

# Fairy Tale

—《Tales of Tarsylia》10

吴森作品

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Tarsylia Year 15 of the Heroes  
Old Rainbow City outskirts  
Divytown



"Did you hear any strange noises from Sally's room last night? It sounded like she was talking to someone, but when I checked, she was alone in her room. She said her sister was reading her some stories..."

"Leave it, she's already 13. She's not a child anymore. With all the wars going on outside the city, we haven't had business in days. Give me some peace!"

"I'm worried about her. We do have a responsibility to care for her."

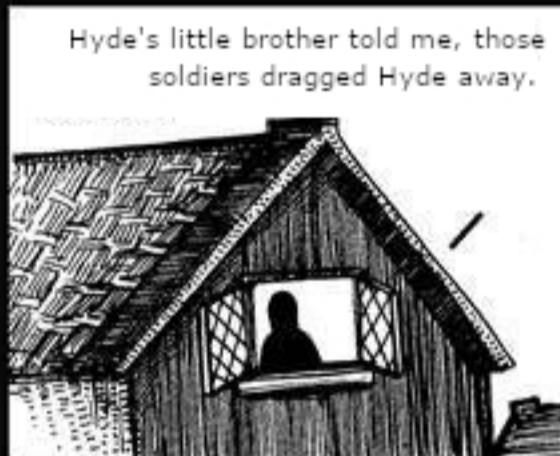
"Shut up. We're already working day and night just to get bread on the table. Did you hide that chest? I don't want it to be seized by those militiamen!"



Dollo, how long did you say this war would last?



Mom won't let me go outside. She said it's too dangerous with those soldiers running around.



Hyde's little brother told me, those soldiers dragged Hyde away.



I'm going to go crazy! I heard over a thousand people are dying every day.



Dear god, please keep Hyde safe...



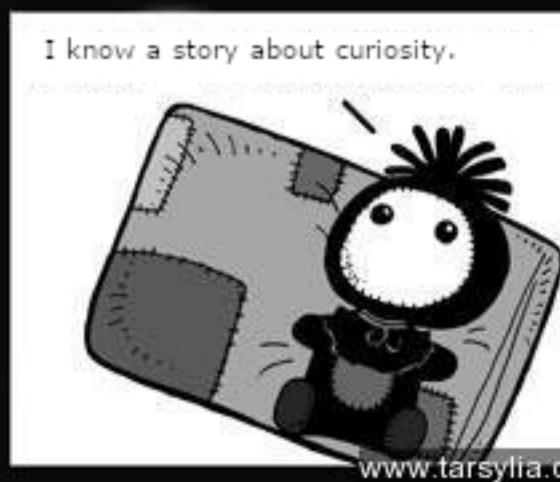
Mom and Dad have also been acting strange these past few days. They've been sneaking around, moving things down to the cellar.



They think they can, keep secrets from me? Let's go explore the cellar tonight. Dollo.



I know a story about curiosity.



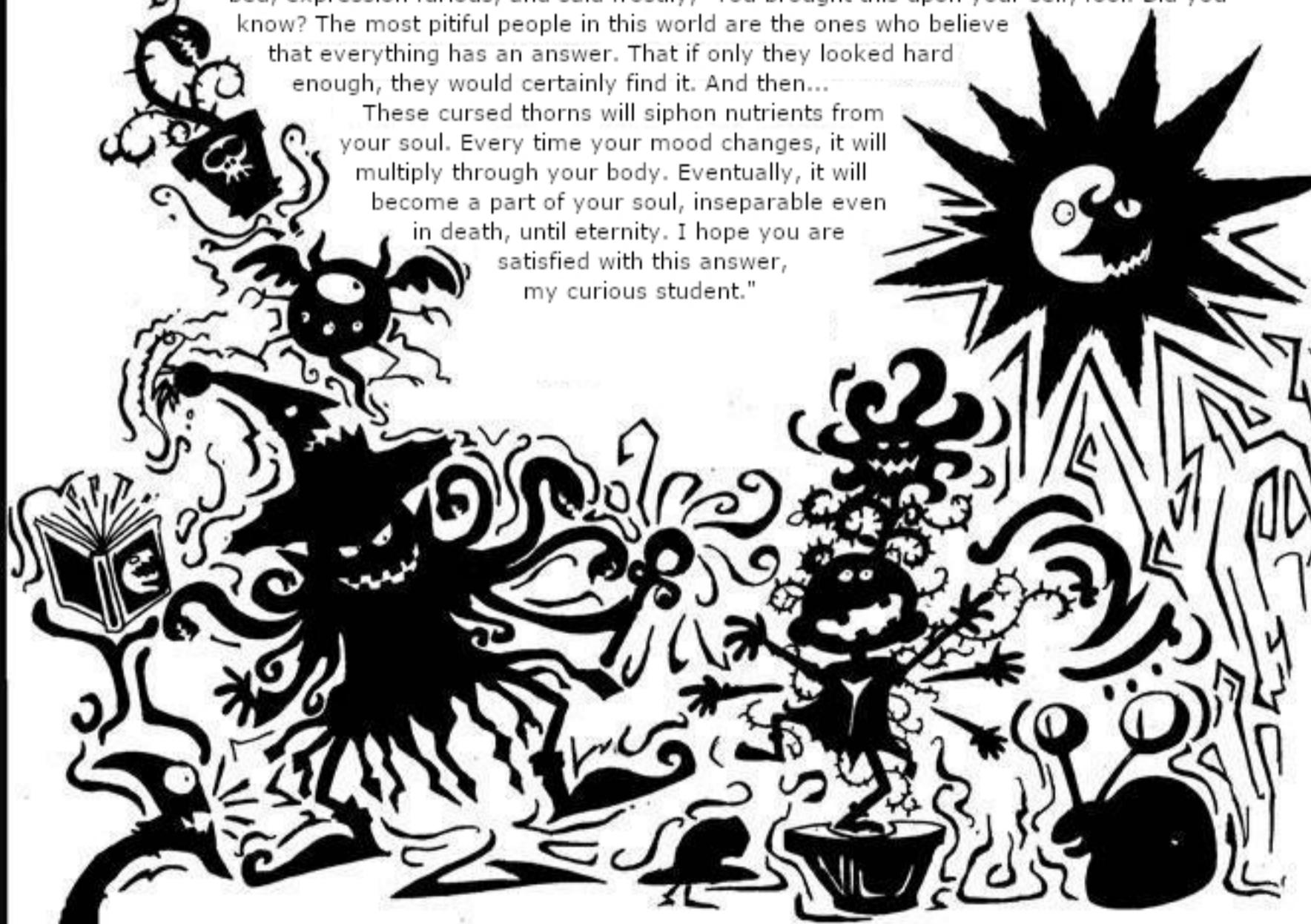
Once upon a time, there was a child who was learning magic. He was very curious, and couldn't stand it when there was a secret he didn't know. No one could hide anything from him, especially his teacher. He always suspected his teacher didn't teach some spells, out of fear that his students would one day surpass him. So, whenever he saw the wizard acting out of normal, the child would slip into a secret alcove to spy on him.

Getting into the wizard's secret alcove was no easy task. He first had to avoid the small demon standing guard, and then disable the curse on the door. The slightest mistake would get him caught. Luckily this child was very clever, and could escape detection every time.

One day, the wizard returned from a deep underground abyss. Ashen-faced, he entered his office without saying a word to his apprentices. The child thought to himself: "There must be some huge secret he's hiding from us. I must know what it is." That day, the room was sealed off especially well, covered in warning runes. But the more there was, the more excited the child felt. Three hours later, he finally snuck in. The wizard had drawn out an extremely complicated magic circle. In the middle of the circle rested a crystal pot. A tendril was slowly emerging from the dirt, in time with the wizard's incantation. The child hid behind the cabinet, not daring to breathe. Suddenly he saw eyes pop open on the tendril's black buds. They turned to look at him. He heard the teacher swear, the spell collapsed, and then a black, black ball came flying towards him...

