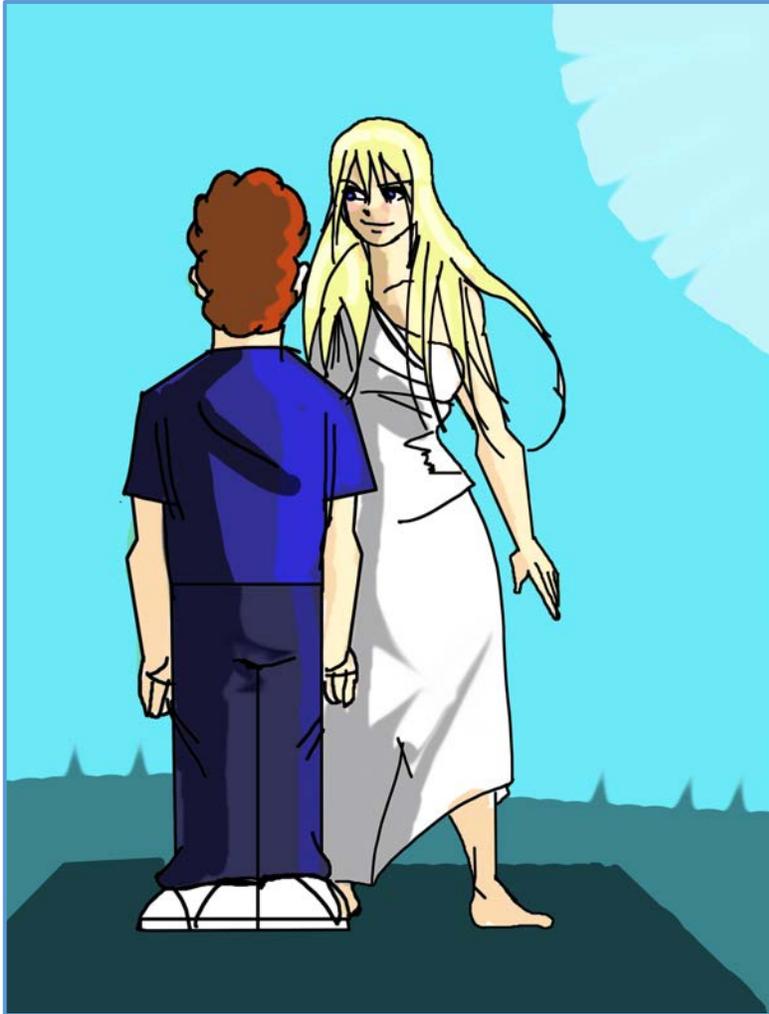


Chapter 7

“Perfection From Every Angle”

You are perfection, perfection is you.



He drank in her beauty, but was she real? Yes, she was. She was very real. She was perfect!

It seemed like he knew her forever and the world around them was magical in a way. Surely it must be because of this fantastic lady who possessed an overabundance of “womanly” talents. Funny, he couldn't remember how they'd met. There were times, although rarely, when that question had mattered to him but then...she'd throw him that lusty smile and abracadabra, he'd fall back into her welcoming web as her seductive calves with sharply defined muscular curves

would wrap completely around him... He lost control repeatedly - mesmerized somehow by even her slightest motion.

What the hell day was it, anyway? Why was that even important? He couldn't stop thinking about her.

Occasionally, something flared on his brain, disturbing his concentration. It was during these rare moments when the headaches drove him crazy. One of the strangest things that crept into his mind was a man with a long white beard looking at him with eyes that held a look of tragedy and then everything went black. He couldn't recapture his face and when he wanted to remember or put a name to the face, then worst of all he couldn't understand why it even bothered him so much. Why was he thinking about that sage old man again?

His thoughts were so incoherent. Garbled random stray thoughts that he couldn't rein in or make sense of. Who was he again?

His thoughts always shifted back to her, a graceful image that was perfection from every angle. She smiled. She always smiled at him. He always smiled back.

The room was cool and misty. Music played innocently in the background, quietly enhancing each moment they shared.



