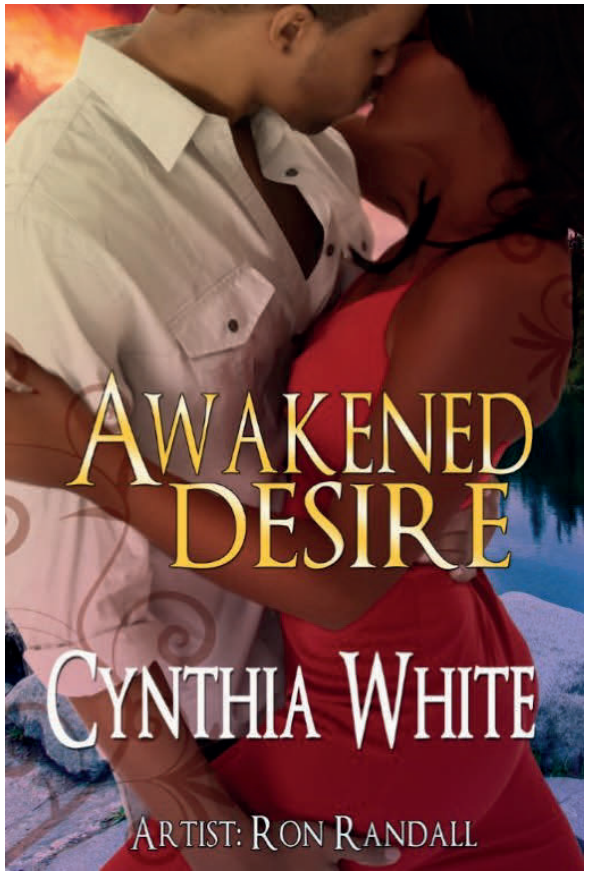
AWAKENED DESIRE
CYNTHIA WHITE
ARTIST: RON RANDALL

Awakened Desire

Harrison Coulter was only looking for a quiet life in the small, out-of-the-way Maryland Eastern Shore town. A place to lick his wounds and mind his own business. That was before the rugged millionaire had his first run in with sassy, high-powered financial analyst, Charise Smith. Charise was also hiding out—from a devastating business fiasco and an equally devastating broken engagement. From their first meeting, they got on each others' last nerves. Under each others' skins. So hell would freeze over before either would give in to the passion that soon started to sizzle between them.

* * *

Charise Smith had finally discovered mysterious Harrison Colter's secret. She couldn't wait to confront him.

"So! Now we know who you really are."

Harrison scowled.
"What are you rattling on about?"

"Only that you are the imposter. You're hiding out here, too, aren't you? Big-city lawyer. Why did you give it all up? They find you bribing a jury or something?"

As he angrily pulled her to his hard body, Charise realized too late that she had pushed him too far.

Awakened Desire

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Artists: Ron Randall

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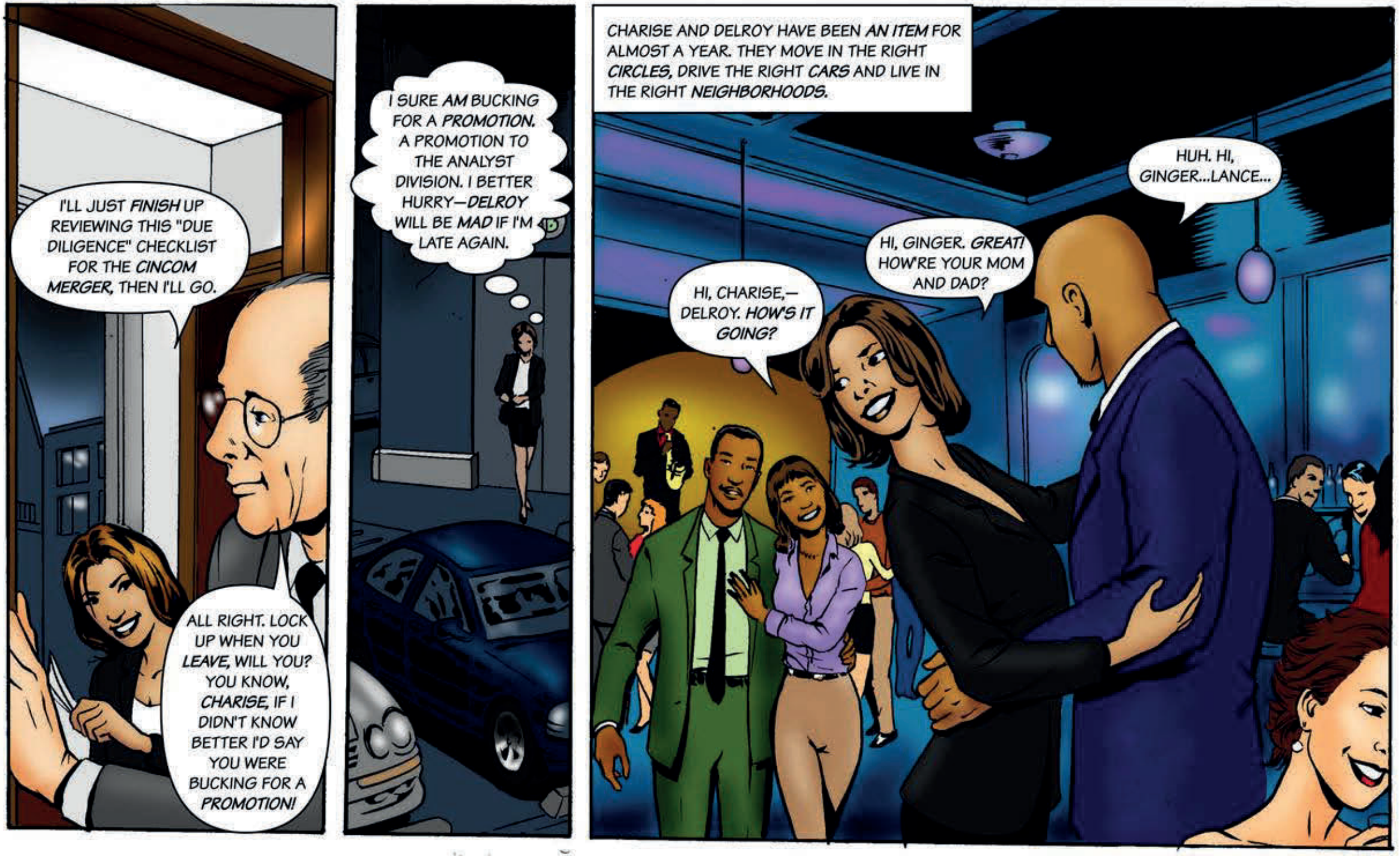
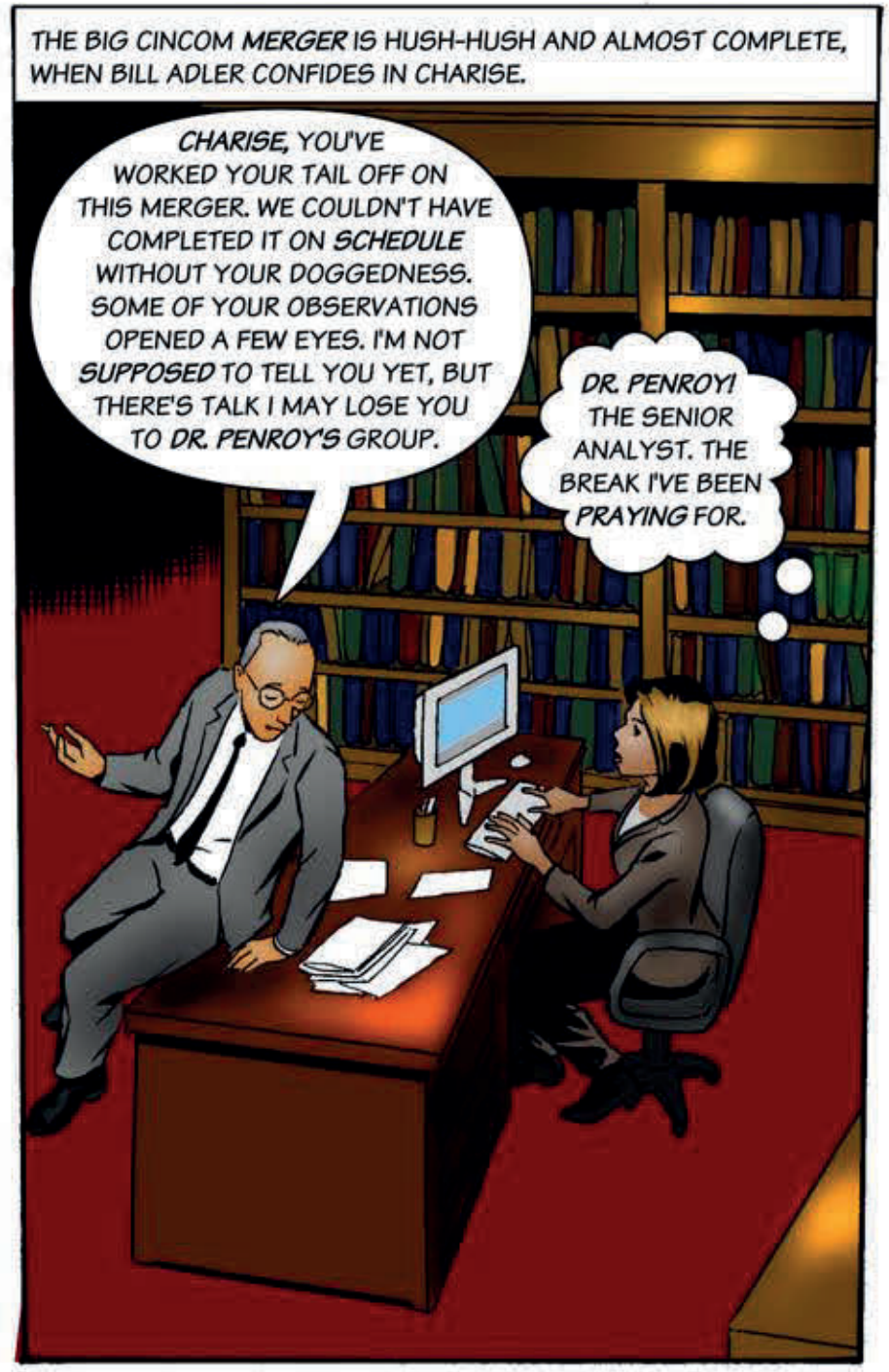
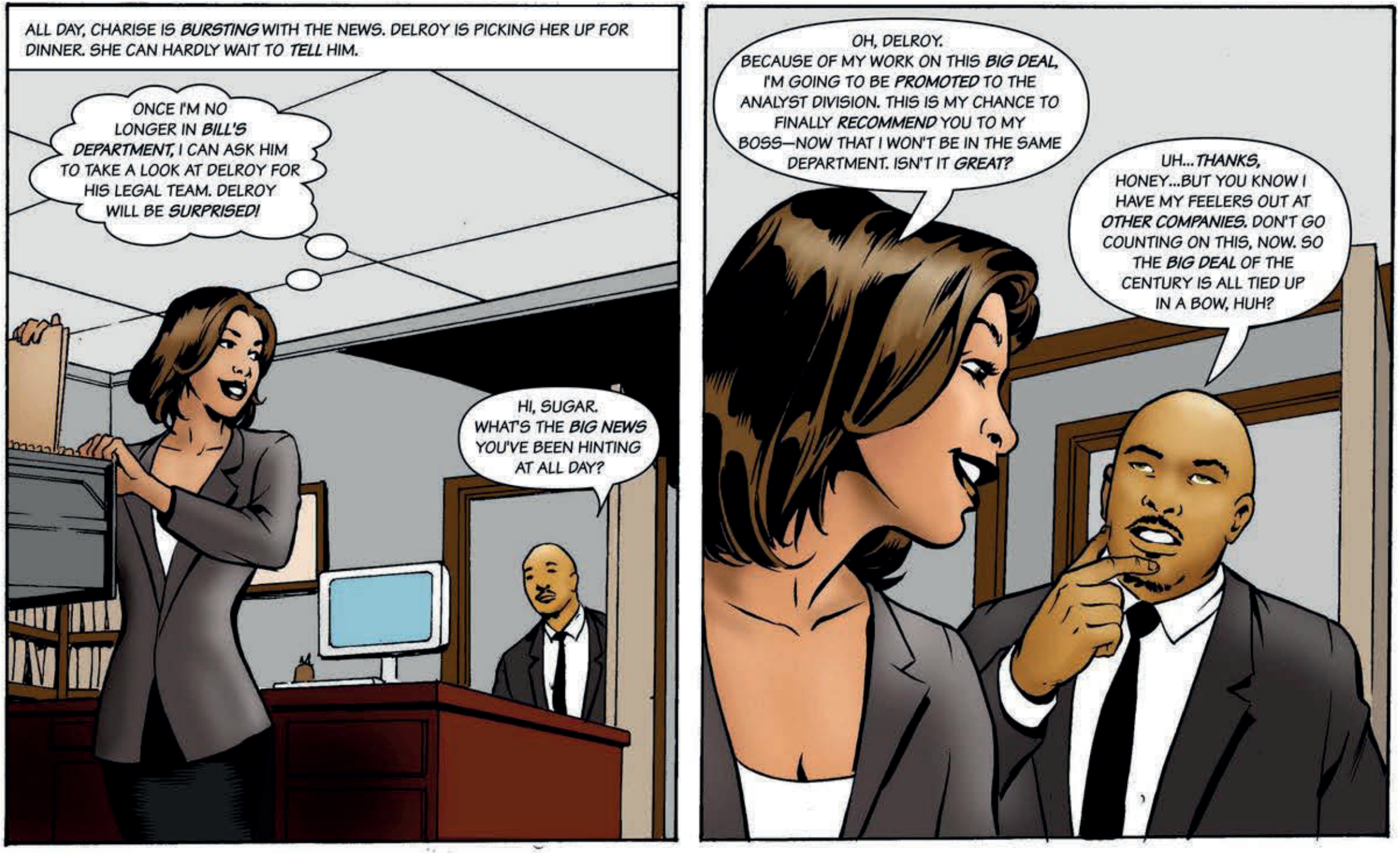
ARMED WITH AN MBA FROM A PRESTIGIOUS *BLACK UNIVERSITY* IN WASHINGTON, DC, CHARISE SMITH LANDS A JOB AS AN *ACQUISITION ASSOCIATE* TO ONE OF THE PARTNERS IN A LARGE DC FIRM SPECIALIZING IN MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS OF *BILLION-DOLLAR COMPANIES*. AFTER THREE YEARS, SHE HAS MADE HER MARK AND IS WELL LIKED AND RESPECTED BY HER CO-WORKERS, AND HER *BOSS*, BILL ADLER.
IT'S AFTER NINE, *CHARISE*. DON'T YOU HAVE A *HOME* TO GO TO?
ONE OF THESE DAYS *I'LL* BE A *TOP ANALYST*, THEN I'LL BE THE ONE DECIDING WHICH *DEAL* TO MAKE. TILL THEN, I'LL LEARN ALL I CAN ABOUT THE BUSINESS FROM *BILL*.
Awakened Desire

