

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

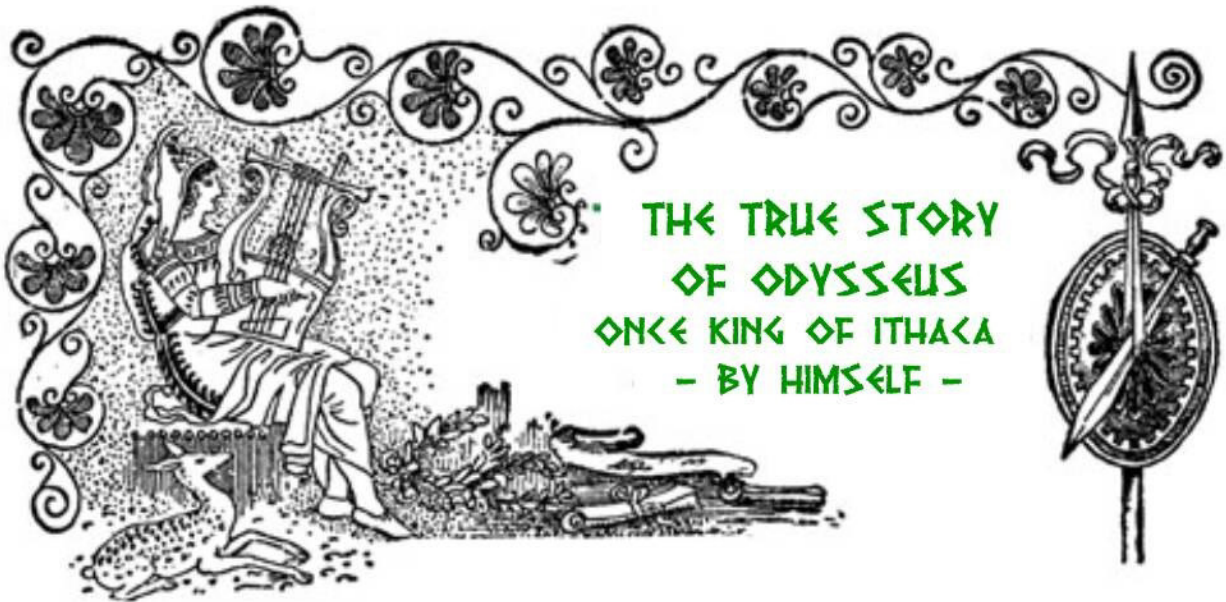
BOOK 13

THE RETURN TO ITHACA



Panko





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

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SCRIPT AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PANKO

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...ΜΕΙΔΗΣΕΝ ΔΕ ΘΕΑ ΓΛΑΥΚΩΠΙΣ ΑΘΗΝΗ,
ΧΕΙΡΙ ΤΕ ΜΙΝ ΚΑΤΕΡΕΞΕ, ΔΕΜΑΣ Δ' ΗΪΚΤΟ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΙ
ΚΑΛΗ ΤΕ ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΑΓΛΑΑ ΕΡΓΑ ΙΔΥΙΗ...

Homer, "The Odyssey", xiii 287-289

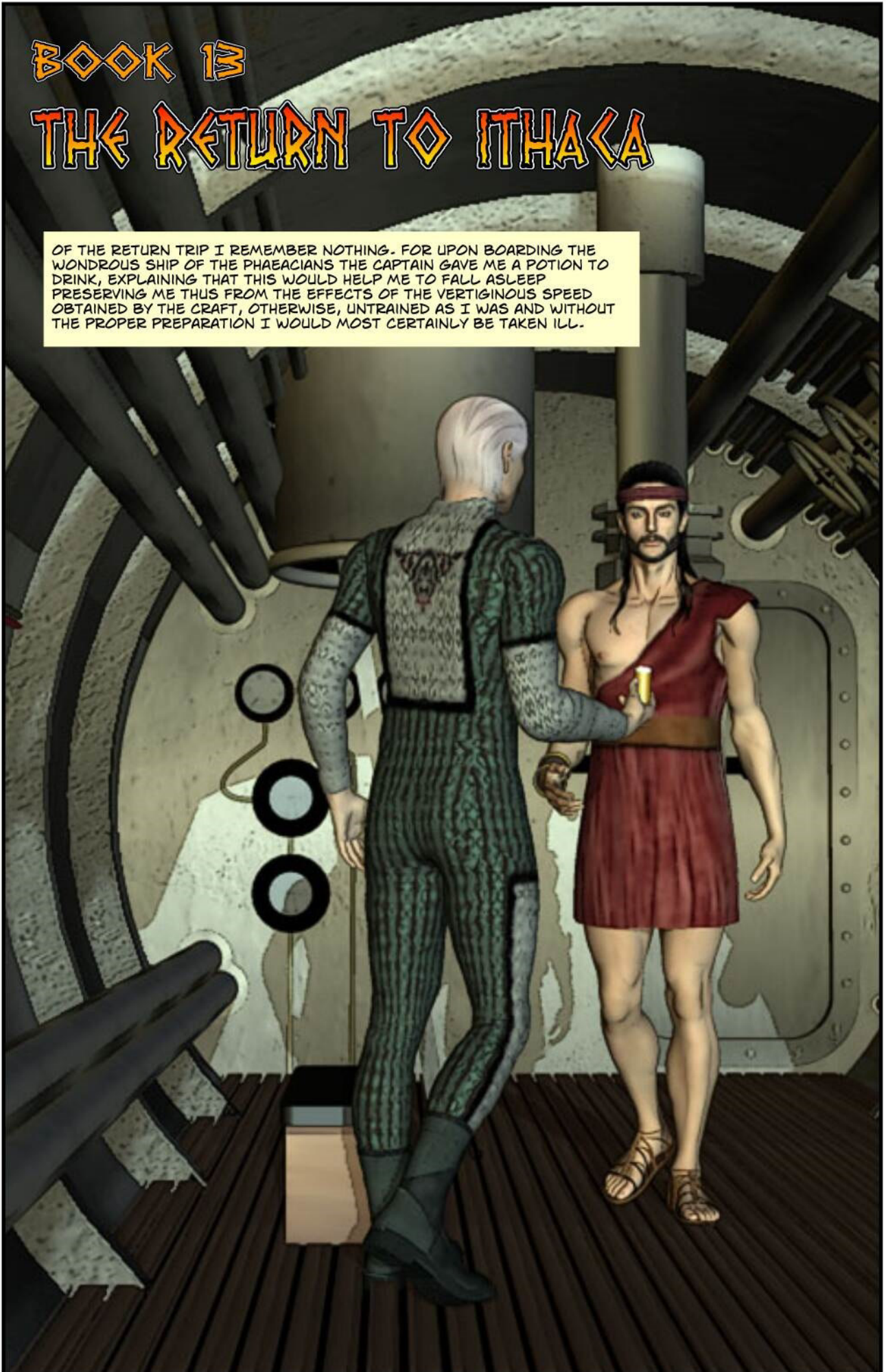
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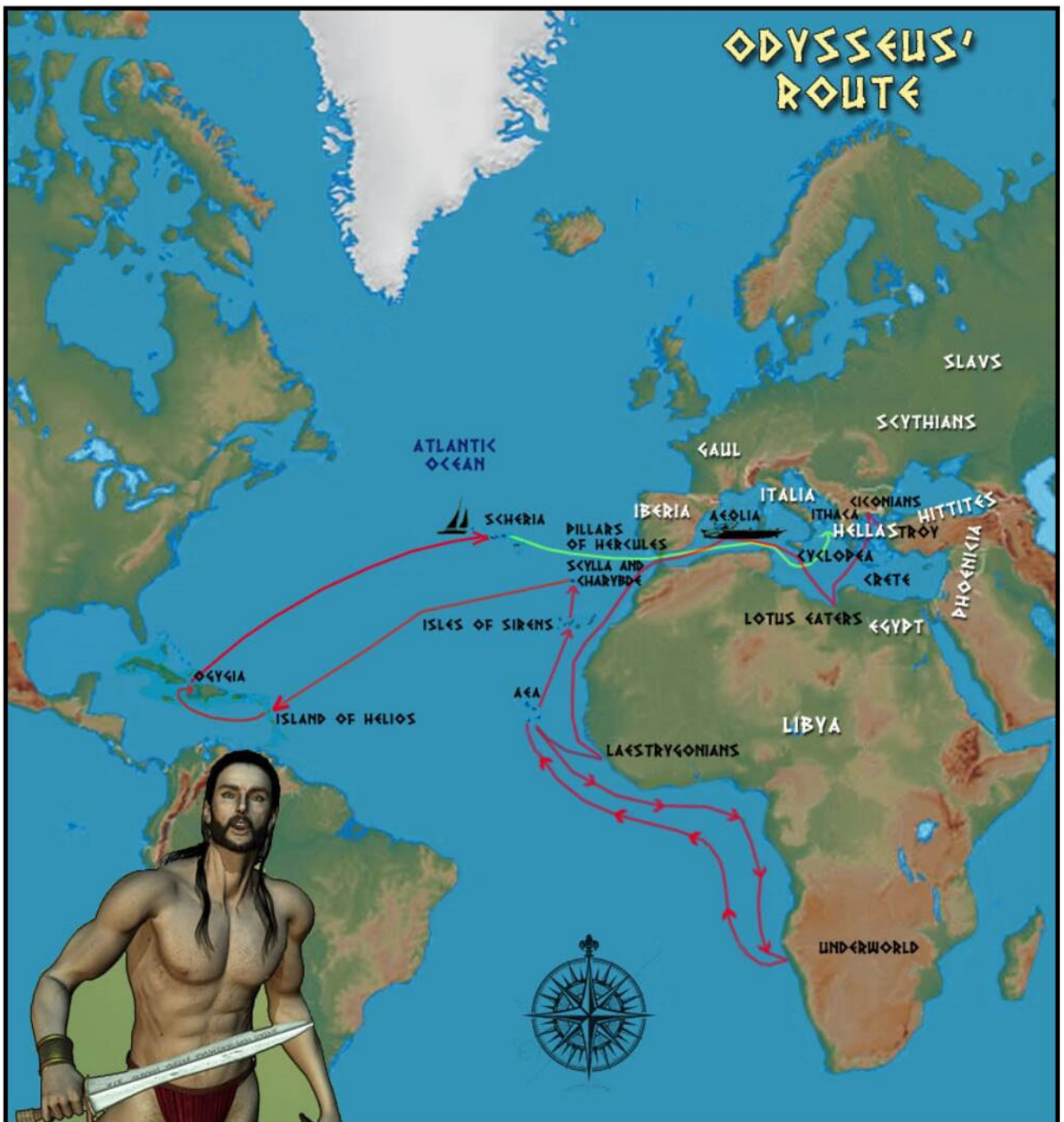
BOOK 13

THE RETURN TO ITHACA

OF THE RETURN TRIP I REMEMBER NOTHING. FOR UPON BOARDING THE WONDROUS SHIP OF THE PHAEACIANS THE CAPTAIN GAVE ME A POTION TO DRINK, EXPLAINING THAT THIS WOULD HELP ME TO FALL ASLEEP PRESERVING ME THUS FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE VERTIGINOUS SPEED OBTAINED BY THE CRAFT, OTHERWISE, UNTRAINED AS I WAS AND WITHOUT THE PROPER PREPARATION I WOULD MOST CERTAINLY BE TAKEN ILL.



