

# TWOKINDS

## Chapter Twelve



THE MORNING

No Keidran!

I'm so bored!

Karen, stop it.

It's been over a month. You need to get over this wanderlust of yours.

We're not adventurers. Our place is here in this inn.

But it's so boring!  
It feels like we haven't done anything in four years!

Didn't you have fun chasing Trace around all the time?

Yeah, well, now it's over. So get used to it already.

Augh...

Come on... something... anything exciting happen...

SLAM!

Keidran!

Wolves are attacking the village!! They're trying to kill everyone!

Hurray!

H...hurray?!

Ack! They're here!

W-wait! Can't we talk about this-?

Die, Human!

CRACK!

Alright, the rest of you are ne-

Eh?

Oh, no, not you guys again...

Oh, hey, Mr. Sythe!

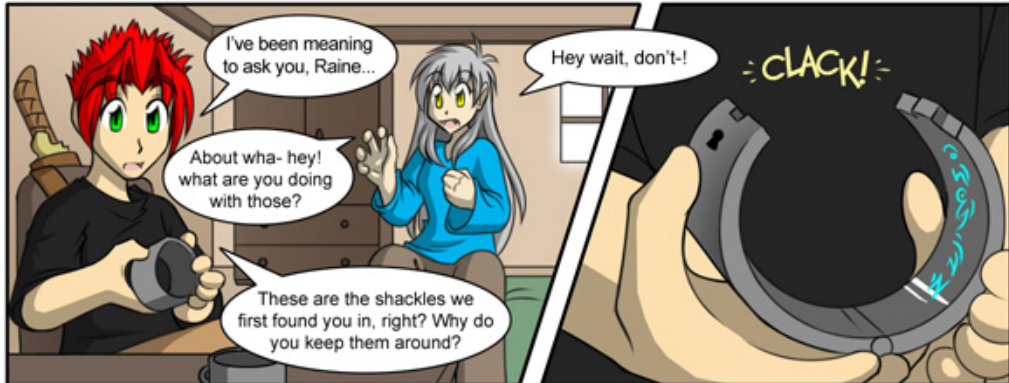
Karen, get down!

Damn it, why did it have to be them?  
The only Humans I actually know...

From that night in the tavern...

Look... you guys should get out of here.  
The others won't hesitate to kill you.

Huh?





Would you guys hurry up? We don't have all day!



Grr...

Maren, why are you even listening to this Keidran? I say we run these beasts through, starting with this one!



Don't be an idiot! You're just one warrior and the rest of the town is lost.

Your priority now should be to get these women to safety!

Be grateful I'm actually helping you escape!



"Helping escape?"



B-Boss!

Sythe, I always knew you were a coward, but now I see you're a traitor as well!

N-no!! I'm not a traitor! I was just... they... uh...



Oh, can't you tell by the ears? We're family. Sythe's my father!

What?!



F-father?!



Not only are you a traitor... you... mated with one of these hairless apes?!



Karen, why are you antagonizing the Keidran?

Because it's fun...  
And now Sythe can't weasel out of coming with us!



I-it's a lie! I swear!  
She... she's five years older than me!



Enough of this!  
Kill them all!

There's no need for violence! We haven't done anything to you! Please...



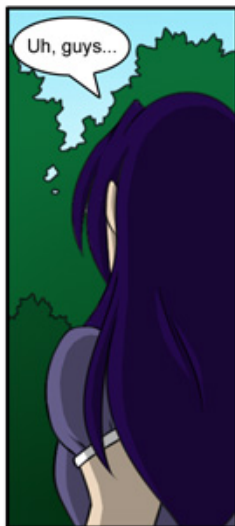
Let us go!



Oops...

Cool!

What the--?  
Stop them!





Should we go after them?

No. We still have orders to carry out.

Mage, contact the others and tell them to send the assassin.



They won't get far...



Deserter?



Yes, we just received news from the front.

The traitor's name is Sythe. Apparently, he eloped with a Human.

Unfortunately, he's also the nephew of someone important, so they want him returned alive if at all possible.

Just make sure they're all silenced one way or another.



I hope you haven't gotten rusty since your injury.

...Zen?



