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FRED PERRY

# GOLD DIGGER



MARCH 2010



SO THIS IS  
ALL THERE IS  
TO BEING AN  
ARCH VAMPIRE  
NAMED NATASHA  
VOLSTOV THESE  
DAYS.

QUEEN OF THE UNDEAD:  
ABSOLUTE RULER OF AN  
ENTIRE EXISTENTIAL PLANE  
FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH  
UNLIVING SLAVES AT MY  
EVERY BECK AND CALL.

≥SIGH≤

THIS USED  
TO BE FUN.





EVERYONE  
STOOPING AND  
TREMBLING AT  
MY FROWN.

BEING ALL-  
POWERFUL.

GIVING ANYONE  
WHO MOUTHS  
OFF TO ME THE  
OL' "ZZZZT".

IT ALL USED  
TO BE GREAT  
FUN.



NOW...  
EVERYTHING'S  
JUST...

...BLEH.

EVEN MY  
ZINGIEST  
HOBBIES...

...LIKE PUNISHING  
FOOLS FOR THEIR  
INSOLENCE...

...HARDLY  
MEAN  
ANYTHING  
ANY MORE.



≥SIGH≤

Q-QUEEN  
NATASHA?

...





Y-YOU USED TO HAVE LOTS OF FUN WITH SIR VLADIMIR.

WHY DON'T YOU FREE HIM FROM THE TORTURE POST?

...



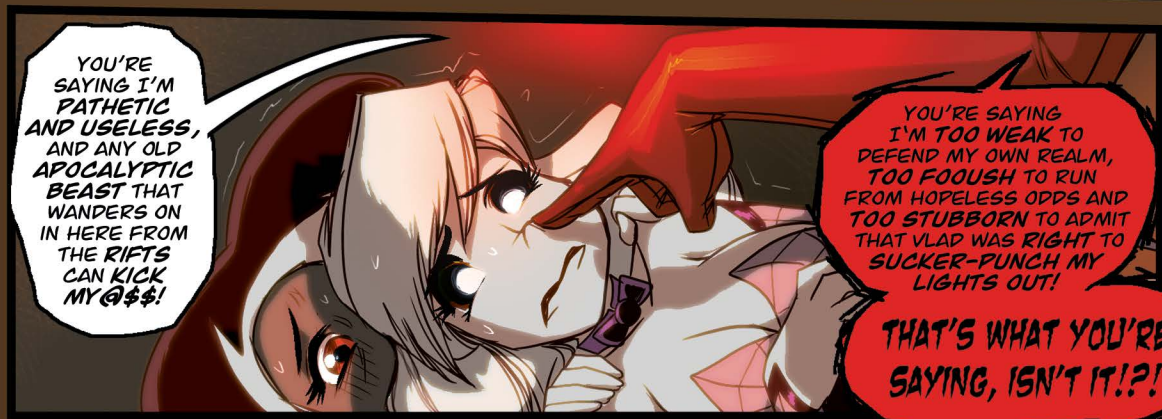
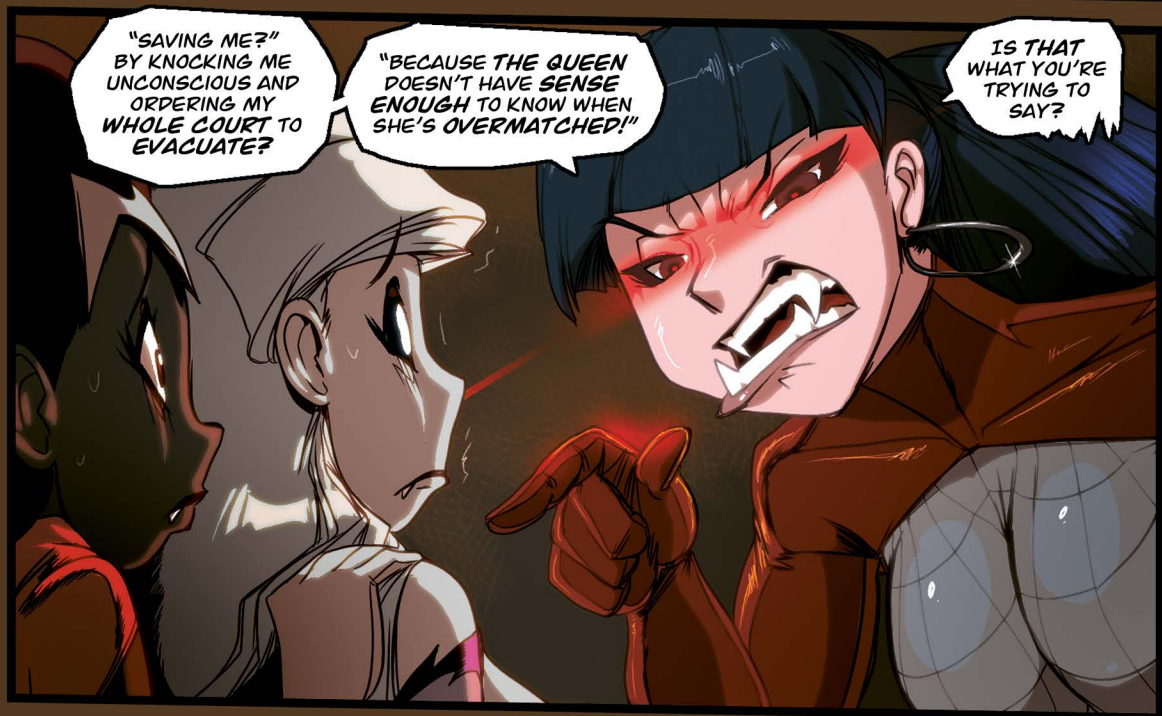
VLAD IS NOT FINISHED PAYING FOR WHAT HE DID TO ME!

