

TWO KINGS



Chapter 18 COMING HOME

Many days later...

Hey, look!

I can see mountains!
We must be getting close
to the mainland!

Eric was right, the
currents made coming
back a lot faster.
Still, it felt way longer
to me, especially after...
all that's happened.

Mr'eah...

Speaking of
which, how's your
cheek doing?

Oh, i-it's fine.

It doesn't hurt
anymore, but I figured
I'd keep this on.

Might help make
me less recognizable
in the village.

I still can't believe
Keith did that!

What a *jerk!*

He was just upset.
I don't blame him.

Well I do!

Being scared and angry
is no excuse to start lashing
out at other people!

Especially
friends!

Sigh...

Yeah, well, I'm the
last person who can
criticize him for doing
something like that.

I just hope we can find
something to help Natani,
for both their sakes.



You couldn't help Laura, you can't help Natani...

I can't believe you were once Grand Templar. What good are you now?

You're *useless!*



...Maybe he's right.



Trace, don't say that! Keith was way out of line!

He's just taking it out on you because it's how he feels about himself right now.



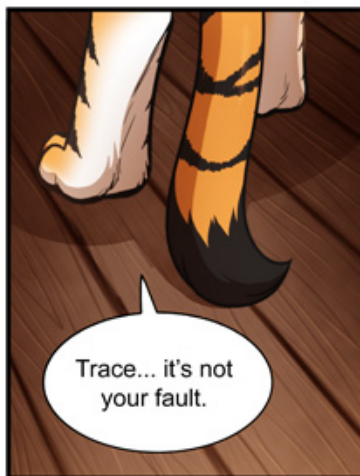
He's not wrong though, is he?

What good have I done?

Ever since waking up all I've managed to do is put you guys in danger.

I have power, but it only seems to work when I'm not thinking about it, and half the time it's hurting my friends.

And everyone keeps telling me the world's falling apart because of me.

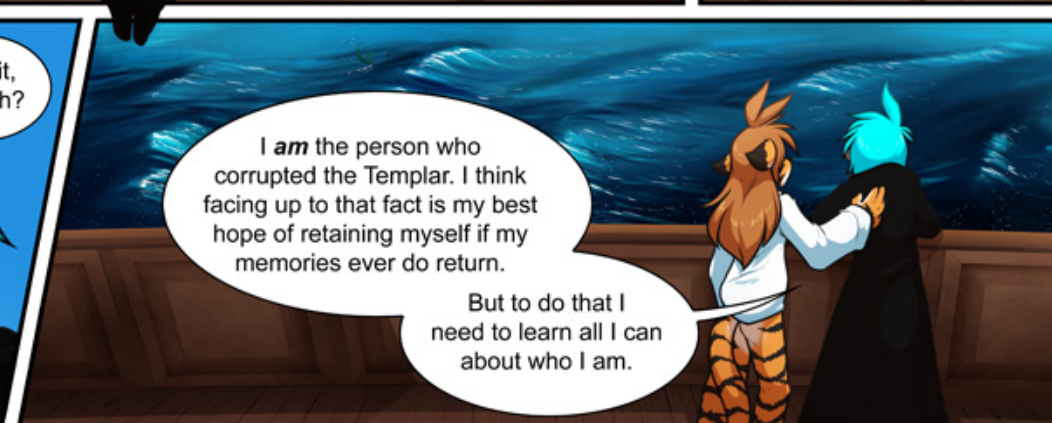


Trace... it's not your fault.



Isn't it, though?

Not being able to remember doesn't make me innocent.




I *am* the person who corrupted the Templar. I think facing up to that fact is my best hope of retaining myself if my memories ever do return.

But to do that I need to learn all I can about who I am.




And that begins at Edinmire.



Alright, Natani.


We should be landing soon. Kathrin will take care of you until I get back.



You know, at the time I resented Alaric for what he did. Sacrificing himself like that just to help someone like me.

But now, I'm grateful.


There'd be nothing I could do for you as "Keith the Banished".



But as a general...


The Templar may be corrupt, but humans are still technically Basitin allies.

What do you think? Pretty good, hm?



I'm sure the other generals would say this was an abuse of power, but the truth is...

I've never been a very good Basitin.



But I'm not going to wallow in self-pity. Not this time.

I know you're still in there, and I'll get you back.

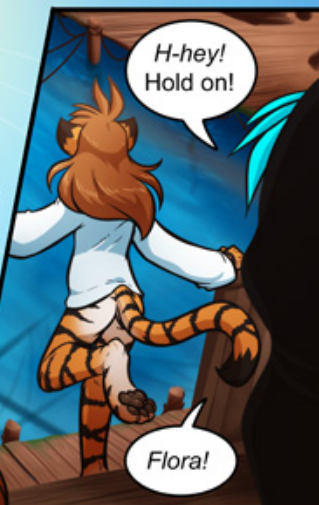
See you soon.



...Keith.



We're here!



Maybe we should wait for the others first?

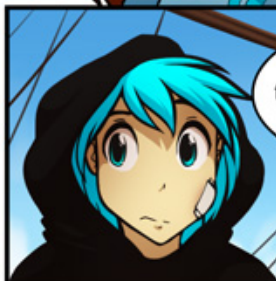
Mrrrah!



I know, but I couldn't help myself!

It's just feels *so* good to finally be back on dry land again! Oh, ground, how I've missed you!

Or... at least the docks attached to you. Close enough!



I did make sure to check first. I didn't see any Templar.

Although... actually, now that I think about it...



...I don't see very many people here at all.

Weird... where is everyone?



Well there are still dock workers, at least. That guy back there helped bring our ship in, after all.

I'm sure we'll find out more in the village.





THUMP!
THUMP!

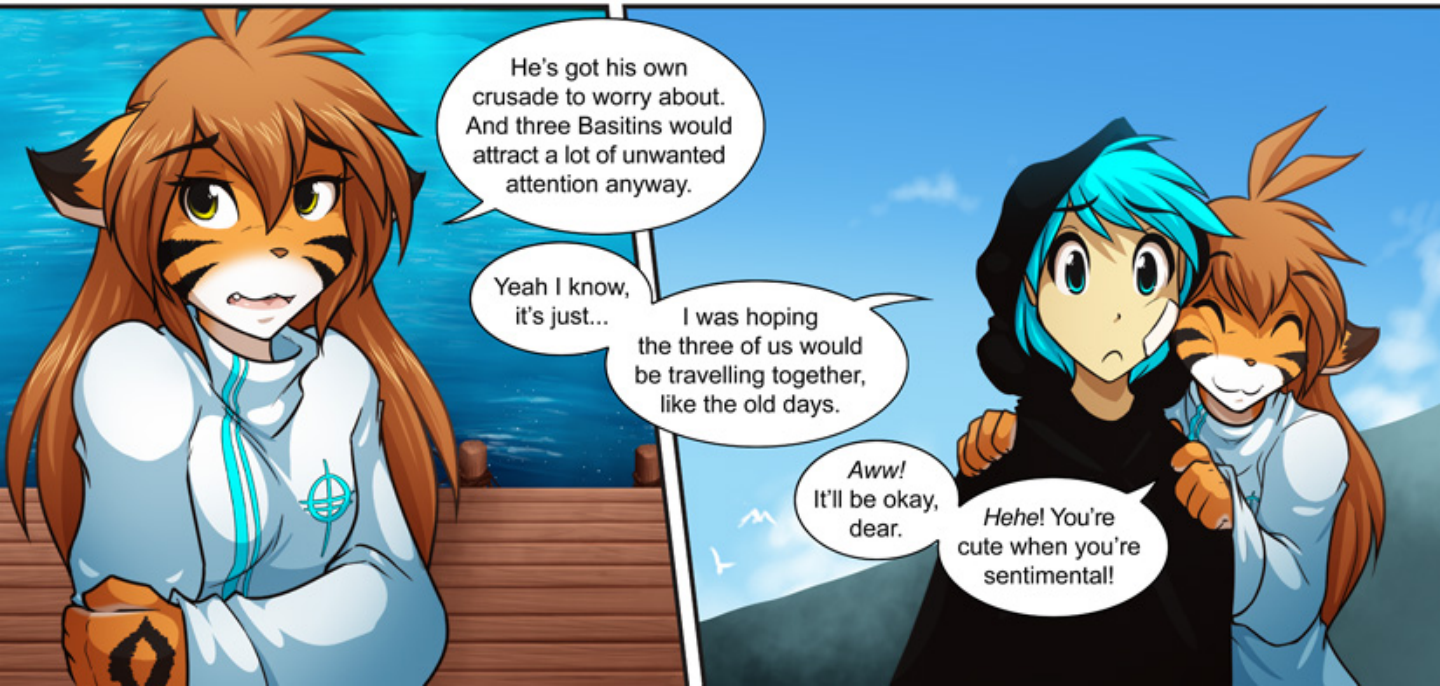
Oh, hey, there
you are, Keith.
We were just
waiting on...

...yoooo.



I... I guess
Keith has his own
entourage now.

Eh, just let
him go, Trace.



He's got his own
crusade to worry about.
And three Basitins would
attract a lot of unwanted
attention anyway.

Yeah I know,
it's just...

I was hoping
the three of us would
be travelling together,
like the old days.

Aww!
It'll be okay,
dear.

Hehe! You're
cute when you're
sentimental!



Ack! Flora!
We're supposed to be inconspicuous!

So cute!

Now. Sir...

I am.. aware your previous travels through human cities have been less than ideal.

I've worked to ensure this will not be the case this.. time.

I have prepared all the proper documents for our first foray within human lands.

I have also created a map of the area from memory, and marked possible places that may help your wolf friend.

From... memory?

Yes, sir, the Templar brought many new maps on their last island visit.

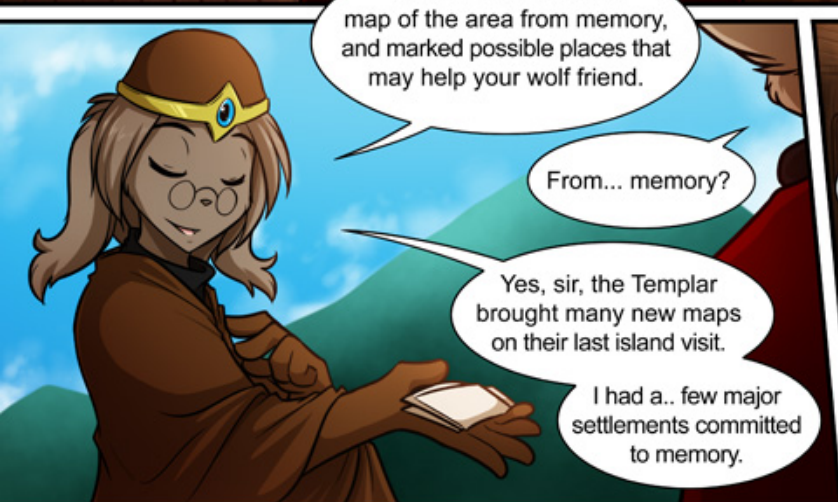
I had a.. few major settlements committed to memory.

Is something the matter, sir?

Er, no. This is great, Lynn.

Actually, I'm just... worried about my friends.

I wish they had someone like you to help them as well.



I anticipated you might say that! I've.. already prepared similar documents, and would be happy to keep my **eye** on them as well.

Playing go-between is my primary duty, after all. I am glad to serve.



Oh, well, if you can, that would be perf— wait, hang on... I don't remember signing any of these.

Did...

Did you forge my sig—




...Wow, I thought I was good.









Oh, sorry if I gave your girl a fright, pal.

If it's the board that's got her spooked, no worries.

Folks have no love for wolves these days, but our feline neighbours are still welcome, 'specially now.

I'm just here to tell you to keep the main road clear.

We've got a procession coming through soon, so if you're here for that, you need to be down in Shepherd's Square.

It's just a guard. I think it's okay, Flora.

W-wait! Did he just say... it can't be!

You back there! Did he just call you "Flora"?

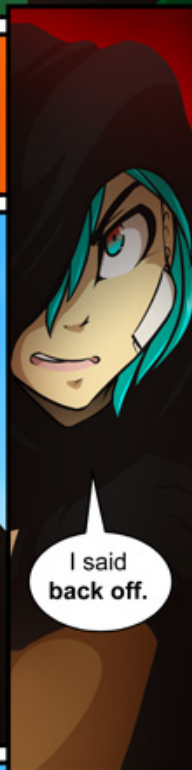
Uh... maybe? Do we know each other?

That face! It *is* you! I can't believe it!

Flora...

Don't... don't you recognized me? It... it's me, Keiren!

K...Kei?!



Meanwhile...

I have returned, sir.

I've also discovered that many humans have gathered near the center of town.

In an area called *Shepherd's Square*.

I see. That would explain why we haven't run into anyone yet.

PROBABLY
HARMLESS

Look, sir!

There's the local healer! Oooo, I can't wait to meet my first native human!

KNOCK!
KNOCK!

Finally, customers! Yes! Yes! Welcome! How can I help yyyyouuuu...?

Yes. We're Basitins.

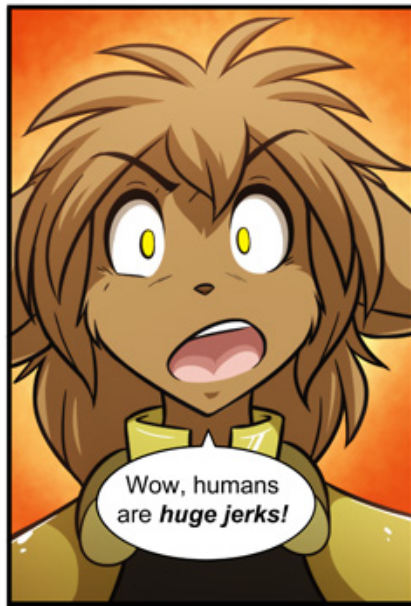
Listen, I'll make this brief: my friend is sick.

It's something magic, and I believe it involves the soul. Can you help us?

Well, I... I suppose I could take a look. Though I'm not familiar with Basitins. Which of you is injured?

No, it's not one of us. He's a **wolf**, and he's on a ship right now, so if you could just

SLAM!!!





Sigh...

Of all the people to run into, it had to be Keiren.

At least I don't think he recognized you. No one's tailed us to the tavern.



Yeah, I think he had his attention elsewhere at the time... *hmph*.

So who is this "Key" guy?

Kei. And... It's complicated.



He was the son of my old master. And... my best friend for a long, long time.

When we were young, the fact that I was a Keidran never seemed to bother him. In fact, he stood up for me several times.

But as we got older Kei... changed.

He would act differently towards me when around his friends. That's how it started. It happened slowly, but...

Well, to make a long story short, by the end he was hunting me when I ran.

I'm sorry, Flora. That must have been hard.



I don't trust him. But if he's guard captain now, he could help us.

Either way, I need to talk to him.

Ahem!

Are you two planning to stand in my doorway all day or are you coming in?

Eep!



Welcome to Riftwall East.
I'm Adira.

Oh, hi.

I'm Flora.
And this is Trrr-
Er, I mean...

He's...

M-my... my
name is... uh...

Keil

...Rrrrrright.

(I knew I had a
bad feeling about today.
Stay strong, Addy.)

Well, please follow me...
sir. I'll show you inside.

Trace! Kei?!

You know I can't
make up names!

But of all the names
you know, why **his**?!

He was the last
person we were talking
about! I panicked!

I can't call you
Kei, though!

Uh, you guys... know
I'm still here, right? I didn't
leave or anything.

Relax. It doesn't
matter to me who you are.
You could claim to be Princess
Reni for all I care.

I've survived here by
knowing not to stick my nose
in other's business.

I just get
people drunk.



Hey, Maeve!
You back there?

Need a couple
drinks! Sigh... where
is that girl?



...There's
no one here.



Yeah... don't
remind me.

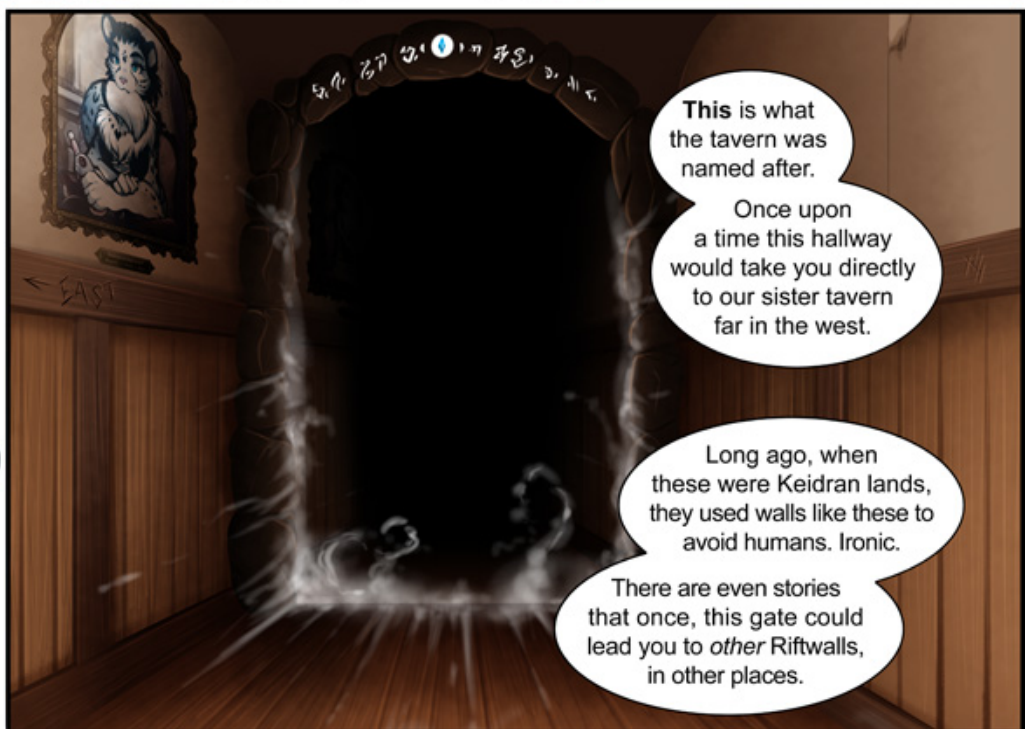


Business hasn't
been what it used to be,
ever since we lost our
main attraction.

