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MCCREERY • GLASS • NESTERENKO

#2

THE LAST WITCH™



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CREATED BY CONOR McCREERY

ISSUE #2 BLACK ANNIS

Saoirse and her younger brother Brahm have ventured out to find the Cailleach's tower on Imbolc day, looking for an adventure. But this adventure may be more than Saoirse can handle when Brahm goes missing while exploring the outside of the tower...

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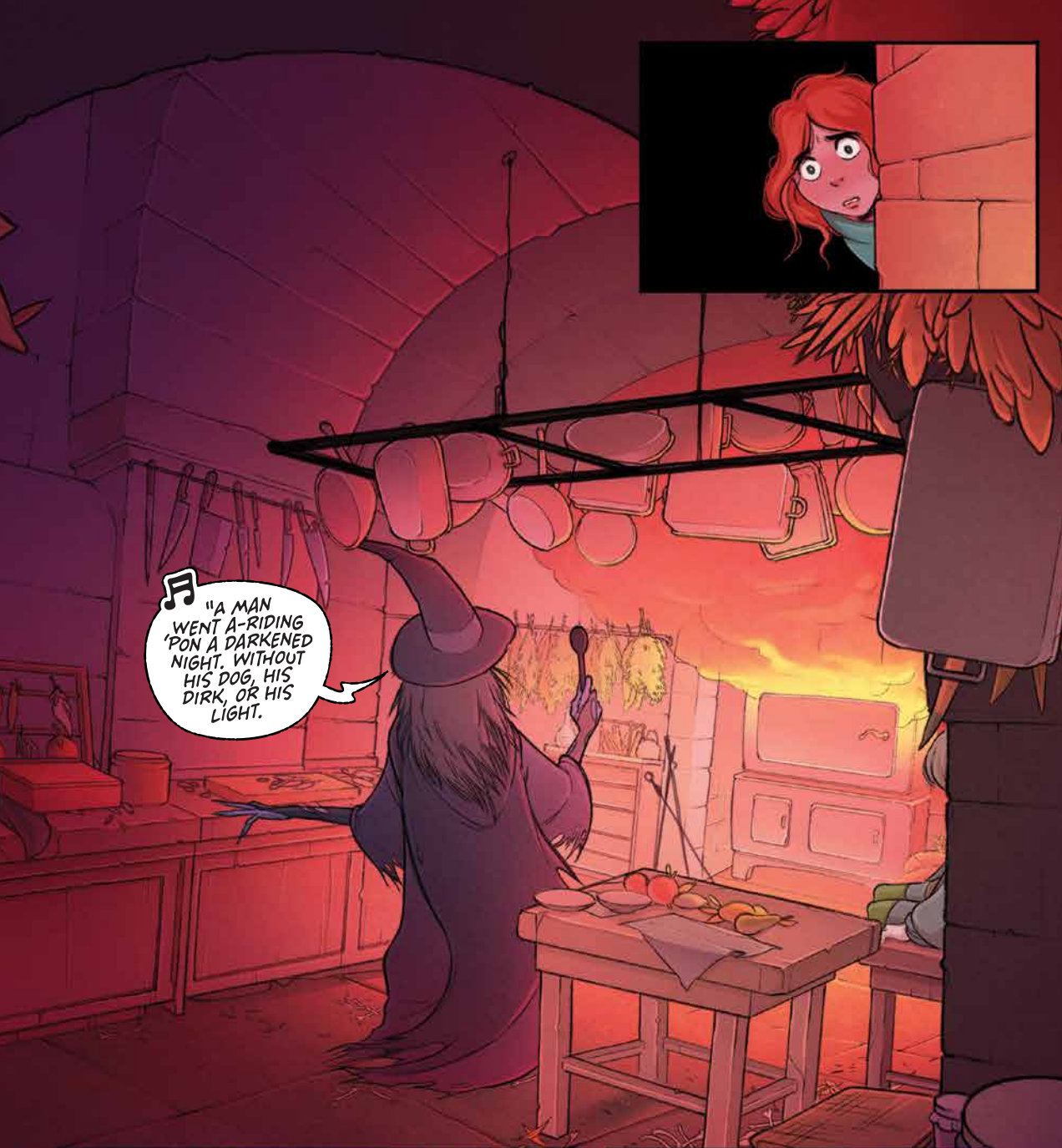
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♪ "A MAN
WENT A-RIDING
'PON A DARKENED
NIGHT. WITHOUT
HIS DOG, HIS
DIRK, OR HIS
LIGHT."



"HE RODE
FOR THREE WEEKS,
HE RODE FOR A YEAR.
AND NEVER DID HE
COME CLOSE TO THE
ONE HE'D HELD
DEAR."

♪

☹️ "FOR SHE
WAS A-TAKEN BY
THE KING OF THE WISPS.
AND HE'D PUT HER TO THE
OVENS, AND HER SKIN
WAS ALL CRISP."



