

An illustration in a dark, moody style. Two figures stand in the center, looking up with expressions of shock or fear. The figure on the left is a woman in a dark top and light skirt. The figure on the right is a man in a wide-brimmed hat and a vest over a long-sleeved shirt. They are surrounded by dark, jagged rock formations. In the foreground, several human faces and hands are visible, appearing to be part of the rock or buried within it, suggesting a plague or a cursed site. The overall tone is horror and mystery.

Our Plague Bear

A GENUINE but ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE Concerning
THE DREADFUL VISITATION of THE PLAGUE upon the VILLAGE OF EYAM in the year 1665

By Nick Burton

Our Plague Year

THE OLDS CAUSED THIS

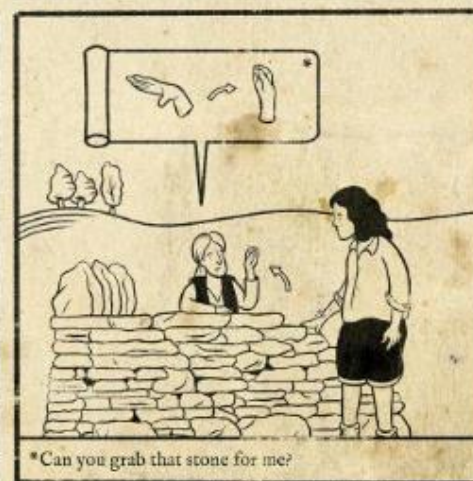
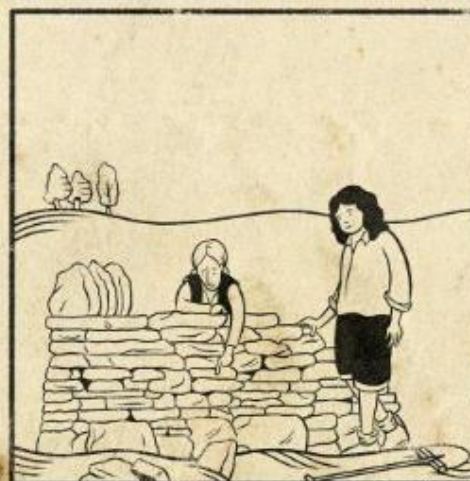
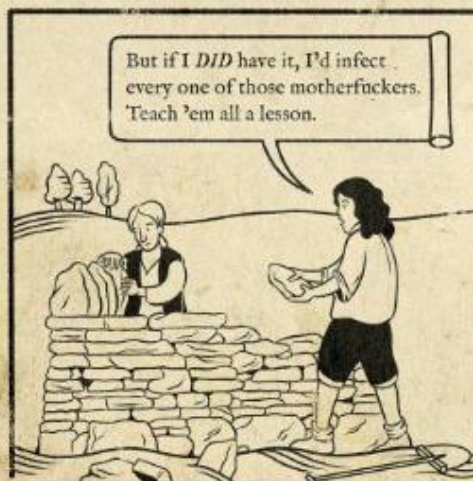
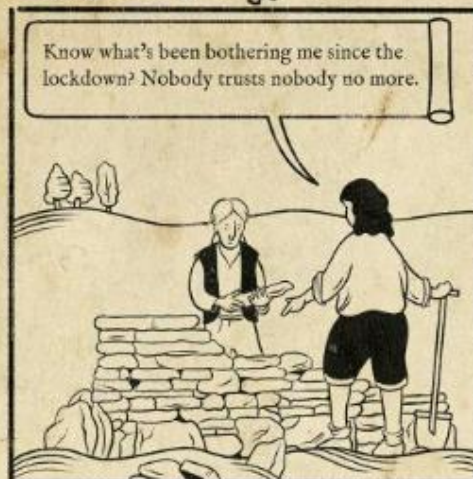
by Nick Burton



Our Plague Bear

WHAT'S BOTHERING ME

by Nick Burton



Our Plague Year

THANK THE BABY JESUS

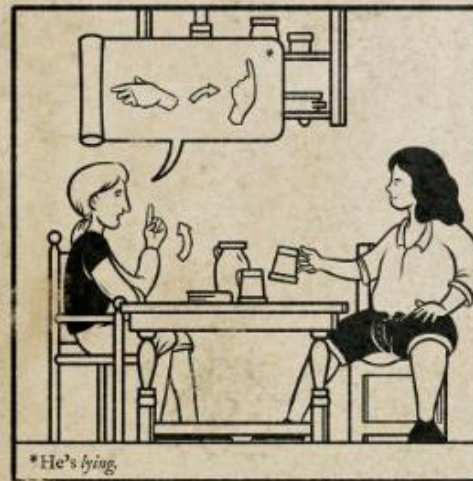
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Our Plague Bear

