





# DECIPHER

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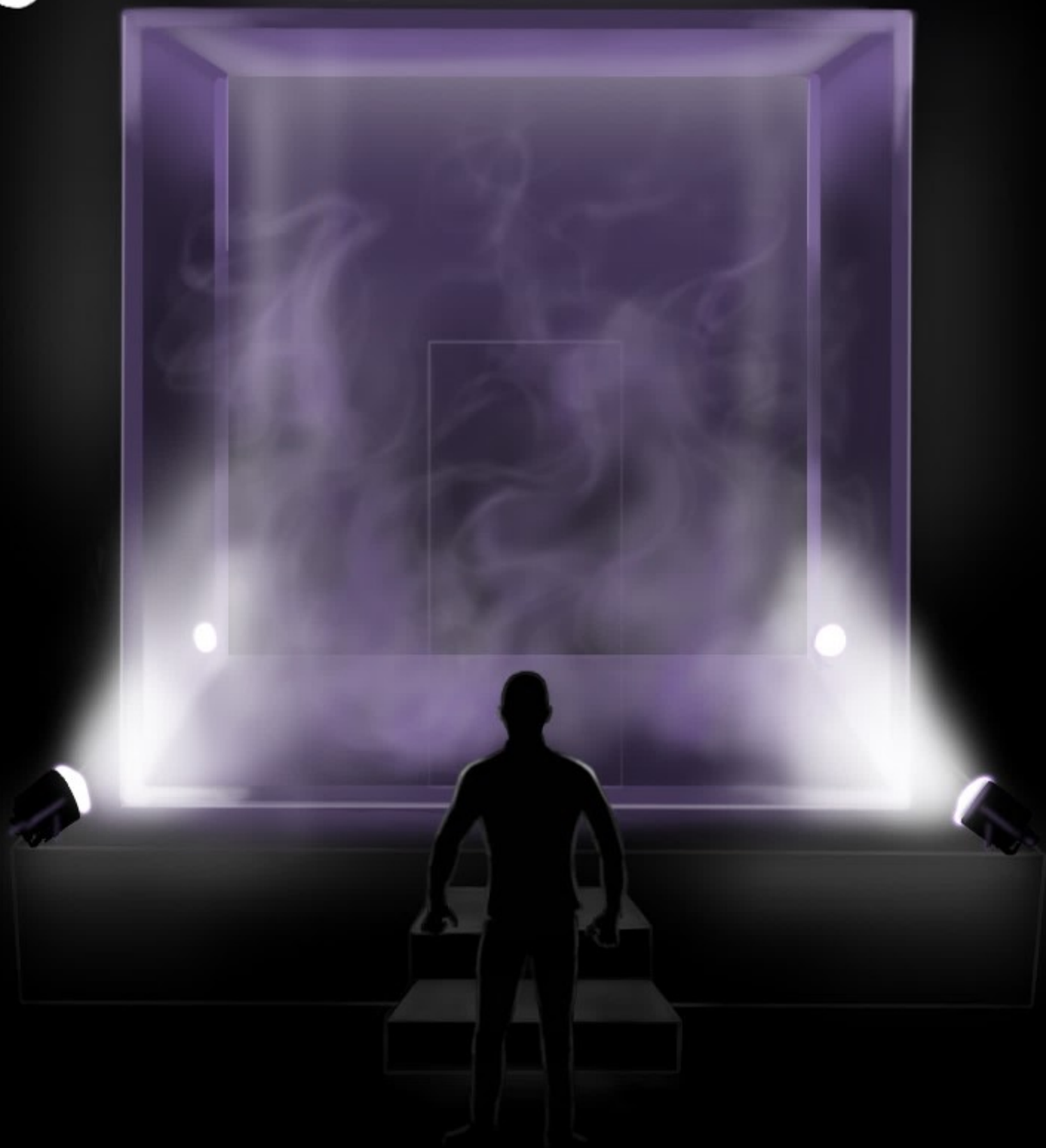
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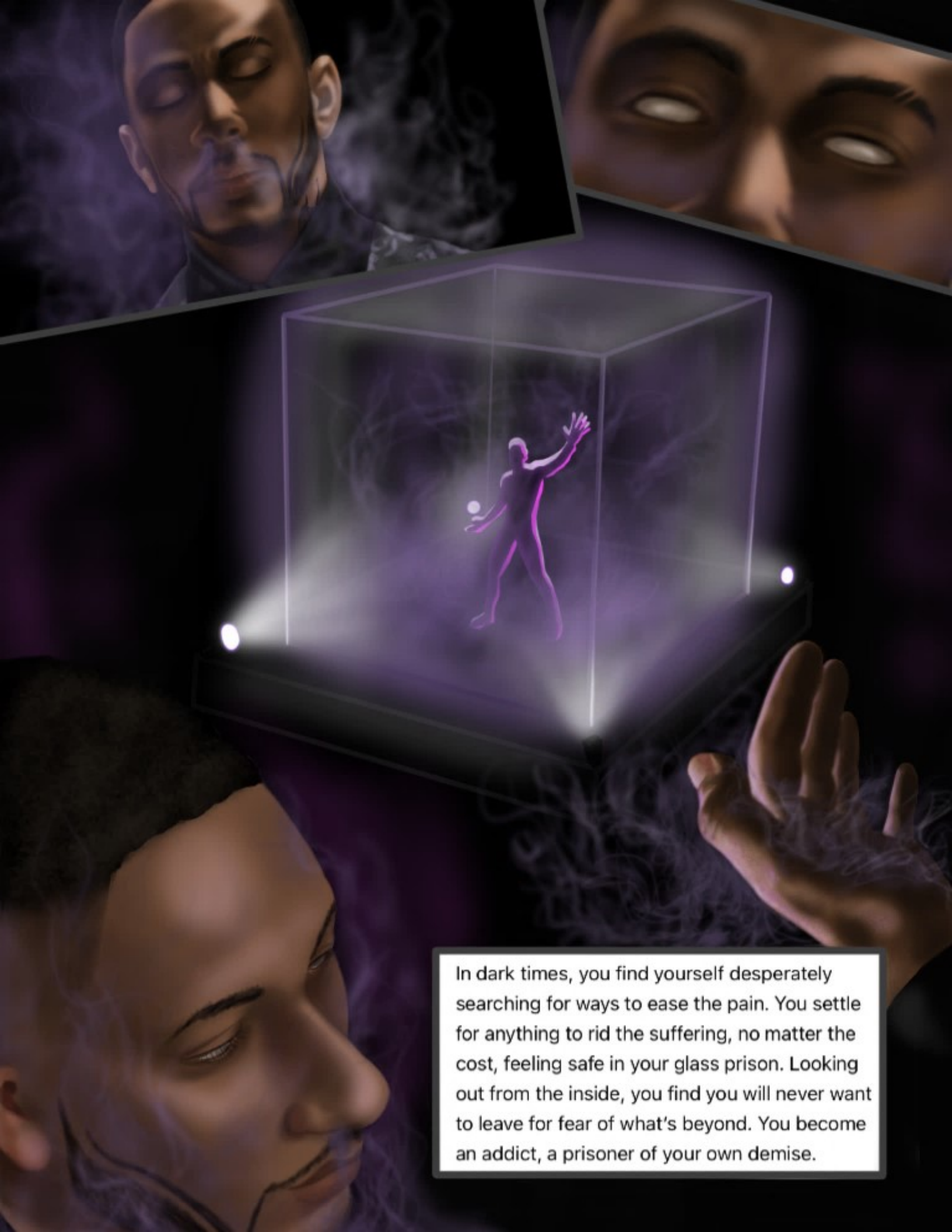
Decipher – Vol. 1, No. 1 January 2022. Published by AJ Comics, Andrew John President, Marc Shaw, Publisher. Office of Publication: Orlando, Florida. All rights reserved. No similarity between any names, characters, people, and/or institutions in this comic with those of any living or dead people or institutions intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This may not be sold except by the express written consent of the writer and artist of this comic.



**A** Comics Presents...

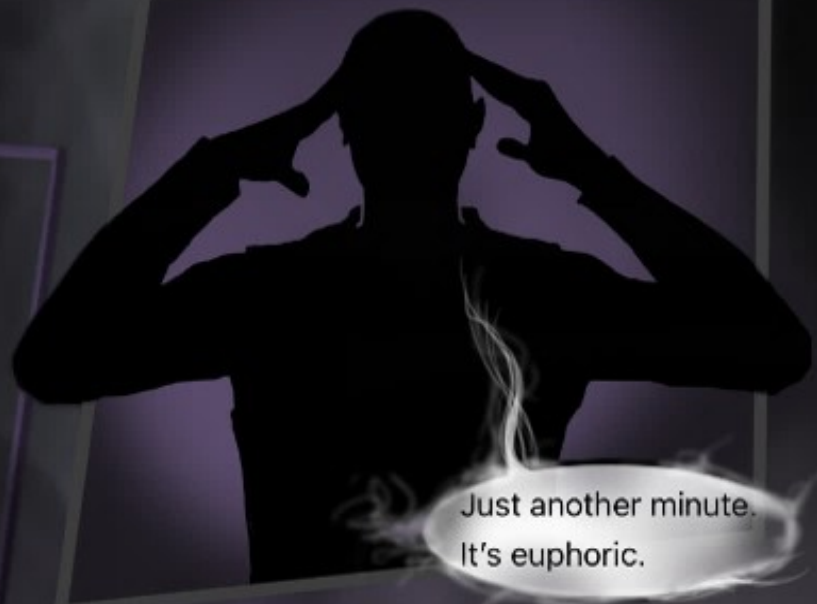


*DECIPHER*

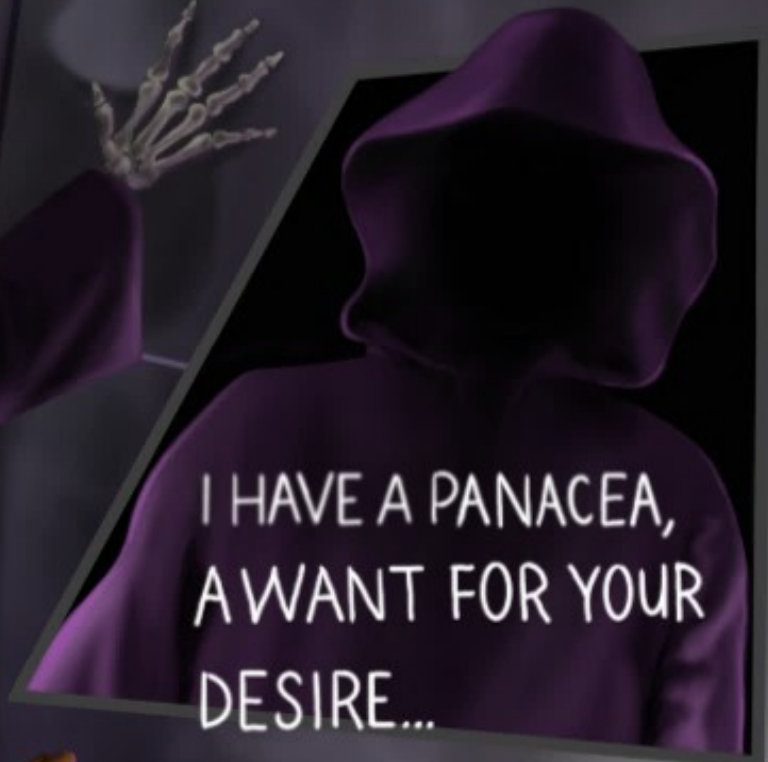


In dark times, you find yourself desperately searching for ways to ease the pain. You settle for anything to rid the suffering, no matter the cost, feeling safe in your glass prison. Looking out from the inside, you find you will never want to leave for fear of what's beyond. You become an addict, a prisoner of your own demise.

EXIT THE CHAMBER.



Just another minute.  
It's euphoric.



I HAVE A PANACEA,  
A WANT FOR YOUR  
DESIRE...









