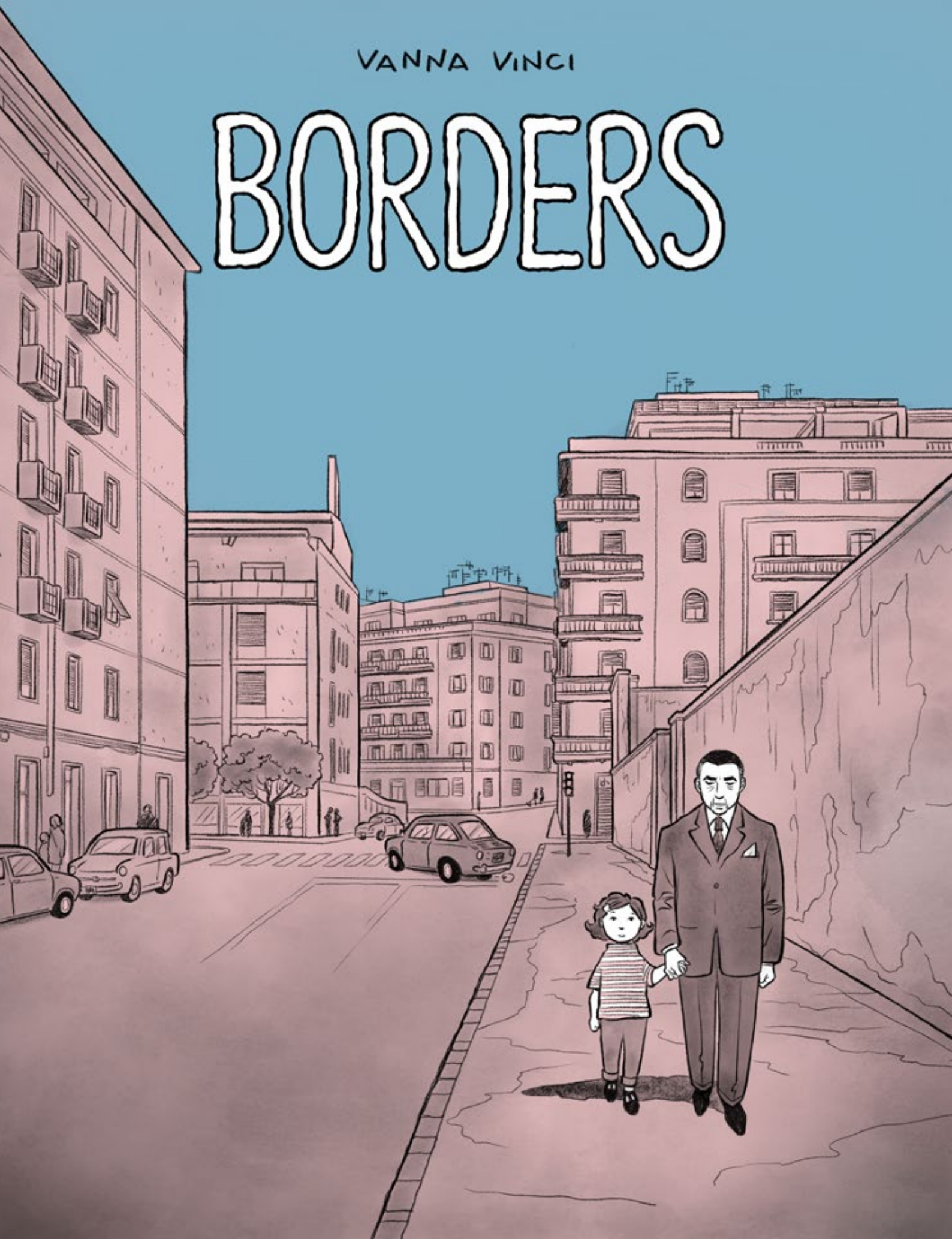


VANNA VINCI

BORDERS



BORDERS CONFINI MEJE

Vanna Vinci

Published for



On the occasion of

GO! 2025
NOVA GORIZIA
GORIZIA

Uradni program
Programma ufficiale
Official programme

by



Borders

A comic book by Vanna Vinci
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This is the volume
of the Borders/Confini/Meje project
dedicated to adulthood.

Borders/Confini/Meje

Three stories, three ages, one single
question: what are “borders”?

In a region where borders have always been part of everyday life and culture, a special project has been created, made up of three volumes – each designed for a different age group: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood – entrusted to three leading figures of the Comic Art: Altan, Sara Colaone, and Vanna Vinci. A narrative and visual journey that embraces the spirit of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, European Capital of Culture 2025, to portray borders not as limits but as spaces for encounter, discovery, and reflection.

Editorial direction
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Graphic design
Studio But Maybe

Letterer
Irene Pinatto

The illustrated book you're holding was created as part of the GO! 2025 project, which features Friuli Venezia Giulia as its protagonist and the cities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia as the joint European Capital of Culture. It is an initiative that brings together diverse and innovative forms of expression to tell our story and, above all, to engage younger generations.

The choice of the comic, with the evocative power of its images and its fresh approach to storytelling, is no coincidence: it speaks to everyone, young and old, with immediacy and lightness, yet carries with it profound themes such as encounter, dialogue, and the new meaning that we wish to give to the concept of borders together.

For us, GO! 2025 is an opportunity for growth, exchange, and openness. Through initiatives such as this, we want to remind everyone that culture is not a privilege for the few, but a shared, living, and accessible space, capable of bringing people and communities together. In this spirit, I invite you to turn these pages, to let yourselves be guided by the stories, and to be surprised by the creative energy that Friuli Venezia Giulia brings to the fore in looking to the future with courage and curiosity.

Happy reading!