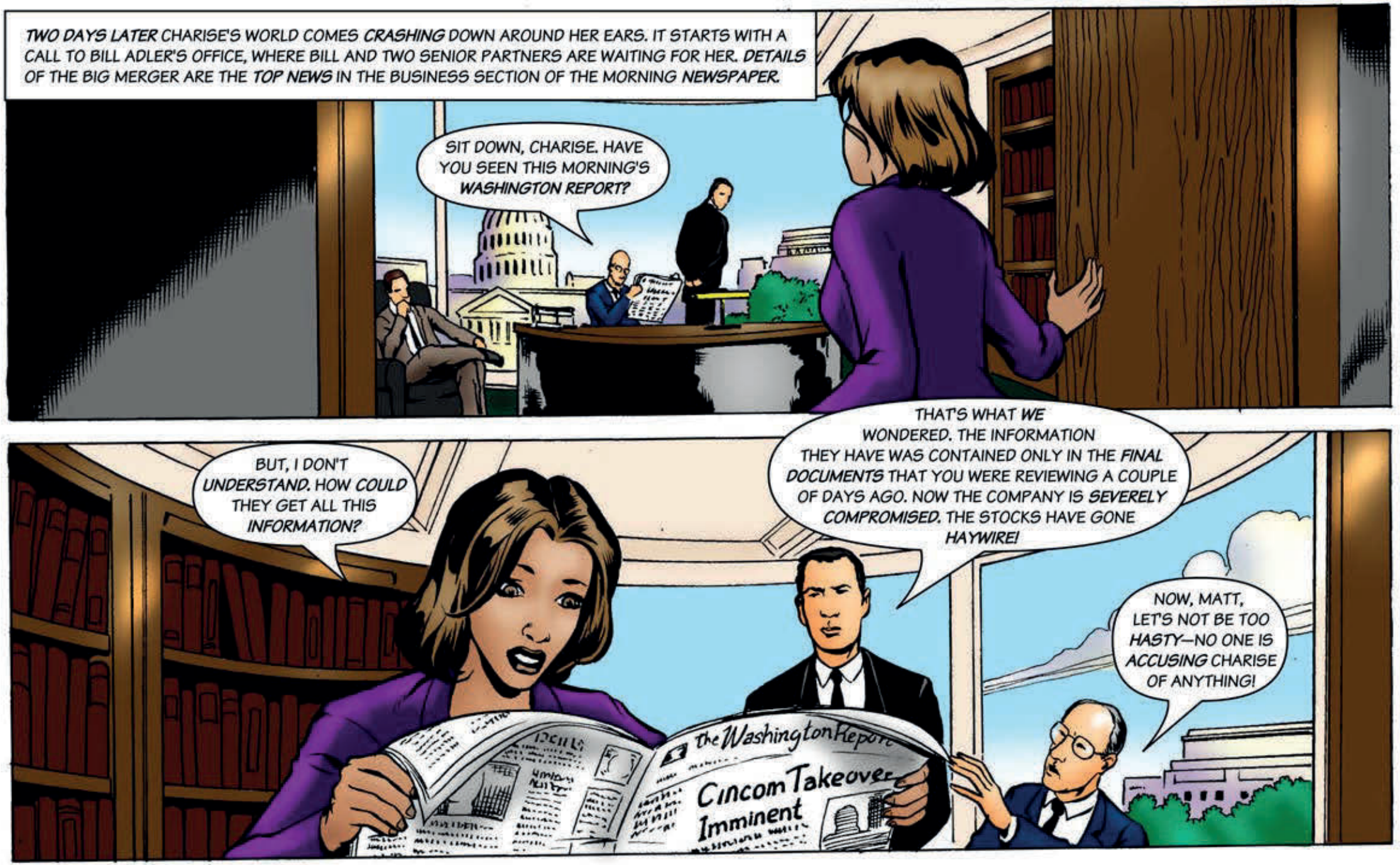

I'LL JUST FINISH UP REVIEWING THIS "DUE DILIGENCE" CHECKLIST FOR THE CINCOM MERGER, THEN I'LL GO.
ALL RIGHT. LOCK UP WHEN YOU LEAVE, WILL YOU? YOU KNOW, CHARISE, IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER I'D SAY YOU WERE BUCKING FOR A PROMOTION!
I SURE AM BUCKING FOR A PROMOTION. A PROMOTION TO THE ANALYST DIVISION. I BETTER HURRY—DELROY WILL BE MAD IF I'M LATE AGAIN.
CHARISE AND DELROY HAVE BEEN AN ITEM FOR ALMOST A YEAR. THEY MOVE IN THE RIGHT CIRCLES, DRIVE THE RIGHT CARS AND LIVE IN THE RIGHT NEIGHBORHOODS.
HI, CHARISE,—DELROY. HOW'S IT GOING?
HI, GINGER. GREAT! HOW'RE YOUR MOM AND DAD?
HUH. HI, GINGER...LANCE...

YOU'RE BAD. YOU KNOW HIS NAME ISN'T LANCE. WHY DO YOU KEEP CALLING HIM THAT?
YOU MEAN "LANCE WITH THE HIGH WATER PANTS"? WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THOSE TWO LOSERS, ANYWAY? SHE'S JUST A SECRETARY AND HE'S A USED-CAR SALESMAN, FOR PETE'S SAKE.

CHARISE LOVES DELROY, BUT SOMETIMES HIS SNOBBERY AND CUTTING COMMENTS ANNOY HER.
WE ALL CAN'T BE LAWYERS AND MBA'S, DELROY. GINGER AND I WENT TO SCHOOL TOGETHER BACK HOME IN BOONE'S TOWN. SHE'S AN OLD FRIEND. AND I HAPPEN TO THINK HER FIANCÉ, LARRY, IS VERY NICE.
YEAH...I GUESS YOU CAN TAKE THE GIRL OUT OF THE COUNTRY BUT...NEVER MIND. GIVE ME SOME SUGAR.


THE BIG CINCOM MERGER IS HUSH-HUSH AND ALMOST COMPLETE, WHEN BILL ADLER CONFIDES IN CHARISE.
CHARISE, YOU'VE WORKED YOUR TAIL OFF ON THIS MERGER. WE COULDN'T HAVE COMPLETED IT ON SCHEDULE WITHOUT YOUR DOGGEDNESS. SOME OF YOUR OBSERVATIONS OPENED A FEW EYES. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU YET, BUT THERE'S TALK I MAY LOSE YOU TO DR. PENROY'S GROUP.
DR. PENROY! THE SENIOR ANALYST. THE BREAK I'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR.


ALL DAY, CHARISE IS *BURSTING* WITH THE NEWS. DELROY IS PICKING HER UP FOR DINNER. SHE CAN HARDLY WAIT TO *TELL* HIM.
ONCE I'M NO LONGER IN *BILL'S DEPARTMENT,* I CAN ASK HIM TO TAKE A LOOK AT DELROY FOR HIS LEGAL TEAM. DELROY WILL BE *SURPRISED!*
HI, SUGAR. WHAT'S THE *BIG NEWS* YOU'VE BEEN HINTING AT ALL DAY?
OH, DELROY. BECAUSE OF MY WORK ON THIS *BIG DEAL,* I'M GOING TO BE *PROMOTED* TO THE ANALYST DIVISION. THIS IS MY CHANCE TO FINALLY *RECOMMEND* YOU TO MY BOSS—NOW THAT I WON'T BE IN THE SAME DEPARTMENT. ISN'T IT *GREAT?*
UH...*THANKS,* HONEY...BUT YOU KNOW I HAVE MY FEELERS OUT AT *OTHER COMPANIES.* DON'T GO COUNTING ON THIS, NOW. SO THE *BIG DEAL* OF THE CENTURY IS ALL TIED UP IN A BOW, HUH?


TWO DAYS LATER CHARISE'S WORLD COMES CRASHING DOWN AROUND HER EARS. IT STARTS WITH A CALL TO BILL ADLER'S OFFICE, WHERE BILL AND TWO SENIOR PARTNERS ARE WAITING FOR HER. DETAILS OF THE BIG MERGER ARE THE TOP NEWS IN THE BUSINESS SECTION OF THE MORNING NEWSPAPER.
SIT DOWN, CHARISE. HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MORNING'S WASHINGTON REPORT?
BUT, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW COULD THEY GET ALL THIS INFORMATION?
THAT'S WHAT WE WONDERED. THE INFORMATION THEY HAVE WAS CONTAINED ONLY IN THE FINAL DOCUMENTS THAT YOU WERE REVIEWING A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. NOW THE COMPANY IS SEVERELY COMPROMISED. THE STOCKS HAVE GONE HAYWIRE!
NOW, MATT, LET'S NOT BE TOO HASTY—NO ONE IS ACCUSING CHARISE OF ANYTHING!
The Washington Report
Cincom Takeover Imminent

THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS ARE A *NIGHTMARE.* NO ONE ACTUALLY *ACCUSES* CHARISE OF DIVULGING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, BUT THEY ALL *ACT* AS IF SHE HAS.

UH...CHARISE, SEEMS I *MISUNDERSTOOD* ABOUT DR. PENROY. HE APPARENTLY *ALREADY* HAD SOMEONE ALL LINED UP FOR THE *JOB* IN HIS SECTION. *SORRY.* BUT I'M SURE SOMETHING ELSE WILL TURN UP.

CHARISE SOON FINDS OUT THAT THE FRIENDS SHE THINKS SHE HAS ARE *FEW AND FAR* BETWEEN. ONLY HER TRUE FRIENDS ARE IN HER CORNER.

