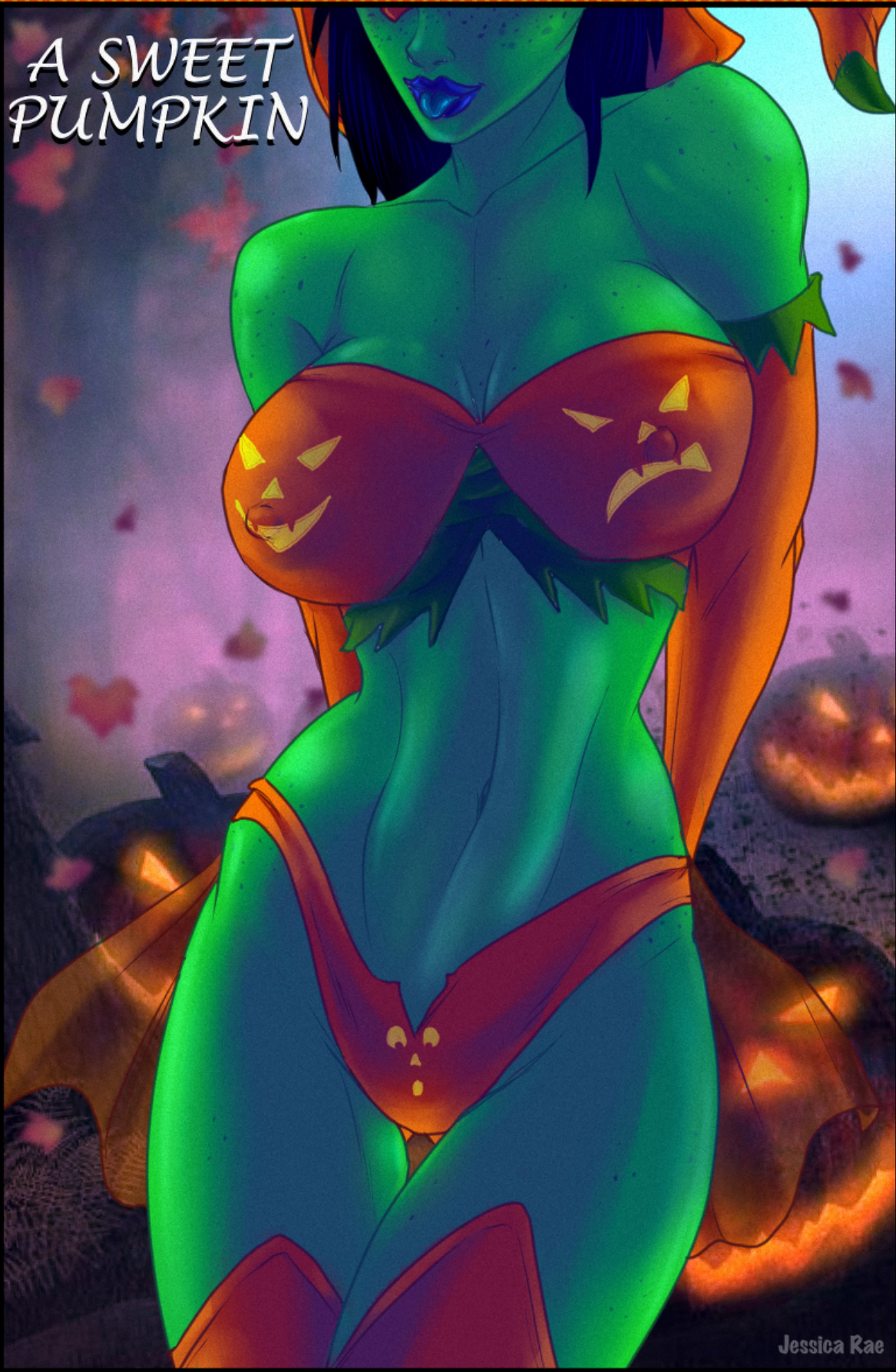


A SWEET  
PUMPKIN



Jessica Rae





♪ Spooky cookies  
wanna go CRUNCH!  
Spooky cookies  
wanna go-!

I don't wanna sing  
THAT song.

How about  
something  
about us?!

YEAH!



Oh, wow!

Be quiet. We  
don't want that  
witch knowing  
we're here.

Sorry. But her candy looks so  
amazing. Grab as much as you can.



Our shop  
will be booming  
with business  
tomorrow.

I'm  
still  
not  
so  
sure  
about  
this.

What  
if she finds out  
WE stole the candy  
and comes after  
us?



As long as we hurry,  
that witch won't. And it's not  
like she'll go searching our village  
to find her candy, Will.

...  
And just  
in case,  
you're  
not feeling  
guilty about  
taking from  
a man-eater  
hmm?



Um, maybe. I  
heard that she  
just wants to be  
liked, so ...

Don't be stupid.

Hey, Claire. Grab a  
singing pumpkin. It  
oughta sell well.

Sure thing, boss.

Uh, I don't  
think we, um ...



♪ Help! I need somebody!  
Help! Not just anybody! Help!  
You know I need someone! ♪



Shut up.



\*yawn\*  
Huh? It's  
after midnight  
and those stupid  
villagers wanna  
mess with me.  
What's wrong,  
you guys?



Claire.  
Come on.

I'm moving. I'm moving.

Sweets!

She's taking  
our brother!



He didn't  
do anything  
wrong.

They  
even took  
some of  
your  
candy!

Those humans  
took one of us;  
Billy Bob Joe.

Will you  
get him  
back,  
Sweets?



Hmm, lemme  
work some  
magic, guys.  
Your brother  
will be back in  
by tomorrow.

Yay!



I almost feel bad for those pitiful humans.  
... Almost.

Since tomorrow- well, technically today is Hallow's Eve, I best get dressed in a more fun attire.

Let's see. I believe there were three thieves, so best be crative with how I handle all three of them. Hmm... I'll use a... pumpkin, candy and an apple. Yes!



Hee hee hee- This'll be sweet justice!

Speaking of sweet ...

I'm already hungry for breakfast. Best be heading to town.



**CANDY!**  
Just one mug of random candy bits cost just two farthings or one halfpenny!

Hey, dad! Can we get some? Please?

A candy cane costs just 2 halfpence!

Mmm, I don't see why not. It's at a good price.



BAKERY & SWEET SHOP



Such cute little girls. I'll get two mugs of candy put together for you right away.



Oh, you make the best candy, mister.

Hmph-

He's been stealing candy from that witch's house over the last couple of months.

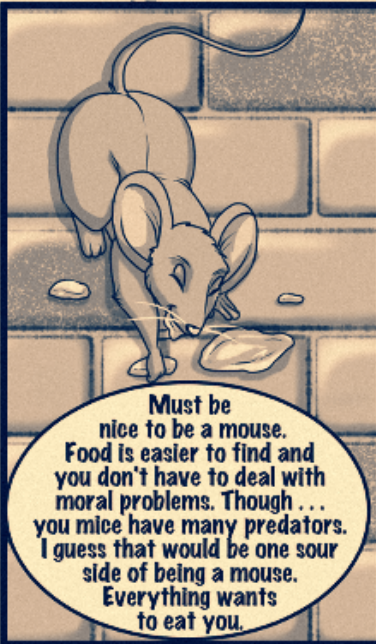


I know last night was my first time stealing from her and she hasn't gone after the boss before, but I have this feeling that the witch will have her revenge after taking the pumpkin. I'd return it, but... I can't afford to lose this job.



