



CHAPTER 1.



MY NAME IS BRANDT.

BUT I AM NOT THE BRANDT
YOU ARE THINKING OF.

I AM NOT TOMISLAV BRANDT,
THE CREATOR OF TEXAS KID,
THE MOST FAMOUS COMIC
BOOK EVER.

I HAVE NOT WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED OVER
A HUNDRED BOOKS ABOUT THAT DAREDEVIL
COWBOY, I DID NOT RECEIVE A GRAND
MASTER AWARD AT LUCCA.

I WAS NOT THE SUBJECT OF
THREE MONOGRAPHS, I AM
NEITHER A MAESTRO, A POYEN
NOR A LEGEND.

I AM RADOVAN BRANDT,
HIS SON.

SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE
HEARD ABOUT ME.

YOU MIGHT HAVE READ
"RICK MARSHALL", ...

...OR "SAVANNAH,
THE QUEEN OF
ADVENTURE"...

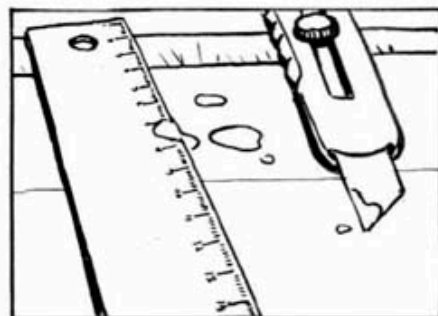
...OR "DESTINATION
SATURN".

YOU MAY EVEN BE
FAMILIAR WITH
SOME OF MY
SHORTER WORKS,
LAUDED BY FESTIVAL JURIES, ...

...SOME COLLEAGUES
AND EDITORS ...

...BUT YOU TOO WILL, UPON HEAR-
ING, MY NAME, ASK "IS HE RELATED
TO THE TEXAS KID BRANDT?"







IM LOOKING FOR
TOMISLAV BRANDT.





TOMISLAV BRANDT.

MY FATHER.

THE YOUNG MAN WITH
A DAZLING SMILE LOOKS
AT ME AS IF I WERE A BUG,
HE'S ABOUT TO CRUSH ...
OR SPARE ...

IT IS THE SAME LOOK MY FATHER HAD
WHEN I SHOWED HIM MY DRAWINGS
FOR THE FIRST TIME.

MHM... SIT AND WATCH!

A CRUEL LOOK, ICY COLD.
AND NOT EVEN BECAUSE HE
HATED ME.
I MEAN, HE DID HATE ME...

