

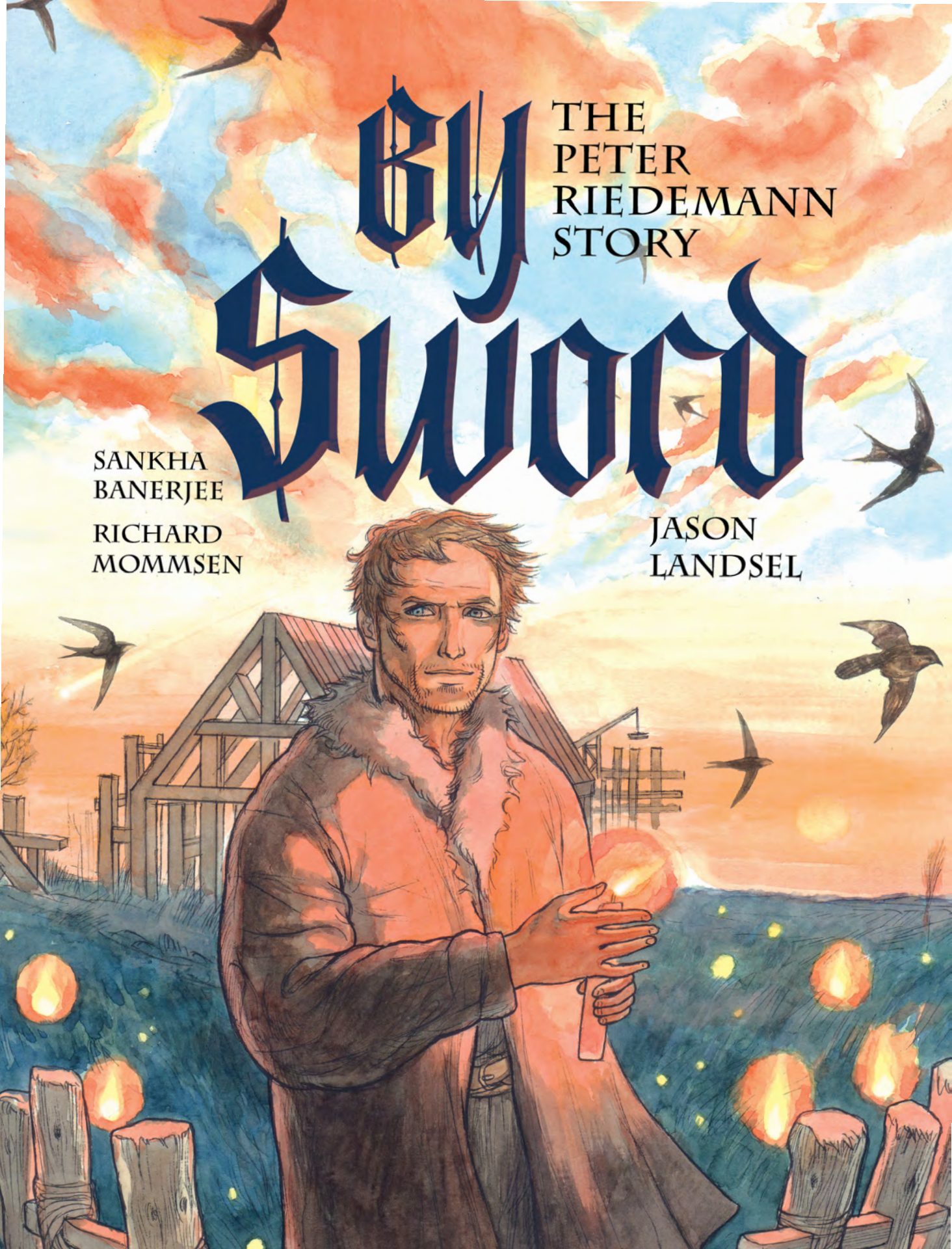
BY SWORD

THE
PETER
RIEDEMANN
STORY

SANKHA
BANERJEE

RICHARD
MOMMSEN

JASON
LANDSEL



BY SWORD

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"AND I SAW AN ANGEL COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN, HAVING THE KEY TO THE ABYSS AND HOLDING IN HIS HAND A GREAT CHAIN.

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HE SEIZED THE DRAGON AND THREW HIM INTO
THE ABYSS, AND LOCKED AND SEALED IT
OVER HIM, TO KEEP HIM FROM DECEIVING THE
NATIONS ANYMORE..." REVELATION 20:1-3



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HEROES OF THE RADICAL REFORMATION

BOOK THREE

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By Sword

THE PETER RIEDEMANN STORY

JASON LANDSEL

SANKHA BANERJEE, ART

RICHARD MOMMSEN, SCRIPT



Plough

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TO THE READER

THE JAMES RIVER cuts through the fertile South Dakota prairie. Here, in a quiet cemetery, my family and I stand beside two modest grave markers bearing the word “martyr.” The Hutterites emigrated to South Dakota from Russia in the 1870s after refusing conscription in the czar’s army. Their first communal settlements were established in this peaceful valley.

Beside the grave makers, my father-in-law tells us the story of martyrs Joseph and Michael Hofer, two brothers who died of abuse in a US military prison in 1918, after a stint in Alcatraz, because of their refusal to participate in the war.

For 500 years the Hutterites and their fellow Anabaptists have resolutely refused to “take up the sword.” In the sixteenth century, new converts to this peaceful way of life were warned to expect persecution, including execution “by water, by fire, or by sword,” for their refusal to comply with the mandates of state religion.