# *Chapter I*

*Before I was Afflicted,  
I went Astray*





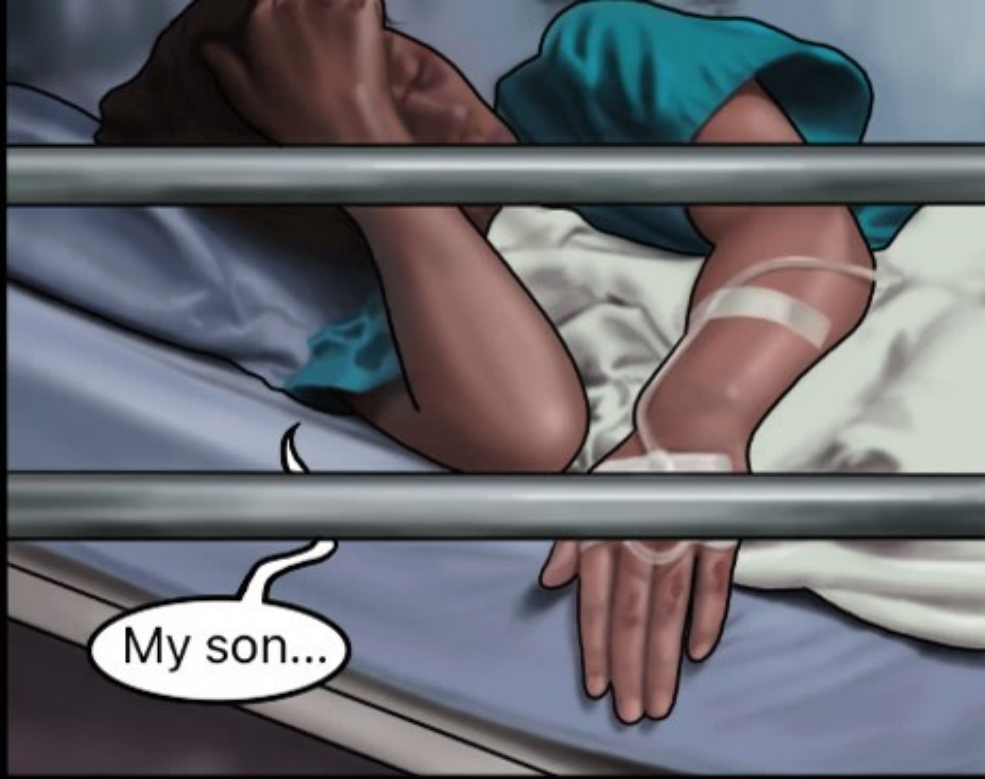


Bring the stretcher! There's two inside.









My son...

Cilas, I'm so sorry.

Sadly this tragedy is what brought you back to me.



Mom, it's okay. I'll always be here for you.

I can't believe this happened.

Cilas, hand me my purse please.

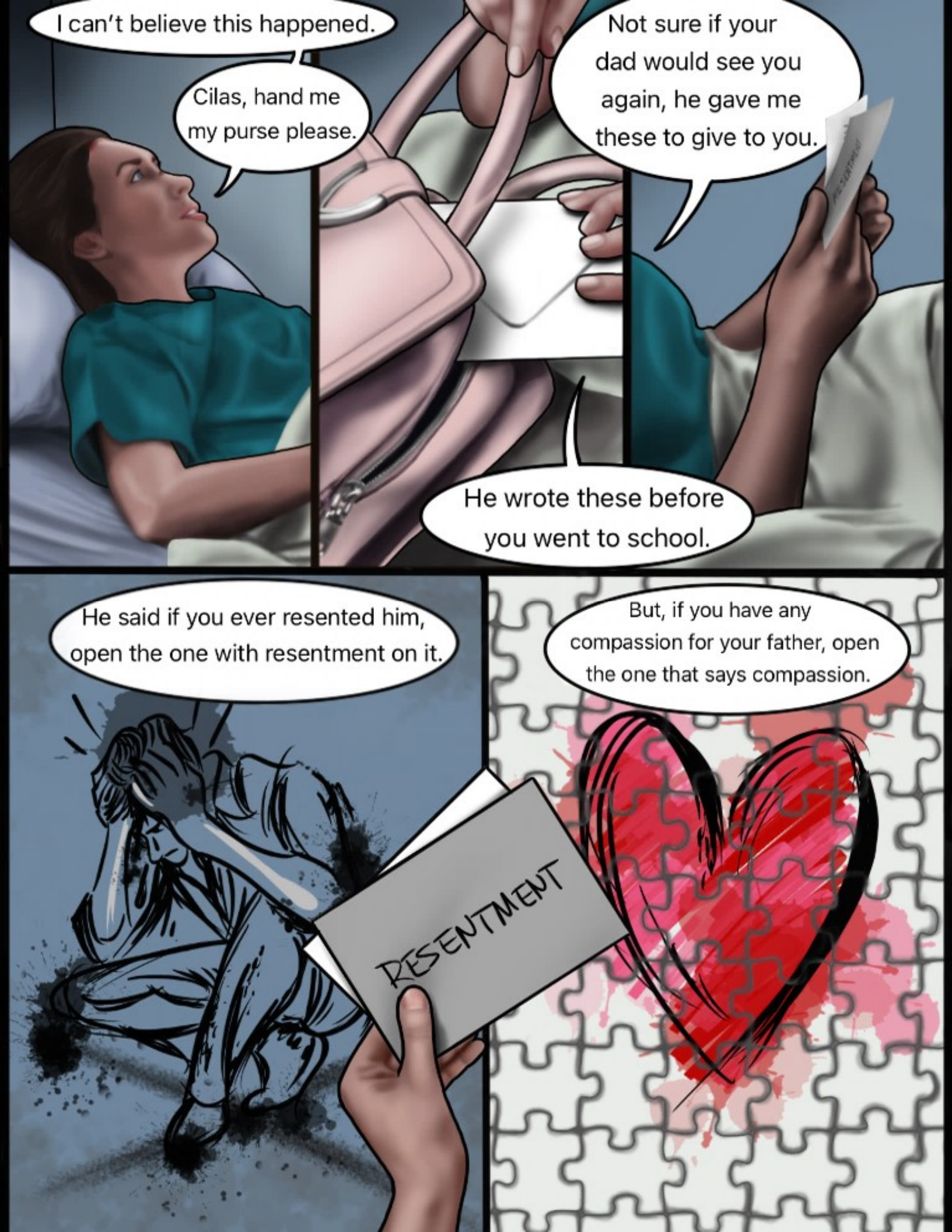
Not sure if your dad would see you again, he gave me these to give to you.

He wrote these before you went to school.

He said if you ever resented him, open the one with resentment on it.

But, if you have any compassion for your father, open the one that says compassion.

RESENTMENT





He loved you...  
We love you.

Seeing you here  
knowing I could have  
done more, makes it  
hurt even worse.

I never should have sent you to Kedesh.






KEDESH




Dad, how come we stopped?

Give me a hand son.



Where are we dad?

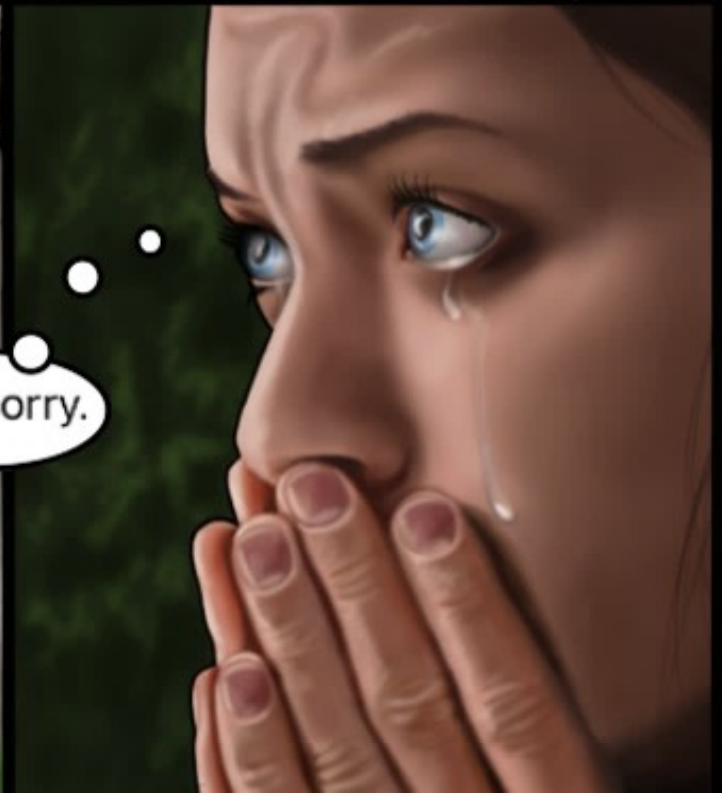
Mom and dad need to work some things out. In the meantime, you'll stay here.



Will I ever see you again?

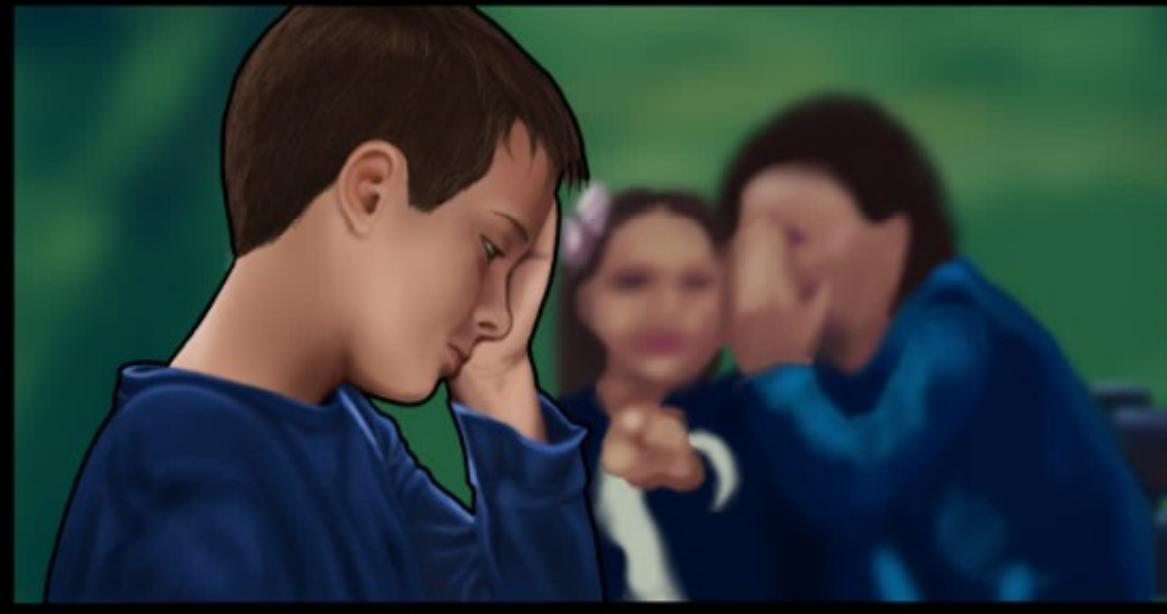


Of course. It's just temporary.





I know it's not an easy transition, but consider this a new beginning for you. And with that comes new friends and new people for you to call family.





You know that saying is a lie don't you?

What saying?

Sticks and stones may break your bones...

I know.

What's your name?

Cilas...

and yours?

They're mean.

I can tell.

Aquilla.

Nice to meet you.



How long have you been here and why?

I've been here for years. My parents were unfit to raise me so they brought me here.



Before mom left, she gave me this necklace. It's a constellation of my name. She told me not to be like her, instead to shine bright like the stars.



