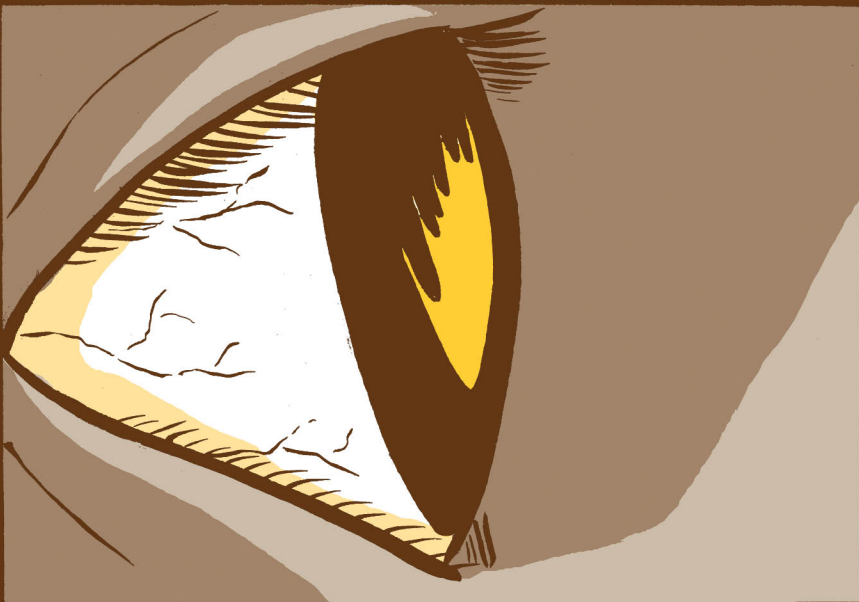




FREED MAN

PETER QUACH





THREE FORKS OF THE TRINITY, TEXAS, 1866

12 HOURS EARLIER





I'D BE ...
MUCH OBLIGED,
THANK YOU.

MAUDE!
GET OUT HERE!
WE'RE RECEIVING
GUESTS!

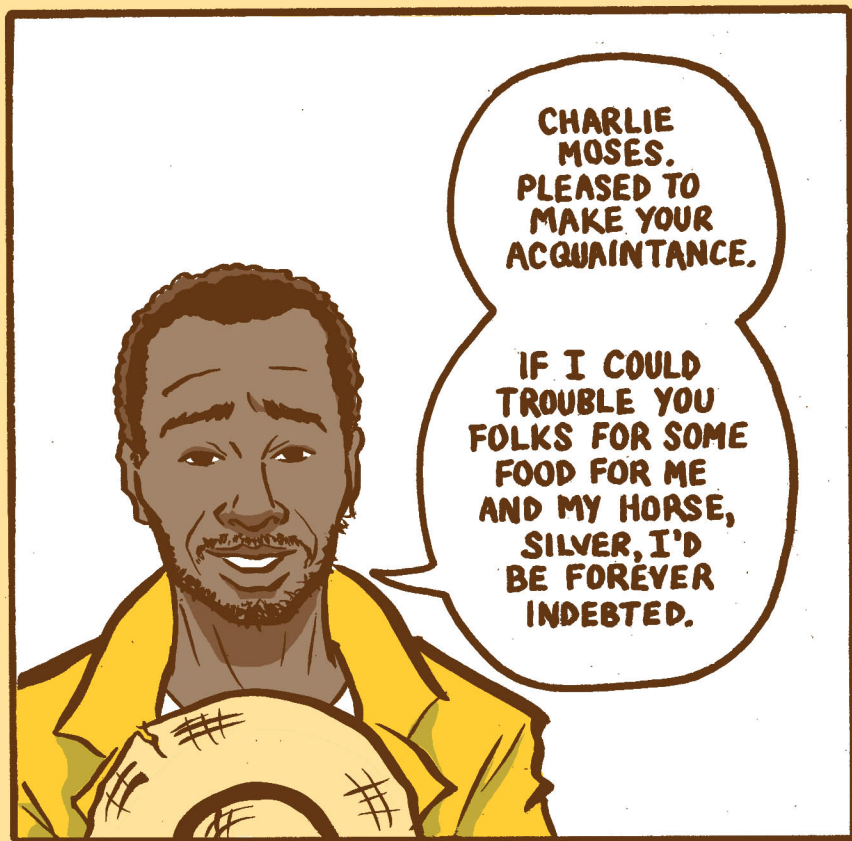
WE AIN'T
GOT NO GUESTS!
NO ONE LIKES
YOU ENOUGH
TO VISIT!

