

GOLD DIGGER NO. 52

FRED PERRY



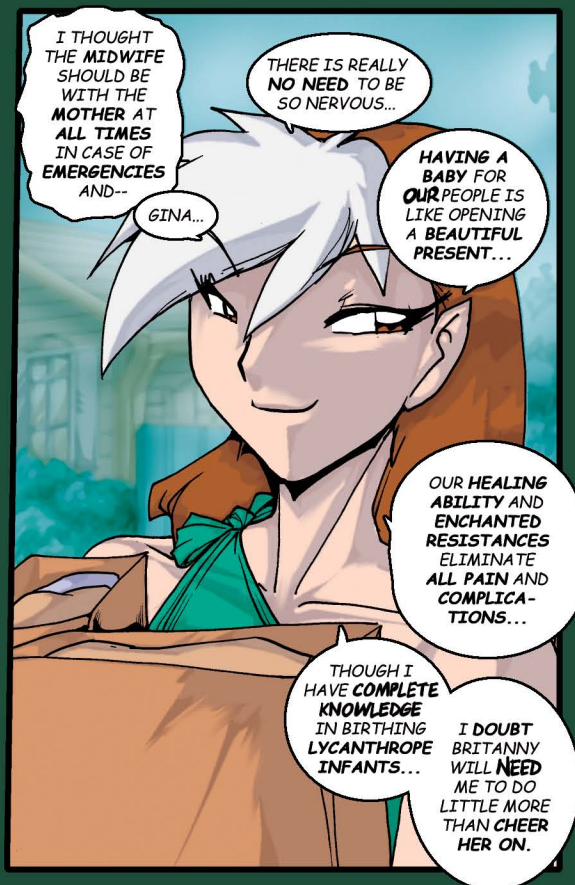
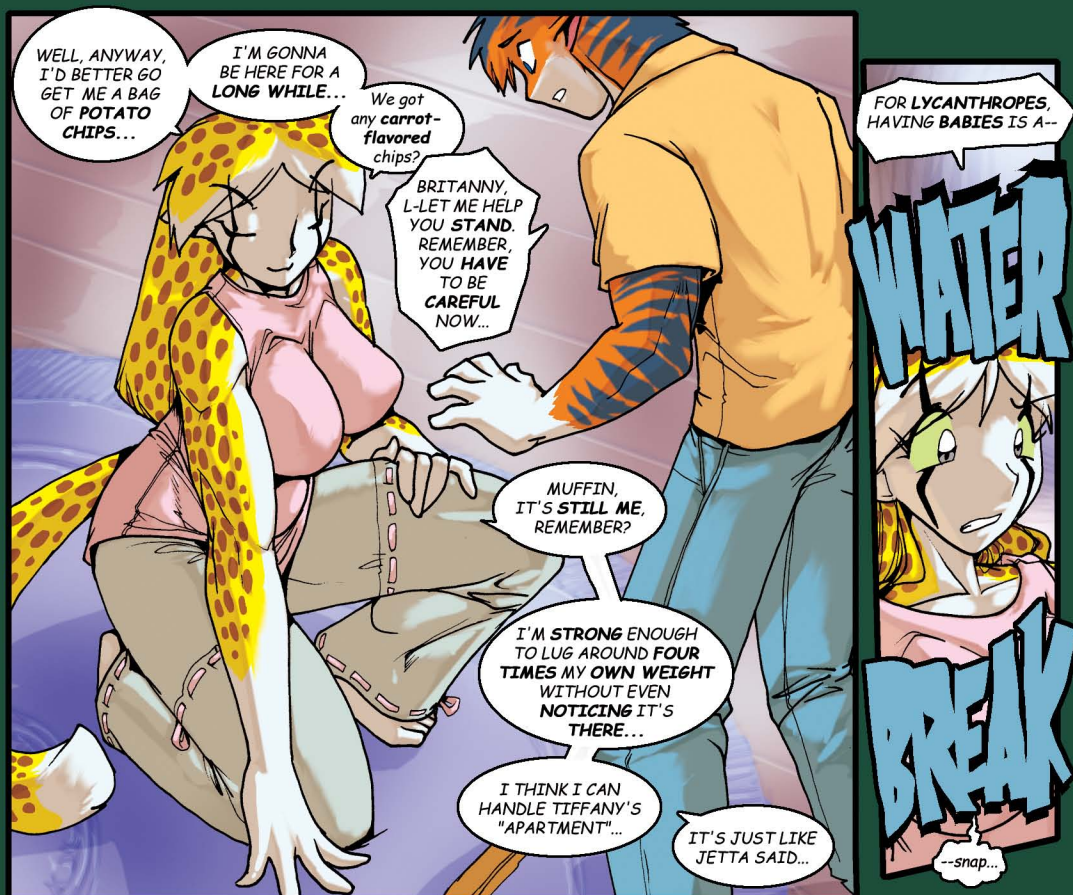
GOLD DIGGER



