

NEED TO KNOW

BY MARK SIMMONS
PLOT ASSIST BY JULIE DAVIS



HEY, LOOK!



YEAH, WHAT ABOUT IT?

THAT'S TWENTY BUCKS, RIGHT? AREN'T YOU GOING TO PICK IT UP?



OH, COME ON! EVERYONE KNOWS THIS GAG.

YOU PICK IT UP, YOU GET ALL EXCITED--

BUT IT'S JUST SOME JACK CHICK PAMPHLET ABOUT HOW JESUS LOVES YOU. THEY MAKE IT LOOK LIKE MONEY TO TRICK YOU INTO READING IT.



FINE, SO YOU THROW IT AWAY. BUT THERE'S STILL A CHANCE IT'S REAL MONEY, RIGHT?

SO REALLY, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE?

OKAY, LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY...



FROM A RATIONAL STANDPOINT, THE OVERWHELMING LIKELIHOOD IS THAT IT'S JUST A PIECE OF RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA.

BUT AFTER THAT, WE ALSO HAVE TO ALLOW FOR A COUPLE OF MARGINAL POSSIBILITIES...



YOU HAVE YOUR BEST CASE. LET'S CALL THAT SCENARIO ONE.



HOORAY! I'M RICH!



AT THE OTHER EXTREME, THERE'S SCENARIO TWO.



YOUR CURIOSITY HAS PASSED OUR TEST...

WE HAVE SUCH SIGHTS TO SHOW YOU...

CENTURIES OF EXQUISITE SUFFERING...



LOST IN THE HIMALAYAS? HOW'D THAT HAPPEN?



UH, PLANE CRASH. HE'S THE ONLY SURVIVOR.



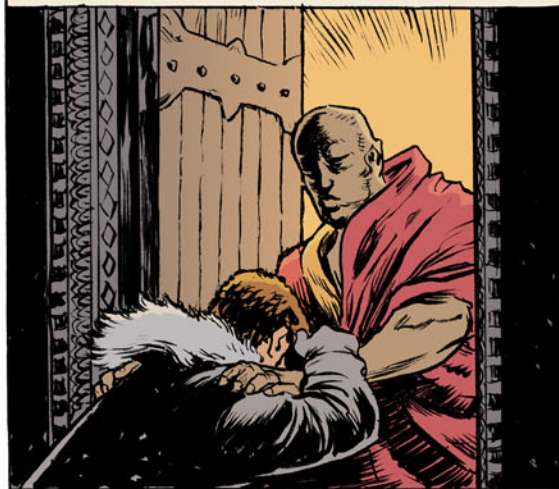
DOES HE HAVE ANY FOOD, OR A TENT, OR A SATELLITE PHONE OR ANYTHING...?



JUST LET ME GET ON WITH THE STORY, OKAY? THAT PART REALLY ISN'T IMPORTANT.



FINE, GO AHEAD AND TAKE MY *SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF* FOR GRANTED.



...ANYWAYS, JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME, THE GUY FINDS THIS REMOTE MONASTERY AND THEY BRING HIM IN OUT OF THE STORM.



THE ABBOT SAYS HE CAN STAY ON ONE CONDITION.



NO MATTER WHAT YOU MAY HEAR, YOU MUST NOT LOOK OUT YOUR WINDOW TONIGHT.

