

DYNAMITE
5

Q
♥

DAMSELS



STEWART

♥
Q

DYNAMITE
5

Each night, as darkness
descends upon the Earth, its
sons and daughters prepare
to depart their world.

Heads begin to nod,
eyelids grow too heavy
to raise, familiar sounds
echo then trail away.

Sleep comes
to the children
of Earth.
And in slumber
come dreams.

Dreams of
far off lands,
uncharted, yet
instinctively
known.

Of adventures
never before
undertaken,
whose outcome
is nevertheless
inevitable.

Dreams
dreamt for
generations,
for centuries,
for aeons.

Everlasting,
ever-changing,
every night,
for evermore.



A group of children are shown in a state of waking up. In the foreground, a boy with reddish hair is rubbing his eyes. Behind him, a girl with dark hair looks on. To the right, another boy is yawning with his mouth wide open. The background is a warm, golden light, suggesting a dreamlike atmosphere.

One by one, the children awake into
an old, old place within the dream.

Instantly at ease within the confines of the
warm, sweet-scented Sanctum Somnium,
their dream-selves yawn and stretch.

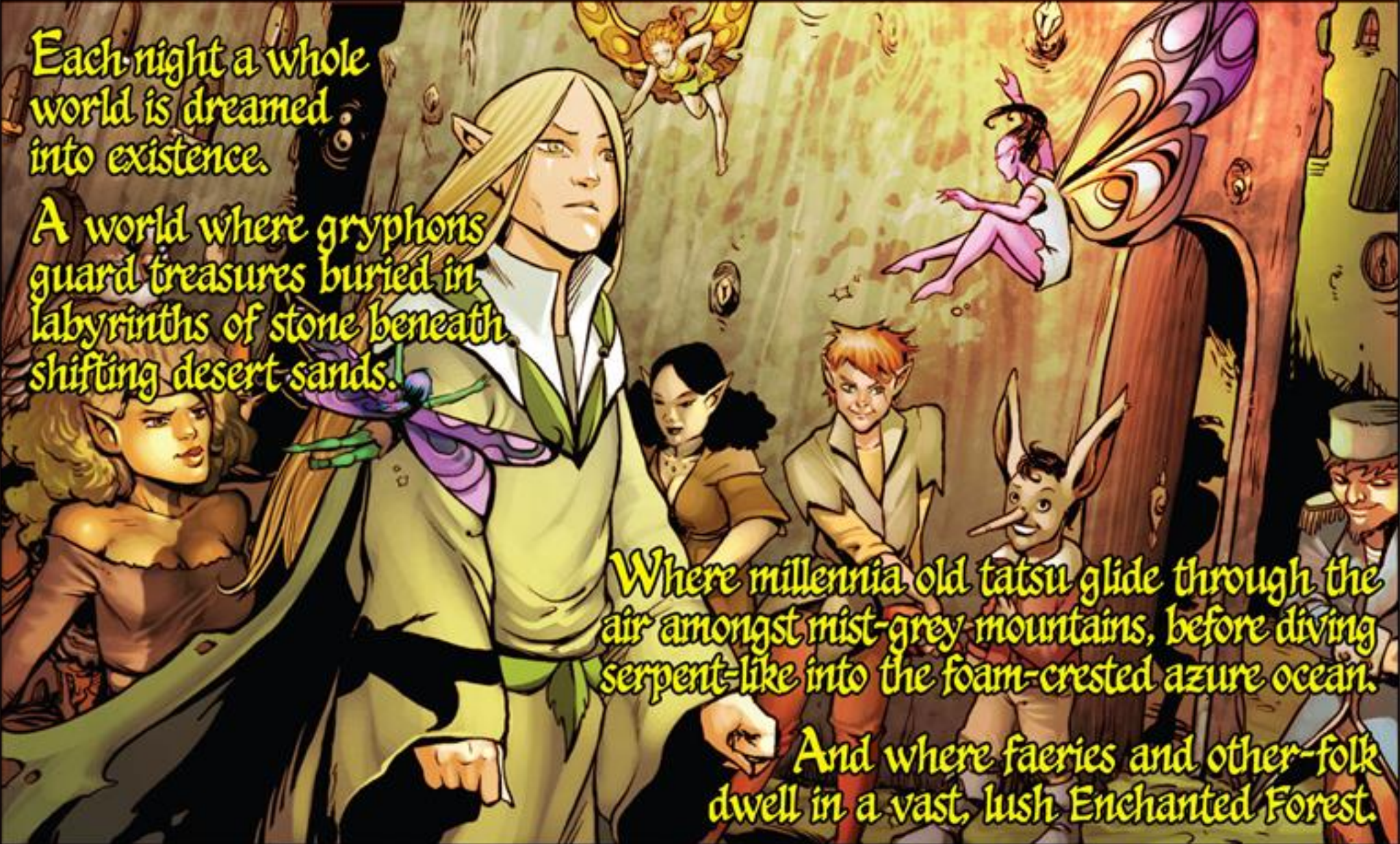
A group of children are gathered around a large, gnarled tree trunk in a dream world. One child is lying down, while others are sitting or standing. The scene is filled with a warm, golden light, and the children appear to be in a state of wonder and discovery.

In this Chamber of Dreams, familiar
tales are retold night after night.

Story-seeds are planted in
the dreamers' imaginations.

