







RIGHT, I MUST BE COMPLETELY SKINT, THEN.

THAT'S ALL I WAS ANY GOOD AT IN LIFE.

LISTEN, ARE YOU NOT DOING SOMETHING ELSE WITH YOUR LIFE THESE DAYS...?

THINK ABOUT IT...



ER, I DON'T THINK SO...

THEY HAVEN'T RENEWED MY CONTRACT AT THE AIRPORT.

AND AFTER THAT LITTLE MISHAP WITH TONY SANTAGATA*, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO HIRE ME BACK IN A HURRY.



DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

'COURSE I DON'T!

YOU'RE 800 YEARS OLD, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

*TONY SANTAGATA WAS AN ITALIAN FOLK SINGER, COMPOSER, COMEDIAN AND ACTOR.



NOPE, NOTHING.

I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING AT ALL.

NOTHING TO DO WITH MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS, RIGHT?

BECAUSE YOU LOST A BIT OF HAIR THERE.

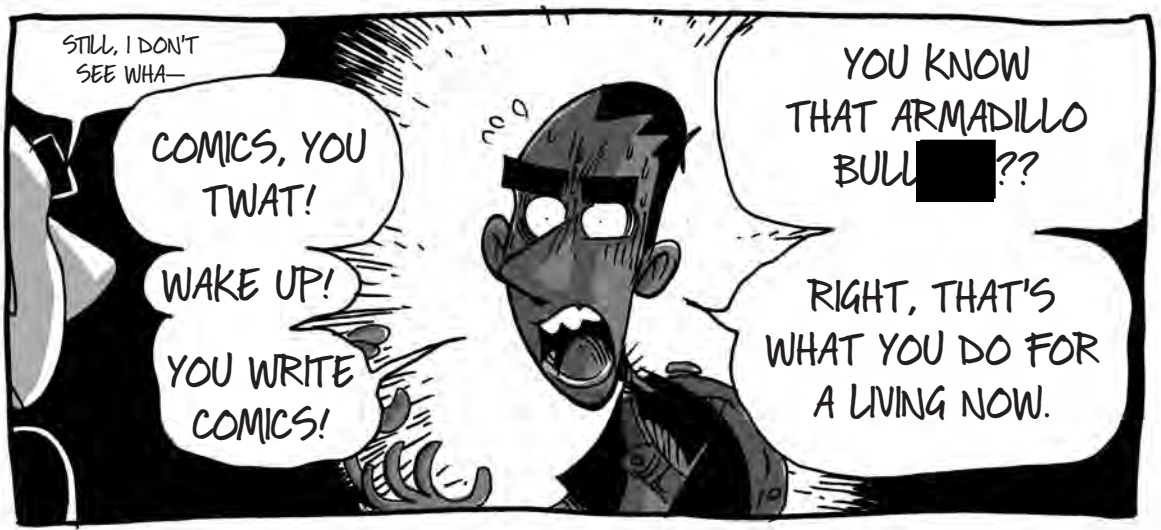
AND YOU'RE ALSO SLIGHTLY ON THE PUDGY SIDE.

HEY, ASSHOLE.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD A RECEDING HAIRLINE.

BESIDES, I'M NOT PUDGY, JUST STOCKIER.

I'M 33 YEARS OLD.



STILL, I DON'T SEE WHA—

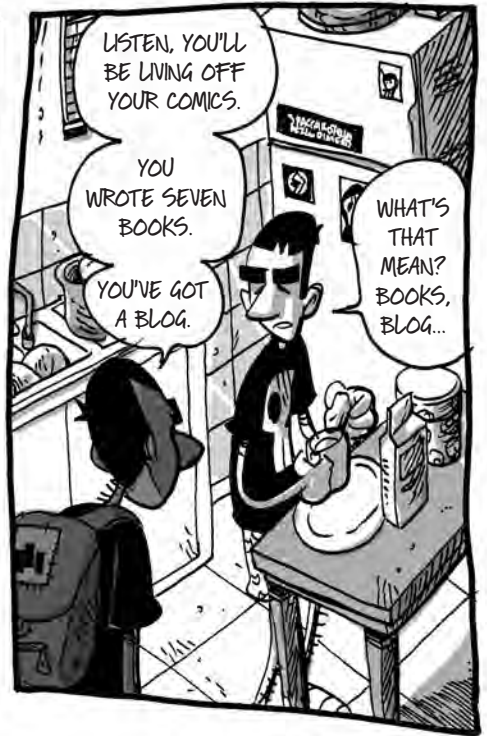
COMICS, YOU TWAT!

WAKE UP!

YOU WRITE COMICS!

YOU KNOW THAT ARMADILLO BULL [REDACTED]??

RIGHT, THAT'S WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING NOW.





SO...
...WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...
...I'VE ACTUALLY MADE SOMETHING...

...OF MY LIFE?

