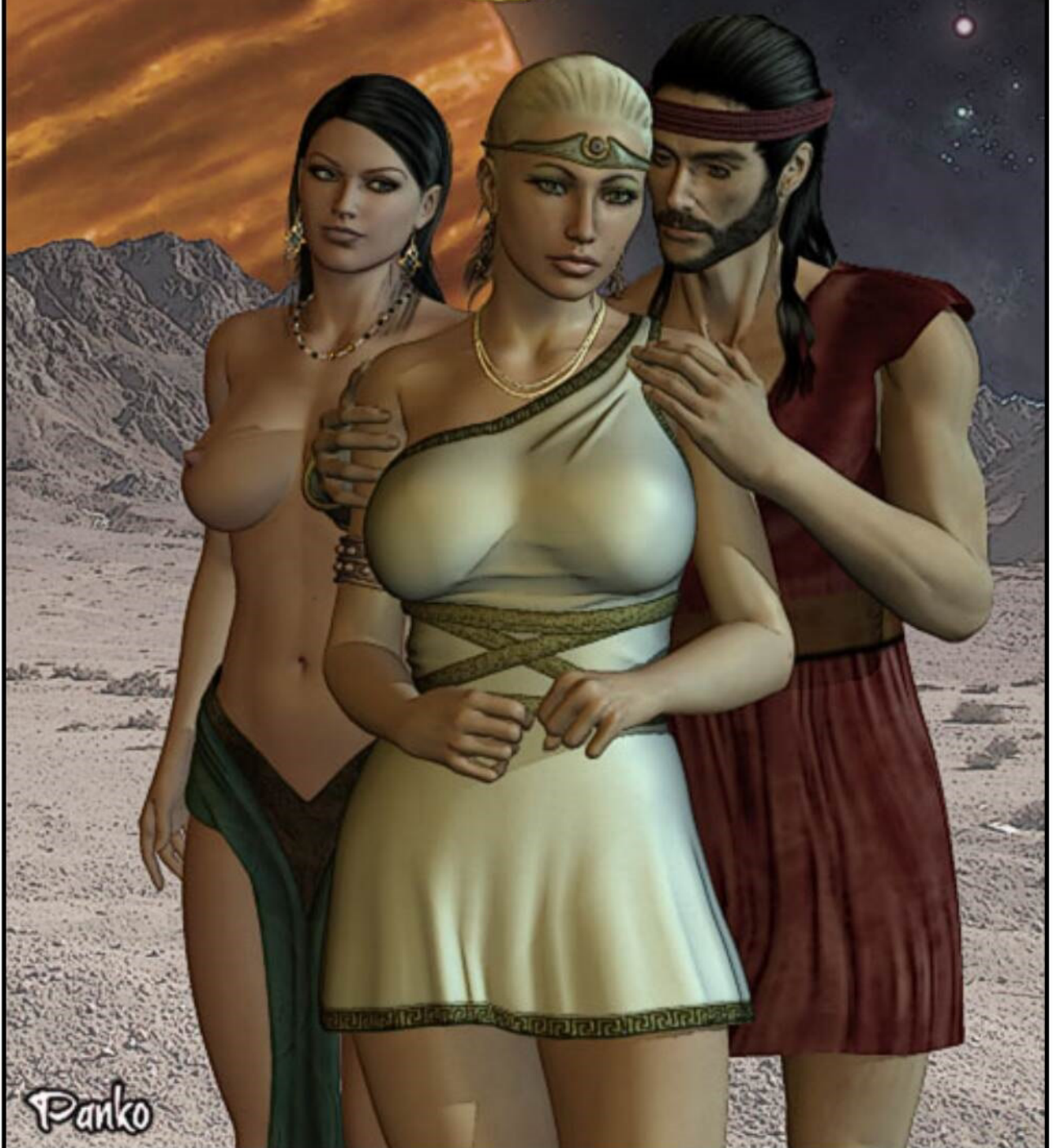


THE TRUE STORY OF ODYSSEUS, ONCE KING OF ITHACA
- BY HIMSELF -

BOOK 14

HELEN



Panko





THE TRUE STORY

ONCE KING OF ITHACA
- BY HIMSELF -

BOOK 1	.....	THE EVENTS IN TROY
BOOK 2	.....	IN THE LAND OF LOTUS-EATERS
BOOK 3	.....	ON THE ISLAND OF THE CYCLOPS
BOOK 4	.....	THE FLOATING ISLAND OF AEOLUS
BOOK 5	.....	IN THE LAND OF THE LAESTRYGONIANS
BOOK 6	.....	ON THE ISLAND OF CIRCE
BOOK 7	.....	IN THE UNDERWORLD
BOOK 8	.....	ON THE ISLAND OF THE SIRENS
BOOK 9	.....	SCYLLA AND CHARYBDE
BOOK 10	.....	ON THE ISLAND OF HELIOS
BOOK 11	.....	ON THE ISLAND OF CALYPSO
BOOK 12	ON THE ISLAND OF THE PHAECIANS
BOOK 13	THE RETURN TO ITHACA
BOOK 14	HELEN

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ΑΡΓΕΙΟΙ ΤΡΩΕΣ ΤΕ ΘΕΩΝ ΙΟΤΗΤΙ ΜΟΓΗΣΑΝ.

Homer, "The Odyssey", xvii 118-119

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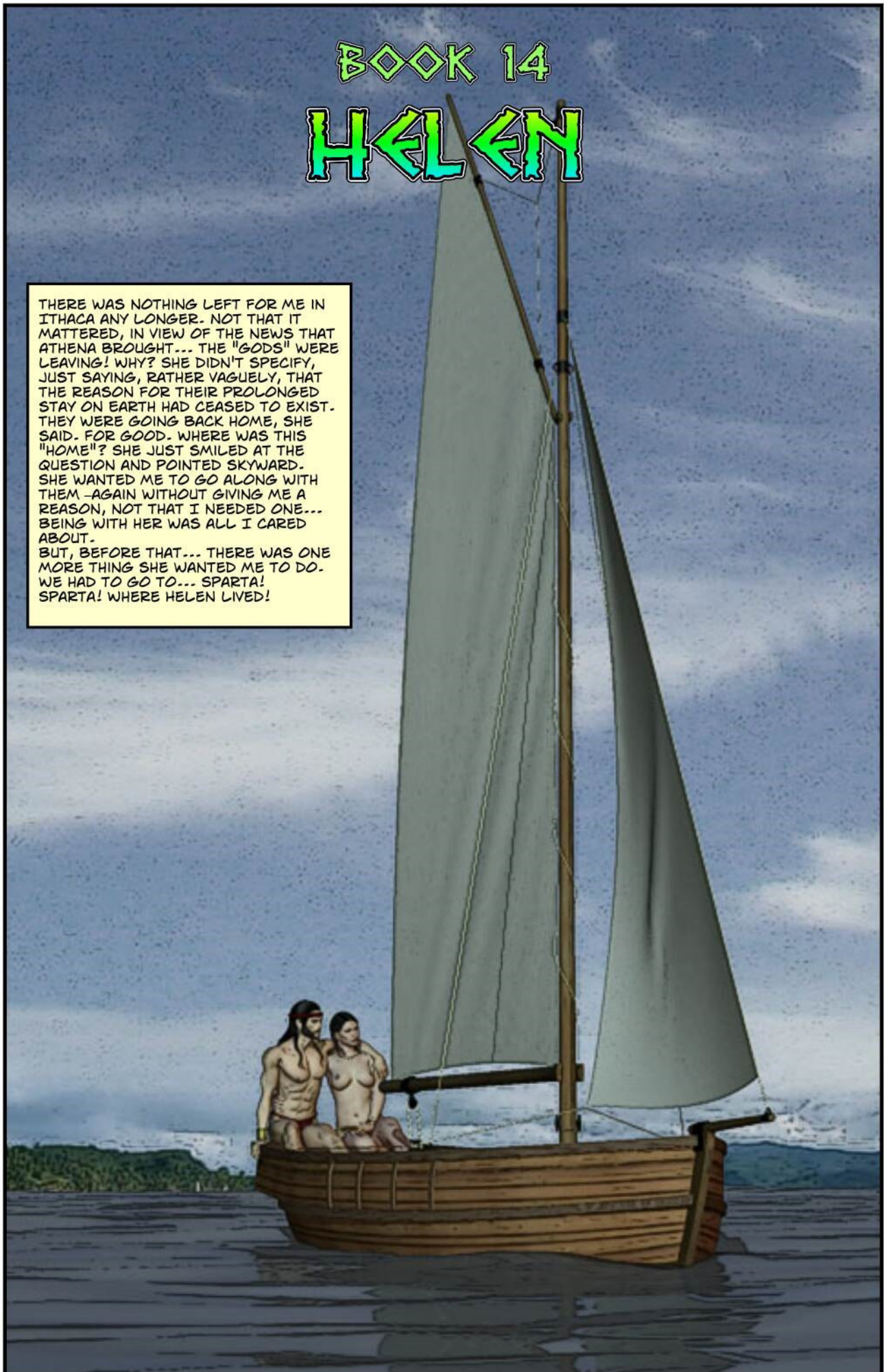


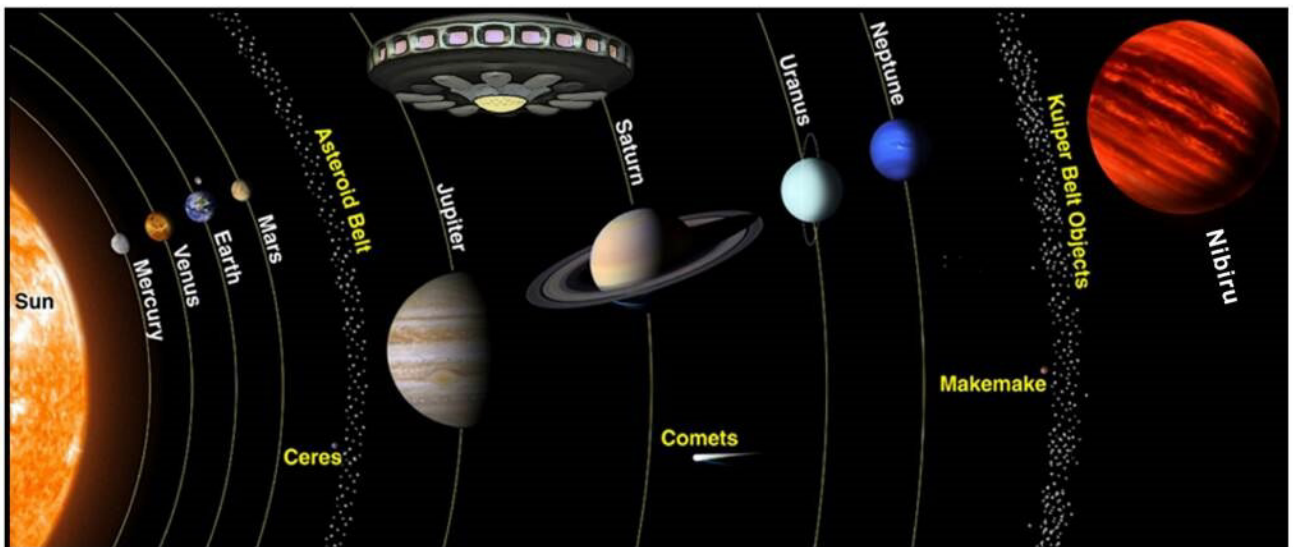
BOOK 14

HELEN

THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME IN ITHACA ANY LONGER. NOT THAT IT MATTERED, IN VIEW OF THE NEWS THAT ATHENA BROUGHT... THE "GODS" WERE LEAVING! WHY? SHE DIDN'T SPECIFY, JUST SAYING, RATHER VAGUELY, THAT THE REASON FOR THEIR PROLONGED STAY ON EARTH HAD CEASED TO EXIST. THEY WERE GOING BACK HOME, SHE SAID. FOR GOOD. WHERE WAS THIS "HOME"? SHE JUST SMILED AT THE QUESTION AND POINTED SKYWARD. SHE WANTED ME TO GO ALONG WITH THEM -AGAIN WITHOUT GIVING ME A REASON, NOT THAT I NEEDED ONE... BEING WITH HER WAS ALL I CARED ABOUT.

