

YOU AND THIS HERO FELLA CAN STAY AT MY PLACE
FOR AS LONG AS YOU NEED TO, OKAY?

HMMM WAIT SHOULD I SAY THAT BEFORE I MEET...
WHAT DID YOU SAY HIS NAME WAS?

ARC. HE'S.... I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE HIM. BUT
HE'S HELPING ME FIND MANA. SO HE'S WONDERFUL.

WAY BACK HOME PART 4: ROUGH TRAILS



ANY LUCK AT THE GUILD?

SOME. WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

ARC, THIS IS MY AUNT MYRA. MYRA, THIS IS THAT HERO I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT.

OOH, YOU CAN DEFINITELY STAY AT MY PLACE WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN.

UH, THANKS.

SO WHAT'S THE GO? WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT AT THE GUILD?

THERE'S AN ADVENTURER THAT COMES AROUND OFTEN WE'LL WANT TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR. A HUMAN MONSTER SUMMONER BY THE NAME OF MATTHIAS COLSON.

BUT I THINK WE CAN FIND OTHER LEADS, TOO.

NO OFFENCE PRIESTESS, BUT
SHOULDN'T YOU HEAD BACK TO LIKA?



STARTING
WITH 'NO
OFFENCE' IS A
SURE WAY TO
PUT ME ON
THE WRONG
FOOT.



WHY SHOULD I GO BACK? I'LL BE
MORE HELPFUL HERE.



TO BE SURE.... BUT I THOUGHT, UH. CRIPES,
THERE'S NO EASY WAY TO SAY THIS - DON'T YOU
NEED TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR
HUSBAND'S FUNERAL?



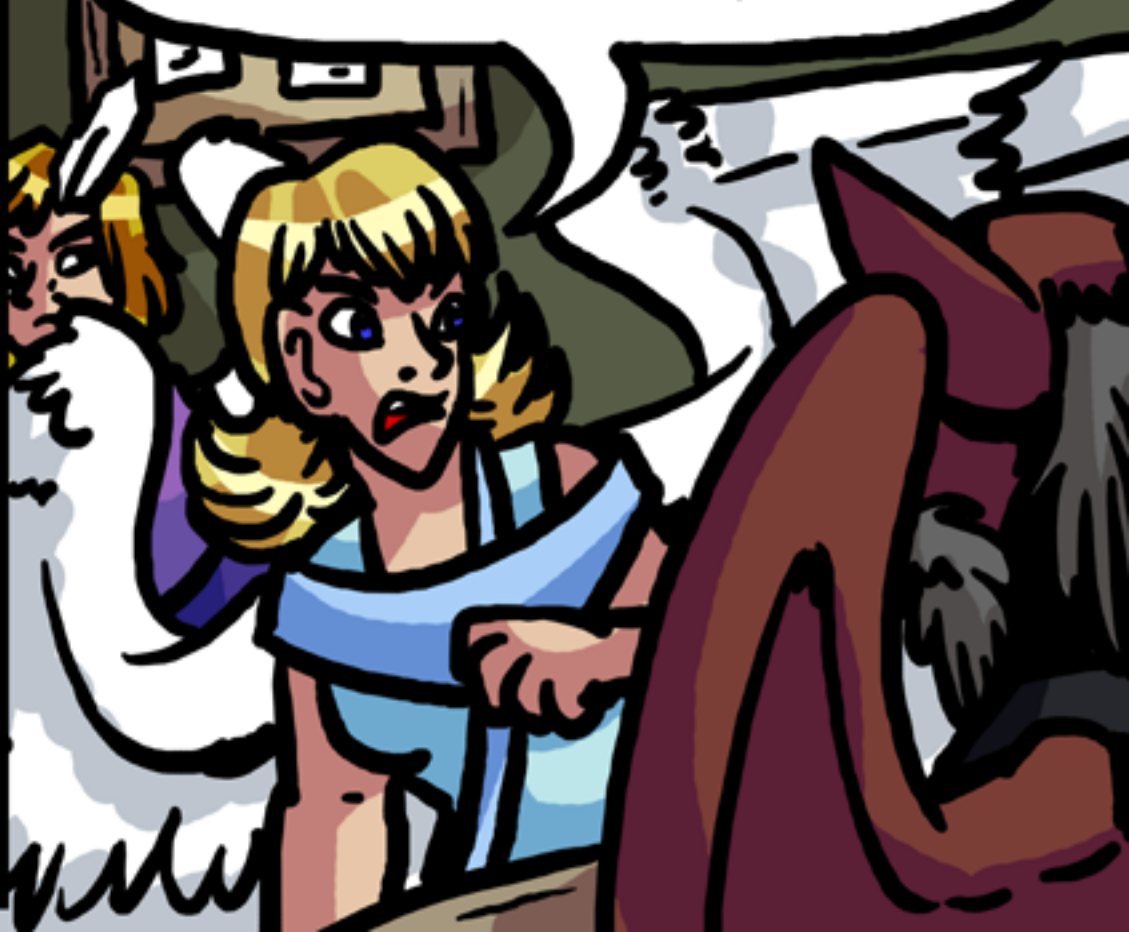
.....YES. BUT...



