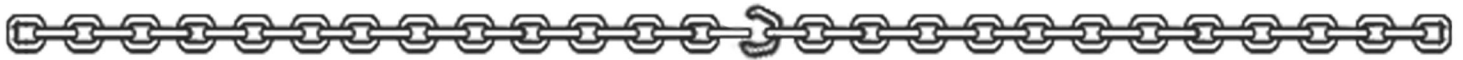


AIN'T NO PRINCESS



STEPHEN SONNEVELD

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT: <http://s-sonneveld.tumblr.com/>

PRICE: Free

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE: Chapter 1 debuts Wednesday, September 2, 2015, at 10 AM Central.
Chapters 2 – 15 debut each subsequent Wednesday, 10 AM Central (Sept. 9 – Dec. 9, 2015).

SYNOPSIS: Set on an unnamed world where women are treated so cruel that their low caste is forbidden even to speak, a barbarian woman rises up to lead a rebellion against the patriarchy. The defiance is so shocking and the misogyny is so ingrained that the entire society is thrown into a tumult. The shockwaves reverberate into modernity, where two students, far from barbarians, form a plan to end the gender inequality of their time.

DEVELOPMENT: Created/written in 2014, illustrated in 2015. Black and white illustration, ink on 8.5 x 11 paper, finished in Photoshop. 50 pages, 15 chapters.

ORIGIN: “An article on The Mary Sue website put out a call for female character submissions for Jenn Woodall’s FIGHT! zine in 2014. It was something I was interested in submitting to and began working out ideas. I knew I wanted to create a barbarian, but one who fought for *something*. An emerging backstory of a prisoner rebellion against the patriarchy began to inform the design, such as liberating her hair from the ripped hijab. The character grew on me and I began refining the story, as well as exploring the notion of telling it in vignettes across that world, a format I first became aware of in the excellent Lone Wolf and Cub comic book series. Like that protagonist, I wanted Ain’t No Princess, or Ani, to be stoic, a fierce fighter, but ultimately moral. She knows the desired change in her society is not going to come from the end of a sword. She has compassion, she has ideas, and, through the sign language her caste was forced to invent, Ani is able to express her ideas on her own terms. If a creator is going to tackle a subject like misogyny, it is imperative you go beyond allegory and bring those ideas, and what you hope will be solutions, to the work.” – *Stephen Sonneveld*

GENDER EQUALITY SYMBOL: One of the positive results to come out of this project is the creation of a symbol for gender equality, which has been made available for all nonprofit use.



RATING: 14 + “As a writer, I make it a point not to think of new ways to torture and kill people. All the violence depicted in this work has historical and contemporary corollaries.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Stephen Sonneveld has won the Kennedy Center/American College Theater Festival Outstanding Playwright Award, has had scripts place and/or advance in the New York Television Fest and the Austin Heart of Screenwriting Festival, has freelanced for publications as diverse as MAD Magazine and the LGBT newspaper Windy City Times, and is the co-writer and co-performer of the new Chicagoland radio show, “Don’t Call Me Sweetheart.” His acclaimed comic strip “Greye of Scotland Yard” is available on Comixology.

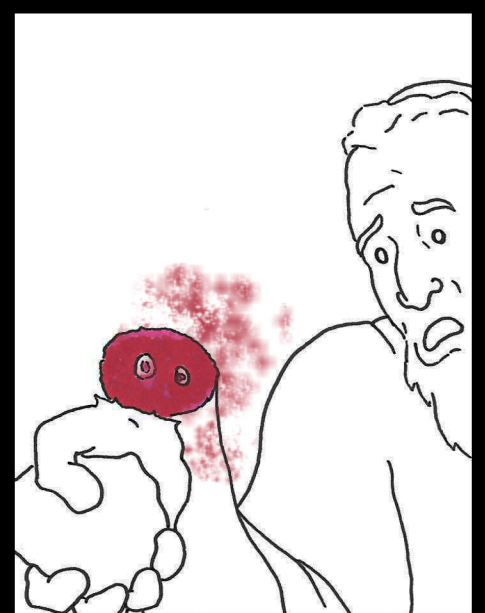
Contact:

Stephen Sonneveld
sonneveld50@hotmail.com
VM: 708.657.4208

Stone her!



Wait! Let he who is not guilty cast the first stone.

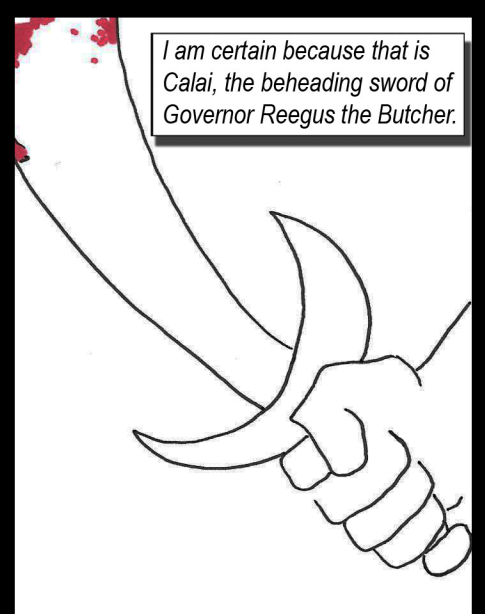


It is the troublemaker.
The would-be liberator.

How can you be so sure? I heard
told she was larger and resembled
the devil himself.

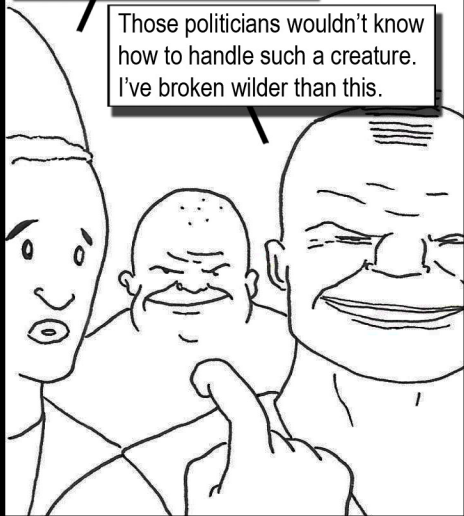


*I am certain because that is
Calai, the beheading sword of
Governor Reegus the Butcher.*



The Father Figures will pay handsomely for such a tribute.

Those politicians wouldn't know how to handle such a creature. I've broken wilder than this.

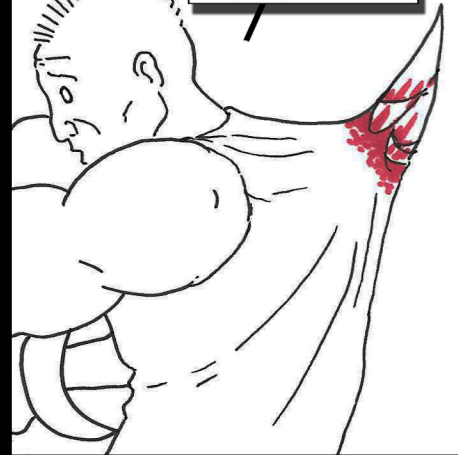


That's right! I'm talking about you! There's quite the sizable bounty on your fairly sizable pelt.



I doubt she has one!

True! She's definitely got some man in her. Or, rather, she *will* --



Scalp that wh --

Stop this insanity! Your hatred has driven you mad!

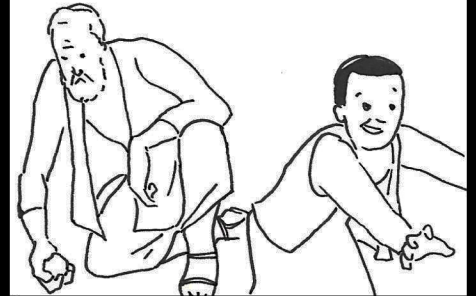




Stone her!



Quick, son! Gather the biggest ones. It's a wonder our streets have any stones remaining!



How's this, poppa?

Oh, those are some fine stoning rocks. Good weight, even shape, just enough sharp edges.

I hope I hit her eye.

In time. Just do your best.



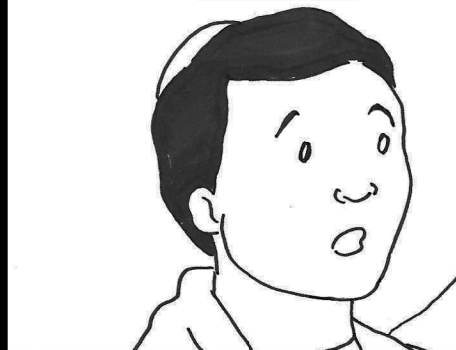
Is this one a whore?

They haven't said. She could be guilty of anything.

Anything?

Oh, yes.

Even stealing?



I took a delight from the market. Will I be stoned next?



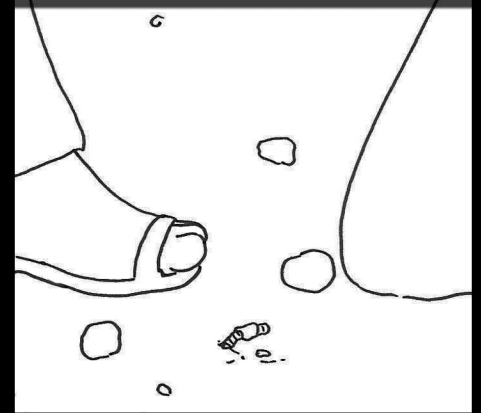
Thieving is wrong, but you were brave to admit it. We are all infallible, imperfect beings. Thankfully, God forgives us.

No, silly. God decided you should be a man. He loves us more because we have not displeased him. What do the holy books say? It was not *us* who caused the ruin of paradise, or who introduced lust into the world, was it?

I, I won't be stoned?

No. The weakness of their frail forms are only matched by the weakness of their minds. Son, women are merely vessels from which souls leave heaven to enter earth, like a door, or this wormhole. There, you see it? A hole. The thing simultaneously exists, but is nothing, all the same. That is women.

No.



Scalp that wh --



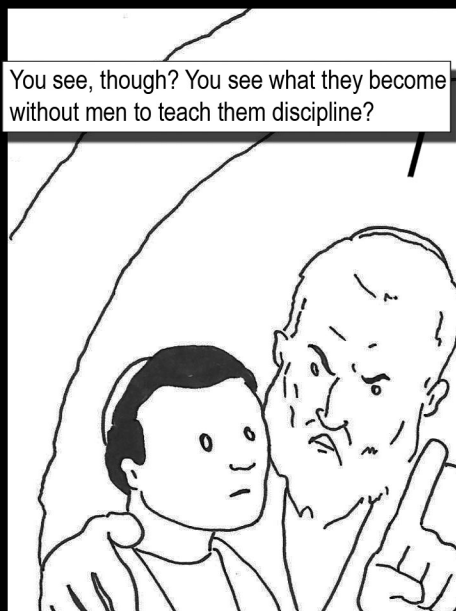
Her form does not look frail, father.

No, indeed.

I... I think we best put down our stoning rocks.



