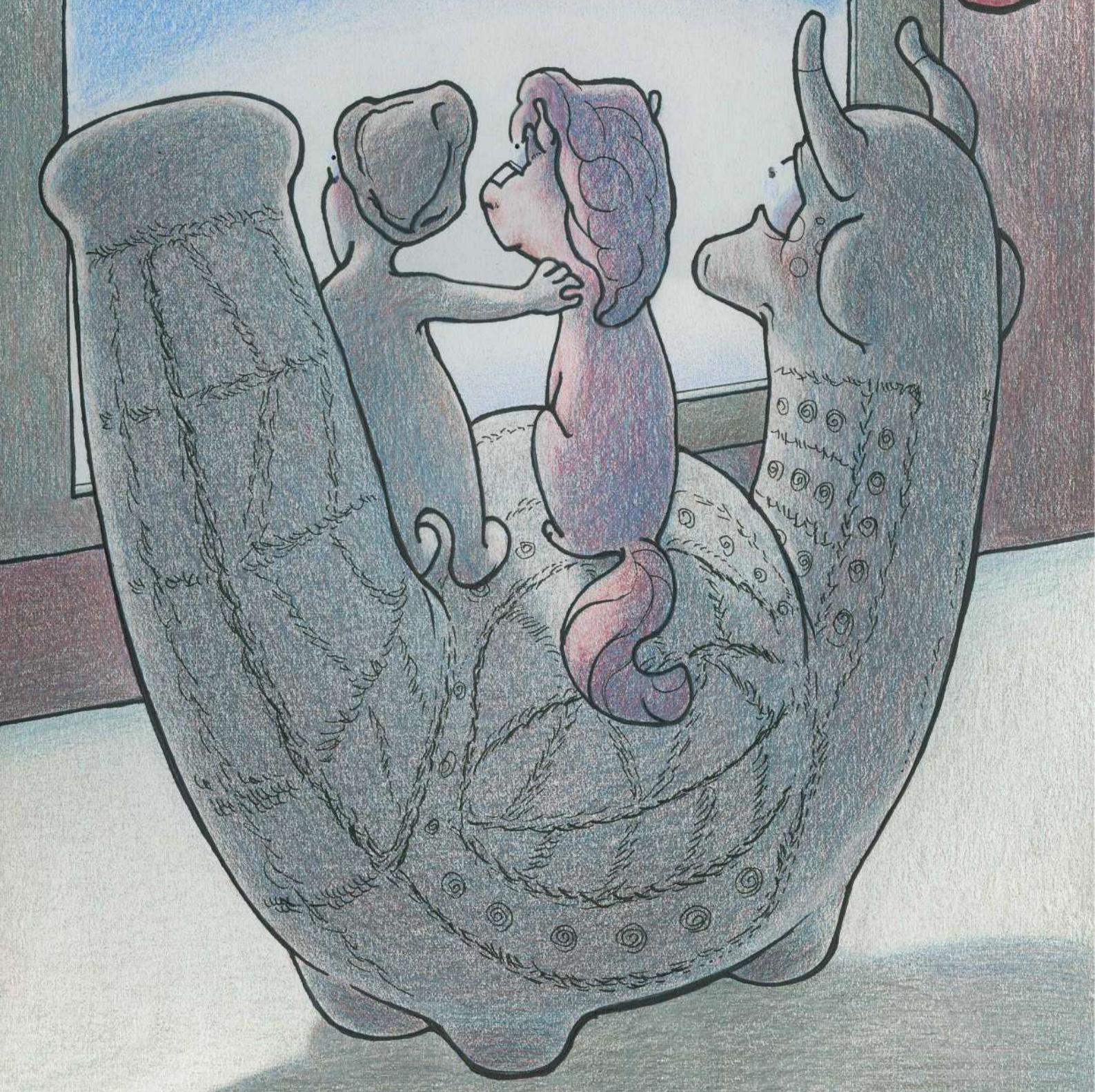


THE LONGEVITY OF ASKAS



THE LONELINESS OF ASKOS

A project by the Archaeological Museum of Bologna - Istituzione Bologna Musei (Paola Giovetti, Elena Maria Cané, Anna Dore, Federica Guidi, Marinella Marchesi)

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 Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna

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—THE LONELINESS OF ASKOS—



Spring 2020.

How strange these days are...

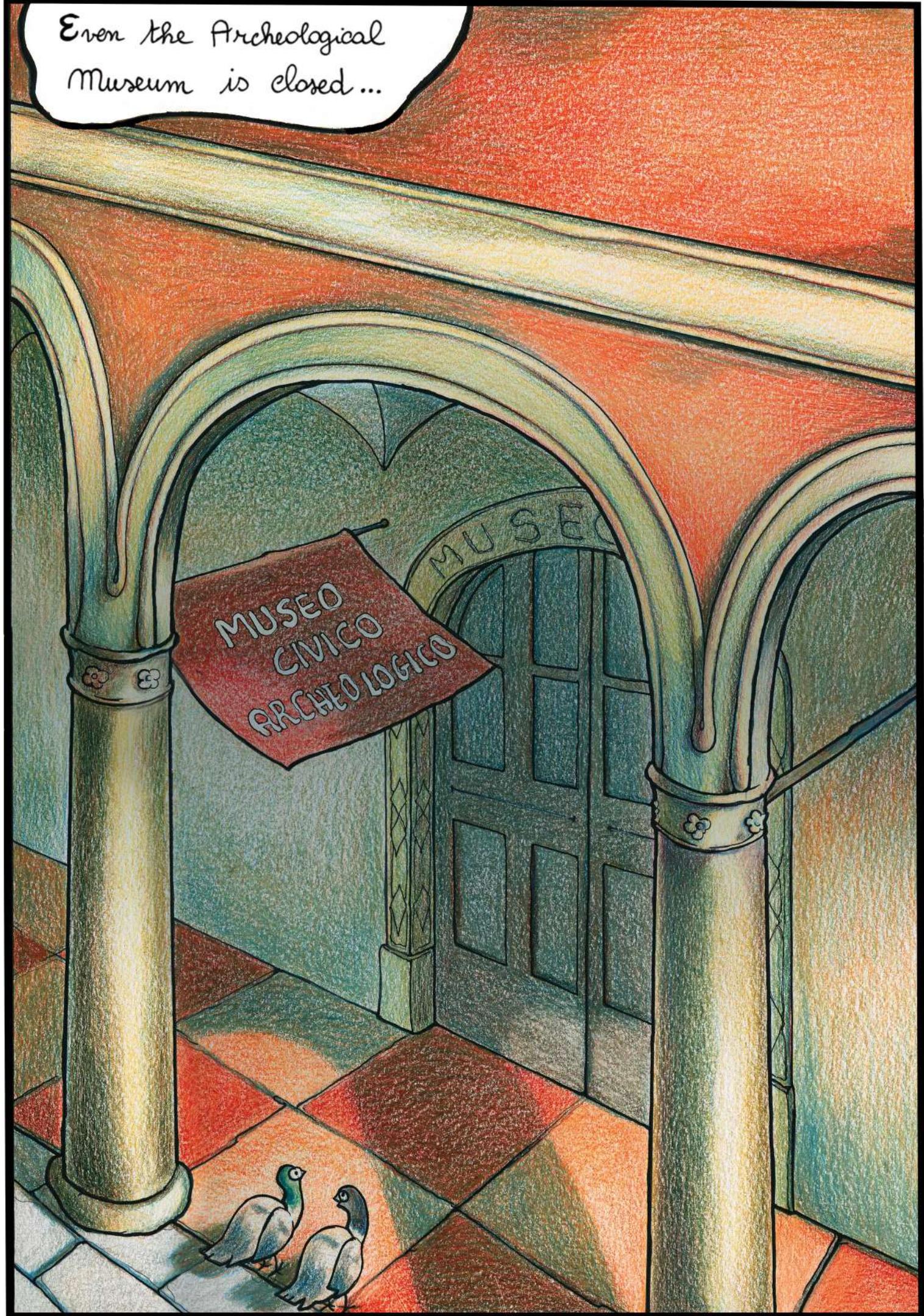
There's a bad virus around that makes us ill and scared us.

