# COWGIRLS & DINOSAURS

## BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SPITTLE



First published in Great Britain in 2024 by
PICCADILLY PRESS
4th Floor, Victoria House, Bloomsbury Square
London WC1B 4DA
Owned by Bonnier Books
Sveavägen 56, Stockholm, Sweden
bonnierbooks.co.uk/PiccadillyPress

First published in the USA in 2023 by Razorbill
an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, New York

Text and illustrations copyright © Lucie Ebrey, 2023

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

The right of Lucie Ebrey to be identified as author and illustrator of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This is a work of fiction. Names, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-80078-844-2

1

Book design by Tony Sahara
Printed and bound in China

MIX
Paper | Supporting responsible forestry
FSC® C104723

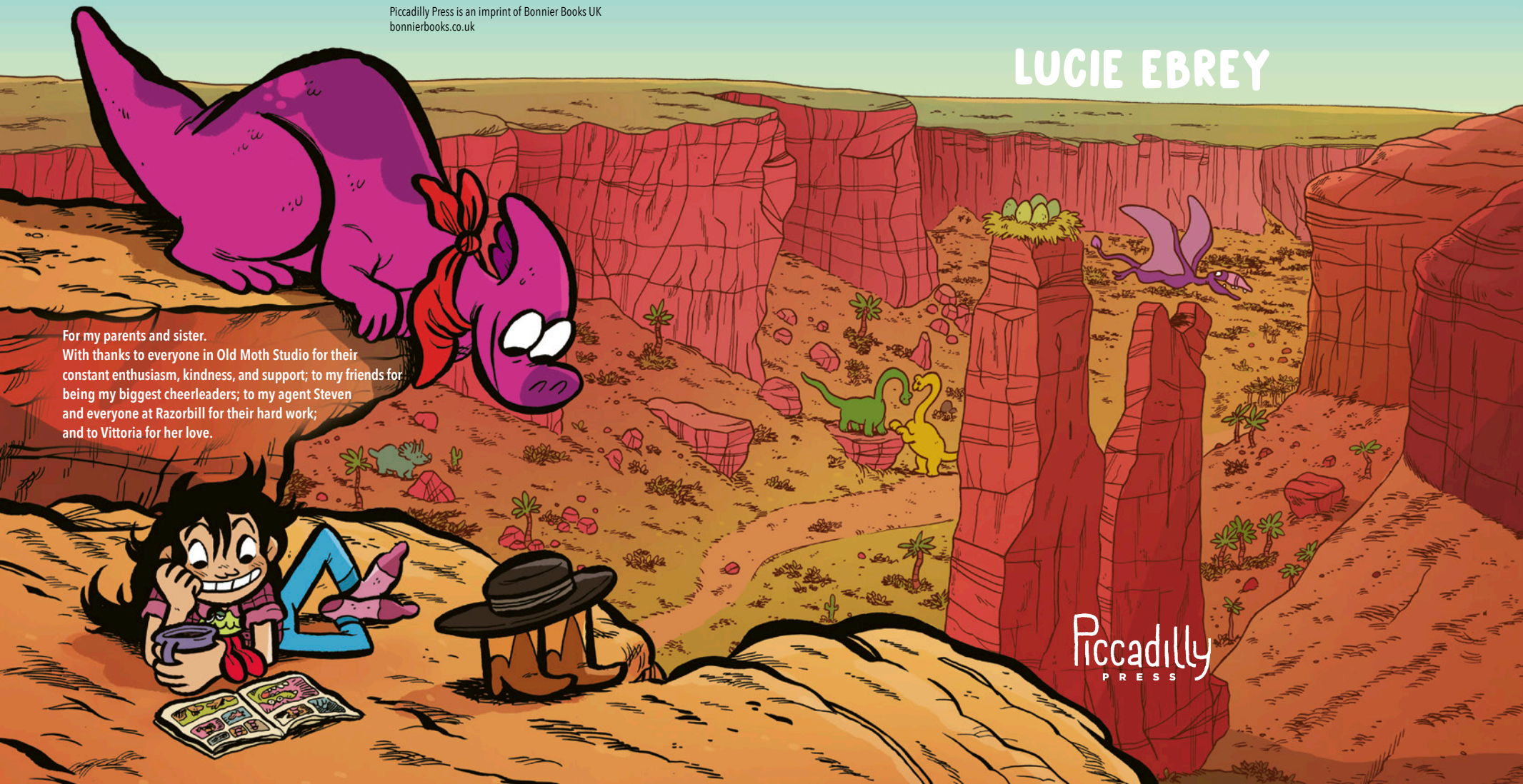
Piccadilly Press is an imprint of Bonnier Books UK
bonnierbooks.co.uk

For my parents and sister.
With thanks to everyone in Old Moth Studio for their constant enthusiasm, kindness, and support; to my friends for being my biggest cheerleaders; to my agent Steven and everyone at Razorbill for their hard work; and to Vittoria for her love.