She momentarily faded from his view, but his eager eyes searched for her and then found her dancing, playfully teasing him with her naked body. He noticed something different about her this time - she wore long black shiny leather boots that looked like they were part of her skin. Wow, she created such excitement deep inside him. He found his thighs swaying with her passionate smirks, as the darkness fell suddenly against them embracing both lovers in a sanctuary of romance. Nothing else mattered. They were meant for one another. He knew this inside his soul. He could think of nothing else. Nothing else mattered.

What?

"Who's there?"

She's gone again and there's that blasted knocking.

"Answer me, who's there?"

He couldn't get the sound to cease. It came and went like an annoying ringing of the ears and she was always gone when he heard it. He must have been sleeping.

He wanted to call for her, but whatever her name was never came into his head. He couldn't recall what her name was. She only appeared in front of him when he felt desperate for her attention. Did she have a name? She must. Did it matter? Not really, he thought.

Crap, there's that old man, again. This time his mouth is moving. What's he trying to say? He looks creepy.

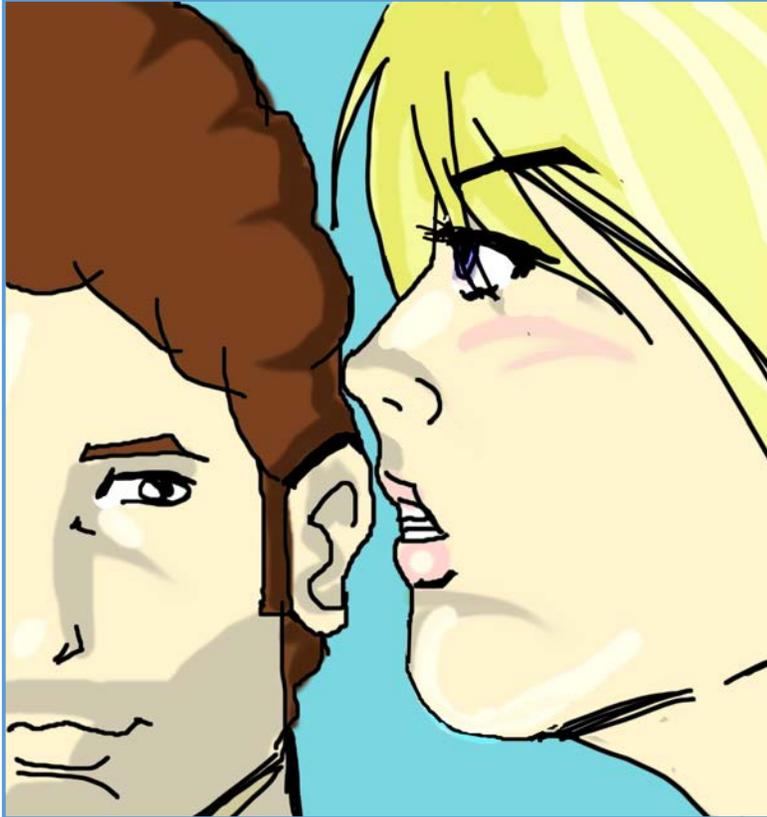
"Good grief, old man, go away and leave me alone."

What's that? A strange giant cat is now leaning in front of the old man. His tail is moving.

"Go away, you odd couple. Go away. Leave me alone!"

His head was pounding as their images faded lazily from view. Was he psychotic? Why was he seeing an old man and a big cat??

This time he realized there was no music playing in the background. He missed the music. He liked music, or did he? Where did the music go?



His eyes opened when the gentle smell of her soft breath naively brushed his cheeks. Her mouth tickled his ears as she licked each one, sensually. That wasn't what really set him off though. When she started talking dirty, he simply lost control. He couldn't take it anymore! Talking dirty just did something to him. He was suddenly an animal and made the noises that befit the animal kingdom. He was horny as hell.