A few days later, the child woke up from his coma. His teacher stood by his bed, expression furious, and said frostily, "You brought this upon your self, fool. Did you know? The most pitiful people in this world are the ones who believe that everything has an answer. That if only they looked hard enough, they would certainly find it. And then...

These cursed thorns will siphon nutrients from your soul. Every time your mood changes, it will multiply through your body. Eventually, it will become a part of your soul, inseparable even in death, until eternity. I hope you are satisfied with this answer, my curious student."



That went too far! You could have just asked me to not go.



No need to tell such a scary story!



Bad Dollo! I'm going to sleep.



Year 21 of Heroes

Why didn't you drink that glass of wine?

He was our inn's most generous patron!

Do you want the inn to go bankrupt?  
To live on the streets as a beggar?

You certainly couldn't become a  
palace maid!

You can't even thread a thread  
through a needle properly.

Tell me, after all these years we've  
raised you, what use are you?

If you had a nice face, we could at  
least pawn you off to some rich family.

I'm telling you, stay away from that  
cripple Hyde!

In these next few days, the lord  
might be paying us a visit.

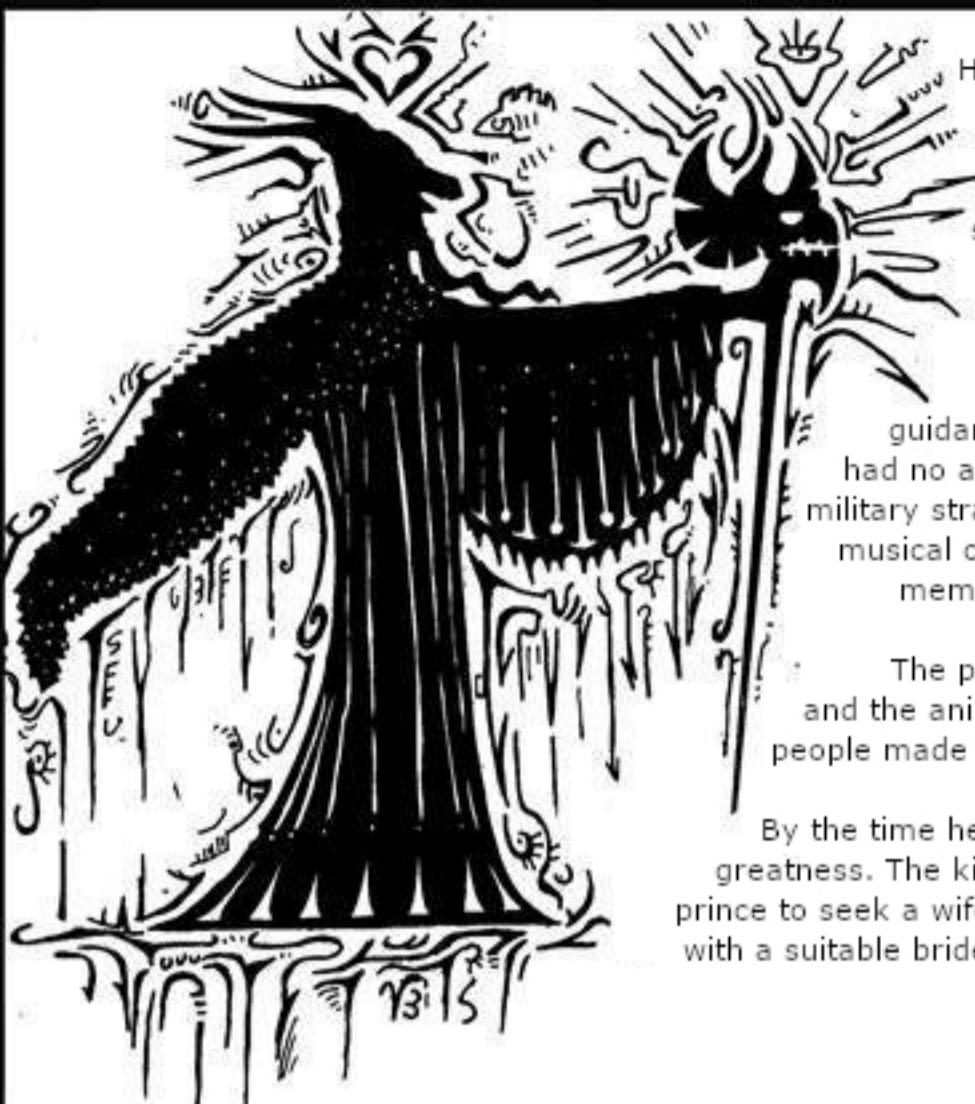
You had better dress yourself up  
properly when he does.

I really am a waste of  
space, Dollo. I can't do  
anything...

I don't want to be a  
burden on the family.  
But I also don't  
want to become  
someone's trophy  
wife.

..... .....

I do know a real waste of space.



He was a prince from one of those small kingdoms that come up only in fairy tales. According to the stories, the night he was born, the palace astrologer said that the heavens were acting strange, and that the prince would surely grow up to accomplish great things. And so the king, the queen and all of the country's people catered to the prince's every whim.

The prince grew up under their watchful guidance. However, the king slowly realized, the prince had no affinity for horses or weaponry, nor any interest in military strategy. He didn't have a head for business, and no musical or poetic talent to speak of. By 18, he still couldn't memorize the royal ancestry. The poor astrologer was thus beheaded...

The prince's one distinction was this: he loved animals, and the animals in the royal forest adored him in return. The people made fun of him for this, laughing that "The prince sure is a mighty stableman."

By the time he was 20, the prince still hadn't shown any signs of greatness. The king couldn't endure the shame, and so ordered the prince to seek a wife among the neighboring countries. The prince left with a suitable bride price and a whole retinue of animals. It took one month to walk to the nearest kingdom.

The princess of that kingdom was enchanting, and the prince fell in love at first sight. But the princess didn't agree. She had dreamt of becoming the queen of a large kingdom, and the prince in front of her eyes seemed like an idiot. He lacked spirit and ambition and, what's more, was surrounded by a bunch of livestock! And so she screamed, "Goodness, how could I marry such a waste of a man? Do you expect me to live out the rest of my life among pigs? Get out of here! Scram!"

Hurt, the prince ran out of the palace. He was too ashamed to go home, and hid in the forest to cry alone. At this point, a forest spirit appeared in front of him.

