"Gorgeous artwork and a lovable heroine make Lightfall the series I wish I'd had as a kid."
—**FAITH ERIN HICKS**, *New York Times* bestselling and Eisner Award–winning creator

Book Two

LIGHTFALL

Shadow of the Bird



Tim Probert

Praise for *Lightfall: The Girl & the Galdurian*

★ "Thoroughly satisfying, with a cliffhanger ending that's sure to hook readers."
—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

★ "A fresh fantasy world."
—*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* (starred review)

"Cinematic, full-color artwork packed with inventive creatures and vivid landscapes."
—ALA *Booklist*

"A team that readers can root for."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Majestic artwork, a burgeoning friendship, and the promise of adventure keep the pages turning in this to-be-continued tale."
—*School Library Journal*



BOOK TWO

LIGHTFALL



SHADOW OF THE BIRD


Fall Off
Lealand
Waterfall Downs
Cuan Fields
Spine of Irpa
Gorse Hills
Rinn
Zuba Swamp
Fall Off
Kelby Bay
Aigann Ocean
Fallore Forest
Kilyaa River
Glasiwilt Mountains
Fodwyn Forest
Kilpi
Faorise Lake
Tide Plains
Fall Off
North
West
East
South

The Known Lands of Irpa

Referred to as The Sea of Light

FALL OFF

HINTERLANDS

LODBAY

REIFE

RYGGAN MOUNTAINS

THE GENFOR SEA

TARIAN

BIANNEN HILLS

BLOODY SHORES

FALL OFF

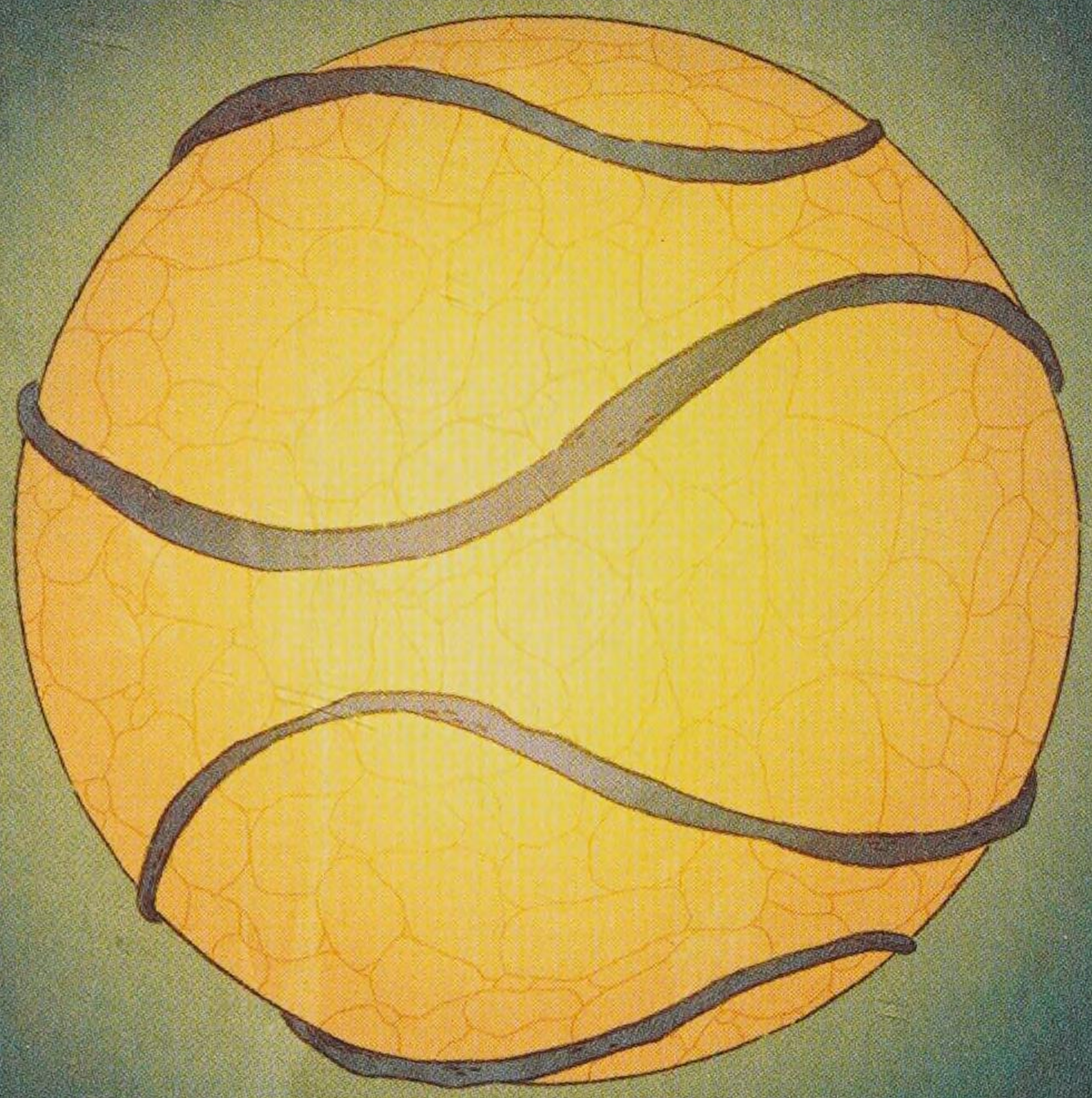
BAIHLE

LAKE PERRIN

SEA OF LONGING

PELLYDIR

RUBY STEPPES



You know, Hobbes, some days even my lucky rocketship underpants don't help.

—Bill Watterson









Book Two

LIGHTFALL

Shadow of the Bird



Tim Probert

HARPER alley

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

One more story. Which would you like to hear?

Hm.

Tell me about the Bird and the Sun.

Oh ho, again? Okay then.

Long ago there was a sun hovering above Irpa, high in the sky, making everything warm and bright.

Things were peaceful,
but then something appeared.
A bird—Kest Ke Belenus.

Kest was jealous of the
love people had for the sun.

So he devoured it,
plunging the entire world
into empty darkness.

But the heroic
Galdurians rose up
and defeated Kest.

They rescued the sun's Flame
from him and created the Lights
that hover above Irpa today.

What if the
Bird comes
back?

Well, that would be very bad!
But don't worry, little bumblebee, your
ol' gramps won't let that happen.

Besides, you've got your
magic lantern, so you'll never
be in the dark . . .

Isn't that
right, Bea?

. . . Bea?

?!

Where'd you go?

Sorry. I drifted off a bit.

I was just saying I had no idea there was an Arsai village behind this waterfall. And so close to Lealand! I must've walked past it dozens of times.

There are several.

They are hidden.

Mph–umph–grumph.

I could see myself settling down in a place like this one day when I'm gray and wrinkled.

You are gray.

You're right! What's our next move?

It is beautiful here.

I'd love to stay, but we have to find Gramps.

Or I do anyway.

Everything's gone sideways. The Feather Knights took the Jar, which Kipp said is actually a piece of the sun—which is **insane**—and we still don't know where Gramps is or even where to start.

Here.

Hi there, friend.

POP!

You're here! I saw you in Lealand.

You made that lightning. You saved us.

Didn't make. Asked the storm for help.

I missed it. I was unconscious.

This way.

Shall we?

Nice rock.

Don't worry.
Not deep.

So pretty.
It's like bone.

Sit.

Much happens throughout Irpa and much to happen still.

Nimm! Don't!

Sorry.

Only water. The furred one may drink.

The Restless Sleeper has awoken.

The Restless Sleeper is Kest, right? The Bird?

Yes. It has the Flame. Its power grows. The Bird goes to Lealand and will take the Flame within the Light. Then the Flames within all the Lights.

How do you know this?

It has been seen and told by Irpa.

Irpa? Like the planet?

Yes.

You talk to it?

Yes.

How?

This . . .

. . . is a bone of Irpa.

Wow. Okay, I **really** want to know more about that.

Sure, but let's stay on topic.

What is that flame in the jar? Why does Kest want it?

It is from the sun first. Then from the fallen Light.

So Kipp was telling the truth.

Darkness will soon befall the Sea of Light.

No it won't. I will stop Kest.

No.

Oh, **yes** I will! The Galdurians defeated him once. I'll do it again.

There is a message from the wizard.

GRAMPS?! Is he here?!

Was here.
Healed your wounds.
Went back to
Lealand.

Went back . . .
Without me?
Why?

The wizard asks you
to complete his quest.

Dear Beatrice,

I'm sorry to keep leaving you notes, but I couldn't wait for you to wake. There's too much to tell you here, so I will keep it short.

Watching over the Restless Sleeper was my task and I failed. The Jar of Endless Flame is on its way to him, and his power will grow once he has it.

I'm going to Lealand to warn the mara and evacuate the city before Kest arrives.

You must NOT follow me. Seriously this time.

Kest is too powerful for us to stop. My plan was to find Lorgon, the Lord of Waters, and ask for his help. My research says his realm is underground along the Lost River. You must be lost to find the river, then follow the fireflies once you are there. If anyone will know what to do, I believe it is Lorgon. Call it a hunch.

I need you to do this for me. Find Lorgon for the sake of us all.

Promise to see you again.

Love,
Gramps

PS- Say hello to the Galdurian for me!
He seems oddly familiar.

Lorgon . . . like the Spirit?
As in, one of the ancient beings
that created all of Irpa?

Yes.

How?!
Nobody's ever seen
a Spirit. And we're supposed
to find one and ask it for help?!
They might not be around
anymore. Or they might
not even be real!

They said the same thing about
Galdurians, to be fair. But even still,
I don't think searching for Lorgon
is the answer.

We **know** Kest is going to Lealand, so that's where **we** should go. The help of a Spirit is well and good, but we can stop this here and now.

?

Bea, are you coming?

It's okay if you stay, but I've made up my mind.

I'm gonna go to Lealand.

I...
I—

I need some air!!

Air?

We're outside.

What do I do?

This is all just too much. It's all jumbled.

I just need a moment.

Just gotta clear my head.

We almost **died**! And we're gonna go right back there?! To do it **again**?!

We've gone through so much already and where has it gotten us . . . ?

MROWR

I lost a piece of the sun to the worst possible being in the world!

Who knows what I'll mess up next.

But it could be worse if we don't go to Lealand. Something terrible could happen.

MROWR

I wish we'd learned more about the Jar. Or found Gramps sooner.

MROR

Cad doesn't understand and I don't know how to explain it.

MRORRW

I mean, he was barely even listening to what Gramps wrote! All he could talk about was fighting the Bird.

Gramps wants us to find Lorgon, but Cad doesn't want to. I can't find him alone, can I?

Yawwwn

And I can't convince Cad to come because I don't want to do it . . . not really.

Cad knows what he wants. That's so much easier.

MRRRRR

Or is it? I dunno.

MROOROWRRRR

Right . . . ?

Finding a Spirit would be amazing, actually.

MRW

PURRRRR

But does it even matter anyway? Gramps might be in danger.

Though what could I possibly do to help him?

Maybe that's just an excuse not to go back there.

I just want to find Gramps.

I want to go home.

I want this all to go away.

I want to disappear.

I want to start over.

You think I'm a coward, don't you, Nimm?







These choices all feel bad.

But you know what?

PURRRRRRRR

Talking to you kinda helped.

MROWWWRRRR

Thanks for listening, Nimm.

MROW

I think I know what to do!

Maybe. At least I know what I'm **going** to do.

MROWR!

Let's go, Nimm!

Hey!

You're right. Lealand is in danger and so is Gramps. That's where we should go.

All right, Lealand! Reinforcements are on the way!

Once we get Gramps we can figure out all this Lorgon stuff.

Thank you for your generosity and hospitality, little friends.

This will not go well.

It will not.

But I will help.

You want to come with us?

Yes.

The party grows! What are we waiting for? Let's find a pig and stop a bird.

Say . . .

What's your name, anyway?

Name?

Yeah. I'm Cad, this is Bea. That's Nimm. We never got your name.

Don't have names. Not really.

Well, that won't do. You want one?

SCHWWIPP

Ralph. Lizard. Crow. Grass. Dig, Cad Jr., Gil, Mouse, Fern—

Is there something you really like? You could go with that.

Perhaps.

Not really. Will think about it.

Take your time!

What do you think they'll call **me**?

:MRP:

What do you mean?

After I slay Kest! I'll be the greatest hero of the age. I'll need some catchy name for all the songs and things.

Like Cad the Great?

Yeah, but more exciting than that. Cadwallader the Conqueror!

That's a mouthful.

Yeah, and the tone isn't quite right. But I like the alliteration.

Cad the Courageous.

I like that!

Or how about–

?!

What's wrong?

Look.

