



# *el indon*

*Part One*

**JAIYANDTE** 



## *Contents*

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>148</b>

El Indon Part One

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**CONTENT WARNING:** blood, vomit, violence.

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Hello?  
Is someone there?

uuuh

ughhh



Are you okay?



Oh God, you're not okay at all...

aaah

huuuh...

hrrrghh



Blood.

More blood.

Yeah!

More blood.

There it is.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BOH MY GOD WHAT ARE YOU DOING

Just calm down!

STOP IT OH MY GOD STOP IT HURTS IT...hurts?

There.





What?

How did you do that?



I'm a Tailor.

I stitch things all the time.



See?



Whoa...

It doesn't even sting anymore...



Are we all done screaming now?



Uh, yeah...

I think I'll be fiiiiiiii-



Fire.



**FIRE!**  
Did you see a fire anywhere?!

Uh, I saw lots of f-



**HEY! STOP!!**



I thought we were all done screaming...

**ROTH!!**  
R O O O O T H !

Can you hear me?!



Hey, hey! Don't do that! It's not safe here!

ROTH!!

Can you hear me?!




Look, I'm sorry if you lost someone, but we need to get out of here!



I hear him!  
I can't just leave him there!

Well don't run into the fire like a what did I just say what are you **DOING?!**







Rrr... we're both going to daAAAAAH!!




Found him!



You almost gave me a heart attack.



Yeah, I was really worried for a second there.



Then your friend's okay? Where is he?



Roth?

He's right here.



Right where?

Right here.

In the lantern.



Roth, I was so worried. I almost lost you.



So your friend...

...is a flame...



Yeah, he's my pilot light.

I'm a Kindler.


Fire's kind of my thing.



Ooooooooooooooooookaaaaaaaaaayyy...



Anyway...



We really, really  
need to go.


The next town  
is still days away,  
and I'd rather not  
freeze to death.

Uh, okay...

Did you find any  
other survivors?


A close-up of a yellow cat-like character with large ears, wearing a brown scarf and a grey tunic. It has a slightly open mouth as if speaking.

No, not yet.

A close-up of a human character with brown hair and a red hooded cloak. They have a concerned expression and are looking towards the cat.

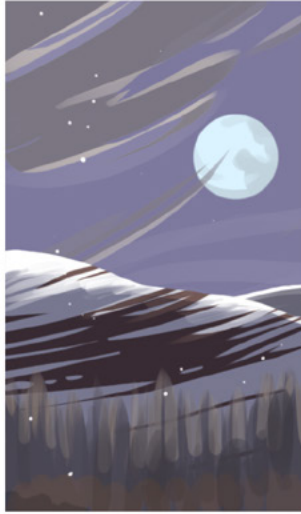
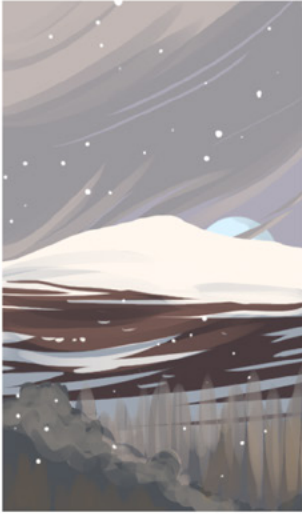
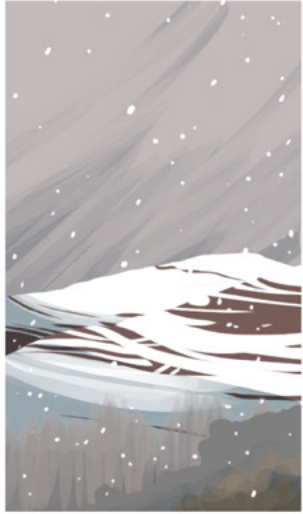
Were you with anyone else?

Uh, no.  
No one  
else.

A wide shot of a scene of destruction. The ground is covered in white ash and orange flames. In the background, a wooden cart with a large wheel is overturned. A person lies motionless on the ground to the left. The yellow cat and the human character are in the center, looking at the scene.

No one else...

I have a real bad feeling about this.








That makes  
twenty jars.


Beans. Great.

I found my  
poncho, so that's  
one good thing.


I guess.



But we've wasted  
a lot of time now...




...we should  
get moving.



So we have the beans,  
two boxes of hardtack,  
a tin of fishes, and a  
jar of pickles...

...and two  
hundred miles  
of dark woods  
between us  
and safety.



That sounds  
rough.

But you know what  
else we have?

What?

We have Roth  
to light the way.

Oh yeah.  
Roth.

Thank God  
for that.



# *el indon*

Roth DOES know where we're going, right?

Of course he does.




Okay, so...

NOW which way do we go?


Uh...

...not this way.







Wow. Roth has a great sense of direction.



We should have found the trail by now...



Well, we can't keep going like this.



Let's just find a safe spot to camp until the morning.

...Shouldn't we find the path before camping?



We're lost either way,  
so we might as well be  
lost and warm.

Remember what I said  
about freezing to death?

Yeah?

I'm freezing.

Let's go.



Can you get some  
kindling for a fire?  
I'll clear a space.

Kindling.

Sure.



This should be plenty, I think.

Good. Now all we do is rest until the morning.









What's your name?



Hmm?

I just realized, I never asked your name.



I'm Patch.

I'm Ashley.  
Nice to meet you.





Ashley...

You're going to El Indon, right?


Yeah, I am.

Well, so am I...



...or rather, I was, until the caravan exploded.


Well, uh... yeah, until that.



Did you happen to see the people who did it?

Uh, no, I didn't.

I just heard a lot of yelling, and a big bang, and the wagon fell over.



I was afraid of that. I didn't see anything either.

I just remember a bang, and a hard whack on my head...

...and waking up in a pile of bodies.



Do you think it could have been some kind of accident?

Maybe they were carrying dangerous cargo, or something.

Could be, except that we didn't find anyone alive.


"Dangerous cargo" wouldn't go to the trouble of killing all the witnesses.

No, someone did this.

But they didn't kill US...

No... they didn't.

Hmm...



Why would anyone  
attack the caravan  
in the first place?


All it had  
was beans, and wine,  
and food, and stuff  
like that...

Who would do  
something like this?

Well...

That's the big  
question, isn't it...

...What?



Well, let me put it  
this way...


We could probably still  
hike to the next town  
in a couple of days...

...and find a way  
to El Indon after that...

...but I need to know  
if I can trust you.



Excuse me?



Look, it could have been anyone, and that includes you.

You can't be serious.

It's not impossible.

You did say fire was "your thing."

And maybe you weren't traveling alone after all...



You're making wild assumptions.

Am I?

Since you're the only other survivor, that makes you the only other suspect.

How could I have destroyed a whole caravan at once?

I was bleeding to death when you found me.

Maybe you were targeting one of the passengers...

Maybe things didn't go to plan...

Next thing you know, there's splinters in your shoulder.

You think I'm lying to you? Really?

I **think** there's something suspicious about this whole situation.

I'll say.

But for that matter, why should I trust **you**?

Well, I saved your life, for one thing.



You did, yes.

Well, I guess  
you have a point...

I don't really have any way to  
prove to you that I'm innocent.

Come on, Roth...



Uh, wait...



No, no, you're right.

After all,  
I don't have any  
evidence.

And there's no point in  
sticking together if we  
can't trust each other.

Roth and I might as  
well carry on, and make as  
much headway as we can...



Hhh...

Haa...

Hhh...

Hhh...

I-I-I think...

