

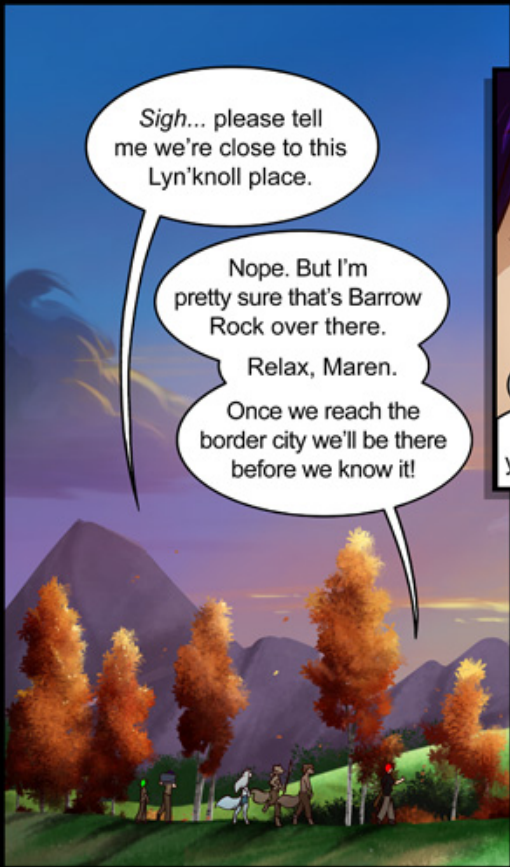
# TWOKINDS

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.

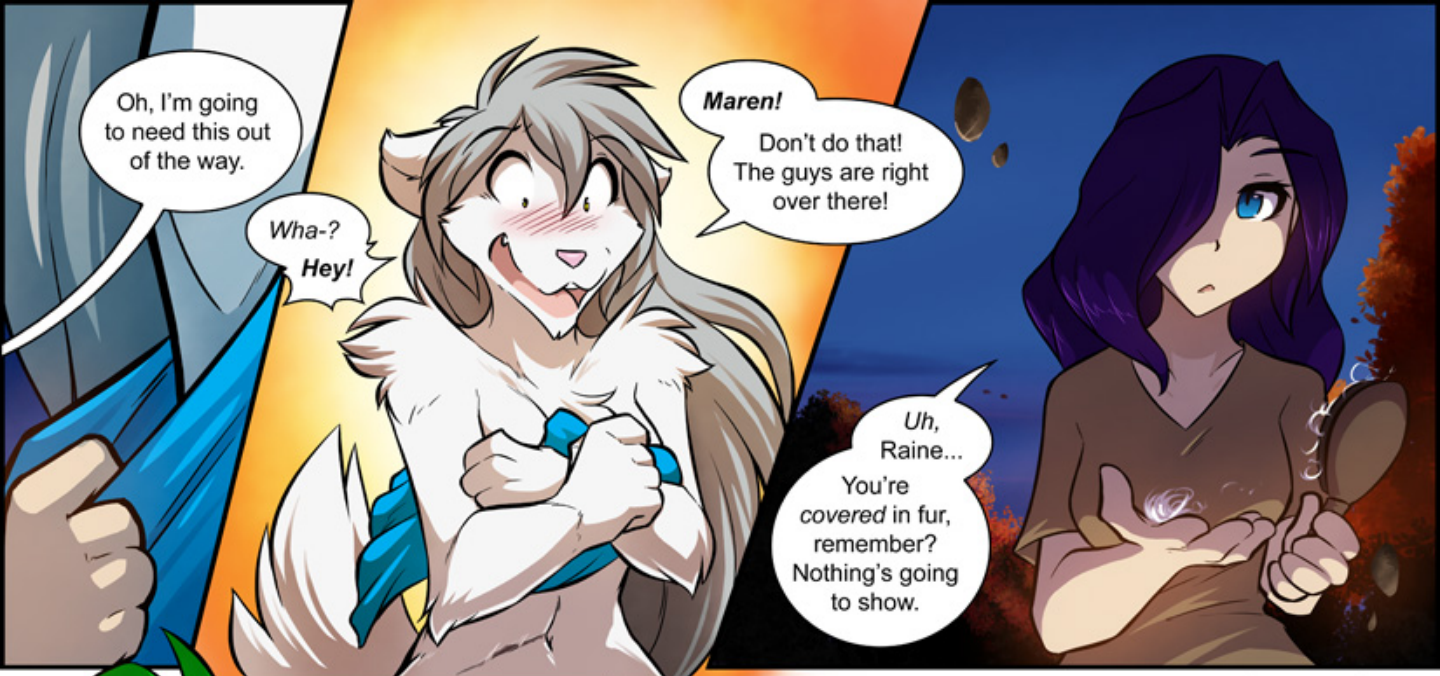
You know you love it!

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?



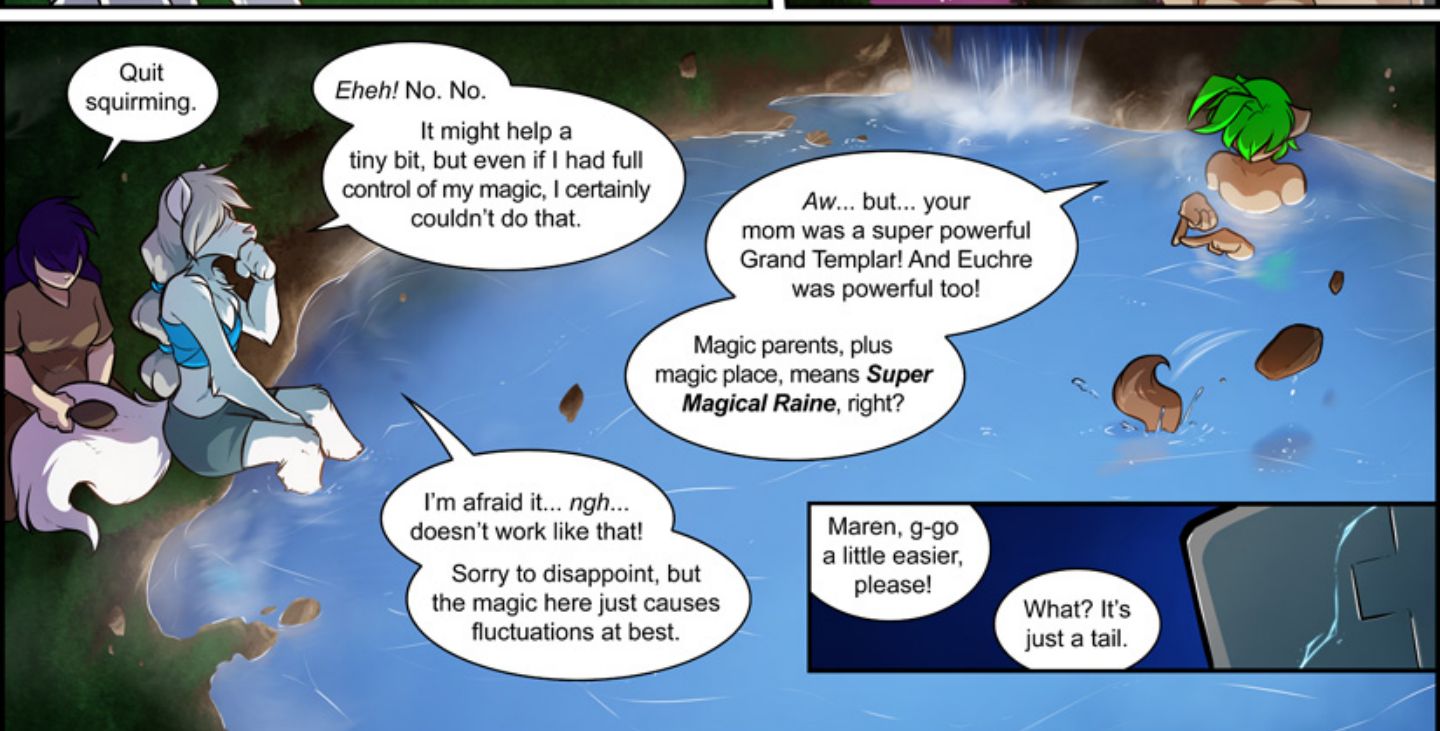
On me too, technically.

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.

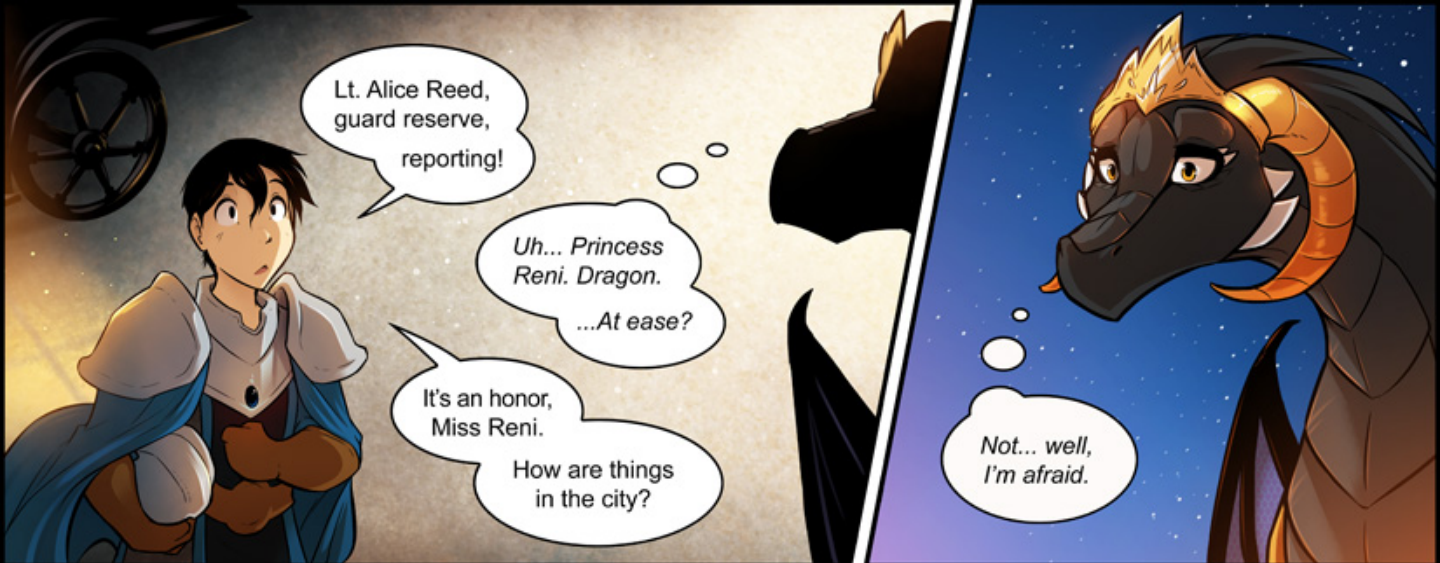
Oh!  
Speaking of, there's Reni now. I suppose she must have flown ahead to meet... with...

...uh...

Sir Templar, Guardswoman! Greetings!

