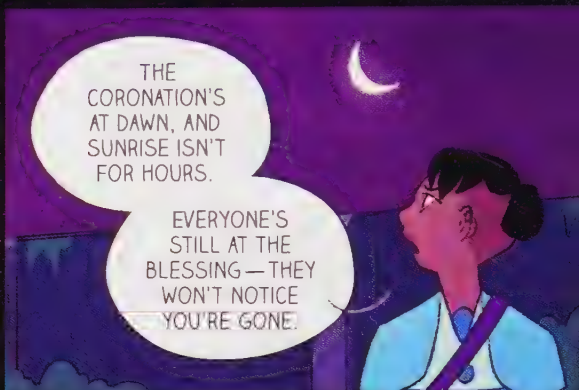
THERE'S NO WAY
WE CAN TALK TO THE
COUNCIL OF LORDS
NOW — IF SHE KNOWS
THEY'RE COMING, SHE'LL
KILL HIM FOR SURE.

WE HAVE TO
RESCUE HIM.
WE HAVE TO GET HIM
TO THE GREAT HALL
BEFORE MIRELLE'S
CORONATION —

Reyden



...IF YOU GO NOW, YOU CAN MAKE IT.



THE CORONATION'S AT DAWN, AND SUNRISE ISN'T FOR HOURS.

EVERYONE'S STILL AT THE BLESSING—THEY WON'T NOTICE YOU'RE GONE.

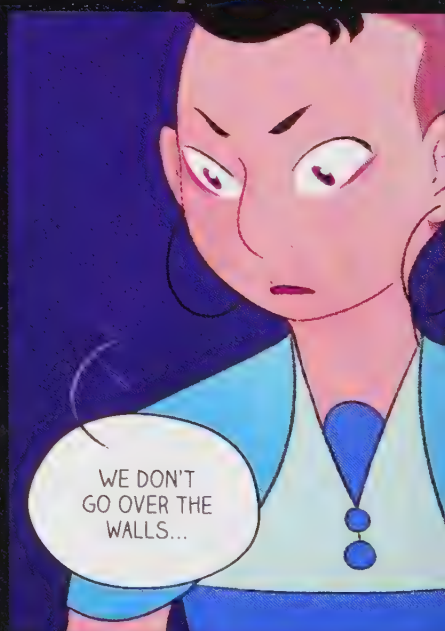


BUT HOW WOULD WE GET IN...?



THE MANOR IS CRAWLING WITH MIRELLE'S SOLDIERS.

WE'D NEVER MAKE IT IN OVER THE WALLS. WE BARELY MADE IT OUT!



WE DON'T GO OVER THE WALLS...



WE GO UNDER.



THOSE ARE THE DYE POOLS, RIGHT?

R-RIGHT, BUT —

THEY'VE GOTTA DRAIN INTO THE SEWERS!



THE SEWERS?!

THERE'S A WHOLE MAZE OF TUNNELS DOWN THERE...!

WHO CARES ABOUT GETTING A LITTLE WET?



WE JUST HAVE TO WORK OUR WAY EAST.

IF WE CAN REACH THE MANOR CELLAR, WE CAN FIND REYDEN AND GET HIM OUT —



THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY—

YOU CAN—
YOU CAN TALK TO CALIA'S FATHER TONIGHT, HE'LL TALK TO THE OTHER LORDS—



UGH, THIS DRESS...

WE CAN'T RISK MIRELLE FINDING OUT—

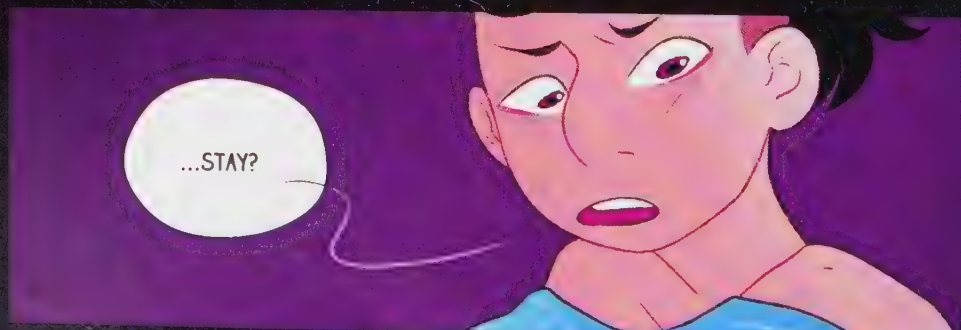
WE'VE GOTTA RESCUE REYDEN AND GET HIM TO THE CORONATION. HE CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING.




BUT—BUT IF WE REVEAL OURSELVES, IF THEY FIGURE OUT I'M—



THEY'LL NEVER LET ME STAY—




...STAY?



GRAYSON,
THIS IS OUR
CHANCE...!


Wince



OUR CHANCE
TO GET OUR
HOME BACK!




WE DON'T
HAVE TO STAY
ANYMORE...!



WE'LL GET
OUT OF HERE,
GET OUR OLD
LIVES BACK —


OUR OLD ROOM!
NO MORE GETTING
UP AT DAWN FOR
BLESSINGS!

NO MORE
DISGUIISING
OURSELVES EVERY
SINGLE DAY —




AND... AND CALIA
CAN COME WITH US.
WHO CARES ABOUT
A DOWRY?

HEY...




JUST BECAUSE
YOU'RE A MEMBER
OF THE COMMUNION
NOW DOESN'T MEAN
YOU CAN'T LEAVE.

OUR MOM WAS
HERE FOR LIKE
THREE YEARS, AND
SHE LEFT!



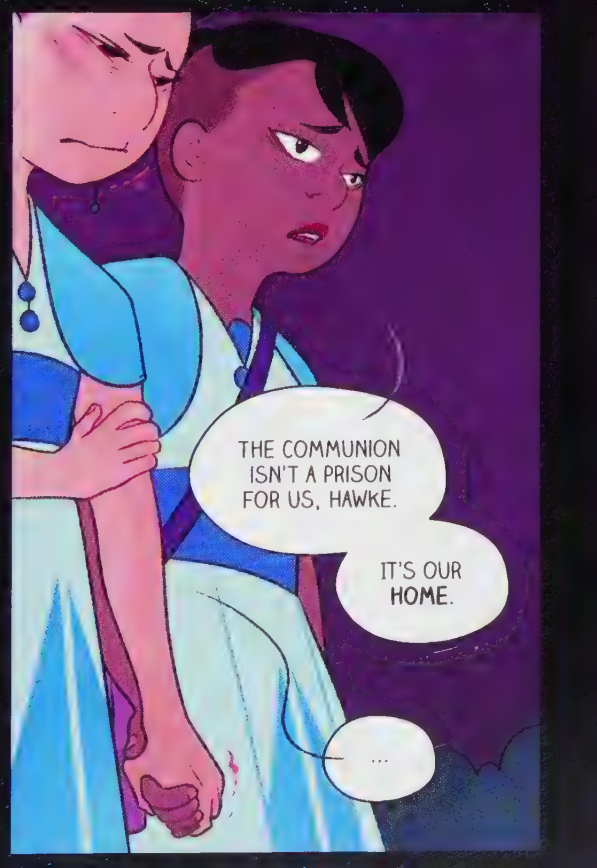
HAWKE... I LIKE
SPENDING TIME
WITH YOU...

BUT I'M
HAPPY HERE.



I DON'T WANT TO
LIVE AS A NOBLE'S
WIFE. BEING A SCHOLAR
IN THE COMMUNION OF
BLUE IS MY DREAM.

