

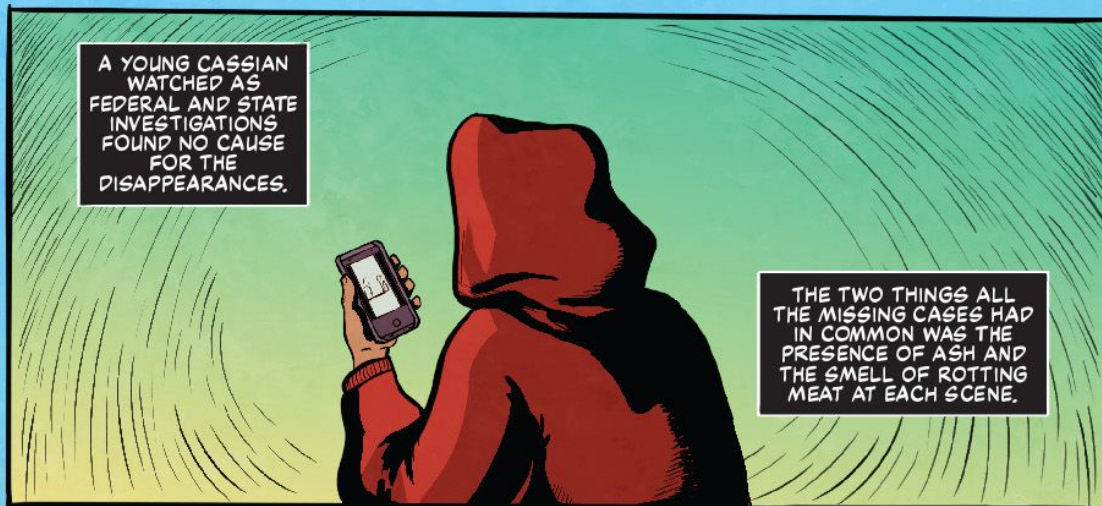
IT WAS A TIME OF
GREAT SUFFERING,
NOT SO LONG AGO...

THE NEWS REPORTED
THOUSANDS
MISSING. MORE WOULD
DISAPPEAR IN THE
NEXT FEW YEARS.



THEIR VOICES WERE
COLD AND THEIR
FACES **STIFF** TO
THE TRAGEDY THAT
HAD PLAGUED A
NATION, A **PEOPLE**.

A YOUNG CASSIAN
WATCHED AS
FEDERAL AND STATE
INVESTIGATIONS
FOUND NO CAUSE
FOR THE
DISAPPEARANCES.



THE TWO THINGS ALL
THE MISSING CASES HAD
IN COMMON WAS THE
PRESENCE OF ASH AND
THE SMELL OF ROTTING
MEAT AT EACH SCENE.

THE DISAPPEARANCES
WEIGHED HEAVY ON
EVERYONE WHO FELT
TARGETED.

IT MADE PEOPLE LIKE
CASSIAN AFRAID TO
GO TO WORK OR
SCHOOL. THERE WAS
NOWHERE THEY COULD
TURN TO FEEL SAFE.



SHADOWS IN THE SMOKE

THE FEAR
FOLLOWED
THEM HOME.

PENCILS & INKS: CAROLINA GARRIDO
LECCA-NUNA
COLORS: BRITTANY PEER
LETTERS: ADITYA BIDIKAR
STORY & SCRIPT: HERNÁN GUARDERAS





YOU SHOULDN'T RIDE YOUR BIKE WITHOUT A HELMET. YOU COULD FALL AND CRACK YOUR SKULL ON A CURB.

WHAT THE HELL?! WHAT ARE YOU?

A CONCERNED CITIZEN, CASSIAN.

HOW... DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?



WATCH IT! COULD YOU KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, CONCERNED CITIZEN.

MIND YOUR MANNERS, BOY. SPEAK WITH RESPECT OR DON'T SPEAK AT ALL.

LISTEN, MAN, YOU NEARLY KNOCKED ME OFF MY BIKE.

