

Of all nights, he picks one
during a fucking HURRICANE.

I can hear his heartbeat --
we're close.

There he is!

Where?!

On the ground.

WHY THE HELL MUST YOU
SLEEP THROUGH
EVERY CRISIS?!

Not helping,
Fern.



I must have been
born under a bad
sign.

Heh.

— *ding dong*

dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong
dingdong

O'mon, Lem, answer
the frikkin door.

Hi Fern, how are you?

Oh, just dandy. Where's Lem?

Well...you know
how he is.

This is of the
utmost
importance,
Darcy. You
need to wake
him up.

He won't
listen to me...
Once he's asleep,
he won't
wake up for
anybody.

Lem, honey, I think
someone's at the door.

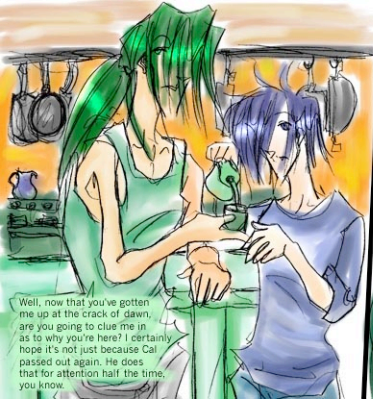
It's Fern. Tell him
to go away.



Mmpph...
...Smoke? What
are you doing in
here? ... Hey!
Stop that! HEY!
NO! NOOO!!
ANYTHING BUT
THAT! OH GOD!
NOT THERE!
AAAAHH!!!

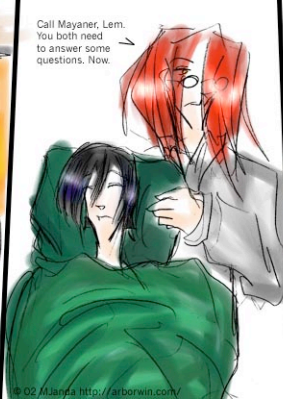


He did
that to
me once.



Well, now that you've gotten me up at the crack of dawn, are you going to clue me in as to why you're here? I certainly hope it's not just because Cal passed out again. He does that for attention half the time, you know.

Call Mayaner, Lem. You both need to answer some questions. Now.



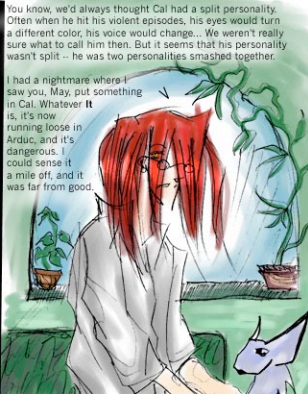
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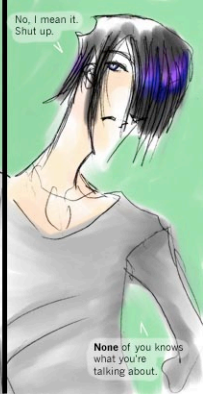


All right, done.

Am I in trouble? Ooh, I'm shaking in my boots.

^
If this is another thing like the locust incident, I'm leaving you.





We're the people responsible for this situation, and therefore, we are the people who are going to perform the search.

And Lem, you are not so much as to TOUCH him, is that understood?

He is an animal as much as you or I. He's frightened right now, and will lash out at the least provocation. That could mean the end of Arduc. So, exercise a little delicacy for once, hmm?

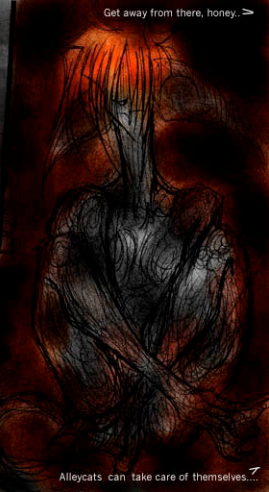
I will exercise any measure I see fit, Cal. You seem to have an unnaturally great deal of sympathy towards a creature who has the ability to unravel everything we value in this world.

Don't insult the same sympathies that keep you intact, my darling baby brother.

You can be right smarmy at times, Cal. Ugh, I don't want to wander around this ugly place. Why do mortals construct such homely places and then proceed to coat them in filth...

Everyone split up.. Raise a call if you find him, and remember, don't provoke him.

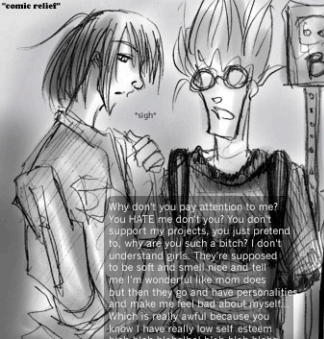
Yes, yes, I heard you the first time...



Get away from there, honey..➤

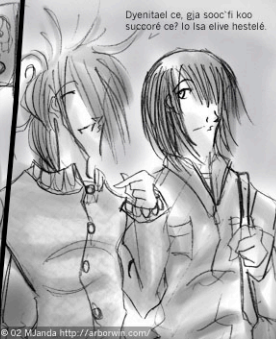
Momma...? I think there's a hurt kitty down there...

Alleycats can take care of themselves....7



Why don't you pay attention to me?
You HATE me don't you? You don't
support my projects, you just pretend
to, why are you such a bitch? I don't
understand girls. They're supposed
to be soft and smell nice and tell
me I'm wonderful like mom does
but then they go and have personalities
and make me feel bad about myself..
Which is really awful because you
know I have really low self esteem
high high high high high high high

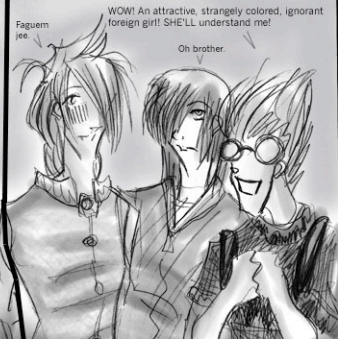
Dyenitael ce, gja sooc'fi koo
supporé ce? lo isa elive hestelé.

