



Twokinds

Chapter 6, part 2



It feels like we've been going around in circles all day.

It's just a bit further now.

Hey guys, I think we lost Raine.



RUMBLE!
RUMBLE!

Woah! Why is the ground moving?

Look up there!



SMASH!

BZZRT!
BZZERT!

It's Ephemural!



This is bad!

Maren, you and Karen go on ahead and find Trace!

What about you?



Well... I may not be the most powerful of warriors.

But as an ex-Templar it's my duty to protect the people.



What's going on now- Flora?

That can't be Flora... Who are you?



Oh, it's Trace.. he betrayed you.

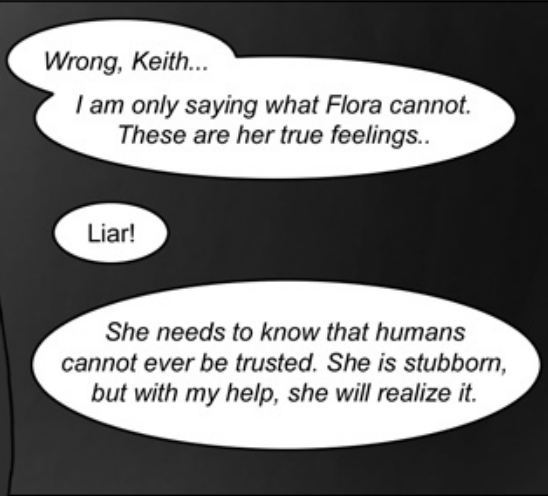
You must be strong. Take care of yourself...

Trace... it's his fault.



Trace!
It's Neutral! She's possessing Flora and tainting her mind!

What?!



Wrong, Keith...
I am only saying what Flora cannot. These are her true feelings..

Liar!

She needs to know that humans cannot ever be trusted. She is stubborn, but with my help, she will realize it.



Let her go right now!

Why are you doing this?

What have we ever done to you?



It's not what you have done..
It's what you will do.

There is a great war coming,
with balance hanging from a thread.

You two will determine the outcome,
but you cannot be on the same side!

Once she accepted my help, it was easy.



Wait... what's going on?

You're not-! Who.. what are you doing to me?



I needed her to willingly want my help, even if it was only for a moment.

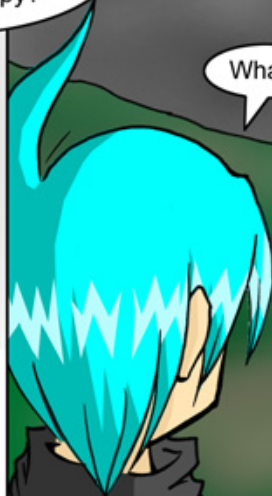
I have you to thank for that.

Why would Flora ever want your help? Why was she so unhappy?



You really have no idea.

Wha-?



Flora had fallen in love with you. A stupid little girl with a childish crush.

And your words mean everything to her.



"Just a Keidran." Remember that?



That's what she heard?

No.. but she should have realized I didn't mean it...

That I couldn't say that I... that...



That you what?!





I don't know!
I don't know how I... feel?



Hah!



I knew it!

You can't even admit it to yourself.

CRASH!



Arg... what do you want from me?!

This seems familiar... do you remember?

What are you talking about?



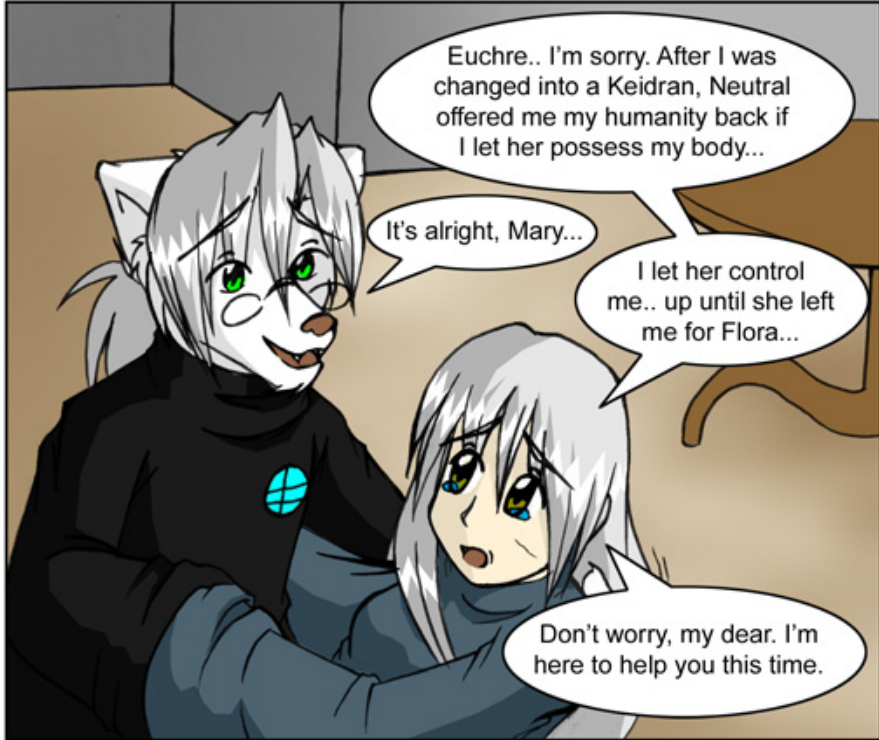
But of course you don't. That was before I stole your memories.