That makes us close schools, libraries and shops. We don't go out on the street anymore and we all stay home.

But from our windows we can still look up.

Because the sky is so blue and the sun warms so much!

Even the Archeological
Museum is closed ...





Inside...
silence everywhere!



The rooms are empty
and the showcases are off.
Little voices start running
around here and there...

HEY!
IS THERE ANYONE
AROUND?

DON'T
THINK SO!

BUT...
WHAT HAPPENED
TO EVERYONE?

Here we are ... little voices
we were saying!

There is Ox, big and fearful.
And Hippo, a judgmental little horse.
Lastly, Nero, little soldier and big brave.
Together they form a team called Askos!
Askos is a very singular and prestigious
vase, pot-bellied and curiously shaped,
but so important for the Museum
that everyone but everyone stops
in front of its showcase to
admire it!



HEY, GYS ... THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG HERE!

DO YOU THINK SO?

NO, NO! SERIOUSLY!
THIS SICKNESS DOESN'T SOUND GOOD AT ALL!

YOU'RE ALWAYS THE SAME CHICKEN!
THERE'S JUST A GREAT PEACE...

YOU CAN ONLY SEE THAT GUY WHO SPEAKS SUPER FAST... WHO ALWAYS GOES AROUND WITH KEYS...

AUGUSTO
THE GUARDIAN?

OK... LET'S STAY CALM! NOW!
TRY TO ASK TO OUR SMALL VESSELS... HEY JUG, MY FRIEND... DO YOU BY ANY CHANCE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

YES, YES! HE'S THE ONE!

WAIT!
I GOT AN IDEA ...
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP US...

HARRY!
THERE SHE IS!

HEY... BIG HEAD OUT THERE ... HAVE YOU SEEN ANYONE THIS MORNING?

NO!

... SO?

GULP!

BUT... HOW IS
THIS POSSIBLE?

I'LL TELL YOU:
SHE WAS SLEEPING,
AS USUAL!

WAIT!
THERE'S A SIGN
OVER THERE!

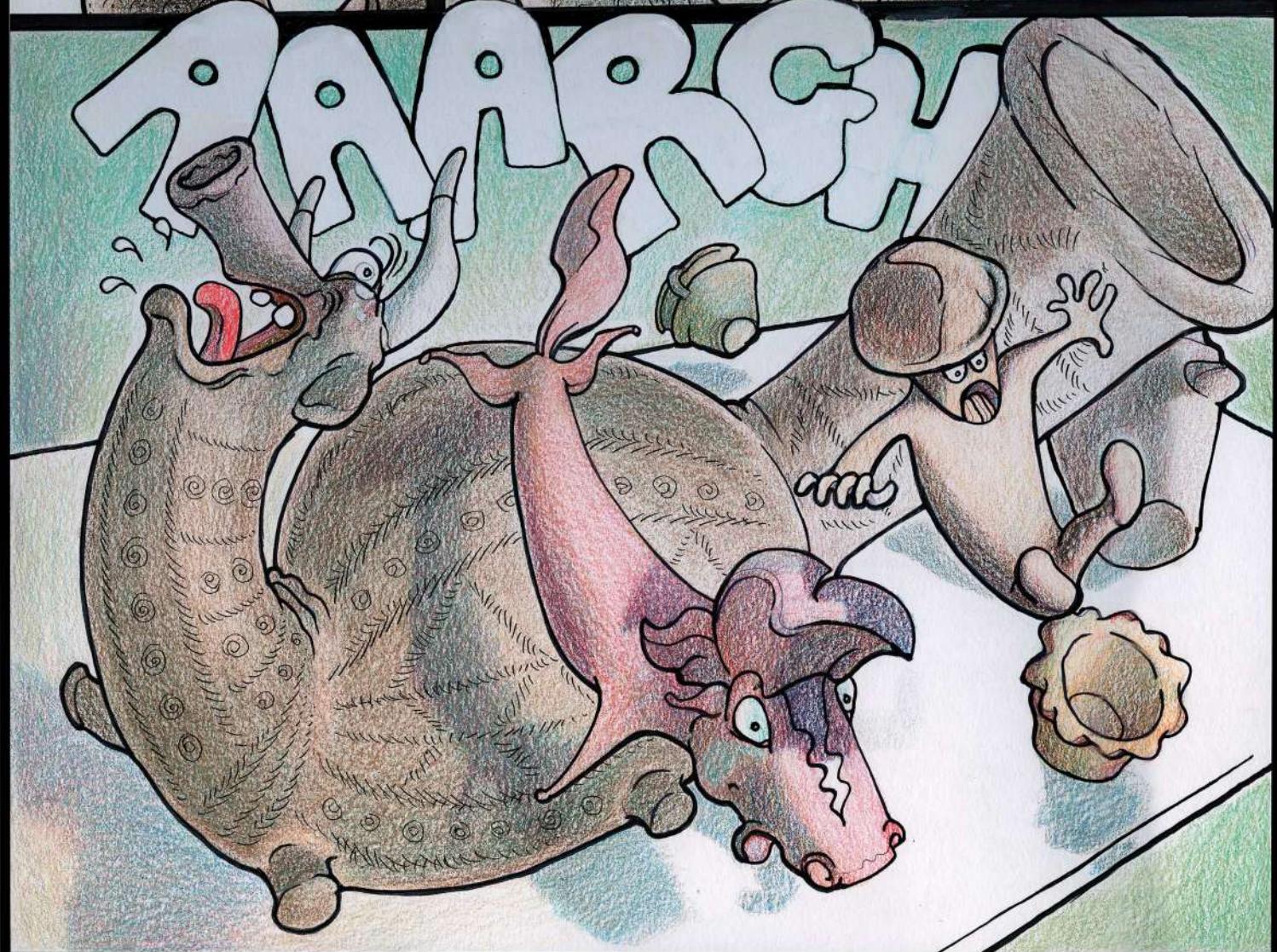
CAN YOU SEE IT! DO YOU
MANAGE TO READ
SOMETHING?

WHERE
IS IT?

DOWN
THERE!

... SO... WE...

Avoid hugs
handshakes
Keep a safe
distance of
1 meter
at least.



KEEP
THE DISTAAANCE!

NO WAY!

YEAH, YEAH OX!
DON'T WORRY ... COME
OUT OF THAT POOR JUG,
INSTEAD!

STOP THERE,
YOU TWO!

Fortunately,
the night falls
on this chaotic
day and our little
friends can rest a bit!

The next
morning...

HEY, BUT,
ARE YOU STILL
SLEEPING? COME
ON WAKE UP, IT'S
CATE!

GOOD... GOOD MOR-
NING, HERO. ARE
WE... ARE WE
STILL ALONE?
AND SO... IT
HASN'T BEEN JUST
A BAD DREAM?

WISH THAT WAS A
DREAM, OX!

I WOKE UP EARLY
AND... COMPLETE
SILENCE!

RONF
POZ
AX

'MORNING...
WELL, I DON'T KNOW
ABOUT YOU, FRIENDS,
BUT I DON'T DISLIKE
AT ALL A BIT OF
PEACE!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, HIPPO?
JUST TRY TO THINK A CITTLE,
OX...

IF NO ONE'S AROUND MEANS
THAT THEY'RE NOT HERE
EITHER...

THEY
WHO?

