

I'VE SEEN WHALES

JAVIER DE ISUSI

ASTIBERRI

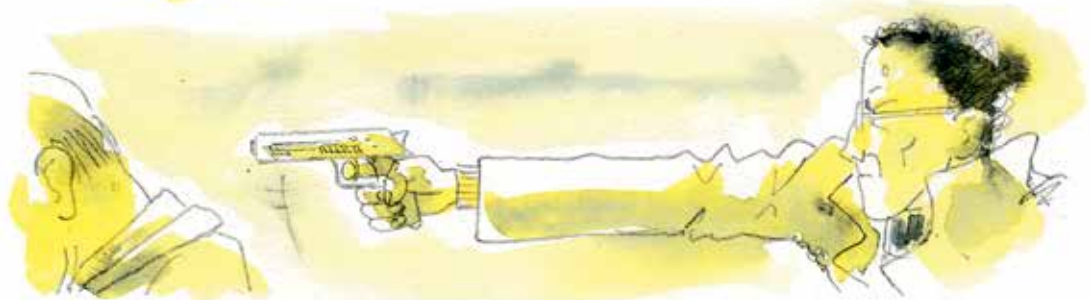


Denborak bidea ahorturik
etxera itzuli ninduzunean
berria zizun ateko zura
eta sarraila ere*

Joseba Sarrionandia

* Cuando volví a casa
consumido el camino por el tiempo
nueva era la madera de la puerta
nueva también la cerradura











* EN EUSKERA: PAPÁ.





"I FORGIVE THEM", I SAID, AND ALL THE MASS MEDIA ECHOED THE WORDS OF THE YOUNG SEMINARIAN ORPHAN.



I FORGIVE THEM...

I SAID, WITHOUT REALLY KNOWING THE SCOPE OF THESE TWO WORDS



I FORGIVE THEM...

I WAS SAYING WHILE IN THE DISTANCE I SAW JOSU

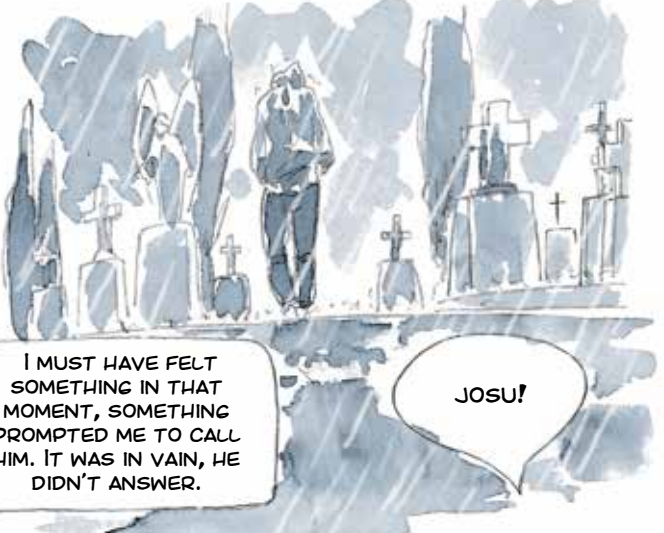


I...FORGIVE THEM...

AND I DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY, AT MY FATHER'S FUNERAL, JOSU, MY BEST FRIEND, APPROACHED ME




I... THEM...




I MUST HAVE FELT SOMETHING IN THAT MOMENT, SOMETHING PROMPTED ME TO CALL HIM. IT WAS IN VAIN, HE DIDN'T ANSWER.

JOSU!



I OFTEN REMEMBER THIS SCENE. THOUGH I DONT KNOW WHY, I REMEMBER SEEING IT FROM OUTSIDE OF MYSELF.

IN MY MEMORY I SEE MYSELF FROM A DISTANCE, ALONE, AND JOSU AHEAD OF ME LOOKING GRIM AND CREST FALLEN IN THE RAIN.




I DIDN'T GO BACK TO SEE JOSU, AND FOR YEARS IT TORMENTED ME TO THINK THAT HE'D HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE ATTACK. IT WOULD HAVE MADE ME AN INVOLUNTARY ACCOMPLICE.




