

# Herein!\*

Marguerite Aboutet & Ergün Gündüz

*“No-one hates another,  
he just doesn’t understand him.”*

African proverb.

Thank you, Jacques Paulot, for your confidence in me.  
With my warmest affection.

Marguerite Aboutet.

**\*Come in!**

TAILLY, A LITTLE VILLAGE IN THE ARDENNES, HALFWAY BETWEEN SEDAN AND VERDUN, IS A CHARMING AND PEACEFUL PLACE, WHERE ITS FIFTY RESIDENTS LIVE IN TRANQUILLITY. "YOU ALWAYS INHERIT SOMETHING FROM YOUR PARENTS", AS WE SAY IN THE IVORY COAST.  
THE ARDENNAIS HAVE INHERITED BAD REPUTATIONS: DREADFUL WEATHER, A GODFORSAKEN DUMP STUCK UP AGAINST A CORNER OF GERMANY AND, ABOVE ALL, A DIRECT ROAD TO WAR...



...FROM THE FRENCH DEFEAT AT SEDAN IN 1870 TO THE FAMOUS GERMAN BREAKTHROUGH OF 1940, VIA THE GREAT WAR.



SO WHY DID MY COLLEAGUES AND I CHOOSE TAILLY FOR OUR WRITERS' WORKSHOP? MAINLY BECAUSE WE NEEDED A SPACIOUS AND ABOVE ALL QUIET PLACE TO WRITE THE SCRIPT FOR A 26 EPISODES TV DRAMA IN 10 DAYS. WHATEVER THE REASON, TAILLY IS WHERE WE ENDED UP AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST 2015.



ANOTHER SAYING FROM MY NECK OF THE WOODS IS THAT THE CAT LOOKS AT THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE BEFORE COMING IN. YES, PEOPLE ARE A BIT WARY OF THOSE THEY DON'T KNOW! ALL THE RESIDENTS OF THE GRANDE RUE CAME OUT OF THEIR HOUSES TO CHECK US OUT. I HAVE TO SAY, WE WERE QUITE A SIGHT. THREE BLACK PEOPLE, A WOMAN AND TWO MEN, AND A LONG-HAIRED WHITE MAN. IT SEEMED THAT A STRANGER HERE IS LIKE A RARE BIRD, IMMEDIATELY RECOGNISABLE. OH YES, A STRANGER STANDS OUT HERE.

OUR HOST, WAITING TO WELCOME US IN FRONT OF A BEAUTIFUL BIG HOUSE, ASKED US TO EXCUSE HIS NEIGHBOURS. THEY SO RARELY SEE ANYONE HERE, IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH SKIN COLOUR OR HAIR LENGTH.



HE WAS 92, STILL BRIGHT-EYED AND DELIGHTED TO WELCOME US TO HIS HOME IN TAILLY.

WE FOUND THE KITCHEN.



IN THE LIVING ROOM, I NOTICED A DOOR WITH TWO PAINTED, CLASPED HANDS, WITH A GERMAN INSCRIPTION, 'EINIGKEIT MACHT STARK', (STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY).



A LEFTOVER FROM THE GREAT WAR. MY HOUSE, LIKE ALL THOSE IN TAILLY, THROWS UP REMINDERS OF OUR POSITION SO CLOSE TO THE BORDER. MY COUSIN EVEN HAS A SKELETON.

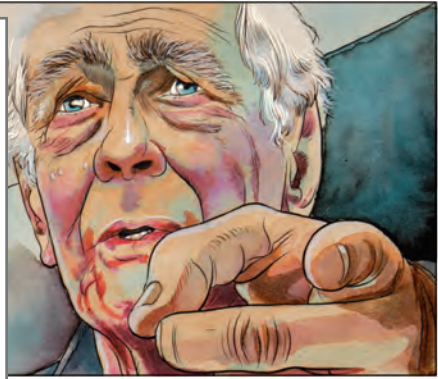




I TOOK THE FIRST ROOM AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. THE BIGGEST. IT BELONGED TO LUCIE, OUR HOST'S GRANDMOTHER. I IMMEDIATELY OPENED THE BIG WINDOW TO LOOK AT TAILLY, SURROUNDED BY ROLLING HILLS.