HE'S NOT GETTING ANY DEADER. I
NEED TO FOCUS ON MANA FO NOW.



HERE'S A QUESTION - WHY DO YOU KEEP QUESTIONING
MY COMMITMENT TO THIS, ARC?



FELS, MICHELLE, I DIDN'T
MEAN IT LIKE THAT.

I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A HORRENDOUS
EXPERIENCE AND I FEEL LIKE I SHARE THE BLAME FOR THAT.

I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE
EVERYTHING'S TAKEN CARE
OF, THAT YOU'RE OKAY.

I'M SORRY. TELL ME
IF THERE'S SOMETHING
MORE I CAN DO.

WELL FOR STARTERS YOU
CAN STOP ASKING ME IF I
CAN DO THIS. I HAVE TO DO
THIS, GOT IT?

I'M NOT OKAY, AND I DON'T KNOW IF I WILL BE.
BUT WE NEED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

SO WHAT OTHER LEADS CAN WE FOLLOW?

WELL LIKE I SAID, WE GOT THIS MATTHIAS FELLOW TO FIND. MONSTER-SUMMONERS TEND TO BE A PRETTY TIGHT-KNIT GROUP, SO IF HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS HE MIGHT KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES.



ANOTHER THING I'D LIKE TO FOLLOW UP ON IS ANYONE WHO KNEW YOUR HUSBAND. HE GOT ANY ENEMIES, ANYONE WHO'D WANT TO HURT HIM?



N-NOT THAT I COULD THINK OF...



WAS HE FROM AROUND THESE PARTS? GOT FAMILY HERE?



NOT REALLY. HIS FAMILY MOVED DOWN HERE WHEN WE WERE IN UPPER SCHOOL, FAR AS I KNOW. BUT HE WAS ESTRANGED FROM THEM NOT LONG AFTER WE BEGAN GOING OUT. I UH, THEY DIDN'T REALLY LIKE FEATHRIES, I DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT THEM AT ALL.



VERY WELL. WE'LL NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT WE CAN ABOUT THEM. THAT GIVES US THREE LEADS TO WORK WITH.

THREE...?



UMM, THE MONSTER-SUMMONER AND ZAMIL'S FAMILY? THAT'S ONLY TWO.



THE THIRD THING TO CONSIDER IS TRICKSTERS, ISN'T IT?



WELL, AS YOU SAID, YOU'RE A PRIESTESS OF CERAPH, AND THEY ARE HERETICS.



Y-YEAH. I, UM...



WHAT IS IT?



NEVERMIND. I'LL SEE IF I CAN FIND THIS 'MATTHIAS'. CERAPH MAGIC CAN MORE THAN TAKE CARE OF A MONSTER, SO THERE WON'T BE ANY PROBLEMS FROM HIM.



RIGHT. SINCE I'M NOT A CERAPH PRIESTESS AND AIN'T RELATED TO ONE, I THINK IT'S BEST IF I SEE IF I CAN FIND ANYTHING OUT ABOUT THE LOCAL TRICKSTER MOB.



HMMM, GUESS THAT LEAVES ME TO FIND OUT ABOUT ZAMIL'S FAMILY. JUST AS WELL, I THINK THAT'LL SUIT ME FINE.



SO THERE IT IS. WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO MANA, NO MATTER WHAT.

...IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY. WE'LL START FRESH TOMORROW.



HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE ACADEMY,
PRIDE OF LUONOR.

