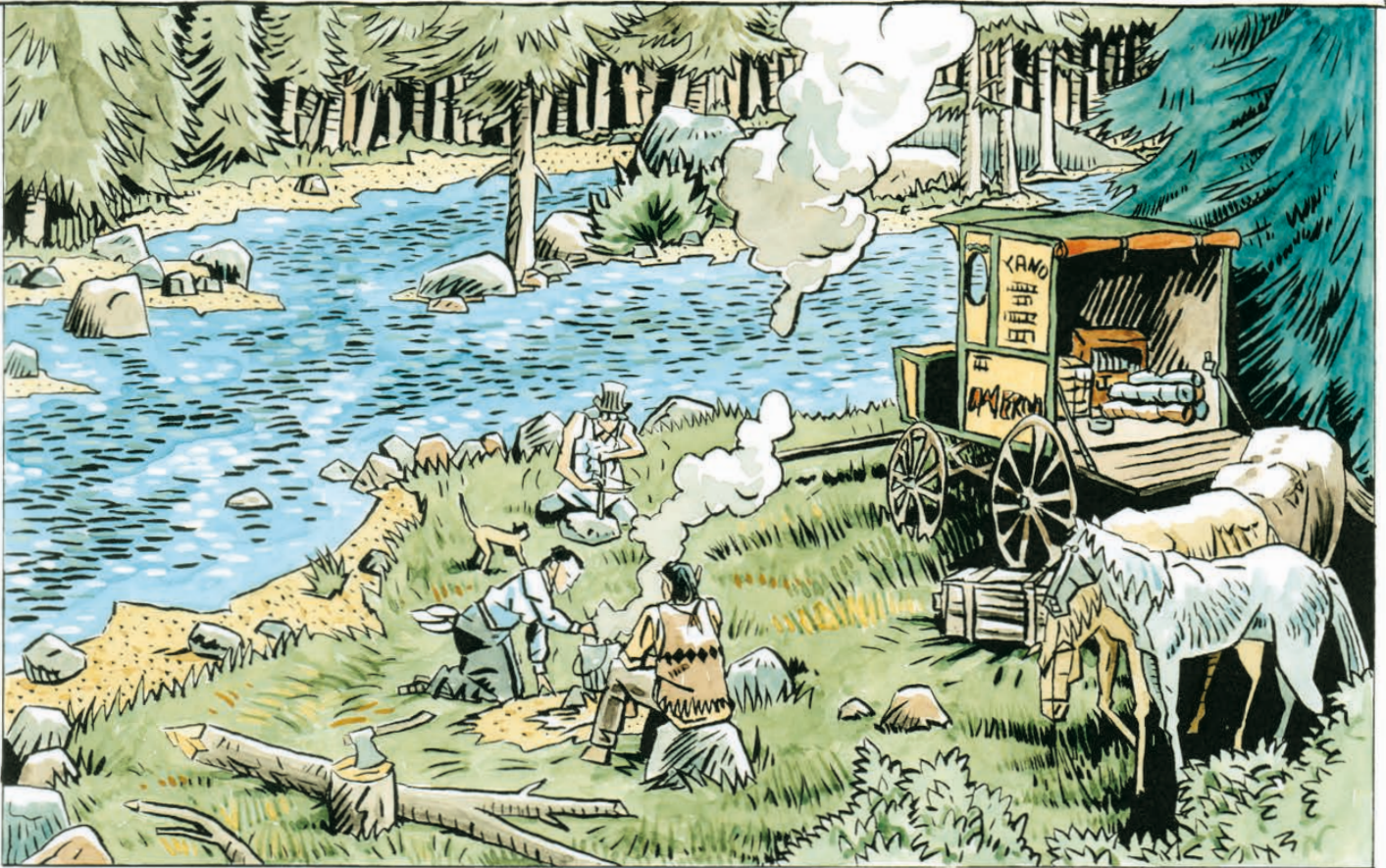


THE 4TH COLONY, WRITING IN THE YEAR 1879. A BAND OF STREET PERFORMERS IS SITTING ON THE RIVERBANK.