THIS VILLAGE IS WHACK

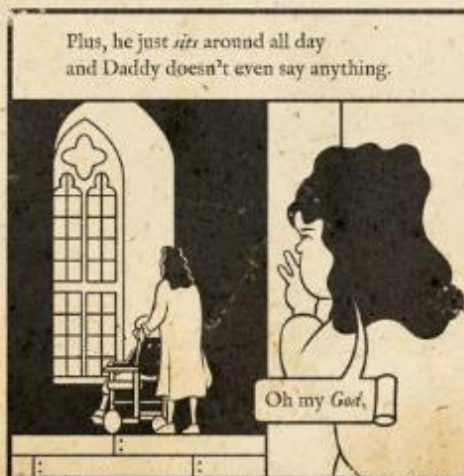
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Our Plague Bear

LET'S PLAY A GAME — PT. I

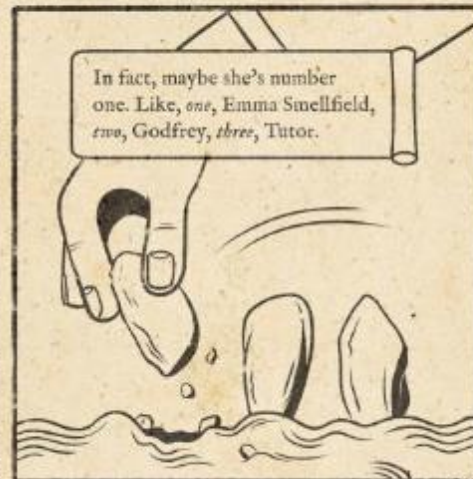
by Nick Burton



Our Plague Pear

LET'S PLAY A GAME — PT. 2

by Nick Burton

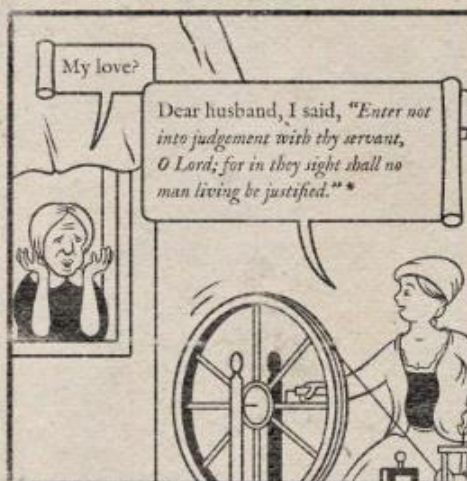
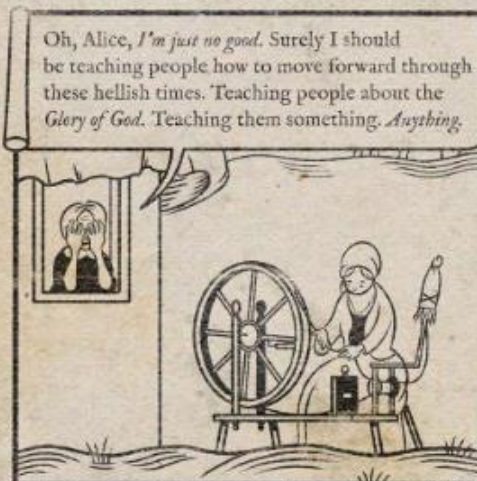
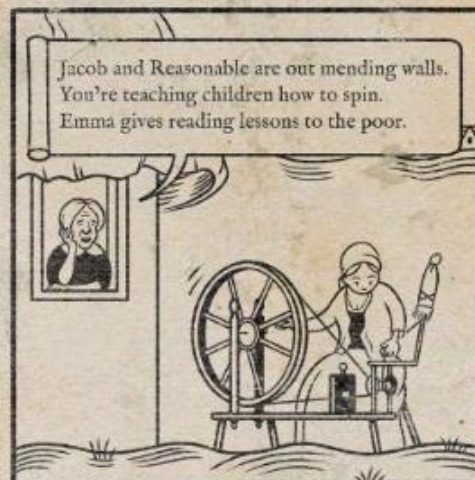
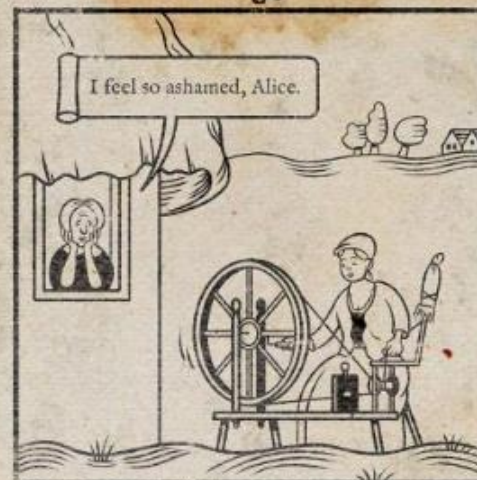


