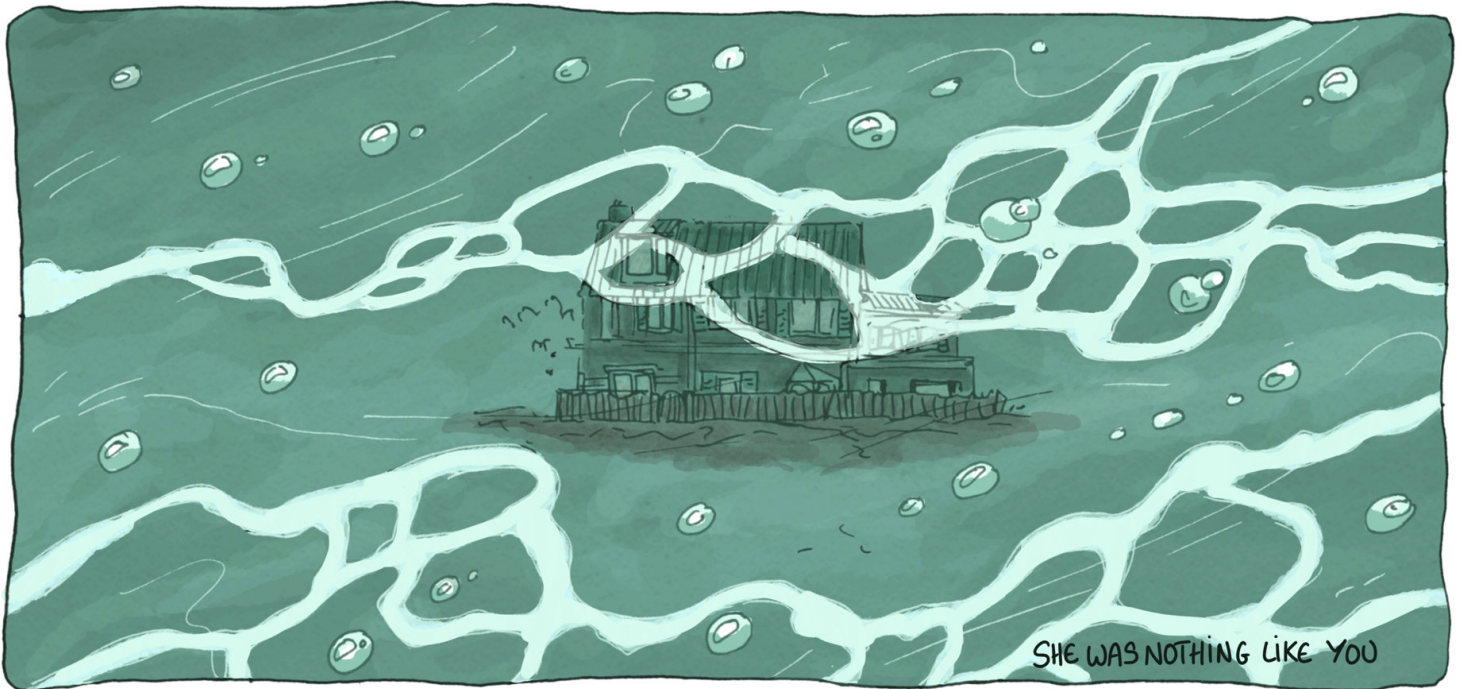


MY LAST LANDLADY



SHE WAS NOTHING LIKE YOU



NOTHING AT ALL ALIKE





HER ROOMS WERE DAMP.



THE BREAKFASTS WERE UNPLEASANT



Oily EGGS

LEATHERY SAUSAGES

A BAKED ORANGE SLUDGE OF BEANS



HER FACE COULD HAVE CURDLED BEANS



SHE WAS NOT KIND.



YOU STRIKE ME AS A KIND PERSON



I HOPE  
YOUR  
WORLD  
IS KIND.



BY WHICH I MEAN...

