



WAY BACK HOME

1: END OF THE ROAD

WELL... ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, IT COULD BE WORSE. AT LEAST IT'S A GOOD DAY FOR A WALK.



HA! SURPRISE!!

POOF!



MANA HUSSEIN AHMAD!

PEFFF
HI DAD!



HAHA! QUIT HORSING AROUND!

NEVERRRR!!

YOU'LL RUN OUT OF ENERGY BEFORE WE GET TO THE NEW PLACE.

NEVERRRR!!

HEH, YOU'LL NEED SOME ENERGY LEFT WHEN WE GET THERE SO YOU CAN ANNOY YOUR MOTHER!



AAAH! I WILL ANNOY EVERYONE, FOREVER!!



OOH! DID YOU SEE THAT COOL BIRD BACK THERE?

Hm?

IT WAS REAL BIG AND BLACK! AND IT WAS HOLDING A LAMP!

WHAT?

A BIRD WITH A LANTERN? LIKE... THE REAPER...?

ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW PLACE? THERE'LL BE A LOT MORE FEATHRIES LIKE YOU AND MUM. YOU'LL MAKE PLENTY OF NEW FRIENDS!

Mmmmm...

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T WANT TO MOVE, BUT THIS NEW PRIESTHOOD IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR MUM. SO LET'S BE GOOD, OKAY MANA?

Mmmmm...

EVERYTHING IS GOING TO GO JUST FINE, RIGHT?

Mmmmm...

MANA!

WHAT?

NUH-
UH!

YOU'RE A GOOD KID,
MANA.

PBBBT

THAT'S RIGHT!
WE'LL DO JUST
FINE, WE'LL-



W-WHA-?!

A- MONSTER-?!

HERE...?

I...



MANA,
RUN!







W-WHAT-?



WHY DIDN'T THAT DO ANYTHING?
I-IT WAS LIKE I... JUST...
PASSED THROUGH IT...



NO....



DAD! DAD! P-PLEASE! GET UP!



I CAN'T BE- NO!
MANA! I HAVE
TO SAVE HIM! I-



AWK.



NO! PLEASE! YOU CAN'T
TAKE ME AWAY!



I'M NOT
DEAD!



AIEEEE!!

LOKI! RUN!! JUST GET AWAY!!

OH GODDESS... WHY... WHY DIDN'T I PREPARE, I KNEW ABOUT THE CURSE, BUT I-

LOKI!

OH NO

G-GRAND-FATHER...

RUN! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS!

Hrk-!

BAD DREAMS, TELLA?

YEAH, GENERALLY.

ALL DEAD DREAD TO DREAM, TELLA KIBORN.
YOU CAN EXPECT NOTHING BUT NIGHTMARES.
SO WHY BOTHER SLEEPING?

EH...IT
PASSES THE
TIME.

OH? YOU COULD ALWAYS GO
THROUGH HELL TO PAY YOUR
PENANCE AND BE REBORN.

C'MON, MANA,
YOU KNOW I
CAN'T...

...I NEED TO WAIT FOR LOKI.

I HOPE
I'M HERE
FOR A
LONG
TIME!

WHY DON'T YOU GO
PAY YOUR DEBTS?

HM.

INDEED... I COULD TRY AGAIN...
FIFTH TIME'S THE CHARM.

≡SIGH≡

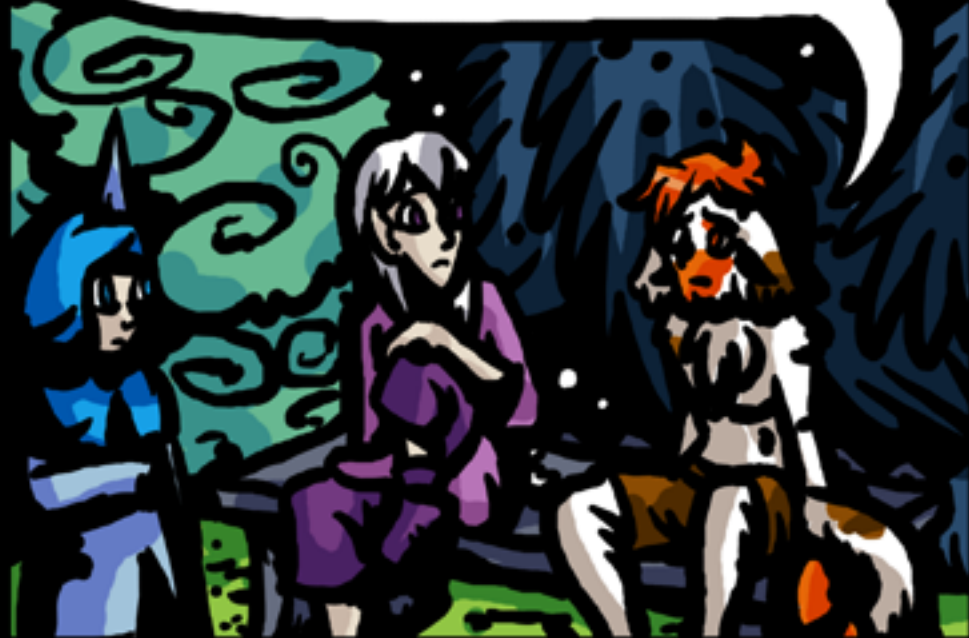
I'VE BEEN
HERE A LONG
TIME...

