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FRED  
PERRY

# GOLD DIGGER

15th Anniversary  
1991-2006

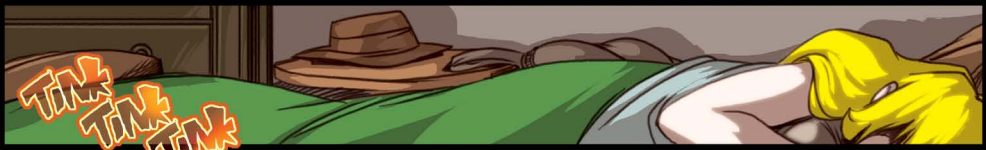


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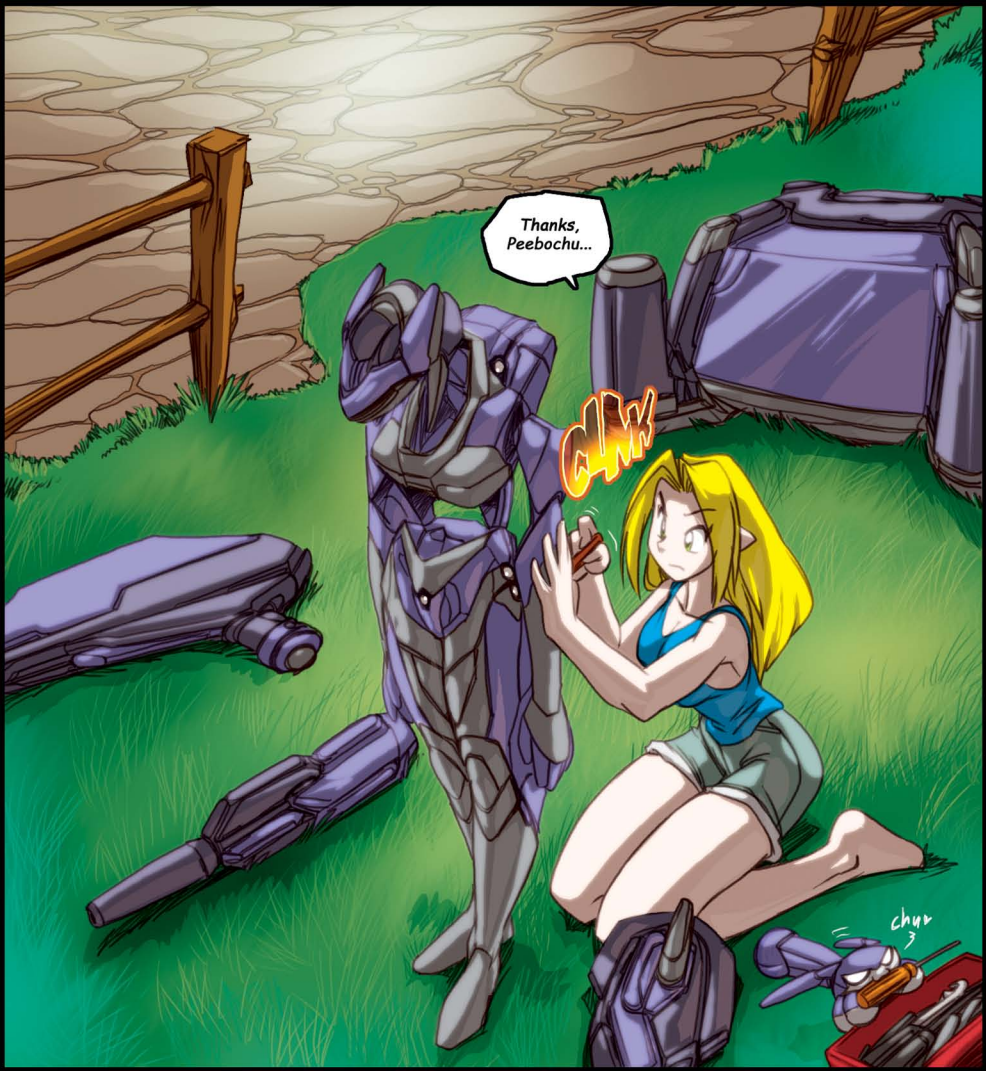
APRIL 2006

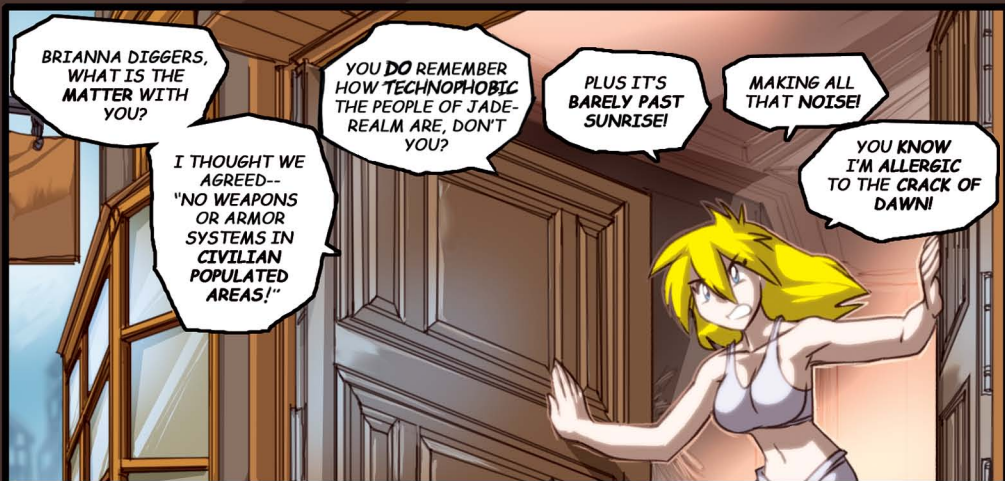


Mermaid's Rest Inn: Port Arn...

