

# New Game Plus

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volume 16  
Darkness

HERE WE ARE, ZACHARY'S HOUSE. STILL STANDING.... WE CAN REST AWHILE HERE. IT'S TOO HOT YET TO START CROSSING THE DESERT, BUT WE CAN'T STAY TOO LONG.



ARE WE REALLY CROSSING THE WHOLE DESERT?



NOT THE WHOLE THING.... TRUST ME.



ARE WE PREPARED TO TRAVEL THE DESERT, THOUGH? DO WE HAVE THE FOOD, WATER, AND SHELTER...? THIS IS GOING TO BE MUCH HARSHER THAN THE REST OF OUR JOURNEY.



I-....



I PACKED SUPPLIES MAGICALLY WHEN I LEFT THE SPIRE. IT'S DWINDLED DOWN, BUT THERE SHOULD STILL BE ENOUGH TO LAST A FEW DAYS AT LEAST.

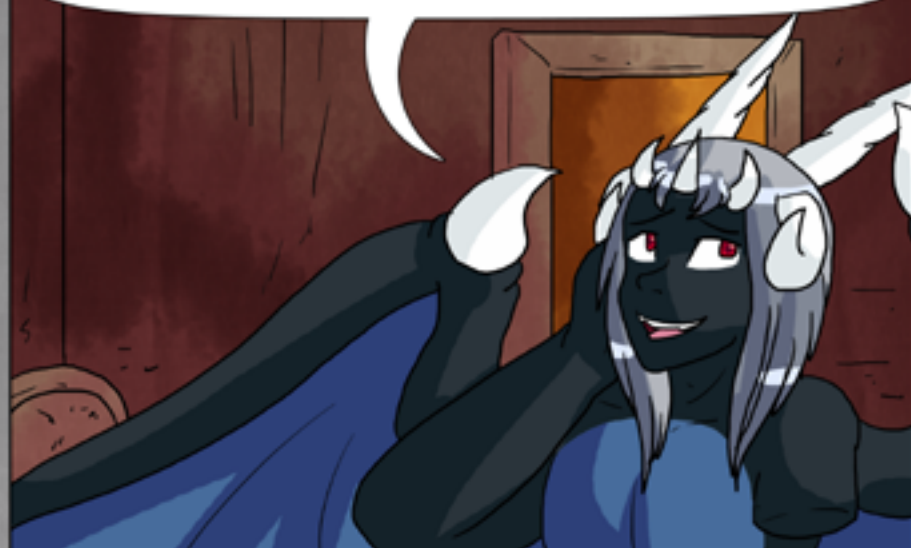




THE DESERT... THAT'S WHERE YOUR HOMETOWN IS?



WELL IT'S A SECRET... BUT YES, THAT'S BECOMING RATHER OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT? WHEN WE GET THERE, YOU'LL SEE...



THAT MEANS WE FINALLY GET TO SEE WHAT YOU REALLY LOOK LIKE THEN, HEY ZACK?



UH... HAHA. GUESS YOU WILL SEE THAT... LATER ON. MY REAL NAME IS GRAIN, BY THE WAY...



THANKS FOR SAVING ME BACK THERE, ART.

THANKS FOR SAVING ME FIRST, GRAIN!



YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM...



I DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL CLAW EITHER, BUT THEY'RE IMMORTAL, THEY'LL BE FINE.

WHAT? BUT YOU DIDN'T KILL....



...OH MY GODS, GRAIN.











...THERE ISN'T ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY.

Y-YES THERE IS...



WELL, WHEN WE REACH OUR DESTINATION, YOU WON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ANY OF THAT...



...I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.



DON'T WORRY. I'M ALWAYS RIGHT.

HMM THAT SOUNDS WRONG.



THIS PLACE IS IN QUITE GOOD SHAPE FOR BEING ABANDONED.



YEAH, THAT'S THE DESERT FOR YOU. NICE OF THE TOWNIES NOT TO BURN IT DOWN.

UHHH... HEHEH.



HEY LITTLE BROTHER, LOOK AT THIS.

HUH?



OH... AWWWW.

WHAT?





ART.

HMM?



OH HUH... HEHEH, HEY, O'REILLY!



O'REILLY-?