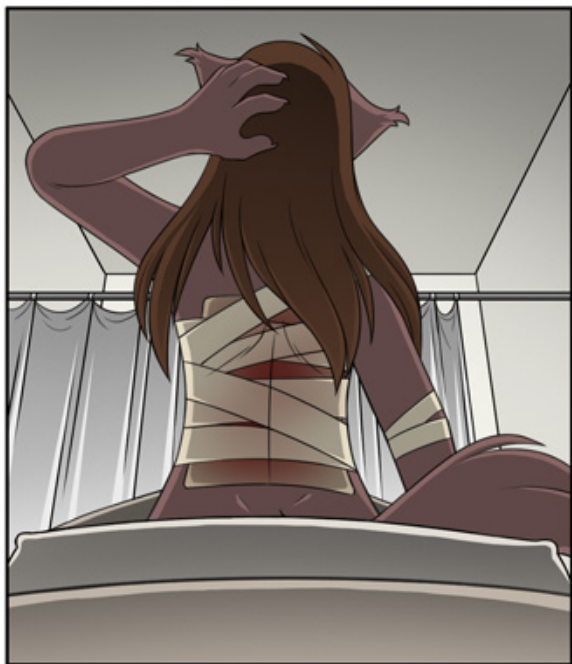
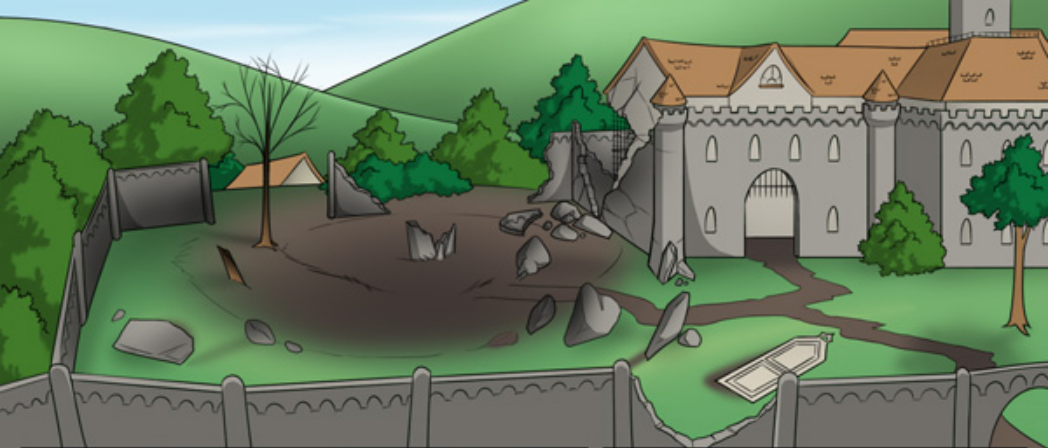
Zen, are you listening to me?

Huh? Oh, right. No problem!

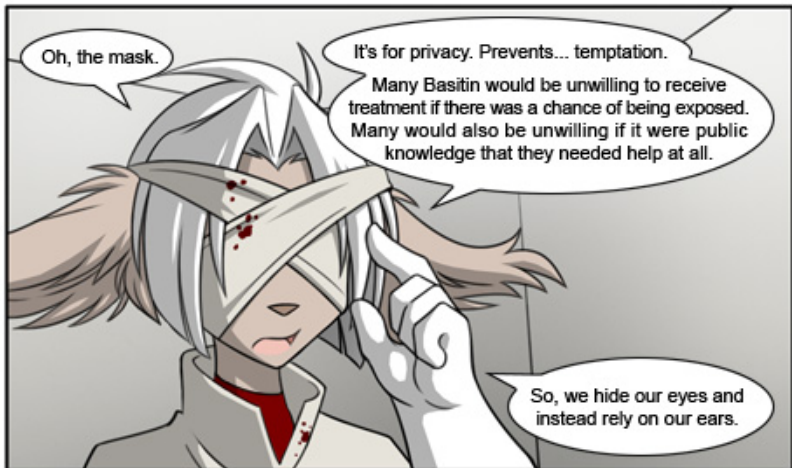


*Sigh*  
Natani, where are you? Why can't I hear your thoughts...









Oh, the mask.

It's for privacy. Prevents... temptation.

Many Basitin would be unwilling to receive treatment if there was a chance of being exposed. Many would also be unwilling if it were public knowledge that they needed help at all.

So, we hide our eyes and instead rely on our ears.



So... you don't know who I am?



Well, I can tell you're a Keidran. And I... noticed you were female once I began examining you.

But beyond that. I don't have information about your identity.

My Lord!  
This man is horribly disfigured! I...

Oh...  
...Oh my...



Phew...

And no one else has been in here?

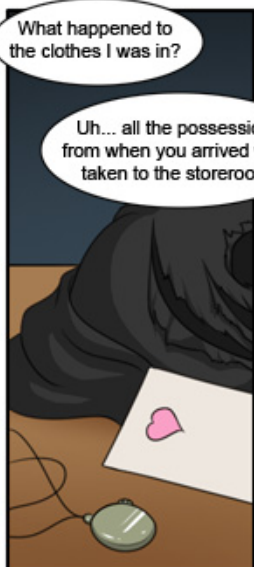
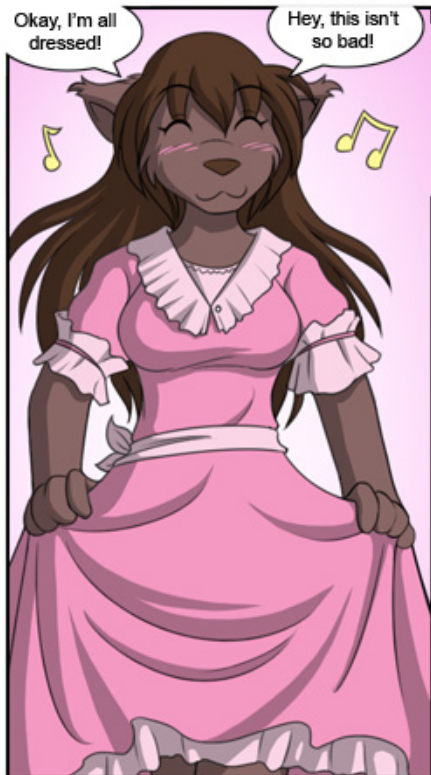


Not since they brought you in.

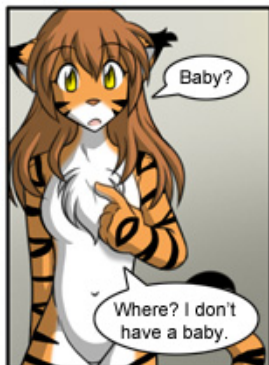
...It is refreshing to see a Keidran that values modesty. I... did not think it was possible for your kind.

