



Title
Author





Witch

Will Irma Tarance Cornelia Hay Lin

Part IV.
Trial of the Oracle
Volume I

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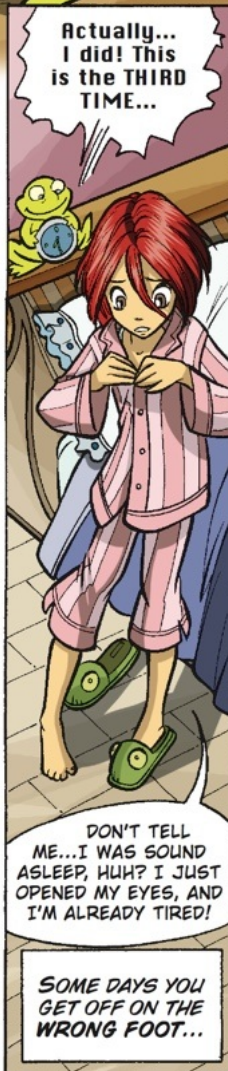
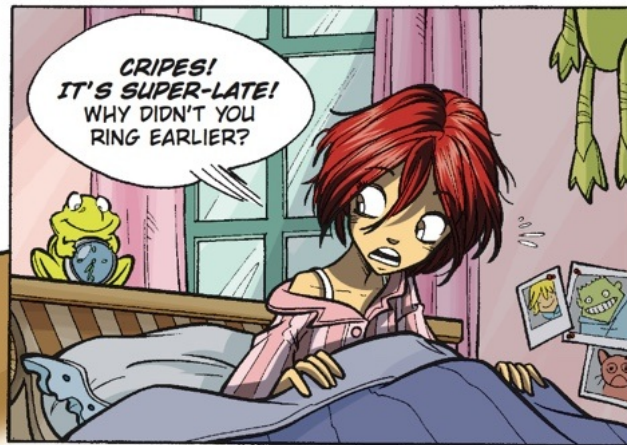


The Dispute

"Time's up, Oracle. The
Congregation demands facts!"







KANDRAKAR, IN THE CENTER OF INFINITY. THIS FORTRESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE OF PEACE AND HARMONY...

...BUT THIS EQUILIBRIUM IS ABOUT TO BE BROKEN...

SOMETHING WRONG, SIR?

MY SPIRIT IS TROUBLED, TIBOR.

DARK, POWERFUL FORCES OBSCURE KANDRAKAR'S LIGHT. I FEEL THE TIME FOR CONFRONTATION IS COMING.

YOU SENSE A THREAT? DO YOU FEAR AN ATTACK, ORACLE?

NO, MY FRIEND. EVIL ROAMS FREE BETWEEN THESE WALLS AND GROWS SURPRISINGLY QUICKLY...

DISAGREEMENTS, MISUNDERSTANDINGS, DISCONTENTMENT...

...CAN BE SHARPER THAN ANY BLADE.

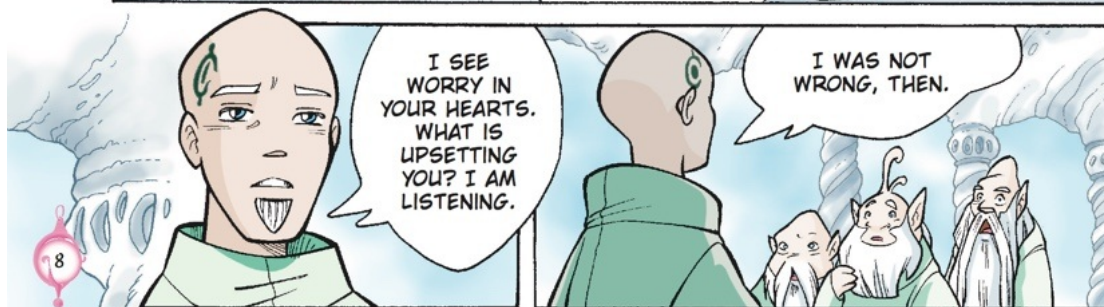
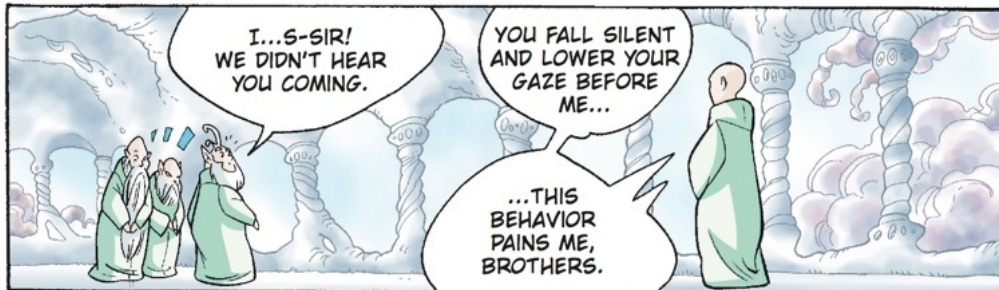
IT'S UNACCEPTABLE.

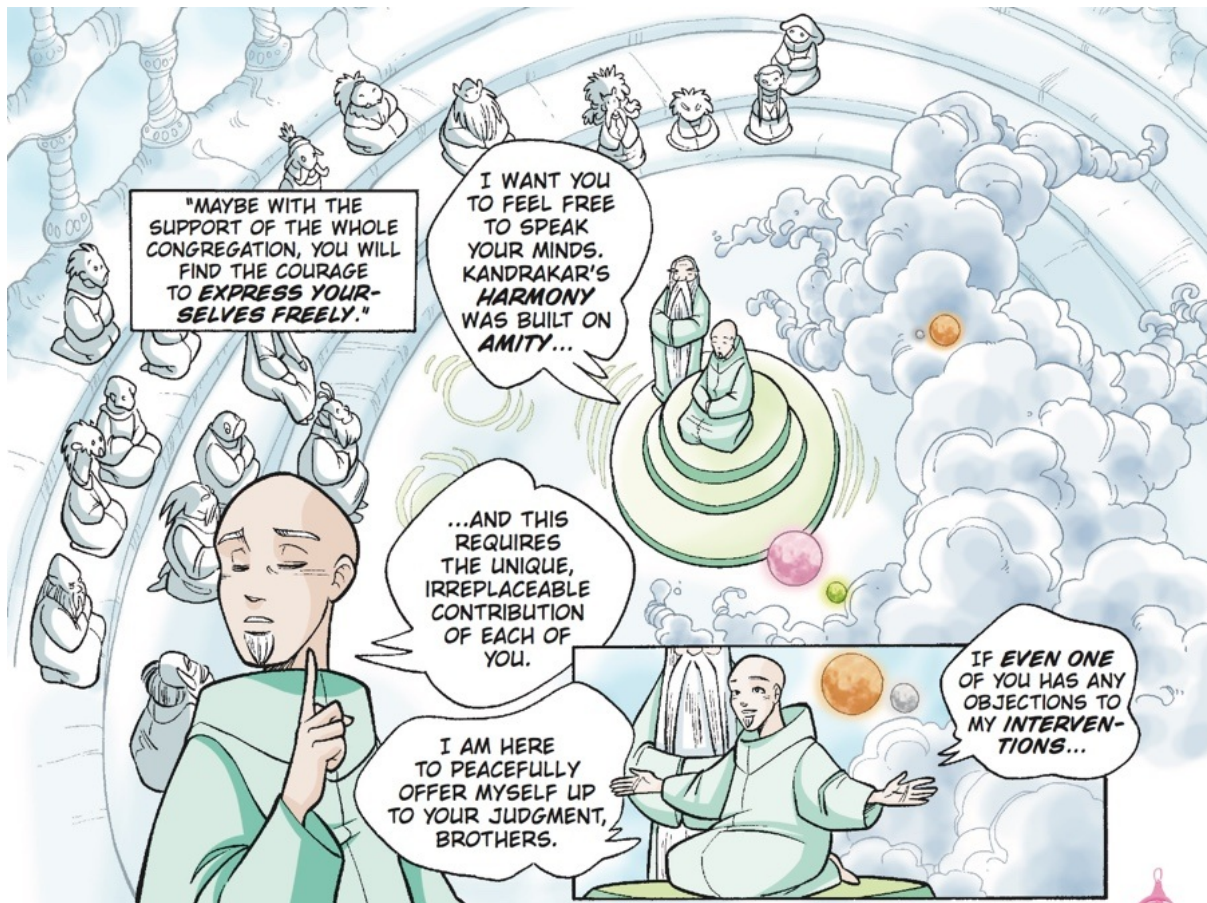
OUTRAGEOUS!

CLEARLY... INAPPROPRIATE.

NO AUTHORITY IN KANDRAKAR HAS EVER GONE SO FAR.

THE MEMORY SPELL, FREEING THOSE ASTRAL DROPS... WHERE WILL THESE RASH CHOICES LEAD US?





"MAYBE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE WHOLE CONGREGATION, YOU WILL FIND THE COURAGE TO EXPRESS YOURSELVES FREELY."

I WANT YOU TO FEEL FREE TO SPEAK YOUR MINDS. KANDRAKAR'S HARMONY WAS BUILT ON AMITY...

...AND THIS REQUIRES THE UNIQUE, IRREPLACEABLE CONTRIBUTION OF EACH OF YOU.

I AM HERE TO PEACEFULLY OFFER MYSELF UP TO YOUR JUDGMENT, BROTHERS.

IF EVEN ONE OF YOU HAS ANY OBJECTIONS TO MY INTERVENTIONS...



...STEP FORTH WITHOUT FEAR. **DIALOGUE** IS THE ONLY PATH TO ANY SOLUTION.

WELL SAID, ORACLE. YOUR **INTERVENTIONS...** THEY'RE THE PROBLEM!



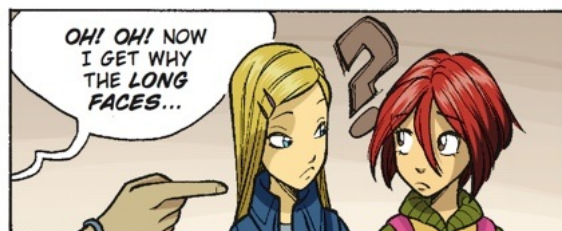
SHOULDN'T KANDRAKAR'S HIGHEST AUTHORITY MERELY **OBSERVE** AND KEEP THE BALANCE?

Isn't that the custodian of the TOWER OF MISTS?



YOUR OPINION IS VALUABLE, **ENDARNO**, MY FRIEND.

SPEAK, THEN. I AM LISTENING.

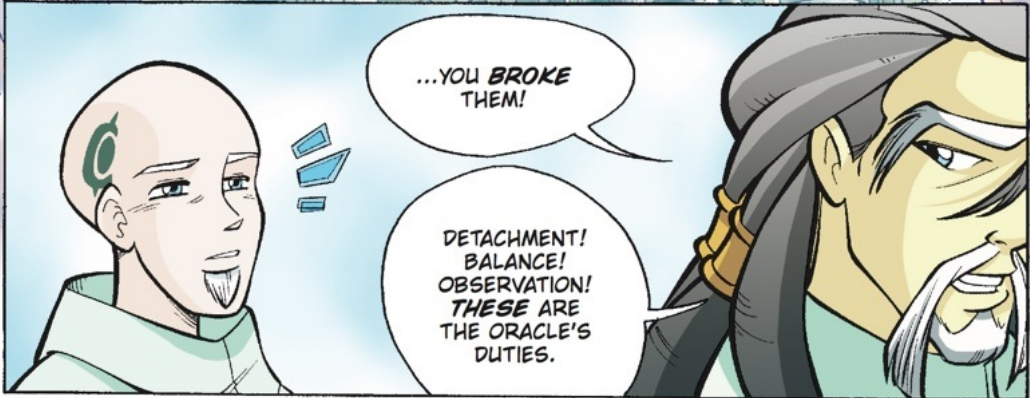






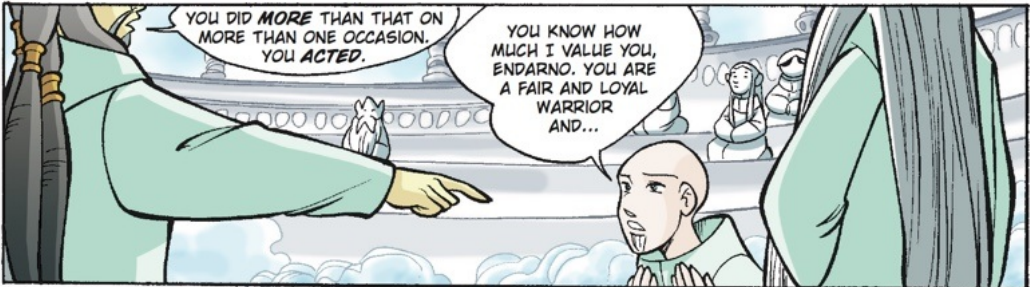
FAR AWAY, IN A PLACE
BEYOND SPACE AND TIME,
SOMEONE ELSE WANTS
ANSWERS...

THE **LAWS** OF
KANDRAKAR MAKE NO
EXCEPTIONS, ORACLE,
AND AS MUCH AS IT
PAINS ME TO
SAY IT...



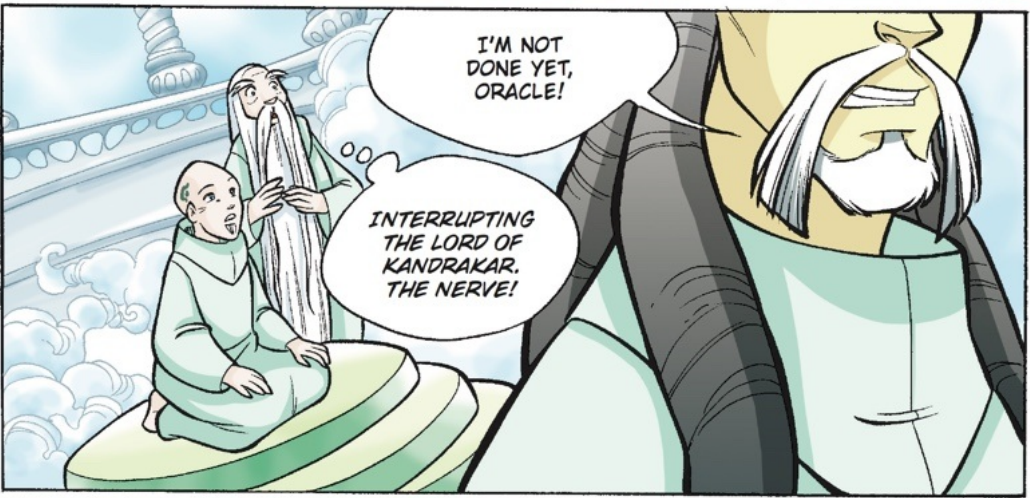
...YOU **BROKE**
THEM!

DETACHMENT!
BALANCE!
OBSERVATION!
THESE ARE
THE ORACLE'S
DUTIES.



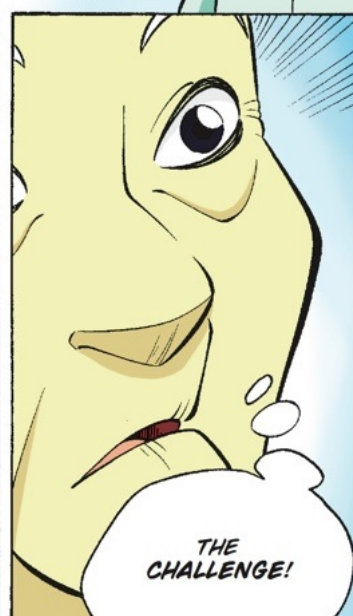
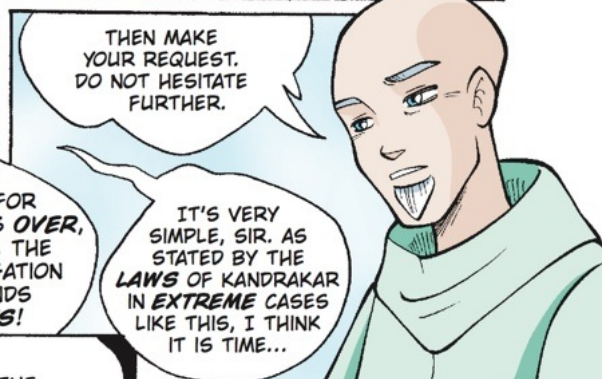
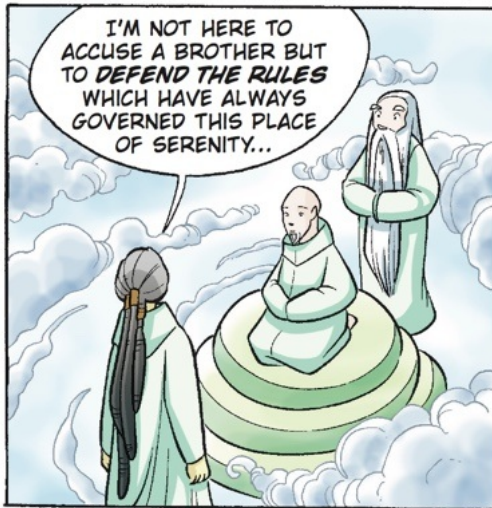
YOU DID **MORE** THAN THAT ON
MORE THAN ONE OCCASION.
YOU **ACTED**.

YOU KNOW HOW
MUCH I VALUE YOU,
ENDARNO. YOU ARE
A FAIR AND LOYAL
WARRIOR
AND...



I'M NOT
DONE YET,
ORACLE!

INTERRUPTING
THE LORD OF
KANDRAKAR.
THE NERVE!



AN ANCIENT, DEFINITIVE
PROCEEDING THAT NO
ONE HAS DARED INVOKE
BEFORE NOW.

AN ACCUSER PUBLICLY
CHALLENGES THE LORD OF THE
FORTRESS TO DEFEND HIMSELF
BEFORE THE CONGREGATION,
WHICH HAS THE FINAL SAY...



...OR SUBMIT HIMSELF
TO THE TRIAL, THUS
DECLARING HIMSELF READY
TO LOSE HIS POSITION
AND HIS CREDIBILITY.

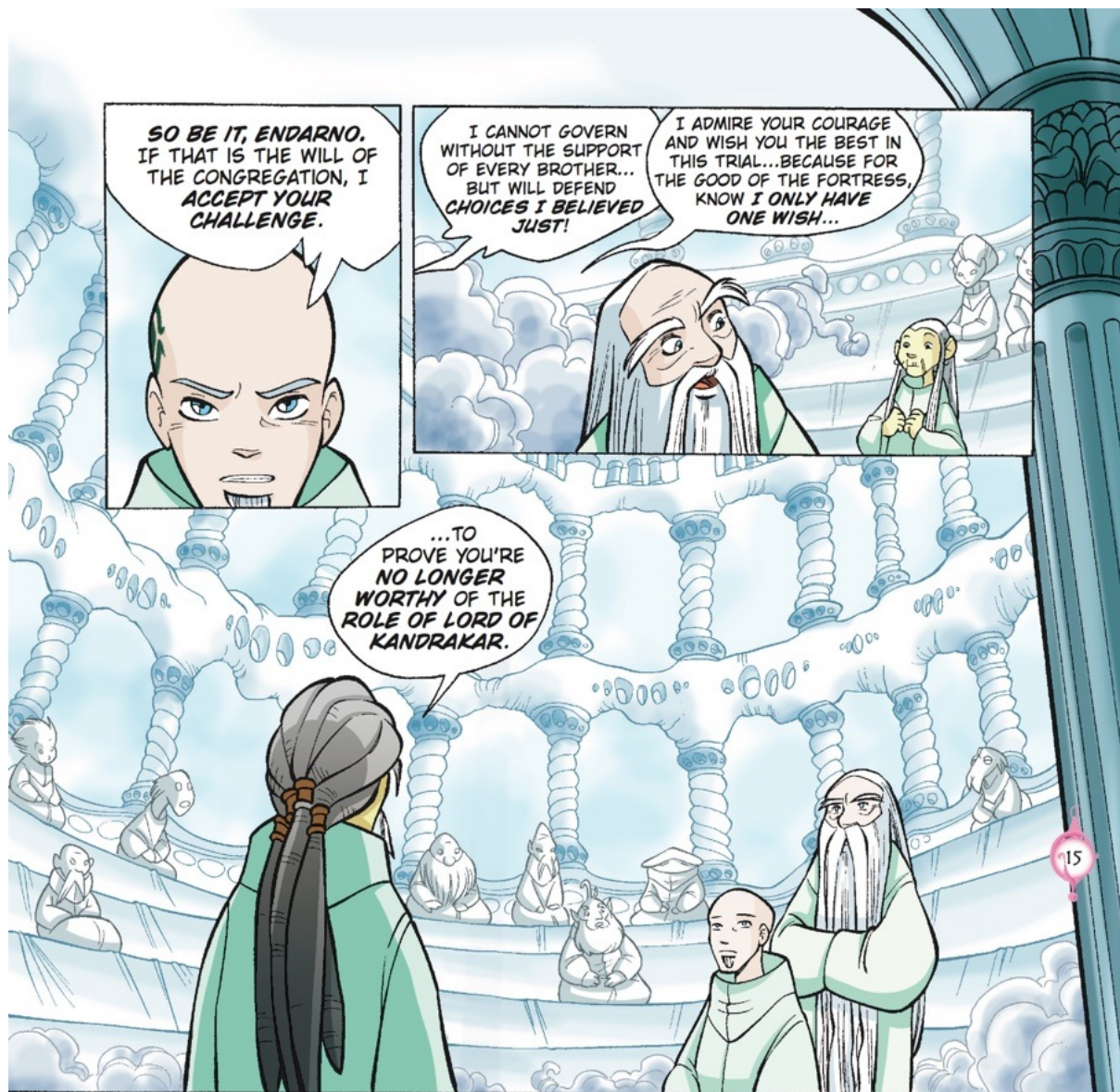
THE ORACLE HAS TWO
CHOICES—ASSERT HIS
AUTHORITY TO AVOID
THE CHALLENGE...

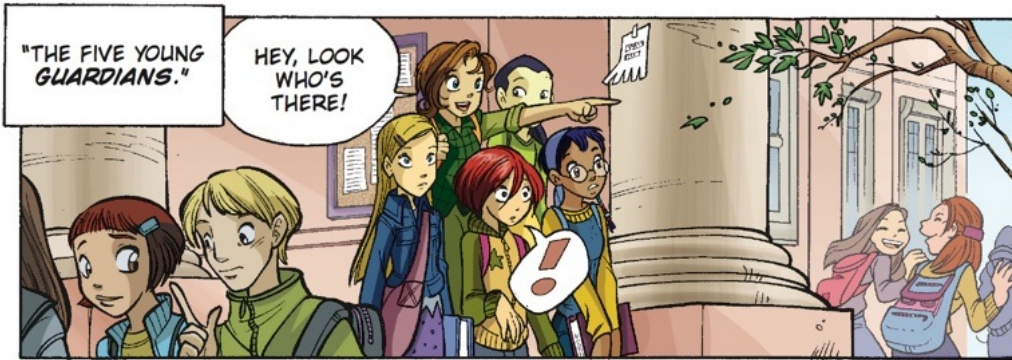
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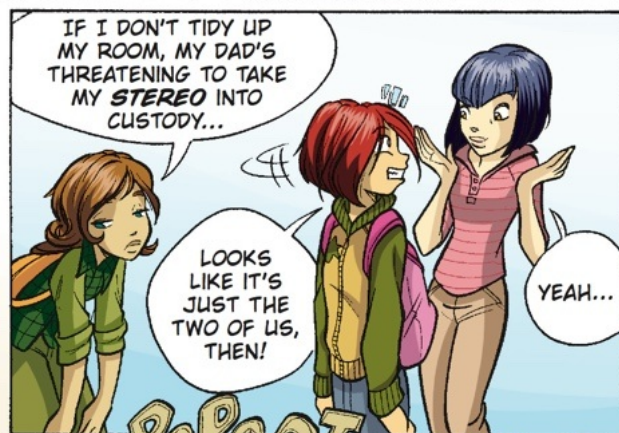


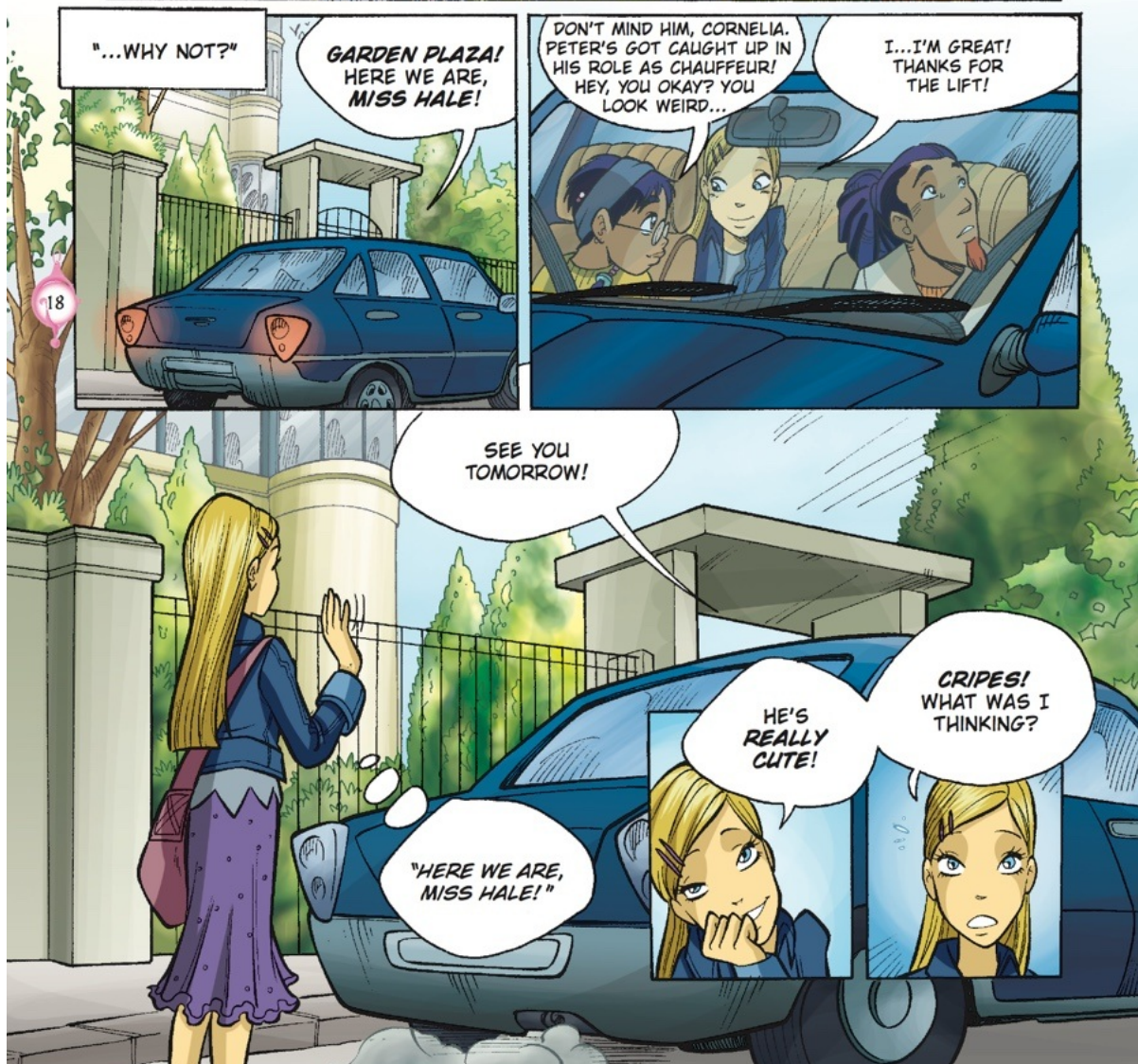
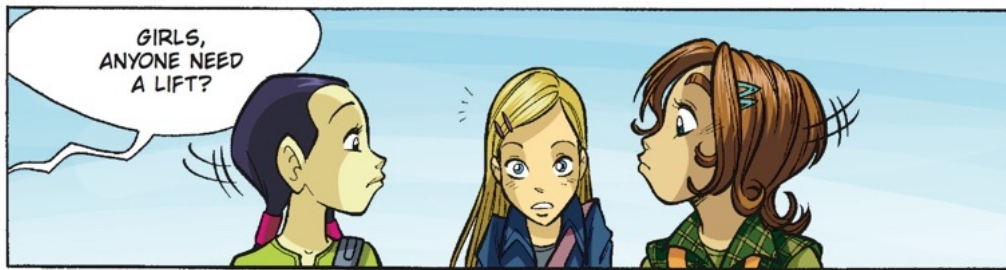
...OR BE PREPARED TO LOSE!





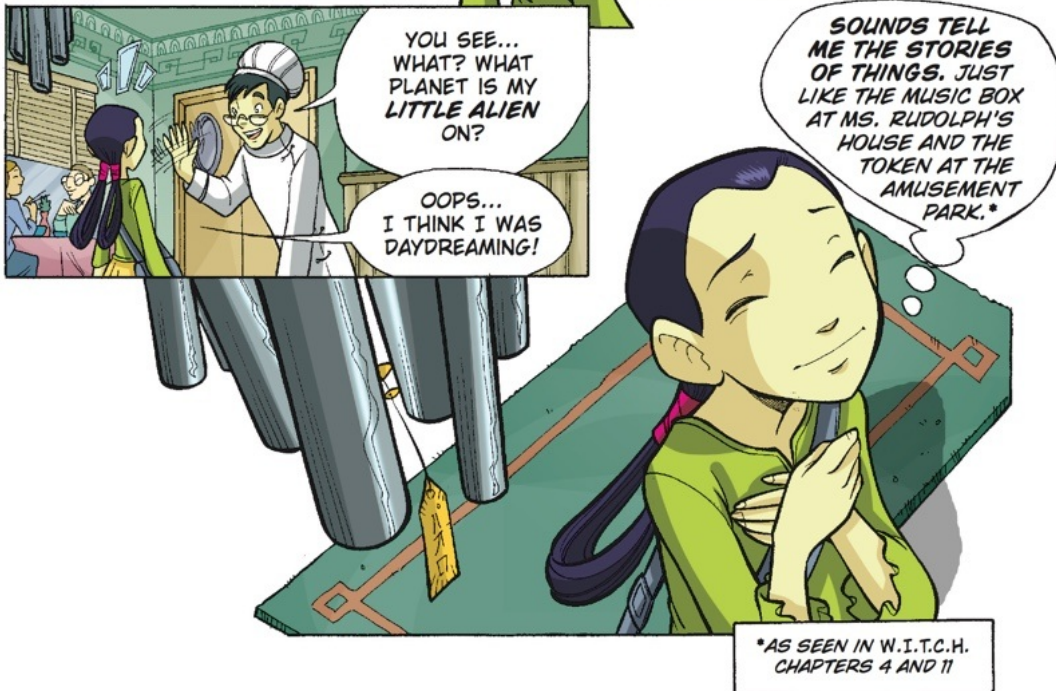


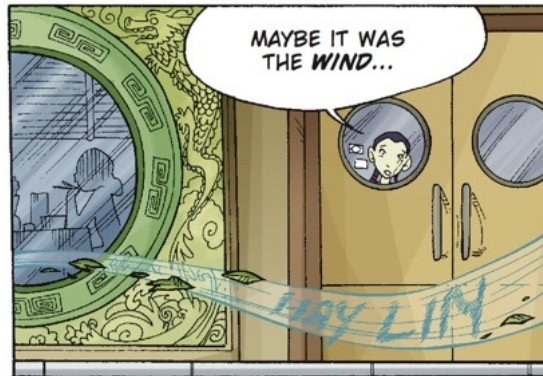


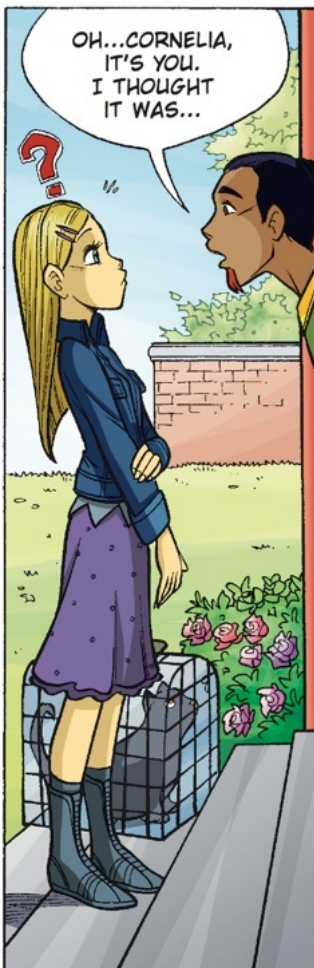
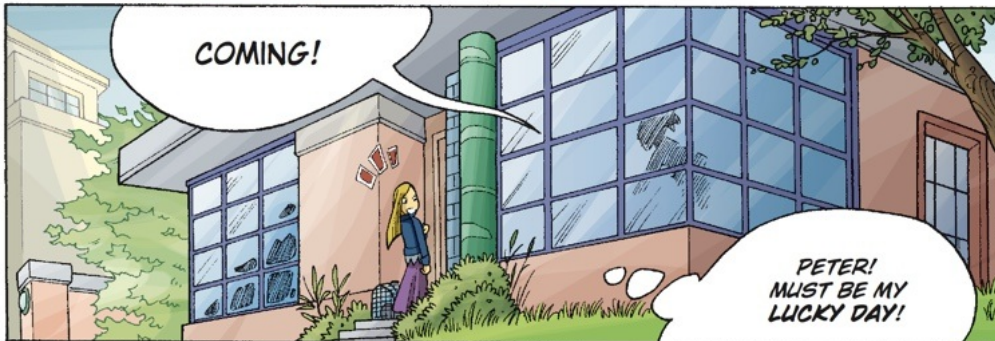
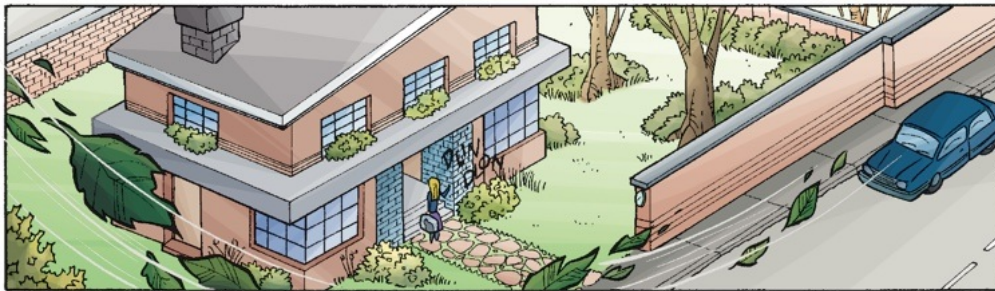


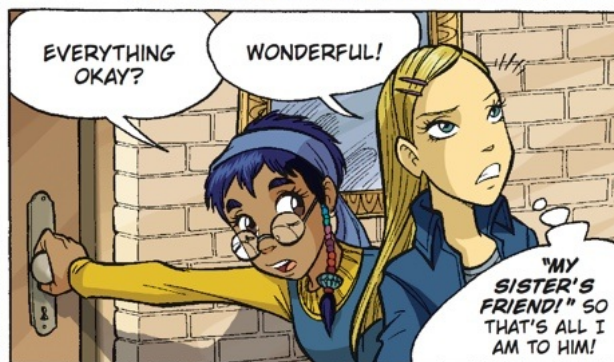
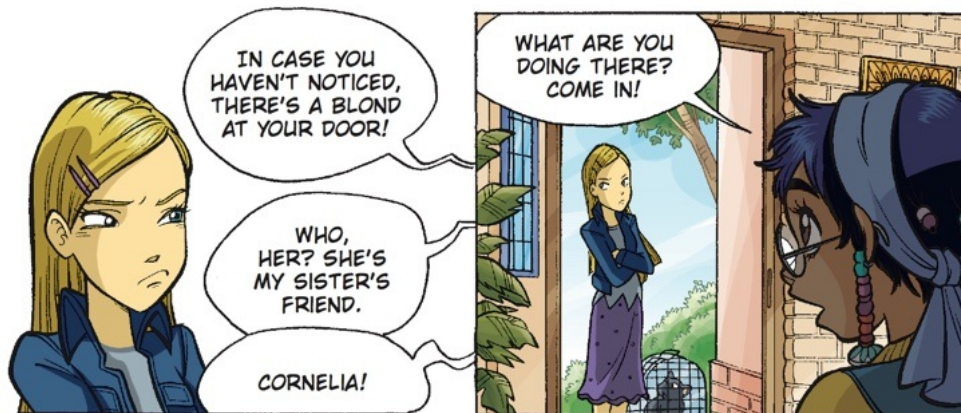


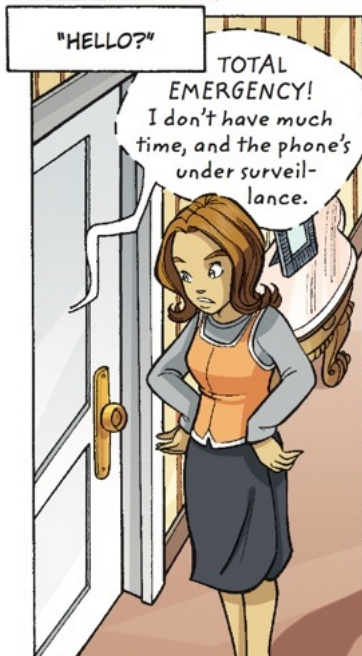


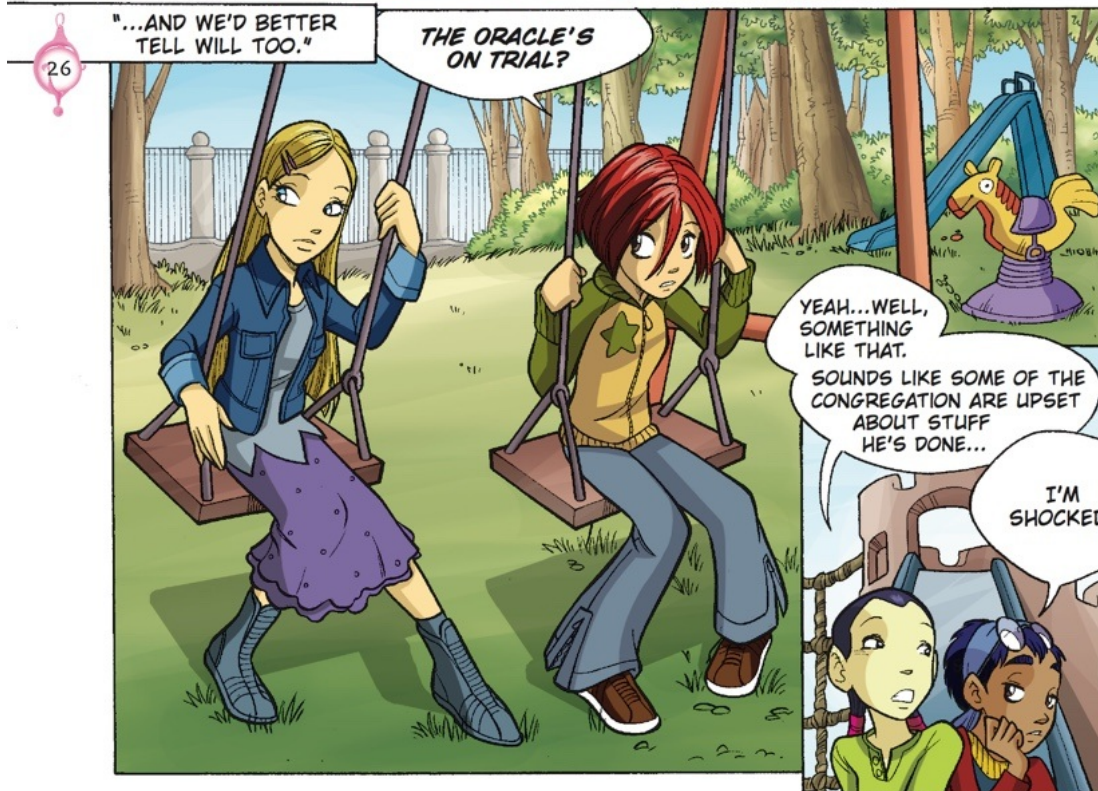
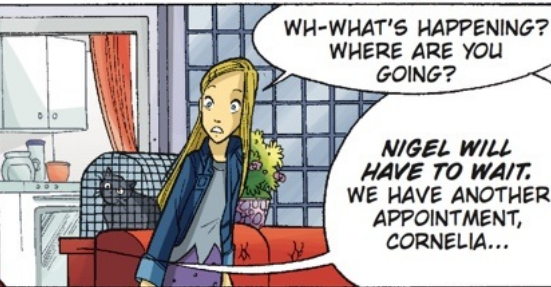
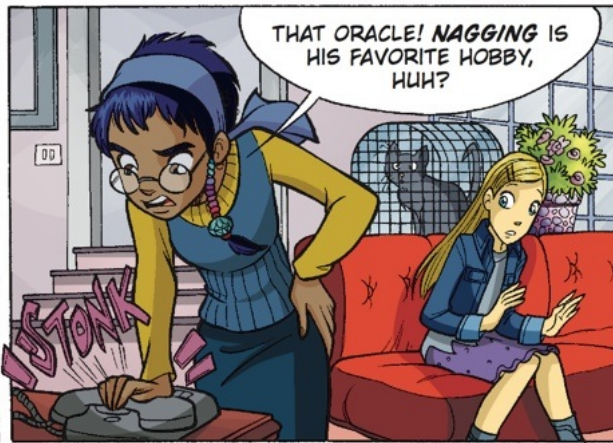


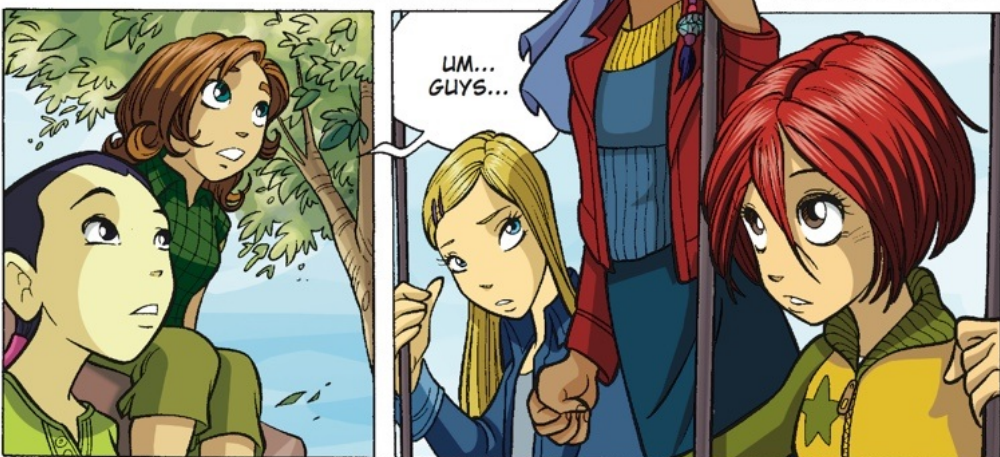
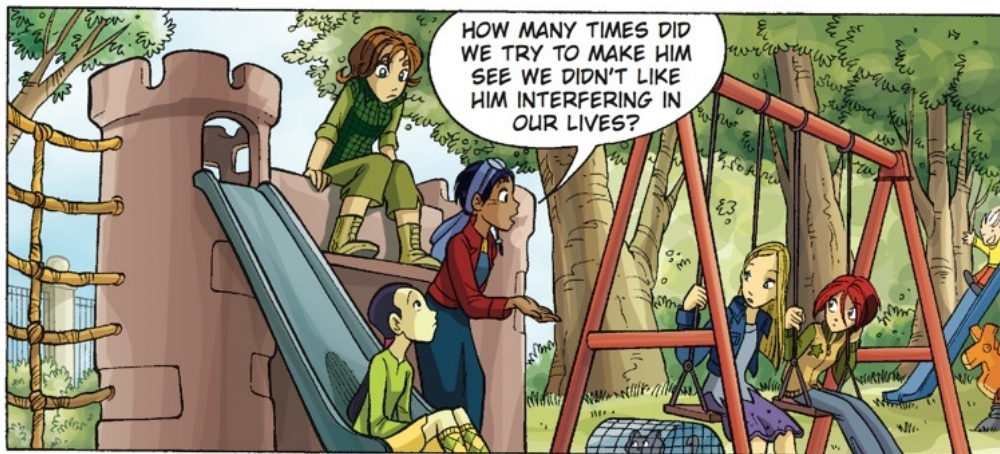
















WE'LL JUST BE ASKED TO **BE OURSELVES** AND SAY **WHAT WE FEEL LIKE SAYING**. GRANDMA GAVE HER WORD.



MAYBE...BUT IT'S A **HUGE RESPONSIBILITY**, HAY LIN, AND I CAN'T HELP BUT WORRY.

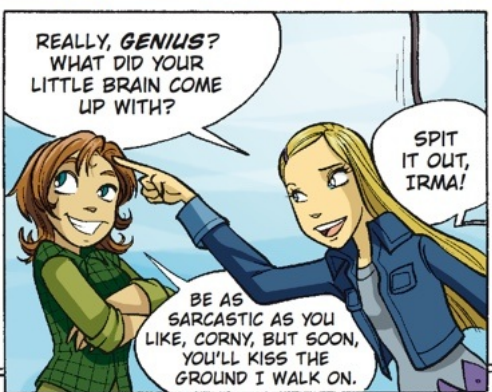
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE, WILL...



NOW THAT OUR **ASTRAL DROPS** ARE GONE, WE NEED A **COVER STORY** FOR EVERY MISSION.

I WONDER HOW WE CAN KEEP FINDING NEW EXCUSES.

CHEER UP, GUYS! AUNTIE IRMA'S ALREADY THOUGHT OF THAT.



REALLY, **GENIUS**? WHAT DID YOUR LITTLE BRAIN COME UP WITH?

SPIT IT OUT, IRMA!

BE AS SARCASTIC AS YOU LIKE, CORNY, BUT SOON, YOU'LL KISS THE GROUND I WALK ON.



WELL, MOM JUST GAVE ME THE THIRD DEGREE, AND I HAD TO MAKE UP A REALLY IMPORTANT REASON TO GO OUT...

MAYBE IT COULD BE THE **OFFICIAL ALIBI** FOR OUR **LAST-MINUTE TRIP TO KANDRAKAR**.

WHAT'D YOU TELL HER?



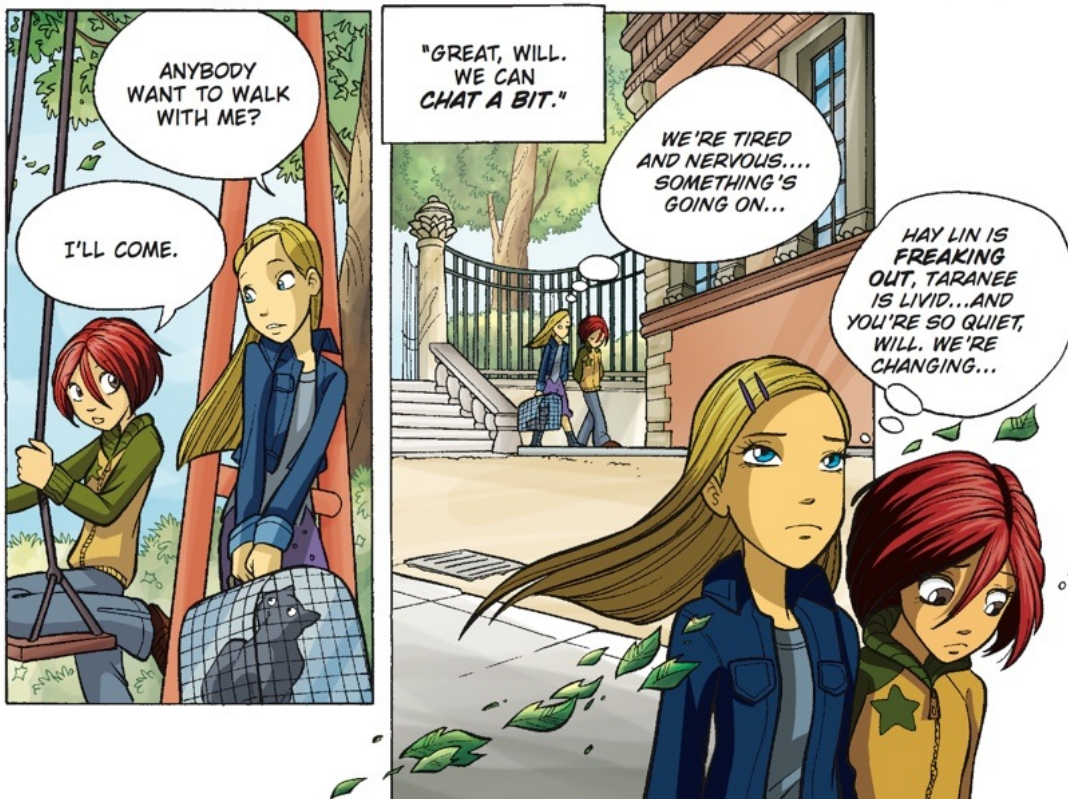
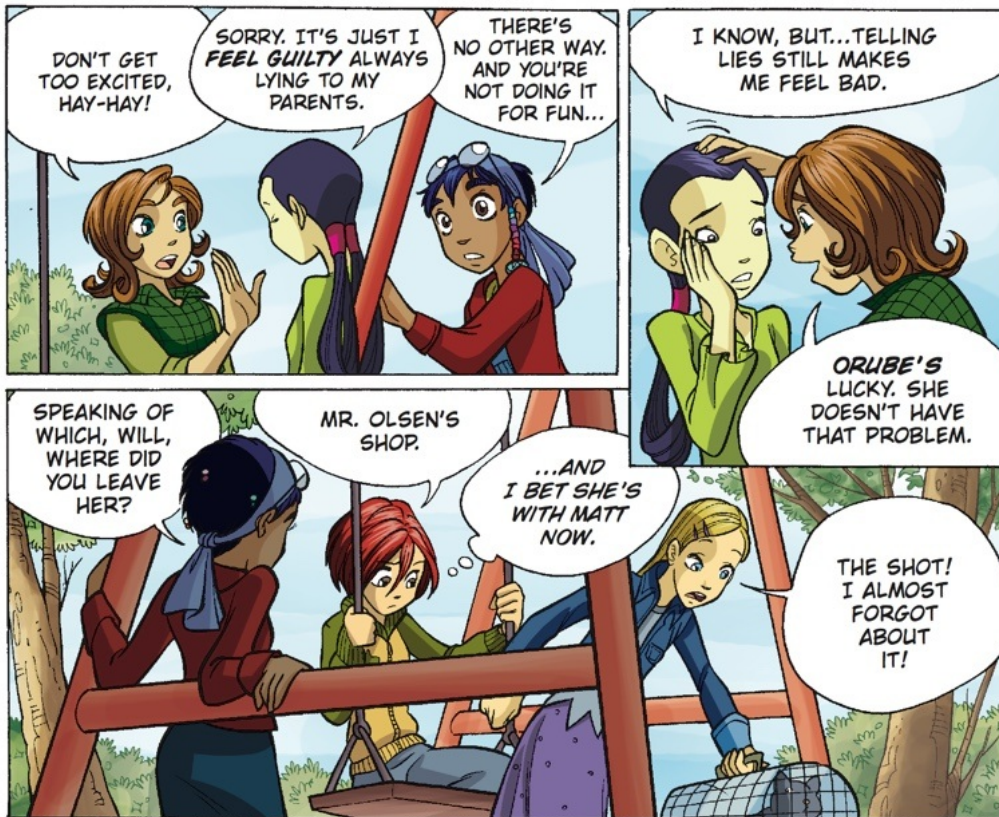
THAT WE STARTED **VOLUNTEERING** AT THE PET SHOP. COMMUNITY SERVICE TO BUMP UP OUR GRADES.

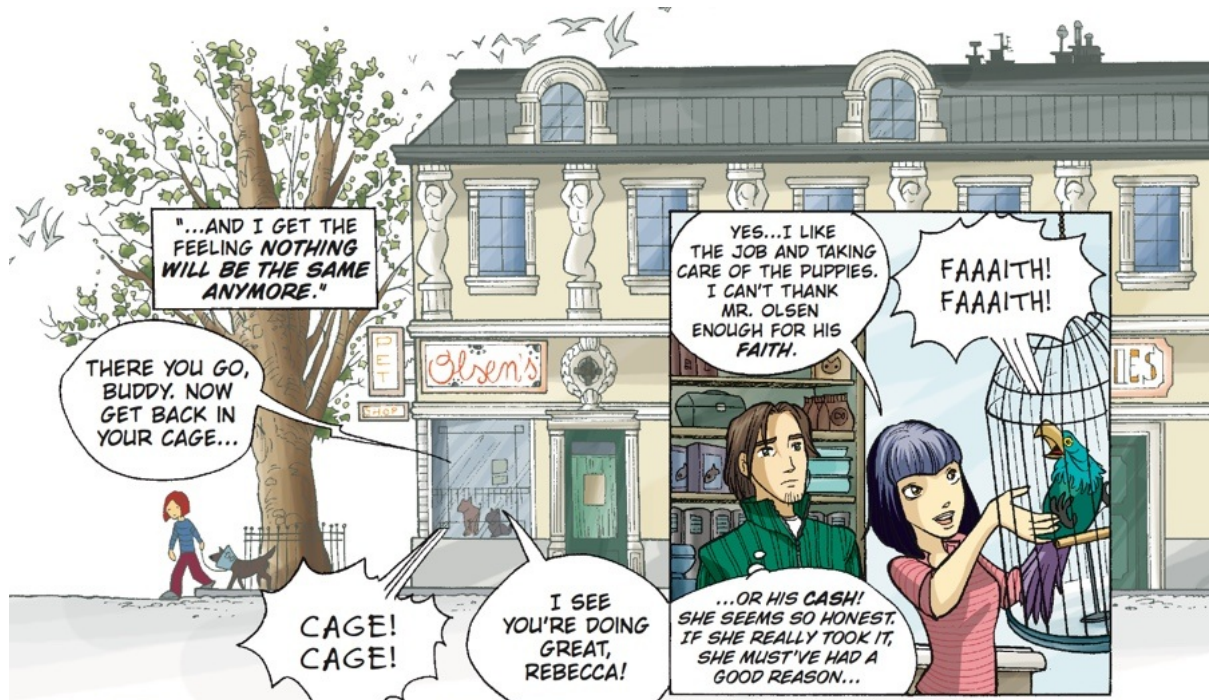
NICELY DONE, **WUNDERKIND**. I UNDERESTIMATED YOU.

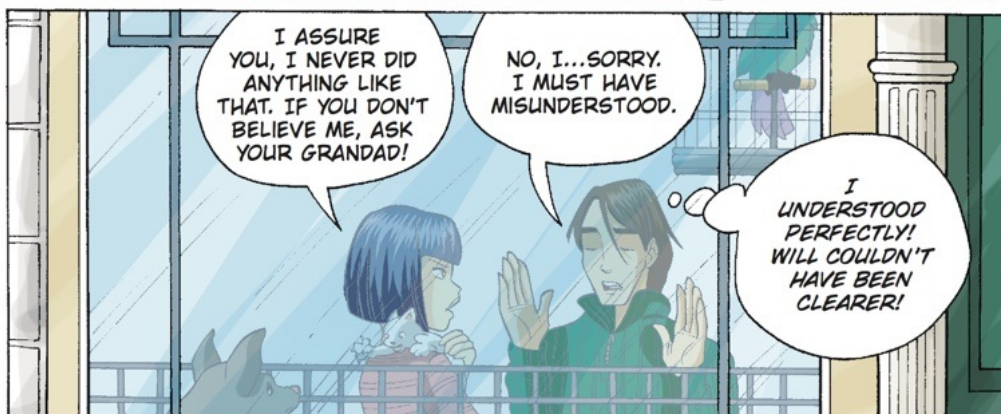
GREAT!