AND SO THE STRANGE SHIP OF THE PHAEACIANS RUSHED UPON THE WAVES IN THE DIRECTION OF MY HOMELAND.



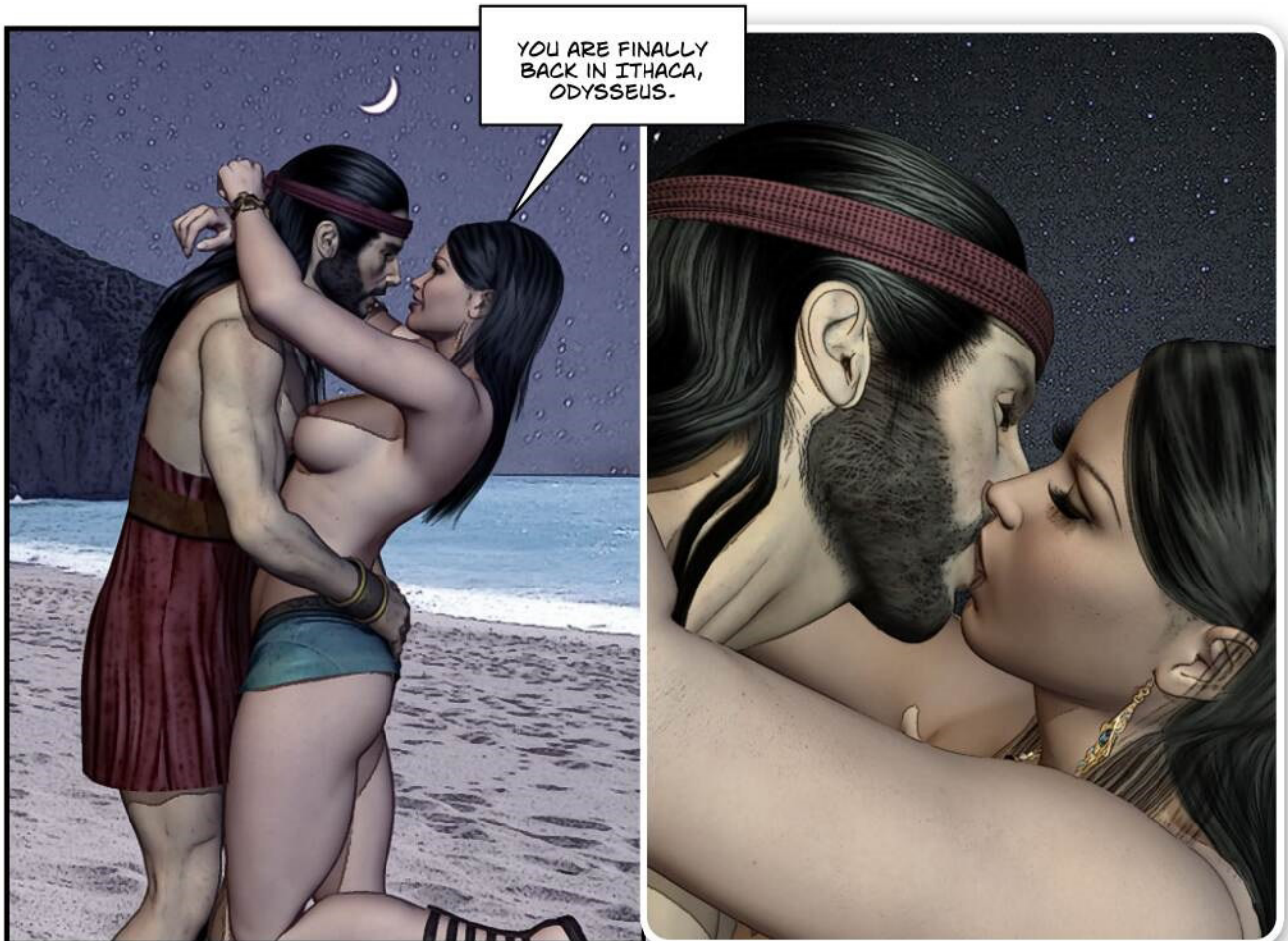


IT REACHED ITHACA THAT SAME EVENING AND THE SAILORS CARRIED ME ASHORE WITHOUT WAKING ME UP, TO THE REMOTE BEACH OF FORKYNAS.



AFTER THAT THEY LEFT IMMEDIATELY FOR THE LONG RETURN TRIP TO SCHERIA.

I WOKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
AND I FOUND THAT I WASN'T ALONE.







AND SO I SPENT MY FIRST NIGHT IN ITHACA ON THE BEACH WITH THE GODDESS I SO DESPERATELY LOVED.



IN THE MORNING ATHENA GAVE ME AN UPDATE ON THE SITUATION. IT WASN'T GOOD.



THE SUITORS ARE GATHERED IN YOUR PALACE UNDER THE PRETEXT OF ASKING FOR YOUR WIFE.



FOR THREE YEARS NOW THEY HAVE BEEN HAVING A GREAT TIME THERE.



AND... PENELOPE?



WHAT CAN SHE DO? SHE FEARS FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR SON.



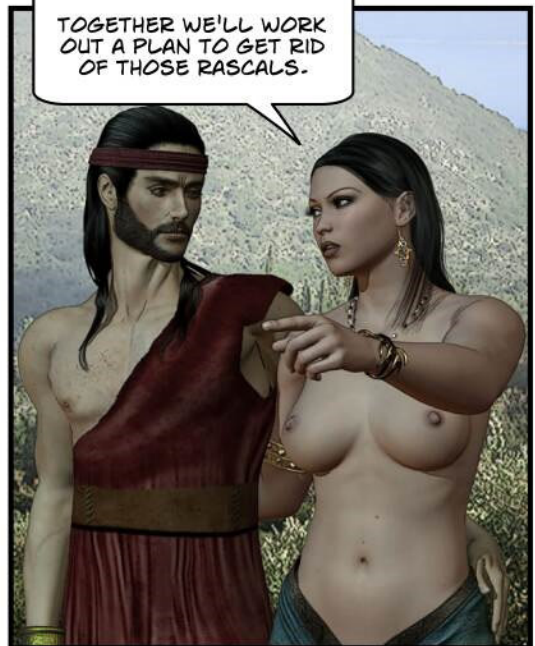


SO, TELEMACHUS IS IN DANGER...

YES, FOR HE IS THE ONLY OBSTACLE STANDING BETWEEN THEM AND YOUR THRONE.



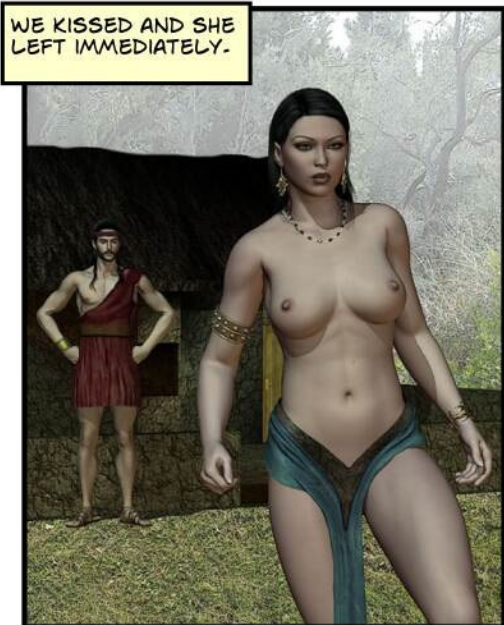
I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU TO THE HUT OF ONE OF YOUR SHEPHERDS, WHERE YOU SHOULD STAY UNTIL I BRING ALONG YOUR SON.



TOGETHER WE'LL WORK OUT A PLAN TO GET RID OF THOSE RASCALS.



WE ARRIVED AT AN ABANDONED SHEPHERD'S HUT.



WE KISSED AND SHE LEFT IMMEDIATELY.

SHE DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO RETURN. AND THIS TIME SHE WAS FOLLOWED BY A HANDSOME YOUTH.



FATHER?...

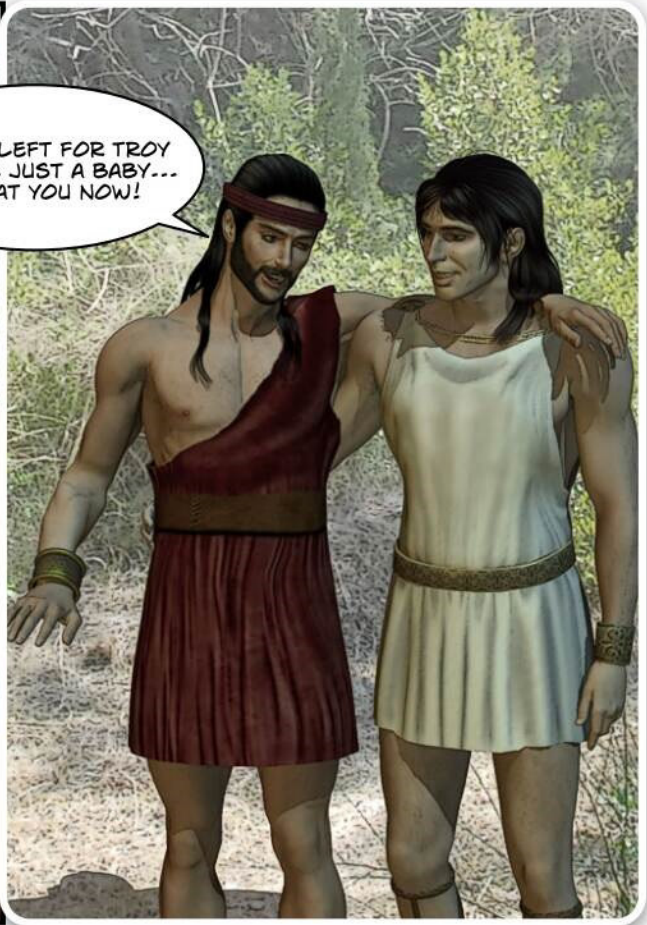
TELEMACHUS,
MY SON!