Their bodies danced and swayed to the music...no, not to the music but in the music. Their movements were inside each note, each echo of sound vibrated into their beings creating the music their bodies were making. His anxieties were released over and over again. He was never exhausted and she never made a sound. The music spoke for her body but her dirty talk ignited his manhood. Over and over again. How long did this go on?

Not long enough he rationalized. He would never grow tired of this. Her words fueled his inner rage as their bodies satisfied their most mischievous thoughts and desires. He was in heaven. She was perfection.

"Do you think he saw you?"

"Yes, dwarf, he saw me. He always sees me."

"Will we ever get him out of there?"

"Only if he quits acting like a young, oversexed teenager long enough for us to help him." The tone of the wizard's voice should've been an indication to keep his mouth shut, but...

"So what are you going to do to him, once he gets out?"

The wizard turned directly into the dwarf and grabbed him by the beard. Blayke inhaled anxiously, expecting the worst possible scenario.

"Let, me show you, dwarf! I'll be glad to give you a bird's eye view of exactly what I'm going to do. The silly boy always has his pants unzipped, or on backwards!"

"No, I don't think I'll be needing a demonstration anytime soon, but thanks wizard old friend."

The wizard released his beard. Mika whistled.

"That was a close call, dwarf."

"Yeah, I gathered that." He brushed down his beard and mumbled, "Never touch my beard again."

"What's that dwarf?"

"Nothing."

"Good. Let's get going."



He was thirsty, his eyes were thirsty for her. She never said his name. Why not? Did she not know it? Did he have one? Why does he keep worrying about names? What's in a name anyway? Nothing important. It's just a way to identify who you're talking to, or about. But something disturbed him about not knowing who he was, it should be important, shouldn't it? To speak a name is touching a part of a person's heart, acknowledging their existence as meaningful. She was beyond a doubt, hot. If they were around other people, he had no doubt all eyes would be watching her every move. She was perfection from every angle! Why weren't they

around other people? He didn't remember anyone else. Did he have any friends, or family? She was his world, his life, his existence, his reason for living. How could that be so bad? It wasn't.

She was there. Teasing him and laughing at the same time. They never ate. Shouldn't he be eating? He never felt hungry. Why did he not eat?

"Are you ever hungry?" His voice echoed everywhere around him. It was deafening.

She grinned and her arms enticed him towards a pool of water. He followed like a misplaced puppy. It was her pool, her essence and he wanted to drink from it and never stop. She unzipped her boots, throwing them behind her. She slid her manicured foot into the deep turquoise water, allowing her disobedient body to slowly sink in with it. She went under and when her wet body reappeared, her skin glistened with spicy beads of moisture. He stared at her long copper hair dripping in her own essence and clinging lewdly to her breasts. It was a glorious union.

He never had clothes on. Shouldn't he be wearing something other than his own skin? But, this was natural and it was the only thing that was his in this life. Being naked made him feel free but vulnerable. She was always around. He was always watching her and wanting her. A word surfaced. Shallow. Yes, he supposed he was. This life was shallow but he was so incredibly happy being with her, in her world. No, his world. Was it a world at all? Maybe he'd died and this was heaven. He jumped in the water.

He came up under her and wrapped his body around her respectfully, removing each strand of hair from her breasts and placing it tactfully down her back. He nibbled at her soft skin...she felt real and her smell was intoxicating. Yes, this must be heaven and what was wrong with accepting heaven? Nothing. He deserved it, or so he believed.

"Is this heaven?" He asked out loud while pulling her intimately closer to his needs.

Her voice was that of an angel. "Yes, it is. Unless you want hell?"

"How long will it take us to get there, Wallis?"

"Several days, Blayke. I hope we can retrieve our friend before he's trapped in there forever." They both looked at the girl. They'd come to know her as Annabel.

"I'm sorry, I've no idea how long I was inside the gem, but your clothes are strange. I can't help you any further than that. I was from an Island, I think. I remember so little. I happened to see your friend in a vision and I reached out to him and here I am. That's all I know."

"What did you do before that?"