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





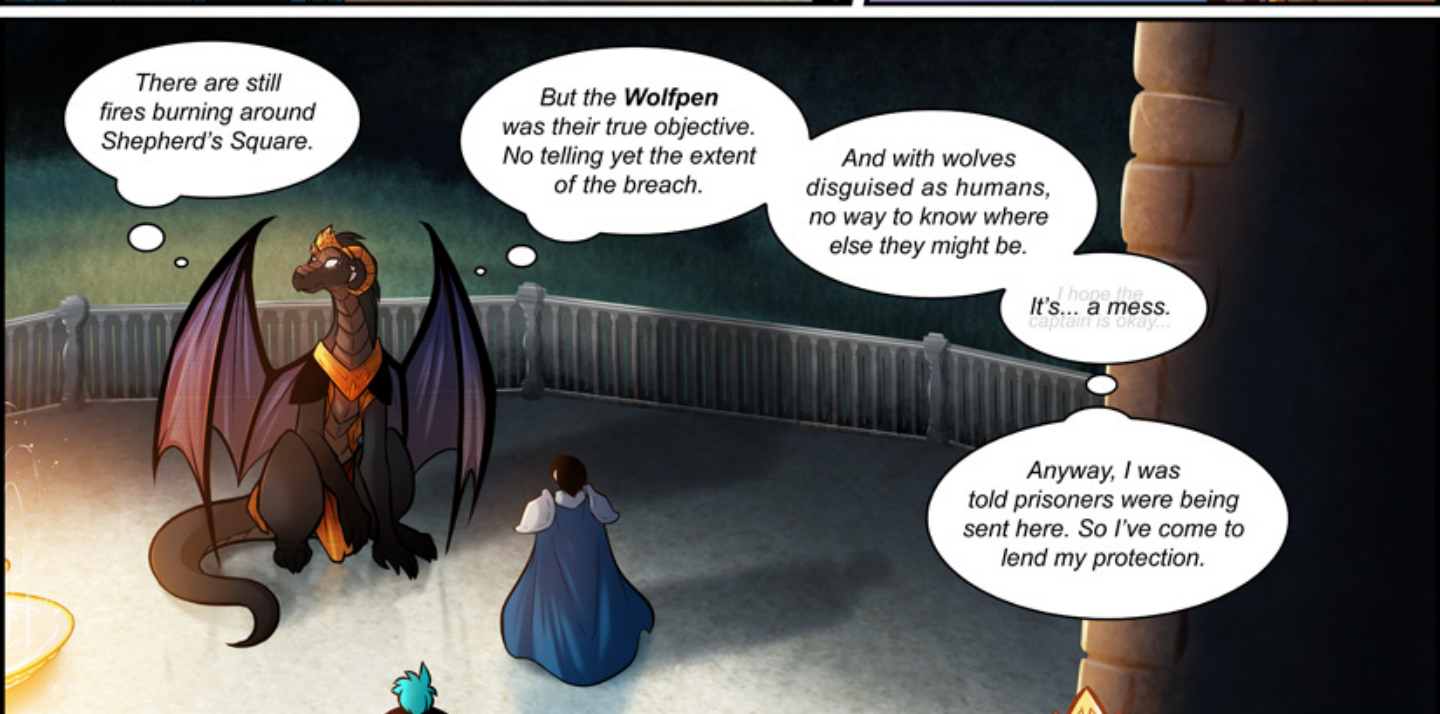
Lt. Alice Reed,  
guard reserve,  
reporting!

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

It's an honor,  
Miss Reni.

How are things  
in the city?

Not... well,  
I'm afraid.



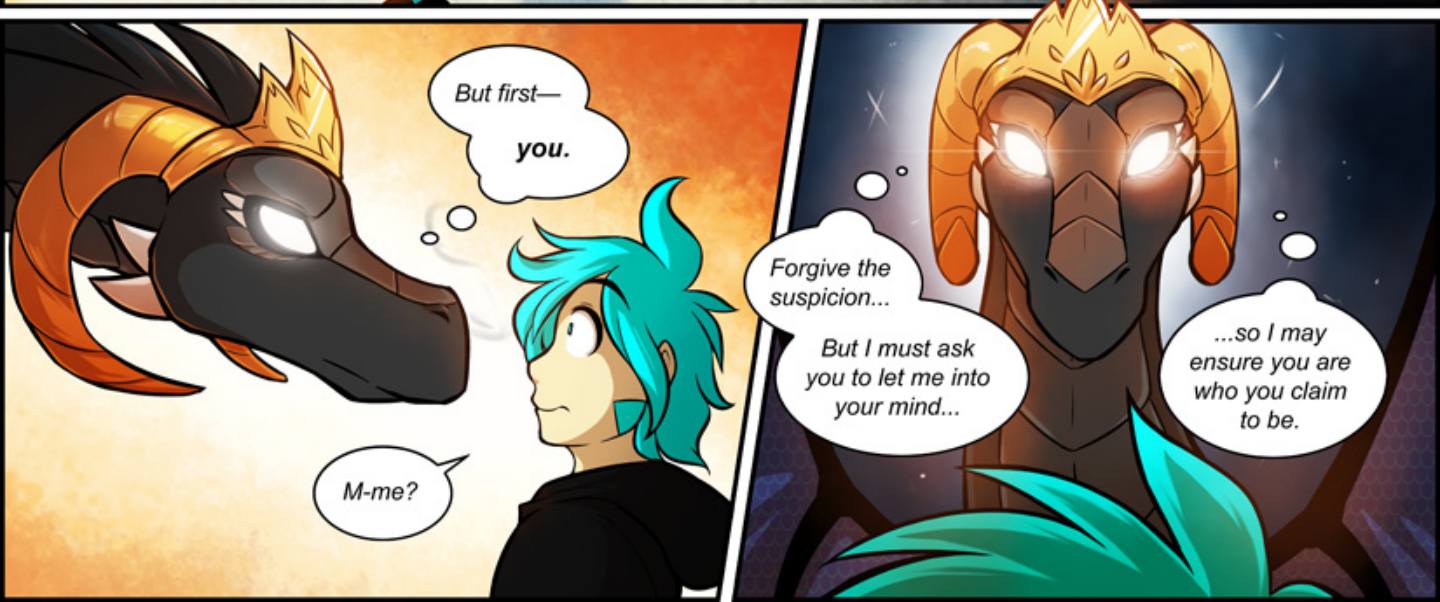
There are still  
fires burning around  
Shepherd's Square.

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.

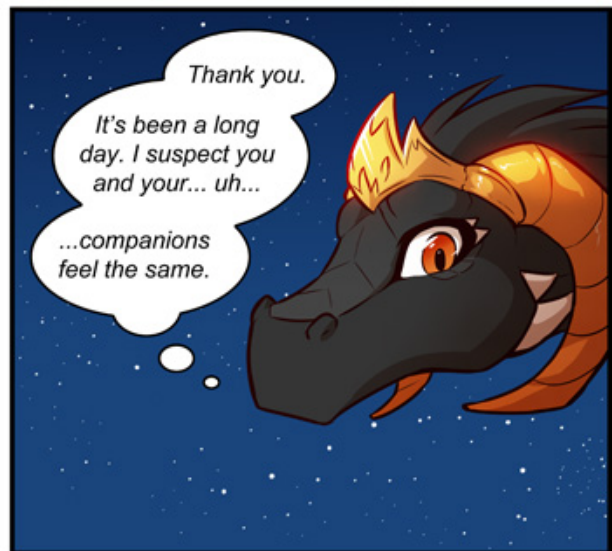


If you wish, I can  
try to fill you in later on  
anything you need.

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.

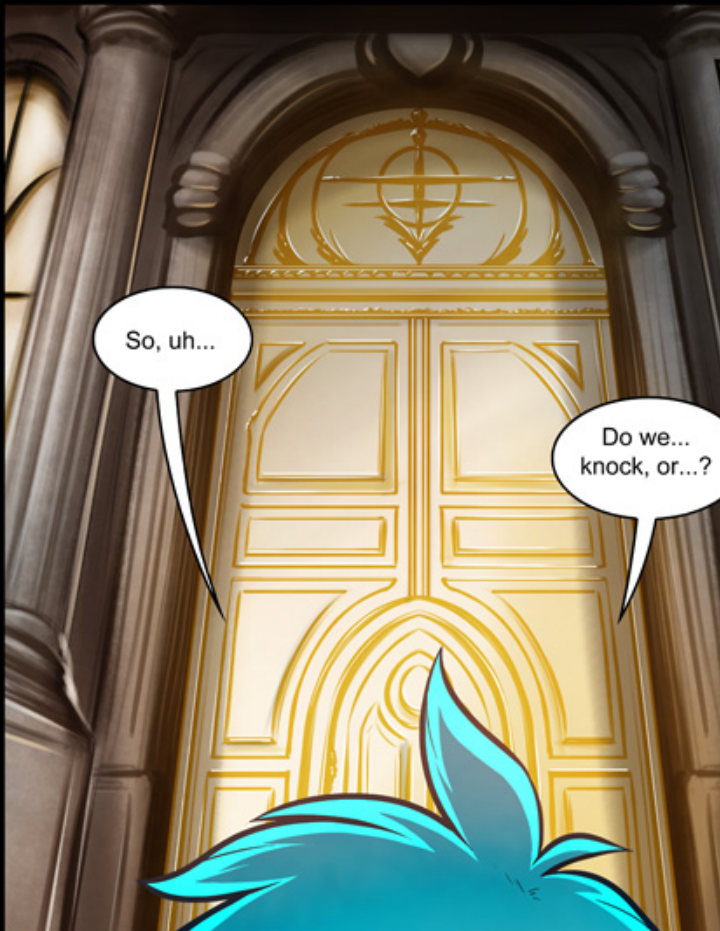


<Guess  
this is it. Hm.

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.



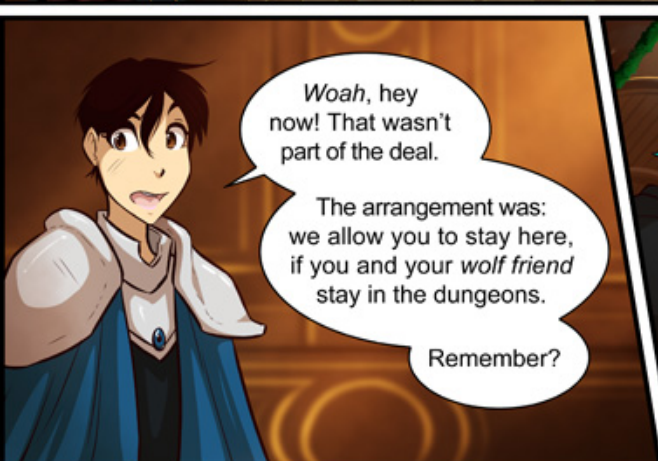
It's one fad I actually **do** appreciate.

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!

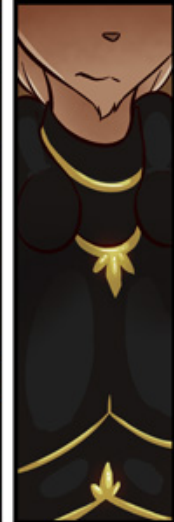
The wolf from before!

It's alive?

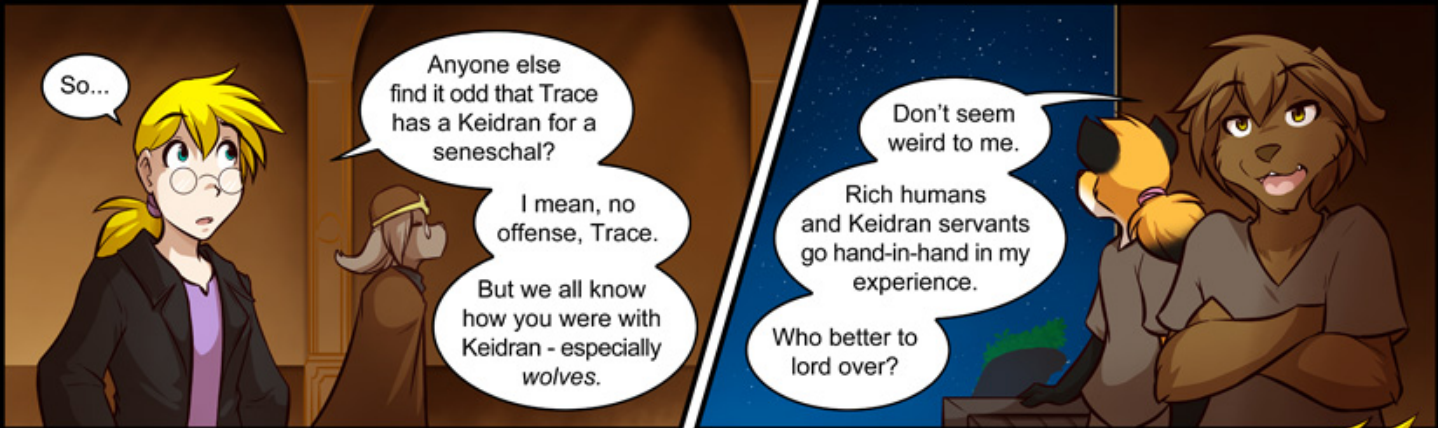
Yes, I made sure of it.