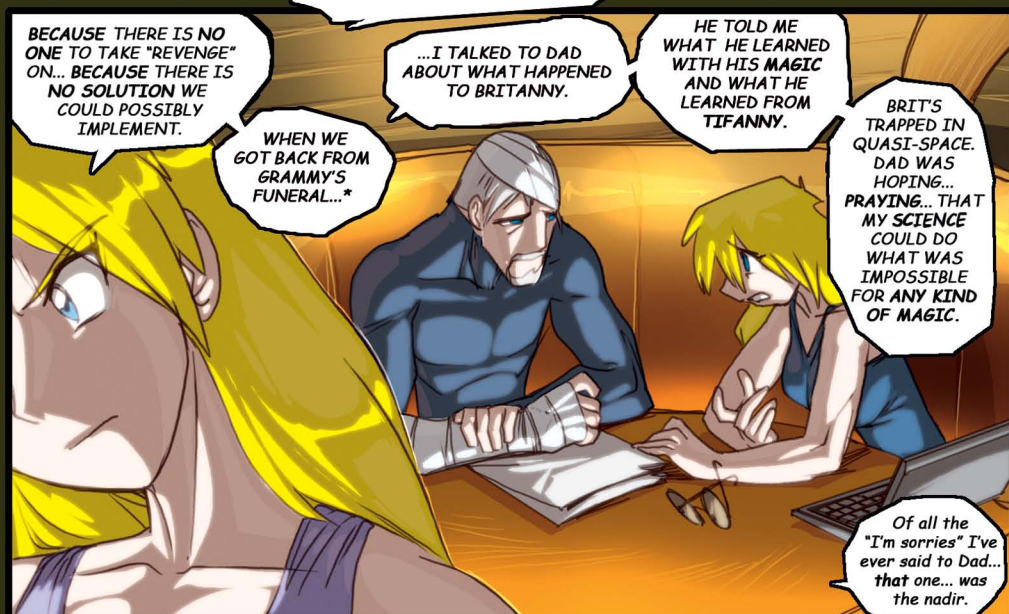
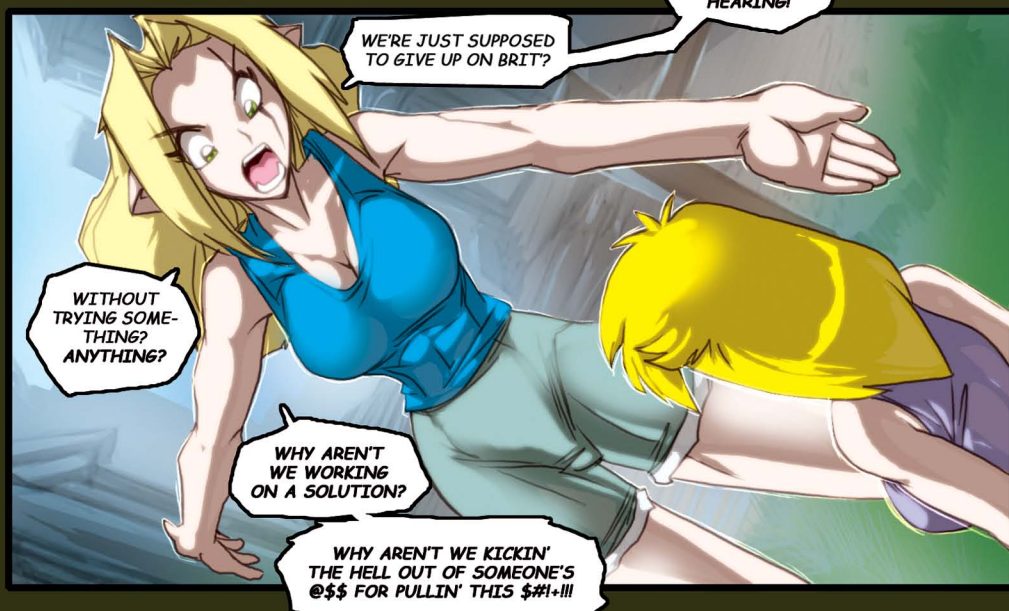


...Jade Realm.













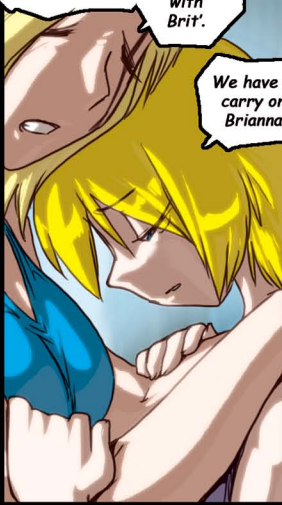


Gina...oh, Gina...  
they're gone.

n-No more stories  
from Grammy.

No more  
racing  
with  
Brit'.

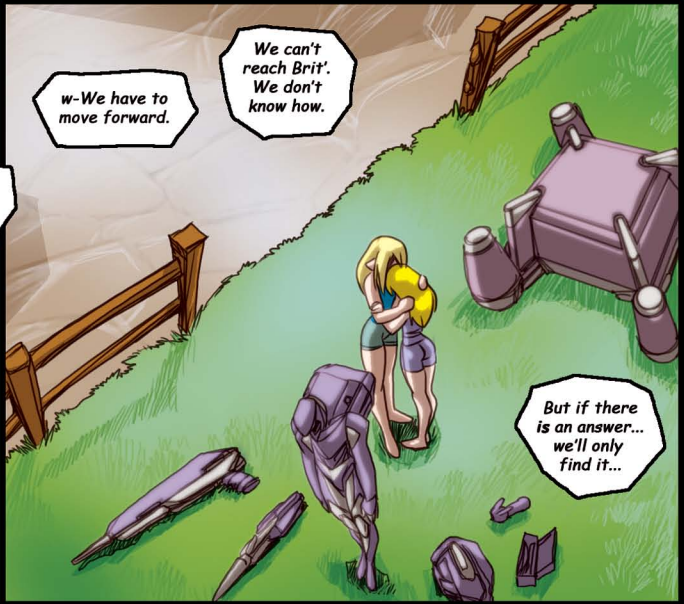
We have to  
carry on,  
Brianna.



w-We have to  
move forward.

We can't  
reach Brit'.  
We don't  
know how.

But if there  
is an answer...  
we'll only  
find it...



...if we  
carry  
on.

SO, MYRIA...

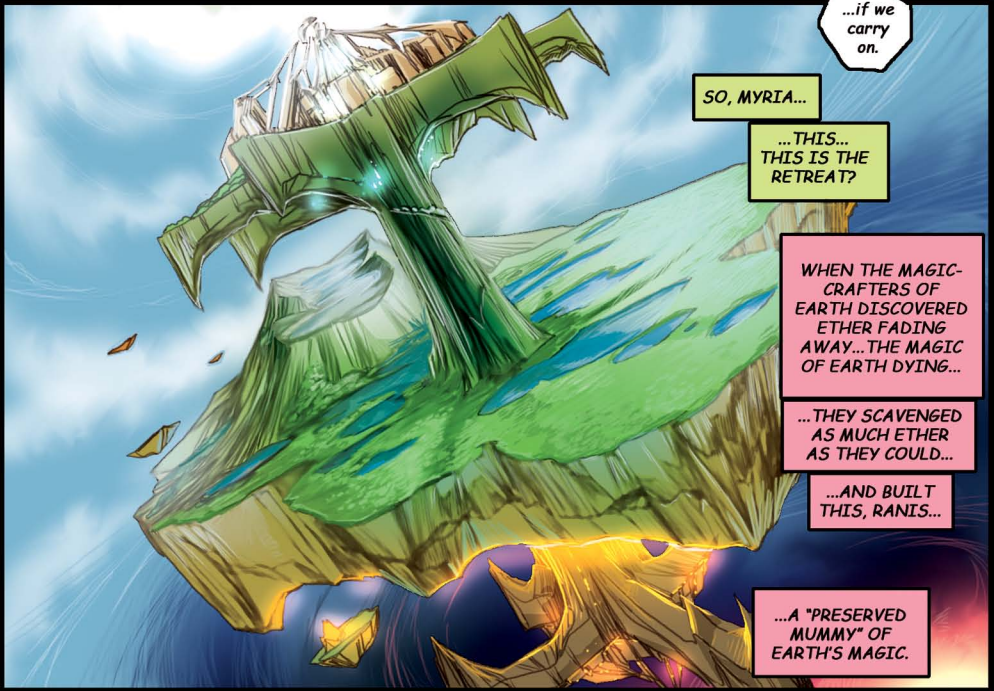
...THIS...  
THIS IS THE  
RETREAT?

