



FOREST OF FORGOTTEN FUTURES

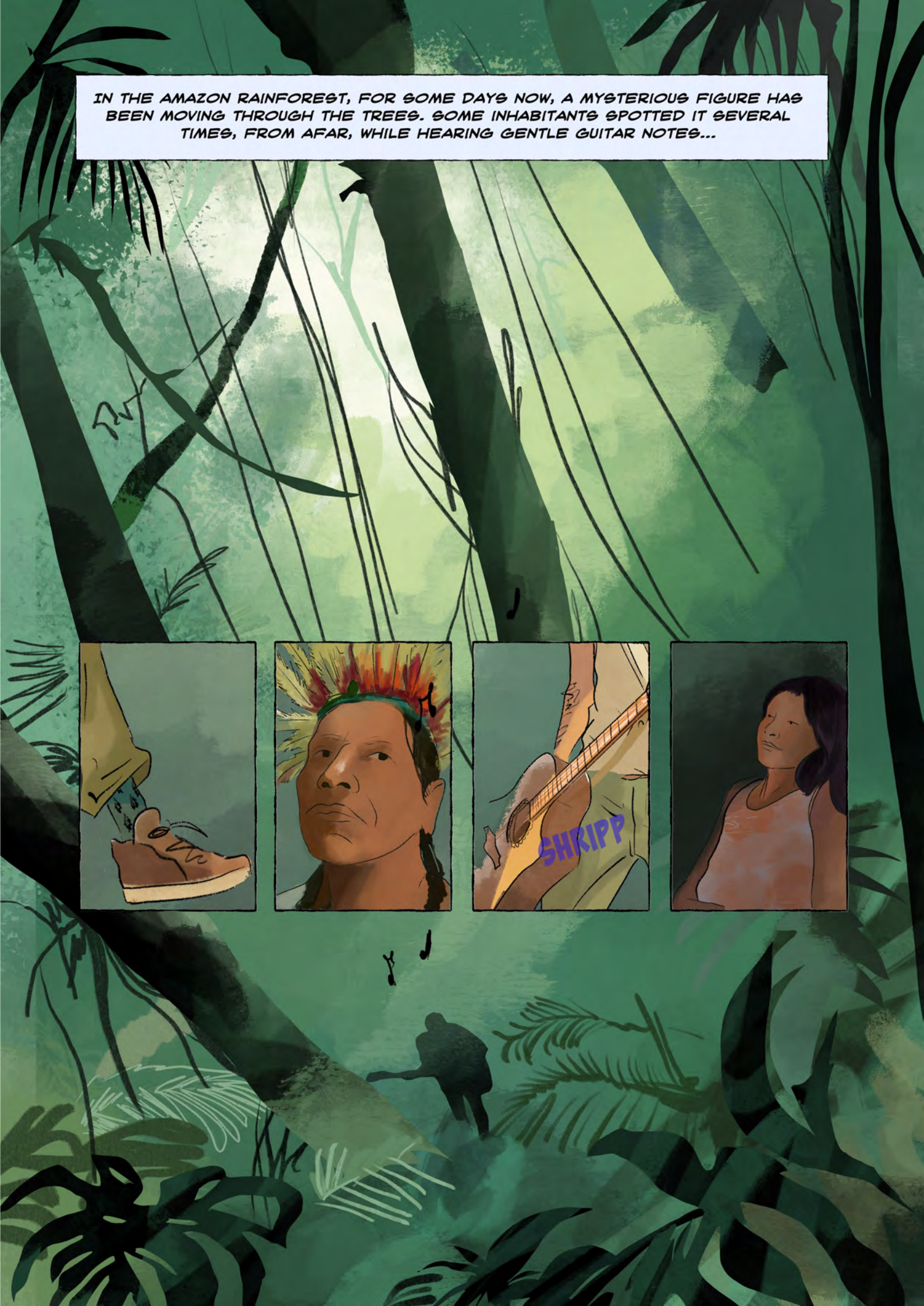
DEIANIRA D'ANTONI & LORENZO C. PIROSA



FOREST OF FORGOTTEN FUTURES

DEIANIRA D'ANTONI
LORENZO C. PIROSA

IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST, FOR SOME DAYS NOW, A MYSTERIOUS FIGURE HAS BEEN MOVING THROUGH THE TREES. SOME INHABITANTS SPOTTED IT SEVERAL TIMES, FROM AFAR, WHILE HEARING GENTLE GUITAR NOTES...





THESE DAYS, NOT EVERY CORNER OF THE FOREST FEELS PEACEFUL AND CALM ANYMORE.



WE NEED TO PUSH THE FLAMES BACK ON THAT SIDE—MOVE QUICKLY!