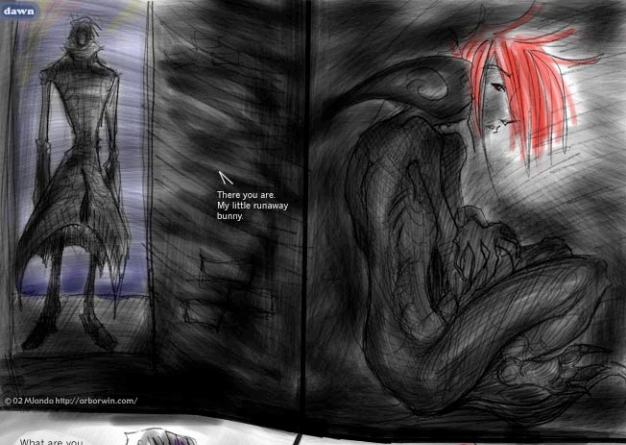


Faguem

WOW! An attractive, strangely colored, ignorant foreign girl! SHE'LL understand me!

Oh brother.





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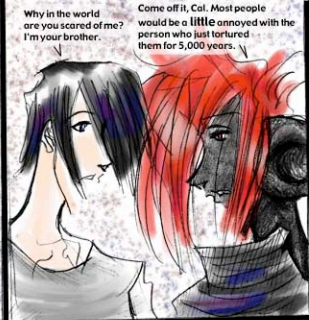




Why did you run from me, Rae?

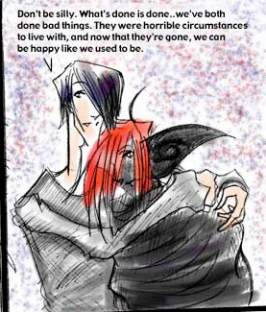
I'm scared.

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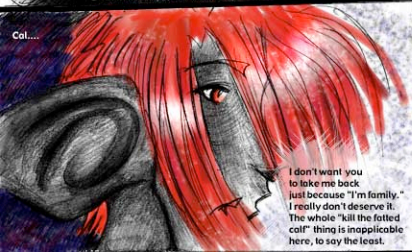


Why in the world are you scared of me? I'm your brother.

Come off it, Cal. Most people would be a little annoyed with the person who just tortured them for 5,000 years.



Don't be silly. What's done is done...we've both done bad things. They were horrible circumstances to live with, and now that they're gone, we can be happy like we used to be.



Cal....

I don't want you to take me back just because "I'm family." I really don't deserve it. The whole "kill the fatted calf" thing is inapplicable here, to say the least.

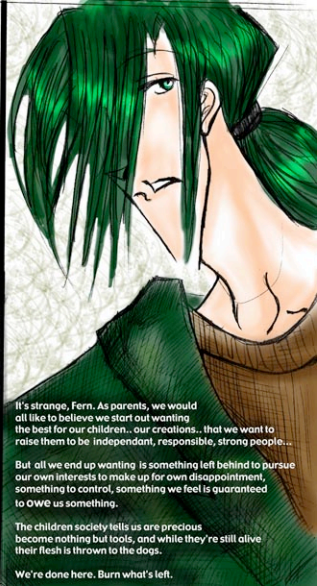
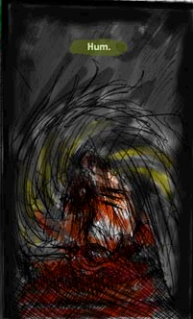


Feh, you think those rules apply to us? Lem just made them up to be a pest.

If you love me, nothing else matters.



So, let's go home.



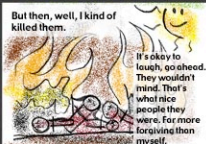
What a hardness, eh? Annoying, stubborn, unfair, callous...that's life for you, and that's also a good sum up of my "social interaction" as a secondary elemental ... "Do this, or I'll hurt you very, very badly."



I used to live with much more amiable people.



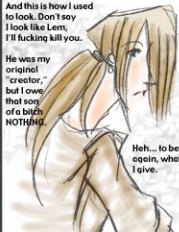
But then, well, I kind of killed them.



It's okay to laugh, go ahead. They wouldn't mind. That's what nice people they were. Far more forgiving than myself.

And this is how I used to look. Don't say I look like Lem, I'll fucking kill you.

He was my original "creator," but I owe that son of a bitch NOTHING.



Heh... to be mortal again, what would I give.

It's strange how depravity works among people....



It spreads like a disease...

And you end up not even understanding what the word "victim" means.

S'that you, Darc?

I'm home...
everything's
straightened
out...



Darcy? Are you all r--

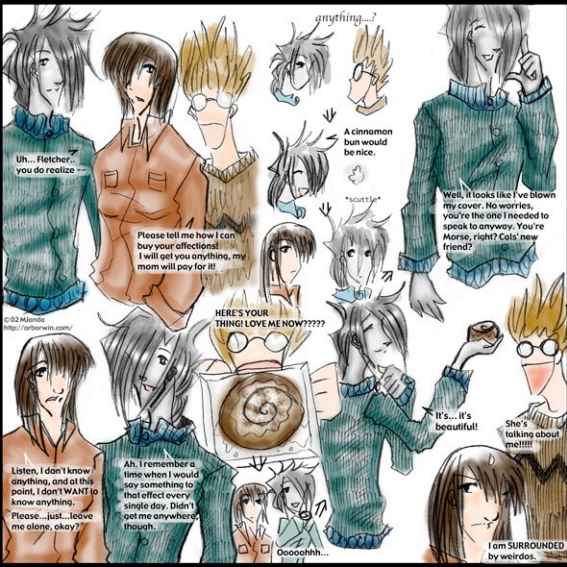
...Darcy... What is that?