BUT, BEFORE THAT... THERE WAS ONE MORE THING SHE WANTED ME TO DO. WE HAD TO GO TO... SPARTA! SPARTA! WHERE HELEN LIVED!

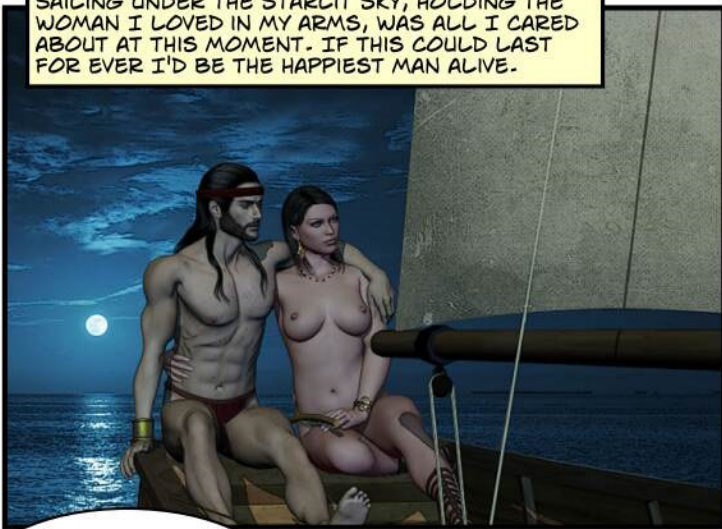




A GENTLE BREEZE WAS PUSHING THE SMALL CRAFT SOUTHWARDS. IT WAS A SLOW PROGRESS BUT THIS TIME I WASN'T IN A HURRY TO GET ANYWHERE.



SAILING UNDER THE STARLIT SKY, HOLDING THE WOMAN I LOVED IN MY ARMS, WAS ALL I CARED ABOUT AT THIS MOMENT. IF THIS COULD LAST FOR EVER I'D BE THE HAPPIEST MAN ALIVE.



YOUR WIFE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HELEN. WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT?



OH, THAT... SHE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT I WAS IN LOVE WITH HER COUSIN.



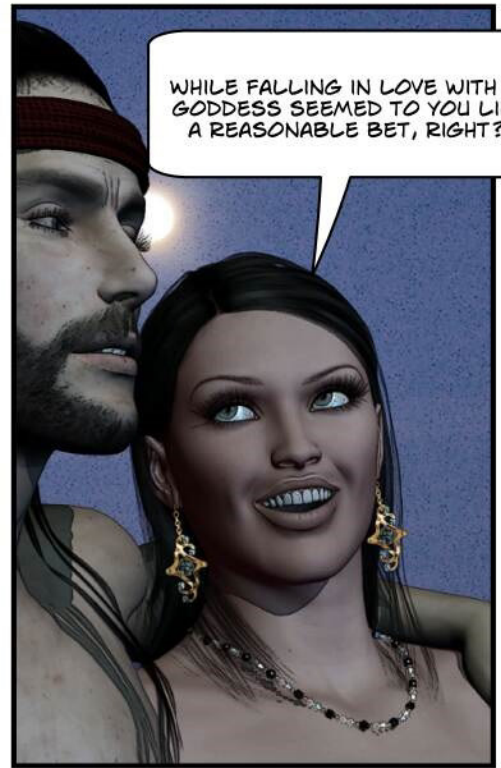
WERE YOU?



WHO WOULDN'T BE?



HOWEVER I WAS QUICK TO REALISE THAT I DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE THERE, SO I MANAGED TO PUT HER OUT OF MY MIND.



WHILE FALLING IN LOVE WITH A GODDESS SEEMED TO YOU LIKE A REASONABLE BET, RIGHT?



THIS WAS SOMETHING I DIDN'T EXPECT TO HAPPEN. I WAS CAUGHT TOTALLY UNPREPARED.

THAT MAKES TWO OF US...



STILL... YOU MUST HAVE SOME FEELINGS LEFT FOR HER...



BACK IN TROY YOU SAVED HER FROM MENELAUS' WRATH.



WELL, I NEVER LIKED MENELAUS... NOR HIS POMPOUS BROTHER...



CAN'T YOU GUESS WHY WE ARE GOING TO SPARTA?



BECAUSE OF... HELEN?



YES.

WHY?



AS I TOLD YOU ALREADY THE TIME HAS COME FOR MY PEOPLE TO GO BACK HOME... AND YOU'LL BE COMING ALONG WITH US.

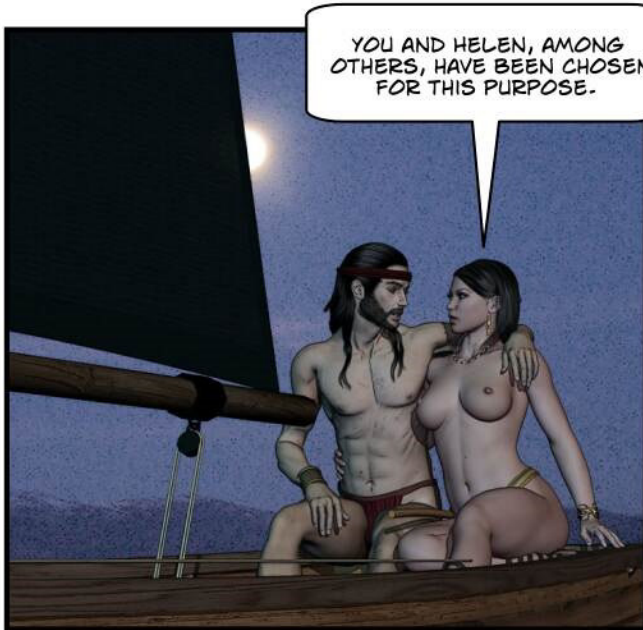


BUT NOT ALONE. HELEN IS ALSO COMING.

WHAT!!!



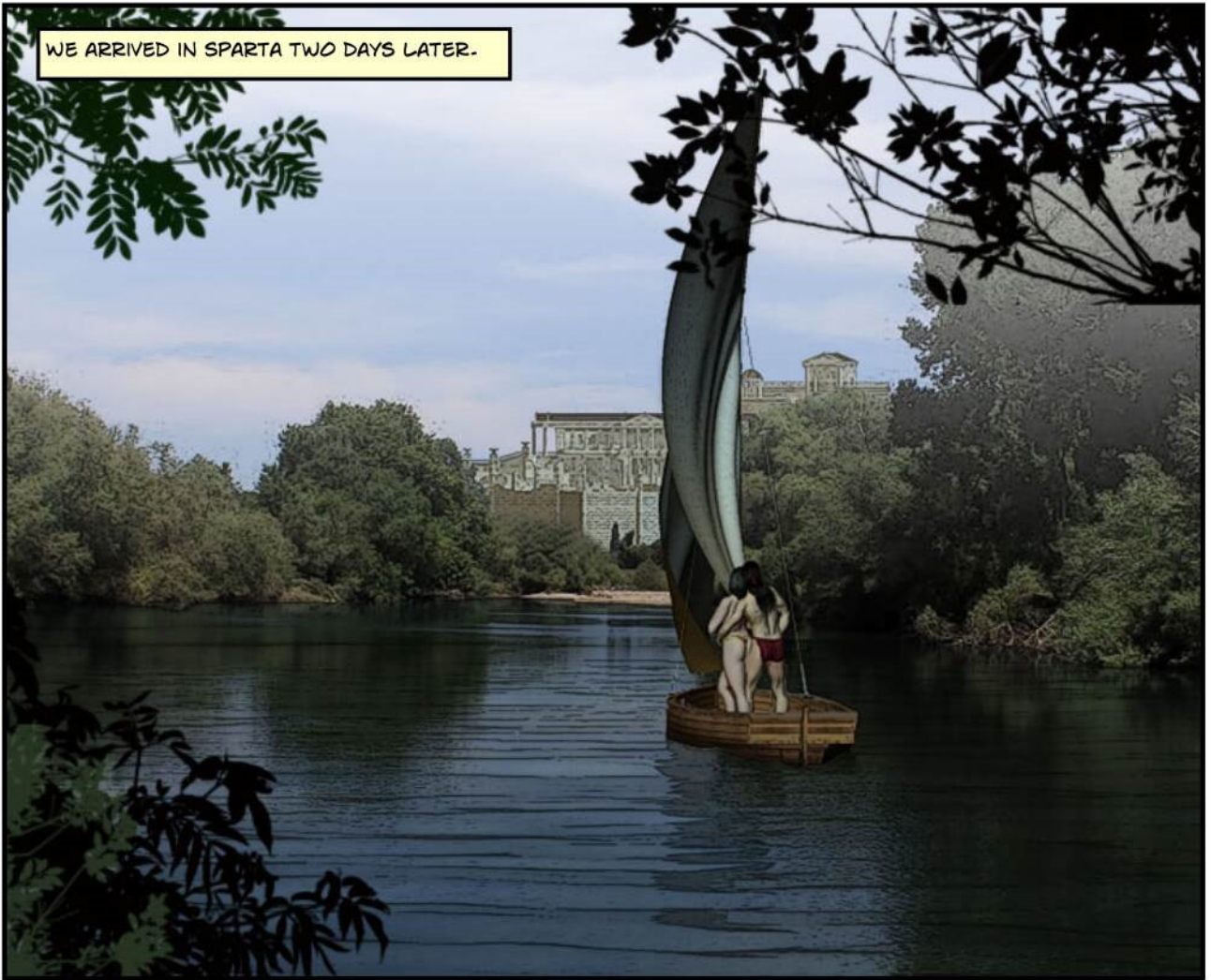
WE HAVE DECIDED THAT THE HUMAN RACE SHOULD BE PRESERVED.