It was you? Why...

If all you wanted was for me and Flora to be enemies...

If I hadn't removed your memories, you would have killed Flora that day in the forest.

Yet you still try to stop me now...





So, you wish to fight a god?
Fine by me!



Ack!



Eep!

You used.. a crate...
I mean, really.. a crate? Come on...



Why won't you just give up already? This would be so much simpler.

There's no use struggling!
Just forget about Flora!



Why won't you fight me?
Realize your true powers! Give in to your memories!



I... I can't..

Why? I don't understand..

It's... it's because I really do care.. about Flora.

I wasn't sure before, but..



But she's just a Keidran!
You could have any human female you wanted!

Or if you're into Keidran, who's going to stop you? You could have anyone!

But... I don't want a human. Or a Keidran!

Don't you get it? It's not the race that's important to me. It's just.. Flora.



Because...



...I love her.



Y-you're not supposed to say that!

I saw the future! This isn't what happens!



Jeez, I wish there was something for me to do around here.

I would help Trace.. but I don't think I can do much for him now.



I mean really.. a crate? Come on!

What...? Hey, it's that red-haired guy from before... can't remember his name.

What's he doing?



If I can just get close enough... Maybe I can kill the host before she realizes I'm here...

It may be all-powerful, but without a body, it won't be able to affect us...



Hey, stay back!

WAK!



Ow! What was that for, you stupid Keidran?!

I'm not a Keidran, damn it!



But that's not the point... You can't hurt Flora! Let Trace handle this!



Hah! Like I'm going to listen to an animal. Why should I care for the life of this "Flora"?

Grrr...




If you hurt Flora, I will kill you.






Seriously, Trace.

I don't know what's going on, entirely, but you have to do something!



But I can't...

I can't risk hurting Flora! I can barely move in any case...



Maybe you just need a little help?



It's you! Uh.. Euchre?

I'm honored you remember me.

I must say, I have to agree with this human.




What?!


But... what about Flora?

You're practically her brother!

Are you saying you would fight her too?



Me? Heck, no! I'd be killed!

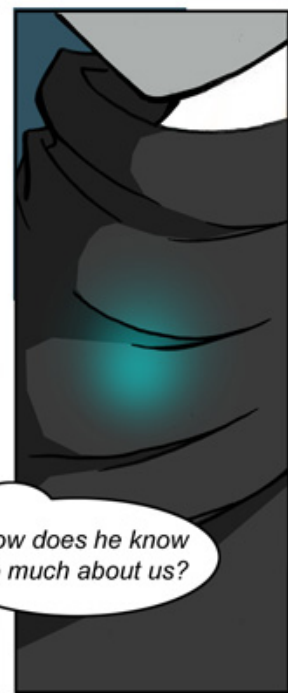


Listen Trace, it's true that the masks know everything.

Past, present, and future.

But there's one thing that they cannot predict...

Who is this Keidran?



How does he know so much about us?



Erg...

You stay out of this!

CRASH!

Die, you mortal Kei- wait...!



What?!
Where did you...

Heheheh, looks like you're a little too slow.

Trace, listen to me.
You cannot be afraid of the power you have.

You control your powers, you cannot allow them to control you any more.

You can do great thing. And horrible things. It's all up to you, Trace.

But you have to act. You must fight! I cannot fight her for you.

H-how dare you-!



Catch!

Ack!

Fight her, Trace. Get Flora back!





I wouldn't try that again if I were you.

You know, the reason we need our hosts is because we feed on their energy.

And every time you attack me, you force me to use up a little bit more of Flora.



Bit after bit...

She slowly turns into an empty shell of a Keidran...

Oh well... Maybe that's better for her after all...



Hm... She has a stronger hold on Flora than I had though.



If only I could help... ..interfere... but there's nothing I can do... I am bound by the rules...



But... I'm sure everything will turn out alright in the end.



Don't worry... I believe I've done enough interfering for the both of us.



How are things progressing?

Not favorably, I'm afraid.
Ephemeral is once again trying to awaken Trace's true self, and it seems to be working.



How does it feel, Trace?

To be helpless? Weak? Unable to do anything?



The ground...
It's... moving...



How does it feel, to know you were able to kill hundreds of thousands of people...



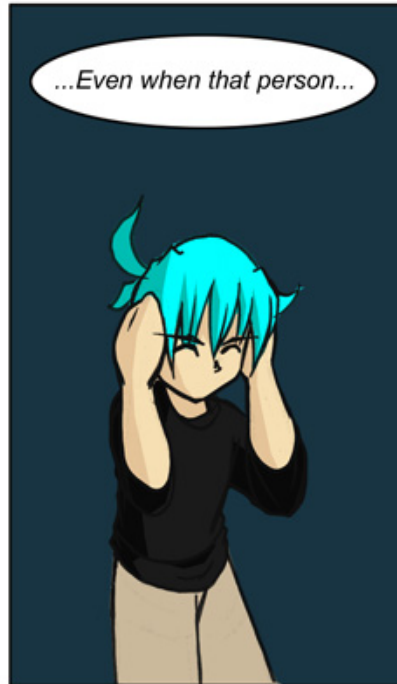
This doesn't look good...