OVER DINNER, OUR HOST EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR VISITORS TO UNDERSTAND THE HISTORY OF THE PLACES THEY VISITED. HE TOLD US THE STORY OF THE ARDENNES. A REGION TRAPPED, BECAUSE OF ITS GEOGRAPHY, RIGHT AT THE HEART OF THE BIGGEST EUROPEAN WARS. GROUND TO BE MARCHED OVER, LADEN WITH HISTORY, THE ARDENNES HAS BEEN INVADED, OCCUPIED, BOMBARDED, DEVASTATED.

IT WAS THE ONLY FRENCH DEPARTMENT TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY OCCUPIED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. FROM AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup> 1914 RIGHT UP TO THE LAST BATTLE ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> AND 11<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER, THE ARDENNAIS WERE UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION FOR 52 MONTHS. INDEED, THIS HOUSE HAD MANY TALES TO TELL FOR ANYONE WHO WAS AT ALL CURIOUS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO COULD NO LONGER BE SEEN OR HEARD, BUT WHOSE STORIES WERE ALL AROUND.



WHEN I FELL PEACEFULLY ASLEEP IN LUCIE'S BED ON THAT DAY, AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup> 2015, COULD I HAVE IMAGINED, ON ANOTHER AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup>, IN 1914, THAT THE END OF THAT WORLD WAS AT HAND?

WOULD I HAVE BELIEVED THAT WAR WOULD BREAK OUT THE NEXT DAY? DISASTER IS ALWAYS A SURPRISE AND NEVER MAKES AN APPOINTMENT!



SO WHEN WAR BROKE OUT ON AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup> 1914, LUCIE DIDN'T THINK AT THAT MOMENT THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH DIFFERENT FROM WHAT PREVIOUS GENERATIONS HAD EXPERIENCED. AND TAILLY WAS NOT WITHIN RANGE OF THE GUNS.

BUT THINGS RAPIDLY GOT WORSE! AFTER THE INVASIONS OF LUXEMBOURG AND BELGIUM, THE ENEMY BYPASSED THE EASTERN FORTS AND Poured DOWN ON THE ARDENNES. THE VILLAGE WAS SUDDENLY FULL OF FRENCH TROOPS. THE CANNONS THUNDERED IN THE EAST, TOWARDS THE MEUSE.





LONG, GREY, SOLID AND IMMENSE, THE GERMAN INFANTRY COLUMNS MARCHED DOWN THE VALLEY. THE FRENCH UNITS, ORDERED TO PREVENT THEM ENTERING THE ARGONNE VALLEY VIA THE TAILLY GAP, BUSIED THEMSELVES DIGGING TRENCHES AND CONSTRUCTING ARTILLERY POSITIONS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ROAD THROUGH THE SURROUNDING HILLS, IN THE WOODS TO THE SOUTH.



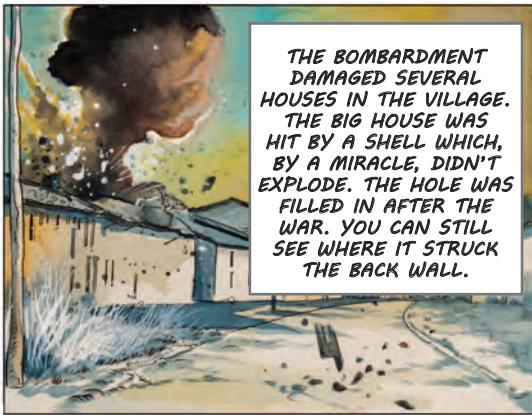
WHEN THEY SAW THIS, AND THE TROOPS' DETERMINATION TO DEFEND THEM, SOME OF THE VILLAGERS TOOK NEW HOPE AND COURAGE.

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BUT SCARCELY FIVE DAYS LATER, GERMAN SCOUTS WERE SPOTTED NEAR THE RUINED HOUSES IN BEAUCLAIR. THE NEXT DAY, SHELLS RAINED DOWN ON TAILLY.