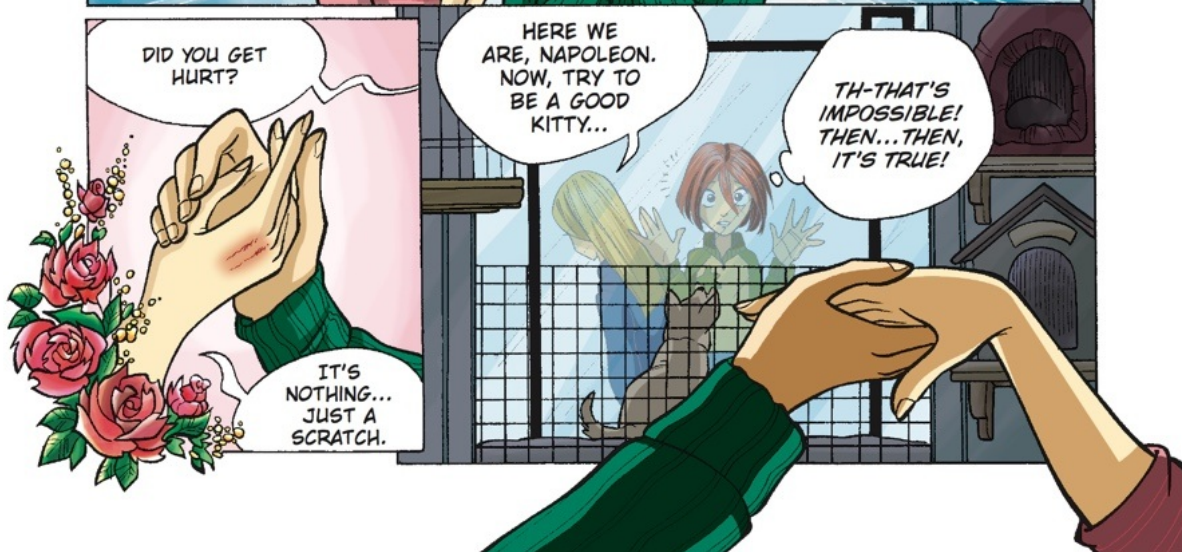
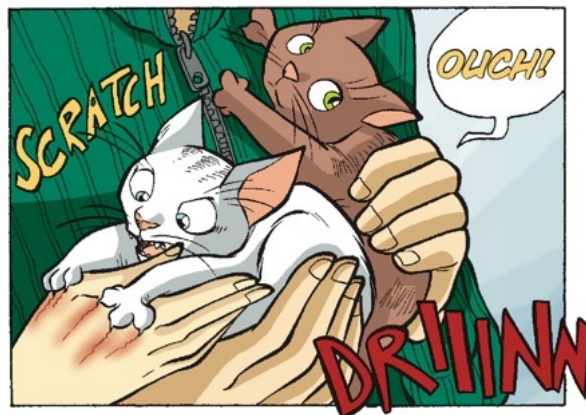
REALLY CLEVER!

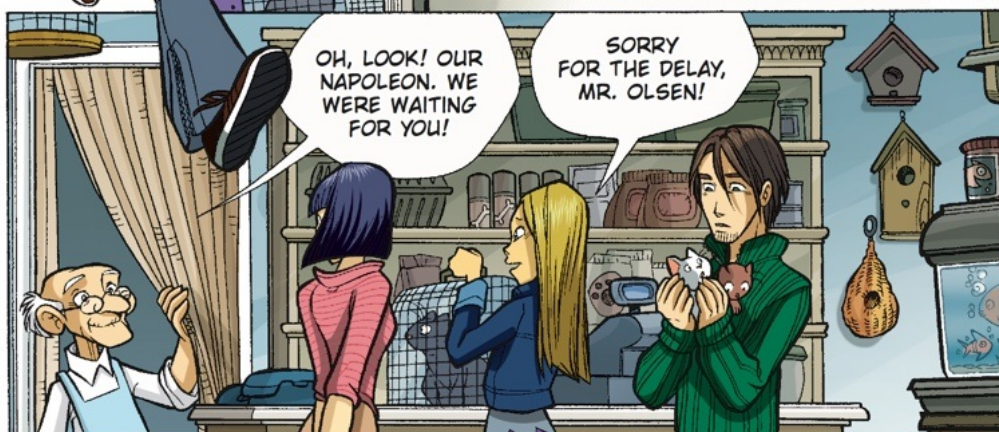
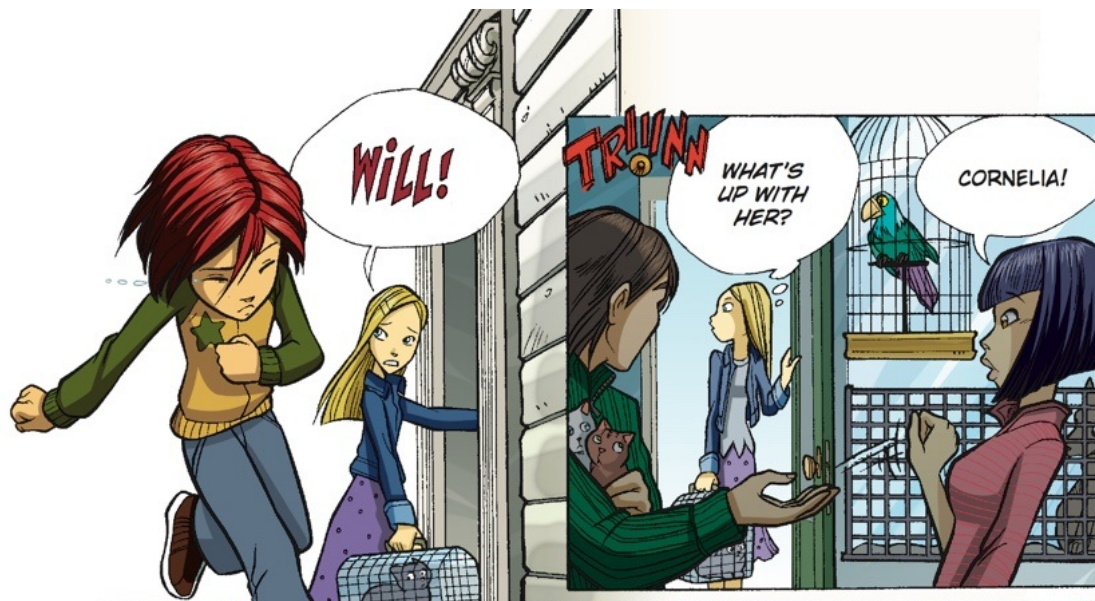
AWESOME...





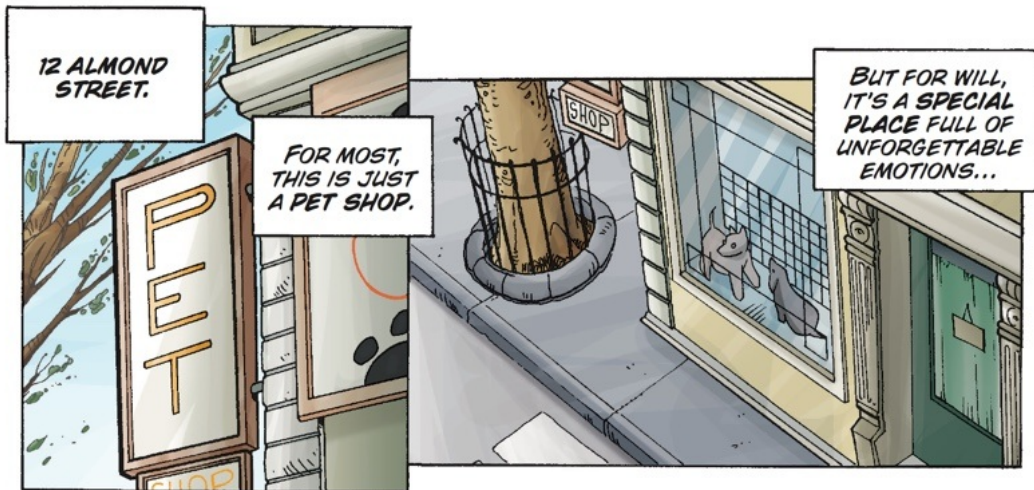






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MEMORIES FLEE,
BUT THIS ISN'T
THE TIME TO
CHASE THEM...

PUFF...
PANT!

...BECAUSE
A MUCH MORE
IMPORTANT TASK
AWAITS THE
GUARDIANS NOW.

THERE YOU ARE!
WE WERE AFRAID
YOU'D ALREADY
LEFT.

WE HEARD
THE CALL!

...AND
RAN TO LOOK
FOR YOU. IT'S
TIME, HUH?

LOOK AT
THE HEART.
IT'S NEVER
BEEN SO
BRIGHT.

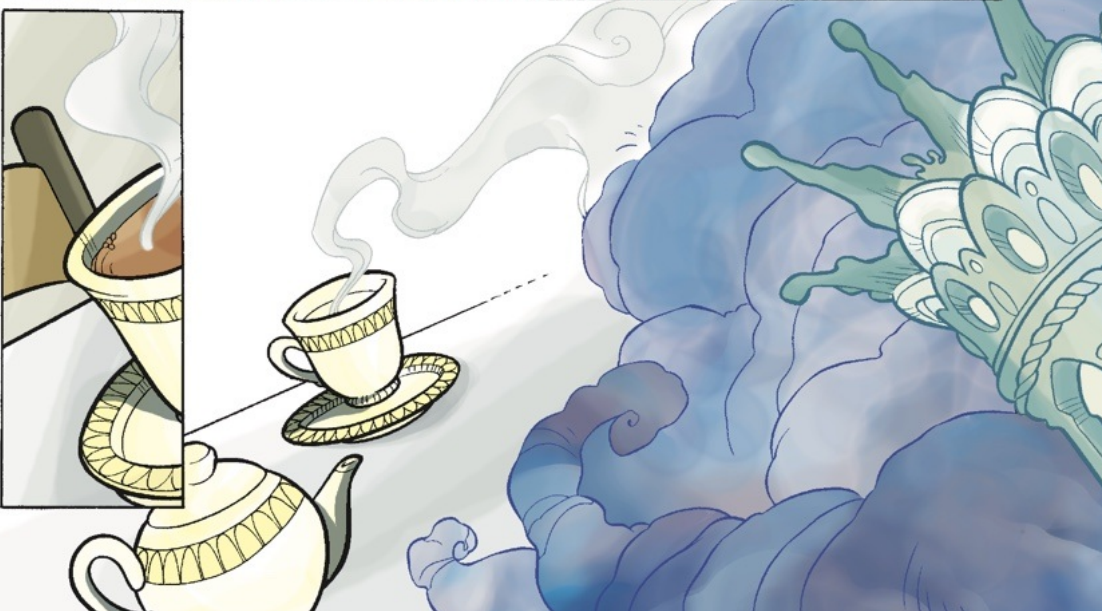
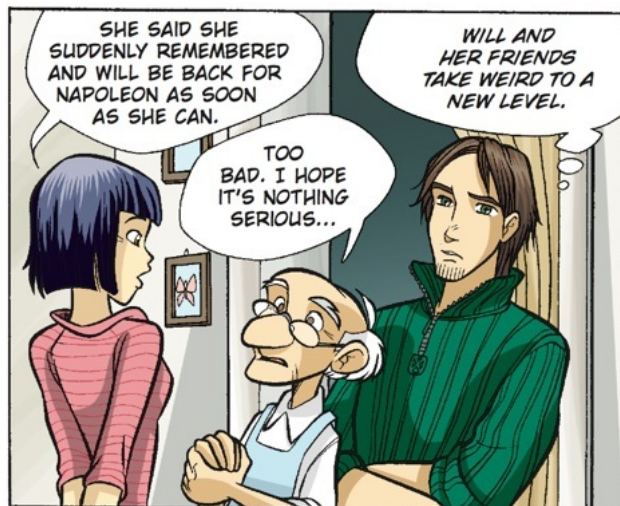
TIME TO
TRANSFORM.
AIR!

A WAVE OF
IRRESISTIBLE
CHARM!

LET'S GO
HEAT THINGS
UP AT THE
FORTRESS!

OKAY, GUYS!
LET'S STICK TOGETHER.
KANDRAKAR AWAITS
WITH...

BETTER
TO STAY
GROUNDED!



KANDRAKAR.

BLACK CLOUDS
GATHER OVER
THE FORTRESS.

THE KINGDOM OF
LIGHT FACES ITS
DARKEST HOUR.

A TENSE ATMOSPHERE
CASTS ITS SHADOW ON
THE USUALLY QUIET
HALL. THE WISE MEN
WAIT IN SILENCE...

...AND THE QUIET,
RESERVED ONE
WHOSE DUTY WAS
TO OBSERVE...

...IS NOW UNDER
OBSERVATION.



THANKS FOR COMING, GUARDIANS. THE CONGREGATION WAS WAITING FOR YOU.

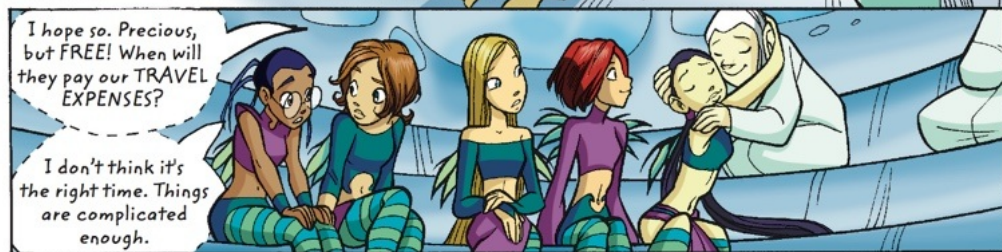
IS THIS A **BLIND DATE**, OR ARE YOU TRYING TO SAVE ON ELECTRICITY?



IRMA!

HAVE YOU LOOKED AROUND? WE'RE GONE A COUPLE DAYS, AND THEY **REVAMP THE HALL!**

PLEASE TAKE A SEAT ON THE WITNESS STAND. YOUR PRESENCE IS VERY **PRECIOUS...**



I hope so. Precious, but **FREE!** When will they pay our **TRAVEL EXPENSES?**

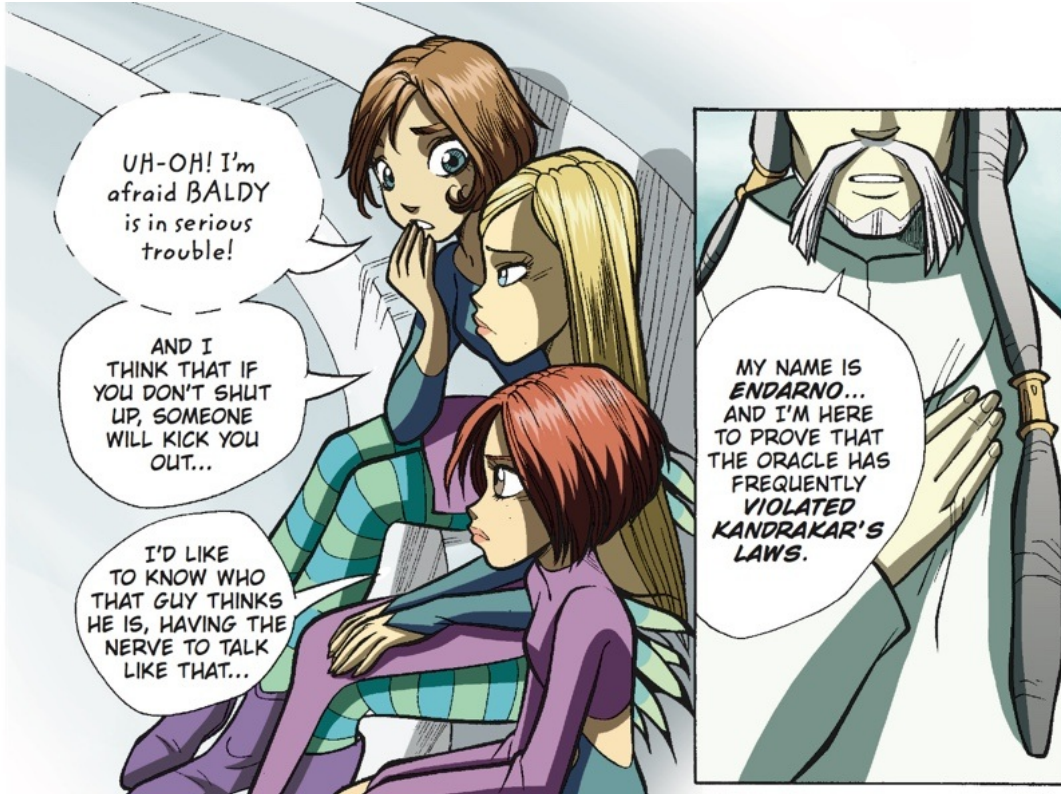
I don't think it's the right time. Things are complicated enough.



YOU'LL HELP US MAKE A DECISION VITAL FOR THE FUTURE OF KANDRAKAR...



...AND THE ORACLE!



UH-OH! I'm afraid BALDY is in serious trouble!

AND I THINK THAT IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP, SOMEONE WILL KICK YOU OUT...

I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHO THAT GUY THINKS HE IS, HAVING THE NERVE TO TALK LIKE THAT...

MY NAME IS **ENDARNO...** AND I'M HERE TO PROVE THAT THE ORACLE HAS FREQUENTLY **VIOLATED KANDRAKAR'S LAWS.**

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I'M SURE THIS OPINION IS SHARED BY **MOST OF US!**

Speak for yourself, you arrogant, cheeky...

Grandma!

...BUT MANY ARE STILL UNCERTAIN AND NEED FURTHER PROOF TO DECIDE **WHOSE SIDE THEY'RE ON.**

ENDARNO'S ACCUSATIONS HAVE MERIT, BUT THE ORACLE... HE'S ALWAYS BEEN MY LORD. HE TRUSTS ME, AND I RESPECT HIM. HOW CAN I DENY HIM?

THE CONGREGATION NEEDS YOU, GUARDIANS. THE ORACLE HAS OFTEN CALLED ON YOU TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT TASKS. I ASK YOU TO REVIEW THE MOST RECENT...

...AND **HELP US UNDERSTAND.**





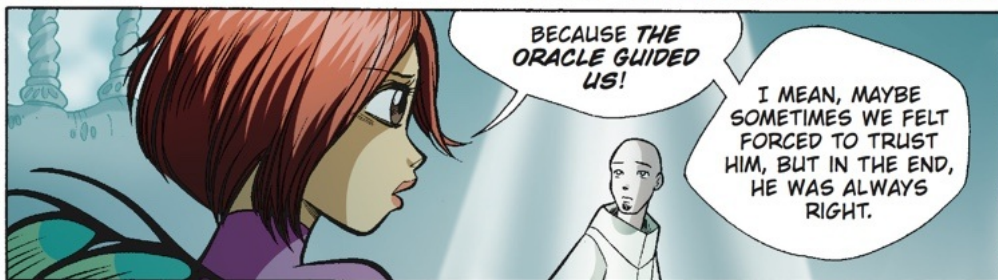
MY FRIENDS AND I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PROUD TO SERVE KANDRAKAR. WE'VE OFTEN BEEN INVOLVED IN MISSIONS WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, THAT'S TRUE...

GO, WILL!
SHOW HIM WHO
W.I.T.C.H. ARE!



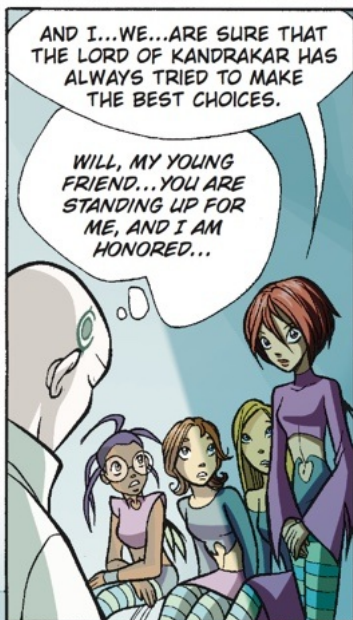
...BUT IF IT ALL WORKED OUT, IT WASN'T JUST THANKS TO US...

HEY,
HANG ON!
WHAT'S SHE
SAYING?



BECAUSE THE
ORACLE GUIDED
US!

I MEAN, MAYBE
SOMETIMES WE FELT
FORCED TO TRUST
HIM, BUT IN THE END,
HE WAS ALWAYS
RIGHT.



AND I...WE...ARE SURE THAT THE LORD OF KANDRAKAR HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO MAKE THE BEST CHOICES.

WILL, MY YOUNG
FRIEND...YOU ARE
STANDING UP FOR
ME, AND I AM
HONORED...



...BUT YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THIS ISN'T HOW YOU REALLY FEEL. I CAN SENSE IT...



...AND I KNOW ENDARNO WILL SOON REALIZE IT TOO.

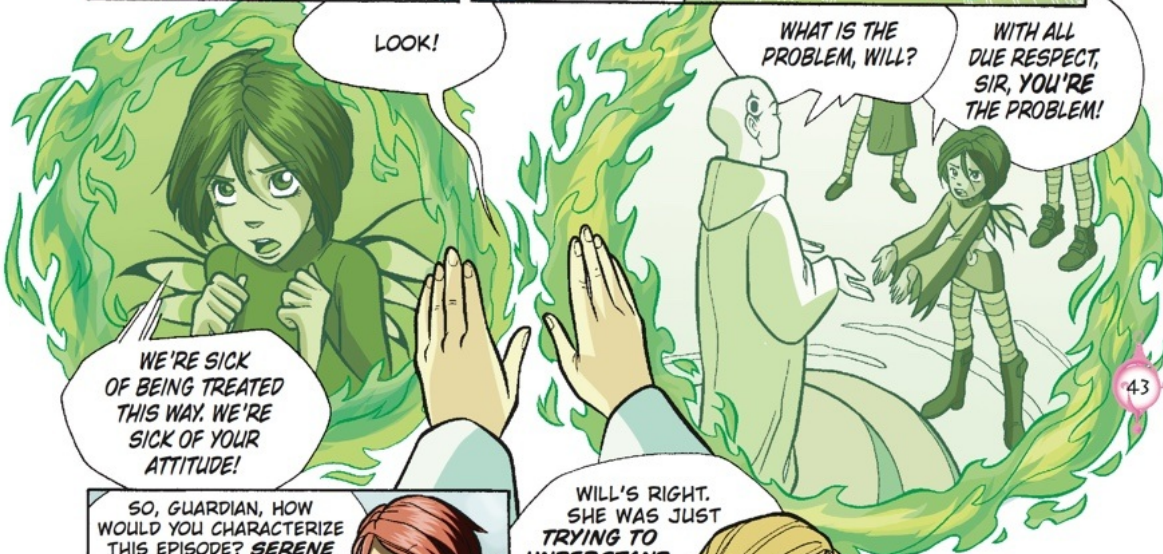
THOSE ARE
UNCALLED-FOR
EXCUSES.
I EXPECT
FACTS, NOT
OPINIONS...



...AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, **HONESTY.**



APPARENTLY, YOU NEED A LITTLE HELP TO REMEMBER.

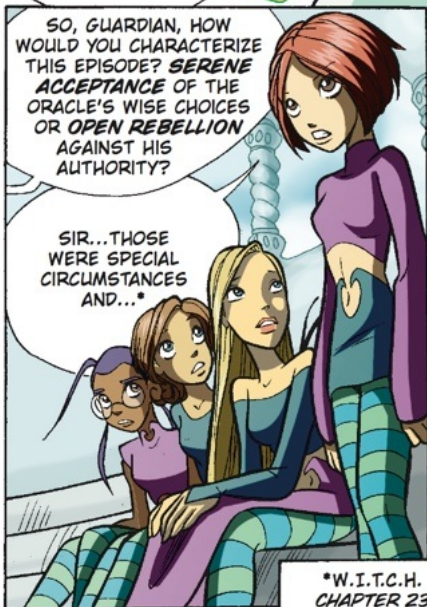


LOOK!

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM, WILL?

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR, YOU'RE THE PROBLEM!

WE'RE SICK OF BEING TREATED THIS WAY. WE'RE SICK OF YOUR ATTITUDE!



SO, GUARDIAN, HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE THIS EPISODE? **SERENE ACCEPTANCE** OF THE ORACLE'S WISE CHOICES OR **OPEN REBELLION** AGAINST HIS AUTHORITY?

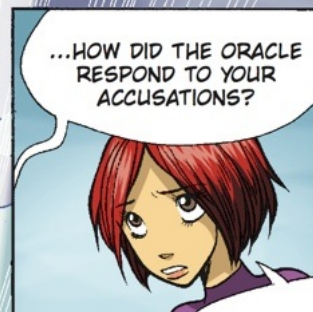
SIR...THOSE WERE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND...*

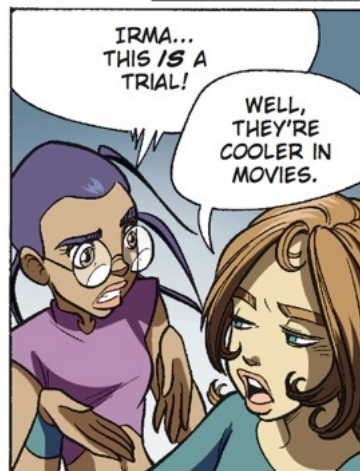
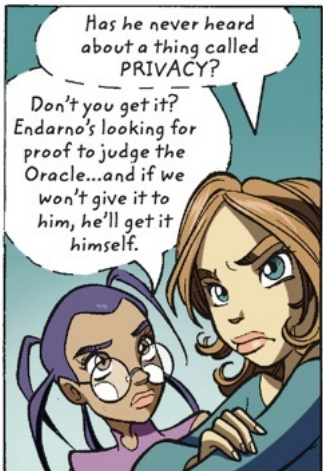
WILL'S RIGHT. SHE WAS JUST TRYING TO UNDERSTAND. CALEB HAD JUST TOLD ME HE WOULD GO BACK TO MERIDIAN AND...

*W.I.T.C.H.
CHAPTER 23



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USED BY THE HEART OF KANDRAKAR. IT BARGED INTO OUR LIVES AND LOADED US WITH DUTIES BIGGER THAN US, RESPONSIBILITIES WE NEVER ASKED FOR.

USED BY THE ORACLE. WE WERE PUPPETS IN HIS HANDS, AND WHAT DID WE GET? A GIFT WE DIDN'T ASK FOR. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THAT IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE.

AND WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, RIGHT NOW, I FEEL **USED BY YOU, ENDARNO!** FORCED TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF A WORLD NOT MY OWN.

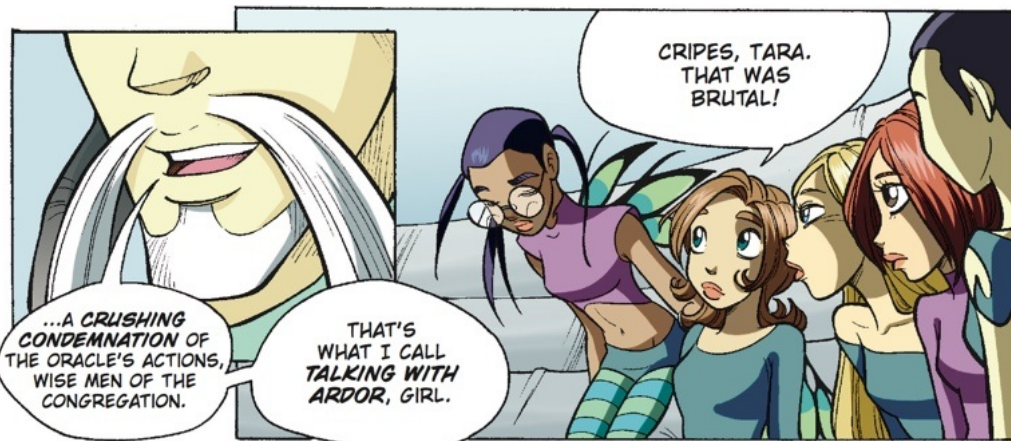
TARANEE, I THOUGHT YOUR RESENTMENT TOWARD ME HAD FADED, BUT I WAS WRONG.

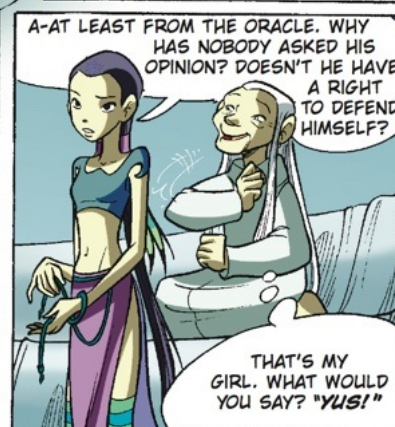
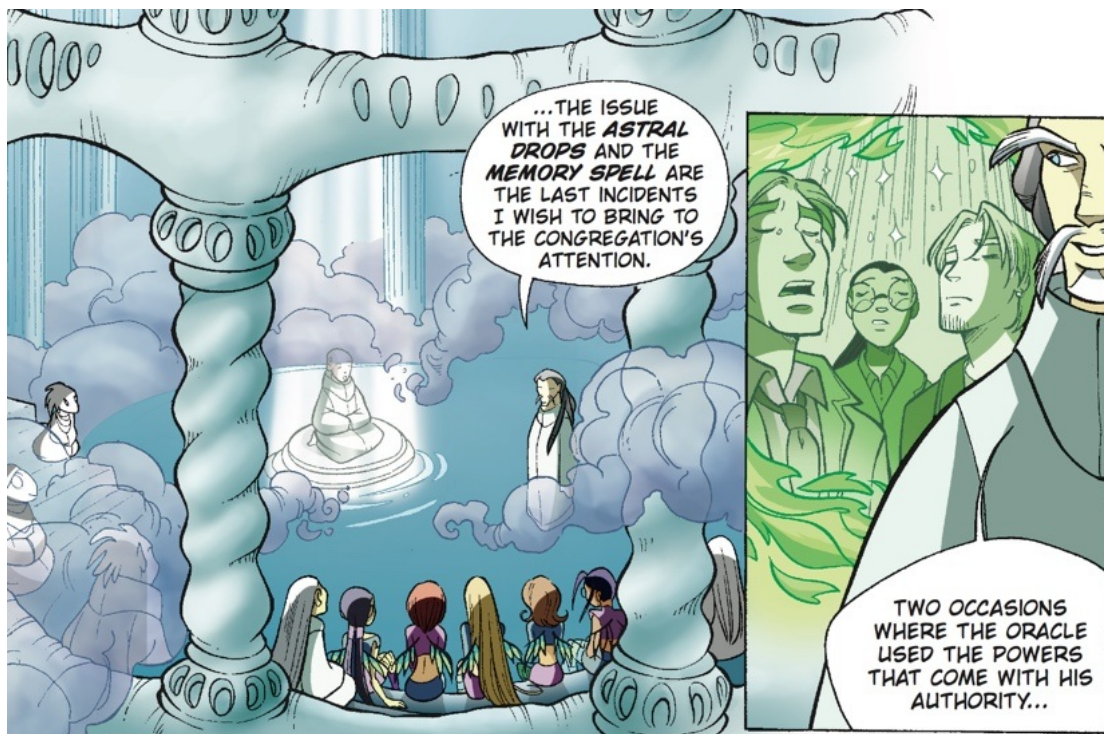
"WHY DID YOU HOLD ALL THIS PAIN INSIDE? WE COULD HAVE TALKED ABOUT IT..."

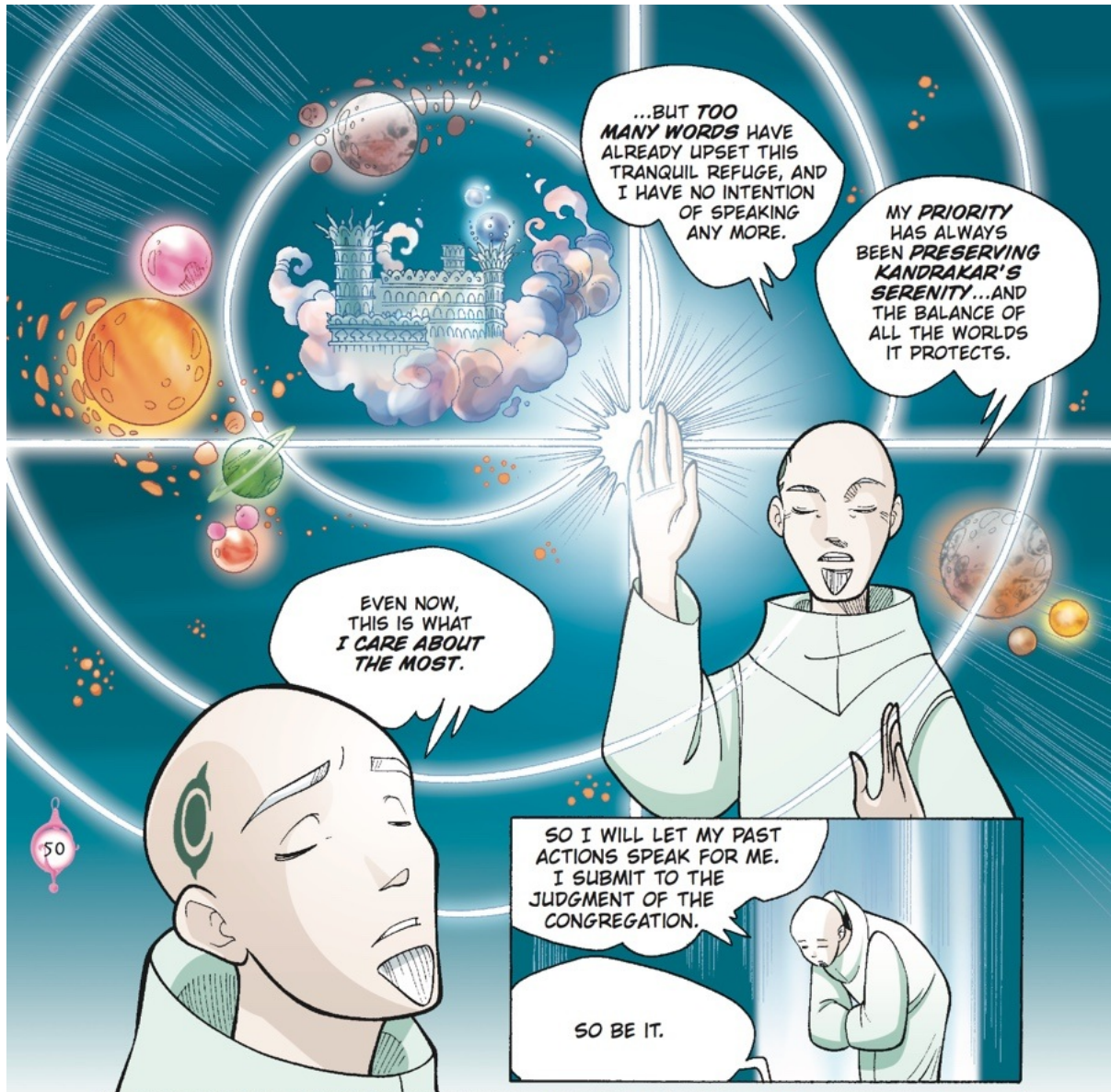
"I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU THERE IS NO MALICE IN KANDRAKAR'S ACTIONS. THAT YOU ARE NOT PUPPETS, BUT INSTRUMENTS..."

"...AND THAT BEING CHOSEN AS GUARDIANS MEANS ACTING TO PRESERVE THE BALANCE OF ALL THINGS..."

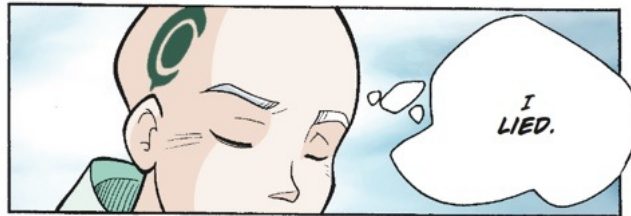
"BUT NOW IT IS **TOO LATE**. YOUR STATEMENT IS PROOF OF GREAT HONESTY AND COURAGE, BUT ALSO..."











I
LIED.



A MOMENT
AGO, BEFORE
THE WHOLE
CONGREGATION, FOR
THE FIRST TIME, I
LIED TO THE WISE
MEN...AND TO
MYSELF!

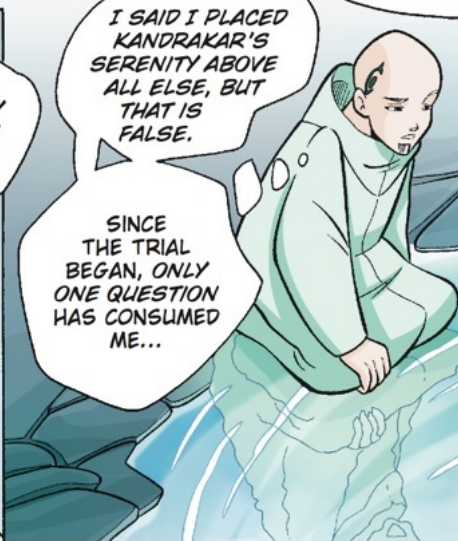


AND WITH THAT
LIE, I OPENED
MY HEART TO THE
DARKNESS THAT
SURROUNDS THE
FORTRESS.

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MY SPIRIT IS MURKY,
TORMENTED BY THE MEMORY
OF THE UNTRUTHFUL WORDS
I DARED SPEAK.



I SAID I PLACED
KANDRAKAR'S
SERENITY ABOVE
ALL ELSE, BUT
THAT IS
FALSE.

SINCE
THE TRIAL
BEGAN, ONLY
ONE QUESTION
HAS CONSUMED
ME...



WHAT WILL
BECOME OF
ME?

"I SENSE THE **THREAT CLOSING IN** WITH GREAT STRIDES BUT CANNOT STOP IT OR GUESS WHAT SHAPE IT WILL TAKE TO ATTACK ME..."

"...SOMETIMES, BEING THE ORACLE ALMOST FEELS LIKE A **CURSE**."

...AN ORACLE WHO **CAN'T** GIVE SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATIONS TO HIS GUARDIANS FOR THEIR MISSIONS...

AN ORACLE WHO FORSAKES HIS DETACHED ROLE AND USES HIS POWERS TO **MEDDLE** IN THE COURSE OF EVENTS...

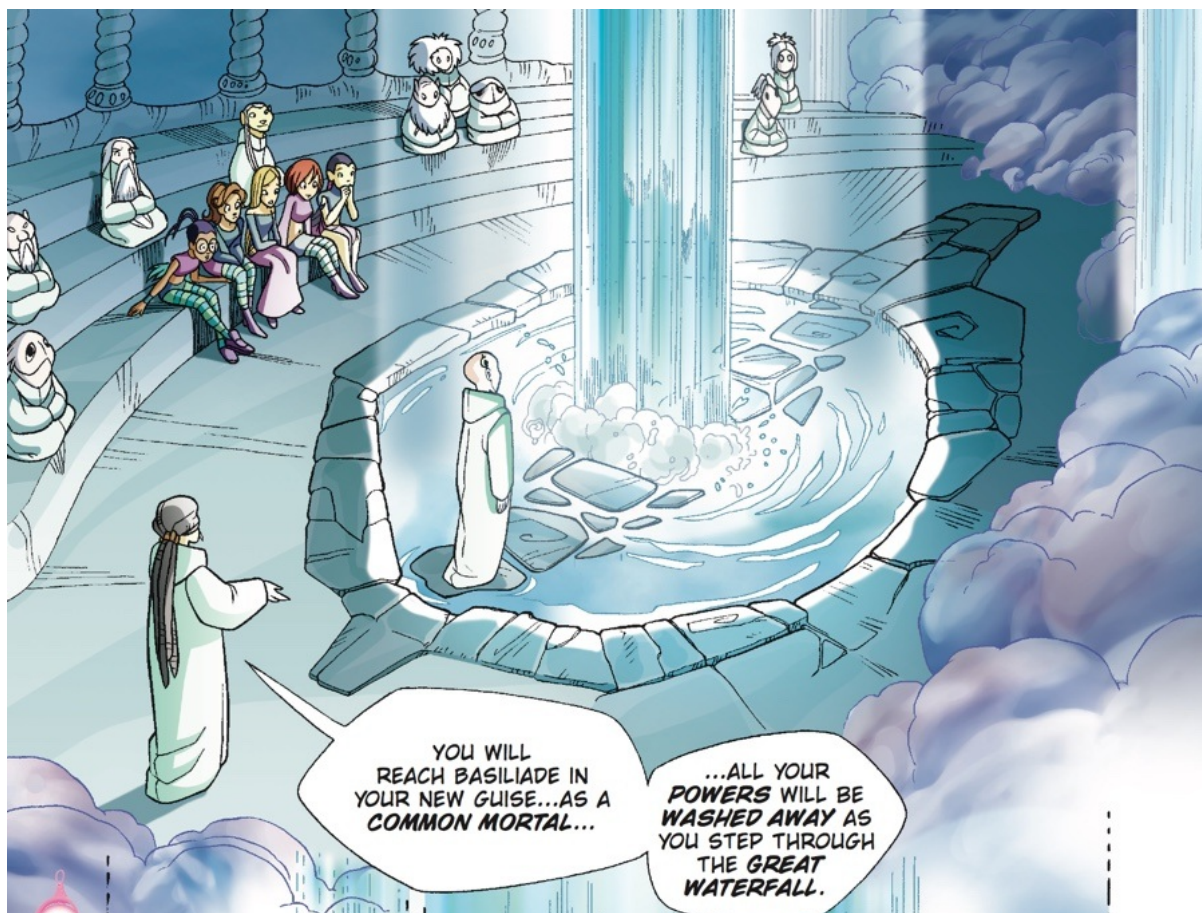
TO PREVENT FUTURE MISCONDUCT, A **FITTING SENTENCE** HAS BEEN DECIDED...

...IS AN ORACLE **UNWORTHY** OF THE TITLE.

YOU WILL BE **EXILED**, LORD OF KANDRAKAR, TO THE WORLD FROM WHICH YOU CAME... **BASILIADE!**

TOO OFTEN, YOU HAVE INAPPROPRIATELY **BEHAVED LIKE A SIMPLE HUMAN!**

I APOLOGIZE, MY LORD. I BEGGED ENDARNO TO SPARE YOU THIS **PUBLIC HUMILIATION...** BUT MY WORDS FELL ON DEAF EARS.

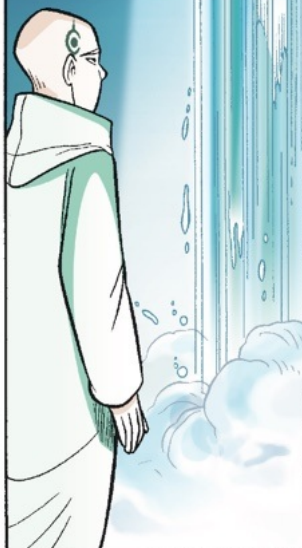


YOU WILL
REACH BASILADE IN
YOUR NEW GUISE...AS A
COMMON MORTAL...

...ALL YOUR
POWERS WILL BE
WASHED AWAY AS
YOU STEP THROUGH
THE **GREAT**
WATERFALL.

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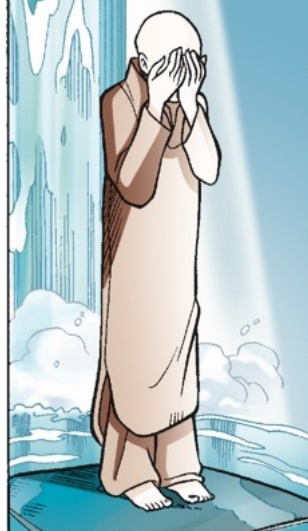
SOME BARRIERS
SEEM IMPOSSIBLE
TO CROSS...

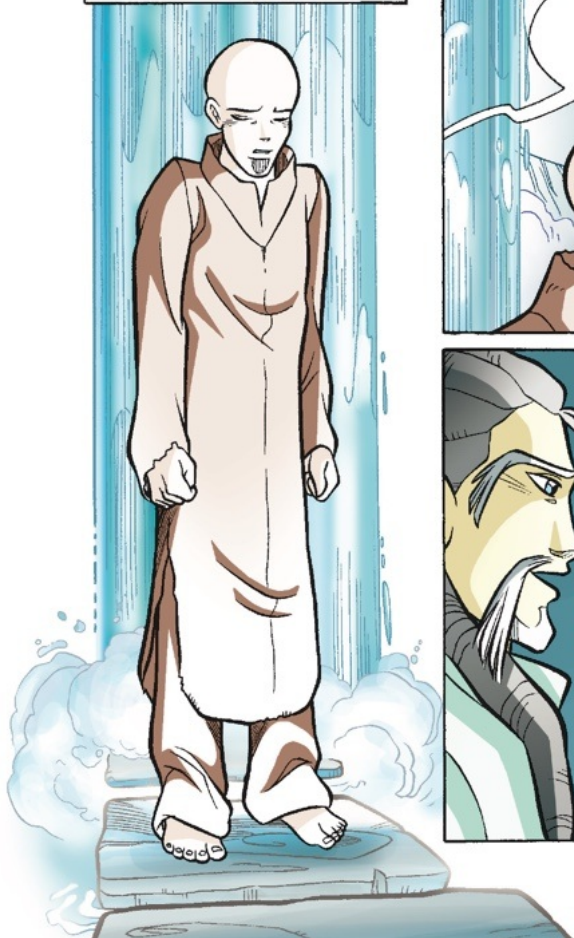
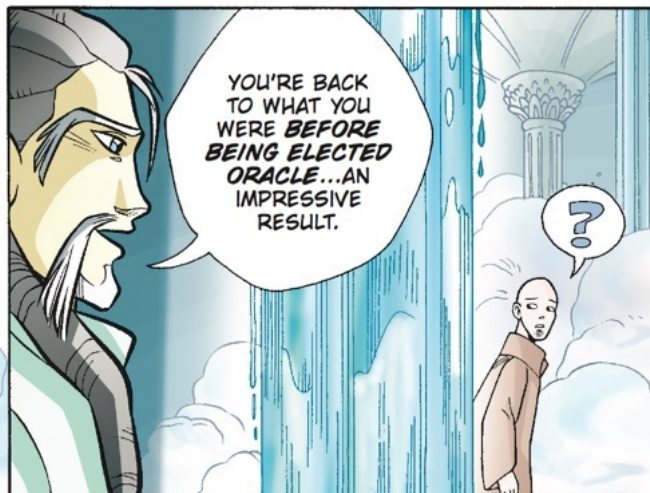
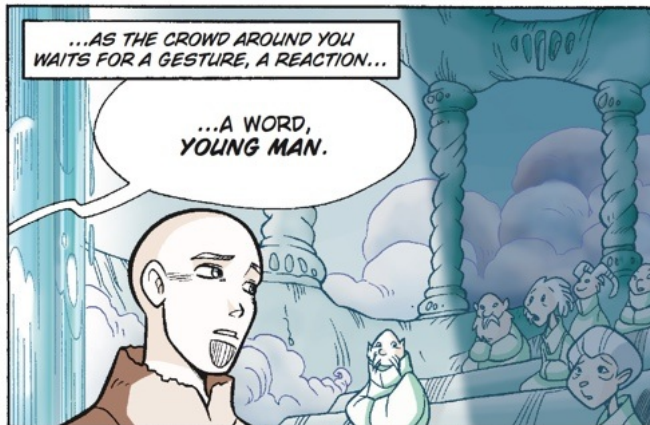
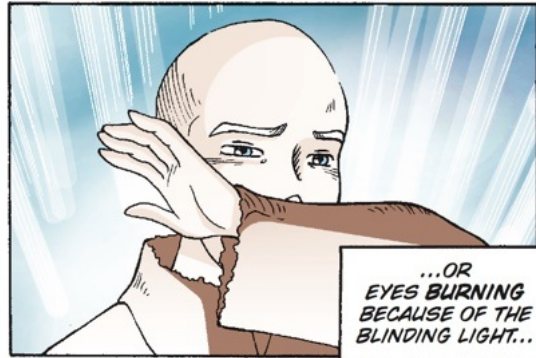
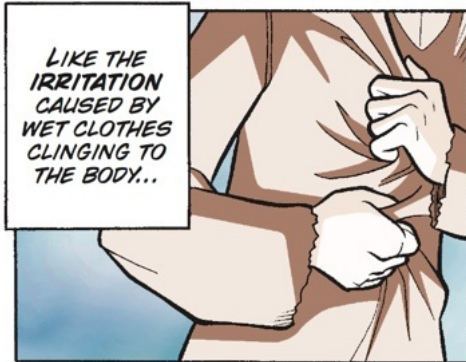


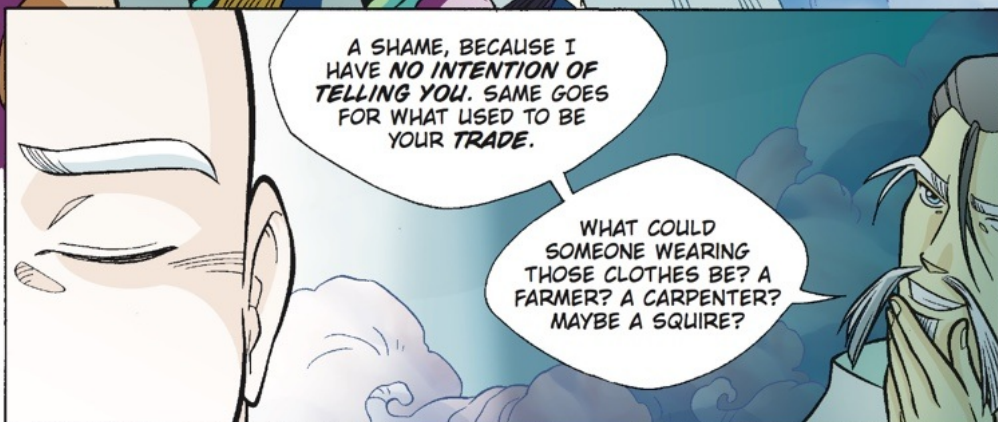
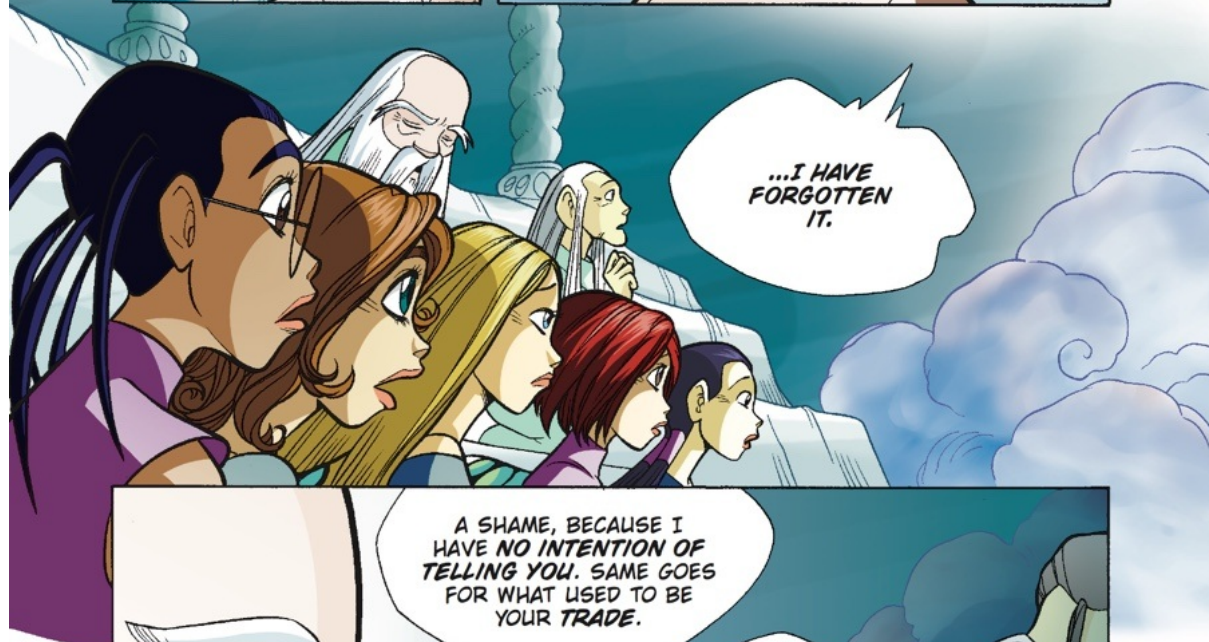
...BUT WE
OVERCOME THEM WITH
SURPRISING EASE...

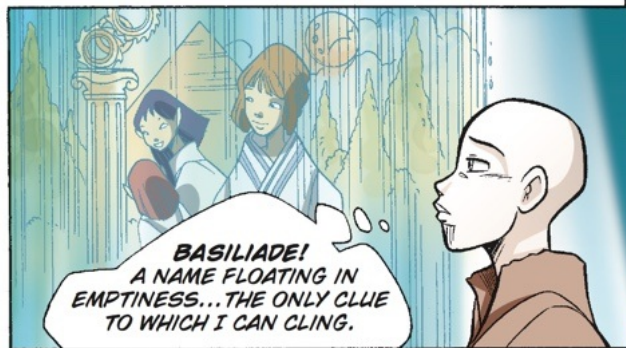
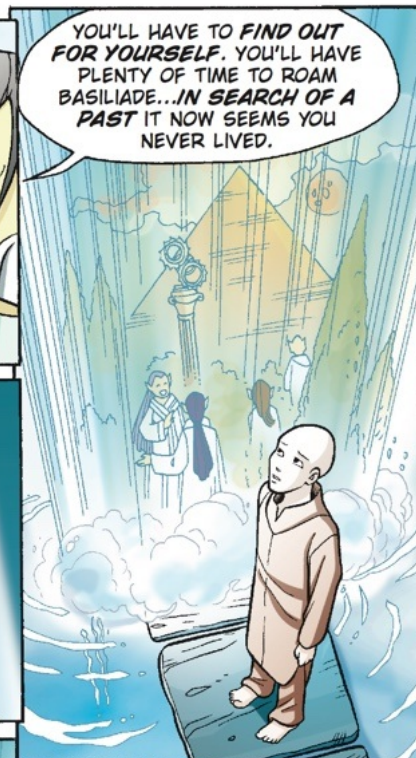
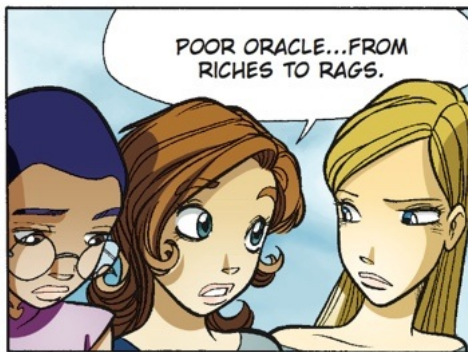


...BECAUSE THINKING
ABOUT THE CHALLENGES
OF THE PAST GIVES US
THE COURAGE TO FACE
AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.









"...AND THE SAME GOES
FOR KANDRAKAR."

I MEAN, IT'S
OUTRAGEOUS! DID
YOU SEE HOW HE
DISSED HIM?

THIS TIME,
YOU'RE RIGHT,
CORNY!

HE TREATED HIM LIKE
DIRT, TAKING ADVANTAGE
OF THE FACT THAT HIS
POWERS ARE...**WATER
UNDER THE
BRIDGE!**

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT
SOMEDAY I'D BE **ROOTING
FOR THE ORACLE?**

DON'T CALL
HIM THAT. HE'S
**NOT THE ORACLE
ANYMORE, IRMA,**
AND ALL THIS
HAPPENED...

DON'T
FEEL GUILTY,
TARANEE.

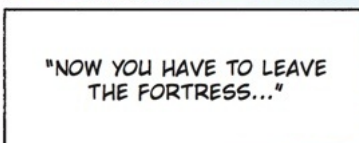
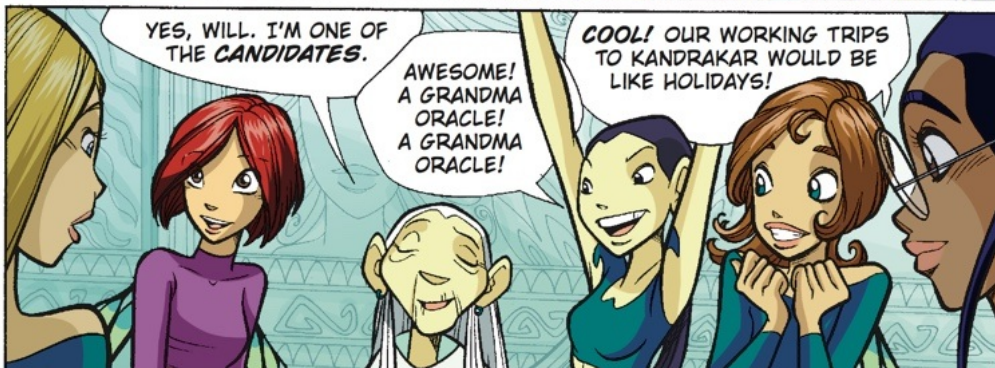
OR YOU,
GIRLS. NO
REMORSE,
PLEASE.

GRANDMA!

YOU HAD A TOUGH
TASK TO DO, WHICH YOU
FACED BRAVELY...EACH
IN HER OWN WAY...

...BUT WE DON'T
ALWAYS SEE THE
RESULTS OF OUR
ACTIONS RIGHT AWAY,
AND I'M AFRAID
IT WILL TAKE
SOME TIME.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?



"HEATHERFIELD
NEEDS ITS
YOUNGSTERS."



OOF! GUYS,
DON'T TELL
ME YOU'RE NOT
EXHAUSTED
TOO.



I...CAN'T STOP
THINKING ABOUT
THE ORACLE. I FEEL
RESPONSIBLE.

