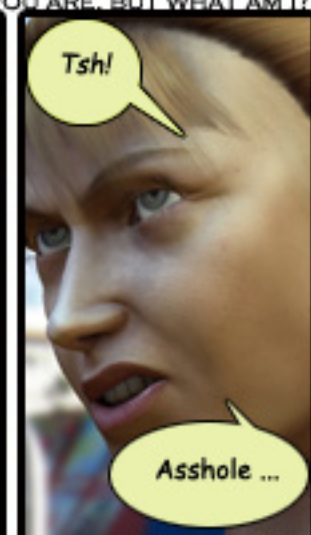
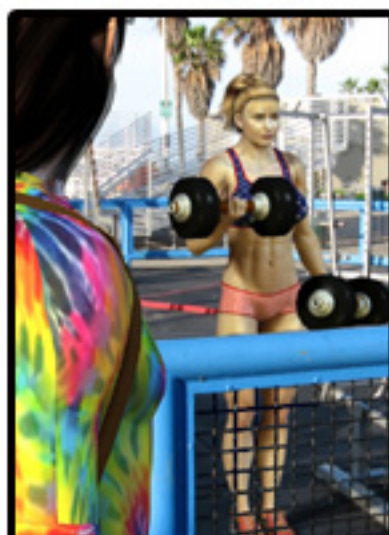




I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT WHAT AM I?



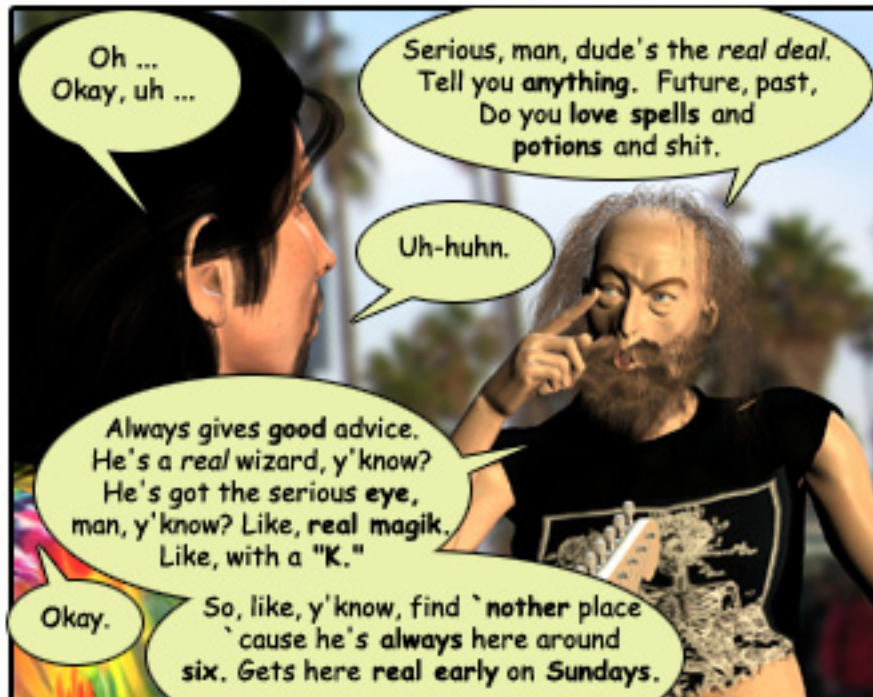
Tsh!

Asshole ...

Yeah,
Right.

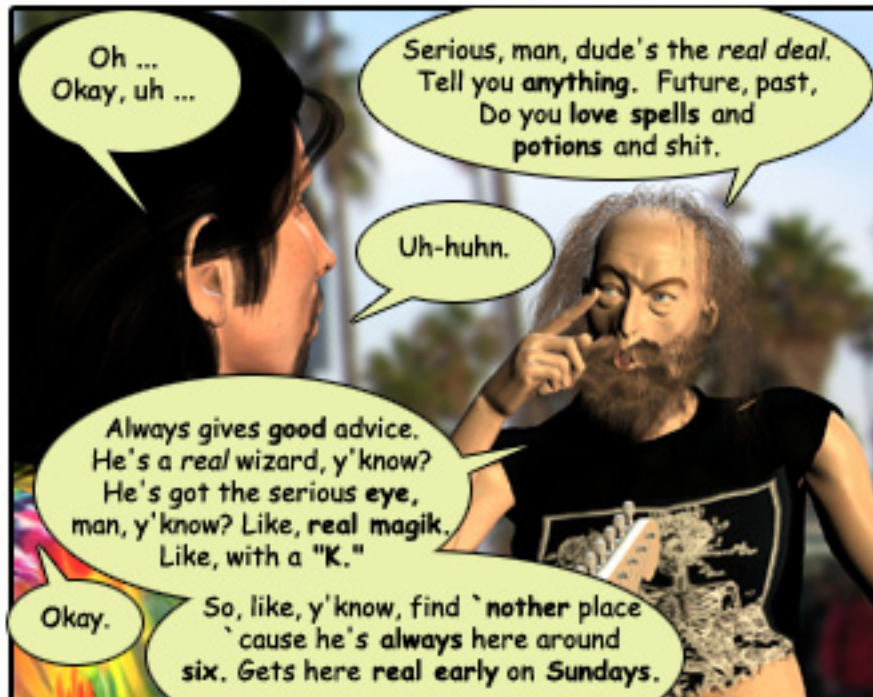


Right.
Asshole.



LIVING ON REDS, VITAMIN C, AND COCAINE

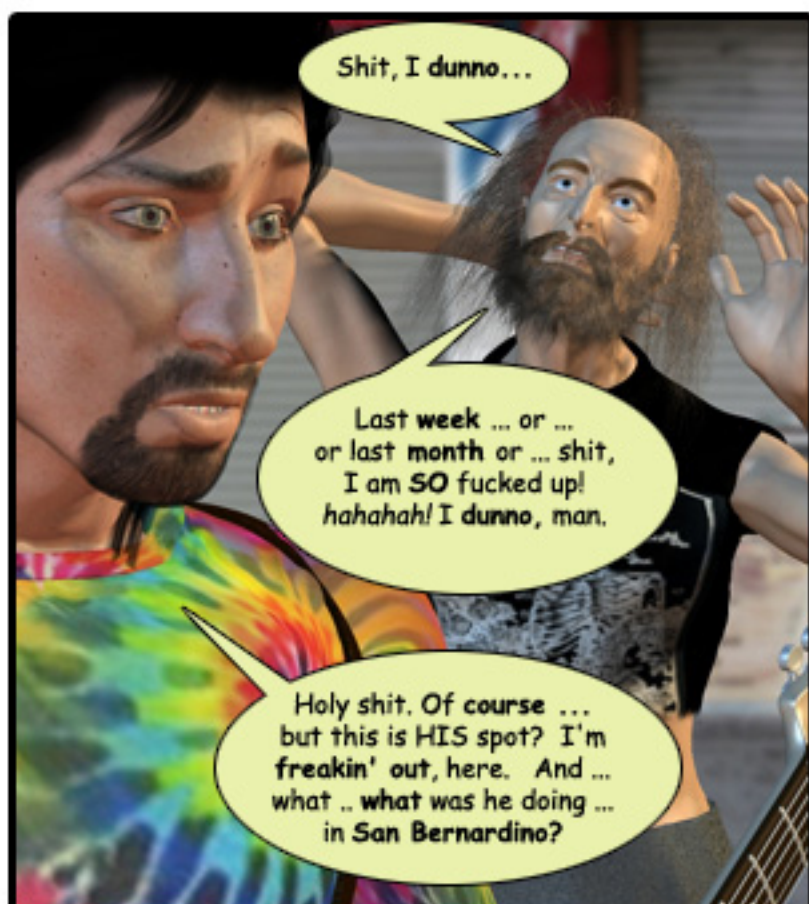




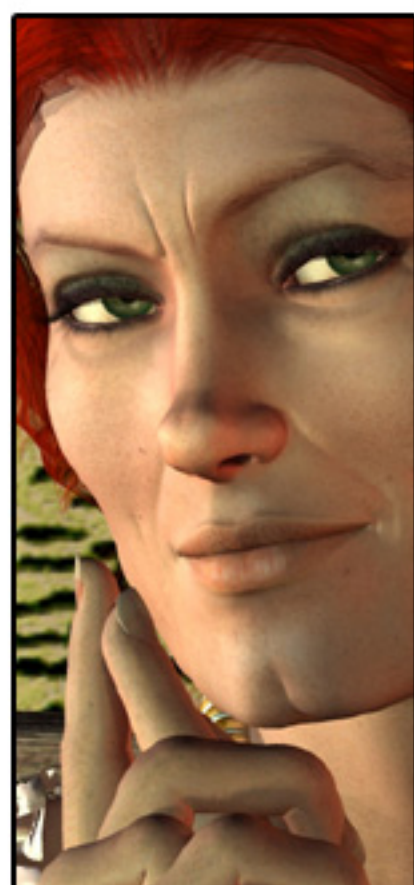
LIVING ON REDS, VITAMIN C, AND COCAINE







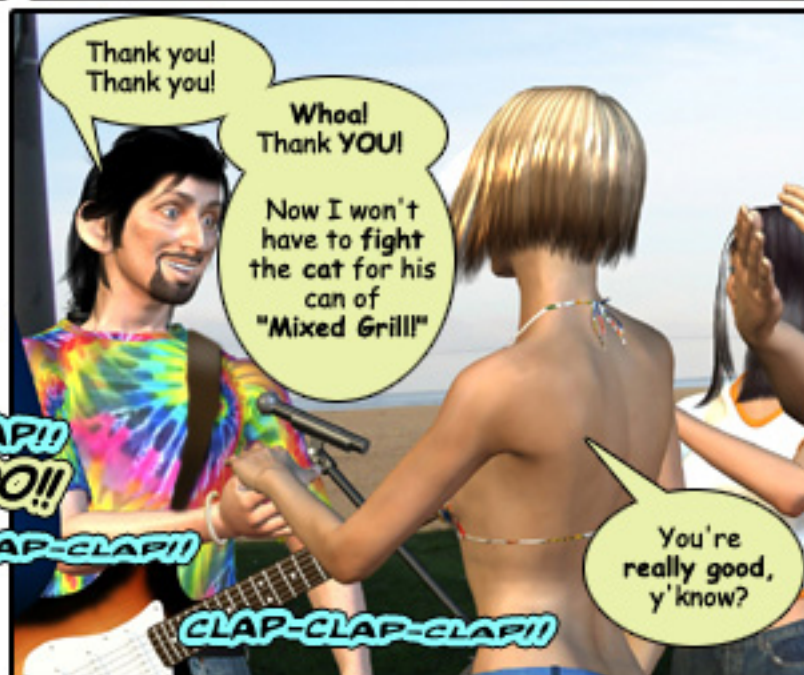


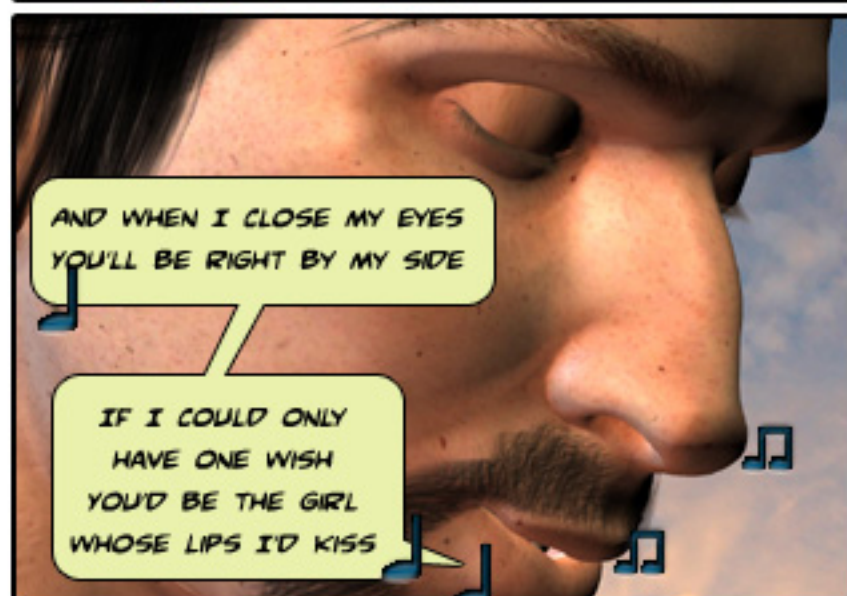




A MOTHER'S LIFE, YOU SEE, IS ONE LONG SUCCESSION OF DRAMAS







SO EVERY NIGHT I'LL PRAY I'LL HAVE YOU HERE ONE DAY
I'LL COUNT THE STARS TONIGHT AND HOPE WITH ALL MY MIGHT

THAT WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES
YOU'LL BE RIGHT BY MY SIDE

IF I COULD HAVE JUST ONE REQUEST
STAY WITH ME GIRL I CONFESS

ALL MY ONLY DREAMS

Thank you!

Thanks!

Thank you very much!

Hey, Mentl.

Hey, Zero.

YOUR FRIEND IS THE MAN WHO KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOU, AND STILL LIKES YOU.

FIRM EMBRACE!!

Ha-ha!
Man, what are you
doin' in L.A.?

Eh -
I ran away
from home.



A road house, near the Kivalian border.



Well, there she is!
Come on in out of the
rain, darlin'.

Show what you've
brought us tonight.



Quails
and pheasants
and - oh, look at
the size of these
pigeons! Good
hunting!

So, I have a stew ready,
or would you like me to cook
one of these for you?

B-b-b-brandly.

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT



That's all?
You need to eat
something, sweet `en,
or you'll --

J-j-just
b-b-b-brandly.



Good enough.
Change your mind,
you let me know,
all right?

KRAKAKOOON!!!

God's body!
What a filthy night!

Innkeeper, something
warm against the wet and
the chill, if it please you!

Right away.
I have a nice venison stew,
or if you care to wait, we're roasting
some fresh game birds?

The stew sounds
good, *sniff!* -
Mm, smells better!

And word on the road
is you have excellent
ale - yes?

Well, judge for yourself,
young master. Here's to
get you started.

Ahhh....
perfect.

Be just
a bit, sir.

Do you mind if I join you?

J-j-j-join me?
Wh-wh--

Don't mind if I do.
No need to be nervous, I'm pretty harmless!
Haha! I'm Kalon. I'm from Fuln.
I sell wool.

Traveled the length and breadth
of Kivalia, even up into the Bull Territory
and the Bear territory in
Erogenia

Matter of fact,
Queen Uroc's a good friend
of my family. Wears our cloth,
keeps her nice and warm in
the cold winters you folk have
up here.

C-c-cold ...

Right.
Um, are you Kivalian? Or Erogenian?
Can't pick out the accent. Doesn't matter to me,
of course - I mean, I'm not like some people,
I get along with everybody.

N-n-not ...

Not what?
Sorry, I can't even
really see your face
under there.





What ...
what is she?

Is that
why she's so
crazed?

She's Urr-naitt -
a half-urtt.

No. I know
half-urtts that
are fine -
good hunters,
the best.

She just
started coming by a
few weeks ago. Brings
good game from the forest,
trades it for drink. It was
plain to me she'd escaped
from the Urtts, and that
something happened to
her there.



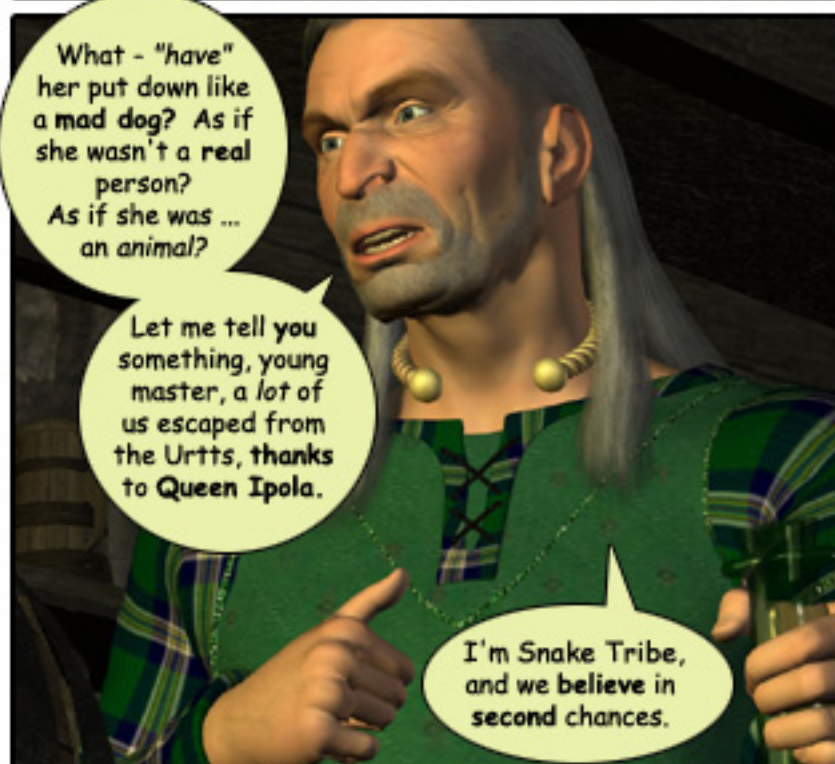
She usually just sits
in the corner and drinks and
doesn't bother anyone as
long as they leave her
alone.

Can't speak straight
in any language, and if she
ever had a name, I think it's
been beaten out of her.



Wouldn't it be better
just to have her put down?

I mean, she's dangerous.