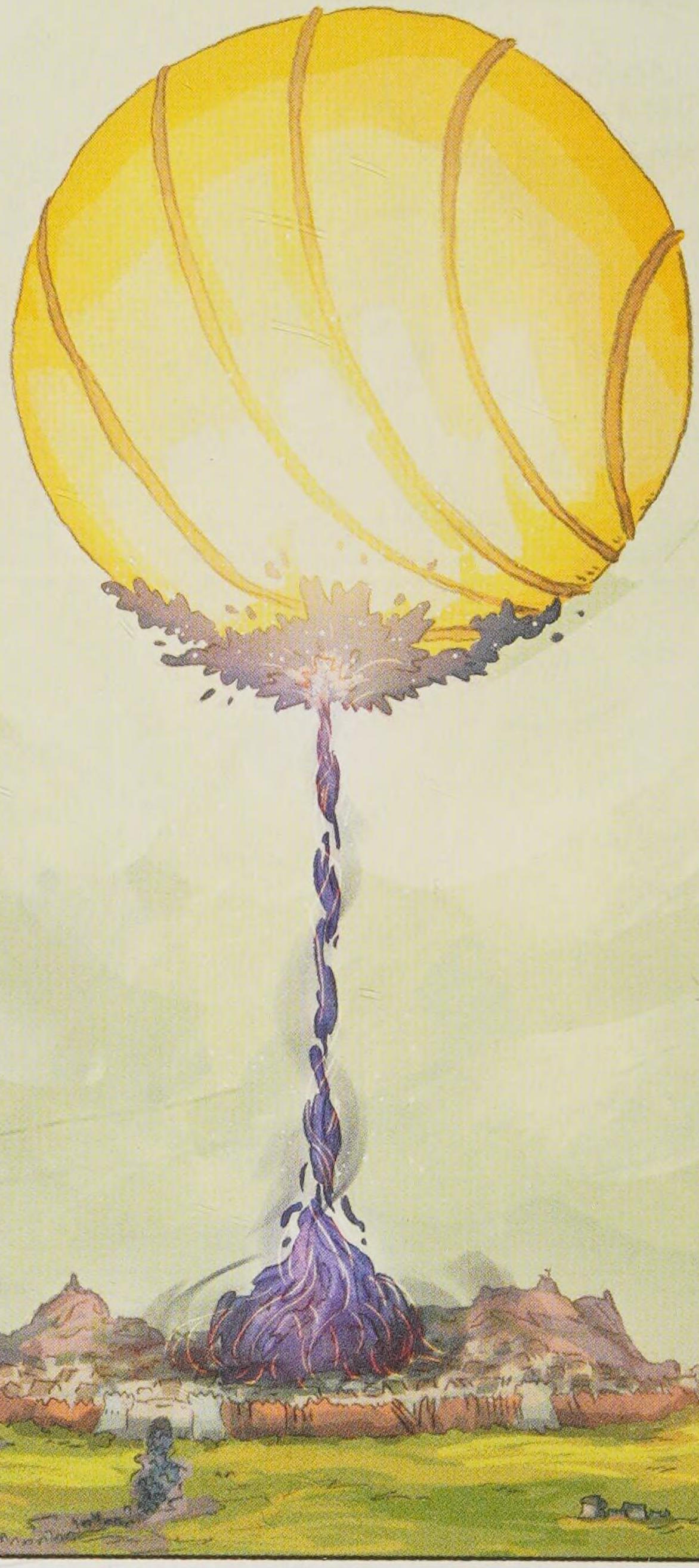
The city.

Something's happening.

It is too late.

No! There's still time!

WHUUUSH!















How . . . ?

Kest.

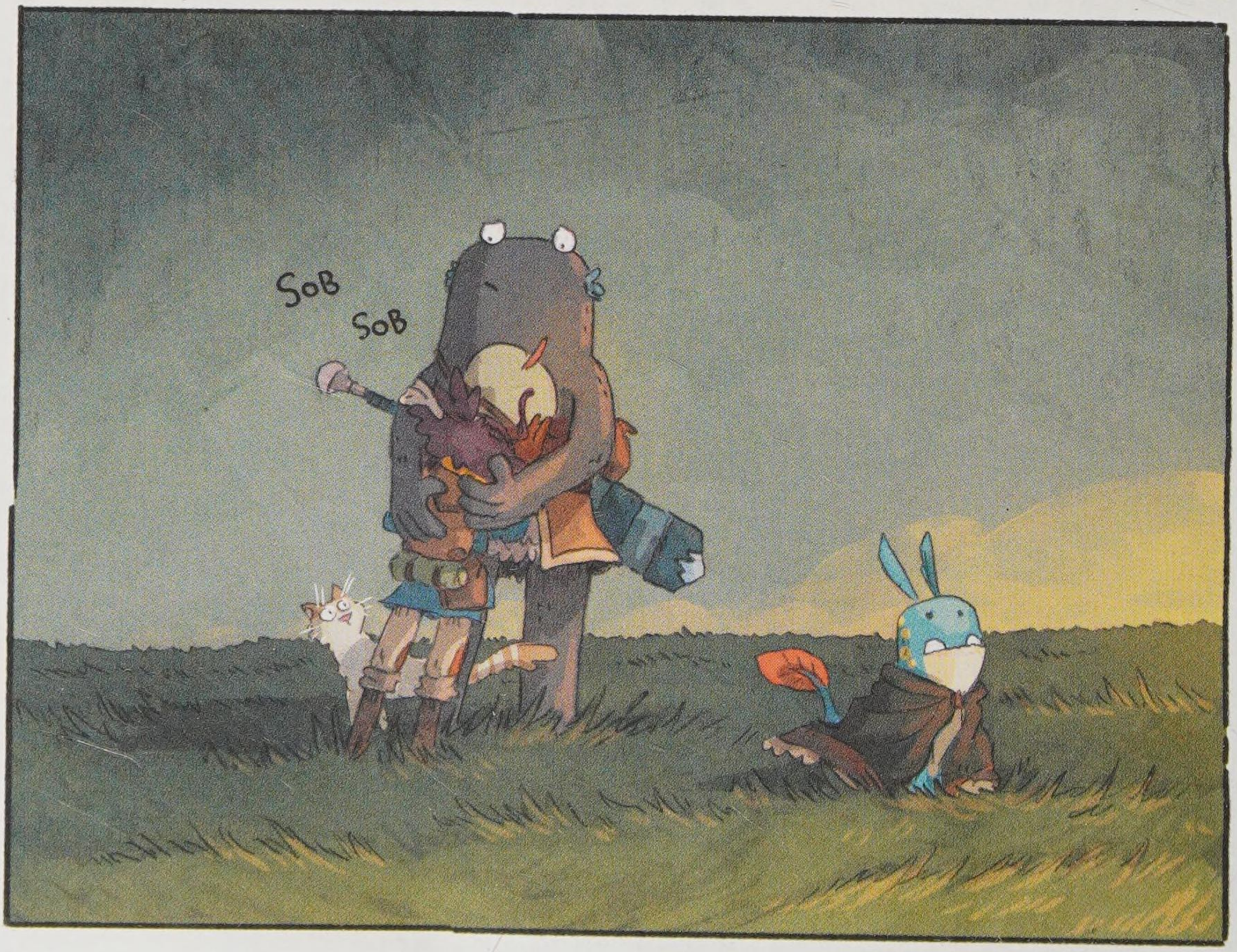
He just . . .
He didn't . . .

Somehow . . .

He did.




Gramps.


SoB
SoB

Cad, the world's going to end.

NO! No, it's not.

Kest won't leave that city.

Mark my words.

I'm with you . . .

Till the very end.

Look out!!

Run!!

Move!

Somebody help!

Did you hear that?

That sounds like a kid!

We're coming!!

Hang on!

KAROARRR!!

Holy crabapples!

FLASH!

You're okay!

Run! GO!

KRAAAOR

WOOOF!!

SH

What **was** that?

A shadow of a thing.

Pure darkness.

These used to hunt us. After the sun, before the Lights. But this one won't be hunting any time soon.

Uh—Cad? Look!

SHKLOOOOOOP!!

SKREEE

RUN!!

Go, go, go!!

Whoa!

CLASH!!

CRASH!

KA-KLANG!!

KRAOR!!

End of the line, beast!

THWUMP!

BUNGA?!

Make yerselfs useful— stab the glowy bit!!

SHUNK!!!

KA-POOOOSH!!!

The Bird— where is he?

Heading toward the city center.

THWUNK!!!

Think he went into the Light— **Look out!!**

Thanks, Bunga.

You're going **INTO** the city?! You'll never make it out alive!

We'll see.

Beatrice?!

Gramps?

You're alive!!

MROW!

For now, at least.

What are you and the Galdurian doing here? Didn't you get my note?

I'm sorry. We thought we could help.

That was very brave. But you shouldn't be here! We're holding the gate while the last of the survivors clear out— You need to go too!

Mr. Wizard. I—I can't believe it's you. I'm sorry, but I'm going after Kest.

Madness!!

Look at what he did! His power is unimaginable.

You can't defeat him on your own. You need **help**.

There isn't time! I won't let him destroy another Light!

Bea, we found your grandfather. You should go with him.

CLANG!

KRAOOOR!!

KLASH!!

We can't hold out any longer! It's time to book it!

Bea! Let's go!

Gramps . . . Cad's my friend. I can't let him go alone.

Oh ho.

Oh . . . I won't . . . I won't stop you.

MROWR

Bea,
I am so sorry
for all this.

I'll come find you.
I promise.

I haven't a doubt.
Convince the Galdurian
to find Lorgon. It's our
best hope.

MROW

I love you,
bumblebee.

Retreat to Rinn,
everyone! Retreat!!

CAD!!
Wait up!

What are you doing?!

I told you–

I'm with you till the end.

That bird doesn't stand a chance.

SKREEEE!!

SKLASHHH!!

HNGH!

UNGH!

Look, Bea!

The center of the Light!

That's our way in!

Drat!!

Looks like we have to fight our way through.

I will help.


SNAP
KRAK!
WOOOOSH!!

GO.


It's . . . warm?
We're near the heart of the Light.

There it is up ahead.

He's here.

STOP!!

KA-A-SHOOM!

We're too late. We have to go.

We need help. We **have** to find Lorgon.

BIRD!

WAIT!

VOOOOOOSH!!

GAH!

KARUSH

CRACK!!!

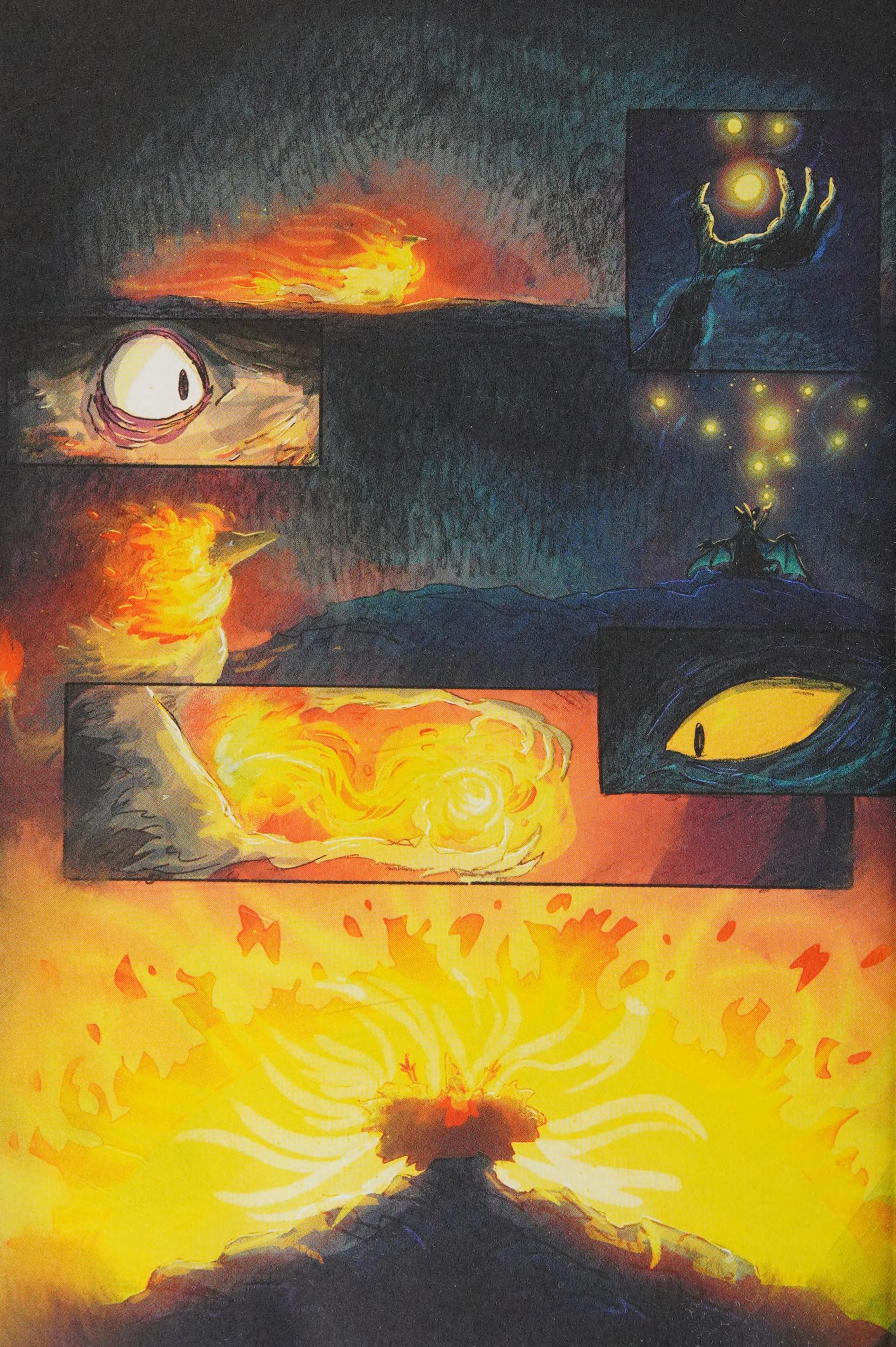
CAD!!

Stay back!

Stay . . .

. . . back.