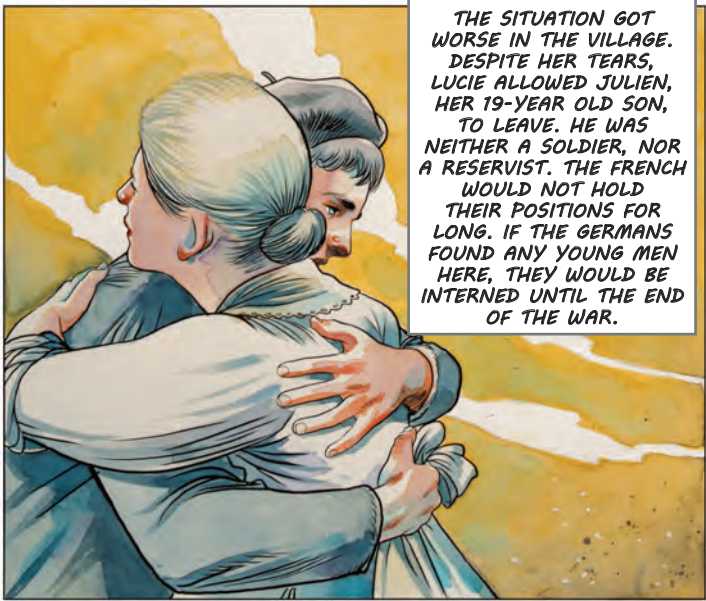
LUCIE AND HER ENTIRE FAMILY WENT DOWN INTO THE VAULTED CELLAR, THE STRONGEST AND SAFEST PLACE IN THE HOUSE. THEY HAD CANDLES, A WATER BARREL AND FOOD WITH THEM.



THE BOMBARDMENT DAMAGED SEVERAL HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE. THE BIG HOUSE WAS HIT BY A SHELL WHICH, BY A MIRACLE, DIDN'T EXPLODE. THE HOLE WAS FILLED IN AFTER THE WAR. YOU CAN STILL SEE WHERE IT STRUCK THE BACK WALL.

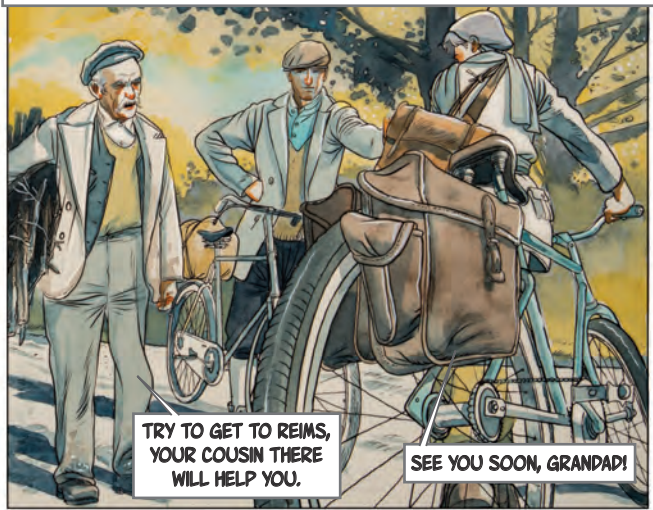


THEN GUNFIRE WAS HEARD, A WAY OFF AT FIRST, THEN RAPIDLY COMING CLOSER. WOUNDED SOLDIERS FELL BACK AND OTHERS WENT TO TAKE THEIR PLACE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE.



THE SITUATION GOT WORSE IN THE VILLAGE. DESPITE HER TEARS, LUCIE ALLOWED JULIEN, HER 19-YEAR OLD SON, TO LEAVE. HE WAS NEITHER A SOLDIER, NOR A RESERVIST. THE FRENCH WOULD NOT HOLD THEIR POSITIONS FOR LONG. IF THE GERMANS FOUND ANY YOUNG MEN HERE, THEY WOULD BE INTERNED UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR.