What - "have"
her put down like
a mad dog? As if
she wasn't a real
person?
As if she was ...
an animal?

Let me tell you
something, young
master, a lot of
us escaped from
the Urtts, thanks
to Queen Ipola.

I'm Snake Tribe,
and we believe in
second chances.

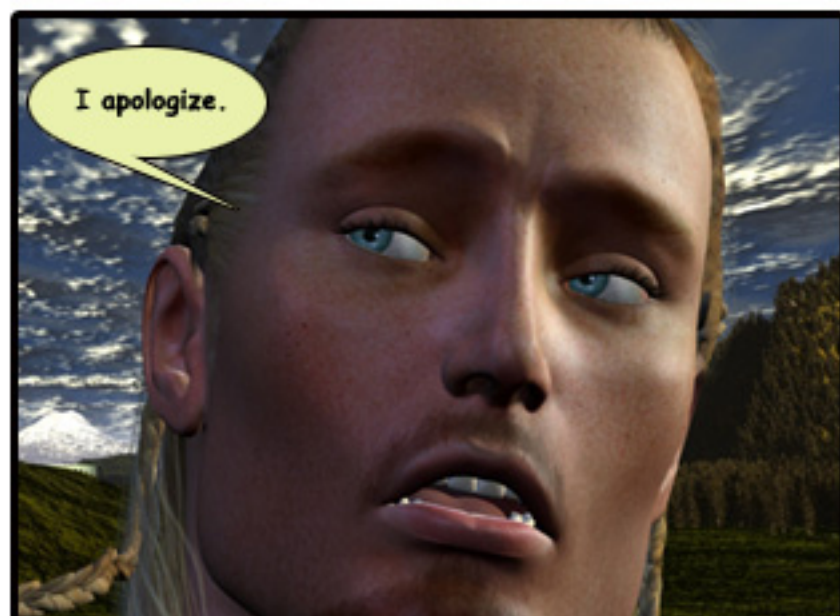


Even for
something like ...
like that?

Especially
for someone like
that.



JUST A LITTLE AWKWARD ...





Is the threat that bad?
What did you see?

More Urts than I've
ever seen this side
of the river.

They had an entire base
underground in one of the old,
forgotten temples, deep in Kivalian
territory. For all I know they have more.
They've got magick, now - from the ...
from Him. Powerful magick. Tula's
really worried.



Gods.

Took us
completely
by surprise.

They had enough
hunters to go after us time
and again - chasing us,
trying to keep us from
telling what we saw.

If it hadn't been
for Mentl being with
us, we would've died.



Ah, Mentl again.

Yes, Mentl "again," and,
for me, Mentl always. If
that offends you, keep it
to yourself.



I speak my mind,
princess, just like you do.



All right.

Speak it.

YES, IT'S ALL GONNA COME OUT, NOW.



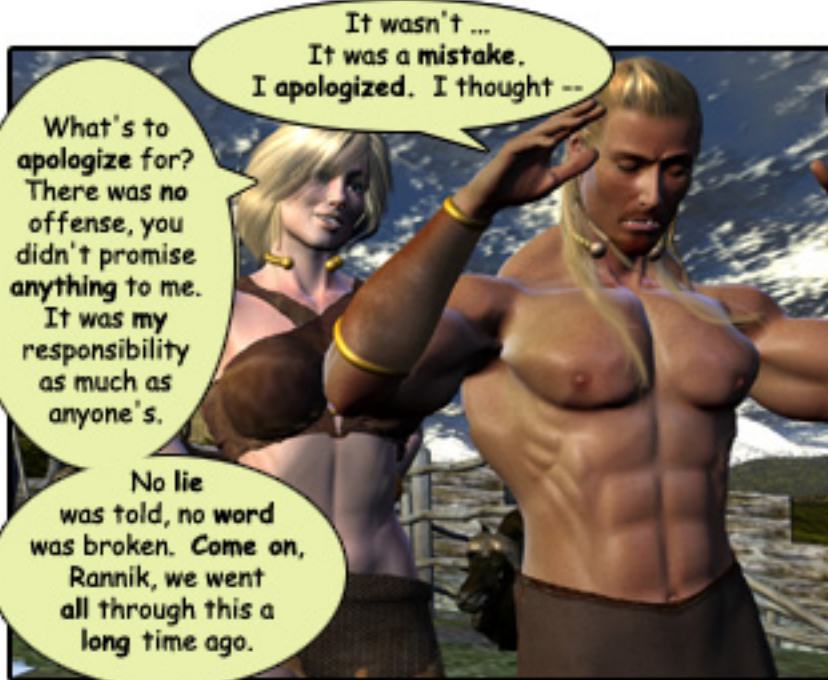
Zona,
we've known
each other practically
all our lives. We've
grown up together,
fought together,
been lovers --

-- at least I was in
love with you.

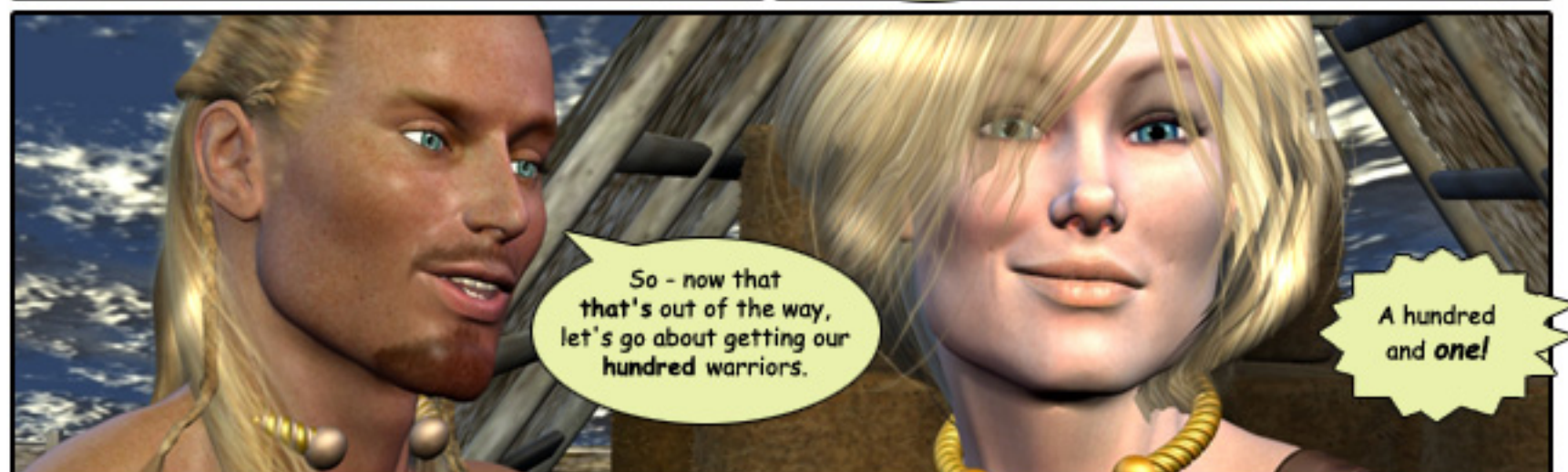


And I was with
you - once.

You chose
someone else, and
that was that.









... I JUST **KNEW** THEN THAT I'D ... I'D BEEN **IGNORING** EVERY **RED FLAG**, EVERY **NEON SIGN** SHOWING ME THAT THIS **WHOLE THING** WASN'T **KOSHER**.

I'D BEEN **KIDDING MYSELF ALL ALONG**. SHE'S A ... A ... A **PRINCESS**, MAN. A **REAL TRUE WARRIOR PRINCESS**.

AND **WHAT AM I?** SERIOUSLY?

SHORT, SKINNY, BIG-NOSED **SECOND RATE MUSICIAN**. AM I REALLY EVEN **CLOSE** TO BEING IN **HER LEAGUE**?

WHY **ELSE** WOULD SHE FEEL **ANYTHING** FOR **ME** IF THERE WASN'T SOME KIND OF, LIKE, **MIND CONTROL** OR SOMETHING?



IT WAS A **LIE**. AND **WORSE THAN ME** LYING TO **HER**, IT MADE **HER LIE** TO **ME**, WHICH IS, LIKE, **WORSE THAN MURDER** IN THEIR CULTURE, Y'KNOW?

I COULDN'T **STAND** IT MAN. I JUST ... **CAME BACK**. AND THE BOOK DIDN'T COME WITH ME, BUT EVERYTHING I WAS WEARING DID. SO I **SOLD** THE RING TO GET A NEST EGG AND I MOVED OUT TO **VAN NUYS**.



FUCK. BONG WATER WILL NOT GET YOU HIGH. JUST VERY, VERY SICK.



SEE? I **TOLD** YOU.

I **KNEW** IT!

WHAT?

I **KNOW** THAT **LOOK**: "MENTI, YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING **BONG WATER** AGAIN."

SHUT UP, MAN. I **KNOW** WHEN YOU'RE **FUCKED UP**, AND AFTER ALL THESE YEARS IF YOU THINK I DON'T **KNOW** WHEN YOU'RE **BULLSHITTING**, THEN YOU'RE **BULLSHITTING YOURSELF**.

IT'S JUST THAT ... IT'S A **LOT** TO SWALLOW, ALL AT ONCE. ARE YOU **SURE** YOU DIDN'T, LIKE, WAKE UP IN A **HOSPITAL** OR SOMETHING?



THE **SAME** ALLEYWAY,
OFF OF E STREET, DOWNTOWN.
I NEVER EVEN LOST CONSCIOUSNESS OR
ANYTHING. I JUST **STEPPED** THROUGH
THE **PORTAL** INTO THE ALLEY
AND IT CLOSED UP
AFTER ME.

NOBODY AROUND,
NATURALLY. MY CAR WAS IN
THE **IMPOUND**, WITH A COUPLE
MORE MONTHS' DIRT AND BIRDSHIT
ON IT, BUT EVERYTHING IN IT
WAS **STILL THERE**.

YOU KNOW WHY
I THINK MAYBE YOU'RE **NOT**
MAKING THIS LIP? 'CAUSE **EVERY** GAL
YOU EVER FELL FOR BEFORE WAS A
DINKY LITTLE **AIRY-FAIRY** NEW AGE
HEAD CASE.

IF YOU WERE
GOING TO IMAGINE A
PERFECT GIRL, IT WOULDN'T BE
SOMEBODY WHO BUSTS THE **FURNITURE**
LIKE **TOOTHPICKS** AND OUTWEIGHS
YOU BY **FIFTY POUNDS**
OF **MUSCLE**.



SHE ISN'T
ALL MUSCLE.



YEAH, WELL
I SUPPOSE THAT **IS**
KIND OF A **FANTASY**,
ISN'T IT?



IT **HAPPENED**, MAN.
ASK TANNENBAUM, THE JEWELER.
THE RING WAS **REAL**. THE DIAMOND WAS
PRIMITIVE CUT I DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY
ANYTHING BEFORE HE SAID IT LOOKED
MEDIEVAL, LIKE SOMETHING FROM
GERMANY OR ROMANIA IN THE
12TH CENTURY.

WELL,
ANYWAY,
SO YOU'RE
BACK IN THE
REAL WORLD,
NOW.

ANY PLANS?

OTHER THAN
DRINKING MYSELF **STUPID**
EVERY NIGHT?

AHH
THAT'S **WEAK**, MAN.
WEAK PLAN. I GOT A
BETTER ONE.

YEAH? **WHAT?**



WE GET THE BAND
TOGETHER AGAIN.

HA! YOU BE
FUN-NY MAN!

MENTL, LET'S
GET THE **BAND**
TOGETHER
AGAIN!

WHAT, ARE WE
SUDDENLY THE
BLUES BROTHERS
OR SOMETHING?

TELL ME YOU GOT
SOMETHING **BETTER**
TO DO. **NO BULLSHIT**,
NOW. **DO** YA?



ZERO,
I GAVE UP
ON **BULLSHIT**.

I DON'T **LIE**
ANYMORE,
EVER.



AND WE SANG DIRGES IN THE DARK THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED.









ALLRIGHT -

LOOK!



JUST
QUIT WITH
THE ARROWS.
OKAY?!

DON'T
HURT MY
DA!!

I PROMISE I
WON'T, EMMON. I JUST
NEEDED TO GET HIS
ATTENTION AND STOP HIM
SHOOTING ME.



HAAALP!!

DEMON!!
THRASU PROTECT
ME!!

LOOK, I'M -
LOOK, SHUT
UP A SECOND,

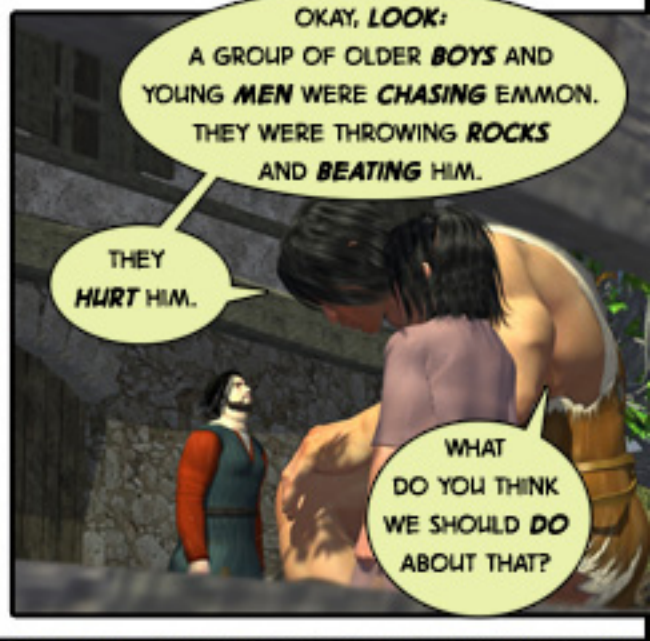
LET ME GO! IT'S
GOING TO KILL ME!

HEY!



WILL YOU STOP, FOR GOD'S SAKE,
SCREAMING LIKE A LITTLE GIRL AND JUST
LISTEN TO ME?!!!

I MEAN,
COME ON!



OKAY, LOOK:
A GROUP OF OLDER BOYS AND
YOUNG MEN WERE CHASING EMMON.
THEY WERE THROWING ROCKS
AND BEATING HIM.

THEY
HURT HIM.

WHAT
DO YOU THINK
WE SHOULD DO
ABOUT THAT?



EMMON?

OH, HELLO.
ARE YOU EMMON'S
MOTHER?

BACK IN THE HOUSE!



AND YOU ...
GET .. GET AWAY!
LEAVE US ALONE!

BUT ---

AND TAKE THAT FREAK
WITH YOU! YOU LOVE IT SO MUCH,
YOU FEED IT!



ALL RIGHT.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
BUT BEFORE I GO, I
JUST WANT TO SAY THAT
YOU ARE MAKING A
TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

IN YOUR HEART
I KNOW YOU
KNOW THAT.



AND AS I KNOW
THERE IS A GOD,
I KNOW ONE DAY YOU
WILL ASK HIS FORGIVENESS
FOR THIS -
AND EMMON'S.

MAYBE YOUR SON WILL
FORGIVE YOU, EVENTUALLY.



RIGHT NOW,
I CAN'T THINK
WHY HE SHOULD.



OH!
GET OFF, YOU!

SHOO!

SHOO, NOW!!

LIRI!



KELTAN!

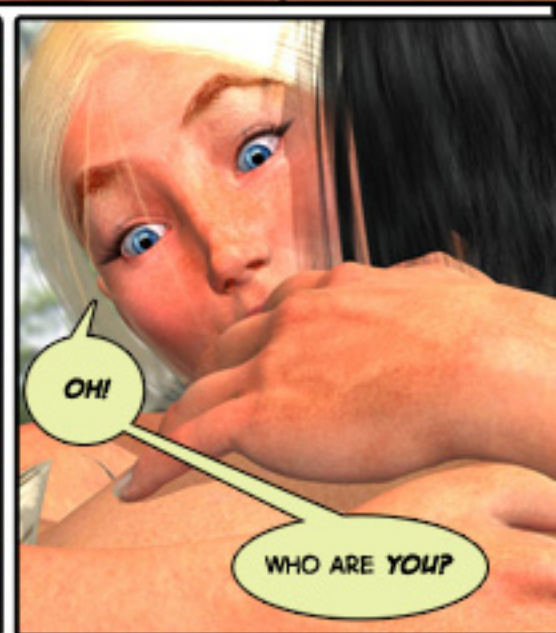
**THOOM THOOM
THOOM THOOM**



YOU'RE *BACK*,
YOU'RE *BACK*!

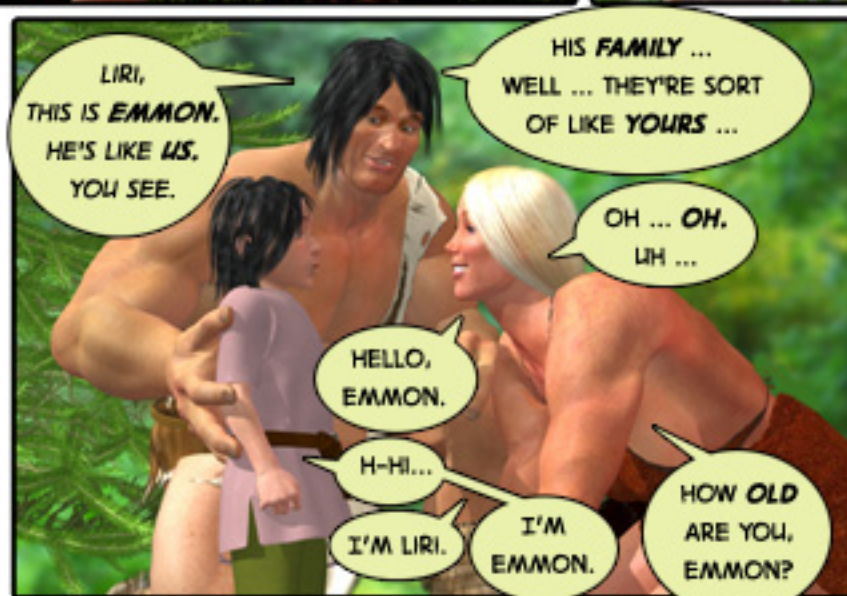
OH ...