Vice-President and Regional
Councillor for Culture and Sport
Mario Anzil

This story is dedicated to my mother

THERE WERE LOTS
OF LOVELY DAYS.



HE WAS
MORE THAN 70
YEARS OLD.

HE WAS AN
EDUCATED AND
CALM MAN.

BY THEN, HIS
LIFE WAS LIKE
THE DOCK...



CALM.

TWO TELEGRAMS.

ONE FROM 1916. ADDRESSED TO
SECOND LIEUTENANT BRUNDO,
MACHINE GUN UNIT.

DESTINATION: WAR ZONE.
ORIGIN: WAR ZONE.

LIKE A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS, OUR HEARTS
WISH YOU PROSPERITY, ABUNDANCE,
AND ETERNAL SALVATION.

THE OTHER FROM 1918. ADDRESSED TO
LIEUTENANT BRUNDO, 76TH INFANTRY,
2ND BATTALION, S. P. MAILLY LE CAMP.

EARLY JULY EXAMS
AWAIT YOU, BRUNDO.



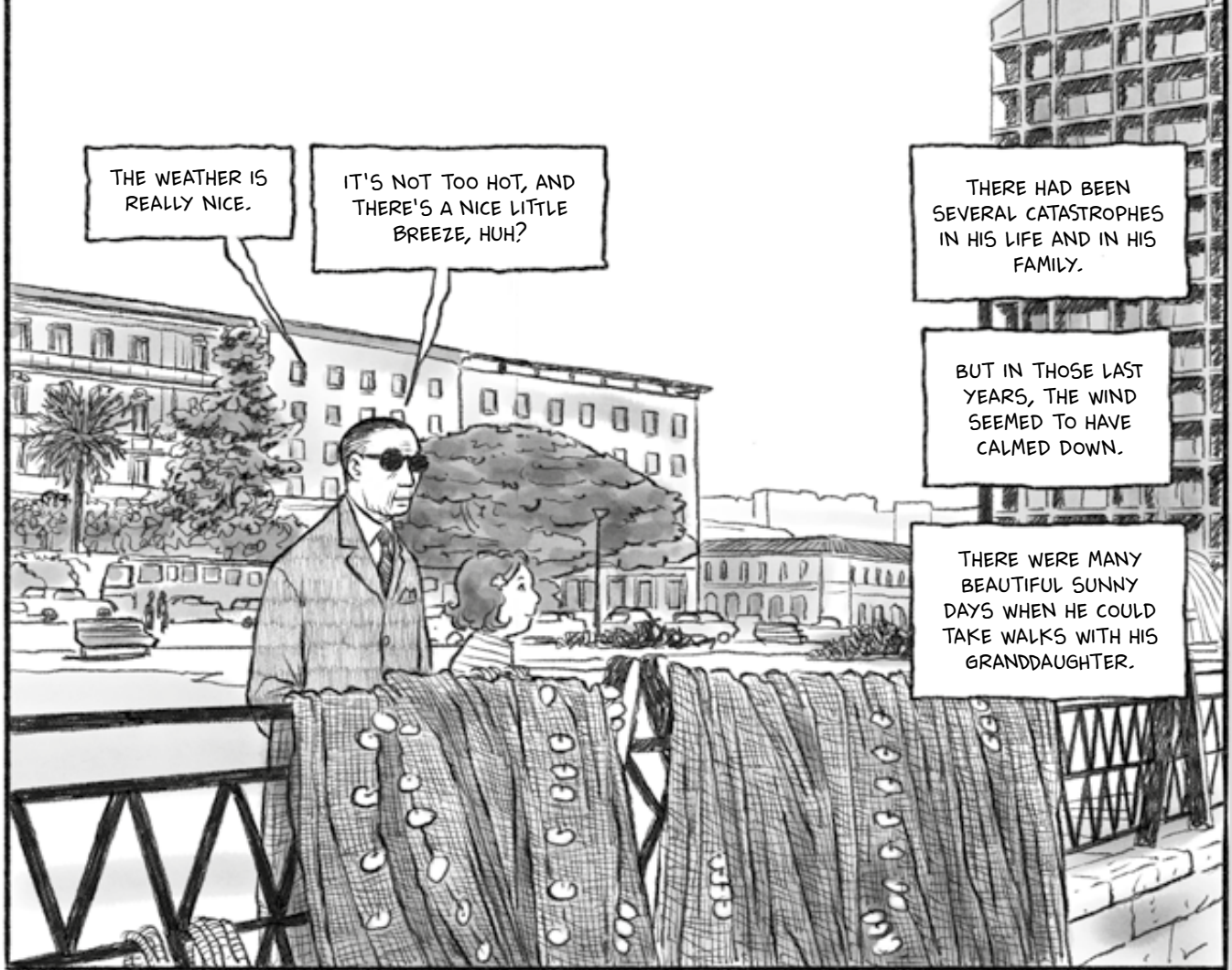
WHAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE FIRST ONE IS
THAT THE MAIN THING COMES LAST: SALVATION.