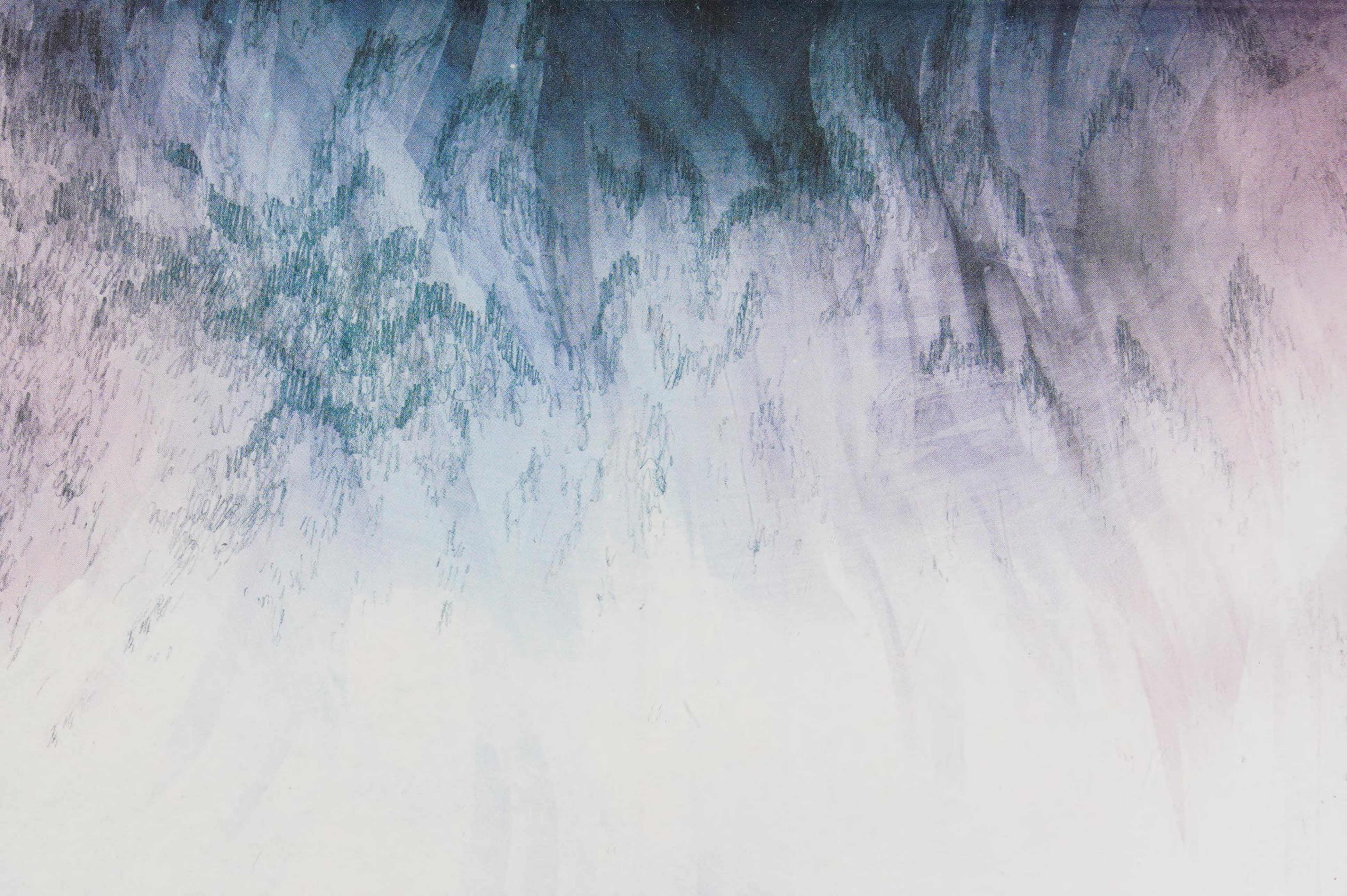


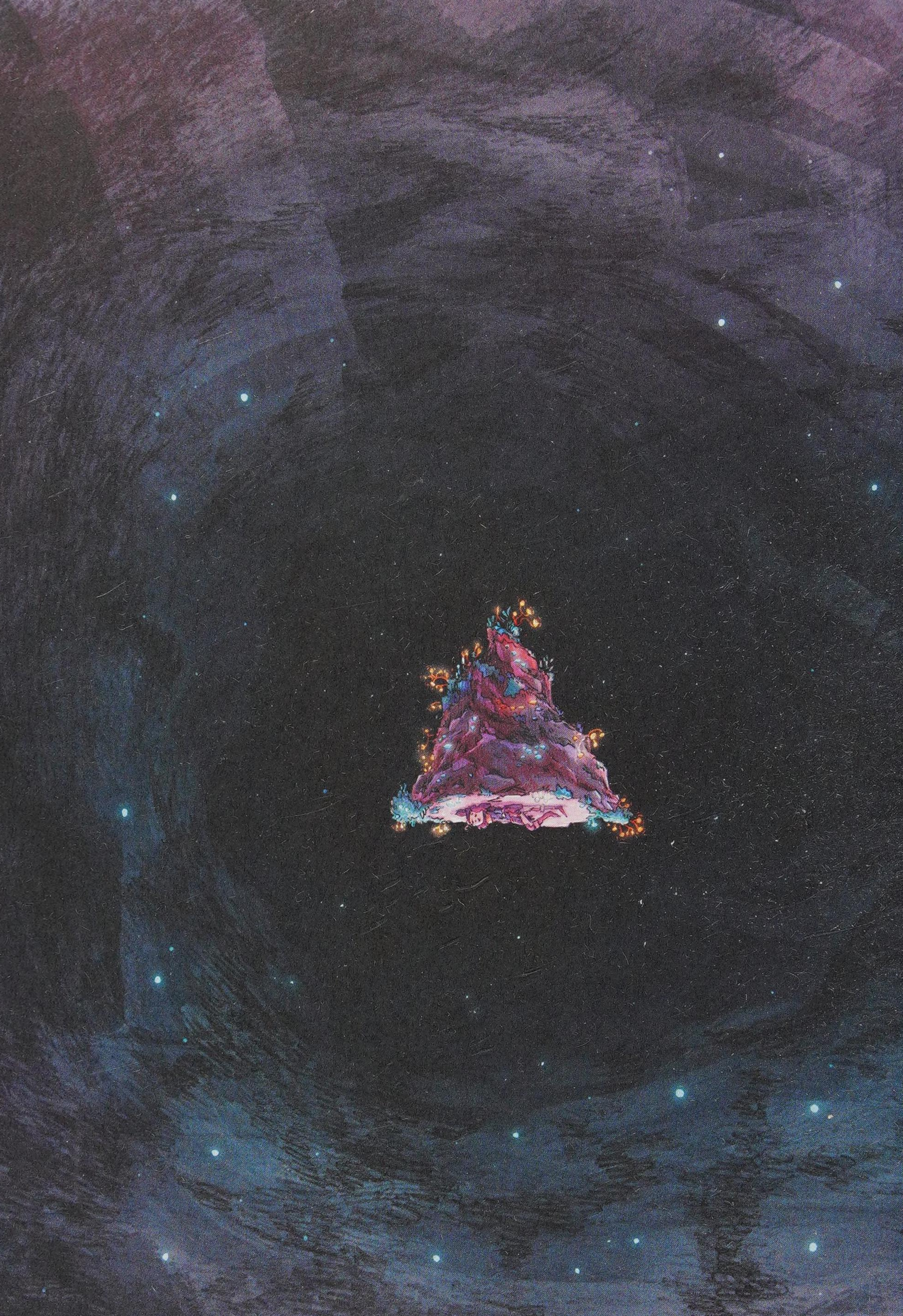


MMORPG

GASP

ZAROOOOOSH!!





Stars?

That isn't possible.

Oh . . . They're mushrooms.

!

BRRR

MROWRR

Nimm! Thank goodness you're okay.

MOW

CAD! CAAAD!! WHERE ARE YOU?!

Ca–

Oh no.

Hang on!
I'm coming!

GOTCHA!!

HNH!!

Are you okay?!

Maybe.

Are we dead?

WHAT?!

No.

I mean, I don't **think** so.

Never mind. I feel plenty alive.

Where'd everyone go?

Where did **we** go?

CRAACK

CRAAACK

Uh-oh.

Jump!

To **where**?!

Look out for the water!

UHNF!

You almost rolled right in there.

SPLOSH

SPLUSH

You don't look so good.

Are you all right?

It's nothing. It's just . . . It's just really cold in here.

I hope everyone got away safely.

They've got your grandfather and Bunga watching their backs. They'll be fine.

Yeah.

But Kest has **another** Flame.

He's unstoppable.

We'll have none of that defeatist talk! **Nothing** is impossible. We just need a new plan.

So, what should that plan be?

Lorgon.

Oh right! Your grandfather's quest. Find a Spirit to fight a demon. Let's do it.

Demon . . .

Bea . . . Are you sure you're just cold?

A lot has happened. It's okay if you need to take a moment.

No.

No more wasting time. I'm fine.

Fair enough! First step, we find the Lost River.

I think this is it.

What?!

Gramps said it's underground, and you have to be lost to find it. We're underground and very lost. And this **is** a river.

It's just a gut feeling, really.

Maybe our Arsai friend sent us here.

That little guy is full of surprises.

Can you pick which way to go? I can't possibly make any more decisions right now.

Hm.

Let's see.

As long as we're going with gut feelings, I say we follow the current of this river.

Follow the current it is.

How's all this stuff floating, anyway?

I have so many questions, Cad. So many.


YEEK!

Everyone halt!

Never mind. I thought I heard something.

Perhaps we can try across the river.

Maybe they didn't make it out.

TCH TCH TCH

TCH TCH TCH

Ever the optimist, Fillog. Wait—

TCH

This way!!

AAAAAAAAAAAWWW

YAH!

AAAAAAAAAAWW

Listen! Do you hear that?

BWWAAAAHHHH...

Oh ho, I do!

AHHHH

Finally, some good luck.

BWAAAHHH

They're riders!

BWAAAAAAAAHHHH

Greetings. I am Karru, the mara of Rinn.

We picked up other survivors from Lealand.

They said more were coming. We've been searching.

Aye, that's us.

No more?

Sorry to disappoint. We're the last.

We held the city as best we could. But there was no chance.

With our Light gone, shadowy creatures chased us down.

They only stopped when we reached the edge of your Light.

But we must not linger! The Bird will surely come here next.

The Bird . . .

Here.

. . . We must get you all back to Rinn.

YOINK!

Snore!!

BOISENBERRY & SNORE'S EXOTIC FRUIT EMPORIUM

This new business will never take off if you continue to eat the product!

I didn't! At least, I don't think I did.

He he he

The mara has returned!

The scouts found so few.

What happened to Lealand?

Are we next?

Hieri, please get these folks some warm food and comfortable beds.

Yes, Mara.

Madame Bunga, will you join me at the citadel?

Certainly.

Will you join as well?

Me? Indeed, oh ho!

Bunga and a bearded pig, eh? Fancy that.

Trouble must be on the way.

Best to keep abreast of what's going on!

Your name is Alfirid, correct?

Oh ho, my reputation precedes me!

You don't remember me, do you?

I'm afraid not. But don't take it personally. I don't remember much.

My father was Luth, the previous mara of Rinn. He considered you a friend.

Luth . . . ? Oh ho, **of course**! Karru! You were knee-high last time I saw you.

That was some time ago. But I am glad you're here now.

I'll gladly take all the guidance I can find during these troubling times.

From both you and Madame Bunga.

Sure, but just "Bunga" will do fine.

Impossible!!

Absurd nonsense!

It's absolute rubbish!

Regretfully, it is all true, as much as it pains me to say.

Kest Ke Belenus has awoken.

The Bird is a **myth**! And even if he **was** real, legend says that he was destroyed hundreds of years ago.

Defeated, but not **destroyed**. And then put into a magical slumber.

Why spare such a creature?

I do not know.

How did he awaken?

I do not know that either. But it does not matter. All that matters is that he is now awake and wants to destroy every Light of Irpa.

Heh Heh Heh

Tell us, Pig Wizard . . . How is it that you know so much about this bird?

Because I'm the one who found him.

In my youth, I set out on a quest to find a way to revive the sun.



My first discovery was the Lost Flame from the Light of Tarian. A critical step in the right direction . . .



But my next discovery changed everything.

I found Kest, asleep in a crystal cage.



I realized that reviving the sun would mean nothing if Kest were to escape.

So I appointed myself as guardian of both the Flame and the slumbering bird.

Where is the Flame of Tarian now?

Kest has it. It surely gave him the strength to destroy the Light of Lealand.

Sounds like you didn't do a very good job at **either** of your tasks.

I didn't.

I am an old fool who has made many mistakes.

Mara, are we supposed to believe such wild words from this stranger?!

Pardon me, sir. But you **should**.

You **all** should. I saw the Bird take down our Light right before my eyes.

Lealand's mara chose not to listen, and now he's **gone**. Crushed under our broken Light, and our city overtaken by shadows.

Well, that's no good.

Alfirid was a friend of my father's. He is not a stranger.

My father trusted his counsel and I will too.

Alfirid, what woud you suggest we do?

My plan was to request the help of the Spirit Lorgon.

But my granddaughter and her friend, a Galdurian, are going in my stead.

Spirits and Galdurians! Praise Irpa, the pig is mad!

We need to find the **true cause** of what's happening!

We can't sit around waiting for some imaginary friend to save us!

I know he was a family friend, but I do think it wise to take what the wizard says with a grain of salt.

Oh ho!

Are those dewberry cakes?!

Don't mind if I "dew."

That's my cue to go.

Hello.

I didn't take anything, I swear!

Strange.

GAH!!

Where'd you come from?!

Wait, I know you. I saw you in Lealand.

You're friends with the frog and the girl.

Friends?
Yes, perhaps.

But you—
Whatever, it
doesn't matter.

Where are
they?

Unsure.

Fancy that.

Welp.

Good seeing you.

Need help.

With what?

Saving Irpa.