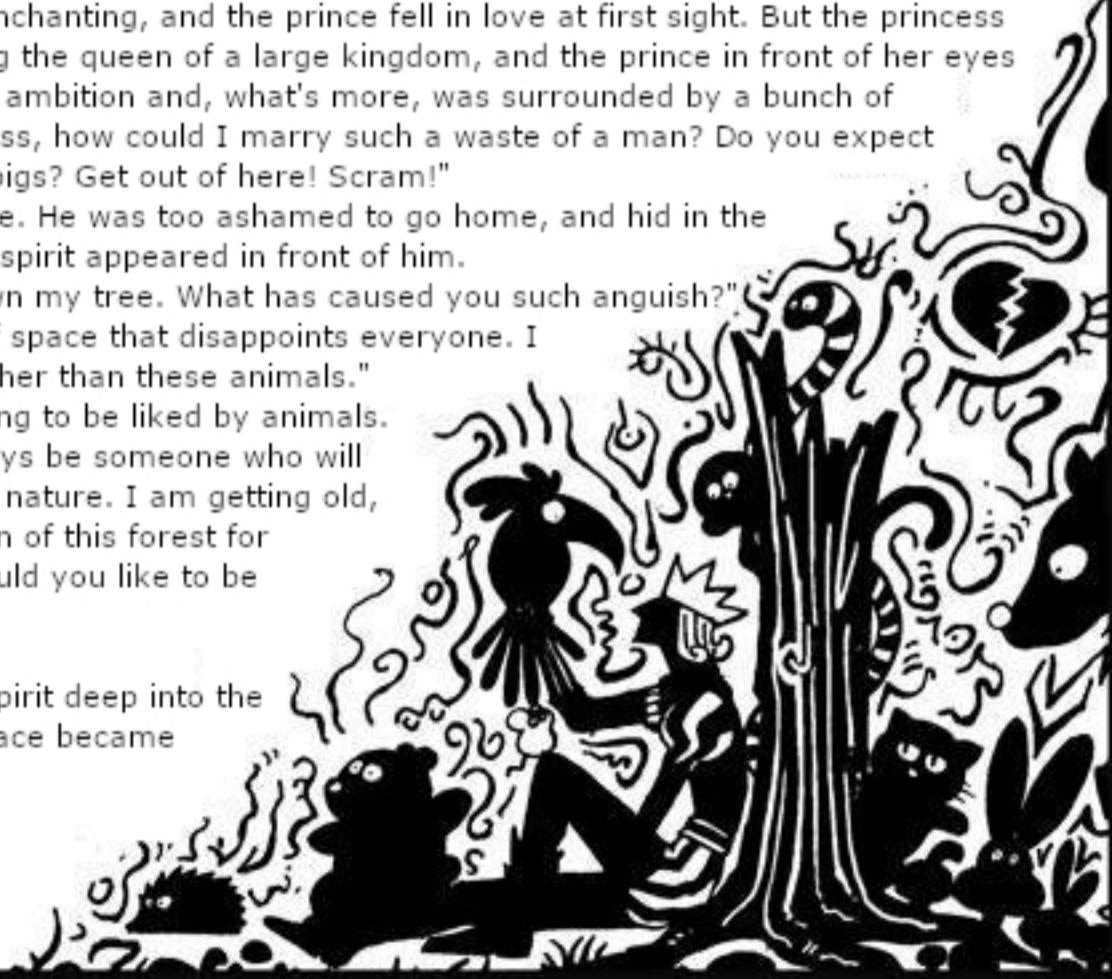
"Child? Your tears are about to drown my tree. What has caused you such anguish?"

The prince replied, "I am a waste of space that disappoints everyone. I don't have any skills. No one likes me, other than these animals."

The spirit said, "It's a marvelous thing to be liked by animals. Child, the world is so vast, there will always be someone who will appreciate and need you. This is a law of nature. I am getting old, and have been looking for a new guardian of this forest for many years. I think you are suitable. Would you like to be my student?"

The prince responded, "Of course!"

And so the prince followed the old spirit deep into the forest. Many years later, this waste of space became Tarsylia's greatest forest guardian.



Haha...if I were a princess...



I would have been just as worthless.



Hahaha...



Year 27



Dear, we should pack our things away tonight.



I know. You should get some rest. I want to look around this house one last time.



Do you know? Dollo, I finally sold those bugs that Hyde brought back last year.



The person who bought it looked like a wizard. He paid 700 gold pieces for it.



Who would have thought? It was the first time Mama smiled at Hyde.



The wizard said that they were building a new city, and he'd come back regularly to buy medicinal fungus.



Now our little store can finally survive. It feels like I'm dreaming.



What a shame the marquis' castle burned down that year. Otherwise...



Hehe, soon I'll be wearing elegant dresses, and hiring my own maids and butlers.



I'll need to get silver cutlery and sheets and drapes made from satin.



We also might as well get you some new clothes. I'm so excited!



The life I didn't even dare to dream is about to come true.



I just so happen to have a story about happiness.



Once upon a time there was a demon who had kidnapped a lot of children and locked them in his cave. Then, using his demonic magic, slowly corrupted the children until they became demons like him. Of course, this sort of transformation required great fortitude, and those unworthy children became his next meal.

Among this group of children was one called Yaya. He was extremely average and had little interest in the promises of demon magic, so the demon decided to eat him. But Yaya spoke up first:

"I might be too weak to join your clan, but I can serve you as your chef! My dishes are always excellent. Feel free to try if you don't believe me."

The demon agreed. The boy's cooking was indeed great, and satisfied the demon's appetite. The demon thought, "Once I've gotten sick of his cooking, I can eat him then!" But every day, Yaya was able to create fresh and bold flavors to experience, and the demon always wanted more.

Just like that, twenty years passed. The demon finally died by the hands of his creations, and Yaya finally earned his freedom. The demon-children flew out of the cave, impatient to start a new life. Before they left, they said to Yaya, "The demon is dead. What do you plan to do in the future?"

Yaya said, "Find a rich man, and become his chef."

The demon-children all laughed. "If you had worked as hard as the rest of us, you wouldn't have ended up in this situation. Look at us, we can use this magic to do whatever we want. We can become kings, overlords, live like gods! Anything we could want is within reach. It's a pity you could never understand this joy..."

Yaya said, smiling, "To be oneself is the truest joy. Farewell, my friends!"



I curse this damned place every day.



Every single day...



Tarsylia, Year 33 of Heroes  
Old Rainbow City, Upper District  
Silver Goblet Inn

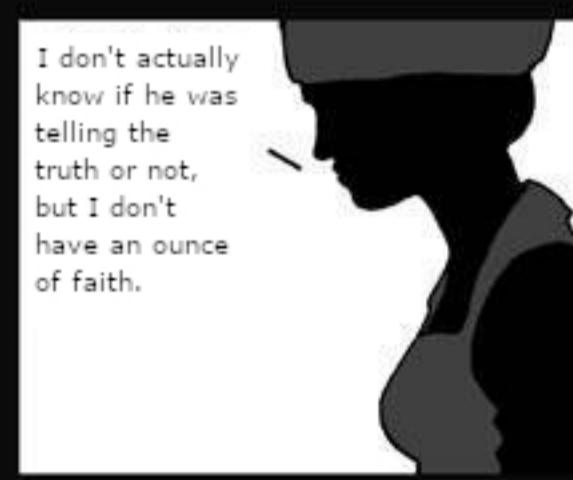
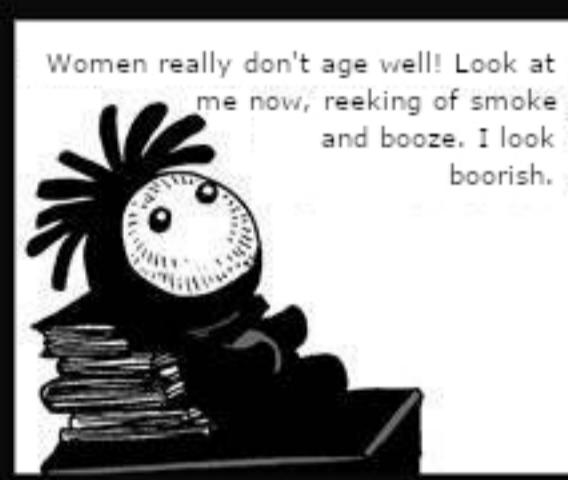
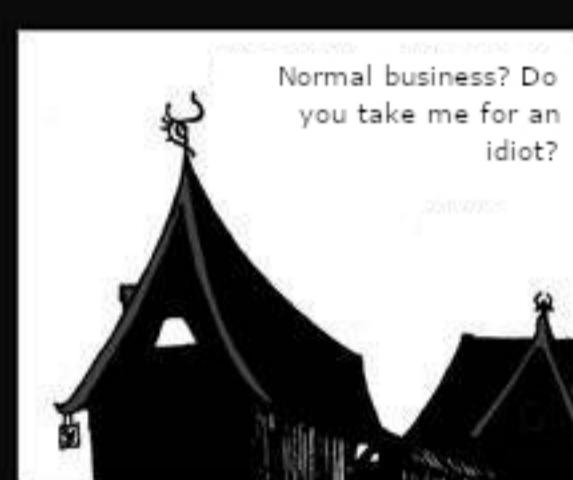
Sally, you just take care of managing the inn. I don't need any help running the pharmacy. There are more wizards in Rainbow City every day.



