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Jaap's Silence

Monique van Dongen

Jaap was a hard worker who preferred to bury himself behind the newspaper whenever he was at home. He criticised the world - and his family - from behind the pages. The rest of the time he remained silent. No one really knew why. Until his granddaughter pushed the paper aside and asked to interview him, about the war. When Jaap finally starts to tell his story, the words keep coming. About the Second World War, Camp Amersfoort, the Arbeidseinsatz at the Russian front, the gruelling journey back home, and all the hardship that had been buried deep down for all these long, silent years.

Jaap's Silence is inspired by Monique's father in law. With her niece's school project as starting point, she embarked on her own research. By delving into old newspapers, letters and testimonies she revealed what might have been her father in law's life-story.

Monique van Dongen (1965) *studied visual communication at the 's-Hertogenbosch School of Art as well as Film and Television sciences at Utrecht University. She went on to build a career in communications. But her job as communications consultant and her previous studies really came together when she started Graphic Storytelling and Narrative studies at the Venster Academy in Utrecht. To be gripped by an event, do research, construct a story, to write and draw: this is what she wants to do!*



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Original title : Het zwijgen van Jaap (Oogachtend, 2026. Softcover, 21x25. 128pp.)

8
Zeist, March 1995

9
Hello Grandpa!

Hi Dad.

10
Well, it's been a lifetime.

I'm here now, aren't I, Dad?

Sure, but your brother comes every week.

11
Do you want coffee?
Tea for you, Else?

12
Mum?
How come grandad never talks?
Why is that?

I don't know, Else.
He was the same way when we were little. He was usually hidden behind his newspaper.

13
1952
And from behind his paper he would comment on the news.

14
We didn't see much of him, he worked a lot.

16
Except on Sundays.

17
On Sundays, he would be home all day.

Sleep tight!

18
1966
PROTEST IN THE CAPITAL

NO PARDON FOR NAZI-CRIMINAL

When ‘The Breda three’ or other war criminals were in the news Daddy wouldn’t be able to sleep. He’d suddenly get very angry. Especially at your uncle Alex.

Hey, can you turn that so-called music down!?

He liked to play The Beatles in his room, sometimes quite loudly.

19
I asked IF YOU COULD TURN THAT MUSIC DOWN!!!

20
Fortunately, he had his scrapbooks. He’d document anything about the war.
It would keep him busy for hours.

Zeist, maart 1995








Hallo Pa.
Hoi Opa!

