


Trace has been kidnapped, everyone is in danger, and everything hinges on the decisions of a single banished Basitin.

Chapter 11

No Pressure








Hm? Did you say your brother?




Ow!



Oh, right...

The one I... stabbed through the chest.


I'd almost forgotten. ...Sorry. Is he—?



Oh, don't worry. he's fine.

Healed and lazing about back at our village.


Though now he spends all his days bugging me. I think you should have stabbed him harder.



Speaking of which...

You mentioned that "link" before, but you didn't say much about it.

Is it something all you assassins have?



...No. It's not.

It was because of our job as assassins, yes. But we were not linked by choice.

I became linked with my brother after our very first "solo" mission for the Brotherhood.

It was supposed to be easy. Just kill an old wolf named Issac as he traveled alone between villages.



Assassins!



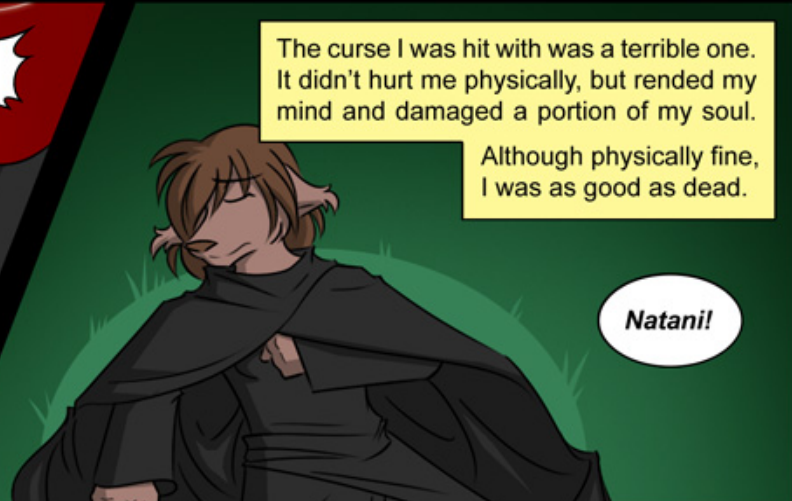
I've got him!

Natani, wait!

What we didn't know was that Issac knew forbidden magic, and was willing to use it.




Aaaagh!



The curse I was hit with was a terrible one. It didn't hurt me physically, but rended my mind and damaged a portion of my soul.

Although physically fine, I was as good as dead.

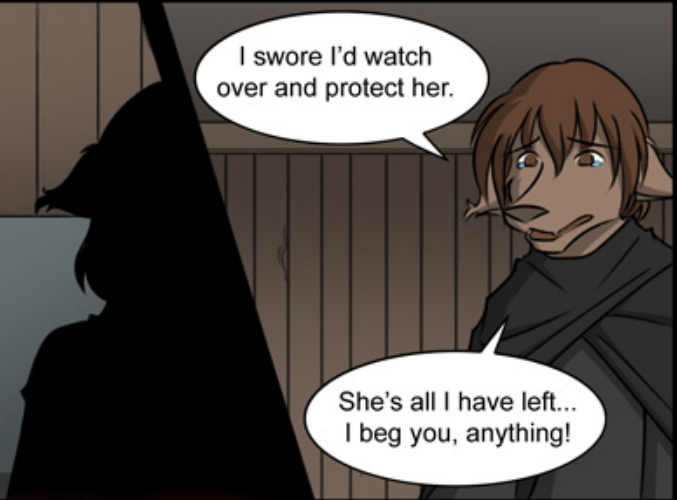
Natani!



I'm sorry... there's nothing physically wrong with her.


It's part of her soul that's missing. We cannot heal something like this.

Please... there must be something...



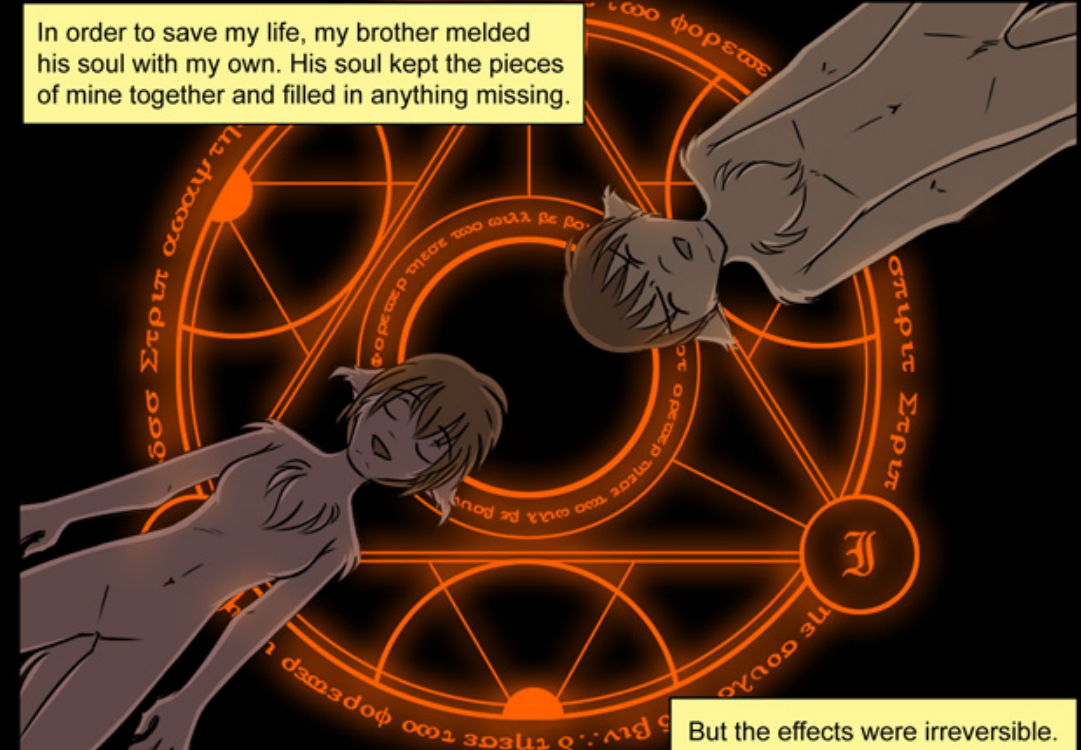
I swore I'd watch over and protect her.

She's all I have left... I beg you, anything!




I... -sigh- there is one possibility...

But... it would require your own sacrifice.



In order to save my life, my brother melded his soul with my own. His soul kept the pieces of mine together and filled in anything missing.


But the effects were irreversible.



And having his spirit in my body changed me. His mind filled in my missing pieces...

One happened to be my gender... so I copied his.

Zen and I became permanently mentally linked.



And... that's how I ended up being male in mind, and female in body.

It took a while to adjust to being mentally linked to my brother.
In the beginning, we didn't know how to block out thoughts and sensations from each other.



When he felt pain, I felt pain.

Be more careful!



When I had a hangover, so did he.



When he went to the bathroom, I... well, you get the idea.

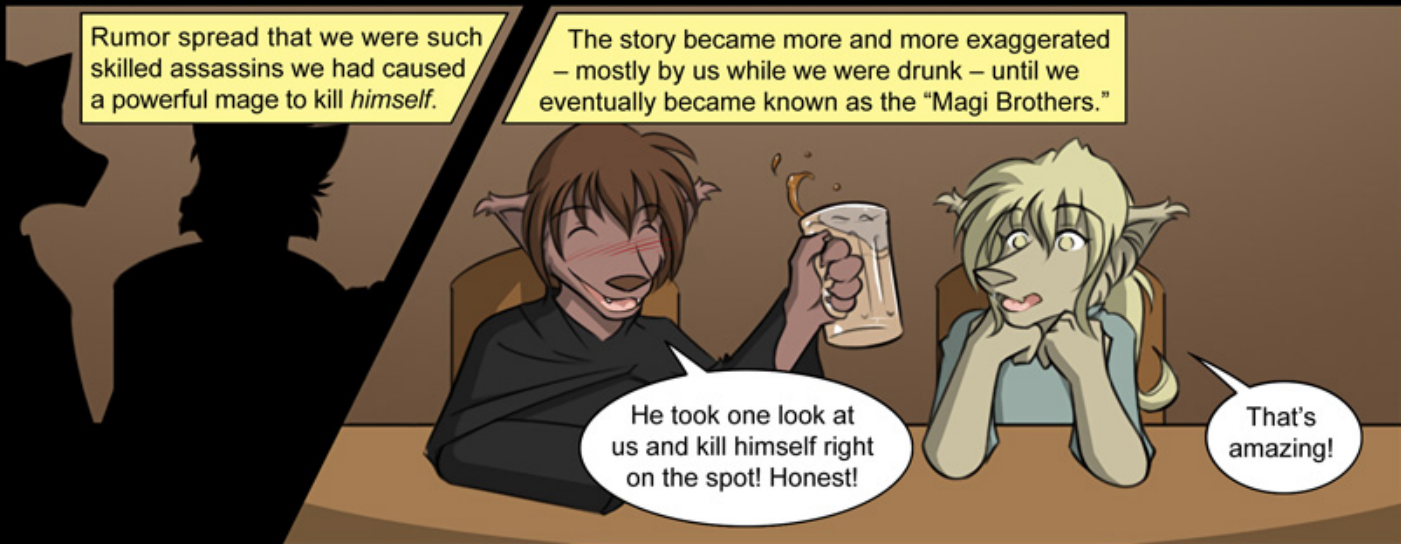
It... wasn't pleasant.



Ironically, Issac, the wolf we were supposed to kill, died casting that curse. It's forbidden magic for a reason...

It tends to kill its user.

So our mission was considered a success.



Rumor spread that we were such skilled assassins we had caused a powerful mage to kill *himself*.

The story became more and more exaggerated – mostly by us while we were drunk – until we eventually became known as the "Magi Brothers."

He took one look at us and kill himself right on the spot! Honest!

That's amazing!



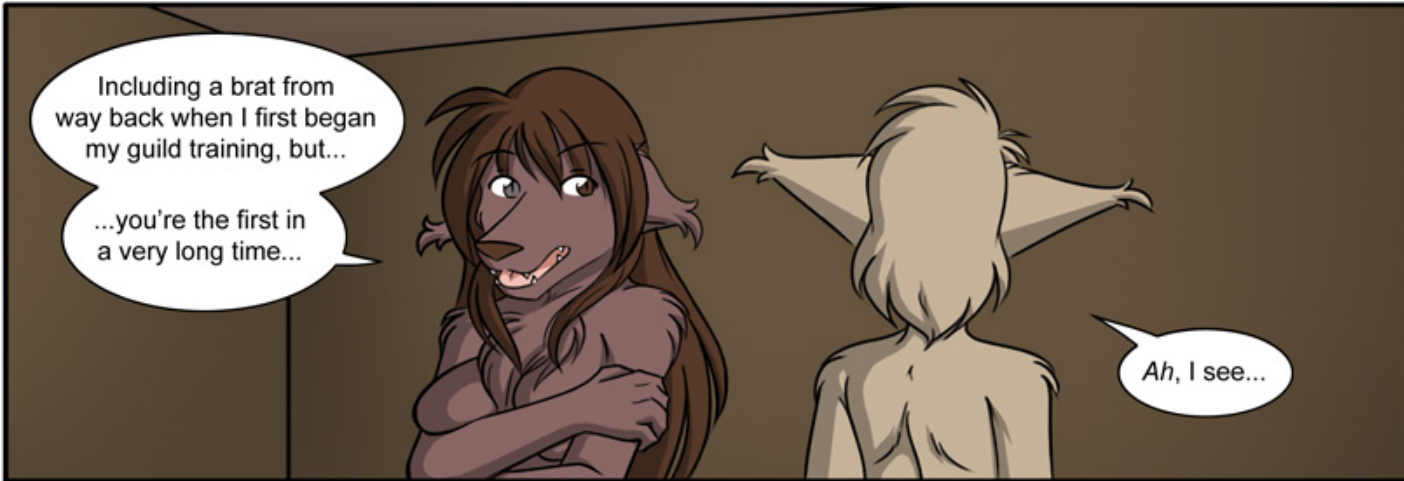
And that's the whole story.



You know, I've never told anyone that before.

Am I the only one to find out about you?

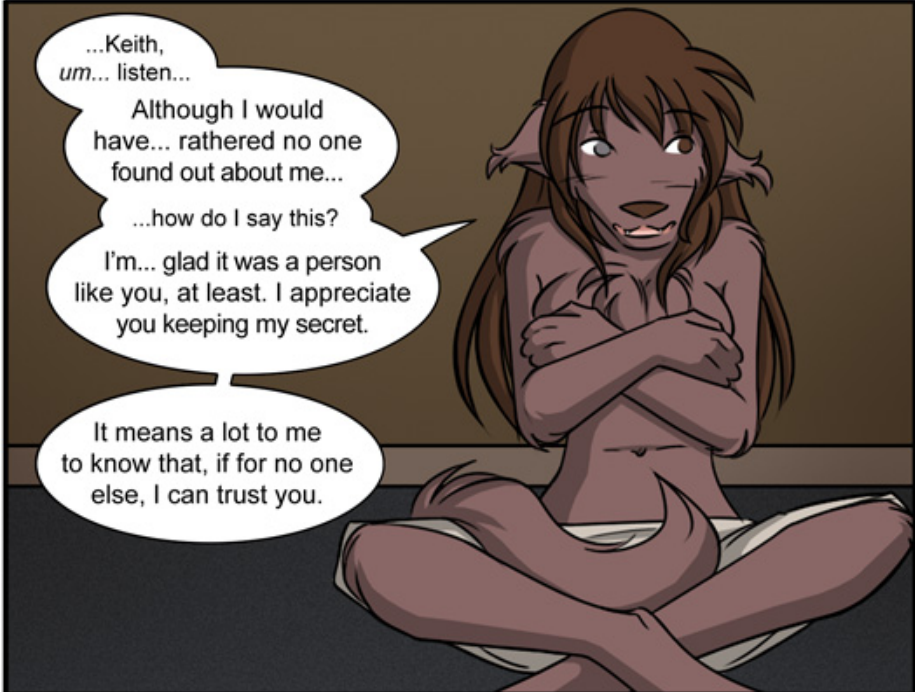
Well, there were a few others early on...



Including a brat from way back when I first began my guild training, but...

...you're the first in a very long time...

Ah, I see...



...Keith, um... listen...

Although I would have... rather no one found out about me...

...how do I say this?

I'm... glad it was a person like you, at least. I appreciate you keeping my secret.

It means a lot to me to know that, if for no one else, I can trust you.



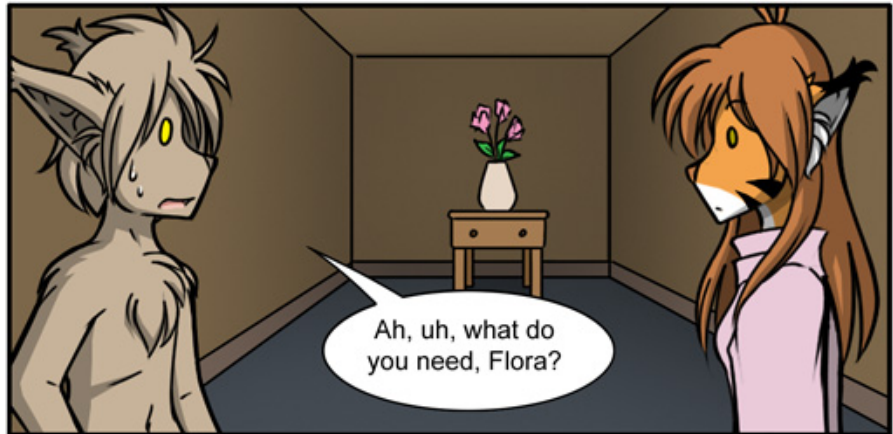
...Don't mention it.



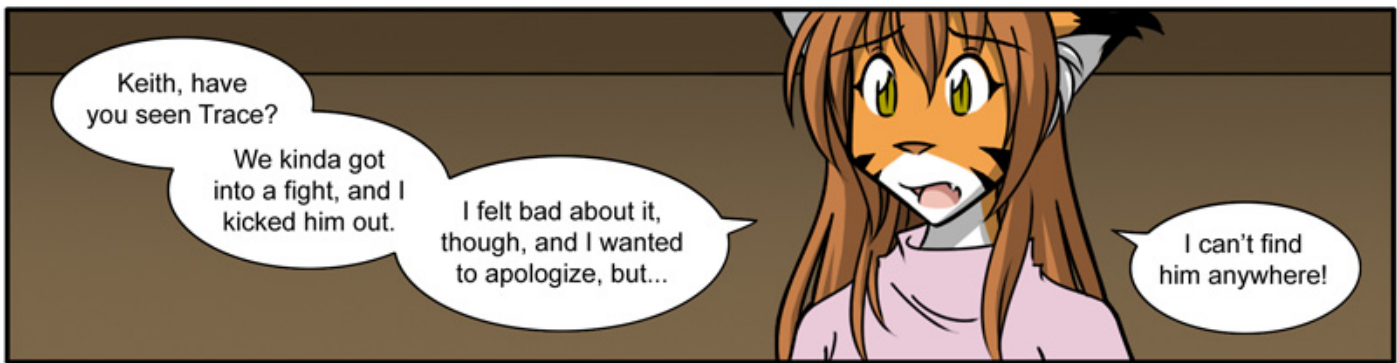
Hey, Keith?



Er... wait...
J-just a second...
Hang on!



Ah, uh, what do you need, Flora?



Keith, have you seen Trace?
We kinda got into a fight, and I kicked him out.
I felt bad about it, though, and I wanted to apologize, but...
I can't find him anywhere!



Have they taken him already?
I thought that they were going to waiting for me.



Sorry, Flora, I... I don't know where he is.



Lying to my friends, now...
There's no honor in any of this...



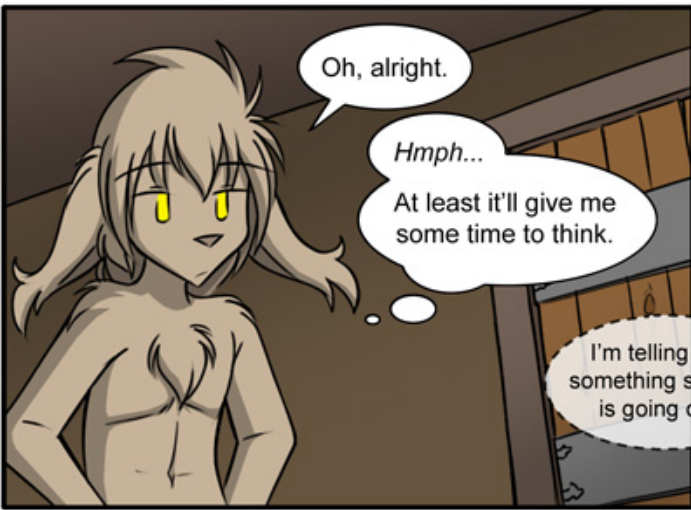
Alright, the coast is clear, Natani.



Say, Keith, while you're up, could you get me another towel? I'm still damp.

What? I'm not wearing anything!

The closet's just down the hall! Please?



Oh, alright.

Hmph...
At least it'll give me some time to think.

I'm telling you, something strange is going on...



Hm?



Haven't you noticed it?



Ever since that tower began lighting up, the generals have all been behaving strangely.

They've been giving weird orders and acting erratically...

And did you see that statue General Alaric made?!

Actually... I think Alaric's always been like that.

But I know what you mean. I've noticed it too.



I mean, attacking someone from behind... it just doesn't feel right.