OH! HEY! YOU FOUND ZACHARY'S  
OLD BOOK OF SCALER HEROES.



I USED TO GO THROUGH THIS ALL THE TIME WHEN I WAS  
A KID. I CHOSE MY FIRST ILLUSION FROM THERE, YEAH.  
O'REILLY, HERO, THAT'S THE ONE.



ZACHARY SAW YOUR  
REAL FORM?



SURE. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DO  
ILLUSIONS UNTIL HE TAUGHT ME.



I WONDER WHAT YOU REALLY  
LOOK LIKE...

OH, I KNOW.



YOU KNOW...?

WELL. I DON'T KNOW 100%, BUT I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

LET'S SEE... SHORT, CURLY HAIR LIKE MINE. DEFINITELY A SHORTER TAIL THAN THAT. NO HORNS - WELL, MAYBE SOME LITTLE BLUNT ONES. MMM. NOT SURE ABOUT THE COLOURING OR MARKINGS...

IS THAT RIGHT...?

OH. YEAH.

WE WERE IN A FEW TIGHT SCRAPES WITHOUT YOU, I HAD TO ILLUSION ARTHUR, BUT I'M NOT REALLY STRONG ENOUGH TO DO TWO PROPER ILLUSIONS, HE SAW ME PRETTY CLOSE TO MY REAL FORM.

SO HE IS A SCALER?

UH, YEAH? OF COURSE.

HUH, I WOULD NOT HAVE PICKED THAT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ALL THOSE HINTS - HE DOESN'T EAT, DOESN'T DRINK, DOESN'T SLEEP, AND IS WEIRDLY FRIENDLY WITH GOLEMS, AND HIS NAME IS GRAIN... I MEAN, APART FROM BEING ABLE TO USE MAGIC, Y'KNOW... I'D HAVE HIM PEGGED AS A GOLEM.

AHA... WHAT?



HMM... AND HE GOT HIS ARM CUT OFF BUT IT'S NOT AS MESSY AS YOU'D THINK IT WOULD BE... THAT WOULD BE BELIEVABLE, EXCEPT GOLEMS APPARENTLY HAVE NO HAIR, AND NO MAGIC.

AND I AM VERY MAGIC.  
...KINDA MAGIC.

AND YOU HAVE HAIR...?

MY HAIR IS GORGEOUS,  
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW!

IT IS KIND OF LIKE ART'S-

OH HEY, ART! YOUR WINGS  
ARE WHITE AGAIN.

OH, FANTASTIC!

I AM GLAD I ONLY KILLED AN IMMORTAL, SO MY  
WINGS ONLY HAD TO BE BLACK FOR A SHORT WHILE.  
I'D REALLY HATE TO...

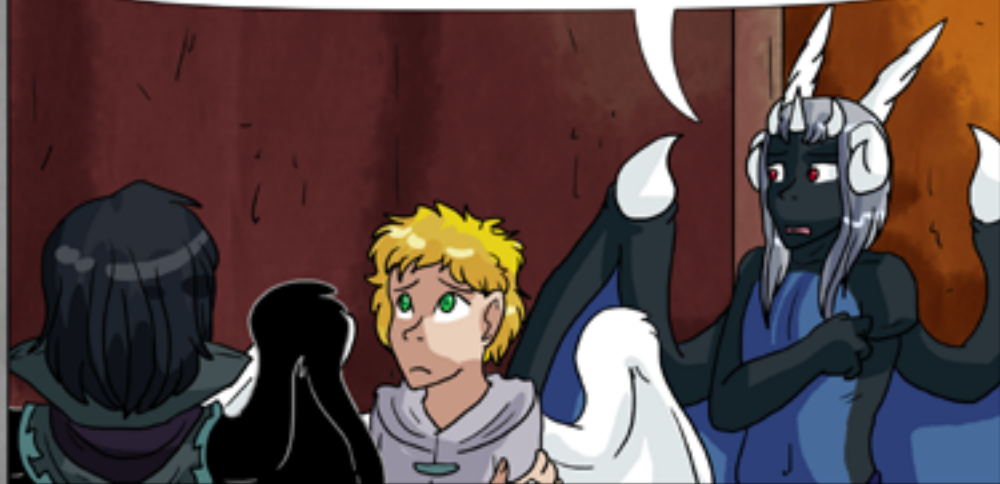
OH, DARRLING! I DIDN'T MEAN- I'M SO SORRY, I-  
...IT'S FINE.