STOP STARING AT ME. YOU'D BE BETTER OFF HUNTING AND FINDING US SOME MEAT LIKE YOU DID IN THE OLD DAYS.



MMMMM. BUT YOU KNOW I LOVE YOUR BEANS.

SAY SOMETHING, ANDERSSON. HE'S JUST SITTING THERE, STARING AT ME.



WATCH THIS. IT'LL BE OUR NEW TRICK. YOU PUT A LITTLE WOODEN WEDGE INTO THIS HOLE.



WE PUT THE STONE ON YOUR STOMACH, YANO, AND WHEN I HIT THE WEDGE WITH A HAMMER, THE STONE SPLITS, VOILÀ.

YOU'RE NOT SMASHING ANY STONES ON MY STOMACH!



IT'S AN OLD TRICK, IT DOESN'T HURT. I SAW IT WHEN I WAS SAILING. I ...



HERE. SIT DOWN.



... WAS SAILING. SUDDENLY, I FOUND THE SNAKE ...

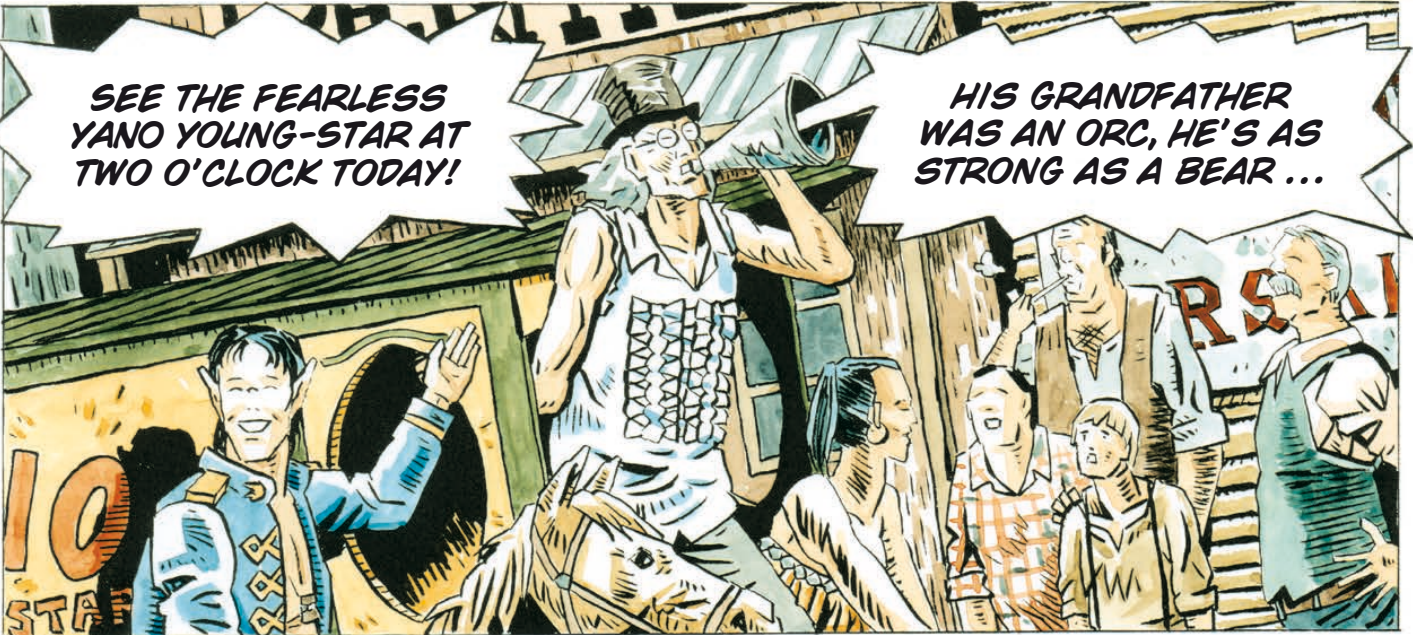
YES, YOU FOUND THE SNAKE IN YOUR BOOT. IT WAS NO BIGGER THAN A FOOT.