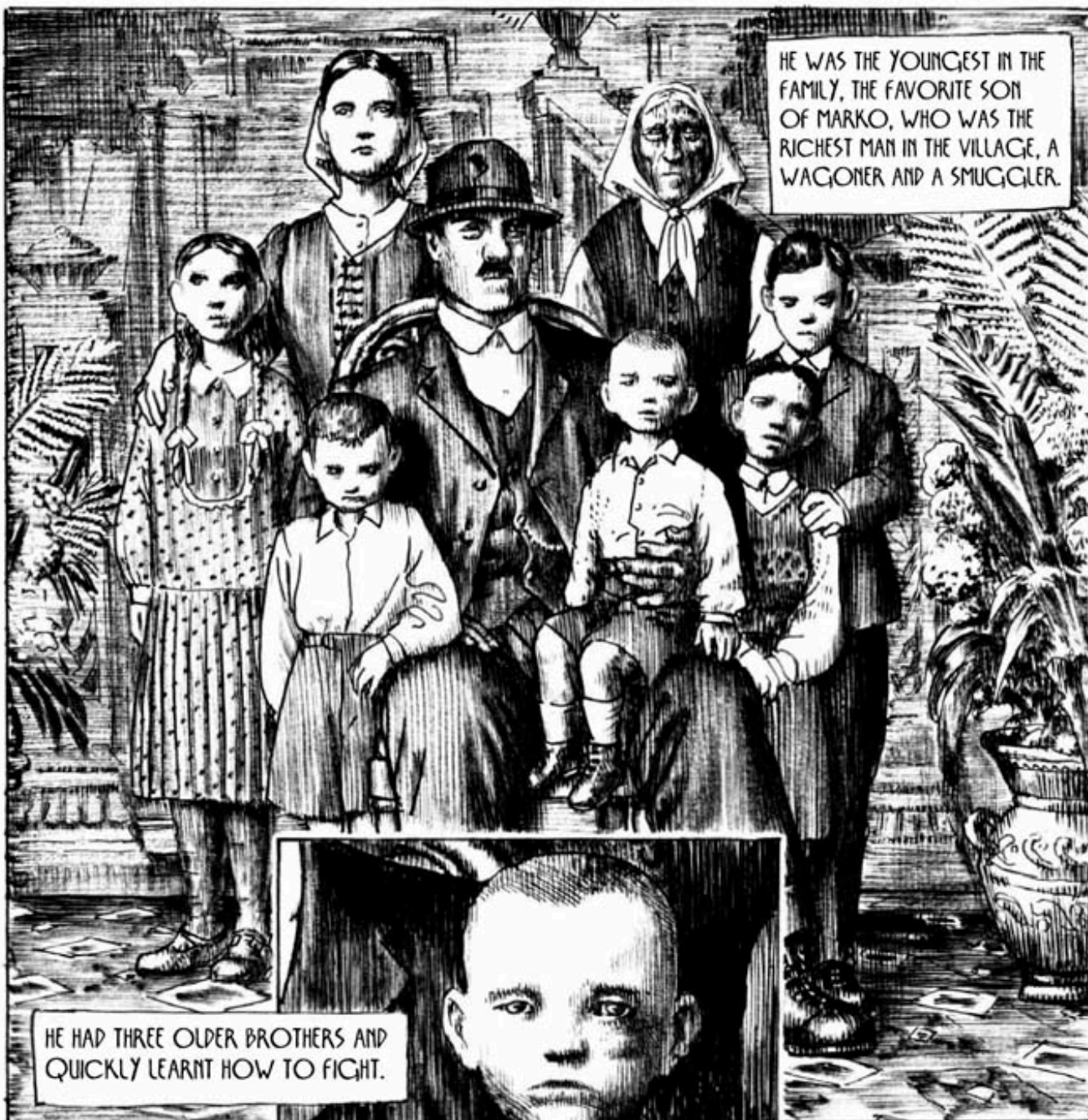
... BUT THE REASONS
STEMMED FROM ...

HIS DEEP-SEATED SELF-HATRED.

HE GREW UP IN A VILLAGE SOUTH
OF KARLOVAC.



HE WAS THE YOUNGEST IN THE
FAMILY, THE FAVORITE SON
OF MARKO, WHO WAS THE
RICHEST MAN IN THE VILLAGE, A
WAGONER AND A SMUGGLER.



HE HAD THREE OLDER BROTHERS AND
QUICKLY LEARNT HOW TO FIGHT.







WHEN HE WAS SIX, HE
WENT WITH HIS FATHER
INTO THE WOODS
TO LOOK FOR
A CHRISTMAS TREE...



... AND GOT LOST.

WHOLE VILLAGE
JOINED THE SEARCH PARTY.

TOMOOO!!

WHOLE VILLAGE
JOINED THE SEARCH PARTY.

TOMOOO!!

TOMO,
MY SON!

SWEET JESUS AND MARY!

SWEET JESUS AND MARY!
OVER THERE!



MARKO,
THE BLIZZARD IS TOO
STRONG. WE CAN'T GO
ON. WE'RE GOING BACK.



THE SEARCH WENT ON
UNTILL DAWN.



AHOY!
EVERYBODY!