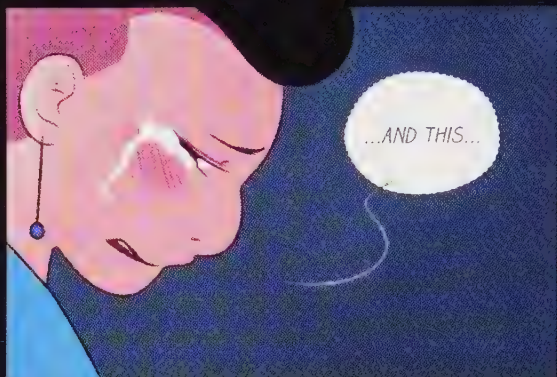
CALIA...?



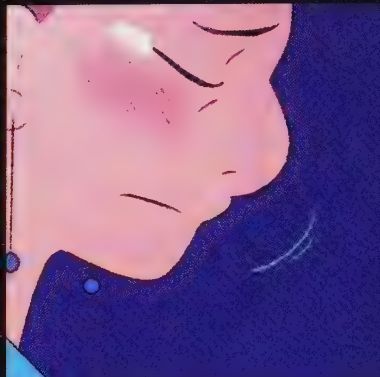
THE COMMUNION
ISN'T A PRISON
FOR US, HAWKE.

IT'S OUR
HOME.

...



...AND THIS...



THIS ISN'T A
DISGUISE...

IT'S WHO
I AM.



I DON'T...

HAWKE...
DON'T BE
AN IDIOT.

YOU'VE BEEN AT
EACH OTHER'S SIDE
SINCE THE DAY YOU
WERE BORN.



LOOK AT
HER.

...!



GRAYS—

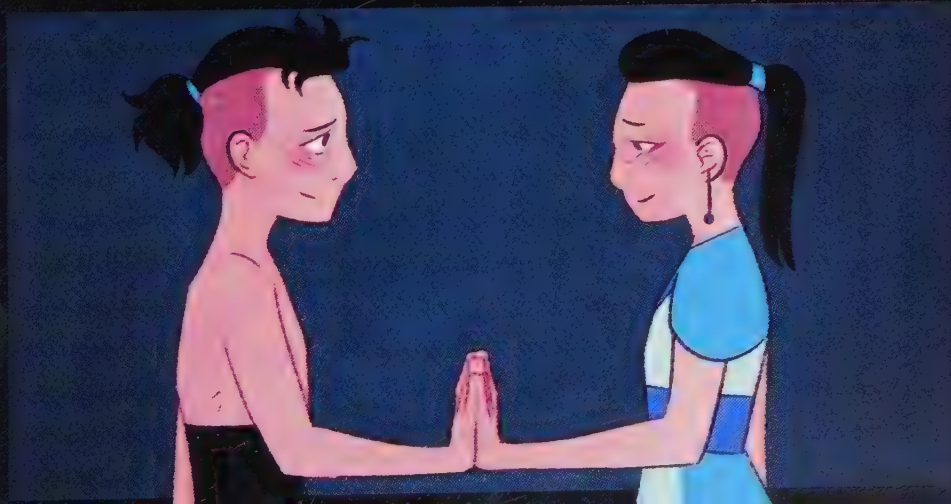


AH!



GRAYCE—?

I'M SORRY, I
DIDN'T...I DIDN'T
REALIZE...





...YOU'RE SHAKING.



ME?! YOU'RE SHAKING!

YEAH, I'M SHAKING!



OH—

THE DRESSES...



IS THIS...IS THIS OKAY?



WE CAN FIND ANOTHER WAY IN. THERE HAS TO BE SOME WAY OTHER THAN THE SEWERS —

I...

LEAVE THE DRESS TO ME!



OH!

ALL THE
SECOND-YEAR
INITIATES LEARN
HOW TO TIE THESE
UP WHEN WE GET
TRAINED IN THE
DYE POOLS —




I'VE TOTALLY
GOT THIS.




I DON'T WANT
TO LEAVE THE
COMMUNION...





BUT RIGHT NOW, WE HAVE TO SAVE REYDEN. WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN.



WE'LL RESCUE REYDEN, AND THEN YOU CAN SNEAK BACK HERE WHILE I GET HIM TO THE CORONATION—



THE TAPESTRY WILL BE ALL THE PROOF WE NEED.

NOBODY HERE WILL EVEN NOTICE YOU'RE GONE. OKAY?

OKAY.




I'LL COVER BOTH YOUR TRACKS.


STAY SAFE, OKAY? KEEP YOUR DUMB BROTHER FROM GETTING HIMSELF KILLED.



I'LL DO MY BEST.




CAN YOU TAKE THESE TO THE FEAST? YOU'D BETTER GET BACK BEFORE THEY WONDER WHERE YOU'VE BEEN.

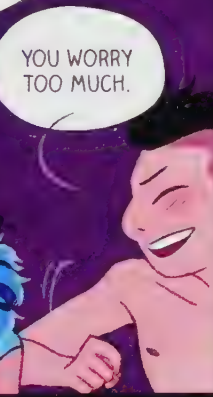


WHAT? NO! MIRELLE HAS THAT SPINNER AUDREN WORKING WITH HER! WHAT IF YOU HAVE TO FIGHT HER! BRING IT!


CLANK



BUT — BUT I'VE NEVER SPUN ALONE BEFORE. I CAN ONLY DO THE GROUP BLESSINGS.




YOU WORRY TOO MUCH.



hmp

WELL, IF WE'RE BEING CAREFUL, YOU SHOULD BRING YOUR DRESS.

THE LONGER WE CAN GO WITHOUT BEING RECOGNIZED, THE BETTER.



scritch scritch

NNNGH. YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S BRING IT.




HERE,
TAKE MY
BAG.

IF YOUR WOOL
GETS WET IN THE
SEWERS, YOU WON'T
BE ABLE TO SPIN
ANYTHING.

OH!

THANK
YOU! THAT'S
PERFECT!



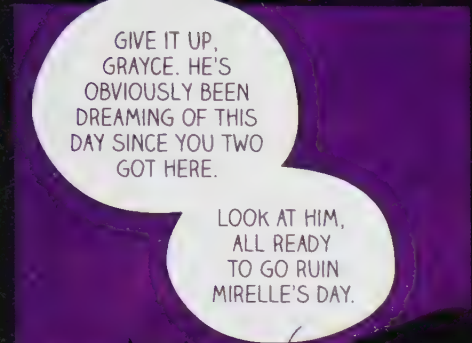
THINK YOU
CAN FIT THIS IN
THERE TOO?



HAWKE!

MY OLD
DISTAFF! I KNEW
YOU TOOK IT!

WHAAT,
I NEEDED IT!
HOW ELSE WAS
I SUPPOSED TO
PRACTICE!



GIVE IT UP,
GRAYCE. HE'S
OBVIOUSLY BEEN
DREAMING OF THIS
DAY SINCE YOU TWO
GOT HERE.

LOOK AT HIM,
ALL READY
TO GO RUIN
MIRELLE'S DAY.

haha
haha



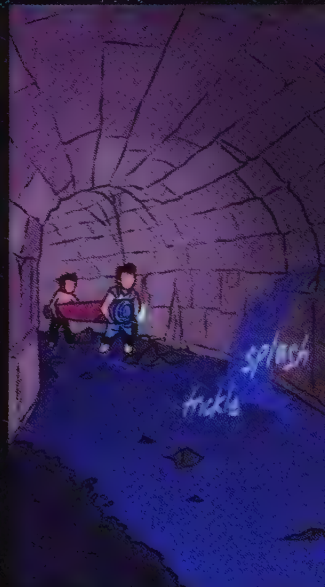
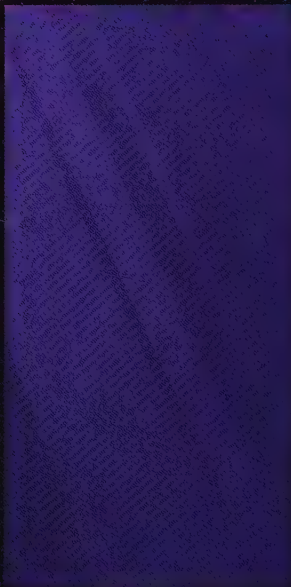
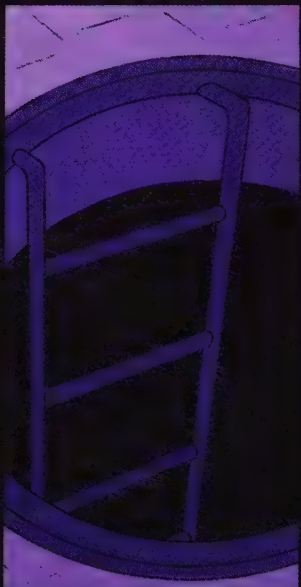
...YEAH.