You... you lied to me,
Lem ... you lied to everybody...

You killed your brother, didn't you.
You killed him.





anything....?

Uh... Fletcher,
you do realize --

A cinnamon
bun would
be nice.

scuttle

Please tell me how I can
buy your affections!
I will get you anything, my
mom will pay for it!

Well, it looks like I've blown
my cover. No worries,
you're the one I needed to
speak to anyway. You're
Morse, right? Cals' new
friend?

HERE'S YOUR
THING! LOVE ME NOW?????

It's... it's
beautiful!

She's
talking about
me!!!!

Listen, I don't know
anything, and at this
point, I don't WANT to
know anything.

Please...just...leave
me alone, okay?

Ah, I remember a
time when I would
say something to
that effect every
single day. Didn't
get me anywhere,
though.

Oooooohh...

I am SURROUNDED
by weirdos.

WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF ME LIKE MY MOM DOES???

Of course! Ah, Delye, perfect timing.

Hola! Here I am. You said you needed me? >

Indeed I did ^^
Would you mind entertaining this gentleman for a bit? He's VERY lonely.

ANOTHER HOT GIRL ???

The supply of feminine-looking boys that pop out of nowhere must be quite high where you come from.

Isn't it convenient? He just got out of the mental ward, too.
Come on, we have serious work to do.

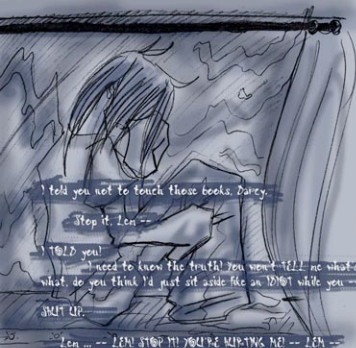
Erm.... Right.

... and where'd the laptop come from?

.....
My pants?

Duuhh...

Mmm, of course.
My, my, aren't you a definitive example of masculinity...



I told you not to touch those books, Darcy.

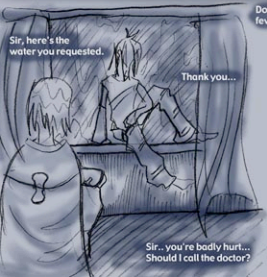
Stop it, Len --

I TOLD you!

I need to know the truth! You won't tell me what's wrong.
What do you think I'd just sit aside like an IDIOT while you --

SHUT UP.

Len ... -- LEN! STOP IT! YOU'RE KIRTING ME! -- LEN --



Sir, here's the water you requested.

Thank you...

Don't bother, it'll heal in a few minutes.

Sir... Sir... Lemanerial,
he --

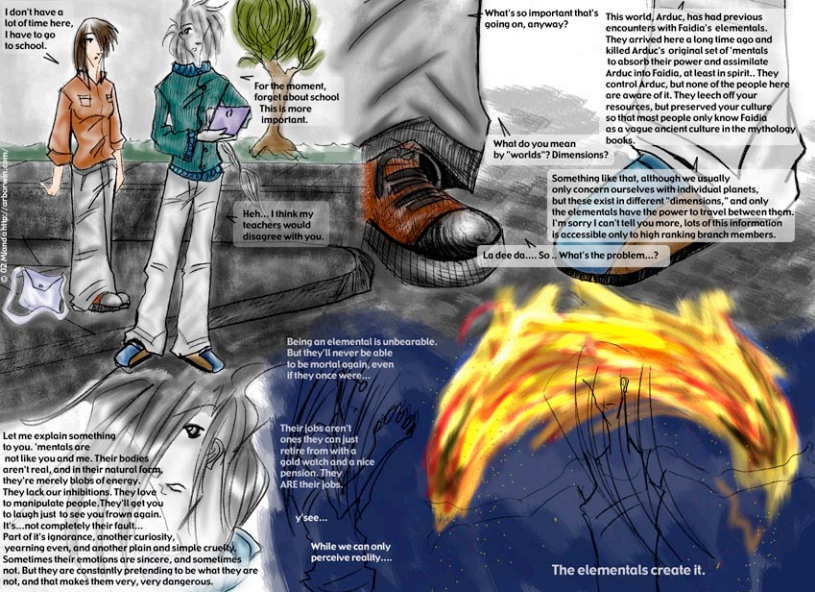
No, I don't want to hear it.
Just tell me where he went.

He left without
telling anyone
where he was
going... but he
took his sword,
sir.

....
I'm going
out for
awhile.

I'm going to be
the only person
who'll tell me
the truth.

Sir.. you're badly hurt...
Should I call the doctor?



I don't have a lot of time here, I have to go to school.

For the moment, forget about school. This is more important.

Heh... I think my teachers would disagree with you.

What's so important that's going on, anyway?

This world, Arduc, has had previous encounters with Faidia's elementals. They arrived here a long time ago and killed Arduc's original set of 'mentals to absorb their power and assimilate Arduc into Faidia, at least in spirit.. They control Arduc, but none of the people here are aware of it. They leech off your resources, but preserved your culture so that most people only know Faidia as a vague ancient culture in the mythology books.

What do you mean by "worlds"? Dimensions?

Something like that, although we usually only concern ourselves with individual planets, but these exist in different "dimensions," and only the elementals have the power to travel between them. I'm sorry I can't tell you more, lots of this information is accessible only to high ranking branch members.

La dee da.... So .. What's the problem...?

Being an elemental is unbearable. But they'll never be able to be mortal again, even if they once were...

Their jobs aren't ones they can just retire from with a gold watch and a nice pension. They ARE their jobs.

y'see...

While we can only perceive reality....

Let me explain something to you. 'mentals are not like you and me. Their bodies aren't real, and in their natural form, they're merely blobs of energy. They lack our inhibitions. They love to manipulate people. They'll get you to laugh just to see you frown again. It's...not completely their fault... Part of it's ignorance, another curiosity, yearning even, and another plain and simple cruelty. Sometimes their emotions are sincere, and sometimes not. But they are constantly pretending to be what they are not, and that makes them very, very dangerous.

