

THE REAL STORY OF ODYSSEUS, ONCE KING OF ITHACA  
- BY HIMSELF -

----- BOOK 1 -----  
**THE EVENTS IN TROY**



Panko

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Greece







THE TRUE STORY  
OF ODYSSEUS  
ONCE KING OF ITHACA  
- BY HIMSELF -

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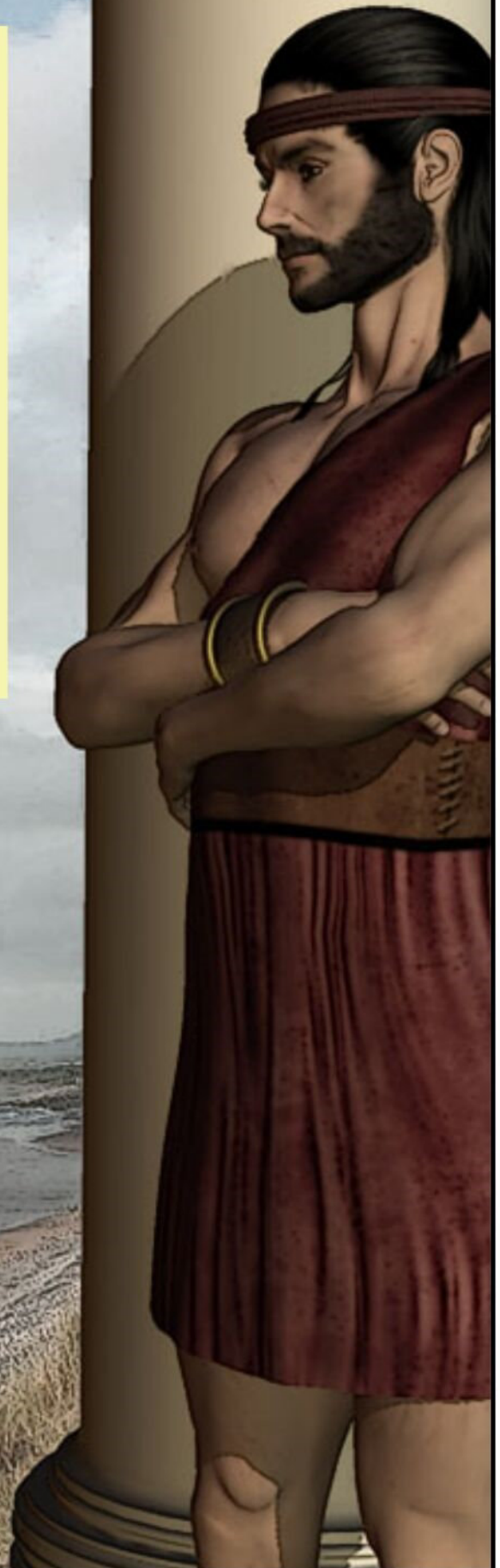
SCRIPT AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PANKO

MIDNIGHT PUBLISHING

MY REAL PASSION IN LIFE HAS NOT BEEN WAR NOR ADVENTURE, AS MANY A CHRONICLER TURNED POET TRIED TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE, BUT WOMEN, WHO COMBINE BOTH WAR AND ADVENTURE, FOR WHO IGNORES THAT A RELATIONSHIP WITH A WOMAN IS WAR AND ADVENTURE OF THE MOST SUBLIME KIND?

I AM ODYSSEUS, SON OF LAERTES, AND I HAVE ONCE BEEN KING IN ITHACA. IT IS TRUE THAT I HAVE SEEN MANY CITIES AND THAT I CAME TO KNOW A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE, BOTH MORTAL AND IMMORTAL, BUT MY GREATEST TALENT AND INCLINATION HAS BEEN THE EXPLORATION OF THIS MYSTERIOUS AND UTTERLY PUZZLING UNIVERSE THAT WOMEN ALONE POPULATE, A UNIVERSE THE EXISTENCE OF WHICH FEW MEN ARE EVEN SUSPECTING.

YES, I CAME TO KNOW MANY WOMEN. WOMEN OF ALL SHAPES, AGE, SKIN HUES, MENTALITIES AND INCLINATIONS. I LOVED A FEW, SOME OF THEM LOVED ME IN RETURN, I BECAME ATTACHED, THRILLED, MESMERIZED, DISAPPOINTED, EVEN BETRAYED AT TIMES, ALWAYS MOVING ON, FOREVER IN QUEST OF THE IMPOSSIBLE, NEVER DESPAIRING IN MY SEARCH OF THE ONE, THE FINAL PORT, THAT WILL SET AN ENDING TO MY WANDERINGS AND PUT MY MIND AND SENSES TO PEACE -AT LAST.





I WAS MARRIED YOUNG -AN ARRANGED AFFAIR, AS WAS THE CUSTOM IN MY COUNTRY IN THOSE DAYS. PENELOPE WAS A SIMPLE GIRL FROM SPARTA WITH NO OTHER AMBITION IN LIFE BUT TO BECOME AN EXEMPLARY WIFE AND MOTHER. OH, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, WELL SHAPED AND DESIRABLE, BUT SHE ALSO WAS LITTERLY AND DESPERATELY INDIFFERENT TO THE MYSTERY OF THE UNION OF TWO BODIES AND SOULS, A FRIGID, IF COMPLAISANT, ENTITY. I TRIED TO STIR HER SENSES -I FAILED. I TRIED TO LOVE HER -IN VAIN.

WHEN THE ACHAEANS DECIDED TO TAKE PART IN THE WAR THAT THE EGYPTIAN KING RAMSES HAD LAUNCHED AGAINST THE MIGHTY EMPIRE OF THE HITTITES I JUMPED WITH JOY AND HASTENED TO JOIN THEIR ARMIES WITH 12 SHIPS AND 700 MEN.

THE ABDUCTION OF HELEN OF SPARTA BY THE TROJAN PRINCE PARIS, SOME TEN YEARS PREVIOUSLY, WAS ONLY A PRETEXT OF COURSE TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK TO THE RICH CITY OF ILION. AT THE TIME NO ONE BELIEVED THAT THIS CAMPAIGN WAS GOING TO LAST FOR SO LONG AND THAT WOULD CAUSE THE DEATH OF SO MANY VALIANT WARRIORS IN THOSE INHOSPITABLE FOREIGN SHORES.

TO ME THIS HAS BEEN THE BEGINNING OF A MOST MARVELOUS ADVENTURE, WHICH LED ME TO A KIND OF KNOWLEDGE THAT NO MORTAL MAN HAD ACQUIRED BEFORE OR SINCE. IT HELPED ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HUMANS, BUT, WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT, IT HAS REVEALED TO ME THE AGE-OLD MYSTERY PERTAINING TO THE TRUE NATURE AND IDENTITY OF THOSE STRANGE BEINGS THAT WE CALL "GODS".


WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE TRUE ACCOUNT OF MY QUEST AND WANDERINGS.





# BOOK 1

# THE EVENTS IN TROY



IT WAS ON THE SEVENTH YEAR OF OUR SIEGE OF TROY. THE WAR, THAT MANY BELIEVED IT WOULD BE A QUICK AFFAIR, WAS DRAGGING ON INTERMINABLY. DAY AFTER DAY BOREDOM AND UNREST WERE THE FEELINGS THAT UNDERMINED THE MORAL OF THE WARRIORS IN THE ACHAEAN CAMP. THE TROJANS WERE HOLDING THEIR GROUND WELL AND LAUNCHED OCCASIONAL ATTACKS AS IF TO STRETCH THEIR LEGS, CAUSE SOME CASUALTIES AND THEN GO BACK TO THE SAFETY OF THEIR HIGH WALLED CITY.

OUR LEADERS WERE QUARRRELING AMONG THEMSELVES, THE MEN WERE UNHAPPY AND HAD STARTED TO CAST LONGING GLANCES TOWARDS THE SHIPS THAT WERE WAITING ANCHORED IN THE BAY TO TAKE THEM BACK HOME, THE AIR WAS THICK WITH DISCONTENT.

IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT I MET CASSANDRA.



IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON AND I HAD GONE ALL ALONE ON A SNEAKY RECONNAISSANCE OF A REMOTE PORTION OF THE WALLS IN THE HOPE TO DISCOVER A WEAK SPOT WHERE WE COULD EVENTUALLY MAKE A BREAK THROUGH.



I CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE GIRL QUITE UNEXPECTEDLY, FOR SHE OBVIOUSLY HAD COME OUT OF THE CITY AND THIS WAS VERY UNUSUAL.



SHE WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL, AS MOST TROJAN WOMEN ARE, BUT THIS ONE HAD ALSO SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL ABOUT HER.







I DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO DO. IF THE GIRL STARTED TO YELL I WAS LOST.

DON'T BE AFRAID. I WISH YOU NO HARM.

I'M NOT AFRAID, ACHAEAN. I'M A TROJAN WOMAN.



SHE WAS AS PROUD AS SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL. I WAS PUZZLED AND UNEASY.

I WAS ABOUT TO TURN AND LEAVE, BUT SOMETHING MADE ME HESITANT.

I'M ODYSSEUS, SON OF LAERTES.

THE ONE THEY CALL "CRAFTY"?

IF YOU DON'T CRY OUT I'LL GO ON MY WAY QUIETLY.

I WON'T.



YOU KNOW OF ME THEN?

YES. GO NOW.

AND YOU ARE?...

CASSANDRA, PRIESTESS OF ATHENA.







BUT, FOR SOME STRANGE REASON I WAS NOT EAGER TO LEAVE ANYMORE.

CAN WE SIT FOR A MOMENT?... TALK?...

WHY?



BECAUSE I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE LIKE YOU FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.

DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU ARE SOFTENING UP, ACHAEAN!



BUT SHE CAME TO SIT BESIDE ME AND THIS MADE HER BEHAVIOR TO APPEAR EVEN MORE PUZZLING.



FOR A WHILE WE SAT THERE IN SILENCE. SHE WAS THE FIRST ONE TO SPEAK.

I'VE HEARD TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT YOU. THEY SAY THAT YOU ARE A DANGEROUS MAN. AND QUITE RUTHLESS...

I TOLD YOU...

YES, I KNOW... YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE.



AND YET, YOU DON'T SEEM FRIGHTENED.





SHE SMILED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND I FELT MY HEART MELTING. SHE WAS RIGHT. SHE HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE THE WALLS? DON'T YOU KNOW THAT IT IS DANGEROUS?

I COME OUT OFTEN TO COLLECT SOME HERBS THAT CAN BE FOUND ONLY ON THIS SPOT.



WHAT KIND OF HERBS?

SPECIAL HERBS. THEY HELP ME TO SEE THE FUTURE.

THE FUTURE AGAIN! I WISH I COULD SEE MINE...