And yet...



Trace, please, don't listen!

... You are unable to save the life of one person...



...Even when that person...



...is just...



...a Keidran...

Is it already too late?

No...

I do not sense that Trace has regained his memories...

However, this is also something I have never seen before...

I believe Trace is in a transition.

He still doesn't remember anything...

And yet he's now discovered his power...

I fear that it is corrupting his mind.

Heheh...

I... I had never imagined power could feel this good...

This.. this isn't supposed to happen!

What good will those powers do you anyway?

You can't hurt me without going through Flora first!

Heh, I don't need anything else except these powers...

Why should I care about Flora?



I don't understand it.

If Trace doesn't remember, then why doesn't he care about the safety of Flora anymore?



You have to realize that Trace hasn't been able to do anything to help Flora up until this point.

Now that he has power, though, he's lost sight of why he wanted them to begin with. All he wants is to kill Ephemeral.



This is insane. You have to do something.



You know I can't doing anything. I am not to interfere-

You and your rules!



Don't you get it, Euchre?

That's Flora out there, your sister - practically.

Maybe Trace isn't the only one who's let power get to his head...

I did not make the rules...



Trace is the one that must get Flora back...

Sigh, you are right. Perhaps I have been worrying too much about these rules. I will interfere... once..



But I can point him in the right direction.



Hey! What the heck is this?

What the-?



Trace, you've forgotten...

Where am I?
How are you doing this?!



forgotten...



Wha... what the!
Flora! And the mask, it's...

It's gone!
And we're.. in the forest?

Hey, what're you doing?

Grrrrrrr.....



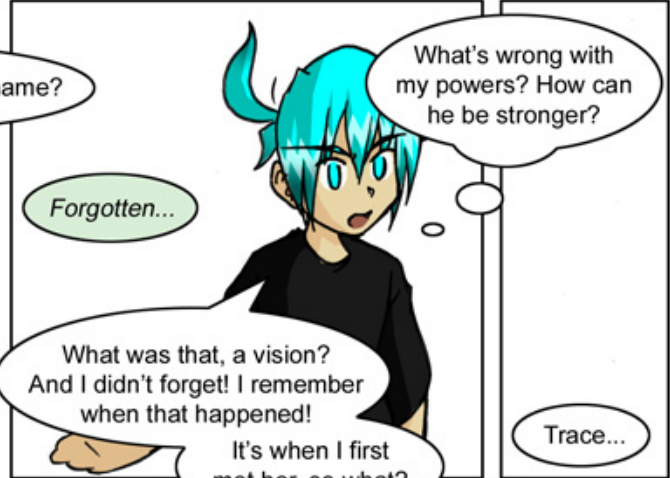
What's wrong with you? Why are you growling like that?

Come on, Flora!



Gasp!
How did you know my name?

Hey... wait!



Forgotten...

What's wrong with my powers? How can he be stronger?

What was that, a vision?
And I didn't forget! I remember when that happened!

It's when I first met her, so what?

Trace...



Die, Keidran!

What the-!?



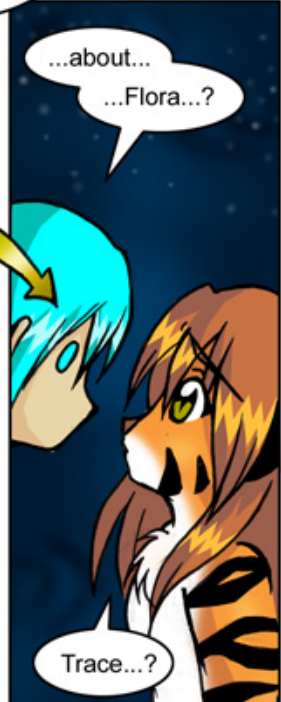
Keith, stop it!
She's not the enemy...



Eh.. hey, where did they go.. not another one..

What are you, Euchre? Why are you showing me these things!

There's nothing wrong with my memories! I haven't forgotten-



...about...
...Flora...?

Trace...?



I... I can't believe I thought about letting Flora die...

The power... it overwhelmed me...

What happened? How could I forget?

The whole point of me being here is for her... Flora...

Trace... I.. um..



I remember this too, I think...

It's... our first...



Ahah! I see you've chosen to break the rules.

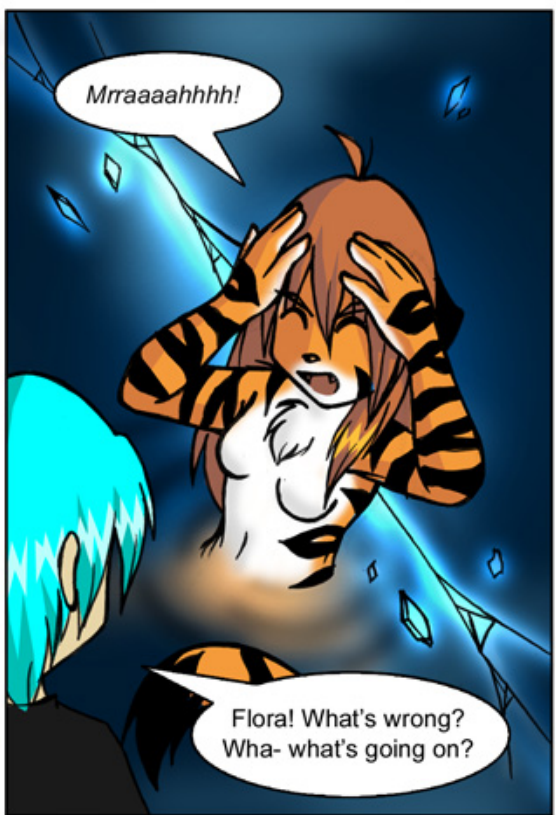
But you know full well the consequences...