WE ARRIVED IN SPARTA TWO DAYS LATER.



ATHENA CHANGED INTO CONVENTIONAL CLOTHES.

WE'LL TELL THEM THAT I'M YOUR SISTER LEFKOTHEA.



THIS IS GETTING WEIDER AND WEIDER, DON'T YOU THINK?

YES, ISN'T IT MARVELLOUS?



MENELAUS WAS SURPRISED TO SEE ME. HE PRETENDED TO BE DELIGHTED THOUGH.



ODYSSEUS! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, BROTHER?

I JUST DROPPED IN TO SEE AN OLD BROTHER-IN-ARMS, MY DEAR MENELAUS.

SPLENDID! SPLENDID! MY HUMBLE HOME IS YOURS.



HELEN WAS EVEN MORE SURPRISED TO SEE ME THERE.



ODYSSEUS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I WAS JUST PASSING BY... I THOUGHT I'D DROP IN TO SEE YOU.



SEE ME OR MY HUSBAND?

ISN'T IT THE SAME THING?



IT ISN'T AND YOU KNOW IT.



I PRESENTED ATHENA.

HELEN, MEET MY SISTER... HUH... LEFKOTHEA.

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A SISTER... AND SUCH A STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL ONE!...

YOU ARE NOT SO BAD LOOKING YOURSELF... MAJESTY.



THANK YOU, LEFKOTHEA. YOU ARE TOO KIND.

I COULD SENSE THAT IT DIDN'T GO SO WELL. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT NEITHER WAS TOO CRAZY ABOUT THE OTHER.



YOU MUST HAVE A LOT OF CATCHING UP TO DO YOU TWO. I SHALL SEE YOU BOTH LATER.



I DON'T THINK SHE LIKED ME MUCH.

WOMEN USUALLY DON'T, HELEN. AND WITH GOOD REASON.





SO, YOU AREN'T HAPPY HERE?



BEING CALLED "SLUT" AND "WHORE" ALL DAY LONG ISN'T EXACTLY UPLIFTING FOR ONE'S SPIRITS.



THEN WHY STAY?

WHERE CAN I GO?

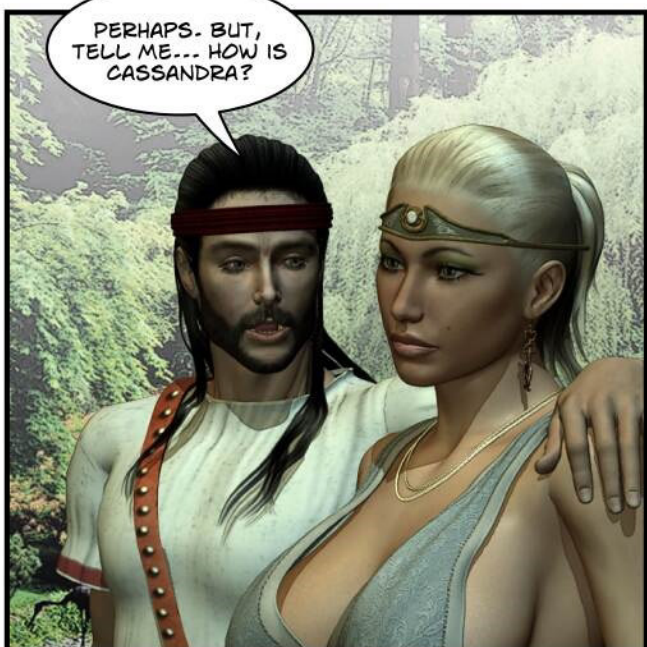


PARIS, THE ONLY MAN I EVER LOVED, IS DEAD. TROY IS NO MORE... I'M TRAPPED.



MAYBE THERE IS A WAY OUT...

OH?... ONE OF YOUR CLEVER IDEAS PERHAPS?



PERHAPS. BUT, TELL ME... HOW IS CASSANDRA?







...AND ALSO CONCERNED-
BECAUSE OF ALL THOSE
ACHAEAN BUNCH OF THIEVES
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO
TREATED ME WITH RESPECT.



THAT'S BECAUSE I
BELIEVE THAT YOU
DESERVE IT.



OH, ODYSSEUS! YOU
ALWAYS HAD A WAY WITH
WORDS! I'M SO GLAD
YOU ARE HERE!

THAT SAME EVENING, AT THE QUARTERS MENELAUS HAD PROVIDED FOR "MY SISTER" AND ME...

DID YOU TELL HER?

NOT YET. I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE.

YOU ARE NOT HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS I HOPE?

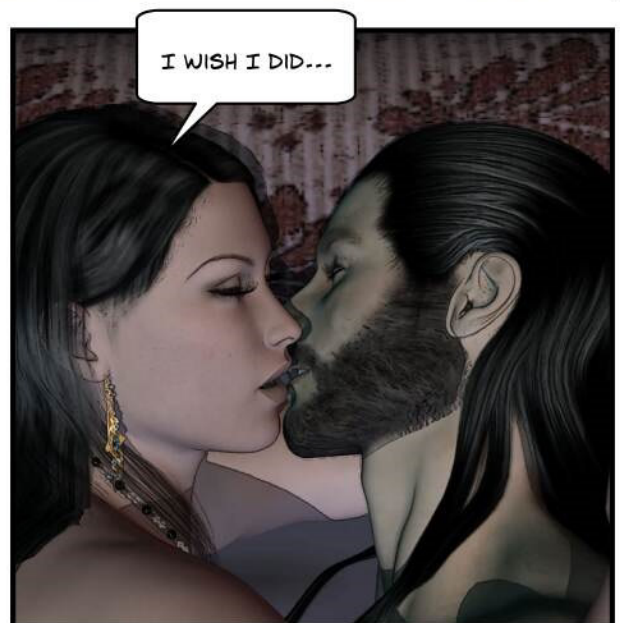
NO. I'D DO ANYTHING TO BE WITH YOU.

YOU NEVER GIVE UP, DO YOU?

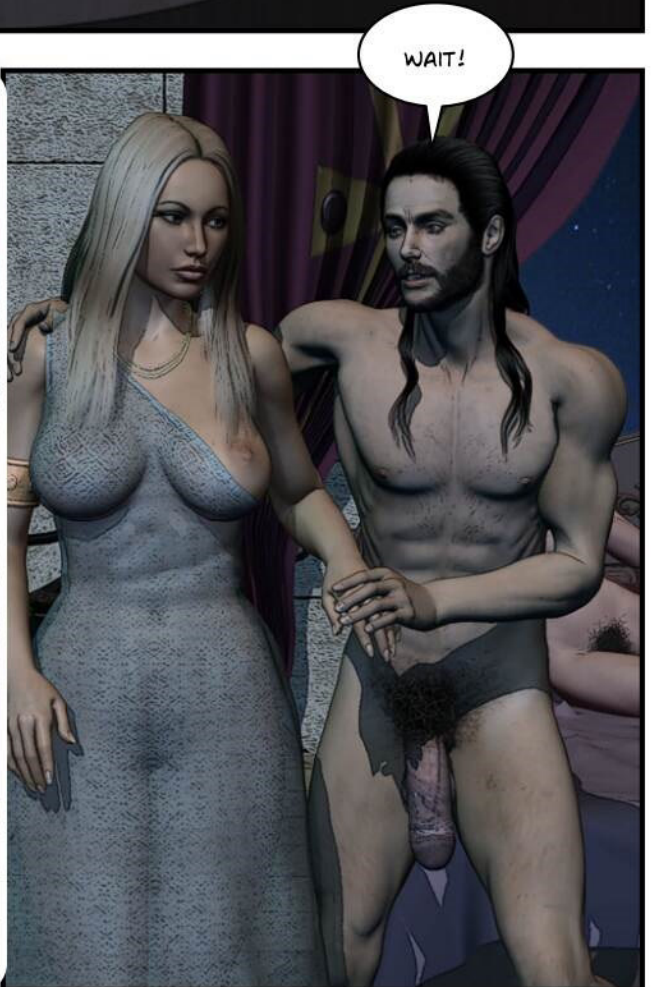
I LOVE YOU, ATHENA. HOW CAN I POSSIBLY GET THAT THROUGH YOUR THICK SKULL?

YOU JUST HAPPEN TO LOVE WOMEN, ODYSSEUS. THAT IS THE ONLY TRUTH.

MAYBE SO. BUT I NEVER LOVED ANYONE THE WAY I LOVE YOU.









WE ARE NOT BROTHER AND SISTER. THIS IS ATHENA.



OH! YOU MEAN...?



YES, THE VERY ONE. COME, GIRL, SIT WITH US. I NEED TO TALK TO YOU.



ATHENA EXPLAINED THE REASON FOR OUR VISIT TO HELEN.

OH, NO! THE SAME OLD STORY ALL OVER AGAIN!!!

WITH THE DIFFERENCE THAT NOW THE IMPLICATIONS ARE MUCH MORE SERIOUS.



DO I HAVE A CHOICE? CAN I REFUSE?

OF COURSE YOU CAN. WILL YOU?



HUH... MAYBE NOT...

THE NEXT DAY A FLYING SHIELD CAME DOWN TO TAKE ATHENA TO SOME OTHER PLACE FOR, SHE SAID, SHE NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF A NUMBER OF THINGS.

BE READY TO LEAVE AS SOON AS I RETURN.

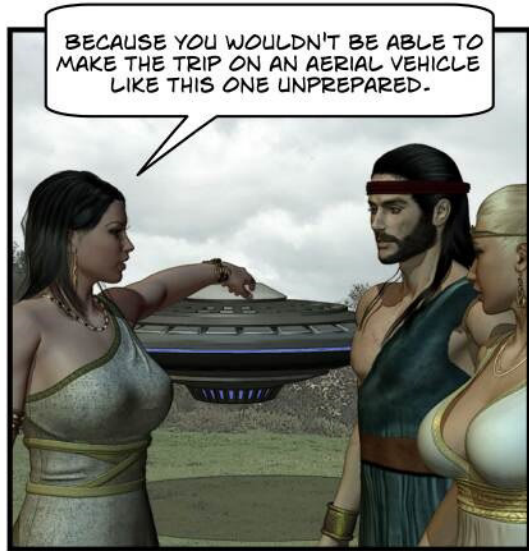
...AND... TRY TO BE DISCREET.



WHY CAN'T WE ALL LEAVE RIGHT NOW?



BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MAKE THE TRIP ON AN AERIAL VEHICLE LIKE THIS ONE UNPREPARED.



AND BESIDES I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF SOME IMPORTANT DETAILS FIRST.