HUH. THA' PASSAGE REALLY IS
DANG FAST, ISN' IT?

OF COURSE.

NOW, WE NEED TO GET
YOUR NAMES BEFORE YOU
HEAD ON, YOUR RELATION-
SHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER,
WHY YOU'RE TRAVELLING
TOGETHER.

JUST GOT TO MAKE SURE
NOTHING SUSPICIOUS IS GOING
ON, YOU KNOW.

UM-

HE'S PHOENIX
CLAN.

OH?

MY APOLOGIES, BUT CAN YOU OFFER
SOME PROOF OF THAT? SINCE YOU
CAME FROM MARLOWE, THAT MARK
COULD BE FAKE.

IS SHE CALLIN' ME A
TRICKST'R?

I THINK SHE JUST
WANTS YOU TO SHOW
HER SOME FIRE MAGIC,
TALON.

OH, YOU TRULY ARE A SERVANT OF
THE FIRE GOD! WHAT AN HONOUR!



IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU?



I COULD REALLY USE A CHANGE'A
CLOTHES, ACTUALLY.



THESE SMELL AWFUL.

I WASN'T GOING TO SAY ANYTHING...



IF YOU COULD TELL US THE
WAY TO FELTON TOO, THAT WOULD
BE VERY HELPFUL.



CERTAINLY! IT WOULD BE OUR PLEASURE.

MAN, 'BOUT TIME WE FOUND
SOME PROP'R HELPFUL PEOPLE.



WH-WHY AM I HERE....?

MUM... DAD... I MISS YOU
SO MUCH... WH-WHY...

I KNOW... IT'S HARD... YOU CAN
CRY AS MUCH AS YOU NEED TO.

YOUR PARENTS ARE AT PEACE IN THE AFTER-
LIFE NOW, THEY'RE WITH THE GODS...

YOU'RE SAFE, AND I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE
NOTHING HAPPENS TO YOU.

M-MISTER YASIR... WHY DID
YOU SAVE ME...?

I'M A HERO, MANA. IT'S MY DESTINY.



I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SAVE YOUR MOTHER... OR YOUR FATHER.

≡SNIFF≡



THEY... THEY'RE AT PEACE NOW, RIGHT?

OF COURSE THEY ARE.

