

TOM JUDGE:

“The Fall”

By

Alberto Veloso

PAGE ONE (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-up Shot of a pack of cigarettes on a table. They’re next to an ashtray stuffed with cigarette butts.

1) TOM (O.P.): Smoking.

PANEL TWO:

Close-up Shot of a few empty bottles of booze on the same table.

2) TOM (O.P.): Drinking.

PANEL THREE:

Close-up Shot of a handful of dirty magazines next to the empty bottles.

3) TOM (O.P.): Pornography.

PANEL FOUR:

Wide Shot of the parish rectory which contains these items. Hung-over, and bent over the table with the naughty items is Father Jason Simms, an older, groggy priest with a nihilistic temperament. Standing over him is young Father Tom Judge, fresh from the seminary, clean cut and rosy-eyed.

4) TOM: These are not the actions of a priest.

5) SIMMS: You know, just cause your last name’s Judge doesn’t give you the right to judge me.

PAGE TWO (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Close-Up Shot of Tom, unfazed by Simms's remarks.

1) TOM: Only God can judge you, Father Simms, but I assure you that he will not look favorably upon someone using his Church as a drunken watering hole.

PANEL TWO:

Father Simms tries to sit up straight in his chair.

2) SIMMS: Aw, I was like you once. So sure of everything. But you know what Socrates said, right? "The only thing I know for sure is that I know nothing." And he was the smartest man in Athens!

PANEL THREE:

Wide Shot of the two priests.

3) TOM: That's interesting, Father Simms, but I didn't come here to debate you. I came to remind you that today is the 15th, the day of alms.

4) SIMMS: What? Now?

5) TOM: Now's as good a time as any.

PANEL FOUR:

Simms gestures for Tom to sit down with him.

6) SIMMS: I haven't had my morning pick-me-up. Sit down, Judge. Have a drink with me.

7) TOM: No, thank you. I don't drink.

8) SIMMS: Whatada you mean? Ever?

PANEL FIVE:

Close-up Shot of Tom, serious.

9) TOM: I never have. And I don't intend to start.

PANEL SIX:

Simms stands and grabs his hat off the table.

10) SIMMS: You're a strange one, Judge. I guess we'd better get this over with.

PAGE THREE (6 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Tom and Simms are walking through the impoverished streets of Calcutta, giving food to the homeless beggars they encounter. The food is in a big cloth bag.

- 1) SIMMS: You know, I never asked you. Who'd you piss off to get this post, anyway?
- 2) TOM: No one. I asked to be assigned here.
- 3) SIMMS: Seriously? Calcutta is the asshole of the world and you chose to be there?

PANEL TWO:

Two Shot of the priests. Tom quotes the Bible with confidence and poise, while Simms looks at him like he's a nuisance.

- 4) TOM (Quoting the Bible): "He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses." Proverbs 28:27.
- 5) SIMMS: You are insufferable, Judge. Insufferable.

PANEL THREE:

Suddenly, a young, ragtag boy comes running toward the priests.

- 6) BOY: Help, Father! Help! My sister. She's sick.

PANEL FOUR:

Tom kneels down and puts his hand on the boy's shoulder.

- 7) SIMMS: I've seen this trick before. Sick sister needs an extra ration of food. Is that it?
- 8) BOY: No, Father. There is something wrong with her. She started talking some strange language. And her voice. It wasn't hers.
- 9) SIMMS: Well, you get points for creativity, kid.

PANEL FIVE:

The boy and Tom head back in the direction from which the boy came, leaving the bag of food on the ground. Simms looks at Tom flabbergasted.

- 10) TOM: Take us to her. We'll do what we can.
- 11) SIMMS: You can't be serious!

PANEL SIX:

Simms reluctantly follows, while mumbling to himself.

12) SIMMS: I need a drink.

PAGE FOUR (4 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

The boy and the priests go into a particularly bad part of town. Everywhere there is hunger, homelessness, and misery.

- 1) SIMMS: Where are you taking us, kid?
- 2) BOY: It's up the stairs.

PANEL TWO:

The boy rushes up a stairway of a nearby building, but Simms grabs Tom by the arm before he can follow.

- 3) SIMMS: It's a trap. At best, we get kidnapped and held for ransom. At worst, well, I'd rather not think about it.
- 4) TOM: And what if there is a sick girl up those steps?

PANEL THREE:

Close-up Shot of Simms, frustrated by Tom's naivety.

- 5) SIMMS: There's a fine line between idealism and stupidity, Judge, and you're crossing it.

PANEL FOUR:

Tom walks up the stairway.

- 6) TOM (Quoting the Bible): Psalm 82:3-4. "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."
- 7) SIMMS (Frustrated): Grrr.

PANEL FIVE:

The boy is waiting outside the door, while Tom and Simms (reluctantly) approach.

- 8) BOY: She's in here!

PANEL SIX:

Medium Shot from inside the apartment showcasing the trio standing in the doorway, surprised looks on each of their faces.

[NO DIALOGUE]

PAGE FIVE (5 PANELS):**PANEL ONE:**

Wide Shot inside the room. They find what they least expected. Anneli, 8-years-old and adorable, sitting on the floor and drawing in a notebook. Perfectly normal and happy.

1) ANNELI: Hello, big brother.

2) ANNELI: Where did you go?

PANEL TWO:

Wide Shot as they enter. Tom and the boy are confused by the girl's apparent healthiness, but Simms is more annoyed than anything else.