I, um... well, there's more work to be done. I... I'd better go...











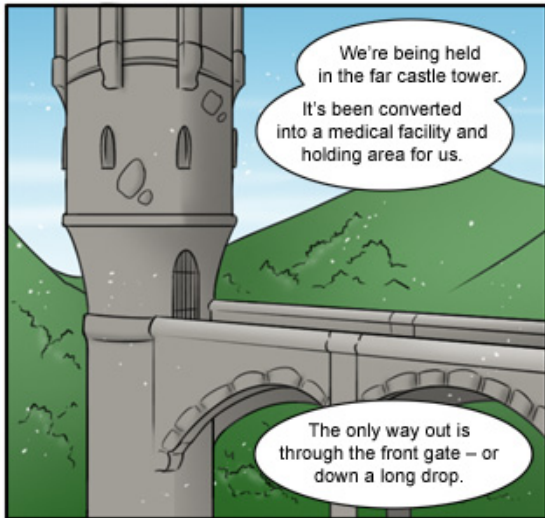
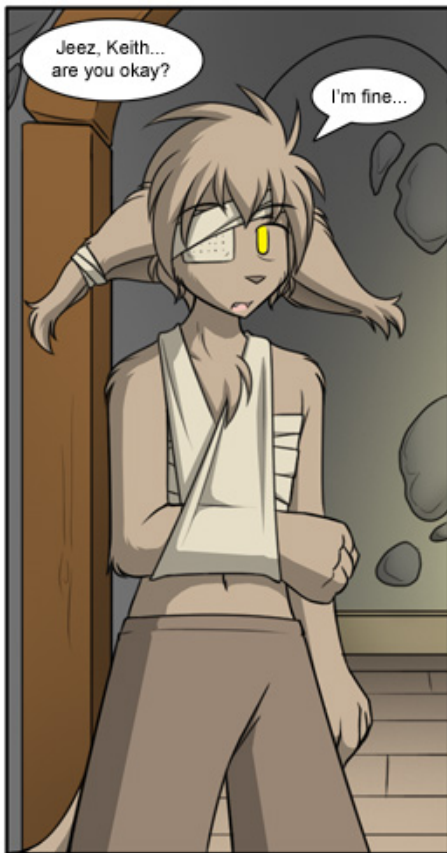
With my stealth skills, I should have no problem—


**NATANI!!**












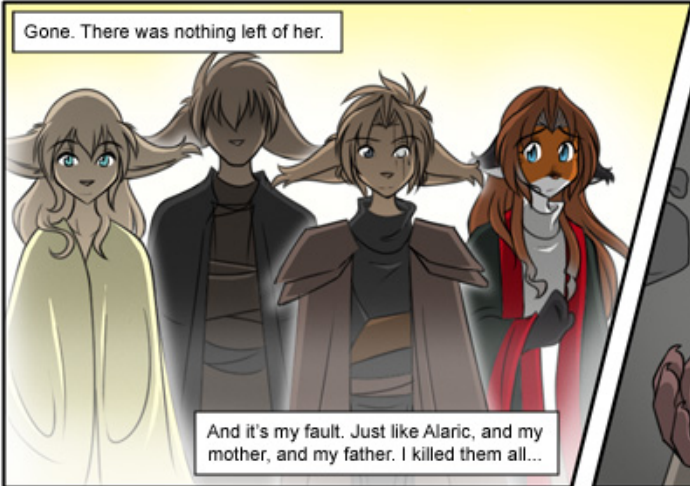
What do you mean  
you're not escaping?



We can't stay here!  
If we don't...  
Laura's dead.




S-she's...!



Gone. There was nothing left of her.

And it's my fault. Just like Alaric, and my  
mother, and my father. I killed them all...



Keith, that's not true!  
You can't just give up!




I didn't say I was!


I just have no reason to  
leave anymore. This place is  
my home, like it or not.

I might have given it  
up again for Laura, but now  
that she's gone...

I will accept the consequences  
of my actions from the new king.

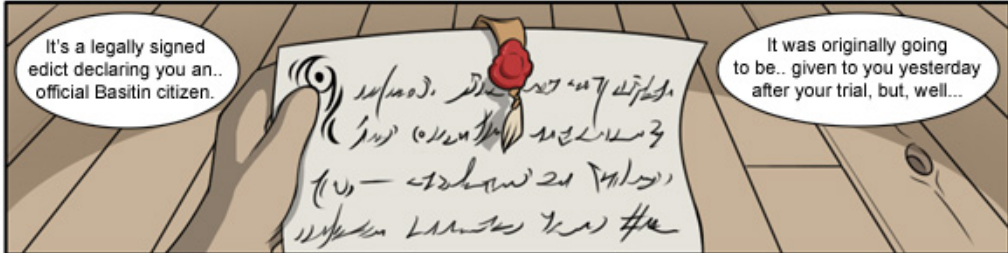


Then perhaps  
you are in luck.




It is I.. Lynn. Do you remember me?

I have a document for you from my master.. General Alaric.




It's a legally signed edict declaring you an.. official Basitin citizen.

It was originally going to be.. given to you yesterday after your trial, but, well...



