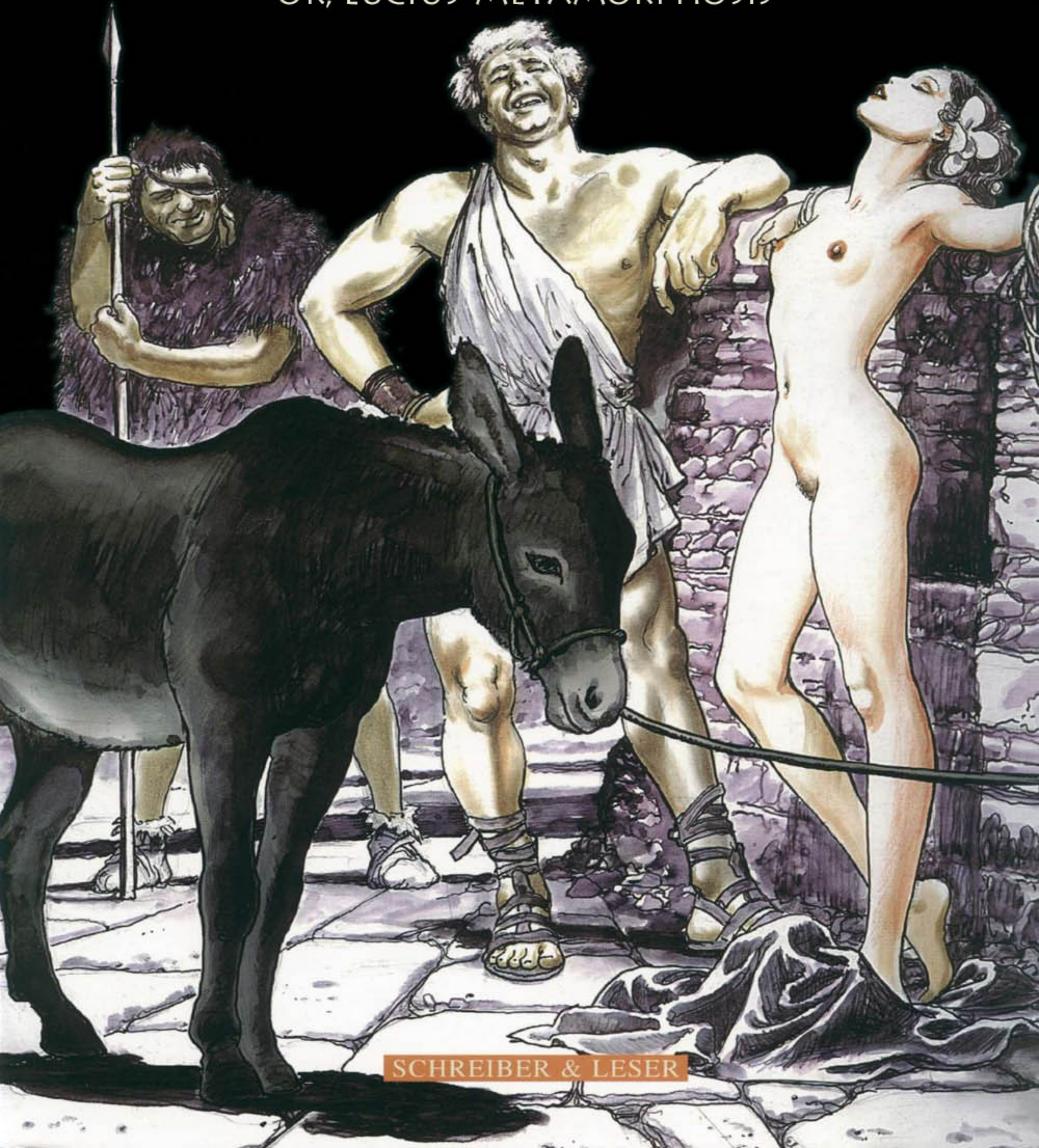


MILO MANARA

THE GOLDEN ASS

OR, LUCIUS' METAMORPHOSIS



SCHREIBER & LESER

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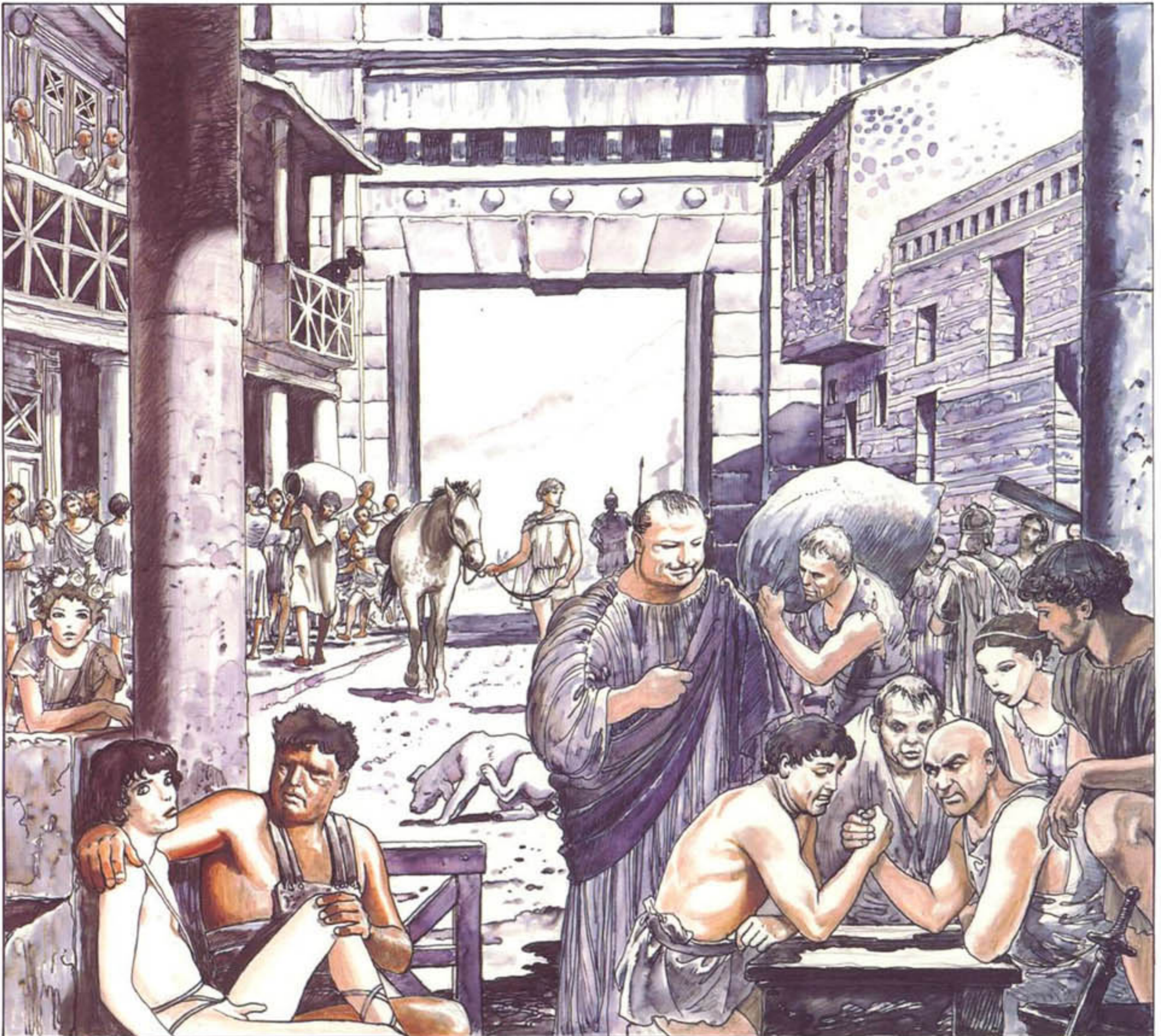
MY NAME IS LUCIUS AND MY FAMILY IS A VERY ANCIENT ONE. ON THE MATERNAL SIDE, PLUTARCH IS MY ANCESTOR, WHICH MAKES ME TRUSTWORTHY. I HAD ALREADY CROSSED THE CRAGGY MOUNTAINS AND THE PERILOUS VALLEYS OF MACEDONIA IN ORDER TO MAKE MY WAY TO THESSALY ON BUSINESS. MY COMPANIONS ON MY TRAVELS HAD TOLD ME STORIES ABOUT THAT REGION THAT WERE AT ONCE TERRIFYING AND WONDERFUL ...

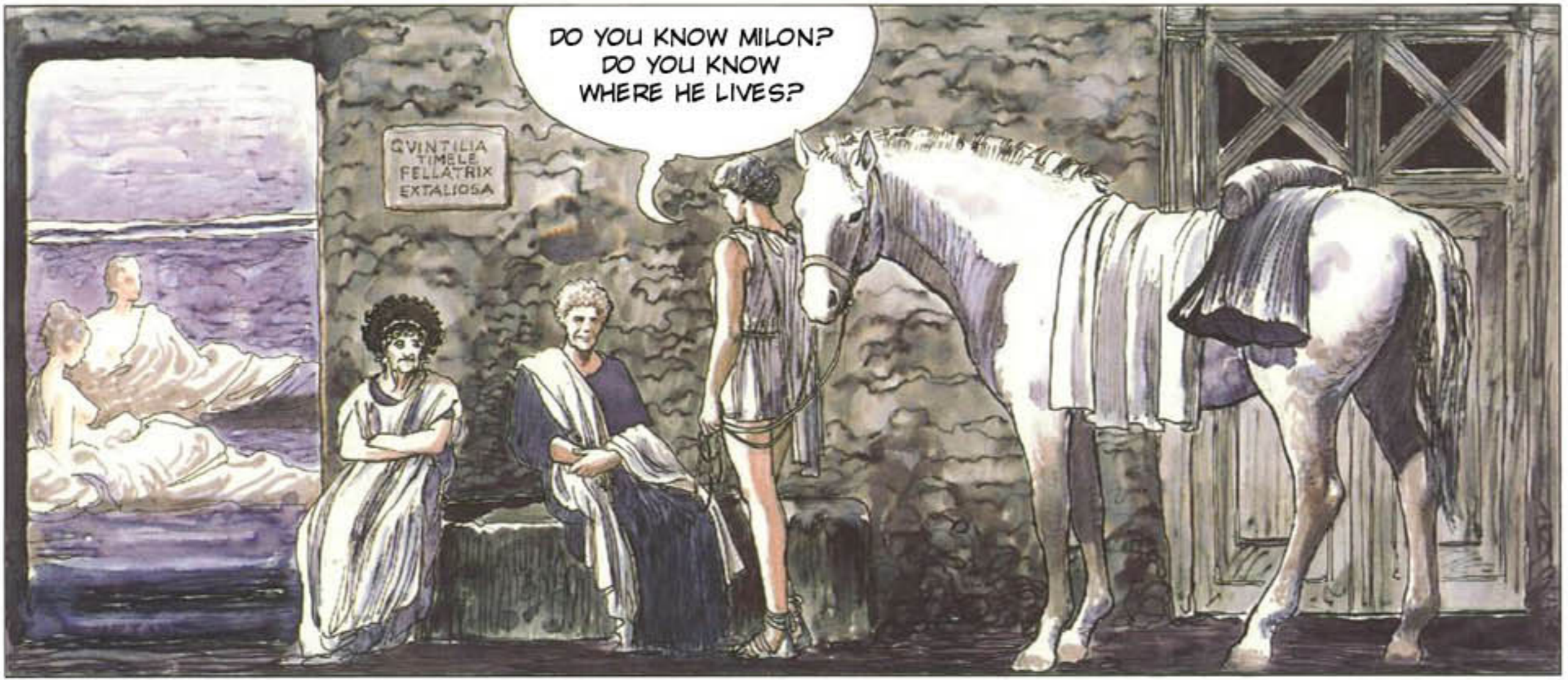


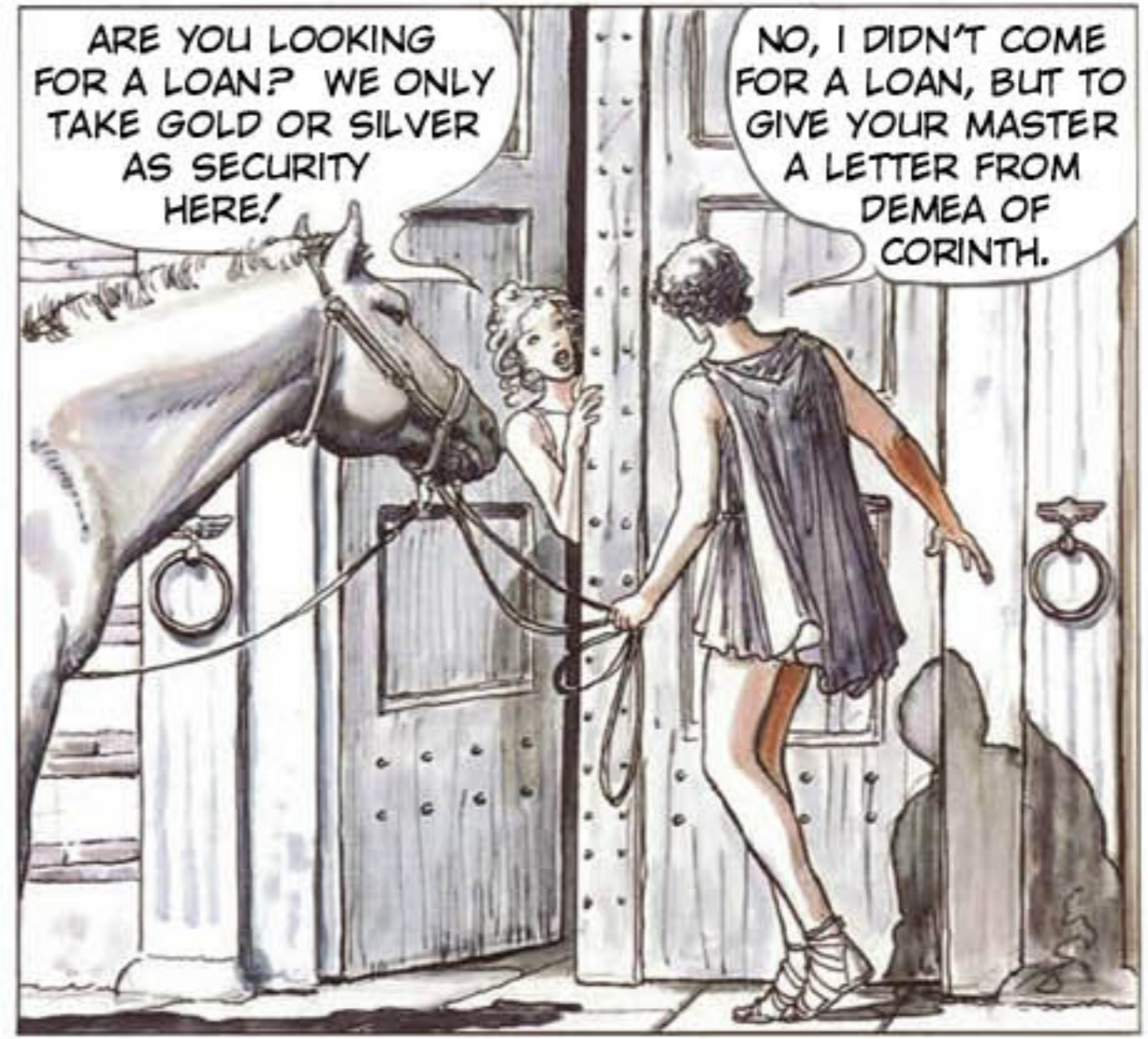
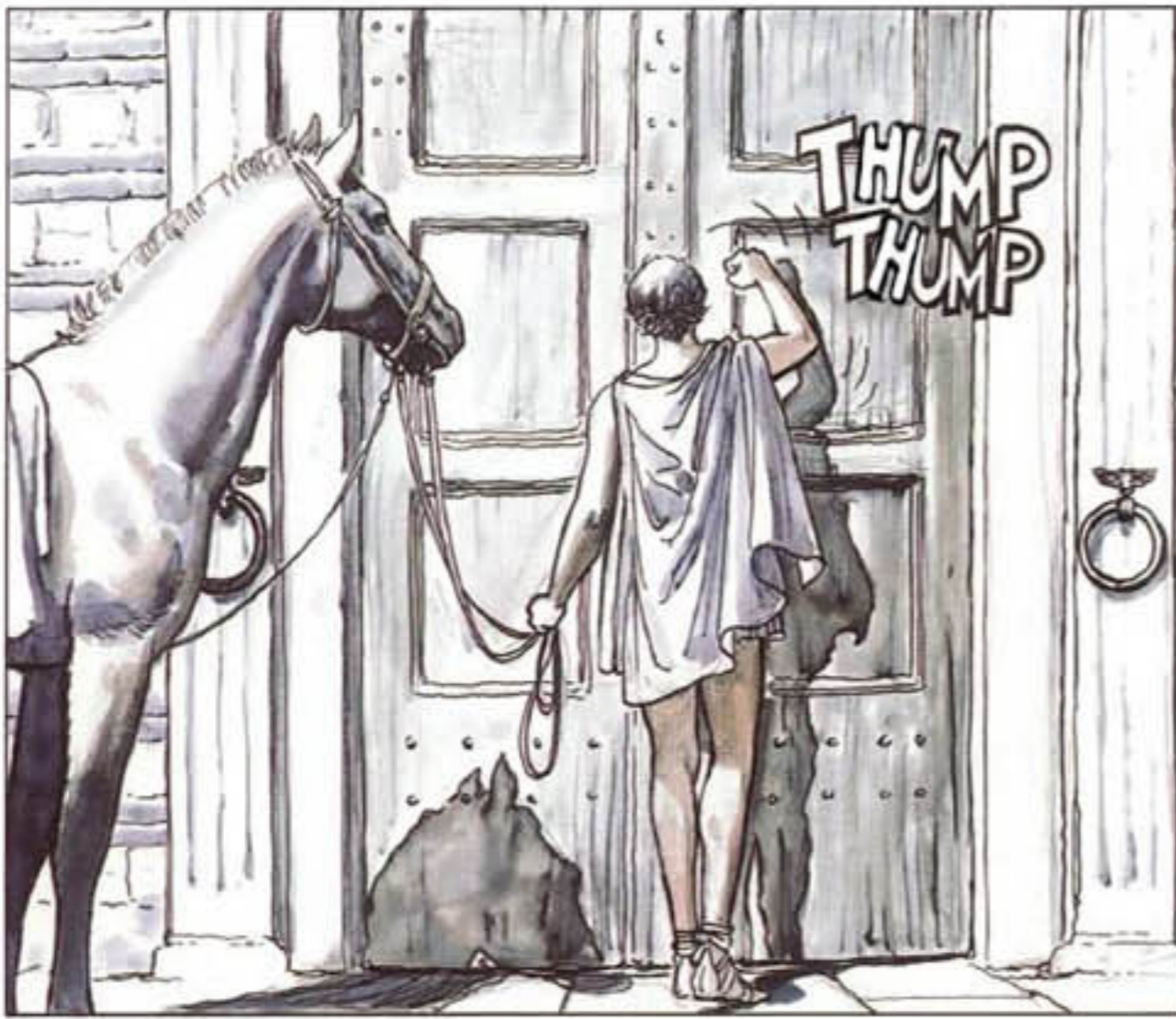
... INCREDIBLE FABLES OF MAGICIANS AND SORCERORS, OF HORRIBLE METAMORPHOSES WHERE MEN WERE TRANSFORMED INTO ALL SORTS OF EXTRAORDINARY ANIMALS SUCH AS WOULD ASTONISH THE GODS THEMSELVES... SO I APPROACHED THE END OF MY JOURNEY WITH APPREHENSION ...

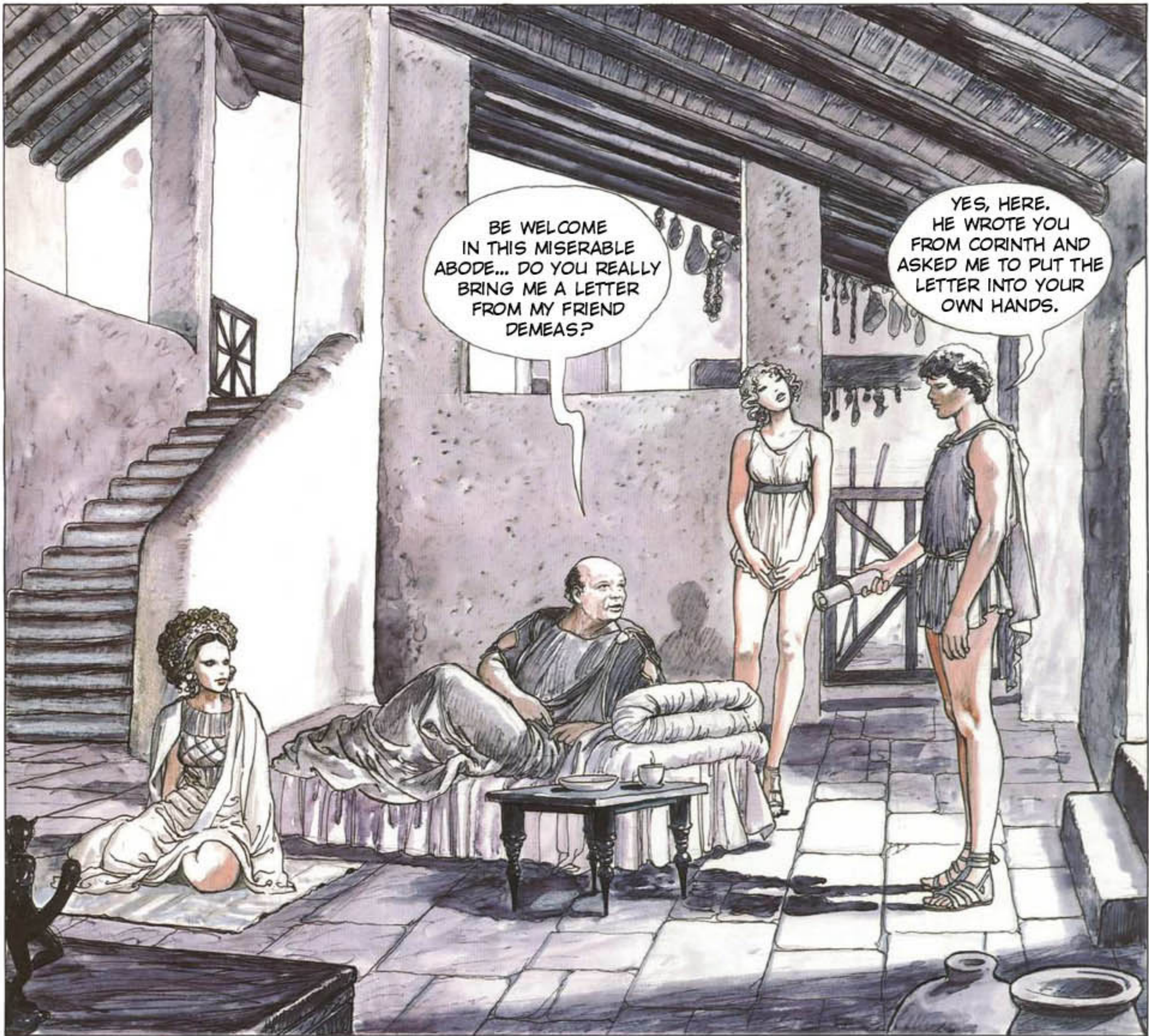


CIVILIZATION AT LAST!
THIS HAS TO BE HYPATIA,
WHERE I HAVE TO FIND
A CERTAIN MILON
TO DELIVER A LETTER
TO HIM.



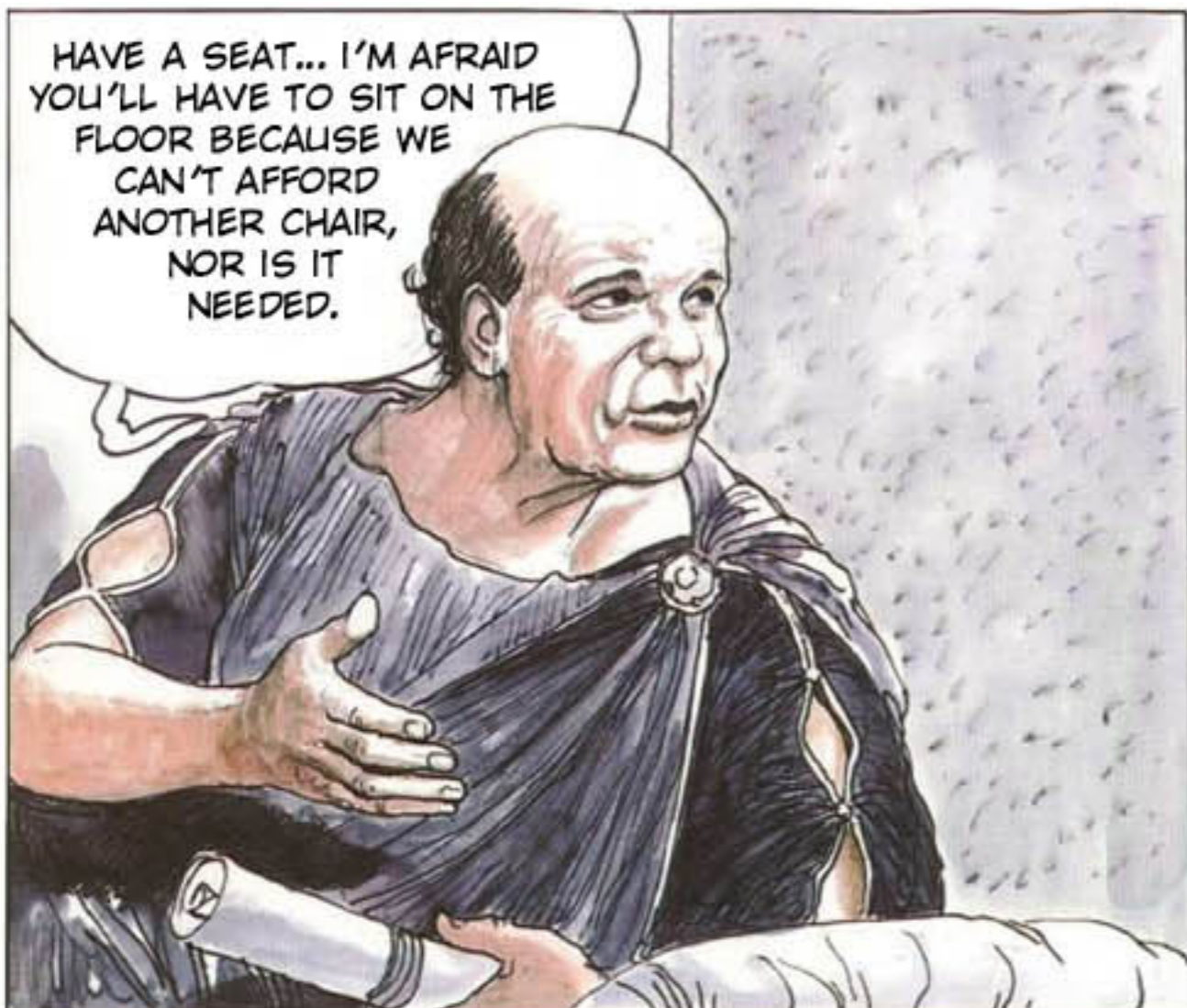






BE WELCOME
IN THIS MISERABLE
ABODE... DO YOU REALLY
BRING ME A LETTER
FROM MY FRIEND
DEMEAS?

YES, HERE.
HE WROTE YOU
FROM CORINTH AND
ASKED ME TO PUT THE
LETTER INTO YOUR
OWN HANDS.

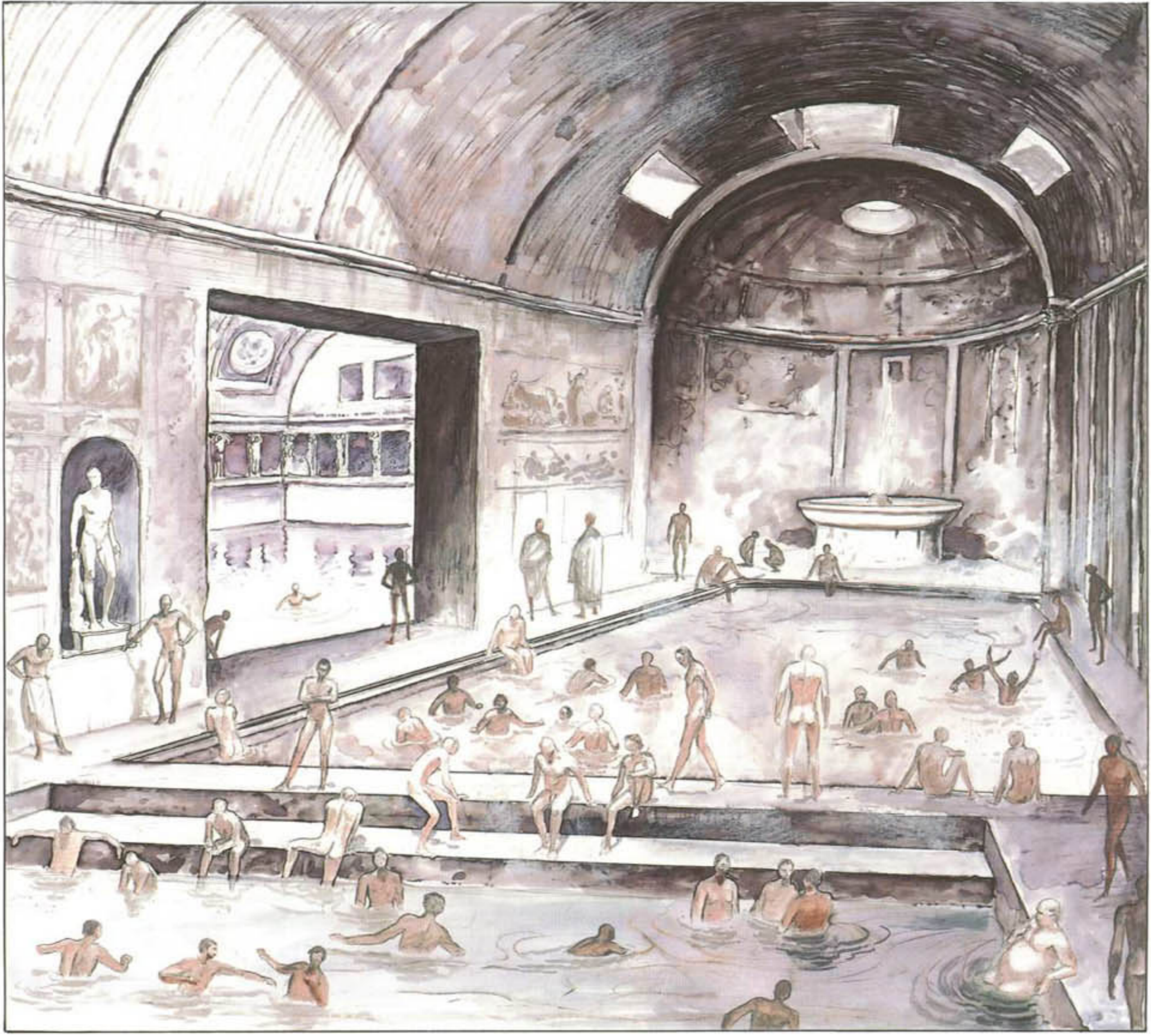
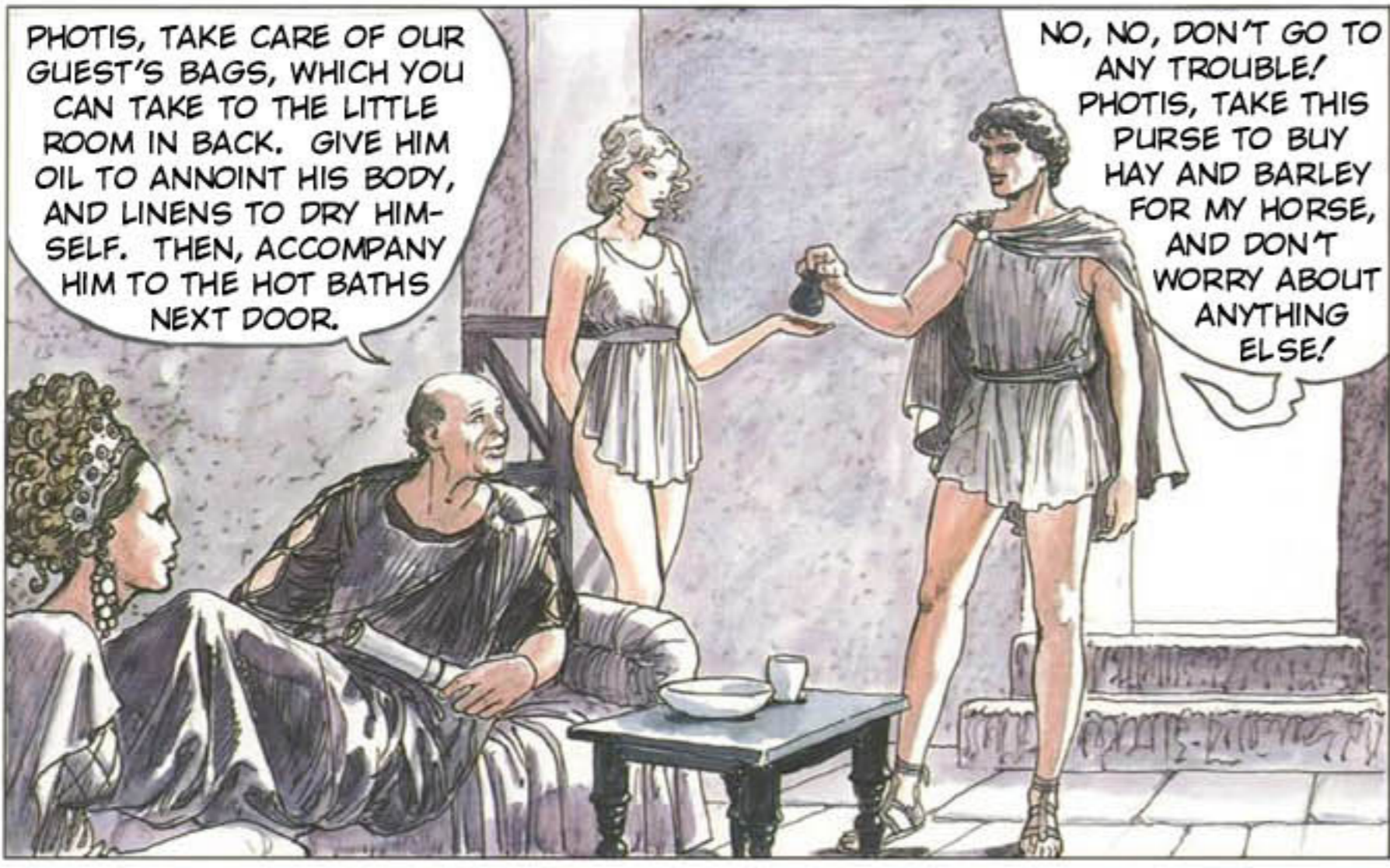


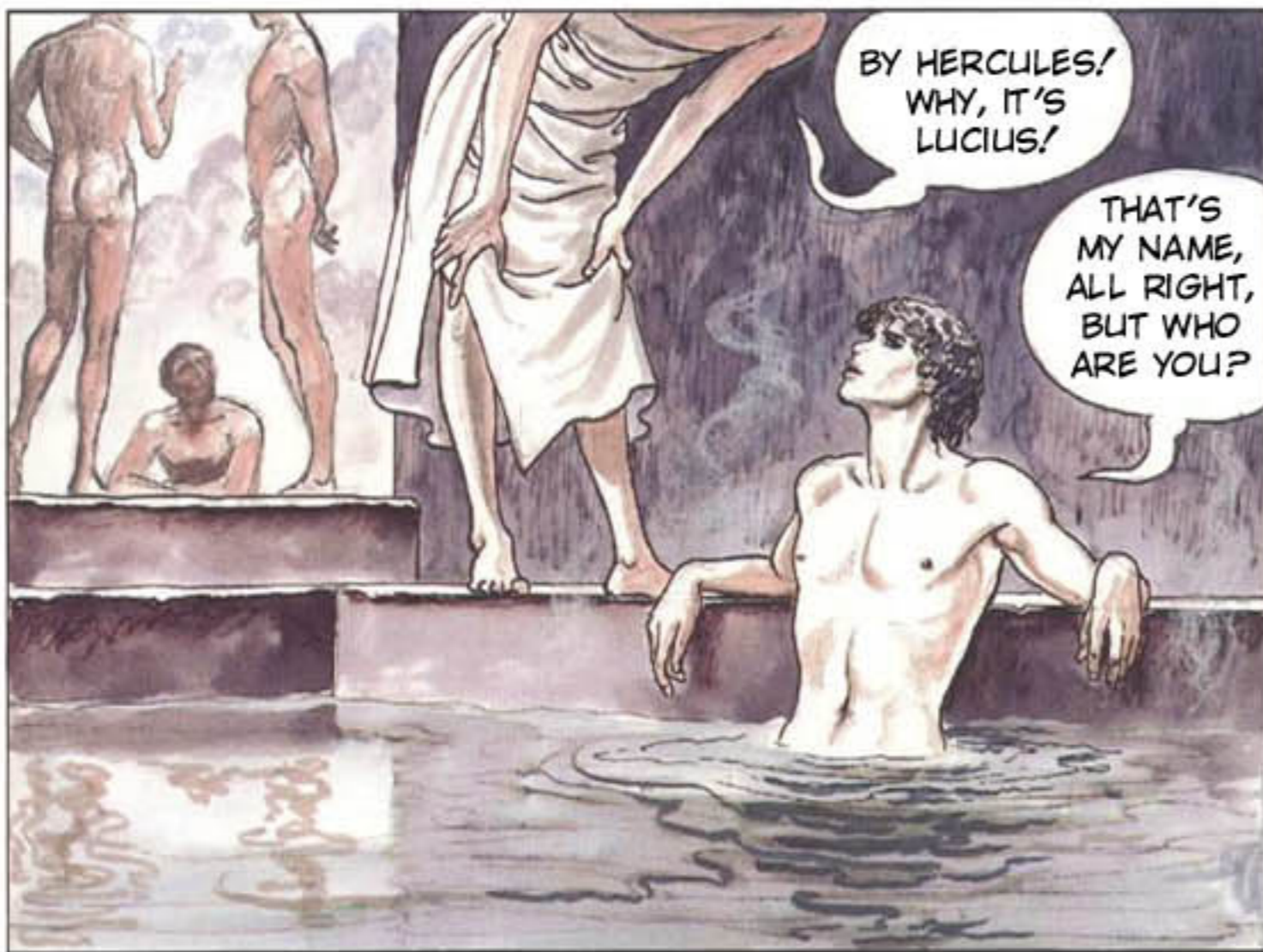
HAVE A SEAT... I'M AFRAID
YOU'LL HAVE TO SIT ON THE
FLOOR BECAUSE WE
CAN'T AFFORD
ANOTHER CHAIR,
NOR IS IT
NEEDED.



THEY TOLD ME
YOU WERE GREEDY,
YOU'LL LIKE MY
ANSWER!

I THANK YOU, MILON,
BUT I NEED NOTHING.
A BED FOR THE NIGHT
WOULD SUFFICE,
IF THAT
WOULDN'T
BE A
BOTHR.





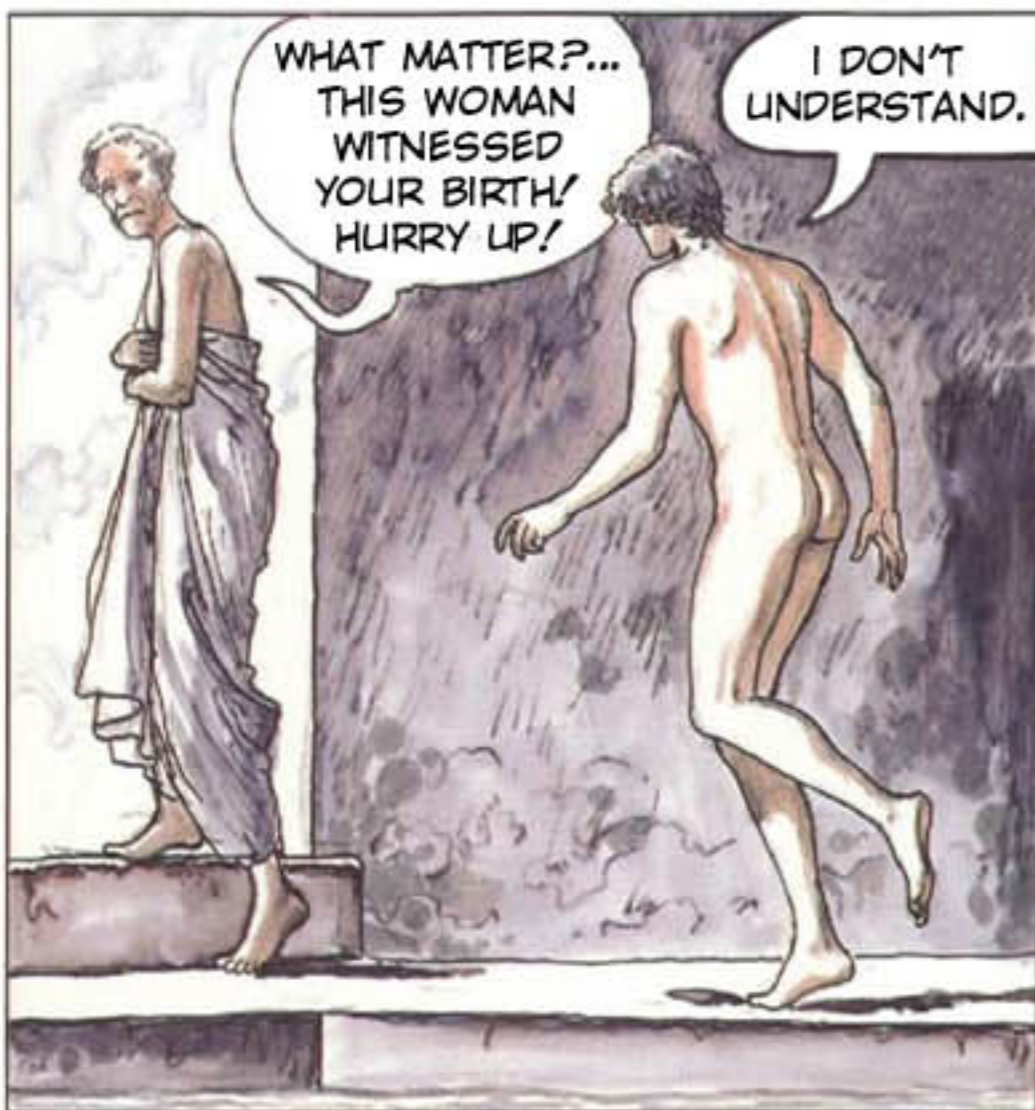
BY HERCULES!
WHY, IT'S
LUCIUS!

THAT'S
MY NAME,
ALL RIGHT,
BUT WHO
ARE YOU?