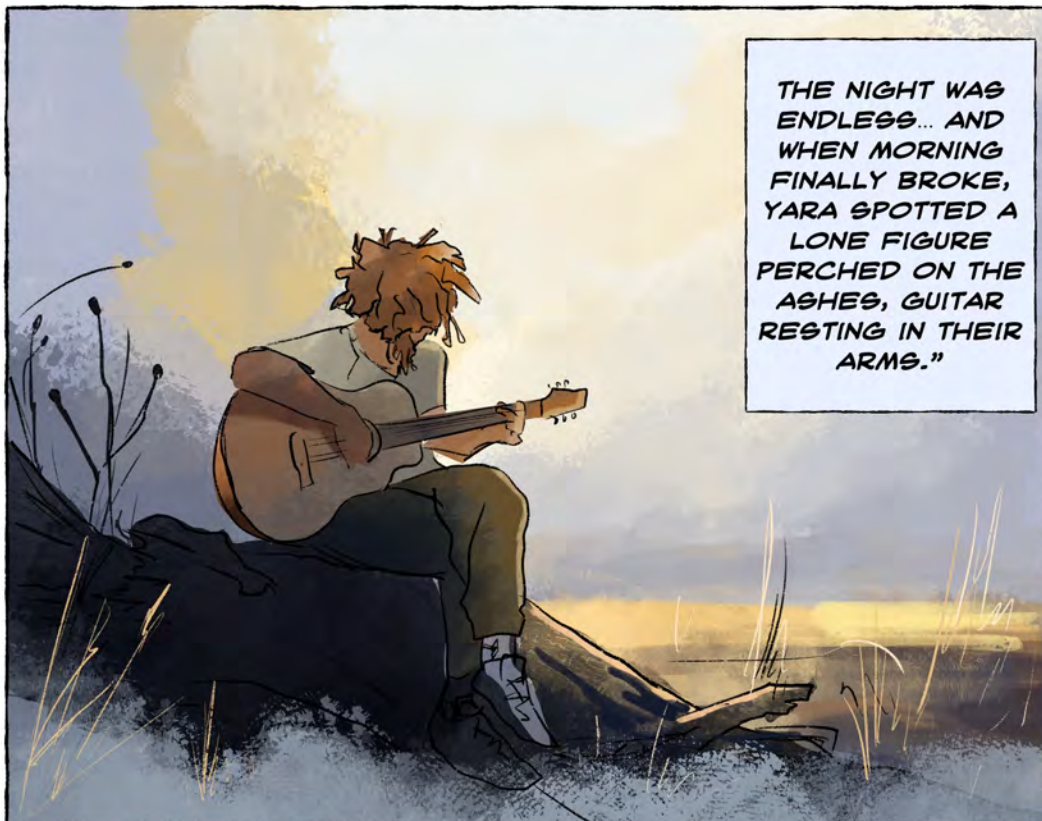
WE'VE GOT TO DIG FIREBREAKS RIGHT HERE, OR IT WON'T STOP!



WATCH OUT—THAT TREE'S COMING DOWN!!

DON'T GIVE UP—WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

A MOURNFUL TUNE DRIFTED THROUGH THE FOREST, SLICING THROUGH THE DYING FIRE'S CRACKLE.



THE NIGHT WAS ENDLESS... AND WHEN MORNING FINALLY BROKE, YARA SPOTTED A LONE FIGURE PERCHED ON THE ASHES, GUITAR RESTING IN THEIR ARMS."





WHO ARE YOU? THAT WAS YOUR MUSIC WE HEARD THROUGH THE FLAMES LAST NIGHT...



MY NAME IS LEO. I WALK WHERE THE TREES LEAD ME. I LOOK FOR PLACES WHERE FORESTS STILL FIGHT—WHERE THEY STILL TRY TO HEAL.



HERE IN THE AMAZON, THE FOREST IS STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE. BUT THERE IS SO MUCH TO DO. TOO MANY TREES ARE BEING CUT, AND FIRES ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE FREQUENT...



BUT YOU ARE HERE TO HELP IT SURVIVE.

...THE ANIMALS CAN NO LONGER MOVE OR LIVE, AND THE PEOPLE WHO BELONG TO THIS FOREST ARE BEING DRIVEN AWAY

WE FIGHT BESIDE IT. BUT THE FOREST IS BREAKING APART. IT IS STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A FISH SKELETON.

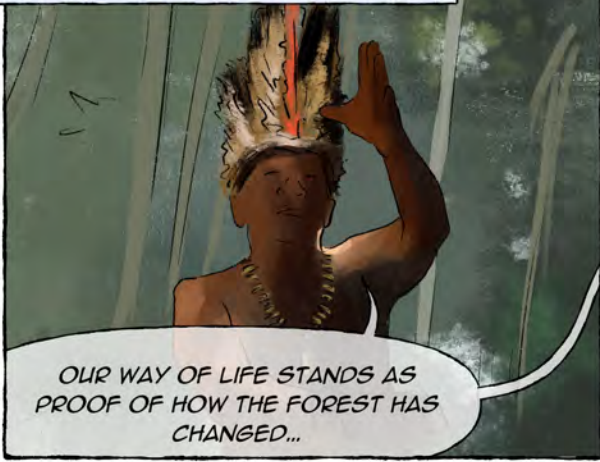


THESE ARE THE BATTLES I SING ABOUT. TO KEEP HOPE ALIVE.



THEN STAY. WE NEED SONGS THAT REMIND US WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR.

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, YARA LED LEO TO MEET HER PEOPLE...



OUR WAY OF LIFE STANDS AS PROOF OF HOW THE FOREST HAS CHANGED...

...OUR WATER RESERVES ARE OFTEN INSUFFICIENT, AND FIRES DEVASTATE SOIL AND VEGETATION.



THE FOREST IS SHRINKING, THE ECOSYSTEMS BREAKING APART. OUR FUTURE HERE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.



I DREAM OF GREEN CORRIDORS FOR MY PEOPLE AND THE ANIMALS THAT LIVE IN THESE HABITATS...

...TOGETHER, WE CAN STILL PROTECT THE FOREST'S FUTURE—FROM FIRE, DEFORESTATION, AND EXTREME HEAT.



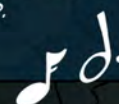
I HARDLY RECOGNIZE THESE WOODS ANYMORE. WE USED TO NAVIGATE THESE PATHS BY SIMPLY READING THE TREES...





I WORE THE WIND LIKE SKIN,
FORGOT WHICH WAY WAS FALLING.
BIRDS STITCHED MY SHADOW
TO THE BACK OF A PASSING DREAM.

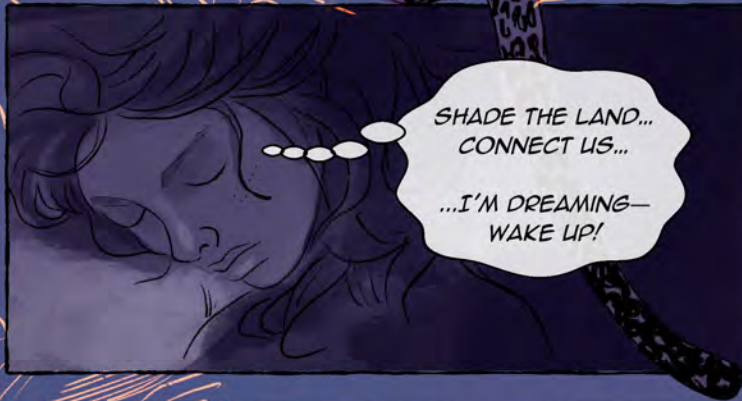
I WOKE WITH ROOTS IN MY TEETH,
AND LEAVES BEHIND MY EYES.
THE MORNING DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME.
I DIDN'T EITHER.