≡SNIFF≡

≡SNIFF≡

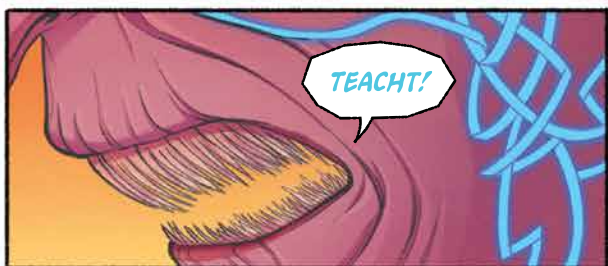
YOU CAN
COME OUT,
GIRL.



I KNOW YOU'RE
THERE, PET. NOTHING
CAN HIDE THE STENCH
OF YOUR KIND.



NOW,
COME IN. I'VE
GOT SOMETHING
TO **SHOW**
YOU.



TEACHT!





NOT HUNGRY? DON'T WORRY. I DON'T LIKE TO SHARE, ANYWAY.

IT'S BEEN A **LONG** TIME SINCE I'VE HAD SUCH A DELICACY.



AND LONGER STILL, SINCE I'VE HAD ONE **THIS** YOUNG.



GNNNN...



GNNNNN!



GNNNNN!



SHUFFLE



LOOK AT YOU,
CHILD. DRIVEN BY
THE LOVE OF YOUR
BROTHER.

IT WARMS
MY HEART.

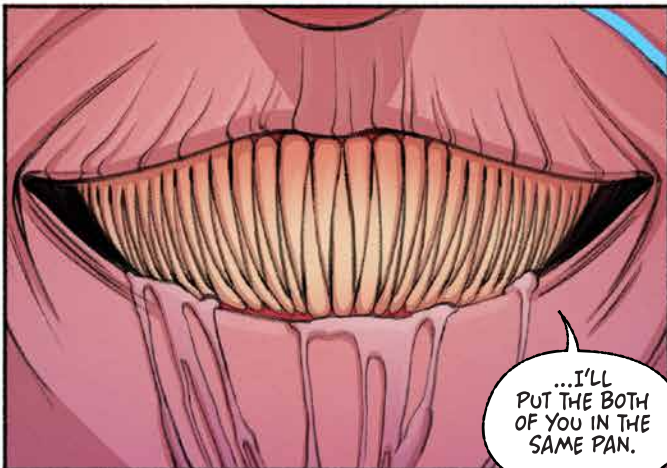


ĐỐ!

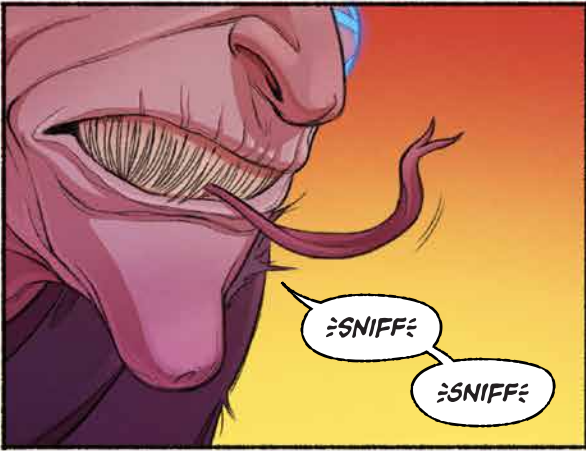


FWSCCHHHH

SO, DON'T
WORRY CHILD.
I WON'T BE
CRUEL...



...I'LL
PUT THE BOTH
OF YOU IN THE
SAME PAN.





OW!

I TOLD
YOU NOT TO LIE
TO ME, GIRL! I'LL EAT
MY DINNER RAW IF
IT DISPLEASES
ME.



IT'S AN
APPETITE
TEA!

Pig



AN
APPETITE
TEA...?

FOR MY BROTHER!
BRAHM'S BEEN SICK,
HE WASN'T EATING.
I WAS JUST TRYING
TO HELP HIM!



I DIDN'T
WANT YOU
TO KNOW,
I WANTED
YOU--

YOU
WANTED ME
TOO FULL TO EAT
YOU. MAYBE I
WAIT TO COOK
YOU. MAYBE
YOU ESCAPE.



WELL, DON'T
YOU WORRY.
I'LL BE PLENTY
A-HUNGRY,
GIRL.







YOU...HAVE
THE MARK...



WHICH OF MY SISTERS
SENT YE? THEY THINK SO
LITTLE OF ME, THEY SEND
A CHILD?

I'LL STOP THEIR
LAUGHTER! I'LL KILL
YE AND TAKE YOUR
POWER!



THEN I'LL BE
THE ONE TO OPEN
THE DOOR!

CHEEEE
CHEEEE



SLASH

AAAAEEEEEE!



AAAAGGGGHH!

CHEEP CHEEP
CHEEP







"I WANT TO SEE DA!"



SHH. SHH. SHH.

I WANT DA!
=SOB= I WANT TO SEE HIM.