I think -

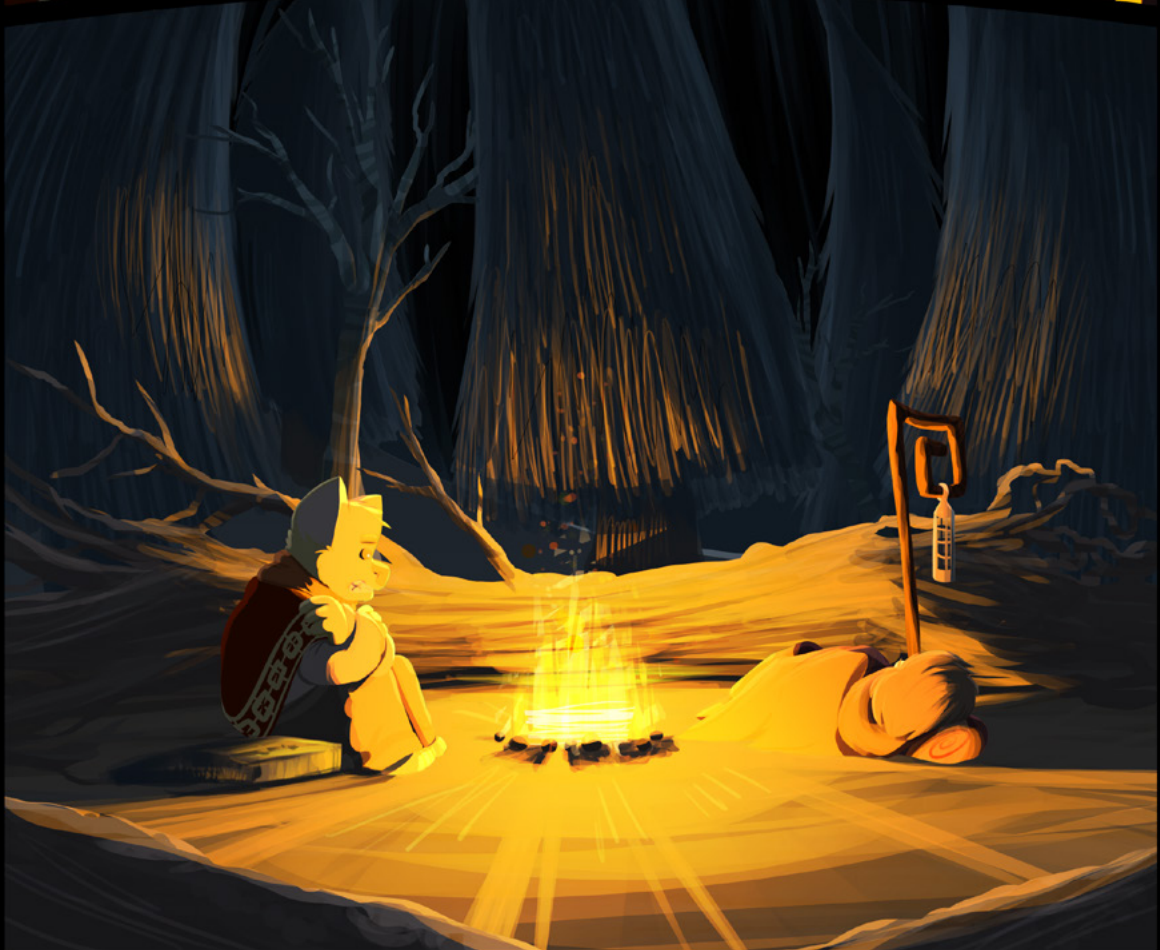
Yes?

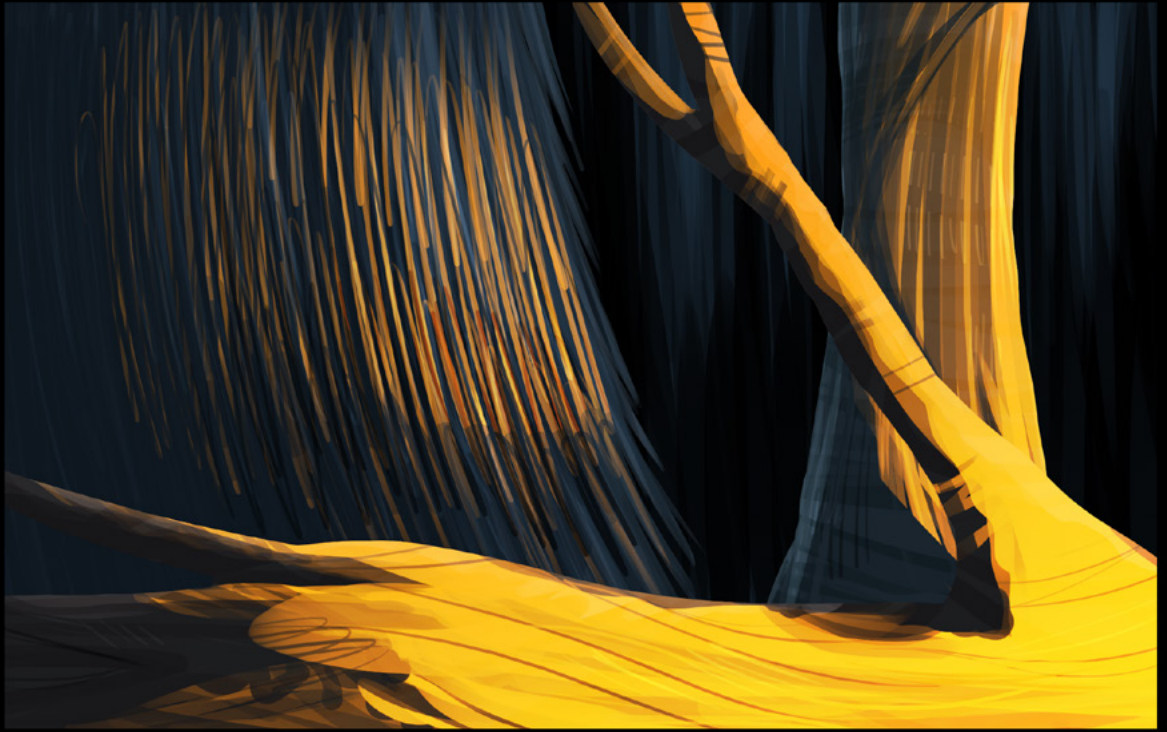


I - I think I can trust you. For the time being.



Okay. Sleep tight.







Uuhh...



AAAAAAH!!



What are you AAAAAA AAAAAA AAAAAA



What is that thing?!

What's it doing here?!

I don't know!

I don't know!



And ... why's it staring at me?

Uh ... hello?

What ... who are you?



He has a bag...



Uh ... hi.

Hello?

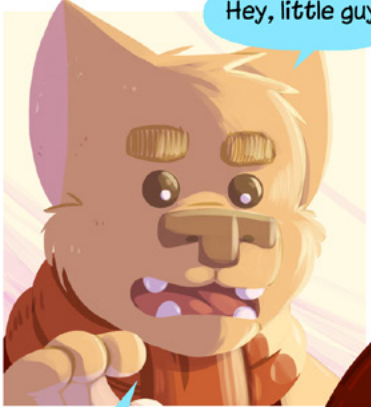
Do you understand me?



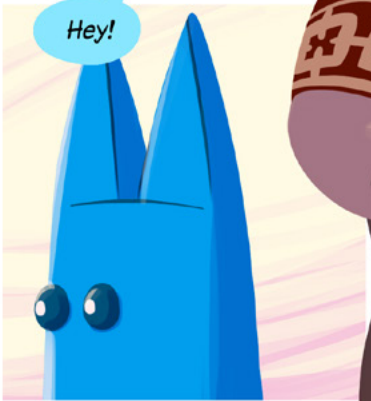
Hey, little guy...

What is going on around here...?

I think you're being ignored.



Hey!







Hi there...  
My name's Ashley.  
What's your name?

Can you...  
...can you talk?

I don't...  
I don't see  
a mouth...

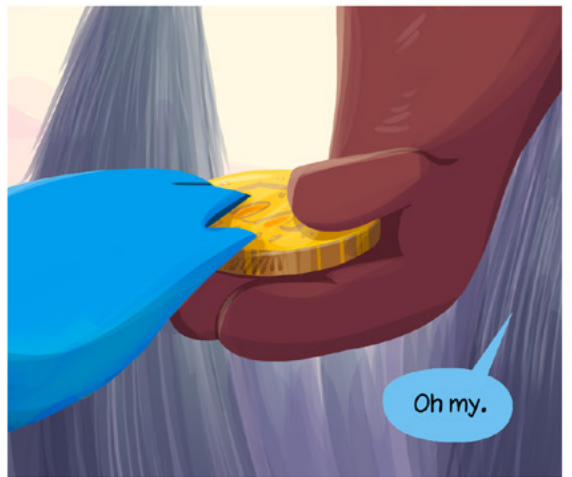


Is that your bag?

What do you have in th



Oh.



Oh my.



This is for me?

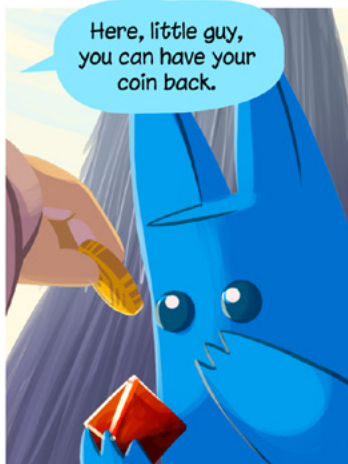
Um ... thanks?



Why are you giving us these?

I'm not so sure about - oh.

Oh my.





You still haven't told me your name, though...

What's your Trade?

Are you a Jeweler? Or a Goldsmith, or something?

...You're not telling us anything, are you?



Don't be so rude, Patch.

I don't think he CAN talk.

Maybe that's true, but what am I supposed to say? What IS he?!

He's friendly.

He's a weird blue THING that doesn't have a mouth!

Don't say things like that in front of him!

Is it even a "him"?

You don't...

You know, I'm not really sure.

He's got those pointed ears ... but no nose?

Or feet?

But he has hands...

He's got big ears, but no tail...

Well, neither do you...

We're not talking about me, stay on topic.





I've never seen anything like this before.