Her wild blonde hair bounced as she turned towards Sergio. "I don't know. I was happy, I remember. Once in a while since I've been out I dream of a beautiful man who seduced me. I'm not sure if it was someone I knew from my past or a memory from my time in the gem. Whoever it was, I'm sure I loved him and I'll never find happiness with another again."

"We can't cater to someone weak. Our journey requires skilled adventurers. You'll have to leave us at the next town." The wizard's voice was harsh and lacked concern.

"Sure, I understand, but I think your Sarantos could be my lost love from the past or the gem."

"That's not going to happen. He's devoted to another woman!" Sergio almost screamed it at her, as he moved to the front of the group taking Murielle's hand walking down the path at a faster pace basically dragging her with him.

"Sorry. I didn't mean to offend anyone."

"Please, just find your way at the next town. We'll give you enough coin to get by until you can get your berrings."

She nodded her head cordially as they continued toward their destination.

"I'm worried, wizard. If he stays too long, he'll have trouble coming back. This woman clearly remembers nothing of her past. He's been lost to us for two weeks already."

"I know, Mika. I'm worried, too. We're here to help Sergio, our old friend, and can't give up his mission that we set out to do. We are just a week away from the forest that holds the flower. We'll need Sarantos to assist us. That's why I risked him in the first place. Ever since that horrible vampire sunk her vile teeth into him, he's been a vulnerable and, at times, the weakest member of our group, but then he rises above all the carnage that surrounds us like a Phoenix and hands us the gift of life and music. We can't abandon him in his time of need either, if indeed he is in need." His eyebrows rose and his lip curled with a mischievous smirk.

"Of course, he's in need. Don't be angry Wallis, you know he's lost control of his senses. I know you're just worried about him. Maybe, Leigh can help bring him out."

"I've thought of that too, but I haven't been able to contact her and I don't know why. That worries me, as well."

"I'll go and see if I can bring her here. She might be our only hope, but do we run the risk of her being drawn inside of the gem when he comes out? What if they just swap places?"

"Yes but I think if we create a doppelganger it might just work. I've never used the spell but it's itching to get out of the book and fill a void if you know what I mean?"

"Yes, I do. Be safe, wizard. Until I return, watch yourself."

"Safe journey, my friend."

Where the hell did all these men come from?



She moved toward him as the music increased tempo. The rhythm was savage and she danced recklessly, beckoning him out onto the dance floor. Of course, he wanted to be a part of the dance, her dance.

Her eyes attached to his from somewhere beyond the scope of reality. He saw his reflection in the depths of her green eyes. Who was this man dancing with passion like an animal under the thumb of romance? He wasn't sure. He thought he knew himself, but...a stranger lurked behind his eyes. Funny,

he never noticed the color of her eyes before now.

Other men started to paw at her. He needed to pay more attention to her. They were jealous she was with him. They all wanted her to indulge them with her brilliant womanly charms. That wasn't going to happen on his watch!

He grabbed her arm and pulled her close. The music was rabid and insane. Those men with jealous eyes have seen enough. He was the golden man. Not them.

Damn, she is freaking hot. He loved the rough romping and the heat of her body and his moving in perfect harmony. He was drifting and loving the waves of motion as he twisted and danced. He didn't mind being naked at all. She saw what she did to him, but the others were causing him to be uncomfortable. Why were they here?

Pain reached into his head. She smiled. His hands flew to his face rubbing his temples. What? He saw himself playing music and singing. How could that be? The music came from her. He knew it came from her. He was going mad. Was he going mad? The men started to fade gradually. What does that mean anyway, going mad?

Without warning only the two of them remained in the mist. She placed his head on her breasts. She felt real. He kissed her soft skin. Her hair blew instinctively across her breasts and then onto his face. He knew he loved her, after all she was his world, his life. He smiled and fell against her as his desire returned.

He was glad the men were gone.

“Over here and be quick about it. I’m starving!”

“Dwarf, give it a rest and have some manners.” Wallis stared at the dwarf with bulging eyes and a pursed lip.

“Well, I am. We’ve been on the road and me stomach is needing nourishment!”

Aurora and Annabel couldn’t contain an outburst of laughter.