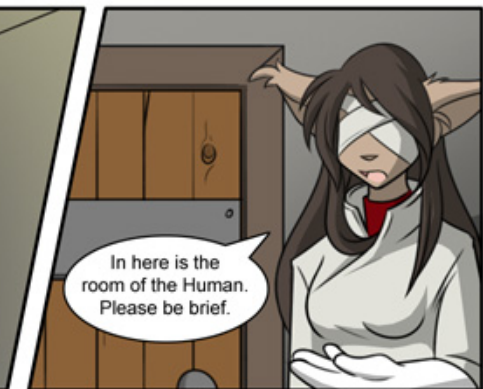
Too little, too late.  
What's the point of having this when they'll just take it away again once I'm executed?

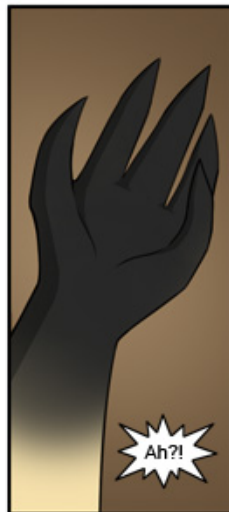


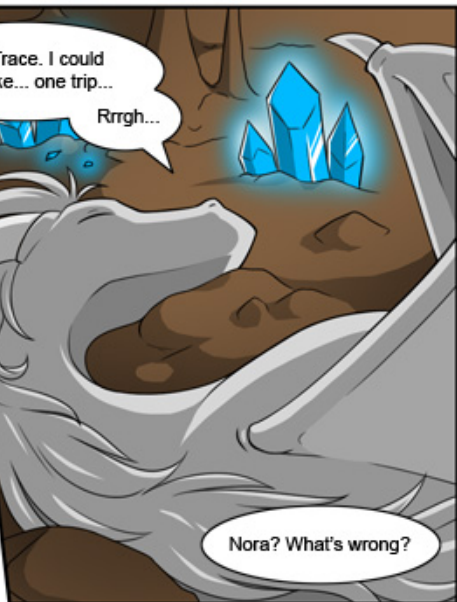
Well, that's.. a depressing way to look at it.

Relax.

Everything works itself out.. eventually.









If I'm the only one here, Flora and the others might still be in danger. I have to go back...

Oh... long drop..



Well, I can just... huh? I can't...

Magic has been disrupted throughout the island as a result of the tower's destruction.

I'm afraid you're without your powers for the time being.

...



Trace... I know you want to help them, but... maybe you could stay here for a while?

At least until I fall asleep...

It would be safe here, and... I'd feel better if I wasn't going into this long sleep alone...



...I'm sorry, Nora. I'd like to help, but I just can't sit here and wait.



Not while my friends need me.

Magic or no magic, I've gotta find them.

...But I'm...



...I understand, Trace.



Meanwhile...



Looks like your  
escort has arrived.

Please get dressed,  
your trial is scheduled  
to begin shortly.



<Hey, wait a minute!>  
<Where are you going,  
Keith? I'm coming too!>



<Stay where you  
are, Keidran!>

<These are  
Basitin affairs.>

<Your kind are  
not welcome.>



Wait! I...  
I'd like to have  
the Keidran as my  
confidant, so that he  
may sit in during  
my trial.



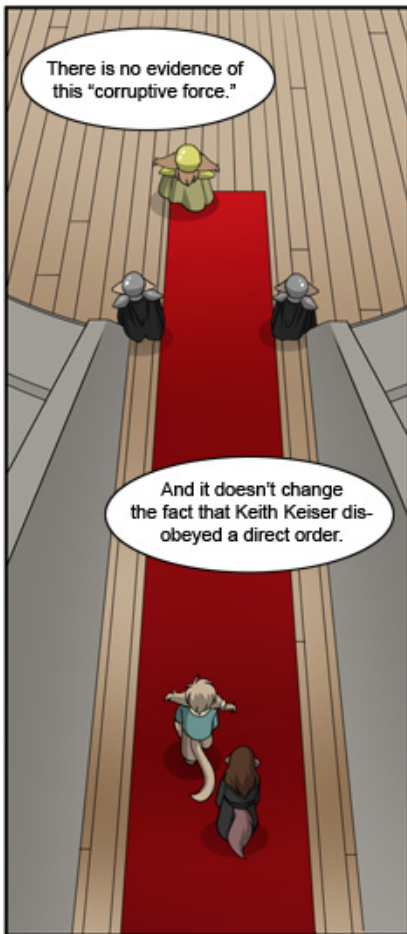
Are you sure about that?  
Having a Keidran there will not  
help your case at all.



Well, to be honest, I  
don't care what any of  
them think anymore.







Keith Keiser, for the second time you stand before this court accused of a heinous crime.

We five have been chosen to determine your guilt, if any, in accordance with Basitin law.

You are charged with the following:

Disobeying a direct order from a superior... trespassing on royal grounds... destroying royal property... committing treason against the Basitin government... and breaking curfew.

Do you understand the charges against you?

Yes...

Then I, Alabaster, hereby bring this court to order.

D-did you just say "Alabaster"?

That's right. I am Lieutenant Alabaster...

...son of the late General Alabaster.

I see you've brought the Keidran with you as well... the one you were ordered to kill.



Are you mocking us by flaunting your disregard for the law in here?

No, of course not...



Then tell us, Young Man, why exactly did you disobey your orders?

Did you have a legitimate reason? A legal precedent?