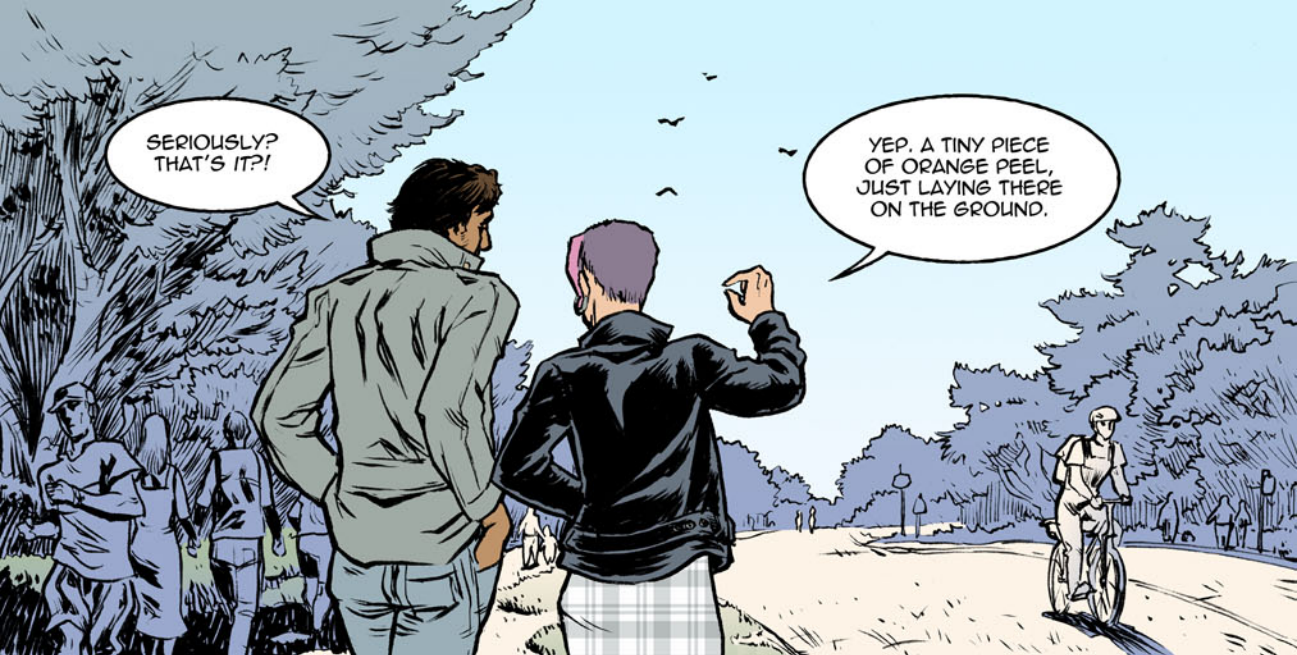


BUT THAT NIGHT, AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, HE HEARS THE SOUND OF GHOSTLY BELLS RINGING IN THE COURTYARD OUTSIDE.



SO OF COURSE HE LOOKS THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND DOWN THERE HE SEES...





SERIOUSLY?
THAT'S IT?!

YEP. A TINY PIECE
OF ORANGE PEEL,
JUST LAYING THERE
ON THE GROUND.

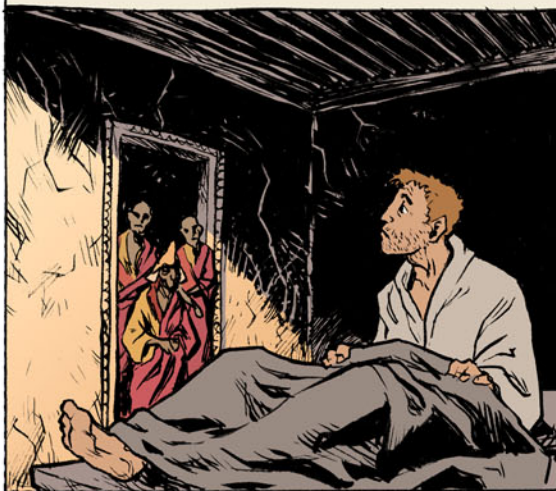
IT COULDN'T BE SOMETHING MORE EXCITING?
LIKE A PILE OF TREASURE OR SOMETHING?



IT WAS ORANGE PEEL WHEN I HEARD THE STORY,
SO THAT'S THE WAY I'M GOING TO TELL IT.



WELL, THE NEXT MORNING, THEY IMMEDIATELY
KNOW WHAT HE'S DONE.



I'M SORRY. I TRIED
TO WARN YOU.



THE GUY STAYS THERE TWO MORE NIGHTS,
WAITING FOR THE STORM TO BREAK.



AND EVERY NIGHT, HE HEARS THE BELLS AGAIN
AND LOOKS OUT INTO THE COURTYARD...

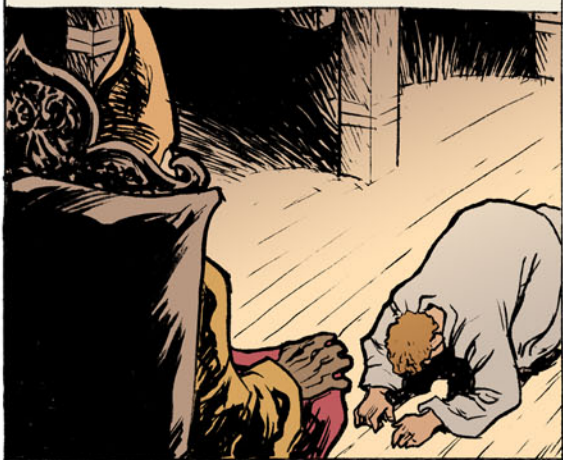


AND IT'S THE SAME
PIECE OF ORANGE
PEEL EVERY TIME?