Ambitious!
Good luck.

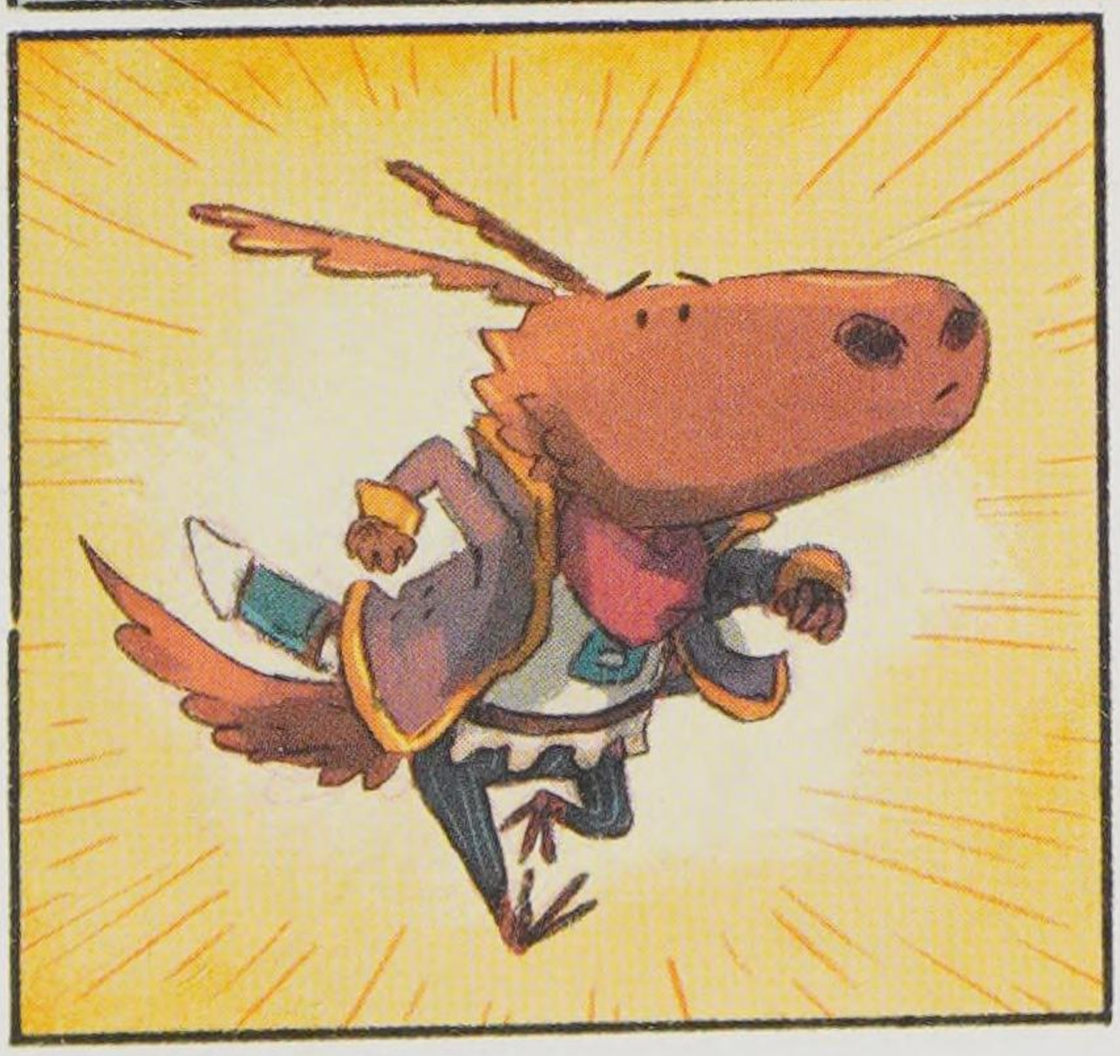
Will you help?

ME?!

No.
No no no.
That's not really
my kinda thing.

I'm getting as
far away from all
this as possible.

Far away.
Yes.








Look.
This place is about to go under.
Murderous demons and shadow monsters and all sorts of unsavory things I'd really like to avoid will be here in a matter of time.
But your lightning trick in Lealand bought me time to escape, so I owe you one.
Rogue's honor and all . . .

Not a trick. Asked the storm for help.

Huh. How 'bout that.

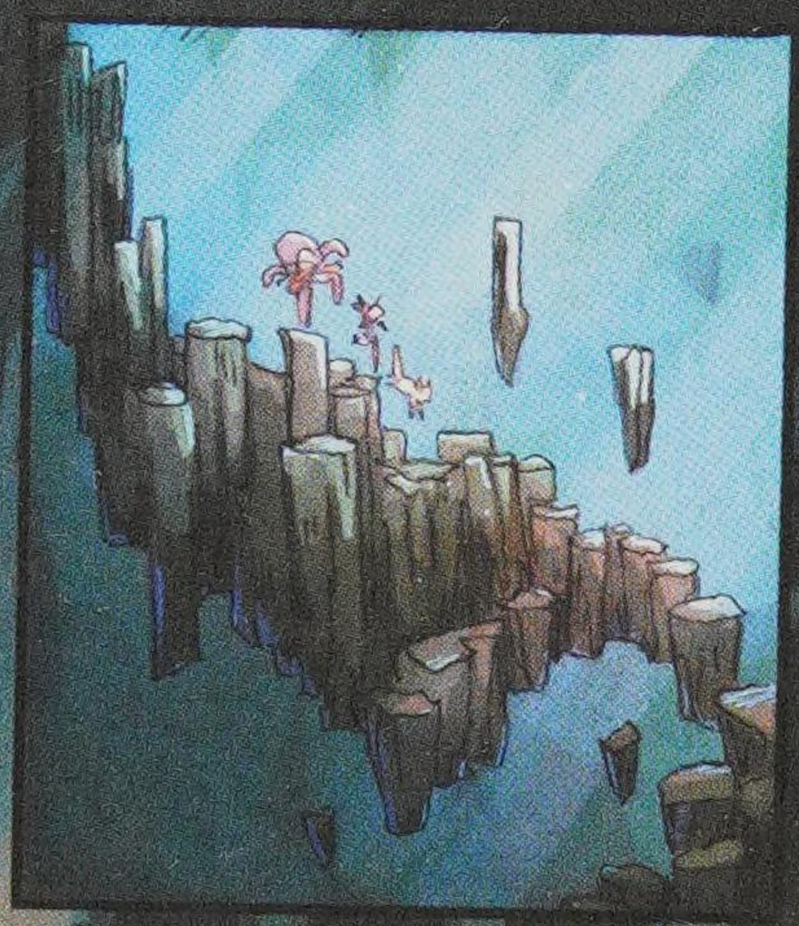
Okay.

Tell me what you need and I'll see what I can do.

Preferably something that doesn't involve all the terrible things on their way.

First, a boat.

I can work with that.





None of these buildings look the same. Were they all built down here?

I don't think so. That's Crogaen architecture and that's Surund.

I've seen drawings of buildings like this in Gramps's books. Those civilizations were gone even before the sun disappeared.

And what is this strange goo everywhere?

Don't touch—

—it!!

SHLURRP

SHLWARRP!!

GAH!

You were right, don't touch it!

SHIS

What're you—?

Ugh. It's clinging to me.

HISSS

Water! We need water!

Hold on!

SPLASH!!

SHWOOOP

Gimme your hand!!

HEAVE!

Quick thinking! How'd you know that would work?

I didn't.

But I didn't see any of that stuff in the water, so I just guessed.

Does it hurt?

Nah. Nope. It's fine.

Sorry about your cloak.

It's okay.

But seriously, what on Irpa **is** that stuff?

Nothing good, that's for sure.

We should keep moving.

Agreed.

You need anything? I'm sure you can find it down here.

This stuff might belong to someone.

If it did, I'm sure they're long gone.

It could all be cursed or something.

Cursed shmursed! I'm sure it's fine.

WHA!!

Watch your step.

Huh.

A shield . . .

It's pretty.

And so light!

WHOOOSH

And nearly indestructible.

That's **Galdurian**.

No way!!

It is!

Here.
You should
have it.

No, no.
I don't **need** a shield.
It'll just mess with my
finely honed sword flow.
You keep it.

Are you
sure?

Yes! And together
we shall wield the **sword**
and **shield** of **Galduria**
as protectors of Irpa!!

Okay!

Besides, I spent
all that time learning to
blacksmith in Baihle so I could
make the world's greatest
Galdurian sword.

You **made**
your sword?

I sure did!

What the—?

What? I really did.

No, I . . . I felt like something was watching us.

I wouldn't worry. I'm pretty sure we're the only living things down here.

Yeah. You're probably right.

So . . . back to your sword . . .

How long did it take to make?

Not long. My teacher said I was the best student she ever had.

Wow.

Actually, that might not be entirely true. Maybe I drove her into early retirement. Who's to say?

But I did make this sword, and it'll never leave my side. It has seen me through many perilous situations.

Scrit Scrat

Did you hear that?

Eh?

No. I didn't hear anything.

Are you just tired of my stories?

No.

Tell me more about Baihle. How long did you live there?

Maybe ten years? It's a big place. Always a lot going on.

I didn't really like it very much.

Why not?

It was crowded but lonely. It didn't feel like home.

Hey, don't let me bring you down. **You** might love it there!

No. I just realized . . .

My home . . . It's gone. It's so far off in the dark. I can't ever go back.

I'm sorry, Bea.

It's stupid to get upset about it with everything that's happening. I just hadn't thought about it.

It's not stupid. It's important to have a home. To have somewhere you belong. I understand.

Oh, Cad. Your home. I didn't mean . . .

It's okay.

C'mon! After our stunning victory, we can find ourselves some **new** homes. Or even get our **old** ones back.

Just one more reason to defeat that **evil** bird.

Do you really think Kest is evil?

He destroyed the sun. That qualifies as evil in my book.

Why would he do that? I just don't understand.

Bad things happen, and sometimes there's no explanation for them. If there's anything I've learned, it's that.

But that bird almost destroyed the entire world five hundred years ago. I might not be able to change that, but the least I can do is try and save what's left.

Cad . . .
He spoke to me.
Or showed me something.
I don't know how to describe it.

WHAT?!
You're just telling me this **now**?!

I guess I still don't really know what it was. Or how to explain it.

Try me.

He . . . looked at me.

And I was in his head. Or he was in mine . . . ? It was all a jumble. There were stars, water, plants. The sun, I think.

And feelings. Anger, pain, sadness, worry, fear. Regret. It was a lot of things, but it didn't feel **evil**.

They were all feelings **I've** felt before.

Bea, why didn't you tell me?

I don't know.

I . . . just . . .

No way!!

Hey!
You're not getting out of talking to me about this that easily!

But look—
there!

Fireflies!!

We must be getting close!!

How 'bout that. Honestly, I didn't think we'd ever find them.

What did you think?

HRMPH

We'd wander here until we starved to death.

That's comforting.

HRMPH

HRMPH!

HISSSS

!

!

AROOOOO!

KLUMP!!

Is that–

A dragon!

It needs help!

Bea rushing headlong into danger? Before **me**?!

I like it.

FWIP!

It's stuck in that awful goop.

Here, let me give it a shot!

HRMM

SHLUUURRRRPPPPrr

It's no use!

What if we both try?

Great idea, let's rip this blanket in half.

I'll get this side if you get over there.

=MROWR=

Ugh. This stuff comes back as soon as you scrape it off.

Don't worry. We're gonna get you outta here.

Uh, Cad.

This dragon is ours.
It must stay. You must leave it.
We will keep it.

Ours.

Leave it.

Ours.

Ours.

Keep going.
I'll take care of
these creeps.

GRRAAAWRR!!

Back off!

SHLURRP

NO!

Stop. It is ours.

You will all be ours.

KA-THUNK

YAH!

Did you see that?!

I'm a little preoccupied. We're going to need more water.

Wait.
That's it!

We have to get it in the water!

Right!
I'm coming back.

C'mon, buddy, try and stand!

No no no...

YAH!

HISSSS

!!

AIEE-

BEA!

HELP!

SHLURP

Hang on, Bea!!

You must stay.

I'm coming!

Stay.

Ours.

Ours.

Ours.

C'mon, Nimm!

We're going for a–

SWIM!

YARGH!!

Hang on, Nimm!

SPLASH!

WAHOO!!

Over there . . . !

The door with the fireflies. **That's** where we need to go.

SPLASH

SPLUSH





What're you **doing**?! Get in the shadows!

You're going to get us caught.

Caught?

Yes, caught. Found out. Spotted. Thrown in the dungeon.

Someone's coming— Quick!

A complete evacuation this quickly?! While the mara rushes off to chase a myth, no less.

I suppose if we must leave, we may as well leave before the masses bottleneck our harbor.

You speak more sense than the lot of them.

Sounds like trouble's on the way. We better be quick.

This will do. Get on!

This isn't your boat.

Just get in.

'EY!!! That ain't your boat!

It's not.

We'll return it. Not to worry!

THIEVES!!

We are.

It's all a matter of perspective.

Mara.

A moment, if you will.

Are you sure about this plan?

Adeline, please.

Getting the entire city onto boats?! We are unprepared for such an evacuation. We need more time.

And time is what I am going to give you.

But we also need our leader.

This city is not a fortress built for defense. We are a people of the sea. And the sea is how we will save our people.

Take the ships on our trade route—the Kilyaa River to Baihle. That's our best hope for safety.









Scouts!

We ride into the unknown, toward whatever destroyed Lealand. Our job is to slow this evil down, to buy more time for our people to escape.

Wait!

We're coming!

Surely you wouldn't turn down the help of a wizard, would you? Besides, I can't stand boats.