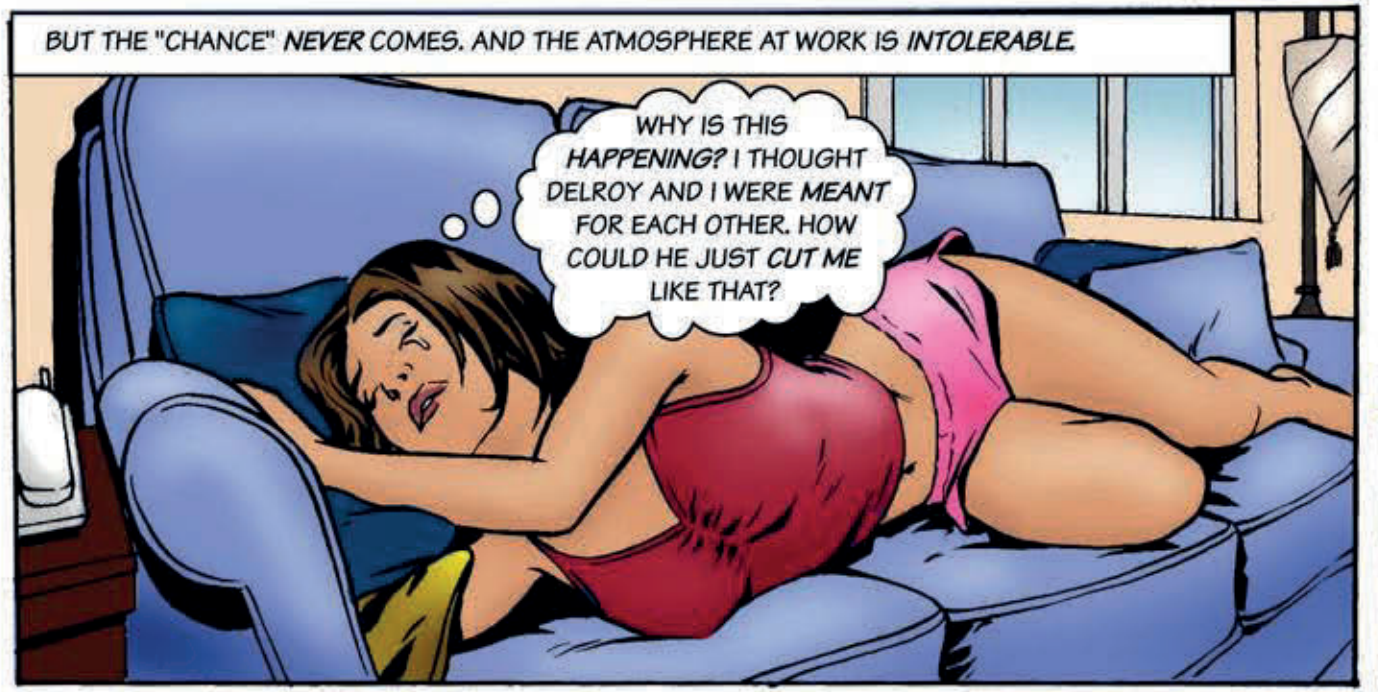
HI, CHARISE—WE'RE SO *SORRY* TO HEAR ABOUT...YOU KNOW.

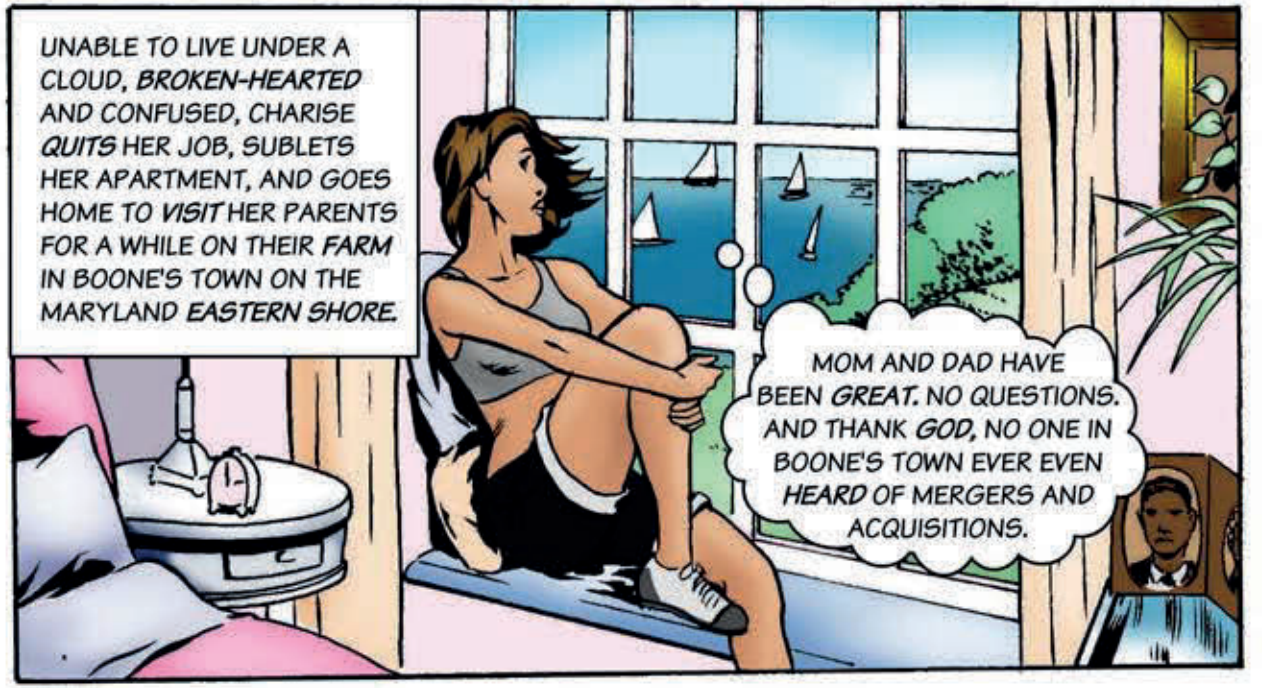
THANKS, GINGER,—LARRY. IT'LL BE *OKAY.*

GOD! SYMPATHY FROM *THEM* IS MORE THAN I CAN STAND. *LET'S GO.*

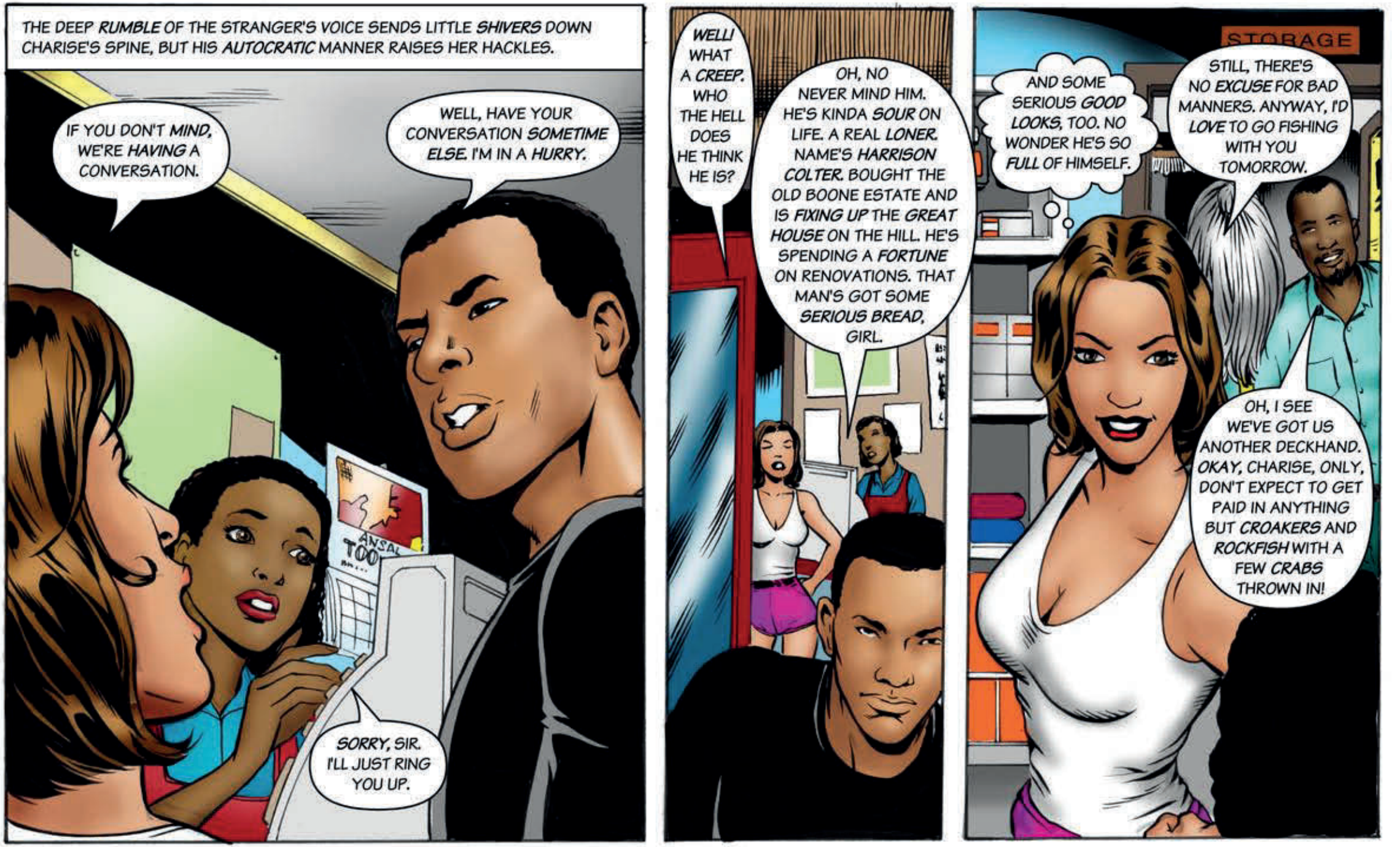
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM DELROY IN *DAYS.* AND HE HASN'T RETURNED MY CALLS. HE MUST BE *ILL* OR SOMETHING. MAYBE I SHOULD GO OVER THERE. OH, *FINALLY.* THERE'S A *MESSAGE* ON MY MACHINE.

HI, CHARISE. LOOK, SUGAR, I'M STARTING AT *SWEITS AND ROYCE* IN A COUPLE WEEKS. YOU KNOW, THE *LARGEST* MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS FIRM ON THE *EAST COAST.* THAT JOB FINALLY CAME THROUGH. SO I'LL BE KIND OF *BUSY* FOR A WHILE, CLEARING UP THINGS IN MY OFFICE. YOU UNDERSTAND. I'LL *CALL* YOU WHEN I GET A CHANCE. TALK TO YOU, BABY. *CLICK*


BUT THE "CHANCE" *NEVER* COMES. AND THE ATMOSPHERE AT WORK IS *INTOLERABLE.*
WHY IS THIS *HAPPENING?* I THOUGHT DELROY AND I WERE *MEANT* FOR EACH OTHER. HOW COULD HE JUST *CUT ME* LIKE THAT?