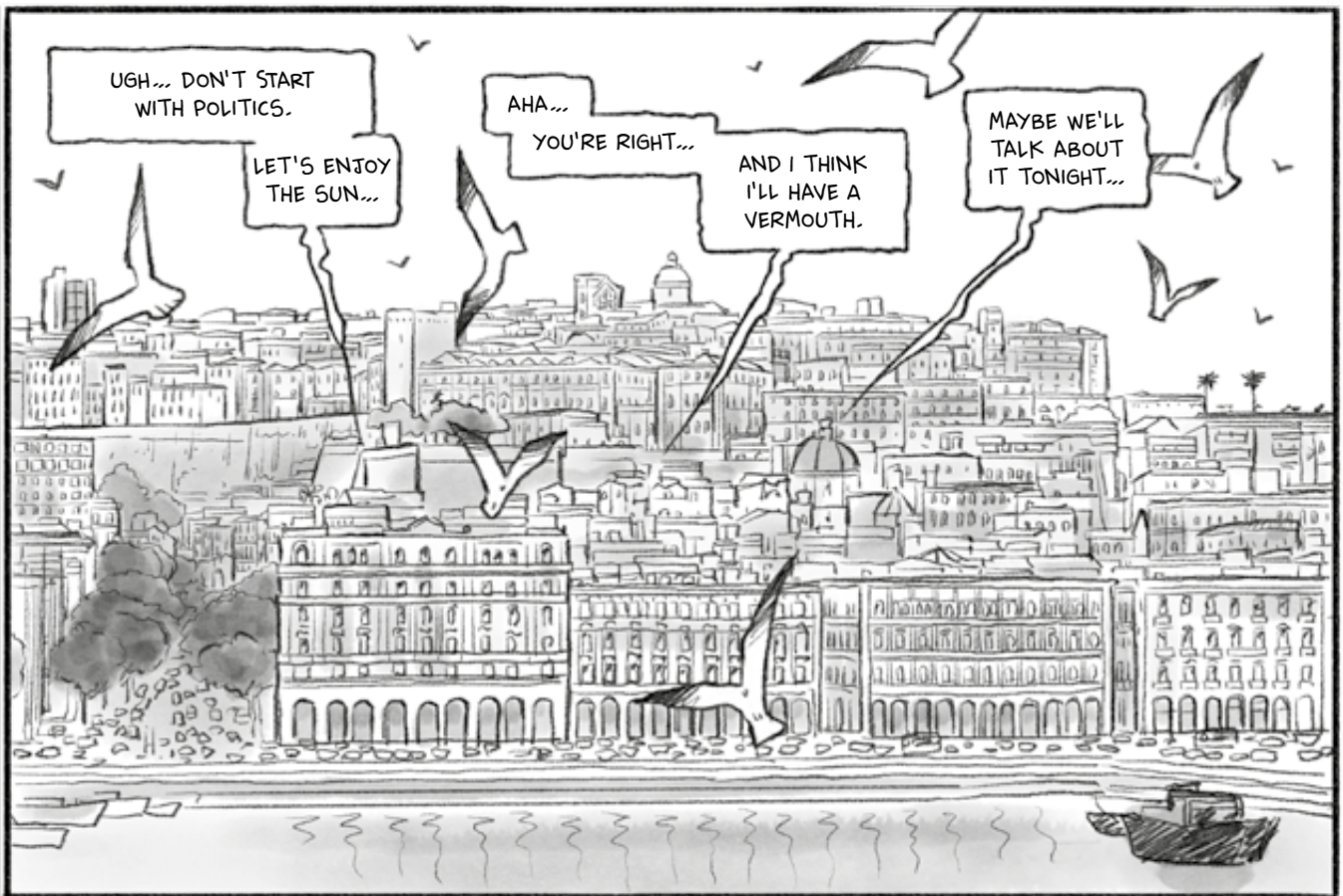
AS FOR THE SECOND ONE, IT SEEMS ABSURD. THE FATHER WRITES TO HIS SON THAT HE IS EXPECTED
TO TAKE HIS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMS. THE SON IS AT THE FRONT, IN FRANCE. JUST BEFORE WORLD WAR I
ENDS. THE TELEGRAM IS FROM 20TH JUNE 1918. THE CONFLICT WILL END ON 11TH NOVEMBER OF THE
SAME YEAR. BUT NEITHER OF THEM KNOWS THIS. NOR DO THEY KNOW IF LIEUTENANT BRUNDO, WHO IS
ALMOST TWENTY-TWO, WILL SURVIVE SAFE AND SOUND AND BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME AND TAKE THE
EXAMS. THE PLAN WAS TO ENROL IN LAW SCHOOL, BUT NOW THAT IDEA SEEMS VERY DISTANT.















RACKET.

BOOM BOOM
BOOM WHAMMM

AN INVISIBLE
LIMIT.

THE FRONT
LINE.

A FINE LINE.

A BORDER.

NO MAN'S
LAND.

UNDEFINED
TIME.

ANOTHER
WORLD.

BOOM



CRASH CRACK AHAKHHH SBAM

OBSCURITY.

DARKNESS.

RATS.