But it's
been particularly
empty today.

"Main
attraction"?

I'll show
you.



This is what
the tavern was
named after.

Once upon
a time this hallway
would take you directly
to our sister tavern
far in the west.

Long ago, when
these were Keidran lands,
they used walls like these to
avoid humans. Irony.

There are even stories
that once, this gate could
lead you to *other* Riftwalls,
in other places.



But ever since
this war business started,
it's gone dark.

I don't want to think
about what that might mean
for our sister tavern.

Sometimes I think I can see
things moving inside, and hear
whispering at night, but nothing
ever comes through.



Man, that archway gave me the creeps. It felt like I was being watched when we were in front of it.

You've never seen it before?



No. I must have passed by this tavern loads of time as a kid, but I never thought about it.



Still, being up here is a good spot to wait.

We'll be able to see Kai coming, just in case he brings any unwanted company.

I still don't like the idea of waiting this guy.

I think we should just get what we came for and leave this weird town as soon as possible.



Trace, I'm still not exactly clear on how we were planning on getting to your money.

Oh, well...



I was going to play it by ear, but basically, I just planned to get there, scout around a bit - you know, make sure the coast is clear - then enter the house undetected through a back window or something, and make off with everything we need. Simple!



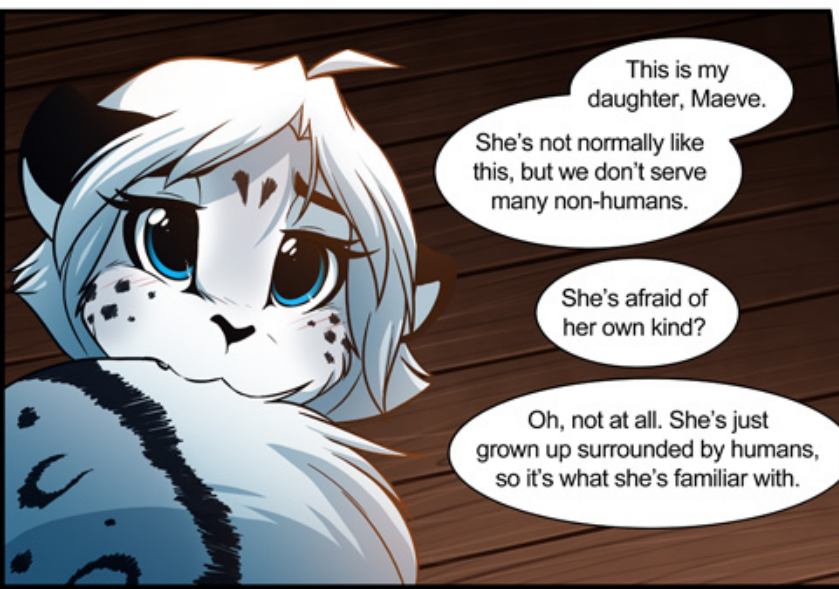
I mean it is my property after all, right? So it's not really breaking in or stealing.

And I've been gone for months. Why would Templar be guarding an empty building after all this time?

It's the perfect plan!



Trace, do you know what an **estate** is?





What's it like raising a child in a human village?

Oh, not nearly as bad as you might think.

Maybe it's because we're so far east, but we've rarely had much trouble with the human folk. Even after this war nonsense began.

You always get the occasional "fleabag" comment, but I ignore it. Most are decent.

And that's what I try to teach Maeve: look to the good ones.



That's... a surprising opinion to hear, especially from someone who has to deal with people all day.

Is she your first?



Yup! She's my baby - one and only.



So cute.

I... I'll be having my first soon, too.

Ah, I see, Congrats!



I thought so when I first saw you, but I didn't want to presume.

Is the father going to be joining you here, or...?

Oh, no, he's... well, it's complicated.

BUSH!





Never thought I'd see the day that tiger nomads stroll through Edinmire.

These are strange times.

Maeve was so disappointed when I told her she had to stay here and miss everything.

Hopefully, meeting you and seeing this has made up for it a little.

SWISH!

SWISH!



I don't understand... This is a human village. What are tigers doing here?



I... wait, you **don't know?**

I figured that was the whole reason why you were here!

I thought you were like... an advanced scout or something, and that's why you were being all secretive.

If you're really not aware, the humans want to begin peaceful relations with felids. They *invited them here*.

W-what?! Why... why now?

Why else?
The war.

I can't say for certain, but I suspect the Templar do not want to fight a war on two fronts.



Trace! I.. I need to go and see this for myself!

I know it's dangerous, but they're *my people*, and I don't trust the Templar.

O-oh... okay, we can go, sure.



Guess that means we **won't** be meeting Kei after all. *What a shame*

Flora!



You're here! Sorry to keep you waiting!

Gah, **dang it!**

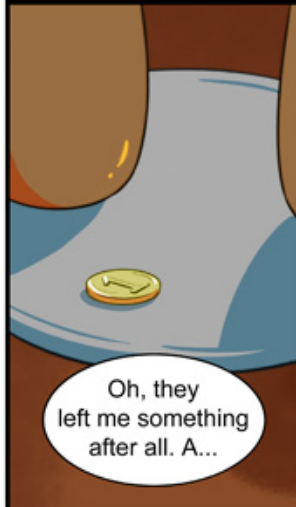




Well, there goes my entertainment for the day.

...And business. Ah, well, I—

Hm?



Oh, they left me something after all. A...



A... gold coin?!



Wow... Maybe Mr. Big Bad Templar isn't quite as bad as they say.

Couldn't be any worse than his acting. Not that I'd say that to his face.



Maeve, dear, I need to go to the market. Could you help mommy clean—

Maeve?



Sigh... Maeve.

Trying to sneak off after the tigers, hm? That girl, I swear...



You're going to be cleaning so many dishes when I catch up to you, Maeve.













Sir, we can't detect any mind control.

We've run a dispel just in case.

I see... Thank you.



In that case, let him go.

Yes, sir!

There, no harm done. You okay there, pal? You look a bit sick.

I'm... fine.



Flora, I... want to apologize again.

Today has been pretty stressful and this position is still fairly new to me.

Honestly, I was hoping to impress you – be a hero, ya know, and I guess that... kinda backfired.

I understand, Kei. Thank you.



And I suppose I owe you an apology too.



Sorry for the mix-up, bud. Any friend of Flora's is a friend of mine.

Just remember, though...

When it comes to Flora, I came first.



Say, now that I actually get a good look at you...

You seem... familiar. What did you say your name was, again?



Thank you for joining with me on this crazy adventure! -Tom-

Meanwhile...

Sigh...

We're getting
nowhere.

Why does every magic
user in this whole village slam
their door in our faces?!

Sir, look!

Hm? Oh...

Wow... look
at all the Floras.

Floras
everywhere...

... "Floras"
sir?

Oh, right, you guys
weren't... erm... would
have been funnier if Flora
were here...

F-forget it. Let's
see if one of the tigers
might help.



E-excuse me... sirs?



Huh?

Oh, it's you... apothecary man.

Well, that's... not my name, but yes!

Hello!



I-I would like to apologize for my behaviour earlier. I may have acted a bit... rashly.

These are... difficult times to be trusting, what with the war and all.

But... I... I realize, as a healer, it is my duty to aid those in need.

Thus, I feel it is only right that I... do so.



You'll really help us?

Yes! I... well, I'll certainly try.

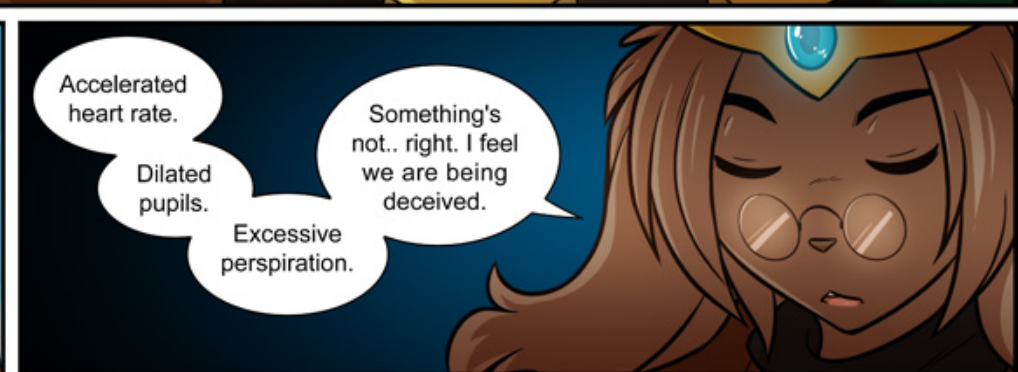
If you could just lead me to this wolf of yours...



Of course! Follow us, he's right—

Wait, general.

Huh? What is it, Lynn?



Accelerated heart rate.

Dilated pupils.

Excessive perspiration.

Something's not... right. I feel we are being deceived.



Don't need all that to tell something's up. We're being watched.

Three humans, at least.

(MAGICAL
COMMUNICATOR OR
WHATEVER.)

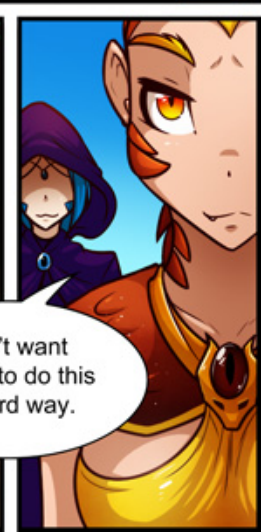
TWOKINDS
TELL THE ~~OTHER~~
~~TEMPLAR~~ I'LL BE LATE.
READERS

YES. FELL ASLEEP
ON ME. YES, AGAIN.

...

I REALIZE I'M THE
GRAND ~~TEMPLAR~~:
ARTIST

IF YOU WANT TO
TRY AND MOVE HER,
BE MY GUEST.







Hey, calm down, Sarah!

Maybe you should let me and Landen do the talking instead? R-right, Lan?

...Eh.

If these guys really are ambassadors, we might get in big trouble if we—



CRUNCH!

R
R
R
A
A
A
H
H
H
H
H!!

And... here we go again.

Mhmm.



CLINK!

I may not be a full dragon **yet**, but I have plenty of fire for you!

Now tell us where your wolf is or your friends will **burn**!





Erg! So much for diplomacy...



Sir, look out!

FWOOOOOOSH!!

Gah!



BOOM!

What the hell?!

Looks like introductions will have to wait.



Flora, stay here with your friend.

You two, come with me. Daniels, go get our ace ready.

I'm not taking any chances. Not today.

Sir!



I wonder what happened? I hope he'll be okay.

Weren't you just mad at him?



Well, sure, he's a jerk.

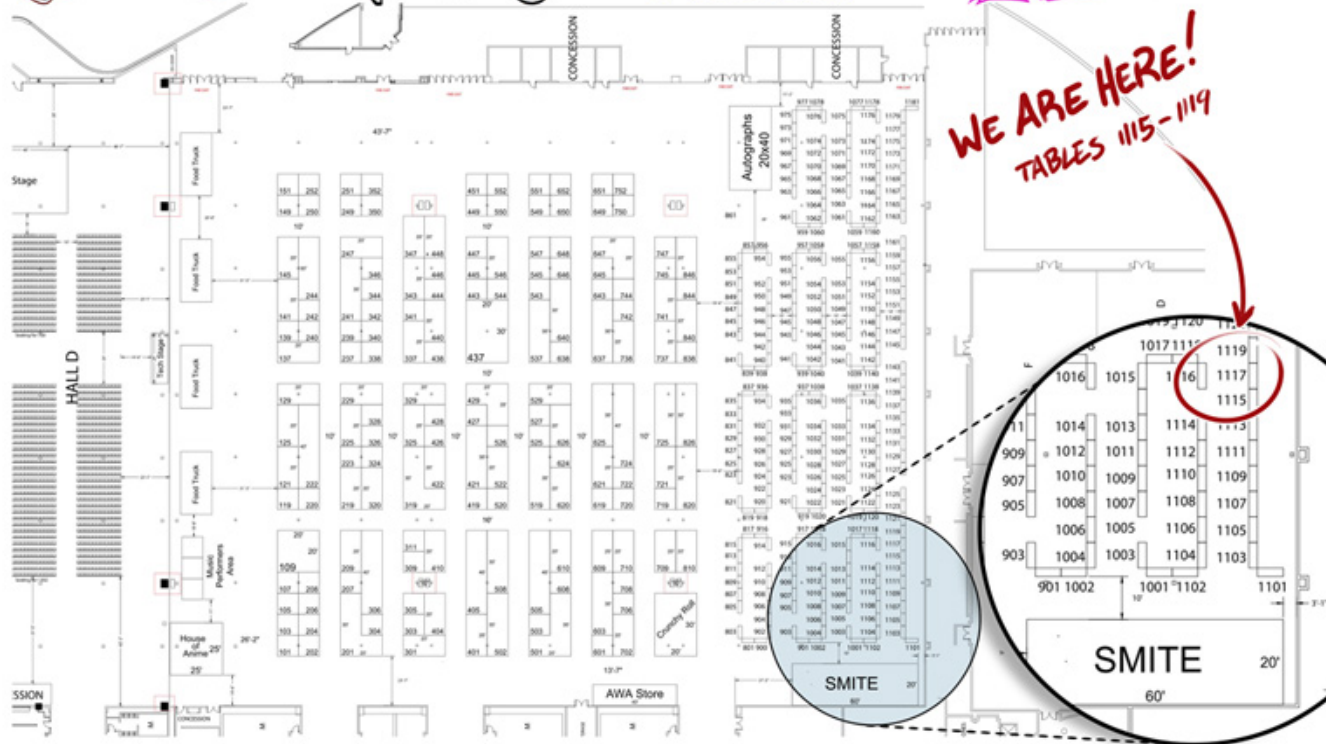
But that doesn't mean I want him getting killed.

Still, we can't wait here. I need to catch up to those other tigers. Let's go.



ANIME WEEKEND ATLANTA

SEPTEMBER 24 - 27 2015 @ COBB GALLERIA IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA



IT'S NOT TOO LATE! IF YOU'RE IN THE AREA, COME OUT TO SEE US THIS WEEKEND!
FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO AWA-CON.COM



Hey, Natani.

I know it took me a while, but I finally finished the new version of the cloak to go with your vest.

I'm... sure once you wake up, you'll like it. I added plenty of secret pockets, and an inlay for crystals...

Heh, and since it's made of wyrm silk, it won't catch fire this time! Haha...



It'll be okay.

Keith will come through, you'll see. You have a lot of friends who care about you.

Myself included.

I know we only had that one "girl talk" but... confiding with you really meant a lot to me.

I know you and Keith have a... thing going on.

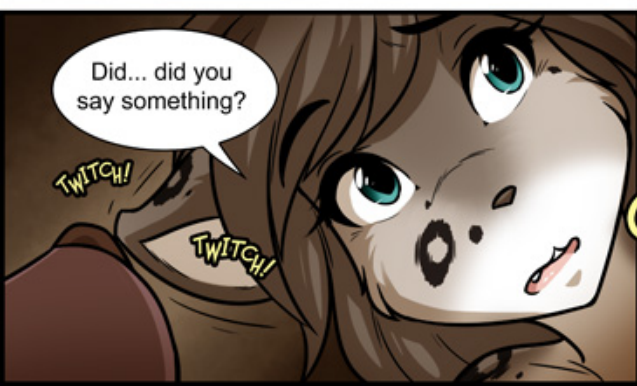
But I want you to know I'm here for you as well. And... if things ever change, m-maybe...

I mean... If you were ever interested, I... I might...



Keith...

WSP!
N-Natani?



Did... did you say something?

TWITCH!

TWITCH!