Ngh...



No, I had no 'legal precedent'.

I didn't follow the orders because... I couldn't do it.

That Keidran, Natani, is the closest thing I have to a friend right now.

There's no way I could kill him.



Sigh...

You were right, Alabaster.

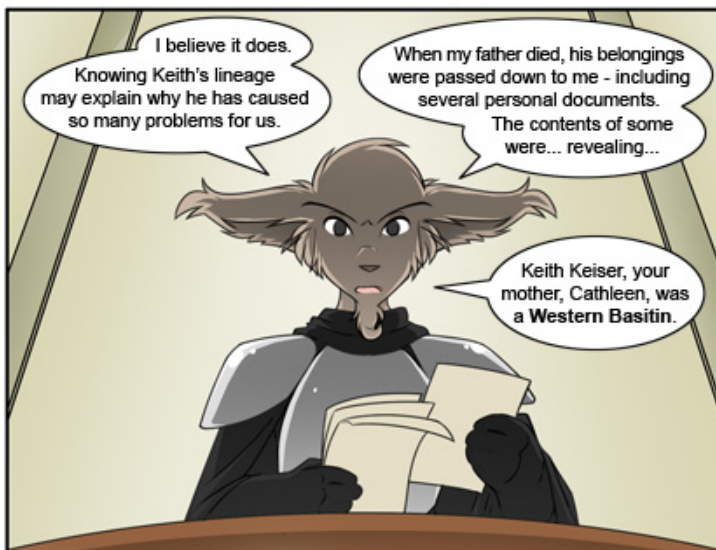
Our predecessors should have seen this coming.


The boy's just too much like his mother.




Wha-?

What does my mother have to do with anything?






...I need to leave  
this place, Albion.




What are  
you talking about,  
Cornelius? Leave  
where?



I'm going to leave the  
island... with Cathleen.

What?!




Suspicion about her origins  
have been growing. Any day now  
I'll be questioned, and I won't be  
able to answer falsely. But...  
maybe if we went to hunt in  
lands we

Listen to yourself!  
Leave the island?!

It's the drink talking,  
you can't be serious!


You'd be disgraced!  
Forever labeled a traitor!



It matters not. I will  
be disgraced either way.  
At least this way, I will not  
implicate her or Keith.

I will leave  
the child here.

He is a weak boy,  
but I've done all I can  
to toughen him.



No...! I can't let him  
destroy himself! Not for  
a Western harlot!

Hello?

Let me in, Cathleen.

General Alabaster?  
It's passed curfew, Sir. It  
wouldn't be decent...

THUD!  
THUD!  
THUD!

And what would you  
know of decency?

SLAM!

I knew it was a mistake the  
moment I forged your papers, but  
I did it for Cornelius' sake...

But now he's planning to throw  
his whole life away because of the  
mistake he made with you!

Well I won't  
allow it!

Ah!

Let go of me!

Aaaaahhhh!



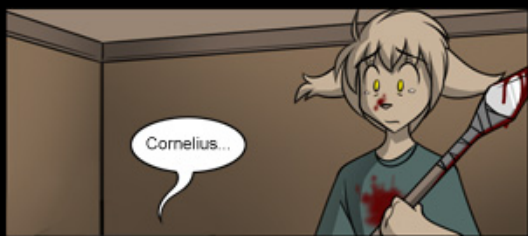


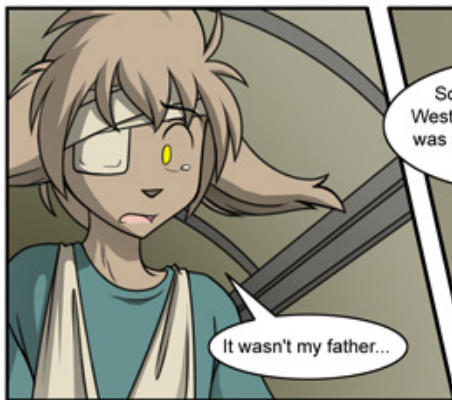
Alabaster claimed that he was forced to kill Cathleen after being attacked unprovoked.



He did not anticipate what would happen after he left...

He did not witness what lead up to Cornelius' death, but his last note detailed the aftermath.





It wasn't my father...



So Keith Keiser is a Westerner, and Alabaster was responsible for what happened.

But what does that mean in regards to this trial?



It shows how Keith is able to act independently.

However...

It also gives motive behind my father's recent actions.

Manipulating Keith's orders, burning down a tavern...

My father hated Keith for what he was, and for killing Cornelius. He was willing to go to any lengths to get rid of him for good.



Keith, are you alright? What did they say?



I think we should recess.

Agreed. We will return after the counsel has had time to deliberate.

Meanwhile...

The whole ship is crawling with Basitins.

I told you we should have taken off when we had the chance!

What were we supposed to do?

It's a shame about Kat, I know. But... The control spells are gone, I can feel it.

If we just took the ship and left... we could be free!

We couldn't just abandon everyone on the island...

Free...?

Did you check everywhere?


Yes, we've cleared the ship. Everything has been accounted for.

PHIEW...


The only things left are those two Keidran talking under the floorboards.








Well, what do you expect us to do? You heard him! They'll kill us!




Oh, come on! Aren't you two the men in this group? Man up!




Look, we're not cowards...

...okay, maybe a little...


...but fighting against the Basitins would be suicide!