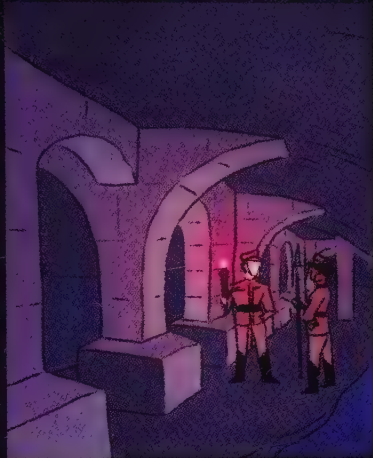
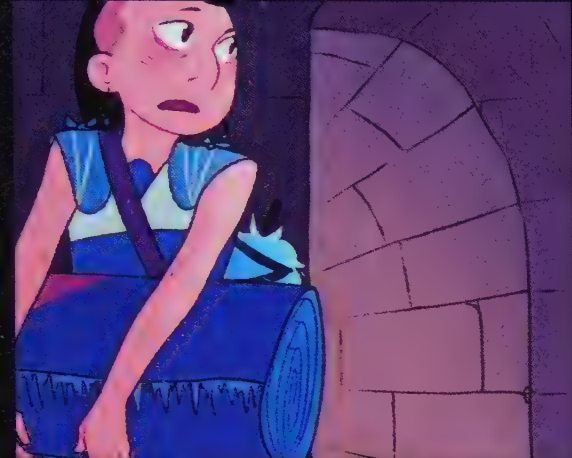


LET'S GO.



THANKS AGAIN,
CALIA...FOR
EVERYTHING.





WE MUST
BE GETTING
CLOSE.



splish... splish...

THE
SOLDIERS...!



HEY!

THE LADDER!



hghgh

shfff

shfff



AH—!

WHRRR

WHRRR

WHRRR

WHRRR



splish



splish

splash



shew



RUFFLE

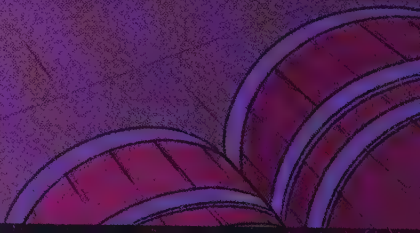
CHECK IT OUT.



HOUSE
SUNDERLAY



FOUND IT.









CLACK
CLACK

WHRRRR





IS THAT A SPINNING WHEEL?

WHAT IS THIS?!

HAW

GRAYCE, TELL ME HOW TO GET THIS OFF HIM!

WHRRR



WHRRR



HAWKE ?

DON'T TRY TO MOVE. I'LL GET YOU DOWN —

WHRRR



WHRRR

CLACK

HAWKE WHAT ARE YOU

JUST HOLD ON, I'LL HELP YOU OUT—

I'VE ALMOST—

CLACK

CLACK

No!!

WE CAN'T!

WE HAVE
TO GET HIM
FREE! IT'S
KILLING HIM!

WHAT

NO! IT'S
KEEPING HIM
ALIVE!

WARRRRR

YOU


THE
THREADS—
THEY'RE TYING
HIM HERE—

THEY—

GRAYCE!

—WHAT ARE
YOU TWO DOING
HERE?!


WARRRRRR



YOU GOT AWAY...THE LAST TWO...

YOU WERE SAFE ...

WHRRR




...YOU GOT AWAY!!



W-WE HAD TO COME BACK!

MIRELLE HAD YOU CAPTURED! WE HAD TO SAVE YOU!



SHE'S KEPT ME LIKE THIS TO FIND YOU!

CLACK
CLACK

THE LAST
TWO THE ONLY
ONES ABOVE
HER

Dave
1987-2011

Thomlin
1988-1992

Hauke

Reyden

YOUR LINE IS
ALL THAT CAN
KEEP HER FROM
INHERITING

CLACK
CLACK

WHRRR

AND YOU'VE
WALKED RIGHT
INTO HER
GRASP...



REYDEN,
WE...
WE DIDN'T
KNOW...



WE—WE CAN
STILL STOP
HER—



...*

THE
CORONATION
ISN'T TILL
SUNRISE...

WE CAN GET
YOU DOWN, WE
CAN BRING YOU
THERE —



WARRR




DID I
HEAR.



HAWKE
CALL YOU
GRAYCE?


LOOK AT
YOU

CLACK
CLACK

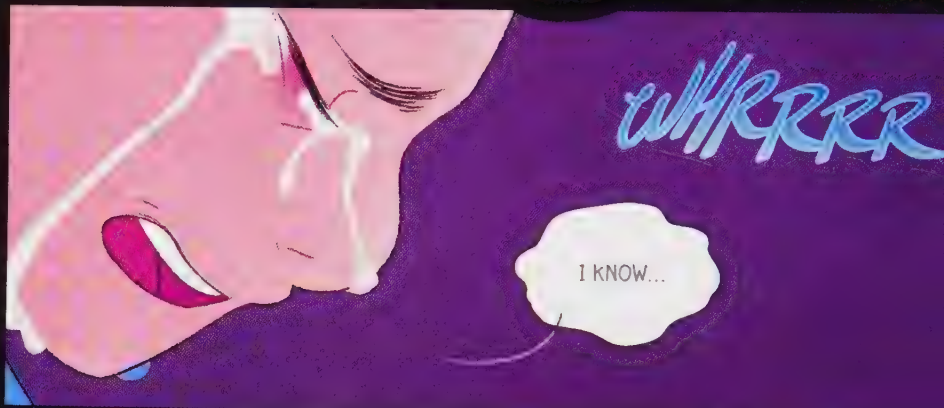


THAT
DRESS...SO
MUCH LIKE YOUR
MOTHER.

WHRRRR



GRAYCE...THESE
THREADS ARE ALL
THAT BIND MY SPIRIT
TO THIS WORLD...



WHRRRR

I KNOW...

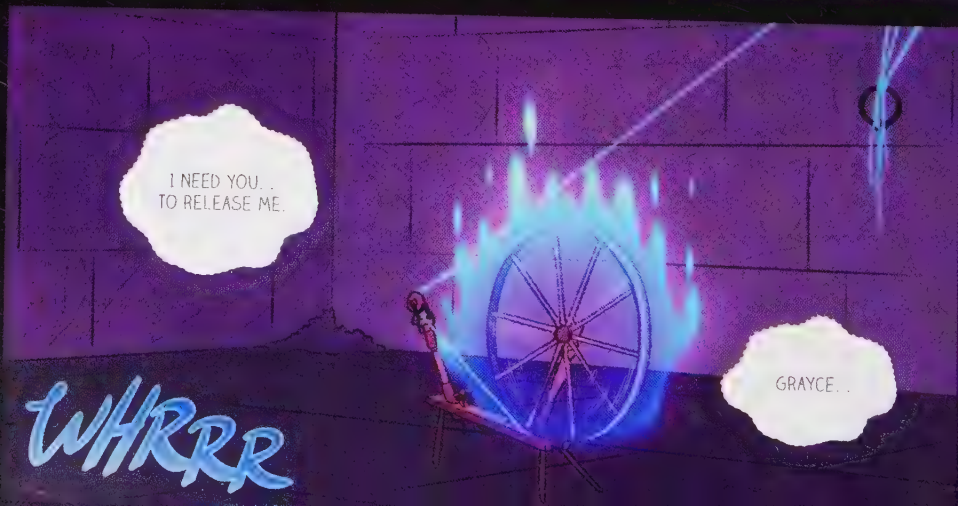


CLACK CLACK

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE

WHO CAN HELP ME

CLACK CLACK



I NEED YOU... TO RELEASE ME.