YOU'VE HEARD IT BEFORE, I KNOW. IT WAS NOTHING. IT'LL PASS. TOMORROW WE'LL PERFORM AS PLANNED, AND THEN WE'LL HAVE MEAT FOR DINNER.

SEE THE FEARLESS YANO YOUNG-STAR AT TWO O'CLOCK TODAY!

HIS GRANDFATHER WAS AN ORC, HE'S AS STRONG AS A BEAR ...



... SEE THE BEAUTIFUL SNAKE GIRL - PRACTICALLY PART SNAKE HERSELF. AND WILD ANIMALS FROM WORLDS YOU CAN'T IMAGINE!



COME CLOSER, HONORED AUDIENCE. HEAR ME. I AM KING ANDERSSON, THE RIGHTFUL KING OF SWEDEN.

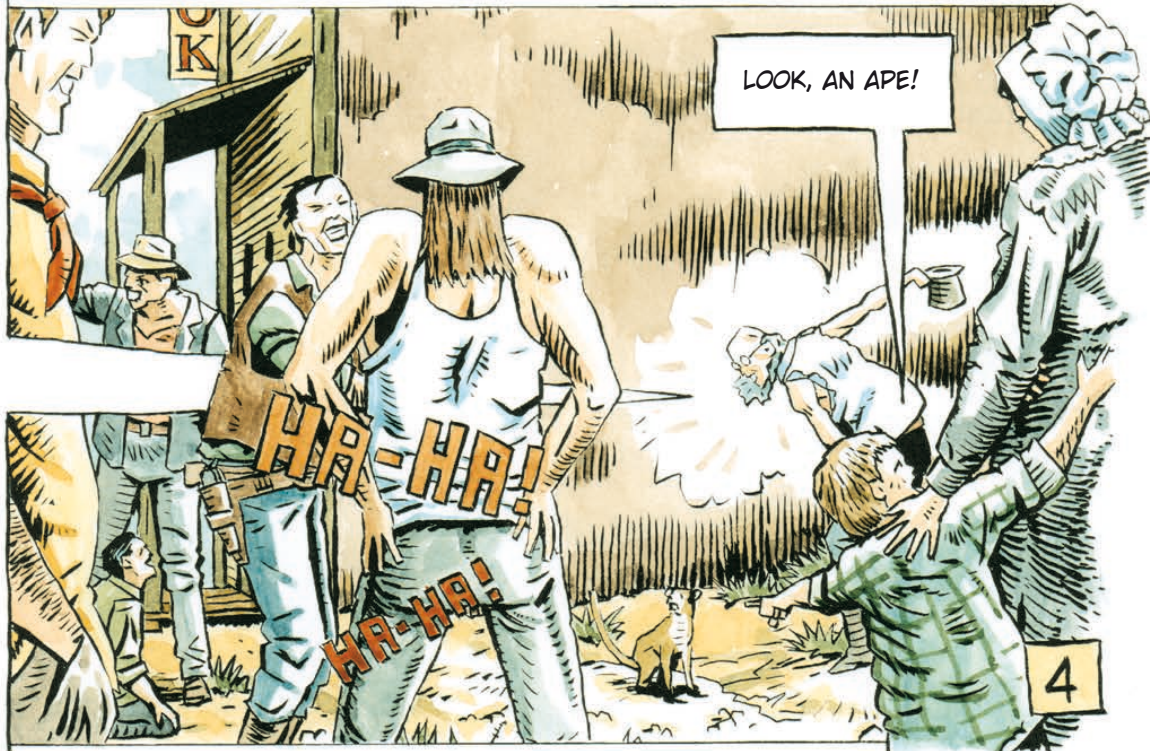
MANY MOONS AGO, MY MOTHER DALLIED WITH THE VERY WELL-FED REIGNING KING. I'M THE FRUIT OF THAT ACT OF LOVE.