I'VE HEARD WE SEE THE  
WORLD NOT AS IT IS BUT  
AS WE ARE

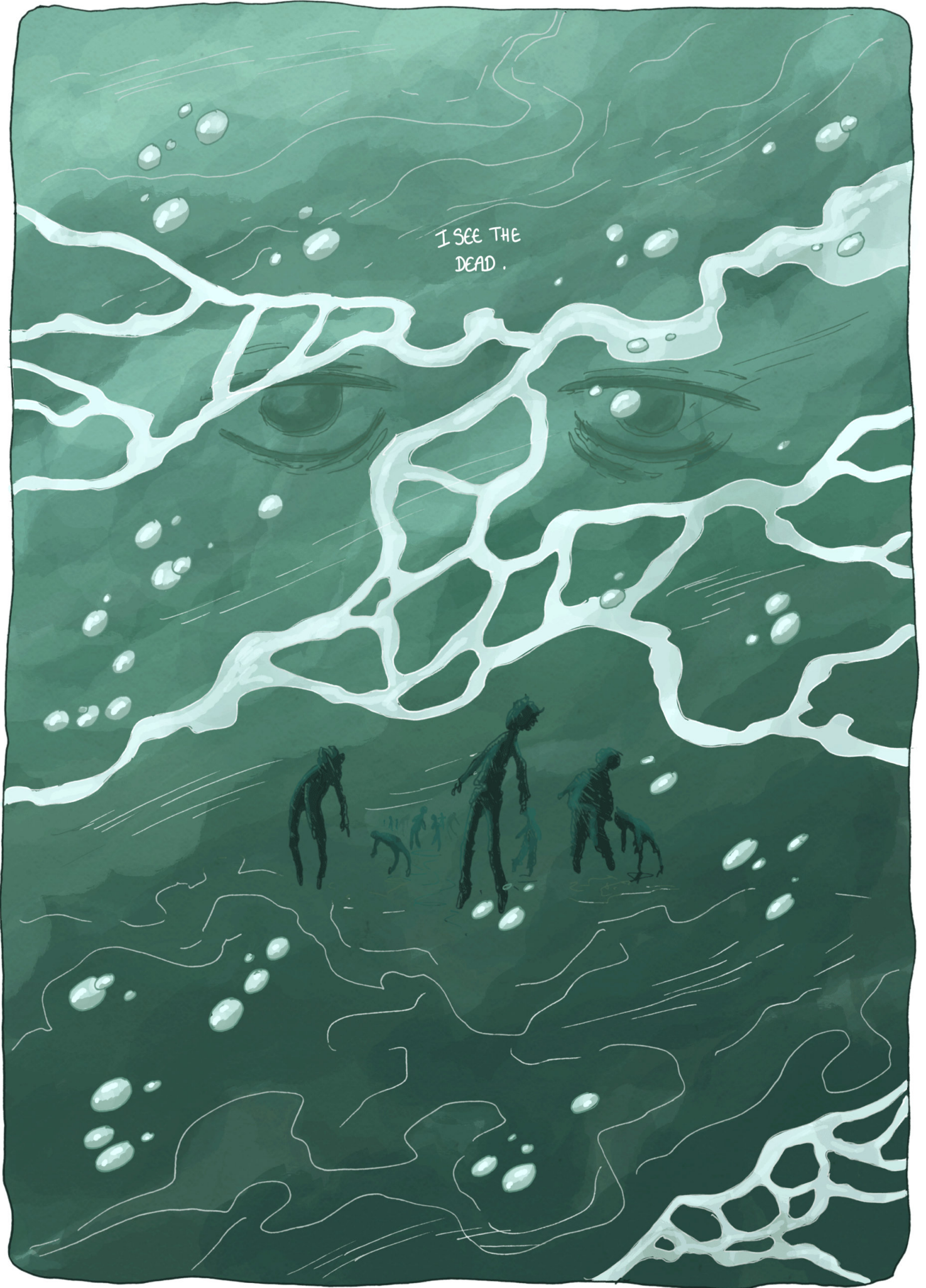
A SAINT SEES A  
WORLD OF SAINTS

A KILLER SEES  
ONLY MURDERERS  
AND VICTIMS