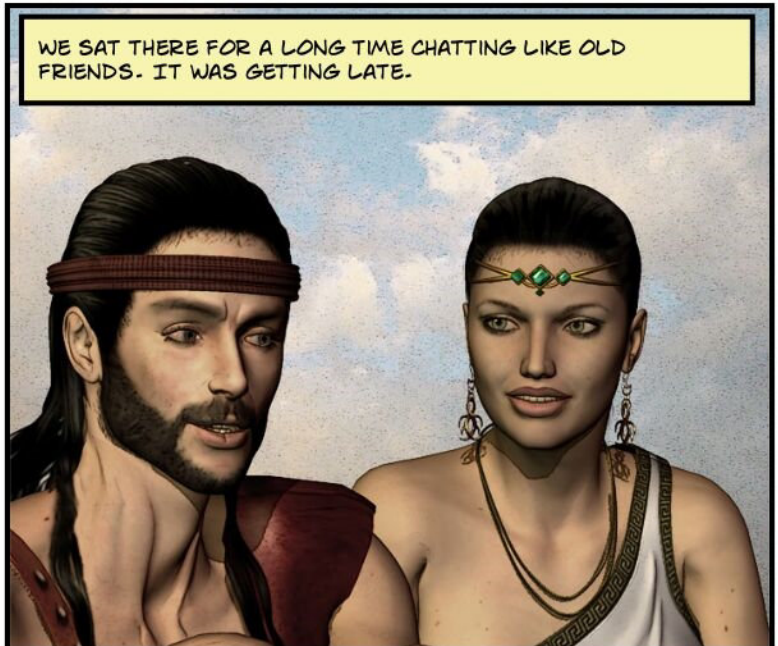


SHE LOOKED AT ME IN A STRANGE WAY.

NO, YOU DON'T. BELIEVE ME, IT IS BETTER NOT TO KNOW THESE THINGS.



WE SAT THERE FOR A LONG TIME CHATTING LIKE OLD FRIENDS. IT WAS GETTING LATE.







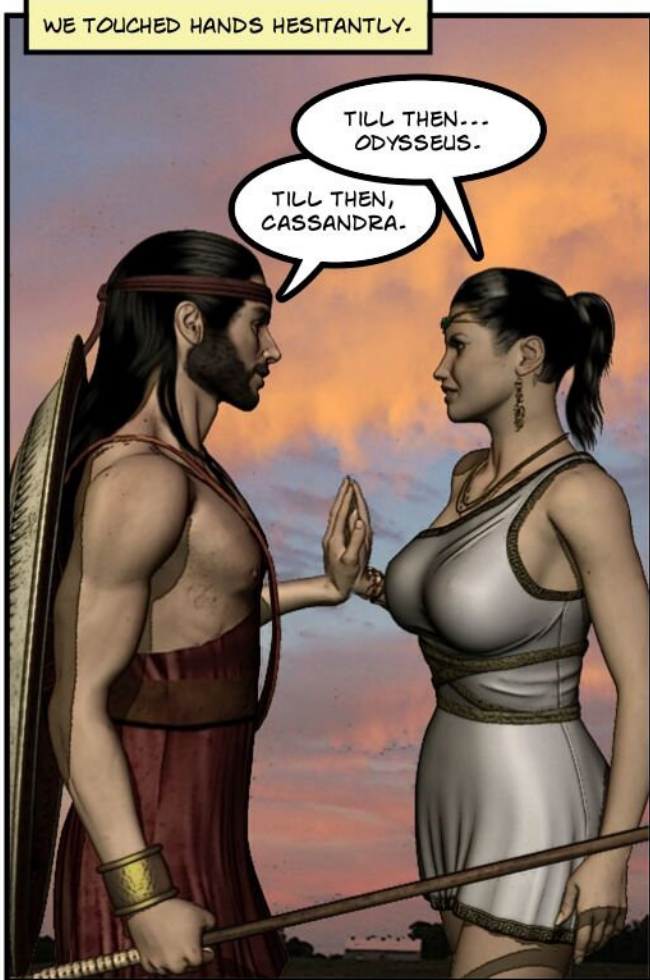
IT WAS TIME TO PART.

I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CASSANDRA.



I'LL COME OUT AGAIN THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.



WE TOUCHED HANDS HESITANTLY.

TILL THEN... ODYSSEUS.

TILL THEN, CASSANDRA.



SHE TURNED AND SMILED BEFORE DISAPPEARING BEHIND A PROTRUSION OF THE WALL.

DEAR GODS! WHAT A GIRL!



WE MET AGAIN AND AGAIN SINCE THIS FATEFUL AFTERNOON AND EACH TIME I FELT MORE AND MORE ATTRACTED TO THIS STRANGE, DARK GIRL.



THEN THE INEVITABLE HAPPENED.

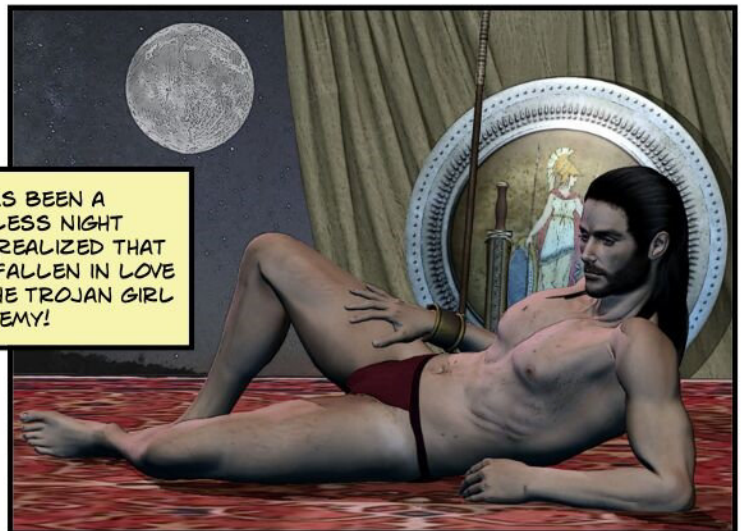
IT WAS A KISS LIKE NO KISS I HAD EVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE.



NOTHING MORE HAPPENED THAT DAY. WE JUST SAT THERE, HOLDING EACH OTHER AND WHISPERING WORDS FULL OF TENDERNESS.



THIS HAS BEEN A SLEEPLESS NIGHT FOR I REALIZED THAT I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE TROJAN GIRL -MY ENEMY!



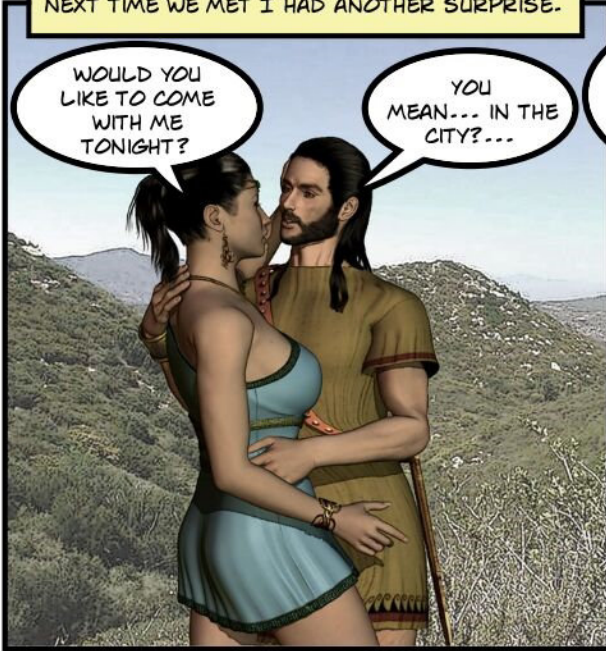


NEXT TIME WE MET I HAD ANOTHER SURPRISE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME WITH ME TONIGHT?

YOU MEAN... IN THE CITY?...

YES. THERE IS A SECRET PASSAGE IN THE WALLS. I'LL TRUST YOU IF YOU TRUST ME.

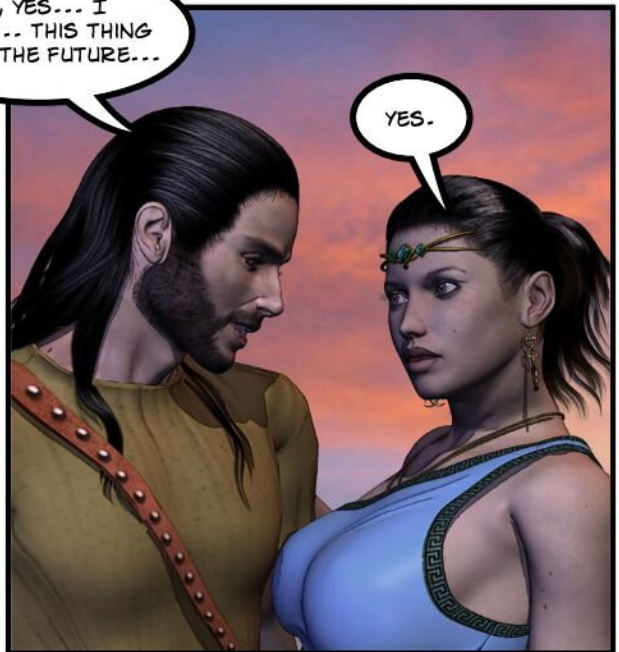
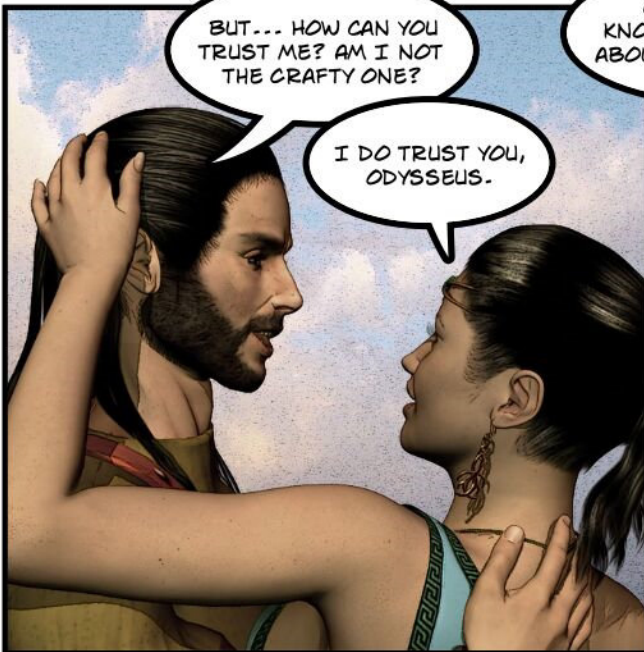


BUT... HOW CAN YOU TRUST ME? AM I NOT THE CRAFTY ONE?

I DO TRUST YOU, ODYSSEUS.