WHRRRR

GRAYCE...



CLACK

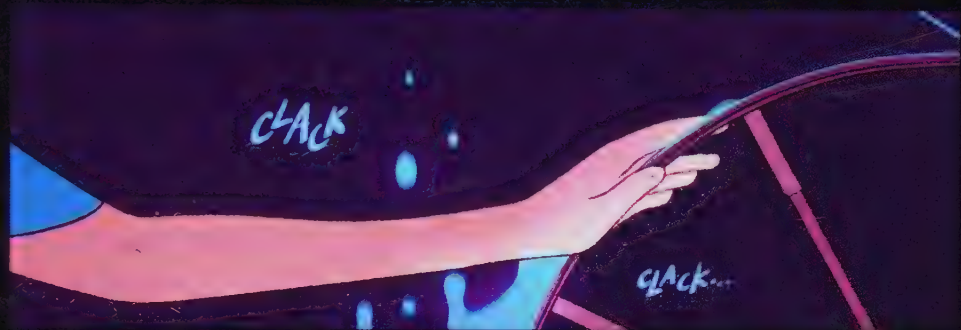
hic


REYDEN...

CLACK

WHRRRR







"... IT'S UP TO YOU."

A man with a black mohawk and a woman with long black hair are shown from the chest up, embracing each other. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right, her arms around his neck. They are both looking towards the right. The background is a dark, textured purple.



IT'S NOT OVER, HAWKE.

A woman is shown from the chest up, facing away from the viewer. She has long black hair tied in a ponytail. She is wearing a blue, off-the-shoulder top with a purple strap across her chest. Her hands are tucked into a purple bag or pocket. The background is a dark, textured purple.



...?

A man with a black mohawk is shown from the chest up, looking down and to the right with a distressed expression. He has his arms crossed over his chest. The background is a dark, textured purple.



THE TAPESTRY
SHOWS THE TRUE
LORD AND HEIR.





Rayzer
1922-1987

Kathrin
1925-1988

Heywood
1951-1986

Therese
1923-1993

Rayden
1943-1996

Hawke

Elnor
1903-1981

Grayson
1903-1981

Mirelle
1923-1988

Nadine Berens
1918-1984

Lark
1918-1992

Charles
1940-1986

Thom
1942-1989

Cris
1943-1988

Winn
1914-1986

Lola
1902-1982

Helen
1907-1983

Frank
1907-1980

Mable
1914-1980

Sam
1915-1978

Loretta
1912-1977



IT'S NOT
SUNRISE YET.

...



... WE CAN
STILL STOP
HER.



WE CAN STOP
MIRELLE. REVEAL
EVERYTHING
SHE'S DONE.

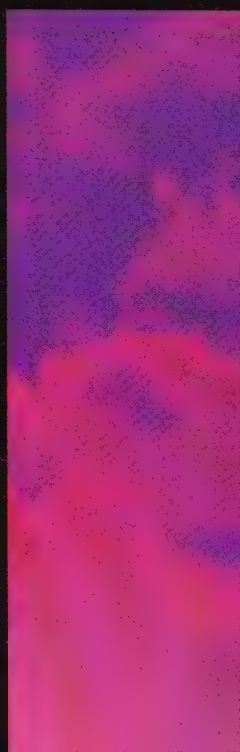
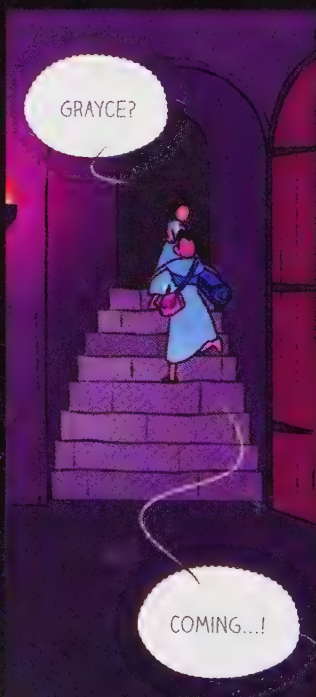
...WE CAN
TAKE BACK
OUR HOME.



TIME TO
PUT YOUR
DRESS BACK
ON...




I KNOW
HOW TO GET
US INTO THE
CORONATION.





G-GOOD MORNING!

WE'VE, UM, BROUGHT THE NEW TAPESTRY, AS REQUESTED!

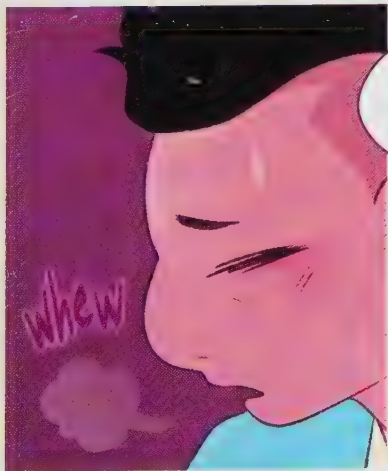


OUR SISTER WEAVERS HAVE BEEN WORKING VERY HARD TO FINISH BEFORE THE CEREMONY...




EH?

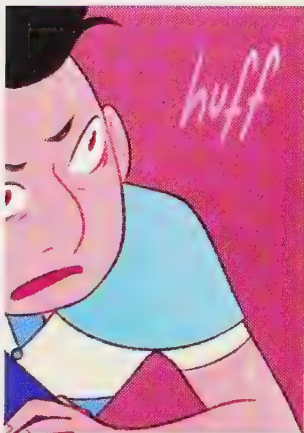
OH, YOU TWO PART OF LAST NIGHT'S BLESSING?



SURE, SURE, RIGHT.

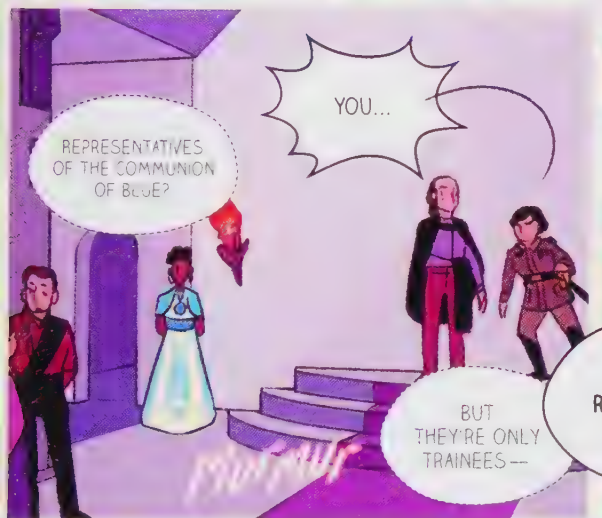


BETTER GET A MOVE ON, THOUGH...





WHO—



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNION OF BLUE?

YOU...

BUT THEY'RE ONLY TRAINEES—



I DO NOT REPRESENT THE COMMUNION!



I AM HAWKE, SON OF ELENOR, GRANDSON OF THE LATE LORD HEYWOOD—

I REPRESENT HOUSE SUNDERLAY!