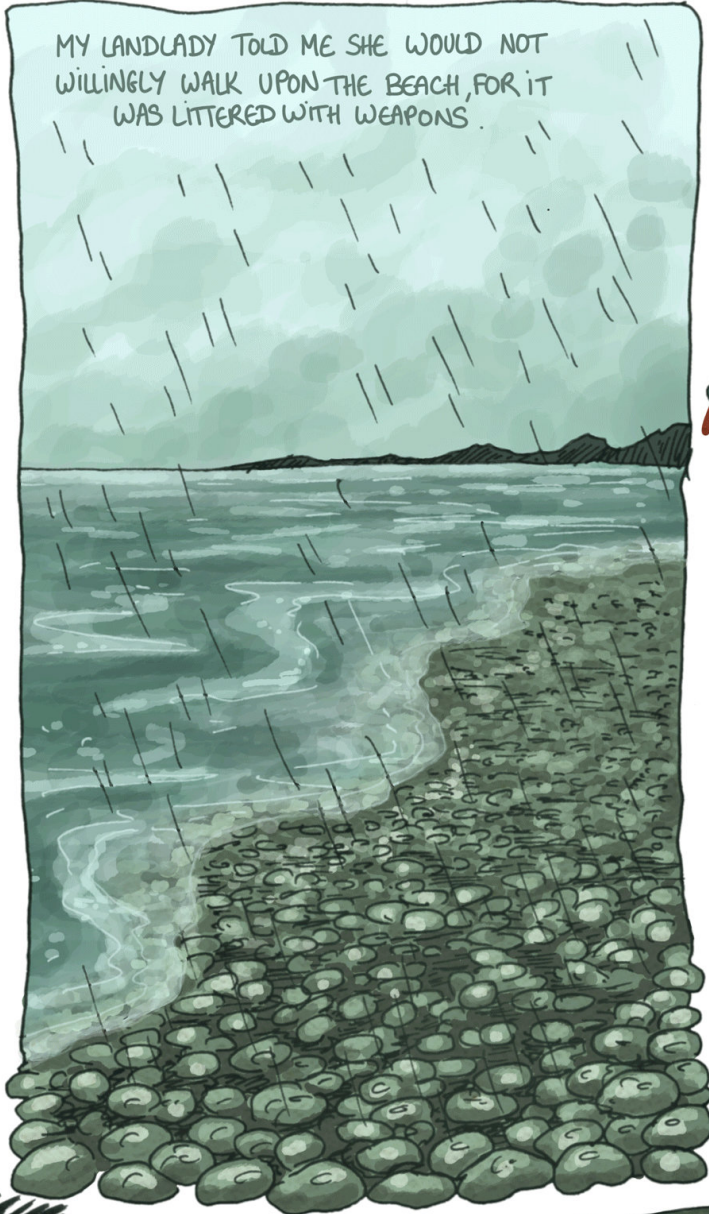


I SEE THE  
DEAD .





MY LANDLADY TOLD ME SHE WOULD NOT WILLINGLY WALK UPON THE BEACH, FOR IT WAS LITTERED WITH WEAPONS.



