

LOVE EVERLASTING

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Charretier

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Cowles

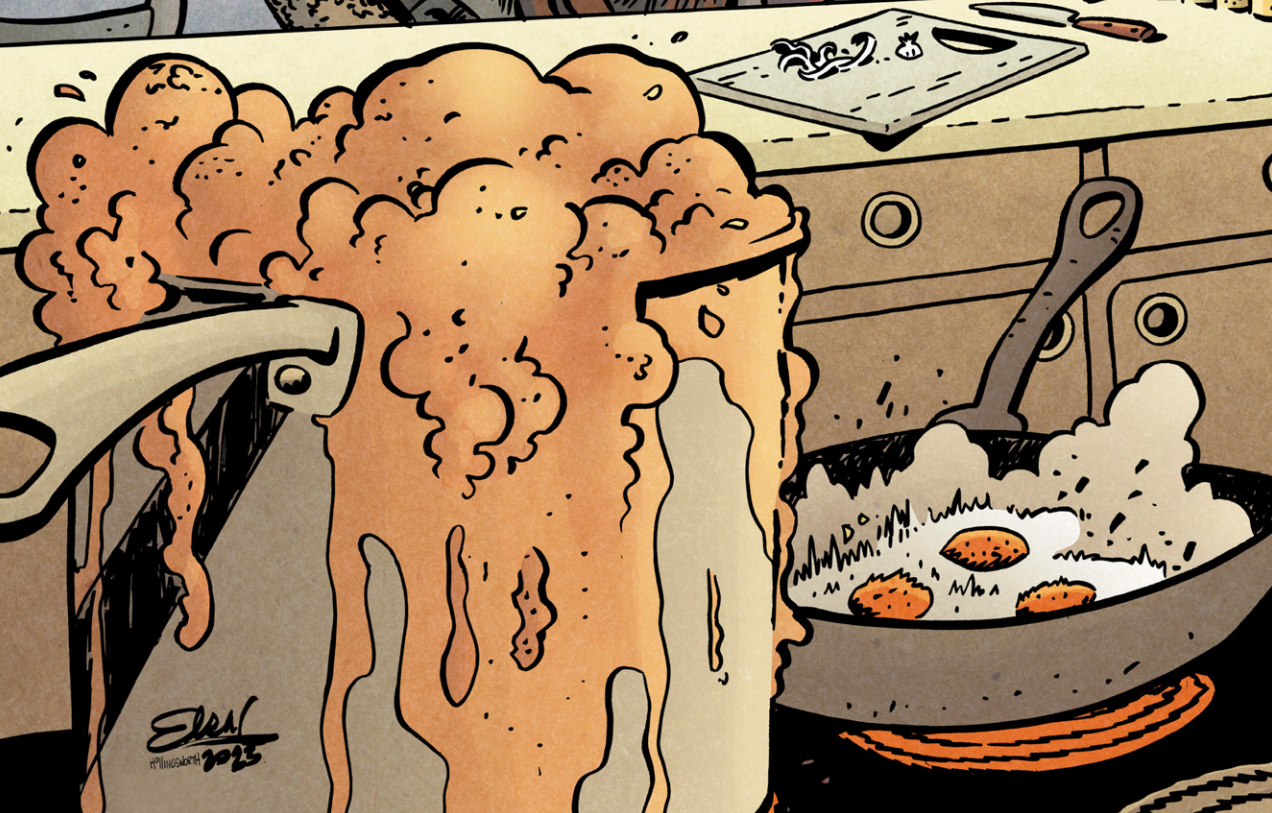
ISSUE 3

I AM
JOAN PETERSON.
I AM A MOTHER AND
A WIFE. I LOVE
MY FAMILY.

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I AM
JOAN PETERSON.
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A WIFE. I LOVE
MY FAMILY.

LIAR, LIAR,
PANTS ON FIRE...



Elek
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Ask Penny Page!

Do you have any questions for
team **LOVE EVERLASTING**?

Send us your secrets, your love
notes, your burning desires to
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**LOVE
EVERLASTING**

I'D SPENT A DECADE GOING FROM ONE HOSPITAL TO ANOTHER, SKIPPING THROUGH DOZENS OF SMALL WHITE ROOMS WITH THEIR POORLY FITTED WHITE SHEETS AND COARSE WHITE PILLOWS.

A LOT OF DOCTORS SMOKING SUCH A WIDE VARIETY OF PIPES HAD LAIN ME DOWN ON THEIR MANY COUCHES AND TOLD ME THAT I WAS GETTING BETTER, THAT EVERY DAY I WAS LEARNING THAT, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, NO ONE REALLY IS...

HE SAID HE'D BE HERE. MAYBE I SHOULD'VE WAITED *INSIDE*. BUT I DON'T *THINK* HE LIKES THESE PLACES. I'M *SURE* HE'LL COME SOON.

HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO BE *ALONE*.



TOO HIP FOR LOVE

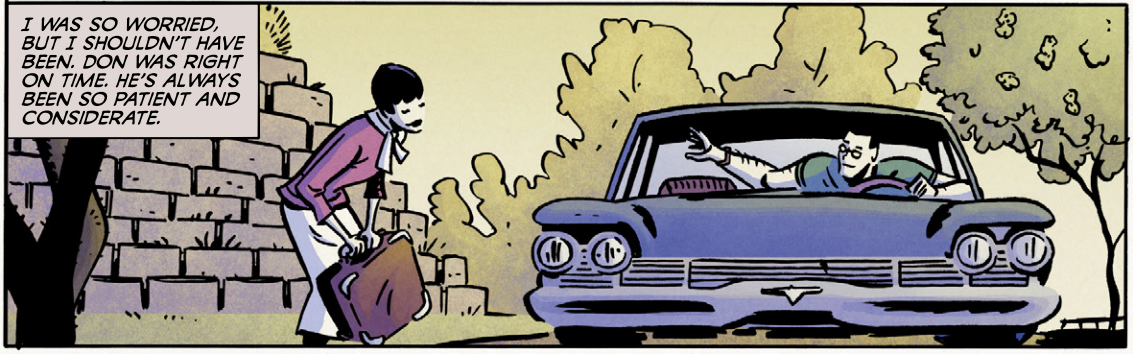
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I WAS SO WORRIED, BUT I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN. DON WAS RIGHT ON TIME. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SO PATIENT AND CONSIDERATE.



DON PUT MY CASE AWAY AND GAVE ME THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE CHILDREN.

JUST GOT WORD YESTERDAY THAT DAVID MADE JUNIOR VARSITY! GOING TO PLAY POINT, JUST LIKE HIS OLD MAN. THOUGH HE HASN'T GOTTEN ALL MY MOVES YET!