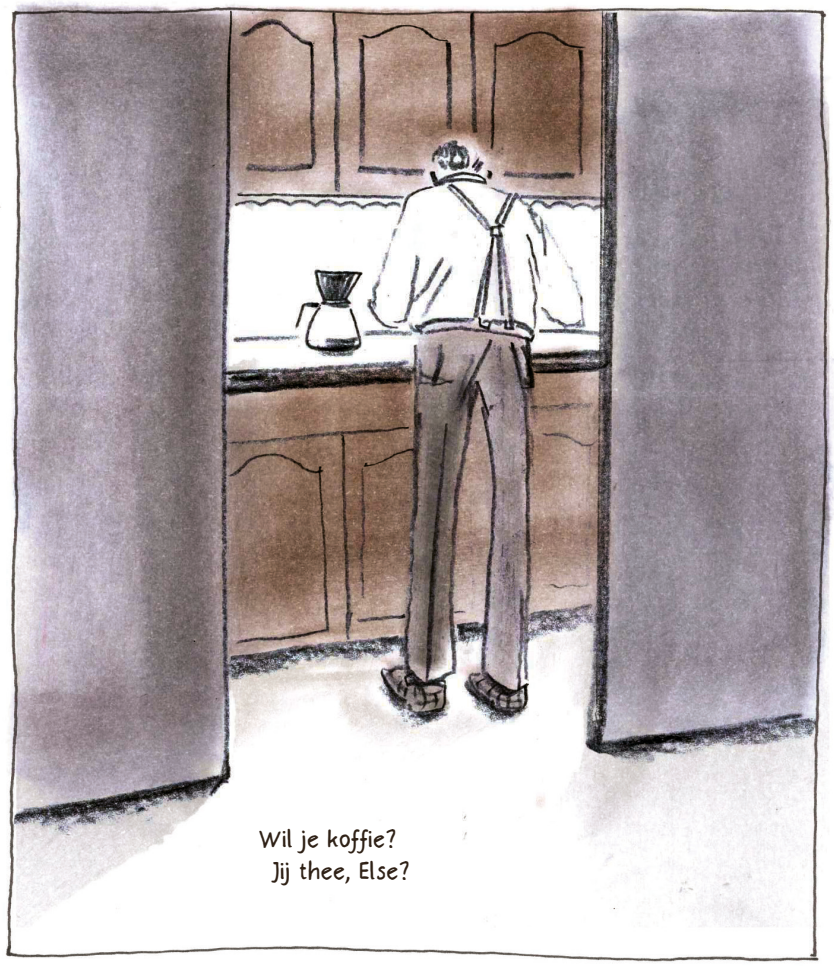


Nou, dat is een eeuwigheid geleden.



Ik ben er nu toch, Pa?

Tuurlijk, maar je broer komt elke week langs.



Wil je koffie?
Jij thee, Else?



Mama?
Waarom is opa toch
altijd zo stil?

Hoe komt dat?



Ik weet het niet, Else.
Zo was hij ook al toen wij klein
waren. Hij zat vaak helemaal
verborgen achter zijn krant.