What a noble sacrifice... ..for such a petty cause.



I hate having to strike you down while you are defenceless, however..
I have risked too much already. Once you are out of the way..
I shall depart... with this little Keidran...

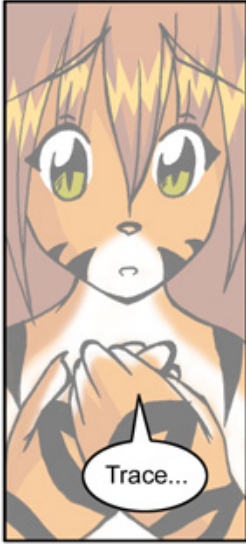


Mrraaaahhhh!

Flora! What's wrong? Wha- what's going on?



...sister...



Trace...



Trace, snap out of it! Trace?

She's on the roof!
That's it, I'm going after her.

The roof? Yes...
It's like.. I can sense her now.. her thoughts.
She's calling me to her.

No, you can't!



That was completely unnecessary, Ephemeral.

That Keidran was an innocent-

No one is innocent.
He knew the rules.

We all break rules.

Not as long as I'm around.



Would you care to join him?

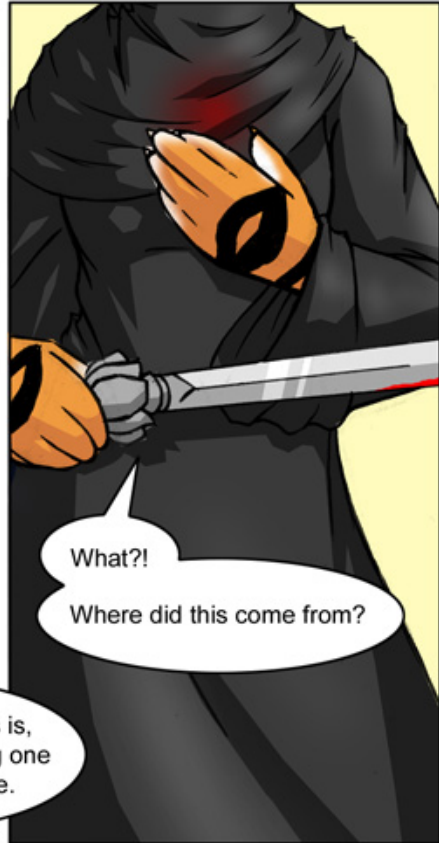


Oh no, of course not.

I wouldn't dream of interfering with your work now.

Especially considering I already have.

You know what this is, right? You're wearing one just like it, you see.



What?!

Where did this come from?



...This?

A little human bauble?

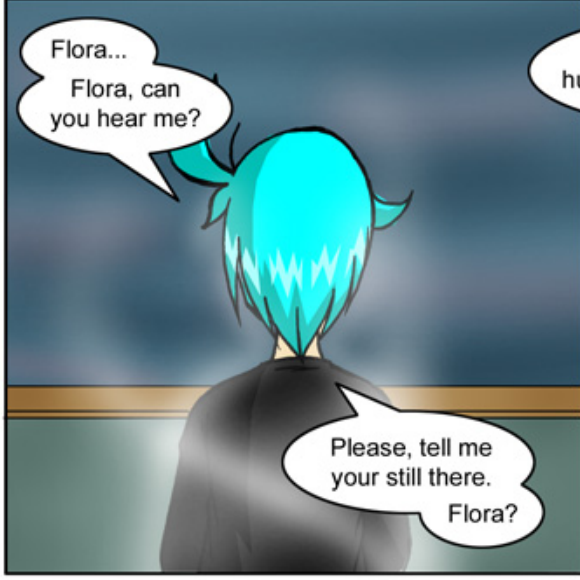


Yes, but one of my own designs.



Hmph...

I don't see what you though you could accomplish with this little thing.



Flora...
Flora, can you hear me?

Please, tell me you still there.
Flora?



Grr.. What is that human muttering about?

He should know by now that Flora isn't-



eh...
Mew...?



Agh! What is this?
What are all these thoughts?



No, get away!
What's going on?
This is impossible!

AAAAAAHHH!



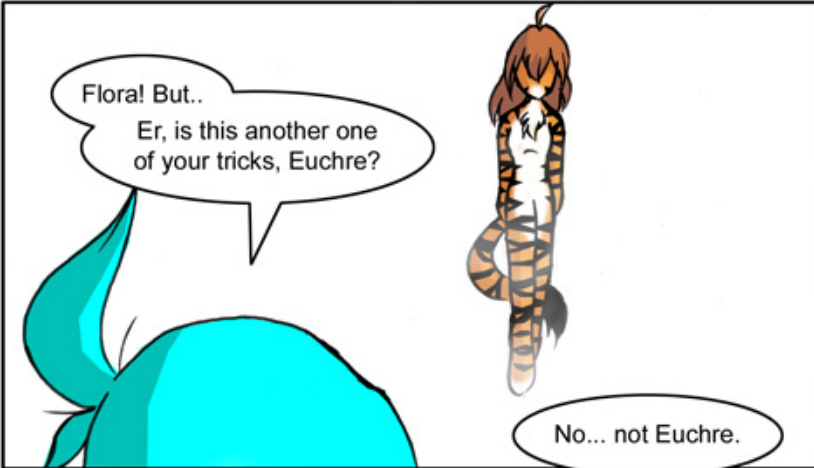
Huh? Where..?
Where am I..?