...WE'LL BE WAITING HERE UNTIL NIGHT, RIGHT?



WELL, WE CAN'T STAY TOO LONG, IN CASE WE'RE FOLLOWED...  
BUT WE CAN'T CROSS THE DESERT WHILE IT'S TOO HOT. IT'LL  
BE COLD DURING THE NIGHT, BUT BETTER THAN THIS...  
WE'LL NEED TO LEAVE MID-AFTERNOON.



OKAY, THAT MAKES SENSE.



I'M GOING TO GO FOR A BRIEF WANDER OUTSIDE. I NEED TO CLEAR MY HEAD.



I'LL COME WITH YOU.



NO, THAT'S FINE. I THINK I'D RATHER BE  
ALONE FOR A MOMENT. I WON'T BE LONG,  
AND I WON'T GO FAR. WE HAVE TO CONSERVE  
ENERGY TO TRAVEL LATER...



...OKAY.  
BE CAREFUL.





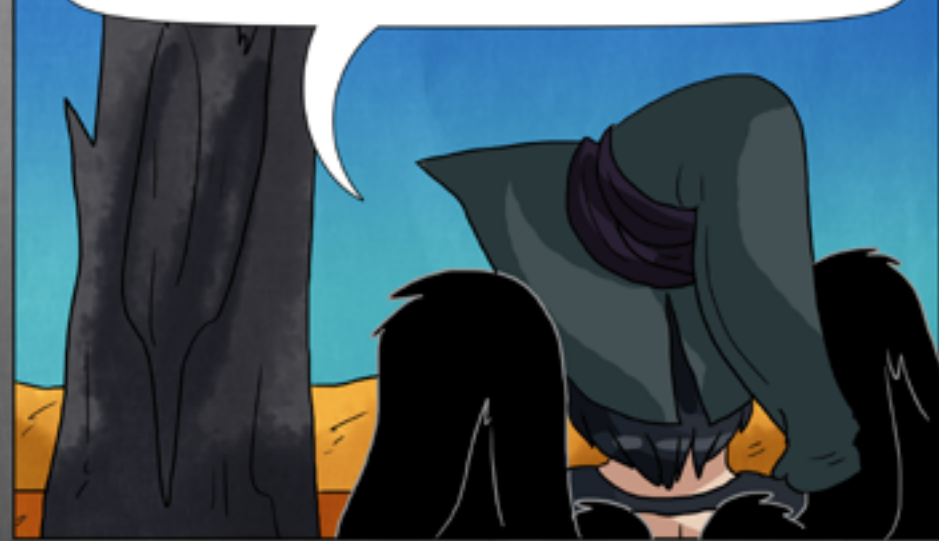


≡SIGH≡

FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I HAD TIME  
TO JUST STOP AND THINK...



EVEN BACK IN THE SPIRE, I NEVER REALLY GOT TO....



I HOPE GRAIN IS RIGHT. I HOPE  
WE'RE NEARLY AT THE END OF  
THINGS.... I JUST WANT TO BE  
SOMEWHERE ELSE...



SOMEWHERE QUIET...



SOMEWHERE SAFE...















TH-THANKS...



GRAIN, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE...



RIGHT! OF COURSE! LET'S MAKE YOU LOOK PROPER DIFFERENT!



...HM... IT MUST BE NEARLY TIME TO GO.



DARK!



WH-WHA.... WHO ARE-



GET INSIDE! A LIGHT POWER'S COMING, I THINK IT'S ALASTAIR!



A-ARTHUR?









Y-YEAH, FINE... WHERE'S GRAIN?

DARK! ARE YOU OKAY?



HE'S NOT WEARING AN ILLUSION, SO HE DOESN'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE HIM. HE'S HIDING OUT SOMEWHERE...



MMFFH. I GUESS IT'S FINE.



YOU'LL NEED TO SEE MY REAL FORM SOON ANYWAYS.



HI.



OH, GRAIN... OH! WOOD GRAIN, I SEE! HUH. YOU DO HAVE NICE HAIR...



BUT I THOUGHT GOLEMS... YOU'RE A GOLEM, AREN'T YOU?