HAWKE...?

IS THAT — GRAYSON?!

DISGUISES?!



AH...

THE TWINS — YOU'RE ALIVE?!

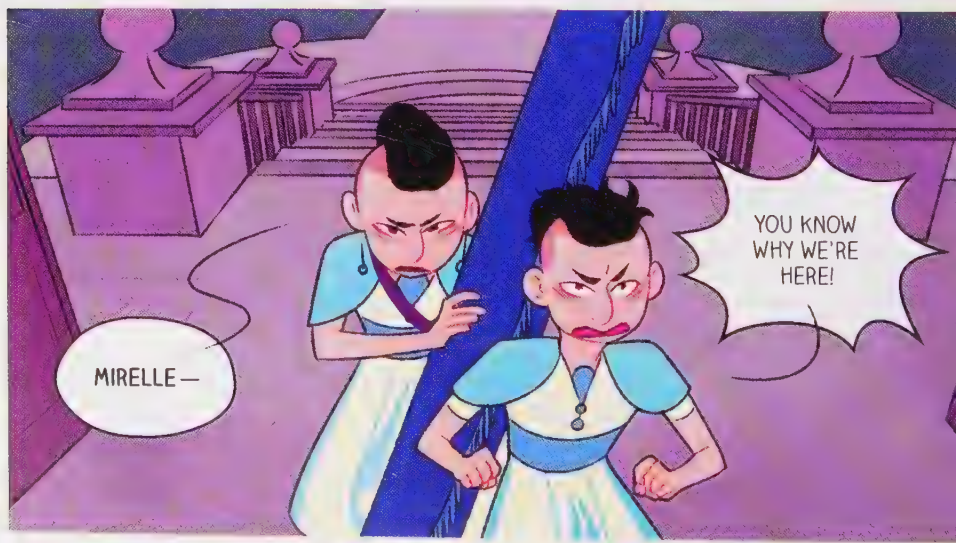


BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?



YES... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



MIRELLE —

YOU KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE!





BUT IT'S NOT
GONNA WORK,
MIRELLE.

THE TAPESTRY
SHOWS THE TRUE
LORD AND HEIR OF
HOUSE SUNDERLAY.

STEP
DOWN.



SO THAT'S
WHERE THAT
ENDED UP.

YOU THINK
THIS IS SO
SIMPLE, DON'T
YOU...?

CHILDREN WILL
NEVER UNDERSTAND
THE INTRICACIES OF
GOVERNING A CITY.

STOP
EMBARRASSING
YOURSELVES.



AUDREN!


WHY ARE
YOU HELPING
HER?!

THE
COMMUNION
IS SUPPOSED TO
STAY OUT OF
POLITICS!



STAY OUT OF
POLITICS?

YOU ARE
NAIVE!



THE SISTERS OF
THE ORDER ARE
WOVEN INTO EVERY
NOBLE HOUSE
IN THE CITY.

THIS IS FAR
BIGGER THAN
YOU REALIZE.

ENOUGH
TALK.

HAND OVER
THE TAPESTRY.
NOW.

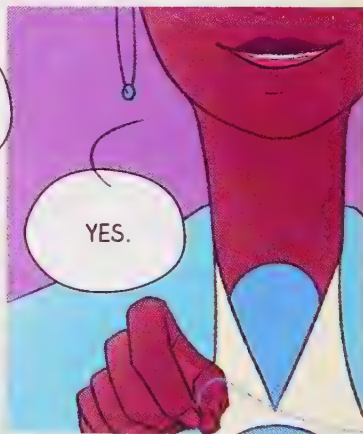


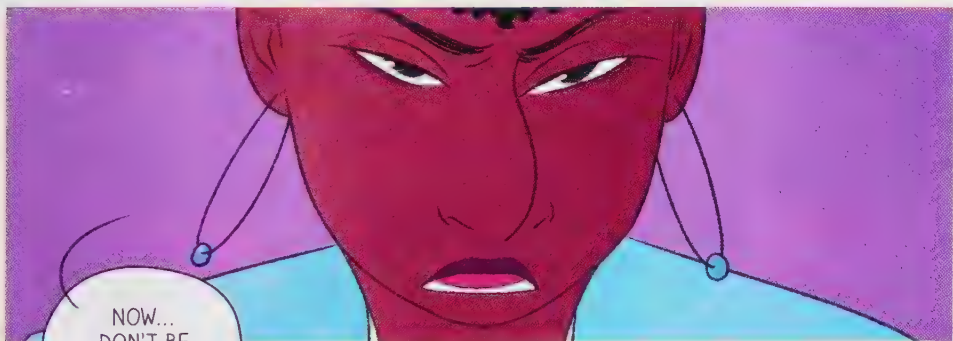
WHY?

SO YOU CAN
DESTROY THIS
ONE TOO?

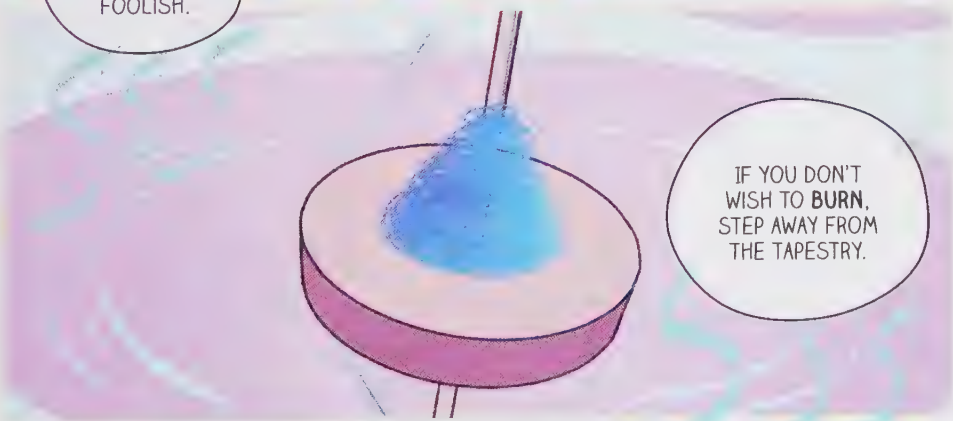


GRIP

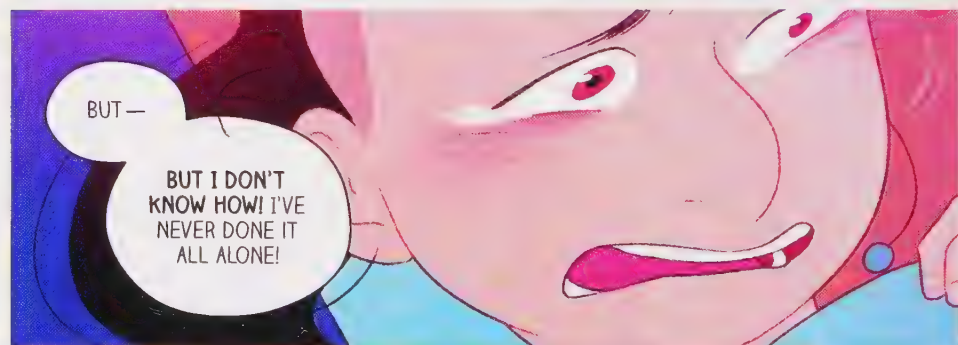




NOW...
DON'T BE
FOOLISH.



IF YOU DON'T
WISH TO **BURN**,
STEP AWAY FROM
THE TAPESTRY.





DASH
DASH
DASH



CLANG

NOT SO FAST, LITTLE COUSIN.



stagger

AUGH!