The elementals create it.

It's not a sure thing... but from past experience, we know that the kind of behavior they've been displaying lately is a good recipe for disaster....

Our elemental of evil, or chaos, depending on how you look at it, has just been let loose after 5,000 years of imprisonment. For now, it seems he's taking a break, but he'll be back to Arduc to finish what he started.

And what is it he started?

We don't know. That's why we need your help. Whatever it is he wants, you're a key factor in finding it.

I don't know how... I'm just a kid...

I have a cousin I haven't seen since we were little... he was supposed to have gone schizophrenic or something, because the last I heard of him, he was in an institution.

It always seemed odd... nobody wanted to talk about it...

I didn't really know them that well, so it didn't seem like a big deal.

That sounds like a lead to me! Now we're getting somewhere.

Don't worry about it. It's probably something you'd never even suspect. Let's start off this way... Is there anything unusual in any way whatsoever about your family or its history? Involvement in wars, strange deaths, mental illness, congenital defects, that sort of thing.

uh..Jeez... no... Well.. except for mental illness.. I guess there's some depression on my mother's side.. but...

....Did you just plug the computer into your neck? Isn't that bordering on the eccentric?

Hey, you're the one with the crazy relative.



MOM IS MAKING US
SNACKS! WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?!

You have
so many neat things
in your room!!! What's this
toy plane do?

OH MY GOD YOU
TOUCHED MY PRECIOUS
THINGS?!?!?!?

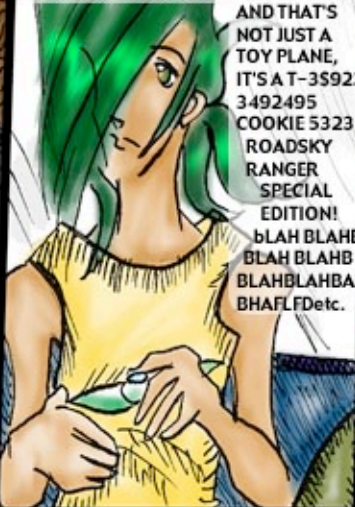


WHY DID YOU CHANGE
CAPTAIN UBER'S
POSE?! I WORKED
FOR HOURS TO GET
IT JUST RIGHT!



He looked
rather lonely,
if you know
what I mean.

WHY IS MY POSTER STRAIGHTENED??
OMG YOU CLEANED UP THE DUNE
OF GARBAGE ON MY DESK!



AND THAT'S
NOT JUST A
TOY PLANE,
IT'S A T-35923
3492495
COOKIE 5323
ROADSKY
RANGER
SPECIAL
EDITION!
BLAH BLAHE
BLAH BLAHE
BLAHBLAHBA
BHAFLDetc.



munch munch

don't want to make the impression that they're horrible people...none of them are, at heart. Especially Cal. But they've had hard lives, and it shows.

Cal was never anything but kind to me...

<I'm not surprised...Cal is a sweet person.

Here's my house...

This is your cousin?

Umm... Yeah, that's him. That's an old photo, though. He's about three years older than me, so he should be 19 by now.

Heh, yeah, we both resemble our dads. My dad and uncle are twins.

I see. What's his name?

Rhodes. Dunno why they named him something so weird...

I can't tell her this yet... But the aura around this photo is mangled beyond repair. He's undergone a transformation worse than death...which means...

You look a lot alike.

Where is he being kept?

The records show that when the branches invaded Arduc and assimilated its elemental power, all of the native elementals were destroyed and their power absorbed by their Faidian counterpart.



But Arduc, unlike many other worlds assimilated by Faidia, possessed a native elemental of evil. Faidia's elemental of evil, Raenerial, was not available to absorb the power of Arduc's evil elemental, and so it escaped destruction as the only living member of the Arducian branches. Raenerial, newly freed of his imprisonment, is now searching for this elemental in order to collect his due.

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I have good reason to believe that this elemental has been possessing mortals since the invasion, too oppressed by the surrounding Faidian presence to physically manifest himself. This elemental is now in the possession of a 19 year old boy.



The power this elemental possesses would double Raenerial's strength. This lost elemental must not fall into Raenerial's hands.

A full dispatch of Callaneriallian agents is requested to assuage this problem and protect the mortals involved, as well as make a study of the possessed mortal in question, since the effects of malignant elemental possession in human mortals is little understood. Respectfully submitted, Tocaro Callanerial (Midnight)

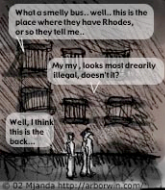
(Edonalekce, or "diamond palace" the Callaneriallian stronghold)



They know, Roe. It's not very easy to hide these things from them anymore.

If you won't listen to me, then you had better hurry. They'll snap your prize out from under your nose.

What are you waiting for? Go ahead. Leave.

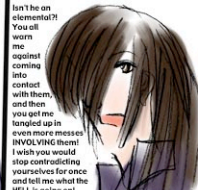
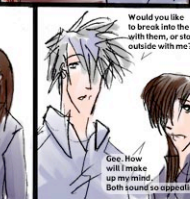


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Okay, okay! I'm sorry! You don't have to be scared of Fern, he's a secondary, which means he was a mortal once.



I'll be serious, right after I shove that rotty flea-infested--
Shhh...
You know he's just after the body heat.
If heat's what he wants I'll acquaint him with the microwave.
SHHH!





I'm sorry to disturb you, ma'am... but I'm your brother Lem's boyfriend, Darcy. I was wondering if you could tell me the truth about your brothers... what happened, and all ...

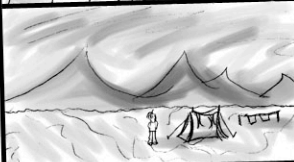
Yes?



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Okay. Take off your shoes and come in.



I would find it rather inconvenient to live in a tent in the middle of nowhere.