SURPRISE!



HEH. MANY GENERATIONS AGO, WHEN GOLEMS WERE FIRST CREATED AS FAIRLY MINDLESS SLAVES, THEY HAD NO MAGIC AND YEAH, NO HAIR.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE THEN. THINGS HAVE CHANGED. THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF GOLEMS LOOK LIKE ME AND CAN USE MAGIC... BUT WE TRY NOT TO ADVERTISE OUR EXISTENCE.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY GOLEMS LIKE MYSELF OUTSIDE MY HOMETOWN, AND FROM THE SOUNDS OF IT YOU HAVEN'T EITHER. WE'RE FORBIDDEN TO LEAVE THERE, BUT... AH, YOU KNOW.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THAT'S KIND OF A SECRET.

...THANK YOU FOR TRUSTING US.

YEAH, YEAH. IF ALASTAIR KILLS US ALL IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.

D-DON'T SAY THAT...

YEAH. IT'S PROBABLY FINE. ARTHUR'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.





...OH HELL.



TWO OF THEM... ONE LIGHT POWER... ONE WITH BLACK WINGS...



OH, THAT'S ALASTAIR **AND** TALON... FEL'S.  
..C'MON ART! YOU CAN DO THIS. YOU HAVE TO DO THIS!



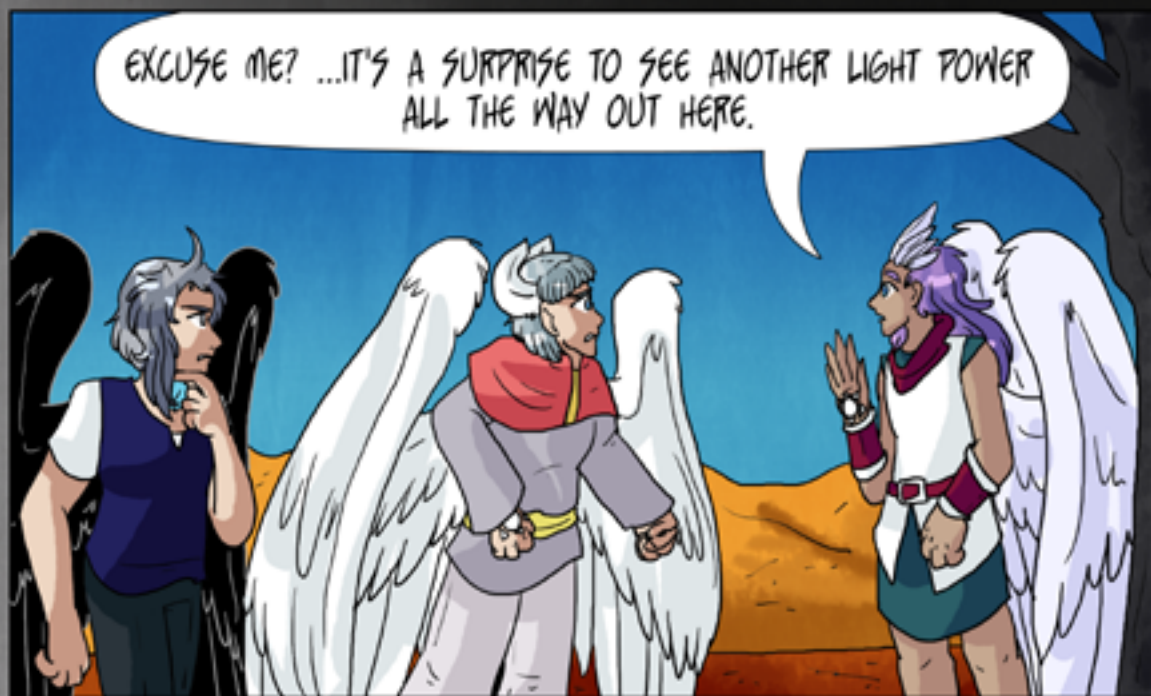
HAIL, VISITORS!



YOU THERE! WHERE IS ARTHUR?!



EXCUSE ME? ...IT'S A SURPRISE TO SEE ANOTHER LIGHT POWER ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.



AND YOUR UH, BLACKWINGED FRIEND.



YOU-!!



....