And new, though recognizable,
narratives blossom forth.

The stories grow, they adapt, they live.

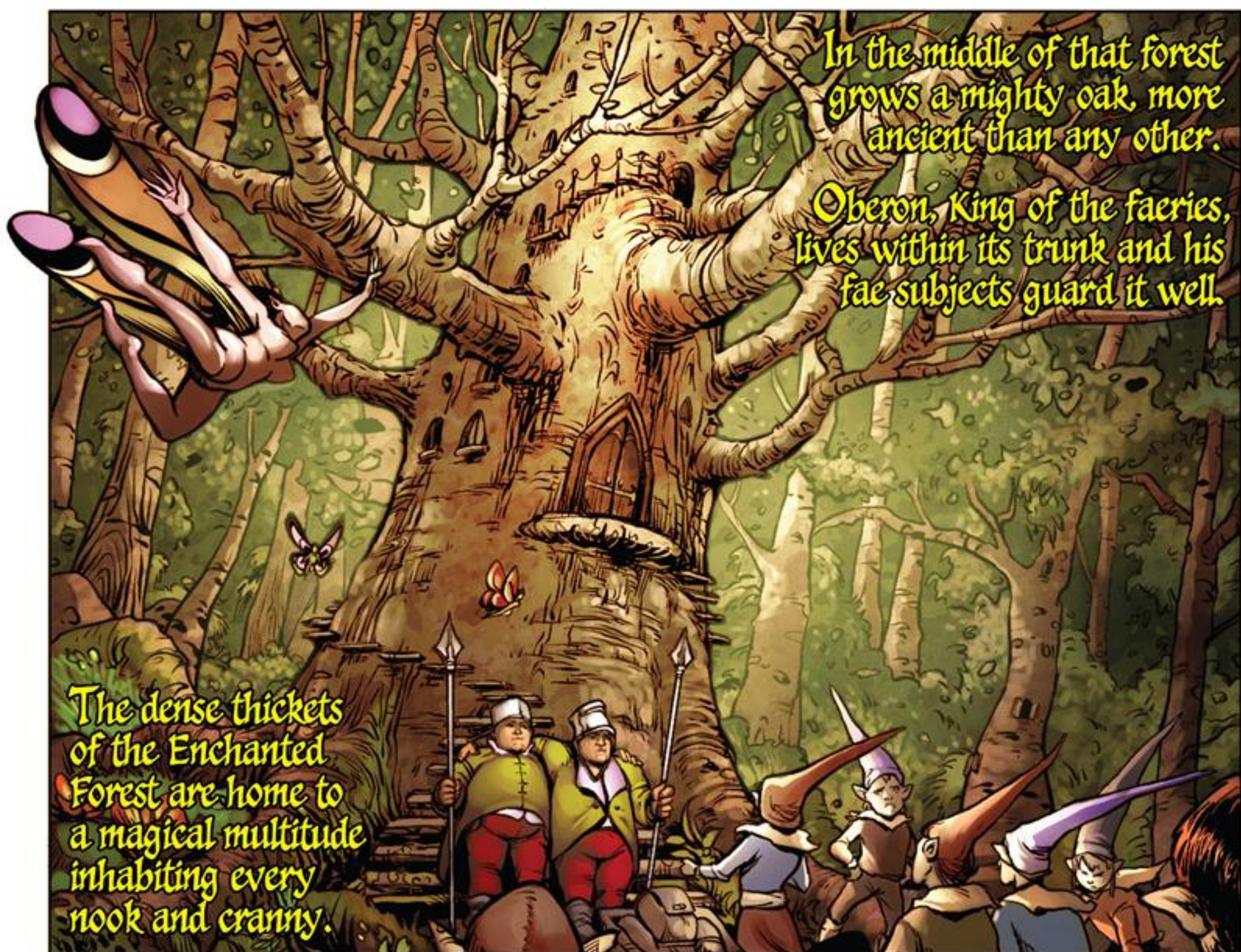
A dream world is depicted with various creatures. In the foreground, a woman with long blonde hair and a green sash looks on. To her left, a woman with dark hair and a brown dress is visible. In the background, a man with a long nose and a hat is seen. The scene is filled with a warm, golden light, and the creatures appear to be in a state of wonder and discovery.

Each night a whole
world is dreamed
into existence.

A world where gryphons
guard treasures buried in
labyrinths of stone beneath
shifting desert sands.

Where millennia old tatsu glide through the
air amongst mist-grey mountains, before diving
serpent-like into the foam-crested azure ocean.

And where faeries and other-folk
dwell in a vast, lush Enchanted Forest.