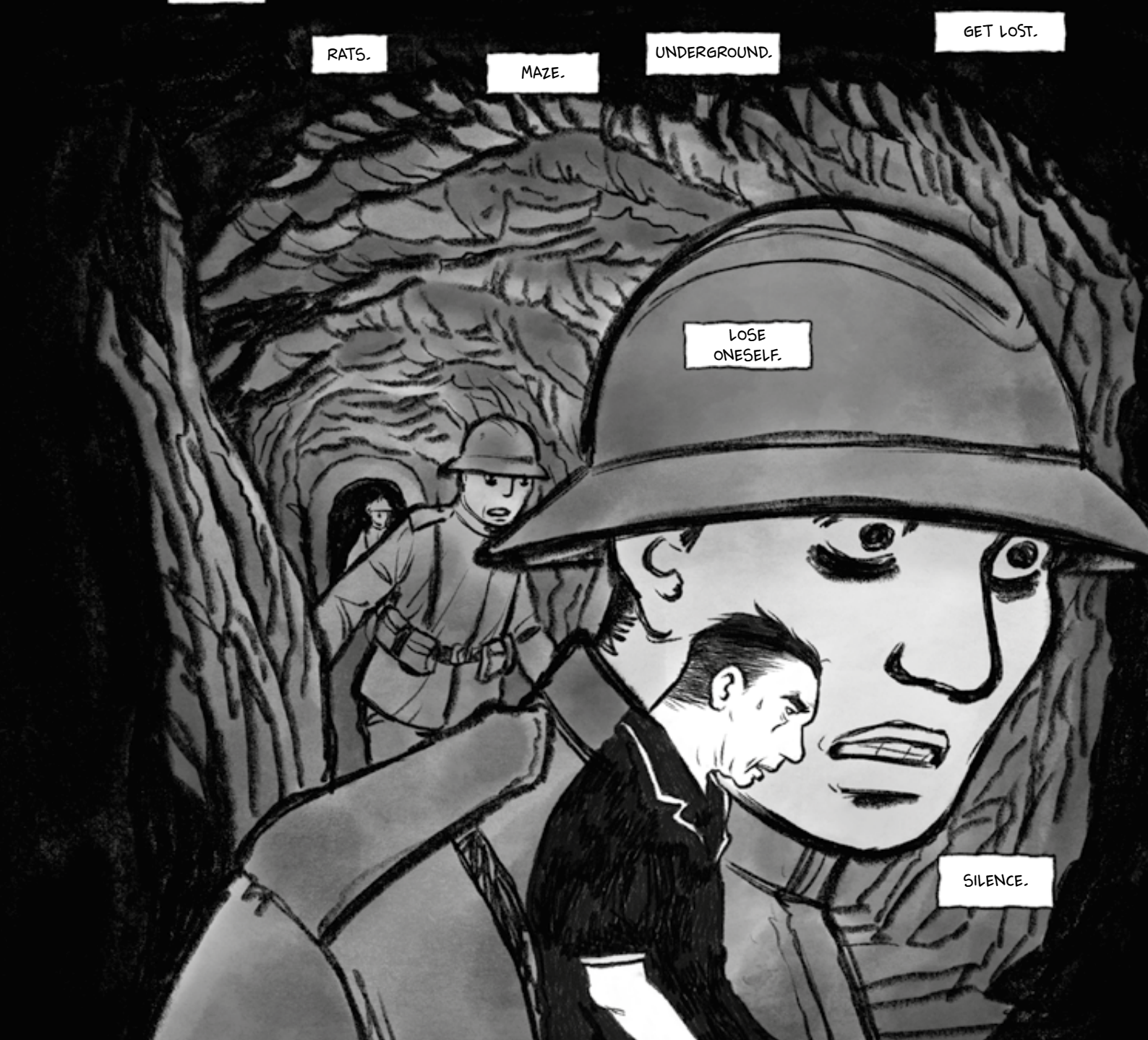
MAZE.

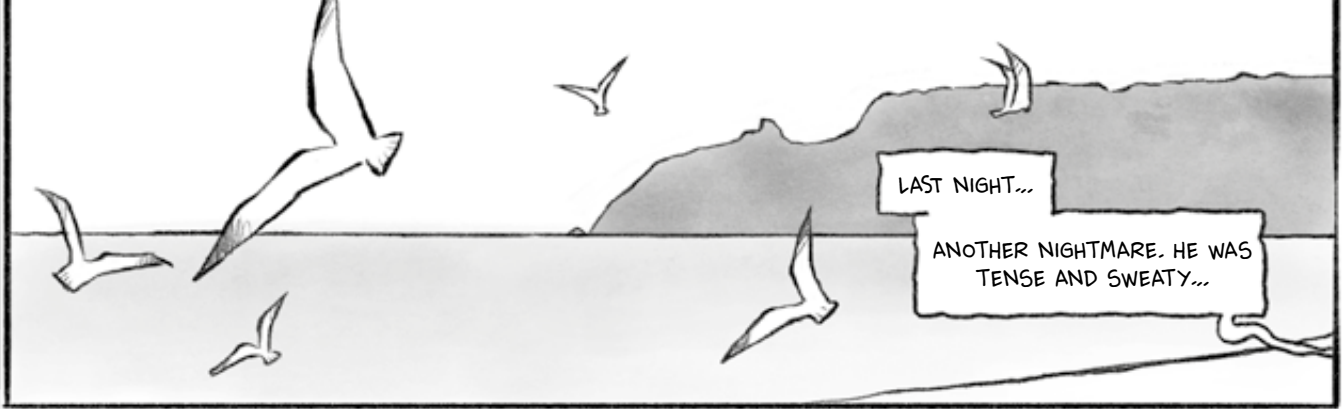
UNDERGROUND.

GET LOST.

LOSE
ONESELF.

SILENCE.





LAST NIGHT...

ANOTHER NIGHTMARE. HE WAS
TENSE AND SWEATY...



STILL THOSE THINGS
ABOUT THE TRENCHES...