I DIDN'T INVITE YOU TO MY ROYAL TORTURE TERRACE TO TALK ABOUT MY INDENTURED BOYFRIEND!

I ASKED YOU IDIOTS HERE TO DELIBERATE ON IMPORTANT MATTERS OF STATE!

LIKE MY BOREDOM!













EWWW...  
RIGHT INTO  
RAZOR BONE  
FOREST...

OUCH...

ENOUGH OF THIS.

SPINNERETTE, ASSEMBLE  
MY NIGHT-STALKER APPAREL,  
COLLECT A CAPRE OF SENSOR  
GHOSTS, AND MEET ME AT  
THE RIFT GATE IN  
ONE HOUR!

WE'RE GOING  
ON A LITTLE  
HUNTING  
TRIP!



AND WE'RE NOT  
COMING BACK UNTIL  
WE HAVE THE HEAD OF  
THE MOST FEROCIOUS  
BEAST IN ALL OF THE  
ASTRAL RIFTS AS  
MY TROPHY!

WHEW...  
THAT WAS  
CLOSE.

I'D SAY THAT  
WAS THE MOST  
FEROCIOUS BEAST  
WE'VE EVER  
ENCOUNTERED  
IN THE RIFTS,  
SUBTRACTO!



WE'VE BARELY  
CROSSED INTO THE  
WILDS OF THE  
ASTRAL RIFTS,  
MADRID.

THESE BORDERS  
ARE PATROLLED  
BY NEARBY  
SETTLEMENTS.

SO OUR FRIEND  
HERE IS ONE  
THE PATROLS  
MISSED?

MORE THAN  
LIKELY.

HO-BOY.

TO DO ANY  
REAL EXPLORING,  
WE'RE GOING TO  
HAVE TO TRAVERSE  
"THUNDER BUTTE!"

LYNN NAMED  
THIS PLACE ON  
OUR FIRST VISIT.  
I, UM...HAD TO  
CORRECT HER  
PRONUNCIATION.

GREAT...  
I'M SO LOOKING  
FORWARD TO  
THAT TRIP.

YOU'RE THE ONE  
WHO *INSISTED* ON  
THIS EXPEDITION,  
MADRID...

...TO MAP THE  
UNFATHOMABLE  
PLANAR BRIDGE  
TOUCHING THE  
FRINGES OF  
EARTH-REALM  
AND COUNTLESS  
OTHER OCCUPIED  
WORLDS.

HOWEVER,  
PLANTS,  
MINERALS,  
ANIMALS AND  
ATMOSPHERE  
SPILL IN FROM  
EACH TOUCHED  
REALM...

...AS WELL AS  
SOME OF THE  
MOST HORRIFIC  
CREATURES IN  
EXISTENCE.

I KNOW, I KNO--  
WAIT...SO *THIS*  
MONSTROSITY  
WAS NOTHING?

WELL, NOW,  
I DIDN'T SAY  
THAT!





THE ONLY  
UP SIDE TO  
ENCOUNTERING  
VICIOUS, ILL-  
TEMPERED  
BEASTS  
AROUND  
HERE...

...IS THAT THEY'RE  
CHOCK-FULL OF  
NUTRITIOUS,  
FLAVORFUL  
NOM-NESS!

LETS SEE...  
COORDINATES  
SET...  
CALCULATING  
QUANTUM...  
DIVISION...  
PARAMETERS...  
THERE WE  
GO.

I STILL CAN'T GET  
OVER HOW CONVENIENT  
IT IS TO BE ABLE TO  
DEFEND MYSELF FROM  
ATTACKS...

...AND HAVE  
MY BETA-PACK  
QUANTUM-  
DIVIDE THE  
REMAINS FOR  
MY ICEBOX  
IN HYPER-  
SPACE!

THIS SUCKER  
SMELLS LIKE  
A GIANT POT  
ROAST!

EARTH-REALM IS  
A POISONOUS DESERT  
COMPARED TO THE  
OTHER WORLDS  
TOUCHING THE ASTRAL  
RIFTS, MADRID.

YOU MIGHT SEEM  
PHYSICALLY INFERIOR  
TO MOST OF THE  
RIFT'S INHABITANTS...  
BUT YOU'RE ALSO A  
SUPER-PREDATOR  
WHEN IT COMES  
TO WHAT YOU CAN  
SAFELY DIGEST.

SO HUMANS  
ARE LIKE PLANAR  
RACCOONS ON AN  
INTERDIMENSIONAL  
HIGHWAY FILLED  
WITH GROCERY  
TRUCK MONSTERS.

WELL,  
THIS LITTLE  
RACCOON IS  
SICK OF HAVING  
TO DODGE HER  
WAY THROUGH  
MONSTER RUSH  
HOUR JUST TO  
DO A LITTLE  
EXPLORING!

I MEAN...IT  
WOULD BE KIND OF  
NICE, EVERY ONCE IN  
A WHILE, TO FIND  
A LONG-LOST  
TEMPLE...

...INHABITED BY  
CUPCAKE CHEFS  
INSTEAD OF  
GHOULS!