WE EMBRACED EACH OTHER, DEEPLY MOVED.



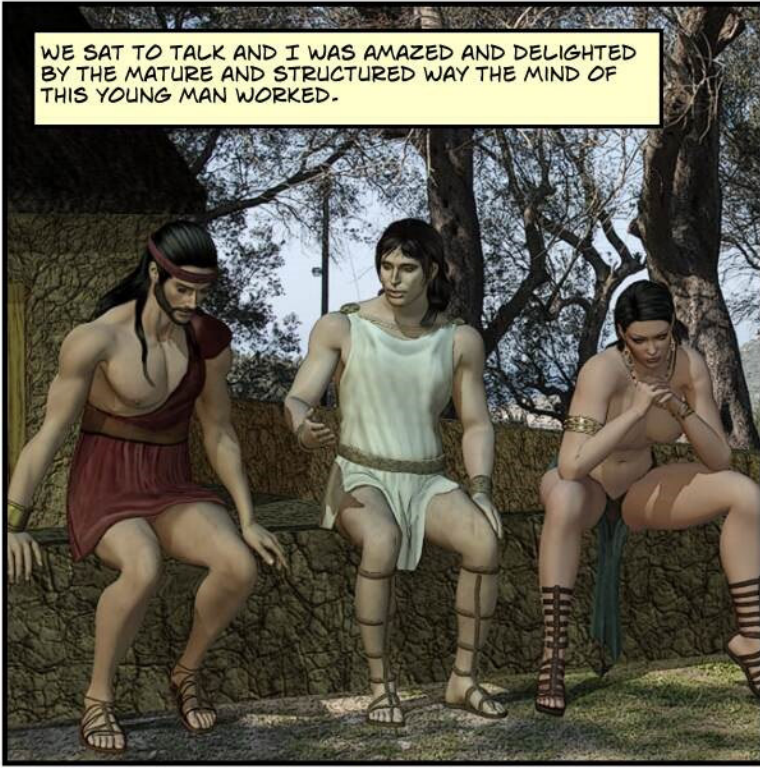
WHEN I LEFT FOR TROY
YOU WERE JUST A BABY...
LOOK AT YOU NOW!



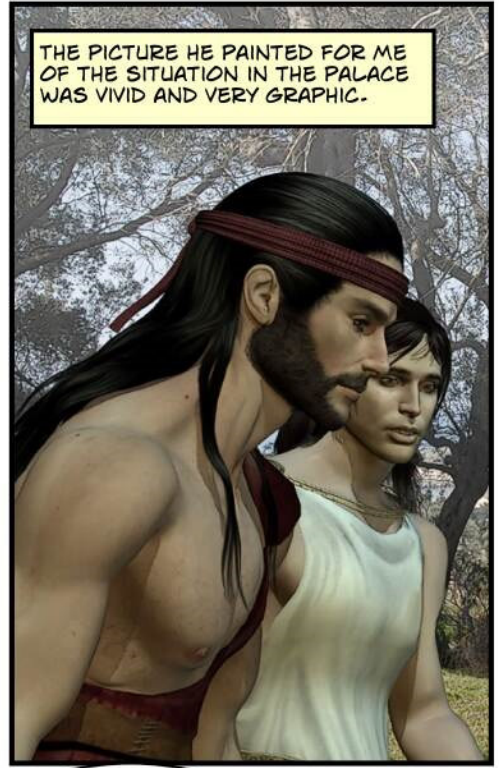
IT'S STRANGE BUT YOU
ARE EXACTLY AS I
IMAGINED YOU!



WE SAT TO TALK AND I WAS AMAZED AND DELIGHTED BY THE MATURE AND STRUCTURED WAY THE MIND OF THIS YOUNG MAN WORKED.



THE PICTURE HE PAINTED FOR ME OF THE SITUATION IN THE PALACE WAS VIVID AND VERY GRAPHIC.



AND YOUR MOTHER?
SHE DID NOTHING TO
PREVENT THIS FROM
HAPPENING?



THERE'S NOT MUCH
SHE COULD HAVE DONE.
AND BESIDES SHE WAS
CONCERNED ABOUT MY
OWN SAFETY.



WELL... IT LOOKS
TO ME THAT WE NEED TO
ACT FAST.



DO YOU HAVE A PLAN,
ODYSSEUS?





AS SOON AS ATHENA LEFT...



TELL ME, FATHER... DO I DETECT A SPECIAL KIND OF A BOND BETWEEN YOU AND THE GODDESS?

YES, THERE IS.



BUT... HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? ATHENA ENJOYS A BLAMELESS REPUTATION.



WOULD THAT REPUTATION BE TARNISHED IF SHE SHOWED UP WITH A RASCAL LIKE ME?

NO, NO... I DON'T MEAN IT THAT WAY...



IT'S ALL RIGHT, MY SON. I PROBABLY DESERVE THAT.



HOWEVER, I MUST TELL YOU THAT THOSE WE CALL "GODS" ARE NOT EXACTLY WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



THEY ARE NOT SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES. THEY ARE PEOPLE, LIKE US.

SIMILAR, BUT ALSO DIFFERENT. AND MUCH... MUCH MORE ADVANCED THAN US IN ALL DOMAINS.



DOESN'T THIS SOUND LIKE... BLASPHEMY?

HARDLY. MAYBE ONE DAY YOU'LL FIND OUT BY YOURSELF.



YOU SEEM TO BE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THEM, FATHER.

OH, YES. I HAVE THAT DUBIOUS PRIVILEGE.



ATHENA RETURNED.

AND NOW LET'S GIVE OUR HERO A NEW FACE.



A LITTLE WHILE LATER
MY TRANSFORMATION
WAS COMPLETED.



AND NOW, LET'S
GET ON WITH THE
SHOW!



THE TWO OF US
AGAINST THE WHOLE
WORLD, FATHER?



DON'T FORGET THE
"DIVINE INTERVENTION".



THE SCENE WHICH UNFOLDED BEFORE MY STUNNED EYES AS I ENTERED THE PALACE WAS SHOCKING.







HEY, TELEMACHUS... WHO IS THE BEGGAR? A FRIEND OF YOURS?



AN HONOURED GUEST, ANTINOOS. HE KNEW MY FATHER.



ANCIENT HISTORY. YOUR FATHER IS DEAD.

...AND BURIED! HAHAHahaha



ODYSSEUS IS VERY MUCH ALIVE, YOU RASCALS.



SOON HE SHALL RETURN.



YEAH, RIGHT... HIS GHOST MAYBE...

WE FOUND A QUIET PLACE IN THE PALACE AND SET ABOUT MAKING OUR PLANS.

YOU'LL MAKE SURE TO HIDE THEIR WEAPONS.

FROM WHAT YOU TOLD ME, TELEMACHUS, TOMORROW EVENING THERE'LL BE A BANQUET IN WHICH YOUR MOTHER WILL CHOOSE ONE OF THEM AS A HUSBAND.

BUT THERE ARE STILL A HUNDRED OF THEM! EVEN IF THEY ARE DRUNK AND UNARMED THE ODDS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST US.

WHILE YOU HIDE OUR OWN IN THE LARGE ROOM.

YOU FORGET THAT YOU ALSO HAVE ME ON YOUR SIDE, BOY.

IN THE EVENING PENELOPE CAME TO JOIN THE SUITORS AT DINNER.



SHE HADN'T CHANGED MUCH! SHE WAS HELEN'S COUSIN AFTER ALL --EXCELLENT GENES THAT FAMILY!



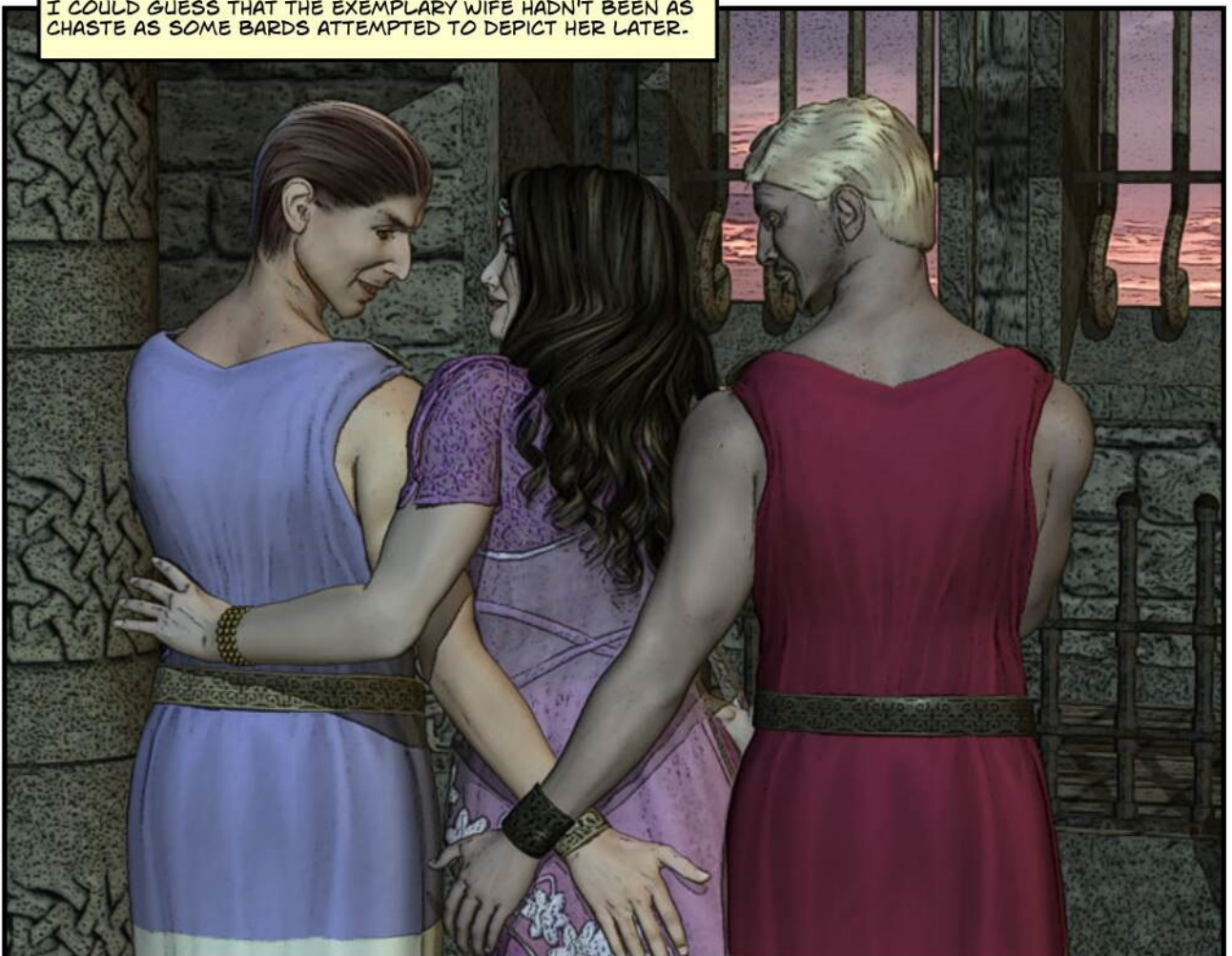
I WASN'T SURPRISED TO FEEL NOTHING AT SEEING HER AGAIN AFTER SUCH A LONG TIME --EXCEPT FOR SOME CONTEMPT PERHAPS.