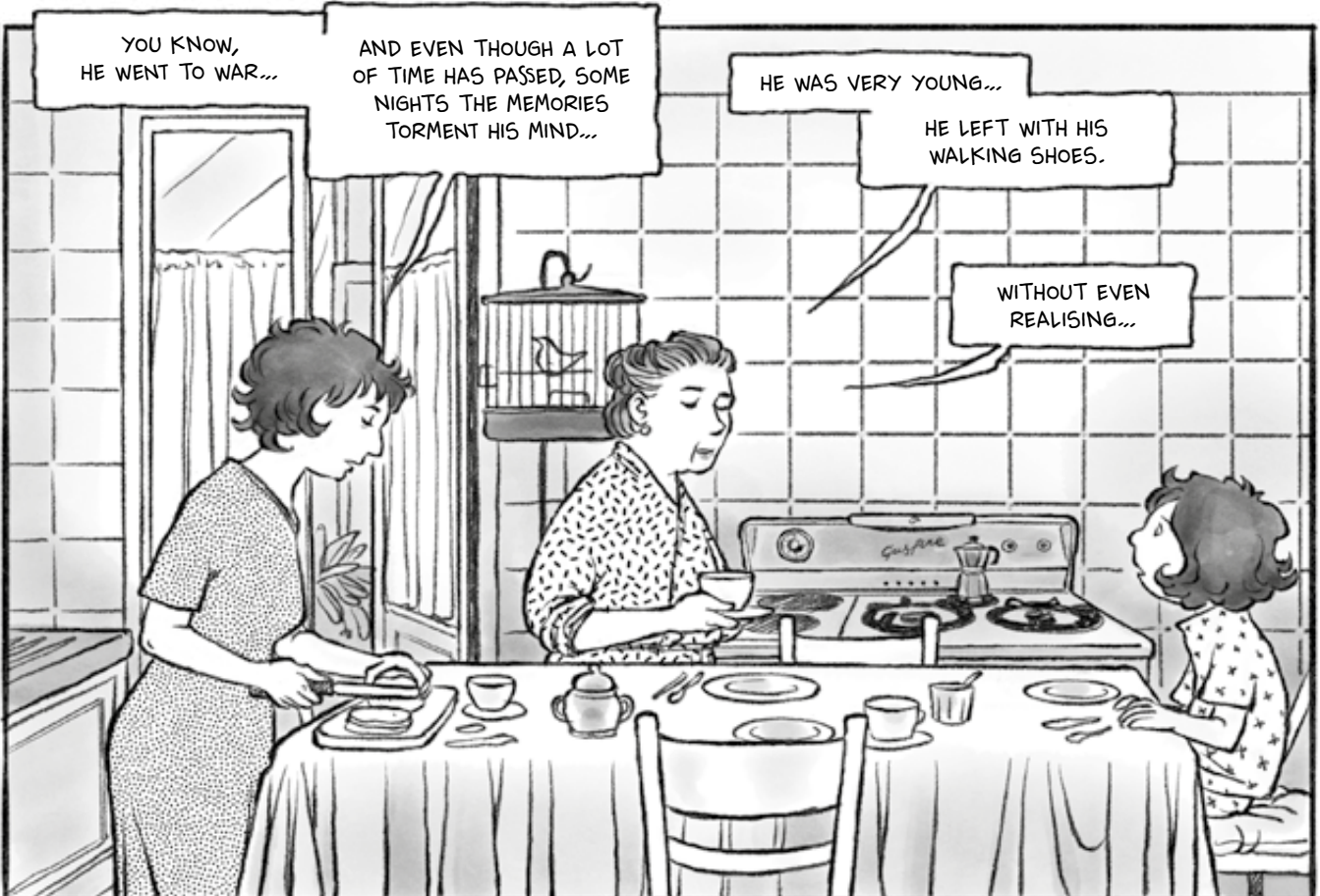


HE DOESN'T SAY
ANYTHING... BUT SURELY
THAT'S WHAT IT IS.



WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN...?

IS
GRANDPA
NOT WELL?



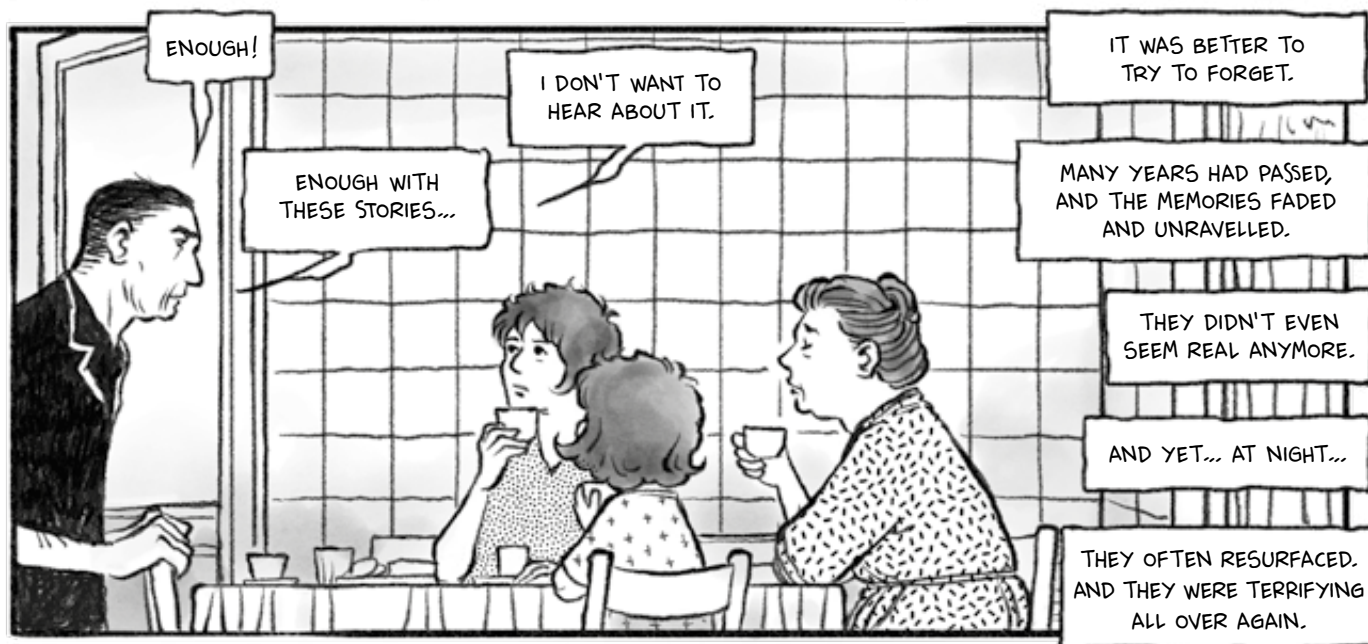
YOU KNOW,
HE WENT TO WAR...

AND EVEN THOUGH A LOT
OF TIME HAS PASSED, SOME
NIGHTS THE MEMORIES
TORMENT HIS MIND...