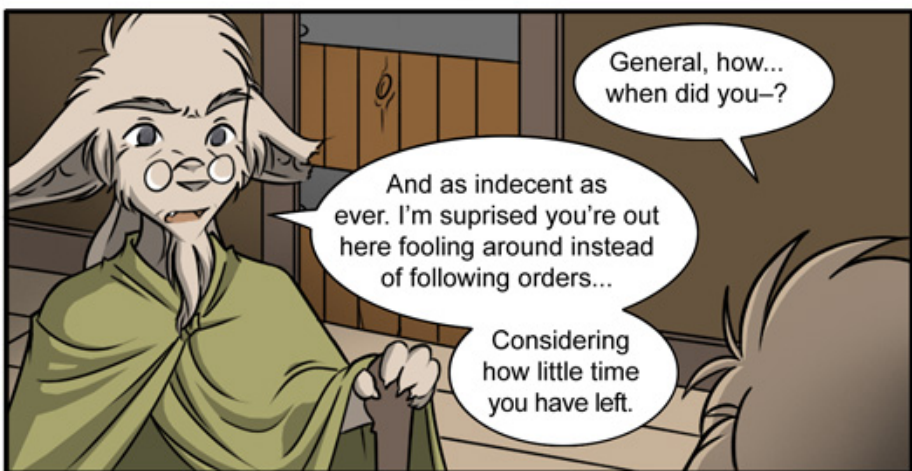
I also heard something from the inner guards... They say the king is sick with an unknown illness.

And that the whole reason for the tower being built in the first place is to keep the king alive!

Hey, don't speak so loudly about that!



Evesdropping, I see. How like you...



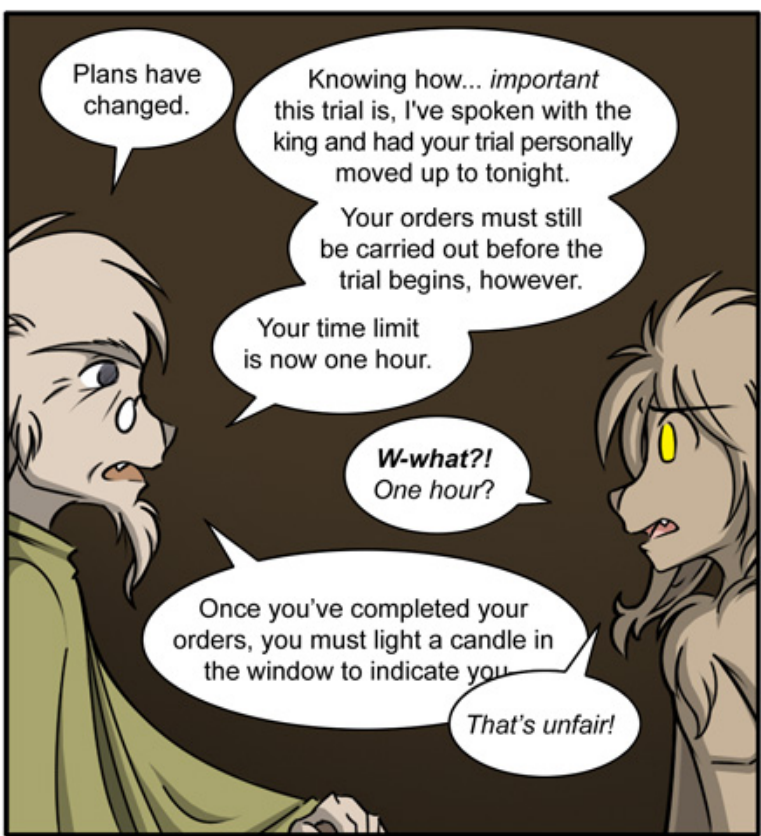
General, how... when did you-?

And as indecent as ever. I'm suprised you're out here fooling around instead of following orders...

Considering how little time you have left.



W-What are you talking about?
I have time. I... I have until tomorrow-



Plans have changed.

Knowing how... *important* this trial is, I've spoken with the king and had your trial personally moved up to tonight.

Your orders must still be carried out before the trial begins, however.

Your time limit is now one hour.

W-what?!
One hour?

Once you've completed your orders, you must light a candle in the window to indicate you

That's unfair!



No! You returning from banishment is what's *unfair!*

It's a mockery of our laws and our judicial system. You will do as you are ordered to do!

You have **one hour!**



Well, happy?

Yes, very!
Um... now,
turn around!



Hey, that wasn't
part of the deal!
All you ask for
was a peek, an' that's
what you got!



Oooh,
okay...

But I sure hope no one
informs a certain human that his fox
slave has become a vixen...

Erk!



Okay, okay!
You're a real
dog, you know?



What are
you—?

You've
got a heart on
your butt!

H-hey!!
That's not my
fur pattern!



Snerk!
Huh?

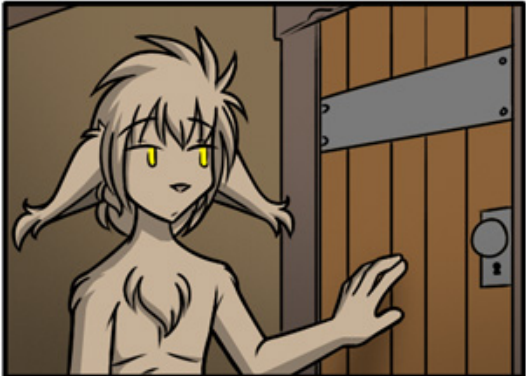


What?

Mike, have you
seen yourself from
behind? Heh...



Arg, that Basitin
is going to pay!!
My gender is one
thing, but my fur...
My fur pattern
is personal!



Oh, it was... nothing...



Here...

Oh, thanks...

What's wrong? Your ears are all... droopy.

I... I'm fine.



.....



...So, Keith. That girl you came in with... she was your ex-fiancée, right?

Huh? Oh yeah, a long time ago...

I see...



Do... do you still have feelings for her?



...I don't know...

Why is she asking me this? And why am I just sitting here?
I'm running out of time...



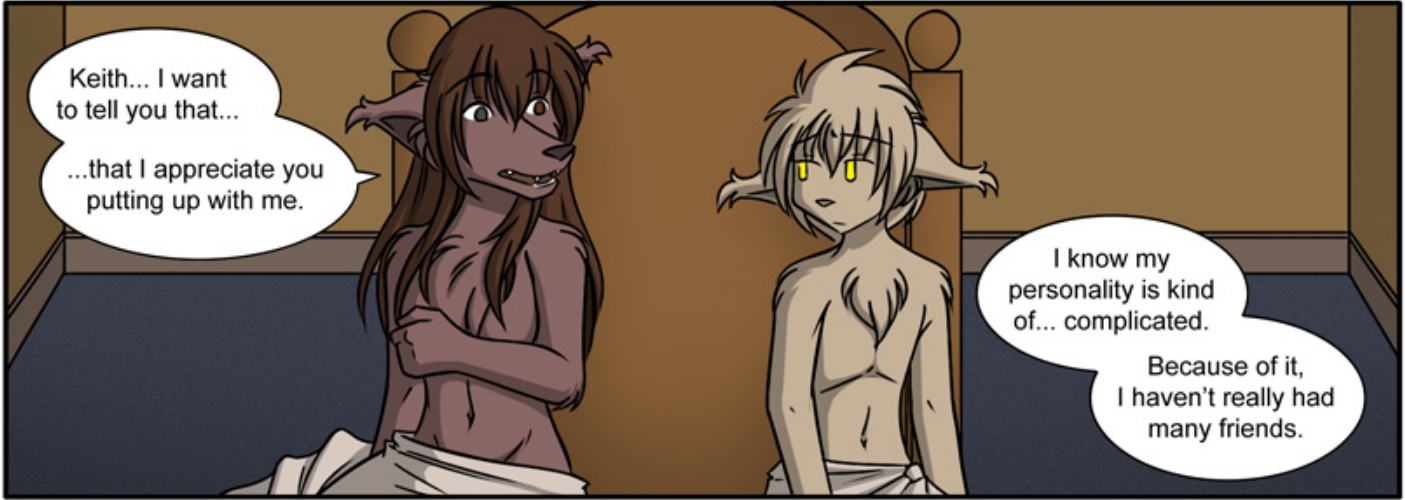
Come on, Natani...
Just tell him you have feelings for him, before it's too late.



No! I can't, because I don't!
And even if I did have any so called "feelings," it wouldn't matter! I. Am. A. **Male!**



But... I can at least admit I like him... as a friend.
That would be okay, right?



Keith... I want to tell you that...
...that I appreciate you putting up with me.

I know my personality is kind of... complicated.
Because of it, I haven't really had many friends.

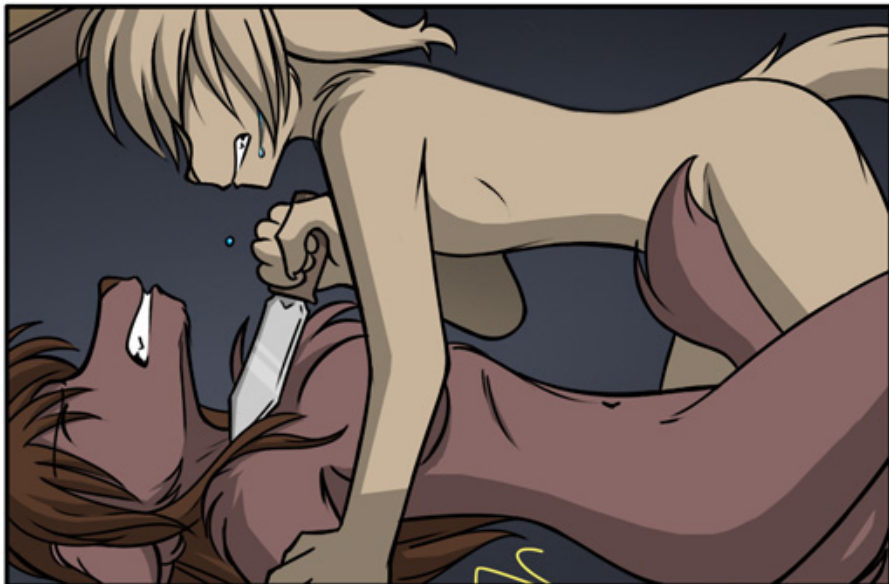
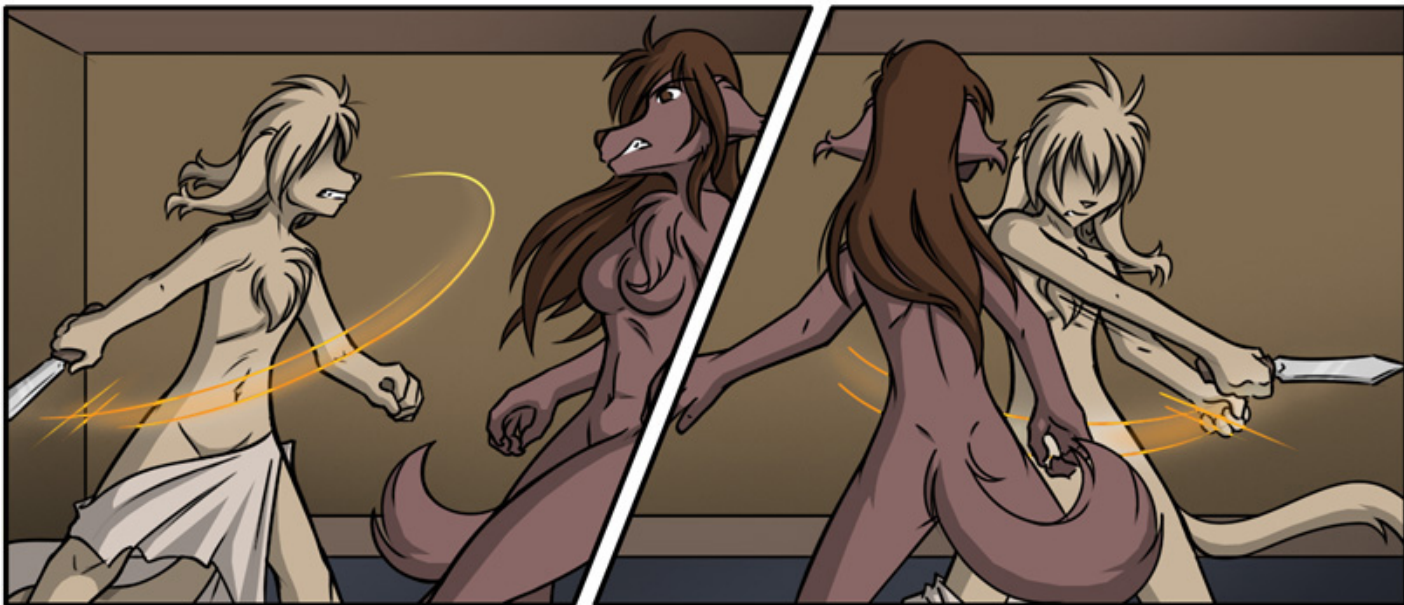


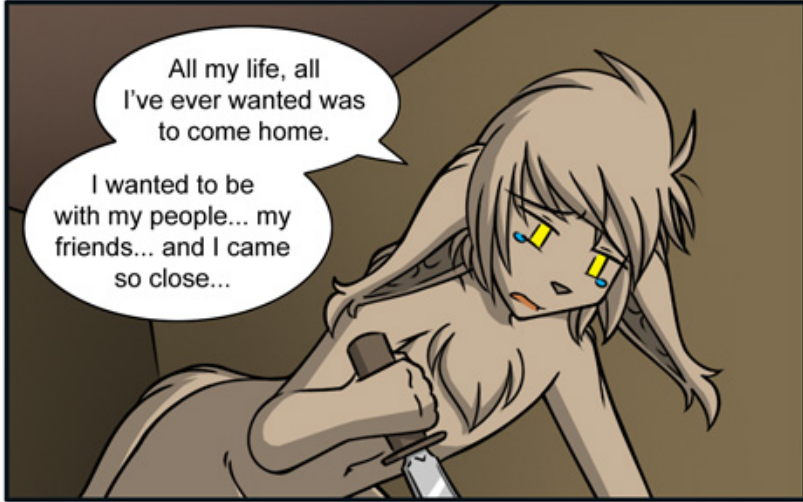
Hardly any, actually.
And I suppose you're the best I'd had...
So... what I'm trying to say is... er, thanks, I guess.



Eeerrgh!
Eh?







All my life, all I've ever wanted was to come home.

I wanted to be with my people... my friends... and I came so close...



But now... I'm going to lose it all... because of you!

What?!



I thought I could just let myself do it...

We Basitins are biologically predisposed to follow orders. The urge is... overpowering.

What are you talking about?

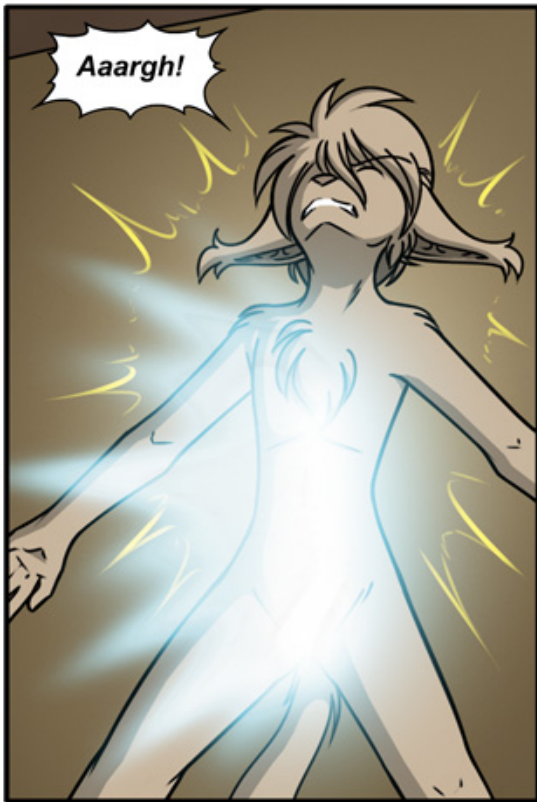
It would have been the easy way... but I can't...

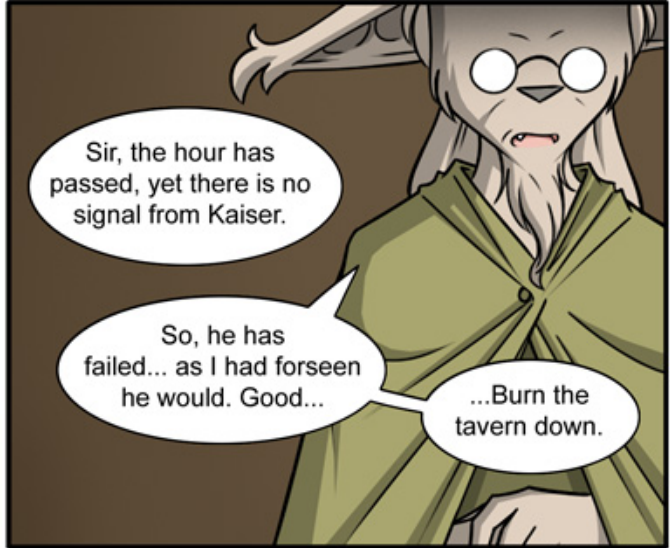
I can't...



I won't!







Sir, the hour has passed, yet there is no signal from Kaiser.

So, he has failed... as I had foreseen he would. Good...

...Burn the tavern down.



G-General?!
That is our... own tavern!

There are our own people in there. And Kaiser still needs to stand trial—



Don't you dare talk back to me!



SMASH!



I said burn it down, now!

Y-yes, Sir!



Yes, sir... urgh...

Keith will pay for killing Cornelius yet!



Are you sure it's safe leaving him out in the open like this, Randal?

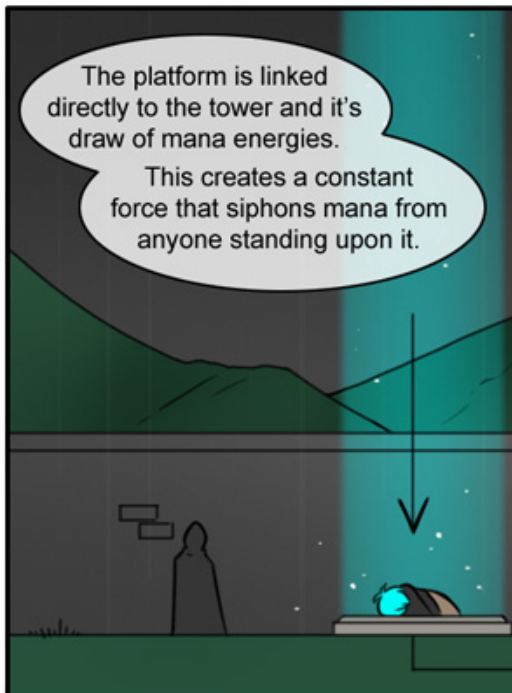
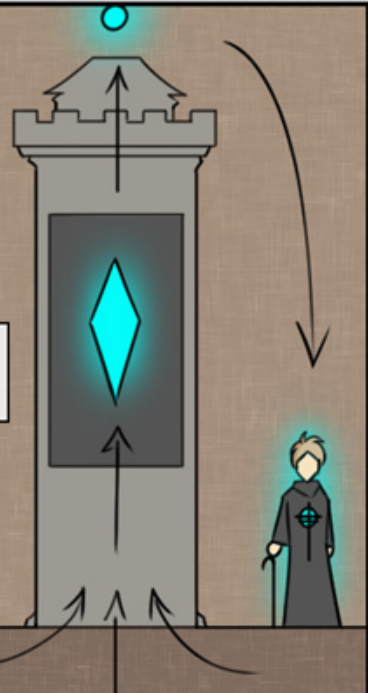
Oh, not to worry. He's essentially harmless. That platform he's lying on is of my own invention.

It creates an effect I call a mana sink.



You are familiar, of course, with the basic fundamentals of magic and how our Towers function.

Mana gathered in large enough quantities tend to crystallize. Our towers are basically storage batteries. Templar work to draw mana into the towers, where it joins with the existing crystals to grow larger. Then the mana energy from the crystals can be used by those linked to the tower. In essence, Towers provide a store of energy vastly greater than any single mage could retain on his own.



The platform is linked directly to the tower and it's draw of mana energies. This creates a constant force that siphons mana from anyone standing upon it.

