

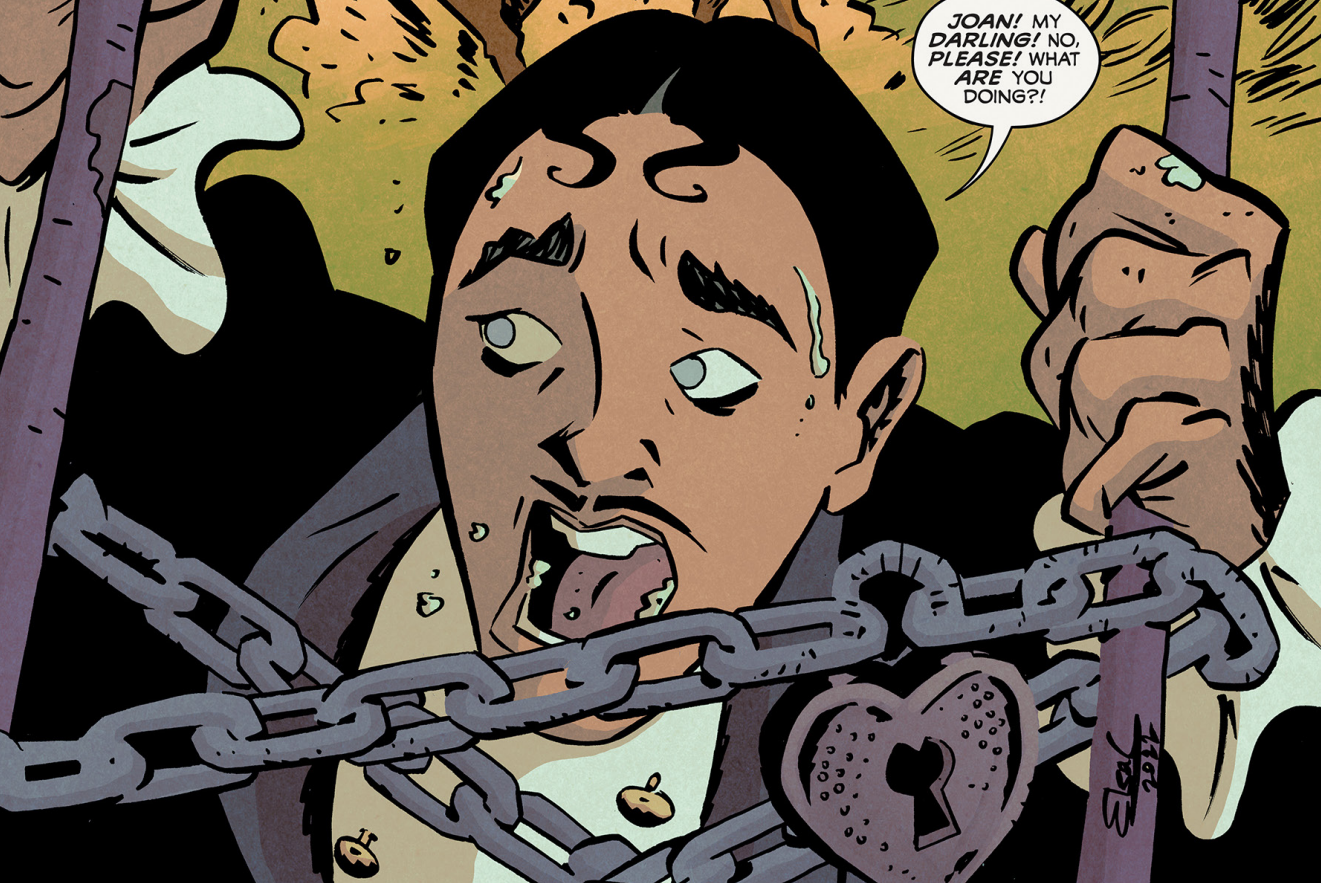
King Charretier Hollingsworth Cowles

LOVE issue 2 EVERLASTING

ROGER, I
LOVE YOU! BUT
AT SOME POINT
LOVE HAS TO
DIE! AND SO
DO YOU!

"THE HUNT
FOR LOVE!"

JOAN! MY
DARLING! NO,
PLEASE! WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!



I WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THE NURSEMAID. HE WAS THE SON OF THE LORD OF THE HOUSE. CLASS AND WEALTH SEPARATED US. AND YET WE BOTH WERE BOUND TOGETHER BY ONE THING...

THE HUNT FOR LOVE!

Chapter 1

JOAN, *DARLING*, PLEASE! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT NOTHING ELSE MATTERS?! NOT MY FATHER! NOT MY POSITION! NOT THIS HOUSE!

THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS--IS YOU!

ALL THESE YEARS! IT'S WHAT I'VE *ALWAYS* WANTED TO HEAR! AND YET I KNOW, EVEN IF HE BELIEVES IT'S TRUE, IT'S ALL A LIE!



TOM KING
writer

ELSA CHARRETIER
artist

MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
colorist

CLAYTON COWLES
letterer

THIS IS THE ABBEY INTO WHICH I WAS BORN AND IN WHICH I WAS RAISED.

HUMBLY KNOWN AS HILL HOUSE, IT SITS ON THOUSANDS OF ACRES AND IS HOME TO GENERATIONS OF NOBILITY, THE LORDS AND LADIES OF WESTSHIRE.

THOUGH THIS WAS AND ALWAYS WILL BE MY HOME, I MYSELF WAS NOT OF SUCH HIGH BLOOD. I WAS MERELY, BUT PROUDLY, THE DAUGHTER OF THE NURSEMAID.