So be it.

We go north!






There.


Okay,
I got you here.
We're even.

Looks like a place full of traps and treasure.

Likely.

Lots of treasure?

Perhaps.

Hm.

At least there's a view.

Maybe I'll just poke my head in. Make sure you're safe and all.

Yes.

>Huff, huff!< Better be some good stuff in there.

What did you say you needed?

Ya know, you could be a little more forthcoming with information!

Well, well, well.

Ain't this something! All this stuff, just sitting here right outside the city. It's almost too good to be true!

Hey, where'd you go?

CHIK CHIK CHIK

Of course.

Ugh.
That was
a lot.

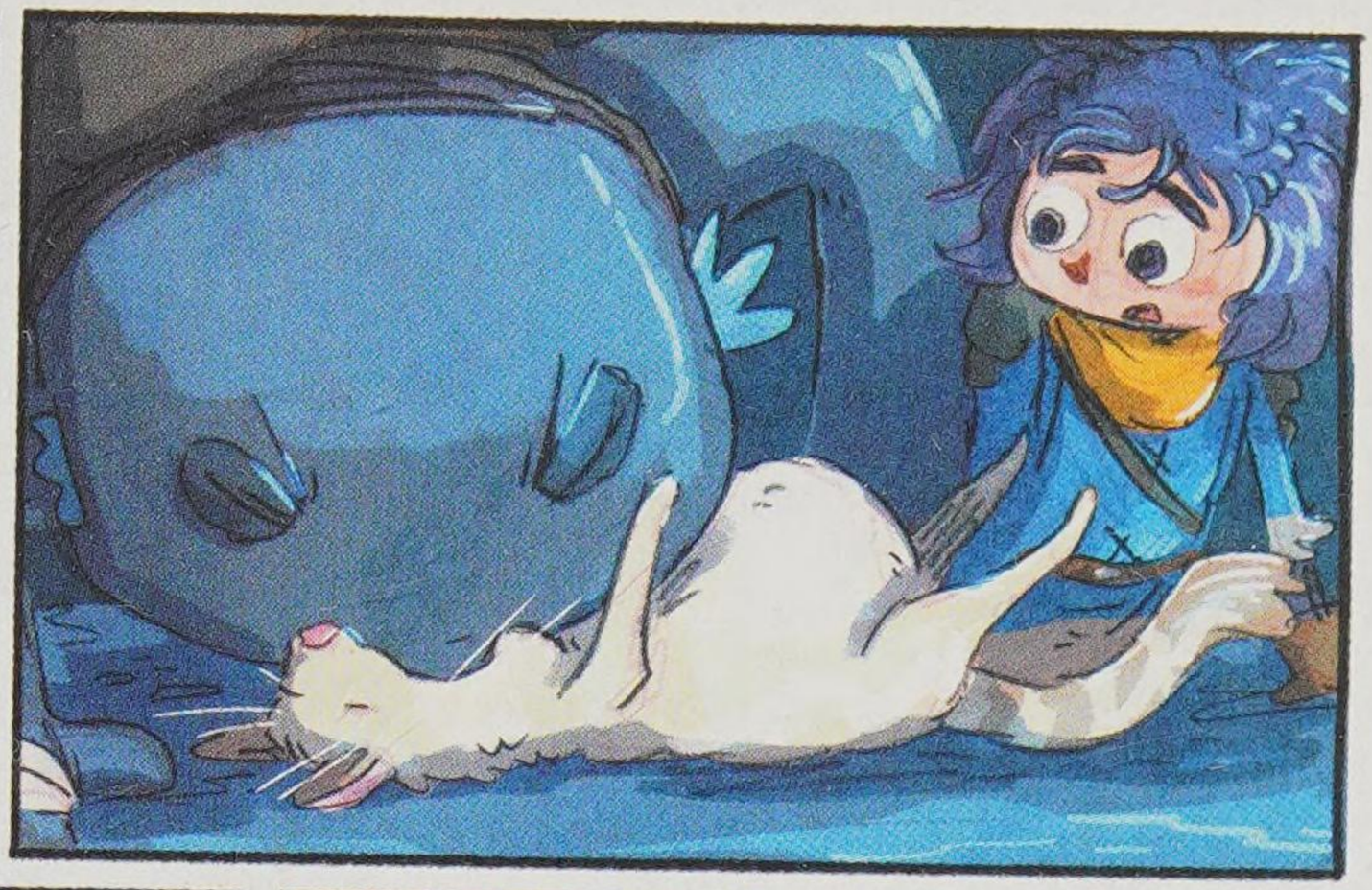
Oh no.

NIMM!

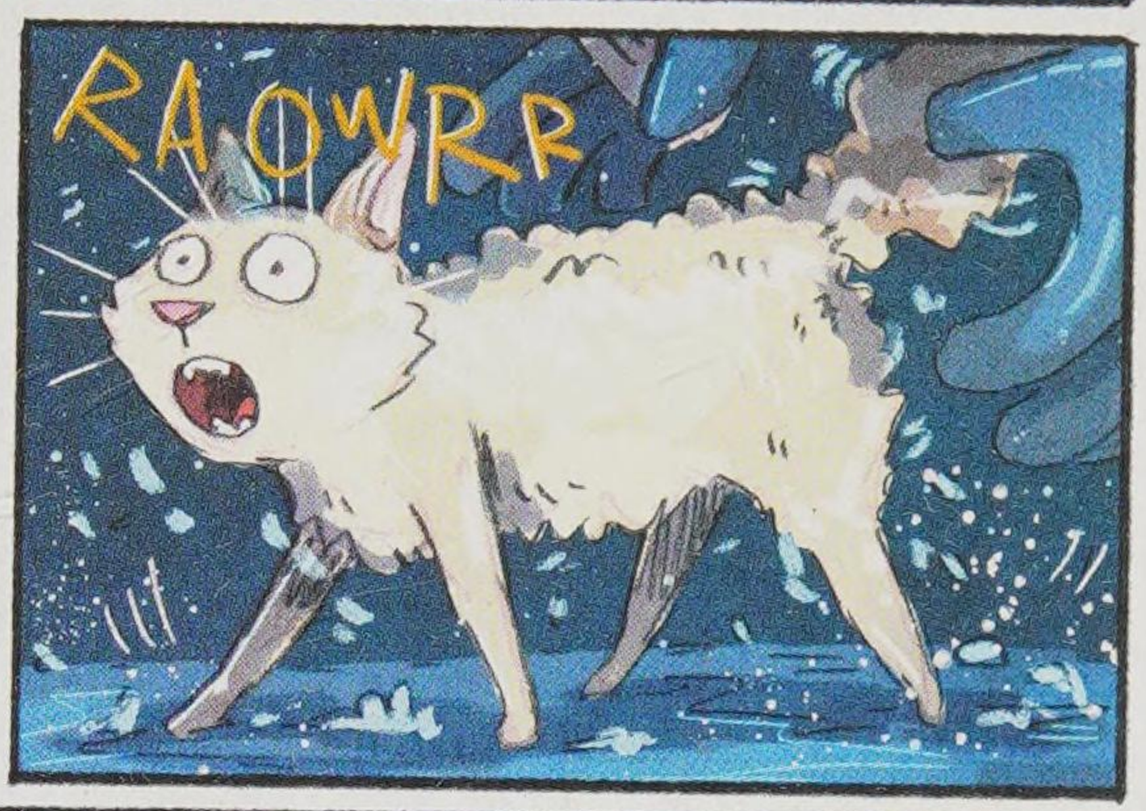
Oh no.
No no no!

I know what to do!


WHOOOSHHH




HuRAK!!


RAOWRR


Thank goodness.
You're okay. Everything's okay.


Good as new!

That goes for you too!

How in the world did you end up down here all alone?

That must've been really scary.

We don't know where we're going, but you can come with us if you want.

SHLURP!!!

Looks like the fireflies are going that way.

Then so are we!

Would you look at that.

I think we're here.



C'mon, it's all right.

I think.

Maybe they know something we don't.

Okay, wait here. We'll be back soon.

Here we are. Now what do we do?

Let's leave an offering. Spirits love those. What kind of food do you have?

O mighty and magnificent Lorgon. We offer you a gift and humbly request an audience with you.

What now?

We wait.

?!

Maybe we could try–

SPLASH!

CRACK

Didn't see anything down there.

I wasn't saying to–

LORRRGONNN!! YOU HEEERRE??

HERE HERE HERE HERE HERE

Any more ideas?

HERE HERE HERE

I could throw a rock.

Please don't.

There's gotta be some way to let him know we're here.

Like a lever or button or something?

When you say it like that, it does sound kinda dumb.

It's not dumb.

Let's keep thinking. How 'bout we–

HNGH!

Aw, c'mon!

SKIP

SKIP

SPLASH

What? We gotta explore all our options.

WHOOOSH

Maybe this **isn't** the place.

GAH!

THWUMP

!!!

WHO DARES ENTER MY REALM?!

Lorgon.

Greetings, O Lord of Waters. I am Cadwalla—

Have you come to **slay** me?!

The bones of those who have tried before litter the floor of my lake.

Do you wish to join them?

No.
We aren't here to—

You doubt the veracity of my claim?! Insolent knave!

WHOOOSH

Ah, human.
To be expected.

SNIFFFFFF

But this . . .
Impossible.

SNUFF

Your nose doesn't fail you.
I'm a **Galdurian**. There's a dragon and a cat with us too.

Strange. Regardless, if you are here to slay me, you'd best get to it quickly.

I am hungry and look forward to crunching your bones.

We don't want to slay you!!

Then what could you **possibly** desire?!

We need your help.

My help?

Yes.

Please.

НАЦА НАЦА

No.

But—

The people of Irpa turned their backs on us Spirits centuries ago. We are nothing but ghosts to all of you.

Why should I help those who treated us so?

We have nowhere else to go.

Hm.

Before even hearing **any** request, I will require an offering.

We already left you one!

Just over there.

WHUMP

Do not insult me. I need a **true** offering.

GULP

I've got ten luggs and twelve skoons.

Money? I don't need money.

Umm . . . I have a rare Galdurian shield.

I've no use for such things.

A tasty cake?

No.

Where'd you get that?

Hm.

I know!
We will be in
your debt!

His **debt**?!
Are you sure?

Trust me.

Why would **I** ever
require **your** services?

Maybe you'll need to
get into a small space one
day to retrieve a lost object.
Or you'll be tired and will need a
strong friend to carry something.
Or you'll want somebody to
read a book aloud to you.

Call on us!

Heh heh heh.

A favor for a favor . . . Your offering is accepted. You are both in my debt until I see fit to call upon your services.

Great!

So you'll help us?

I will answer a question.

That's it?! We don't have **questions**. We need **help**!!

Insolence! The knowledge of a Spirit is not satisfactory? You're all the same— **ungrateful**! Just taking and taking and taking!

Okay, okay. Can we have a few questions at least? Say, twelve?

No. Just one.

Ten?

One.

Seven?

You get **one**!

Now ask while I have an ounce of patience remaining.

Can we have a few moments to discuss, please?

Fine.

Kind of a raw deal if you ask me.

I think we're lucky he hasn't eaten us yet. But Gramps sent us here for a reason.

Lorgon must have a wealth of knowledge, even about Kest.

We could ask him to help us defeat Kest.

That's more of a request than a question.

He didn't specify.

He'll probably just say no and then we have nothing.

True. Then let's ask how to defeat Kest.

Okay.

Actually, I think we should ask who Kest **is**.

Why?

I dunno . . . something doesn't feel right.

You mean because he talked to you?

Well, yeah.

I don't see how that will help us.

Let's say Lorgon tells us how to defeat Kest, and it's something we can't do. Or he can't be defeated at all. Then what?

If we know what he is, we can figure out why he's doing this and how to stop him.

Maybe we can even find a way to undo the damage he's done and put things right.

We can make sure this never happens again.

AHEM

Your question?

That's a lot of things. Are you sure?

No, but I think it's our best chance of figuring this all out.

I created the seas faster than this!

Your call. I trust you.

Now I, Lorgon . . .

WHOOOOOOSH

. . . Lord of All Waters of Irpa . . .

. . . shall answer your one singular question.

Go ahead, Bea . . .

You've got this.

Who is Kest Ke Belenus?

Why do you ask this?

Uhh . . . Well, it's just . . .

You said we get to ask a question. Now if you please, answer said question.

Hm.

Kest Ke Belenus is the Spirit of Light.

Impossible!

Why ask the question if you don't want the answer?

Kest is no Spirit! He's a creature of darkness that devours light!

The opposite, in fact. Kest **creates** light.

The sun was his greatest gift to Irpa.

But . . . he destroyed it.

Indeed.

I am almost jealous of your ignorance. Maybe I **should** eat you and spare you the cruel burdens of this world.

Why? Why woud Kest do that?

The sun was created from the flames of his very soul.

But the people of Irpa were greedy. They didn't want balance, they wanted more. More light and less darkness. Eventually **no** darkness.

They took something special from Kest. So he took something from them.

The sun.

Yeah right.

I grow tired of your continued impudence.

Why do you need **my** help anyway? It was the Galdurians who stopped him the first time.

Pinned him to the ground and ripped the remaining flame from his chest, then cast him into an eternal slumber.

It was only a matter of time before he awoke. Now he has, and it's clear his opinion of the situation has not changed. He will not stop until all the Flames are in his possession once more.

Not if we stop him first. And we will.

Heh. Will you now?

Yes! I will finish what my people started and rescue the light of this world from evil!

And pray tell, how do you plan on doing that?

I will destroy Kest if it's the last thing I do.

A bold claim. Careful, or it may prove to be your undoing.

But can it be done? How do we stop him?