Maybe they have a point, Flora... what can we do? None of us are fighters.



Well... I don't know... but the least we can do is buy some time...



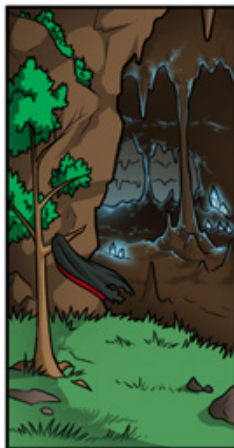
And why should we?

We've got a chance for freedom, and I for one am not giving it up!





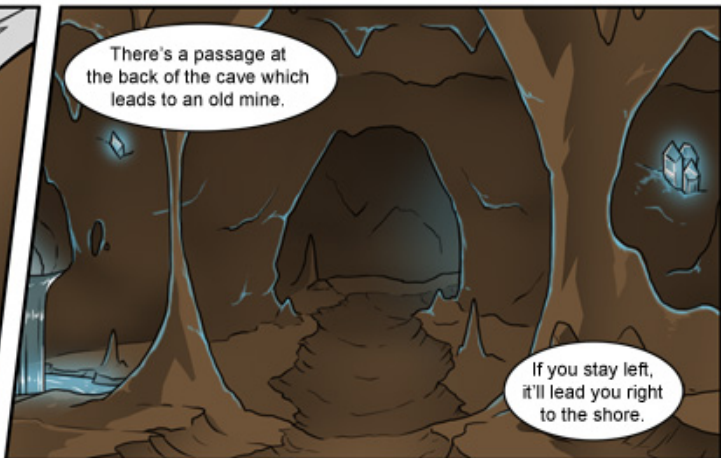






Sigh...

There's a passage at the back of the cave which leads to an old mine.



If you stay left, it'll lead you right to the shore.



There's... you knew about that all along?

Why didn't you tell me before I nearly ran off the cliffs?



I was going to!

But you were in such a hurry to abandon me, I figured you could find your own way off the mountain!

Hmph!



Well, I didn't...

I didn't mean it to come across like that.

My mind was focused on Flora and the others.

But I honestly did not mean to hurt your feelings. I didn't even know a dragon's feelings could... er...

...it's alright. I know, you have new companions now. I can't expect you to forsake your friends for... someone you don't remember.







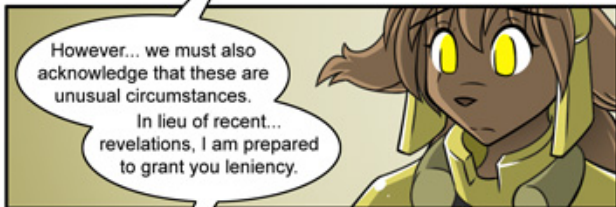
We are prepared to render judgement.



Keith Keiser, you have committed serious crimes that we cannot ignore.

You may have been acting in the best interests of our people when you destroyed the tower...

But the means at which you achieved it cannot go without consequences.



However... we must also acknowledge that these are unusual circumstances.

In lieu of recent... revelations, I am prepared to grant you leniency.



rather than execution, your citizenship will simply not be reinstated.

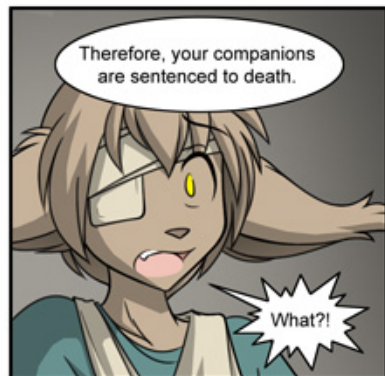
You are once again banished from these islands; this time, without any opportunity to return.

You shall be escorted out the way you arrived, along with the Keidran slaves.



However, this leniency does not extend to the outsiders!

An attack on our people cannot be forgiven.

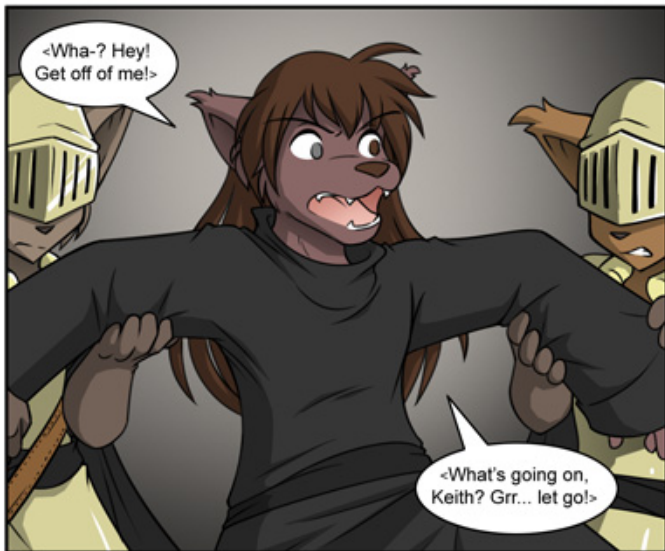


Therefore, your companions are sentenced to death.

What?!



Take the  
Keidran away.  
And escort the  
exile to the docks.



<Wha-? Hey!  
Get off of me!>

<What's going on,  
Keith? Grr... let go!>



You haven't  
given them a trial!

They destroyed the  
tower for the good of  
the Bastin people!

That should count  
for something!