BUT NO. JOSU APPARENTLY, ALREADY INSIDE ETA, HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. HE HADN'T EVEN MET THE ONE WHO DID IT, A CERTAIN BISKARRET.



ANDRES BISKARRET DIED AT THE HANDS OF OTHERS, THE GAL. YEARS LATER.

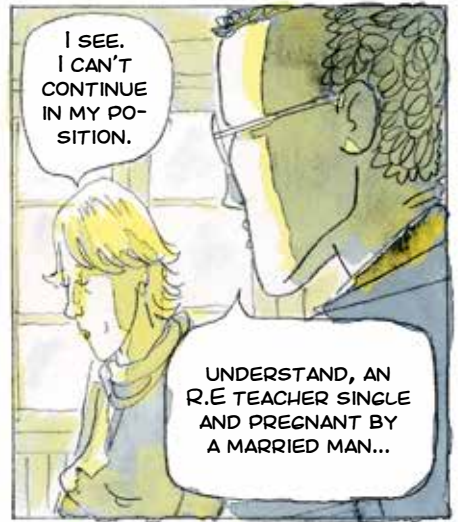


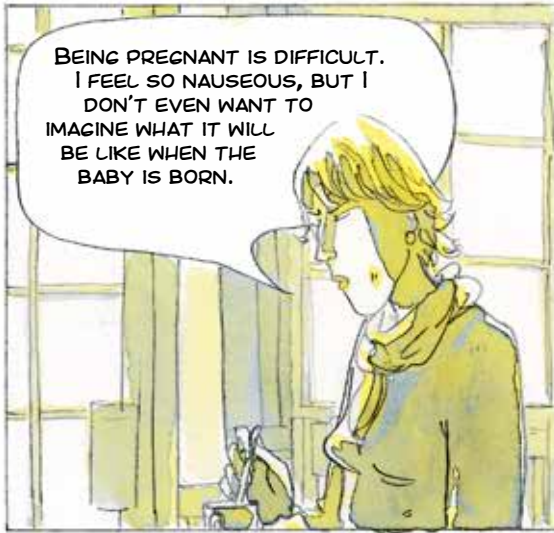
AND SO HE BECAME A MARTYR AND I HAD TO STAND AND WATCH HIS FACE PAPERED ACROSS THE STREETS, LIKE A SAINT.



ANYWAY, I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I HAVE THESE DREAMS. AND WHY NOW, TWENTY FIVE YEARS ON...



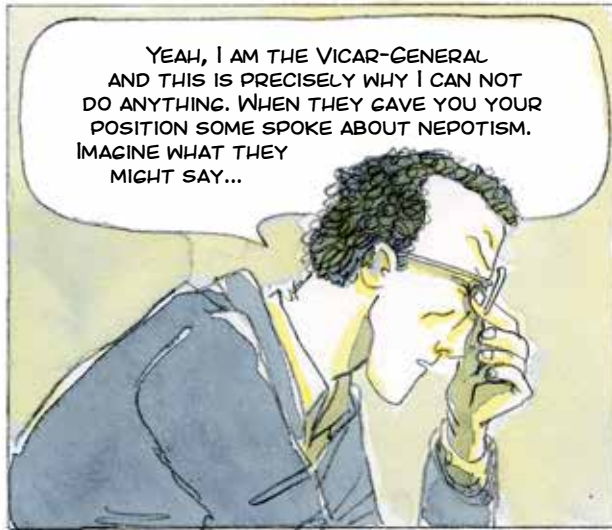




BEING PREGNANT IS DIFFICULT. I FEEL SO NAUSEOUS, BUT I DON'T EVEN WANT TO IMAGINE WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE WHEN THE BABY IS BORN.



I DON'T MIND RAISING IT ALONE, I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO ASK GONZALO TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT. BUT I NEED MY JOB, ANTON. DO SOMETHING, PLEASE. YOU CAN! YOU'RE THE VICAR-GENERAL.