WHEN THE MAGIC-  
CRAFTERS OF  
EARTH DISCOVERED  
ETHER FADING  
AWAY...THE MAGIC  
OF EARTH DYING...

...THEY SCAVENGED  
AS MUCH ETHER  
AS THEY COULD...

...AND BUILT  
THIS, RANIS...

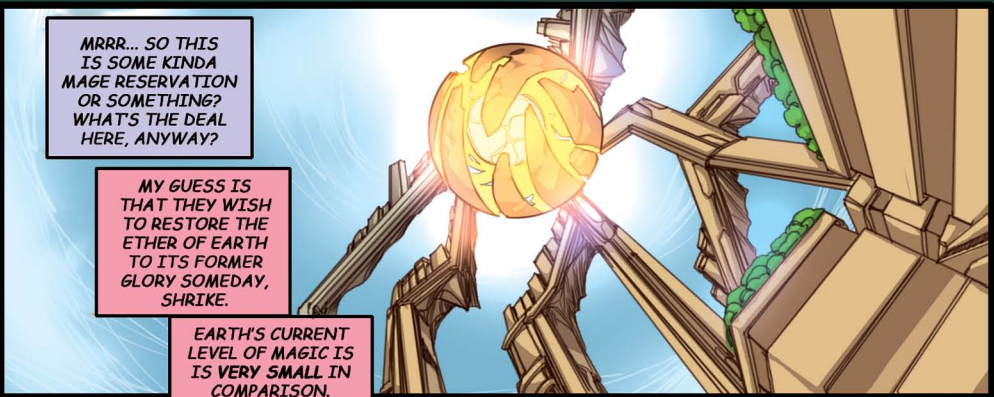
...A "PRESERVED  
MUMMY" OF  
EARTH'S MAGIC.



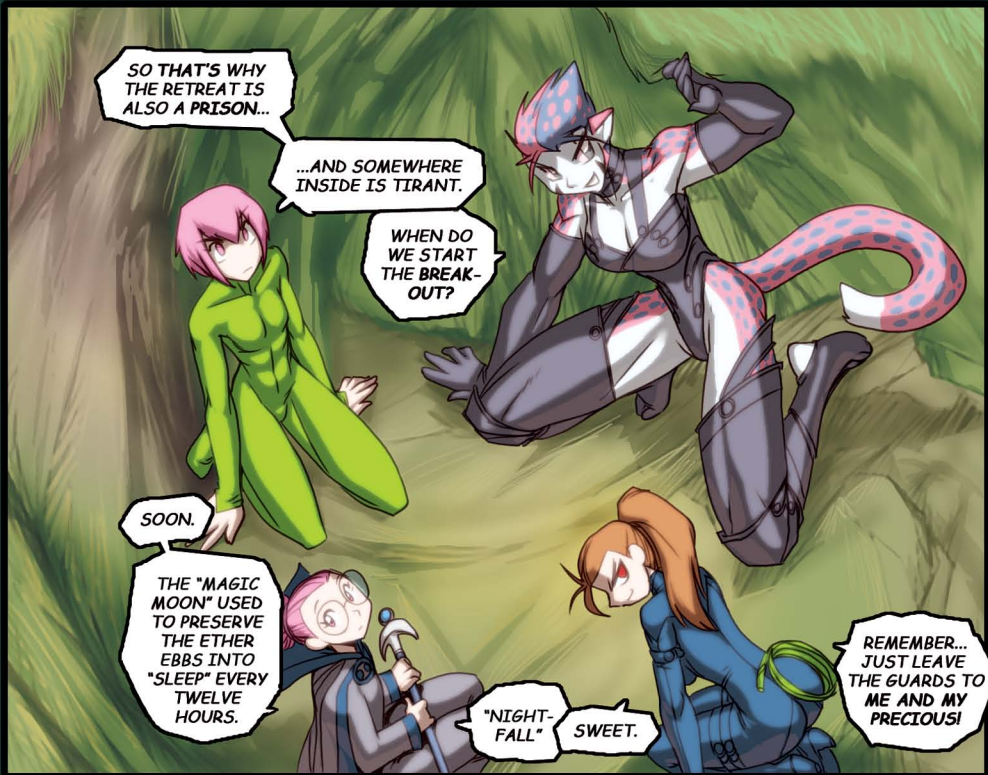
MRRR... SO THIS  
IS SOME KINDA  
MAGE RESERVATION  
OR SOMETHING?  
WHAT'S THE DEAL  
HERE, ANYWAY?

MY GUESS IS  
THAT THEY WISH  
TO RESTORE THE  
ETHER OF EARTH  
TO ITS FORMER  
GLORY SOMEDAY,  
SHRIKE.

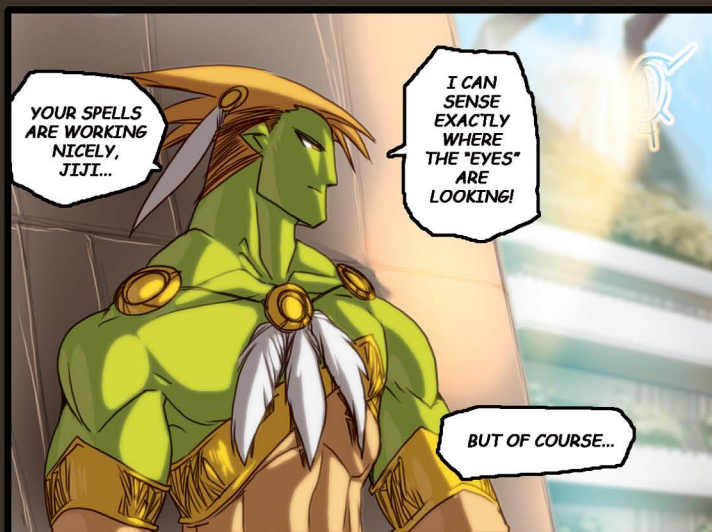
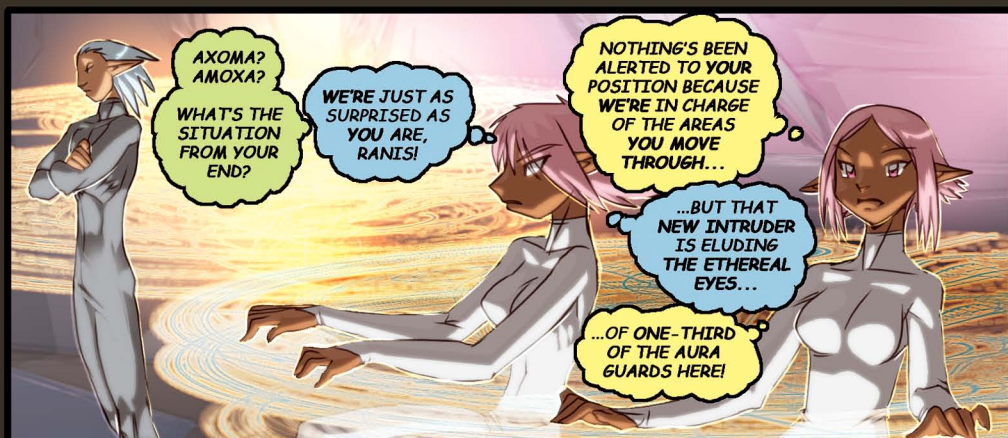
EARTH'S CURRENT  
LEVEL OF MAGIC IS  
IS VERY SMALL IN  
COMPARISON.