EXACTLY!



AFTER THREE DAYS, HE CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE.
HE GOES TO SEE THE ABBOT AND BEGS HIM FOR
SOME KIND OF EXPLANATION.



THE ABBOT TELLS HIM THERE'S A WAY HE
CAN FIND OUT.

THERE IS A
WAY YOU CAN
FIND OUT.





...AND FINALLY, AFTER TEN YEARS, THE ABBOT SAYS HE'S READY TO LEARN THE SECRET.



THE GUY SPENDS TEN YEARS WAITING TO FIND OUT?!

THIS JOKE MAY BE LOSING ME AT THIS POINT.



JUST STICK WITH IT, OKAY?



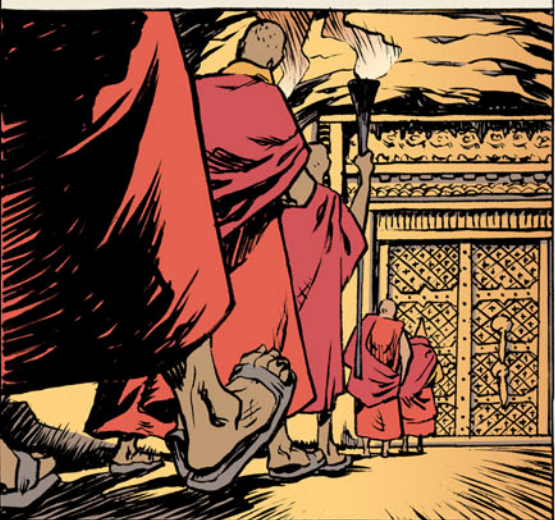
I PROMISE I'M GOING SOMEWHERE WITH THIS.



SO FIRST THEY GO THROUGH ONE DOOR...



THEN THE NEXT ONE...



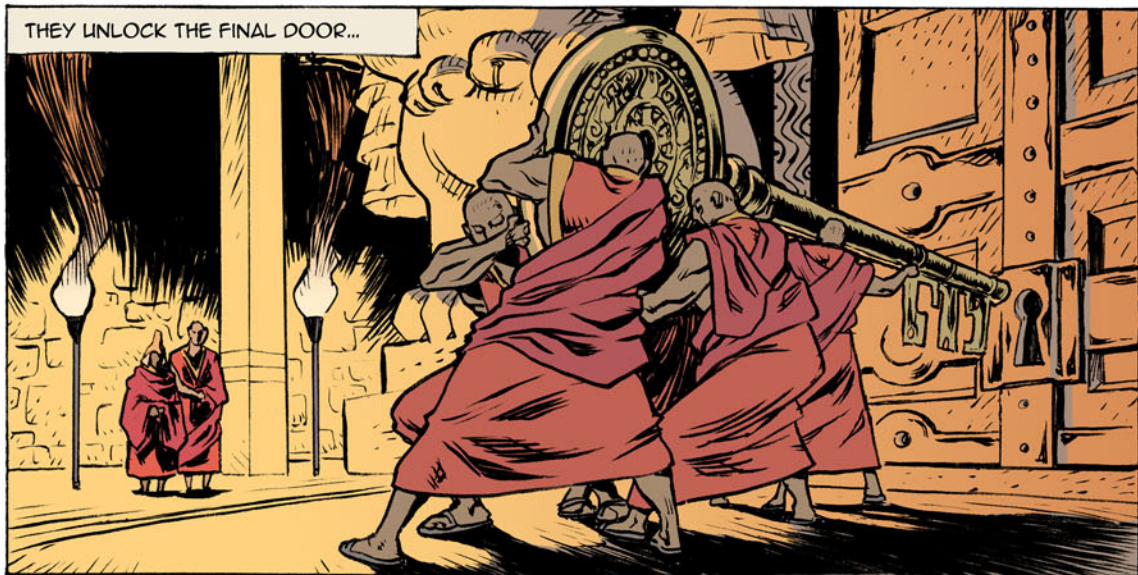
AND SO ON AND SO FORTH, RIGHT?



WELL, YEAH. AND THEN THEY REACH THE LAST DOOR, WHICH IS THE BIGGEST OF THEM ALL.



THEY UNLOCK THE FINAL DOOR...



AND THE GUY LOOKS INTO THE INNER CHAMBER...



WELL? SO WHAT DOES HE SEE?