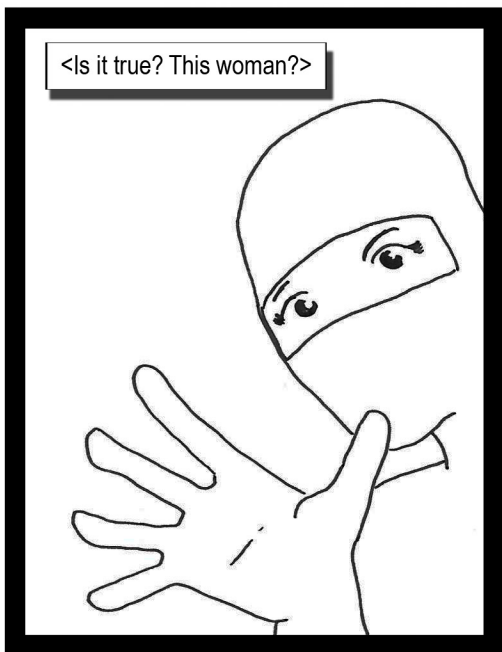
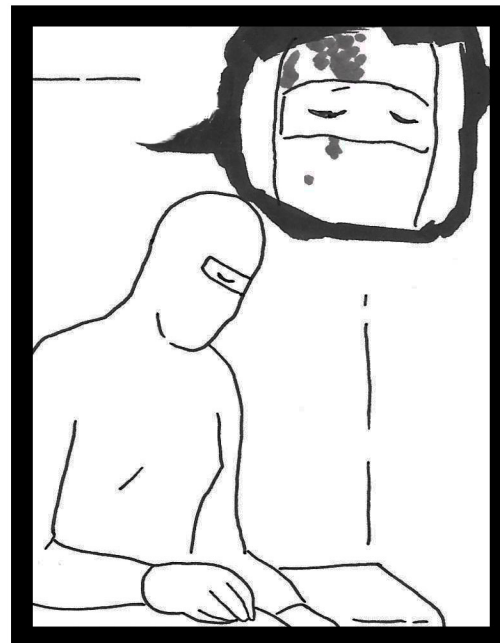
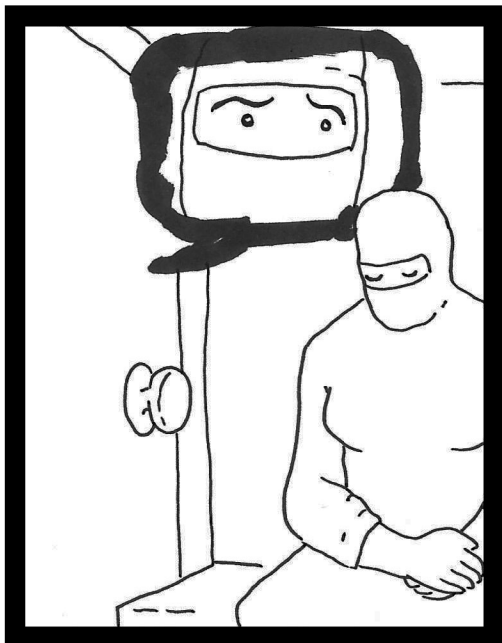
You see, though? You see what they become without men to teach them discipline?



God will punish her.

In time.



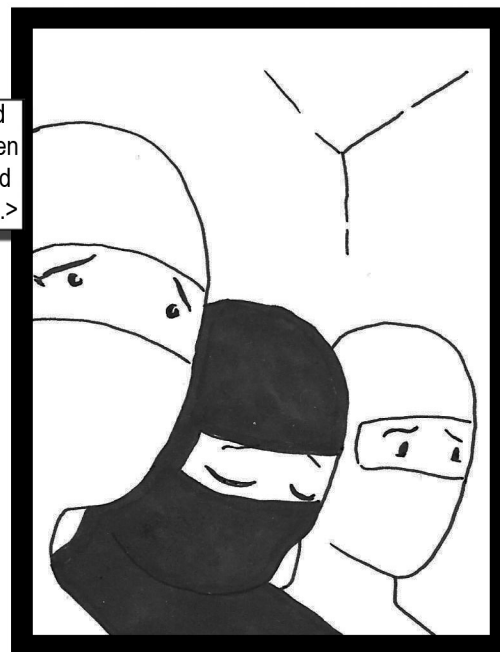


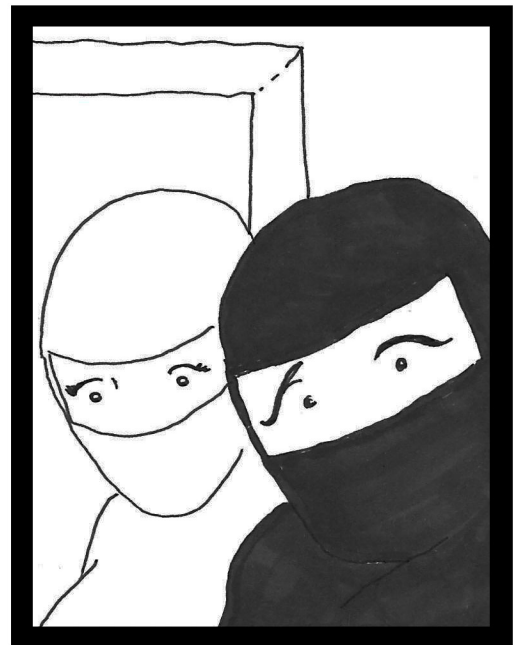
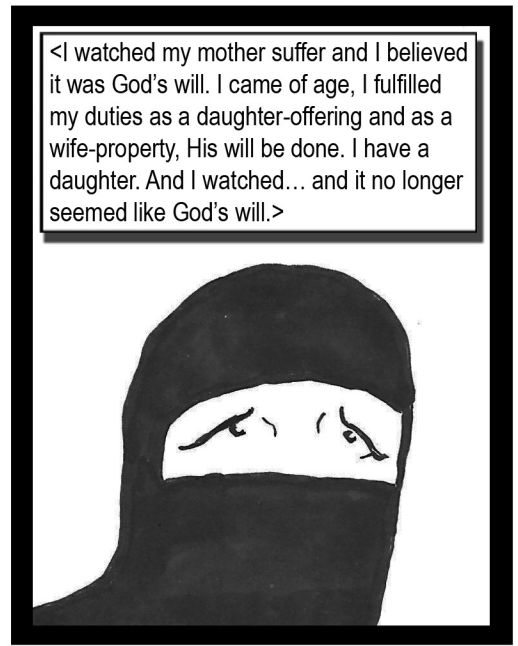
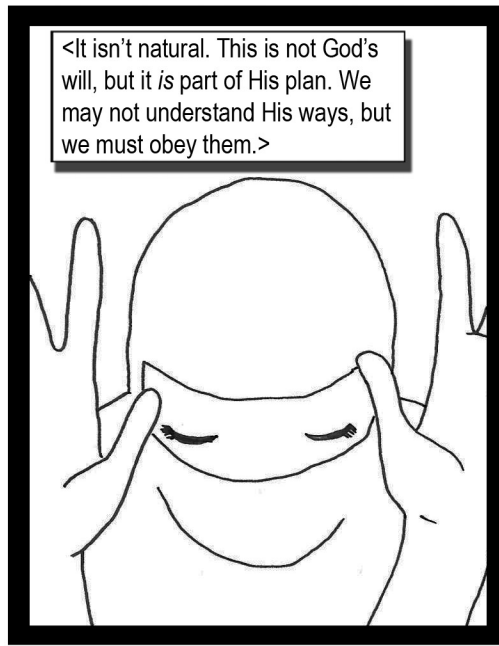
<Is it true? This woman?>

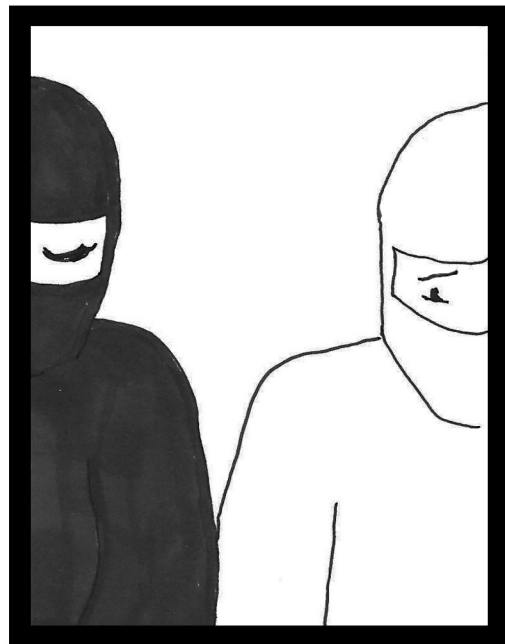
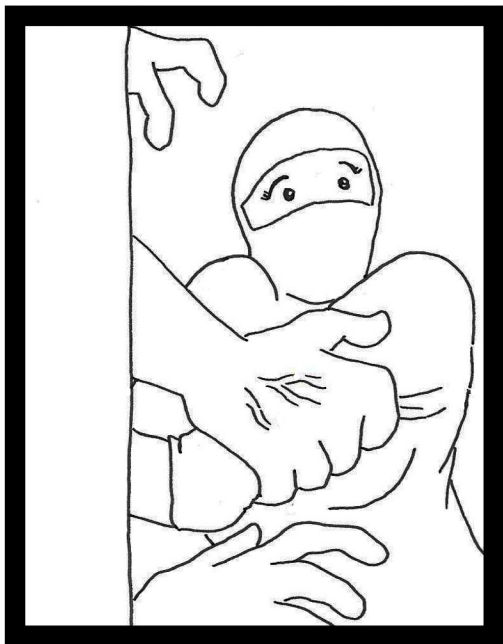


<Sol Solotan's wife overheard that she beheaded the governor butcher in Tunriq.>

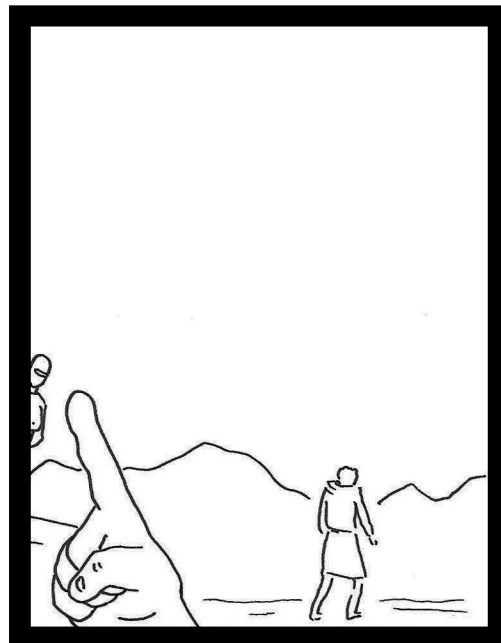
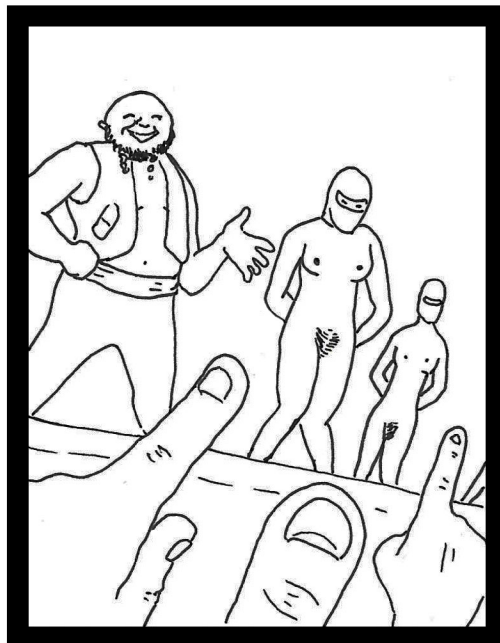
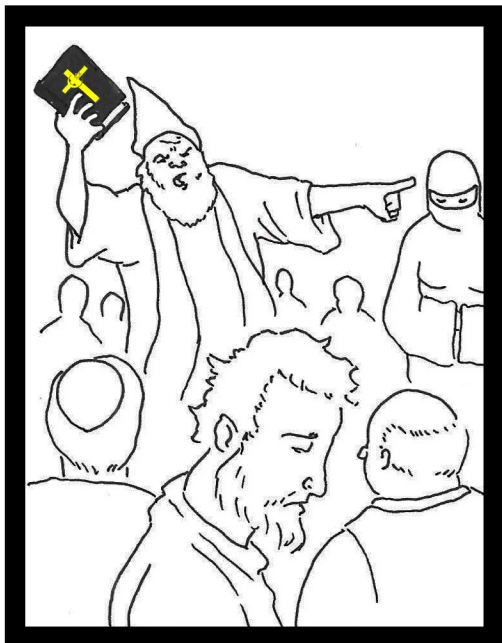
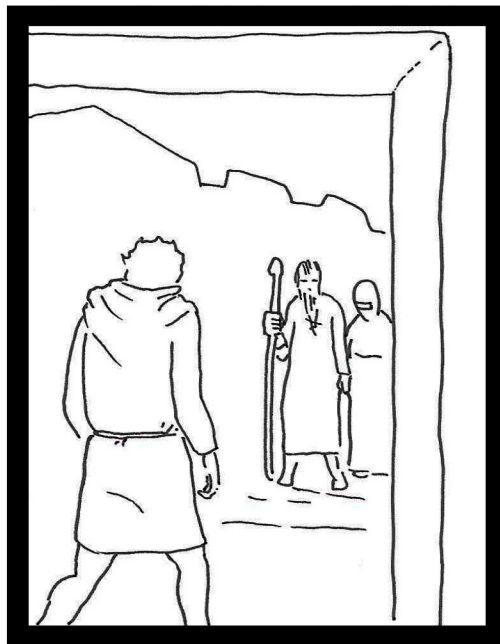
<Yes, with his own sword! She freed the female prisoners. Some had been tortured there for years. They burned the palace down and all the evil in it.>