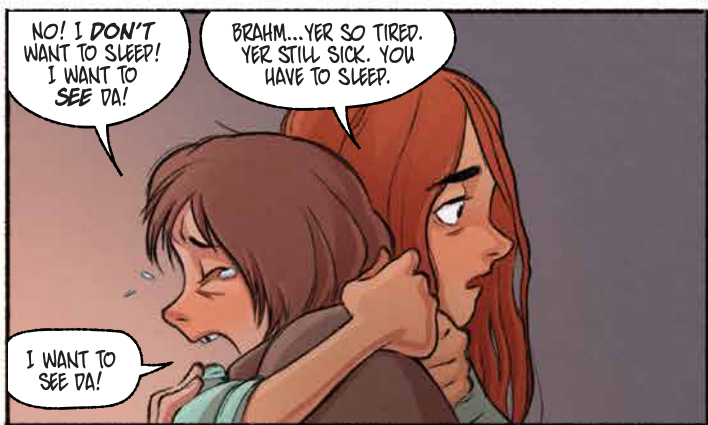
YOU CAN'T, BRAHM.



I'M SO SORRY.



HERE, BRAHM. DRINK THIS. IT WILL HELP YOU SLEEP.



NO! I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP! I WANT TO SEE DA!

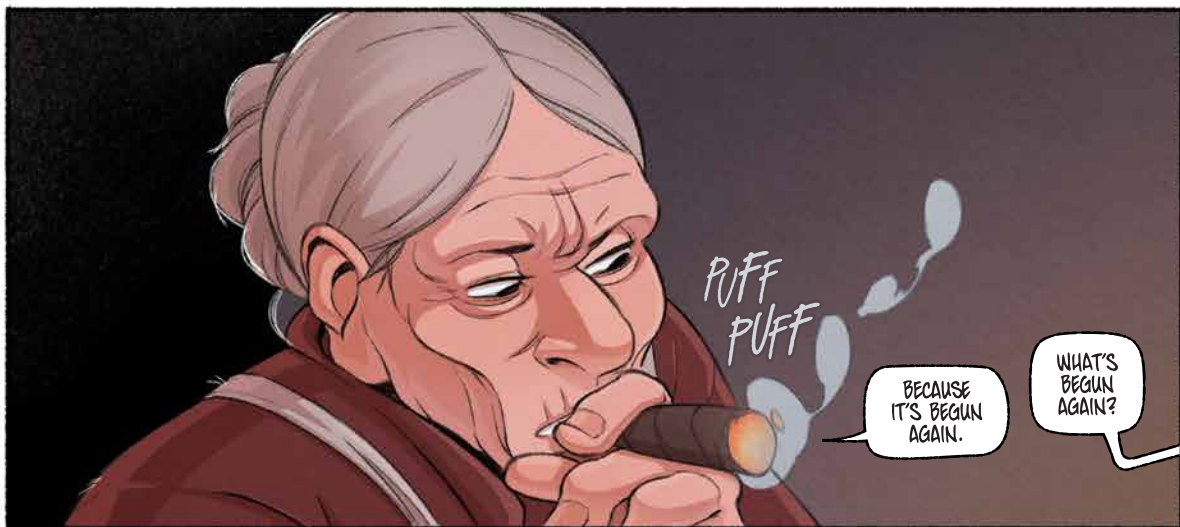
BRAHM...YER SO TIRED. YER STILL SICK. YOU HAVE TO SLEEP.

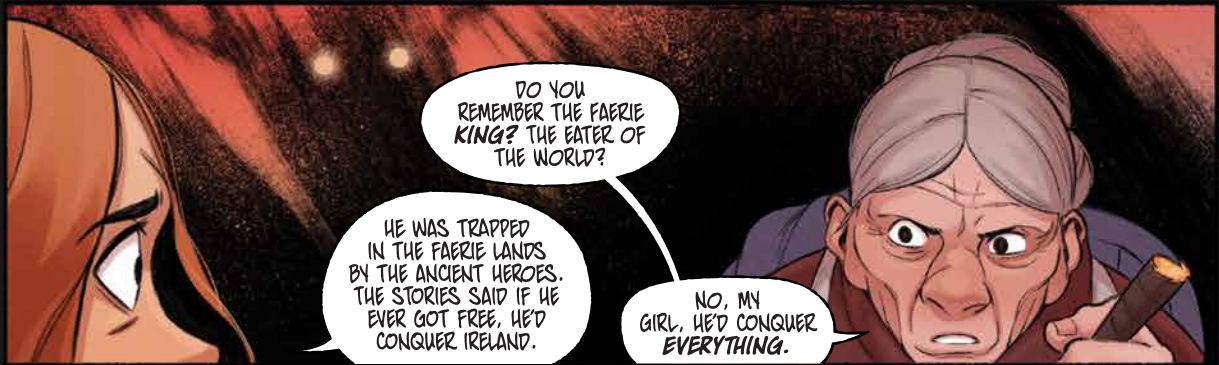
I WANT TO SEE DA!