LAMBKIN ...



OH!

WHO ARE YOU?



LIRI,
THIS IS *EMMON*.
HE'S LIKE *US*.
YOU SEE.

HIS *FAMILY* ...
WELL ... THEY'RE SORT
OF LIKE *YOURS* ...

OH ... OH.
UH ...

HELLO,
EMMON.

H-HI...

I'M LIRI.

I'M
EMMON.

HOW *OLD*
ARE YOU,
EMMON?



THIS MANY.

I SEE.

ANY CHILD YOU TAKE FOR YOUR OWN BECOMES YOUR OWN.



EMMON, WOULD
YOU LIKE SOME
CINNAMON BREAD?


I MADE A
BATCH JUST *TODAY*.
AND I *ALWAYS* MAKE
TOO MANY LOAVES
FOR JUST THE
TWO OF US.

YES, PLEASE.



GOOD.

LET'S GO
HOME, THEN.



WE'VE GOT BUTTER AND SOME
HONEY, TOO AND **LOTS** OF GOOD THINGS TO EAT.
OH, I MADE SOME APPLE COMPOTE
THAT WILL BE **PERFECT!**

SEE, THERE'S **NICE**
PEOPLE IN THE AREA WE DO SOME
TRADE WITH, BECAUSE, REALLY, **MOST**
PEOPLE ARE NICE, AT LEAST
WHEN THEY CAN **AFFORD**
TO BE.

AND THEY LIKE HAVING
A FIELD **CLEARED** OR **PLOWED**
IN A FEW **HOURS** INSTEAD OF **DAYS**.
AND OTHER THINGS, TOO, THAT
FOLKS LIKE **US** CAN DO
BETTER THAN ANYBODY.

I'LL **TEACH** YOU.
IT'S GOING TO BE **ALL RIGHT**.

SO SHE SAYS ... SAYS T'ME ... SHE SAYS ...
"I WOULD *LIKE* TO 'SPRESS MY 'PRECATION.
RIGHT *NOW*. IN MY *BED*."

NO SHIT, MAN... AND HOLY ... HOLY *SHIT*,
YOU HAD T'*SEE* THIS GAIL. SHE WAS *HOT!*
I MEAN... HAH-HAH-HAH-*HOT!* SHE WAS, LIKE,
MAYBE 45 OR, LIKE, 50 IN THE *SAME* WAY
THAT, LIKE, *SUSAN SARANDON* IS 50.

DUDE!!

AI, MAMA!!
'CEPT I THINK SARANDON'S,
LIKE, *SIXTY-SOMETHIN'*
THESE DAYS.

OKAY, THEN, SO, LIKE, SO,
FOR WHEN *SUSAN SARANDON* WAS FIFTY,
OKAY? JESUS. I MEAN ...

I MEAN ... JESUS.
JESUS, ZERO, Y'GONNA
ARGUE WITH ME 'BOUT
SUSAN SARANDON,
F'CHRISSAKE?!

NEVER. NEVER. SHE'S,
LIKE, *AMAZ-(HURRI!)-ZAZING*.
I WOULD *SO* DO HER. HEY, Y'KNOW
WHO *ELSE* IS HOT? *SOFIA VERGARA*.
MAN, TALK ABOUT-

HEY, I'M *TELLIN'*
THE *STORY*, OKAY?

SORRY.
SORRY, MAN.
Y'GO *AHEAD*.

THIS IS THE
GODDAM' *QUEEN*
OF *KIVALIA*, WE'RE
TALKIN' 'BOUT HERE!

RIGHT, RIGHT.
HOT QUEEN.

AND OH-*GAHD*, WITH SOME
SERIOUS D-CUPS! NO *LIE*, MAN,
THE WAY SHE FILLED OUT THIS ...
THIS ... *FLIMSY GOWN* ...

YOWZA! MENTL'S
THE *MAYOR* OF
MILF TOWN!

WOULD *YOU*
TURN HER DOWN?

'*COURSE* NOT,
ARE YOU *BRAIN-DEAD?*

YES. YES,
I THINK I *AM*.
'CAUSE I *TURNED*
HER *DOWN*.

SHUT.
UP.

HAD, TO,
MAN, *ZONA*,
SHE ...

DIGNITY INSTANTLY DISSOLVES IN ALCOHOL.

OH, GOD!
ZONA! AHHH
ZONA-A-AAH...

I ... I ... W-WALKED AWAY
FROM THE ONLY .. *MUH-MY ONLY* ...
NHHNNH ... *LOVE* ... MY WHOLE ...
MY WHOLE *LIFE!!*

OH, GOD, I ...
I'M *SUCH* A MISERABLE
ASSHOLE ... *SNLRRKK!!*
ASSHOLE!!!

AAAAAAAAAAAA-HUHH ...
A-HUHH ... *SHURR!*

MENTL ... *DON'T* MEAN
T'INTERRUPT, BUT Y'GOTTA
QUIT THIS OR I'M GONNA
BARF, MAN.





MENTL,
NO, COME ON ...

YOU! YEAH, **YOU**,
THINK I DON'T **KNOW?**

HEY - UH ... **HAAH!**
UH - **LOOK**, MY BUDDY'S
PRETTY **RIPPED**, SO PLEASE
DON'T TAKE **ANYTHING**
HE SAYS ...

THINK I CAN'T **SEE?**
THINK I CAN'T **SMELL** YOU?
I **KNOW** WHAT YOU **ARE!**

OH, **JESUS!**
MENTL, COME **ON!**



I **KNOW**
WHAT YOU **ARE**.
I **KNOW** WHERE
YOU'RE **FROM!**

ONLY IT WAS
TWO OF YOU BEFORE,
AND AN **OLD MAN** WITH A **BOOK**,
AND YOU **FUCKING HEROES** HAD TO
STAB HIM IN THE **BACK!**



I DIDN'T **KNOW THEN**
WHAT I **KNOW NOW**.
COULDN'T **SEE** THEN
WHAT I **CAN** NOW.

MENTL, MAN,
YOU ARE GONNA
GET US KILLED!



BUT I **KNOW**
WHAT YOU **ARE**,
MOTHERFUCKER!!!

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
JUST **ONE** LITTLE **DRUNK** GUY
TOO **MUCH** FOR YOU?
HUH?!



COME ON!

COME ON,
YOU EVIL, DEMON
SUBHUMAN COCKSUCKIN'
SONOFABITCH!!

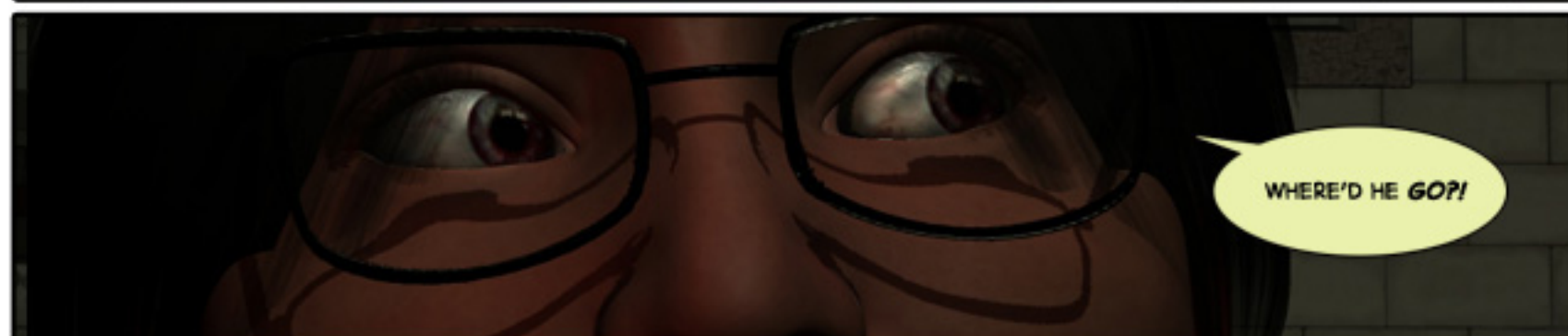
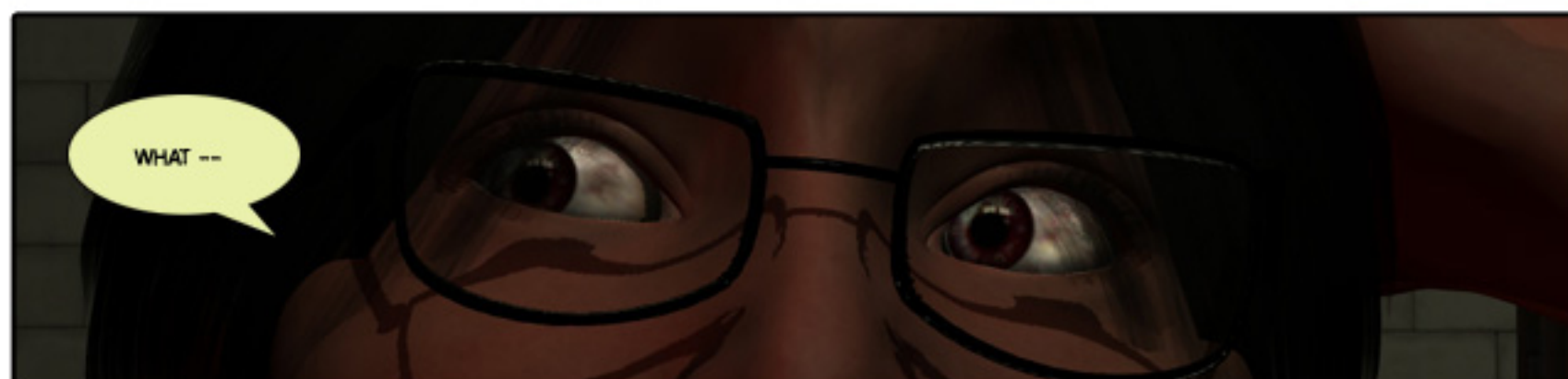


STAB



DON'T KNOW IF A SOUND EFFECT CAN BE COPYRIGHTED? DON'T CARE.





THE DEVIL'S AGENTS MAY BE OF FLESH AND BLOOD. MAY THEY NOT?





SOME WEEKS LATER, ON THE
KIVALIAN/EROGENIAN BORDER.



SIR! LOOK!
COMING OUT OF
THE WOODS!

I DO HAVE
EYES, SERGEANT.

EROGENIANS!
DOZENS OF THEM!
WE SHOULD --

"WE" SHOULD
WAIT FOR MY ORDER.
UNDERSTOOD?

AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING...



BORDER PATROL, ZONA.



YEAH, THEY OUGHT
TO BE **GLAD** TO SEE US.

JUST YOU **REMEMBER** --
THESE ARE **KIVALIANS**.

I KNOW,
GUNTIG.

KEEP
YOUR **COOL**.

I KNOW.

BESIDES, IF YOU
HIT THEM TOO **HARD**,
THEY **BREAK**, THE
LITTLE **DEARS**.



GEN TAL.

GREETINGS.

I AM *SIR LENTHIK* OF MIMOS. YOU RIDE INTO KIVALIAN TERRITORY IN *ARMS* AND IN *NUMBERS*. WHAT'S YOUR *BUSINESS*?

(AS WE REHEARSED, PRINCESS ...)

FRIENDLY BUSINESS TO KIVALIA, OUR *ALLY*. AT THE *REQUEST* OF YOUR REGENT, PRINCE MALDIK, WE'VE COME TO YOUR *AID* AGAINST OUR COMMON ENEMY, THE *URTTs*. I AM PRINCESS *ZONA ZONN-IPOLA*, CHAMPION OF EROGENIA.

THESE *WARRIORS* ARE THE FIRST *SMALL* PART OF AN *ARMY* OF EROGENIANS THAT WE BRING TO DRIVE THE *URTTs* *BACK* ACROSS THE *RIVER*, AND TO MAKE THEM *PAY* FOR THE HUMAN *BLOOD* THEY'VE *SPILLED*.

YOU SAY *YOU* ARE PRINCESS *ZONA*?

YES.

DO YOU THINK WE'RE COMPLETELY *STUPID*, EROGENIAN?

WELL, AS A MATTER OF *FACT* -

OF *COURSE* NOT! WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* BY THAT?

WE HAVE *WORD* FROM NORMOS THAT THE EROGENIAN CHAMPION IS *DEAD*. *KILLED* BY *ASSASSINS*.

YOU'RE *MISTAKEN*.

NOBODY'S KILLED ME *YET* - THOUGH IT WASN'T FOR LACK OF *TRYING*!

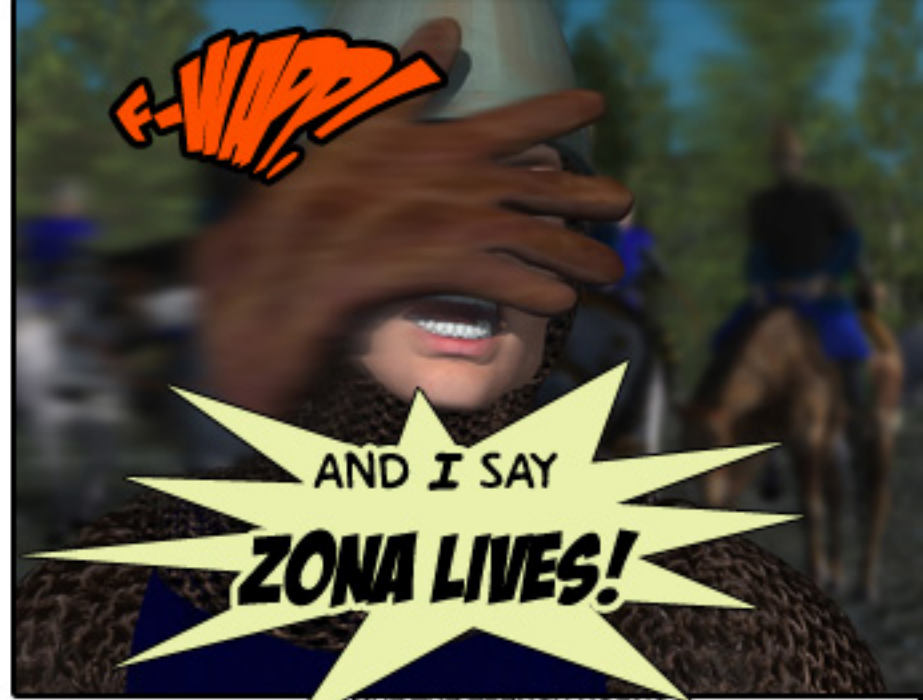
THE REPORTS OF MY DEATH ARE GREATLY EXAGGERATED...

AND *WHO* SHOULD WE *BELIEVE*? *YOU*?

OR OUR *OWN* PRINCE REGENT?

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* YOU *HAVE* TO ASK ME THAT.







ARE YOU SERIOUSLY
CHALLENGING ME, SOUTHERNER?
OH, YES, **NO** MISTAKING THAT
BUMPKIN ACCENT.

YOU SHOULD
FEEL *HONORED*, NORTHLANDER.
YOU WILL HAVE THE *PRIVILEGE* OF
BEING SLAIN BY *YATTA-TA OF*
IRANIS!

OO!
GOING TO
KILL ME WITH A
MUSTARD BALL,
ARE YOU?

ONLY *MERCHANTS*
AND *SHEEP HERDERS* COME
FROM THAT *DUNGHILL!*

OH, **NOW** YOU HAVE HURT
MY FEELINGS. I SHALL TAKE
EVEN **GREATER** PLEASURE
IN **KILLING** YOU.

TELL US YOUR
NAME, O SOON-
TO-BE **CORPSE**
OF MIMOS?

SERGEANT
NATHAM LOTHANEL,
 OF THE **FOURTH**
 HUNDRED OF
MIMOS.

GOOD GOD,
WHAT A WINDBAG!

LAUGH AND THE WORLD LAUGHS WITH YOU.

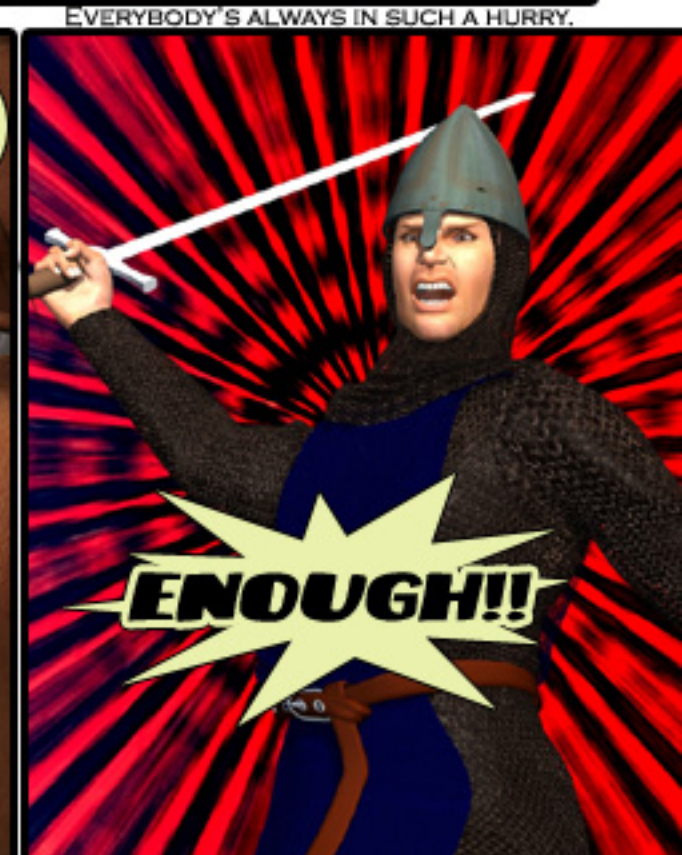
THE **FINEST**
IN ALL OF
KIVALIA!