YOU COULDN'T REMEMBER ME,
YOU WERE TOO LITTLE THE LAST
TIME I SAW YOU. BUT ONE OF
YOUR CLOSE RELATIVES
LIVES HERE, AND SHE'LL
BE THRILLED TO SEE YOU
AGAIN. COME,
FOLLOW ME!

WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING? I HAVE NO
FAMILY IN THIS CITY!
BESIDES... I'M NAKED!



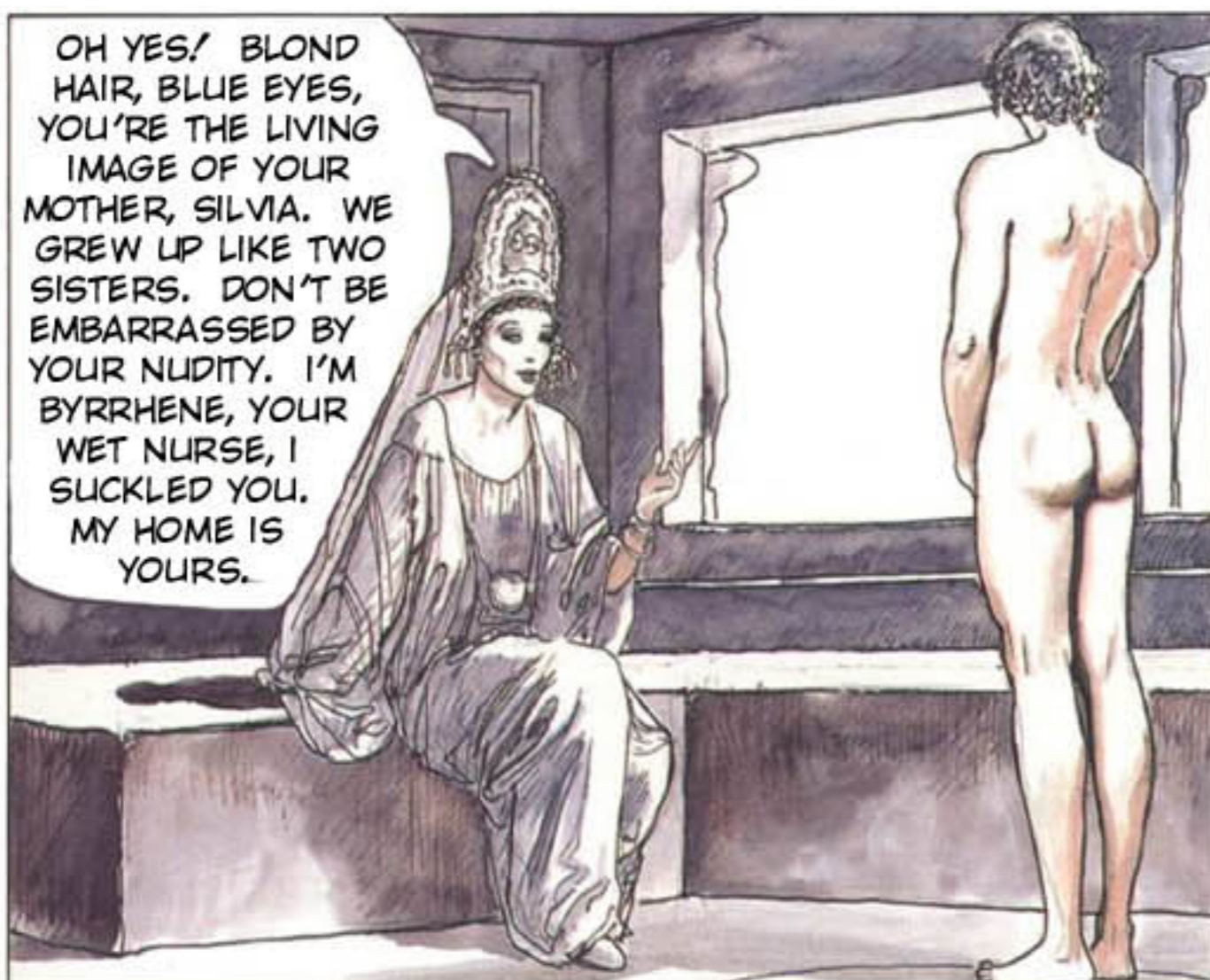
WHAT MATTER?...
THIS WOMAN
WITNESSED
YOUR BIRTH!
HURRY UP!

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.



SEE WHO I'VE
BROUGHT TO YOU,
NOBLE BYRRHENE...
LUCIUS!

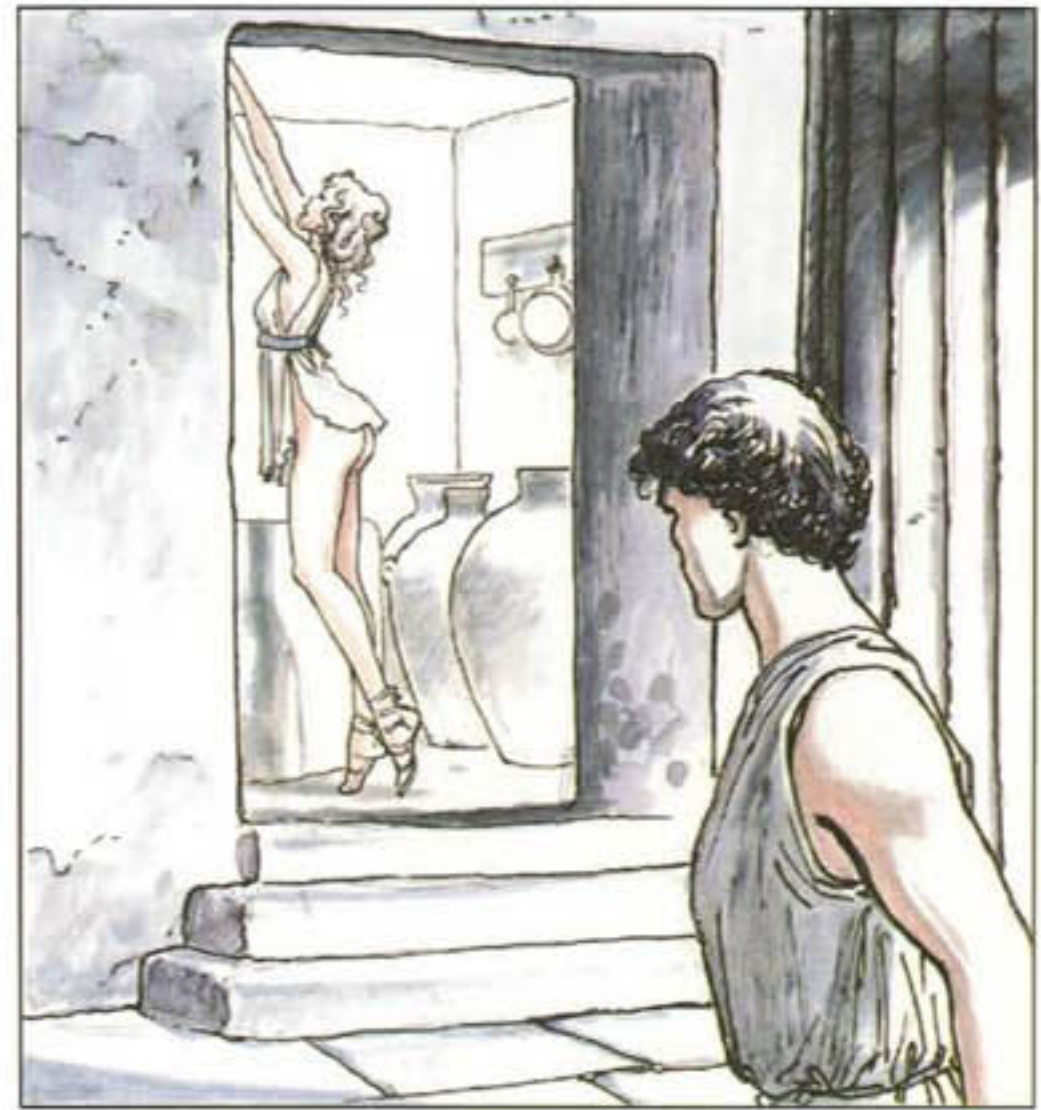
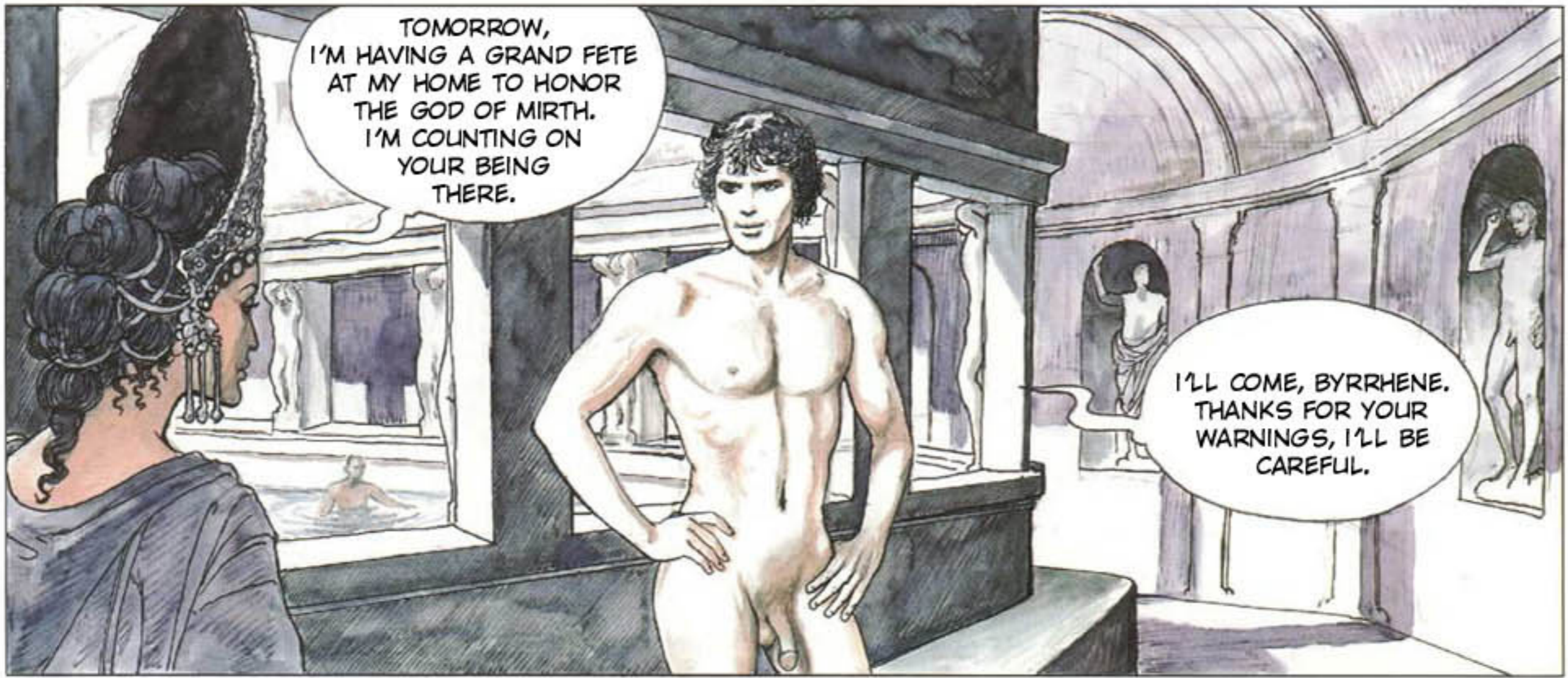
I DON'T
KNOW THIS
LADY...



OH YES! BLOND
HAIR, BLUE EYES,
YOU'RE THE LIVING
IMAGE OF YOUR
MOTHER, SILVIA. WE
GREW UP LIKE TWO
SISTERS. DON'T BE
EMBARRASSED BY
YOUR NUDITY. I'M
BYRRHENE, YOUR
WET NURSE, I
SUCKLED YOU.
MY HOME IS
YOURS.



TOO BAD YOU'RE
ALREADY MILON'S
GUEST... BE VIGILANT!
BEWARE OF THE
BALEFUL TRICKS AND
FALSE FLATTERIES
OF PAMPHILE, MILON'S
WIFE! SHE'S A
FORMIDABLE MAGICIAN!
SHE SEDUCES
HANDSOME BOYS
LIKE YOU
AND CHANGES THEM
INTO ANIMALS
WHEN SHE TIRES
OF THEM...





WHAT A DELICIOUS SAUCE
YOU'RE MAKING!
I'D BE GLAD TO
DIP MY FINGER IN IT!



EASY, BEAUTIFUL MAN, DON'T COME NEAR
MY STOVE, OR THE FLAME
WILL SCORCH
YOU!



I'M ROASTING
ALREADY,
I'M WELL DONE,
AND THE FLAME IS
CONSUMING ME
WHOLE...

WATCH OUT, MY SWEET...
SOMETIMES THE
SWEETNESS OF HONEY
SUDDENLY TAKES ON
THE BITTER TASTE
OF BILE.



HOLD ON TO THIS GOOD MOOD
BECAUSE I'M ALREADY ALL YOURS.
I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT,
BUT LATER. I'LL COME TO YOUR
ROOM THIS VERY NIGHT...
GET READY, BECAUSE I'LL LOOSE
ALL MY ENERGIES ON YOU,
WITHOUT RESPITE, UNTIL
DAWN.

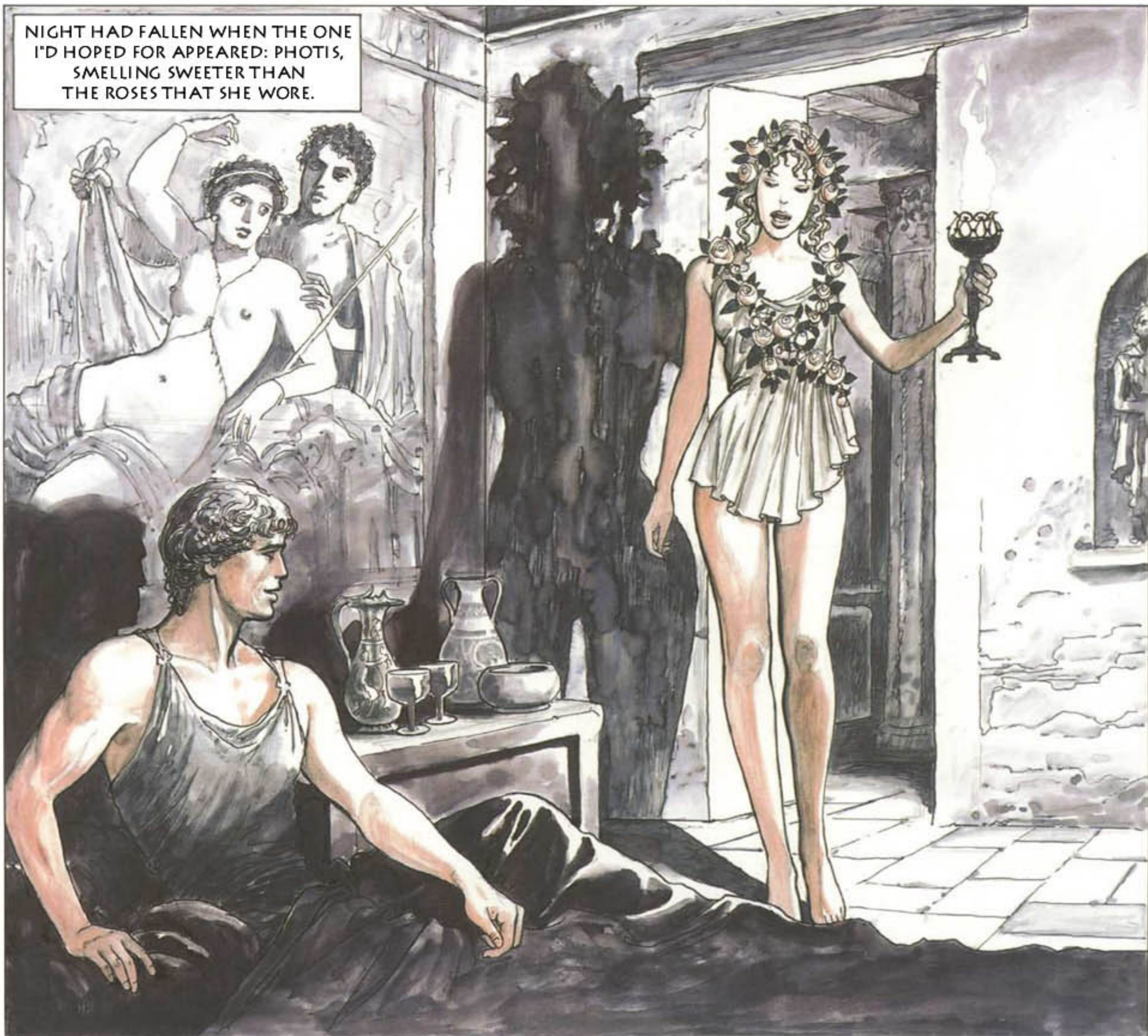
EVENING CAME...

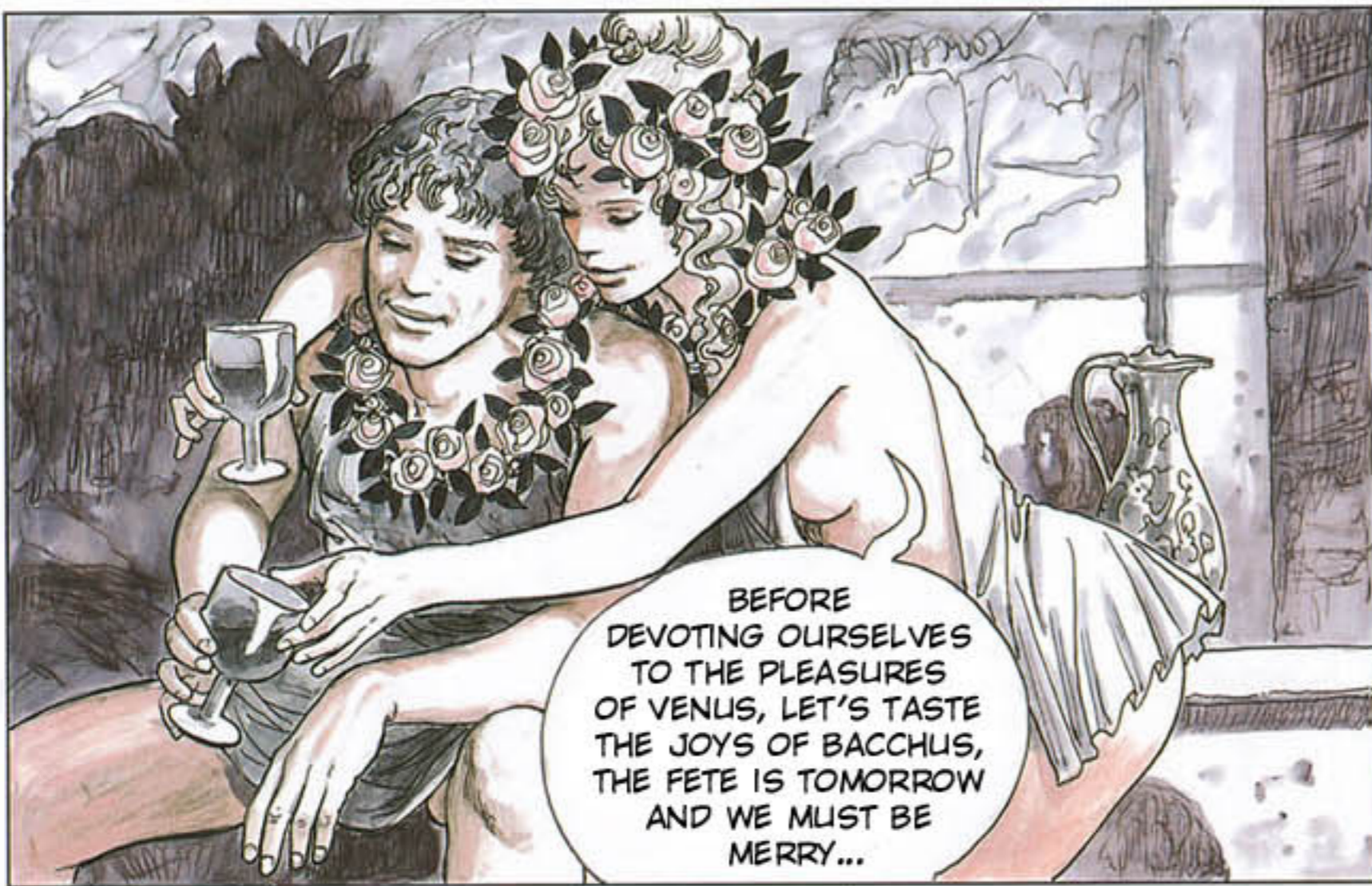
I'D LIKE VERY MUCH FOR PAMPHILE TO SHOW ME A LITTLE OF HER MAGIC...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT MY MAGIC? I'D SAY THERE'S A TONGUE AROUND HERE THAT'S FAR TOO LOOSE!

OH NO, IT WAS JUST SOMETHING I HEARD AT THE BATHS. FORGIVE ME. I'M EXHAUSTED, I'M GOING TO BED.

NIGHT HAD FALLEN WHEN THE ONE I'D HOPED FOR APPEARED: PHOTIS, SMELLING SWEETER THAN THE ROSES THAT SHE WORE.





BEFORE
DEVOTING OURSELVES
TO THE PLEASURES
OF VENUS, LET'S TASTE
THE JOYS OF BACCHUS,
THE FETE IS TOMORROW
AND WE MUST BE
MERRY...

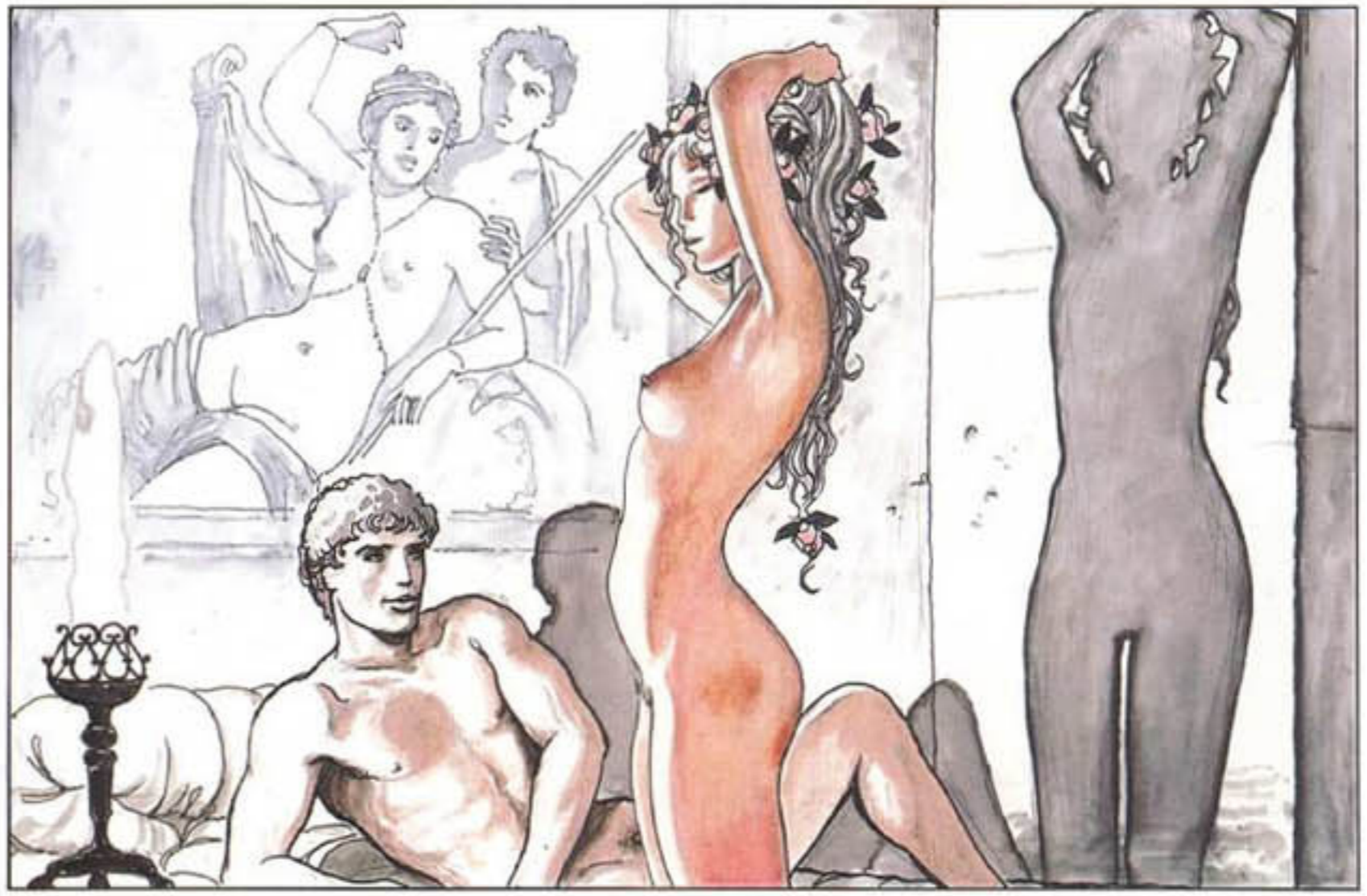


FOR PITY'S SAKE,
MY SWEET PHOTIS,
COME HELP ME, MY BOW IS DRAWN
SO TIGHT THAT WITHOUT YOUR
FIRST AID, IT WILL SNAP!



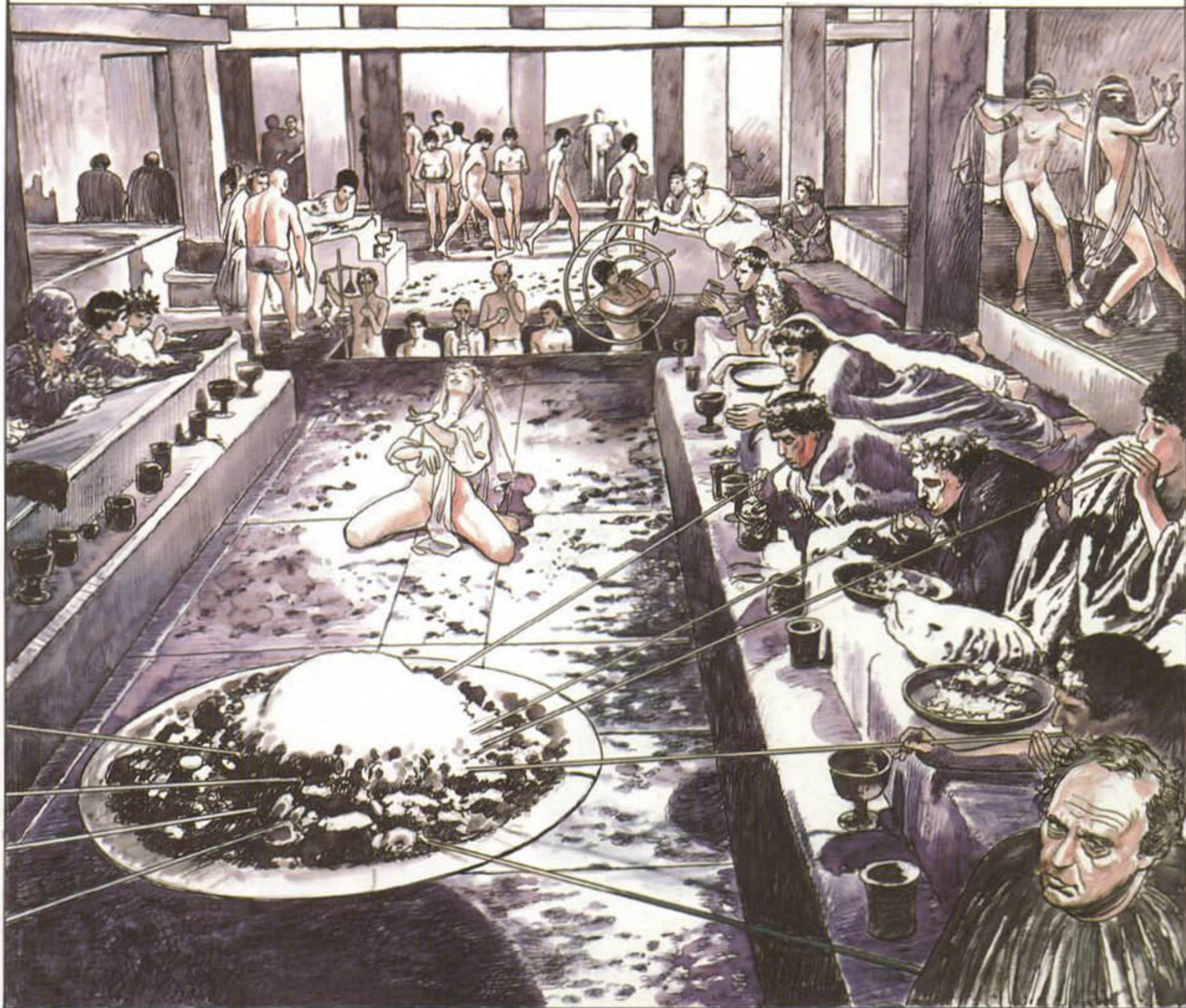
IF YOU WANT TO TAKE ME
TO THE PINNACLE OF
PLEASURE, AFTER YOU
LINDRESS, LET DOWN
YOUR LOVELY HAIR
BEFORE YOU COME
INTO MY ARMS.







THE NEXT EVENING, I WENT TO BYRRHENE'S FETE, PARTLY SO AS NOT TO ABUSE MILON'S HOSPITALITY, BUT ALSO TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PAMPHILE'S MAGICAL POWERS. THE PARTY WAS IN FULL SWING.

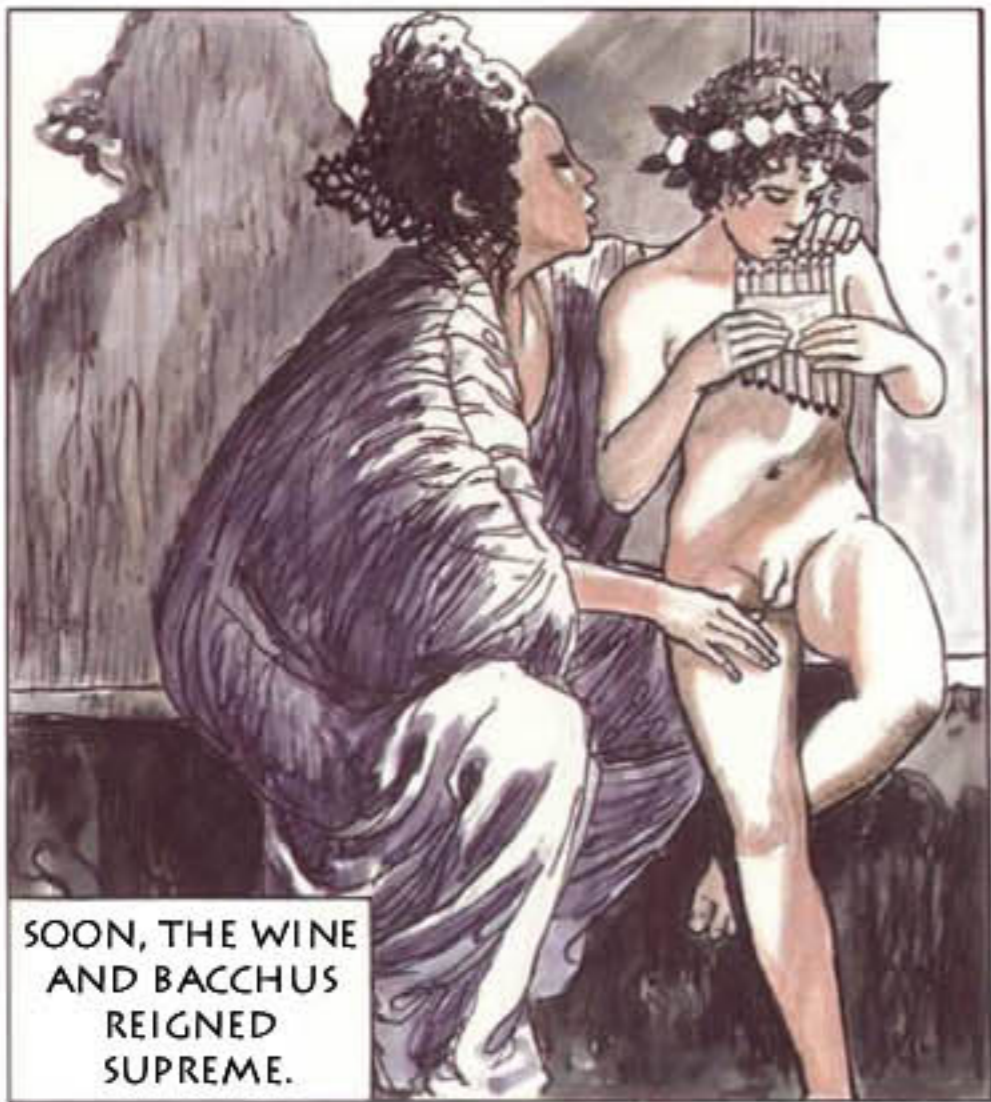


IN THE BALCONY, THE COMMONERS MOANED FOR US TO THROW THEM SOME SCRAPS TO EAT.



THE OLDER WOMEN WATCHED ME WITH CURIOSITY, WHISPERING AMONG THEMSELVES.





SOON, THE WINE AND BACCHUS REIGNED SUPREME.



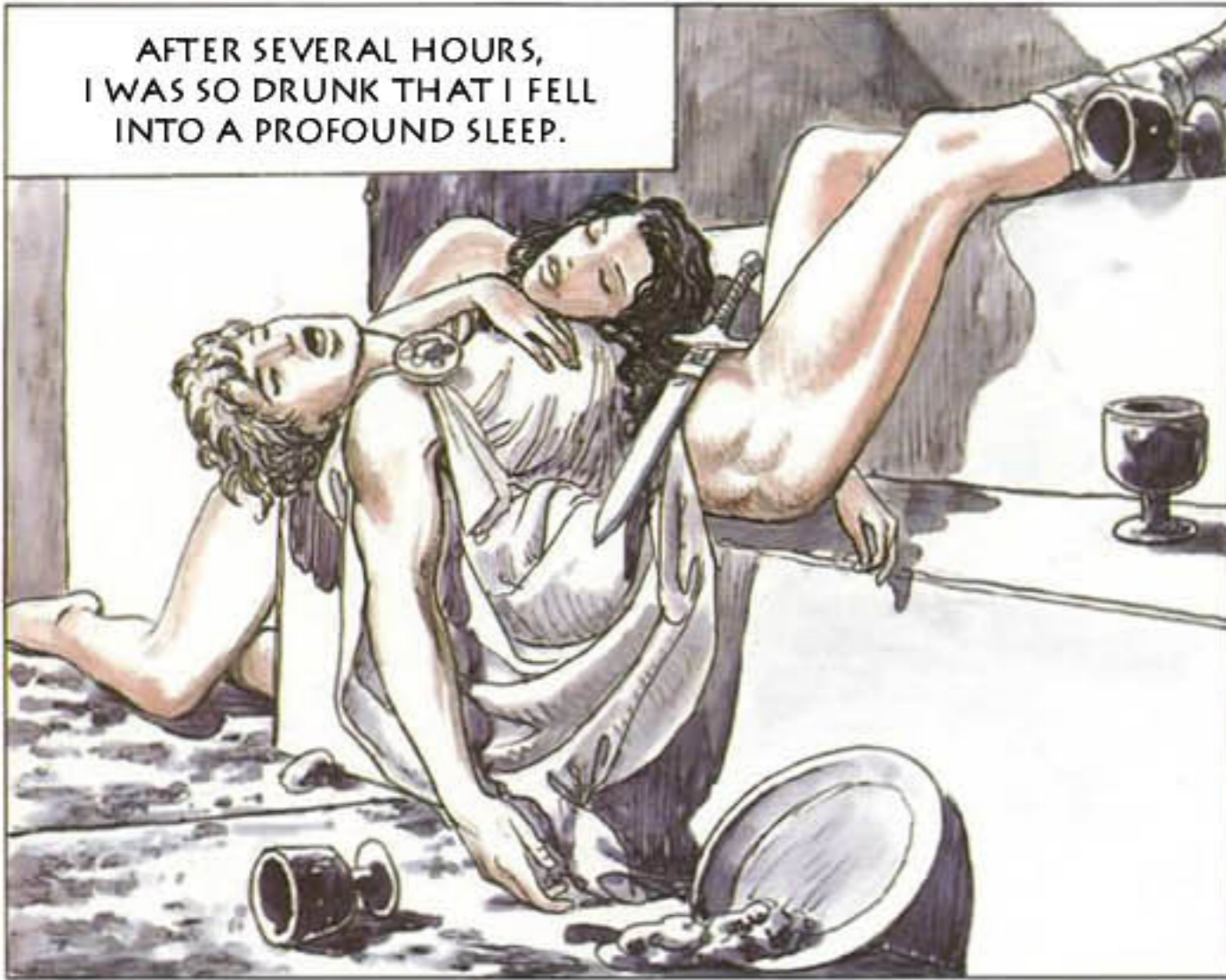
THE LADIES LOST ALL RESTRAINT.



WHAT COULD BE MORE PROPER FOR THE LUPERCALES* THAN TO FREELY CELEBRATE BACCHUS AND THE GOD OF MIRTH.

* ANNUAL FESTIVAL TO WORSHIP THE FERTILITY GODS.

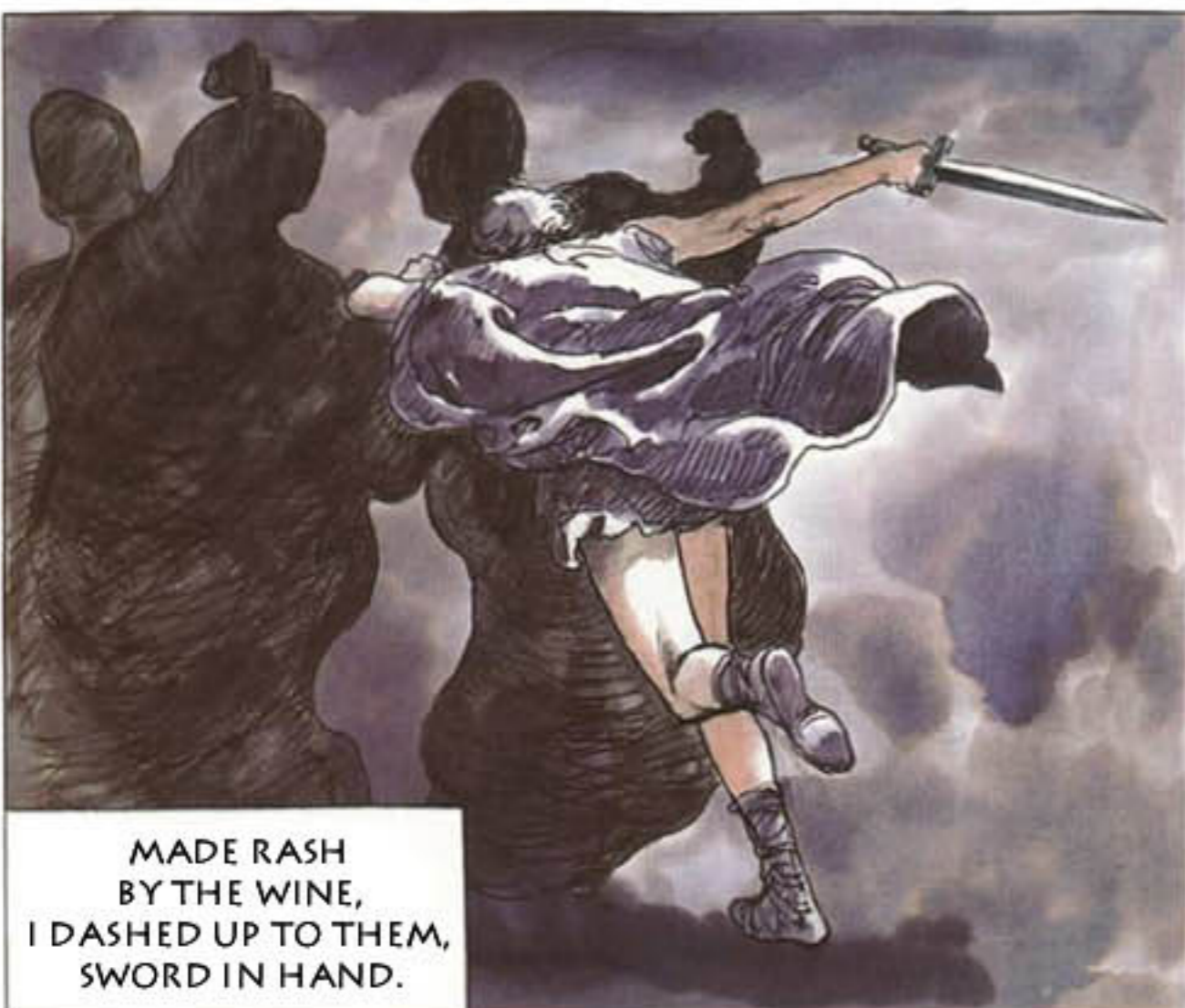
AFTER SEVERAL HOURS,
I WAS SO DRUNK THAT I FELL
INTO A PROFOUND SLEEP.



WHEN I CAME
TO MYSELF, I
STAGGERED OUTSIDE
IN HOPES THAT THE
FRESH NIGHT AIR
WOULD DO ME
SOME GOOD.