HAVEN'T WE
ALL?

OH, HEY SAFF. DON'T BE SUCH A SODD, YOU'VE ONLY BEEN HERE A FEW YEARS.



IT CERTAINLY FEELS LONGER, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THERE'S SO FEW DECENT FOLK WHO STAY HERE FOR VERY LONG...



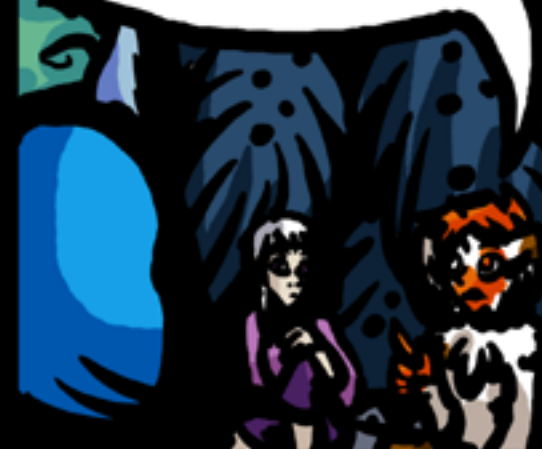
UH, NO OFFENCE, MR KIBORN.



WHAT OFFENCE? MY FAMILY IS JERKS.



MISS RYUSHIN, IF I MAY, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU DIED?



HM. I SUPPOSE IT WOULD BE ... AROUND TWO HUNDRED YEARS, NOW...

MY PENANCE IS TOO HIGH, SO I CAN'T- ...
:SIGH:



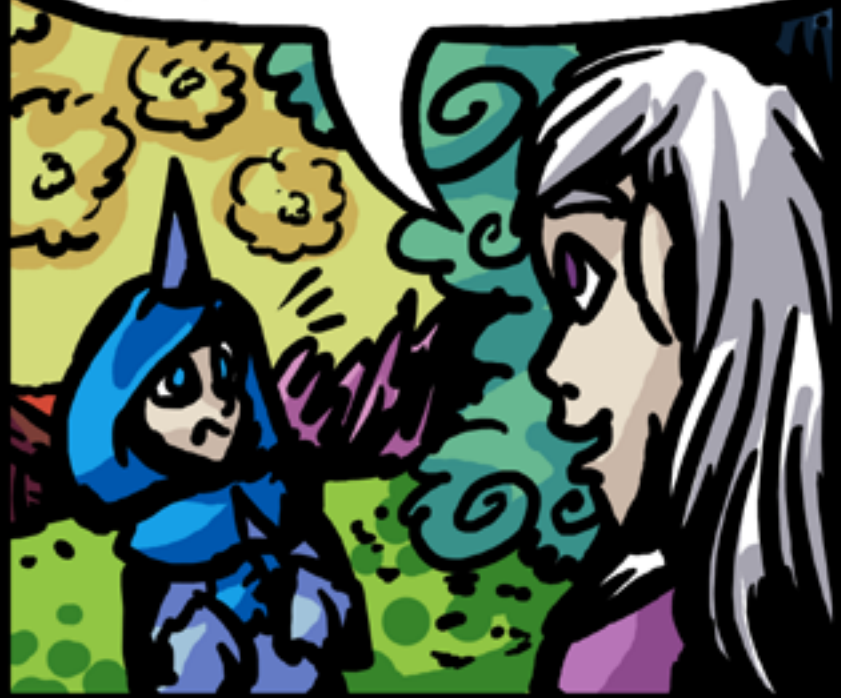
W-WHY...? HOW DID YOU DIE?

I REFUSE TO SAY.

WHY? WAS IT EMBARRASSING?



DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO
WITH YOUR WEIRD HORN? WHAT'S
THE DEAL WITH THAT, ANYWAY?



I AM HUMAN IT IS PERFECTLY
NORMAL DON'T BRING IT UP!!



I HAVE TO-
LEAVE GOODBYE!

MR. KIBORN, YOU SHOULD
NOT BE MEAN TO HER...

WHAT? I
WAS JUST
TEASING.



MISS RYUSHIN IS A NICE GIRL.

SHE'S SUPER FUN
TO ANNOY.

...ARE ALL
KIBORNS JERKS?

I- HEYYYYYYYY...



UM. I HAD
ANOTHER QUERY.



DENIED, ON ACCOUNT
OF YOU CALLING ME A
JERK, YOU BUTT.