Felix Manz, whose story we tell in *By Water*, was the first to die, in 1527. He was executed for his conviction that only believing adults should be baptized. Manz was drowned, but many more were baptized; water was a weapon but also the symbol of new life and the “living water” Jesus promises. Jakob Hutter, whose story we tell in *By Fire*, was burned at the stake, but the communal movement he sparked spread like wildfire.

By Sword, the final volume in this trilogy, tells the story of Peter Riedemann (1506-56), who, with his wife, Treindl, courageously led and rebuilt the fractured Anabaptist communal movement in Moravia after the death of Hutter. In Riedemann’s day, many Anabaptists were beheaded; their egalitarian and pacifist communal lifestyle was seen as a threat to the social and political order, and rulers were determined to stamp it out. But again, the word of God proved “sharper than any two-edged sword.”

Riedeman was a prolific writer; his *Confession of Faith*, letters, and numerous songs still inspire people today. In *By Sword* we see the significance of songs, not only to uplift and encourage but to preserve a community’s history. My kids listening to their grandfather pass on the story of the Hofer brothers is part of this oral tradition, and we offer these graphic novels in the same spirit. I hope these stories inspire others to be courageous, to question the misuse and manipulation of religion for power and profit, and to break from corrupt systems and build something new – because the better world that Manz, Hutter, and Riedemann envisioned is still possible.

Jason Landsel
May 2026

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TYROL, 1536

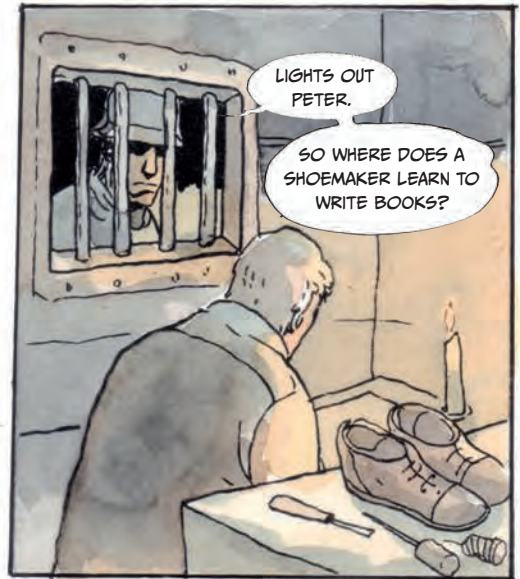
THEY WILL NEVER
BREAK ME, JAKOB...

AND OUR SON
WILL SURVIVE...





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LIGHTS OUT
PETER.

SO WHERE DOES A
SHOEMAKER LEARN TO
WRITE BOOKS?

I RECEIVED SOME
SCHOOLING IN SILESIA,
WHERE I ALSO
LEARNED THE CRAFT OF
SHOEMAKING. THERE I
MET THE REFORMERS
YOU CALL ANABAPTISTS,
WHO URGED ME TO
READ THE BIBLE FOR
MYSELF.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
WIELDS WORLDLY
POWER AND DOESN'T
WANT PEOPLE TO
DISCOVER THE TRUTH.

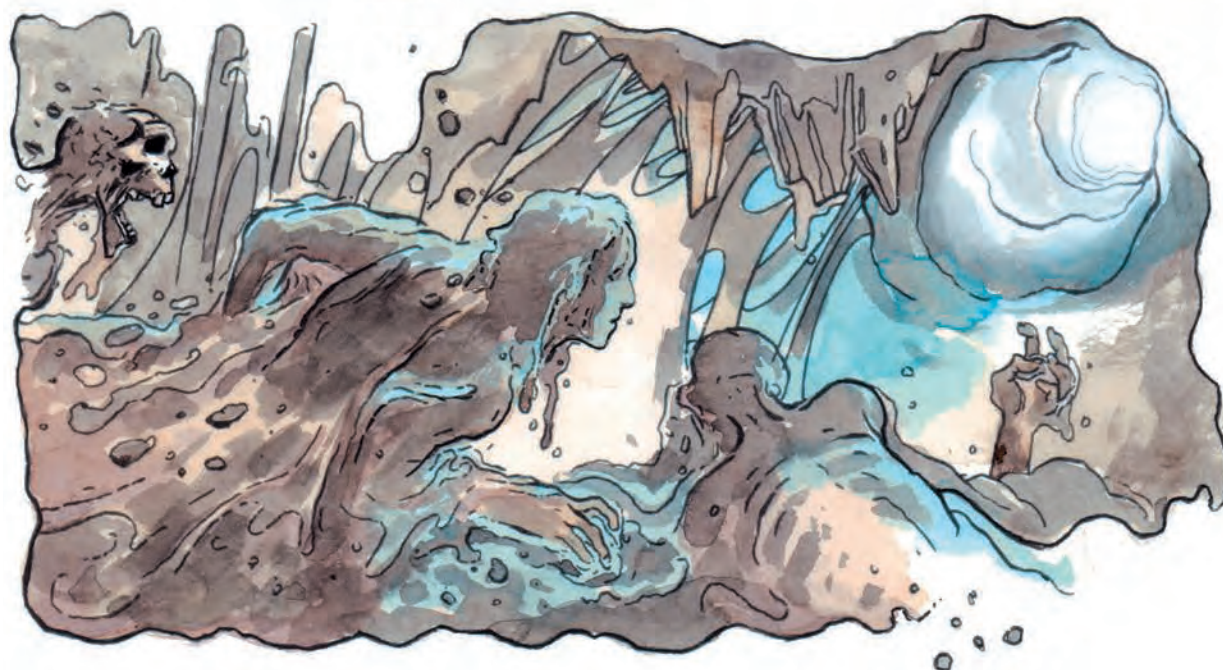
I LEFT AND GOT
TRUE BAPTISM,
FREELY CHOSEN AS
A BELIEVER, AND
BECAME A PASTOR.
NOW I'M HERE.