BE READY... ON MY RETURN.





IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME WITH HELEN.



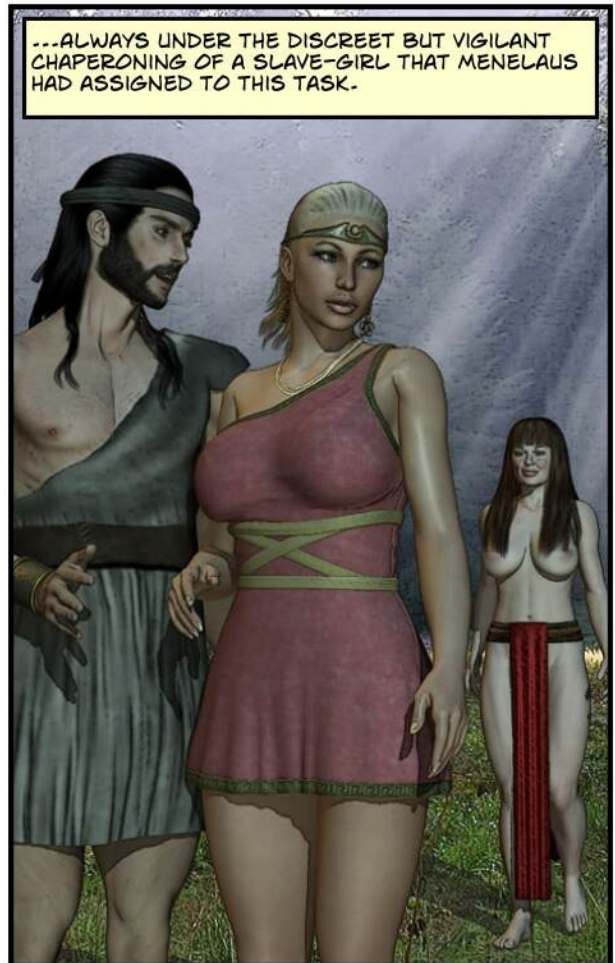
TAKING HER ON LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE...



TALKING ABOUT THE OLD DAYS, TROY, HER LIFE IN SPARTA AFTER HER RETURN, OF MY ENDLESS TRIBULATIONS...



...ALWAYS UNDER THE DISCREET BUT VIGILANT CHAPERONING OF A SLAVE-GIRL THAT MENELAUS HAD ASSIGNED TO THIS TASK.





SO, YOU LEFT EVERYTHING BEHIND AND WENT ON THE ROAD AGAIN...



I HAD NO CHOICE.

BECAUSE OF THE... "GODDESS"?



BECAUSE OF HER AND ALSO BECAUSE OF WHAT I HAD BECOME.

DO YOU LOVE HER?



I DON'T KNOW... IT'S DIFFICULT TO GET INTO THOSE PEOPLE'S MINDS.



YES.

DOES SHE RETURN YOUR LOVE?



YOU TRUST HER HOWEVER.

I DO.

MENELAUS ON THE OTHER HAND HAD BECOME A SHADOW OF HIMSELF. HE SPENT HIS DAYS DRINKING AND REMINISCING OF THE GOOD OLD GLORIOUS DAYS.



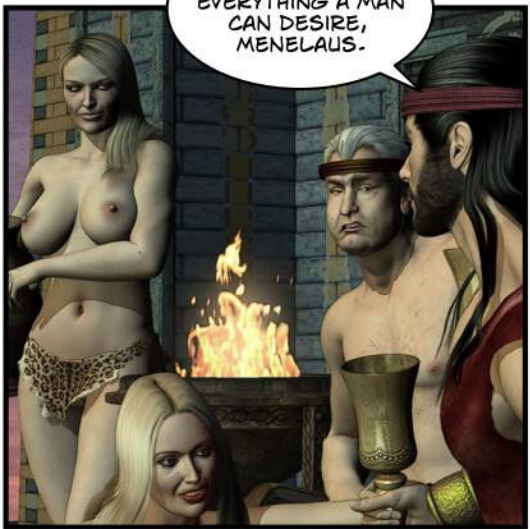
AH, THE GOOD TIMES WE HAD IN TROY! HAPPY DAYS, ODYSSEUS. HAPPY DAYS!

DEATH IS ALL I REMEMBER OF THOSE "GLORIOUS TIMES", MENELAUS. DEATH AND SUFFERING.

AND YET YOU HAVE EVERYTHING A MAN CAN DESIRE, MENELAUS.



SUFFERING YOU SAY? NOTHING TO COMPARE WITH THE DAILY NIGHTMARE I HAVE HAD TO FACE SINCE.



YES, EXCEPT FOR WHAT REALLY MATTERS.



IT CAN'T BE SO BAD...

IT'S WORSE. FAR WORSE. BELIEVE ME.



I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SPARED THE LIFE OF THAT BITCH IN TROY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE...



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE MARRIED HER IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU NEVER REALLY LOVED HER.



I WAS BLINDED BY HER BEAUTY! BLINDED...

WHY DON'T YOU LET HER GO THEN?

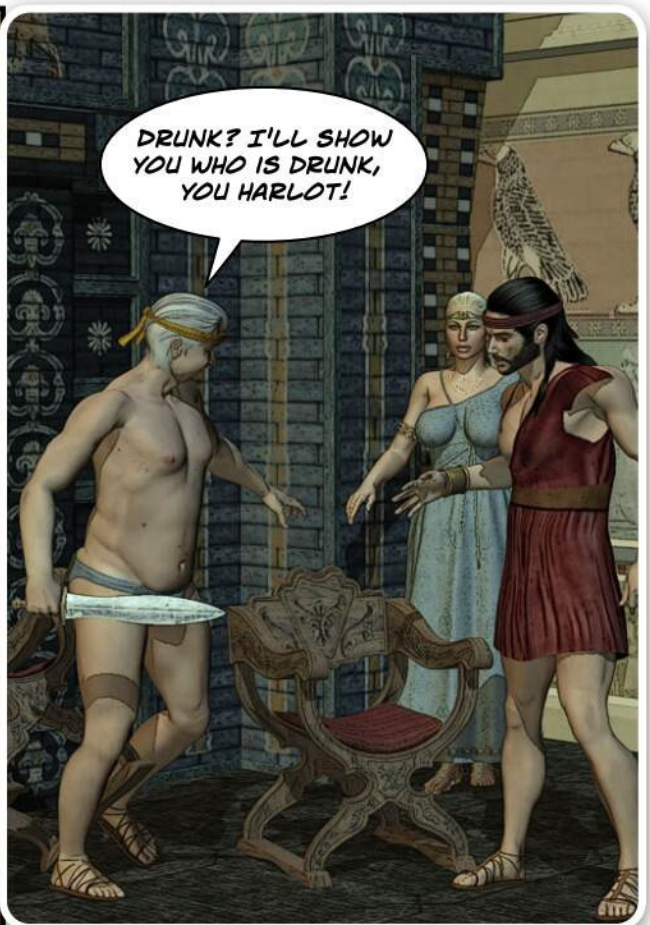


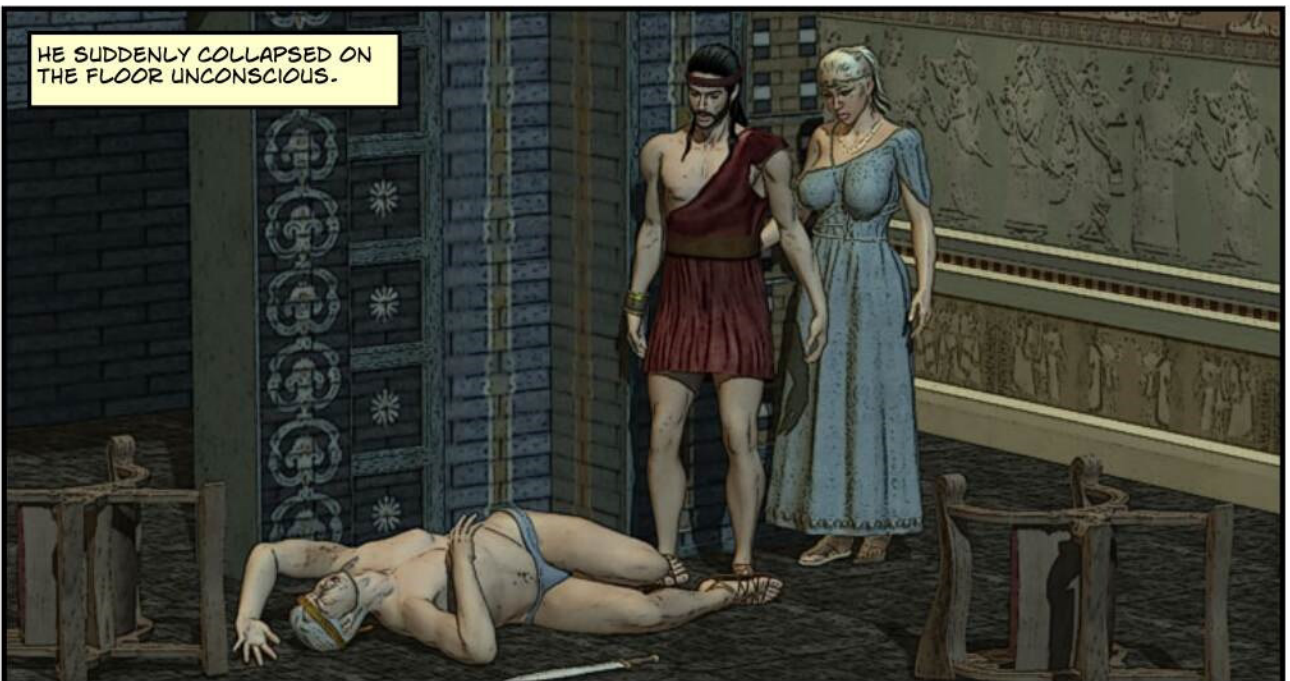
AND SUFFER YET ANOTHER HUMILIATION IN THE PUBLIC EYE? NEVER!



YOU'D RATHER RUIN YOUR LIFE AND HERS THEN?

YES. I'M GOING DOWN... AND I'M TAKING HER WITH ME.





I DRAGGED HELEN
OUT OF THE ROOM.

WE'D BETTER LEAVE SPARTA
NOW. IT'S GETTING TOO
DANGEROUS FOR YOU.



IT'S YOUR ARRIVAL THAT
TRIGGERED MENELAUS'
REACTION. HIS SHAME
TURNED TO RAGE.