YARA AND LEO'S JOURNEY
DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED... NOT
EVEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE WORLD.



SHADE THE LAND.
CONNECT US TO
PROTECT US ALL...



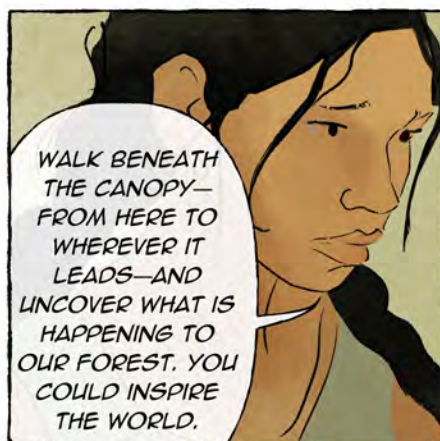
SHADE THE LAND...
CONNECT US...

...I'M DREAMING—
WAKE UP!

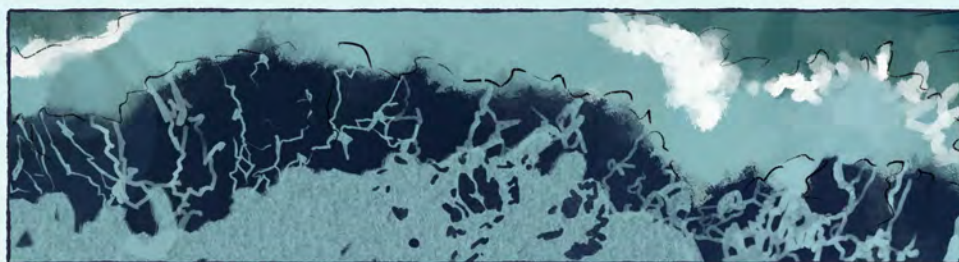
IT HAPPENED
AGAIN...



YEARS LATE. AFTER ELIA'S LAST VISION, YARA AND LEO'S EFFORTS HAVE SPARKED HOPE ACROSS COMMUNITIES—BUT THE RESULTS FELL SHORT OF THEIR DREAMS.



LEO TRAVERSES NATIONS AND CONTINENTS, ENCOUNTERING BOTH MONOCULTURES AND DIVERSE WOODLANDS—TREES WILTING UNDER DROUGHT AND OTHERS STANDING RESILIENT. THOUGH THE FULL PICTURE REMAINS UNCLEAR, HIS PATH BENEATH THE SWEEPING CANOPY WILL GUIDE HIM TOWARD NEW TRUTHS.



I WALKED WHERE THE
JAGUARS SLIP THROUGH
THE LIGHT,
GOLD EYES WATCHING,
SILENT AND DEEP.
THE TREES STOOD,
COUNTLESS, ENDLESS,
TANGLED, BRIGHT,
EACH ONE A PROMISE THAT
I SWORE TO KEEP.

I HEARD THE VOICES DRIFT
UNDER THE LEAVES,
STORIES WOVEN IN
SHADOW AND SONG.
NOW THIS OLD GIANT HUMS
WITH THE BREEZE,
HOLDING ME STEADY,
THOUGH I WON'T STAY
LONG.



NOW A SEASONED LEO, LANDS ON THE SHORES OF
THE MEDITERRANEAN'S LARGEST ISLAND.



HAVE YOU SEEN ELIA'S MURAL?

IT'S BREATHTAKING...
THE ANIMALS AND
TREES ALMOST COME
TO LIFE!

I WONDER WHERE
SHE DRAWS HER
INSPIRATION FROM!



EVERYONE HERE IS
TALKING ABOUT
YOU—AND YOUR
MURAL...

HELLO, STRANGER. THIS
MURAL TELLS MY STORY—MY
DEVOTION TO MY PEOPLE
AND TO THESE LANDS. THE
TREES GUIDE ME, AND I
SHARE THEIR VOICE WITH THE
WORLD.

WHAT BRINGS
YOU HERE?

...I SET OUT FROM THE
AMAZON YEARS AGO. ON MY
JOURNEY I'VE MET FORESTS
OF ALL KINDS—THEIR
CANOPIES BOW AS I PASS,
AND MY MUSIC FIGHTS FOR
THEM.