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

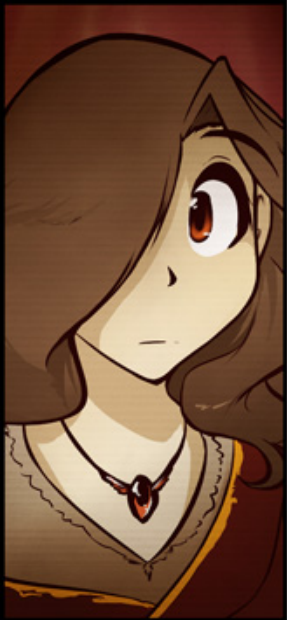








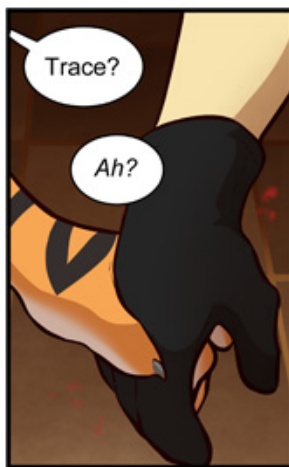




Ngh...



Damn them.



Trace?

Ah?



Are you okay?  
More memories?

Eh, no, just...  
emotions this time.  
I'm alright.

Are you  
sure?



Yeah. With  
you I am, Flora.

Though, maybe  
we should skip the tea.  
I'd like to lie down.

Uh.... very  
well, master.

Your bedroom  
is prepared as  
always.



<Man... so  
much gold.

I'm really  
tempted to pocket  
some of this stuff.>

<...Huh. Snow  
wolves usually all look  
the same to me, but the  
one in this painting looks  
oddly... familiar.>



On second  
thought, maybe  
I shouldn't.

<You two  
know each  
other?>

Uh, erm...  
<It's nothing.

Snow wolves and  
forest wolves just don't  
get along, is all.>





The Legacy Estate has never hosted quite such a... **diverse** group of guests before.

I am aware Basitins in particular have requirements when it comes to sleeping arrangements.

But I assure you, there's plenty of space.

We have two wings on this floor, so male Basitins may take one separately if they so desire.



Distribute yourselves as you see fit.

Please note, the third floor is off limits.



<Hey! Hear that?

Looks like we're **finally** staying somewhere where you two won't have to share the same room!>



<Or even the same wing!>

<Oh... Great.>

<Y-yeah. Good. Finally.>



<B-but you know, after what happened with Natani...>

<Oh, yeah! I'm not nearly 100% yet...>

<Just to be safe, I should *prooobably* be nearby...>

<Yes! Safety!>

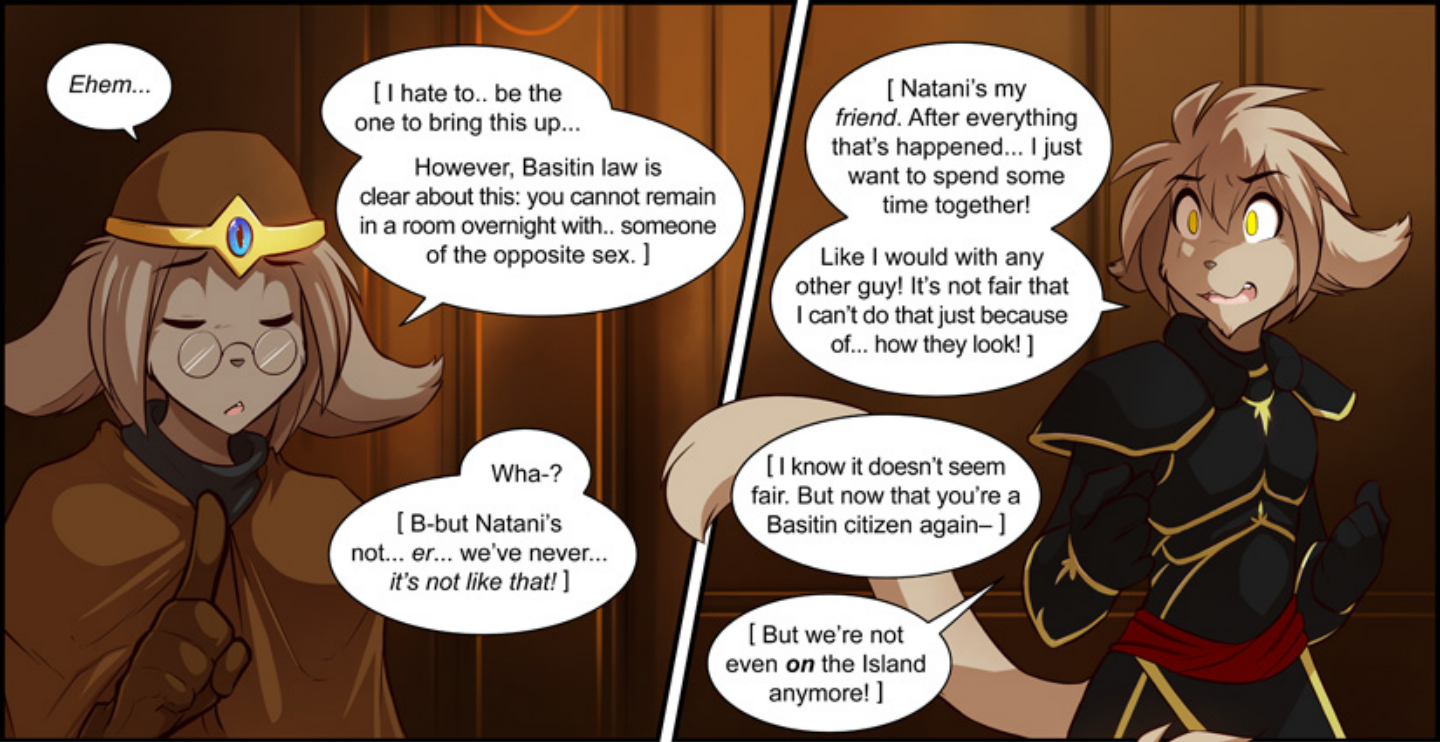


...Okay.

<We have adjoining rooms in the east wing, if... that's what you desire.

Feel free to call for me if you need anything else. Otherwise, good night.>





Ehem...

[ I hate to.. be the one to bring this up...

However, Basitin law is clear about this: you cannot remain in a room overnight with.. someone of the opposite sex. ]

Wha-?

[ B-but Natani's not... er... we've never... it's not like that! ]

[ Natani's my friend. After everything that's happened... I just want to spend some time together!

Like I would with any other guy! It's not fair that I can't do that just because of... how they look! ]

[ I know it doesn't seem fair. But now that you're a Basitin citizen again- ]

[ But we're not even **on** the Island anymore! ]



[ Yes. But nevertheless, you **are** our Ambassador.

You, more than anyone, represent our people to the world. ]

[ I never asked to be that! The Basitins on the island don't even want me to be that! ]



[ Unfortunately, for many, what we are is not a choice we make.

We're stuck with the cards life has dealt us. ]

[ Well I'm sticking with **Natani**. ]

?

[ Besides, like Roselyn said, it's an adjoining room.

Technically two rooms. So no laws are going to be broken tonight. ]

[ Of course, sir. ...If you say so. ]





Meanwhile...

Mwahaha...

S-squee?



Eek!

Ah! Sythe!  
Your pet squirrel  
is so cute!  
I could just  
eat her up!

Eek!!



Ew! Karen,  
put that thing down!  
You don't know where  
it's been!

Honestly, where  
did that thing even come  
from, anyway?

No normal squirrel  
hangs around a bunch  
of predators. It **must**  
be diseased.

Right,  
Raine?



Snnrx-!  
Huh? Wha-?

Oh. I dunno.  
I think we'd notice  
by now if it was.

**YAWN!**

She was probably  
someone's pet, maybe.

Although... hm... I've read  
that baby dragons shapeshift  
into other creatures in order to  
experience the world.



**PADDLE!**  
**PADDLE!**

Dragon?



Is that it, Nibs? Are  
you actually a fierce,  
fire-breathing dragon  
under that fur?!



**BOOP!**

Well, if it's true,  
at least she's a  
friendly dragon!

Euck!

Whatever it is,  
just keep it away  
from me.





Some time later...

Raine! Hurry,  
come quick!

Something's  
happening with  
Mrs Nibby!

I think you  
were right!

Ooo! I wanna  
see too!

Come on,  
dragon!

I knew Nibs  
was special!  
I wonder what  
she'll look like?

She's... she's a...

POOF

AAAAHHH!

Change  
back!

Change  
back!

What is it?!

Happy April Fools!





Aaand...  
done.

I wish I had the  
rest of my old grooming  
kit. I'd like to be able to  
do your nails too.

I have to admit,  
this was... fun.

It brings me back to  
the days when I wanted  
to be a groomer.



At least until...  
well, with a name like  
Taverndatter, I didn't have  
much ch- h-hey!

Ngh...

Raine!

Aw, poor girl.

Us wolves need less  
sleep than humans, but once  
we're out, we're out.

I think  
she's got the  
right idea.

I'm headed  
to bed too.  
Later, sis.

As am I. Looks  
like you've been  
volunteered first  
watch, Maren.



Wha- hey, wait!  
Give me a hand with  
her, I'm pinned here!  
She weighs a ton!

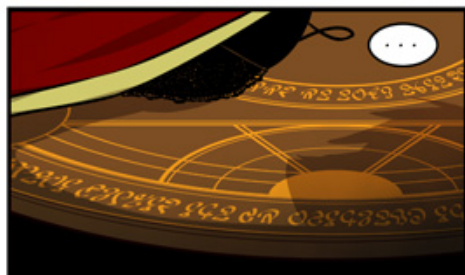
Guys?! This  
isn't funny!

Eep-! Raine!  
No nuzzling!

























<Alright, alright! Now I know you're pulling my tail! Cut it out!>

<No, really! It's not that big of a deal!>

<They are!>

<Pff! Hey! I just figured I'd offer, ya know, from one guy to another.>

But fine, suit yourself!>



<...Wait, were you really being serious?>



<Eh... maybe?>

I mean, if they were on you, I'd hope you'd be willing to do the same for me.

Anyway, whatever. I'm gunna get the lights and rest my eyes for a bit, if you don't mind.>

<Now, for my excellent Human... Ehem!>

Ruum! Laights aut!



*Fwoosh*

<Hah! It worked!>



<Oh, okay. Well...>

I haven't slept much this last week, so I'm pretty beat too.>



<I guess it's about time I - erk!>



<Keith, I wasn't saying "get out".>

Let's be honest. We both know we were lying about the twin-bedroom thing.

Come on. How about for once we actually share a bed on purpose?>



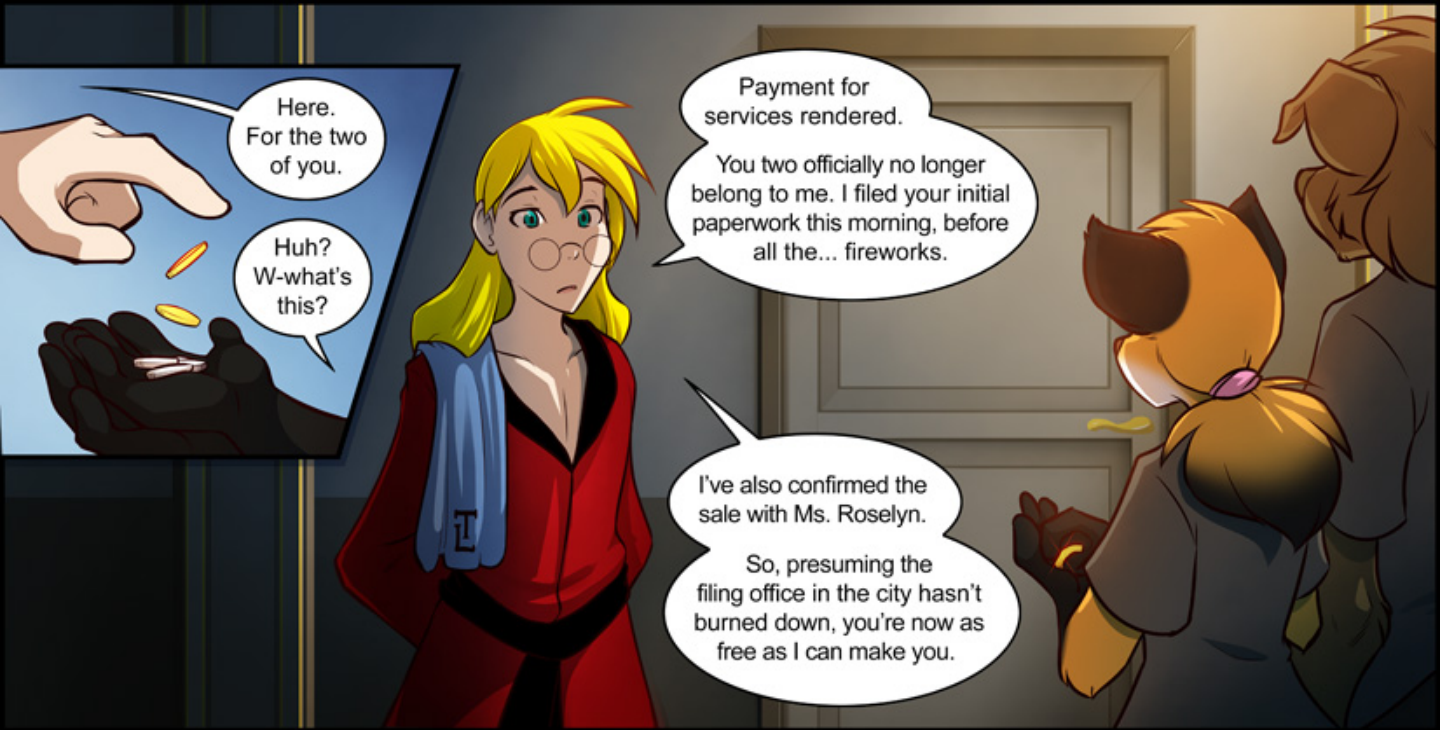
<Alright, if you insist.>

...  
<Also you're cute.>

<Huh?>

<N-nothing!>





Here.  
For the two  
of you.