Don't need any help, huh?  
That way you can keep fooling around with those girls from the Finance Ministry.

What are you implying?  
That's just normal business between merchants.

Normal business? Do you take me for an idiot?



I'm not that girl that Hyde loved anymore. Maybe I should dress up a bit more. Try to charm him.



Maybe I should learn to be more ladylike. That way, Hyde will let me go out more.



I know someone who could change themselves on a whim.



He was an alchemist. One day he fell in love with the daughter of the king. Although the difference between their ranks was great, he still aspired to woo her. He slowly convinced the king of his worth by using his alchemy to create miracles that won over the country's people. At the end, he married the girl he was obsessed with.

After they got married, in order to win her love, he abandoned everything to focus on her pleasure. He turned into a mermaid to hunt for moonlight pearls under the ocean. He became a eagle and flew to the highest peaks in order to pick a nameless wildflower. He turned into a horse and galloped through mountain forests with her on his back. He became a fierce tiger so the princess could challenge the giants. He even became a harp under the moonlight and performed for her nature's melody. Every day was filled with new experiences, so that she would start seeing him in a new light and realize that a joyous life was waiting for her...

One morning a year later, the alchemist was suddenly awakened by a scream. He saw the princess hanging halfway out the window yelling "Help!" Their bodyguards rushed in, and all started shouting over each other.

"What's everyone's problem?" the alchemist thought. He went to the mirror to look at his reflection and jumped with fright. His reflection had turned into a formless monster. He had known that constantly taking the transfiguration potion would have side-effects, but had never suspected they would be this severe. He had no more time to think. The guards had already drawn their swords and the princess was screaming, "Kill that monster! He ate my husband!"

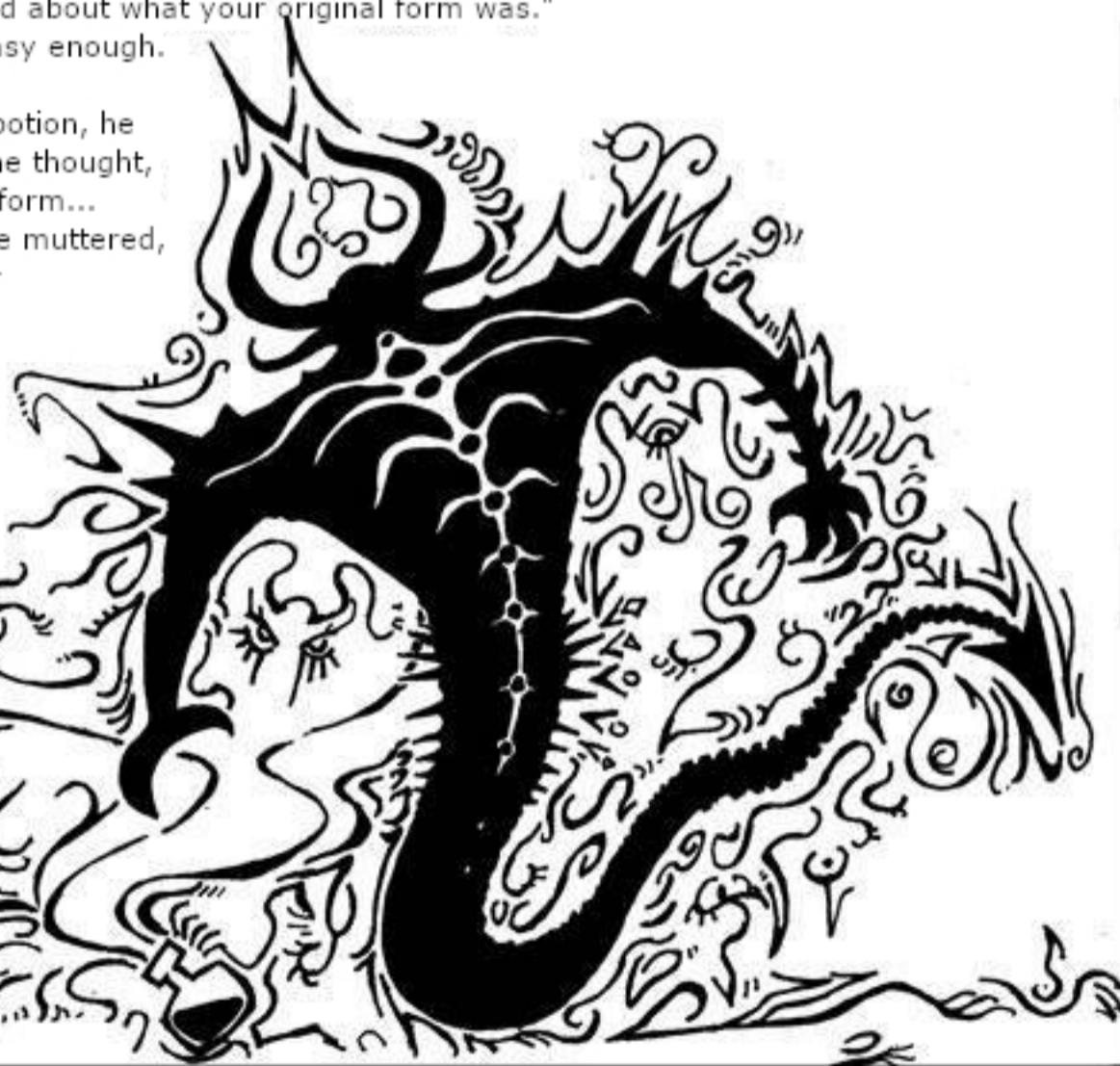
With a lumpy, unwieldy body, the alchemist dragged himself back to his tower, where his teacher awaited.

His teacher told him, "I can help you. I have a potion that will let you return back to normal. All you have to do is drink it and think hard about what your original form was."

The alchemist said, "That's easy enough. Thank you for helping me."

But after he drank down the potion, he realized that no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't remember his original form... Looking at himself in the mirror, he muttered, "That's not me, not me. But what r eally am I?"

From that moment on, he hid in the forests around the palace, emerging only during the darkest nights to watch from afar...



"Mama, if you take me to school, I won't be able to show my face there anymore!"  
 "Behave. You're already 11! Are those kids still making fun of you?"  
 "Yeah! They make funny noises whenever they see me."  
 "Alright, be safe out there."  
 "Mama, I'm a great wizard!"

Time sure flies. I blink and Luke's already grown up. I can't believe he was chosen by the Wizard Council. Even now, it's hard to imagine my son becoming a wizard...



He said Rainbow City would become the wizard's city soon...



The newly built Rainbow City is gorgeous. But I don't think the wizards will twist it into a dangerous, grotesque city like the rumors say. I don't know why...

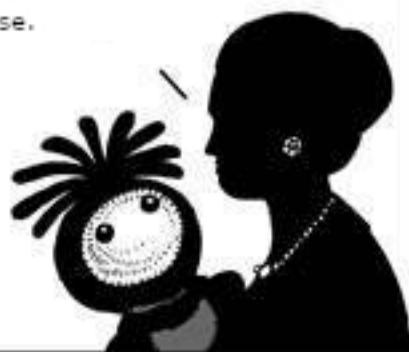
Anyway, all the wizards I do business with are very kind.

Being a wizard's not bad, I guess. At least you don't have to fight in the army.