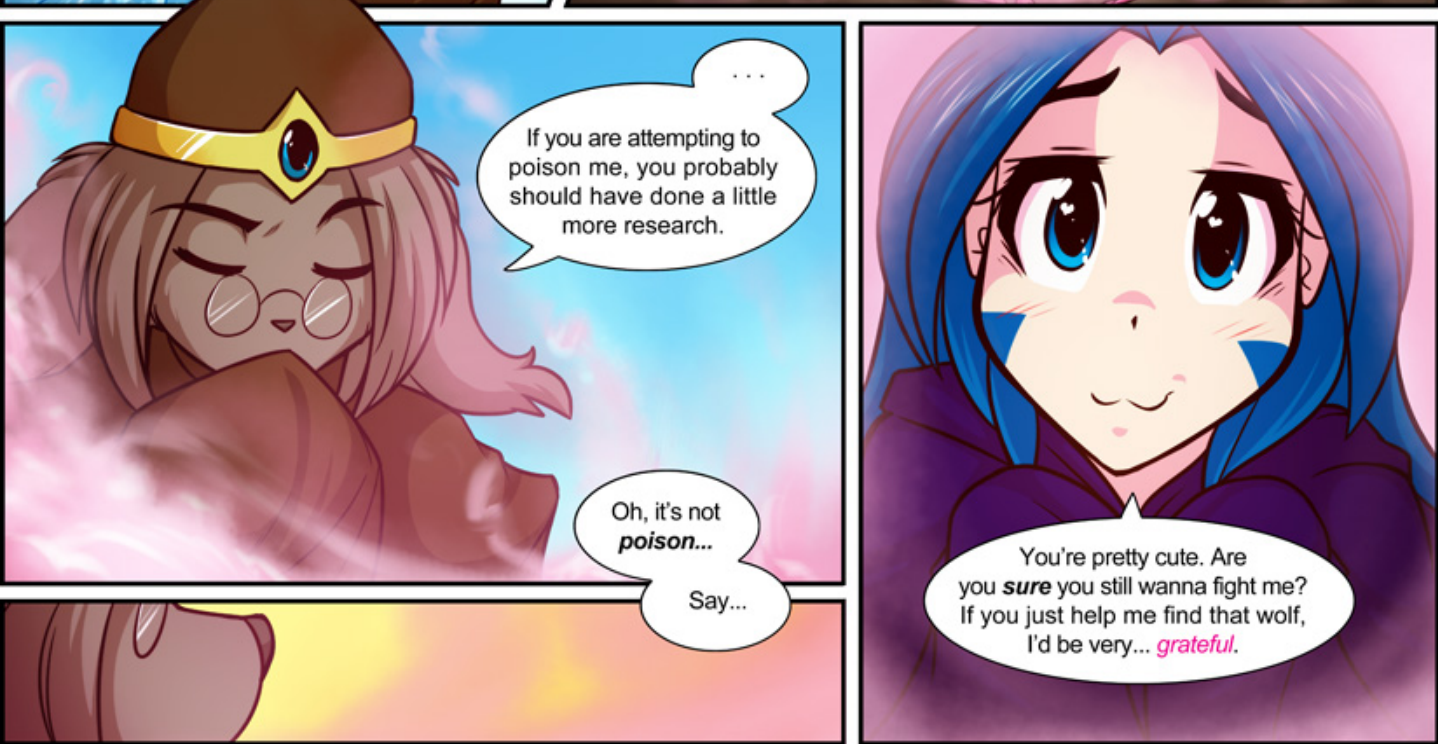
CHOMP!



Ow ow ow ow!

Is this about what I said?! I wasn't trying to get between you and Keith, I swear!





TWOKENDS

12 YEARS
AND STILL GOING
STRONG!







"No effect"?

B-but that's impossible! *How?*

Those pheromones should work on *any* man - keidran **or** basitin!

On anyone else, it probably would have.

I'm.. afraid you just picked the wrong basitin. You see, I am *Messenger Lynn*.

Where I am from...

Society is divided by gender. But there's.. always need of a go-between.

Even during curfew.

This requires a particular kind of person. Someone who can be blind to both.

In other words...



Let's just say... my ears don't hang limp like this for no reason.

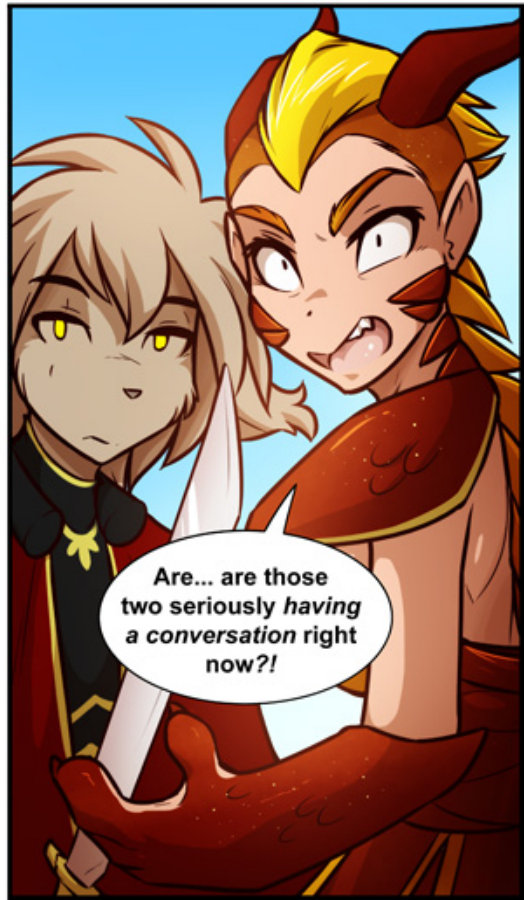
Still... thank you for what you said. I'm... not used to being flirted with. No one on the island would bother with someone like me.

Even if you didn't really mean it, it felt... nice.

Well, I mean...

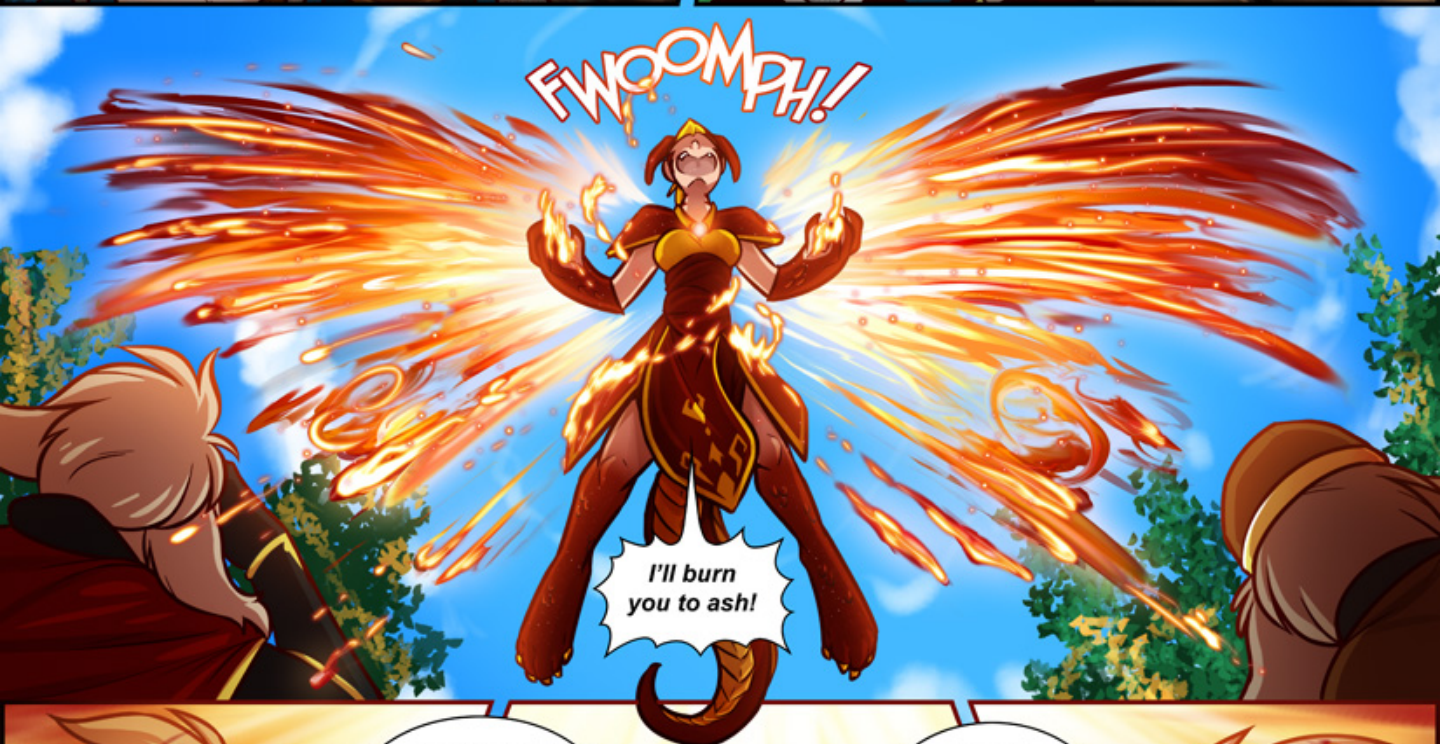
Okay, I admit, I was just playing you before. But, you know...

Those ears of yours really are kinda cute...



Are... are those two seriously *having a conversation* right now?!







Hah! I'd like to see you try!



BOOM!

Argh!

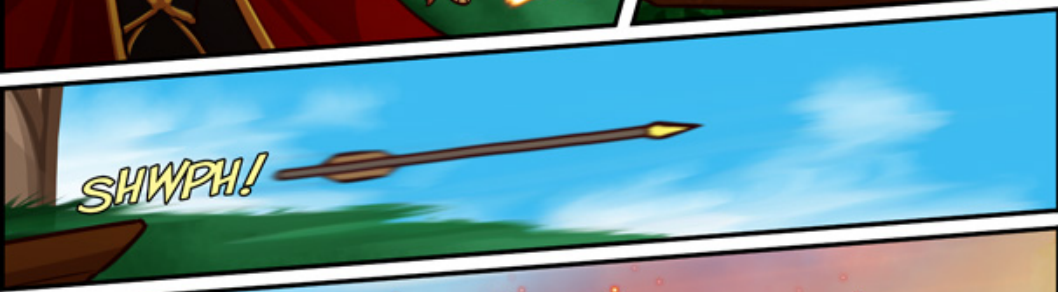


Damn.
We just need
an opening!

Something to
distract her, like—

Hey!

I said **stop**, you
monster, in the name
of the guard!



SHWPH!

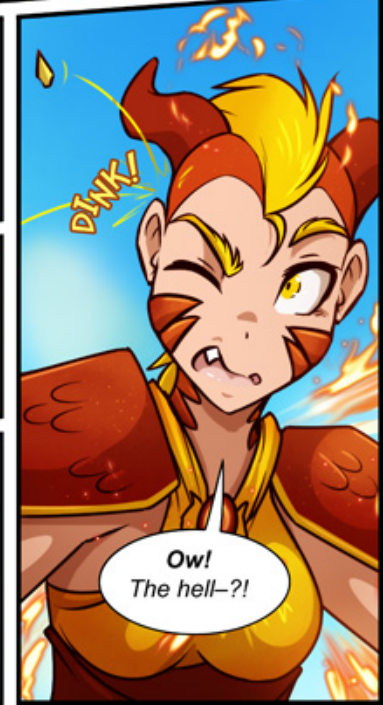


FWOOSH!



FWIP

FWIP



PINK!

Ow!
The hell-?!



Who threw that?!

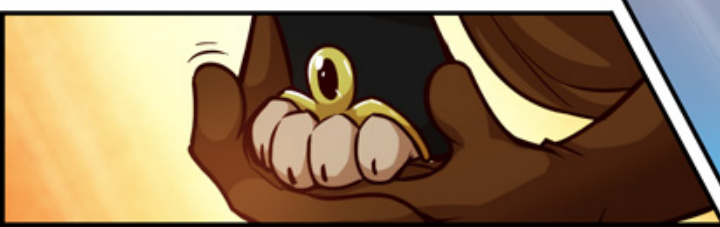
Someone threw something at me! Show yourself!

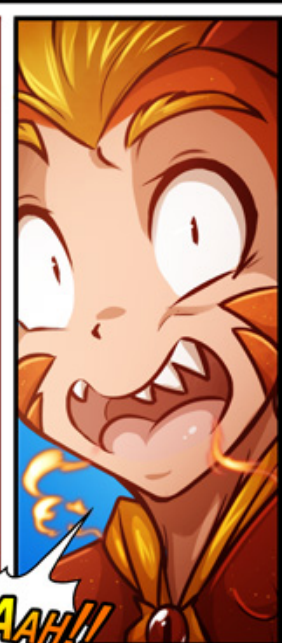


Now!
Lynn!



Yes,
My Lord!









Basitin diplomats?

Yes. It'd be unfortunate if your city was found to be responsible for a...

Diplomatic incident between our nations.

"D...diplomatic incident?"



After all...

We basitins **are** still allies of your kind, correct? Or is this Edinmire's way of declaring war—

W-wait!

Now hold on just a minute!

I'm sure this is all just some kind of misunderstanding!

E-Edinmire of course welcomes our... esteemed island friends. We were simply not aware that the basitin king was sending an envoy!



I can assure you, this Adrakist was **not** acting on Edinmire's behalf.

We will hold her until this can all be sorted out.



Ngaahah!!!
What?! Me?

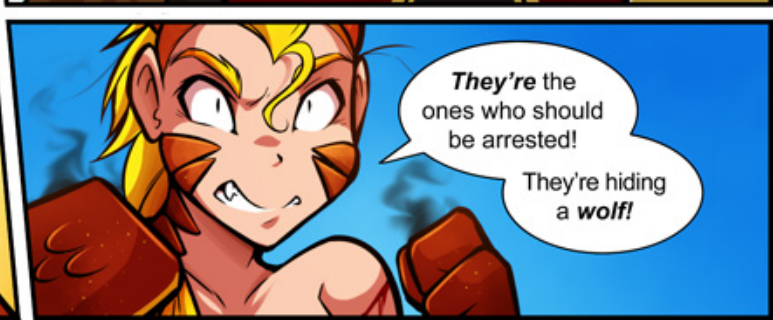


How can she still get up after that?!

It appears her hide is as tough as her scales.

Huh. So that's what a human's looks like.

Neat.



They're the ones who should be arrested!

They're hiding a **wolf!**



Sir, sir!
The Ace-

**That's
irrelevant,
Adrakist!**

You've damaged city
property and endangered
innocent lives.

I'm taking you
into custody. Surrender
peacefully, lizard!



L-L-Lizard?!



**I am Seraphina!
Adrakist of Fire!**

I don't answer to
you, or anyone else
in this hick town!

You should be
listening to **me!**

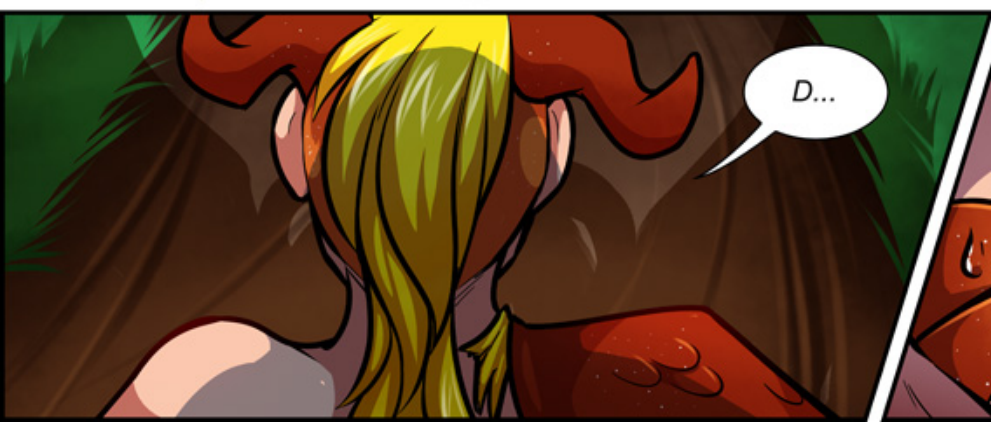
You should **all** be
looking upon me with the
reverence deserving of
a goddess!



Because I!



Am!



D...



Dra...gon?

A dragon, hm?
Well, Sarah, meet
our **own** dragon:

Madam Reni.



Not feeling so
smug now, are—

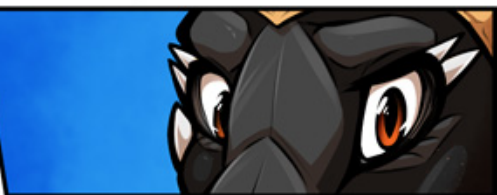
...you?

Oh... my...



oshohmygoshohm!
mygoshohmygoshohm!
nygoshohmygoshohm!
shohmygoshohm!

WAG!
WAG!



SHRUG





WHATCHA
LOOKING FOR,
FLORA?

COME ON!
WHERE IS IT?

O-OH,
HEY TRACE!

UH... WELL, YOU
SEE... REMEMBER THAT
ENCHANTED MISTLETOE?



OH NO...
YOU'RE NOT THINKING
ABOUT TRYING THAT TRICK
AGAIN THIS YEAR?

AW, LIGHTEN
UP, TRACE.

IT'S JUST A
MAGIC KISS. WHAT'S
THE HARM?

REMEMBER
WHAT HAPPENED
LAST TIME, WHEN
YOU PUT IT—

WE DO NOT TALK
ABOUT THE BUTT
INCIDENT!!!



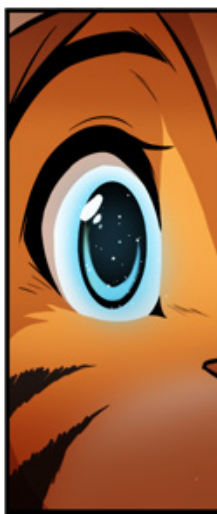
BESIDES! THAT WAS
JUST A FLUKE! THIS TIME,
NOTHING WILL GO—

HEY~ FLORA!

I GRABBED
A FEW THINGS OUT OF THE
HOLIDAY CHEST TO SPRUCE
UP MY OUTFIT.



WHAT DO
YOU THINK?



FLORA?

FLORA, WHAT
ARE YOU... **EEK!**

YEAH... WE
SHOULD PROBABLY
PUT A WARNING ON
THAT THING.





A dragon... right in front of me! And not just any dragon...

The royal dragon!