YOU'RE JUST
PROVING MY POINT,
MR. KIBORN!



HAHA, I'M JUST
JOSHING WITH YOU,
SAFFRON!

WHAT DO YOU
WANNA KNOW?

HUH?

....IS IT WORTH IT?

WAITING FOR
YOUR FAMILY...
IS IT WORTH
IT?

UM... HMM.

YOU ASK A TOUGH QUESTION!


I THINK IT'S WORTH IT
EVERY DAY SHE'S NOT HERE.

...YOU'RE WAITING FOR YOUR
FAMILY TOO, HUH?

YES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

WELL, EVERYONE'S ANSWER WILL
BE DIFFERENT. ASK YOURSELF IF YOU
CAN WAIT A LIFETIME FOR THEM

...A LIFETIME?!




THAT'S A BLOODY
LONG TIME!!



ER.... YOU
DIDN'T EXPECT
THAT??


WELL... Y-YEAH. BUT
WHEN YOU PUT IT SO
BLUNTLY... HMM.



I WOULD GLADY
WAIT A LIFETIME FOR
MY GRANDKID, BUT-


HOW LONG IS A
LIFETIME?

...HUH?



SORRY- HOW OLD WERE YOU
WHEN YOU PASSED?

UH... LIKE,
65?



OH MY GOSH, YOU DIED SO
YOUNG, MR KIBORN!!

WHAT?

C'MON, MAN. I WAS THE OLDEST KIBORN IN GENERATIONS. SURE I WAS KILLED, BUT I WASN'T THAT YOUNG...

YEAH, YOU WERE.

WHEN I DIED, I WOULD HAVE BEEN... HMM, AROUND 2000? I LOST TRACK A BIT. I DIDN'T DIE OF OLD AGE EITHER.

UHHH... WHUH... BUT THAT'S-

WHAT THE HELL?! IS EVERYBODY AROUND HERE A TOTAL FREAK?! I KNOW IT'S PURGATORY, BUT STILL! GODS!

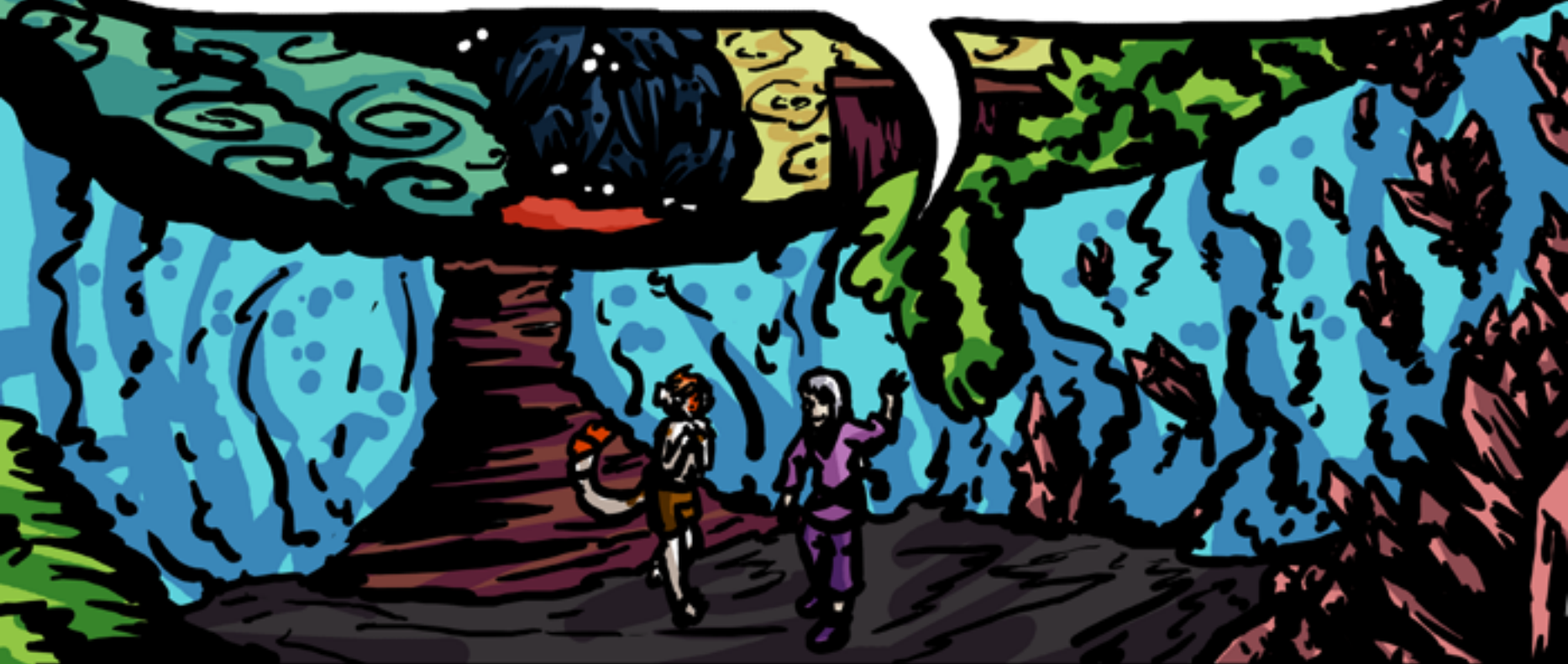
UH... RUDE.