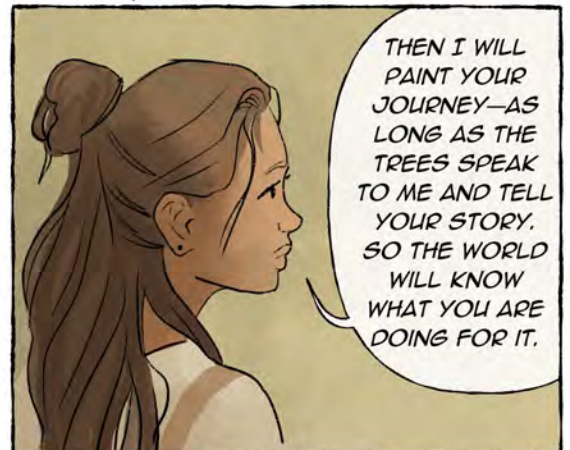
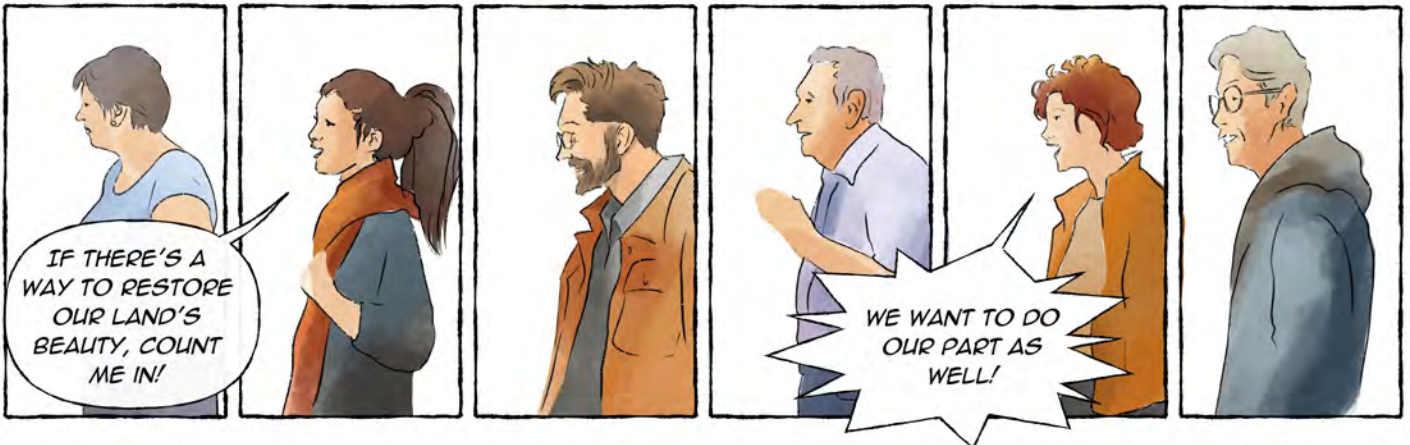
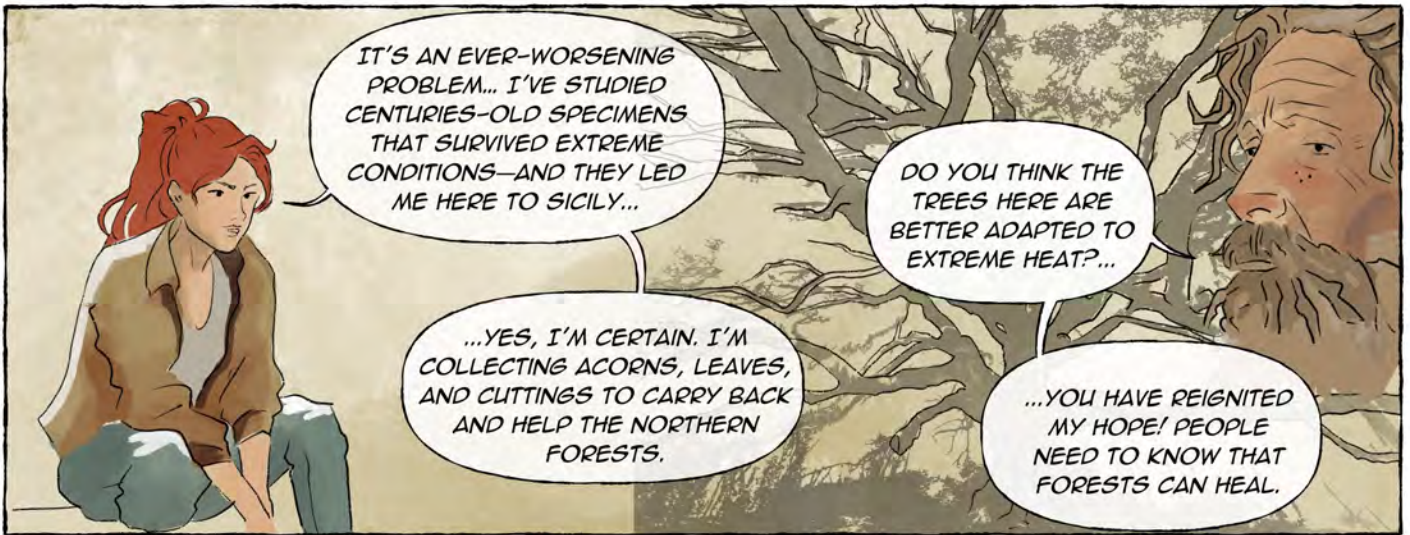
HANG ON! I
KNOW YOU FROM
MY DREAMS...THE
TREES TOLD ME
OF YOU!

THEY BIND US
TOGETHER, THEIR
VOICES WEAVING
US INTO ONE AND
YOU CAN HEAR
THEIR CALL...



...TREES LED ME HERE
—TO FIND A WAY TO
SAVE OUR FORESTS.
THEY WANTED US TO
MEET.

WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS
INCREDIBLE. PEOPLE PLACE
THEIR HOPE IN YOUR
VISIONS; YOU'RE
REIGNITING THEIR
CONNECTION TO NATURE.



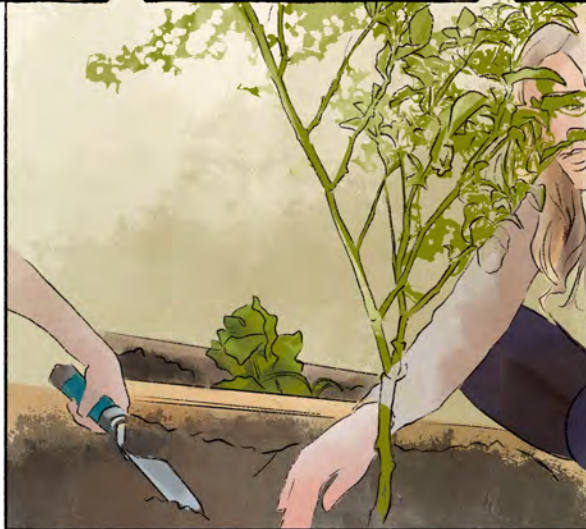


I'VE IDENTIFIED OAK POPULATIONS THAT ARE SHOWING REMARKABLE RESILIENCE TO GROWING DROUGHT STRESS...

...THEY SEEM AMONG THE BEST AT ADAPTING TO NEW CONDITIONS.