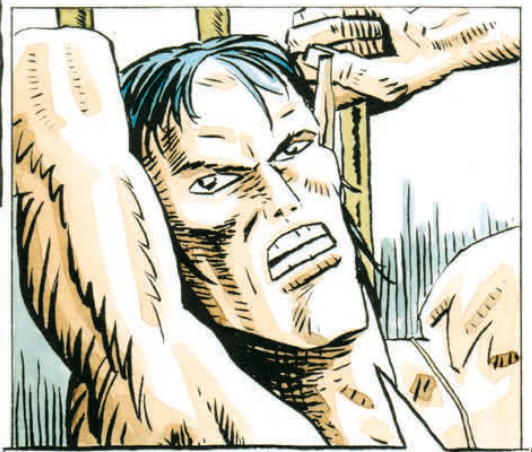
FOR YEARS, I'VE BEEN HUNTED BY MURDEROUS LORDS OF THE COURT. MY FLIGHT HAS TAKEN ME AROUND THE WORLD AND NOW TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL TOWN.



ALONG THE WAY, I ASSEMBLED OUR LITTLE CIRCUS, WHICH, BESIDES MYSELF, CONSISTS OF YANO YOUNG-STAR, SNAKE GIRL, AND THE MONKEY, SVEA. THE SNAKE YOU WILL MEET HAS NO NAME—NOT THAT IT COMES WHEN IT'S CALLED ANYWAY.



AS I SAID, YANO IS THE GRANDCHILD OF A POWERFUL ORC. AS A CHILD, HE SURVIVED ON HIS OWN FOR YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS. HERE'S A TRICK I LEARNED IN THE DWARF KINGDOM.



THE DWARF KINGDOM? YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE DWARF KINGDOM.

SSH! LIE PERFECTLY STILL AND TENSE YOUR STOMACH MUSCLES.



TA-DA! NOTHING CAN HARM HIS AMAZING BODY. HE'S STRONGER THAN GRANITE!





NOW SVEA WILL PASS THE HAT AROUND. BE GENEROUS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. BEING ON THE RUN FROM THE SOLDIERS OF THE SWEDISH BARONS IS EXPENSIVE.



I WANT TO BE IN A CIRCUS WHEN I GROW UP.

SSH! NEVER SAY THAT. NEVER EVER!



IS THAT ALL YOU'RE RUNNING FROM? HA! CROOKS!