I DONT KNOW IF MY ACOLYTE WILL LIVE AS LONG AS I DID, BUT IT'S ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY... AND I AM NOT SURE I CAN STAY IN THIS PLACE THAT LONG.

STILL... I DO WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN HIM ONE LAST TIME.

IS THAT IT? HEH, I CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT. C'MON!

C'MON, CATFEATURES! THE VIEWING POOL IS JUST DOWN HERE! YOU CAN SEE THE LAND OF THE LIVING THROUGH IT, MORE OR LESS...



I KNOW ABOUT THAT PLACE, BUT IT'S SURROUNDED BY, UH... YOU KNOW, YOUR PEOPLE. I KNOW THEY WON'T LET ME USE IT.

MWAHAHA, YOU MEAN YOU CAN'T USE IT UNTIL SOMEBODY LURES THEM ALL AWAY...



IF THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW, IT'S HOW TO UPSET MY FAMILY.

YOU- YOU'D DO THAT FOR ME? TELLA... I MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID ABOUT ALL KIBORNS BEING JERKS.

SUCH HIGH PRAISE, SAFFRON.





HMM... WHO TO TRY,
WHO TO TRY...



EENY...



MEENY...



MINEY...



BRO! AHA!
HOW ARE YOU, DEAR
BROTHER?



TELLA. WHAT THE HELL ARE
YOU DOING HERE?

BREEZE! MY BOY! AH, LOVELY TO SEE
YOU, BUT I AM HERE TO TALK TO MY
DEAR BROTHER, SO EXCUSE ME.

GET YOUR
HANDS OFF
ME.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE NOT
WELCOME HERE, TELLA.

WHAT, REALLY?

BUT I WAS
DYING TO GET
HERE.

AH! GET IT?!

SLAP



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, TELLA?



....HI DAD.



YOU HAVE NO
RIGHT TO CALL YOUR-
SELF MY SON.

AFTER
WHAT YOU
DID, YOU ARE
NO KIBORN.



YYYYEAH, BUT WHAT
YOU'RE FORGETTING IS-





THAT WORKED BETTER
THAN I THOUGHT IT
WOULD!



TELLA!!

TELLA!!



NOW ALL I
GOTTA DO IS
GIVE THEM THE
SLIP, HEAD BACK
TO SAFF, AND-

AND-

UHHHH...



A DEAD END? FELS!

THAT DOES
COMPLICATE
THINGS A
TOUCH.



≡HUF≡

HEY, SAFF! THE VIEWING POOL'S
READY FOR YOU!



GODDESS, TELLA! WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU?



MY FAMILY IS JERKS, MAN. YOU
KNOW THAT!



HEH, BUT AFTER A FEW
TRIES I LOST 'EM




SO HURRY UP! WE'VE ONLY GOT THE VIEWING
POOL UNTIL THEY GET BACK.



HERE WE ARE!


...IT'S NOT EMPTY.




NAH, BUT THESE GUYS ARE THE ONES WHO AIN'T AGGRESSIVE, SO YOU CAN CHASE 'EM OFF IF YOU GOTTA.



...UM, I DON'T WANT TO ATTACK-




OI! OUT OF THE WAY! I NEED TO BORROW THE POOL FOR A BIT.



WHAT, NO QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER IS DOING?

SOME, BUT...

I'M SURE IF SHE WAS IN DANGER YOU PEOPLE WOULD BE WELL WORSE THAN USUAL



WHEN THEY GET BACK YOU'RE DEAD, TELLA!

I'M DEAD NOW, BUT ME AND MY MANY BRUISES CATCH YOUR POINT. WE GOTTA BE QUICK, SAFF.



SHOW US SAFFRON'S ACOLYTE, UH....



UM, WHAT'S HIS NAME?