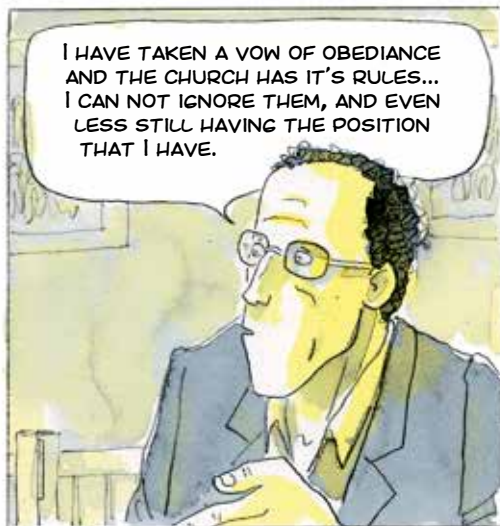


YEAH, I AM THE VICAR-GENERAL AND THIS IS PRECISELY WHY I CAN NOT DO ANYTHING. WHEN THEY GAVE YOU YOUR POSITION SOME SPOKE ABOUT NEPOTISM. IMAGINE WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY...

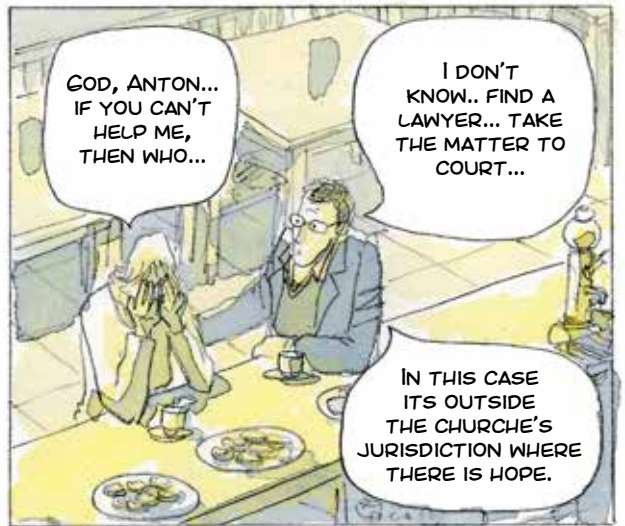


IS IT A QUESTION OF THAT? OF WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY?

NO... NO... IT IS ONLY...



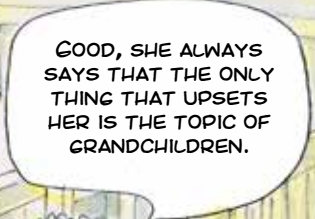
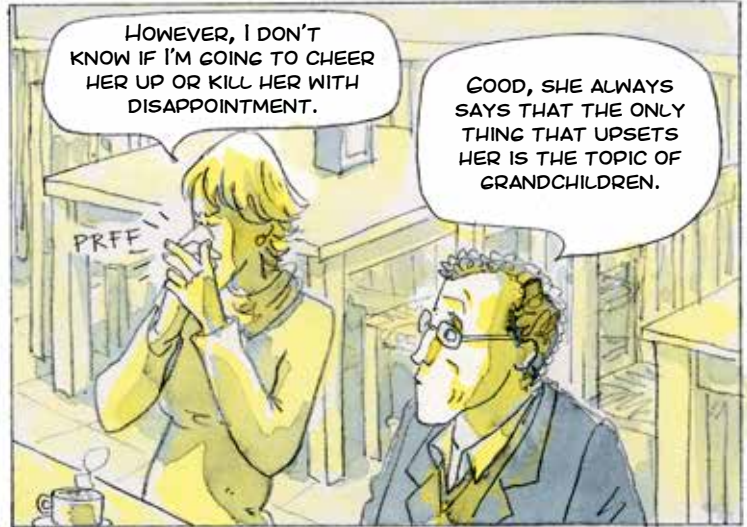
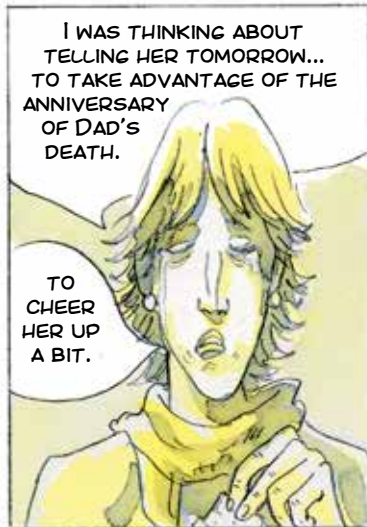
I HAVE TAKEN A VOW OF OBEDIENCE AND THE CHURCH HAS IT'S RULES... I CAN NOT IGNORE THEM, AND EVEN LESS STILL HAVING THE POSITION THAT I HAVE.