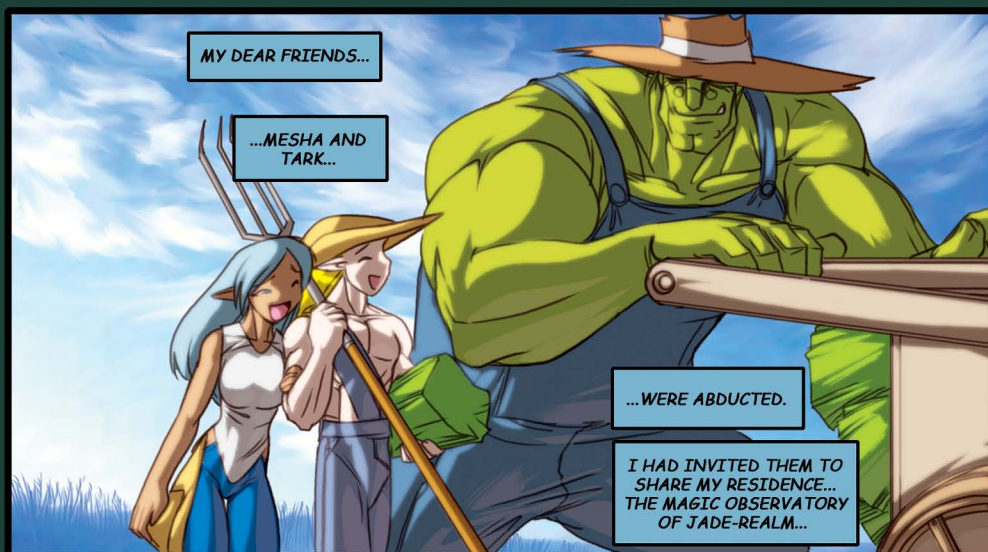














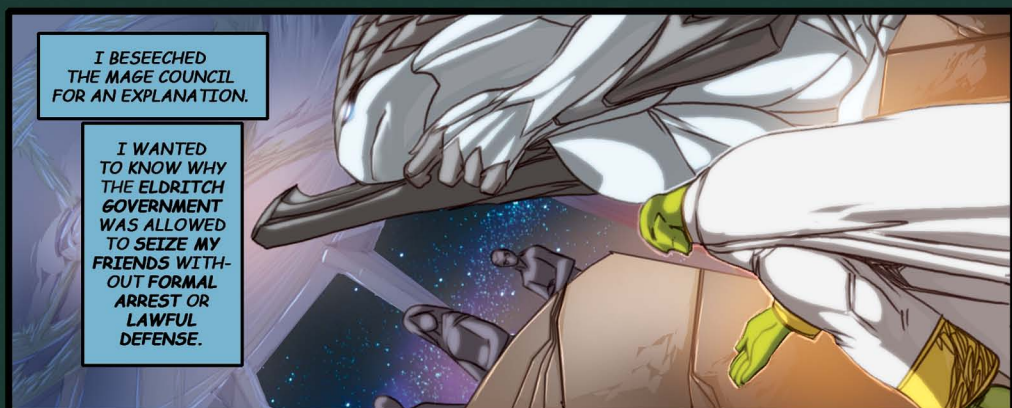
THE VERY  
NEXT DAY...

...MY LAND  
WAS INVADED.

FIFTEEN ROYAL  
BLADES APPEARED  
AND ABDUCTED  
MY FRIENDS...

...BUT ONLY  
AFTER A BRUTAL,  
MERCILESS  
CASTIGATION.

THEY TOOK  
MY "FAMILY"  
FROM ME.



I BESEECHED  
THE MAGE COUNCIL  
FOR AN EXPLANATION.

I WANTED  
TO KNOW WHY  
THE ELDRITCH  
GOVERNMENT  
WAS ALLOWED  
TO SEIZE MY  
FRIENDS WITH-  
OUT FORMAL  
ARREST OR  
LAWFUL  
DEFENSE.



BUT LORD MECCO...  
RULER OF THE ELDRITCH  
EMPIRE... FEIGNED  
IGNORANCE.



AND THE  
COUNCIL  
BELIEVED  
HIM...OR  
PERHAPS  
THEY  
FEIGNED  
IGNORANCE  
AS WELL.

IT WAS  
THEN I KNEW...

...THE ONLY SALVATION  
FOR MY FRIENDS...  
MY "FAMILY"...

...RESTED WITH  
ME AND MY OLD  
STUDENTS.





A FIGHT FOR  
FREEDOM AND  
JUSTICE...  
JUST LIKE  
"THE BAD  
OLD DAYS"...

...NOW IF  
ONLY I COULD  
WIPE THIS  
GRIN OFF  
MY FACE.

Well...

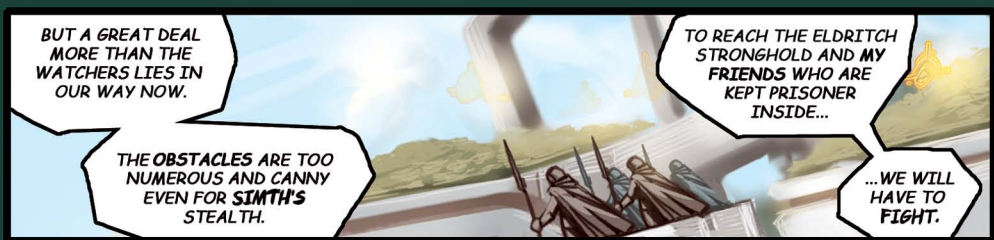
...FROM HERE  
ON, OUR RESCUE  
MISSION BECOMES  
A LITTLE MORE  
DIFFICULT.

THE SPIRE AND THE  
AREA BELOW ARE  
PATROLLED BY THE  
ASTRAL WATCHERS.



OUR ENTIRE RESCUE  
PARTY COULDN'T HAVE  
NEGOTIATED A PATH  
TO THIS LOCATION  
EVEN WITH MY  
STRONGEST  
MAGIC.