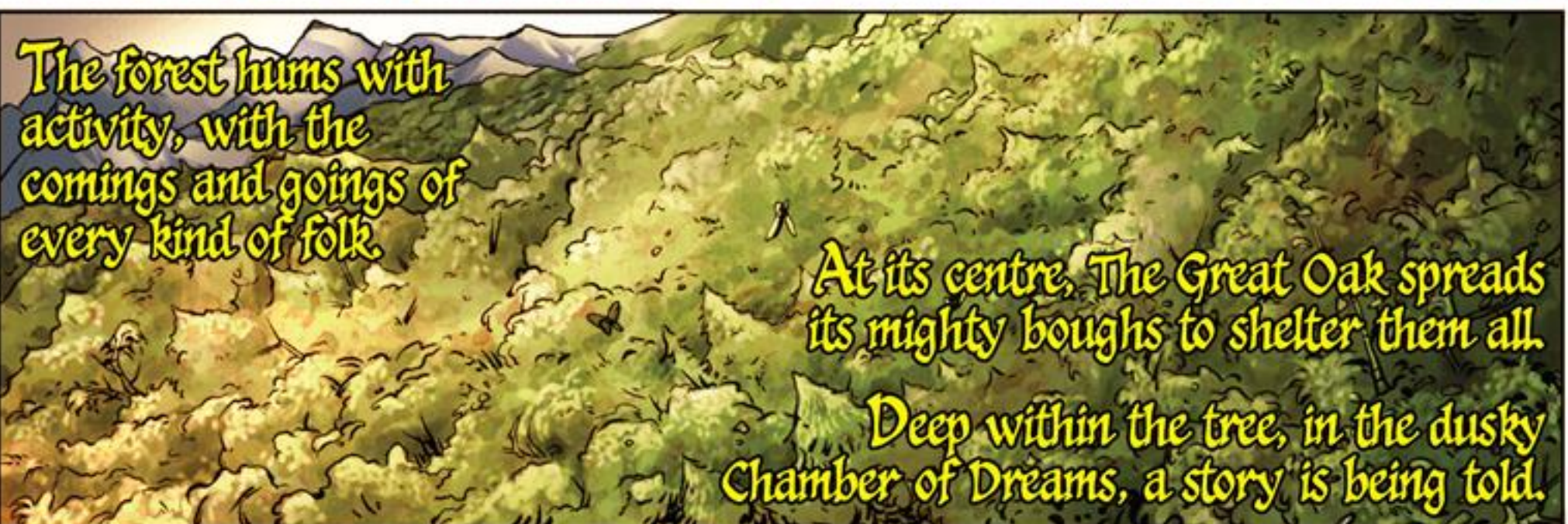
In the middle of that forest grows a mighty oak, more ancient than any other.

Oberon, King of the faeries, lives within its trunk and his fae subjects guard it well.

The dense thickets of the Enchanted Forest are home to a magical multitude inhabiting every nook and cranny.



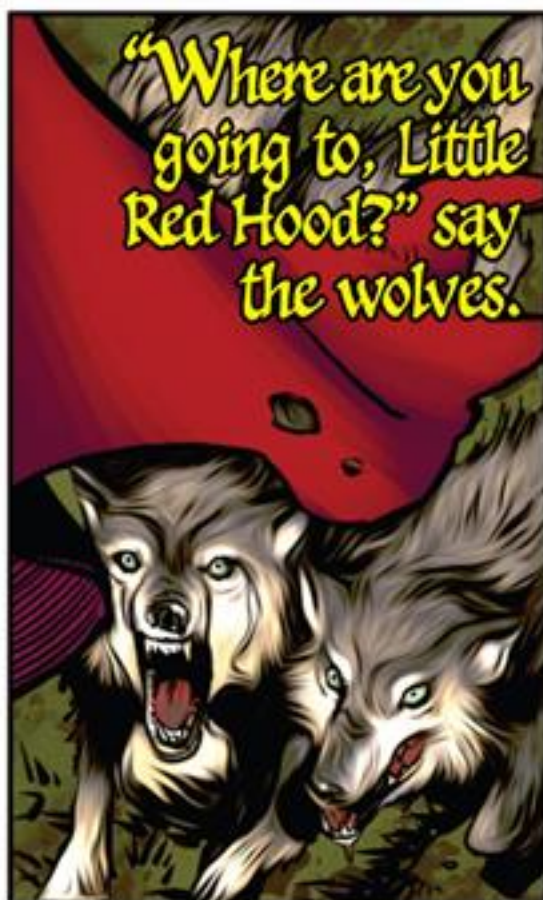
Some, from without the forest, come to pledge allegiance to its king.



The forest hums with activity, with the comings and goings of every kind of folk.

At its centre, The Great Oak spreads its mighty boughs to shelter them all.

Deep within the tree, in the dusky Chamber of Dreams, a story is being told.





GRRRR

RRRR

AAAGH!

AAUGH!
HELP!

GODS
DAMN
THAT
JINN!

IF TALIA
EVER WAS HERE,
SHE'LL HAVE BEEN
EATEN ALIVE BY
WILD BEASTS!



AAAGH!



AAUGH!
HELP!



I HOPE
YOU CHOKE ON
MY HAIR, YOU
FURRY SON OF
A WITCH!

GRAAAA



I SEE IT BUT
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
BEARS HUNTING
HUMANS...

WHAT
HAPPENED?
RUN OUT OF
PORRIDGE?

OR DID YOU
FORGET WHAT I
DO TO BEASTS
THAT EAT
PEOPLE?

YOU HAVE
A CHOICE,
BEARS. LEAVE
NOW, OR DIE.



The Myvathen Mire.

KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK



WHO
DARES
TO...?

OH, IT'S
YOU, RAPUNZEL.
WHAT IS IT?



WE HAVE
COME TO
A STOP.

ALTHOUGH,
I SEE THAT
YOU HAD NOT
NOTICED.



WHAT'S
THE DELAY?

OUR PASSAGE
ACROSS THE
MYVATHEN BRIDGE
IS BLOCKED.