Without mana, there is no magic. And without magic, Trace is an ordinary man.



One explanation later...

...and that's about it, I guess.

Keith... he... he gave up everything to save me!

He had the chance to get back all he lost as a child, but he chose my life instead...

And risked losing it all...

If I was given the chance to get back my village and all my friends and family I lost as a child...

...would I have been willing to do the same as Keith, and give it all away to save his life?

I don't know if I could, but Keith... he did. He cared about my life that much...

Natani? I told you everything... why are you staring at me like that? I still have to report my failure at my trial.

Can you let me go now?

...
No. Since you can't move, there's something I've always wanted to do to you...

W-what?!

W-wait, stop! Don't touch me there!

Those are sensitive!

They're so soft!



Enough, already!
Why are you acting so strange all of the sudden?



I-I'm not really sure...
I should still be furious at you for attacking me, but... you risked your life to save mine.
...Keith, I think there is something that...



that I have to admit to you... and to myself, before it's too late...
Even though I know you're a guy... I can't help feeling this...



Keith... I...



FIRE!

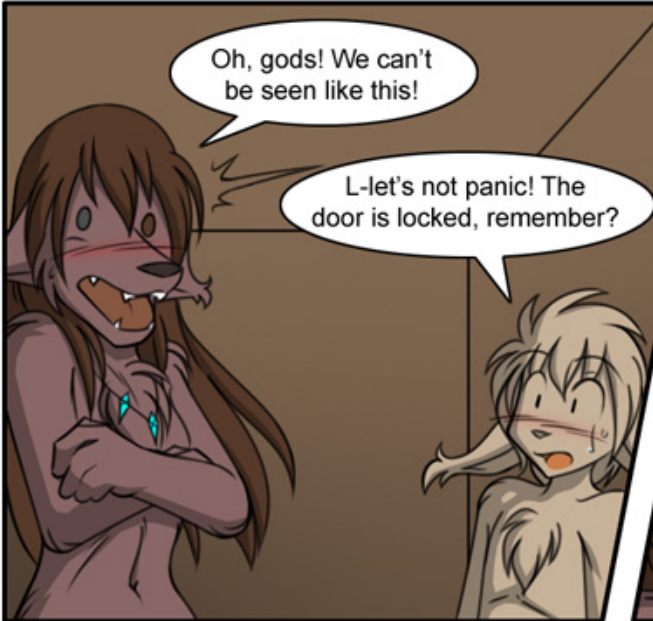


Keith! The tavern's on fire! We have to get out!



It's locked!

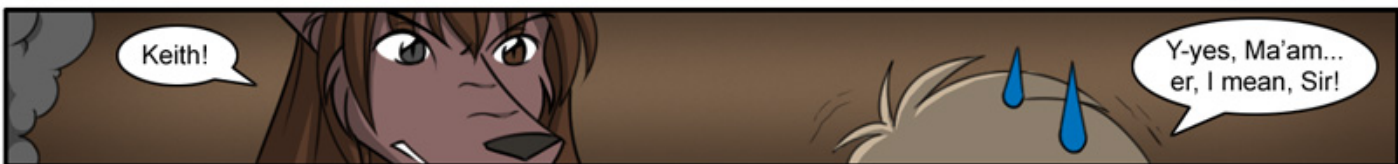
Some weird guy just gave me the master key!
Can this help?



Oh, gods! We can't be seen like this!
L-let's not panic! The door is locked, remember?



SIGH...
Alright, let's panic...





Well, I hope you're satisfied.

Hee hee, I appreciate it.



But seriously, I meant what I said. I will help you how I can. You know, you really don't look all that different from when you were a guy. I bet with a little work, we could get you looking like a guy again in no time!

And then maybe later we can go and confront that Basitin together!



Whadaya say, Buddy?



Mike? Huh, he must have been exhausted...



Well, I guess I might as well let him be for now. I'll bug him lat- eh?



Hey, Mike! Leggo! You've got my tail!



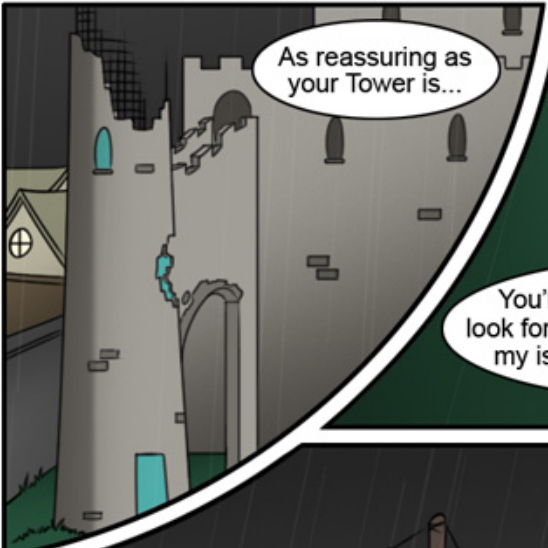
HMMMM...



We-e-ell... I could just risk waking him up to get my tail loose...



But... that would be rude!

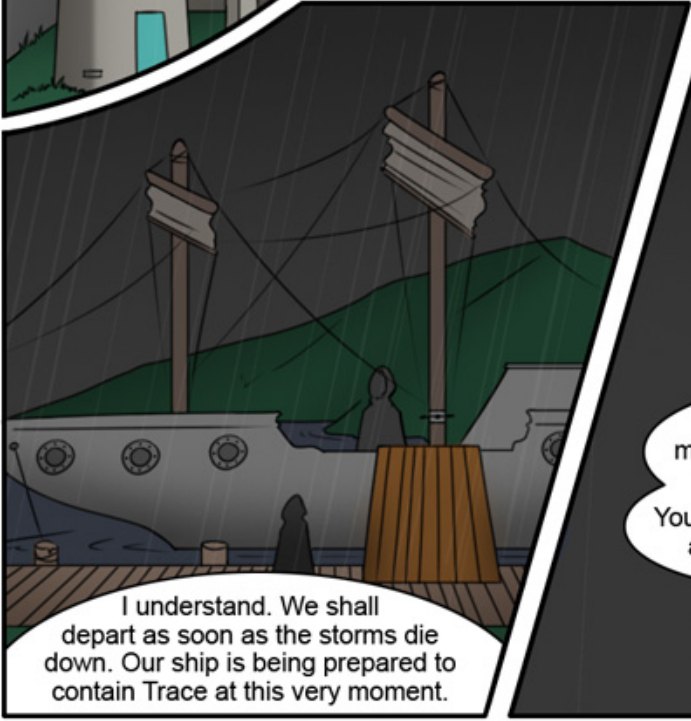


As reassuring as your Tower is...



I have heard many rumors of the destructive nature of Trace's power.

You'll understand when I say I look forward to you Templar leaving my island as soon as possible. No offense.



I understand. We shall depart as soon as the storms die down. Our ship is being prepared to contain Trace at this very moment.

But you have nothing to be concerned about.

I am quite confident in my ability to contain Trace's power, if necessary. Your castle and people are in no danger.



As the Master Architect, I can guarantee you:



My technology is infallible.





<Alright, is everybody here? Where's the humans?>



Present!
Is it just me, or are all the exits sealed off?



<I'm here, but I can't find Trace!
<And the whole first floor is on fire!>



<Trace isn't in the tavern!
<I'll explain later, but right now I need to concentrate.

<I've never done this many people before!>

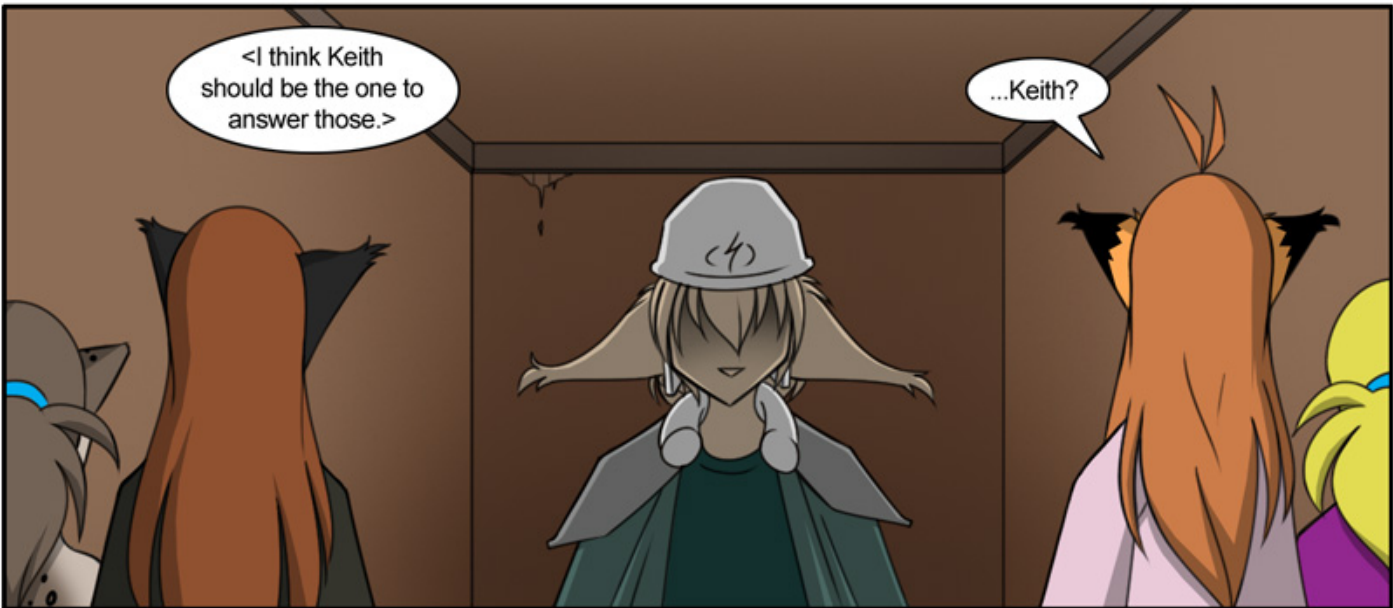
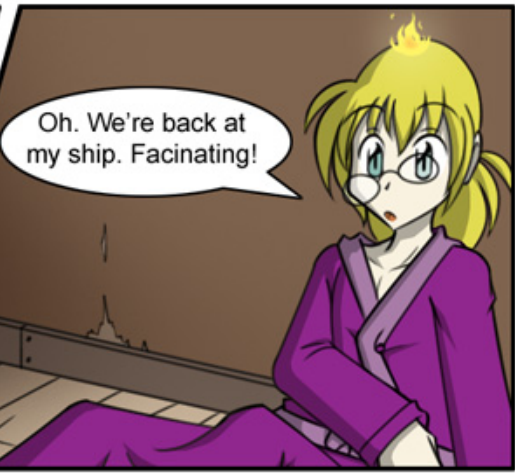


<Done what? Wait a minute!>



<What are you doi-!>

BWOOSH!





...And that's what happened...
Trace is probably at the tower now. They're preparing to take him back to human territory, so they can attempt to restore his memory.

Oh, no...



Keith... you betrayed us...

Yes, Flora, I-



How could you, Keith?
I know you don't think very highly of Keidran, but you were Trace's best friend!

Didn't our travels together mean anything to you?



Flora, please!

What Keith did was wrong, but he's trying to make things right now!



Make things right?!
He sold us out!

Why are you defending him, he tried to kill you! How can you trust him after that?



I'm sorry... I didn't want any of this... I just wanted to go home.

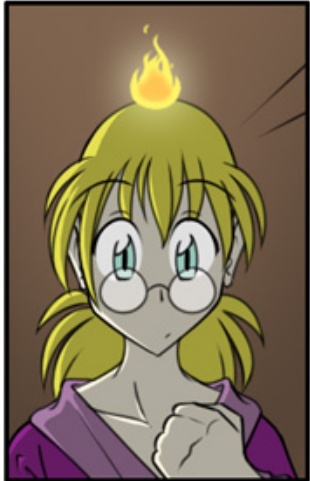


A Tower on the island?

But I feel like I've heard this before...

Why would the Templar do that? Doesn't sound like the Templar I knew...

Basitins... Magic...



Roderick, is that a Basitin?

Oh, yeah, that's Vehra, Master Templar's personal pet.

Where can I get one of those? I've never heard of a Basitin slave.



She's the only one that I know of. She was a failed experiment. The Master Mage found some way to give Basitins the ability to wield magic.

But apparently after a while forcing magic makes 'em go soft in the head. She used to be pretty skilled, but now she can hardly speak in full sentences.



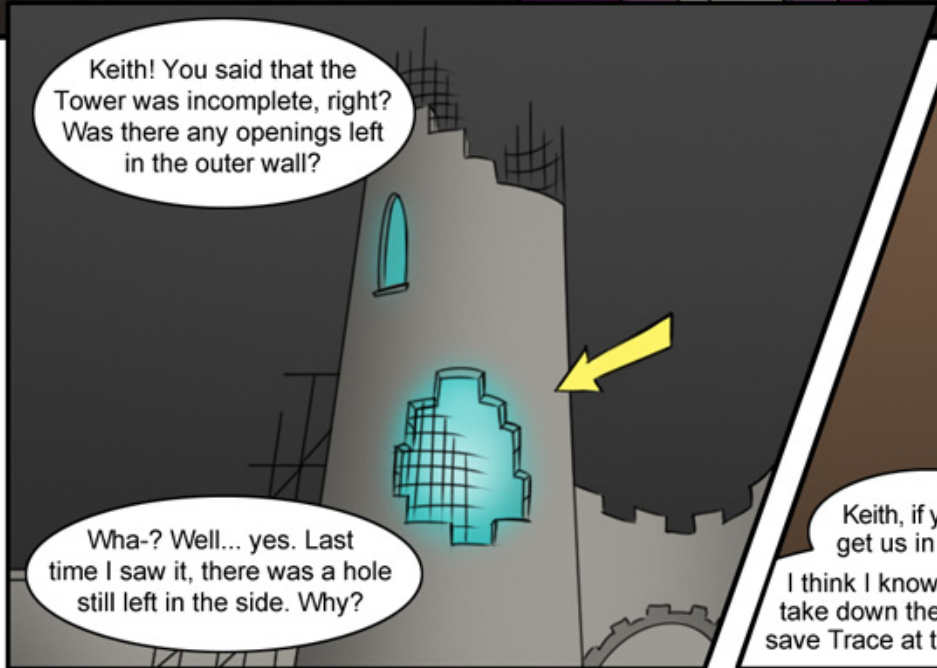
This is all just a ruse... They're fooling the Basitins into lobotomizing themselves.

That sounds exactly like the Templar I knew.



Merry
Christmas!

Get lucky!



Completed Towers are very resilient to attack,

because its core is protected by a strong crystalline barrier.

However, if the Tower wall is still incomplete, the core will be exposed.

With enough force, a strike to the core will begin a catastrophic chain-reaction, causing the crystals to release all their mana energy at the same time.

This will take out the Tower... and likely half the castle with it. That'll give us the distraction we'll need to escape.

<So, if - and this is a big if - we can get into the castle courtyard, we then grab Trace, snipe the Tower, and run for our lives.>

<Natani, you're our only magic user. Do you think you can hit the Tower with a magicked arrow?>

<I don't know how I feel about saving a human, but he's better out of Templar hands.>

<I've only got one shot, but if you can get me up to it, I can take it out!>

<A-actually, I-I can-->

Alright, let me get a map...

<O-oh, okay...>



There are three bridges leading up to the castle. A central bridge, and two lesser bridges to the north and south.

Reaching the bridges shouldn't be a problem. It's after curfew, and I don't hear any alarms going off. So they probably don't know we escaped the fire, yet.



But getting across those bridges will be a lot harder without being detected. The castle side will be well defended.

Ah!

whispering



You guys take the north and south bridges. They are out of the way and easier to cross.

I will take the central bridge alone and draw their attention away.



Keith! No, you can't go by yourself!

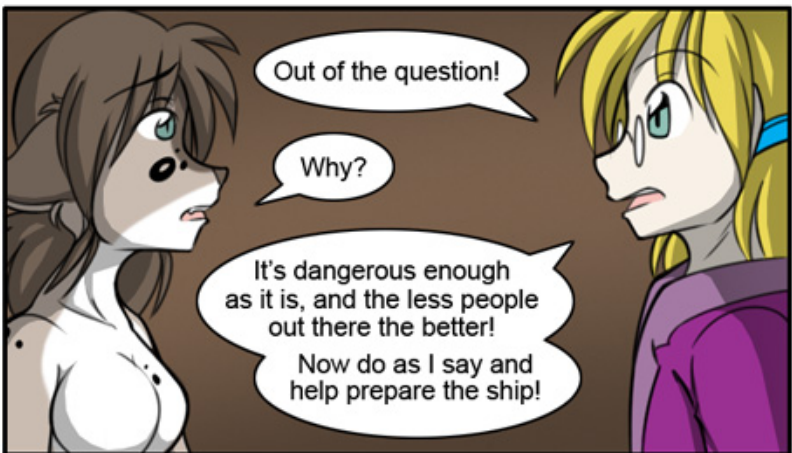


I have to... even if destroying the tower means saving my people, I will still be marked as a traitor for aiding you. I must face them alone, but at least I can serve as a distraction.



Kat, I want you to go get Mike and Evals and prep the ship.

What? No! I'm coming with you!



Out of the question!

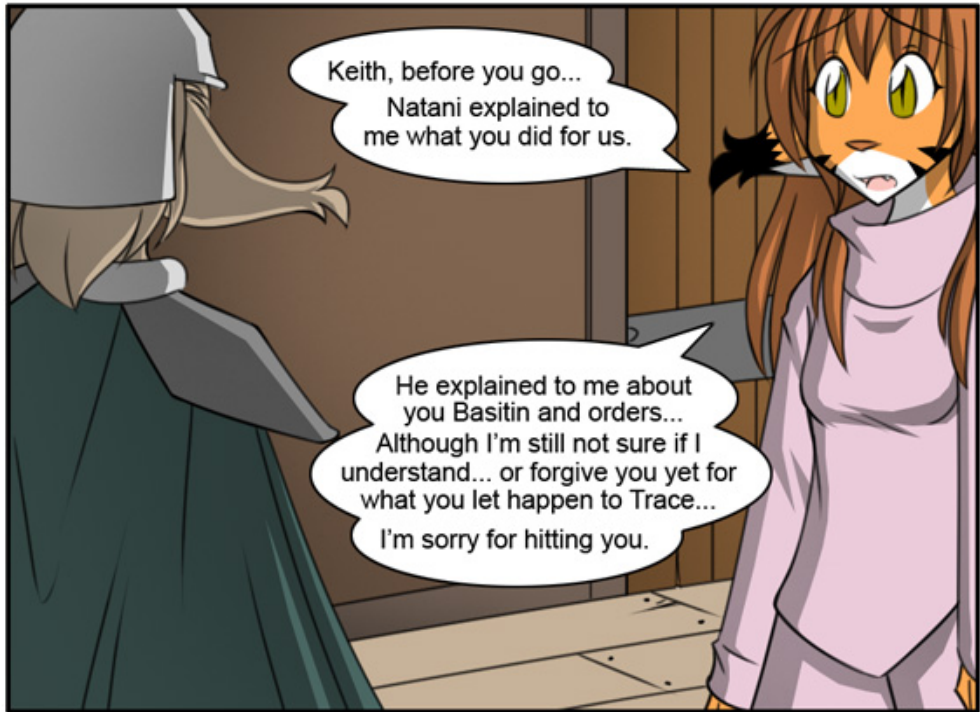
Why?

It's dangerous enough as it is, and the less people out there the better!

Now do as I say and help prepare the ship!



If you don't see a flash of light from the tower in an hour, I want you to leave.



Keith, before you go... Natani explained to me what you did for us.