AH .. THAT IS ...

I MEAN ...

OY VEY ...



AND THE TITLE IS:

"Duel between Yatta-Ta of Ir Anis,
(Finest Swordsman In All Kivalia)
and a Northern Cretin."

CLANG!

"A fight, a fight you see, I seem to be
Engaged withal an insult to avenge

"And lo the clumsy thrust I take from thee
Deflect with ease and parry back again



"As sun upon our flashing blades doth shine
As now the truth begins to dawn for thee



"And slander you so loudly did opine
Becomes revealed as basest calumny!"



WHISHH!

SHUT UP!!

Hark, all ye bear fair witness to this show



How Yatta-Ta and Sir Fool did contend



RAAAAAGH!



HMM.... WHAT'S A GOOD
RHYME HERE FOR "SHOW?"



And scarlet sparks did strike with every blow

THANK YOU!

And ringing steel did serenade his end.

Such music when my broadsword is the bell

CLANG!

shrang!

To toll dishonest slanderer's ...

RING!

PTING!

SHRANG!

death

KNELL!



COME **ON**, SIR LENTHIK!
THAT'S **NONSENSE**, YOU **HAVE**
TO **SEE** THAT, NOW!

YOU'RE **YOUNG**,
YOUR HIGHNESS, AND I KNOW
THAT WARS **ARE** FOUGHT **DIFFERENTLY**
BY EROGENIANS.

BUT I'M AN
OLD SOLDIER.

NONSENSE IS A MORE OR LESS
CONSTANT COMPANION IN **OUR** CHAIN
OF COMMAND. I'VE GROWN **GREY** JUST
TRYING TO FIGHT IT - AND I WILL **NOT**.
I'LL **OBEY** MY **ORDERS**
TO THE **LETTER**.



SO - YOU'LL
STAND **AGAINST** US.



ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH, DEAR FRIENDS, ONCE MORE!



I ... **KNEW** YOUR FATHER
A **LITTLE**, PRINCESS.

WE FOUGHT **TOGETHER**
AT THE SIEGE OF MIMOS,
ON THE **BRIDGE**.

THE **URTTS** WERE THICK
AS **FLIES** THAT DAY. WE
THOUGHT OURSELVES **LOST**.

HE **RALLIED** US, AND TOGETHER
WITH A FEW **DOZEN** EROGENIANS,
WE SALLIED OUT FROM THE GATE AND
CHARGED INTO THE **THICK**
OF THEM.



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NICE CROSSBOW YA GOT THERE.





WHO HERE
NOW DOUBTS THAT **THIS** IS TRULY
EROGENIA'S LEGENDARY
CHAMPION?!



IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING.

I THINK YOU'VE **PROVEN**
THAT, SOUTHERNER,
VERY ... **THEATRICALY**.
WELL DONE.

UNFORTUNATELY,
THAT DOES **NOT**
CHANGE MY
ORDERS.

PRINCE MALDIK HAS
FORBIDDEN EROGENIANS
TO CROSS OUR BORDERS, IN
FEAR OF **RETRIBUTION** FOR
THE **SLAYING** OF THEIR
PRINCESS.



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WE SALLIED OUT FROM THE GATE AND
CHARGED INTO THE **THICK**
OF THEM.



WE DIDN'T **OFTEN** FIGHT SIDE-BY-SIDE
WITH YOUR PEOPLE. TOO MANY OLD **QUARRELS** BETWEEN
OUR FOLK AND THE EROGENIANS AND **OFTEN**
WE WERE JUST TOO **DIFFERENT** IN OUR WAYS
TO FIGHT WELL **TOGETHER**.

BUT **THAT** DAY I SAW LET LOOSE
ON OUR ENEMIES A **WHIRLWIND** -
A **STORM** OF BLOOD, FIRE AND DESTRUCTION
THAT **SAVED** OUR CITY AND **TURNED** THE **TIDE**
FOR OUR PEOPLE.

NONE OF THE DEMONS COULD **STAND**
AGAINST US **THEN**, AS ZONN AND HIS KIN
LENT US **STRENGTH** AND MADE US **ALL** FIGHT LIKE **LIONS**.
WE **BROKE** THEIR SIEGE LIKE A **TOY** AND MADE THEM **RUN**
WITH THEIR SCALEY **TAILS** BETWEEN THEIR **LEGS**.
IT WAS ... A **GOOD** DAY.



IT WOULD BE A **SIN** IF OUR ENEMIES WERE TO BE **SHIELDED** FROM SUCH A WHIRLWIND BY THOSE WHO **OUGHT** TO BE PART OF IT **AGAIN**.

YES.

YES, IT **WOULD**.

I WILL **NOT** DISOBEY ORDERS.

YOU MUST TURN **BACK**, HERE AND **NOW**.

OF COURSE, IT IS ALSO **NO** SECRET THAT I MUST CONTINUE TO PATROL FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER **TEN MILES** TO THE **SOUTH**..

ONCE I SEE YOU OVER ONTO **YOUR** SIDE OF THE BORDER AGAIN, I AND MY MEN WILL DO **JUST THAT**. IN LESS THAN HALF AN HOUR, I IMAGINE WE'LL BE COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT OVER THAT **RIDGE**, THERE.

NATURALLY, WE'LL TRY TO MAKE **ANOTHER** SWEEP BACK THIS WAY AGAIN **SOON**, BUT --



WITH THE WAR IN **GREYMOUTH** AND ALL, OUR FORCES ARE **THIN**. **DELAYS** CAN HAPPEN.

I ... **THINK** I UNDERSTAND YOU, KIVALIAN.

BUT ... I DO **NOT** UNDERSTAND YOU.



WELL, WE HAVE THAT IN **COMMON**, YOUR HIGHNESS.

NOW, PLEASE YOU **ALL** TO TURN **AROUND** AND HEAD **BACK** THE WAY YOU CAME, OR AS I AM A SOLDIER I MUST **ORDER** MY MEN TO **CHARGE** YOU.



LET'S TURN **AROUND**.

COME ABOUT!





BE *SEEING* YOU.

GEN JURYAN, PRINCESS.



THANKS.
IT'S *HARD*, LETTING
OTHERS FIGHT FOR ME.
BUT GUNTIG WAS *RIGHT*.
IT NEEDED A
KIVALIAN.

OF *COURSE*.
A MATTER OF *HONOR*.

THAT WAS VERY *FANCY*.
DID YOU *REALLY* MAKE ALL THAT UP
AS YOU WERE *FIGHTING*?



AHH .. *NO*.
ACTUALLY, IT TOOK ME ABOUT
FOUR MONTHS TO COME UP
WITH THAT.

IT *DID*?

WELL, *NOT* COUNTING
THE TIME TO *LEARN*
IT BY *HEART*.

IT IS NOT RHYMING AND VERSING THAT MAKETH A POET ...



AH. *HM*.

OH, I SUPPOSE
YOU THINK IT'S *EASY* TO JUST
COME UP WITH A *RHYME* FOR
"*AVENGE!*"

"*MOONHENG*."

OH ... WELL, OF *COURSE*,
FOR YOU, I MEAN ...

"*REVENGE*"



THAT'S A *FORM*
OF THE *WORD!*
DOESN'T *COUNT!*

"TO *WRENCH*"

ALL RIGHT,
ALL RIGHT ...

"TO *CLENCH*"

YOU'RE USING
A HARD *CH* SOUND,
NOW INSTEAD
OF "*G*" ...

WELL, YOU JUST
CUT OFF THE ENDING
CONSONANT ALTOGETHER
AND USED "*THEN*."

IT
WORKS!!

CHATSORTH,
CALIFORNIA



EXCUSE ME ...

BUT COULD YOU
HELP ME ACROSS
THE **STREET**?



UM - OKAY.



THERE YA **GO!**
WELL -

COULD YOU ...
COULD YOU **SIT** WITH ME
FOR AWHILE?

I'D LIKE TO
TALK TO SOMEONE ...



NO GOOD DEED GOES ... UNNOTICED.



SURE.

I MEAN,
I HAVE SOME
TIME.



YOU PLAY
A **GUITAR**?

YEAH. YEAH. I'M IN A **BAND**. **LITTLE** BAND.
WE DO **COVERS**, MOSTLY, **CLASSIC** ROCK.

WE HAVE A STEADY **GIG** AT THIS **CLUB**
IN **HOLLYWOOD**. **FRIDAY** AND **SATURDAY** NIGHTS. MY
BUDDY **WORKS** AT ONE OF THE PLACES DOWN THE **STREET**,
HERE, AND ON **SUNDAYS** HIS BOSS DOESN'T MIND IF WE
USE THE **WAREHOUSE** TO REHEARSE.



OH. I ...
I JUST **NEED**
TO GET TO **DEVONSHIRE**
STREET.



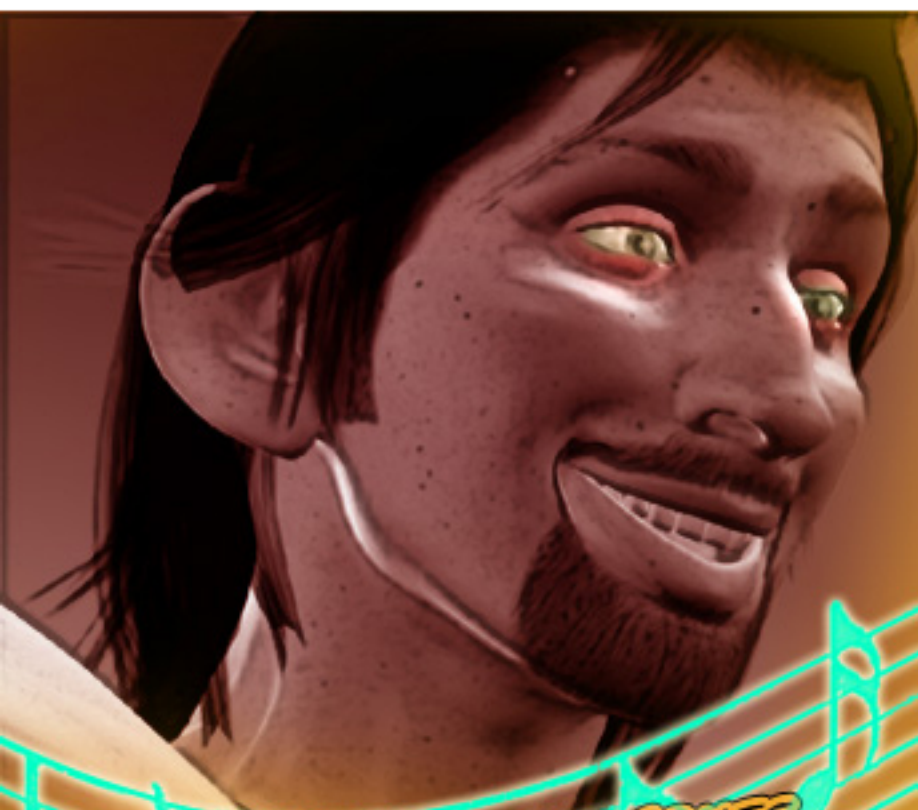


WHAT?
OH, I'M FINE.

YEAH -- WELL, LET ME
LAY **THIS** ON YOU, OKAY?
YOU PROBABLY **REMEMBER**
THIS ONE.



HERE COMES THE SUN, (DOO-DN-DOO-DOO)
HERE COMES THE SUN,
AND I SAY IT'S ALL RIGHT



LITTLE DARLING, IT'S BEEN A
LONG COLD LONELY WINTER
LITTLE DARLING, IT FEELS LIKE
YEARS SINCE IT'S BEEN HERE
HERE COMES THE SUN, (DOO-DN-DOO-DOO)
HERE COMES THE SUN
AND I SAY IT'S ALL RIGHT

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

SUN, SUN, SUN, HERE IT COMES...

LITTLE DARLING, I FEEL THAT
ICE IS SLOWLY MELTING
LITTLE DARLING, IT SEEMS LIKE
YEARS SINCE IT'S BEEN CLEAR

HERE COMES THE SUN, (DOO-DN-DOO-DOO)
HERE COMES THE SUN,
AND I SAY IT'S ALL RIGHT

IT'S ALL RIGHT.



"SOMETIMES THE MAGIC WORKS, AND SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T" - OLD LODGE SKINS



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"...IN ORDER TO BE A REALIST YOU MUST BELIEVE IN MIRACLES." - BEN GURION



HELP!
I NEED SOMEBODY!

WONT YOU
PLEASE HELP ME?

BE SPECIFIC.

I SAID WOULD
SOMEBODY PLEASE
RESCUE ME!!

GEEZ!!

YELLO!

'SUP?



OH - MIGHTY ENCHANTER!
I'VE BEEN PUT IN THIS TOWER HERE
BY AN EVIL ... UM ... WIZARD.

ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M **IMPRISONED**
BY A **EVIL WIZARD!!**

WADDAYA THINK?!!

CAN'T YOU
ESCAPE BY
YOURSELF?

NO.
I'M NOT THAT
KIND OF A
PRINCESS.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE
A WARRIOR PRINCESS
OR SOMETHING.

I DON'T WANNA
PLAY THAT!

I WANNA BE
THE KIND OF PRINCESS
THAT GETS RESCUED,
O-KAY?

YOU SURE? I MEAN,
YOU COULD PROBABLY MANAGE,
AND I MIGHT SCREW IT UP
OR SOMETHING ...

MENTL ...

I HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH HEIGHTS, NO LIE ...

MEN-TUHL!

I WANT TO BE RESCUED!

CAN'T I HAVE IT
JUST THIS ONCE?

Dleeeeeeeeeeeeeeease?



WELL, OKAY.

IF I TEAR THIS COSTUME MY MOM IS GONNA KILL ME, THOUGH.



YOU'LL BE OKAY!

AND WHEN YOU RESCUE ME, YOU GET A KISS.

OKAY ...



UNH! ACK ...

NNH!! OW!

OWOWOWOWOW!

OY! DANGIT!



SONOVAGUN!

OY.

SEE, I JUST KNEW -

UNHH!



BE CAREFUL!

I'M OKAY, I'M OKAY ...



OOF!

UNH!

AW, MANNNN ... UNH!



My HERO!!!

HANGON!

HANGON!

HANGON!

OY!

OY!

OY!



NOW YOU CAN —

GASP! HHN!

GIMME A SEC ...

HOOBOY ...

OKAY?

PANT ... PANT ...

SURE, OKAY ...



NOW YOU CAN KISS ME.



RIGHT!



EWW! THAT'S NOT NICE!

C'MONNN! LET'S MAKE OUT!

NO! I DON'T WANT TO PLAY THAT WAY NOW! MENT! STOP!

C'MON - LEMME SEE YOUR BOOBS!

I DON'T WANT TO BE THAT RIGHT NOW! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!



ALL RIGHT, YOU.

OUTTA HERE.



LEMME GO!



I'M ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE, JACKASS!

YOU STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM MY FRIENDS, Y'HEAR?



YOU'RE
NOT THE BOSS OF ME!
I'LL DO WHAT I
WANT!

RIGHT.

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PULL!

Huoco!

BOOM!

AAAHH!!

I'LL GET YOU
FOR THIS!

I'LL FIX YOU!!

I WILL!

I'LL FIX YOU
GOOD!

AND YET, I DONT
APPEAR TO BE BROKEN ...

WHO ARE YOU?

VITO.
I'M A FRIEND.

THAT ... THAT
WASNT REALLY MENTL.

OF COURSE NOT.
IT WAS A LITTLE TURD THAT
WANTED TO SCREW WITH
YOUR DREAM WHILE
YOUR SPIRIT IS HERE.

I HATE THOSE GUYS.
THEY'RE THE PIMPLES IN THE
ASS-CRACK OF THE UNIVERSE.



YOU KNOW MENTL, DON'T YOU?
YOU WERE THE OLD MAN
IN THE ROBE.

YEP.

HIS TEACHER.

MM-HM.

CAN YOU ... DO YOU ...
KNOW WHERE HE IS? HOW IS HE?
DO YOU KNOW?



A LITTLE.
IT'S HARD FOR ME
TO EVEN SEE HIM ON EARTH
RIGHT NOW.

AND HE CAN'T HEAR
ME FOR SOME DAMN REASON.

DOESN'T HELP
THAT HE'S DRUNK
HALF THE TIME.
ANNOYING ...



IS HE OKAY?

DOES HE
MISS ME?



OH, YEAH,
SWEETHEART.

HE MISSES YOU LIKE ...
LIKE THE BIGGEST PART OF
HIS HEART, LIKE
LIFE ITSELF .

KINDA LIKE
I MISS MY
ESTELLE.

WHO'S THAT?

MY WIFE.
I WALKED OUT
ON HER IN '87.