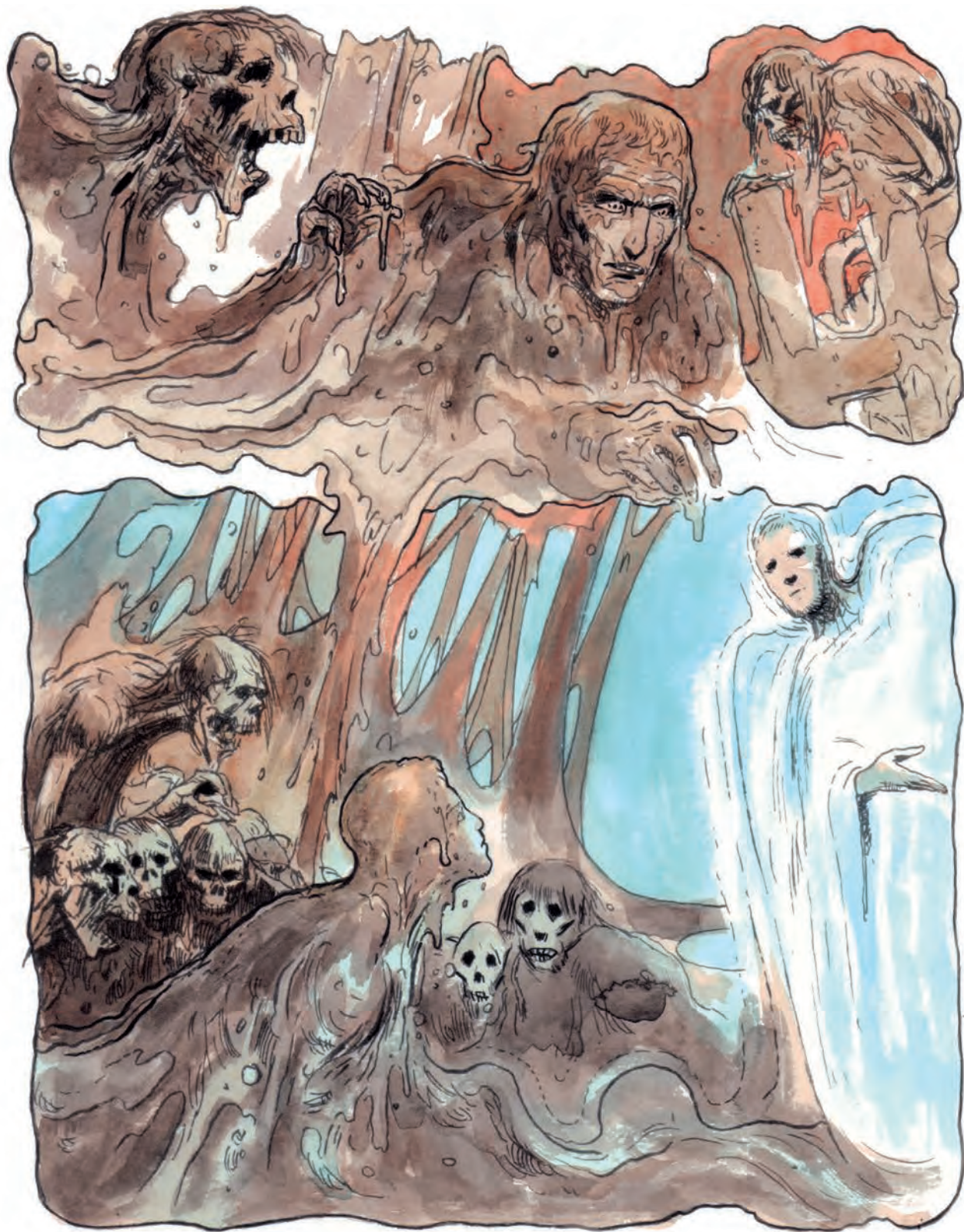
THE MINISTER WITHOUT
A CONGREGATION,

PREACHING TO
THE MICE!





