



It's done. The Power is raised.

Our purpose is one.

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THIS IS IT.



And it's a good Goddamn thing.

'Cause shit's about to get real.





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FOOSH! BOOM!! WHIZZ!! CRACKLE!!!!





IF YOU BATTLE MONSTERS, YOU DON'T ALWAYS BECOME A MONSTER. BUT YOU AREN'T ENTIRELY HUMAN ANYMORE, EITHER.



Hijole ...

Yep. It's him.

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Menti!
Quit fucking around with
the small fry!

Big Daddy's
comin' through,
ese'.

We're up.



Okay. Okay.

I got it.

I guess ... I
guess I'm gonna be
lead vocal?

SO MAY I INTRODUCE TO YOU THE ACT YOU'VE KNOWN FOR ALL THESE YEARS

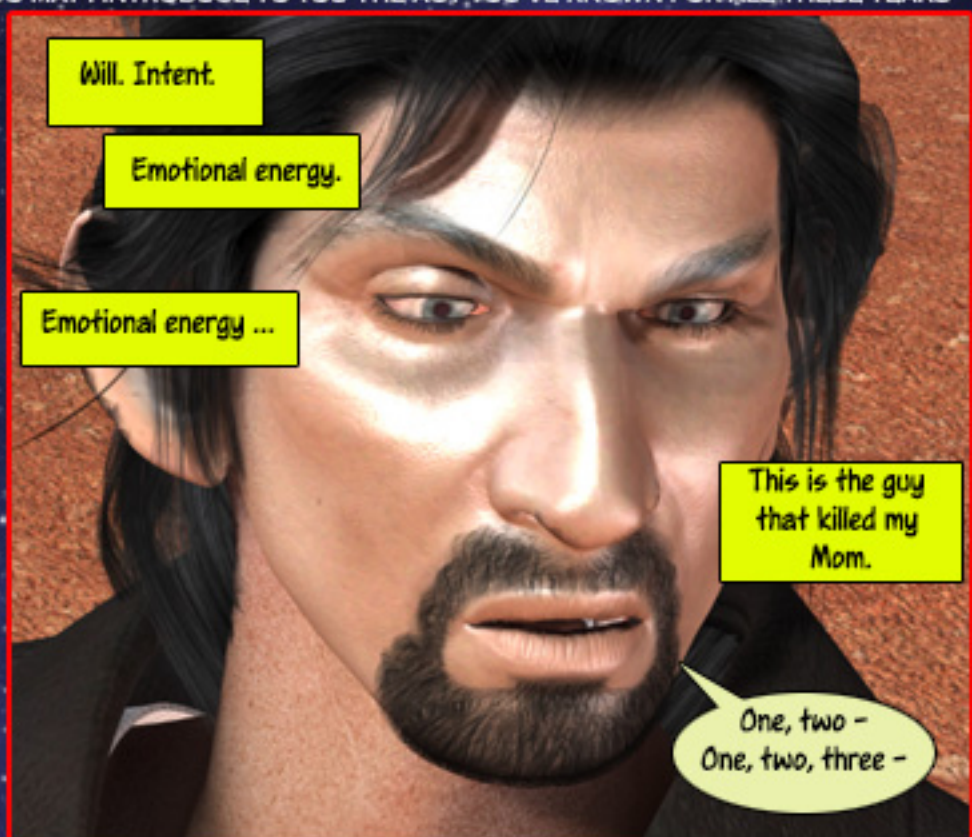


You are,
boychik.

Let's keep it
simple, vato. You
got something that'll
smack that bastard
back where he
belongs?

Uhh -
Yeah.

Yeah, I think
so.



Will. Intent.

Emotional energy.

Emotional energy ...

This is the guy
that killed my
Mom.

One, two -
One, two, three -



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WITH APOLOGIES TO LITTLE RICHARD. :)



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WAS YOU EVER STUNG BY A DEAD BEE?





Don't move!
I've got it!

Get it off!
GETTITOFF!!

Εγκαυμα!
Ελευθέρωση!

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The poison of the K'Te
paralyzes. It is not fatal.
I have stopped its spread,
but you will not be able to use
that leg for some time.

No -
NO!
I need to jump!
We have to -



It's Okay.
I can throw you through
the breach.

Just hold on
tight to each other and
let's do it.



Are you sure?
All three of us?

You're ...
You're strong enough?

ALLEZ OOI!



You really have NO
idea who I am, do you?

That's so ...
refreshing.

**ANY
TIME, KIDS!
ANY FUCKING
TIME!!**

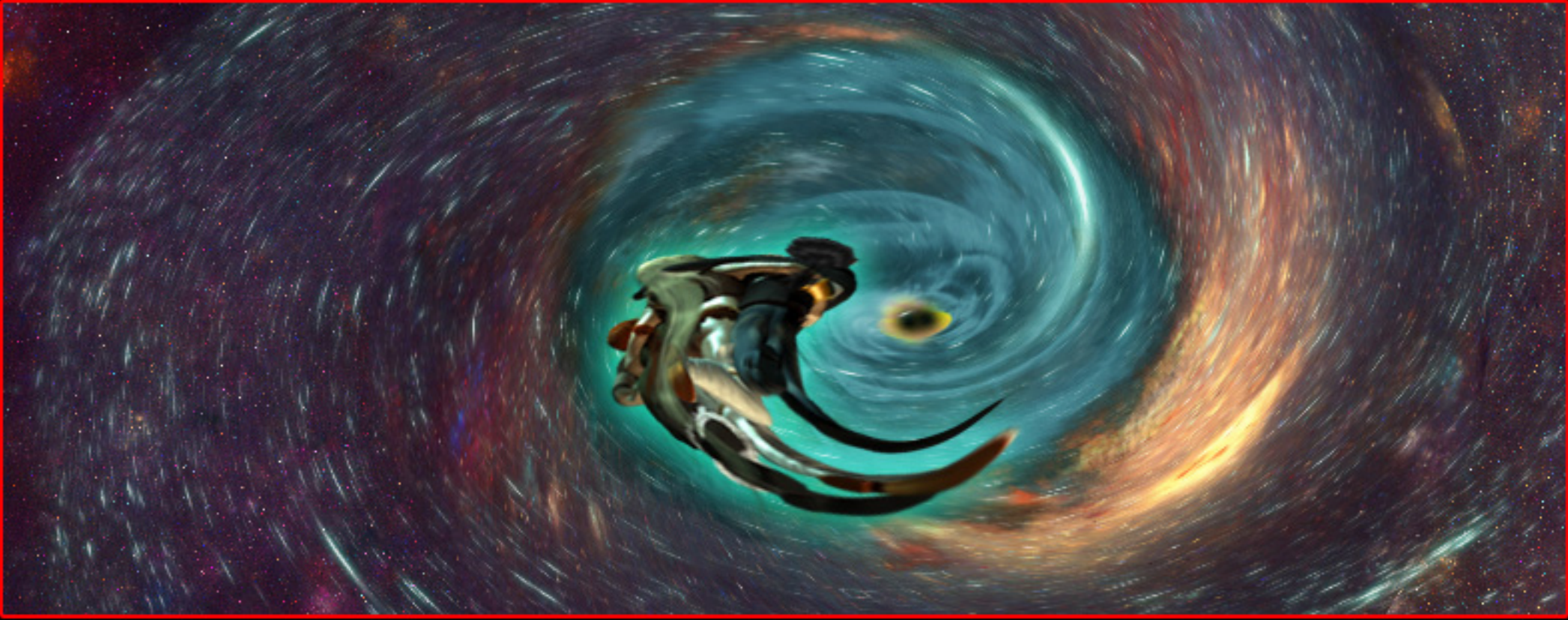


Right! Right!

Okay -
Give me the good foot -
and hang on!



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AND AWAAAY WE GO!





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JUST ANOTHER LABOR.



OKAY, OKAY, EVERYONE!
SETTLE DOWN. SETTLE DOWN.

QUIET -

SHADDAP!!

MUTTERMUTTERMUTTER

MUTTERMUTTERMUTTER

MUTTERMUTTERMUTTER

MUTTERMUTTERMUTTER

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YOU ALL CAN
GIVE YOURSELVES A
HAND -OR WHATEVER
APPENDAGE YOU HAPPEN
TO HAVE. THE CLIENT
WAS PLEASED AND
SAID SO TO ME
PERSONALLY.