Me neither.  
How does it eat...?



...Let's find out.



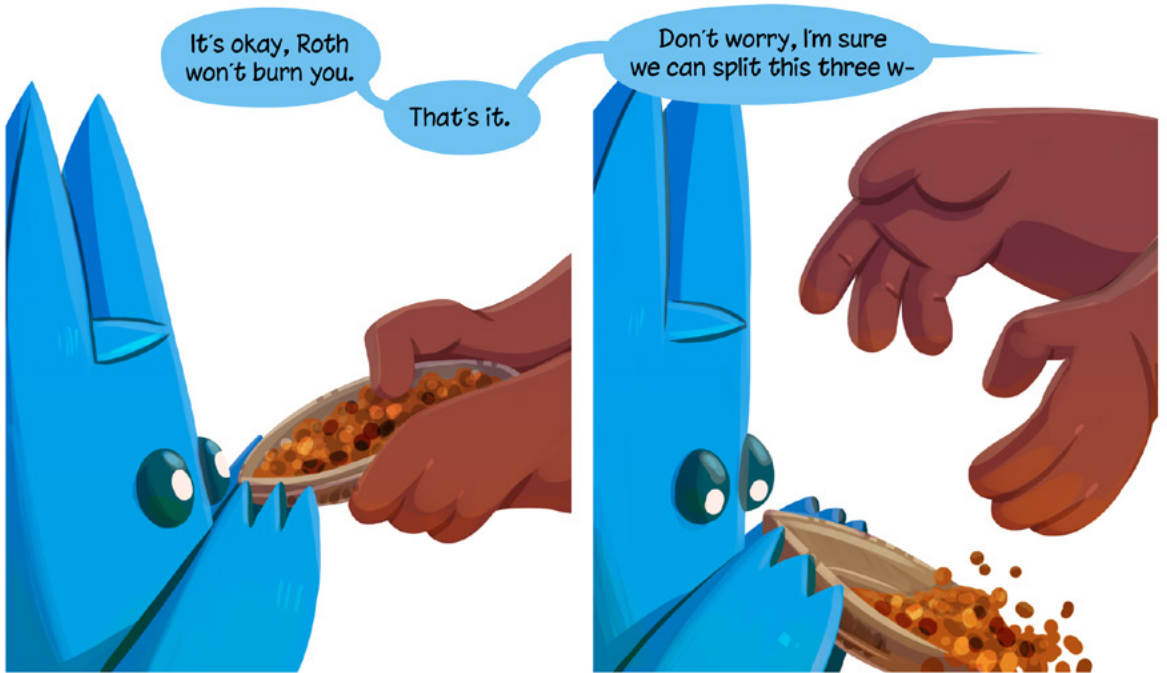
Hey!

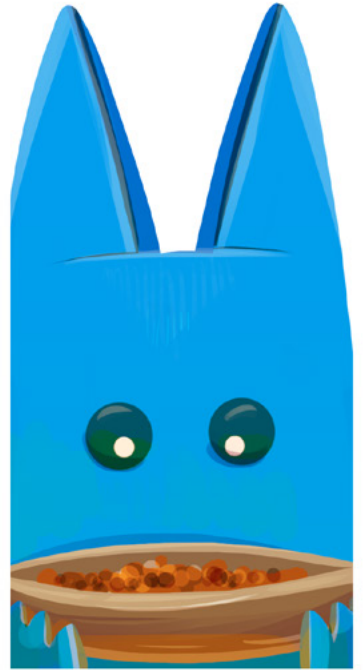
Little blue friend!  
Are you hungry?



Roth cooked up some beans.

Would you like some?



















Don't go too far ahead, little buddy...

...or...

No, I can't just keep calling you "little buddy," can I?



I think I'll call you...

"Blue."

How very creative.



Actually, can I ask you something?

Sure.

How did you not know what a Tailor was?



I've never met a Tailor before.

There aren't any in my town.

My family buys them. From a Merchant, a few towns over.

What?!

Then who makes your clothes?




Buys them...?

A town with no Tailors? At all? Do they have any Weavers, or Drapers, or anyone?

Nope.

Peat and lumber, that's all there is in my town. Kindlers, one and all.



I've never heard of a town like that...

It's not that odd.

...and I've never heard of anyone talking to flames before.

Well, I've never heard of a Tailor stitching skin together before.

Can't imagine they teach that in your Guild.

Yeah, that's...

Sometimes you need to think outside the box.





Can ya hear `em?

Barely. Stay quiet so I can listen...

What're they talkin' bout now?

Somethin' about a box.

Do they keep the jewels in the box?

Maybe if you shut up, I'd find out.

What box?

What ... outside the box ... it's an expression.

The name ... name of the box ... what's in it?

It's not a real ... jewel.

If you've got some secret box, I can't try to steal it or anything.

I don't have a secret box!

Okay, sure, I got it.





Can I ask YOU something?

Shoot.

How did you not know what a Kindler was?

You must have a boiler in your town.

It never snows in my town. No boilers or furnaces.

What?

Don't need any. We can light lanterns fine by ourselves.

No way. You **MUST** need a Kindler.

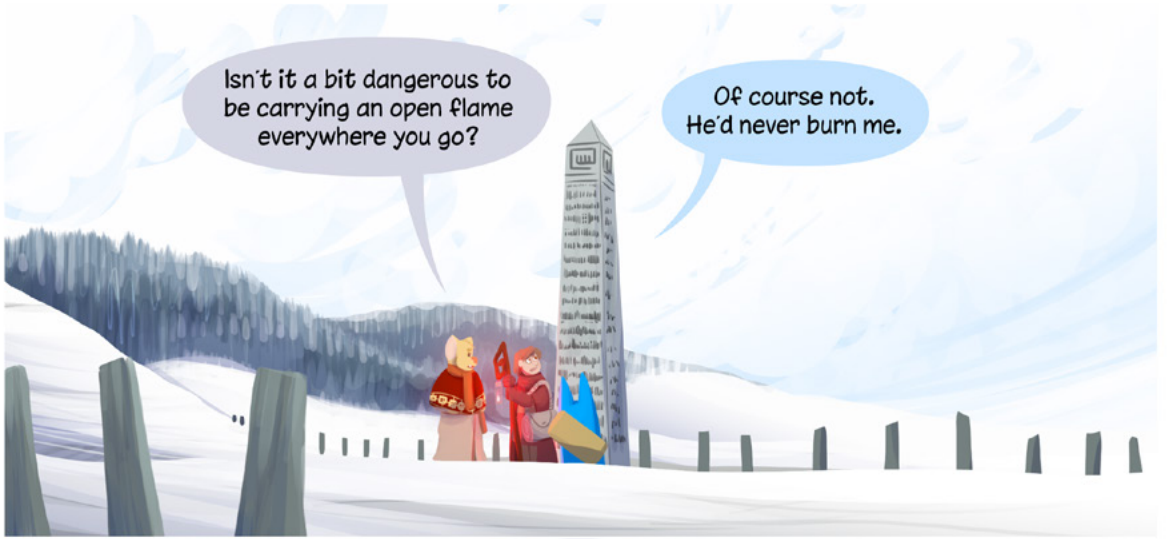
You're telling me your town doesn't have a forge, or a foundry, or even a barbecue?

Nope. Small fishing town. Weavers and Fishers and Thatchers, all the way through.

Hmm.

That's... neat.





Isn't it a bit dangerous to be carrying an open flame everywhere you go?

Of course not. He'd never burn me.



I was more worried about him burning the woods down.

You don't need to worry.

Honestly, that doesn't reassure me.

I've been tending Roth since before I could talk.



They're talkin' about... burnin' the woods down?

That WOULD warm me up...

One of em's a Kindler.

Maybe that explains how they got out of the caravan...



But there was nothin' in that caravan worth hittin'.

Nothin' but wine and beans...

Y'know what would help, is a cup of bean soup...

And that blue thing they're walkin' with, I've never seen anything like that before...



I could REALLY go for some hot chocolate...

Shut up and focus! You're makin' me hungry too.

That's the idea.



These beans don't even taste like beans.

They taste like shoe.



And where do you think YOU'RE going?



Calm down, Blue.

There's daylight yet, and we're on the right path.

We just need to rest a bit.





Y'know, we can jump 'em right now.

No. Not yet.

Don't tell me - the cold's gettin' to ya? Want me to fetch ya a cup of coffee?

That's not... well yeah, actually, that would hit the spot. But listen...