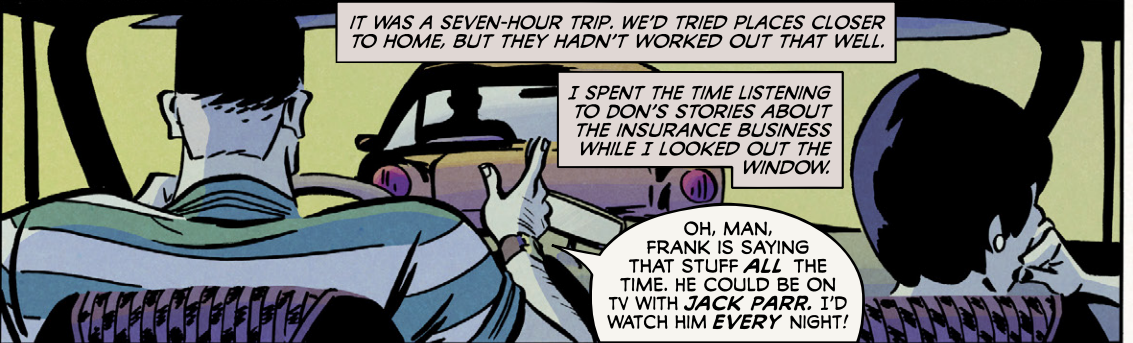
BUT THE WAY HE'S IMPROVING, HE'LL GET THERE! THAT'S FOR SURE!



HE DROVE US HOME. I DIDN'T HAVE A LICENSE ANYMORE, THEY'D YANKED THAT AWAY YEARS AGO. BUT EVEN IF I HAD, DON ALWAYS DOES THE DRIVING.

...AND FRANK LOOKS AT ME AND SAYS, "YOU DIDN'T SELL THAT GUY A PLAN, YOU SOLD HIM A PLANET!"

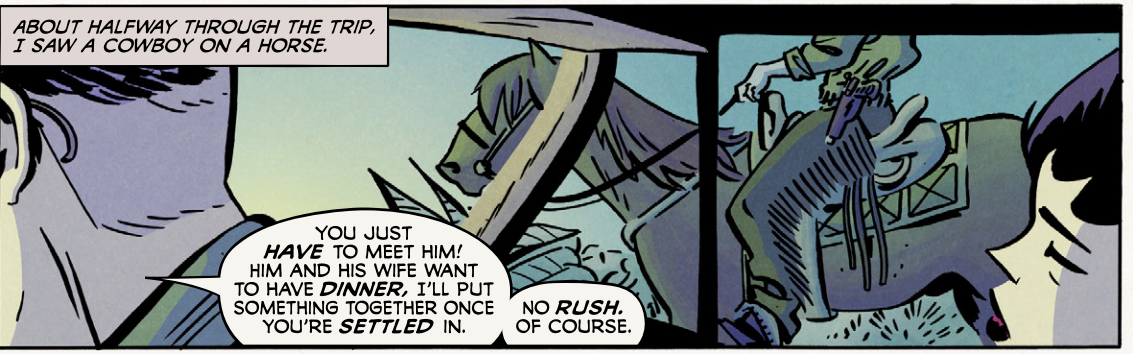
HAHA HAHAHA HA



IT WAS A SEVEN-HOUR TRIP. WE'D TRIED PLACES CLOSER TO HOME, BUT THEY HADN'T WORKED OUT THAT WELL.

I SPENT THE TIME LISTENING TO DON'S STORIES ABOUT THE INSURANCE BUSINESS WHILE I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW.

OH, MAN, FRANK IS SAYING THAT STUFF ALL THE TIME. HE COULD BE ON TV WITH JACK PARR. I'D WATCH HIM EVERY NIGHT!



ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH THE TRIP, I SAW A COWBOY ON A HORSE.

YOU JUST HAVE TO MEET HIM! HIM AND HIS WIFE WANT TO HAVE DINNER. I'LL PUT SOMETHING TOGETHER ONCE YOU'RE SETTLED IN.

NO RUSH. OF COURSE.

THE BOYS WERE WAITING FOR ME AT THE HOUSE. THEY HAD BOTH GROWN SO MUCH SINCE THE LAST TIME I'D SEEN THEM.

THAT ALWAYS HAPPENED. I WAS USED TO IT BY THEN.

MOMMY!

ALL RIGHT, BOYS! NOW, REMEMBER WHAT I SAID, ONE HUG EACH.

THEN WE'RE GOING TO LET YOUR MOTHER GET SOME WELL-EARNED REST.

IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY, I'M SURE SHE'S QUITE TIRED.

WELCOME HOME, MOTHER.

THANK YOU, DAVID.

WELCOME HOME, MOTHER!

THAT'S VERY SWEET, TIMMY.

HE'S GOING BY TIM, NOW.

TOLD ALL HIS FRIENDS AT SCHOOL, HE'S TOO OLD FOR "TIMMY." HAHA.

HE'S GETTING TO BE A MAN, NEEDS A MAN'S NAME. THAT'S WHAT HE SAID! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?!

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, DON.

I SHOULD GET SOME SHUT-EYE BEFORE DINNER.

DON WALKED ME UPSTAIRS. HE ALWAYS WAS SUCH A GENTLEMAN.

HE TOLD ME MRS. MAZY NEXT DOOR WAS GOING TO BRING OVER A CASSEROLE FOR DINNER, SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MAKING ANYTHING.

AT THE DOOR, HE GAVE ME A KISS AND WENT BACK DOWN. HE WAS GOING TO TAKE THE KIDS OUT TO THE PARK TO PLAY SOME BASKETBALL.

I PUT ON MY PAJAMAS, CLOSED THE SHADES, AND GOT INTO BED.

IT WAS NICE TO BE HOME.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

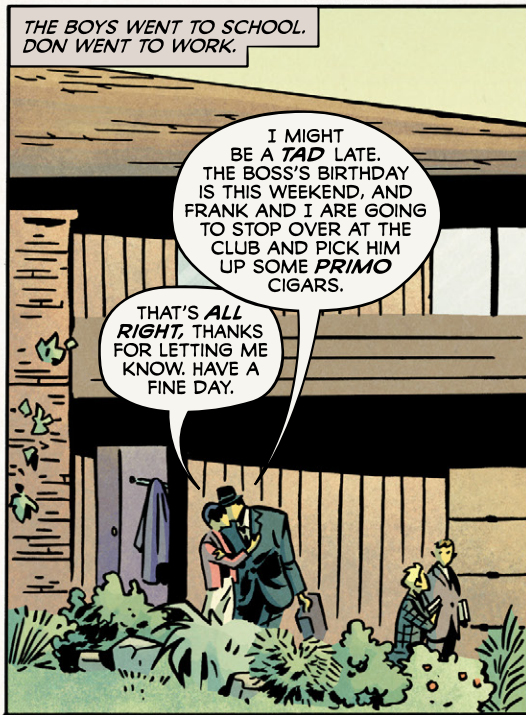
NO.
NOT NOW.



DAYS WENT BY.