I'd heard you'd gone missing from the capital, but I had no idea you were here!



Princess, this is such an honor. You're an inspiration!

Oh... um... t-thank you.

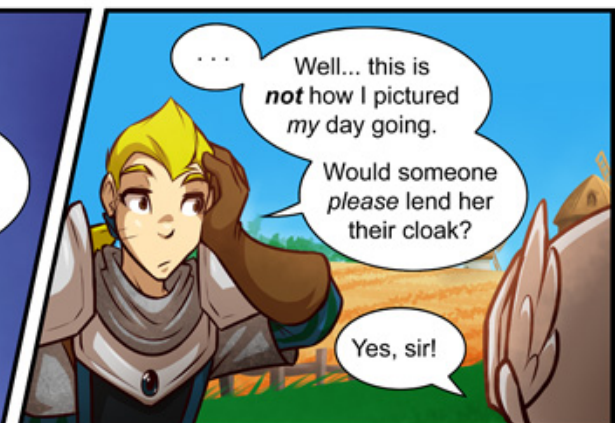
But I'm afraid you've caused quite a lot of trouble.



I need you to come with me for now.

Princess Reni... used her magic on me!

I'm being arrested... by the princess! This is the best... day... ev—



... Well... this is **not** how I pictured my day going.

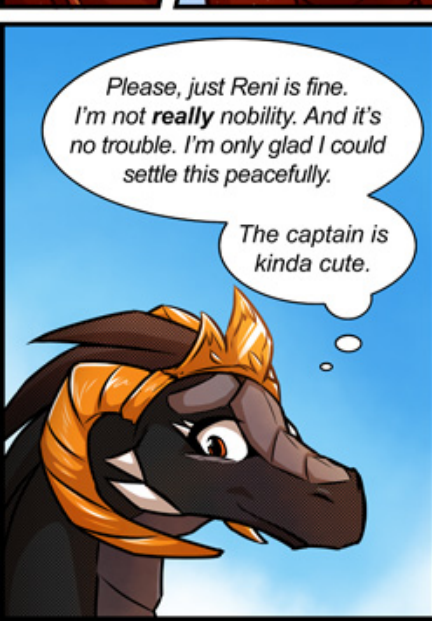
Would someone please lend her their cloak?

Yes, sir!



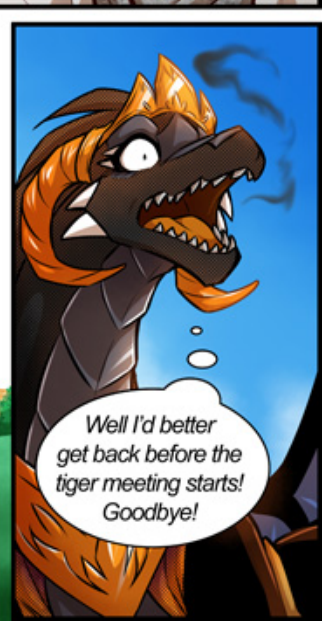
Er... thank you for the assistance, miss... your highness.

S-sorry to bring you out for something so trivial. I figured better safe than sorry.



Please, just Reni is fine. I'm **not** really nobility. And it's no trouble. I'm only glad I could settle this peacefully.

The captain is kinda cute.



Well I'd better get back before the tiger meeting starts! Goodbye!



O...kay. Just going to suppress that.



->Ahem!- As for you three...

Tell me: is what she said true? **Do** you have a wolf?



Hey, relax.

Look, as far as I'm concerned, you've got diplomatic immunity.

Just keep it out of the public eye, alright? Lotta folk on edge right now.

Otherwise, welcome to Edinmire.



Now if you'll excuse me...

Captain.

Hm?

Oh, Daniels. Good work getting to the Ace in time.



Thank you sir.

On the way back, though, I was stopped by a farmer - Ol' Rinehold.

He claims he saw figures moving through his fields on the outskirts near Riftwall... again.

He says it's wolves this time.



Sigh...

Fifth time this week. Of course he'd pick today too. It's probably just kids cutting through his fields again.

Should I check it out, sir?

No, Reed can. I have something else for you.



I need you to go to the docks. Find out what ship the basitins arrived on.. *discreetly*.

Sir?

I want to know where this wolf of theirs is.





Here we are.
Shepherd's Square.

It's so strange,
seeing tigers interacting
with humans like this.

Unlike wolves,
tigers have **always**
been isolationists.



Wait here.

I'm going to find
out what's going on.

Flora, are you sure
that's a good idea?

It's fine, Trace. These
are my people.



< How bizarre, these humans.
I've never seen them so close before.
They really don't have tails? >

< One of my cousins swears
they do! But they always wear
clothes so you can't tell.

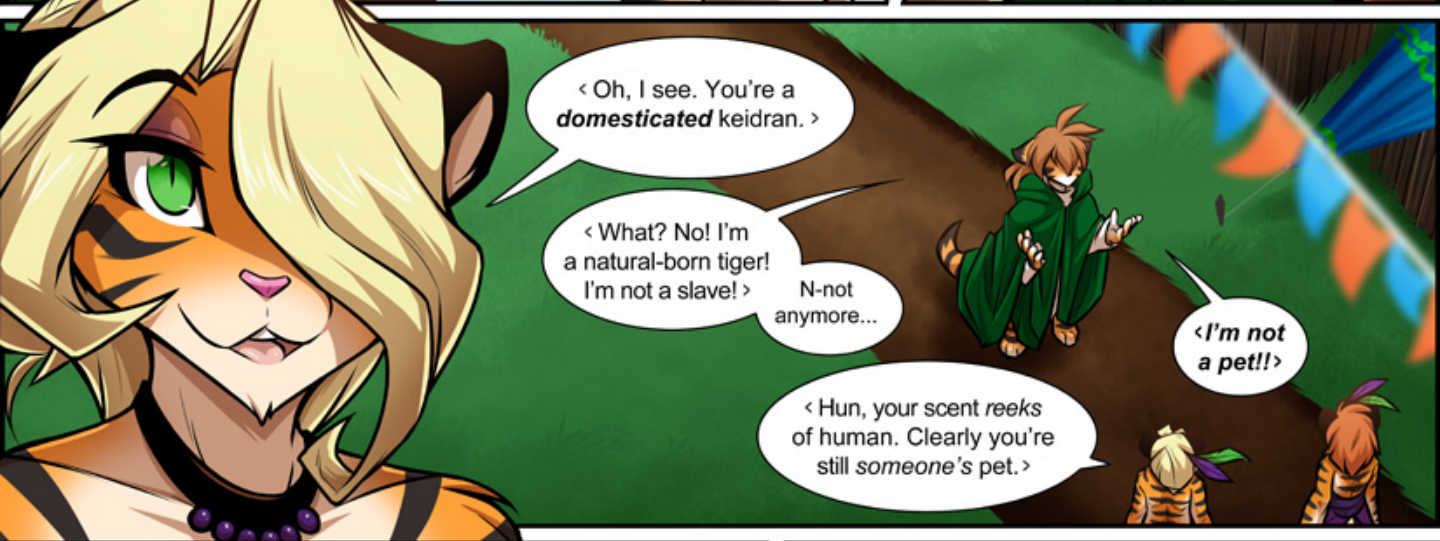
We have a bet that she
can get a guard out of his armor
before the first night. >

< Well, good luck to her.
Humans are as prudish as
they are repulsive. >

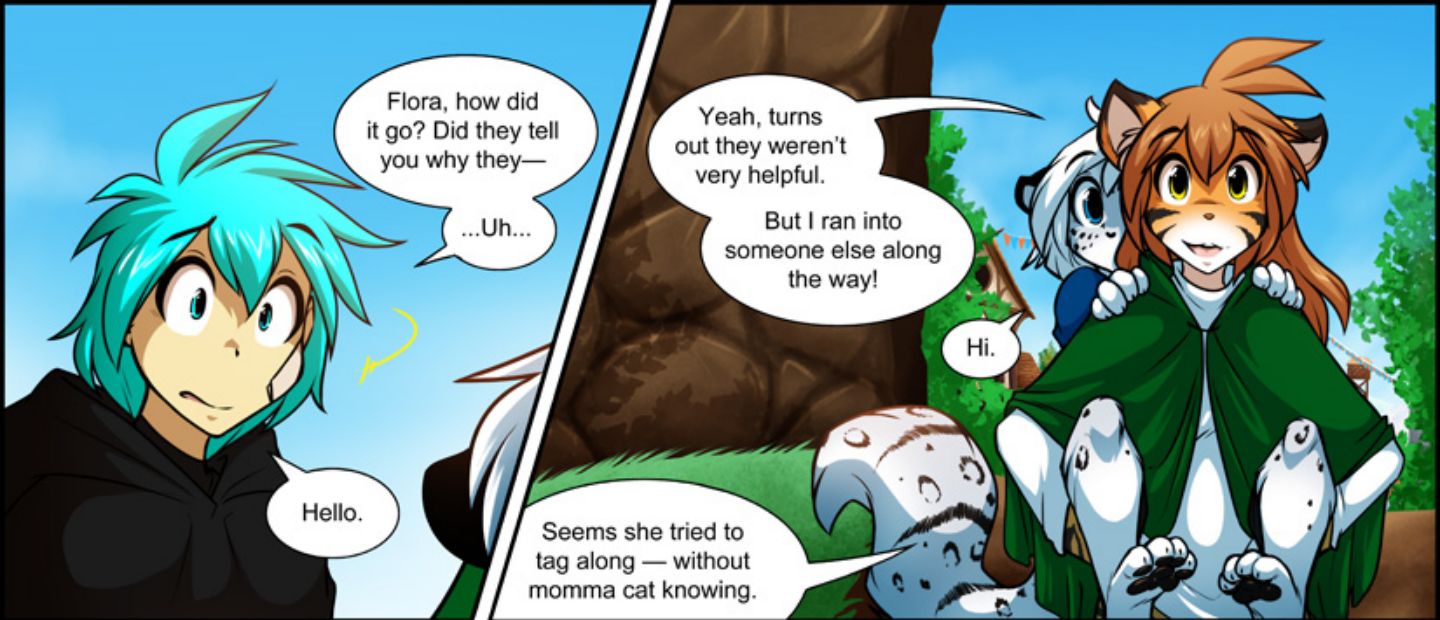
< Erm...
excuse me! >

Hm?









Flora, how did it go? Did they tell you why they—

...Uh...

Hello.

Yeah, turns out they weren't very helpful.

But I ran into someone else along the way!

Hi.

Seems she tried to tag along — without mamma cat knowing.

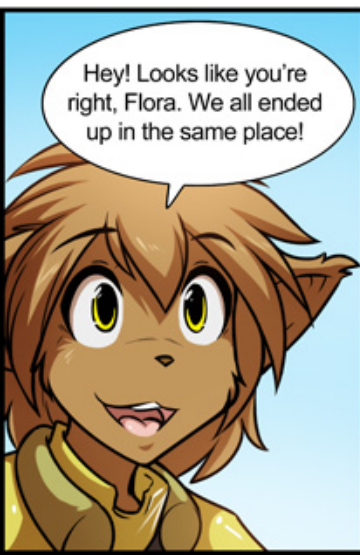


Oh. Well, should we head back to the tavern, then?

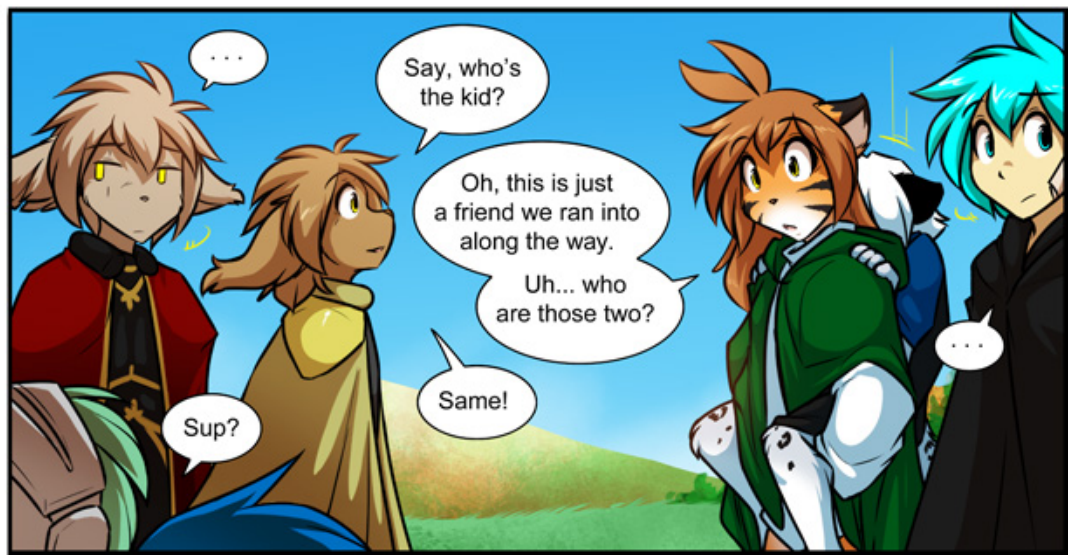
I think we're better off if we stay put for now.

I have a feeling Adira will come looking, and I don't want us to accidentally pass each other.

All roads tend to lead here, so it's the best place to wait.



Hey! Looks like you're right, Flora. We all ended up in the same place!



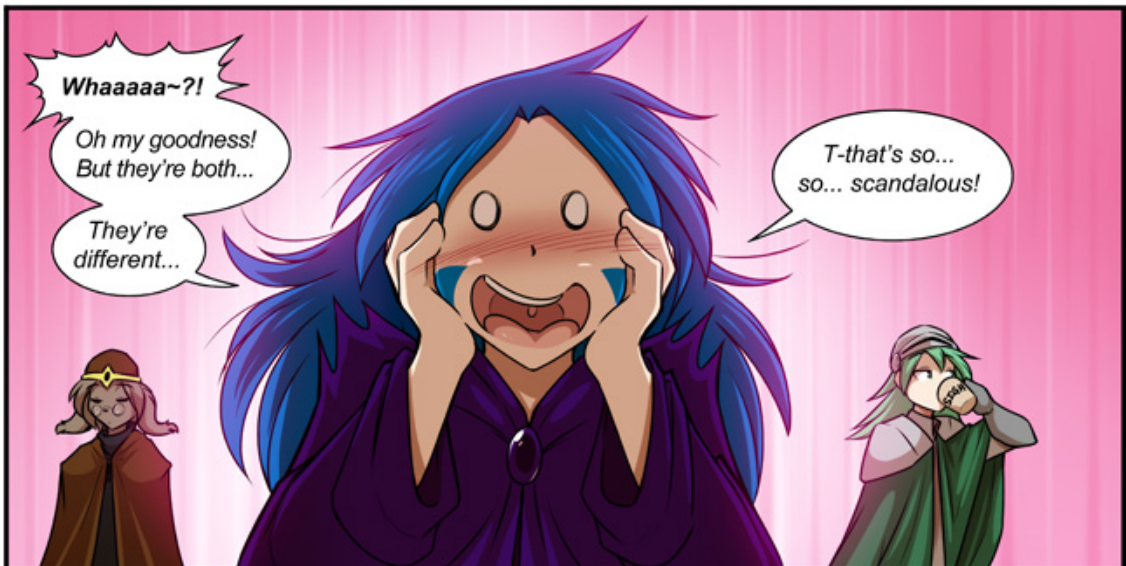
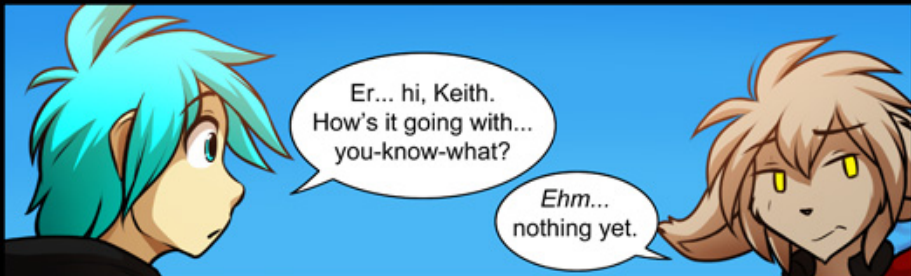
...
Say, who's the kid?

Oh, this is just a friend we ran into along the way.

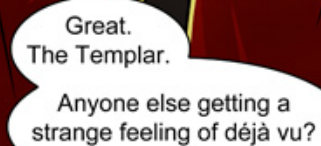
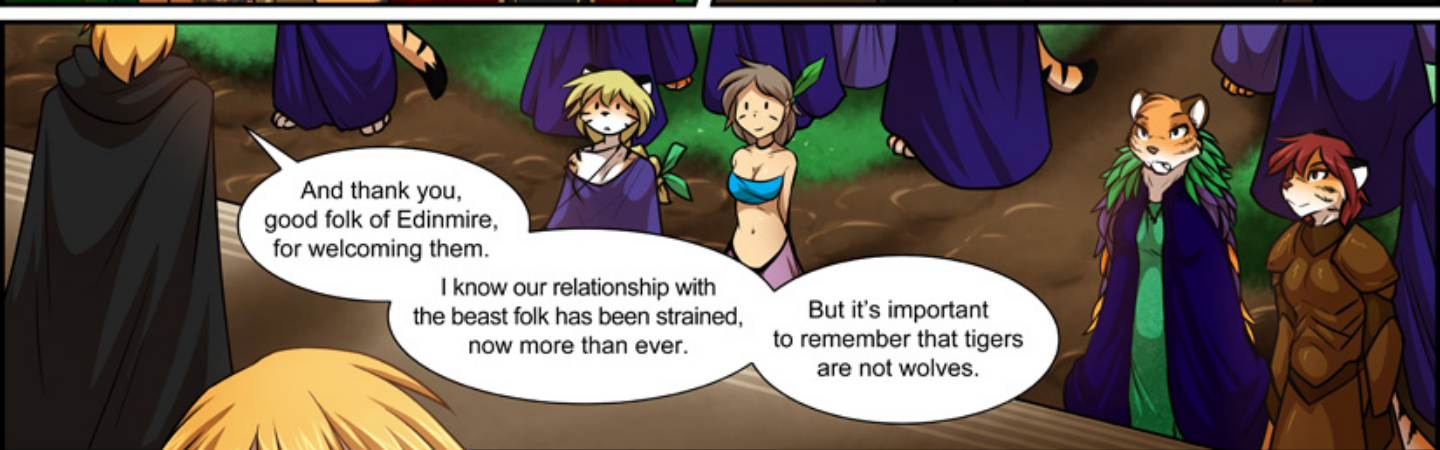
Uh... who are those two?