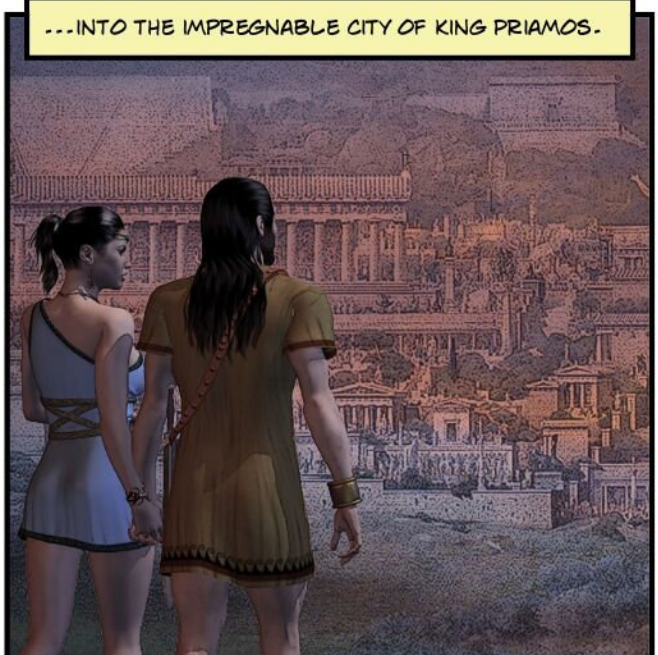
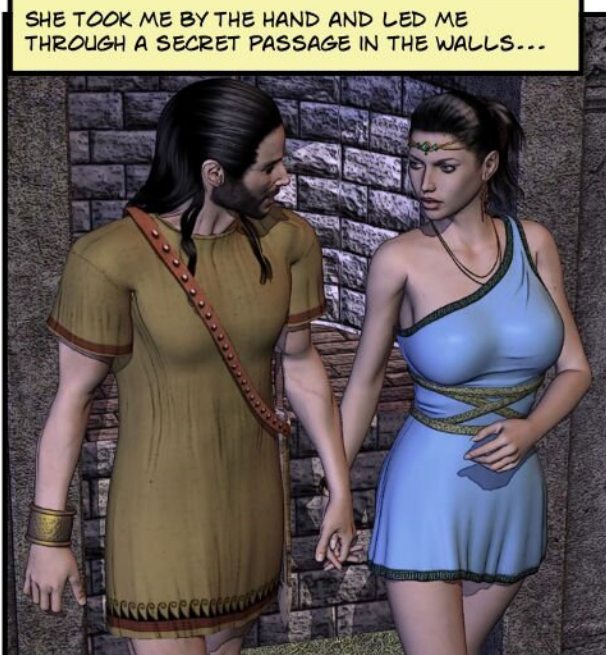
OH, YES... I KNOW... THIS THING ABOUT THE FUTURE...

YES.



SHE TOOK ME BY THE HAND AND LED ME THROUGH A SECRET PASSAGE IN THE WALLS...

...INTO THE IMPREGNABLE CITY OF KING PRIAMOS.

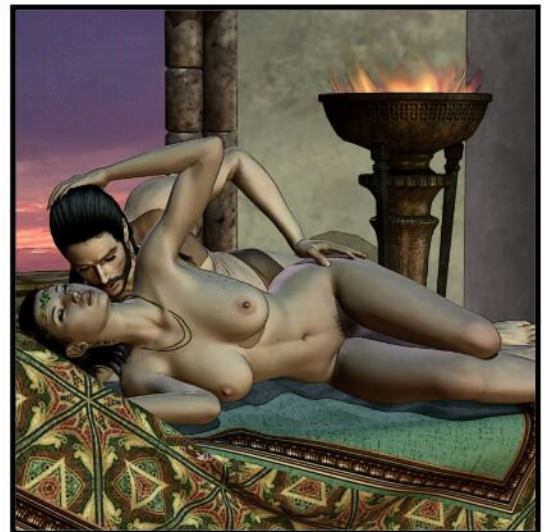




SHE TOOK ME INTO THE SAFETY OF THE TEMPLE OF ATHENA.



AND THERE, IN HER QUARTERS WE MADE LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME.



OH, ODYSSEUS! SAY THAT YOU LOVE ME...



I LOVE YOU, CASSANDRA. I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.





WE SLEPT ON EACH OTHER'S ARMS THAT NIGHT AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY, MANY YEARS I FELT HAPPY.



THE WAR, THE HORRORS, PENELOPE... HAD ALL RECEDED IN A DARK PLACE AT THE DEPTHS OF MY MIND. MY WHOLE WORLD NOW WAS JUST ONE WOMAN: CASSANDRA.

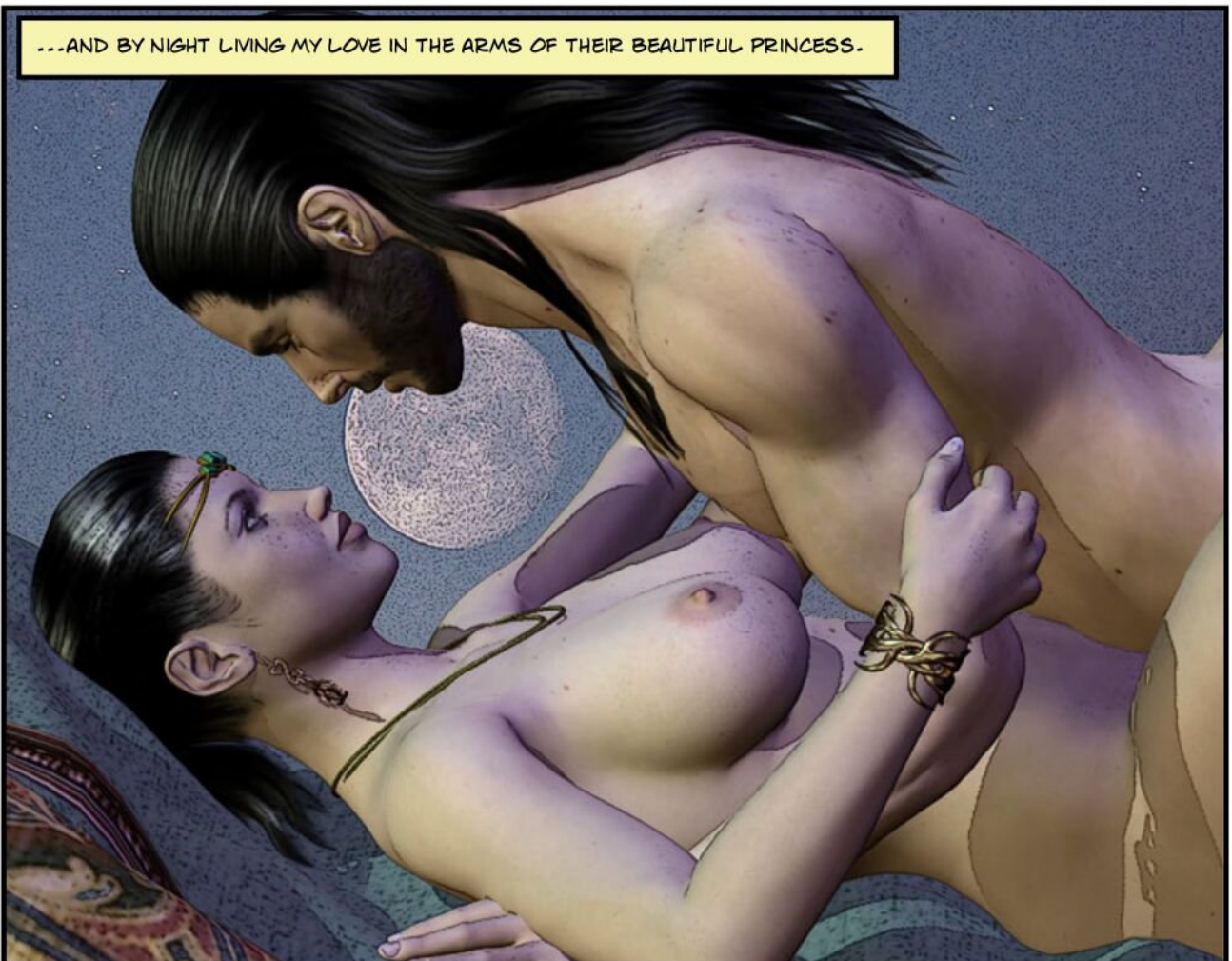




AND THE DAYS, THE WEEKS, THE MONTHS WENT BY  
LIKE IN A DREAM. BY DAY FIGHTING THE TROJANS...



...AND BY NIGHT LIVING MY LOVE IN THE ARMS OF THEIR BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS.







I HOPE THIS DREAM WOULD LAST FOREVER...

IT WON'T. BUT WE HAVE THE PRESENT AND THIS WE CAN LIVE AS BEST AS WE CAN.



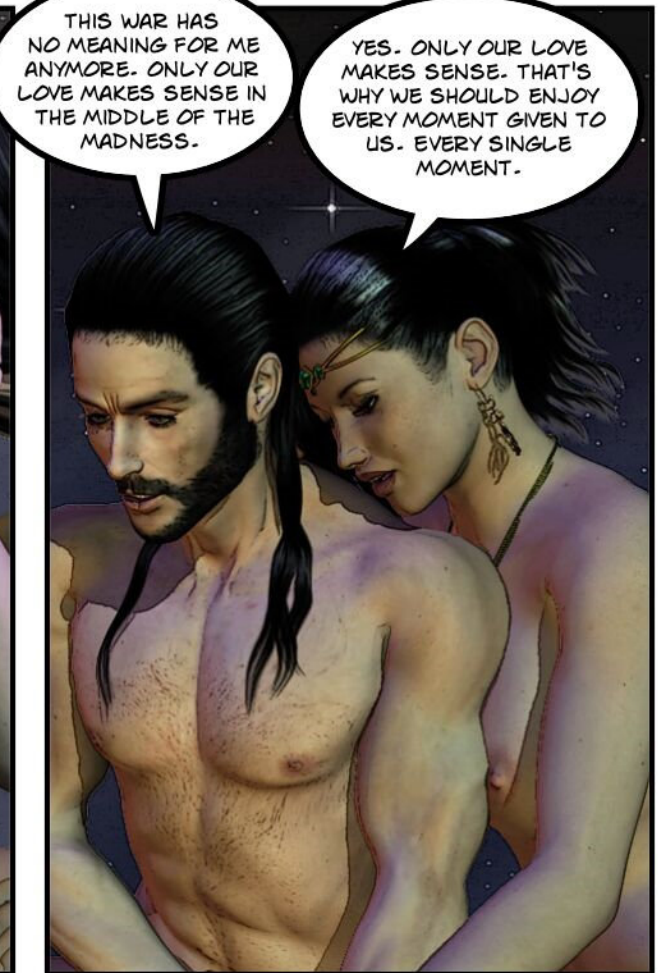
WHY DON'T WE GO AWAY? JUST YOU AND ME... AWAY FROM ALL THIS...

WE CAN'T, MY LOVE. WE CAN'T AND YOU KNOW IT.



YOU CAN'T DESERT YOUR PEOPLE AND I CAN'T DESERT MINE.

BUT... THIS IS INSANE!



THIS WAR HAS NO MEANING FOR ME ANYMORE. ONLY OUR LOVE MAKES SENSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MADNESS.

YES. ONLY OUR LOVE MAKES SENSE. THAT'S WHY WE SHOULD ENJOY EVERY MOMENT GIVEN TO US. EVERY SINGLE MOMENT.



THEN, ONE NIGHT, SOMETHING VERY STRANGE HAPPENED. WE WERE LYING TOGETHER AFTER OUR LOVEMAKING WHEN I HEARD THE SOUND OF MUFFLED VOICES AND MOANS COMING FROM SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE TEMPLE.

*aaahh!...esh...esh..*



I JUMPED UP AND GRABBED MY SWORD, FEARING THAT OUR LITTLE SECRET HAS BEEN DISCOVERED.

IT LOOKED AS IF SHE WAS TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING FROM ME.

WHAT ARE THESE VOICES?

NOTHING... IT IS NOTHING...

SOMEONE IS OUT THERE...