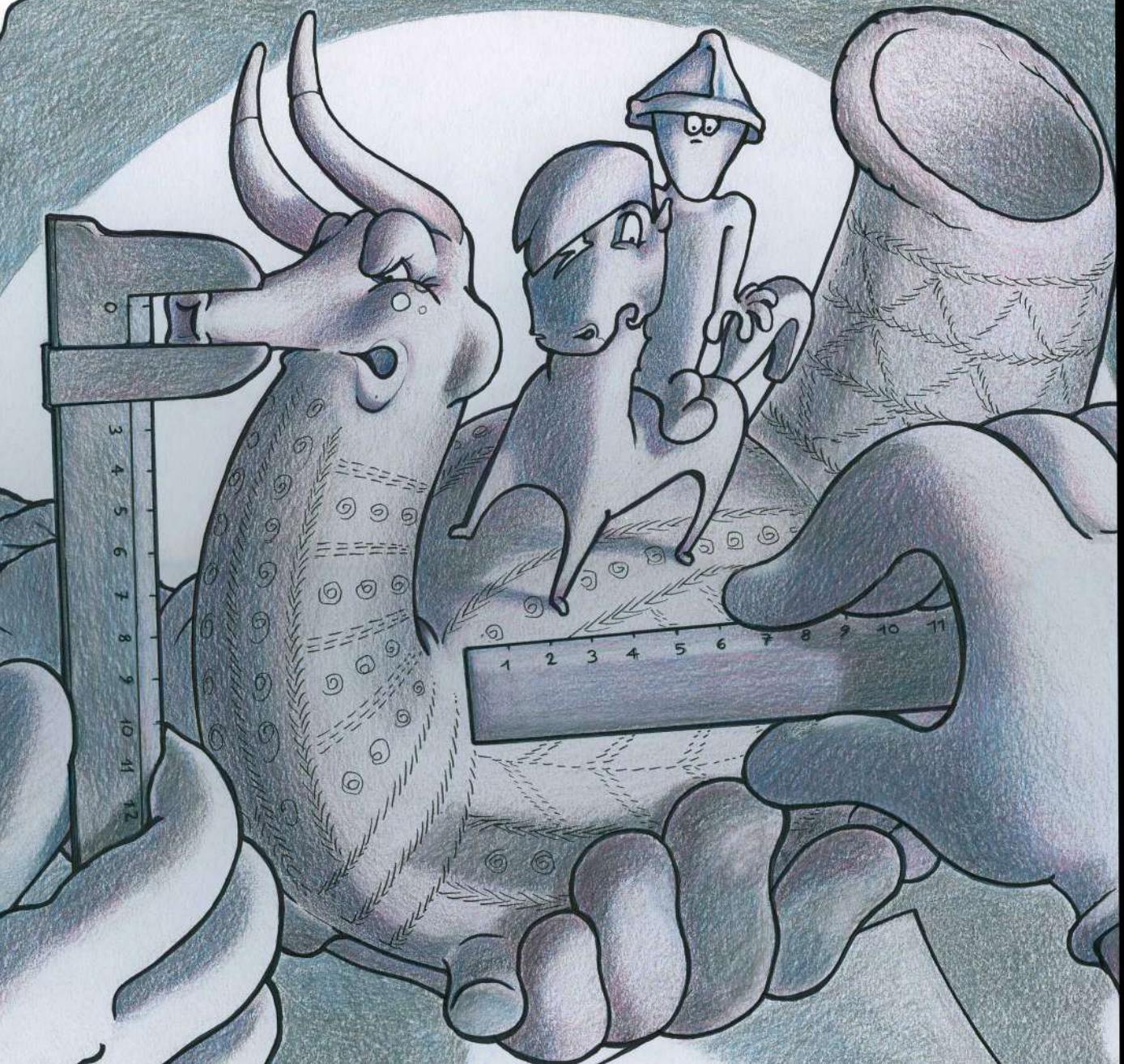
THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS!

AHH, SO... THERE AREN'T
EVEN ALL THE OTHERS THAT
HANG OUT WITH THEM?

YOU'RE SAYING THAT FOR A WHILE NO MORE TICKLING WITH THE RULER AND WITH THAT OTHER THING THAT ITCHES?

YEAH! THAT ONE, CRAP!

YOU MEAN THE CALIPER?



AND SO... THEY'RE NOT GONE TO DRAW US ANYMORE?

I HATE BEING DRAWN!



THEY'LL ALSO STOP
RESTORING US?

YES, FOR A WHILE!

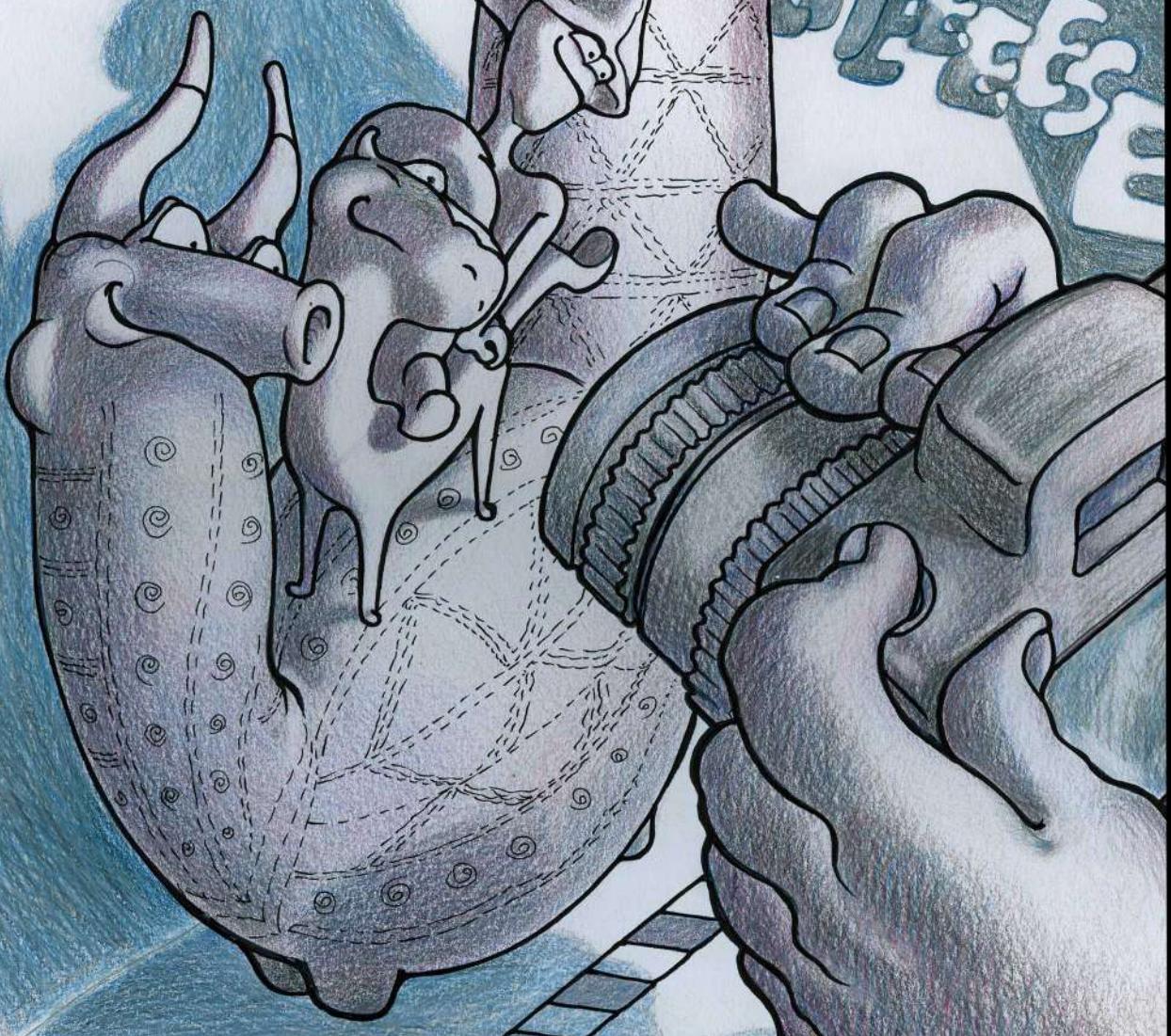
I HAAAATE
BEING RESTORED!