Same!

Sup?













< Your words are like honey.
You speak of friendship.

But for many of my kind,
the only humans they know are
the ones who steal our families
away in the night. >

< I ask, why now
should we listen to
your words? >



< I had a feeling
you'd say that.

And you're right. This will
require more than mere words.
It needs a show of faith. >



< Which is why
I've decided...

The practice of hunting
and trading feline keidran
will be **abolished**. >



Wait, what?!

What?

< Can he
do that? >

< Woah... >



Wow. That's... certainly
going to cause quite an
upset if he's serious.

I'm surprised you're
not ecstatic, though. This
is great news, right?



Could
he really be
sincere?



< Now, this will
not be an easy change.
It will require time.

But I believe it's
time the Templar turn
over a new leaf. >



Alarm!

Alarm!
We're under
attack!

Daniels?!



Daniels, what is it?
What's going on?

Ngh- Couldn't reach
the docks... magic circles
in the fields...

Whole city is
surrounded.

By what?
Wolves?!

They were cloaked,
I couldn't tell for sure.
But their emblems...



They were dressed
like Templar.

What?



GRRRRR
Brahn...



What is
the meaning
of this?!



I swear, whatever this is,
it is not our doing!

< Pray you speak
the truth, human. >



< ...For we tigers here
are but a fraction of those
waiting at your borders.

If we should not return,
it **will** mean **war**. >



Why would the
Templar do this? Something
doesn't add up here.

Daniels, how
soon until they
get here?

I don't actually
think they were coming
this way, sir.

I can't say for certain, but
it looked like they were cutting
off routes out of the city.

I saw them burning a
line of fire through the fields,
heading down towards—

—The docks!



Natani!



Keith, wait!

Let's move.



Sir, what should we do?
Don't the Templar technically
outrank... ngh... us?

I don't care if it's the
Grand Templar himself!
Assemble the guard.

Y-yes sir!



Kathrin!
There you are!

How's Natani?
Is everything okay?

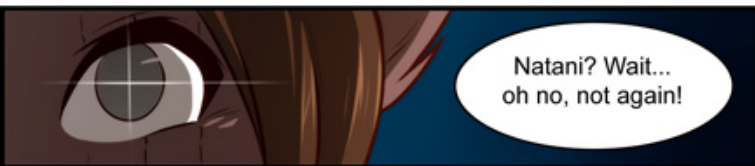
Oh, Keith! There's
been a development.

Natani is... well, *technically*
fine. And awake! But...

Awake?!
How?



I found a new
soul willing to fill in for
my missing half.



Natani? Wait...
oh no, not again!



Hello, my
dear Keith.

Miss me?

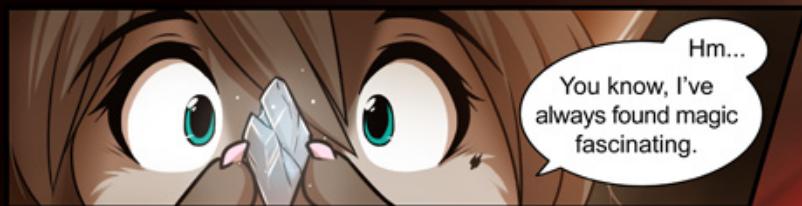


Actually,
I'm okay with this.

At least it's not
me this time around.

Does that make the wolf
a basitin general now?

Also, how does
that scar work?



Hm...
You know, I've
always found magic
fascinating.



Of course, as
a slave, I was never
allowed to try.

But I'd sometime
sneak school books
from Roderik.

And now that I'm
free... maybe I could
learn some day?



Mreowf!



I didn't mean *right now*!
W-what the heck is that?!



Wait here,
Natani! I'll be
right back!







Oh, come on!

My mind is the **one** place where I can feel like myself!

Why am I still a woman in here?!



Sigh...

Jeez. Get ahold of yourself, Natani.

Yeah. Yeah. Gotta get ahold of my—



...self...



Damn. I end up **stacked** when I'm older. What a pain.



WAAAAH!!!

WHUMP



Meanwhile...

Everyone
please remain
calm!

You're
safe inside the
walls!

Flora, we should
get out of here!

Look!

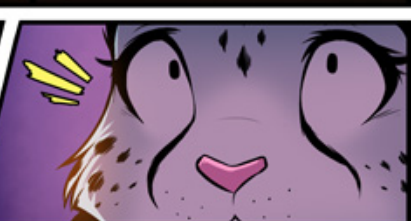
No one is
going anywhere.
You Keidran were
fools to come.

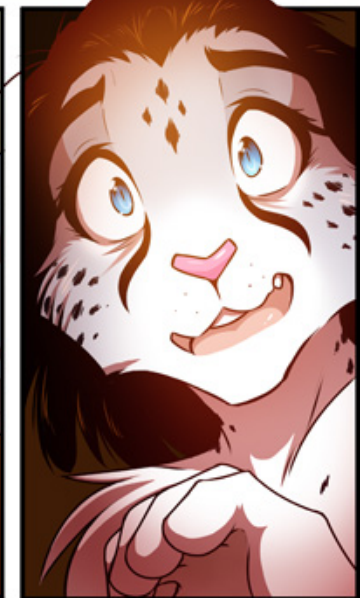
And so too are the
ones who invited you.
Traitors to humanity.

The Templar
will never consort
with beasts!

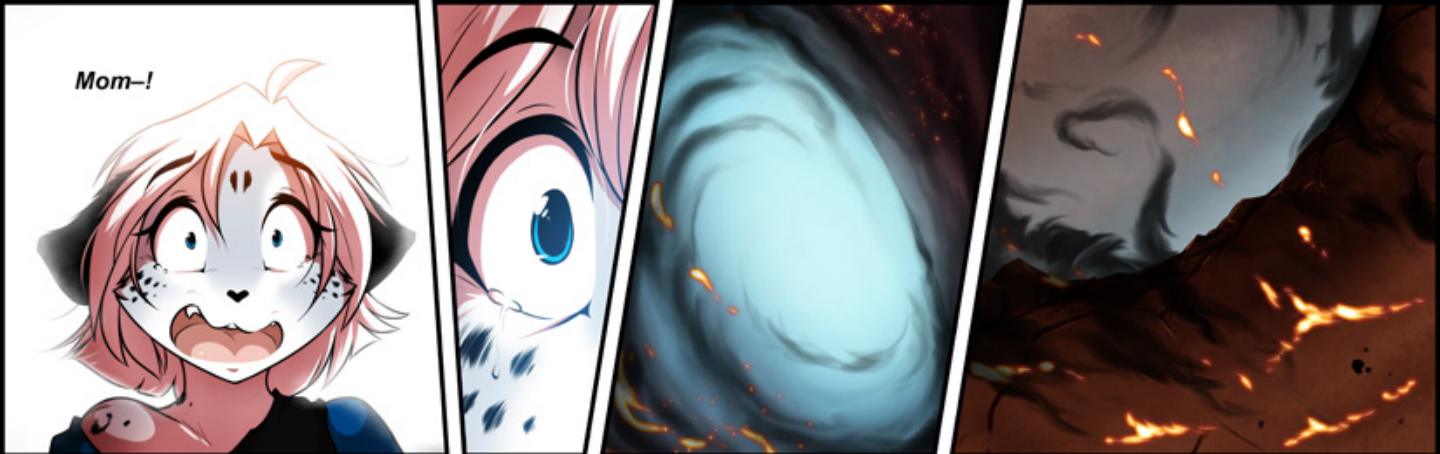
And now you will
all burn together, fools
and traitors alike!

FWOOMBWOOOM!





Mom—!



Keith was right! All I ever do is let people down. I had to save *someone*!

What good am I, if all I do is pretend I'm not here while they're killing in my name?

I can't keep hiding. Not if it means this!



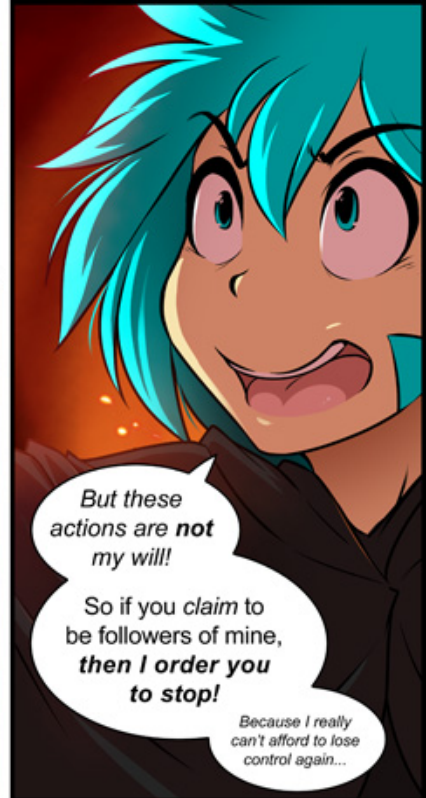
Wait,
who is—?

My name
is Trace.

Better known
as the once **Grand
Templar Trace**.

The same name
you called on to justify
your actions.

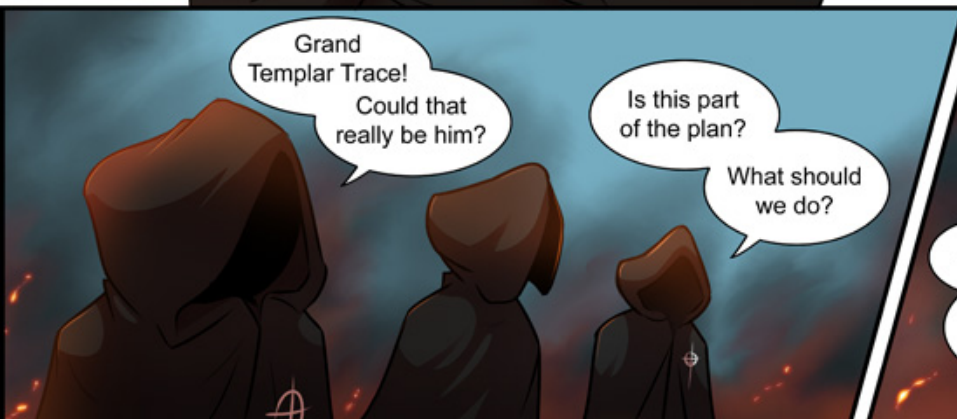
‘The grand
Templar!’



But these
actions are **not**
my will!

So if you *claim* to
be followers of mine,
**then I order you
to stop!**

*Because I really
can't afford to lose
control again...*



Grand
Templar Trace!
Could that
really be him?

Is this part
of the plan?

What should
we do?



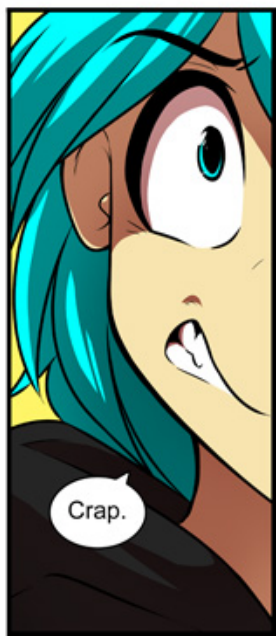
No.

Grand Templar
Trace is dead. This one
is an imposter.

He must be.



**And he will burn in
our fire like the rest!**



Crap.

What do I do?

There's no way I can shield against that many! Not without losing control.

But if I move, that amount might take out half the square!

I can't...

No.

I *am* the Grand Templar.

You *will* obey me!

And I said...

STOP!

FWEEEEEEEEEE!

BWOOOM!

CRASH!







Phew...

You did it!

Trace, that was amazing!

Oof!

And you didn't lose control this time!



You... didn't, right?
You're still you?

Heh, yeah.
It's still me, Flora.

No shadowy
voices or anything.



I, uh...



Dang it, Trace.
You really had me
worried again. I—



Um...

Oh my...




Sigh...

So much
for trying to
lay low.




Well, I for
one am grateful
you didn't.





Thank you,
Grand Templar,
for my life.


To be honest, it was
not something I would have
expected from someone of
your reputation.



Ah... no
offense.

None taken.

You don't seem
that surprised.




Oh, I knew
who you were.

But like I said back
at the tavern, I know
when not to pry.

I've heard the stories
about you, of course, like
everyone else. But clearly
they can't be all true.

I am one keidran,
at least, who is grateful
you've returned.




I wish I had money to repay
you. But if my tavern still stands,
you'll always be welcome.

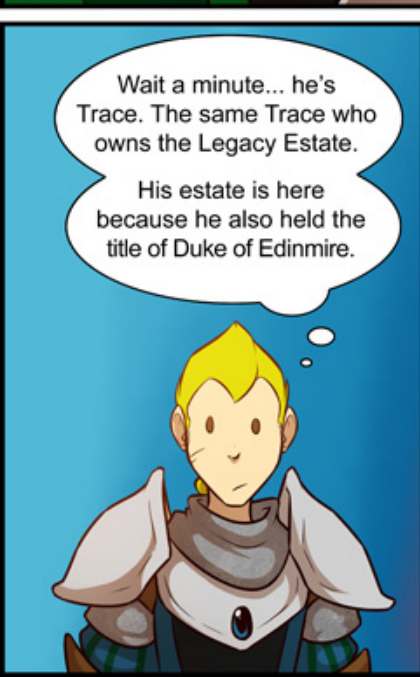
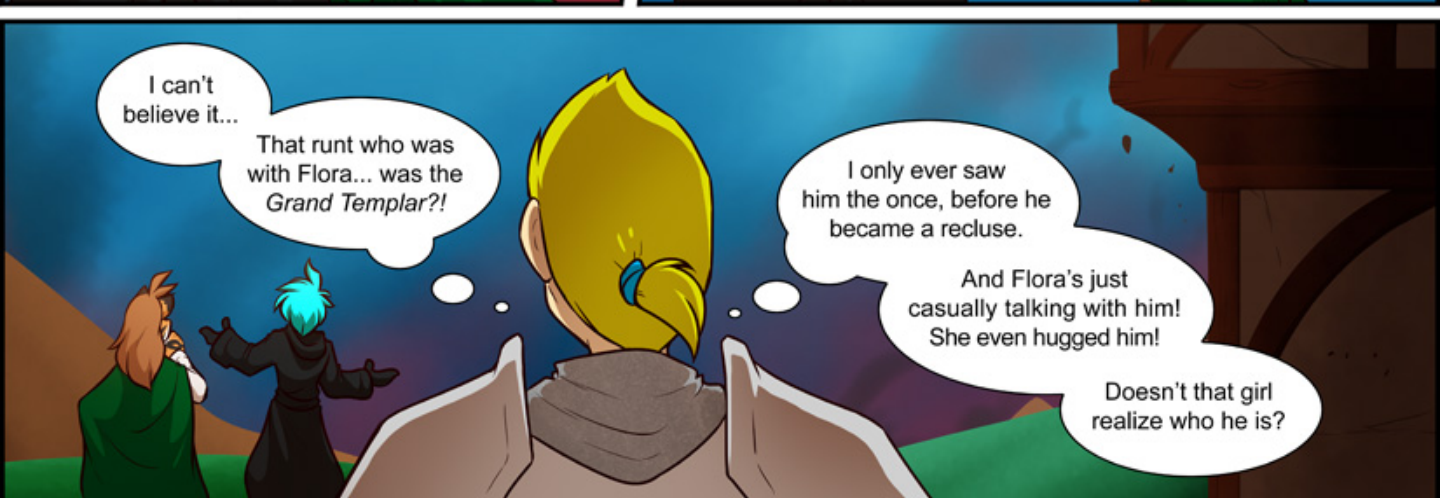
Oh, thanks!
But there's really
no need to—



LICK!



See you around,
Mr. Trace.





Is that-?!

It's a wolf!

I knew it! I knew there was something more to this!

Those rotten fleabags!

I knew the Templar wouldn't do this! This was a setup from the start!

Dressing up as Templar and attacking the tigers while framing us in the process!

Bastards!

We need to move! There's still at least two, probably more- huh?

Captain!

Warden Tallon, reporting!

We're the reenforcements you sent for!

I sent for? Wait, from...?

The Wolfpens.

The relief units you sent said you needed every able-bodied soldier here. We were told you'd been overrun!

Wha-? Relief units-?

What are you talking about? I never sent any relief units to...

...The Wolfpens!



All the wolves rounded up in the southeast are being held in The Wolfpens!

If they break them out... we're going to have a war on our hands!

That's not the worst of it, Captain!