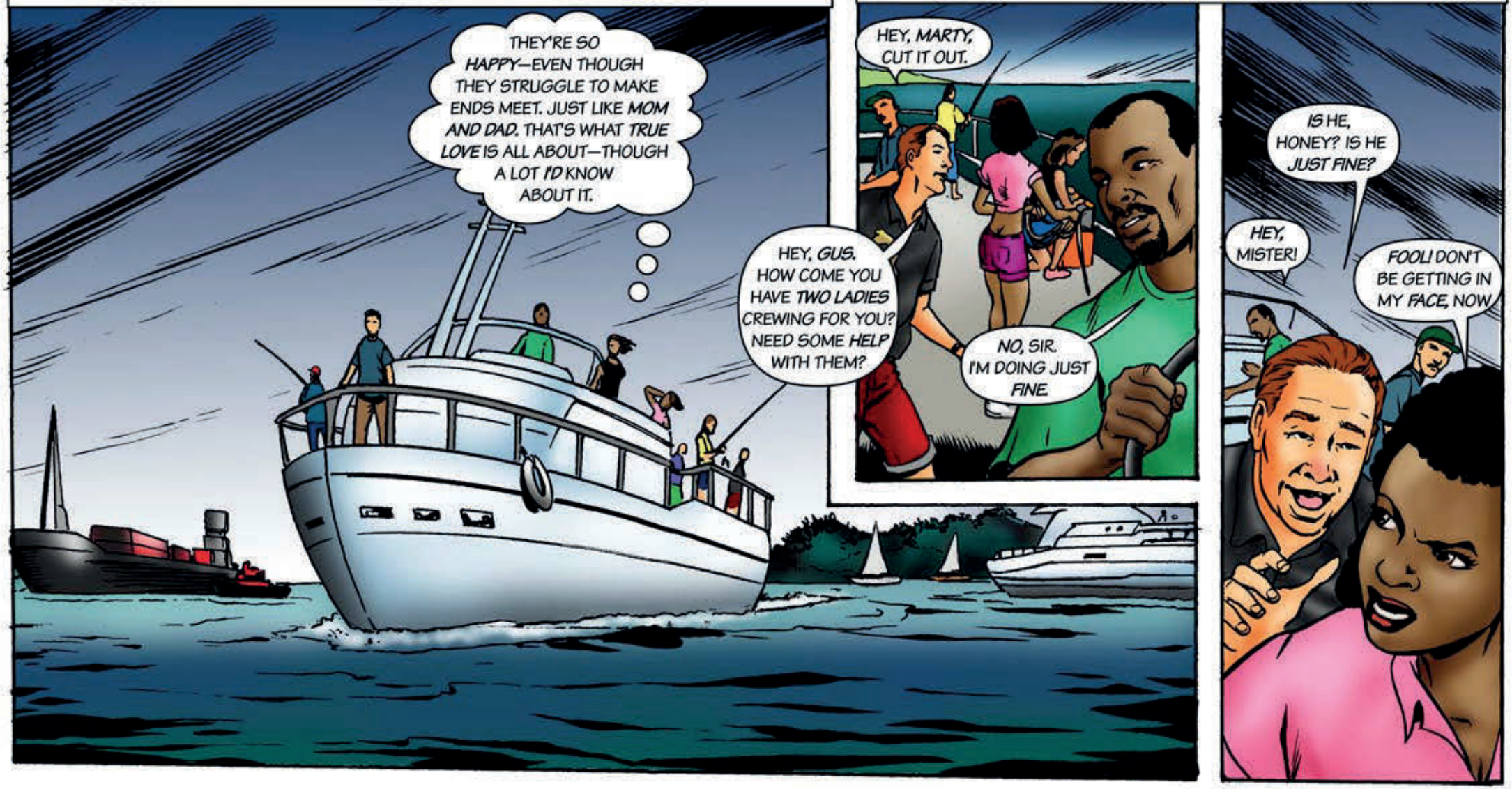

UNABLE TO LIVE UNDER A CLOUD, *BROKEN-HEARTED* AND CONFUSED, CHARISE *QUITS* HER JOB, SUBLETS HER APARTMENT, AND GOES HOME TO *VISIT* HER PARENTS FOR A WHILE ON THEIR *FARM* IN BOONE'S TOWN ON THE MARYLAND *EASTERN SHORE.*
MOM AND DAD HAVE BEEN *GREAT.* NO QUESTIONS. AND THANK *GOD,* NO ONE IN BOONE'S TOWN EVER EVEN *HEARD* OF MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS.

VISITING HER OLD FRIEND, *LINDRA,* IN HER SMALL HARDWARE STORE, CHARISE *CATCHES UP* ON LIFE IN BOONE'S TOWN.
YOU'VE *GOT* TO CATCH UP, CHARISE. IT'S MATHEW, DAVID *AND* ANTHONY NOW. ANTHONY IS ALREADY THREE! *LISTEN,* HOW ABOUT COMING *FISHING* WITH GUS AND ME TOMORROW? WE'RE TAKING OUT A *CHARTER.*
HI, *LINDRA.* HOW ARE THE KIDS? MATHEW AND DAVID, *RIGHT?*
LOOK, MISS, IF YOU TWO DON'T *MIND,* I NEED TO FINISH PAYING FOR THIS *STUFF*—UNLESS YOU ALL JUST BARTER AROUND HERE INSTEAD OF USING COLD, HARD *CASH.*


THE DEEP RUMBLE OF THE STRANGER'S VOICE SENDS LITTLE SHIVERS DOWN CHARISE'S SPINE, BUT HIS AUTOCRATIC MANNER RAISES HER HACKLES.
IF YOU DON'T MIND, WE'RE HAVING A CONVERSATION.
WELL, HAVE YOUR CONVERSATION SOMETIME ELSE. I'M IN A HURRY.
SORRY, SIR. I'LL JUST RING YOU UP.
WELL! WHAT A CREEP. WHO THE HELL DOES HE THINK HE IS?
OH, NO NEVER MIND HIM. HE'S KINDA SOUR ON LIFE. A REAL LONER. NAME'S HARRISON COLTER. BOUGHT THE OLD BOONE ESTATE AND IS FIXING UP THE GREAT HOUSE ON THE HILL. HE'S SPENDING A FORTUNE ON RENOVATIONS. THAT MAN'S GOT SOME SERIOUS BREAD, GIRL.
STORAGE
AND SOME SERIOUS GOOD LOOKS, TOO. NO WONDER HE'S SO FULL OF HIMSELF.
STILL, THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR BAD MANNERS. ANYWAY, I'D LOVE TO GO FISHING WITH YOU TOMORROW.
OH, I SEE WE'VE GOT US ANOTHER DECKHAND. OKAY, CHARISE, ONLY, DON'T EXPECT TO GET PAID IN ANYTHING BUT CROAKERS AND ROCKFISH WITH A FEW CRABS THROWN IN!

THE NEXT FEW WEEKS OF *EARLY SUMMER* PASS BLISSFULLY FOR CHARISE, EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL *UNPLEASANT RUN-IN* WITH HARRISON COLTER. SOMEHOW THEY HAVE A KNACK OF GETTING UNDER EACH OTHER'S SKIN. SHE OFTEN GOES OUT ON FISHING TRIPS ON THE *CHESAPEAKE BAY* WITH GUS AND LINDRA, WHO SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME FROM THEIR HARDWARE STORE BY TAKING ON CHARTERS.

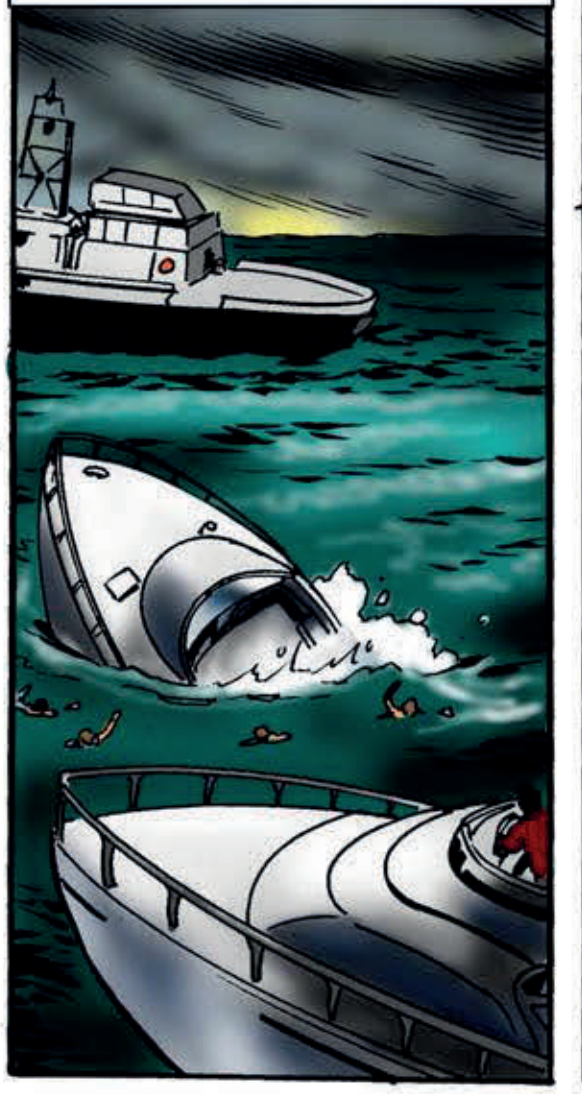
SOMETIMES THE PASSENGERS, USUALLY YOUNG, *BRASH* BUSINESSMEN FROM WASHINGTON, DC—THE TYPES SHE AND DELROY USED TO HANG OUT WITH—*DRINK* TOO MUCH ON A FISHING TRIP, BUT GUS CAN USUALLY *HANDLE* THEM. *CHARISE* WONDERS HOW SHE COULD'VE EVER THOUGHT HER *FORMER LIFE* AMONG THAT CROWD APPEALING.



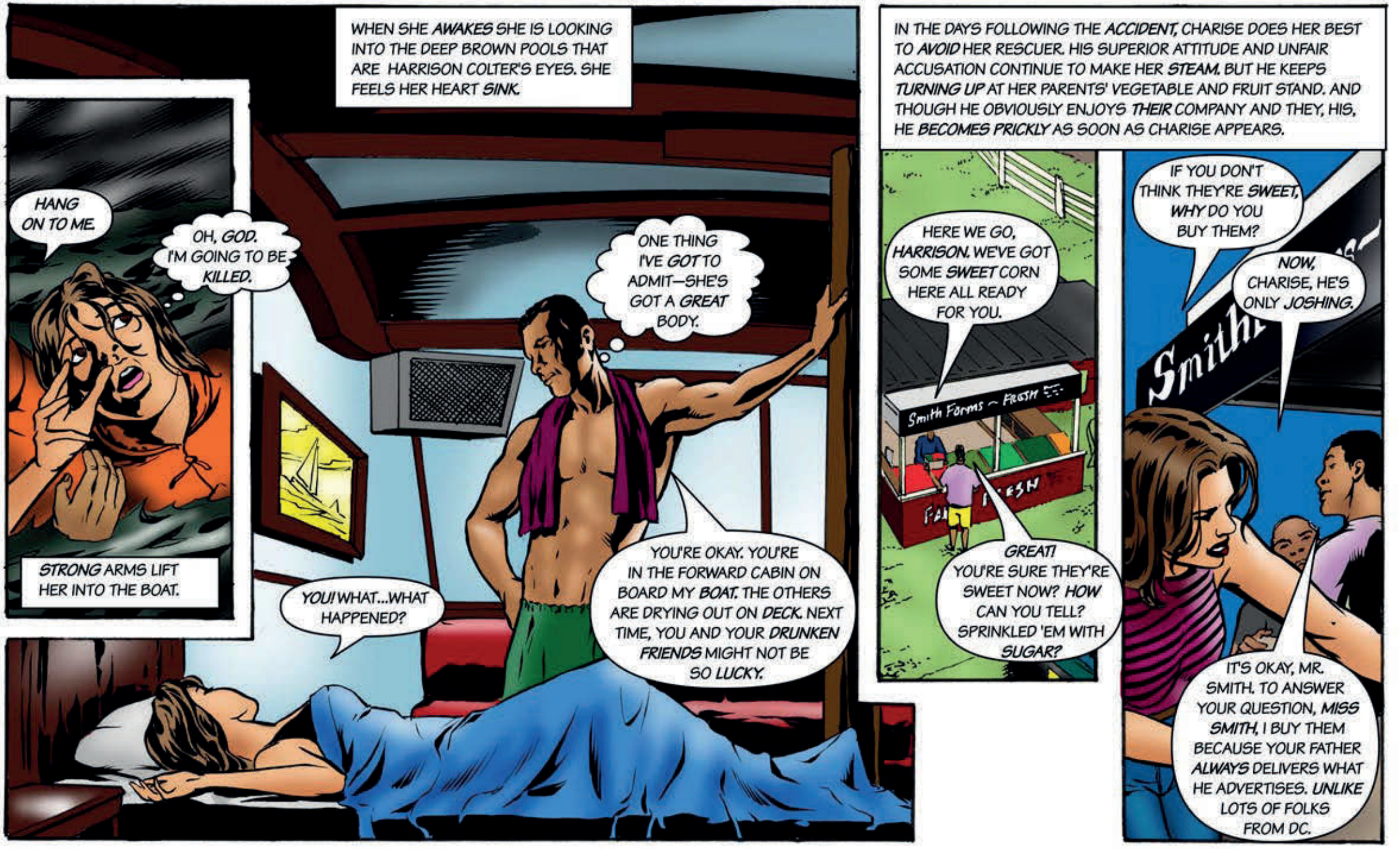
AS GUS TRIES TO PULL THE *DRUNK* AWAY FROM HIS *WIFE*, ANOTHER FISHERMAN IN THE PARTY TRIES TO HELP, BUT *ACCIDENTALLY* PUSHES AGAINST THE THROTTLE AND THE BOAT *LURCHES*.

THE HULL OF THE *FISHING BOAT*, WHICH HAS HIT A BARGE BEING TOWED, IS BADLY *DAMAGED*. AS WATER GUSHES IN *PANIC* ENSUES.

EVERYONE DONS LIFE JACKETS, BUT SO *SWIFTLY* THEY CAN'T BELIEVE IT, THEY ARE ALL *DUMPED* INTO THE *COLD* CHESAPEAKE WATER. WORSE, A *SUDDEN SQUALL* IS APPROACHING. ROPES ARE THROWN TO THEM FROM A PASSING CABIN CRUISER.



SUDDENLY, A HUGE SURGE ROCKS THE CABIN CRUISER, AND CHARISE CAN SEE THE BIG HULL BEARING DOWN ON HER. SHE IS *UNAWARE* OF THE SPLASH BESIDE HER.