NO, ODYSSEUS... PLEASE...











ಕೆಂಪು-ನು ನಡುವೆ ನೋ...  
ಕೆಂಪು ಲೇನ

ನೋ ಲೋಕ ದೇವ, ನಡುವೆ  
ಇಡೆ-ಇಡೆ





I JUST STOOD THERE, PARALYZED, LOOKING IN MESMERIZED FASCINATION AT THE WONDROUS SCENE DEPLOYED IN FRONT OF MY INCREDULOUS EYES.

आआआआआ...



THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE LOVERS AND THE OUTLANDISH SOUND OF THE WORDS SPOKEN IN THE HEAT OF THEIR PASSION LEFT ME IN NO DOUBT AS FOR THE IDENTITY OF THE TWO INVOLVED ACTORS.

आआआआ... आआआआ...



I LET CASSANDRA'S FIRM HAND TO DRAG ME AWAY FROM THERE AND TAKE ME BACK TO HER QUARTERS.



YOU MUST FORGET WHAT YOU HAVE WITNESSED HERE TONIGHT, ODYSSEUS. DO YOU HEAR ME? FORGET IT.



I COULD HARDLY SPEAK AND I REALIZED THAT MY HANDS WERE TREMBLING.



ARE THEY...?

YES. TWO IMMORTALS FROM OLYMPUS.



SO... IT IS TRUE. THEY REALLY EXIST!

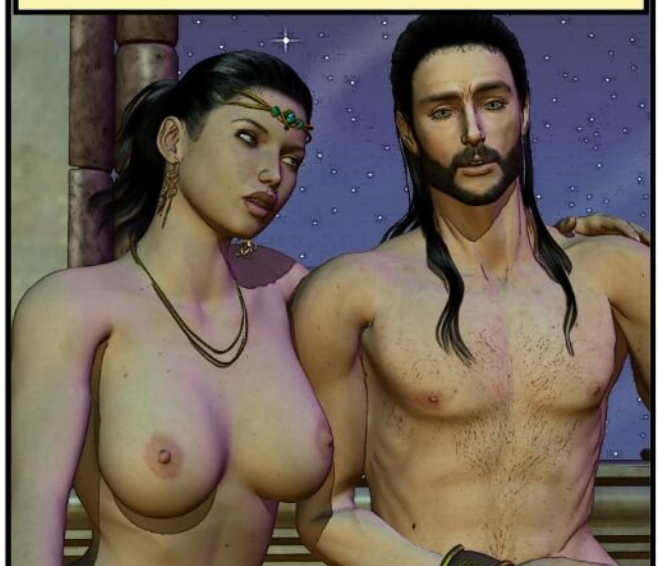
YES, MY LOVE. THEY ARE AS REAL AS YOU AND I.




ATHENA...?

YES... AND ARES.

I WANTED TO SPEAK, TO ASK CASSANDRA A THOUSAND QUESTIONS, BUT I WAS IN DEEP SHOCK AND NO WORD WOULD PASS MY TREMBLING LIPS.







WE SAT THERE FOR A LONG TIME HOLDING HANDS AND LISTENING TO THE MOANING AND SCREAMING OF THE DIVINE GUESTS FROM ABOVE.

THEN, AT LAST, THE NOISE SUBSIDED AND SOON ONLY OUR OWN BREATHING WOULD BREAK THE PEACE OF THE NIGHT.

AND YET, YOU HAVE OFTEN OBSERVED THEIR FLYING SHIELDS HOVERING IN THE SKIES.

YES, AND I THOUGHT THEM TO BE MACHINES MANNED BY SOME VERY ADVANCED PEOPLE.

AND YOU WERE RIGHT. FOR THAT'S WHAT THE GODS REALLY ARE IN FACT. WELL... ALMOST.

I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT GODS WERE AN INVENTION OF THE PRIESTS IN ORDER TO BETTER CONTROL THE MASSES...

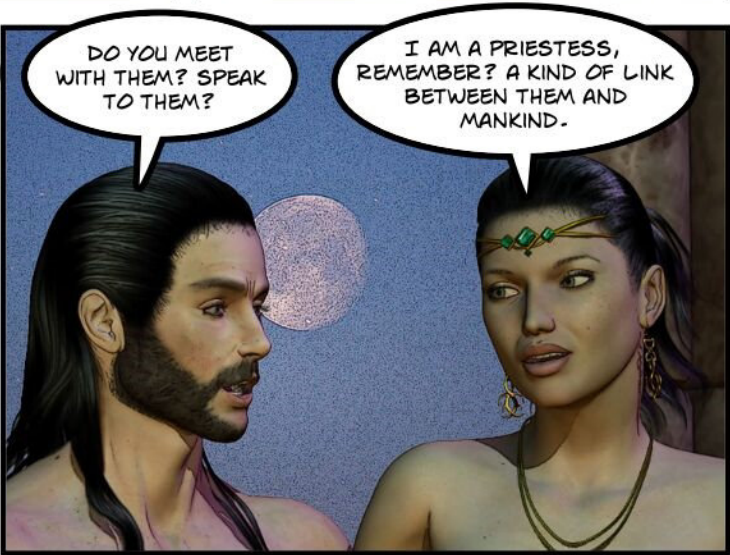


JUST PEOPLE? LIKE YOU AND ME?

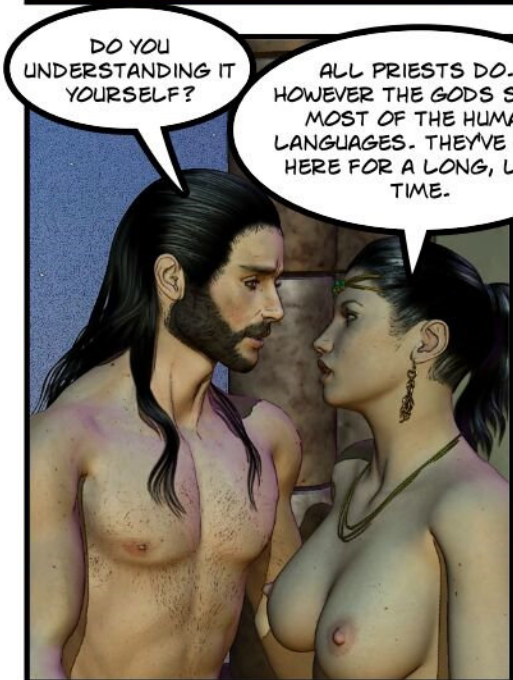
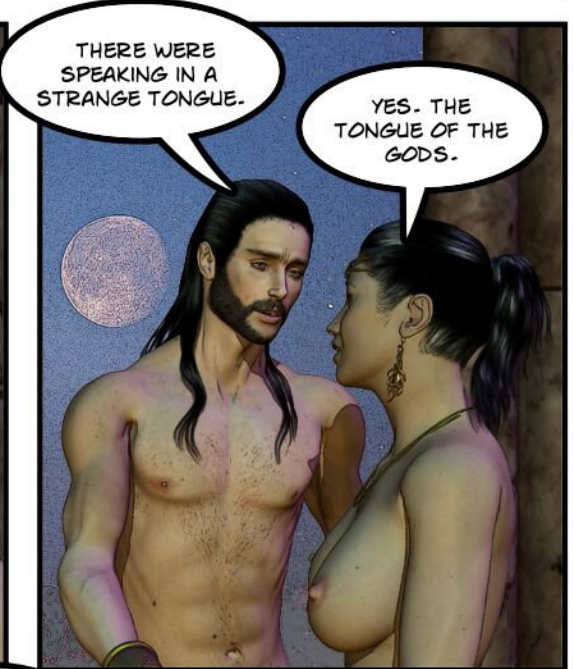
IN A WAY VERY SIMILAR, YET VERY DIFFERENT. THEY ARE TRULY IMMORTAL YOU KNOW.

DO YOU MEET WITH THEM? SPEAK TO THEM?

I AM A PRIESTESS, REMEMBER? A KIND OF LINK BETWEEN THEM AND MANKIND.











A FEW MONTHS WENT BY AND THOUGH THE WAR WAS TAKING AN UGLY TURN WHAT I HAD SEEN THAT NIGHT IN THE TEMPLE OF ATHENA AND THE CONVERSATION THAT FOLLOWED WITH CASSANDRA WOULDN'T LEAVE MY MIND.



IN A COUPLE OF OCCASIONS I NOTICED THE DARK FLYING SHIELDS OF THE GODS HOVERING HIGH ABOVE THE BATTLEFIELD AND I COULDN'T HELP WONDERING WHO WOULD BE UP THERE.



THEN, ONE EVENING, AS I SNEAKED INTO MY BELOVED'S QUARTERS I HAD A BIG SURPRISE. I RECOGNIZED THE MAJESTIC FIGURE OF THE GODDESS AT ONCE.



SHE LOOKED UP AT ME AND SMILED. SHE WAS THE STRANGEST, MOST EXTRAORDINARY, MOST MARVELOUS AND OUTLANDISH CREATURE I HAVE EVER SET EYES UPON.

DON'T GODS KNOW EVERYTHING?

DON'T BE AFRAID, ODYSSEUS.

YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

HER VOICE WAS MELODIOUS AND SOOTHING AND YET THERE WAS AN EDGE THERE AS HARD AS THE BLADE OF A SCYTHIAN SWORD.







I LOOKED AROUND FOR CASSANDRA. SHE WASN'T IN THE ROOM. THE GODDESS UNDERSTOOD AND SMILED.

I ASKED YOUR BELOVED TO LEAVE US ALONE FOR I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU, ODYSSEUS.



I'VE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOU. THEY SAY THAT YOU ARE CLEVER AND RESOURCEFUL. IN FACT FAR MORE INTELLIGENT THAN ALL THE HUMANS THAT ARE GATHERED HERE.

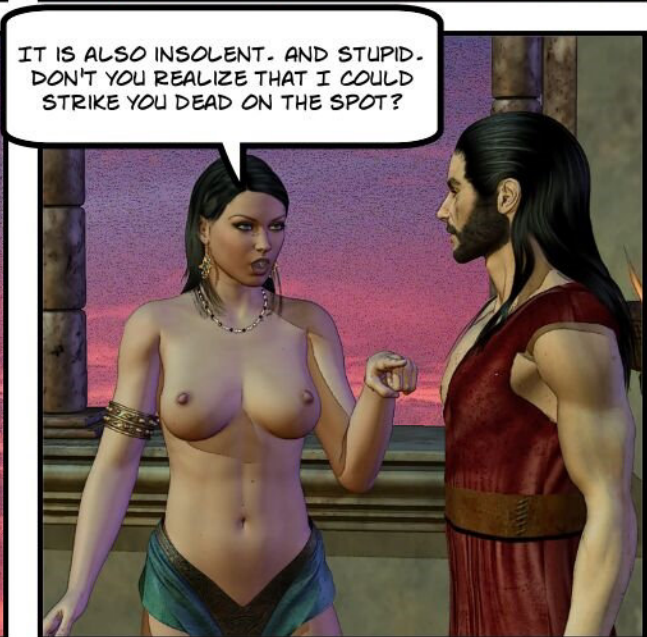


BUT, HOW CLEVER IS IT TO RISK YOUR LIFE EVERY NIGHT FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE, I WONDER.