PEOPLE
LIKE ME! THERE'S
BEN, AND-- WOMAN,
JUST GET OUT
HERE!



I'VE EXTER TELLADY,
AND THIS IS MAUDE,
WIFE OF MY BOSOM.

DOES
"BOSOM"
MEAN TIT?



CHARLIE
MOSES.
PLEASED TO
MAKE YOUR
ACQUAINTANCE.

IF I COULD
TROUBLE YOU
FOLKS FOR SOME
FOOD FOR ME
AND MY HORSE,
SILVER, I'D
BE FOREVER
INDEBTED.



AND I'D BE ON
MY WAY SOON
SO I WON'T
NO TROUBLE

NONSENSE!



YOU'LL BE STAYING THE
NIGHT, DINING WITH TWO
LONELY OLD FOLKS, AND
SLEEPING UNDER OUR ROOF.
THERE AIN'T GONNA BE
NO FURTHER DEBATE
ON THE SUBJECT!



NOW YOU TWO GO
INTO TOWN AND BUY
SOME BACON FOR SUPPER,
BEFORE I WHUP BOTH
Y'ALL'S BEHINDS!



THAT DANG WOMAN'S GOT DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR, DON'T SHE! THINKING SHE CAN ORDER MEN AROUND!



I ALWAYS TELL HER, "I AIN'T GOT NO MASSA NOW, WHITE OR WOMAN! I'SE FREE!"



MY WIFE WAS OF LIKE MIND.

"WAS?"



LOOK AT THOSE GODDAMN DARKIES PLOTTING AND CONSPIRING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GODDAMN STREET.