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Chapter 1

MARTYRS AND BARDS

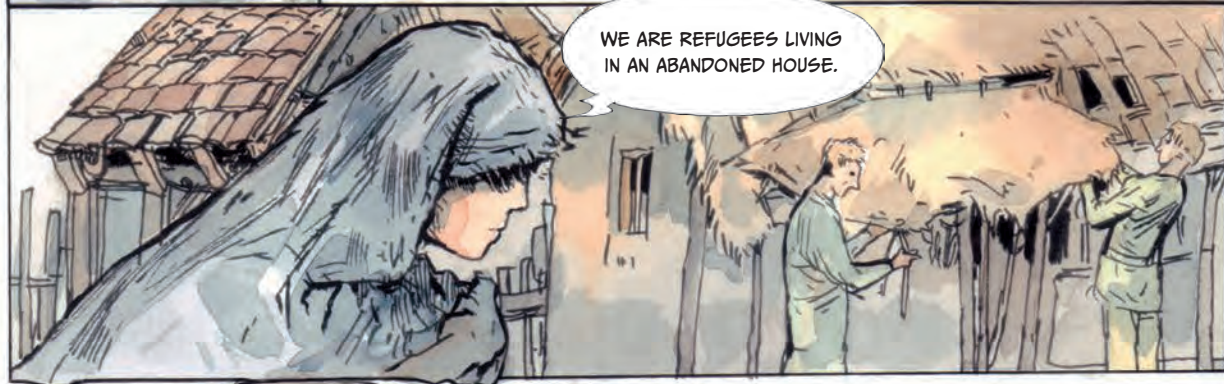


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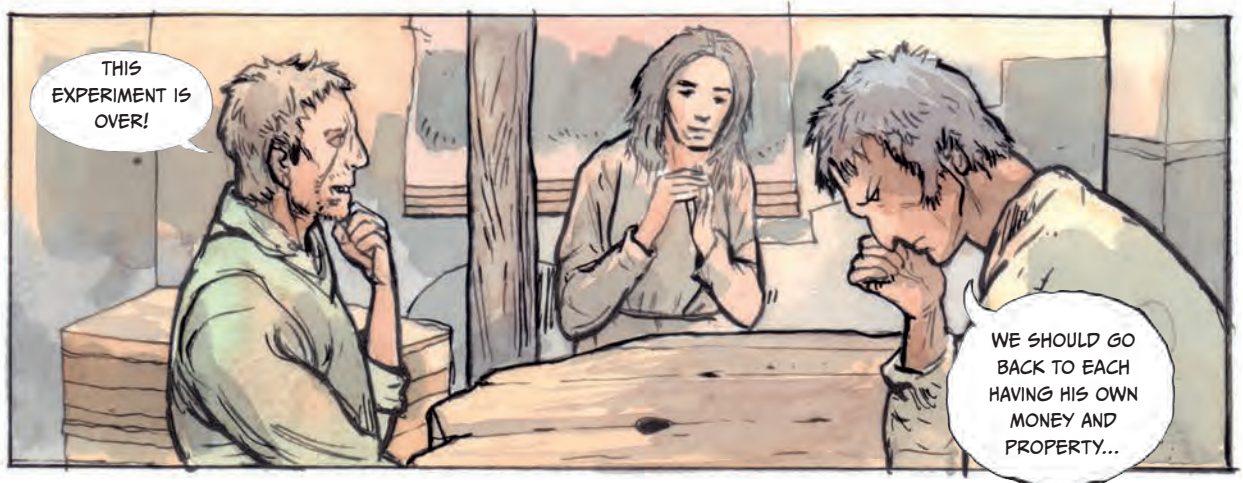
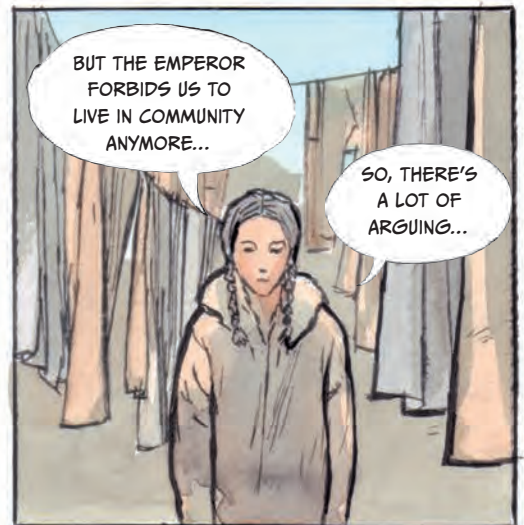
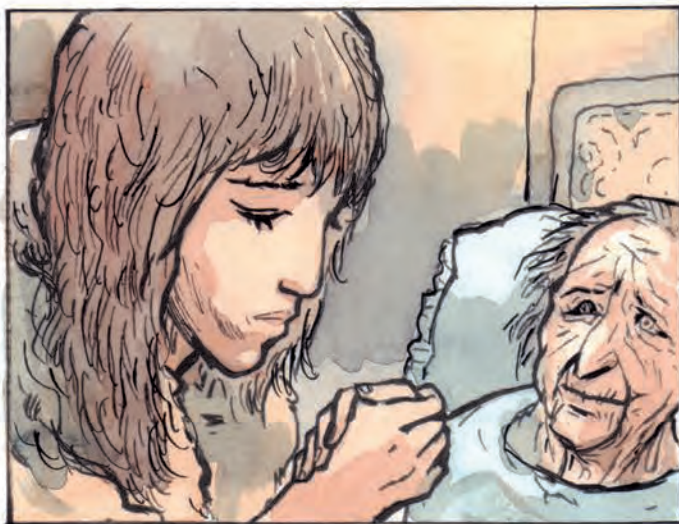
ANABAPTIST SETTLEMENT,
AUSTRIA, 1536