MIRELLE!



crackle

crackle



COME ON...

nigh



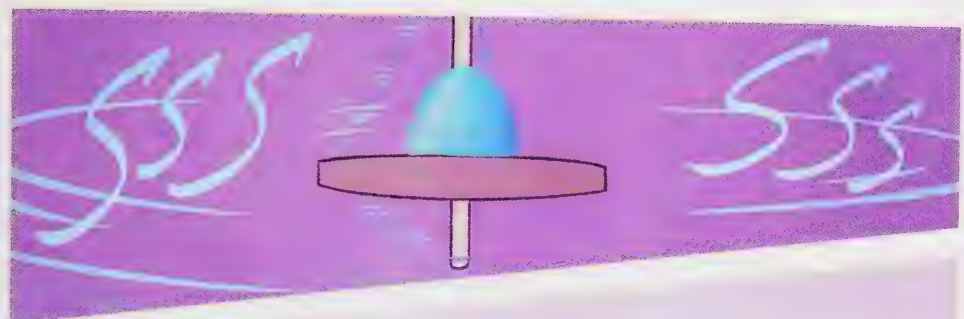
bounce
bounce

COME ON...



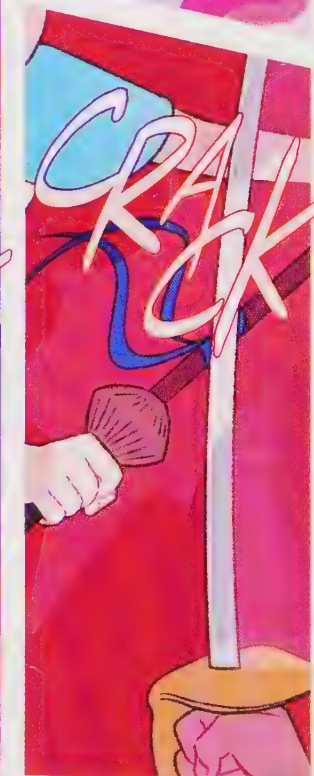
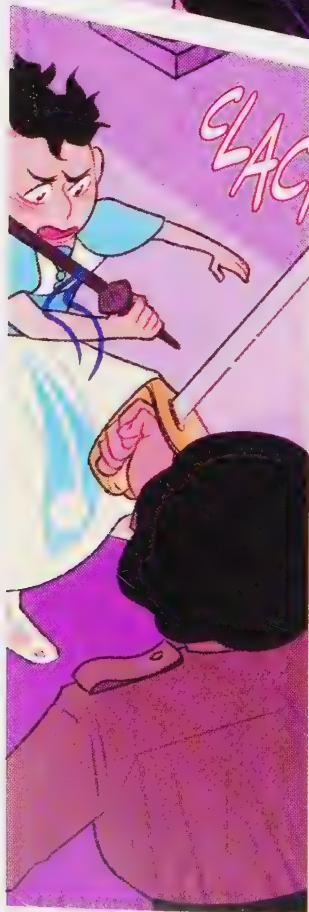
WATER...!

huff







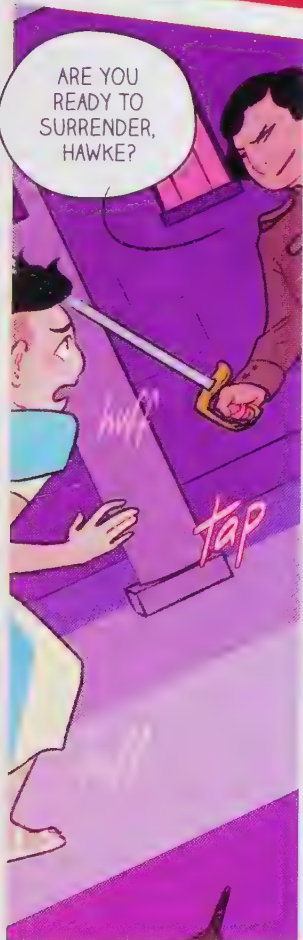




NNGH—

WAAH!

Flying



ARE YOU READY TO SURRENDER, HAWKE?

tap



YOU WISH!

tap



JUST ONE...
MORE...

tap





WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

HE'S A CHILD—
GET UP! WE HAVE
A JOB TO FINISH!



!



GRAYCE!
NOW!

GRAYCE—

I KNOW!

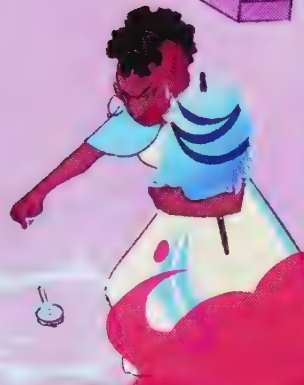


Shhh



Crackle

Crackle



WE WON'T LET YOU WIN!





SPLASH



AARGH!

CRASHH



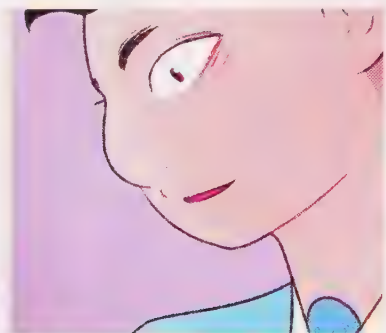
NGH...



urk

shnk





...BOYS!





I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE SAFE—

IS IT TRUE...? REYDEN WAS FRAMED?



LOOK AT YOU!

I BARELY RECOGNIZED YOU!