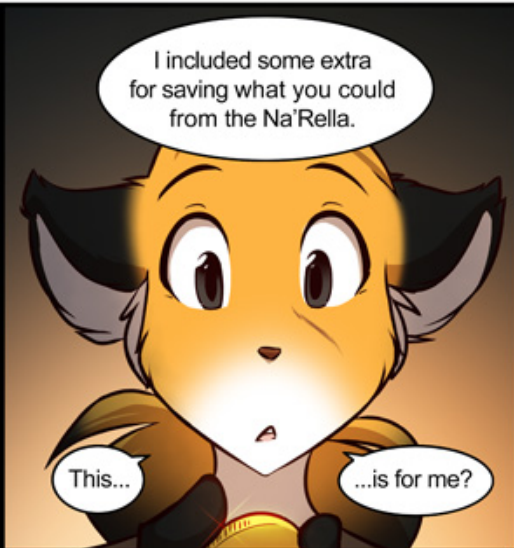
Huh?  
W-what's  
this?

Payment for  
services rendered.

You two officially no longer  
belong to me. I filed your initial  
paperwork this morning, before  
all the... fireworks.

I've also confirmed the  
sale with Ms. Roselyn.

So, presuming the  
filing office in the city hasn't  
burned down, you're now as  
free as I can make you.



I included some extra  
for saving what you could  
from the Na'Rella.

This...

...is for me?



Well... wow, uh...  
thanks, I guess.

And... thanks for  
defending us on the  
docks, as well.

For what it's  
worth, I'm sorry your ship  
went down like that.



It's alright.

It's no small loss, but  
it's certainly not going to affect  
me as much as it will for some  
from this attack.

*Sigh*

I am sorry as well, for  
putting the collar on you. I knew  
what those things did but I used  
them anyway, and I regret it.

To be honest, this whole  
"vacation" has given me  
a lot to think about...

In any case,  
good luck to the two  
of you, wherever you're  
headed from here.



Meanwhile...

...This must be where we're staying.

I guess this used to be my bedroom? It's actually more... normal than I imagined.

Yeah! Knowing how you used to be, I half expected... I dunno, Keidran-skinned rugs or something?

I guess even evil-you liked to sleep in comfort.  
Still, feels weird being here.

I know. Like invading someone else's bedroom.

Not only that, I think I recognize this place now.

Yeah, I can see the lights of Edinmire way down there.

If it were daytime, I bet I could see the hill on my old farm, too.

My owner had me on a loose leash, so it's where I spent a lot of my time.

At night, I would see the lights on the mountainside and wonder who lived up there.

It's weird to think that was only a couple summers ago.

I was just a little farm cat.

And back then, to me you were just this nebulous thing... the scary guy other Keidran would sometimes whisper about.

And now here I am, just casually resting in the master bedroom like I own the place... on what turned out to be your estate. It's crazy!

You mean our estate.

Yeah, our-- wait... my...?

Gah! Not helping, Trace!



Trace, while the kitten in me is giddy at the idea of actually getting to live in this piece of my childhood...

You do remember this is just a rest stop for us, right?

To be honest, I was afraid just being here might reawaken that... you know, *other side* of you.

So I admit, things are going better than I expected, wolf attack aside. But...

**Lyn'knoll** is still the ultimate goal.



I know, I know.

But it seems like we may be stuck here for a little while.

At least until things calm down enough to get resupplied.

So why not enjoy it while we have it?

This place seems safe.

The Templar are distracted, and the town guard seem to still consider me in authority...

There's even a **dragon** watching over us.



And while I'm not sure how much we can trust Reni, she seems... nice enough.

So what do you say... *Duchess Flora Legacy*?

Duchess... Legacy?



**Gah! Bad Trace!** I never should have told you about that spot!

I knew this place would bring out your evil side!

Hey, I'm innocent! I just wanted to help you relax, honest!



Pff! Sure! Well, it's working.







Man, I can't see anything from here.  
Do you think that really was Trace?

Dunno.



It had to be, right? They let him in.

But the rumors were he died! And Seer Brahn was heard calling himself Grand Templar.

What gives? Do you think it's a coup?

Maybe.



Heh, sorry.

Thanks for indulging me with this, Landen. I know I can get a little Templar-crazy sometimes.

Yup.

Say, in all the commotion, we never did get paid by those Basitin guys.

You think they were serious about hiring us?

Probably not.



Yeah, I guess we did kinda mug them first.

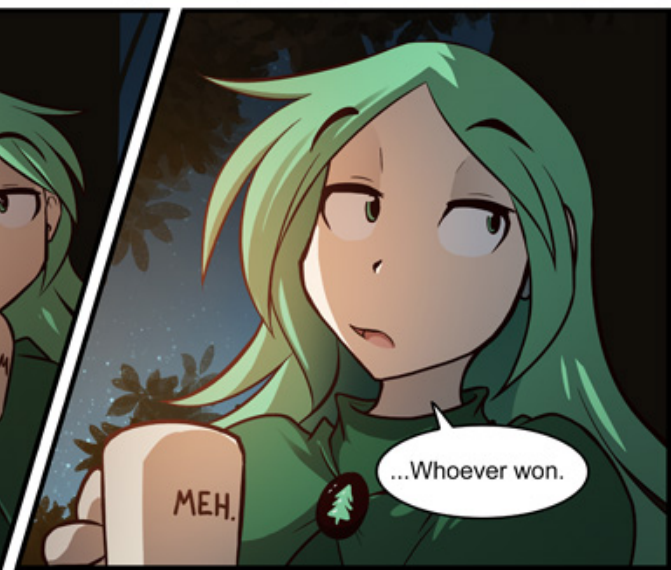
It's a shame. One of them was kinda cute.



Hey, Landy?

If Trace has come back to reclaim his position, what does that mean for the rest of the Templar order?

If it came down to it, who would everyone side with?



...Whoever won.



The next morning...

Ngh...

Mmph...

Wow, I haven't  
slept that well in  
ages...

Huh?  
Maren?

What are  
you doing in  
my tent?

Yiiip!!

Maren! I-I'm so sorry!  
I don't even remember  
falling asleep!

Why didn't you  
just push me off?

You were  
very heavy.

And she wouldn't  
let us wake you up.

She cares more  
than she lets on.

Shut it,  
fleabag!

Whatever you  
say, ice queen.









It's over here, too!

It goes all the way around the hot spring!

What the hell's going on?



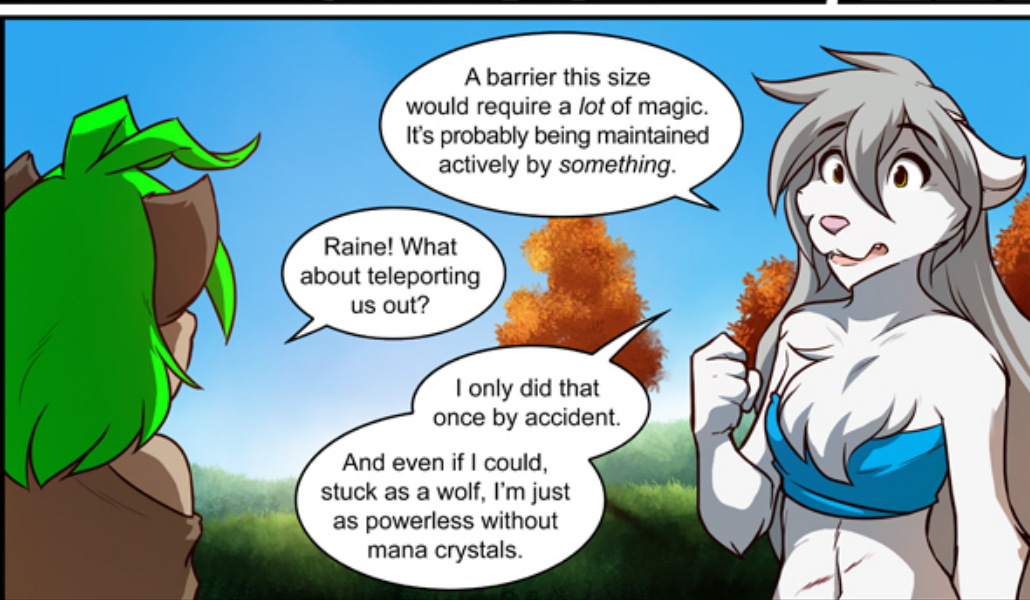
Are you trying something, wolf?!

What?! Come on!

<I'm a Keidran with no mana crystals and wearing a magic suppressor.>

Get real.

...What?



A barrier this size would require a *lot* of magic. It's probably being maintained actively by *something*.

Raine! What about teleporting us out?

I only did that once by accident.

And even if I could, stuck as a wolf, I'm just as powerless without mana crystals.



Hey! You're all forgetting someone!

Alright, stand back!



I may have flunked out of the Templar, but I still know how to blow stuff up!

Wait, you moron! Maybe we should think about thi-



Okay... maybe I should have stood back a little too. :Cough!:






Hahaha!

clap!  
clap!  
clap!

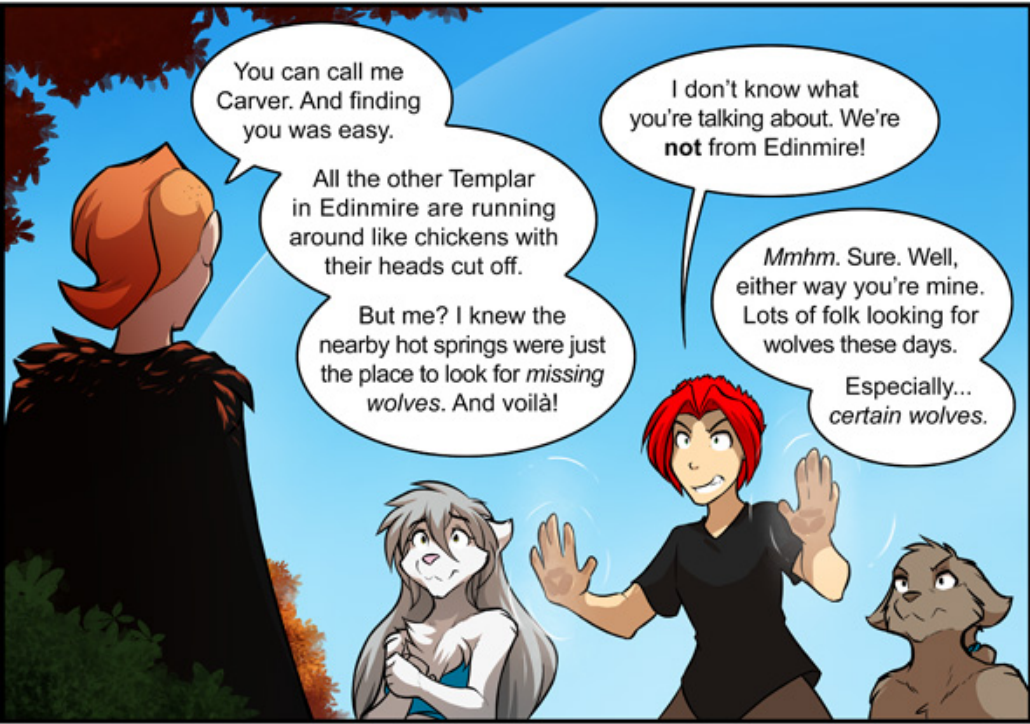
Bravo!  
Well done!