Kill him, you mean? Oh yes, stab him in the heart, drop a boulder on him, chop off his head . . .

No special spell or magic sword or anything?

Magic sword? No, no. We Spirits can be killed. It's been done before.

If you've known Kest is awake, why haven't **you** stopped him?

Who's to say I want to?

You're a **Spirit**, for crying out loud! Don't you want to save the world?!

You and I might not have the same definition of "save," Galdurian.

I already know how this story ends.

One way or another, Irpa will slip back into darkness.

No.

No!
We're not going to give up! There **has** to be a way to fix things, to make a **better** ending. A better **world**! And we'll find it.

You can go on hiding in your lake while everything falls apart around you, but we're going to **do** something!

I mean . . . Sorry.

You two have heart, I'll give you that.

The Waters are my only concern now, as the Lights are Kest's. We are done here.

I have answered more than one question. Kest is on his way to Rinn as we speak. I will grant you safe passage through my waters.

So much for that. Dragon, Nimm—c'mon! We're getting outta here.

What the—

!

VOOOOOSH

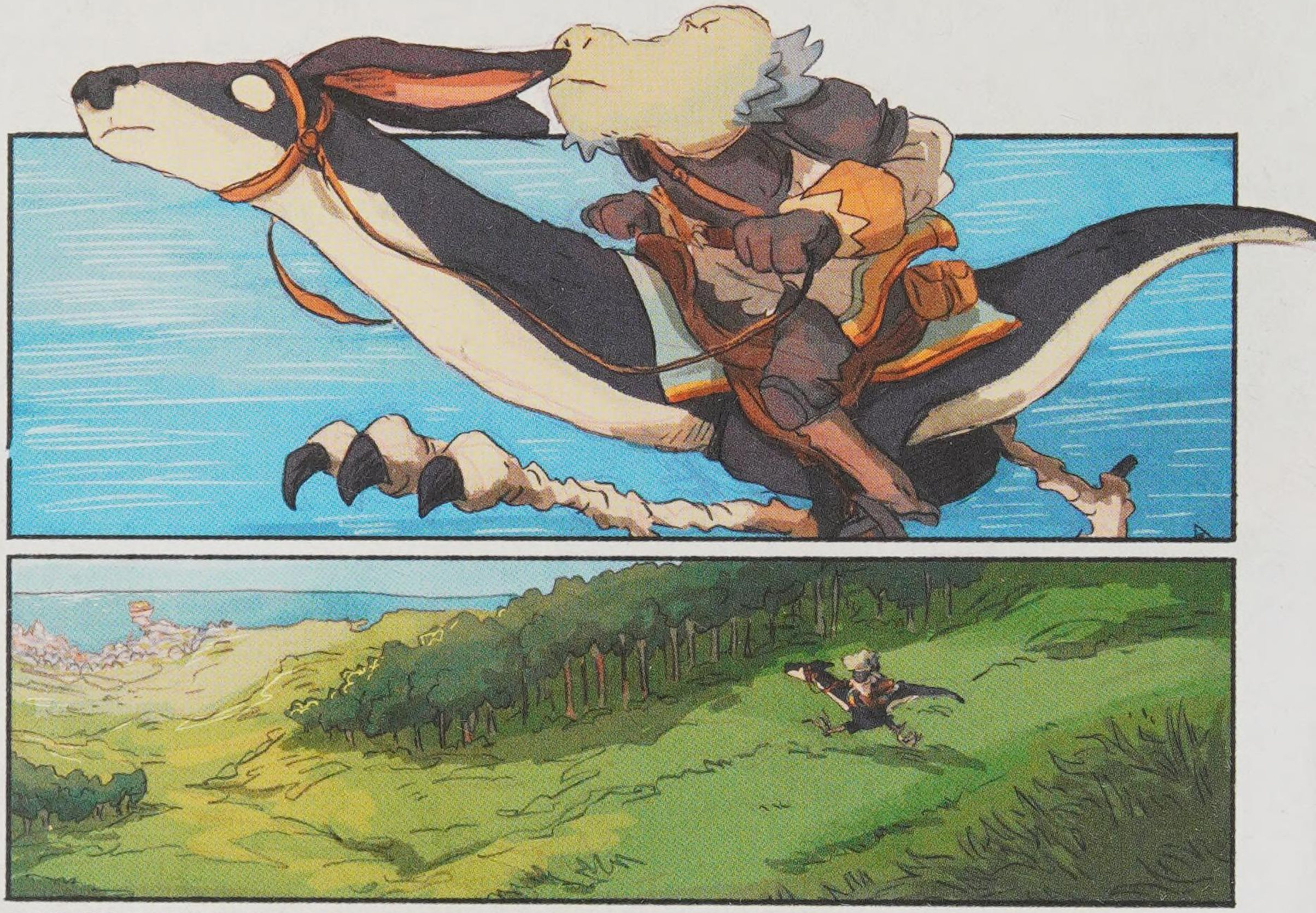
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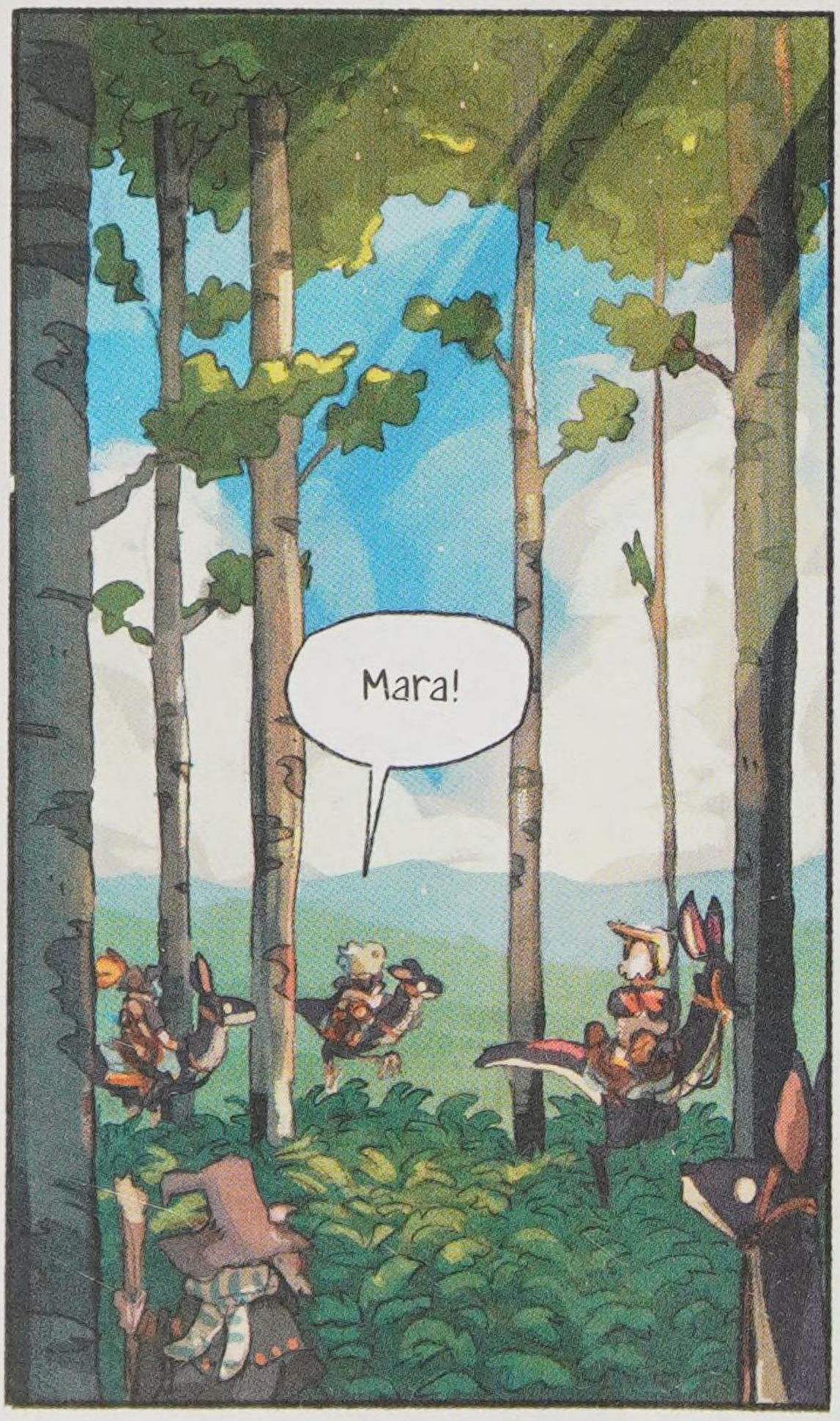
Tunnels?!

Whoa.

MROWR

We're coming for ya, Bird!




Mara!


They're coming. Just over the ridge.


Thank you, Fillog. How bad does it look?
It could be worse.

Scouts!
It is time.

We have **speed** and **surprise** on our side. Stay spread out— we'll hit their flank and create chaos. Our goal is to slow them down.

Hold for my signal!

SKREEEEEEEE

BOOM

NOW!!

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

SKISH

Karru!!
Behind you!


WOOOOSHHH
KAKOOOOM

Two lines, I said. **Two!**

There's room enough for everyone!

Thank you for assisting with the evacuation, Madame Bunga.

Aye. I'm no stranger to wrangling a rowdy crowd.

But . . .

Looks like our time is up.

The mara's done her part. Time to finish ours.

GASP

AH!

Run for your lives!!

Save yourselves!

It's ov

We

Keep yer heads! We're gonna get you all out of here!

CHIK
CHIK
CHIK

CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CHIK

Every time, there's gotta be something.

CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CHIK

ROW!!!

ROW!!!

Toss anything heavy! Dump the anchors!

Raise every sail!

ROW!!!

CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK

CHIK

Get off my boat, you rotten bug!

WHUMP

Jump, quick!

CHIK CHIK CHIK CHIK

They were angry.

Just a bit. I hope that stick was worth it.

The city's overrun. No way we're going back there.

Look at that. They actually evacuated all those ships.

Hurry! We need to catch up to them.

Too late.

Huh?

SKEEEEEE

KA-KOOM

WOOOOOOSH

VOOOOSHHH

TUG

Was that—

Yes.

CRKRRKRK

Kick those little legs of yours!!

Am kicking.

BACK-BACK

That's unfortunate.

Cad, there's a light ahead!

POP

It's Rinn! We've made it!!

The Light! We're not too late.

?!

Is that . . . ?

My friends.

Cad—
Look!

I see 'em!

Don't sink!
We're coming!

Gotcha!!

To the Bird!

Maybe you could drop us off first?

Be quiet, you ungrateful mouse.

Can't this dragon fly, at least?

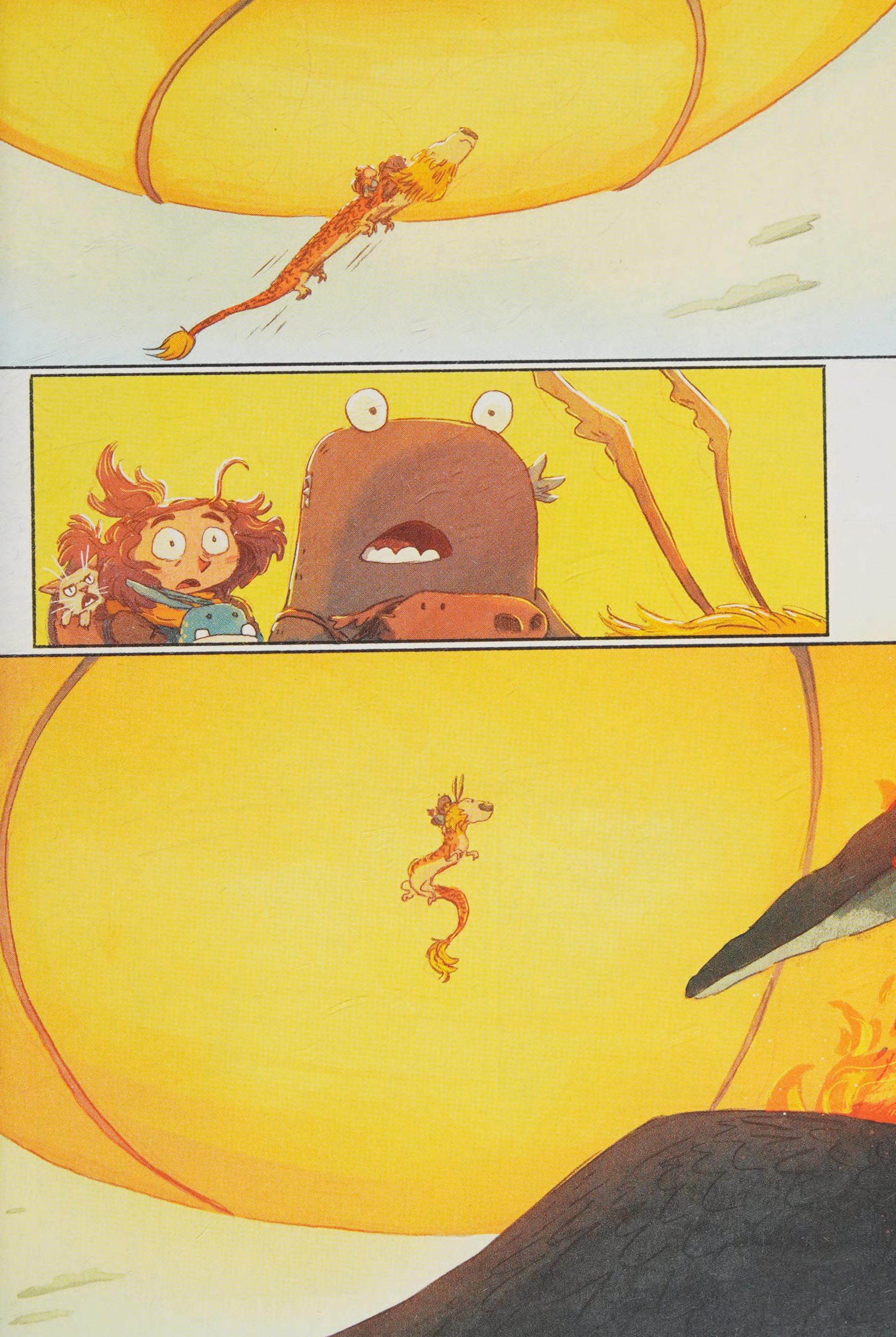
Don't listen to him, friend. He's just—

HRMPH

Woah!!