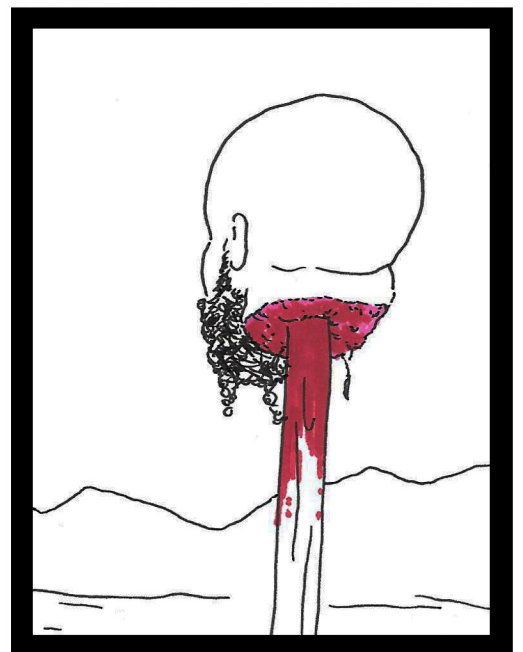
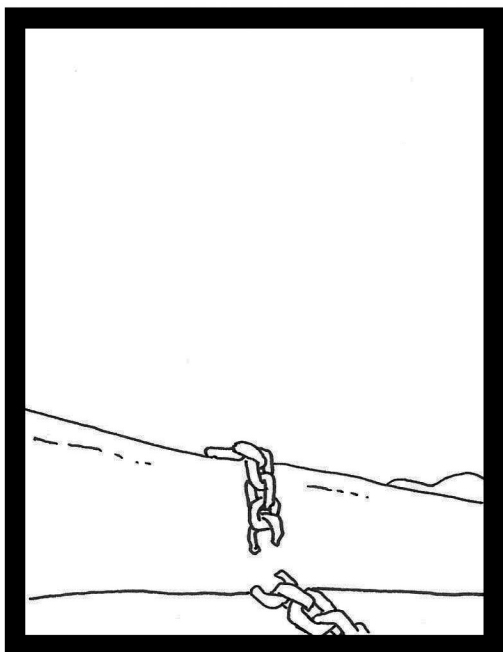
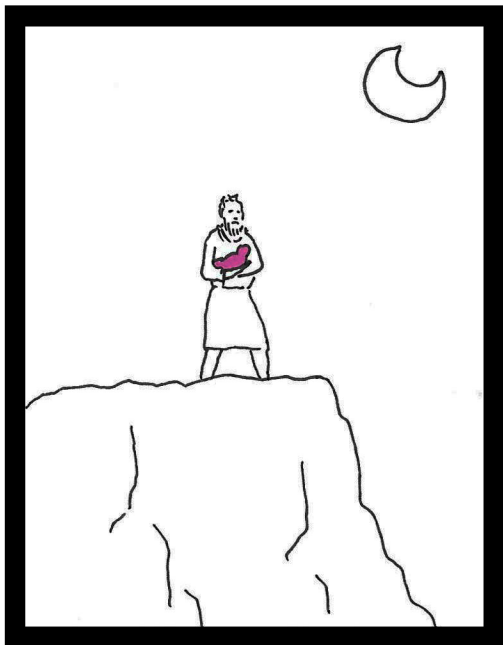


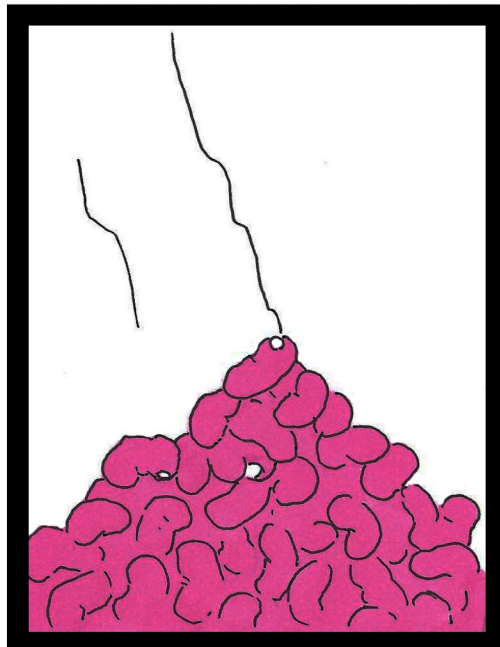


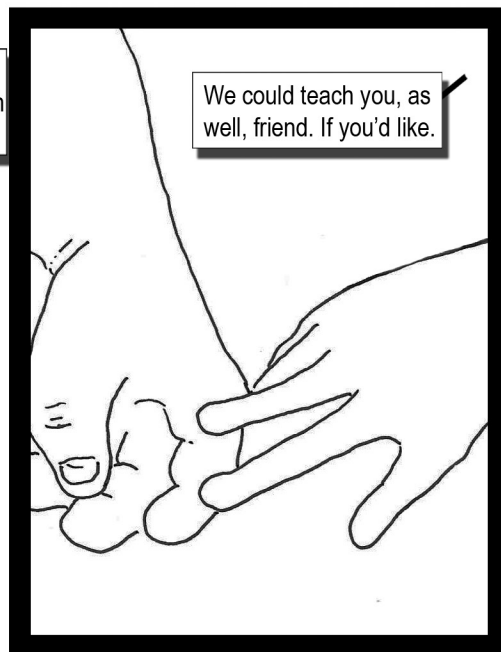
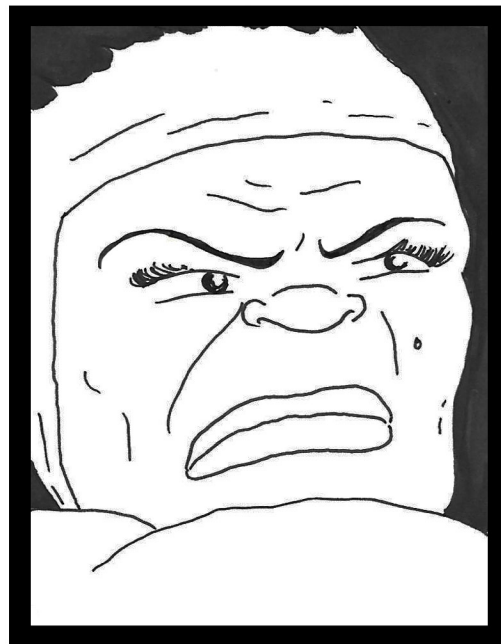


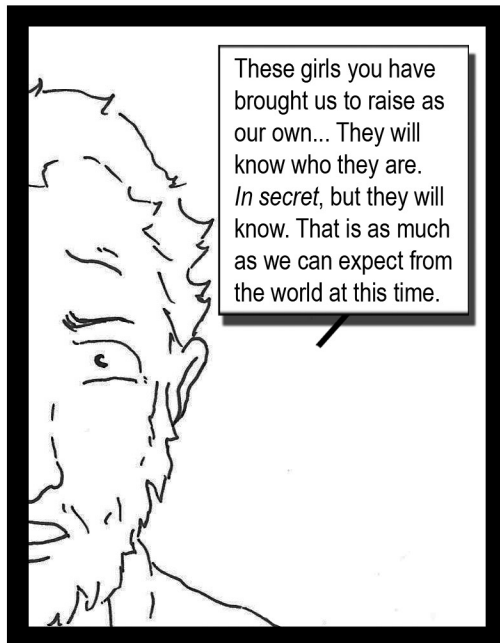
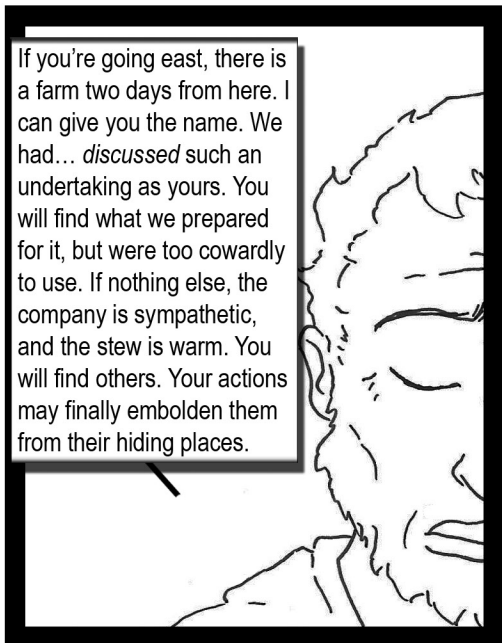
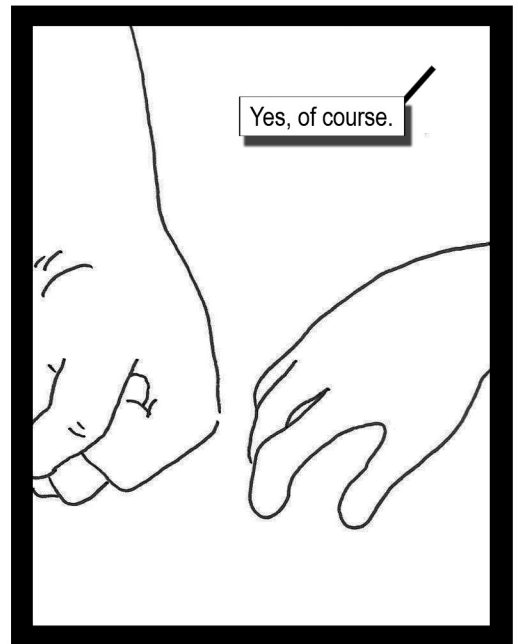
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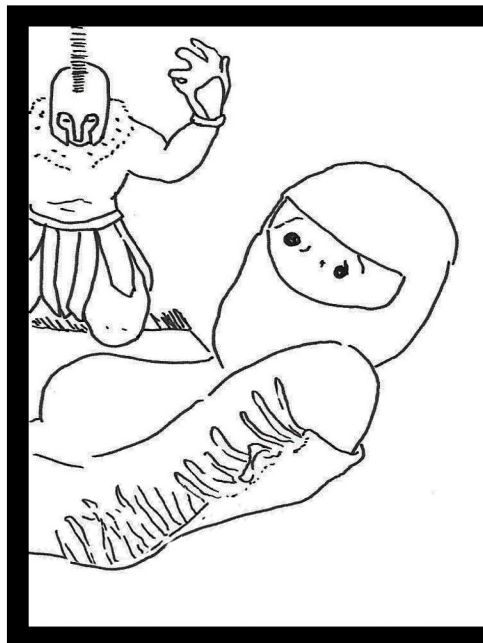










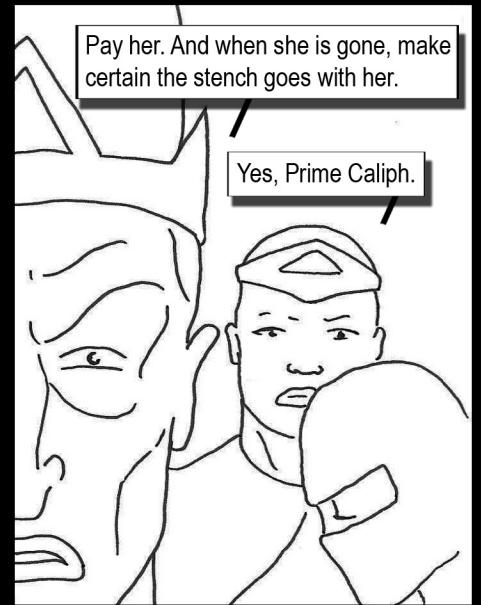


What news do you have for the Prime Caliph?