\*sigh\*  
I'll be back, boss. Just need a bite to eat.

Got you some cheese, Squeaks. Just be sure to hide before anyone else gets in here.



Must be nice to be a mouse. Food is easier to find and you don't have to deal with moral problems. Though... you mice have many predators. I guess that would be one sour side of being a mouse. Everything wants to eat you.



I guess I should see myself as lucky for being human. Ah-

Rrr-

**RAAAAAAH!!!**

Oh... crap.



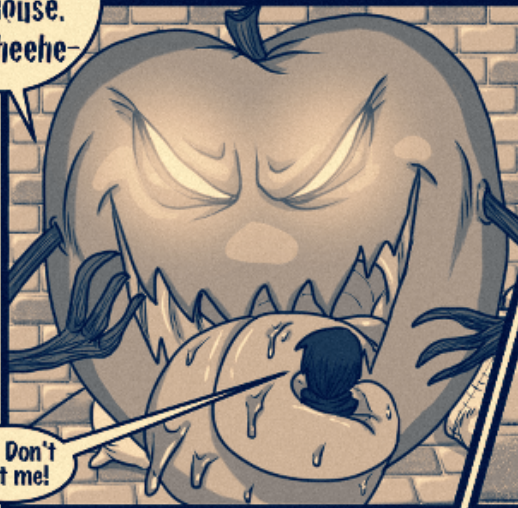
H-hey! STOP THAT!



HEE  
HEE  
HEE!



Human like  
a mouse.  
Hehehehe-



No! Don't  
eat me!

Please! I'll  
do anything  
you want, but  
don't kill me.



Oh, really?

When did  
you go-?



You promise to do  
as I ask, human? No matter  
what I ask for? If you don't, you  
go to the apple's tum or just  
straight into mine.

I-I WILL!  
I PROMISE!



You best  
count yourself  
lucky. You don't  
seem scummy,  
so I'm giving  
you another  
and final  
chance.



Besides,  
I could use  
someone to  
have some  
tricking and  
treating fun  
with. Sound  
good to  
you?

Oof!

Y-yes, ma'am.

Call me Sweets,  
please. Now,  
as for the first  
thing I want you  
to do...





I want you to quit your job.

But ... what am I supposed to do to get money? I can't just-

Do you want to be witch food or have a chance at life?



Okay! Okay! I'll quit! I just know that they get very angry with anyone that quits. I may get beaten even for taking their charity for granted.

Charity, huh? I tell you what; I'll show you true charity they do beat you and help you more than they ever would. NOW GO!



LATER

We gave you this job out of the kindness in our hearts. Paid you and all you gave us were your complaints and minimal work.

Tell us why we shouldn't punish you for quitting in such a way?



I'm sorry. I really am. I just can't work here any longer with a clear conscience.

Oh, you will be sorry, you disgusting filthy worker!



Oy, glad I'm not that guy.

WHACK  
WHACK  
WHACK

Mmm, I think I know I know which one shall be my first course.





Take your rat and don't ever come back! Don't be spreading any more of those stupid lies that we steal candy from the Sweets Witch, wretch!

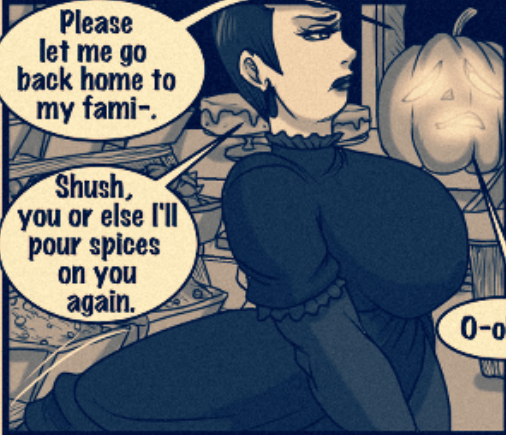
Oh, my goodness. There's blood all over his face.

There'd be blood everywhere if he was my worker and lied about me.



Nice touch, love. Best to call it a lie from the start before he spreads the rumor about.

\*tsk\* With one worker down, I'll need to help out around your shop. Keep on selling treats while I peel apples for the pies.



Please let me go back home to my fami-.

Shush, you or else I'll pour spices on you again.

O-okay.



I didn't think it was this dark in here before.

Meh, I know my way around here. No point in wasting matches. I'll just take the bag of apples out front and peel there.

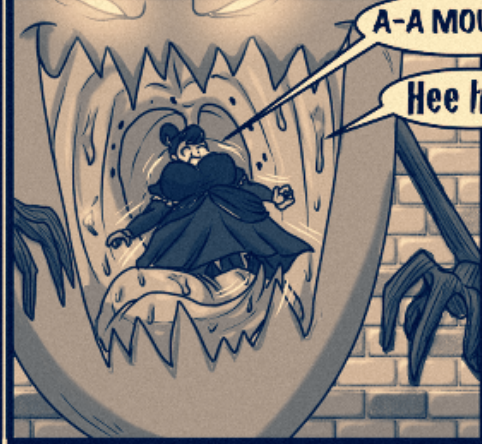


It smells like strong apple cider down here. And why is the floor so ... gross?

\*tsk\* I'll need a match after all.