THE SPELLMANS' *CAT* HAS BEEN COMING IN THE YARD. I SAW HER **AGAIN** YESTERDAY. EATING OUR GARDENIAS. THEY SHOULD GET **CONTROL** OF HER.

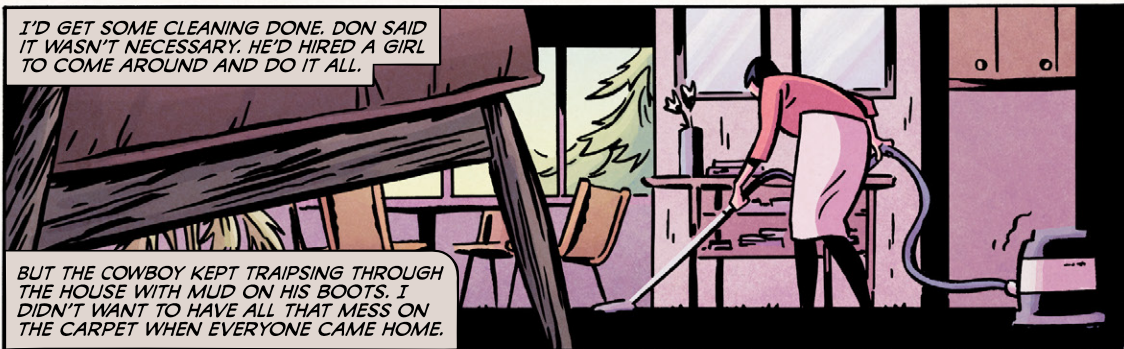
YES, HONEY.



THE BOYS WENT TO SCHOOL. DON WENT TO WORK.

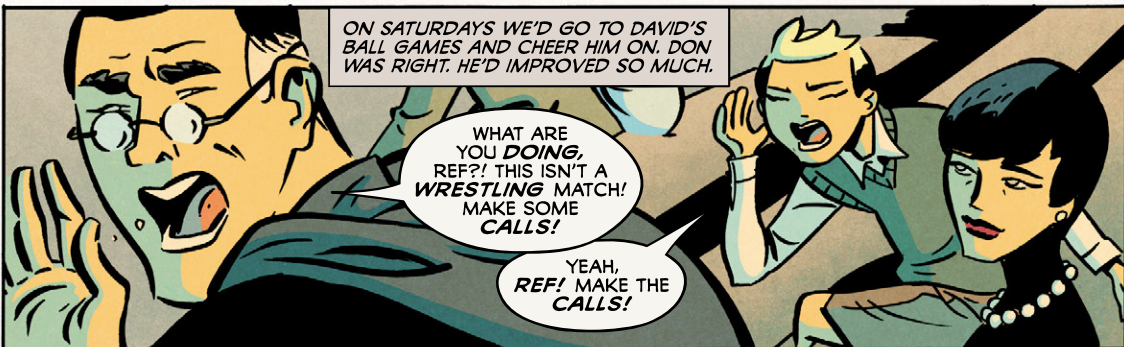
I MIGHT BE A **TAD** LATE. THE BOSS'S BIRTHDAY IS THIS WEEKEND, AND FRANK AND I ARE GOING TO STOP OVER AT THE CLUB AND PICK HIM UP SOME **PRIMO** CIGARS.

THAT'S **ALL RIGHT**, THANKS FOR LETTING ME KNOW. HAVE A FINE DAY.



I'D GET SOME CLEANING DONE. DON SAID IT WASN'T NECESSARY. HE'D HIRED A GIRL TO COME AROUND AND DO IT ALL.

BUT THE COWBOY KEPT TRAIPSING THROUGH THE HOUSE WITH MUD ON HIS BOOTS. I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE ALL THAT MESS ON THE CARPET WHEN EVERYONE CAME HOME.



ON SATURDAYS WE'D GO TO DAVID'S BALL GAMES AND CHEER HIM ON. DON WAS RIGHT. HE'D IMPROVED SO MUCH.

WHAT ARE YOU **DOING**, REF?! THIS ISN'T A **WRESTLING** MATCH! MAKE SOME **CALLS!**

YEAH, **REF!** MAKE THE **CALLS!**



DON LOVED BASKETBALL. HE ALWAYS HAD. SINCE THAT FIRST DAY WE MET. WHEN I TOLD HIM I LOVED HIM AND WE WOULD HAVE TO GET MARRIED.

AND THEN WE DID.

WE JUST DID.



SEEMS LIKE THINGS ARE GOING PRETTY GOOD...



I THINK SO.



YOU KNOW HOW I CAN *REALLY* TELL THINGS ARE GOING GOOD?

USUALLY BY NOW YOU'VE ASKED ME WHAT YEAR IT IS. MORE THAN A FEW TIMES.



OH, *WOULD* I? I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT, DON. IT'S *EMBARRASSING*, ISN'T IT?

I COULD GET SO *CONFUSED*.

BUT, *PLEASE*, DON'T WORRY. I KNOW WHAT *YEAR* IT IS. EVERYONE DOES.



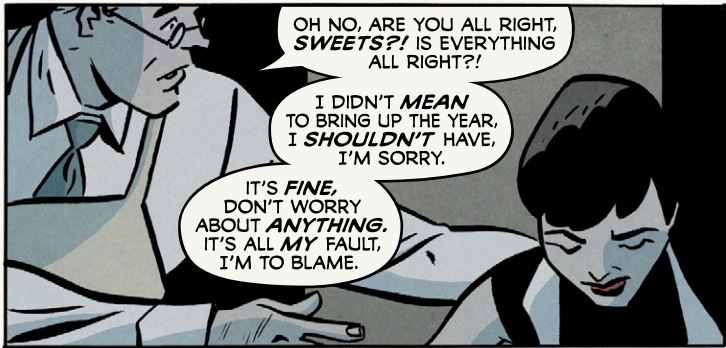
WELL, YOU KNOW, HON, SOMETIMES IT *SCARES* ME TOO. I'M WRITING IT ON A CHECK, AND I WANT TO ASK THE GUY NEXT TO ME AT THE BANK, THIS *CAN'T* BE RIGHT.

I JUST DON'T WANT TO FACE THAT IT'S ACTUALLY *1963*. JUST SAYING IT SOUNDS FUNNY.



I MEAN, *1963*? ARE WE IN THE *FUTURE*? IS IT WORLD PEACE AND ALIENS AND ROCKET SHIPS AND *TIME-WARPING* MONSTERS?

AH, FUCK!



OH NO, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SWEETS?! IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?!

I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO BRING UP THE YEAR, I *SHOULD'N'T* HAVE, I'M SORRY.

IT'S *FINE*, DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ANYTHING*. IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT, I'M TO BLAME.



DON, IT'S--MY *HANDS* SLIPPED. IN THE SOAP.

IT'S JUST A *PLATE*. PEOPLE *BREAK* THEM.