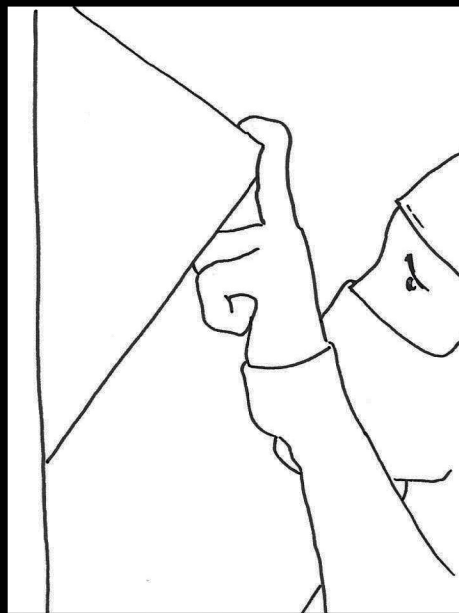
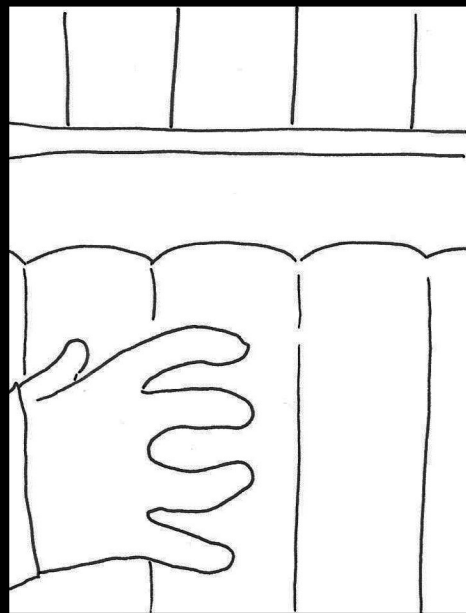


Pay her. And when she is gone, make certain the stench goes with her.

Yes, Prime Caliph.

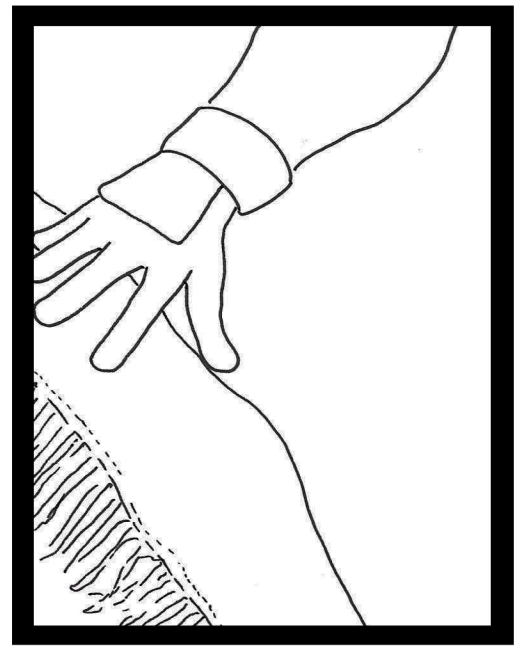


For your payment --



If you wish. But you know the consequences if your husband-owner catches you with it.



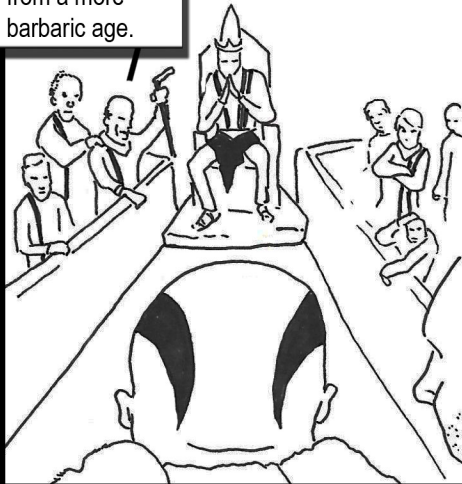


Continued next Wednesday

This abhorrent practice of scalping is a relic from a more barbaric age.



It has no place in a modern society.



Senator, I would actually like to expand the scalping sacrament to include liberals!

Seconded!



If it were up to you liberals, this nation would have no traditions left!



Hacking off flesh and selling it as souvenirs --



You! Citizen. You're obviously a peltsman. What is your stake in this?



Bless you, Prime Caliph. I want the measure voted down.

Here, here!



This is my livelihood.

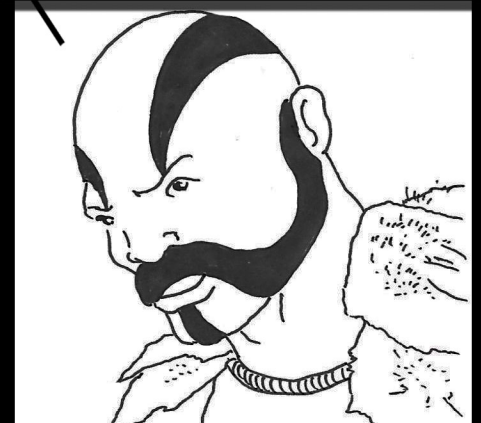
I see by your collection of dead flesh that business is good.



Well, bounties ain't what they were. Strays, dissidents, government-sanctioned castrations. I collect where I can. What can I say? I look at women and all I see are dollar signs!



Senator, you may mock our traditions, but what right do you have to take it away? My family has been skinnin' cats for three generations. It is our divine right, as expressed in holy writ. Lieviticus, Chapter 3, Verse 2, "The evil eye will never see the path to Heaven." Tell me, Senator --



-- if the word of God is not sufficient testimony, then whose word is?



Whose, indeed?
Let us adjourn.

I have a bounty. I trust I have my hunter in you, Onar the Peltsman?



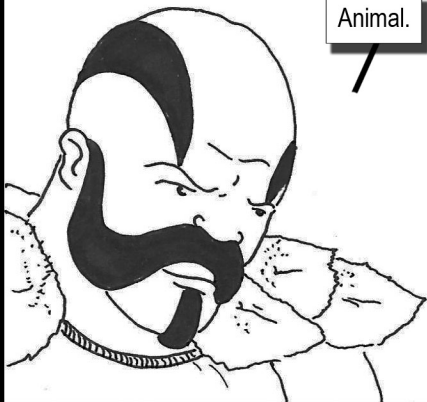
Your trust is well placed.

I'm sure you know the target.

"Ain't No Princess."



That part of her legend is true. She was just another prisoner. A guard developed a nasty penchant for calling her princess. She broke free and carved "ain't no princess" into his forehead.



Animal.

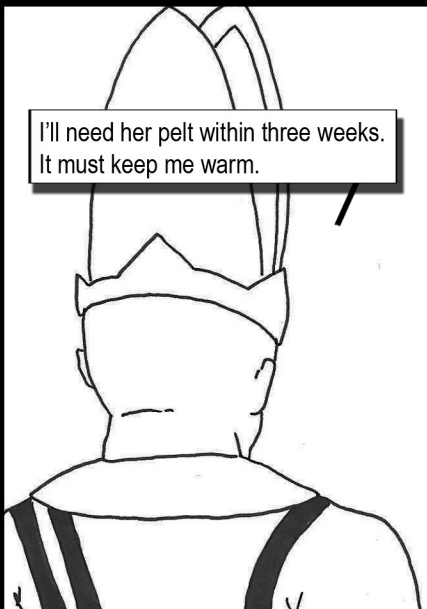
She left him alive to spread her gospel of rebellion. As Tunriq burned, this guard stood in parliament, telling his story, showing off his shameful scars. He was executed for desertion.



In parliament. At my command.