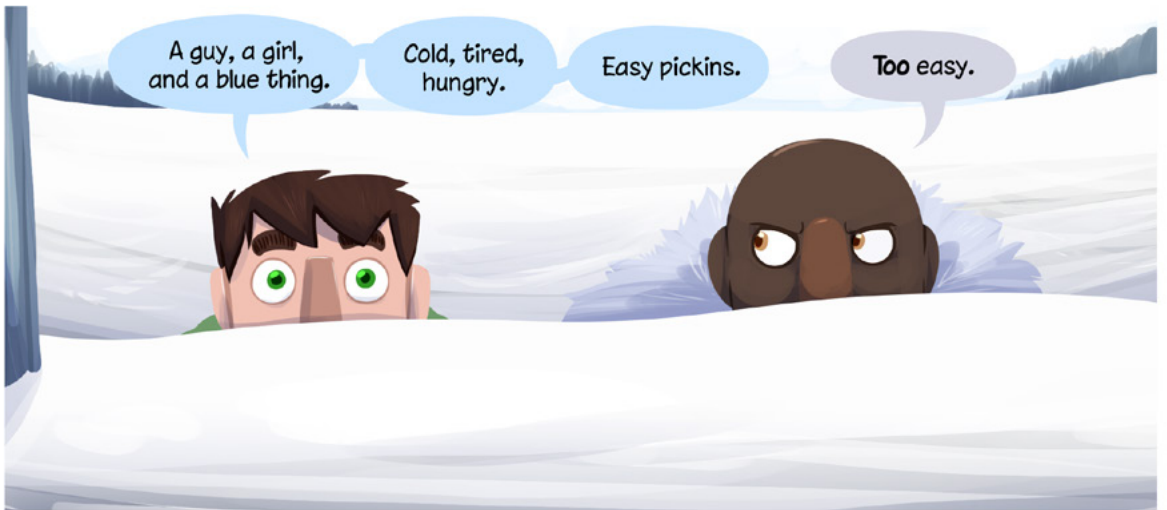
Those three -

- uh, two and a half -

- are the only ones who walked away from that caravan.

I wanna know how.

And I'm not doing anything till I know what we're goin' up against.



A guy, a girl, and a blue thing.

Cold, tired, hungry.

Easy pickins.

Too easy.



We must be getting close.

Any idea how close?

Not really, the milestone didn't say...



Maybe we should knock on one of these doors and ask for directions.

Well, you could...

...but then we'd have to explain **him**...

Yyyyyyyyyyaaah...



Looks like they're goin' in the same direction we are.

To Debrandt?

If they stay on this road, yeah.

They're probably on their pilgrimage.

Really...



That means they're headin' for El Indon.

Probably, but we need to be sure...



Well then...

Guess I'll go an' introduce myself.







'Scuse us sir...

Maybe you  
can help us.

Can you tell us  
how far it is to  
the next town?

Oh, don't tell me -  
you folks're  
pilgrims, right?

Yes, we're  
going to  
El Indon.

Thought so!



So you're passin'  
through Debrandt,  
then? No problem...

Go six or seven  
hours down this  
road and you'll reach  
the city walls.

You folks, uh...

Uuuuhhhh...



What is...?

This is our, uh...

This is our friend. He's from the southern countries.

Southern, huh? They have blue people in the southlands?

Yes.

Please don't stare. It's very rude.

My apologies. I didn't mean any offense.

I won't delay you folks. Please, travel safely.

Thank you.





Well?

Three humble pilgrims,  
walkin' to El Indon.

Whaddya think  
about the  
blue thing?

Hell if I know.

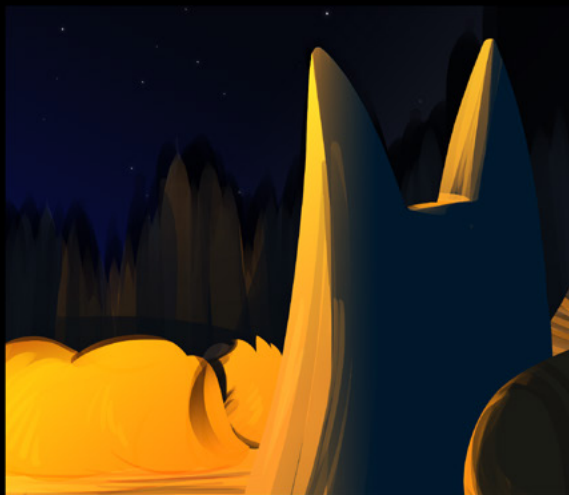
But that girl's  
coin is real enough.

And we know there's  
more where that  
came from...



All we gotta do  
now is wait.





Alright! How many jewels did you get?

Uh... none.

What?


There weren't any jewels in its bag. Just coins.

You're kiddin' me.

You must've missed a pocket.

When have I ever missed a pocket?

...Don't answer that.



You must've made a mistake.

That's not possible, there's nowhere else to keep 'em...

Wait - the girl had one of 'em, didn't she?

No, really! The blue thing didn't have any jewels.

Not in her bag. She must keep it in her coat...

The furball's got nothin' but hardtack an' beans in his bag.

But there were two jewels, right?

I definitely saw two. Unless we're BOTH going crazy.

Either way ... somethin's up with these guys.







Who's there?

Whaddya want?



Hi, we're just passing through.

Pilgrims? How many in yer party?

Three.

...Well, two and a half.



Two 'n a - what the...



He's our friend from the southlands.

Oh. Those people, huh? I getcha.





Okay, that'll be three dollars for all o' ya.



Um, hang on...



Uh...



Hey, if ya can't pay, then ya gotta get -



- Oh.



Uh, yeah. Yeah, that'll cover it.



Blue, I'm noticing a pattern about you.

Welcome to  
Debrandt, pilgrims.



Big place.

Eh.

I've seen bigger.





Pilgrims, huh?



Well, how can I help you?

I'd like a room, please.

Yeah, me too.



Are you a party of two?



No.

Preferably not.



Okay, but this is the only room we have left.

Unless you wanna use the common room.

I'd really rather not. Common rooms are, uh...



...kinda gross.

Well, if you're not gonna share, I'll give the room to whoever can pay the most.



Oh, easy!



Ta-dah!

ohgod



How much is that?

I dunno.

Ninety-nine-something.



Oh come on, that's not fair!  
You just got that money as  
a gift!

Maybe you shouldn't  
turn down gifts, huh Patch?

How am I supposed to  
compete with that, huh?

You think I can  
pay in beans?

Wait, what  
are those?

Uh... beans. Not money.  
Can't do it.



What kind  
of beans?

I don't know...  
gross beans! Beans  
that taste like -

Like shoe?









Eight jars each!

Looks like it's a tie!

You've got to be shi

Have fun sharing  
the room!

Dinner's served  
every night at seven!

Yeah, yeah.

This sucks.

I'm not crazy  
about it, either.





I just h-

Oh! There you are!



How did you...

I thought we'd lost you. Don't just run off like that.

...actually, I don't want to know.



I don't think they'll mind another person in this room...

It's going to be really cramped.

Well, that makes it...

...cozy.

Don't say that again.



Whatever. If there's nothing else, I have some other business to attend to.

Really? So do I.

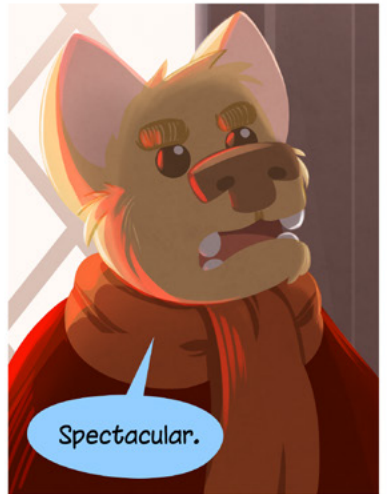
So we'll meet back here at dinner time?

I don't ...

...ugh, fine.



Does that work for you, Blue?




Spectacular.



A friend,  
with a light.



Come in.




Welcome, sister. I don't believe I recognize you. Are you a pilgrim?

Yes, brother. My name's Ashley.

Warm welcomes, Ashley. I'm Brother Edan.

What brings you to the Guildhall on a weeknight?



Trouble, actually.

And it's urgent. Is the Guildmaster available?

Oh, uh... Mistress Brigid is in her office.



Come with me.

She might be busy, but if it's an emergency...

It really is.





Mistress?

A visitor to see you.  
Says it's urgent.

Let them in.



Ashley, this is  
Mistress Brigid.



Hello Ashley.

Hello ma'am.



...and you can add more to it without disturbing the weft.

See? Easy.

Master Heddle?



Yes?

A visitor, with important news.



Important enough to interrupt my work...?

Afraid so, sir.

...and I was just getting to the interesting part...

Alright.

Let's hear it.



Take a seat, Ashley. What seems to be the trouble?

I don't know the whole story, ma'am, but something awful has happened.

There's been...  
...an attack, I think.

An attack?

Yes ma'am. On a caravan, out from Mawson.

I was in it, on my pilgrimage to El Indon, and... uh...

...nearly everyone in it is dead.

Dead... how many people?

I don't rightly know. Hundreds, probably.

How many survivors?

Four, including me. And Roth.

Roth?

Roth, this is Mistress Brigid.

Ooooooooooorkaaaaaaaaayyyy...

I didn't see it, really.

There was an explosion,  
a lot of fire, and screaming.