Fortunate that you don't live here then, isn't it? What would you like to know?

Our parents are the dietties Sun and Universe. Cal and I were fraternal twins. He was born first, making him the oldest and most powerful entity of Faidia.

Our father wasn't faithful, and had another child awhile after with the Moon. The Sun was horribly jealous, and wanted the child destroyed. He was our half-brother, Raenerial.

Moon brought the child to Cal to keep safe. Cal raised him like his own. They were very close.

Then, for some reason none of us understand, the Sun and Universe had another child, Lemanerial, our youngest brother and later to become the Sun's favorite child.

Even then I had very little interest in what was going on. Rae and Cal didn't have what you would call a normal sibling relationship, but there was no one else BUT us back then. There were no societal taboos or anything of that sort... Lem made up all that stuff later.

Not long after Rae left, the Sun decided suddenly she was interested in Lem again, and took him away. It was easy enough to do. Cal didn't seem as wonderful anymore to Lem, especially now that he was grieving after the missing child. The Sun offered him power... she taught him how to build his own little world to control... How to use his power to create life...

We all have some blame in this situation... I could have helped Cal raise those two, or stepped in somehow. But there were no rules back then. We didn't know bad things could happen. Hah, unbelievable now how gullible we were... I doubt we've much changed. Rae, Lem... they're like overgrown children. I'm sorry you have to deal with him, but I'm also glad he has someone willing to love him despite what he is, because I highly doubt he's capable of loving himself.

The Sun had no interest in raising babies, so Lem was dumped on Cal, too. Rae was a teenager by the time Lem arrived, and for awhile, if I remember correctly, they were all very happy together... but Rae began to feel excluded... I doubt Cal did it on purpose... Lem is the type of person who demands a lot of attention. It's in his nature. Rae used to be such a shy boy because of his appearance, easily swept under the carpet. Cal was so busy raising Lem, Rae felt unwanted. He ran away. Cal was crushed. You have no idea how much those two adore each other... it's uncanny...

He didn't have to deal with what he thought was Cal's nagging anymore... no more parental figure telling him what to do. HE was in charge now, HE was running the show. Little did he know the Sun was the one with all the cards. Cal was never a nag, never hard to deal with. He would have given anything to those boys. They were spoiled rotten, and weren't even aware of it. Unlike the Sun, Cal loved them, and would never have done ANYTHING to hurt them.

Needless to say, without proper instruction, Lem's first generation of living things failed. All the plants died and rotted in the ground. Faidia itself was covered in reeking slime. It was very ugly. Lem, pissed as all hell, went looking for answers, and the only one he got was conveniently provided by Rae. "It's all Cal's fault," was the answer, and you think the Sun jumped to correct them? I don't think either of them really knew what they were doing. Scapegoating is an ugly, blind sort of thing. They just knew they could walk all over Cal as much as they wanted to, and the next morning he would still love them just as much. Cal loved unconditionally -- Not like each other, not like the Sun, certainly, and not like the dead things Lem had created.

So they murdered him, together. They had no concept of what death was. They literally created it. Lem didn't TRIUMPH over death, as the false legends say -- he helped bring it into being. And Rae... Rae went absolutely mad. He fulfilled the Sun's prophecy, and became elemental of evil. He would have annihilated Faidia after realizing what he'd done to Cal. I arrived late on the scene... I locked Rae into Cal's gaping chest. God, I can still see the blood splattered everywhere... They played in it like children with fingerprints.





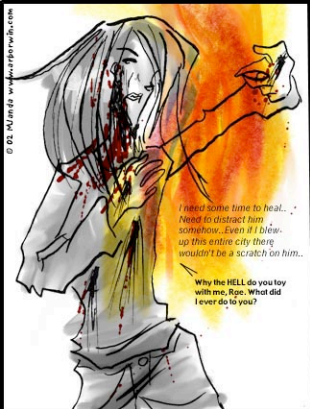
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We haven't even started
yet, sir.

Ah, how I've dreamt of smashing your head in with
my very own hands, Moranerial. You've stood in
my way one too many times. But I must say,
I'm disappointed. Aren't you being a little easy?

That's more like it. C'mon,
you little midget, give
me all you got.



*I need some time to heal...
Need to distract him
somehow... Even if I blew
up this entire city there
wouldn't be a scratch on him...*

**Why the HELL do you toy
with me, Rge. What did
I ever do to you?**

**Because I like
to fuck with you,
Fern, it's as
simple as
that.**

**You get excited
about the
littlest things.
You really
do ask for
it, you know.
No wonder
everyone
teases you.**



That, and you're extremely

PESKY

Sorry I can't play longer, Fern, but I have
have business.



Time to put
you out of
commission
for awhile.



....?!

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Raaa! Aren't you
even going to say
hello to me?



....Mid...?

To think, this is technically
the first time you and I have
ever met. I was beginning
to think you would never
come out ...

Plus we haven't
spoken for so long...



You're even
handsomer
than I imagined!

.....er....well...
you're only...saying
that...Mid...

Phlekk.. Just
some...slight
discomfort
over here.
cough





Bah. That was just a love tap. And he WAS getting in my way. You two want to keep that boy away from me.

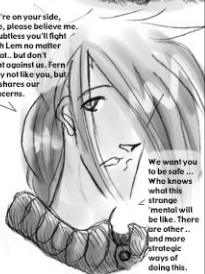
Rae... Why'd you attack Fern? I know you two don't like each other... but it's not necessary...

Why do you want the power so badly, anyway?

We're on your side, Rae, please believe me. Doubtless you'll fight with Lem no matter what... but don't fight against us. Fern may not like you, but he shares our concerns.



Why do you think? Lem is going to try and stuff me back in Cal the first chance he gets. I'm NOT going back in there, dammit. I need the extra juice after being held up so long. I don't know why Cal doesn't approve. It was as bad an experience for him as it was for me. There's a lot of things I need to fix on this planet, starting with Lem's treatment of the halfings. It's my fault that started in the first place, and I'm going to stop it.