MAKE THAT...  
CUTE, HUNKY  
CUPCAKE  
CHEFS WITH  
ROCK-HARD  
ABS! ♡

≥SIGH≤  
WHY DIDN'T  
I PACK  
MORE CUP-  
CA--

MADRID!

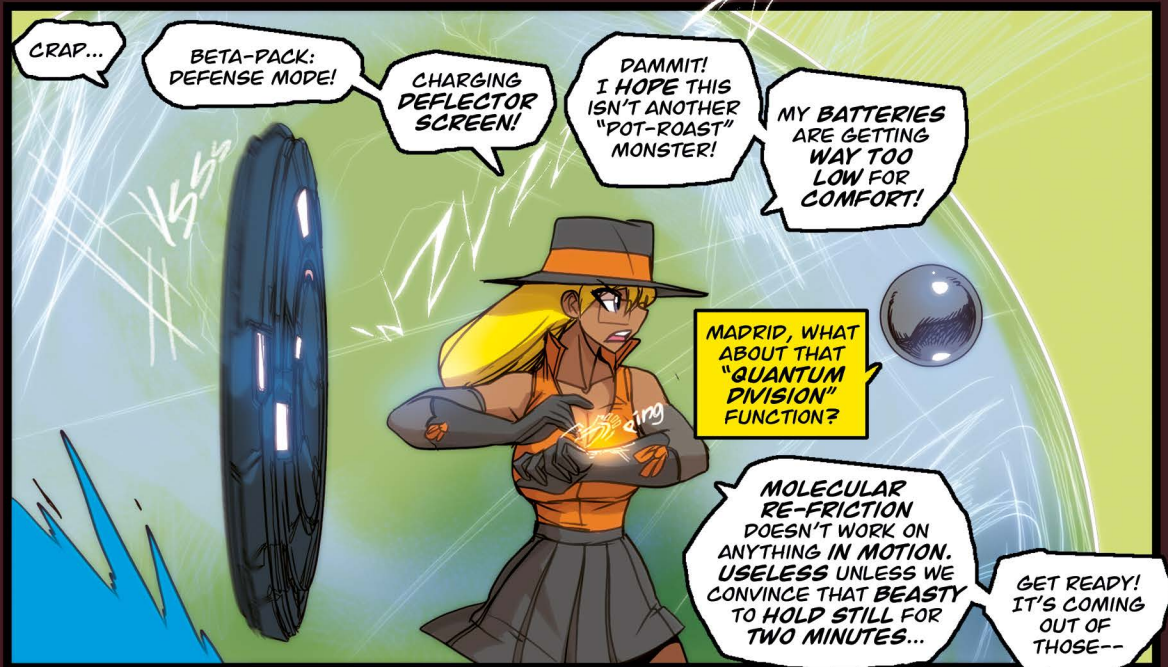
PR-PROXIMITY  
ALERT!

I KNOW.

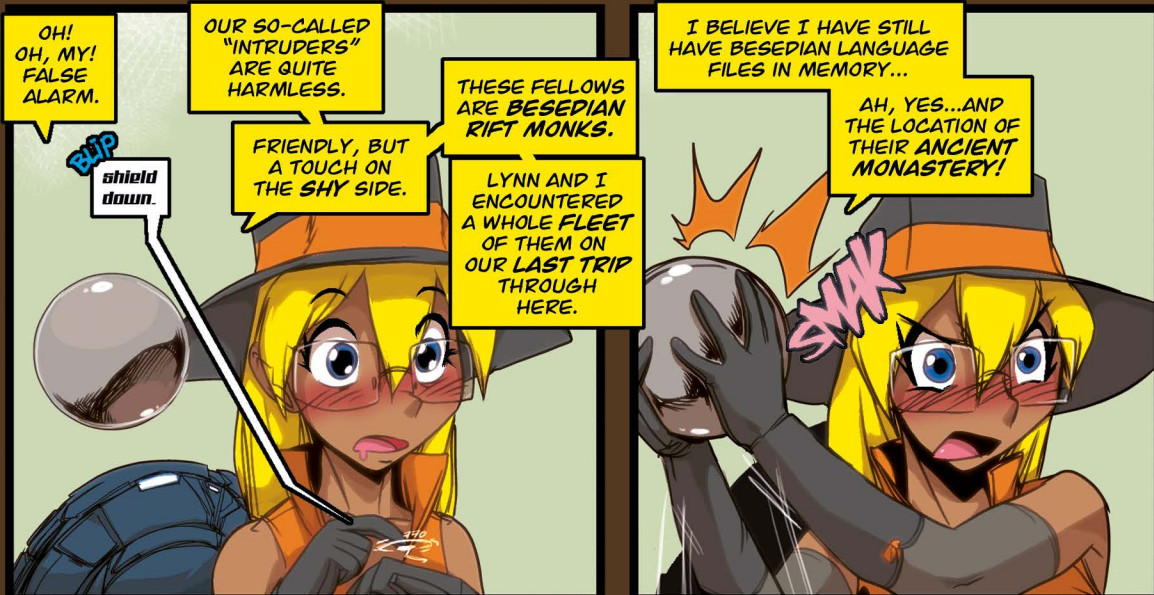
MY TECH-SPECS'  
MOTION DETECTION  
SENSORS JUST  
"BLIPPED"!

SOMETHING'S  
LURKING BEHIND  
US!