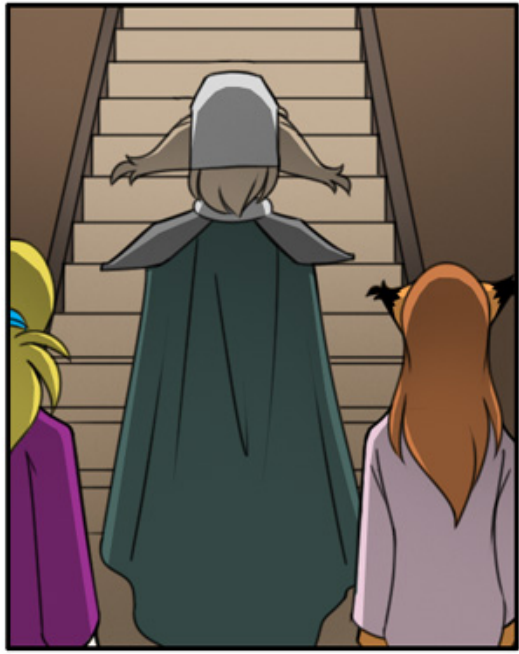
He explained to me about you Basitin and orders... Although I'm still not sure if I understand... or forgive you yet for what you let happen to Trace...

I'm sorry for hitting you.



Well, it doesn't matter now. All that matters now is stopping the Templar and getting Trace back.

So let's get this over with. I'm going out now, you guys follow when the coast is clear.





E-excuse me...

I- I just wanted to ask...
You are a human...

So why do you fight
y-your own kind?

Oh, My Dear, we humans are
not so different from you Keidran.
We have both good and bad.
Many of us do not agree
with the Templars.

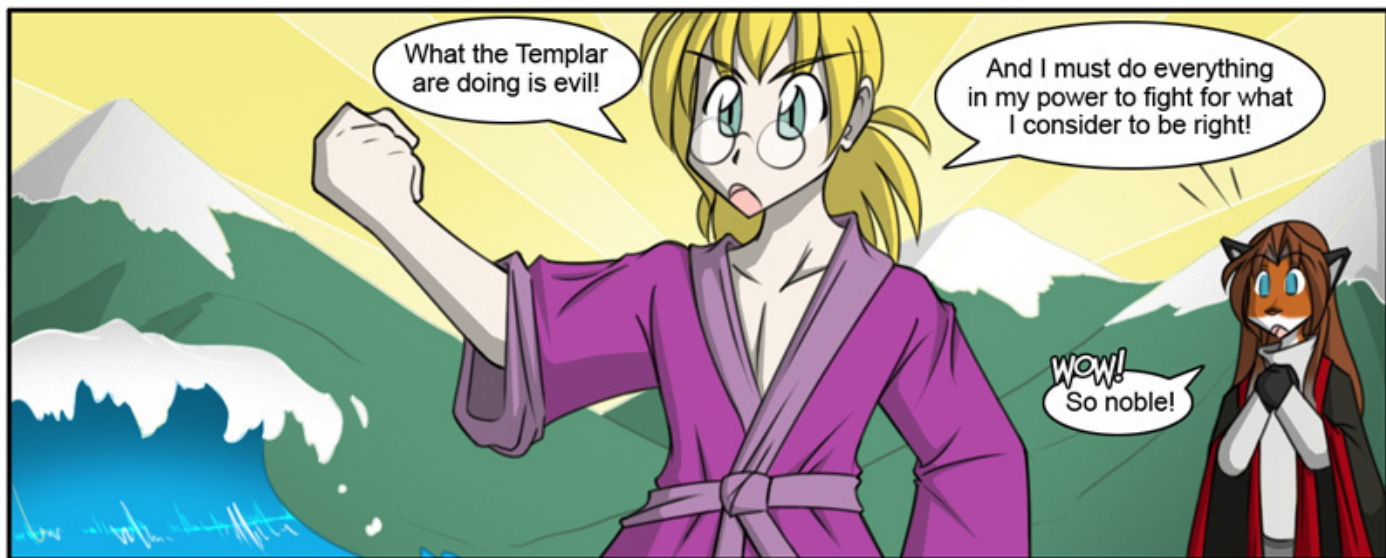


S-still! Risking your own
life t-to save the Basitins...
I've been told humans
were heartless, b-but you're
nothing like I expected.

You're v-very brave.



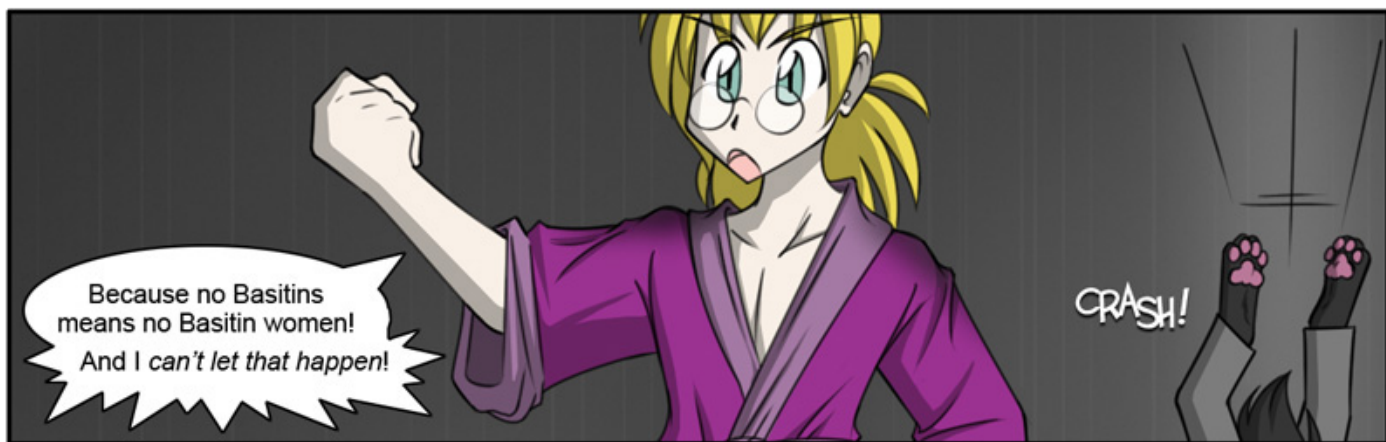
How can I not be?
I can't just stand
idle while the Templar
perform genocide!



What the Templar
are doing is evil!

And I must do everything
in my power to fight for what
I consider to be right!

Wow!
So noble!



Because no Basitins
means no Basitin women!
And I can't let that happen!

CRASH!





...what's that?



Wha-? Well, uh, this just makes light out of mana. Why are you here?

I thought you were going to stay on the ship?



I - I decided to come with you. I'm not going to abandon Keith a-again. If he's doing this, then I will a-as well.

I - I also owe the Basitin people a lot, f-for their hospitality. I must help anyway I can.



But this is very dangerous!

You're better off on the ship where it's safe!



You should listen to the human, Mongrel.



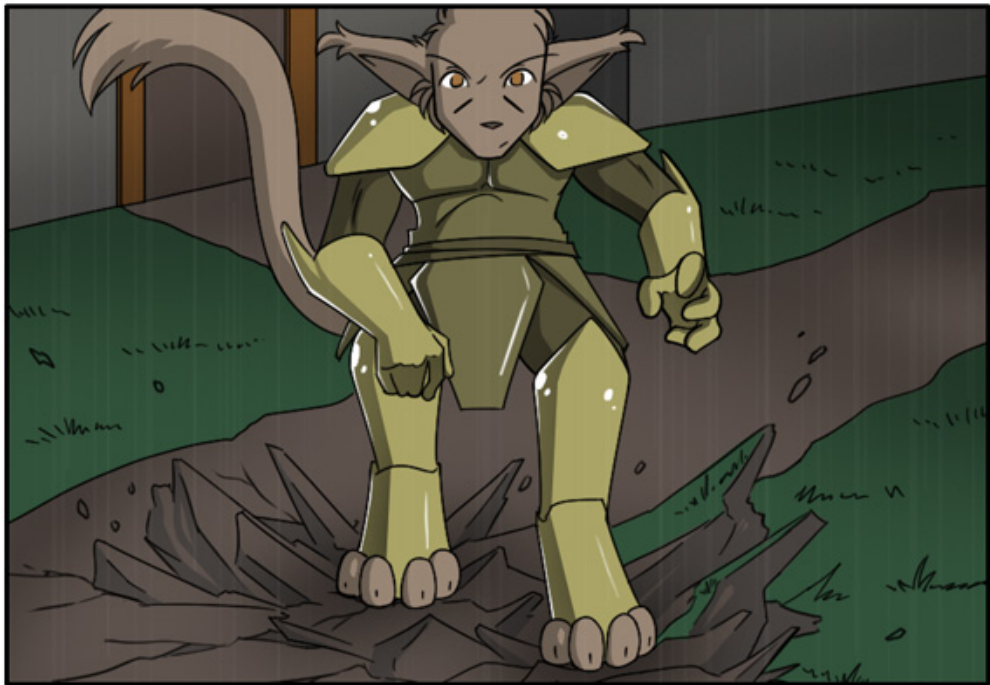
Not that it will make any difference now.



There it is, the bridge!
And the coast is clear...



Not so fast, Fiends!



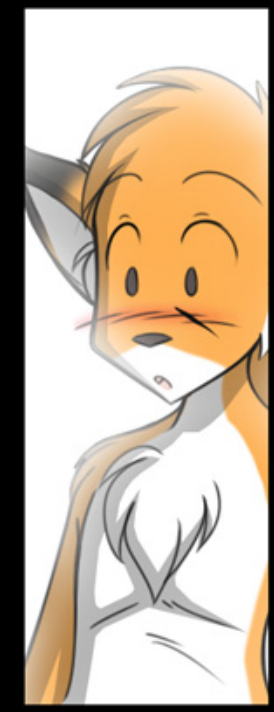
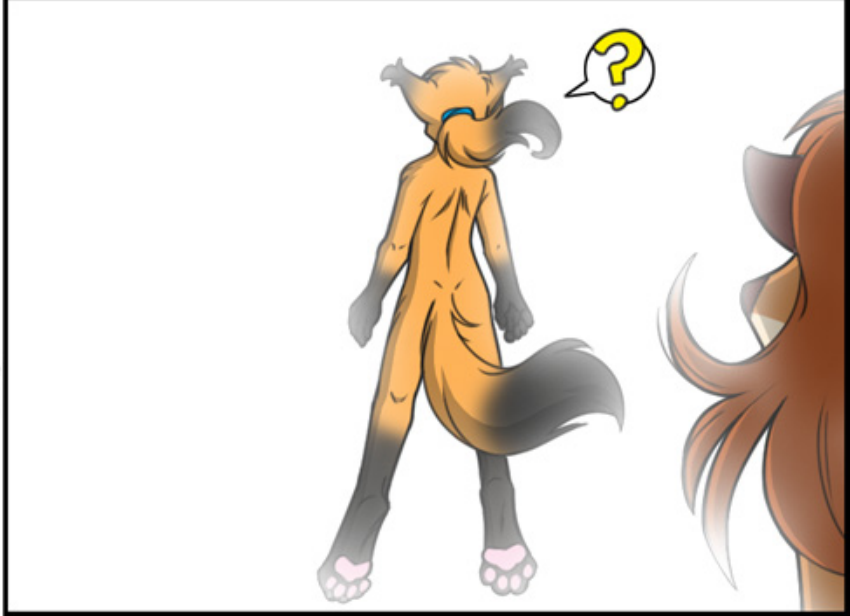
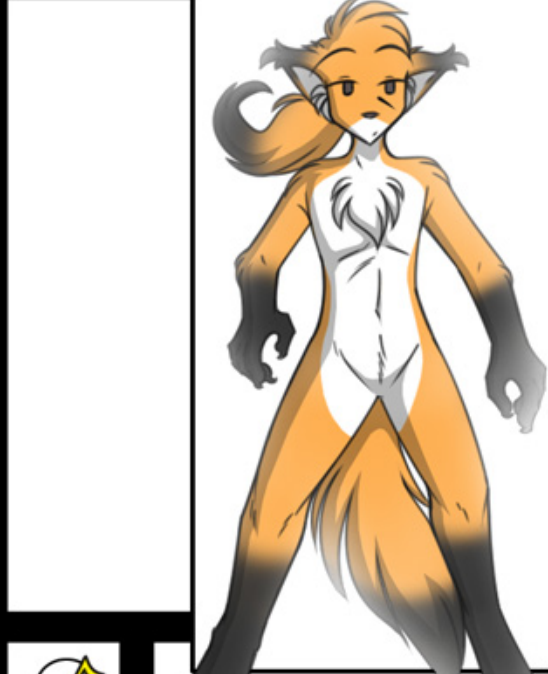
You might as well give yourselves up now, for you have no chance of defeating me!

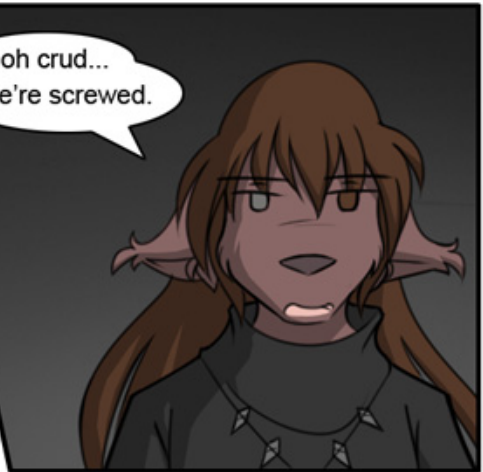
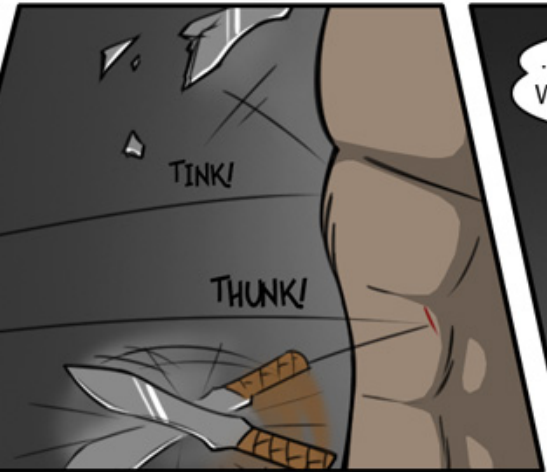
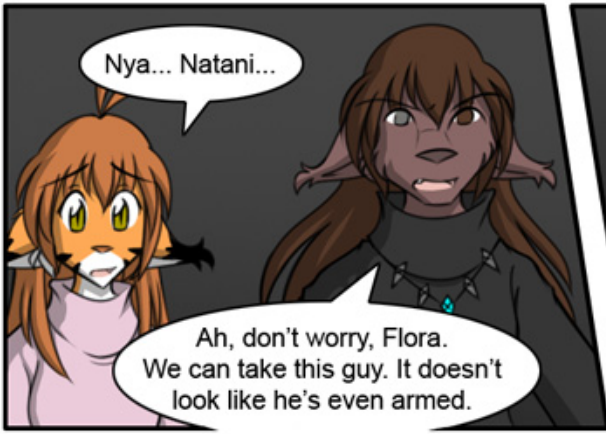


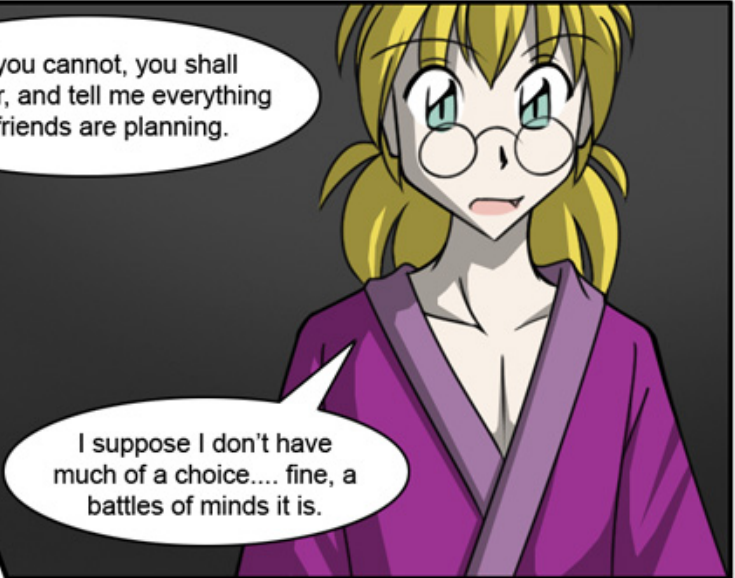
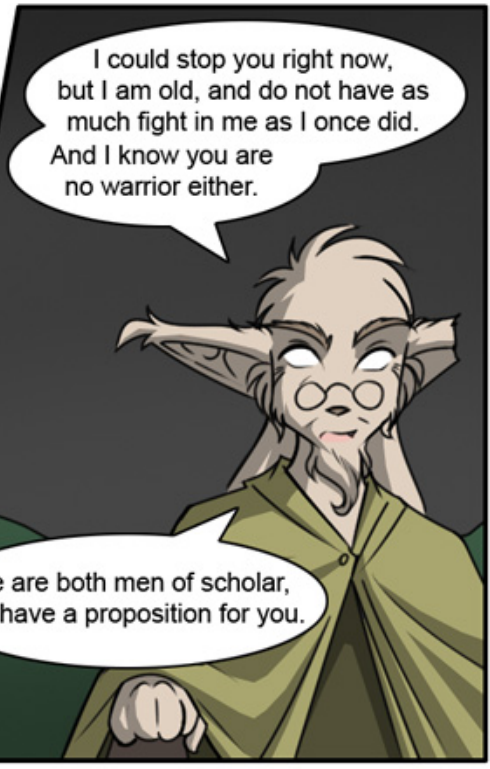
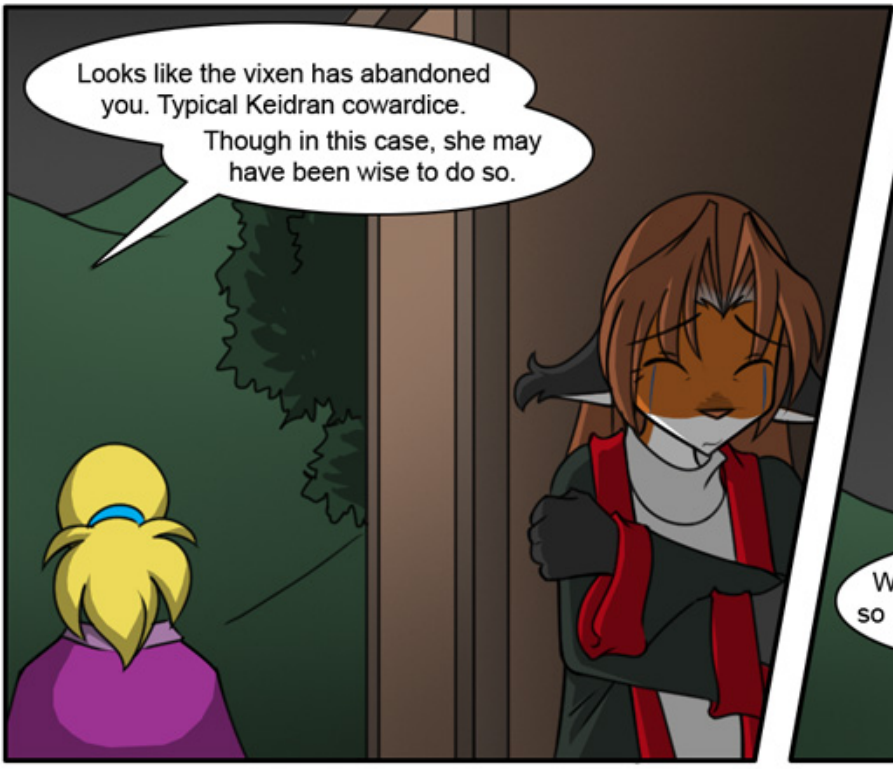
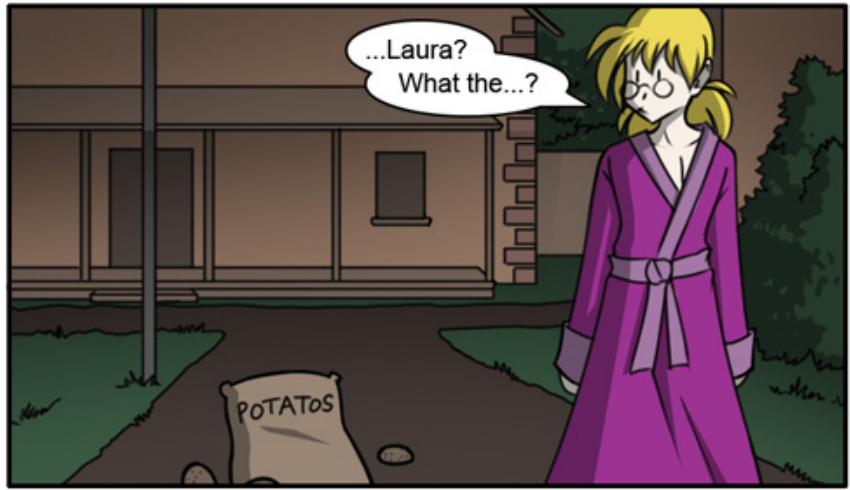
Aw crap, it's the Musclehead General!