It's no wonder  
you flunked out of  
the Templar.



Not that many of  
my, er... colleagues  
are much better.

Who the hell  
are you?! How did  
you find us?



You can call me  
Carver. And finding  
you was easy.


All the other Templar  
in Edinmire are running  
around like chickens with  
their heads cut off.

But me? I knew the  
nearby hot springs were just  
the place to look for *missing*  
wolves. And voilà!

I don't know what  
you're talking about. We're  
**not** from Edinmire!


Mhmm. Sure. Well,  
either way you're mine.  
Lots of folk looking for  
wolves these days.

Especially...  
*certain* wolves.




You can't  
keep us in here  
forever!

You'll have to let  
us out eventually if you  
intend to capture us!



Nah! I'm just  
going to wait until all  
your air runs out!

Why you little—!



Honestly, at first  
I was hoping that you  
wouldn't find the barrier  
until it was too late.

But seeing the  
looks on your faces is  
so much more fun!

...Huh...





When I get out of here, I'm going to wipe that smirk off your face, you little twerp!

Hey! Quit yelling! We'll be out of air even faster!

I don't think that's likely...

Huh? What do you mean, Raine?



Something doesn't add up here... why is the bubble so big?

It would take ages for the six of us to run out of air, even without the trees.

If he really wanted to suffocate us, he could have put it *just* around our camp. But it's not.

Maybe he's just an idiot?

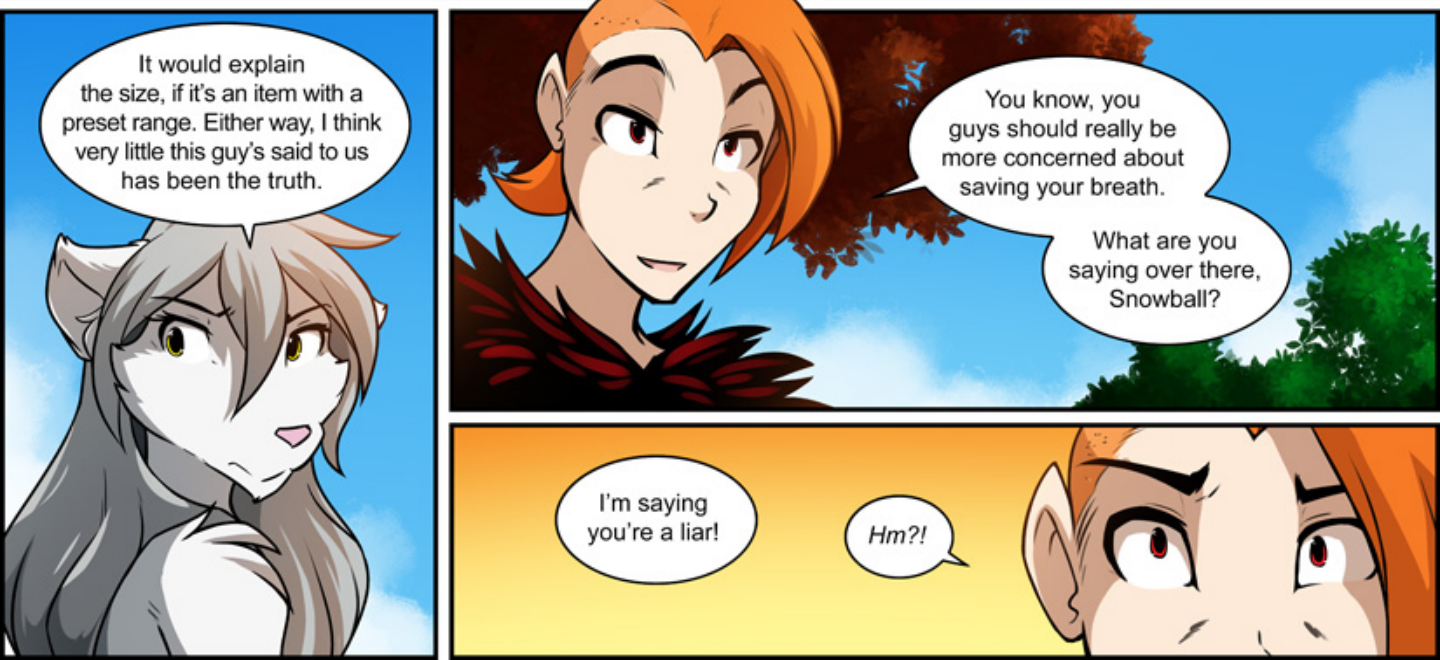
YAAAAA4444H!!

Maybe. But I think it's more likely he's trying to keep us distracted.

Like I said, a barrier this large should be a **huge** strain. But he seems fine.

So someone else is making it then?

That, or Something.



It would explain the size, if it's an item with a preset range. Either way, I think very little this guy's said to us has been the truth.

You know, you guys should really be more concerned about saving your breath.

What are you saying over there, Snowball?

I'm saying you're a liar!

Hm?!





You've been lying to us this whole time.

In fact, I know you're not a real Templar at all!



Oh? Now **that's** a bold claim. Why would you say that?



Because I've been able to see the **real** you since you first appeared!

Huh?!



It's a trick I've seen before – an illusion spell.

Isn't that right... **fox**?

Which makes me think you didn't just find us by coincidence.

Huh...



Well, shoot. To see through *my* magic... *hm*. What an unusual girl. The boss might be interested in you.



So you were a Keidran all along? Damn it, again! I should have known!

Why are you really after us?!

Pfff!

I don't care about **you** at all. Like I said, I'm hunting for wolves. Certain wolves.



Wolves like... **you**.


Wha-?! Why me?



Let's just say, you left a lot of loose ends back at the guild.

And the person I work for has been very eager to get their hands on **you** again.





YOU'D THINK YOU  
WOULD HAVE LEARNED  
FROM LAST TIME TO ADD  
SOME AIR HOLES.

QUIET YOU.  
'LEAST I DIDN'T  
SIT ON IT THIS TIME...

BLARG...

HAPPY  
30<sup>TH</sup>  
TOM



Back at the Legacy Estate...

YAWN!

Ah~ It's nice to have some fresh clothes again. Ones that don't smell like seawater.

...And aren't **completely covered in tiger fur!**

Thttbt!

Love you too, Trace. I'll make sure it spreads to those soon enough!

Though I admit I have been shedding quite a lot lately.

Not sure if it's stress, the baby, or just my winter coat coming in.

Either way, I could use a bath. And maybe a nice grooming.

I'm sure both of those things can be arranged.

We can ask that seneschal wolf.

After breakfast, of course!

Oh, speaking of Roselyn, are we still going to try and keep... *us* a secret?

I don't think there's much point. The dragon knows.

And if Roselyn hasn't guessed already, I'm sure she will soon enough.

True. We spent the night in the same room and we're covered in each other's scents.

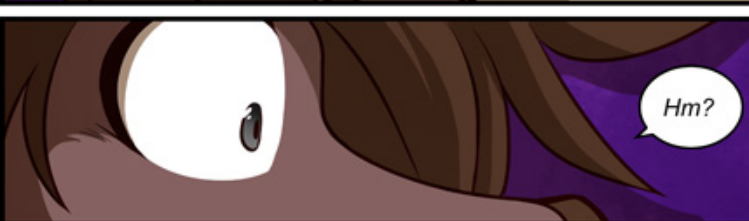
It's pretty obvious. Still, probably shouldn't mention the *baby*.

I doubt she'd even believe it, but just in case, it's best if Rose doesn't end up putting it together.

Putting what together?

MRRREOW!!!

















What's the matter, Reni?



Oh... I'm not much of a morning dragon.

Since dawn, I've been in the dungeon trying to get information out of the wolf we captured.

Is that coffee? Oh, bless you, ma'am!



Why don't you just read his mind like you did me?



That's what I've been doing. It's all I can do, since he's still yet to regain consciousness.

I've managed to see how they infiltrated the city, and when they planned their attack.

So far, from what I can tell, the wolf we have now was just a pawn in all this.

What's been so aggravating is trying to find who his boss is. Who's really behind the attack?



The wolf didn't know?

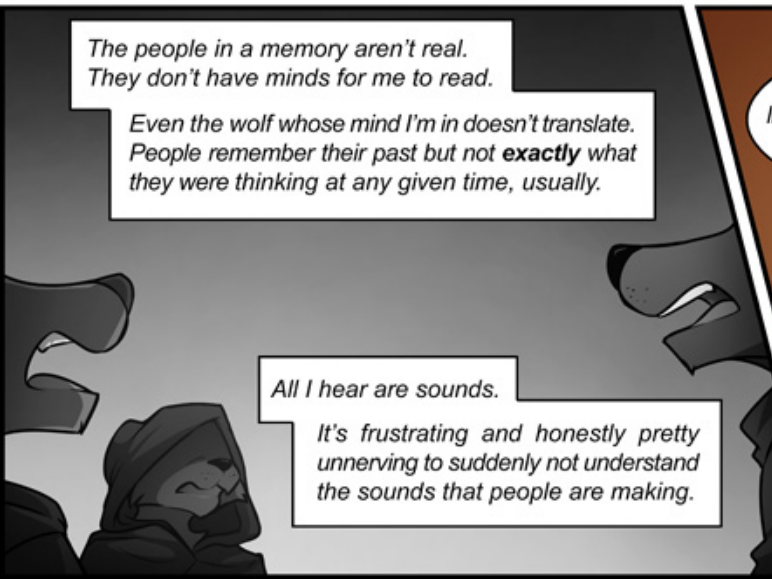
W-well... that's just it, I'm not sure. I can see anything he's experienced, but the problem is...

Well... it's a little embarrassing to admit, but...

I, uh...

I don't understand Keidran.







"Clovis"?

Who the hell is that?  
Another assassin?

<He's the only guy I can  
think of who might have sent  
this little twit after me.

But no. Clovis isn't an  
assassin. He's worse.>

Worse than an  
assassin? What's  
worse than that?

In *human*,  
please!

A rich asshole!  
One I ..erm.. used to  
<owe money> to.

He's... well, he  
likes to call himself the  
<**Prince of Greed.**>  
He uses his gold  
to force.. <desperate>  
to work for him.

The.. mind link I told  
you about, between me  
and my brother—

Supposed  
link.

—He helped  
create it.

So... you  
owe this **Clovis**  
your life?

<Eugh! Don't  
remind me.

The thought of that  
slimy bastard poking  
around in my head...>

And you say you  
did jobs for him?

<Not by choice!>

<And before you ask, no,  
I don't work for him anymore, or know  
what he's up to now. We haven't  
crossed paths in years.

In fact, last I heard, he  
pretty much up and disappeared.  
Odd, considering how much of a  
playboy he was. I'd hoped he'd  
been offed by somebody.

But I can tell you if he is  
here, it's only because he has  
something to gain.>

And that  
means trouble...





<Aw, I'm sure Clovey will be pleased you still remember him!>

<I am disappointed that your little sibling isn't here with you.