DON'T *BLOW* IT ALL OUT OF PROPORTION.



OKAY.

YEAH, ALL RIGHT, YEAH, *YOU'RE* RIGHT, I'M SORRY, GREAT THEN.

I'M *GLAD* TO HEAR THAT. SOAP CAN BE *SO* SLIPPERY SOMETIMES. RIGHT? I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT "*SOAP*."



HONEY, WHY DON'T YOU GO GRAB THE *MOP*, AND I'LL GET THESE *BIGGER* PIECES UP.

IT'LL BE ALL CLEAN IN A *JIFF*.

ABSOLUTELY, HON.

ONE *FRESH* *MOP*, COMING UP!



SEE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO *WORRY* SO MUCH!

IT'S 1963, AND EVERYTHING IS GOING *WONDERFULLY*!

IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE I COULD RELAX IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY. GO OUTSIDE AND POUR MYSELF A GLASS OF FRESH LEMONADE.

DON'T.

I'D ALWAYS LOVED LEMONADE ON A WARM DAY. ESPECIALLY WITH A FEW CUBES OF ICE FLOATING IN THE CUP.

SHE HAS IT COMING.

I LIKED TO SWIRL IT AROUND IN THE GLASS. WATCH THE ICE CRASH TOGETHER.

IT'S THE **NEIGHBORS'** CAT. THEY'D BE UPSET IF **ANYTHING** HAPPENED.

I LIKED THE NOISE IT MADE. CLINK CLINK CLINK.

THIS ISN'T **HER** HOME. SHE SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

GIVE ME THAT **GUN**. IT'S NOT A GAME.

CLINK
CLINK
CLINK.

WHO SAID IT WAS A **GAME**?

IT REMINDED ME OF HAPPIER TIMES.

THAT **POOR** LITTLE PUSS.

IT'S NOT **HER** FAULT. SHE'S JUST DOING WHAT A CAT IS **SUPPOSED** TO DO.



JOAN,
HONEY!
I FOUND
THE SPELLMANS'
CAT!

ADJUSTING BACK TO LIFE WITH MY FAMILY HAD GONE BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE HOPED! UNLIKE THE LAST FEW TIMES, I WAS LESS NERVOUS AND I JUST FELT MORE LIKE MYSELF THAN I HAD IN A WHILE.

STILL, EVERY NOW AND THEN, I'D GET THAT CERTAIN ELECTRICITY RUNNING THROUGH ME, WHERE I WOULD LOOK AROUND AND THINK ABOUT HOW ALL OF THIS WASN'T HONEST, AT LEAST NOT TO SOMEONE...

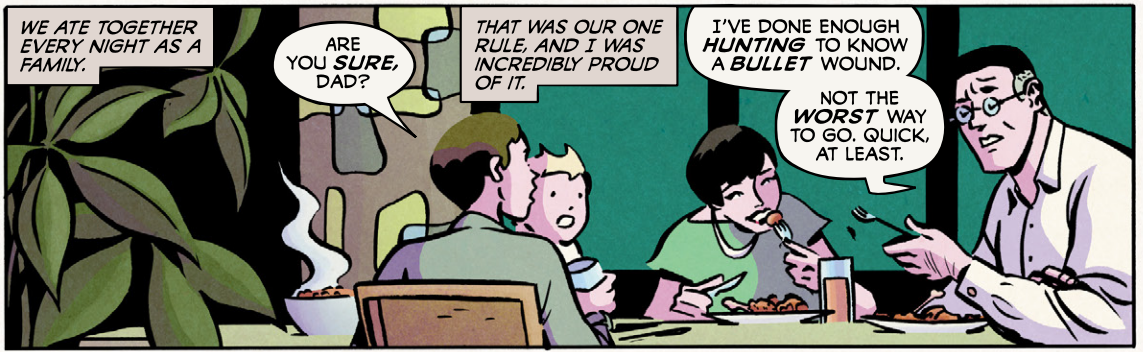
TOO HIP FOR LOVE

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WE ATE TOGETHER EVERY NIGHT AS A FAMILY.

ARE YOU **SURE**, DAD?

THAT WAS OUR ONE RULE, AND I WAS **INCREDIBLY PROUD** OF IT.

I'VE DONE ENOUGH **HUNTING** TO KNOW A **BULLET WOUND**.

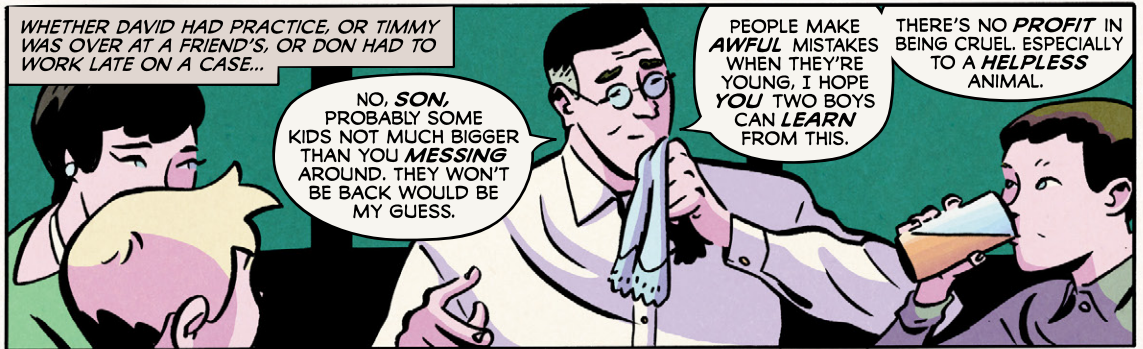
NOT THE **WORST** WAY TO GO. **QUICK**, AT LEAST.



NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE DAY.

SO IS IT A **PROWLER**?!

SHOULD I GET OUT MY **SLINGSHOT**, AND WE CAN TAKE **WATCHES**?! WHEN WE CATCH HIM, WE CAN SEE IF THERE'S A **REWARD**!



WHETHER DAVID HAD PRACTICE, OR TIMMY WAS OVER AT A FRIEND'S, OR DON HAD TO WORK LATE ON A CASE...

NO, **SON**, PROBABLY SOME KIDS NOT MUCH BIGGER THAN YOU **MESSING** AROUND. THEY WON'T BE BACK WOULD BE MY GUESS.