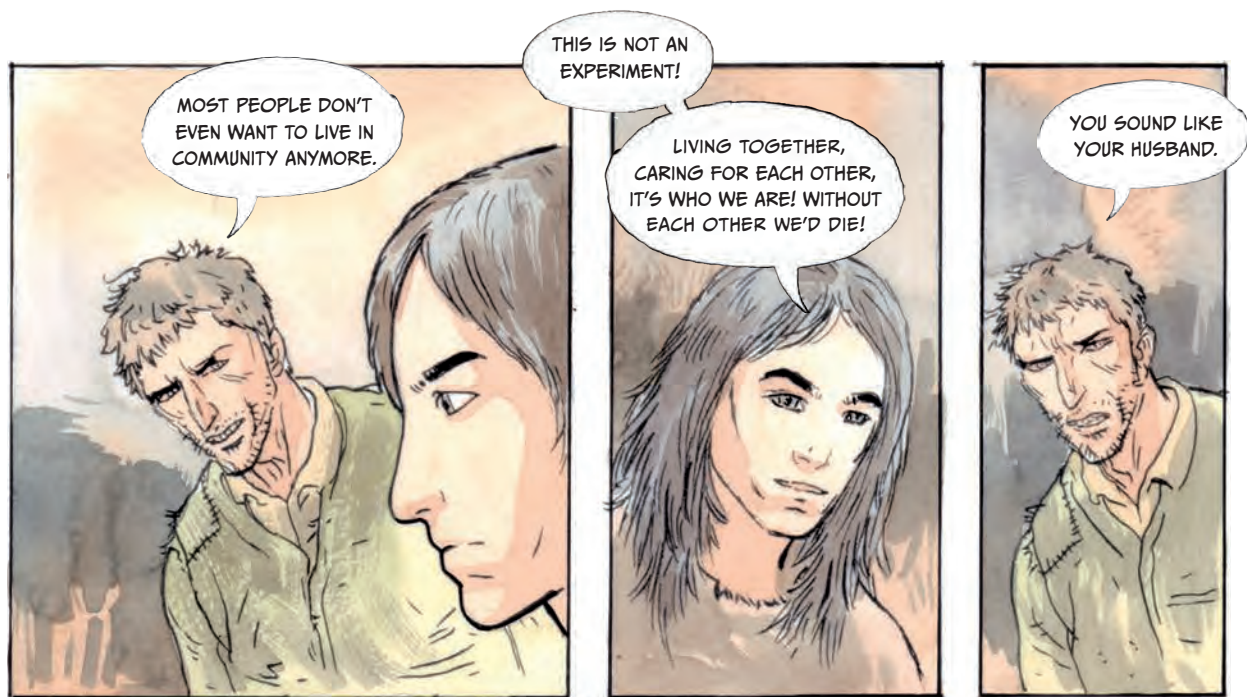


WE ARE REFUGEES LIVING
IN AN ABANDONED HOUSE.

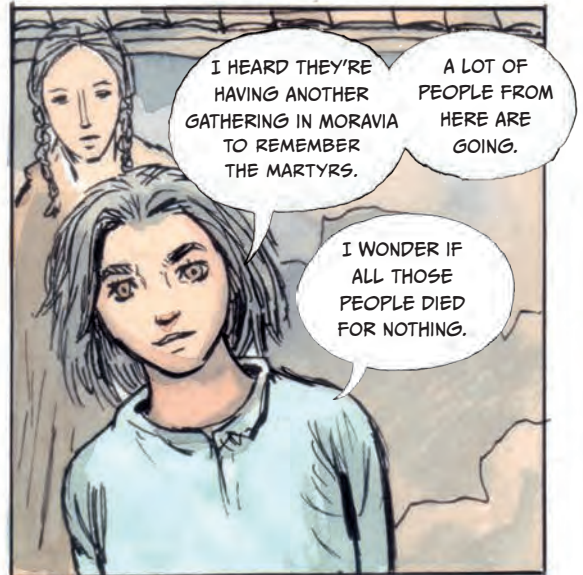
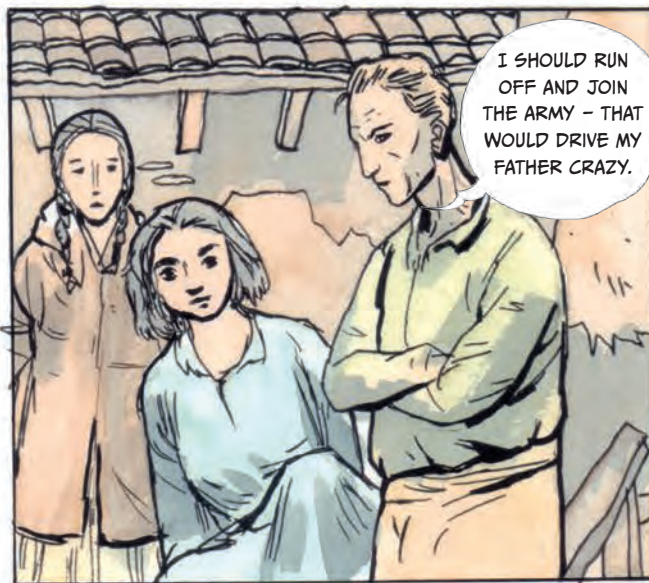








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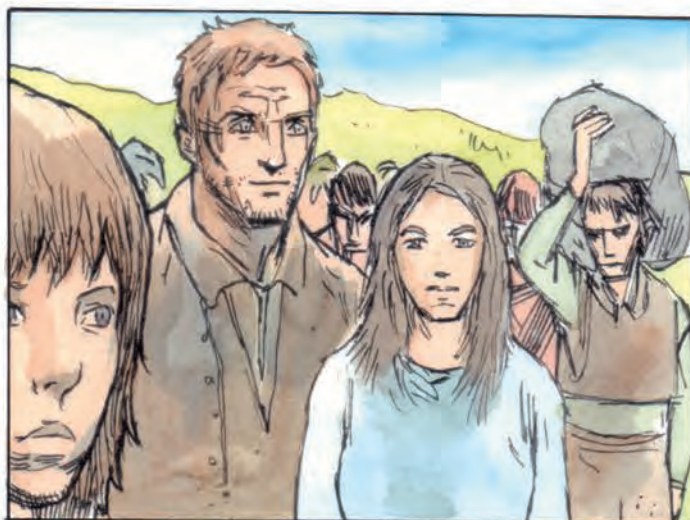
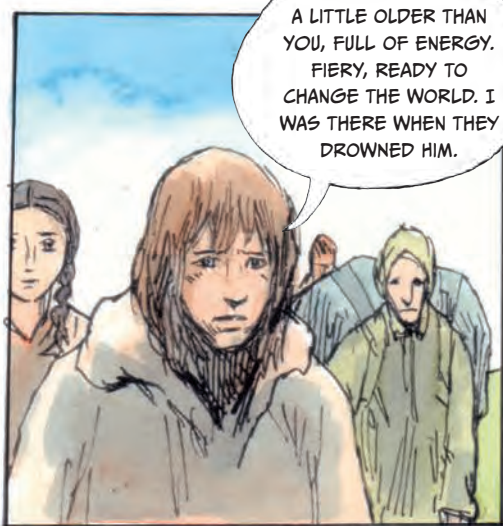
SO, YOU WERE THERE IN ZURICH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MOVEMENT?