Geh... Musclehead General?!







So you see! The Templar set you up! It's slowly driving you insane.

...I see...
I had my suspicions that the Templar might have been trying something...

So now you see why I have to stop them!

You have to let me through-

No!

What?

I told you everything! The Humans, The Templar... you know now....

Nick, you should be helping me...

You have no right to call me that, Keith!
I'm not broken like you. I cannot disregard the laws that have built our society.

It's for the courts to decide what should be done with the humans.
As for me, I must do as ordered by the king - and my orders are to stop you and your friends here.

I do what's commanded, even if I feel it's wrong. That is what it means to be a Basitin.

RAAAWWWR!



WHINE...



I won't back down, Alaric.



I must do what I know is right...

Even if it means fighting the ones I'm trying to save.

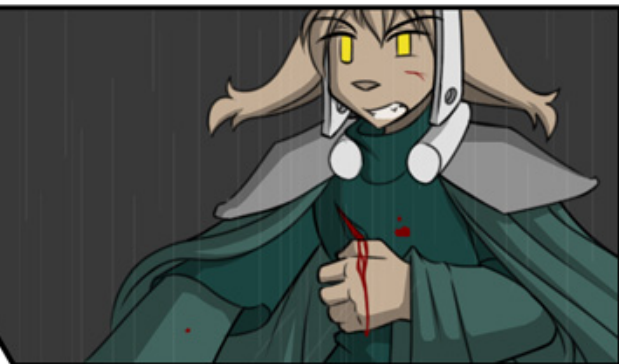


...very well, Keith.



En garde!!







OK



The capital of the Wolven Territories is—

—Karne, population 36,000. You'll have to do better than that.



The first Great War ended—

—on March 1st of the second century, 181 CE...

If you could call that pathetic skirmish between you and the Keidran a 'war'.



...erm... my middle name—

—Is Adrian; after your grandfather.



But that's not a general knowledge question, is it?

Are you prepared to surrender your friends yet?



Hey... what is that?



What's wrong with the core?

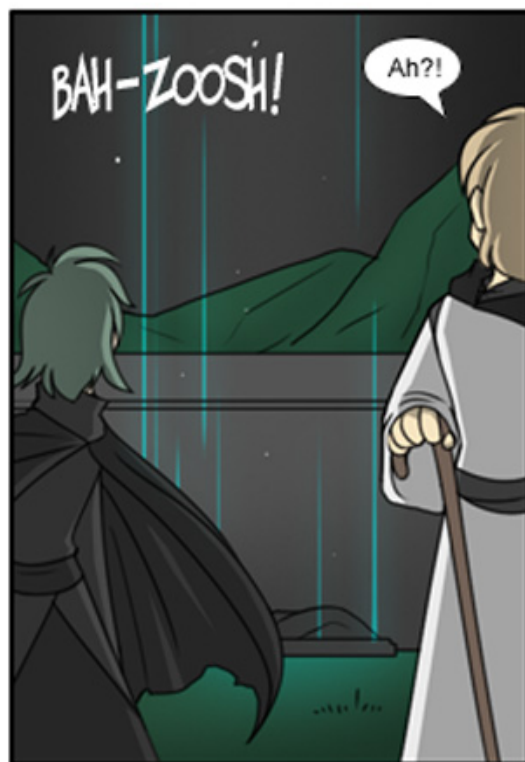


I dunno...



The mana sink on the ship is done.

Very good.



BAH-ZOOSH!

Ah?!



Oh...

That's bad...



Looks like it's just you now.

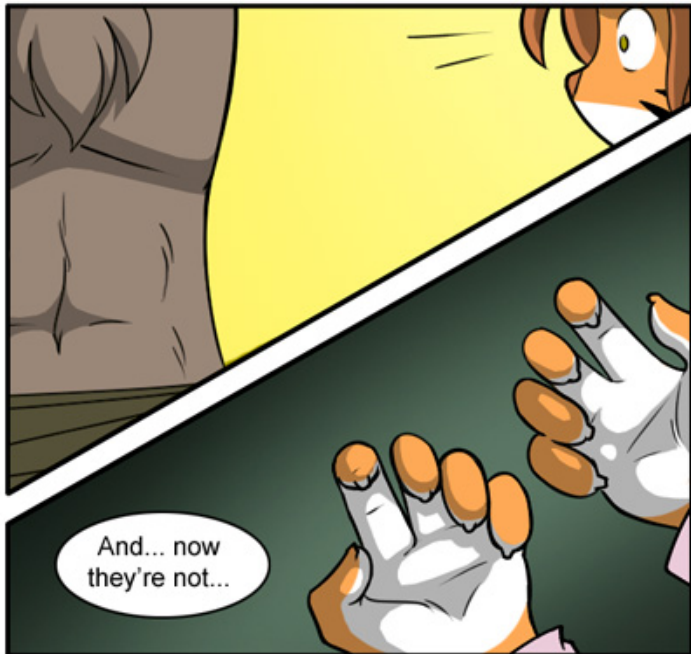
S-stay back! I'm warning you...

M-my claws are sharp!

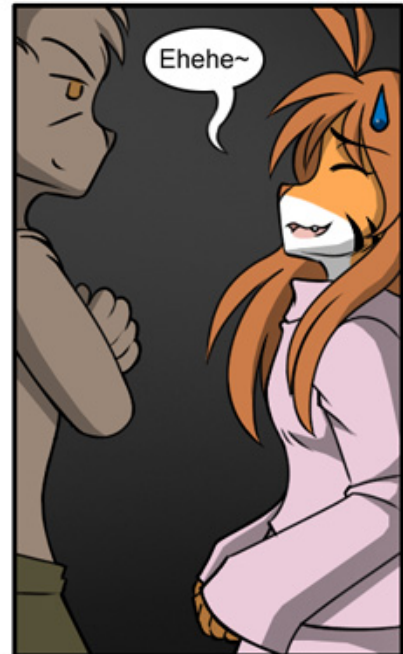
SCRATCH!

SLASH!

SLICE!



And... now they're not...



Ehehe~



BONK!



You two are probably lucky it was me you faced and not the other two.

You'd better hope your friends are having more luck than you.

For all our sakes.



There!
Don't worry. The courts
will probably just have you
two deported.



Our laws are not
cruel. Tough but fair
is the Basitin way!

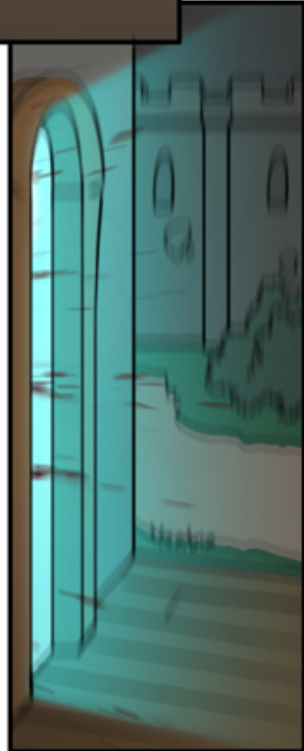


Those two *should*
be saving Trace.



Eh? Who are you? What
do you know about it—

Wait...there's something strange
about you... you're not Basitin...
What are you?



Meanwhile...

Well, is that all you've got, Boy?

Ugh... this is hopeless... I can't outwit him!

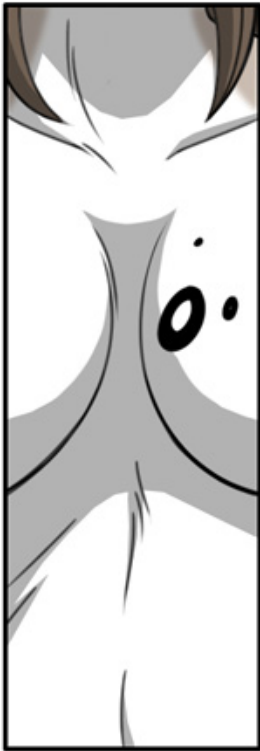
Don't give up, Master!

Kathrin? I told you to stay on the boat!

I just couldn't! I had to see that you were okay!

Come on, Eric! There must be something you know that the old goat doesn't!

Think! You're the smartest person that I know!



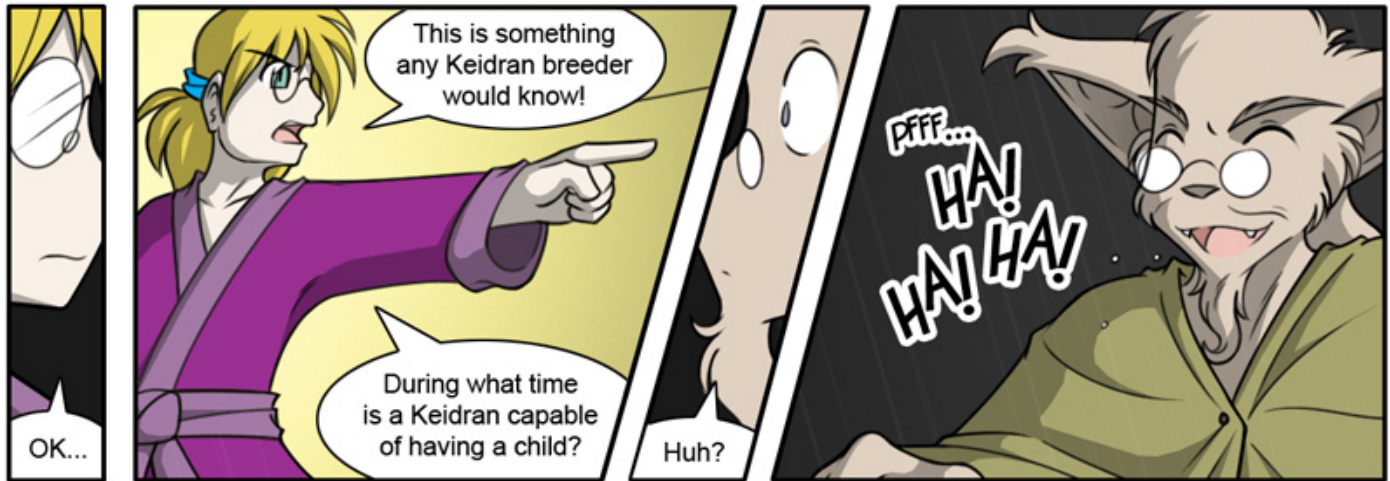
Ahah!



There is one thing!

Ah?!

It's a subject I consider myself to be an expert on!



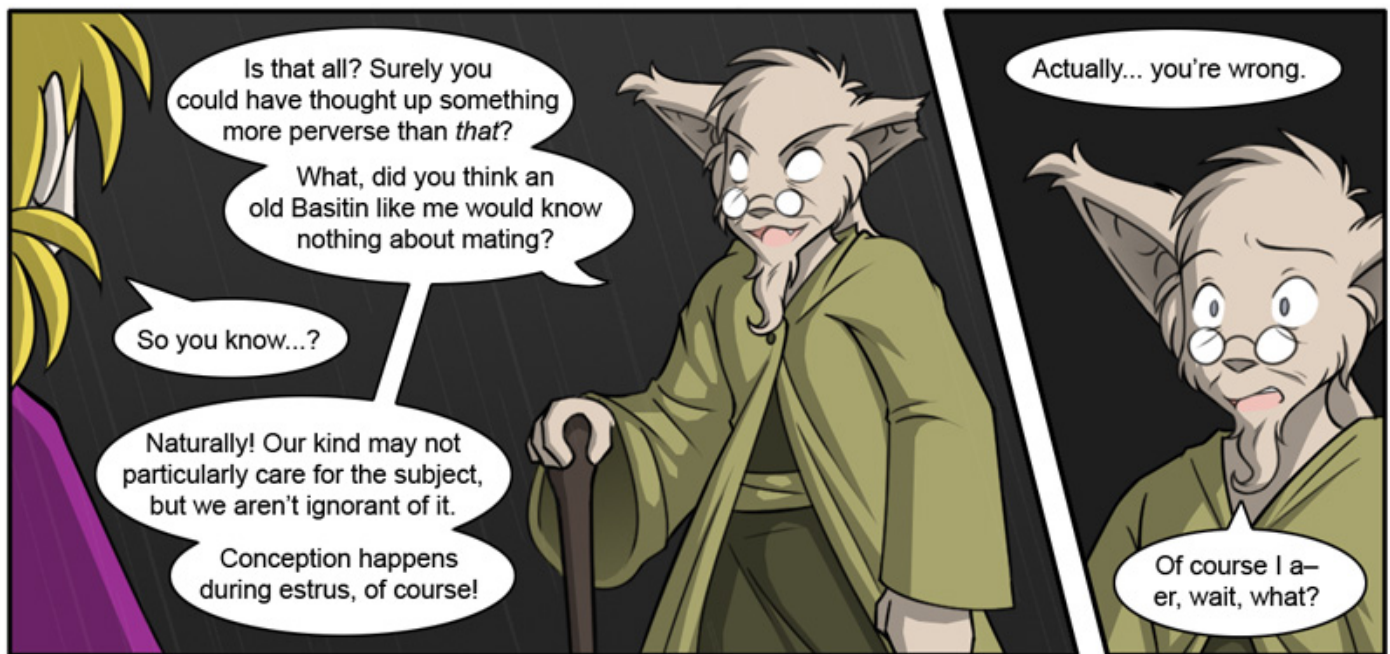
This is something any Keidran breeder would know!

During what time is a Keidran capable of having a child?

OK...

Huh?

FFF... HA! HA!



Is that all? Surely you could have thought up something more perverse than *that*?

What, did you think an old Basitin like me would know nothing about mating?

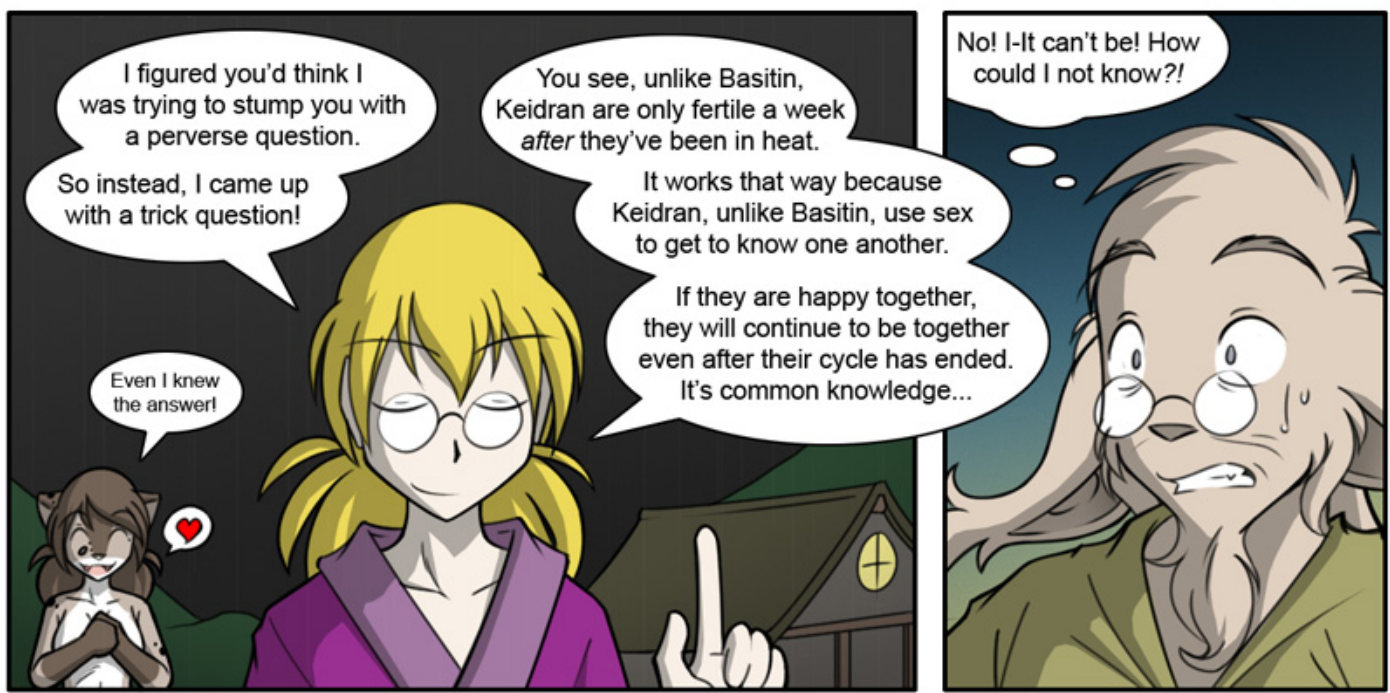
So you know...?

Naturally! Our kind may not particularly care for the subject, but we aren't ignorant of it.

Conception happens during estrus, of course!

Actually... you're wrong.

Of course I a-er, wait, what?



I figured you'd think I was trying to stump you with a perverse question.

So instead, I came up with a trick question!

Even I knew the answer!

You see, unlike Basitin, Keidran are only fertile a week *after* they've been in heat.

It works that way because Keidran, unlike Basitin, use sex to get to know one another.

If they are happy together, they will continue to be together even after their cycle has ended. It's common knowledge...

No! I-it can't be! How could I not know?!



Keith, it's over.

Surrender before it's too late.

I don't want to kill you.



Then... don't...

You have free will... you have a choice!

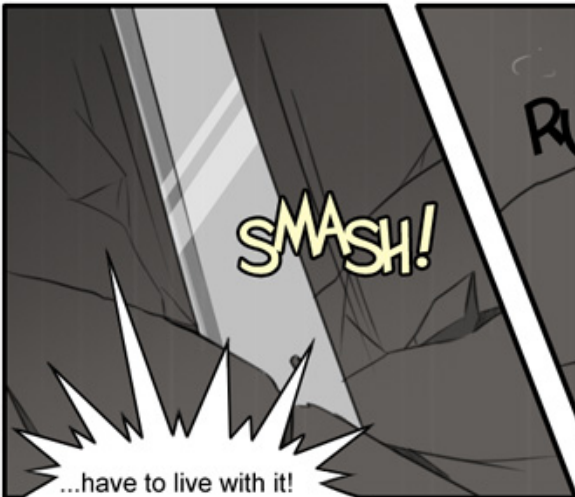
I have made my choice, Keith. I chose to stay on the path of righteousness...

You chose the path of rebellion. There's no turning back now, Brother.



...I... I guess you're right, Alaric... we've... made our decisions...

Now we... erg...



SMASH!

...have to live with it!