ONLY A LONE, SKILLED  
INFILTRATOR STOOD  
A CHANCE.



BUT A GREAT DEAL  
MORE THAN THE  
WATCHERS LIES IN  
OUR WAY NOW.

THE OBSTACLES ARE TOO  
NUMEROUS AND CANNY  
EVEN FOR SIMTH'S  
STEALTH.

TO REACH THE ELDRITCH  
STRONGHOLD AND MY  
FRIENDS WHO ARE  
KEPT PRISONER  
INSIDE...

...WE WILL  
HAVE TO  
FIGHT.



BELGAS, VYRLGA.

YOU WILL ASSAULT  
THE WALL TO THE  
NORTH.

FIGHT YOUR  
WAY TO THE  
GREEN TOWER  
AND REACH THE  
HIGHEST POINT  
YOU CAN.

IT IS DONE.

I'M  
READY.

FROM OUR CURRENT  
POSITION, THE SECURITY  
FORCES WON'T BE ABLE  
TO ASSEMBLE THEIR FULL  
STRENGTH AGAINST YOU  
BEFORE WE FIND MY  
FRIENDS.



SIMTH.  
EXIAY.

YOU WILL  
ASSAULT  
THE WESTERN  
PRECINCT.

HARASS THE  
GATE FOR TEN  
MINUTES.

EVADE CAPTURE  
AT ALL COSTS.

THAT GATE IS  
NEAR THE SOUTH-  
CENTRAL DISTRICT.

WHERE THE  
SOUTHERN  
EDGE GUARD ARE  
CURRENTLY  
ON DUTY.

HMM.  
LOOKS LIKE  
WE GET THE  
CHALLENGE  
OF THIS  
MISSION,  
SIMTH.





I NEVER SAID THIS QUEST WOULD BE EASY, EXIAY...

BUT I DID SAY... I'D MAKE IT EASIER!

**WIND FORM!**



AHHH! YOU'RE STILL FULL OF SURPRISES, JIJI... MANY A TIME I'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH THIS SPELL...

...BUT NEVER BEFORE FOR MY BENEFIT!



HURRY! THE ENCHANTMENT WILL ONLY LAST FOR TEN MINUTES!

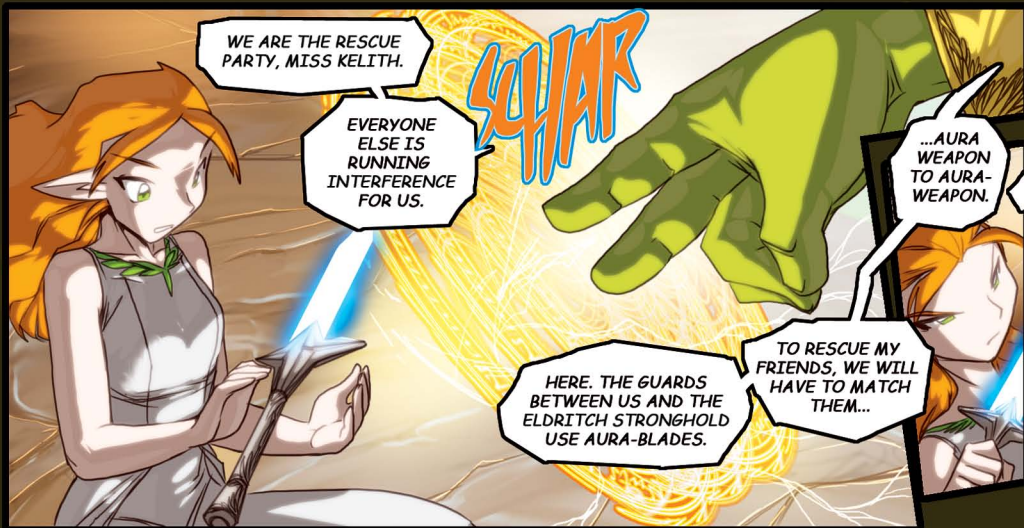
MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME!

Y-YOU KNOW THE WIND-FORM SPELL?

BUT--THAT'S A ROYAL SPELL OF THE ELDRITCH!

HOW DID YOU LEARN IT?

OBVIOUSLY... I WAS TUTORED.



WE ARE THE RESCUE PARTY, MISS KELITH.

EVERYONE ELSE IS RUNNING INTERFERENCE FOR US.

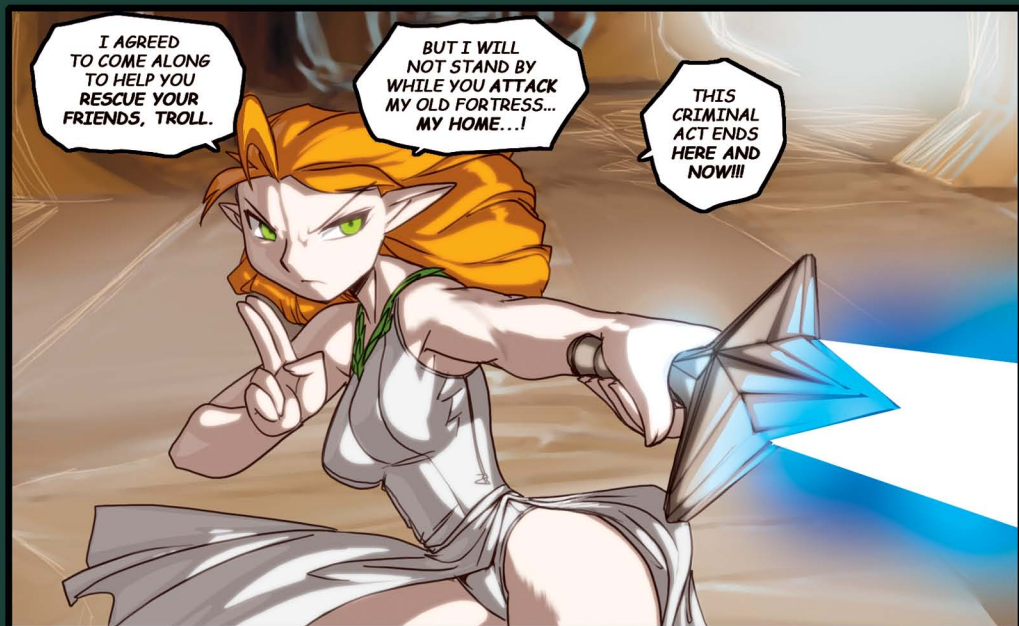
**SHAR**

...AURA WEAPON TO AURA-WEAPON.