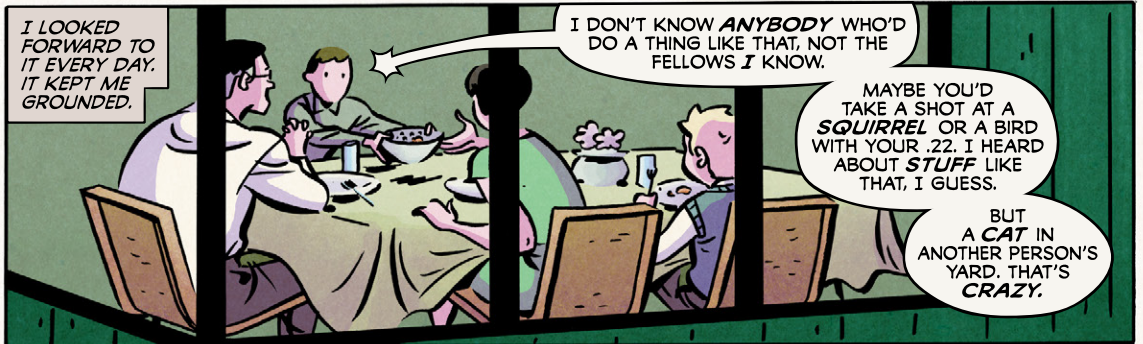
PEOPLE MAKE **AWFUL** MISTAKES WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG, I HOPE YOU TWO BOYS CAN **LEARN** FROM THIS.

THERE'S NO **PROFIT** IN BEING CRUEL. ESPECIALLY TO A **HELPLESS** ANIMAL.



WE WOULD MAKE TIME FOR ONE ANOTHER.

WILL YOU PLEASE PASS THE **PEAS**, DAVID?

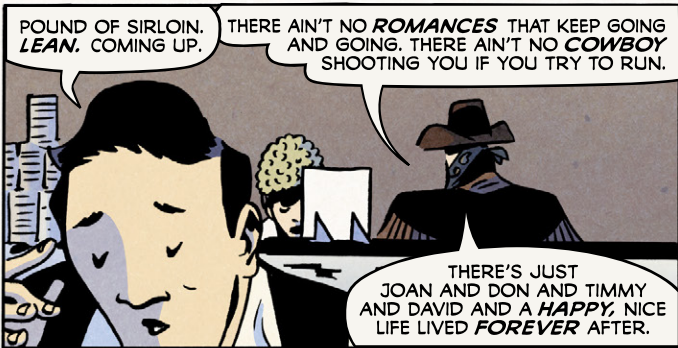


I LOOKED FORWARD TO IT EVERY DAY. IT KEPT ME GROUNDED.

I DON'T KNOW **ANYBODY** WHO'D DO A THING LIKE THAT, NOT THE FELLOWS I KNOW.

MAYBE YOU'D TAKE A SHOT AT A **SQUIRREL** OR A BIRD WITH YOUR **.22**. I HEARD ABOUT **STUFF** LIKE THAT, I GUESS.

BUT A **CAT** IN ANOTHER PERSON'S YARD. THAT'S **CRAZY**.



A MONTH PASSED, AND I STOPPED THINKING ABOUT THAT CAT.

WHICH WAS A GREAT RELIEF.

BUT, AND THIS TOOK ME SOME TIME TO LEARN, SOMETIMES NOT THINKING ABOUT THINGS ISN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM GO AWAY.

AAAAAAAAAAAA!

NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY.

AAAAAAAAAAAA!

THAT'S TIMMY!

AAAAAAAAAAAA!

TIMMY, I'M COMING, IT'S JUST A NIGHTMARE!

MOMMY'S COMING!

AAAAAAAAAAAA!



HE WAS JUST SOAKED WITH SWEAT.

IT'S OKAY, HONEY, MOMMY'S HERE, IT'S JUST A DREAM, IT'LL GO AWAY, POP LIKE A BUBBLE. GIVE IT A SECOND, AND YOU'LL SEE. POP AND GONE.

AAA!
AAA!
AAA!



I SAT NEXT TO HIM, AND HE CLUNG ONTO ME.

IT WAS THE CAT HE WAS COMING FROM THE YARD AND HE WAS COMING INTO THE HOUSE AND HE WAS COMING AND HE WAS BLEEDING AND HE WAS ON MY BED...



AS IF THE FLOOD HAD COME, AND I WAS NOAH'S ARK.

SHHH, SHHHH, THERE'S NO CAT HERE, SWEETIE. IT'S JUST ME.

JUST YOU AND ME, IT'S OKAY.



AND I THOUGHT, THIS...

HE WAS COMING UP AND LOOKING AT ME AND BLOOD WAS IN HIS HEAD AND HE WAS ON MY FEET AND THEN ON MY CHEST AND THEN HIS NAILS WERE ON MY NECK AND THEN HIS HEAD WAS HERE AND HE WAS SCRATCHING ME AND HE SAID...



...THIS IS LOVE.

I LOVE YOU.



AND I TRIED NOT TO CRY.

OH, OH, SWEETIE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, NO, NO, NO.

THAT'S NOT-IT'S NOT REAL.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THINGS THAT AREN'T REAL.





A FEW MORE NIGHTS WENT BY AND I COULDN'T SLEEP.

DON, DEAR, I'M **SORRY** TO WAKE YOU.

BUT I NEED TO **TELL** YOU SOMETHING.

click



I KEPT WAITING TO HEAR TIMMY'S SCREAM.

MM. HONEY...

CAN IT WAIT UNTIL **MORNING?**



THE CAT GETTING INTO HIM AGAIN.

DON...

I...



I HAD TO DO SOMETHING.

I WAS THE ONE.



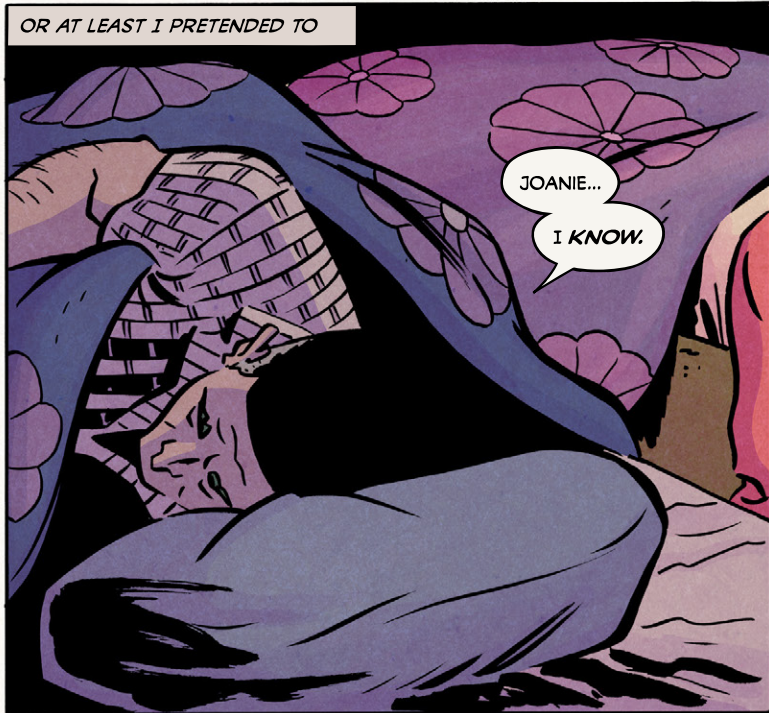
HE DIDN'T DESERVE THAT.