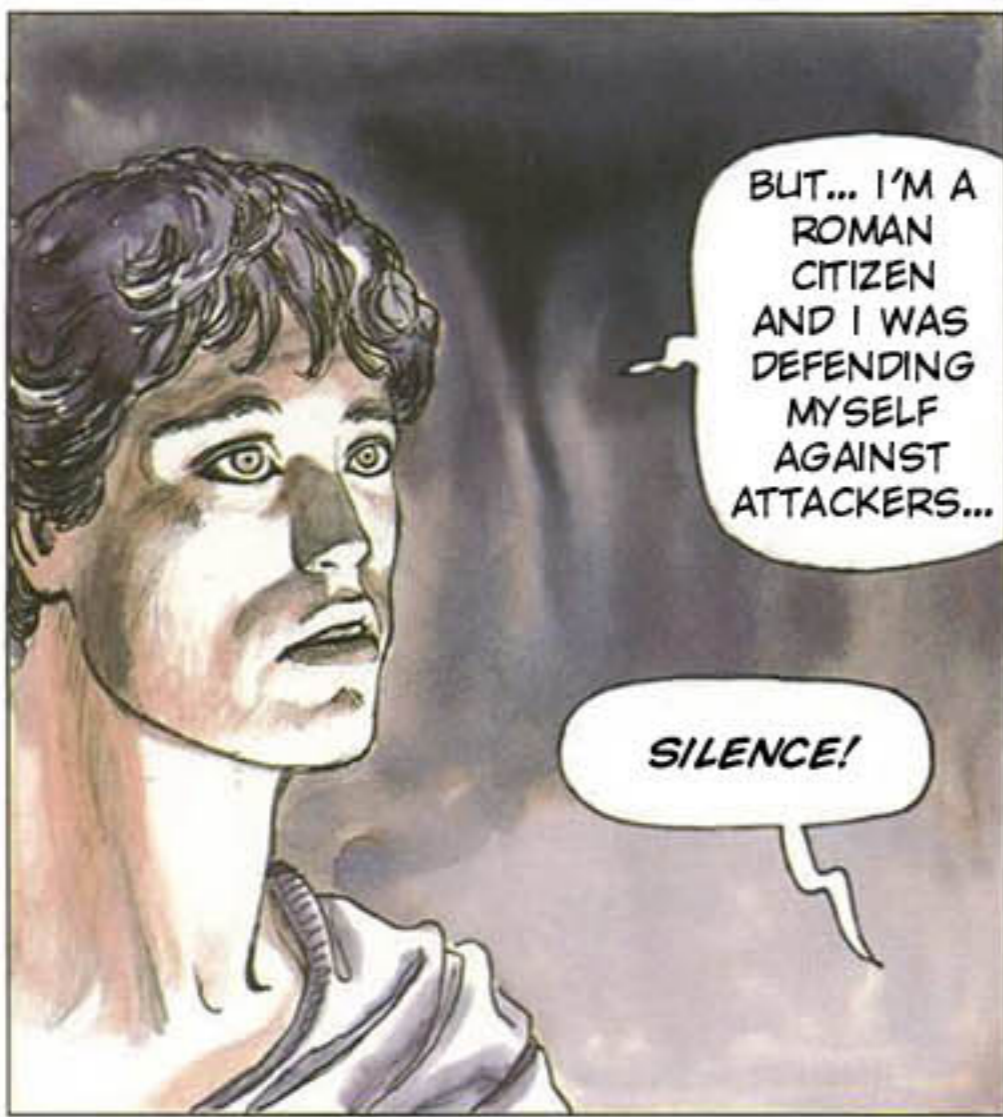
SUDDENLY,
THREE MENACING FIGURES
LOOMED OUT OF THE SHADOWS
AND REARED UP IN FRONT OF ME.



MADE RASH
BY THE WINE,
I DASHED UP TO THEM,
SWORD IN HAND.

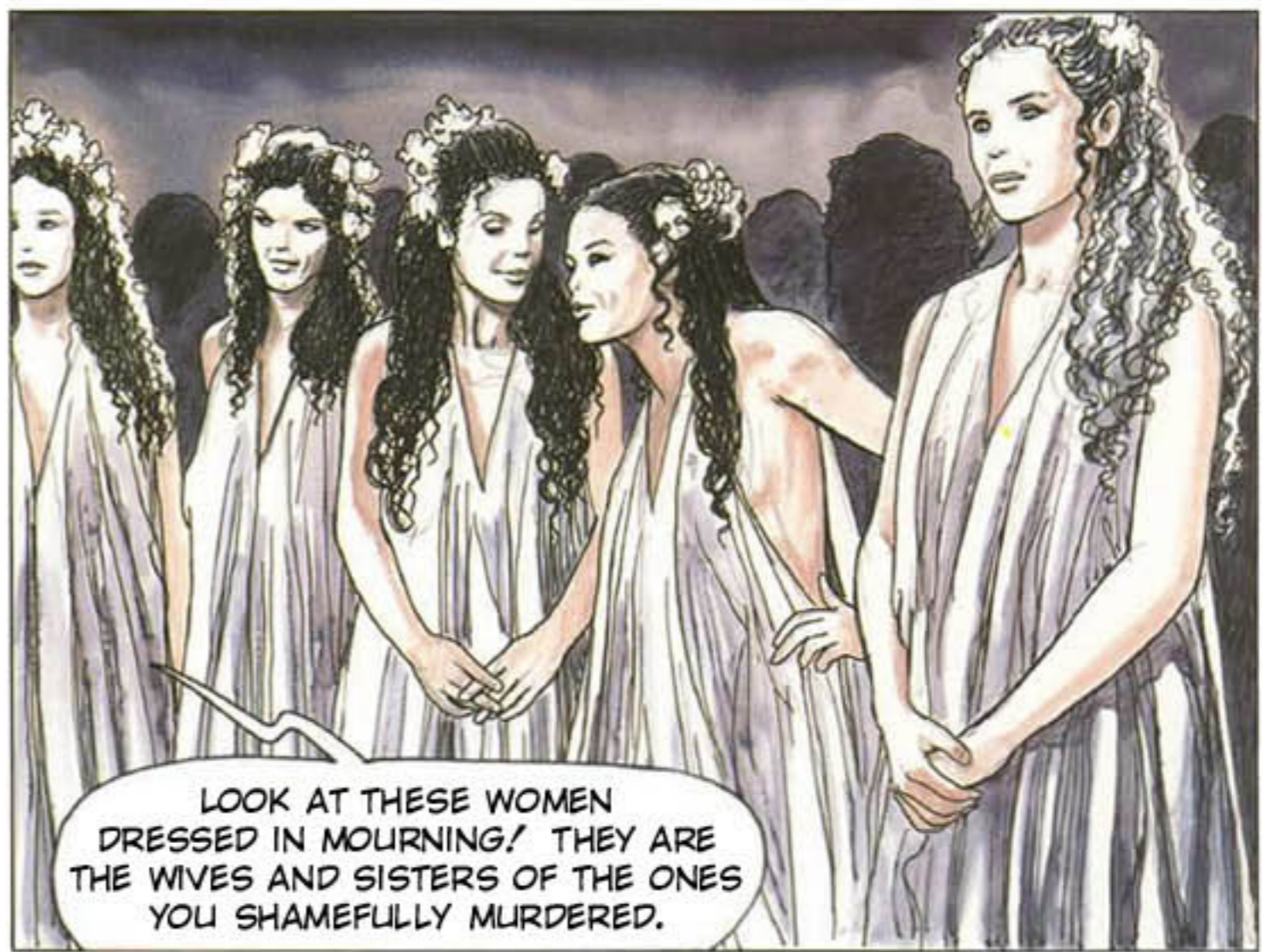






BUT... I'M A ROMAN CITIZEN AND I WAS DEFENDING MYSELF AGAINST ATTACKERS...

SILENCE!



LOOK AT THESE WOMEN DRESSED IN MOURNING! THEY ARE THE WIVES AND SISTERS OF THE ONES YOU SHAMEFULLY MURDERED.



REMOVE THE SHROIDS AND DISPLAY THE CORPSES! SO WE CAN SEE THE WOUNDS! SO WE CAN SEE THE BLOOD THAT FLOWED SO COPIOUSLY!



BACCHUS' WONDERS! THEY'RE NOTHING BUT EMPTY WINESKINS!



HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

COME HERE, SKINKILLER!

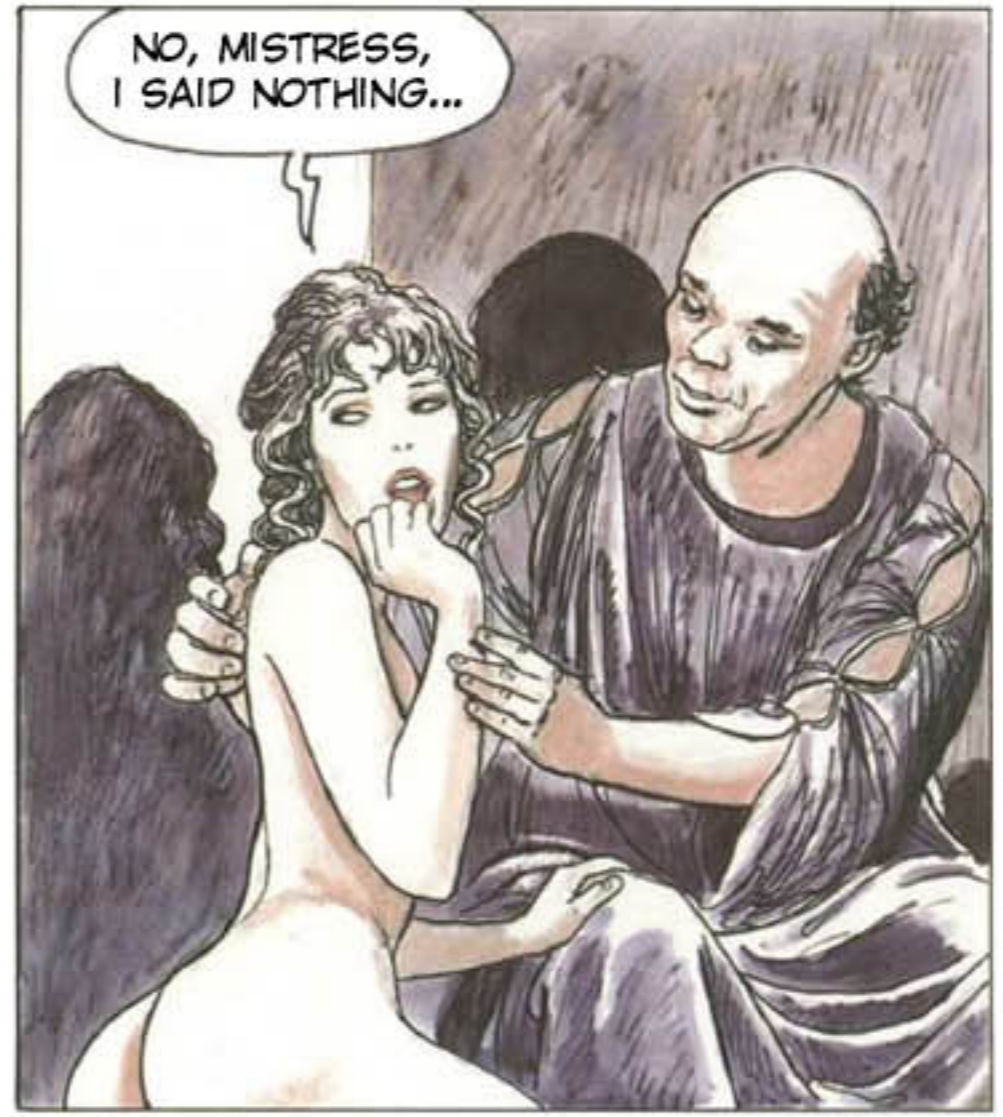
WHAT A HEROIC RIPOSTE AGAINST THE ATTACK OF THE THREE WINESKINS! HA HA HA!

IN THE HOUSE OF MILON...

YOU TALK TOO MUCH, PHOTIS! ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL SHORTEN YOUR TONGUE!



NO, MISTRESS, I SAID NOTHING...



DON'T HIT TOO HARD, MISTRESS... I SWEAR I WON'T SAY ANY MORE...



I'LL BELIEVE YOU WHEN I'VE NAILED YOUR TONGUE TO THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE.

ANYWAY, HE WON'T BE ENJOYING YOUR PRETTY ASS ANYMORE, BECAUSE I'M GOING TO CARVE A PIECE OUT OF IT.

WITH NO TONGUE, THEY'LL LOVE YOU AT THE WHOREHOUSE, AS A COCKSUCKER.

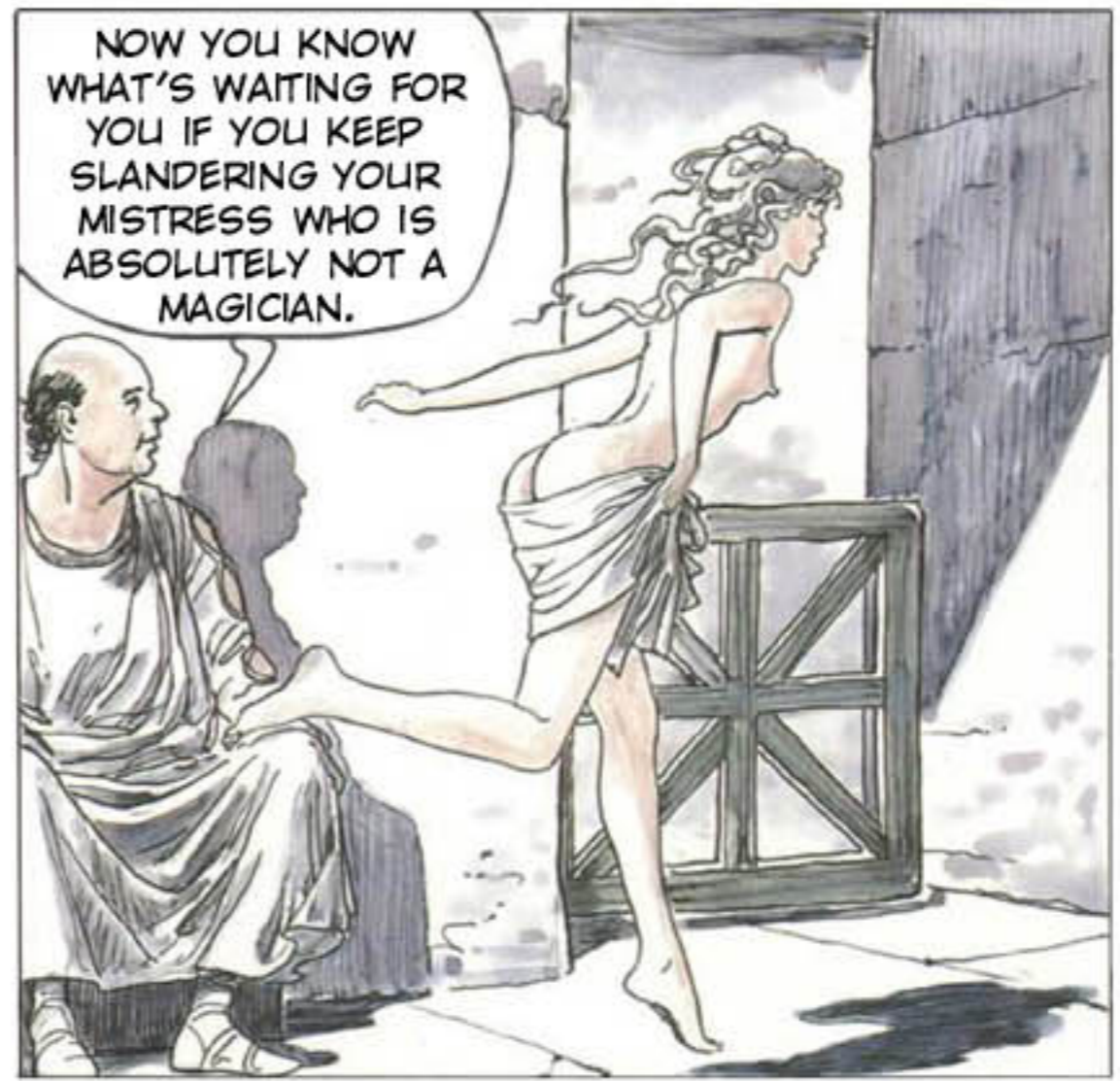
OOOFF!!!



AGGGH!



OR YOUR LITTLE NIPPLES, EITHER, 'CAUSE WE'LL RIP THEM OFF YOUR TITS!



NOW YOU KNOW WHAT'S WAITING FOR YOU IF YOU KEEP SLANDERING YOUR MISTRESS WHO IS ABSOLUTELY NOT A MAGICIAN.



PHOTIS?

IS THAT YOU, LUCIUS? I'M HERE...



OH! MY SWEET PHOTIS! YOUR BOTTOM IS ON FIRE!



THE SORCERESS BEAT ME BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW WHAT SHE IS!

THEY'VE PLAYED A NASTY TRICK ON ME TOO, TO HONOR THE GODS OF MIRTH...



LISTEN!
NOISES
OUTSIDE...



IT'S THE SORCESS
LEAVING TO WORK ONE OF
HER SPELLS.

YOU THINK?
QUICK, LET'S FOLLOW!
I JUST HAVE TO UNCOVER
HER SECRETS!



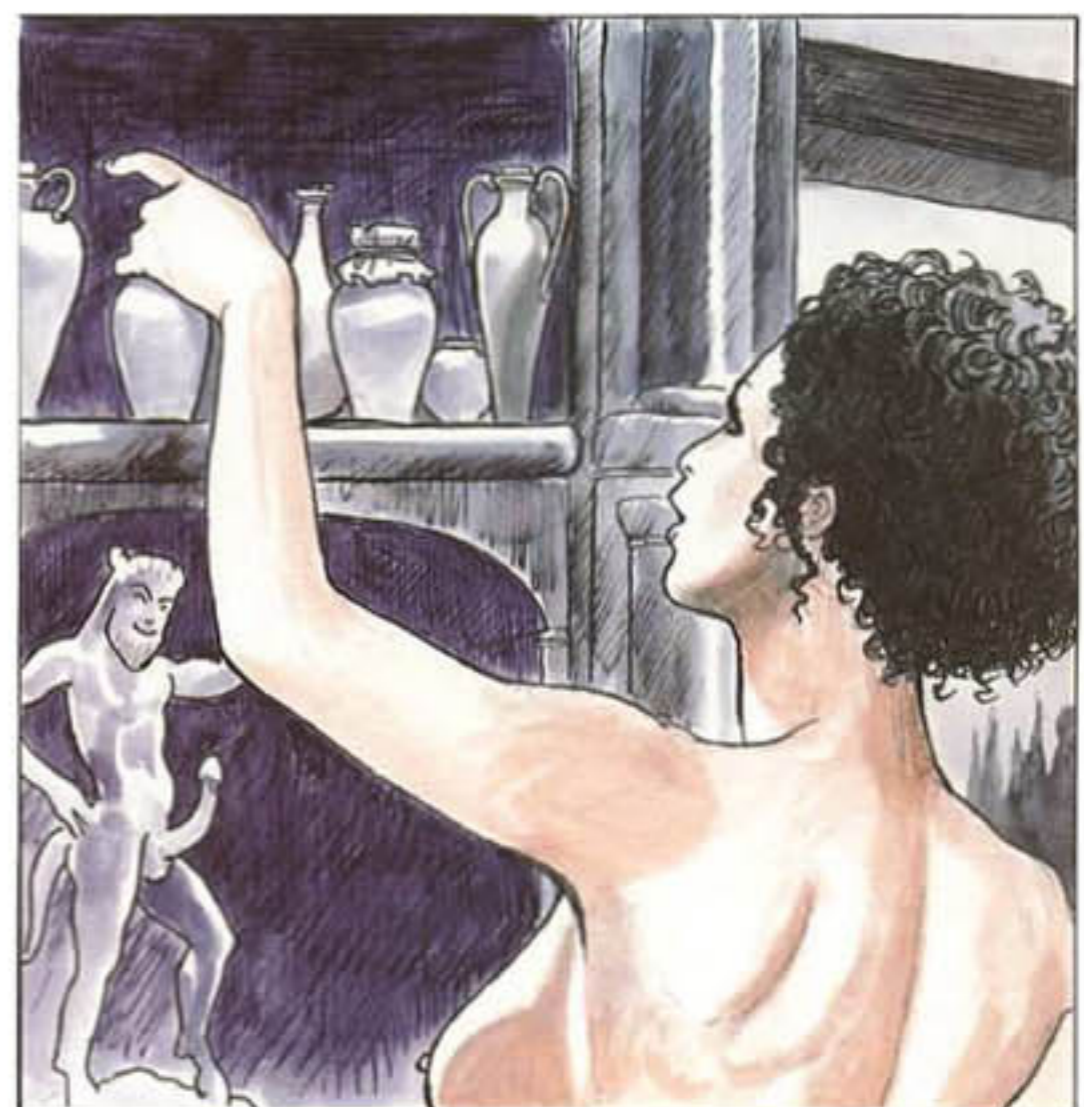
IT'S HER
ALL RIGHT...
LIKE ALL MOONLESS
NIGHTS...

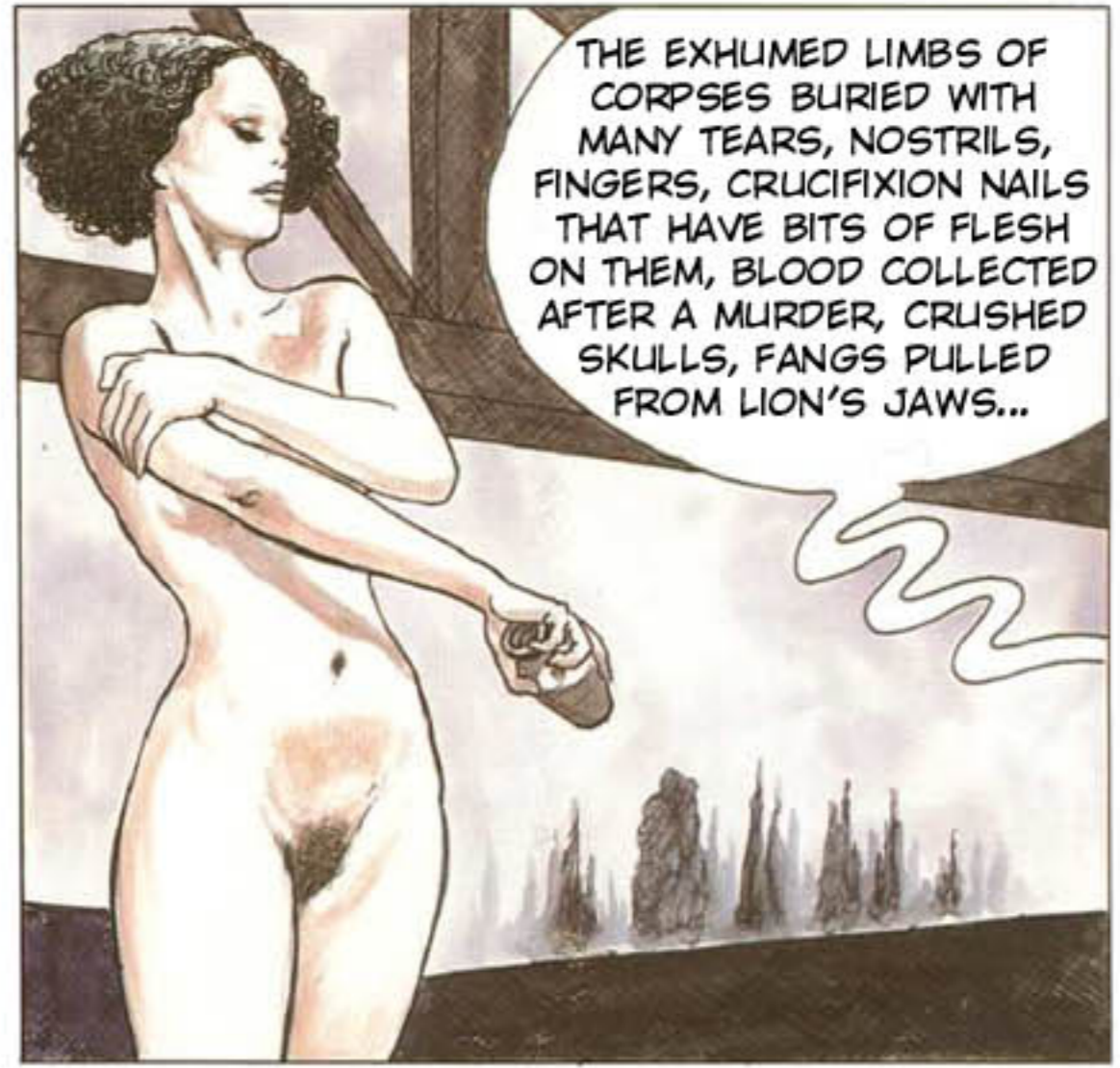


SHE GOES UP
TO A LOFT WHERE
SHE KEEPS ALL HER
MAGIC POTIONS...



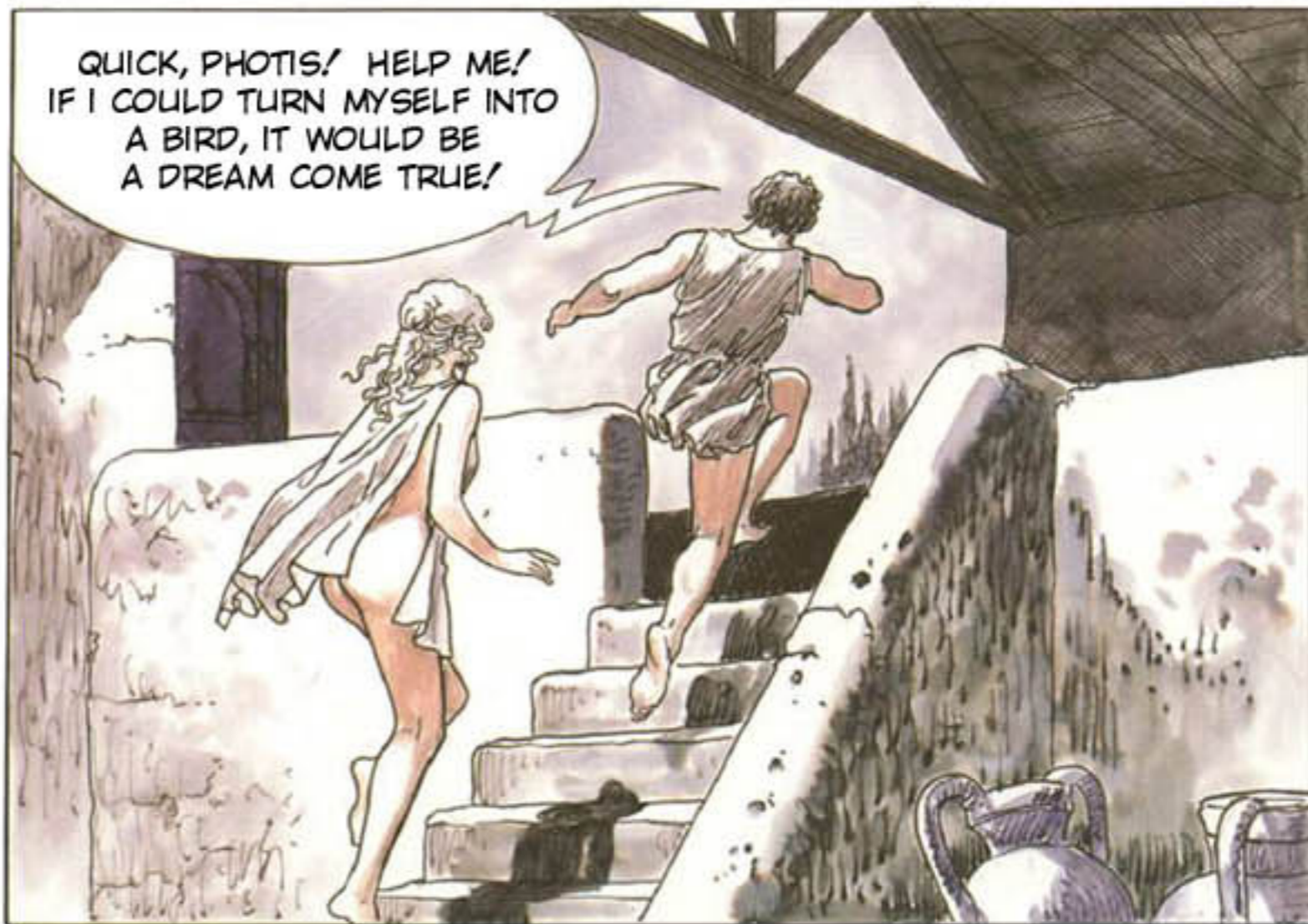
SHE'LL UNDRRESS
AND ANOINT HER BODY
WITH A SECRET UNGUENT
THAT TURNS HER
INTO A BIRD...







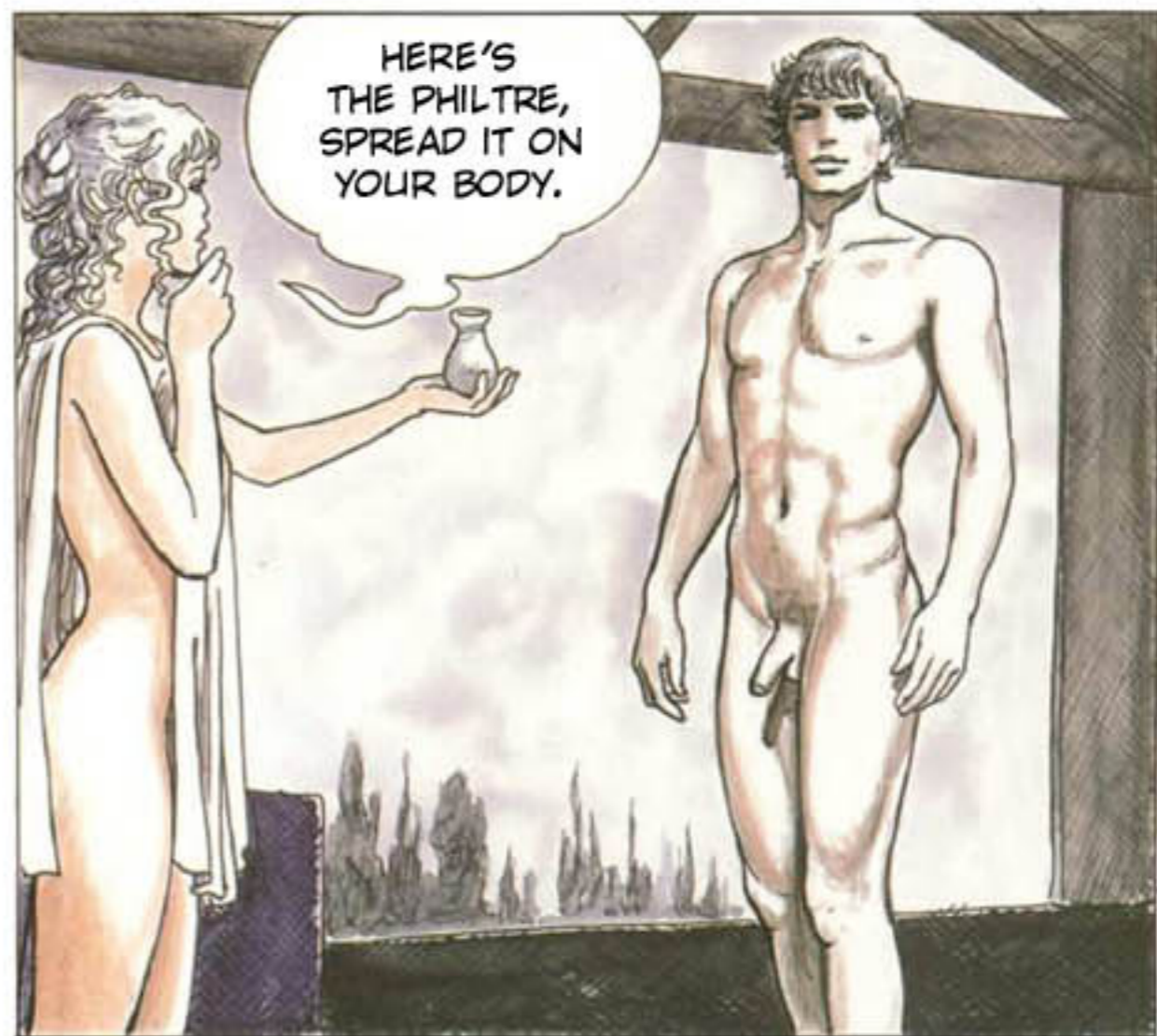
THERE, SHE'S FLYING AWAY!
EXTRAORDINARY!
INCREDIBLE!



QUICK, PHOTIS! HELP ME!
IF I COULD TURN MYSELF INTO
A BIRD, IT WOULD BE
A DREAM COME TRUE!



YOU REALLY
WANT TO TRY IT?



HERE'S
THE PHILTRE,
SPREAD IT ON
YOUR BODY.



YES, LIKE THAT...
PUT IT ON
ALL OVER...



AAAHHH!
MY LIMBS ARE
TENSING UP!
AND I FEEL
THE FEATHERS
BURSTING OUT!

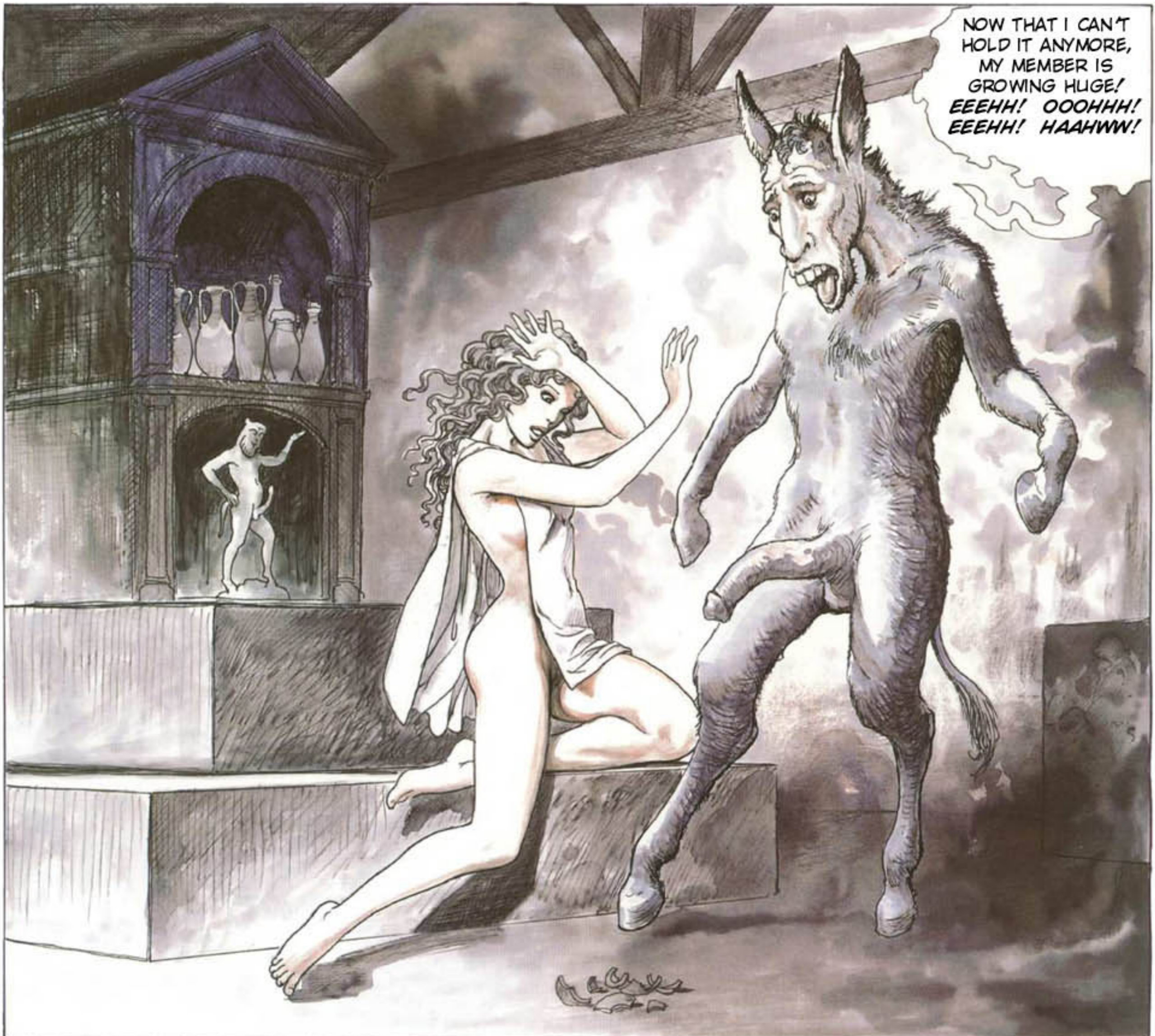
AAAHH! OOOHH!
THEY AREN'T FEATHERS...
THEY'RE HAIRS!
AND MY FINGERS!
MY FINGERS!

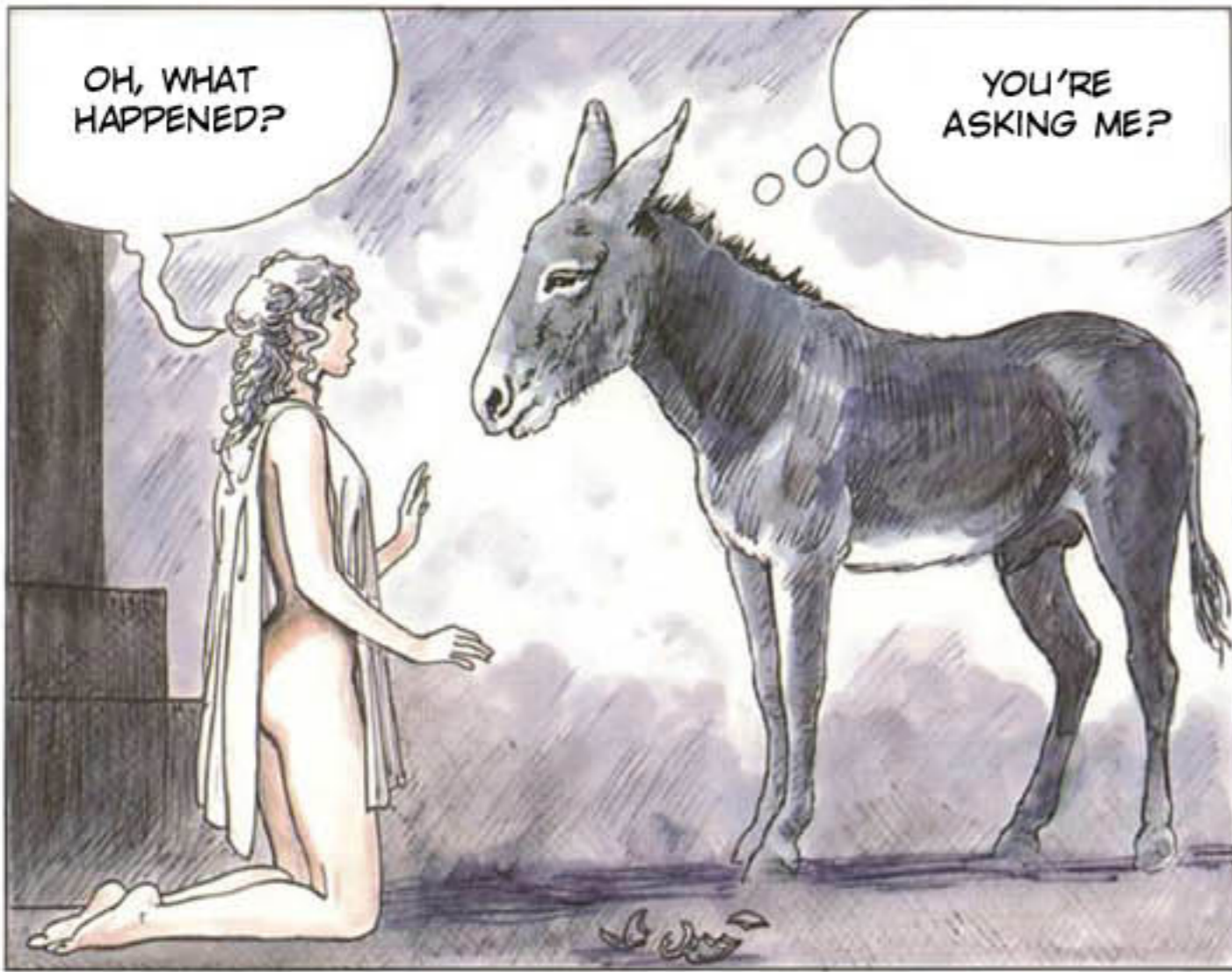


MY HANDS
ARE TURNING
INTO HOOVES!



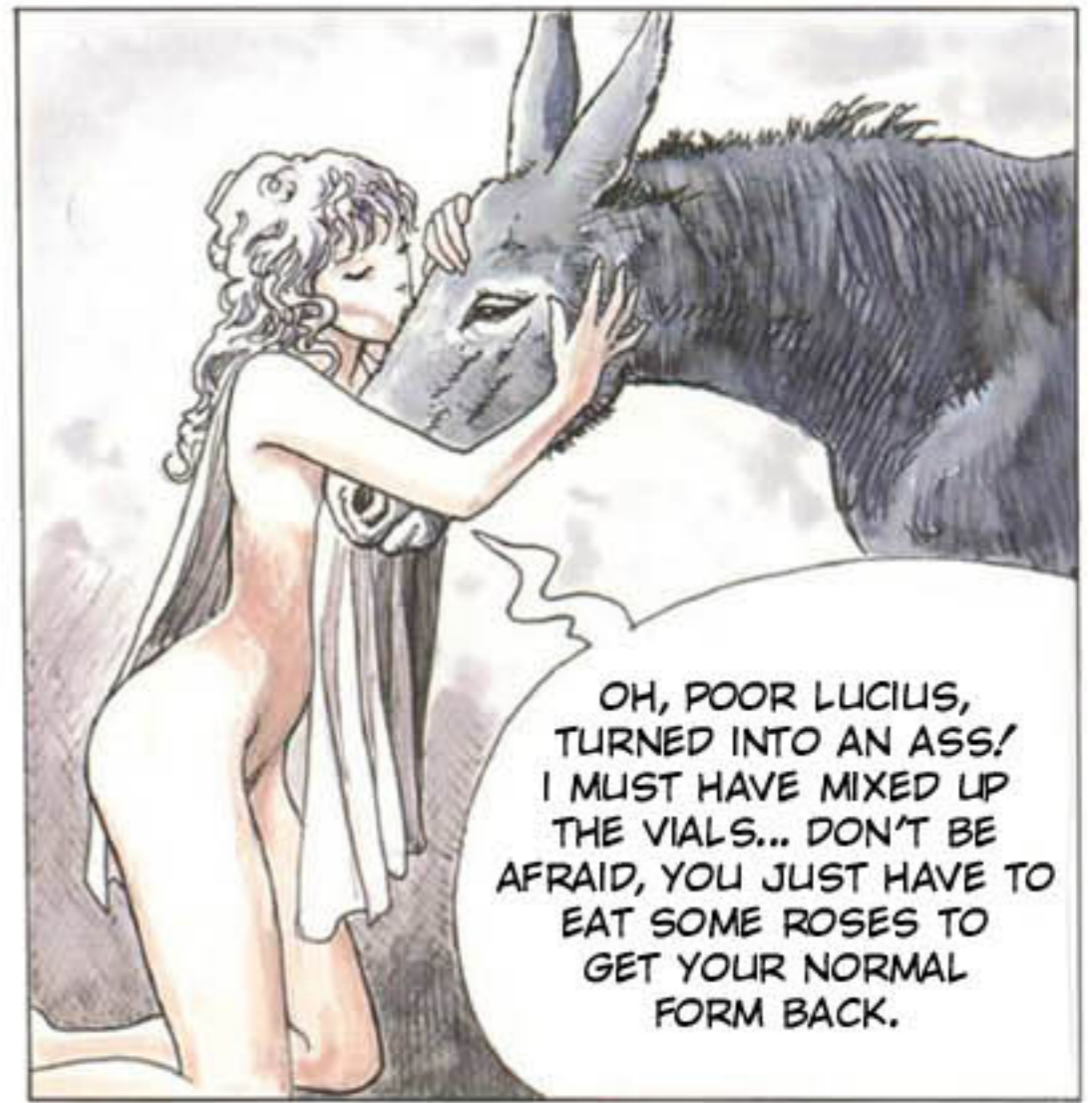
NOW THAT I CAN'T
HOLD IT ANYMORE,
MY MEMBER IS
GROWING HUGE!
EEEHH! OOOHHH!
EEEHH! HAAHWW!