Don't worry, though, we'll catch that one too. And believe me...>

<Clovis has special plans for *her*.>



<I won't let any of you lay a hand on Natani, you son of a bitch!>

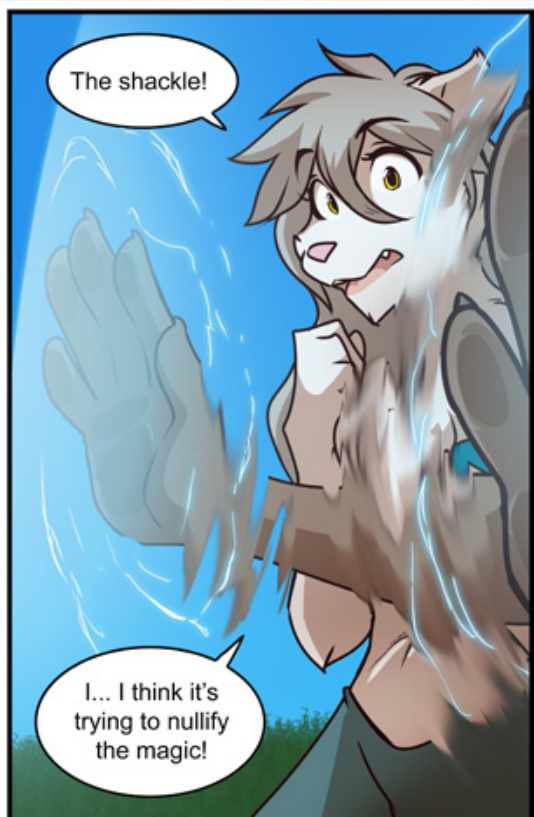


BZZZT!

CRACKLE!



<What the-?>



The shackle!

I... I think it's trying to nullify the magic!



<A magic suppressor? Well isn't that just bloody inconvenient.

Still, it'll take you ages to get through like that. And I could just keep refreshing this barrier all day...>



<But I think it's time to stop fooling around and wrap this up already!>



That it! That's what's holding up the barrier!

Hah! I like you, snowball!  
For a woman, you're pretty clever!  
All book-smarts, I can tell.

But I have a surprise for you!  
Remember when you thought  
I was bluffing about the air?

SPARK!

FWOOSH!

Ah!

What's going on?

I was going to wait  
until you realized it had been  
draining, but I figure it's time  
I sped things along.

THUD!

Not to worry  
though, my dear!

You're going with Zen!  
I'll have you both gift-wrapped  
and on your way to Clovis by  
the time you wake up!

But as for the  
rest of you, well...

Wait,  
is that-?!

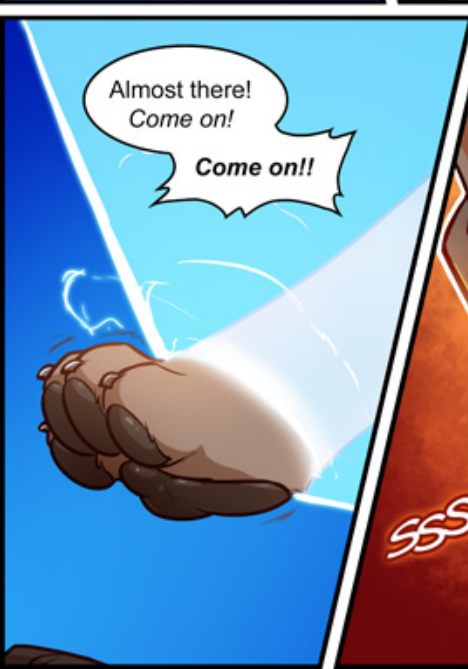
...I suppose this  
is goodbye!

Screeeeee—!

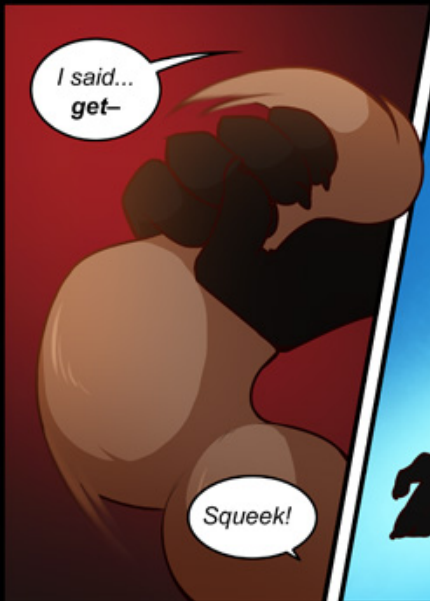
Wha-AUGH!!

Nibbly!

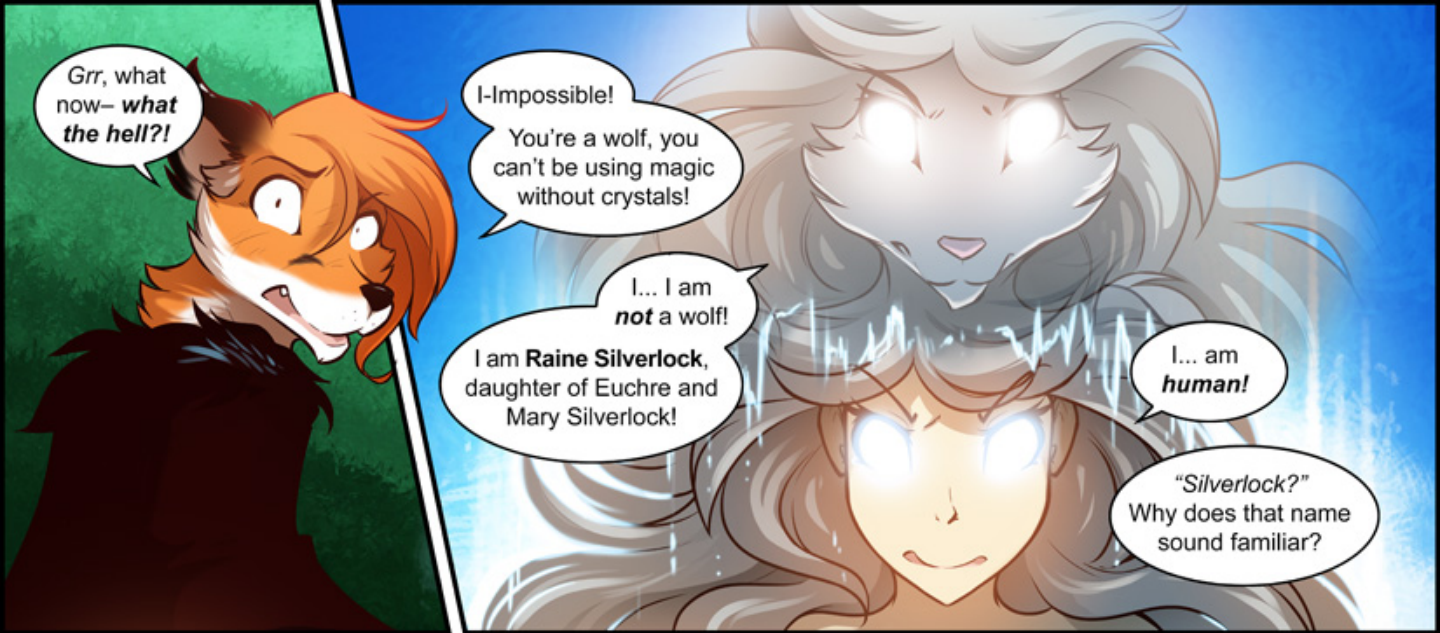












Grr, what now— **what the hell?!**

I-Impossible!

You're a wolf, you can't be using magic without crystals!

I... I am **not** a wolf!

I am **Raine Silverlock**, daughter of Euchre and Mary Silverlock!

I... am **human!**

"Silverlock?" Why does that name sound familiar?



Wait... *Oh crap!*

Welp, this fox knows when it's time to bail...

No.

You won't.

Hey, what—

-Gah!

POP!

See ya, girly! I-I'll be back for you all later!



Raine! You're human again! You alright?

Jeez, you straight up **disintegrated** that guy! That was awesome!

Ow...

I didn't *disintegrate* him! Urgh... I couldn't stop him teleporting, so instead I gave him a little push... with all of my magic.

I don't think he's going to end up where he intended.

So where is he going to end up?

Somewhere a lot farther than **ten meters** this time.







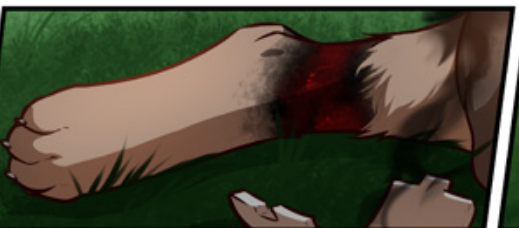


Raine! You need to come quick!  
It's bad...



Oh, gods...

He passed out. What do we do?



Uh... Maren, get my bag. I've got herbs that might help.

Alright.

Karen, get as much water from the spring as you can carry.

O-okay.



Look, I don't mean to always be the callous one here, but...

You all **do** remember who this guy was right?

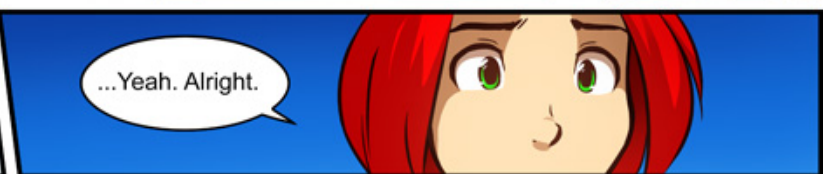
**He's** the one—



—Who **saved all of our lives** taking down the barrier.

And we're not going to stand around and let him die.

Could you help me by tearing up some bandages? *Please*.



...Yeah. Alright.



There.

That's all I can do.



But unless he gets some proper care I don't know what his chances are.

U-uh, guys? I think there's a bigger problem headed our way!





Earlier, at the estate...

I need to know as much as you can tell me about this Clovis.

My duty here is to protect Edinmire, and if he's the one responsible for these attacks, I must find him.

<Well... as much as he pretends otherwise, he's half fox.

Yellow-ish fur, red eyes...

He's got a ton of properties and lackies in the wolf kingdom.>

<Rich prick.>

<But as much as I'd love to see that pompous git get roasted by a dragon, I'm afraid there's not a lot else I can tell you.

He kept me in the dark more so than even my brother.>

<In fact, he took every opportunity to make it clear he thought of me as the lesser of the two of us. For... various reasons.>

<I had the link of course, but frankly I didn't care to listen to him any more than I had to, anyway.

Zen could probably tell you more—>

**Aaaugh!!**

**CRASH!**

<Natani? What's wrong?>

<My leg... it... felt like it was on fire—

**Aaugh!**

Something's wrong! M-my head! I...>

**No! Not again!**





Going to  
shackle me, huh?

Lots of folk looking  
for wolves these days.

I'm almost  
to Edinnire.

A day or two  
more walking.

You can call  
me Carver.

This lake looks cool!  
There's floating rocks!

It's some kind of  
magic barrier.

It's bad.

What do  
we do?

I won't let any  
of you lay a hand  
on Natani!

Ah!



<Natani?!  
Natani, talk to me!  
What's wrong?!>

<I'm okay!  
I'm still here.  
Still... me.>

<The link... Zen  
and I... our minds  
are open again.  
It was just...  
intense.>



<I... I thought  
for a second...>

<Keith, I'm okay.  
Zen's mind doesn't  
have the influence over  
me that it did before.>

<I'm more...  
myself now.  
What happened  
last time won't happen  
again, I promise.>



stet  
<Good. I don't know  
if I could go through  
that again.>



<So why did it  
come back now?>

<Not sure. Give  
me a minute. It was  
a lot all at once.

Zen passed out  
right when the link  
was restored.>

<That might have  
been because of the  
link, but... no...  
Something's  
wrong...!>



<Zen! He's  
in trouble!>





**HAPPY HALLOWEEN!**





<You have to help him! He's not far!

I-I'm not exactly sure where, but it's within a day or two by foot! I could find it!

I understand your concern for your brother...

B-but... it's my duty to keep you here...



<You said your duty was to protect Edinmire by finding Clovis, right?!

Zen knows! He.... he has information! He can help you, I swear!>



W-well...

I don't know...

Trace, can you vouch for this wolf's word?



Yes.

I mean, truthfully, we don't have much direct interaction...

But these are all friends of mine.

I've only caught half the conversation, but I get the gist of it. I say we help.



Very well! In that case, this shall be a **prisoner acquisition mission!**

Wolf, you're with me. I shall read your mind and compare the surroundings as we get closer!

<R-right. Me... i-in the air...>

I'll also take any others willing to go.