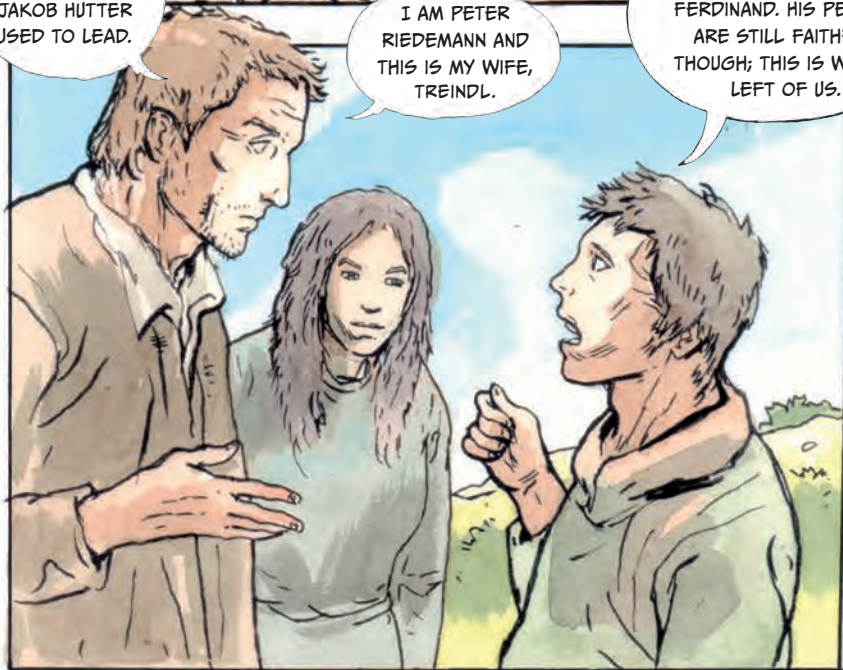
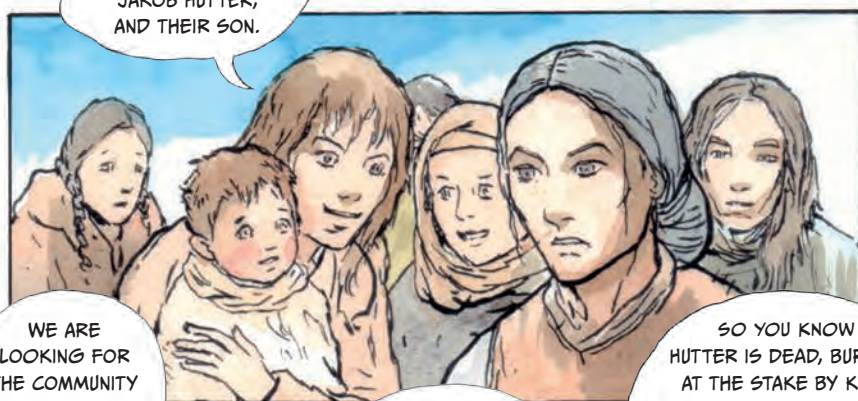
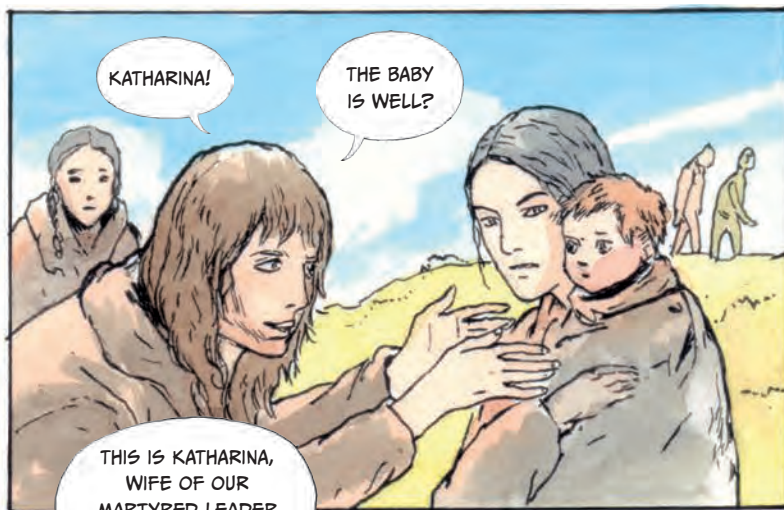


THOSE WERE DAYS TO REMEMBER. I WISH YOU COULD HAVE MET FELIX MANZ AND HIS FRIENDS.



A LITTLE OLDER THAN YOU, FULL OF ENERGY. FIERY, READY TO CHANGE THE WORLD. I WAS THERE WHEN THEY DROWNED HIM.







SINCE HUTTER'S DEATH THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF DIVISION, EACH FACTION FOLLOWING ITS OWN LEADER AND DOCTRINE.

OUR NEW COMMUNITIES NEED STRONGER LEADERSHIP.

THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASY FOR FERDINAND: HE'D JUST NEED TO CATCH THOSE LEADERS.

I WAS JUST RELEASED FROM PRISON.