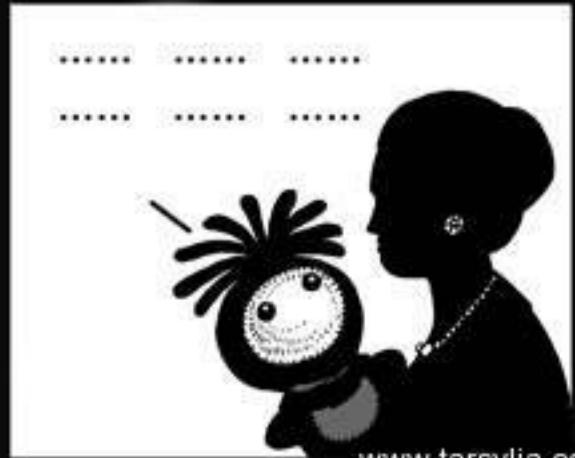
Still, yesterday I met Luke's teacher.



Hunched over, light red skin...  
His eyes were full of fear  
and unease.



Everyone says he is extremely vicious. Will Luke be okay?  
I really do worry!





Long, long ago, in a mountain range far to the north, lived a wizard famous for his brutality. His castle was close to a trade road by the border of the old Jesper Empire. The wizard was rumored to have a daughter whose beauty rivaled the gods. Every morning she would sit atop the tower and play the zither. Anyone who passed by would inadvertently linger around, hoping to hear more of the ethereal music, and contemplate the wondrous world.

Quickly, a stream of suitors and young men hoping for a glance started visiting the castle. But the cruel wizard set before them test after impossible test, and turned all who failed into stone. One by one, the petrified suitors lined both sides of the trade road.

These cruel, inhumane acts quickly reached the ear of the emperor's son, who immediately set out alone to the wizard's castle to challenge the wicked man to a duel. As it happened, that morning, the prince standing beneath the castle wall heard the most beautiful zither song. It was music so elegant it felt like it was reaching through his body to comfort his soul. The prince became so enchanted by this woman that he dismounted and laid by the wall for six straight days. He recited poems, sang songs, danced alone on the fields. The girl blushed, but from beginning to end uttered nothing...



The prince could endure no more. He rushed into the palace, intent on seeking out the girl who had stolen his heart, but the wizard appeared instead. Cackling, he summoned demonic minions to kill the prince. In less than a second, flames, lightning and blood spattered around the castle. The wizard yelled, "Your recklessness will end with your death!"

The prince responded bravely, "You have no right to imprison a free person, even if it is your daughter! You have even less of a right to stand in the way of my love. If you persist, I will extinguish your evil from this world!"

Then the prince thrust his heavenly sword into the wizard's chest... "Why did you lock her up? Don't you want her to be happy?"

"Why did I do that? Then what do you love about her?"

"I love her beauty, her purity, I love her gentleness and her restraint..."

"She is beautiful because the sun has not yet left its mark on her skin. She's pure because she hasn't yet seen the cruelties of the outside world. She's gentle because she has never suffered any hardship. And she's reserved because...because she's mute."



Mama! Our teacher never eats cake!



Just tell him it's a gift of goodwill.

Tarsylia Year 53 of Heroes

Old Rainbow City Upper City District  
Silver Goblet Inn

"Sally, still no news from Luke? They've been gone for a long time now!"

"No, but he's a grown man and knows how to take care of himself."

"Letting him become a wizard was my mistake! Sorry..."

"Let's go to sleep, Hyde. Luke's doing what he's always wanted to do."



"In truth I know where Luke is. He came back to see me after they left Rainbow City. But I decided it was best not to tell Hyde..."



A lot of people are looking for them...



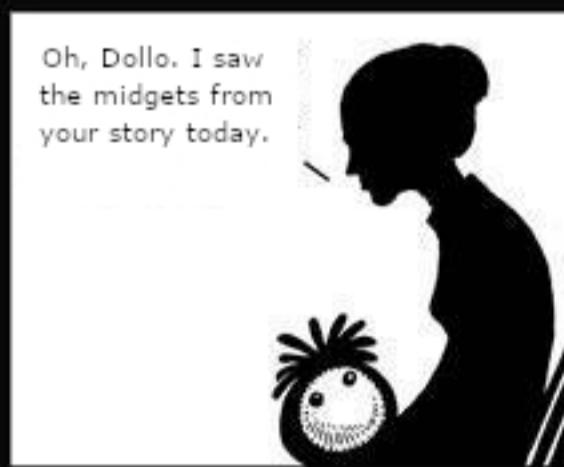
Actually I'm a bit jealous of that child. My parents never supported any of my goals. Otherwise...



Otherwise I could've been a successful tailor by now!



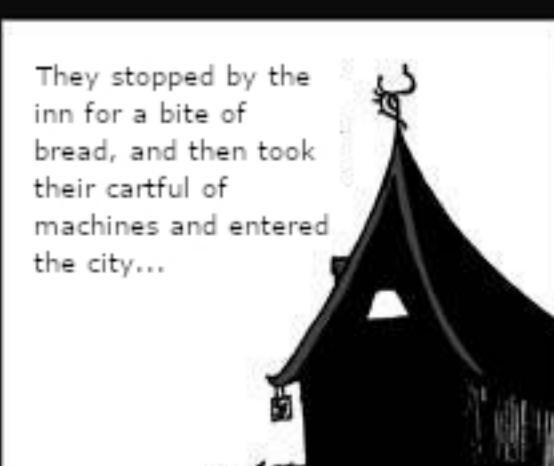
Oh, Dollo. I saw the midgets from your story today.



I thought it was just a story. I wouldn't have imagined...



They stopped by the inn for a bite of bread, and then took their cartful of machines and entered the city...