We are not  
obliged to give trials  
to outsiders.

Under the law, destruction  
of government property is a  
crime punishable by death.



Ngh...  
Don't you  
have any minds  
of your own?!



I won't let you  
do this! The laws  
are wrong!



...is this still part  
of the trial?







Erm... was that dramatic enough?

I was told to make it as dramatic as possible...



Messenger Lynn!

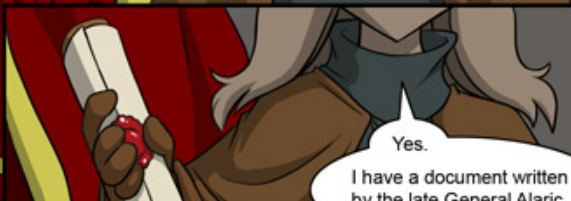
This is an active courtroom. Get out of he- ERK!



Y-your Highness!

Magistrate.

Lynn has informed me that he has important information in regards to this trial. I am here to ensure that it gets heard.



Yes.

I have a document written by the late General Alaric.





My Lady,  
you're okay!

We were told you'd  
been fatally wounded!



The healers feared I would  
succumb to my illness without the  
healing properties of the tower.

They were quick to assure  
everyone I had been killed in the  
blast, to ensure my death would  
be considered "honorable."

Tragically, I survived.



Yes, I'd been told that  
as well. I chose to ignore  
it and continue living.



In fact, I feel stronger  
than I have in years.

Which leads me to suspect  
that my "illness" may not have  
been entirely... natural.

Are... are you suggesting  
the humans were not just alleviating  
the illness, but supplying it?

If this is true... this  
is a call for war!

And it's all the more reason  
why these outsiders should be  
executed! Nothing good comes  
from people of other lands!



I appreciate your  
enthusiasm, Aster...

But you do not  
have the authority to  
make that judgement.





I don't understand...

Is this a joke?  
Keith Keiser has no  
rank or title.

He is not even  
a legal citizen.



Oh, but that's just not true.

When Alaric discovered  
Alabaster's manipulation, he granted  
Keith's citizenship himself.


And since Keith is the only living  
Basitin to return from the outside world,  
Alaric decided his experience would  
make him worthy of promotion.



That's not how it works!

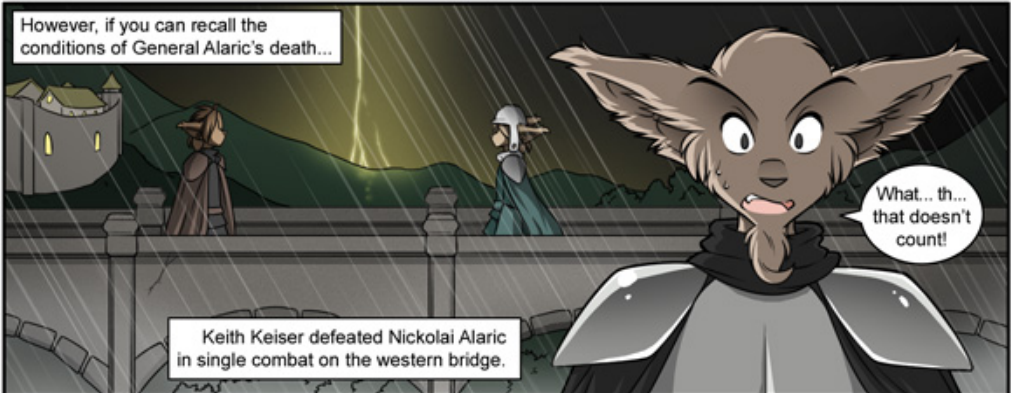
Rank is not something you're  
handed! It can only be earned through  
strength of body or will of mind!

And Keith Keiser has neither!




I think you underestimate  
our wayward brother.  
But you are correct.

The law states rank  
can only be earned through  
succession or combat.



However, if you can recall the  
conditions of General Alaric's death...

Keith Keiser defeated Nikolai Alaric  
in single combat on the western bridge.



What... th...  
that doesn't  
count!



I won't accept it!

That challenge cannot be considered legitimate! No one witnessed it happen!  
For all we know, *the Keidran* murdered Alaric with sorcery!



I witnessed it!



Erk! You?



Yes, I was asked to document everything. I gave it to the wolf.

<Excuse me, Confused Wolf...>  
<Do you happen to still have the document you were given?>

<Huh?>



<I have no "document.">



<Well, unless you mean this thing.>



Madelyn Adelaide  
482-7-11-11-11  
1407 St. Mary's Lane  
L... ..  
- Mrs. ♥ Madelyn Adelaide

On the 28th of August, Year 482, I, Lieutenant Madelyn Adelaide, witnessed a duel between Keith Keiser and Nickolai Alaric... and it was awesome! You should have seen it. At first, Keith was all like "oh noes!" but then he



This is insanity...

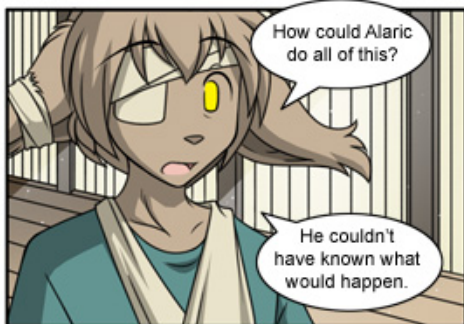
Can't you people see what's going on? Alaric is making a mockery of our government just to get Keith into power!