AHHHH!!!

Now **this** is more like it!



BIRD!

NO . . .

HUUUUSHH

KRSH KRUH

KRUCK KRSH

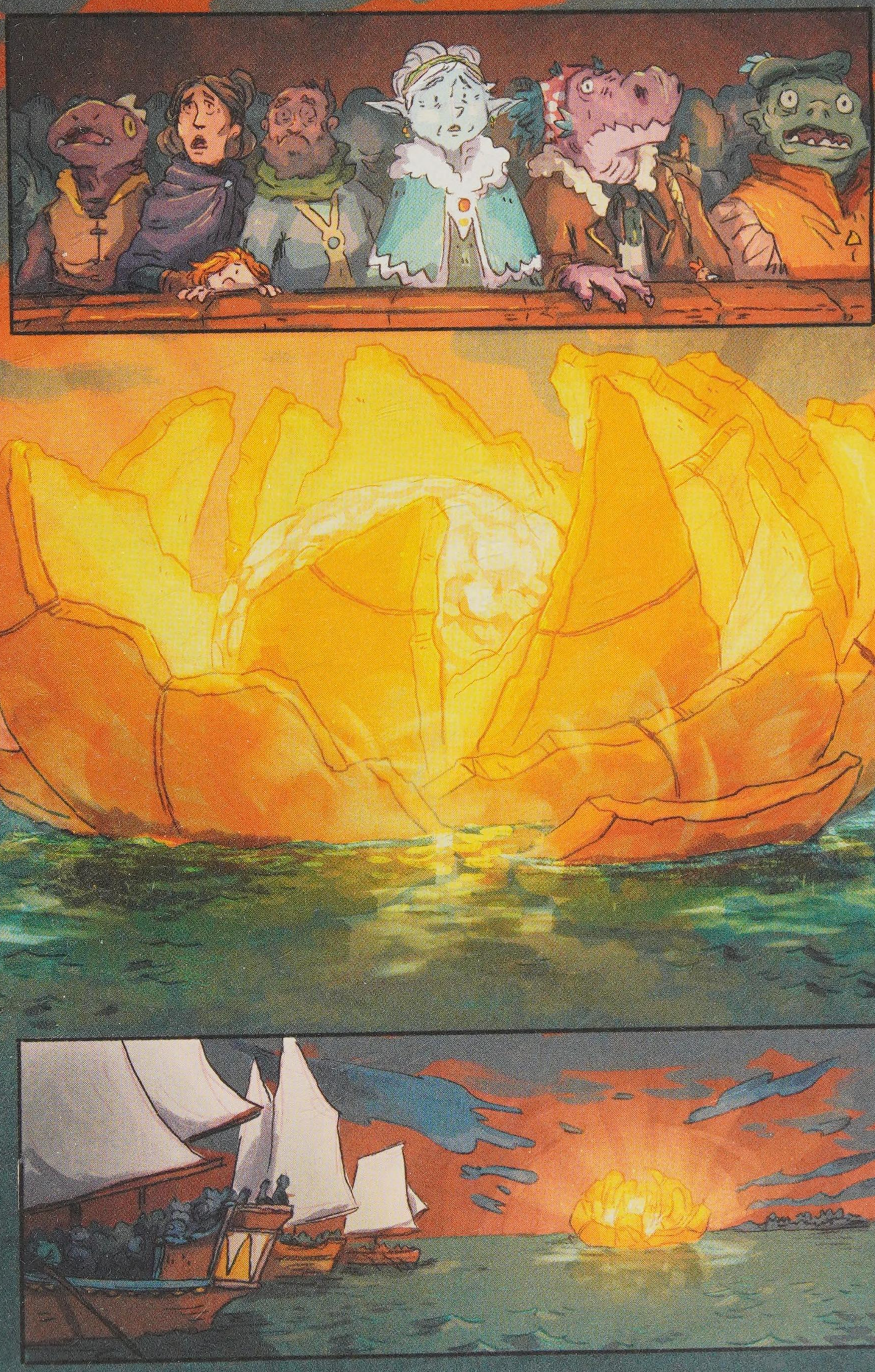
OOF!

WHOOOOOOOSH!









:Cough:
:Cough:
:Cough:
:Cough:
Gerrru
Everyone okay?
Sure.
Hyunghh
Alive.
Hey.
Where are you going?

I'm going out there and I'm putting an end to this.

Lorgon said the Bird can be killed, so that's what I'm going to do.

How, Cad?? We already **tried**! What are we supposed to do?!

If **nobody** does **anything** then Irpa doesn't stand a chance.

I don't care who or what that bird **used** to be. He's destroying the only world we've got.

I'm done failing, Bea. I won't fail again . . .

Not this time.

Stay put.

Not a problem.

Will wait.

MROWR

Wait up!!

You know, Cad . . .

This is the first time I've seen the ocean.

It's pretty good, right?

More beautiful than I ever imagined.

MARA!!

MARA KARRU!!

Over here!

Praise Irpa, you're alive!

Fillog!

You're wounded!

Keep still. I need to get this tight to stop the bleeding.

I'm a fool to think I could've slowed him down.

But you did! You bought your people time to escape! You saved countless lives, I'm sure of it.

They cut right through us and now our Light is lost. I have failed Rinn as its mara.

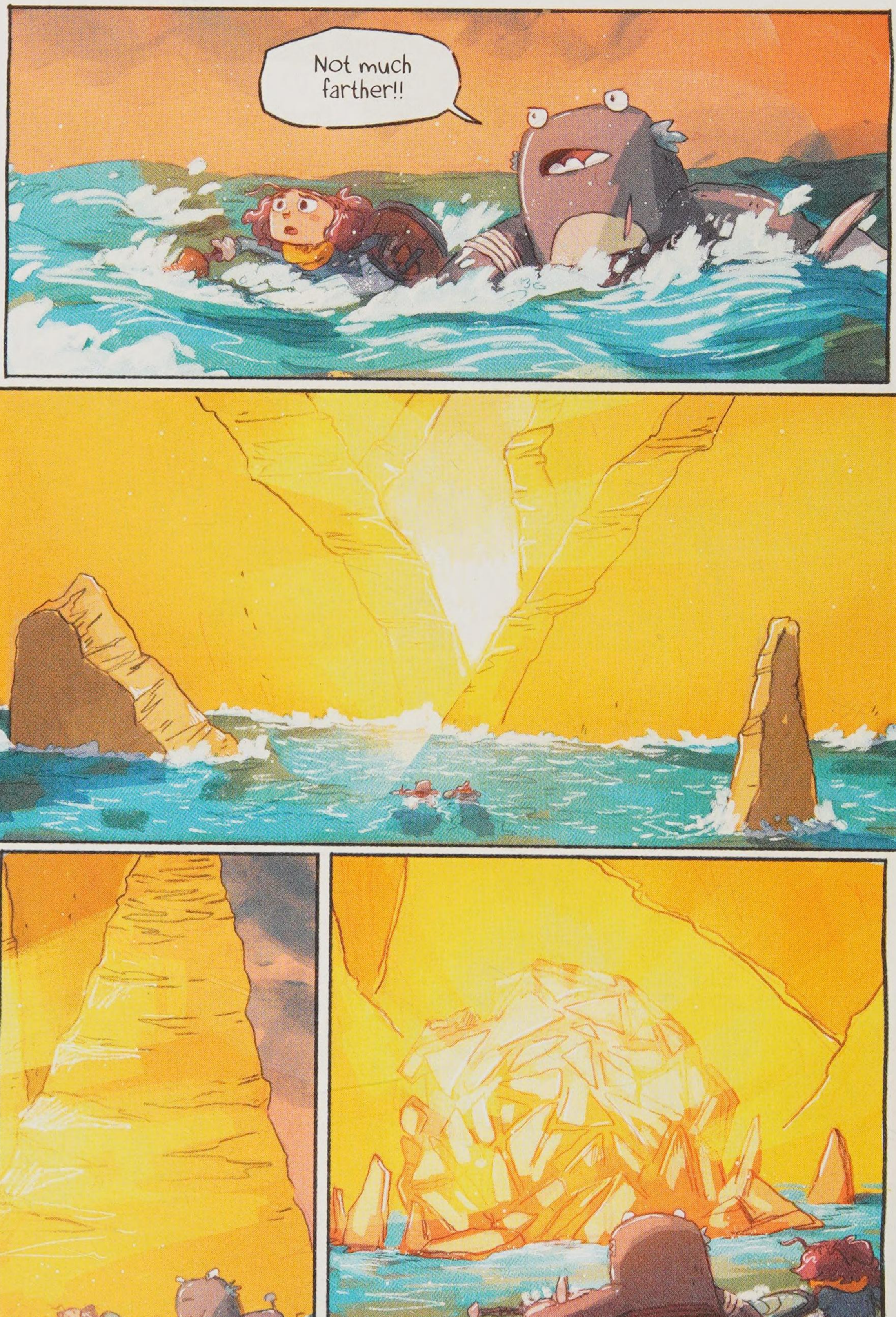

Nonsense!
The people of Lealand paid for their mara's lack of leadership. You were faced with an impossible choice. The bravery of you and your scouts saved your people.
The Light is gone, but there's still a glow in the distance.
How?
Kest must not have retrieved the Flame from within the Light yet.

Then there's still a chance we can do something.

I'm going back.

We're with you.

Lead on, Mara Karru.


Not much farther!!

Watch your head. This place is falling apart!

CROOSH!

SPLASH!

CRASH!!

There it is.

The Flame.

We made it.

Kest will be here soon.

Maybe we can move the Flame. Get it away from here. Hide it.

And delay the inevitable?

Waiting around feels worse than facing him somehow.

WHOOSH

THOOM!!

CRASH!

This is it.

?!

Kest . . .

You've shown me things.

And I'm trying to understand. But—





SKREE

BEA!!

BEA— MOVE!!

KAWOOSH

SHIZGGGG

AHH!

KLANG

GYA!

SLASH

URK!

SH-KLANG!!

YAH HHHH!!

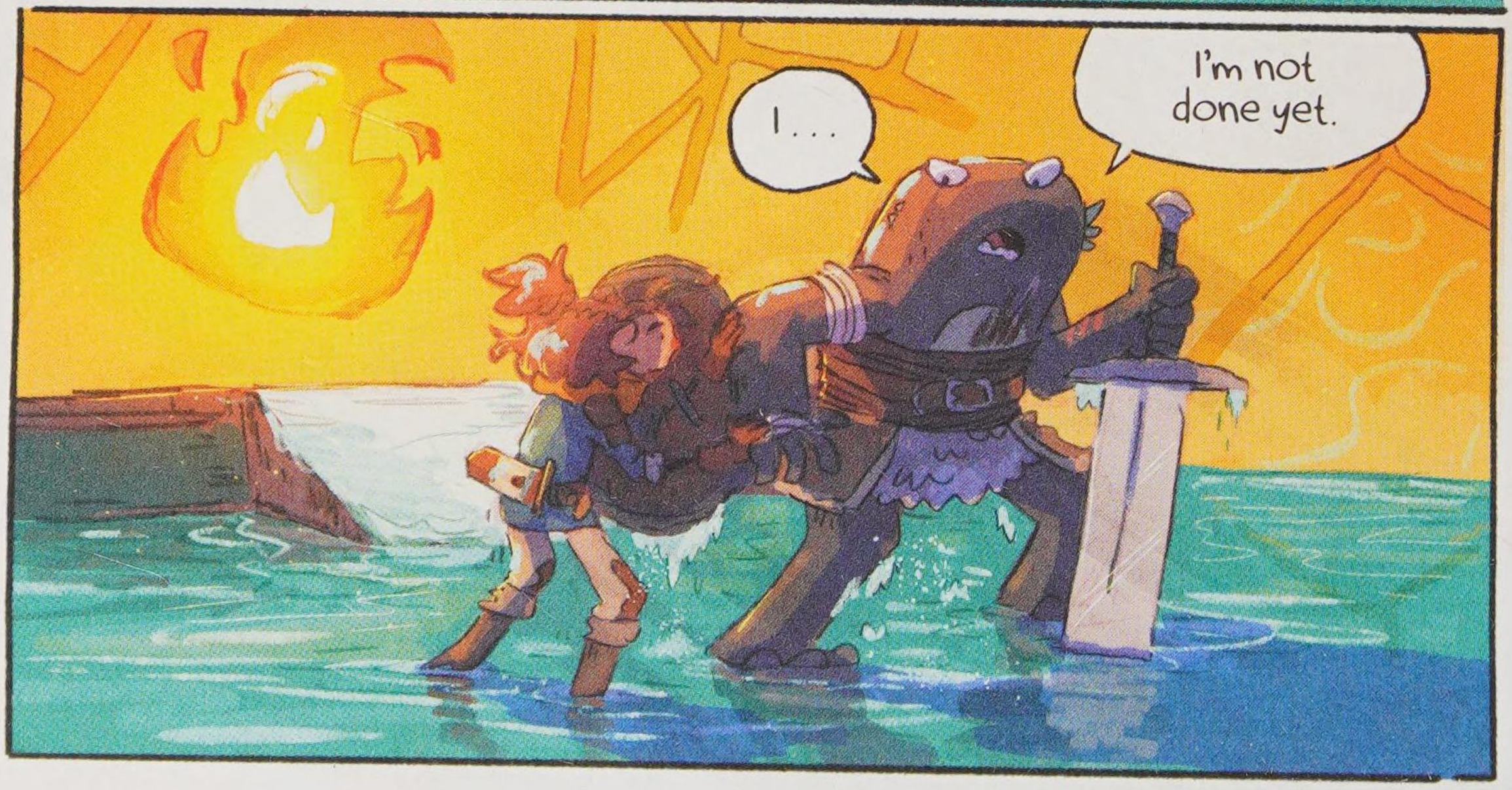
SKELETOR




HNH


GASP


CAD!!
urgh


I...
I'm not done yet.