Ack! Why am I naked!?
What is this place?



Am I dead?
...huh?

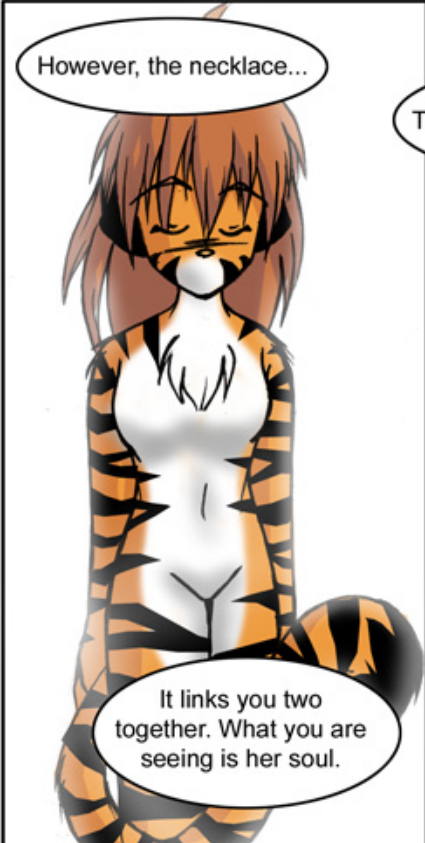


Flora! But..
Er, is this another one
of your tricks, Euchre?

No... not Euchre.

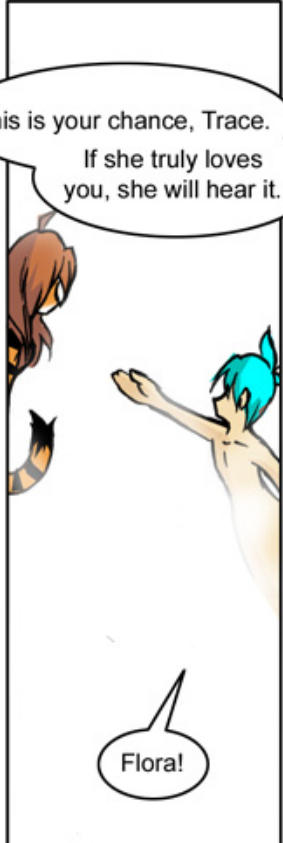


Who said that?
I don't have much time.
Listen to me, Trace.
In order to free
Flora, you need to be
able to reach her.
But you can't...



However, the necklace...

It links you two
together. What you are
seeing is her soul.



This is your chance, Trace.
If she truly loves
you, she will hear it.

Flora!



Flora...
It's... time
to wake up.

I know it's a
little late now...
But... I love
you too.



Flora, I know it's a little late now...

But...



I love you too.



Aaaarg!



Gah!
You infuriating little pest! You've gotten in my way for the last time!

I tried to be nice about this, Trace, but you leave me with no alternative.



I will make sure you never... eh..
You.. nev.. wait...



What the-?



Having a... bit of trouble, Neutral?
I don't fine that -cough- very surprising.

What? You again!
What would you know?



I.. know what it's like to be tricked into your... control.

You promised me my humanity back, but controlled me -cough- as price for it.

Just as you did with that young.. Keidran.



My dear Euchre..
Because of him, you're hold on that Keidran is fading.



It's over, Nuetra!
You cannot use her soul for your magic any longer.

Soon you wont be able to control her at all.



Why... you.. little..



I can still make her kill you!



Get behind me!

Trace?! Where did you come from...?

Ephemura!!



Leave them alone!

CRACK!

Gaaaaaaaah!!



Mom, are you okay?
You ran off and-

Nooooo!

I... I'm fine!
Look!



Flora!

That's impossible!

Woohoo! Flora!



Ah...!
Flora!



You... You're
alright...

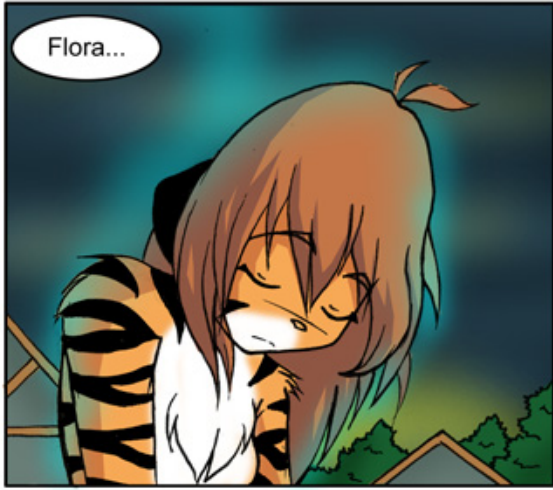
Thank goodness..