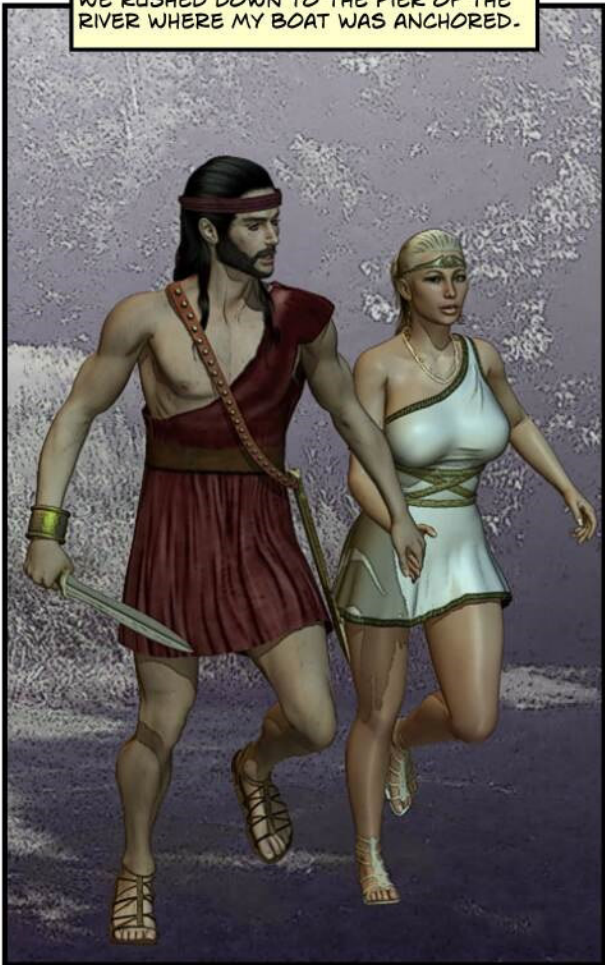
I'M READY,
ODYSSEUS. THERE'S
NOTHING FOR ME HERE
ANY MORE.



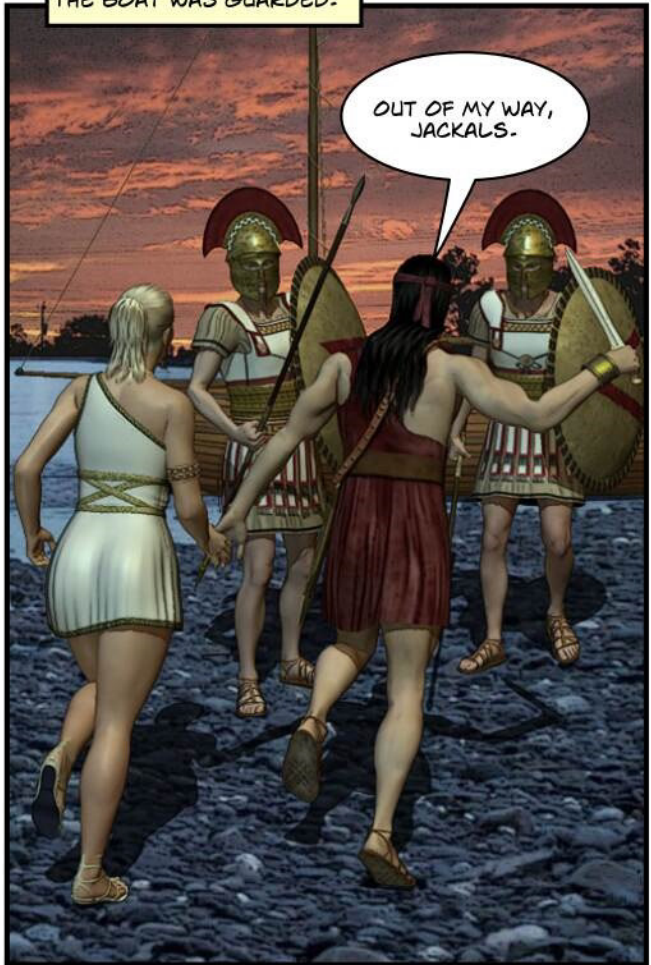
WE LEAVE NOW...
WHILE WE CAN.



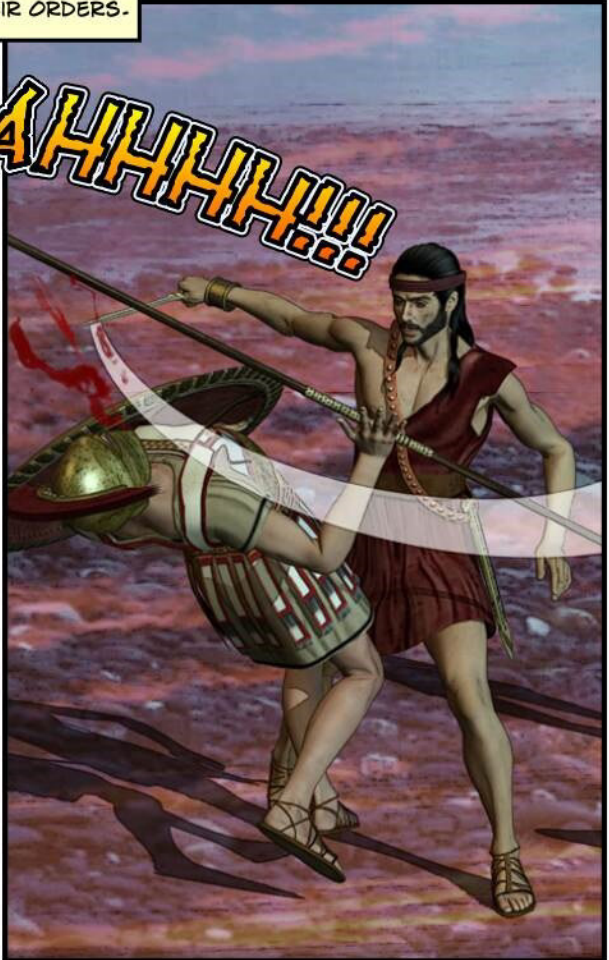
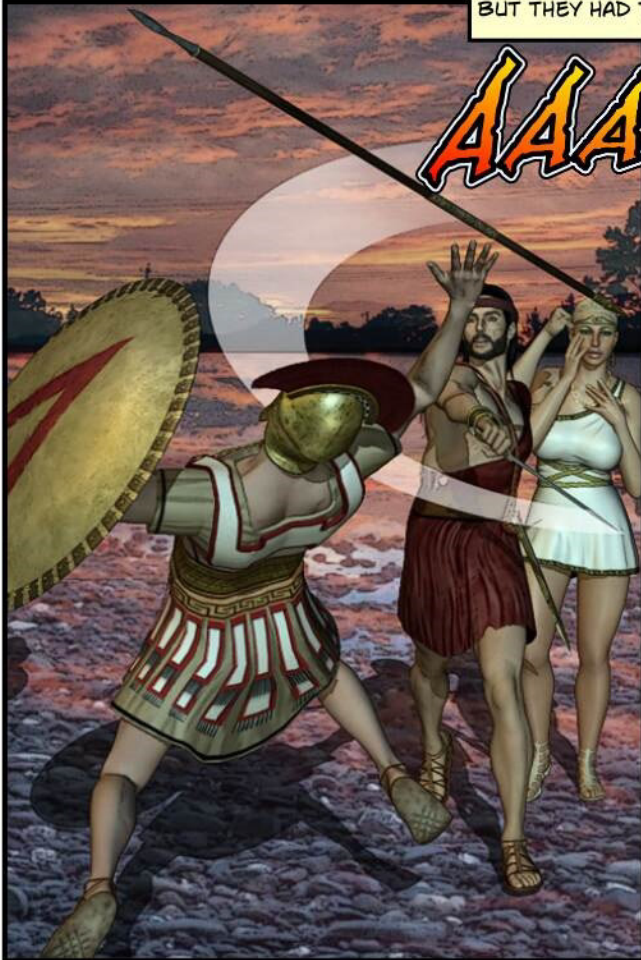
WE RUSHED DOWN TO THE PIER OF THE RIVER WHERE MY BOAT WAS ANCHORED.



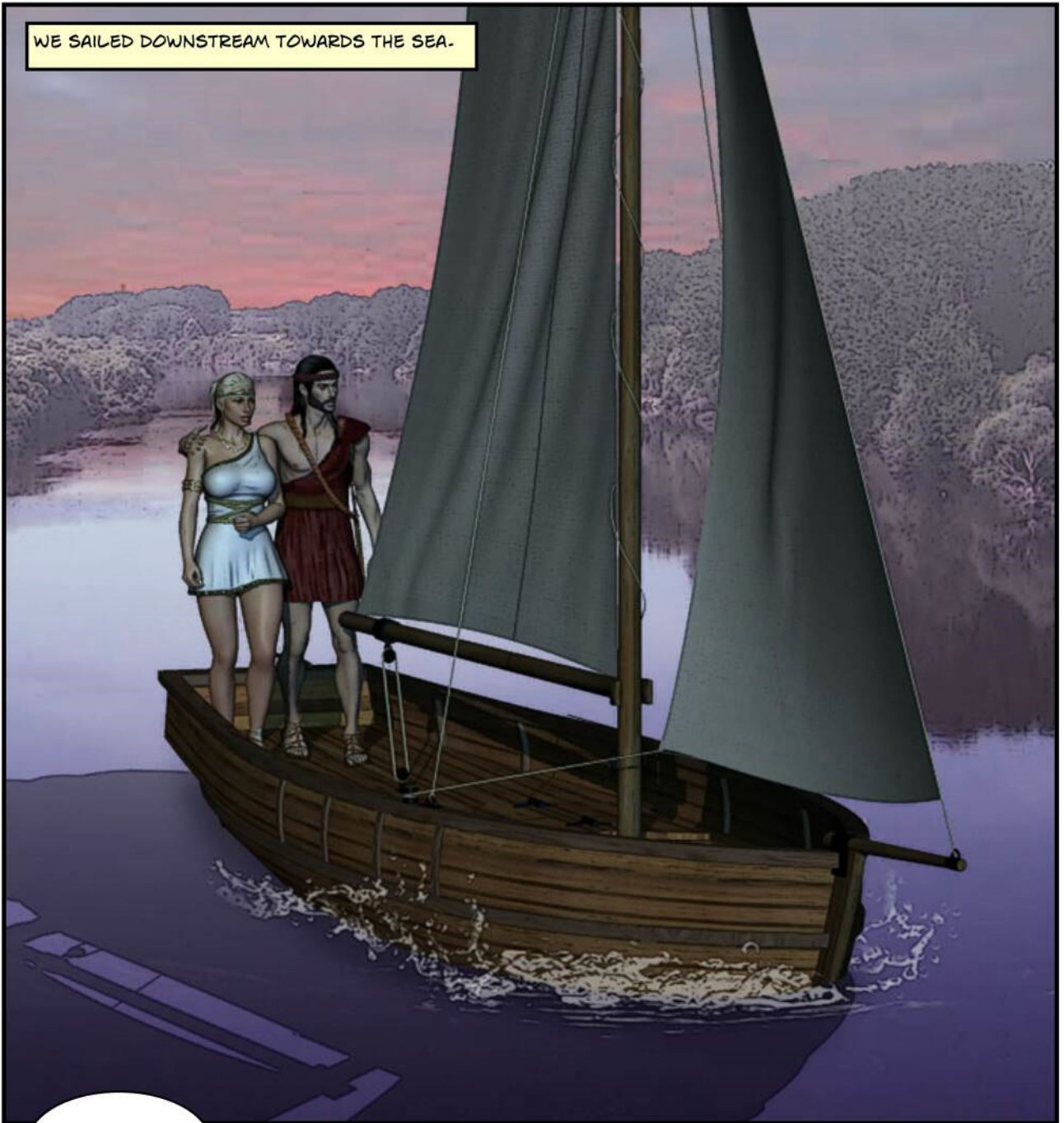
THE BOAT WAS GUARDED.