JULIEN WOULD SOON BE MOBILISED. AND FRANCE NEEDED HIM. HE HAD TO LEAVE. LUCIEN AND OTHER YOUNG MEN GATHERED AT THE END OF THE VILLAGE WITH BAGS PACKED AND LOADED ONTO THEIR BICYCLE RACKS.



TRY TO GET TO REIMS, YOUR COUSIN THERE WILL HELP YOU.

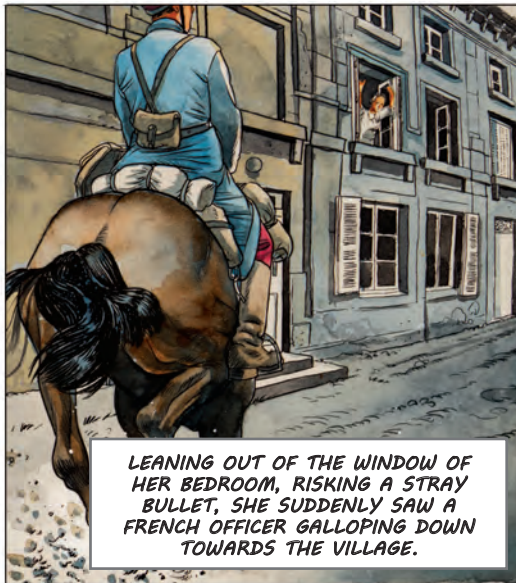
SEE YOU SOON, GRANDPA!





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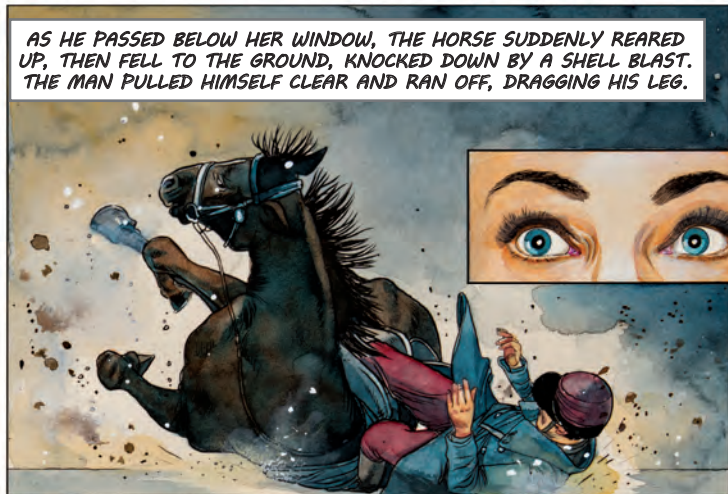
LUCIE, ALL TOO AWARE OF THE DANGERS FACING HER ONLY SON, WHO SHE MIGHT NEVER SEE AGAIN, WAS NO LONGER AFRAID FOR HERSELF. SHE HAD LOST ALL FEAR.



LEANING OUT OF THE WINDOW OF HER BEDROOM, RISKING A STRAY BULLET, SHE SUDDENLY SAW A FRENCH OFFICER GALLOPING DOWN TOWARDS THE VILLAGE.



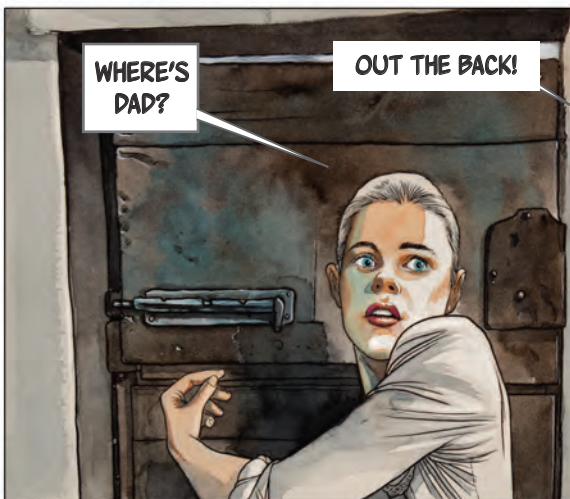
SHE RAN TO WARN HER FATHER.