MY PRETTY LITTLE GIRL, LOOK AT YOU, YOU LOOK JUST LIKE ME MUM. IT'S LIKE LOOKING BACK IN TIME, ISN'T IT?

WE'LL HAVE TO CALL YOU **JOAN**, THEN. DON'T SEE A CHOICE ABOUT IT.

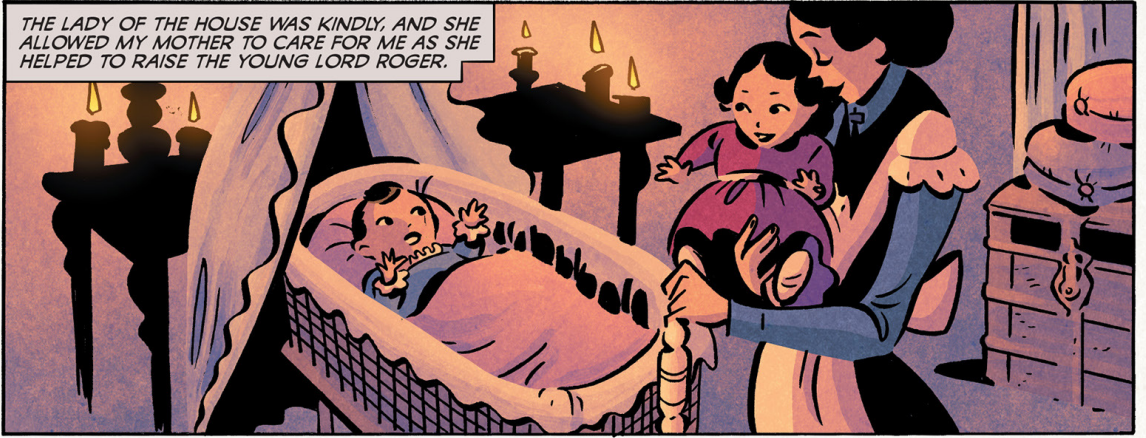
MEANWHILE, ON THAT SAME DAY, AT THAT SAME HOUR, JUST A FEW FLOORS ABOVE, THE LADY OF WESTSHIRE WELCOMED HER FIRSTBORN, THE HEIR TO THE LAND AND HEARTH.

THERE, YOU SEE, A BOY, AS PROMISED.

OUR **ROGER**. THE NEXT **ROGER**.

WHAT A LEGACY YOU INHERIT, CHILD, WHAT A LIFE YOU SHALL LEAD.

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE WAS KINDLY, AND SHE ALLOWED MY MOTHER TO CARE FOR ME AS SHE HELPED TO RAISE THE YOUNG LORD ROGER.

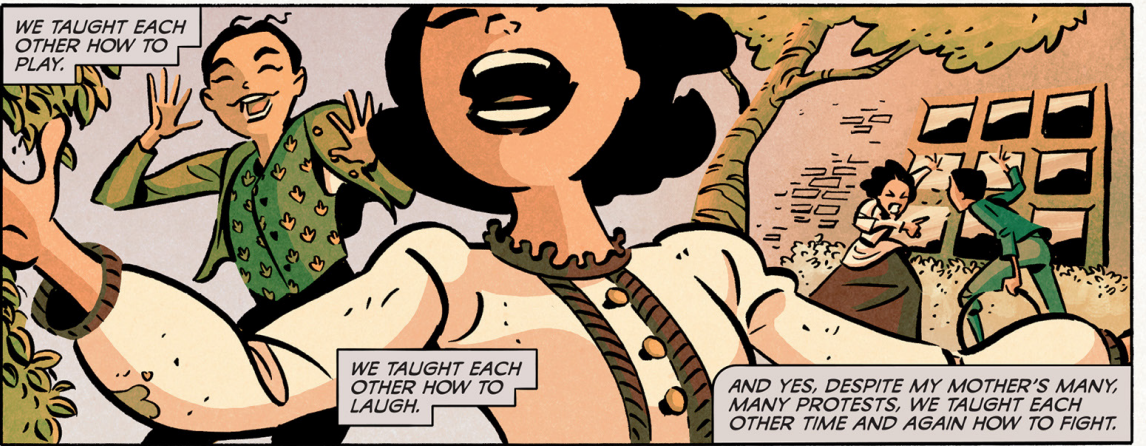


AND IN THAT CONTEXT, WE TOOK OUR FIRST STEPS TOGETHER.



SAID OUR FIRST WORDS TO ONE ANOTHER.

WE TAUGHT EACH OTHER HOW TO PLAY.

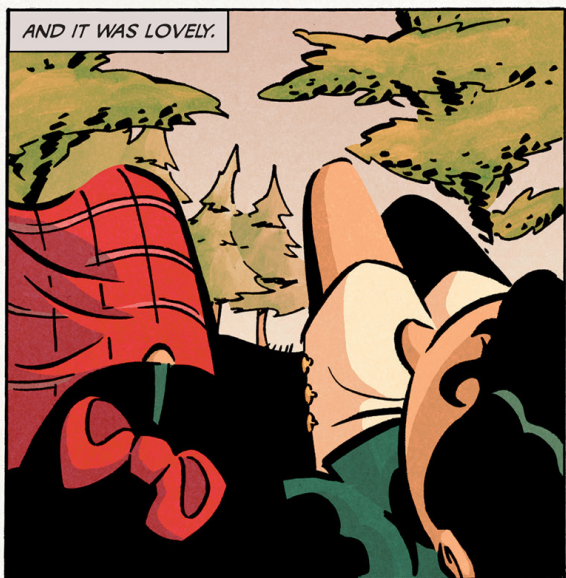


WE TAUGHT EACH OTHER HOW TO LAUGH.