LOVE IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING, MY GODDESS. BUT I'M CERTAIN THAT YOU KNOW THIS AS WELL AS I DO.

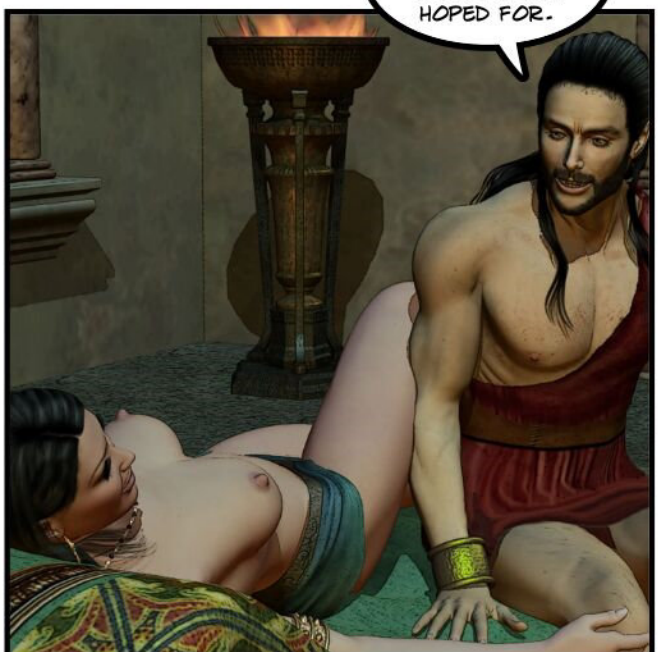
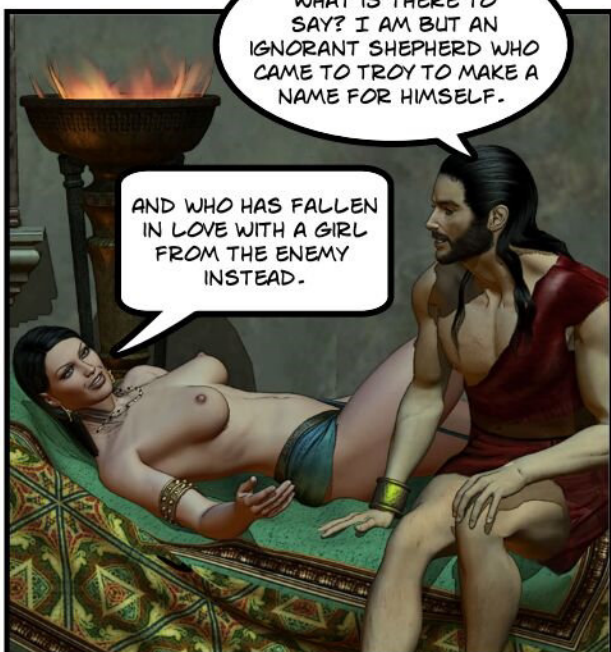
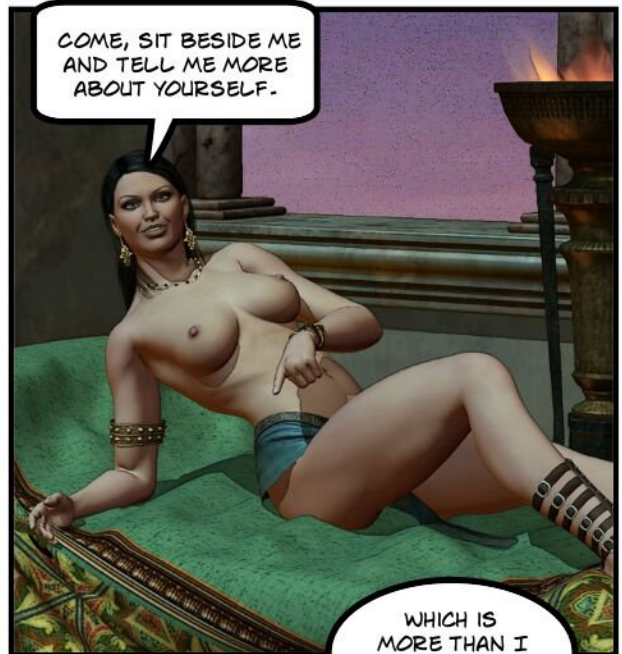
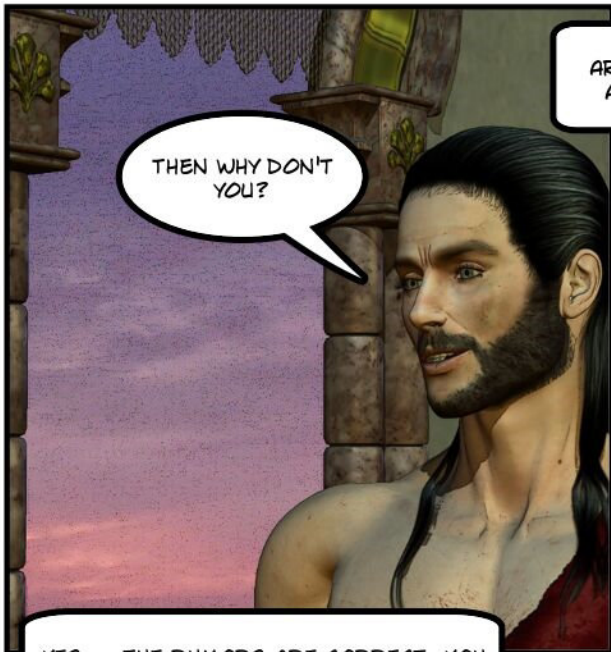


OH, THAT WAS WITTY!.... TOUCHÉE!



IT IS ALSO INSOLENT. AND STUPID. DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT I COULD STRIKE YOU DEAD ON THE SPOT?







AFTER THAT SHE CALLED CASSANDRA TO JOIN US AND WE SAT ALL THREE AND TALKED, LIKE OLD FRIENDS, UNTIL THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING. THIS WAS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH ATHENA, THE IMMORTAL GODDESS OF WISDOM AND WAR.





THEN, ONE EVENING, A FEW WEEKS LATER, CASSANDRA TOLD ME THAT THE GODDESS WANTED TO SEE ME AGAIN.

SHE LOOKED SAD AND RESIGNED.

SHE IS WAITING FOR YOU IN THE SACRED CHAMBER.

BUT...

YES. IT IS THE PLACE WHERE GODS ARE MEETING WITH MORTALS OF THEIR LIKING. AND SOMETIMES THEY ALSO MEET AMONG THEMSELVES, AS YOU VERY WELL KNOW.



WITH MY HEART BEATING WILDLY I ENTERED THE SACRED CHAMBER, AS ATHENA HAD REQUESTED.







YOU ASKED FOR ME, ATHENA?

YES, AND YOU TOOK A LONG TIME TO COME.

I TOLD YOU THAT I LIKED YOU. BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ME.



I WENT TO SIT AT HER SIDE, DAZZLED BY HER DIVINE BEAUTY.

I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF I DIDN'T LIKE YOU, MY GODDESS.



BUT... COULD YOU LOVE ME? THE WAY YOU LOVE CASSANDRA?

BEFORE I MET YOU I WOULD SAY THAT SUCH A THING WOULD BE UNTHINKABLE... NOW, I'M NOT SO CERTAIN.



THEN, YOU BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE CAN LOVE TWO PEOPLE AT THE SAME TIME? THE SAME WAY?

THE SAME AND YET DIFFERENTLY. LOVE HAS MANY FACES AND ASPECTS.



SHE KISSED ME AND I FELT LIKE DYING A MILLION WONDERFUL DEATHS!



IT WAS A MOST WONDROUS, A MOST THRILLING ENCOUNTER AND I WAS AMAZED TO FIND OUT HOW TENDER AND PASSIONATE THIS STRONG WOMAN COULD BE. THIS WAS THE NIGHT THAT CHANGED MY LIFE AND MY VISION OF THE WORLD FOREVER.





THEN THE WINDS OF WAR STARTED TO BLOW HARSHLY IN THE PLAIN OF TROY AS THE EVENTS FOLLOWED EACH OTHER. HECTOR, CASSANDRA'S BROTHER, DIED BY THE HAND OF ACHILLES, WHO DIED IN TURN SHORTLY AFTERWARD; THE TROOPS WERE BECOMING MUTINOUS, TALKING MORE AND MORE OF GOING BACK HOME AND TROY WAS COVERED BY DARK CLOUDS OF MOURNING AND DESPAIR.



MY MEETINGS WITH CASSANDRA WERE BECOMING MORE AND MORE SPARSE AND DANGEROUS. THEN, ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS, AS WE LIED IN BED TOGETHER SHE TOLD ME THAT SOMEONE WANTED TO SEE ME IN SECRET.

IS IT IN RELATION TO THE WAR?

YES. CAN YOU MAKE IT TOMORROW NIGHT? PLEASE, ODYSSEUS. IT IS IMPORTANT. WE MUST PUT AN END TO THIS MADNESS.





I WAS PREPARED TO MEET WITH SOME OFFICIAL WHO WANTED TO PROPOSE SOME KIND OF TREATY, BUT I DID NOT EXPECT THIS ONE TO TURN UP.





I HADN'T SET EYES ON HER FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS NOW, AND THE SHOCK THAT HER INCREDIBLE BEAUTY CAUSED WAS AS STRONG AS WHEN I SAW HER FOR THE FIRST TIME. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL THEN, SHE WAS EVEN MORE SO NOW.



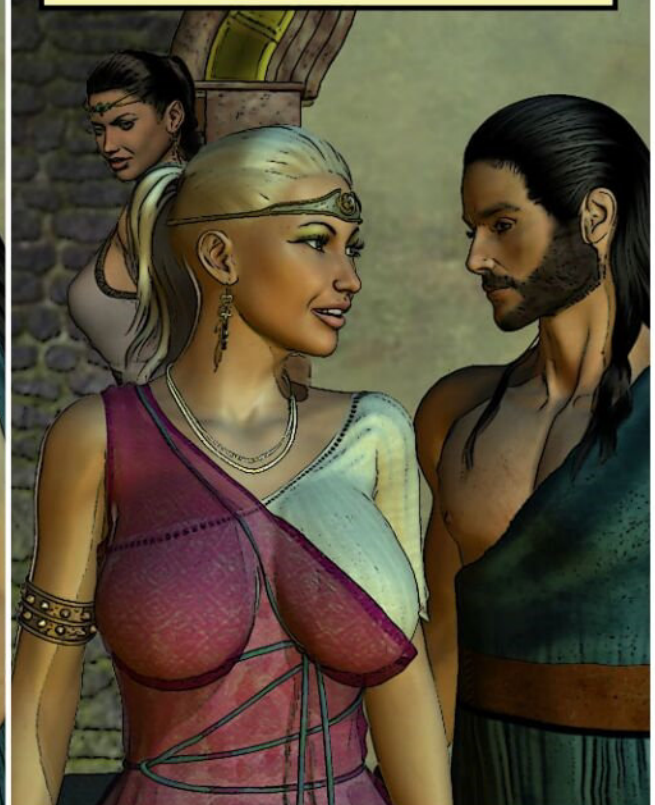
SO GLAD TO  
SEE YOU AGAIN,  
ODYSSEUS.