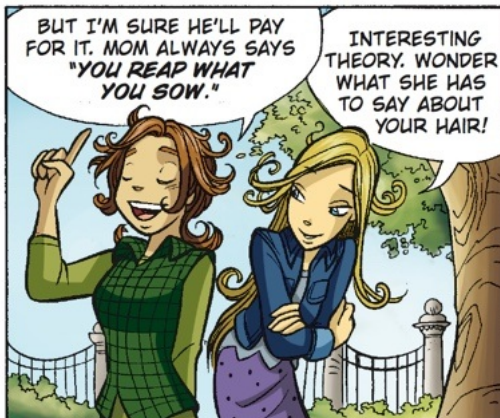
TARANEE, DON'T.
YOU HEARD
GRANDMA. IF
ANYONE HAS TO
FEEL **GUILTY** FOR
HURTING HIM, IT'S
NOT YOU...



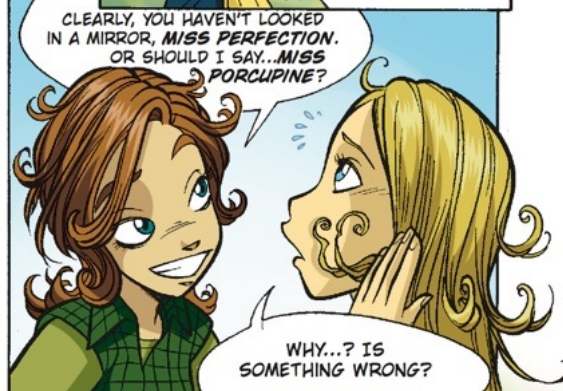
RIGHT.
THE **BAD**
GUY IS THAT
ENDARNO
DUDE.

BUT I'M SURE HE'LL PAY
FOR IT. MOM ALWAYS SAYS
"YOU REAP WHAT
YOU SOW."

INTERESTING
THEORY. WONDER
WHAT SHE HAS
TO SAY ABOUT
YOUR HAIR!



CLEARLY, YOU HAVEN'T LOOKED
IN A MIRROR, **MISS PERFECTION**.
OR SHOULD I SAY...**MISS**
PORCUPINE?



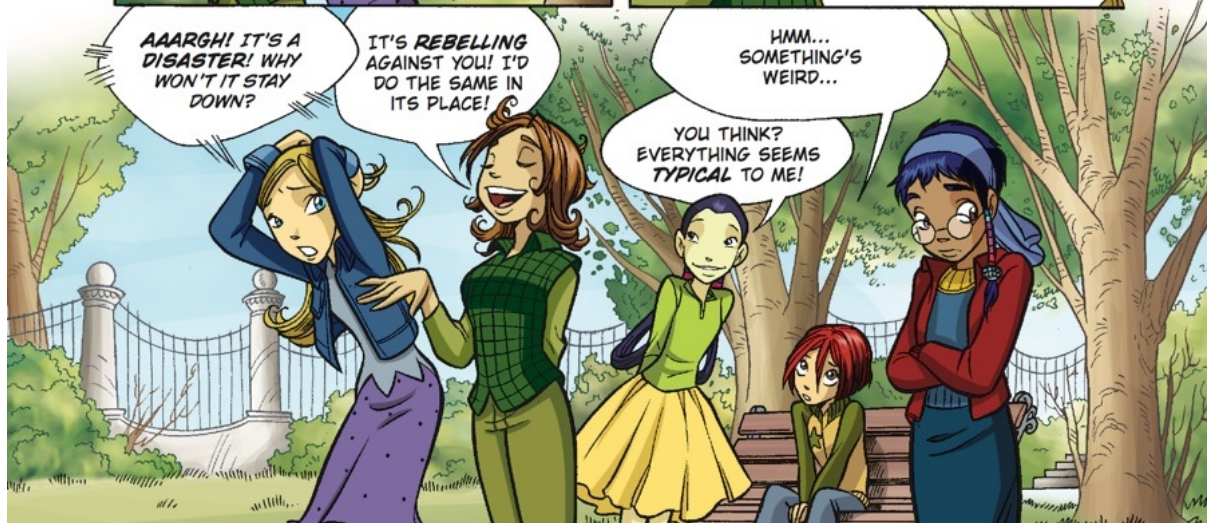
WHY...? IS
SOMETHING WRONG?

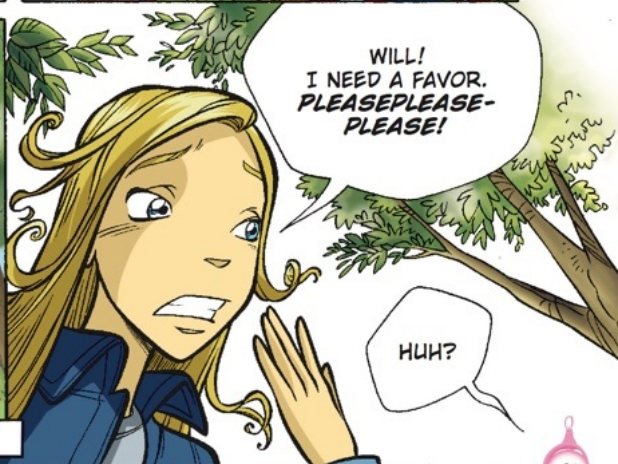
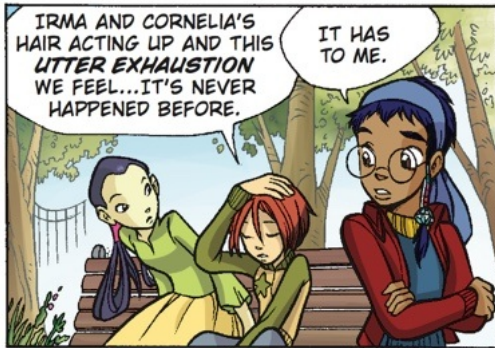
AAARGH! IT'S A
DISASTER! WHY
WON'T IT STAY
DOWN?

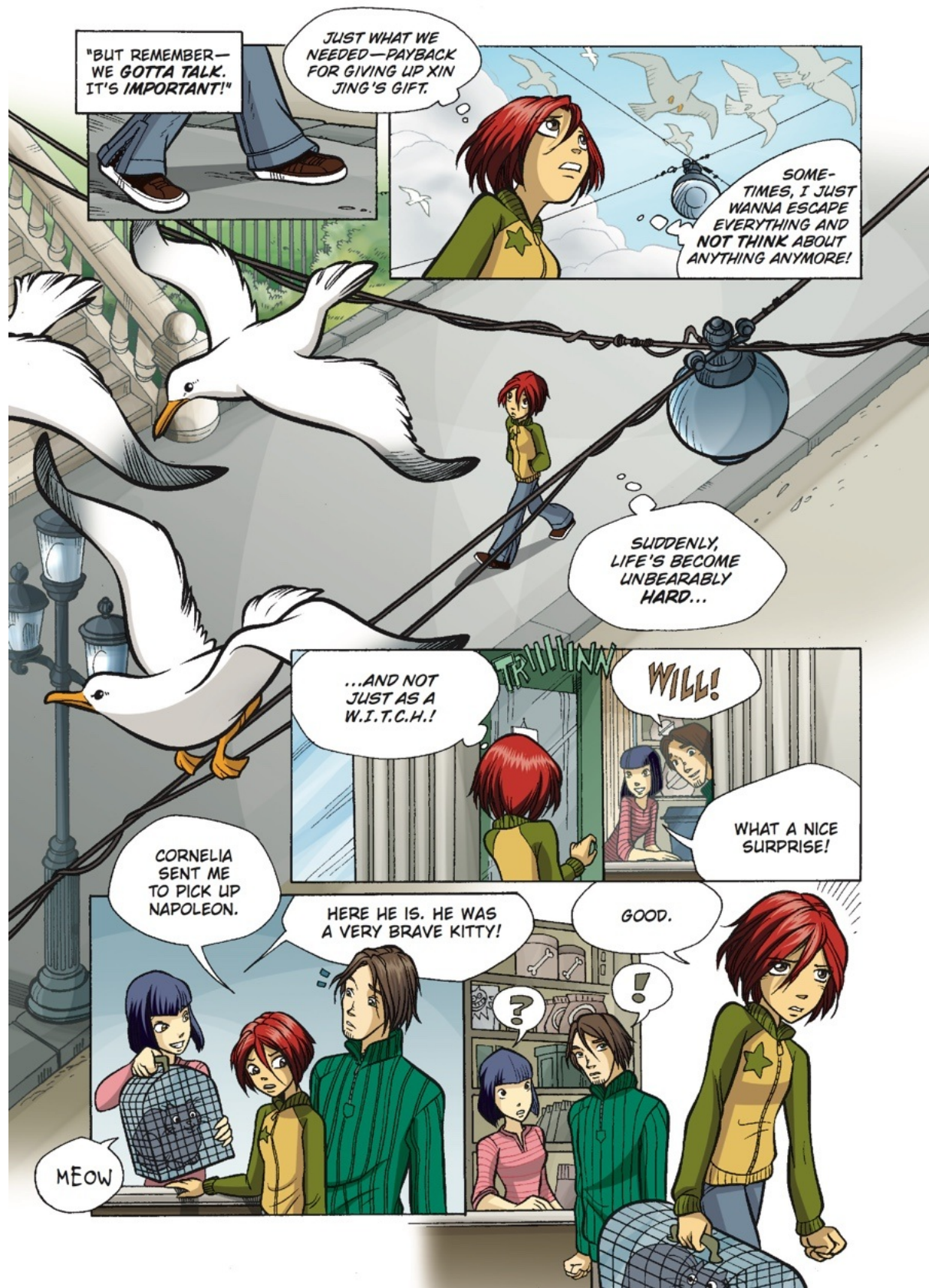
IT'S **REBELLING**
AGAINST YOU! I'D
DO THE SAME IN
ITS PLACE!

HMM...
SOMETHING'S
WEIRD...

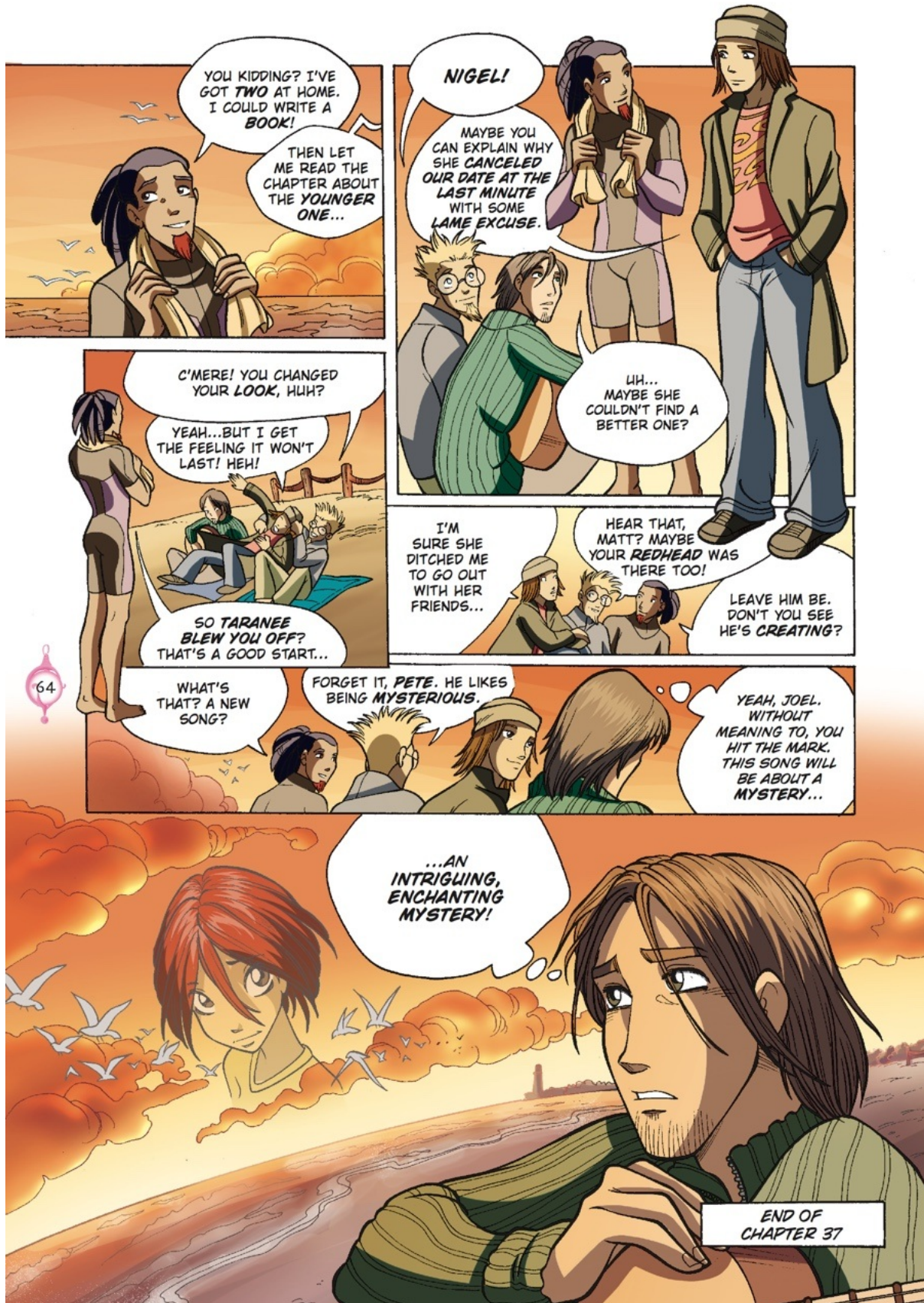
YOU THINK?
EVERYTHING SEEMS
TYPICAL TO ME!











YOU KIDDING? I'VE GOT **TWO** AT HOME. I COULD WRITE A **BOOK!**

THEN LET ME READ THE CHAPTER ABOUT THE **YOUNGER ONE...**

NIGEL!

MAYBE YOU CAN EXPLAIN WHY SHE **CANCELED OUR DATE AT THE LAST MINUTE** WITH SOME **LAME EXCUSE.**

UH... MAYBE SHE COULDN'T FIND A BETTER ONE?

C'MERE! YOU CHANGED YOUR **LOOK, HUH?**

YEAH...BUT I GET THE FEELING IT WON'T LAST! HEH!

SO **TARANEE BLEW YOU OFF?** THAT'S A GOOD START...

I'M SURE SHE DITCHED ME TO GO OUT WITH HER FRIENDS...

HEAR THAT, MATT? MAYBE YOUR **REDHEAD** WAS THERE TOO!

LEAVE HIM BE. DON'T YOU SEE HE'S **CREATING?**

WHAT'S THAT? A NEW SONG?

FORGET IT, **PETE.** HE LIKES BEING **MYSTERIOUS.**

YEAH, JOEL. WITHOUT MEANING TO, YOU HIT THE MARK. THIS SONG WILL BE ABOUT A **MYSTERY...**

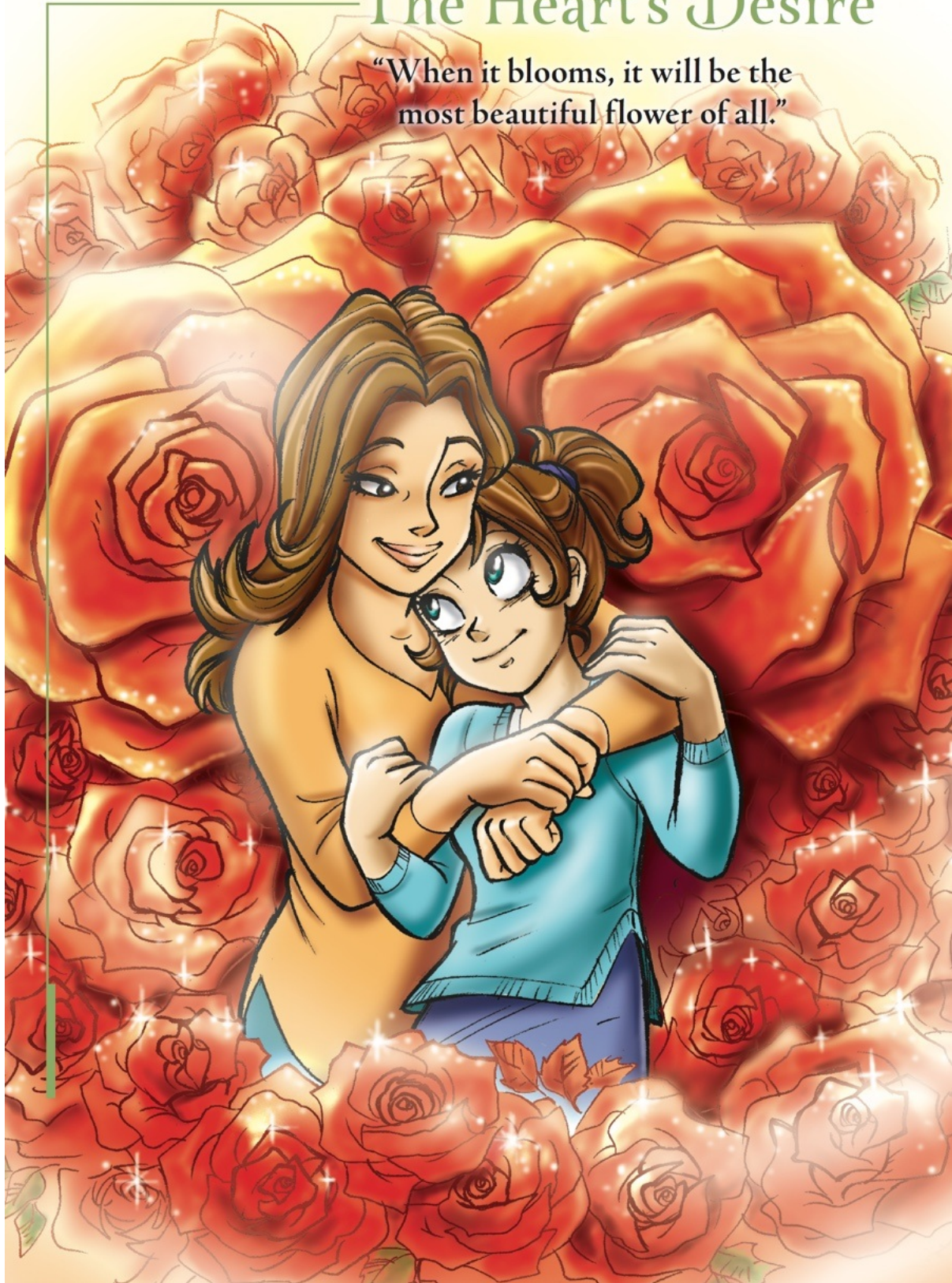
...AN **INTRIGUING, ENCHANTING MYSTERY!**

END OF CHAPTER 37

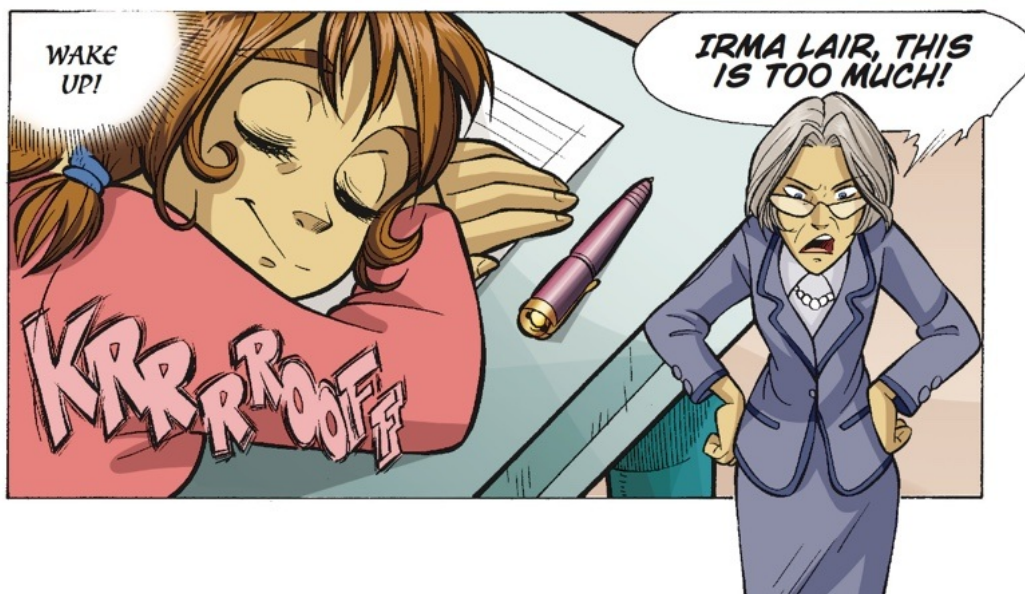
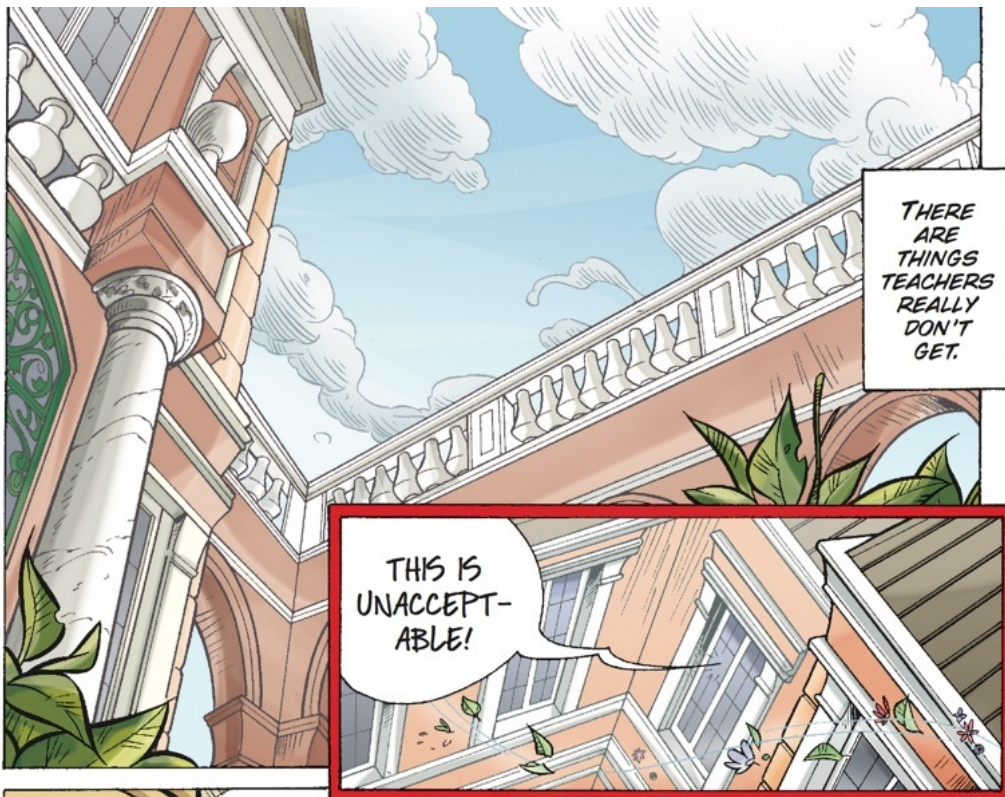


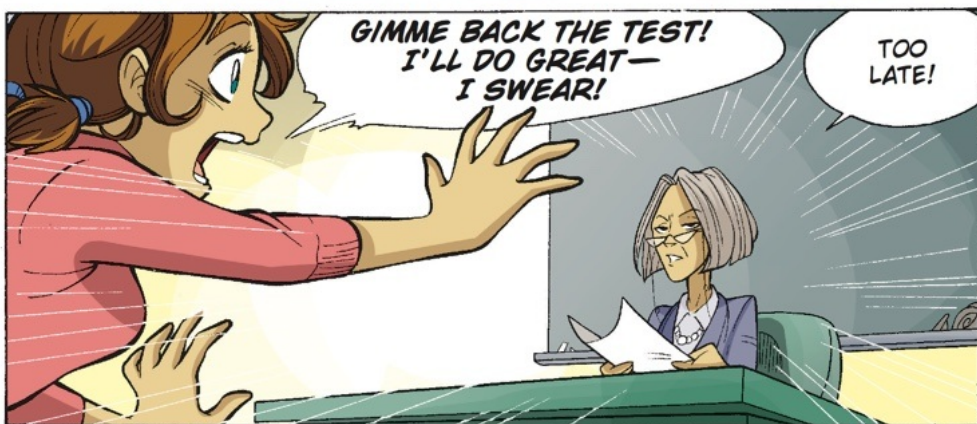
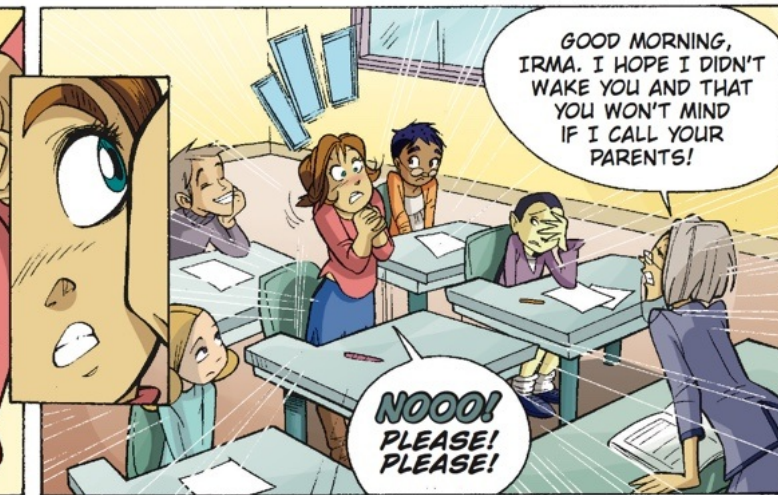
The Heart's Desire

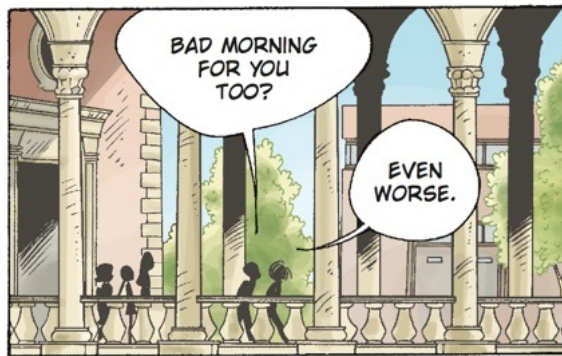
"When it blooms, it will be the
most beautiful flower of all."



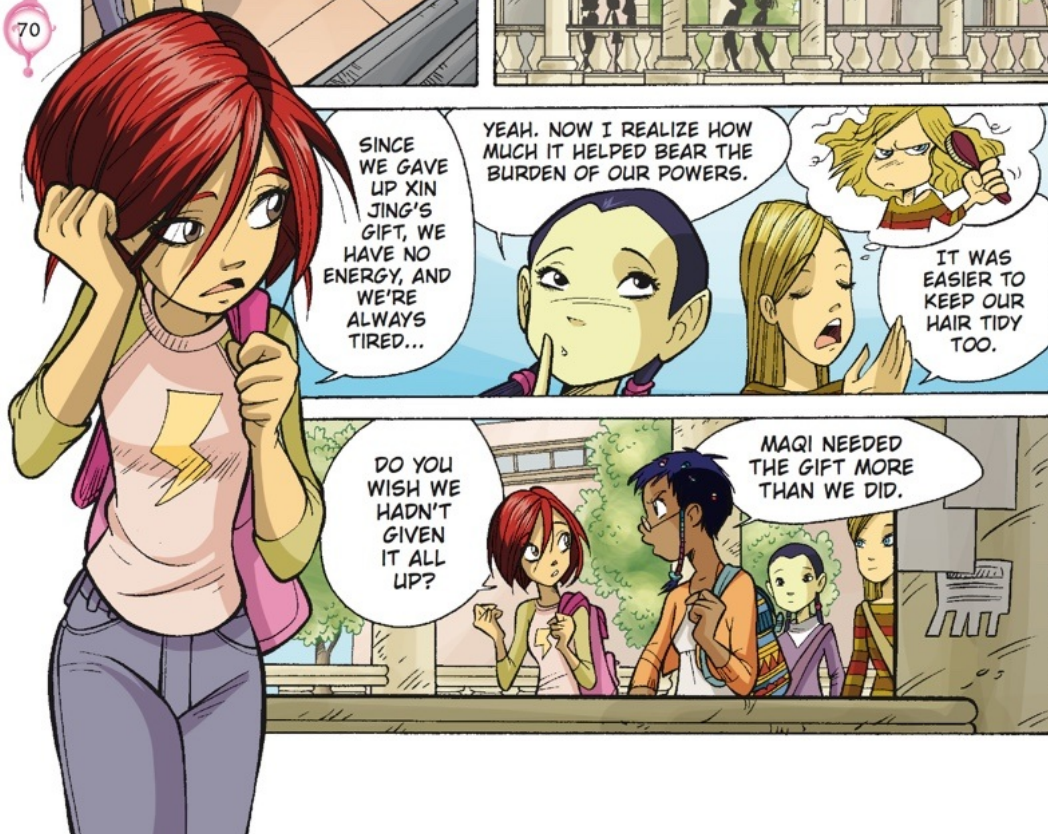


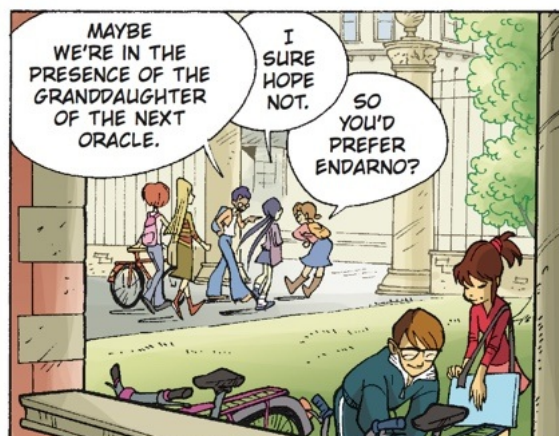
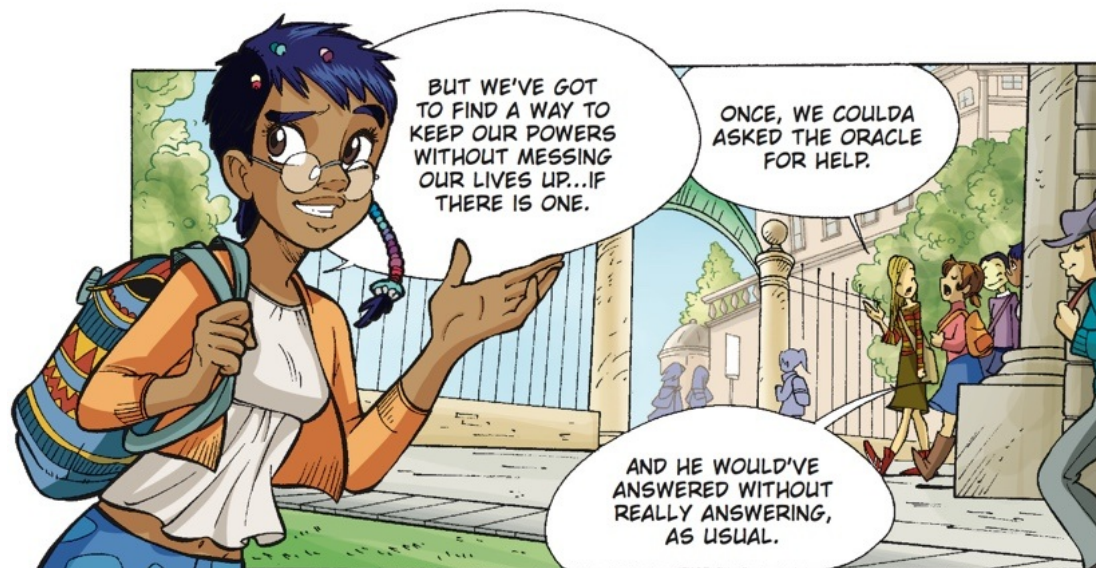






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KANDRAKAR.
THE CEREMONY
OF REBIRTH, THE
ELECTION OF THE
NEW ORACLE, IS
ABOUT TO BEGIN.



I DON'T LIKE
IT, TIBOR.
I DON'T LIKE
IT AT ALL.



IT'S THE
CONGREGATION'S
DECISION.

IT'S
THE CON-
GREGATION'S
BIGGEST
MISTAKE!



THE
ORACLE
WAS EXILED
JUST WHEN
HE'D MANAGED
TO EXPRESS HIS
HUMANITY!

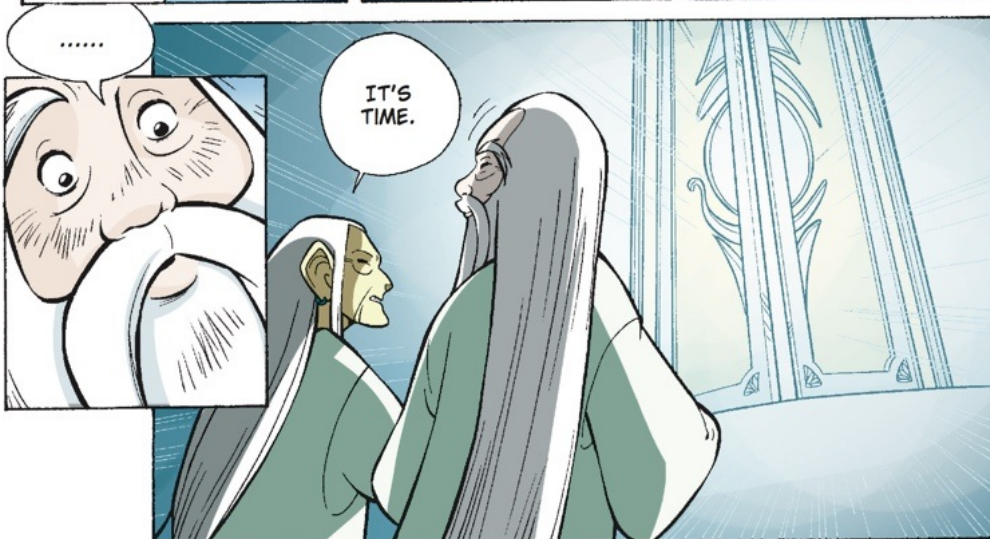
YOUR ANGER WILL
BE YOUR STRENGTH
ONCE YOU BEAR
THE MARK OF
KNOWLEDGE.

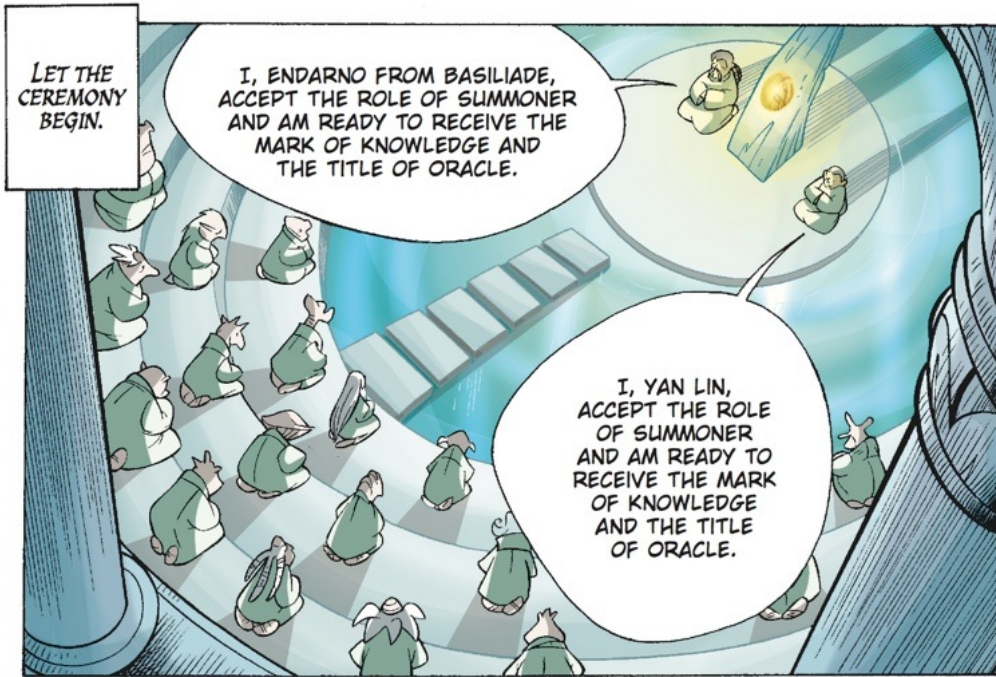
IS
THAT
A HINT
ABOUT
WHO'S
GETTING
YOUR
VOTE?



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IT'S
TIME.





LET THE
CEREMONY
BEGIN.

I, ENDARNO FROM BASILIADE,
ACCEPT THE ROLE OF SUMMONER
AND AM READY TO RECEIVE THE
MARK OF KNOWLEDGE AND
THE TITLE OF ORACLE.

I, YAN LIN,
ACCEPT THE ROLE
OF SUMMONER
AND AM READY TO
RECEIVE THE MARK
OF KNOWLEDGE
AND THE TITLE
OF ORACLE.



TIBOR, WE SUMMONERS
ASK YOU TO EXPRESS
YOUR WILL.

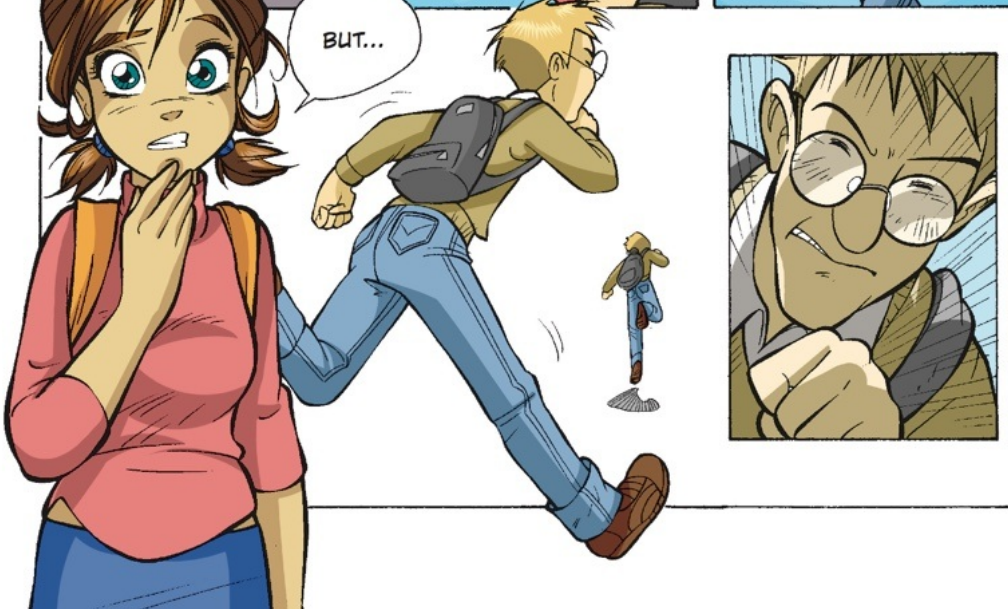
SO BE
IT.

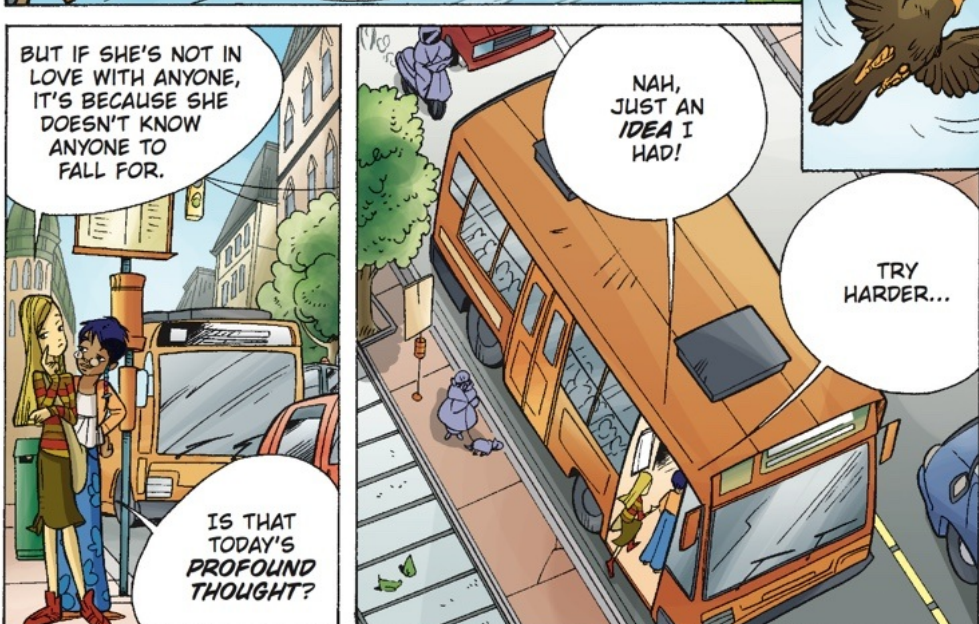
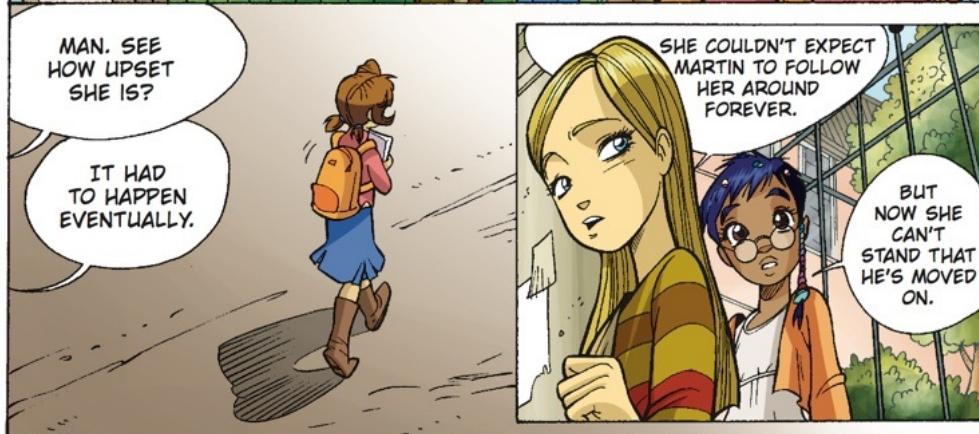


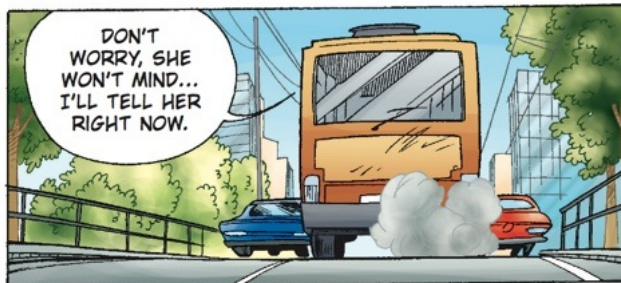
MAY MY
CHOICE BE WISE
AND BRING
PEACE TO THE
FORTRESS.



HEATHERFIELD











YAY!
HERE'S THAT
RARE CD ERIC
WANTED...AND
IT'S ON SALE
TOO!



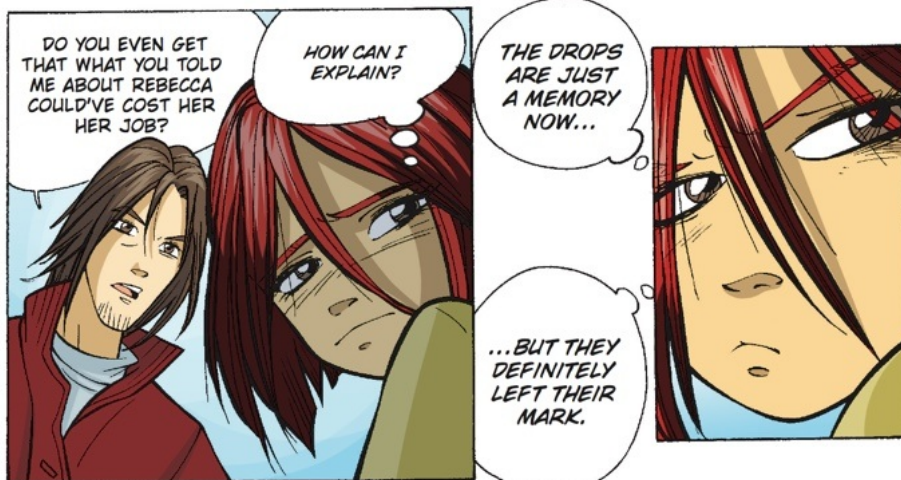
AWESOME! I'LL GIVE
IT TO HIM TODAY!

YES! I'D
LOVE TO HAVE
A **ROMANTIC**
AFTERNOON
LIKE WILL AND
MATT!



"ROMANTIC"
ISN'T
EXACTLY
THE RIGHT
WORD.

I MEAN...I'M
DISAPPOINTED
IN
YOU. YOU HEARD SOME
GOSSIP AND REPORTED
IT LIKE IT WAS THE
ABSOLUTE TRUTH.



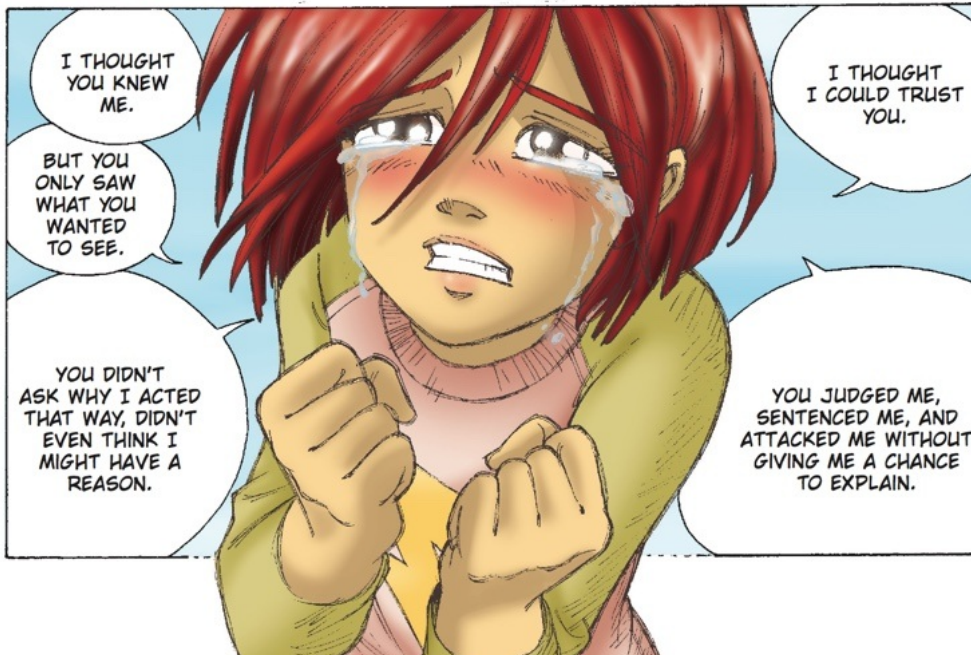
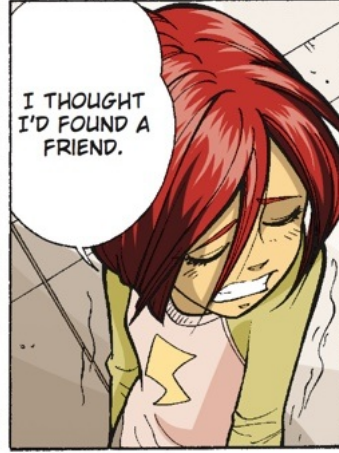
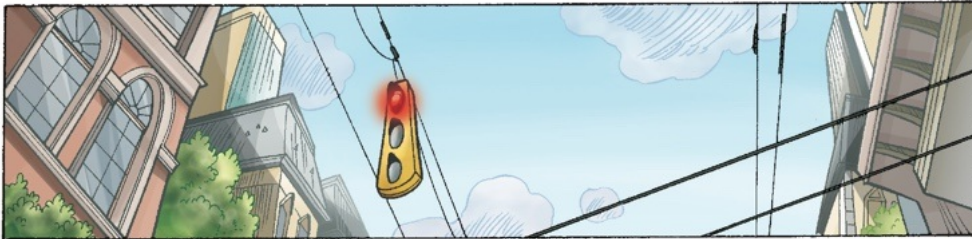
DO YOU EVEN GET
THAT WHAT YOU TOLD
ME ABOUT REBECCA
COULD'VE COST HER
HER JOB?

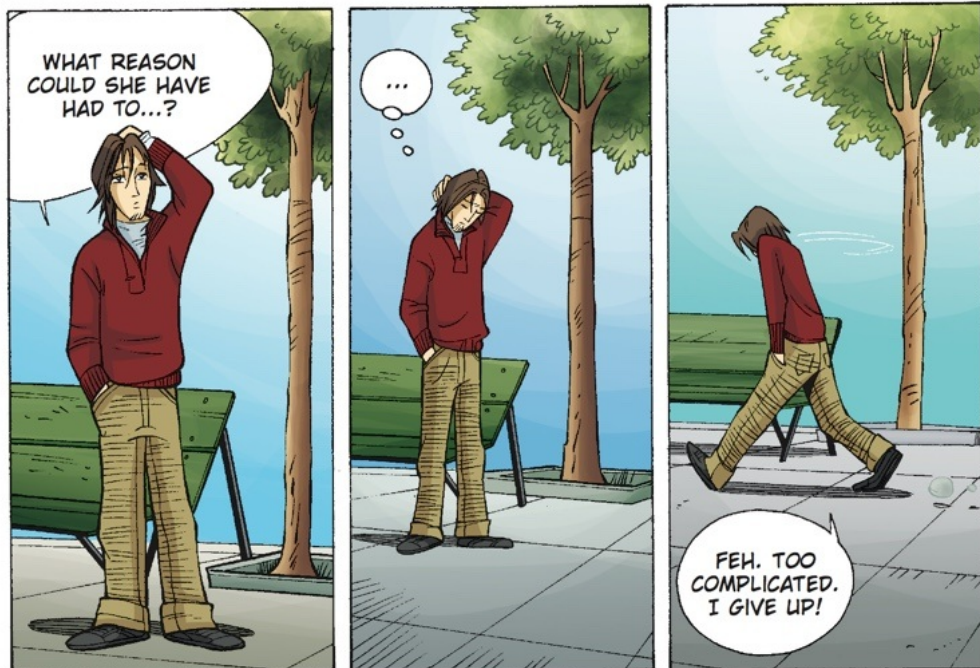
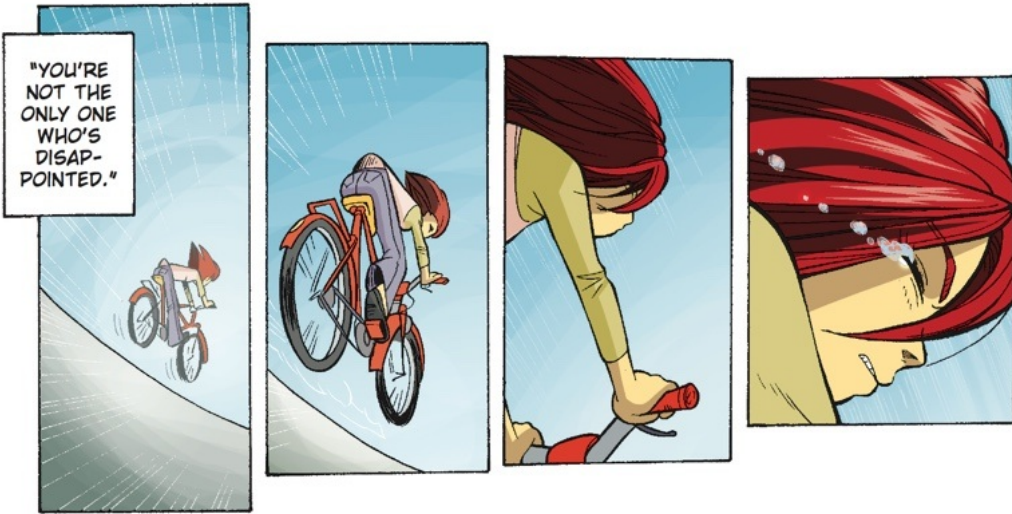
HOW CAN I
EXPLAIN?

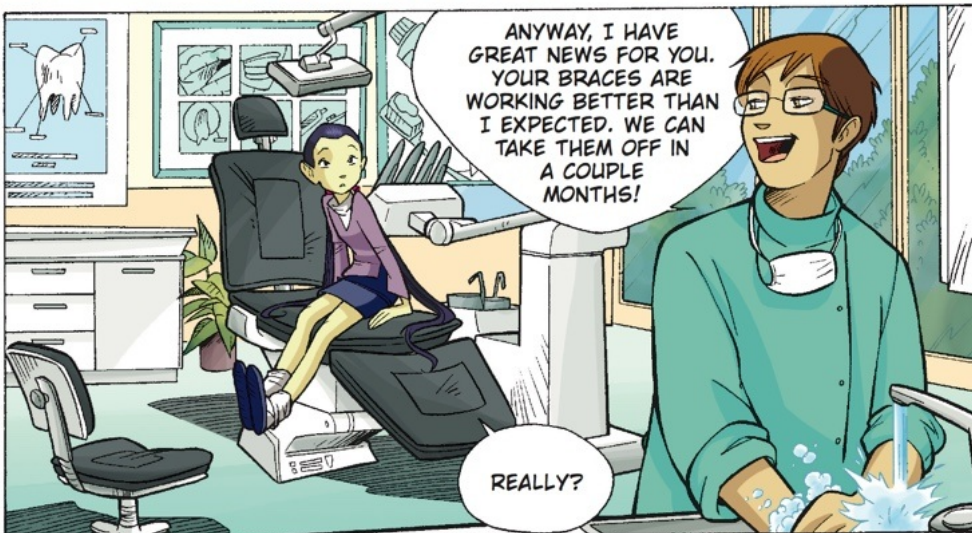
THE DROPS
ARE JUST
A MEMORY
NOW...

...BUT THEY
DEFINITELY
LEFT THEIR
MARK.