TEXAS KID (part two)

art&script by Igor Kordej - story by Darko Macan



TOMO SPENT
A COUPLE OF WEEKS WITH PNEUMONIA
IN KARLOVAC'S CITY HOSPITAL.
HIS FATHER WENT ALL THE WAY TO
PROVIDE THE BEST CARE
FOR HIS KID.

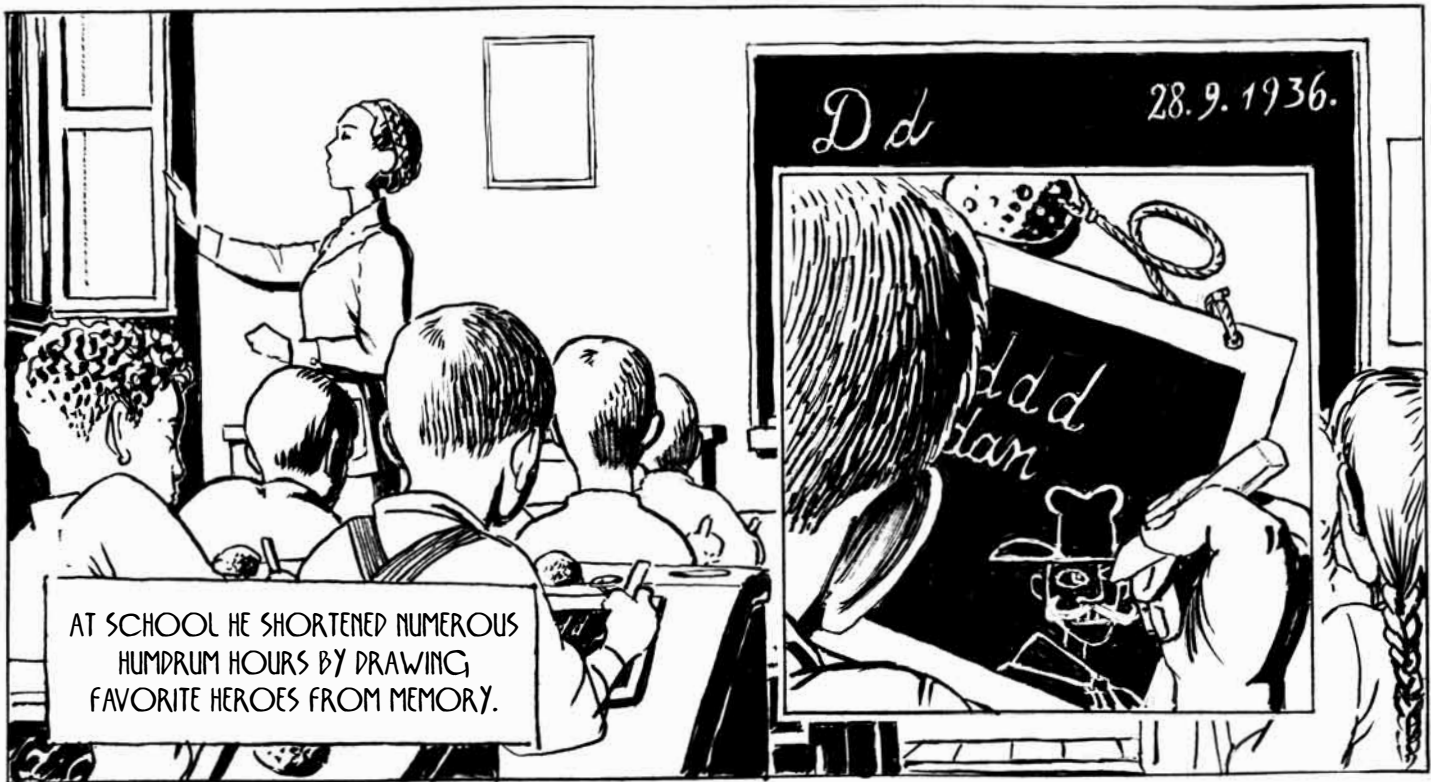
HIS FATHER TRANSPORTED EVERYTHING,
FROM MEAT TO FABRIC, BUT HE MADE HIS MONEY
MOSTLY BUYING AND RESELLING GOODS
SMUGGLED TO THE BIG CITY MARKET
BY SHADY PEOPLE.