GOD, ANTON... IF YOU CAN'T HELP ME, THEN WHO...

I DON'T KNOW.. FIND A LAWYER... TAKE THE MATTER TO COURT...

IN THIS CASE ITS OUTSIDE THE CHURCHE'S JURISDICTION WHERE THERE IS HOPE.





JOSU





FUCK! TWENTY-FIVE YEARS... DO YOU REALISE THAT WE ARE YOUNG ENOUGH FOR ANYTHING AND YET TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAS GONE BY?

ESPECIALLY SINCE OUR LIVES STOOD STILL FOR EIGHT...



HEY, DON'T GO THERE, YOU'LL GET DEPRESSED. WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IS GET OUT MORE, HANG OUT WITH GIRL, YOU KNOW, HAVE FUN!



RIGHT, WITH GIRLS. ONLY YOU WOULD ENCOURAGE A COMPANION TXARLI.

OF COURSE! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY TOLD ME ABOUT DOMINIC, THE BRIT?



APPARENTLY HIS WIFE IS THE MADAM OF A WHOREHOUSE IN MARSEILLE, AND WHEN SHE CAN'T COME TO VISIT HIM ... SHE FIXES HIM UP WITH ONE OF HER GIRLS!



WHAT DO YOU THINK? WE COULD REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH HIM AND HE COULD SEND SOMEONE FROM TIME TO...

LOOK, TXARLI. I AM MARRIED AND YOU ARE ABOUT TO GET SENT INSIDE.



HA!
I'M LOCKED UP!
VERY FUNNY!



"ESPECIALLY AS OUR
LIVES STOOD STILL EIGHT
YEARS AGO ..."



IT'S NOT
TRUE

LIFE HAS NOT
STOPPED, MY BODY
DID NOT STOP. IT
HAS CHANGED IN THE
EIGHT YEARS.

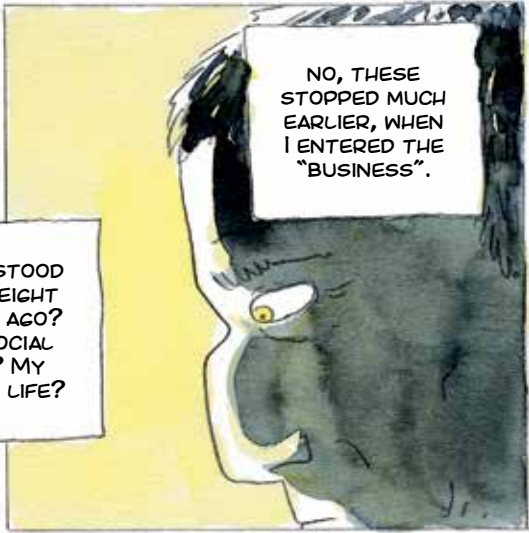
FORGET
IT...

MY HAIR, FOR
EXAMPLE, IS
TURNING WHITE.