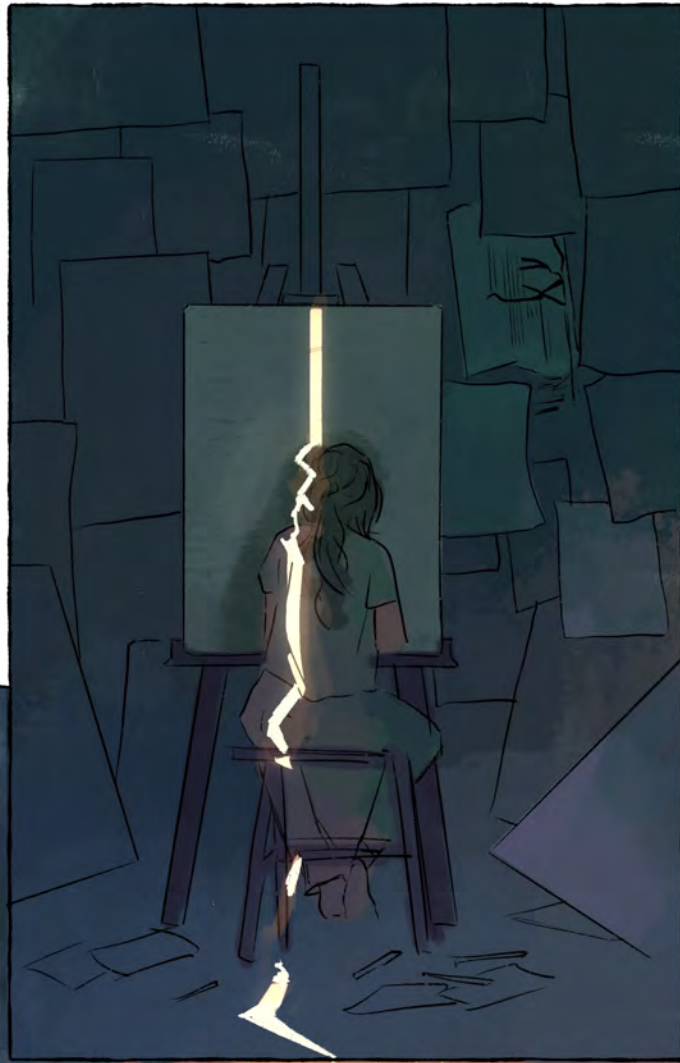
WE CAN TAKE THESE SEEDS WITH US—AND TEST THEM IN THE FORESTS THAT NEED THEM MOST.

THAT COULD WORK... BUT WE MUST PROCEED WITH CARE. EVERY ECOSYSTEM'S BALANCE IS FRAGILE.



ACROSS DROUGHT-SCARRED MEDITERRANEAN HILLS, LEO'S PATH NOW WEAVES SONG AND SCIENCE—CARRYING THE TREES' STRENGTHS, HE UNCOVERS THE FOREST'S SECRETS BENEATH IT'S LONG CANOPY.

GUIDE THEIR STEPS,
AWAKEN THEIR HEARTS.



THE BRANCHES BREATHE,
A SIGH OF YEARS,
THIS LONG CANOPY
WEAVES THROUGH
COUNTLESS SPHERES.

WE WALK THROUGH
MYTHS, DREAMS, UNDER
ENDLESS GREEN,
A PATH OF SCIENCE,
EVERY STEP AN IN-
BETWEEN.

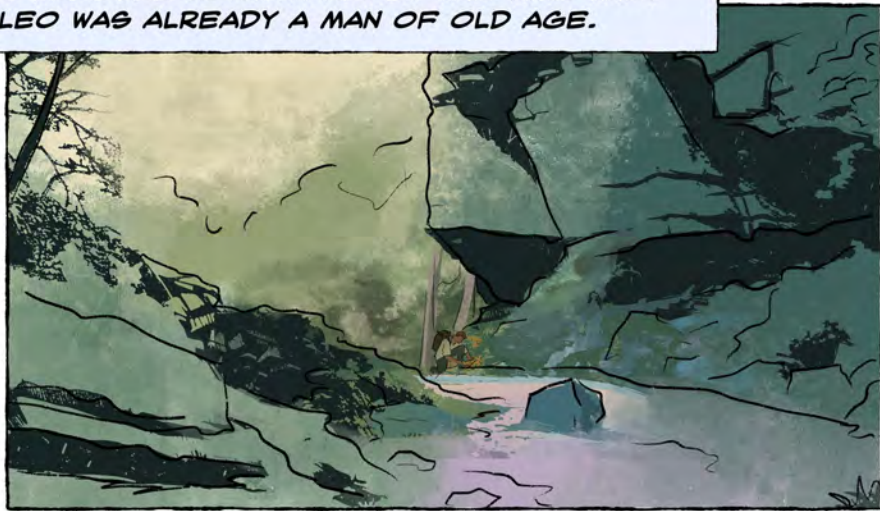
JAGUAR EYES, HER
FLEETING GLOW,

THE TREES REMEMBER.
THE TREES THEY KNOW.

I WALKED THE LONG
LONG CANOPY
A 20 TWENTY THOUSAND
DAY'S WALK
ALL THE LEAVES MADE
GALAXIES
OF LIGHT AND DARK.



LEO AND MARIE'S JOURNEY PRESSED NORTHWARD. BY THE TIME THEY REACHED GERMANY, LEO WAS ALREADY A MAN OF OLD AGE.



HEY, LEO—THERE'S SOMEONE OVER THERE...

YES, I SEE HIM. I WONDER WHAT HE'S WORKING ON.

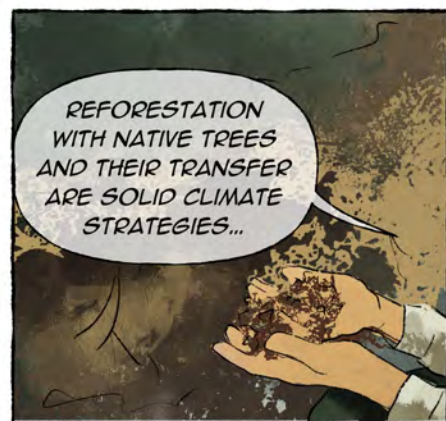


HELLO AND WELCOME— I'M RIK. SORRY, I'M A BIT BUSY; I'M STUDYING DROUGHT'S EFFECTS ON TREES AND SOIL.