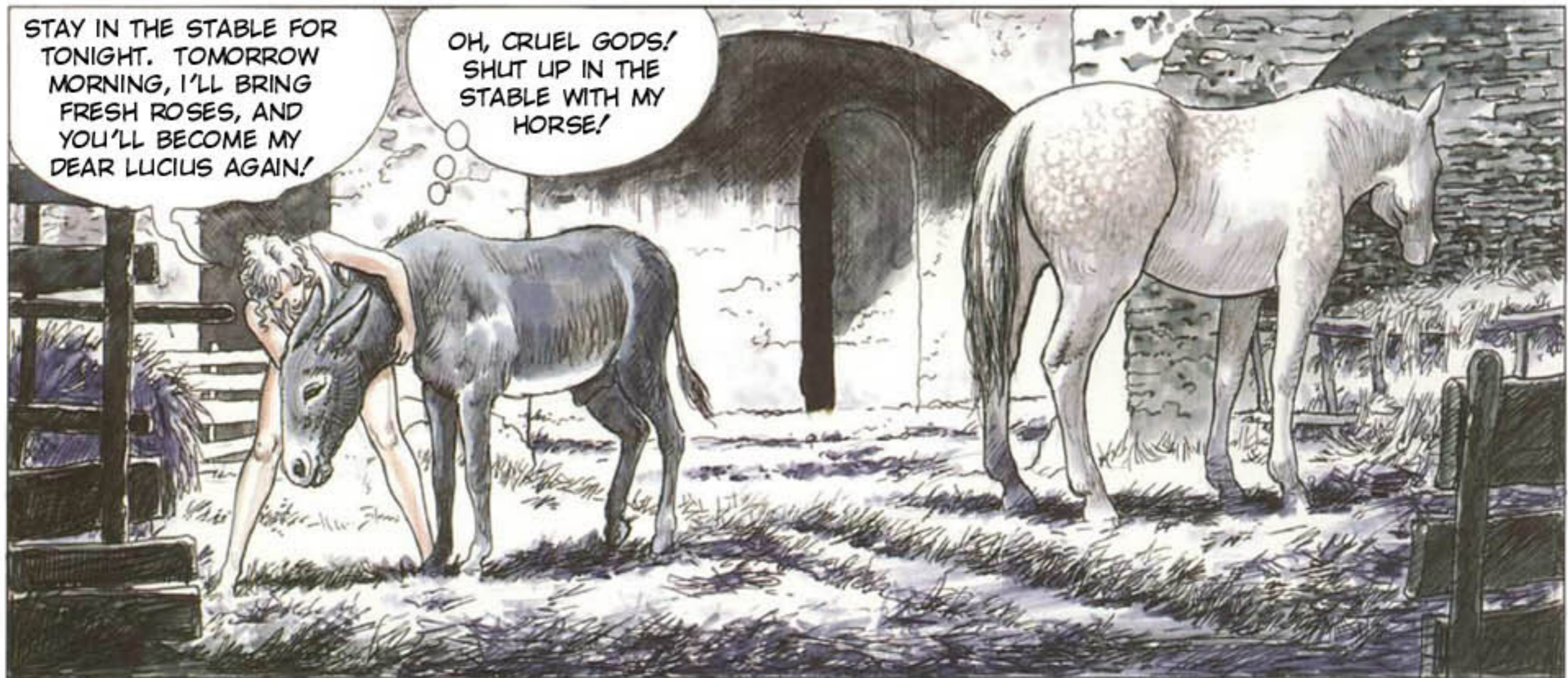


OH, WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU'RE ASKING ME?

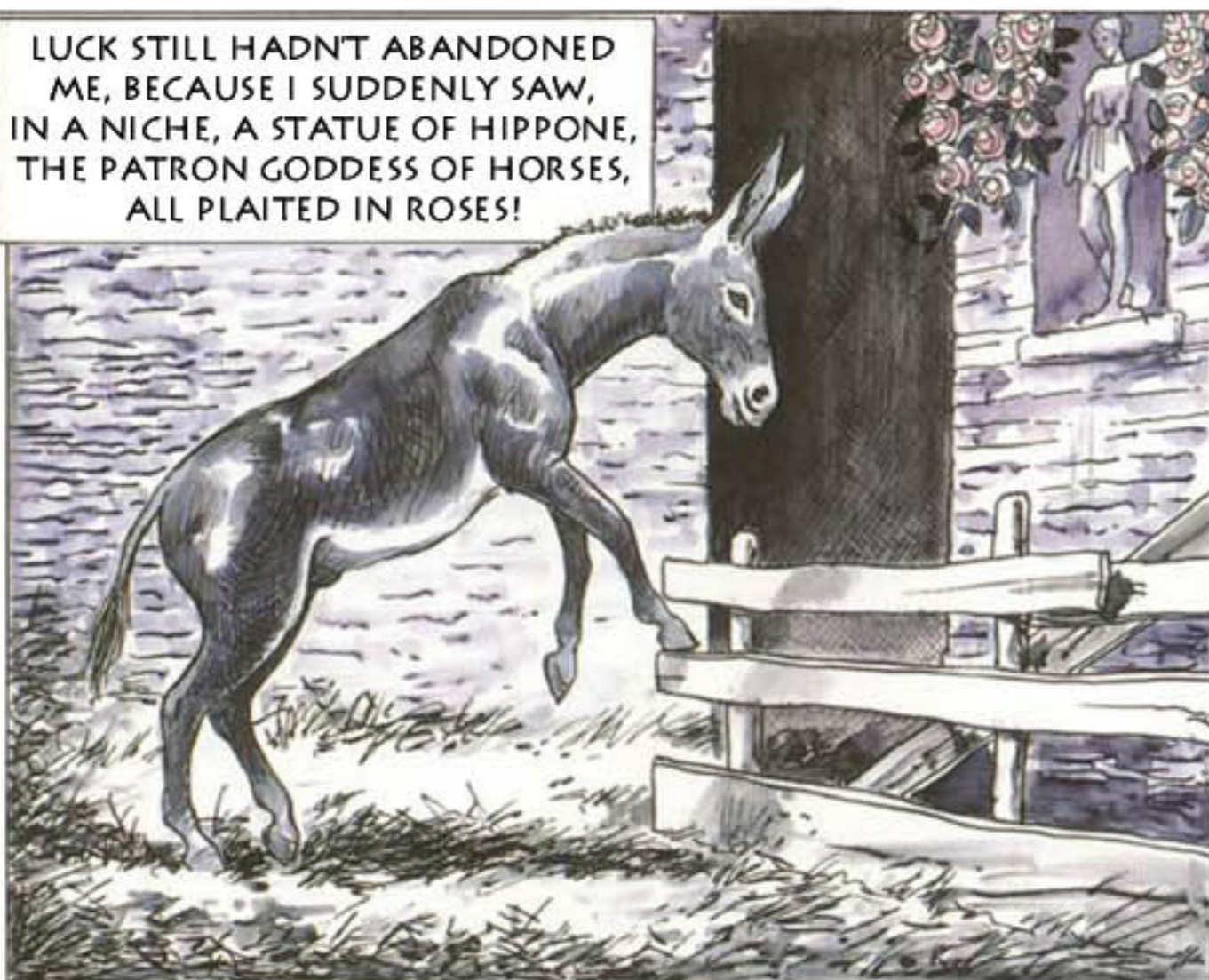


OH, POOR LUCIUS, TURNED INTO AN ASS! I MUST HAVE MIXED UP THE VIALS... DON'T BE AFRAID, YOU JUST HAVE TO EAT SOME ROSES TO GET YOUR NORMAL FORM BACK.



STAY IN THE STABLE FOR TONIGHT. TOMORROW MORNING, I'LL BRING FRESH ROSES, AND YOU'LL BECOME MY DEAR LUCIUS AGAIN!

OH, CRUEL GODS! SHUT UP IN THE STABLE WITH MY HORSE!

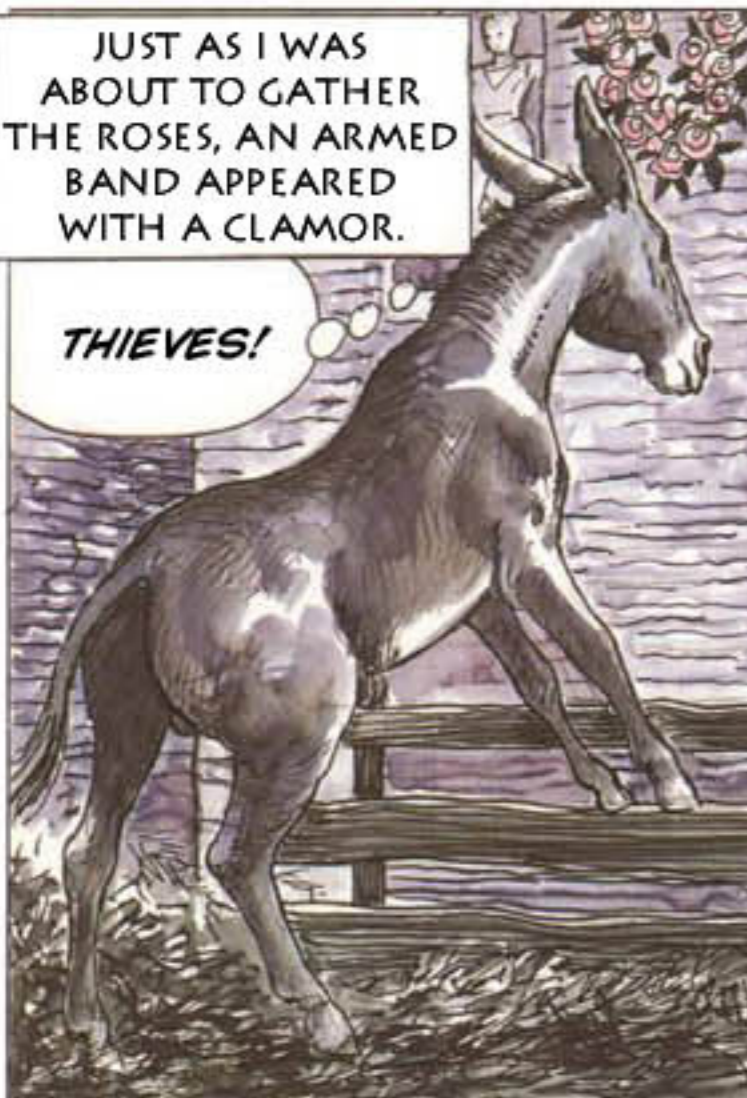


LUCK STILL HADN'T ABANDONED ME, BECAUSE I SUDDENLY SAW, IN A NICHE, A STATUE OF HIPHONE, THE PATRON GODDESS OF HORSES, ALL PLAITED IN ROSES!



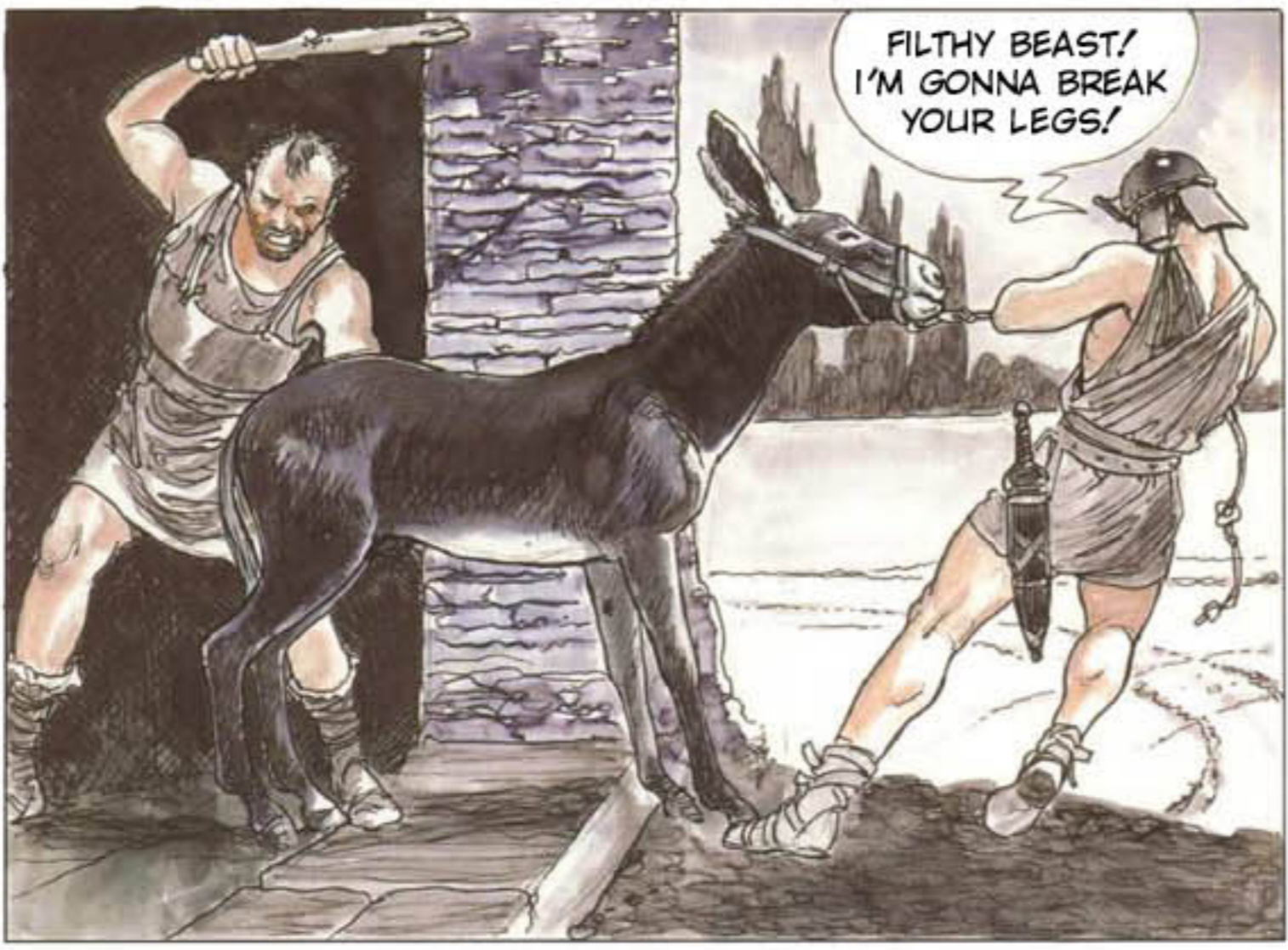
ONE MORE EFFORT AND I'LL BECOME THE MAN I AM AGAIN...

JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO GATHER THE ROSES, AN ARMED BAND APPEARED WITH A CLAMOR.

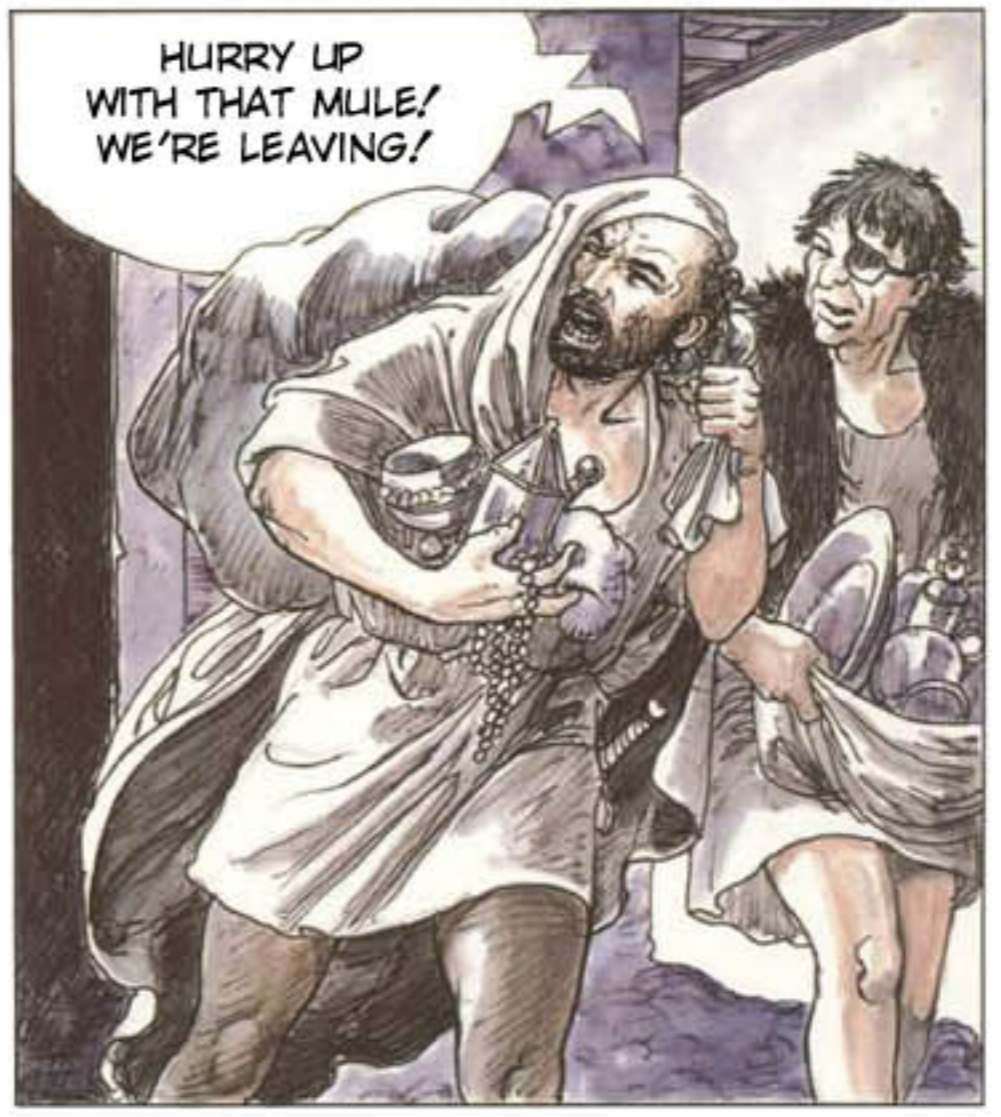


YOU TWO, BRING THE HORSE AND ASS, THEY'LL CARRY THE LOOT.

THIEVES!

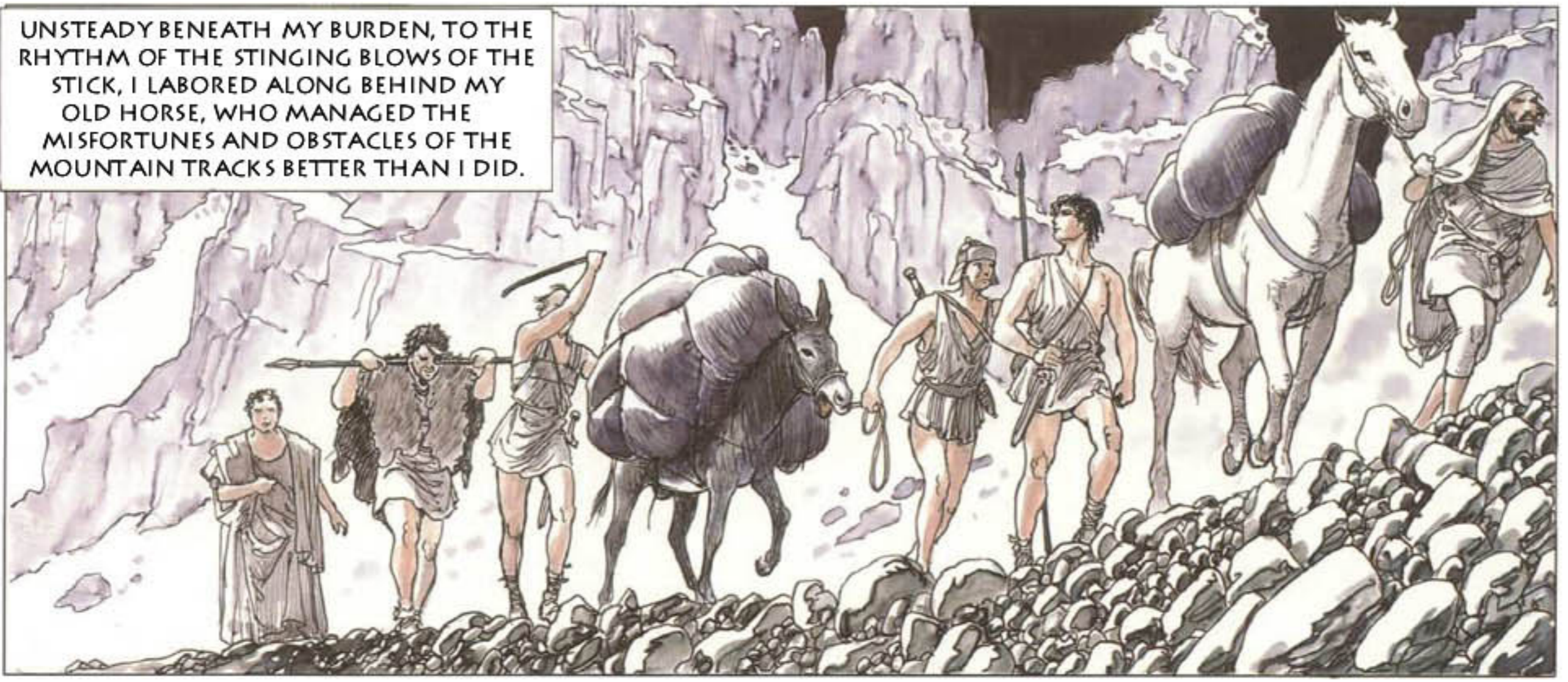


FILTHY BEAST! I'M GONNA BREAK YOUR LEGS!



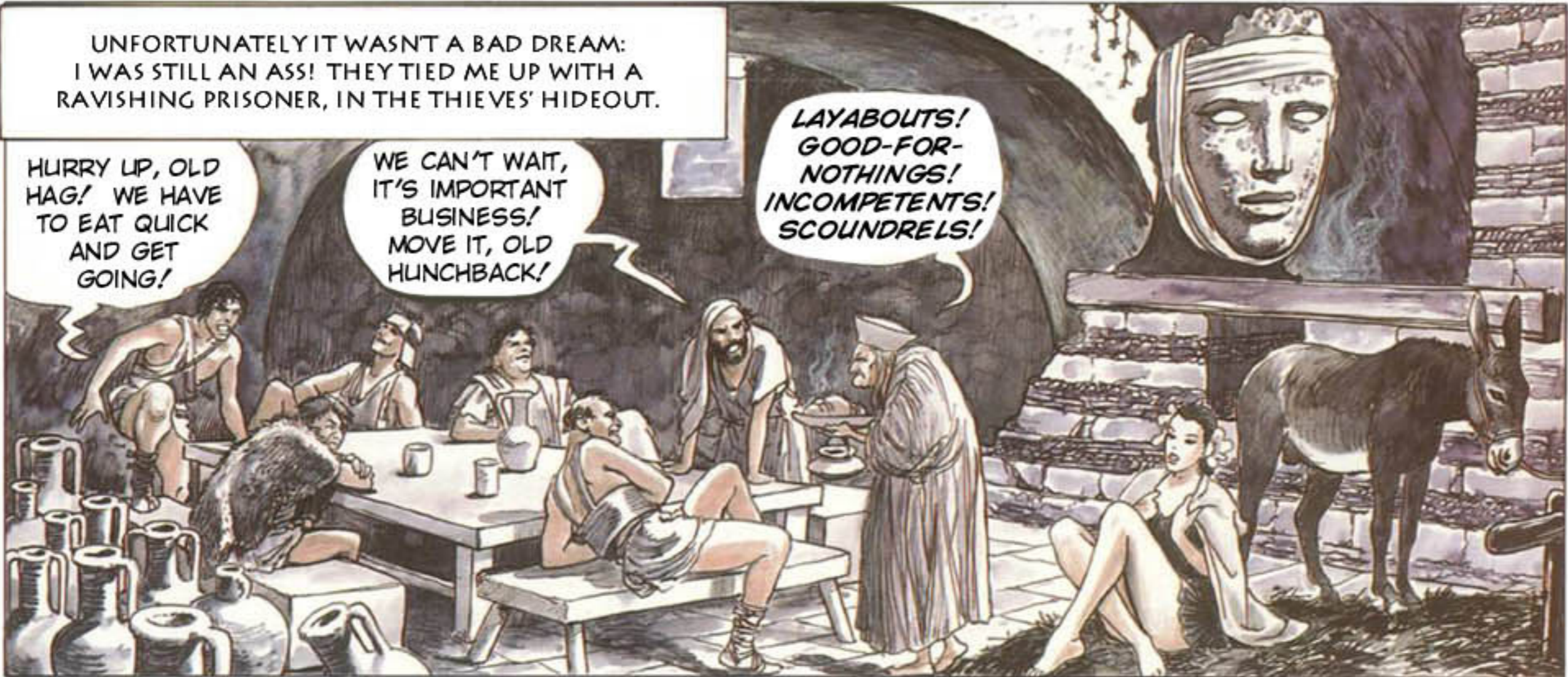
HURRY UP WITH THAT MULE! WE'RE LEAVING!

UNSTEADY BENEATH MY BURDEN, TO THE RHYTHM OF THE STINGING BLOWS OF THE STICK, I LABORED ALONG BEHIND MY OLD HORSE, WHO MANAGED THE MISFORTUNES AND OBSTACLES OF THE MOUNTAIN TRACKS BETTER THAN I DID.





THE ROSY-FINGERED DAWN CHASED AWAY THAT TERRIBLE NIGHT'S SHADOWS...



UNFORTUNATELY IT WASN'T A BAD DREAM: I WAS STILL AN ASS! THEY TIED ME UP WITH A RAVISHING PRISONER, IN THE THIEVES' HIDEOUT.

HURRY UP, OLD HAG! WE HAVE TO EAT QUICK AND GET GOING!

WE CAN'T WAIT, IT'S IMPORTANT BUSINESS! MOVE IT, OLD HUNCHBACK!

LAYABOUTS! GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS! INCOMPETENTS! SCOUNDRELS!



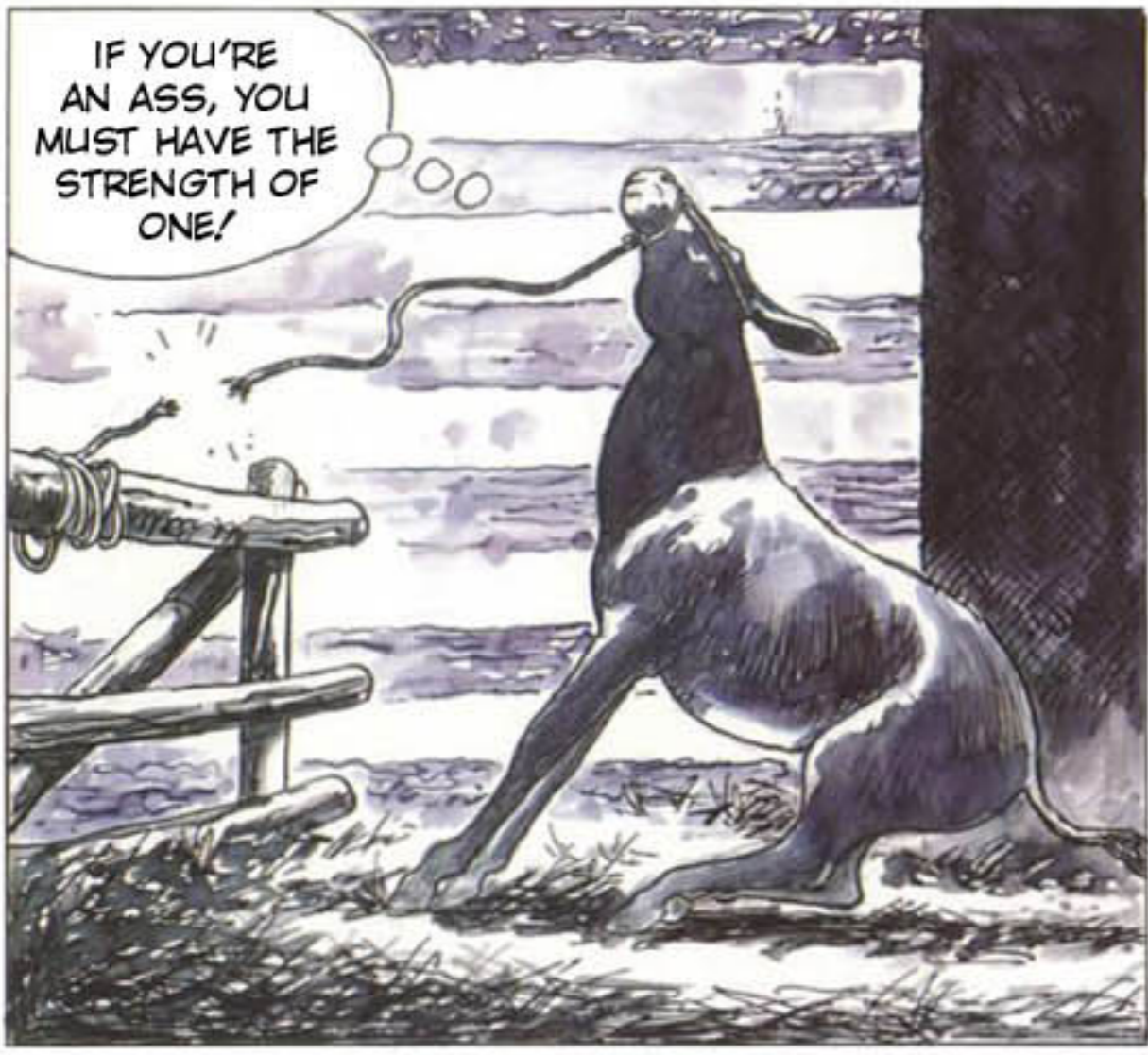
WE'RE LEAVING, BUT WE'LL BE BACK SOON! ONLY THE GIRL HAD BETTER NOT GET AWAY, OR LOOK OUT! HER FAMILY WILL PAY A HUGE RANSOM! WE'LL EAT THE ASS ROASTED!

SCOUNDRELS... LAZYBONES... GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS...



MY DEAR LUCIUS, IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR POOR ASS'S HIDE, THINK OF SOMETHING...

GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS... SCOUNDRELS... LOAFERS...



IF YOU'RE AN ASS, YOU MUST HAVE THE STRENGTH OF ONE!



WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, STUPID BEAST, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING!

OLD WRETCH!



GO ON, MY LITTLE ASS, RUN AWAY!

STOP! STOP!



HYAAH! HYAAH!



IF YOU GET ME TO SAFETY, YOU'LL BE TREATED LIKE A PRINCE!

I'M ALREADY RUNNING LIKE A THOROUGHBRED!



NO! NOT THAT WAY! THIS WAY!

NO! WE'RE GOING THAT WAY!



WE'RE SPINNING AROUND LIKE A TOP AND LOSING PRECIOUS TIME!

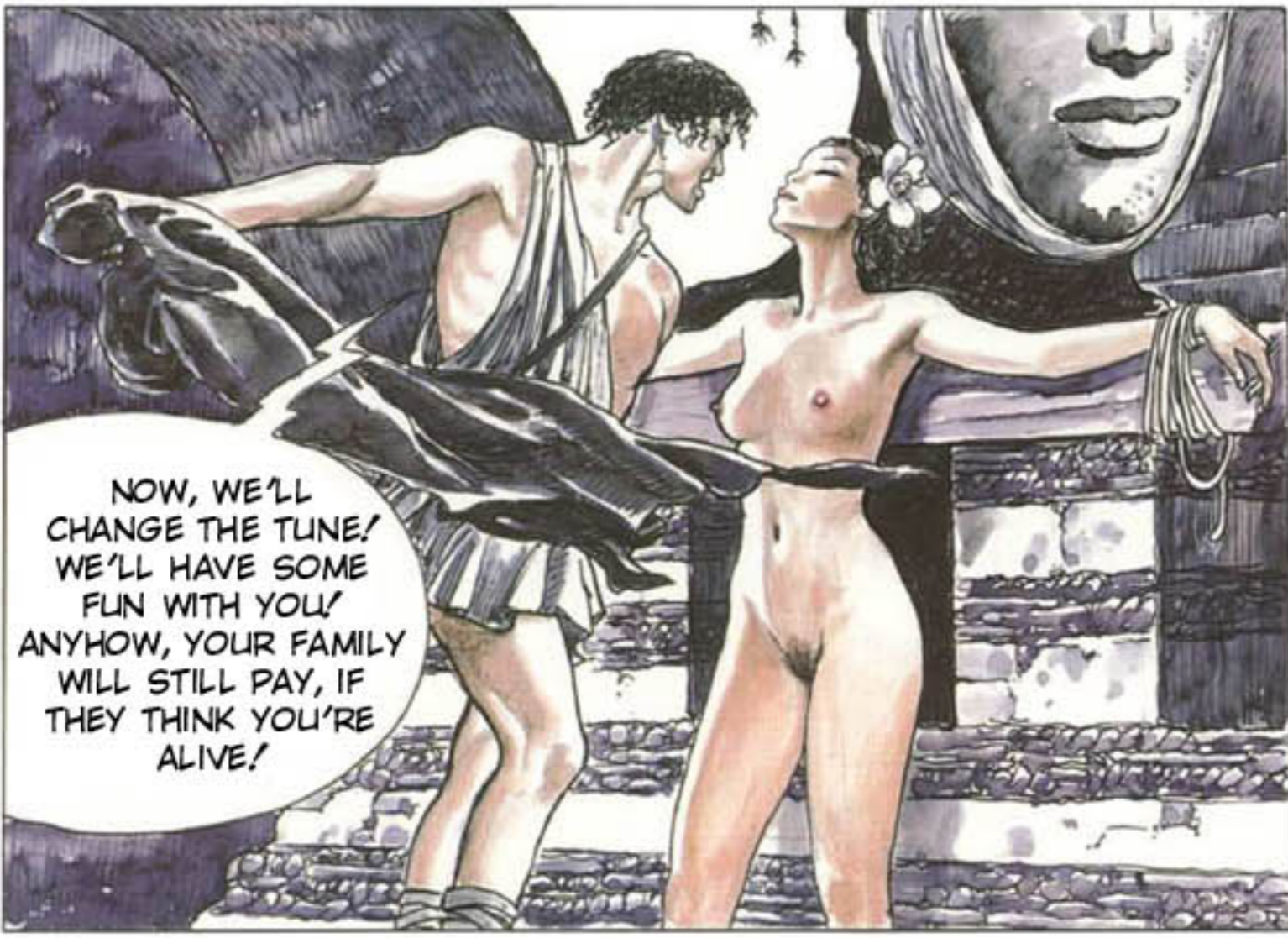
IS IT MY FAULT YOU'RE MORE STUBBORN THAN A MULE?



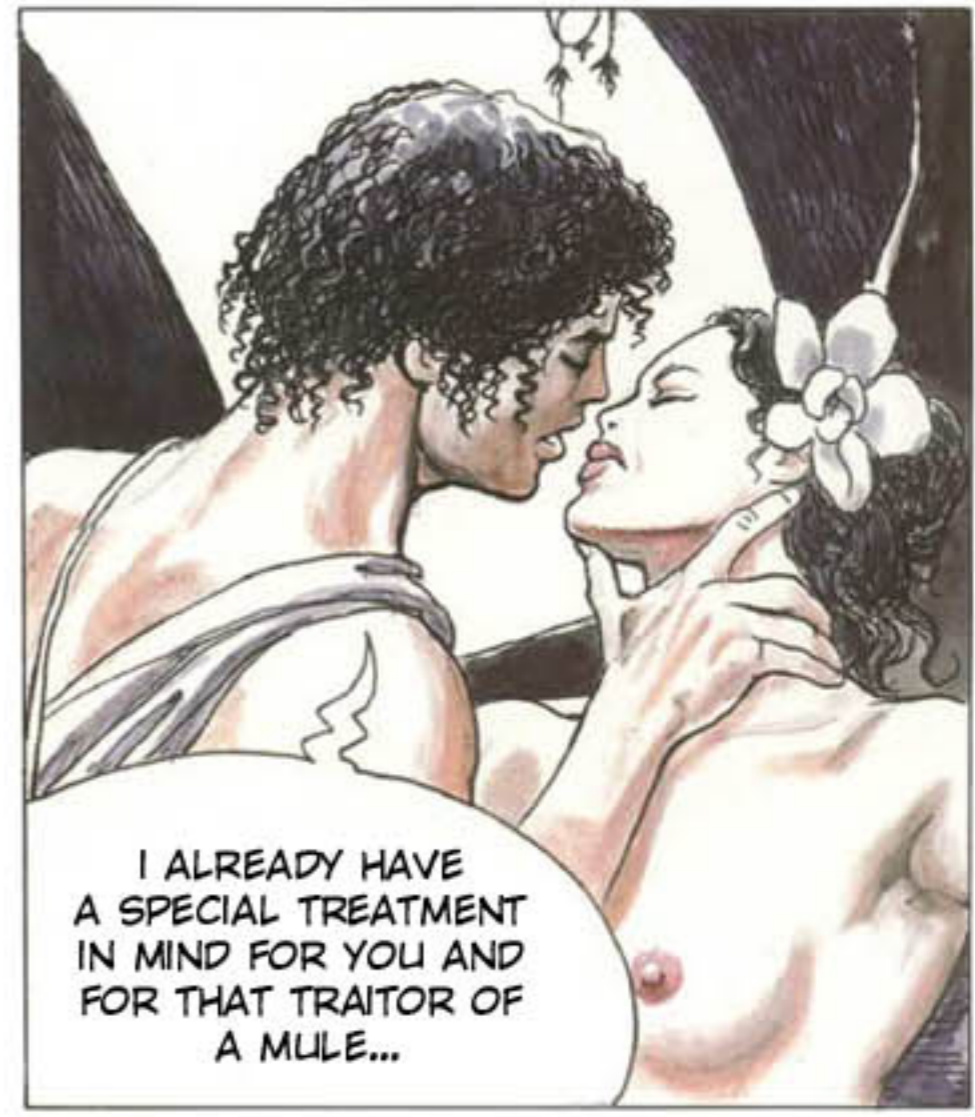
AAAHHH! LET ME GO, YOU WRETCH!

THAT'LL TEACH YOU, YOU STUPID CUNT!

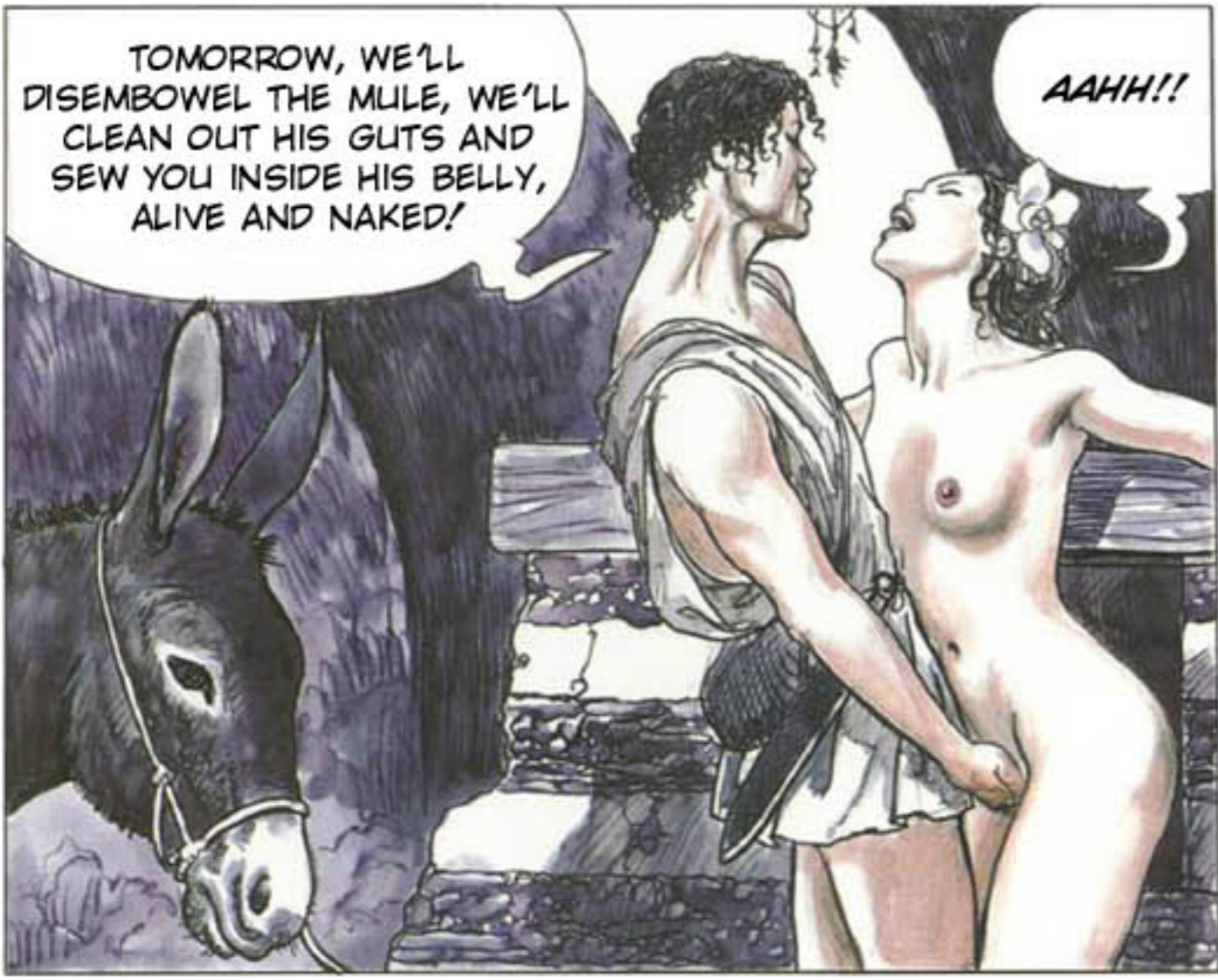
WELL, IT SEEMS THE LITTLE DOVE WANTED TO FLY AWAY!



NOW, WE'LL CHANGE THE TUNE! WE'LL HAVE SOME FUN WITH YOU! ANYHOW, YOUR FAMILY WILL STILL PAY, IF THEY THINK YOU'RE ALIVE!