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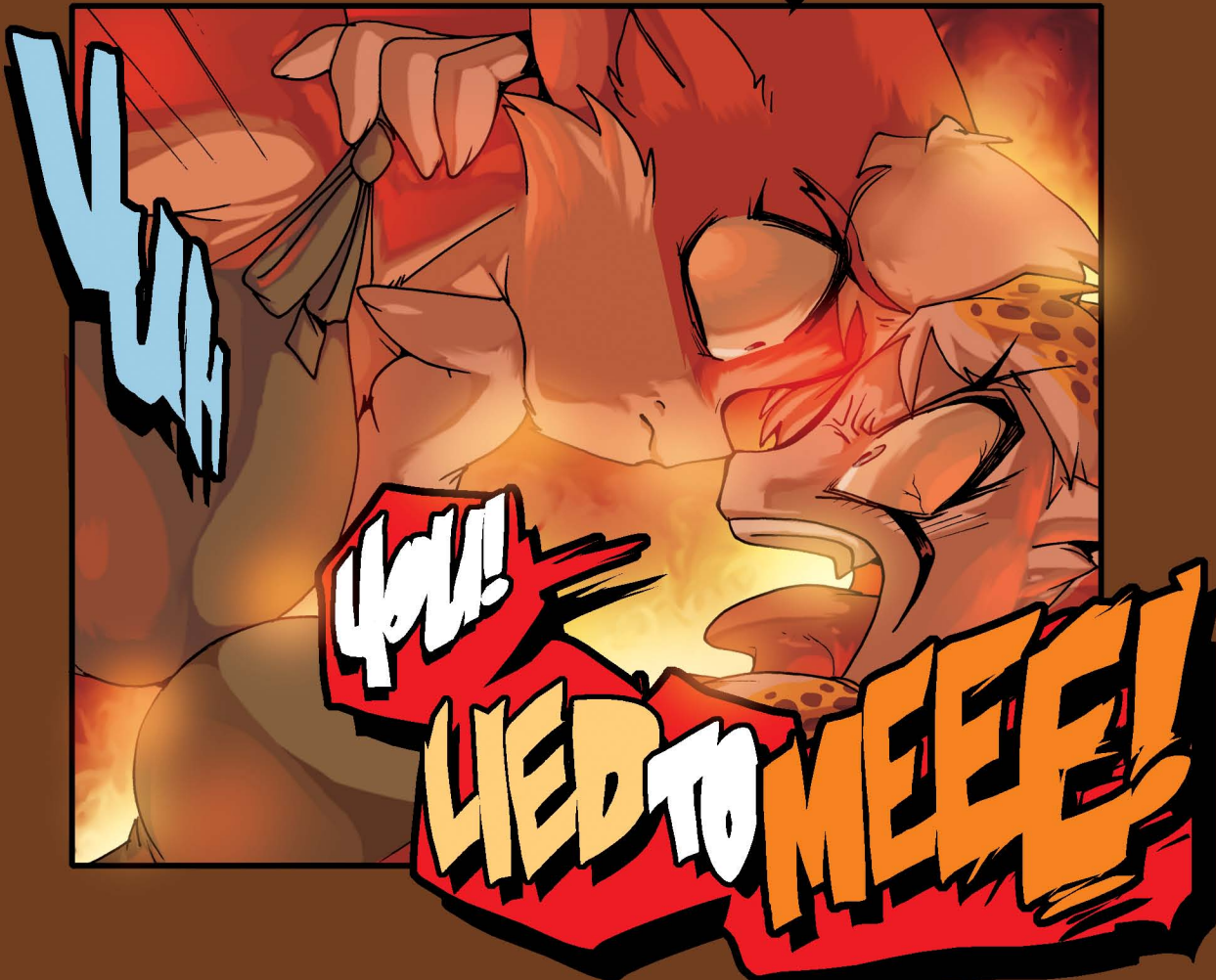
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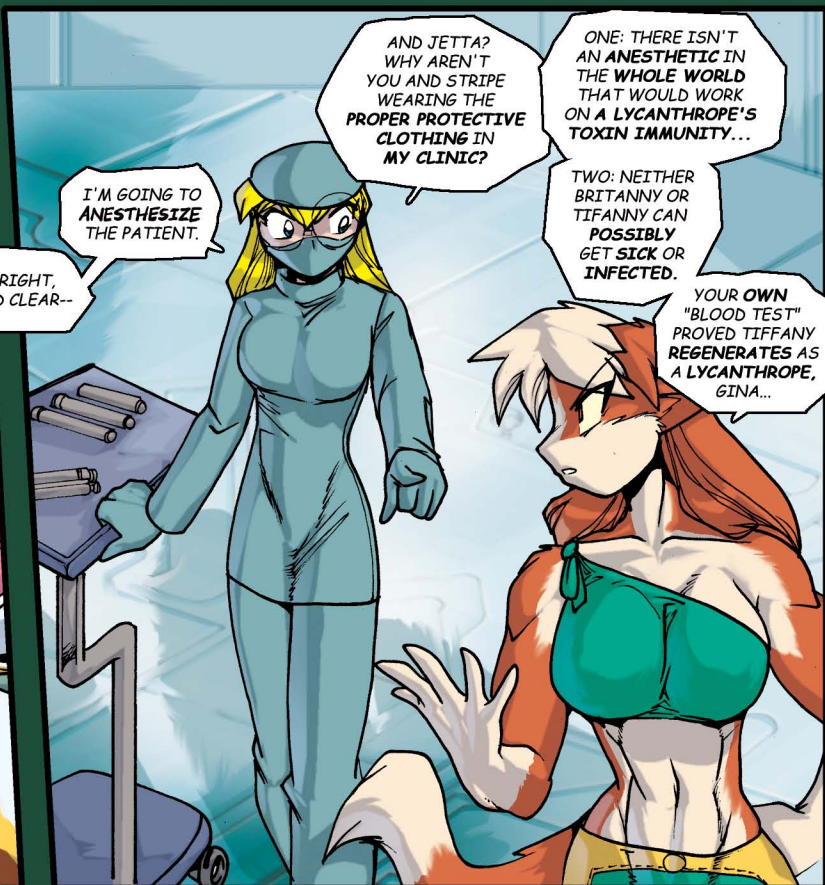
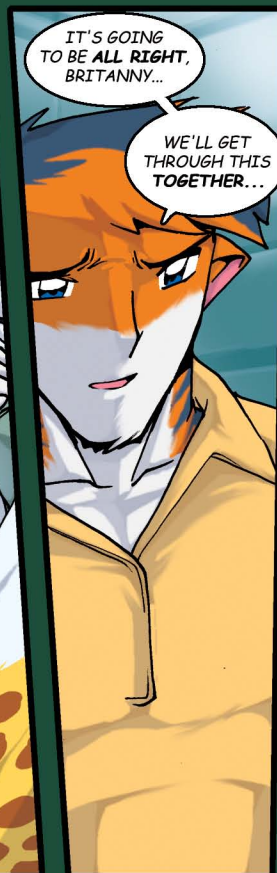




