

THE HIGH ROAD
issue #0
by E.Erecius

SETTING: SYLVIA & REUBEN's room in Menaluga

- 1:
An alarm clock on a bedside table.
- 2:
The alarm clock rings, making a soft sparkling sound.
"RING-A-DING-A-Ding ding di di. . ."
- 3:
The alarm clock is silent again . . .
A slight zoom out to show a figure in a bed.
- 4:
The alarm clock rings again and a hand shoots out from under the covers to silence it.

- 5: FULL BLEED
A full zoom out to show Sylvia sitting up in bed.
SYL: "sigh. . ."

- 6:
Sylvia turns on the light; close up on her hand.
FX: a snore from Reuben
- 7:
Sylvia walks across the frame as it pans slightly to the left.
SYL: "Morning, Reubs. . ."

8:
Scene switches to a brightly lit restroom she has just walked into
-- Sylvia splashes her face in the water. Angled from behind, you
can see her back and her reflection in the mirror.
FX: splsh splsh

9:
Sylvia puts on her work shirt, face now dried.

10:
Sylvia puts her hair up, looking at herself in the mirror (now
occupying the entire panel.)
SYL: "Okay. . ."

11:
Back in the room, walking out the door to the left.
SYL: "'Til later, sleepy. . ."
REUB: "G'nh. . . hg. . ."

12:NO BORDER
Sylvia stands outside their unit with her bicycle.
CAP: "Hi, moon."
"Hi, fields."

13: NO BORDER, BLEED
A wide shot showing Sylvia riding her bike to work. The foreground
is dark against the night sky.
CAP: "Hi, road."

14:

Another wide shot as she rides up to Lola's diner and around the back -- focus should be on the building and sign.

A large flat-bed truck with an awning over the bed is visible pulling into the lot.

18: NO BORDER, BLEED

One final wide shot as she walks up to the kitchen doors around the back of the bar.

The doors are opening, spilling light onto the gravel lot and emanating bits and pieces of conversation between the staff.

?: "Hey, got a platter for booth 4 that needs to be -- "

?: "Behind -- between you -- "

?: " -- the fuck has the cleaver? I just had -- "

19:

Kitchen chatter continues as Sylvia enters the kitchen and greets a tousled-looking man in a splattered apron. It's CARLO, long-time cook at Lola's.

CARLO: "Ai, ai, so you decided to show up, *princesa Sylvia!*
Caravan from up the road just pulled in, we need--"

SYL, pointedly: "Nice to see you too, Carlo. I saw them on my way in --"

20:

from waitstaff, VEE: "Ey Syll, i'm headed out. Margie's probably gonna want help with the caravan boys. . . Have fun."

SYL: "Ha, thanks V. Get home safe."

21:

and from an older woman with a tight bun, MARGO: "Hey, Syl, there's a spill by the bathroom that needs -- ah, forget it hon, you look busy already. VEE! HEY, VEE!! BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT -- "



Speech bubbles and figures in these three panels should flow through/over the gutter and into each other in order to get across the confusing and chaotic nature of the kitchen -- basically a larger panel split into three so Sylvia can be in multiple places at once.

22:

Finally, she makes it to the dining area, the picture of peace by comparison to the frantic BOH. She's now holding a tray with water glasses and a bill, and takes a moment to breathe. A man behind the bar to her left (our right) chats with his patrons.

FX: half lidded eyes, spiral around her head, etc. -- she's DAZED
(half audible from behind the ajar kitchen door:)

VEE: "-- aw, Marg, can't you? I already -- "

MARGOT: "-- not like you have anything better to --"

23, 24, 25, 26:

She makes the rounds, taking orders, wiping tables, etc, until --

No dialogue in these panels nor any immediate connection between them motion-wise; should function as a montage of sorts; these panels lay along the bottom of the page setting the scene for --

27: FULL PAGE (but no bleed)

A woman walks in the door; she's young enough but has clearly seen a lot of sun in her days. Wears a trucker hat pulled down over her mop of blonde hair and a sturdy-looking canvas jacket -- something about the way she holds herself makes you feel she doesn't really want you looking at her. Of course, it's JULIE.

Meanwhile, Sylvia is visible in silhouette at the very front of the panel, finishing up a table's order.