Who are you?!

Are you one of them? Show your face!



Captain, get ahold of yourself!

It's Lt. Reed!



Fires are still spreading toward the harbour. We have to do something, or Edinmire will be left crippled.

We can answer questions later.

Let's get out of here while he's distracted.

Right!



Fires have also started up all over the city!

So what do we do? Do we go after the wolves? The docks? The city?

I... I...

Captain! What should we do?



We will fight.



Er, you? But... you're...




We may be keidran, but we are tigers first.


I hold no love for humans, but I will defend my people.



As will I. The Templar cannot allow these filthy imposters to soil our good name.



What the hell
is going on?



How is there a
younger version of me
in my own head?

Who are you?


Are you the
reason I'm stuck
like this?

If you mean
stuck in your head,
then no.

I'm pretty sure having
Zen's mental crutch swept out
from under us did that.

If you mean stuck
looking like your normal
bosomy self...

...I'm guessing it's
because of how you
feel right now.



I **do not** feel
like a woman!

No, but without Zen
we're feeling pretty weak.

And you consider
woman and weakness
in the same breath.

Sooo, your mind
just falls back on
what it knows...

...And **bam!** You're
stuck with your... *bountiful*
womanliness.







Don't you
"hint hint" me!

I'm not an idiot, okay?
I know what you are, I see
where this is all going. *But*
I won't play along!

I refuse!
I **refuse** to let
myself...

To let myself
be you again.

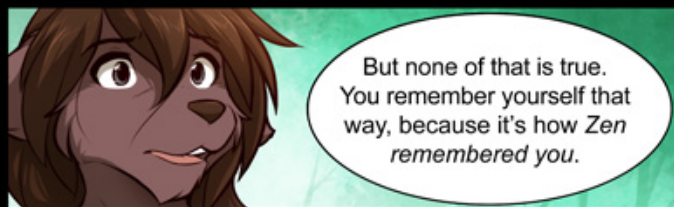
Natani...



Look... I get it.
You see accepting me
as losing yourself.

That somehow this
is going to end with you in a
dress embracing all things
girly or something.

You think of your
younger self as the scared
little girl Zen's link saved
you from being.



But none of that is true.
You remember yourself that
way, because it's how Zen
remembered you.



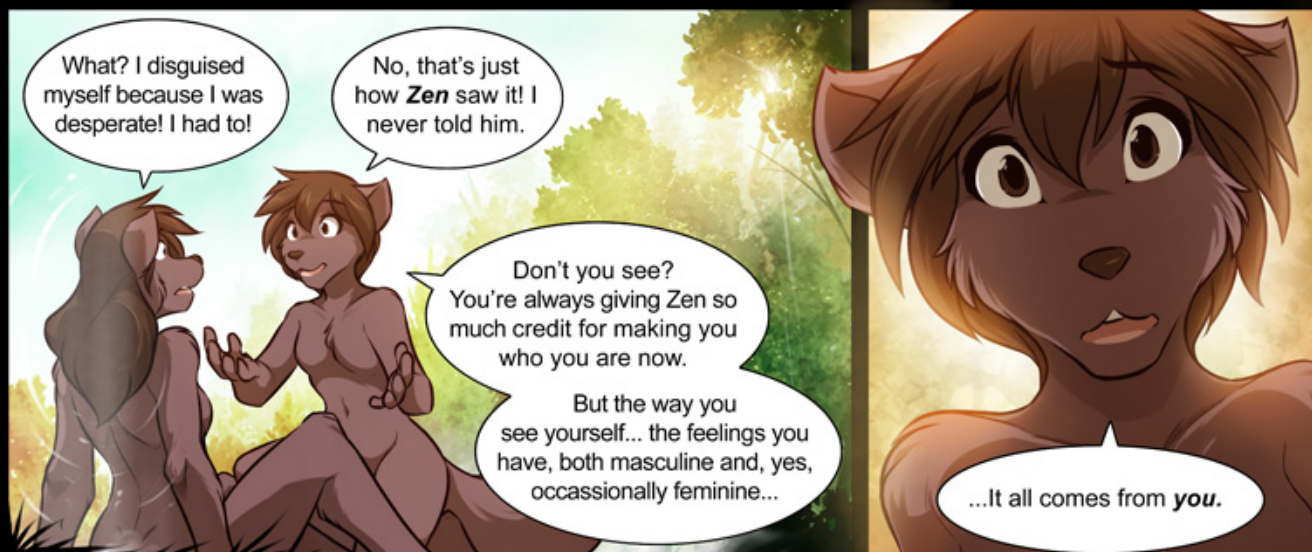
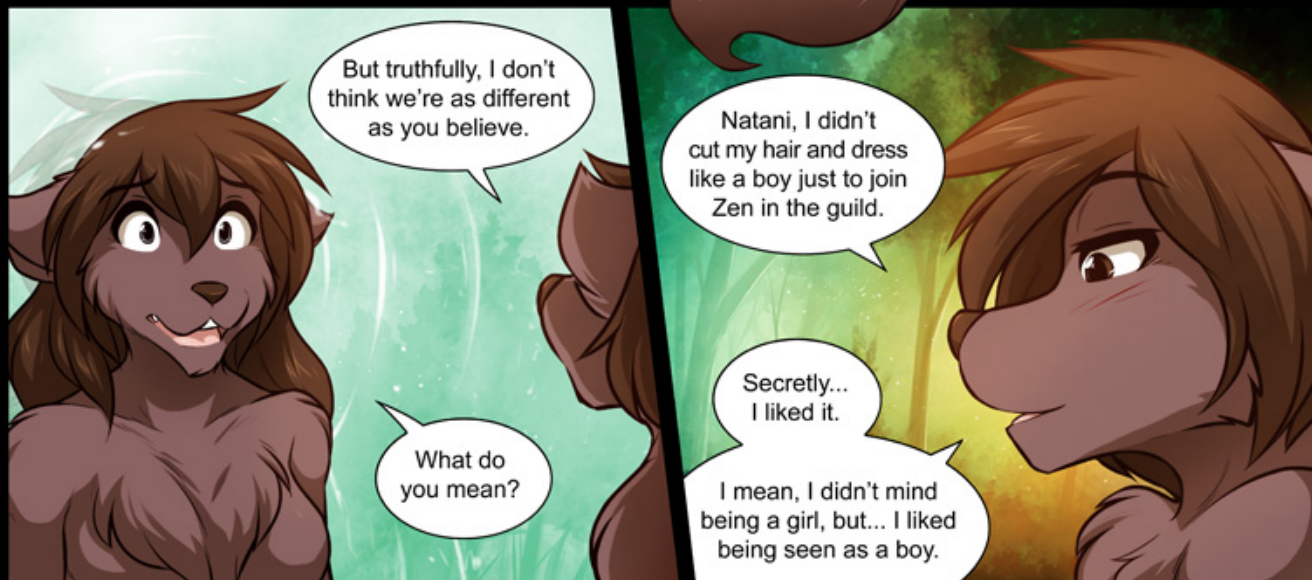
Don't blame
Zen! He didn't see
me as weak.

He saw us
the only way
he could...

...As a big brother protecting
the only family he had left.



A part of him will always think of us as his helpless
baby sister. And the link burned that into your mind.







Okay, need to
get up to speed.
Let's see...

No Zen.
No Keith. No...
clothes.

Kathrin?



<Hey, what's
going on, Kat?>

N-Natani?



<Yeah, I'm still
me... I think. How long
was I out for?>

And what's with all
the smoke? You burn a
cake or someth—>



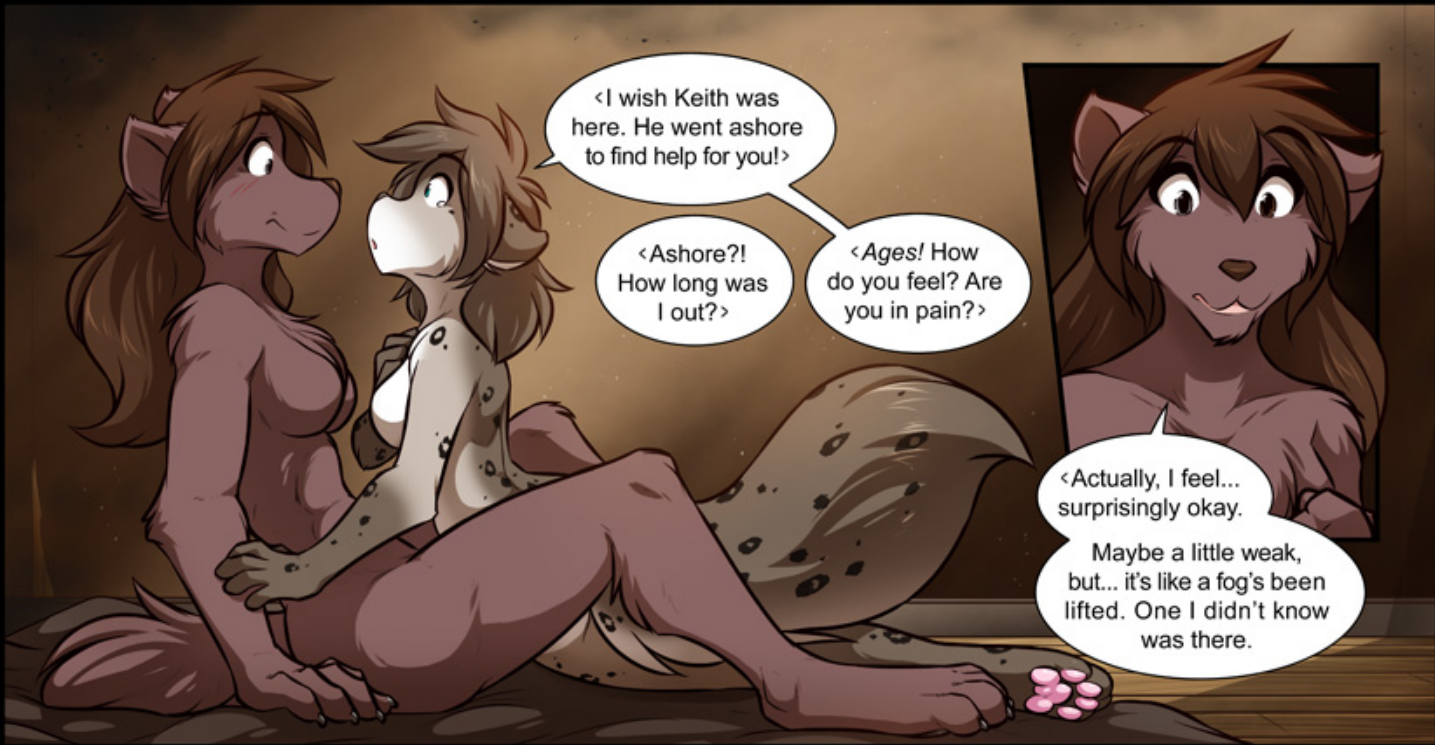
NATANI!!

I can't believe it! You were
so worried! You just fell
asleep and I tried to look after you.
I finally reached the land and there
was an explosion and smoke
everywhere and I couldn't find Mike or Eva.
Everyone else was already on shore
so I couldn't just leave you here so I tried
to drag you but you were too heavy.
I didn't know what else to do
but you were going to die!
I'm glad you're okay!



O...kay. Pretty sure
even if I knew Human, I
wouldn't have got that.

Also **personal
space!**





<Wait!>

Huh?



<Are these the new robes you were making for me?>

<Well, yes, I finished them and your smallclothes while you were out.

But this is no time to be dressing!>

<I'm not going to leave them behind!

You said this stuff was fireproof, right?>



<Here, hang on to this! I'll be right back!>



Wha?!



<Natani! Where are you going?!>

The stairs are this way!>

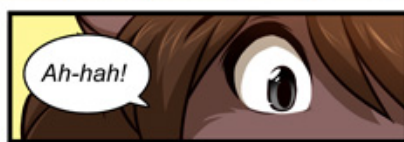


SLAM!



<Cough!>
<Cough!>

<Come on, where is...?>



Ah-hah!

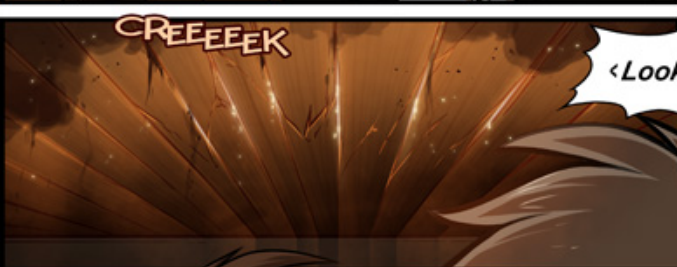


<Keith would never forgive himself if he lost this.

And I think we can both agree, he's been through enough.>



Uh... oh...



CREEEEK



<Look out!>

CRASH!



<Natani, you... saved me.>

<Don't thank me yet.

Looks like you were right - the ship's going down.>



<Come on, let's go!>

<But... that was the way to the stairs!

How do we get out now?!>



CRIISSHH!



<Oh. Right, of course.

This is... probably a bad time to mention I'm not a very strong swimmer.>



<We'll be fine.

Just hang on to me, okay?>



<O-okay...>



The fire's already spread to the ships!

Hurry!



~Hack!~

~Cough!~

Mike, Evals!

There you two are!
What happened?!

Ah, I see Eric's fine. Great.

Master!
I don't know,
it happened
so fast.

We tried to
save what we could,
but there was barely
time to get out!



Wha-?

I don't care
about the damn
paintings!

Where's
Kathrin?!

Kat? I... I thought
she was taking the wolf
ashore with the Basitins
to find help?

Natani!

Speaking
of Basitins...

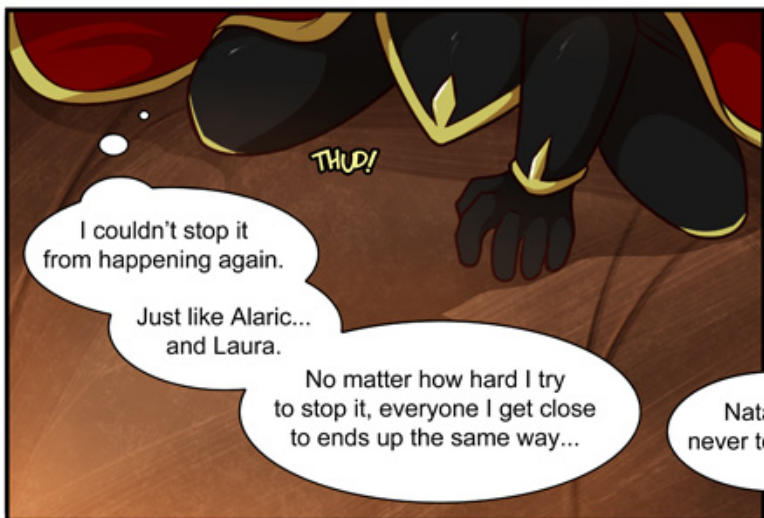




Natani...



I... I couldn't
save him...



THUD!

I couldn't stop it
from happening again.

Just like Alaric...
and Laura.

No matter how hard I try
to stop it, everyone I get close
to ends up the same way...

Natani... I
never told him—



<Wow, glad no one
else was on that thing.

Urgh... I think I
underestimated just how
hard swimming for two would
be... especially given the
circumstances. Haa...



You okay
there, Kat?>

<I think
I swallowed
a fish...>



<Hah, lucky.
I'm starving.>

N... Natani...?



<Oh, hey
Keith. Huff...

Sorry to keep
you waiting. What
did I miss?>

Keith?
Where?



<What's the matter, Keith? Aren't you happy to see me?>



Eric!

Erg! Kathrin, You're okay!



Natani...

You... You're...



BAP!

<Gah! The face!

Why always the face?!



Eh?



<I thought you were dead.

I didn't know how to help you.

And then... you just get back up on your own, just like that...>

<Well, to be fair, coming back was a little more involved than "just that.">



<But, you know me.

I'm not one to play the damsel in distress.

I missed you too, Keith.>

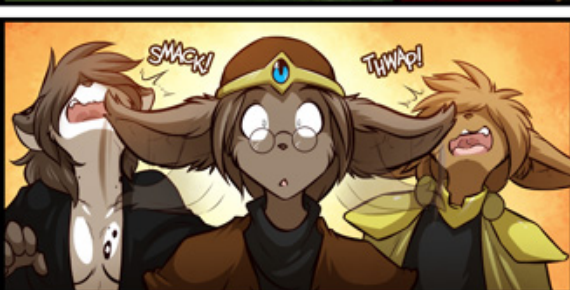


<Uh, speaking of damsel, I just realized my face was... your chest isn't...>

<Oh... yeah. There... wasn't a lot of time. And living seemed more urgent than getting dressed.

Sigh... I guess the jig is up.>





TWOKENDS

13TH ANNIVERSARY



VOLUME 3 PREORDERS NOW OPEN!

SHIPPING DECEMBER 2016

Yes, finally, after four years, the new book is ready! And you'll be glad to know Keenspot will be handling distribution this time, so I can't bumble it up. ;) Without further ado...

Celebrate the Twokinds 13th anniversary by revisiting the past with Twokinds Vol 3! Featuring the first half of the Basitin Isles saga (with part two coming next year!) This volume includes 160 full-color pages, cleaned-up art, new chapter titles, and more!

Basically, it's the comic, but much more book-like than usual.