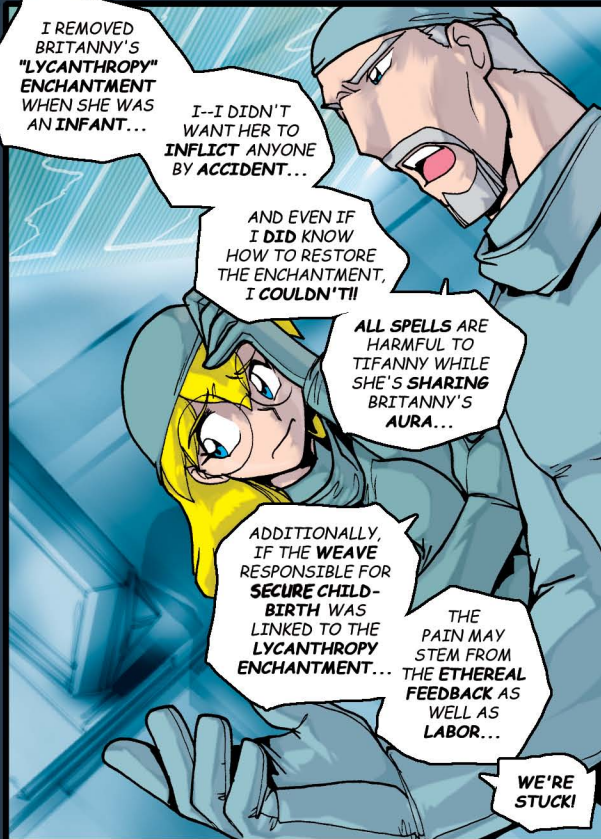


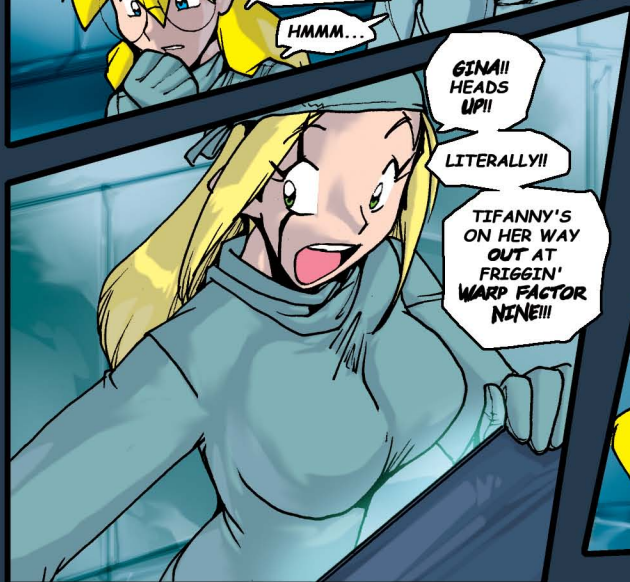


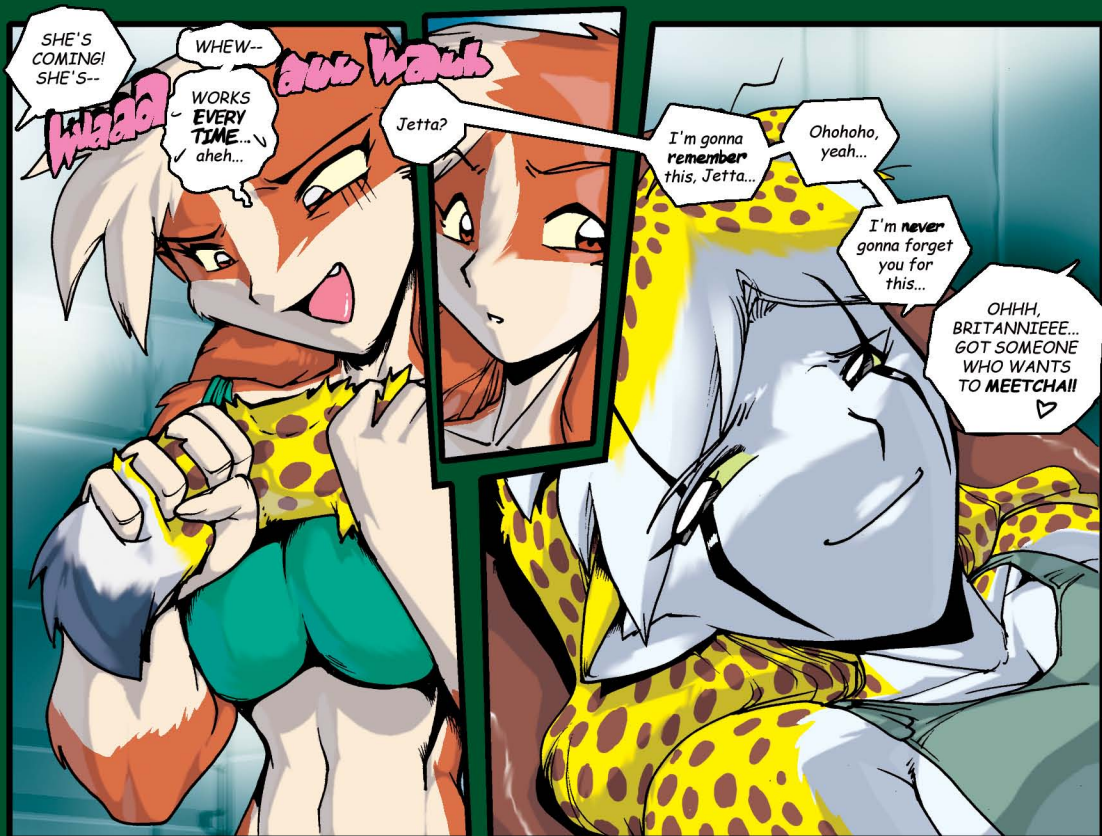
















Koan!



ISN'T THIS ACTIVITY OF YOURS A BIT CHILDISH FOR THE QUEEN OF ALL VAMPIRES, NATASHA?



IF THE REALM OF THE UNDEAD'S **UNDISPUTED RULER** CAN'T HAVE A LITTLE FUN DEGRADING HER **FORMER MASTER**, THEN WHAT'S THE **POINT**, VLAD?

ALTHOUGH HE IS STILL AS **INDESTRUCTIBLE** AS HE WAS WHILE RULING THE REALM AS THE "**LICH KING**"...

THE **POINT** IS THAT **DIGGERS** IS NO MORE POWERFUL THAN A **LOWLY ZOMBIE** NOW...



THE **POINT** IS THAT HE **SHOULD** BE BENEATH YOUR **PERSONAL, ROYAL ATTENTION**...

YOU **APPEAR PETTY**.

OTHER VAMPIRES ARE BEGINNING TO "**TALK**"...

REALLY, VLAD...

...WHEN HAVE I EVER GIVEN A **DAMN** TO WHAT **ANYONE ELSE** THINKS OF ME?