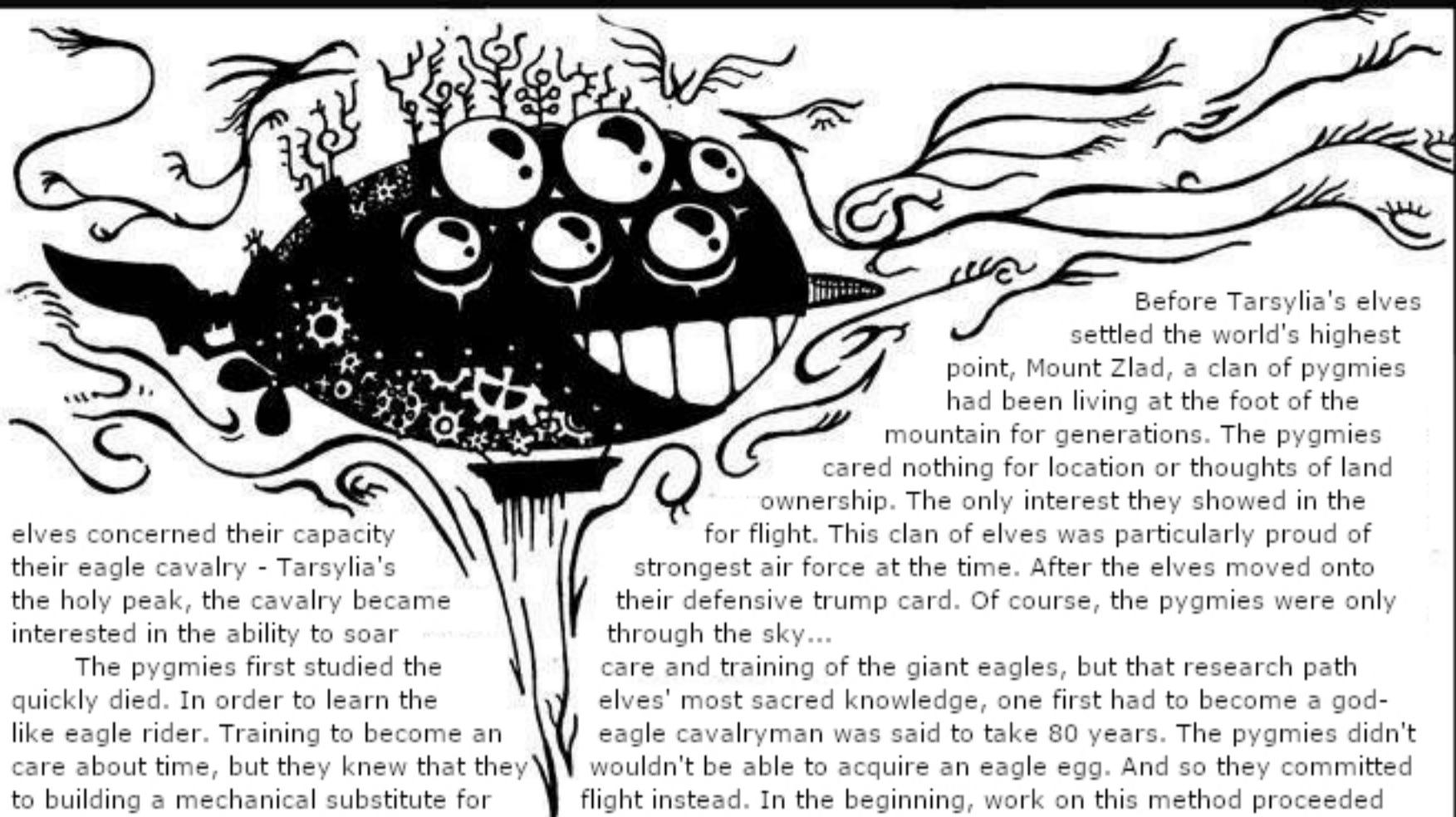


They looked just like children, cavorting around as they were.



Midgets are actually all children, up until their death.





elves concerned their capacity  
their eagle cavalry - Tarsylia's  
the holy peak, the cavalry became  
interested in the ability to soar

The pygmies first studied the  
quickly died. In order to learn the  
like eagle rider. Training to become an  
care about time, but they knew that they  
to building a mechanical substitute for  
smoothly. The pygmies' first planes quickly rose into the sky. Thus they soon achieved low-altitude flight. But, as their scientists discovered, at a few thousand meters above sea level, relying on wind power alone to glide along wasn't enough. They began to research high-power energy sources. In this, the pygmies received assistance from dwarf engineers, and were able to use their refined ore to create the most basic gear-powered propeller. A few revolutionary ideas later, the pygmy clan worked together to fly the first pygmy plane 2000 meters above sea level. When they saw the plane circling at their feet, the sacred elves began to panic. The priests immediately called for a meeting, where they ultimately dictated, "The pygmies' mechanical inventions are a great danger to Tarsylia, and must be restricted." They sent hordes of eagle cavalry to destroy the planes, and sent down guards to monitor them at all times.

Don't worry, the pygmies wouldn't have declared a war of vengeance over something like this. To them, the elves killing spree was like a bad storm. However, it did raise a small issue in their research. Now, they had two goals in their research: to increase the maximum height achievable by their planes, and to avoid detection by the elves' guards. After about forty years, the pygmies' planes finally flew high enough that not even the giant eagles could reach them. The pygmies sang and danced above the sacred peak in celebration, and the sounds of their joy was revenge enough on the elves.

No one knows what they are up to now, what new device has captured their interest and their time. It isn't important, because the pursuit is their life's goal. The pygmies are easy to please, doing exactly what it takes to reach their dreams. Humanity's dreams, on the other hand, are always being distorted by their own desire for fame. They are fragile and greedy, caring too much about how they are perceived. In the end, their own dreams become their source of suffering...

Dollo, did you  
know? Your coat was  
the first piece of  
clothing I had ever  
made.

I was ecstatic, but  
my dad said:  
"Why would you  
waste your time on  
that? You think the  
sewing shops will  
accept you?"

How about I make  
you a new coat,  
Dollo? It can be  
the same as the  
pygmies'. Hehe...



"Luke, why are you back? I was just thinking of sending someone to find you! Your mother, she..."

"Don't look so down, Father. If Mom sees you like this, she'll worry!"

"She's upstairs in her old room."

"I'll go now."



Alright, child. I spent the entire afternoon getting scolded.

I...I'm doing well. We aren't being hunted anymore.

I'm eating properly. I found a girl I'm in love with, though I haven't told her that yet. Also...

I love you, Mama...

Could you bring Dollo to me? That cursed doctor left her downstairs!

I'll go now...

Thank you, child. I want to rest alone for a while.

The story is almost over...



"When I'm tired and hurting, I pray that this is all a nightmare. Once I wake up, everything will be wonderful. When I am happy, I'm afraid it's all a dream and that once I wake up, none of it was real. Dollo, it feels like I've always been living in a fairy tale. I've always thought this way!"

"If you want, the story doesn't need to end!"

"Haha...no, Dollo. I still remember that story you told me once about Yaya. Before he died, his monster friends came from all corners of the world to send him off. At that time, his best friend said angrily, 'Why? Why is your life so short? It's too unfair. Let us use our magic to help you overcome this blasted fate!' Yaya responded quietly, 'How can you measure the quality of man's life with time? That's too tragic...' Yaya was my favorite character in all of your stories."

"No, this is different. This..."

"It's the same, Dollo. They are all stories, just with different plots and characters. No one knows whether they are in a story or not. Everyone just looks for their own ending. When I was young, I often asked myself, why didn't my life have a single remarkable story? There was no prince rescuing me from hell, no fairy godmother or any hidden treasure. Why was my life like this? I finally understand now. Our life's story isn't told for other people to hear. Family, love, dreams...every story has these, so what counts as a happily ever after? And so we go around comparing this and that like fools, instead of remembering those moments of happiness."