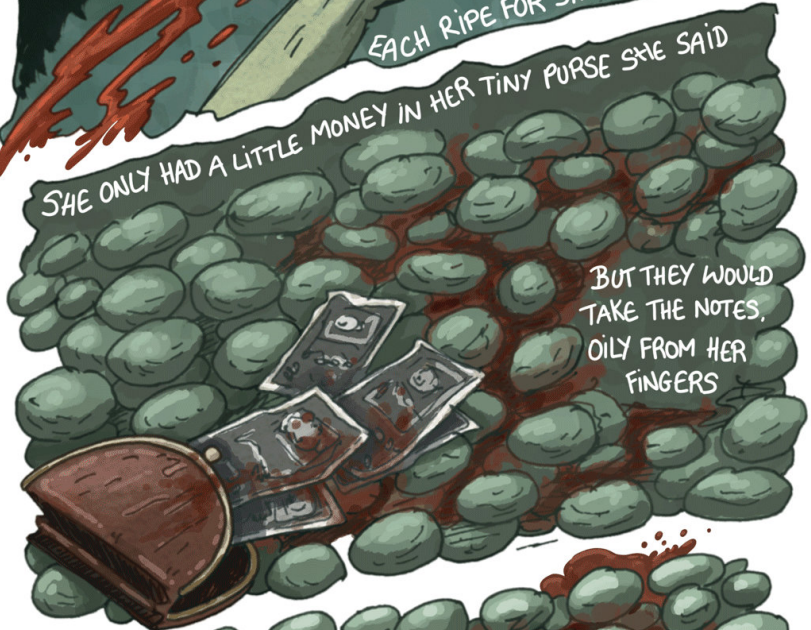
HUGE HAND-FITTING ROCKS

EACH RIPE FOR STRIKING

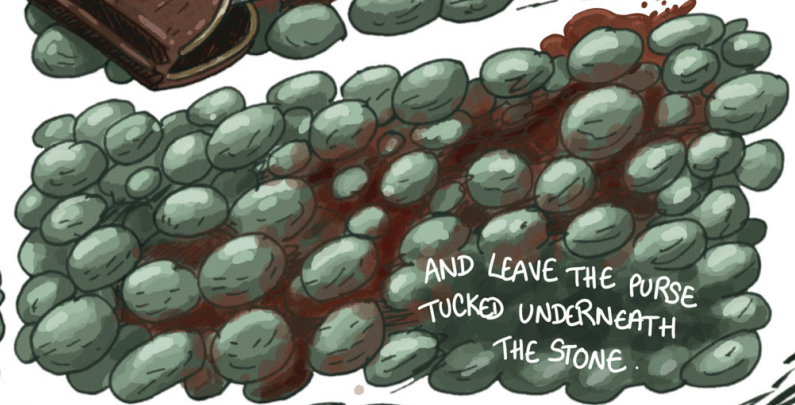


SHE ONLY HAD A LITTLE MONEY IN HER TINY PURSE SHE SAID

BUT THEY WOULD TAKE THE NOTES, OILY FROM HER FINGERS



AND LEAVE THE PURSE TUCKED UNDERNEATH THE STONE.