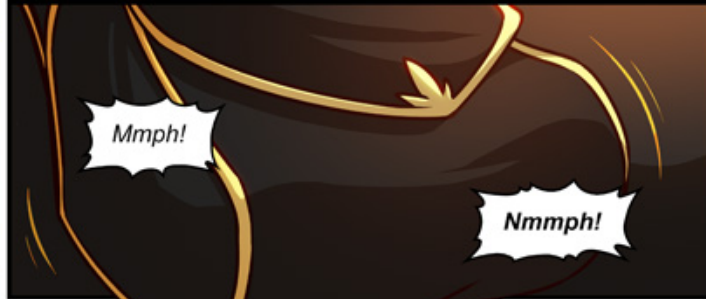
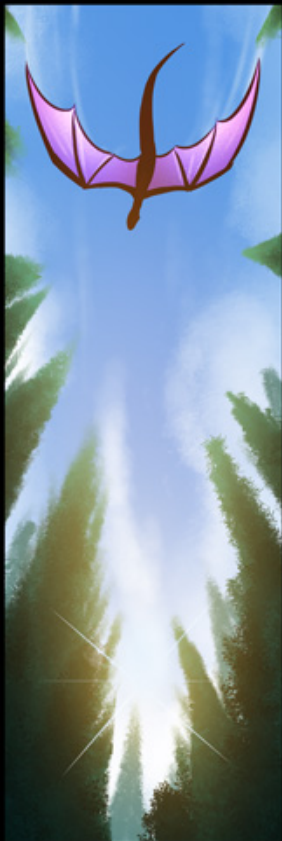
The city guard handbook recommends recon parties of at least three!

...Guard handbook? But... you're a dragon.



No offense, Ms Reni, you're big, but not... *that* big. How exactly do you plan to carry so many people?





Mmph!

Nmmph!



Gah!

<Why did I have to agree to this?!>

<Dragon, I thought you said these things were bigger on the inside?>



PANT!

No...

I... said the inside becomes... as large as it needs to be.

Though...haah... I may have overestimated how much weight they reduce.



<I think it's kinda cozy.>

<You would!

Urg... either I suffocate inside or see just how high up I am outside.>

<Who could enjoy this?>



This is amazing!

Flora, be careful!

I still think in your condition you should have stayed behind.

And miss out on *this*?!>



I'm making an approach.

You all... may want to hold on to something. This landing could get a little rough!





Look!

I told you!  
There it is again!  
A dragon!

Do you think  
it's after *us*?

Maybe it's just here  
for the hot spring?



Karen!

Get out of  
the open before  
it spots you!

I can't believe  
this. First an assassin,  
now a **dragon**?

I think it's wearing  
armor too. It **must** be  
from the Templar!

Fates! How are  
we going to get out  
of this one?



M-maybe we can  
try... talking our way out?  
Dragons are usually pretty  
reasonable creatures.

...A-at least  
from the stories  
I've read.

Wait... is it just me or does  
that thing look like it's coming  
in a little... too fast?

Get down!



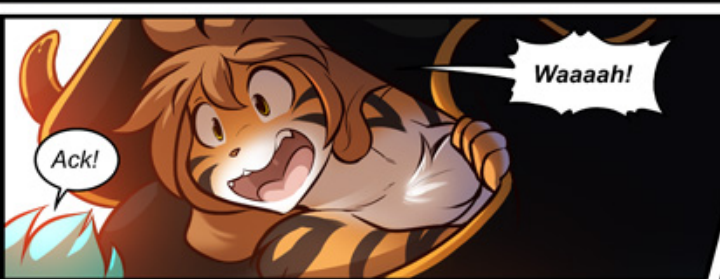


R-rregh!

Graurgle!



SLAM!



Waaaah!

Ack!



YAAAAHHH!



THUD

Oof!



Uuurgh...



WUMP!







Meanwhile...

THUD!  
THUD!  
THUD!

SHHHHFT

Yes? May  
I help you?

You! Servant Keidran,  
open this door!

We have orders  
from Master Templar  
Seer Brahn.

The wolf terrorist you  
are holding is to be moved  
to the tower, where it can  
be closer guarded.

I'm sorry.

Your timing  
is... conveniently  
unfortunate.

Master Trace  
is not available  
right now.

I'm afraid you will not  
be able to enter the manor  
without his permission.

Did you not  
hear us?!

We are under  
orders from **Brahn**! We  
will not be denied entry  
by a filthy beast!

And don't think we can't tell  
**you're** also a wolf! Trace's pet or  
not, technically, you're illegal too!  
We could take you as well.

And we shall, if you  
don't take us to—

CLUNK!

You misunderstood  
me just now. You **cannot**  
enter the manor without  
permission. *Physically*.

It's built into  
the stone. I'm giving  
you fair warn—

We'll just  
see about—!

FWUMPH!!

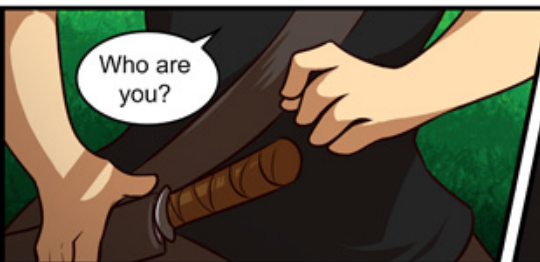
Sigh...  
They never  
listen.

Thanks,  
Nora.

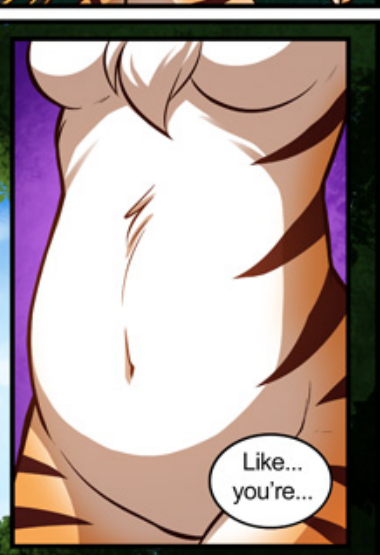
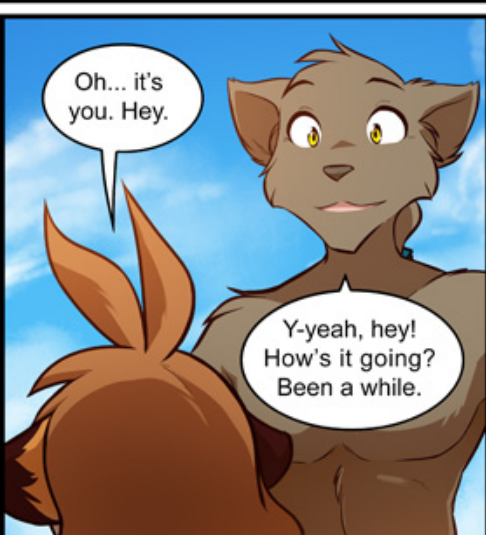
Well, better check  
the fields and see what's  
become of them.

I hope it's hens  
this time. We could  
use the eggs.









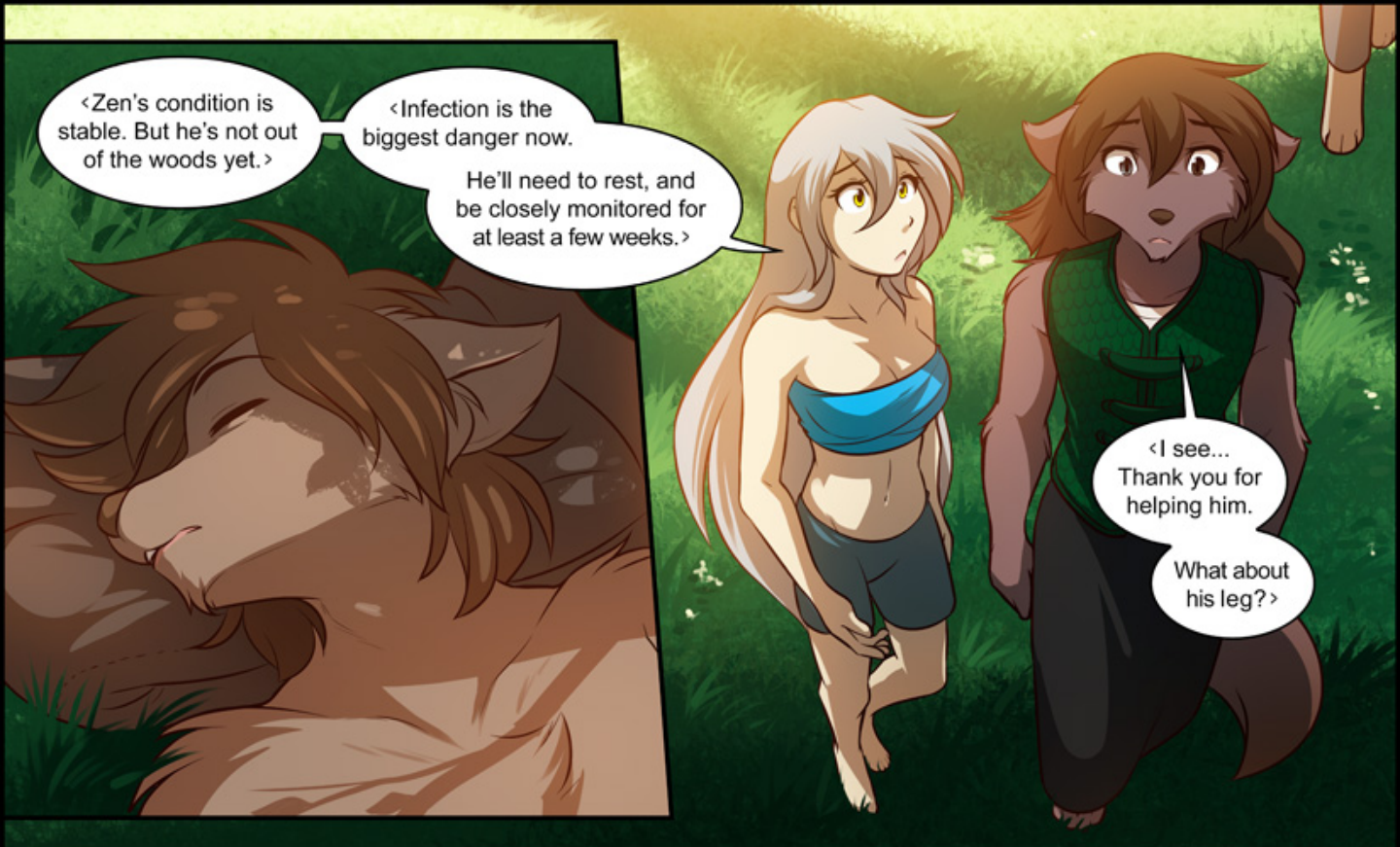












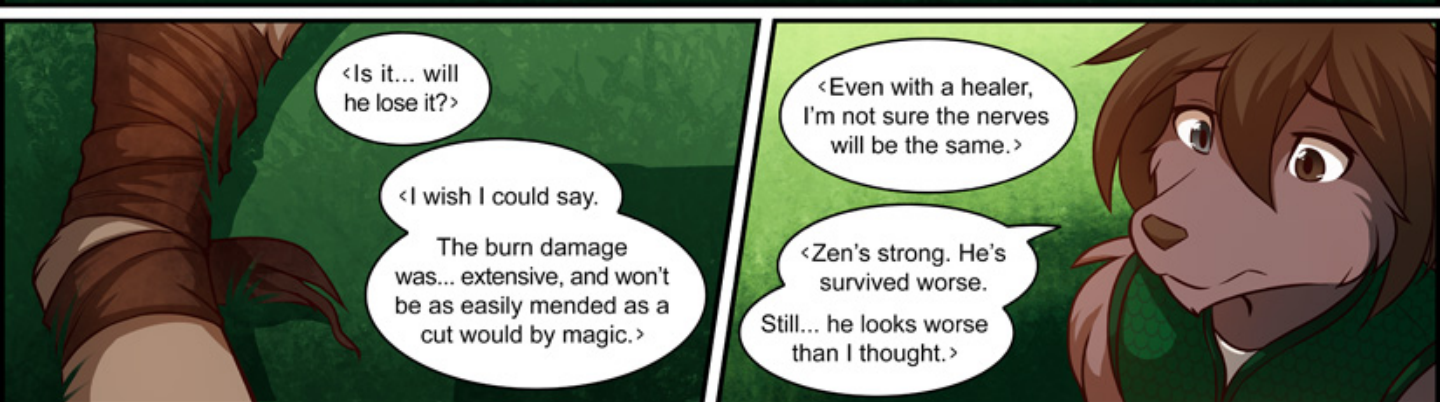
<Zen's condition is stable. But he's not out of the woods yet.>

<Infection is the biggest danger now.