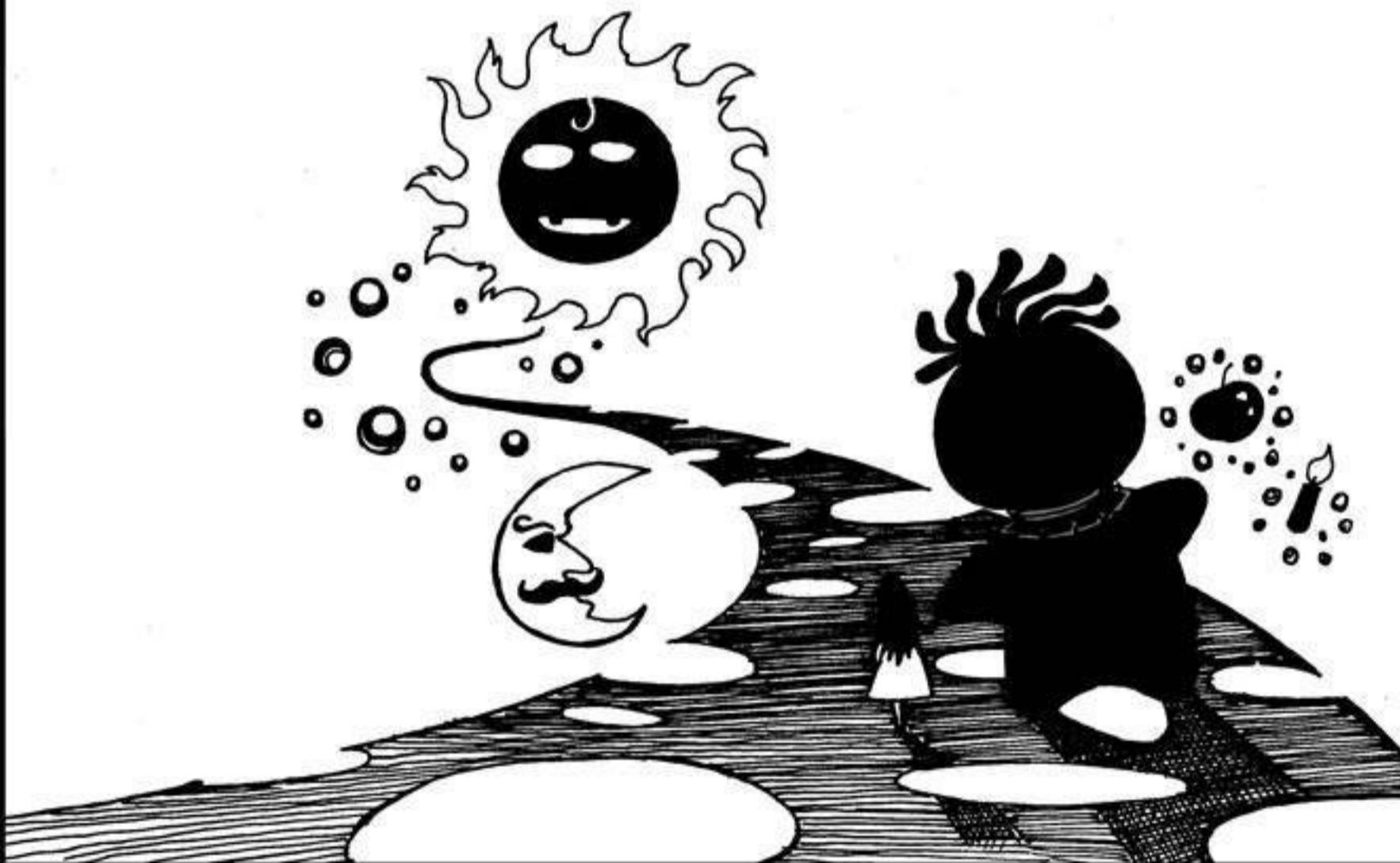
"...mm..."

"Dollo, do you have any stories left to tell me? I'm tired..."

"No, all the stories have ended. My girl, you've lived a fortunate life..."

"What a beautiful ending!"

"It is. Good night."



Keep the doll with your mother. It was her most cherished item.



Teacher, I've finished the arrangement's for Mother's funeral.



Then what are you standing around for? Waiting for comfort? Get to work.



On my way back...that friend of yours was drunk at my family's tavern again.



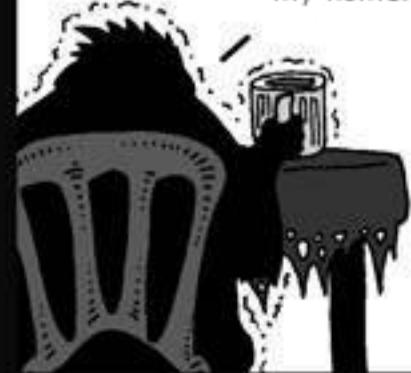
I got it....that idiot.



Oh Parker, Parker...you're an early now, you know? I'll take you home.



No...I'm not going back. That's not my home...it's not...



That thing...I did it...I've done the impossible...



I never doubted you would.



Then why are there some things I still can't do? What a joke. I had thought there was nothing outside my reach!



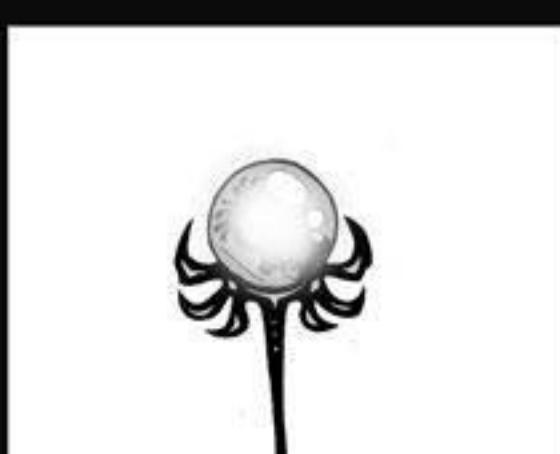
I can't change it...I can't...no matter how much you try, no matter how much you have...



You just can't reach it...can't reach...



Did you actually love her?



On an island far, far to the north, a large nest of baby birds were hatching. The sunlight was warm, the sea breeze gentle...the baby birds hopped from tree branch to tree branch, chittering and chasing each other around. Evening, the father and mother returned to the nest with fish to share with everyone. These peaceful days passed by slowly until suddenly, it was time for the nestlings to learn to fly. Now, everyone realized that there was one hatchling unlike any of the others. Its wings hadn't grown since it hatched, and it had no way to fly. And so everyone called the bird "Crawly."

When Crawly was small, he hadn't felt any different from the others. When his siblings were beginning to fly from tree to tree, Crawly finally realized how different he was. He tried to be happy, to accept his fate, to forget about his wings, to smile...who needed to fly anyway? As long as everyone was happy and together. But then winter came. All of the birds had to fly south with their parents. Without any divine intervention, Crawly would be left behind to die because, naturally, no one could help him. Everyone flew away, and the northern wind began to blow...

Crawly finally understood. In this world, cooperation meant nothing, and he was just a joke. In the icy winter wind, he cursed the world, cursed the many spirits, cursed anything related to him. He knew that death was coming...

However, one god found him before Death could. The god appeared in front of him and intoned, "I have listened to your complaints. I want you to know that not all gods are apathetic. I will help you. I will lend you a pair of wings, let you fly and join your siblings in the Southern Isles. But there is one condition. Once you wear these wings, you cannot speak to anyone or make any friends. You must face the world alone, or the wings will fall off. One more thing: these wings are named Loneliness. Farewell!"

With the borrowed wings, Crawly raced towards the Southern Isles. The road was long and hard, and Crawly repeated to himself, "This is what life is." A few months later, he arrived at the small island and at last saw his family, smelled their familiar scents, bathed in the warmth of the sun. Then the god appeared before him again.

"Alright, child, you understand now that gods won't give up on everyone who suffers. Now, you can give up these wings and live in peace with your siblings!"

Crawly replied angrily, "You want to take away my only friend? You despicable monster! I'd rather die!"

The god responded with the same heat, "You not only lack any sense of gratitude, but actually....you like the wings? Alright, then you'll keep them forever! I hope this kind of life satisfies you."

Crawly said nothing. He flew off into the ocean without once looking back...He didn't know what lay ahead, and didn't know when he