“You don’t appear to be starving to me, silly dwarf.”

Blayke stood up and walked across the room to the short man who appeared to be the only one serving food in this establishment. After a few brief hand gestures and a moment of conversation he came back to the table and sat down.

“He’ll be with us shortly, dwarf.”

“Ohhhhhh...me poor stomach.”



“Annabel, this is where we part company. I’m sure you will find a nice home here. You might want to check with the owner of this place, seems they could use some help.” He winked at her and patted her hand reassuringly.

“Thank you, wizard. I think you could be right.”

“In the meantime, I’ve got us all a room

for the night. Maybe, a comfortable resting place will help us refocus. Murielle knows someone close by who can help us with some ranger skills that we very well may need on this journey. It’s a rogue elf who lives out in the hills to the south of

here. He might listen and be sensitive to our cause and agree to aid us. Murielle and Sergio went to speak with him. They may not return until morning.”

His face was sad but tender, as he spoke of replacing Gabby.

Their nourishment was brought and the dwarf gorged himself on three helpings of soup, two helpings of mutton while also polishing off a whole loaf of bread on his own.

The dwarf leaned back in his chair, threw his spoon on the table and burped loud enough to wake the dead.

“What is wrong with you? Can’t you see your body is overstuffed? Those noises are not healthy, you know.”

“What? It means I’m enjoying my food, wizard.”

“It means you ate too fast and your digestive tract hasn’t been able to process it. Like I said, what’s wrong with you?”

“Ahh.” He waved him off and headed up the stairs to find a warm place to hibernate until morning.

“You go hard on the dwarf, Wallis.”

“Yes, Aurora, I suppose, at times, I do.”

She placed her hand on his and smiled. “It’s okay sometimes. You are a bit sensitive right now, plus you just lost a close friend. Give yourself a break too. It wasn’t your fault.”

He grinned sheepishly. “I felt as though it was. After all, I invited her to join us on this journey and I knew it was dangerous.”

“True, but she could have turned you down.”

He looked up and deep into her loving eyes before he said, “She would’ve never turned me down and I knew that.”

She smiled and held his hand. “Wizard, we all do things for love and we all call on others to assist us when we need strength beside us. We can’t know where the journey will take us but we have to live with the outcome or be afraid and do nothing. Gabby wouldn’t want you like this. You know that in the depths of your heart.”

“I know.”



The room was spinning. Well, it must be a room, although the misty colors flying around him surrounded him anytime he moved. He never found an exit. Where were these thoughts coming from? He loved it here. He didn't need to leave. There was a pond once. All things happened when she came to him...her beauty brought things with her. He loved that about her. What was her name? Who was she?

He heard a buzzing and she was back in front of him with her flaming red hair blowing behind her - wait, today it looks black. Is that a tattoo on her stomach?

“No, my head is going to explode.”

He tripped over his own feet hurrying to her side. Something is familiar but different. His eyeballs ached in the back of his head and the burn was intolerable.