He'll need to rest, and be closely monitored for at least a few weeks.>

<I see... Thank you for helping him.

What about his leg?>



<Is it... will he lose it?>

<I wish I could say.

The burn damage was... extensive, and won't be as easily mended as a cut would by magic.>

<Even with a healer, I'm not sure the nerves will be the same.>

<Zen's strong. He's survived worse. Still... he looks worse than I thought.>



<Wow, gee... thanks.>



**Zen!**

<Gone for months... and the first thing you do when you get back is... insult how I look.

I see. You're just jealous. I was always the pretty one, and now you're afraid a pegleg will just make me sexier.>

<Are you really cracking jokes at a time like this?!

I had to hitch a ride on a giant lizard to save your ass, you know! You could at least be more serious about it!>

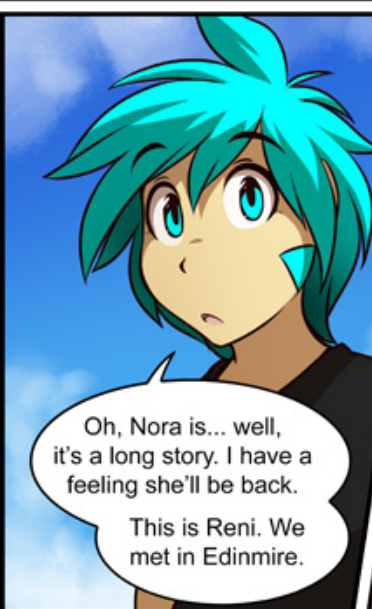
**Hahaha! Ow! Heh...**

<Glad to see you too, Nat.>









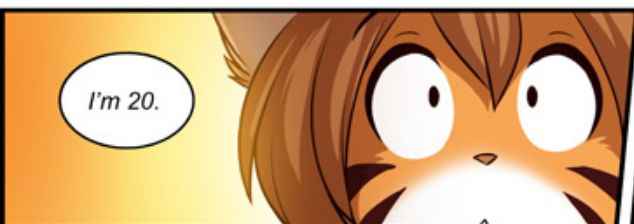
















Oh! Right,  
let's see...

...Which  
compartment  
was it...

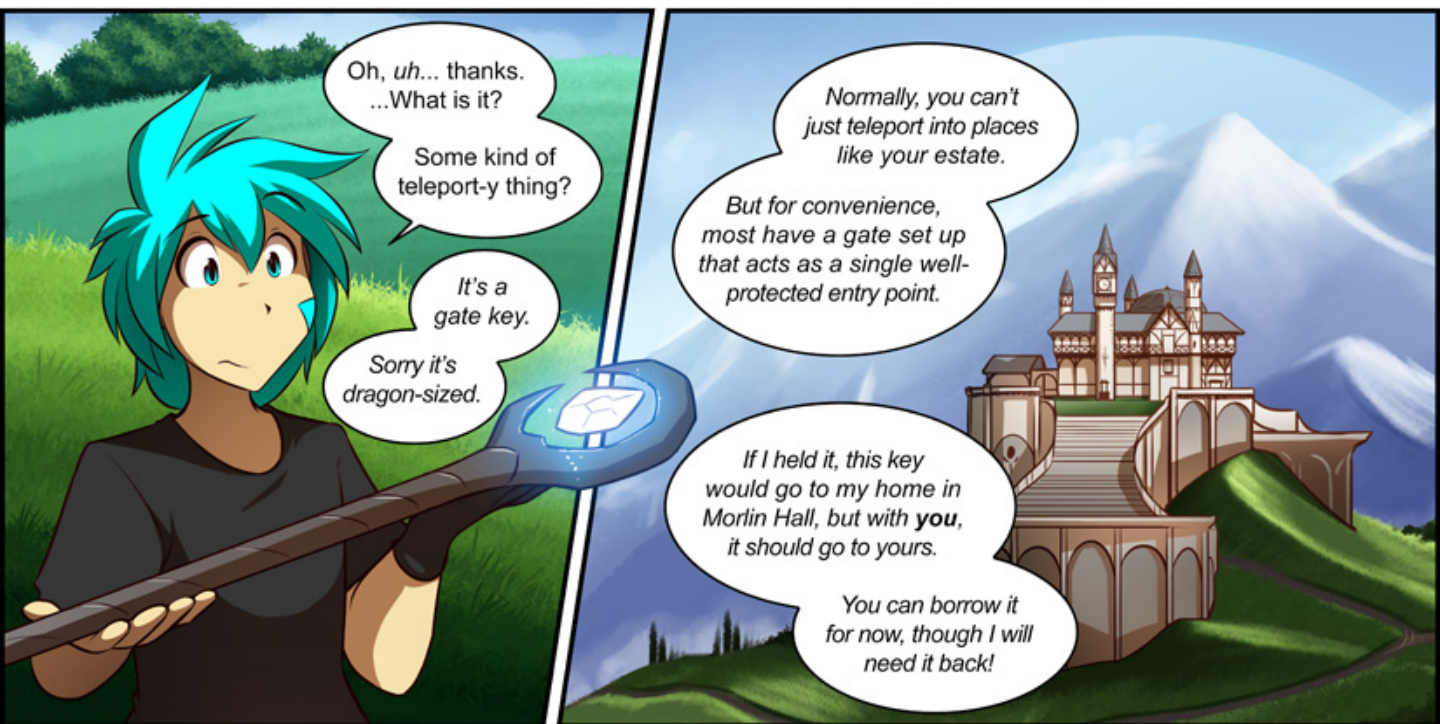
Everything's  
mixed up from  
the crash...

Here? No.  
Oh! Wait...

Got it!

While I might not  
know much magic yet,  
I do come prepared!

Here, Trace.  
This should work.



Oh, uh... thanks.  
...What is it?

Some kind of  
teleport-y thing?

It's a  
gate key.

Sorry it's  
dragon-sized.

Normally, you can't  
just teleport into places  
like your estate.

But for convenience,  
most have a gate set up  
that acts as a single well-  
protected entry point.

If I held it, this key  
would go to my home in  
Morlin Hall, but with **you**,  
it should go to yours.

You can borrow it  
for now, though I will  
need it back!



I... actually collect magic  
stuff like this as a hobby.  
I think they're neat.



**Hang on!** Does  
that mean we aren't  
going to get to ride on  
a dragon?!

Er... It'd be very  
hard to carry so many  
people. Sorry.

Aaaww~!



Okay, so  
how do I—

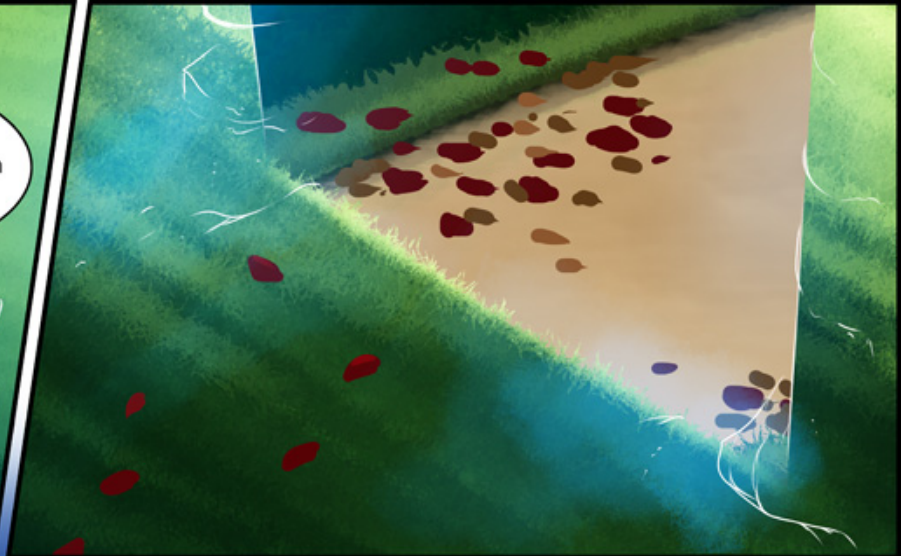
CRICK!





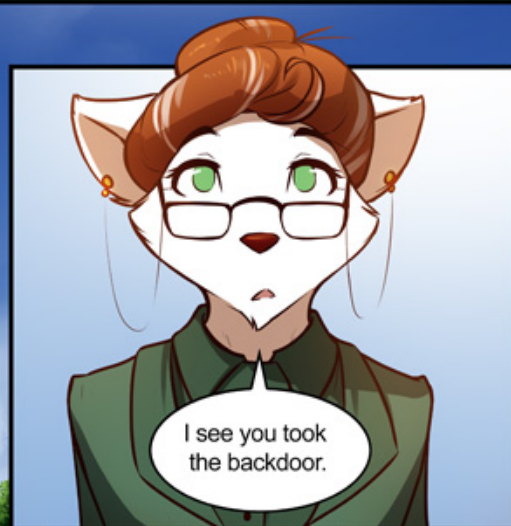
WOOSH!

Woah... I think  
I get what you mean  
by "gate" now...

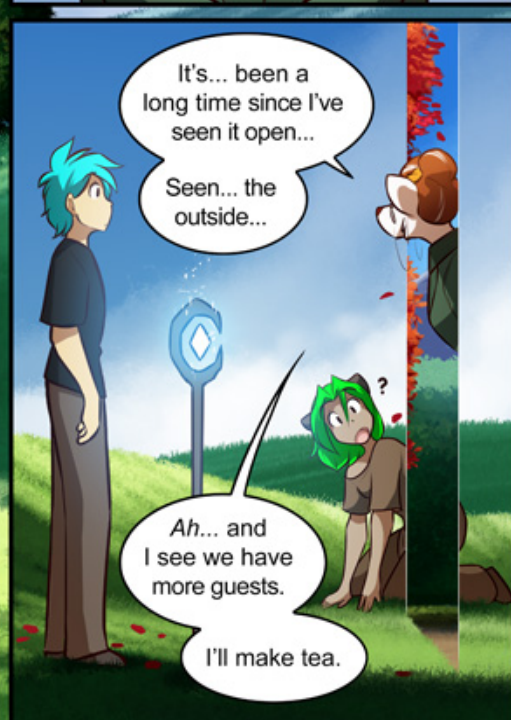


Ah, Master Trace.  
You've returned.

Quite a bit faster  
than last time.



I see you took  
the backdoor.



It's... been a  
long time since I've  
seen it open...

Seen... the  
outside...

Ah... and  
I see we have  
more guests.

I'll make tea.









What a strange group of people Trace has collected.

The estate hasn't been this crowded in years.

So many guests...



And some *less welcome* than others...



Come out. I can sense you lurking.

You're worse than Brahn's pet.



Hello, Rose.

Nice to see you again after so long, cousin.

Spying, are we, Euchre?

Just watching over family. That's my daughter down there, you know.



Really? How thoughtful.

You should come visit in person then! Instead of projecting yourself like that.

I'd be interested to know if that "*perfect transformation*" of yours can fix being cursed into a barnyard animal.



I think I'll keep my distance, thank you.



Why are you *really* here, Euchre?





<You know, it's very odd to hear you speak without your drawl.>

<Just get on with it!>

<Alright...

I'm sure by now you've noticed that Trace is not the man he once was.

I've been working to keep it that way, and I'd like your help.>

<Oh? Do the other Master Templars know you're doing that?>

<Only Sirus. He knows my true nature, but he's an ally... for now.

**Brahn**, on the other hand, is doing everything he can to draw Trace out.

He's taken to calling himself the **new Grand Templar** now, but so long as Trace still lives, the order remains divided.>



<So Trace is a game of keep-away between the two of you, hm?

What exactly do you want me to do about that?>

<Nothing. Brahn may find a way to bypass the manor defenses eventually, but for now this place is as safe as any other.

I'm more concerned about you.>

<Me?>



<You, and this place. For my work to succeed, I need Trace to remain as he is - happy and ignorant, for now.

I don't want him to keep prying into his past.

I'm sure you know secrets buried here. Keep them buried, please. For the good of everyone.

And whatever's in that room on the third floor, *don't let him see it.*>

End.