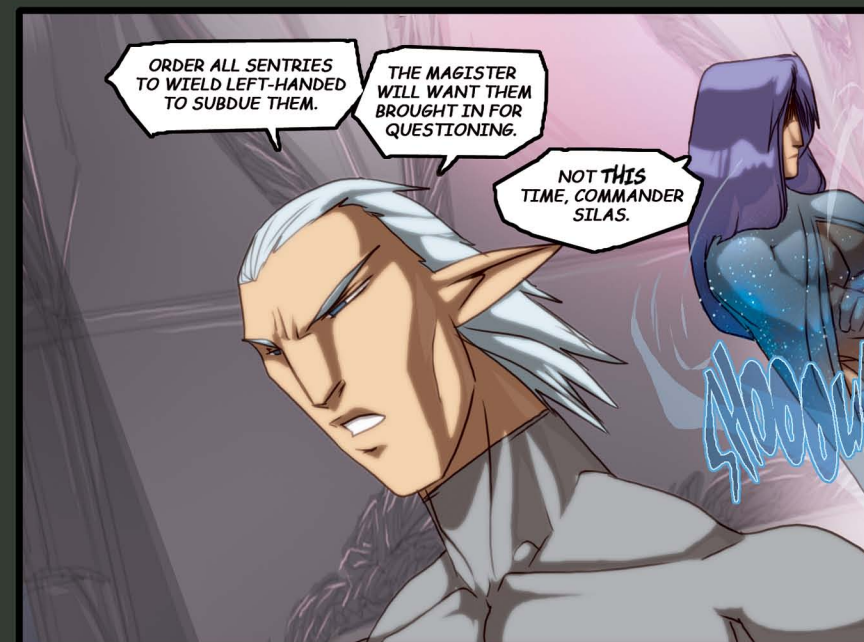
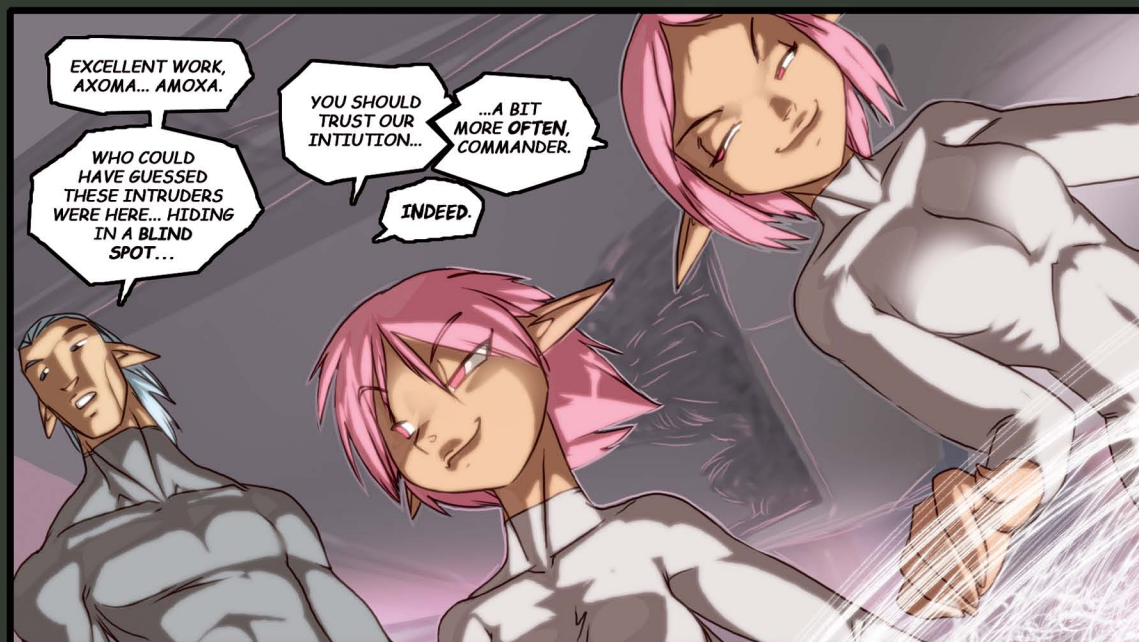
HERE. THE GUARDS BETWEEN US AND THE ELDRITCH STRONGHOLD USE AURA-BLADES.

TO RESCUE MY FRIENDS, WE WILL HAVE TO MATCH THEM...







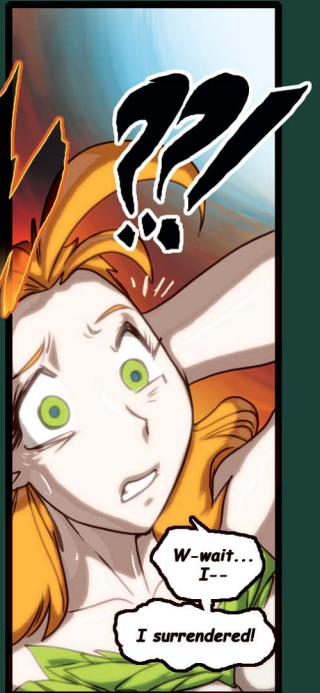




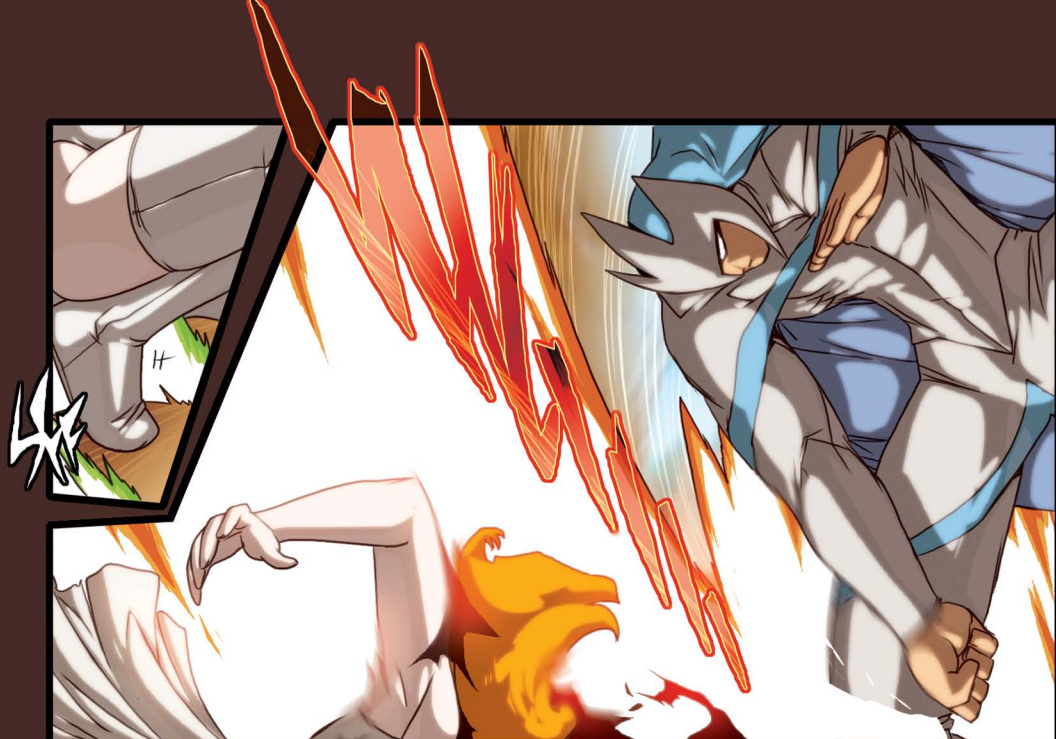


I SURRENDER.