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?



TELL ME SOMETHING, CASSIAN, DO YOUR CLASSMATES EVER LOOK AT YOU DIFFERENT? WHISPER NAMES BEHIND YOUR BACK? MAKE JOSES?

UM... SOMETIMES. THEY THINK I DON'T HEAR THEM, BUT I DO.

LIKE?



WETBACK. SPIC. ILLEGAL.



WELL?

WELL, WHAT?

ARE THEY RIGHT? ARE YOU ILLEGAL? YOU AND THE REST OF THE VERMIN IN THIS HOUSE?



I BET YOU ALL ARE.



I HAVE TO GO. PLEASE LEAVE US ALONE.

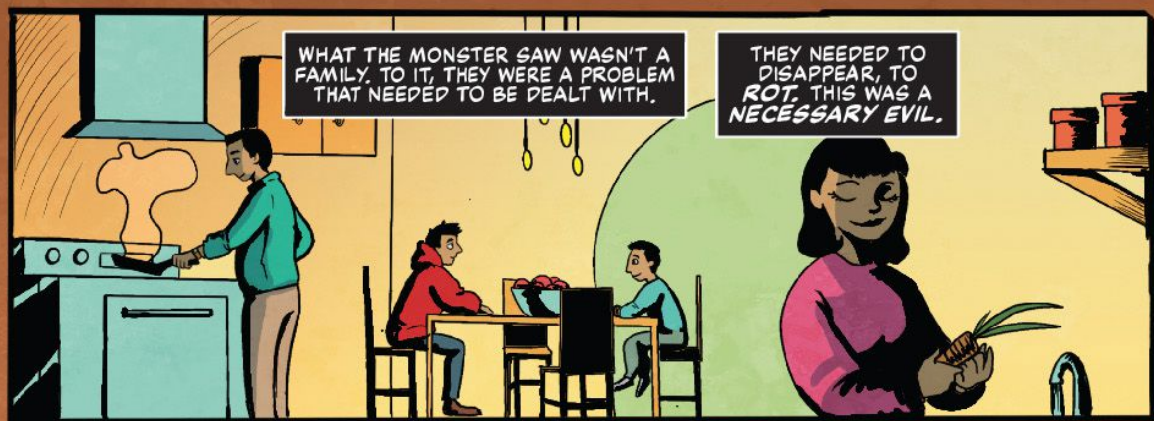


THAT IS WHEN THE MONSTER KNEW. IT HAD THEM.



SMOKE FILLED THE HOME. EVERYTHING IT TOUCHED TURNED TO ASH.

AND YET, THE MONSTER PRESSED FORWARD. IT DIDN'T CARE WHAT IT DESTROYED IN ITS PATH.



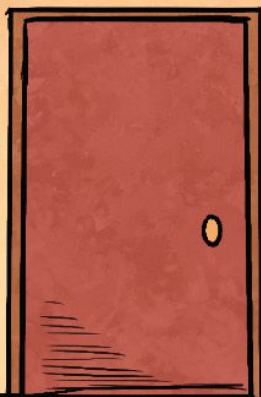
WHAT THE MONSTER SAW WASN'T A FAMILY. TO IT, THEY WERE A PROBLEM THAT NEEDED TO BE DEALT WITH.

THEY NEEDED TO DISAPPEAR, TO ROT. THIS WAS A NECESSARY EVIL.



THE MONSTER WATCHED THEIR SMILES AND LISTENED TO THEIR LAUGHTER WITH *DISGUST*. IT FELT THAT THAT HAPPINESS HAD BEEN STOLEN FROM PEOPLE WHO "BELONGED."

BUT WHAT THE MONSTER DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT IT STUMBLED ON THE WRONG FAMILY.



OUR FAMILY.

MY OLDER BROTHER WASN'T GOING TO LET US BE TAKEN. THE MONSTER DIDN'T KNOW THIS, BUT WE WERE A FAMILY OF *SERES MÁGICOS*. MAGICAL BEINGS.