I DON'T GET IT.
WHY WOULD YOU
DO THAT?

BECAUSE ...
I SCREWED UP A LOT. HAD STUPID AFFAIRS,
ACTED LIKE AN ASSHOLE. THOUGHT I WAS HOT SHIT
AND THEN -- THEN EVENTUALLY I JUST WASN'T
GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER, AND IT WAS
DRIVING ME NUTS.



NOW, OF COURSE, I MISS HER LIKE
THE LIFE I NEVER HAD, THE HOME I NEVER MADE -
THE LOVE I NEVER REALLY KNEW I WANTED.
STUPIDEST GODDAMN THING I EVER DID IN THAT LIFE -
EXCEPT, OF COURSE, WALKING DOWN A CERTAIN
ALLEY IN SAN BERNARDINO.



THIS IS ... SO ...

DUMB!!

LIFE'S
LIKE THAT,
THOUGH.

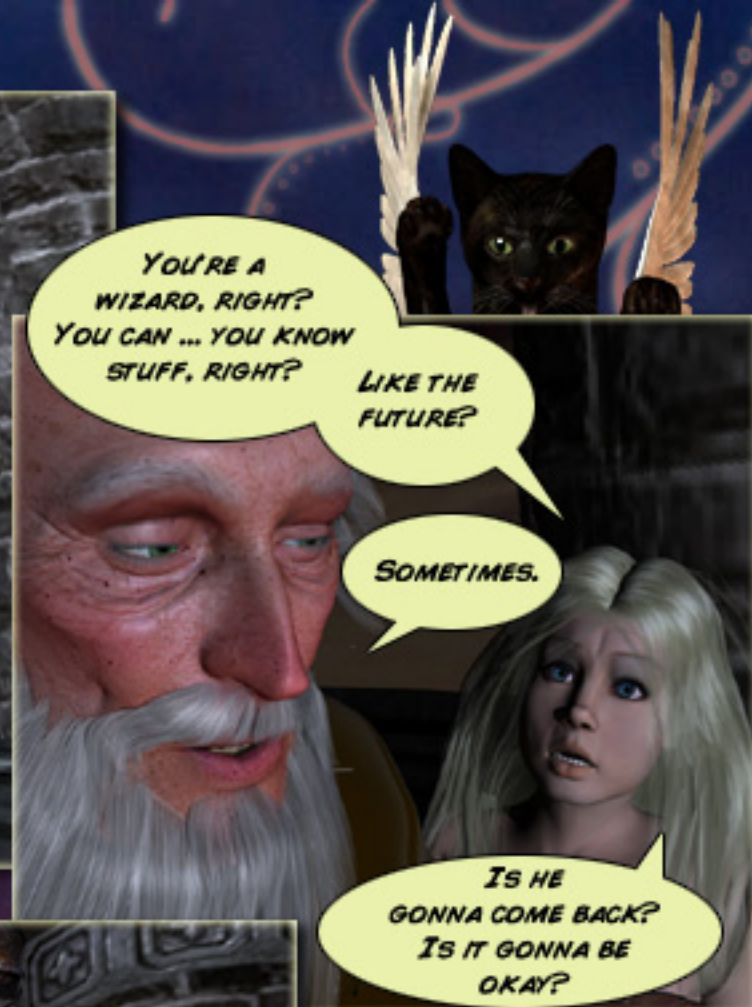


I KNOW I LOVE HIM,
I KNOW HE LOVES ME ...

WHY DOES EVERYTHING
HAVE TO BE SO HARD?

KID, IF LOVE
WAS REALLY ALL THAT
MATTERED, THE WORLD
WOULD BE VERY
DIFFERENT.

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YOU'RE A
WIZARD, RIGHT?
YOU CAN ... YOU KNOW
STUFF, RIGHT?

LIKE THE
FUTURE?

SOMETIMES.

IS HE
GONNA COME BACK?
IS IT GONNA BE
OKAY?



I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT.

WHY NOT?

IT'S AGAINST
THE RULES.

I DON'T CARE!
YOU KNOW!

TELL ME!!




IN THE END, I GUESS,
EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT.

NOBODY'S REALLY SEPARATED -
THAT'S AN ILLUSION.

THE UNIVERSE IS ONE THING,
UNBROKEN AND CONTINUOUSLY
CONNECTED.

THAT DOESN'T
HELP!





I KNOW.
BEST I GOT,
THOUGH.

I HATE
YOU!

NO,
YOU DON'T.

YOU'RE NO
HATER.

YES
I AM!

NOW, NOW -
ZONA ZONN-IPOLA,
YOU DON'T GET TO LIE,
NOT EVEN TO ME.
NOT EVEN HERE.

I WISH I COULD
GO BACK TO THAT DAY!
I ... I WOULD STOP
HIM LEAVING!

IT WOULD ALL
BE DIFFERENT.
AND ...

I KNOW,
I KNOW ...

MAYBE IN YOUR
DREAMS, PUNKIN.

I JUST WANT IT
TO BE OKAY AGAIN ...

I WISH SOMEONE
WOULD JUST TELL ME
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY ...

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... TELL ME IT'S GONNA BE OKAY ...
... TELL ME IT'S GONNA BE OKAY ...
... IT'S GONNA BE OKAY ...

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"IT'S GONNA BE OKAY."

FAR EAST OF THE RIVER YURITT.
DEEP IN URTT TERRITORY
PAST MIDNIGHT.



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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN MEET FIZ





"WHY YOU SNEAK ME?!
ALWAYS SNEAK ME! "

"I THINK SOMEDAY
MAYBE I CATCH YOU."



"I THINK SOMEDAY
MAYBE YOU GET
KILLED!"

"You DUMB!!



"HAVE FAITH IN
GOOD FRIEND. "

"YOU DUMB."

"YES, I DUMB. "



"TIME TO WAKE.
URTT'S NEAR."

"HOW CLOSE?"

"CLOSE.
TEN MINUTES. LESS."

"GOOD AMBUSH?"

"SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO USE TRYING TO GET ON YOUR GOOD SIDE"



"GOOD AMBUSH.
URTT'S NOT PREPARED. "

"KILL MANY!"



"KILL ALL"



"YOU'RE GOING OUT THERE TO DESTROY THEM, RIGHT? NOT TO STUDY. NOT TO BRING BACK. BUT TO WIPE THEM OUT."



"I INTEND TO MAKE GEORGIA HOWL."
- WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN





THIS AIN'T NO PARTY



THIS AIN'T NO DISCO



THIS AIN'T NO FOOLIN' AROUND.





DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD



<YOU'RE NOT GOING TO USE THAT.>



TO GAIN A MINUTE



YOU NEED YOUR HEAD



YOUR BRAINS ARE IN IT.

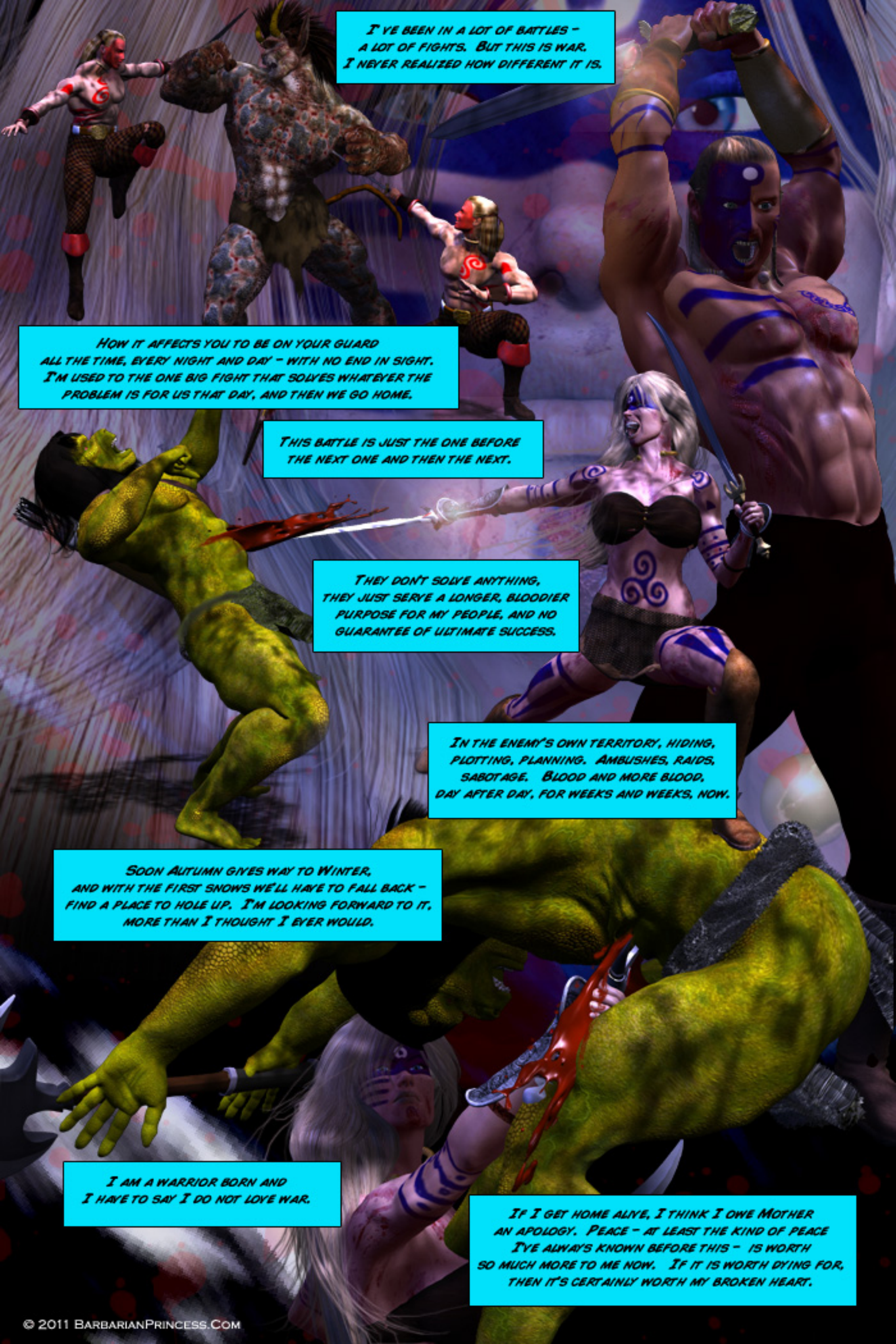


<JUST RELAX.>

<THIS WON'T HURT A BIT.>

- BURMASHAVE.





*I'VE BEEN IN A LOT OF BATTLES -
A LOT OF FIGHTS. BUT THIS IS WAR.
I NEVER REALIZED HOW DIFFERENT IT IS.*

*HOW IT AFFECTS YOU TO BE ON YOUR GUARD
ALL THE TIME, EVERY NIGHT AND DAY - WITH NO END IN SIGHT.
I'M USED TO THE ONE BIG FIGHT THAT SOLVES WHATEVER THE
PROBLEM IS FOR US THAT DAY, AND THEN WE GO HOME.*

*THIS BATTLE IS JUST THE ONE BEFORE
THE NEXT ONE AND THEN THE NEXT.*

*THEY DON'T SOLVE ANYTHING,
THEY JUST SERVE A LONGER, BLOODIER
PURPOSE FOR MY PEOPLE, AND NO
GUARANTEE OF ULTIMATE SUCCESS.*

*IN THE ENEMY'S OWN TERRITORY, HIDING,
PLOTTING, PLANNING. AMBUSHES, RAIDS,
SABOTAGE. BLOOD AND MORE BLOOD.
DAY AFTER DAY, FOR WEEKS AND WEEKS, NOW.*

*SOON AUTUMN GIVES WAY TO WINTER,
AND WITH THE FIRST SNOWS WE'LL HAVE TO FALL BACK -
FIND A PLACE TO HOLE UP. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT,
MORE THAN I THOUGHT I EVER WOULD.*

*I AM A WARRIOR BORN AND
I HAVE TO SAY I DO NOT LOVE WAR.*

*IF I GET HOME ALIVE, I THINK I OWE MOTHER
AN APOLOGY. PEACE - AT LEAST THE KIND OF PEACE
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN BEFORE THIS - IS WORTH
SO MUCH MORE TO ME NOW. IF IT IS WORTH DYING FOR,
THEN IT'S CERTAINLY WORTH MY BROKEN HEART.*



THERE ARE TIMES, IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE,
THAT I DON'T THINK OF HIM - I DON'T THINK OF ANYTHING.

THAT'S THE GOOD PART OF THIS.
THE BAD PART IS NOW - STANDING
HERE, SMOKING WITH THE BLOOD
OF THE SLAIN, AND THINKING -

"DID HE LOVE THIS?"

"DID HE LOVE THE GIANT WARRIOR, COVERED IN GORE?"
GENTLE MAN, THE KILLING AND VIOLENCE CAME SO HARD TO HIM,
DESPITE HIS POWER. HE ALWAYS USED IT TO PROTECT SOMEONE
ELSE. USUALLY ME. OTHERWISE, WOULDN'T HE RATHER SIMPLY
SING HIS SWEET LOVE SONGS AND MAKE ME HAPPY?

LOVE IS LIKE WAR, EASY TO BEGIN BUT VERY HARD TO STOP

OF COURSE HE WOULD.
I ... I CAN'T REMEMBER A
SINGLE LOVE SONG, RIGHT NOW.

ZONA.

HAH?

WE HAVE TO LEAVE. NOW.

OF COURSE.

<YOU .. YOU ARE ...
PRINCESS?>

< I ... YOU KILLED
MY OWNER, ASHKAZ. >

WHAT'S
HE SAYING?

APPARENTLY, YOU
KILLED HIS OWNER. SO --
NOW HE BELONGS TO YOU.

OH, GODS,
THIS AGAIN.



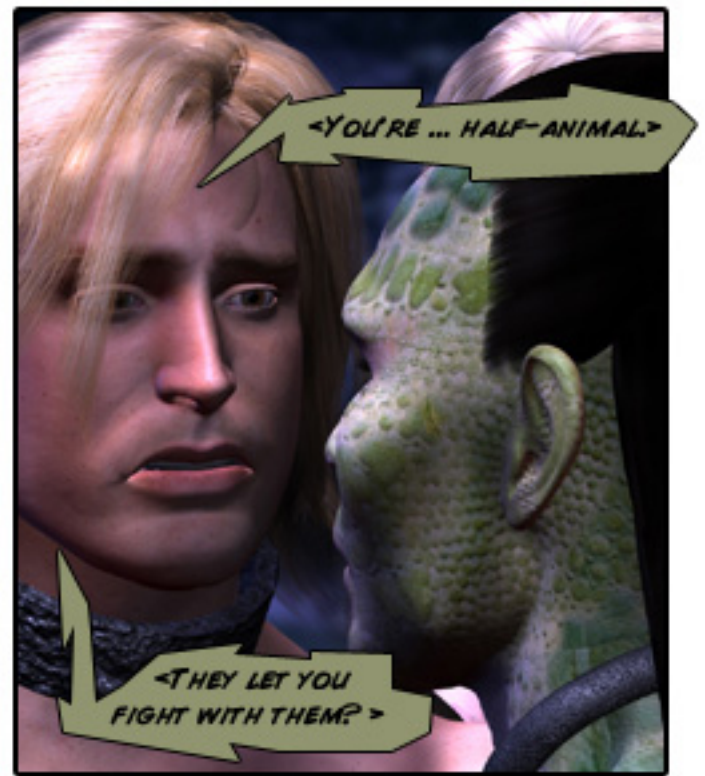
IT'S OKAY.

<YES, THIS IS ZONA, THE QUEEN'S DAUGHTER. AND YES, WE KILLED A LOT OF URTTS TODAY.>

<PARTLY BECAUSE THEY MADE THE MISTAKE OF CROSSING THE RIVER YURITT, PARTLY TO FREE YOU. YOU DON'T BELONG TO ANYONE NOW.>

<FREE... ME?>

<YES. DON'T WORRY - WE'LL TAKE YOU TO MY TRIBE FIRST, TO SEE WHERE YOU BELONG.>



<YOU'RE ... HALF-ANIMAL.>

<THEY LET YOU FIGHT WITH THEM?>



<I'M HALF-URTT, BUT I'M A WHOLE MAN, AND ALL EROGENIAN.>

<I AM SNAKE TRIBE, AND I'M FREE AND MY TRIBE LOVES ME. WE WERE ALL ONCE ESHTAKK, BUT NOW WE'RE FREE MEN AND WOMEN.>



<WE'LL TAKE YOU TO THEM. ALMOST ALL THE ADULTS HAVE BEEN SLAVES TO THE URTTS AT ONE TIME, INCLUDING THE KING AND QUEEN.>

<THEY'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO BE FREE. COME ALONG QUICKLY OR YOU'LL GO BACK TO THE CAGE AND THE CHAINS AND THE SLAUGHTER-PITS, AND NO ONE WANTS THAT. DO YOU WANT THAT?>

<NO...>

<GOOD. THIS WILL BE BETTER. WE'LL PROVE IT TO YOU.>

LIBERTY MEANS RESPONSIBILITY. THAT IS WHY MOST MEN DREAD IT.



I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS ABOUT FREEDOM THAT SO FRIGHTENS SOME OF THEM.

OH, I DO UNDERSTAND, TOO WELL.

BUT YOU KNOW, I'M GLAD, IN A WAY, THAT YOU DON'T. I LOVE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO CONCEPT OF SLAVERY. WHO COULDN'T TREAT A MAN LIKE PROPERTY TO SAVE THEIR LIVES.