THERE—

Reyden

SHFF

Kathrin
1550-1412

MURMUR

1371-1371

Myrie
1308-1417

MURMUR

Heywood
1363-1446

Nadine
1383-1386

Berrie
1385-1432

Lind
1394-1442

Mirelle

Simman
1414-1446

Thom
1417-1417

Elenor
1403-1439

Throulin
1401-1439

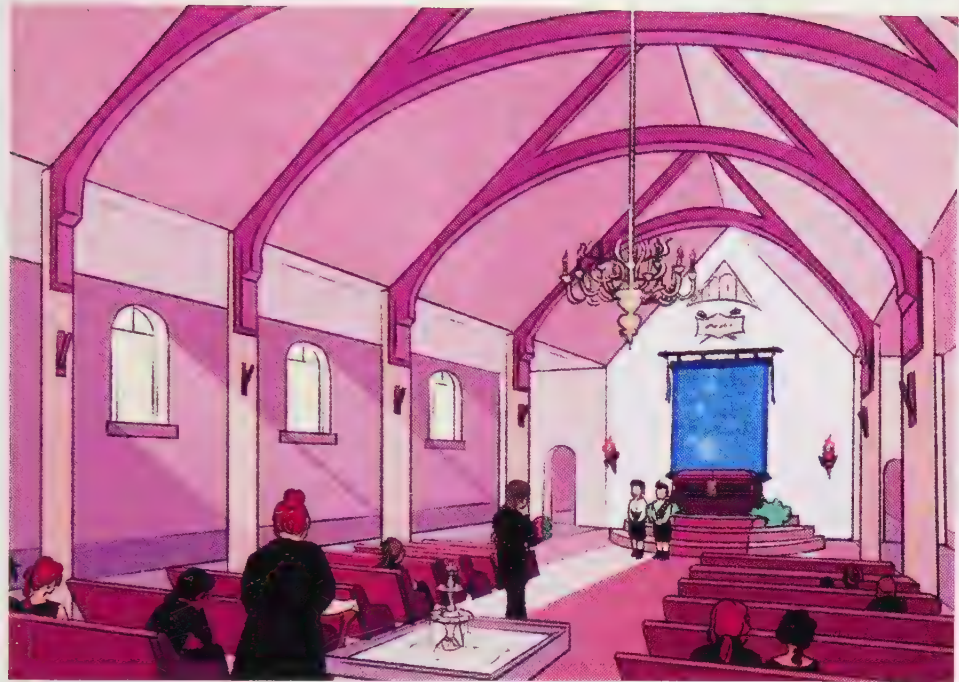
Groyson

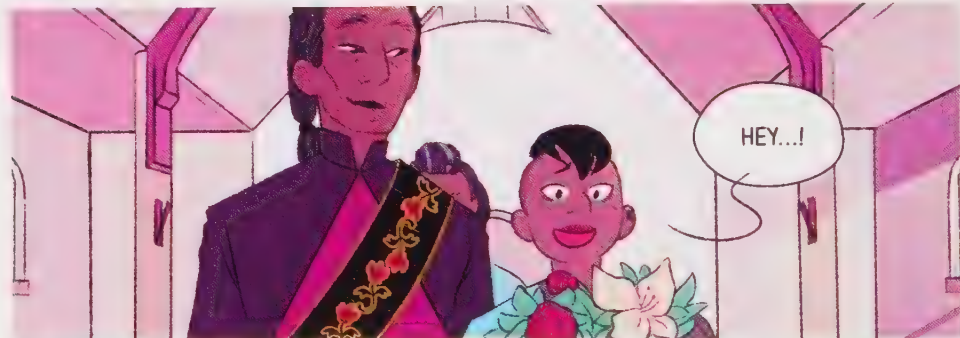
Reyden
1423-1446

Hawke

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

THE NEW LORD OF HOUSE SUNDERLAY...



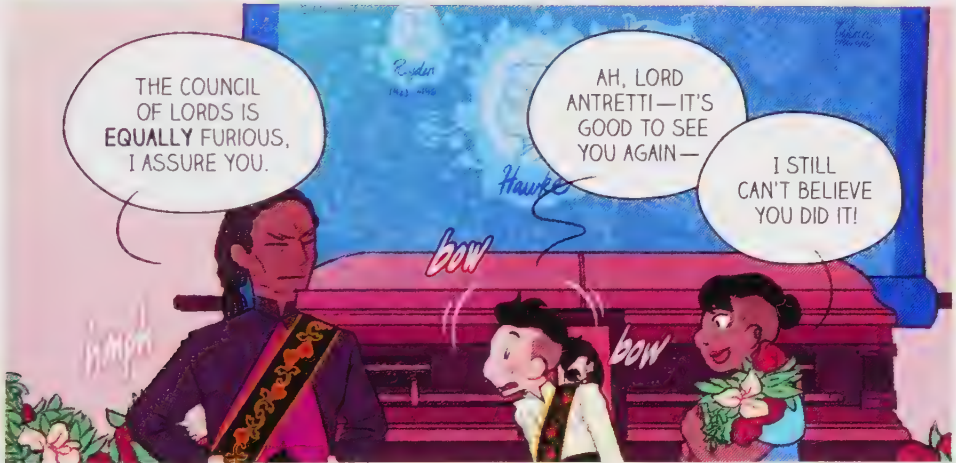




I GUESS THE TRIAL WILL BE IN A FEW WEEKS...

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE COMMUNION WERE FURIOUS WHEN THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT EVERYTHING.



THE COUNCIL OF LORDS IS EQUALLY FURIOUS, I ASSURE YOU.

AH, LORD ANTRETTI—IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN—

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID IT!



WHAT, YOU THOUGHT I COULDN'T PULL IT OFF?

PIECE OF CAKE!



SERIOUSLY, THOUGH... I BARELY DID ANYTHING.

YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN IT. THE SPINNING—



HEY...

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WERE AMAZING...



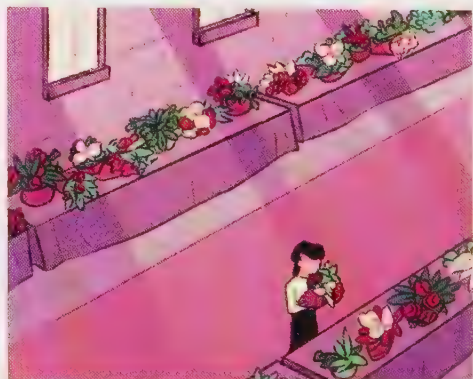
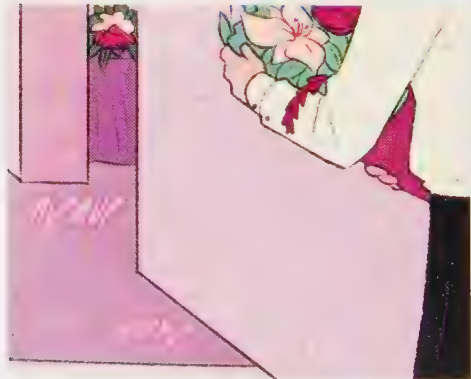
I'LL GO FIND SOMEPLACE TO PUT THIS.



WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON THE COUNCIL SOON.

Y-YES! MY CORONATION'S NEXT WEEK!

Hawke







I'M—I'M
SORRY—

I WAS
JUST...

RIB
RIB



I'M THE ONE
WHO SHOULD BE
APOLOGIZING...

WE DIDN'T
REALIZE WHAT
MIRELLE HAD
DONE...I'M SO
SORRY.



YOU—YOU
COULDN'T HAVE
KNOWN!

YOU—YOU
WELCOMED US
AND TOOK US IN
AND WE LIED TO
YOU—



LIED...?


GRAYCE...WE'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR
YOUR RETURN.




YOUR TRAINING
STILL ISN'T
COMPLETE.



WH-WHAT?



BUT...BUT
I CAN'T.



YOU
KNOW WHO
I AM NOW.

YOU KNOW
ABOUT HAWKE
AND ME.

YOU KNOW
I'M—

GRAYCE...

THE
COMMUNION
OF BLUE IS A
SANCTUARY...

THERE HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN GIRLS WHO'VE
FOUND THEIR WAY
TO US...AND THERE
ALWAYS WILL BE.