So if comics that are also books are your thing, or you just want to help support for Twokinds, [click here!](#)



Twokinds Vol 3 Front Cover



Back Cover

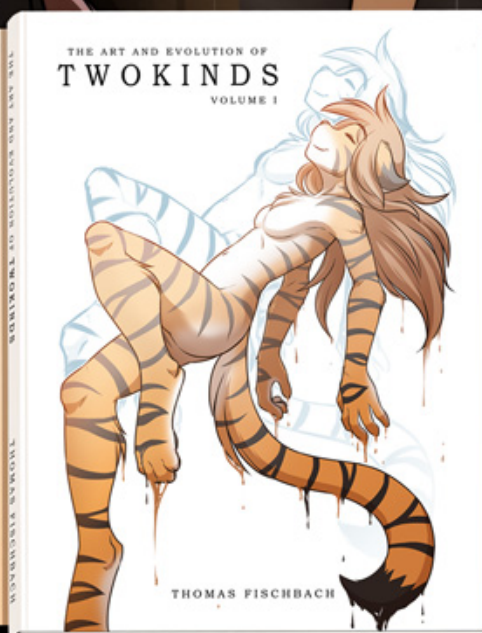
BONUSES

THE ART OF TWOKINDS VOL 1 ► 8.5x10 92-page Hardcover Artbook

Also available for preorder, my very first artbook! Inside are high-quality prints of all-new artwork along with small excerpts about the thought process behind story and characters.

+ ANNIVERSARY CAST POSTER

Included FREE to those who preorder any of the book bundles.



The Art of Twokinds Vol 1



11x17 Cast Poster



Step away
from the wolf,
Basitin!

They've
burned down half
the harbour!

Look! There's
another one over
there!



What? *Me?*!
I'm not a wolf!
Look at the floppy ears!
See? Friendly doggy!



Stop this
at once!

T-these Keidran are
innocent! They are... *currently*
property of the the Vaughan
Trading Company.

They are not your
enemies!

Eric,
don't—!



Neither
is the wolf.
Attack him, and
you attack an envoy of
the Basitin Empire.



T-the Basitin
Empire?

...Wait, *him*?
But... it's got...



You see? *Lies!* **Both**
of them! Like we'll believe
some filthy non-humans and
wolf sympathizers!

Cut them down!
Avenge Edinmire!

GRAAAH!!

No!
Hold!

Happy Halloween!





Epilogue

Brahn!

I lost one of my men back there.

You said we were only to be **unmasked**. You never said anything about facing the *Grand Templar*, much less a bloody **dragon**!

FORMER
Grand Templar.

Besides, what's *one* wolf to a prison full?

From what I hear, your "pack" is breaching the wolfpen as we speak.

Nevertheless...

Thanks to you, the Tigers now see your kind as traitors, and Trace was forced to become involved, as I foresaw.

Right...

I suppose this is the point where you double-cross me, too?

On the contrary.

Let it never be said that I am not true to my word.

The payment you requested: one **flawless crystal amulet**, enchanted exactly as you asked.

It took a team of our best mages *weeks* to weave the magic.



I hope it was worth betraying your pack mates.

Hmph. Says the man who allowed his own city to be attacked.

Besides, I'm only **half** wolf.

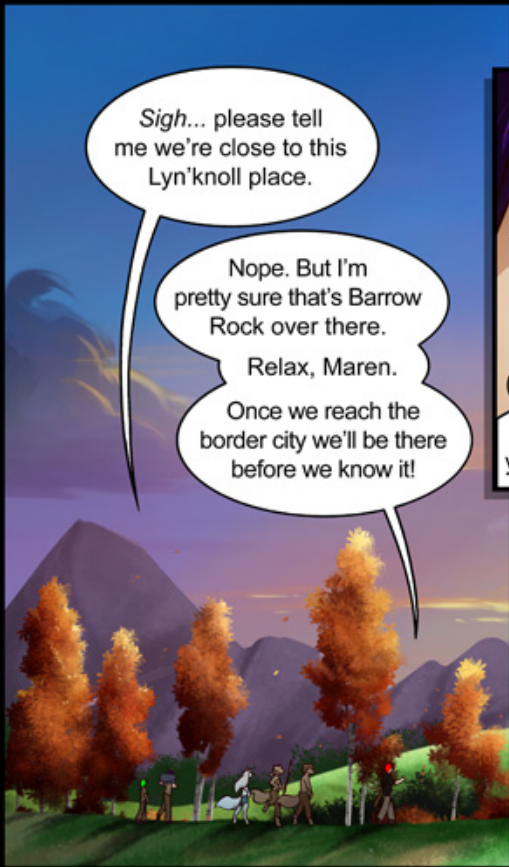
And my fox half is just fine with this.

TWOKINDS

BEWARE
OF
WOLVES!



Chapter 19
REUNIONS



Sigh... please tell me we're close to this Lyn'knoll place.

Nope. But I'm pretty sure that's Barrow Rock over there.

Relax, Maren.

Once we reach the border city we'll be there before we know it!



You're not the one lugging around all the camping supplies!

Ngh...

Easy for you to say...



Hey! Keep your voice down! Soldiers sometimes patrol these roads.

Need I remind you, our group is currently 50% wolf right now!



'Sides, Sythe and I already had a turn, it's too heavy for Karen, and Raine's still injured.

Don't worry. We're going to rest in... three more miles!

Grrr...

One more!



Say, Raine. I wanted to ask about your shape shifting...

Hm?

That cut on your stomach... would it still be there if you were to turn human again?

Er, yes, I think any changes remain.

Oh... okay.



... So say you got with Sythe and then changed back. Would you have humans or puppies?

Karen!
Don't ask stuff like that!





Ow!

I wish my shoes still fit. How do Keidran stand walking barefoot all the time?



You get used to it.

Aaah~!

But I must admit, it's nice to take a load off.



Ugh. I don't know if I'll ever get used to it.

It's still so strange to see you this way, with all that... fur.



Sorry. I know it bothers you.

But believe me, if you think that's awkward, try being the one who has to wear the f—

BRUSH!



Eep!



Maren! W-what are you doing?

Brushing you.

Your fur is tangled and matted all over. You clearly don't know how to care for it.

Don't take this the wrong way, but I used to have a dog I groomed all the time.



Dishevelled fur is kind of a pet-peeve of mine.

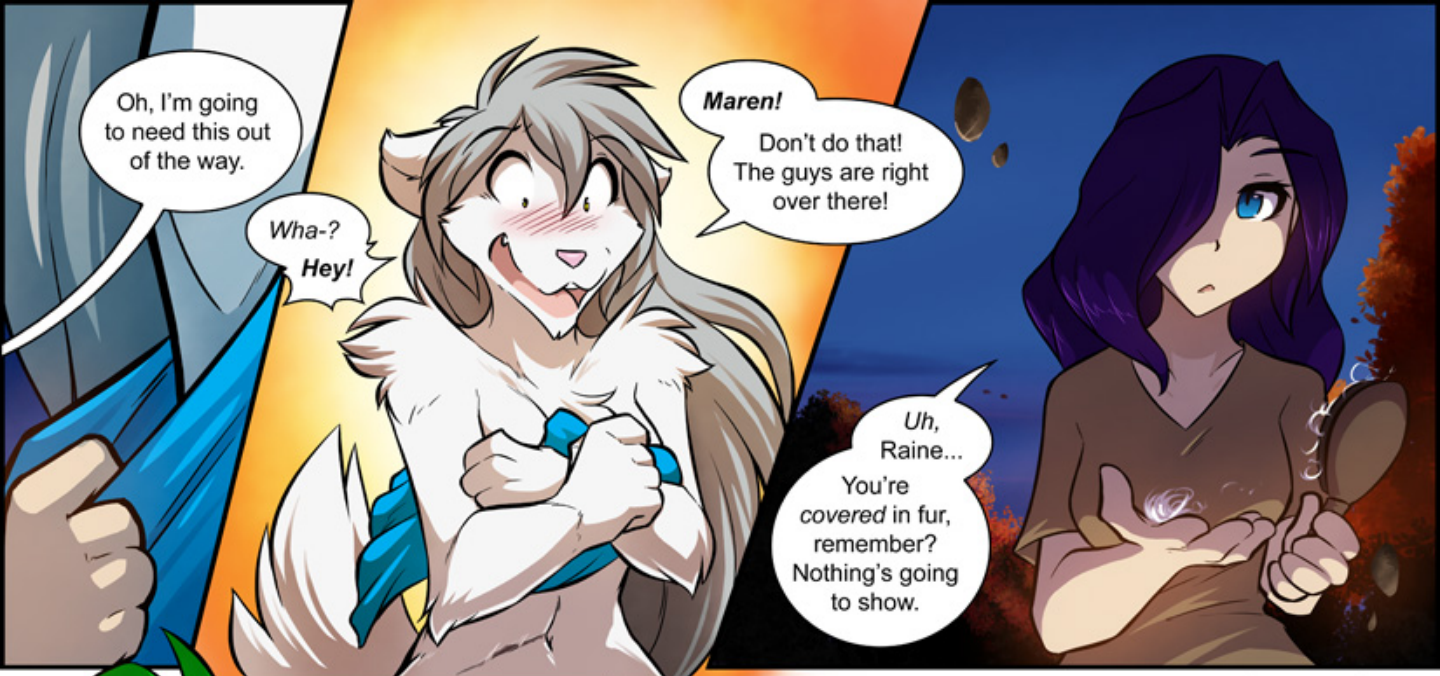
It's why I try to avoid looking at Sythe.

You know you love it!

So hold still and let me know if this hurts.

N-no...

This... this is nice.



Oh, I'm going to need this out of the way.

Wha-?
Hey!

Maren!

Don't do that!
The guys are right over there!

Uh,
Raine...
You're covered in fur, remember?
Nothing's going to show.



Yeah! Besides, how are you going to get in the spring otherwise?

Relax, we're all friends here!

Well, except the moody wolf over there.



I... I know.
Modesty's kind of silly at this point.

Especially with all the time we've spent camping together.

I'd just... prefer to keep it on for now.
It helps me feel a little more... human.



Hey, don't sweat it, Raine.

It's fine.
Whatever makes you comfortable.



Although, even with the top...

You know there are also rows going down her stomach under that fur, right?

Pff!

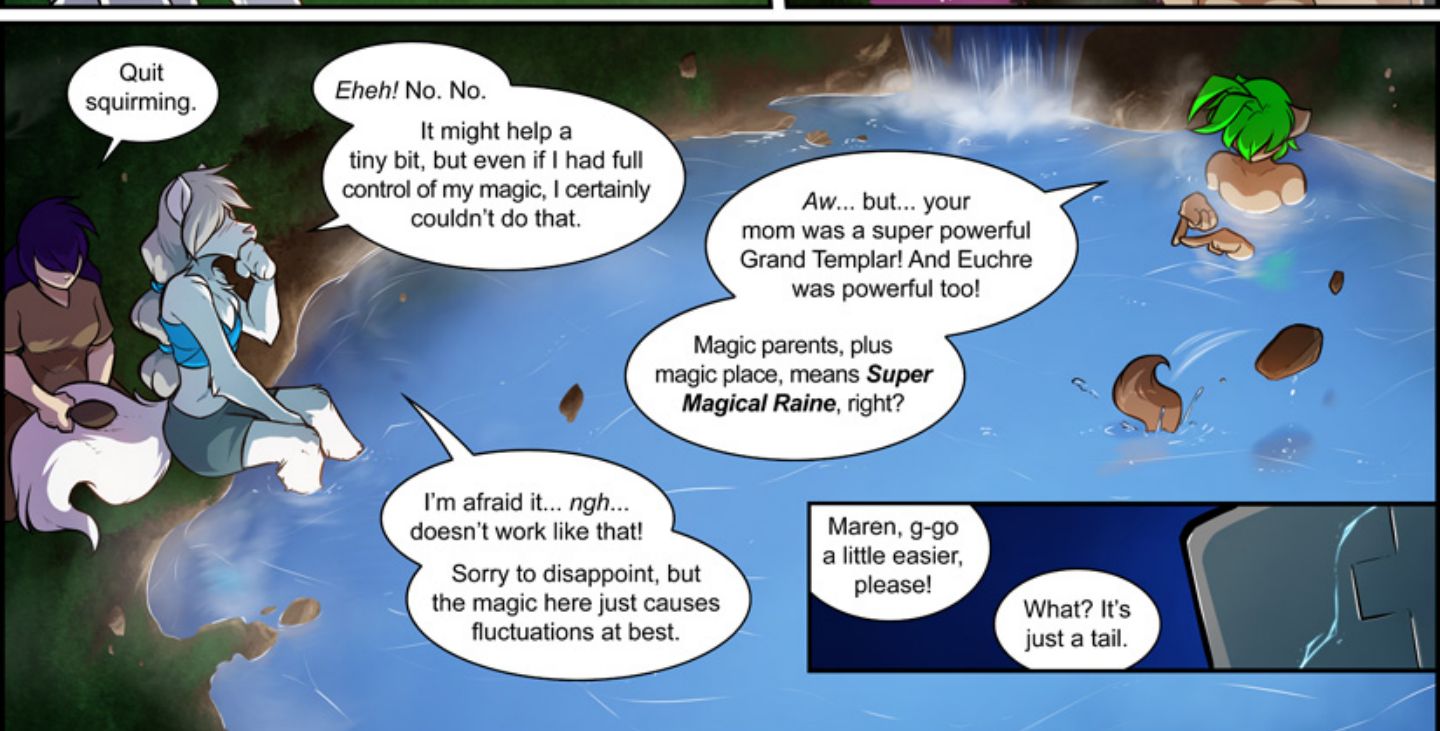


On me too, technically.

I know you're lying just to mess with me!

Hey, I just figured if you're still interested in Raine, you should know all the... perks.

Shut up!





Sigh...

Hey, Natani.
Another update.

Still no luck getting
this thing off without
them noticing.

Rocks make
a lot of noise.



Thought again
about running for it, but as
much as it pains me to admit,
I do need these guys.

They have my map
and supplies. They know
the way and they know
Trace and Flora.

They can get me
to you if I can just keep
being patient.

I just wish I knew
what was happening
on your end.

I keep telling
myself this stupid thing is
just blocking your thoughts
from getting through...

But...



But... what
if I'm wrong?

What if I'm talking
to no one? What if I can't
hear you because this thing
severed the link?

What if I get
it off just to find
out you're...

That you're...

Rrrraaah!
«Natani! Please!
Just say something!»



Zen?

Hey! I don't
know what you just
said, but pipe down
over there!



<Natani?
What is it?>

<I... I just
heard Zen!

He's still blocked
for some reason,
but maybe...>

Zen?



Zen, if you can hear me,
do not go to Edinmire!

Do not go!

It's not safe for
wolves right now. I mean,
more so than usual.

I'm not there, anyway.
I'm in a carriage headed
to the... uh, Legacy...

I'm headed to the
Grand Templar's place!
It's outside the city, north,
in the mountains.

Go there! Just **do
not enter Edinmire!**

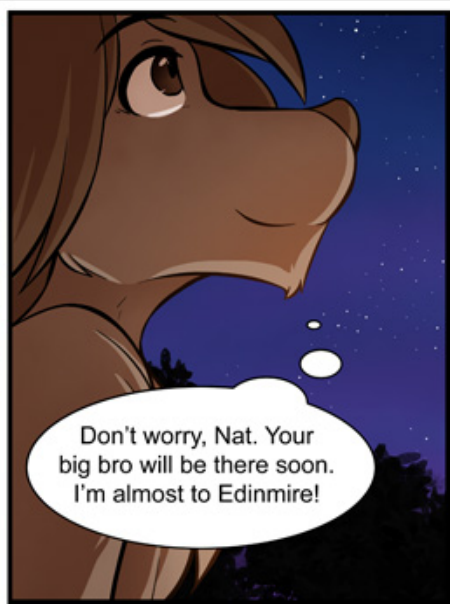


<What... did I
imagine that?

No, no! It was
Natani! I felt it, just
for a second!>



**Natani's okay!
Oh, thank you!
Gods, masks,
whatever!**



Don't worry, Nat. Your
big bro will be there soon.
I'm almost to Edinmire!



clap!
clap!

clap!
clap!

SIGH...

I can't believe
I'm stuck here on
babysitting duty.

I know someone
had to, but Edinmire's
still burning. I should
be down there!

Besides, there's
something weird going
on with these two...

If I didn't know better,
I'd think they were... no, no,
stop imagining things.



Trace, that
Brahn guy has
me worried.

The Templar know
we're here now. They might
be tied up with the wolves at
the moment, but...

You know
he's going to try
something.

I know, Flora. But
the guard still seems to
recognize my authority.

Them keeping an eye
on Natani means them also
watching out for us.



Just be
careful, Trace.

I'm not going to let
them take you away
from me again.

Heh.
Don't worry.

I have no
intention of leaving
your side.



Ah, jeez!
Uh...

O-oh! Looks like we're
coming up on the estate!
Thank the gods....



We are? But
I don't see any—
...woah.



UH... FLORA?
EVERYTHING OKAY?

SIGH...
FINE, DEER.

UH-HUH. I NOTICE
YOU HAVEN'T TRIED PUTTING
THE **ENCHANTED MISTLETOE**
UP AGAIN THIS YEAR.



HPHM.

CURSED MISTLETOE
IS MORE LIKE IT.



MEH, I GIVE UP.

IT'S JUST GOING
TO BACKFIRE AGAIN LIKE
IT DOES EVERY YEAR.

BESIDES, I THINK
I'VE LEARNED MY LESSON.
MAGICALLY INDUCED KISSES
NEVER END WELL.

MORE LIKE THEY
ALWAYS END ON
YOUR 'END', EH?