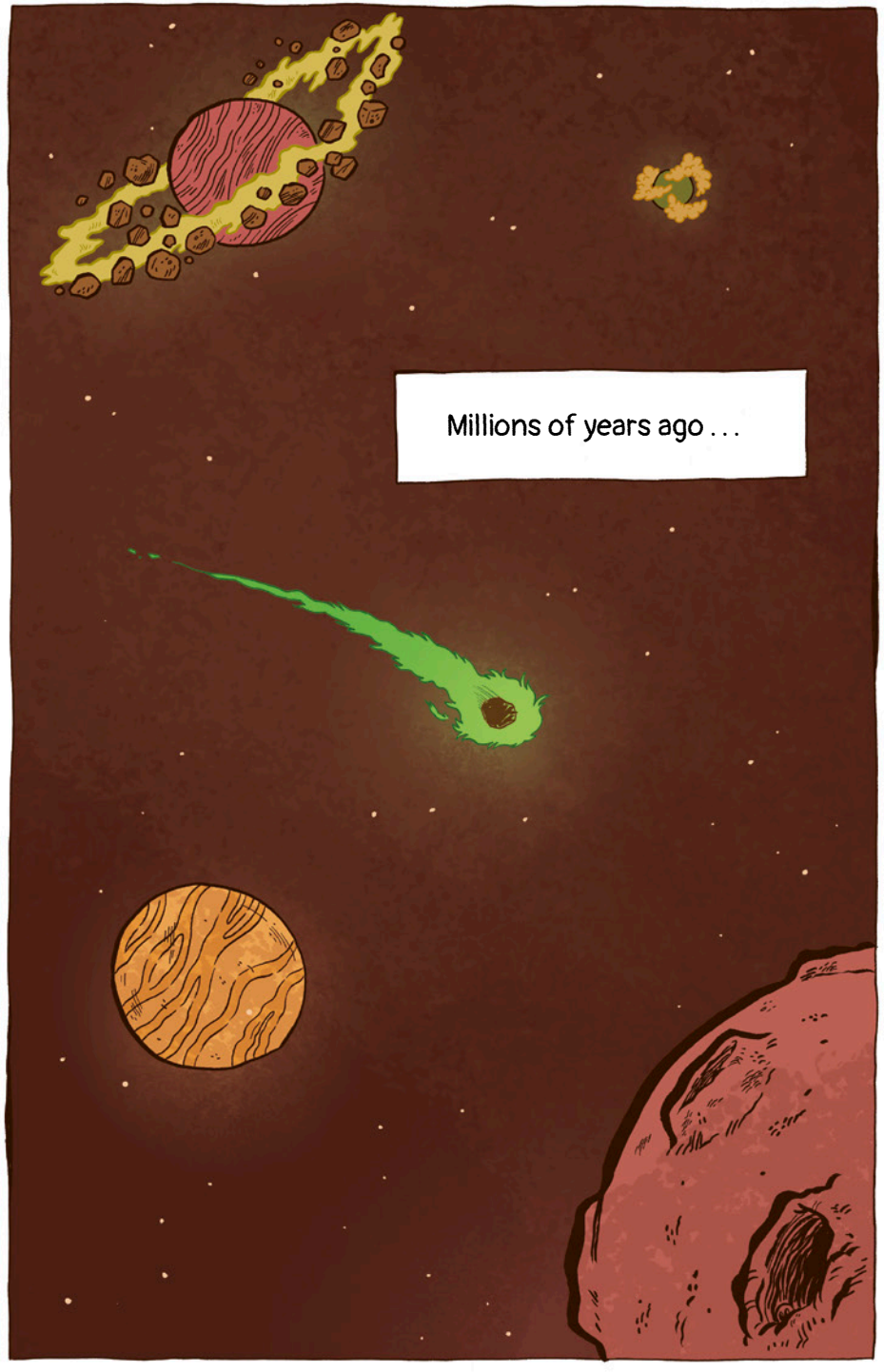
# COWGIRLS & DINOSAURS

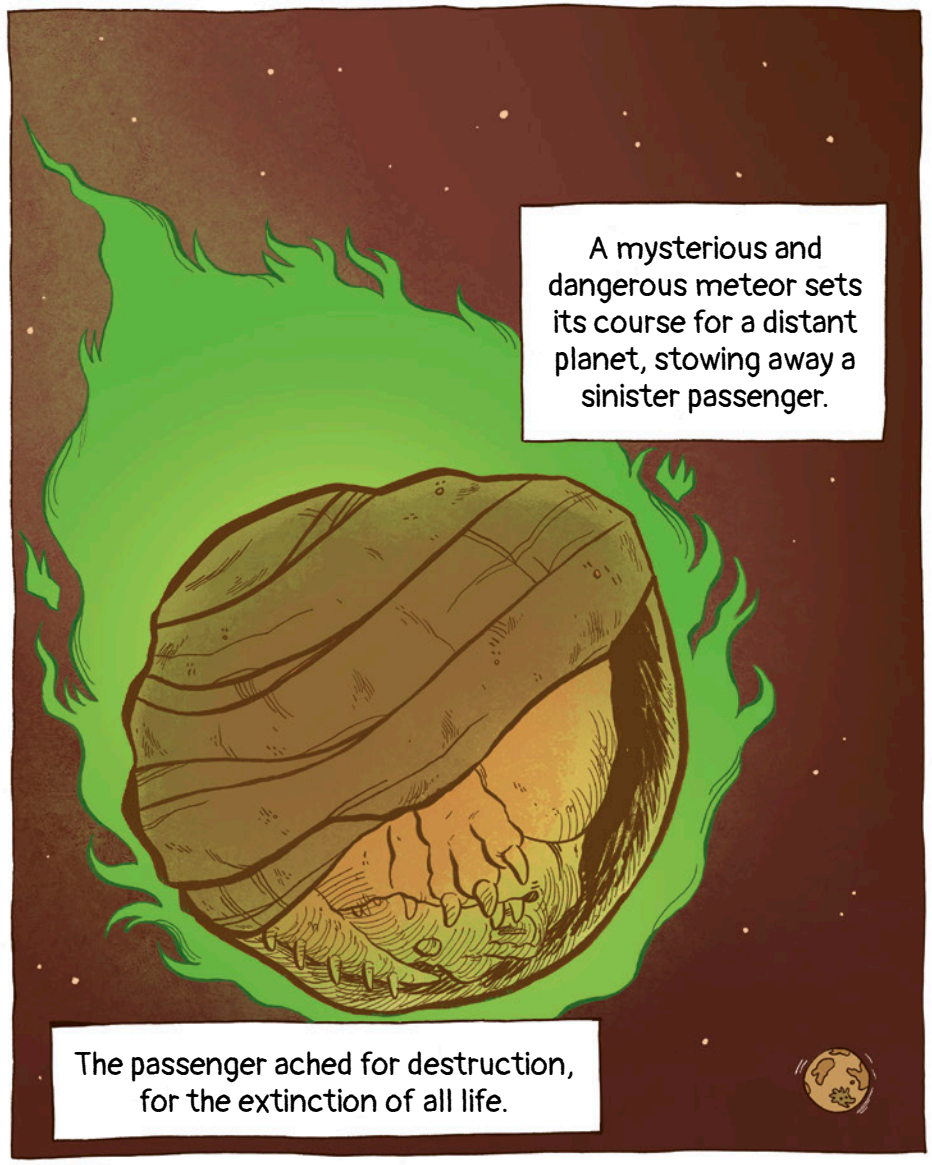
## BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE SPITTLE

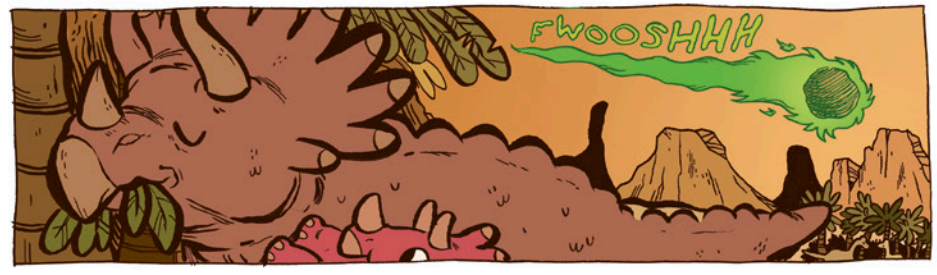
LUCIE EBREY



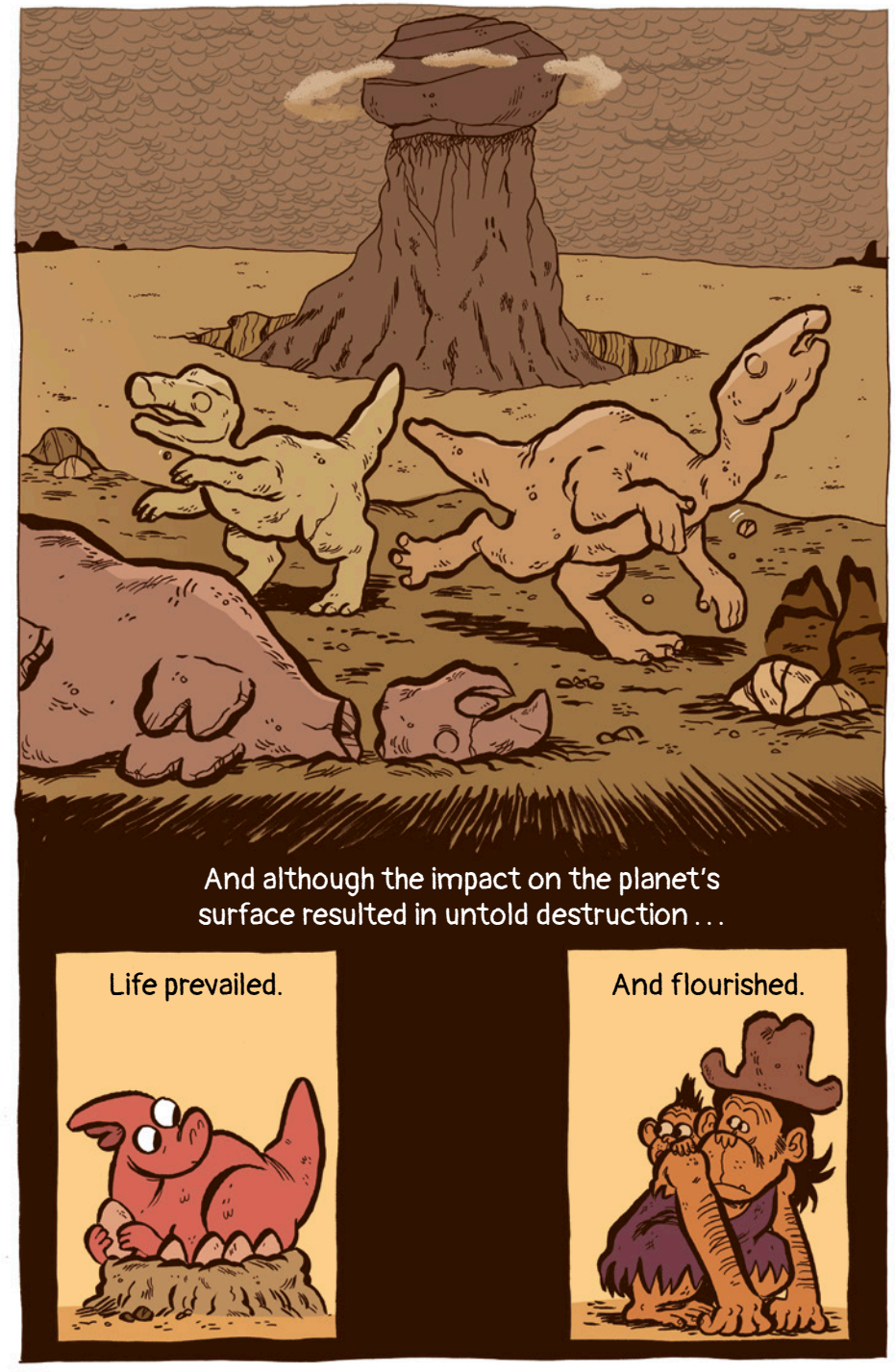
Piccadilly PRESS


Millions of years ago . . .

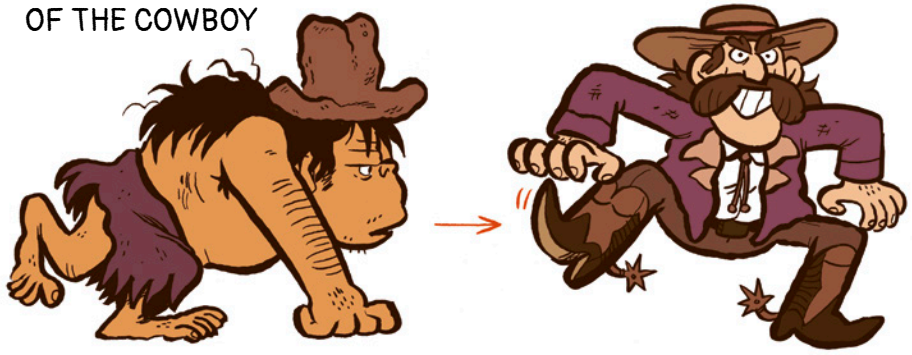

A mysterious and dangerous meteor sets its course for a distant planet, stowing away a sinister passenger.
The passenger ached for destruction, for the extinction of all life.


FWOOSHHH


But its aim . . .
KRASH
. . . was a little off.


And although the impact on the planet's surface resulted in untold destruction . . .
Life prevailed.
And flourished.