I'M **QUEEN**, AND MY ATTENTION CAN **FOCUS** ON **ANYONE I PLEASE**, AND THAT'S THE **END** OF IT.



AND NOW THAT I **THINK** OF IT...

I **HAVEN'T** FOCUSED MY ATTENTION ON **YOU** ALL EVENING, **VLADIMIR... DARLING...**

AND AS MUCH AS I **RELISH** THE OPPORTUNITY TO **INDULGE** YOUR **APPETITES**, MY **QUEEN...** I MUST **DECLINE** TONIGHT.



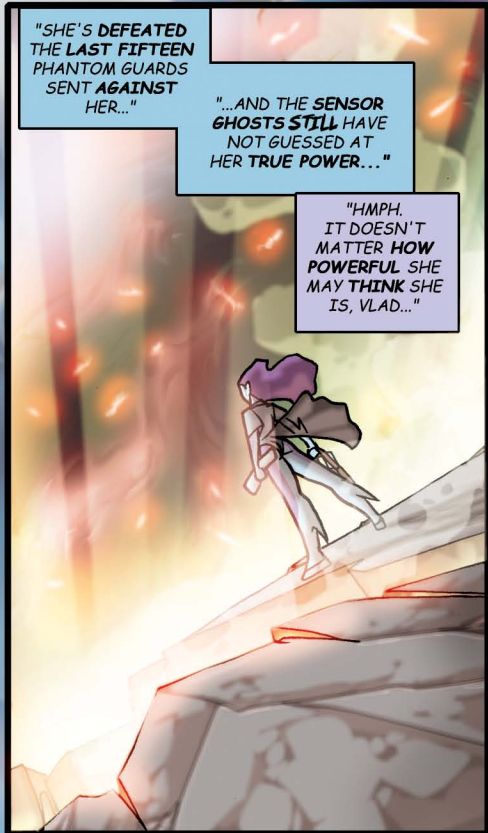
.....
YOU MIGHT WANT TO **RETHINK** YOUR **REPLY, VLAD...**

WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE "**FIELD-GOAL**" **PRACTICE** INSTEAD...

MY **QUEEN**, YOUR **PLEASURE** COMES **SECOND** ONLY TO YOUR **SECURITY** FOR ME.

I'VE BEEN **PERSONALLY** TRACKING AN **INTRUDER** RECENTLY.

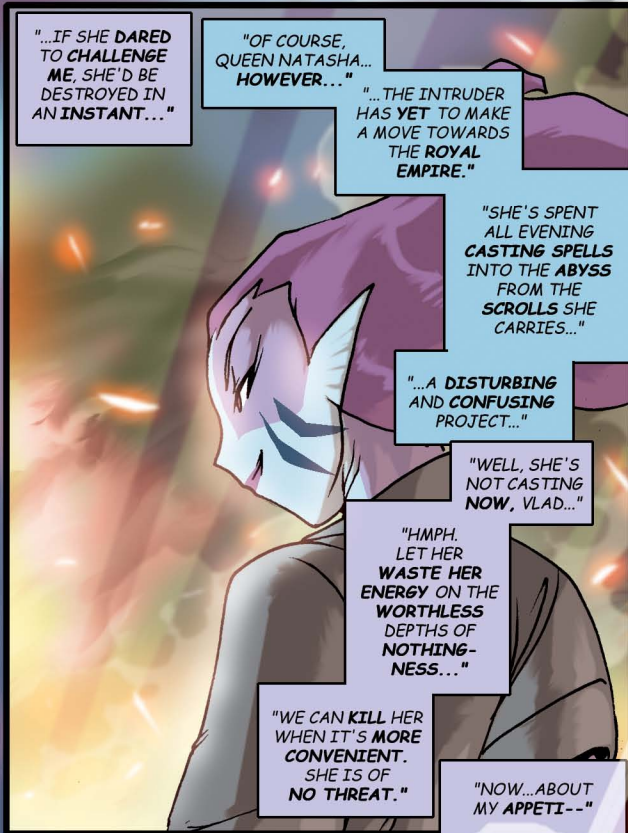
OBSERVE THE **SCRYING CRYSTAL**...