When I came to, most of the  
travelers were ... uh, gone.

Who are the  
other survivors?

There's a Kindler, named Ashley. And  
another one, a strange ... blue ... person. I've  
never met anyone like him before...

A blue person?

I honestly can't describe him, sir.  
You would have to see him for yourself.  
I don't know what his Trade is.

My good Tailor, this is very confusing.  
Are you sure about all this?

I understand that it's  
hard to believe...





Yes ma'am, very sure.

The Tailor pulled some splinters out of my arm and treated me.

I swear to you, this did happen.

I see...

Then this...

This is deep trouble, that's for sure.

This Tailor, do you trust him?

He saved my life.

All the same, he may be involved somehow.

...Yes ma'am, he may.

Have you told him anything about our Guild?

No, nothing.

Good. Keep your eyes on him.

Don't let this Kindler out of your sight.



I won't, sir.

Accompany her to El Indon. Follow this... other person.

Report everything you can to the Grandmasters.


I'll do my best, sir.

Good.

God knows what the reasons for this could be...

...but I suspect that another Guild is behind it.

Or worse, the Throne.



Really, sir?  
The Throne?

It's possible. Punishment, maybe.  
Making an example of one of  
its ... less favorite Guilds.


But we need to  
know more, before  
we do anything.

Patch, was it?

Take this token  
with you to El Indon.

This token will get you  
into El Indon, without  
tolls or papers.

A certified  
Guild envoy.




Ma'am ... You don't really  
think the Weavers' Guild  
could have ...?

That's just it, Ashley,  
I don't know.

I believe your  
story, but we need  
to be careful.

Continue on  
your pilgrimage,  
for now.



I'll share your report  
with the other Kindlers.

Check in with  
the Grandmasters  
when you get into the  
city, and tell them  
everything.

I can do that,  
ma'am, but ...

I'm just one  
person.

I know, and  
I'm sorry.

But we can't  
lend you any  
extra hands.

Not until we  
know what we're  
dealing with.

And I'm sure you  
understand this, but ...

...Trust no one  
outside the Guild.



Trust no one  
outside the Guild.









Thanks so much.

You're welcome, pilgrim!

Two kebabs, that'll be six and a half dollars.

So is that gonna be in bills, or chits, or -

Blue, pay the man.

- oh my God.

Uh, I don't have change for -

Just keep it.

What?


Trust us, it's easier that way.



Let's keep moving.

It's not far now.



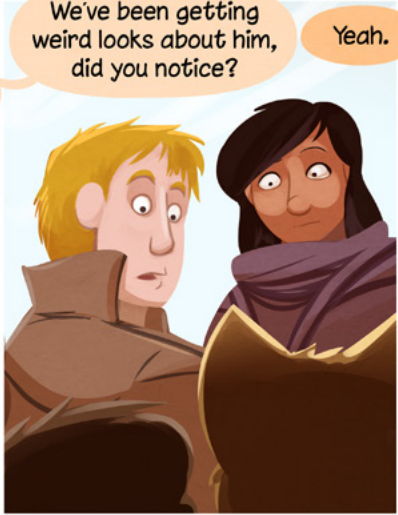


My feet are killing me.

You don't have that problem, do you Blue?


I guess he doesn't, since he doesn't have feet.

I think.



We've been getting weird looks about him, did you notice?


Yeah.



So the sooner we get to the end of this road, the better.



Hey.



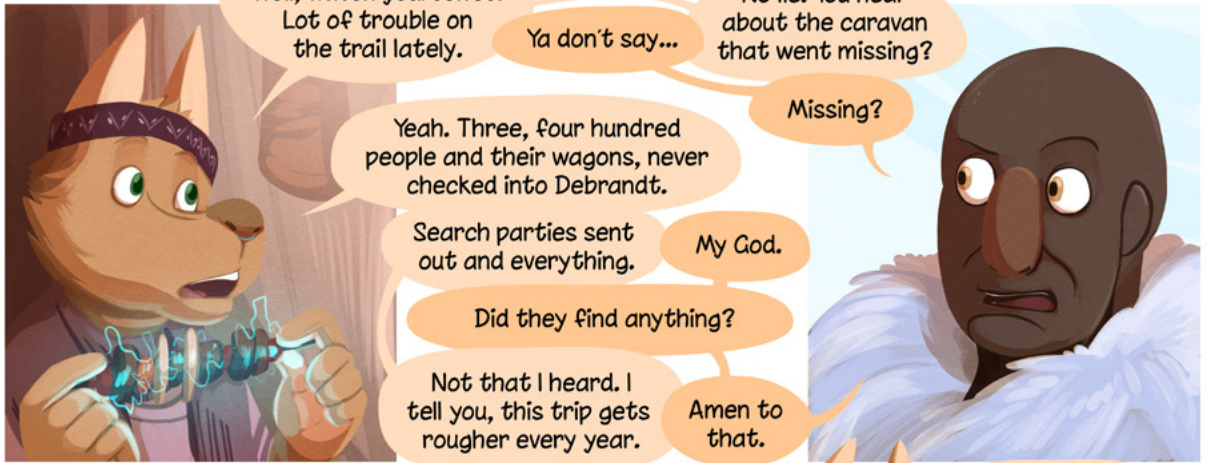
Nice piece o' treasure ya got there.



Yeah, generous pilgrims this year. You boys going to start Apprenticing, too?

Nah, we're old pros.

I'm the pro, you're the old.



Well, watch yourselves. Lot of trouble on the trail lately.

Ya don't say...

No lie. You hear about the caravan that went missing?

Missing?

Yeah. Three, four hundred people and their wagons, never checked into Debrandt.

Search parties sent out and everything.

My God.

Did they find anything?

Not that I heard. I tell you, this trip gets rougher every year.

Amen to that.



Can I fix you boys anything?

Nah, we're good. Take care!

You too, take -

- care?



what

where

how

Y'know, you could've taken his money.

I didn't want money.

I wanted kebab.

Whatever.

For now, we need a better way to get at those three.

Two and a half.

Right. Can't let a treasure like that get away from us.

We'd be laughed at.

We'd be flayed.

That too.

So... what're you thinkin'?

We gotta be patient.

They're in different Guilds, right?

Yeah...

Then they'll split up at some point. We follow the one with the Jewels, and then...

Boom.





You see that?

Yeah, it's lovely.

Not the wood,  
the guns.

Oh.

Oh yeah.

Extra security,  
I guess?

I thought the  
Throne wasn't  
supposed to  
touch Guild  
business...

It's not.


Something's up.

I think **we** might  
be that something.

Could be, don't care. This  
road's been too long already. I'm getting into  
that city, no matter  
what they say.



We can  
agree on that,  
at least.



All arrivals, form a double-file line!

Have your tolls and papers ready!

You see 'em?

Yeah, but they're slippin' away.

We need to get closer.

Hey!

Don't even think about cuttin' in front of me, buddy.

What's wrong?

Ya in a rush to pay your toll to the Throne?

To get into the holy city, of all places...

...seriously, it's like they snatch the money right outta our pockets!

Highway robbery.

Just shut up and wait in line like the rest of us.



Papers, please.

Envoys, huh?  
Colonel, sir ... !



I have this token  
from my ...



... Guild ...



Colonel Duncan, sir!

I'm listening.

Two envoys here, sir,  
with Guild tokens. Would you  
like to inspect them?

I would.

Weaver.

Kindler.

Sir?

Sir?

Purpose of  
your visit.

Number of  
people.

Uh, my, uh ...  
Apprenticeship?

Uh, three? I mean,  
two and a, uh...

Right.

Two and ...











Big place...

...Big place.

How do we even know where to - *gah!*



Rrrfff.

**AAAAAAHHH!!**

Rrrfff...

Don't te-

**Buck! No!**

Down, boy!





Excuse him.

Buck hasn't been fed yet today.

What ... is ...

You've never seen a glawackus before.

Gla-what?

Glawackus. From the southlands.

Are they all this ... big?

Not all.

Buck drank a lot of milk, growing up.

Didn't you, boy...

Rrrfff.



Seriously though, don't be eating when you're around one.


They'll bite off your arms to get your food.

Is that... a joke?

Only for a few seconds.

You two run along. I need to give the big guy his breakfast.

Rrrfff.



Our little blue friend is gone again, I notice.

Yeah. Hopefully for good this time.

It's a good thing we didn't have to pay, or he'd have -

Wait.

Didn't I have ninety-nine-something in bills, too?





Creepy little thing, ain't he?



There he goes...

...and who knows how much treasure goes with him.



He won't get away, I can fit in here.

I can't! How am I supposed to follow you?

Wait in line, like the rest of 'em.

Here. this'll tide you over.

No, no way.