NATURAL EVOLUTION
OF THE COWBOY



A new rootin' tootin' life-form emerged over thousands upon thousands of years.



And together with the established dinosaurs, they lived side by side with all sorts of critters and creatures, carving a new world in the desolate and dangerous prairie.







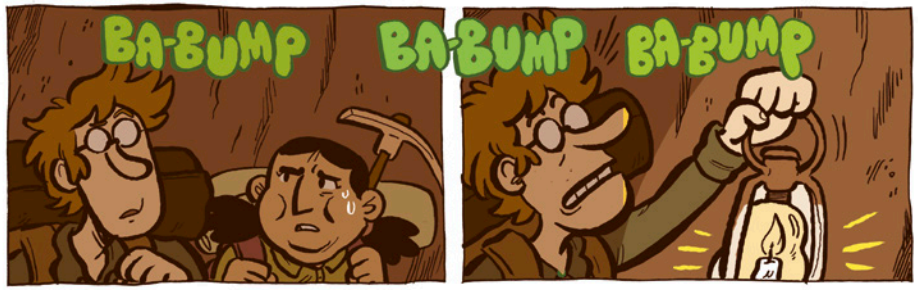





But the League had no idea quite what awaited the prairie when a group of archeologists braved the perils of the desert and made it to the meteor site mountain's peak.



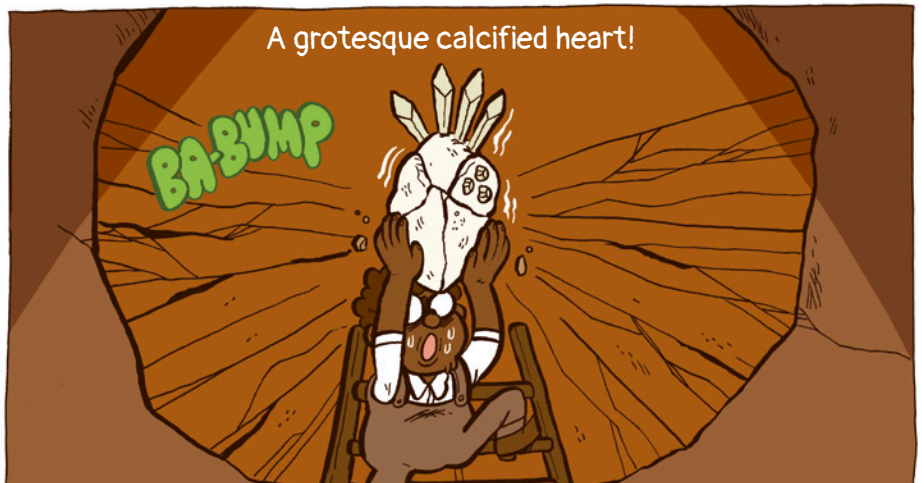
Not soon after they arrived were they haunted by a rhythmic . . .





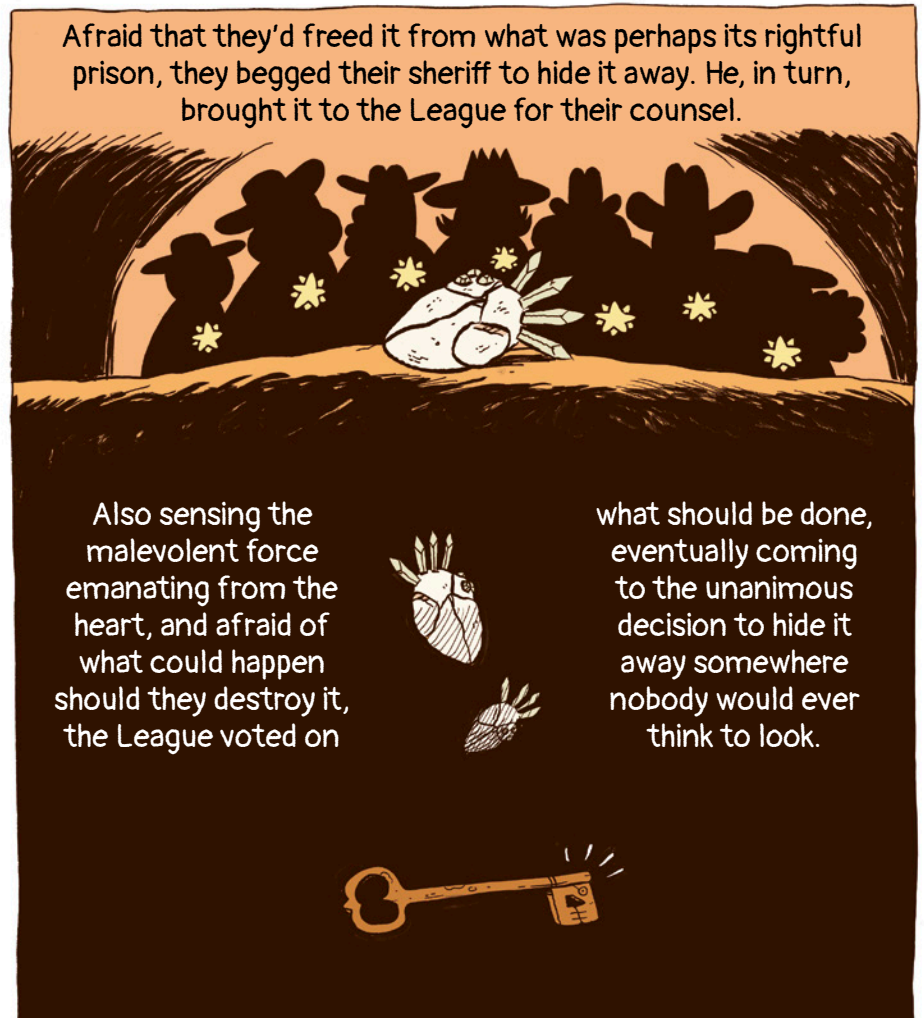












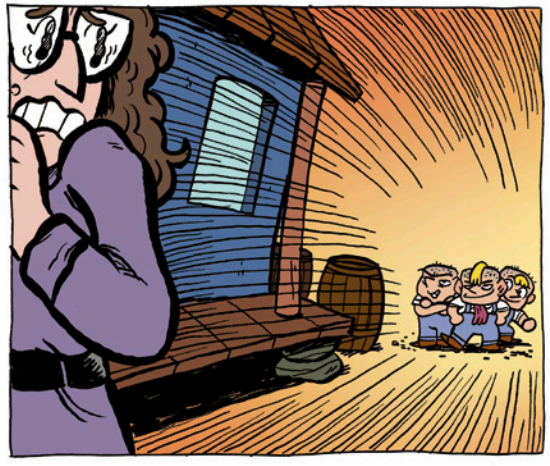

A sleepy town on the far side of the desert where folks minded their manners and said "howdy" to each other on the street.






And certainly a town that knew how to handle . . .