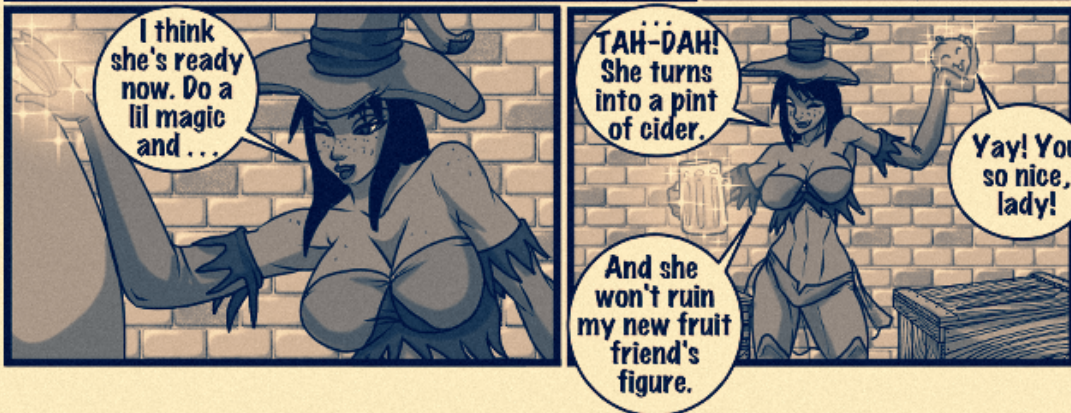
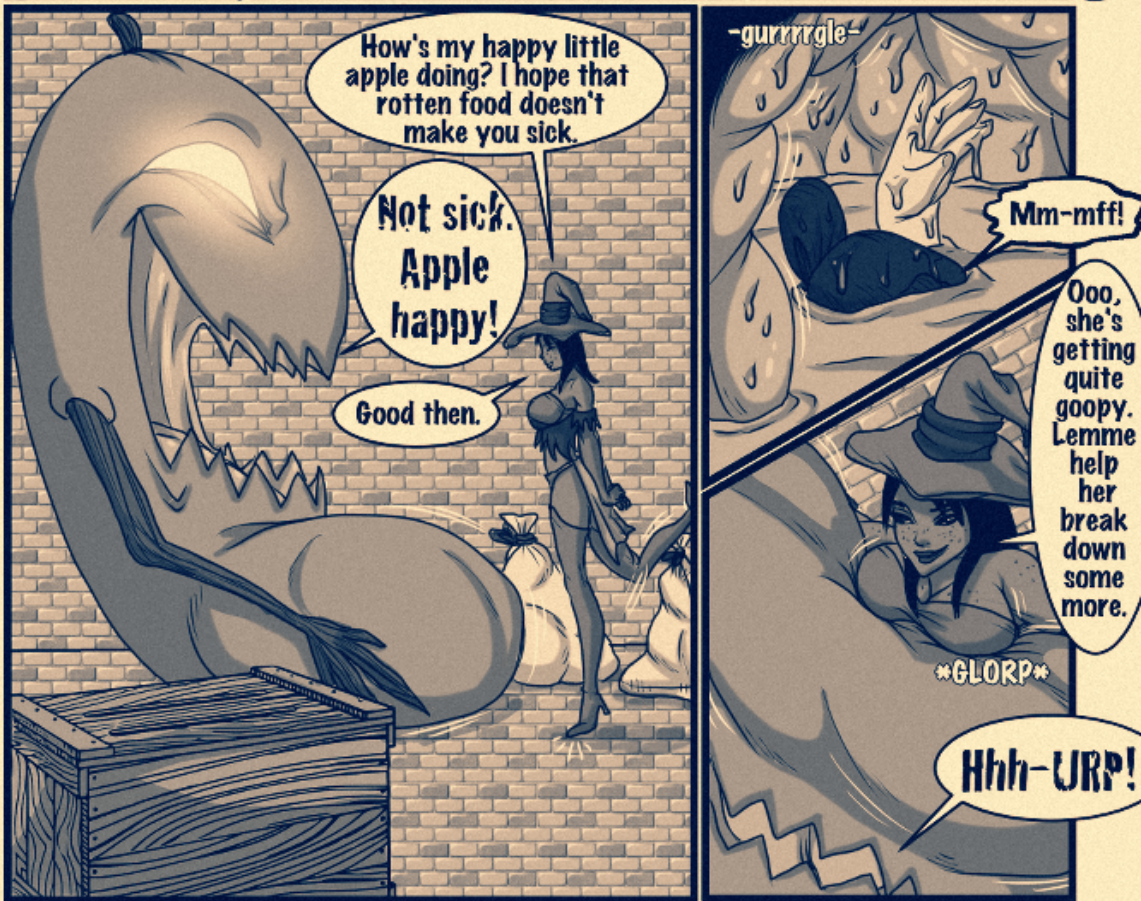
Huh, what is this?



A-A MOUTH?!

Hee hee -









Whoa. Never thought be hot to watch person drink cider.

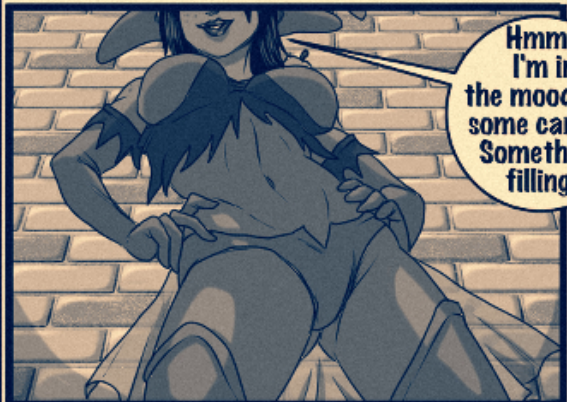
gluck  
gluck



\*snap\*

Did you actually just -URP- say "hot"? Lemme get rid of this glass.

Hee- So what now?



Hmm, I'm in the mood for some candy. Something filling.

LATER



Sorry, boss, but I couldn't find your wife anywhere.

Meh, she probably went home early. Doesn't matter though.



We made a good bit of coins of every sort today. You can take your portion of the profit and a bag of candy, alright?

Sure thing. See ya tomorrow.

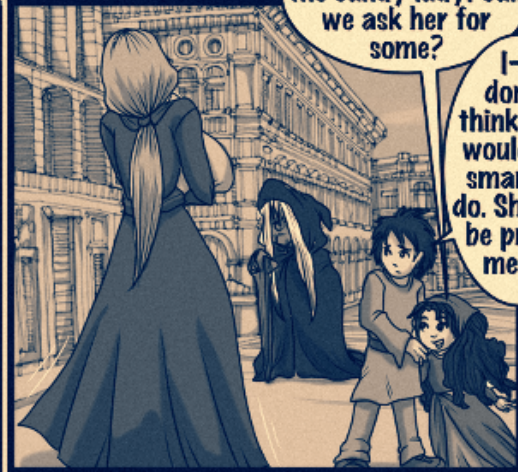


All I wanted were some bits of gingerbread and ooh, it smells so good.



Big brother, its the candy lady! Can we ask her for some?

I-I don't think that would be smart to do. She can be pretty mean.



Excuse me, young lady.

I was wondering if you didn't mind giving me a small bit to eat. I haven't ate in so long.

Hmph-

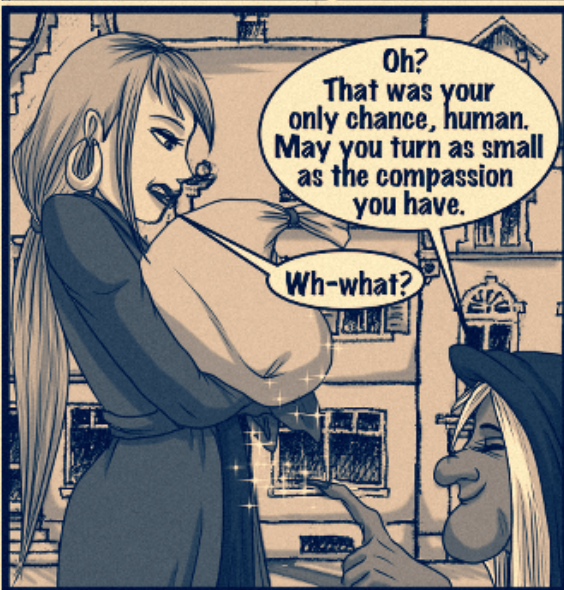
I'm not a charity, hag. Go to the poor house for some food.

What do you want?



Oh? That was your only chance, human. May you turn as small as the compassion you have.

Wh-what?

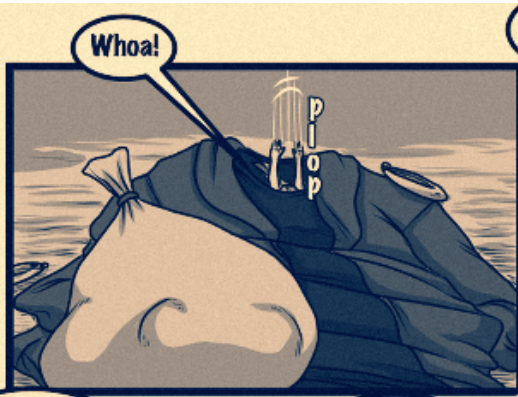


My ear rings?! MY CLOTHES!

Can't have my food with a wrapper on and ear rings hurting it.