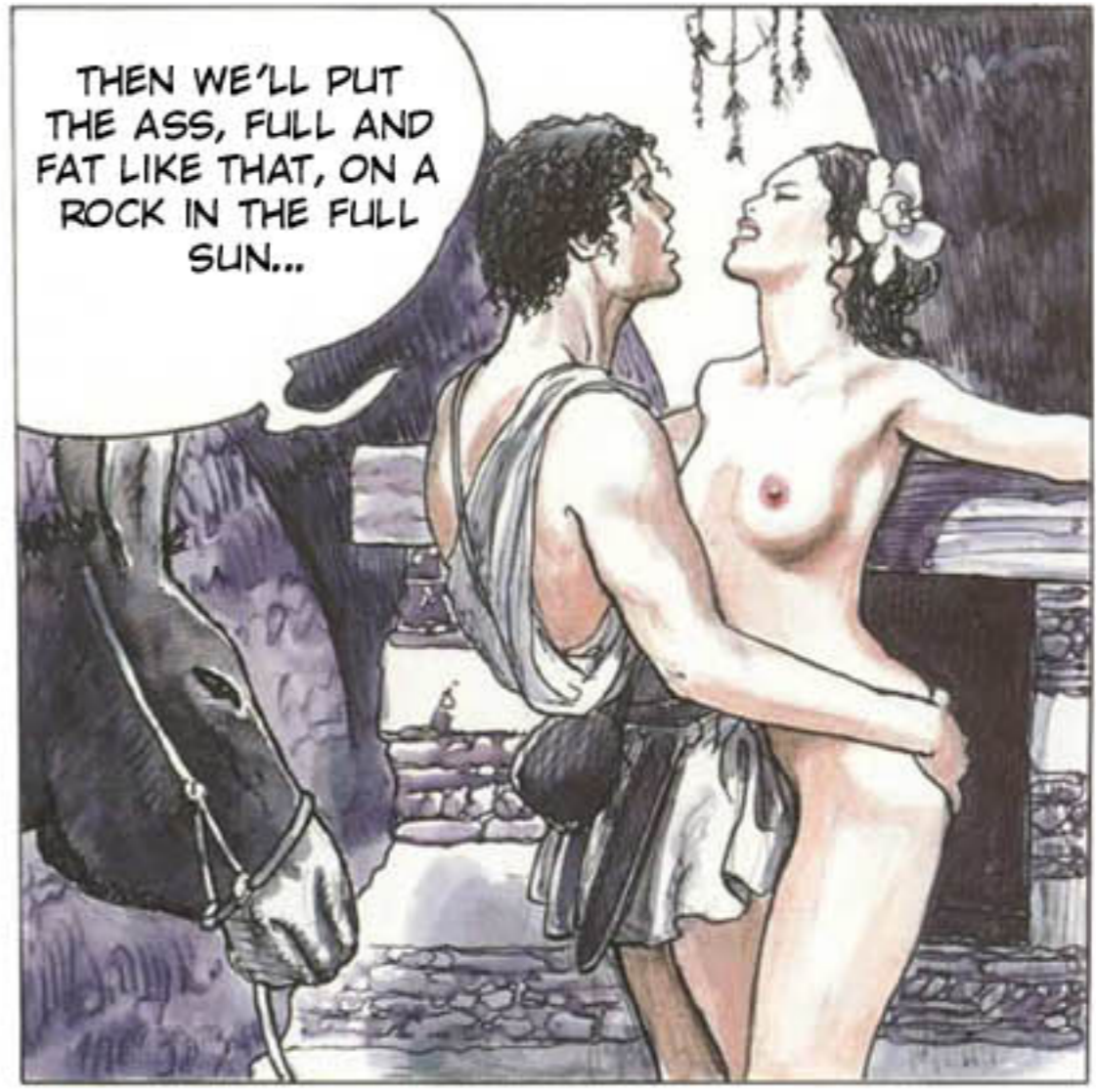


I ALREADY HAVE A SPECIAL TREATMENT IN MIND FOR YOU AND FOR THAT TRAITOR OF A MULE...

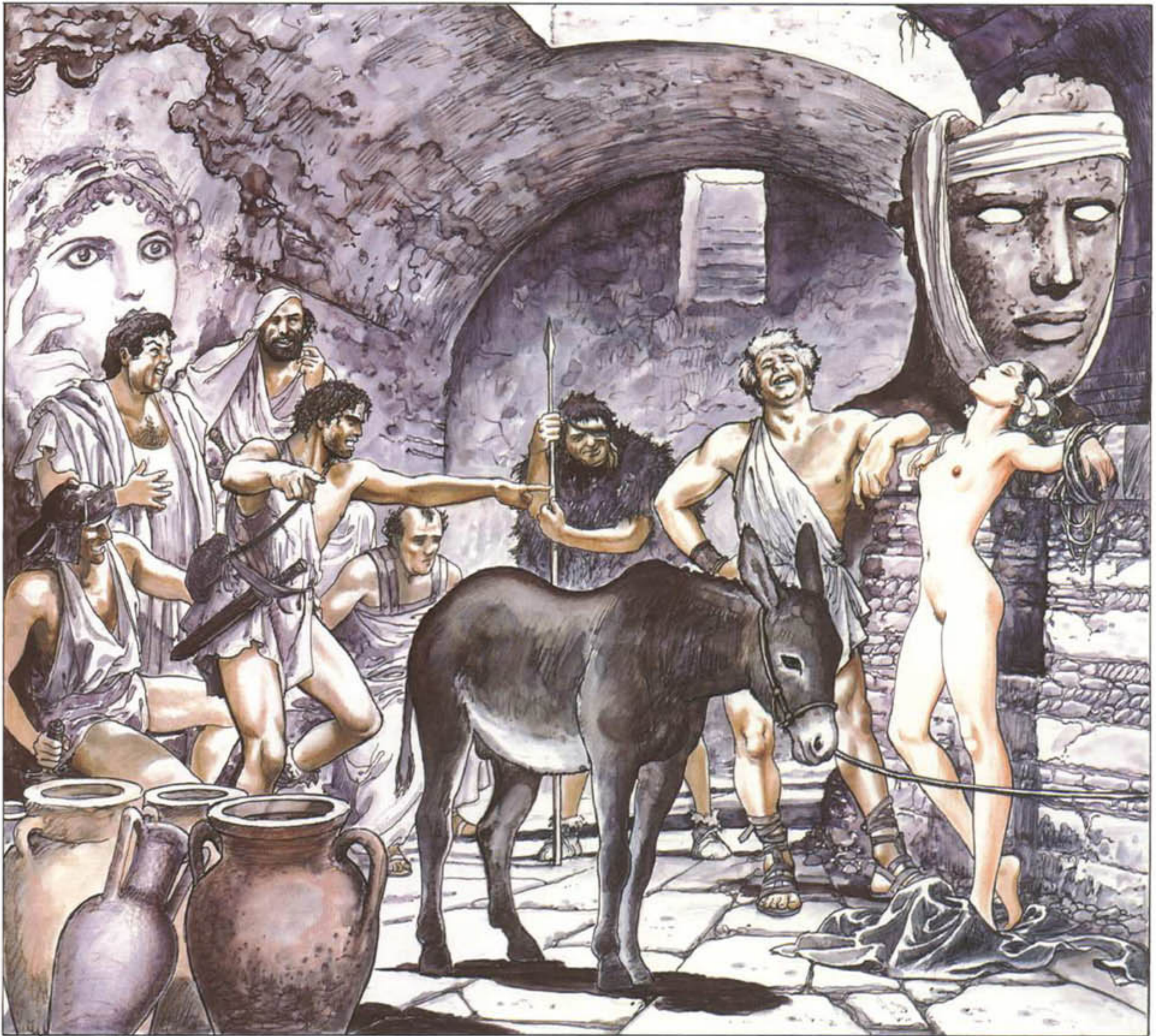


TOMORROW, WE'LL DISEMBOWEL THE MULE, WE'LL CLEAN OUT HIS GUTS AND SEW YOU INSIDE HIS BELLY, ALIVE AND NAKED!

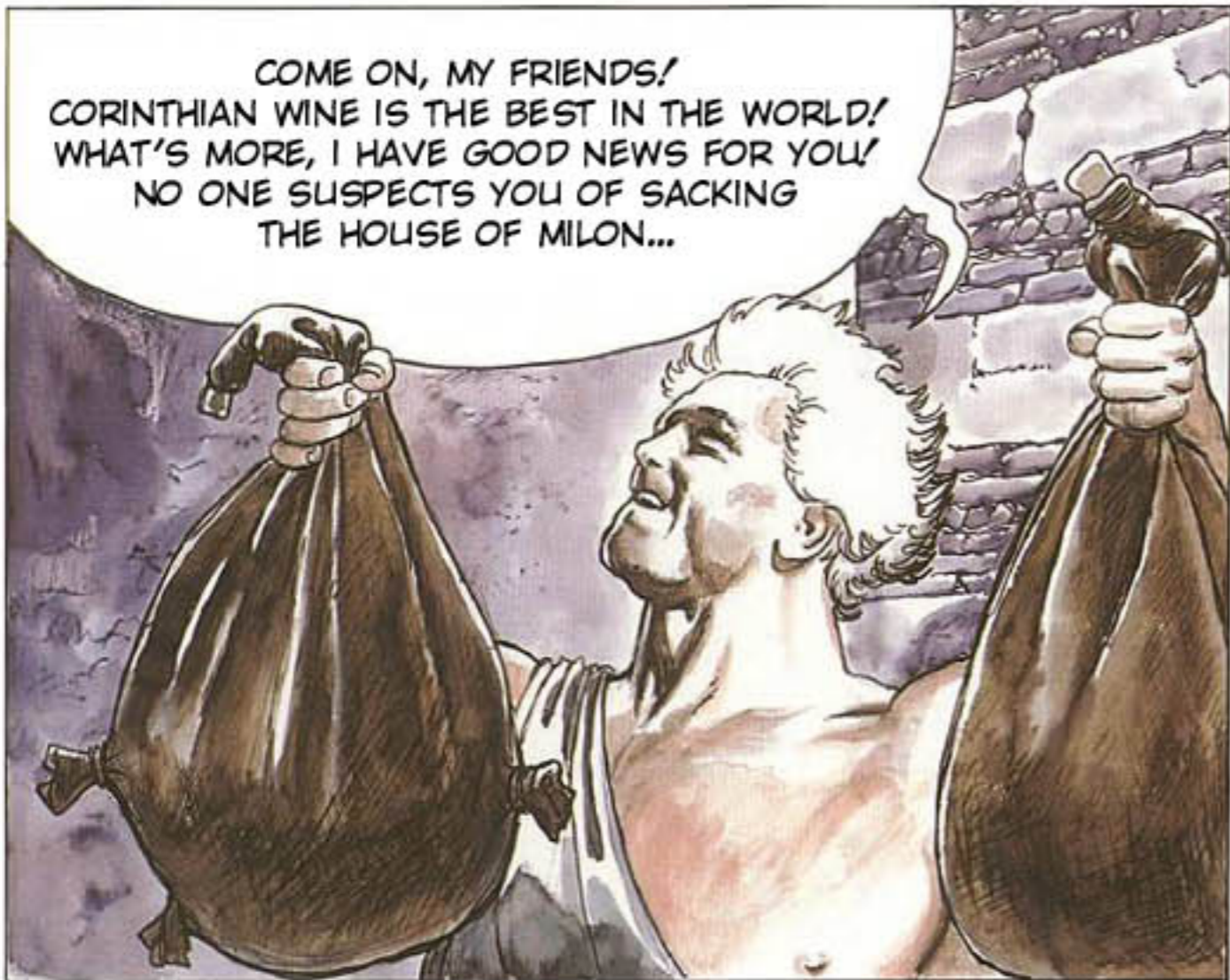
AAHH!!



THEN WE'LL PUT THE ASS, FULL AND FAT LIKE THAT, ON A ROCK IN THE FULL SUN...

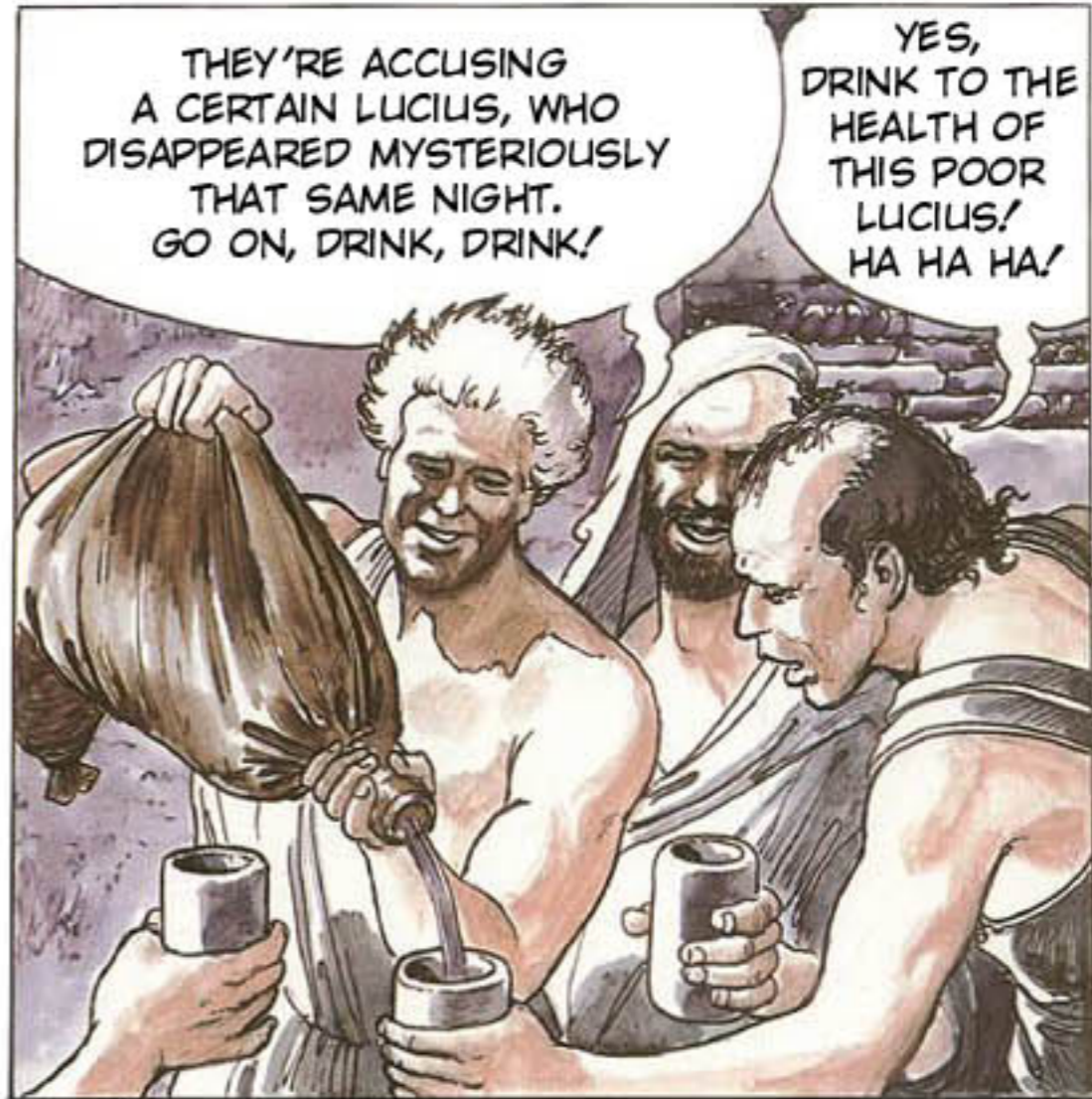


COME ON, MY FRIENDS!
CORINTHIAN WINE IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD!
WHAT'S MORE, I HAVE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!
NO ONE SUSPECTS YOU OF SACKING
THE HOUSE OF MILON...



THEY'RE ACCUSING
A CERTAIN LUCIUS, WHO
DISAPPEARED MYSTERIOUSLY
THAT SAME NIGHT.
GO ON, DRINK, DRINK!

YES,
DRINK TO THE
HEALTH OF
THIS POOR
LUCIUS!
HA HA HA!



SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT THE GOOD EMO HAD SPIKED THE WINE
WITH A SOPORIFIC, SINCE IN SHORT ORDER, THEY WERE ALL LYING
IN THEIR CUPS AS IF THEY WERE DEAD. THEN I UNDERSTOOD
WHO EMO REALLY WAS...

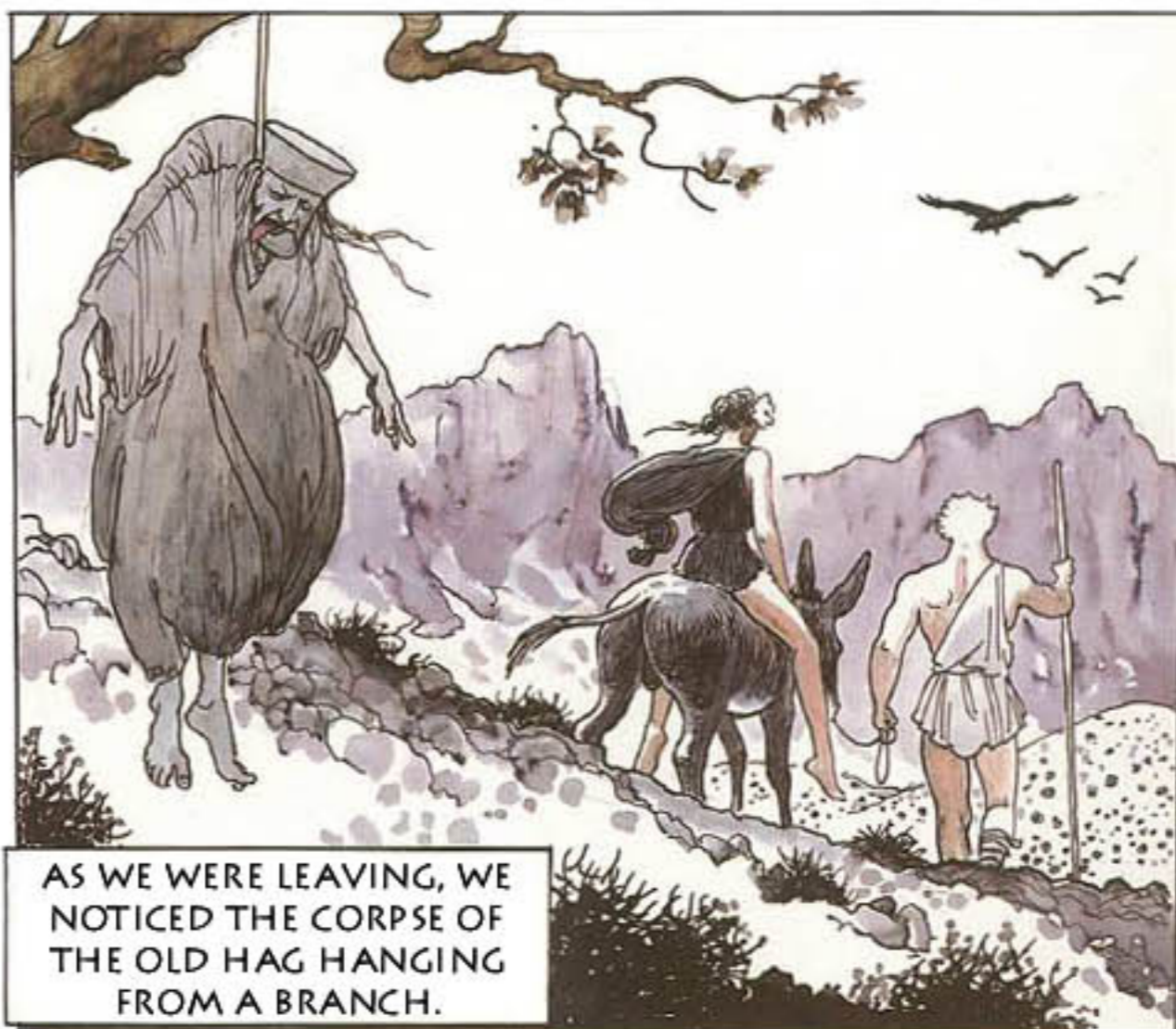


COURAGE, MY WIFE,
IT'S ALL OVER,
I'LL TAKE YOU
BACK HOME!

OH, EMO,
MY LOVE...

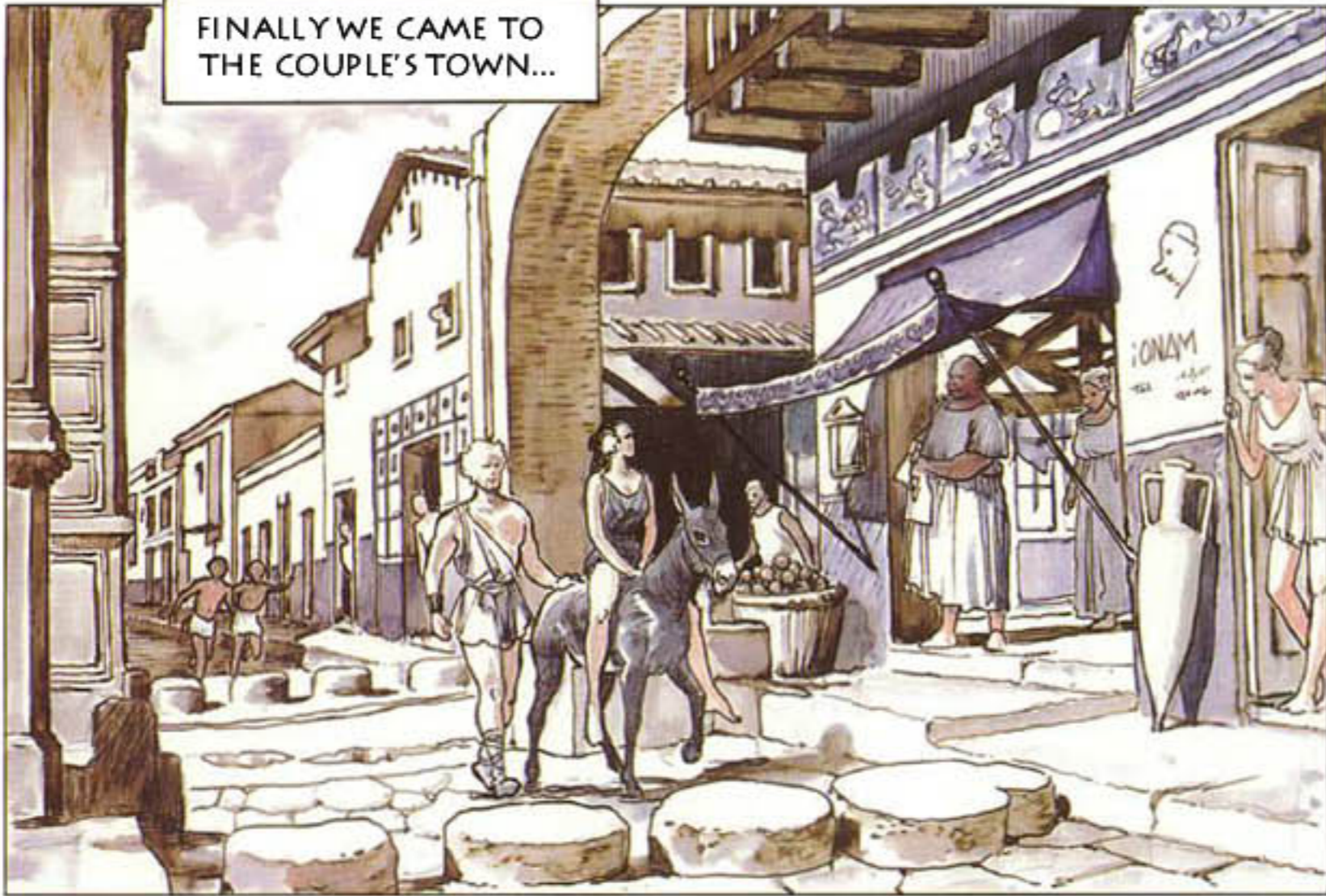


I'VE TIED UP THOSE
RASCALS WELL, BUT WE'D
BETTER HURRY! I DON'T
KNOW HOW LONG THE WINE'S
EFFECTS WILL LAST.
THE ASS WILL
BEAR YOU.



AS WE WERE LEAVING, WE
NOTICED THE CORPSE OF
THE OLD HAG HANGING
FROM A BRANCH.

FINALLY WE CAME TO THE COUPLE'S TOWN...

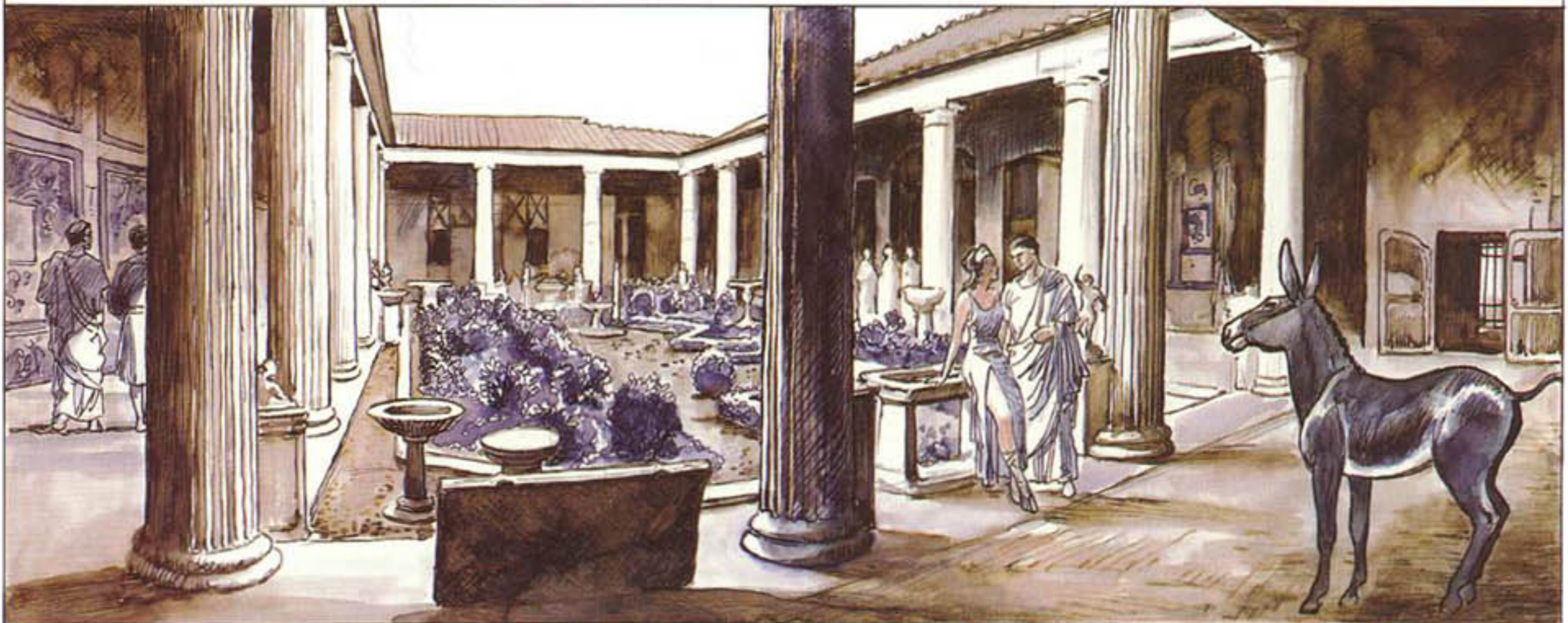


...AND TO THEIR LOVELY HOUSE.

I ENTRUST TO YOU THIS DEAR LITTLE ASS, MY SAVIOR. I WANT HIM TREATED WITH RESPECT!



FOR SEVERAL DAYS, I LIVED A LIFE OF ABSOLUTE IDLENESS IN THAT HOUSE, STUFFED WITH CHOICE BARLEY AND BEANS...



THEN THE LADY HAD AN IDEA...

I THINK HE NEEDS A LITTLE EXERCISE. TAKE HIM OUT AND ABOUT TO STRETCH HIS LEGS.

RIGHT AWAY, MISTRESS...



BUT THE BOY HAD A MALEVOLENT SOUL, AND AMUSED HIMSELF BY TORTURING ME WITH HEAVY BURDENS AND PAINFUL BLOWS OF THE STICK.

POOR ME! IF THE LADY ONLY KNEW...



THE YOUNG MAN WAS CRUEL,
ALWAYS INVENTING NEW TORTURES...



THIS WAY,
WITH EVERY STEP
THE THORNS WILL BE
A PAIN FOR YOU AND
A JOY FOR ME!
HEH HEH HEH!

HIS EVIL FANTASIES
KNEW NO LIMITS...

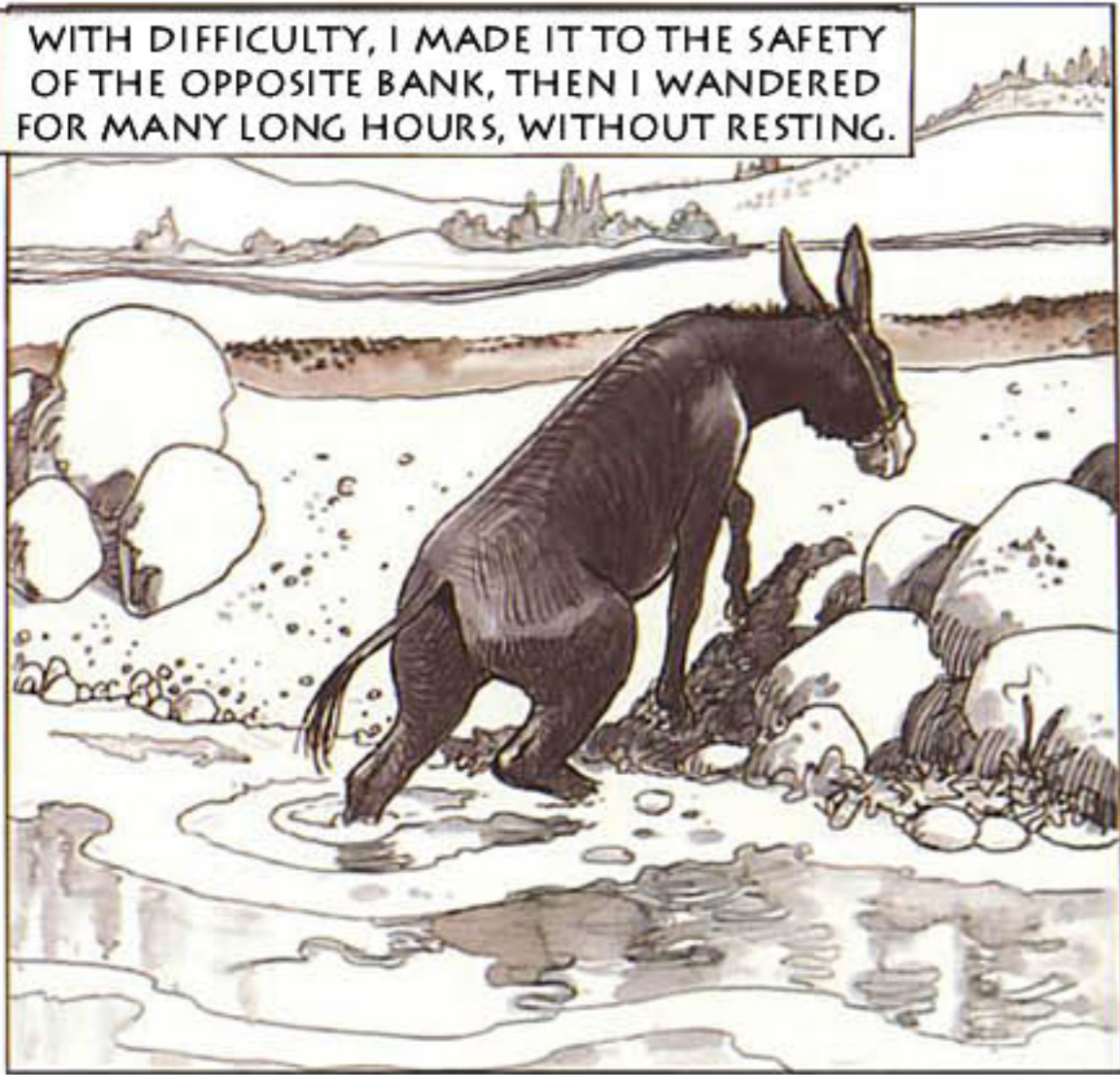


LUCKILY,
STRAW DOESN'T
BREAK MY BACK
LIKE WOOD
DOES!

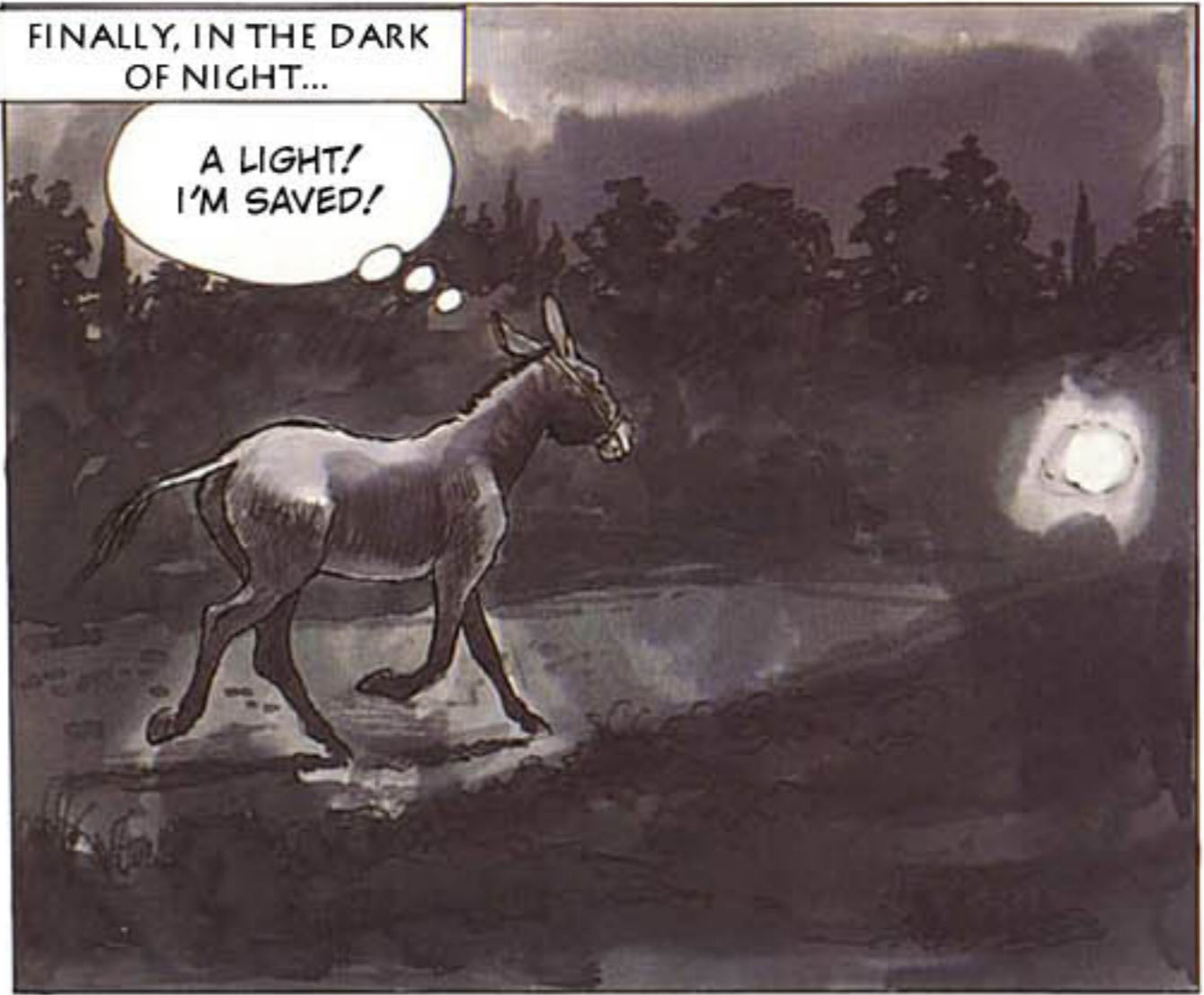


OH!
HOLY GODS!

WITH DIFFICULTY, I MADE IT TO THE SAFETY OF THE OPPOSITE BANK, THEN I WANDERED FOR MANY LONG HOURS, WITHOUT RESTING.



FINALLY, IN THE DARK OF NIGHT...

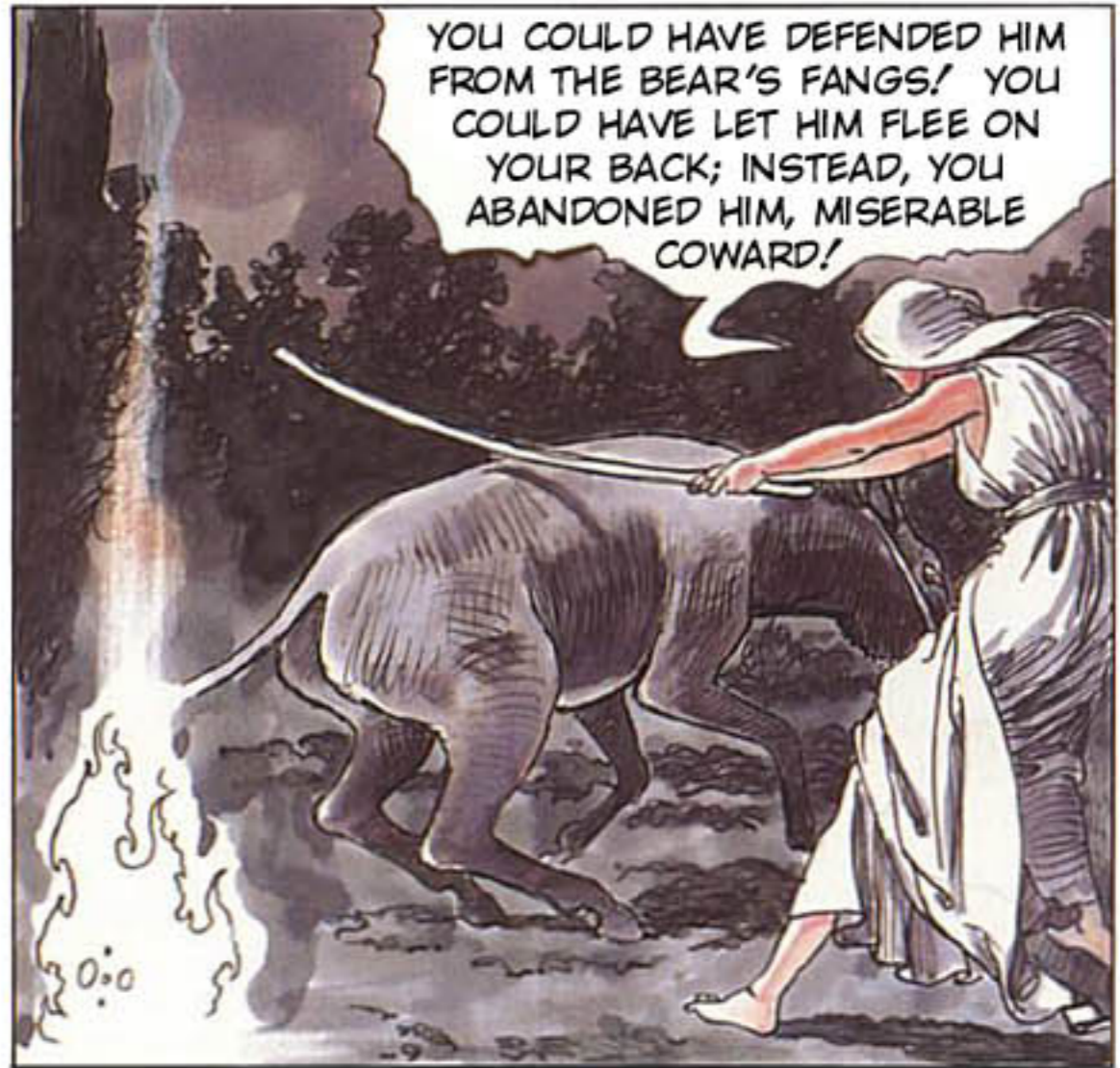


A LIGHT!
I'M SAVED!

FILTHY BEAST!
DISGUSTING!
YOU LET MY POOR
LITTLE SON GET
KILLED!



YOU COULD HAVE DEFENDED HIM
FROM THE BEAR'S FANGS! YOU
COULD HAVE LET HIM FLEE ON
YOUR BACK; INSTEAD, YOU
ABANDONED HIM, MISERABLE
COWARD!



BUT YOU WON'T
ENJOY IT FOR LONG
BEFORE YOU DIE!

AAAHH!



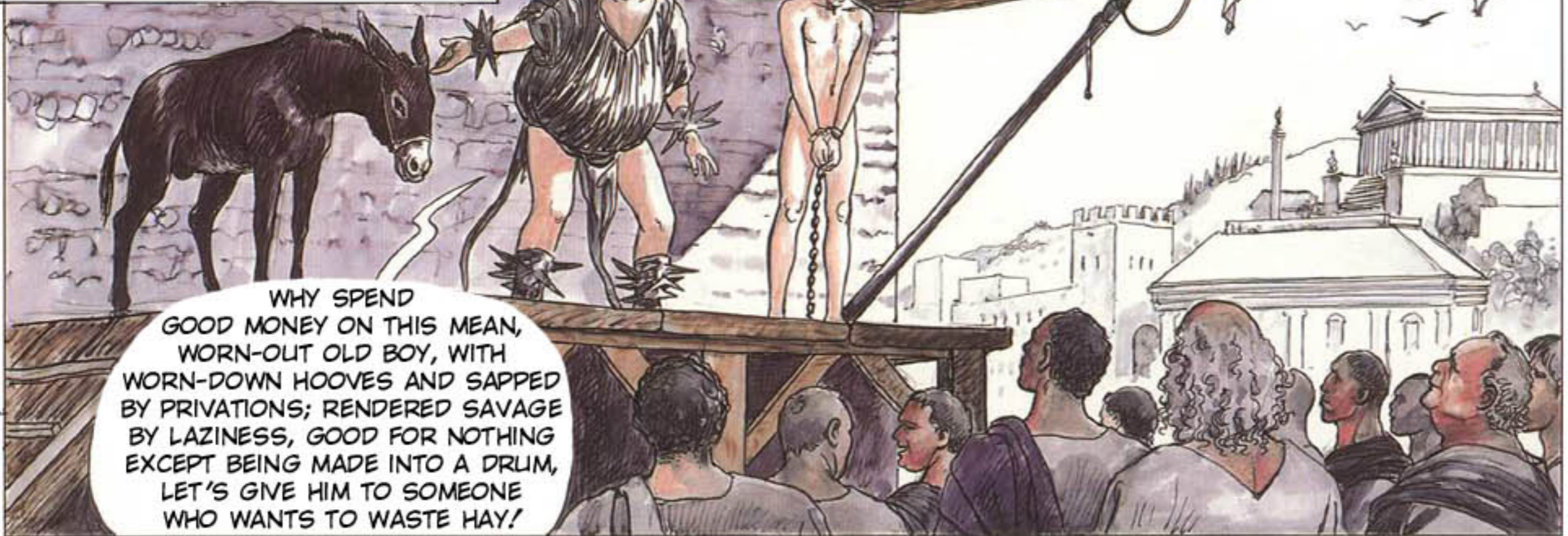
UGGGHH!

THANK GOODNESS
FOR ALL THE
CABBAGES I ATE
TODAY!





