

WE'VE GOT TO GET ACROSS...

CAN YOU SEE A PATH DOWN THIS SIDE?

BUT... LISTEN TO THE WOLVES. THEY CAN'T BE FAR...



LET'S FIND A SAFE PLACE TO DEN FOR THE NIGHT, AND--

WE'RE DONE HIDING, RASK.

SOON, WE'LL BE DONE RUNNING, TOO.



ONCE WE REACH THE LAKE...

QUANAG, LISTEN TO YOURSELF!

DESPITE WHAT YOU BELIEVE, IT'S STILL ONLY A RUMOR--

NO.







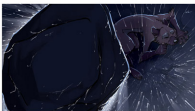














QUANAQ!!



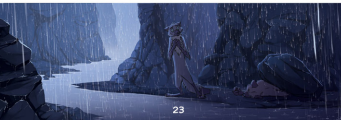
STAY STILL,  
ALRIGHT?

IT'S JUST LIKE  
WHEN TAMA FELL  
OUT OF THE TREE  
AFTER--

...DASK...



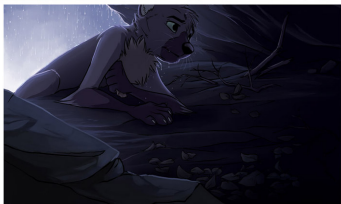


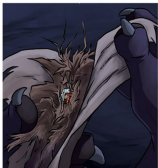
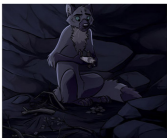
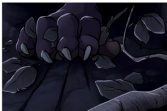




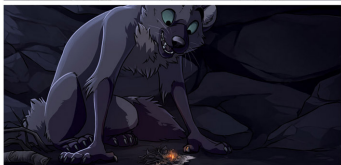
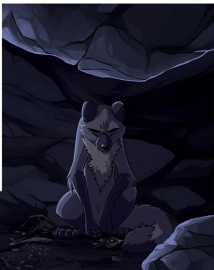
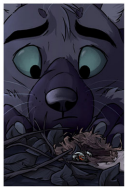


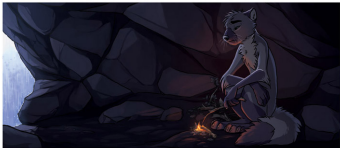
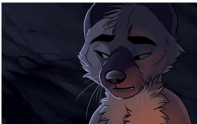


















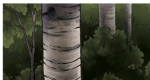




YOUR FATHER  
WALKED A VERY  
WORN PATH. OURS  
IS CROOKER...



--AND YOU CAN'T  
SEE AROUND THE  
BEND, AS YOU'VE SAID  
MANY TIMES.



I CAN'T,  
BUT THIS ONE  
WILL BE OUR  
STORM, RASK.



LIGHTNING  
WILL STRIKE  
THE GROUND  
AND SEED IT.

WATCH ENOUGH  
STORMS AND  
EVENTUALLY ONE WILL,  
UNCLE. IT DOESN'T  
MEAN ANYTHING.

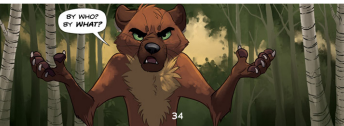


IT MEANS  
WE'RE A STEP  
FURTHER AWAY  
FROM BEING  
EATEN.

WE'LL CATCH  
THE FLAME SLEEPING.  
WE BIND IT SO IT  
WON'T BITE...

AND THEN, SHE SAID TO  
FOLLOW THE WATER BACK  
TO ITS HEAD, TO THE LAKE  
IN THE SHADOW OF THE  
MOUNTAIN.

WITH IT,  
WE WILL BE  
WELCOMED.



BY WHO?  
BY WHAT?

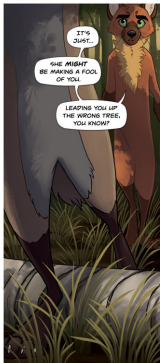


BUT WE'LL KNOW SOON.



MOST DAYS, I WONDER IF YOU HAVE WORMS IN YOUR BRAIN, QUANAG.





SHE  
SOLICIT  
ME OUT.

SHE SAID HER  
TASK WAS TO FIND  
ANIMALS LIKE US... TO  
HELP US.

I'VE NEVER KNOWN  
A PORCUPINE TO  
BE ANYTHING BUT  
SINCERE.

UNCLE... THAT'S  
NOT A REASON  
TO TRUST--

AH, RASK.  
YOU'RE STILL  
JUST A KIT  
SOMETIMES.

WHEN YOU'VE  
HAD A FEW MORE  
SEASONS, YOU'LL ASK  
YOURSELF...

WHEN HAS A  
PORCUPINE EVER NEEDED  
AN IMAGINATION OR A GLICK  
TONGUE TO SURVIVE?