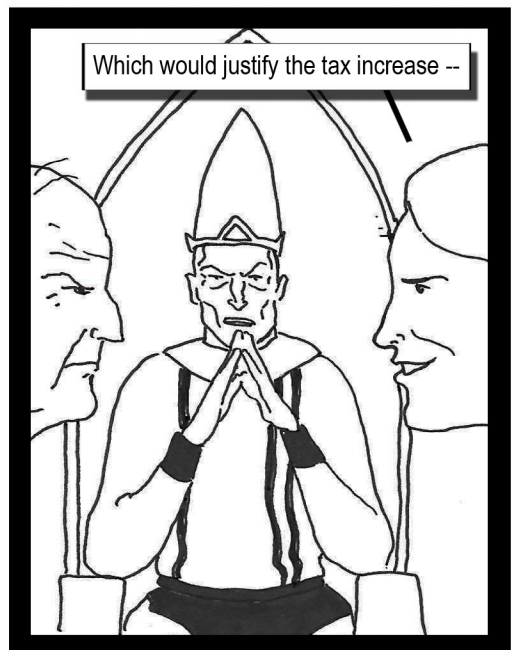
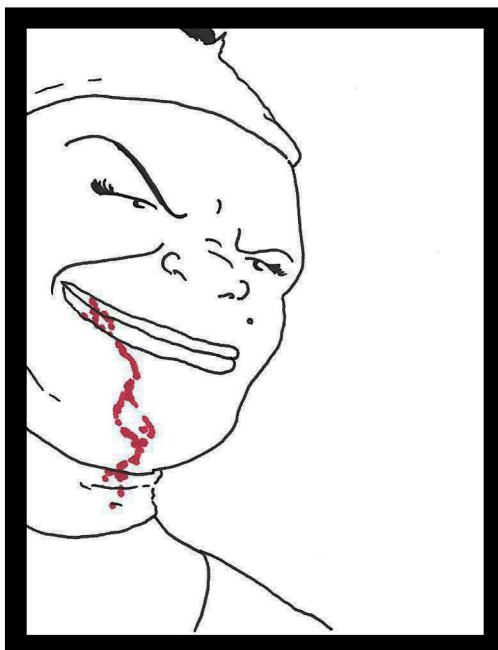
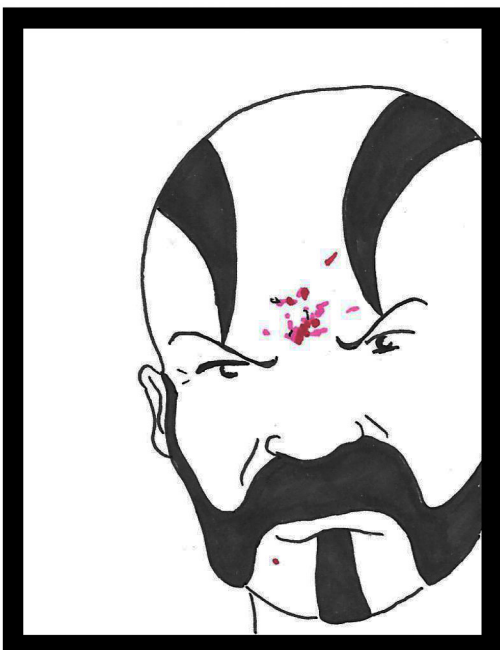
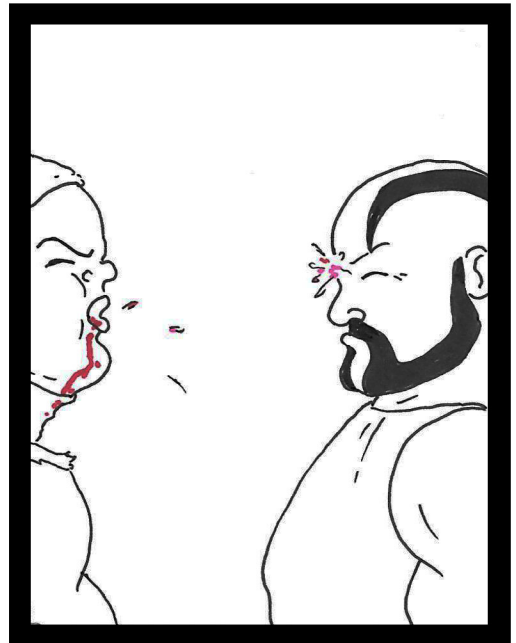
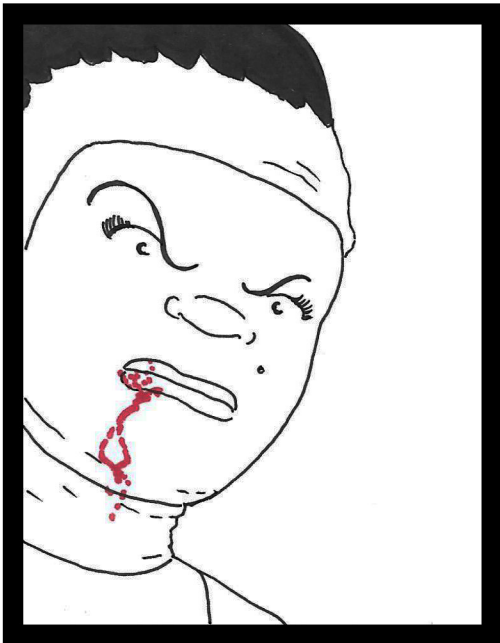
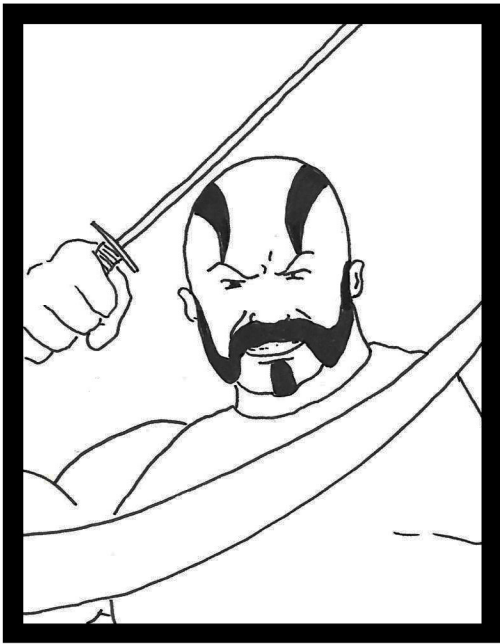


I'll need her pelt within three weeks. It must keep me warm.



I will not die this winter.





The Peltsman has returned with his prize!

What treasure awaits us in the casket?

Is it the demon's head?

It is the peltsman's... *pelt*.

Mr. Prime Caliph --

You! You do not speak! She has scalped you. She has rendered you... a woman.

I, I --

You do not speak! Women are forbidden to speak.

If he is a woman, we should cover his head!

Yes! Tamper down that aura which emanates from all women.

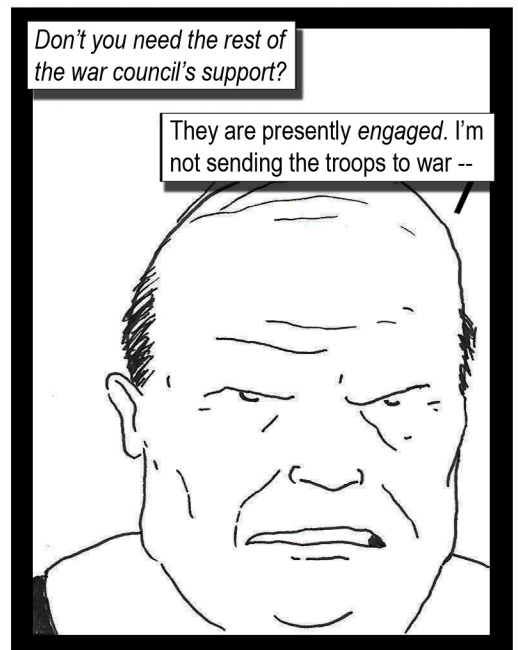
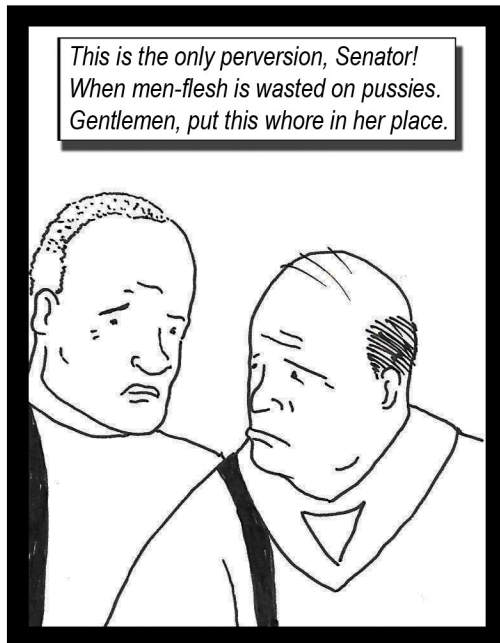
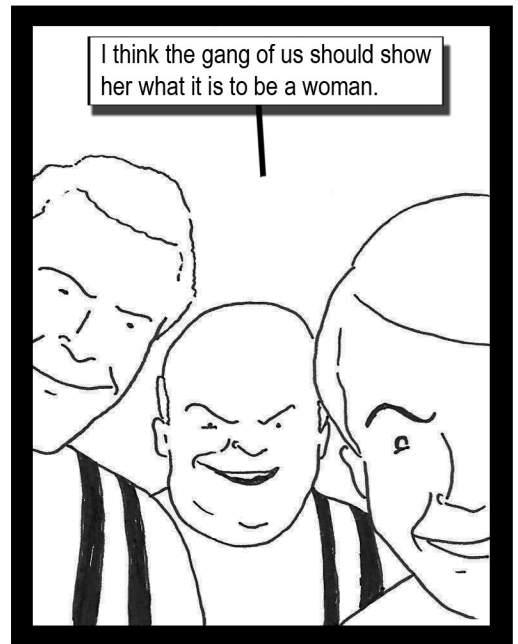
Onar, why did you not tell me I had commissioned a woman to do a man's work?

Here, woman! Paint your eyes with ink.

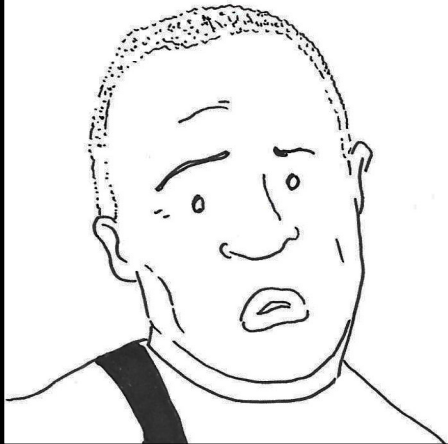
Mr. Prime Caliph! Please! This is a house of law.

And justice shall be done!

Show us your tits!



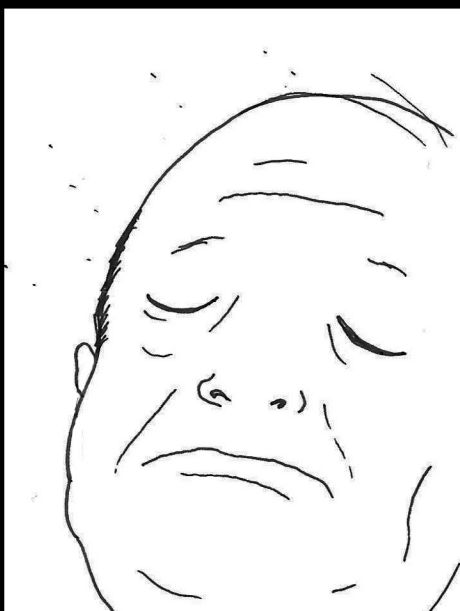
--I'm sending them to join her.



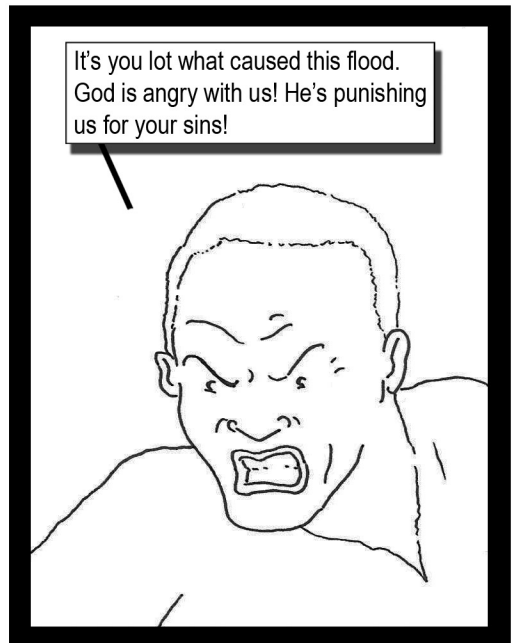
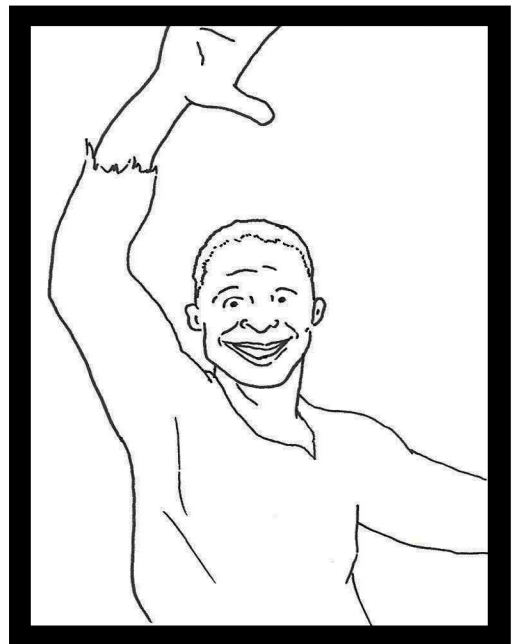
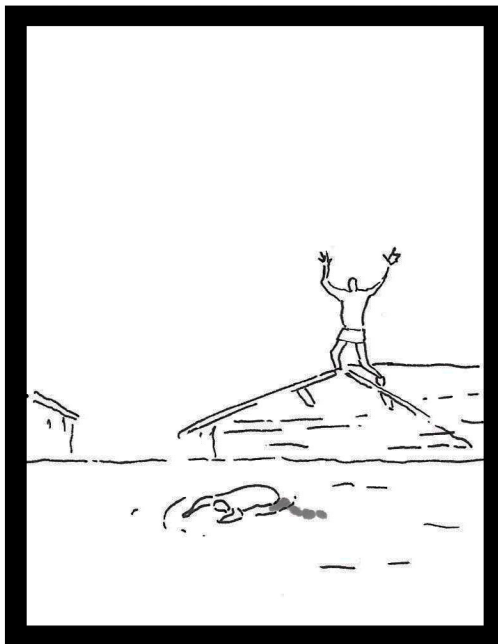
The age we knew is over. At last.