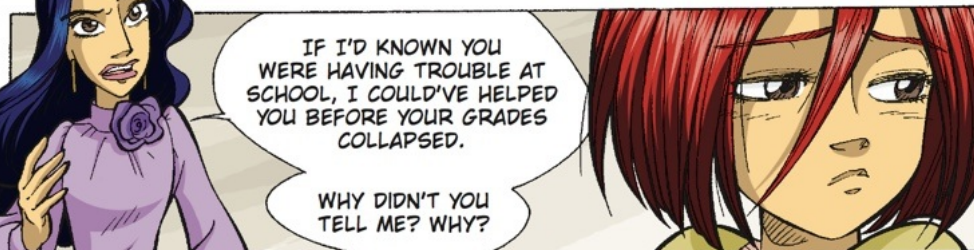




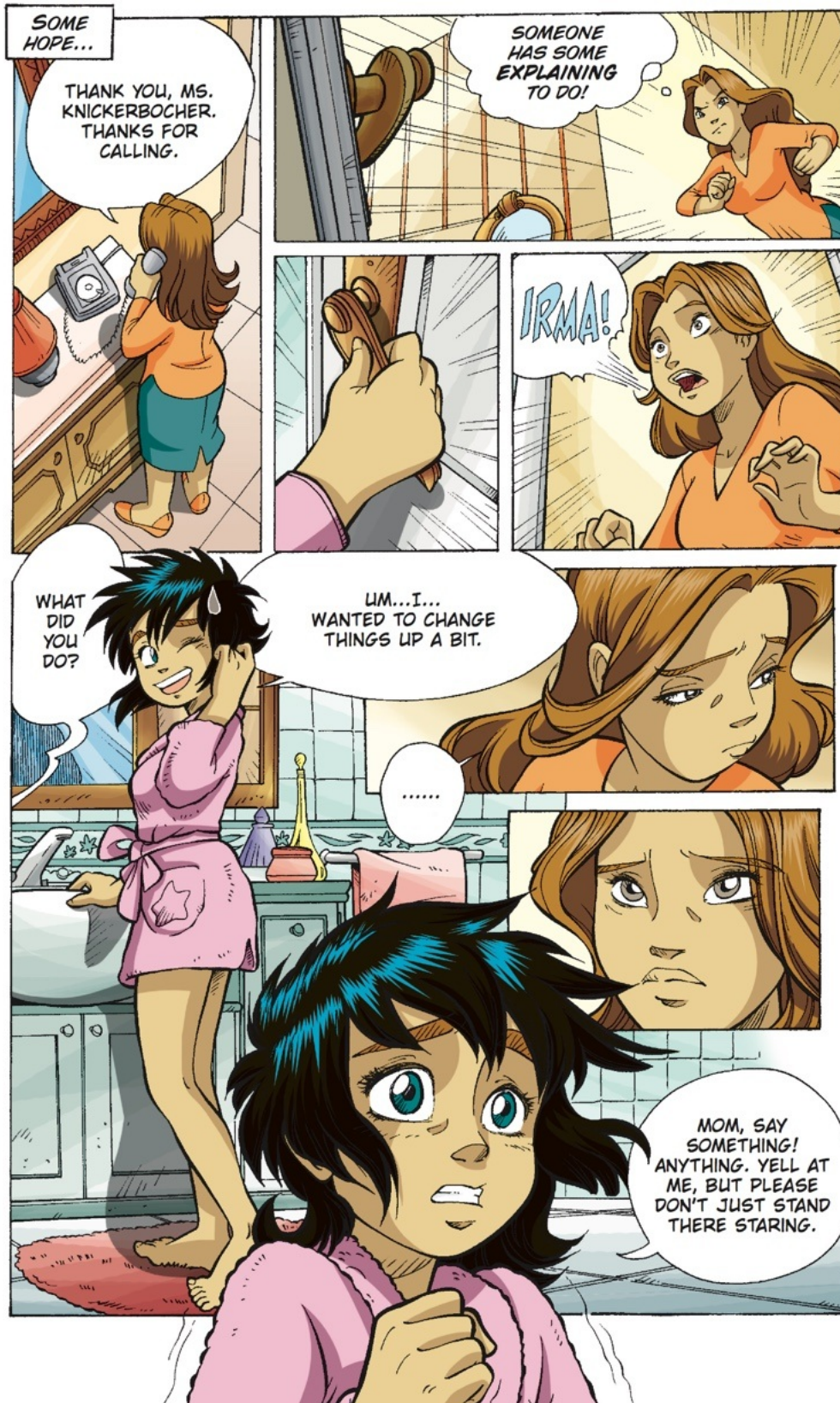


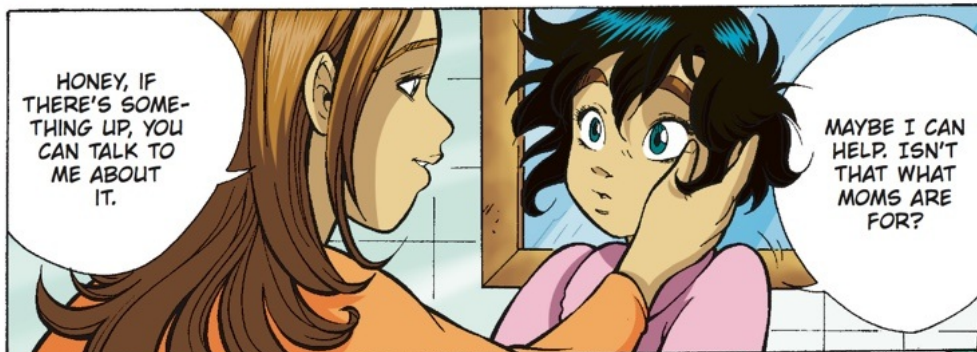
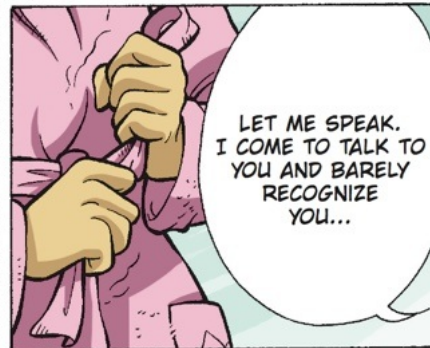
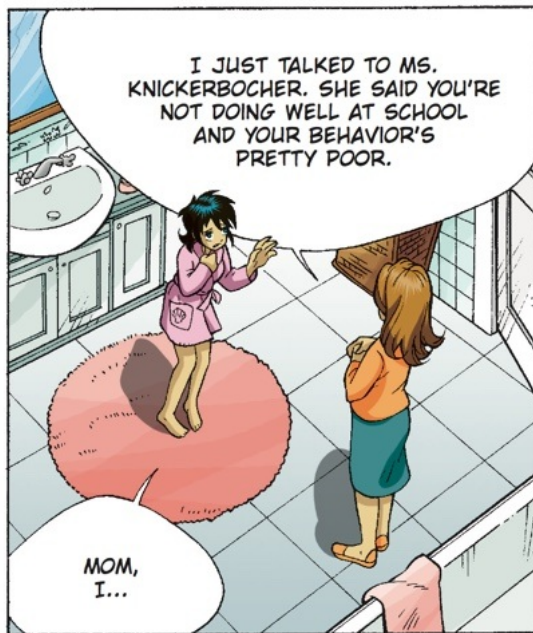


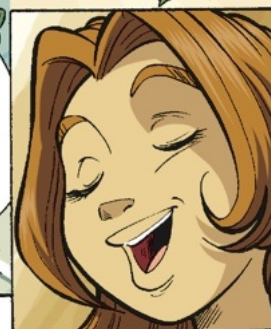
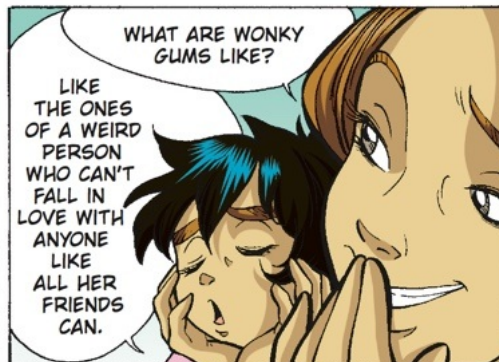
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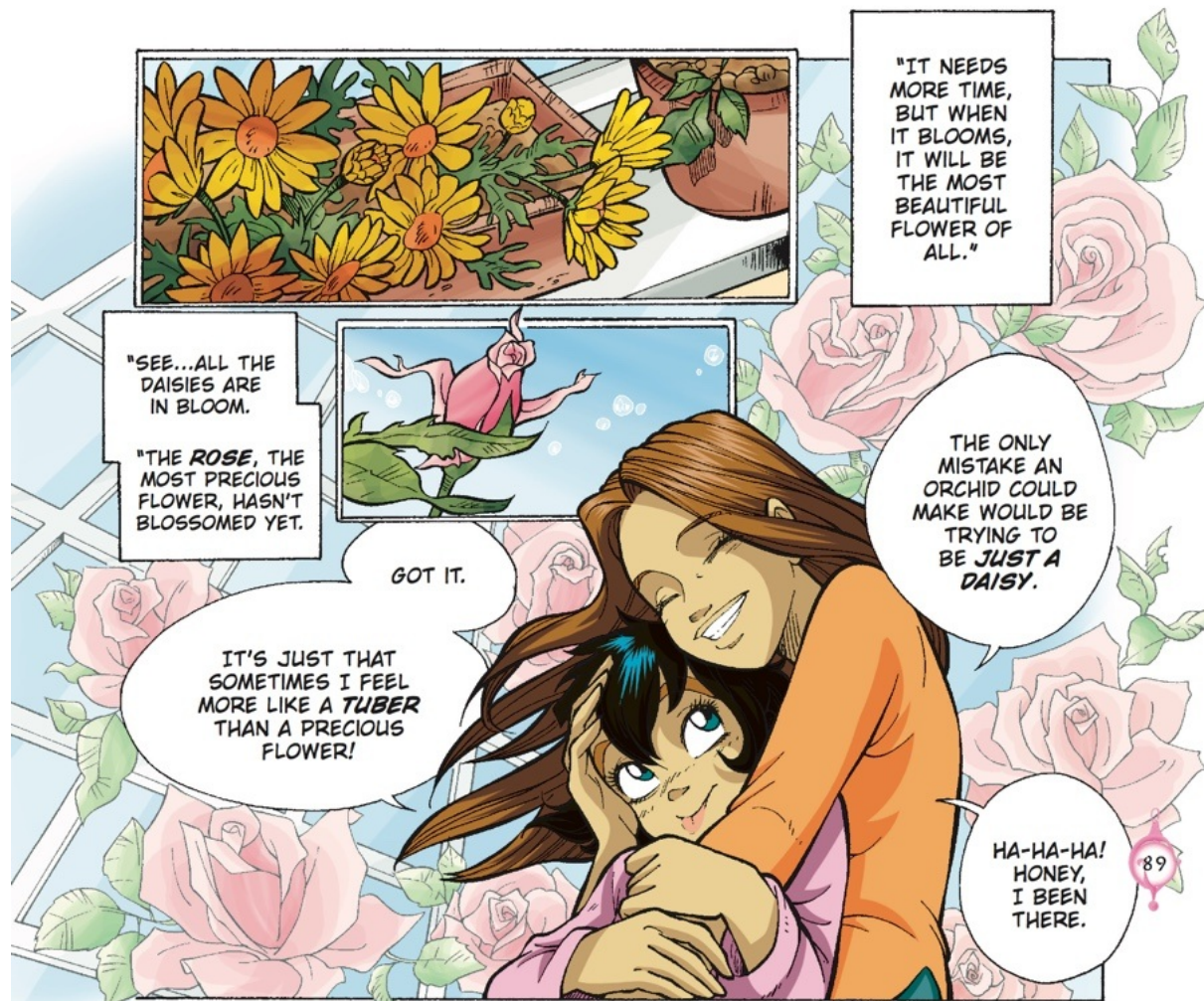


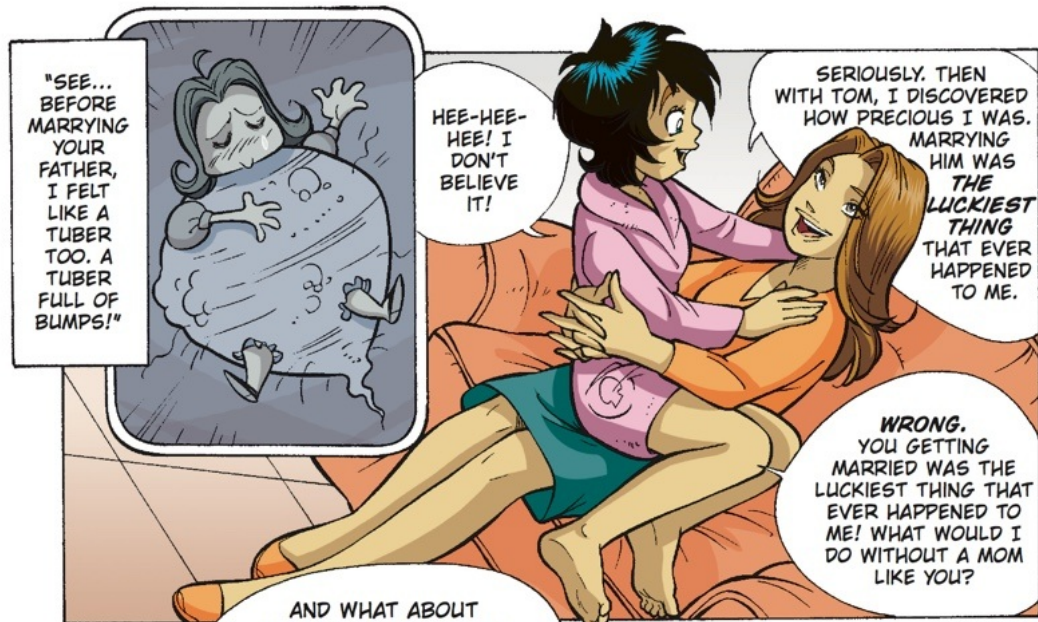




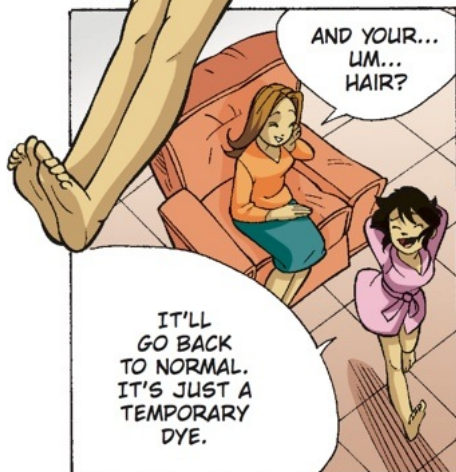


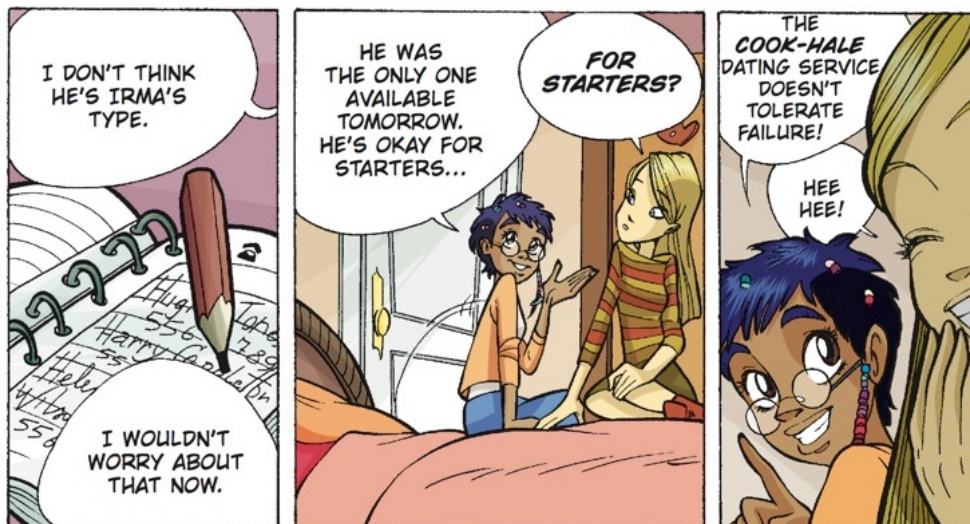






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KANDRAKAR
WILL HAVE
A NEW
ORACLE.

NOT ONLY AM I HERE ALONE,
BUT GRANDMA'S NOWHERE
TO BE SEEN...

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE
CONGREGATION FAILED TO
REACH A UNANIMOUS
DECISION.

TIMES ARE DARK.
THE DIVISION IN
THE COUNCIL IS
PROOF.

THE ORACLE
WON'T ENTER THE
SPRING OF SILENCE
AND WON'T RECEIVE
ALL THE POWERS
NECESSARY FOR
THE ROLE.

THE LACK OF
A UNANIMOUS VOTE
REQUIRES A PERIOD OF
OBSERVATION BEFORE
THE COUNSELORS
APPROVE THE
ELECTION.

EXCUSE ME,
DO YOU KNOW
THE ORACLE'S
NAME...?

YOU JUST
SAID IT.

NO, I MEANT
HIS OR HER NAME
BEFORE BEING
CALLED THE
ORACLE...

HAY LIN, FOLLOW ME.
NOT ANOTHER
WORD!

"MAY THE ORACLE RECEIVE THE
MARK OF POWER AND WITH IT
VIRTUE AND FORESIGHT."



What
happens
now,
Tibor?

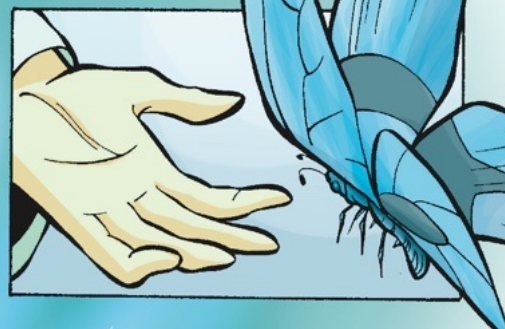
SHHH...

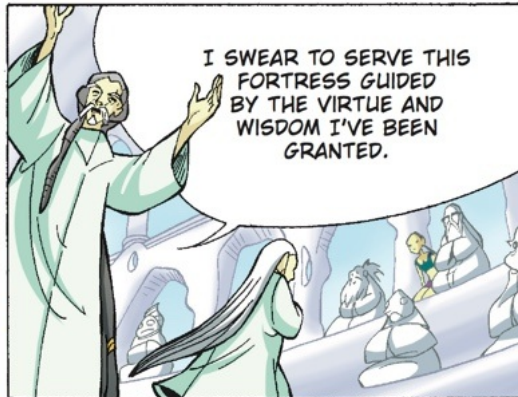
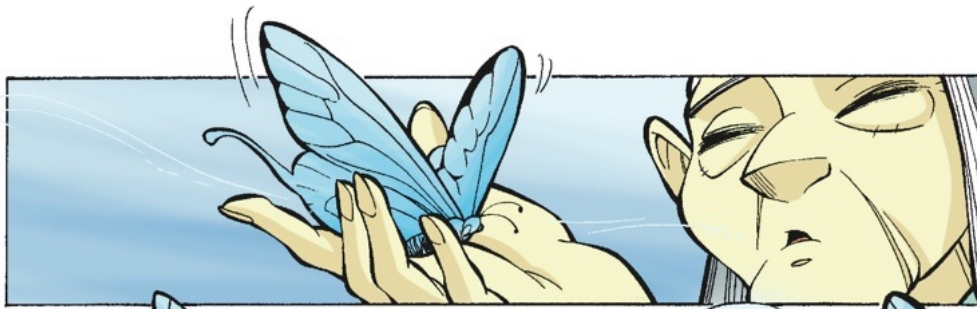


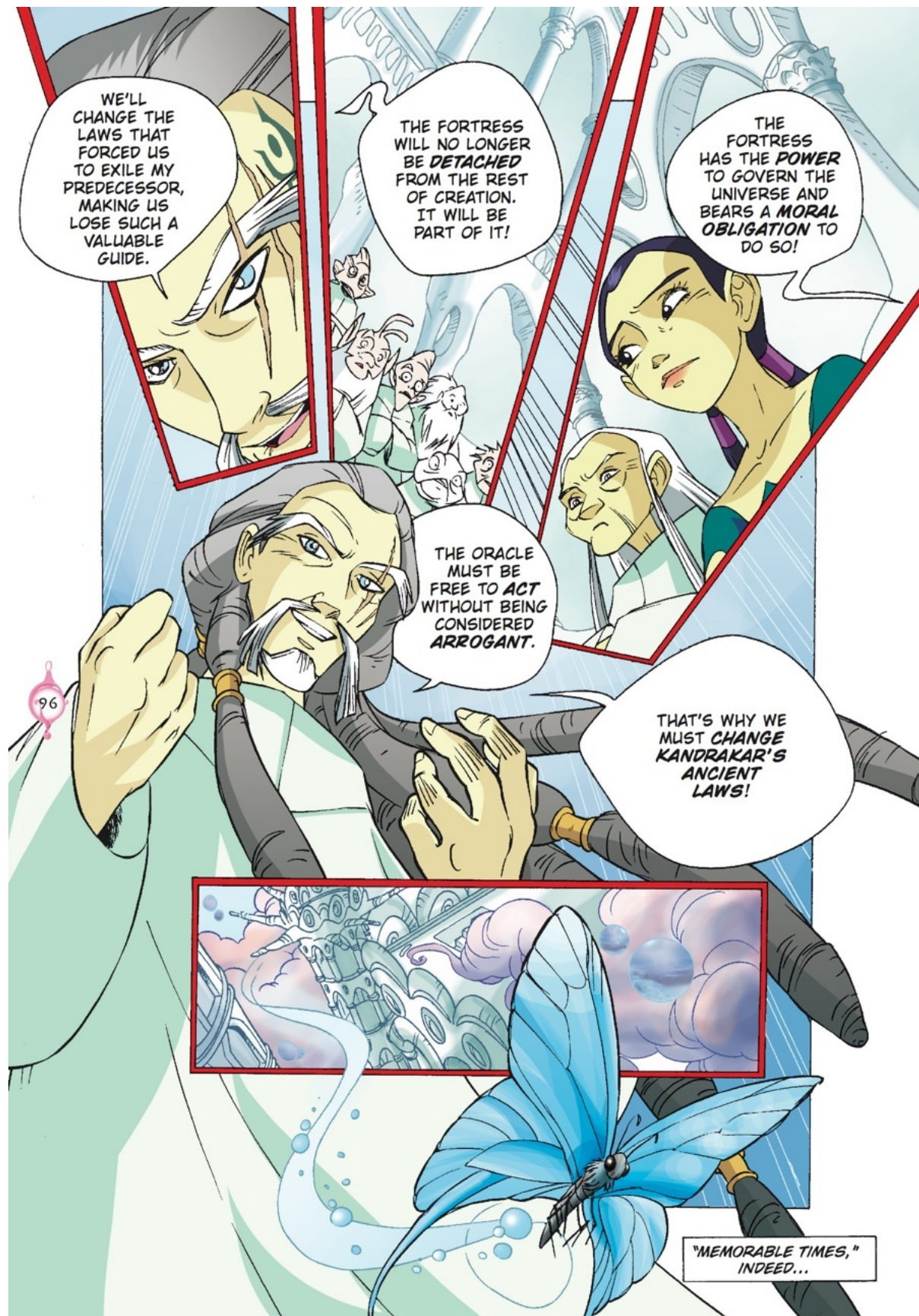
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"MAY THE
CHOSEN
ORACLE
RECEIVE THE
**MARK OF
KNOWLEDGE**
AND WITH
IT WISDOM
AND
LEARNING."







WE'LL
CHANGE THE
LAWS THAT
FORCED US
TO EXILE MY
PREDECESSOR,
MAKING US
LOSE SUCH A
VALUABLE
GUIDE.

THE FORTRESS
WILL NO LONGER
BE **DETACHED**
FROM THE REST
OF CREATION.
IT WILL BE
PART OF IT!

THE
FORTRESS
HAS THE **POWER**
TO GOVERN THE
UNIVERSE AND
BEARS A **MORAL**
OBLIGATION TO
DO SO!

THE ORACLE
MUST BE
FREE TO **ACT**
WITHOUT BEING
CONSIDERED
ARROGANT.

THAT'S WHY WE
MUST **CHANGE**
KANDRAKAR'S
ANCIENT
LAWS!



"MEMORABLE TIMES,"
INDEED...



WE'VE
ASSIGNED YOU
EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES
THAT WILL HELP
IMPROVE YOUR
GRADES.



YAY!
WE'RE
TOGETHER!

HALE, COOK, LAIR, AND LIN...
YOU'LL HELP AS GUIDES AT THE
MUSEUM. YOU'LL MEET THE
DIRECTOR IN HIS OFFICE
IN TWO HOURS.

WE'LL MAKE
YOU *PROUD*!



VANDOM, YOU'RE
ON ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMUNITY SERVICE.
YOU'LL HELP AT
SOME ANIMAL
SHELTERS.



WILL,
DID YOU
HEAR
ME?



CAN YOU
HEAR ME?

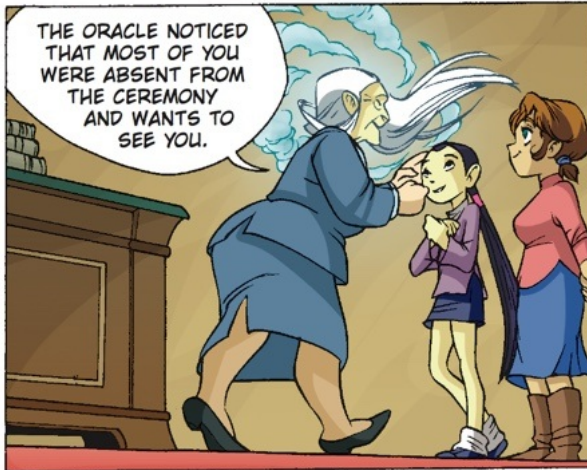


GIRLS, CAN
YOU HEAR
ME?



GRAND-
MA?

I MUSTA EATEN TOO
MUCH CAKE...
I'M SEEING
THINGS!



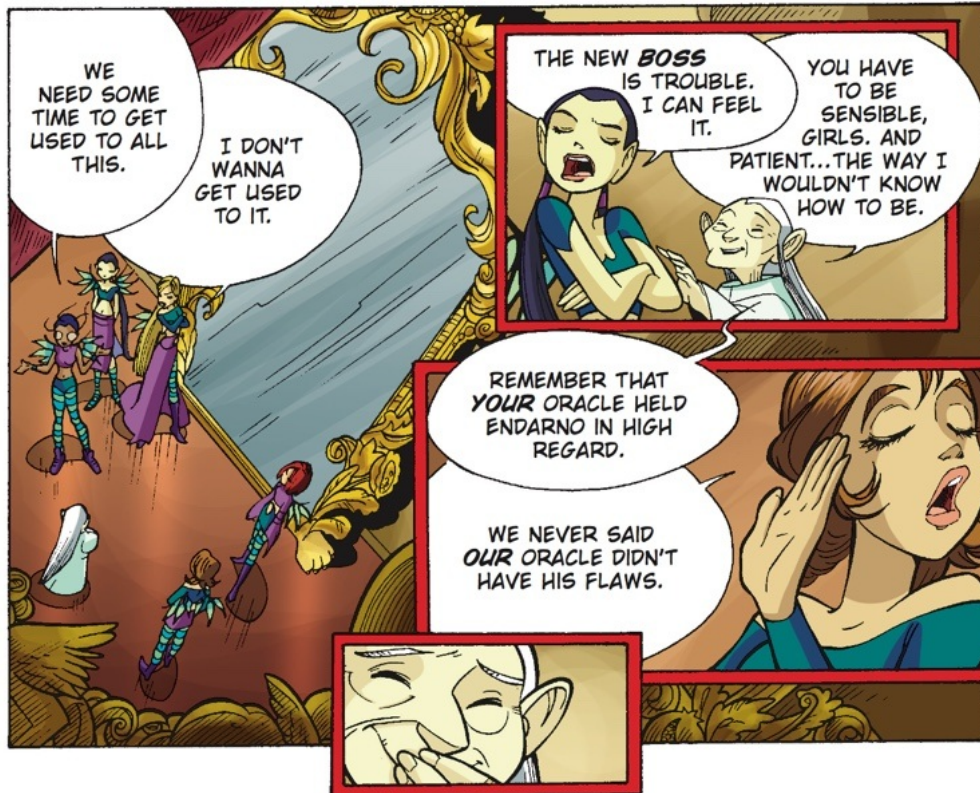
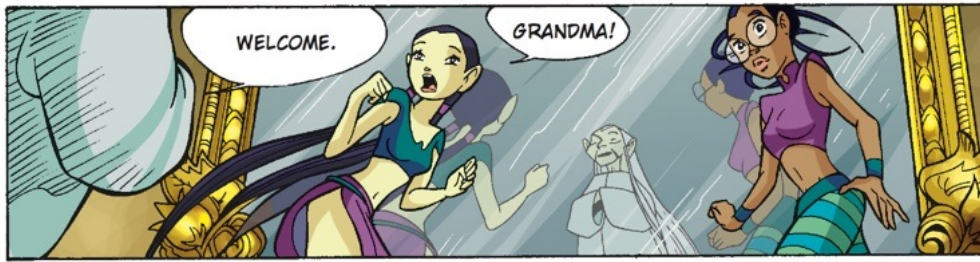
IS THIS
KANDRAKAR?

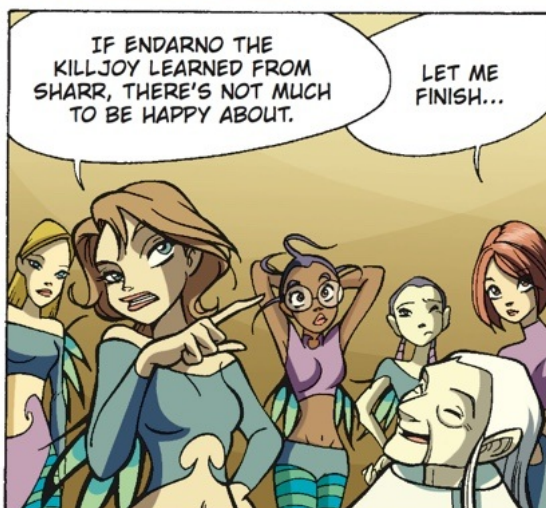
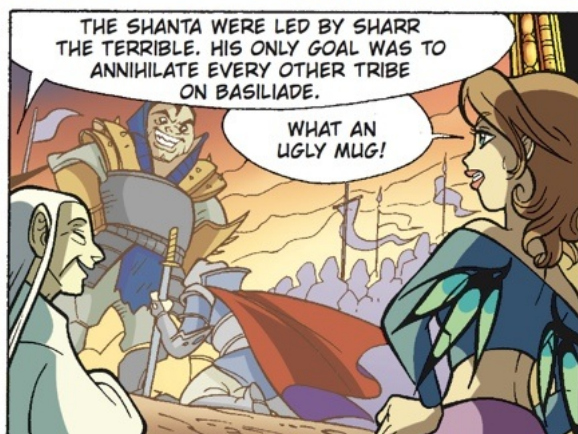
THE HEART
NEEDS A GOOD
CHECKUP.
IT MUST'VE
TAKEN US TO
THE WRONG
PLACE.

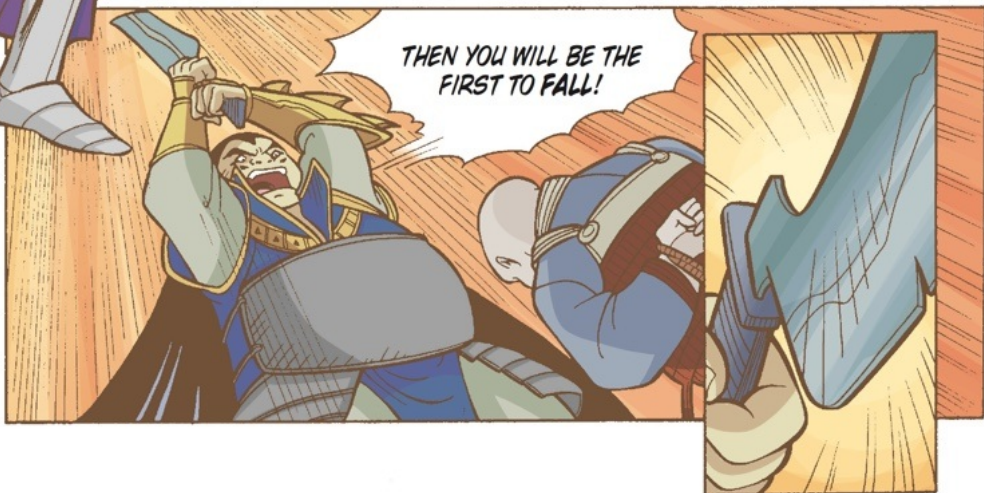
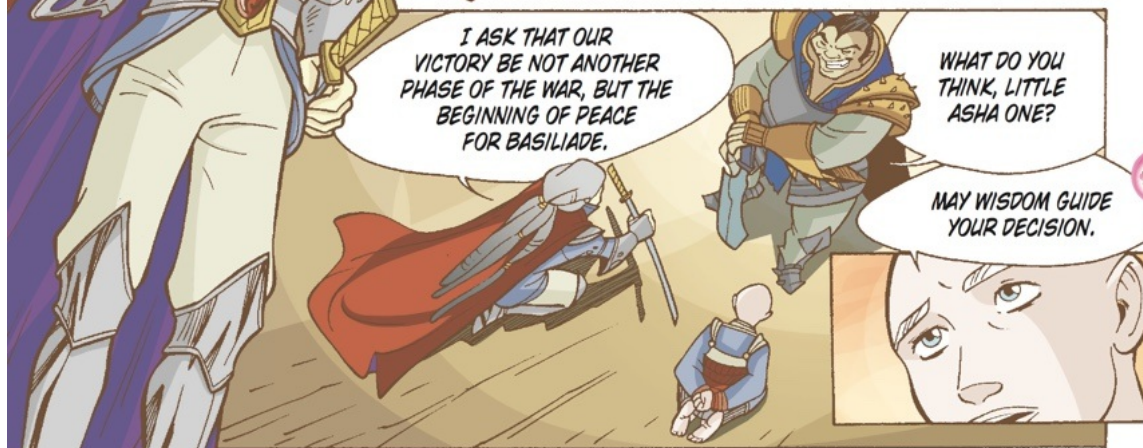
100

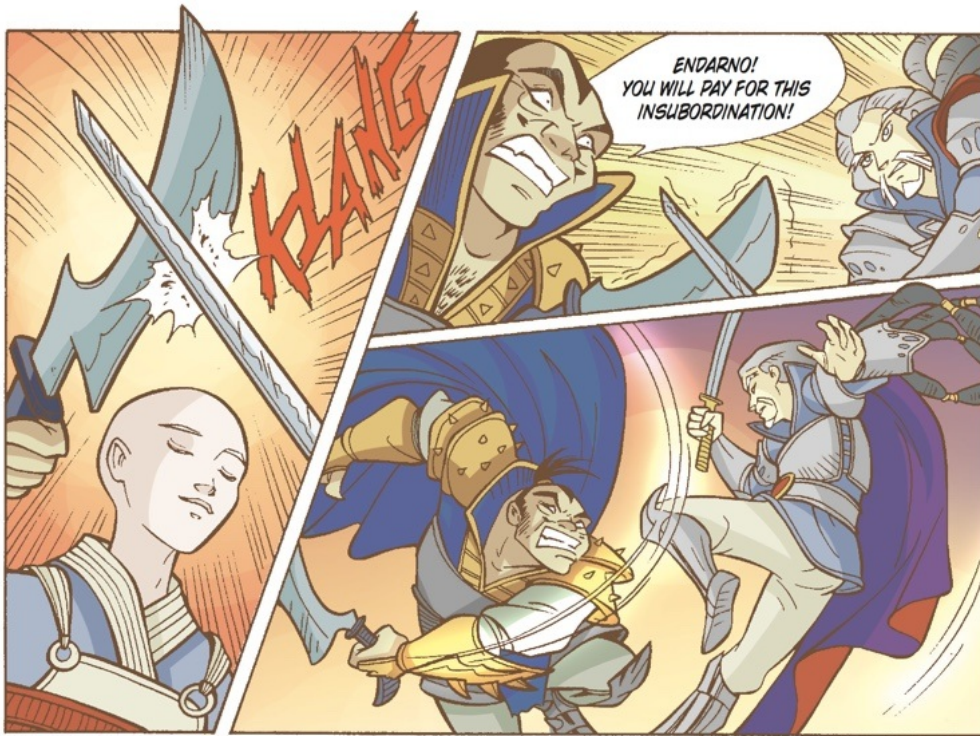
I DON'T LIKE
IT. NOT ONE
BIT...

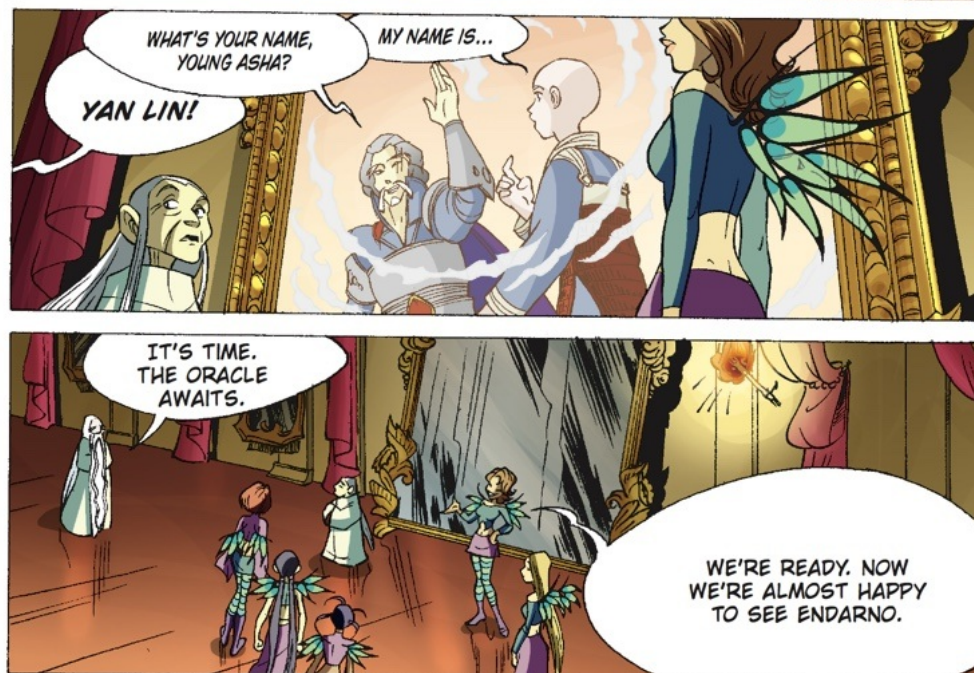
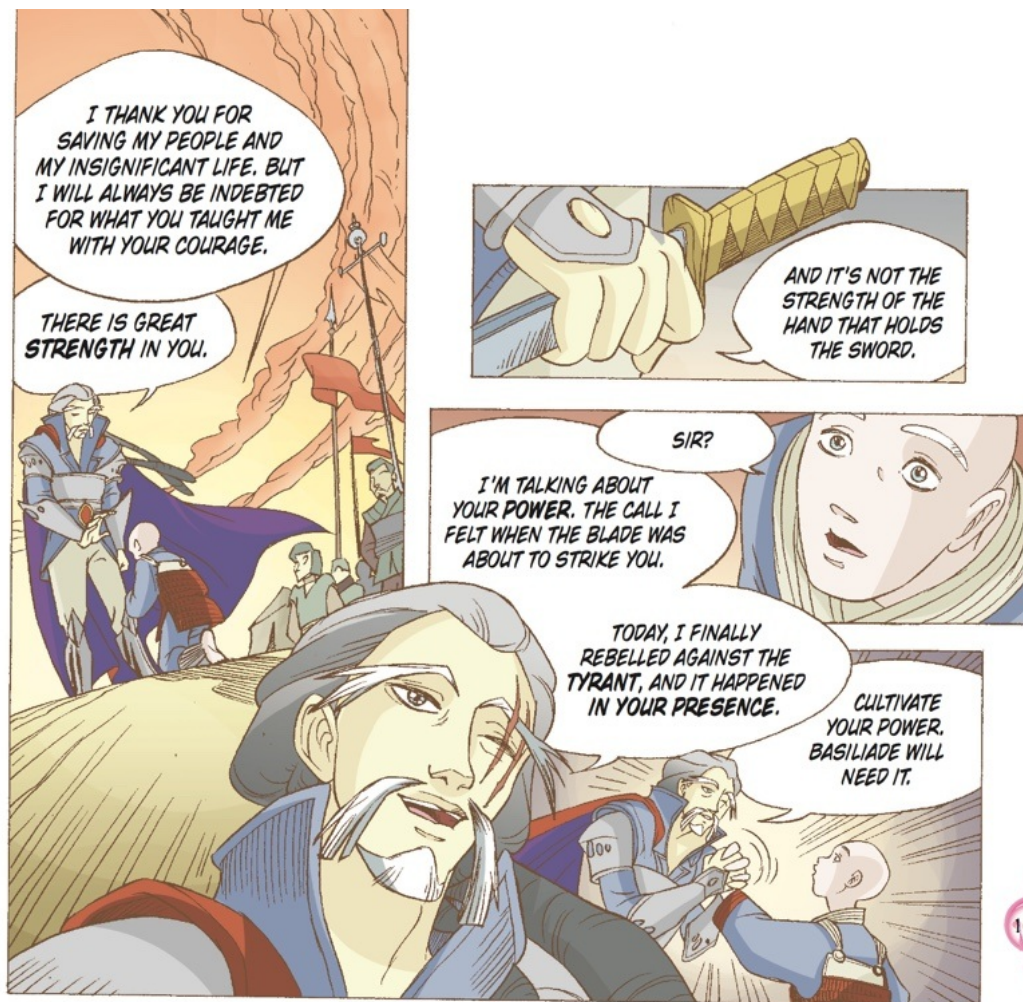
LOOKS
LIKE A
**NIGHT-
MARE!**











THE HALL OF
THE COUNCIL.
THE ORACLE.

IT DEEPLY
PAINED ME...

...TO NOTICE THE ABSENCE
OF MOST OF YOU FROM
THE CEREMONY.

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SINCE YOU'RE **VERY BUSY**, I WON'T KEEP YOU LONG.



I HAVE A REQUEST FOR THE CUSTODIAN OF THE SYMBOL OF THIS FORTRESS. COME FORTH, WILL.

HERE I AM.



RETURN THE HEART OF KANDRAKAR!



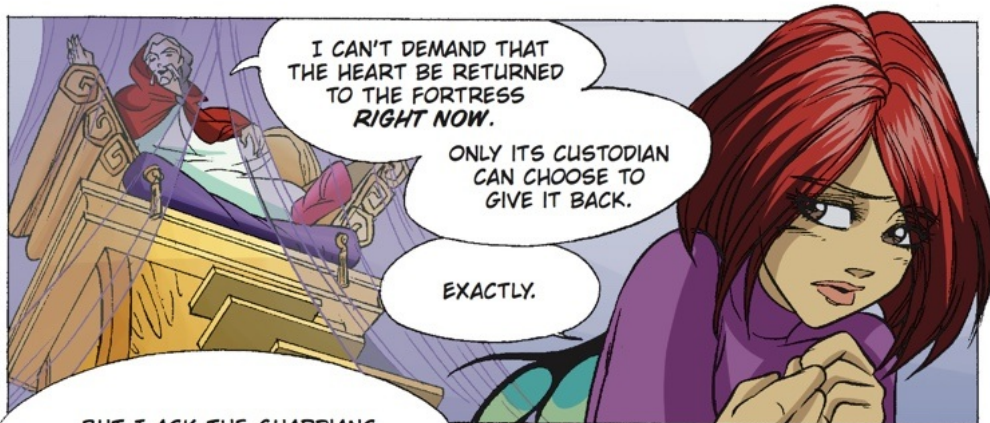
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



No!



I DIDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING ELSE FROM YOU.



I CAN'T DEMAND THAT THE HEART BE RETURNED TO THE FORTRESS **RIGHT NOW**.

ONLY ITS CUSTODIAN CAN CHOOSE TO GIVE IT BACK.

EXACTLY.

BUT I ASK THE GUARDIANS TO **THINK**. THEIR YOUTH AND AFFECTION FOR MY PREDECESSOR...

...ARE CLOUDING THEIR JUDGMENT.

Let's keep calm.

We're with you.

IF THE CUSTODIAN HAD GIVEN THE HEART BACK, I WOULD HAVE RETURNED IT IMMEDIATELY, BOWING TO **HONOR HER**. BUT CLEARLY, THESE GUARDIANS ARE **TOO IMMATURE** TO BOW TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS CHOICES.

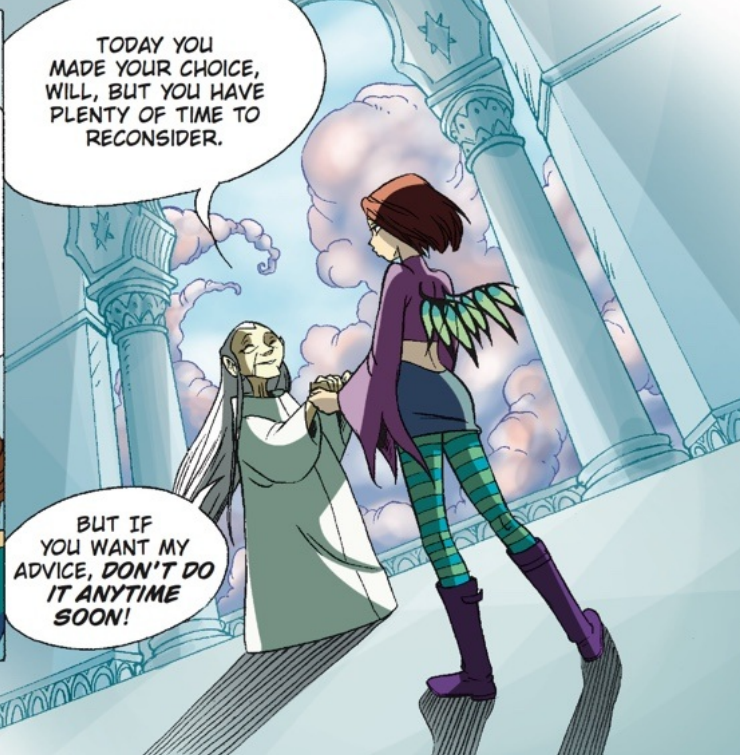
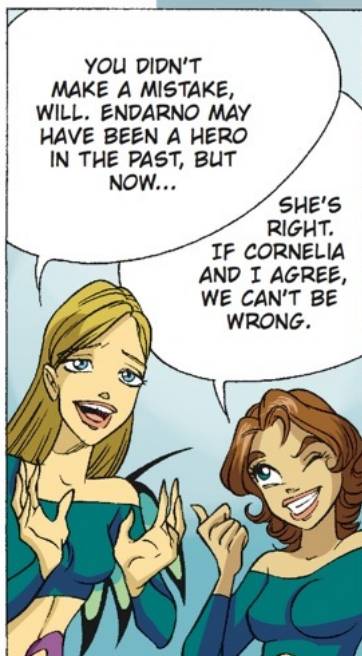
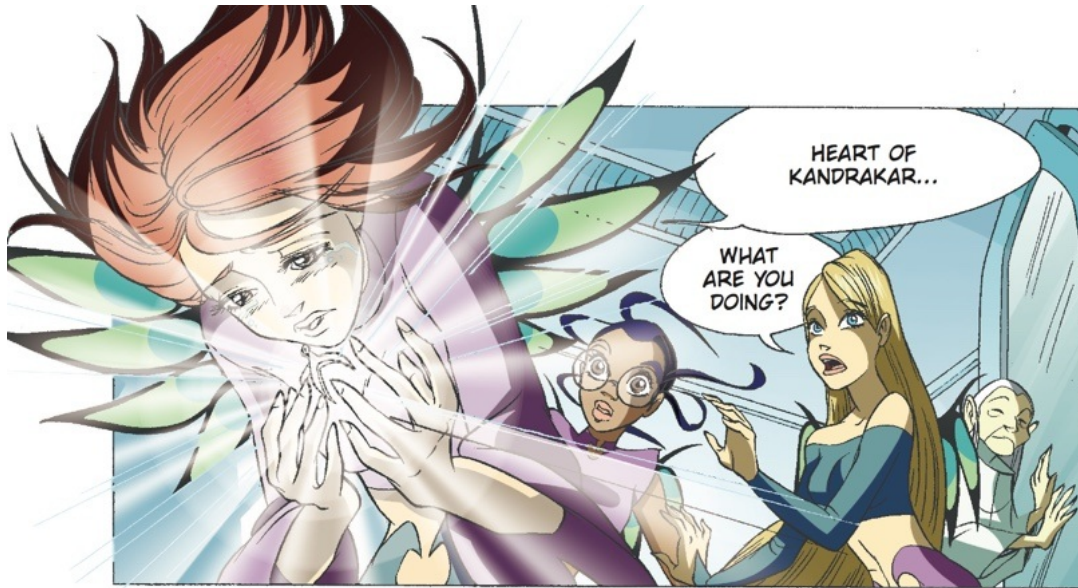
UNACCEPTABLE.

LUBA DID SAY THESE GIRLS WERE **UNWORTHY**.

THE GUARDIANS MAY GO BACK TO THEIR WORLD. FOR NOW, KANDRAKAR DOESN'T NEED THEM.

COME.





EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES.

HAY LIN HAS
TO START RIGHT
AWAY.

MEANING
NOW OR IN THE
NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS?



I'LL NEED
SOME TIME TO
READ ALL THESE
BOOKS, AND TODAY
I SHOULD REALLY
BRING SOMETHING
TO SOMEONE—



WE HAVE
A CLASS
VISITING THE
PREHISTORIC
PAVILION
TOMORROW...



...AND YOU'LL
BE THE GUIDE.
JUST STUDY
THE PIECES
ON DISPLAY.



YOU CAN WORK HERE.
IT'LL BE MUCH
EASIER.

BUT,
DIRECTOR...AAAH...
AAAH...

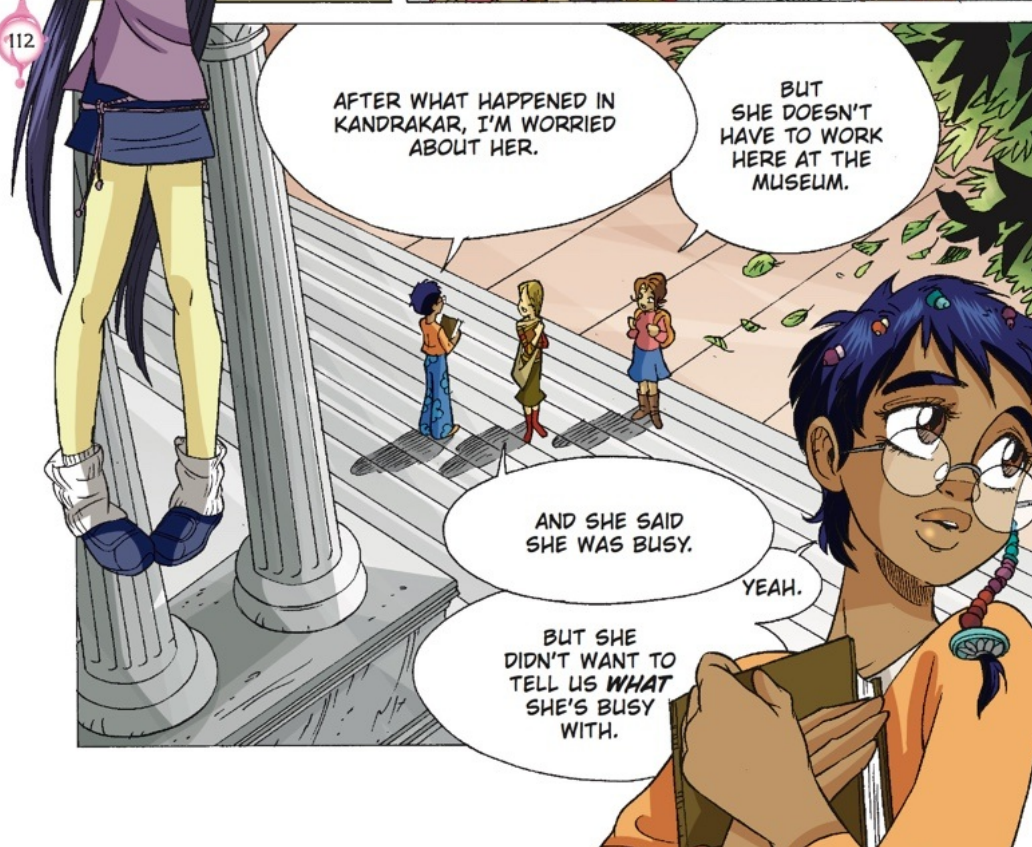


NO
"DIRECTOR,"
PLEASE.

ACHOO!



MY NAME'S
GEREMIA.









THAT'S
ENOUGH.



YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.
THINK WHATEVER
YOU WANT.

YOU COULD
APOLOGIZE.
I'D EXPECT
AT LEAST
THAT FROM
YOU!



IF YOU WANNA KNOW,
AT FIRST I DIDN'T LIKE
YOU AT ALL.



THEN I GOT
TO KNOW YOU
AND STARTED
LIKING YOU.



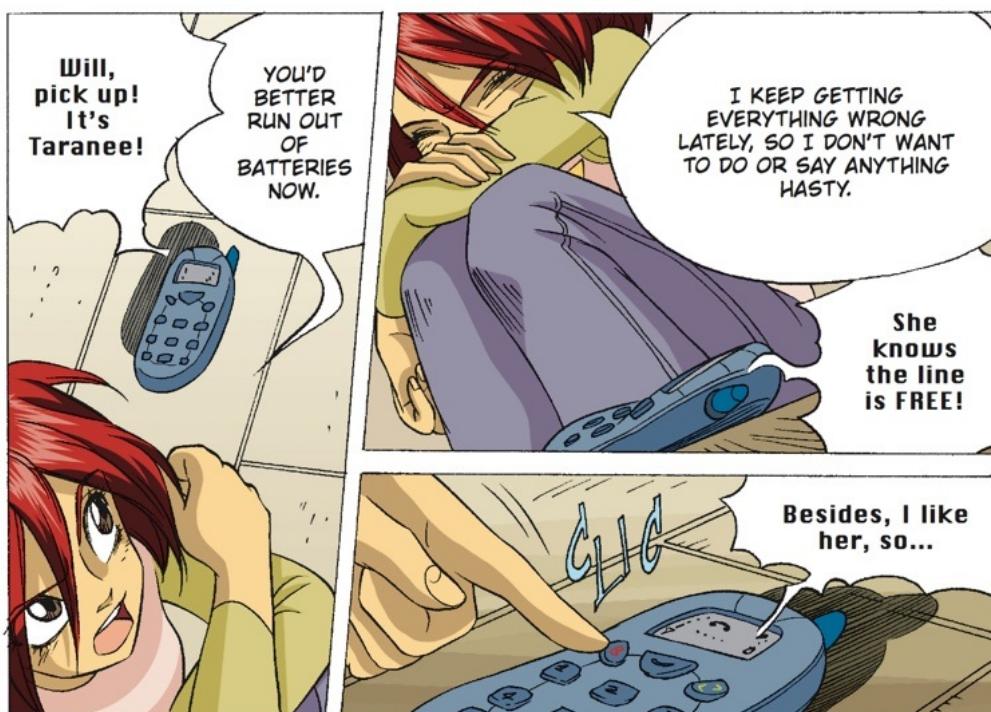
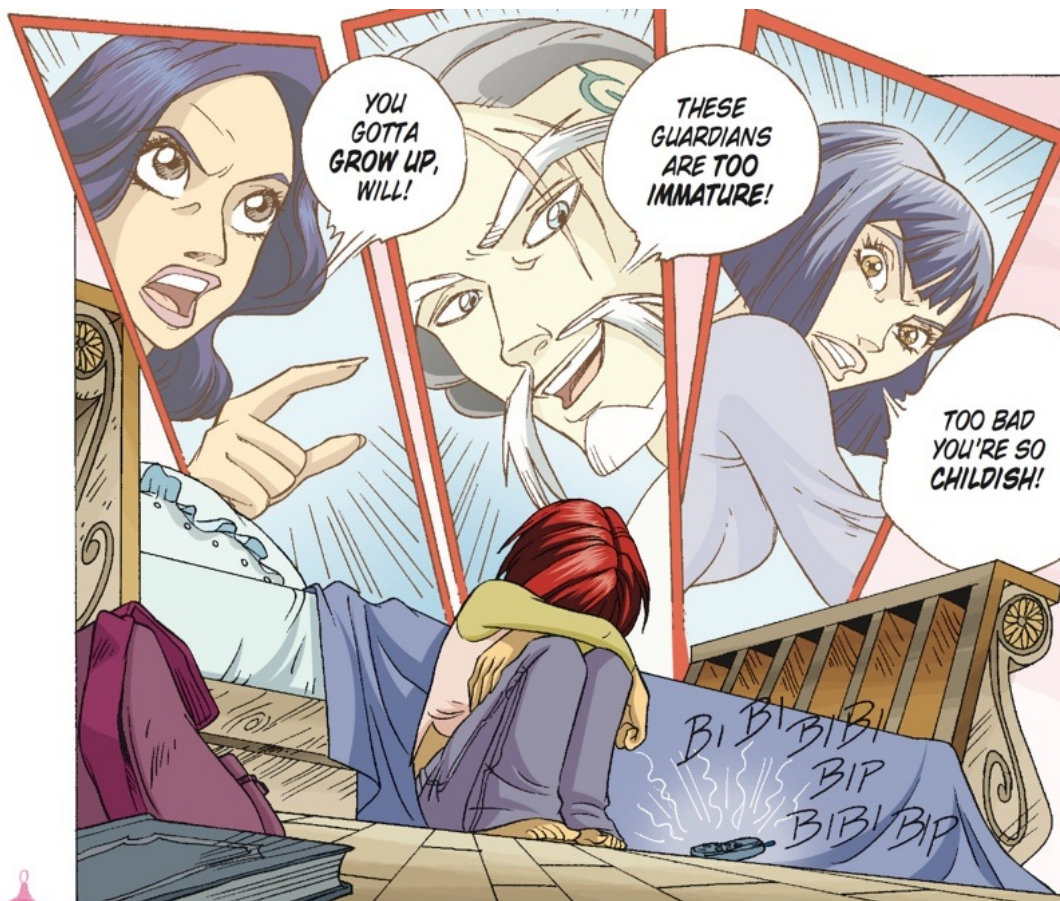
I SAW HOW
YOU FIGHT. YOU'RE
A TRUE LEADER
WHO NEVER LEAVES
ANYONE BEHIND.



YOU'RE
AN **EXCEPTIONAL**
GUARDIAN AND A
TRUE WARRIOR.

TOO BAD
YOU'RE SO
CHILDISH!





5:50 P.M.,
SIDERAL
CINEMA

WELL...
SHALL WE
GO IN?

WE'RE WAITING FOR
SOMEONE. YOU DON'T
MIND IF THEY TAG
ALONG, DO
YOU?

AS LONG AS
THEY DON'T KEEP
TALKING DURING
THE MOVIE!

THERE
HE IS!

HI,
CORNELIA!

HE'S
THE ONE WE
WERE WAITING
FOR?