I KILLED THE CAT. I **SHOT** THE CAT, I MEAN.

IT WAS ME.

I WAS HIS MOTHER.

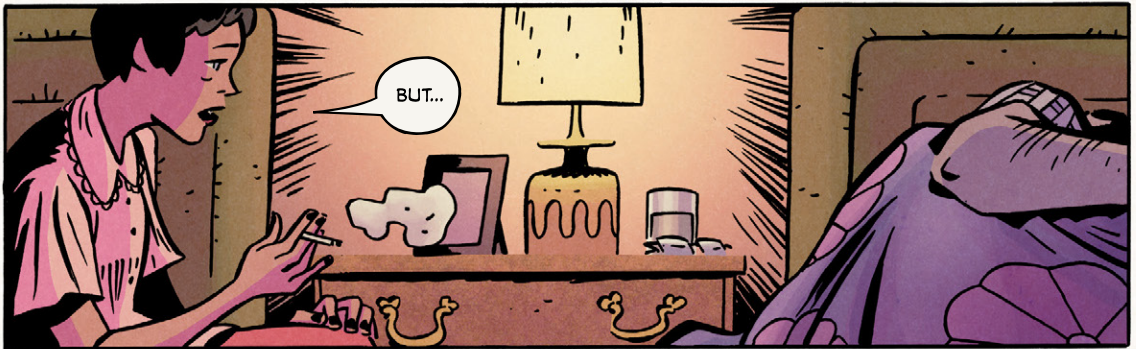
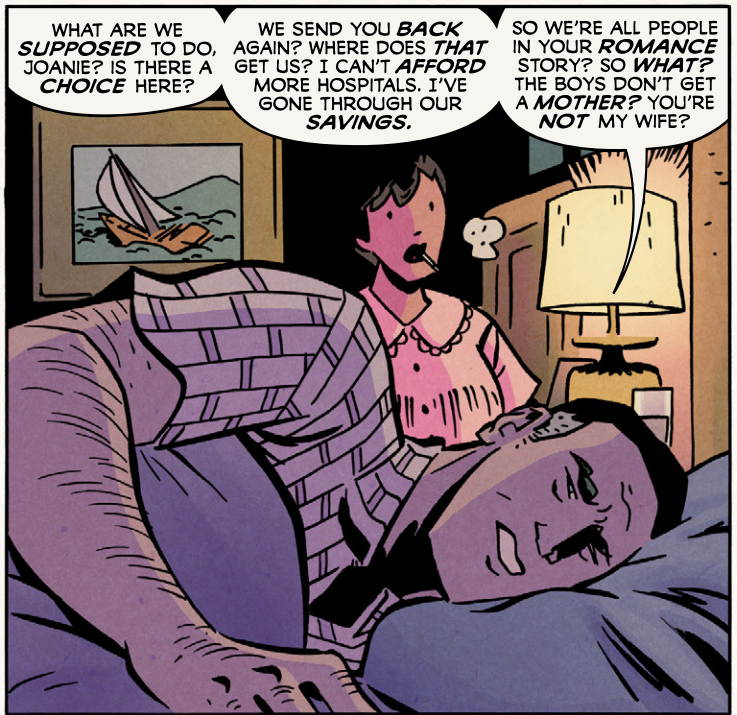
SHIT.



OR AT LEAST I PRETENDED TO

JOANIE...

I KNOW.



JESUS CHRIST!

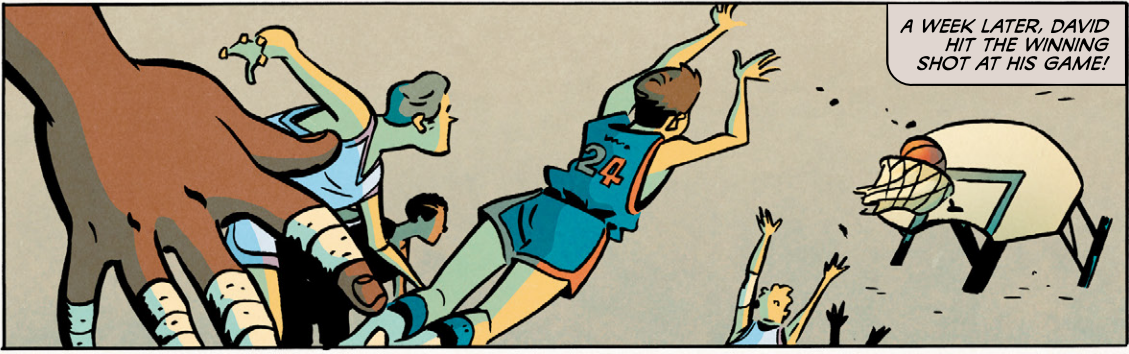
JOAN...

DAYS BECAME WEEKS BECAME MONTHS. I MELTED INTO THE EVERYDAY OF OUR LIVES. GETTING THE KIDS TO SCHOOL, MAKING THE MEALS, DOING THE CHORES, CARING FOR THE HOUSE, CARING FOR DON.

AFTER A WHILE IT ALL STARTED TO FEEL, WELL, IT ALL STARTED TO BECOME NORMAL, EVEN PLEASANT. IT WAS AS IF, WITH ENOUGH TIME AND PATIENCE, YOU CAN FORGET THAT YOU'RE...

TOO HIP FOR LOVE

~SIGH~



A WEEK LATER, DAVID HIT THE WINNING SHOT AT HIS GAME!



I WAS SO PROUD OF HIM!

MOM, QUIT IT! THE OTHER GUYS ARE ALL LOOKING!



WELL, THERE YOU GO.

YOU CAN PLAY SUPERB DEFENSE ON THE FLOOR, DAVID, BUT STOPPING YOUR MOTHER FROM LOVING YOU IS A WHOLE OTHER GAME ALTOGETHER!

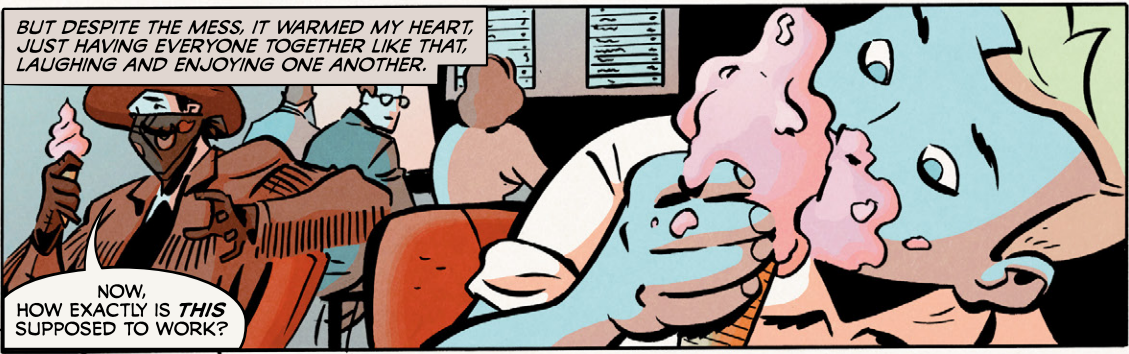


AFTERWARDS, WE WENT FOR CONES AT THE SODA SHOP. TIMMY HAD ICE CREAM ALL OVER HIS CHIN AND SHIRT. I WAS GOING HAVE TO THROW HIM IN THE TUB AS SOON AS WE GOT HOME.