AS HE PASSED BELOW HER WINDOW, THE HORSE SUDDENLY REARED UP, THEN FELL TO THE GROUND, KNOCKED DOWN BY A SHELL BLAST. THE MAN PULLED HIMSELF CLEAR AND RAN OFF, DRAGGING HIS LEG.

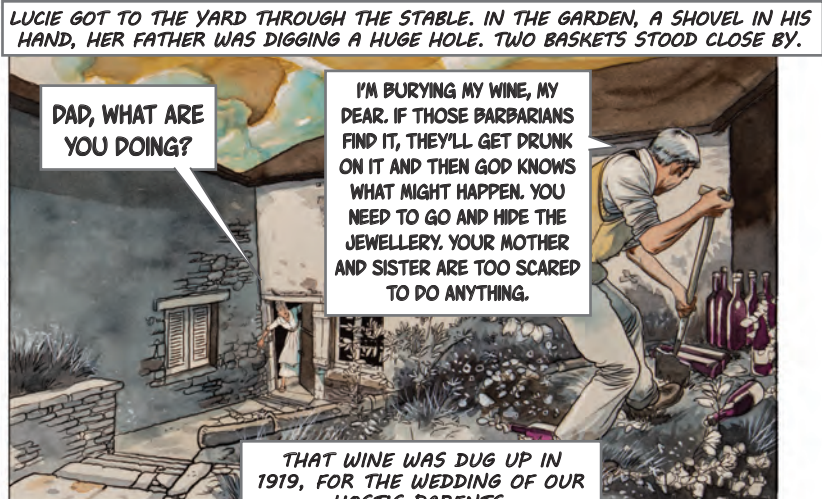


LUCIE RAN DOWN TO THE KITCHEN, WHERE THE SHUTTERS WERE CLOSED. HER MOTHER AND SISTER WERE THERE, TREMBLING.



WHERE'S DAD?

OUT THE BACK!



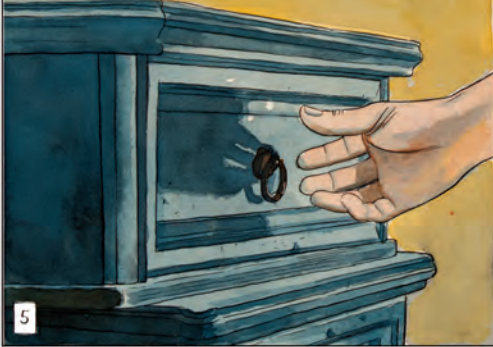
DAD, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M BURYING MY WINE, MY DEAR. IF THOSE BARBARIANS FIND IT, THEY'LL GET DRUNK ON IT AND THEN GOD KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. YOU NEED TO GO AND HIDE THE JEWELLERY. YOUR MOTHER AND SISTER ARE TOO SCARED TO DO ANYTHING.

THAT WINE WAS DUG UP IN 1919, FOR THE WEDDING OF OUR HOST'S PARENTS.



FOLLOWING HER FATHER'S ADVICE, LUCIE QUICKLY GATHERED UP CHAINS, RINGS, MEDALLIONS AND BAPTISMAL CROSSES, EARRINGS, GOLDEN BROOCH...



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SHE HAD FOUND A BOX AND A BAG TO PUT THEM IN.



SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN QUICKER, BUT COULDN'T STOP HERSELF LINGERING OVER HER FAVOURITES, EVEN AS SHE COLLECTED THEM UP. SHE THOUGHT ABOUT WHEN SHE HAD RECEIVED THEM, TRIED ON A RING HERE, PINNED ON A LONG FORGOTTEN BROOCH THERE.



SUDDENLY SHE BECAME AWARE OF A STRANGE SILENCE. CANNON BLASTS, SHOOTING, THE CLASH OF WEAPONS, SHOUTING AND SWEARING, ALL HAD STOPPED.



THEN SUDDENLY, ORDERS BARKED OUT IN A STRANGE LANGUAGE. NO MORE TIME FOR DREAMS.



LUCIE SCOOPED UP HER TREASURES AND RACED DOWN THE STAIRS.