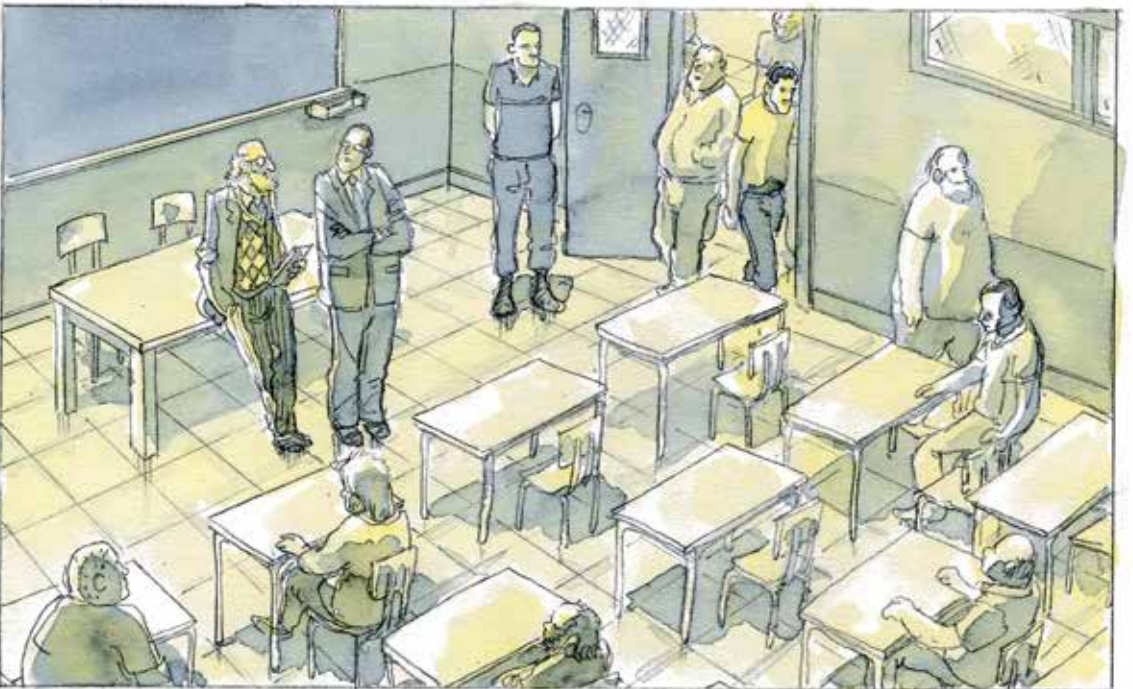
AND OTHER THINGS HAVE ALSO CHANGED.
CERTAINTIES ARE NO LONGER SO, AND WHAT
ONCE LOOKED LIKE SOLID GROUND HAS
BECOME QUICKSAND THAT THREATENS TO
SWALLOW ME UP.

WHAT STOOD
STILL EIGHT
YEARS AGO?
MY SOCIAL
LIFE? MY
FAMILY LIFE?



NO, THESE
STOPPED MUCH
EARLIER, WHEN
I ENTERED THE
"BUSINESS".

THEN WHAT IS IT THAT STOOD STILL
EIGHT YEARS AGO?





TOK, TOK...
SARTU LEIKE?*

* KNOCK KNOCK! CAN I COME IN?

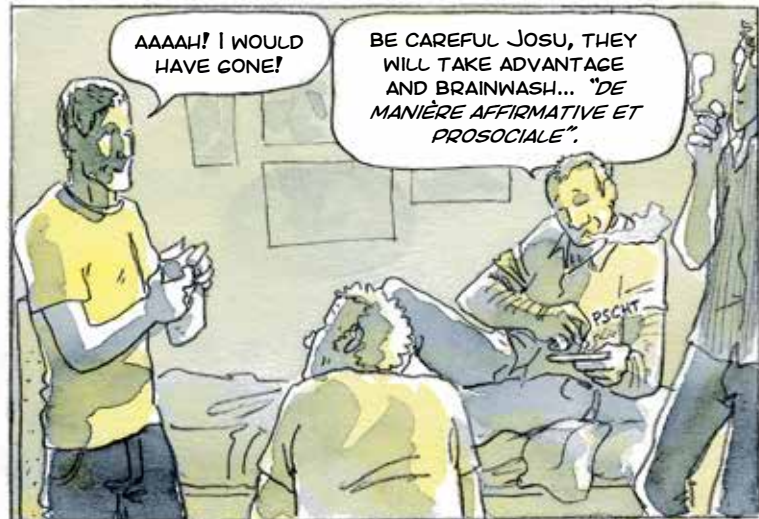


ZELAN HITZALDIA? **
ONDO. ***
HOW DID IT GO?
WAIT...
I'LL READ IT.

