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**ZÄHLER**

# LONG DISTANCE



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WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY THOM ZAHLER  
EDITED BY DAVID HEDGECOCK



Last issue, Carter and Lee met while stranded in an airport during a snowstorm. There was chemistry between them, as well as 300 miles. You see, Carter lives in Columbus and Lee lives in Chicago.

Now Carter has flown out to meet Lee for their first date.

CHICAGO



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"So I bought a plane ticket and flew out to meet this girl I'd only met **once** before."

"Seemed like a good idea."



Hey.

Hey.

I have **really** been looking forward to seeing you.

I kinda got that.

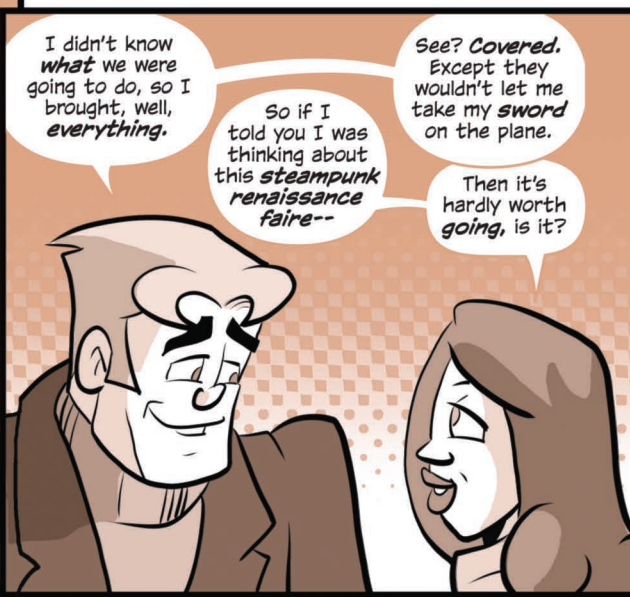
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by thom zahler



Hang on. There's my suitcase!

Holy moley! Did you come out for the weekend or to stay?



I didn't know *what* we were going to do, so I brought, well, *everything*.

So if I told you I was thinking about this *steampunk renaissance faire*--

See? *Covered*. Except they wouldn't let me take my *sword* on the plane.

Then it's hardly worth going, is it?

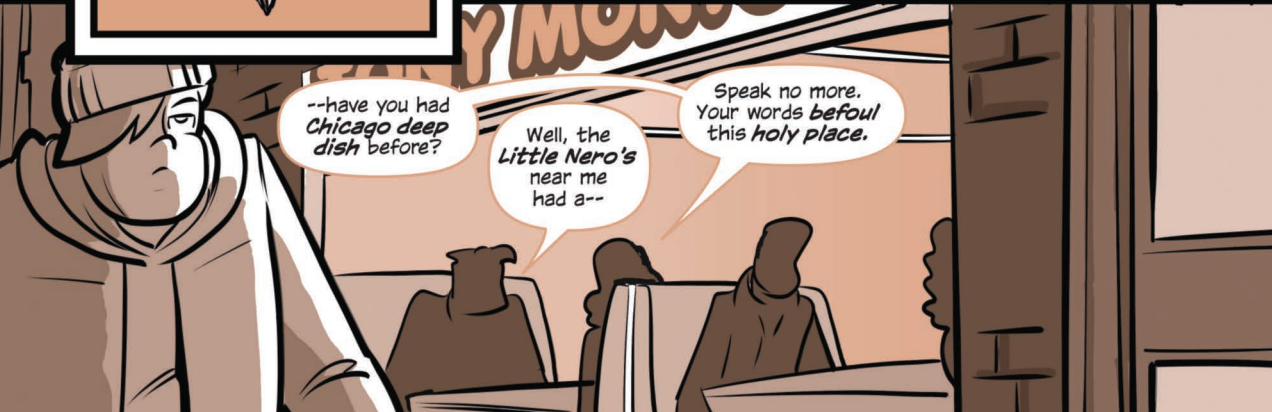


Hungry?

Starving.

Anywhere around here for pizza?

Maybe a couple of places.



--have you had *Chicago deep dish* before?

Well, the *Little Nero's* near me had a--

Speak no more. Your words *befoul* this *holy place*.





So tomorrow, I was thinking we could go see the *Field Museum*. It's a little *Chicago Tourist 101*, but deservedly so.

Then we can go get dinner in the Loop. *Lots* of good places there.



That all sounds good to me. I've really only seen the Chicago airports, so it'll be nice to see the *actual city*.



I'm just going to leave this right here. There's no rush, though.

Thank you.



Here, let me--

*Hey!* Put that wallet *away*, mister. *You* flew out here. Dinner is on *me*.



Or are you one of those men who *can't* let a woman pick up a check?



Not at all. But if I knew you were buying, I would have gotten *another beer*.

Don't let *me* stop you. I like my men *liquored up*.

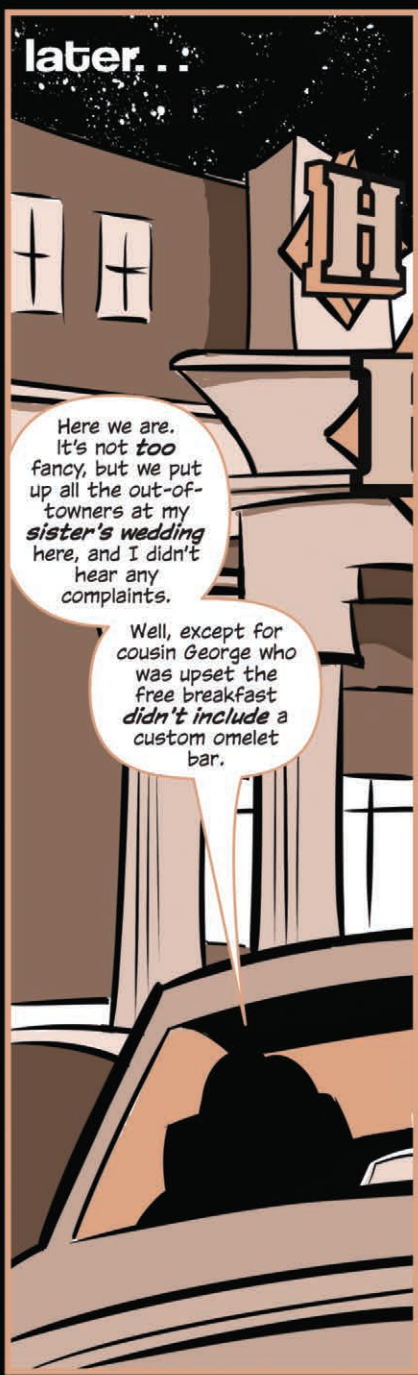
You're *intoxicating enough* on your own, Lee.

Flatterer.



So, *what* do you want to do next? I can take you to your *hotel*... or if you want there's a *great coffee place*--

I've *always* got time for coffee.



later ..

Here we are. It's not *too* fancy, but we put up all the out-of-towners at my *sister's wedding* here, and I didn't hear any complaints.

Well, except for cousin George who was upset the free breakfast *didn't include* a custom omelet bar.



No omelet *bar*? What are we, *savages*?

So, hey--



Lee, wait.

I *don't* know what you were thinking about tonight, but--



--I *don't* want you to come in.