AND YES, DESPITE MY MOTHER'S MANY, MANY PROTESTS, WE TAUGHT EACH OTHER TIME AND AGAIN HOW TO FIGHT.

AND...HOW TO LOVE!

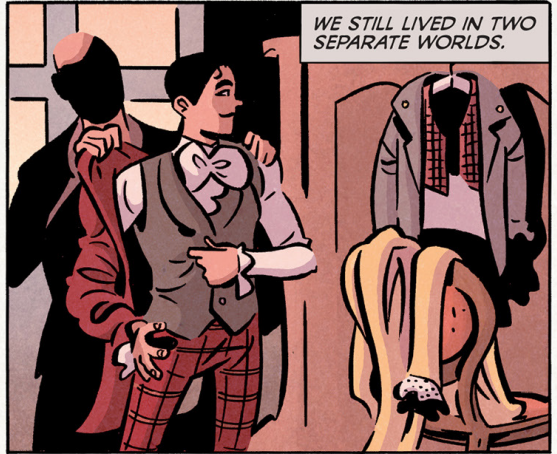




HOWEVER, AS THE YEARS PASSED, WE LEARNED QUICKLY ENOUGH THAT THOUGH WE WERE BORN IN THE SAME ILLUSTRIOUS MANOR...



WE STILL LIVED IN TWO SEPARATE WORLDS.



JOAN!

HELLO, ROGER.



DO YOU LIKE MY NEW OUTFIT? THE BOOTS WERE A GIFT FROM THE KING FOR MY BIRTHDAY. THEY CAME WITH A VERY KIND NOTE WISHING ME WELL.

AND TODAY FATHER IS TAKING ME ON MY FIRST HUNT, ISN'T THAT JUST THRILLING, JOAN?

OH, IT'S SO WONDERFUL, ROGER! I BET YOU CATCH FORTY PHEASANTS! AT LEAST!

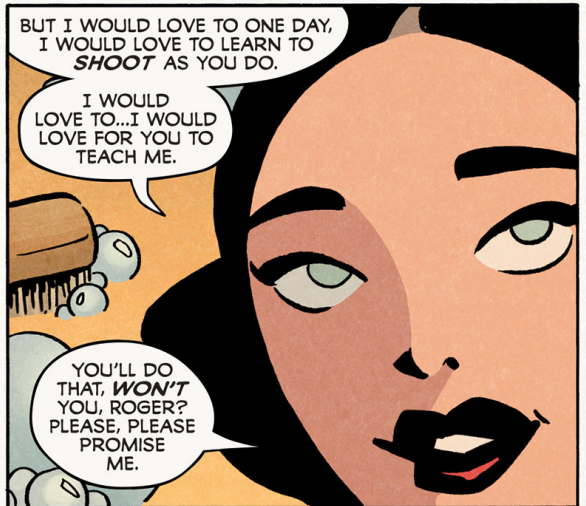


I WISH YOU COULD COME, I DO. I AM SO USED TO HAVING YOU BY MY SIDE. NOTHING FEELS QUITE RIGHT WITHOUT YOU.

DON'T BE SILLY.

ANGELICA IS ILL AND I HAVE TO PREPARE THE CURTAINS IN THE GRAND HALL ON MY OWN.

IT WILL TAKE HOURS. NOT THAT...



BUT I WOULD LOVE TO ONE DAY, I WOULD LOVE TO LEARN TO SHOOT AS YOU DO.

I WOULD LOVE TO...I WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO TEACH ME.

YOU'LL DO THAT, WON'T YOU, ROGER? PLEASE, PLEASE PROMISE ME.

AND SO THE DAYS SLIPPED BY, AND WE EACH MET THE OBLIGATIONS ASSIGNED TO US AT BIRTH.

C'MON, CHESTER, GIVE IT A GO, OLD BOY. GLORY AWAITS.

ROGER WENT UPON HIS WAY.

AND I WENT UPON MINE.

AREN'T YOU A FILTHY THING? HOW HAVE THEY BEEN TREATING YOU TO GET YOU THIS WAY?

YEARS PASSED, AND I WAS GIVEN A PERMANENT POSITION IN THE HOUSE. MY MOTHER TOLD EVERYONE I WAS BLESSED, FATED EVEN, TO BECOME THE HOUSE-KEEPER OF HILL HOUSE.

IF YOU COULD IMAGINE.

ROGER SEEMED TO GROW MORE CONFIDENT (AND MORE DASHING!) EACH DAY.

HIS UNTARNISHED REPUTATION AS A MAN OF AMBITION AND FORTITUDE SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND MANY A GOSSIP WONDERED WHO WOULD BE THE LUCKY LASS TO FINALLY CATCH HIS EYE.

SOON THE LADY WAS ARRANGING FOR DOZENS OF GIRLS FROM THE BEST FAMILIES, FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, TO COME TO HILL HOUSE AND MEET MY ROGER.

I MEAN, AND MEET HER ROGER.

OF COURSE THAT'S WHAT I MEAN. HOW STUPID OF ME.



BUT THEN AGAIN...

JOAN...



ROGER?

JOAN, I...I WAS WONDERING... WELL, I'M SORRY TO...

BUT...BUT YOU SEE...I REMEMBER I...I DID **PROMISE** YOU... A WHILE BACK...TOO LONG, REALLY...BUT I SAID...IF YOU...I'VE BEEN THINKING ON IT...

WELL, I HAD SOME TIME AND...AND I THOUGHT PERHAPS WE MIGHT...



IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, ROGER?

YOU LOOK FLUSHED.



JOAN, WOULD YOU...COULD YOU...

I...I WOULD BE HAPPY IF I MIGHT SHOW YOU HOW TO SHOOT, TAKE YOU **NOW**, IN FACT.