Whoa!

pop

So I need some food to help my magic.

An actual monster in town on Hallow's Eve? Should we tell someone?

Put me down, witch!



I-I've shrunk? How did you do that?

I thought that would be obvious. I'm a witch, dear. The one you stole from.



Oh, by the way, children...

\*gulp\* Y-yes?

Take the gingerbread and be sure to go home. Don't want any monsters getting you when the sun sets.



And doing magic not food related weakens me.

DON'T TOUCH ME!



O-okay.



LATER

I'm glad my uncle let me be able to work on his farm for food and a bed.

\*squeaks\*



But no money in this. I don't know if anyone will hire me in this village ever again. I don't know if I should move to the next village or what I should do.

You cleaning the stall, Will?



Oh! Hey, Uncle! Sorry. I was taking a small break. I'm getting right back to work.



Ah, no need to worry about you taking a break around me. It's been a rough day for you, so I understand you taking your time. Just make sure you take care of all of the animals before the sun sets.

Will do.



I'll be setting out the jack-o-lanterns to scare away evil spirits. Mmm . . . or maybe carve turnips into scary faces. Meeeee, later, Will.

Later.

Speaking of evil spirits, I really don't know if I want that "charity" the witch was talking about.

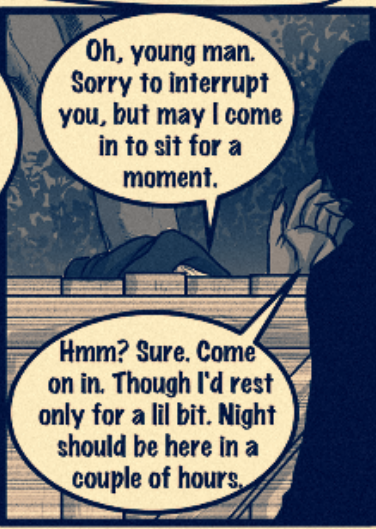


I just want her to take her pumpkin back home and have people stop stealing from her.

Besides, if people figure out that I spoke with a witch and even agreed to do something for her, I may get hung. I wish someone could show her some kindness to hopefully change her back into an elf.



Oh, young man. Sorry to interrupt you, but may I come in to sit for a moment.



Hmm? Sure. Come on in. Though I'd rest only for a lil bit. Night should be here in a couple of hours.

I know. I know. Because witches like the one you were talking about, might come out to play.



Y-you heard?

Y-you?

NEIGH!!!



Oh, don't worry, dear. I won't tell anyone. By the way, does this arm make me look short? Heehee-



Will, is it?  
It's so sweet  
and naive of you  
to think I want to  
be an elf again, but  
I enjoy the power I  
have as a witch.  
Being a witch  
allows me to  
handle this lil  
treat.

I'M  
NOT  
A TREAT,  
YOU FILTHY  
TRAMP!

Oh, shush.  
And as for you,  
Will, I'd like to  
see you in . . . a  
lil gingerbread  
outfit.

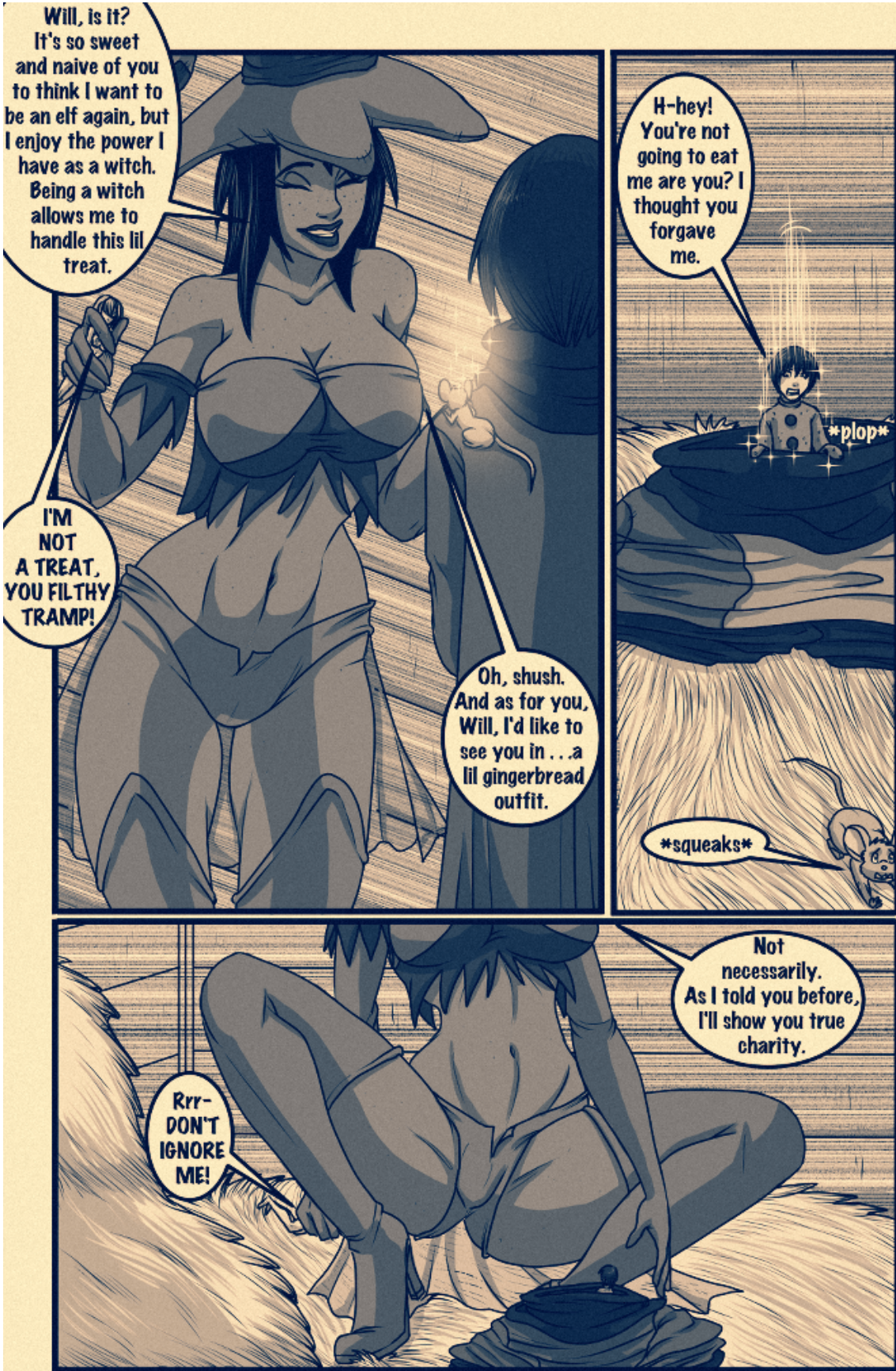
H-hey!  
You're not  
going to eat  
me are you? I  
thought you  
forgave  
me.

\*plop\*

\*squeaks\*

Not  
necessarily.  
As I told you before,  
I'll show you true  
charity.

Rrr-  
DON'T  
IGNORE  
ME!