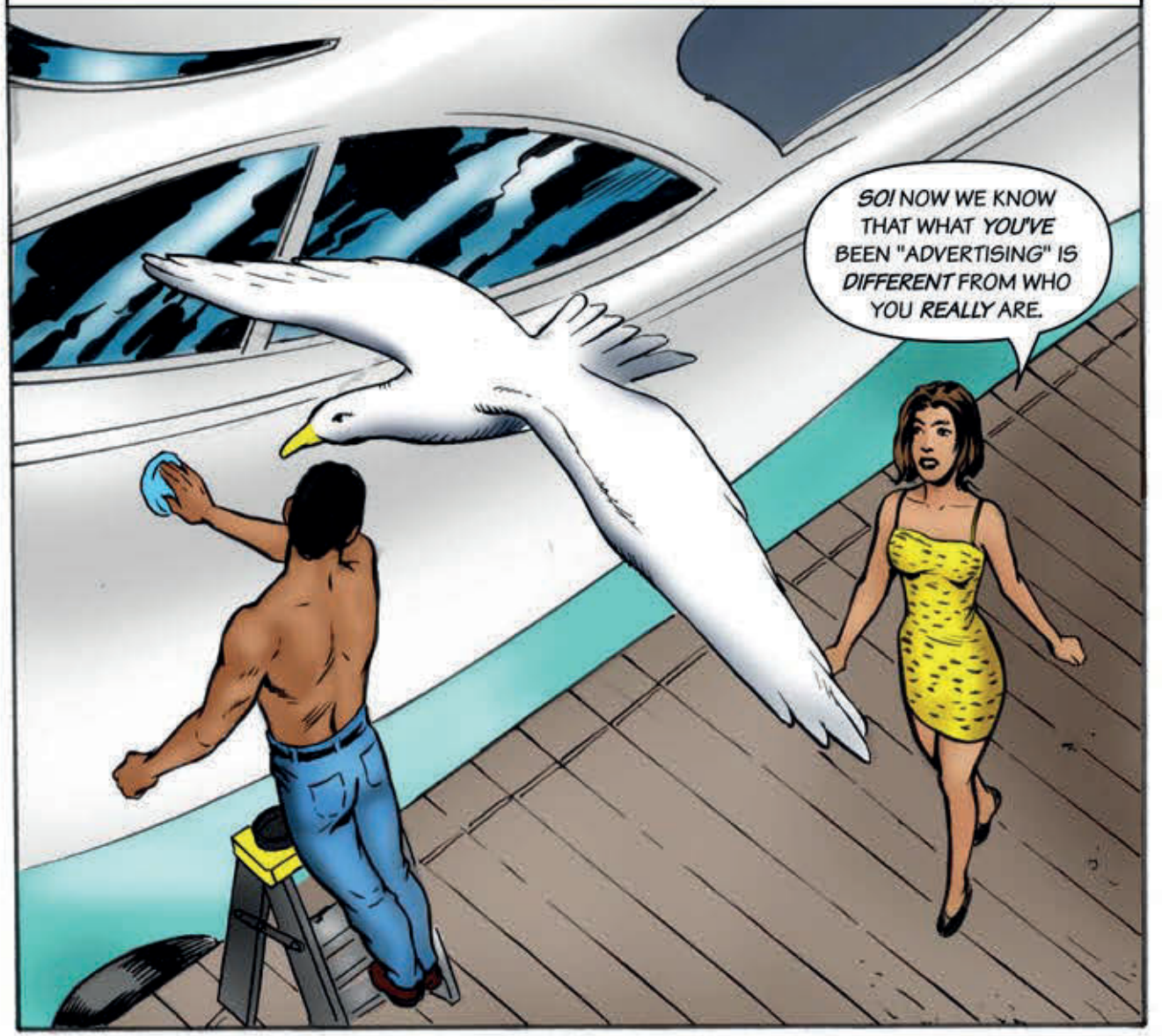

WHEN SHE AWAKES SHE IS LOOKING INTO THE DEEP BROWN POOLS THAT ARE HARRISON COLTER'S EYES. SHE FEELS HER HEART SINK.
HANG ON TO ME.
OH, GOD. I'M GOING TO BE KILLED.
STRONG ARMS LIFT HER INTO THE BOAT.
ONE THING I'VE GOT TO ADMIT—SHE'S GOT A GREAT BODY.
YOU! WHAT...WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU'RE OKAY. YOU'RE IN THE FORWARD CABIN ON BOARD MY BOAT. THE OTHERS ARE DRYING OUT ON DECK. NEXT TIME, YOU AND YOUR DRUNKEN FRIENDS MIGHT NOT BE SO LUCKY.
IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THE ACCIDENT, CHARISE DOES HER BEST TO AVOID HER RESCUER. HIS SUPERIOR ATTITUDE AND UNFAIR ACCUSATION CONTINUE TO MAKE HER STEAM. BUT HE KEEPS TURNING UP AT HER PARENTS' VEGETABLE AND FRUIT STAND. AND THOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY ENJOYS THEIR COMPANY AND THEY, HIS, HE BECOMES PRICKLY AS SOON AS CHARISE APPEARS.
HERE WE GO, HARRISON. WE'VE GOT SOME SWEET CORN HERE ALL READY FOR YOU.
Smith Farms ~ Fresh
GREAT! YOU'RE SURE THEY'RE SWEET NOW? HOW CAN YOU TELL? SPRINKLED 'EM WITH SUGAR?
IF YOU DON'T THINK THEY'RE SWEET, WHY DO YOU BUY THEM?
NOW, CHARISE, HE'S ONLY JOSHING.
IT'S OKAY, MR. SMITH. TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, MISS SMITH, I BUY THEM BECAUSE YOUR FATHER ALWAYS DELIVERS WHAT HE ADVERTISES. UNLIKE LOTS OF FOLKS FROM DC.

THE DIG HITS HOME AS CHARISE REMEMBERS HER EXPERIENCE WITH DELROY. BUT SHE'S INSTANTLY ON THE DEFENSIVE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
NOTHING MUCH. JUST THAT YOUR TYPE IS ALWAYS HIDING OUT IN SOME SMALL TOWN. PRETENDING TO BE A HOMETOWN GAL, WHEN YOU'RE REALLY HIDING OUT FROM LIFE. PROBABLY SOME GUY, RIGHT?
CHARISE FEELS LIKE THROWING THE CORN AT HIM. INSTEAD SHE RETAINS HER COMPOSURE, DESPITE THE SUDDEN WEAKNESS IN HER KNEES AS HIS EYES RAKE OVER HER BODY. SHE BECOMES ACUTELY AWARE OF HER SKIMPY OUTFIT.
YOU MUST HAVE A LOW OPINION OF US COUNTRY BUMPKINS. I HATE TO DISILLUSION YOU, BUT I HAPPEN TO LOVE IT HERE AND I INTEND TO STAY.
NOW, YOU TWO—
BUT FOR HOW LONG? YOUR TYPE ONLY HANGS AROUND TILL THE NEXT BRASS RING COMES ALONG. AND IT'S USUALLY ATTACHED TO SOME HAPLESS GUY.
CHARISE IS STILL STRUGGLING TO FIND SOMETHING TO SAY AS HARRISON LEAVES.
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK, MRS. SMITH.
THE NERVE! WHY COULDN'T I THINK OF A REPLY QUICK ENOUGH?

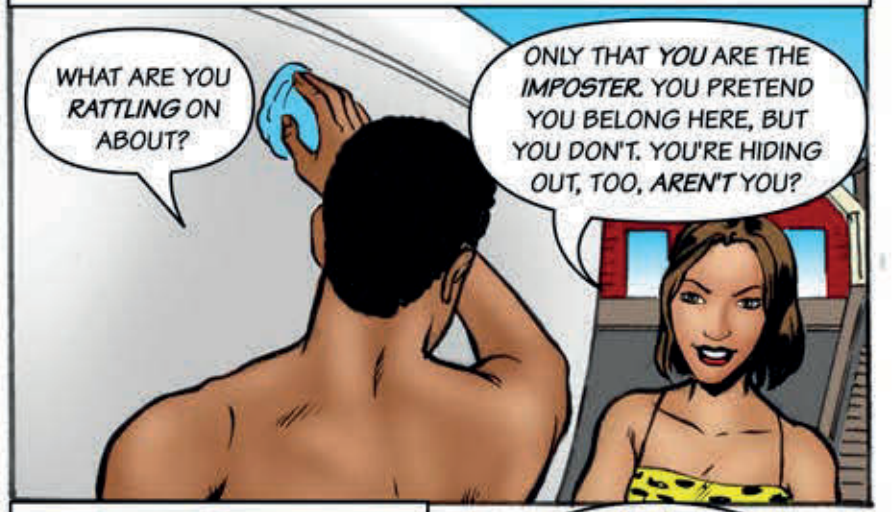
BOONE'S TOWN IS ALL ABUZZ WITH THE NEWS THAT THE DRUNK WHO'D BEEN ON GUS'S BOAT IS SUING HIM FOR DAMAGES!
OH, CHARISE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO. WE CAN'T AFFORD A LAWYER. AND ON TOP OF THAT THE INSURANCE COMPANY'S ACTING LIKE THEY DON'T WANT TO PAY FOR OUR BOAT.

A FEW DAYS LATER, TO CHARISE'S AMAZEMENT, LINDRA TELLS HER THAT HARRISON SAYS HE WILL DEFEND GUS, PRO BONO.
JUST WHEN I THINK HE'S IMPOSSIBLY DISGUSTING, HE DOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
I WISH YOU TWO WOULD BURY THE HATCHET. NOT ONLY IS HARRISON GOING TO REPRESENT GUS FOR NOTHING, HE'S EVEN GOTTEN THE INSURANCE COMPANY TO APPROVE THE CLAIM!
UH, LISTEN, MARTY. LET'S TRY FOR A SETTLEMENT. AFTER ALL, THE GUY IS ONLY WORTH THE PRICE OF HIS BOAT AND SMALL HOUSE—OUR TAKE WOULD BE NEXT TO NOTHING. HARDLY WORTH PROCEEDING. I'VE ALREADY SPENT A COUPLE THOUSAND ON THIS LAWSUIT...
WITH HARRISON'S INVOLVEMENT, THINGS TAKE A TURN FOR THE BETTER FOR GUS...
FINE. YOU DON'T WANT TO REPRESENT ME, I'LL FIND SOMEONE ELSE!

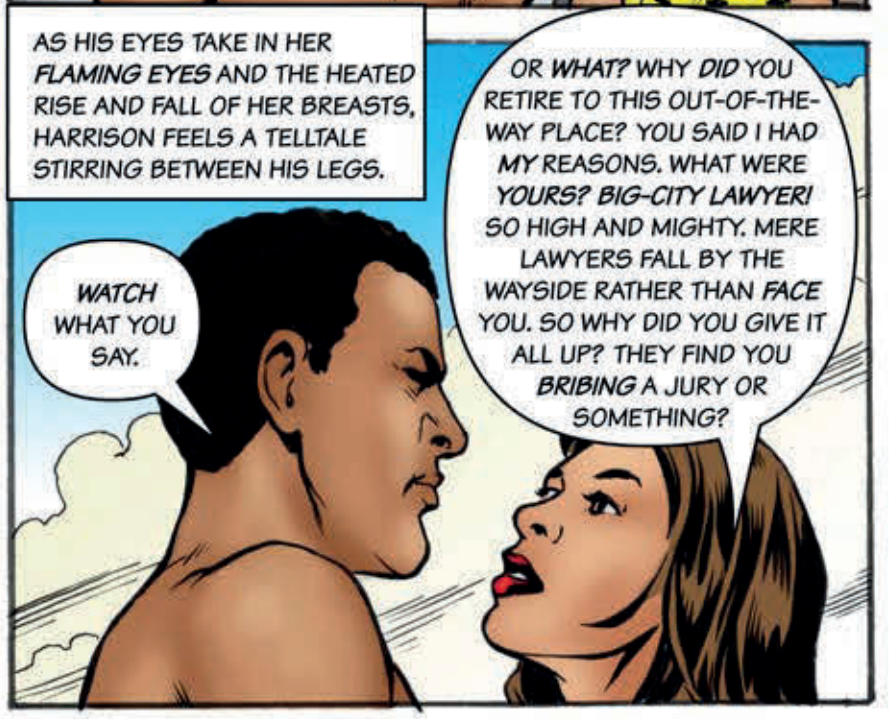
BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG FOR *MARTY* TO FIND OUT THAT *NO ONE* IS WILLING TO REPRESENT HIM AGAINST AN OPPONENT LIKE HARRISON COLTER—ESPECIALLY ON *CONTINGENCY.* A WEEK LATER GUS TELLS EVERYONE THE SUIT HAS BEEN *DROPPED* BECAUSE OF HARRISON'S HIGH-POWERED *REPUTATION.* CHARISE CAN'T WAIT TO *CONFRONT* HARRISON. SHE GETS HER WISH WHEN SHE *RUNS INTO HIM* AT THE DOCK.