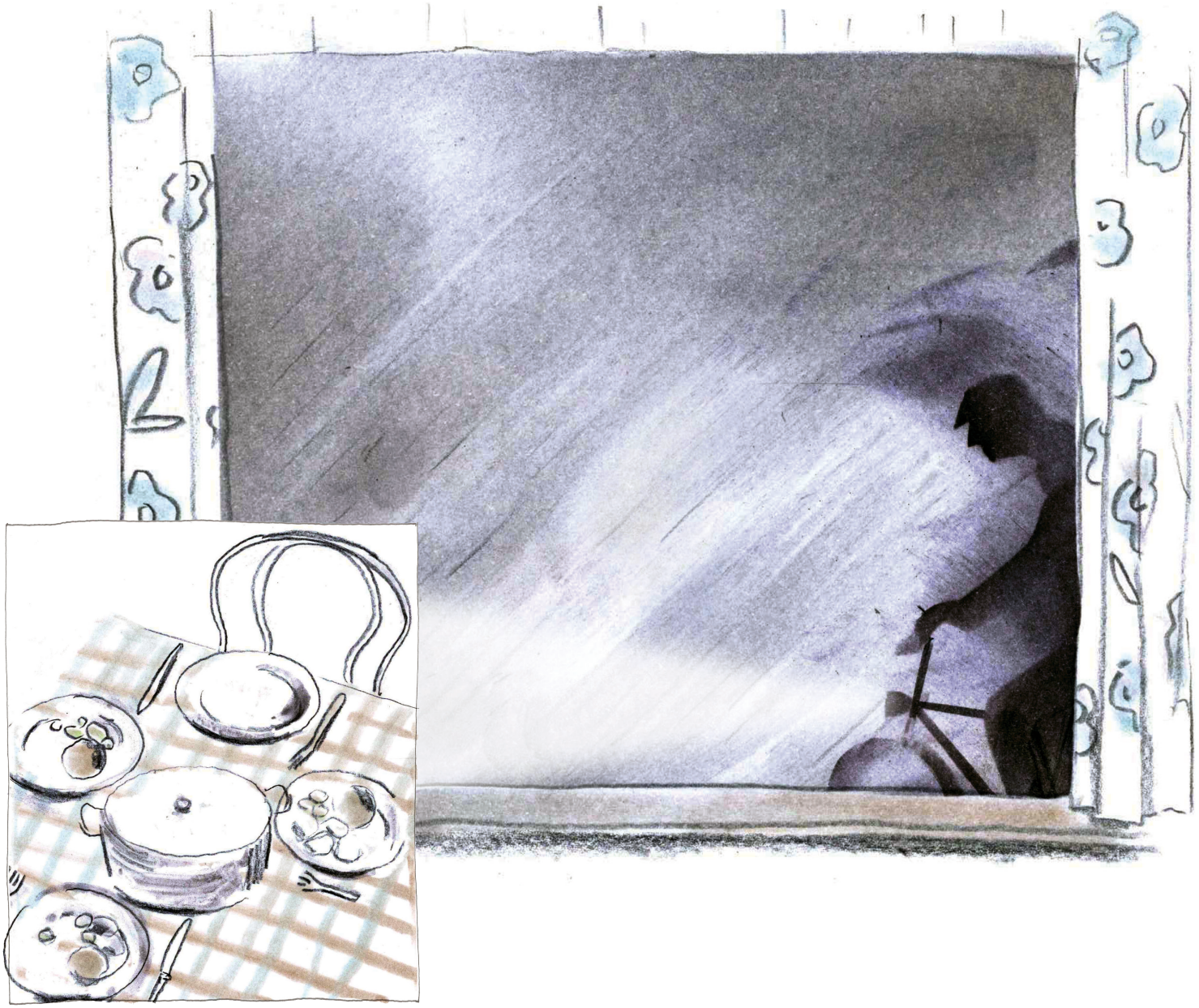
1952



En vanachter die krant gaf hij dan commentaar op het nieuws.