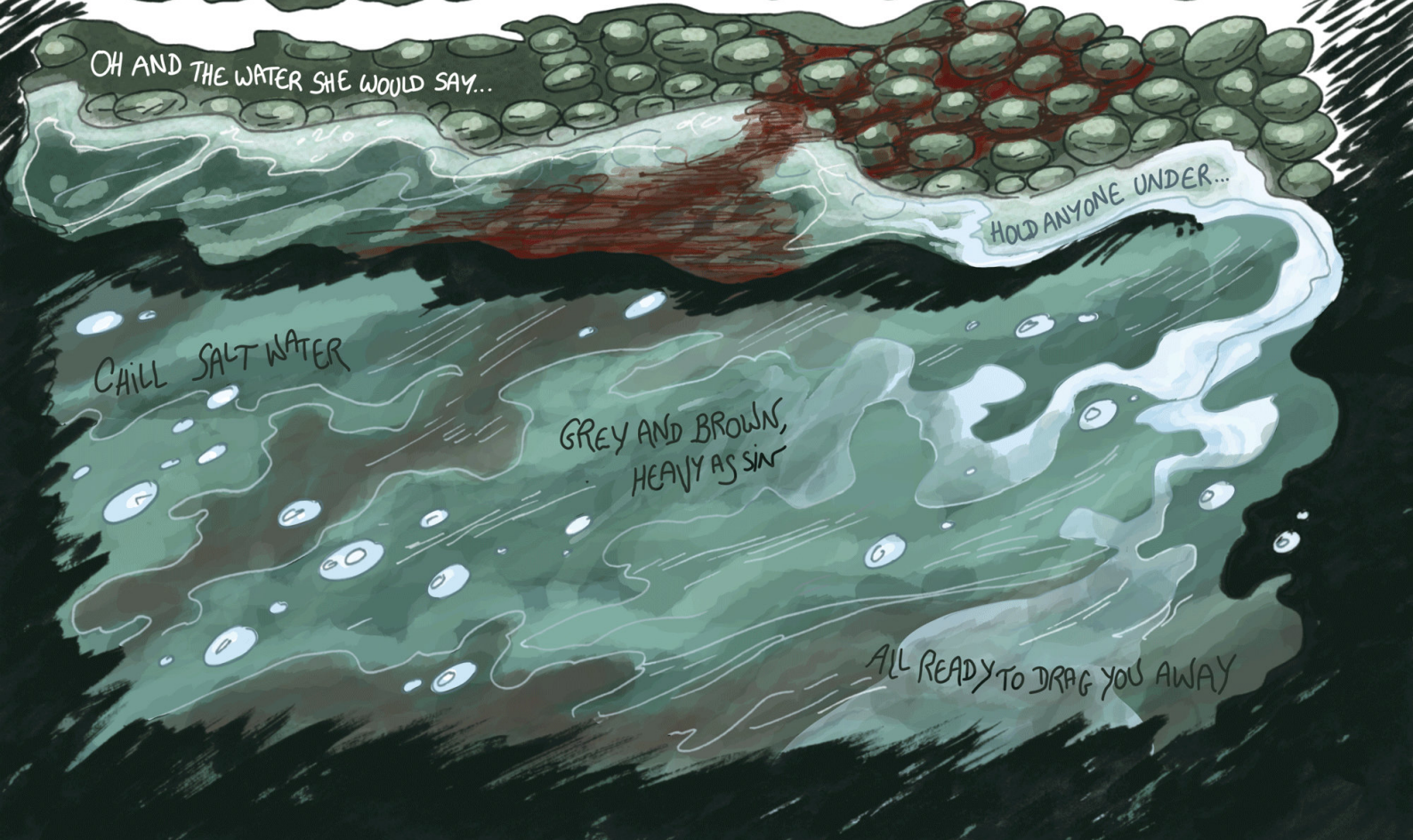
OH AND THE WATER SHE WOULD SAY...

HOLD ANYONE UNDER...

CHILL SALT WATER

GREY AND BROWN, HEAVY AS SIN

ALL READY TO DRAG YOU AWAY





CHILDREN WENT LIKE THAT SO EASILY IN THE SEA

WHEN THEY WERE SURPLUS TO REQUIREMENTS

OR HAD LEARNED  
AWKWARD  
FACTS THEY  
MIGHT BE  
INCLINED TO  
PASS ONTO  
THOSE



THERE WERE PEOPLE ON THE  
WEST PIER THE NIGHT IT BURNED  
SHE SAID

WHO WOULD LISTEN.

THE CURTAINS WERE DUSTY LACE AND  
BLOCKED EACH TOWN GRIMED VIEW.

"SEA  
VIEW"

THAT WAS A LAUGH!



THE MORNING SHE SAW ME  
TWITCH HER CURTAINS TO SEE  
IF IT WAS PROPERLY RAINING



SHE RAPPED MY KNUCKLES.



"MR MARONEY," SHE SAID, "IN THIS  
HOUSE WE DO NOT LOOK AT THE  
SEA THROUGH THE WINDOWS."



"PEOPLE COME TO THE BEACH  
TO FORGET THEIR PROBLEMS. IT'S  
WHAT WE DO, IT'S WHAT THE  
ENGLISH DO."



YOU CHOP YOUR GIRLFRIEND  
UP BECAUSE SHE'S PREGNANT  
AND YOU'RE WORRIED WHAT  
THE WIFE WOULD SAY IF  
SHE FOUND OUT.