HE SAID HE WAS
PLEASED?

WELL, HE ACTUALLY CALLED US A
"BUNCH OF MINDLESS INSECTS BARELY
WORTHY OF EXISTENCE,"
BUT COMING FROM HIM THAT'S HIGH PRAISE.

GENERALLY, I THOUGHT IT WAS A
VERY GOOD SHOW. NATURALLY,
THERE ARE A FEW NOTES. DONNA?

YEAH?

GOOD WORK OUT THERE, AS
ALWAYS, BUT I THINK THERE'S
ROOM FOR SIGNIFICANT
IMPROVEMENT.

LIKE WHAT?

YOU'RE STILL RELYING TOO
MUCH ON THE RADIOACTIVE
BLASTS AND BANSHEE HOWL.

A LITTLE SONG, A LITTLE DANCE ...

I REALLY THINK WE CAN PUT MORE EFFORT
INTO EXPANDING YOUR REPERTOIRE

- OR MAKING MORE
IMAGINATIVE USE
OF WHAT YOU HAVE.

JUST TRY GOING
OUT OF YOUR COMFORT
ZONE, THAT'S ALL.

GOT IT.

AH- GENERAL NOTE:
THE ENTRANCE COULD HAVE
"POPPED" MORE.

WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS PICK UP YOUR CUES,
DAVE.

NO PINTER PAUSES,
OKAY?
WHEN WE ZAP IN,
I WANT THE VICTIMS
WONDERING WHAT THE FUCK
IS GOING ON,
INSTEAD OF WHY NOTHING
IS HAPPENING.
GARY, I'M TALKING
TO YOU.

WHY? I HIT MY MARK!

YOU WERE JUST A BEAT TOO LATE.
AND - WHAT'S WITH THE FACE?

I DIDN'T MAKE A FACE.

YOU MADE THE FACE AGAIN, GARY.
THAT SAME FACE. *YOU* WANT TO
DO MY JOB? IS THAT IT?

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WHAT? I ...
I DIDN'T MAKE A FACE.

DID I, DINO?
DID I MAKE A FACE?

I WASN'T WATCHING
YOU, MAN.

NEVER MIND,
JUST TAKE THE
NOTE.

I DIDN'T
MAKE NO FACE

NOTE ON THE GROIN
MACHINE GUNS:
VERY GOOD USE OF
FREUDIAN
IMAGERY, THERE.
SICK, FRIGHTENING
AND FUNNY.
COMMENDATION TO
THE DESIGN CREW,
CORKY.

THANKS, BOSS!

IT'S ALL JUST BUSINESS.

WHICH BRINGS US TO WHAT IS PROBABLY MOST ON YOUR MINDS: THE BONUS.
YES, YES, DREAD LORD SHUACH DID DELIVER THE COMPANY INCENTIVE, WHICH
MEANS A NICE EXTRA IN YOUR OWN PAY THIS MONTH.

YAAAY!!
ALRIGHT!!

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE COMPANY
ITSELF IS EXPANSION INTO A
NEW MARKET. THANKS TO LORD
SHUACH, WE HAVE A WHOLE NEW
DIMENSION WHICH WE CAN ENTER
AT WILL.

SO EXCITING THINGS ARE ON THE HORIZON. WE WILL BE SETTING
UP OUR FIRST PERMANENT BRANCH OFFICES ON EARTH IN THE
SECOND PART OF Q3 TO BEGIN AGGRESSIVE PENETRATION BY SALES
IN THE FIRST WEEKS OF Q4. WE CAN INTRODUCE EARTH-BASED
ENTITIES TO OUR SUPERIOR TURNKEY SOLUTIONS.

IN THE COMING WEEKS
THERE WILL BE
ANNOUNCEMENTS
REGARDING
STAFFING AND PROMOTIONS,
INVESTMENTS IN NEW
SORCERIES AND STRATEGIES
TO MAXIMIZE OUR GROWTH
POTENTIAL IN THE
UPCOMING FISCAL
MILLENNIUM.



FOLKS, TRUST ME,
THE DEEPS IS REALLY
GOING SOMEWHERE!





"THERE'S NOWHERE YOU CAN BE THAT ISN'T WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE..."



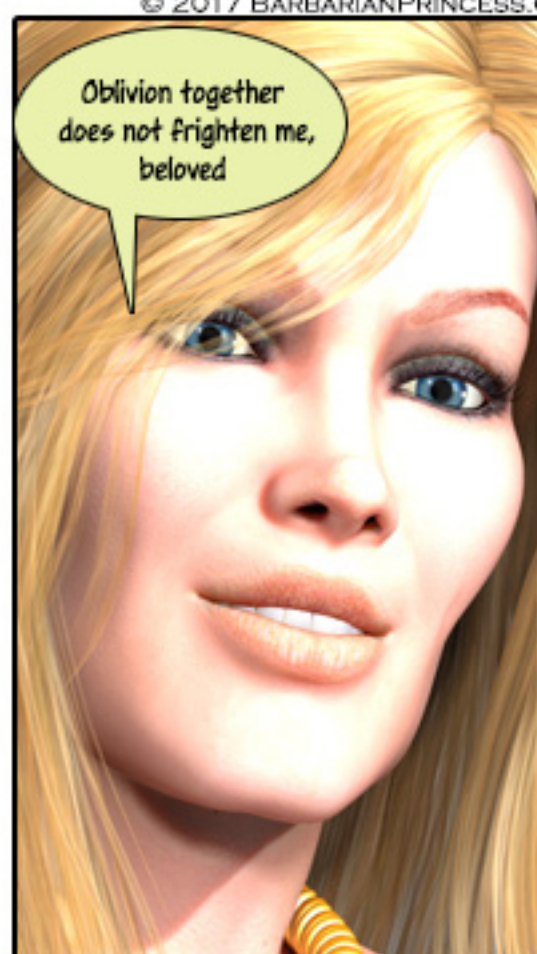


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"YOU HAVE TO GET LOST BEFORE YOU CAN BE FOUND."









AND NOW

AFTER ALL MY SEARCHING
AFTER ALL MY QUESTIONS
I'M GONNA CALL IT HOME

I'VE GOT A BRAND NEW MINDSET
I CAN FINALLY SEE THE SUNSET
I'M GONNA CALL IT HOME

NOW I KNOW
YEAH, THIS IS HOME
I'VE COME TOO FAR
AND I WON'T GO BACK

YEAH, THIS IS HOME

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My love! Menti, you *did* it!

Did I?

The stars!

Yes - that's *our* sky!
We're in Teria again!

We're home.



"OH LOOK. I'VE FALLEN DOWN A DEEP, DARK HOLE ..." - MARVIN







What ... what the fuck, man?

Okay ... that's ...

... that's got to have balanced something shitty I did in a past life ...

Owwwww!

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Baby, are you all right?

Oh, hell no. But I seem to at least be in one piece. You?

Worst headache of my life, but nothing broken.

Tula?

I'm okay. More or ... less.

Good. We can all use some healing.

I daren't even try, just yet.

Why not?



I could have expected this. - what happened up there. I spent all that time acclimating to your world, attuning myself to it.

For now I'm still attuned to Earth, and my magick here is ... unpredictable.

For that matter, Mentl, so will yours be. You need to adjust to Teria's vibrations and rules again or, with your power, you might wind up destroying us. Or worse.

Oh swell.

So ... what can we do?



I don't know about you two, but Ipola's youngest child is going to sit here and rest for a bit.

None of our injuries appear life-threatening. The shaft we fell down is collapsed, but this chamber has a corridor that leads off, hopefully, to another way out.



There's almost always a back door, right?

Right.

"OPTIMISM IS THE KEY." - WILL CHAMP'ION



Damn all dank,
vermin-ridden tunnels
anyway.

I *really* hate
this part.

Well I'm kind of
skeeved out, here. All these
bones and skulls.

Looks ...
like Shuach stuff.

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Something
just occurred
to me.

Where is
the light coming
from?



No.
This is ancient Erogenian, yes,
but not Shuite. It's an ossuary,
probably Surian, Lashkite or maybe
even older, based on where
we are ...