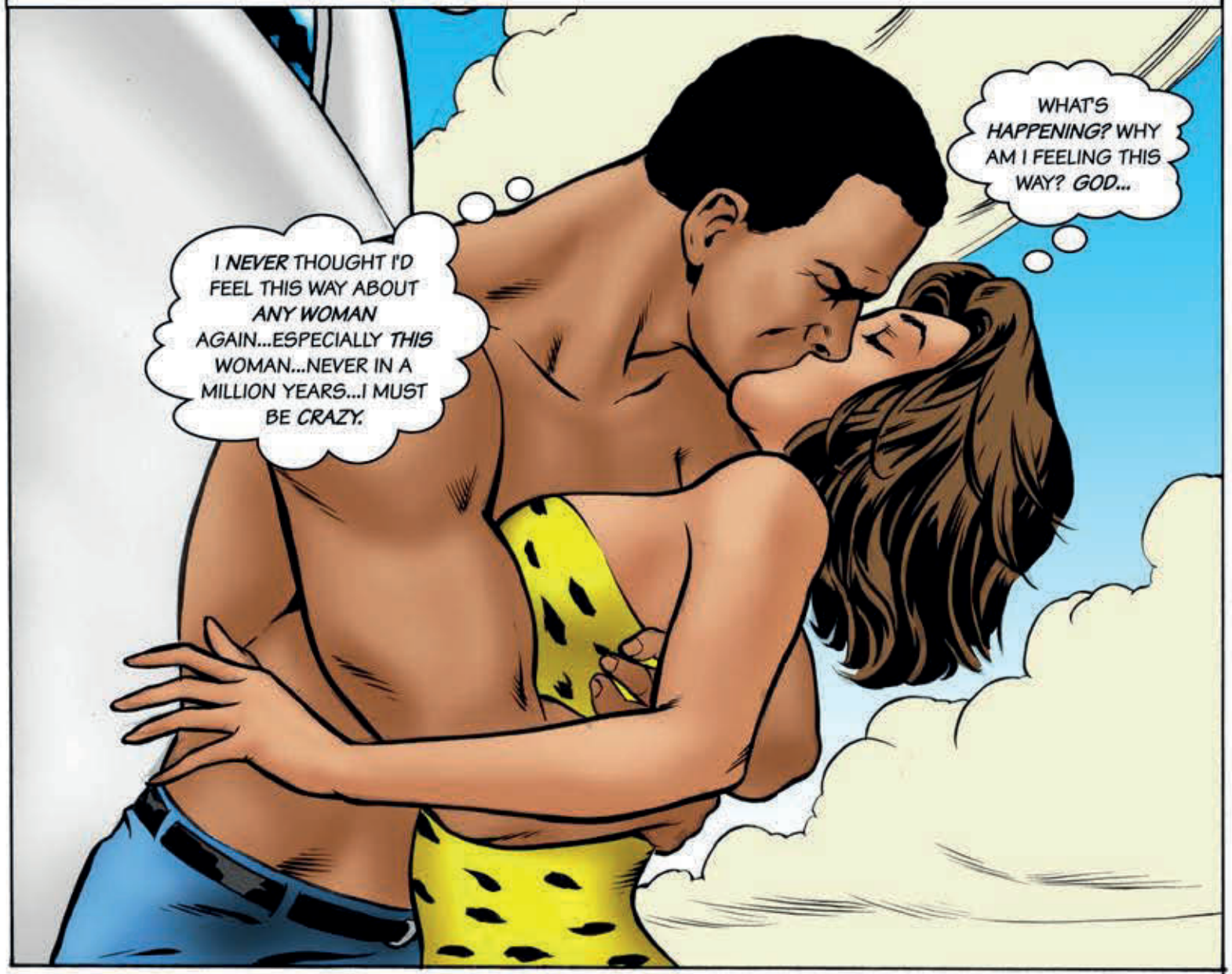
CHARISE FIGHTS AGAINST THE SUDDEN *QUIVERING* IN HER LOWER ABDOMEN AT THE SIGHT OF HARRISON'S BARE *MUSCLES GLISTENING* WITH SWEAT IN THE SUNLIGHT.



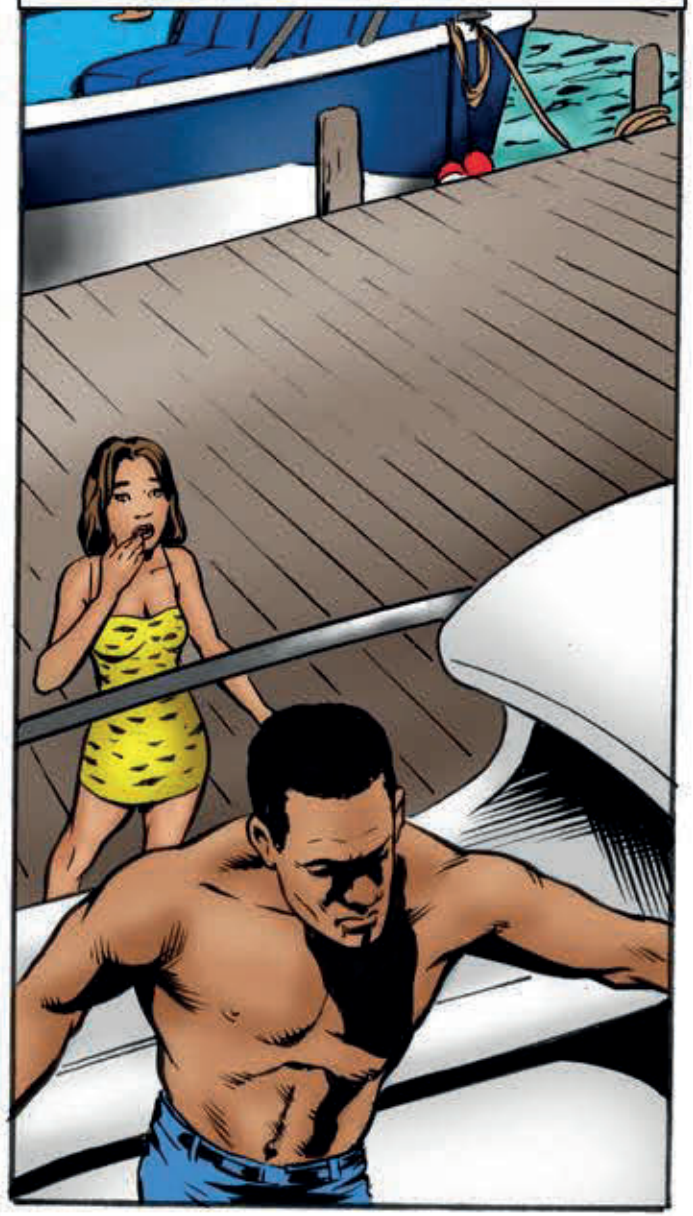
AS HIS EYES TAKE IN HER *FLAMING EYES* AND THE HEATED RISE AND FALL OF HER BREASTS, HARRISON FEELS A TELLTALE STIRRING BETWEEN HIS LEGS.



HARRISON FEELS AN *ANGRY* RESPONSE FORMING, BUT *INSTEAD,* HE GRABS HER AND *KISSES* HER—ONLY TO BE OVERWHELMED BY THE SUDDEN *SENSUAL TORRENT* THAT COURSES THROUGH HIS LOINS. AS FOR CHARISE, HER LONG-DULLED *SENSES FLAME* WITH UNEXPECTED DESIRE.



ABRUPTLY HARRISON RELEASES HER. WITHOUT A WORD, HE BOARDS HIS BOAT AND *DISAPPEARS* BELOW-DECKS LEAVING CHARISE ALONE AND *SHAKEN* ON THE DOCK.



OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, HARRISON AND CHARISE ARE SEEN OFTEN EXCHANGING PLEASANTRIES. IT IS SOON APPARENT TO ONLOOKERS THAT THERE ARE SIGNS OF A GROWING ATTRACTION BETWEEN THEM.

HI, HARRISON. DAD ASKED ME TO BRING THESE VEGETABLES UP FOR YOU.
OH, GREAT...ER...OKAY. COME ON IN. I'LL PUT THEM IN THE KITCHEN.
GOD, SHE LOOKS GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT.
WOW, YOUR HOUSE LOOKS GREAT. YOU'VE DONE WONDERS WITH IT. I REMEMBER HOW DILAPIDATED IT WAS WHEN WE USED TO PLAY UP HERE WHEN I WAS A KID.
THANKS. IT'S A WORK IN PROGRESS. LISTEN, I'M MAKING SOME CRAB SOUP—WANT TO STAY AND GRAB A BITE?
YEAH, SURE. WHY NOT?

OVER A DINNER OF CRAB SOUP AND FRENCH ROLLS SERVED WITH A CRISP CHARDONNAY, THE TWO FIND THAT THEY ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY IMMENSELY.
DON'T TELL MAMA, BUT THIS IS THE BEST SHE-CRAB SOUP I'VE EVER HAD. WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO COOK?
MY GRANNY. SHE WAS FROM A LITTLE WATERFRONT TOWN LIKE THIS. ALWAYS HAD TIME FOR ME. NOT LIKE MY PARENTS WHO HAD TO PROVE HOW SUCCESSFUL THEY COULD BECOME. STRANGE THAT I FOLLOWED IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS...AND IT COST ME MY MARRIAGE.

FOR THE *FIRST TIME*, CHARISE SEES THE *HURT* IN HIM, A HURT THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE BENEATH THE SURFACE. SHE FEELS AN *OVERWHELMING* URGE TO REACH OUT AND *TOUCH* HIM...COMFORT HIM...

I GUESS THAT WAS *HARD*. MY PARENTS WERE *ALWAYS THERE* FOR ME. I DIDN'T *APPRECIATE* IT UNTIL THE LAST FEW MONTHS.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW *LUCKY* YOU ARE. WHY DON'T WE GO INTO THE FAMILY ROOM? I'VE GOT A *FIRE* GOING.

AS THEIR HANDS *TOUCH*, A SENSUAL CURRENT COURSES THROUGH THEM. *CHARISE* FEELS HER NIPPLES HARDENING WITH THE ONSLAUGHT OF DESIRE SO STRONG SHE STARTS TO *TREMBLE*.

HERE, LET ME *FILL* YOUR GLASS.

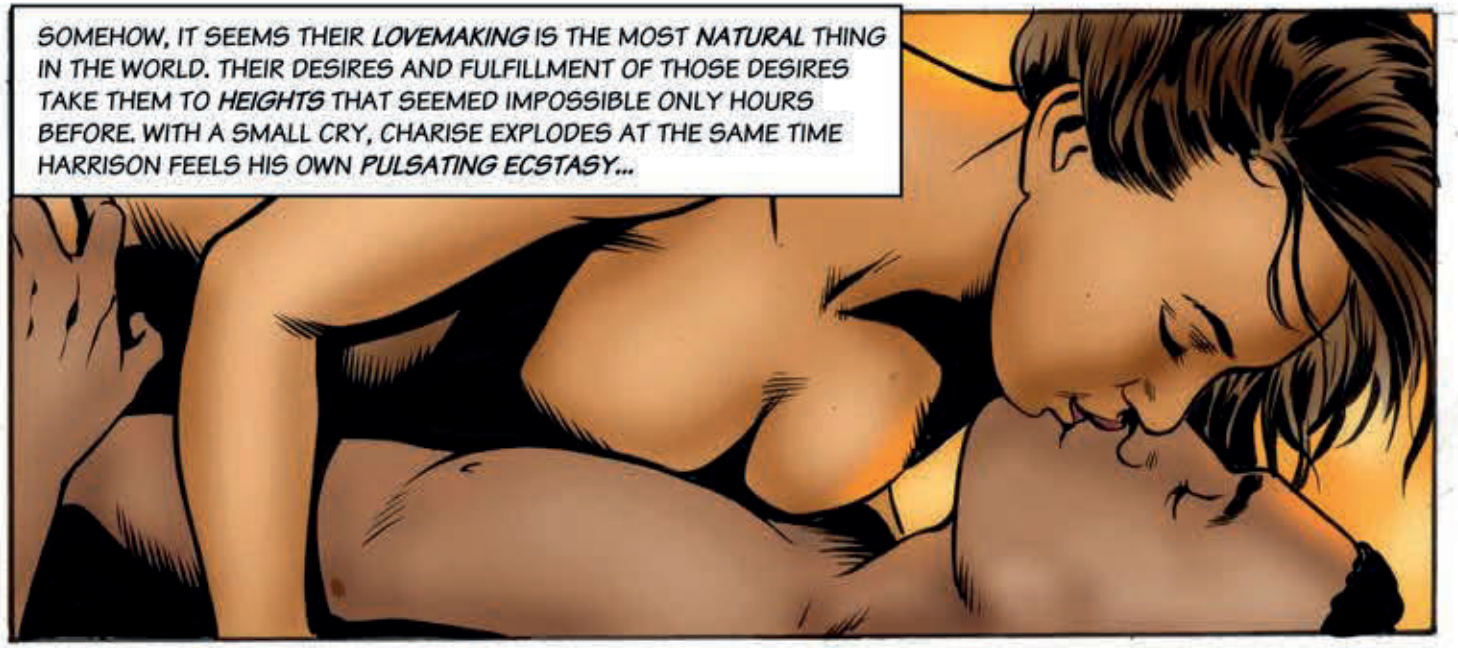
MAYBE IT'S THE WINE IN FRONT OF A *COZY FIRE*...THE INTIMATE REVELATIONS, BUT SOMEHOW *SEXUAL TENSION* THAT HAS BEEN *SMOLDERING* ALL AFTERNOON BECOMES A FLAME...AND A FLAME BECOMES A *BONFIRE*...