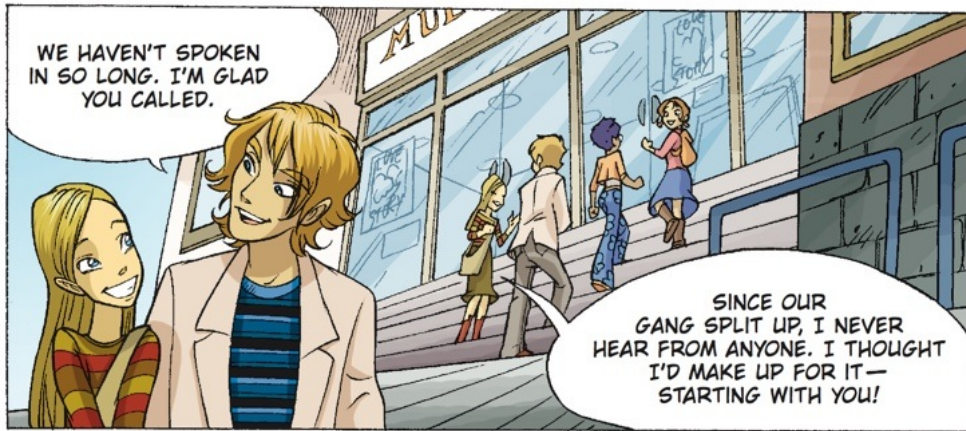
THIS IS HUGH...
AND THESE ARE
TARANEE AND
IRMA.

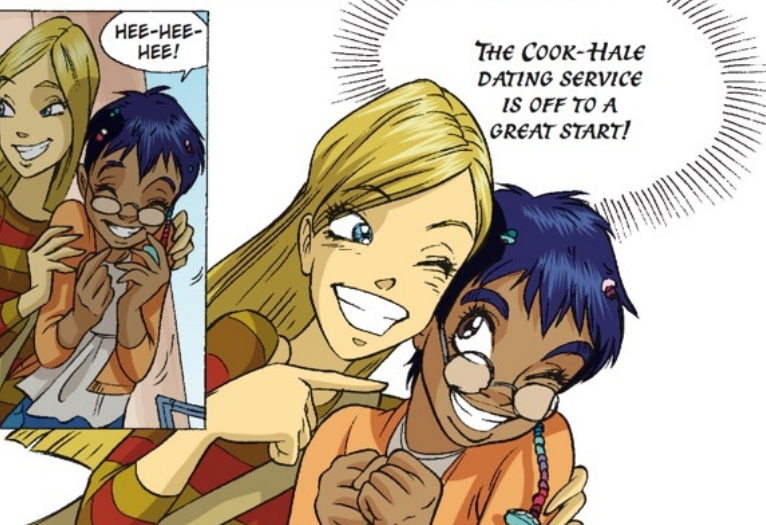
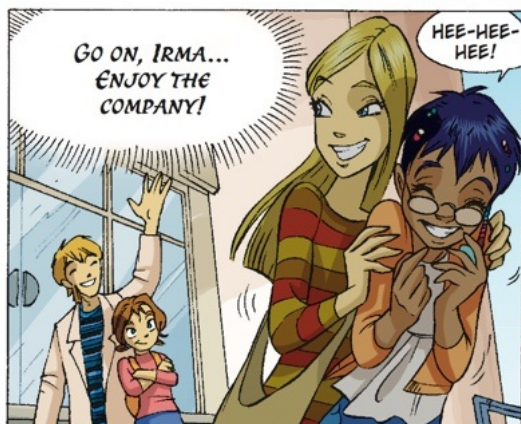
HI!

WHERE'D
YOU FIND
HIM?

SECRET!

IRMA...
WHAT
A NICE
NAME!





CAN ANYONE SURVIVE A DULL AFTERNOON STUDYING PREHISTORY?



I'LL GO GET HIM.

TH-THANK YOU, MR. LYNDON.



I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME.



WORKING AT THE MUSEUM HAS KILLED ME. LOOK AT MY SHIRT... IT'S ALL DUSTY.



ALL THE OMENS WERE *BAD*! ERIC WON'T LIKE MY PRESENT. I'LL HAVE TO *MAKE UP* ANOTHER REASON WHY I CAME.

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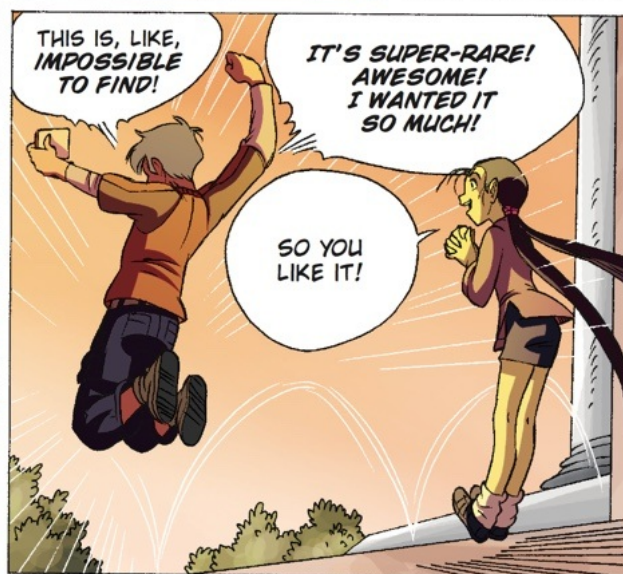


HI, HAY LIN! WATCHA DOING HERE?

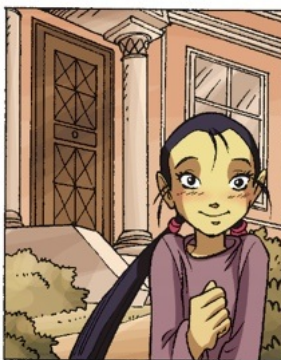
UH! UM! I...UH...



HI, ERIC! I'M HERE TO... TO...TO...







SHEFFIELD
INSTITUTE,
THE NEXT DAY.

AFTER
YESTERDAY,
YOU'RE LUCKY
I'M STILL
TALKING TO
YOU.

DIDN'T
YOU HAVE
FUN?

"OH, SURE.
HOW COULD I
BE BORED WITH
MR. FUNTIMES?"

HA-HA-
HA!

HA-HA-
HA!

HEE-HEE!

HA
HA!

HA-HA-HA!
HA-HA-HA!

HA
HA!

HA
HA!

HAN!

?!?

WHAT'S SO
FUNNY?

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"THEN IT GOT
EVEN WORSE!"

OKAY!

YOU REALLY WANT
ALL THAT?

PIZZA WITH FRIES,
SUPER-MAXI ORANGE
JUICE, AND CHOCOLATE
ICE CREAM.

WELL, SINCE I JUST
ORDERED IT...

YOU GOTTA EAT
HEALTHIER.



I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO EAT PROPERLY. UNSEASONED TOMATOES FOR TWO, WELL WASHED, PLEASE!



SEE? TASTY, NUTRITIOUS, AND HEALTHY!



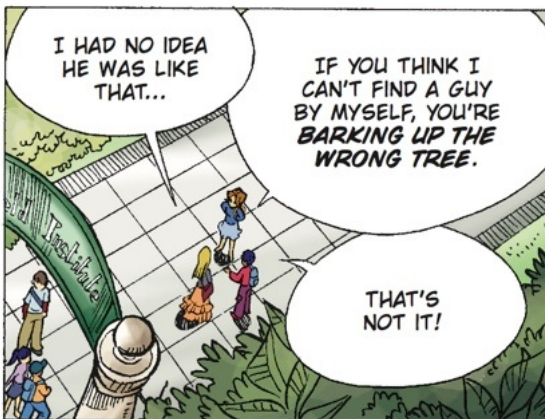
EATING IS IMPORTANT. I NEVER EAT ANYTHING AT PARTIES.

IF THERE'S CAKE, I ASK IF IT WAS MADE WITH FRESH EGGS.

YOU SHOULDN'T EAT TOO SWEET...

...OR TOO SALTY!

OR TOO BITTER OR TOO SOUR!



I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS LIKE THAT...

IF YOU THINK I CAN'T FIND A GUY BY MYSELF, YOU'RE BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE.

THAT'S NOT IT!



IT'S JUST THAT YESTERDAY, WITH MARTIN...

WE JUST WANTED TO CHEER YOU UP...



REALLY?

WE SWEAR!

WELL... YOU MIGHT TOTALLY SUCK AS BOYFRIEND-FINDERS...

...BUT YOU'RE THE **BESTEST** OF BEST FRIENDS!



KANDRAKAR

BEGIN THE
CELESTIAL
SEARCH.

I WANT THE
NEW GUARDIANS TO
BE STRONGER AND MORE
POWERFUL. WE'LL
PICK THREE.

AND THEY SHOULD
LOOK GOOD...NOT
LIKE THOSE **FIVE**
LOSERS!

AS YOU
WISH.

A PIECE
OF ADVICE
FOR YOU,
YAN LIN.

DON'T
GET IN MY
WAY!

END OF
CHAPTER 38

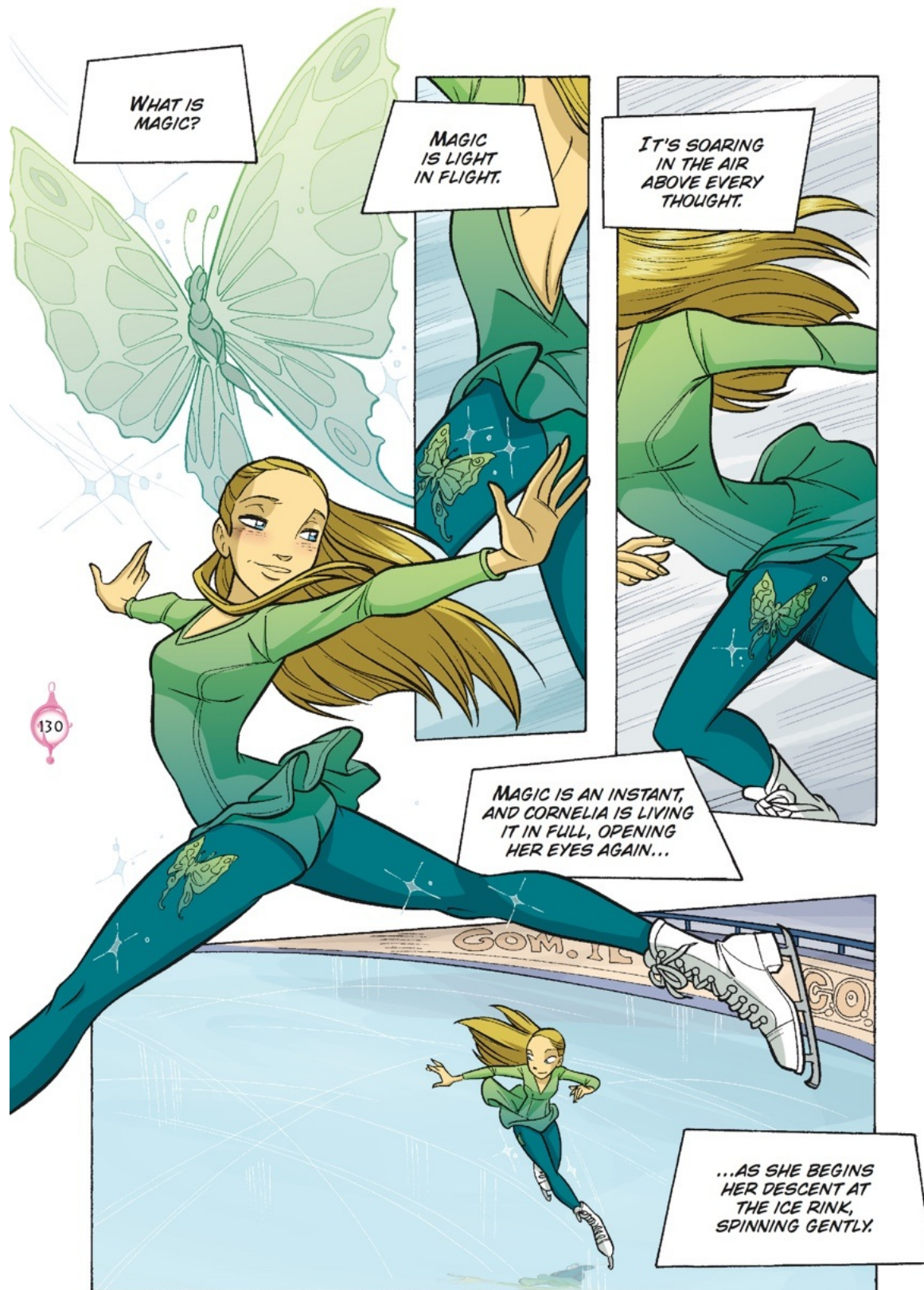


A Flutter of Wings

"Can the cruel flight
of a butterfly erase a
whole existence?"







WHAT IS
MAGIC?

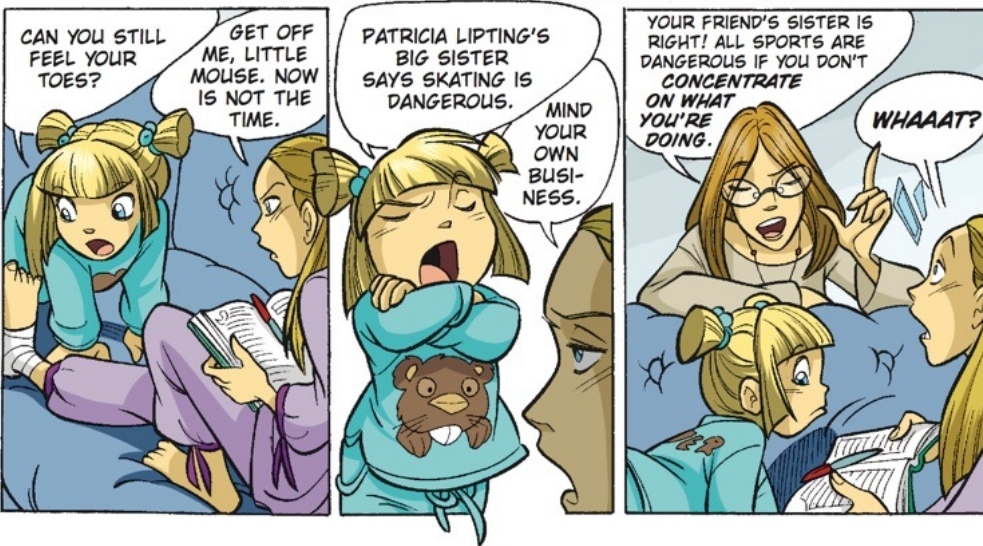
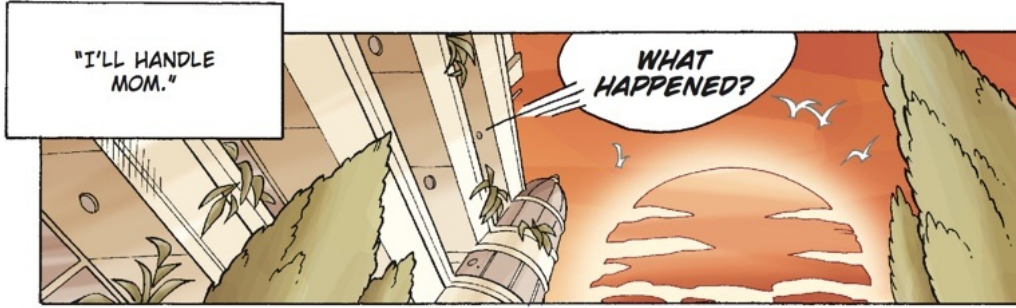
MAGIC
IS LIGHT
IN FLIGHT.

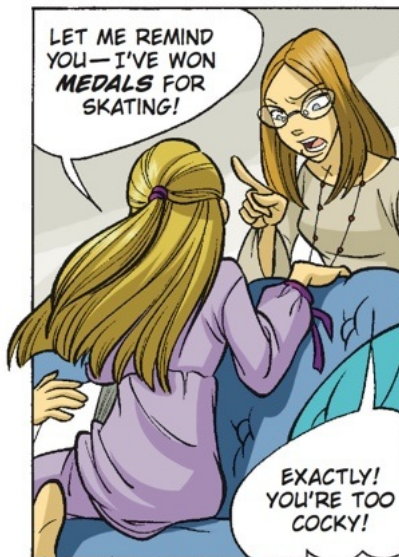
IT'S SOARING
IN THE AIR
ABOVE EVERY
THOUGHT.

MAGIC IS AN INSTANT,
AND CORNELIA IS LIVING
IT IN FULL, OPENING
HER EYES AGAIN...

...AS SHE BEGINS
HER DESCENT AT
THE ICE RINK,
SPINNING GENTLY.







"THAT'S NOT FAIR!"
CORNELIA THINKS,
AVOIDING A FIGHT
AND HER MOM'S
GLARE.



"IT'S NOT FAIR!"
AND LILIAN'S CRYING
FACE TURNS INTO A
SATISFIED SMIRK.



"IT'S NOT FAIR!"
AND HER FATHER
DOESN'T SEEM TO
NOTICE, DISTRACTED
BY COMPLICATED
WORK STUFF.



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FOR A MOMENT,
THE GUARDIAN FEELS
SO ALONE IN THAT
CROWDED HOUSE.



ALONE IN AN OCEAN
OF UNPLEASANT,
CONTRASTING
FEELINGS.



ALONE! AS HER
ROOM BECOMES HER
SAFE HAVEN, AWAY
FROM THE WORLD.



BUT AWAY FROM THE
WORLD, FAR AWAY, IN
KANDRAKAR, BEYOND
SPACE AND TIME...



...SOMEONE WATCHES
HER WITH INTEREST.

WONDERFUL!



THE POWER
FLOWING THROUGH
THIS BODY IS
ALMOST
UNLIMITED.

I CAN OBSERVE
THE GUARDIANS' LIVES
WHenever I WANT. I
JUST NEED TO WISH
FOR SOMETHING
TO...

WISE
ENDARNO...

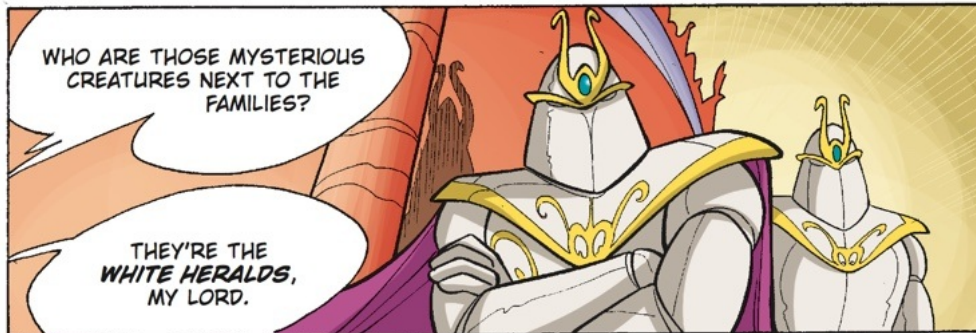
AH,
VAAL!

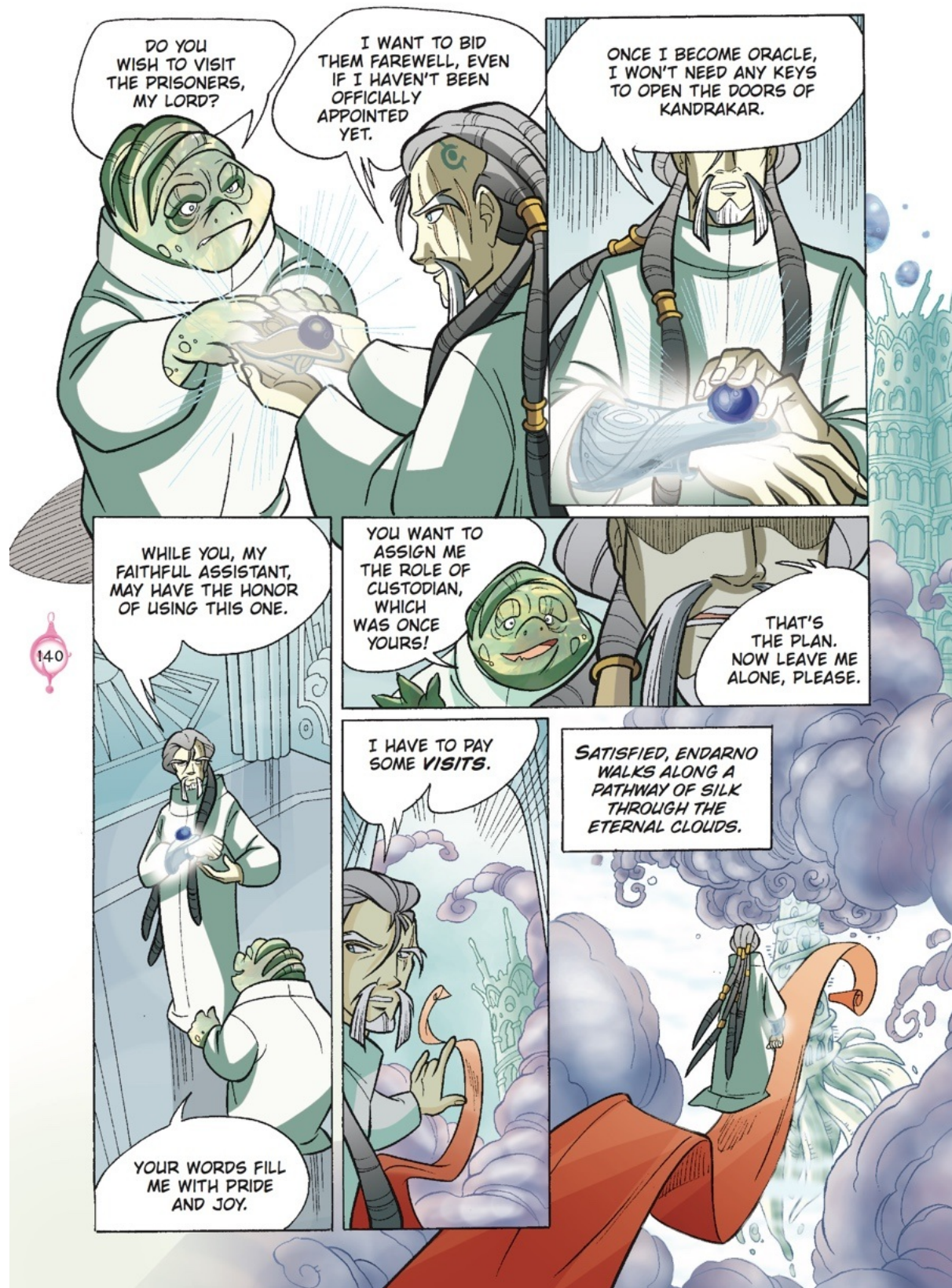
COME IN, MY
FAITHFUL ADVISER.
I HOPE SOON YOU
CAN SIMPLY CALL
ME ORACLE.











DO YOU
WISH TO VISIT
THE PRISONERS,
MY LORD?

I WANT TO BID
THEM FAREWELL, EVEN
IF I HAVEN'T BEEN
OFFICIALLY
APPOINTED
YET.

ONCE I BECOME ORACLE,
I WON'T NEED ANY KEYS
TO OPEN THE DOORS OF
KANDRAKAR.

WHILE YOU, MY
FAITHFUL ASSISTANT,
MAY HAVE THE HONOR
OF USING THIS ONE.

YOU WANT TO
ASSIGN ME
THE ROLE OF
CUSTODIAN,
WHICH
WAS ONCE
YOURS!

THAT'S
THE PLAN.
NOW LEAVE ME
ALONE, PLEASE.

I HAVE TO PAY
SOME VISITS.

SATISFIED, ENDARNO
WALKS ALONG A
PATHWAY OF SILK
THROUGH THE
ETERNAL CLOUDS.

YOUR WORDS FILL
ME WITH PRIDE
AND JOY.

ONCE IN FRONT OF
THE SMOOTH WALL OF
THE TOWER OF MISTS,
ENDARNO ACTIVATES
THE KEY BRACELET...

...AT THE MOMENT,
HIS ONLY MEANS TO
GET IN OR OUT OF
KANDRAKAR'S
INVIOLABLE
PRISON.

THE EX-CUSTODIAN'S
FIRST VISIT IS TO PHOBOS,
ELYON'S BROTHER, EVIL
TYRANT OF MERIDIAN.

HIS PRIVATE CELL IS
A CHAOTIC PLACE,
CONSTANTLY
CHANGING ITS
APPEARANCE...

...SPECIALLY
CREATED FOR
ONE ARROGANT
ENOUGH TO
DOMINATE AN
ENTIRE WORLD!

HEAD BOWED.
EYES DEAD.
THE PRISONER
IS BUT A
SHADOW
OF THE MAN
HE WAS.

ENDARNO'S SECOND VISIT
IS TO PHOBOS'S RIGHT-HAND
MAN, THE CRUEL CEDRIC.

HIS CELL IS
JUST LIKE HIS LIFE—
FULL OF LIES!

THE SOLID
FLOORS LIE,
BUILT TO GIVE
THE ILLUSION
OF BEING
SUSPENDED
OVER AN ABYSS.

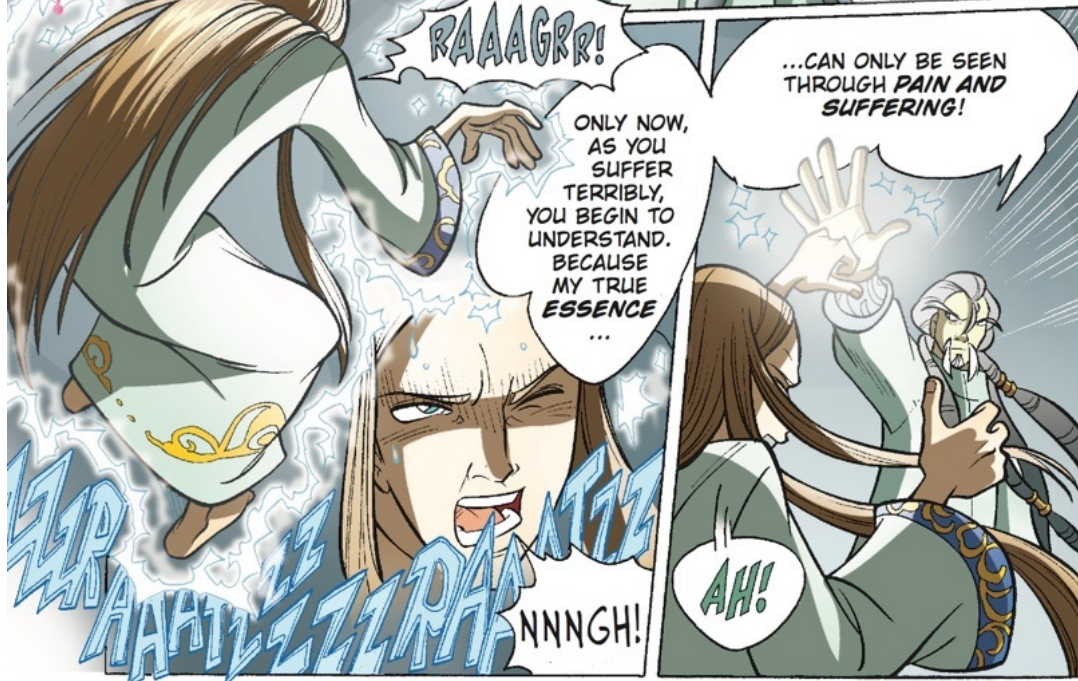
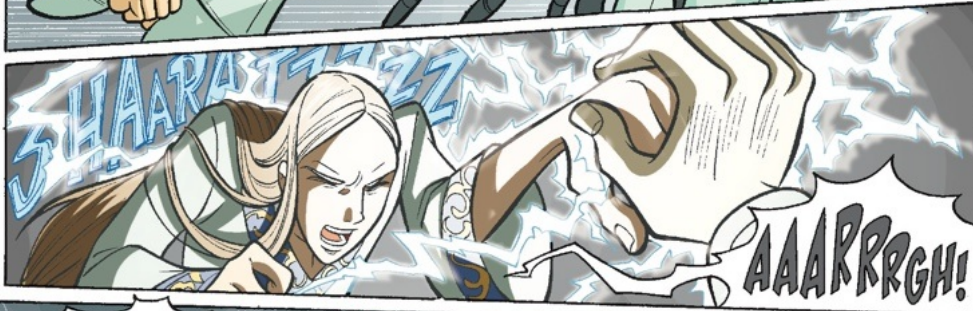
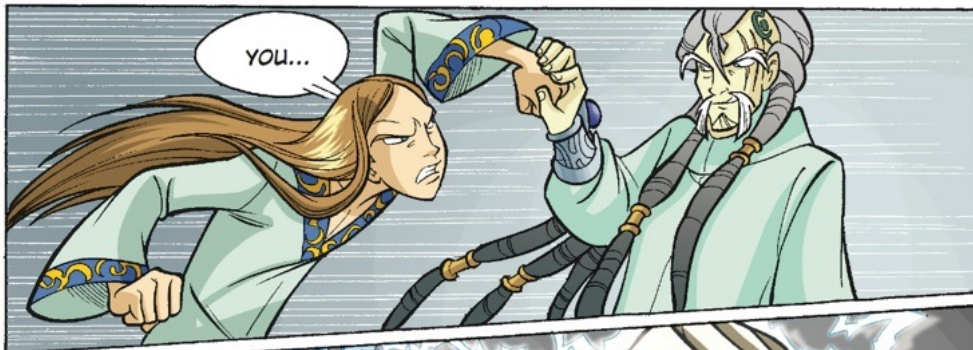
THE WALLS LIE,
APPARENTLY CONJURING
UP ENDLESS LANDSCAPES.
HOWEVER, A SIMPLE TOUCH
REVEALS THEM TO BE
COLD AND FLAT.

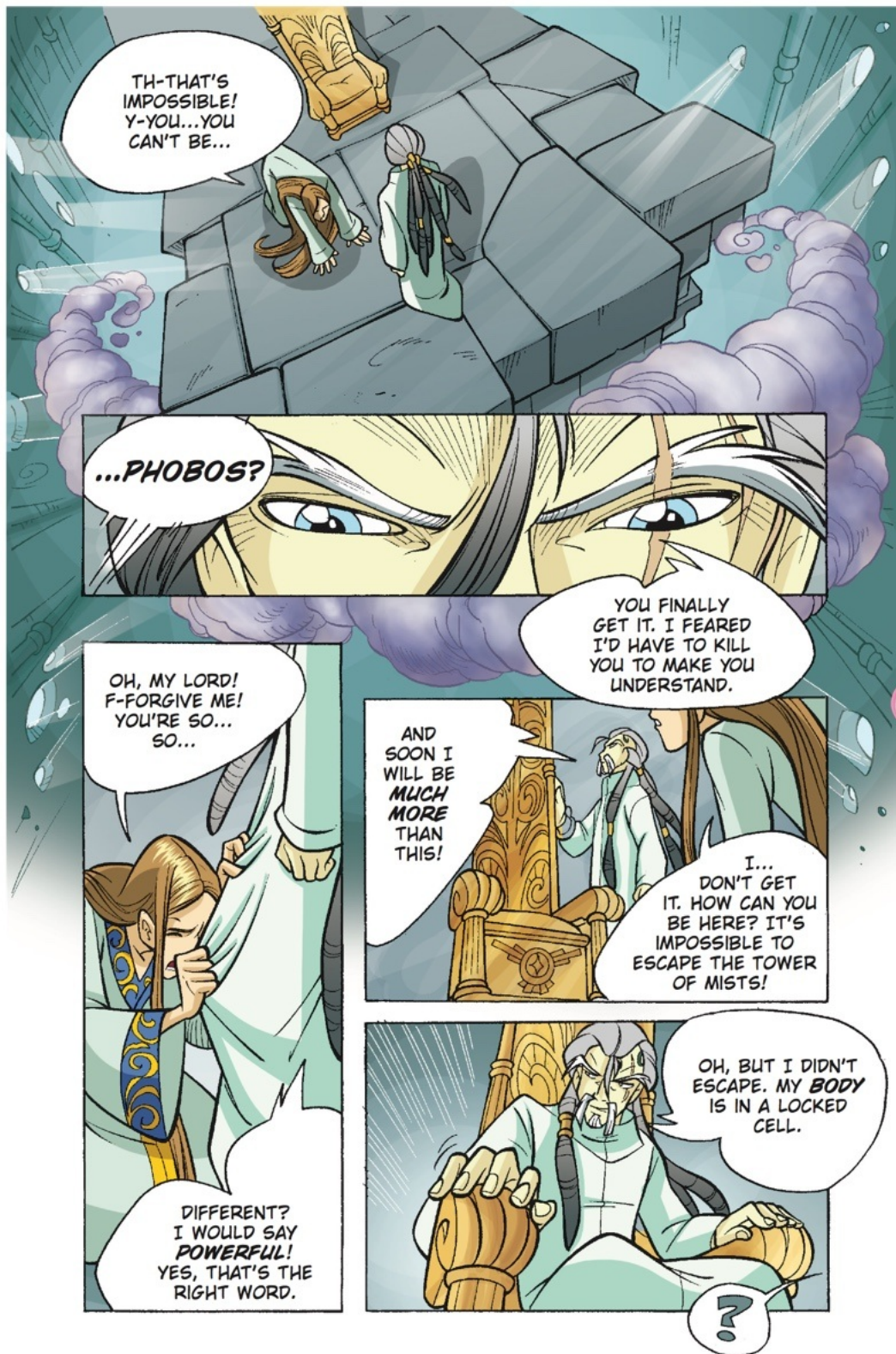
FINALLY, ON A FAKE,
GOLDEN THRONE
SITS CEDRIC...

...AND
OBVIOUSLY,
HE LIES
TOO.

I'M HAPPY
TO SEE YOU,
ENDARNO!







TH-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
Y-YOU...YOU CAN'T BE...

...PHOBOS?

YOU FINALLY GET IT. I FEARED I'D HAVE TO KILL YOU TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND.

OH, MY LORD!
F-FORGIVE ME!
YOU'RE SO...
SO...

AND SOON I WILL BE **MUCH MORE** THAN THIS!

I... DON'T GET IT. HOW CAN YOU BE HERE? IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE THE TOWER OF MISTS!

OH, BUT I DIDN'T ESCAPE. MY **BODY** IS IN A LOCKED CELL.

?

"AFTER BEING
IMPRISONED, I WAS
DRAINED OF ALMOST
ALL MY MAGICAL
STRENGTH.



"IN TIME, I LEARNED TO
FEED OFF MY HATRED AND
RESENTMENT. I SAVED MY
RESIDUAL ENERGY AND
NOURISHED IT...



"...AND IN THE DARKNESS
OF MY HEART, I FOUND
A SPARK OF **POWER!**

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"I TRICKED THE REAL
ENDARNO INTO
APPROACHING ME. I
MANAGED TO LOOK HIM
IN THE **EYES**...THEN...



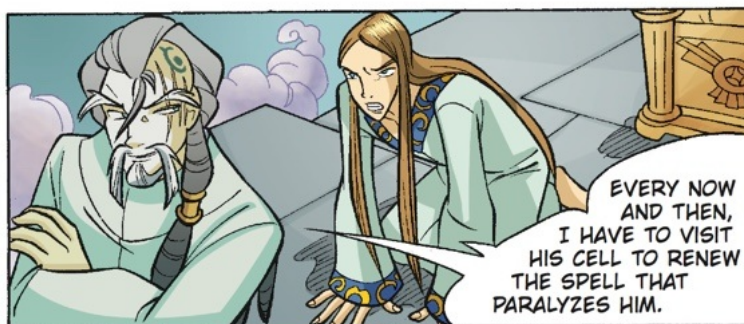
"...THEN I STARTED
SEEING THROUGH
HIS!"





A MIND
TRANSFER!

SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.
NOW I LIVE IN
ENDARNO'S BODY,
AND HE LIVES
IN MINE.



EVERY NOW
AND THEN,
I HAVE TO VISIT
HIS CELL TO RENEW
THE SPELL THAT
PARALYZES HIM.



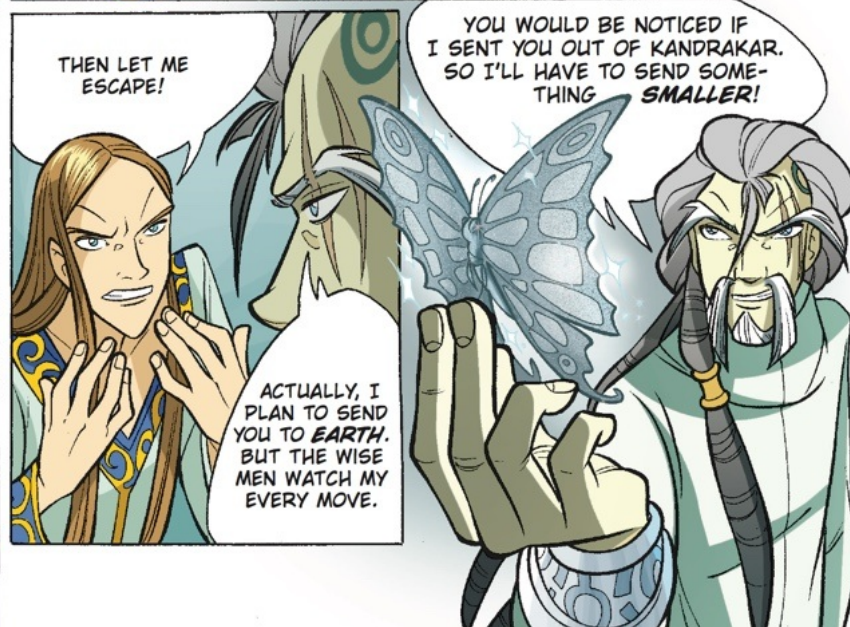
HOW DID
YOU FOOL
THE WISE
MEN OF
KANDRAKAR
...?

IT WAS EASY.
I CAN SEE
ALMOST ALL
OF ENDARNO'S
MEMORIES.
THERE ARE
ONLY A FEW
DISTANT
EVENTS
I DON'T
KNOW.



WHAT ARE
YOU WAITING
FOR? SET
ME FREE!
LET'S TEACH
THOSE OLD
RELICS A
LESSON
!!

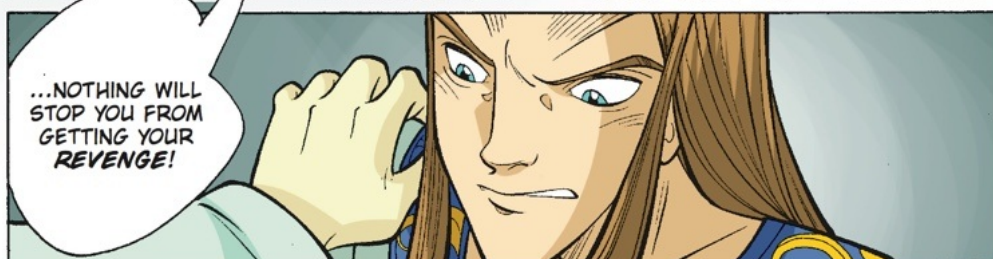
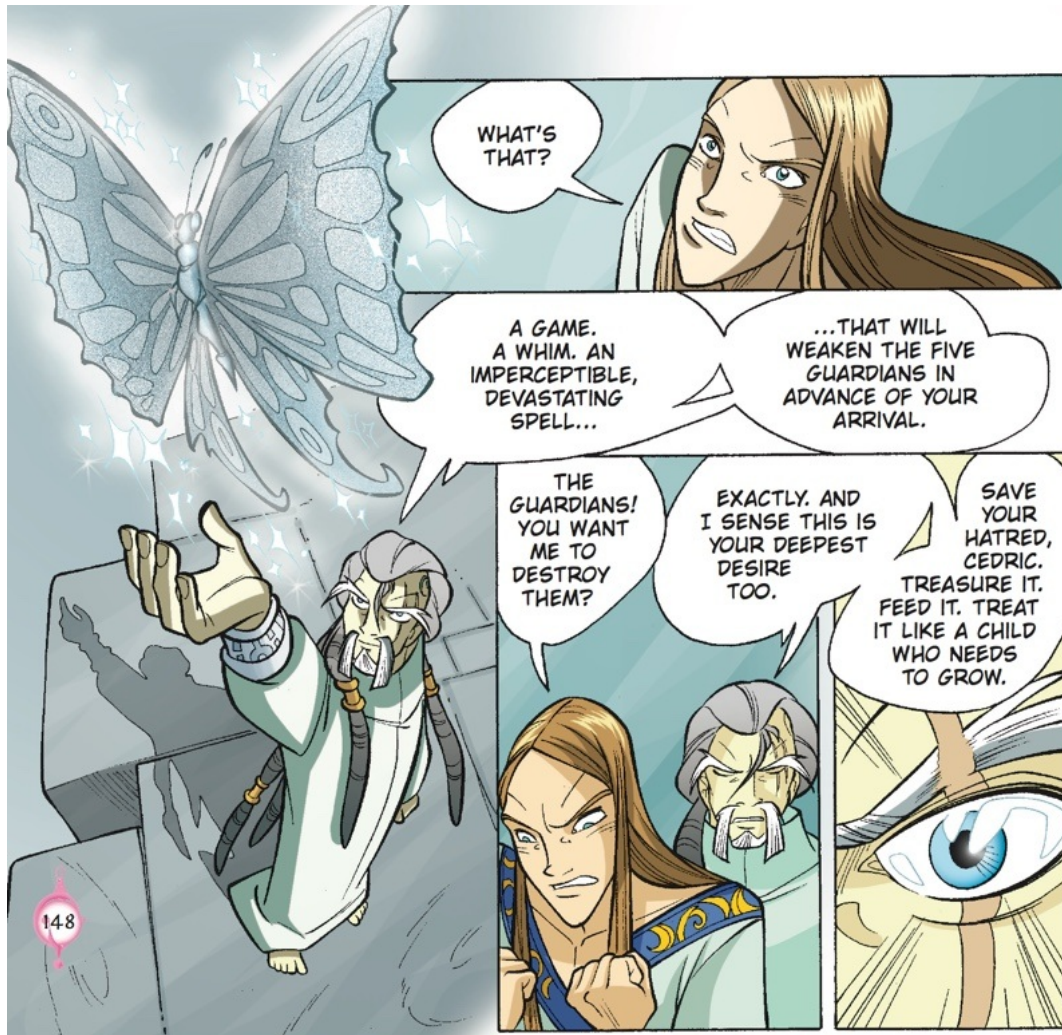
NOT YET.
FIRST, I HAVE
TO OFFICIALLY
BECOME THE
NEW ORACLE.



THEN LET ME
ESCAPE!

YOU WOULD BE NOTICED IF
I SENT YOU OUT OF KANDRAKAR.
SO I'LL HAVE TO SEND SOME-
THING *SMALLER!*

ACTUALLY, I
PLAN TO SEND
YOU TO *EARTH*.
BUT THE WISE
MEN WATCH MY
EVERY MOVE.

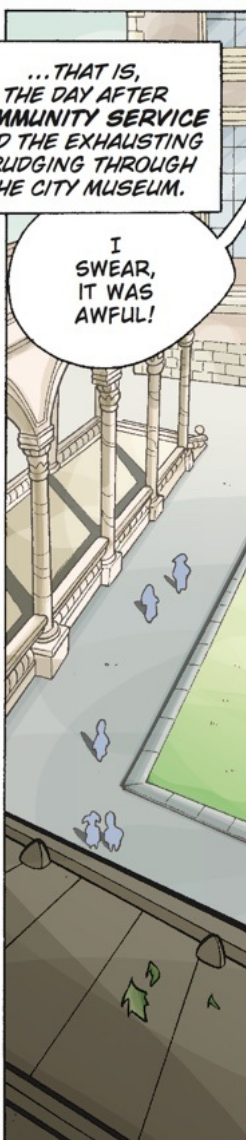


EARLY MORNING IN
HEATHERFIELD.
EVERYDAY LIFE—OR
BETTER STILL, THE LIFE
OF THE DAY AFTER...



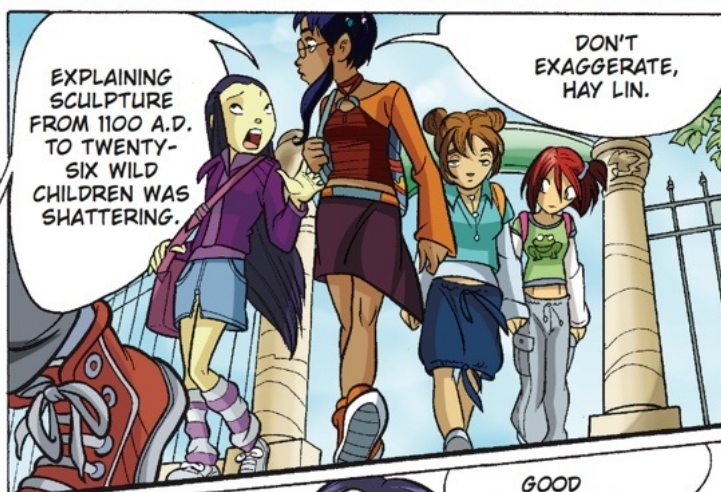
...THAT IS,
THE DAY AFTER
COMMUNITY SERVICE
AND THE EXHAUSTING
TRUDGING THROUGH
THE CITY MUSEUM.

I
SWEAR,
IT WAS
AWFUL!



EXPLAINING
SCULPTURE
FROM 1100 A.D.
TO TWENTY-
SIX WILD
CHILDREN WAS
SHATTERING.

DON'T
EXAGGERATE,
HAY LIN.



BUT IT'S TRUE,
TARANEE. I EVEN
CONSIDERED USING
MY **POWERS** TO
SHUT THEM
UP.

GOOD
THING YOU
DIDN'T!

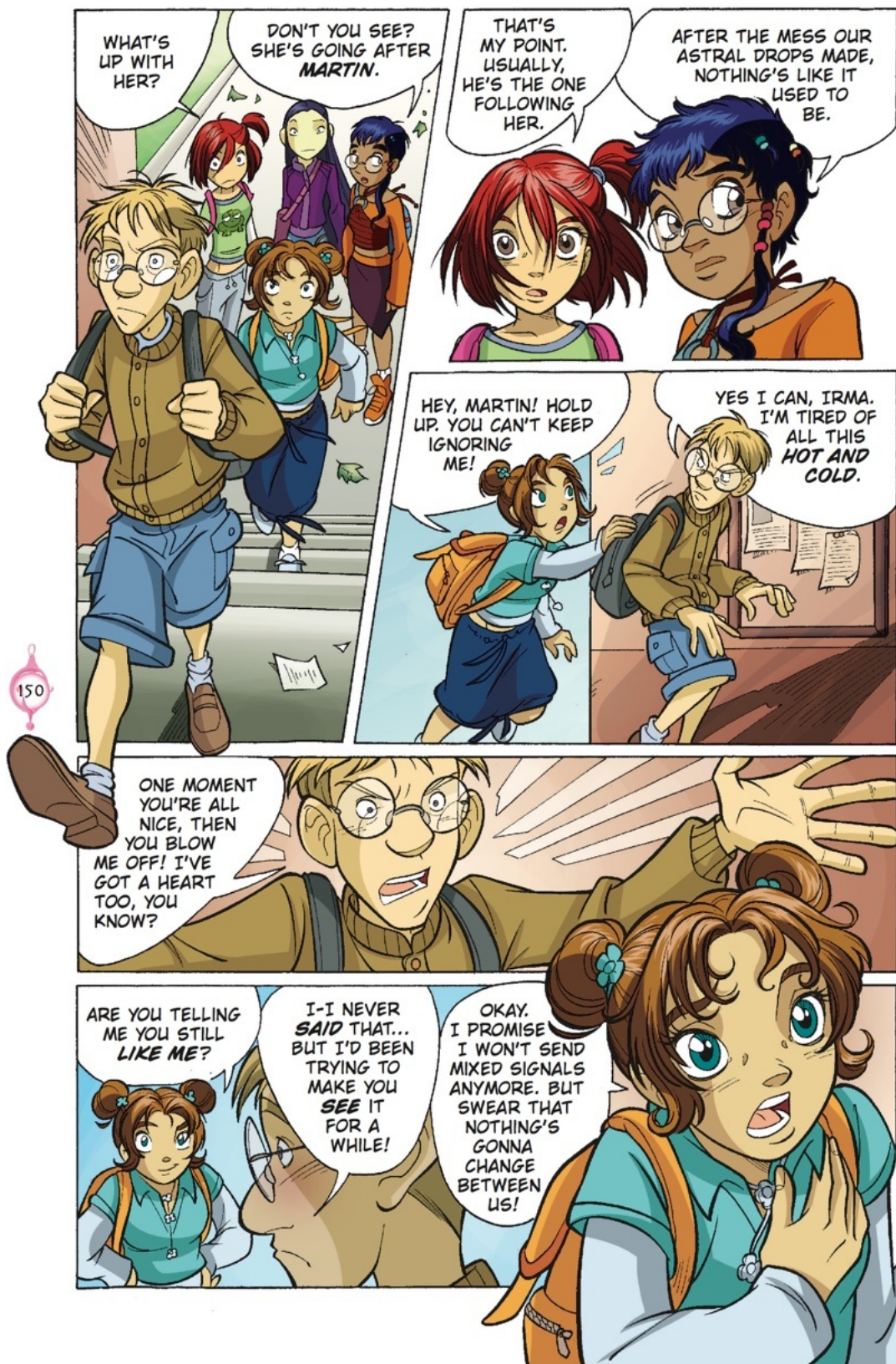


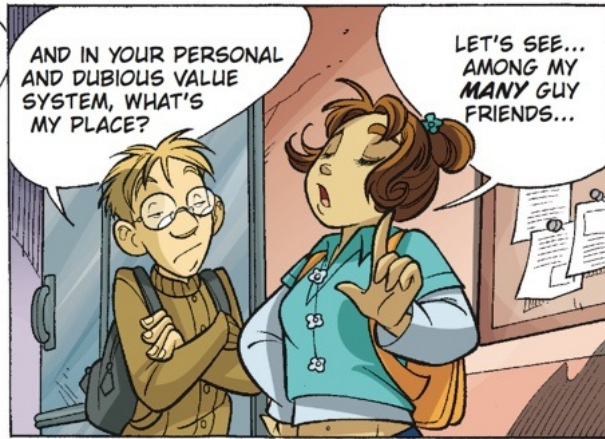
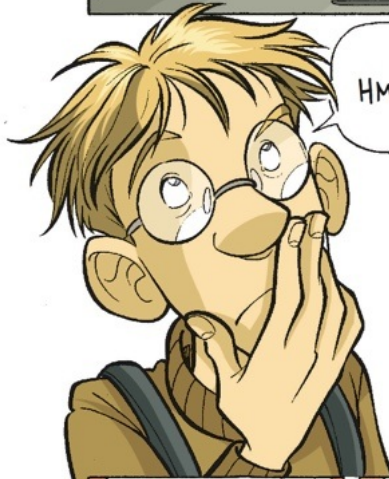
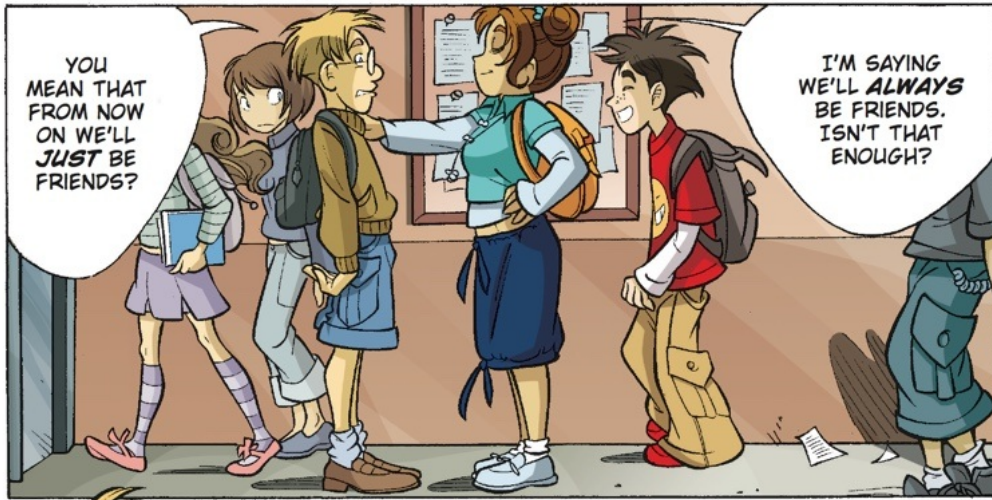
THE NEW ORACLE
WILL COME DOWN ON
US LIKE A TON OF
BRICKS IF WE STEP
OUT OF LINE.

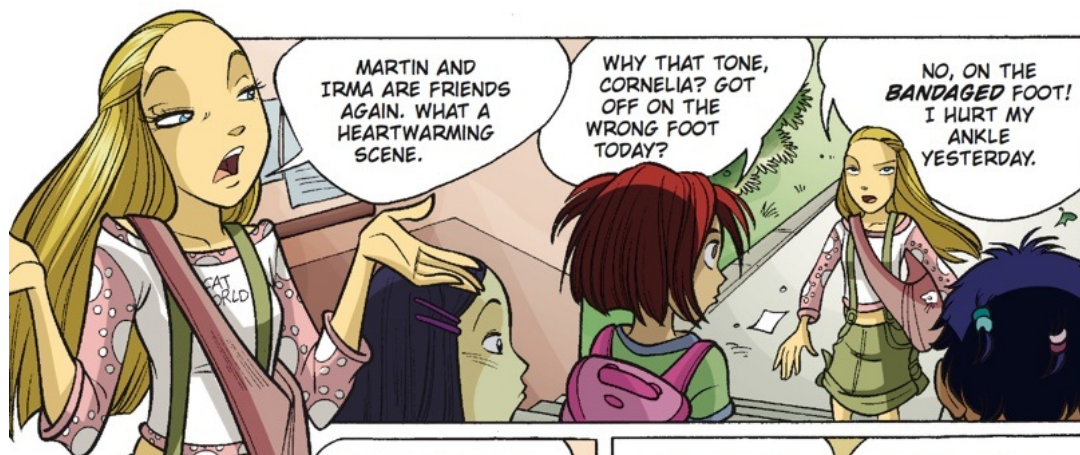
BY THE WAY,
AFTER SCHOOL, WE
SHOULD MEET UP
TO TALK ABOUT
ENDARNO.

HMMM...
SURE, WILL.
LATER,
LATER.





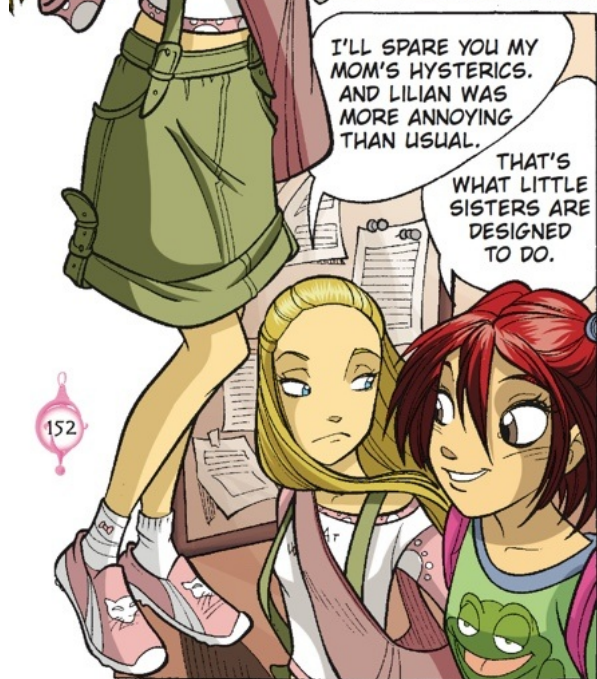




MARTIN AND IRMA ARE FRIENDS AGAIN. WHAT A HEARTWARMING SCENE.

WHY THAT TONE, CORNELIA? GOT OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT TODAY?

NO, ON THE **BANDAGED** FOOT! I HURT MY ANKLE YESTERDAY.



I'LL SPARE YOU MY MOM'S HYSTERIC. AND LILIAN WAS MORE ANNOYING THAN USUAL.

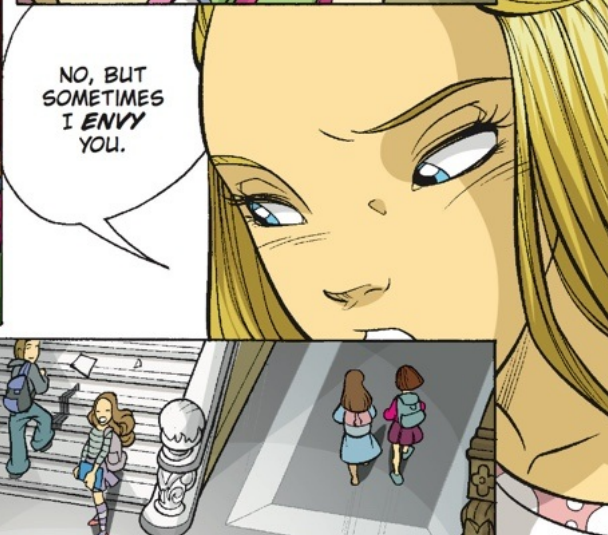
THAT'S WHAT LITTLE SISTERS ARE DESIGNED TO DO.



EASY FOR YOU TO SAY. YOU'RE AN ONLY CHILD!