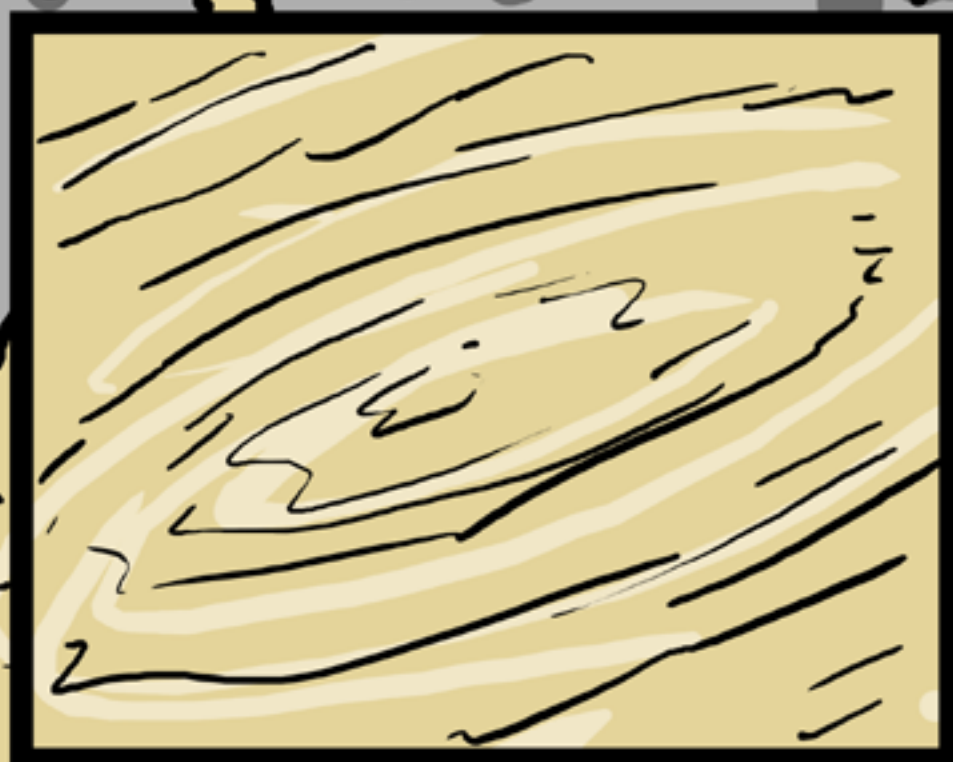
NETTLE.

FULL NAME?

YES?



...ALL RIGHT! SHOW US NETTLE!




IT'S...

BLANK?



...TELLA, DID YOU DO IT WRONG?


WHAT? NO WAY.




HMM, IT IS BLANK. BUT FOR ONCE, TELLA DIDN'T STUFF UP.



HMMM?



THIS VIEWING POOL ISN'T LIKE A WINDOW INTO THE LIVING REALMS THAT SHOWS ALL.




IT IS MORE LIKE A BOOK. IT MAY SKIP SOME THINGS, BUT IT SHOWS WHAT IS IMPORTANT.



SO, MY ACOLYTE IS...

PROBABLY TAKING A LEAK?



WELL, I WOULDN'T HAVE PUT IT SO VULGARLY, BUT YES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

WELL, IT SOUNDS LIKE THE FAMILY IS RETURNING. I WOULD ADVISE LEAVING, QUICKLY.

OH, RIGHT. THANKS?

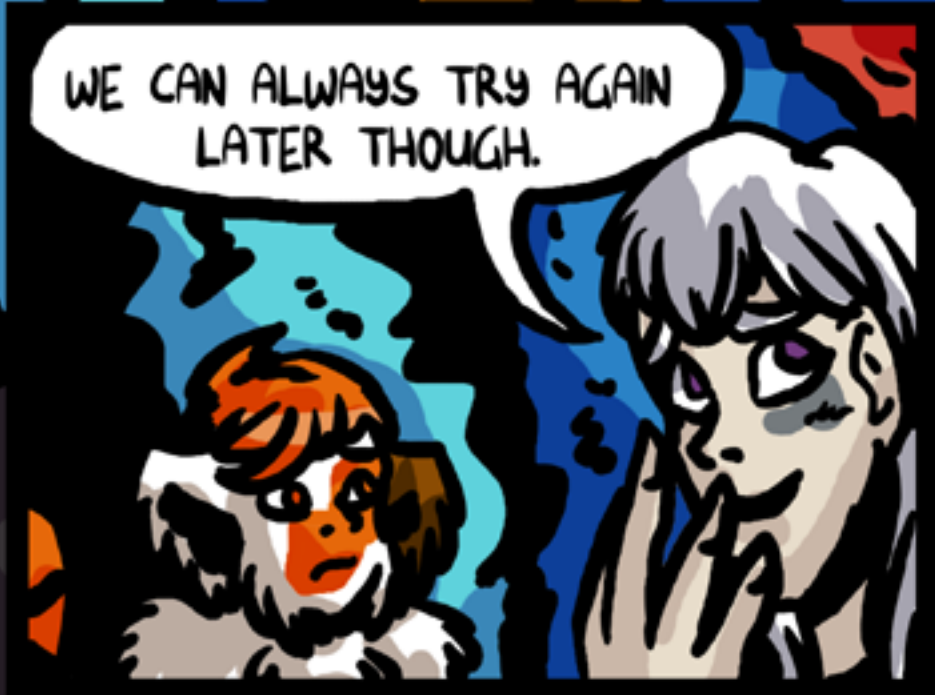
BETTER HURRY, SAFFRON. LET US BRAVELY RUN AWAY.