THIS WAY, HIS FATHER CAME
ACROSS A NEWFANGLED
ENTERTAINMENT FOR CITY KIDS
AND ADULTS ALIKE, AND BROUGHT
IT TO HIS FAVORITE SON ...







AT SCHOOL HE SHORTENED NUMEROUS HUMDRUM HOURS BY DRAWING FAVORITE HEROES FROM MEMORY.

A YOUNG TEACHER, FRESH FROM THE BIG CITY, DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO DRAW DURING THE CLASS. BUT, AS SHE WAS HERSELF PASSIONATE FOR "NOVELS IN PICTURES", SHE RECOGNIZED THIS SEVEN-YEAR-OLD TALENT FOR DRAWING. HOWEVER, SHE DARED NOT TO OPENLY SUPPORT HIM IN THE SMALL-TOWN OF KARLOVAC



--- BUT SHE ENCOURAGED HIM PRIVATELY, TELLING HIM TO KEEP DRAWING WHENEVER HE HAD FREE TIME. SUCH A CLANDESTINE COMPLIMENT MEANT A WORLD TO TOMO.





TOMO WAS EIGHT
WHEN ONE NIGHT HE CAME UPON PETAR
THE "ANIMAL" AND TWO OF HIS CRONIES
- ALL THREE TWENTY YEARS OLD -
POISONING MARKO MANOJLOVIĆ'S
PIGS OVER A GRUDGE.



HE DID NOT RUN.
HE WITHSTOOD THE BEATING,
STOICALLY, SILENTLY.



HE WAS TOLD TO
KEEP HIS TRAP SHUT BUT HE DID NOT
TAKE TO THE WARNING.

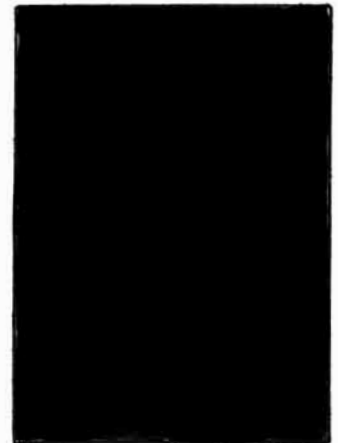


IT WAS BARELY DAWN
WHEN TOMO - ALL BRUISED AND
BLOODIED - TOLD GENDARMES
ALL HE KNEW.



PETAR AND THE OTHER TWO
HAD TO RUN AND HIDE IN THE FOREST WHERE
THEY LAID LOW AND WAITED FOR TOMO.

THEY GOT HIM
ONE EVENING.





TOMO SPENT THREE MONTHS
IN THE HOSPITAL. HIS FATHER HAD
TO GIVE UP ALL HIS SAVINGS AND
SELL ONE OF THE COWS TO PAY THE
HOSPITAL BILLS. HIS MOTHER MOURNED
HIM FOR THE SECOND TIME.
HE LAY THERE FOR THREE MONTHS,
NOT A TEAR FROM HIM,
NOT A THREAT, NOT A PEEP.
IF HE MISSED ANYTHING, HE MISSED THE
COMICS, THE TIME HE WOULD BE
SPENDING WITH HIS FAVORITE HEROES.

AFTER HIS DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL, TOMO SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME WANDERING THROUGH THE NEARBY HILLS AND FORESTS. IN THE WILDERNESS OF NATURE HE FELT ... WELL, IF NOT HAPPY, THEN SERENE.





MARA JAGIĆ
OFTEN KEPT HIM COMPANY
DURING HIS WALKS OR MINDING
THE CATTLE. SHE WAS A FEW YEARS
OLDER THAN HIM, THIN AND FRAGILE,
NOT TOO QUICK OF MIND.
THEY BECAME INSEPARABLE
AS FISH AND WATER.