BY THE WAY SOME OF THE SUITORS BEHAVED...



I COULD GUESS THAT THE EXEMPLARY WIFE HADN'T BEEN AS CHASTE AS SOME BARDS ATTEMPTED TO DEPICT HER LATER.





AT SOME POINT SHE NOTICED MY PRESENCE.

WHO'S THIS BEGGAR?

OH, JUST A CRACKPOT CLAIMING TO HAVE KNOWN YOUR LATE HUSBAND.



HEY, YOU! COME HERE.



IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE SEEN MY HUSBAND?



YES, MY LADY. HE WILL SOON BE HERE.

IN ANOTHER TEN YEARS PERHAPS?



I THINK NOT, MY LADY.





THAT NIGHT ATHENA STAYED WITH ME.

NOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU EXPECTED TO FIND WHEN YOU RETURNED HOME, ODYSSEUS?

PERHAPS NOT... BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER...



TELEMACHUS IS THE ONE I'M CONCERNED ABOUT. THE BOY HAS BEEN THROUGH MUCH.

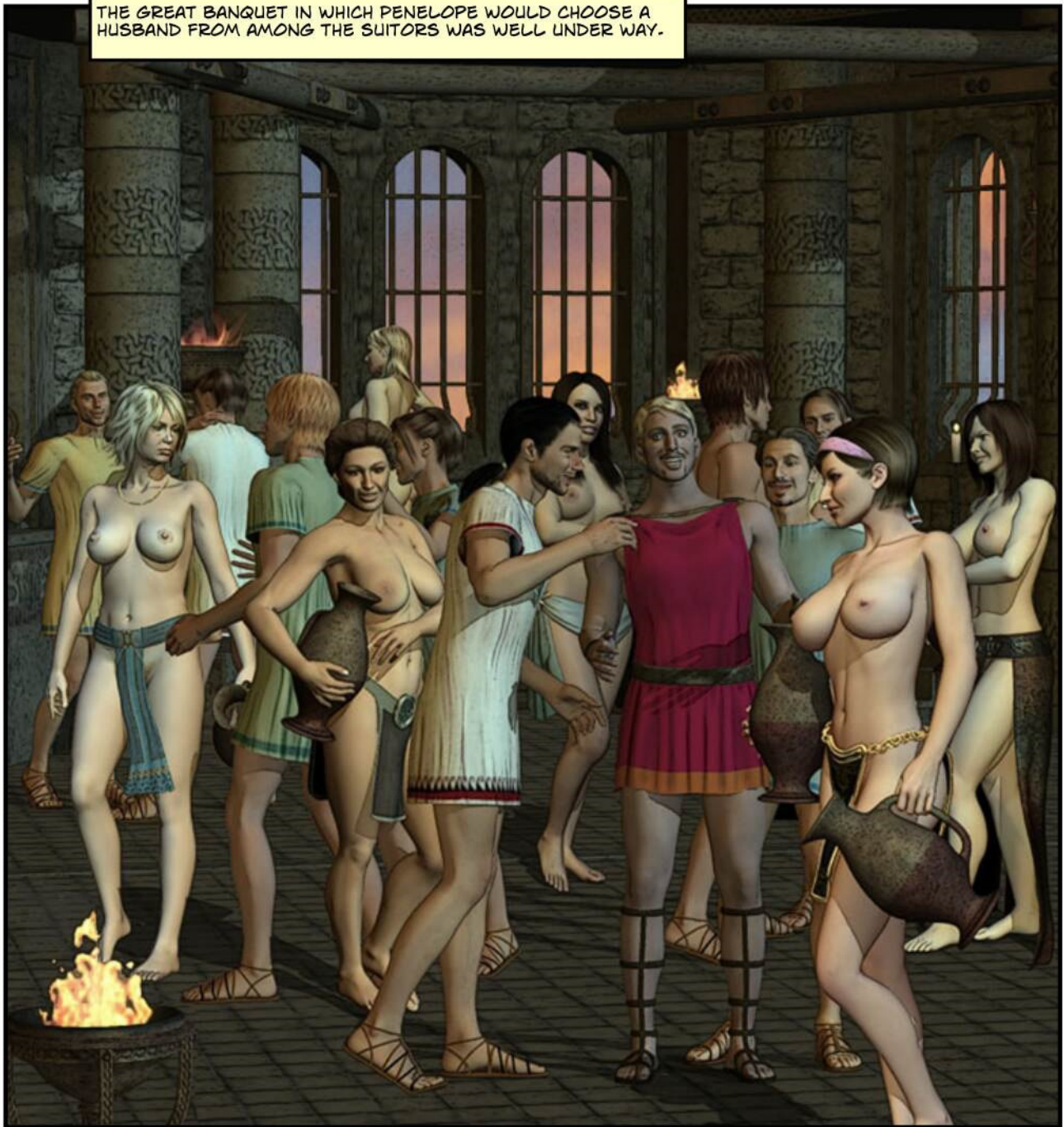
EVERYTHING WILL BE SETTLED BY TOMORROW NIGHT.



AND THEN WHAT, ATHENA?

WELL, AFTER THAT... IT IS UP TO YOU... I THINK...

THE GREAT BANQUET IN WHICH PENELOPE WOULD CHOOSE A HUSBAND FROM AMONG THE SUITORS WAS WELL UNDER WAY.



ALL SET, MY SON?



YES, FATHER. THE WEAPONS ARE UNDER THE BENCH.



NOW, PENELOPE... BEFORE WE GET TOO DRUNK... IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GIVE US YOUR DECISION.

LET'S HAVE A SHOOTING CONTEST. YOU'LL BE USING ODYSSEUS' HUNTING BOW.



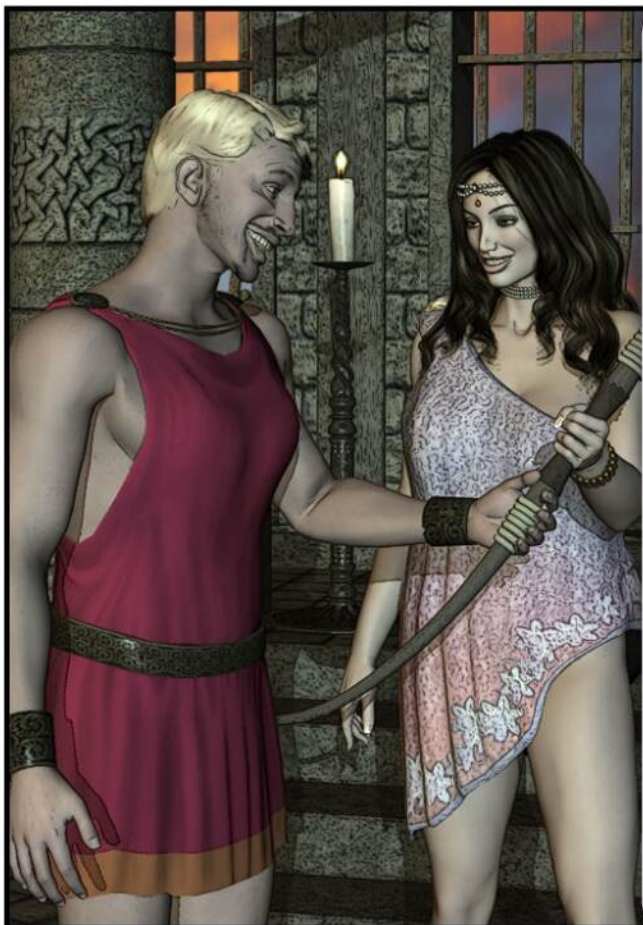
VERY WELL THEN...



LET'S HAVE A SHOOTING CONTEST. YOU'LL BE USING ODYSSEUS' HUNTING BOW.



THE ONE WHO MANAGES TO CUT THE WICK OF THE CANDLE WITH JUST ONE SHOT SHALL BE MY CHOSEN ONE.





YOU ARE TOO DRUNK, ANTINOOS. HAND IT OVER...



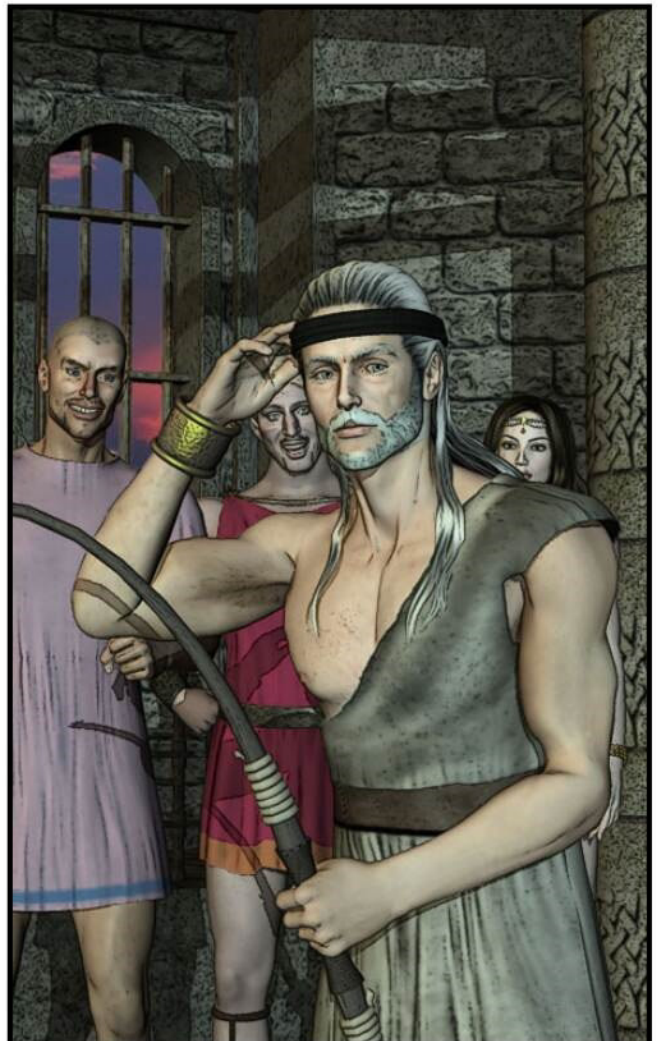
BLAST! YOU ARE RIGHT! THIS BLOODY THING WON'T BEND!