*Slattern: a dirty untidy woman

Our Plague Bear

I'M SO ASHAMED

by Nick Burton



*The Book of Common Prayer 1662: Psalm 143.2

Our Plague Bear

WHEN I'M BIG AND STRONG

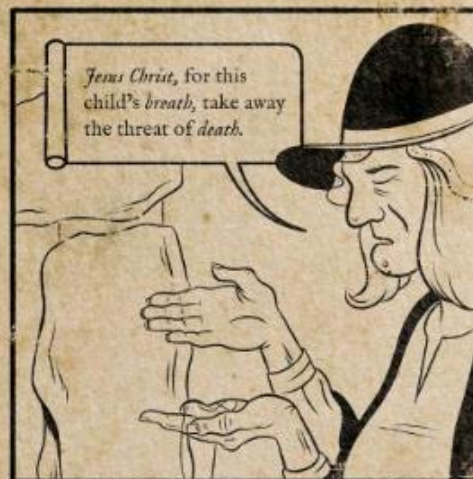
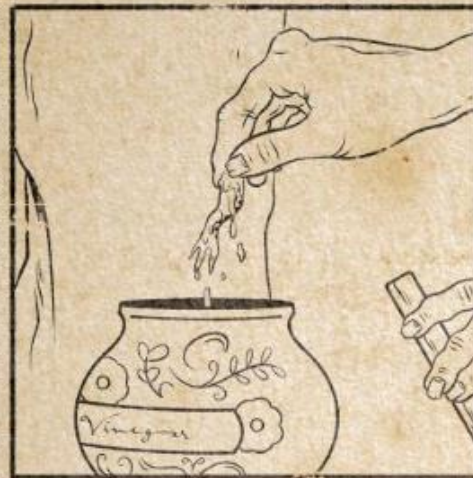
by Nick Burton



Our Plague Bear

SO BE IT

by Nick Burton



Our Plague Bear

THE FAIRIES ARE ANGRY

by Nick Burton

Future Reader, the fairies are angry.



We build homes upon their ancient pathways, nail iron onto our beds and doors, and place Bibles beneath our pillows. Yet we no longer leave cake or cream upon our hearths.



There are even those who doubt I have danced with elves beneath a warm, summer moon, or seen, with my own eyes, the glittering realm of the Invisible Ones.



George Gribble is a credulous fool, they say - a pedlar of Old Wives' Tales.

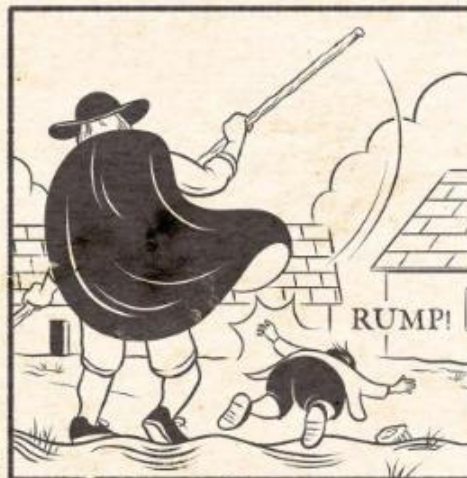


This is not the Eyam of my Father's generation. It's an Eyam filled with the pestiferous winds of ignorance, youth and now, plague.



Mark my words ... the old ways are dying and the village is in per...

HOLY EARTING CRACKERS, child!



It's fairy-taken,* leave it be!