SHE WAS IN THE KITCHEN. THERE WAS HAMMERING AT THE DOOR.



HERE THEY ARE!



HEREIN!\*

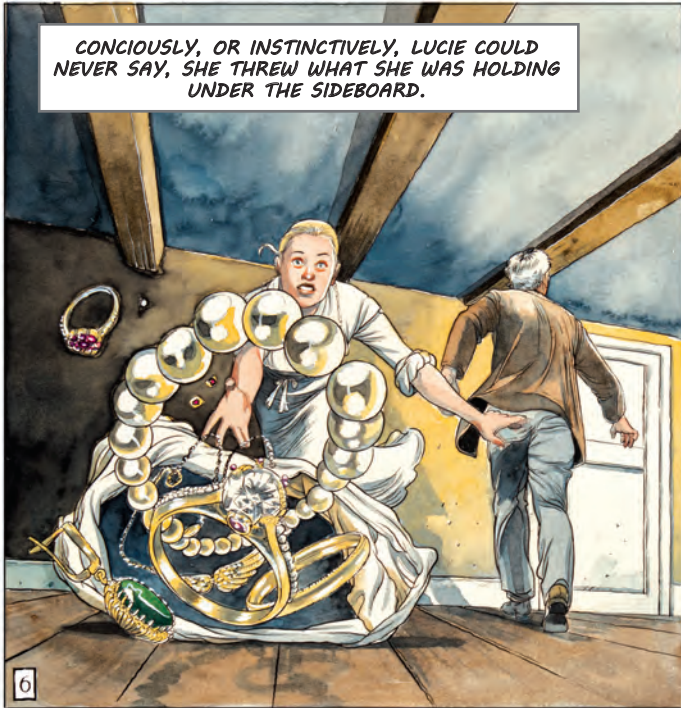
OPEN UP!



\*COME IN!

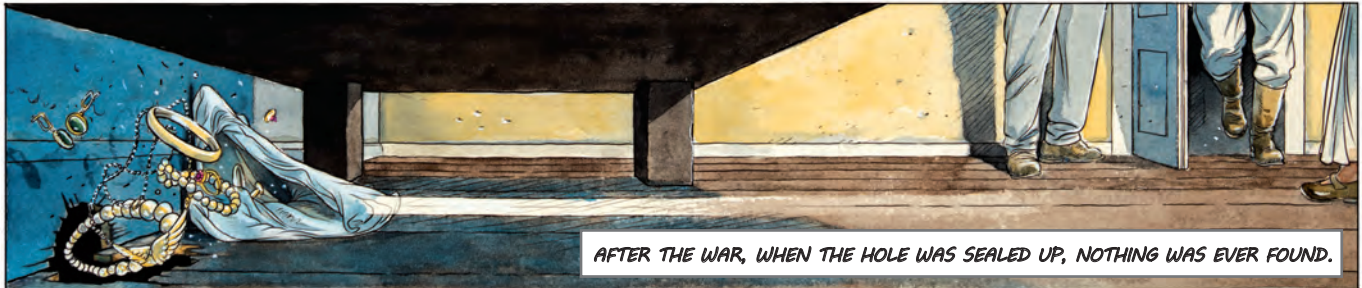
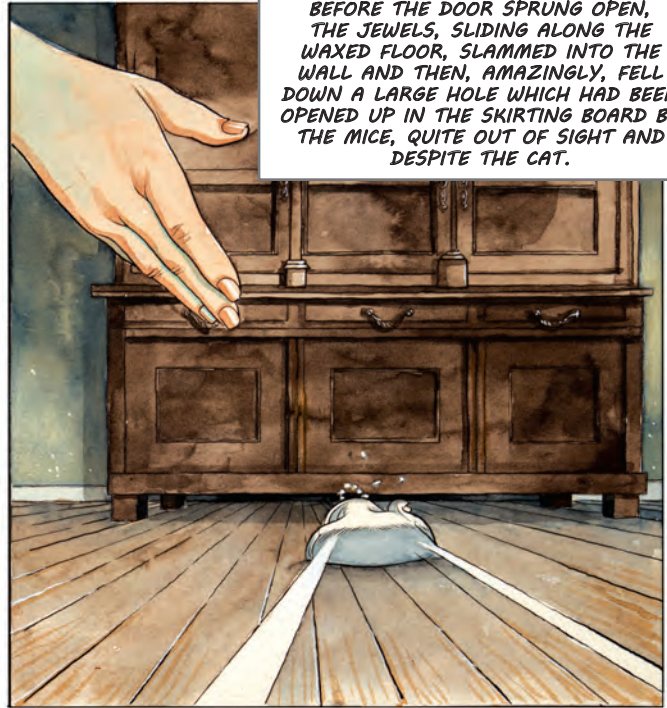