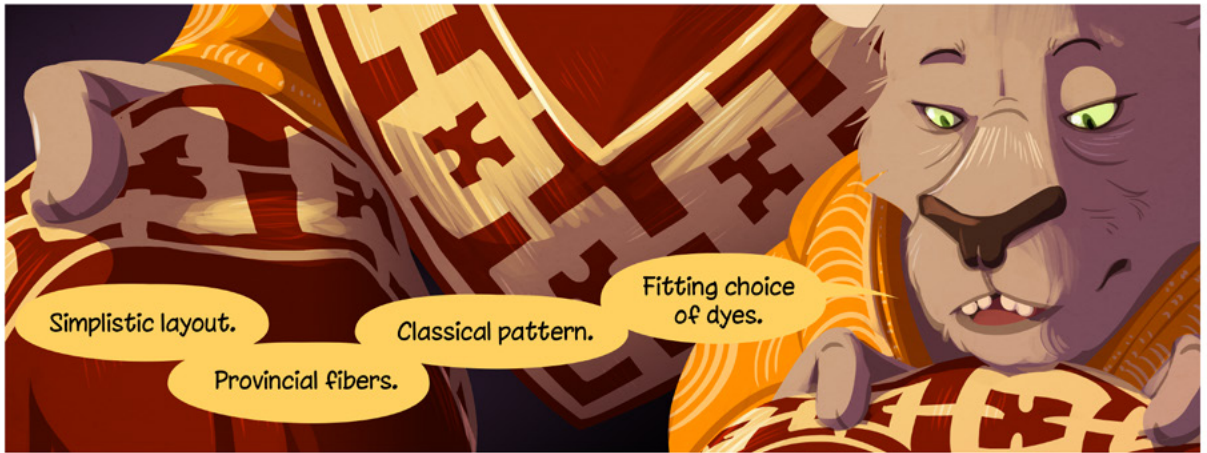
I am not waiting in -



- aaaaaand he's gone.

Great.



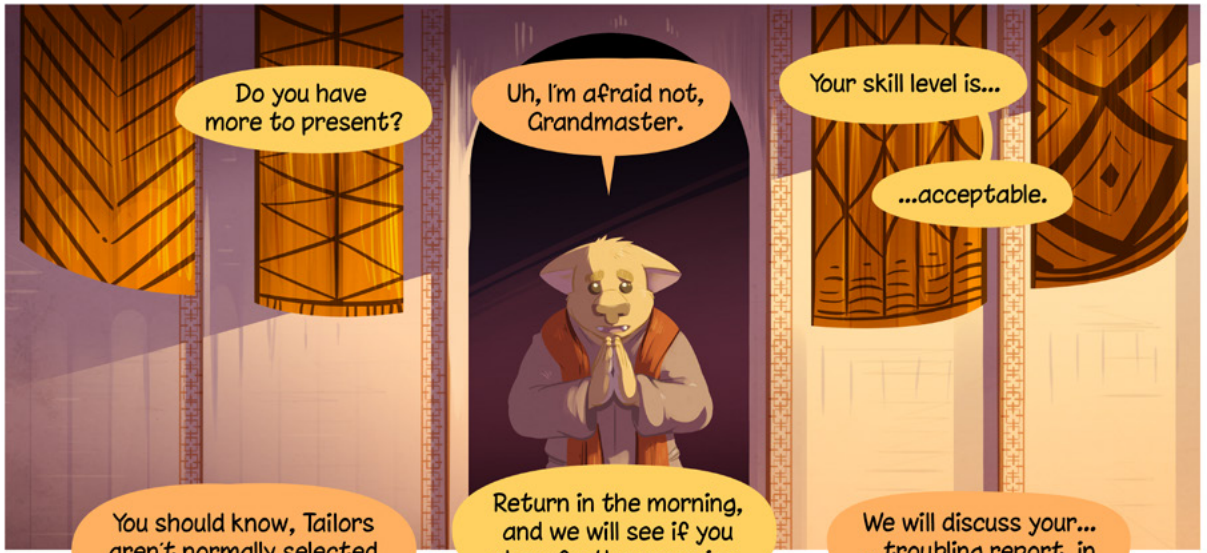


Simplistic layout.

Classical pattern.

Fitting choice of dyes.

Provincial fibers.



Do you have more to present?

Uh, I'm afraid not, Grandmaster.

Your skill level is...

...acceptable.

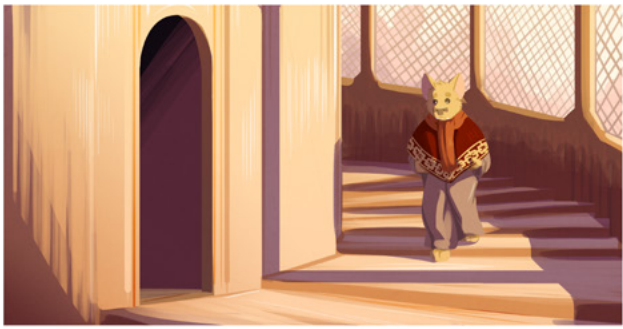


You should know, Tailors aren't normally selected for creative Weaving.

Return in the morning, and we will see if you show further promise.

We will discuss your...  
...troubling report, in the meantime.





Oh my God...

...that's incredible...

Thank you.

You, uh... you're a senior Weaver?

I am.



Is ... is this your tapestry?

No, it's the Royal Family's tapestry.

I'm Just Weaving it.

Are you a new Apprentice?

Uh, no, but uh...

...my skill level is acceptable.

Is that so...?

...and that's all they said. "Acceptable."

"Acceptable" is **good**, kid.

Acceptable. Not accepted.

You're nervous. So is everyone, when they start.

Yeah, but...

But what if...

...if you're not good enough to be a Weaver?

...I don't know what I'd do.

You'd still be a Tailor, and Tailoring is a fine Trade.

You wouldn't be famous, but you could eat.


I guess so.

Nobody's a Grandmaster on their very first day.

Even us senior Weavers, we started out like you.

Nobody comes to El Indon without a little bit of fear.





Did your meeting with the Grandmasters go well, sister?

Uh, I...

I'm not sure how well it could go, with news like that...

They told me to come back in the morning...

That's a good sign!

Is it?

Yeah!

If you'd like to see more, I could show you around.

That would be great, thank you.

It's your first visit to the Grand Furnace, right?

Because, I uh ...

...got a little lost coming down here.

Big place, huh?

Big place.



I'm afraid I didn't get your name?

I'm Ashley.

And my pilot light is Roth.

Say hi, Roth.

Uh...

Hi...

"Roth."



So!

You've probably heard of this room!

This is ... the Hall of Virtues.

Yep! Everyone comes here for their opening prayers before work.

I'm actually here...

It's so much brighter than I imagined it.

Bright, nothin'. You should see what else we've got down here...



Magnesium!



Sodium chloride!



Oh my God,  
butaaaaaaaaane!

And ... what's that?

That's a  
Devil Ember.

Those things  
are real? I've only  
heard stories...

Well, they don't  
burn **forever**, but...

...almost forever.

Can't be doused,  
or snuffed out.


Once you work  
here, you'll learn  
secrets like these.






name's Nathan Clewen and I'm seventeen and I'm a second year apprentice in the Weavers' Guild under Master Jacobsen he's a good man and he's working on a table service for a noble from Folgnar I don't remember the noble's name but I don't want any trouble please don't kill me sir I just want to make colored cloth I mean I use indigo and munjeet but your cloak is a lovely dark hue what is that shade of purple it looks herbal but it might be synthesized I never know these days they're doing more with oils all the time please don't kill me sir I don't want any trouble with the Throne for all some of my best friends are in the army I mean we don't really talk much anymore but it's not ne... people say I've always been thought there was a neat element to me I'm always been supportive of the government eye... I've never said anything wrong in my opinion I... please don't kill me sir oh my God please don't kill me sir I'm doing nothing at all I'm not a criminal I just want to make pretty clothes oh my God v...






Uh, they were ... short.  
And blue. And they never  
spoke. But were really  
insistent on something...



And they just... gave  
me this? I mean I didn't  
want to be rude...

Give me that.

Yeah okay.




Buck, sniff.



Rrrff.

hnff  
hnff...

Scribe,  
details.



There's uh, nothing  
about stolen gemstones  
in the report. No cargo  
of that description.

Curious.

Scribe, review.

Sir yes sir.

Suspicious blue character,  
thirty sightings on highway,  
twenty-two in city proper.

Matches description  
from Debrandt office.

No record of said person  
in El Indon's customs.

Current total, one hundred  
and eighteen dead, over three  
hundred thousand dollars in loss  
of trade goods and gold coins.

No gemstones listed.

Sixteen Guilds have  
issued formal oaths of  
silence to display  
their sympathies.

Sympathies.  
Right.



Oaths of  
silence...

...not suspicious  
in the least.

Still.

That gem makes  
Thievery our most  
probable motive.

Detail it for  
the report.







Hold on to it tightly.

Looks like this story's spreading around, huh?

Looks like it...



Oh hey, where were ya?

Waiting in line for four hours.

Neat.

...Right.




So I see our blue friend got away.

Just cuz he's not here, ya assume he got away?