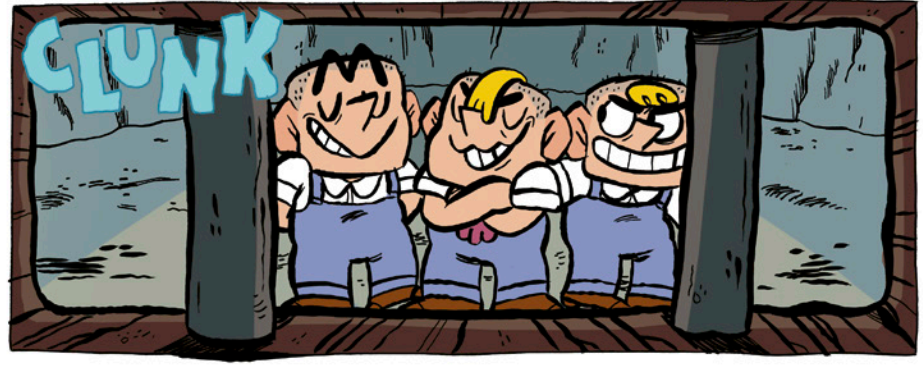






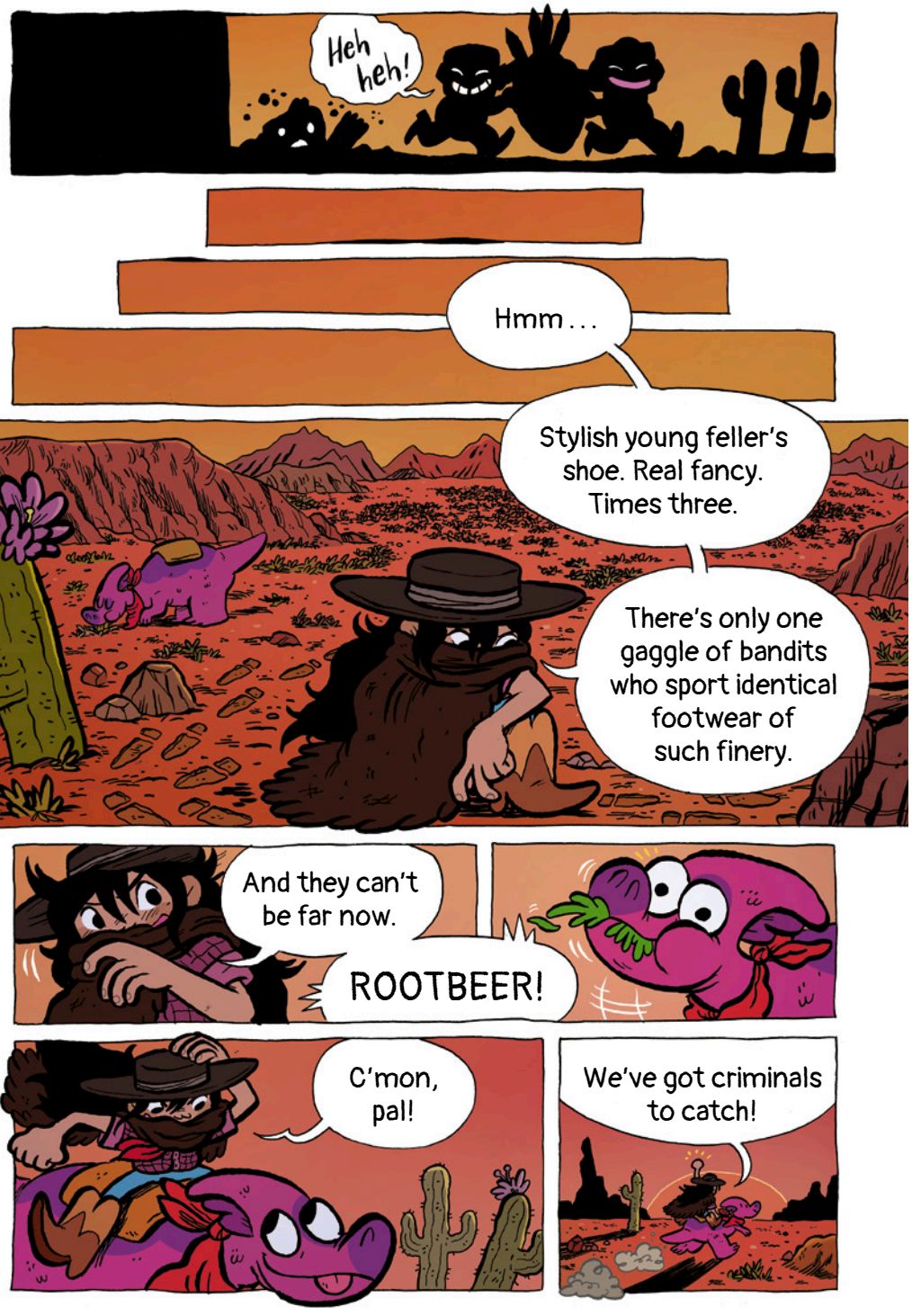







Okay! Phase one is complete! Quick! While the coast is clear!
BLEUGH!


BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
Whoa-ho-HOOO! JACKPOT!
Sis is gonna be real pleased with us!

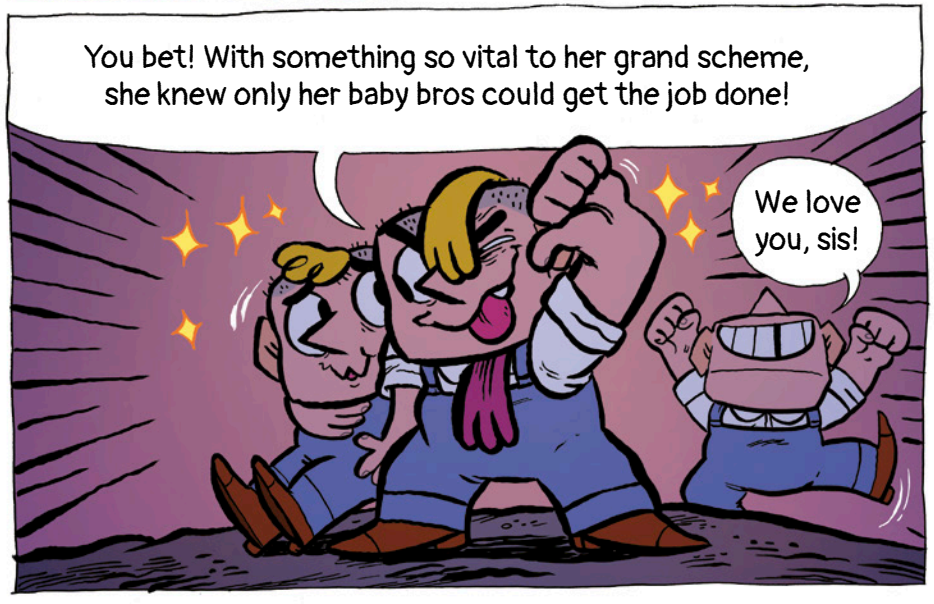

Heh heh!
Hmm . . .
Stylish young feller's shoe. Real fancy. Times three.
There's only one gaggle of bandits who sport identical footwear of such finery.
And they can't be far now.
ROOTBEER!
C'mon, pal!
We've got criminals to catch!


That was too easy!
I mean, even for skilled bandits such as us!
Can you imagine the look on that pip-squeak deputy's face?
I wonder if she's figured out that we escaped yet.

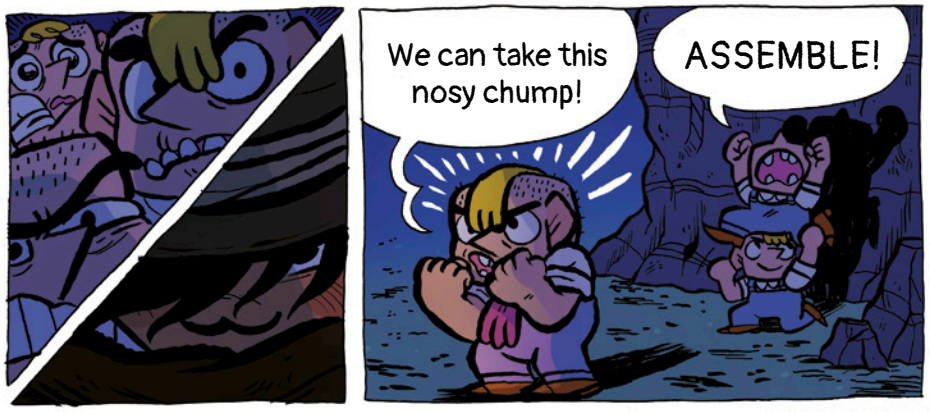

And since we "suggested" those sheriffs take a little "vacation," the path is all clear for sis's big plan.


With this thing bein' the key!
FWIP


D'ya reckon sis'll be proud of us?
It's just lately she's been so—

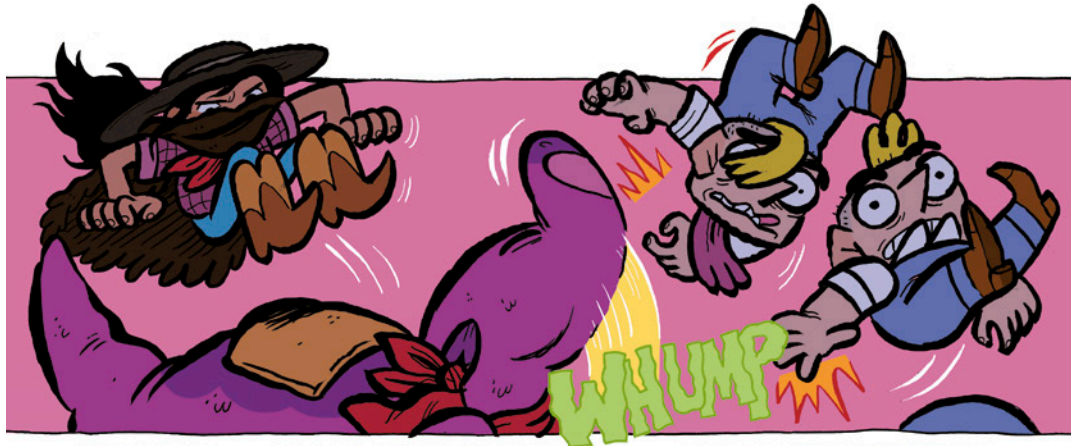

You bet! With something so vital to her grand scheme, she knew only her baby bros could get the job done!
We love you, sis!

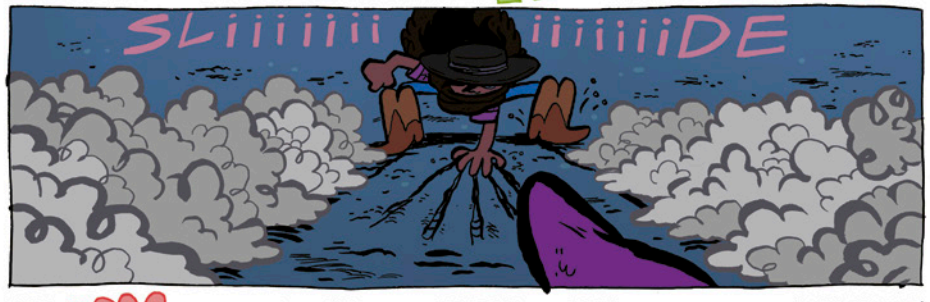

When it's all set in motion, the whole desert is in for a—
SURPRISE!
THE SARSAPARILLA KID
Cloaked vigilante


We can take this nosy chump!
ASSEMBLE!