YOU DID SAY YOU **WANTED** TO LEARN, JOAN. DIDN'T YOU?



OH, YES, VERY MUCH.

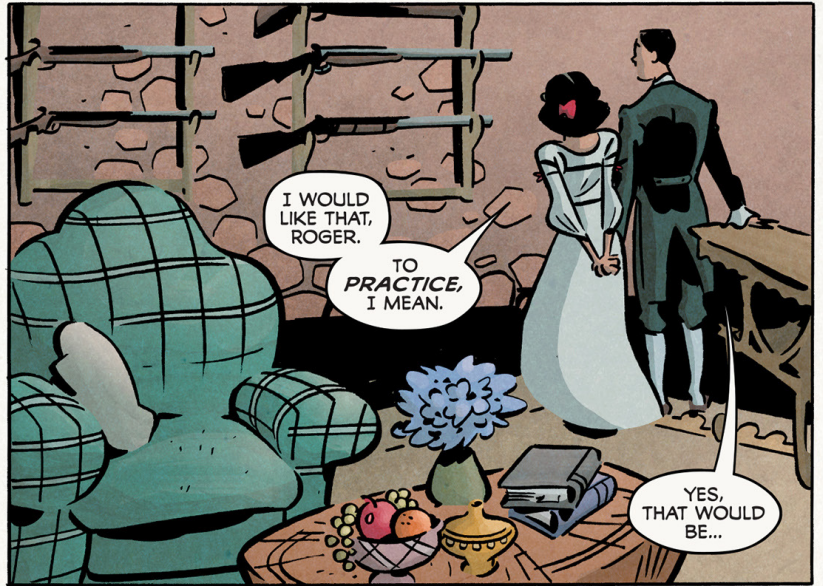


JOLLY! THAT'S...

THAT'S JUST JOLLY!

ROGER TOOK ME TO A SMALL COTTAGE HALF A MILE FROM THE HOUSE, NEAR THE EDGE OF THE WEST FOREST.

THEY KEPT THE SHOTGUNS HERE, HE EXPLAINED POLITELY, AND WE COULD TAKE THEM AND GO TO THE WOODS AND PRACTICE.

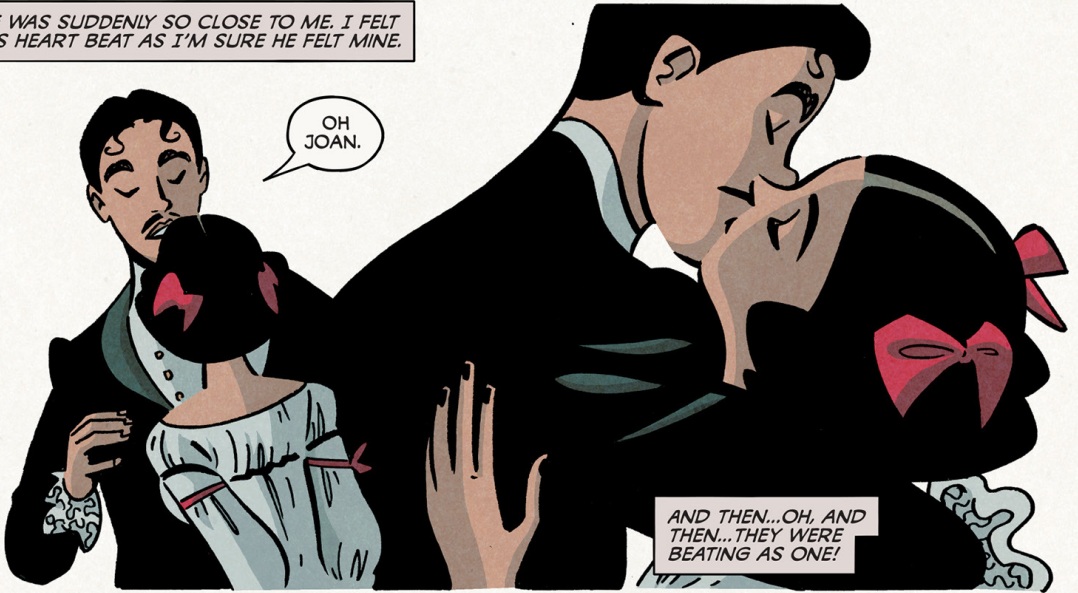


I WOULD LIKE THAT, ROGER.

TO PRACTICE, I MEAN.

YES, THAT WOULD BE...

HE WAS SUDDENLY SO CLOSE TO ME. I FELT HIS HEART BEAT AS I'M SURE HE FELT MINE.



OH JOAN.

AND THEN...OH, AND THEN...THEY WERE BEATING AS ONE!



WELL? HOW...

IF YOU START IN WITH THE LAUGHING, JOAN DARLING, I'M JUST GOING TO ABOUT DIE!



NO.

NO, NO, NO, MY SWEET, MY OWN, MY ROGER. THAT WAS DIVINE.

BUT WEREN'T WE HERE FOR THE SHOOTING?

HIS LIPS UPON MINE, I SHOULD'VE FELT SAFE, SECURE, AS IF ALL THE PROBLEMS OF YESTERDAY WERE MERE SOAP BUBBLES, SO EASILY POPPED AS WE REACHED OUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER. BUT INSTEAD I KNEW WE WERE JUST AT THE BEGINNING OF...

THE HUNT FOR LOVE!

Chapter 2



ROGER!
MY SON! MY
BOY!