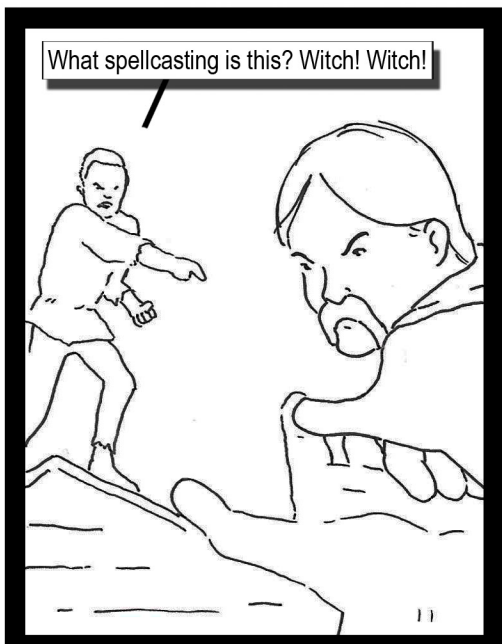
Go inside, John. You'll catch your death.



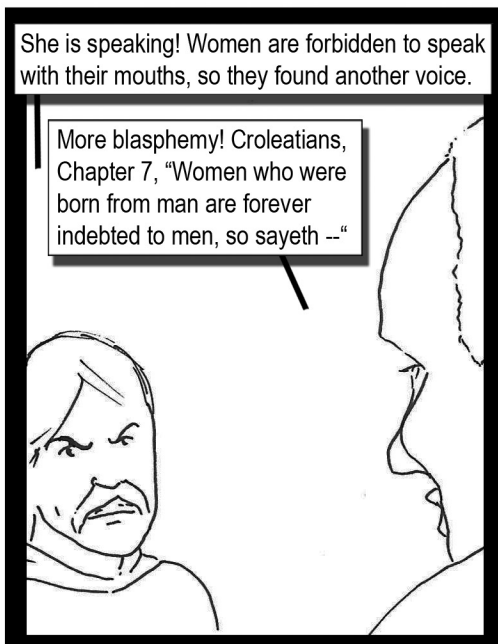
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It's you lot what caused this flood.
God is angry with us! He's punishing
us for your sins!

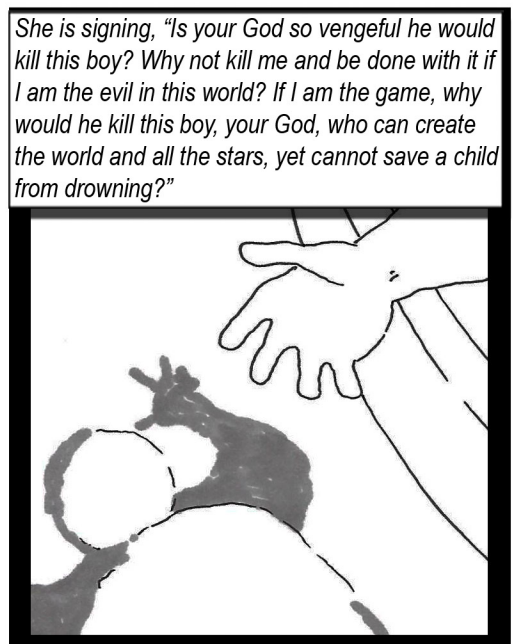


What spellcasting is this? Witch! Witch!



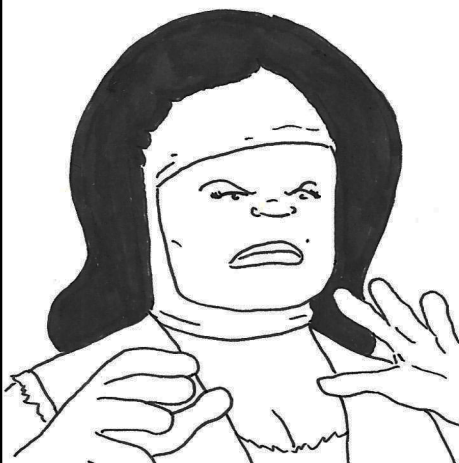
She is speaking! Women are forbidden to speak
with their mouths, so they found another voice.

More blasphemy! Croleations,
Chapter 7, "Women who were
born from man are forever
indebted to men, so sayeth --"

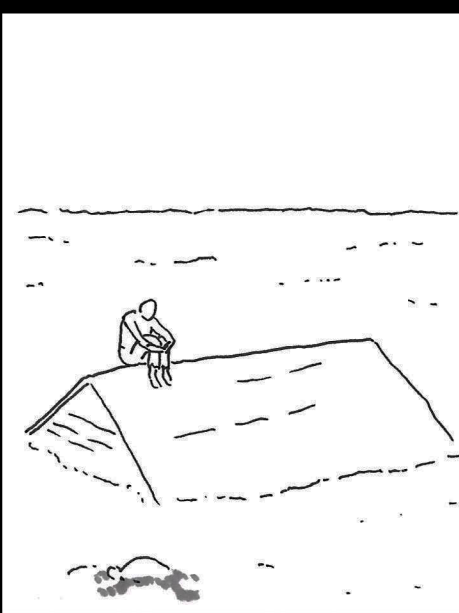


She is signing, "Is your God so vengeful he would
kill this boy? Why not kill me and be done with it if
I am the evil in this world? If I am the game, why
would he kill this boy, your God, who can create
the world and all the stars, yet cannot save a child
from drowning?"

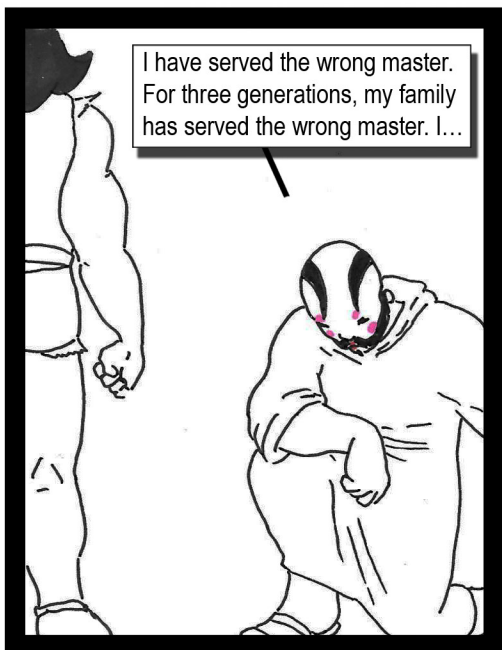
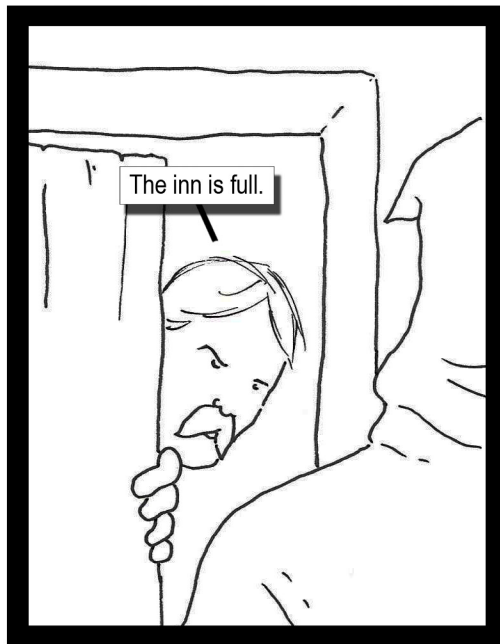
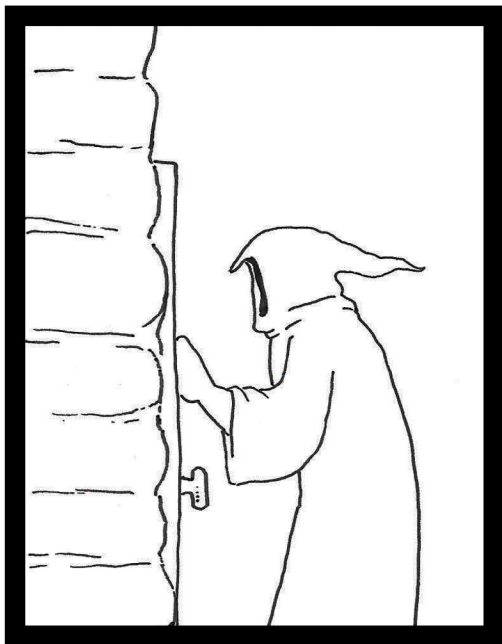
"It wasn't God, but rain. Floods are the nature of rain, as it the nature of people to endure."