"SHE'S DEFEATED THE LAST FIFTEEN PHANTOM GUARDS SENT AGAINST HER..."

"...AND THE SENSOR GHOSTS STILL HAVE NOT GUESSED AT HER TRUE POWER..."

"HMPH. IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW POWERFUL SHE MAY THINK SHE IS, VLAD..."



"...IF SHE DARED TO CHALLENGE ME, SHE'D BE DESTROYED IN AN INSTANT..."

"OF COURSE, QUEEN NATASHA... HOWEVER..."

"...THE INTRUDER HAS YET TO MAKE A MOVE TOWARDS THE ROYAL EMPIRE."

"SHE'S SPENT ALL EVENING CASTING SPELLS INTO THE ABYSS FROM THE SCROLLS SHE CARRIES..."

"...A DISTURBING AND CONFUSING PROJECT..."

"WELL, SHE'S NOT CASTING NOW, VLAD..."

"HMPH. LET HER WASTE HER ENERGY ON THE WORTHLESS DEPTHS OF NOTHINGNESS..."

"WE CAN KILL HER WHEN IT'S MORE CONVENIENT. SHE IS OF NO THREAT."

"NOW...ABOUT MY APPETI--"







WH-WHAT...
WH--
WHERE AM--
I...

I WELCOME
YOU **BACK**
FROM THE BRINK
OF **OBLIVION**,
MASTER
GYPHON.

I AM
PLEASED TO
SEE MY EFFORTS
HAVE REVIVED
YOU.

YOU ARE NOW
IN THE REALM
OF THE UNDEAD...
A SINGLE STEP
AWAY FROM
HOME...

DYRANNA...
MY LOYAL
SERVANT...



I AM CONFUSED...
HOW DID YOU
ENLIST THE POWER
TO REVIVE ME?

POWER I,
EVEN WITHIN
THE SHELL OF
THE MIGHTY
ARMAGEDDON,
LACKED...

I HAD
HELP.
I HAD
THESE!

MANA
SCROLLS.



THOUGH
LIMITED TO
A SINGLE USE
PER DAY...

THEY POSSESS
TREMENDOUS
POWER OVER
THE FORCES OF
MAGIC...

I... **PROCURED**
THEM FROM THE
SECRET LIBRARIES
OF THE **WERE-RAT**
ELDERS ON
EARTH...

WHO UNDOUBTEDLY
STOLE THEM FROM
SOMEONE ELSE...



HMHMM...

AS
RESOURCEFUL
AS EVER,
DEAR SLAVE.

BUT HOLD...
IT SEEMS THE
DENIZENS OF
THIS BONE-PIT
APPROACH...

...HOW
FORTUNATE.
ARMAGEDDON
HAS NEEDED
TO FEED FOR
QUITE A
WHILE...

BONE DRAGONS
TO THE FRONT!!

PREPARE TO
UNLEASH
FLAME-
STRIKES...

HEY!
WE DO
KNOW OUR
JOBS,
HERE...

SHE'S
TRYING TO
SHOW OUT
FOR THE
QUEEN.

HEH...
LIKE SHE'S
EVER GOING TO
BE PROMOTED...

LOOK AT
THE SIZE
OF THAT
THING!

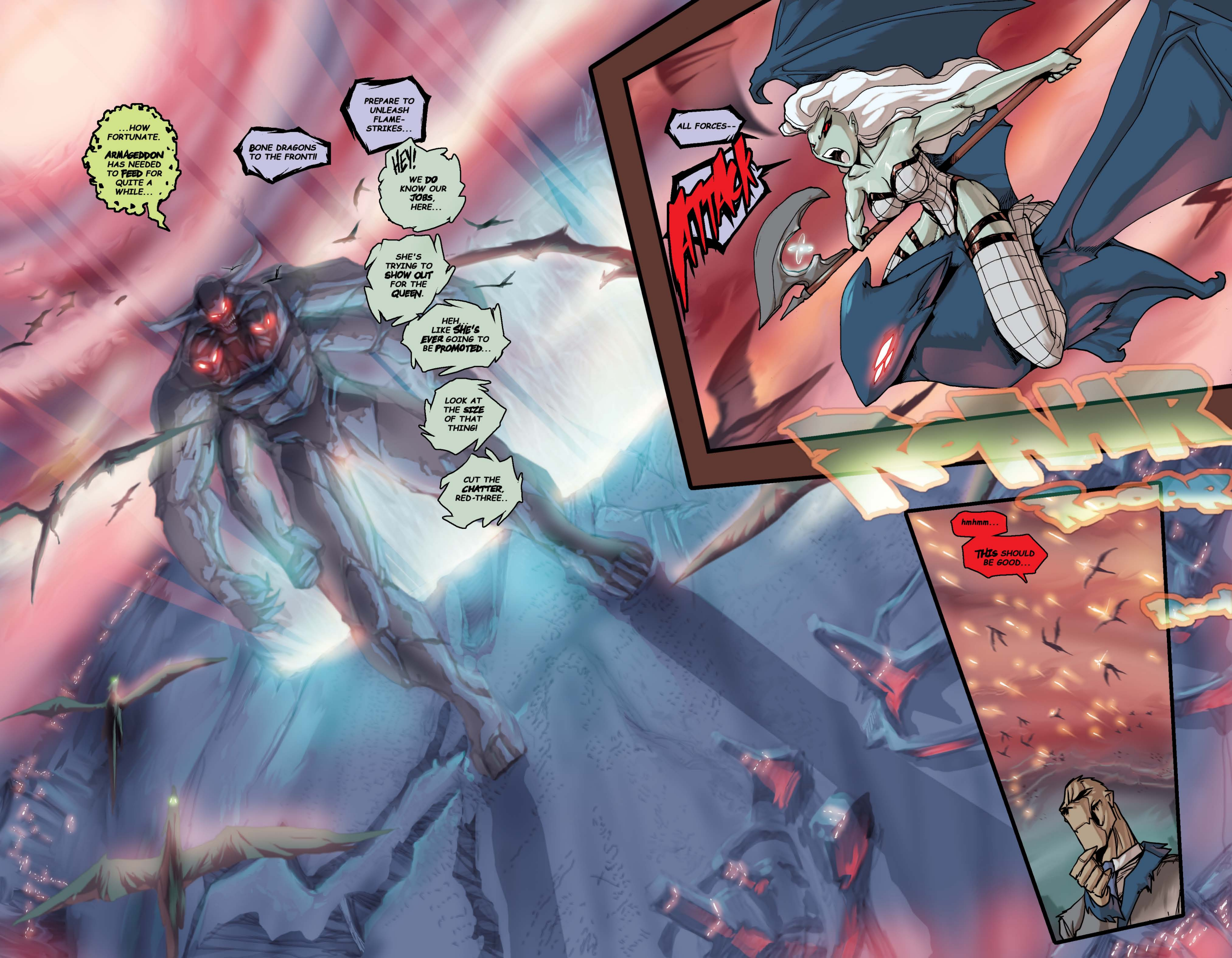
CUT THE
CHATTER,
RED-THREE...