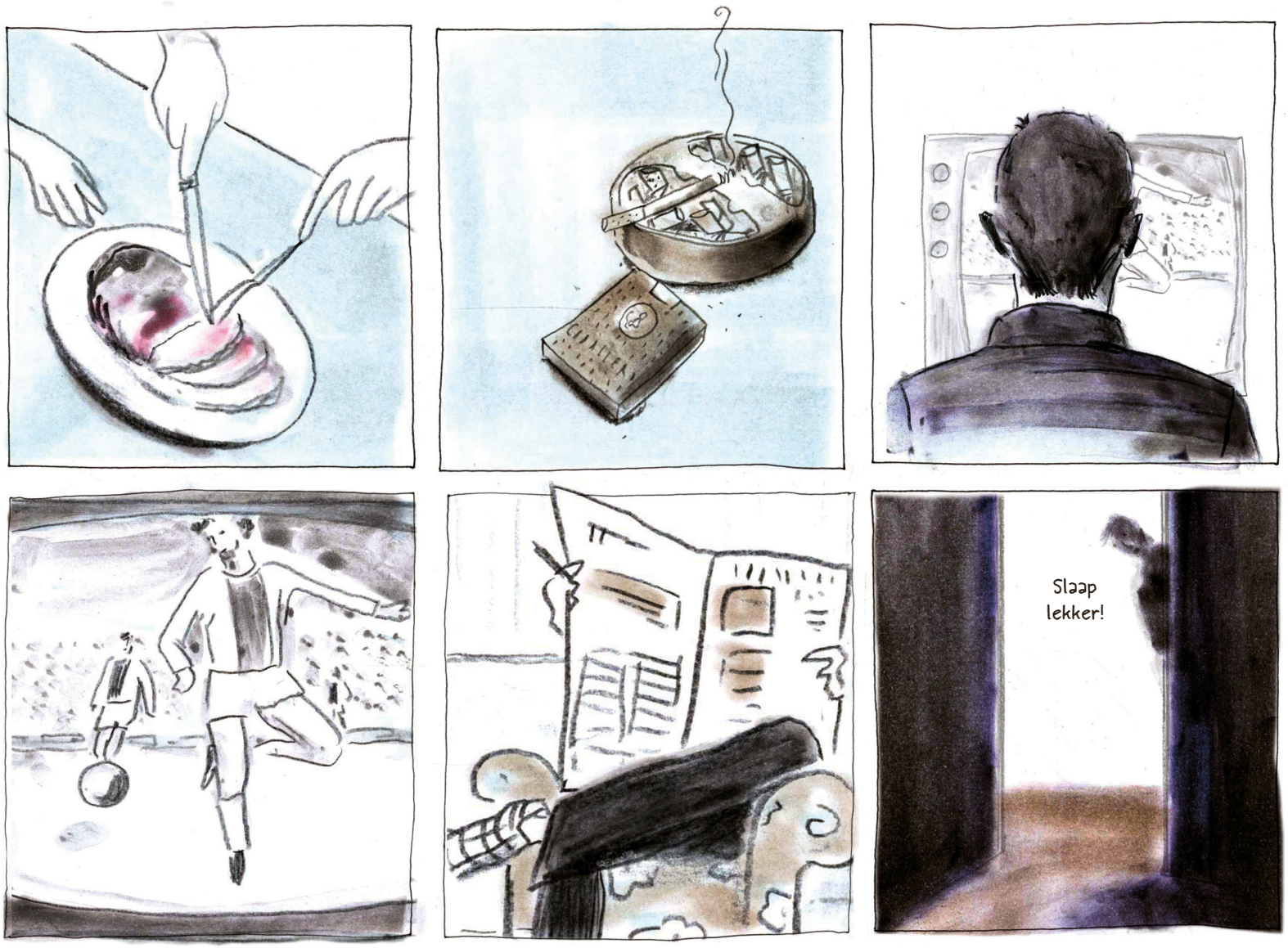


We zagen hem niet zo veel. Hij werkte hard.



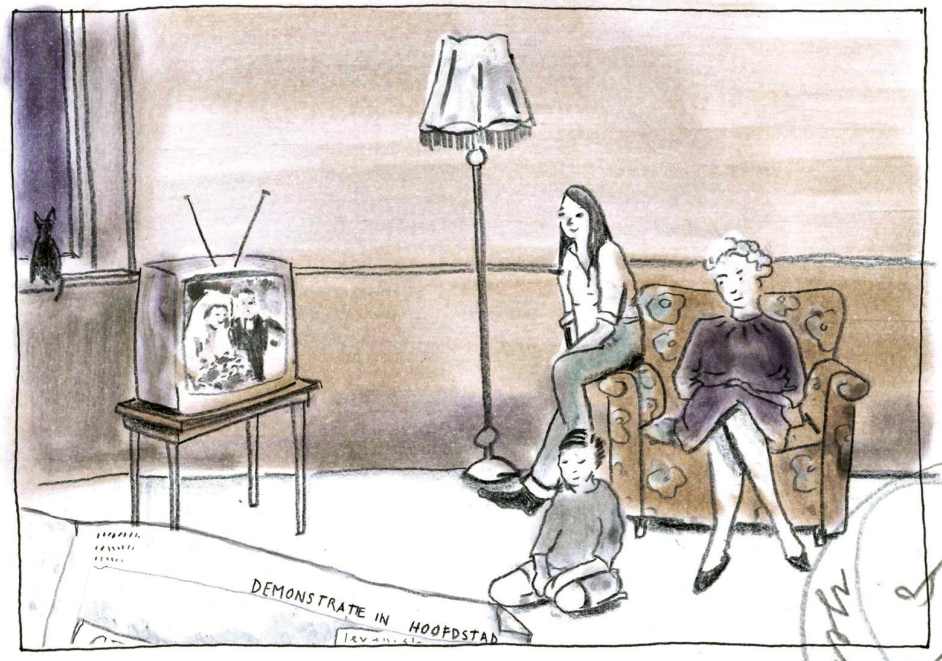


Behalve op zondag.