AN AUDIENCE
HAS BEEN
REQUESTED.





"GINNY GREENTEETH--THE
WITCH OF THE MIRE--DEMANDS
TO SPEAK WITH US BEFORE
SHE WILL ALLOW ANY TO PASS.

"JUST US, TALIA.
NOT THE KINGS.

"SHE WAS QUITE
SPECIFIC ABOUT THAT."



VERY WELL,
RAPUNZEL. LET
US SEE WHAT
THE SWAMP HAG
HAS TO SAY.

CAREFUL,
COUSIN. DO
NOT TREAT
THIS LIGHTLY.



"IT SEEMS SOME
HAVE A GREATER
KNOWLEDGE OF
OUR AFFAIRS
THAN WE HAD
ANTICIPATED."

The Enchanted Forest

Deep within
the Great Oak

YOU'RE NEXT,
BROTHERS.

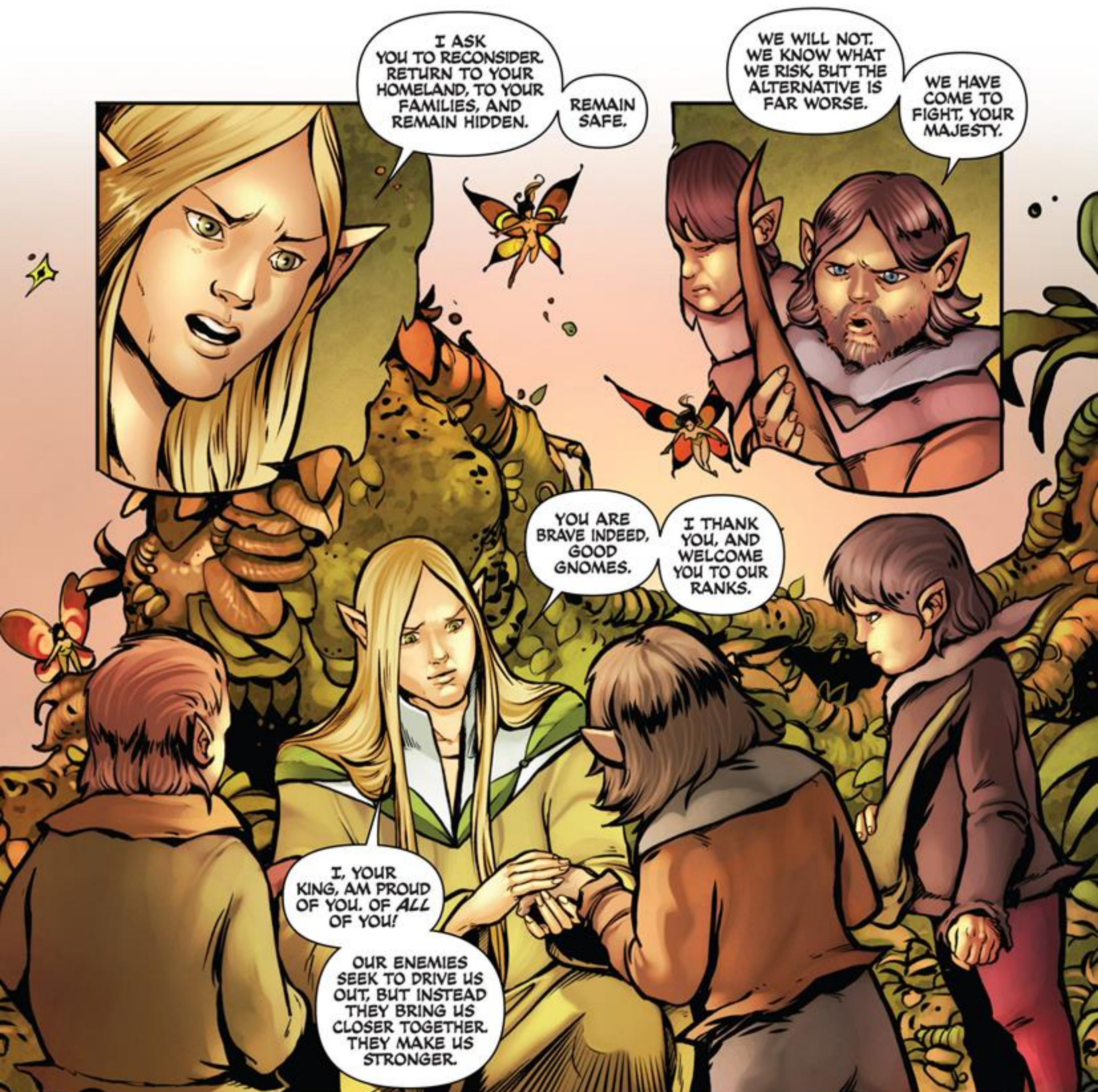
KING
OBERON
WILL SEE
YOU NOW.

YOUR
MAJESTY, IT IS
A PLEASURE TO
MEET YOU.

WE HAVE
JOURNEYED FAR,
YOUR HIGHNESS,
FORCED FROM OUR
OWN PLACE, BY
THE HATRED OF
THE HUMANS.

THE DETESTATION OF
OTHER-FOLK SPREADS LIKE A
DISEASE THROUGH MANKIND,
SIRE. WE COULD BEAR IT
NO LONGER.

WE HAVE
COME TO
OFFER OUR
HELP.