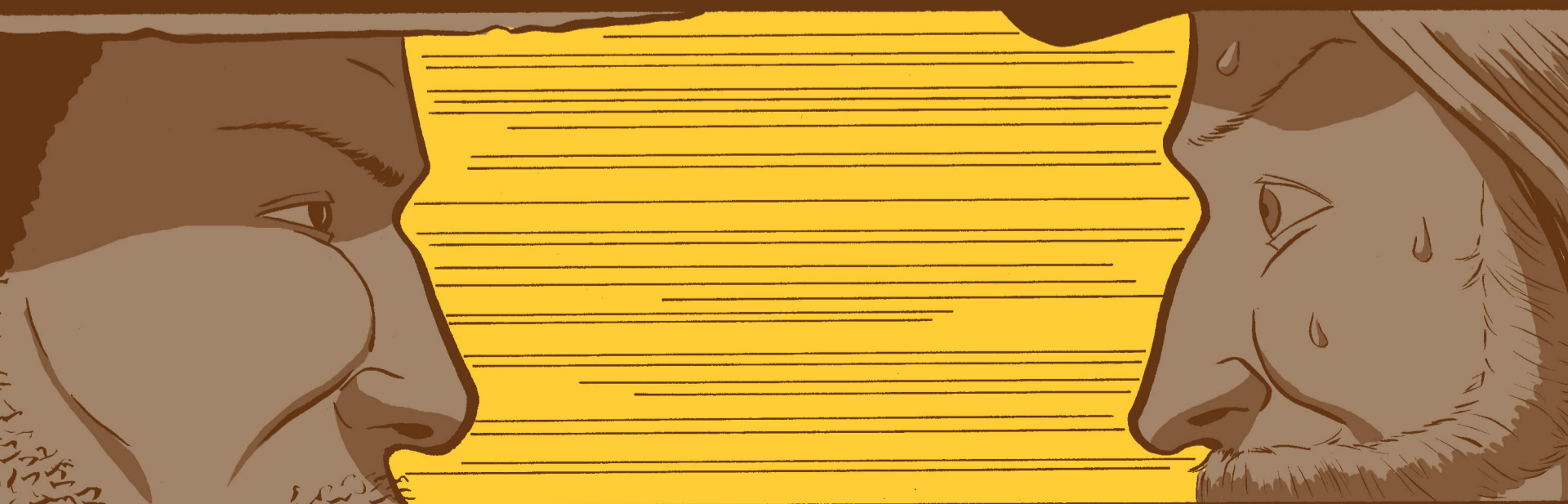
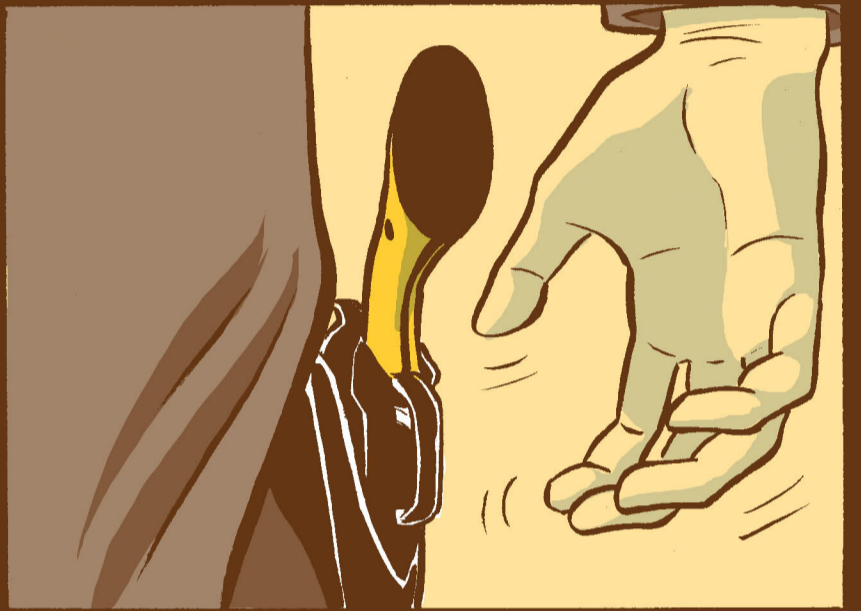
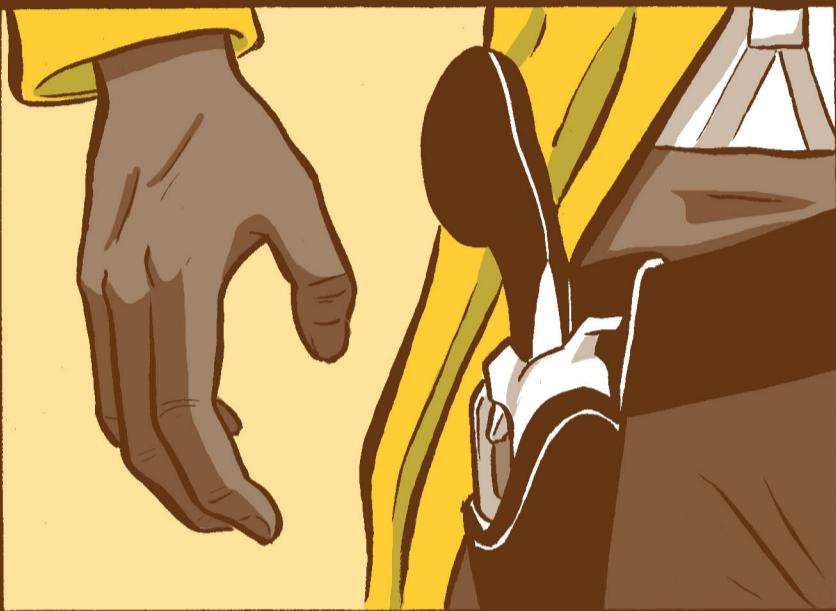
AW, JACK, IT'S JUST THAT NEGRO CARPENTER, EXTER. HE DON'T MEAN NO HARM.

YOU HEAR ONE OF THEM NEGROES LOOKED CROSS-EYED AT CLINTON FISK WHEN CLINTON CALLED HIM "UNCLE?"