* Food that falls to the floor belongs to the fairies - GG

Our Plague Bear

LUCKY SHE'S ALREADY DEAD

by Nick Burton



Our Plague Bear

WHAT IF THIS NEVER ENDS?

by Nick Burton



At the Lydgate

SEPTEMBER 1665

HALF HIDDEN BY HILLS AND TREES, AND GUARDED BY A CRAGGY SANDSTONE RIDGE, THE ANCIENT VILLAGE OF **EYAM** PREPARES FOR SLEEP.



THE MOON *SLIPS* BEHIND A BANK OF CLOUDS.



AND THE BELLS OF **ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH** RING CURFEW TO CLOSE OUT THE DAY.



TONIGHT, IT'S **REASONABLE SMITHFIELD'S** TURN TO STAND WATCH.

THERE HE IS NOW AT THE **LYDGATE**, HALBERD IN HAND, PEERING INTO THE GLOOM.



READY TO TURN AWAY ANY **UNWELCOME VISITORS**.



OR, IF NECESSARY...



SOUND THE ALARM.





MANY AUTHORS SAY THAT GEORGE NEVER WENT TO LONDON - THAT INSTEAD, THE PLAGUE RIDDEN CLOTH WAS DELIVERED TO THE TAILOR'S HOUSEHOLD IN CHAM, IN LATE AUGUST/EARLY SEPTEMBER - BUT I HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT GEORGE MADE THE FATEFUL TRIP HIMSELF.

HOW PLAGUE CAME TO EYAM *featuring:*
GEORGE VICCARS

DOESN'T MAKE **SENSE**.
WHY CAN'T I JUST GO
TO MANCHESTER?



BECAUSE I WANT THE **FANCY LONDON CLOTH**, GEORGE,
AND BECAUSE YOU'LL **DO AS YOU'RE TOLD**, OR YOU CAN
FIND ANOTHER JOB.



I SHOULD **KEEP THE MONEY**
AND NEVER GO BACK. LIVE
THE **GOOD LIFE** FOR ONCE.



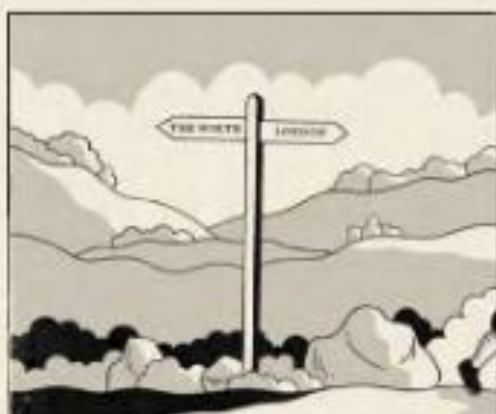
BASTARDS!



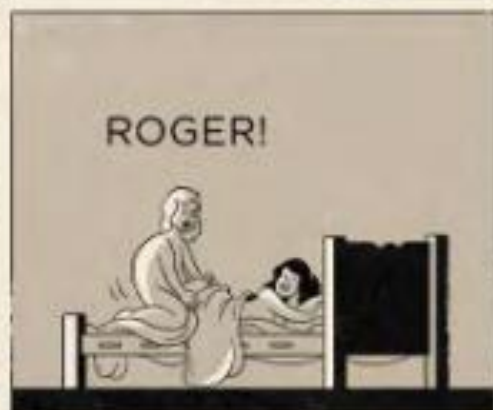
MAN, IT'S SO **BEAUTIFUL** OUT
HERE, I...

MONEY, SIR? **ALMS?**





TO BE CONTINUED...



UGH. I FEEL TERRIBLE.
WHY DID I DO THAT?



CHRIST, THIS IS HEAVY.



AS IF THIS COULD
GET **ANY** WORSE.



ARGHK!



Crack!



TO BE CONTINUED...



JEEZALOO, THAT WAS CLOSE.



Eventually

THIS DOESN'T
FEEL *PREMIUM*.
AND IT'S WET.*



*UNFORTUNATELY, THE CLOTH
IS INFECTED WITH PLAGUE.

I'LL HANG IT BY
THE FIRE, THEN.



OR MAYBE YOU'D PREFER
I *STUFF IT UP YOUR ASS*,
YOU UNGRATEFUL *HAG*.



BECAUSE I *LITERALLY*
NEARLY DIED FOR YOU.



In the
morning

WHAT THE *HELL*,
I'M ALL LUMPY...