I ASK YOU TO RECONSIDER. RETURN TO YOUR HOMELAND, TO YOUR FAMILIES, AND REMAIN HIDDEN.

REMAIN SAFE.

WE WILL NOT. WE KNOW WHAT WE RISK, BUT THE ALTERNATIVE IS FAR WORSE.

WE HAVE COME TO FIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOU ARE BRAVE INDEED, GOOD GNOMES.

I THANK YOU, AND WELCOME YOU TO OUR RANKS.

I, YOUR KING, AM PROUD OF YOU. OF ALL OF YOU!

OUR ENEMIES SEEK TO DRIVE US OUT, BUT INSTEAD THEY BRING US CLOSER TOGETHER. THEY MAKE US STRONGER.

BY THE GODS OF THE GLADE, OF THE FOREST, OF THE DALE, I, OBERON, SWEAR THEY SHALL REGRET DOING SO!









MY DARLING
QUEEN, IS
EVERYTHING
ALRIGHT?



WHA?
YOU'RE
NOT
TALIA!

YOU'RE
DAMN RIGHT
I'M NOT.



PLEASE, DON'T
SCREAM. I DON'T
WANT TO HURT
YOU. WHAT'S THE
MATTER? DON'T YOU
RECOGNIZE ME?



WHOEVER
YOU ARE, I'LL
GIVE YOU
ANYTHING!

ANYTHING
I WANT? YOU
REALLY *DON'T*
RECOGNIZE ME,
DO YOU?



"I RECOGNIZED
YOU, THE VERY
FIRST TIME I
SAW YOU.

"I KNEW YOU WERE THE
ONE. THE *ONLY* ONE I
COULD EVER LOVE.



"YOU WERE SO BEAUTIFUL,
LEANING THERE IN THE SUN.

"YOUR FRIEND WAS LAUGHING AT
YOU--HOW COULD YOU HOPE TO FIND
LOVE WHEN YOU WERE SO *PICKY*?

"YOU SAID YOU'D FIND *HER*
AT YOUR BIRTHDAY BALL.



"THAT NIGHT, A GREAT STORM BLEW UP, YOUR SHIP WAS THROWN ABOUT LIKE A TOY."

"I SAW YOU ON DECK, DROPPING SAIL. AND I SAW YOU FALL IN."

"THERE YOU WERE, FLOATING WITH YOUR ARMS OUTSTRETCHED. AS IF YOU KNEW I WOULD COME FOR YOU."

"AS IF YOU WANTED *ME* TO SAVE YOU, AND NO-ONE ELSE."

"I WAITED THERE UNTIL THEY FOUND YOU. I WATCHED AS THEY CARRIED YOU AWAY."

"I WENT TO THE SEA WITCH."

"I KNEW I HAD TO GET TO THAT BALL, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST."

"TO WIN YOUR HEART AT THE BALL--TO DANCE--I NEEDED *LEGS*."

"I BEGGED, I PLEADED, UNTIL SHE SAID THERE WAS A WAY."

"I DIDN'T HESITATE. I KNEW IT WAS MEANT TO BE."

"YOU WOULD LOVE ME, AND I WOULD BECOME A REAL GIRL, WE'D BE WED, AND I'D BE A *PRINCESS*!"

"A POTION WOULD GIVE ME LEGS. WALKING WOULD BE...*UNCOMFORTABLE* ...BUT I'D HAVE LEGS!"

"A POTION AND A DAGGER... *THIS* DAGGER I HAVE HERE..."

"YOU LOOKED ME UP AND DOWN, ASKED ME TO DANCE RIGHT AWAY."

"DANCING, YOU HELD ME SO CLOSELY. I KNEW YOU LOVED ME TOO."



"YOU DIDN'T PROPOSE THAT NIGHT, BUT INVITED ME TO THE *NEXT* BALL, ONE MONTH HENCE.

"SO I WAITED, FOR THAT WHOLE MONTH, JUST THINKING OF YOU.

"IMAGINING OUR LIFE *TOGETHER*.



"EVENTUALLY, THE TIME PASSED, AND AGAIN I CAME TO THE CASTLE.

"THE WALKING HURT, BUT I THOUGHT ONLY OF YOU.

"WHEN I ARRIVED... I-I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOME MISTAKE.



"THERE WAS NO BALL, IT WAS A *WEDDING!* YOUR WEDDING...TO ANOTHER GIRL!

"I SAW YOU THERE COOING OVER EACH OTHER LIKE TURTLE DOVES, AND COULD ONLY THINK IT WAS A DREAM.

"A STRANGE... HORRIBLE DREAM."



THAT WAS IT FOR YOU, WASN'T IT? "*HAPPILY EVER AFTER*"? IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?