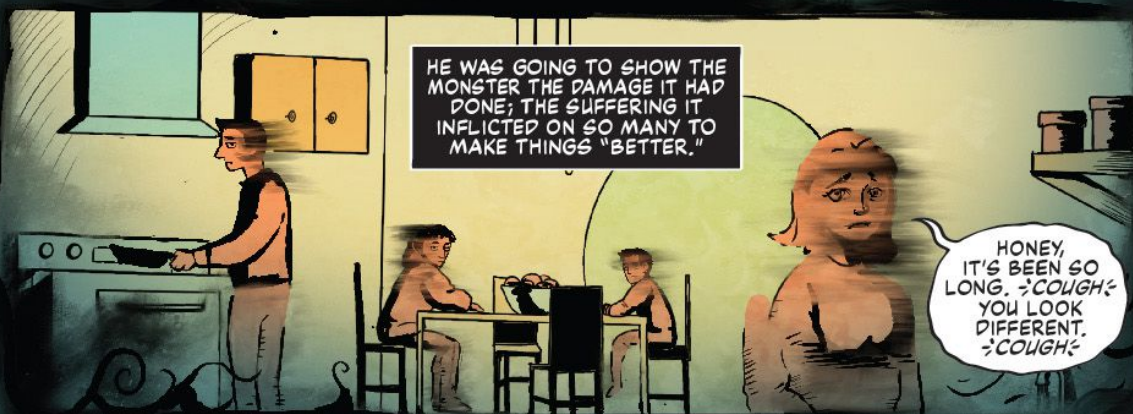
HE WAS GOING TO USE THE *MAGIC* IN OUR BLOOD TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT. HE WAS GOING TO MAKE THE MONSTER *PAY*.

CASSIAN FELT IT FROM A DISTANCE, WATCHED AS IT STALKED US. HE TOLD MAMA Y PAPA HIS PLAN.



IT WAS DANGEROUS, BUT OUR PARENTS WOULD BE THERE TO MAKE SURE IT WENT HOW CASSIAN WANTED. BESIDES, HE KNEW WHAT IT WAS.

HE WASN'T SCARED.



HE WAS GOING TO SHOW THE MONSTER THE DAMAGE IT HAD DONE; THE SUFFERING IT INFLICTED ON SO MANY TO MAKE THINGS "BETTER."

HONEY, IT'S BEEN SO LONG. ♪COUGH♪ YOU LOOK DIFFERENT. ♪COUGH♪



THIS WAS GOING TO BE HIS REMINDER. CASSIAN SHOWED THE MAN BEHIND THE MONSTER'S MASK THE FAMILY HE GAVE UP TO DESTROY SO MANY OTHERS.

♪COUGH♪ WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US?! I FEEL STRANGE. ♪COUGH♪ LIKE I'M GOING TO SLEEP. LIKE I'LL NEVER WAKE AGAIN.



THIS WAS CASSIAN'S JUDGEMENT. THE MAN'S PUNISHMENT WOULD BE A LESSON IN EMPATHY.

THIS WAS THE
BEGINNING OF
CASSIAN'S
GREAT BATTLE.

AND WE STOOD BY HIM
AS HE SERVED HIS OWN
BRAND OF JUSTICE.
THERE WAS NEVER
VIOLENT RETRIBUTION.

HE SHOWED THEM
THE EVIL INSIDE
THEMSELVES,
REMINDED THEM OF
THEIR *HUMANITY*.
HE ACHIEVED THIS
THROUGH THE
SCOPE OF OUR
FAMILY'S LOVE.

HE FOUGHT FOR ALL THOSE
FAMILIES WHO HAD BEEN
STOLEN AND THOSE WHO
WERE STILL IN DANGER
OF DISAPPEARING.

HE DID WHAT WAS
RIGHT, NO MATTER
WHAT IT TOOK,
UNTIL EVERYONE
WAS *SAFE*.

END