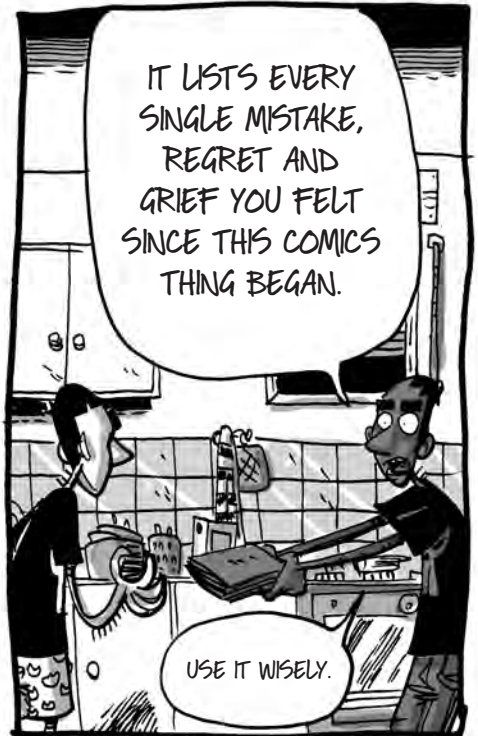


THIS CONSTANT FEELING OF STILLNESS, OF GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES AS EVERYONE ELSE MOVES ON...

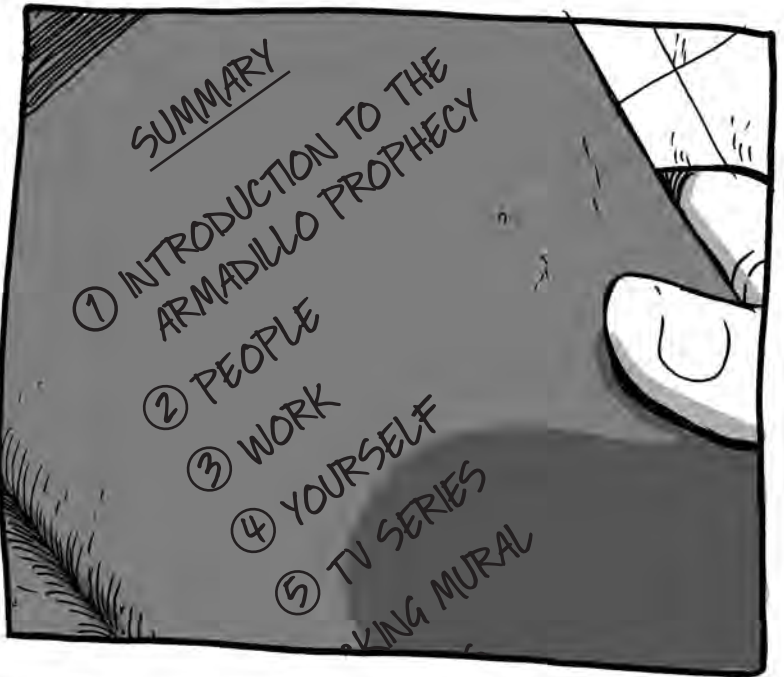
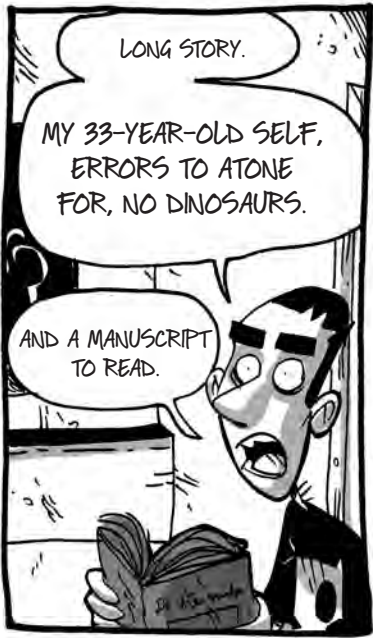
...OF NOT MOVING ONE IOTA SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL SEVEN YEARS AGO...

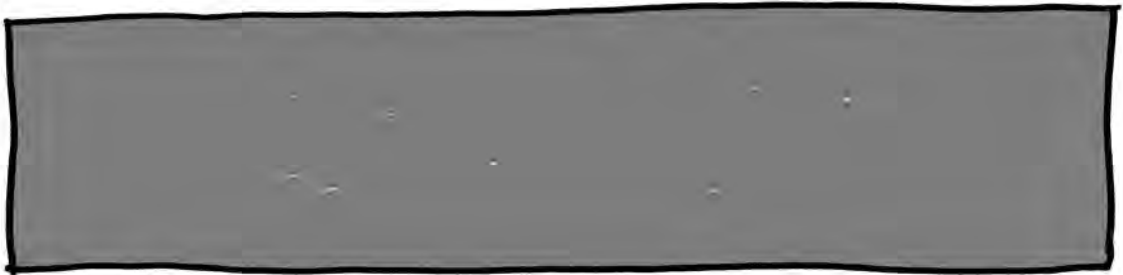


...IS THAT GOING TO DISAPPEAR THEN?