WAIT...  
THEY CAN  
SPEAK OUR  
LANGAUGE?

AS I SAID...THIS  
ISN'T MY FIRST  
ENCOUNTER WITH  
THE BESEDIAN  
MONKS.

THERE HAVE BEEN  
BRIEF CULTURAL  
EXCHANGES.

JUST A  
MOMENT...  
I'M INITIATING  
MY FOCUSED-  
SPECTRUM  
PARABOLIC  
SOUND-  
MASK.

I'LL BE ABLE TO  
PROJECT ACCURATE  
TRANSLATIONS INTO  
EVERYONE'S EARS  
IN LOCALIZED  
PINK-FREQUENCY  
"SURROUND  
SOUND"!

THERE WE  
ARE...BUT  
PLEASE TRY  
TO IGNORE  
THE AWKWARD  
LIP-SYNCH.



UHM...OKAY?  
N-NICE...  
TO MEET Y--

WAIT...

WHAT ARE  
THOSE TWO  
BACK THERE...  
ARE--ARE  
THEY...  
CROAKING?

WHAT?

BOTH OF YOU!  
BEHAVE!

RUDE!



OH!O!  
FIDGETY  
BODY-  
LANGUAGE...  
...BASHFUL  
GLANCES...

...THAT CHEEK  
CROAKING  
STUFF MUST  
BE SOME KIND  
OF BESEDIAN  
FROG-BOY...  
BLUSH!

JINKIES!  
THESE GUYS...  
ARE "EYEING"  
ME!  
HMMM.

NOW KEEP  
THERE AND DO  
NOT EMBARRASS  
ME FURTHER!

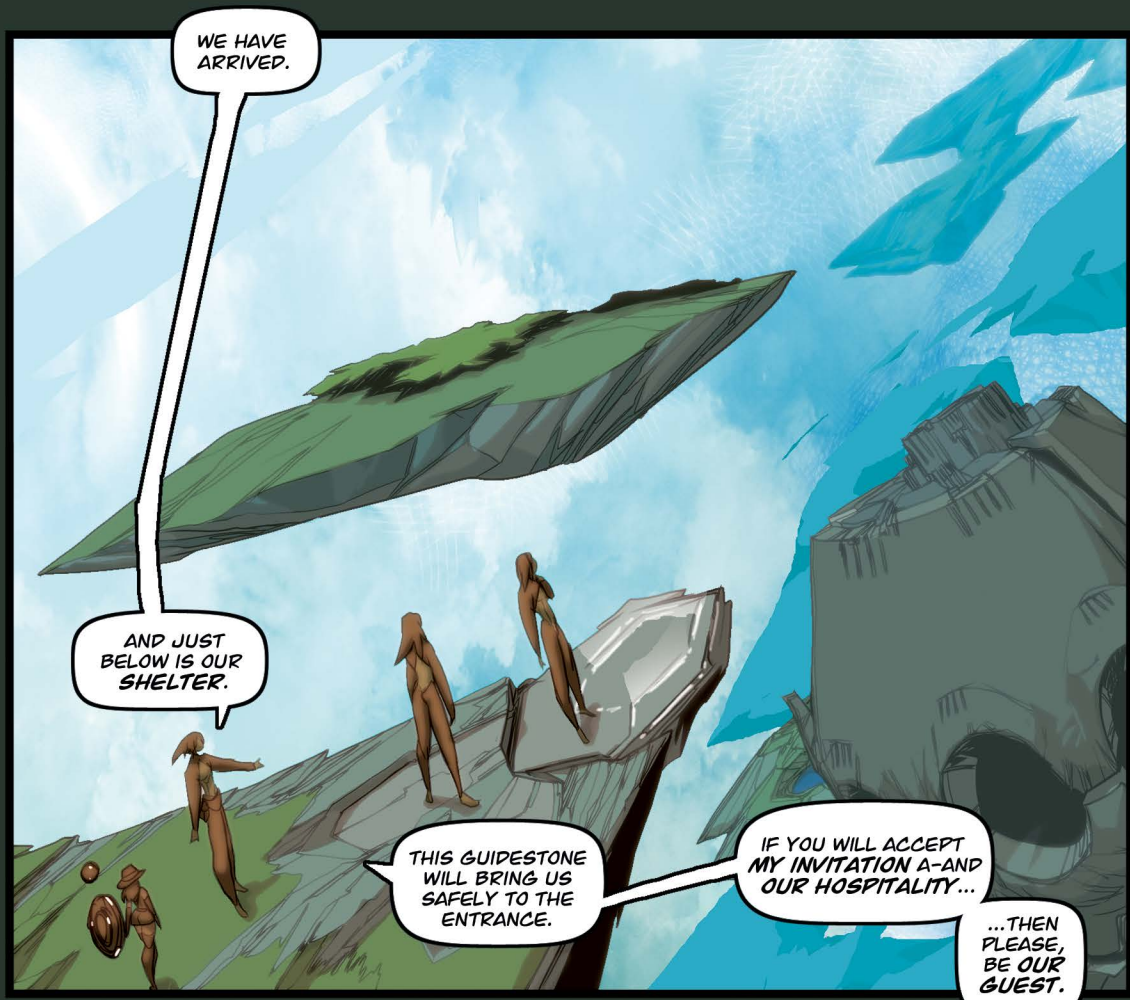














THOUGH I MUST  
BEG YOUR PARDON  
FOR THE SAKE OF  
MY YOUNGER  
CLASSMATES.