WHILE LOCKED UP, I TRIED TO SUM UP OUR BELIEFS IN WRITING.

WE NEED VISIONARIES...

PEOPLE ARE DISCOURAGED.



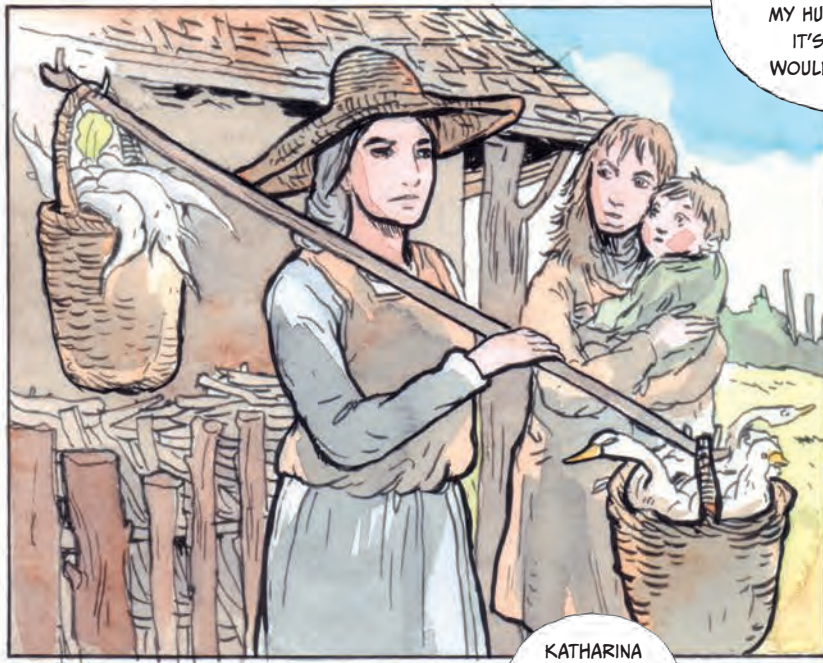
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URSULA, I CAN'T STAY
HERE. I NEED TO RETURN
TO TYROL AND CONTINUE
MY HUSBAND'S WORK.
IT'S WHAT JAKOB
WOULD HAVE WANTED.

WILL YOU CARE
FOR THE CHILD
TILL I RETURN?



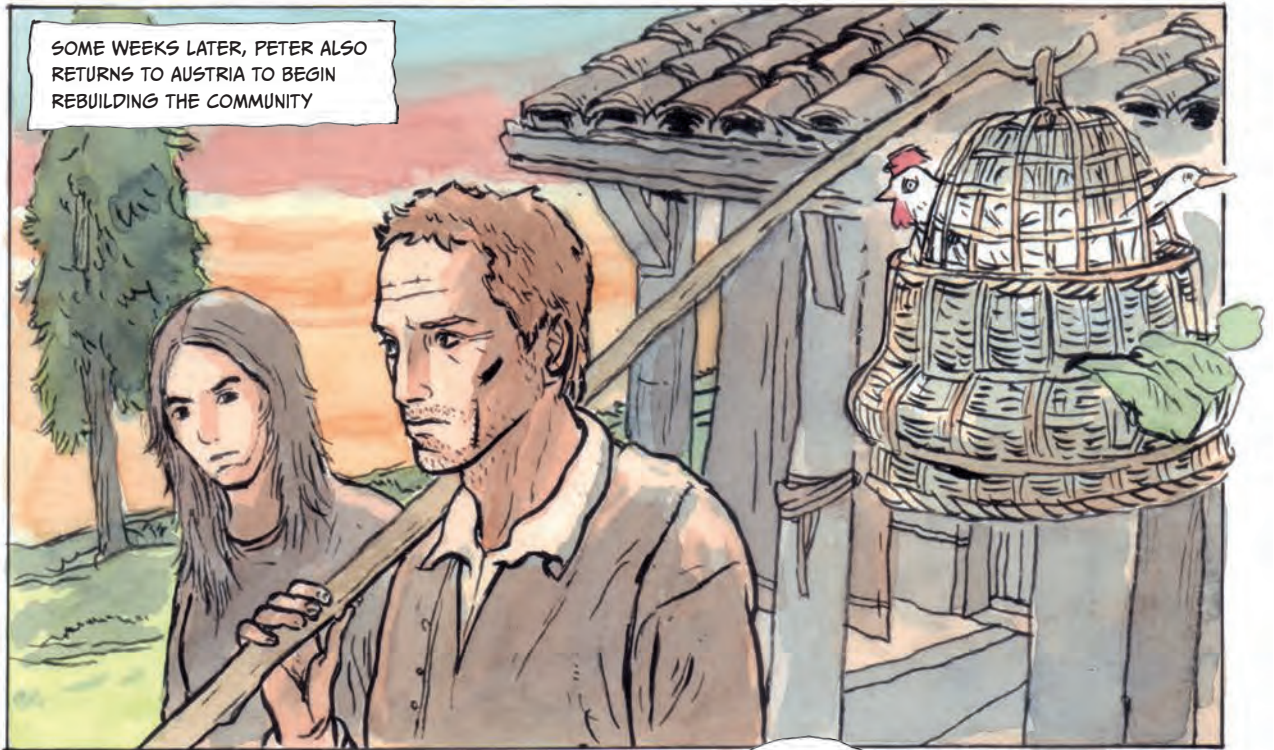
KATHARINA
IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS
RIGHT NOW...