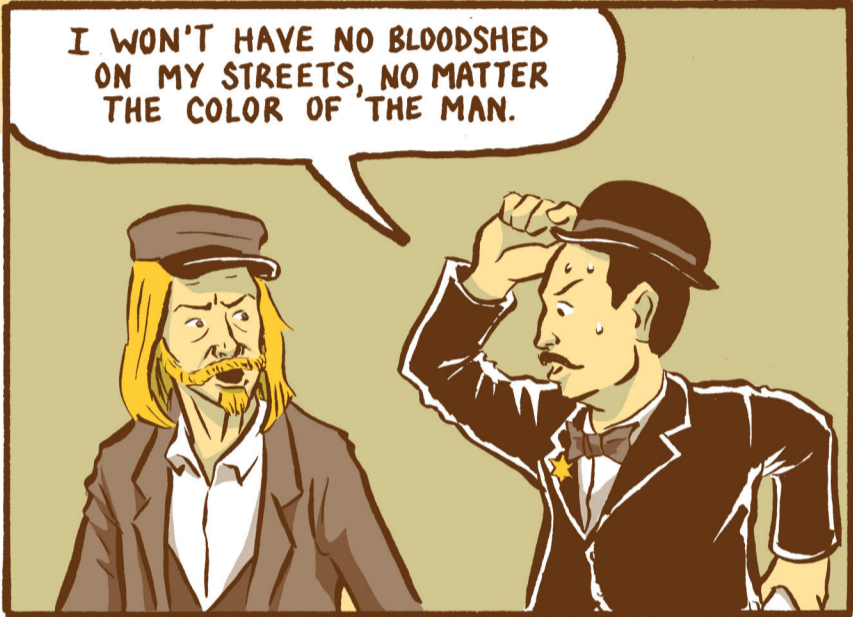
IT'S COME TO THIS, TOM? CAN'T EVEN CALL 'EM UNCLE. THEY'RE GONNA MAKE SLAVES OF THE WHITE MAN-- UNLESS SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT...







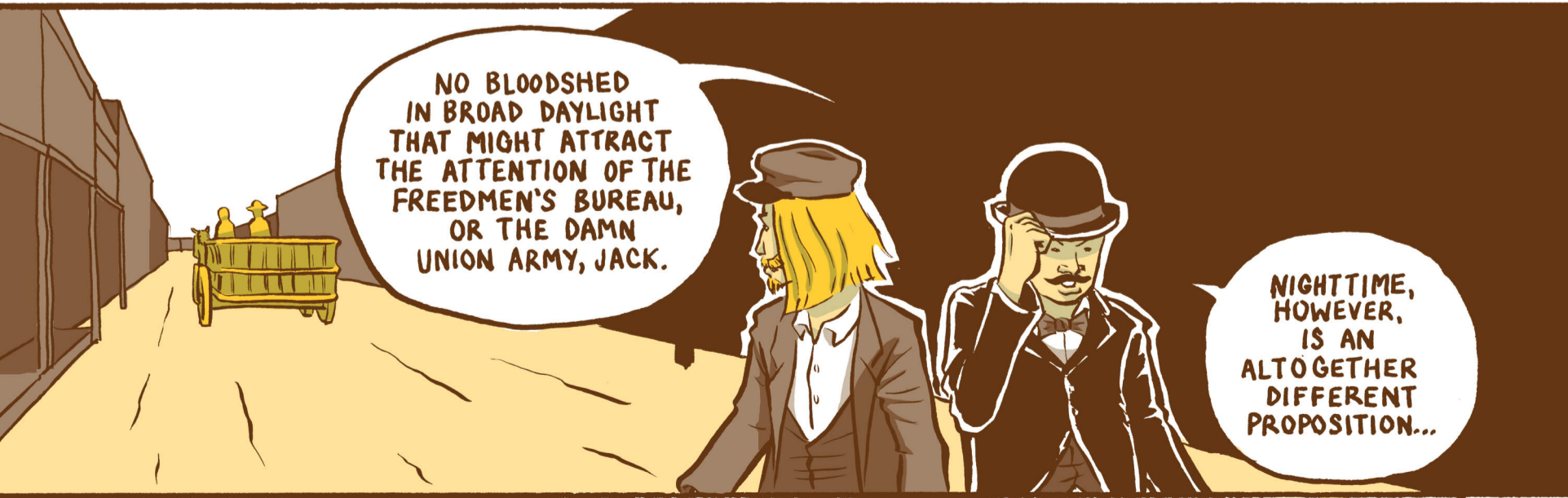
DAMMIT,
JACK RAVENEL!
KEEP YOUR BLASTED
PISTOL HOLSTERED!



I WON'T HAVE NO BLOODSHED
ON MY STREETS, NO MATTER
THE COLOR OF THE MAN.