THEY ALMOST NEVER
TALKED. BOTH SOMEHOW
KNEW EACH OTHER'S
THOUGHTS OR PLANS.
TOMO WAS A SILENT
TYPE OF PERSON AND THIS
SUITED HIM FINE.

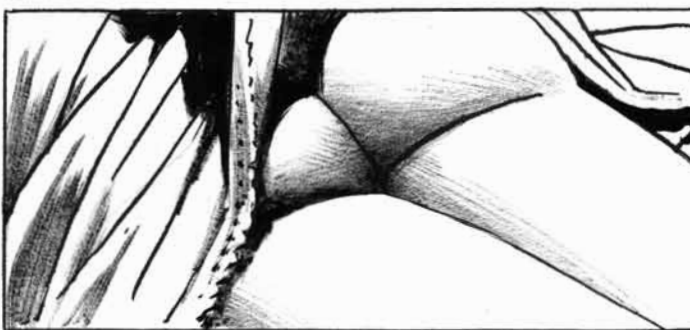
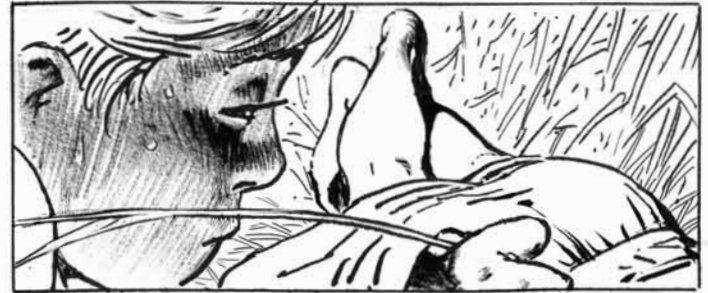


IN DUE TIME, TOMO BEGAN TO FEEL SOMETHING
MORE THAN CLOSENESS, SHARING, OR LOYALTY
TO HIS PLAYMATE --



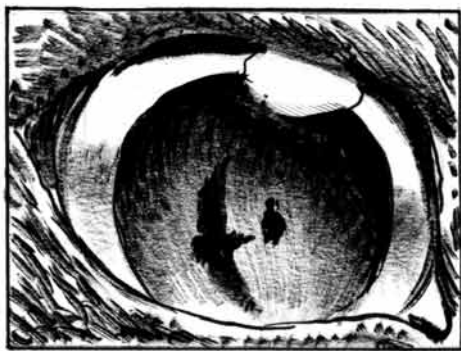
SUCH FEELINGS WERE NEW TO HIM,
THOSE DOZENS OF BUTTERFLIES IN HIS STOMACH OR
THE PAINFUL TIGHTNESS IN HIS CROTCH --
ONE DAY, HE DECIDED TO EXPLORE THE MYSTERY,
THE CAUSE OF THIS INSUFFERABLE TURMOIL AND THE
STRONG LONGING EVERY TIME HE WAS NEAR MARA







MARA KNEW THE SECRET INSTINCTIVELY. AFTER SHE HAD LIBERATED A MAN IN HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME, TOMO WAS CERTAIN, IN A FLASH, THAT HE WOULD DIE IF HE EVER SEPARATED FROM MARA.



AND YET, HE CONTINUED
TO WANDER ABOUT. WILD
NATURE, SO DEAR TO
HIM AND SO CONSTANT
IN ITS CHANGES, WAS
HIS SOLACE DURING THE
STORMY YEARS OF HIS
EARLY ADULTHOOD.





ENTRANCED BY ETERNITY,
HE COULD NOT KNOW THAT
THE DARK CLOUDS OF A
STRONGER AND MORE TERRIBLE
TEMPEST WERE GATHERING
OVER HIS PRISTINE WORLD.
NOTHING WAS EVER TO BE THE
SAME AGAIN ...