THAT'S WORTH ... EVERYTHING TO ME.



"OH, MY, YES!" - PROF. FARNSWORTH.





GENNA?
NO, I DIDN'T KNOW! WHY DOESN'T
SHE SAY ANYTHING?

SHE'S
FIRE TRIBE - YOU
HAVE TO ASK?

SHE'S A WARRIOR - HOW
CAN SHE BE FIRE TRIBE?

SHE'S ARROGOND'S NIECE,
AND SHE HAS HIM WRAPPED AROUND
HER FINGER. HE THOUGHT HE'D CALL
HER BLUFF WHEN SHE SAID SHE
WANTED TO FIGHT - WAS HE SURPRISED
WHEN SHE TURNED OUT TO BE
BETTER THAN MOST OF THE MEN!
ASK ME? THERE'S MORE
THAN A LITTLE LION TRIBE ON
HER MOTHER'S SIDE.

MR SOPWITH, AREN'T YOU IN FACT A TRAIN SPOTTER?



WELL, WELL.
THIS IS A NICE BIT
OF INFORMATION, PRINCESS,
THANKS.

KEEP IT QUIET, THOUGH.
WOULDN'T WANT TO START A RIOT
WITH HER COUSINS, ESPECIALLY PONTIGAR.
HE'S OBNOXIOUS ENOUGH AROUND
YOU AT THE BEST OF TIMES.

I AM THE
PRINCE OF SUBTLE,
YOU KNOW THAT.




SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'M GOING TO
TAKE A COUPLE OF THE SCOUTS AND
CHECK BACK. THE ADVANCE GUARD SHOULD
BE STARTING TO GET SUSPICIOUS ABOUT
WHY THE REST OF THE PARTY HASN'T
HOOKED UP WITH THEM, YET.

DON'T ENGAGE THEM.
JUST COME BACK TO US.

OH... YOU'RE
NO FUN ANYMORE.





HERE WE GO, YEH?
YOU JUST TRY TO LOOK
OLD AND TIRED - DON'T SAY
NOTHIN', YEH?

AND WHAT?
HOPE THAT THE GUARDS ARE
STUPID ENOUGH TO OPEN THE
GATE DURING CURFEW?

WELL, MOST O' THE
GUARDS AINT THAT STUPID -
BUT SOME OF 'EM ARE, YEH?

AND THE TRICK IS KNOWING
WHAT SHIFT THE STUPIDS'RE
ON AND WHAT GATE
THEY'RE AT, YEH?

AND, UH - THAT
HAS TO GO.

NO
PROBLEM.

YEH? HEH.
THOT YOU FOLK'D
DIE TO WEAR THOSE
BITS OF JEWELRY,
YEH?

FOR THE RIGHT
TO WEAR IT, MAYBE.
A MAN WHO CAN'T TOSS A
TREASURE WHEN HE NEEDS TO
IS WEARING SHACKLES.

LORD TETHIK
DIDNT KILL MY
GRANDSON,
DID HE?

HE SAYS
HE DIDNT, YEH?,
AND HE'S ALWAYS PLAYED
STRAIGHT WITH ME, YEH?
DIDNT SEEM REALLY
HIS STYLE, ANYWAY.

THE WHOLE THING
SMELLS MORE LIKE THAT
PIMPLY SECOND SON
OF KENDRIK'S, AND
YOU JUST CONFIRMED
IT FOR ME.

"BRING YOUR DOG AROUND, I'LL GIVE HIM A BONUS, TOO."

OH, HE'S OVER
THE PIMPLES.

HOW D'YOU
KNOW THAT?

I GET
AROUND, YEH?

MM.
WE'RE TRUSTING
YOU PRACTICALLY ON
INSTINCT, YOU KNOW.

IF YOU BETRAY US,
I DONT CARE HOW
GOOD YOU ARE, YOU
WILL DIE FOR IT.

SUITS ME, YEH?

LONG AS I
GET MY BONUS.



"SOME MEN ARE BORN MEDIOCRE MEN, SOME MEN ACHIEVE MEDIOCRITY, AND SOME MEN HAVE MEDIOCRITY THRUST UPON THEM"





HO, THERE!
WHAT'S YOUR —

OH, HELLO,
THERE, POHLEE!

ALL RIGHT, LEHNI?
HOW'S THE NIGHT?

JUST FINE,
JUST FINE.

OH, YEAH, FOR THOSE
OF US WHO DIDN'T GET OUR
FUCKING THUMB CUT OFF.
IT'S FINE ...



WHAT'S THAT,
SKIGGI? MAYHEM?

AH, FORGET HIM.
HE'S JUST BEIN'
A LITTLE BOY-LOVER.

AM NOT!

YOUR MASTER
GOT YOU DELIVERIN'
AFTER HOURS AGAIN?

OH, YEAH.
YOU KNOW HIM —
HE'S ALWAYS GOT SOME
SCHEME, YOU KNOW?



THIS TIME HE'S
WANGLED A WEDDING
PARTY IN GRODNIK, ONLY
HE DON'T TELL ME ABOUT
IT UNTIL THIS
AFTERNOON.

SPENT REST OF THE DAY GETTING
ALL THE GOODS READY FROM BOTH WAREHOUSES
AND THE ONLY WAY WE CAN GET THE WINE
THERE ON TIME IS TO LEAVE IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE GODDAMN NIGHT.



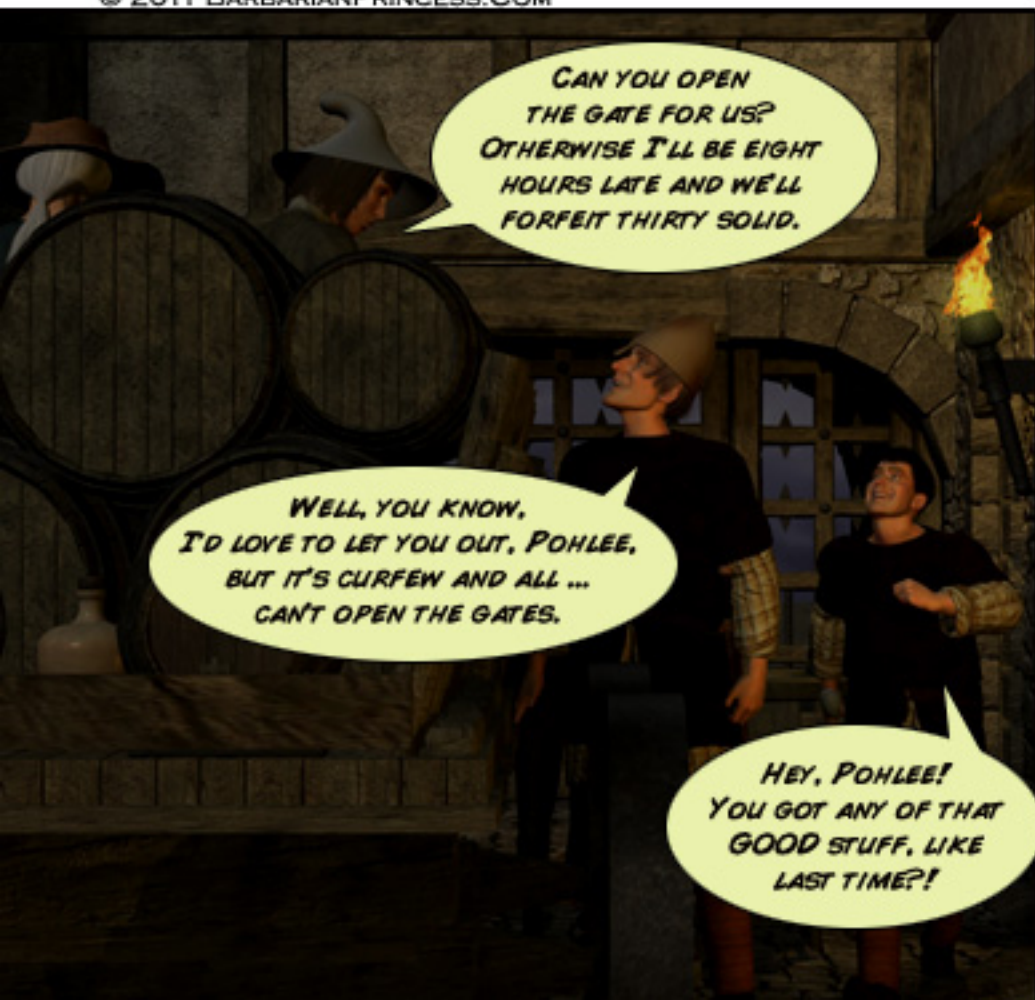
GRODNIK? HAH!
THEY MARRY THEIR SISTERS
IN THAT LITTLE VILLAGE!

MORE THAN HALF
YERGO, I HEAR, AND
Y'KNOW WHAT THAT
MEANS.

HA-HAH!
WELL, I DIDN'T ASK
WHO THE BRIDE
WAS, DID I?

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...BUT LIQUOR IS QUICKER.



CAN YOU OPEN
THE GATE FOR US?
OTHERWISE I'LL BE EIGHT
HOURS LATE AND WE'LL
FORFEIT THIRTY SOLID.

WELL, YOU KNOW,
I'D LOVE TO LET YOU OUT, POHLEE,
BUT IT'S CURFEW AND ALL ...
CAN'T OPEN THE GATES.

HEY, POHLEE!
YOU GOT ANY OF THAT
GOOD STUFF, LIKE
LAST TIME?!



NOT SO FUCKIN'
LOUD, DAMMIT!

WHAT?

THE
GOOD STUFF, EH?
WELL ...

BLOODY LITTLE
SIR OBVIOUS!

HONESTLY, DID YOUR MA HAVE
ANY KIDS THAT LIVED?!



SEEING AS HOW
YOU'RE BOTH MY FRIENDS,
I DID MANAGE TO TUCK A JUG BACK THERE.
MASTER WON'T MISS IT, AND YOU ALL DO
YOUR DUTY, KEEPING US SAFE,
DONT YA?

WELL, THAT'S
GENEROUS,
THANKS,
POHLEE.

HEY . . . PARDON ME FOR ASKING
BUT WHO'S THAT LITTLE OLD MAN?



WHAT LITTLE OLD MAN?

THAT
LITTLE OLD
MAN.

OH, THAT ONE.
THAT'S MY
GRANDFATHER.

Y'GRANDFATHER?

YEAH.



THAT'S NOT
YOUR GRANDFATHER.

IT IS, Y'KNOW.

BUT I'VE SEEN YOUR
GRANDFATHER, HE LIVES
IN YOUR HOUSE.

OH, THAT'S MY OTHER
GRANDFATHER, BUT HE'S MY
GRANDFATHER AS WELL.

HOW DO YOU
RECKON THAT
ONE OUT?

WELL . . . EVERYONE'S ENTITLED TO
TWO, AREN'T THEY, AND THIS IS MY
OTHER ONE.



WELL WE KNOW THAT,
BUT WHAT'S HE DOIN' HERE?

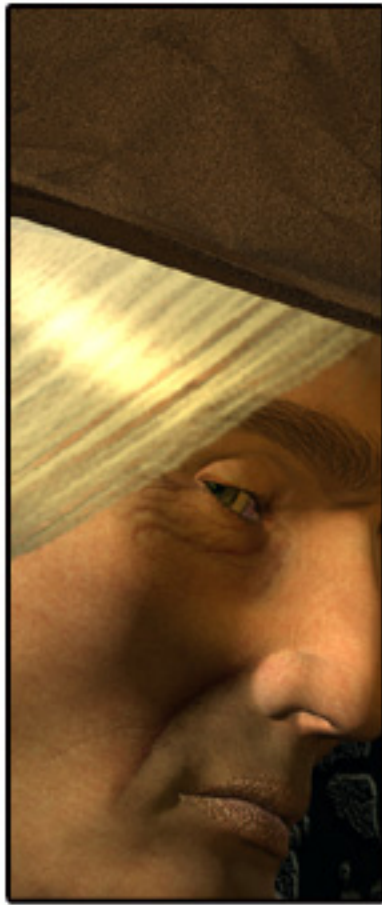
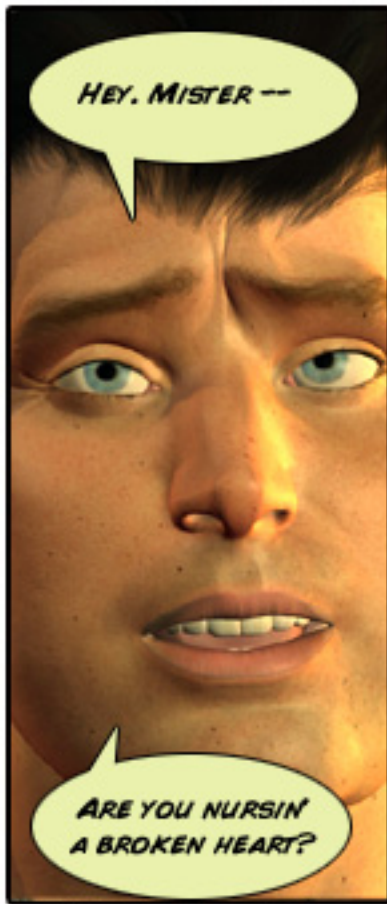
WELL, MY MOTHER
THOUGHT THE TRIP U'D
DO HIM GOOD.

HOW'S THAT?



HE'S NURSING
A BROKEN HEART.

AHH, THE
POOR OLD
THING.



I HAVE A CUNNING PLAN ...



A FINE DAY.

AUTUMN IS GETTING ON
TOWARD WINTER, BUT THE SUN
STILL WARMS YOU, EVEN AS THE
FRESH COLD BREEZES IN A CHILL
BLUE SKY CHAP YOUR LIPS AND
CHEEKS AND KEEP YOU AWAKE.

IT'S BEEN FIVE WEEKS SINCE THE
URTTs TOOK HIM, AND I KNOW THAT
GELTHIK ISN'T COMING BACK. I PRAY
HE'S DEAD, AND NOTHING WORSE.

MY HEART IS A
LUMP OF LEAD IN ME.

I ONCE WAS A CHILD, BUT THE CHILD WAS KILLED.

I GO THROUGH THE DAYS
LIKE A WOODEN STATUE.

NO LIFE,
NO LOVE,
NO JOY.



AND YET I WALK ON, STILLBORN IN WAR AND CANNOT DIE.



ALMOST NO JOY.



THE RAIDS.

THE WAR.

I REMEMBER ...

IT WAS AS THOUGH
ALL THE DEMONS HAD
COME OUT OF THE DEEPS TO
PLAGUE AND DESTROY US.



OUR MEN WERENT COWARDS,
THEY DIDNT SHAME US.



THEY FOUGHT AS WELL AS MEN CAN - BUT HOW
WELL CAN FARMERS AND CRAFTSMEN FIGHT AGAINST
BEASTS LIKE THAT? WE WATCHED AS THEY DIED.

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AND THE WOMEN AND
CHILDREN WERE ROPED AND
TIED LIKE ANIMALS.

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED.

THEN --



FROM OUT OF THE WEST
THEY SWEEPED DOWN ON THE URTTS.
THEY WERE GIANTS, MEN AND
WOMEN WITH BLOND OR RED
HAIR AND BLUE OR GREEN EYES,

WARRIORS SO FAST AND
TERRIBLE THAT THE URTTS
SEEMED TO MELT IN FRONT
OF THEM.

AND AT THEIR HEAD WAS THE
BIGGEST MAN ON THE BIGGEST HORSE
I HAD EVER SEEN OR EVER WILL.

ZONN.

"APPARENTLY YOU THINK OF ME ONLY AS THE LEADER OF A CAUSE."



GODS ...

SHE SEEMED
LIKE A GODDESS.



I KNOW NOW
SHE COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
MORE THAN
TWENTY-ONE.

YOU DON'T
LOOK TOO BAD,
LITTLE ONE.

HERE - TRY
TO TAKE A DEEP
BREATH.

HK -- HUH
HAAAHH ... **GASP--**

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"WELL - I'M ALSO A HUMAN BEING."



OH ...
SOLAN AMANHARA ...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, NOW,
WE'VE KILLED THEM.
WE DROVE THEM
AWAY.

THEY
WON'T HURT YOU
ANYMORE.



IPOLA!

HOW GOES IT?

WE'VE ROUTED
THEM, ALL RIGHT.

TRINARA ...

UT ... I ...
HAHHH ...

BUT A BUNCH OF THEM
LIT OUT AHEAD OF US AND
MADE THE WOODS BEFORE
WE COULD OVERTAKE THEM.



DAMN.

I CAN TAKE
SOME WARRIORS --

NO. WE HAVE TO WAIT
UNTIL OUR MAIN FORCE CATCHES
UP WITH US, OR KENDRIK'S MEN
CAN SECURE THIS AREA.



KENDRIK'S
TWO DAYS TO THE NORTH,
AND THE OTHERS ARE
EVEN FARTHER.

IPOLA, WITH EVERY
MINUTE THEY GET FURTHER
OUT OF REACH ...

WE HAVEN'T GOT THE NUMBERS
TO PUSH INTO THEIR TERRITORY.
WE DID WELL TODAY -

BUT IT MEANS
NOTHING IF I LOSE MORE
THAN I'VE GAINED, OR OVERREACH
AND LET THEM CIRCLE BEHIND
US IN THE FOREST.

IPOLA -

NO. WE WAIT.

"MAKE FOR SCYLLA'S ROCK INSTEAD, AS IT IS FAR BETTER TO MOURN 6 FRIENDS LOST OUT OF YOUR SHIP THAN THE WHOLE COMPANY."