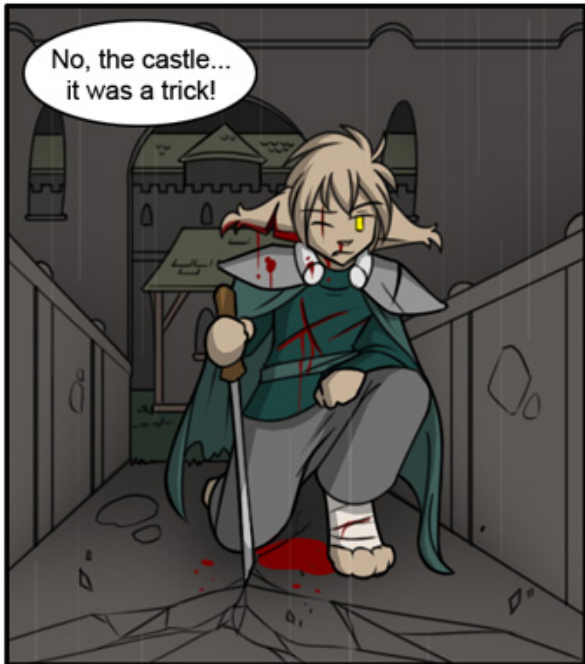
RUMBLE!

CRACK!

Ah?!



CRACK!

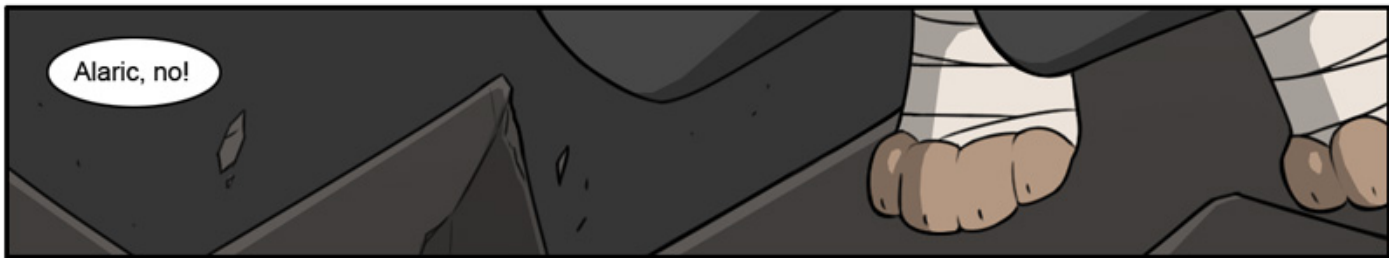


No, the castle...
it was a trick!



I'm standing on
the section of the bridge
I damaged...!

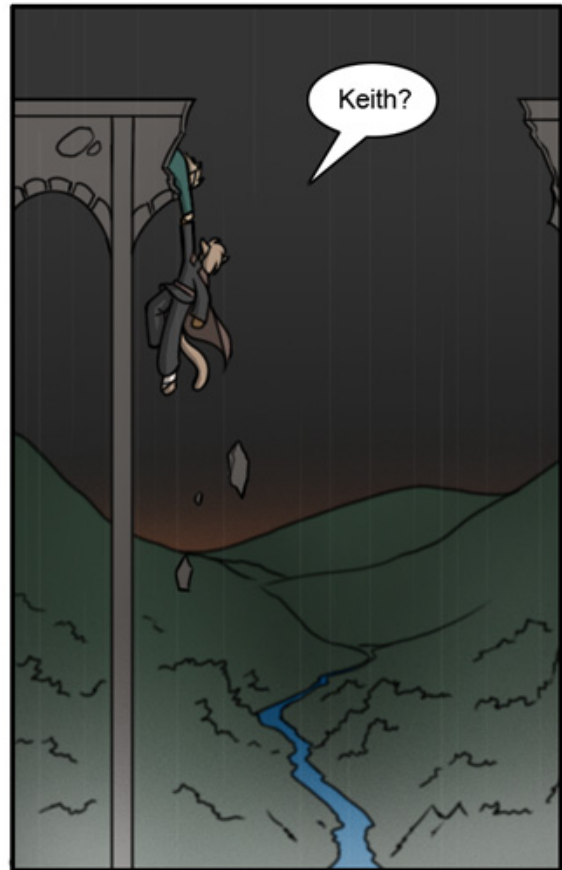
If I keep backing
up, I'll lose him!



Alaric, no!



I won't let
you get away!









Flora, wake up.



You alright?
We need to go.

Natani?



GASP!



Oh, gods...
Natani? D-did
you do...?

No.
I woke up just before
you. He was like this.

...but whoever *did*
do it was much more
powerful than me.



T-this is terrible...
Why would someone
do something like this? Even
in order to help us...

He didn't deserve to
die... not like this...



Hey! We don't
have time for that!
We have our own
lives to worry about!

We've got to
get to the others!



Wait here, Flora.

I'll scout ahead.
As an assassin,
stealth and discretion
are my speciality.



[Hey, who are you?]

Damn it!

[It's past curfew, and
this is a restricted area!]



[Oh, wait.]
[You're the wolf I
talked to before.]

Remember me, from
yesterday? I guess... you are here
to save the human, yes?



Erm... how would
you know that?



I've been stalking you.

Oh... what?!

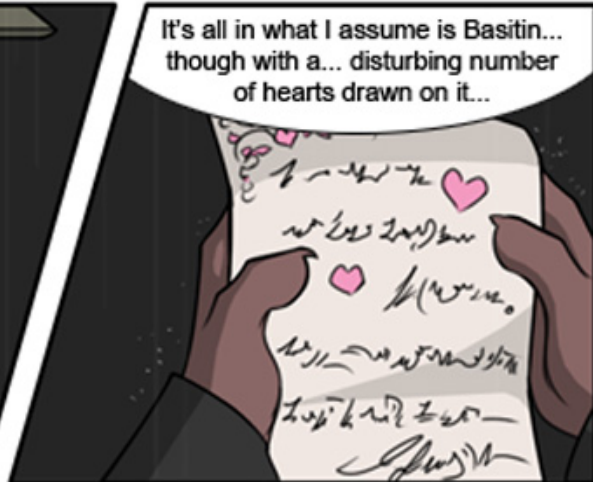
Also, as a lieutenant,
I know what's happening
around the castle.
I would like to
help you.

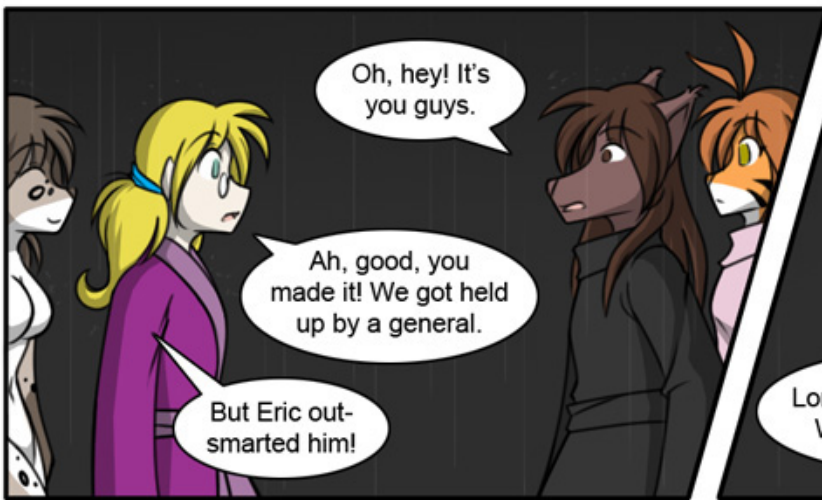
...why?

I... have reasons. But
I need a favor first.



I'll look the other way... if you
give Keith this note here.





Oh, hey! It's you guys.

Ah, good, you made it! We got held up by a general.

But Eric out-smarted him!



We ran into a general too.

Long story, though. Where's Keith?



Gasp!



T-there he is!

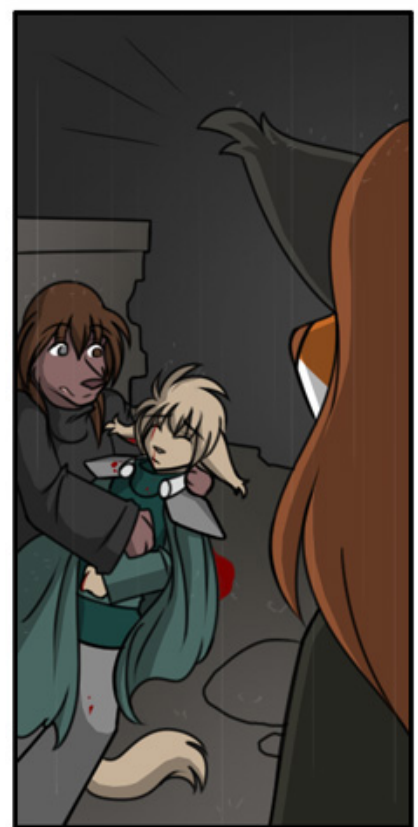
He looks hurt!

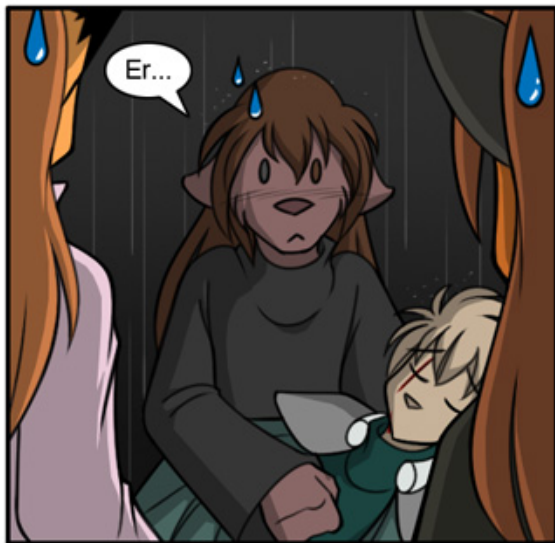


K-Kei-!



Keith!

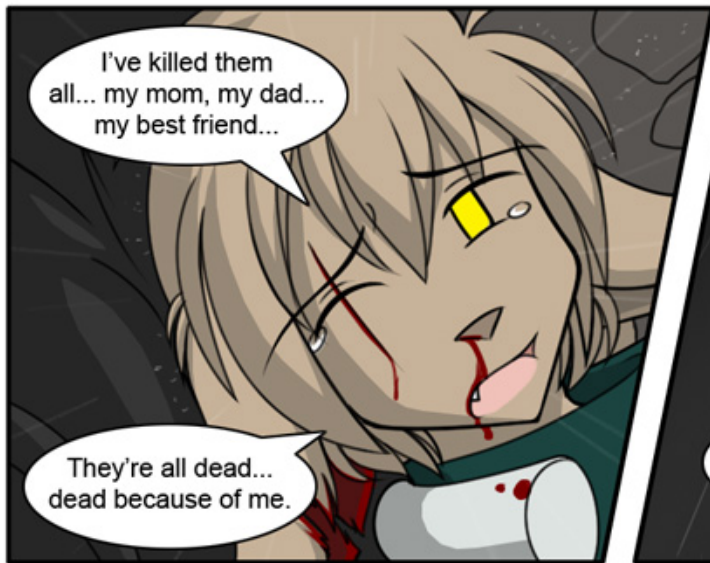




Oh, whatever. I'll deal with the gay rumors later.

Keith, can you hear me?

Natani... I... I killed him...



I've killed them all... my mom, my dad... my best friend...

They're all dead... dead because of me.



Don't talk like that. I remember what you said at the graveyard.

It wasn't your fault...



Natani, is there anything you can do for him?



Even if I could spare the magic, healing wounds like this is beyond me.

We don't have time enough anyway. I'll carry him.





You whelps have made a lot of trouble tonight.

But now it's time for me to finish what I began at the tavern.



And what exactly was that, General?



Your Majesty!



I... thought you were still bed-ridden. You shouldn't be out here... in this rain—

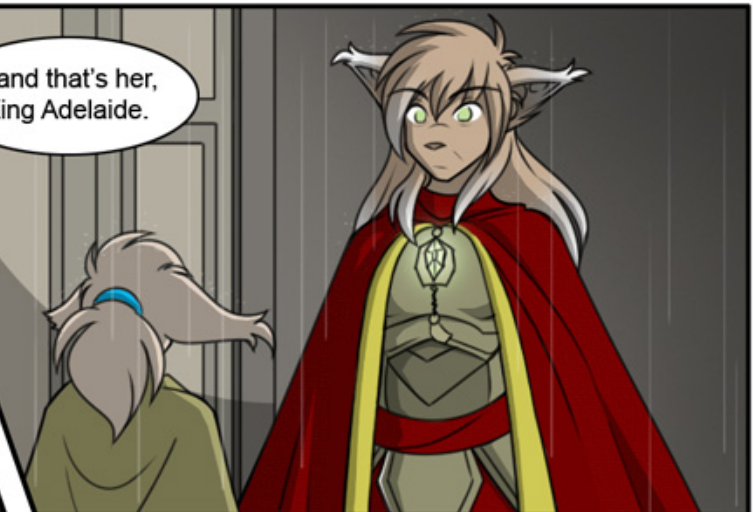


I am not yet too weak to stand with my men when the time calls for it.




Woah, that's a... big Basitin. But... I thought they had a king?

They do...




...and that's her, King Adelaide.



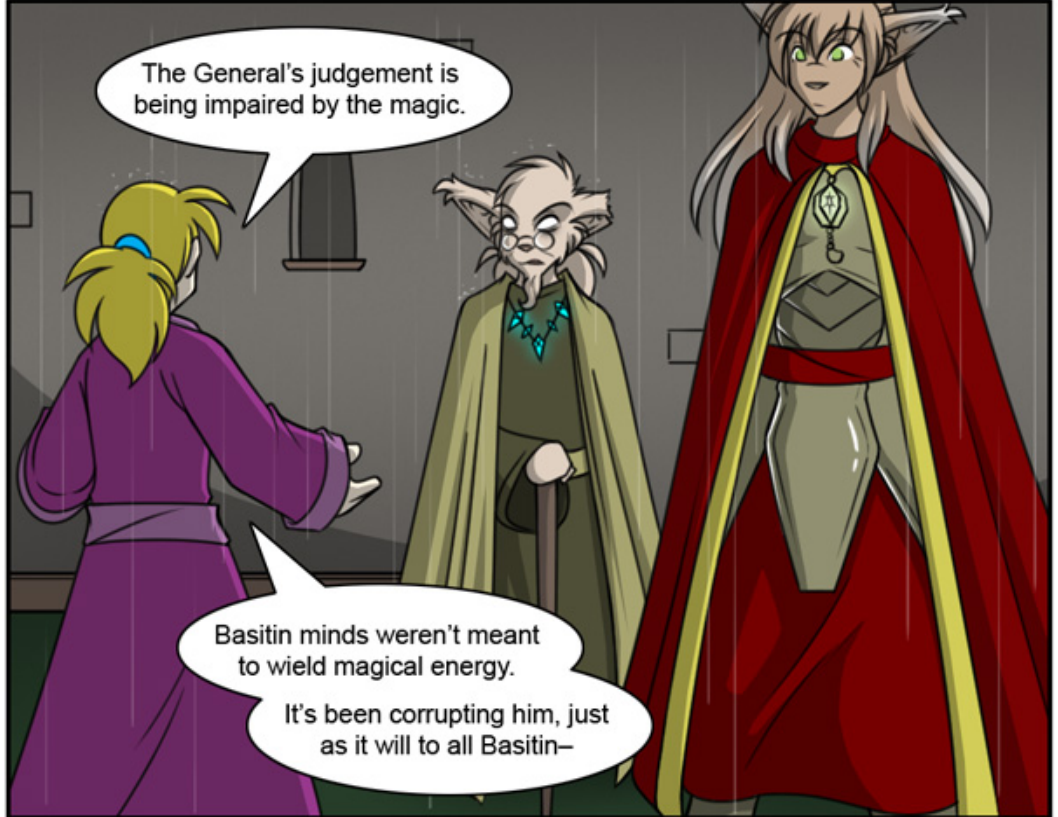
I've been hearing disturbing reports of your activities, General.

Killing a fellow soldier...
Burning down a Basitin tavern...
Manipulating a legal trial...

What is making you act in such a way?



Your Majesty!
if I may...



The General's judgement is being impaired by the magic.

Basitin minds weren't meant to wield magical energy.

It's been corrupting him, just as it will to all Basitin—

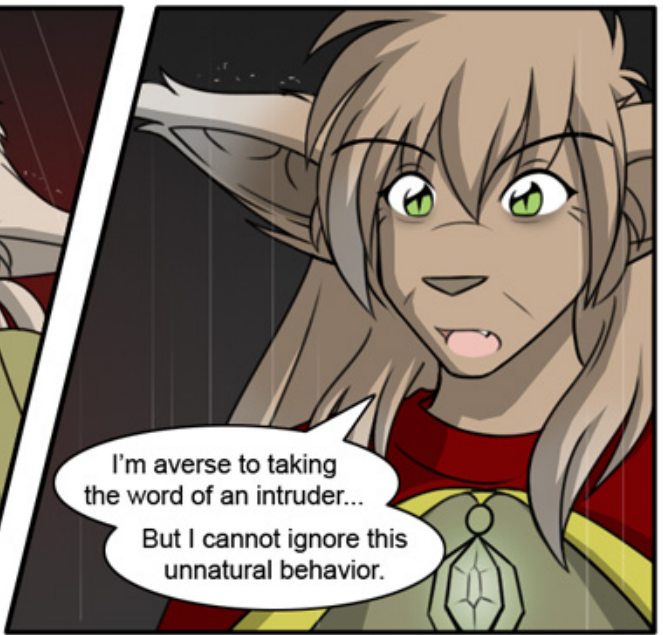


Lies! Nothing but lies!

He's working with the Keidran; trying to keep the magic to themselves!

My mind has not been changed!

My mind has never been clearer; my body never stronger!

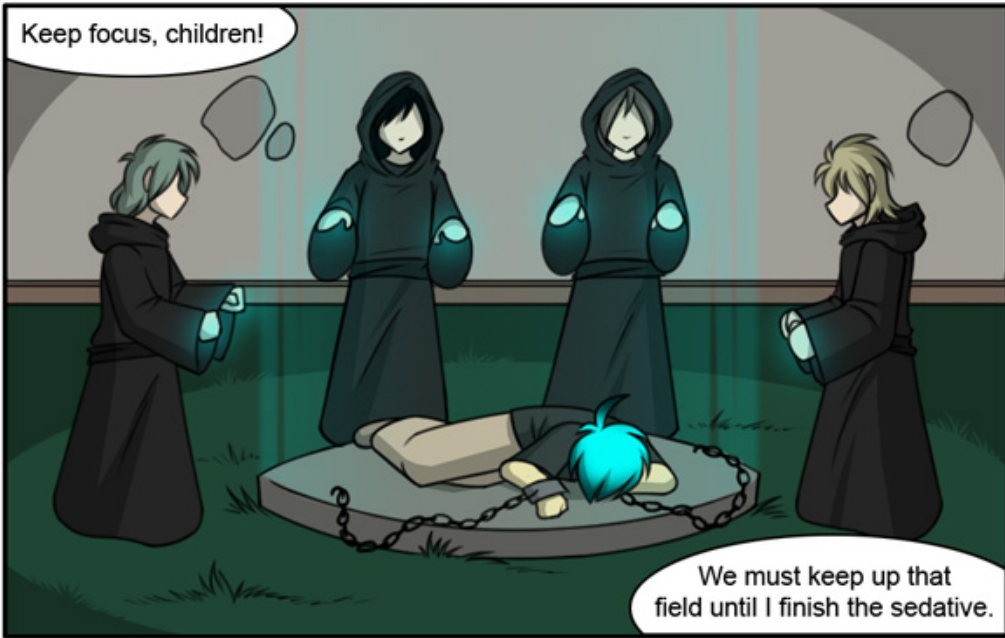


I'm averse to taking the word of an intruder...

But I cannot ignore this unnatural behavior.



