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MY DARLING SERKA,

LAST TIME I SAW
YOU, I SAID I COULD
BARELY REMEMBER
WHAT THE WORLD
WAS LIKE BEFORE
THE QUENCH.

**THERE
ARE RATS
IN MY
BOWEL!**

I--
**I FEEL THEM
SCAMPER!**

I WAS LYING.

HALF ASLEEP, BUSY ENJOYING
THE LINE OF YOUR HIP. JUST...
TOO LAZY TO FIND THE RIGHT
WORDS.



SLRKK

GET THEM
OUT OF ME,
SCAVENGER--ELSE
I SHALL **IMMOLATE**
YOU! TH--THEY
SCAMPER SO!

HM.

NO, I REMEMBER THE OLD
WORLD JUST FINE. IT'S
MORE LIKE I CAN'T BELIEVE
IT WAS REAL.

THE CRYSTAL CASTLES.
THE KNIGHTS AND ENCHANTED
BLADES. THE LIGHTNING MAGES
AND GLAMORED QUEENS.

I MEAN, WHEN
YOU WRITE IT
DOWN LIKE THAT
IT JUST LOOKS--
RIDICULOUS.

I MUST'VE LIVED IT, OF COURSE.
I MUST HAVE ACCEPTED IT ALL
AND NEVER STOPPED TO THINK
"THIS IS INSANE."

WH--WHAT DID
YOU **FIND** INSIDE
ME, HUMAN? IS IT THE
RATS? DESTROY
THEM OR FACE MY
WRATH!



NOW? THAT
WHOLE TIME
FEELS LIKE
A DREAM.

**SCRATCH
MY ARSE!
SCRATCH MY
ARSE OR BE
DOOMED!**

OR IF I'M HONEST, MORE LIKE THE
MEMORY OF A DRUNKEN NIGHT.
FLASHES OF OBNOXIOUSNESS WHICH
FELT SO VERY CLEVER AT THE TIME.

SOMETIMES I THINK THIS
WHOLE BLOODY WORLD'S
HANGOVER.

HM.

WENT FOR A
RUMMAGE IN THERE,
DIDJA? HEARD OLD
BONY COMPLAINING
FROM MILES AWAY,
I BET. HEH.

NO
SUDDEN
MOVES,
EH?

DON'T FEEL TOO BAD,
MATE. I BEEN PUTTIN'
SHINY BAIT IN THERE SINCE
HIS LAST MUSCLES
FELL OFF.

AGITATE MY BOWEL
BANDIT! SCATTER THE
RODENTS! MY RAGE
IS LEGEND!

MUST BE SOME
SORT OF HELL.
IMMORTALITY,
EH? =TT=

*TWEEN US,
I DON'T THINK HE'S
EVEN GOT AN ARSE
TO SCRATCH, NO
MORE.

YOU EVER GET
THAT, DRIFTER?
PHANTOM
ITCHES, LIKE?

I REFER
TO THE
LEG.

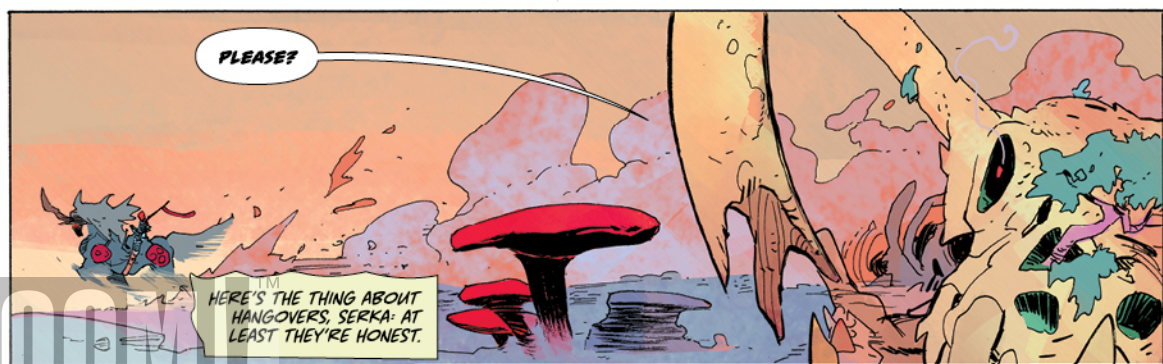
OH, YOU DON'T
HAVE TO ANSWER.
I'M JUST BEING
POLITE. I WAS
AN 'EADSMAN,
PRE-QUENCH.