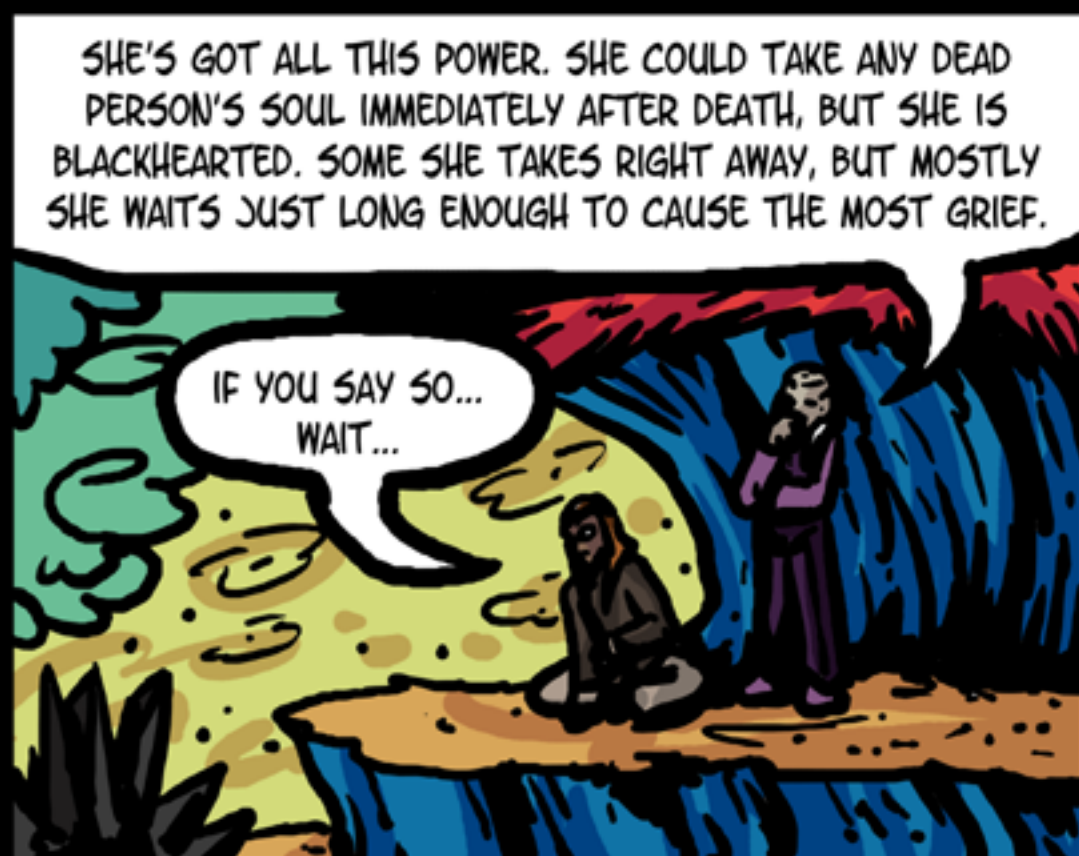


ARGH! GODDESS, I HATE THAT BLOODY REAPER. WHAT A PIECE OF WORK.



...I SUPPOSE SHE IS ONLY DOING HER JOB.

DOESN'T MAKE HER LESS OF A JERK.