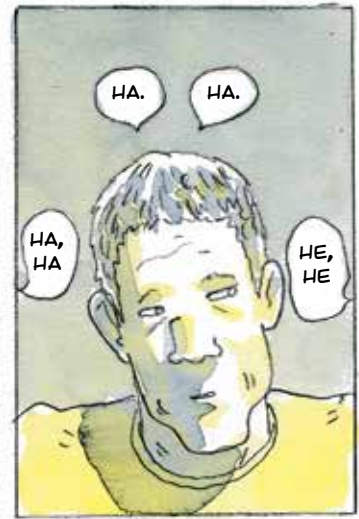
** HOW'S IT GOING? *** GOOD.



"COMMENT FAIRE FACE
AUX DÉFIS SOCIAUX
ET PERSONNELS DE
MANIÈRE AFFIRMATIVE
ET PROSOCIALE".
BLOODY
HELL, WHATS
THAT SUP-
POSED TO
MEAN.



AAAAH! I WOULD
HAVE GONE!
BE CAREFUL JOSU, THEY
WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE
AND BRAINWASH... "DE
MANIÈRE AFFIRMATIVE ET
PROSOCIALE".



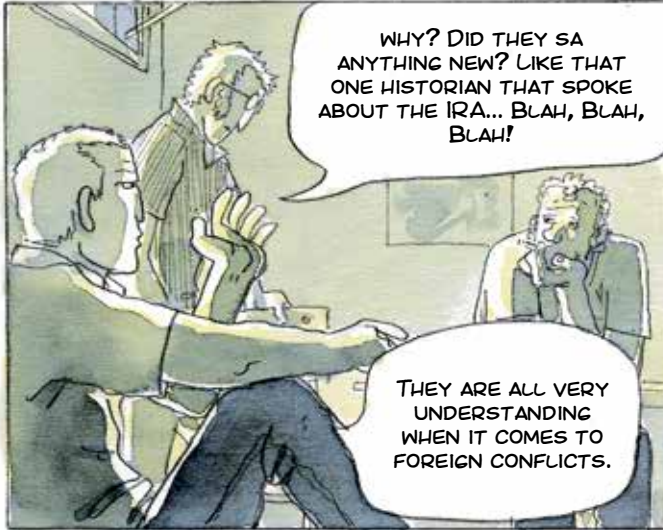
HA. HA.
HA, HA
HE, HE



WE'LL, SOMETIMES THERE ARE REALLY GOOD PEOPLE WHO COME. THE GUY WHO CAME LAST WEEK KNEW A LOT ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND YOU MISSED IT.



LOOK, TO THAT TALK I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE GONE.



WHY? DID THEY SA ANYTHING NEW? LIKE THAT ONE HISTORIAN THAT SPOKE ABOUT THE IRA... BLAH, BLAH, BLAH!

THEY ARE ALL VERY UNDERSTANDING WHEN IT COMES TO FOREIGN CONFLICTS.



I WENT ONCE TO ONE OF THOSE TALKS, BUT IT WAS TO SEE B. B.

B. B? BRIGITTE BARDOT? IN THE PRISON?



YES, SHE WAS A SAINT. SHE CAME TO TALK ABOUT THE THINGS SHE DEDICATES HERSELF TO NOW, LIKE BULLFIGHTS AND WHALES...IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME, I JUST WENT TO SEE HER.