Where I think we ...
might be.

Still creepy as all hell.

No argument there.



Good point.

Over there ...
that corner.



Oo.
"Magick mirror on the wall,
who's the fairest one of all?"

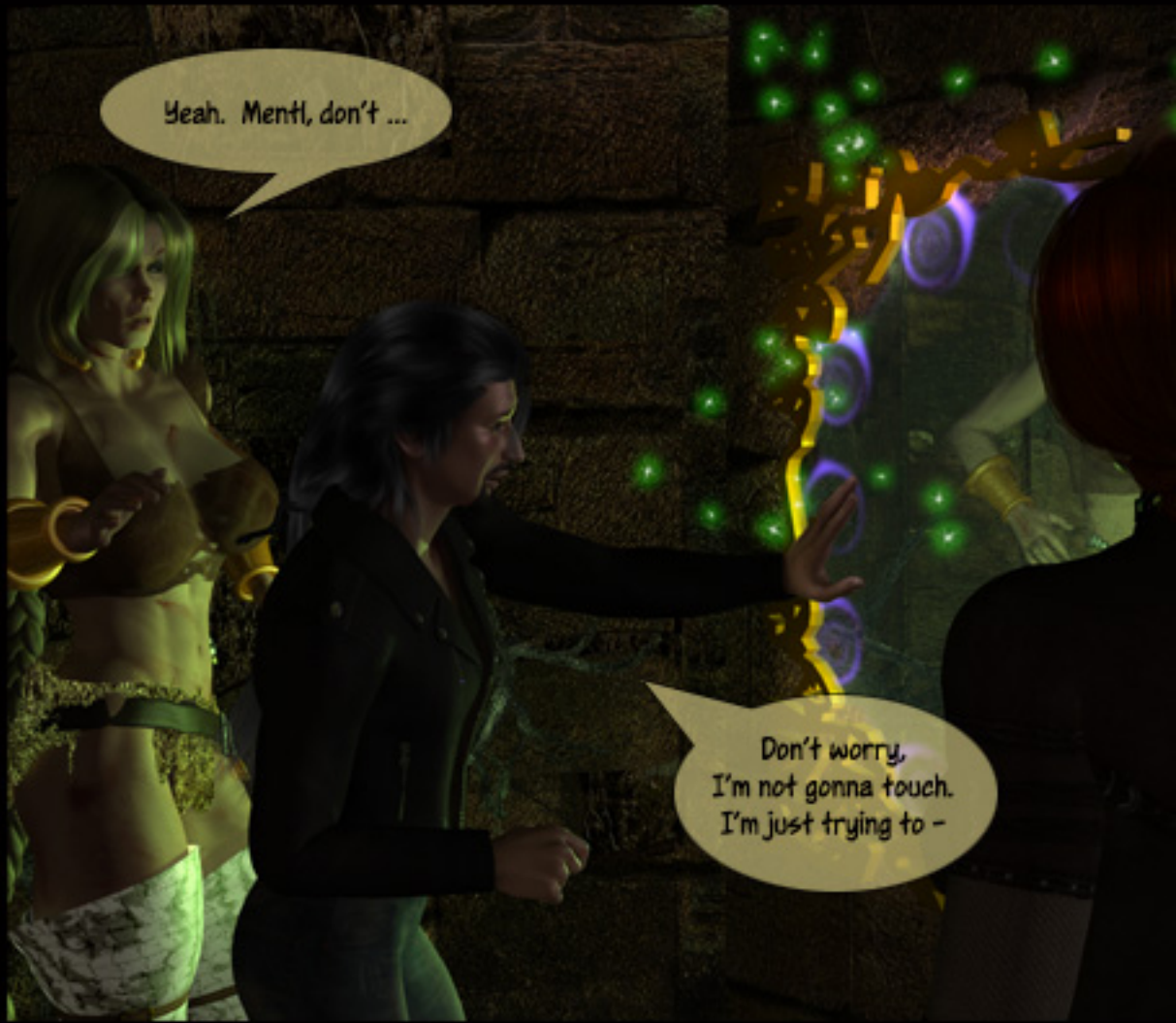


Are you
actually talking to
the mirror?

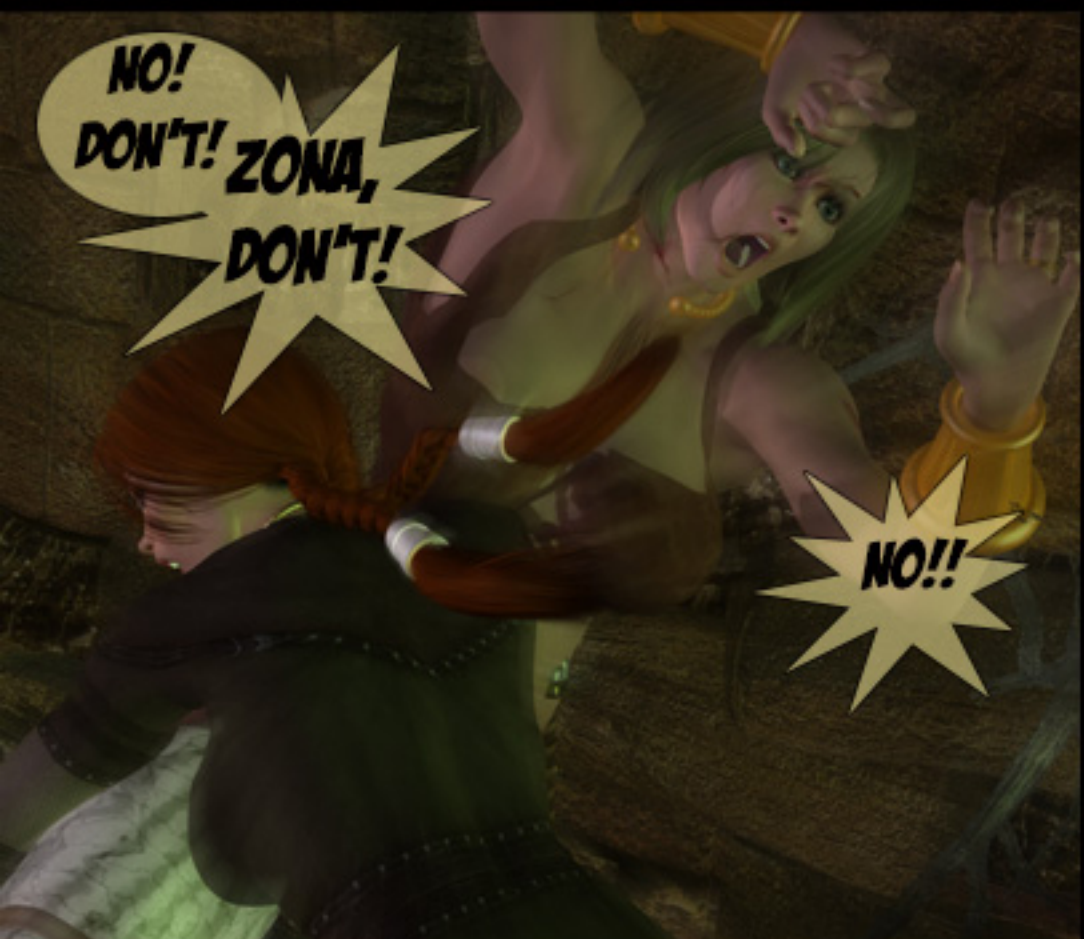
It's from
"Snow White." I thought
you'd watched it?

I was waiting
to watch it with
you.

THE LESSON OF SNOW WHITE IS: DON'T EAT APPLES.



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AND YES, OF COURSE ZONA LET HERSELF BE RESTRAINED.



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"COLORLESS GREEN IDEAS SLEEP FURIOUSLY." -NOAM CHOMSKY



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"THEY SAY DRAGONS NEVER TRULY DIE. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU KILL THEM."



We need to plan *some* kind of defense against them.

I do not want to be put on the defensive! But unless we can come up with something powerful and new of our own - practically immediately, - that's how the game will be played.

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No. They've been gone for weeks, now.

Tula supposedly broke the dimensional barriers looking for Zona's little man using that ... artifact. I'm afraid -

I am not.