Flora, wait!
Look out for the edge!



Flora!



Flora...



Thank goodness, he managed to get her.



I was afraid I'd have to be crushed trying to catch her.

Darn that stupid Keidran. She's going to give me a heart attack someday.



Mother, isn't it wonderful? He saved that poor little Keidran!

Quiet, Raine! Don't you forget, the Keidran -cough- are still our enemies.



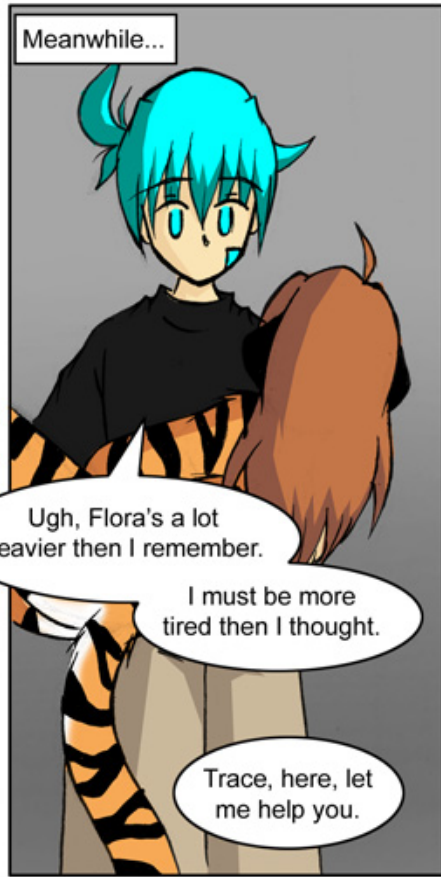
Enemies? How can you say that? After you-

Enough! This.. is not the time. I still feel unsure about all this...

This all seems too easy...



But.. what if she really.. really is gone?



Meanwhile...

Ugh, Flora's a lot heavier than I remember.

I must be more tired than I thought.

Trace, here, let me help you.



Trace, I- Hey! wouldn't you like me to help carry her? You look exhausted.



Trust me, Keith... It would take a lot more than exhaustion...

...to make me want to let go of Flora right now.



Heya, Fuzzyyears!

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I demand you let me see Trace right now!

I'll tell you what I told everyone else.

Trace and Flora are tired, so they're both resting.

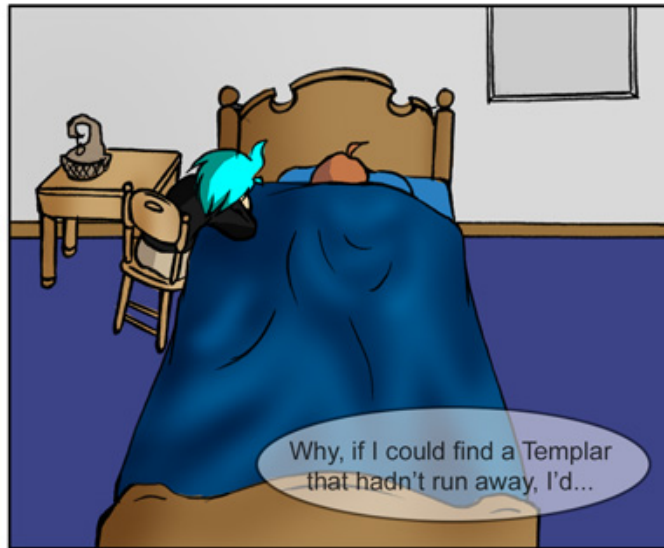
The room is magically sealed, so if you want to talk to Trace...

I guess you'll have to wait 'til later.



How dare you? Do you know who I am?

Does it look like I care?



Why, if I could find a Templar that hadn't run away, I'd...



Mew? mmm... I just had the strangest dream...



Huh, Trace? Did... he stay by my bed because he knew I was upset?



...



Come on, Trace. Come to bed.

neh... muh...

Shhh, no need to wake up.

Just... -yawn- sleep.



Mmm, goodmorning, Trace.

Flora! You're awake!
Thank goodness... gah!

What am I doing in your bed?!

Hehe, I couldn't let you sleep in that chair all day, could I?

We can't do this! Let me go!



Stupid Trace.
What am I, a butler now?

Can't wait 'til Flora wakes up.

Then we can get out of here.



Trace!

T

I got the stuff you-



...wanted...

Oh.. um, thanks Keith.

Heya, Keith!



yeah.. um.. no problem..
Sorry about... interrupting...



Keith wait, it's not what you- ah..

Hehe, or is it?