IPOLA - MAJESTY -

THEY TOOK THEIR PRISONERS.
CHILDREN, WOMEN.

SOME OF THEM WILL BE
MEAT BY TOMORROW!



YOU
THINK I DON'T
KNOW
THAT?!





WHERE DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE ...
ZONN?!

HEAR ME, YOU HAD
BETTER TURN RIGHT AROUND,
RIGHT NOW!!



GODDAMMIT, ZONN!
WHAT GOOD ARE YOU
TO ANYBODY IF YOU
JUST GET YOURSELF
KILLED FOR
NOTHING?!!

ZONN!



FINE!!
YOU ARE NOT MY
CHAMPION ANYMORE,
DYOU HEAR?

I'LL BE SLEEPING
WITH SOMEBODY ELSE
BY TOMORROW NIGHT!

NOT AS IF I HAVENT
GOT PLENTY TO
CHOOSE FROM!!



PLEASE ...

DON'T GO ...

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"THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH" J.W. BOBBIT.



AAAGH!!



IF HE COMES BACK ALIVE,
I AM GELDING THE MAN.

I KNOW HOW
TO DO IT, TOO. GET HIM GOOD
AND SOUSED, AND THEN WHEN
HE'S ASLEEP, SNICK!

GOT JUST THE
KNIFE FOR IT. GOOD
AND SHARP.

I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF THE NEXT FEW DAYS BESIDES CRYING. I WAS SEVEN, AND MOTHER WAS GONE.



BUT I'M TOLD THAT THE EROGENIANS HELPED US BUILD A PALISADE AND DEFENSES FOR WHEN THE URTTS MIGHT RETURN, AND STARTED TUTORING SOME OF US THAT WERE LEFT IN THEIR WAYS OF FIGHTING.

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AND FOR THOSE NIGHTS THE QUEEN KEPT HERSELF BUSY MANAGING EVERY ASPECT OF HER PEOPLE, AND EVEN PERSONALLY USING HER HEALING MAGICKS ON THOSE OF US WHO WOULD ACCEPT IT.



AND THE KING'S SOLDIERS WERE DELAYED BY FIGHTING TO THE NORTH, AND SO THE EROGENIANS' TIME WITH US DRAGGED ON.

SOMETIMES, HOPE CAN BE NOTHING MORE THAN A TRAP.

BUT IN ANY ODD MOMENT WHEN SHE WASN'T WORKING, PEOPLE COULD SEE HER STARING OUT AFTER WHERE ZONN HAD RIDDEN ON HIS GREAT GREY HORSE. AND SHE REFUSED TO SAY HIS NAME, AND WOULDN'T ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO SPEAK OF HIM.

SHE TRIED TO TREAT HIM AS THOUGH HE WERE ALREADY DEAD.

NOW, OF COURSE, I KNOW WHY.



THEN, EARLY
ONE MORNING —

RIDERS!

BATTLE READY!

ARCHERS!
TO HORSE!

MAJESTY, WAIT!
THEY'RE NOT URTTS!

THEN WHO ..?

WELL —
THE GUY IN THE LEAD
IS REALLY BIG.

AND BLOND.

AND HE'S RIDIN'
A GREAT BIG GRAY.



OH, THANK THE GODS ...

"BY ALL THE SPIRIT KINGS, THAT MAN WAS MAGNIFICENT."



I'D HAVE BEEN BACK SOONER, BUT I HAD TO LIBERATE SOME HORSES - ORGANIZE THAT CART.

OTHERWISE WE MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET EVERYBODY AWAY.

I SEE.



THESE ARE GOOD PEOPLE, IPOLA. THEY FOUGHT HARD. ALL I HAD TO DO WAS CUT THEIR BONDS AND TELL THEM WHAT TO DO.

THEY SURPRISED ME. SURPRISED THE URTTS EVEN MORE.

REALLY?



THEY'VE GOT HEART. I DON'T MIND FIGHTING FOR THEM.

THEY ARE GOOD PEOPLE, YES.

COME HERE.

EVERYBODY BUT HIM SAW IT COMING A MILE AWAY.



YEAH?



WHAAAA



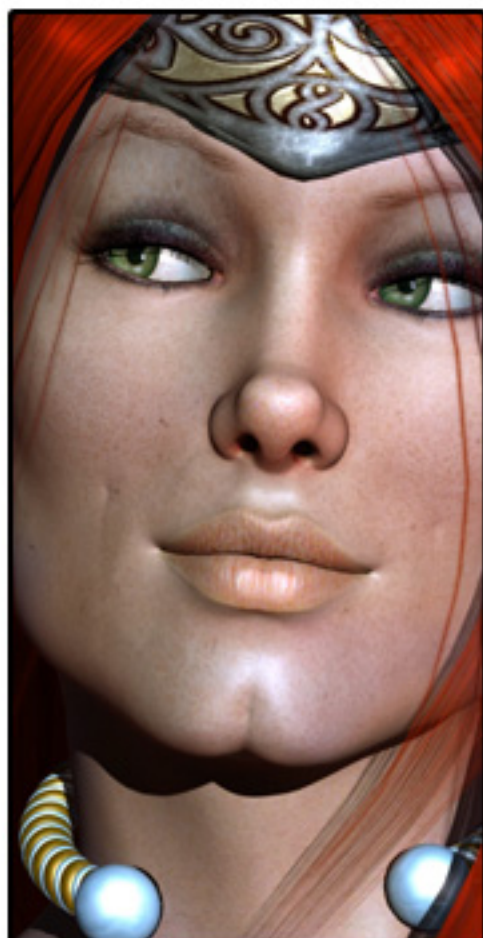
EVERYBODY BUT HIM SAW IT COMING A MILE AWAY.





"EVERY NOW AND THEN I FEEL THAT MY EXISTENCE IS JUSTIFIED."



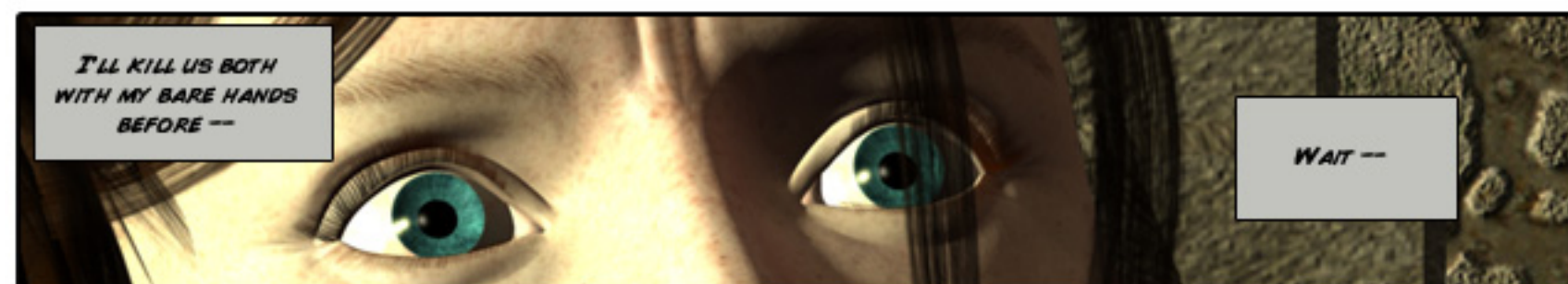


I DON'T KNOW WHY I LOVE YOU BUT I DO





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"I WAS RIGHT. YOU ARE A SENTIMENTALIST."





NEAR NORMOS.
A FARM A SHORT WAY'S
FROM THE ABBEY OF
HOLY KALACHMA.

WELL, HIS COLOR IS MUCH BETTER -
AND I'VE NEVER SEEN A GIRL RISE SO SOON
FROM BED AFTERWARDS, AND SUCH A
HARD BIRTH, TOO.

PRAISE GOD, SHE'S A
HEALTHY YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUR POTIONS,
IS WHAT IT IS, BROTHER.

NOTHING YOU
DON'T ALWAYS DO, SURELY.

I USUALLY MAKE 'EM MYSELF,
BUT THIS CAME ON TOO EARLY AND
MY BATCH WASN'T READY.

I'M ONLY GLAD
I HAD SOME OF MY OWN
PREPARED WHEN
YOU CALLED.

WELL, I ONLY KNOW
WHAT I SEE, AND I KNOW MY PHYSICS
NEVER WORK THIS WELL, AND I'M NOT
THE ONLY ONE IN THE TOWN
THAT SAYS SO.

OH, COME.

NO, NO, DON'T
PUT ME OFF.

IT'S TRUE WHAT I'VE HEARD,
ABOUT WHAT YOU USED TO DO BEFORE
YOU TOOK THE VOWS?

I'VE DONE
MANY THINGS.

O, MICKLE IS THE POWERFUL GRACE THAT LIES

IN HERBS, PLANTS, STONES, AND THEIR TRUE QUALITIES.

I JUST MEAN THAT, WELL -
IT SEEMS LIKE THAT ESSENCE
MIGHT HAVE A LITTLE ...

MAGICK ...

... IN IT?

I --

NOT THAT I'M LIKE SOME,
MIND. I ... I DON'T JUDGE ...

MISTRESS,
I PUT ALL THAT
BEHIND ME MANY
YEARS AGO.



BUT THE -

I PROMISE YOU, IF THERE IS ANY SPECIAL VIRTUE IN MY PREPARATION, IT IS NOT MAGICK.

IT WOULD GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE IF YOU WOULD COME TO MY WORKSHOP AND I'LL SHOW YOU AND TEACH YOU EXACTLY HOW I PREPARE THE ESSENCE.



WELL ... ALL RIGHT.

SPLENDID. ANY TIME AFTER MORNING PRAYERS, I'M LIKELY TO BE THERE AND I'LL BE HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU. FAREWELL!

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THE MOTHER'S PAINS WERE EASED AND THE CHILD WILL BE STRONG. AND, IF I CAN TEACH A MIDWIFE A BETTER WAY TO COAX THE ESSENCE FROM AN HERB, THEN THE TOWN ITSELF BENEFITS. HUMBLE VICTORIES LIKE THIS FILL MY LIFE WITH PURPOSE AND CONTENTMENT.

MANY YEARS AGO, I DREAMED OF POWER, OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. I HAD THE AMBITION TO TAKE THE WORLD APART WITH SORCERY, AND THEN PUT IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, ORDERED AND ASSEMBLED AS I, MYSELF, WOULD WISH IT TO BE. GOD STRIPPED ME OF ALL SUCH AMBITION AND POWER AS JUST REWARD FOR MY ARROGANCE. AND WHAT SEEMED A PUNISHMENT WAS THE BLESSING OF A LIFETIME.



IN THESE MY LATER YEARS, I HAVE FOUND THE TRUE SECRET OF HAPPINESS. "LOVE THAT WHICH YOU DO AND YOU SHALL DO THAT WHICH YOU LOVE. DESIRE ONLY WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY GIVEN YOU, AND YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR WHOLE DESIRE." HOLY THRASU'S WORDS ARE AS TRUE NOW AS THEY WERE 1200 YEARS AGO.

THERE'S ONE IN EVERY BUNCH.

AFTER WALKING THE HALLS OF POWER AND PALACES OF PRIVILEGE IN MY YOUTH, MY HUMBLE WORKSHOP AND GARDEN ARE TO ME GREATER AND RICHER THAN ANY NOBLE'S TOWER OR MIGHTY CASTLE.

ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, LIKE THEM, I STILL HAVE TO ENDURE THE OCCASIONAL SIEGE.



BROTHER
LAEMUL!





TA-DA!





"THE CAT WAS CREATED WHEN THE LION SNEEZED"





IF YOU HATE A PERSON, YOU HATE SOMETHING IN HIM THAT IS PART OF YOURSELF.



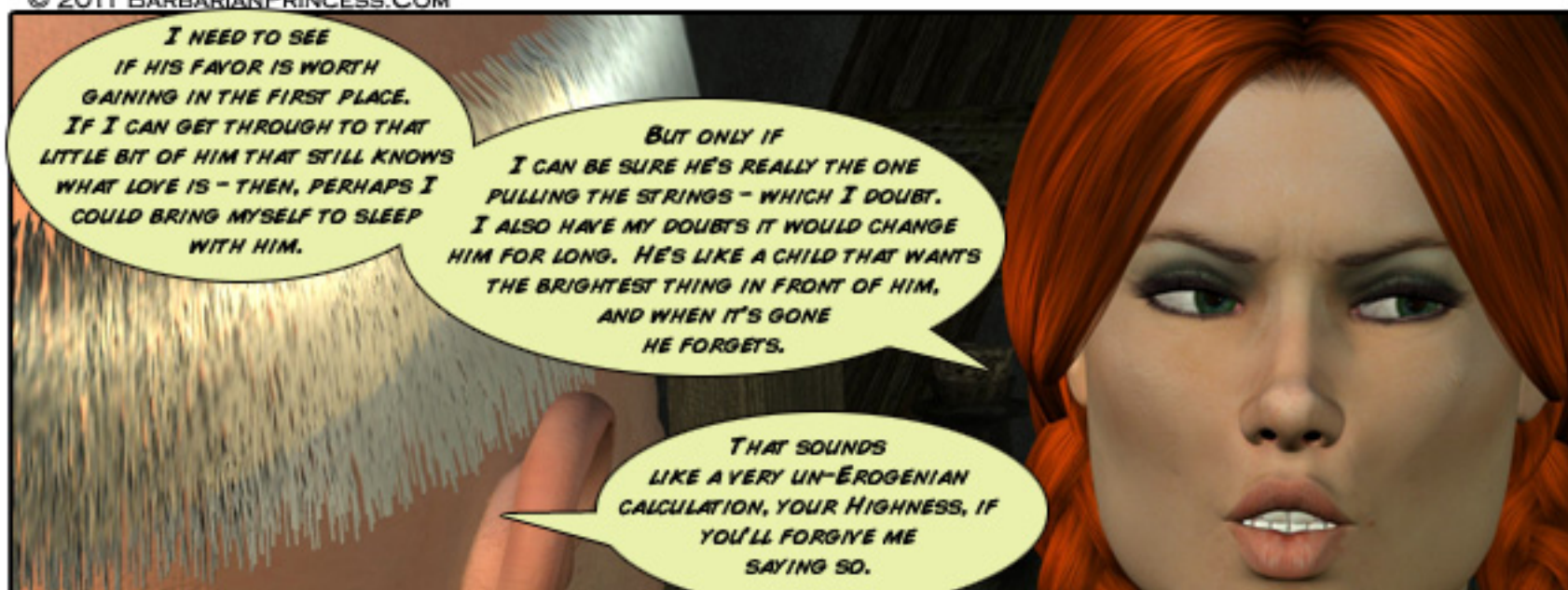


I DON'T HAVE MUCH HOPE, BUT WE HAVE TO TRY.

KYALIA AND EROGENIA NEED EACH OTHER FOR WHAT'S COMING, AND MOTHER THOUGHT IF HE'D LISTEN TO ANYONE, HE'D LISTEN TO ME.

HM ...
I KNOW IT WON'T OFFEND YOUR SENSIBILITIES IF I ASK HOW FAR YOU'RE WILLING TO GO TO GAIN HIS FAVOR?

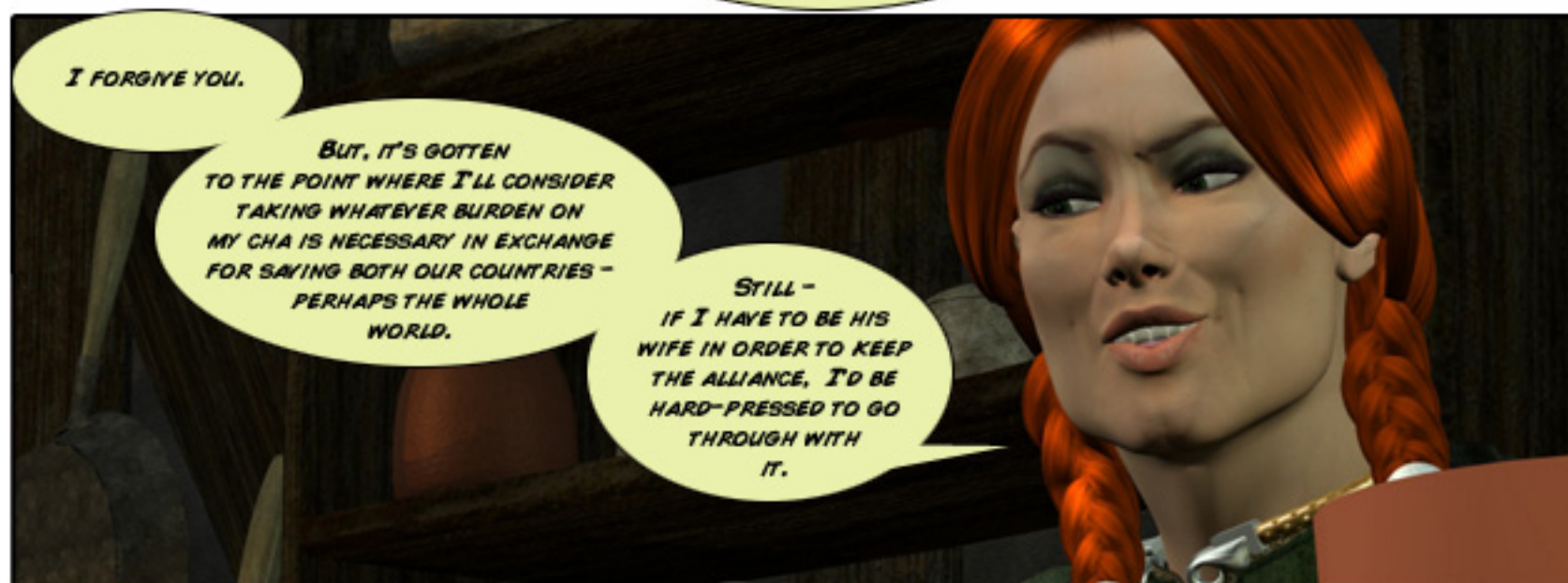
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I NEED TO SEE IF HIS FAVOR IS WORTH GAINING IN THE FIRST PLACE. IF I CAN GET THROUGH TO THAT LITTLE BIT OF HIM THAT STILL KNOWS WHAT LOVE IS - THEN, PERHAPS I COULD BRING MYSELF TO SLEEP WITH HIM.