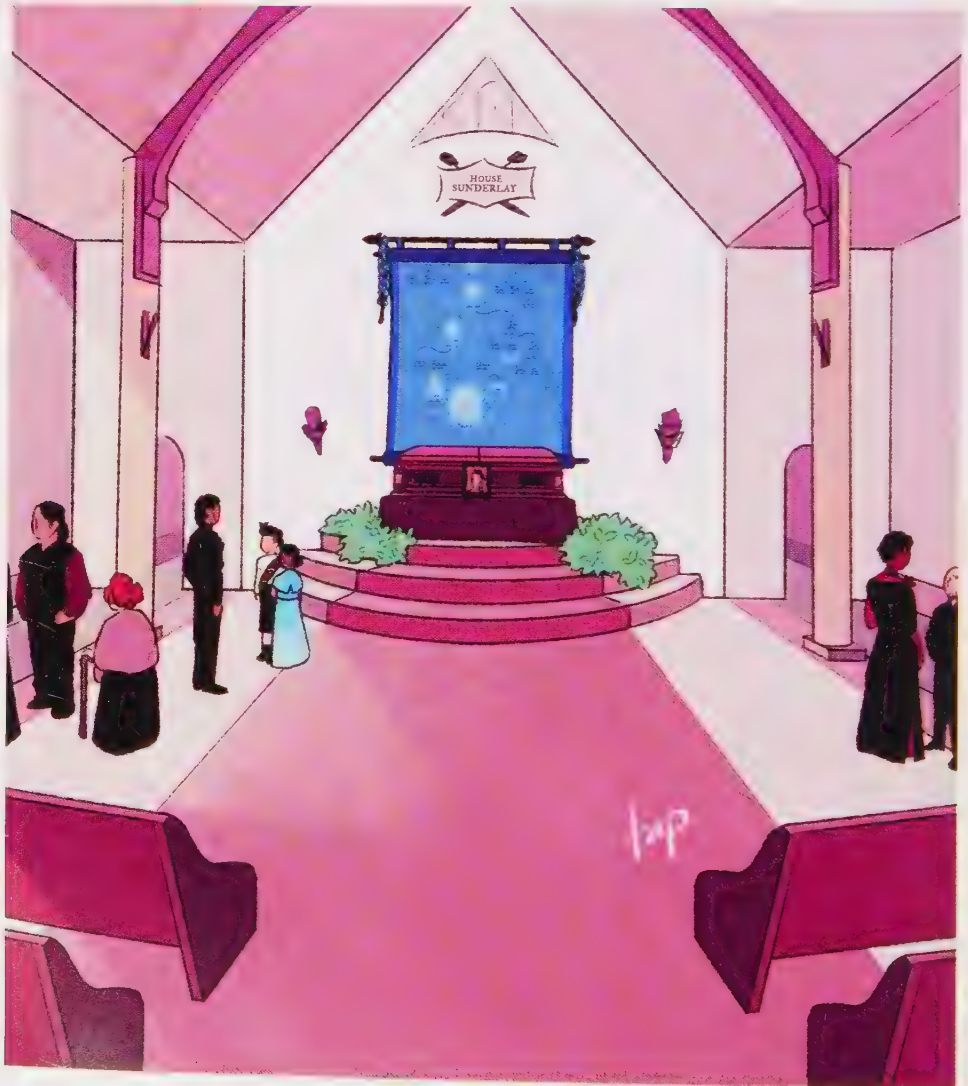
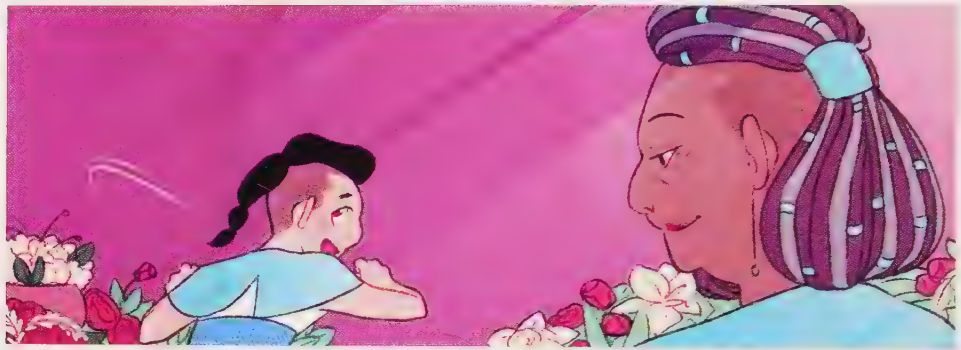


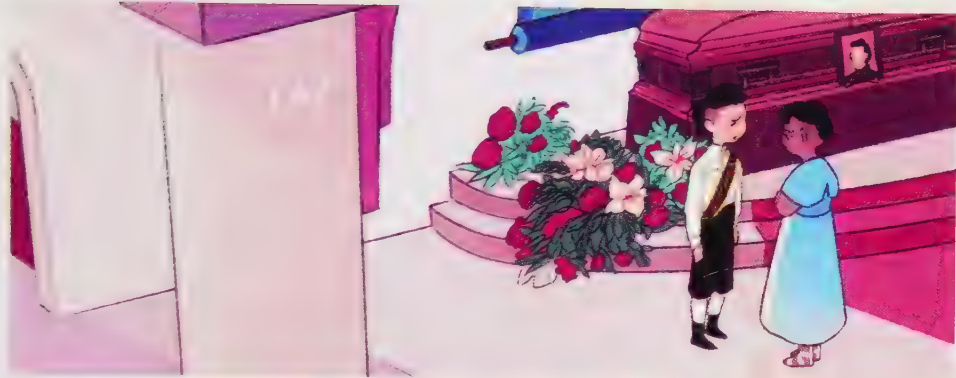
IF YOU WISH
TO RETURN...



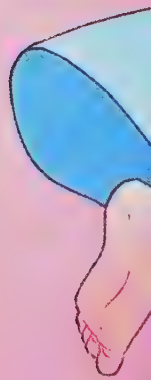
...WE WILL
WELCOME YOU
HOME.





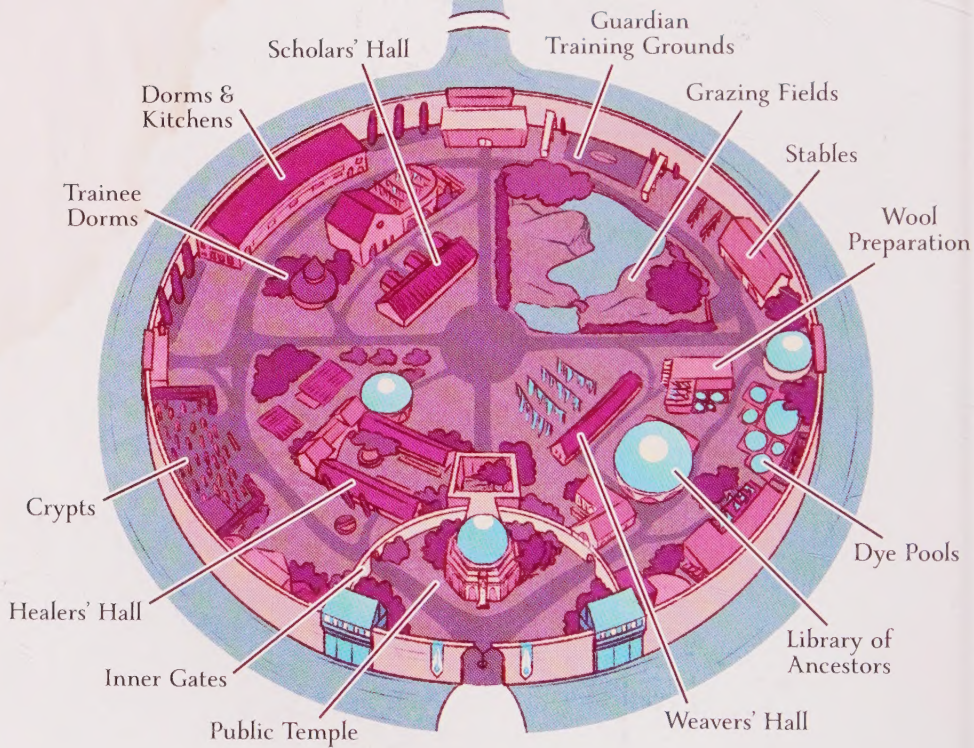


THE END





COMMUNION OF BLUE



wool roving



spindle



distaff



Kerstin Wolff



Niki Smith is a cartoonist based out of Munich. She is

33029107971897

Literary Award-winning author for *Crossplay*, digitally published by DC Comics and The Nib, and has contributed to the Lambda Literary Award-winning *Beyond* anthology. This is her debut trade graphic novel.

SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 3 0 2 9 1 0 7 9 7 1 8 9 7

Follow the winds. You know the way.
Find strength in each other.

After a terrible political coup usurps their noble house, Hawke and Grayson flee to stay alive and assume new identities, Hanna and Grayce. Desperation and chance lead them to the Communion of Blue, an order of magical women who spin the threads of reality to their will.

As the twins learn more about the Communion, and themselves, they begin to hatch a plan to avenge their family and retake their royal home. While Hawke wants to return to his old life, Grayce struggles to keep the threads of their new life from unraveling and realizes she wants to stay in the one place that will allow her to finally live as a girl.

VISIT US AT
LBYR.com

#TheDeepandDarkBlue

Jacket art © 2020 by Niki Smith
Jacket design by Ching Chan
Jacket © 2020 Hachette Book Group, Inc.
Printed in China

\$12.99 U.S. / \$16.99 CAN.

ISBN 978-0-316-48601-9



EAN

9 780316 486019

5 1 2 9 9 >