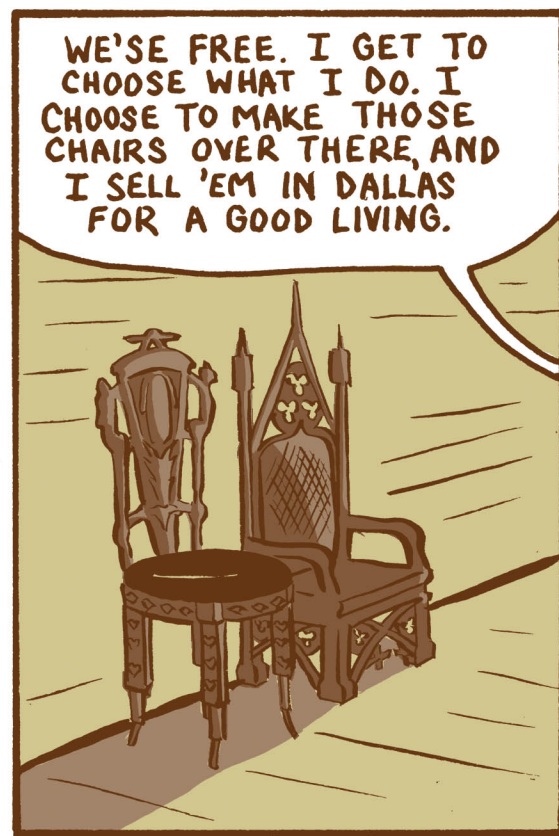


YOU TWO GET
ON HOME NOW.



NO BLOODSHED
IN BROAD DAYLIGHT
THAT MIGHT ATTRACT
THE ATTENTION OF THE
FREEDMEN'S BUREAU,
OR THE DAMN
UNION ARMY, JACK.

NIGHTTIME,
HOWEVER,
IS AN
ALTOGETHER
DIFFERENT
PROPOSITION...



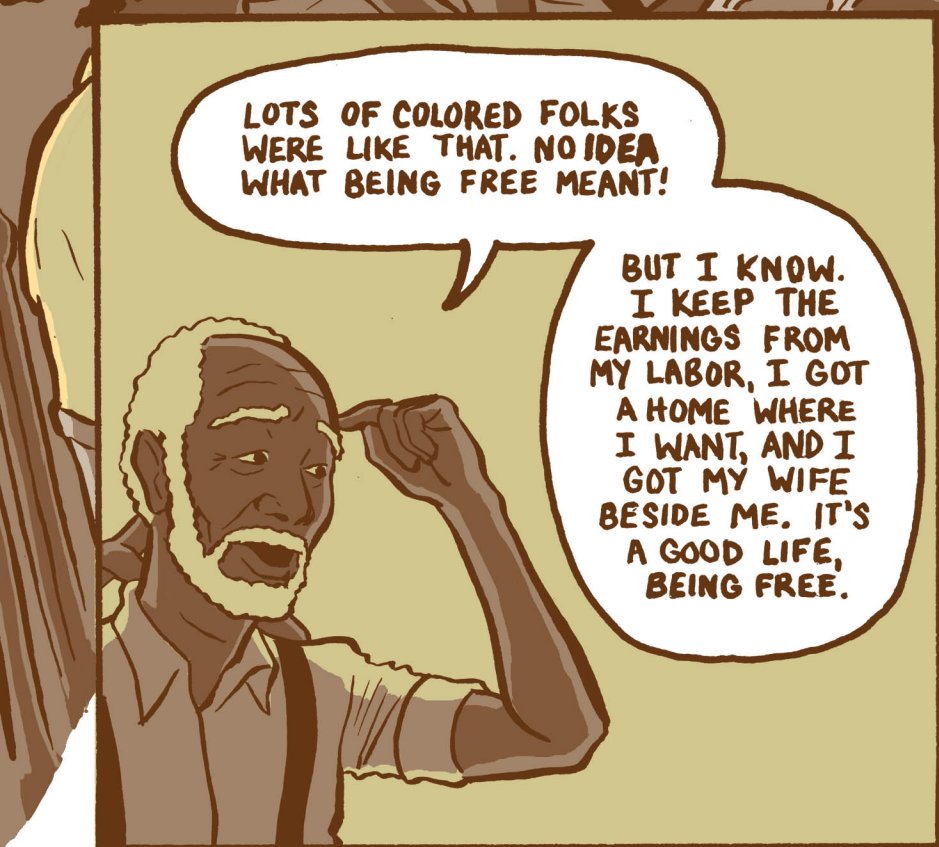


GOOD ENOUGH OF A LIVING TO LET ME AND MAUDE BUILD THIS HOUSE HERE OURSELVES.