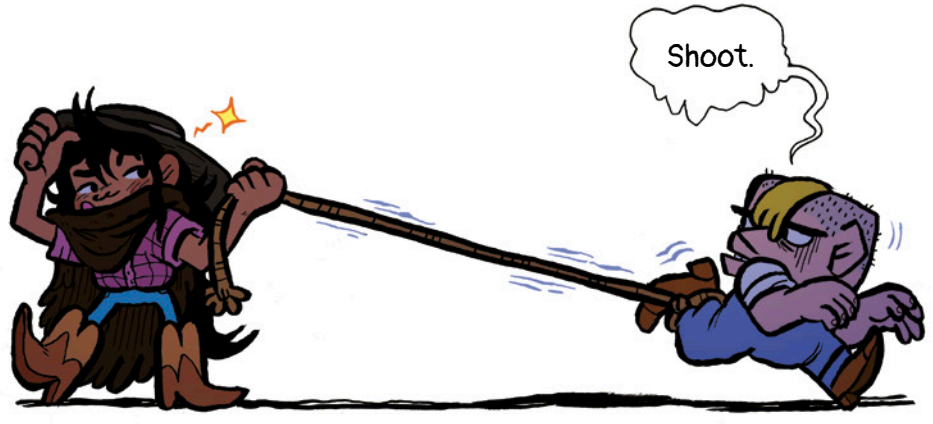

POWER
POWER




WHUMP


SLiiiiiii
iiiiiiiDE


BONK

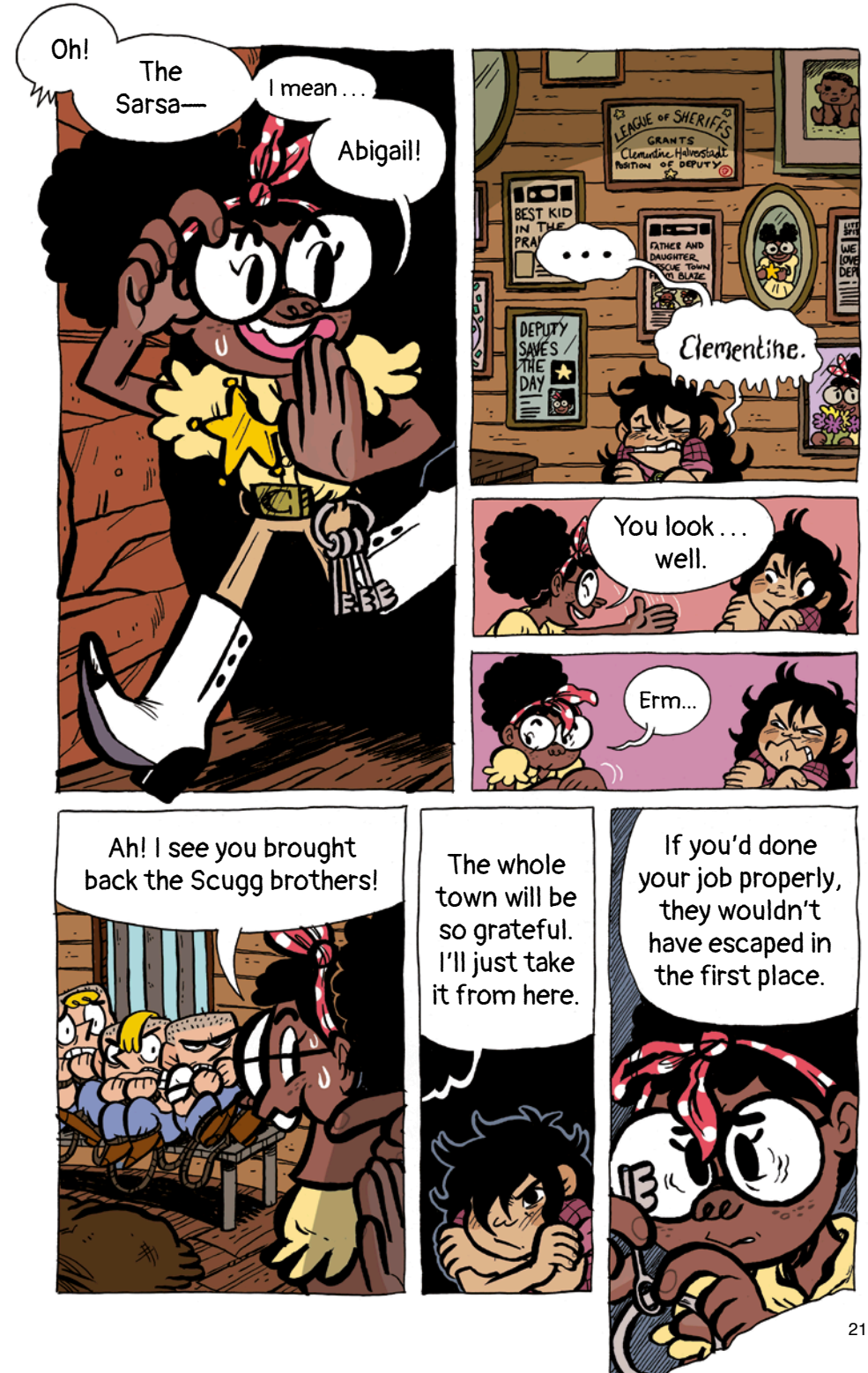

Shoot.


That was too easy!
Are we there yet?
In a hurry to be back behind bars, eh?
You boys may have slipped out of jail a couple of times before . . .
Twelve times.




. . . but when I'm keepin' an eye on you, that won't be happenin' anytime soon!
YEAH!
. . .
Yeah . . .
SMECKV
Ha ha, okay, bud.
This is gonna be the day!
LITTLE SPITTLE
A DARN NICE TOWN, YESSIR
The day they finally say "yes"!


WHAT DO YOU MEAN "NO"?!
JAILHOUSE
Z
We've been through this before, Abigail . . .
Okay, okay, but hear me out!
This time I really, **really** proved myself!
WANTED
THE SCUGG BROS
$10,000
FLOP
$10,000
You know by now that sheriffs don't work with vigilantes.
Oh, and . . .
. . . I ALREADY HAVE A DEPUTY!
Did you call, Papa?


Oh!
The Sarsa—
I mean . . .
Abigail!
LEAGUE OF SHERIFFS
GRANTS Clementine Halvorsdatt POSITION OF DEPUTY
BEST KID IN THE PRA
FATHER AND DAUGHTER RESCUE TOWN IN BLAZE
DEPUTY SAVES THE DAY
. . .
Clementine.
You look . . . well.
Erm...
Ah! I see you brought back the Scugg brothers!
The whole town will be so grateful. I'll just take it from here.
If you'd done your job properly, they wouldn't have escaped in the first place.






I haven't figured it out just yet. I locked them up tight.

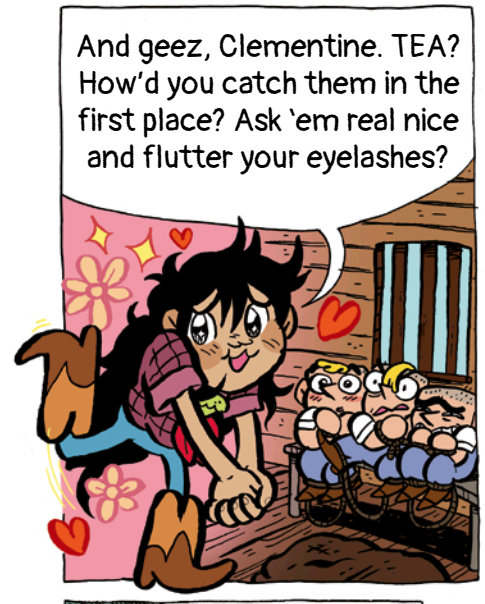


But when I came back with their complimentary inmate tea, they'd somehow dug their way out!



HARUMPH! I would never have taken my eyes off of them. Just sayin'.

