

OKAY, I ADMIT...

THIS WHOLE THING COULD HAVE GONE BETTER.

YOU ARE A *SLIMMONER*. YOU COULD HAVE USED BERNARD TO FLY YOURSELF--AND THE VERY DANGEROUS ARTIFACT WE'RE NOW CARRYING--AWAY FROM HERE.

BUT THEN YOU'D BE IN THE DESERT ALONE, WITHOUT SHADE, WATER, OR FOOD. BECAUSE BERNARD IS NOT A FLYING PACK MULE. HE CAN BARELY MANAGE *JUST ME*.

I KEEP FEELING LIKE WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED MR. PROTO.

WE ARE ALONE TATAKANA. WHO WOULD FOLLOW US THROUGH THE DESERT? RAI, AS A SUMMONER YOU HAVE DUTIES *BEYOND* THE PERSONAL. I AM A PROTO--

AND YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO *PROTECT* ME. YES, YOU'VE SAID, BUT I'M NOT LEAVING YOU OR TATAKANA OUT HERE.

BESIDES THAT, THIS IS STIODAN... I THINK.

WHICH IS THE *OTHER* PROBLEM. EVEN IF I WERE WILLING TO TAKE THE ARTIFACT AND LEAVE YOU, WHICH I AM NOT, I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE I'M GOING. I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO KEEP SUMMONING BERNARD, AND THE STIODANI DON'T LIKE US.

THIS IS WHAT MATTERS. GETTING THIS TO KAZAN. IF THE ARTIFACT GETS INTO TO STIODANI HANDS, INTO *DARCASSIAN'S* HANDS--

HE'S TOO DANGEROUS. THAT CANNOT HAPPEN. WE MUST BE PREPARED TO DO OUR DUTY EVEN IN *DEATH*.

WE ARE *NOT* DYING HERE. I REFUSE TO DIE SMELLING THIS BAD.

MR. PROTO? MR. SUMMONER?

YOU NEED TO BE REALISTIC--

WELL, *YOU* NEED TO HAVE SOME IMAGINATION YOU--

YOU *REALLY* NEED TO SEE THIS!



I THINK WE MIGHT BE SAVED.



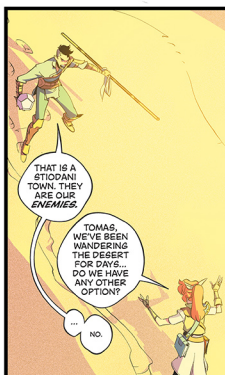
THIS IS THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!



HRRM.



OKAY, WHAT? IT'S A TOWN. WE'RE LOOKING FOR A TOWN, RIGHT? FOOD, WATER, FLEA DIPS?



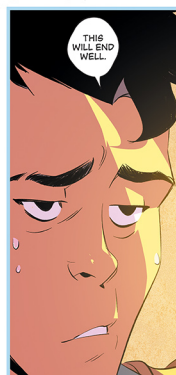
THAT IS A STODAN TOWN. THEY ARE OUR ENEMIES.

TOMAS, WE'VE BEEN WANDERING THE DESERT FOR DAYS... DO WE HAVE ANY OTHER OPTION?

... NO.



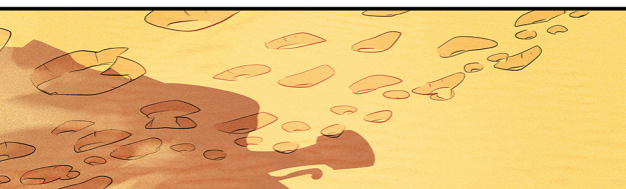
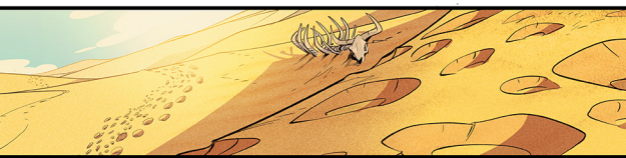
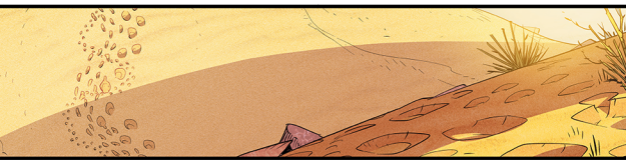
THEN COME ON.



THIS WILL END WELL.



BEST
FOR YOU TO GO,
BERNARD. DON'T
WANT TO DRAW
TOO MUCH
ATTENTION.



YOU
CANNOT
HIDE FROM
ME.