BUT THEY HAD THEIR ORDERS.



WE SAILED DOWNSTREAM TOWARDS THE SEA.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

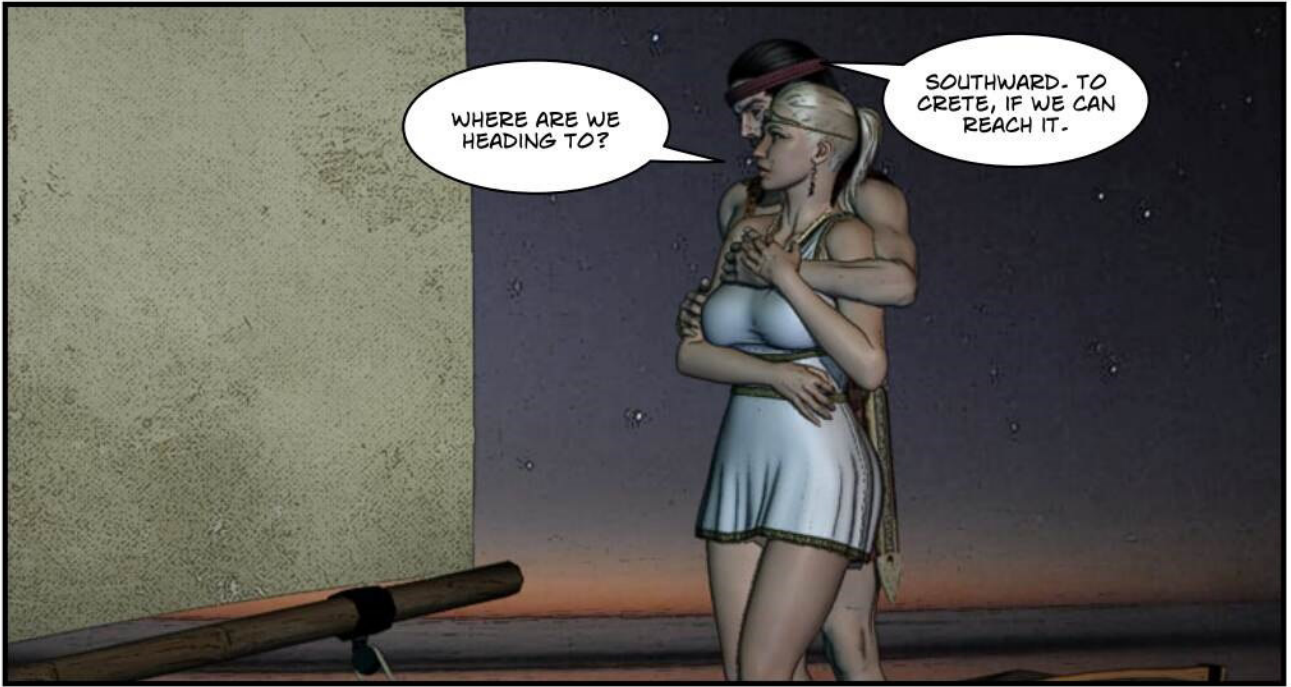


NO. HOW COULD I BE?



WE SOON WERE SAILING OUT IN THE OPEN SEA.





SHE SLEPT ON MY SHOULDER THAT NIGHT. THE WOMAN WHO LAUNCHED TEN THOUSAND SHIPS AGAINST TROY AND CAUSED THE DEATH OF THOUSANDS OF MEN IN THEIR PRIME!



WE REACHED AN ISLAND IN MID-MORNING.

CRETE ALREADY?

NO... IT COULD ONLY BE KYTHERA.





WE FOUND A REMOTE BAY WHERE I HID THE BOAT AND SET OUT TO LOOK FOR A SHELTER.



WE SOON DISCOVERED A SHEPHERD'S HUT WHICH LOOKED CONVENIENTLY ABANDONED.



THIS WILL DO FOR THE TIME BEING.



WHY DO YOU LAUGH?





WE SPENT THE NIGHT TOGETHER AND IT WAS A NIGHT LIKE NO OTHER NIGHT I HAD EVER EXPERIENCED, FOR IT WAS IN FACT A SYNTHESIS OF EVERYTHING I HAD LIVED UP TO THIS MOMENT.







AT DAYBREAK, NEXT MORNING...

SORRY TO WAKE YOU UP SO EARLY, YOU LOVE-BIRDS.

ATHENA!



WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE FAST.



YOUR SWEETHEART'S HUSBAND IS SETTING THE ISLAND ON FIRE.

ATHENA LED US TO HER FLYING SHIELD.



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD SET FOOT ON ONE OF THOSE WONDROUS CHARIOTS.



WHERE ARE WE GOING?



TO A PLACE CALLED SINAI. IT'S ONE OF OUR TAKING-OFF SPOTS.



SOON THE EARTH SHRANK AWAY FROM US.



ARE WE THE ONLY HUMANS CHOSEN TO GO WITH YOU?



NO, THERE'S A SMALL NUMBER OF SELECTED ONES BESIDES YOU.



MAINLY OFFSPRING OF THE "GODS".



AND ALSO SOME OF YOUR LOVERS?



YES. SOME OF OUR LOVERS TOO.

WE LANDED AT THE TOP OF A HIGH MOUNTAIN WHERE A HUGE FLYING DISK WAS RESTING.



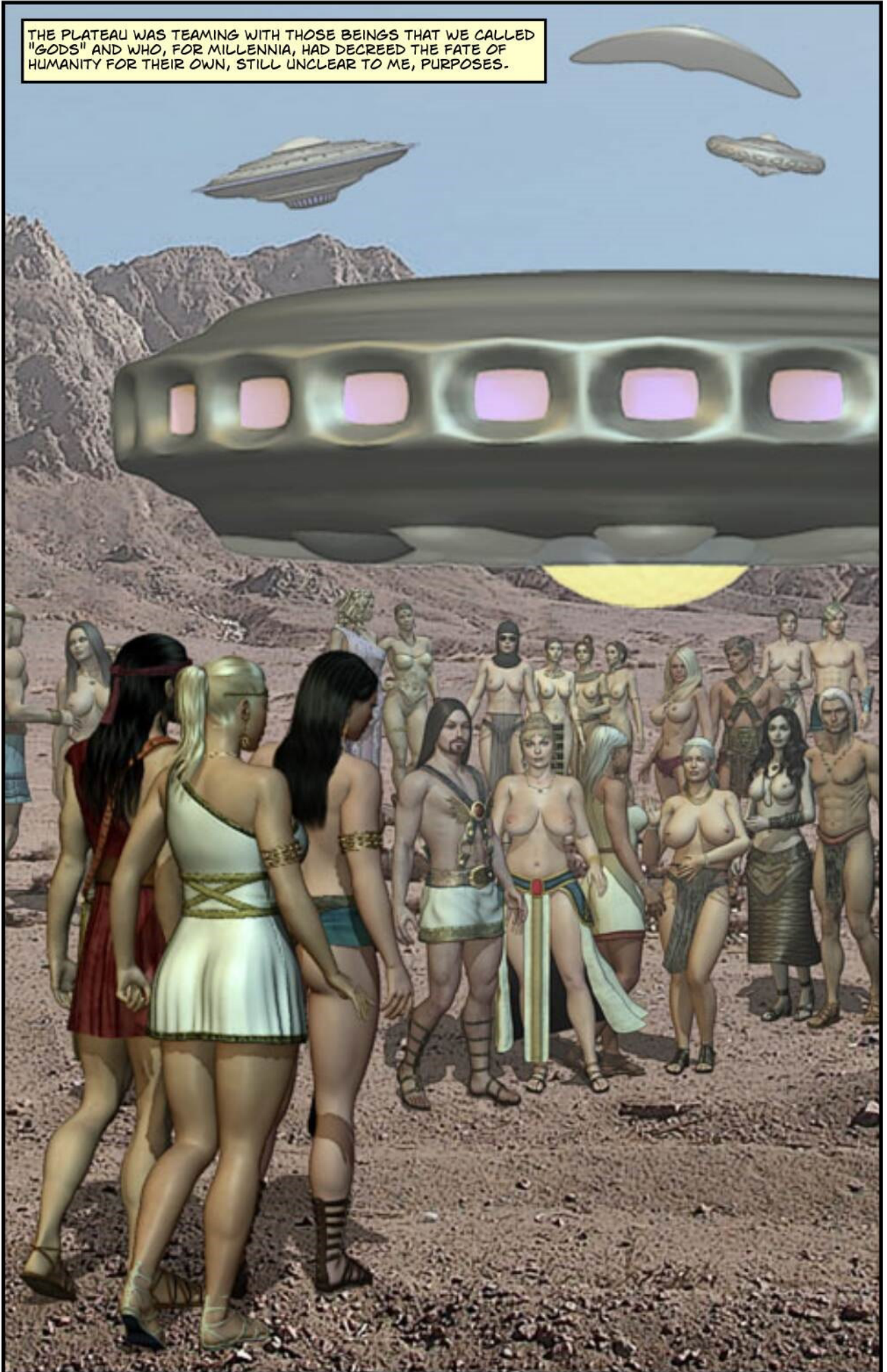
HEAVENS! IT IS AS LARGE AS A CITY!



ONLY MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE.



THE PLATEAU WAS TEAMING WITH THOSE BEINGS THAT WE CALLED "GODS" AND WHO, FOR MILLENNIA, HAD DECREED THE FATE OF HUMANITY FOR THEIR OWN, STILL UNCLEAR TO ME, PURPOSES.



WITH SOME OF THEM I WAS ALREADY WELL ACQUAINTED.

SO, WE MEET AGAIN,
ODYSSEUS!

HESTIA!