^{SO...}
NO MORE PHOTOS?

VACATION EVEN FROM THAT ONE!

I HAAAATE BEING PHOTOGRAPHED!

WELL...
... I LIKE IT A LITTLE...



BUT AFTER ALL...
WE DO REALLY FUNNY
THINGS!

FUNNY??
THEY TURN YOU IN THEIR HANDS
AT LEAST 60 TIMES, THEY SPIN YOU
UP AND DOWN TO SEE HOW YOU ARE
DOING!! YAYA, REALLY FUNNY!

YOU ARE RIGHT
HIPPO, BUT...
DON'T YOU THINK
THEY'RE DOING IT
FOR OUR OWN GOOD?
I MEAN: ALL ALONE
WE DON'T REALIZE
HOW LIFE'S GOING,
DO WE? AND THEN,
THEY MAKE US GOOD
FOR PEOPLE WHO
COME TO SEE US!

EXACTLY, PEOPLE...
WILL ASK AGAIN TO
BIG HEAD OUT THERE...

THERE IS
SOMETHING BUG-
GING ME ...

YOU TWO,
STAY THERE, OK?

YEAH,
YEAH...

HEAD...? SORRY
IF I BOTHER YOU
BUT... WHEN ARE
WE GOING TO SEE
CHILDREN AGAIN?
HIPPO WILL NEVER
ADMIT IT, BUT WE'RE
STARTING TO MISS
EVERYBODY ...

NO ONE KNOWS!

WHAT?



YOU CALL ME RECKLESS!
YOU READ THE SIGN, AND WHAT DID YOU
MAKE OF IT?
OH, YES...
YOU RESPECTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS,
BUT SHORTLY AFTER YOU CHEERED UP
FOR AN UNEXPECTED AND UNUSUAL
FREEDOM.
BUT FREE FROM WHAT, INDEED?
FROM THE TREATMENTS OF THE
STAFF?
FROM VISITORS' GAZE?
FROM CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS?
I ADMIT THAT I AM NOT INDIFFERENT
TO THE CHARM OF SILENCE,
BUT... HAVE YOU WONDERED
WHERE ANYONE HAS GONE?



WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

AND THE
CHILDREN, OH...
WE DON'T KNOW
WHEN THEY WILL
BE ABLE TO
COME AGAIN...

BUT
...

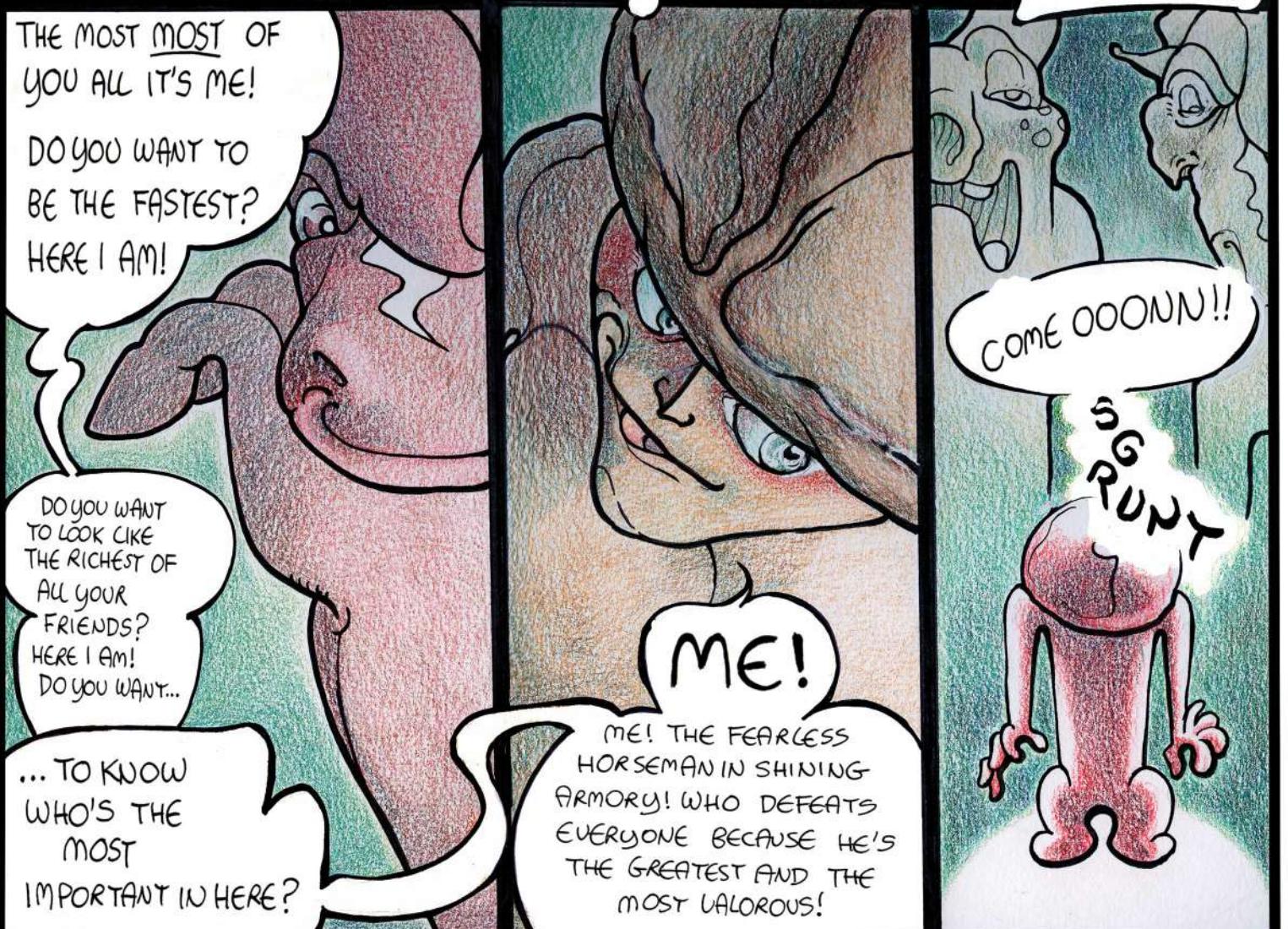
ACTUALLY, YES!
AND WE SO ALSO ASKED
YOU, BUT...