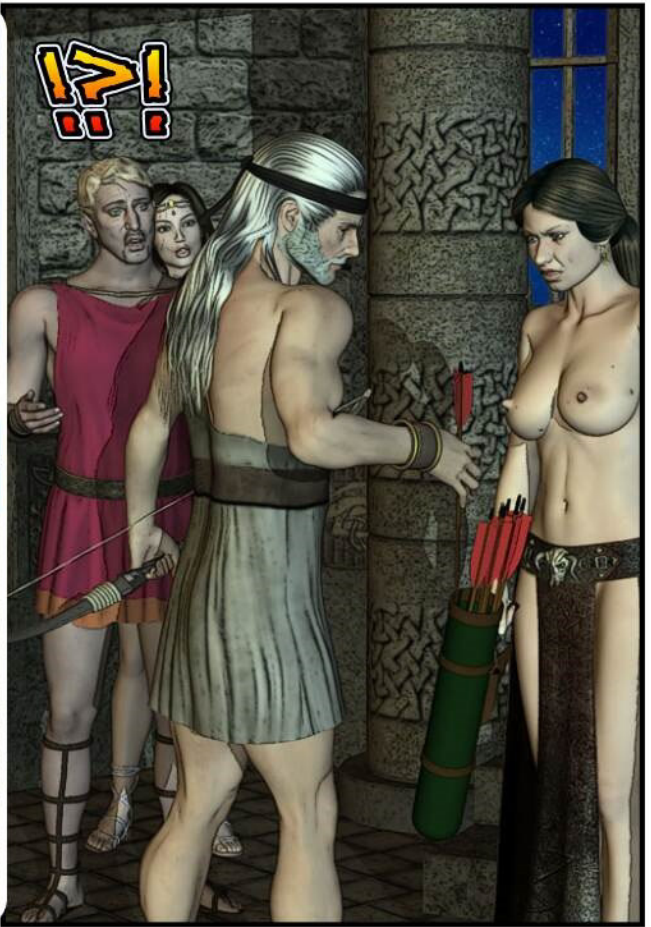
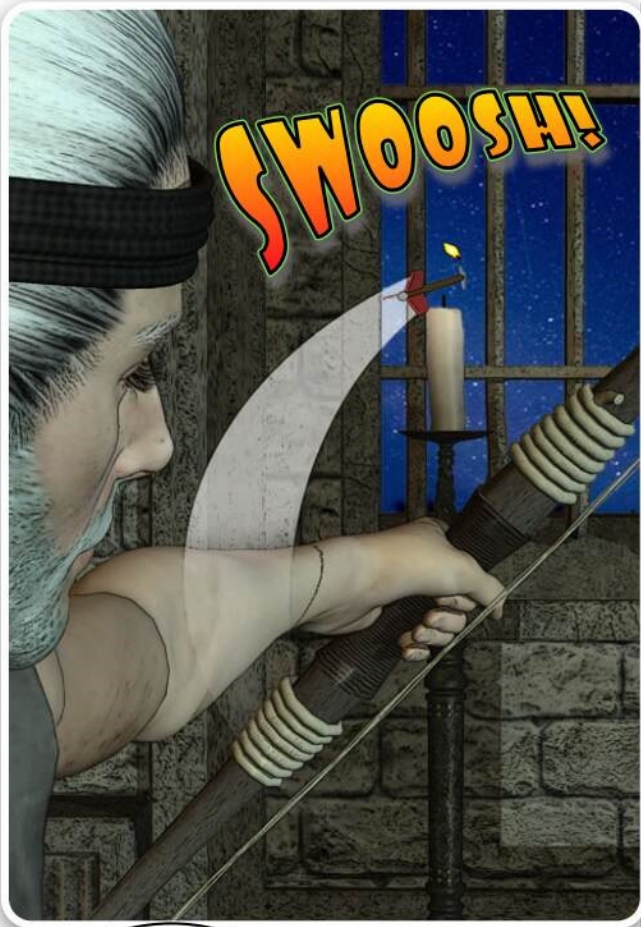
THE SUITORS TRIED THEIR HAND ONE BY ONE BUT NO ONE COULD BEND THE LONG BOW.

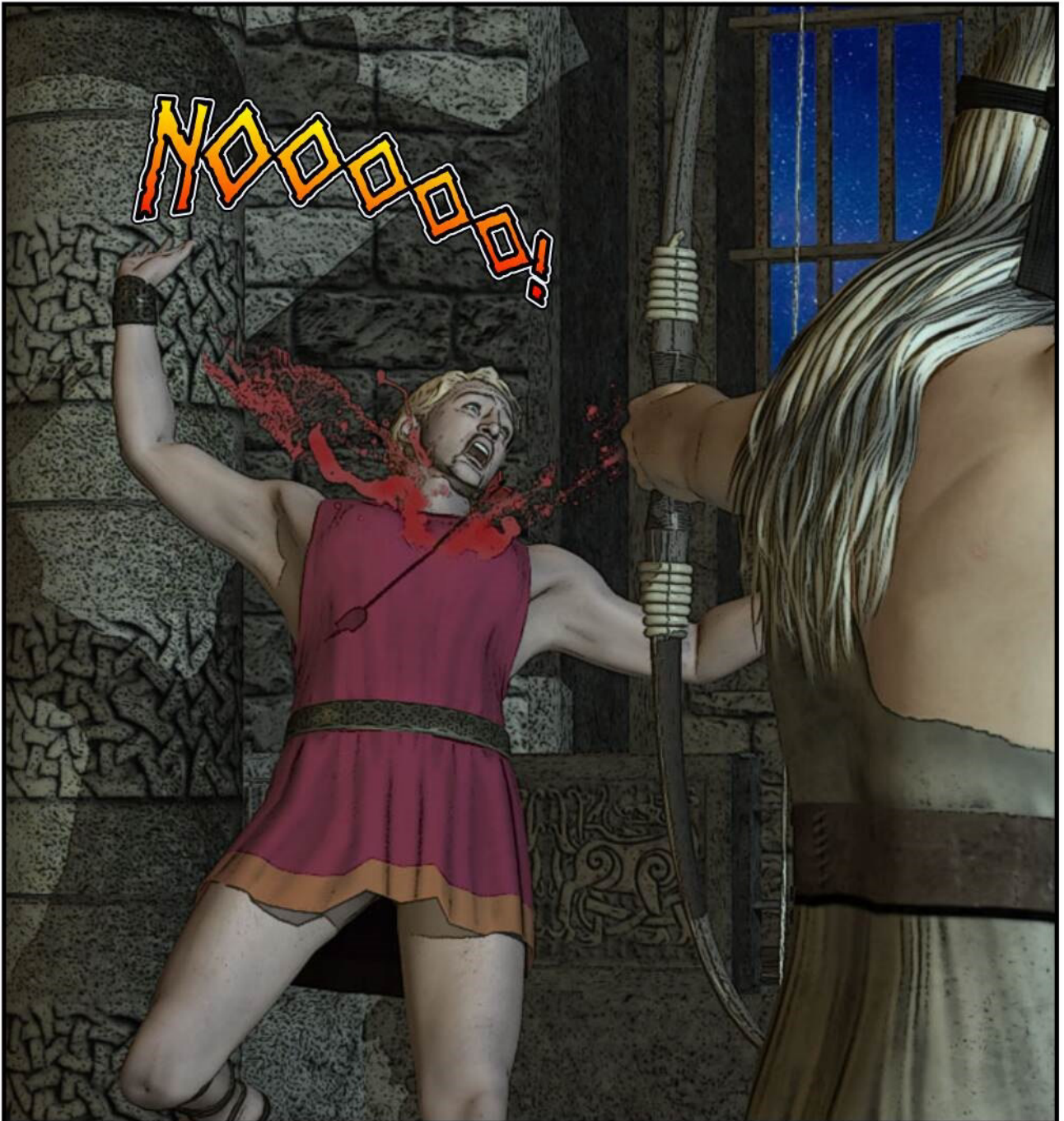


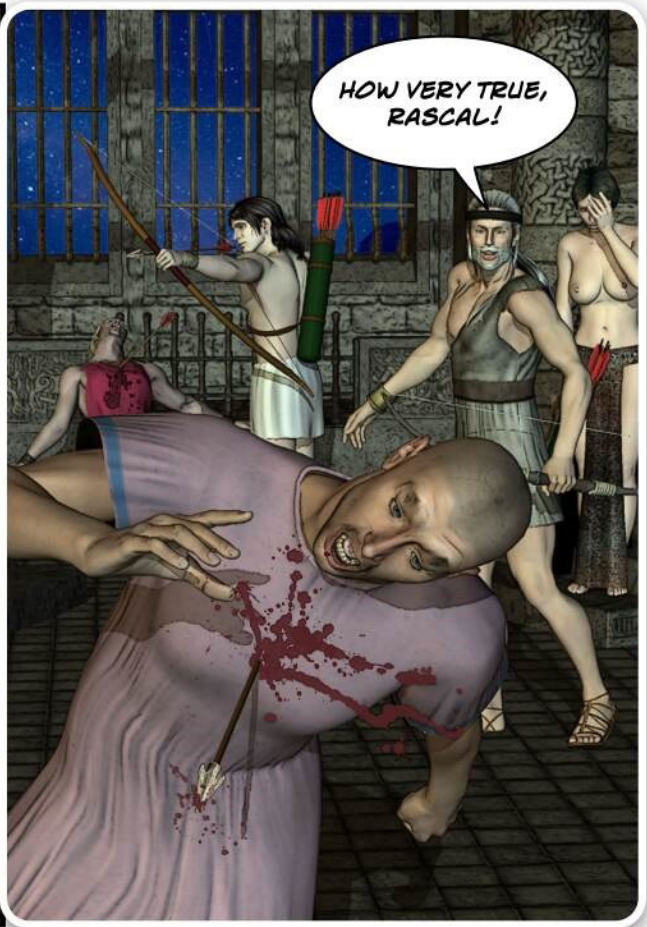
DAMN!