YOU THINK I'M HAPPY ABOUT THAT?

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NO, BUT SOMETIMES I **ENVY** YOU.

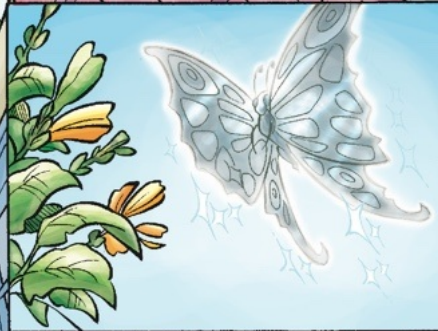


CORNELIA ISN'T SERIOUS, BUT SHE KNOWS SHE SHOULD NEVER SAY SUCH THINGS, EVEN AS A JOKE.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, IN THE GUARDIAN'S FLAT, THE DOOR OF THE BALCONY BURSTS OPEN...

A SMALL CRYSTAL BUTTERFLY APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE AND GENTLY SETTLES ON A PLANT...

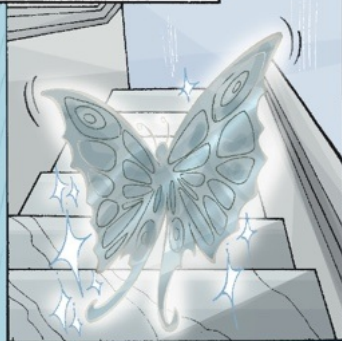
SPAM



...INCINERATING IT!



THEN, THE LITTLE CREATURE FLIES UNDISTURBED INTO THE EMPTY HOUSE.

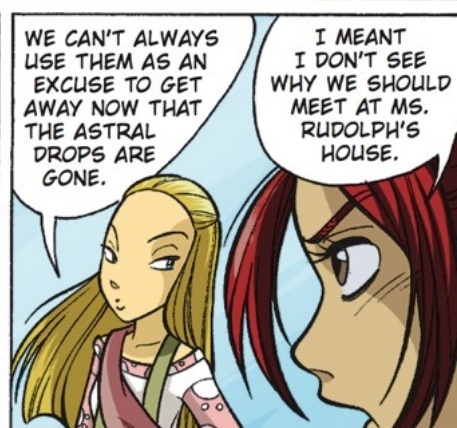
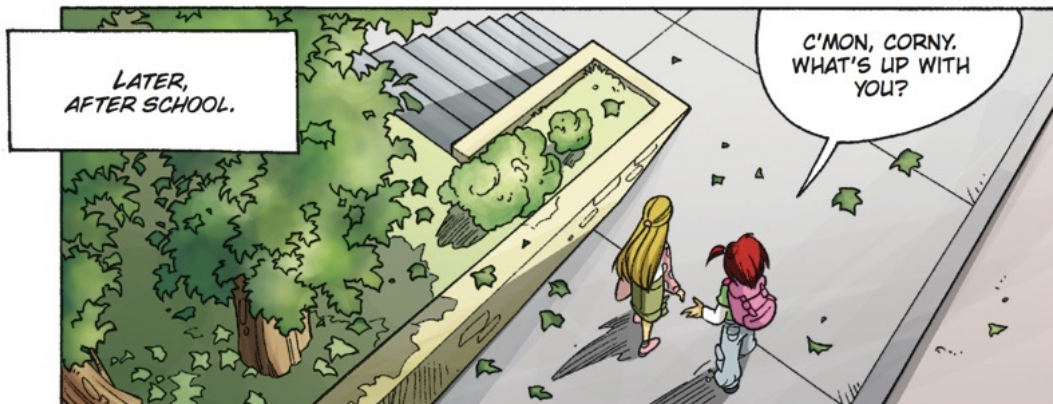


IT BRUSHES EVERY ITEM, TOUCHES EVERY PHOTOGRAPH, AND FINDS EVERYTHING RELATED TO CORNELIA...



...MAGICALLY ERASING ANY VITAL TRACE OF THE GUARDIAN!







STUPID, STUPID,
STUPID! CORNELIA
CAN'T GET ANYTHING
RIGHT TODAY.



SHE HAS TO SORT
HERSELF OUT BECAUSE
SHE MIGHT BE
ARGUING WITH HER
MOM AGAIN SOON.



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ON THE STAIRS,
SHE SAYS HELLO TO A
NEIGHBOR, WHO DOESN'T
REPLY. HOW RUDE!

WHEN SHE SLIPS HER
KEY IN, SHE FINDS THE
LOCK HAS BEEN BEEN
CHANGED. WHY DID
NO ONE TELL HER?



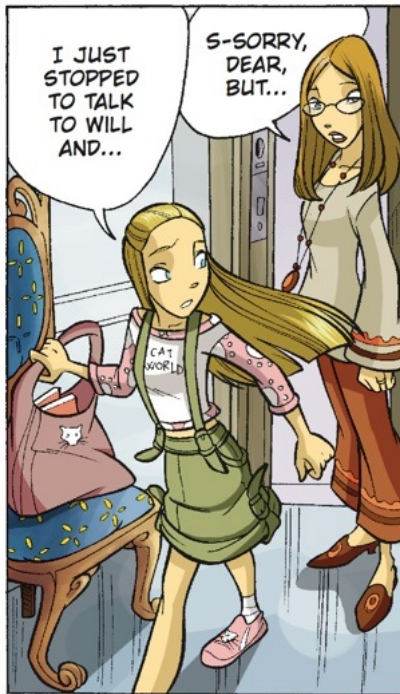
AND WHAT'S THIS
SUDDEN ANXIETY?
THIS OPPRESSIVE,
EMPTY FEELING?



BUT SOMEONE
OPENS THE DOOR, AND
EVERYTHING'S BACK TO
NORMAL. EVERYTHING'S
AS USUAL.

DON'T
SAY A WORD.
I'M A BIT LATE,
BUT NOT BECAUSE
OF THE ANKLE!



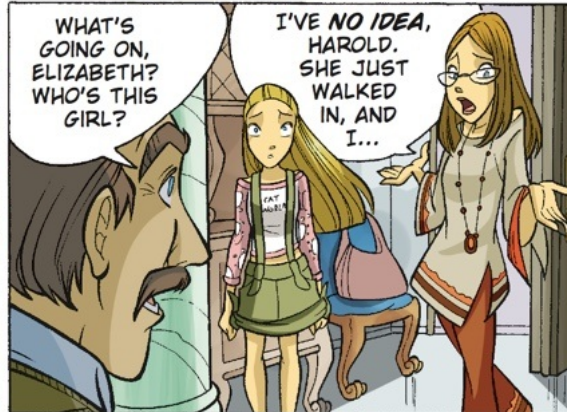


I JUST STOPPED TO TALK TO WILL AND...

S-SORRY, DEAR, BUT...



...WHO ARE YOU?



WHAT'S GOING ON, ELIZABETH? WHO'S THIS GIRL?

I'VE NO IDEA, HAROLD. SHE JUST WALKED IN, AND I...



YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? IS THIS A JOKE?



WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M TIRED AND DON'T FEEL LIKE PLAYING!

MOMMY...

DON'T WORRY, LILIAN.



A NATURAL, PROTECTIVE GESTURE. WHY DOES HER MOM SHIELD HER LITTLE SISTER? WHY? WHO IS SHE AFRAID OF?

WHAT'S HAPPENING, CORNELIA? WHY IS DAD SO TENSE? WHY DOESN'T HE WANT YOU TO GO INTO YOUR...

...ROOM?

M-MOM!
DAD! WHERE...
WHERE ARE MY
THINGS? MY BED?
MY WARDROBE?

I'M SORRY, DEAR.
THIS HAS ALWAYS
BEEN MY OFFICE,
AND WE...

...WE ONLY HAVE
ONE
DAUGHTER!

"LILIAN!"

ONLY NOW, SEEING
THE CONFUSION
AND ANGUISH IN
HIS EYES, DOES
CORNELIA
UNDERSTAND!

WHAT DOES IT FEEL
LIKE, PRAGMATIC
GUARDIAN, WHEN
YOUR OWN ELEMENT
CRUMBLES BENEATH
YOUR FEET?

WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN YOU FIND
OUT YOU NEVER
EXISTED?

ALL YOUR
CERTAINTIES
TURN TO SAND
WHILE HARSH
REALITY REPLACES
MAGIC.

THAT MAGIC
THAT, NOW MORE
THAN EVER, IS
JUST A FLIGHT
OF LIGHTNESS.

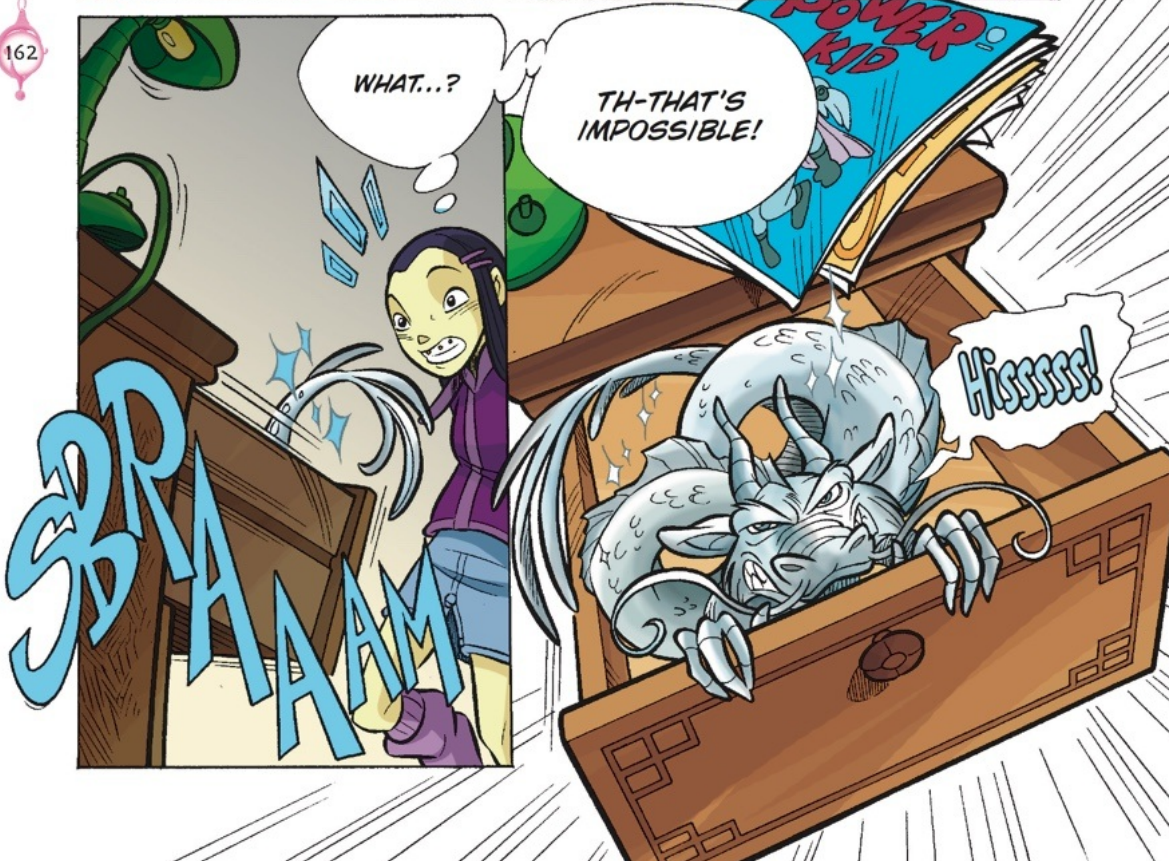
THE CRUEL FLIGHT
OF A BUTTERFLY
THAT ONLY NEEDED
TO FLUTTER ITS
WINGS...

...TO ERASE
A WHOLE
EXISTENCE!

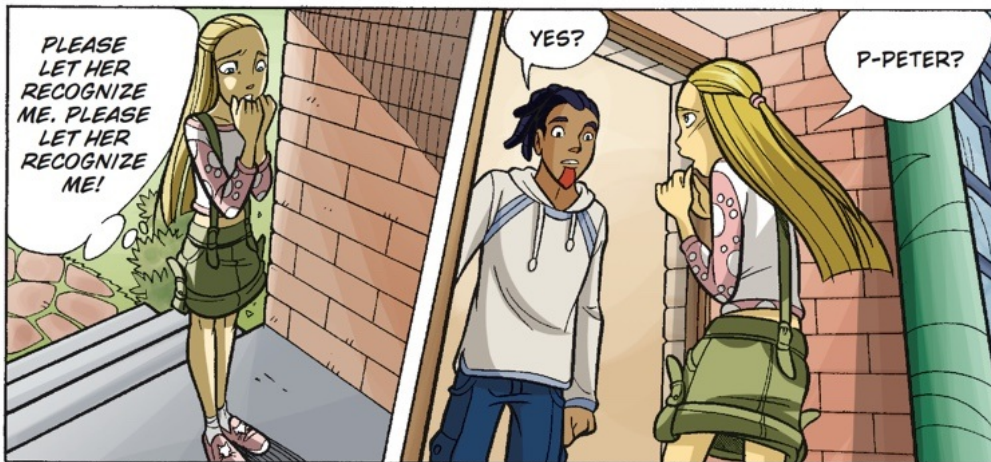
UNIMAGINABLE.



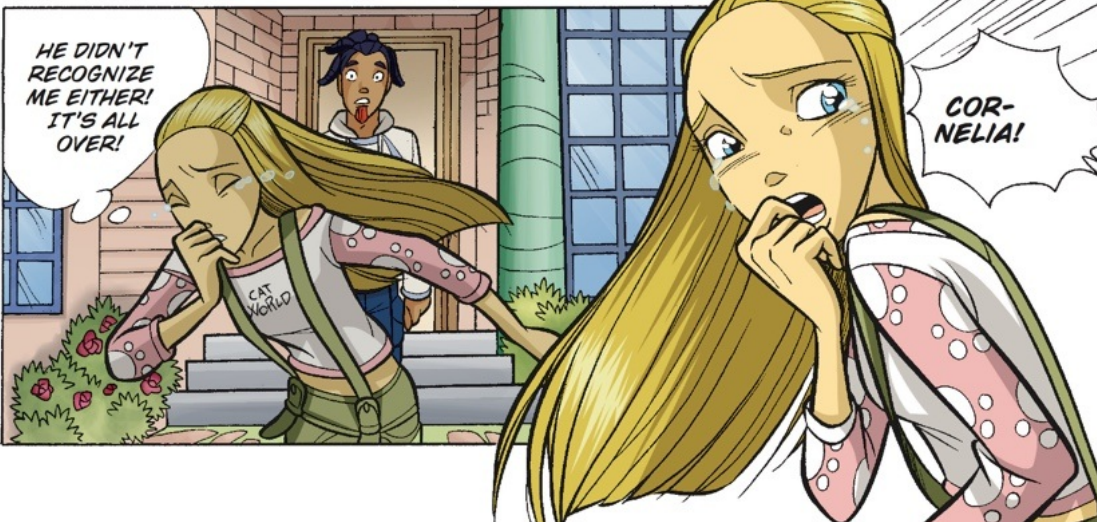


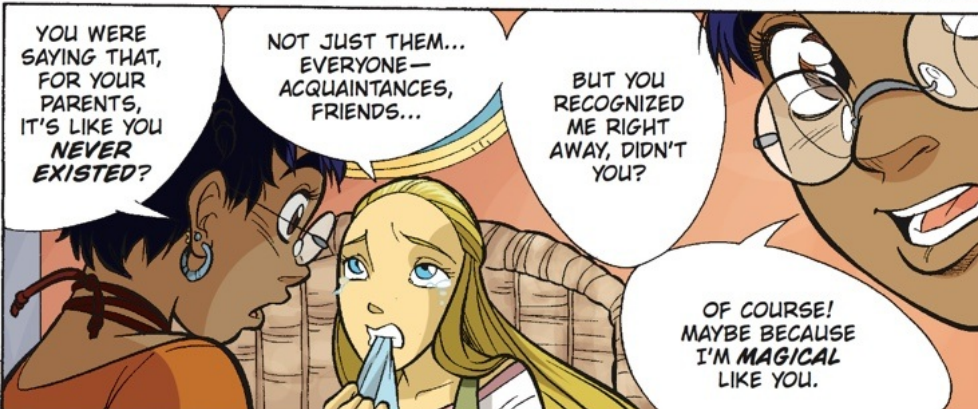
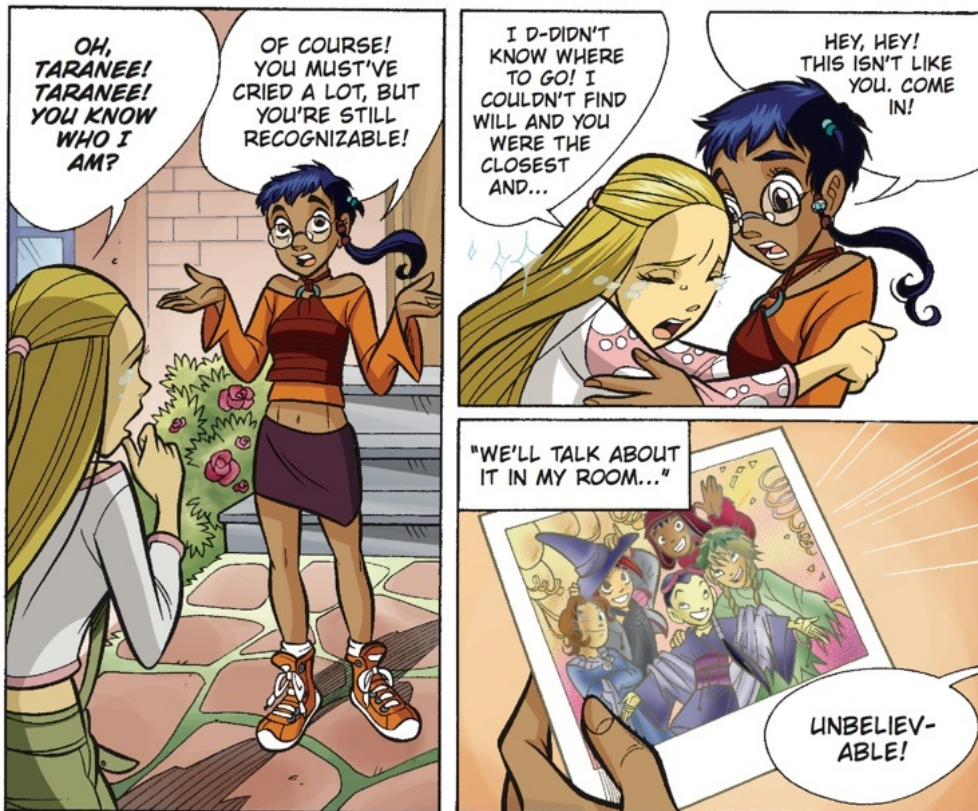


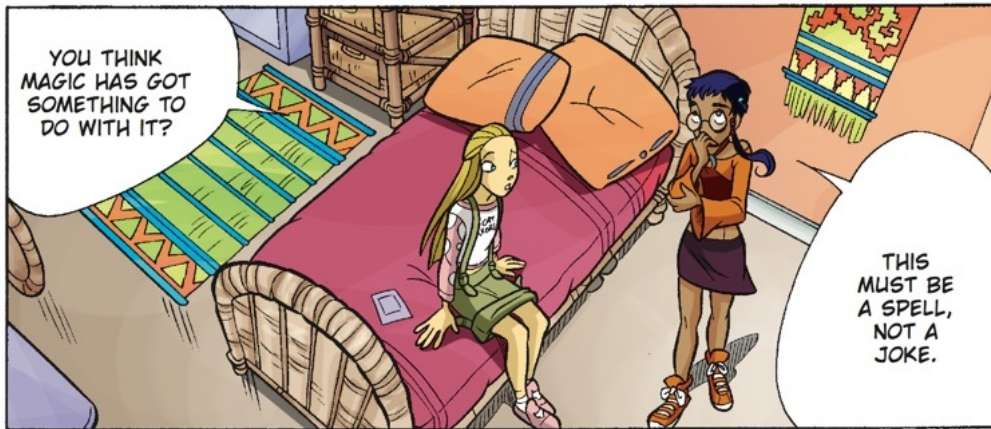




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LATER, AT REBECCA
RUDOLPH'S (A.K.A.
ORUBE'S) HOUSE...

LOOKS LIKE
I'M THE FIRST.
CAN I COME
IN?

OF COURSE.
IT'S YOUR
HOUSE.



I THOUGHT WE'D
SORTED THINGS
OUT, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW
WHAT. MAYBE
WE SHOULD
TALK ABOUT
YOU, ME, AND
MATT.

TALK
ALL YOU
WANT. I'M
NOT GONNA
LISTEN.



WHADDAYA
MEAN?

I'LL JUST SAY
ONCE AGAIN THAT
I FEEL **NOTHING**
FOR HIM. HE'S
ONLY A
FRIEND.

REALLY?
GOOD.
ME TOO.

THEIR TALK ENDS
A BIT ICILY...
WHO KNOWS IF THE
GIRLS ARE BEING
SINCERE
...?



WILL IS STILL
IN LOVE WITH
MATT, AND
ORUBE FEELS
SOMETHING
FOR HIM TOO.



IN HER CASE,
IT'S NOT LOVE
BUT SIMPLE
GRATITUDE.



THANKS TO MATT AND
HIS KINDNESS, NOW
ORUBE FEELS A LITTLE
LESS ALONE AND A
LITTLE LESS...ALIEN.

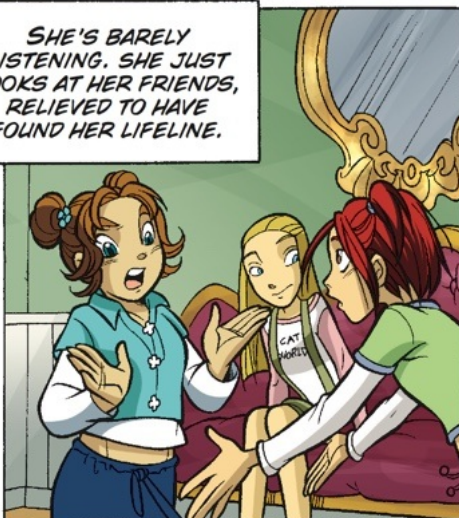


LATER, THE OTHER
GUARDIANS ARRIVE,
AND THE DISCUSSION
SHIFTS TO WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO
CORNELIA.

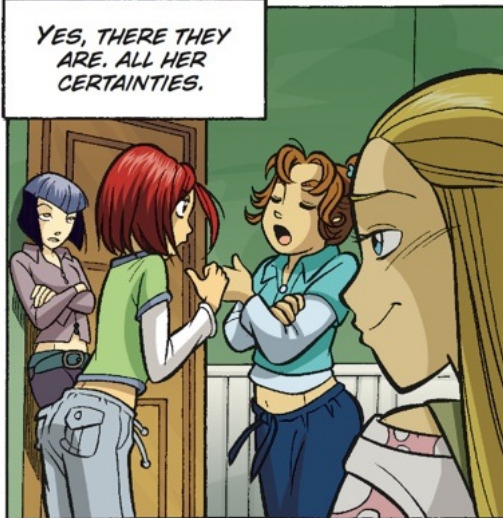
168

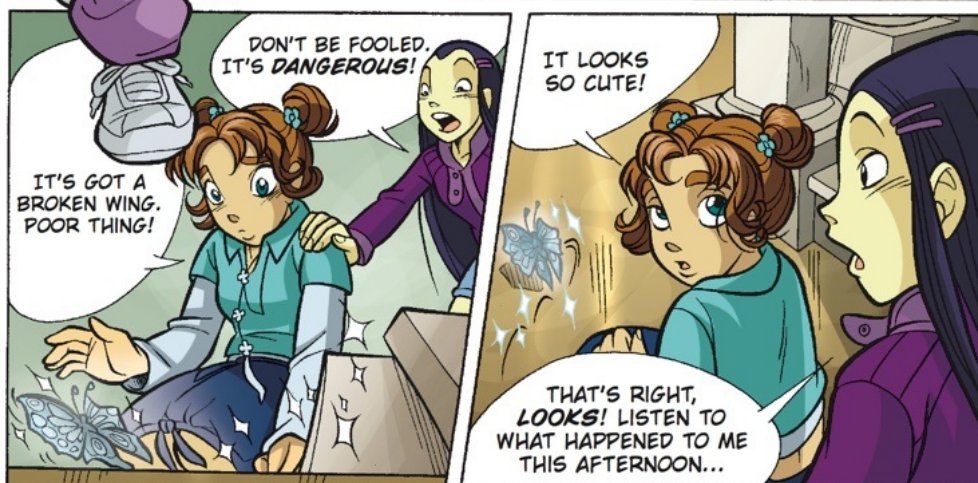
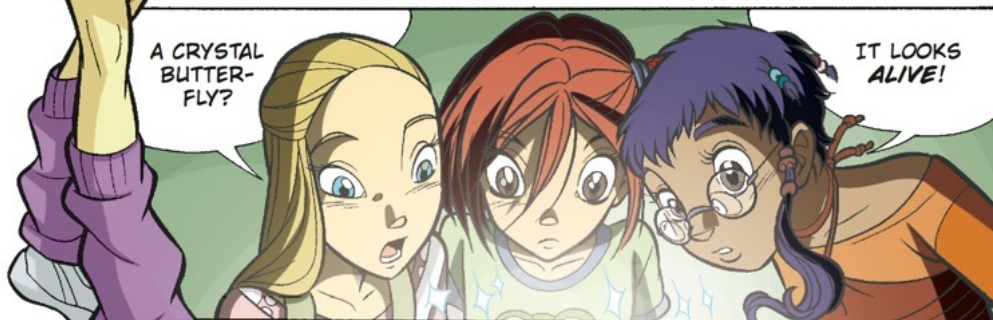
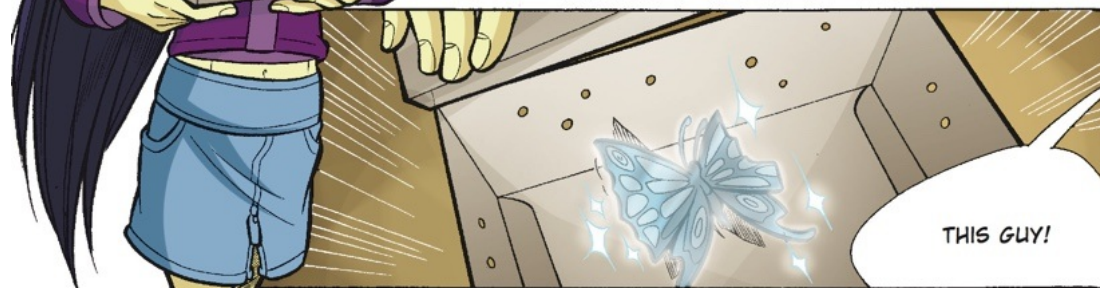


SHE'S BARELY
LISTENING. SHE JUST
LOOKS AT HER FRIENDS,
RELIEVED TO HAVE
FOUND HER LIFELINE.

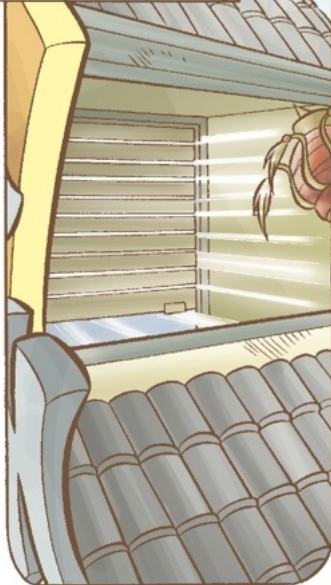


YES, THERE THEY
ARE. ALL HER
CERTAINITIES.





"IT ALL STARTED
WITH A LITTLE
DRAGON WITH ITS
MOUTH OPEN..."



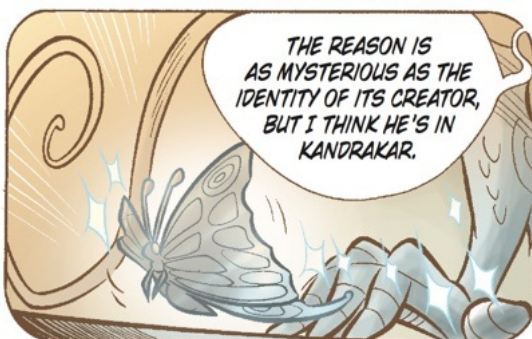


IT CARRIES A SOPHISTICATED SPELL THAT ONLY SOMEONE VERY POWERFUL COULD HAVE CONJURED UP.



IT WAS IN YOUR DRAWER BECAUSE IT WAS ERASING ANY MEMORIES CONNECTED TO CORNELIA!

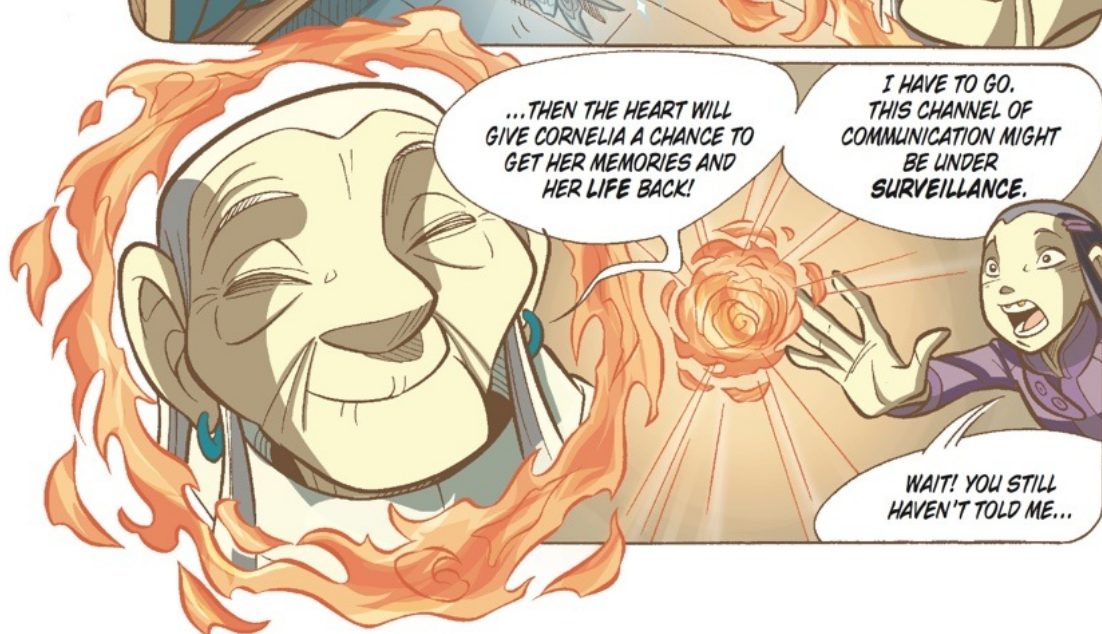
I DON'T GET IT!



THE REASON IS AS MYSTERIOUS AS THE IDENTITY OF ITS CREATOR, BUT I THINK HE'S IN KANDRAKAR.



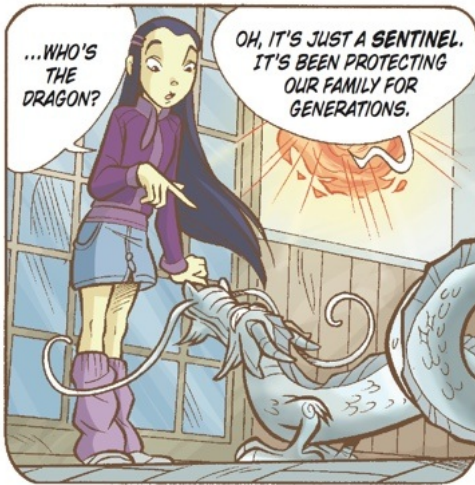
TO GET PROOF, YOU'LL HAVE TO BRING IT NEAR THE HEART OF KANDRAKAR. IF THERE'S A REACTION...

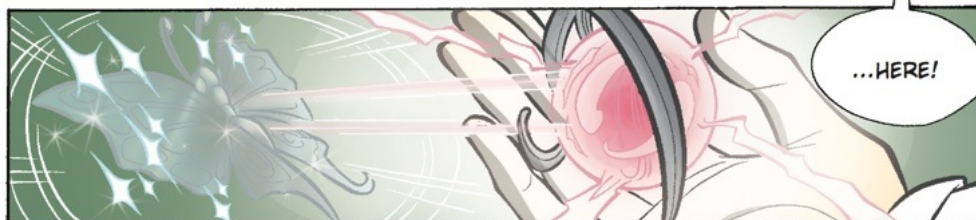


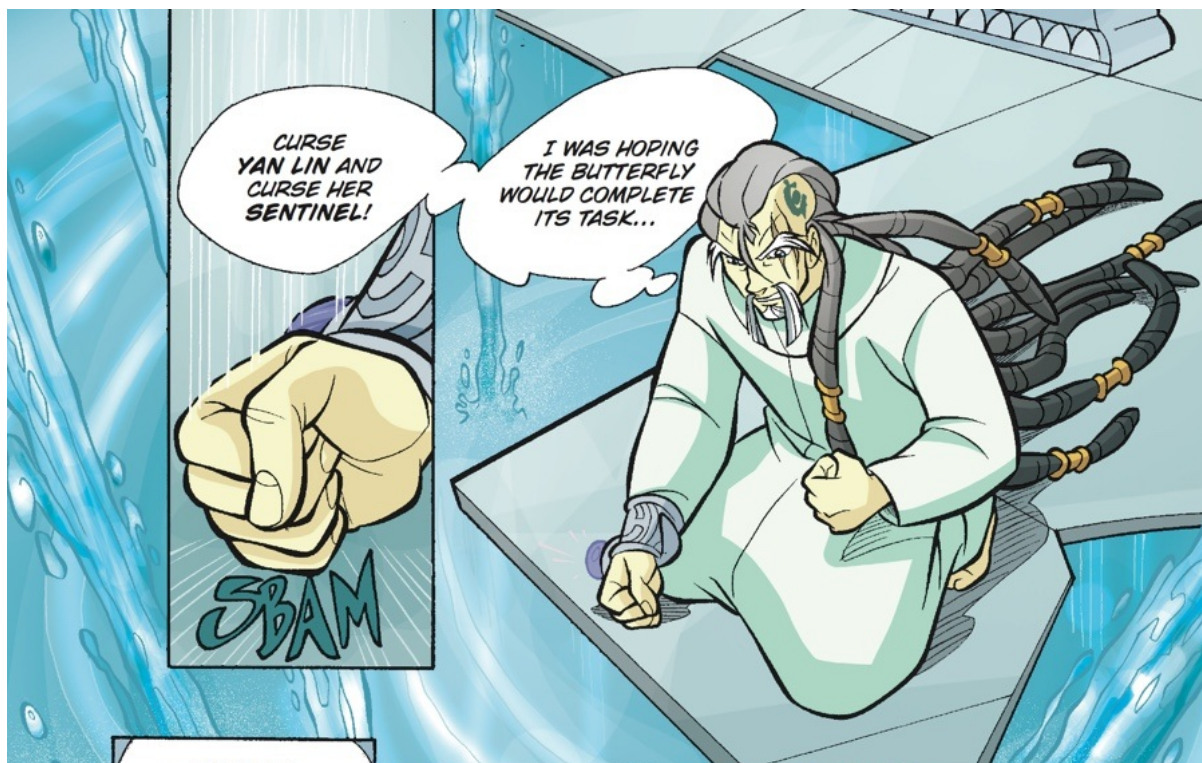
...THEN THE HEART WILL GIVE CORNELIA A CHANCE TO GET HER MEMORIES AND HER LIFE BACK!

I HAVE TO GO. THIS CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION MIGHT BE UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

WAIT! YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME...







CURSE
YAN LIN AND
CURSE HER
SENTINEL!

I WAS HOPING
THE BUTTERFLY
WOULD COMPLETE
ITS TASK...

BAM

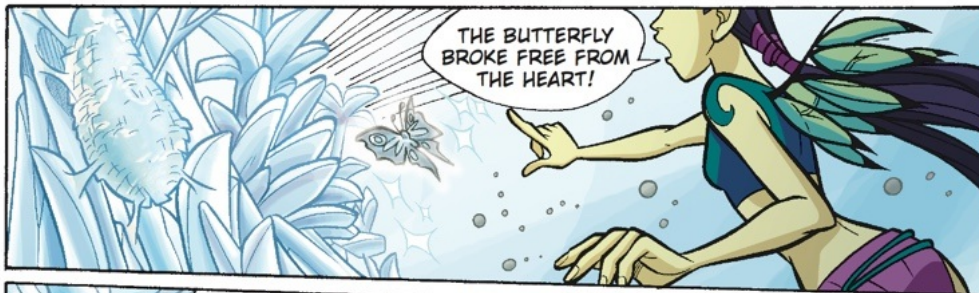
...SILENTLY
ERASING THE
LIVES OF ALL
THE GUARDIANS,
ONE BY ONE.

I WASN'T
ASKING FOR
MUCH. I JUST
WANTED TO
MAKE THEM FEEL
DESPERATE AND
INSECURE, LIKE
THEIR ASTRAL
DROPS DID.

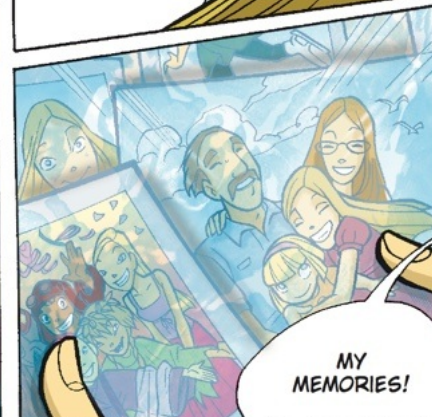
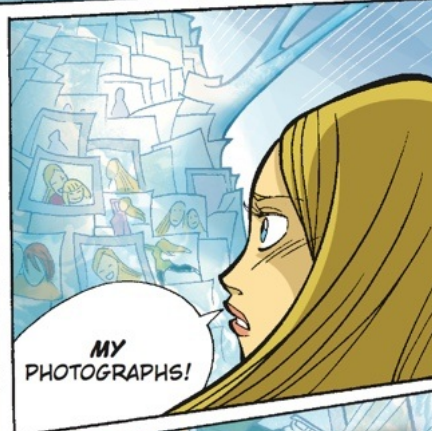
BUT THE HEART
OF KANDRAKAR
FIRST ABSORBED THE
BUTTERFLY, THEN
TRANSFORMED
THE GIRLS...

...TO TAKE
THEM WHERE
THEY MIGHT FIND
AN ANSWER.



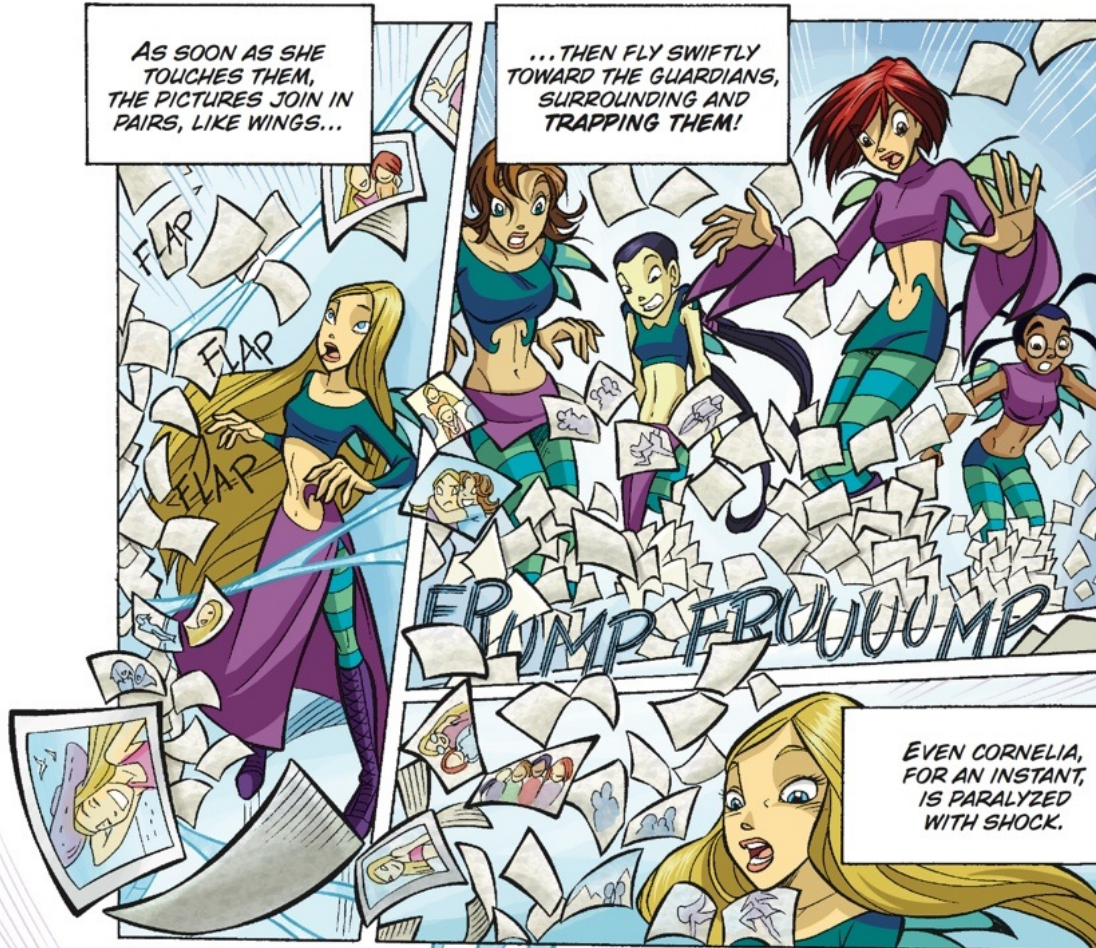


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AS SOON AS SHE TOUCHES THEM, THE PICTURES JOIN IN PAIRS, LIKE WINGS...

...THEN FLY SWIFTLY TOWARD THE GUARDIANS, SURROUNDING AND TRAPPING THEM!

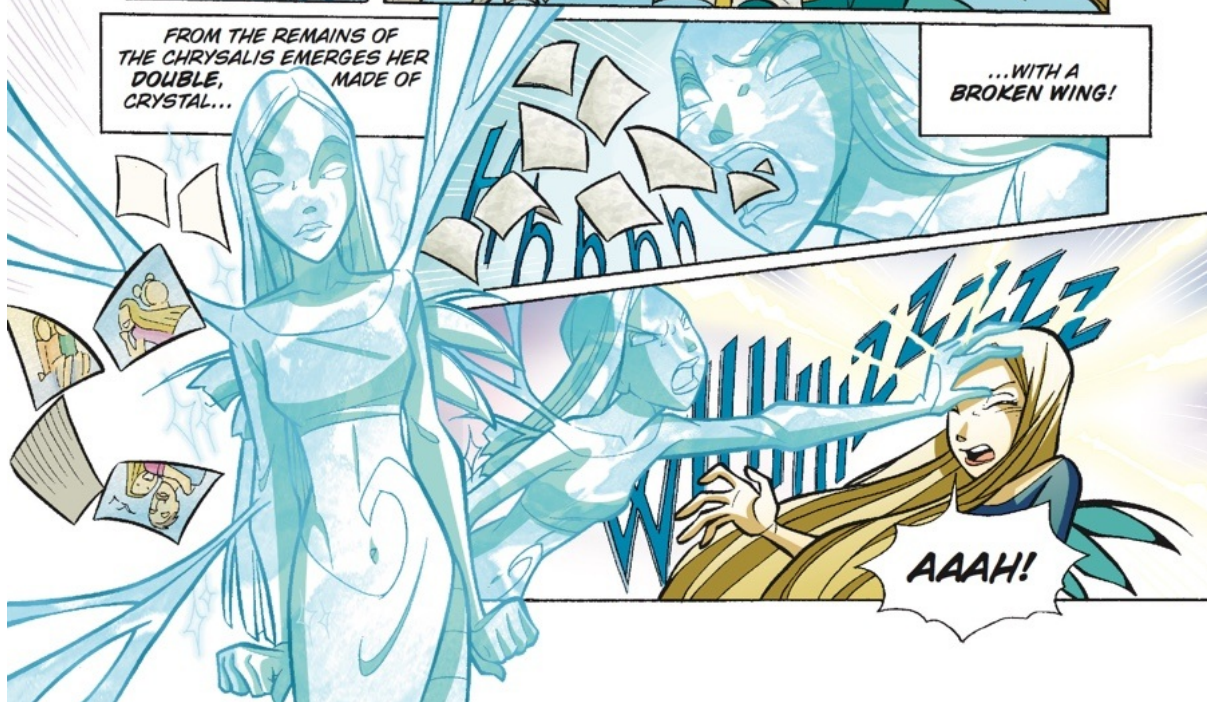


EVEN CORNELIA, FOR AN INSTANT, IS PARALYZED WITH SHOCK.

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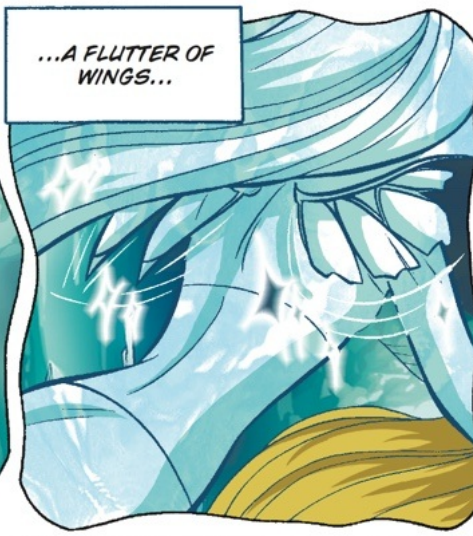
FROM THE REMAINS OF THE CHRYSALIS EMERGES HER DOUBLE, MADE OF CRYSTAL...

...WITH A BROKEN WING!





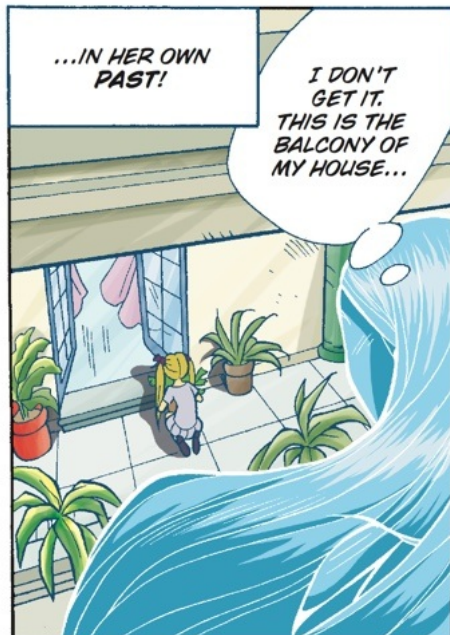
THE BLINK OF
AN EYE...



...A FLUTTER OF
WINGS...

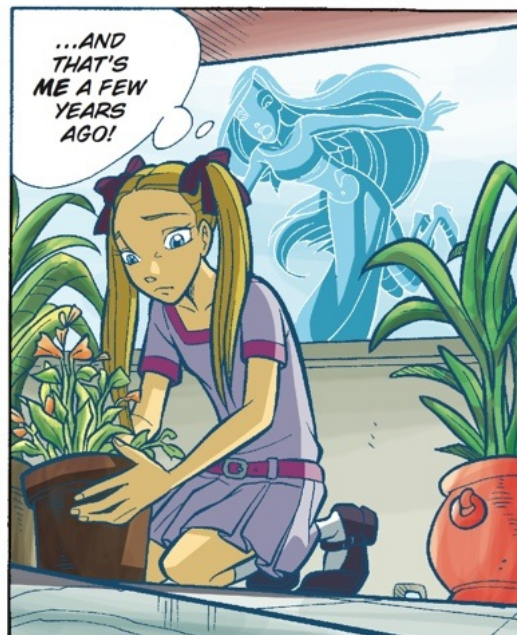


...AND CORNELIA FINDS
HERSELF FLOATING LIKE
AN INVISIBLE GHOST...

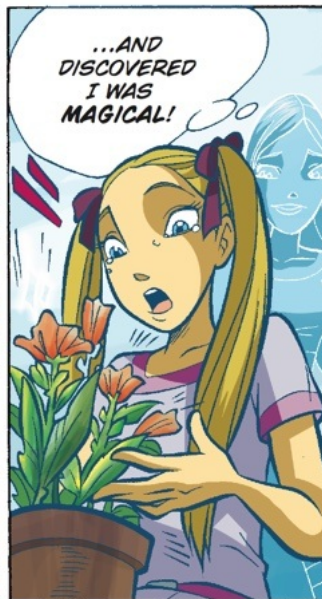
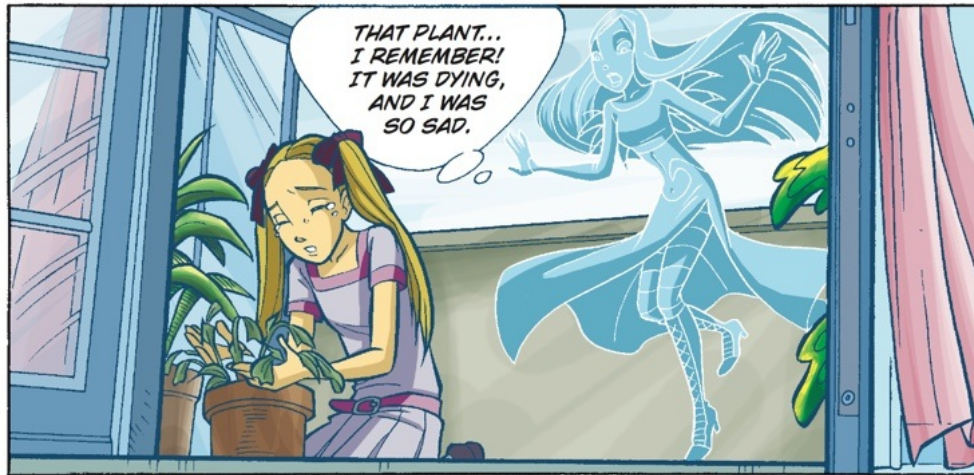


...IN HER OWN
PAST!

I DON'T
GET IT.
THIS IS THE
BALCONY OF
MY HOUSE...



...AND
THAT'S
ME A FEW
YEARS
AGO!





THE BLINK OF
AN EYE...



...A FLUTTER
OF WINGS...



...AND...

WHERE AM I?
WHERE ARE MY
FRIENDS?

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HANG ON.
THIS IS MERIDIAN,
AND THAT'S...



...CALEB!



I'M RELIVING
THE MOMENT I MET
HIM AND STARTED
LOVING HIM!



CALEB.
OH, CALEB! I
WISH I COULD
RELIVE THIS
MOMENT
WITH YOU
FOREVER.

B-BUT...
NO. I CAN'T
STAY. I DON'T
WANT TO.



FORGIVE
ME, BUT I FEEL I
NEED TO GET AWAY
FROM ALL THIS.



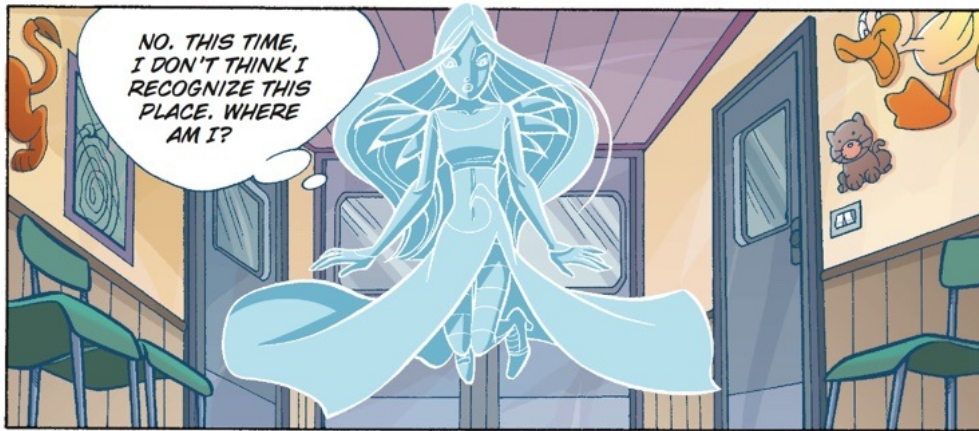
FAR...
A-AWAY...
NOW...



ONCE AGAIN,
THE BLINK OF
AN EYE...



...AND A
FLUTTER OF
WINGS!



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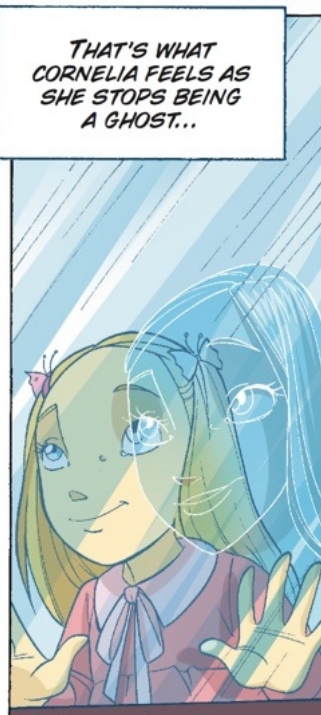
THE BLINK OF
AN EYE...



...A FLUTTER OF
WINGS...



...AND HER HEART
BEATING SO FAST...



THAT'S WHAT
CORNELIA FEELS AS
SHE STOPS BEING
A GHOST...



...AND STARTS SEEING
THE WORLD THROUGH
THE EYES OF HER
YOUNGER SELF.

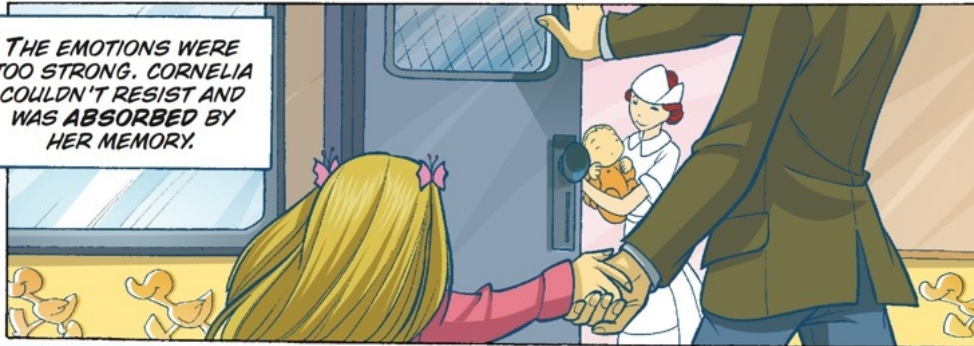


YES, CORNELIA
IS NO LONGER JUST
WATCHING HER PAST.
NOW SHE'S PART
OF IT.

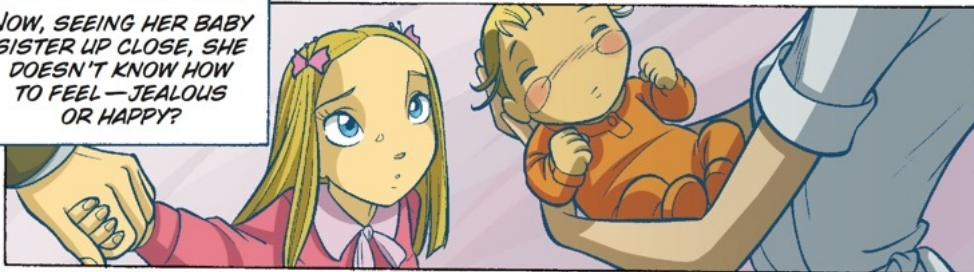
DAD,
CAN I SEE
LILIAN UP
CLOSE?

SURE!
COME
WITH
ME.

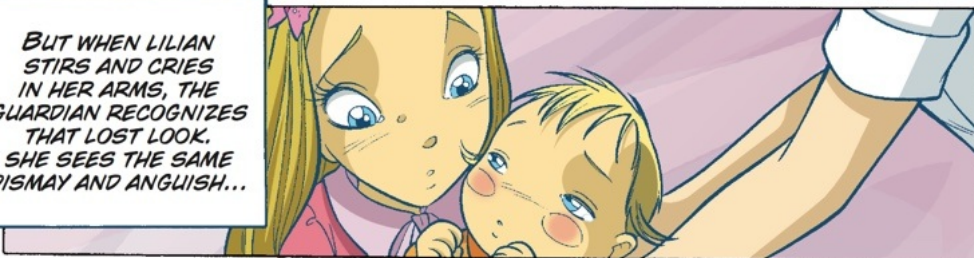
THE EMOTIONS WERE TOO STRONG. CORNELIA COULDN'T RESIST AND WAS ABSORBED BY HER MEMORY.



NOW, SEEING HER BABY SISTER UP CLOSE, SHE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL — JEALOUS OR HAPPY?