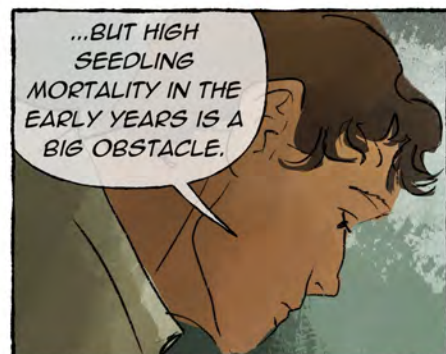


I'M MARIE, AND THIS IS LEO. WE'RE HERE ON A RESEARCH TRIP, TOO.

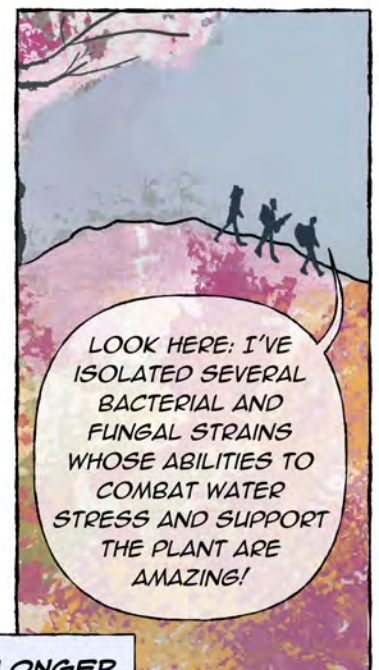
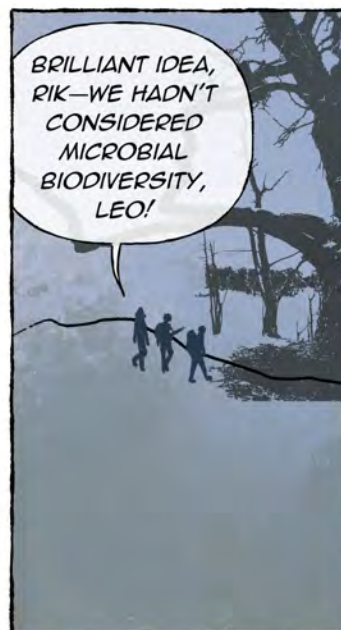
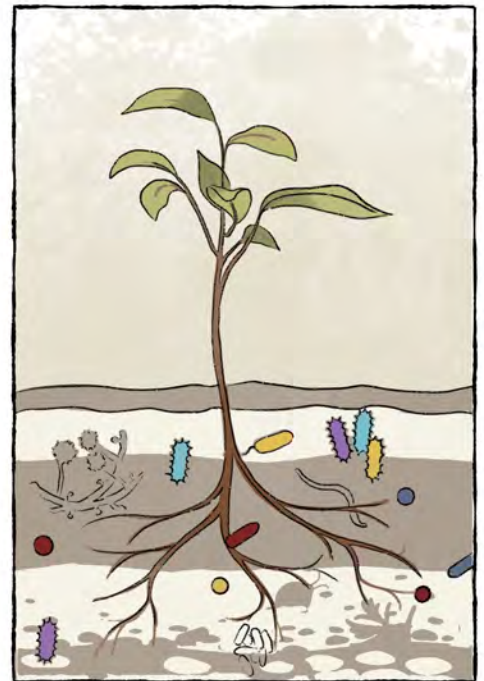
WE'VE BEEN STUDYING NEW OAK VARIETIES THAT RESIST DROUGHT— BROUGHT THEM UP FROM SOUTHERN REGIONS.



REFORESTATION WITH NATIVE TREES AND THEIR TRANSFER ARE SOLID CLIMATE STRATEGIES...



...BUT HIGH SEEDLING MORTALITY IN THE EARLY YEARS IS A BIG OBSTACLE.



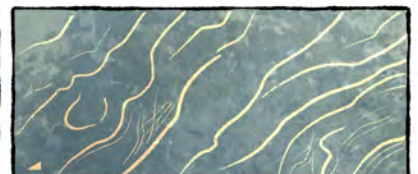
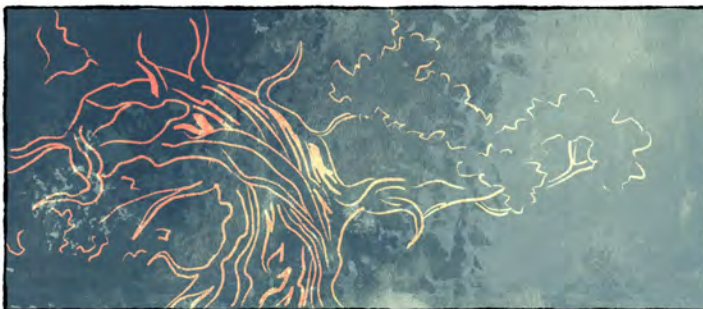
THE JOURNEY INTO MICROBIOTA DISCOVERY TOOK LONGER THAN LEO HAD EXPECTED, BUT THE RESULTS ARRIVED SWIFTLY—ONE STEP AT A TIME.





HERE I MET SCIENCE,
SHE SEEMED LIKE A MYSTIC.
THERE I MET A TREE, AND IN
LOVE I KISSED IT
AS WE SLEPT INSIDE A
THOUGHT.
EVERYWHERE I MET PEOPLE,
AND LEARNED WHAT THEY
TAUGHT

CANOPIES GIGGLE, SCIENCE
SHRUGS,
I'M CHARTING WORMS AND
DODGING BUGS.
THEY SAY I'M ODD, BUT
ROOTS AGREE —
THE FOREST HUMS IN TUNE
WITH ME...



HEAVY AND SLOW ARE HIS STEPS, YET HIS SPIRIT ENDURES. HIS GUITAR IS WORN, BUT HIS SONG STILL CARRIES STRENGTH. EVENTUALLY HE STOPS, AT THE EDGE OF THE MAP THAT HAD LED HIM HERE.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. YOU'VE WALKED A LIFETIME— THE TREES REMEMBER YOUR FOOTSTEPS...

...BUT I NEVER IMAGINED I'D MEET YOU HERE.

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, MY DEAR...

...NATURE SETS MY PACE, AND I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I'VE KEPT A PROMISE MADE LONG AGO.