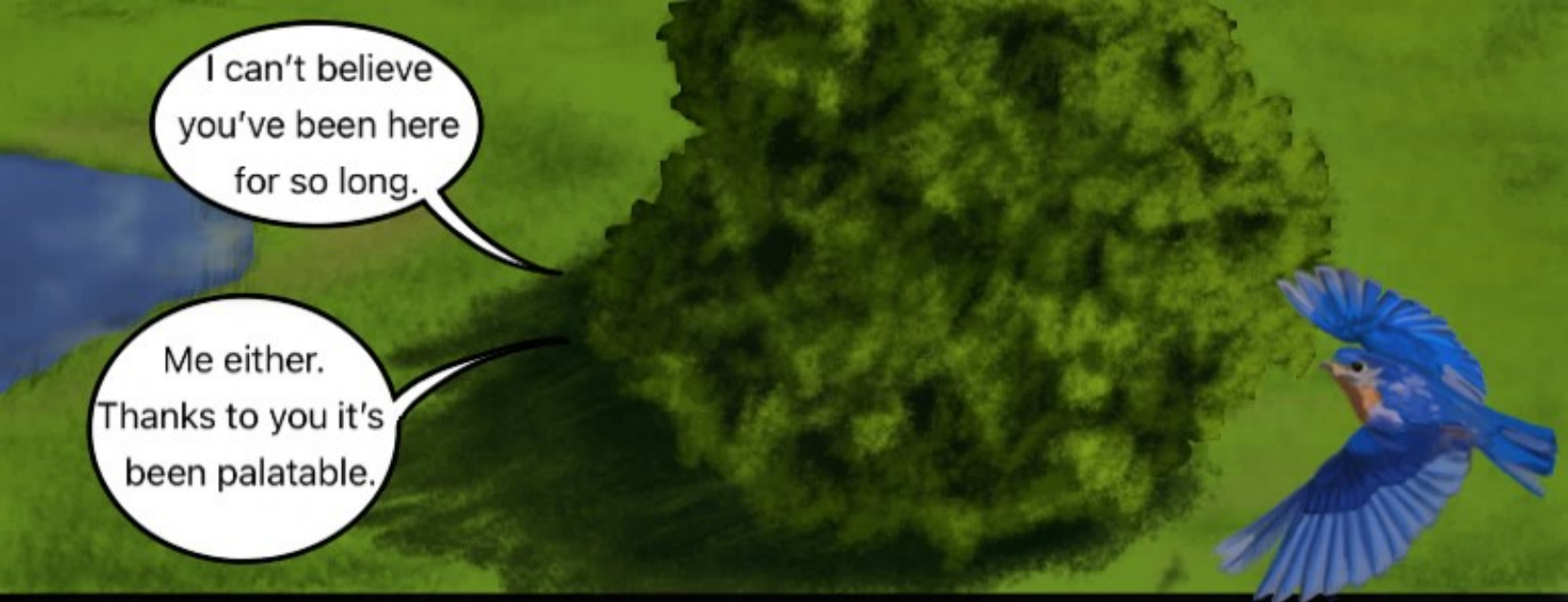
I wear it hoping one day she'll change.

I pray for that every night.









I can't believe you've been here for so long.

Me either. Thanks to you it's been palatable.



That's an impressive word! You've learned something during your time at Kedesh.

Yeah, it's taught me how much you mean to me.

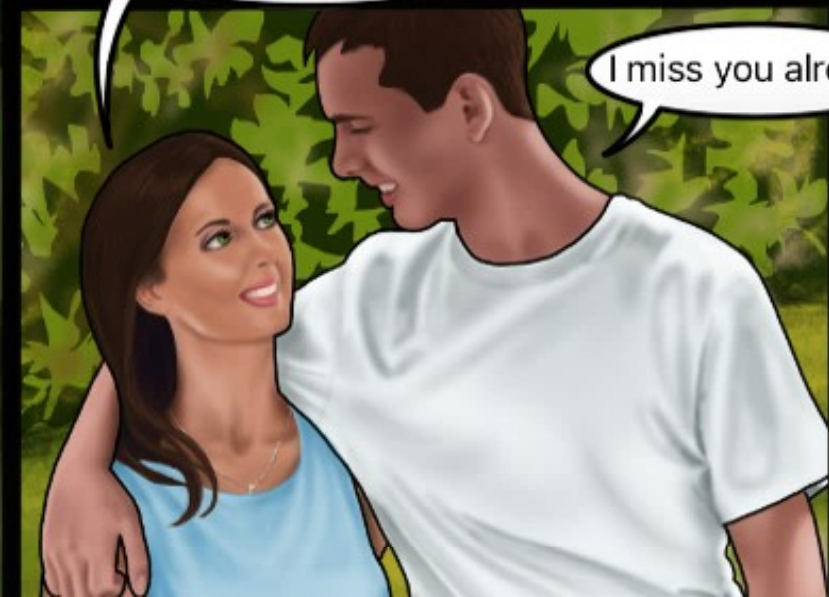
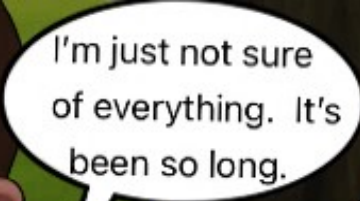


I hope you still feel that way after you leave in a couple of days.

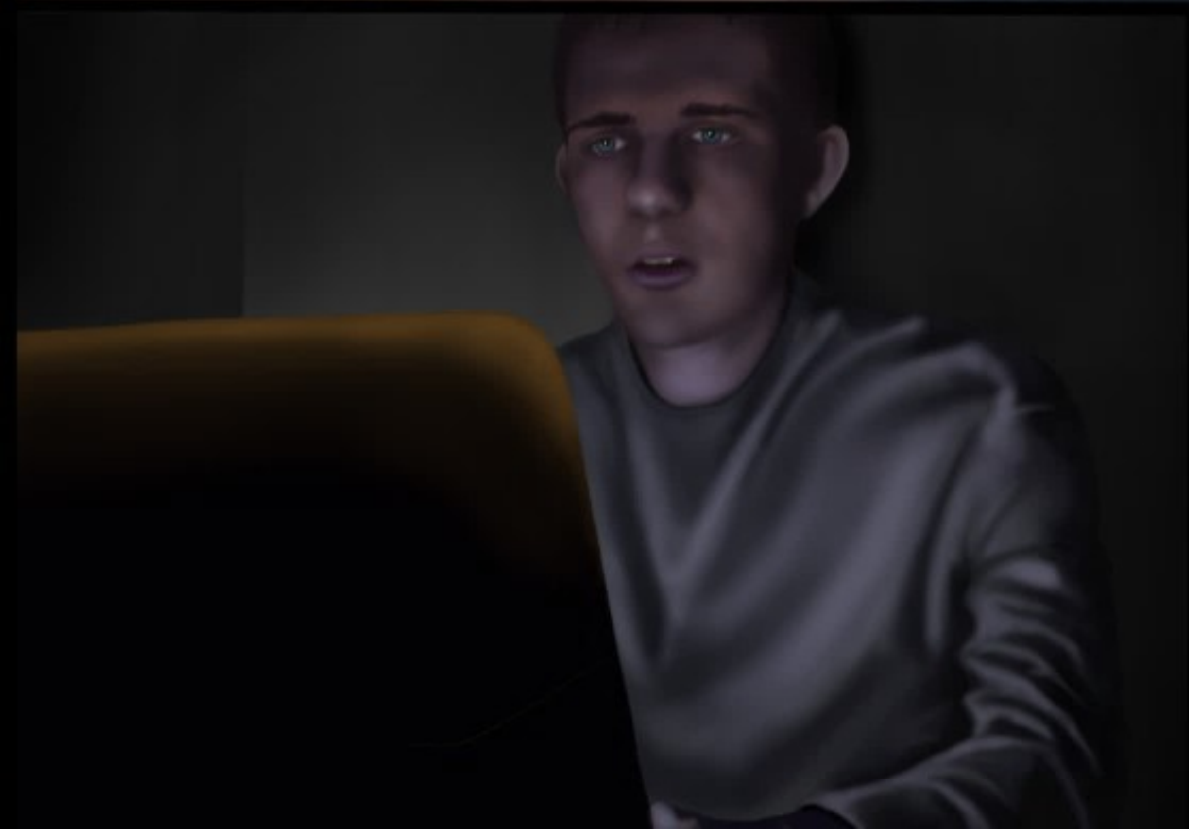
I will. You're irreplaceable.

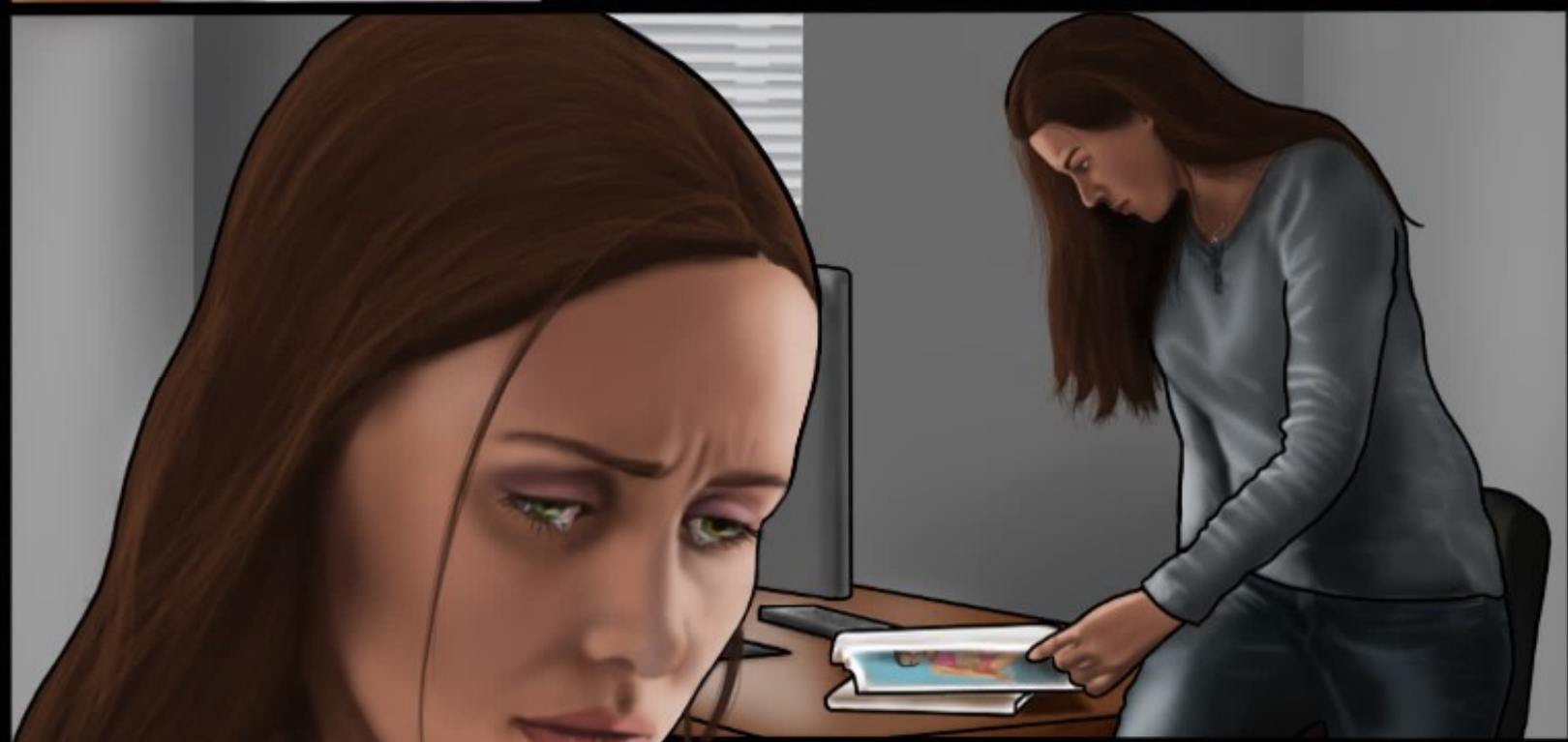


At least you're going home. It'll be nice to stay with your mom for awhile.



Months later.







Search history

Monday		
<input type="checkbox"/>	9:33 PM	Jezebels Palace
<input type="checkbox"/>	9:24 PM	Passionate love scene
<input type="checkbox"/>	6:29 PM	Iniq night club

Sunday		
<input type="checkbox"/>	10:45 PM	1 Thessalonians 4:3-4
<input type="checkbox"/>	10:41 PM	Titus 2:11-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	10:33 PM	Matthew 5:8
<input type="checkbox"/>	3:03 AM	Kedesh foster care







Do you want to tell me what's this all about?!

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry I let you down.

Well HELLO to YOU too!

Sorry?!  
For what?

I asked you a question.

Sorry you got caught?  
Sorry you're an addict?  
Sorry for what?!

Don't you **dare** touch me.

How long has this been going on?  
You couldn't wait? What is it?



It meant nothing. I wasn't hurting anybody.

It hurt us, Cilas.

I was afraid you'd leave me.



But we made a commitment to each other. Does any of that matter?

Trust me, I want to stop. The guilt is overwhelming.

I want a future with you but I will NOT share it with another woman.





Sorry Aquilla, I have an addiction. I don't know if I have the strength to fight it.

I'll trust you. For better or for worse, I'll put you first. I know you'll make the right choice.



I'll stay with you but you need to get help.


I will. I'm glad we can be honest with each other.

We just need to have faith. We need to have patience even when it seems difficult.




# *Chapter II*

*It's not if we pass through waters,  
It's when*




How did I get to this place?