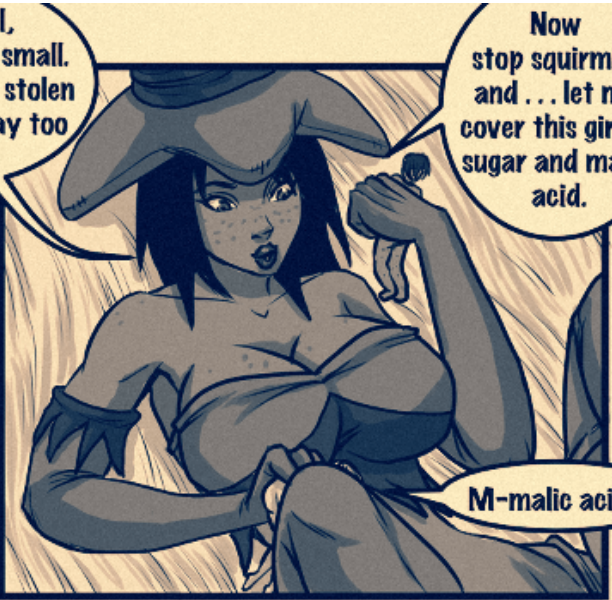




Th-then what are you planning on doing for me? It's not like people get shrunk down and put in an actual cookie to get ... money.



Little Will, you think too small. Money can be stolen and given away too easily.



Now stop squirming and ... let me cover this girl in sugar and malic acid.

M-malic acid?!



Eee-yuck! Get this stuff off of me!

Mmm, I don't take orders from food. And that sweet and sour flavor should help out your taste.



At least, it'll match your sour personality and make you taste like candy.

NO! Don't put me in there!



Aah-♥

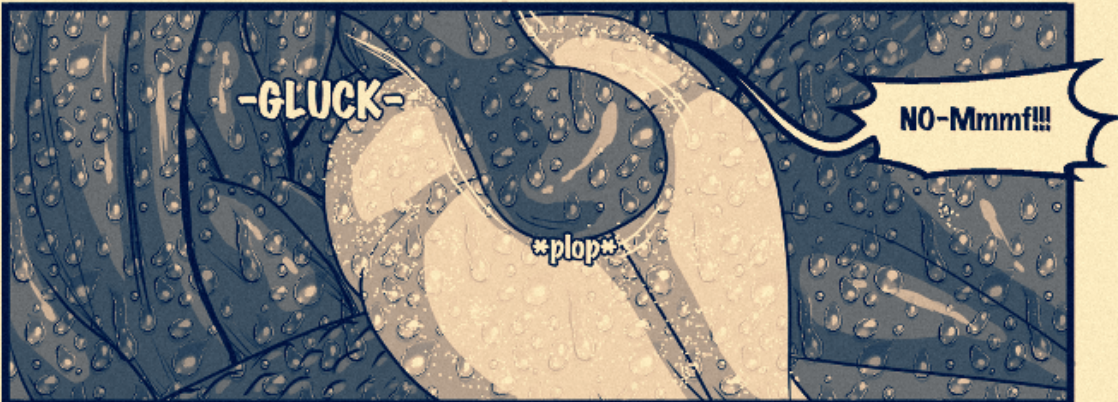
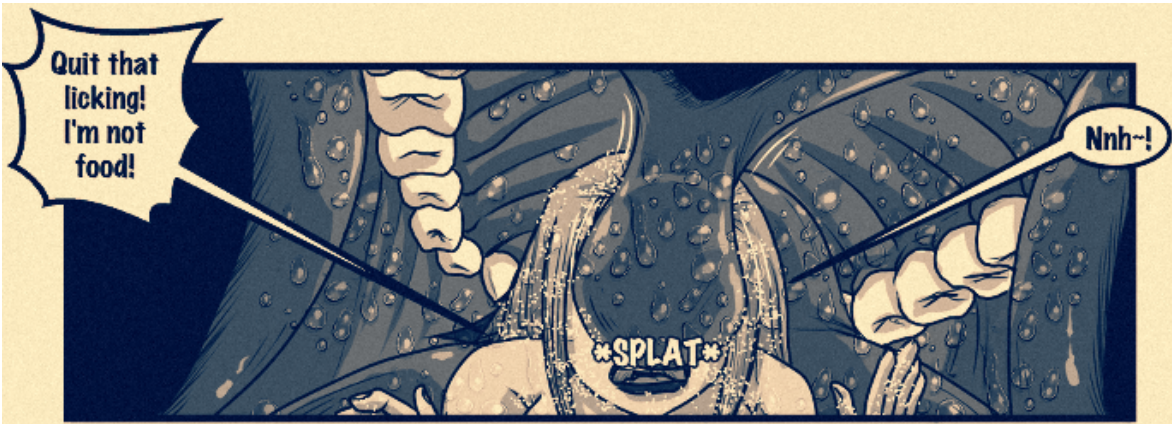
AAAAH!!!



DON'T YOU DAR- EEE!!!

\*PLOP\*











Well, I don't think killing someone is wise to do in this situation.

Um ... can I lie somewhere other than here? Not saying your ... female part isn't nice but ...

To be honest, I don't just eat others for revenge. I do it also to make sure I keep my witch powers. I'd be nothing without them except a useless elf.



As for where to put you ...

-I think you'd fit nicely in here. Best not let that cookie outfit go to waste. Don't worry, I won't swallow you down.



W-wait!



-slrrrp-

Mmm-yum!



-slrrrp-

-slrrrp-

Oh, come on! This is super gross!



Can' 'alk. Mout' full. Mmm-





Okay, you licked all of the cookie off. You can let me out now!



Mmm, you are sweet even on the outside.



You're such a sweet human that I wanna ask... will you be my pet?

P-pet? Are you serious?

I am. You get to stay safe with me from now on. You'll be loved, fed, clothed, and sheltered.



Please. I want you, Will.



I may not want to be a pet, but she is nicer than she thinks she is.



Maybe with my help, God-willing, she will see that she doesn't have to be powerful with magic to be special.



O-okay. I'll be your pet.



Oh, thank you, Will. You won't regret this.

And now to get ready for this fun night ... in disguise.



Wh-what's going on?!

Nnh- It's getting sm-smaller in h-here.



Wh-what?!



How are you able to take so many different forms? I thought that you could only do magic dealing with food.

Only on Halloween can I do other magic. By midnight, if I have ate about ten more humans, I'll be powerful enough to maybe change my form until spring.

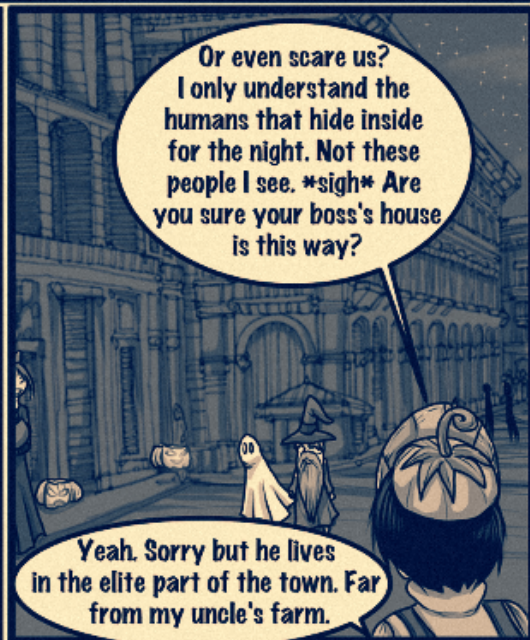
I know! How about I visit your old boss?! Maybe he has some family there.