Unfortunately

Therefore

GEORGE
VICCARS
DEED SEPT 7TH
1665





Merry Christmas from Eyam

EYAM PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCLXV



The bad September

SEPTEMBER 1665



She was a child!

SEPTEMBER 1965



LATER THAT NIGHT

WELL I THINK SHE **DESERVED** IT.



SHE WAS A **CHILD!**



SHE WAS **UNGODLY**. SHE WAS **JUDGED**. AND NOW SHE'S **BURNING IN HELL.**



THE NEXT DAY



SERIOUSLY, EMMA, HE'S **LOVING** IT. IT'S LIKE, WHAT, **FIVE DEAD IN A WEEK?** AND HE'S ALL, "**GOD'S CLEANSING THE VILLAGE OF UNDESIRABLES, ALICE**"



DUDE, TELL ME AGAIN WHY YOU **MARRIED** THIS **TOTAL DILLWEED?**



YOU MEAN MY "**SOUL MATE**" AND "**BEST FRIEND?**"





What I heard.

SEPTEMBER 1665

YOU KNOW WHAT I HEARD?



I HEARD THAT EMMA SMELLFIELD GAVE BIRTH TO THE PLAGUE CLOTH. IT'S HER BABY.



I HEARD THAT SHE FLIES AROUND ON IT EVERY NIGHT, SPREADING PLAGUE OUT OF HER BUTT.



CRICK



WELL I HEARD THAT TWO SHALL CHILDREN WERE SITTING INSIDE A FAIRY PORTAL.



OH MY GOD.

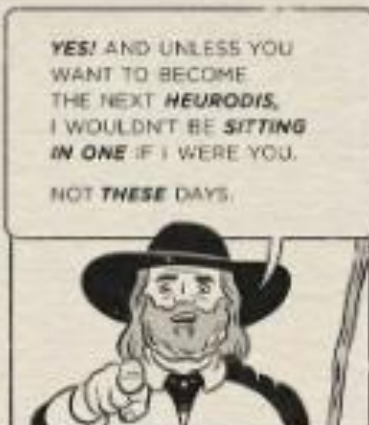


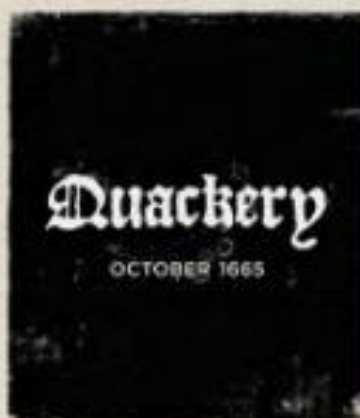
AND THAT IF THEY KNEW WHAT WAS GOOD FOR THEM, THEY'D STEP OUT OF IT.



THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.







To the people of this village

*Terrible things have lately annoy'd these parts
with several*

MISERIES and GRIEVOUS DEATHS



THE
WORM SOCK



Will *prevent* the wrongs these EVILS intend
to inflict upon *all sorts* of people.

ESPECIALLY THE INNOCENT.

Eyam, Printed for F. Daneworth and are to be sold by her in
Thistle Cottage in Cliffe Field Lane. 1665.

FUTURE READER, LET IT BE KNOWN THAT NOT ONLY DO OUR *IRKSOME* CHILDREN TAUNT THE *BOGGART OF THE DELPH*...



BUT THAT *OLD FANNY DANKWORTH* PEDDLES *QUACKERY* ONTO UNSUSPECTING LOCALS.



PROOF, YET AGAIN, THAT THE CHRISTIANS OF *EYAM* *FAIL* TO UPHOLD THEIR END OF THE BARGAIN WITH THE *TRUE OWNERS* OF THIS LAND.



I *FEAR* WHAT IS TO BECOME OF US. SURELY, OUR VILLAGE SITS UPON THE EDGE OF SOME *DARK PRECIPICE* INTO WHICH WE ARE ALREADY *TUMBLING*.



A PRECIPICE WE ARE ALL *TOO BLIND* TO

MORNING, GEORGE!

OH, FOR F...



MORNING, FANNY.

YOU CHARLATAN.