AND I APOLOGIZE  
I-IN ADVANCE  
FOR THEIR  
STARES.

YOU ARE...  
STRANGE TO US...  
AND CURIOSITY  
CAN MAKE ONE  
FORGET HIS  
MANNERS.

NO WORRIES.

I SHALL LEAVE  
YOU TO REST.

I HOPE THIS  
PRIVATE CHAMBER  
WILL BE ADEQUATE.

MORE THAN  
THAT.

THANK YOU,  
ADEL.

V-VERY  
WELL.

BY YOUR  
LEAVE...

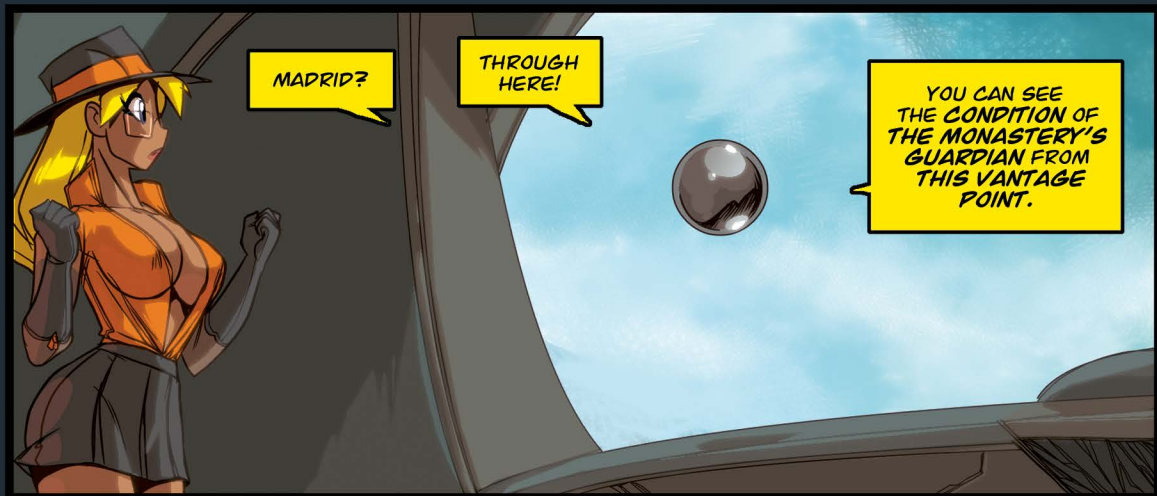
UNTIL  
TONIGHT.

click...

EUREKA!

I-JUST-MADE-  
THE-GREATEST-  
DISCOVERY-OF-  
ALL-TIME  
DOUBLE-FIST-  
PUMP!





MADRID?

THROUGH  
HERE!

YOU CAN SEE  
THE CONDITION OF  
THE MONASTERY'S  
GUARDIAN FROM  
THIS VANTAGE  
POINT.



OH!

IT'S SOME  
KIND OF  
BIRD!

JINKIES!  
THAT THING  
MUST BE  
EIGHT HUNDRED  
YARDS FROM  
NOSE TO  
TAIL!

HER NAME IS  
QUEZTAL.

WHEN LYNN AND  
I MADE OUR LAST  
VISIT, *SHE* WAS  
OUR HOST.



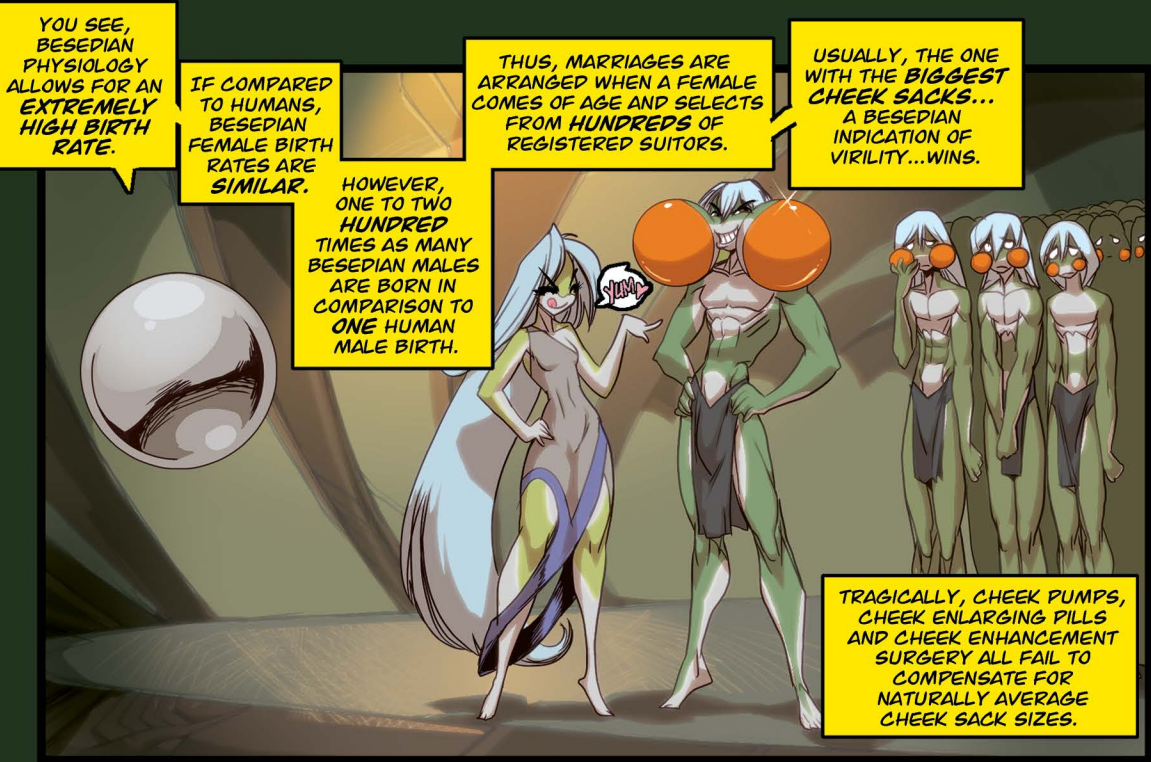
QUEZTAL IS...  
INTELLIGENT?