3) BOY: I don't understand. You're not sick?

4) ANNELI: You're so silly, brother. Of course I'm not sick. I was just playing.

5) BOY: But the noises...

PANEL THREE:

Close-up Shot of Tom, suspicious.

6) SIMMS (O.P.): Mystery solved. We can we go back now?

PANEL FOUR:

Tom kneels down next to the girl.

7) TOM: What are you drawing, little sister?

PANEL FIVE:

The girl shows him her notebook. In it is a childish drawing of a cat.

8) ANNELI: It's a kitty cat.

PAGE SIX (6 PANELS):**PANEL ONE:****Wide Shot of the room.**

- 1) SIMMS: That's a bloody awful drawing.
- 2) TOM: Mind your manners, Father Simms.
- 3) ANNELI: I tried my best!

PANEL TWO:**Tom continues to question the girl.**

- 4) TOM: Where are your parents?
- 5) ANNELI: They went to look for my brother.
- 6) BOY: I'm sorry. I didn't know.

PANEL THREE:**Simms puts his hand on Tom's shoulder.**

- 7) SIMMS: Come on, Judge. Let's get back to whatever food the masses haven't stolen yet.

PANEL FOUR:**The priests are on their way to the door, but Tom notices a puddle of dark liquid coming out of the closet.**

[NO DIALOGUE]

PANEL FIVE:**Tom walks over to the closet, while Anneli warns him sweetly.**

- 8) ANNELI: I wouldn't open that if I were you.

PANEL SIX:**Close-up Shot of Tom's hand as it reaches for the closet door handle.**

[NO DIALOGUE]

PAGE SEVEN (5 PANELS):

PANEL ONE:

Tom opens the door and two dead bodies fall out, Anneli's mother and father.

1) TOM: Oh my!

PANEL TWO:

The bodies hit the ground. It's clear that their throats were cut and drained of blood.

2) TOM: What happened here?

PANEL THREE:

A set of windowpanes suddenly slams shut.

3) SFX: Wham!

PANEL FOUR:

And then another.

4) SFX: Slam!

PANEL FIVE:

Then the front door is closed by a mysterious wind.

5) SFX: Bam!

PAGE EIGHT (1 PANEL):

SPLASH:

Wide Shot of Anneli levitating in the middle of the room while the others struggle against the gust of wind whipping around the room. Anneli's voice and demeanor become demonic as she speaks.

1) ANNELI: I told you not to open it.

TO BE CONTINUED...

TOM JUDGE:

“The Fall”

A Proposal for a 22-Page One-Shot
Written by Alberto Veloso

What was he like before? There are plenty of stories about the hard-drinking, foul-mouthed Tom Judge we all know and love. But what was he like before the booze? Before the cynicism? Before the fall from grace?

We open in a rectory covered in booze, cigarettes, and pornography. “These are not the actions of a priest,” says father Thomas Judge, an idealistic, young clergyman fresh out of the seminary. Tom is talking to his fellow parish priest, Father Jason Simms, who’s drunk, as usual. Tom reminds him that they are supposed to give alms to the poor today, but Simms says there’ll be plenty of time for that later. “Sit down,” Simms says, “Have a drink.” “No thank you,” Tom replies. “I don’t drink.”

Tom finally convinces Simms to walk with him through the streets of Calcutta (their parish assignment) giving food to the poor. As they are distributing the food, a young boy comes running up to Tom. “Father, please, come quick! There’s something wrong with my sister!” Simms thinks it’s a trick to steal their food, but Tom refuses to be so distrustful. He goes with the boy, and Father Simms reluctantly follows.

The trio arrives in the poorest slum in Calcutta. The boy takes the priests to his house, where they find young Anneli, the boy’s sister, sitting calmly in the bedroom, coloring in her book. “Silly brother,” Anneli explains, “It was just a game.” Father Simms is content with knowing that he was partially right, but Tom has a suspicious feeling.

As they make their way out to the door, Tom notices a pool of blood coming out of the closet. He moves toward it. Anneli warns sweetly, “I wouldn’t do that if I were you.” Tom opens the closet, and the bodies of Anneli’s murdered parents fall to the floor. Suddenly, the windows close, the door slams shut, a strong gust of wind whips around the room while Anneli’s voice turns deep and demonic. “I told you not to do that.”

Anneli’s demon-possessed body begins to levitate. Tom quickly pulls out his cross and starts the Exorcism incantation, but the demon vomits on his cross. “Your toys mean nothing to me, Thomas Judge.”

The demon taunts Tom, calling his blind faith childish, the spiritual equivalent of sticking your head into very thick sand. “There is no right or wrong, no black or white. There is only gray.” And the demon wants to prove it to him.

Using its powers, the demon telekinetically forces Father Simms and the boy against the wall, but leaves Tom alone. “You pray. I’ll torture. Let’s see who finishes first,” the demon says. Tom continues his exorcism incantation while the demon starts torturing the boy, at one point biting off a chunk of his ear.

It becomes more than he can bear. Tom grabs his cross and brings it violently down on the possessed girl’s chest, stabbing her again and again and again, blood splashing all over his face, until a newly released Father Simms stops him. “It’s over, Judge. It’s all over.”

We end with the traumatized priests returning to their parish. Their robes drenched in blood. The cross still in Tom’s hand. Father Simms is on his way to his room when Tom stops him. “Father Simms.” Simms looks back at Tom. “Is it too late to take you up on that drink?”