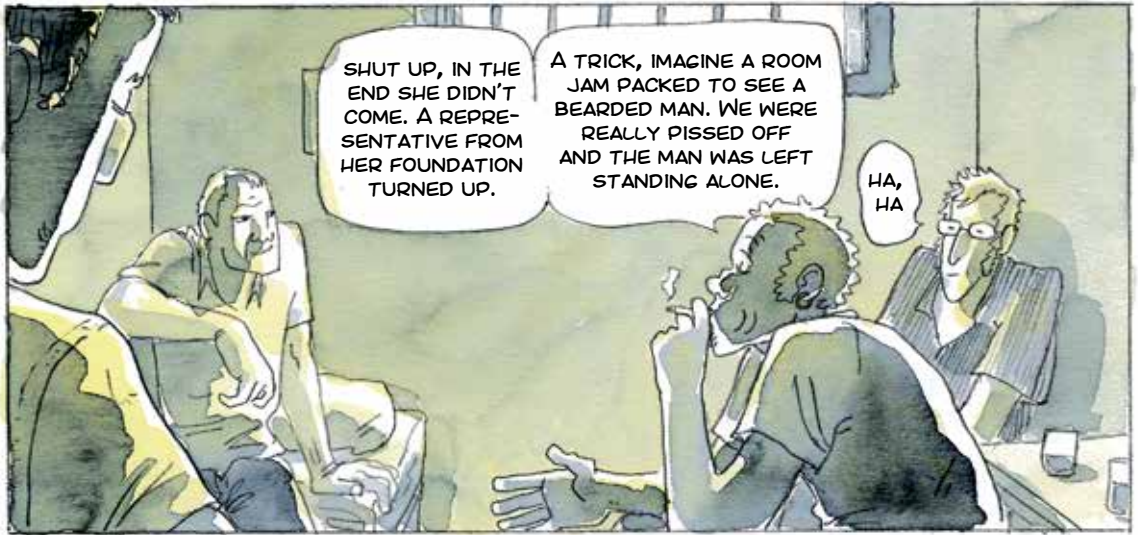
HMMM? BUT NOW SHE IS THE ONE LOOKING LIKE A WHALE.



DON'T SAY THAT OSCAR, SHE HAS ONLY AGED AND WITH DIGNITY. I LOVE THAT WOMAN SHE IS UNTAMEABLE.

BUT, ISN'T SHE A FASCIST?

AN INDOMITABLE FASCIST, YEAH! HE HE, AND HOW WAS IT?



* HEY, JOSU! ARE YOU LISTENING?



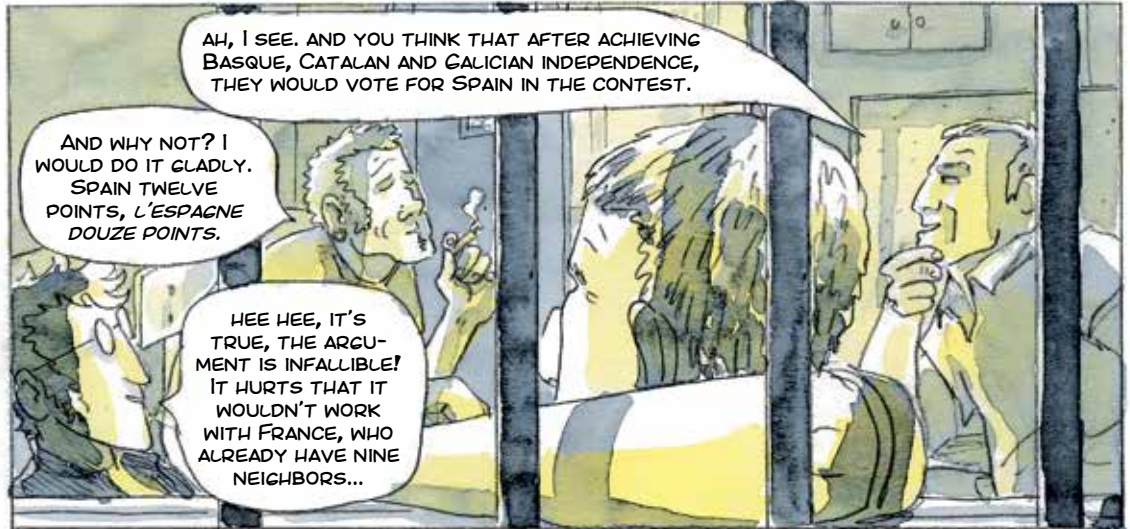
HM?