PORCUPINES AREN'T  
EMPTY-HEADED BABBLERS  
LIKE SQUIRRELS, OR  
BACKWARD-TALKING LIARS LIKE  
RABBITS...

YOU WANT  
ME TO JUST  
ACCEPT--

ACTUALLY,  
I'M NOT EVEN  
SURE THEY  
KNOW HOW TO  
LIE.





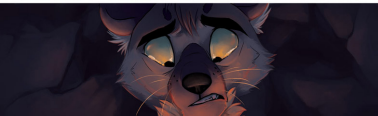
BUT I BELIEVED  
HER THEN AND IT  
SAVED OUR LIVES...

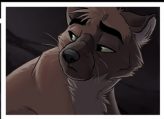
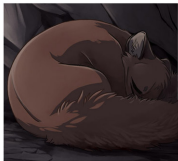
SO I'VE **GOT** TO  
BELIEVE HER ABOUT  
THIS NOW.



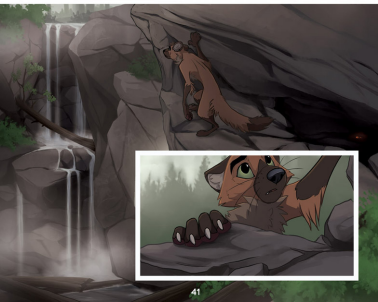
OTHERWISE...

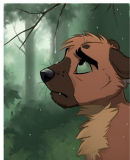
WHAT'S THE POINT  
FOR US TO STILL BE ALIVE  
WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS  
**DEAD?**

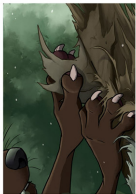


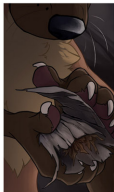
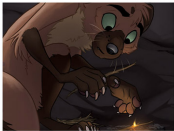


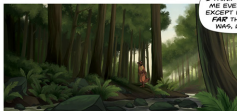
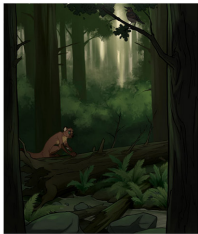






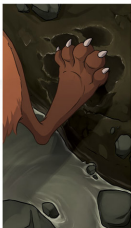
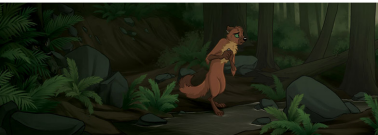


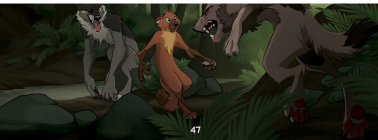
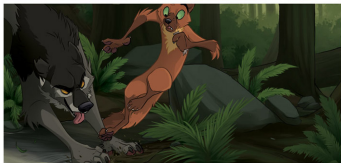


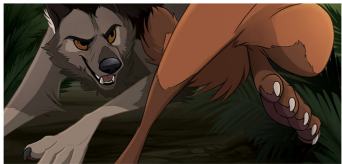


I THINK YOU TOLD  
ME EVERYTHINGS  
EXCEPT FOR HOW  
FAR THE LAKE  
WAS, UNCLE.

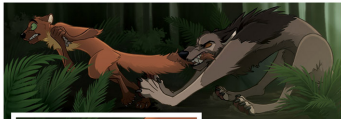


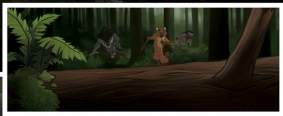


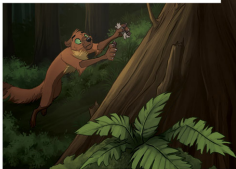


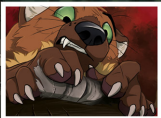


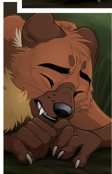
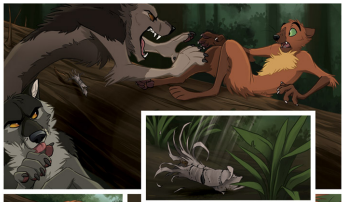


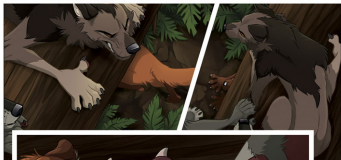


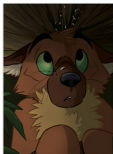


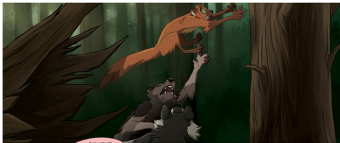












STUPID  
THING TREP  
ITSELF!







I SEE WHY ALPHA  
DOESN'T LEAD HER  
HUNTS IN HERE...