I confess, this magic is new to me and makes me weary. I must eat soon and maybe eat more than ten humans.

*\*sigh\**  
Why did I let myself get roped into helping a witch eat my kind?

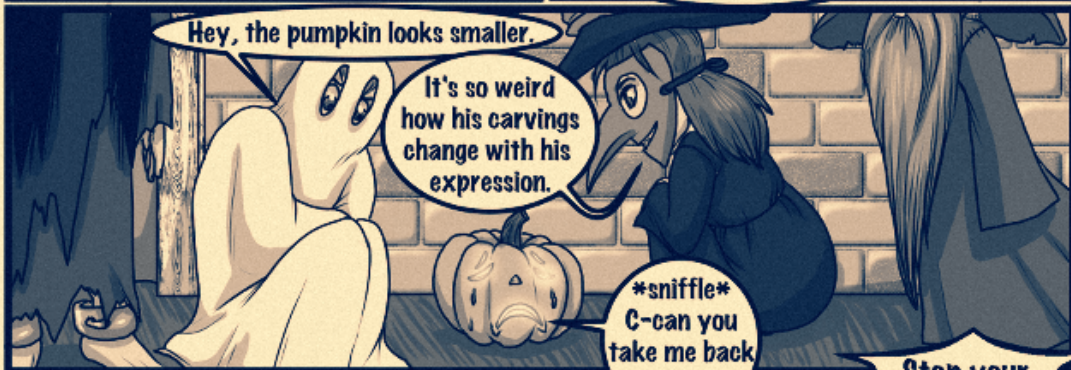


It's so odd to me that humans actually enjoy Halloween. It's the day monsters like me are most powerful. Yet they think carved plants and costumes that look barely like us will keep us away?



Or even scare us? I only understand the humans that hide inside for the night. Not these people I see. *\*sigh\** Are you sure your boss's house is this way?

Yeah. Sorry but he lives in the elite part of the town. Far from my uncle's farm.



Hey, the pumpkin looks smaller.

It's so weird how his carvings change with his expression.

*\*sniffle\**  
C-can you take me back home?

Stop your crying!



**\*huff\*** I wish father had sold that miserable plant. All it does is cry and whine. If it doesn't stop, it'll get smashed after Halloween.



Woah- the candy man's daughters.

So pretty.

Hey, I looked inside the house and mother isn't home yet.



Wha-? Seriously?

And she was going to buy us new jewelry for the mayor's Hallow's Eve party. We're going to be late!

What if she forgot to go to the jeweler?! I'm not going to a party in just a dress. I'll be mocked!



Rrr- just awful. And what are you kids standing around here for? There's no treats for you. Move on.



Oooh- I see nine treats here. And I know how to get them to bring me inside.



Excuse me, ladies! But I overheard that you need jewels!

And who are you? Come out from the shadows!



Hee- sorry for hiding at first. But my mom let me go out to get treats as long as I sold some of the jewelry she made.

Lemme show you some samples from my purse.



They're so shiny!  
I've never seen  
such jewelry  
before.

Hey! I can't see!

Can  
we afford  
this without  
mom and dad's  
money?

Don't touch anything though.  
We like to keep things tidy.



I have  
some in my room.  
Come on, merchant girl,  
and we'll talk about  
business inside.

Oh, thank  
you so much.  
Best be safe  
and not buy  
jewels in the  
open.



Oh,  
so  
do I.



In fact, I don't  
like to make a mess  
when I eat.

Lemme show  
you girls what  
I mean.



Huh? What?

Oh my gosh!



How? How did  
you do this to  
us?! You're just  
a girl!

Don't judge a book by  
its cover, as they say.



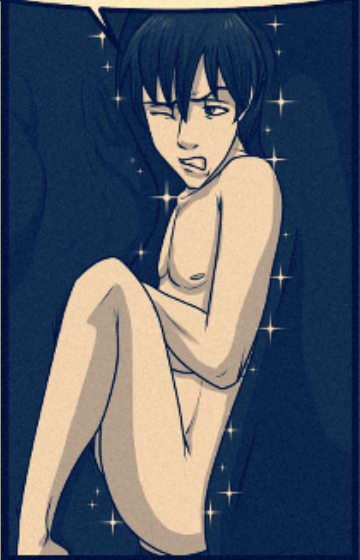
Put us  
down!

Lemme show  
you lil morsels  
my true colors,  
eh?

Hey!



"True colors"? What? Sweets, it's getting  
fight in here! What are you doing?!



Oh... crap,  
I think we're  
shrinking!



Sh-she's  
that witch!



Whew-  
I at least  
got a break  
from those  
rubbing walls.  
\*cough\*

-gUUUUURGLE-



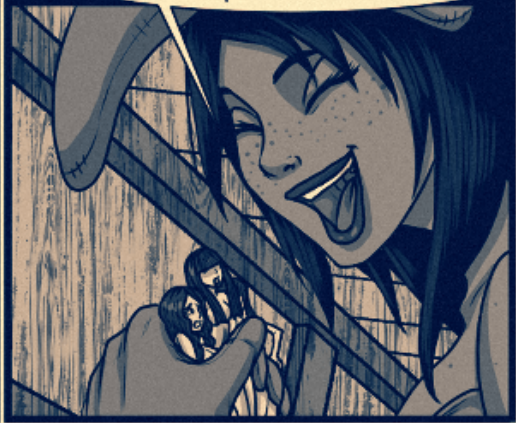
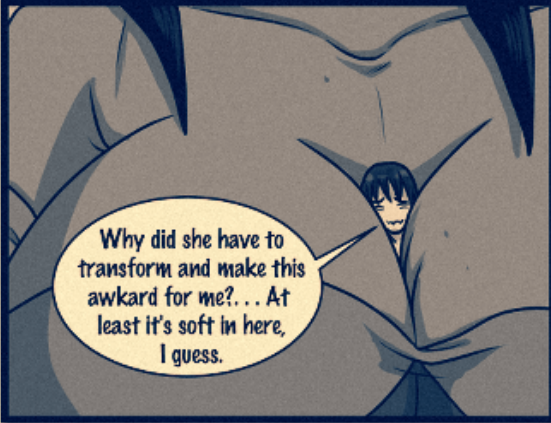
Er...  
I think I  
should've stopped  
growing sooner. Meh,  
it's rare I get to be a  
giantess. Oughta be fun  
breaking out of here  
and spooking the  
whole village.

YOU CRACKED  
OUR CEILING! How  
dare you!

SHE'S  
HUGE!



Now enough chit-chat. You brats need to get to know your new home. Ah-♥





URRRRP! Excuse me.

Easy. Lemme show you how.

H-how could she do that to them?

Nonono!!! You don't have to!

But I wanna. Ah-♥

Oh, gosh. I can't believe she actually did this.