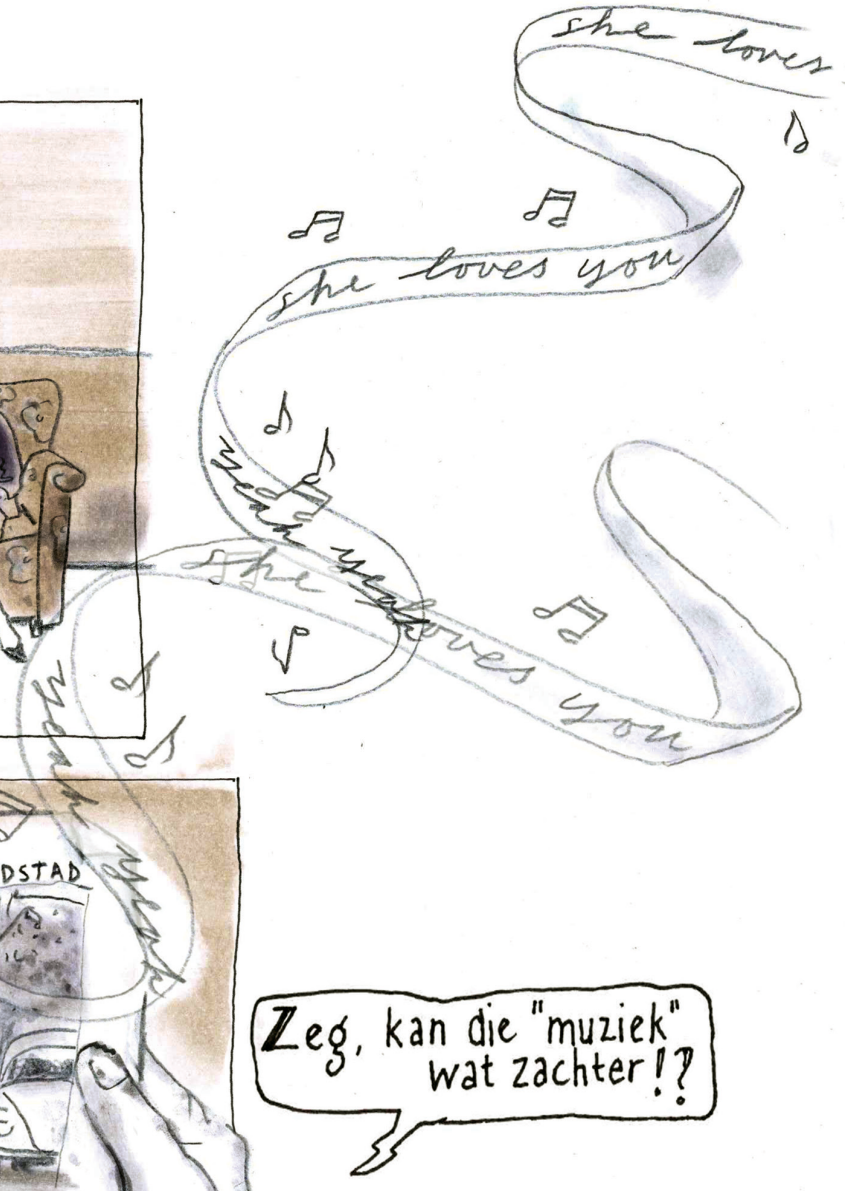
Op zondag was hij de hele dag thuis.