C'MERE,  
TREE-RAT,

YOU PUT UP  
A GOOD FIGHT, BUT  
IT'S YOUR TIME  
TO LAY DOWN IN  
THE SHAPE...

TAKE A  
KNIFE

IT HAS THAT...  
ABANDONED  
FEEL, LIKE AN  
EMPTY DEN.

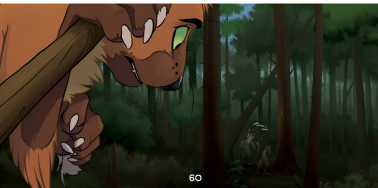
NO SIGN OF  
ANYTHINS.

THERE'S  
AT LEAST **ONE**  
WEASEL... BUT  
NOT FOR MUCH  
LONG--

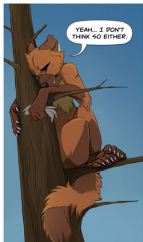
**CRACK!!**

BONES.













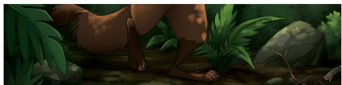
THE WEASEL IS  
STILL HEADED  
TOWARD THE  
HOLLOW...

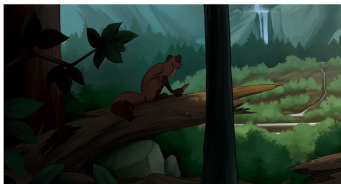
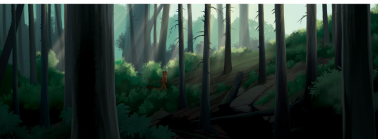


WE TRIED TO  
WARN HIM OFF  
YOUR WAY...

NOW... WE  
HUNT.









THE SHADOW OF THE MOUNTAIN.

THE LAKE HAS GOT TO BE JUST OVER THAT RISE AT THE WATER'S HEAD...



ANY IDEA OF WHAT'S WAITING UP THERE?



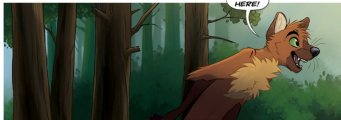
NOTHING TO SAY? WELL...

LET'S GO FIND OUT.



NO.







I WISH YOU COULD SEE IT, UNCLE!

WE'RE HERE TOGETHER THOUGH, I CAN FEEL IT.

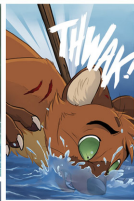
AND YOU...

I CARRIED YOU AND KEPT YOU SAFE, JUST LIKE QUANAQ SAID..

YOU NEEDED ME, BUT NOW I NEED YOU.

SO..NOW WHAT?



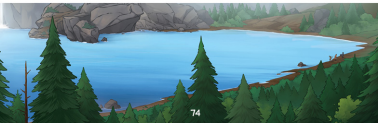
















SPRIG!  
HEMLOCK!

YOU'RE BACK  
EARLY! WITH A  
BLOOD-LETTER,  
TOO! WELL  
DONE!



THE  
'SANCTUARY'  
IS JUST...  
PREY WITH  
TEETH!



WE PICKED UP THE  
MARTEN'S TRACKS IN THE  
OLD WOOD. HE WAS HEADED  
STRAIGHT TO THE LAKE.

THEN WHY  
DID YOU BRING IT  
STRAIGHT HERE?!

IT'S  
STRANGE,  
CRAIC, BUT...

OREN NEEDS TO  
SPEAK TO THIS ONE  
BEFORE WE DECIDE  
WHAT TO DO WITH HIM.



HE'S SEEN THE  
HOLLOW, SPRIG.  
THERE'S ONLY  
ONE THING TO DO  
WITH IT.







WHAT'S THE WIND BLOWN IN THAT'S MADE SUCH A STIR!



I DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM, PLEASE, HELP--

OH YEAH, LITTLE COUSIN!

THESE LITTLE GUYS SPEAK TOO FAST. I'LL HELP



...KILL THE FLESH-EATER IMMEDIATELY.

OH, THEY'RE GOING TO KILL YOU.









WE'RE DIGGING UP NEW GROUND.

OF COURSE THERE IS GOING TO BE STRANGE STONES.



THEN YOU KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO...



TO PROTECT OUR MATES AND OUR KITS!



DON'T WORRY LITTLE COUSIN. THE ACHE STOPS EVENTUALLY.



HE CAME HERE LOOKING FOR SHELTER AND INSTEAD YOU'D MUTILATE HIM?

HE'S SCARED HALF TO DEATH AND NEARLY STARVED THE REST OF THE WAY!

ARE YOU ALL STILL SO SMALL AND AFRAID THAT ONE MISERABLE MARTEN CAN MAKE YOU FLEE YOUR SENSES?!