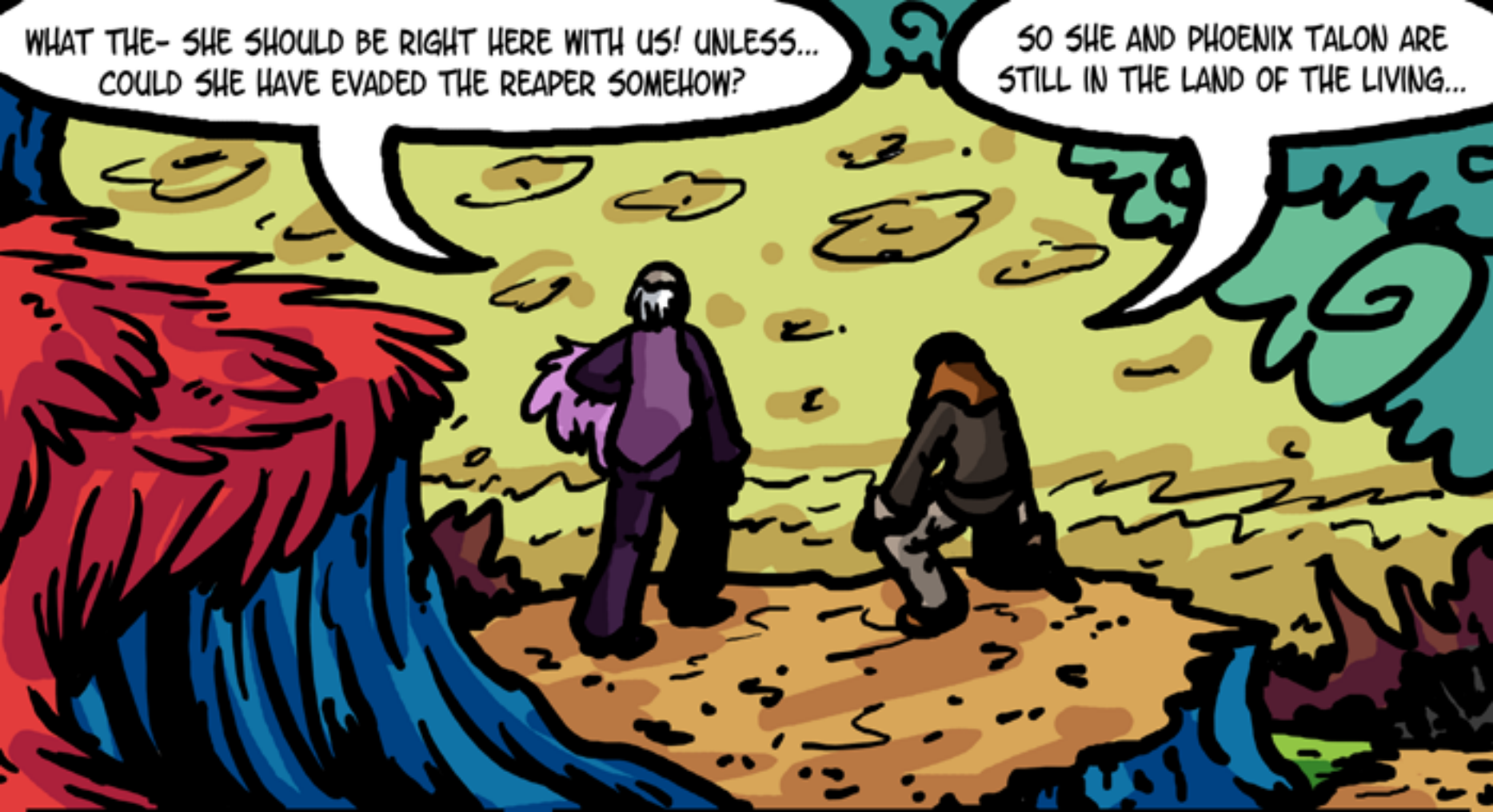


SHE'S GOT ALL THIS POWER. SHE COULD TAKE ANY DEAD PERSON'S SOUL IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH, BUT SHE IS BLACKHEARTED. SOME SHE TAKES RIGHT AWAY, BUT MOSTLY SHE WAITS JUST LONG ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE MOST GRIEF.

IF YOU SAY SO...
WAIT...



WHERE'S MANA RYUSHIN?



WHAT THE- SHE SHOULD BE RIGHT HERE WITH US! UNLESS...
COULD SHE HAVE EVADED THE REAPER SOMEHOW?

SO SHE AND PHOENIX TALON ARE
STILL IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING...



...MAYBE SHE CAN KILL TALON
AND BRING US BACK.



WHAT? MANA'S A GOOD KID, SHE'D NEVER DO THAT.

REALLY?



WHEN I WAS BEING JUDGED, THE
GODS SAID MANA RYUSHIN WAS
THE WORST, RECEIVED THE WORST
JUDGMENT... SHE HAD TO HAVE
DONE SOMETHING.



MANA? THE
WORST?



SHE DOES HAVE A DIFFICULT
PENANCE, BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE
HER DOING SOMETHING BAD.

WHATEVER SHE DID,
I HOPE SHE AND
TALON WILL STILL
LOOK FOR MY MANA.

I THINK THEY WILL. THEY SEEMED INTO IT.

BUT HE... COULD MANA
HAVE DIED WHILE WE WERE
LOOKING FOR HIM...?

UM.... IT'S
POSSIBLE.

THEN... CAN WE FIND HIM?

IF HE'S DEAD, AND IF HE'S STILL HERE, MAYBE...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'IF HE'S STILL HERE'?

...NOT MANY PEOPLE STAY IN PURGATORY.
HE MAY HAVE MOVED ON.

WHAT?! BUT HE-

LOOK, WE CAN ONLY ACT ON
WHAT WE KNOW. NO POINT WORRYING
ABOUT WHAT WE CAN'T CHANGE.

BUT HE'S MY SON-!!

WOULD YOU
LIKE TO MEET
MY SON?

WHA-?

THERE'S A WAY TO
FIND OUT WHERE YOUR
SON IS. C'MON AND I'LL
SHOW YOU.

AND YOUR SON
CAN HELP US?

UMMM

THERE'S A PLACE AROUND HERE WE CALL THE VIEWING POOL, YOU CAN SEE GLIMPSES OF THE LIVING WORLD THROUGH IT.

AND WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT THIS BEFORE?

WELL WE WEREN'T HERE FOR VERY LONG LAST TIME. BESIDES...

MY FAMILY HANG AROUND IT THE WHOLE TIME, HOGGING USE OF IT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE LAST OF OUR BLOODLINE.

SO YOU NEED TO ASK THEM TO BORROW IT FOR A WHILE?

NOT REALLY. MY FAMILY ARE NOT EXACTLY NICE. AT ALL. LOOK, I'LL TRY TO LURE THEM OUT AND RUN FOR IT, YOU NIP IN AND ASK THE WATER TO SHOW YOU YOUR SON, GOT IT?

THAT'S THEM...

YOU SAID THEY'RE NOT NICE...
YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR FAMILY?

I LOVE MY FAMILY.
SO... THIS ISN'T GONNA
BE EASY, SORRY.

SIGH

WELL HIYA FRIENDS! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

CAN I ASK-

OW! FELS!

GRAB HIM.

TELLA-!

NNGH.