Unsuspecting people place their faith in me.



I experiment in the name of science for what? The almighty dollar?

Where does it get me?



It gets me to a place where I'm addicted to anything that numbs the guilt, the shame...

I need  
to quit.

CLICK!

Something  
to distract me.

With the effect of the virus, a private company, Quieten, has developed a vaccine to help diminish its spread. Hospitals are quickly admitting citizens to receive their vaccinations with hopes to get rid of the virus within the year. Still some people are divided, with many supporting the vaccine and others being skeptical of it...



CLICK!

I don't have  
the patience  
for this.

But I do  
have patients  
waiting.



Your next patient is Cilas Cavour.




Who knew an addiction...

could make all your achievements so insignificant.




What I can give you is peace of mind.

The side effects are minimal.




Nausea, headaches  
and hallucinations  
are possible.

But in the end it will be all worth it.

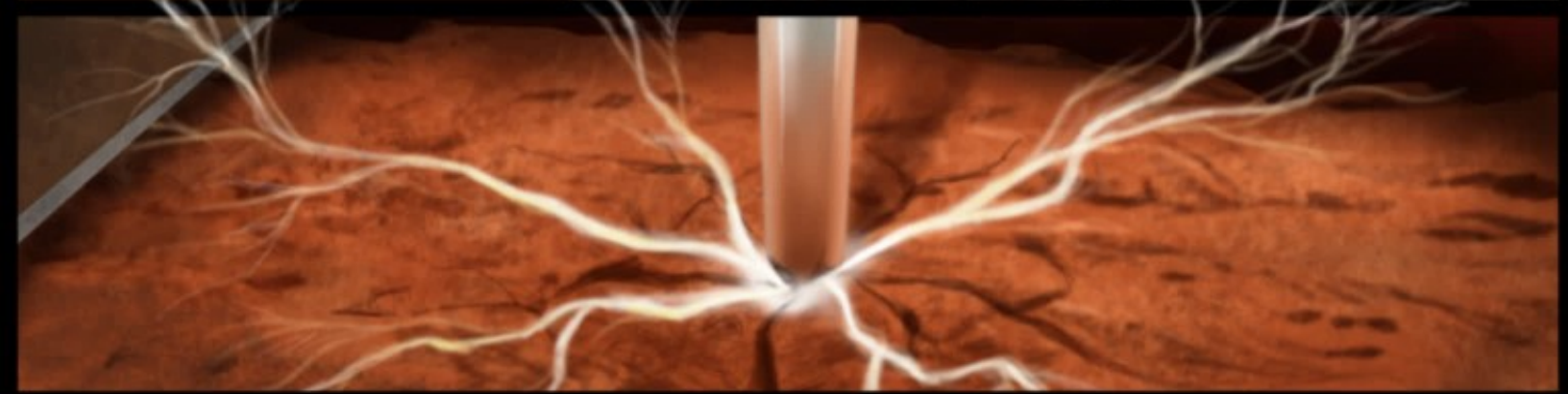


Trust me.

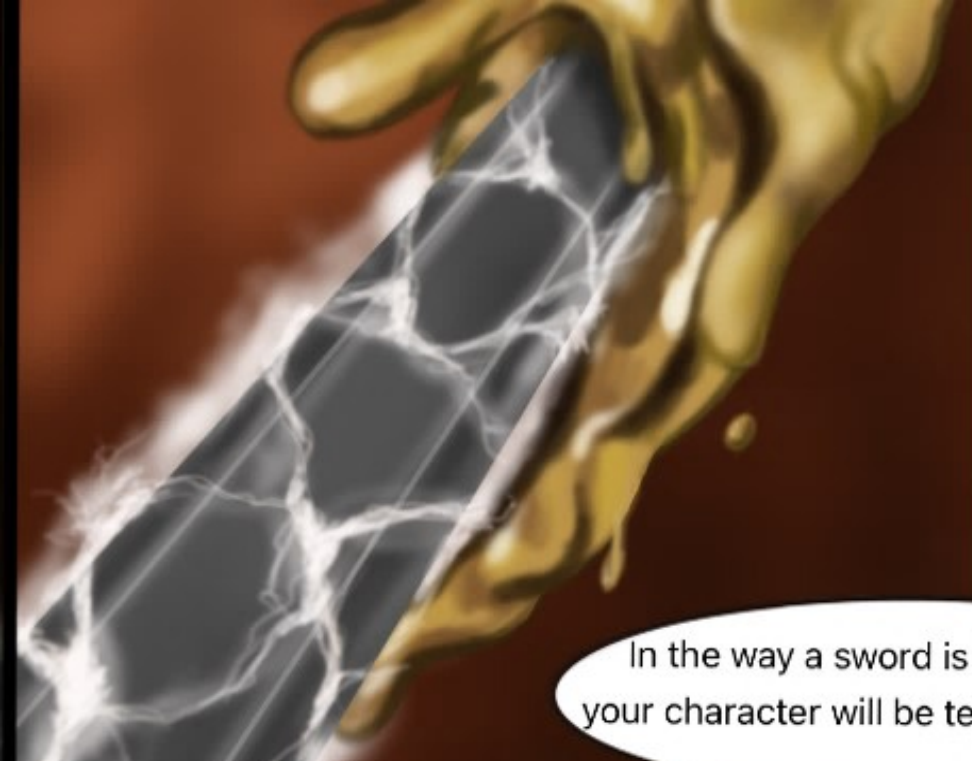


Now it's the entities turn.  
Good luck in the afterworld.









In the way a sword is forged in fire,  
your character will be tested in Golgotha.

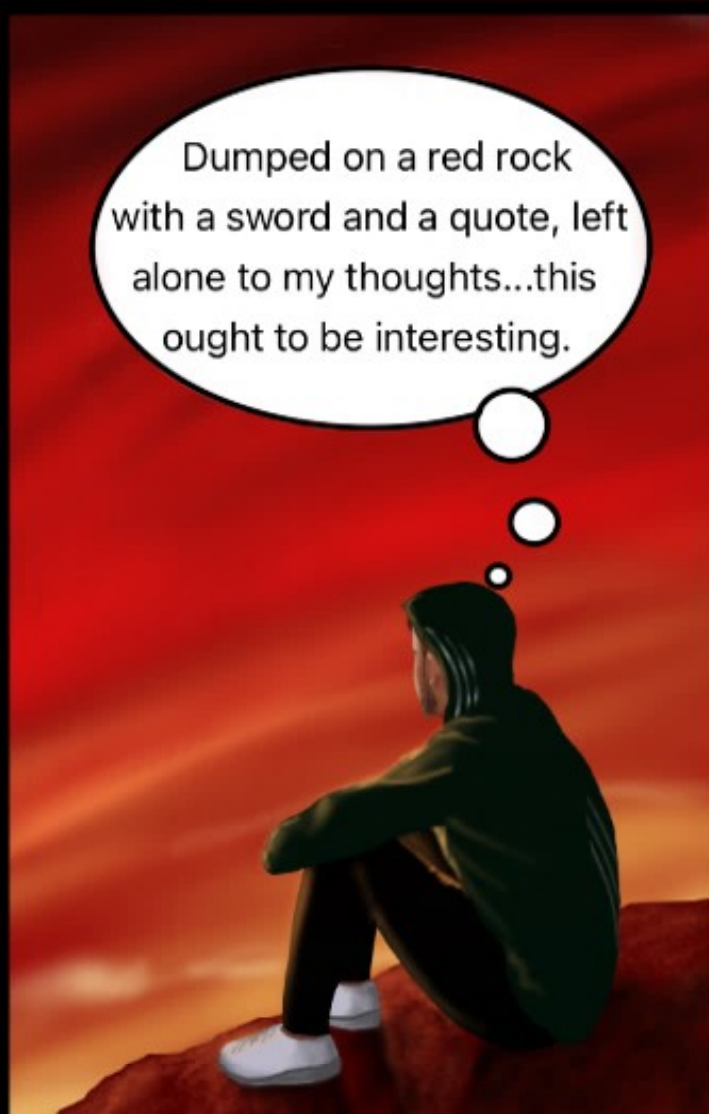
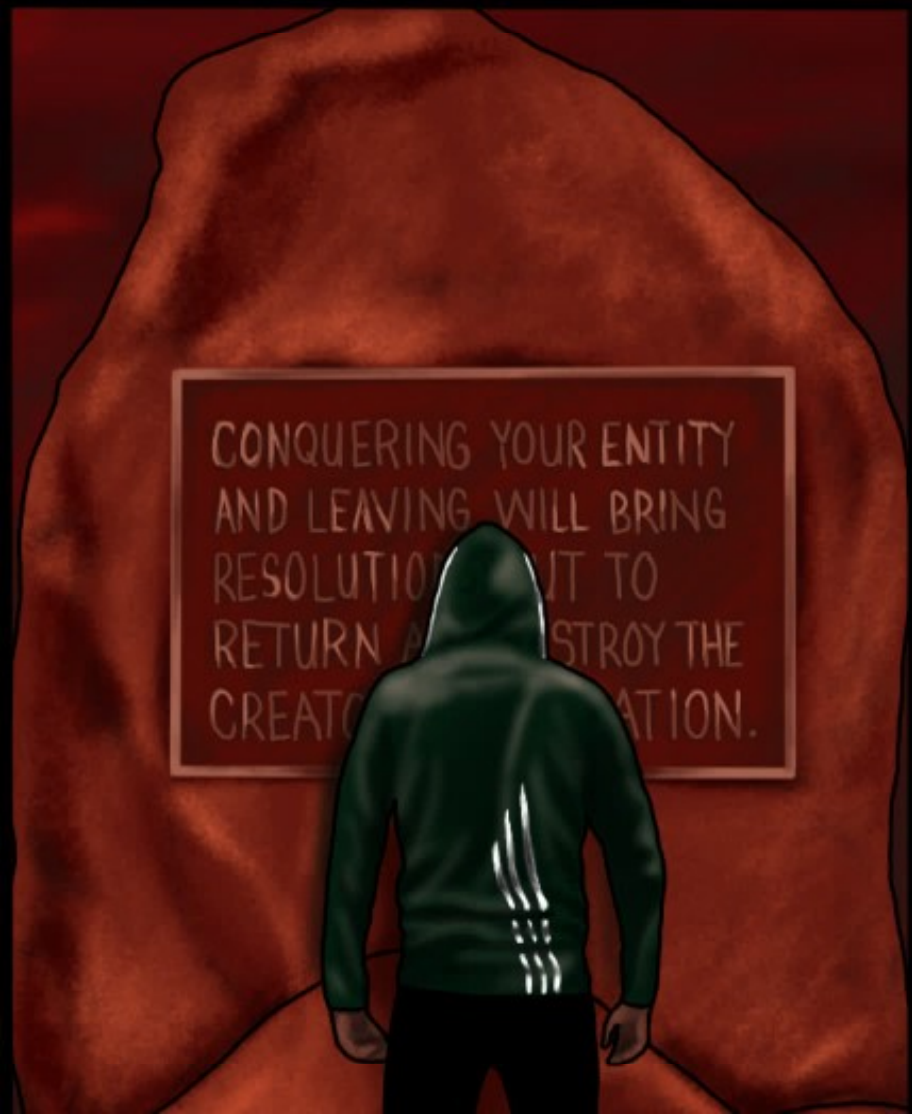