And no word about Zona?

Or Tula?



Zona might charge into a situation without thinking, but not Tula. She is young, yes, but in many ways she's a lot smarter than either you or me.

I know she had a plan for getting there, and she must also have a plan to get back.

I'm not going to underestimate my children again. She took Zona to find Mentl.

They will find him. And between the three of them they will return.



When?

Hopefully, before it's too -

KEEEEEEEER!!



KEEER!

Hold a moment, Karna.



KEEEEEEEER.
KEE-EE-EEE.

KEEEEEEE?
KEE. EE-EEE-EER.

KEEEE EE-EER.

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KEEEEE-EER.
KEE KEEREE!

KEEEE EEREN.
KEE EE EE EE!



Oh Luna.

Oh Gods.

Oh Gods.

What?
What did she say?
I couldn't make
it out ...

Come with me.
I'll tell you as we go.



Where are we going?

North.

What for?
What are you going
to do?

Something
incredibly stupid.



"Stupid?!"

Oh, fine.
Is it going to at least
help anything?

Good.

Well,
of course.

Well -
Erogenian.

It might
save us all - or at least
give us a fighting
chance.

Or I
could get
killed.



The Otherwhen.

Wednesday.

Ten O'Clock.

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Am I going to remember any of this?

The suggestions I gave us when we went into the trance should help us be focused and to remember all that happens here.

Yeah - "Says here in fine print."

"SOMETIMES I'VE BELIEVED AS MANY AS SIX IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST." LEWIS CARROLL



That sounds like something Mentl would say.

Yes. Now all I have to do is find the man to go with his smart-ass words.

Given how powerful he'll be here, I don't think we have to worry.



WHO are YOU?

Goddess!



Is that who you are?
Yes. I see.

No ... it's ...

You look like the goddess.
Or she looks like you, which is virtually the same thing, though not always.

I'm just ... Zona.

That's what I said.

No it isn't.

HE THOUGHT HE SAW A RATTLESNAKE THAT QUESTIONED HIM IN GREEK

HE LOOKED AGAIN, AND FOUND IT WAS THE MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK



Of course it is.
Why are you arguing?

I'm not arguing.
I'm just trying to tell you who I am.

And then you contradict yourself. Typical. People can't be trusted with their own self-knowledge.

Well, I can't be responsible for how stupid you are.



"Stupid?!"

THE ONE THING I REGRET,' HE SAID, 'IS THAT IT CANNOT SPEAK!'

Listen, you big green sack of shit --

Lion Cub, it's not even real. Let it go..

Doesn't matter anyway.

Ahh! Merlin!

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You kids took your sweet time getting here ...

Vito!
Wh- why are you dressed that way?

And you're old again.

Don't even ask.

I am asking.

sigh
Because I'm Merlin
The Fucking Magician.

Explain?

Merlin went on a kick and decided that I was Merlin The Magician. So I have to wear this getup.

Ohh ... like from the video about the sword in the stone.
That is SO funny!

Wait - Merlin put you in these clothes?

Ha ha.
Tee hee. It is to laugh.
Yuck yuck yuck.

Yep.

Why didn't you stop him?

Because he outranks me.
I'm dead, okay?
I'm here as a spirit.

He's body and soul a complete living person, and a powerful enchanter to boot.

There's nothing he can't do here.

MAGISTER VITELLUS



Wait - if he's really that powerful, could he ... escape?

Probably? Maybe? I really have no idea. But right now he doesn't even want to.

What?



He doesn't realize he's awake. He thinks that this is a dream, and so he's just having too much fun playing around inside his own mind.



Take us to him.



Right. But, uhh, don't be too surprised by anything you see here.

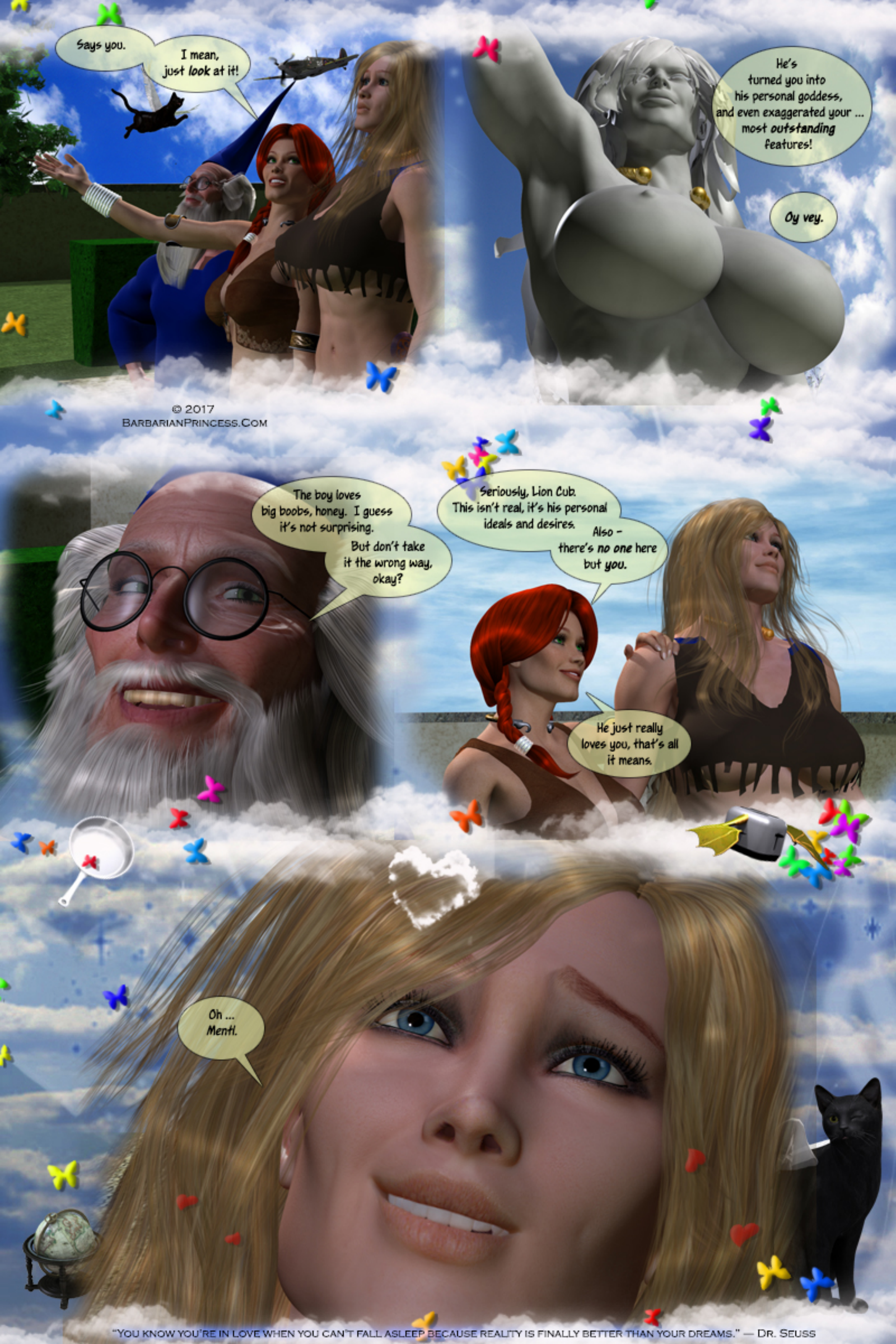
You are kidding, right?



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"SCIENTISTS NOW BELIEVE THAT THE PRIMARY BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF BREASTS IS TO MAKE MALES STUPID." - D. BARRY



Says you.

I mean,
just look at it!

He's
turned you into
his personal goddess,
and even exaggerated your ...
most outstanding
features!

Oy vey.

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The boy loves
big boobs, honey. I guess
it's not surprising.

But don't take
it the wrong way,
okay?

Seriously, Lion Cub.
This isn't real, it's his personal
ideals and desires.

Also -
there's *no one* here
but *you*.

He just really
loves you, that's all
it means.

Oh ...
Mentl.





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BETTER A WITTY FOOL THAN A FOOLISH WIT.





Hel-loo, Merlin.

Cassandra.