GEEZ... SORRY YOU DIDN'T GET TO SEE YOUR BUDDY NETTLE. YOU MUST BE BUMMED.



WE CAN ALWAYS TRY AGAIN LATER THOUGH.



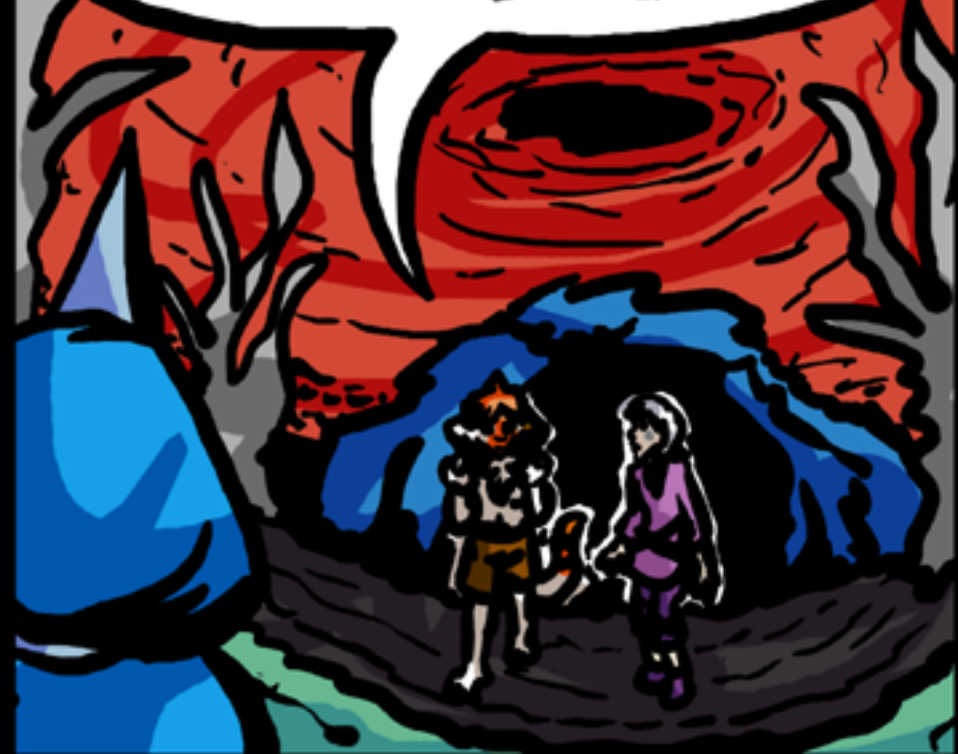
NOPE.



HUH?



NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE HIM, HEH.
IT MUST BE A SIGN.



UH, IT'S NOT...
BUT OKAY.



I AM NOT MEANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN.
BUT I KNOW HE CAN HANDLE THINGS ON
HIS OWN. IT IS TIME TO REALISE MY TIME
IS PAST, AND MOVE ON.

THAT IS WISE, SAFFRON.
IF YOU ARE GOING TO TRY
THE JOURNEY... I WILL TRY
AGAIN, TOO.



ALL YOU WELL-ADJUSTED
PEOPLE GOING ON WITH THE
REST OF YOUR AFTERLIFE SURE
MAKE ME LOOK BAD.



OH TELLA. YOU KIBORNS ARE SO
MALADJUSTED IT DOESN'T TAKE
MUCH, HONESTLY.



SAFFRON, I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE NOT TRIED THIS JOURNEY BEFORE... IT IS A HARD ROAD, TRAVELLING THROUGH HELL TO PAY BACK THE DEBTS FOR THE LIFE YOU HAVE LIVED. IT CAN BE ROUGH, AND IF YOU FAIL... YOU WILL END UP BACK HERE AND NEED TO START AGAIN.

IT IS... LESS THAN PLEASANT.



THE JOURNEY IS ONE YOU MUST TAKE ALONE. BEST OF LUCK.

YOU TOO, MISS RYUSHIN. THANK YOU.

FAREWELL, MISTER KIBORN.

BYE, GUYS. SEE YOU IN ANOTHER LIFE.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU AS WELL, TELLA.

WITH... ALL THAT YOU HAVE GOING ON HERE.

...BYE.



HELLO...?

B-BIRD...?

...REAPER!


YOU HAVE TO TAKE ME BACK! PLEASE!
MY SON IS IN DANGER! I HAVE TO-
PLEASE! I CAN'T BE DEAD!

Hmm!

HEY, FIRSTLY! SHOO, WON'T CHA!
THIS BLOKE'S MINE NOW!

WHO-
WHAT ARE
YOU?