HEY! ARE Y' SURE HE'S EVEN A LIGH' POW'R? THEY'VE GOT A TRICKST'R. THIS MIGH' BE A-



SHUT UP, CLANNER. AS IF I CAN'T TELL HE IS A LIGHT POWER. HE'S THE ONLY LIGHT POWER HERE. YOU LED ME WRONG.





I'M SORRY... WERE YOU EXPECTING SOMEONE ELSE?



YOU... YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OTHER LIGHT POWERS..?



NO. YOU ARE THE FIRST ONE I'VE SEEN IN QUITE A WHILE.



TH-THAT CAN'T BE...  
I... I WAS SO CLOSE.



THA' CAN'T BE! I SEEN TH' LITTL' BLONDE LIGH' POW'R IN TOWN, WITH A TRICKST'R AN' A DARK POW'R!!



WITH A **DARK POWER**?? UH.... HUH. IS THAT SO...? WELL. IF THAT IS TRUE, SO IT IS. THEY DIDN'T COME THIS WAY...



HE DID! HE MUST'VE! YOU MUST BE HIM!





ER... THIS FRIEND OF YOURS... PLEASE CONTROL HIM.



YOU ARE HIM! YOU ARE THAT ARTHUR!  
Y' KILLED ME IN TOWN, BUT I'LL-



SILENCE!



ARTHUR WOULD NEVER DO WHAT YOU SAID.  
AND THIS IS NOT ARTHUR.



ARTHUR...



I CAME OUT HERE TO SAVE YOU...  
BUT I WAS LED ASTRAY BY THIS  
UNHINGED IMMORTAL.



SAVE?! HE'S IN LEAGUE WITH A DARK POWL'R  
AN' A DAMN TRICKST'R!



HOW DARE YOU!

AN' THA' IS HIM, AN' I  
C'N PROVE IT!!







MY FRIEND, I AM SORRY YOU LOST THIS 'ARTHUR' PERSON....



THIS MURDEROUS LUNATIC IS DOING YOU NO FAVOURS THOUGH. HE'S WASTING YOUR TIME, AND IF YOUR FRIEND'S IN DANGER, YOU DON'T HAVE THAT TIME TO WASTE.



...YOU ARE RIGHT, FRIEND.



HE'S WRONG! THA'S AN ILLUSION - AN' I C'N PROVE IT! ILLUSIONS CAN'T BE TOUCHED, WHA'S REAL WILL BE REVEALED!



DO NOT TOUCH ME.



WHY? Y'AFRAID YOUR TRICKS WILL BE REVEALED?



I- I'M WARNING YOU, DO NOT TOUCH ME!!















...YOU NEVER WERE ANY GOOD AT LYING TO ME.



SO THEY'RE HERE? IS DARKLING HERE, TOO?



N-NO!

SUCH A PATHETIC BOY.



A-ALASTAIR?!



WHAT KIND OF LIGHT POWE.... WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!



YOU WENT MISSING! ALL THE DARK POWERS ON THE SPIRE VANISHED! I THOUGHT THEY MURDERED YOU - AND I FIND YOU HERE! YOU TELL ME TO LEAVE, YOU KILLED AN ELEMENTAL CLANNER AND YOU'RE COVERED IN ILLUSIONS!



EXPLAIN YOURSELF!







A-ALASTAIR, I CAN'T...



...I HAD THIS ILLUSION DONE IN TOWN. CERAPH TALON SAW, AND TRIED TO KILL THE ILLUSIONIST. I HAD TO DEFEND US... AFTER THAT I CAME OUT HERE. ALONE. I JUST- I WANTED TO TRAVEL, SEE THE WORLD, NOT BE STUCK ON THE SPIRE FIGHTING DARK POWERS FOREVER. IT WAS JUST MEANT TO BE A LITTLE BREAK. I- I LEFT YOU A NOTE, D-DIDN'T YOU SEE IT?



I JUST NEED A LITTLE TIME TO MYSELF... SO PLEASE, GO BACK TO THE SPIRE. I'M FINE. I'LL SEE YOU BACK THERE AGAIN, LATER.



ARTHUR.



YOU ARE LYING AGAIN.



WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHAT HAS BECOME OF YOU... **WHY WOULD YOU LIE TO ME?**



**NO!!**