"THE CAILLEACH CAUSED THE FAMINE?"



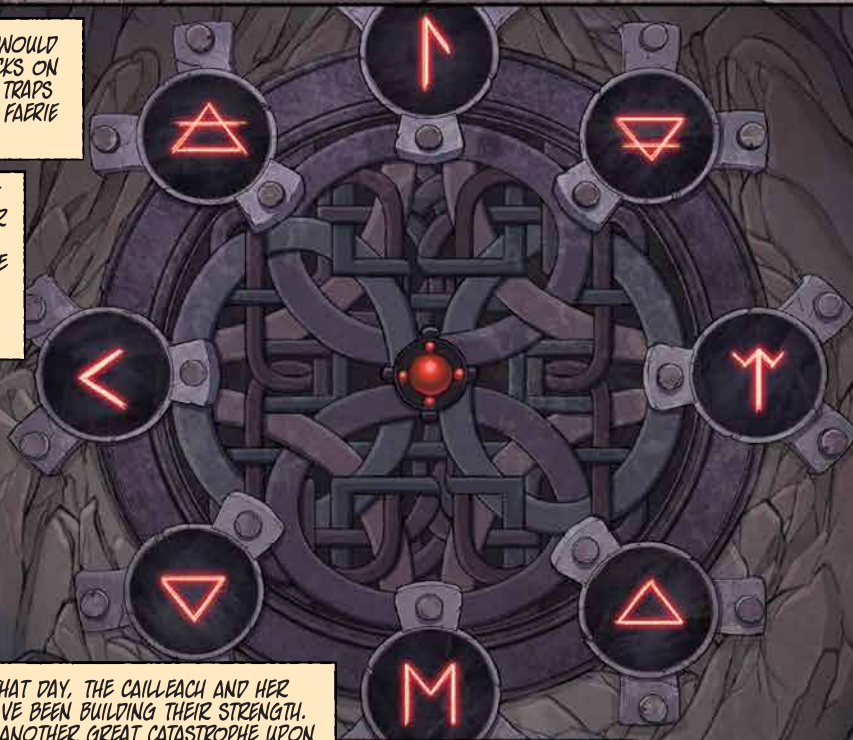


"WHY? WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT? SO MANY DIED...MA..."

"BLOOD MAGIC. THE CAILLEACH AND HER HANDMAIDENS NEEDED IT TO FUEL AN EVEN GREATER SPELL."

"THE ONE THAT WOULD SHATTER THE LOCKS ON THE DOOR THAT TRAPS THE KING IN THE FAIRIE LANDS."

"...BUT IT DIDN'T WORK. THE DOOR WAS BENT, BUT NOT BROKEN. THE EATER WAS STILL TRAPPED IN TIR NA NÓG."



"EVER SINCE THAT DAY, THE CAILLEACH AND HER HANDMAIDENS HAVE BEEN BUILDING THEIR STRENGTH. READY TO BRING ANOTHER GREAT CATASTROPHE UPON IRELAND, AND SO FINISH BREAKING THE DOOR."



"SUCCEED, AND THE KING WILL REWARD THEM WITH A PLACE AT HIS RIGHT HAND WHEN HE CONQUERS THE WORLD."



THEY KILLED MY MOTHER, AND NOW THEY'RE GOING TO DESTROY THE WORLD...

NO, DUCK...



YOU COULD STOP THEM.

ME? HOW?

BECAUSE OF WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL, MY GIRL. YOUR WITCHMARK.

WITCHMARK...?





WHEN YOU
FACED BLACK
ANNIS, WHAT
HAPPENED?

SHE USED A
SPELL ON ME. TO
CONTROL ME.

AND DID IT
WORK?



AT FIRST, BUT WHEN I WAS SCARED
SHE'D HURT BRAHM, I COULD MOVE
A LITTLE. SHE WAS SURPRISED
BY THAT.

AND...

SHE
TRIED TO BURN
US, BUT THAT
DIDN'T WORK
EITHER.



THAT WAS THE
WITCHMARK,
DUCK.

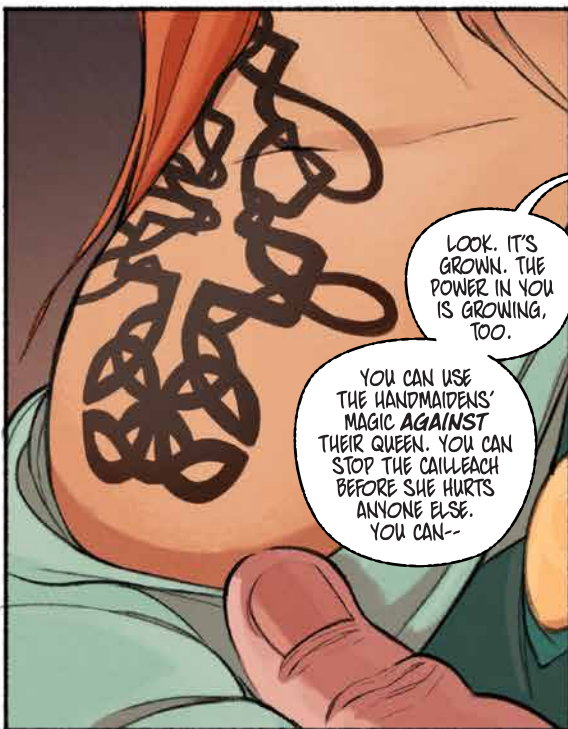
AND IT DOESN'T ONLY
LET YOU RESIST THE
HANDMAIDENS' MAGICKS,
IT TAKES THEM
AS WELL.