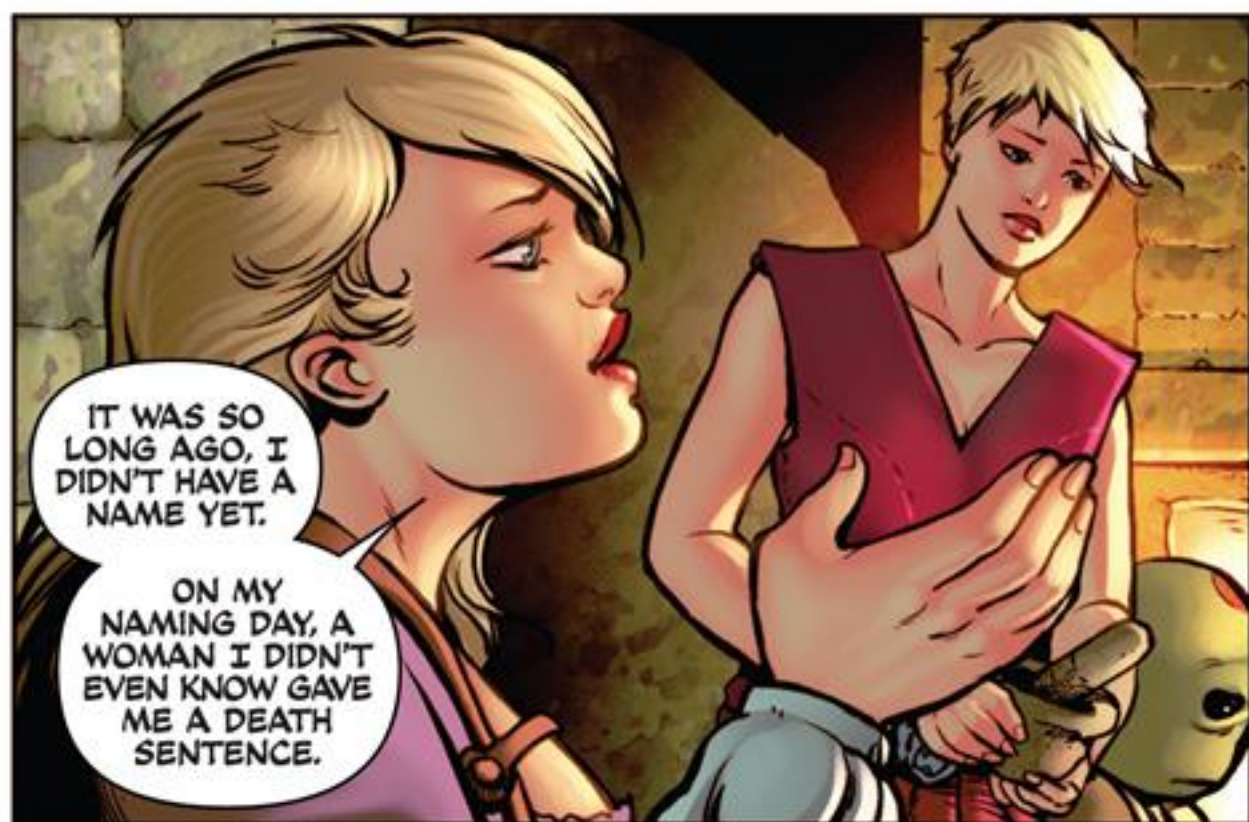
PLEASE, I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN...



"YOUR *PRECIOUS*, BELOVED WIFE.

"YOU FOOL. SHE'S NOT WHO YOU THINK SHE IS.

"NOT AT ALL."



IT WAS SO LONG AGO, I DIDN'T HAVE A NAME YET.

ON MY NAMING DAY, A WOMAN I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW GAVE ME A DEATH SENTENCE.



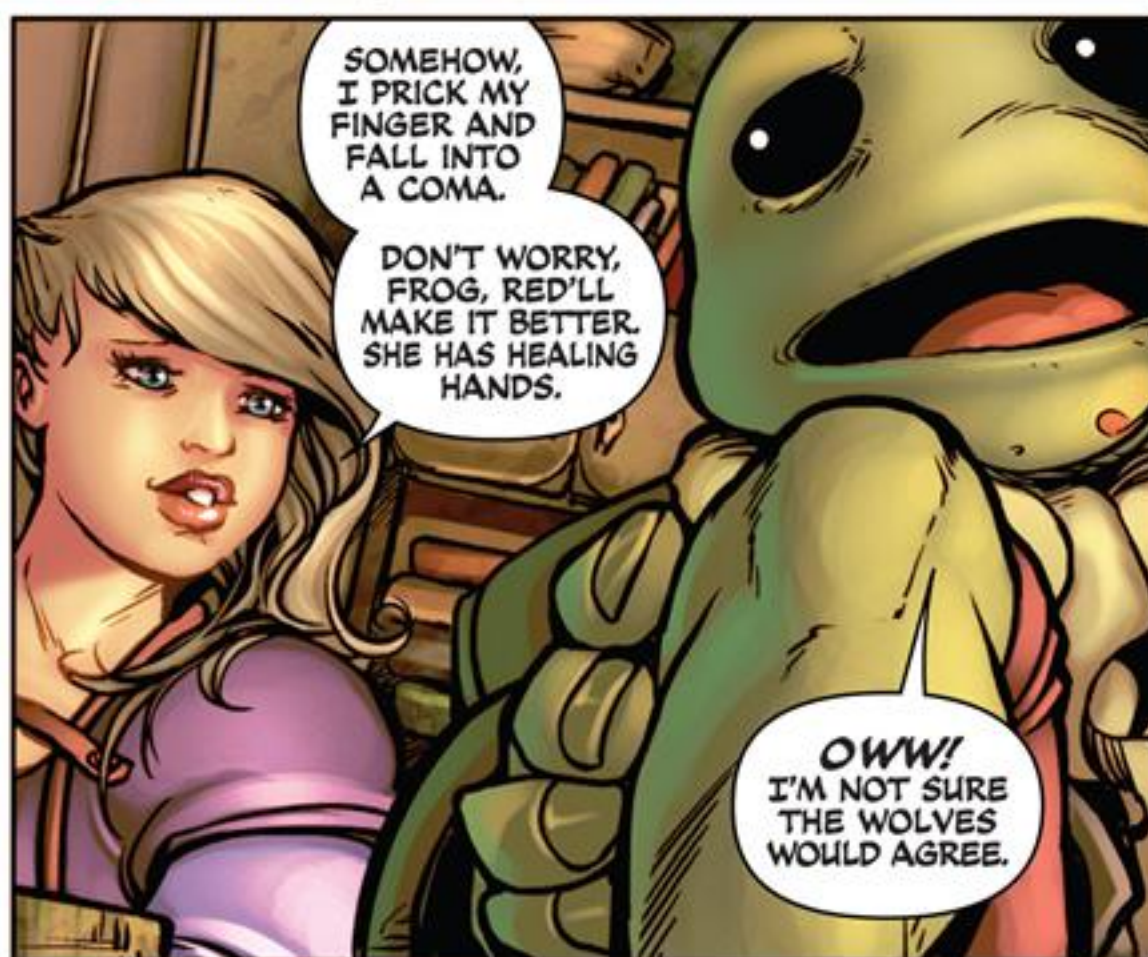
MY FATHER INVITED THE WHOLE FOREST--HUMAN AND FAE--EXCEPT FOR ONE OLD CRONE.