HE WAS VERY YOUNG...

HE LEFT WITH HIS
WALKING SHOES.

WITHOUT EVEN
REALISING...





HE WAS AN HONEST
AND RESPECTED
PERSON.

HE WAS RECOGNISED AS A
MORAL AUTHORITY, THANKS
TO HIS FAIR AND BALANCED
CHARACTER.

LIFE'S EXPERIENCES HADN'T
WORN AWAY THAT HUMAN
FORM OF KINDNESS AND
SIMPLICITY.

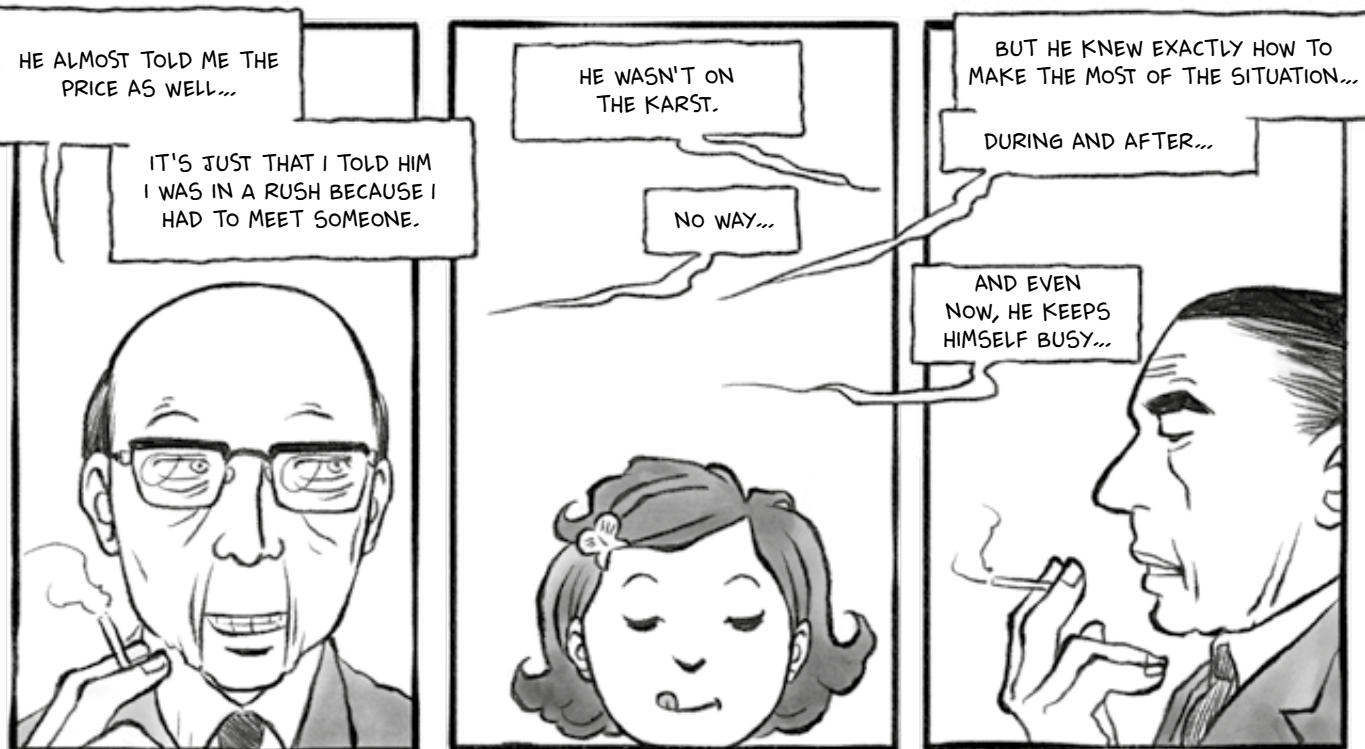


DO YOU KNOW WHO I
JUST RAN INTO?

THE KNIGHT...

HE MADE SURE TO LET ME
KNOW HE'S JUST BOUGHT A
SEASIDE VILLA.

GOOD FOR HIM...



HE ALMOST TOLD ME THE
PRICE AS WELL...

IT'S JUST THAT I TOLD HIM
I WAS IN A RUSH BECAUSE I
HAD TO MEET SOMEONE.

HE WASN'T ON
THE KARST.