MAUDE, REMEMBER WHAT THAT FOOL SQUIRE JACKSON ASKED AFTER WE WERE ALL EMANCIPATED?

SURE DO. HE ASKED IF FREEDOM MEANT WHITES WOULD BE WORKING THE FIELDS WHILE WE COLOREDS WOULD BE SITTING IN THE BIG HOUSE, SIPPING COLD TEA.



LOTS OF COLORED FOLKS WERE LIKE THAT. NO IDEA WHAT BEING FREE MEANT!

BUT I KNOW. I KEEP THE EARNINGS FROM MY LABOR, I GOT A HOME WHERE I WANT, AND I GOT MY WIFE BESIDE ME. IT'S A GOOD LIFE, BEING FREE.



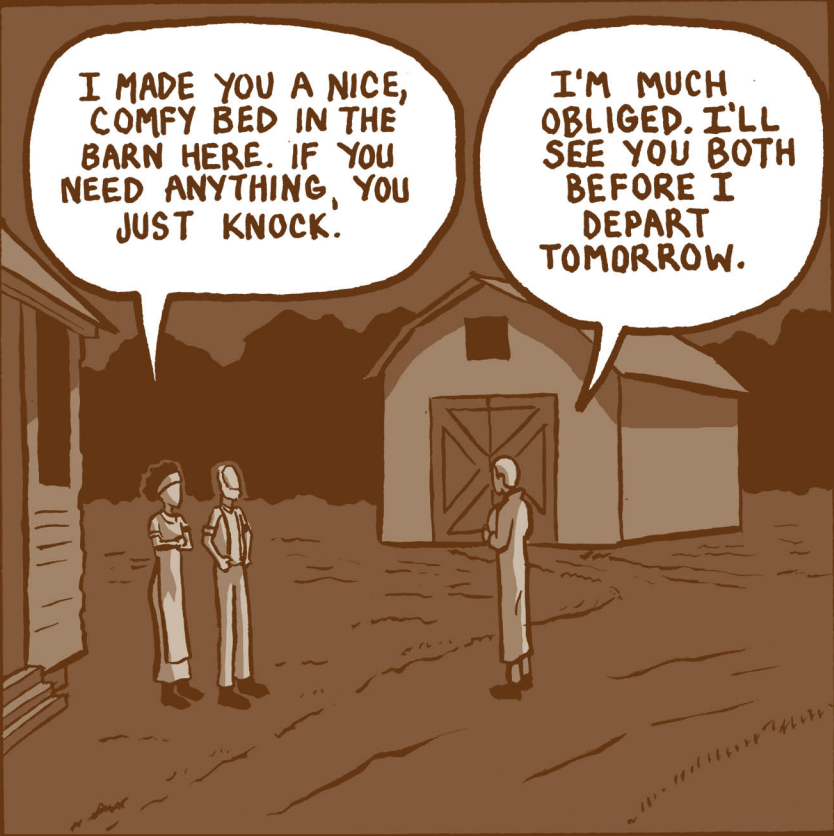
WHATEVER YOU'RE OUT HERE HUNTING, IT AIN'T WORTH YOUR LIFE, CHARLIE.



WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE WITH US? YOU'D BE KEEPING AN OLD COUPLE COMPANY, AND YOU COULD HELP ME WITH MY WORK--



I ... CAN'T. I'M SORRY.





I'M VERY SORRY
IF I WOKE YOU.

YOU AIN'T GOT NOTHING
TO APOLOGIZE FOR.
I'D FEEL BETTER ABOUT
YOU ABSCONDING IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
IF YOU'D TAKE THIS FOOD
FOR THE ROAD, THOUGH.



OF COURSE--

WHO'S "CALDONIA,"
CHARLIE? YOU WERE
CALLING OUT TO HER.



...SHE WAS
MY WIFE.

SHE AND I LIVED ON DIFFERENT
PLANTATIONS IN VIRGINIA, AND SO
I HAD TO LEAVE HER BEHIND
WHEN I ESCAPED TO THE UNION
LINES AND JOINED THE ARMY.

WHEN I MADE IT BACK TO
VIRGINIA AFTER THE WAR, SHE
WAS GONE. HER MASSA UP AND
MOVED ALL HIS SLAVES TO
TEXAS TO AVOID EMANCIPATION.