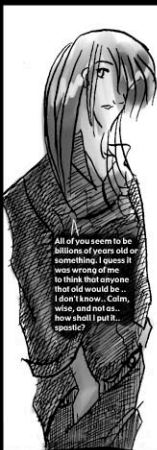


We want you to be safe ... Who knows what this strange 'mental' will be like. There are other... and more strategic ways of doing this.

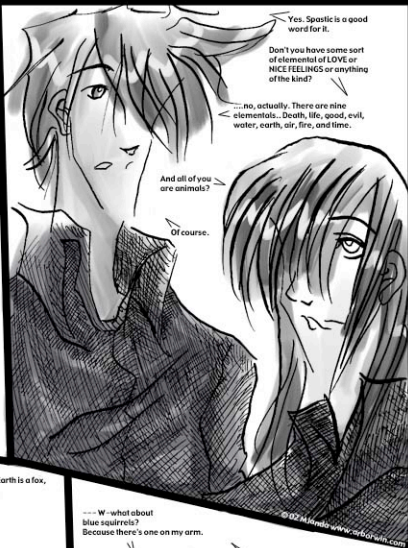


Sheez, Mid... you voice of reason.

Just doing my job...



All of you seem to be billions of years old or something. I guess it was wrong of me to think that anyone that old would be... I don't know... Calm, wise, and not as... how shall I put it... spastic?



Yes. Spastic is a good word for it.

Don't you have some sort of elemental of LOVE or NICE FEELINGS or anything of the kind?

...no, actually. There are nine elementals... Death, life, good, evil, water, earth, air, fire, and time.

And all of you are animals?

Of course.

Death is a crow, Life is a snake, Fire is a snake, Good is a swan. Air is an albatross, Earth is a fox, Time is a winged horse. Mid, by the way, is a horse. Time is his mother.



--- W-what about blue squirrels? Because there's one on my arm.



Oh... that'd be Vivianerial, elemental of water.

What do SQUIRRELS have to do with w- Oh, nevermind. Is he dangerous?

Depends on your definition of "dangerous."

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Tch. My apologies, Miss.

Stop scaring the natives,
Viv.

sigh
Morse, meet
Folanerial,
elemental
of air. He's
one of Lem's
secondaries,
if that means
anything to you.

They're really coming out
of the woodwork, aren't
they...

resigned
What do you want,
Fola?

I'm here for the same
reason you are, Smoke.
Everyone's talking about it.
I don't know why this little pest
came, though. He never
actually DOES anything.

Kweee...

Well, for now
we're just
waiting. This
night could
turn out fairly
violent,
however, so
be ready for a
brawl.

A brawl...?
I don't like the
sound of that...

cheeeee n_n

Hmm, well! --
Oh for the love of
god, stop HUMPING me!

Delye? What are you doing there in the dark?

Lem...?

One invited m-me to his house and then after awhile he asked if I would go out with him and I said yes and then I asked where we were going and he said he wasn't ready for commitment and that he was dumping me and I had to leave so I've been standing here outside his house waiting for someone to come get me for hours and it's so very cold :

Why of all the nerve... which house is his?! I'll show that little bastard, nobody treats my minions like that and gets away with it. Here, put my coat on.

B-but ...

B-but ...

[illegible]

WOW YOU HAVE LONG HAIR
ISNT THAT PRETTY GIRLY FOR
A GUY TO HAVE WHAT DO YOU
WANT? WHATEVER IT IS I DONT HAVE
IT BECAUSE IM BUSY CLEANING
MY RETAINER AND THAT'S MORE
IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING

Yes..Yes,I
suppose I have

There he is.

Are you listening to me, you little shit?
I know you can hear me.

Melted through those locks like
they were wax

Nothing you could ever do, hmm?

There's something wrong with
this one ... I can't wait to
see more ...

There's a room in his head ... a lot like this
one. Dark, rotten, guilty ...

What's that? You don't want to?
Well, you don't really have a choice in this
matter, DO you.

Yes.. something deeply wrong here.

He's perfect.

You know what you need to do.





It's been awhile... I hope they're all right. How much longer do you think they'll be in there, Smoke?



Well, seeing this is a Callaneriaillian-run project, it could take from one to two, oh, maybe three BILLION years.

Cal didn't order you to come, Fola.



If it wasn't for YOU people we wouldn't have to be doing this in the first place! I won't be surprised if something doesn't get BLOWN UP before tonight is finished, you bunch of hamhanded

We handle our projects the way we see fit, SIR.

Pay no attention to those two. They were born to fight. You and I, though, we're different. We were born to make loooooove.

The night will end eventually... the night will end eventually... the night will end eventually...

Okay, kiddo... Usually, I don't really care for my face, but since it's already been ripped off once tonight, if you're going to maul me, I wonder if you could focus on some other part of my body. I doubt you're in this strait jacket for nothing, huh?

Let's see how we can get you out of this thing



Tch... you've been through hell, haven't you. Black scars under your eyes.. Heh, we have something in common then. I used to have a black scar... nasty, aren't they?



But there's something else wrong...

You can't hear a word I'm saying, can you?

You're deaf.



Hum.

... Come on, I'll take care of you.



Rae.. I really wish..you'd stop hurting Fern. At least..intentionally. There's no point to it.

The 'mentals' need their chew toy. Fern's been the meat of choice since he was born. The fuckin' Sun thought so, and since we're all such nice little sheep, we've been following suit. What can I say? He takes a licking and keeps on licking.

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Hey. Target initiated, or whatever. They had him trussed up in a padded cell.

He's deaf, don't know how much of his other senses are crippled.

Hasn't spoken a word... you should take over from here, Mid.



So do I.