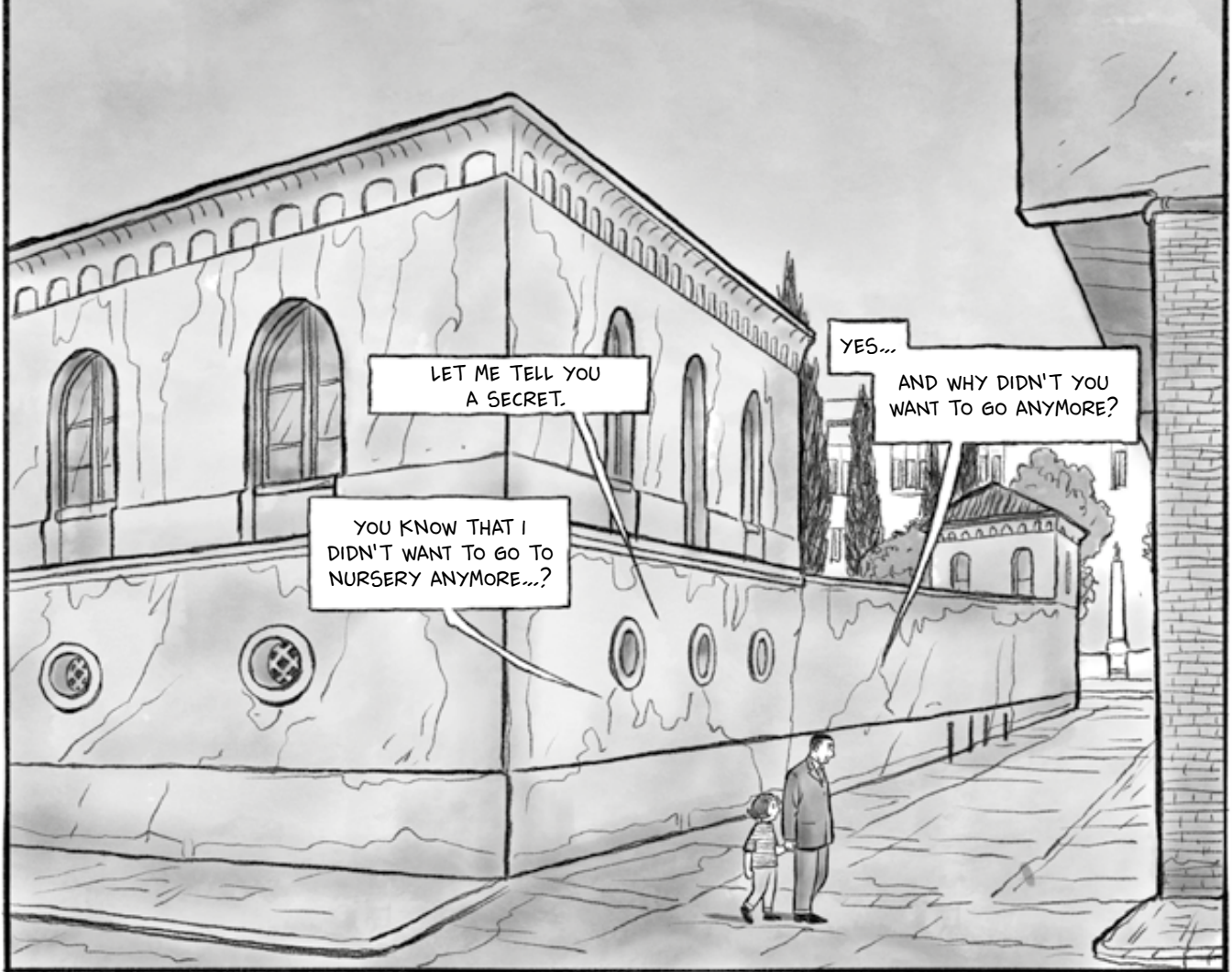
NO WAY...

BUT HE KNEW EXACTLY HOW TO
MAKE THE MOST OF THE SITUATION...

DURING AND AFTER...

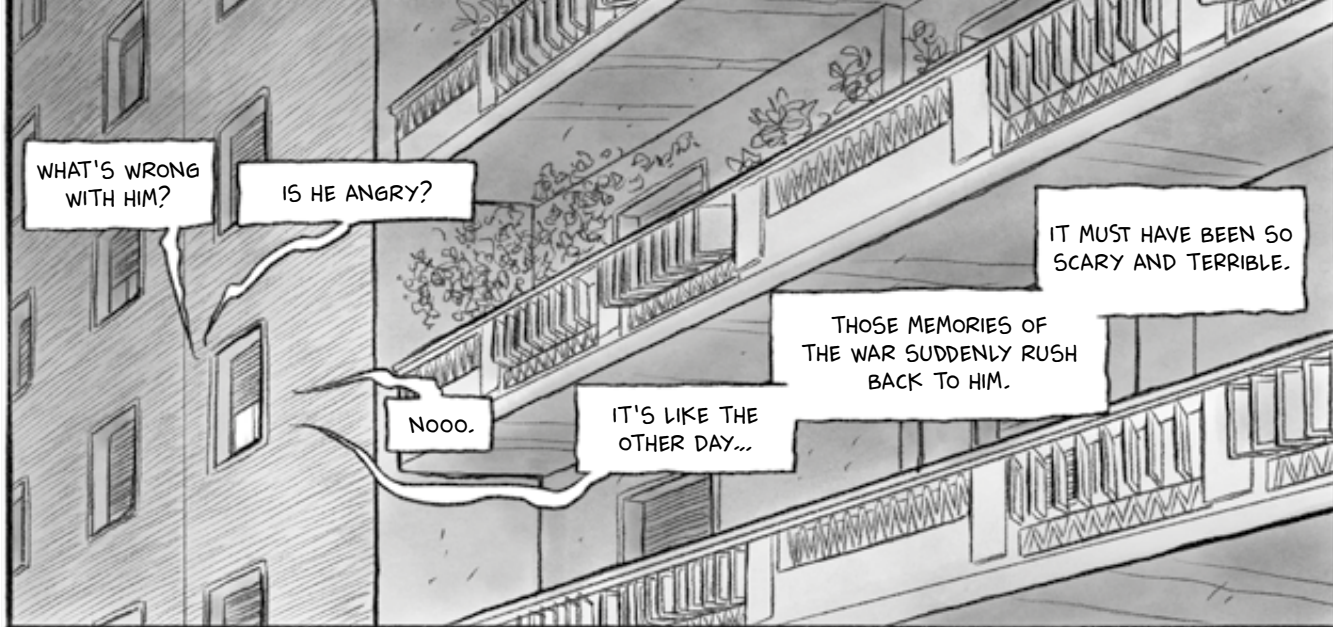
AND EVEN
NOW, HE KEEPS
HIMSELF BUSY...











BOOM BOOM





IT'S JUST A NIGHTMARE...

YOU'RE HERE, WITH ME, AT HOME...

YES...

DON'T SAY ANYTHING TO THEM.

OTHERWISE, THEY'LL JUST WORRY ABOUT ME AND ASK ME THINGS...

I WON'T SAY ANYTHING...