EXTREMELY  
INTELLIGENT.

AND EVEN MORE SO,  
COMPASSIONATE.

SHE FELT THE  
PLIGHT OF THOSE  
IN THIS MONASTERY  
AND CAME TO  
THEIR AID.





YOU SEE, BESEDIAN PHYSIOLOGY ALLOWS FOR AN EXTREMELY HIGH BIRTH RATE.

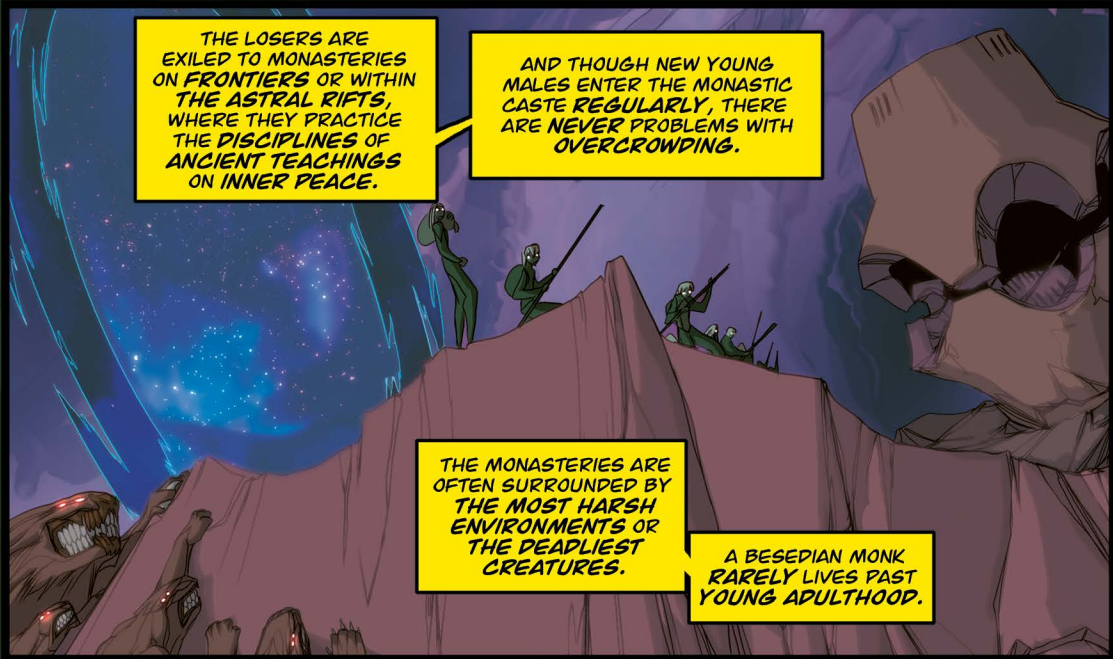
IF COMPARED TO HUMANS, BESEDIAN FEMALE BIRTH RATES ARE SIMILAR.

HOWEVER, ONE TO TWO HUNDRED TIMES AS MANY BESEDIAN MALES ARE BORN IN COMPARISON TO ONE HUMAN MALE BIRTH.

THUS, MARRIAGES ARE ARRANGED WHEN A FEMALE COMES OF AGE AND SELECTS FROM HUNDREDS OF REGISTERED SUITORS.

USUALLY, THE ONE WITH THE BIGGEST CHEEK SACKS... A BESEDIAN INDICATION OF VIRILITY...WINS.

TRAGICALLY, CHEEK PUMPS, CHEEK ENLARGING PILLS AND CHEEK ENHANCEMENT SURGERY ALL FAIL TO COMPENSATE FOR NATURALLY AVERAGE CHEEK SACK SIZES.