Oh yeah, sure. Except, you whimper and cry when you're hurt. Fern snarls, bites, and curses our names. You do the math. Torture is a lot more fun when the victim presents a challenge, and anyway, Fern is nothing to feel guilty over.



Ugh...

He's starving. The only reason he's alive is the elemental possessing him. Living death ... the mortal probably died a long time ago, but it's trapped inside.

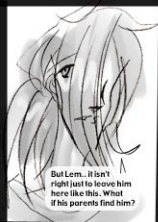
An unwilling minion...that's the worst.

Something like that...He would look a lot better if they were feeding him, though.

That's a bunch of half-assed mortals for you... They lust after eternal life when they can't even keep their own kids alive.

Oh, quiet,Rae, save your anti-people rants for some other time.

Hmph



But Lem... it isn't right just to leave him here like this. What if his parents find him?

If the parents have any brains they'll celebrate their new-won freedom with a bottle of wine and a bonfire fueled by his stupid belongings.

Eee... He may have been the new face of evil, but I'm sure his parents care about him ... I'm sure he wasn't really aware of what he was doing wrong...



It's ... just so sad. So young, and he didn't even have a chance to change his ways...

Oh, all RIGHT.



There, he's a necco. Happy now?

Yay! I get to keep him?

Mm hm. I'll leave a note for the parents saying he ran off with gypsies.

Ooh. I like gypsies n_n

Now let's get moving and join the others.

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Leeeem!
I found Smoke!
And Fola, and
Viv, and Miss
Morse.

Terrific. What is this, an
international conference?
How long have you been
waiting?



It's no matter. Here they come.



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Well.. We're in deep shit now.

Ah..Rae..
Please remember
the nice non-violent
behavior I asked you about..

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK
WHERE YOU CAME FROM,
YOU DISGUSTING FREAK
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA
HOW HARD I'VE WORKED
AND YOU JUST STROLL
IN AND DESTROY
EVERYTHING YOU
IRRESPONSIBLE
UGLY STUPID
IGNORANT
UNEDUCATED UNCLE
MONSTER YOU THINK
I WOULD EVER
CONSIDER YOU A
BROTHER? WE
RELATED TO A FREAK
LIKE YOU? I DON'T
THINK SO DON'T YOU
PAID BLAME THAT ALL
THINGS ON ME, YOU WERE
AT THE ROOT OF EVERYTHING
I AM THE SON OF A WHORE
THAT YOU ARE

YOU'VE HUNG I SEEN A MORE SPOILED
BRAT THAN YOU, LEM YOU SIT UP THERE
IN YOUR LITTLE CASTLE AND PRETEND
EVERYTHING IS JUST FINE AND YOU BREED
A BUNCH OF SHEEP WHO'LL DO WHATEVER
YOU SAY AND RUN LIKE THE CHICKENSHIT
THAT YOU ARE BECAUSE YOU'RE A WEAK
SHITTY FREAK A BOY WHO'LL NEVER
PICK UP TO REAL AND EXCUSE ME
BUT YOU WERE THE WHO HIT CAL
YOU STEP UP AS MUCH AS I, I LOVED
CAL BUT HE DIDN'T YOU SHOULD BE
GRATEFUL HE EVEN PAID ANY SORT OF
ATTENTION TO YOUR PALE SKINNY LITTLE
YOU ARE SO FULL OF SHIT LEM, YOU
SUCKING PARASITIC LITTLE WORM,
GET OFF THIS PLANET AND ALL YOUR
CREATIONS RUNNING AROUND
TRYING UP FLICKING MORTALS
WHAT
YOU JUST
USE ALL PAIN FOR
NOT YOUR OWN
YOU OVER
JUST LIKE ANYBODY ELSE YOU
ROTTER AND I
MEAN THAT LITERALLY

You can certainly see the family resemblance, eh?



I don't think so. They
consider this sort of
thing bonding.

We have to get Rhodes home,
Fern. Can you handle this?

God, Rho..
what happened
to you...

Don't sweat it...
They're not ready
to fight for real
yet. I think they're
both scared out
of their minds, frankly..

Viv and Fola
are gone. We
better leave.

ding dong

Don't use the bell, idiot, I
have the key someplace...

You never remember your key.

Yes, right here...one sec...
Sez YOU....Mid, do you have yours?

Hold on a minute-- Where are we? We were just outside the hospital!

It's called "teleportation" kid. This is our house.

But WHERE are we? This isn't even my TIME zone!

"thud" OW! GODDAMNIT! WHO put this WALL here?!

Oops... Smoke, get the light...
It was a simple enough question...I'm tired and hungry and cold, I want to go HOME!

Pus-snorting scumbag.
Larvae munching savage.
Trial?! What is going ON?!

Oh, REAL good comeback...
Yes, yes, all the pudding you want... Stop FIGHTING you two!

My nose--bloody hell!-- fucking wall!--

Well you've lived here 5,000 years, I'd think you'd know where the walls are by now!

I DO know where they are -- This one... attacked me.

Delyel! Don't EAT that!
But I LIKE wax fruit; ;

Why is it so dark in here...? AAH!
Something brushed my leg!

Better put some newspaper down.
I just KNOW Rae can't be housetrained.

Your MOM isn't housetrained.

SHUTUP!

CRAShtinkle tinkletinkle

Oh my god... was that the Vernerian vase? Cal is going to KILL us!

No problem then, because we're already dead.

Haha, smartass.



Smoke, you seem relatively sane. Can YOU tell me what's going on?

I'm sorry for ignoring you, Morse, there's always a debacle when we get home. We would like to keep you with us for a little longer so your testimony about your cousin can be offered to our council, who'll then decide how his recovery process should be carried out. In the meantime, we'd be honored to have you stay here.

Uh...
m...

It looks...charming.

yaaaawwww

Oh, good heavens, no: We would need a bottomless pit for all this stuff. I just cleaned last week... It's like this naturally.