BUT ONLY IF I CAN BE SURE HE'S REALLY THE ONE PULLING THE STRINGS - WHICH I DOUBT. I ALSO HAVE MY DOUBTS IT WOULD CHANGE HIM FOR LONG. HE'S LIKE A CHILD THAT WANTS THE BRIGHTEST THING IN FRONT OF HIM, AND WHEN IT'S GONE HE FORGETS.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A VERY UN-EROGENIAN CALCULATION, YOUR HIGHNESS, IF YOU'LL FORGIVE ME SAYING SO.

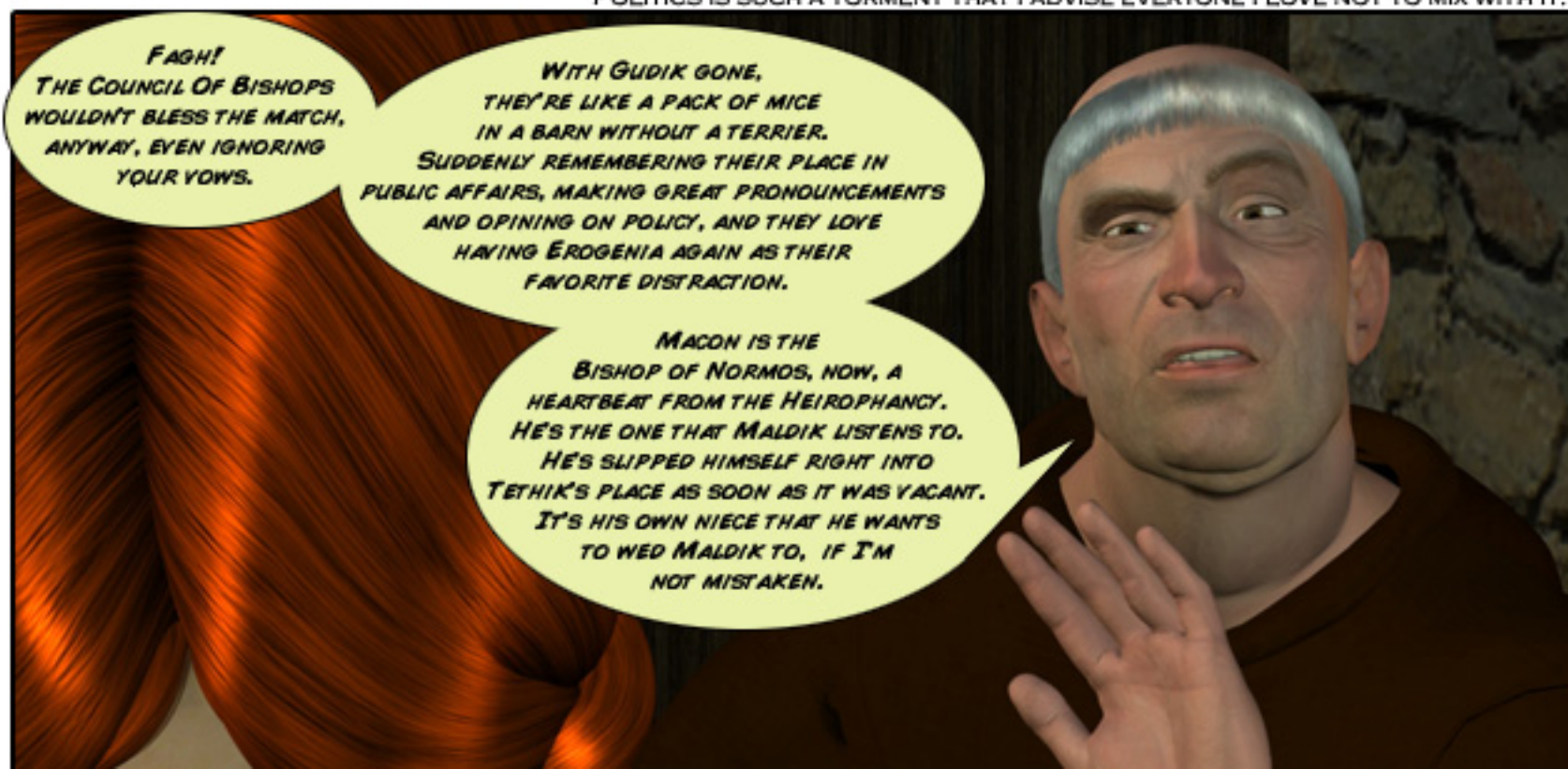


I FORGIVE YOU.

BUT, IT'S GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE I'LL CONSIDER TAKING WHATEVER BURDEN ON MY CHA IS NECESSARY IN EXCHANGE FOR SAYING BOTH OUR COUNTRIES - PERHAPS THE WHOLE WORLD.

STILL - IF I HAVE TO BE HIS WIFE IN ORDER TO KEEP THE ALLIANCE, I'D BE HARD-PRESSED TO GO THROUGH WITH IT.

POLITICS IS SUCH A TORMENT THAT I ADVISE EVERYONE I LOVE NOT TO MIX WITH IT.



FAGH! THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS WOULDN'T BLESS THE MATCH, ANYWAY, EVEN IGNORING YOUR VOWS.

WITH GUDIK GONE, THEY'RE LIKE A PACK OF MICE IN A BARN WITHOUT A TERRIER. SUDDENLY REMEMBERING THEIR PLACE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, MAKING GREAT PRONOUNCEMENTS AND OPINING ON POLICY, AND THEY LOVE HAVING EROGENIA AGAIN AS THEIR FAVORITE DISTRACTION.

MACON IS THE BISHOP OF NORMOS, NOW, A HEARTBEAT FROM THE HEIROPHANCY. HE'S THE ONE THAT MALDIK LISTENS TO. HE'S SLIPPED HIMSELF RIGHT INTO TETHIK'S PLACE AS SOON AS IT WAS VACANT. IT'S HIS OWN NIECE THAT HE WANTS TO WED MALDIK TO, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.



SO - IT SEEMS
AS THOUGH I REALLY HAVE
MY WORK CUT OUT
FOR ME.

I'M AFRAID
THERE ISN'T MUCH HELP I
CAN OFFER, BY MY OATHS AND UNDER
THE EYE OF BROTHER WEXIM, MY CHILD,
BUT WHAT I CAN DO,
I WILL.

WHICH BRINGS
US TO THE SECOND REASON
FOR MY COMING
HERE.

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LOOK AT THIS:

BY
ALL THE SPIRIT
KINGS...

THIS
CAME HERE WITH
OUR FRIEND,
MENTL.

HE'S FROM
ANOTHER WORLD,
ANOTHER DIMENSION
CALLED SANBERDINO,
I THINK.

MAGICK
DOESN'T WORK THE
SAME THERE.

BUT HE
BECAME THE MOST
POWERFUL ENCHANTER
ANY OF US HAVE EVER SEEN
PRACTICALLY AS SOON AS
HE SET FOOT HERE AND
THIS ARTIFACT WAS AT
THE CENTER
OF IT.



AND YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT IS?

I KEEP
TRYING TO READ IT, BUT -
NONSENSE, UNREADABLE
RUNES AND TEXT
OR ELSE --

WELL,
ONE TIME
IT MADE A RUDE
REMARK IN ANCIENT
PALOTIN. THAT'S
IT.

OBVIOUSLY INTELLIGENT.
THE POWER -- EXTRAORDINARY! YOU
CAN FEEL IT JUST POURING OFF...

"WTF?" I HEAR YOU SAY. AND WELL YOU MIGHT.



LORDS
AND LADIES OF LIGHT,
TULA.

I THINK
THIS IS ...
SIDEREAN.



SO - IT SEEMS
AS THOUGH I REALLY HAVE
MY WORK CUT OUT
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LORDS
AND LADIES OF LIGHT,
TULA.

I THINK
THIS IS ...
SIDEREAN.



ARE YOU CERTAIN?

UNDER THE
CERTAINTY OF GOD,
NOTHING IS CERTAIN,
BUT ... YES, THIS HAS
ALL THE SIGNS.



WE'VE BEEN
WORKING ON IT FOR
MONTHS, AND WE NEVER EVEN
SUSPECTED.

THAT'S BECAUSE
IT'S SO CLEVERLY DISGUISED
ITSELF. NONE OF YOU'VE EVER SEEN A
SIDEREAN ARTIFACT, - NOR HAS ANYONE ELSE
IN A GOOD FORTY YEARS, I THINK. BUT, IN MY
YOUNGER DAYS, I SAW. AND MORE.
MAY I KEEP IT HERE
TO STUDY?

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NATURALLY.

AND NOW,
I HAVE TO GO AND
ENTER THE CASTLE BY THE
FRONT GATE, BE ANNOUNCED
AND MAKE NICE WITH
YOUR PRINCE.

AND
BISHOP MACON.

UCK.
THAT'S LIKE ADDING
FIRE PEPPER TO A
SHIT STEW.

DO YOU
THINK YOU'LL TRY
TO SEE HER
MAJESTY?



I KNOW I WILL -
WHETHER MALDIK WANTS
ME TO OR NOT.

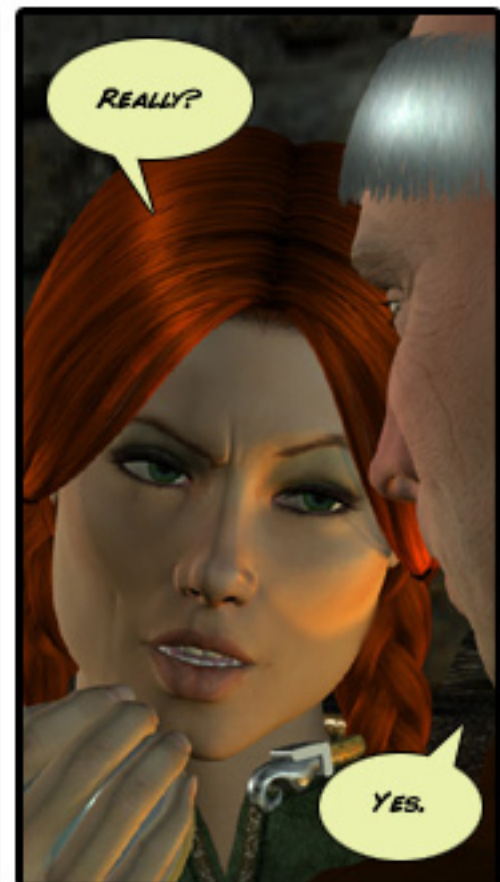
I HAVE
MY WAYS.

COULD BE WORSE. COULD BE RAINING.



I DON'T
WANT TO
KNOW.

BUT --
IF YOU SHOULD GET
IN TO HER, GIVE
HER SOME OF
THIS.




REALLY?

YES.



"THE ADVENTURES FIRST... EXPLANATIONS TAKE SUCH A DREADFUL TIME."





HER HIGHNESS,
PRINCESS TULA UTHIC IPOLA
OF THE MOON TRIBE
OF EROGENIA ...

AND ...

... FRIEND.

YOUR HIGHNESS!
UM ... GREETINGS!

FROM
MY MOTHER,
QUEEN IPOLA
THANTIC RAYONNA OF
THE MOON TRIBE, LIEGE
LADY OF ALL EROGENIA,
I BRING FAIR GREETINGS
TO YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS,
AND WELL WISHES TO
ALL KIVALIA.

UMM ...

UH --

SO -

HOW'RE
YOU DOING,
MALDIK?

DIPLOMACY: THE ART OF RESTRAINING POWER.



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"HANG ON TO THIS, BOY. I THINK WAR'S JUST BEEN DECLARED."





MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR.



I THINK I'VE NEVER HAD A MORE COMPLETELY DREADFUL MEAL.

IT SEEMED AS THOUGH ALL MY OLD FRIENDS AT COURT EITHER HAD SOME DUTY SOMEWHERE ELSE OR WERE DEAD, ABSENT OR "INDISPOSED."

EVERYONE ELSE SEEMED POSITIVELY AFRAID TO SPEAK TO ME - OR TREATED ME WITH BARELY-DISGUISED CONTEMPT.

FROM OVERHEARD CONVERSATIONS, IT ALSO BECAME CLEAR TO ME THAT THE NEWS OF ZONA'S DEATH AND THE NULLIFICATION OF THE TREATY WAS THE MOST WELCOME PUBLIC LIE THAT HAD BEEN TOLD HERE IN TWENTY YEARS.

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MALDIK KEPT TRYING TO CLUMSILY FLIRT WITH ME, AND MACON ALWAYS DIVERTED THE CONVERSATION FROM ANYTHING SUBSTANTIAL.

HE WAS VERY GOOD, I HAVE TO GIVE HIM CREDIT FOR THAT.

SMOOTH AND COOL, LIKE THE SKIN OF AN EEL.

... SUDDENLY THERE CAME A TAPPING.

AS OF SOMEONE GENTLY RAPPING, RAPPING AT MY CHAMBER DOOR.

AT ANY RATE, ONCE THE MEAL WAS OVER I WAS SHUTTLED OFF TO MY CHAMBER.

HOURS LATER --

**KNOCK-
KNOCK!**

COME.



COMPASSION WILL CURE MORE SINS THAN CONDEMNATION.







I KNOW
THAT MAYBE YOU'RE INTO
A SITUATION YOU'RE HAVING
TROUBLE CONTROLLING.

THAT'S
SOMETHING
THAT CAN HAPPEN A
LOT WHEN YOU HAVE
THE KIND OF POWER
THAT WE DO -
YOU'RE NOT THE
ONLY ONE.

WE CAN GET
INVOLVED IN THINGS
THAT ARE MATTERS OF
LIFE AND DEATH
FOR THOUSANDS AND
THOUSANDS OF
PEOPLE.

ANY LITTLE MISTAKE
CAN BE MAGNIFIED TO DISASTER -
AND IT CAN SEEM SO TANGLED
THAT YOU CAN NEVER
BREAK FREE.



BUT IT'S
NOT TOO LATE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE
EVERYTHING ALONE.

WE CAN HELP,
NO MATTER WHAT
IT IS, MALDIK.

IT'S THAT
IMPORTANT, NOW.
WE CAN HELP.

I ...
I COULD
HELP.



MALDIK,
ZONA IS NOT
DEAD.



AHHH ...
UHH ...

WELL, I GOT
A VERY DIFFERENT
REPORT, SEE.
AND ...

AND I THINK ...
I MEAN, THERE'S AN
ONGOING INVESTIGATION,
YOU KNOW, AND ... AND
MOTHER IS ...

I SAW
ZONA MONTHS
AGO -- AFTER
THIS RUMOR WAS
STARTED,

WE'VE
HAD NEARLY DAILY
MESSAGES FROM
HER SINCE.

MALDIK,
YOU KNOW I
WOULD NEVER
LIE.



I ...
WELL, I ...

I GUESS
I COULD ...

**KNOCK
KNOCK!**

GO AWAY

YOUR
HIGHNESS!



I TRULY
REGRET HAVING TO INTERRUPT
YOUR MEETING IN THIS WAY,
BUT A MATTER HAS ARISEN THAT
NEEDS YOUR IMMEDIATE
ATTENTION.





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YEAH, I GOT YOUR "SECURITY" RIGHT HERE, PAL.



AND NOW FOR SOMETHING
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

AN ANCIENT RUIN IN
A DESOLATE PART OF
THE WILDS.

FOR THE LATECOMERS AMONG YOU,
THE BLONDE MUSCULAR TYPE SHOWING A
LOT OF SKIN IS PRINCESS ZONA, THE
CHAMPION OF ALL EROGENIA.



SHE IS ABOUT
TO WIN A FIGHT.





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Boy, it's always something.



CRACK-DOO!!!



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THIS MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK IT IS. OR NOT.





WHAT -
YOU NEED
HELP?

ARE YOU IN
TROUBLE?

YOU HAVE
NO IDEA!

AND PLEASE!
PLEASE JUST LEAVE ME BE!
I CANT TALK TO
YOU!

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I'LL MAKE
YOU TALK, BY
LUNA!

WHAT'S YOUR
CONNECTION TO THE BLADE?
WHY ARE YOU DRESSED
LIKE THAT?

GAHH!
YOU DONT
UNDERSTAND! I'M
NOT SUPPOSED
TO BE --

-- OH,
GOD, THEY'RE
GONNA KILL ME!
I JUST HAVE TO
GET AWAY!



K-KSSHHH!!



Whoosh!

OF COURSE THEY HAD TO FIGHT. THEY'RE SUPERHEROES



NOT BAD!

WHO
TAUGHT YOU?
WHAT
TRIBE ARE YOU
FROM?

K-KSSHHH!!

SUN TRI -



NO, NO, NO!!

SHIT!
SHOULDN'T HAVE
SAID THAT!



PLEASE!
JUST LET ME
GO!

NOT A CHANCE.
YOU'RE GONNA EXPLAIN
THAT LAST ONE!