PARDON MY BOLDNESS —COULD YOU SPARE SOMETHING WARM FOR AN OLD WAYFARER?

I HAVE WALKED FOR MILES BENEATH THE LONG CANOPY, SEARCHING FOR PLACES WHERE NATURE STILL THRIVES.

YOU WON'T FIND WHAT YOU EXPECT...

...THE ARCTIC'S NATURAL BALANCE IS GONE. HUNTING, FISHING, EVEN HERDING—NONE ARE SAFE ANYMORE.

...I SPOKE TO SCIENTISTS IN SILVER COATS, THEIR WORDS LIKE GLASS IN FOG, THEY COAX THE BONES OF FORESTS AND TELL STORIES ON CLIPBOARDS MADE OF SKY.

TOLD THEM: ROOTS REMEMBER AND STORE. THEY SMILED LIKE SWINGING DOORS. STILL, AN OLD TREE BOWED AND FOLLOWED, ITS SHADOW CURLED IN MINE AND MORE.

SOON THE OAKS WERE HUMMING, LEANING IN LIKE OLD CONSPIRATORS, COMING TOGETHER, ONE CALLED ME BRANCHWALKER, AN FIR GAVE ME MOSS, A PINE GAVE ME NOTHING.

I KEPT WALKING, SLOWER NOW, WITH CROWNS BEHIND ME, SWAYING BOUGHS. THEIR LEAVES SAID NOTHING CLEARLY, I TRIED TO LISTEN, EVEN WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW HOW.



LICHENS ARE VITAL FOR REINDEER, BUT HEAVY RAINS AND ICE CRUSTS MAKE THEM HARDER TO REACH...

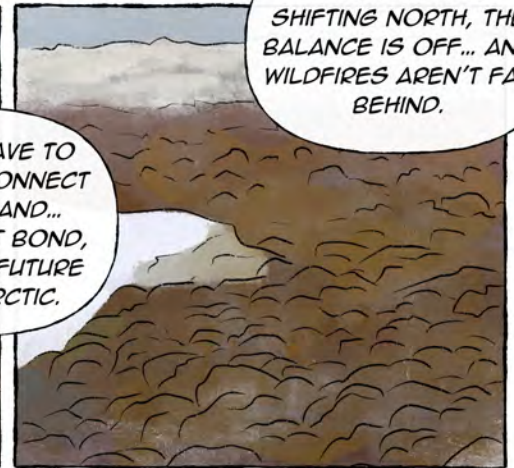


YOU KNOW... THE ELDERS FEAR THAT TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF FISHING AND HERDING IS LOSING MEANING AS THE LAND CHANGES...

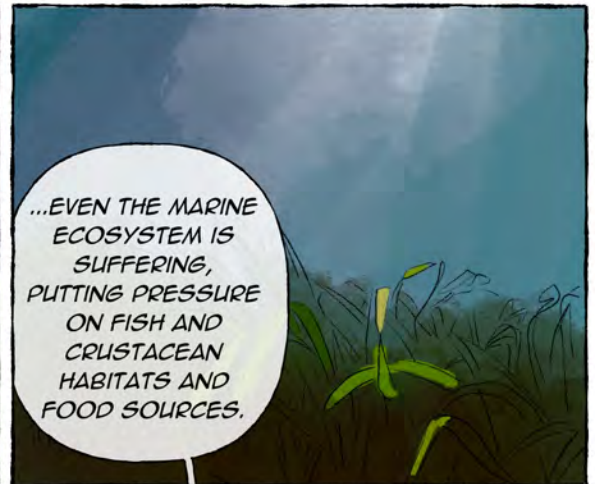
...YOUNG FISHERMEN ARE THINKING OF LEAVING FOR THE CITIES.



LEO, YOU HAVE TO HELP US RECONNECT WITH OUR LAND... WITHOUT THAT BOND, THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR THE ARCTIC.



...HABITATS ARE SHIFTING NORTH, THE BALANCE IS OFF... AND WILDFIRES AREN'T FAR BEHIND.



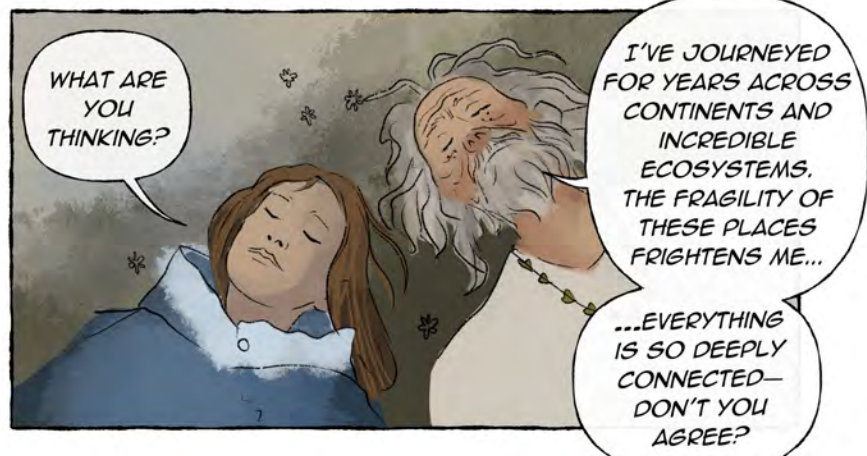
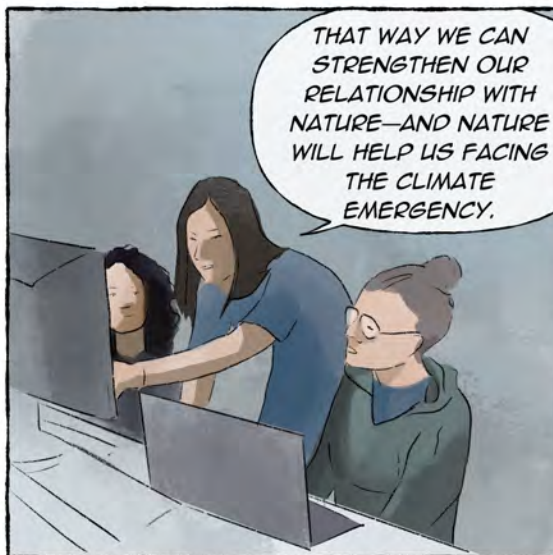
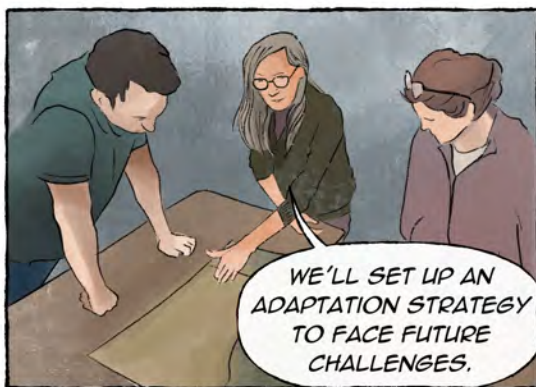
...EVEN THE MARINE ECOSYSTEM IS SUFFERING, PUTTING PRESSURE ON FISH AND CRUSTACEAN HABITATS AND FOOD SOURCES.