What is that blue box? It looks vaguely familiar.

Hey, Jeeves!

Miss Xena.

It's "Zona."

Your move it is.

That was not ... logical

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No it isn't.

Ohh, uh ...



My mistake. Sorry.

No problem. Jeeves, are you on your way to see the King?

We are, Miss.

Tell him that Gabrielle is rescheduling her poetry reading to tomorrow night.

She got invited to the Swedish Bikini Team trampoline event.

FUN FACT: "ZONA" HAS THE EARLIER COPYRIGHT.



I will pass on the message, Miss.

Thanks!

What's that music?

The Bulgarian State Television Female Vocal Choir, your Highness.

Ah.

ROSOVI ZVINOVE
HAPRAKE PUE NA
CUPANI BLAG VUV RICHUMI
DACHESACA E PAK CUKAN

I like her - she reminds me of my mother.



Oh, hello ... Boric.

Tula.

Boric, what are you ... doing here? Menti barely knows you.

I ... I just came to say goodbye.



"REMEMBER, I WILL STILL BE HERE AS LONG AS YOU HOLD ME, IN YOUR MEMORY"





WELL, ONE AND ONE IS TWO
SIX AND TWO IS EIGHT
COME ON BABY DON'T YA MAKE ME LATE
HIDE HEY

BABY DON'T YOU WANNA GO

MENTI!

MENTI!

MENTI!

BACK TO THAT SAME OLD PLACE

SANBER-NARDINO.

"REALITY IS WRONG. DREAMS ARE FOR REAL." - TUPAC SHAKUR

MENTI!

MENTI!

MENTI!

MENTI!

Oh, my.

I'm not sure whether this is sweet, flattering or ...

Disturbing?

Told you it got even weirder.

Try "all of the above."



Look at the sky -
wasn't it just morning?

The castle courtyard
is enchanted to provide whatever
lighting effect the show requires.
I read about it in "Castle Du Fools,
A History."

Yes,
thank you, Miss Granger.
I believe you have an arithmancy
class to attend?

Oy gevalt ...

Thank you,
thanks, one and all!

Thanks
Especially all of
YOU!

Mentl!

Mentl!
MENTL!!!

Good luck with that.
I've been trying to get him
to listen to me since
I got here.

WE LOVE YOU!!!

Zero. Of course.

Yeah. Hey, baby.

Zero ... I'm ..
I'm so sorry.

I'm mostly
here to try to help Mentl
get out of this place.

We all are.
But I think we may have
made it worse.

Yeah.
Well - not your fault, mija.
Hey, you made it almost worth
dying for.

Almost.

I'm just sorry
we only had one
night.

Did you
come to the Otherwhen
to ...?





Thanks, Jeeves.

And by the way, tell Bertie I can distract the Glossop chick this evening if he wants. You already have plenty to do.

Much obliged, sir.

Okay, apparently there's a special guest who's been waiting to sing a birthday song just for me, which is very nice, especially since my birthday isn't til August.

So we're gonna let her on stage for her set.

Don't get jealous, though, sweeties! You're all invited to the orgy - I mean party - after the show.

ORGY!
ORGY!
ORGY!

And so, without further

BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM

BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM

BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM

MENTL!
MENTL!
MENTL!

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Moderate Rock
NC.

pp cresc.

QUOTE UNQUOTE DQUOTES

Marshall

pp cresc.

I LOVE MYSELF,
I WANT YOU TO LOVE ME

WHEN I FEEL DOWN,
I WANT YOU ABOVE ME

I SEARCH MYSELF, I WANT YOU TO FIND ME
I FORGET MYSELF, I WANT YOU TO REMIND ME

I DON'T WANT ANYBODY ELSE
WHEN I THINK ABOUT YOU, I TOUCH MYSELF

OOH, I DON'T WANT ANYBODY ELSE
OH NO, OH NO, OH NO

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO MAKES ME COME RUNNIN'
YOU'RE THE SUN WHO MAKES ME SHINE

WHEN YOU'RE AROUND, I'M ALWAYS LAUGHIN'
I WANT TO MAKE YOU MINE

I CLOSE MY EYES AND SEE YOU BEFORE ME
I THINK I WOULD DIE IF YOU WERE TO IGNORE ME

A FOOL COULD SEE JUST HOW MUCH I ADORE YOU
I'D GET DOWN ON MY KNEES, I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU

"THERE IS ONLY ONE HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE,
TO LOVE AND BE LOVED".
GEORGE SAND

I WANT YOU.

*I DON'T WANT
ANYBODY ELSE.*

WHEN I THINK ABOUT YOU ...

Aw, Baby ...
I was having this
amazing dream.

Heh! Or ...
was it a nightmare?

**AND IT'S
NOT OVER
YET!!**

ZONA!

Huh ...

So ...
Now what?

Oh.

Dad ...

Dad ... Christ.
Look at you. Not even ... you're
Not even Jacob Levy anymore.

Just the meat
kept alive - just a good man's
... ghost.

Oh God. Oh Dad, Shit ...

Dad, I'm sorry. I am so sorry ...
it's just so hard. So ...
so hard.



I know, Champ. It is hard.

Dad.

I mean, you're right - I wasn't really living anyway. And besides, that's the way it usually works these days.

They put you in hospice, feed you more and more morphine and atavan and everything just goes much more smoothly for everybody. A lot more quickly, anyway.

I didn't ... I was drunk, and when they asked me if we should up the dosage ...

You weren't drunk until afterwards, Mike. And when the nurse asked you if you wanted to up the dosage, you knew what she meant.

I'm sorry. I'm just so sorry!

Don't be. It doesn't matter.

Everybody did. I was the only one who didn't get a vote.

It mattered a LOT to ME. It's not something I can ever make up for!

You can get over that. You can get over anything.

How? You're my Dad. I ... I basically killed you.

No, you really didn't. And you saying that is just ... arrogant.

Trying to take responsibility, trying to have power over shit that just happens, no matter what.

And in the end it's nothing. Get over it.

"Nothing?"

You died, and that was nothing?
All that pain, everything Mom and Sandy
and I went through -
all that ?

Yeah. *Nothing*.

Bullshit, Dad!
What - what are you
saying?

You think
any of that was real?
You think I'm real, you're real,
your Mom, Sandy?
Any of it?

Yeah,
I kind of think so.

It's not.
None of it is.