¹ SEE A DISCOURSE ON NATURAL CURES AND REMEDIES BY WILLIAM PAYNE, PUB. HENRY PINSON, LONDON 1624. CHAPTER 7 CONTAINS THE LOST KNOWLEDGE OF BEATRIX SENDULLA (1321 - 1356) AND CUSTANCIA DE METZ (1332 - 1361) - TWO WISE WOMEN FROM THE VILLAGE OF NATLOCK BATH, IN SOUTH EAST DERBYSHIRE WHO, IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, CHANGED THE COURSE OF NATURAL AND HERBAL REMEDIES.

BLAZING STAR?

THE COMET, GEORGE.
FROM LAST DECEMBER.



A HARBINGER OF DOOM PEOPLE CALLED IT. GOD'S WAY OF TELLING US *NOW* IRRITATED HE WAS WITH US. A WARNING THAT EITHER FAMINE, WAR OR PLAGUE - *PLAGUE, GEORGE!* - WOULD SOON BE ON ITS WAY.



NOW, THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN THAT, OF COURSE, BUT THE CHURCH CAN'T WRAP THEIR HEADS AROUND IT, AND NEITHER CAN THEM FANCY SCIENCE MEN IN LONDON.



SO SOMEONE'S GOT TO SORT IT OUT, HAVEN'T THEY, GEORGE? AND THAT SOMEONE WILL BE ME.



YOU? HAI!
YOU COULDN'T
SORT OUT A...

BECAUSE IT WON'T BE
ANY OF THEM LOT AND
IT CERTAINLY WON'T
BE YOU, GEORGE!



UNLESS YOU THINK YOUR SO-CALLED FAIRY FRIENDS CAN HELP! HAHA...

HAHA!

WHY YOU SOIL-SNIFFING
LUBBERWORT!



Problem solved.

OCTOBER 1665

BRO, THE WORMS *INHALE* THE PLAGUE, *DIGEST* IT, AND THEN *CRAP IT INTO THE SOIL*.



SOME WORMS *DIE*, OR WHATEVER. BUT SO WHAT? *YOU LIVE. PROBLEM SOLVED.*



ISN'T THAT GREAT?



YOU HAVE LOST YOUR MIND IF YOU THINK I...



LASTS FOR, LIKE, A MONTH. THEN YOU *DUMP IT* AND GET A NEW ONE. OLD FANNY D SWEARS BY IT.



DUDE! AS IF I AM GOING TO WEAR ONE OF THESE



OH... *WHY?* BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU'RE *TOO PRETTY* TO WEAR A *WORM SOCK* AROUND YOUR NECK?

NO! YES. YES, ACTUALLY! I DO THINK THAT.

BUT I ALSO THINK THAT I'LL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT *SANE PEOPLE DO* AND *BEG FOR GOD'S MERCY*.





The Worms of Eyam.

OCTOBER 1665

THERE YOU GO.
MUCH BETTER THAN
BEING STUCK IN
THIS OLD SOCK!



EVENTUALLY





HE CONTINUED BEING A **MARD ARSE**,
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.



"NORTHERN ENGLISH SLANG FOR A 'WENT PERSON'"

Interlude: Allen's Story

PART ONE

BECAUSE IT SOUNDS **NOTHING**
LIKE AS BAD AS WHEN MY
MARGARET AND RALPH WERE
TAKEN FROM ME BY THAT
LAPWING TWO SUMMERS AGO.



HAVE I
TOLD YOU
ABOUT THAT
VALENTINE?



YES, **UNCLE ALLEN**. YOU'VE
TOLD ME A FEW

AND ABOUT HOW
TERRIFYING IT WAS?



BECAUSE **BIRDS** ARE A DAMN
SIGHT MORE TERRIFYING THAN
THESE **SOCK PRISONS AND**
PLAGUES EVERYBODY SEEMS
TO BE GOING ON ABOUT.



I CAN **BLOODY** WELL
PROMISE YOU THAT



THERE WE WERE. **ME**, YOUR **AUNT MARGARET**
AND YOUR **LITTLE COUSIN, RALPH**.



HAVING A GAME OF **PEEKABOO**.
THAT'S WHAT WE WERE DOING.



PEEKABOO!



HANA!

IT WAS **SUCH** A LOVELY DAY. SUN WAS
SHINING. **MOTHER EARTH** WAS BLOWING
HER COOL BREEZES EVERYWHERE...



GIGGLE

RALPH WAS HAVING A RIGHT LAUGH.
PROPER LITTLE **GIGGLER** HE WAS.



PEEKABOO!