TXARLI SAYS HE HAS A FOOLPROOF ARGUMENT TO CONVINCE THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT TO BE INTERESTED IN BASQUE, CATALAN AND GALICIAN INDEPENDENCE.

THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST!



WE'LL, IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, THE BORDERING COUNTRIES VOTE FOR EACH OTHER. WHY DOESN'T SPAIN EVER WIN? IT'S OBVIOUS, BECAUSE SHE BORDERS WITH ONLY 2 OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.



AH, I SEE. AND YOU THINK THAT AFTER ACHIEVING BASQUE, CATALAN AND GALICIAN INDEPENDENCE, THEY WOULD VOTE FOR SPAIN IN THE CONTEST.

AND WHY NOT? I WOULD DO IT GLADLY. SPAIN TWELVE POINTS, L'ESPAGNE DOUZE POINTS.

HEE HEE, IT'S TRUE, THE ARGUMENT IS INFALLIBLE! IT HURTS THAT IT WOULDN'T WORK WITH FRANCE, WHO ALREADY HAVE NINE NEIGHBORS...



SOMETIMES I CHEAT



I ESCAPE



I LEAVE MY
BODY...



... AND
I ESCAPE



THEN I'M NOT ME,
I DON'T HAVE A NAME.

I AM EVERYTHING
AND I AM
NOTHING, SO NO
ONE SEES ME.

AND NO ONE CAN
POINT AT ME OR
JUDGE ME.

I DON'T HAVE
TO HIDE OR
PRETEND.



I CAN GO
WHERE I WANT

AS FAST
AS I WANT

IF I WANT TO
I CAN GO BACK
HOME

SOMETIMES I GET TO SMELL THE HARBOR AND LISTEN TO THE HORNS OF SHIPS SAILING INTO THE ESTUARY.

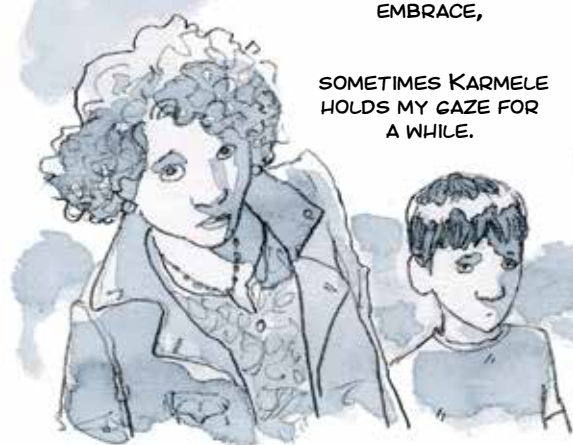


I CAN SEE KARMELE AND ARITZ, AND I CAN TELL THEM HOW MUCH I MISS THEM.



I CAN SEE PEOPLE LIVE.

THEY ONLY LOOK AT ME AND PERMIT AN EMBRACE,



SOMETIMES KARMELE HOLDS MY GAZE FOR A WHILE.

GENERALLY ARITZ IS STILL A CHILD, BUT TODAY I LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND HE WAS FOURTEEN YEARS OLD, AS HE IS NOW AND I SAW MYSELF WHEN I WAS HIS AGE.



AND WITHOUT REALIZING IT, I COME FACE TO FACE WITH ANTON, THE DAY WE MET, THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL




ONLY THIS TIME ANTON SAYS NOTHING ... HIS EYES EXPRESS NOTHING ...






JUST LIKE THE LAST
TIME I SAW HIM ...
TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS AGO, AT
HIS FATHER'S
FUNERAL.




I APPROACH, AND I
FEEL MY HEART BEAT
AS FAST AS HIS.

THE WORDS COME,
BIT BY BIT.



CARRIED AND HIDDEN FOR
TWENTY- FIVE YEARS

FOR TWENTY-
FIVE YEARS
THEY HAVE
WANTED TO
COME OUT



THEY ARE
ONLY TWO

SO WEAK
AND YET SO
FRIGHTENING



...

I'M
SORRY