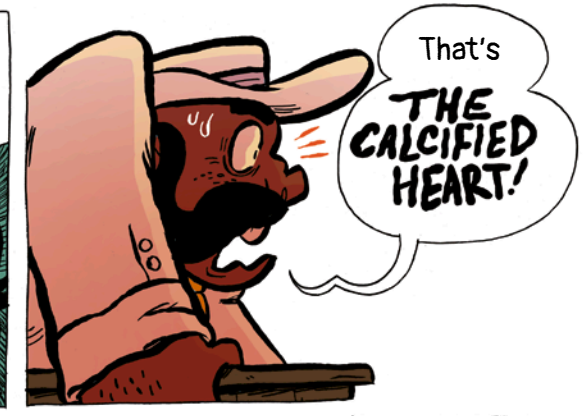










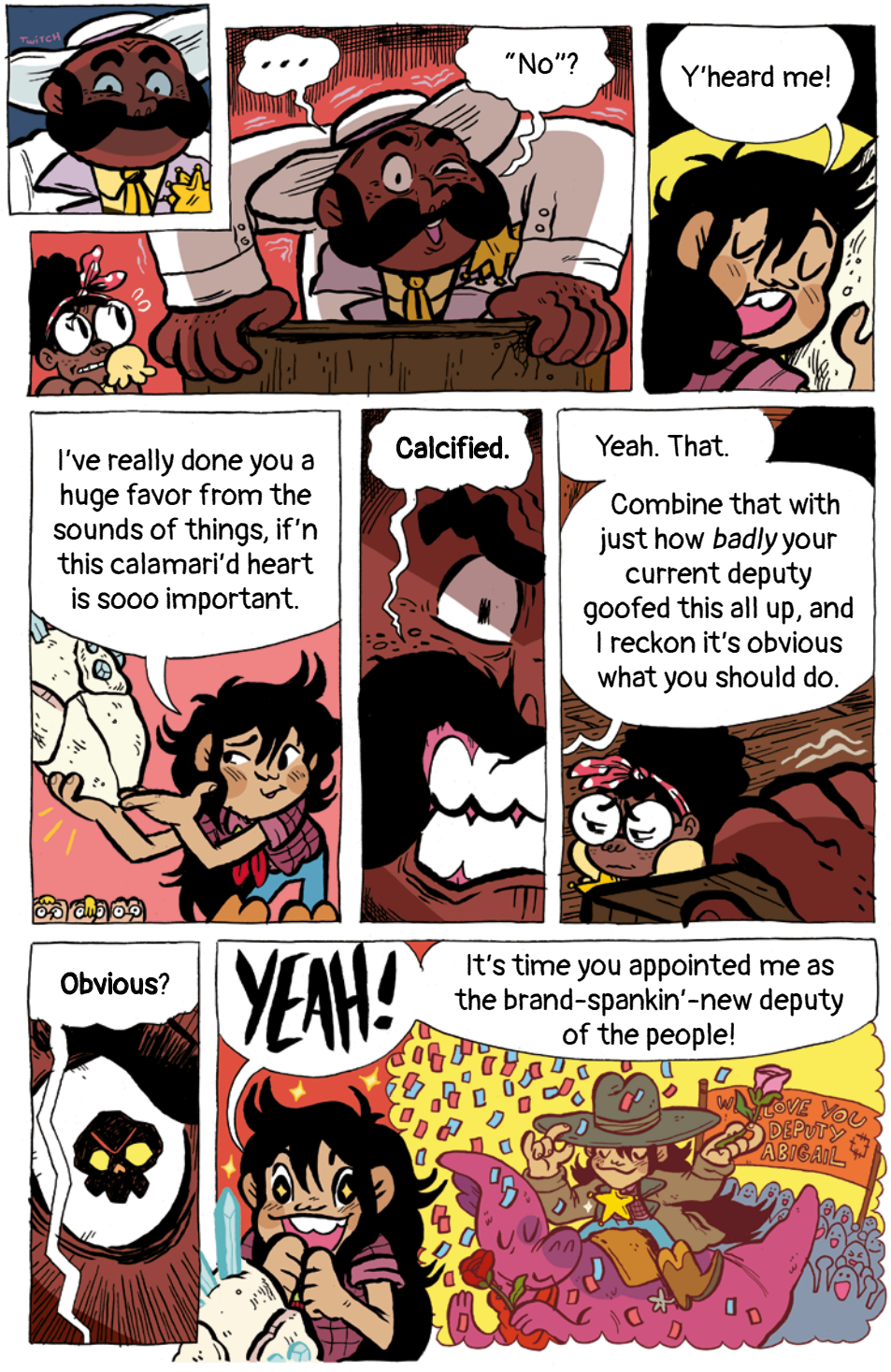













TWITCH
...
"No"?
Y'heard me!
I've really done you a huge favor from the sounds of things, if'n this calamari'd heart is sooo important.
Calcified.
Yeah. That.
Combine that with just how *badly* your current deputy goofed this all up, and I reckon it's obvious what you should do.
Obvious?
YEAH!
It's time you appointed me as the brand-spankin'-new deputy of the people!
I LOVE YOU DEPUTY ABIGAIL




We already have a deputy, Abigail.
I'm afraid I'm going to have to insist that you hand that over.
Please.
...
Give! It! BACK!
No!
SPAN
WAY!


Oh no.
THUNK
Clementine, I'm so sorry! Let me . . .
. . . help.
BAM


A deputy does what they do because it's right. Not because they want glory or attention.
You have a lot of potential, Abigail.
You're talented and passionate.
But acting as you do now, you'll never get to where you want to be.
Thank you for your help today.
Now get out of my town.


W-whatever!
I was just try-ing to help!
Abigail, please! Just wait a moment.
Next time Little Spittle is in peril, don't come cryin' to the Sarsaparilla Kid!
Most heroes savin' the day get a pat on the back.
Or, I dunno, a peck on the cheek.
But all I got was a kick in the teeth!
Abigail!




NIGHTFALL!
Close the gates!
LITTLE SPITTLE


Ah, Sheriff. You're determined that I remain heartless.
I didn't want to have to add a personal touch to this heist.
But...
... you've forced my hand.


You boys best get comfy. I'd wager you're gonna be here a fair while.
YOWCH!
My deputy here will make sure of that.
U-UH-HUH!
CLUNK
clink
I'm going to give the heart the once-over and make sure those clowns didn't damage it before I hide it away again.
I'll stay on watch, Papa.


This time I won't let you down!
You'll be proud of me again!
I'm counting on you, Deputy.
Ew! Barf!
Gross!
Don't worry, bros. We'll figure out a w—
GASP!
WHOA!
WOMPF
She's coming!
CLICK


LOB!
HEY!
I'm hearing an awful lot of ruckus in there. I don't want to have to revoke any snack privileges.
OH! Er . . .
Sorry, Deputy. We promise you won't even notice we're in here!
mmf-mmf!
Gross!


Of course, it'd be easier to stay quiet if'n we had some of your famous calming tea. We're **awful tired**.


Fetch you tea? Shucks, I...I'm not so sure.

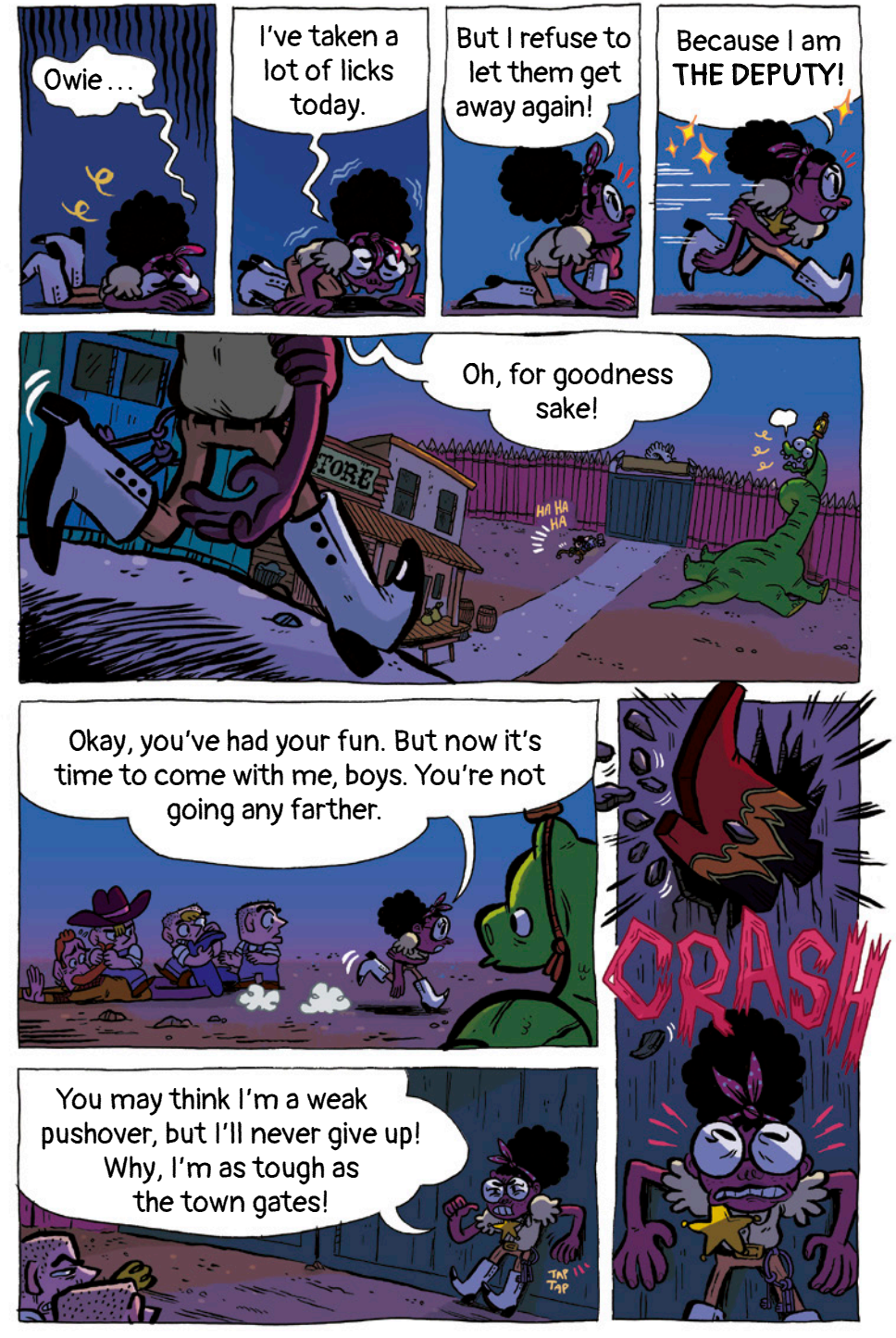

But then again, even villainous bandits should be treated humanely by a deputy!