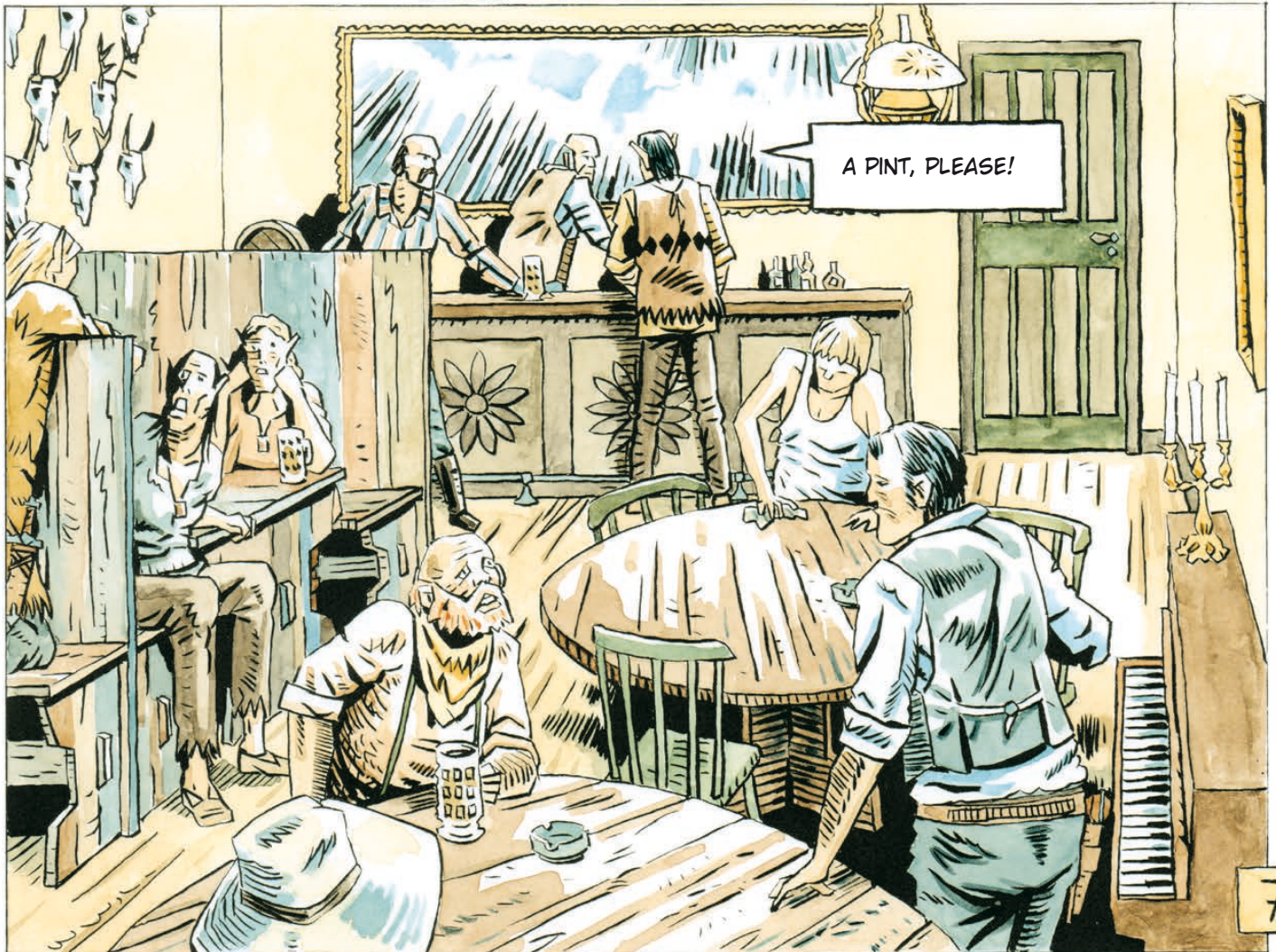


NOT BAD.
DINNER'S ON ME.



I'D RATHER JUST HAVE
MY SHARE. SEE YA ROUND,
BEAUTIFUL.

GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU BEAST!



A PINT, PLEASE!



GREAT SHOW THERE. I'M KIND OF AN ARTIST MYSELF. ARE YOU HEADING ON TONIGHT?