SKREEEEEEEEE!!!

STOP!

I understand now. Someone special was taken from you.

I don't know who. I don't know why. But it doesn't matter. It shouldn't have happened.

My parents were taken from me before I ever knew them.

Cad not only lost his family, but **all** the Galdurians.

It feels like the world has betrayed you.

Turned its back on you.

It isn't fair. It isn't right.

And I don't know how to fix it.

But I don't think this is the way.

It can't be.

NO!!!

BRANG

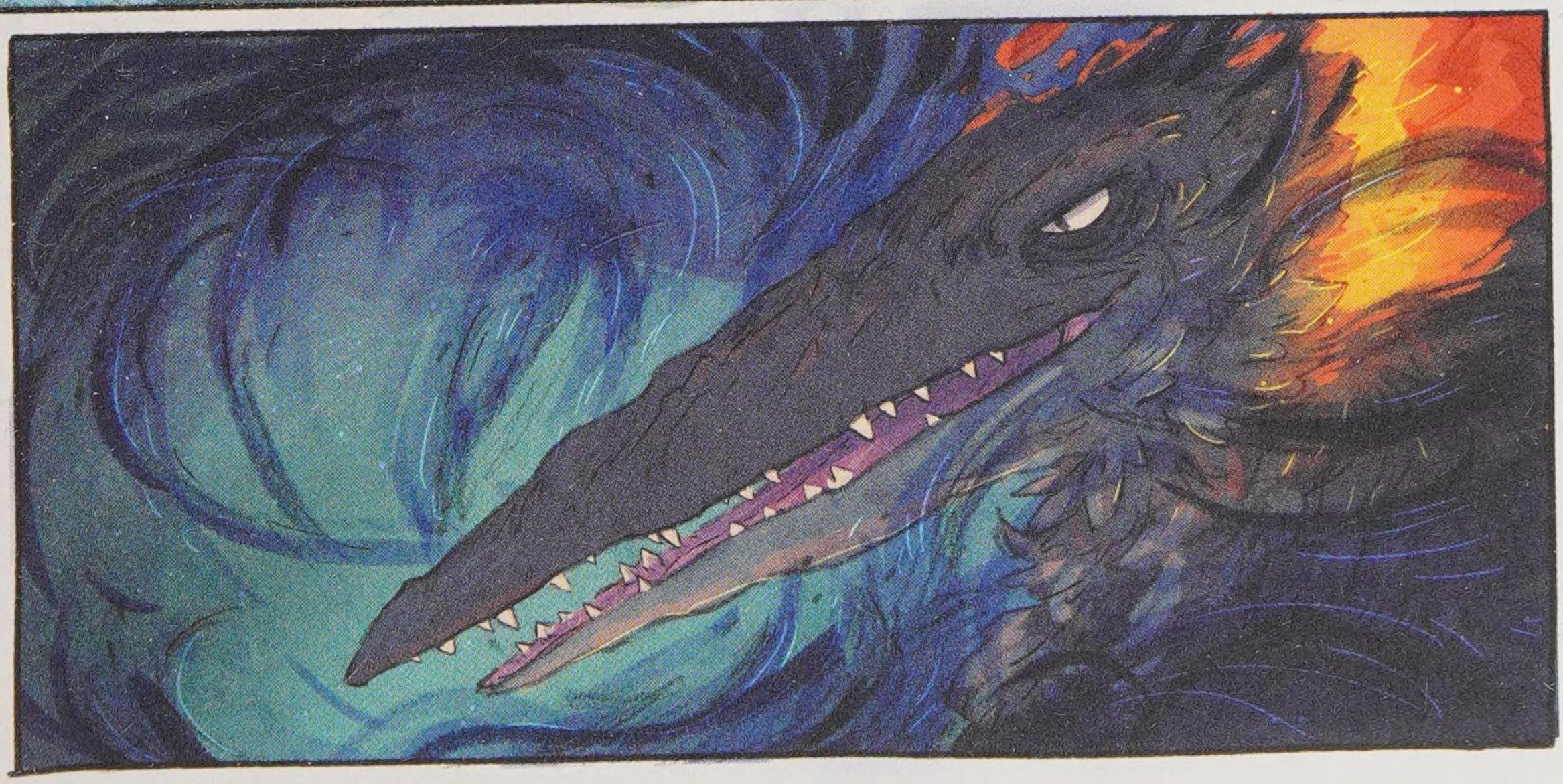
FWOOOOOSH

















HAHAHA!!
WE DID IT!!

Bea—
We're heroes!!!

It doesn't
feel that way.

What
did you
expect it
to feel
like?

I dunno.
Better, I guess.

We saved the Flame!!
Kest is defeated, destroyed
once and for all!!

We've completed
the Galdurian legacy.
The rest of the Lights
are safe. Life will
go on!!!

I'm going to eat a mountain of cheese! And gorseberry pies!!

Do you think they'll give us castles? Or beach houses?

HaHaHa

HEROES OF IRPA

PROTECTORS OF LIGHT

Okay, okay. Let's get that wound wrapped up before you pass out.

Fine, but only if you promise to celebrate more after.

Sputter
SPUTTER
?!
Look.
No!
No no no.
What's happening?!

It's fading.

But we stopped the Bird.

We did everything right.

Did we?

Lucky we rescued your glowing stick, at least.

Not lucky.

Did you **know** this was going to happen?

No.

We need to get going.

Not yet.

RARWWORRRRR

MROWR MROWR

What's that cat meowing about?

There's something out there. In the water. Coming this way!

MROWR MROWR MROWR

They return.

Would you look at that.

MEROWRRR

What happened?

MRRRRR

We fought Kest.

And we won.

You won?! Then why is it **dark**?

The Flame was there. It was safe. And then . . .

It just faded away.

All the lights are dark.

WHAT?! No. No, that can't be true! It can't!

It is true.

Good job.

Lorgon said this would happen.

Huh?

Lorgon.
He told us.

"One way or another, Irpa will slip back into darkness."

The Flames were part of Kest. They were a part of his very soul. He was the source of all light, and the Flames died with him.

I should've realized it before. But I didn't.

He could've just said it instead of speaking in riddles.

We could've listened. But it doesn't matter anymore.

So that's it. World's over?

Not yet.

Inspiring. What do we do now?

We should start by getting out of here. This place will be crawling with shadows soon.

Everywhere will be crawling with shadows. Where do you suggest we go?

What's **your** great idea?

I didn't cause this mess!

How 'bout I feed you to the dragon!

Better than being stuck with you!!

That's it . . .

We keep going. We find the sun. We find a way to bring it back.

What?

How?

There's so much we don't know about the world.

There has to be a way.

We'll figure it out. And then we'll do it.

That's not a plan. That's just cra–

I'm with you, Bea!!

Where do we start?

I don't know.

You're all insane–

CRK

What was that?!

Something is here.

Shadows, I bet. We fight our way through. Rush them on three. Ready?

One.

Two.

?!

Beatrice?!



Oh ho ho!!
Is that you?

For Jodi

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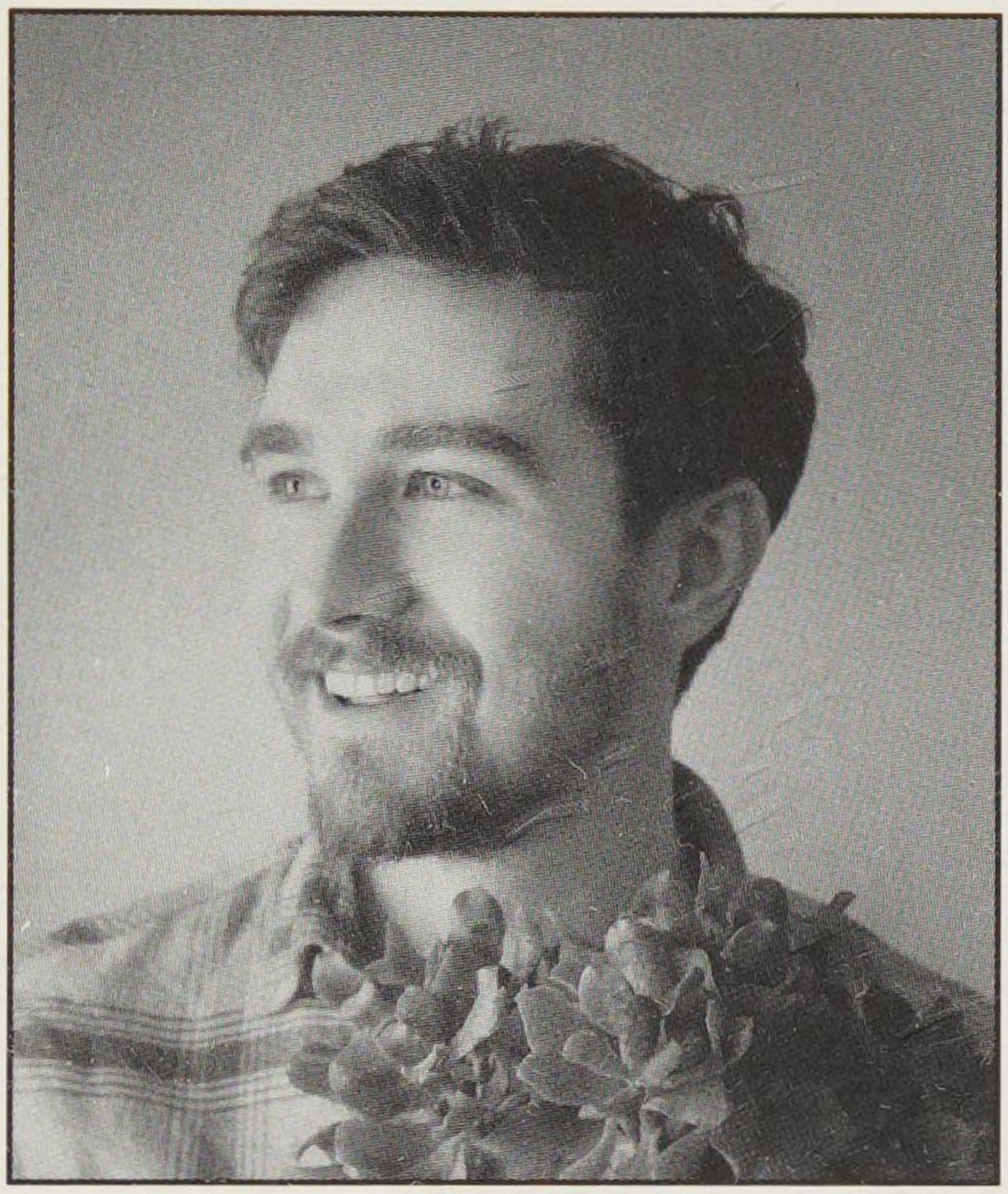
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First Edition





Bob Probert

TIM PROBERT has illustrated children's books, including Dungeons & Dragons: Dungeon Academy, the Rip and Red series, and *Pickle*. He is also an art director at the animation studio Nathan Love. He lives in upstate New York with his wife and two cats. Find him online at www.timprobert.com.

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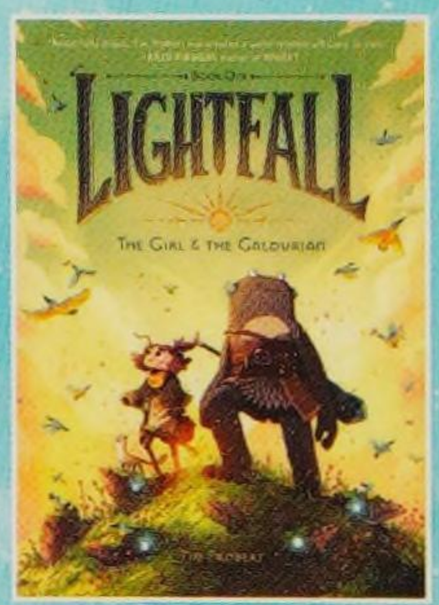
AFTER A BATTLE THAT NEARLY COST them their lives, Bea and Cad awaken in the hidden settlement of the Arsai, mysterious creatures who can glimpse into the future. The Arsai's vision paints a dire picture for their planet, as the Bird, Kest Ke Belenus—now awoken from a restless slumber—threatens to destroy all the Lights of Irpa.

Desperate for a solution, Bea and Cad seek out the help of a water spirit known as Lorgon, whose ancient wisdom may help them find a way to take down Kest and save Irpa from utter destruction.

But when their time with Lorgon presents more questions than answers, Bea and Cad must decide what's more important . . . stopping Kest or uncovering the truth.



Don't miss the first installment in this epic saga!



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—**KAZU KIBUISHI**, author of **AMULET**

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