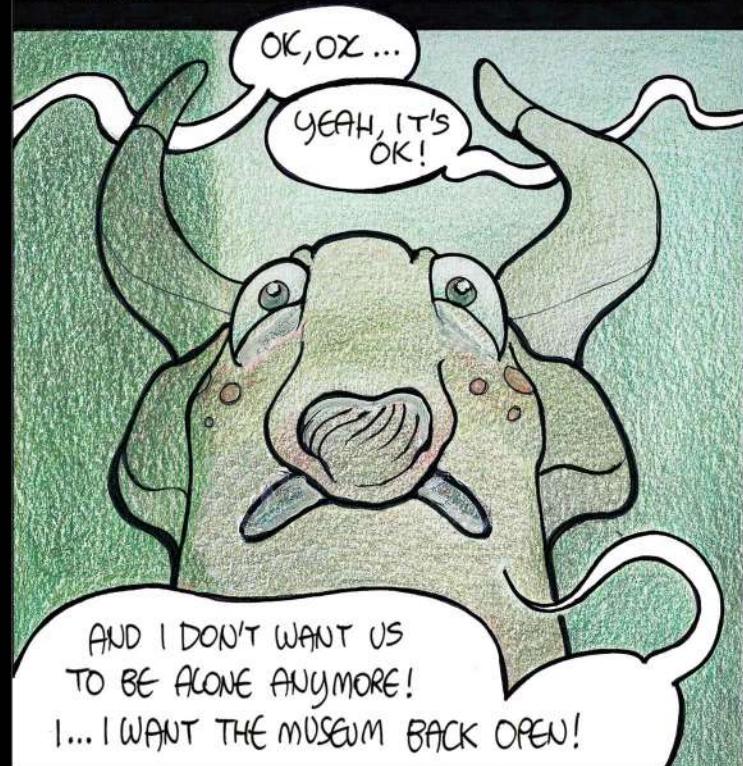
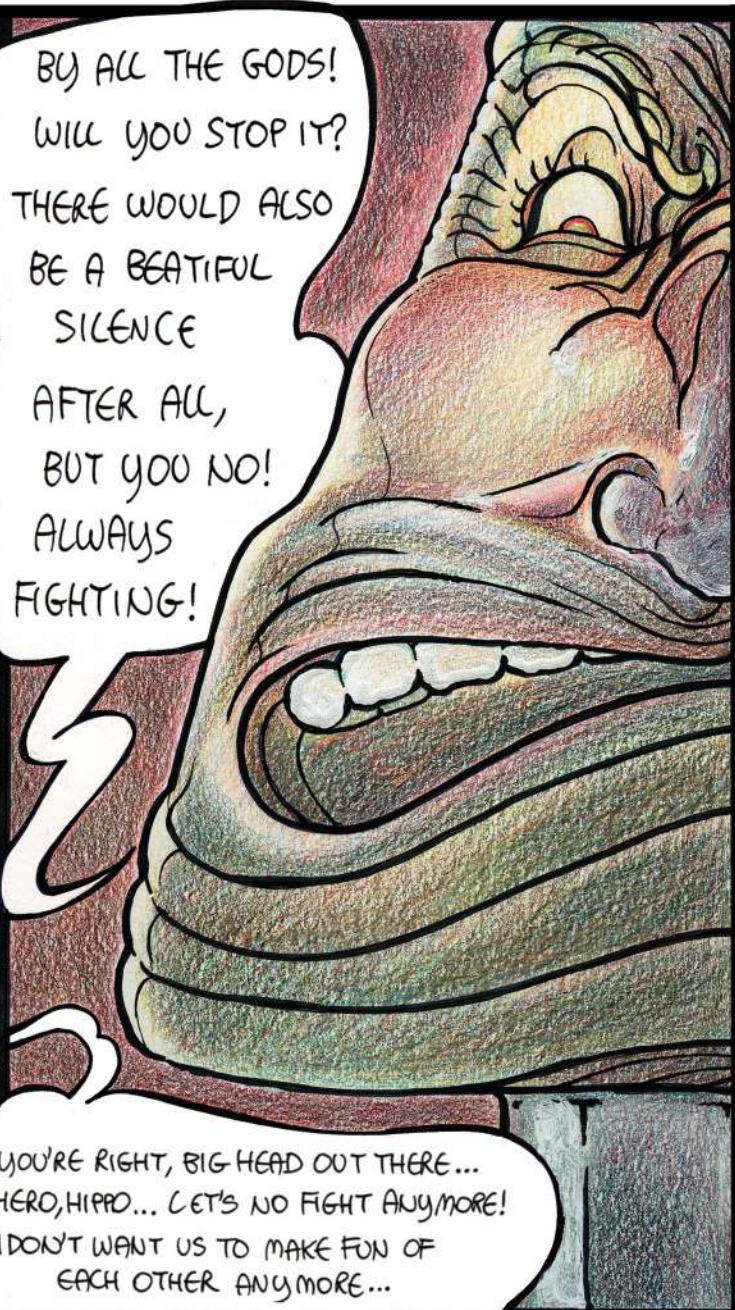
SILENCE, FOOLS!
THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED
NOW AND WE DON'T KNOW
WHEN IT'S GOING TO REOPEN!
NOT ONLY THE MUSEUM: THE
ENTIRE CITY OF BOLOGNA IS DESOLATE:
CHILDREN DON'T GO TO SCHOOL AND ADULTS DON'T GO
TO WORK. A VERY STRONG VIRUS HAS MADE ILL MANY PEOPLE AND...
LOST OF THEM LEFT US...



WHAT...
WHAT DOES
THIS MEAN, OH?