\*gluck\*  
\*gluck\*

lick-

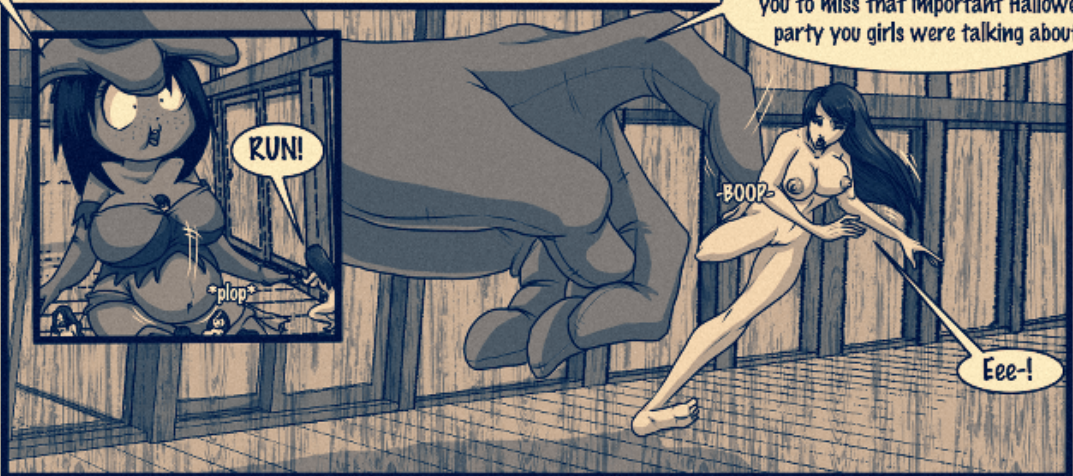
\*GULP\*

Mmf-!

Yummmmm-



Hiccup! Oh my.



RUN!

Run? But where to? I don't want you to miss that important Halloween party you girls were talking about.

-BOOP-

Eee-!



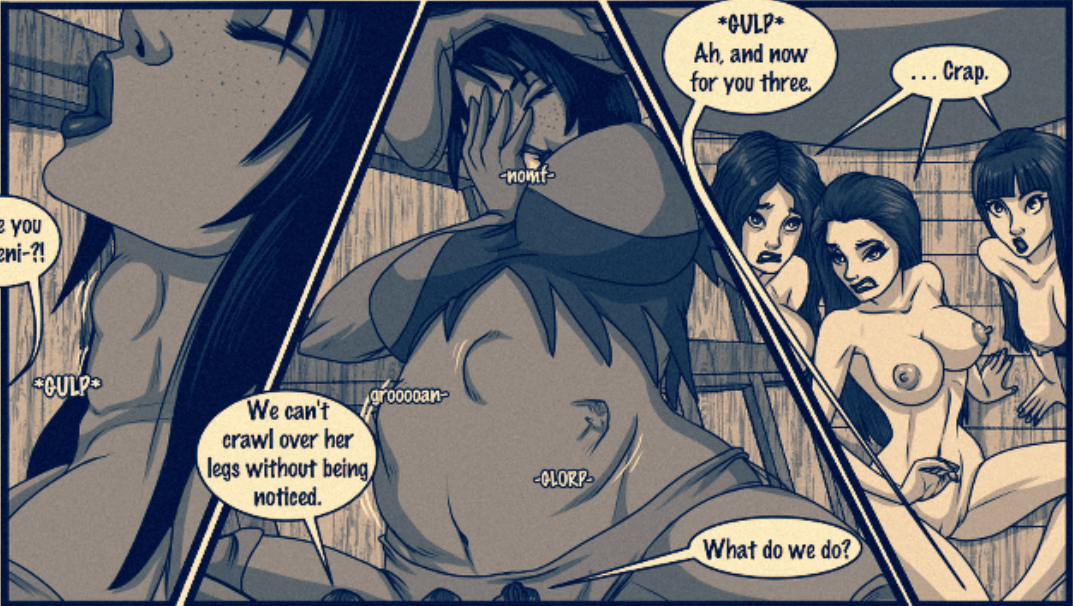
I'll be nice and carry y'all there.

-gurrrgle-



Um, that's a nice offer Miss Witch, but we don't mind walking there, so... can you...?

-slrrp-



Are you listeni-?!

\*GULP\*

We can't crawl over her legs without being noticed.

-gooooan-

-GLORP-

\*GULP\* Ah, and now for you three.

... Crap.

What do we do?



I'm sorry, my pet. They just move around a lot in there.

Mmm, I don't wanna wait for their dad to come home so I guess it's time to bail.

MINUTES LATER ...



URP!!!

Sweets? You mind stopping that burping? And letting me out from here?



\*thmp\*

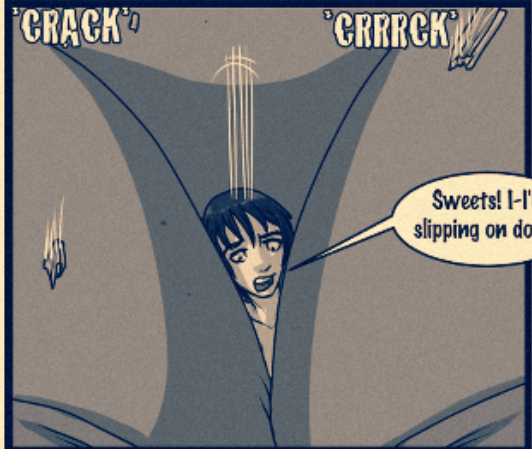
-gurrngle-



\*thmp\*

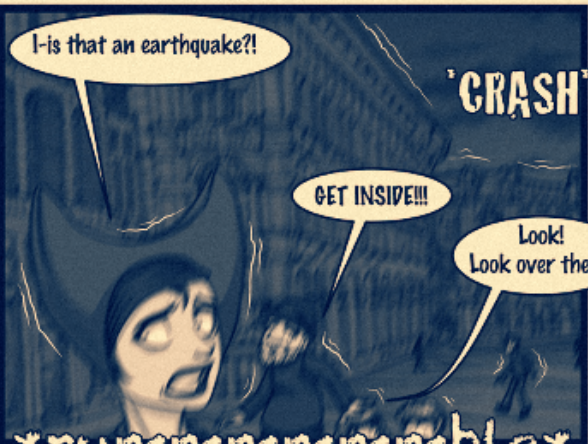
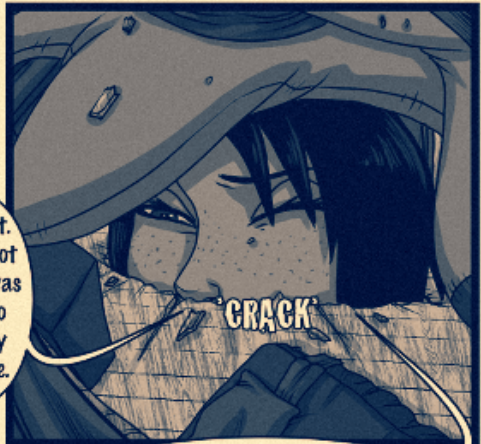
\*thmp\*

Here I go ... or grow.\*titter\*



Sweets! I-I'm slipping on down!

Shoot. I forgot this was a two story house.