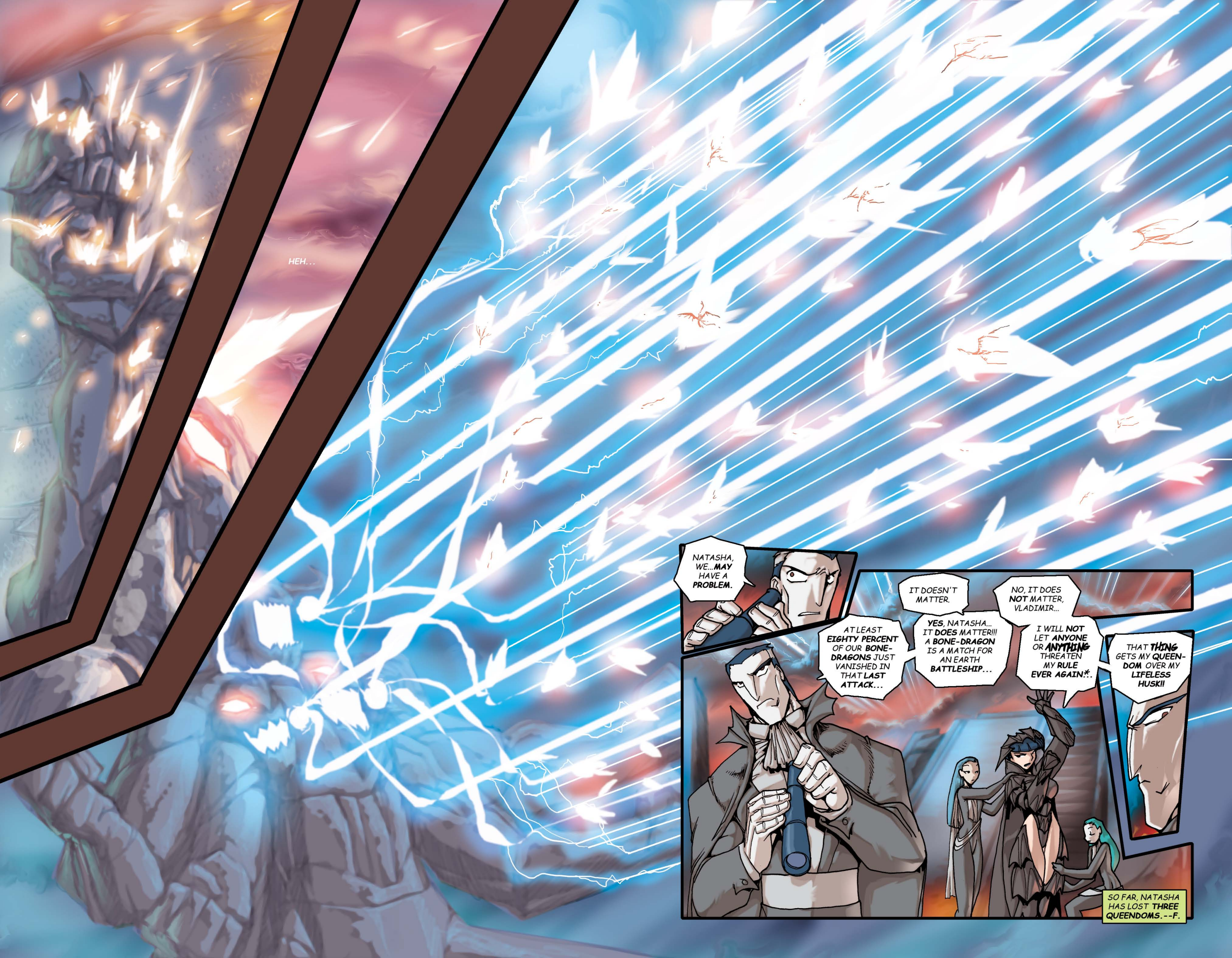
ALL FORCES--

ATTACK

hmm...