I TOUCHED HER EXTENDED HAND AND I FELT LIKE MELTING. I MANAGED TO BLURT OUT A PLATITUDE.



YOU LOOK GOOD,  
HELEN.

WITH THE CORNER OF MY EYE I SAW CASSANDRA SLIPPING OUT OF THE ROOM DISCREETLY AND MY EMBARRASSMENT INCREASED.



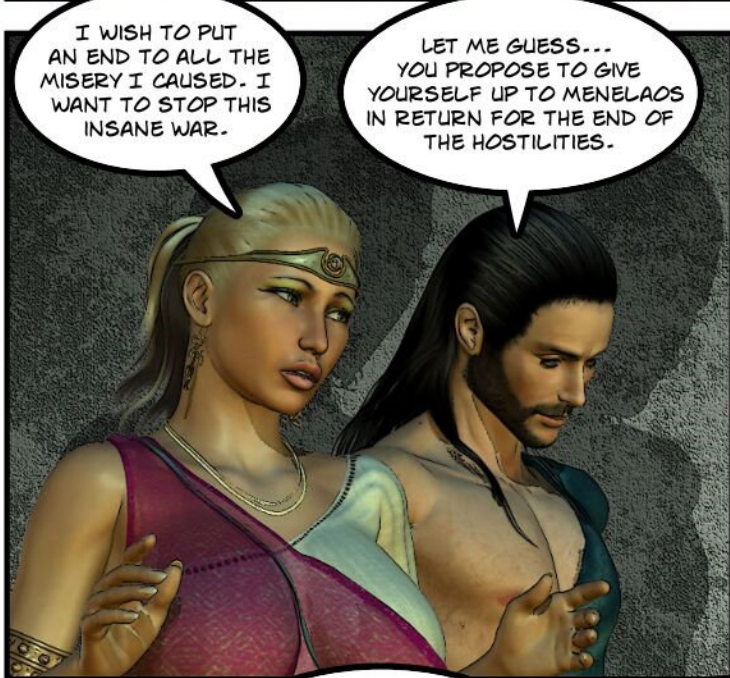




YOU ASKED TO SEE ME. WHY?

BECAUSE I KNOW THAT FROM ALL THE ACHAEANS YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO WOULD LISTEN TO ME.

I'M LISTENING.



I WISH TO PUT AN END TO ALL THE MISERY I CAUSED. I WANT TO STOP THIS INSANE WAR.

LET ME GUESS... YOU PROPOSE TO GIVE YOURSELF UP TO MENELAOS IN RETURN FOR THE END OF THE HOSTILITIES.



YOU ARE MAD AT ME, ODYSSEUS, AND I CAN'T BLAME YOU. BUT, YES, THIS IS WHAT I'M PROPOSING.



WHAT ABOUT THE TROJANS?

THEY'LL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO GET RID OF ME. ESPECIALLY NOW, THAT PARIS ISN'T HERE TO DEFEND ME ANYMORE.



I'LL PUT YOUR REQUEST TO MENELAOS, BUT I DON'T THINK HE WOULD ACCEPT.







AS I EXPECTED, WHEN I PUT THE SITUATION TO MENELAOS, THE STUPID TOAD BLEW HIS TOP.

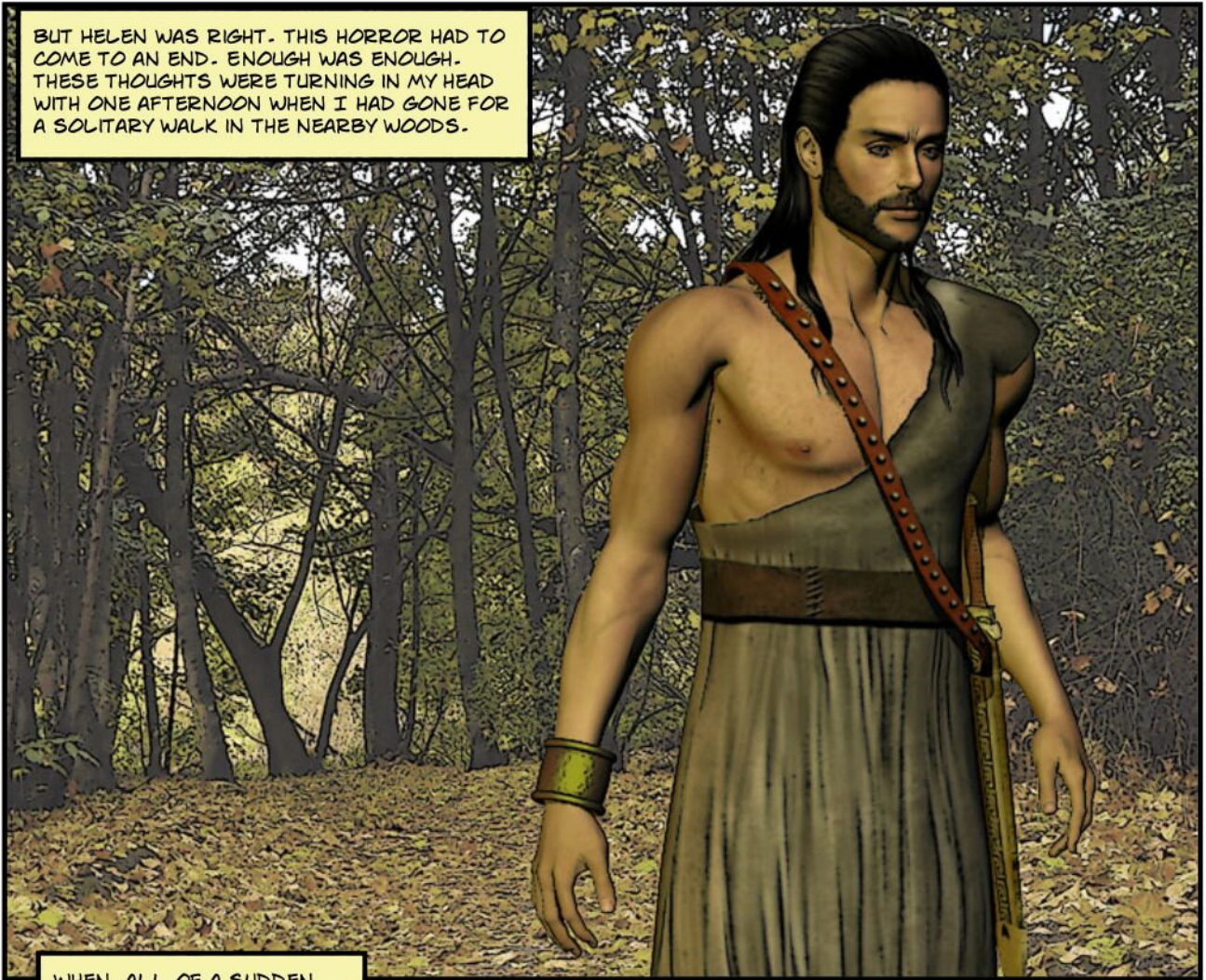
AH, THE LITTLE WHORE  
WANTS TO COME BACK, DOES  
SHE? NEVER! AS LONG AS I  
LIVE... NEVER!

I'LL RAZE THE BLOODY CITY TO  
THE GROUND AND I'LL THROW THE  
HARLOT TO THE TROOPS, TO DO AS THEY  
PLEASE. THEN I'LL CUT HER STUPID HEAD  
WITH MY OWN HANDS AND WILL PLACE IT ON  
TOP OF MY MANTLEPIECE IN SPARTA,  
FOR ALL TO SEE HOW TERRIBLE  
MENELAOS' WRATH CAN BE.

WE WERE GETTING NOWHERE.



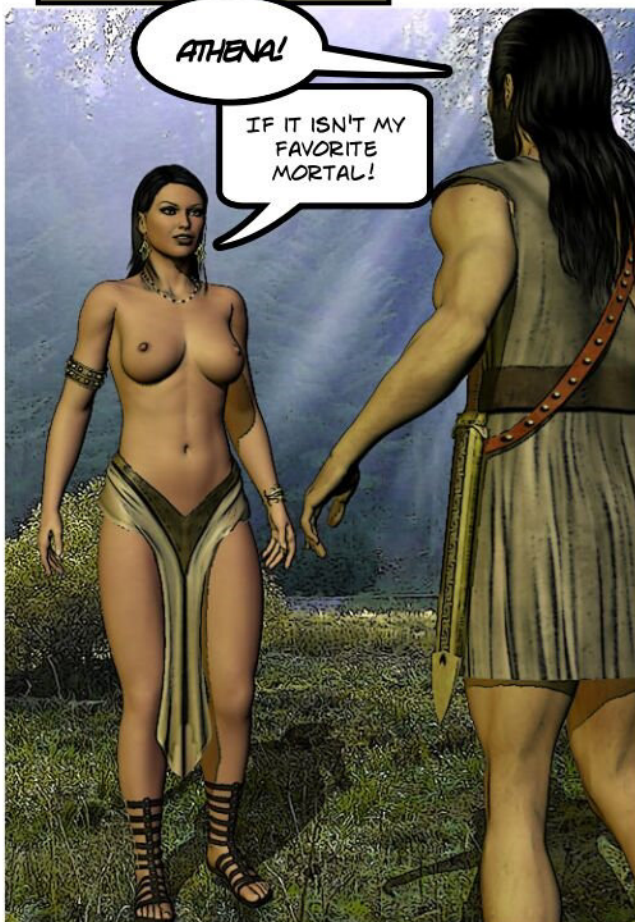
BUT HELEN WAS RIGHT. THIS HORROR HAD TO COME TO AN END. ENOUGH WAS ENOUGH. THESE THOUGHTS WERE TURNING IN MY HEAD WITH ONE AFTERNOON WHEN I HAD GONE FOR A SOLITARY WALK IN THE NEARBY WOODS.



WHEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN...

**ATHENA!**

IF IT ISN'T MY FAVORITE MORTAL!



SHE KISSED ME AND I FELT THE WARMTH COMING BACK TO MY NUMB LIMBS.







SHE THEN TOOK MY HAND AND WE SAT ON THE FRESH GRASS, LIKE TWO YOUNGSTERS IN LOVE, WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD.

I HAVE SOME NEWS FOR YOU, ODYSSEUS. GOOD NEWS I BELIEVE.

I'M LISTENING, MY GODDESS.



THE GREAT WAR IS OVER. AS WE SPEAK, RAMSES AND HATTOUSHILI ARE ABOUT TO SIGN THE PEACE TREATY. THE HOSTILITIES WILL COME TO AN END.



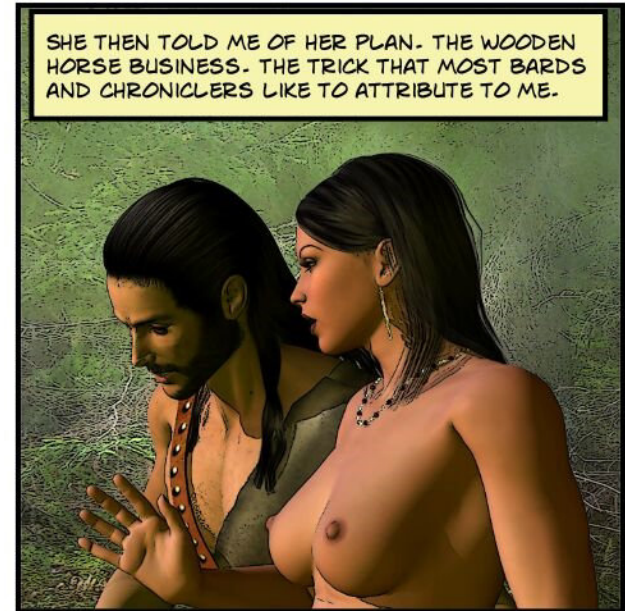
MENELAOS WOULDN'T STOP BEFORE HE SETS TROY ON FIRE AND LOOTS ITS TREASURES.