# Golgotha

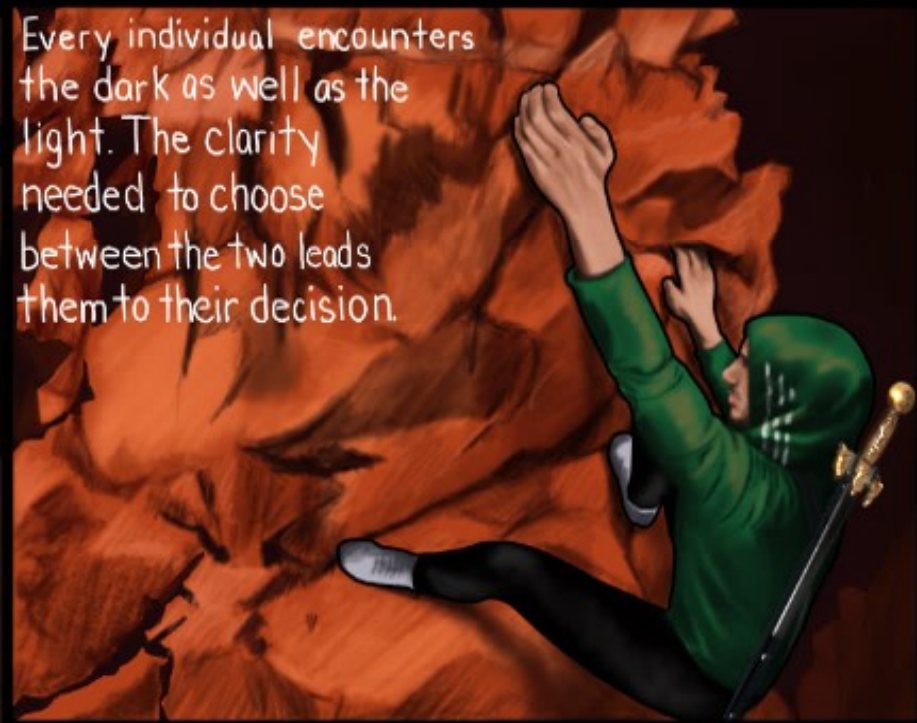
CITY OF THE SKULL



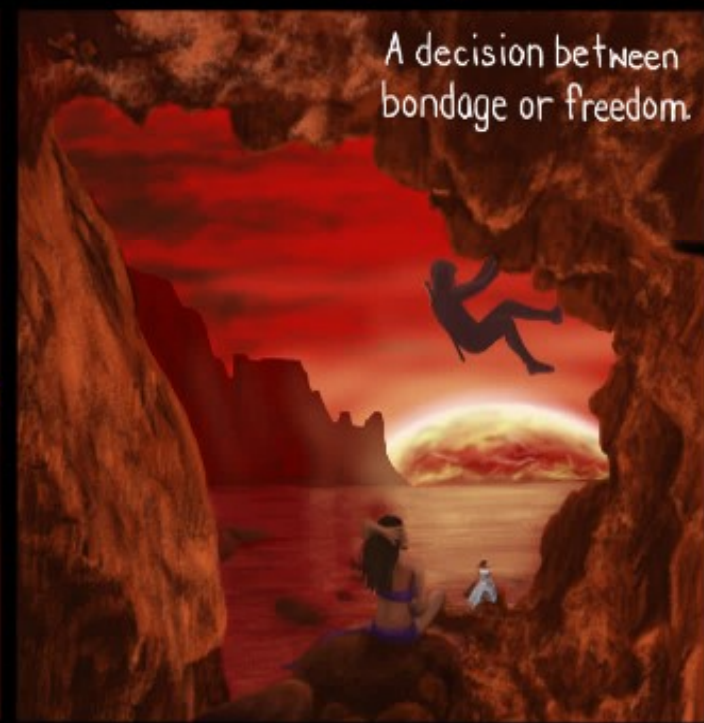




Beyond the sword is a choice.



Every individual encounters the dark as well as the light. The clarity needed to choose between the two leads them to their decision.



A decision between bondage or freedom.



For Cilas...



The choice is between lust and purity.











The sins of my past will not burden me any more.

I'm sorry.

Wait. Killing me will leave you unfulfilled.

Don't let your strong will distract you from the beauty in front of you.



If it's beautiful, take it.

Why settle for less...



when you can have the woman of your deepest desires?

I just need you to hand me the sword.

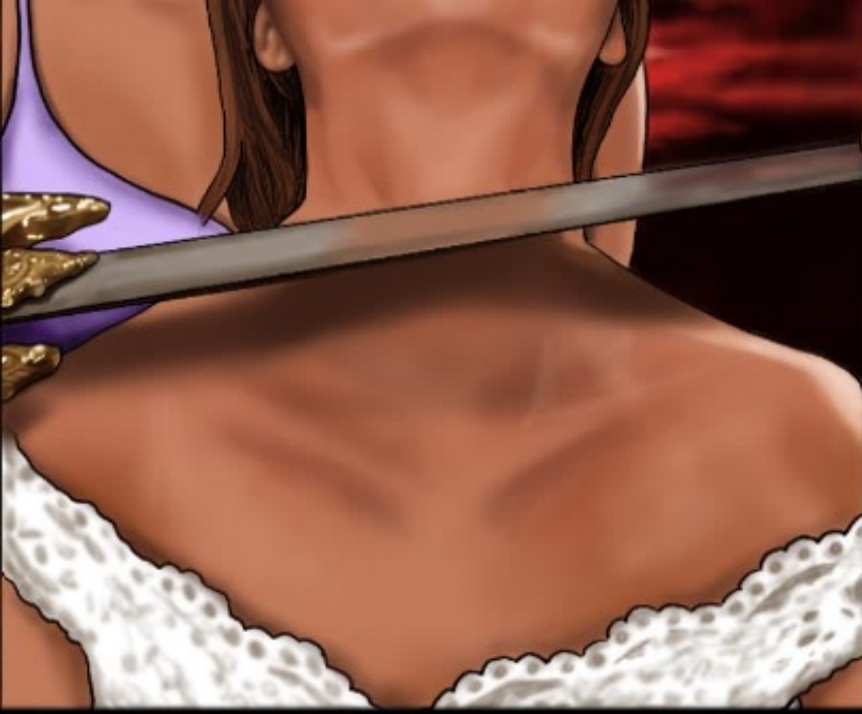
Do not wait on your passions.



You're the part  
of me I abhor.

I should...





kill you once and for all.

Your willingness will lead to her downfall. Purity diminishes by the sword.



Men would be wise to wait but they give in too easily to their desires.

It's a story too often rewritten, passed on by generations.



His past will not become my future. I've seen the sins of my father, but my future will lead to life, not death.

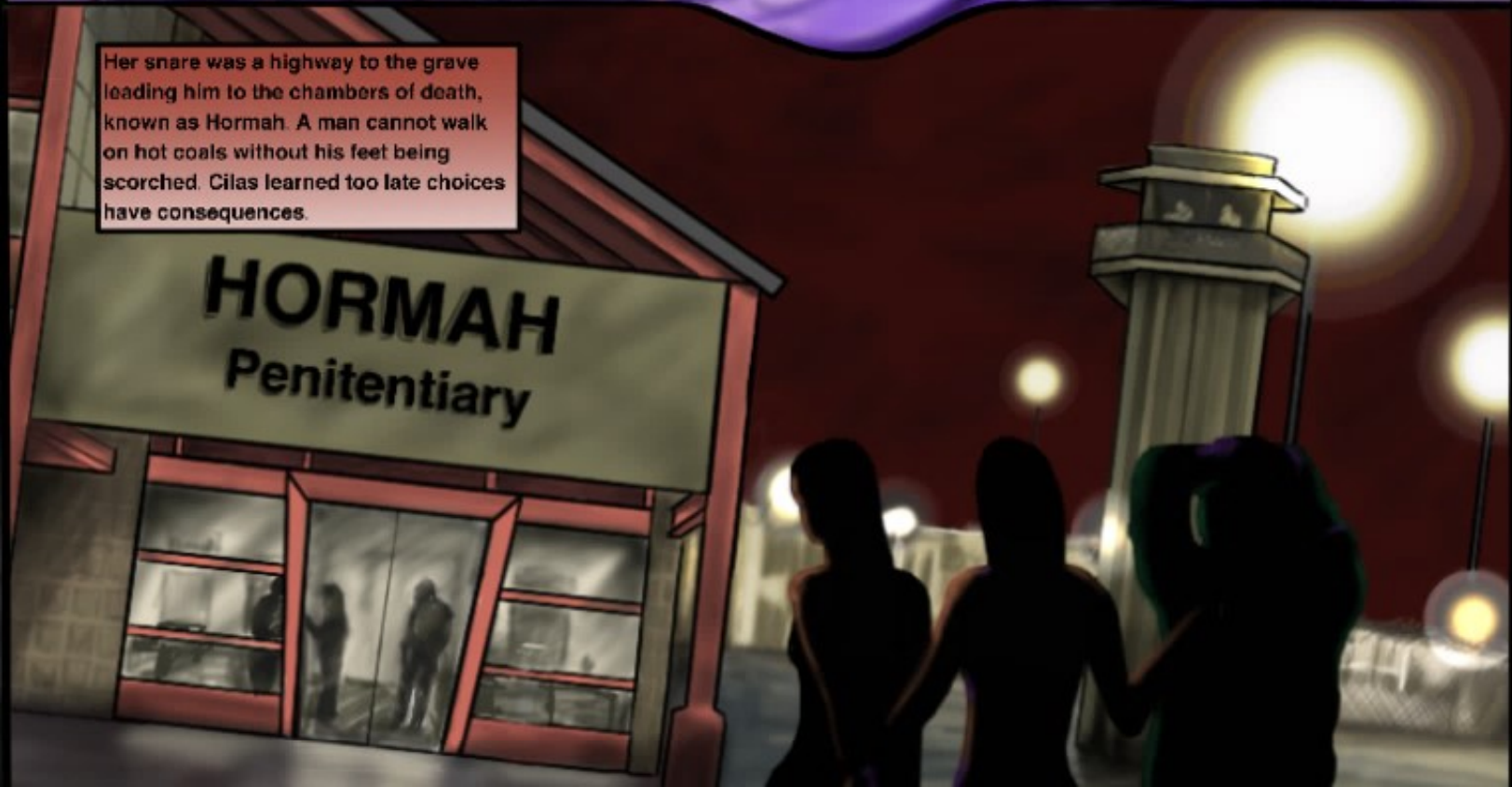
I've made my choice.

It's what Aquilla would want.



Her snare was a highway to the grave leading him to the chambers of death, known as Hormah. A man cannot walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched. Cilas learned too late choices have consequences.

# HORMAH Penitentiary





# *Chapter III*

*Opposite sides of the glass*

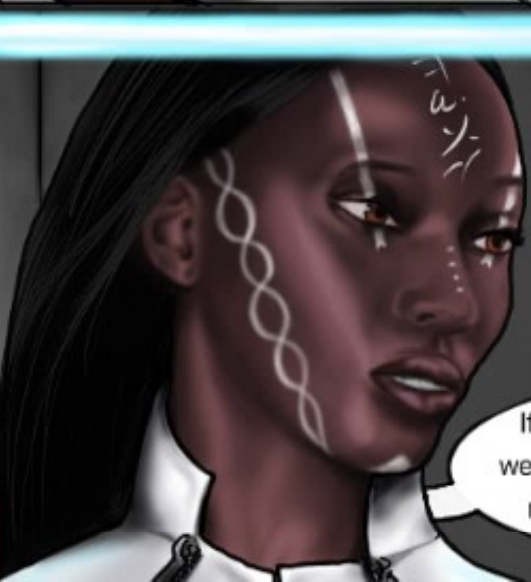


There's no hope for us. If there was any chance of escape we would have done it weeks ago.



You have such little hope, yet you hope for the worst.

I don't hope for the worst, I've just come to expect it.



If we are to die, then it means we've lived long enough. There's more waiting in the next life.







Euronica, you are being relocated to a new cell. As for you Faith, your time seems to have run out.