YOU'RE AS DUMB AS THE
DAY IS LONG, TELLA.

AND YOU'RE AS JERKY AS THE DAY IS... JERKY. YOU JERK.

OOOF

YOU CLEARLY DIDN'T LEARN YOUR LESSON TO STAY
AWAY AFTER LAST TIME. TELL ME, WHAT CAN WE DO
TO MAKE THIS SINK IN, TELLA?

OI! GET YOUR HANDS OFF HIM!

FRIEND OF YOURS, TEL-

AHH!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THAT!

...REALLY?

BUCK-!

ANYBODY ELSE?

OOOF

VIEWING POOL! SHOW US
MANA AHMAD!



VIEWING POOL! SHOW US LOKI KIBORN!



COME ON ZAMIL, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.



SORRY ABOUT
MY FAMILY.

THEY WEREN'T A PROBLEM.
THEY... CAN'T REALLY FIGHT
WELL, CAN THEY?



WELL SURE. WE WERE ALL LIGHT
POWERS WHEN WE WERE ALIVE. NO
NEED TO LEARN HOW TO THROW A
PUNCH IF YOU GOT RIDICULOUS
MAGIC TO THROW AROUND INSTEAD.



BUT HEY, WE GOT TO SEE THROUGH THE VIEWING POOL. THAT WAS THE LIVING WORLD - YOUR SON'S ALIVE! DID YOU GET A GOOD LOOK?

....YEAH.

WHAT IS IT?

THAT MAN HE WAS WITH...

THAT'S MY BROTHER.

IS THAT A GOOD THING?

NO.

I DO NOT KNOW WHY YOU ARE HIDING YOUR IMMORTALITY, PHOENIX TALON.



I DON' LIKE ME FAMILY. I'VE SAID IT BEF'RE. BETT'R PEOPLE DON' RECOGNISE ME.

STILL, IT WOULD BE HANDY TO RELY ON, PEOPLE ARE KIND TO AN ELEMENTAL.



'CEPT FOR TH' ONES THA' JUST MURD'R ME... HEY, IF Y' WANNA SEE IF WE C'N GET SOME BENEFIT OUT'A Y' TELLIN' PEOPLE YER A GHOST, GO RIGH' AHEAD.



HM.

THA'S WHA' I THOUGH'.



HM. THERE'S SOMEONE UP AHEAD.

OH HEY. 'SCUSE ME, STRANG'R!




HELLO?






SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, SIR.
DO YOU KNOW IF IT IS FAR TO
FELTON?



WELL SURE! IT AIN'T FAR, REALLY. THE ROADS
ARE GOOD, YOU'LL BE THERE IN A DAY OR SO IF YOU
PACE YOURSELF. I'M HEADED THAT WAY MESELF!



YOU FOLKS GONNA BE
STAYING IN FELTON LONG?
YOU LIVE THERE, OR JUST
VISITING?




NAH, WE'RE JUS' PASSIN' THROUGH. ONE'A
OUR FRIENDS WAS KILL'D BETWEEN FELTON
AN'... LIKA, WASN' IT?

THAT'S IT.



REALLY--?



GEEZ, I'M SORRY. WHY DON'T WE HEAD
DOWN TO FELTON TOGETHER? THAT'S WHERE
WE ALL GOING ANYWHO. AND CRIPES, IF YOUR
FRIEND GOT KILLED DOWN THERE, CAN'T BE AS
SAFE AS I THOUGHT IT WERE.



THA'S RIGH' KIND OF
Y', STRANG'R.

WELL I AM AN
ADVENTURER BY TRADE,
IT'S REALLY NOTHING!

I DIDN'T THINK THERE WOULD BE ANY DANGER ON A ROAD SO CLOSE TO A HERO SCHOOL. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE REASONABLY QUIET.



IT IS ODD, AIN'T IT? BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY, AT ANY RATE.



DON'T WORRY. I TRAVEL THESE PARTS LOADS. I'LL GET YOU LOT WHERE YOU GOING SAFELY.



THANKS, ER-... WHA' WAS YER NAME?



OH, I'M MATTHIAS COLSON. NICE TO MEETCHA.



HAPPY T' MEET Y' TOO. I'M TALON, TH' LITTL' ONE'S MANA.

HELLO.



IT IS LUCKY WE RAN INTO YOU, FRIEND.

FOR SURE!