THE SEA ISN'T ON OUR SIDE ANYMORE—LIKE I TOLD YOU.

YOU'RE RIGHT... CONDITIONS ARE HARDER TO PREDICT, AND FISHING ROUTES KEEP SHIFTING...





AT A SMALL FESTIVAL HELD IN LEO'S HONOR, PEOPLE FROM AROUND THE WORLD—SCIENTISTS, VILLAGERS, OLD FRIENDS—HAVE GATHERED.



WOW! WHAT A SIGHT!

HURRY—COME SEE THIS!

HIP HIP HOORAY FOR LEO!



BENEATH THE LONG CANOPY, SHADOWS SING IN THE KEY OF GREEN, ROOTS UNRAVEL SECRETS OF THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN.

WE WALKED LONG, WE WALKED THERE. WINDS MURMUR TO WEAVE MELODIES THROUGH BRANCHES' ANCIENT SHEEN,

TIME BENDS, CURLS, BREAKS, AND HERE IT ACHES FOR WHAT WAS BEFORE UNSEEN. BUT NOW WE'RE AWAKE; NOW WE'RE AWARE.



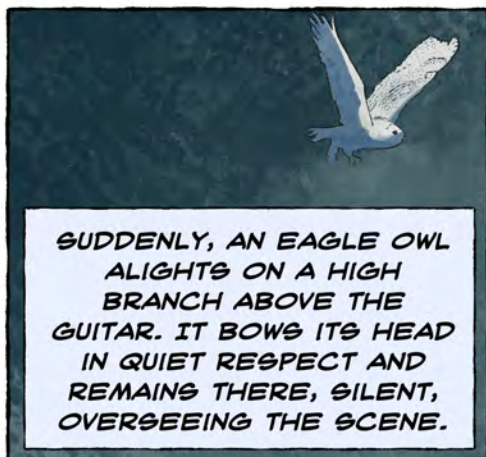
AS NIGHT FALLS, MARIE AND RIK SPOT THE GUITAR LEANING AGAINST A TREE BUT SEE NO SIGN OF LEO. THEY MOVE TO FOLLOW HIM INTO THE FOREST, BUT ASA STOPS THEM.



LOOK—THE CANOPY IS DRAWING IN AROUND HIM. NATURE ITSELF PAYS HOMAGE.



LEO HAS BECOME PART OF THEM AGAIN.



SUDDENLY, AN EAGLE OWL ALIGHTS ON A HIGH BRANCH ABOVE THE GUITAR. IT BOWS ITS HEAD IN QUIET RESPECT AND REMAINS THERE, SILENT, OVERSEEING THE SCENE.



"THE FOREST REMEMBERED ITS STRENGTH. AND IN ITS SHADE, IN ITS ROOTS, SO DID WE."

AT THE VERY SAME INSTANT, ELIA IS FINISHING THE FINAL STROKES OF HER MURAL IN SICILY—HER TEARS MIXING WITH THE PAINT. THE GLOWING ROOTS PULSE WITH LIFE. BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY, THE MURAL AWAKENS, REVEALING FLOURISHING, INTERCONNECTED ECOSYSTEMS WORLDWIDE.



THE SCIENTISTS WALKED BESIDE ME,
WITH NOTEBOOKS FULL OF BIRDSONG.
THEY LISTENED WHEN I SANG TO ROOTS,
AND WROTE MY VERSES DOWN.

THEY STAYED WHEN SILENCE GATHERED,
TUNING INSTRUMENTS OF AIR.
ONE CAUGHT MY LAST REFRAIN IN INK —
ANOTHER HUMMED ALONG.

THE ANIMALS CAME SOFT-FOOTED,
DRAWN BY THE CLOSING CHORDS.
A CHILD PLACED A PINECONE NEAR,
THEN BOWED BENEATH THE BOUGHS.

I BECAME A FINAL CHORUS,
WOVEN TALL AND SLOW.
NOW OTHERS COME TO BORROW LINES —
THE FOREST KEEPS THE TUNE.

UNDER THE LONG CANOPY,
LEAVES REMEMBER MELODY.
IF I'M GONE, JUST SING FOR ME —
THE TREES WILL CARRY THE KEY.

WALKING THE LONG CANOPY,
SONGS FALL DOWN LIKE RAIN ON ME.
IF I FORGET THE LINES I KNEW,
THE WIND WILL SING THEM BACK TO YOU.

I WALKED THE LONG CANOPY SLOW,
MY NOTEBOOK FULL OF RHYME.
THE SCIENTISTS SANG SOFTLY TOO —
THEIR GRAPHS WERE KEPT IN TIME.

SINGING IN SCIENCE, STEP BY STEP,
UNDER LEAVES WHERE SILENCE SLEPT.
WALKING THE LONG CANOPY,
TRUTH AND TUNE INSIDE OF ME.

I WALKED WHERE THE BRANCHES LISTENED,
NOTES TUCKED IN EVERY LEAF.
THE SCIENTISTS SPOKE IN MURMURS,
AND SANG ME INTO SLEEP.



THE END