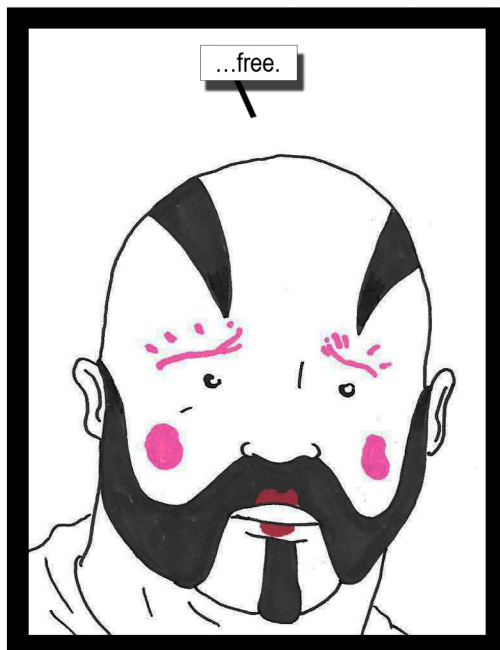
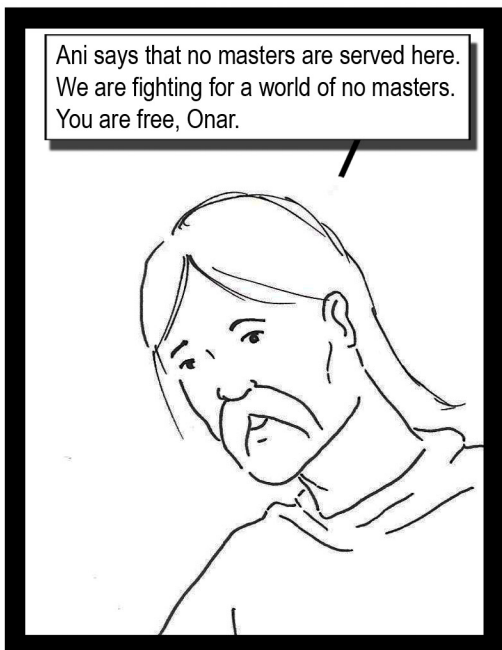
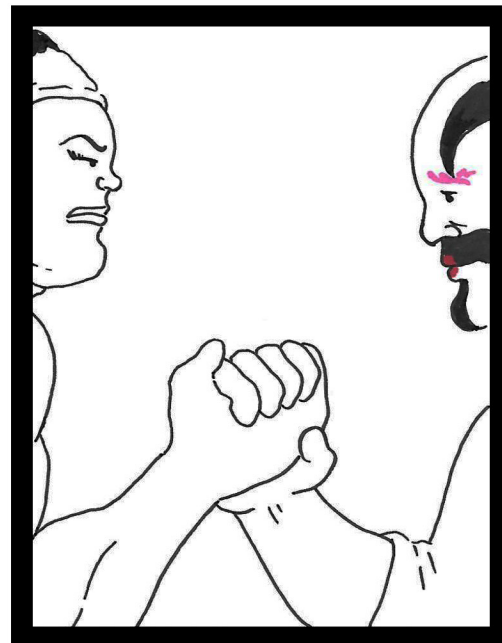
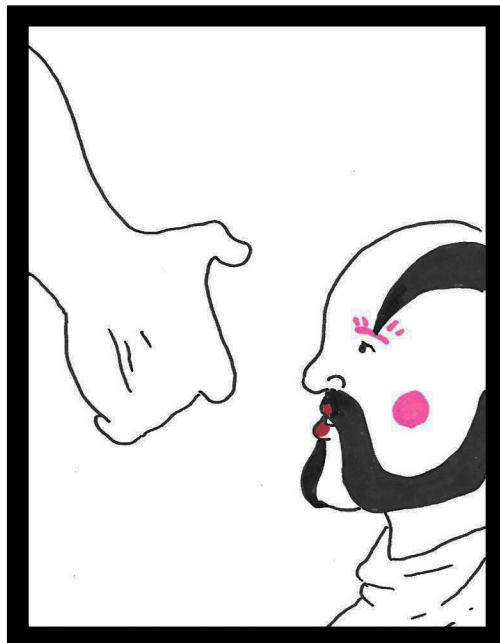
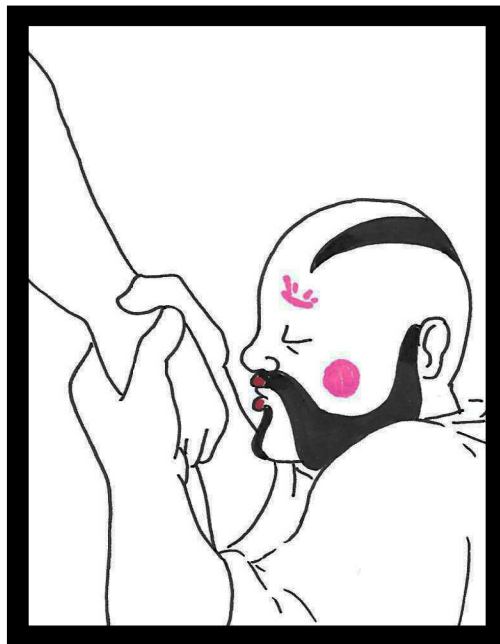
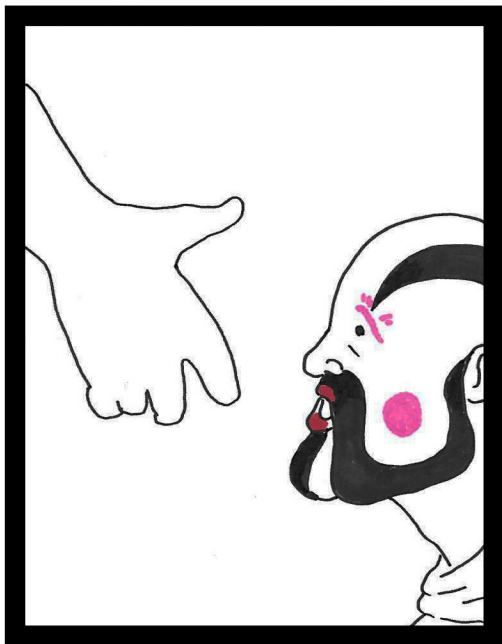


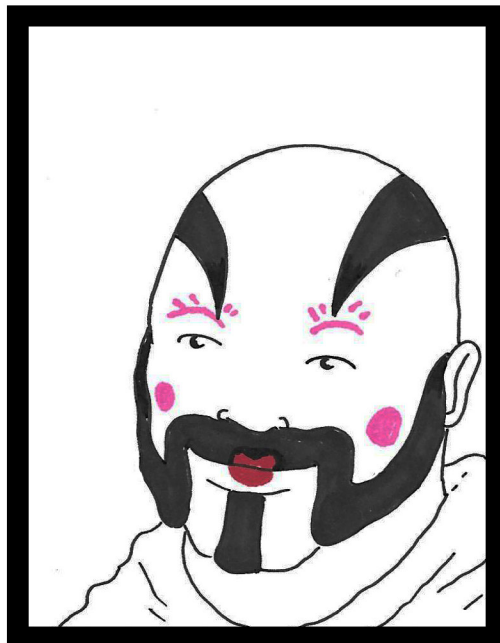
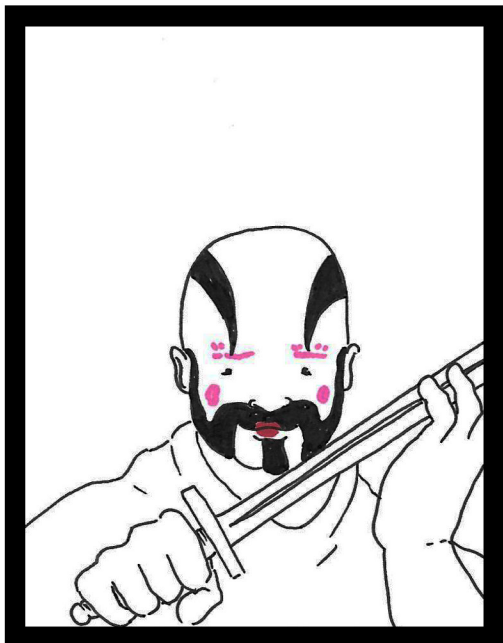
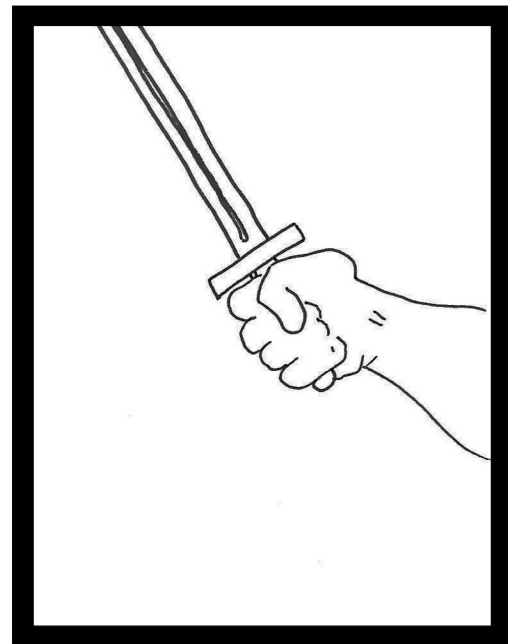
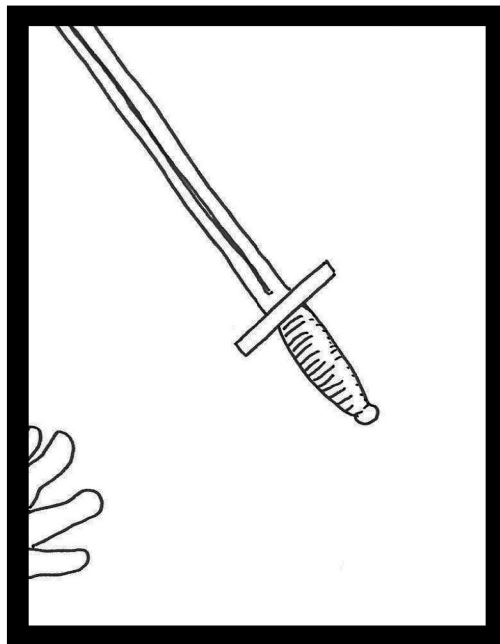
"There is room on the boat if you wish to be saved."



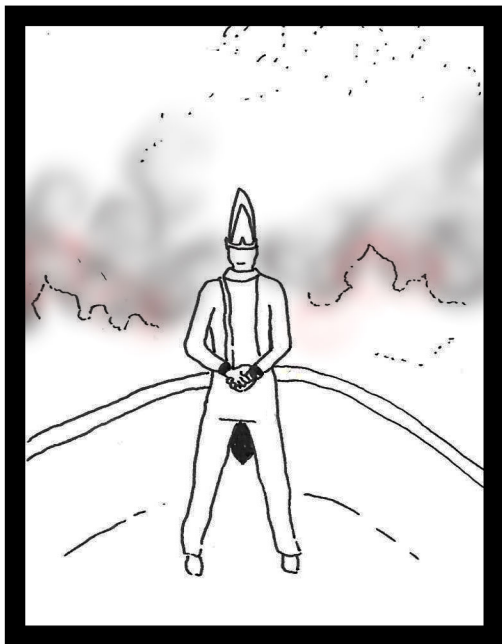
Continued next Wednesday







Continued next Wednesday



The demon woman's army engaged our remaining forces from the west. They fought brave --



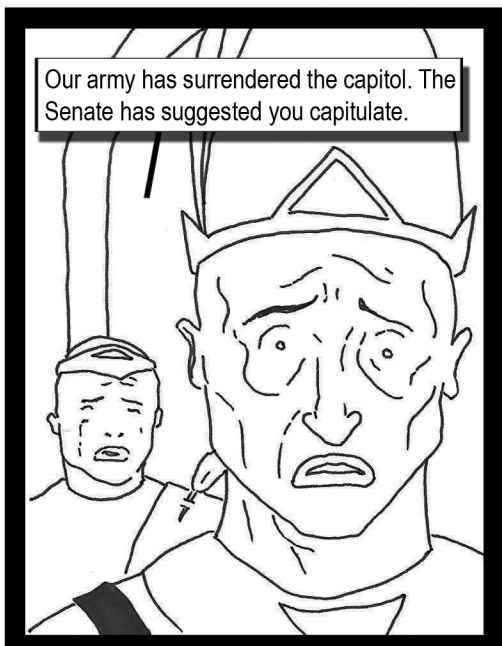
I do not care how they fought! Did they crush her?



Mid-battle, a flank emerged from the north...



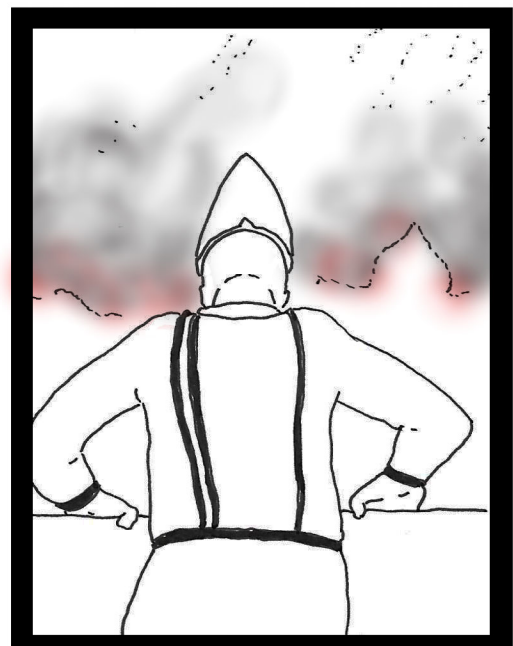
...headed by Onar the Peltsman.