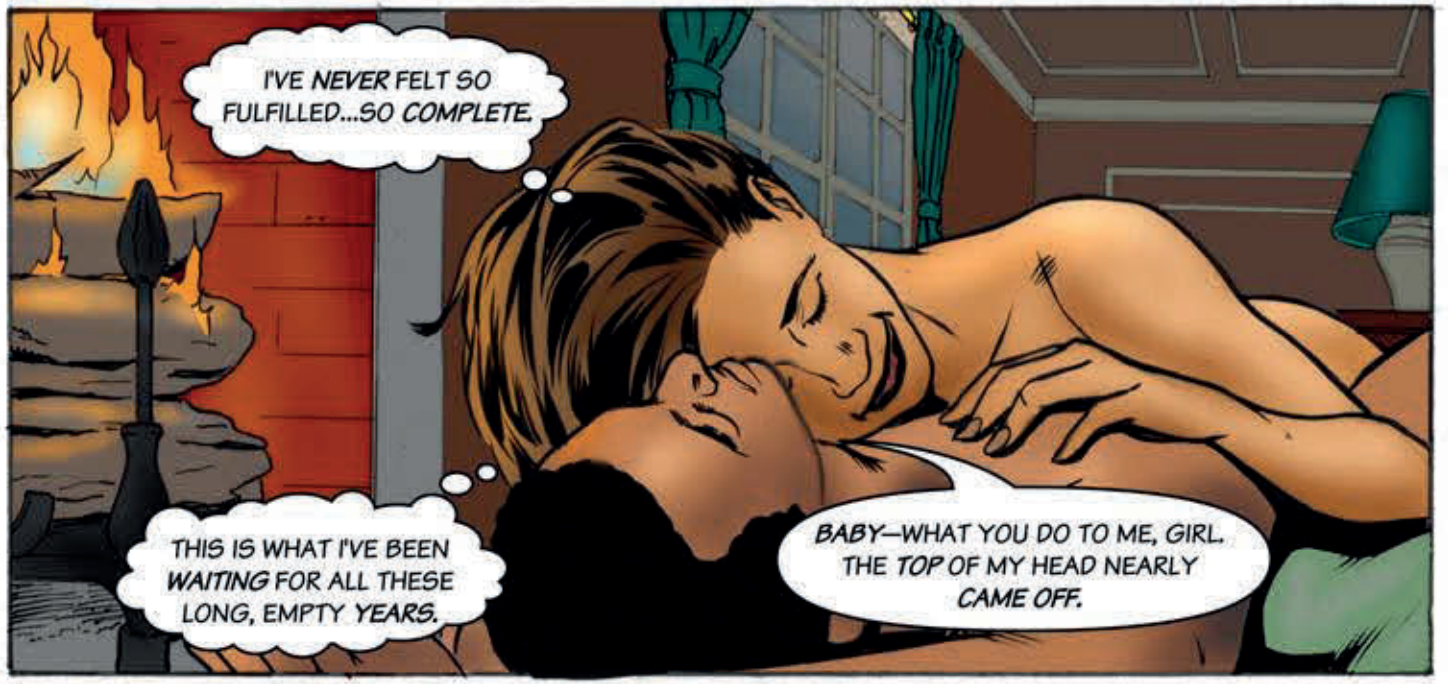
MY *GOD*. HE'S TURNING ME ON LIKE I'VE *NEVER* BEEN BEFORE.

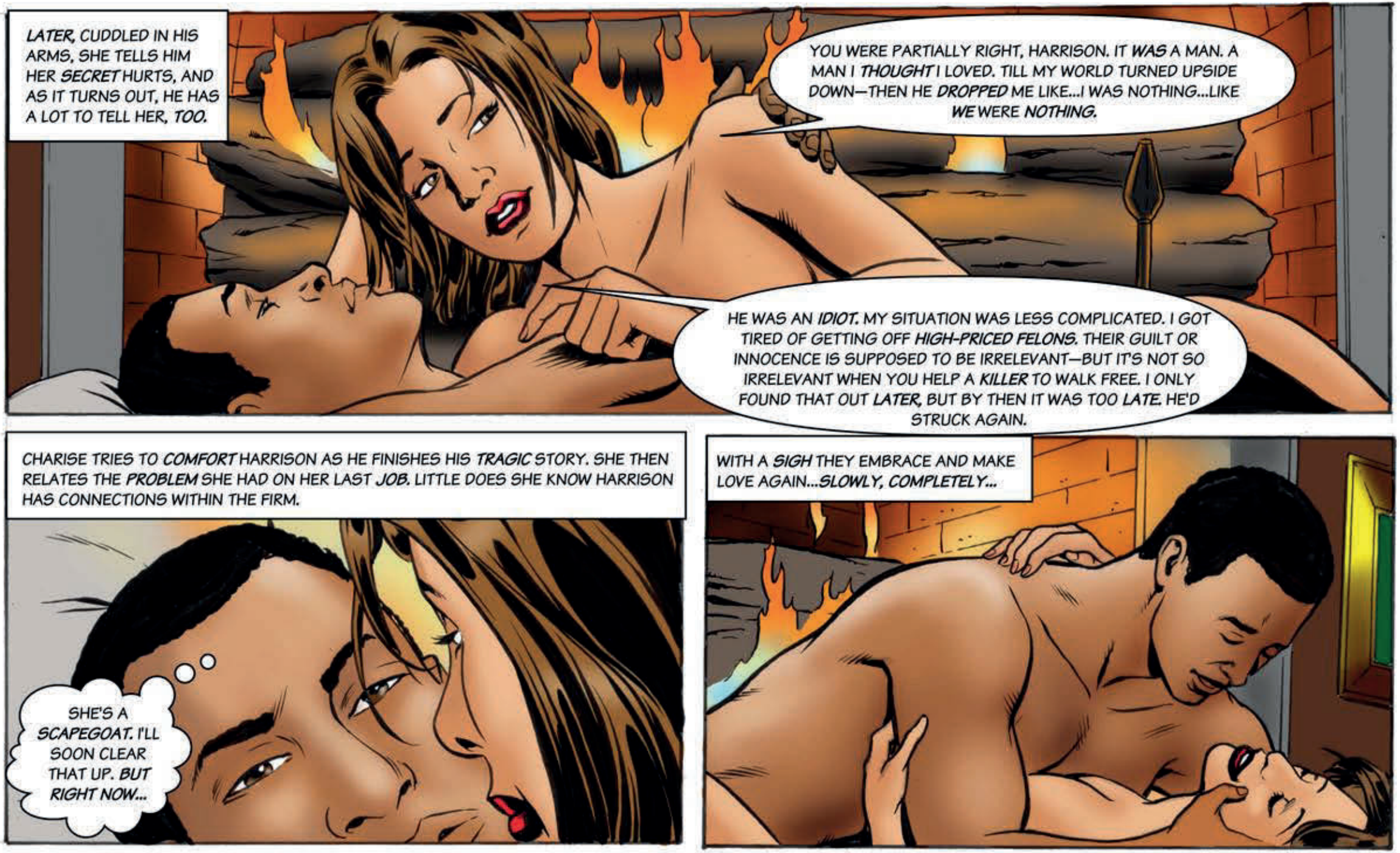
IF I DON'T *STOP* NOW I *NEVER WILL*. SHE'S GOT ME GOING, BUT...I DON'T...CARE...

THEN WHEN THE FIRST KISS BECOMES A DEEPER, SECOND KISS, THE *PROMISE OF RAPTURE* TO COME FILLS THEM WITH THE FERVOR OF AWAKENED DESIRE AND GIVES *LIFE TO HEARTS* LONG DEADENED BY SADNESS. AS HARRISON CARESSES HER *BODY* AND HIS LIPS SUCKLE THE SENSITIVE TIPS OF HER BREASTS, CHARISE FEELS HER BODY *RELEASE* ITS JUICES IN *ANTICIPATION* OF HIS ENTRY.

SOMEHOW, IT SEEMS THEIR *LOVEMAKING* IS THE MOST *NATURAL* THING IN THE WORLD. THEIR DESIRES AND FULFILLMENT OF THOSE DESIRES TAKE THEM TO *HEIGHTS* THAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE ONLY HOURS BEFORE. WITH A SMALL CRY, CHARISE EXPLODES AT THE SAME TIME HARRISON FEELS HIS OWN *PULSATING ECSTASY*...





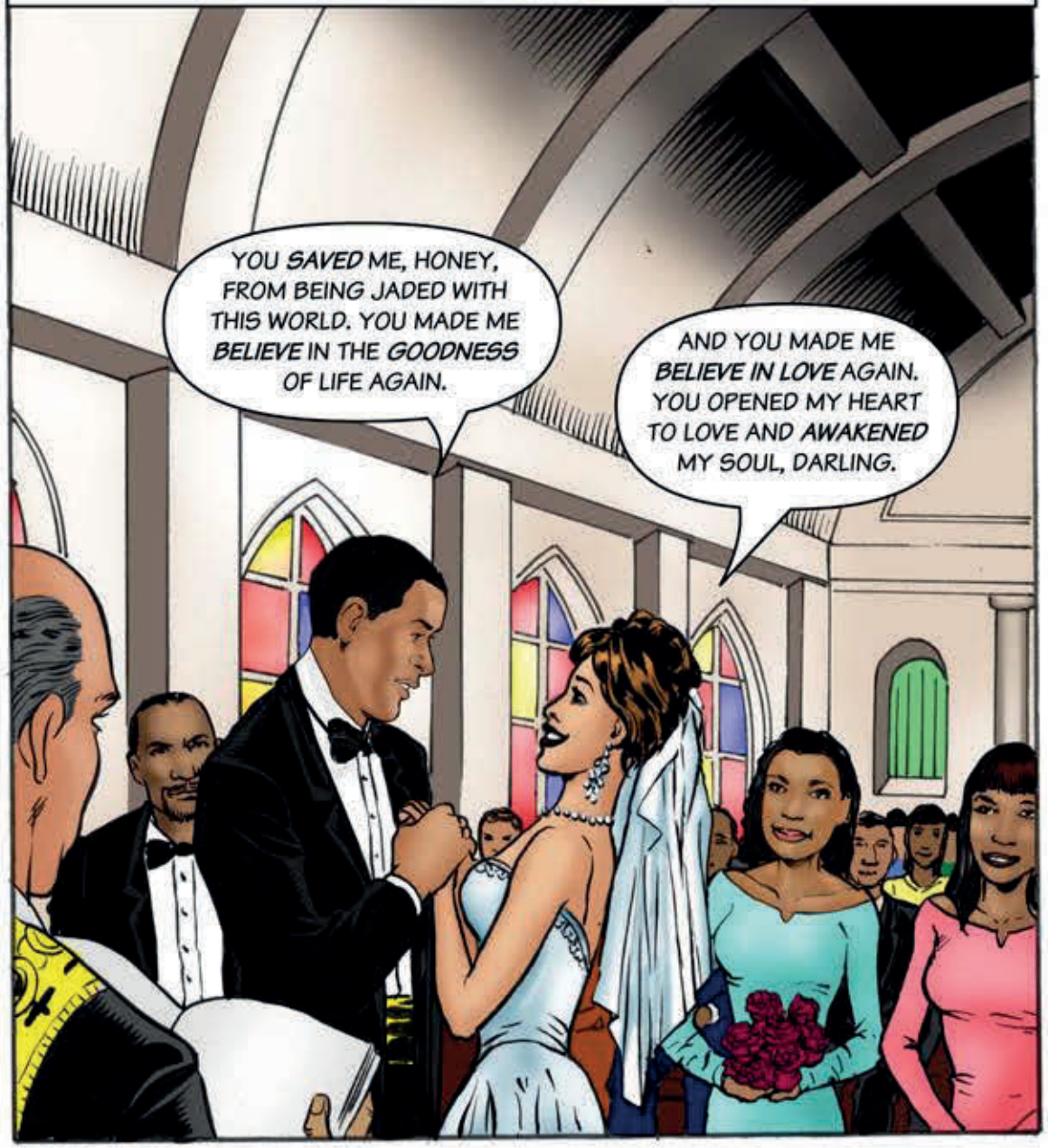

LATER, CUDDLED IN HIS ARMS, SHE TELLS HIM HER SECRET HURTS, AND AS IT TURNS OUT, HE HAS A LOT TO TELL HER, TOO.
YOU WERE PARTIALLY RIGHT, HARRISON. IT WAS A MAN. A MAN I THOUGHT I LOVED. TILL MY WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN—THEN HE DROPPED ME LIKE...I WAS NOTHING...LIKE WE WERE NOTHING.
HE WAS AN IDIOT. MY SITUATION WAS LESS COMPLICATED. I GOT TIRED OF GETTING OFF HIGH-PRICED FELONS. THEIR GUILT OR INNOCENCE IS SUPPOSED TO BE IRRELEVANT—BUT IT'S NOT SO IRRELEVANT WHEN YOU HELP A KILLER TO WALK FREE. I ONLY FOUND THAT OUT LATER, BUT BY THEN IT WAS TOO LATE. HE'D STRUCK AGAIN.
CHARISE TRIES TO COMFORT HARRISON AS HE FINISHES HIS TRAGIC STORY. SHE THEN RELATES THE PROBLEM SHE HAD ON HER LAST JOB. LITTLE DOES SHE KNOW HARRISON HAS CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE FIRM.
SHE'S A SCAPEGOAT. I'LL SOON CLEAR THAT UP. BUT RIGHT NOW...
WITH A SIGH THEY EMBRACE AND MAKE LOVE AGAIN...SLOWLY, COMPLETELY...