**AHN!
HANA!**

I'LL, **NEVER** FORGET HOW
BEAUTIFUL THAT DAY WAS.



EEEEEE...

NEVER.

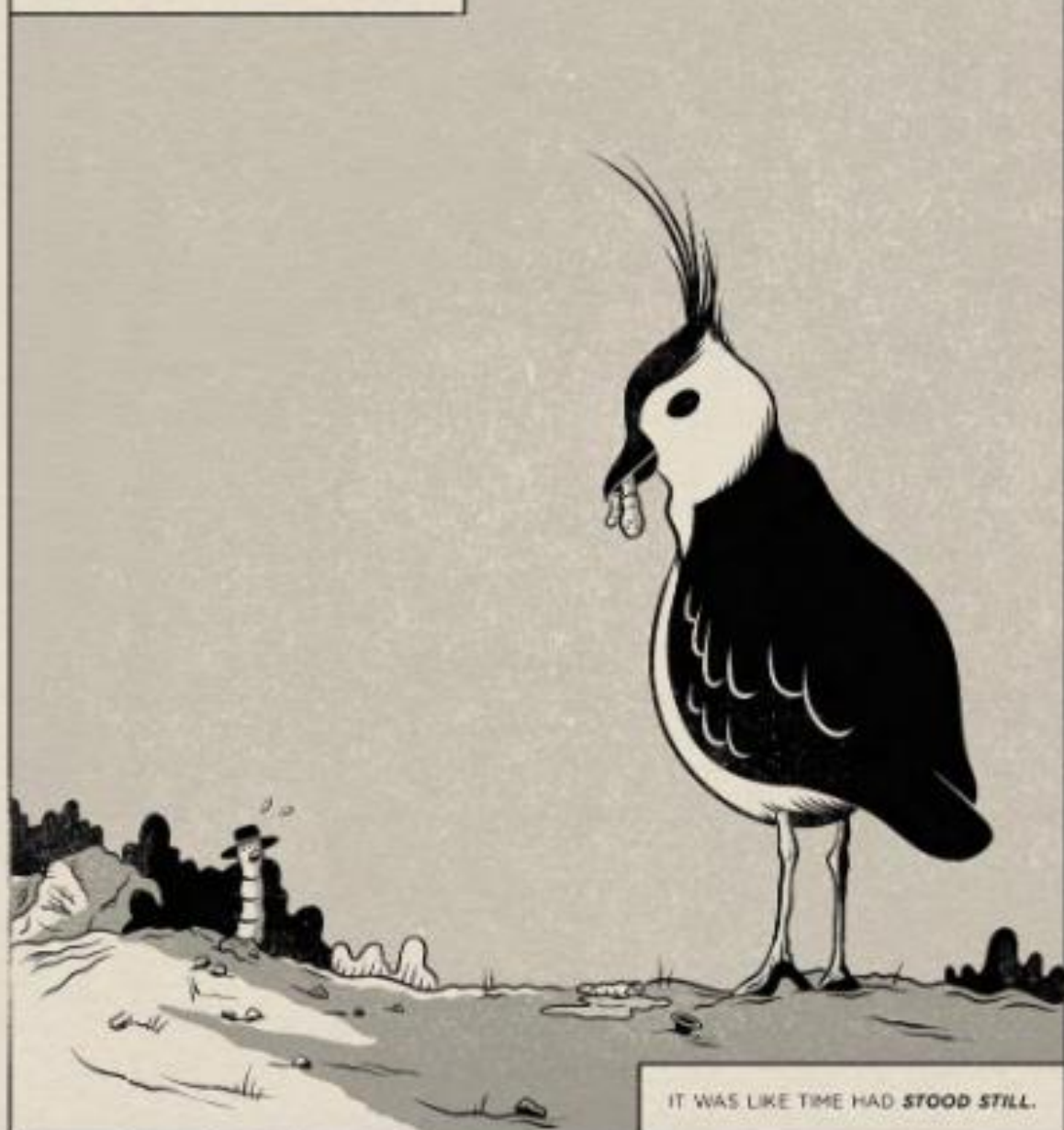
BUT WHEN I POPPED ME HEAD UP AGAIN...



HE WAS DEAD.



AND SO WAS MARGARET. CUT IN HALF,
SHE WAS. BLOOD EVERYWHERE.