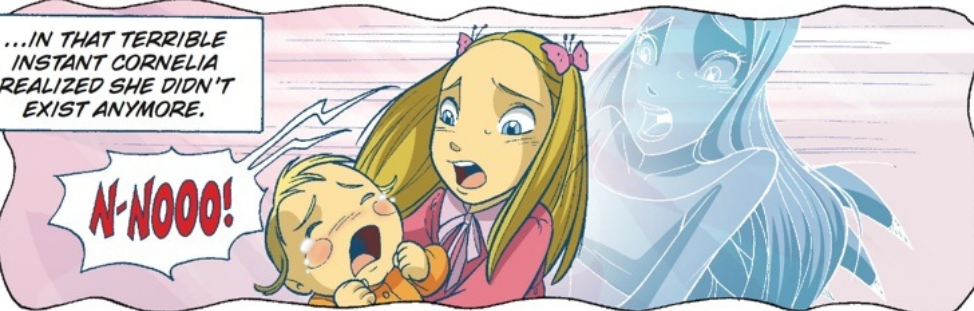
184 BUT WHEN LILIAN STIRS AND CRIES IN HER ARMS, THE GUARDIAN RECOGNIZES THAT LOST LOOK. SHE SEES THE SAME DISMAY AND ANGUISH...

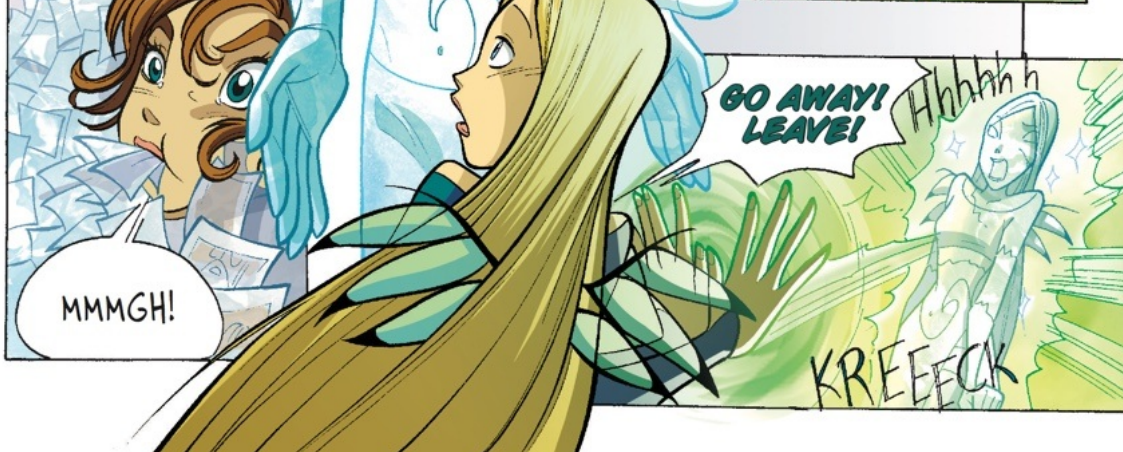


...SHE'S SEEN IN HER SISTER, NOW A LITTLE OLDER, AT HER HOUSE...



...IN THAT TERRIBLE INSTANT CORNELIA REALIZED SHE DIDN'T EXIST ANYMORE.





"WHAT
HAPPENED
TO ME?"



"WHO WAS
THAT CREATURE?
WAS SHE GOOD
OR EVIL?"



"MOST IMPORTANTLY,
WHAT DID SHE WANT
FROM ME?"

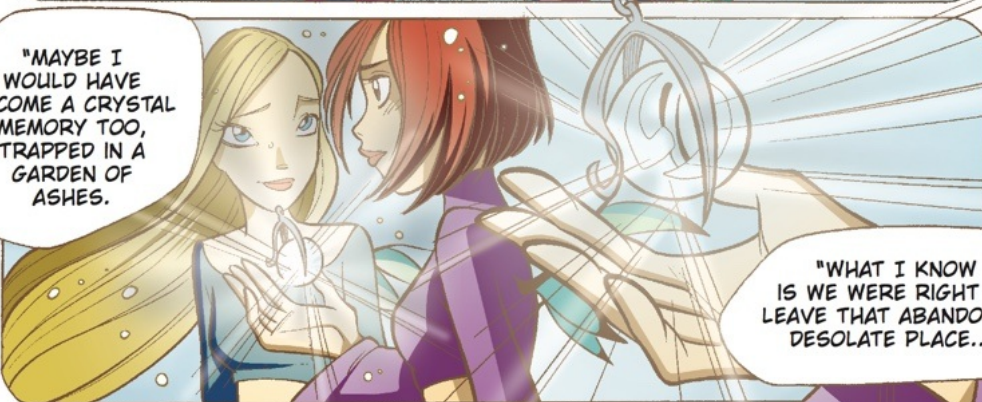


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"I DUNNO.
MAYBE SHE JUST
WANTED ME TO
STAY HERE WITH
HER...FOREVER!"

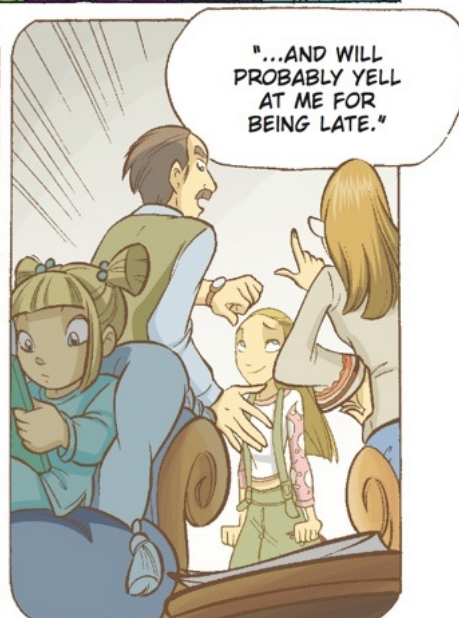
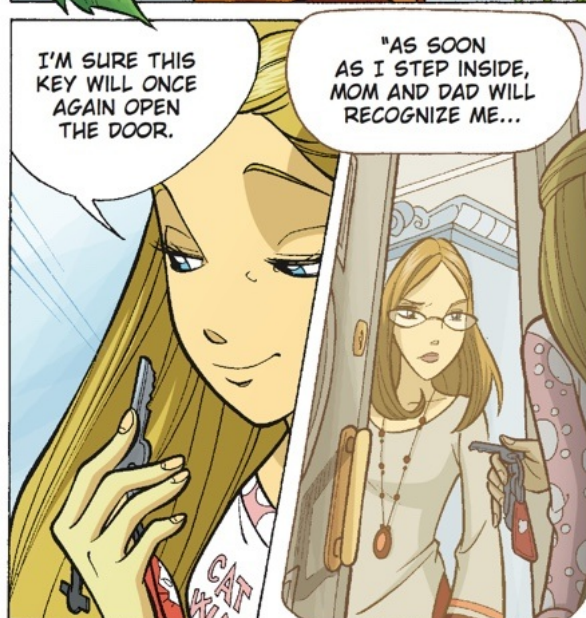
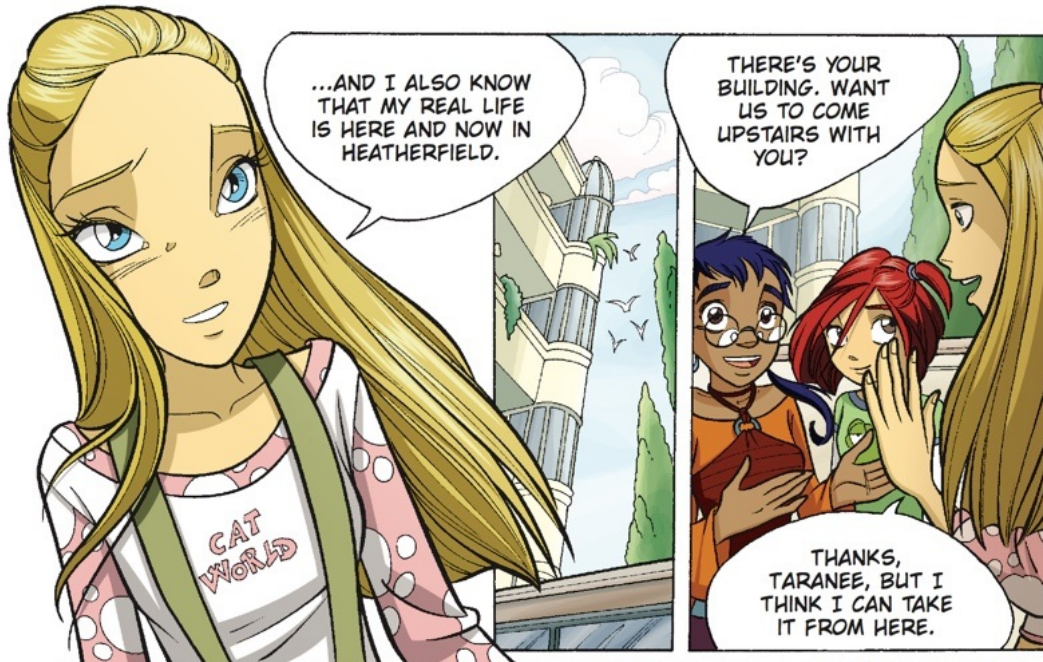


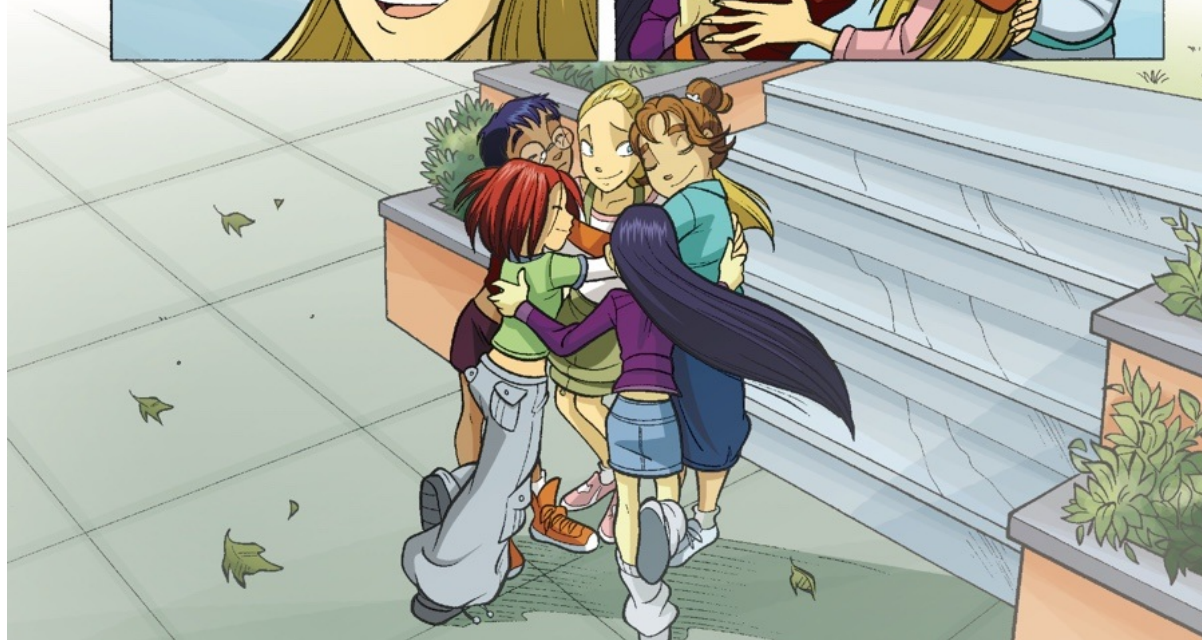
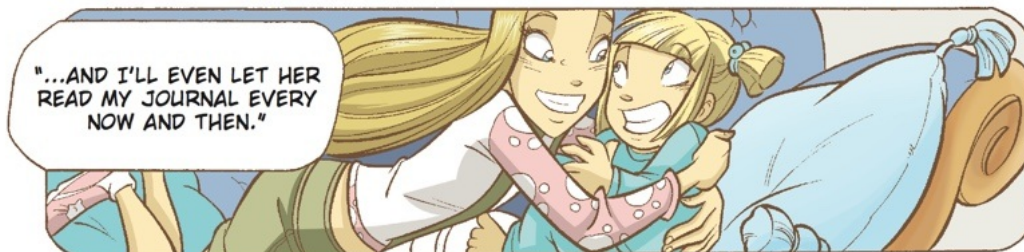
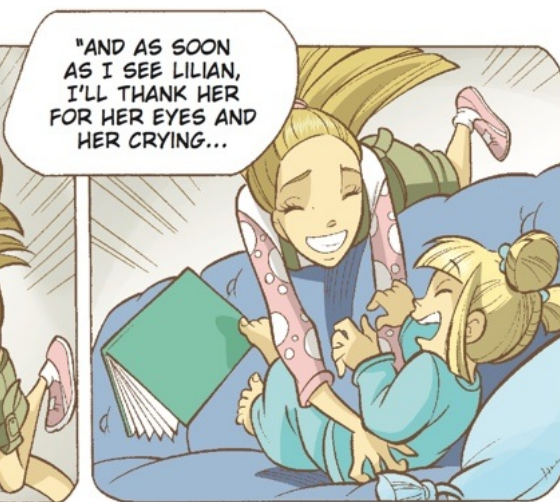
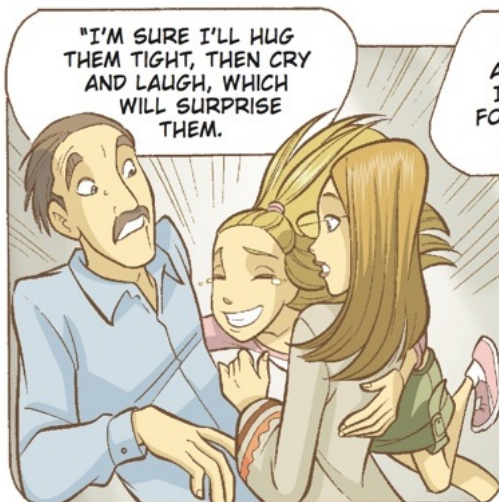
"MAYBE I
WOULD HAVE
BECOME A CRYSTAL
MEMORY TOO,
TRAPPED IN A
GARDEN OF
ASHES."

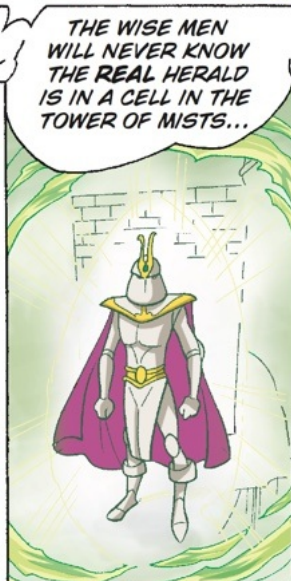


"WHAT I KNOW
IS WE WERE RIGHT TO
LEAVE THAT ABANDONED,
DESOLATE PLACE..."









END OF
CHAPTER 39



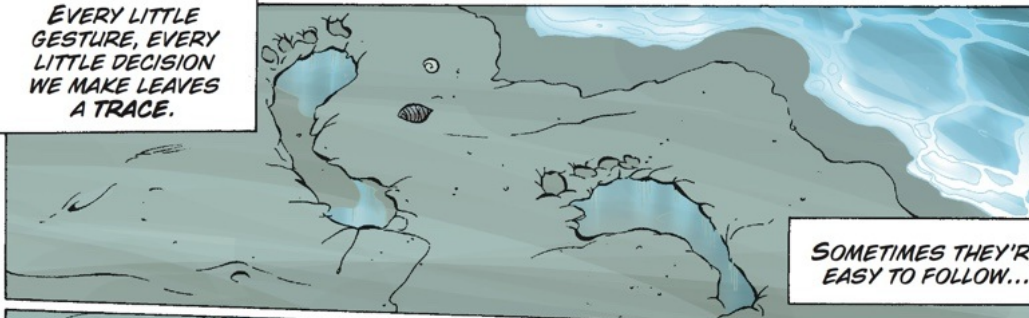




The Last Secret

"Every decision we make leaves a trace..."

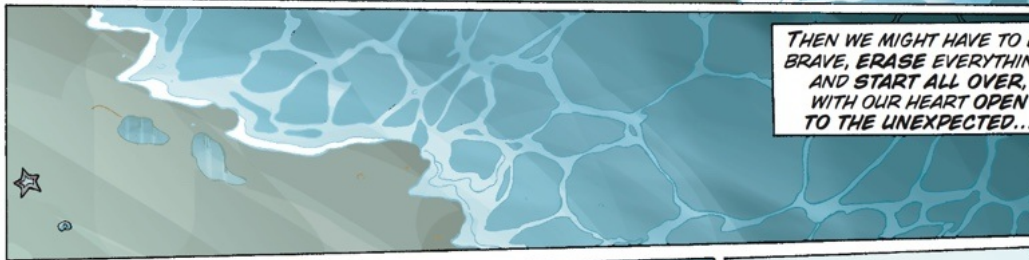
EVERY LITTLE
GESTURE, EVERY
LITTLE DECISION
WE MAKE LEAVES
A TRACE.



SOMETIMES THEY'RE
EASY TO FOLLOW...



...BUT OFTEN, THE
SIGNS ARE TOO MANY,
CREATING CONFUSION.

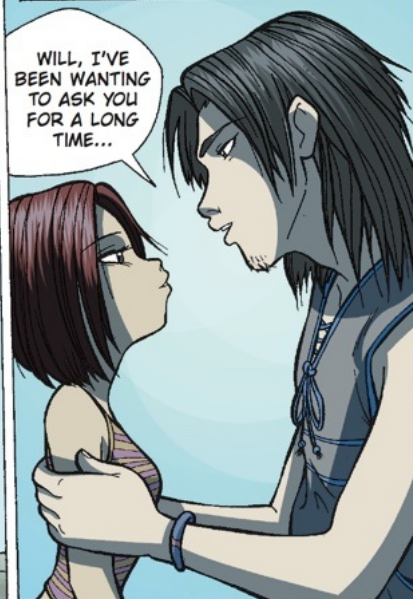


THEN WE MIGHT HAVE TO BE
BRAVE, ERASE EVERYTHING,
AND START ALL OVER,
WITH OUR HEART OPEN
TO THE UNEXPECTED...

THE MOST INCREDIBLE
THINGS OFTEN CATCH
YOU UNPREPARED...

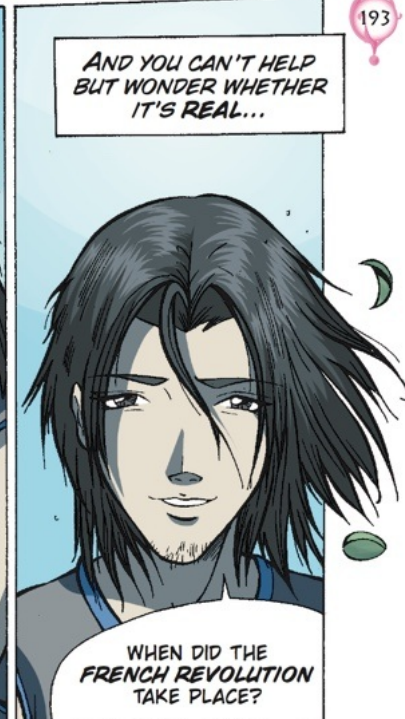


MOMENTS YOU IMAGINED
A THOUSAND TIMES TAKE
YOU BY SURPRISE.

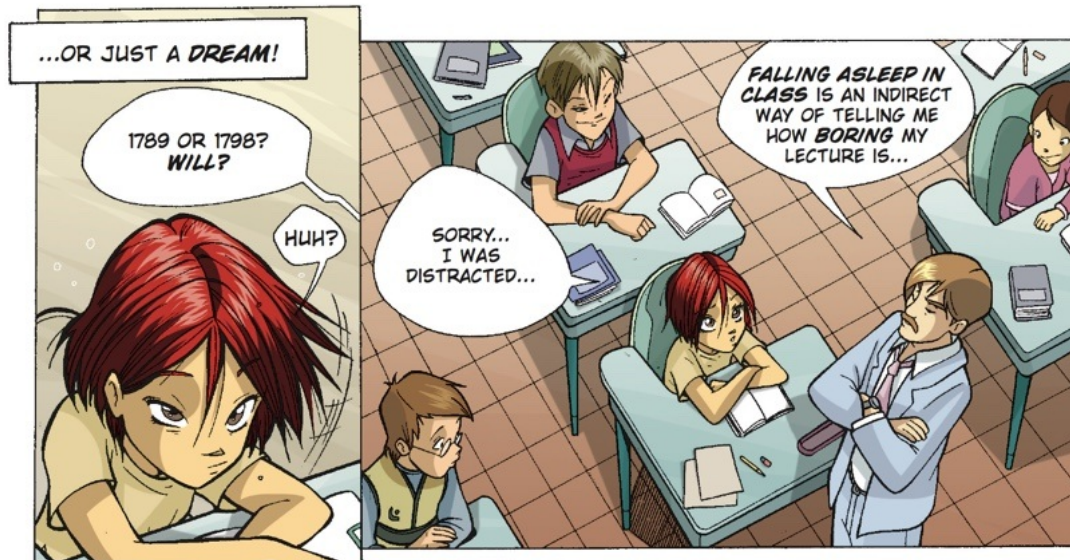


WILL, I'VE
BEEN WANTING
TO ASK YOU
FOR A LONG
TIME...

AND YOU CAN'T HELP
BUT WONDER WHETHER
IT'S REAL...



WHEN DID THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION
TAKE PLACE?





TOO SOFT!



THAT'S HOW I JUDGE
MY PREDECESSOR'S
BEHAVIOR, VAAL.

DOES
SOMETHING
IN PARTICULAR
BOTHER YOU,
ORACLE?



MERIDIAN, FOR EXAMPLE. I
HEAR IT'S STILL GOVERNED BY
THE ESCANOR DYNASTY.

YOUNG ELYON IS
AN EXCELLENT QUEEN,
LOVED AND RESPECTED
THROUGH ALL
METAMOOR, SIR.



SHE WAS THE ONE
WHO ENDED THE REIGN
OF TERROR AND ABUSE
OF PRINCE **PHOBOS**.

HER
BROTHER
PHOBOS,
DEAR VAAL.

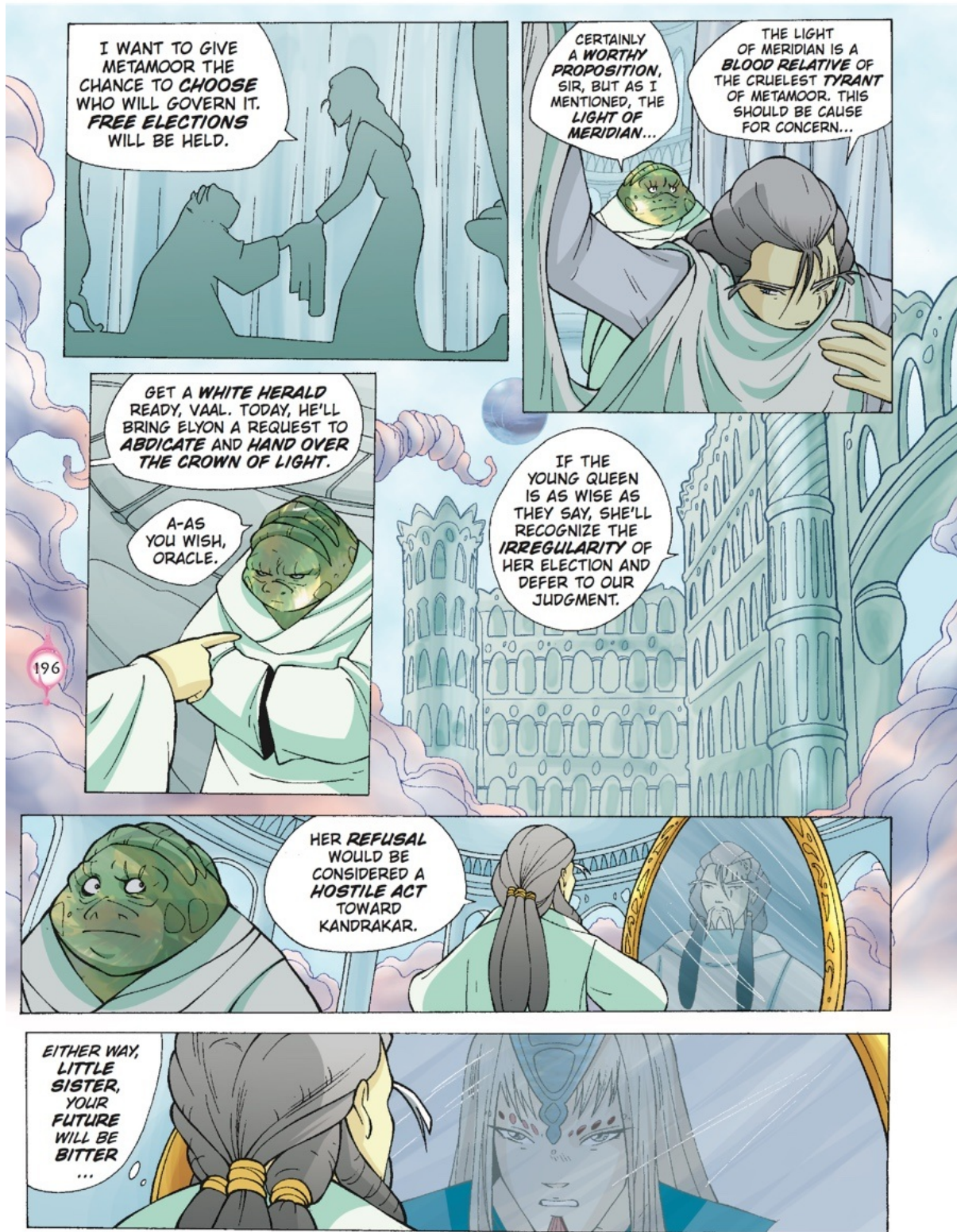


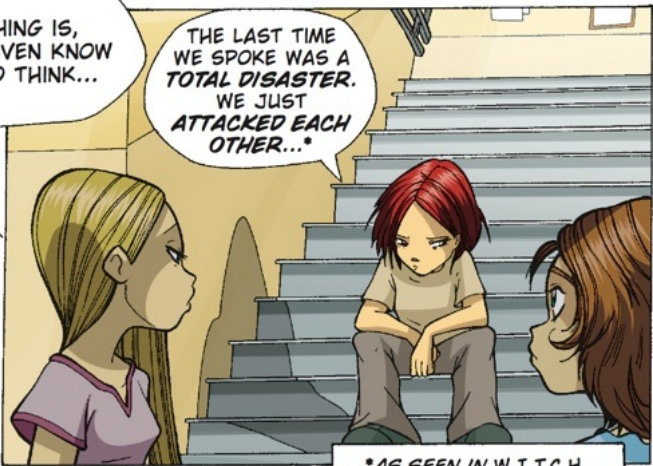
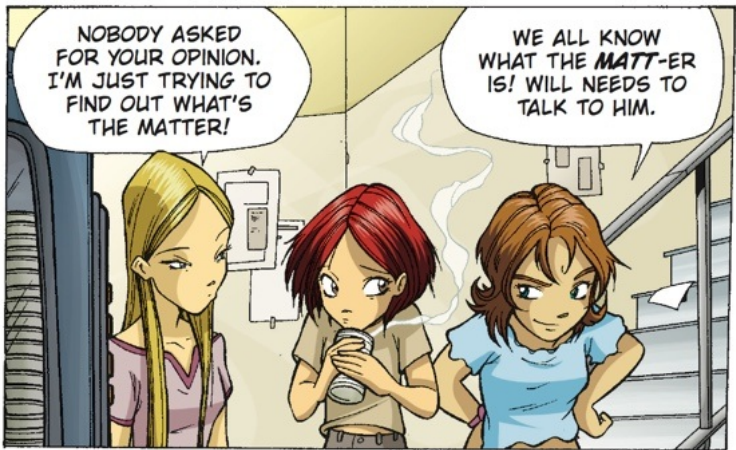
A CLEAR
CONTRADICTION,
DON'T YOU
THINK?

I'M AFRAID I
DON'T FOLLOW,
SIR...

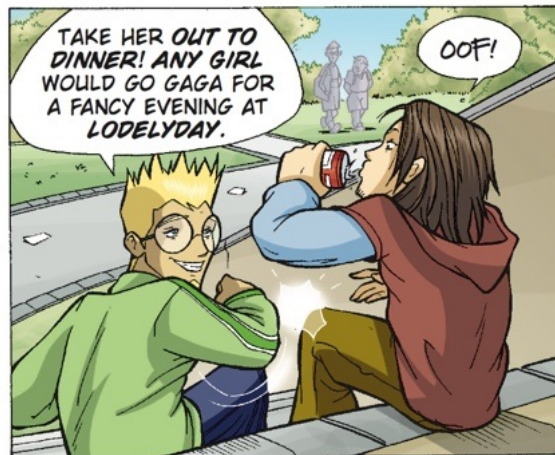
SOON YOU'LL
UNDERSTAND,
AND WITH YOU, THE
WHOLE CONGREGATION.
I WANT TO TAKE
MEASURES TO FIX
THIS SITUATION.

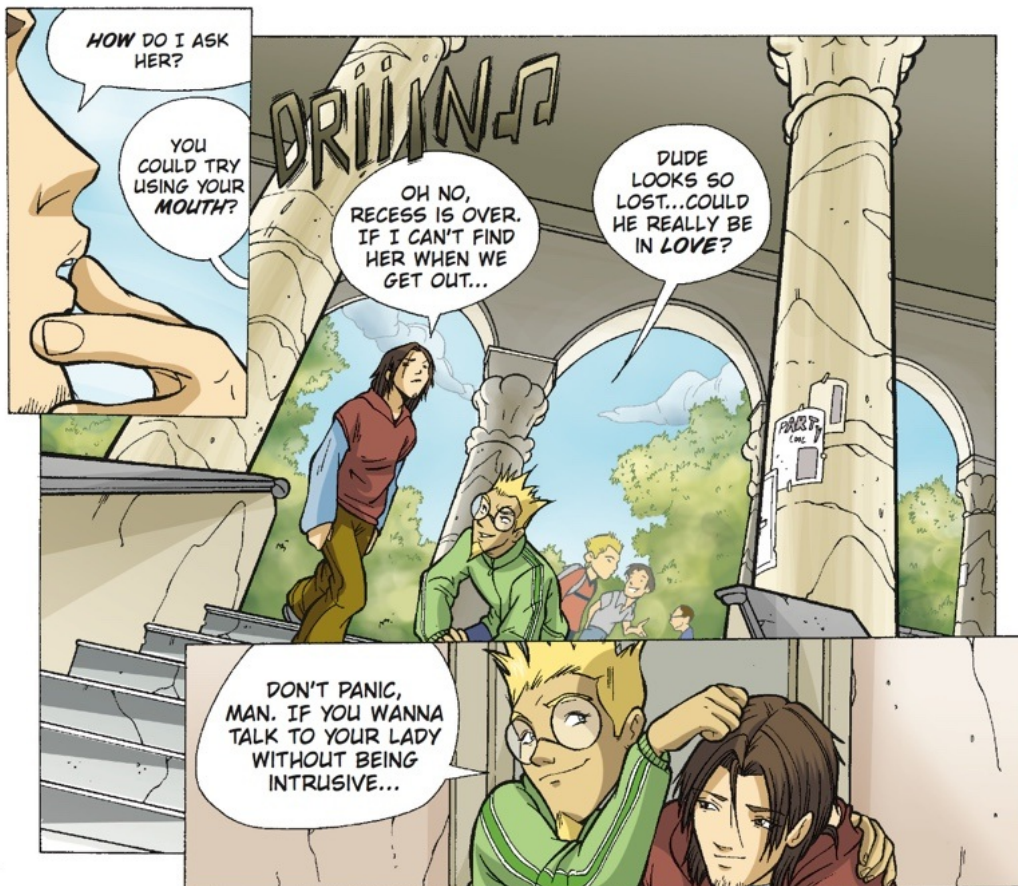
MEASURES,
ORACLE?

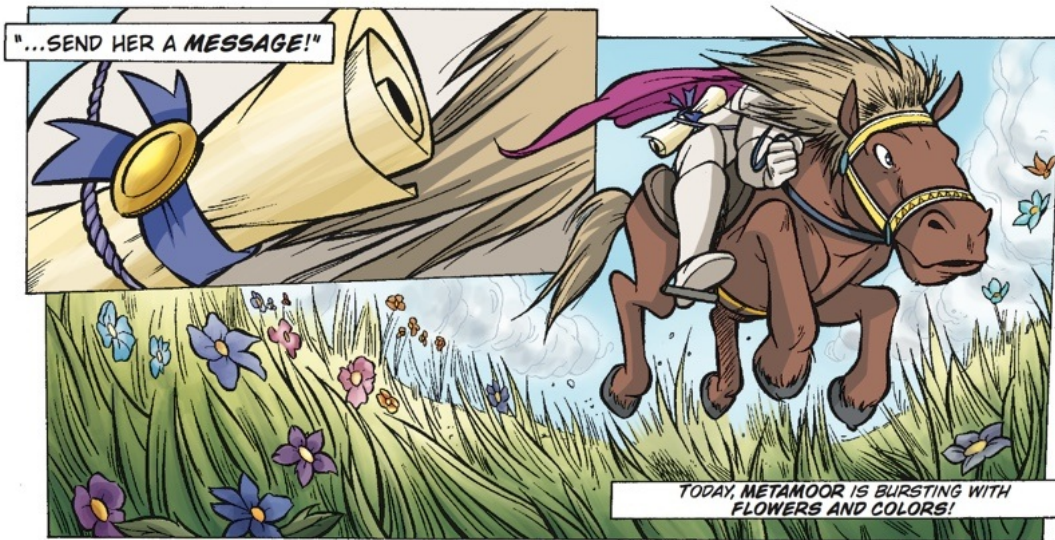




*AS SEEN IN W.I.T.C.H. CHAPTER 38







TODAY, METAMOOR IS BURSTING WITH FLOWERS AND COLORS!

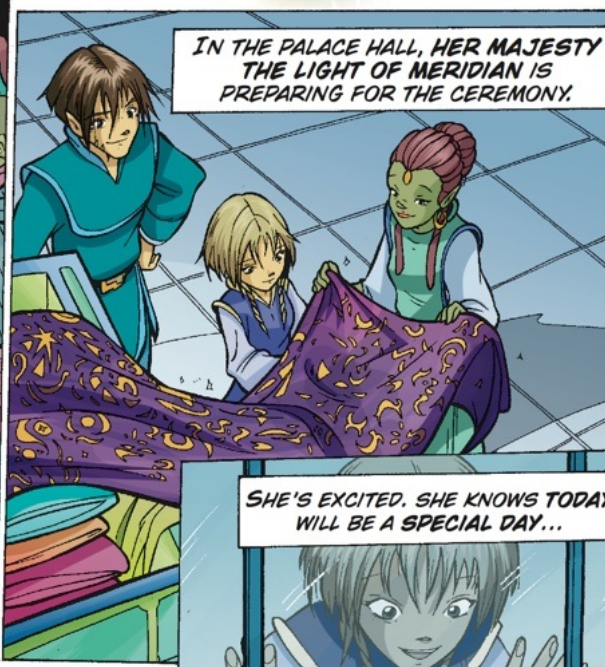


IT'S THE DAY OF THE HARVEST FESTIVAL. SOON, CARTS FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET WILL REACH THE CASTLE OF MERIDIAN...

200

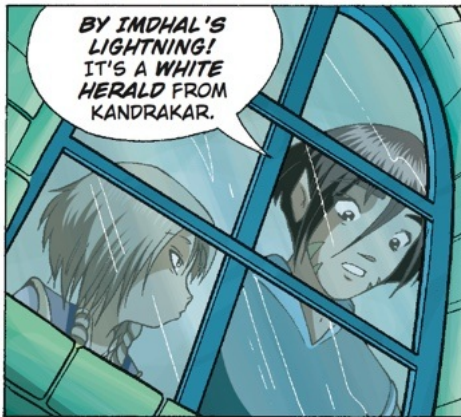
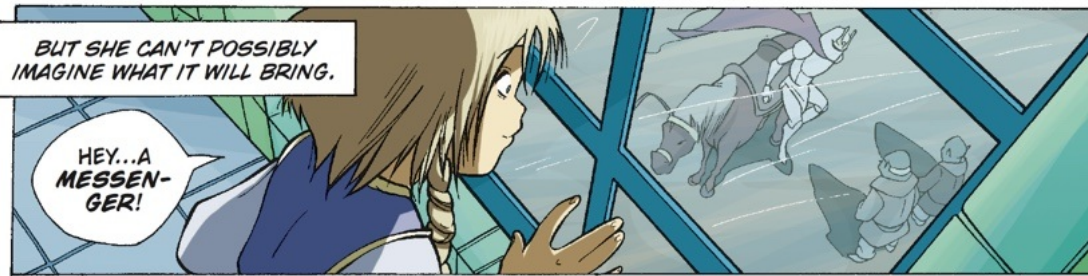


...LOADED WITH PRODUCTS OF THE EARTH TO SHARE AND TRADE WITH FARMERS FROM FARAWAY VILLAGES.



IN THE PALACE HALL, HER MAJESTY THE LIGHT OF MERIDIAN IS PREPARING FOR THE CEREMONY.

SHE'S EXCITED. SHE KNOWS TODAY WILL BE A SPECIAL DAY...



IF IT'S TRUE THAT WORDS CAN
WOUND LIKE WEAPONS...

...THE BLOW ELYON RECEIVES
IS LIKE THAT OF A DOUBLE-
EDGED SWORD.

202

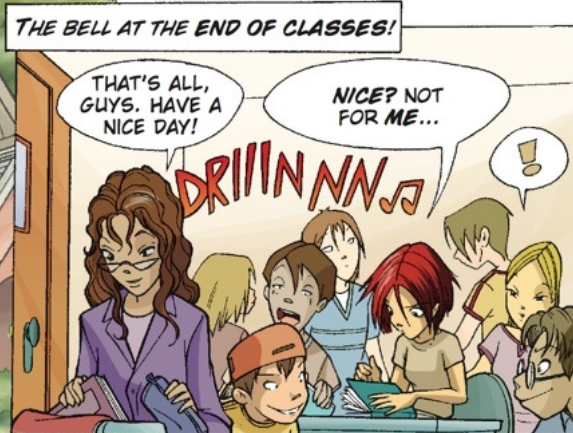
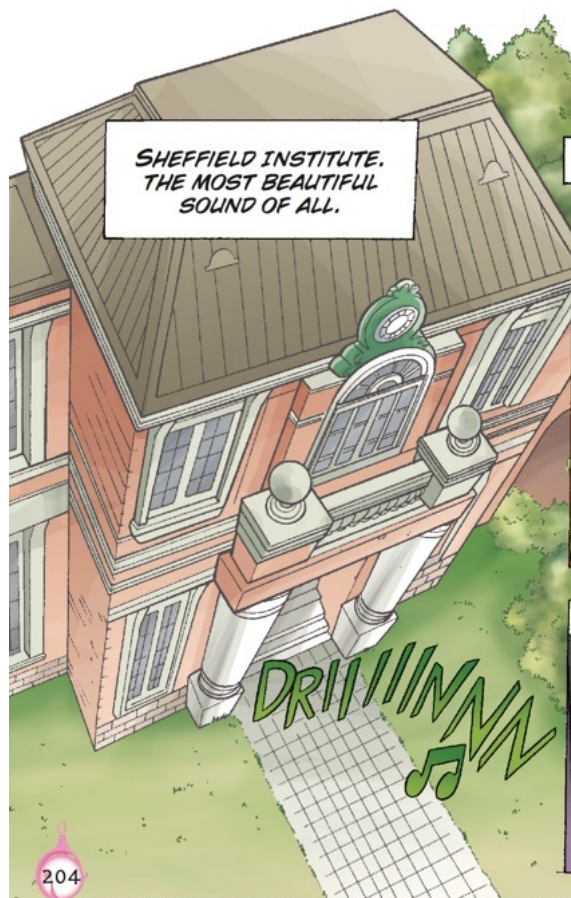
FINDING OUT IN THE
SAME INSTANT THAT
KANDRAKAR HAS
A NEW LORD SHE
DOESN'T KNOW...

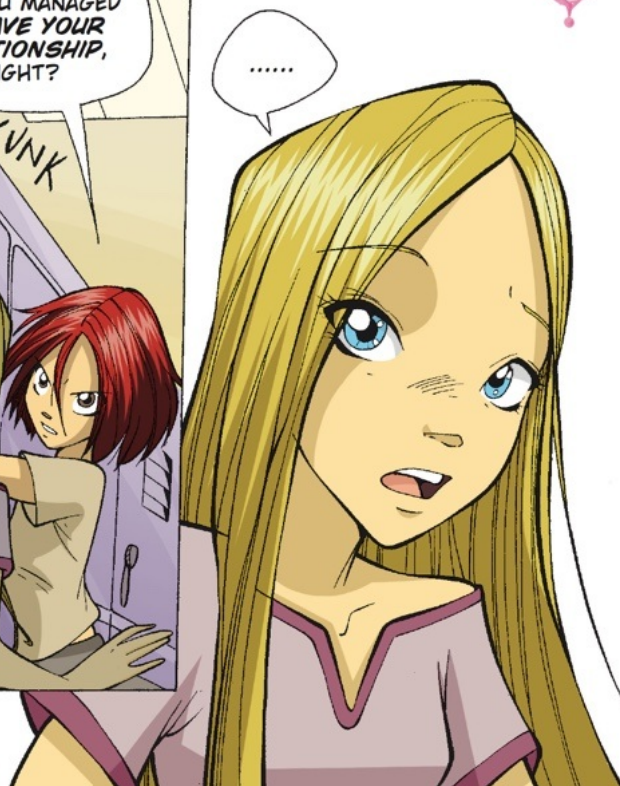
...AND THAT HE QUESTIONS
HER ACTIONS TO THE POINT
OF ASKING HER TO
RENOUNCE HER CROWN...

...IS MORE THAN ANYONE
COULD BEAR...EVEN A QUEEN.

N-NO
WAY!

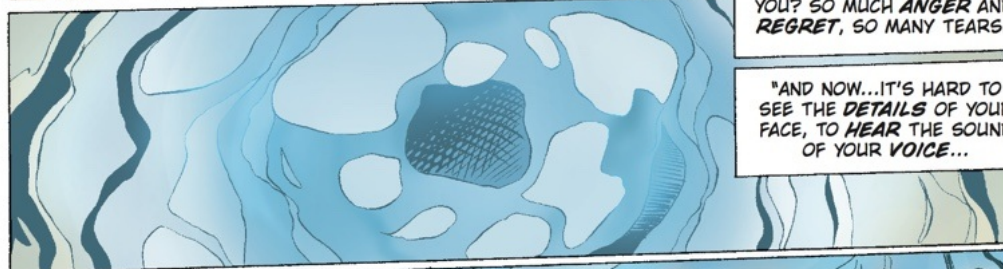
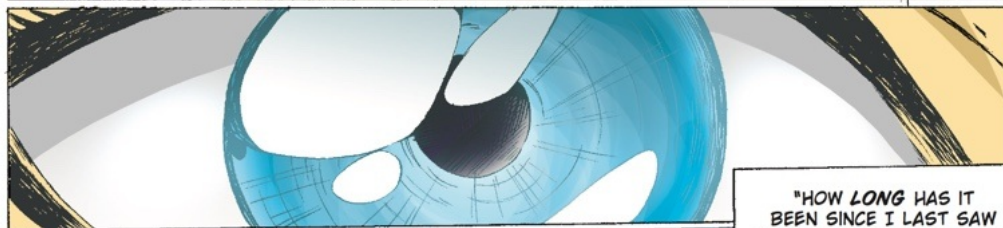
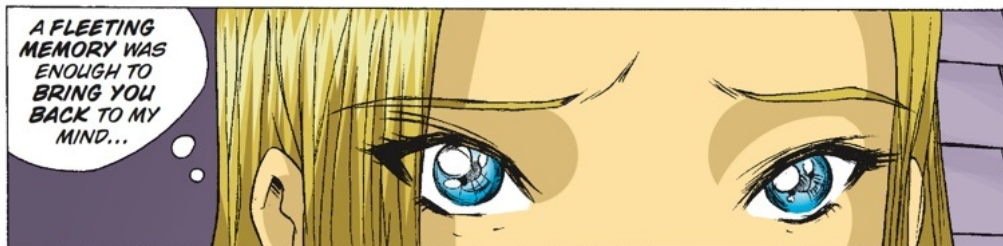
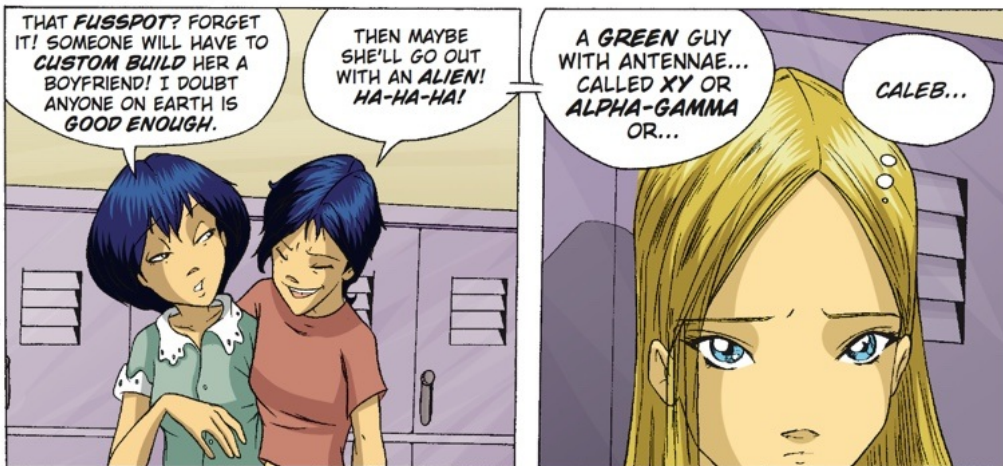


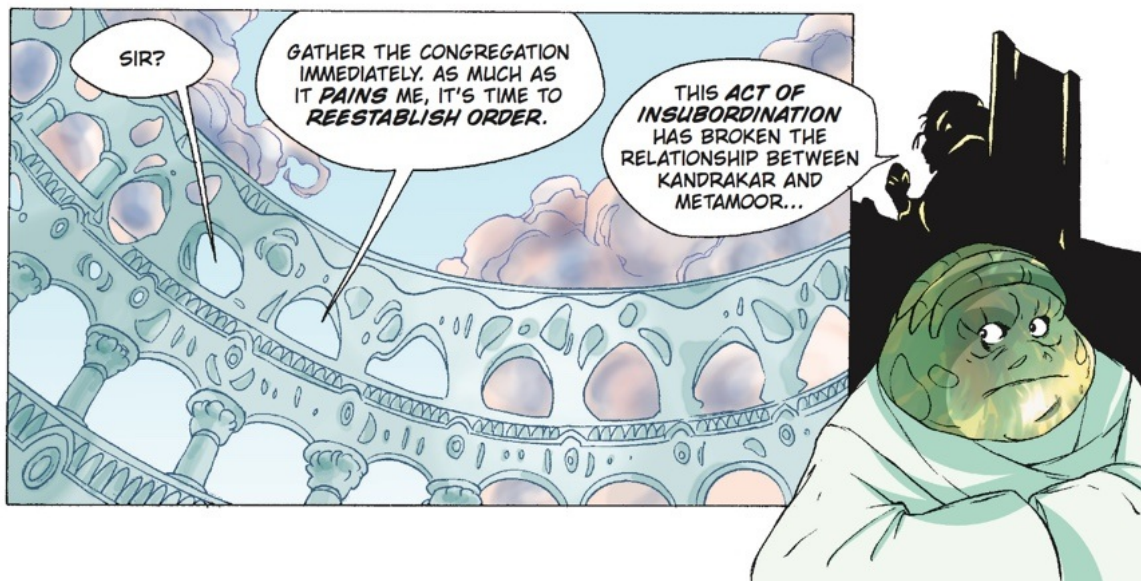
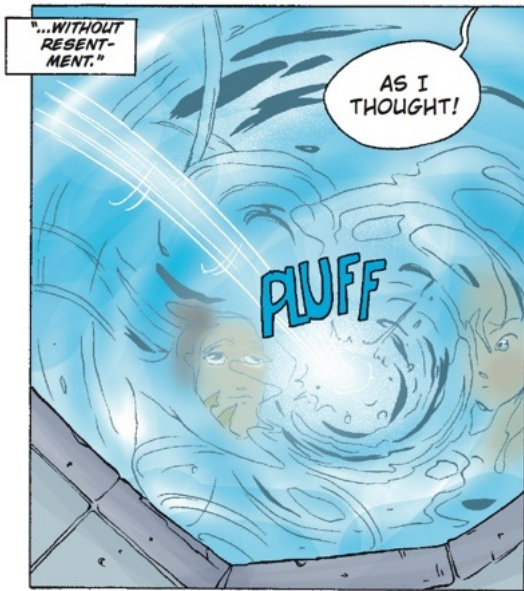


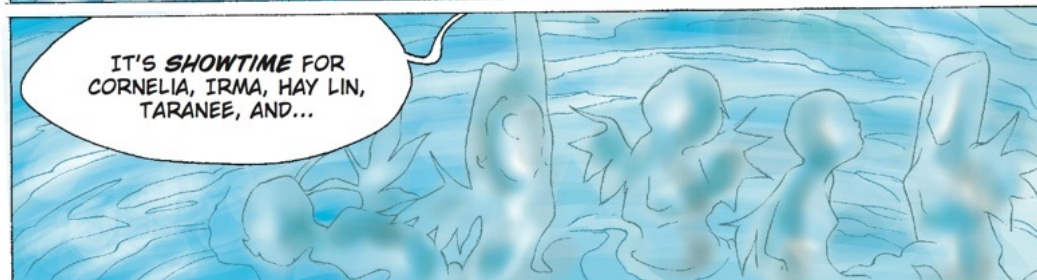


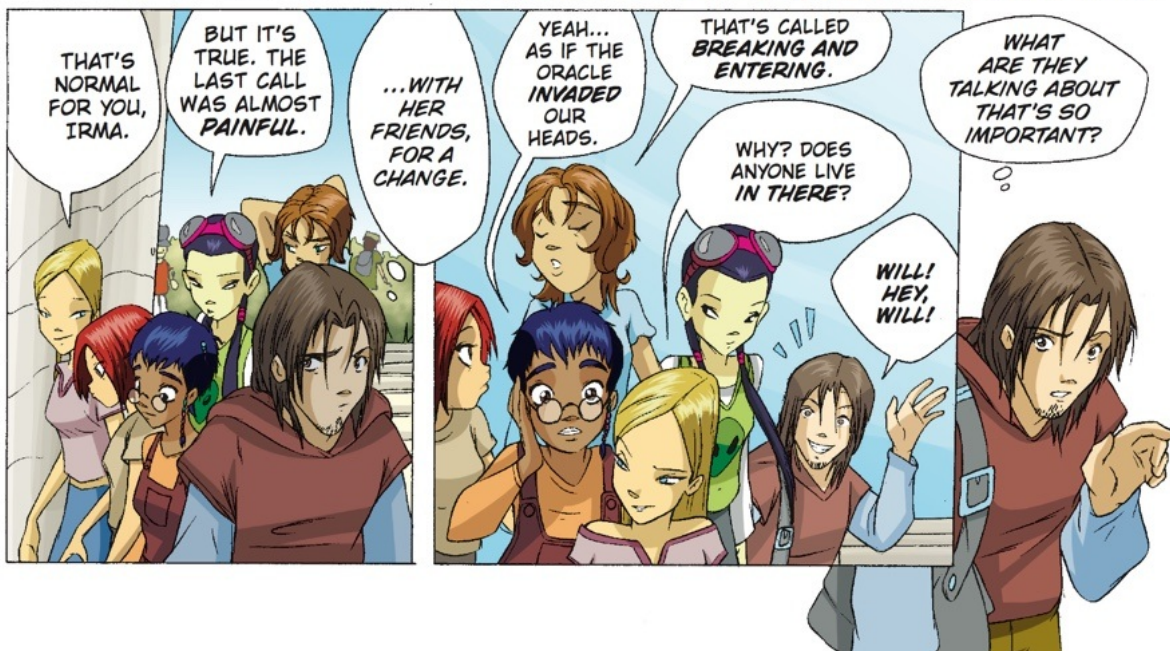
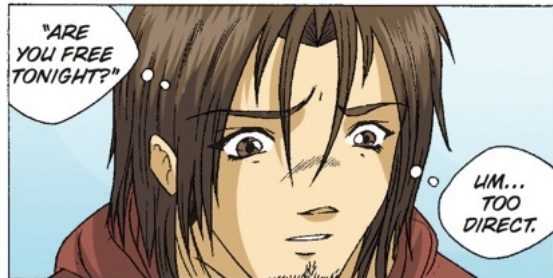
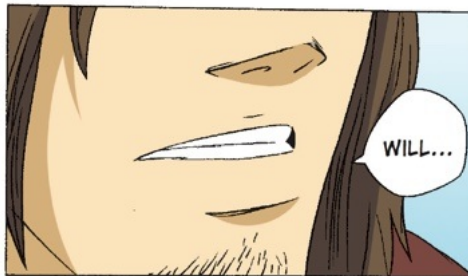


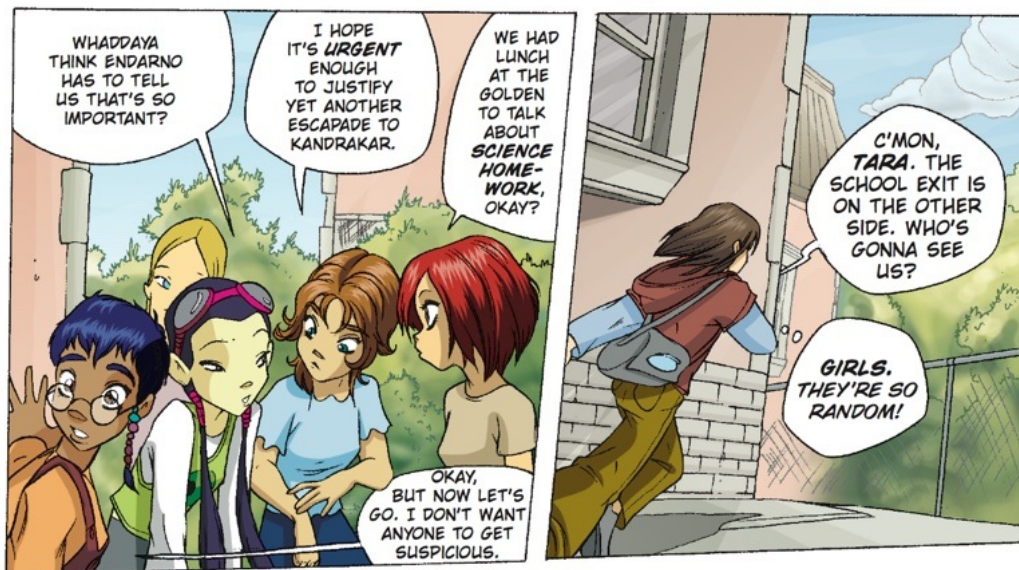












"THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
WHERE'D THEY GO?"



"I SAW THEM COME THIS WAY
AND TURN THE CORNER...
I SAW THEM..."



"...DIDN'T I?"



"THEY SAY *BEING TIRED*
MESSES WITH YOU, BUT
YOU NEVER BELIEVE IT TILL
IT HAPPENS TO YOU..."

213

"YESTERDAY, WE *PLAYED*
LATE...THEN CHATTED, HAD A
LAST SODA...WHAT TIME DID
I GET TO BED?"



"WELL, IF I *HALLUCINATED*,
BETTER NOT TALK ABOUT IT.
JOEL TEASES ME ENOUGH
ALREADY ABOUT *WILL*..."



"UGH...SPEAKING OF...MAYBE
THE *ROCK-AND-ROLL*
CAFÉ ISN'T THE BEST IDEA
FOR TONIGHT. I MEAN...
LOUD MUSIC, TOO MANY
OF MY *BUDDIES*..."





214





...A DEBT OF GRATITUDE,
GUARDIANS...

...IT'S WHAT
KANDRAKAR WILL OWE
YOU IF YOU ACCOMPLISH
THIS DIFFICULT
MISSION.

YOU CAN
COUNT ON US,
ORACLE.

WHATEVER OUR TASK,
WE'LL DO ANYTHING
TO BE WORTHY OF
THE SITUATION.

Wow, Will.
Whatcha eat
for breakfast,
BREAD AND
BRAVERY?

If Endarno
still doubts our
capabilities,
I think we should
SHOW HIM what
we can do,
right?

YOU SPEAK
FIGHTING
WORDS,
GIRL.

I'M GLAD,
BUT AGAINST
THIS ENEMY,
YOU'LL NEED
COURAGE,
RESOLVE,
EFFORT!

LET US
PROVE WE'RE
WORTHY OF
YOUR TRUST,
SIR.