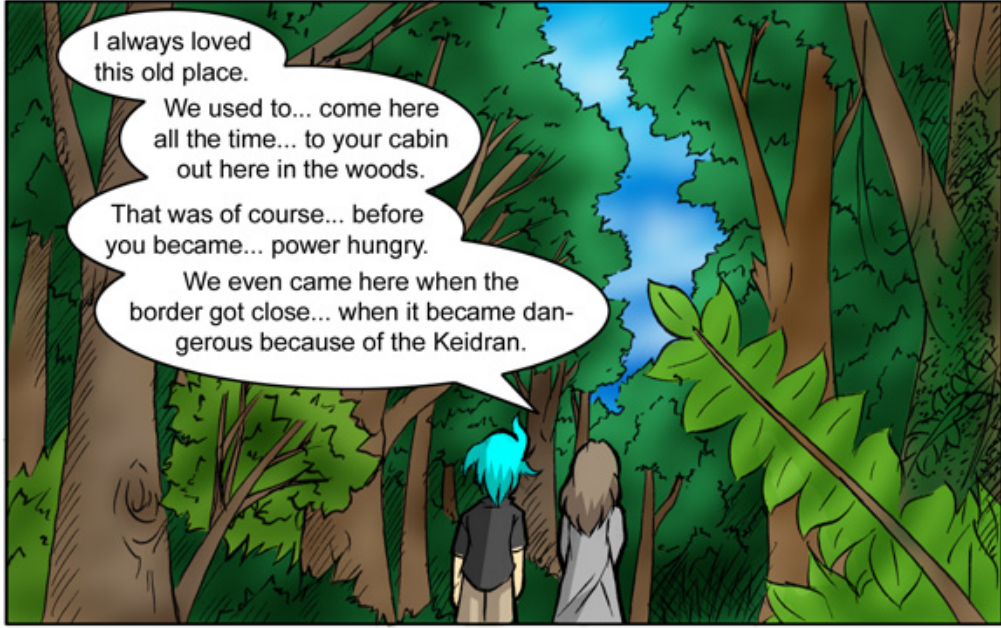


Wha- ack! Hey, get off me!

Noo! Keith, don't leave me in here with her!

Mrrawr!





I always loved this old place.

We used to... come here all the time... to your cabin out here in the woods.

That was of course... before you became... power hungry.

We even came here when the border got close... when it became dangerous because of the Keidran.

Do you remember any of this?



...no, I can't say I do... sorry.

...good. I think it's for the best that you do not remember.

What? Why? I want to know about my past.

No... please, this isn't someplace you'd want to... to remember at all.

But there is something I must... must tell you.



Trace, I am...
...I'm not your wife.

Buh?

I'm sorry, Trace... for all the lies I had to tell you.
We did know each other... a long time ago...

I came back because of Neutral. She brought me here.
I had no choice, but... I had to see you. I'm sorry.



Trace, seeing you in this brief moment in time...

...has brought me greater happiness than I fear you will ever understand.



For a while.. I'd thought you'd never be happy again.



But seeing you with that girl...

...I am glad you've found someone that can make you smile once more.

Even if she is... a Keidran.

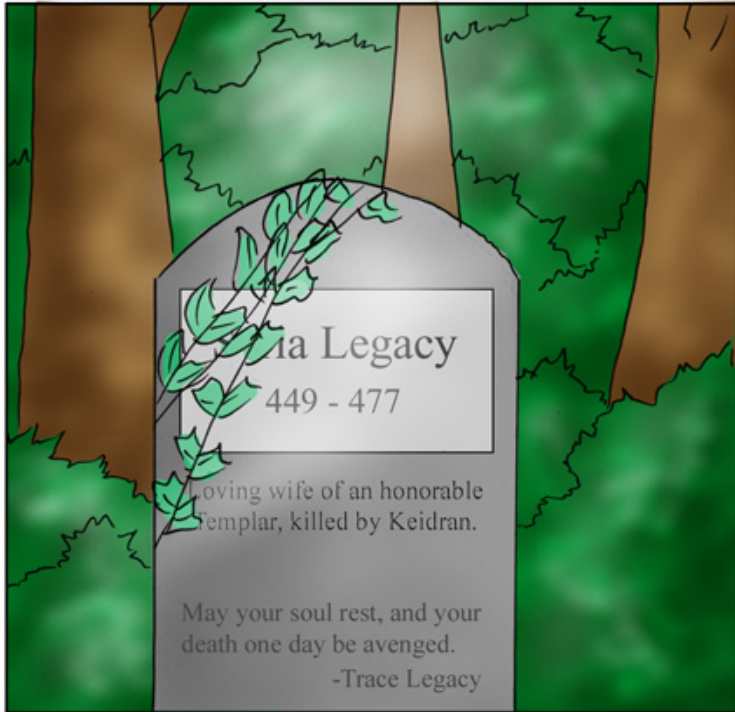


I hope you will forgive me someday, Trace.

I just.. couldn't bear... couldn't bear to burden you...



With the memory of my passing...