SHE ARRIVED ANYWAY, FURIOUS WITH US ALL, AND BESTOWED HER LITTLE "GIFT". SHE PROMISED ME DEATH BY SPINDLE WHEN I TURNED FIFTEEN.



SOME FAIRY TRIES TO HELP, AND MANAGES TO MAKE IT SLEEP INSTEAD OF DEATH...

MY FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY, I FIND MYSELF IN A CASTLE TOWER WITH AN OLD WOMAN SAT SPINNING. IT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS, I KNOW.



SOMEHOW, I PRICK MY FINGER AND FALL INTO A COMA.

DON'T WORRY, FROG, RED'LL MAKE IT BETTER. SHE HAS HEALING HANDS.

OWW!
I'M NOT SURE THE WOLVES WOULD AGREE.



SO, I FALL ASLEEP, BUT SO DOES EVERYONE ELSE.

I STAY YOUNG, PROTECTED BY THE ENCHANTMENT. BUT EVERYONE ELSE AGES NORMALLY. THEY DIE. THEY ROT.



"ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, A KISS WAKES ME, I MARRY PRINCE AURORE OF PERRAULT.

"WHY? MY HOME WAS IN RUINS. MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS ALL DEAD. I WAS *STILL* FIFTEEN.

"WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE?"

"AURORE BECAME KING, MAKING ME THE MOST SCRUTINIZED GIRL IN PERRAULT."



"CRITICISM ON MY WEIGHT, MY LOOKS, MY CLOTHES...AND OF COURSE WHERE WAS THE HEIR?"

"I WAS DAYDREAMING ONE DAY, STARING AT MY OWN REFLECTION, WHEN SUDDENLY THE FACE BEFORE ME WASN'T MY OWN."



"I THOUGHT BOREDOM HAD DRIVEN ME MAD..."

"...UNTIL SHE SPOKE."



DON'T WORRY TALIA, MY DEAR, THIS WON'T HURT A BIT, AND YOU'LL REMEMBER NOTHING.

ALL THAT WAS YOURS IS MINE, AND MINE IT WILL REMAIN.

NO FRIEND SHALL KNOW YOU, BY SIGHT, NOR VOICE.



YOU WILL WANDER THE LAND TO THE END OF YOUR DAYS.

NONE SHALL WELCOME YOU; NONE SHALL BE YOUR FRIEND.



YOU SHALL LIVE ON, AN EMPTY VESSEL, AND REMEMBER NOTHING.

NOT OF YOUR FORMER LIFE, NOR YOUR FORMER SELF.



"I DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS. OR WHERE."