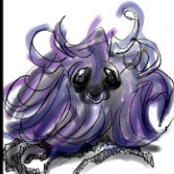
It was just a joke, Fern.

I sure hope you're not thinking I'll be Snow White to your seven dwarves.

Huh? What? Dwarves? We keep dwarves now? They better not have gone in my room.

...Oh. Yeah, I knew that.

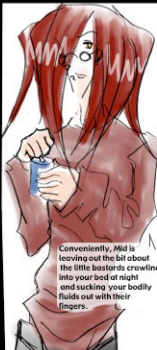
Pardon me for asking... but what is this thing?



Aheheh, don't be scared, that's just a nillit. Cal has a habit of welcoming strange creatures into our house. They come here because no one else will take them in.



There are lots of nillits, most of the time they're hiding in the walls. They're scared of light, so if you don't want them to bother you, you can just turn the lamp on.



Conveniently, Mid is leaving out the bit about the little bastards crawling into your bed at night and sucking your bodily fluids out with their fingers.

XX Ferns' exaggerating, Morse, they are equipped with a natural anaesthetic so you don't feel a thing. They're quite friendly, loveable animals, really...

Yeah, especially when they find someone unconscious or injured. They don't stop feeding until everything's gone, then.

= Fern.

What?

"sigh"
Hello, my darlings...
What are you doing to poor Morse this time?

Fern's scaring her.

I am not! You're not scared, are you, kid?

So sorry you have to put up with them, my dear. Thank you for cooperating so beautifully. Without you, this endeavor would never have gone so smoothly.



Oh.. I... u-um... thank you..



Cal, I can't thank you enough for the kindness you've shown me... I don't think I've ever been treated as well as this by an adult, or... anybody, really. But I'm hoping that, as an adult, you can also understand how... um... Confused and scared I am right now.

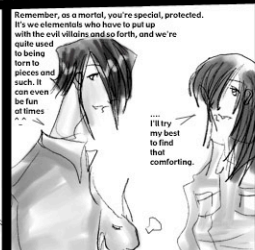


It's not to say it's because of you or anything. It's just... I'm only a kid, I've barely been out of my home town in my entire life... and now suddenly I'm in the company of ageless beings in another world.

You're my friend and I trust you... but... this is getting harder and harder for me to swallow... all these weird people, appearing and disappearing, fighting, it's all so confusing, I barely know what's going on, and whether I'm doing the right thing...



I understand completely, Morse. I'm sorry we haven't been more tactful with you, but necessity makes us hasty. I cannot promise absolutely nothing will happen to you, but you can rest assured that you will never be in serious trouble.



Remember, as a mortal, you're special, protected. It's we elementals who have to put up with the evil villains and so forth, and we're quite used to being torn to pieces and such. It can even be fun at times ^^

.... I'll try my best to find that comforting.

hours later...



Pragmatic tard.

Tyrannical jackass.



Who's that
at this hour?

I'll get it...

I just need to feed,
that's all. I'll
be fine.

Is Lem here?



Yes... over
here in the
living room..



Are they still at it?

Yes... Everyone else is in bed.
They can't fight all night, can
they? I set up a bed for Ree
but I don't know if he'll want --



Darcy...
You --

You haven't
slept or eaten
in days. Let's
go home.



What's this ...?
Little brother has
a boyfriend, hmm?



Are you all right?

Yes...
You?

Of course.
The situation's
in control...at least
for the moment...

I got the story from May, Lem. I would've
expected you and Rae to have blown up the
universe or whatever by now. I'm
surprised...glad, but surprised.

I don't want to blow
up the universe, HE
does. Well, actually,
I don't have a bloody
clue what he wants.

So your assumptions
about your brother
were wrong...

My assumptions
were PRACTICAL.
I just want to
protect Faidia,
damnit. I don't see
what's so wrong
about that.

You should
try to get
along with
your brothers.

Yeah yeah...

Cal didn't do
anything to you,
Lem...he cares about
you...

Nothing's right,
not even the people
have any confidence
in me anymore...
I'm all washed up.
Too many mistakes...
I've cut off all my supports
without even realizing it.

You think I don't
know it? I can't make it
better, Darcy.

Lem... Lem don't talk that
way...it's not like you at
all. Where in the world
are you getting these
ideas from?

I'm dying.

Now you're just being melodramatic. You can't die, you're elemental of LIFE.

You all usually complain that you've been alive too LONG.

My power's draining out into the planet... all the living things are sucking me dry... I didn't begrudge them anything, and that's why I'm running out of energy. In a couple centuries, at this rate, I'll be too weak to keep a physical form...

It's ironic. Cal gave me everything, and I blew him off. I give my people everything... and now they're blowing me off. I don't regret it, though. I wouldn't have had it any other way, I wanted the very best for them. But I won't be able to keep going now. I'll flicker out.

And this boy, Rhodes... Nothing good will come of him. I have a bad feeling...

Lem, please come to bed. Forget about that for now.

Quiet, you.
You're not going anywhere. I'll make sure of it.

Heh... Darcy...



Oh how SWEET. They
fixed you up a bit.
Well, it's no matter.

This place
we're in..it's a
lab, not a hospital.
in their basement...
how curious...

Because you're an ignorant
mortal, you probably think
these people will SAVE you.
They're a lot like me,
actually...But worse.
They're all killers, you know.
They have a nice little facade
going here, but I won't be
fooled a second time.

go away Suti..
please...

Now who's giving orders?
I told you not to do that.
It pisses me off royally.
I'm tired.. please let me sleep..

You think I'M not tired?!
I have to crawl around in
your FLIMSY little
body like a SNAKE
on its BELLY
and YOU'RE tired?!

Even a worthless
waste of energy like
you should have some
sense of justice.

I don't
want to hurt
anyone...

You should be grateful I didn't have
you kill your snivelling little family...
I should have. But that would reduce me
to these Paidians' level.. they killed my
only friends and left me to ROT.

That's just
too
fucking
bad.