GREEDY BASTARDS! THIS COULD GO ON AND ON...



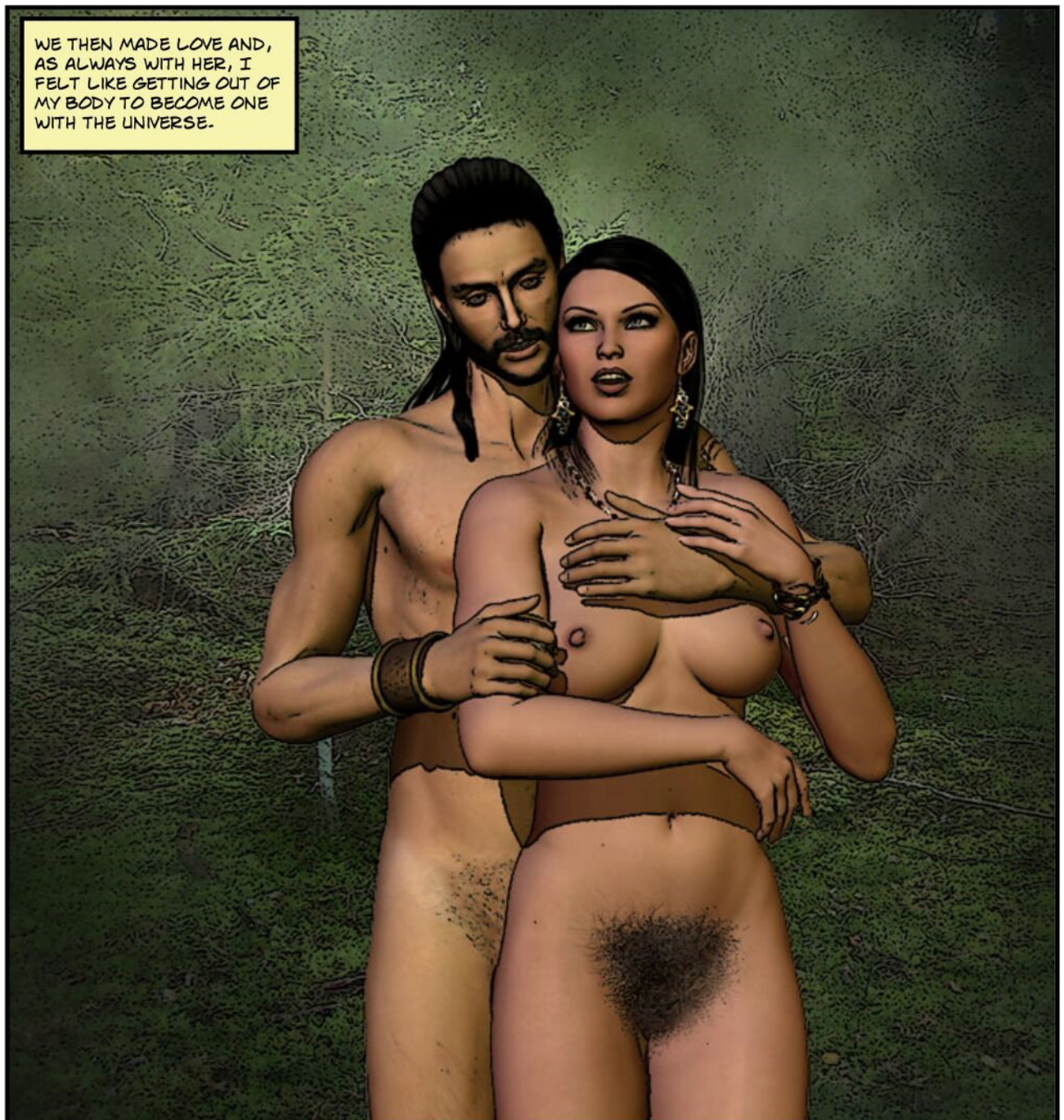
I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU GODS WERE TAKING A FANCY TO THE DISPLAY.

NOT ANYMORE! IT'S BECOMING TOO PERSONAL. THERE IS STRIFE AMONG US AS WELL. THIS MUST STOP.



SHE THEN TOLD ME OF HER PLAN. THE WOODEN HORSE BUSINESS. THE TRICK THAT MOST BARDS AND CHRONICLERS LIKE TO ATTRIBUTE TO ME.







THE REST IS HISTORY. THE HORSE, THE FAKED DEPARTURE OF THE FLEET, THE STUPIDITY OF THE TROJANS TO GET THE WOODEN TRAP INSIDE THEIR CITY, THE SLAUGHTER AND HORRORS COMMITTED IN THIS BLOODIEST OF NIGHTS... IMAGES THAT I'M TRYING TO ERASE FROM MY MIND EVER SINCE -IN VAIN-







WHEN THE FIGHT STARTED I FOUND MYSELF NEAR THE PALACE. MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS TO RUSH TO THE TEMPLE OF ATHENA, TO PROTECT CASSANDRA AND GET HER OUT OF THE CITY TO A SAFE PLACE.



DIOMEDES SHOUTED AT ME...

MENELAOS IS SEEKING HELEN IN THE PALACE. WE MUST STOP HIM.



WE RUSHED IN TOGETHER.



AFTER A FRANTIC SEARCH WE CAME UPON A ROOM AT THE BACK SIDE OF THE BUILDING.



MENELAOS AND HELEN WERE THERE.

DIE, DIRTY SLUT! DIE, HARLOT!



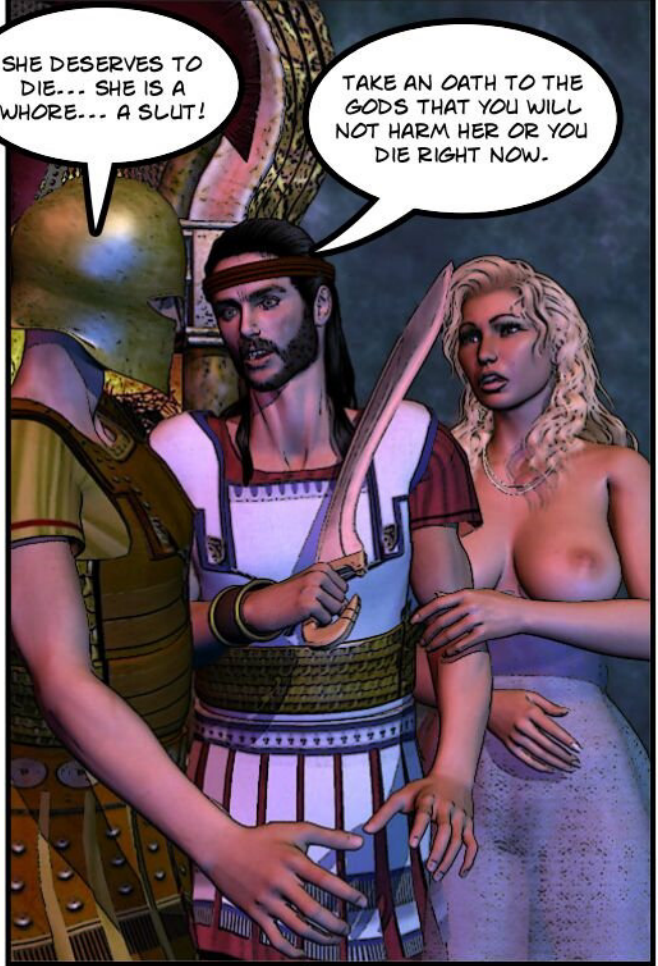
I THREW MYSELF UPON HIM AND KNOCKED HIS BLOODY SWORD OUT OF HIS HAND.



TOUCH ONE HAIR FROM HER HEAD AND I'LL CUT YOU DOWN LIKE A PIG.

SHE DESERVES TO DIE... SHE IS A WHORE... A SLUT!

TAKE AN OATH TO THE GODS THAT YOU WILL NOT HARM HER OR YOU DIE RIGHT NOW.

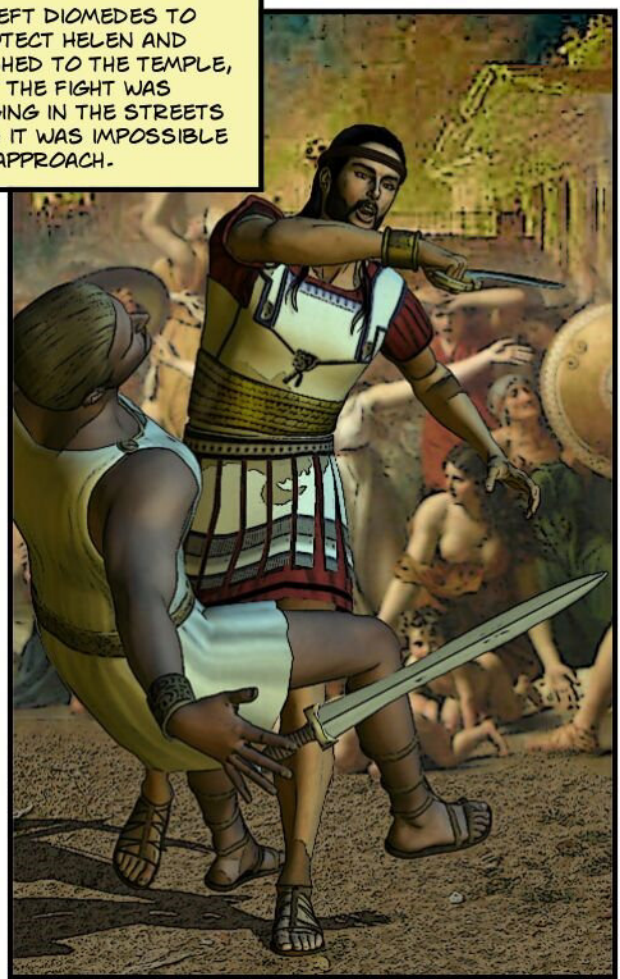


THE POOR SOD BROKE DOWN ALL OF A SUDDEN. HE FELL ON HIS KNEES AND BEGAN TO CRY.



I WON'T HARM HER... I SWEAR! I CAN'T HARM HER... I LOVE HER... I NEVER STOPPED LOVING HER, DAMN YOU!

I LEFT DIOMEDES TO PROTECT HELEN AND RUSHED TO THE TEMPLE, BUT THE FIGHT WAS RAGING IN THE STREETS AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO APPROACH.