THIS SHOULD
BE GOOD...





HEH...

NATASHA,
WE...MAY
HAVE A
PROBLEM.

IT DOESN'T
MATTER.

NO, IT DOES
NOT MATTER,
VLADIMIR...

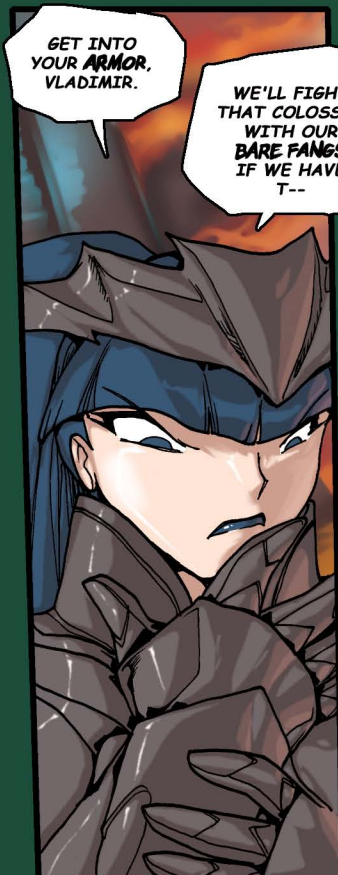
AT LEAST
EIGHTY PERCENT
OF OUR BONE-
DRAGONS JUST
VANISHED IN
THAT LAST
ATTACK...

YES, NATASHA...
IT DOES MATTER!!!
A BONE-DRAGON
IS A MATCH FOR
AN EARTH
BATTLESHIP...

I WILL NOT
LET ANYONE
OR ~~ANYTHING~~
THREATEN
MY RULE
EVER AGAIN*..

THAT ~~THING~~
GETS MY QUEEN-
DOM OVER MY
LIFELESS
HUSK!!

SO FAR, NATASHA
HAS LOST THREE
QUEENDOMS.--F.



GET INTO
YOUR **ARMOR**,
VLADIMIR.

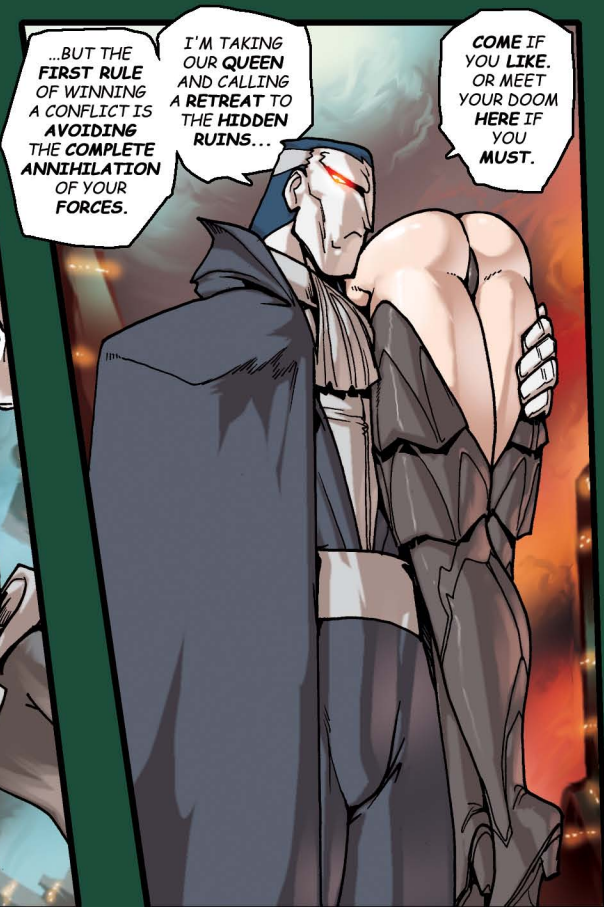
WE'LL FIGHT
THAT COLOSSUS
WITH OUR
BARE FANGS
IF WE HAVE
T--



**QUEEN
NATASHA!!**

YOU ARE
BOTH MORE
THAN WELCOME
TO FOLLOW OUR
QUEEN'S LAST
ROYAL ORDER,
SQUIRES...

...MARCH
BLINDLY INTO
BATTLE AND
CERTAIN
DESTRUCTION...



...BUT THE
FIRST RULE
OF WINNING
A CONFLICT IS
AVOIDING
THE **COMPLETE**
ANNIHILATION
OF YOUR
FORCES.

I'M TAKING
OUR **QUEEN**
AND CALLING
A RETREAT TO
THE HIDDEN
RUINS...

COME IF
YOU LIKE.
OR MEET
YOUR DOOM
HERE IF
YOU
MUST.



BUT IF YOU
SEEK TO **STOP ME**
FROM SAVING MY
NATASHA...

W-WE UNDER-
STAND, LORD
VLADIMIR...

WE WILL
SOUND
THE **RETREAT**
IMMEDIATELY.



HAHAHAH...
THEY'RE
RETREATING,
MASTER...

I DOUBT THEY'LL
WILLINGLY SERVE
SUCH A LARGE
"BANQUET" FOR
YOU AGAIN...

HMPH...
AN "APPETIZER."
YOU MEAN...

THOUGH THE
DESTRUCTION
HAS RESTORED
SOME OF MY
POWER...



...I AM EAGER
TO RETURN
HOME...
TO ATLANTIS...

...TO BEGIN
THE TRUE
FEAST...

AND
SO WE SHALL,
MASTER...