I CAN DO...
MAGIC?

YOU
ALWAYS *COULD*.
IT'S WHY YOU
TOOK SO WELL TO
THE TEAS AND
POTIONS I
TAUGHT
YE.

I COULDN'T
KNOW FOR SURE
IF YOUR MARK
WAS TRUE...BUT
NOW...



LOOK. IT'S
GROWN. THE
POWER IN YOU
IS GROWING,
TOO.

YOU CAN USE
THE HANDMAIDENS'
MAGIC *AGAINST*
THEIR QUEEN. YOU CAN
STOP THE CAULLEACH
BEFORE SHE HURTS
ANYONE ELSE.
YOU CAN--



DA WAS
RIGHT! WITCHES
WERE REAL. HE
KNEW.

YOUR FATHER
AND THE VILLAGERS
KNEW **NOTHING**.
THEY THOUGHT EVERY
BUMP IN THE NIGHT,
OR DEFORMED CALF,
WAS WITCH-
WORK.



THEY HAD NO IDEA
WHAT TRUE
WITCHCRAFT IS.

BUT YOU
DID!



YOU **KNEW!** AND
YOU LET ME GO
PAST THE HEDGE
ANYWAYS?



I TOOK **BRAHM!** HE WAS
FRIGHTENED! BUT I
MADE HIM GO--

IT'S
GOOD THAT
YOU DID!



IF HE'D BEEN WITH ME, I WOULD
HAVE GONE TO THE VILLAGE
SOONER.

WE WOULD
HAVE BEEN THERE
WHEN--



YOU LIED TO ME,
AND YOU'RE TRYING
TO SAY YOU'RE A
HERO?

NO, DUCK.
I'M VILE.

I KNEW,
ONE DAY, THE
CAILLEACH WOULD
RETURN, BUT I DIDN'T
KNOW IT WOULD BE
SO SOON. I NEVER
DREAMED IT WOULD
BE TODAY.



I'M SO SORRY. DON'T
LET MY MISTAKES KEEP
YOU FROM YOUR DUTY.
THE CAILLEACH MUST
BE DEFEATED. YOU
COULD--



MY DUTY?



BANG

BLACK ANNIS
SAID HER SISTERS
WILL COME LOOKING
FOR ME!



SPLASH

I CAN'T
FIGHT THEM!



THUMP

I'M NOT THE
SAVIOR OF THE
WORLD!



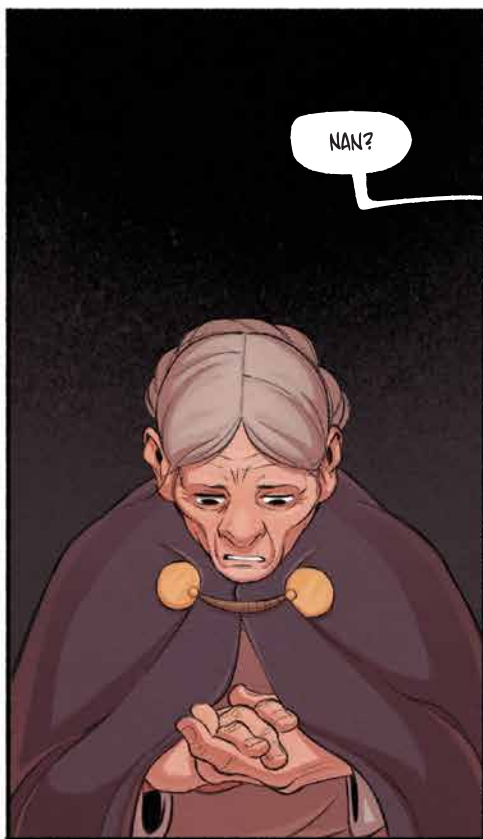
AH!

WOOSH











"THERE'S JUST ONE
THING I HAVE TO
DO FIRST."







I CAN'T DO IT! IT'S TOO HARD!

DON'T BE FRUSTRATED, DUCK.



FAERIE MAGIC IS MATCHED TO THE **FOUR ELEMENTS**: EARTH, WIND, WATER, AND FIRE. EACH WITCH HAS A NATURAL AFFINITY. WE JUST DON'T KNOW YOURS YET.

NOW CLOSE YOUR EYES, PET.