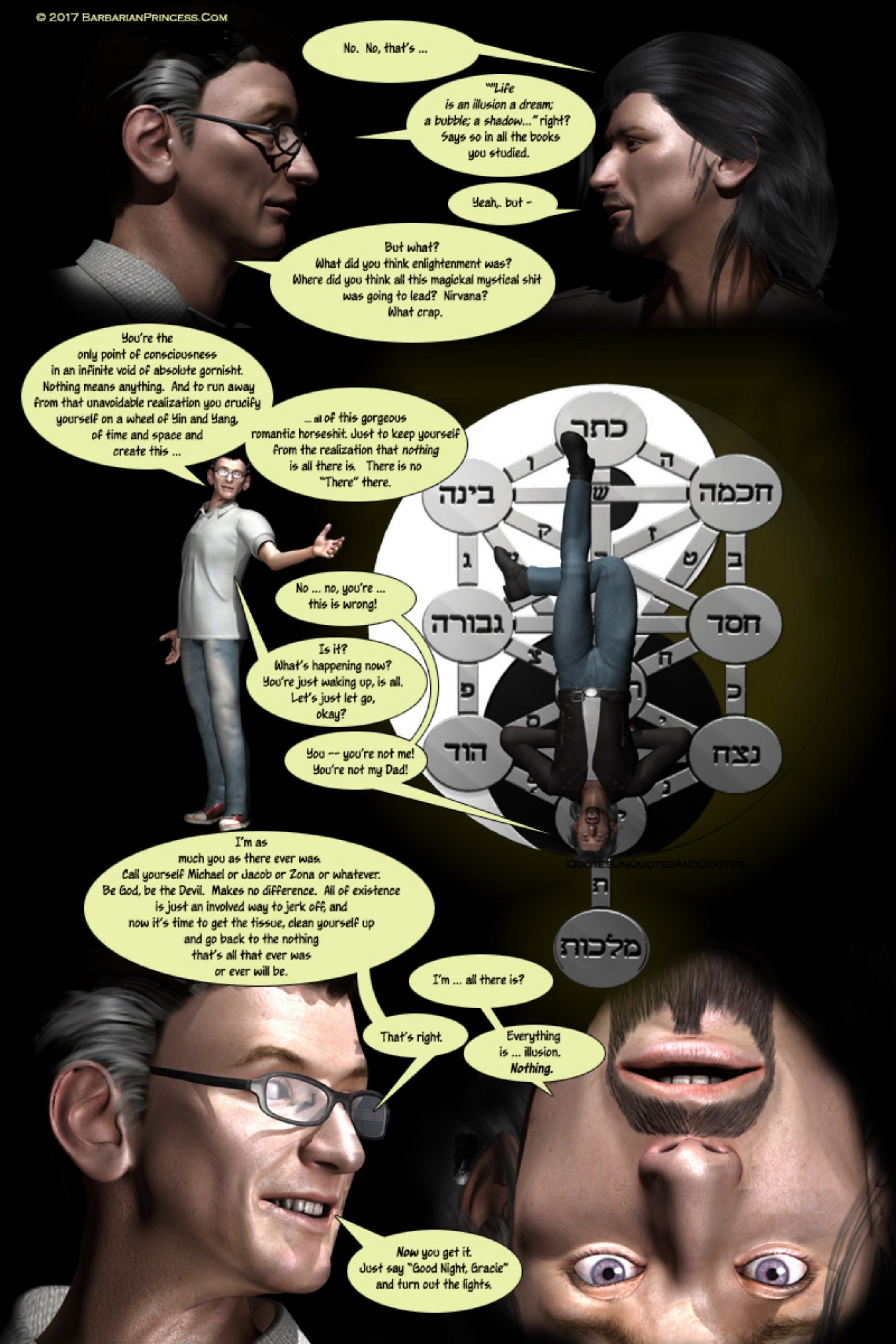
This, all of it,
any of it, your life, the Earth, this *verkochte*
phony universe we're having this discussion in
and all the other dimensions - all of it.
It's nothing. All *nothing*.

That's not true!

I'm not
even *me*, Mike -
I'm *you*. All of this is just
a big con you're putting
yourself through.

The so-called Real World:
Erogenia, Earth, Grayverse - seriously?
The "Grayverse?" Oy. All of it.
It's nothing but bullshit
illusion.

And at last
You're waking up from it.
Or you're trying to. You just made
a ghost of me to bash yourself so
you'll *finally* get real.



No. No, that's ...

"Life
is an illusion a dream;
a bubble; a shadow..." right?
Says so in all the books
you studied.

Yeah, but -

But what?
What did you think enlightenment was?
Where did you think all this magickal mystical shit
was going to lead? Nirvana?
What crap.

You're the
only point of consciousness
in an infinite void of absolute gornisht.
Nothing means anything. And to run away
from that unavoidable realization you crucify
yourself on a wheel of Yin and Yang,
of time and space and
create this ...

... all of this gorgeous
romantic horseshit. Just to keep yourself
from the realization that nothing
is all there is. There is no
"There" there.

No ... no, you're ...
this is wrong!

Is it?
What's happening now?
You're just waking up, is all.
Let's just let go,
okay?

You -- you're not me!
You're not my Dad!

I'm as
much you as there ever was.
Call yourself Michael or Jacob or Zona or whatever.
Be God, be the Devil. Makes no difference. All of existence
is just an involved way to jerk off, and
now it's time to get the tissue, clean yourself up
and go back to the nothing
that's all that ever was
or ever will be.

I'm ... all there is?

That's right.

Everything
is ... illusion.
Nothing.

Now you get it.
Just say "Good Night, Gracie"
and turn out the lights.



QUOTES UNQUOTES AND QUOTES



Just one thing, though.
I can hear her calling me.

What? No, that's -

No, I hear it.
She's singing. She's chanting
and reaching out.
To me

Seriously, you
blind asshole, this is
just more romantic drek!
Stop it!!

And even if I really
did make all this, then I say -

"Let there be light."

I WILL WAIT FOR IT
I'M NOT TOO LATE FOR IT
UNTIL THEN, I'LL SING MY SONG
TO CHANT THE NIGHT ALONG
BRING IT... OH BRING IT...

I COULD LIGHT THE NIGHT UP
WITH MY SOUL ON FIRE

I COULD MAKE THE SUN SHINE
FROM PURE DESIRE

LET ME FEEL THAT
LOVE COME OVER ME

LET ME FEEL
HOW STRONG WE CAN BE



Achievement unlocked



Higher Love



Baby ...
Can we
just go home,
now?

Zona?

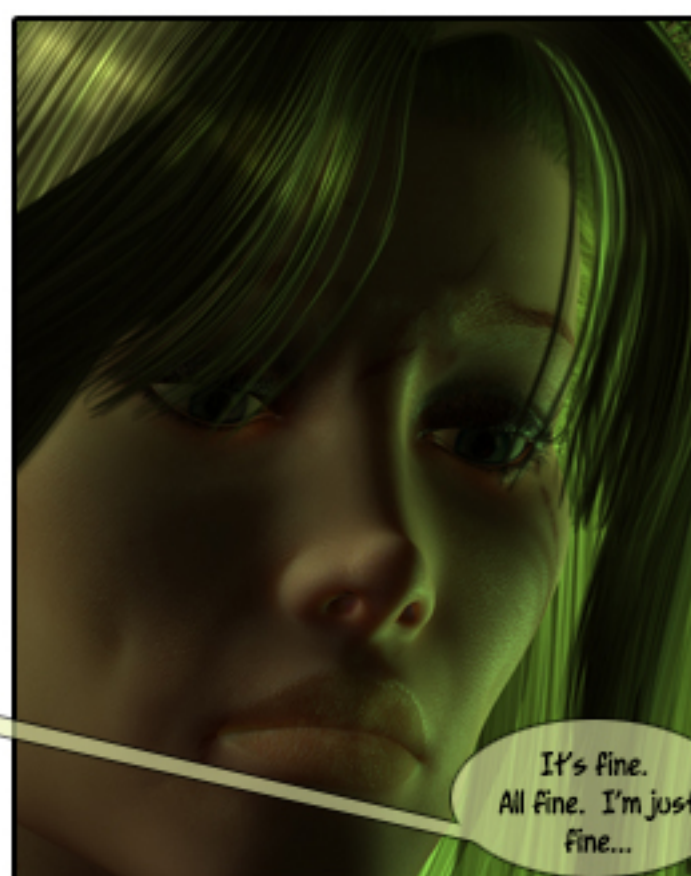
Sweetie?

What

I

I don't







Are you going to be all right?

"Going to" be - yeah. Yeah. Pretty sure.

Good...

Baby ...

Yes?



Thanks. I mean ... you saved me. Again. I ... I'm sorry I freaked out.

I'm such a spazz sometimes, I do that to you when weird things happen ...



What? No! That's ridiculous!

It was just a dream, I know. A nightmare, but still ... to see you ... do that ...

It was the hardest thing I have ever done in any reality.



But - I just needed you back in this world with me.

I need you so much, I love you so much.

I love you, too.

I breathe in I smell her, smell her sweat, her blood, her breath.

Feel her warm body under my touch, that contradiction of the fair softness of her lips on mine, with the feel of iron under silk that is her shoulders and arms.



I hear her rich contralto voice, her familiar loving words.

It's real.

I know it, all of it. It's real. I need it to be. It has to be.



Let there be light.

"LET THERE BE LIGHT."
NOW CHARMING.

NOW QUAINY.

NOW FATUOUS.