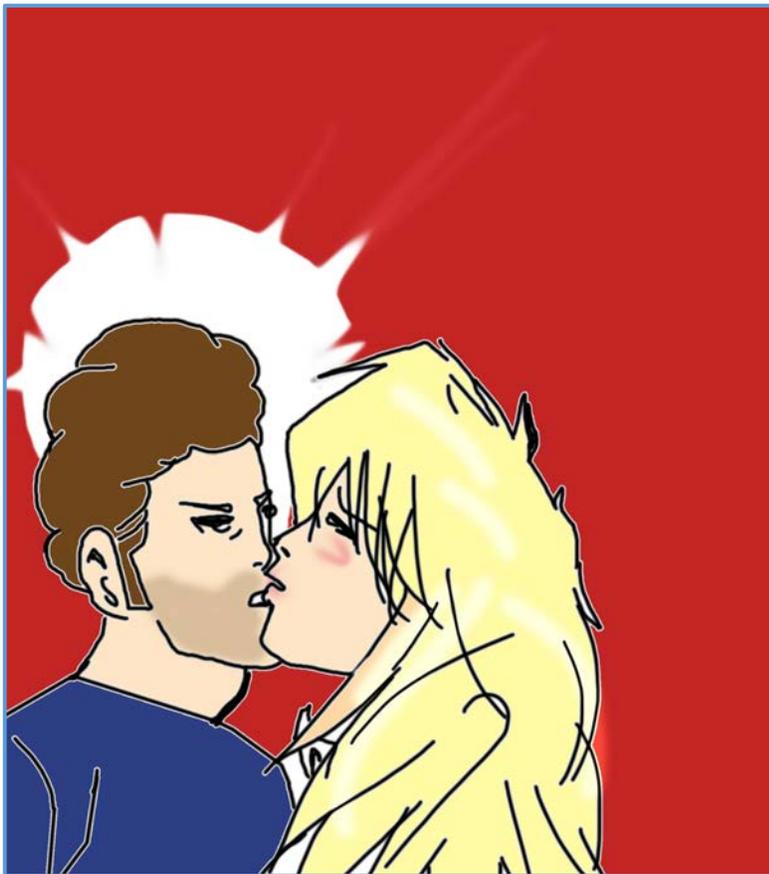
She smiled and reached out for him. He fell into her but she easily propped him up. Her hair was still red and she had no tattoo. What was gnawing at his thoughts?

God, he loved her. “Hold me close.”

She took him in her arms and her generous skin moved with his, the perfect fit, the perfect life. She was him and he was her. Their souls were bound in perfection. He moaned.

“Take me again and again beautiful lady.” Was that his voice? He hardly ever spoke and wasn’t sure when he heard it right now if it was attached to the man he saw reflected in her eyes, or belonged to a stranger, a stranger without a life.

“What’s going on?”



She placed his head on her bosom, just like always. It felt right. He felt like he was dying. He held tight onto her waist and pulled her closer into him. “Don’t ever leave me,” he said. The words sounded desperate. She kissed his lips hard and he bit hers, drawing tiny drips of blood. She was real. Why was he questioning that?

“Quit pounding!”

She wrapped her legs around him...he was surely dying.
“No.”

“It must be the odd couple. Why do they torture me?”

She never answered but continued to comfort him with her warm and exciting body. He came back and felt alive and all there. Her hard body pressed against him. This time he felt all of her and loved it. This was his life!

“Leave me alone!”

He didn't know if the odd couple would hear him and go away once and for all, but he had to try. He couldn't be fading like this...away from her.

“Sarantos.”

What? Who's there? A gentle and seductive female voice called out to him from the mist.

He must go, something compelled him to go. He walked toward the voice. It was familiar.

“Sarantos.”