I WILL
BITE YOU.

SHAME, THOUGH.

THERE WAS AT
LEAST **ONE** COUPLE I
WAS HOPING YOU'D TRY
IT ON THIS YEAR.

OH? WHO'S
THAT?



HM?

WELL... MAYBE
IT DOESN'T **ALWAYS**
GET IT WRONG.

The Legacy Estate

That's the estate?!

Yes? I mean, technically the land is part of it too, but that's the main house.

House?
That thing is a castle!

Why in the world did I need a place that big just for me?

I... wouldn't presume to know, sir. Though, I have heard you would often host guests of... unusual size.

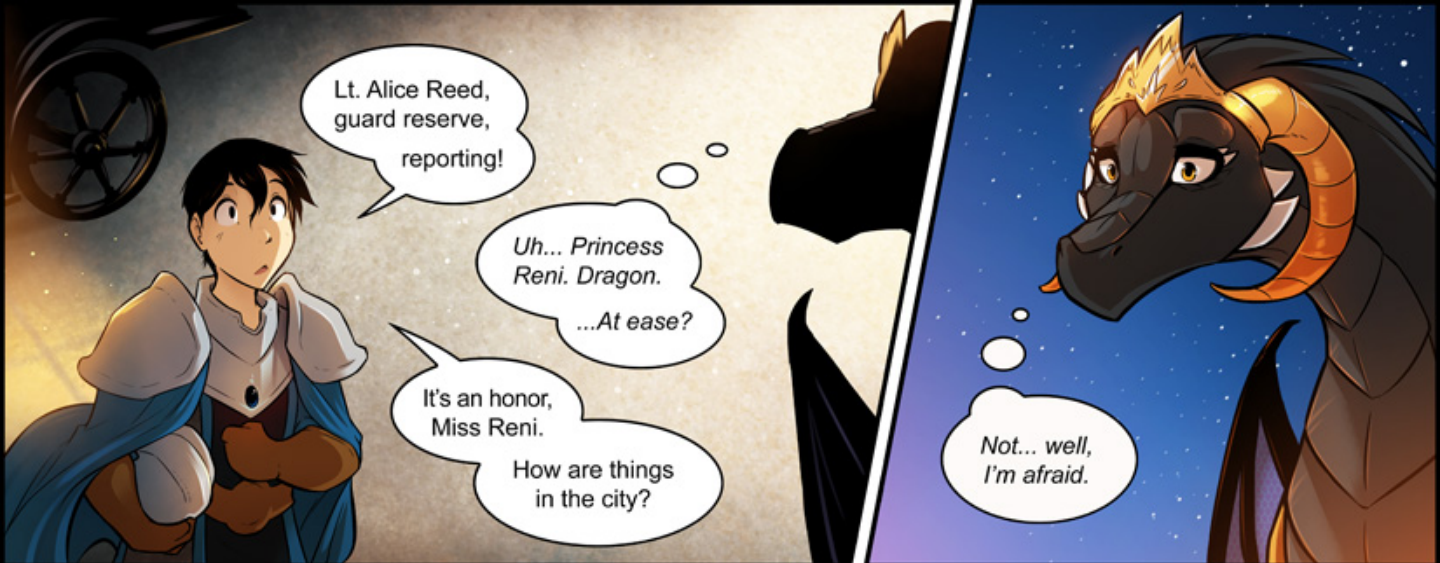
Oh!
Speaking of, there's Reni now. I suppose she must have flown ahead to meet... with...

slurp

...uh...

Sir Templar, Guardswoman! Greetings!

I - I was just... waiting for you!



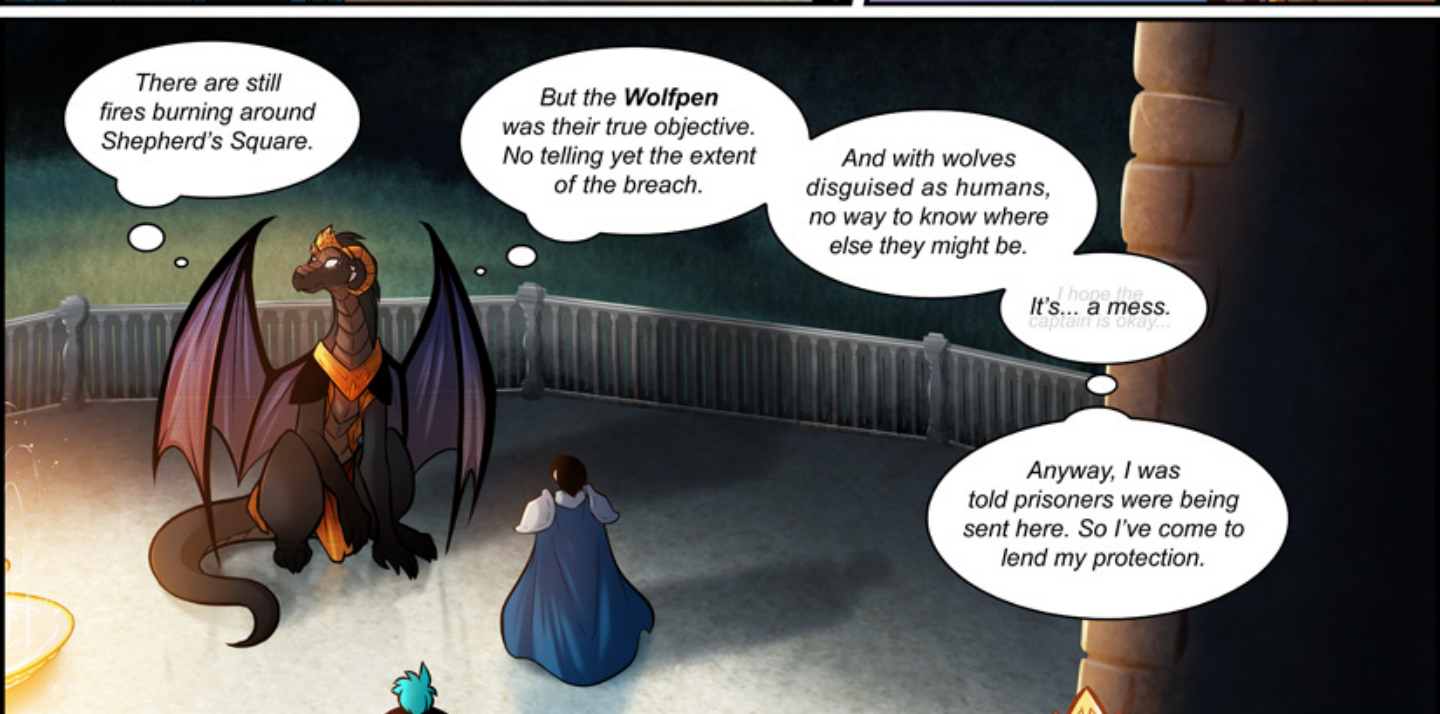
Lt. Alice Reed,
guard reserve,
reporting!

Uh... Princess
Reni. Dragon.
...At ease?

It's an honor,
Miss Reni.

How are things
in the city?

Not... well,
I'm afraid.



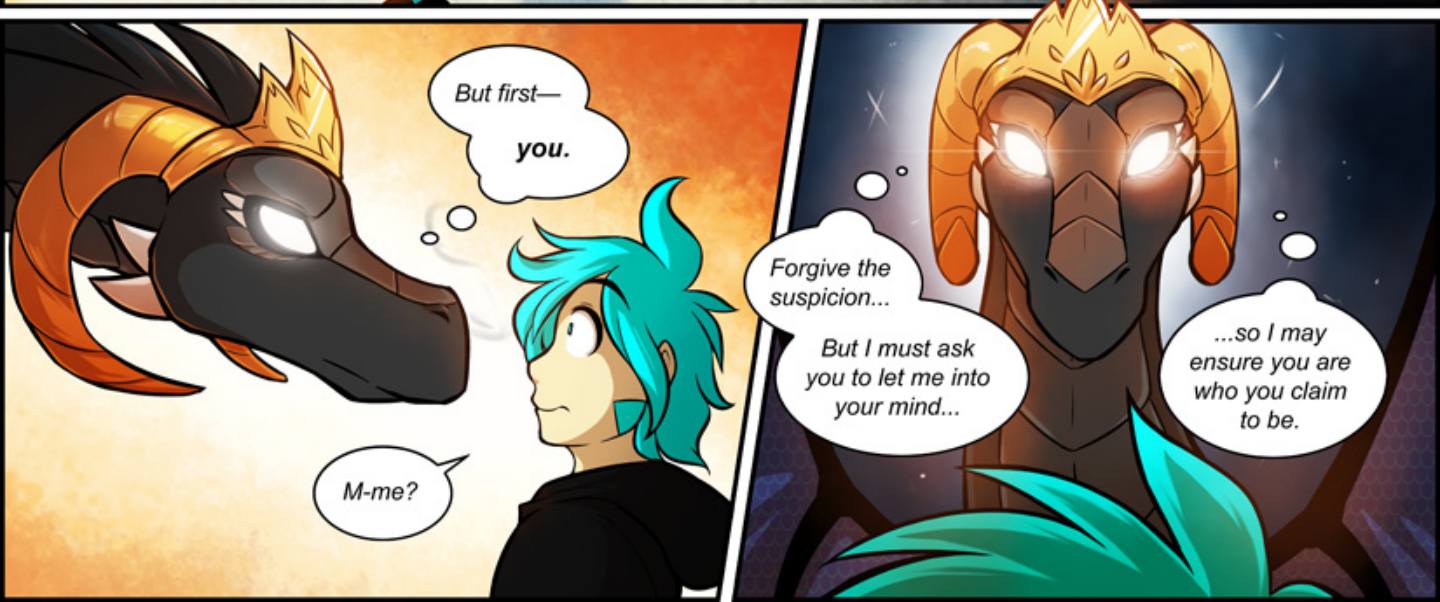
There are still
fires burning around
Shepherd's Square.

But the **Wolfpen**
was their true objective.
No telling yet the extent
of the breach.

And with wolves
disguised as humans,
no way to know where
else they might be.

I hope the
It's... a mess.
captain is okay...

Anyway, I was
told prisoners were being
sent here. So I've come to
lend my protection.



But first—
you.

M-me?

Forgive the
suspicion...

But I must ask
you to let me into
your mind...

...so I may
ensure you are
who you claim
to be.

Wait, this isn't right. Why is...? Oh. I see. Your memories were lost! This explains a great deal.

Where...
am I?

I'm a
Basitin!
She's
Keidran

You've
been through
a lot.

Still, I sense
there's something
you're trying to hide.
Whatever it is, I ask
you **show me!**

Mrreow~!
Trace!

...Oh.
Oh dear!

Ah!

No no no!
Nevermind! Next!

Sorry! That... I-I
didn't think you... with
a Keidran?! Oh, my...

O-okay, now-
wait! ...Nora?

I cannot say
for certain how
long this sleep
of mine will-

Grraaalr!

Ma'am? Are
you alright?

You know,
young one, it's
rude to pry.

Huh?



Ehem.
I apologize.

Grrarg...



It seems you
are indeed who you
claim to be.

Though the
circumstances are not
quite expected.

Nevertheless, if
Lady Nora vouches for
you, then that is good
enough for me.

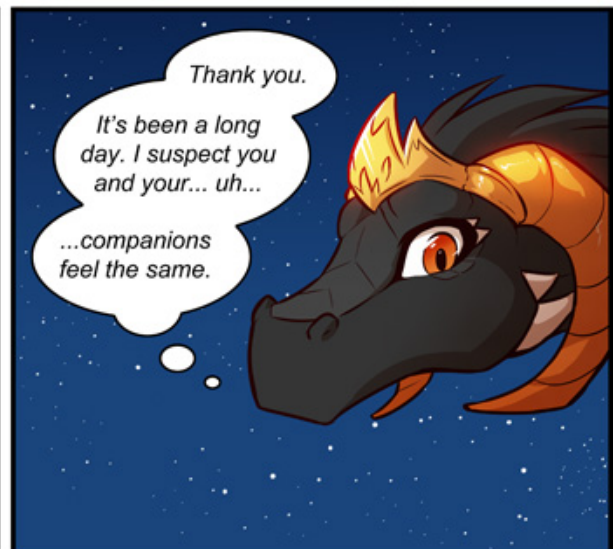


If you wish, I can
try to fill you in later on
anything you need.

But for now...

May I please have
your permission to rest
here in your home for
the time being?

Oh, uh...
sure, I guess.



Thank you.

It's been a long
day. I suspect you
and your... uh...

...companions
feel the same.



Ah, speaking
of which...

It looks like the
rest of them have
finally arrived.

I suggest
we take this
inside.

Well, this place
sure beats the pants
off my manor.

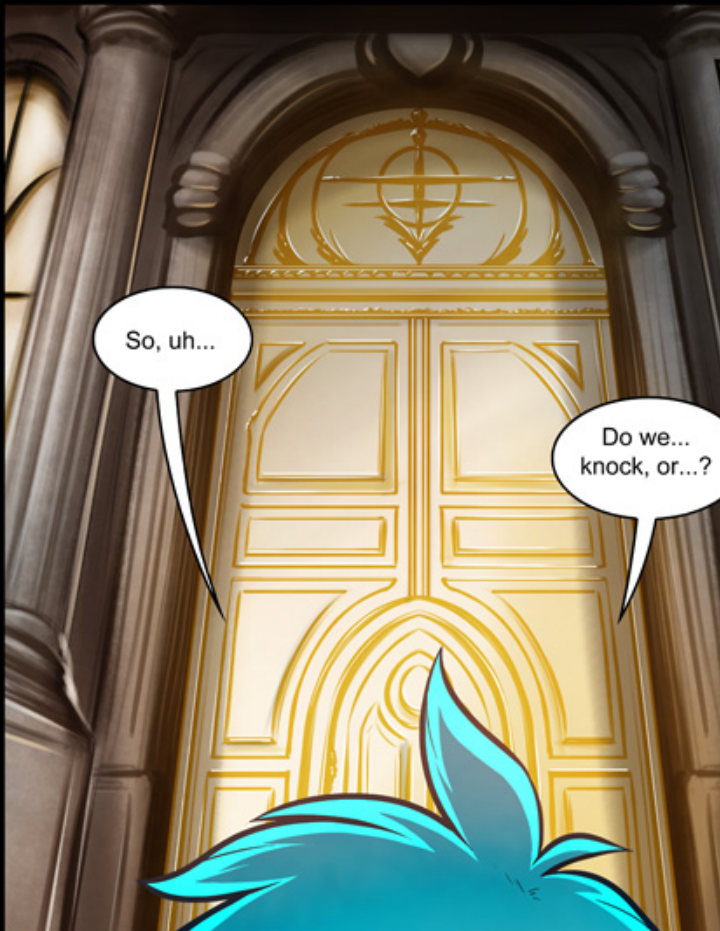
Erg... kinda
regret saving this
stuff now.



<Guess
this is it. Hm.

Not a bad place to
get imprisoned.>

<Oh, great,
another giant
lizard.>



So, uh...

Do we...
knock, or...?

CLUNK!
CREEEEEEK!



Ah, master. I see
you've finally returned...
quite a lot later than
scheduled.
I'd heard you'd died.
What a shame.

It's a
wolf!



Guardswoman, if
you find *me* threatening,
I **weep** for Edinmire.

Ah'm Rose— er, I am
Roselyn, the seneschal
of this residence.

All domestic
wolves were
relocated!

How is it you
were not taken with
the other wolves?!

If your guards
think they could take me
from *this* place, I would be
very impressed.



Well, come in,
it's cold out there.
I'll make tea.



This entrance is huge!

As I said, dragon-sized.

It's been a fad among nobles to be able to host such guests, no matter how unlikely that is.

...Though in your case, I suppose it's more legitimate.



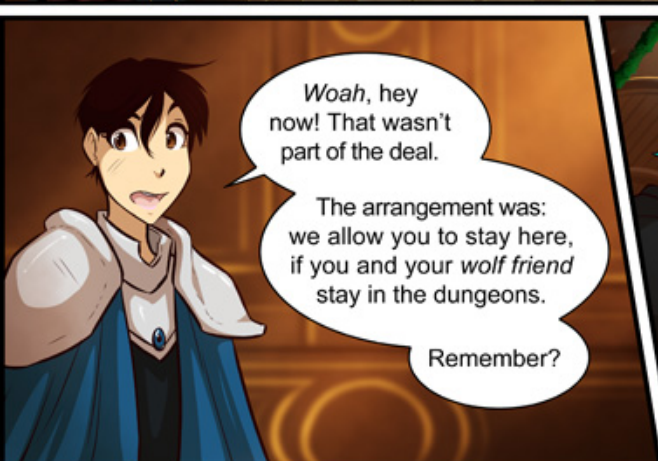
It's one fad I actually **do** appreciate.

I can't even count the number of times I've hit my head on a door frame.



...Seven.

Well, should be plenty of guest rooms. After today, I'm exhausted.



Woah, hey now! That wasn't part of the deal.

The arrangement was: we allow you to stay here, if you and your wolf friend stay in the dungeons.

Remember?



No one is going in the dungeons.

This is my house (apparently) and therefore they are my guests.

But Captain Keiren said—!



Ms. Reed, it's okay.

I know for a fact now they have no connection to the city attacks.

And I can keep my eyes on everyone regardless of where they are.



Though you are mistaken, Trace.

The dungeons here will still see use.



plop!

The wolf from before!

It's alive?

Yes, I made sure of it.

Once he is secured, I hope to learn more about what's behind this attack.