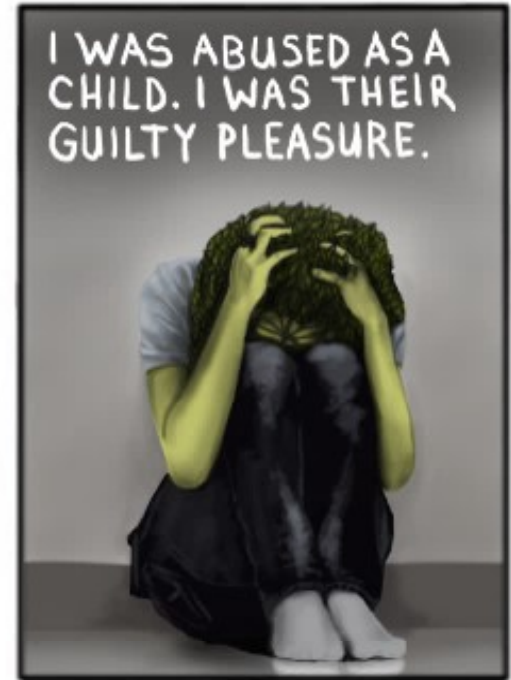
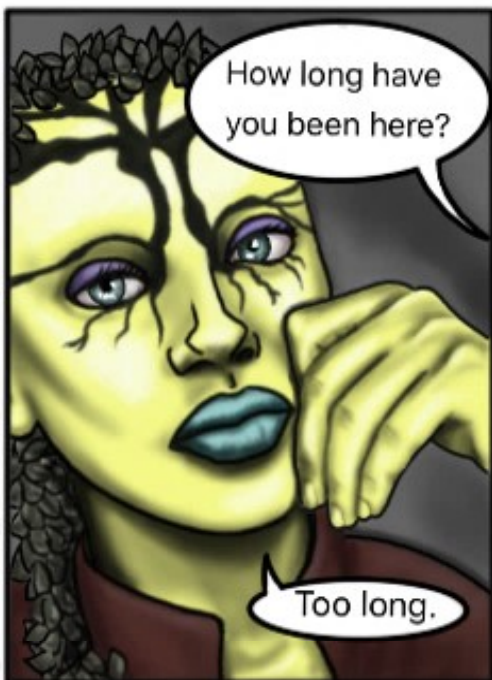
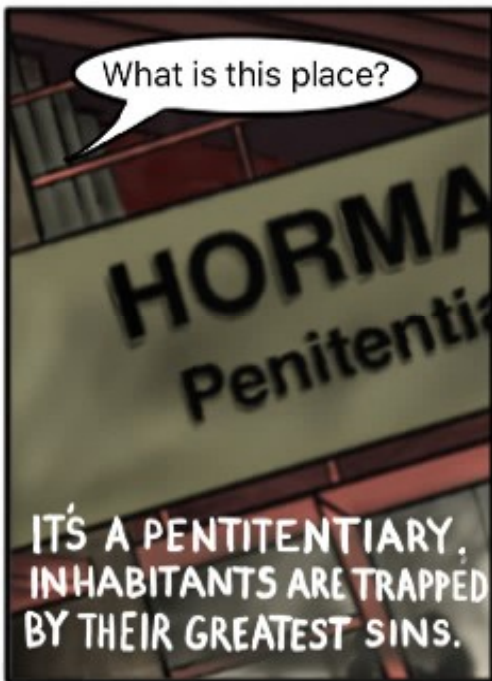
My time has been cut short, but I hope what we shared will live on past my death. Thank you for standing beside me when I needed it most. Please don't forget me.

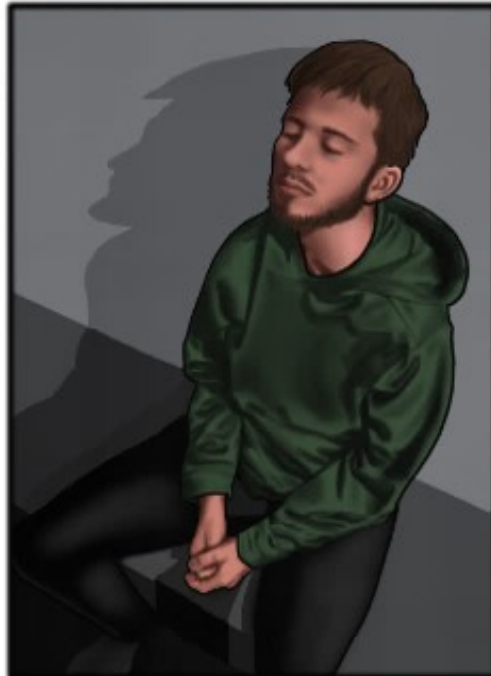
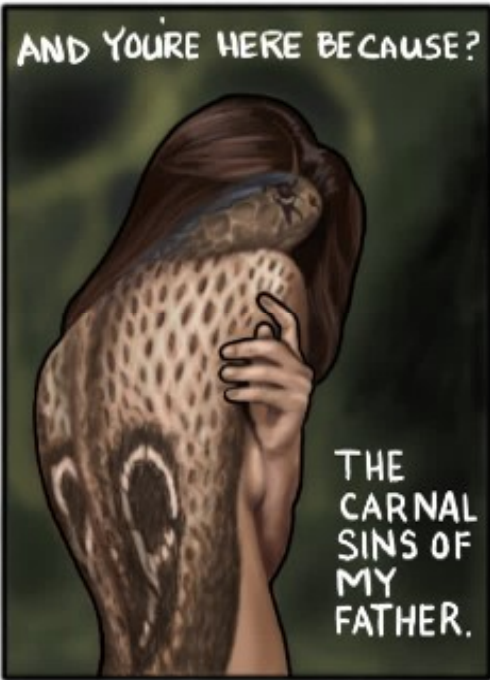


A prison with no guards. Prisoners held captive by their own entities.









That night.

AIYEEEEEEEE!

LOOK IN THE CELL  
ACROSS FROM YOU.

THE  
DARKNESS  
HAUNTS HER.



HER HOUSE  
WAS BROKEN  
INTO WHILE  
THEY SLEPT.

THE ROBBER  
SHE SAW  
ESCAPING..

ROBS HER  
OF HER  
SLUMBER.



HER FEAR OF  
DARKNESS, NOT  
THE INTRUDER,  
WILL BE WHAT  
KILLS HER.



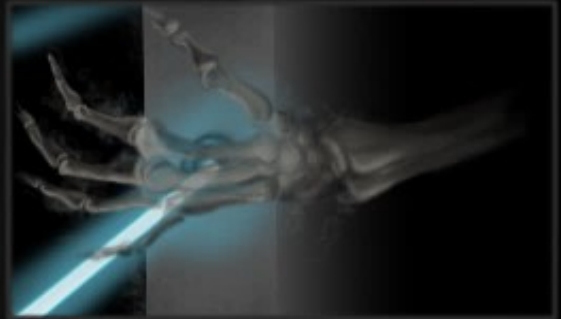
WHAT FEAR  
WILL KILL YOU?

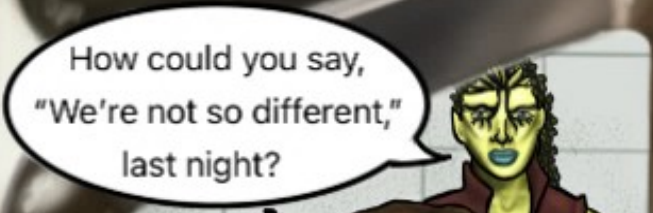
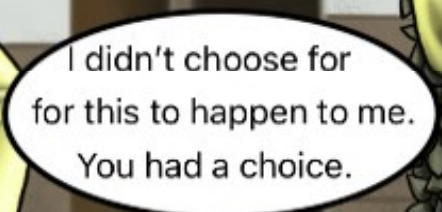


OR WILL IT CONSUME YOU?

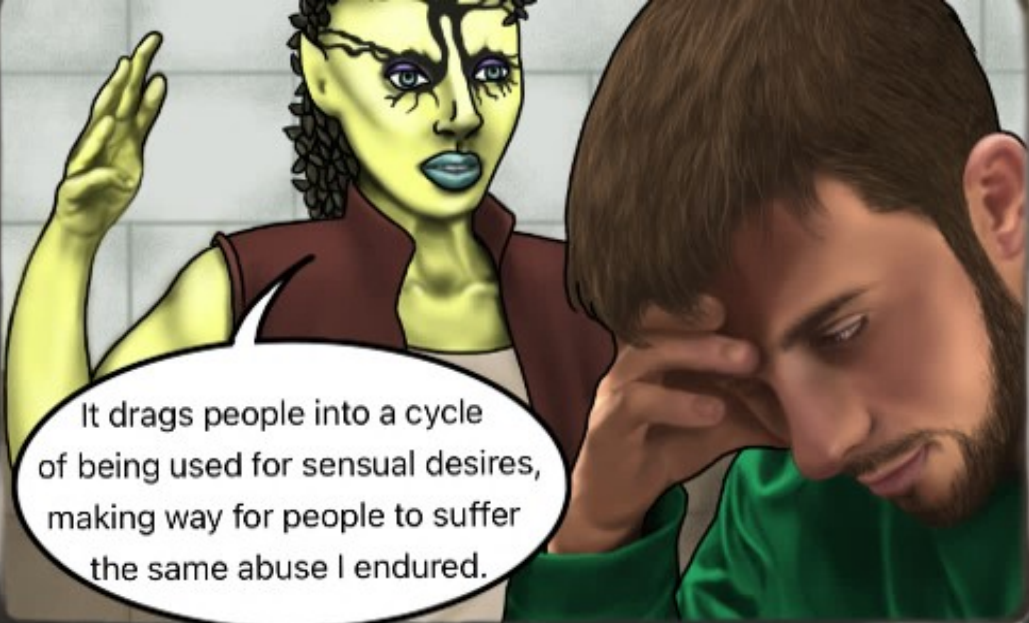


ONE CAN ONLY SURVIVE IN HERE SO LONG.










It drags people into a cycle of being used for sensual desires, making way for people to suffer the same abuse I endured.



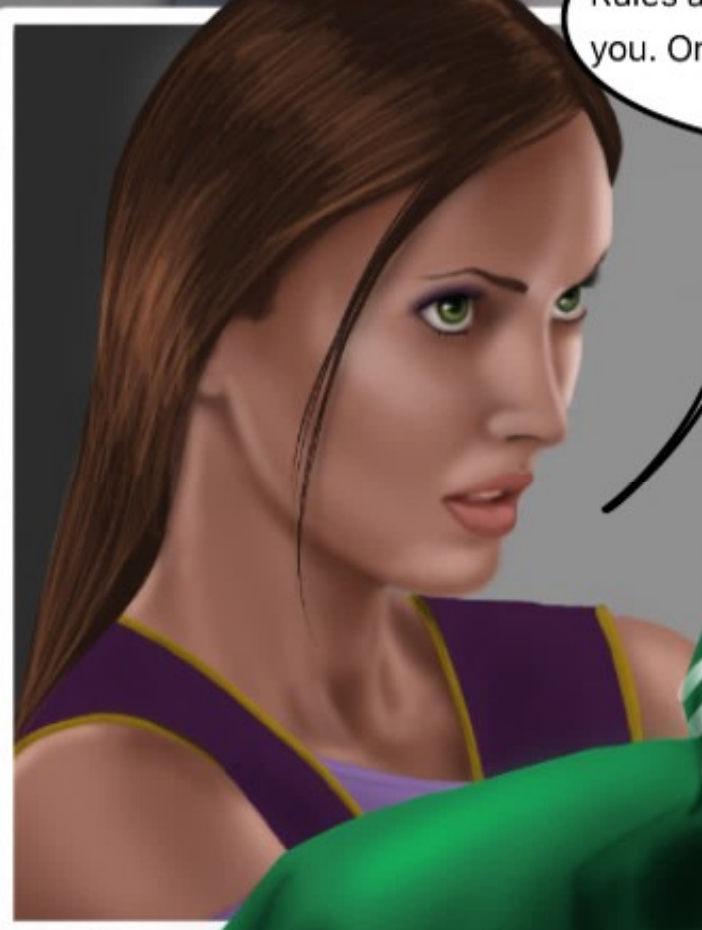
I was lost Euronica. I still feel lost. I'm chained to it. I want to be set free.