SYL: "-- we'll have those right out. Thank you guys! . . ."

28:

Sylvia straightens up from taking orders, turns around and spots Julie entering the building.

29:

A slight zoom to Julie as she glances up towards Sylvia --

30:

-- who makes eye contact, smiling slightly. It's the polite thing to do, of course, but still, --

CUSTOMER (out of panel): "Excuse me, miss?"

- 31: -- Julie drifts behind a small group of people; a customer approaches Sylvia. The moment's over.
CUSTOMER: "Excuse me, miss. . ."
- 32: CUSTOMER: ". . .Hi, sorry, do y'all have a toilet?"
SYLVIA: "Oh, it's around the back."
-
- 33: As the customer drifts off, Sylvia glances back to where she last saw Julie. She is nowhere to be seen. The group in frame chatters, just out of earshot, but we catch some scattered phrases --
"cowshit," "AGBU," "sure, I remember how . . ."
". . . back then, but," --
- 34: Sylvia heads back for the kitchen as the conversation continues.
CAP: "Well. . ."
-
- 35: FULL BLEED
An aerial shot of the diner by the roadside -- in frame, we can see the caravan from earlier pulling onto the High Road, as well as a few grazing oxen, fields, etc..
CAP: ". . . back to it."

36:

A time skip of several hours from the previous panel -- Sylvia is sitting on the stoop out back Lola's on a smoke break. Maybe the sun is just beginning to rise.

37: VERTICAL HALF

A close up on Syl licking a rolling paper filled with what looks to be a mixture of crushed seeds.

38: VERTICAL HALF

She finishes rolling the cigarette and looks up to the right of the panel suddenly, having noticed --

39:

-- Julie, who is sitting on the tailgate of a stocky-looking truck. She looks back at Sylvia with wide eyes.

40: FULL BLEED

A wide shot showing Sylvia on the step at the very far left and Julie on the tailgate on the very far right. Sun rising over the mountains perhaps visible between them?

SYL: ". . . a smoke?"

JUL, haltingly: "Hm? Oh, uh-- no, thanks."

41:

A shot over Sylvia's shoulder; she lights a match.

SYL: "Suit yerself."

42:

Sylvia cups the match and raises it to her mouth.

43:

She looks up, letting out a breath of smoke which curls up around and above the panel, acting as a speech bubble.

SYL: "So. . ."

44:

SYL: ". . . you headed up north?"

JUL: "Yeah. How'd you tell?"

45:

SYL: "Most folks are, this time a' year."

JUL: "Mm."

46:

A beat of silence while Sylvia chews on her cig.

47:

SYL, exhaling: "You got a place to stay?"

JUL: "Yeah."

"Well, sorta."

"Between the truck, and the bathhouses, I. . ."

". . . & I travel by night, so . . . mm. I make it work."

48:

SYL, studying her closely: "Mm. I see. Well --"

49: NO BORDER

A close up on Sylvia's hands as she taps ash out on the steps.

SYL: "-- we don't have a spare room, but,"

"if you want a shower that locks. . ."

50:

JUL: "You're -- oh no, that's alright!"
"Thanks."

51:

Another silence, only punctuated by the smoke between them.

52:

JUL: "Well, um."
". . . no, that might be nice. I mean, if you're sure you
don't mind --

53:

SYL, maybe a little excited: "Yeah? Well, I'm almost out of here
for the night! Lemme just. . . "

54:

Zoom out to a slight aerial view of the both of them in the lot.
SYL: ". . . let Margs know I'm headed out, and then. . ."

55: NO BORDER

Full aerial view now. Multiples of Julie's truck appear on the
panel as they pull out of the lot, each paired with its respective
speech bubbles.

JUL: "All set, . . .?"

SYL: "Pretty much. Oh -- it's Sylvia. Or just Syl."

JUL: "Julie. Thank you so much for this . . ."

56:

We are left with the diner and the silence, the whole area seemingly empty, for now, until --

57:

LOLA, the mascot on top of the diner, hops down off the roof. . .

58:

. . . & follows the pair as they leave, following the road away and out of frame.

In white contrast lettering on the lower right:

"'TIL NEXT TIME. . ."