I don't see any gems in your hands.

He's slippery, but he's bein' real obvious. We'll get him.

For now, help me find a 5-letter word for "impatient."



They were just passing these out?

I know, right?  
Can't believe it!

That's amazing. These  
must be a Jeweler's  
lifetime masterpieces...

There were hundreds  
of people! Everyone got  
a gem as big as this!

Unbelievable...

...You're sure these  
aren't stolen?

So what if they are?  
The Throne's a few million  
dollars poorer. Big deal.

I need to find that  
person again and  
thank them...



Good boy, Buck.

Rrrfff.



Unmarked gold. Fifty or sixty thousand dollars, by the looks.

Wasn't hidden at all, though...

Rrrfff.

This Trademark matches the one in the briefing.

Merchants' Guild. Let them know we've found their missing treasure.

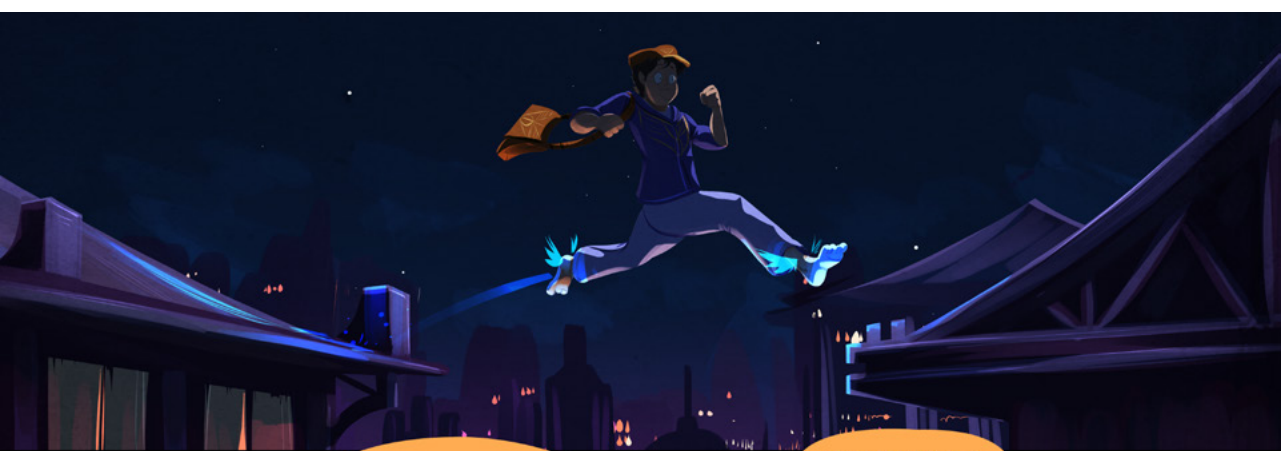


d.



Messenger at your service, gentlemen.





Oh my, that's such a relief!

Glad to hear there's one piece of good news in this whole mess.

Thank you for the message!

Is there anything the colonel needs from our Guild?



Uh, no sir ...



... but he did send the message without paying.

Of course he did.

Warriors...

Goddamn sell-outs, but they won't even open their wallets.

Have a good evening, sir.





"Goddamn sell-outs..."

...What a hypoc



Ooooooh, that looks like it hurts.

But hey, since ya aren't in a big hurry...

I couldn't help but overhear something about a whole lot of gold coins.

Where'd ya learn that?



Thank you again, ma'am.

It's no trouble.

I'm sorry I kept you so late. I should really get back to the inn...

Hang on now, don't forget your first visit to the Shrine.



Oh my God, I almost forgot!

Which way should I go?

Up the next street, all the way to the top of the city.

Pray well.



Thanks again for the tour.

Don't mention it.

You're gonna make your first visit to the Apex Shrine, right?

Of course I am!

Then hurry along, and I'll see you tomorrow.

And don't worry.

You're gonna work wonders.





So that's it?

It's the only place he could be.

He's been in the Upper City all day.

And the colonel hasn't found him.

So there's only one place he could hide.

Security's gonna be a pain, you know that.

We're civilians, we'll get in, no problem.

Picking from someone with so many witnesses? You sure you can pull that off?

Not really.

Awesome.



Excuse me!  
Is the Shrine  
still open?



Barely.

Services're over  
fer the night.

If'n ye need'a speak  
to God, ye have abou'  
ten minutes.



Just made it, then...

Yer welcome, pilgrim.  
Don' scuff tha floor.













Yeah... okay.

Hmm? Did you say something?



I'm sorry.

Huh?

About letting you freeze. Back there.

Oh.

Kindlers...

Fire Keepers aren't supposed to do that.

I could never actually do it. It's against God.



Uh, I'm glad you didn't.

Roth said I should apologize, so... yeah.

Roth has the right idea.



Aren't *you* supposed to apologize for something?

Am I?

Nevermind.





There they are.

See their blue friend anywhere?

Again, no.

And again, following him was **your** job.



Hey, hey, no need to stress. I'm sure he'll be along shortly.

You better be right about that.

You know what happens if you finish this empty-handed.

Heh.

So do you.



Nae.

Ma'am, this is a national security issue.

We're looking for a suspect in a serious crime.

Aye, so what?

Look ye sum'ere else. No Throne folk allowed in here.




I'm a member of a Guild, same as you are.

That's iffy.

I might also add that obstruction of justice is a capital offense.

I'll obstruct yer bodice, if ye step to me again.



So, what're you up to?

Me? I, uh...

...I start my Apprenticeship tomorrow.


Oh wow, congrats! That was quick!

Yeah, they were uh, real impressed.

Not to brag.

No, no, you should be proud! Not everyone gets picked right away.


Uh, Roth and I, we're not sure if we left a good impression...



Well, y'know.

Not everyone gets picked.





Well, that's all the prayer I've got in me for now.

Yeah, me too.

D'you know if any kitchens are open this late?

I could really go for a flatbroOOF!!



What in the...

...you again?

Oh, hi! Nice to see you made it!



There he is!

...Wait, where'd he come from?

Was he there before?



Details, details. We got him now. You cover the exit,

and I'll move in.

Oh, hello!

You're that very generous person from this morning!

I never got the chance to properly thank...

...you?

Okay, fine, walk away.

How many of those gems does he have...?

Oh, loads. You should've seen him earlier.

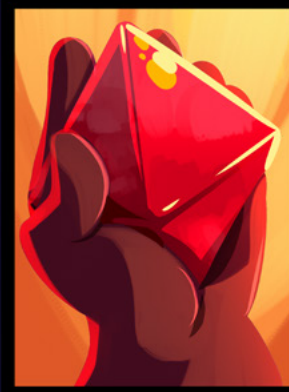


That reminds me, I still have mine...

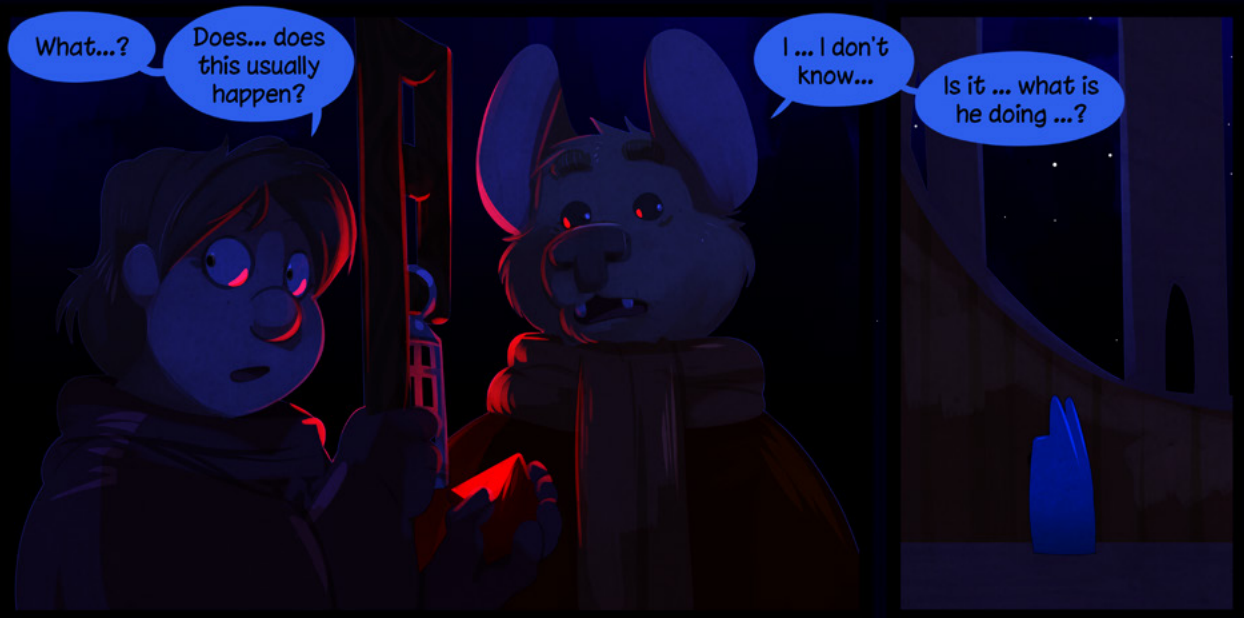
...God, it is pretty, isn't it?