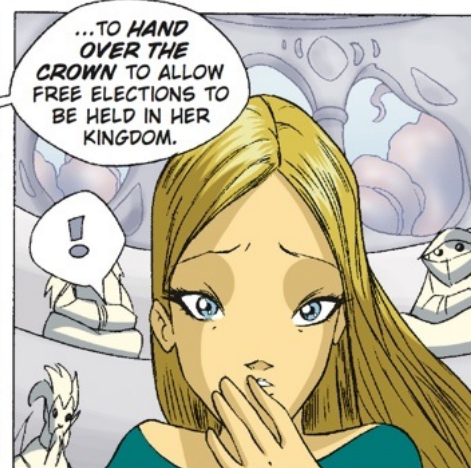
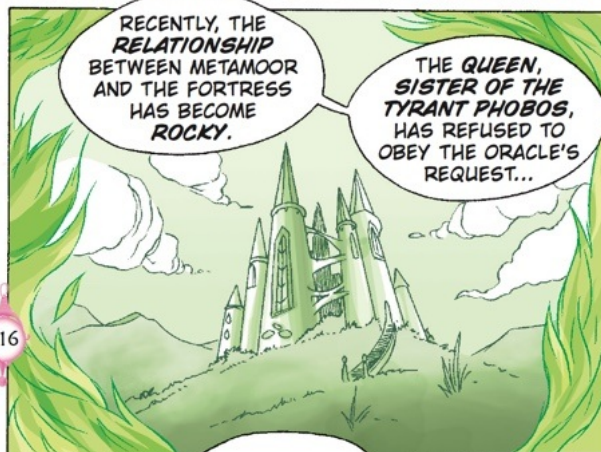
YOU CAN
DECIDE IF
IT'S **WELL-**
PLACED.

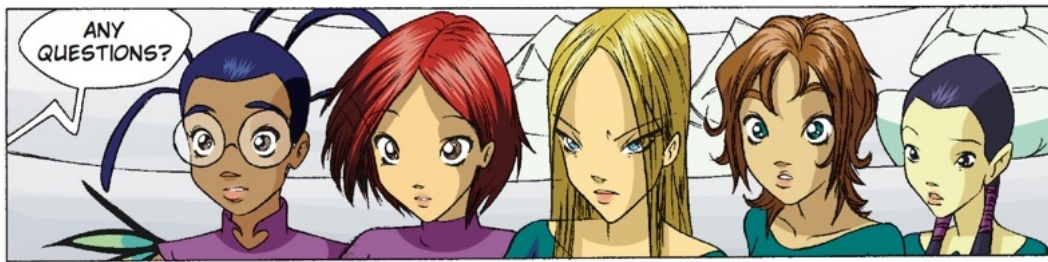
SO BE IT. I WON'T
DETAIN YOU ANY
LONGER. I HOPE
YOU'LL BE THIS
CONFIDENT
DURING YOUR
MISSION.

Go,
Boss!

YOU
ROCK,
WILL!

Awesome!





ANY QUESTIONS?



GOOD. IF EVERYTHING'S CLEAR...

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR...



...I THINK YOU'RE MAKING A HUGE MISTAKE.

MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW ELYON WELL. TO RESTORE PEACE, SHE DIDN'T HESITATE TO STAND AGAINST HER BROTHER. IT'S THANKS TO HER PHOBOS FELL.




SHE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT TYRANT. I'M SURE THE PEOPLE WOULD REELECT HER ANYWAY. IF ELYON SITS ON MERIDIAN'S THRONE, IT'S NOT BECAUSE OF HER NOBLE BLOOD BUT HER NOBLE SPIRIT. I KNOW THAT BECAUSE BEFORE BECOMING QUEEN...




...SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.






...ONE MORE REASON
TO DISCREDIT THEM.
THAT'S ALL I NEED TO
DO AWAY WITH THESE
GUARDIANS...




"...AND WITH YOU, ELYON.
SOWING *DISCORD* BETWEEN
YOU IS JUST THE FIRST STEP ON
THE PATH THAT WILL LEAD ME TO
RECONQUERING METAMoor.



"I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE
GRAND FINALE. AN ARMY
OF FEROCIOUS *SARVAK*, TRAINED
WHEN I WAS STILL *MERIDIAN'S*
PRINCE, IS READY TO SPRING INTO
ACTION AFTER YOUR ARREST.

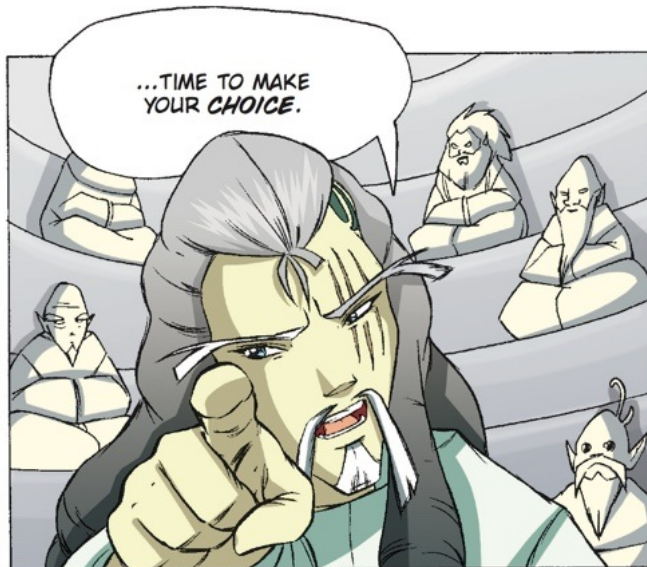
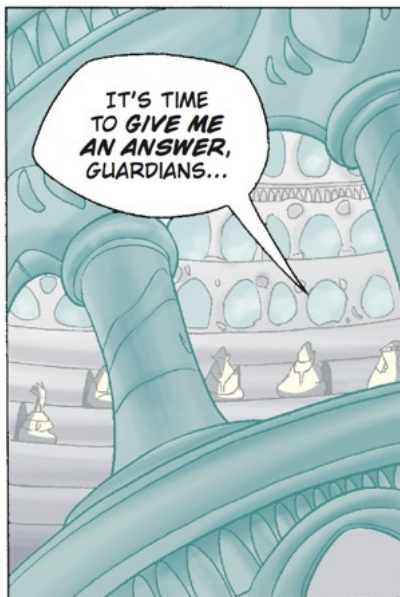
219



"I'LL UNLEASH THEM *AGAINST THE*
GUARDIANS. EVERYONE WILL THINK
YOU GAVE THE ORDER TO ATTACK THE
FORTRESS'S EMISSARIES, COME TO
RECLAIM THE CROWN OF LIGHT..."

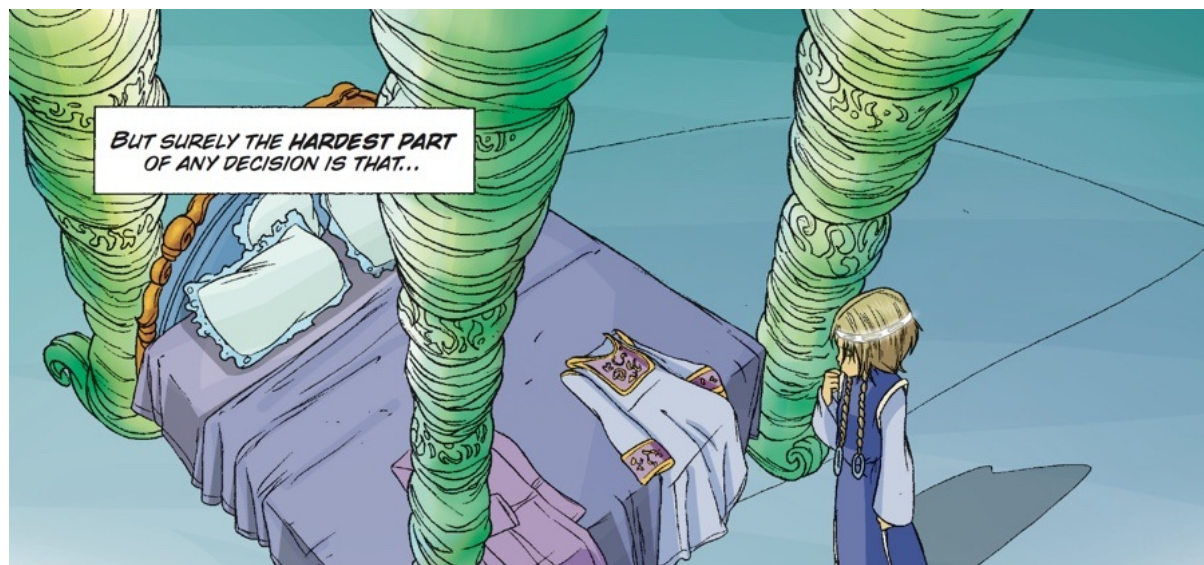


...AND THE RIFT
BETWEEN METAMoor
AND KANDRAKAR WILL
BE COMPLETE.
JUST LIKE MY
REVENGE.



MAKING A CHOICE, PICKING
ONE THING OVER ANOTHER...

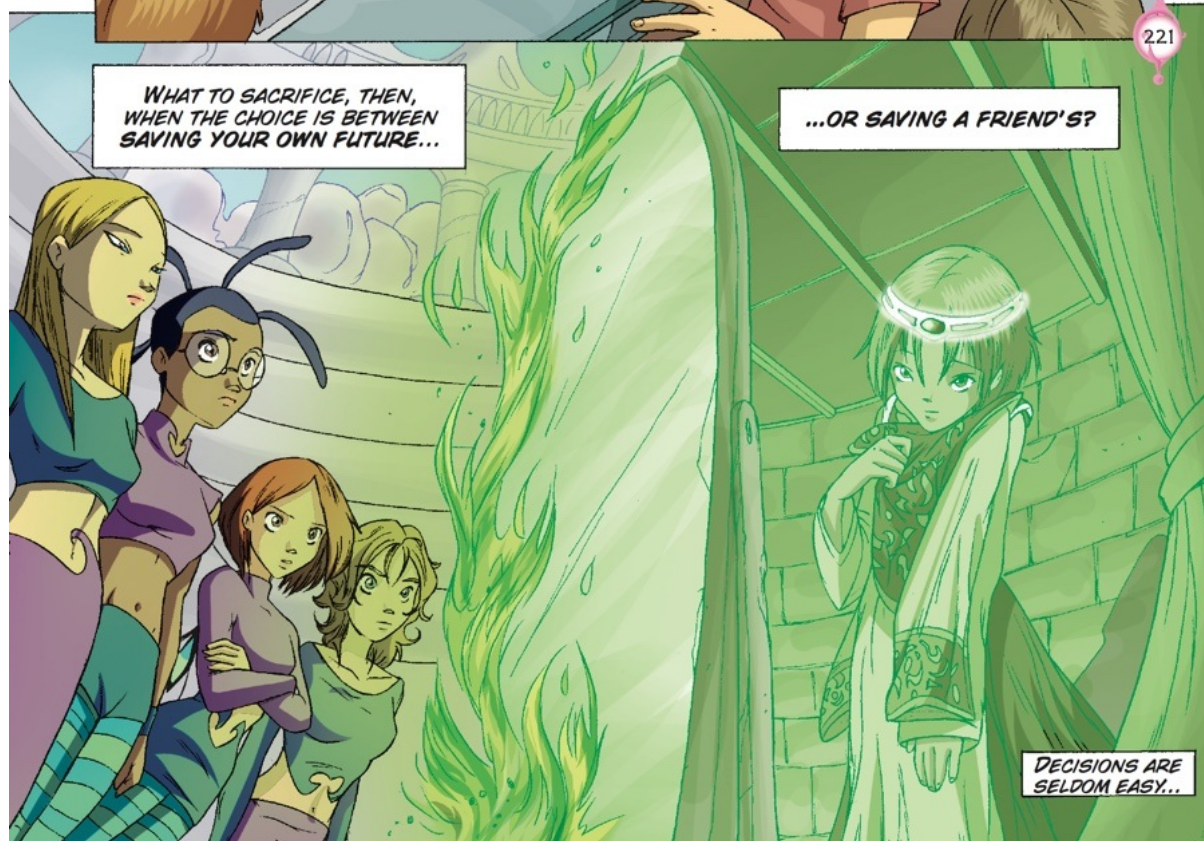




BUT SURELY THE HARDEST PART
OF ANY DECISION IS THAT...



...EACH CHOICE MEANS
GIVING UP SOMETHING ELSE.



WHAT TO SACRIFICE, THEN,
WHEN THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN
SAVING YOUR OWN FUTURE...

...OR SAVING A FRIEND'S?

DECISIONS ARE
SELDOM EASY...

THIS IS MERIDIAN, THE CAPITAL OF METAMOOR, A WORLD THAT TODAY CELEBRATES THE HARVEST FESTIVAL.



CARTS OF PRODUCE TRAVEL TOWARD THE CASTLE, TO BE SHARED IN A GREAT BANQUET TO WHICH EVERYONE IS INVITED.



THE MUSICIANS ARE READY. THE DANCERS HAVE BEEN REHEARSING FOR THE BIG DAY...

222



AFTER THE CELEBRATION, LEFTOVERS WILL BE DIVIDED SO EVERYONE CAN ENJOY THE HARVESTED FOODS—EVEN THOSE WHO DIDN'T DO THE HARVESTING.



SO HAS DECREED THE QUEEN, THE LIGHT OF MERIDIAN. THIS IS A DAY OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS FOR HER...

...AND OF UNEXPECTED VISITS!

I'D PICK THE LIGHTER ONE.





...GREEN IS STILL YOUR FAVORITE COLOR, RIGHT?



GUYS!



I C-CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE HERE!

IN THE FLESH, DEAR ELLIE!

OR SHOULD WE SAY YOUR MAJESTY?

HEY! MAKE SOME ROOM FOR ME!



WHAT A SURPRISE! IF I'D KNOWN, I'D HAVE PREPARED A ROYAL WELCOME FOR YOU! TODAY'S A SPECIAL DAY IN MERIDIAN, AND...



WHAT'S GOING ON? EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, ELYON?

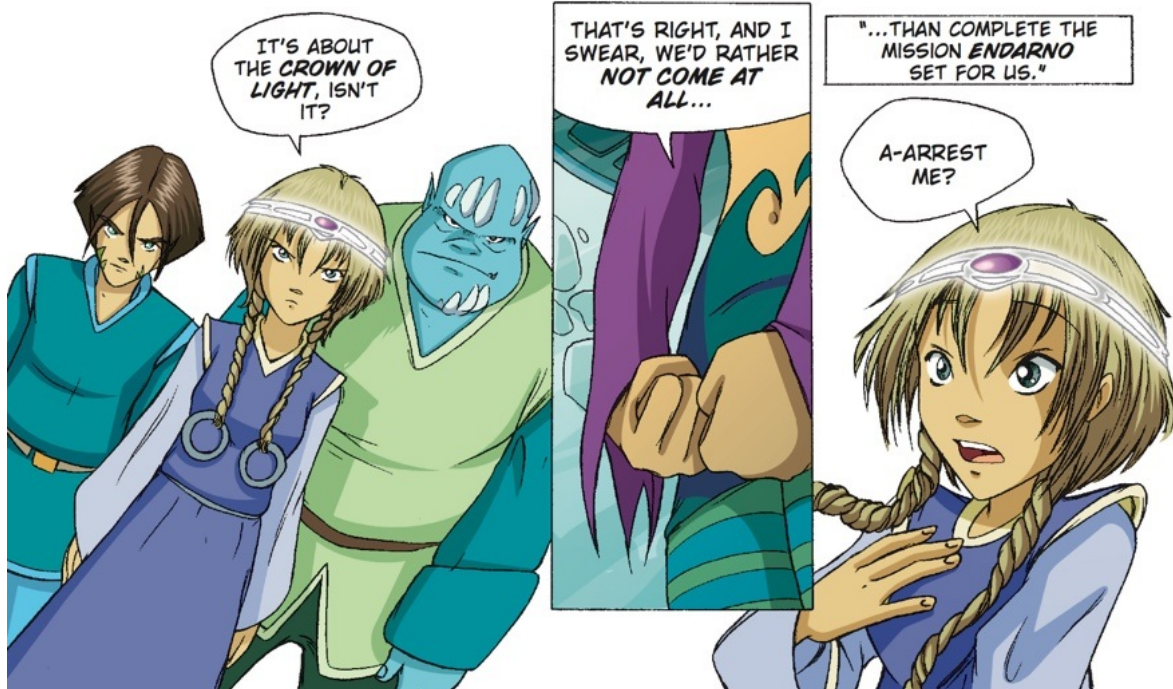
CALEB!



FORGIVE ME, MAJESTY. I SAW A BLINDING LIGHT FROM YOUR ROOM AND...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, NAGADIR. THESE ARE MY FRIENDS. THEY CAME TO VISIT.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME...





THERE ARE MOMENTS THAT SEEM
TO LAST FOREVER...



IT'S GOOD TO
SEE YOU AGAIN,
CORNELIA.

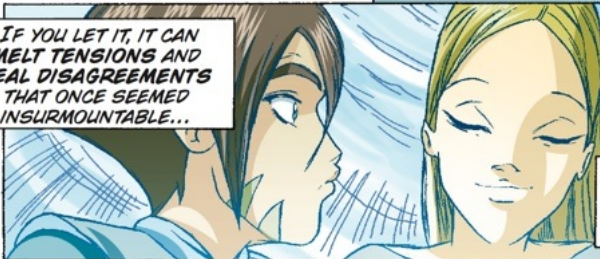


...AND INFINITE
PAST MOMENTS
READY TO VANISH
IN AN INSTANT.

IT'S THE MAGIC
OF TIME!



IF YOU LET IT, IT CAN
MELT TENSIONS AND
HEAL DISAGREEMENTS
THAT ONCE SEEMED
INSURMOUNTABLE...



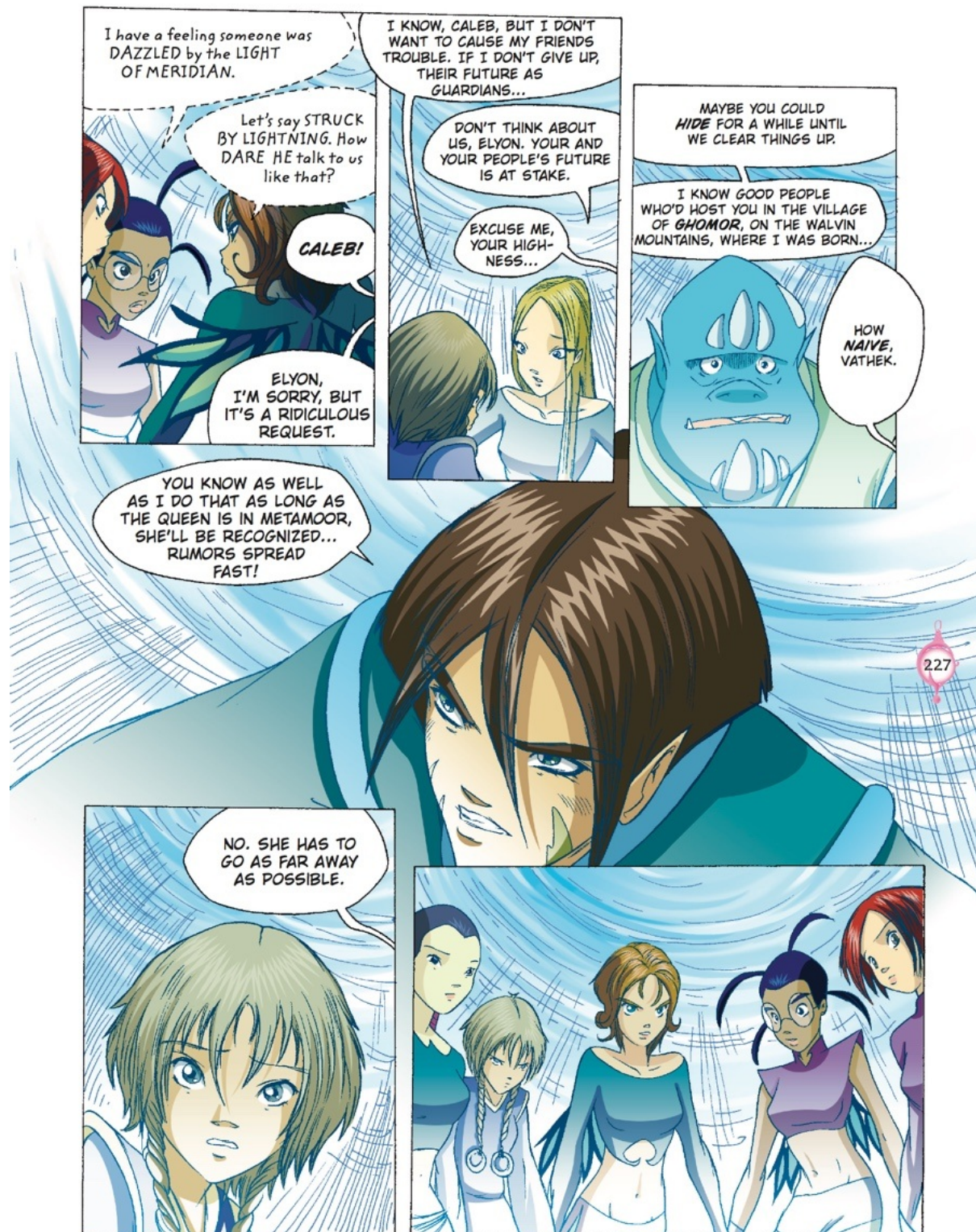
...AND OPEN UP DEPTHS
OF PURE SERENITY
WHERE THERE USED TO BE
REGRET AND DISCOMFORT.

TIME FLOWS AND
TAKES AWAY THAT
MOMENT OF NEW-
FOUND JOY TOO,
BRINGING CORNELIA
AND CALEB BACK TO
THE GRAVE PRESENT.



THERE...
NOW WE
CAN SPEAK
FREELY.

GOOD, BECAUSE I
WANT TO MAKE IT
CLEAR THAT WE'LL
NEVER GIVE UP
THE CROWN OF
LIGHT.





WELL, *ELLIE*...
TOO BAD YOU
ALREADY KNOW
HEATHERFIELD.
WE COULD'VE
GIVEN YOU A
TOUR OF THE
CITY.

THIS ISN'T
THE TIME FOR
JOKES, IRMA.

IT COULD BE
THE *PERFECT*
SOLUTION
...

WOW! I MIGHT
JUST START LIKING
THIS GUY.

ENDARNO WOULD
NEVER LOOK FOR ELYON
ON EARTH. SHE COULD
STAY AS LONG AS SHE
NEEDS...ME AND VATHEK
WILL TELL THE
COUNCIL.

THAT'S EXACTLY
WHAT I HAD
IN MIND.

WHAT
MIND?

THE ONE THAT
JUST CAME UP WITH
A *FLAWLESS PLAN*,
IN CASE YOU DIDN'T
NOTICE!

THEN
LET'S HEAR
IT, *GENIUS*.
HOW ARE YOU
GONNA HIDE
ELYON AT
YOUR HOUSE
FROM YOUR
DAD?

WHO SAID MY HOUSE? SHE CAN
STAY WITH *ORUBE*! SHE LIVES
ALONE, AND SHE'S A *WARRIOR*—
THE *PERFECT BODYGUARD*.

EXCELLENT.



NOW WE JUST GOTTA FIND A WAY TO GET ELYON OUT OF THE CASTLE WITHOUT MAKING ANYONE SUSPICIOUS AND...

Toc Toc



SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING, YOUR HIGHNESS, BUT... THE CARTS ARE ABOUT TO REACH THE CASTLE.

FZZZZ

A CONNECTION BREAKS IN MERIDIAN...



...AND ANOTHER IS RESTORED IN KANDRAKAR WHERE, WITH ELYON'S PROTECTION FIELD GONE, ENDARNO RESUMES HIS FAVORITE PASTIME...

FINALLY! I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE CONNECTION TO METAMOOR WAS INTERRUPTED...

FZZZ



...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I DIDN'T MISS MUCH.

THE FESTIVAL IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE, NAGADIR.



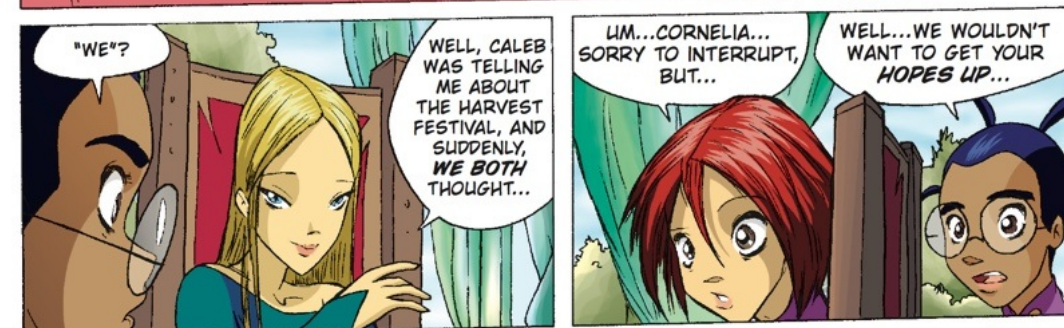
YES, HAVE FUN WHILE YOU CAN... IT'LL BE YOUR LAST CHANCE.



I'LL WAIT UNTIL YOU AND THE GUARDIANS LEAVE BEFORE I ATTACK YOU, SISTER...THE FESTIVAL WILL SURELY BE OVER BY THEN...



230





"WHEN THE **FESTIVAL'S** OVER, THE CARTS WILL HEAD BACK TO THEIR VILLAGES AFTER DIVIDING UP THE LEFTOVER PRODUCE.



"THEY'LL TAKE DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, AND ONE WILL HEAD INTO A FOREST..."



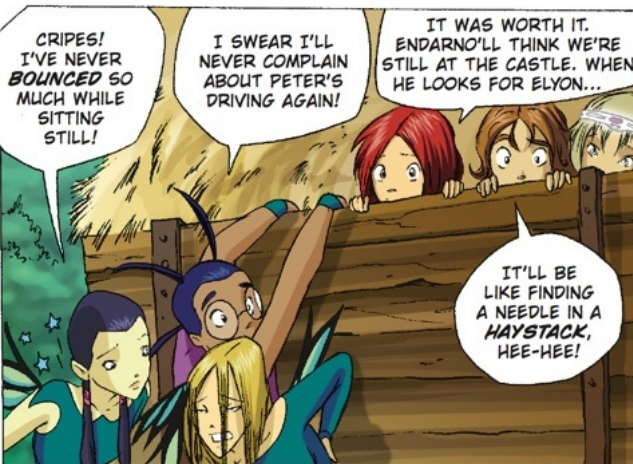
"...AND STOP IN A SMALL CLEARING!"



PERFECT, NOBODY FOLLOWED US!

CAN YOU GET OFF, GUYS?

232



CRIPES! I'VE NEVER **BOUNCED** SO MUCH WHILE SITTING STILL!

I SWEAR I'LL NEVER COMPLAIN ABOUT PETER'S DRIVING AGAIN!

IT WAS WORTH IT. ENDARNO'LL THINK WE'RE STILL AT THE CASTLE. WHEN HE LOOKS FOR ELYON...

IT'LL BE LIKE FINDING A NEEDLE IN A **HAYSTACK**, HEE-HEE!



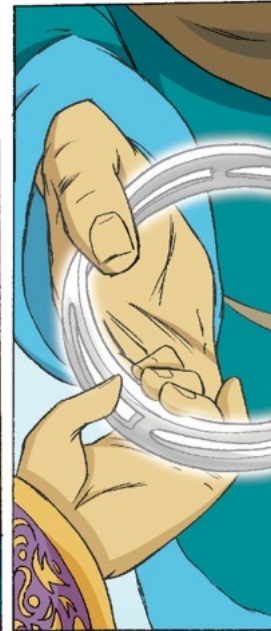
THANK YOU SO MUCH, GUYS.

QUIT REMINISCING, VATHEK. ELYON MUST BE TAKEN TO SAFETY **QUICKLY**.

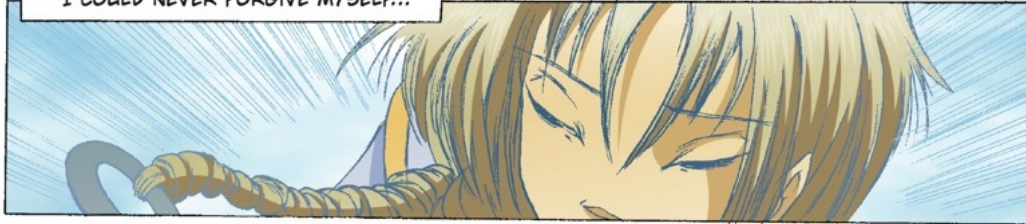
CALEB ...

OUR PLEASURE, WILL. I HAVEN'T WORN A HAT LIKE THIS SINCE THAT TIME IN HEATHERFIELD, REMEMBER?"

*REMEMBER W.I.T.C.H. CHAPTER 10?



"I COULD NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF..."



"...NEVER!"

NEVER SAY NEVER!



WHO'DA THOUGHT ONE DAY YOU'D COME BACK TO HEATHERFIELD, HUH?

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, ELYON?

WHAT'S IT LIKE?

MAYBE YOU SHOULD LET HER BREATHE. SHE SEEMS A BIT FRAZZLED.



234

HI, ELYON. WELCOME. I'M ORUBE.

FOR A WARRIOR, YOU DON'T LOOK TOO TOUGH!

I suggest you don't rub her the wrong way. She could make your HOUSE ARREST a real pain!



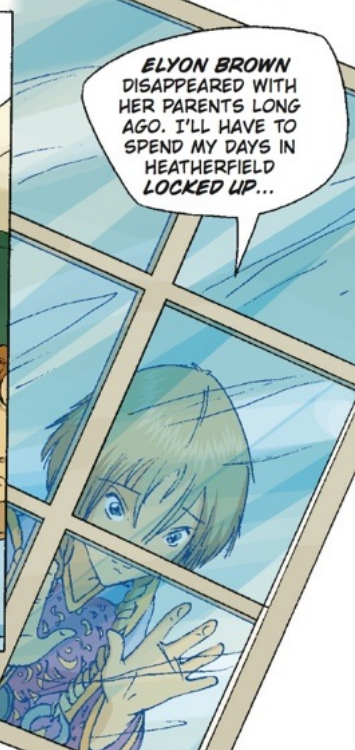
IRMA!

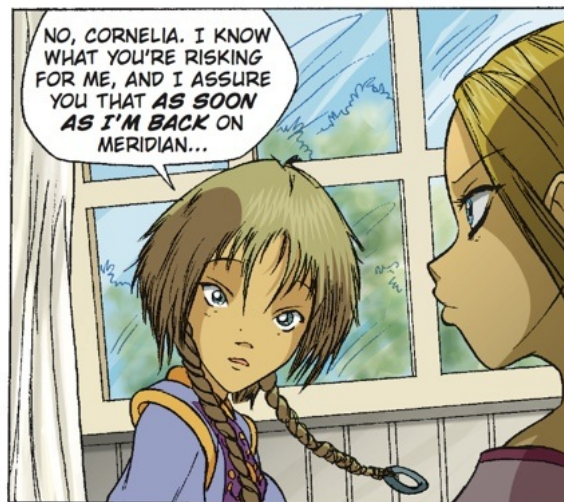
OOPS... I...I DIDN'T MEAN...

DON'T WORRY. I KNOW WHAT'S WHAT...

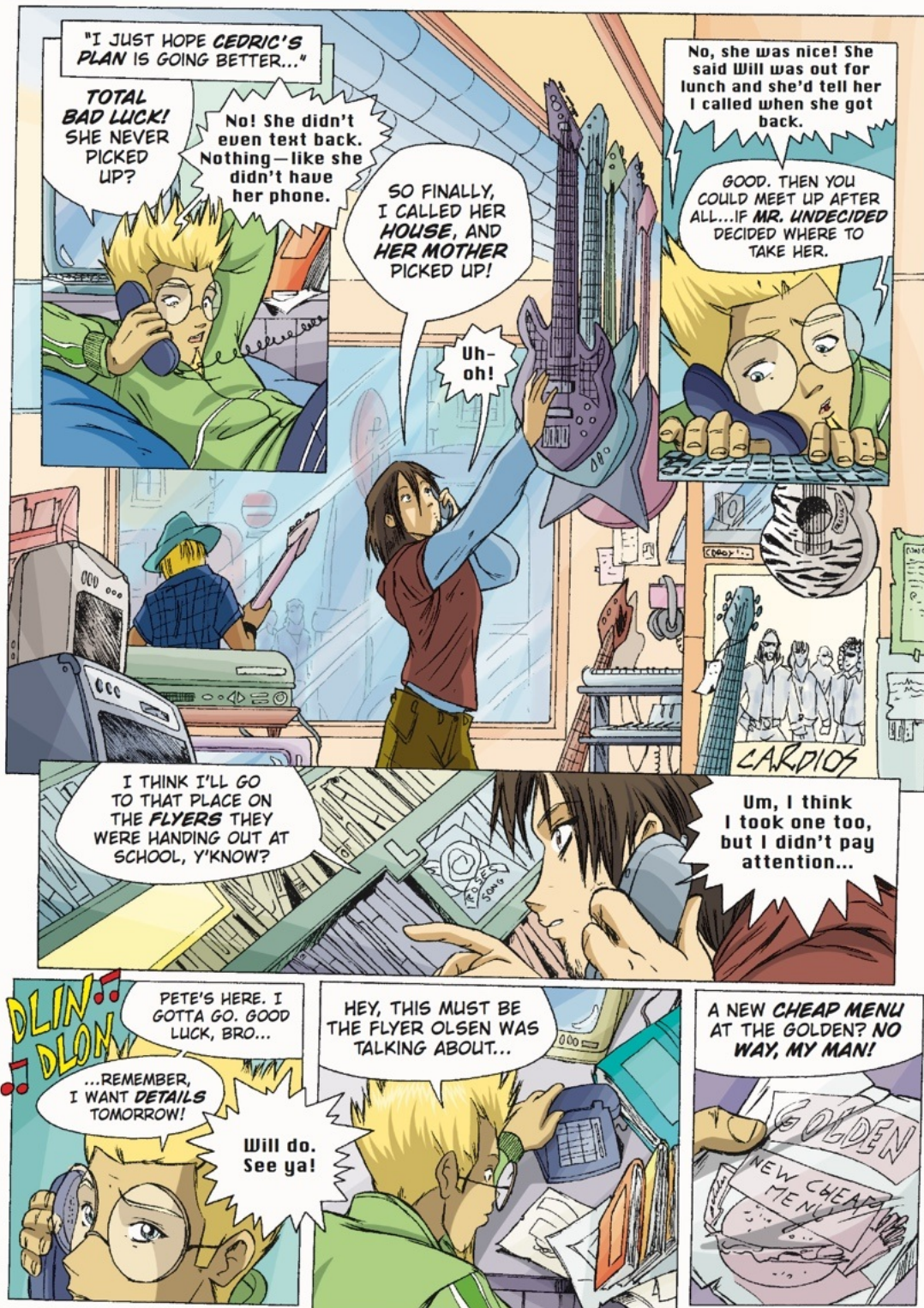


ELYON BROWN DISAPPEARED WITH HER PARENTS LONG AGO. I'LL HAVE TO SPEND MY DAYS IN HEATHERFIELD LOCKED UP...









"I JUST HOPE **CEDRIC'S** PLAN IS GOING BETTER..."

TOTAL BAD LUCK! SHE NEVER PICKED UP?

No! She didn't even text back. Nothing—like she didn't have her phone.

SO FINALLY, I CALLED HER **HOUSE**, AND **HER MOTHER** PICKED UP!

Uh-oh!

No, she was nice! She said Will was out for lunch and she'd tell her I called when she got back.

GOOD. THEN YOU COULD MEET UP AFTER ALL...IF **MR. UNDECIDED** DECIDED WHERE TO TAKE HER.

I THINK I'LL GO TO THAT PLACE ON THE **FLYERS** THEY WERE HANDING OUT AT SCHOOL, Y'KNOW?

Um, I think I took one too, but I didn't pay attention...

DLIN! DLON!

PETE'S HERE. I GOTTA GO. GOOD LUCK, BRO...

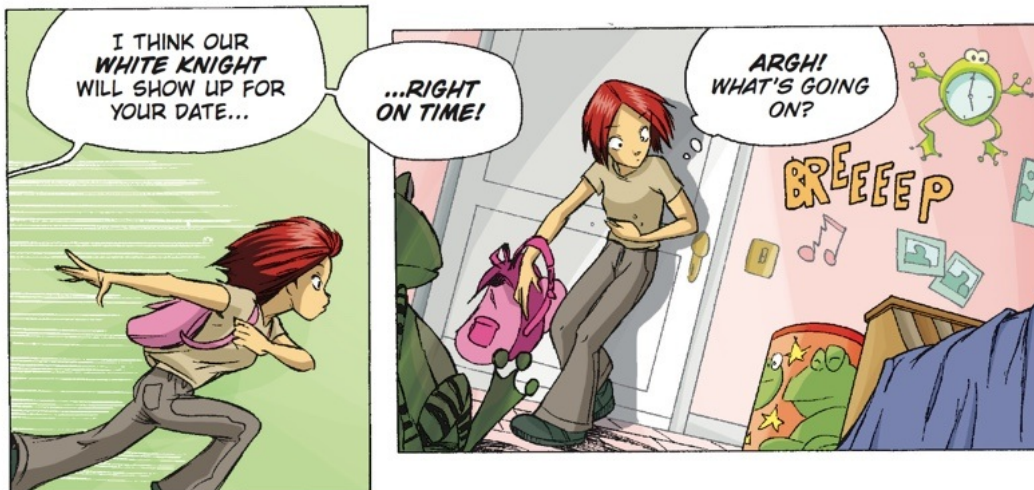
...REMEMBER, I WANT **DETAILS** TOMORROW!

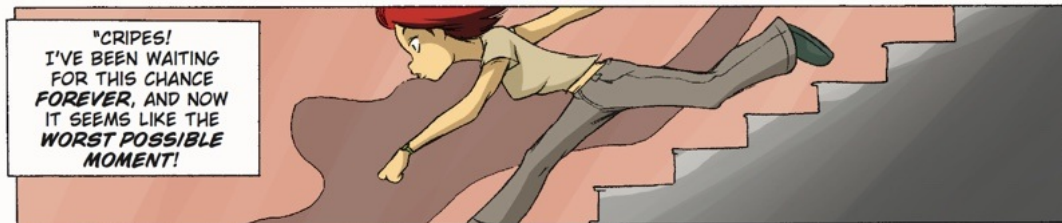
Will do. See ya!

HEY, THIS MUST BE THE FLYER OLSEN WAS TALKING ABOUT...

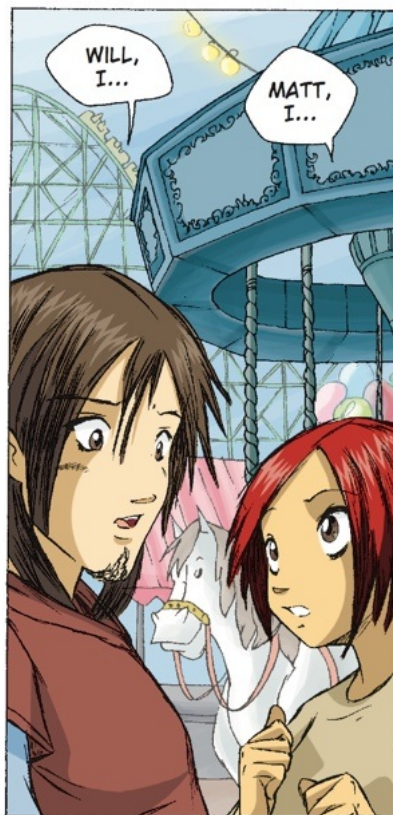
A NEW **CHEAP MENU** AT THE GOLDEN? **NO WAY, MY MAN!**

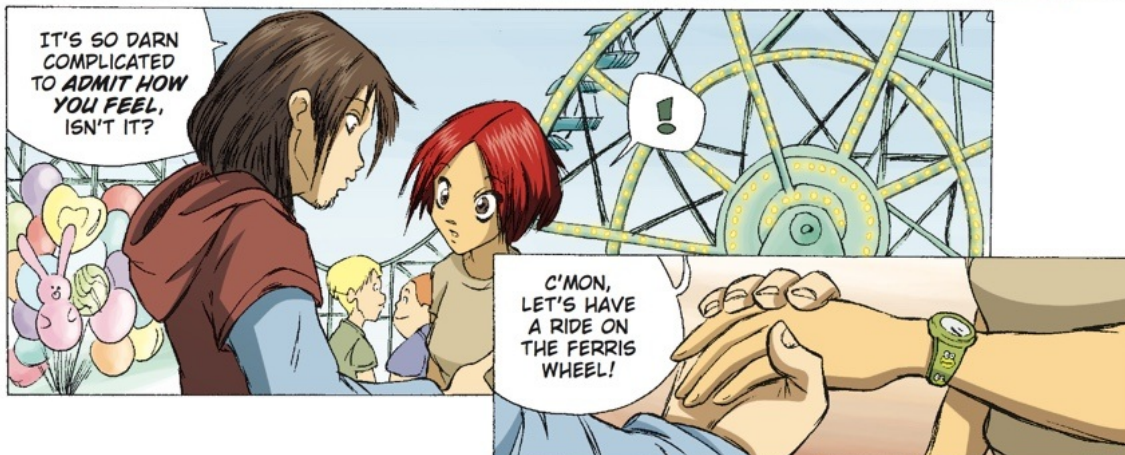
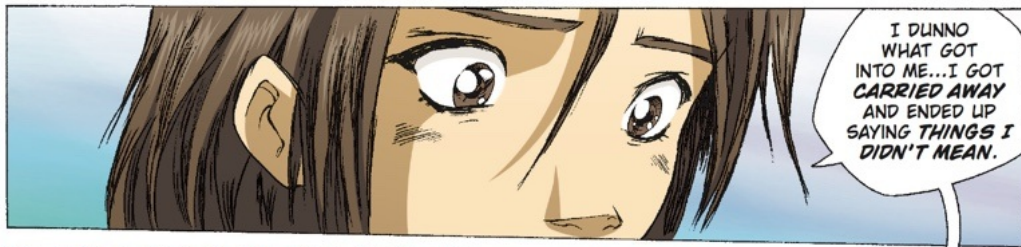
GOLDEN
NEW **CHEAP** MENU









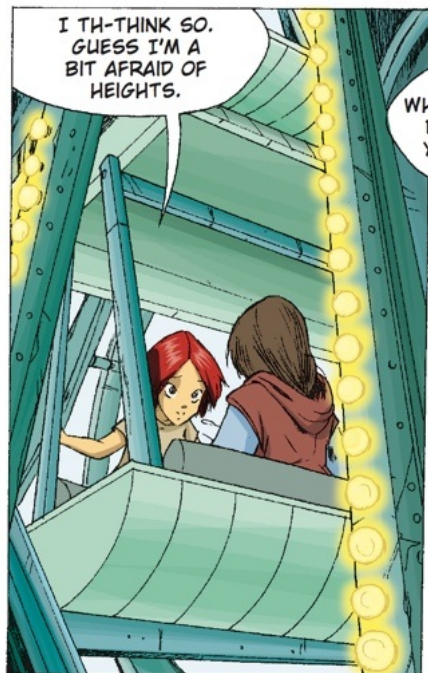




"THE VIEW FROM UP THERE
WILL MAKE YOUR HEAD **SPIN**!"

HNNN...

WILL, YOU
OKAY?

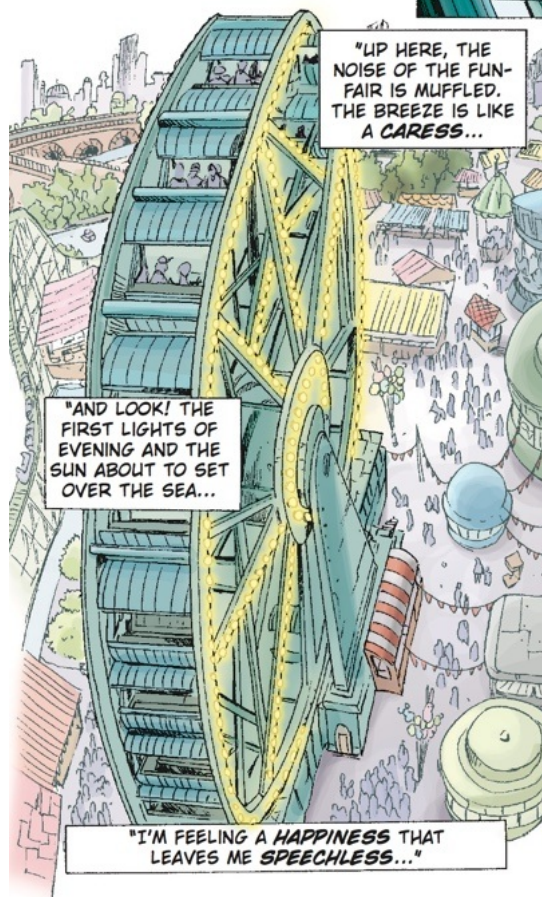


I TH-THINK SO.
GUESS I'M A
BIT AFRAID OF
HEIGHTS.



WELL,
WHADDAYA THINK?
DIDN'T I TAKE
YOU TO A NICE
PLACE?

IT'S
ALL SO
PERFECT,
MATT!



"UP HERE, THE
NOISE OF THE FUN-
FAIR IS MUFFLED.
THE BREEZE IS LIKE
A **CARESS**..."

"AND LOOK! THE
FIRST LIGHTS OF
EVENING AND THE
SUN ABOUT TO SET
OVER THE SEA..."

"I'M FEELING A **HAPPINESS** THAT
LEAVES ME **SPEECHLESS**..."



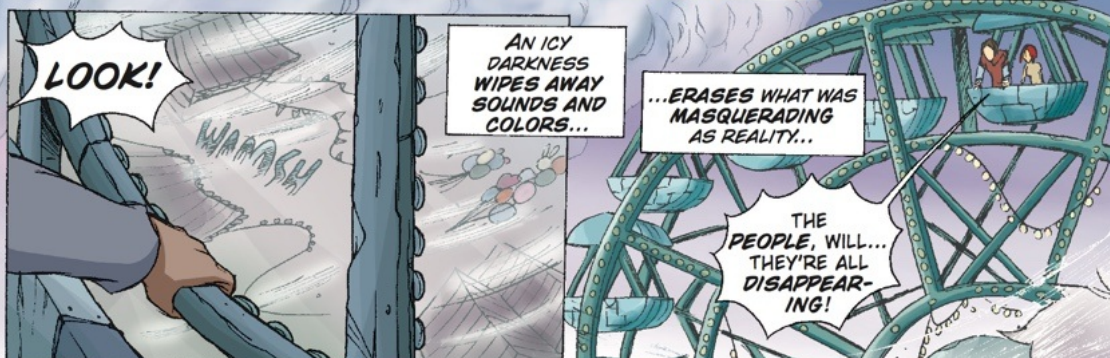
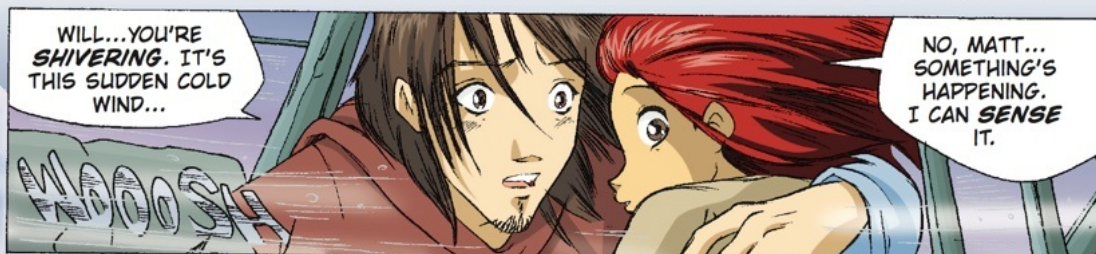
WHEN I MOVED TO
THIS CITY, I NEVER
THOUGHT ONE DAY
I'D FIND IT **SO**
BEAUTIFUL...

YOU KNOW
WHAT? ME
EITHER...



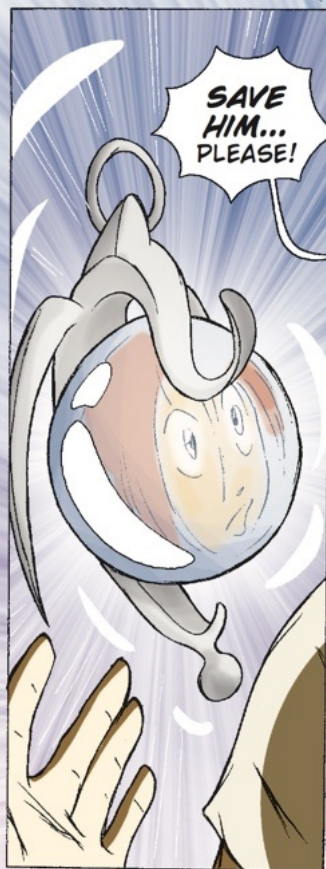
...BEFORE
YOU CAME
HERE!

CLUNK





HELP!
HEART OF
KANDRAKAR...
HELP ME!



SAVE
HIM...
PLEASE!



NOW IT'S
YOU AND ME,
GUARDIAN. I'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR
THIS MOMENT SO
LONG, AND YOU'RE
MAKING MY JOB
EASIER!

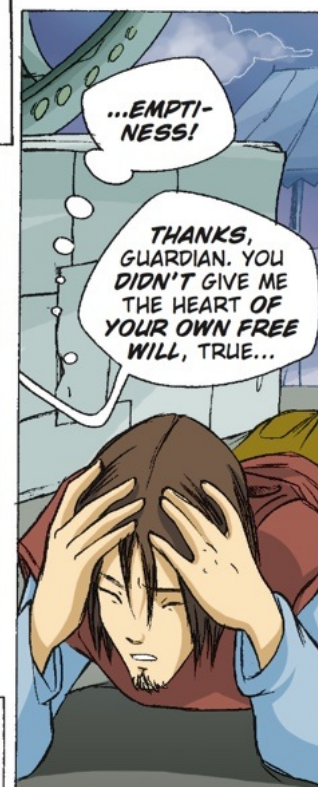
245

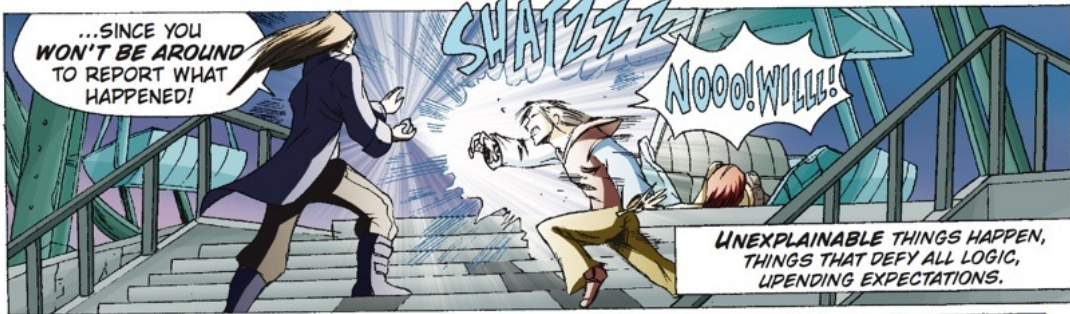


SO NAIVE!
YOU'RE SO
FOCUSED
ON HIM YOU
DON'T EVEN
NOTICE
ME!



YOU RISKED
YOUR SECRET...
AND THE HEART...
BECAUSE YOU
ONLY HAVE
EYES
FOR THIS
FOOL!





WATCH OUT FOR LOVE, CEDRIC! IT BRINGS OUT
THE BEST IN PEOPLE...



...HIDES STRENGTH YOU
NEVER KNEW YOU HAD...

YAAAA...

...AND CAN EVEN
AWAKEN MAGIC!

...AAARGH!
IT'S NOT
OVER!

FZZZZZZTF

248

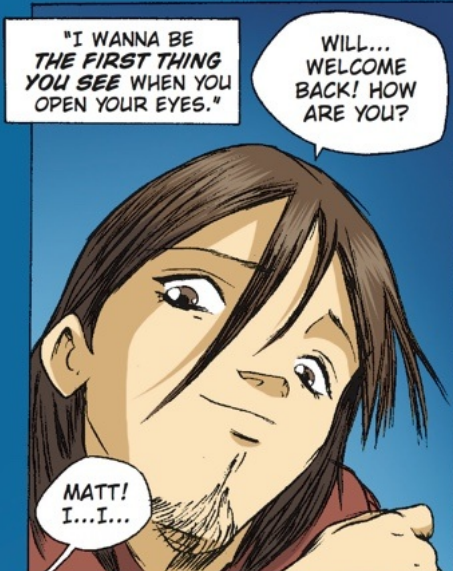
BECAUSE LOVE IS THE
GREATEST MAGIC OF ALL!

ZWIIIN



WILL...I DON'T
THINK I GET MUCH
OF WHAT HAPPENED...
BUT I DO KNOW
ONE THING...





WILL...
WELCOME
BACK! HOW
ARE YOU?



ARE YOU OKAY?
I...THERE'S SO MUCH I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, MATT. ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT YOU SAW...



249





THAT YOU'RE
MAGICAL AND
SPECIAL, WILL...
I'VE KNOWN SINCE
THE FIRST DAY
WE MET.



SO...
SO YOU THINK
THAT *DESPITE*
EVERYTHING WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH...
WE CAN REALLY
START OVER?



START OVER?
ABSOLUTELY
NOT.



I'D RATHER
PICK UP *WHERE*
WE LEFT
OFF...



THE END



Taranee's Wardrobe

① On the top shelf, Tara keeps her favorite books. They're full of fantastical stories about adventures, traveling, and exploring!

② Next to the books there's her photo album: a collection of the most interesting pics she snapped since she got her first roll of film when she was only seven years old.

③ Cat ring holder: Tara likes to keep her many trinkets always in order.

④ Her mom says a wardrobe is no place to hang photos, but Tara isn't changing her mind. She loves to open the door and see a picture that brings back sweet memories.

⑤ Her style is unique, colorful, and very personal, like this handbag made of woven natural fibers.

⑥ This is Taranee's winter coat, super warm and with a pink tiger print pattern.





7 Taranee doesn't feel super comfy in a skirt: She usually prefers trousers. But on special occasions, she makes an exception and wears this **dress** she bought after an exhausting afternoon shopping with her mom.

8 On spring days, as soon as a little wind comes out, Taranee runs out into the garden with her **kite**, and it doesn't matter if Peter makes fun of her saying it's a toy for children.

9 She doesn't know why she loves **succulents** so much: maybe because they're strong and can survive in difficult conditions?

10 This **hen** is a present from Peter. Apparently, he saw it in a shop window, and it reminded him of Taranee. If he says so...



Cornelia's Wardrobe

- 1 A **straw hat** with satin ribbons and lots of flowers. Corny even wore it at the last carnival!
- 2 This is the **dress** she wore for her twelfth birthday party. She likes it because it's elegant but not too serious.
- 3 **Candy handbag**. Hay Lin saw one in a shop, but when she went back to buy it, it was gone. So she sewed one herself!
- 4 A **sweater** she bought in Redstone. Nice color, but her mom says it shows too much of her belly.
- 5 Cornelia loves **perfume**, especially floral scents. Her bottom drawer is full of little bottles. There are also jars full of seashells.
- 6 Every year, Corny saves the **seashells** she picks up on the beach. They remind her of summer!





- 7 Old dolls and teddy bears. Cornelia's secret: She doesn't want to throw them away. When she's feeling sad or can't sleep, she grabs one.
- 8 They're old and don't fit her anymore, but she'll never throw out her first ice skates.
- 9 One of the trophies she won. This one has a special meaning because the competition was especially fierce. She never thought she'd take second place.
- 10 The shawl that belonged to her grandma. It's been passed down from generation to generation. Cornelia wears it when she's feeling insecure.
- 11 Her latest find: a special dress for a fancy dinner with her dad's colleagues.
- 12 Heeled shoes. They're gorgeous but so uncomfortable!



Part IV. Trial of the Oracle • Volume I



Series Created by Elisabetta Gnone
Comic Art Direction: Alessandro Barbucci, Barbara Canepa

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W.I.T.C.H.: The Graphic Novel, Part IV: Trial of the Oracle
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New York, NY 10104

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First JY Edition: September 2018

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2017950917

ISBNs:
978-0-316-47711-6 (paperback)
978-1-9753-0183-5 (ebook)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

LSC-C

Printed in the United States of America

Cover Art by Manuela Razzi
Colors by Andrea Cagol

Translation by Linda Ghio and
Stephanie Dagg at Editing Zone
Lettering by Katie Blakeslee

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Concept by Francesco Artibani and Teresa Radice
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Pencils by Paolo Campinoti
Inks by Marina Baggio and Roberta Zanotta
Color and Light Direction by Francesco Legramandi
Title Page Art by Anna Merli
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