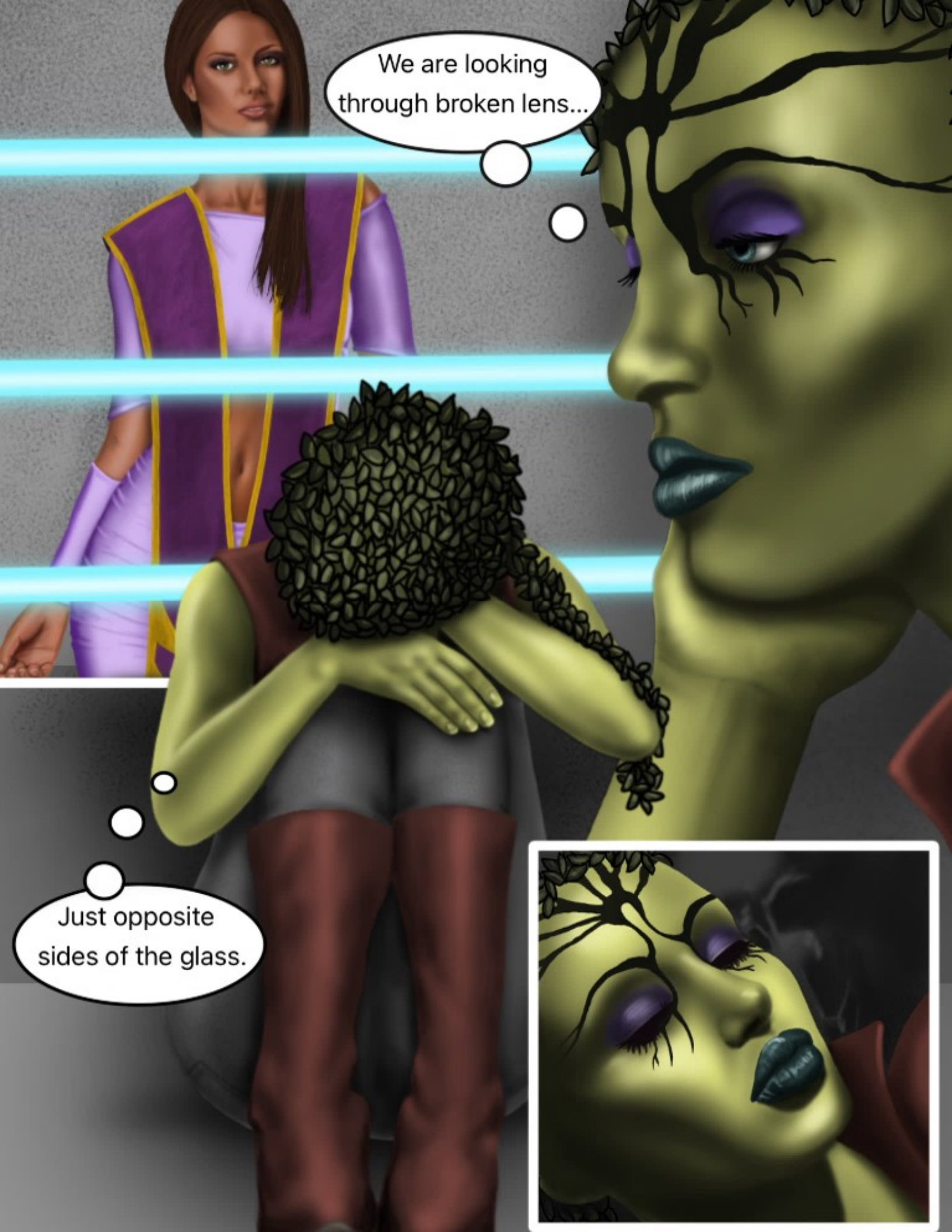
It's frustrating! That's why I'm still here.



Why do you isolate yourself from me?  
Please Cilas...



You don't understand.  
Rules are set in place to restrict you. Once you let go, it will free you to enjoy life.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a purple dress with yellow trim, is looking through a pane of glass. The glass is held in place by three horizontal blue light beams. On the other side of the glass, a green-skinned woman with purple eye makeup and dark lips is looking back. She has a large, dark, leafy headdress on her head. The scene is set against a grey background.

We are looking through broken lens...

Just opposite sides of the glass.



Later.



HAVE YOU  
DECIDED YET?



I don't feel  
it's my choice.

Yet somehow  
I feel responsible.

YOU  
CAN ONLY  
SUFFER FOR  
SO LONG.



The robe...  
It went through.

IT WOULD BE WISE TO DECIDE QUICKLY.



Cilas.

Cilas, wake up!

I thought you weren't talking to me.

Just listen. What if...



What if our thoughts were the only thing between us and beyond the bars?

I'm going off a maybe.  
It's worth a shot.





Grab my hand.



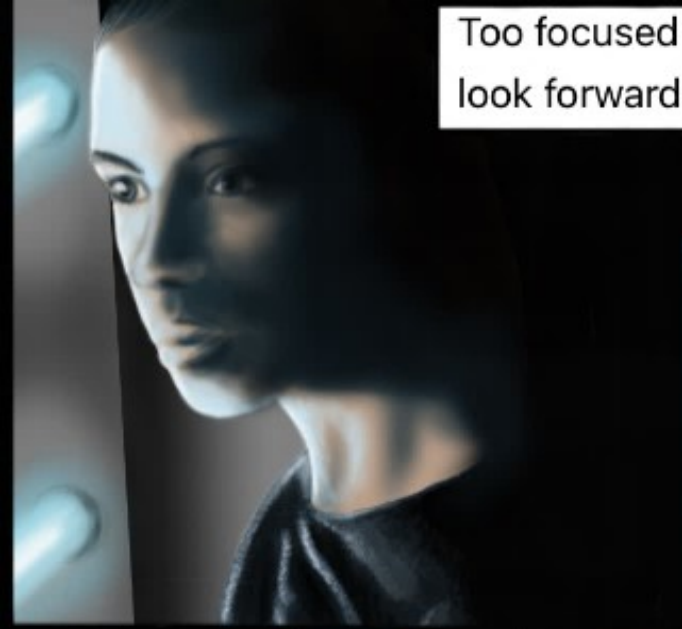
LET'S GO!!



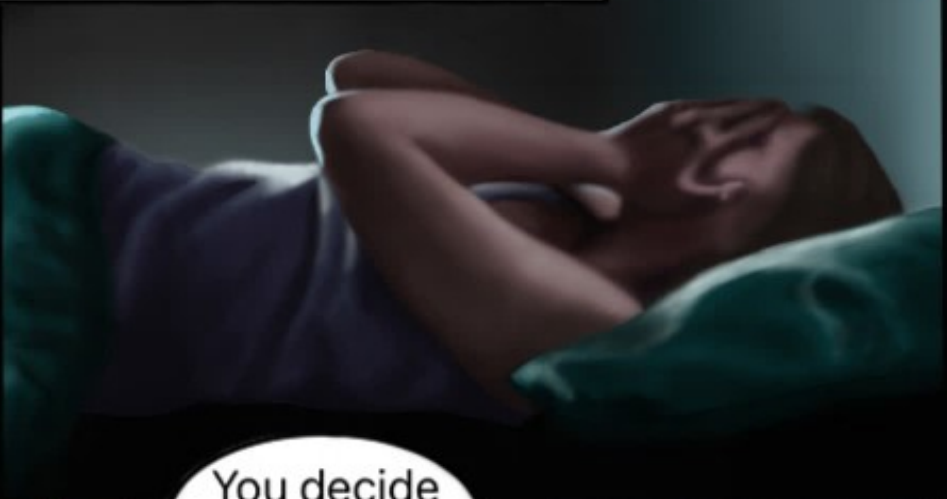
Do you see these bars?




They're not real. You can leave.




Too focused on what they did, they could not look forward and escape. Fear had control.




You decide what to do.



I told someone I wouldn't forget them.



I have to hope she's still alive and find her.



Cilas...was he someone who would've stayed with me?





# *Chapter IV*

*When the fire erupts,  
my symbol will extinguish  
the flames.*



**LOCKED?!**  
No. No. **No!**



**YOU BELONG HERE.**



I've gotta find a way out.



**WHOA!**





Outside of here is unsettling.

Stay with me.

You know this place.

You know me.



Aquilla, how could I dwell  
in a place of temptation? A place  
riddled with guilt.



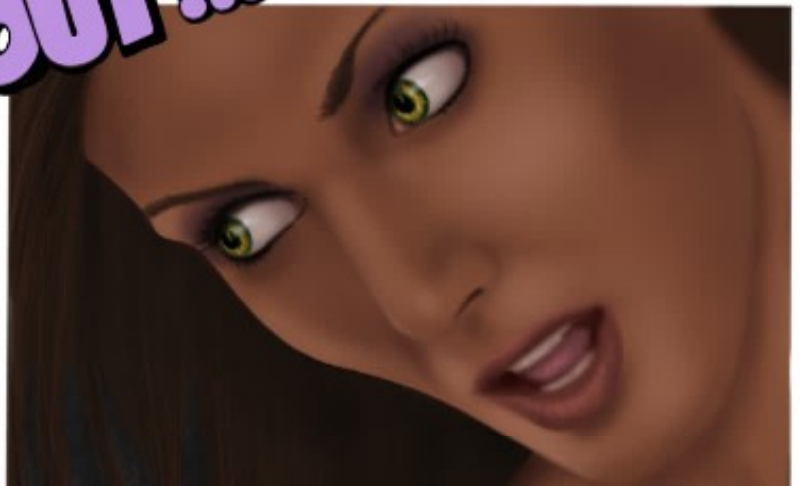




If I loosen the binds,  
can you break free?

I should be  
able to...

**LOOK  
OUT!!!**







THWWPT!

There's nowhere to run. You can't play with fire and not get burned.



**THWAK**

**GASP!**



Your fight is not with me.

You have **no idea** how much power I possess.



Why defend the offensive?



Put me down!  
She needs your help.





GET OFF HER!



The more people you let in, the more they'll use you...

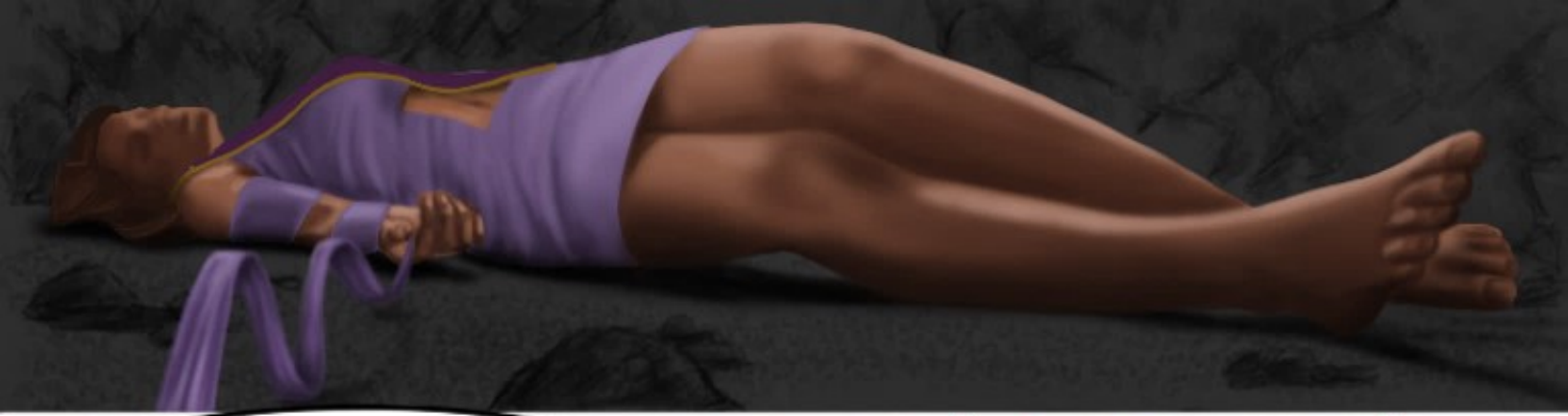


Or help save you.



AHH!!!

LET ME GO!



Her mark is permanent, but how you view the mark makes all the difference.

It can remind you to flee your lustful desires or label you as impure and unredeemable.