CONCIOUSLY, OR INSTINCTIVELY, LUCIE COULD NEVER SAY, SHE THREW WHAT SHE WAS HOLDING UNDER THE SIDEBORD.



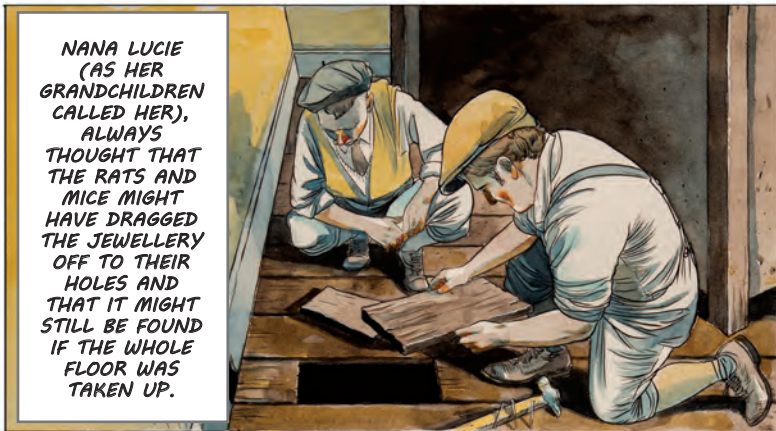
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BEFORE THE DOOR SPRUNG OPEN, THE JEWELS, SLIDING ALONG THE WAXED FLOOR, SLAMMED INTO THE WALL AND THEN, AMAZINGLY, FELL DOWN A LARGE HOLE WHICH HAD BEEN OPENED UP IN THE SKIRTING BOARD BY THE MICE, QUITE OUT OF SIGHT AND DESPITE THE CAT.

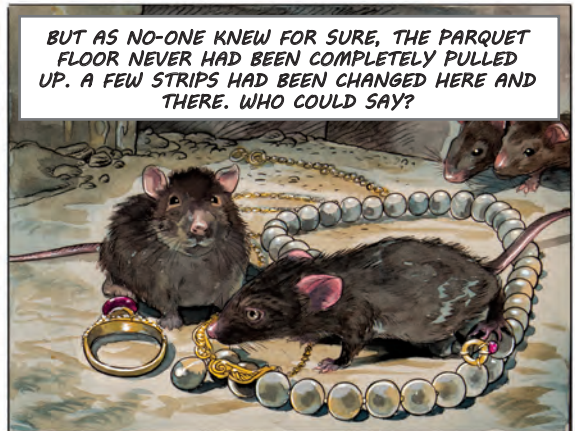


AFTER THE WAR, WHEN THE HOLE WAS SEALED UP, NOTHING WAS EVER FOUND.

NANA LUCIE (AS HER GRANDCHILDREN CALLED HER), ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THE RATS AND MICE MIGHT HAVE DRAGGED THE JEWELLERY OFF TO THEIR HOLES AND THAT IT MIGHT STILL BE FOUND IF THE WHOLE FLOOR WAS TAKEN UP.



BUT AS NO-ONE KNEW FOR SURE, THE PARQUET FLOOR NEVER HAD BEEN COMPLETELY PULLED UP. A FEW STRIPS HAD BEEN CHANGED HERE AND THERE. WHO COULD SAY?



I WOKE UP WITH A START!



END