Yeah, it's gorgeous.

But I've got better things to do...



...to...night...



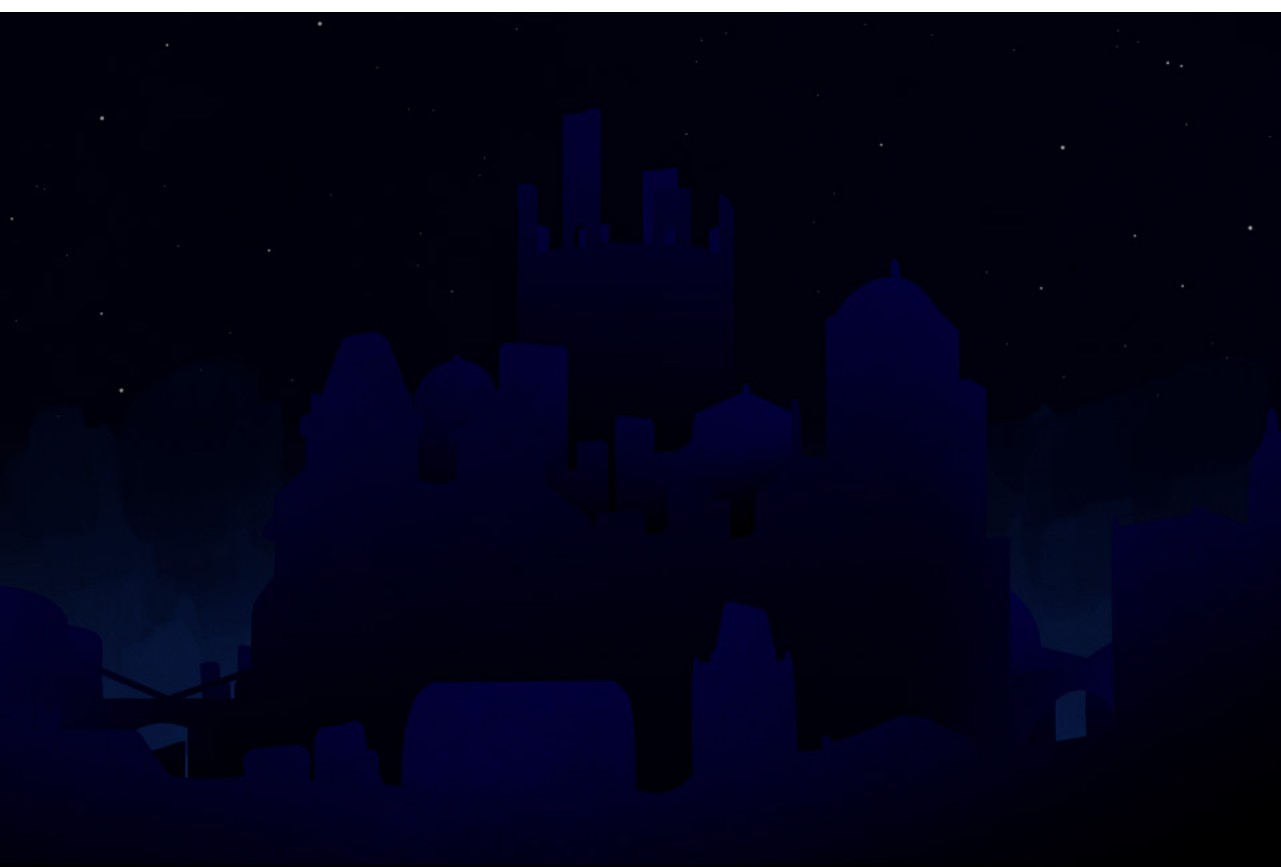
What...?

Does... does this usually happen?

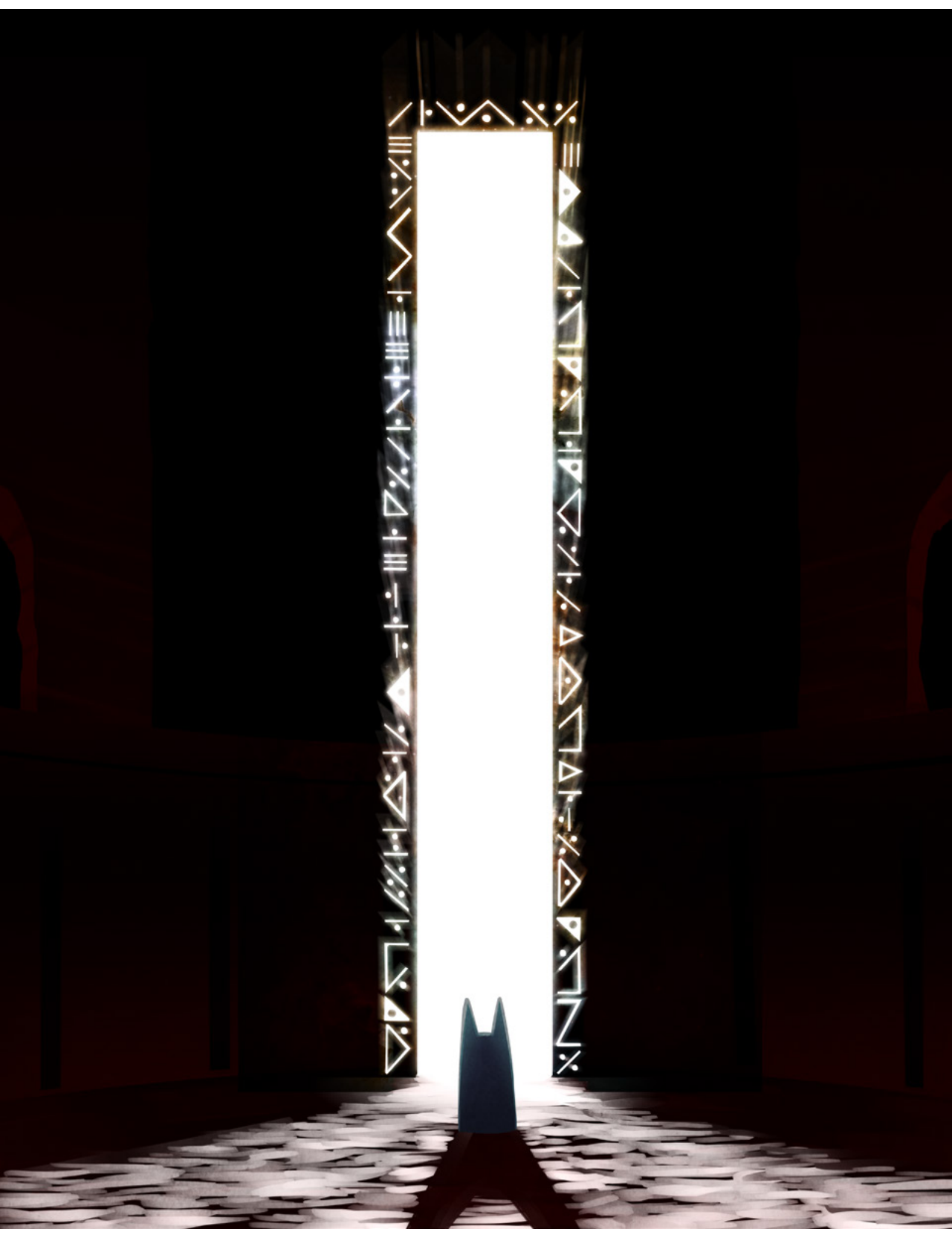
I ... I don't know...

Is it ... what is he doing ...?







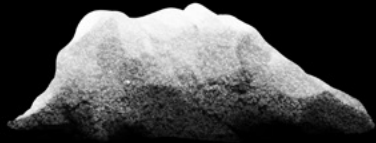
















You!!

You're comin' with me, furball!

What?!

No! Leave 'em! We need to run!

This one's unconscious...

...I can carry her for a bit...

...Ken, grab the other one!

No!! We're not here for them!

Just do it!

I can't believe this...

No!! No, leave me alone!

Don't you t-\*



aaaaah no, no, aaaaah haaarrngh please no aaaaah  
wake up please i can't see oh my god i  
wake up someone help me can't see  
aaaaugh  
no, no no... god no help

C'mon! Over the wall!

aaahuh  
My Scribe just disintegrated! Get out of my way!


Symon, where are we going?  
We...  
...uh...

Symon?

Symon! What are we gonna do, genius?!

We gotta...

We gotta...



...We gotta take  
them home.



**El Indon continues in Chapter 8, available on [itch.io](https://itch.io)!**

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