LET'S TRY TO GET BACK TO SLEEP.





MUCH LATER, MY GRANDFATHER HANDED ME AN OLD BOX, SAYING IT CONTAINED HIS MEMORIES.

IT WAS FULL OF POSTCARDS, PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS.

MANY YEARS LATER, I DECIDED TO SORT OUT THAT PUZZLE OF DOCUMENTS.

THERE WERE TWO TELEGRAMS SENT TO THE WAR ZONE... ALL CRUMPLED.

COUNTLESS POSTCARDS SENT TO HIS MOTHER, MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WHOM I NEVER KNEW. SOME WERE FROM THE WAR ZONE, OTHERS FROM PLACES WHERE THE BATTALION STOPPED.

A KIND OF JOURNEY THAT TRACED THE PASSAGE THROUGH VARIOUS TERRITORIES. ALL THE WAY TO FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

A LITTLE BOOK ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN IN ITALY AND FRANCE OF THE NAPOLI BRIGADE, OF WHICH MY GRANDFATHER WAS PART OF.

SEVERAL PHOTOS, SOME VERY FADED, OF LIFE AT THE FRONT.

A FEW PHOTOS OF MY GRANDFATHER WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG.

AND A SMALL HANDKERCHIEF, WITH CRESTS AND DATES HANDWRITTEN ON IT, IN MEMORY OF THE ANNEXATION OF DALMATIA, TRENTO, AND TRIESTE TO ITALY IN 1918.

AND THAT WAS THE REASON HE WENT TO WAR.

LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHERS.



Afterword

I am grateful to the Palazzo del Fumetto for inviting me to work on the theme of *the border* on the occasion of Nova Gorica/ Gorizia being the European Capital of Culture 2025. The theme of *the border* - and of *borders* - has always been important to me. In the late 90's, I wrote and drew a story set in Trieste, entitled *Aida at the Border (Aida al confine)*. It is a fictional story that explores the sense of the *border* between past and present, the living and the dead, and memories and reality.

In this story I have written, the *borders* are of a different nature. Here too, they are thresholds between past and present, between the characters' inner reality and the outside world, between what is spoken and what remains secret, between dreams and real life, between peace and war. But there is also a very real border, the one for which millions of soldiers fought during the First World War. A border, or the so-called *boundary line*, which today seems minimal, just a few kilometers, and yet it profoundly altered and influenced the lives of those who went to fight, of the populations and territories involved, and of the generations that followed.

Moreover, and this is very important for me as it is the first time, this is an autobiographical story. I felt the need to recount a small slice of ordinary life, truly lived, based on my grandfather Vincenzo, as I remember him from when I was a child.

My grandfather went off to war in 1915, he was nineteen years old. He returned home alive, only to face other dramas - more private, less epic and less significant for History, yet deeply painful for him and his family. Alongside many happy moments and events. And, yet, the experience of war had marked him in a permanent and irreparable way. My grandfather could not bear even a fragment of the sound from a war film, let alone watch one. The same went for documentaries. Nightmares of the trenches haunted him. Often at night, he would wake up terrified, as if he were reliving those moments. The strange thing was that he was unable to talk about it with anyone. There were no words that could convey his experience to someone who hadn't been there and hadn't lived it. It was a secret. Communicating it was impossible.

Only much later did I understand the reason for that silence and the deep trauma that life at the front had caused him, and millions of other soldiers, as well as countless civilians, women and children.

In his own way, my grandfather had tried to explain that discretion to me. Before he died, he left me a box containing various documents, including numerous postcards, two telegrams, and a handkerchief from the period of the Great War.

It took me many years to come to terms with the contents of that box. Only recently, while writing this very story, did I begin to sort out the postcards he had sent to his mother, my great-grandmother. They allow, in part, a reconstruction of the geographic and military movements of the Napoli Brigade, of which he was part of, all the postcards were subject to censorship. I found a few very general references to some bloody battles, "there was work to be done..." or a few words in Sardinian dialect to inform the family that the battalion was about to be transferred to the French front.

But to truly understand the trauma my grandfather endured, I found great help in Eric Leed's essay *No Man's Land*, which I read precisely while working on *Aida at the Border*. *No Man's Land* is the space between the two armies, between opposing trenches. In a sense, that is exactly the border — a line dividing the familiar, allied space from the enemy and from danger. Leed analyses the trauma experienced by soldiers, caused by life at the front, both in the midst of attacks and battles, and even "just" while waiting. Above all, he explains why such a shocking experience and life lived under those conditions is impossible to put into words or to convey to someone who wasn't there.

This border, between the outside world and a deep secret feeling held within an adult, my grandfather, is very close to a small, invisible, and equally secret world that belonged to the child I once was. Two private worlds, one old, historic, and tied to a momentous event, the other small, new, and childish, come close, creating a connection between two human beings who understand each other. They recognise each other's borders, and accept them.

Vanna Vinci
July 2025

I would like to thank Sara Pavan, Riccardo Pasqual, Ariel Brandolini, Irene Pinatto, Palazzo del Fumetto, the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Giovanni Mattioli, Silvana Manconi, and my mother.

Vanna Vinci (1964), creator of the edgy character *La bambina filosofica*, has published her comic stories with Sergio Bonelli Editore, Sole 24 ORE Cultura, Feltrinelli, Dargaud, Planeta, Rizzoli Lizard, Kappa Edizioni, Granata Press, and other Italian and international publishers in Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, and South Korea. Many of her books will be reissued in updated editions by Sergio Bonelli Editore, for which she has just completed her new comic miniseries *Viaggio Notturmo*.



BORDERS/CONFINI/MEJE

Altan
Colaone
Vinci



REGIONE AUTONOMA
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

IO SONO
FRIULI
VENEZIA
GIULIA

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