BUT ALL TOO QUICKLY I WAS CAPTURED BY A TOWN CRIER WHO SOLD ME AT AUCTION, IN THE MARKETPLACE, AROUSING HILARITY AT MY EXPENSE...



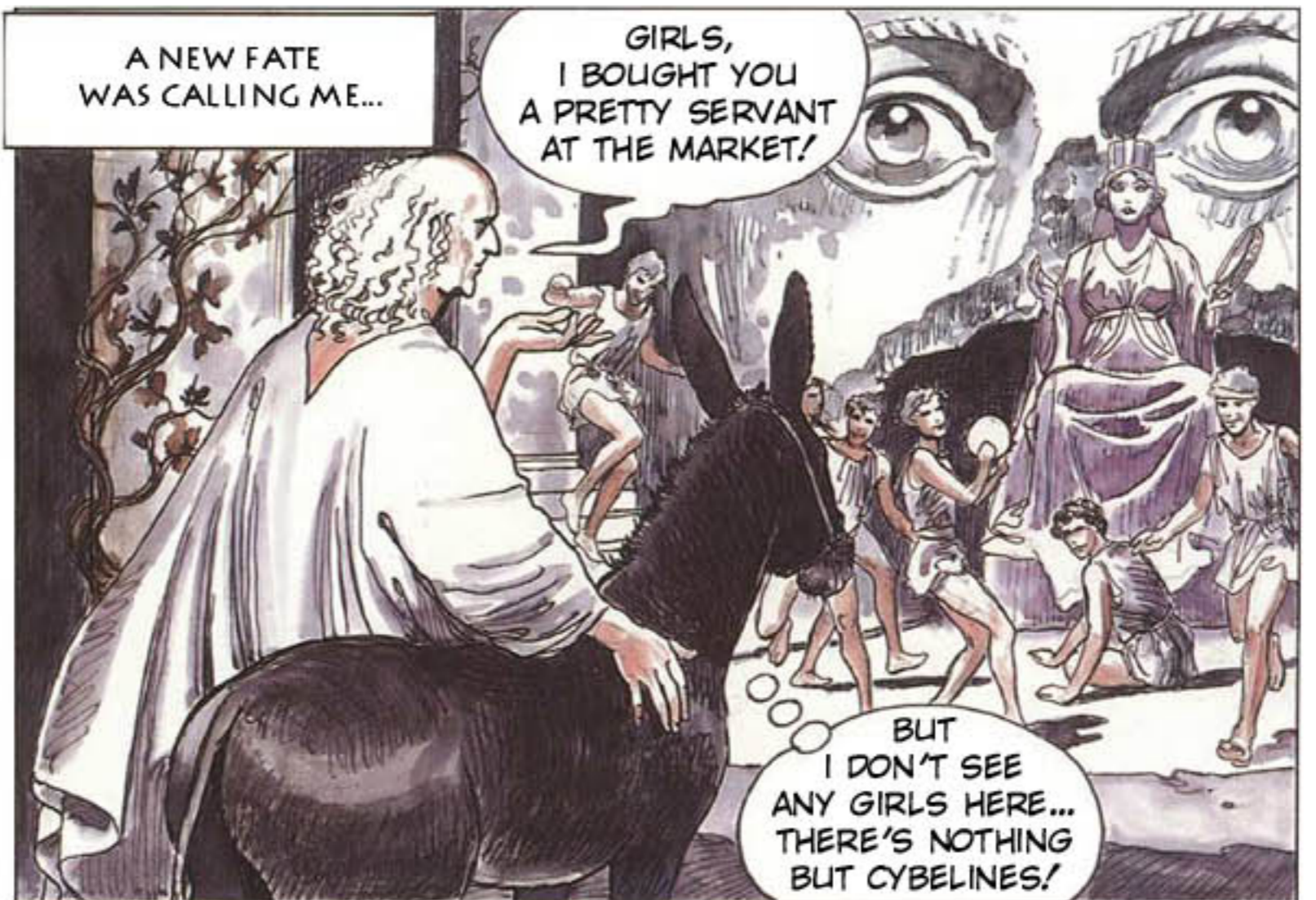
WHY SPEND GOOD MONEY ON THIS MEAN, WORN-OUT OLD BOY, WITH WORN-DOWN HOOVES AND SAPPED BY PRIVATIONS; RENDERED SAVAGE BY LAZINESS, GOOD FOR NOTHING EXCEPT BEING MADE INTO A DRUM, LET'S GIVE HIM TO SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO WASTE HAY!

IF HE'S GENTLE, I'LL TAKE HIM. I'LL GIVE YOU SEVENTEEN CENTS.



A NEW FATE WAS CALLING ME...

GIRLS, I BOUGHT YOU A PRETTY SERVANT AT THE MARKET!



BUT I DON'T SEE ANY GIRLS HERE... THERE'S NOTHING BUT CYBELINES!

THE MEMBERS OF THE SECT OF CYBELE LOADED THE GODDESS' EFFIGY ON MY BACK, THEN, IN OUTRAGEOUS MAKEUP, IN A CACOPHONY OF THEIR INSTRUMENTS, THEY LED ME OUT IN A CHAOTIC PROCESSION.

FORWARD, GIRLS, PROCLAIM THE REIGN OF CYBELE ON EARTH!



SO WE TRAVELED THE COUNTRYSIDE AND VILLAGES, COLLECTING THE OFFERINGS OF THE FAITHFUL AND OF YOUNG GIRLS WHO ASKED TO BE WHIPPED ON THEIR INTIMATE PARTS SO THEY'D GET PREGNANT. THIS THE ACOLYTES ACCOMPLISHED WITH ENTHUSIASM, DERIVING GREAT PLEASURE FROM FLOGGING OTHER PEOPLE AS WELL AS THEMSELVES.



WHEN THE PRIEST, FILEBO, THOUGHT THEY'D COLLECTED ENOUGH GOLD, HE RETURNED TO THE SECT'S HIDEOUT.



NOW, YOU'LL SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR OUR PLEASURE... ARE YOU READY?



THERE, AROUSED AND LUSTFUL, THEY ABANDONED THEMSELVES TO UNSPEAKABLE ACTS BY SURROUNDING A YOUNG MAN THAT THEY HAD LAID NAKED ON THE GROUND, AND EXCITING HIM WITH FILTHY LANGUAGE.

SUDDENLY, A CLAMOR OF ARMS, AND A SQUAD OF SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS BURST INTO THE HIDEOUT, DETERMINED TO PUT AN END TO THE IMPIETY OF THAT SCANDALOUS SECT.

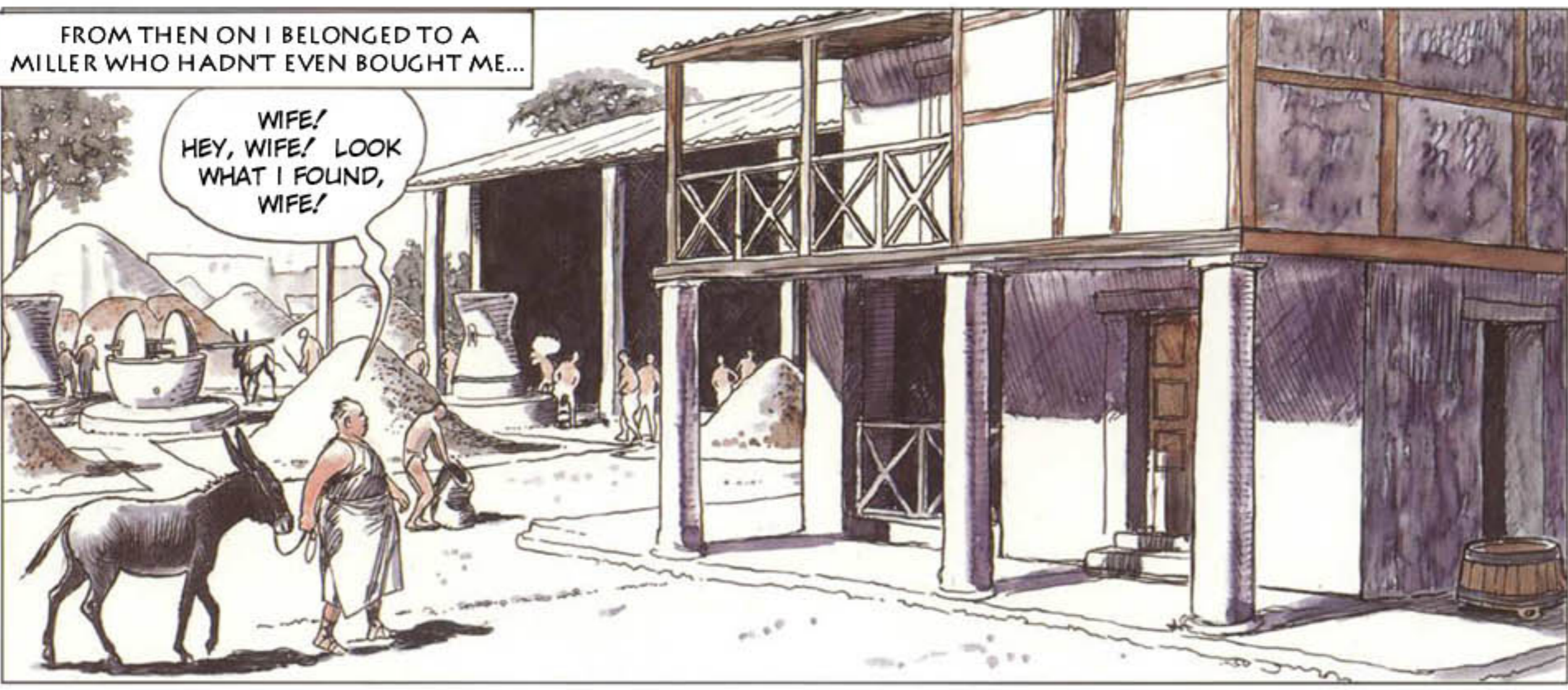
SLIT ALL THEIR THROATS, THE PERVERTS!

THERE'S AN ASS THAT COULD BE USEFUL!



FROM THEN ON I BELONGED TO A MILLER WHO HADN'T EVEN BOUGHT ME...

WIFE!
HEY, WIFE! LOOK
WHAT I FOUND,
WIFE!



THANKS TO MY BIG EARS, I HEARD
WHAT THE MILLER COULDN'T...

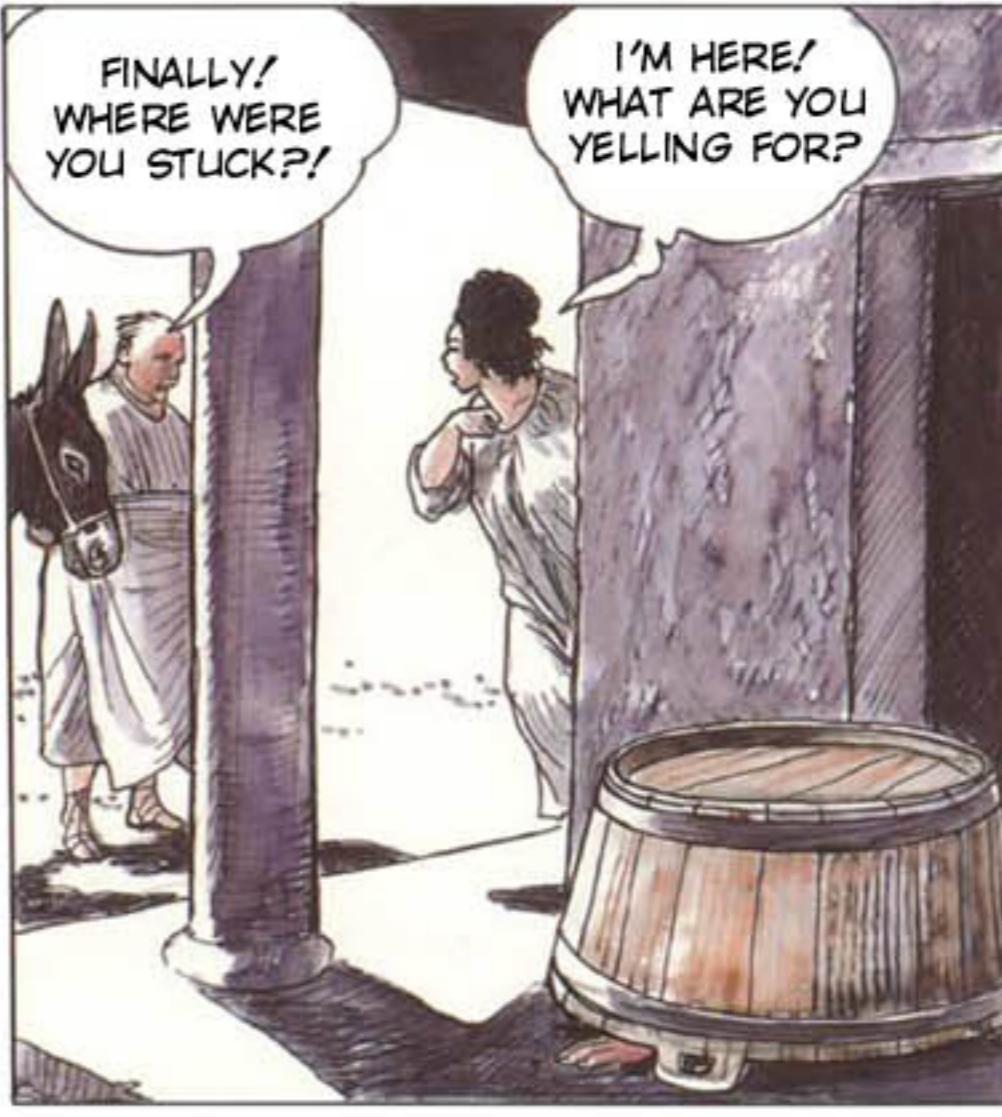
WIFE!
COME OUT!

HEAVENS,
MY HUSBAND!
QUICK, QUICK, HIDE
UNDER HERE!



FINALLY!
WHERE WERE
YOU STUCK?!

I'M HERE!
WHAT ARE YOU
YELLING FOR?



WELL, WELL!
A HAND STICKING
OUT FROM UNDER
THE BARREL!!!



AAAHH!!!



A NEW
LOVER!

AAAAHHHH!!
THAT CURSED BEAST
CRUSHED MY HAND!

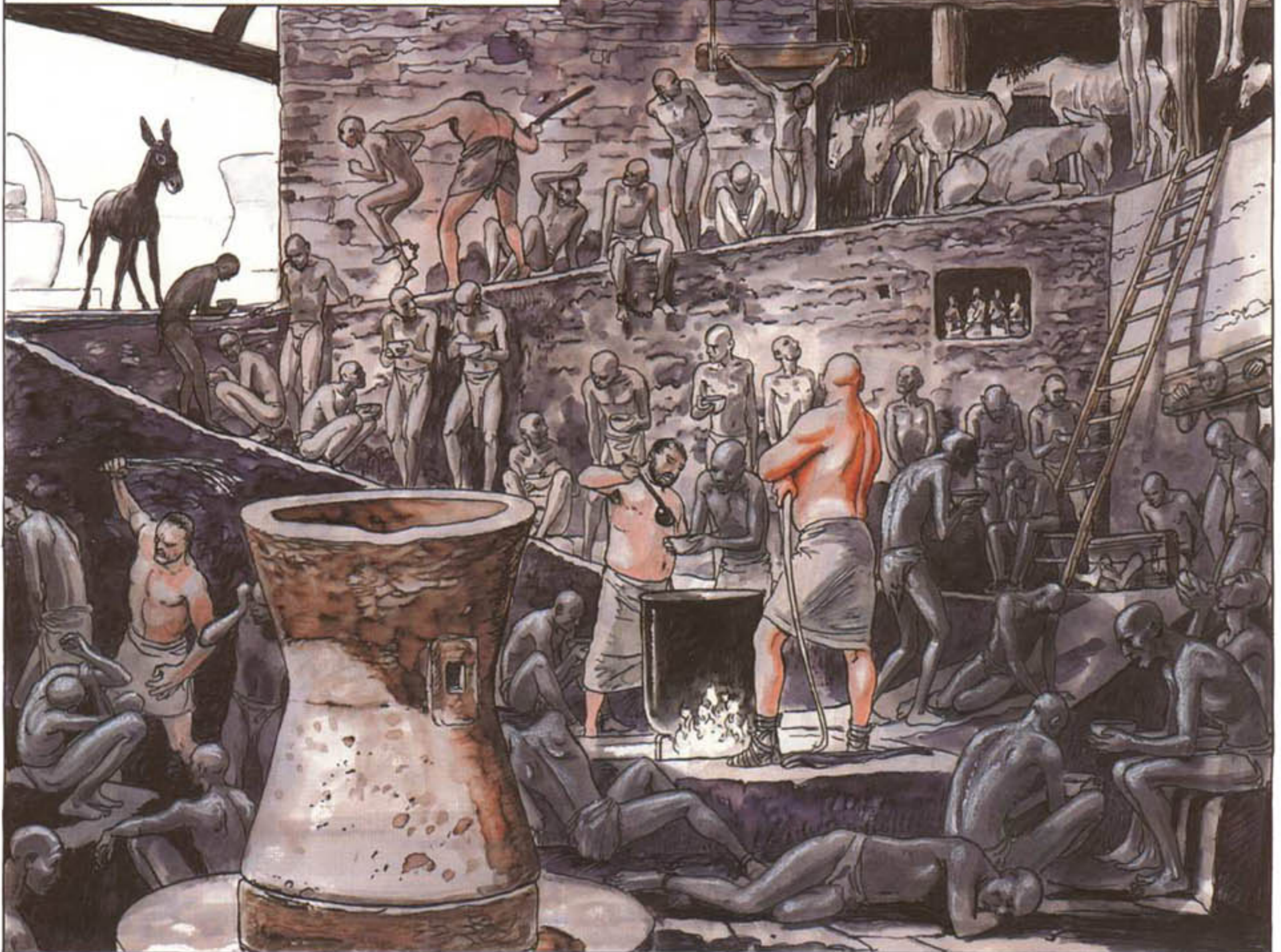


NATURALLY, THE MILLER'S WIFE MADE ME
PAY DEARLY FOR MY GOOD DEED,
ESPECIALLY WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS GONE...

HARDER!
HARDER WITH THE STICKS!
I WANT YOU TO
SKIN HIM ALIVE!



EXHAUSTED, BUT GNAWED BY AN IRRESISTIBLE
CURIOSITY, I DISCOVERED THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE
IN THE WORKSHOP. THE ANCIENTS DID NOT BELIEVE
IN THE WISDOM OF MAN, BUT THEY EXTOLLED THE
VIRTUE OF TRAVELS AMONGST THE LOWER CLASSES.
THANKS TO MY APPEARANCE, HIDDEN IN AN ASS'S
HIDE, THE SUFFERING AND HUMILIATION INFLICTED
ON THE SLAVES WAS REVEALED TO ME.



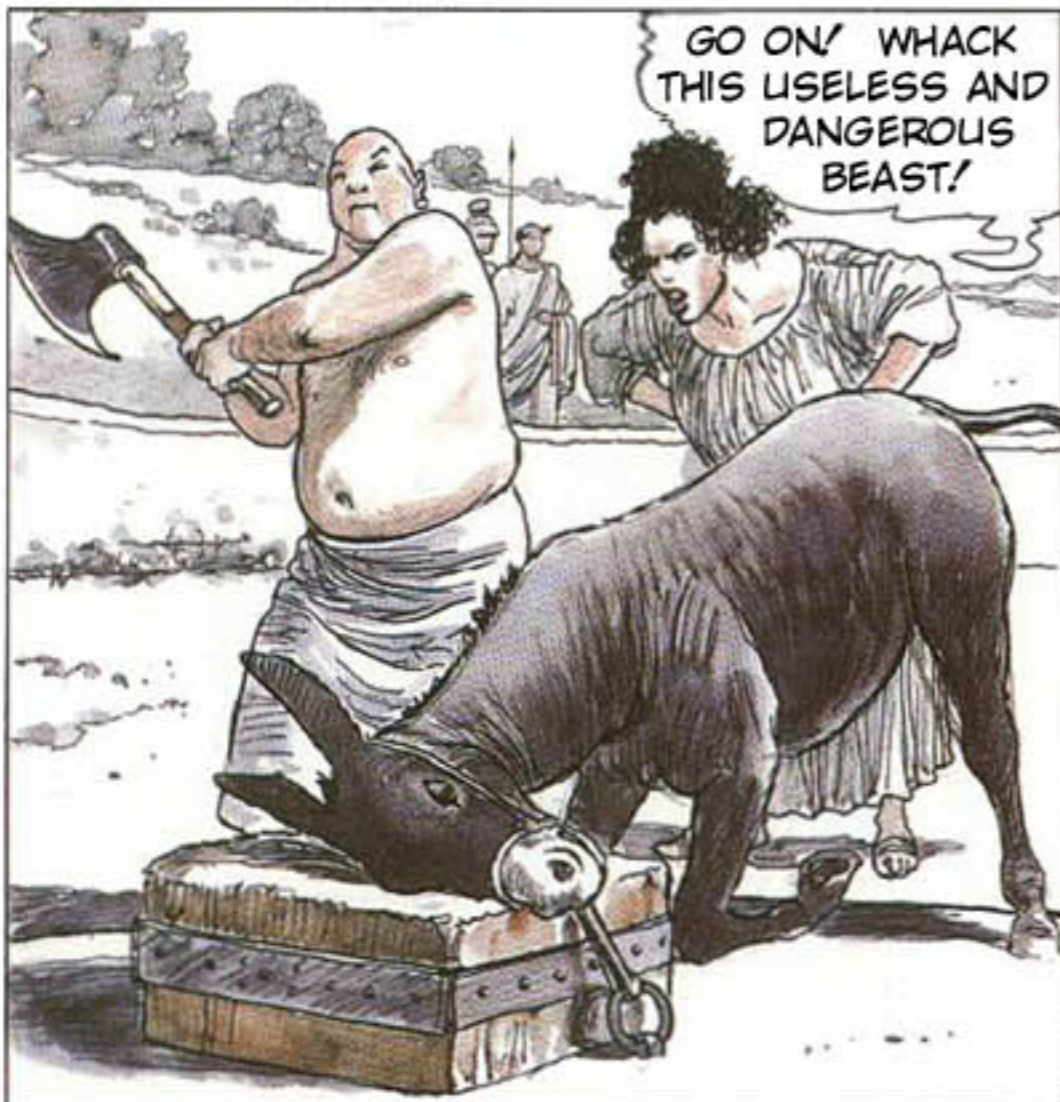
A DELICIOUS LITTLE SMELL
WIFTED FROM THE MASTER'S KITCHEN,
LIFTING MY SPIRITS...



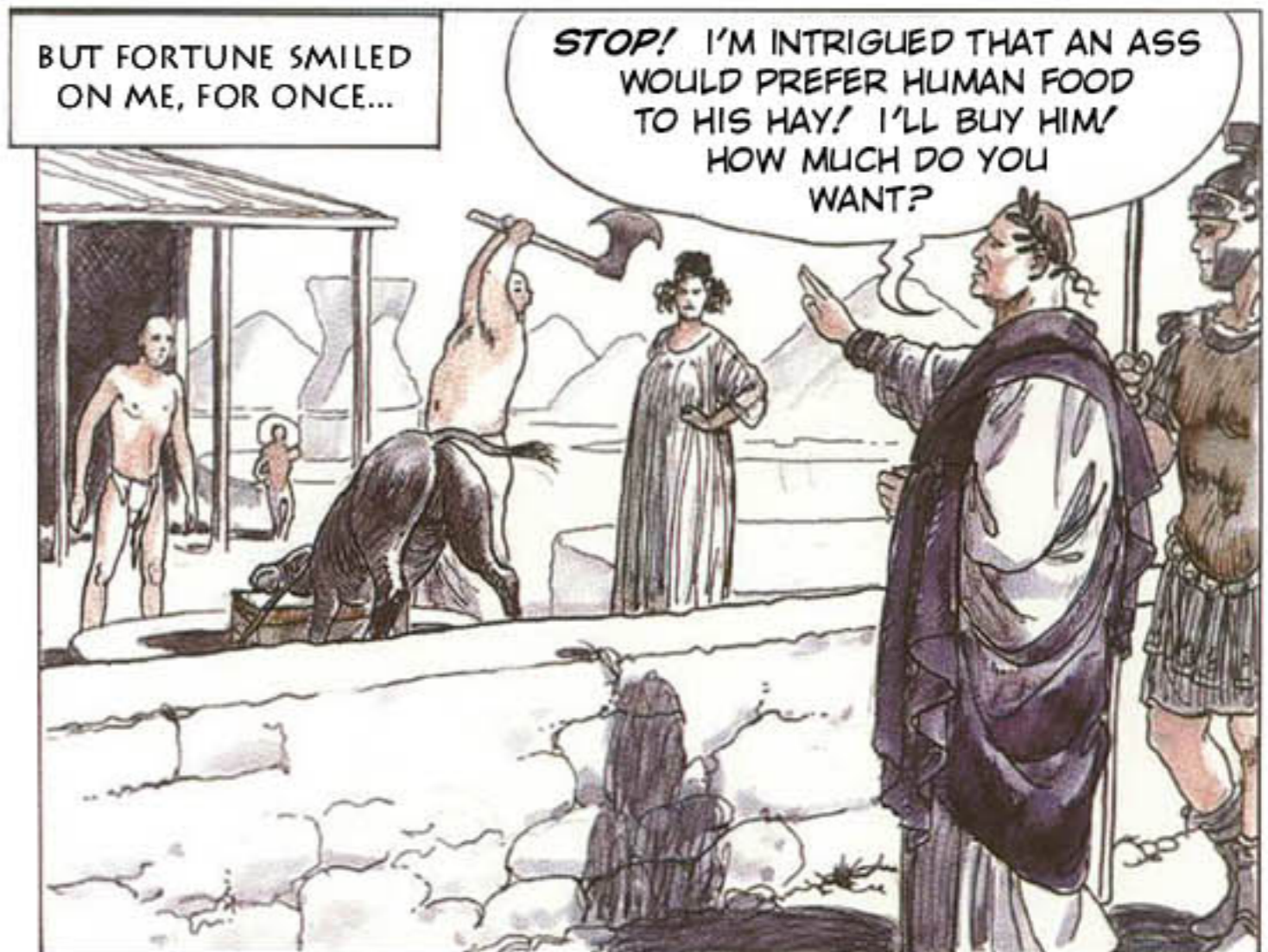
THE COOK'S
NOT AROUND.
LET'S TAKE
ADVANTAGE!



AH!
CURSED THIEF!
THIS TIME I'LL
RIP YOU APART!



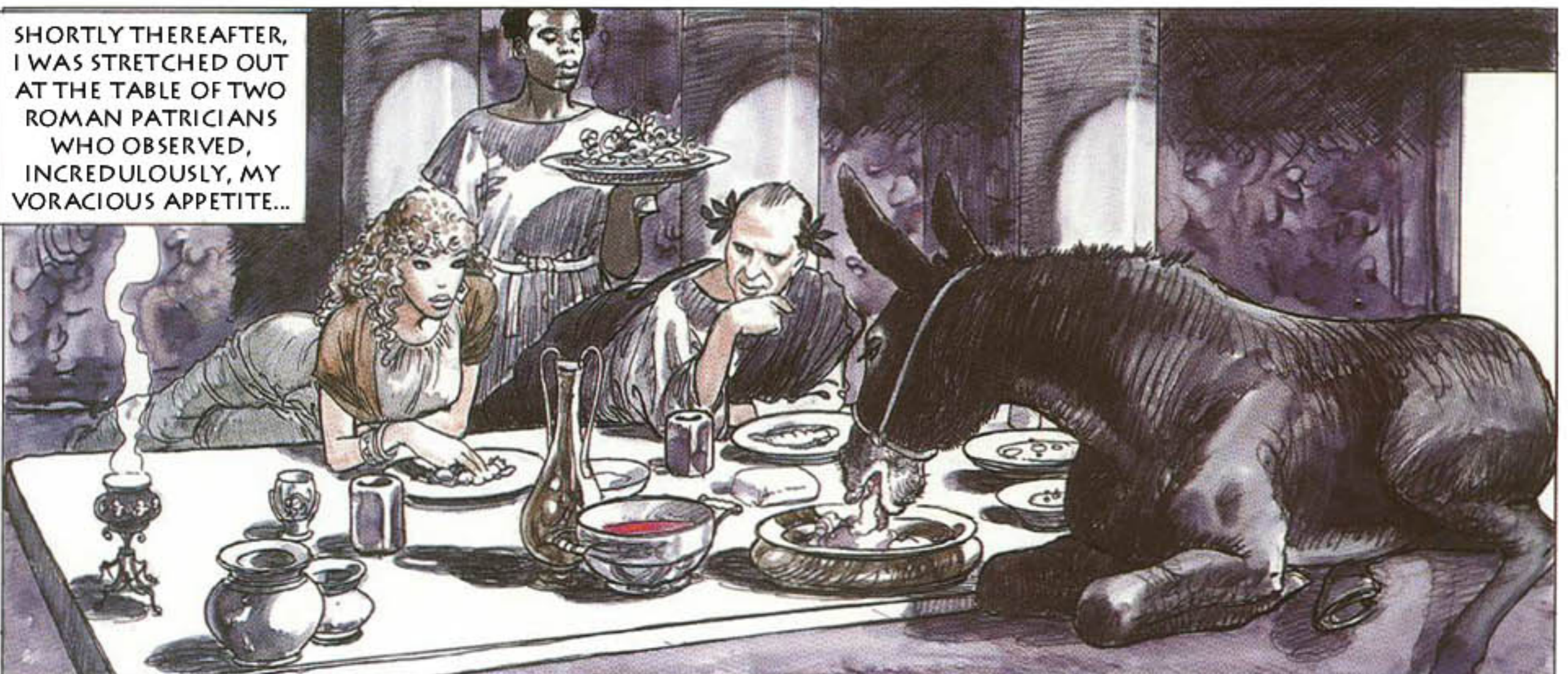
GO ON! WHACK
THIS USELESS AND
DANGEROUS
BEAST!



BUT FORTUNE SMILED
ON ME, FOR ONCE...

STOP! I'M INTRIGUED THAT AN ASS
WOULD PREFER HUMAN FOOD
TO HIS HAY! I'LL BUY HIM!
HOW MUCH DO YOU
WANT?

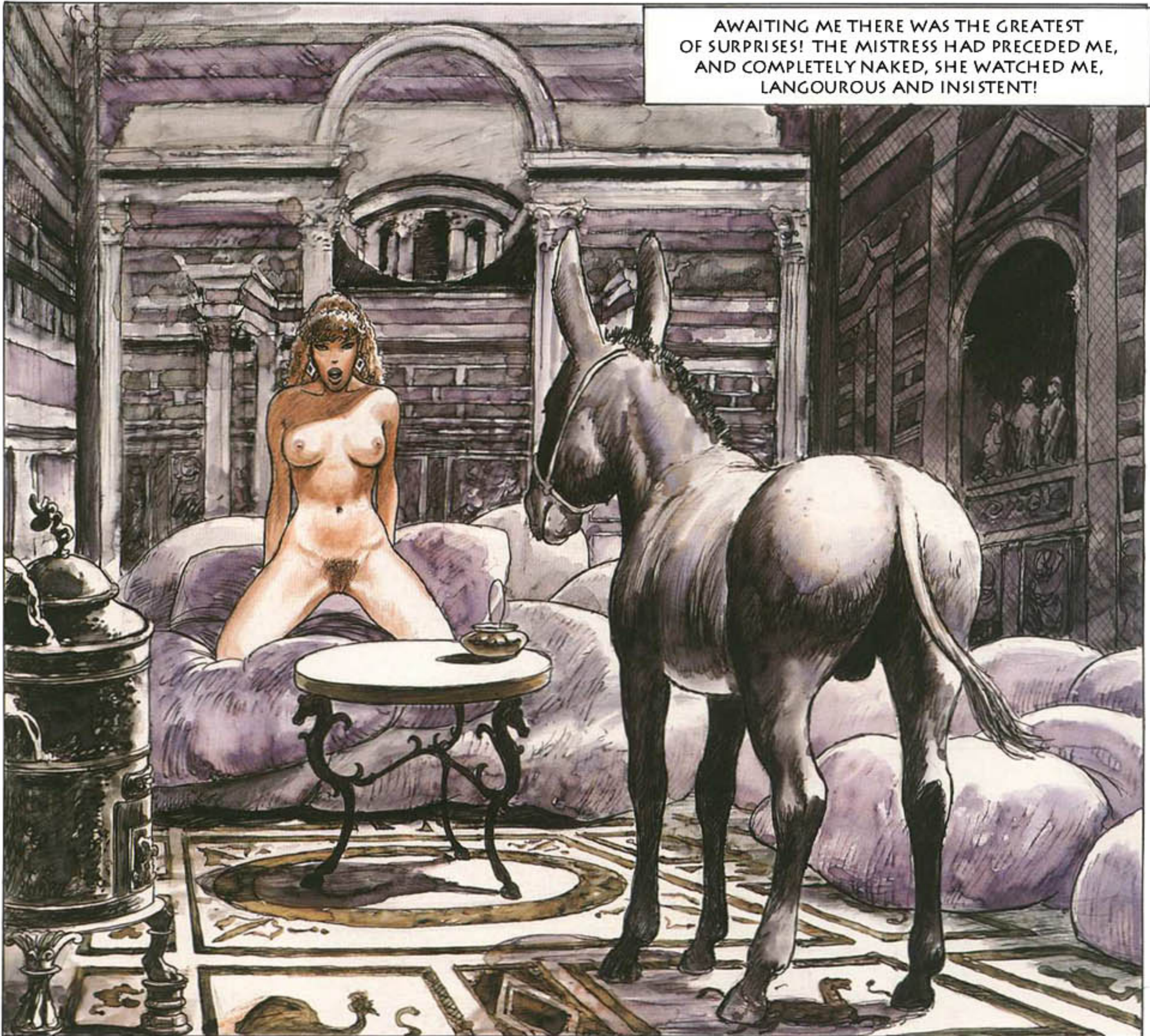
SHORTLY THEREAFTER,
I WAS STRETCHED OUT
AT THE TABLE OF TWO
ROMAN PATRICIANS
WHO OBSERVED,
INCREDULOUSLY, MY
VORACIOUS APPETITE...



AFTER A SUMPTUOUS DINNER, ALREADY
HALF-DRUNK, I HEADED FOR THE ROOM
THAT I'D BEEN ASSIGNED...



AWAITING ME THERE WAS THE GREATEST
OF SURPRISES! THE MISTRESS HAD PRECEDED ME,
AND COMPLETELY NAKED, SHE WATCHED ME,
LANGOUROUS AND INSISTENT!



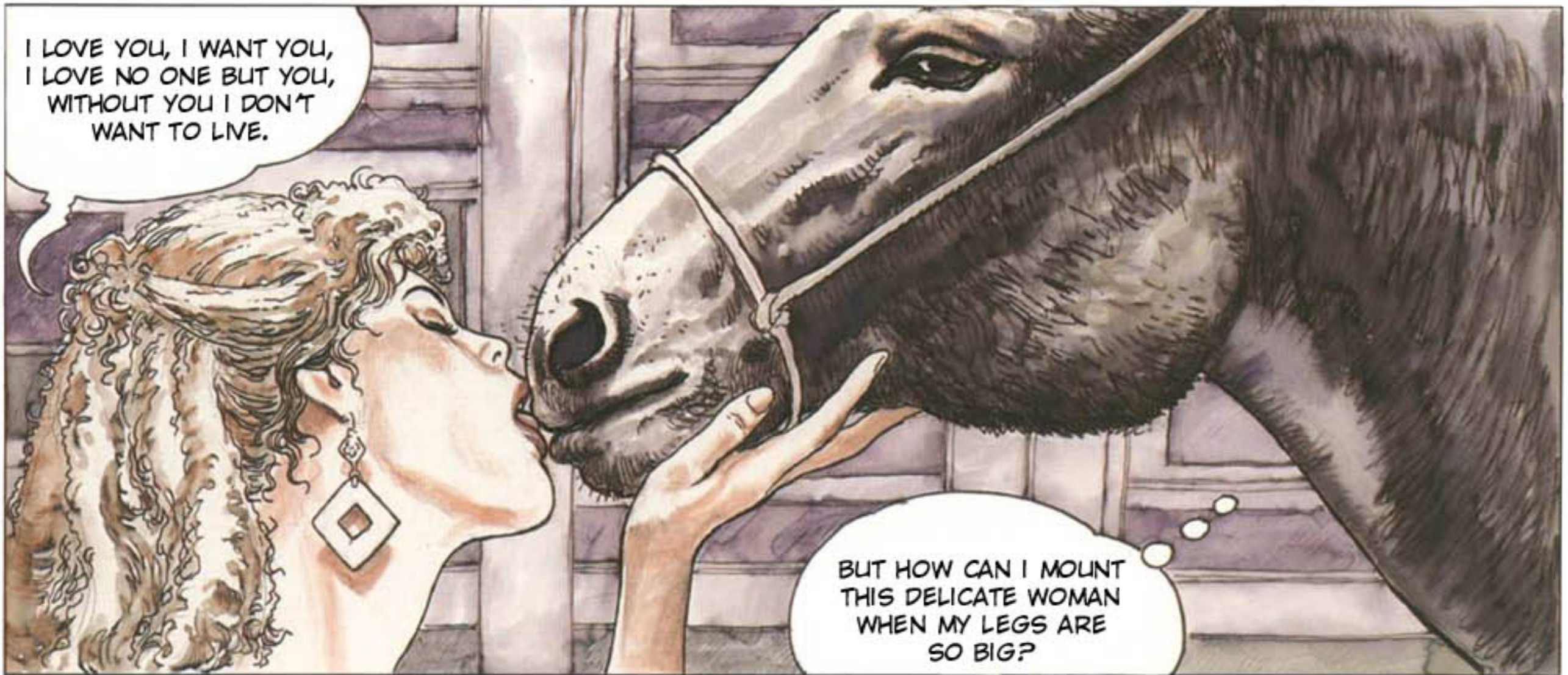
SHE COVERED HERSELF WITH A VERY NICE-SMELLING AND INTOXICATING OIL...



THE SCENT WILL AROUSE IN YOU A GREAT DESIRE FOR LUST...



I LOVE YOU, I WANT YOU,
I LOVE NO ONE BUT YOU,
WITHOUT YOU I DON'T
WANT TO LIVE.