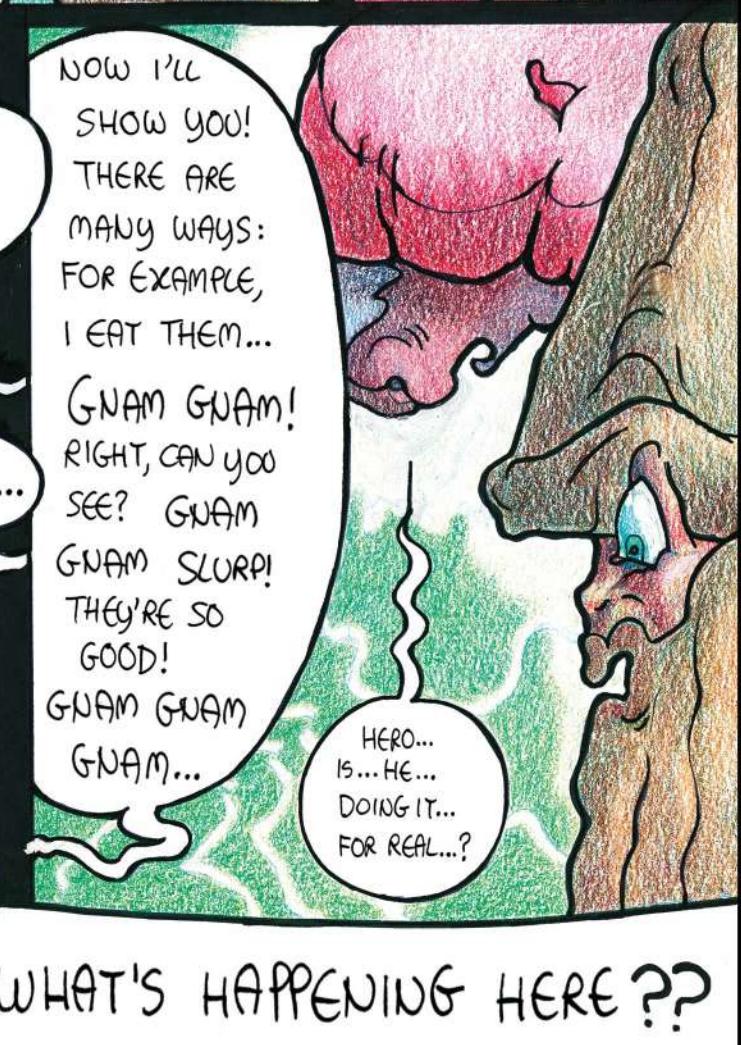
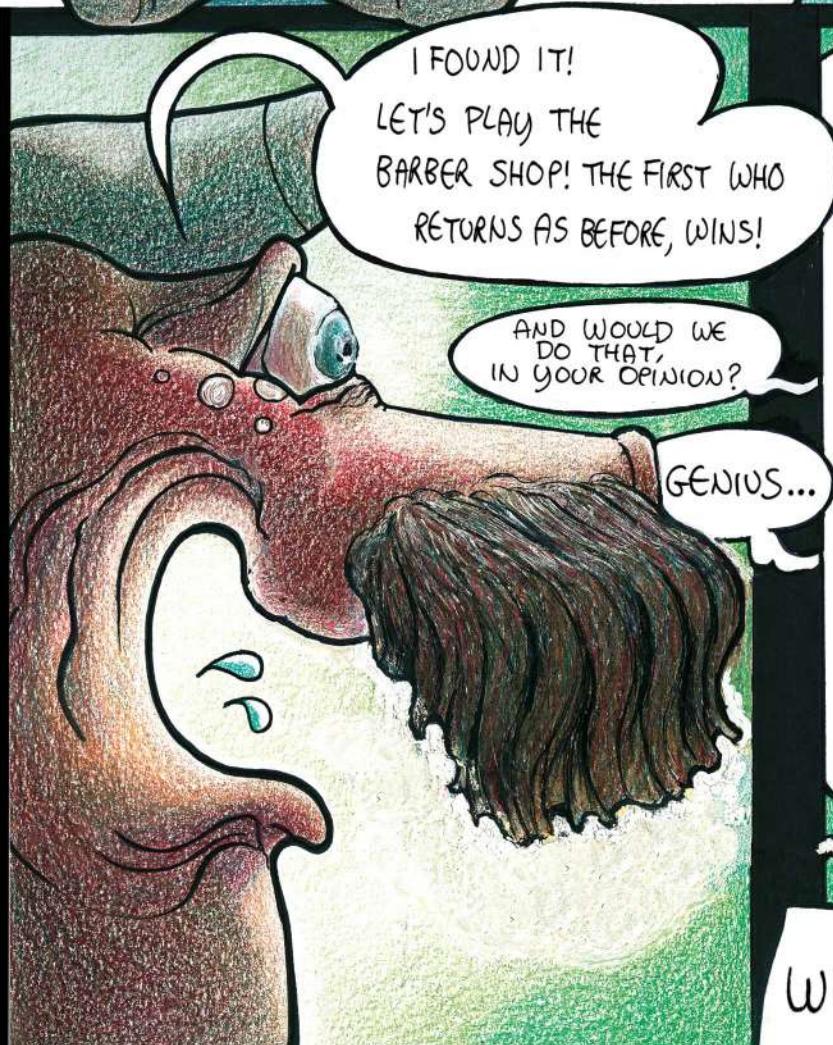
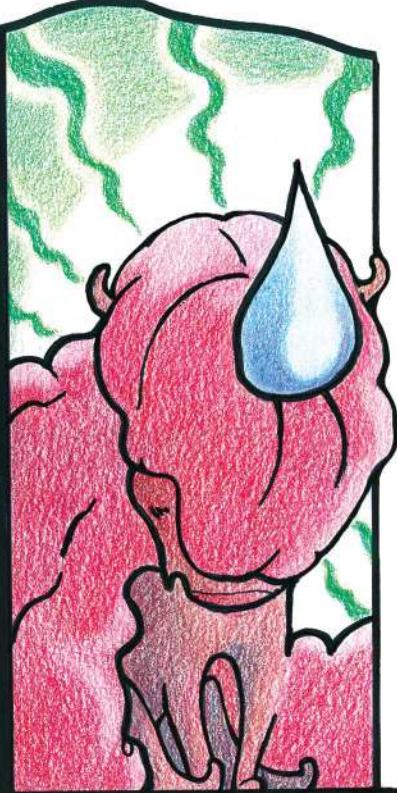
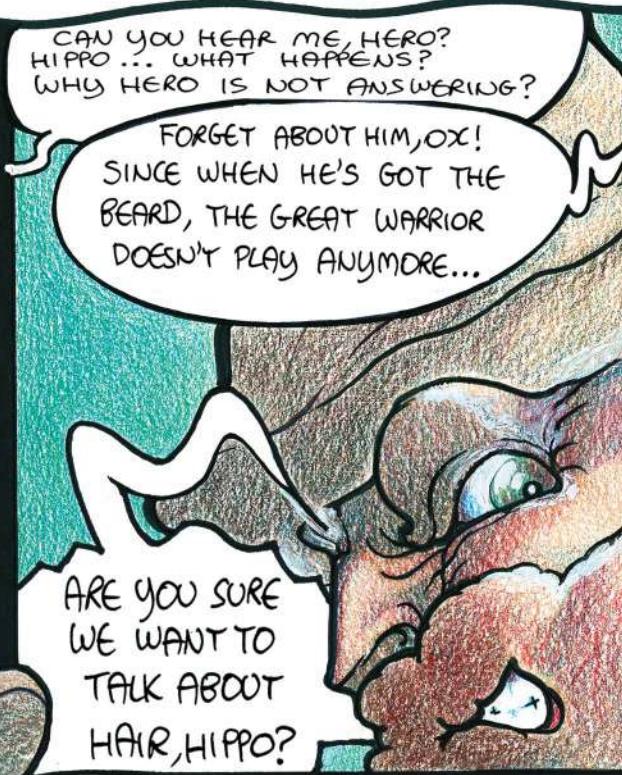
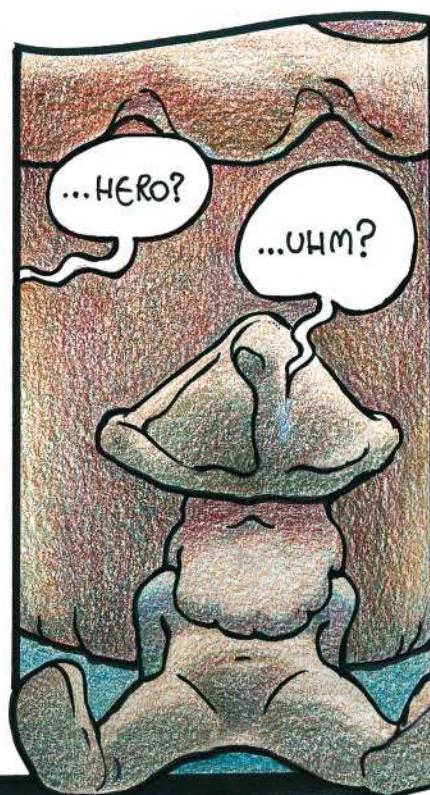
ARE THEY
ALL... SICK?