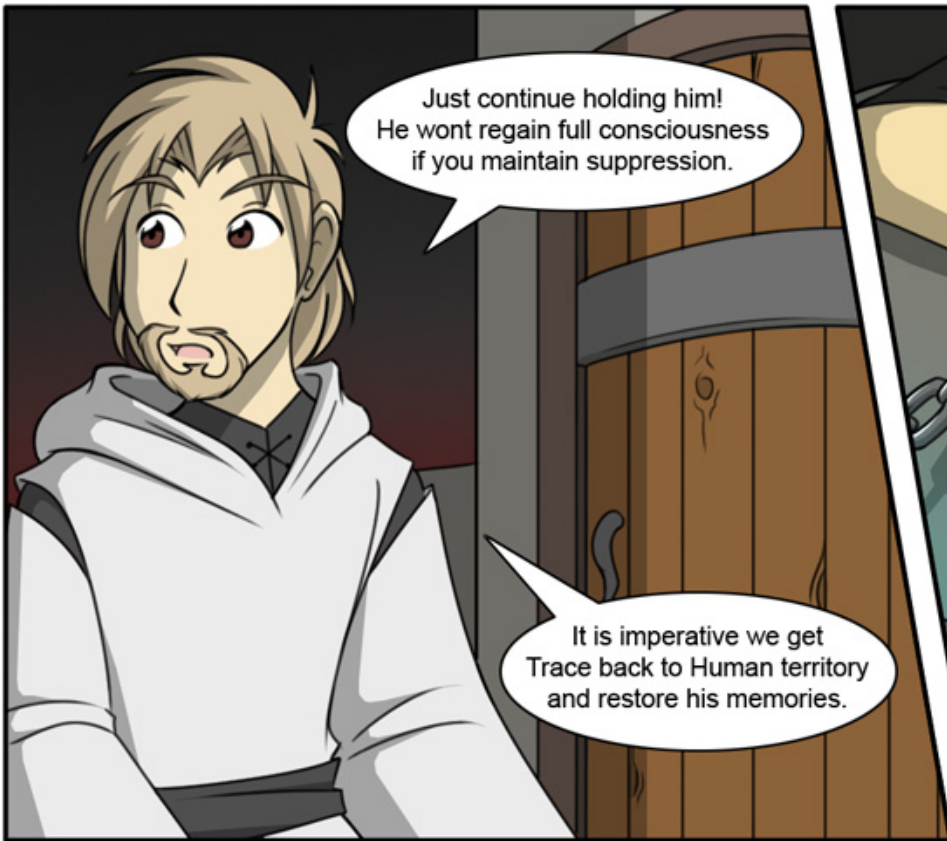
Keep focus, children!



We must keep up that field until I finish the sedative.



S-Sir, he's moving!



Just continue holding him!
He won't regain full consciousness
if you maintain suppression.

It is imperative we get
Trace back to Human territory
and restore his memories.



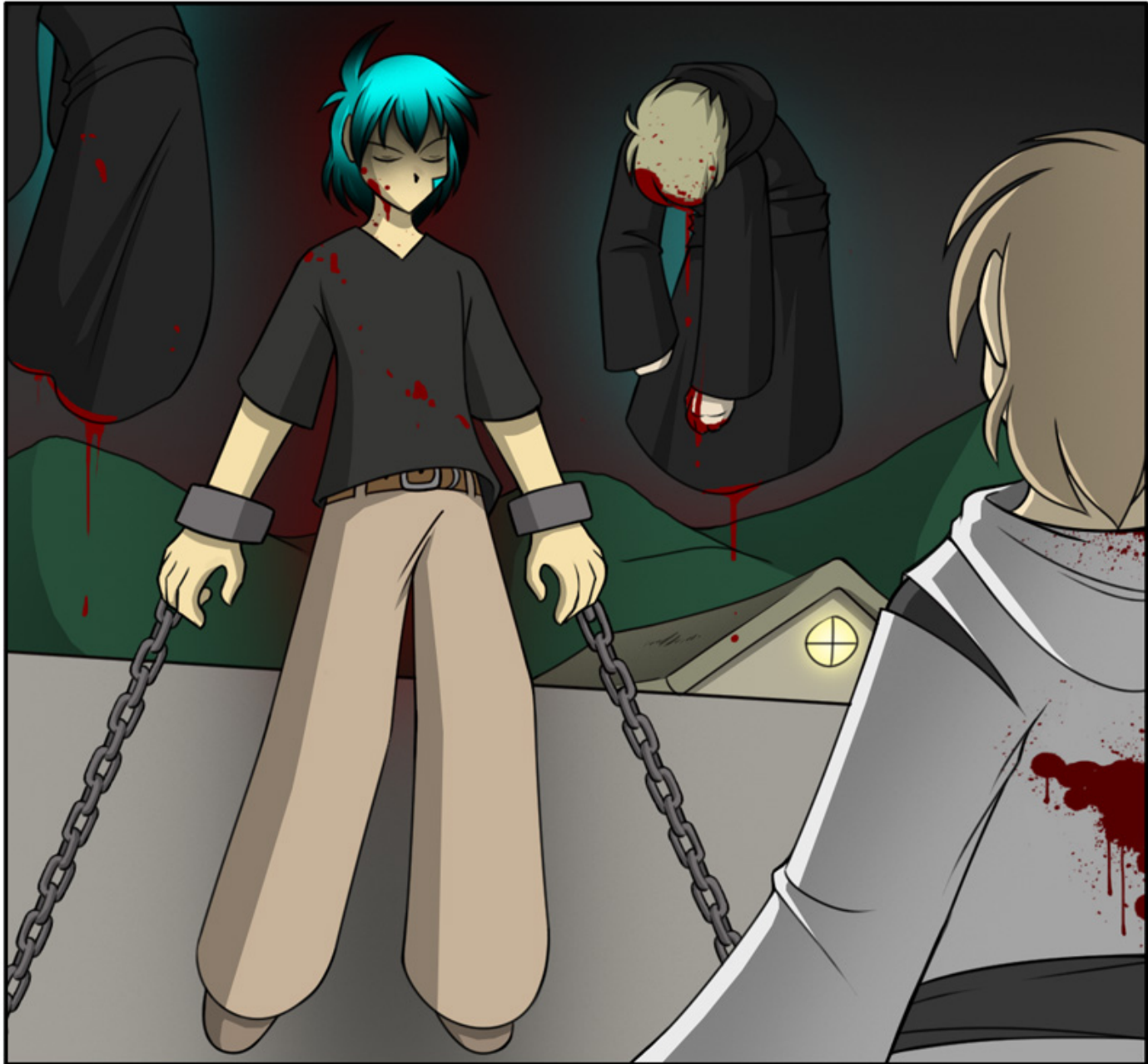
We must find out what he
discovered before he was taken.



There, finished.



Aaaaaah!





General, I gave you a direct order to stop!



No! Keith killed Cornelius. He and all his friends deserve to die!

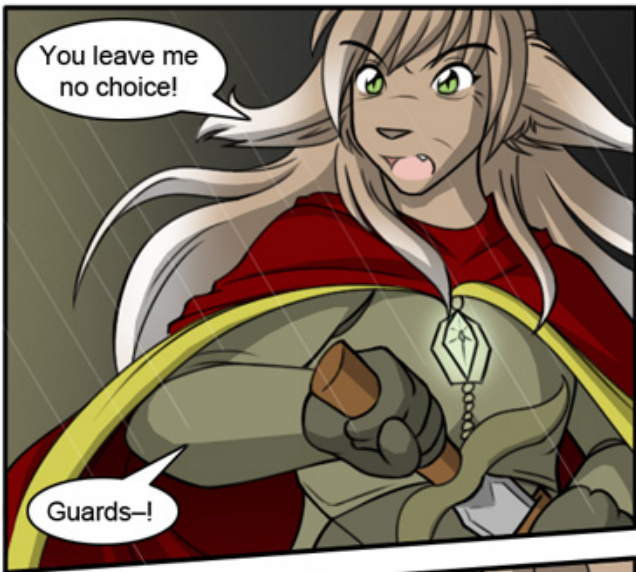


Aaaaah!



Nngh!

Natani...

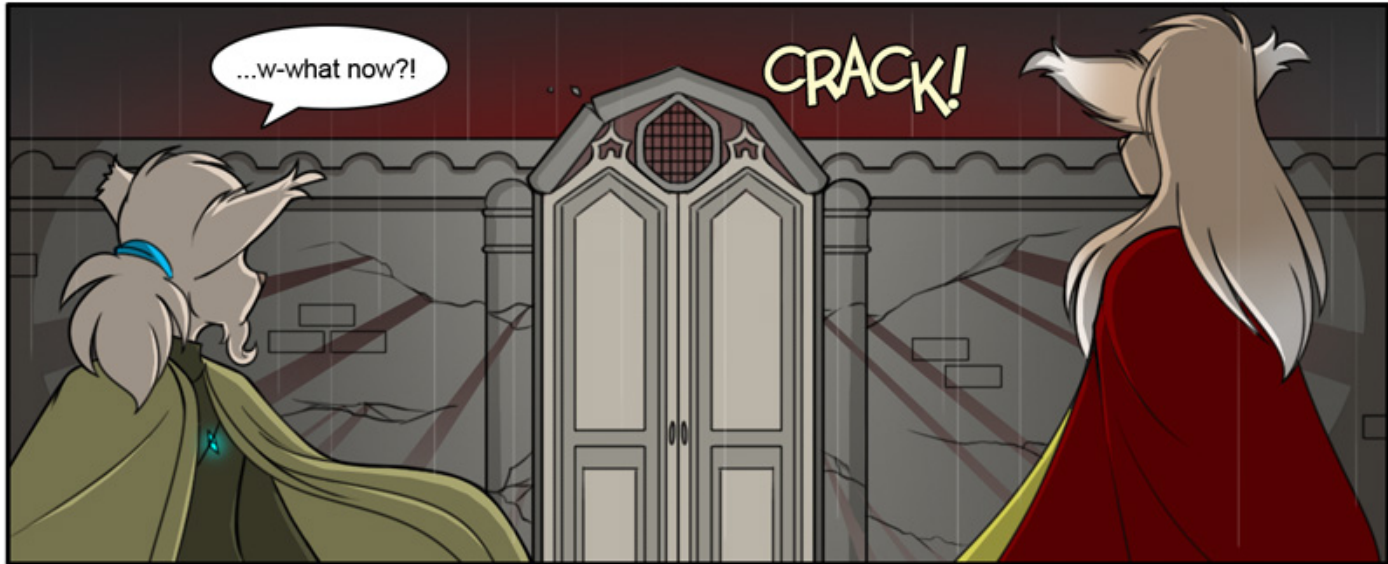


You leave me no choice!

Guards—!



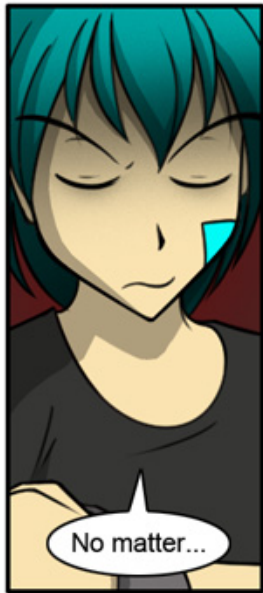
Ah?!



...w-what now?!

CRACK!





No matter...



I'll kill you all and sort it out later.



Defend the king!

Ah!



<Natani, the tower is feeding his powers!>

<And there's the vulnerability!>



<Erg, I see it...>

<Fat lot of good it does us, though.>

<We've only got one shot and no opening.>

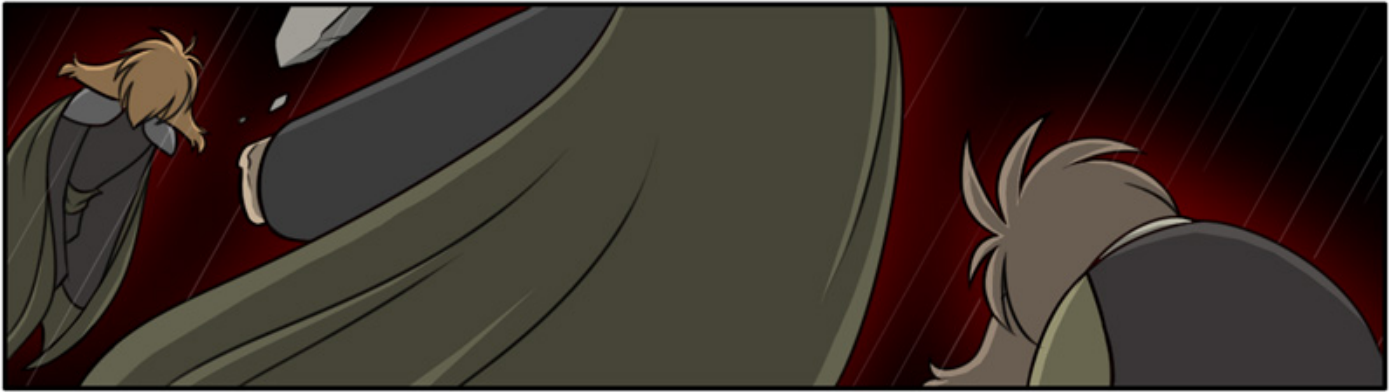
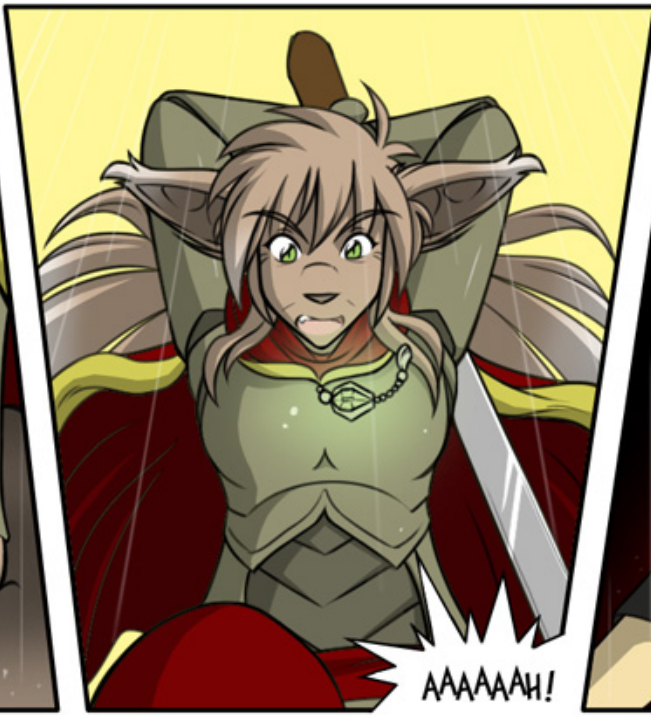


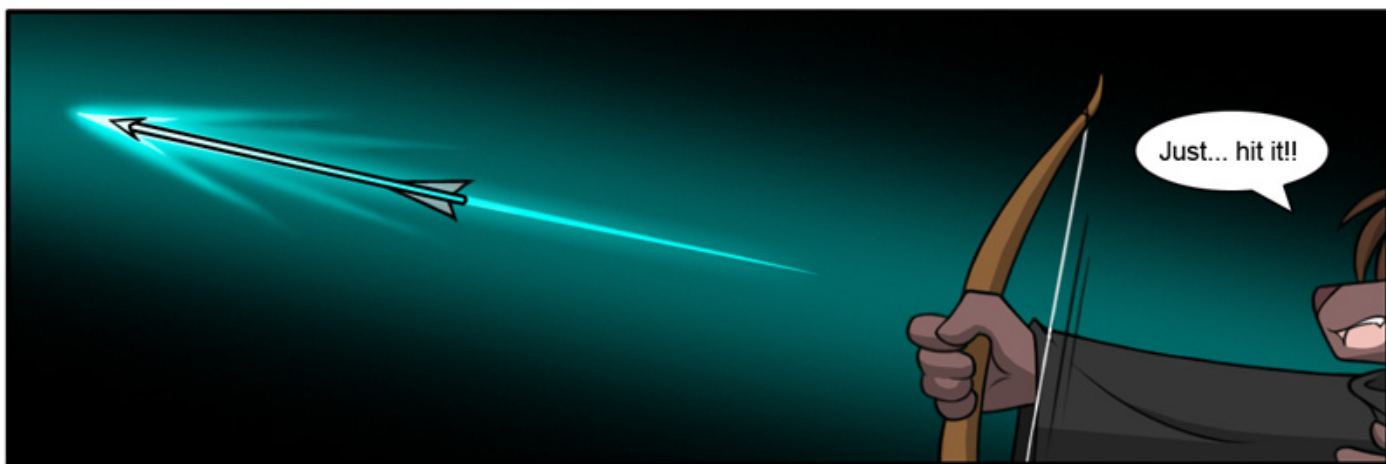
<Keidran, are you saying the tower's causing this madness, and you can stop it?>

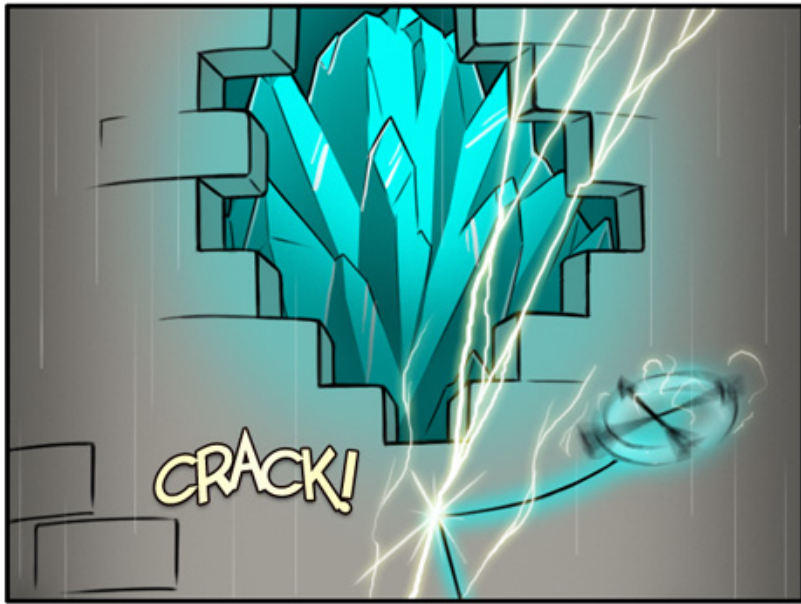


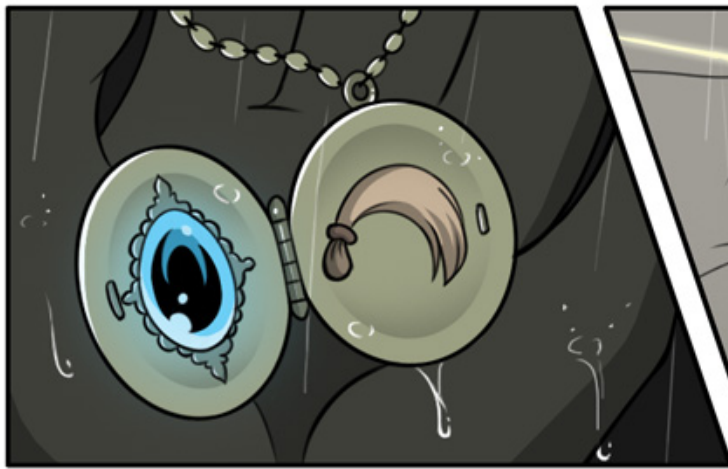
<Yes, I could...>

Very well! I'll give you your opening!









Natani, I t-think you have another chance.

You... you might be able to use my locket as a s-source of mana.



What? Why didn't you tell me that before?



I-I'm sorry...

It's... very important to me. I.. I was hoping you wouldn't have to use it.



Well with the way things are going now, this won't do us much good, anyway.



I'll never get a clear shot so long as that idiot's pinning us down!



Got anything else that might—

Laura? ...where did she go?

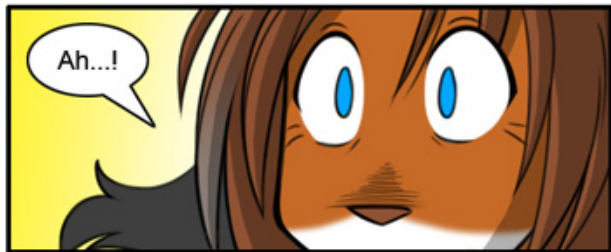


Laura! What is she doing?!