Mmm . . . all righty. But **no** funny business!


WAIT A MINUTE!
How could I be so careless?
Sorry, I forgot to ask if you all wanted milk in your tea or if you're lactose intol—
FLINT WOZ HERE
. . .


No no no NO! Not again!
RATTLE RATTLE
WAIT! If I go round the back of the building, I can intercept them!
This isn't a disaster yet!
I can still fix this!
Papa won't even have to know!
Anything I need to know, Deputy?
No, Papa!
BOMP
Huff-puff.
No sign of them.
HUFF HUFF


S-stop! In the name of the...
Phew...
Eh? You notice something suspicious over there, Frankie?
Who's sneakin' around so late at night?
What?
Kids?


Owie...
I've taken a lot of licks today.
But I refuse to let them get away again!
Because I am THE DEPUTY!
Oh, for goodness sake!
HA HA HA
Okay, you've had your fun. But now it's time to come with me, boys. You're not going any farther.
CRASH
You may think I'm a weak pushover, but I'll never give up! Why, I'm as tough as the town gates!
TAP TAP


JIGGLE JIGGLE
H-how? Who?
SMASH
BOOM
POW
Phew!
Now **that** should get the sheriff's attention.

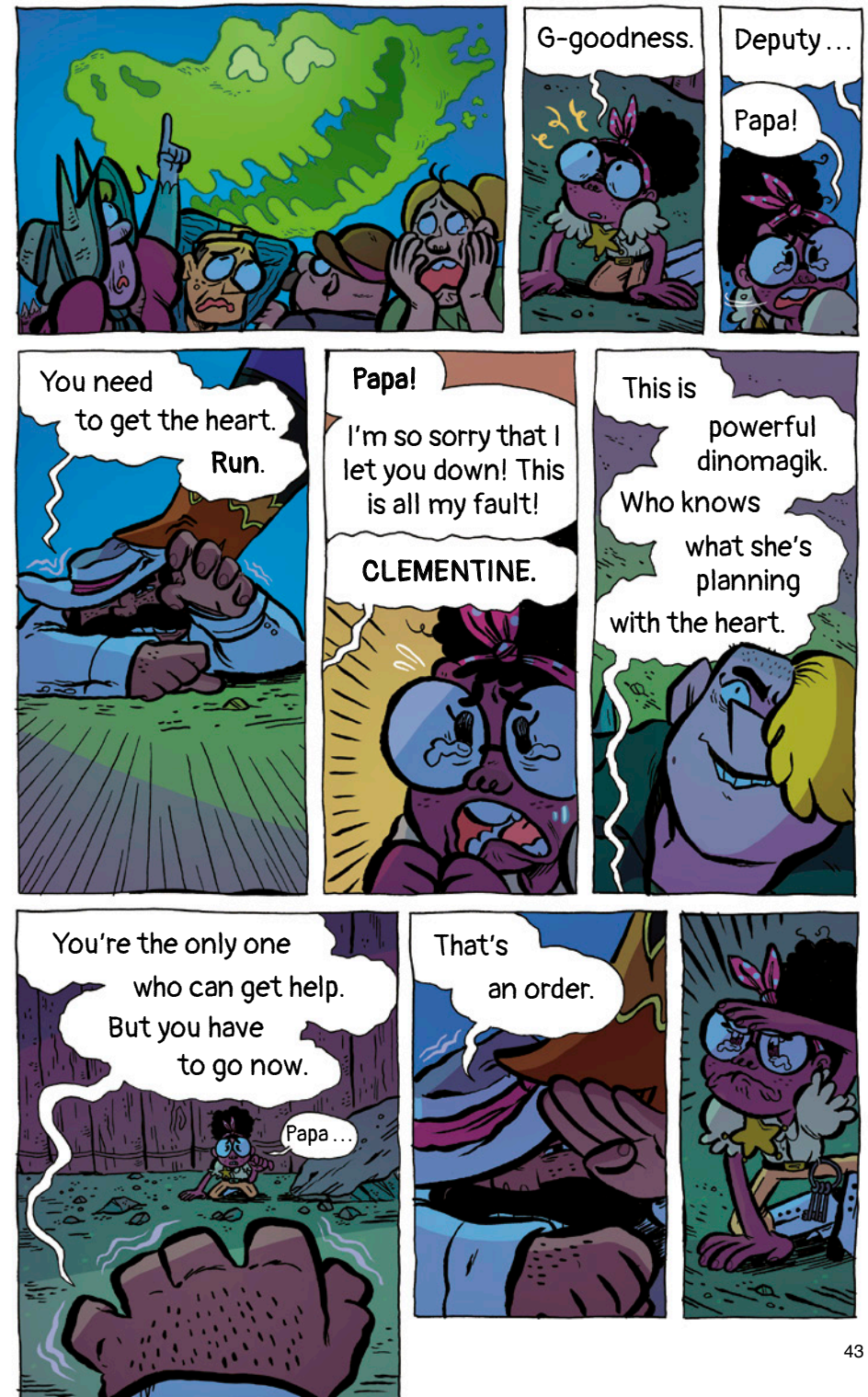

You boys didn't tell me that the sheriff was so **small**.
BANDIT QUEEN!
Well, well, well.
Sorry we got nabbed, sis.
Put. My. Deputy. **Down**.
Sure.


I...
WAAA!
RUN!




KLONK!
OOF!
AH!
PAT PAT
I let Little Spittle down . . .
Oh, hush.
FWOOM

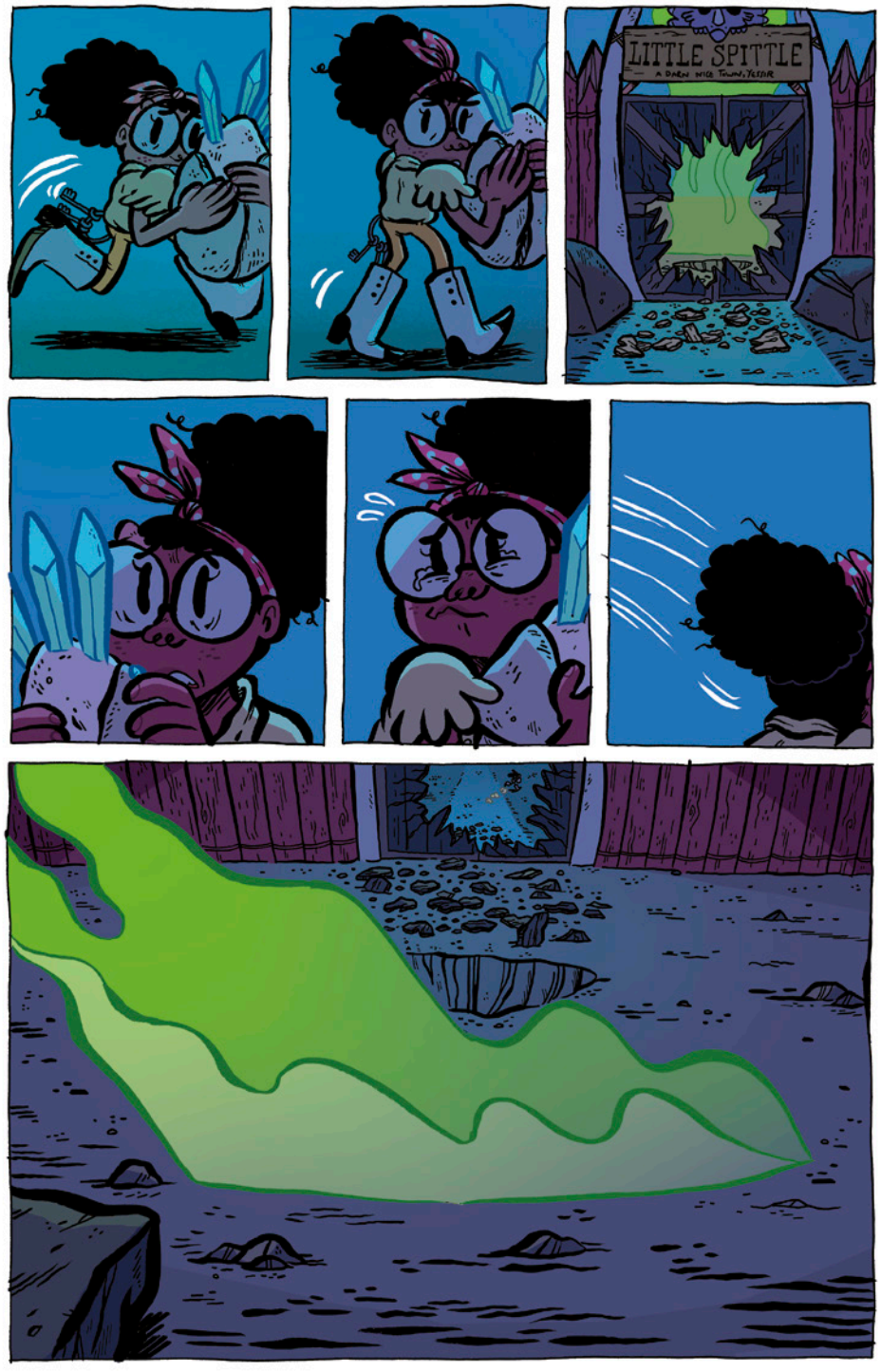

Thanks so much for the heart. But my ride just pulled up.