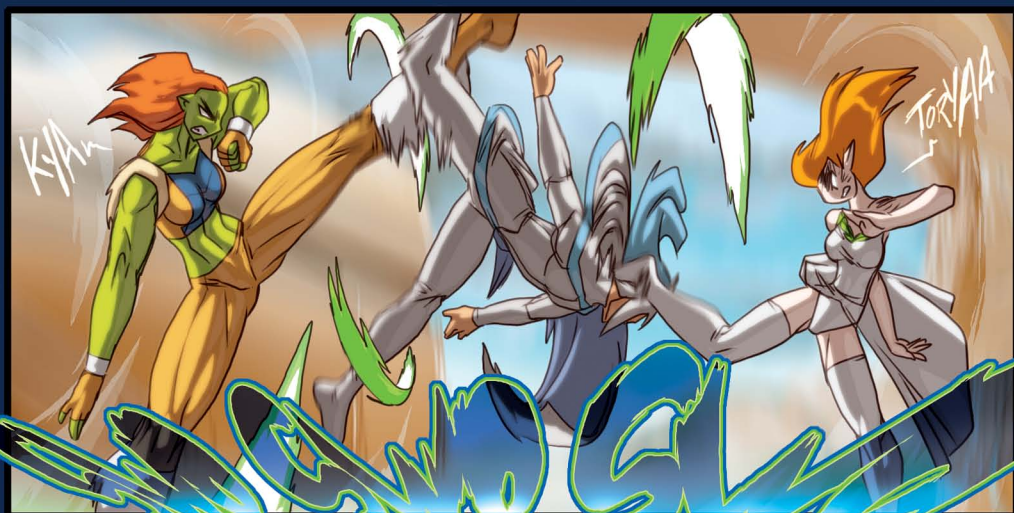
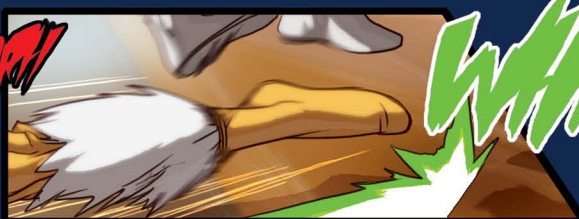
I WILL NOT  
FIGHT MY  
OLD COMRADES.



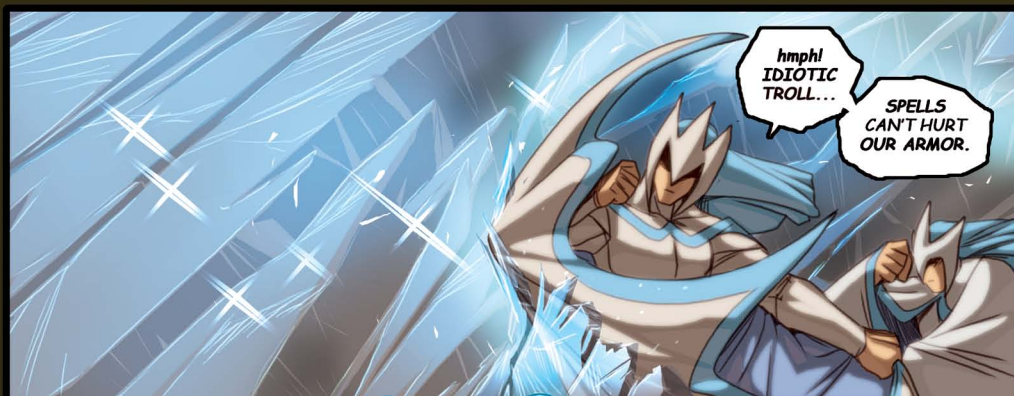








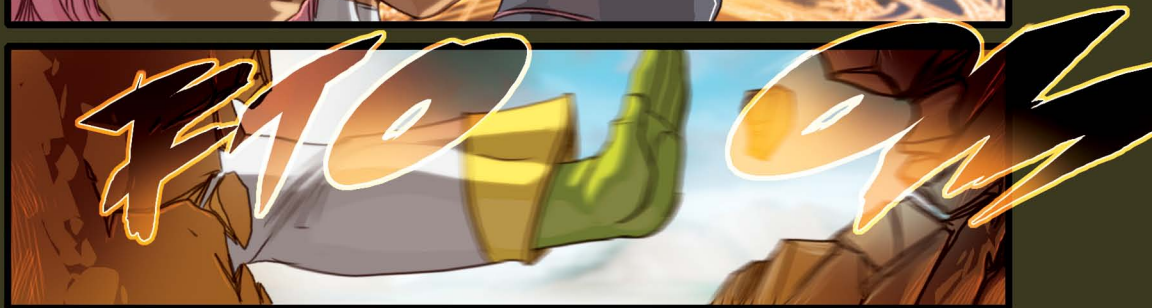
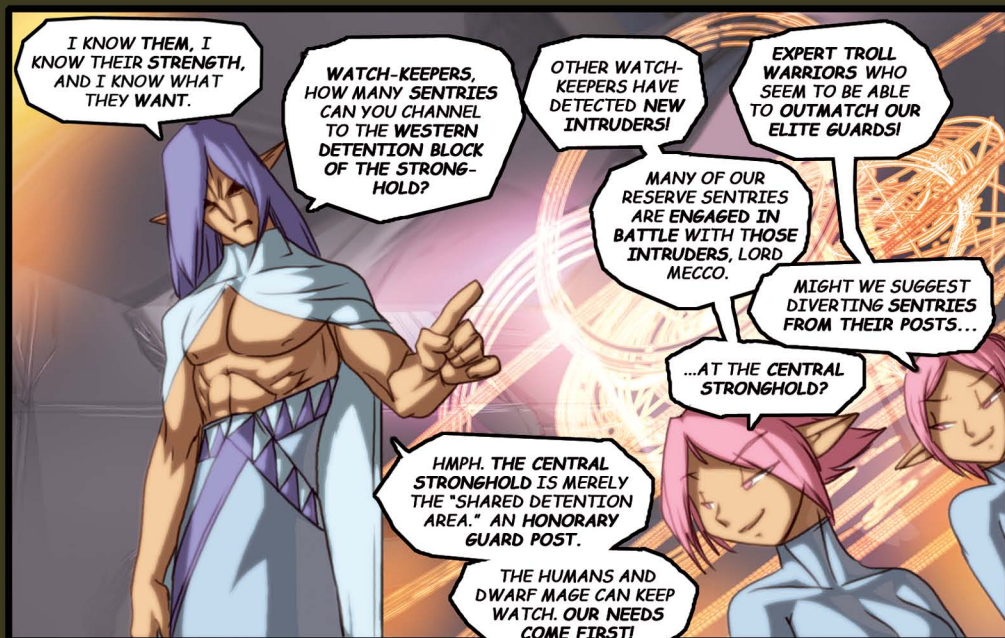