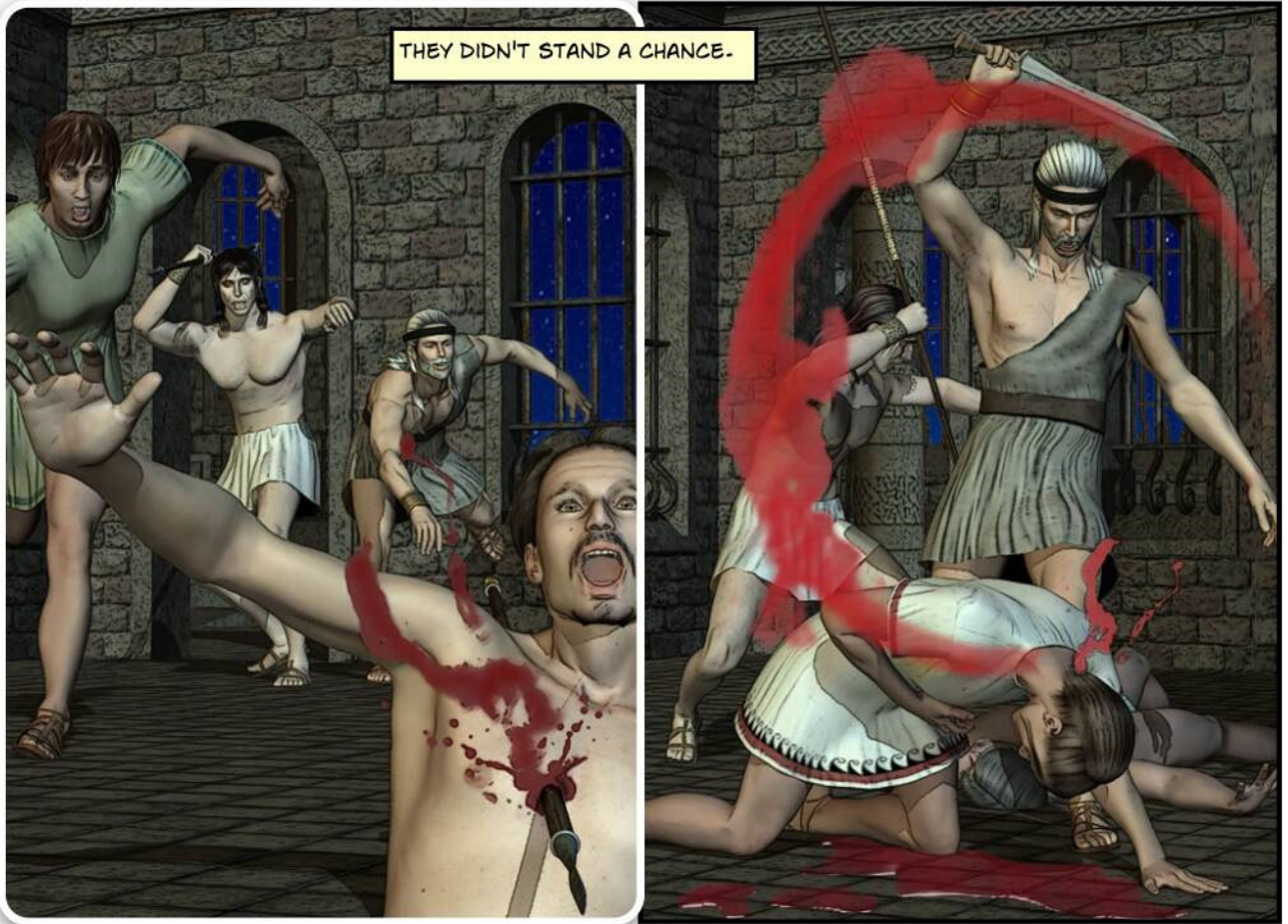








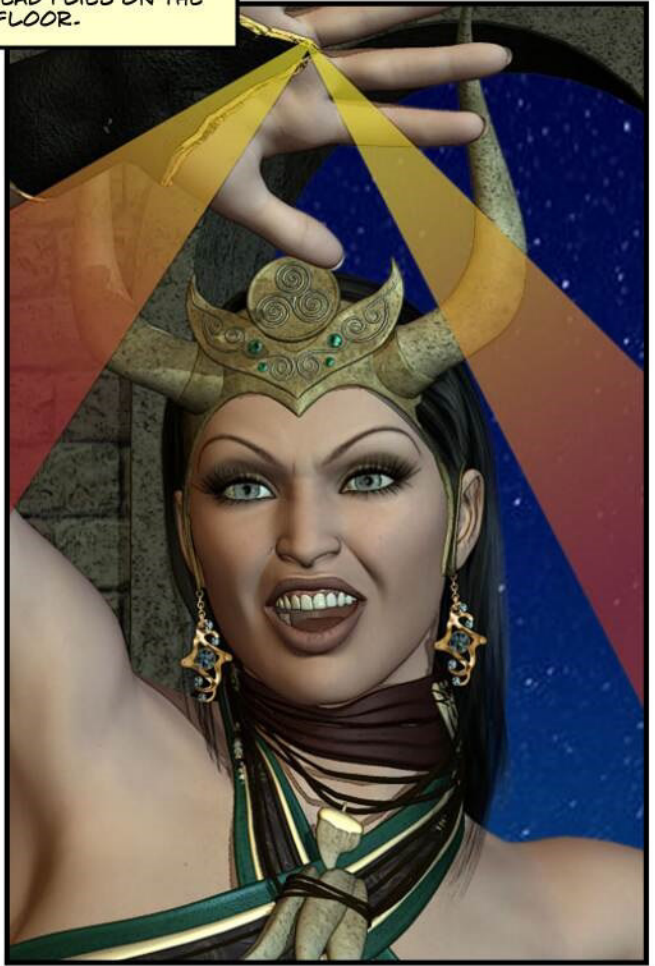
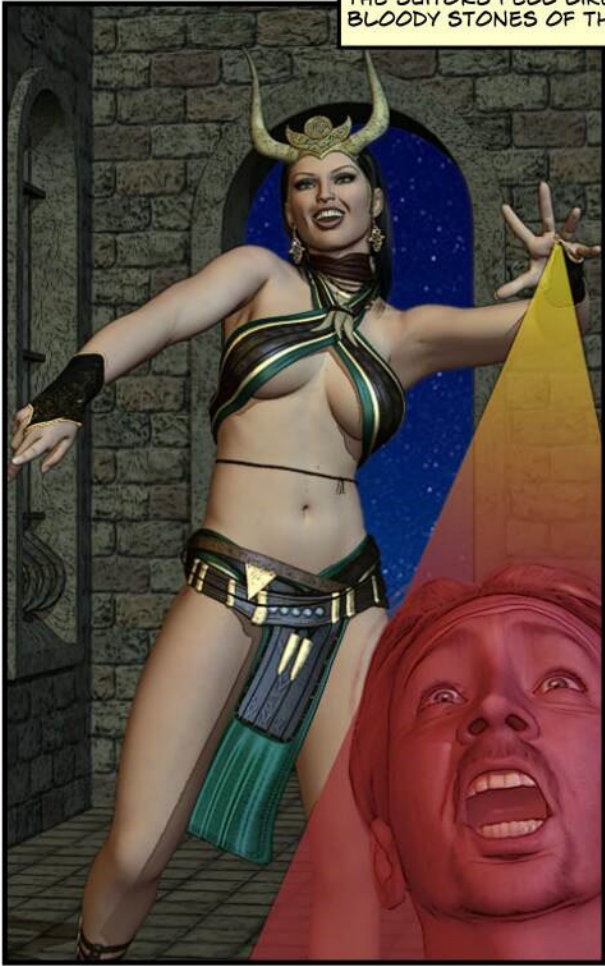
THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE.



WHEN ATHENA REVEALED HERSELF
THEIR TERROR HIT THE CEILING!



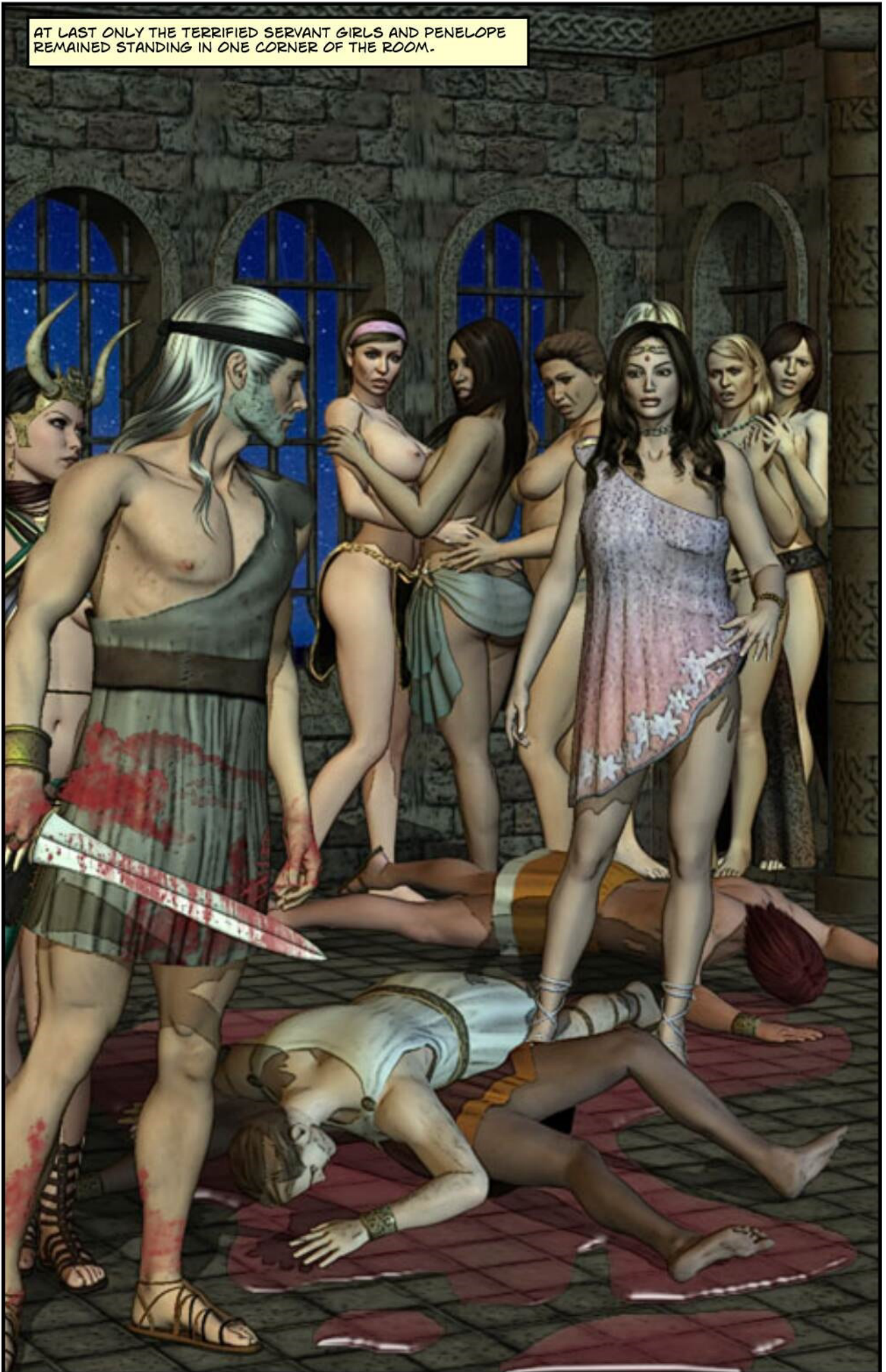
THE SUITORS FELL LIKE DEAD FLIES ON THE BLOODY STONES OF THE FLOOR.