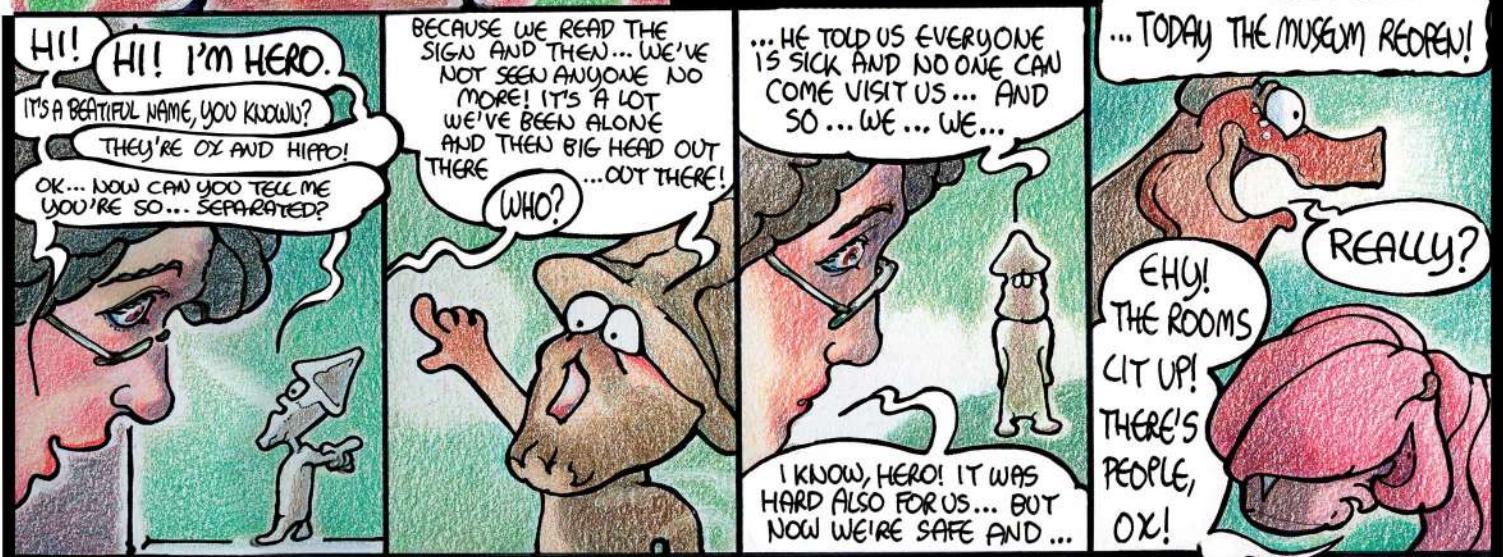
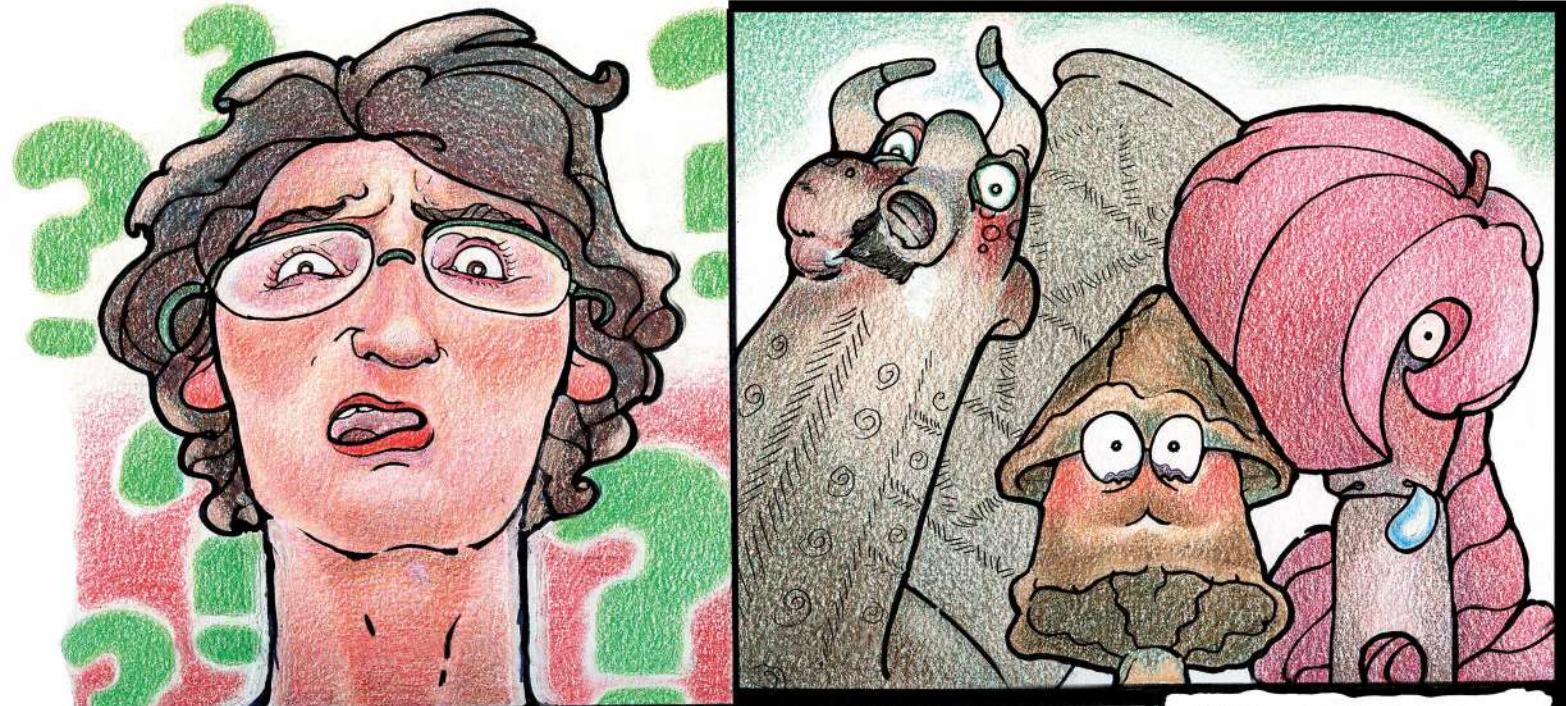




But good intention, we know, are hard to keep and, like clouds, they come and go...

In the meantime, days go by fast or slow in their own way, and this spring is more and more strange!





THEY'RE COMING GUYS! WE HAVE TO GO!

I'LL DEAL WITH YOU LATER, OX...
GULP!

WAIT!

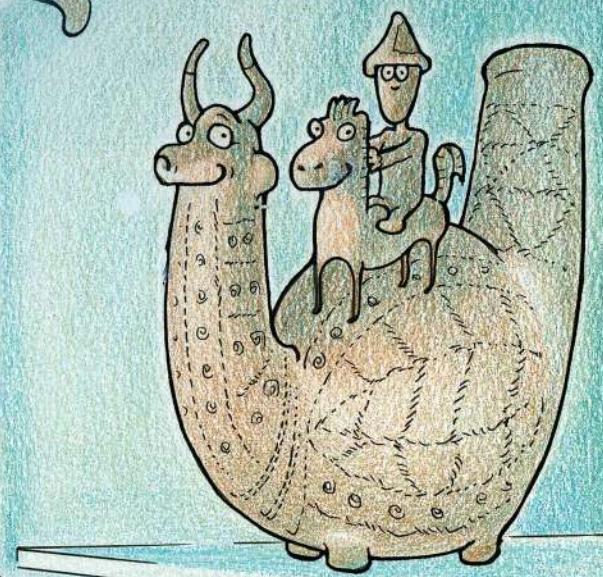
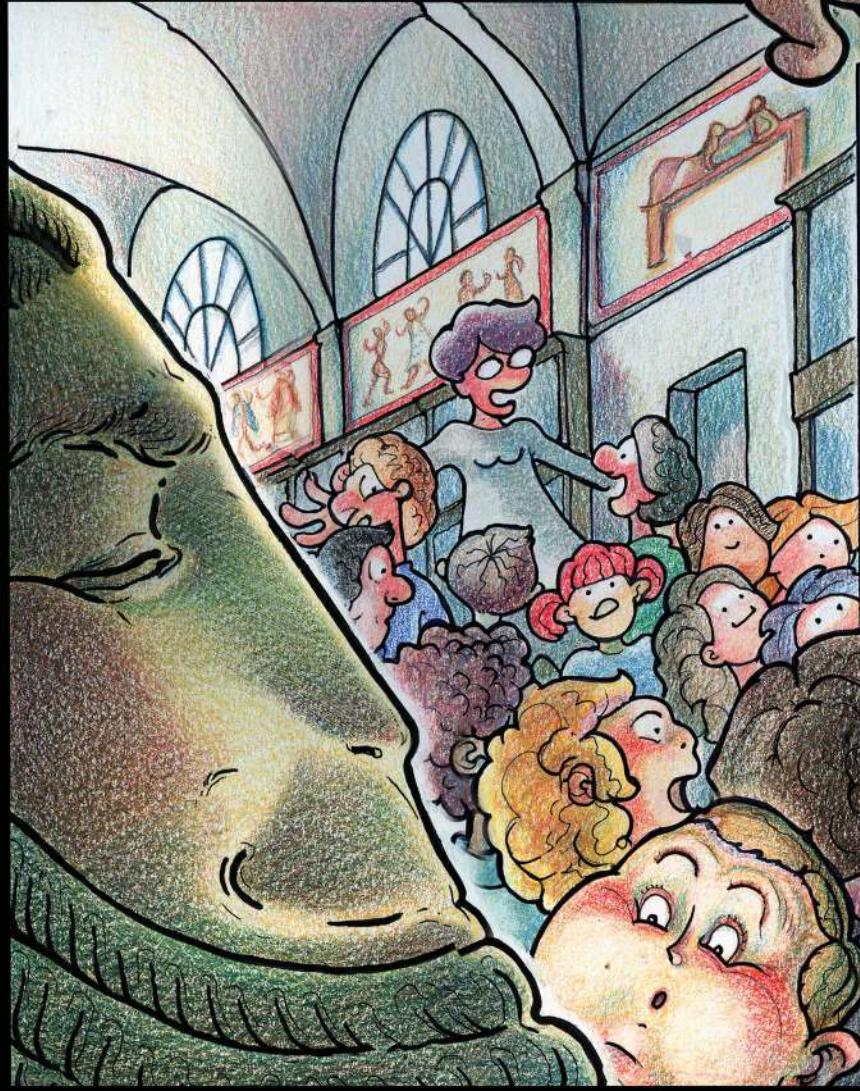
WE PROMISE!