**HUNH?!**



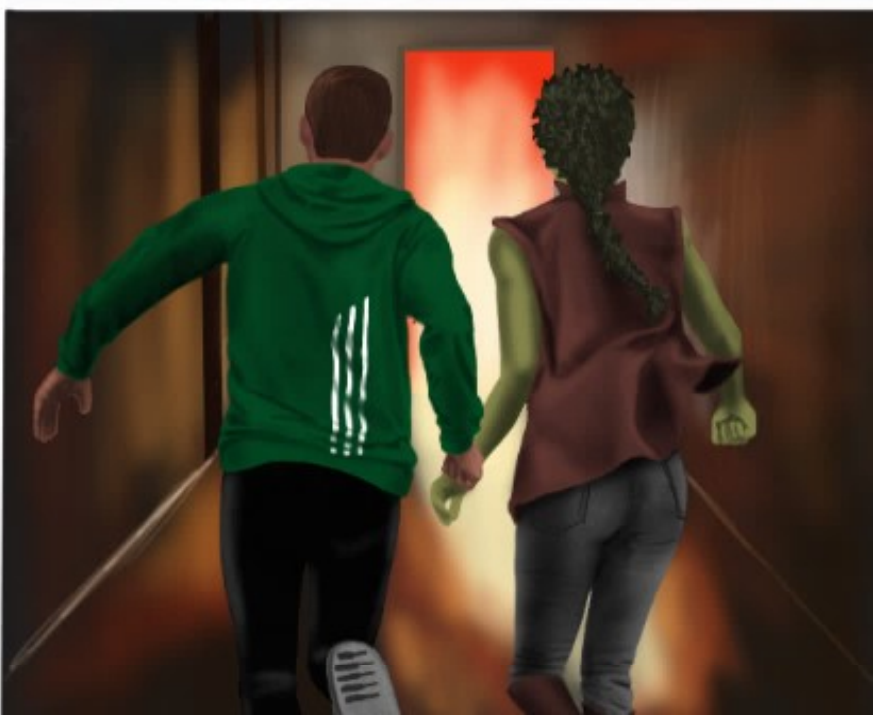
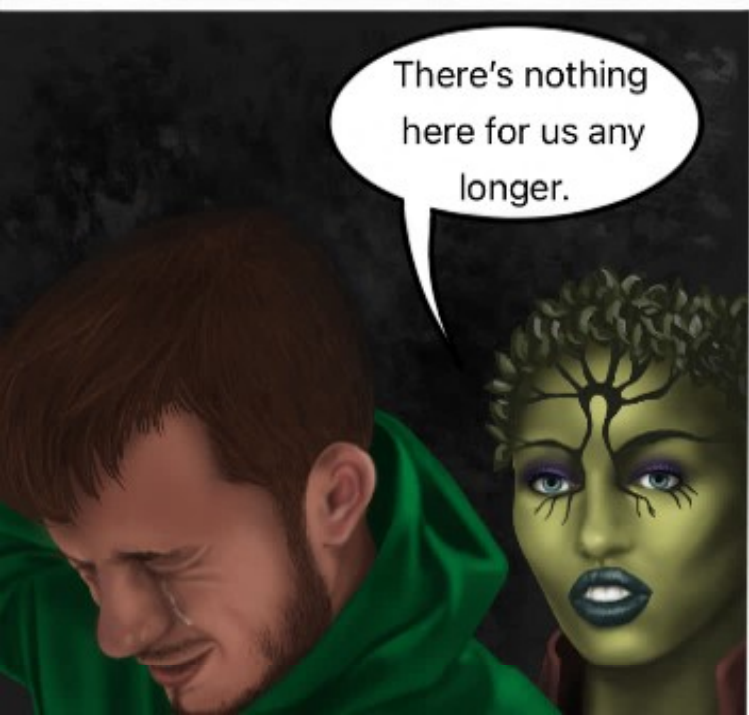
I will leave you with a way to resist your temptation.



Entities feel like you're in a dreamlike state.




But when you lose one or wake up, the loss lingers. Especially when lust and purity wore the face of Aquilla.






CLICK!





Thank you for standing beside me when I needed it the most. Don't forget me.



I won't. You know how to find me...





This entire time you could've left Cilas to die in Hormah, but you didn't...

The one who inherits the sword will always be guided by the Spirit.

He was confused but willing to learn quickly what the sword could do.

Twisting the hilt one-way opens a portal transporting the sword. The other way leaves it behind.

But not everyone who holds the sword listens.

Cilas left the sword behind for you to see how big the world is beyond the bars.

How much bigger could it be?



# *Chapter V*

*Resentment  
or  
Compassion?*



Come in.

I hope I'm not interrupting you two.



It's so nice to see you.



I was just telling Cilas how sorry I am for sending him to Kedesh.



If you wouldn't have left me there, we would've never met.

Aquilla, please right my wrong and stay by him. I know he'll stay by you.



I will. I give you my word.

I hold that promise close to my heart.



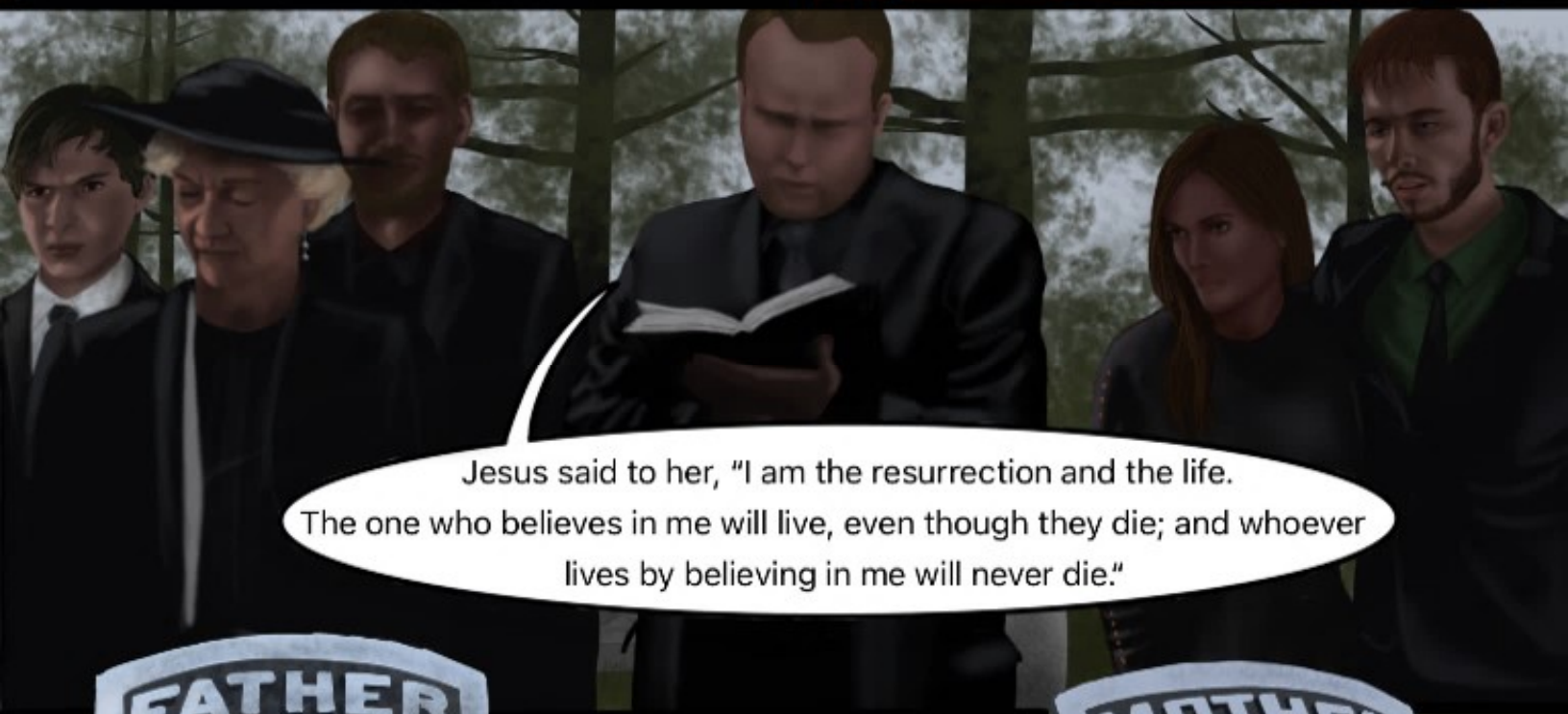
Don't forget the letters Cilas.  
Your father...we both truly...



I love  
you...



We'll miss  
you.



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."

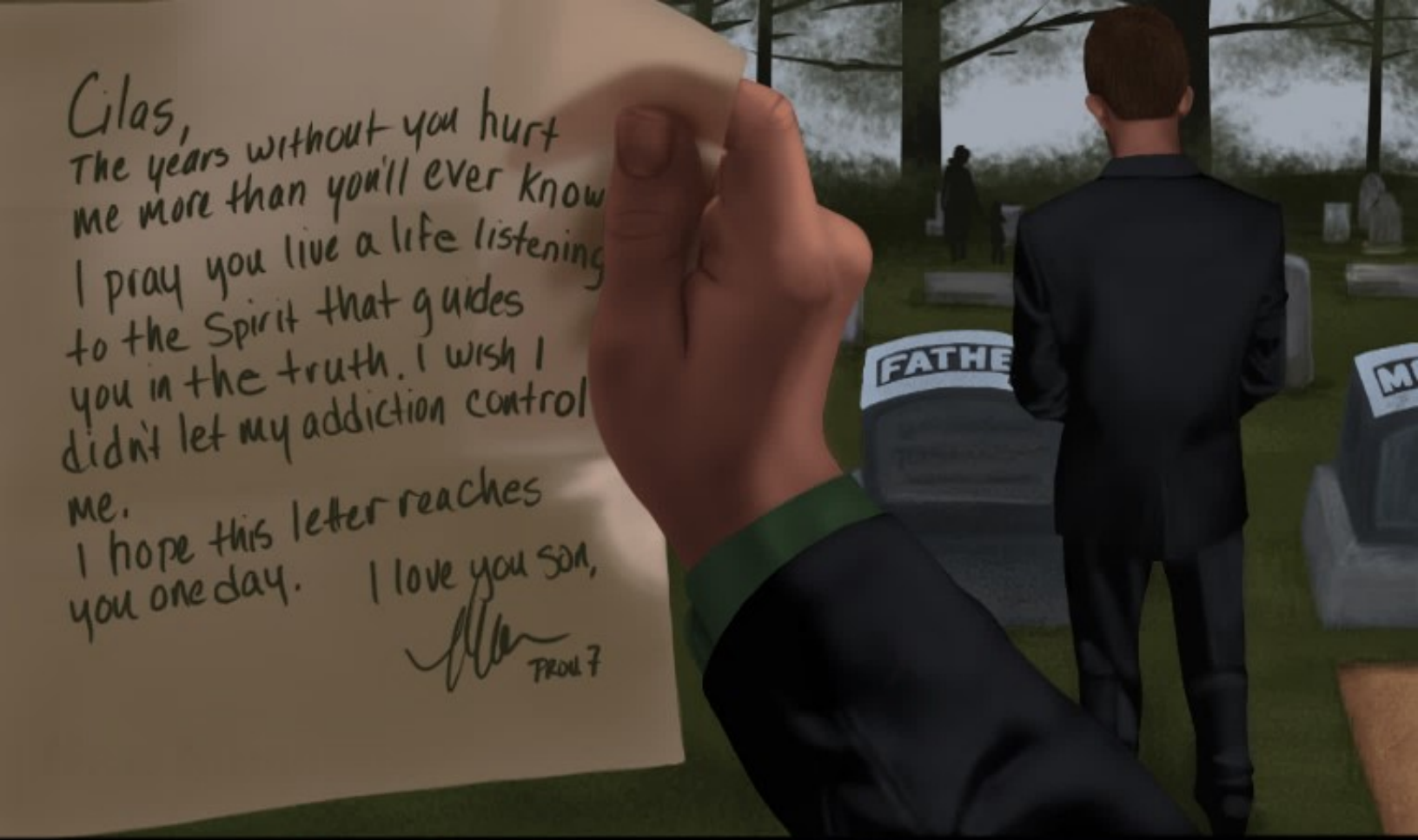






COMPASSION


RESENTMENT



Cilas,  
The years without you hurt  
me more than you'll ever know  
I pray you live a life listening  
to the Spirit that guides  
you in the truth. I wish I  
didn't let my addiction control  
me.

I hope this letter reaches  
you one day. I love you son,

*[Signature]*  
TRON 7



It took me so long to get here dad.  
I've gone through so much without you.

A son needs his father. I've asked God every day why you left  
me but I know it's for a reason. But how could you leave me?



You would have been so proud of me.

What mom told me you struggled with, I was able to conquer.



Isn't that every parent's hope for their child?

But I'll always have compassion for you dad.



I wish you could have met her. You would have been so happy for us. I hope to tell you all the memories one day.

Until then... dad, I love you so much.

At the window of my house  
I looked down through the lattice.  
I saw among the simple,  
I noticed among the young men,  
a youth who had no sense.  
He was going down the street near her corner,  
walking along in the direction of her house  
at twilight, as the day was fading,  
as the dark of night set in.

Then out came a woman to meet him,  
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.  
(She is unruly and defiant,  
her feet never stay at home;  
now in the street, now in the squares,  
at every corner she lurks.)  
She took hold of him and kissed him  
and with a brazen face she said:

“Today I fulfilled my vows,  
and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.  
So I came out to meet you;  
I looked for you and have found you!  
I have covered my bed  
with colored linens from Egypt.  
I have perfumed my bed  
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.  
Come, let’s drink deeply of love till morning;  
let’s enjoy ourselves with love!  
My husband is not at home;  
he has gone on a long journey.  
He took his purse filled with money  
and will not be home till full moon.”

With persuasive words she led him astray;  
she seduced him with her smooth talk.  
All at once he followed her  
like an ox going to the slaughter,  
like a deer stepping into a noose  
till an arrow pierces his liver,  
like a bird darting into a snare,  
little knowing it will cost him his life.