We cannot allow this!



...You're telling me this runt... this bastard child of a Westerner... the boy who helped murder my father *just yesterday*, is now going to represent our entire civilization to the rest of the world?!

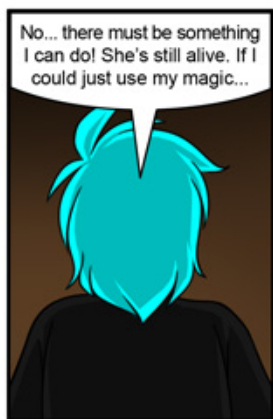




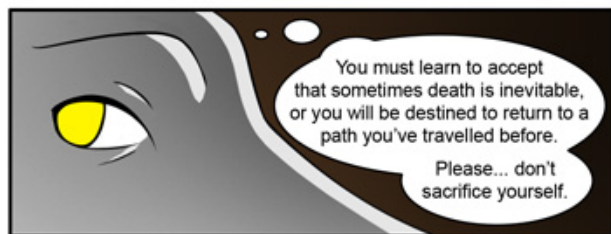
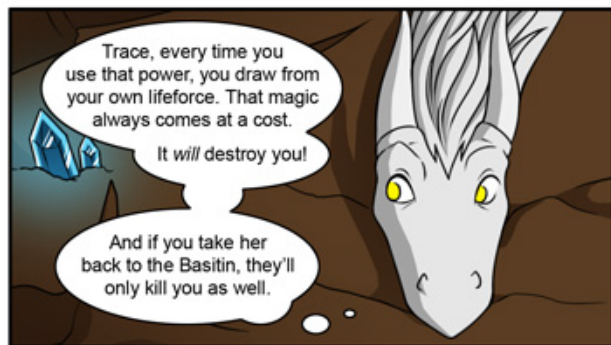
The day you were banished, Alaric devoted himself to avenging you. He drafted hundreds of documents that exploited every loophole in the system. It was the very reason he became a general. He was obsessed with bringing you back, and the idea that those who had cast you out would one day be forced to acknowledge you.

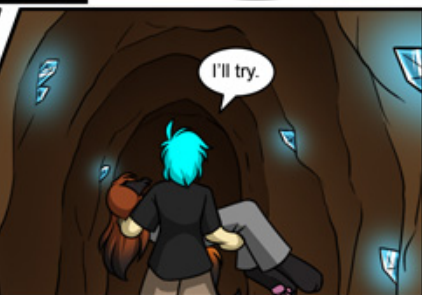




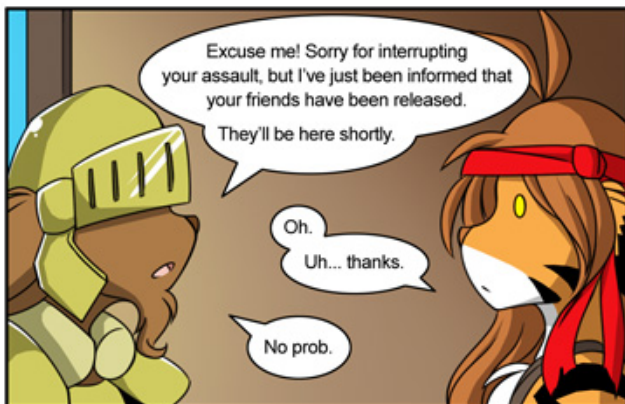














Your Highness, I must protest!



The slaver I can understand, and maybe even the Keidran Spy, but releasing the Templar?

You saw all the destruction he caused first-hand! He cannot be allowed to go unpunished!



Enough, General.

Keith Keiser explained that the human was just as manipulated as we were.

I saw the chains and the look in his eyes, and I'm inclined to believe that. He was a man possessed by evil magic.

Now let it go.

Ngh...



Sir!

Huh? Me?

We've just received word that a human has been spotted on the outskirts of the city.

Should we apprehend him?

Human? Trace?

Uh... no, just escort him to the ship, I guess.



Yes, Sir. Shall we do the same for the vixen he is carrying?

What?!

Meanwhile...

...and then they just started leaving.

I have no idea why, but it seems like they're letting us go now.

Huh...

Say... isn't that your boyfriend out there?

Seems like he's leaving too.

Zen, if you use that word one more time I-! Hey! Where's he going?!

Keith, wait!  
What's going on?

I don't have time to explain! Just get to the ship. I have to go!

But my... I can't! the others would... Arg! Get back here!

There he goes...

Sigh... what do I do now?

Woah! Hey, Nat, who's the huge Basitin lady?

That's probably the "King" I mentioned earlier. Didn't expect him to be a woman, eh?

<To be fair, I didn't expect it from you, either.>



W-what do you mean? I'm.. totally a guy.



Really? Your scent suggests otherwise, but I could be mistaken.

Our noses are not as sensitive as yours.

Er, yeah! you must be mistaken...



At least that's what I'd say if I didn't already know four females were treated at the infirmary.

It's not that hard to figure out we're missing one.

D'oh!



So, erm... I don't suppose you're going to tell anyone?

Of course!

Blarg!

But I am curious...



Keidran culture is something we do not make efforts to understand, and I feel it is a shame.

Is there a reason why you pretend to be male?

I'm not pretending! but... it's a long story...



Well, perhaps you can tell me. And perhaps I might be too busy to correct the error in our records.