OR YOU POISON THE BANKER  
YOU'RE SLEEPING WITH FOR  
THE INSURANCE, MARRY A  
DOZEN MEN IN A DOZEN  
LITTLE SEASIDE TOWN...  
MARGATE...  
TORQUAY...

LORD LOVE THEM BUT WHY MUST THEY STAND SO STILL?



WHEN I ASKED "WHO", WHO STOOD SO STILL, SHE TOLD ME IT WAS "NONE OF MY BEESWAX", AND TO BE SURE TO BE OUT OF THE HOUSE BETWEEN MIDDAY AND FOUR.

AS THE CHILD WAS COMING

AND I WOULD BE UNDERFOOT

AND IN THE WAY!



I'VE BEEN IN THAT BNB FOR THREE WEEKS NOW, LOOKING FOR PERMANENT DIGGS.

I PAID IN CASH.

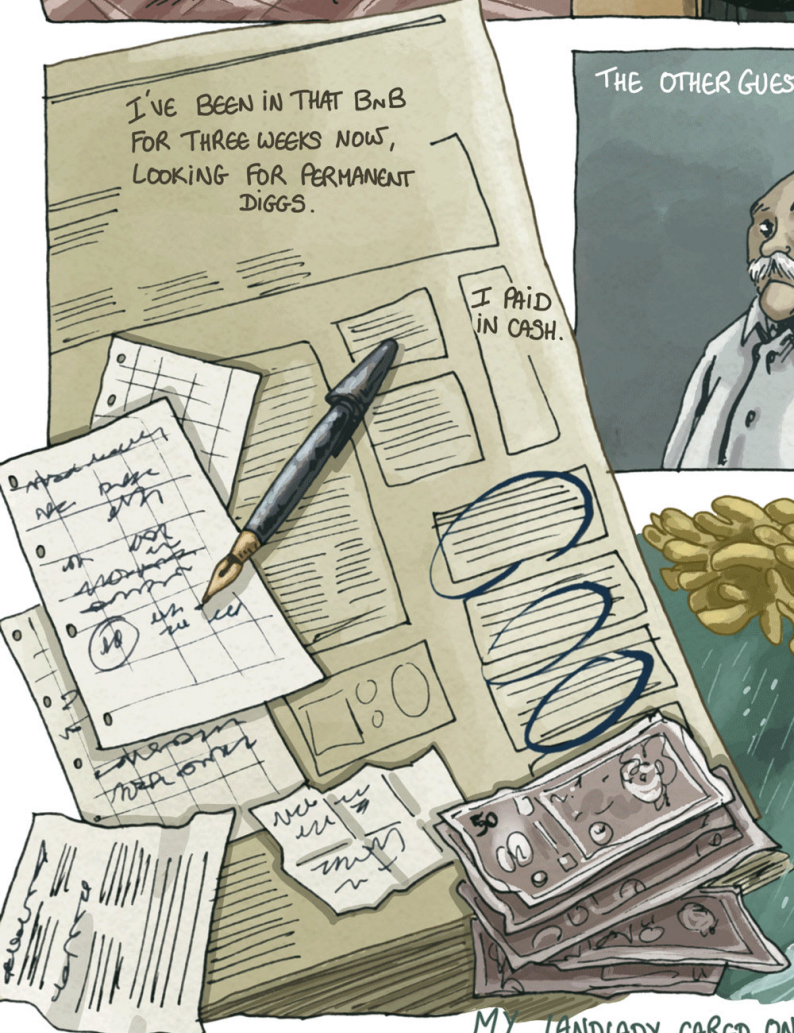
THE OTHER GUESTS WERE LOVELESS FOLK ON HOLIDAY.



AND DID NOT CARE IF THIS WAS HOLE OR HELL

WE'D EAT OUR SLIPPERY EGGS TOGETHER

I'D WATCH THEM PROMENADE IF THE DAY WAS FINE. OR HUDDLE UNDER AWNINGS IF IT RAINED.