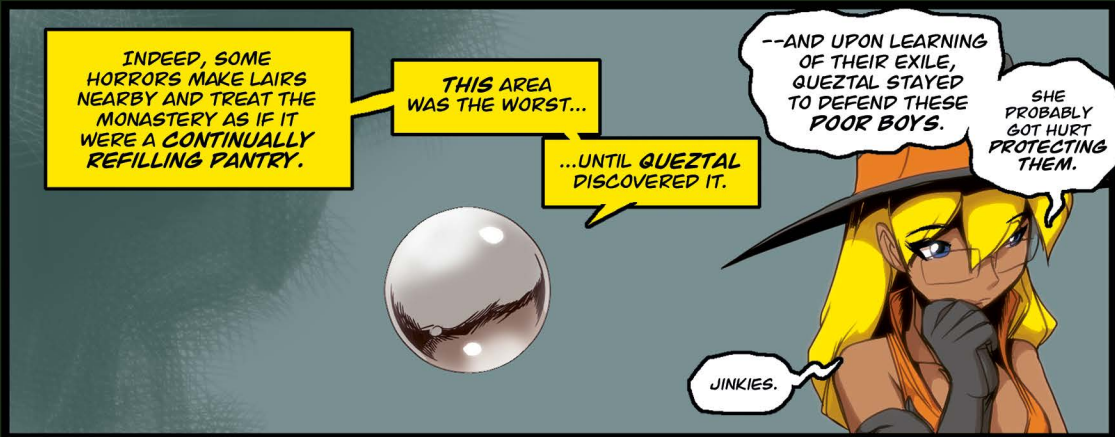


THE LOSERS ARE EXILED TO MONASTERIES ON FRONTIERS OR WITHIN THE ASTRAL RIFTS, WHERE THEY PRACTICE THE DISCIPLINES OF ANCIENT TEACHINGS ON INNER PEACE.

AND THOUGH NEW YOUNG MALES ENTER THE MONASTIC CASTE REGULARLY, THERE ARE NEVER PROBLEMS WITH OVERCROWDING.

THE MONASTERIES ARE OFTEN SURROUNDED BY THE MOST HARSH ENVIRONMENTS OR THE DEADLIEST CREATURES.

A BESEDIAN MONK RARELY LIVES PAST YOUNG ADULTHOOD.



INDEED, SOME HORRORS MAKE LAIRS NEARBY AND TREAT THE MONASTERY AS IF IT WERE A CONTINUALLY REFILLING PANTRY.

THIS AREA WAS THE WORST...

...UNTIL QUEZTAL DISCOVERED IT.

--AND UPON LEARNING OF THEIR EXILE, QUEZTAL STAYED TO DEFEND THESE POOR BOYS.

SHE PROBABLY GOT HURT PROTECTING THEM.

JINKIES.





...

YOU KNOW...

...FOR A WHILE THERE... ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS HOW MUCH FUN I'D HAVE...

... "PLAYING" WITH ADEL TONIGHT...

...AND HOW MUCH FUN I'D HAVE WITH MY PICK OF THOSE BOYS THE NIGHT AFTER.



SUBTRACTO... I DIDN'T THINK FOR A SECOND THAT ADEL WAS A-A PERSON... WITH... FEELINGS OR TROUBLES OR HOPES.

TO ME HE WAS A TOY.

SOMETHING TO TOSS ASIDE AFTER I WAS BORED.



D-DAMMIT.

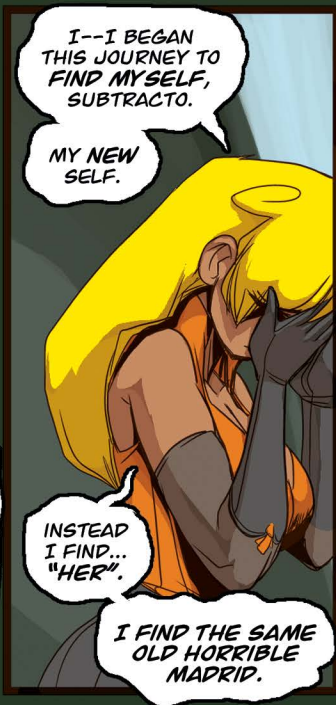
I-I THOUGHT I HAD CHANGED.

I THOUGHT THE OLD ME WAS GONE... FOREVER!



BUT...  
...I'M STILL THAT SELFISH, THOUGHTLESS, LITTLE BRAT, AREN'T I.

AT THE VERY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND DO FOR OTHERS, I SEDUCE, MANIPULATE AND THINK ONLY OF MY OWN PLEASURE.



I--I BEGAN THIS JOURNEY TO FIND MYSELF, SUBTRACTO.  
MY NEW SELF.

INSTEAD I FIND... "HER".

I FIND THE SAME OLD HORRIBLE MADRID.









THERE!

THE AETHER-  
PHOENIX IS  
**SPRAWLED**  
BEHIND THAT  
DWELLING!

BUT...IT SEEMS  
TO BE WOUNDED  
OR ILL...

EXCELLENT!!!



TROPHIES ARE SO  
MUCH MORE SATISFYING  
WHEN YOU **DON'T** HAVE  
TO **WORK** FOR  
THEM!

BUT **NOBODY**  
BETTER TELL  
VLAD ABOUT THAT  
WHEN I SHOW  
HIM THIS  
CREATURE'S  
**STUFFED AND  
MOUNTED  
CORPSE!**