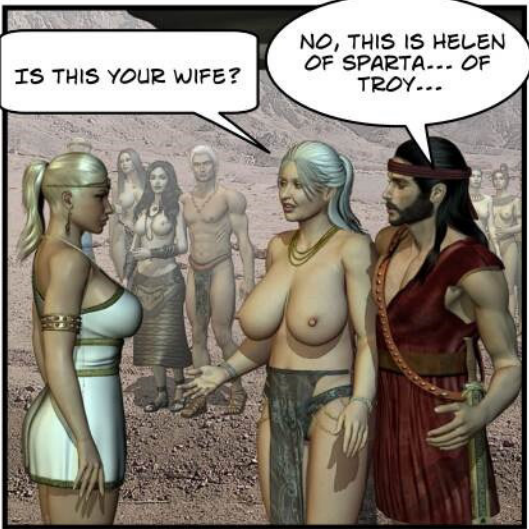


SO GLAD YOU'LL BE
COMING ALONG!



IS THIS YOUR WIFE?

NO, THIS IS HELEN
OF SPARTA... OF
TROY...



THE ONE WHO "LAUNCHED
10.000 SHIPS"... YOU
MAKE A FITTING PAIR...



AND I DON'T MEAN THAT
AS A COMPLIMENT.



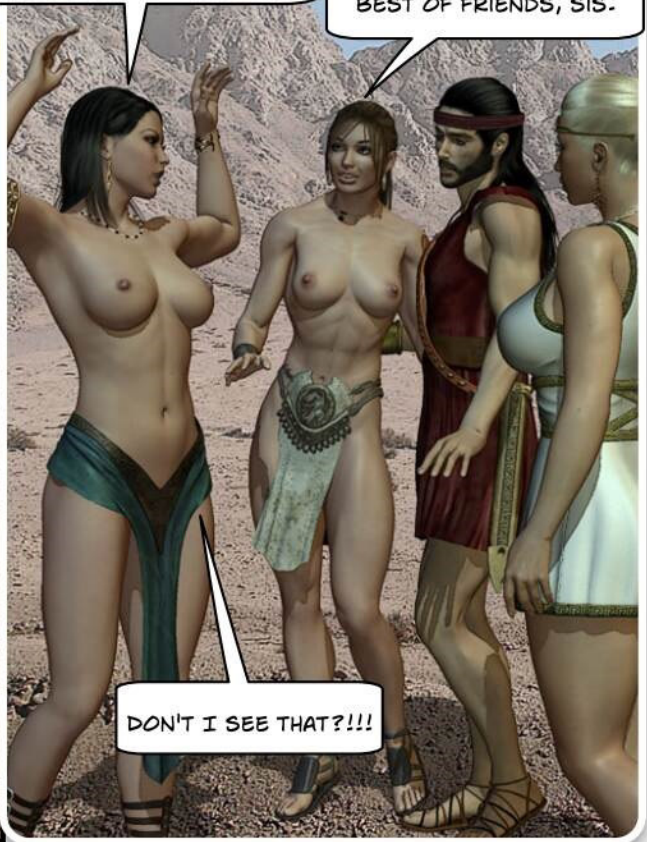
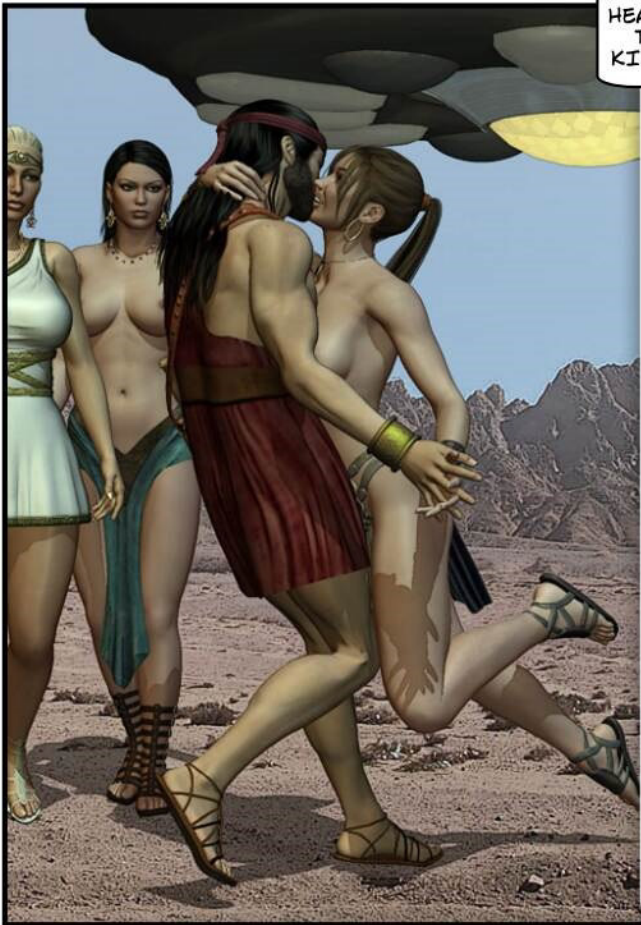
ARTEMIS RAN TO GREET ME.

ODYSSEUS! WHAT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE!



HEAVENS! ARTEMIS TOO?! ARE THERE ANY OF MY FEMALE KINSFOLK THAT YOU SPARED?

OH, BUT WE ARE JUST THE BEST OF FRIENDS, SIS.



DON'T I SEE THAT?!!!



STOP FROWNING, CHILD.
HE'LL BE YOURS FOR
ETERNITY.

THANKS TO DADDY.

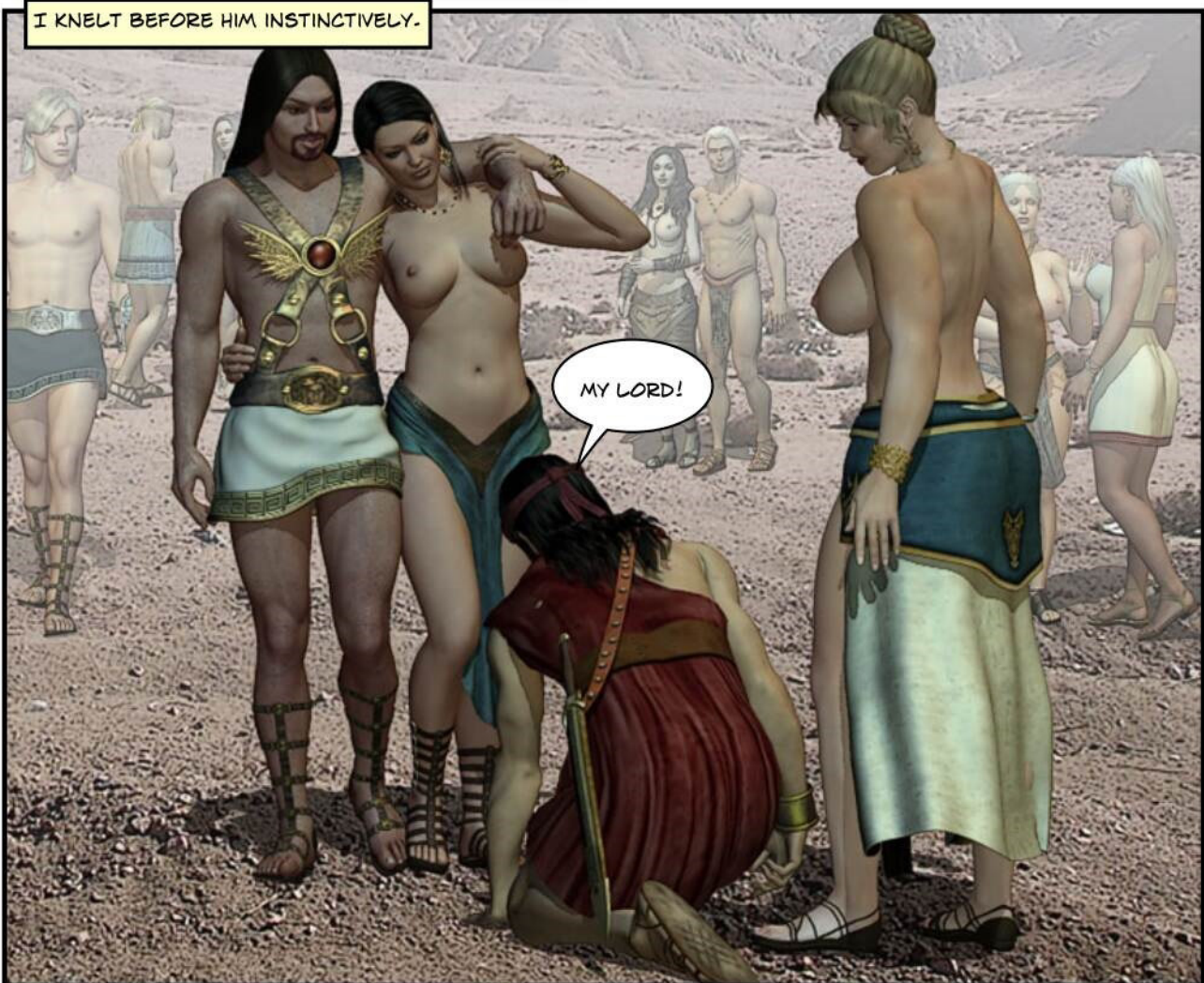


I REALISED THAT I WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF
ZEUS, KING OF THE GODS AND FATHER OF
HUMANITY. I KNEW THAT THERE WAS NOTHING
SUPERNATURAL ABOUT THESE PEOPLE, YET I
FELT MY KNEES WEAKENING.



I KNELT BEFORE HIM INSTINCTIVELY.

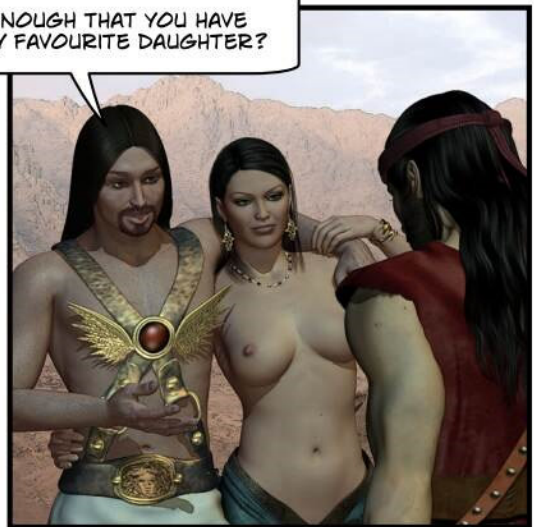
MY LORD!





OH, PLEASE, HUMAN!
SPARE ME THIS!