REBIBBIA, 2017 (A FEW DAYS EARLIER)

"①INTRODUCTION -

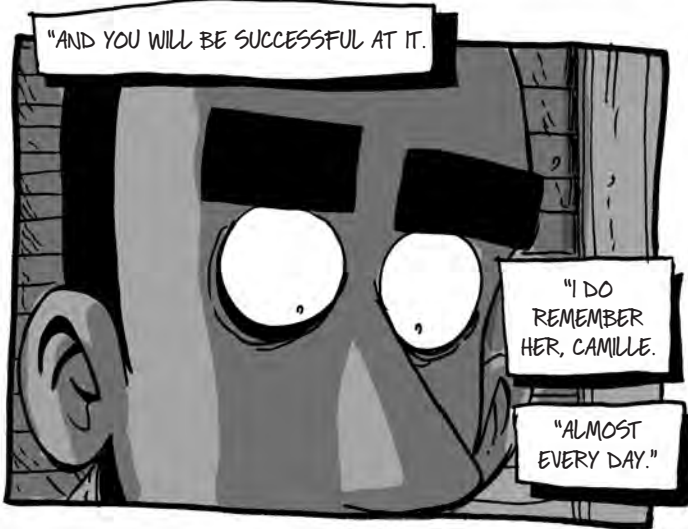
BEFORE WE START LISTING THE ERRORS YOU SHOULD ATONE FOR, LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE BOOK YOU'RE CURRENTLY WRITING, 'THE ARMADILLO PROPHECY.'



"IT'S NOT AS THOUGH THE BOOK WAS A MISTAKE, BUT THE MATTER IS MORE DELICATE THAN IT MAY SEEM RIGHT NOW.



"YOU'RE DOING IT TO KEEP THE MEMORY OF A PARTICULAR PERSON, CAMILLE, ALIVE.

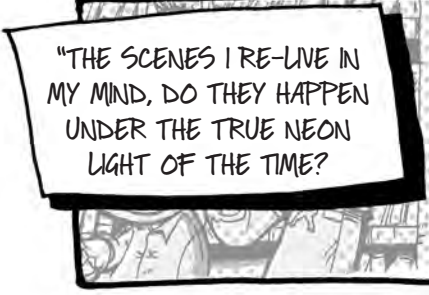


"AND YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AT IT.

"I DO REMEMBER HER, CAMILLE.

"ALMOST EVERY DAY."

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I HADN'T CONSIDERED: AM I REMEMBERING THE REAL CAMILLE OR THE BOOK'S CAMILLE?

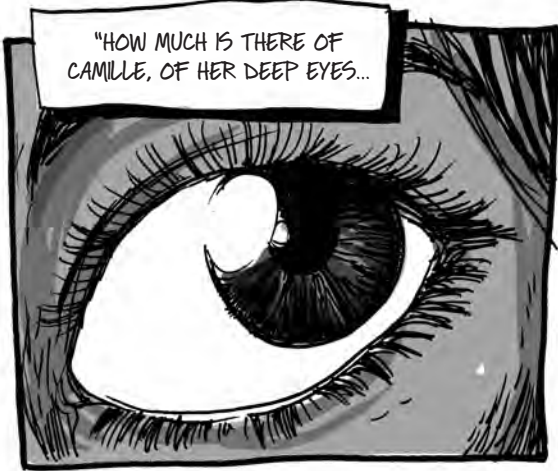


"THE SCENES I RE-LIVE IN MY MIND, DO THEY HAPPEN UNDER THE TRUE NEON LIGHT OF THE TIME?



"OR THE ONE I WAS ABLE TO CREATE WITH STAEDTLER FELT-TIP PENS AND PHOTOSHOP CS?"

"JUST HOW MUCH ARE THESE TWO IMAGES OVERLAPPING?"



"AM I STILL ABLE TO MEASURE THAT GAP?"



"ONE DAY IN TURIN, I MET THE WRITER MARCO PEANO, WHO'D BEEN DOING SOMETHING SIMILAR. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT OF IT. LIKE RELEASE ME FROM MY GUILT, MARCOPEANO, PRETTY PLEASE.



"HE SAID THAT IT'S A WAY OF CONTINUING TO TAKE CARE OF SOMEONE, AND THAT CAN HARDLY BE WRONG NOW, CAN IT? OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.



"STILL, WHAT I MEAN IS, THINK
ABOUT THESE THINGS.

"DON'T DISMISS THEM AS
SIMPLE PARANOIA.



"BECAUSE THEY'LL STICK WITH YOU
FOR A REALLY LONG TIME."

PROLOGUE

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK

STOP!

STOP,
DAMN YOU!