BEFORE MOVING I WANT US TO DO A PACT! WE PROMISE
NOT TO FORGET HOW MUCH WE MISSED THE
PEOPLE WHO USUALLY BUZZ AROUND US!
ALL OF US, OK?

AT WORK, THEN!
LET'S GO!
COME ON!

STAY THERE, OX!

NICE AND EASY...
UH!



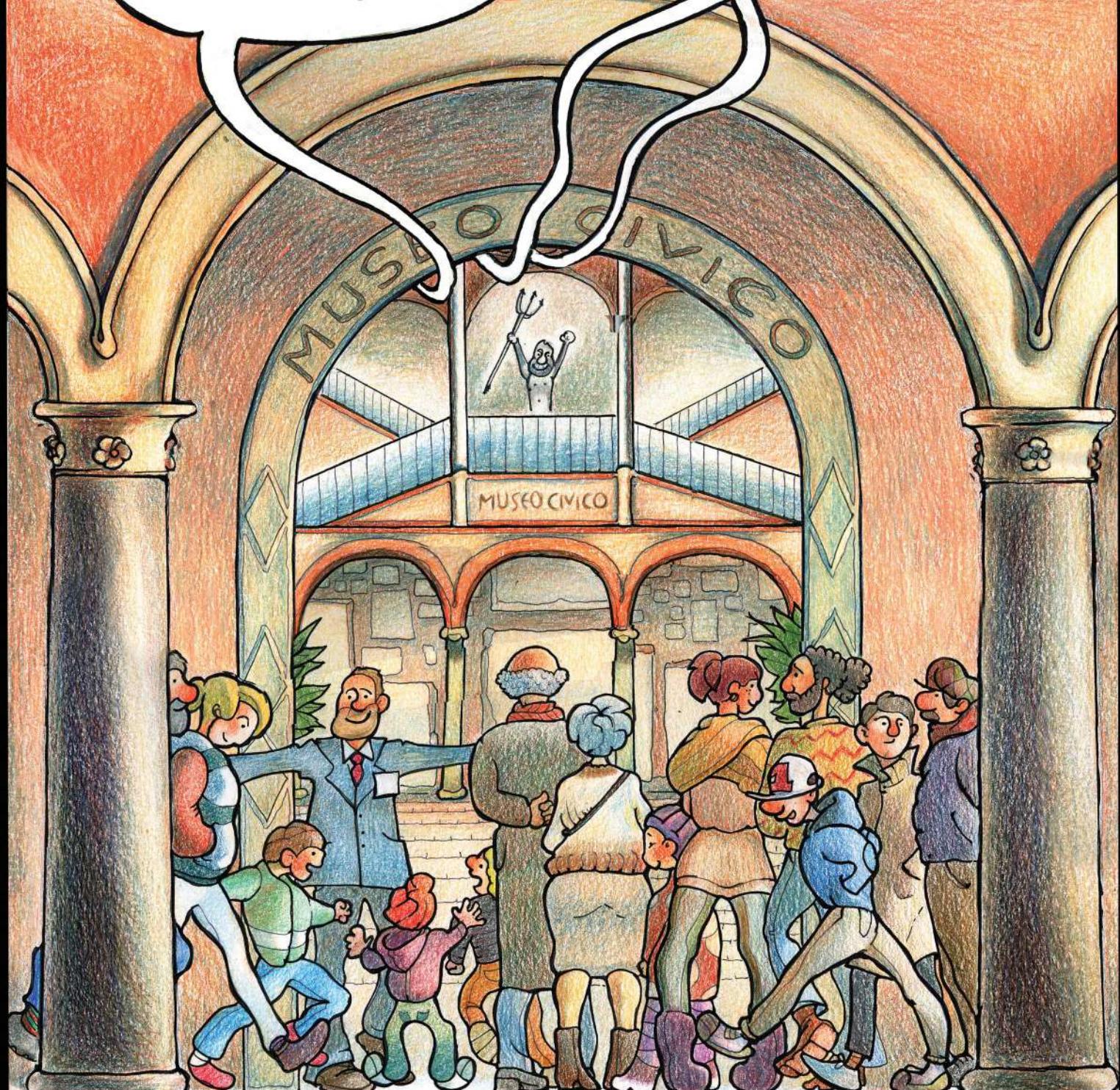
PSST, HERO ...
PSST PSST ... HEROO!!

WHAT'S UP, OX?

HOW... HOW MANY ARE
THEY, HERO? IT'S... IT'S GREAT!

STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU!
WE'RE GOING TO GET CAUGHT?

BUT... BUT HIPPO, CAN'T
YOU SEE? THEY ... THEY
ARE SO MANY?





"YOU... YOU THINK IT WILL BE LIKE THAT THE WHOLE DAY?"

"... YES, YES!"

"AND TOMORROW, HERO?"

"EVEN MORE!"

"AND..."

"OX?" "YES, HIPPO?"

"GIVE IT A REST..."

EVERYBODY'S WATCHING US!"

The
End

THE MAIN CHARACTER

We call it "Benacci *askos*": *askos* is the greek name of its shape, a goatskin, while Benacci is the family name of the owner of the estate where it was found, in 1875, during the excavations of an ancient cemetery. This vase was buried in tomb no. 525 of the Benacci necropolis, a tomb that shows the development of the Etruscan civilization in Bologna during its first period, the so-called Villanovan age. It is shaped like a fantastic animal, with a potbelly body, a long neck and a bull's head with long curved horns (this is *Ox*). Its handle is shaped like a horse (this is *Hippo*), ridden by an horseman with a shield on his back and an helmet on his head (and this is *Hero*). The horseman was a sign of the high rank of the deceased in his community, while the fantastic beast maybe alluded to the journey he should have made to the afterlife. The *askos* probably contained precious liquids, introduced into the larger opening in the back and poured through the smaller hole on the snout. Many other objects were buried in the tomb: first of all, the ossuary, the vase containing the burned remains of the deceased; then, personal ornaments like a brooch, some pins and a bronze bracelet; lastly, goblets, cups and two terracotta wheels, maybe belonging to a small chariot on which the *askos* was placed.



THE BIG HEAD OUT THERE



We call it "Gozzadini Head", from the last name of Count Giovanni Gozzadini, its finder and first owner. It was found in the center of Bologna, in via San Petronio Vecchio, maybe in 1868. It is a very important object because it is one of the most ancient sculptures of the Etruscan Bologna (early 7th century BC), perhaps made by an artist arrived in Bologna from the Near East. It probably represents the head of a sphinx, a statue that marked and guarded one or more tombs. The sphinx is a mythical creature, a winged monster with the head of a human and the body of a lion. It is a symbol that the Etruscans adopted from the Near East, related to mystique, death and rebirth. For that reason it was placed on tombs.



THE KING OF THE SEA

You know...he is named *Neptune* and...it's him! It is not an archaeological object, but a copy of the bronze statue placed on the Fountain of Neptune, made by Giambologna between 1563 and 1566.