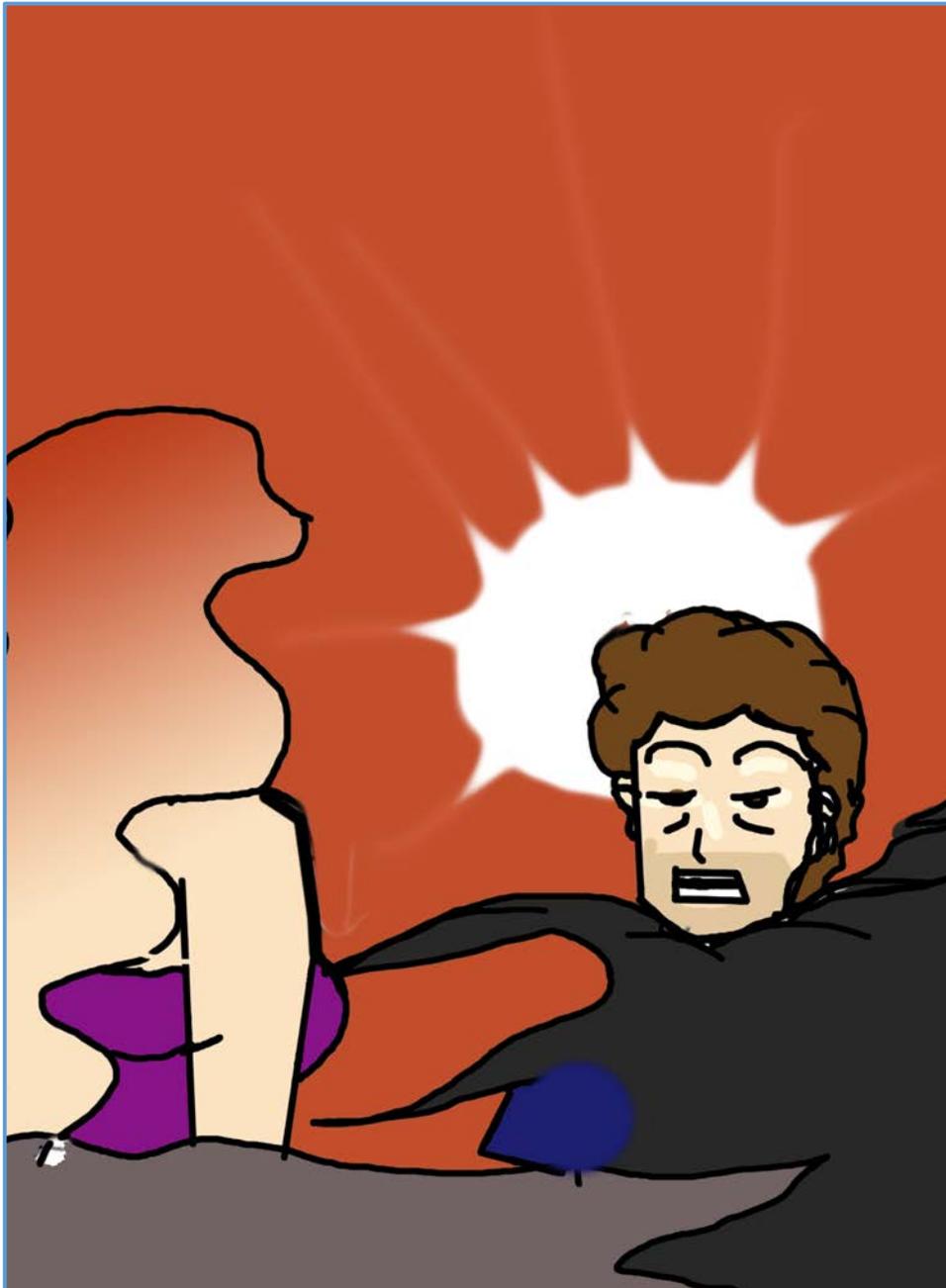
“Who's there?” He was fading fast and she grabbed his arm. He kept walking though. She leapt on his back, her warm legs wrapping around his waist. He turned. She was incredibly beautiful. She tugged at his spirit. Her friendly hair brushed against his chest, sending charged tingles down his skin.

“Hold me.”

“Sarantos, come into the mist. Come back home to me.”

Who said that?

The muscles in his body were ripping out of his skin. He was fading fast but she hung on, holding him bound to their love.



“Sarantos, it’s Leigh. I love you. Come home my love. Come back to me. I love you!”

He turned towards the mist. He was determined to go to her. She was there for him, a raven-haired beauty with black eyes that held both magic and love. Her smile was irresistible. Her sweet and kind demeanor was all he ever wanted in a soulmate.

His heart sank into his stomach.

She must be a dream. A perfectly beautiful dream. She was perfection from every angle.

She reached her hand out to him, and it took all his strength but he lifted his to touch this heavenly being even if for only a moment. His pain became almost unbearable. He heard a scream behind him and then the darkness took him.”

“Sarantos.”

He opened his eyes and there she was - the love of his life.

“What happened?”

“Nothing special. You just never listen to me and went for the gold.”

He smiled. “Where are we?”

“The entrance to the giant’s forest.”

“What? How’d we get here already?”

“Never mind my love.”

Her smile lit up his insides. She was perfection from every angle. How did he ever get so lucky to deserve someone like this??