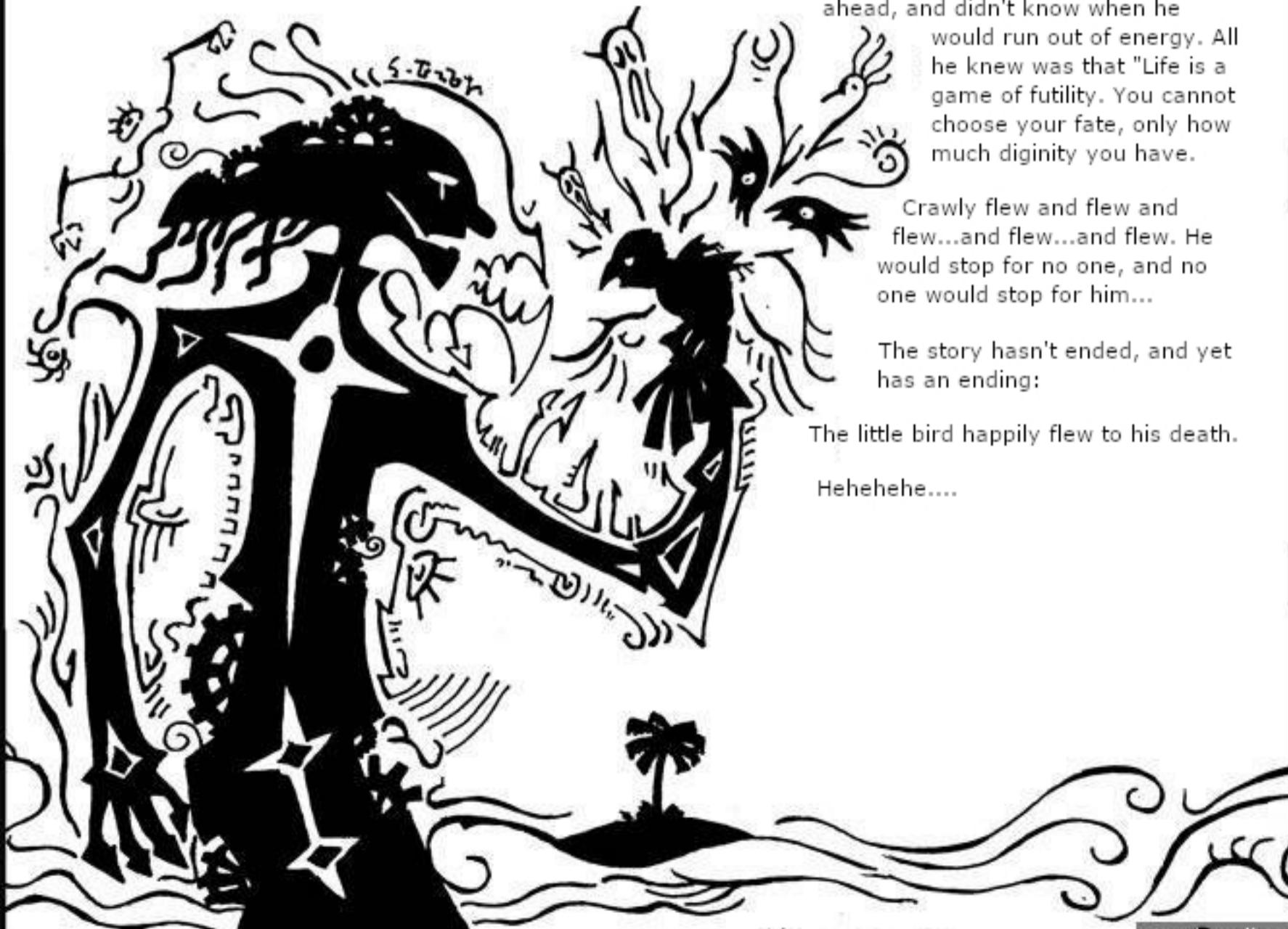
would run out of energy. All he knew was that "Life is a game of futility. You cannot choose your fate, only how much dignity you have."

Crawly flew and flew and flew...and flew...and flew. He would stop for no one, and no one would stop for him...

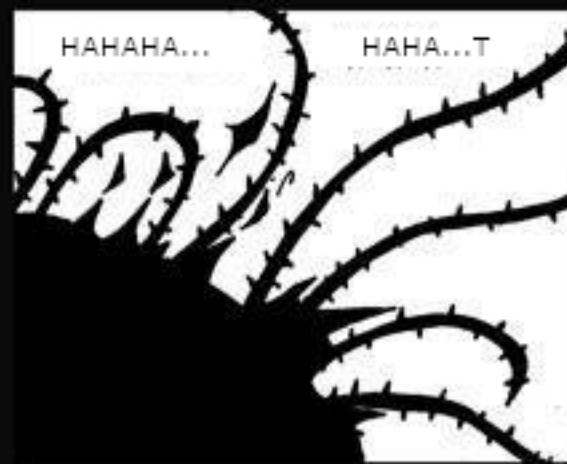
The story hasn't ended, and yet has an ending:

The little bird happily flew to his death.

Hehehehe....

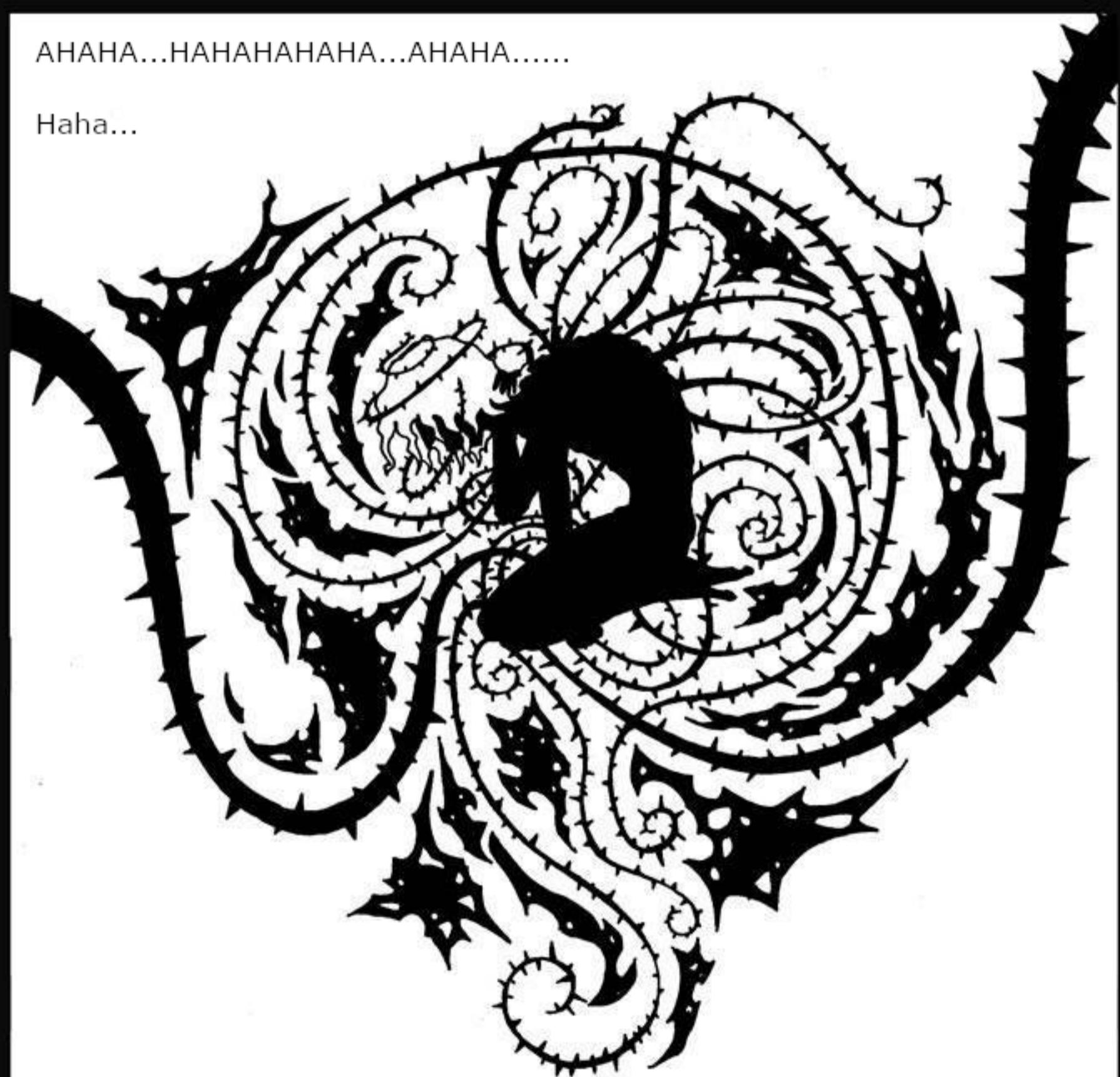


Hehehe...hehehe...



AHAHA...HAHAHAHAHA...AHAHA.....

Haha...



**END**