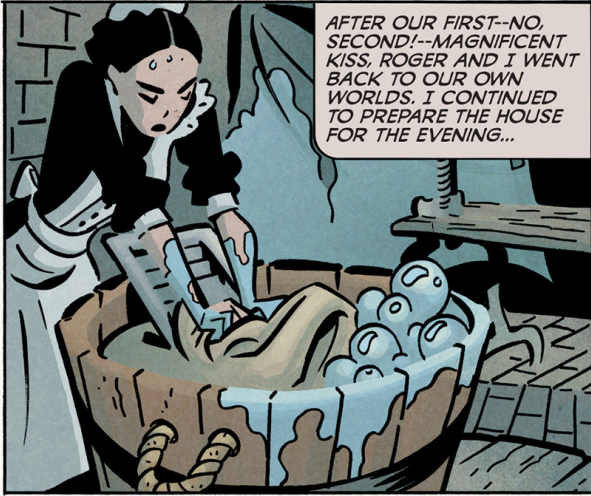
HOW COULD
YOU SHAME
OUR
FAMILY LIKE THIS?!
HOW COULD YOU
BETRAY WHO
YOU ARE?!

TOM KING
writer

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colorist

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letterer



AFTER OUR FIRST--NO, SECOND!--MAGNIFICENT KISS, ROGER AND I WENT BACK TO OUR OWN WORLDS. I CONTINUED TO PREPARE THE HOUSE FOR THE EVENING...



AND HE CONTINUED TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR THE GLORIOUS DESTINY THAT HAD AWAITED HIM SINCE BEFORE HIS BIRTH.



WHENEVER WE'D SEE EACH OTHER, IT WAS ALL HANDLED VERY FORMALLY. IF ANYTHING, IT WAS PERHAPS A BIT MORE STIFF AND REHEARSED THAN BEFORE.

MISS PETERSON.

MY LORD.



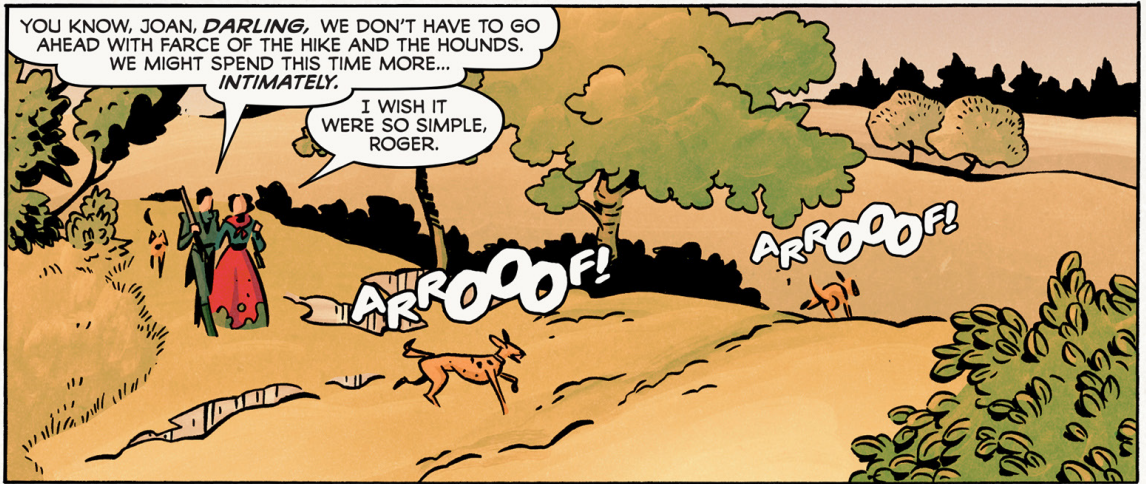
BUT EVERY FEW DAYS, HE'D COME TO ME AND OFFER ME A "HUNTING LESSON," AND WE'D DASH OFF TO THE SMALL COTTAGE WITH ALL THE GUNS.

HURRY, DARLING, THE HOURS ARE NOT AS LONG AS THEY SEEM!

OH, ROGER, REALLY!



AND THERE WE'D FIND OUR SANCTUARY AND WE'D AGAIN SHARE OUR KISSES.



YOU KNOW, JOAN, *DARLING*, WE DON'T HAVE TO GO AHEAD WITH FARCE OF THE HIKE AND THE HOUNDS. WE MIGHT SPEND THIS TIME MORE... *INTIMATELY*.

I WISH IT WERE SO SIMPLE, ROGER.

ARROOF!

ARROOF!



BUT IF WE NEVER LEAVE THE INSIDE OF THAT HOUSE, THEN THIS *FLIMSY* EXCUSE WILL TAKE TO THE WIND FASTER THAN THOSE BIRDS.



NO, EVERYONE THINKS YOU ARE THE *KIND* GENTLEMAN TEACHING AN OLD, *POOR* FRIEND A NEW TRICK.

AND I'M AFRAID WE MUST DO OUR *BEST* TO ACT THAT OUT.

KAPOW



OR RISK *LOSING* IT ALTOGETHER!

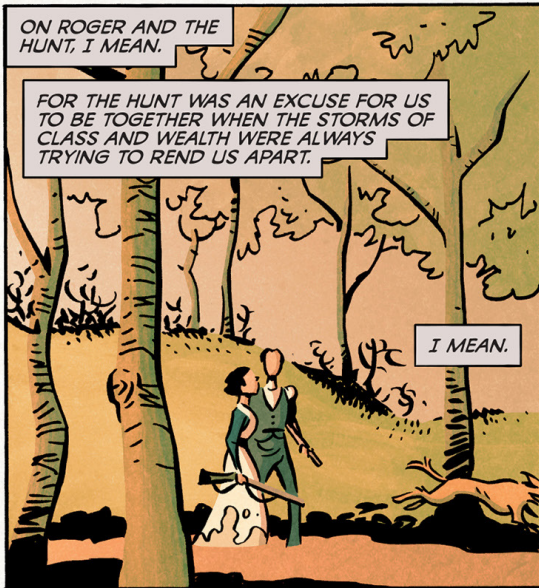


WAS IT NOT A *FINE* SHOT, ROGER?! I AM GETTING *QUITE* GOOD, AREN'T I?