REACH OUT WITH YOUR MIND. CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING?

A... BRIGHTNESS?

THOSE ARE THE **LEY LINES**. THE FAERIE'S MAGIC FLOWS THROUGH THEM. THE WITCHMARK HELPS YOU USE THEM.



CAN YOU FEEL THE LINES?

I THINK SO...



AND WHAT DO THEY FEEL LIKE?

HOT.

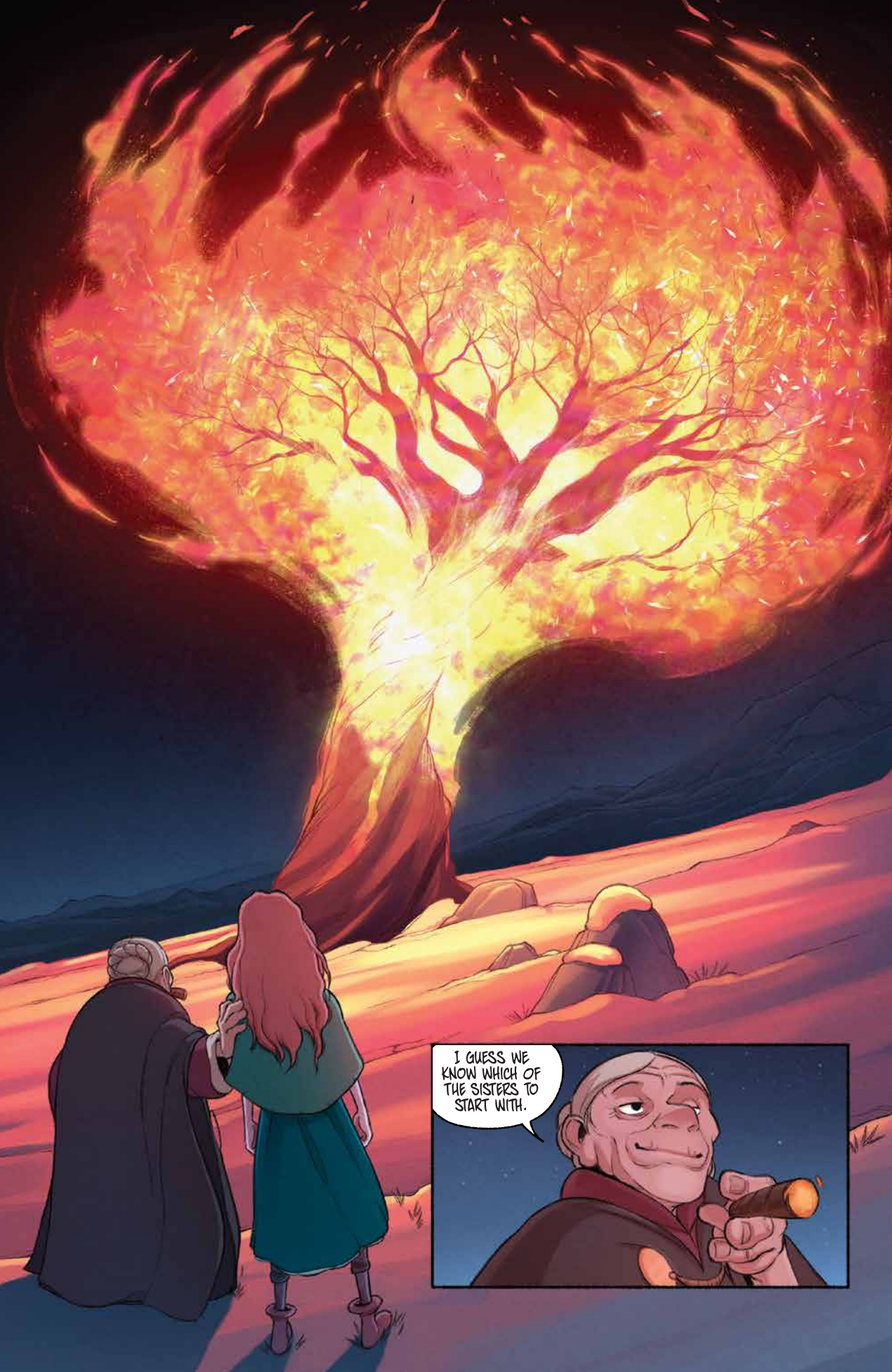
H.M.



DO YOU THINK YOU COULD SET ONE OF THE TREE'S BRANCHES ON FIRE?

I CAN TRY.





I GUESS WE
KNOW WHICH OF
THE SISTERS TO
START WITH.





ARE YOU A WITCH, NAN?

BRAHM!



WELL, WHY DOES SHE KNOW HOW MAGIC WORKS? AND ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT PLANTS?

SHE'S SMART!

HAHA!



I SUPPOSE I AM A WITCH...OF A SORT. WHEN I WAS A CHILD, THEY CALLED WOMEN LIKE ME HEDGE WITCHES, KNOWLEDGEABLE IN WHAT THEY CALLED 'GREEN MAGIC.'