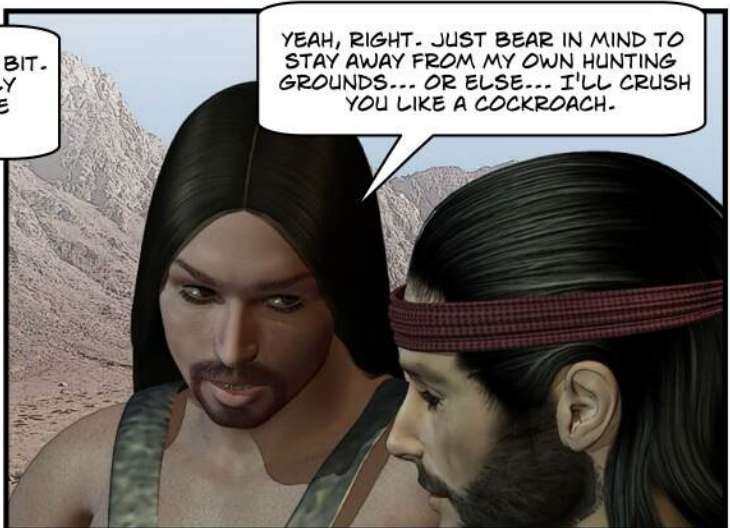
ISN'T IT ENOUGH THAT YOU HAVE
SEDUCED MY FAVOURITE DAUGHTER?



HE TOOK ME ASIDE.

LOOK HERE... I DON'T TRUST YOU ONE BIT.
YOU ARE CRAFTY, RUTHLESS, TOTALLY
IMMORAL, A LIAR AND A COMPULSIVE
WOMANISER... JUST LIKE ME.

YOUR LORDSHIP
FLATTERS ME!



YEAH, RIGHT. JUST BEAR IN MIND TO
STAY AWAY FROM MY OWN HUNTING
GROUNDS... OR ELSE... I'LL CRUSH
YOU LIKE A COCKROACH.



I THINK HE
LIKES YOU.

YES. I GOT THE
SAME IMPRESSION.



ODYSSEUS!

PERSEPHONE!



YOU ARE COMING ALONG! THANK HEAVENS! I'LL HAVE A REAL FRIEND TO TALK TO.



YES, HE HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING A GREAT TALKER!...



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU?

JUST LOVE ME... AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU.

SUDDENLY I NOTICED THAT HELEN WAS KEEPING HERSELF APART.



HELEN... WHAT'S THE MATTER?



I THINK IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR ME TO COME ALONG, ODYSSEUS. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOU DON'T NEED ME WHERE YOU ARE GOING.



WRONG. HE NEEDS YOU AND HE WANTS YOU, EVEN IF HE DOESN'T FULLY REALISE IT YET.

IT'S YOU HE LOVES, ATHENA. NOT ME.

YOU ARE MISTAKEN, MY GIRL. HE LOVES US BOTH. THE QUESTION IS DO YOU LOVE HIM ENOUGH TO PUT UP WITH HIS FICTITIOUS AND UTTERLY UNRELIABLE CHARACTER WHEN IT COMES TO THE AFFAIRS OF THE HEART?



I THINK I DO HAVE FEELINGS FOR HIM.



THEN THE THREE OF US WOULD BE ONE HAPPY FAMILY.

IT SOUNDS WEIRD, BUT ALSO PROMISING...



WELCOME TO THE WAYS OF THE GODS, SIS.

STRANGE WAYS, YET WE'LL HAVE TO TRY TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT, ATHENA.

AND WE'LL SUCCEED, HELEN. YOU'LL SEE... WE'LL SUCCEED.

ATHENA STAYED WITH US THAT NIGHT BEFORE THE DEPARTURE TO THE QUARTER ASSIGNED TO US ABOARD THE FLYING SHIP.



THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE WE DEPART...

ODYSSEUS, YOU ARE AWARE BY NOW THAT WE ARE NOT GODS, AS MOST EARTHLINGS BELIEVE.

WE ARE MERELY A VERY ADVANCED RACE AND WHILE SIMILAR TO YOU WE ARE ALSO VERY DIFFERENT.



OUR FOREFATHERS CAME TO EARTH FROM OUR DYING PLANET IN SEARCH OF CERTAIN MATERIALS THAT WOULD HELP SAVE OUR HOMELAND.



WE ARE PRESENTLY THE THIRD GENERATION OF THE ORIGINAL COLONISERS.

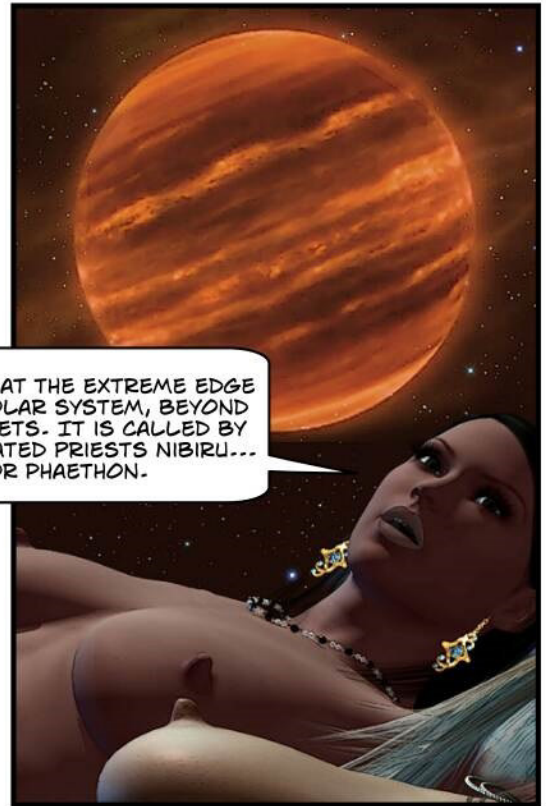


AND NOW, HAVING ACCOMPLISHED OUR MISSION, THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO RETURN BACK HOME.





WHERE EXACTLY IS THIS "HOME"?



A PLANET AT THE EXTREME EDGE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM, BEYOND ALL PLANETS. IT IS CALLED BY YOUR INITIATED PRIESTS NIBIRU... OR PHAETHON.



IS IT LIKE EARTH?

YES AND NO. NIBIRU IS HUGE. THE LARGEST OF ALL PLANETS IN THIS SYSTEM AND IS WARMED BY ITS OWN NATURAL RESOURCES.



I THINK YOU'LL LIKE IT.



HOW FAR IS IT?

VERY FAR. HOWEVER, IN OUR SHIPS IT WILL ONLY TAKE A COUPLE OF DAYS TO REACH IT.



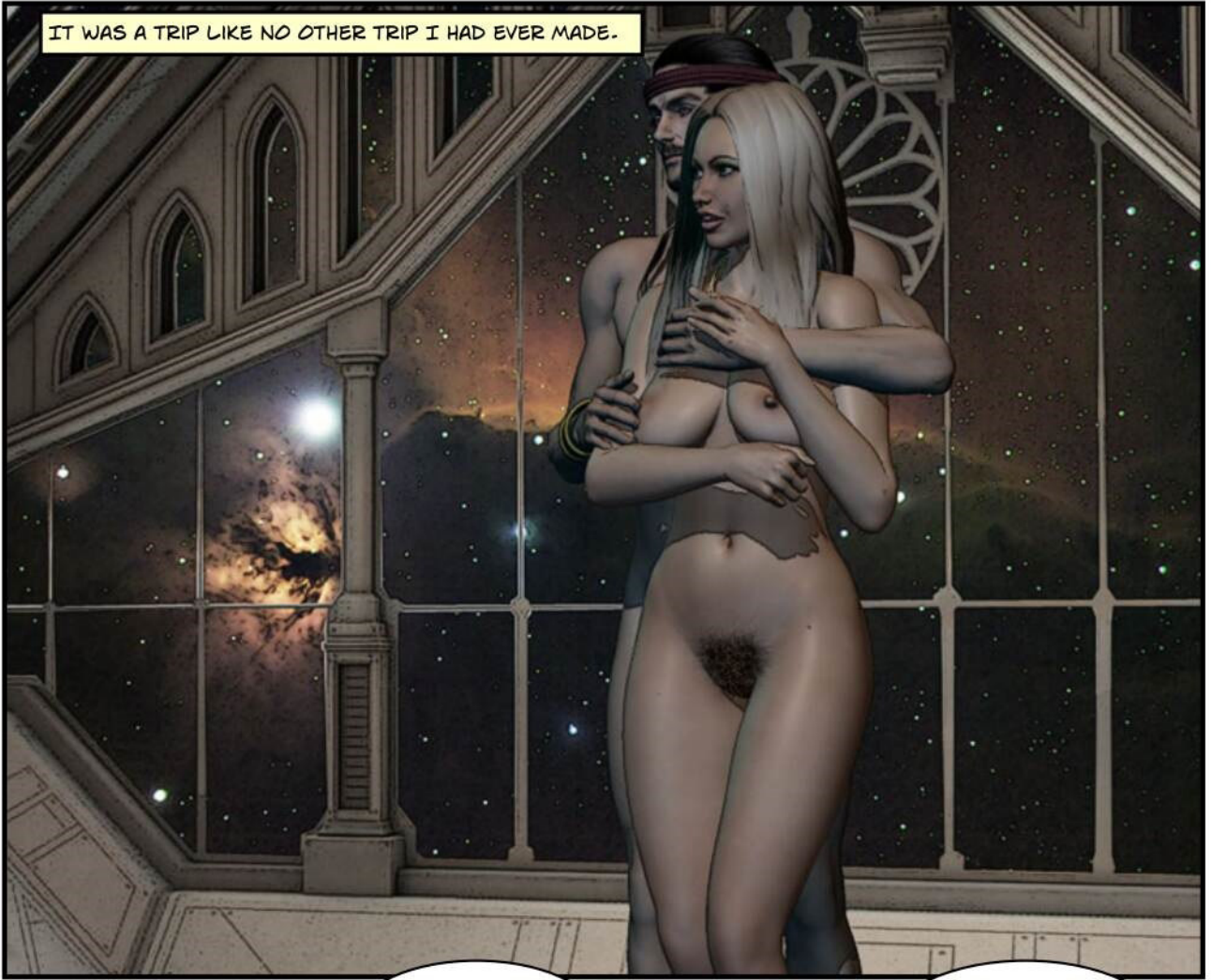
AND ONCE THERE WHAT?

ONCE THERE A NEW LIFE BEGINS FOR YOU... FOR US ALL.

THE HUGE SHIPS OF THE GODS TOOK OFF FROM
VARIOUS PLACES ON EARTH AT THE SAME TIME.



IT WAS A TRIP LIKE NO OTHER TRIP I HAD EVER MADE.



IT IS LIKE A DREAM!



YES. IT COULD BE A DREAM. A WONDERFUL DREAM.



WE ARE NOW AT THE PLANET OF THE GODS AND IT IS A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER HUMAN HAS EVER SEEN BEFORE. I HAVE HELEN AND I HAVE ATHENA... AND A WHOLE NEW LIFE AHEAD OF US... A LONG... LONG LIFE IN A LAND I WOULD SOON LEARN TO CALL MINE.



THE END ?