I HEARD THE HORRIBLE NEWS WHEN THE SLAUGHTER CAME TO AN END. AJAX OF LOKRIS HAD BROKEN INTO THE TEMPLE AND HAD DEFILED CASSANDRA. EVEN THE MOST HARDENED OF THE ACHAEAN SOLDIERS WERE HORRIFIED BY THIS UNSPEAKABLE ACT. THE CHRONICLERS SAY THAT THE RAPIST DROWNED, AS A PUNISHMENT BY THE GODS, ON HIS RETURN HOME. THE TRUTH IS DIFFERENT.

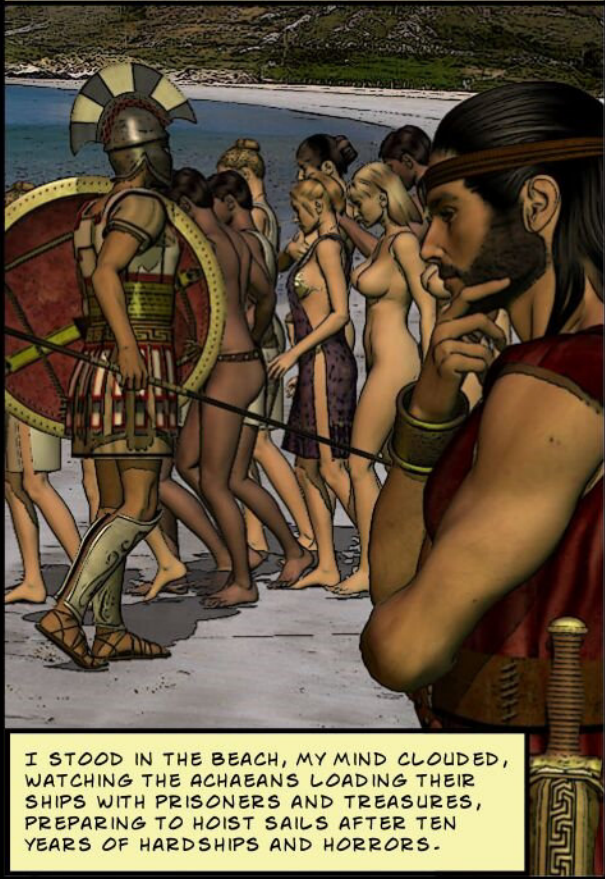


I FOUND HIM...  
HACKED HIM TO PIECES WITH  
MY SWORD AND THREW THE  
BLOODY REMAINS TO THE  
HUNGRY VULTURES.



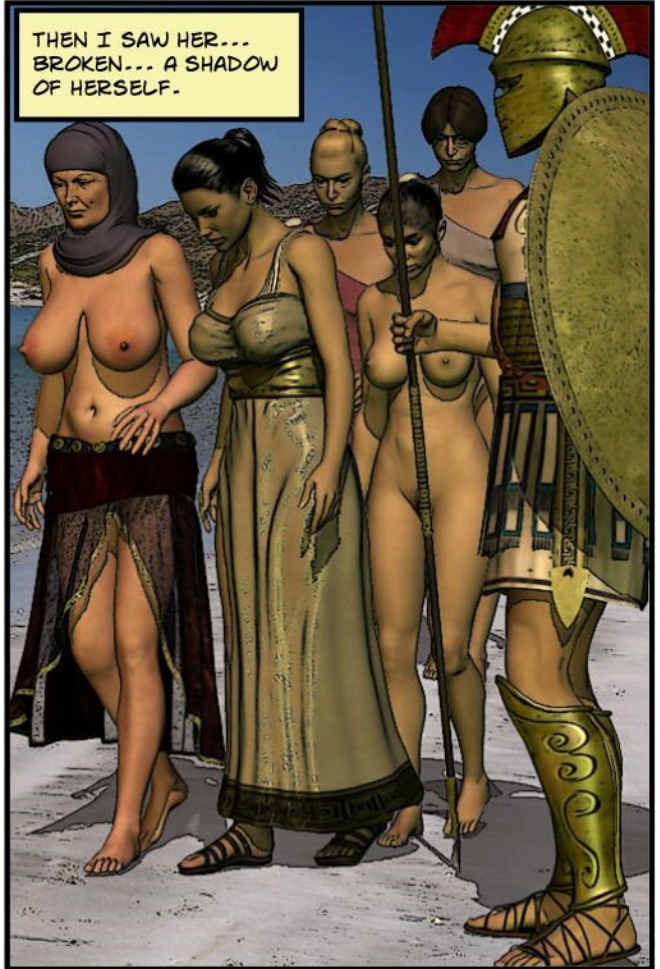


WHEN THE SUN CAME UP AGAIN ALL THAT REMAINED OF TROY WAS A PILE OF SMOKING RUBBLE.



I STOOD IN THE BEACH, MY MIND CLOUDED, WATCHING THE ACHAEANS LOADING THEIR SHIPS WITH PRISONERS AND TREASURES, PREPARING TO HOIST SAILS AFTER TEN YEARS OF HARDSHIPS AND HORRORS.

THEN I SAW HER... BROKEN... A SHADOW OF HERSELF.



I RUSHED TO HER AND TOOK HER IN MY ARMS.

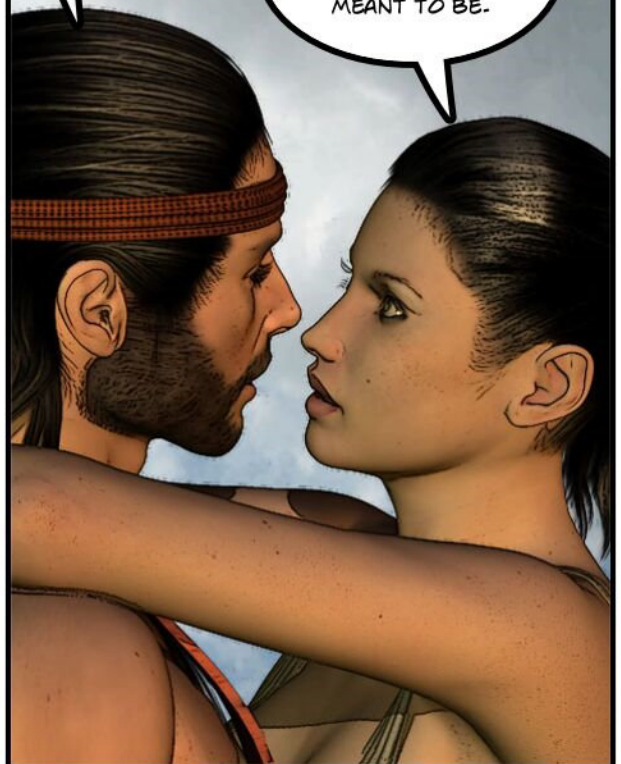
ODYSSEUS!  
THANKS HEAVEN...  
YOU ARE ALIVE!

CASSANDRA!  
MY CASSANDRA!



I FAILED TO  
PROTECT YOU, MY  
LOVE. I FAILED!

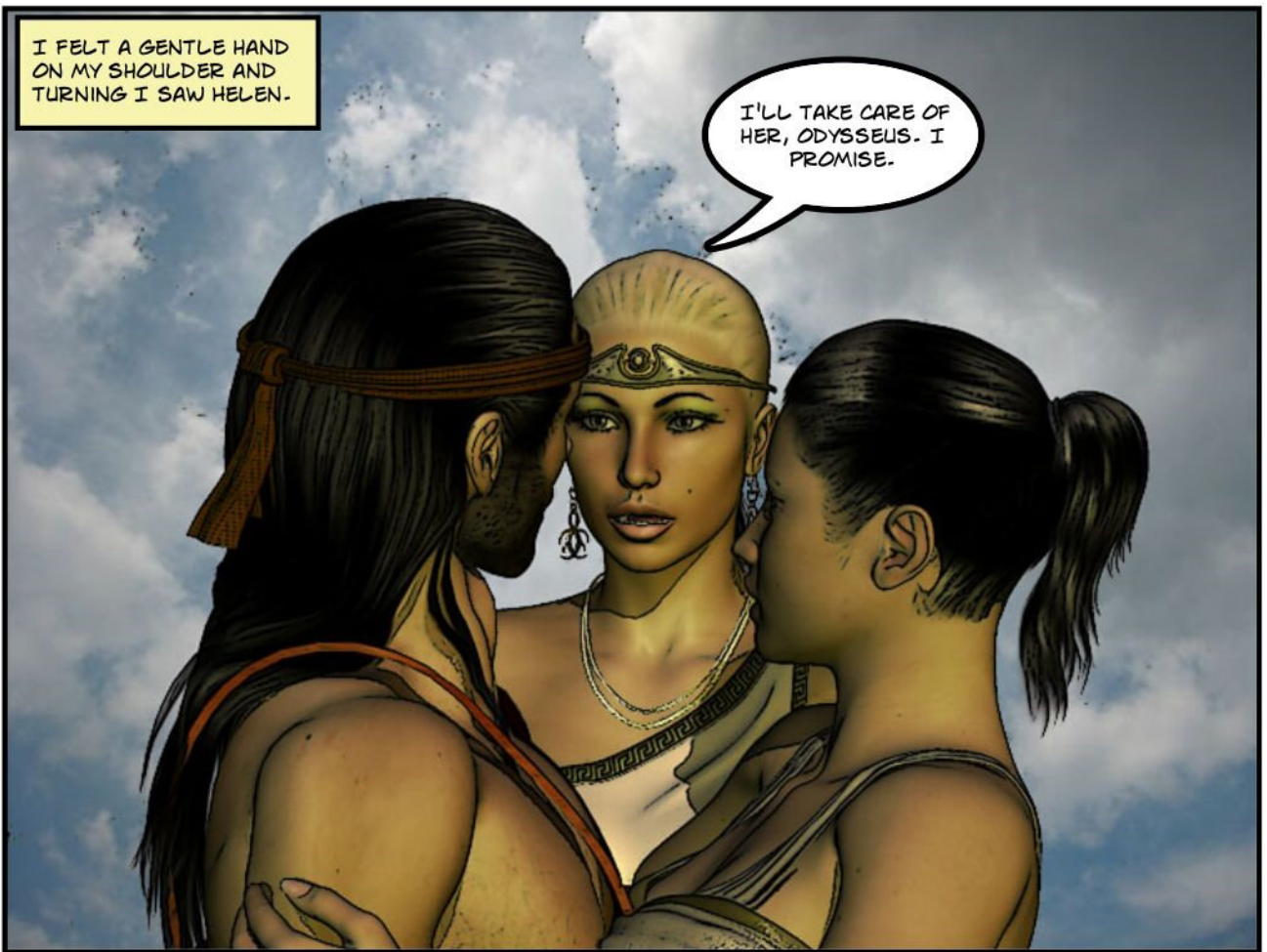
DON'T BLAME  
YOURSELF, ODYSSEUS.  
IT SIMPLY WASN'T  
MEANT TO BE.





I FELT A GENTLE HAND  
ON MY SHOULDER AND  
TURNING I SAW HELEN.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF  
HER, ODYSSEUS. I  
PROMISE.



THIS WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW MY TROJAN LOVE.





WE SAILED AT NOON. AS WE MOVED AWAY FROM THE BLOODY SHORES OF WHAT ONCE HAS BEEN TROY I NOTICED TWO BLACK SHIPS OF THE GODS FLYING LOW ABOVE THE SMOKY RUINS OF THE CITY OF PRIAMOS.



**END OF BOOK 1**