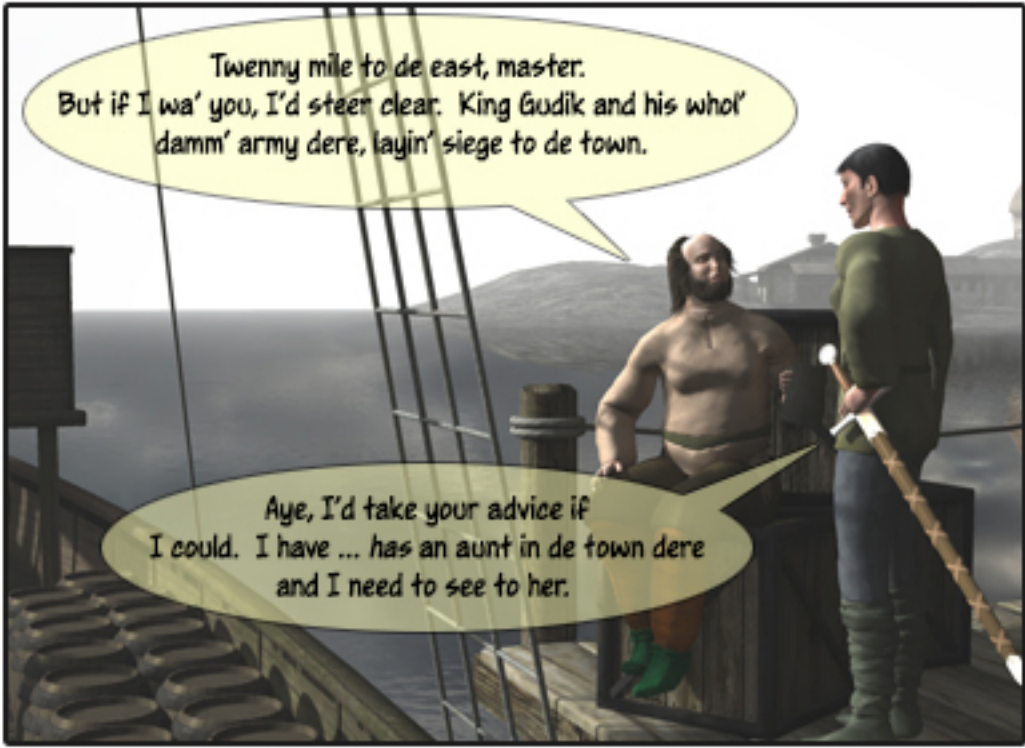
I THINK THAT THIS
IS ACTUALLY GOING
VERY WELL.

THE PLAN PROCEEDS.



Off the coast of Greymouth.

Goodman,
where be Berek Keep
fro' here?



Twenny mile to de east, master.
But if I wa' you, I'd steer clear. King Gudik and his whol'
damm' army dere, layin' siege to de town.

Aye, I'd take your advice if
I could. I have ... has an aunt in de town dere
and I need to see to her.



Well, get her away
from de war, is my advice.
Dose heretics're bland-t'irsty
barbarians!

Worse than
de, uh, Ergos, eh?

Aye, at least
dem savages din't know no better.
Dis lot wanna take us all t'Damnayshun
an' de Deeps right along
wit' `em!

Eh, indeed.
Many thanks, goodman.



Hey, now!

Dat wouldn't be a
Western accent, would it?

Eh?

"Eh?" it says.



I t'ink yer a dam'
Heiropist, Master
"Eh?"

One o'
Gudik's spies,
yeah.

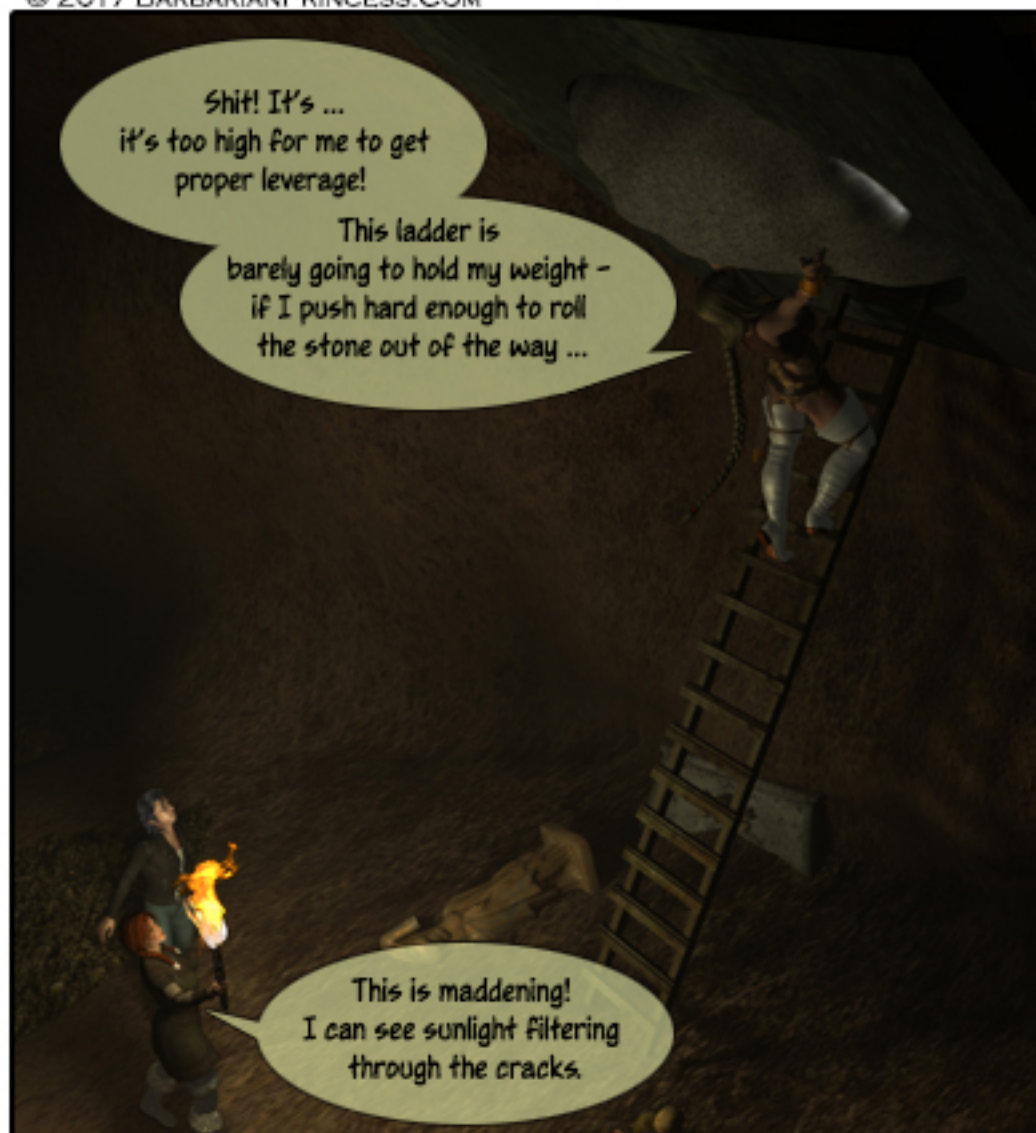
Na, that's
nawt to me,

An' now it
change its talk.
Cleveh.















POOP! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!!!







As you say,
it was twentyfive
years ago.

We were part of a company
that was pushing deep into Urth territory,
far in advance of a big push.

They had a massive slave complex, and
we were to scout it and see what could be done
to disrupt it or maybe, with a larger force,
even capture the whole thing.

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My company wasn't supposed to engage
them, just snoop and maybe do a little sabotage
if we got an easy opportunity.



Well, I ... I tended to get ... enthusiastic in those days.

"YOU WILL DO FOOLISH THINGS, BUT DO THEM WITH ENTHUSIASM." — COLETTE

I had a choice of which way to retreat. Their main force was between us and the western forests.

Alone I could have fought my way through, but we now had a couple hundred people to take care of.

So I chose to go east, deeper into their territory, intending to turn south and circle back to Erogenia and rejoin the alliance.

I'd done more difficult things before, or so I thought. I imagined it would be easy to just improvise and save everyone and come back in triumph, like always.

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It didn't work out that way.

They didn't let us rest, they kept pushing us, hunting us, keeping us from turning south.

"IN HINDSIGHT, I SLID INTO ARROGANCE BASED UPON PAST SUCCESS". REED HASTINGS

Every day more deaths, it seemed.

Hunger, disease, or the Urths.

By the time we were sure they'd given up, we'd passed through Death Gorge and into the desert. We'd lost half the warriors and more than half of the others just making our way through the gorge, and that wasn't even all.