ADLER, YOU KNOW SHE DIDN'T DO IT. DID YOU CHECK OUT THAT SLEAZE SHE WAS DATING? DELROY WASHINGTON, I THINK HIS NAME IS. HE'S NOW WITH SWEITS AND ROYCE—AND YOU KNOW HOW THEY LIKE TO PLAY HARDBALL.
YEAH, I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE BOYFRIEND. THANKS, COLTER, FOR CLUEING ME IN...
THEIR DAYS TOGETHER IN THE CRISP MARYLAND AUTUMN OF SUNSHINE AND MISTY RAINS ARE MAGICAL.
OH, HARRISON, I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU.
WELL, WELL, A WOMAN WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO ADMIT TO LOVE.
IS IT POLITICALLY INCORRECT?
MAYBE. BUT VERY CORRECT FOR US. JUST NAME THE DAY, SWEETHEART. I CAN'T WAIT TO BE MR. SMITH.

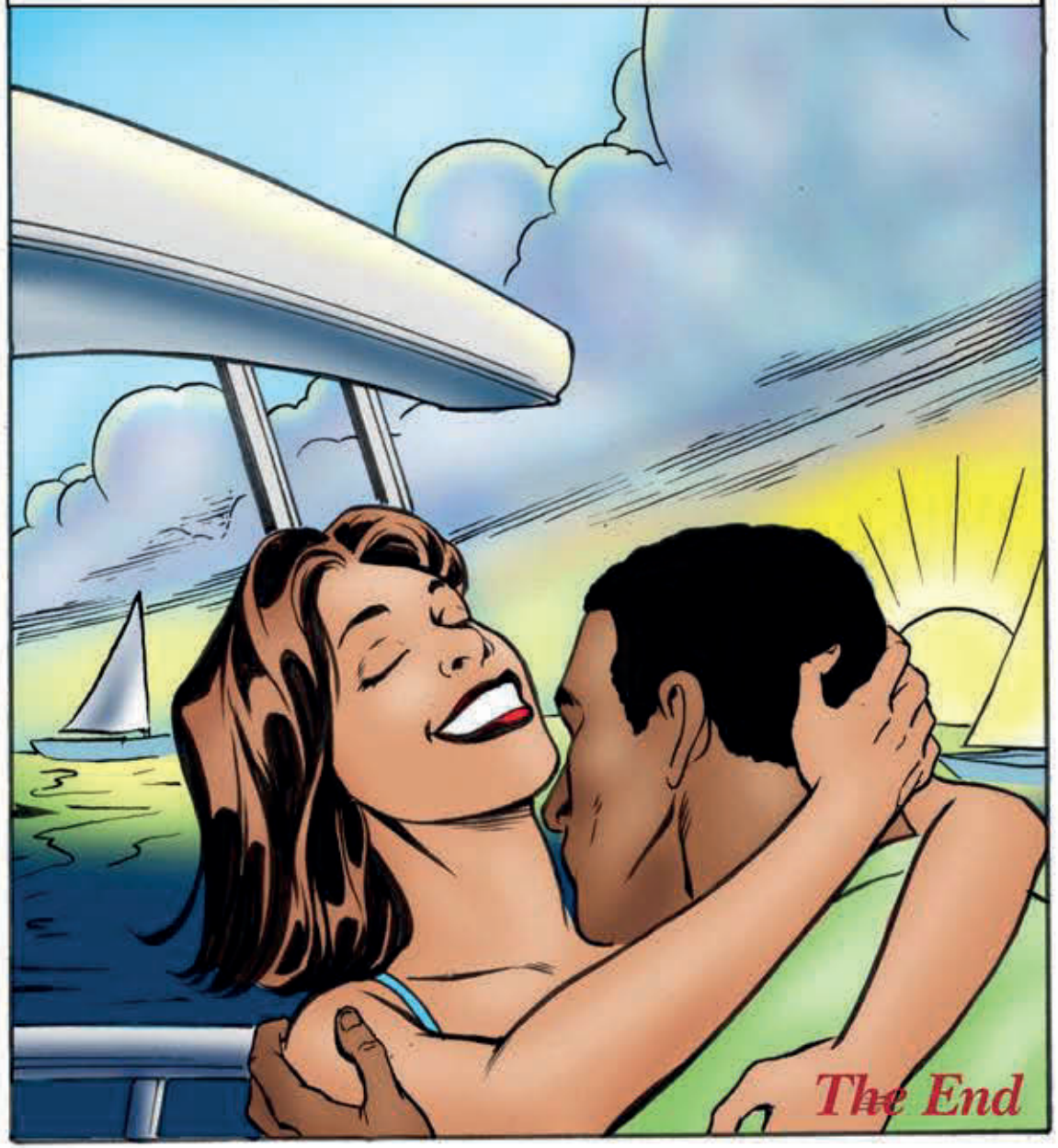
WITH A KISS THEY SEAL THEIR ENGAGEMENT...AND THEIR BOND TO EACH OTHER.
LATER, AFTER A LITTLE DIGGING, HARRISON FINDS OUT FROM A COLUMNIST AT THE WASHINGTON REPORT THE SOURCE OF THE STORY THAT COST CHARISE HER REPUTATION.
REMEMBER, YOU NEVER HEARD IT FROM ME. YOU OWE ME ONE, COLTER.
IT WAS THE NIGHT CHARISE HAD BEEN SO EXCITED ABOUT HER PROMOTION, AND DELROY HAD STOPPED BY HER OFFICE TO TAKE HER TO DINNER...
...SO THE BIG DEAL OF THE CENTURY IS ALL TIED UP IN A BOW, HUH?
JUST ABOUT! ONCE THESE PAPERS GO THROUGH THE FINAL REVIEW. WAIT A SEC. I'LL JUST GO POWDER MY NOSE.
HURRY UP. I'VE GOT DINNER RESERVATIONS AT THE GROVE.
THANKS, SUGAR. THIS INFORMATION SHOULD OPEN SOME DOORS FOR ME!

WITH THE *INFORMATION* BILL ADLER GETS FROM HARRISON ABOUT DELROY, BILL ASKS CHARISE IF SHE WOULD CONSIDER *COMING BACK* TO *WORK* FOR HIM.
CHARISE, WHAT CAN I SAY? WHO *KNEW?* LOOK, WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU *BACK.*
BUT CHARISE IS NOT THE *GOING-BACK TYPE.* NOW THAT HER NAME IS *CLEARED,* SHE'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE WRITING HER OWN TICKET WITH OTHER MAJOR MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS FIRMS. AND SHE IS ALREADY *CONSIDERING* AN *OFFER* FROM A COMPANY IN NEARBY *VIRGINIA.*
I *APPRECIATE* THE OFFER, BILL. BUT RIGHT NOW I HAVE *OTHER* PLANS...

ON THEIR *WEDDING DAY* AS THEY SPEAK THEIR VOWS, SHE KNOWS THAT ALL HER AMBITIONS WILL ONLY BE ENHANCED BY *HER LOVE* FOR HER HUSBAND AND *HIS LOVE* FOR HER.



CHARISE AND HARRISON SPEND A *BLISSFUL HONEYMOON* ON HIS BOAT, WHERE THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER IS EXPRESSED AGAIN...AND AGAIN...*A NEW BEGINNING* FOR THEM BOTH.



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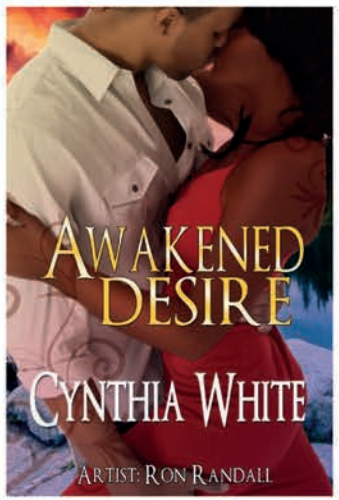
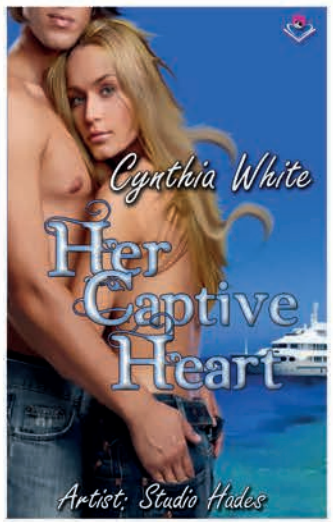


Awakened Desire

Written by Cynthia White and illustrated by Ron Randall

Harrison Coulter is only looking for a quiet life in the small, out-of-the-way Maryland Eastern Shore town. A place to lick his wounds and mind his own business. That's before the rugged millionaire has his first run in with sassy, high-powered financial analyst, Charise Smith. Charise is also hiding out from a devastating business fiasco and an equally devastating broken engagement. From their first meeting, they get on each others' last nerves. Under each others' skins. So hell will freeze over before either will give in to the passion that soon starts to sizzle between them.

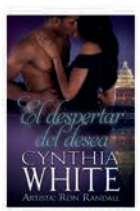


Her Captive Heart

Written by Cynthia White and illustrated by Studio Hades

Michelle Martin accepts a research-assistant job with billionaire hotel tycoon Harland Marks under false pretenses. She's really there to spy on him to help her fiancé regain the birthright Harland stole from him. She doesn't count on being sequestered on Harland's private Bermuda island with him. Or on the attraction that sizzles between them. How can she remain true to her fiancé when Harland's kisses thrill her and send her loyalty into oblivion?

También disponible en español



Amados rivales

El despertar del deseo

El manitas meticente

El partido de amor

Sargazo salvaje

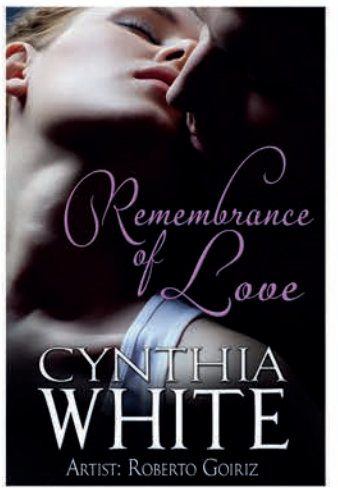
Su corazón cautivo

If you enjoyed this book, check out these other deliciously sexy romance graphic novels by Cynthia White from MyRomanceStory.com

A Complicated Affair

Written by Cynthia White writing as Amen Henriques and illustrated by John &Jason Waltrip

Since his disastrous marriage many years before, billionaire hotelier, Henreid Duval, vows never to be trapped in a serious relationship again. And so he dates shallow, nubile young women, seeking no more than fun and sex. Older women just make for complications—he avoids them like the plague. So when he finds himself in an advanced state of arousal around Sienna Renard, a voluptuous raven-haired fashion designer in her late 30s, he's convinced he can control his lust for her—it's only momentary and will pass. Now if he can only convince his body.



Remembrance of Love

Written by Cynthia White and illustrated by Roberto Goiriz

In twenty years of marriage to Mirabella, Duke Diego Sanchez, special Spanish envoy to the U.S., has never even looked at another woman. How then can he explain his growing sexual yearnings for their alluring neighbor and Mirabella's dearest friend, Dr. Eva Brinkman? And how can he come to terms with this desire in the face of the mortal illness of his wife?

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