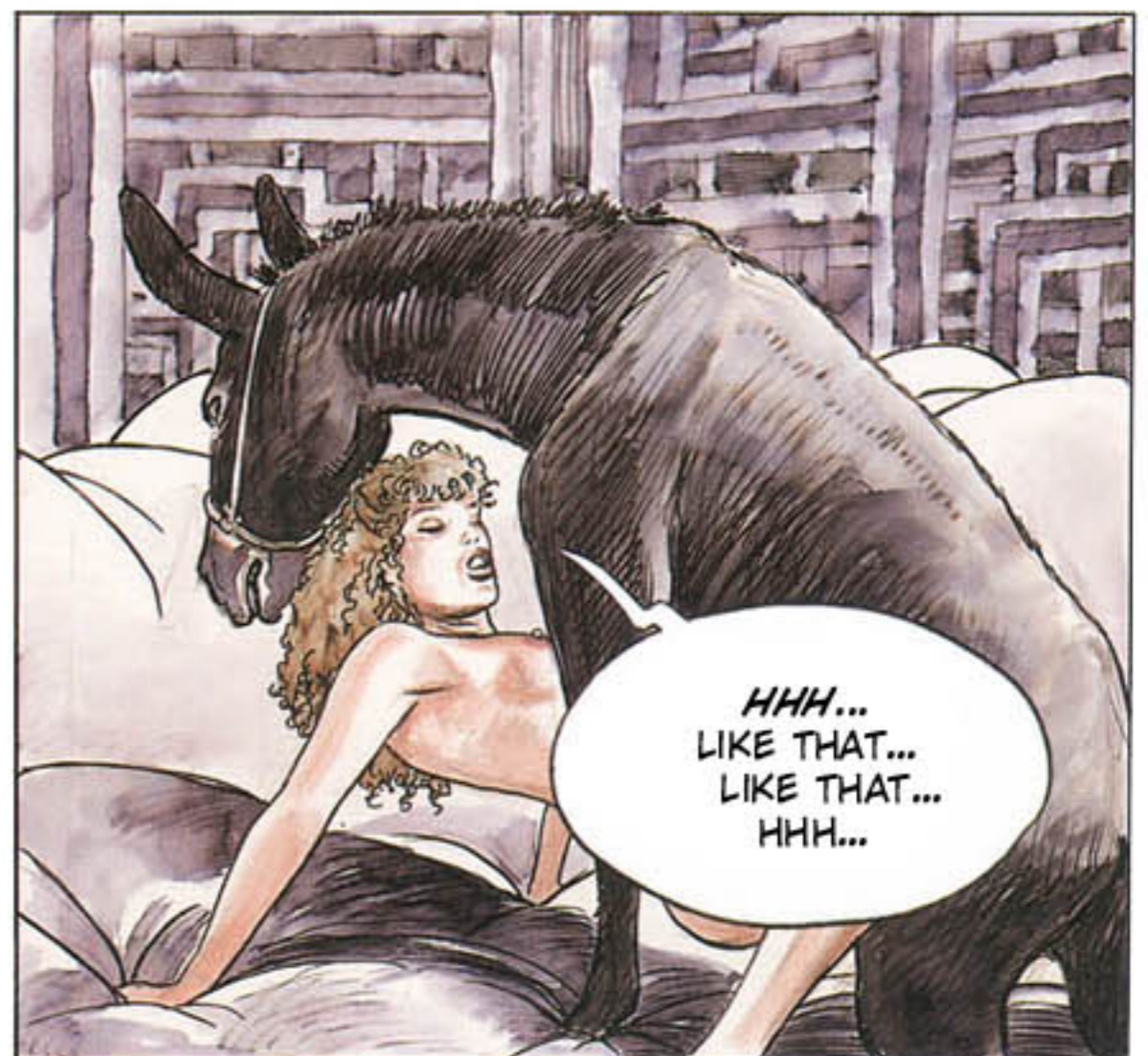
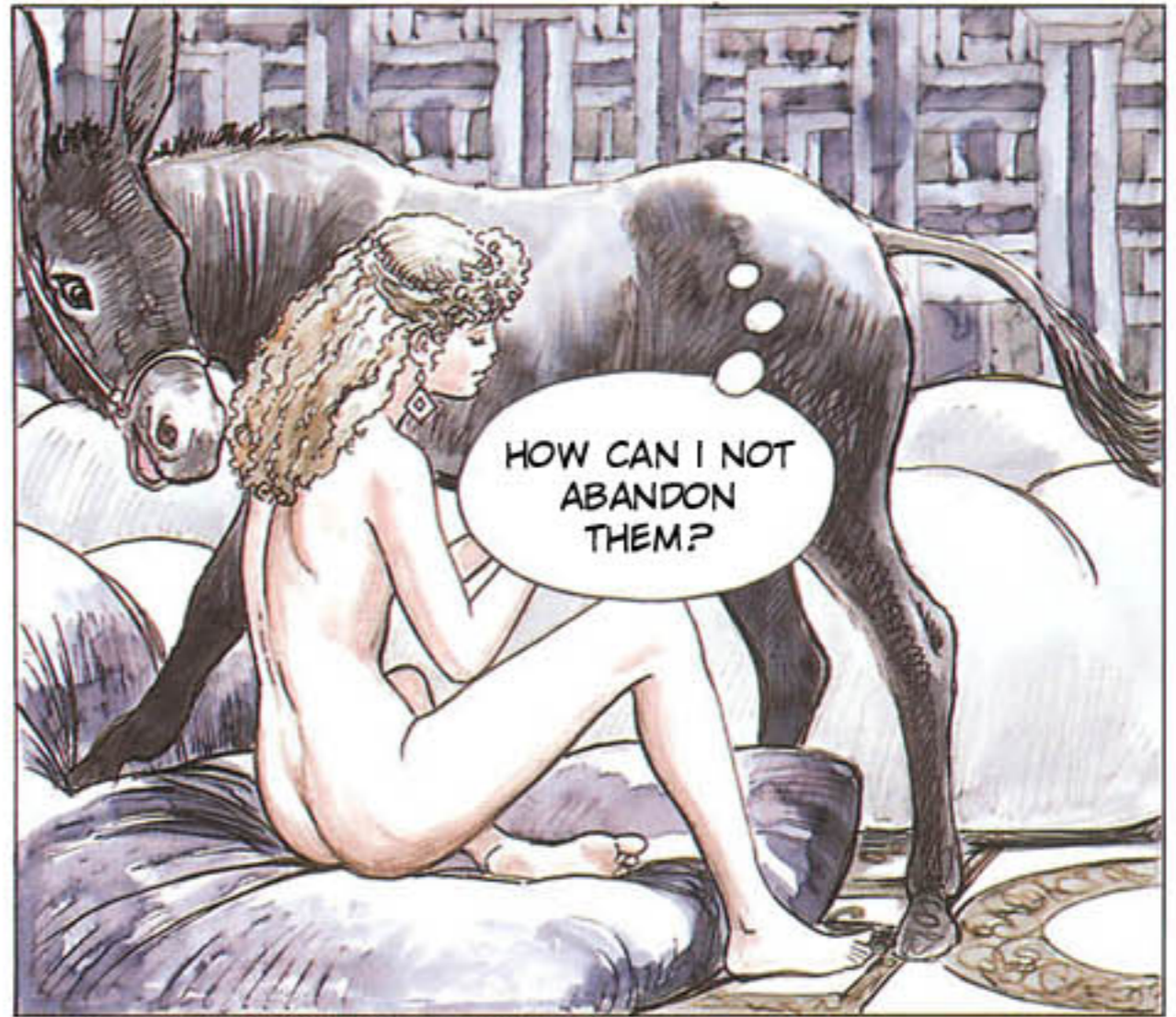
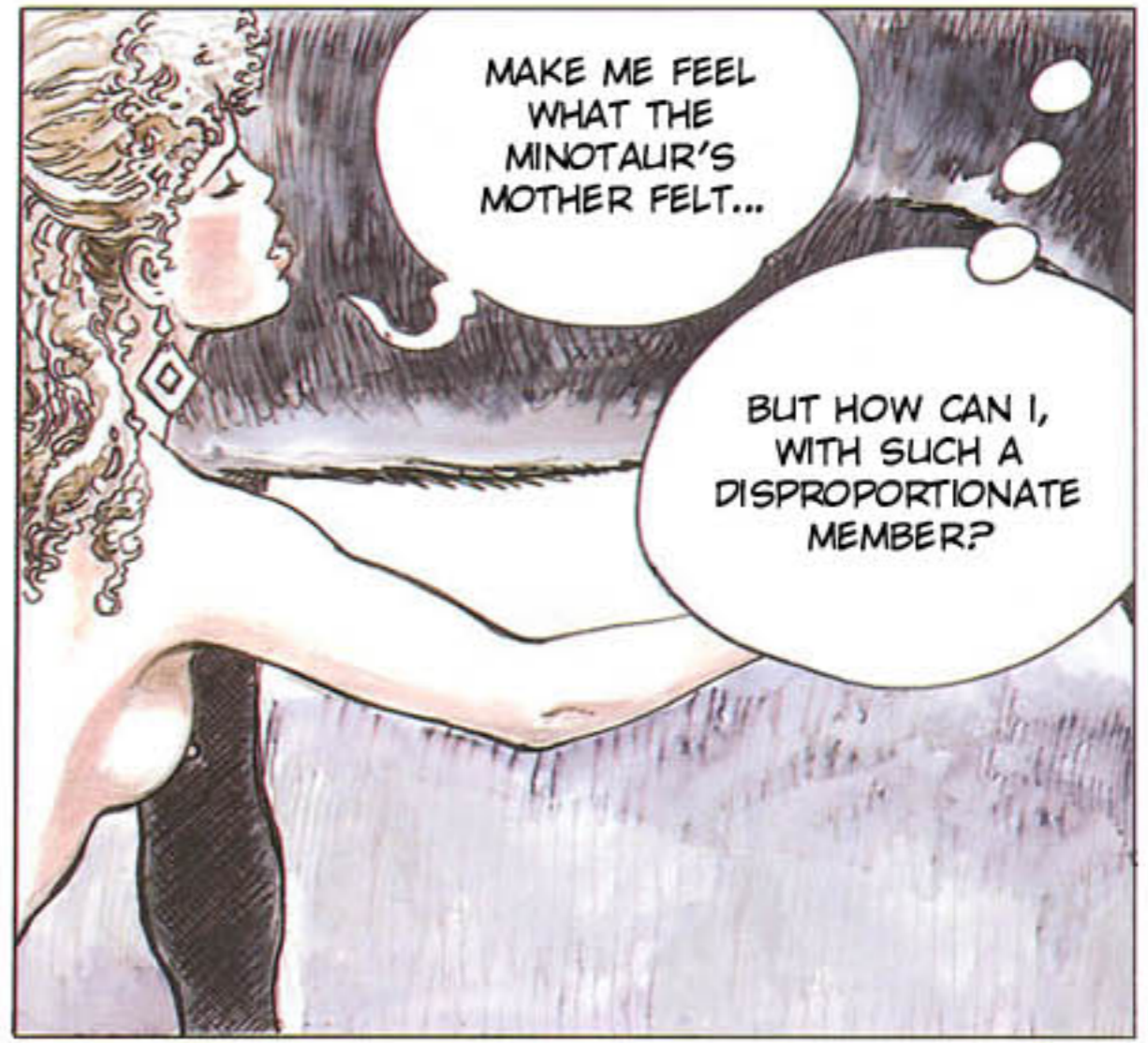
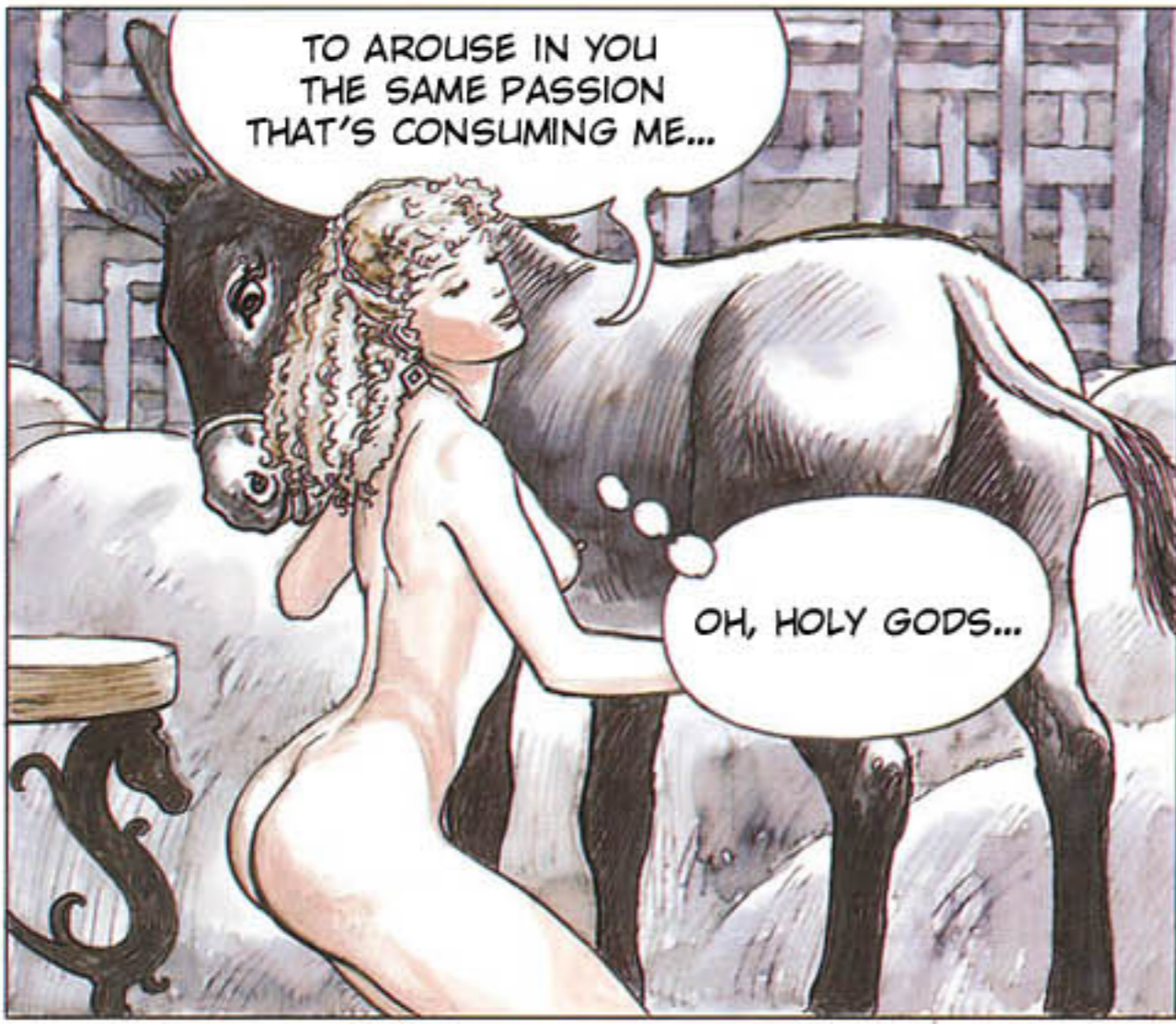
BUT HOW CAN I MOUNT
THIS DELICATE WOMAN
WHEN MY LEGS ARE
SO BIG?

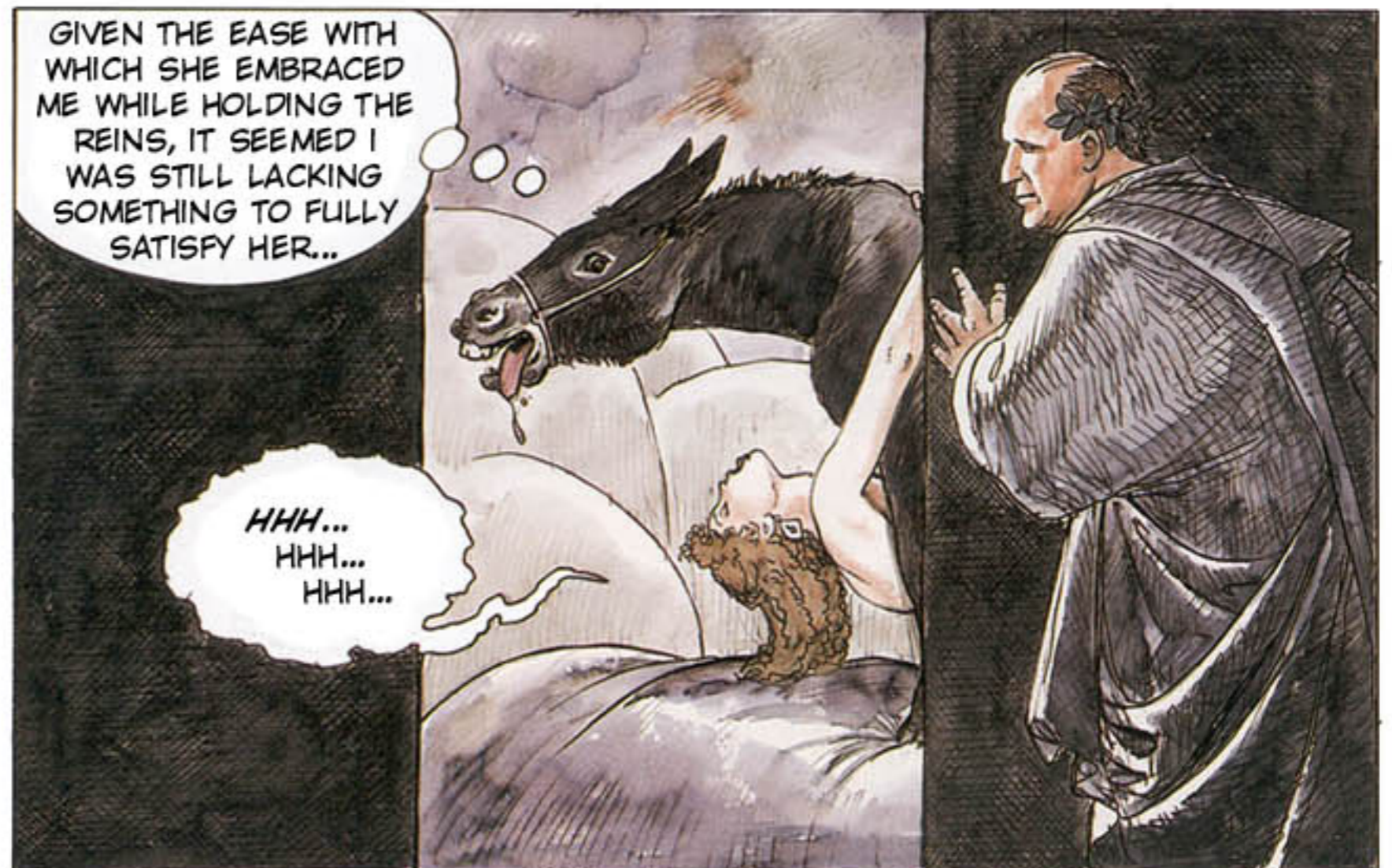
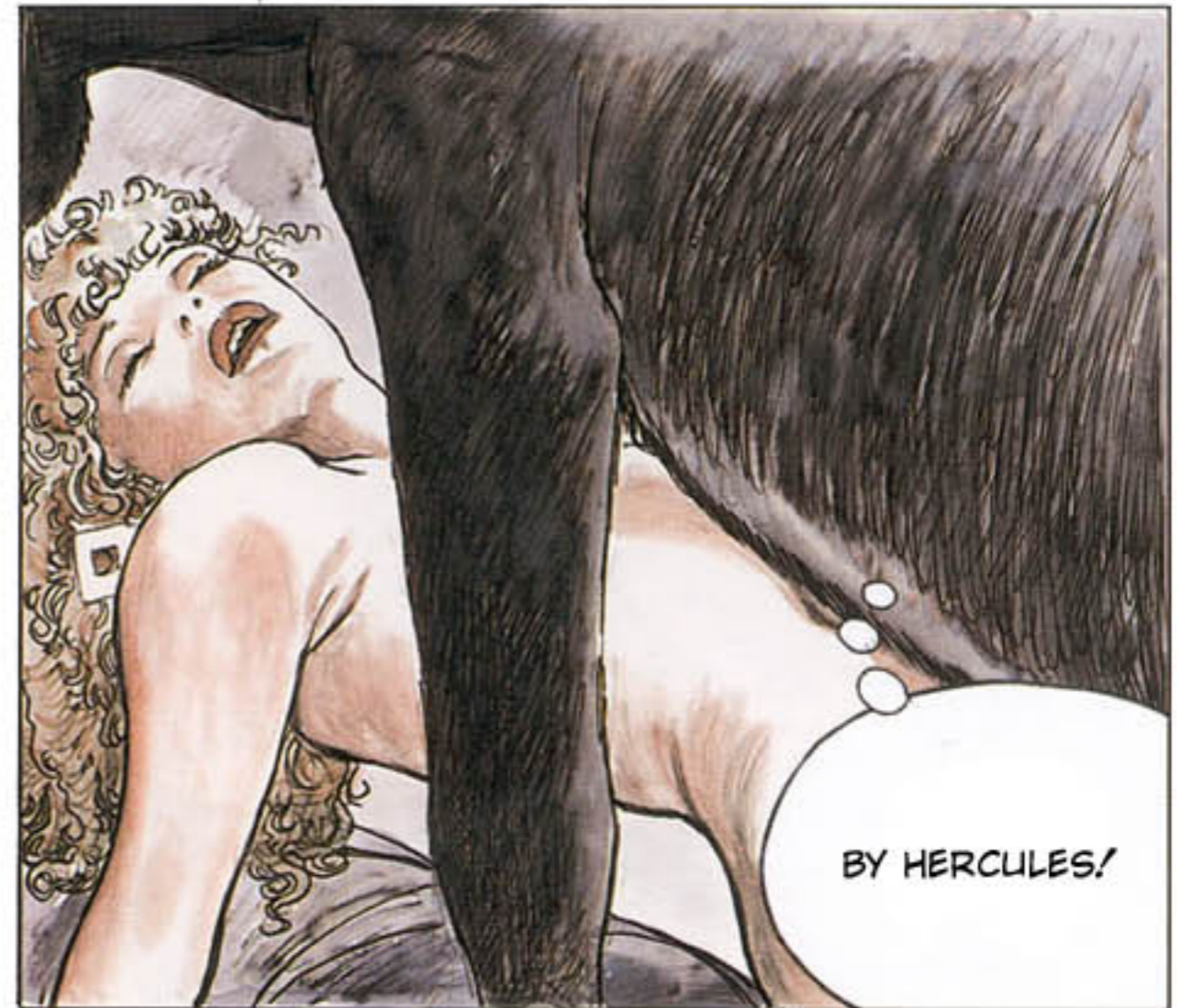
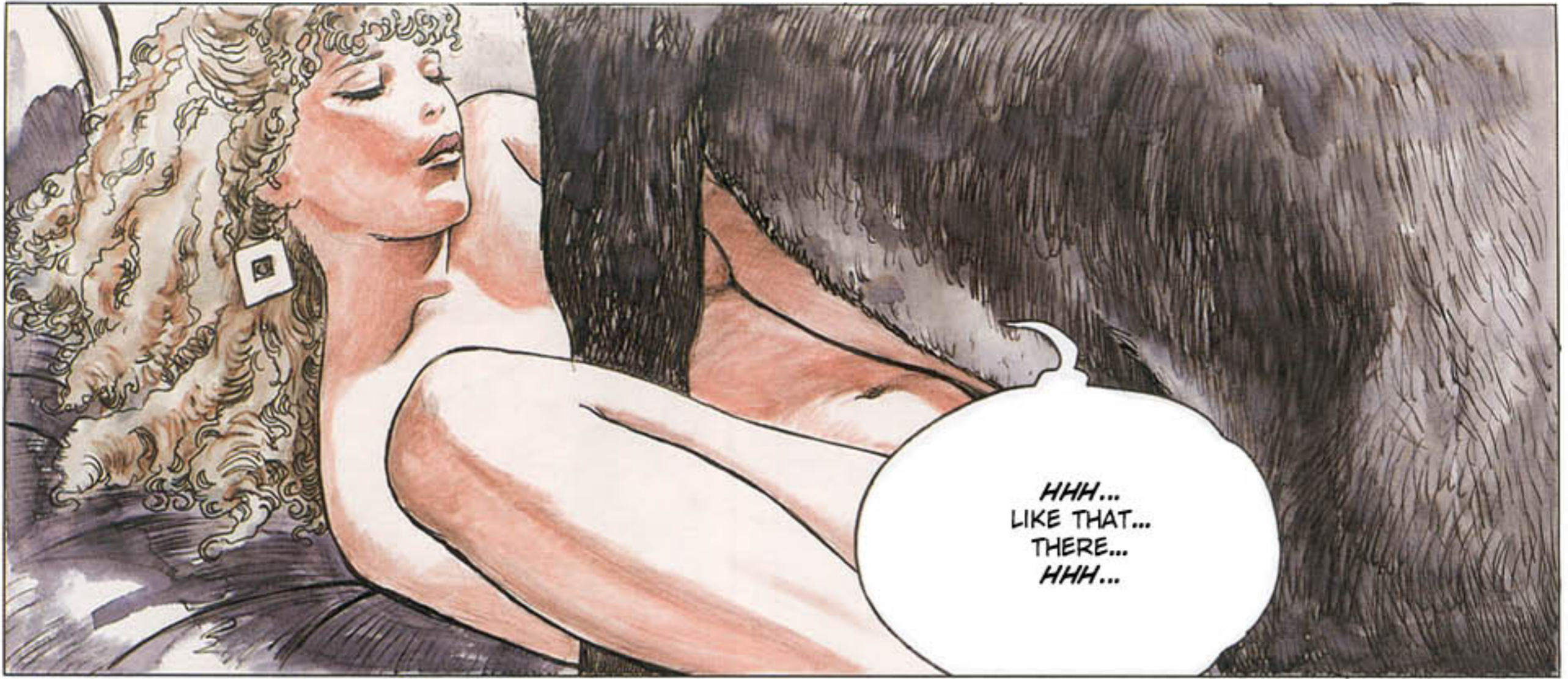
I'LL COAT YOUR GREAT BODY
WITH THIS OIL TO MAKE YOU
EXCITED, AND SO YOU'LL
LOSE YOUR INHIBITIONS,
SO YOU CAN TAKE ME...

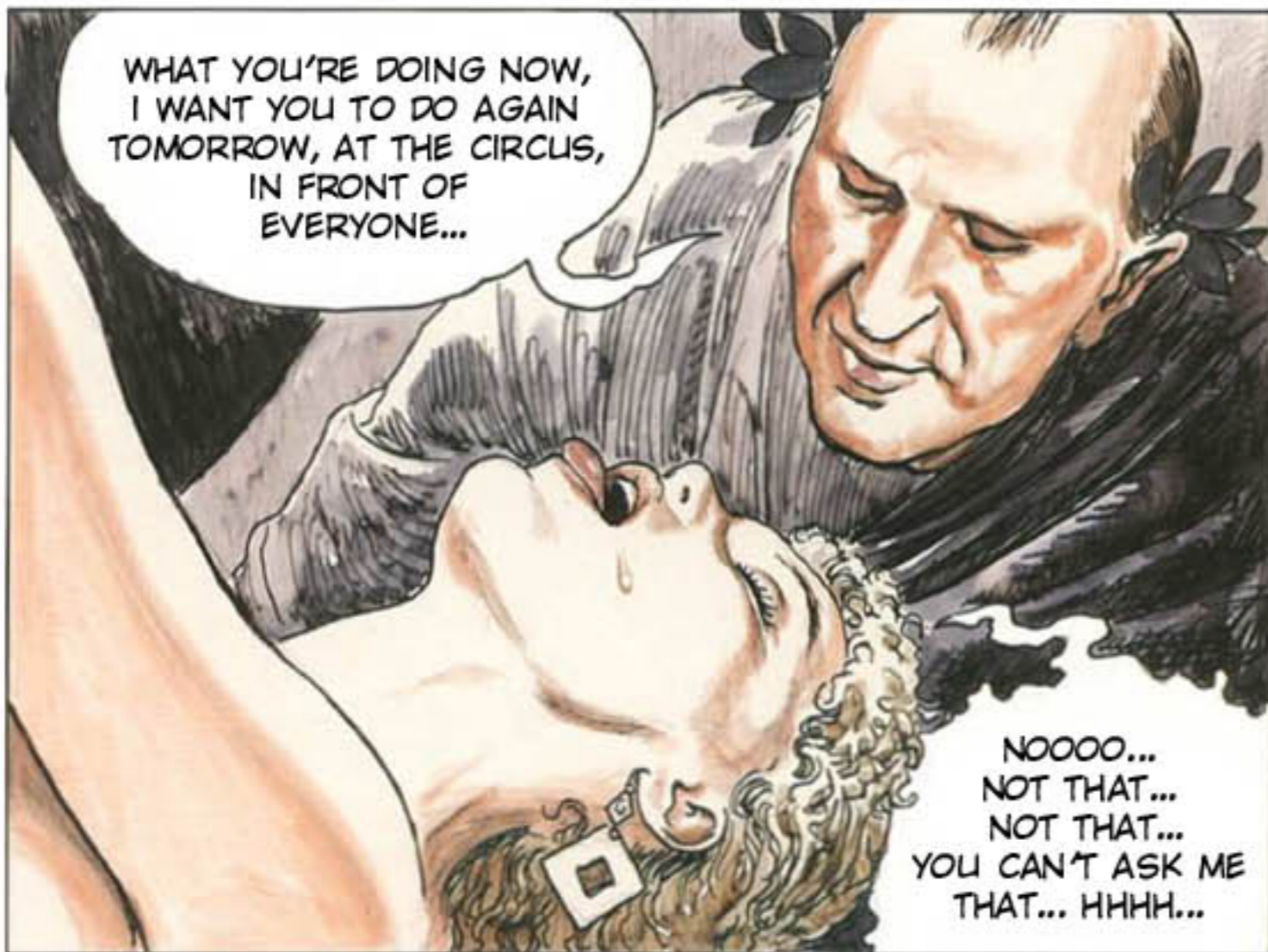
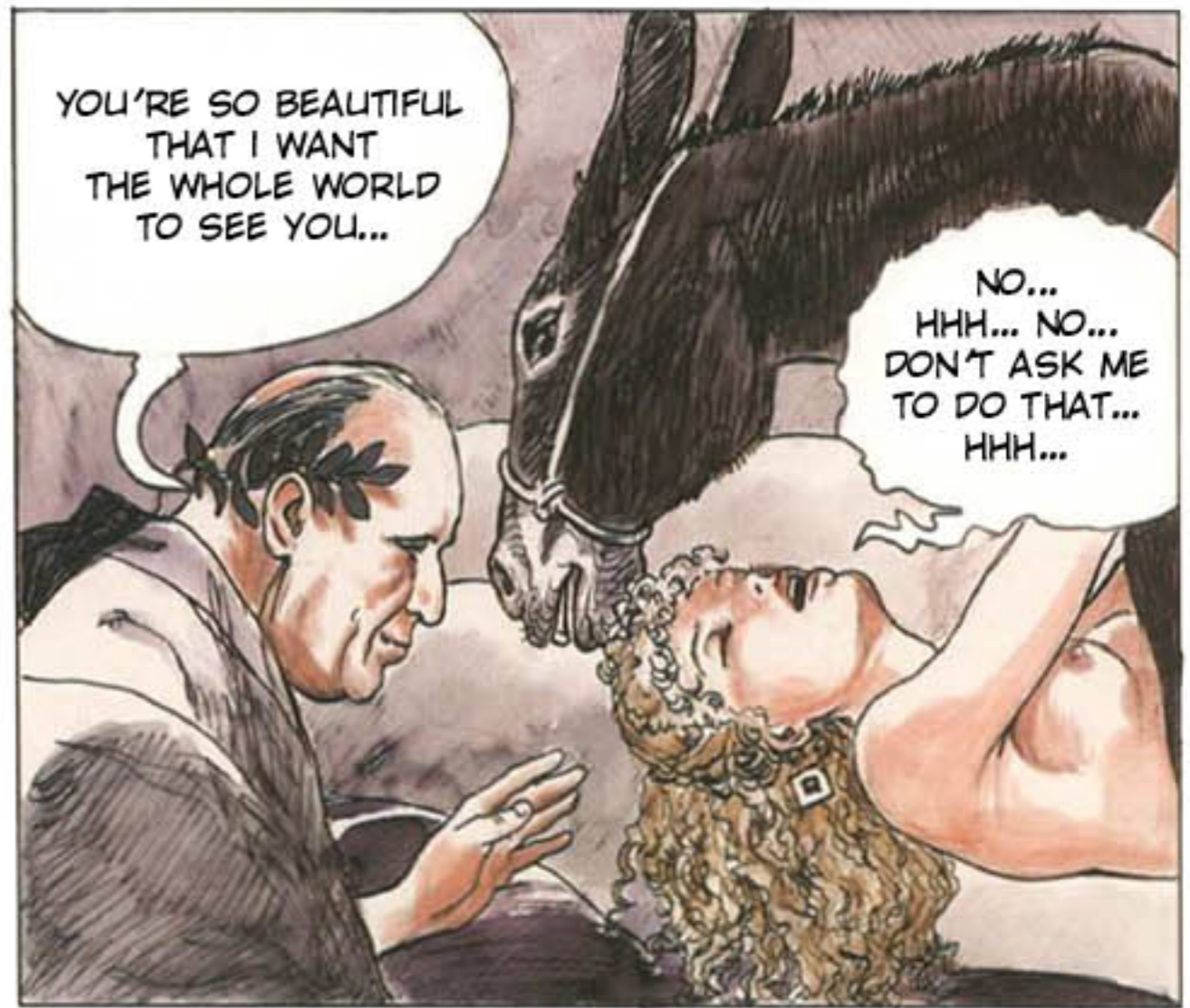
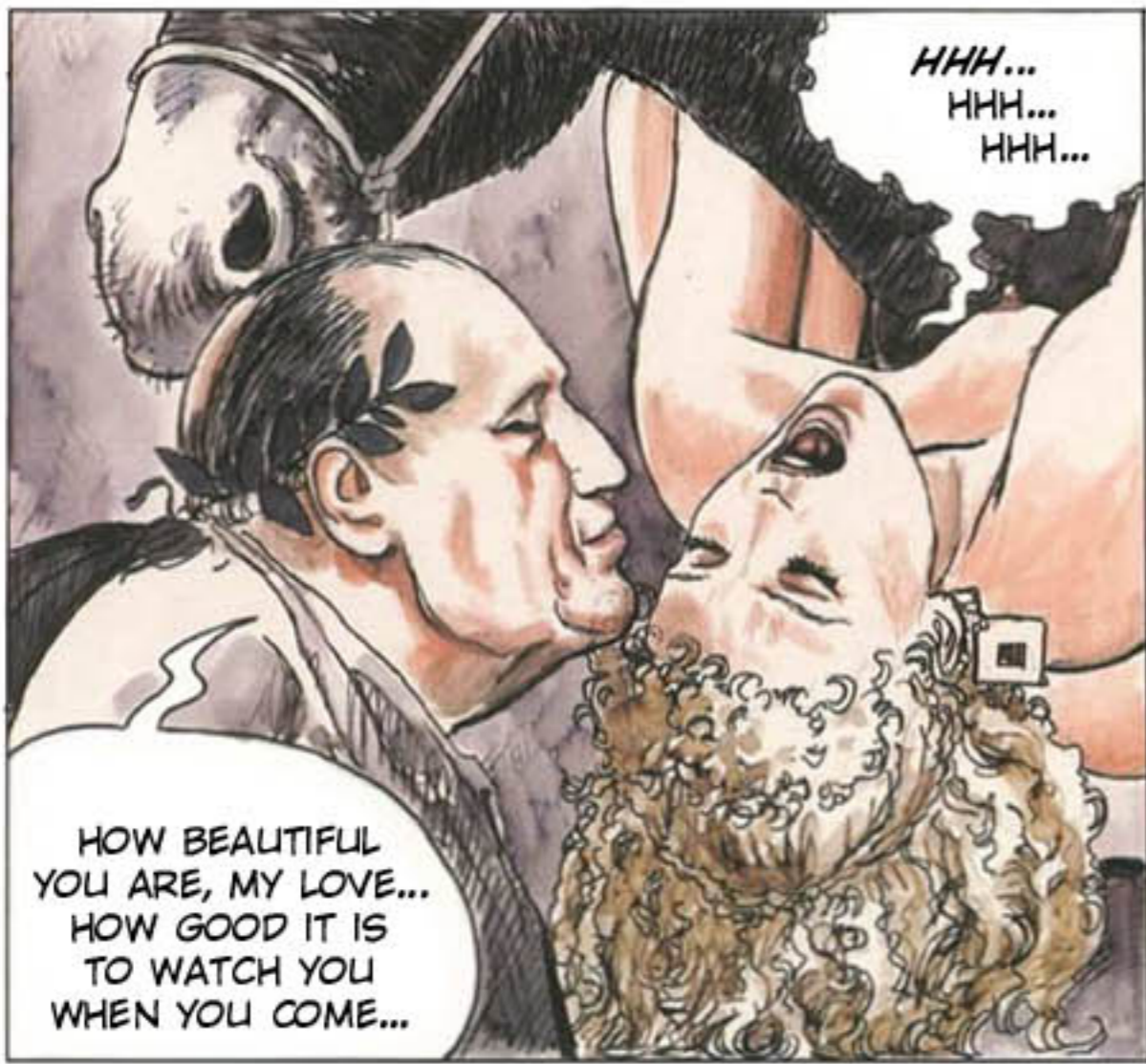


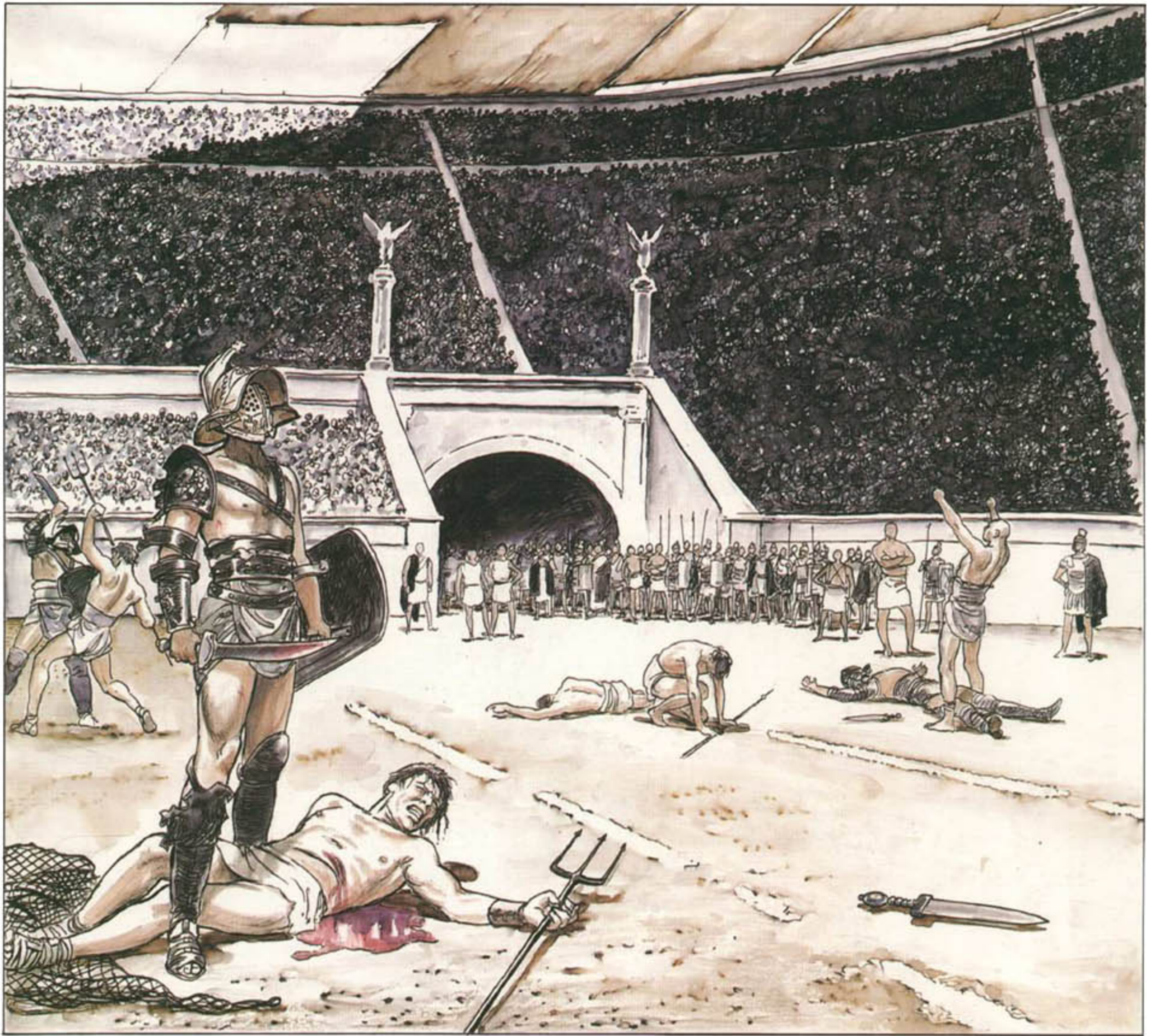
LIKE A SHAMELESS
LADY ASS...



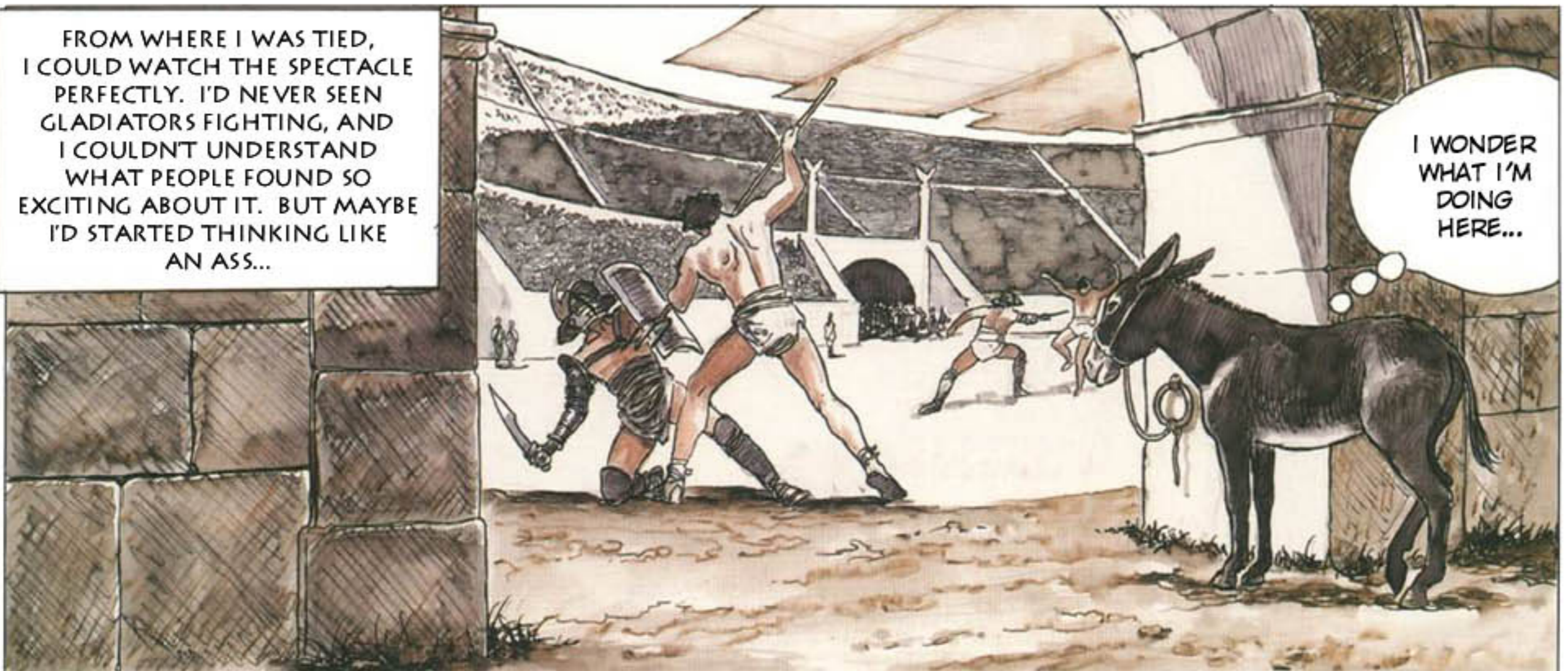






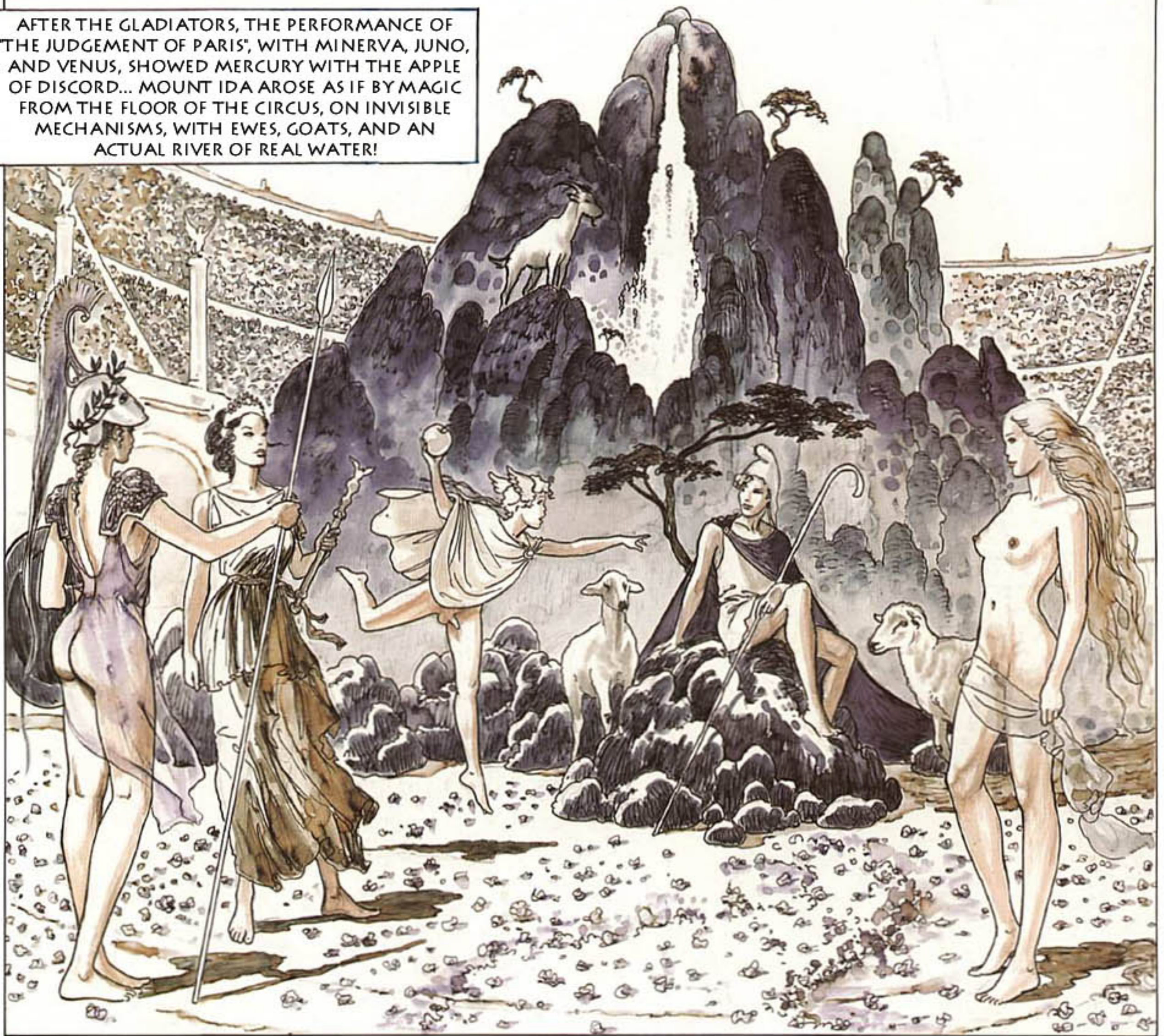


FROM WHERE I WAS TIED, I COULD WATCH THE SPECTACLE PERFECTLY. I'D NEVER SEEN GLADIATORS FIGHTING, AND I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE FOUND SO EXCITING ABOUT IT. BUT MAYBE I'D STARTED THINKING LIKE AN ASS...