IT WAS LIKE TIME HAD STOOD STILL.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? **NO IDEA**. BECAUSE BEYOND THE **SCREAMS** AND **SEARING PAIN**, I REMEMBER ONLY THE **BLACKNESS**.



WHEN I WOKE UP, THE LAPWING WAS GONE.



AND I LOOKED LIKE **THIS**... LIKE I'D BEEN **SHAT OUT OF ITS ARSE**.



BUT I WAS ALIVE.

HE'S **EATEN** THE BIRD!

BIG AL'S EATEN THE BIRD!



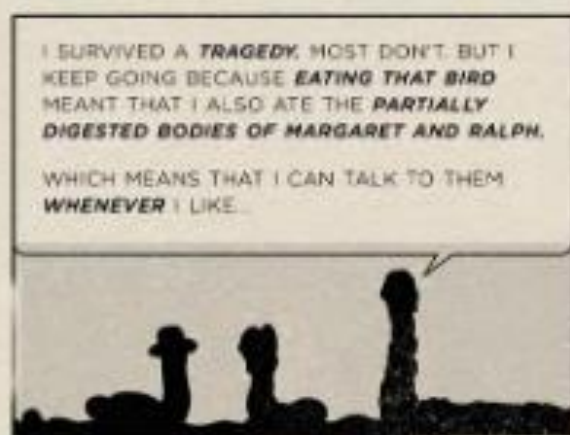
ALLEN THE BIRD EATER, THEY CALLED ME. AND I **BELIEVED** THEM. DO YOU KNOW WHY?

YEAH YOU'VE TOLD ME A FEW...



THAT'S RIGHT, **VALENTINE**... BECAUSE **HOW ELSE** DID I SURVIVE? **NOBODY** SURVIVES A BIRD ATTACK. **NOBODY**.







HIS **WESPY** EYE
CREEPS ME OUT.

I **KNOW**. I TRY NOT
TO LOOK AT IT.

THINK ANYBODY
WILL EVER TELL
HIM THE **TRUTH**?

WHAT: THAT A CAT CAUGHT
THE BIRD, **RIPPED IT TO
SHREDS**, AND THAT HE
FELL, **SCREAMING**, FROM
ITS STOMACH?

YEAH.

ANYWAY, HOW
YOU FEELING?

NO, BUT I SUPPOSE
IT'S NICE TO LET HIM
THINK **OTHERWISE**.

NOT BAD. HEAD'S STILL
SPINNING AND ME BODY
KEEPS **VIBRATING**.

I'M STILL FURIOUS.
I SUPPOSE.

YEAH.

BLOODY HUMANS, EH?

YOU CAN SAY **THAT** AGAIN.

ANYWAY, I'M **GLAD** YOU
MADE IT HOME. GET A **GOOD
NIGHT'S SLEEP** AND WE'LL
FINISH OFF THAT **BIRCH LEAF**
IN THE MORNING.

IT'S A **LOVELY** ONE, FRESH
OFF THE TREE IT WAS.

THAT'LL BE NICE.

WELL... GOODNIGHT, **DENNIS**.

GOODNIGHT,
VALENTINE.





IN AN EFFORT TO
PROTECT THEMSELVES,
THEY RANG BELLS TO
AGITATE THE PLACID AIR.



DRANK VINEGAR WITH
THEIR MORNING TOAST.



ENCOURAGED LOVED ONES
TO **PRAY HARDER**.



LET SMALL BIRDS GATHER
IN THEIR HOMES.



CARVED SCORPIONS INTO
THEIR JASPER RINGS.



AND OFFERED CAKE
AND CREAM TO THE
INVISIBLE ONES.



YET **STILL** THEY DIED.



BY THE END OF NOVEMBER,
ONCE FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURS
BECAME **DISTANT**.



WHILE JUDGEMENT
REPLACED COMPASSION.



WHAT DID
THEY **EXPECT?**



SOME LEFT - THE **WEALTHY**,
THE **PRIVILEGED**...THE
SECOND HOME SORT.



WHILE OTHERS TALKED
ABOUT HOW FLIGHT WAS
UNGODLY.

THE TRUE BELIEVER
MUST ACCEPT GOD'S
PUNISHMENT.



THEY BLAMED THEMSELVES.



AND EACH OTHER.



BUT WHEN WINTER WINDS BEGAN TO
SCOUR THE VILLAGE, THEY FELT HOPE.

GOD-WILLING,
THE COLD WILL
KILL IT OFF.