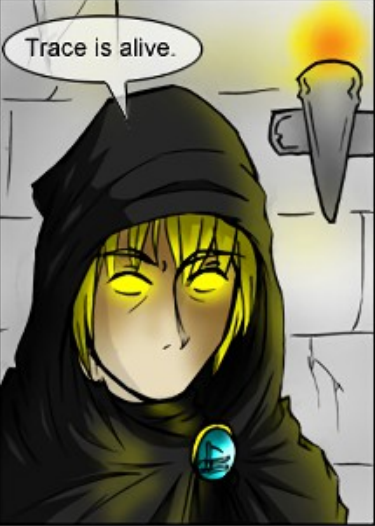
Alia Legacy

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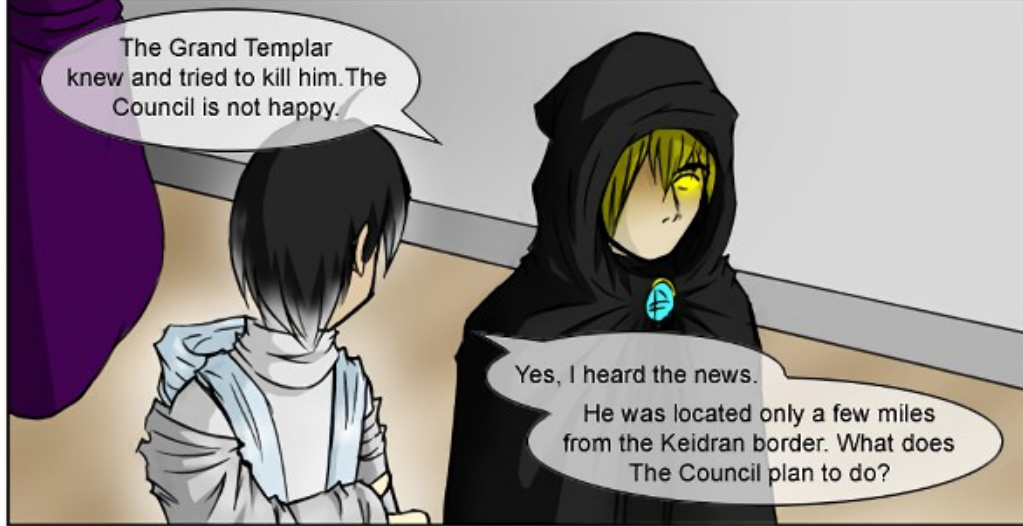
Loving wife of an honorable Templar, killed by Keidran.

May your soul rest, and your death one day be avenged.

-Trace Legacy




Trace is alive.



The Grand Templar knew and tried to kill him. The Council is not happy.

Yes, I heard the news.

He was located only a few miles from the Keidran border. What does The Council plan to do?



As you know, Trace is needed in order to finish the final tower.

The Council knows that they must find Trace as quickly as possible.

Should Trace die, or find his way into the claws of the Keidran... it would be disastrous. This is why we've chosen to employ.. the Dragons.




Dragons?

They can't be serious!

Sending a Dragon near Keidran territory..


It could be considered an act of war!



Not to mention the fact that the king would never approve it.

He wouldn't allow us Templar that kind of gold.

You know what the Dragons ask for.



That won't be a problem for long, Sirvitine.

Once we have Trace in our hands and the final Tower completed...

The king will bow down to us.



Saria told me we were right here, near the border..
And only about 15 miles away from the port.

Trace, listen to reason.



Do you even know what you're doing?
Trace, come back with us to the Templar. We can help!



I'm not going back!
At least not yet.
I have other things I have to do.



And what's that, Trace?
Helping these.. animals?
They aren't animals!
Listen to me, Trace. You don't have any place to go!
We're dangerously close to the Keidran! You can't keep wandering out here.
I can't go back to the Templar either!



Trace... If you're going to go, you'd better go now.
The Templar will think to look here.
After all, you used to live here.. before...
What...?
Nevermind. Maren, get Karen. We have to go too.
The Council is calling all Templar back to the stronghold.



Hey, Who's side are you on here?
And why would the Council do something like that?
They've never called all of you back before.



Trace, I think you should go.
After everything you've been through... I think you need some time for yourself.

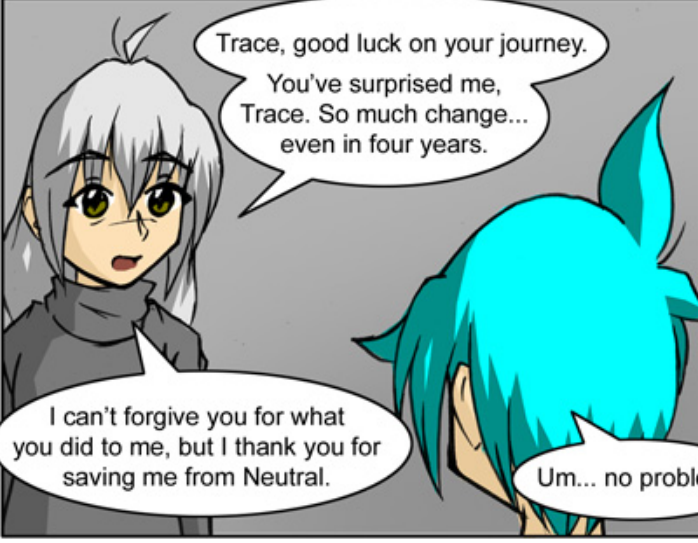
Ever since four years ago, you've been kinda obsessed about the Templar.



Well, you're certainly being unusually insightful all of the sudden.

Yeah, I know. Well, what are friends for, anyway?

Friends? Hah! He probably doesn't even know your name.



Trace, good luck on your journey.
You've surprised me, Trace. So much change... even in four years.

I can't forgive you for what you did to me, but I thank you for saving me from Neutral.

Um... no problem.



Hey, I packed all the supplies I could find, Trace. It's not much though.

I'm sure it'll be okay, Keith.
It's only 15 miles. Should only take one night to get there. We'll be in the port by morning.

If you say so.



Now all that's left...
Where's Flora?

.....
.....home...

She went back up to your room, I think.
I'll get her.



Flora, you in there?

Oh! I'll be right down, Keith.

Finally we were on our way again. Out of the old house, and into the Keidran Forest.