I WILL BE YOUR GUIDE
FOR NOW! DON'T WORRY, I
AM MUCH BETTER THAN
BIRDBRAINS THERE.



...WHERE ARE WE?

OH DON'T BE SILLY. YOU'RE NOT STUPID. YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE. YOU ARE DEAD.

BUT MY SON... M..MANA....

YOU ARE DEAD! YOU SHOULD REALLY START WORRYING ABOUT YOURSELF INSTEAD.

BEYOND THIS DOOR IS JUDGMENT. THE GODS WILL SIT OVER YOUR LIFE, AND ASSIGN YOUR PENANCE ACCORDINGLY.

IT WILL BE **VERY** DULL.





ZAMIL AHMAD...

YOU ARE LATE.

SNICKER





AH, I SEE.

YOU WERE DELAYED BY THIS ONE, HM?



JUDE, PLEASE CONTROL YOUR DEITY.



THAT IS NOT HIS. WHEN DID YOU EVER SEE ONE OF HIS SO JOVIAL?



.....AH.



NO, I DO NOT WANT TO KNOW.



ZAMIL AHMAD.
WE WILL BEGIN YOUR
JUDGMENT NOW.



LET US BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.



WE WILL START FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD, AND ENSURE YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS EXAMINED.



EXCUSE ME, HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?



...WHAT? YOU DARE ASK-



HEHEHE, EASY ANSWER-
HOW OLD WERE YOU?



SILENCE.

IT WILL TAKE AS LONG AS IT TAKES.
USUALLY, THAT APPEARS TO BE QUITE SOME TIME.
PEOPLE OFTEN GET IMPATIENT.



BUT- MY SON'S IN
DANGER! I CAN'T WASTE
ANY TIME - I NEED TO
SAVE HIM!

PLEASE!



...

YOU ARE DEAD.



I-!! BUT
MY SON-



MY SON'S NOT DEAD AND I'M NOT
WASTING TIME HERE!

AW SNAP.



YOU HEARD HIM! HE'S NO TIME FOR JUDGMENT, SO CHOP CHOP! LET'S SKIP ALL THAT!

...IT CANNOT BE SKIPPED.
YOU KNOW THAT.

NOW NOW, GODDESS OF TRUTH! DO NOT LIE... WE CAN'T
HAVE YOU LYING! WHAT ISN'T WITHIN THE POSSIBILITY OF
GODS SUCH AS YOURSELVES, HM?

FINE. WE DO NOT WANT TO- NO... THERE
IS NO REASON TO SKIP THIS.

OH LORD OF DEATH... I
BESEECH YOU. HEY! HIM
WANTING TO SKIP IT
ISN'T REASON ENOUGH?

NO.

AW.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
I'VE GOT TO GET MY SON-

HOLD IT.

DO NOT BOTHER TRYING TO LEAVE
THROUGH THE DARKNESS.



IT LOOPS AROUND. YOU WILL JUST END UP HERE,
WASTING MORE OF OUR TIME.

JUDGMENT IS
THE ONLY WAY
OUT OF HERE.

THEN DON'T WASTE
ANY TIME! SKIP
JUDGMENT, AND
JUST LET ME LEAVE!



SO RUDE... BROTHER, WHY DON'T
YOU TELL HIM.

AH, Y-YES.
MR AHMAD, YOU
NEEDN'T WORRY,
TH-

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO FORCE YOUR
HAND AND SKIP THIS, GOD OF DEATH?

AH, I KNOW.
PERHAPS IF I
MENTION...

MANA?

WHAT?!





MISTER AHMAD, PLEASE
DON'T AGREE TO ANYTHING,
IF YOU ONLY KNEW
THAT-

BUP BUP BUP! HE AGREED! MARIE AGREED! IT'S ALL UP TO
ALTAIR NOW, C'MON! LET IT STAND!



IT'S A GOOD DEAL FOR US!
HE'LL BE OVERPAYING HIS
DEBT FOR SURE!



AH, KEEPING IN MIND
IF YOU AGREE I WILL
LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.



DONE.



ZAMIL AHMAD, YOUR
JUDGMENT STANDS.
PENACE IS SET.



...IS THAT OKAY?



NOPE, TERRIBLE! BUT IT'S TOO
LATE TO WORRY NOW.





WHERE AM I NOW...?

PURGATORY. IT'S WHERE THE SOULS WHO'VE BEEN JUDGED WAIT TO PLUCK UP THE COURAGE TO GO THROUGH HELL TO PAY THEIR PENANCE. ALL DEAD SOULS PASS THROUGH HERE.



THANK YOU.

OHO! DON'T THANK ME! I DID A TERRIBLE JOB!



YOU KNOW WHAT THAT GREEN-SKINNED FELLOW - THE GOD OF KNOWLEDGE - WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU EARLIER?