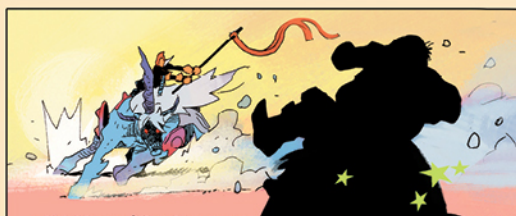
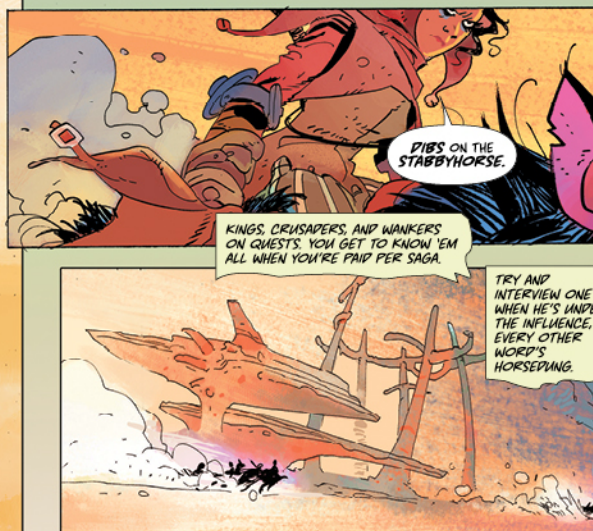
NICE TO
PUT FOLK AT THEIR
EASE BEFORE THE
AXE, THOUGH THERE'S
ALWAYS SOME WHAT
PREFERS THE DIRECT
APPROACH.


=AHEM= SIR:
I INTEND TO
ROB YOU. THIS
WILL BE A TERMINAL
PROCEDURE SHOULD
YOU ATTEMPT TO
RESIST OR FLEE.

...SPEAKING
O' FLIGHT. I CAN'T
IMAGINE YOU WALKED
ALL THE WAY OUT
HERE. SO--C'MON
THEN.









THE OLD WORLD WAS
BEAUTIFUL AND BRIGHT
AND CRAZY AND BRAVE.
MOSTLY I HATED IT.

AND THEN
IT ENDED.

LATEST IN A LONG LINE OF
UNPRONOUNCEABLE DARK
LORDS FINALLY DID IT. FIRE
IN THE SKY, THUNDER IN THE
EARTH, ARMIES OF SHADOW,
BLAH BLAH. AND THAT LAST
DAY, WHEN--

WELL, YOU KNOW.
YOU WERE THERE.

AND THEN NO
NEW MAGIC.

NO NEW MAGIC, AND
WE'RE ALL SUPPOSED
TO BE MISERABLE
ABOUT THAT. BUT YOU
KNOW WHAT, SERKAZ?

I'D RATHER AN HONEST
HANGOVER THAN A
RAGING DRUNK.

AH, IGNORE ME. I'M WAFFLING.
I GOT CHASED BY BANDITS,
SO--YOU KNOW. BUSY PEN.

FOUND A NEW SETTLEMENT TOO. SOME
SORT OF INSANE WEAPON ON TOP.
GOOD TRADE, MAYBE, BUT ALL I CAN
THINK IS: DUMMIES.

SELF-DECEIVERS AND OPTIMISTS,
TRYING TO STAVE OFF THE SORE HEAD
BY PRETENDING TO STILL BE DRUNK.

THE PROBLEM'S ME,
OF COURSE. NOT THEM.

AGE-OLD
INSTINCT, ISN'T
IT? ALL THESE
FOLKS HUDDLED
UP TO SQUABBLE
AND THIEVE AND
COMPETE WITH
EACH OTHER--

--ALL TOGETHER,
ALL HIDING FROM
THE LOSS OF
YESTERDAY--

--AND NONE
OF THEM
ARE THE ONE
I NEED

LIKE I SAID:
IGNORE ME.

SITTING HERE PREACHING
A BREAK WITH THE PAST
WHILE I'M STILL ACTING
THE BLOODY COURT BARD
WITH EVERY OVERLONG,
NEEDLESSLY PURPLE LINE.

THE
FESTERING
FENIX

SAYING
EVERYTHING
EXCEPT WHAT
I REALLY THINK.