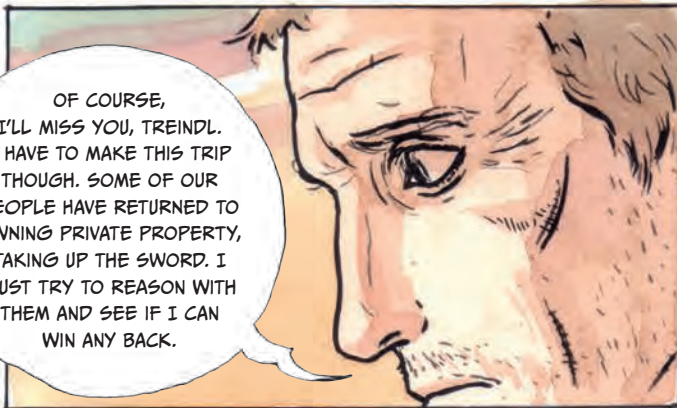
I HAVE
TO...



SOME WEEKS LATER, PETER ALSO RETURNS TO AUSTRIA TO BEGIN REBUILDING THE COMMUNITY



OF COURSE, I'LL MISS YOU, TREINDL. I HAVE TO MAKE THIS TRIP THOUGH. SOME OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE RETURNED TO OWNING PRIVATE PROPERTY, TAKING UP THE SWORD. I MUST TRY TO REASON WITH THEM AND SEE IF I CAN WIN ANY BACK.

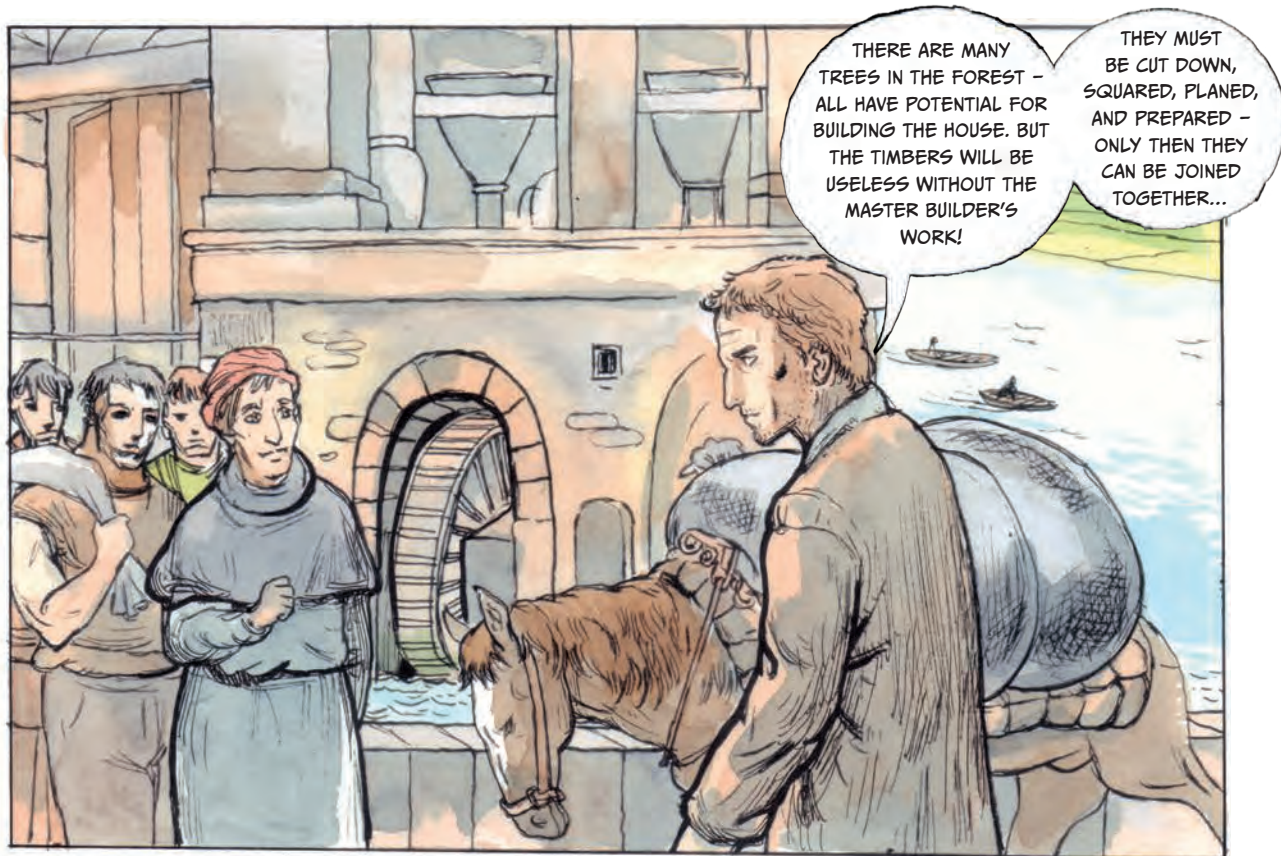


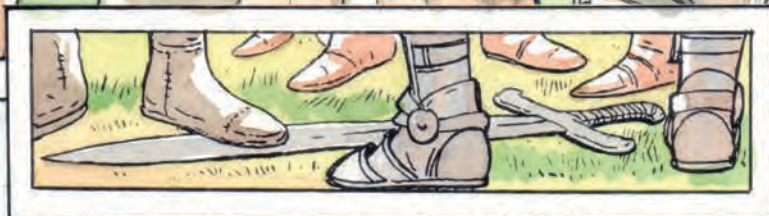
WE HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FOR SEVEN YEARS ALREADY WHILE YOU WERE IN PRISON...



AUSTRIA, 1539







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of this preview. Get the
complete book at
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