THIS NEXT
SCROLL HAS
MORE THAN
ENOUGH
POWER TO--



SCROLLS ARE
WONDERFUL
TOOLS OF
MAGIC, ARE
THEY NOT?



WHAT?
WHO IS
DOWN
THERE?

I SENSE
NO POWER
LEVEL...

WONDERFUL
TOOLS,
INDEED.



WITHIN A
SCROLL, A WIZARD
STORES ALL OF THE
ETHER AND KNOWLEDGE
NECESSARY TO CAST
ANY SPELL HE
KNOWS...

WITH A SCROLL,
ANYONE CAN CAST
A SPELL...



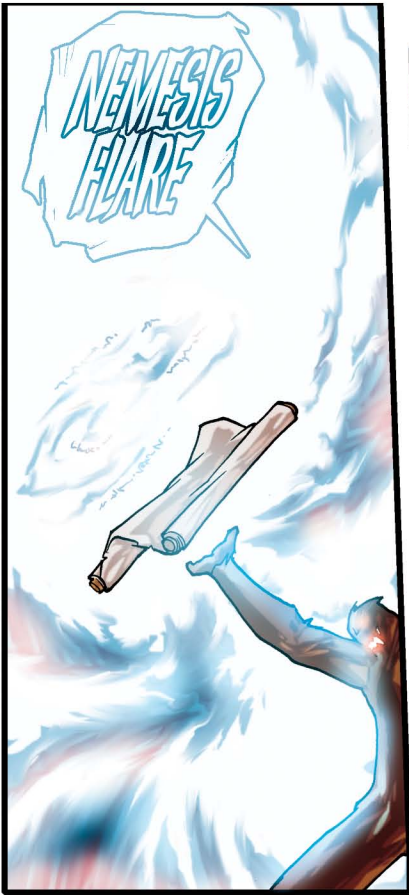
...IF YOU CAN
READ IT...

HOWEVER...
MANA-SCROLLS...
ARE IN A CLASS
ALL THEIR
OWN...

NOT ONLY
ARE THEIR GIFTS
CONTINUALLY
REGENERATING...



THEY ALSO
HEED THE
CALL OF
THEIR
AUTHOR...



By the way... if anyone
was wondering which spell
locked Leon Diggers in for
the job as "Lich King", that
was it... F.



...now
then...
...where
was I...

S-SIRE...
P-PLEASE...



SPARE MY
LIFE...
I BEG OF
YOU...

SPARE
YOUR
LIFE?

Hmhmhm,
MY DEAR...

YOU'VE GIVEN
ME A SHOT AT
MY "SECOND
CHANCE"...



I WOULDN'T
DREAM OF
TAKING YOUR
LIFE NOW...

YOUR BRINGING
MY SCROLLS HERE
ALLOWED YOU TO
MANIFEST ONE OF
THE GREATEST
DIVERSIONS
THIS REALM
HAS EVER
SEEN!

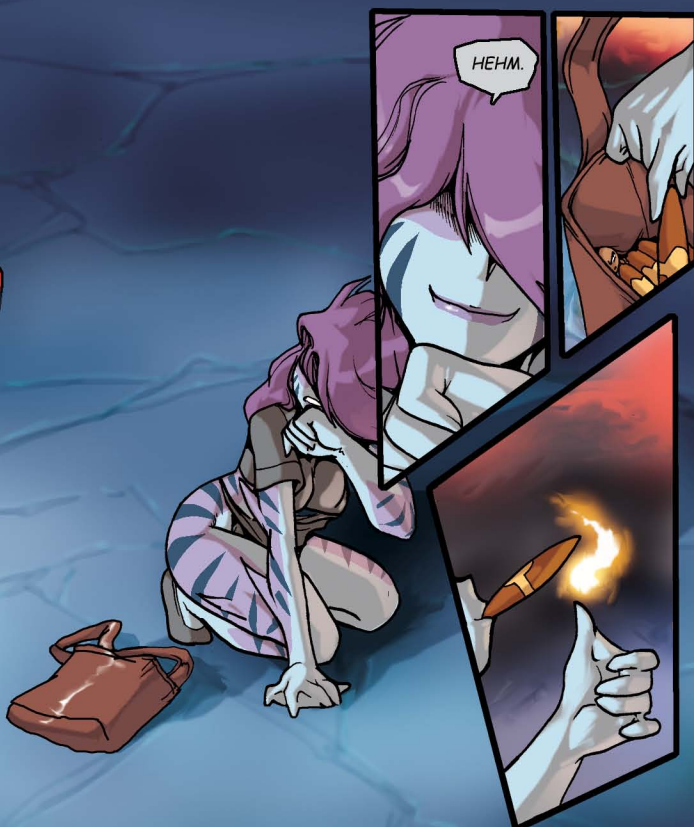
THROWING
EVERYTHING
INTO TOTAL
CHAOS WHICH
CREATED A
SINGULAR
OPPORTUNITY
FOR ME...

DO YOU THINK
FOR ONE INSTANT
THAT I WOULD HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO CLAIM
THESE SCROLLS
WERE IT NOT
FOR THE ANARCHY
YOUR ARRIVAL
CAUSED?

HMHMHMM...
THIS COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN
BETTER IF I
HAD PLANNED
IT...

NOW, IF
YOU'LL EXCUSE
ME, I HAVE
A RAT'S NEST
TO KICK OVER
ON EARTH-
REALM FOR
MY REMAINING
THREE SCROLLS.

FAREWELL,
AND GOOD
LUCK WHEN
THE VAMPIRES
RETURN.
hmhmhm



HEHM.



I LOVE IT
WHEN A
PLAN COMES
TOGETHER.

END.