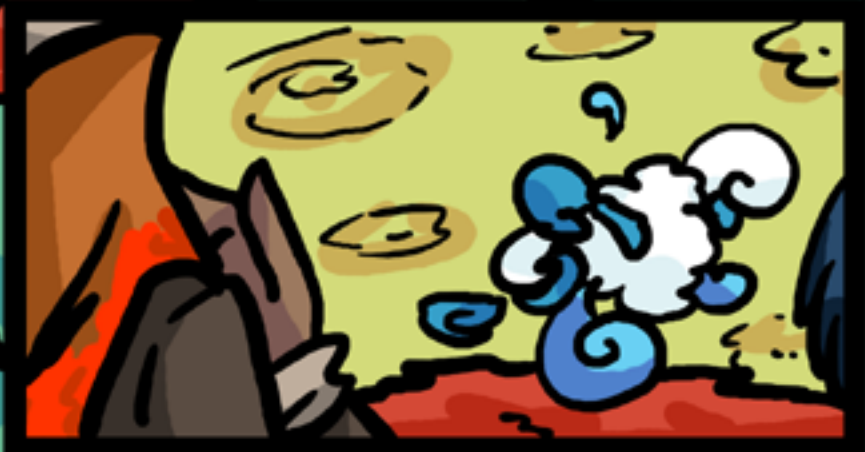
TIME DOES NOT PASS IN THE MORTAL REALMS WHILE YOU FACE JUDGMENT.

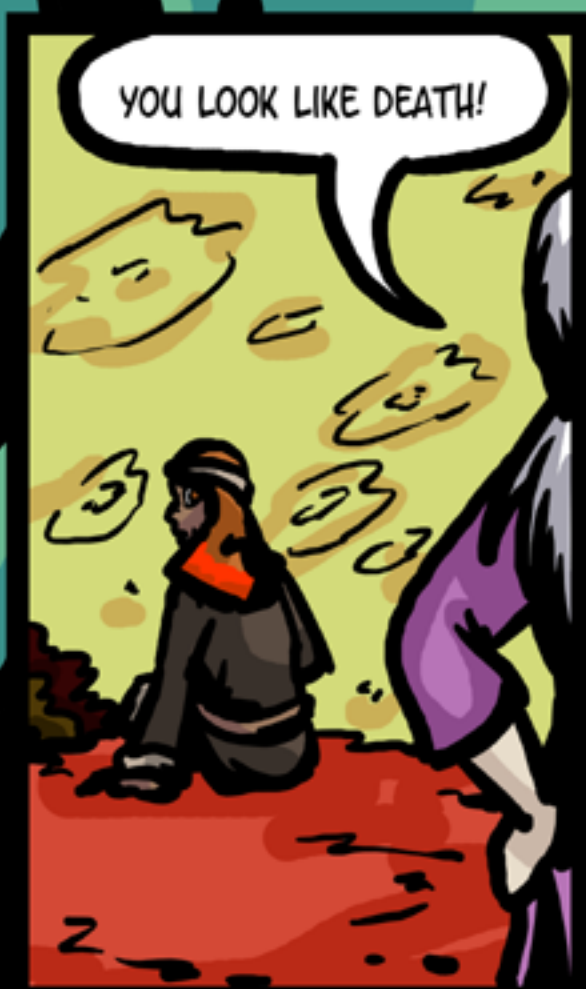



...?
.....!!!



HAHA, BE SEEING YOU!









I'M TELLA KIBORN, BY THE WAY. I'VE BEEN HERE A WHILE, SO IF YOU'VE GOT ANY QUESTIONS, NEED A HAND WITH ANYTHING, LET ME KNOW, RIGHT?



...I'M ZAMIL AHMAD.




I NEED TO FIND MY SON.



AH.
IS HE DEAD
OR ALIVE?

...WHAT?



I CAN TRY TO HELP YOU FIND HIM, I JUST
NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

H-HEY, ARE
YOU OKAY?

I....

I'M... I'M REALLY DEAD... I DIED
DEFENDING HIM FROM...

OH GODS

THAT MONSTER IS GOING TO KILL
HIM AND I CAN'T SAVE HIM.

HE... HE'S
GOING TO DIE...

MANA...

...HE'LL APPEAR CLOSE BY. HE'LL HAVE
TO PASS THROUGH HERE.

I'LL WAIT WITH YOU.

SOB



SOB



RAAAA--K-



OH GOD... ARE YOU OKAY, KID? I... FELT!



HYA!!



COME ON! WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE THAT MONSTER RECOVERS!

D-DAD! NO!!

I'M SORRY I WASN'T IN TIME TO SAVE
YOUR FATHER.

LOOK, THAT MONSTER WON'T BE STUNNED LONG,
WE NEED TO GET SOMEPLACE SAFE, OKAY?

SOB

MY NAME'S YASIR, KID.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

M-...MANA.

MY.... MY
DAD, HE... HE...

SSH, SSH... IT'S GOING TO BE ALRIGHT.

HEH. GOOD BOY, ZAOU.