WHEN NEWS OF EMANCIPATION FINALLY REACHED HER IN TEXAS, I HEAR CALDONIA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO STAND UP AND SAY SHE WAS FREE. SHE ALWAYS WAS MIGHTY BULL-HEADED. BUT WHITES DON'T CARE IF YOU SAY YOU'RE FREE. YOU'RE STILL THEIR PROPERTY, NO MATTER WHAT ANY PIECE OF PAPER SAYS.



THEY HANGED HER, ALONG WITH TWO OTHERS WHO CLAIMED THEY WERE FREE.

I HEARD ALL THIS WHEN I GOT TO TEXAS. I ALSO HEAR THE UNION ARMY'S BEEN HUNTING 6 OF THE WHITES RESPONSIBLE. I ONLY KNOW ONE OF THEIR NAMES--



-- COLONEL W.H. CHESNUT.

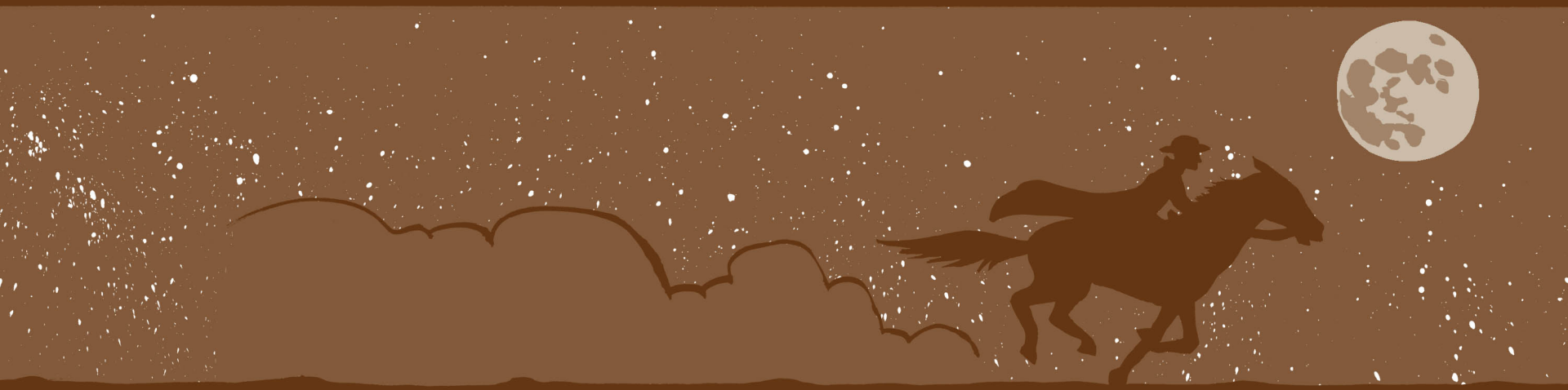
SO I MADE A PROMISE TO MY DEAD WIFE. IF THE ARMY CAN'T FIND ALL THOSE BASTARDS, I WILL, AND I'LL MAKE SURE THEY BURN IN HELL LIKE THEY DESERVE.



FREEDOM'S A FUNNY THING, CHARLIE MOSES. NO PIECE OF PAPER OR UNION ARMY CAN MAKE YOU FREE. YOU'VE GOT TO CHOOSE TO BE FREE.