WE CAN SPEAK TO PLANTS. USEFUL, BUT NOT POWERFUL...



...NOT LIKE YOU COULD BE, SAOIRSE.

BUT WITCHES ARE EVIL!



NOT ALL. ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CORRUPTED BY THE TOOL THEY TRY TO WIELD.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, CORRUPTED?



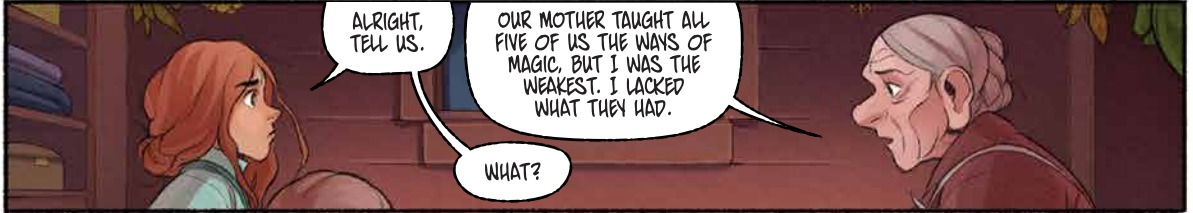


YOU WERE RIGHT, BRAHM. BUT I PROMISE YOU, I'M NOTHING LIKE THEM.



IT'S STILL NAN, RIGHT?

SHRUG



ALRIGHT, TELL US.

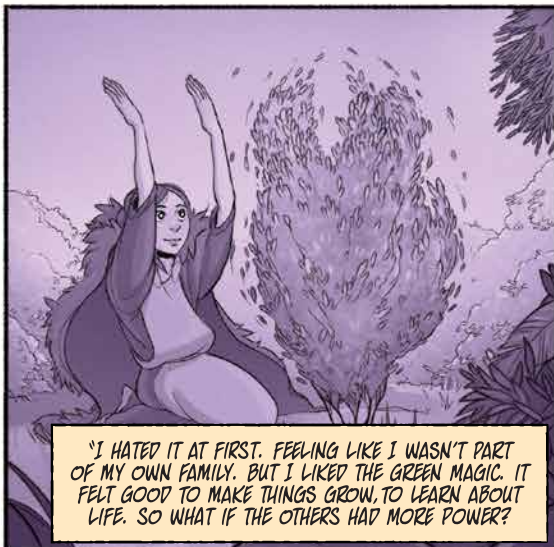
OUR MOTHER TAUGHT ALL FIVE OF US THE WAYS OF MAGIC, BUT I WAS THE WEAKEST. I LACKED WHAT THEY HAD.

WHAT?

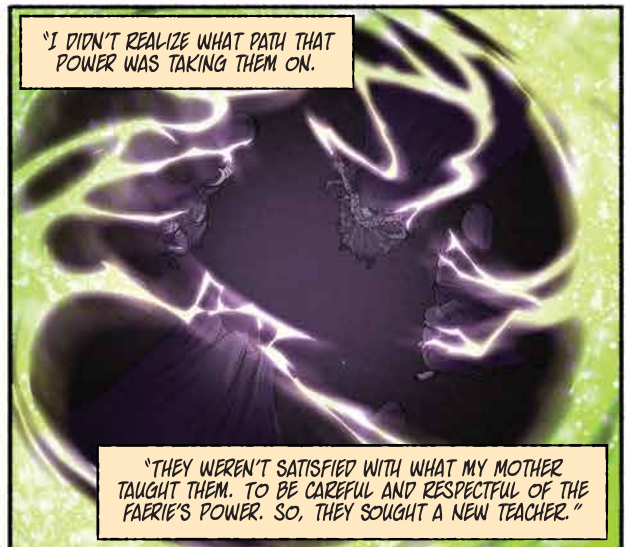


"THE WITCHMARK. I WAS THE ONLY ONE BORN WITHOUT IT. THE OTHERS TEASED ME ABOUT IT. AT FIRST IT WAS AS SISTERS DO, BUT THEN IT GREW CRUEL.

"UNTIL FINALLY THEY BANISHED ME FROM THEIR SIGHT.



"I HATED IT AT FIRST. FEELING LIKE I WASN'T PART OF MY OWN FAMILY. BUT I LIKED THE GREEN MAGIC. IT FELT GOOD TO MAKE THINGS GROW, TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE. SO WHAT IF THE OTHERS HAD MORE POWER?



"I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT PATH THAT POWER WAS TAKING THEM ON.

"THEY WEREN'T SATISFIED WITH WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT THEM. TO BE CAREFUL AND RESPECTFUL OF THE FAIRIE'S POWER. SO, THEY SOUGHT A NEW TEACHER."



"THE CAILLEACH WAS ONLY TOO PLEASED TO HAVE HER NEW DISCIPLES. SHE TAUGHT THEM EVERYTHING MY MOTHER WOULDN'T. BLOOD MAGIC."