YES, MY *DARLING*. *QUITE*!



WEEKS PASSED, THE HAPPIEST WEEKS OF MY LIFE. IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER IN WHAT DRUDGERY I WAS ENGAGED, FOR MY THOUGHTS WERE ALWAYS ON THE HUNT.



ON ROGER AND THE HUNT, I MEAN.

FOR THE HUNT WAS AN EXCUSE FOR US TO BE TOGETHER WHEN THE STORMS OF CLASS AND WEALTH WERE ALWAYS TRYING TO REND US APART.

I MEAN.



I NEVER WANTED THOSE DAYS TO END.



BUT, SADLY, IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING, YOU KNOW NOTHING IS EVERLASTING.

JOAN!



I SAW YOU WALKING, I WAS BEHIND YOU, LOOKING AT YOU, AND JOAN, I CANNOT DO IT ANYMORE!

I CANNOT LIVE THIS WAY IN MY OWN HOUSE! HIDING LIKE THE PHEASANTS IN THE FIELD! WAITING FOR THE DOGS TO COME!



JOAN DARLING, THE HUNT MUST END!

YOU MUST MARRY ME!

ROGER!

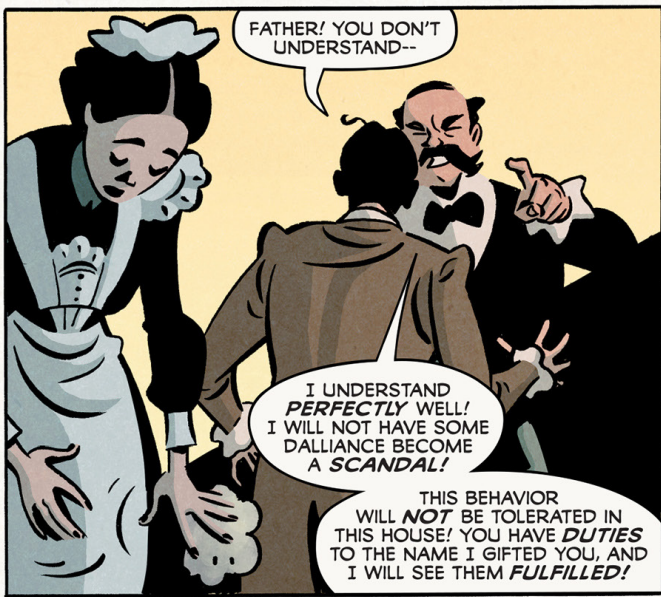
I WAS IN HIS ARMS WHERE I HAD ALWAYS LONGED TO BE, AND IT WAS AGAIN LOVELY, AND YET I COULD FEEL NOTHING BUT FEAR.



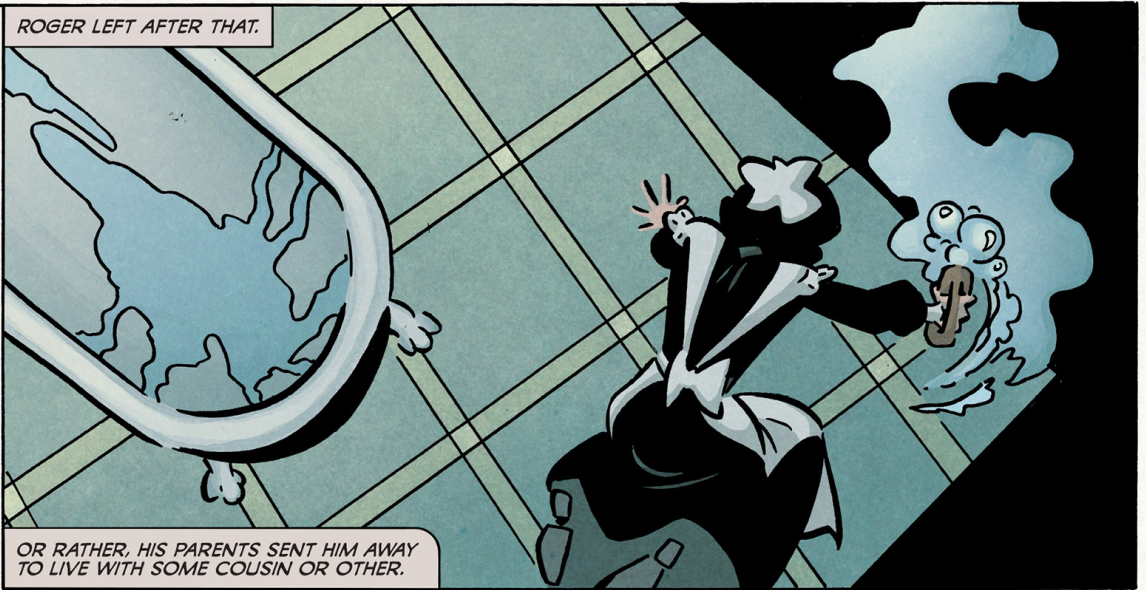
OH, HOW HIS WORDS LIFTED ME, I BEGAN TO FEEL A DASH OF HOPE.



BUT THEN! AT THE DOOR! LORD WESTSHIRE!



ROGER LEFT AFTER THAT.



OR RATHER, HIS PARENTS SENT HIM AWAY TO LIVE WITH SOME COUSIN OR OTHER.