MY LANDLADY CARED ONLY THAT THEY WERE OUT OF THE HOUSE UNTIL TEA TIME.



A RETIRED DENTIST  
FROM EDGBASTON

DOWN FOR A WEEK OF  
LONELINESS AND DRIZZLE  
BY THE SEA

WOULD NOD AT ME  
OVER BREAKFAST,  
OR IF WE PASSED ON  
THE SEA  
FRONT.

OR IF WE  
PASSED ON  
THE SEA  
FRONT.



THE BATHROOM  
WAS DOWN THE  
HALL.



I WAS UP IN  
THE NIGHT



I SAW HIM IN  
HIS DRESSING  
GOWN.



I SAW HIM  
KNOCK UPON  
HER DOOR,  
I SAW IT  
OPEN



HE  
WENT  
IN.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO TELL



MY LANDLADY WAS THERE AT BREAKFAST

BRIGHT AND  
CHEERY.

SHE SAID THE DENTIST  
HAD LEFT EARLY, OWING  
TO A DEATH IN THE  
FAMILY.

SHE TOLD THE TRUTH

THAT NIGHT THE  
RAIN RATTLED THE  
WINDOWS

A WEEK PAST AND  
IT WAS TIME.

I TOLD MY LANDLADY  
I'D FOUND A PLACE  
AND WOULD BE  
MOVING ON

AND PAID  
THE RENT.

THAT NIGHT  
SHE GAVE  
ME A GLASS  
OF WHISKY

AND THEN  
ANOTHER...



AND SAID I HAD ALWAYS  
BEEN HER FAVORITE



AND THAT SHE  
WAS A  
WOMAN

OF  
NEEDS



A FLOWER

RIPE FOR  
PLUCKING



AND SHE SMILED...

AND IT WAS THE  
WHISKY...

MADE  
ME  
NOD  
...



AND THINK SHE WAS  
PERHAPS A WIT LESS

SOUR  
OF  
FACE  
AND  
FORM  
...



AND SO I  
KNOCKED UPON  
HER DOOR  
THAT  
NIGHT





SHE OPENED IT

I REMEMBER  
THE WHITENESS  
OF HER SKIN



THE WHITENESS  
OF HER GOWN  
I CAN'T FORGET

"MISTER  
MARONEY"

SHE  
WHISPERED

I REACHED  
FOR HER


AND THAT WAS FOR EVER THAT





THE CHANNEL  
WAS COLD AND  
SILT WET...