The gorge itself collapsed behind us in a massive rockslide, killing five more of my warriors, and making it impossible to go back the way we came.

What my ...
arrogance cost us
that day -

Lord Zonn
blames himself
unfairly.

How many of us
would have died in the
slaughter pits if you'd done
any differently?

I don't know.

I only know
how many *did* die
because of my
choice.

Every last one of us
would have chosen to *die*
as free people rather than
live as eshtakku.

Maybe.

That still doesn't
explain why you never tried
to come home.

It doesn't? We were exhausted, sick, nearly starved and fifteen hundred miles from home. We made a camp and soon we had other problems with the heat and the creatures here.

I had all I could do to defend my people and help build shelters and search for food and water. I couldn't leave them.

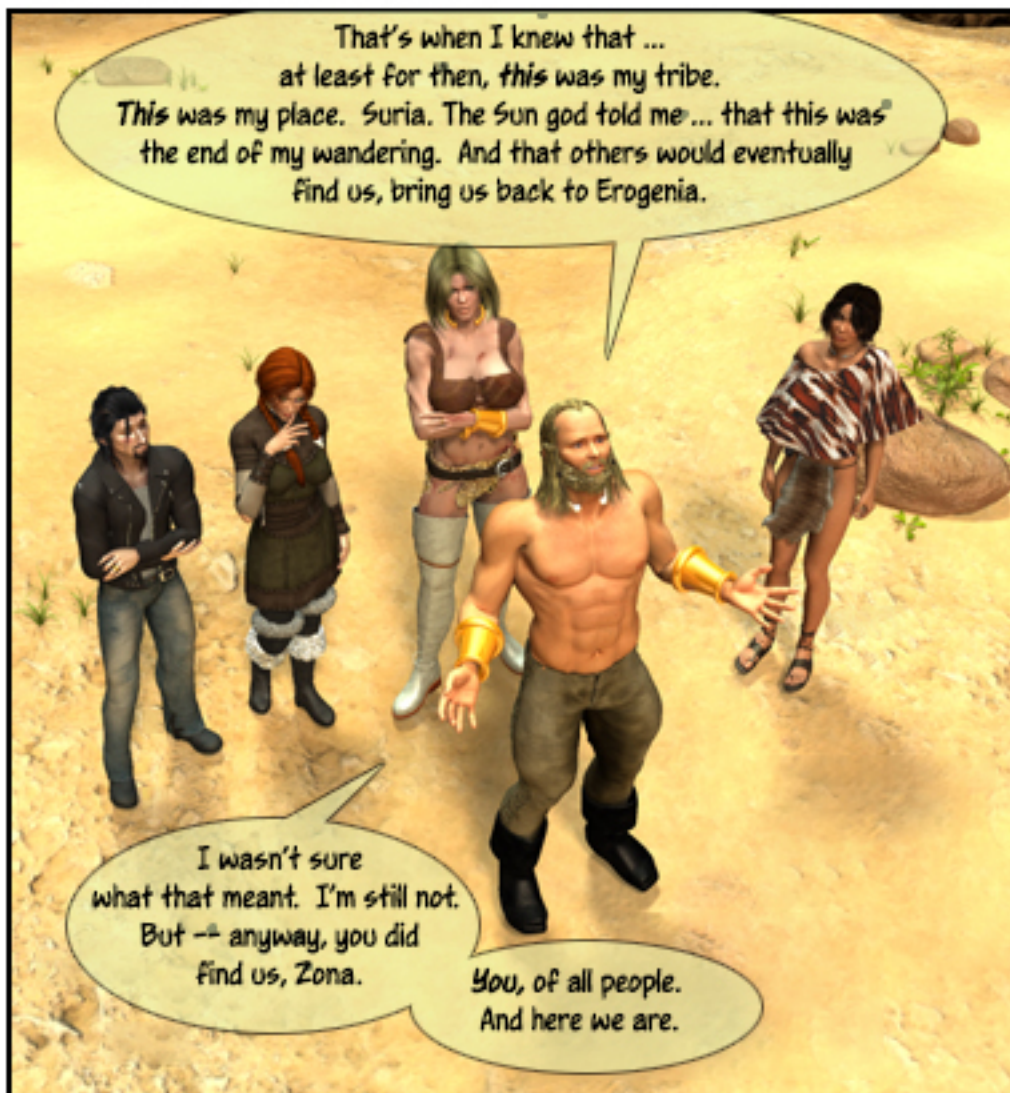
So many of them literally were helpless, raised as eshtakks with virtually no skills, or else children that would be killed by the sudracs and the snakes and scorpions.

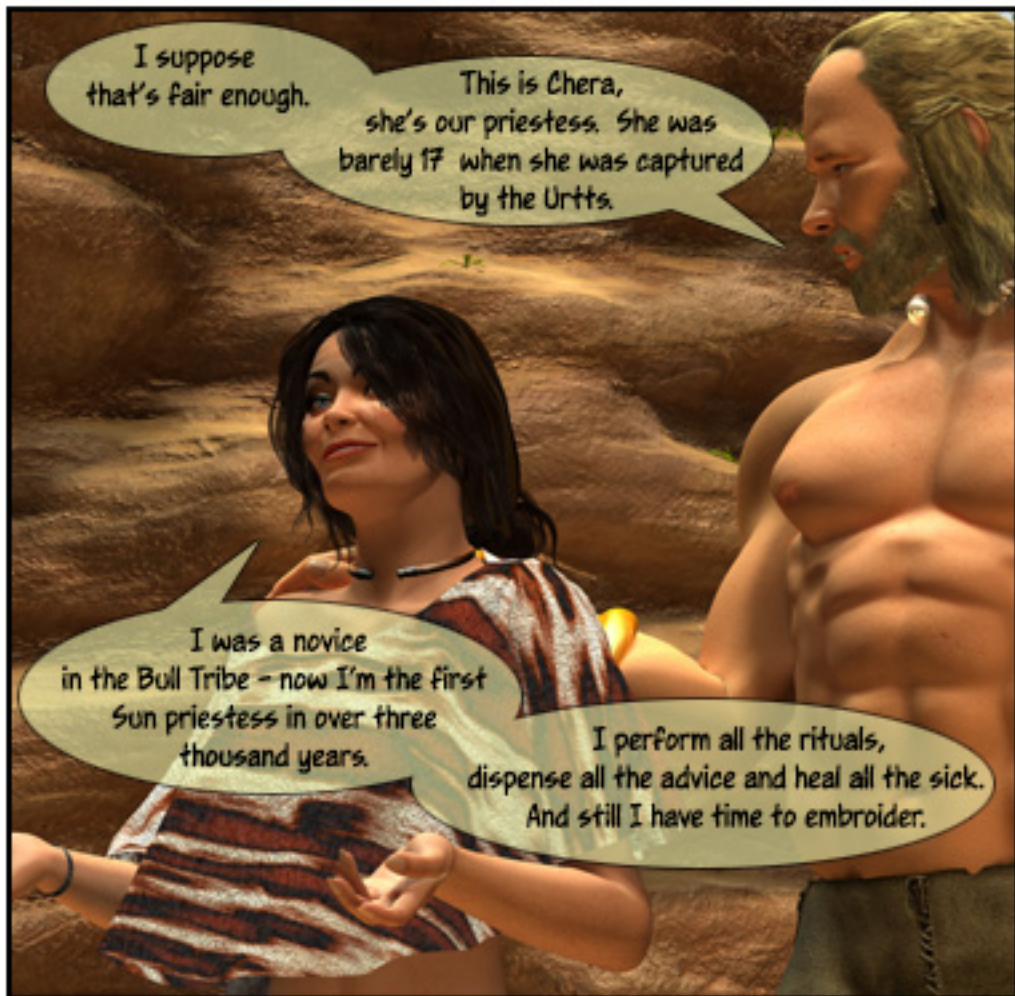
They would have died if I'd left, and they couldn't have made the journey back south across the desert, even with me.

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"GOOD DAY, SUNSHINE!" - LENNON & MCCARTNEY







"DO THE HIPPIY HIPPIY SHAKE ?"





SSSSRRRAHHHHHHH...

A Sudrac!!

EVERYBODY
SCATTER!

Oh,
holy shit ...

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, ONE AND ALL!