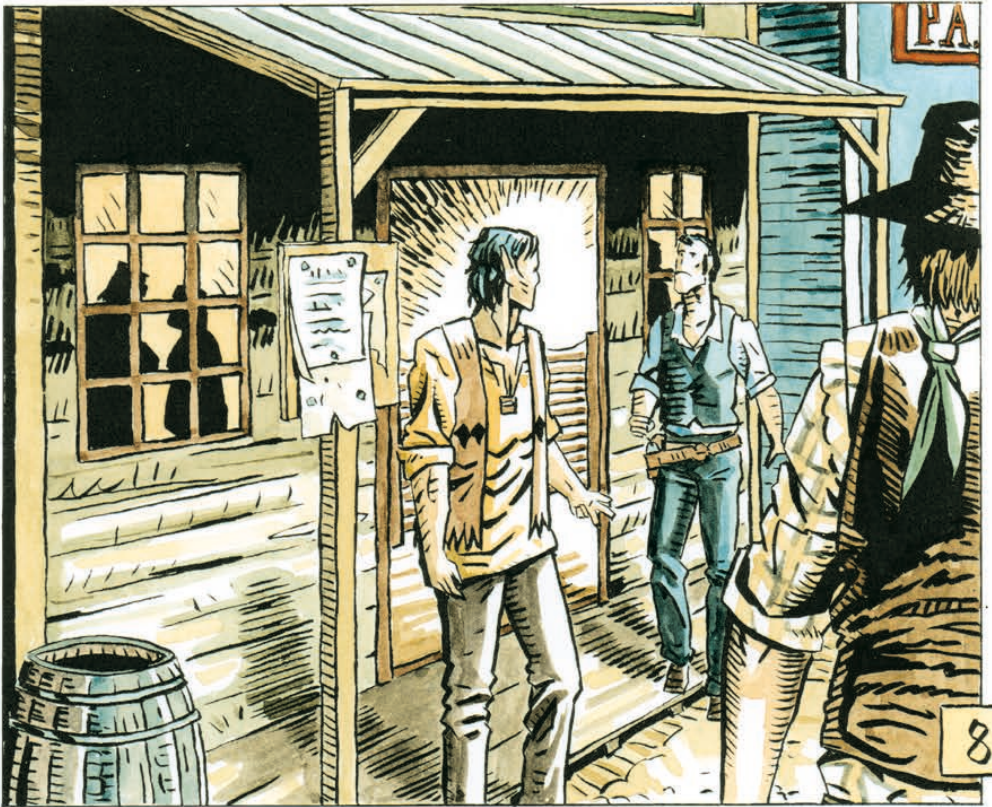
THANKS. YEAH, WE TRY TO SAVE MONEY ON LODGINGS IN THE SUMMER.



CAN YOU SHOW ME THAT TRICK WITH THE STONE? IT WAS MIGHTY INTERESTING.

IT'S VERY SIMPLE. THE STONE ...

I'D LIKE TO SEE IT FOR MYSELF. YOUR WAGON'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER, ISN'T IT?



FORGET THE STONE. LOOK, I'VE NEVER MET A STREET PERFORMER WHO DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE A QUICK BUCK.



I'VE TRAVELED FAR TO PLAY POKER WITH THE FAMOUS DE BOER. WE'LL BE PLAYING FOR BIG MONEY. IT'D BE NICE TO HAVE A LITTLE HELP.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



IF YOU CAN SEE HIS CARDS, PICK YOUR NOSE IF HE HAS THREE OF A KIND OR HIGHER. YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAY POKER, DON'T YOU?

YEAH.

GOOD. AND IF HE'S BLUFFING, COUGH. PRETTY SIMPLE, RIGHT? YOU GET 5 DOLLARS NOW AND 5 AFTER THE GAME. I'LL COME DOWN TO THE WAGON WITH IT.



YOU GO INTO THE SALOON FIRST. I'LL BE THERE IN A FEW MINUTES.

IN THE SALOON, HALF AN HOUR LATER.





GOOD DAY. YOU MUST BE DE BOER.



GOOD DAY, PAUL. I BROUGHT A FRIEND. HE'S INTERESTED IN POKER TOO.

AN HOUR LATER.



THE MORE, THE MERRIER. TAKE A SEAT AND LET'S GET STARTED.



DAMN, DE BOER'S FRIEND IS PLAYING BADLY. BUT HE LOOKS RICH.

AN HOUR AFTER THAT.

UGH! THERE'S MORE SMOKE THAN AT MY FIRE SHOW.

NOW, MY ENTERTAINER FRIEND. I WANT THAT POT.



DAMN, DIDN'T MEAN TO DO THAT. DE BOER HAS THREE ACES. WHAT DO I DO NOW?



IF I SIGNAL THREE OF A KIND OR MORE, AT LEAST IT WON'T BE A LIE.

HE'S BLUFFING, BUT HE HAS THREE OF A KIND OR HIGHER. PROBABLY THREE TWOS. THE STREET PERFORMER IS ON TO ME—HE KNOWS POKER AND KNOWS I WANT THE POT.