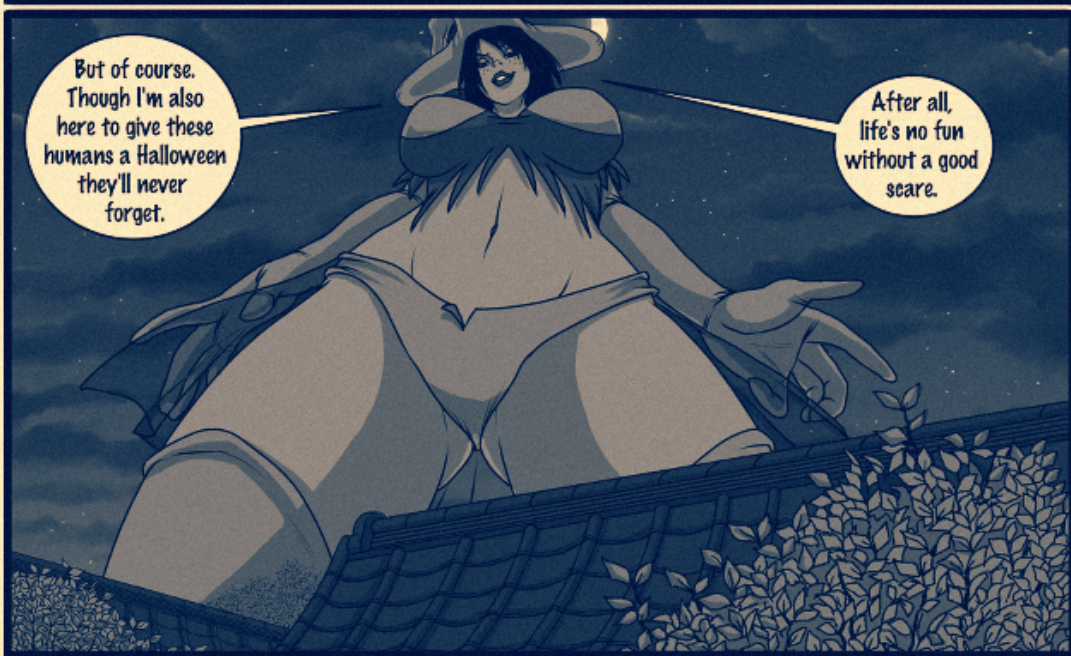
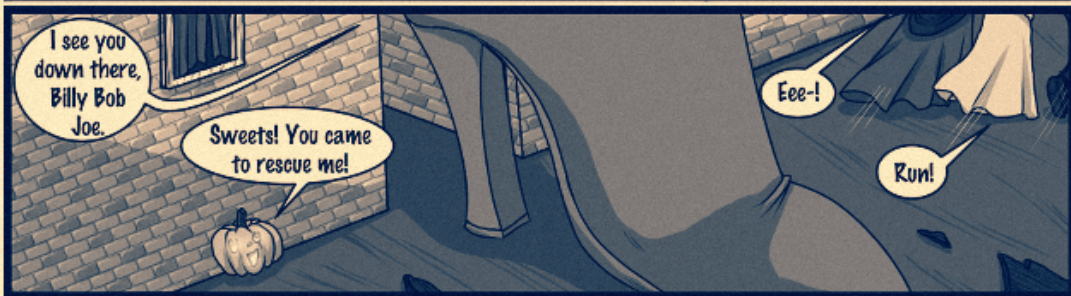
I-is that an earthquake?!

GET INSIDE!!!

Look! Look over there!

I didn't think breaking through wood would hurt this much. Oooh-







Thanks, Sweets.  
Will you eat random  
villagers?

Nah, I'll be fine with gobbling up just  
the nasty folks of the village.

Mainly I am after  
my new pet's ex-boss. I  
only want to scare the villagers  
to make sure they never  
try to visit so casually my  
house ever again.

Everyone!  
Hide in your  
homes!

She's  
coming!

\*step\*

Why'd  
she have  
to grow bigger?  
She could've picked  
a less over-the-top  
form to get to  
him. \*sigh\*

What's going on?  
We didn't shrink again,  
did we?

I-I  
think she got  
bigger. What's going  
to happen to us?

\*gurrrgle\*

\*slosh\*

Mom? Dad?  
Why did the  
witch visit our town  
as a big lady?

\*STEP\*

\*STEP\*

Well, it is  
Hallow's Eve.  
Weird stuff happens  
this time of year. Though  
remind me to light pumpkins  
and carve turnips next year.  
May scare her  
kind away.

Though  
... now I'm  
not so certain that  
it'll keep such  
a witch  
away.

Y-yeah.

\*step\*

\*STEP\*



Never have I seen such lovely peppermints than the ones you make, sir. They look about as good as that witch's. This must be your best Hallow's Eve sale, huh?



Oh, indeed. I hope you enjoy your treats, ma'am.

It's time to lock up and try to make it to the party a- Huh? That's a weird earthquake. Is that even 0-.



AAAAHHHHHHH-!



Well, you weren't that difficult to find.



Y-y-you?!



It's time for dessert, human.



D-dessert?  
You don't wanna eat  
me. I-I'm one of your  
biggest fans.

You make  
such delicious candy  
and made so many  
villagers happy w-with  
my help. I just wanted  
others to enjoy  
your beautiful  
work.

You think  
I'm going to eat you  
JUST because you  
stole bits of my  
house?

That's a laugh.

-slrrrp-

Wait!  
Did you hear  
what I said?! I  
am a fan of  
yours! Not your  
enemy!

Don't care.

\*GLUCK\*

Had nothing  
to do with you  
stealing one of my  
jack-o-lanterns, huh?  
Nor you harming my  
new pet?

Whoa  
... how  
did he taste,  
Sweets?

\*GULP\*

Sadly, the  
clothes ruined  
his flavor, but  
he at least is  
plump enough to  
feel nice on my  
tongue and  
throat.

Mmm,  
thinks it's  
time to go  
home and  
try one  
more bit  
of magic.



Hey, you! Witch! You ate our sweets shop baker!



And his daughters! Those ladies were engaged to our sons!

Oh, no.

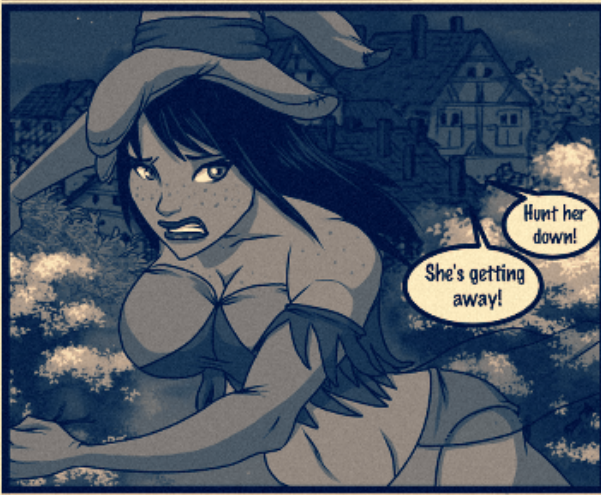
I saved your sons from having to deal with them!



They were brats!

We don't care!

BURN HER!



She's getting away!

Hunt her down!



\*pant\* I can't hear them any longer.



Whew- we should be fine now.



That was a bumpy ride, Sweets.

Oh, I bet. But I hope it wasn't so bumpy for my new pet.



Lemme fix both of our sizes, huh?





There we go!

I'm normal again! And I've got actual clothes!



Yep! And lemme do some more tricks to get us home soo- WHOA!

Oh, that's right! Halloween magic ends at midnight! It must be that time!



RIGHT! And I ate over ten people so I should be able to switch my form at will!

LOOK LIKE AN ELF!



... Look like an elf... Why isn't it working? Did I do something wrong?

LOOK LIKE AN ELF!



I-I must've used too much magic today that the spell won't let me just do this. I didn't think it would matter, but ...



-I wasted my chance to no longer look like a witch. I should've just ate the humans, grabbed my pumpkin and then went home. I'm so stupid.