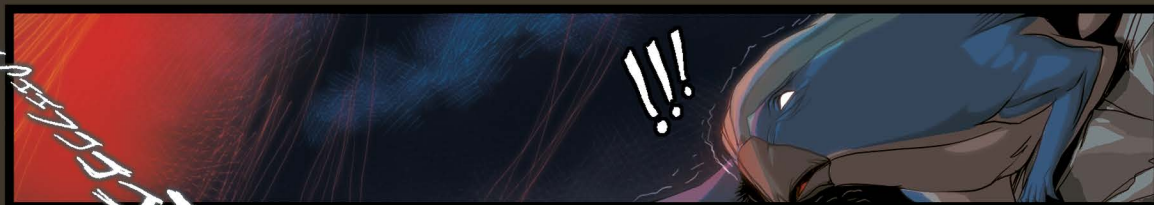
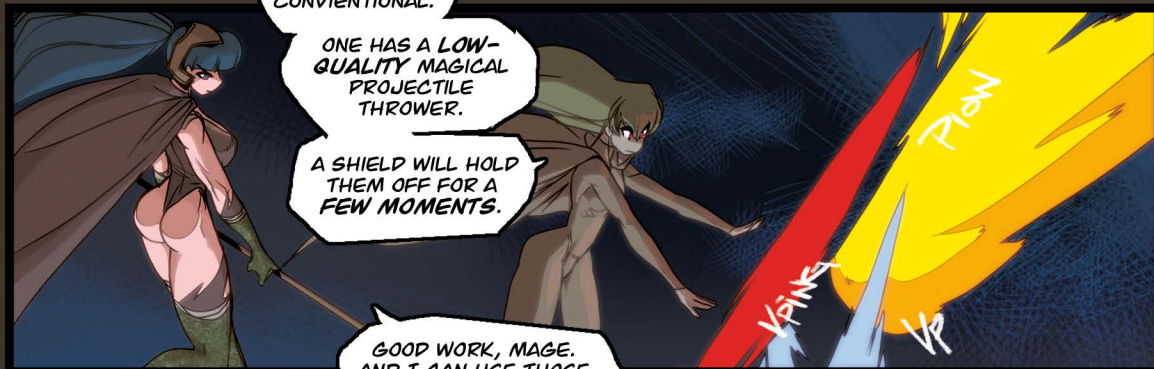
THE **OFFICIAL STORY**  
SHALL BE: "QUEEN NATASHA  
FELLED IT AFTER A MIGHTY,  
THREE-DAY-LONG BATTLE...  
SINGLEHAND--

WHO  
DARES!?!  
**AAH!**

WAS THAT  
A RIFLE  
SHOT!?

**S-SNIPER!!!**

















THAT LITTLE  
BIT OF SUNSHINE  
REALLY STUNG,  
DIDN'T IT?

GAVE YOU A NICE  
LITTLE REALITY  
CHECK.

PUSHING EVERYONE  
AROUND BACK ON YOUR  
THRONE OF THE UNDEAD  
PROBABLY LET YOU  
FORGET HOW YOU  
CAN **STILL** DIE!

NOW, LET'S  
TALK ABOUT  
YOUR "WAKE  
UP CALL!"



THOUGHT SO.

NOTHING  
SCARES A  
SPOILED-  
BRAT BULLY  
MORE...

...THAN SOMEONE WHO  
**KNOWS** HOW **COWARDLY**  
A SPOILED-BRAT  
BULLY **TRULY** IS.



I'M AFRAID...YOU'RE  
GOING TO BE STUCK  
HERE FOR QUITE A  
WHILE, MADRID.

FINDING THE PIECES  
AND REPAIRING YOUR  
PACK WILL TAKE  
**SOME TIME.**







BUT I'M SURE  
YOU'LL BE ABLE  
TO FIND A FEW  
NEW FRIENDS  
TO LEND YOU  
A HAND...

...AFTER  
QUEZTAL  
IS WELL  
AGAIN.

SO IT SEEMS,  
SUBTRACTO.

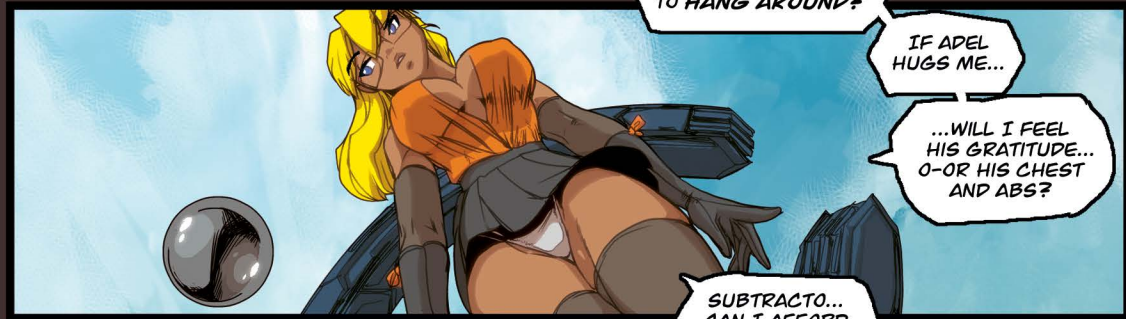
BUT I WONDER...  
WAS I REALLY  
TRYING TO HELP?



OR WAS I  
TRYING TO  
IMPRESS ADEL  
AND HIS  
FRIENDS?

WAS I SACRIFICING  
MY OWN EQUIPMENT?

OR WAS IT QUICK  
THINKING TO COME  
UP WITH AN EXCUSE  
TO HANG AROUND?



IF ADEL  
HUGS ME...

...WILL I FEEL  
HIS GRATITUDE...  
O-O-OR HIS CHEST  
AND ABS?

SUBTRACTO...  
CAN I AFFORD  
NEW FRIENDS...  
IF I'M STILL  
THE SAME OLD  
MADRID?

MADRID...

...IF THAT WERE  
TRUE, COULD  
YOU AFFORD  
NOT TO HAVE  
THOSE FRIENDS?

# EPILOGUE



WHY DIDN'T ANYONE  
WARN ME ABOUT  
THAT B!@#!!!

SURROUNDED  
BY IDIOTS!!!

Pink

END