1966



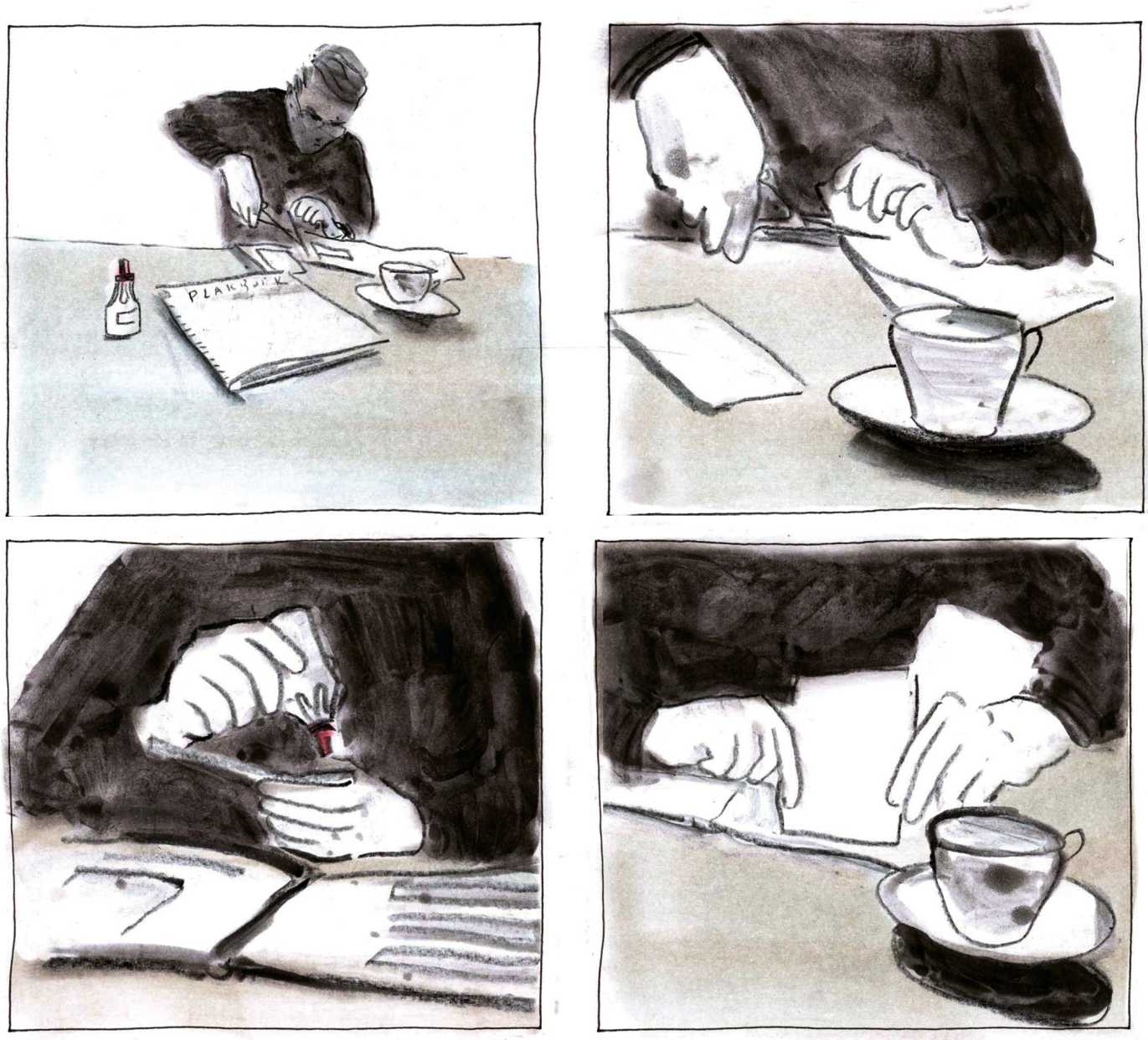


Als 'de Drie van Breda' of andere oorlogsmisdagigers weer eens in het nieuws waren, sliep Papa slecht. Hij kon dan ineens razend worden. Vooral op je oom Alex.



Die draaide graag muziek van The Beatles op zijn kamer, soms best hard...


yeah yeah yeah She loves you
GEENGR
NAZI -
GEEN GR
NAZI
She loves you, yeah
Gratie
yeah yeah
yeah
Ik vroeg
of die MUZIEK
WAT ZACHTER
KON !!!
She loves you



Gelukkig had hij zijn plakboeken. Alles over de oorlog knipte hij uit en plakte hij in.
Uren kon hij daarmee bezig zijn.


Johann Kotälla, „de knuppelaar"
het Amsterdamse Bijzonder Ge
Peter Berg, de gewezen kampc
beruchte „Kerstmannetje"
Hugo Hermann Wo
kreeg levenslang.
e beulen Berg en Kotä
ter dood veroordeeld
erstmannetje" krijgt
levenslang
die in het A
de toon aan
gewelddadig optreed. Hij staa


otälla, de beul van