THERE WAS DEATH EVERYWHERE.



AT LAST ONLY THE TERRIFIED SERVANT GIRLS AND PENELOPE REMAINED STANDING IN ONE CORNER OF THE ROOM.





IF YOU WANT TO CUT ME DOWN TOO, DON'T HESITATE.



DON'T TEMPT ME, WOMAN.



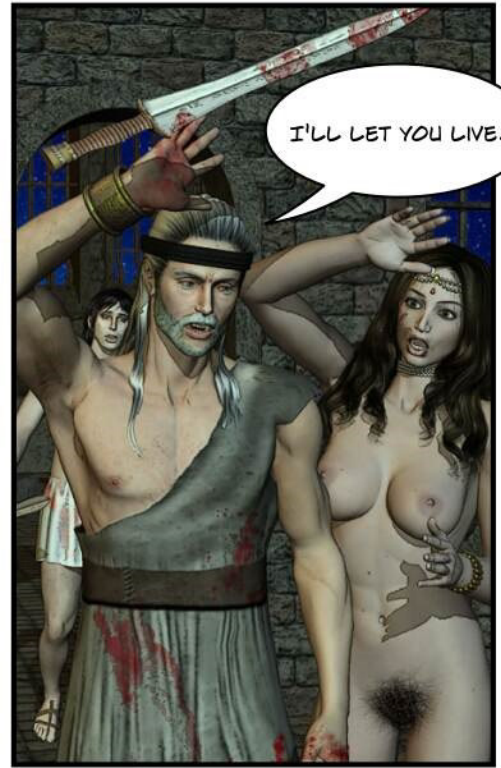
PROVE ME RIGHT THEN.



BE WHAT I ALWAYS BELIEVED YOU WERE. A BARBARIC, IGNORANT, SELFISH SON OF A BITCH.



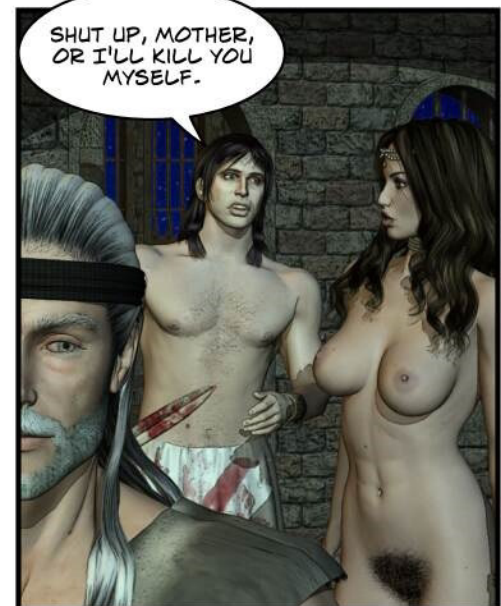
I'LL PROVE YOU RIGHT THEN... I'LL GIVE YOU THE PUNISHMENT ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM A BARBARIAN LIKE ME...



I'LL LET YOU LIVE.



YOU ARE A COWARD! THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE. A COWARD!



SHUT UP, MOTHER, OR I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF.



YOU ARE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER.



THANK HEAVEN FOR THAT!



WHAT ARE YOU ACCUSING ME OF, ODYSSEUS? FOR HAVING WAITED FOR YOU FAITHFULLY FOR 20 YEARS?



I'M NOT ACCUSING YOU OF ANYTHING, PENELOPE. I JUST REALISED THAT I DON'T LIKE YOU ANYMORE.



YOU NEVER DID. YOU MARRIED ME ONLY BECAUSE YOUR PRECIOUS HELEN, MY COUSIN, TURNED YOU DOWN.



MAYBE SO. BUT YOU NEVER LOVED ME EITHER.



I TRIED, BUT ONE CANNOT COMPETE WITH A GHOST.



AS IT TURNED OUT HELEN WAS ANYTHING BUT A GHOST.



OH, INDEED! SHE CAUSED THE DEATH OF SO MANY MEN...



SHE ALSO INSPIRED THEIR DREAMS.



AND I? HAVEN'T I BEEN AN INSPIRATION? SO MANY BARDS ARE ALREADY SINGING MY PRAISE.

OH, COME NOW, WOMAN! WHAT'S EASIER THAN BRIBING A BARD?



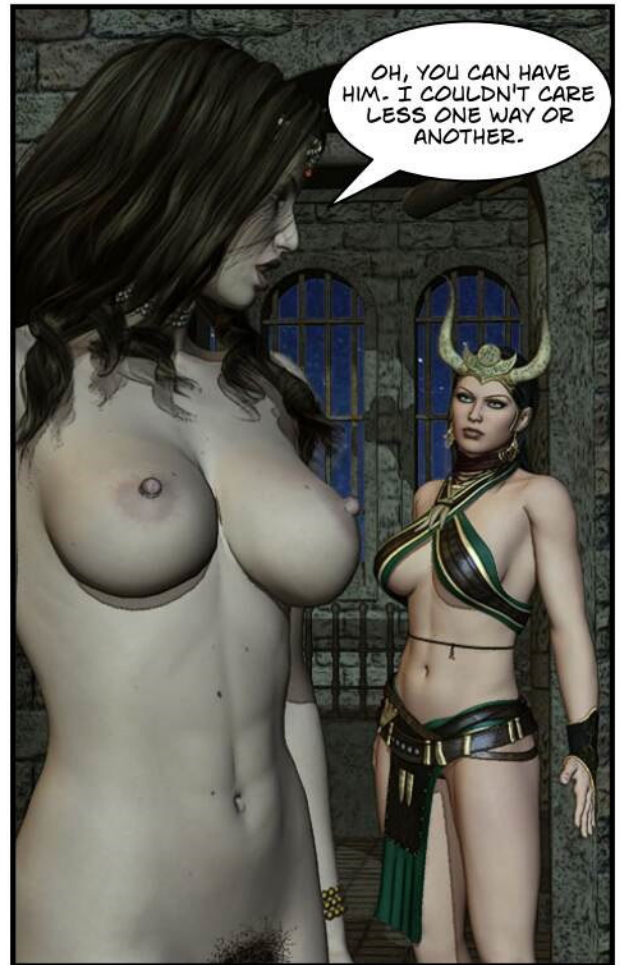
YOU ARE A POOR LOSER, ODYSSEUS. THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE.



WITH THE DIFFERENCE THAT THIS ISN'T A GAME, PENELOPE. THIS IS REAL LIFE.



BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED.





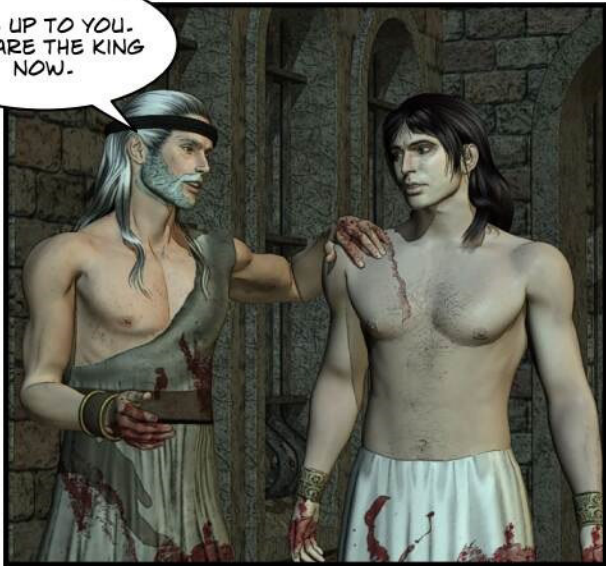
I SUDDENLY FELT TIRED. TIRED OF EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE.

YOU ARE TAKING OVER NOW, MY SON. CLEAN THE PLACE, DEAL WITH YOUR MOTHER, DO AS YOU JUDGE FIT.



BUT... WHAT SHALL I DO?

IT'S UP TO YOU. YOU ARE THE KING NOW.



I WENT DOWN TO THE BEACH TO WASH DEATH OFF MY SKIN.



EVEN THE MOON LOOKED BLOODY THAT NIGHT.