G-goodness.
Deputy . . .
Papa!
You need to get the heart. Run.
Papa!
I'm so sorry that I let you down! This is all my fault!
CLEMENTINE.
This is powerful dinomagik. Who knows what she's planning with the heart.
You're the only one who can get help. But you have to go now.
Papa . . .
That's an order.


Put Put Put
What? NO!
Get your paws OFF the boots.
It's MINE!




NO!
?
WAIT! NOT YET!


LITTLE SPITTLE
A DARN NICE TOWN, TEXAS


HARUMPH!
Of all the ungrateful,
...back-stabbin',
NO-GOOD
RASSUM FRASSUM...
If it weren't for me, that super special heart would be halfway to who knows where!
And this is how they thank me?
Well, heck to 'em!
MUNCH MUNCH
Rootbeer, old bud, at the crack of dawn, the two of us are gonna up stakes and find a better, more appreciative town praying for a deputy just like me.
Just you wait. I'll bet those Little Spittle losers will realize their mistake and will be cryin' and wailin' my name.
I can almost hear it now...
ABIGAIL! ABIGAIL! WHERE ARE YOU?


That was sooner than I thought . . .


Oh, thank goodness.




You're here to make me feel even worse about whappin' you on the head I'll bet!
BONK
Well, I **already** apologized and I ain't doin' it agai—


Great.
It's **you**.




Er . . . hey, Clementine. What's wrong? You look more nervous than a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. And why d'ya have that?

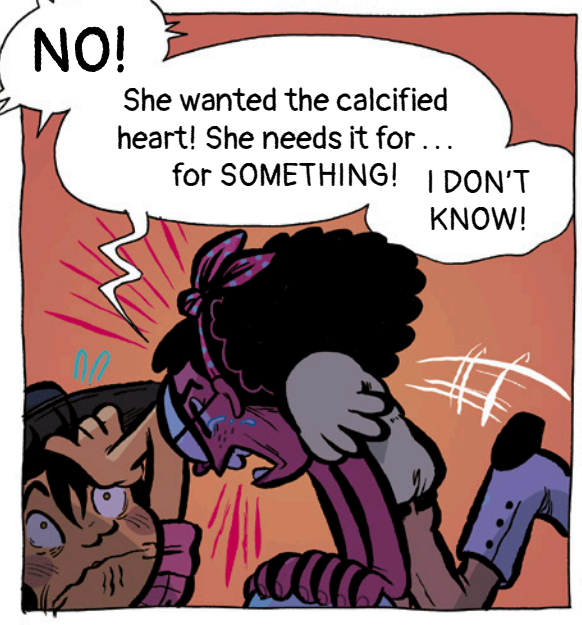



It's . . . Little Spittle . . .
Everyone . . . gone!
KIDNAPPED!
POKE


You ain't makin' a lick of sense.


B-Bandit Queen . . . She came to town because she wanted—

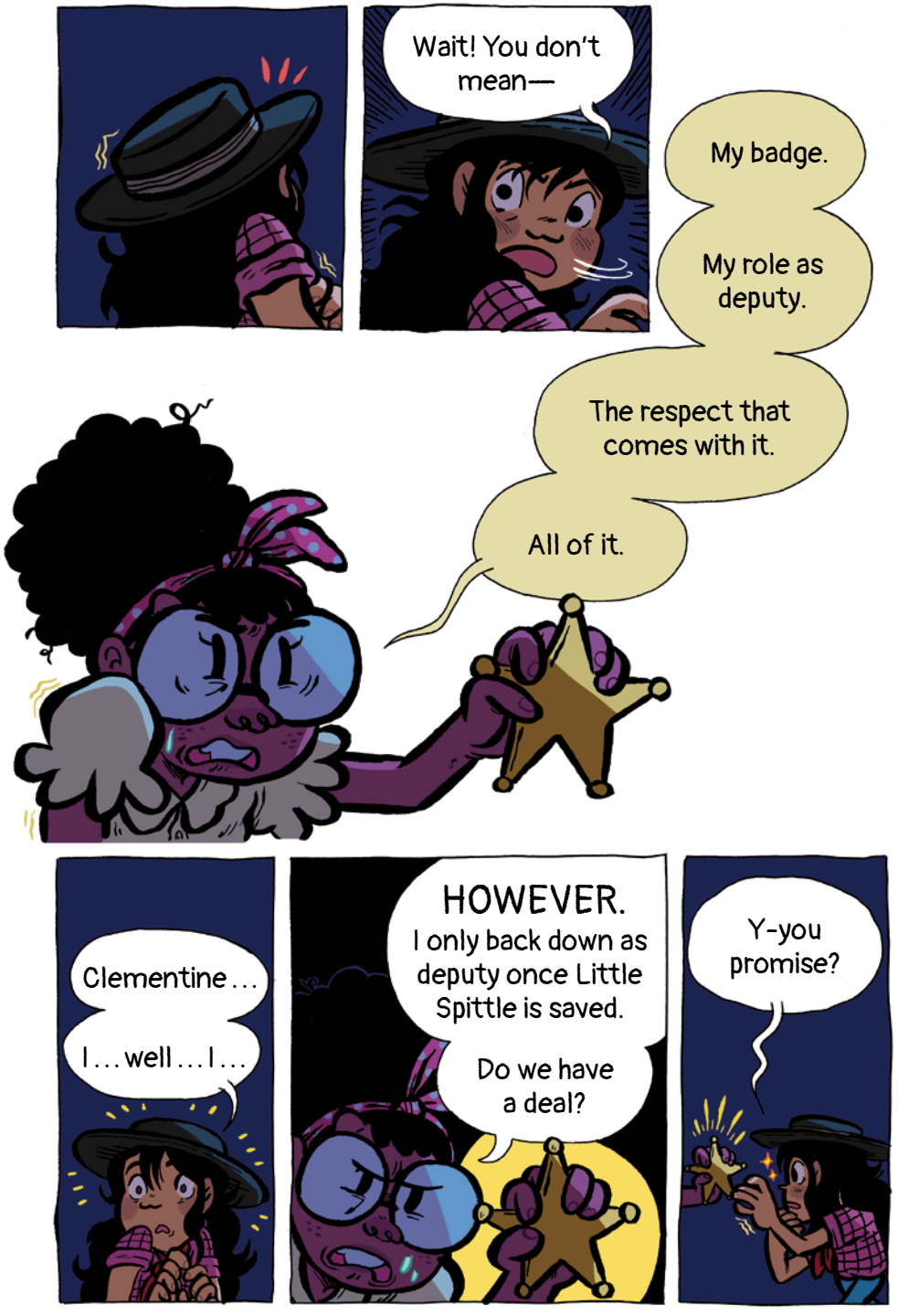

She wanted to rescue her brothers?
I mean **obviously** she wanted to—


NO!
She wanted the calcified heart! She needs it for . . . for SOMETHING!
I DON'T KNOW!


And now she's stolen everyone.
The whole of Little Spittle.
The wonderful townsfolk.
Our dinos.
And . . . Papa . . .


They're all gone and . . .
and . . .
and I couldn't stop it from happening!
sniff sniff
WHUMPF
It's all my fault!
Well, what are you going to do now?
M-me?
Yup.
I mean, you're the deputy and all.
Sounds like a whole lotta ruckus that's none of my business.


You're not serious, are you?
Oh, I am!
That town treated me like dirt! I say heck to them and the mess they're in!
This could be a life-and-death situation, and you're refusing? I thought you were always going on about looking out for everyone!
Yeah, well, that was before they stopped looking out for me.
I really can't convince you to help?
No, ma'am.
What if. . .
. . . what if I gave it to you?


Wait! You don't mean—
My badge.
My role as deputy.
The respect that comes with it.
All of it.
Clementine...
I...well...I...
HOWEVER.
I only back down as deputy once Little Spittle is saved.
Do we have a deal?
Y-you promise?




A deputy's word is everything.
You better get used to that.
Then . . . DEAL!
Abigail, thank you. This means so m—
KA-CLASP
Don't thank me just yet, Clementine. We still have a ways to go.


I mean, we don't even know where that . . . **calibrated** heart is or why Bandit Queen wants it in the first place.
SNATCH
**Calcified**.
But yes, I suppose you're right. We should start, well, with the heart.
That can wait until morning. We won't be much use worn out. Let's get a night of rest in first.
NUDGE
Ah yes. Good idea. It's . . .
. . . it's been quite a day.
You can take my bed.
It's in the wagon.
Oh! Well, thank you, Abigail.
But what about you?
I don't want to be any imposition.


Ehn. Spare me.
I'll sleep under the stars tonight. Looks like a purty one.
If'n anything happens, I'll have Rootbeer with me.


Plus . . .
your . . . er . . . head there could use a soft pillow or two, I reckon.
If that's the case, thank you kindly.
I'll see you tomorrow bright and early!
Uh-huh. Yeah. G'night.
Or...yeah...