"IT CHANGED THEM."



"IN ANNIS AND NICNEVEN, THE CORRUPTION WAS EASY TO SPOT, FOR BRONAGH AND BABB, LESS SO. OBVIOUS OR NOT, ALL OF THEM HAD BECOME WICKED. ALL OF THEM SOUGHT EVEN MORE POWER."

"THEY WERE EASY PREY FOR THE CAILLEACH'S PROMISES-- AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY SISTERS HAD LEFT HOME."



BEFORE I KNEW IT, THEY HAD CAST THE SPELL THAT CAUSED THE FAMINE. SO MANY DIED...

I COULDN'T STOP THEM.



IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, NAN. YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE WITCHMARK. YOU COULDN'T HAVE STOPPED THEM. YOU COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN.

I COULD HAVE DONE MORE.



YOU ARE. YOU'RE TEACHING ME, AND WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT THE PAST.

JUST TELL ME HOW CAN I USE THIS MAGIC TO DEFEAT THE CAILLEACH, AND NOT BECOME A MONSTER LIKE HER AND THE SISTERS?



WHEN YOU MADE THE TREE BURN, DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT? NOT HOW THE LEY LINES FELT, BUT HOW YOU DID?

I WAS CALM. MY MIND FELT LIKE IT WAS FLOATING OUT OF MY BODY.

GOOD. THAT'S WHAT WE NEED. CLOSE YOUR EYES.



THINK OF A GARDEN. FILL IT WITH ALL THE FLOWERS AND PLANTS YOU KNOW.

ARE YOU THERE?

I THINK SO.



WHAT DO YOU SMELL?

JUNIPER.



"JUNIPER." HILARIOUS.



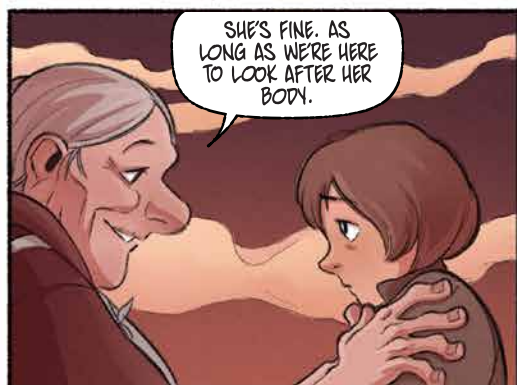
AND WHAT ELSE? MAKE IT REAL. IF IT'S REAL THEN YOUR MIND CAN GO THERE.



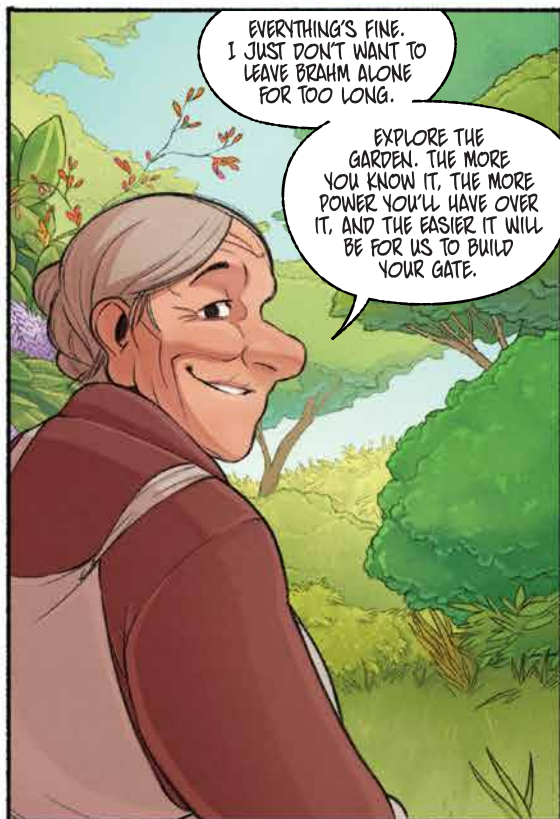
...OLEANDER... I SMELL WHITE OLEANDER.

WELL DONE, DUCK. YOUR MIND IS STRONG. WE'LL NEED THAT.

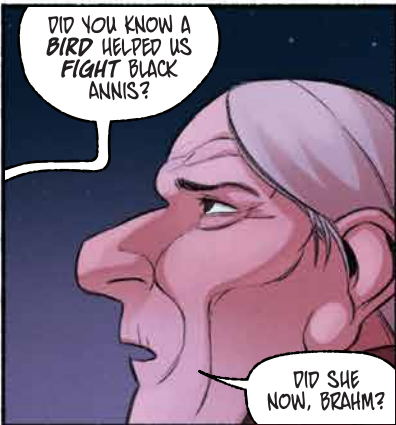
NOW OPEN YOUR EYES.













"THAT'S STRANGE
BEHAVIOR FOR
A BIRD."



TO BE CONTINUED...