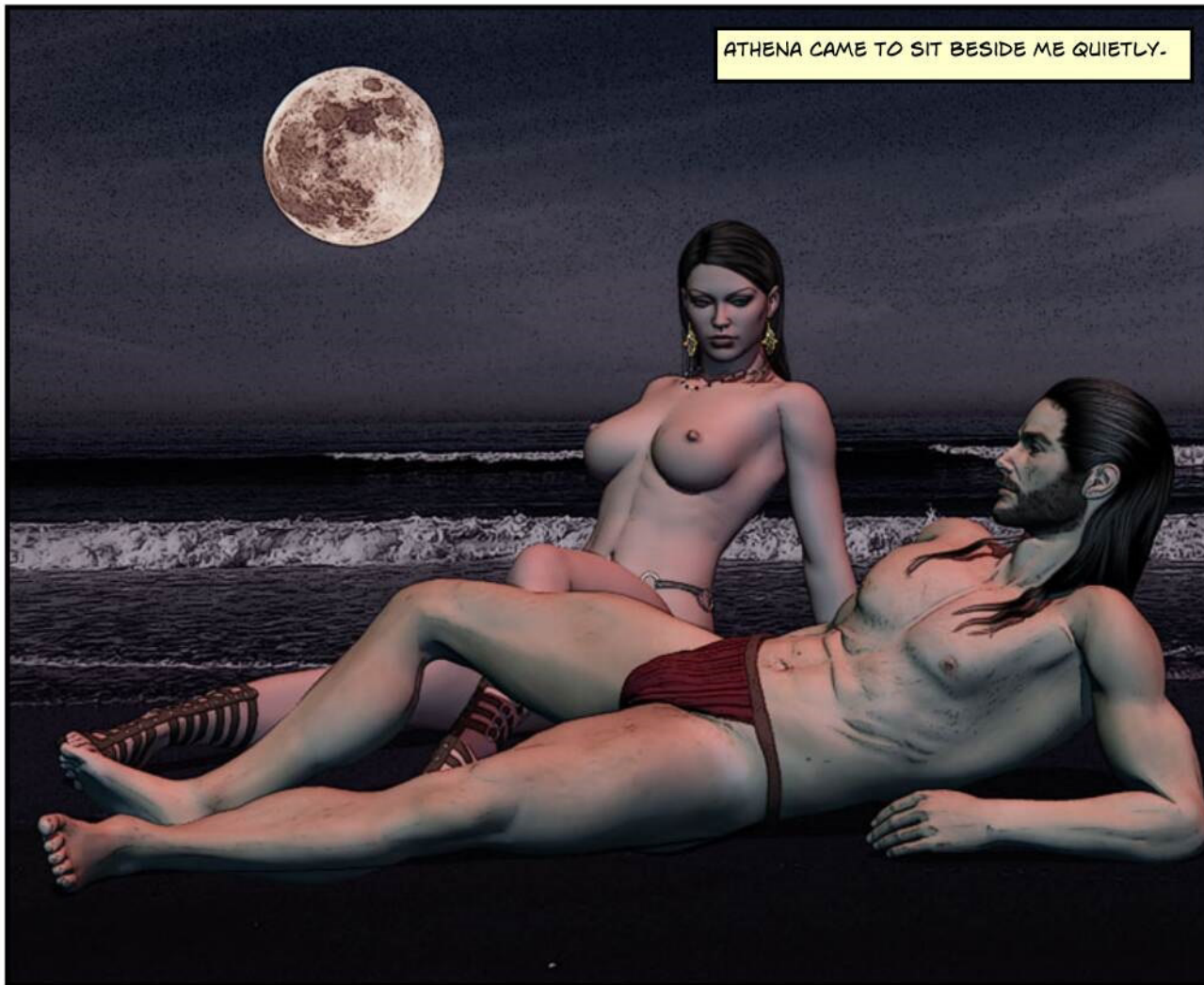
I LAY ON THE SAND FEELING CLEANSED AND IN A STRANGE WAY... RELIEVED.



WHAT I HAD LEFT BEHIND ALREADY FELT LIKE IT BELONGED TO A DIFFERENT, DISTANT LIFE.



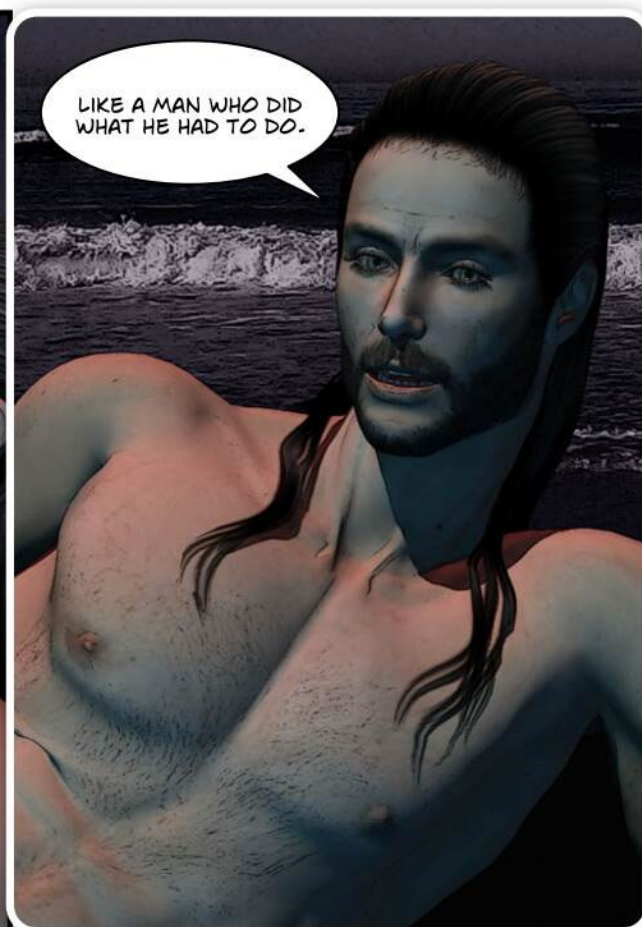
ATHENA CAME TO SIT BESIDE ME QUIETLY.

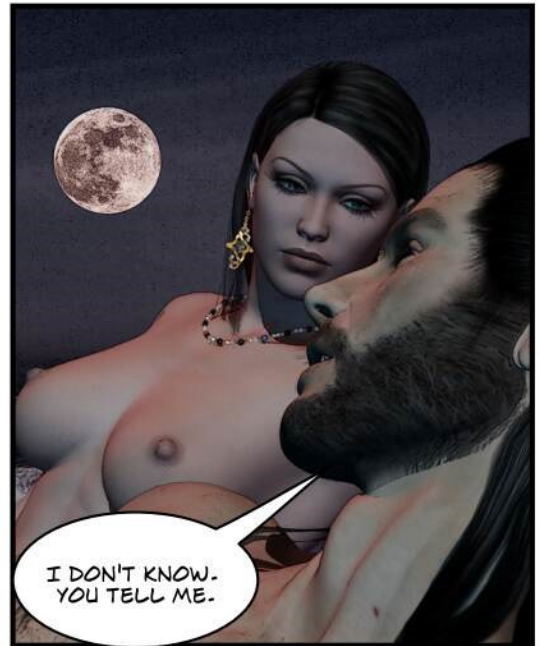


HOW ARE YOU FEELING?



LIKE A MAN WHO DID WHAT HE HAD TO DO.



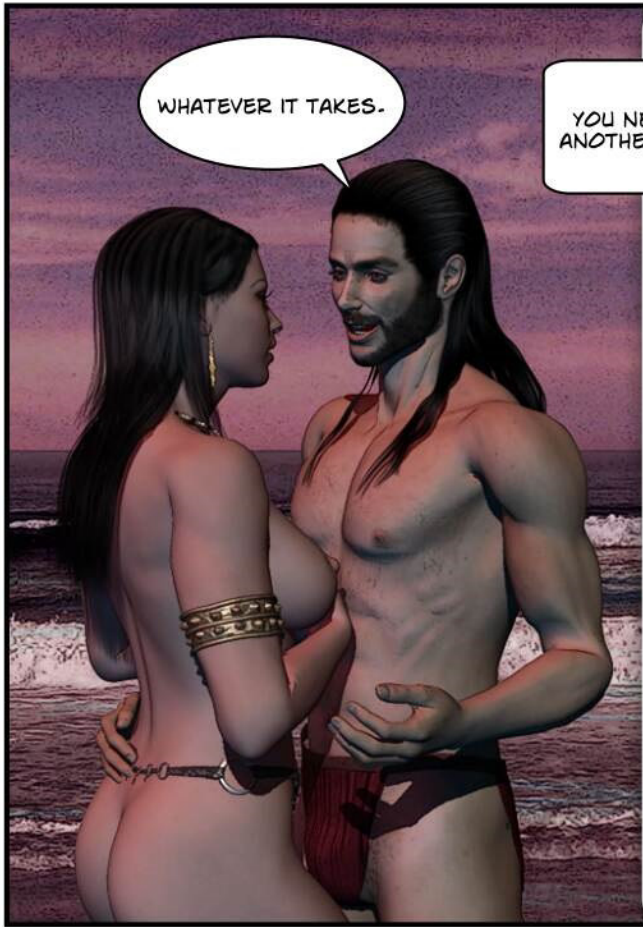


SHE SEEMED TO HESITATE FOR A WHILE.

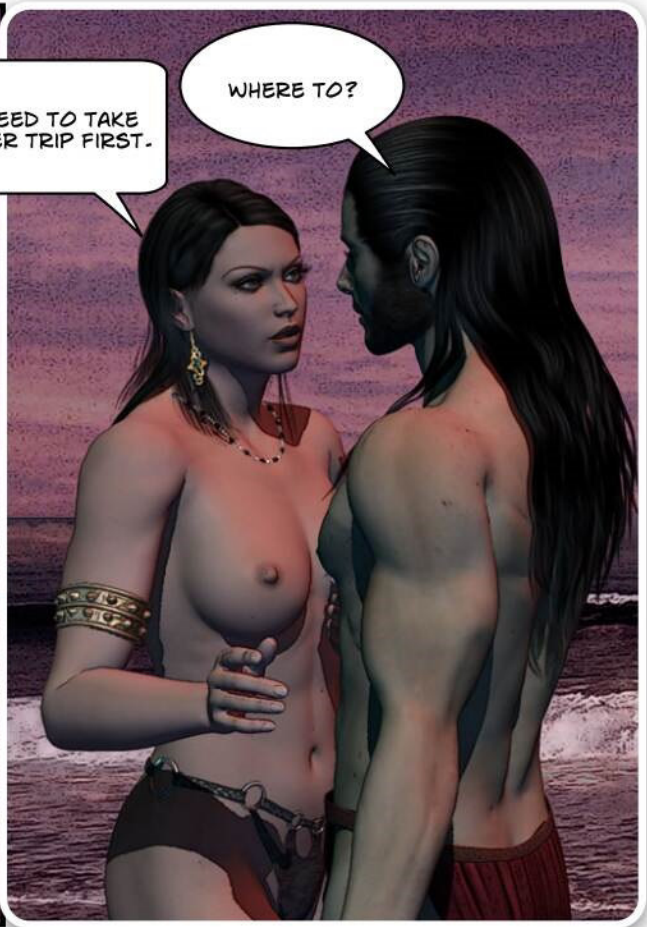








WHATEVER IT TAKES.



YOU NEED TO TAKE ANOTHER TRIP FIRST.

WHERE TO?



SPARTA.

TWO DAYS LATER WE SAILED OUT OF THE PORT OF ITHACA WHICH I KNEW I WAS SEEING FOR THE LAST TIME.



END OF BOOK 13