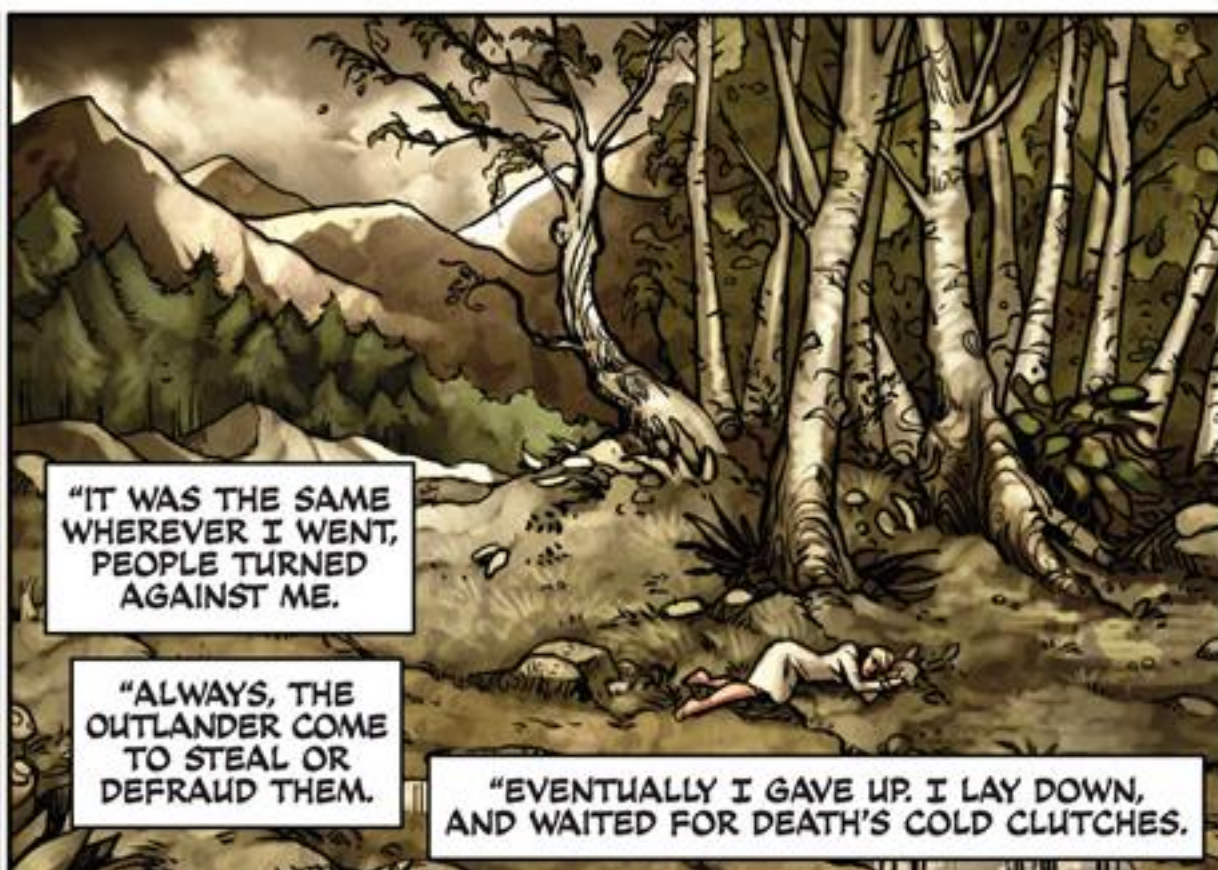
"OR ANYTHING."





"I WAS DESPERATE, I HAD ONLY THE CLOTHES I STOOD UP IN, AND YET NO-ONE WOULD HELP ME.

"SOMEONE SAID I WAS A THIEF, THEN ANOTHER SAID I'D PUT A HEX ON THEIR CHILDREN.



"IT WAS THE SAME WHEREVER I WENT, PEOPLE TURNED AGAINST ME.

"ALWAYS, THE OUTLANDER COME TO STEAL OR DEFRAUD THEM.

"EVENTUALLY I GAVE UP. I LAY DOWN, AND WAITED FOR DEATH'S COLD CLUTCHES.



"INSTEAD, I FOUND A WARMER EMBRACE.

"STRONG ARMS LIFTED ME FROM MY DEGRADATION.

"HEALING HANDS BATHED MY WOUNDS, AND GAVE ME FOOD."



TRUE LOVE.

ALL ENCHANTMENTS CAN BE BROKEN BY TRUE LOVE.

THE WITCH HAD EITHER FORGOTTEN, OR DIDN'T THINK I'D A HOPE OF FINDING IT.



TRUE LOVE? I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I... I MEAN I JUST ASSUMED...



TRUE LOVE.





I GAVE UP
EVERYTHING
FOR YOU.

EVERY STEP
LIKE WALKING
ON BROKEN
GLASS.

BANISHED
FROM THE
UNDERSEA
KINGDOM
FOREVER!



BUT, THE
SEA WITCH GAVE
ME THIS DAGGER.
IF I COULDN'T
WIN YOUR HEART,
I SHOULD
TAKE IT.

FOR
HER!



MY GODS!
YOUR MAJESTY,
WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?

...STOP...
IT...



...STOP...
THAT...
THING...

QUICKLY!
FETCH THE
HEALER, HE'S
BLEEDING
BADLY!

WHAT WAS
IT? A *BEAST*
PERHAPS?

ONE THING'S
CERTAIN; NOTHING
HUMAN COULD
SURVIVE OUT
THERE!



WAIT, SO *I'M* SUPPOSED TO FALL IN LOVE?

JUST FIND A MAN, OR A WOMAN, OR *SOMEONE*... THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?



YOUR STORY... I COULD HAVE TOLD IT MYSELF.

YET, MY TATTOOS WERE DONE *OVER AND OVER AGAIN!*

I FORGET! I ALWAYS FORGET! I WORK IT OUT, I PIECE IT TOGETHER...



I CAN END IT FOR YOU. I THINK I CAN BREAK THE ENCHANTMENT.



YOU ARE RAPUNZEL, THE GIRL IN THE TOWER WITH THE BEAUTIFUL HAIR...

...AND YOU *STILL* LOVE KING PERSINE.



MY GODS!

PERSINE...



"I LOVE HIM.

"AND THAT... THAT *WITCH* HAS HIM PRISONER!



"I HAVE TO SAVE HIM!"

To be continued...