AND SHE  
FILED MY  
POCKETS WITH  
ROCKS TO KEEP  
ME UNDER



SO WHEN  
THEY FIND  
ME



CRAB  
EATEN  
FLESH

IF THEY  
FIND ME



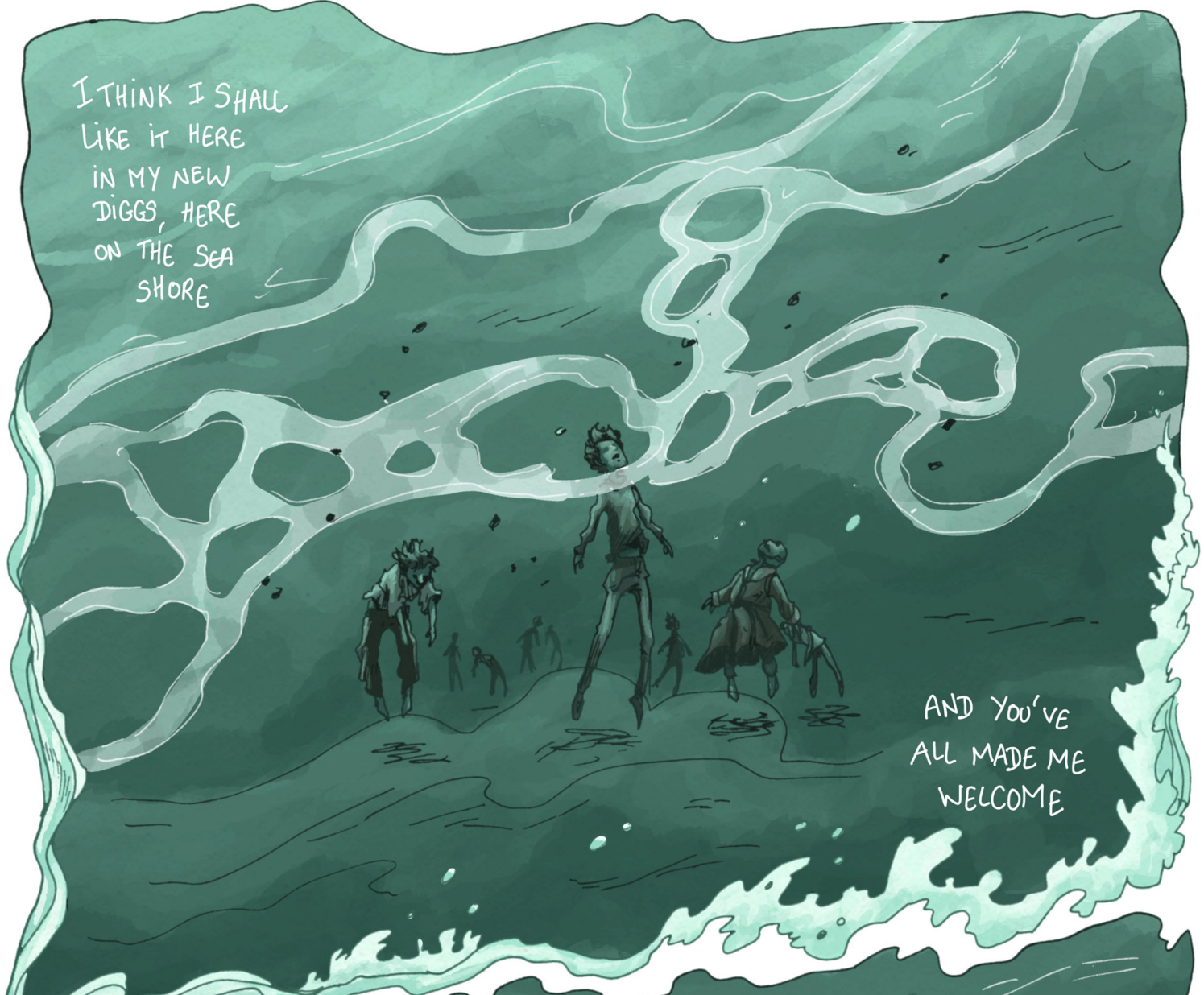
AND  
SEA  
WASHED  
BONES

I COULD BE ANYONE.

AND  
ALL



I THINK I SHALL  
LIKE IT HERE  
IN MY NEW  
DIGGS, HERE  
ON THE SEA  
SHORE



AND YOU'VE  
ALL MADE ME  
WELCOME

YOU'VE ALL MADE ME FEEL



SO  
WELCOME

HOW  
MANY  
OF US  
ARE  
THERE  
?



I SEE  
US BUT  
I CANNOT  
COUNT



WE CLUSTER ON THE  
BEACH AND STARE

AT THE LIGHT IN THE UPPERMOST ROOM OF HER HOUSE

WE SEE THE CURTAINS TWITCH,  
WE SEE A WHITE FACE  
GLARING THROUGH THE GRIME

SHE  
LOOKS  
AFRAID


AS IF ONE LOVELESS DAY  
WE MIGHT START UP THE  
PEBBLES TOWARDS HER.

TO REBUKE HER  
FOR HER LACK  
OF HOSPITALITY

TO TEAR HER FOR HER  
BAD BREAKFASTS AND  
SOUP HOLIDAYS

AND OUR FATES





WE STAND  
SO STILL.

WHY MUST  
WE STAND

So

Still.

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*Based on a story written by Neil Gaiman.*