If I can take his attention away... just a few seconds...

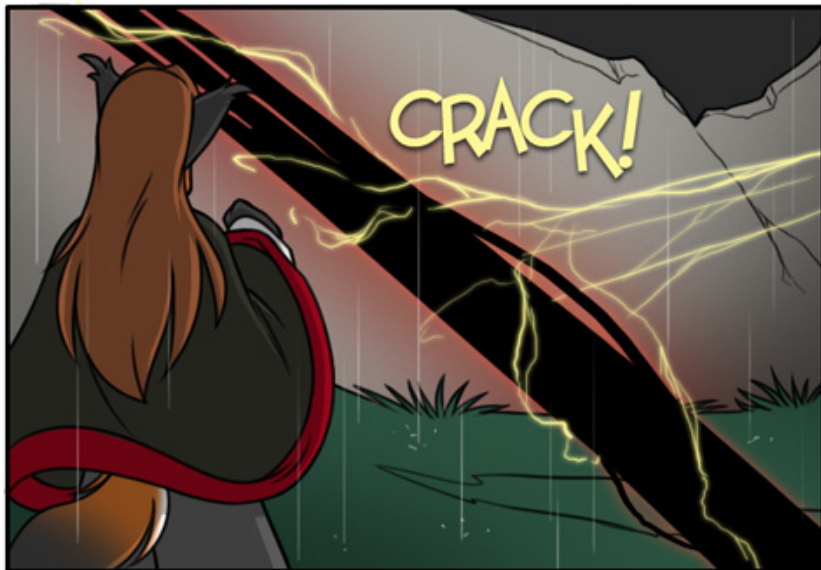
...please, don't let it hurt...



Ah...!



Eh?



CRACK!



What?!

The Templar should have put you down when they had the chance.

You Humans are nothing but trouble!



I won't let you hurt Flora... or... the others!



Don't think I'm afraid of you, Boy.



You may have once been a skilled mage, but now you're just a child with power beyond your control!

I'll show you true magic—!



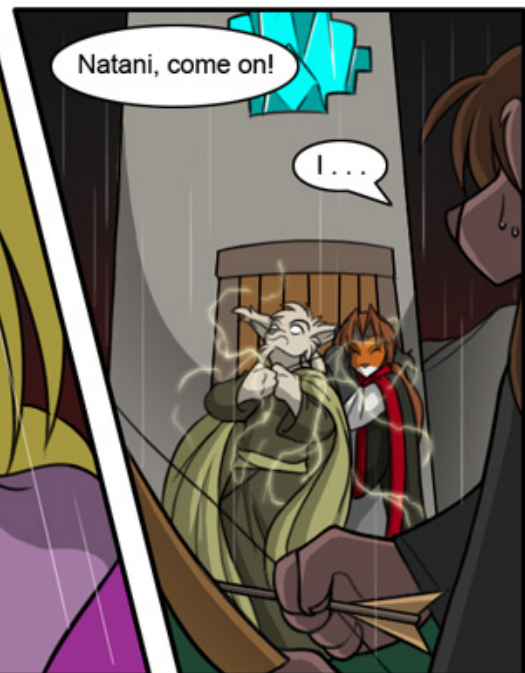
Erk...!

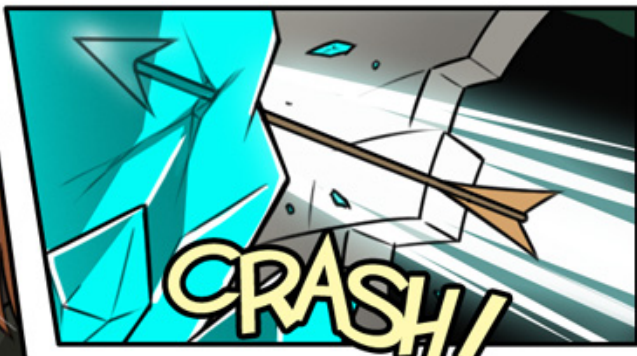
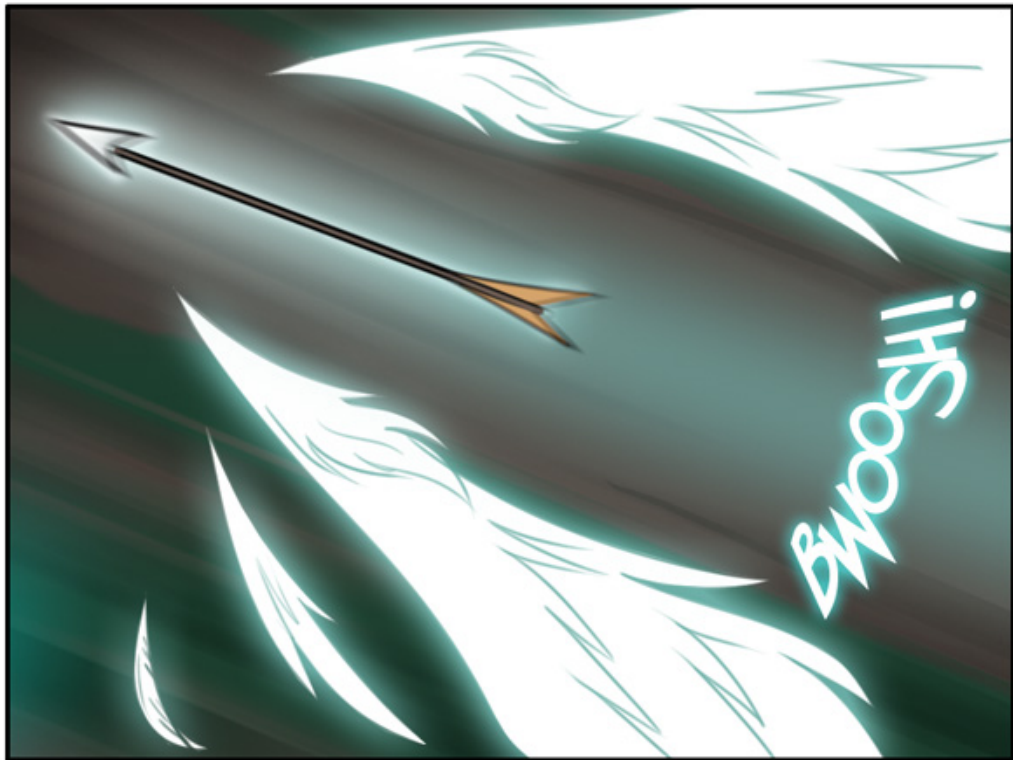



GAAACK!



I... I'm sorry I'm hurting you!








No! All my work...!

What have you done?!
What... have I done?



Come on!

Laura!



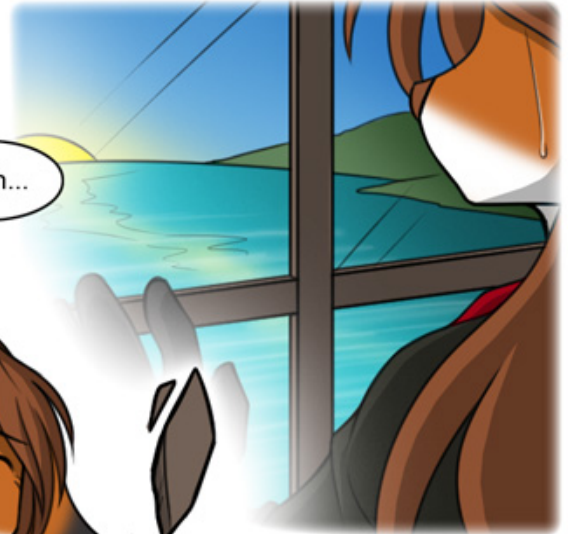
Run!

K-Keith...



AAAAH!

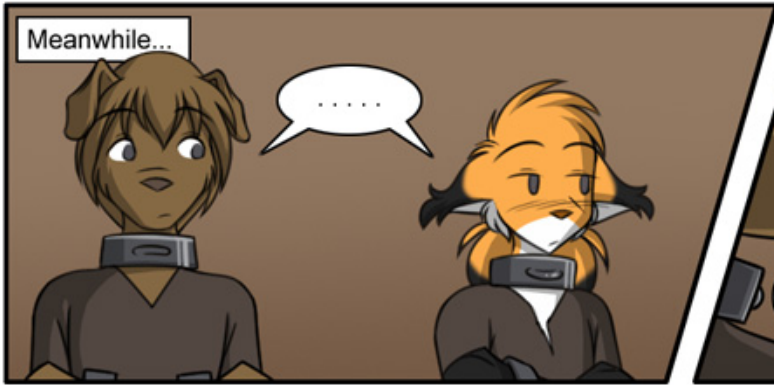
FWOON!

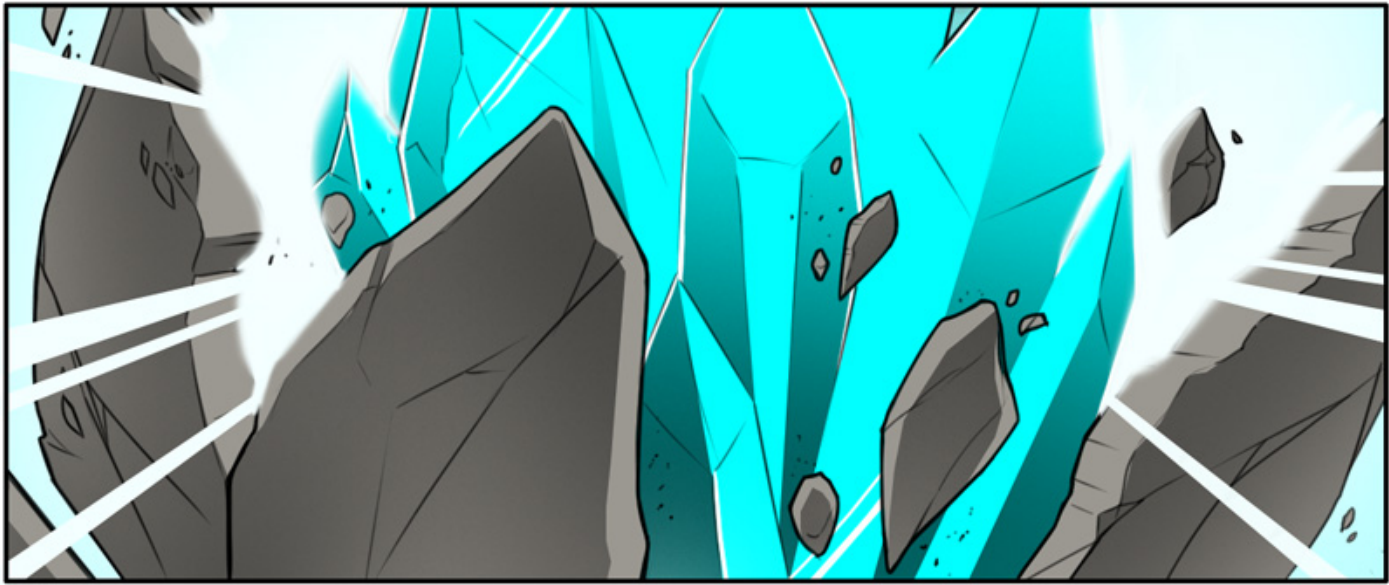


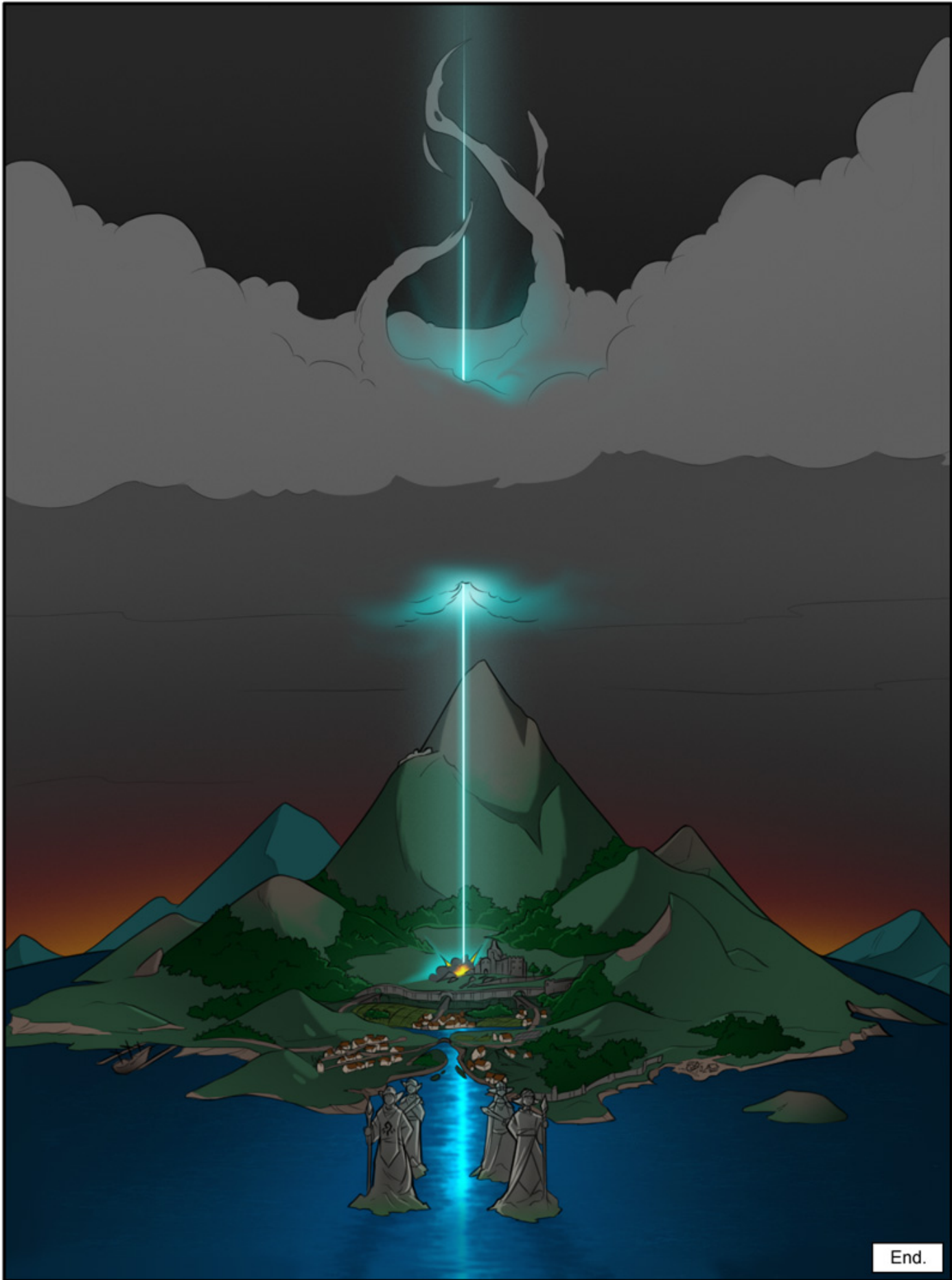
Keith...



I tried as hard as I could...







End.



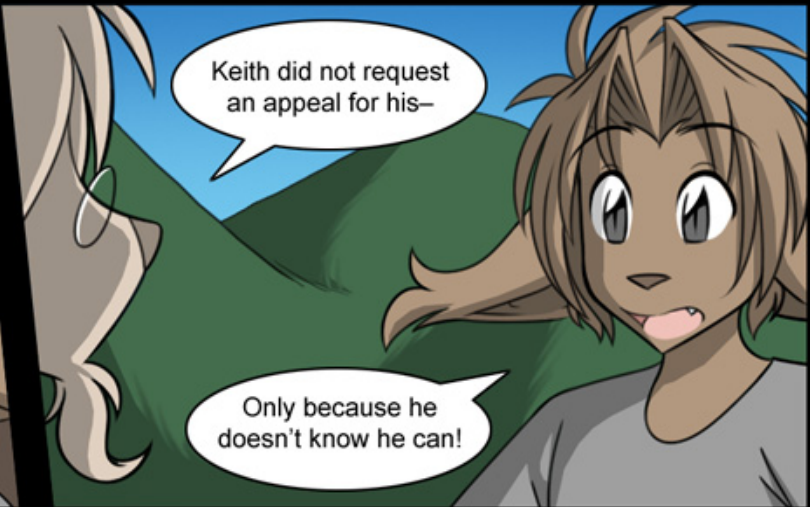
Wait, what are they doing with Keith?



The traitor has been found guilty. He is being prepared for banishment.



What?! But... but he hasn't had a chance to appeal yet!



Keith did not request an appeal for his—

Only because he doesn't know he can!



I have to go tell him—



No!

You're not telling him anything!

That boy is getting just what he deserves!



That's not fair! Keith has a right to representation!

He has a right to present evidence for his trial!

If you'd looked at the crime, you'd have seen Keith couldn't have done it!

He wouldn't have had the strength to beat his mother to death or stab his father!



And it was obvious his father was drunk at the ti-

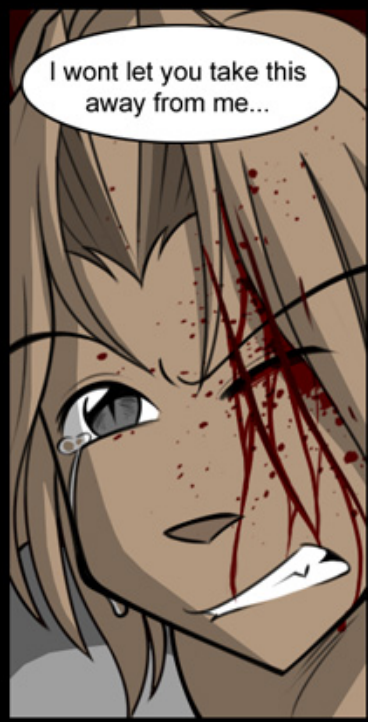


How dare you speak ill of Cornelius!



Cornelius Kaiser was a brilliant man...
...a better man than you or his bastard son could ever be.

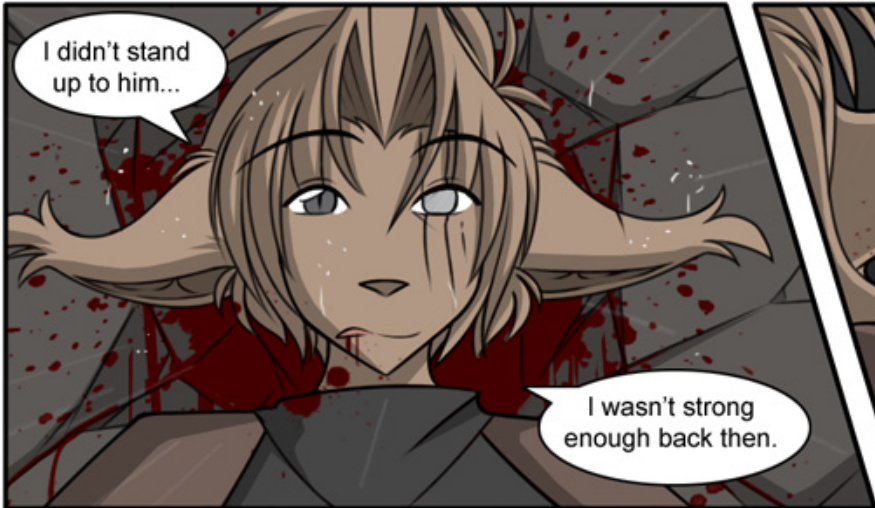
And that boy killed him!



I wont let you take this away from me...



Keith...



I didn't stand up to him...

I wasn't strong enough back then.



But after that day, I set out to change things.



The old generals manipulated the system...
So I did as well!

...I hope you're still alive.
I've made one last scheme...
A practical joke on all those who were responsible for six years ago...

Keith...