I EXPECTED TO BE LET GO, BUT THE FAMILY WAS DESPERATE TO HIDE ANY HINT OF IMPROPRIETY AND TO SQUASH EVERY RUMOR.



THE DISMISSAL OF THE MAID AT THE SAME TIME AS ROGER'S DEPARTURE COULD BE THE CAUSE OF A GREAT DEAL OF TALK.

AND A GREAT DEAL OF TALK WAS ALWAYS TO BE AVOIDED.

SO I RESUMED MY CHORES, CLEANING HILL HOUSE FOR ALL THE GOOD MEN AND WOMEN WHO LIVED THERE.

ALL OF THOSE RICH, WELLBORN PEOPLE WHO EXPECTED A WELL-KEPT HOUSE.

FOR THEM, I SCRUBBED AND I WASHED AND I FOLDED AND I DUSTED AND I...AND I...

AND I HEARD ROGER'S WORDS, AGAIN AND AGAIN.

"DARLING," HE SAID, "THE HUNT MUST END!"



MONTHS PASSED AND THEN THE DAY CAME, THE DAY I HAD BEEN WAITING FOR SINCE BEFORE I WAS BORN ON THIS GRAND ESTATE.

IT WASN'T MUCH, JUST AN EPISTLE DISCREETLY DELIVERED BY THE MILKMAID, JUST ONE MAGICAL SENTENCE IN THE MIDST OF HIS ORNATE PROCLAMATIONS OF LOVE.

"JOAN, DARLING, MEET ME IN OUR PLACE."

AS SOON AS I WAS ABLE, I RUSHED OUT TO THE HUNTING COTTAGE.

I COULD NOT BELIEVE IT WAS ALL HAPPENING. I HAD DREAMED THIS MOMENT WOULD COME, BUT DREAMS CAN BE SO FAR FROM WHAT IS REAL!

YET THERE IT ALL WAS, ALL LAID OUT FOR ME.

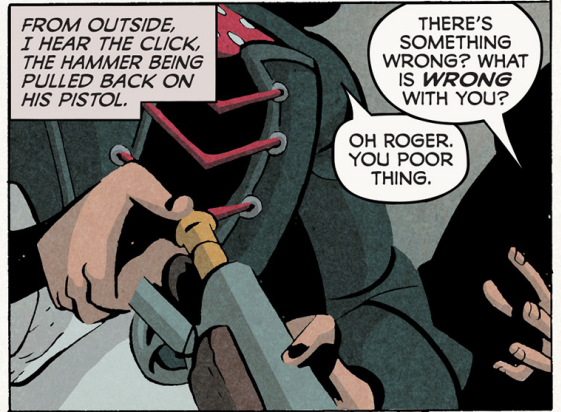
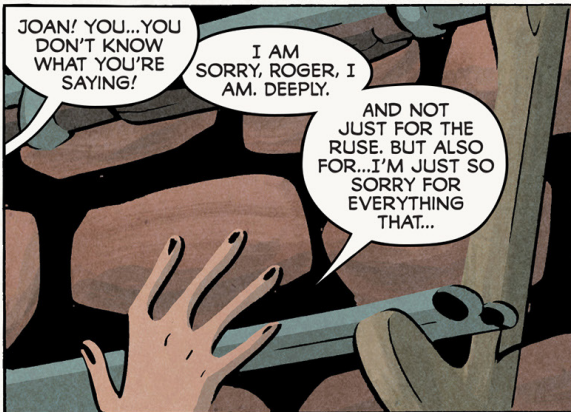
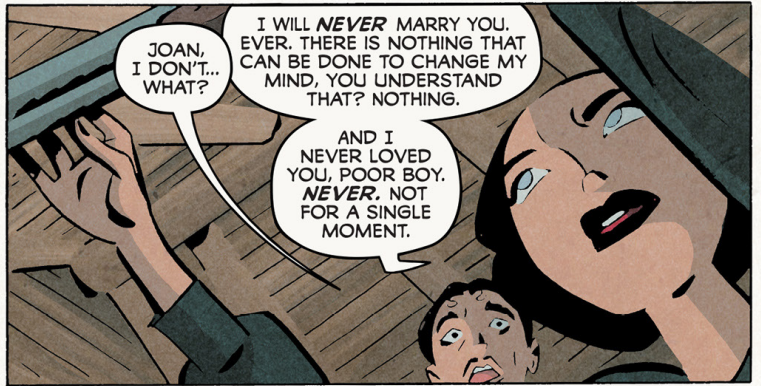
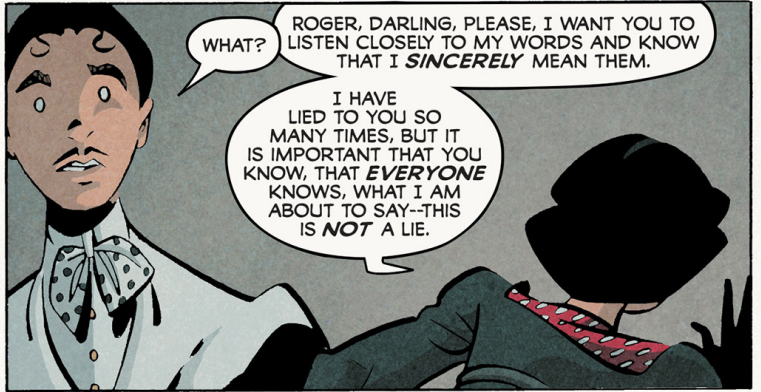
JOAN, MY BLOSSOM, FORGIVE ME, WHEN MY FATHER--

I WAS A COWARD, JOAN! I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT, BUT I'VE RETURNED! I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU! I WILL BE A COWARD NO LONGER!

MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE.

MARRY ME, JOAN! PLEASE, FORGET ALL THE TROUBLES WE'VE HAD OR WILL HAVE AND JUST REMEMBER YOU AND I-- YOU AND I FROM THE BEGINNING AND TO THE END!

MARRY ME, DARLING! MARRY ME!



WITH ROGER BLEEDING BEHIND ME, I COCK THE SHOTGUN AND READY MY NERVES. IT HAS BEEN A LONG, ARDUOUS JOURNEY FROM CHILDHOOD TO HERE, BUT I EXPECTED NOTHING LESS ON...

THE HUNT FOR LOVE!

Chapter 3



WHAT...
WHAT THE
BLOODY @%@\$
IS GOING
ON?

SHUT THE
FUCK UP,
ROGER! YOU'RE
ALREADY
FUCKING
DEAD!

LET ME
WORRY ABOUT
THE LIVING!

TOM KING
writer

ELSA CHARRETIER
artist

MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
colorist

CLAYTON COWLES
letterer



FOLLOW THE PATTERN.

TEN TIMES OUT OF TEN, HE HITS ME ON THE FIRST SHOT.



AND IF I DON'T DIE RIGHT AWAY, HE CHECKS THE KILL AND SHOOTS AGAIN.



JUST WAIT. HAVE PATIENCE.

JOAN... I...I...AM HURT...



HE'S COMING.

ROGER! WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM? SHUT THE FUCK UP.

SERIOUSLY.



HE'S COMING.



THE COWBOY'S HERE.

JOAN, DARLING... TELL MOTHER... TELL HER I LOVED...



I'M USED TO THE KICKBACK.

FUCK YOU!



I KNOW I HAVE A SECOND SHOT.

YOU HEAR, COWBOY?! GO FUCK YOURSELF!



I KNOW HOW TO LOAD IT.

YOU CAN FEEL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE FUCKING SHOT FOR ONCE! YOU WAKE UP SOME OTHER FUCKING PLACE, SOME OTHER FUCKING TIME!

CLICK



THANKS TO ROGER.

I CAN'T DIE, JOAN...I'M... I'M THE HEIR...THEY DEPEND ON...THE WHOLE VILLAGE... DEPENDS...

JOAN... I'M SO... WET...



GOOD AND KIND ROGER.

THAT'S ENOUGH.

IF YOU DON'T SHUT YOUR *FUCKING* MOUTH, ROGER, I'M GOING TO USE THIS GUN TO BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF YOUR BLOODY--

CHKK CHKK

HE SHOULD BE DEAD.



THE COWBOY'S DEAD.



I DID IT. AFTER ALL THESE LIVES.



AND STILL, THE BULLETS RIP THROUGH ME.





I...I... SIR, I... I AM ROGER HENRY CHARLES ANGSTROM... THE... FUTURE... ELEVENTH LORD OF WEST... WESTSHIRE...

WHO...

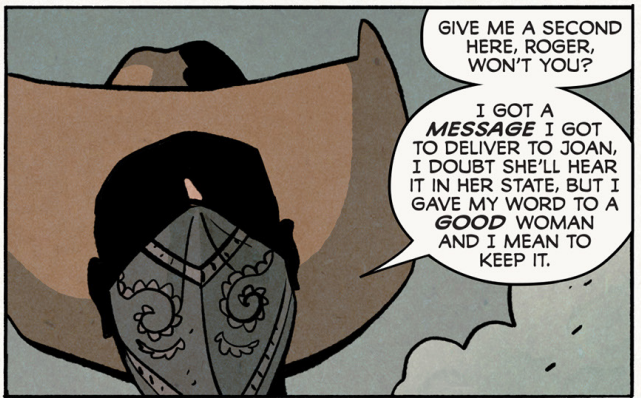


PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, ROGER.

ANY FRIEND OF JOAN'S IS A FRIEND OF MINE. HELL OF A GIRL, THAT JOANIE, AIN'T SHE? SHE GROWS ON YOU FAST, I'LL SAY THAT.



WHAT... I DON'T... WHAT?



GIVE ME A SECOND HERE, ROGER, WON'T YOU?

I GOT A MESSAGE I GOT TO DELIVER TO JOAN. I DOUBT SHE'LL HEAR IT IN HER STATE, BUT I GAVE MY WORD TO A GOOD WOMAN AND I MEAN TO KEEP IT.



JOAN, YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU? LOVE IS--



JOAN! MY DARLING!



ROGER, NOW WHAT IN ALL *TARNATION* ARE YOU DOING THERE?

IF YOU SCREAM LIKE THAT, ALL *LOUD* LIKE, YOU THINK JOAN'S GOING TO HEAR A DAMN THING I HAVE TO SAY?

THIS IS *IMPORTANT*, BOY, KEEP YOUR LIPS TIED.



I MEAN, JESUS, ROGER. DON'T--

HEY, COWBOY... DIDN'T YOU HEAR...?



THE HUNT'S DONE.

THERE.



WHAT...YOU'RE HURT...WE'RE... OH JOAN...OH GOD...

WHAT...WHAT HAS HAPPENED... I'M DYING...JOAN... WE'RE...DYING...



I THOUGHT...I CAME TO TELL YOU...WE SHOULD BE...I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE... I LOVE YOU... JOAN...MY DARLING JOAN, I'VE ALWAYS... ALWAYS...

I... I...LOVE YOU...



ALL THAT... MATTERS...THIS ISN'T...

IT'S THAT WE...WE ARE... YOU AND...JOAN, DARLING...OUR... LOVE...

ONLY LOVE... MATTERS...



TO BE CONTINUED.