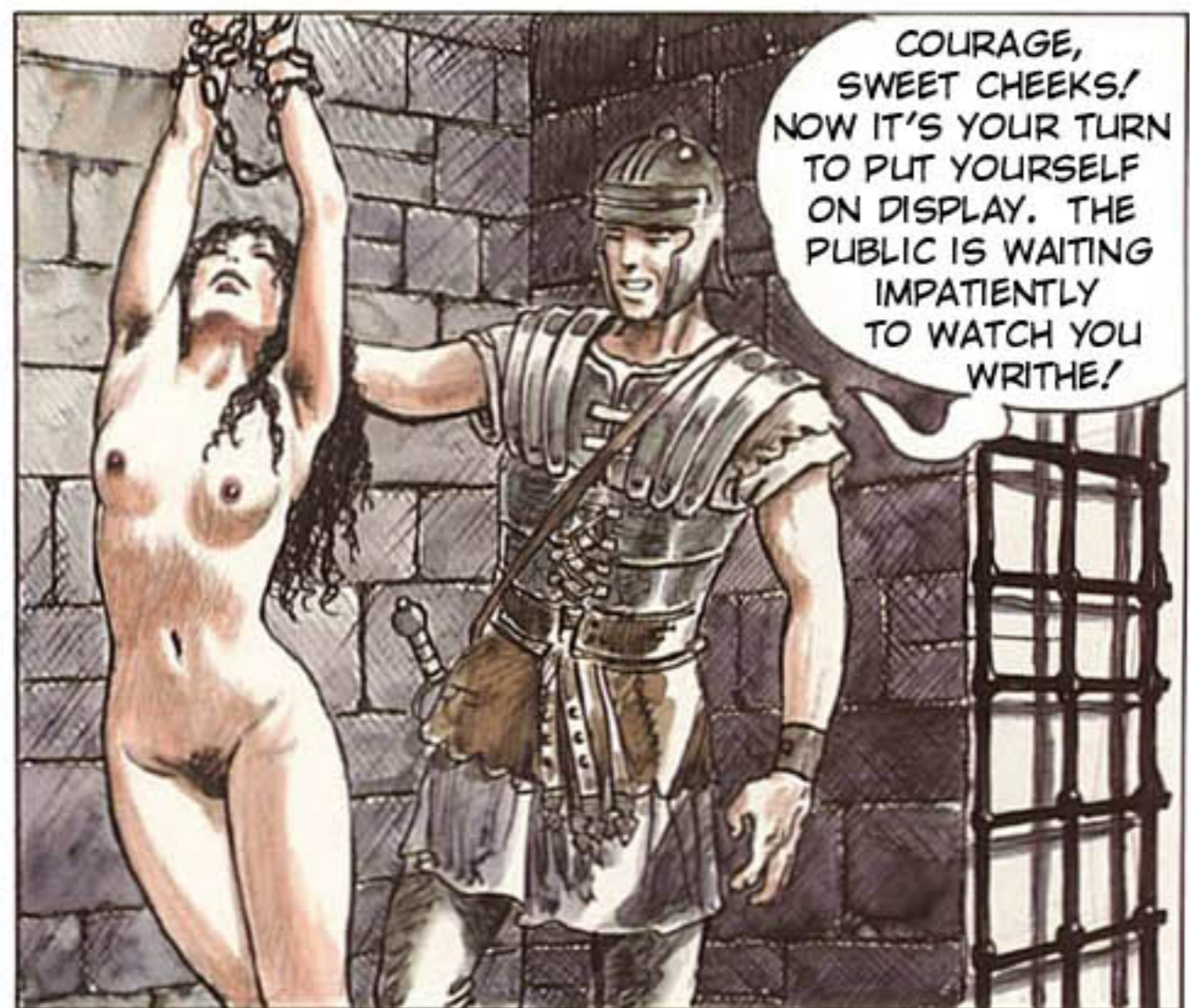


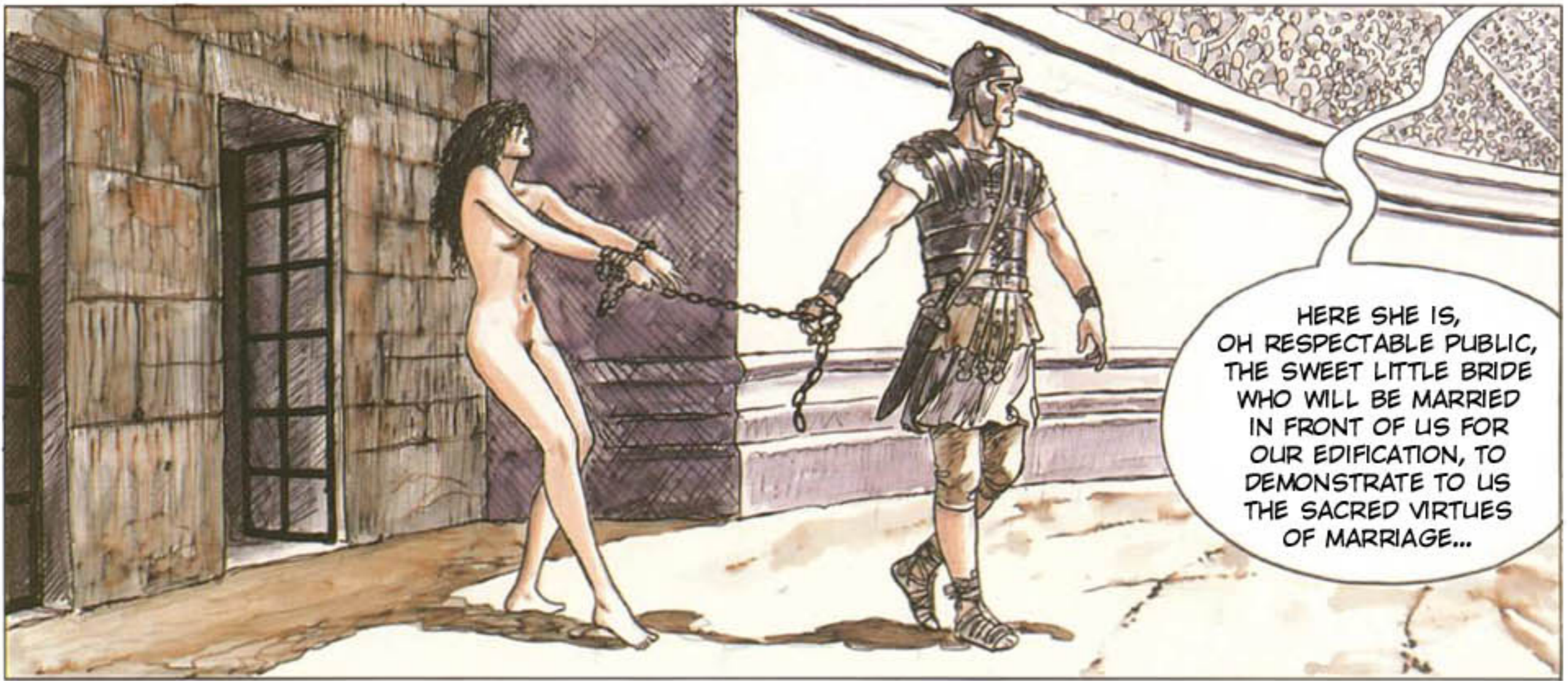
I WONDER WHAT I'M DOING HERE...

AFTER THE GLADIATORS, THE PERFORMANCE OF 'THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS', WITH MINERVA, JUNO, AND VENUS, SHOWED MERCURY WITH THE APPLE OF DISCORD... MOUNT IDA AROSE AS IF BY MAGIC FROM THE FLOOR OF THE CIRCUS, ON INVISIBLE MECHANISMS, WITH EWES, GOATS, AND AN ACTUAL RIVER OF REAL WATER!



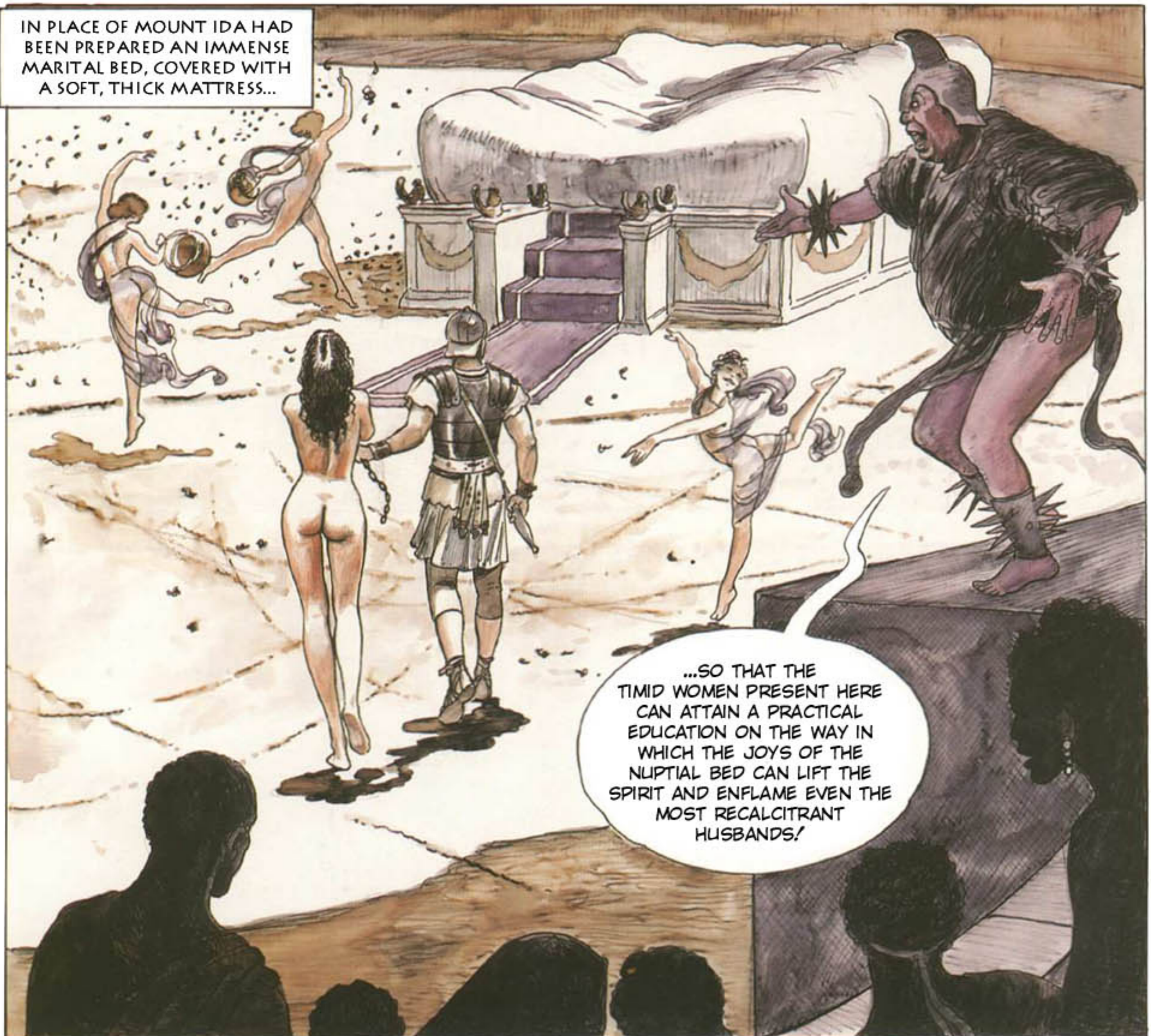
THEN THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES ANNOUNCED THE ARRIVAL OF A WOMAN ACCUSED OF HAVING CAUSED THE HORRIBLE DEATHS OF FIVE PEOPLE, INCLUDING A GIRL AND A MAIDEN, KILLED BY HAVING A GLOWING POKER PUSHED INTO THEIR GENITAL PARTS.





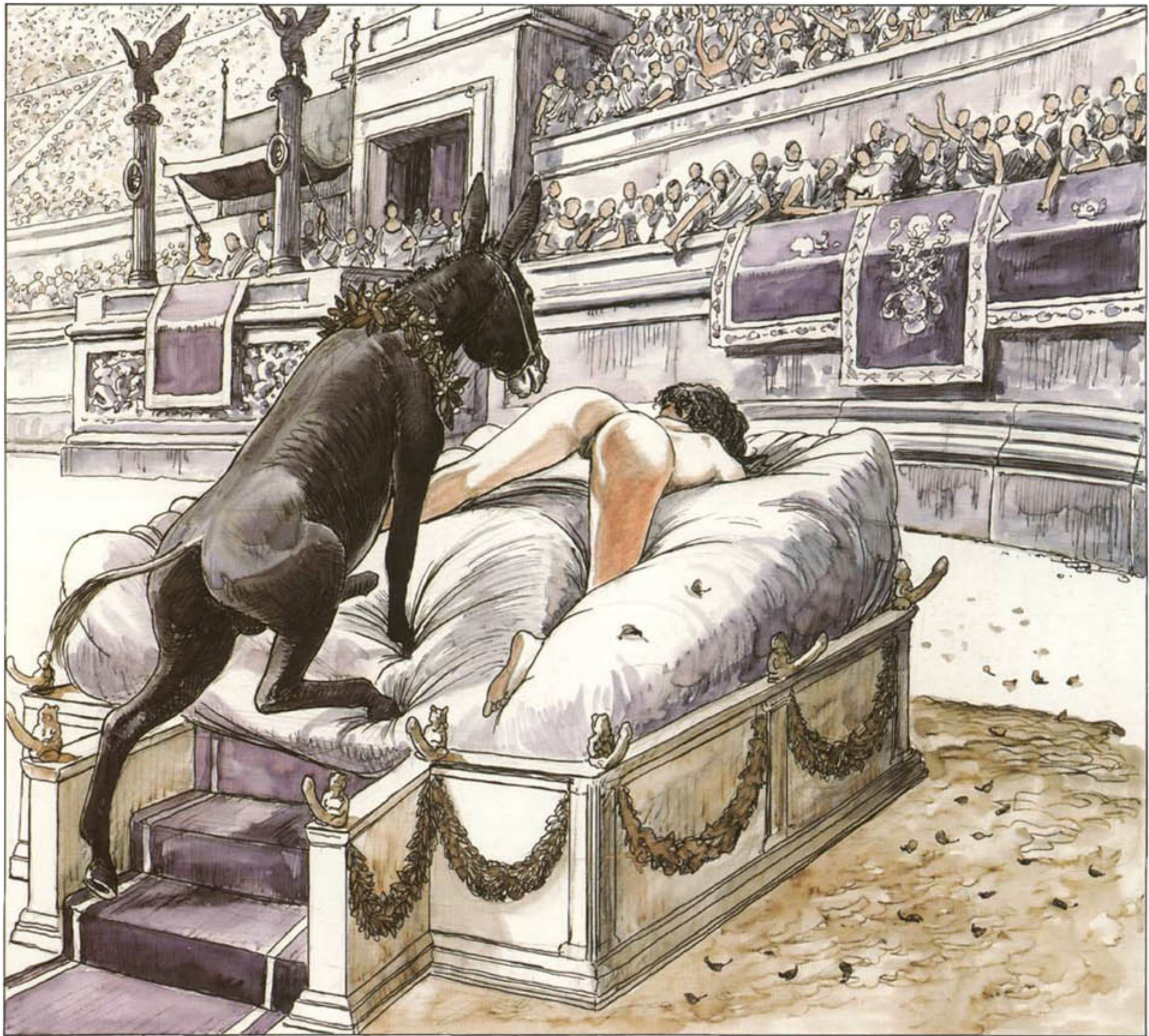
HERE SHE IS, OH RESPECTABLE PUBLIC, THE SWEET LITTLE BRIDE WHO WILL BE MARRIED IN FRONT OF US FOR OUR EDIFICATION, TO DEMONSTRATE TO US THE SACRED VIRTUES OF MARRIAGE...

IN PLACE OF MOUNT IDA HAD BEEN PREPARED AN IMMENSE MARITAL BED, COVERED WITH A SOFT, THICK MATTRESS...

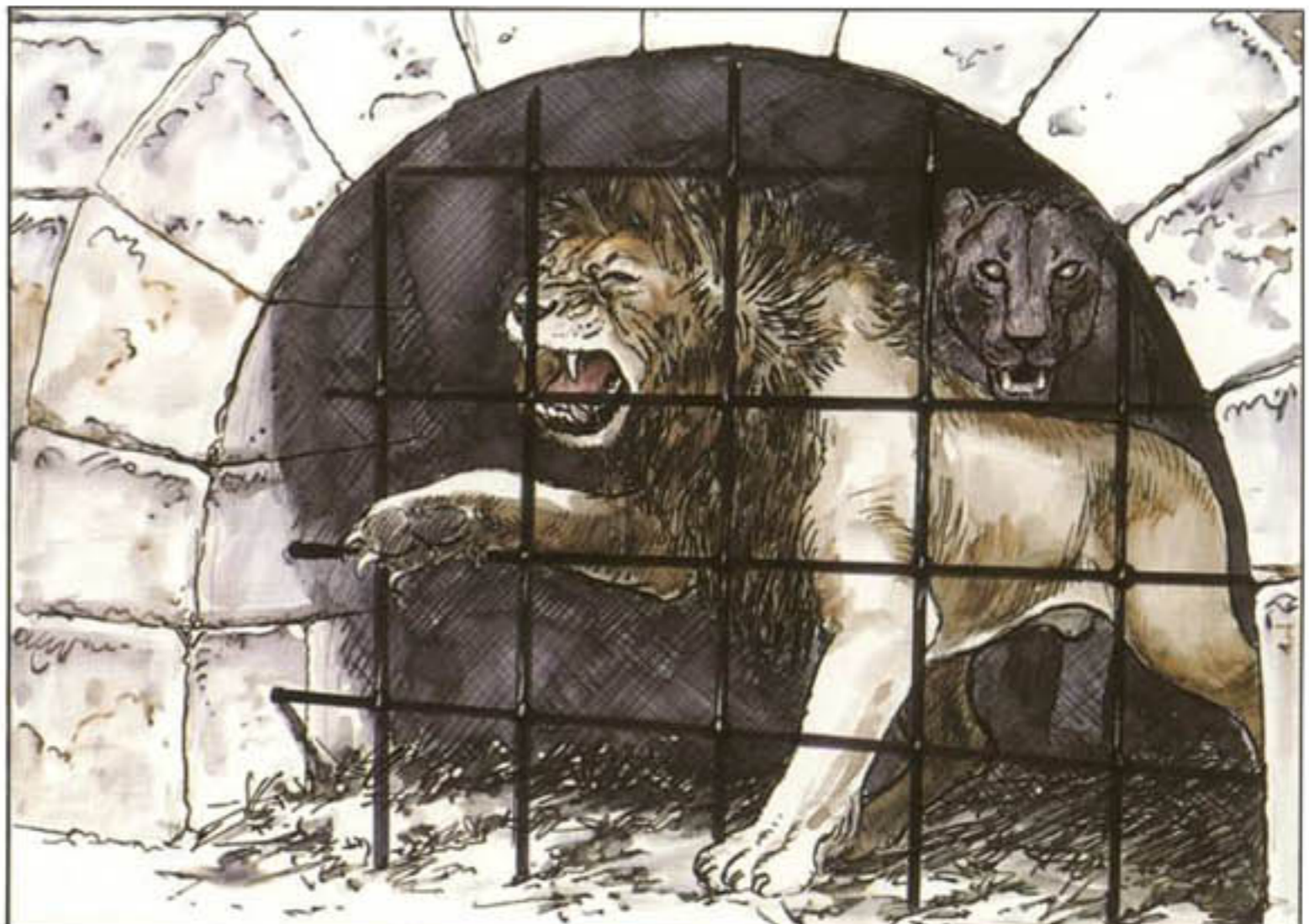


...SO THAT THE TIMID WOMEN PRESENT HERE CAN ATTAIN A PRACTICAL EDUCATION ON THE WAY IN WHICH THE JOYS OF THE NUPTIAL BED CAN LIFT THE SPIRIT AND ENFLAME EVEN THE MOST RECALCITRANT HUSBANDS!





BUT JUST AT THE CRUCIAL MOMENT,
FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE, I SAW
SOMETHING THAT FROZE THE BLOOD
IN MY VEINS...



THOSE SAVAGE BEASTS WERE WAITING TO MAKE A CARNAGE OF THE WOMAN AND I DIDN'T THINK THEY'D SPARE ME IN THEIR FEROCIOUSNESS! I RAN FOR ALL I WAS WORTH!



HEY!
MY GROOM'S
GETTING AWAY!

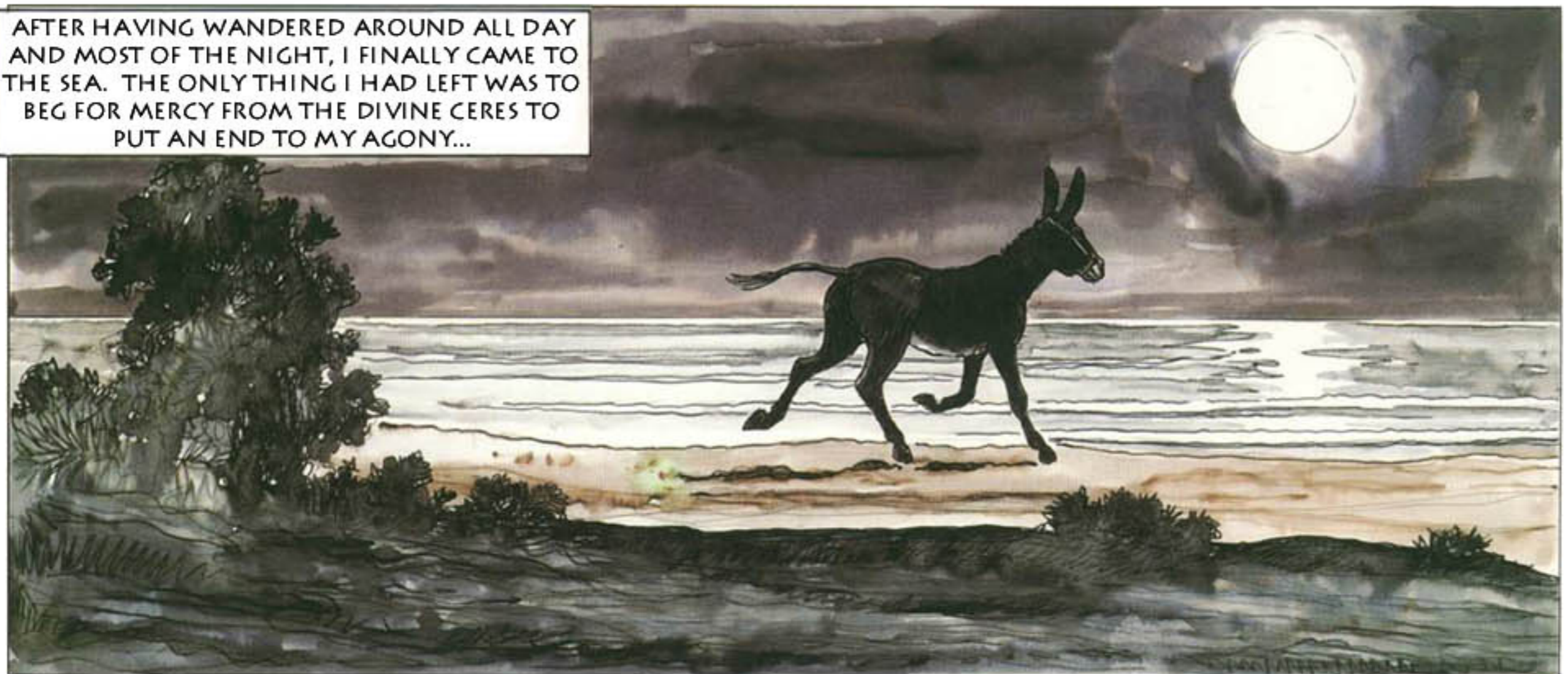


DODGING MY PURSUERS UNDER THE CROWD'S SCREAMS OF DISAPPOINTMENT, I WAS ABLE TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE CIRCUS' EXIT.

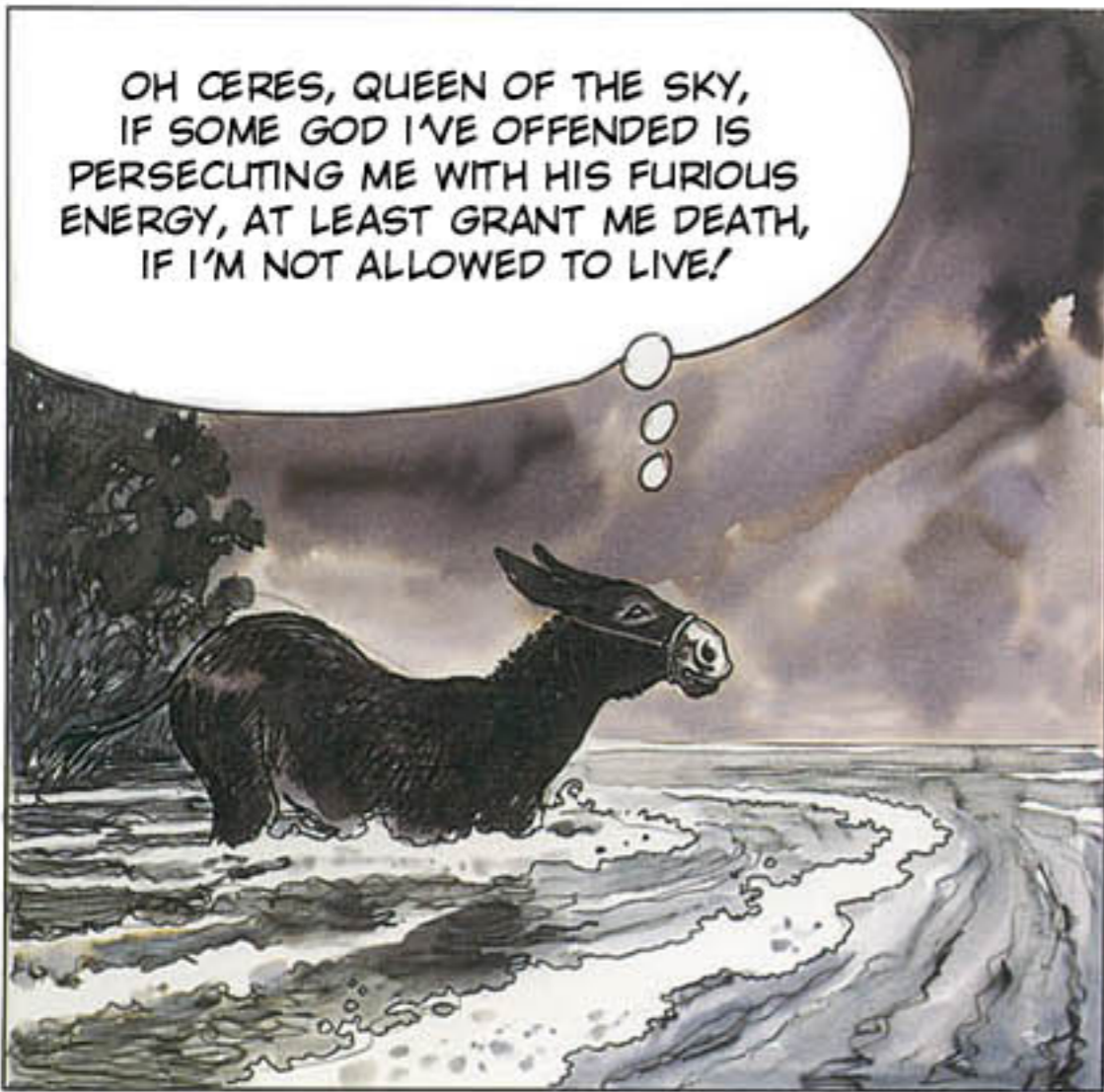
I'M NOT EVEN
GOOD ENOUGH
FOR AN ASS!



AFTER HAVING WANDERED AROUND ALL DAY AND MOST OF THE NIGHT, I FINALLY CAME TO THE SEA. THE ONLY THING I HAD LEFT WAS TO BEG FOR MERCY FROM THE DIVINE CERES TO PUT AN END TO MY AGONY...



OH CERES, QUEEN OF THE SKY,
IF SOME GOD I'VE OFFENDED IS
PERSECUTING ME WITH HIS FURIOUS
ENERGY, AT LEAST GRANT ME DEATH,
IF I'M NOT ALLOWED TO LIVE!

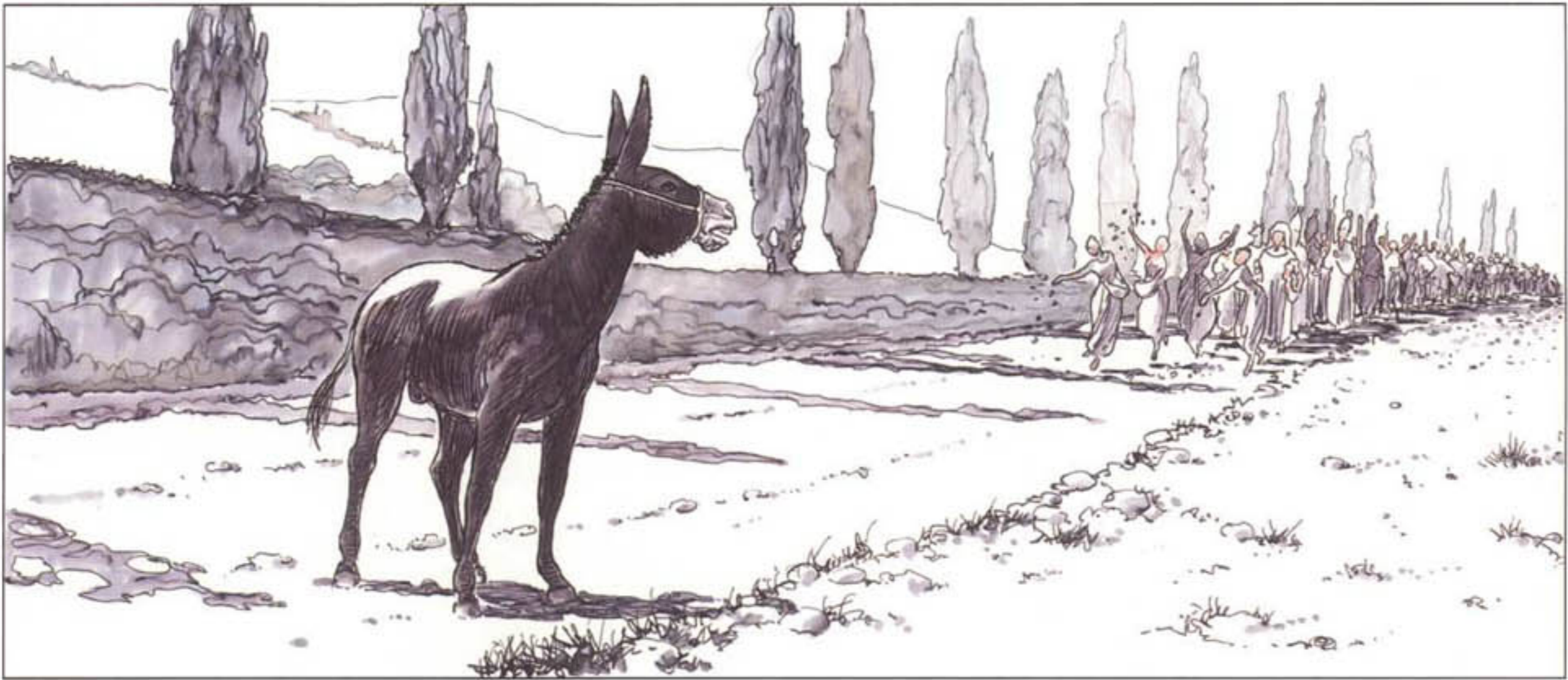
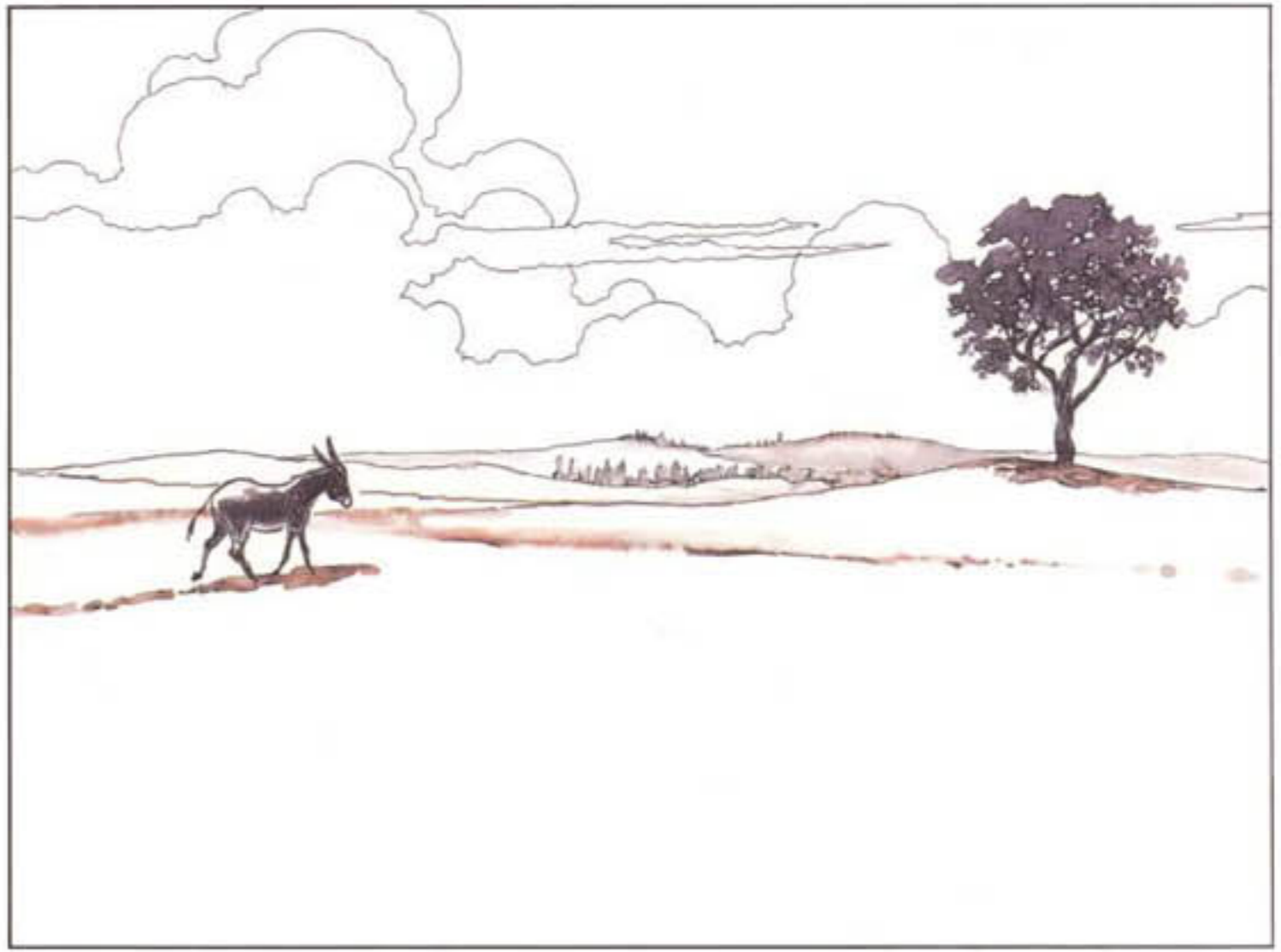
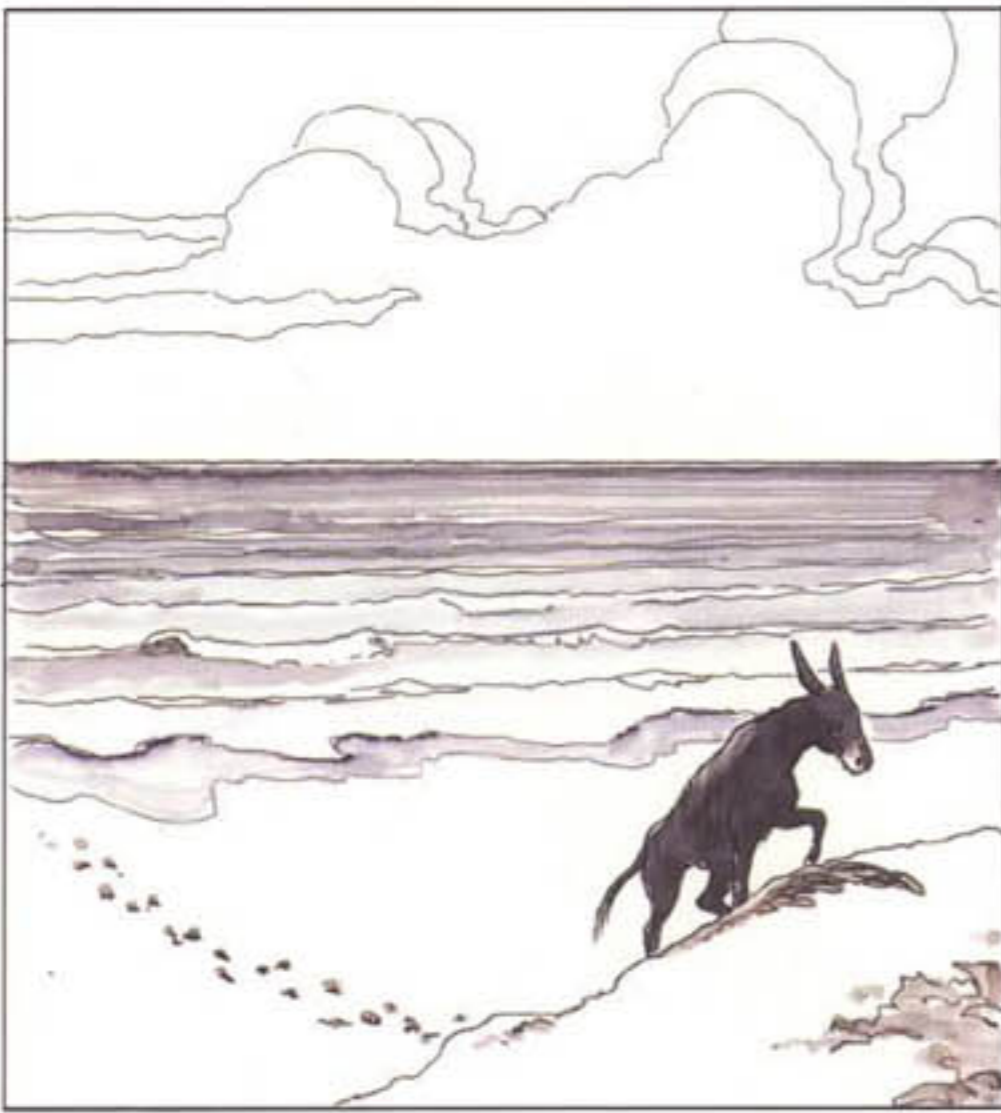


WHAT A
STRANGE
LIGHT... BUT
IT'S NEITHER
THE MOON NOR
THE SUN...



I AM HERE, LUCIUS, TOUCHED BY YOUR
PRAYERS, I'M HERE FULL OF SYMPATHY
FOR YOUR MISADVENTURES, FAVORABLE
AND PROPITIOUS. KNOW THAT TOMORROW
YOU SHALL ENCOUNTER A PROCESSION.
A PRIEST, ON MY ORDERS, SHALL BE
CARRYING A WREATH OF ROSES ALONG
WITH HIS SISTRUM. HE SHALL OFFER
THEM TO YOU, YOU SHALL EAT SOME,
AND YOU SHALL BECOME A MAN AGAIN
AT LAST!







IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THERE WAS REJOICING EVERYWHERE,
AND IMMENSE PLEASURE FOR ME TOO... AS FAR AS
THE DISTANT TREES, THOSE FERTILE ONES WHICH HAD
BORNE FRUIT FOR GENERATIONS, AS WELL AS THOSE
WHICH WERE STERILE, CONTENT MERELY WITH
THEIR SHADE, AND RECREATED BY THE
SOUTHERN BREEZES, RESPLENDANT WITH
BUDS AND LEAVES, RUSTLING LIGHTLY
WITH THE SOFT MURMURS
OF THE MOVING BRANCHES.



The End

THIS IS HOW THE THIRD-CENTURY LATIN AUTHOR, LUCIUS APULEIUS, IN "THE GOLDEN ASS", DESCRIBES THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIS NARRATOR, LUCIUS, WHO THOUGHT HE WOULD TURN INTO A BIRD:

"IN THE WINK OF AN EYE I WAS NAKED, AND I PLUNGED MY HANDS INTO THE BOX. I FILLED THEM WITH OINTMENT, AND RUBBED IT ON MYSELF FROM HEAD TO TOE. THEN I STARTED BEATING THE AIR WITH MY ARMS, IMITATING THE MOVEMENTS OF A BIRD; BUT OF DOWN, OF FEATHERS THERE WAS NO SIGN; WHAT HAIR I HAD THICKENED, AND COVERED MY WHOLE BODY. MY SOFT SKIN BECAME LEATHER. ON MY FEET, ON MY HANDS, THE FIVE DIGITS FUSED AND HARDENED INTO A HOOF; FROM THE END OF MY SPINE SPROUTED A LONG TAIL, MY FACE LENGTHENED, MY MOUTH SPREAD, MY NOSTRILS WIDENED, MY LIPS DROOPED; MY EARS STOOD UP IN EXCESSIVE PROPORTION. MORE WAYS TO EMBRACE MY PHOTIS; BUT CERTAIN PARTS (AND IT WAS MY ONLY CONSOLATION) WERE RADICALLY IMPROVED BY THE CHANGE."

THE GREAT CLASSIC TEXT PROVIDES MILO MANARA WITH A POETIC STRUCTURE, CHOCK-FULL OF LEGENDS, MYTHS, FANTASIES, AND VOLUPTUOUSNESS, WITHIN WHICH HE FINDS IN "THE GOLDEN ASS" THE ECHO OF HIS OWN INSPIRATION. ON THAT LATIN BASE CLOTH IS WOVEN A FASCINATING DIALOG BETWEEN TWO PERSONALITIES SEPARATED BY EIGHTEEN CENTURIES.