YOU HAVE TO LICK ON THE OUTSIDE, AROUND THE EDGE, OR ELSE IT'S ALL GOING TO DRIBBLE DOWN ON YOU, SON.

I'M DOING THAT!

HAHAHAHAHA



BUT DESPITE THE MESS, IT WARMED MY HEART, JUST HAVING EVERYONE TOGETHER LIKE THAT, LAUGHING AND ENJOYING ONE ANOTHER.

NOW, HOW EXACTLY IS THIS SUPPOSED TO WORK?

BEFORE WE KNEW IT, THERE WAS SNOW ON THE GROUND AND EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR JOLLY OLD SAINT NICK TO SLIDE DOWN THE CHIMNEY.



CHRISTMAS IS MY FAVORITE TIME OF THE YEAR. THE TREE, THE DECORATIONS, THE ORNAMENTS, THE SONGS EVERYWHERE.

I'VE BEEN A GOOD BOY THIS YEAR, HAVEN'T I?

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS...



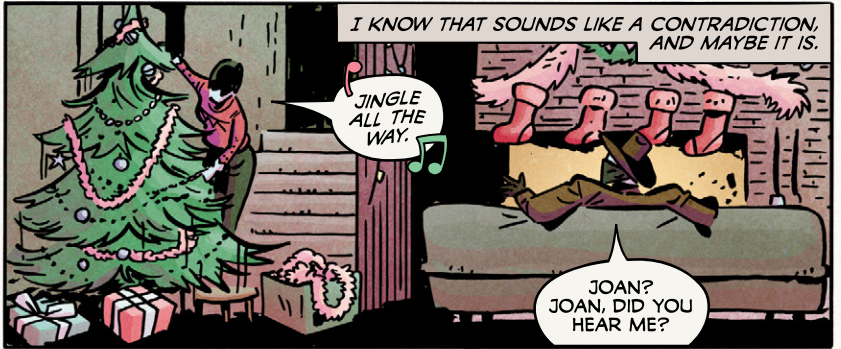
IT'S THE ONLY TIME OF THE YEAR WHERE YOU FEEL BOTH YOUNG AND OLD AT THE SAME TIME.



WHAT'S COMING FOR ME?

I KNOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE A CONTRADICTION, AND MAYBE IT IS.

JINGLE ALL THE WAY.



JOAN? JOAN, DID YOU HEAR ME?

BUT SO WHAT? IT'S OKAY TO BE TWO THINGS AT ONCE.



JOAN? YOU CAN'T IGNORE ME.

I MEAN, WHO'S TO SAY IT'S NOT?

OH, WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE ON A ONE-HORSE OPEN SLEIGH!

I'M AS MUCH HERE AS YOU ARE.





LUCKILY, WE WERE ABLE TO GET A SITTER AND GET AWAY FOR NEW YEAR'S.

I LOVE YOU, JOAN.

DON, IT'S...

TEN!

NINE!

EIGHT!

SEVEN!



YOU CAN SAY IT, DEAR, I WON'T DISAPPEAR. I PROMISE.

I PROMISE.

SIX!

FIVE!

FOUR!



THREE!

TWO!

ONE!

I...
HAPPY NEW YEAR, DON.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY NEW YEAR, MY DARLING.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY 1963!



FINALLY, ROUTINES BECAME ROUTINE.

HURRY, HURRY!
YOU'LL MISS THE BUS AND, DON, THERE'S TRAFFIC! I LET YOU SIT AT BREAKFAST WAY TOO LONG! WHEN WILL I LEARN?!

ALL RIGHT, HONEY! WE'RE GOING!



AND ISN'T THAT ALL LIFE IS, REALLY? IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

HAVE A GOOD DAY! AND HURRY!

YOU TOO, SWEETIE! LOVE YOU!



FINDING THOSE MOMENTS THAT YOU WANT TO REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN.

WE'RE HAVING STEAK FOR DINNER! BE ON TIME!

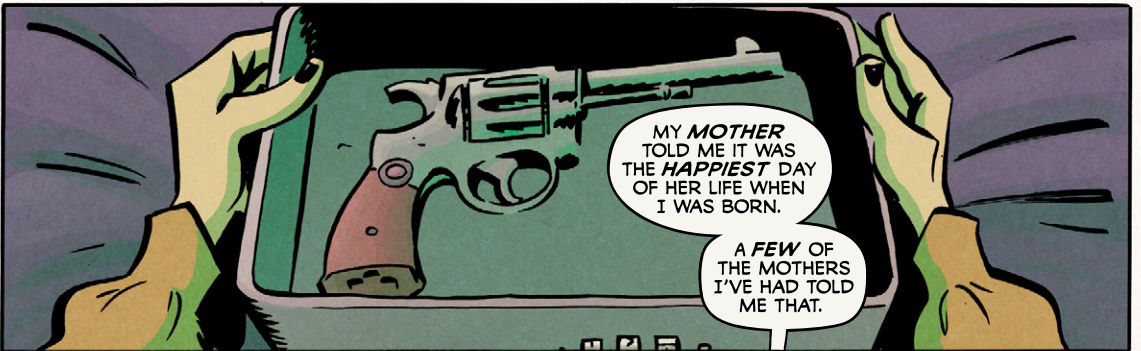
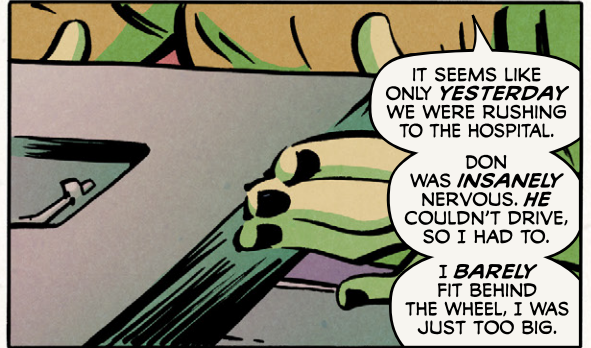
NO ONE LIKES COLD STEAK!



FINDING OUT WHERE YOU ARE MOST COMFORTABLE.



AND HAVING FAITH THAT YOU CAN STAY THERE FOREVER.





JOAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK'S GOING TO HAPPEN HERE?

WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS. A NEW LOVE.



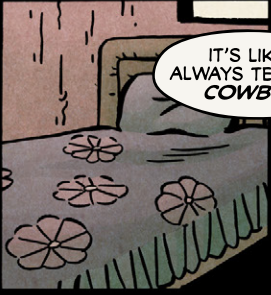
AND IF YOU'RE WRONG, IF THEY'RE RIGHT?



THEY'RE NOT. I REMEMBER THEM. ALL THE BRADS AND THE CHADS.

THAT'S WHO I AM. I'M NOT HIS WIFE OR THEIR MOTHER. THAT'S ME.

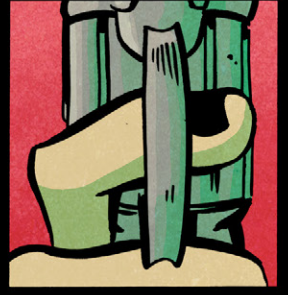
JOAN PETERSON. THE GIRL LOST.



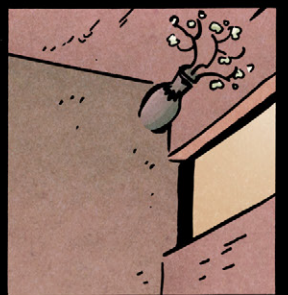
IT'S LIKE I ALWAYS TELL YOU, COWBOY.



LOVE ISN'T EVERLASTING.



IT'S JUST WHAT'S HERE TODAY.



I PUT THE GUN BACK IN THE BOX. I PUT THE BOX BACK UNDER THE BED.



SMELLS FANTASTIC, HONEY!

THEN I DID MY SCRUBBING AND DUSTING AND RAN A FEW ERRANDS, GOING TO THE POST OFFICE AND TO THE CORNER STORE.



WELL, IT'S NOT DONE YET. AND I'VE GOT TO GET THE PEAS OUT OF THE OVEN, AND I MADE A MASH THAT I'M NOT SURE ABOUT...

WHY DON'T YOU CALL THE KIDS AND THEY CAN GET WATERS ONTO THE TABLE?

I'LL HAVE IT ALL READY BY THEN, THE SPEED AT WHICH THOSE TWO SLOTHS MOVE.

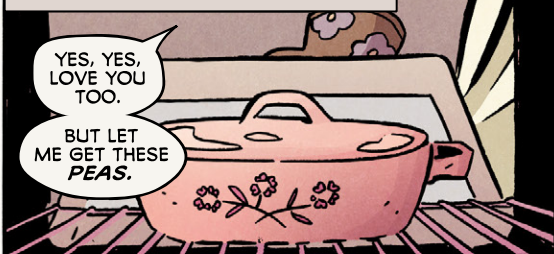
I HAD COOKIES MADE FOR THE KIDS WHEN THEY GOT HOME. DAVID ATE TWO, BUT TIMMY SAID HE WASN'T HUNGRY, WHICH ISN'T LIKE HIM AT ALL.



WILL DO, JOANIE BEAR!

LOVE YOU!

I CHECKED HIS TEMPERATURE, BUT IT ALL SEEMED FINE, SO I DECIDED TO WAIT AND SEE IF ANYTHING ELSE SEEMED OUT OF THE ORDINARY.



YES, YES, LOVE YOU TOO.

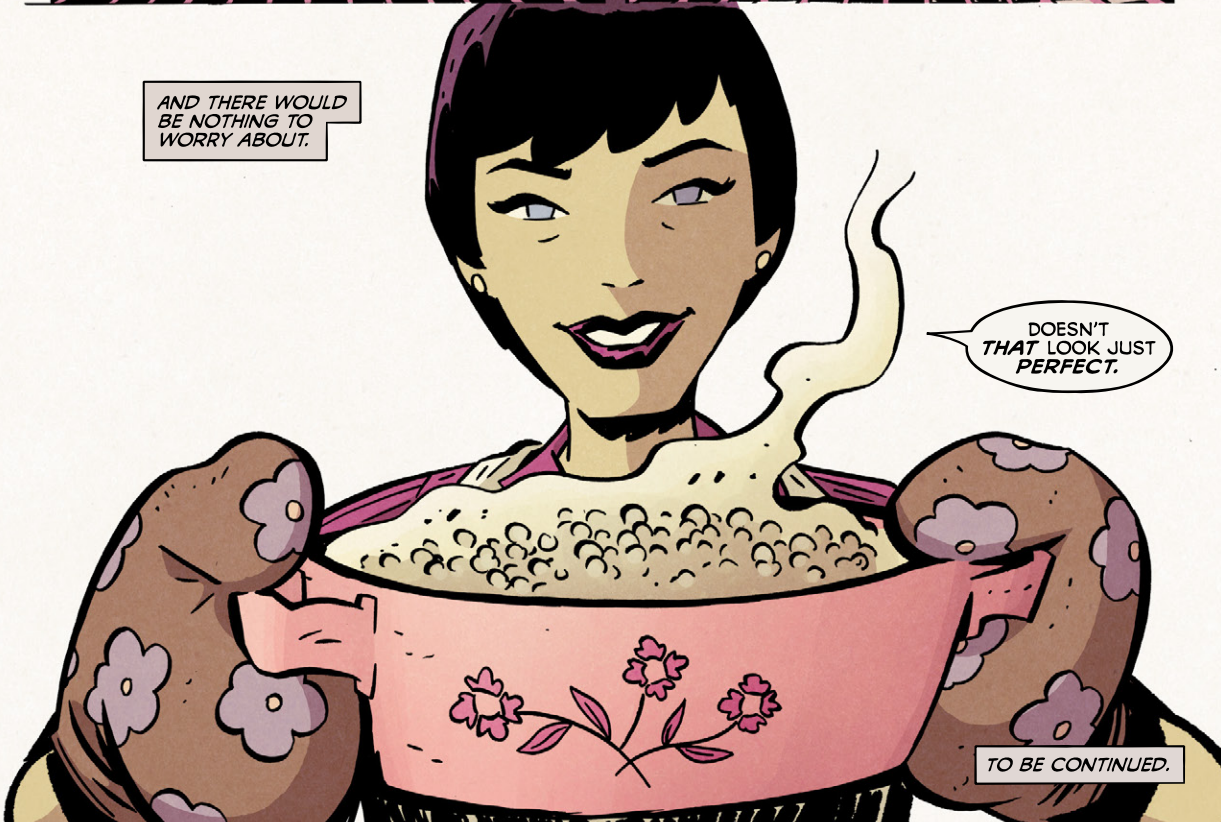
BUT LET ME GET THESE PEAS.

MY GUESS WAS, BY DINNER, HE'D HAVE HIS APPETITE BACK.



OH. WELL.

AND THERE WOULD BE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.



DOESN'T THAT LOOK JUST PERFECT.

TO BE CONTINUED.