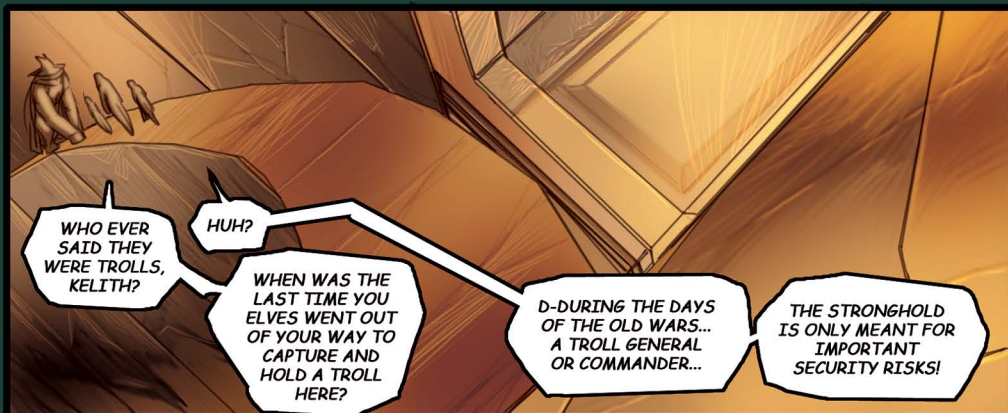












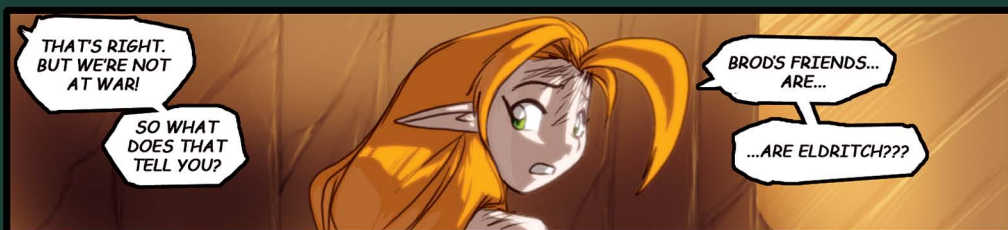
WHO EVER SAID THEY WERE TROLLS, KELITH?

HUH?

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ELVES WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO CAPTURE AND HOLD A TROLL HERE?

D-DURING THE DAYS OF THE OLD WARS... A TROLL GENERAL OR COMMANDER...

THE STRONGHOLD IS ONLY MEANT FOR IMPORTANT SECURITY RISKS!



THAT'S RIGHT. BUT WE'RE NOT AT WAR!

SO WHAT DOES THAT TELL YOU?

BROD'S FRIENDS... ARE...

...ARE ELDRITCH???



LIKE IT MATTERS.

TO HER IT DOES, AHLEA.

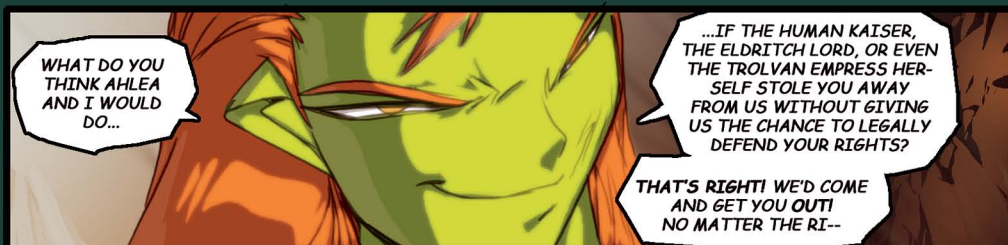
KELITH? YOU'RE THE MOST TALENTED AND SKILLED STUDENT IN OUR CLASS...

...BUT YOU'RE A BLITHERING IDIOT!

WHY DO YOU THINK BROD ASKED FOR OUR HELP?

BECAUSE WE'RE "EXPERTS"?

NOPE! BECAUSE WE WOULD UNDERSTAND!



WHAT DO YOU THINK AHLEA AND I WOULD DO...

...IF THE HUMAN KAISER, THE ELDRITCH LORD, OR EVEN THE TROLVAN EMPRESS HERSELF STOLE YOU AWAY FROM US WITHOUT GIVING US THE CHANCE TO LEGALLY DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS?

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'D COME AND GET YOU OUT! NO MATTER THE RI--



--HEY!

WHY'D YOU STOP?

O-Olga... you are correct...

...I'm a blithering idiot.





BESIDES!

I **KNEW** WE THREE  
WERE DESTINED TO  
BE FRIENDS FER LIFE  
EVER SINCE THE WILD,  
CRAZY NIGHT WE TOOK  
ON THAT DRUNKEN  
PLATOON OF MONSTER-  
HUNTERS BACK AT  
THE BLACK PINE INNI!

WOOO!  
WE GOTTA  
DO THAT  
**AGAIN**  
SUMTIME!

I was drunk  
and out of  
my mind,  
Olga...

er...OLGA'S  
REFERRING TO  
A BAR FIGHT  
WE HAD...  
really.

yuh-huh.



I'M WONDERING  
WHERE THE PATROL  
SENTRIES ARE.

DETOURING  
AWAY FROM CHOKE-  
POINTS AND ACCESS  
PASSAGES WOULD  
HAVE ALLOWED  
US TO EVADE  
MOST OF THEM...

...BUT NOT  
ALL!!!



UNLESS THIS  
AREA WAS EVACUATED  
INTENTIONALLY.

damn...



...OH, DAMN!

A MAGEND!

AND NOT JUST  
ANY MAGEND...

...THIS IS GEAOI  
SHE BELONGS  
TO T'MAT, THE  
DRAGON BROOD  
QUEEN!



ITS CLAWS CUT THROUGH THE FABRIC OF REALITY! ITS TEETH DRAIN THE VERY ESSENCE OF SOULS!!!

WHY IS GEAO GUARDING MY FRIENDS?

Uncle... a-are we gonna be okay?

...no.



WE ONLY NEED TO KEEP THEM FROM ESCAPING THEIR FATE.

YES, LORD MECCO.

THEY HAD BETTER NOT ESCAPE, MECCO.

THEY HAD BETTER NOT.

MESHA, YOUR DAUGHTER, AND HER HUSBAND, TARK, ALLOWED... HIM... TO HURT ME AN AGE PAST.

THEY HAVE TO PAY, MECCO.

FOR ONE FULL YEAR.

THEY MUST BE PUNISHED FOR WHAT THEY HELPED... HIM... DO TO ME.

DAMN THE COUNCIL. DAMN THE BUREAUCRACY.

THEY MUST SUFFER... AND BETTER BY YOUR HANDS... THAN... BY... ~~MINE~~.

AM I CLEAR?

...Yes... Queen T'mat.

TO BE CONTINUED...