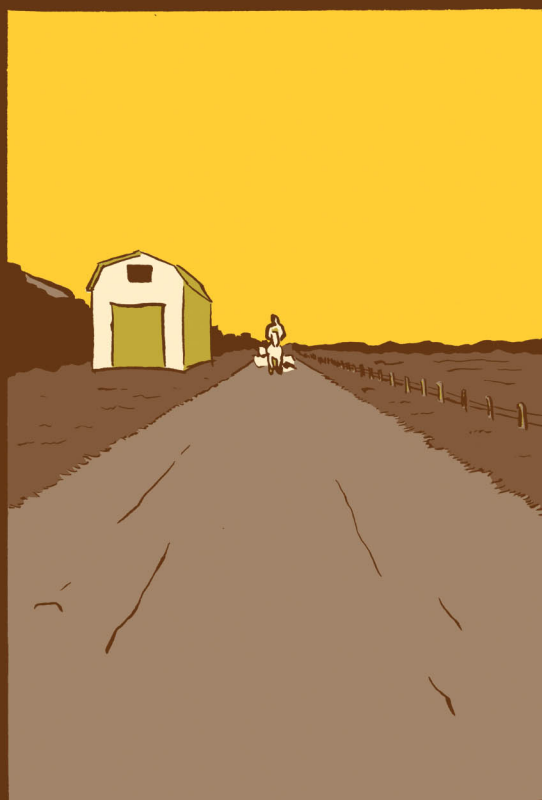






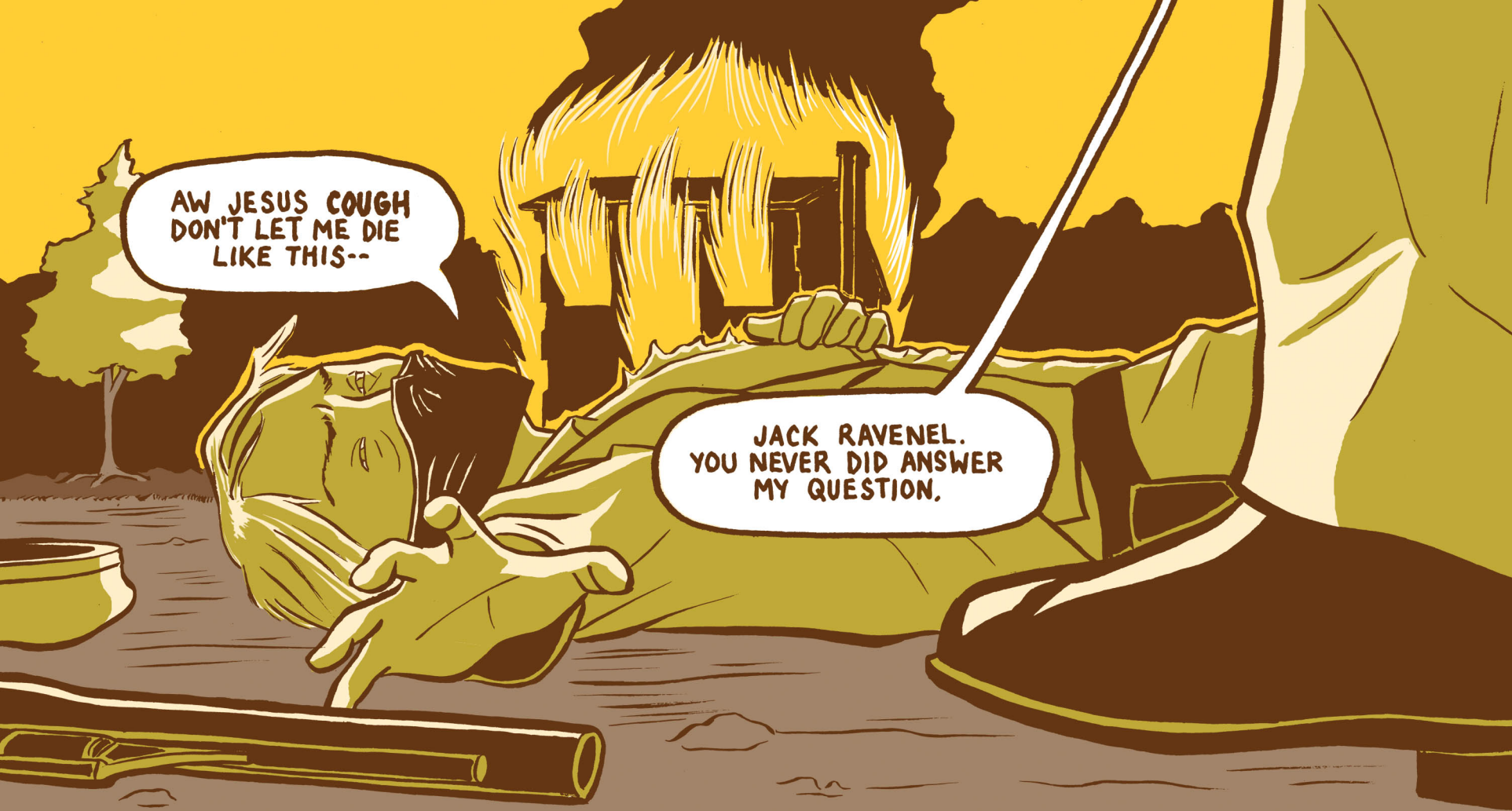


BANG BANG















END.