Our army has surrendered the capitol. The Senate has suggested you capitulate.



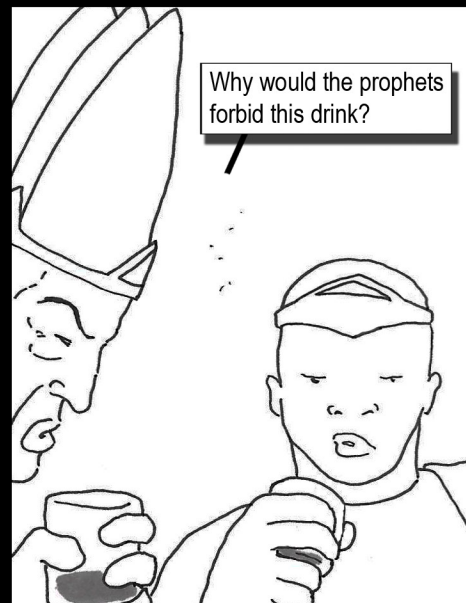
Of course. Their names lost in a clump. My name recorded in history, lost to a woman.



Pour me a drink. The kind we serve outsiders.



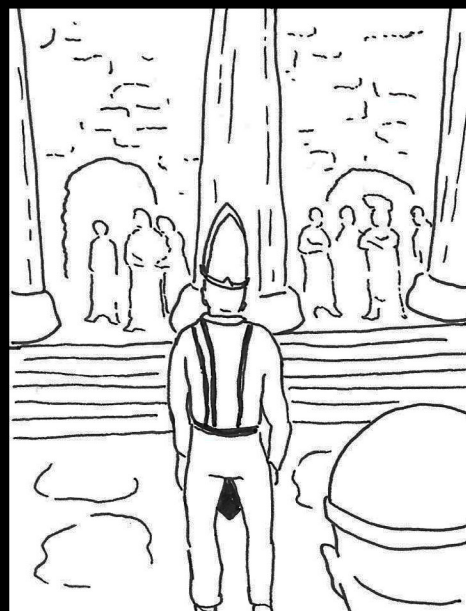
Why would the prophets forbid this drink?



It takes command of your senses, like an evil spirit. It drinks your memories, and eats your mind.

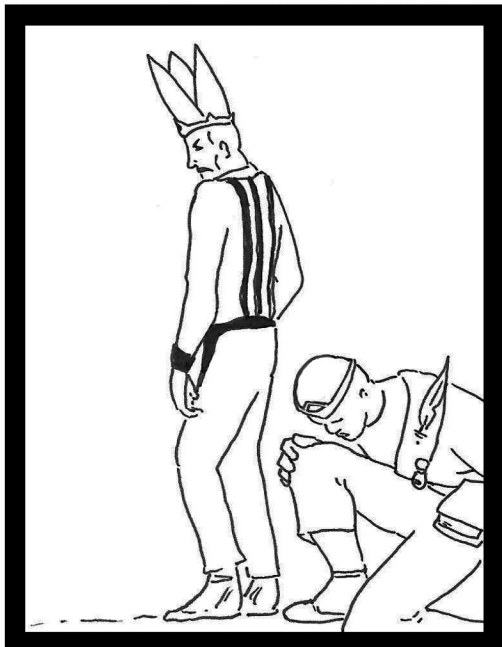
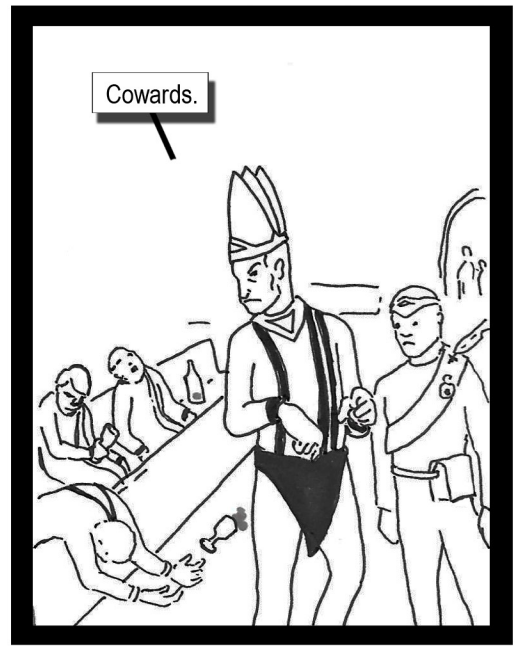
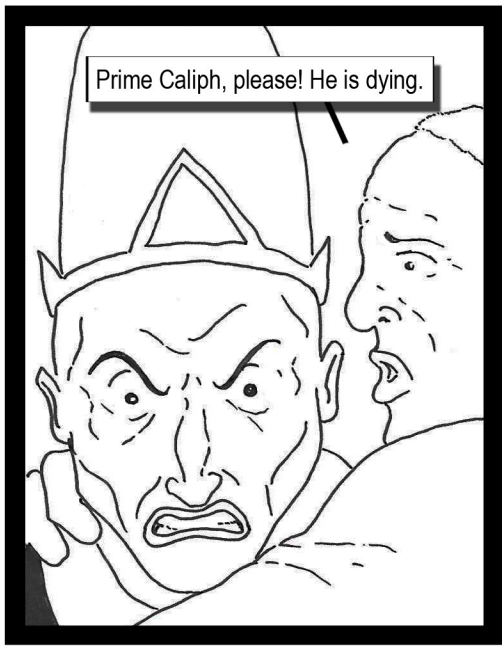


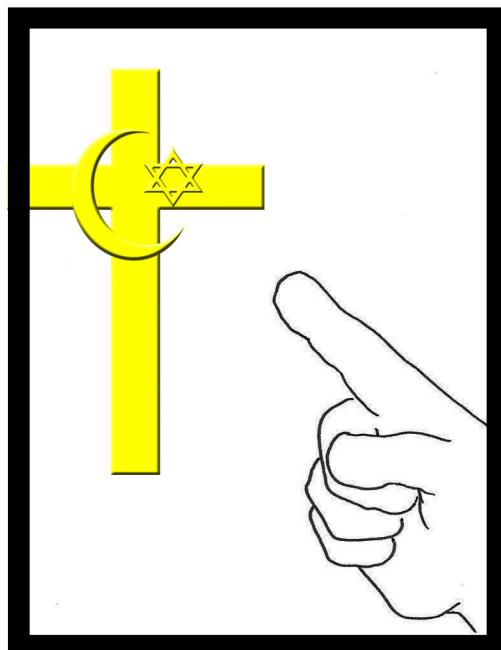
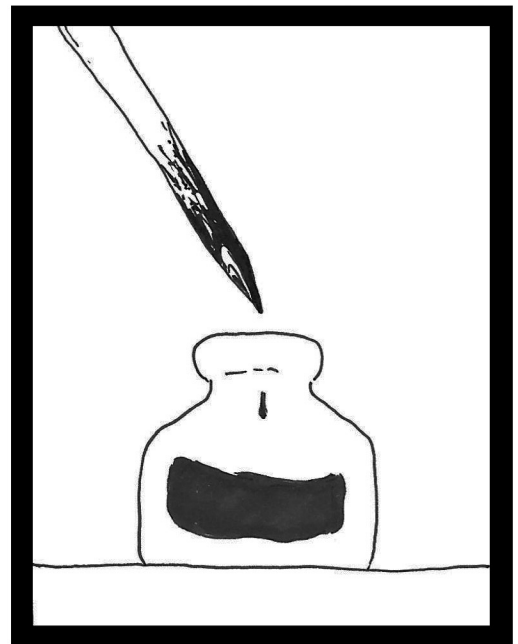
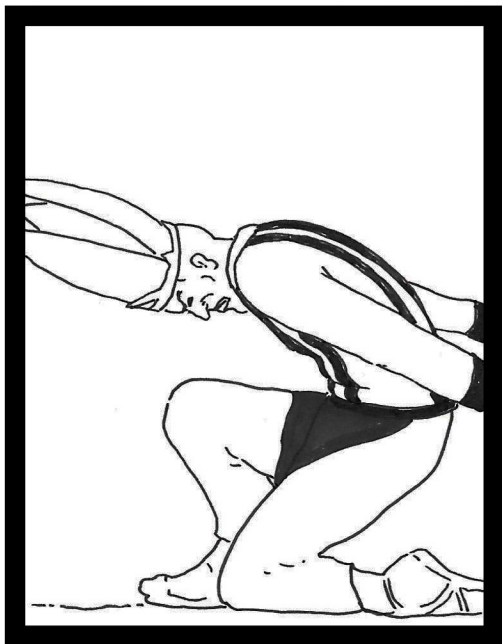
Or maybe because it tastes like piss.



Traitor!







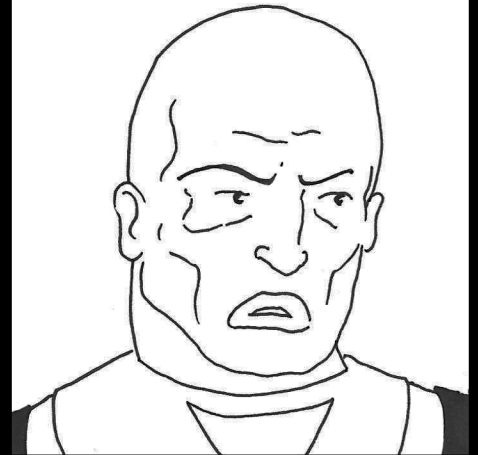
"That is the root of this poison against women. That is the weed that strangles all of us from growing."



Even if I were to sever religion from the affairs of state, how do you sever it from the hearts of the people?



... they will not give up their faith so easily.



"I did not free the people to give them a government in chains. Faith is emotion. The law must be reason."



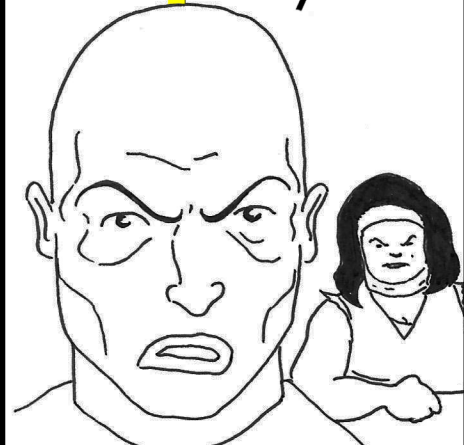
It is your government. You wear the crown, Woman King. That is what I can give you.

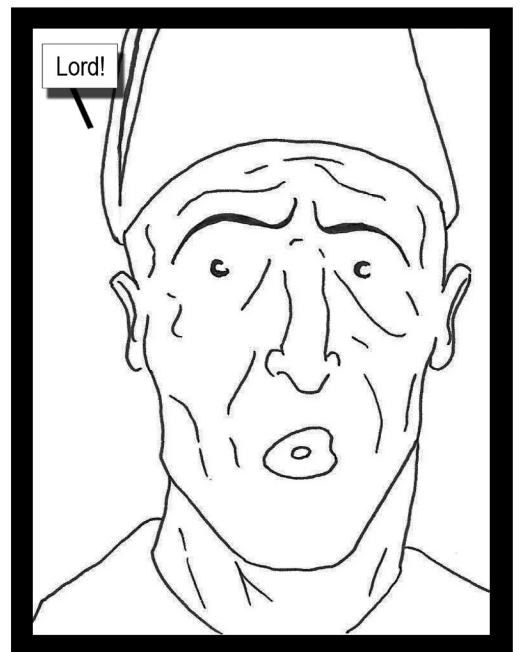
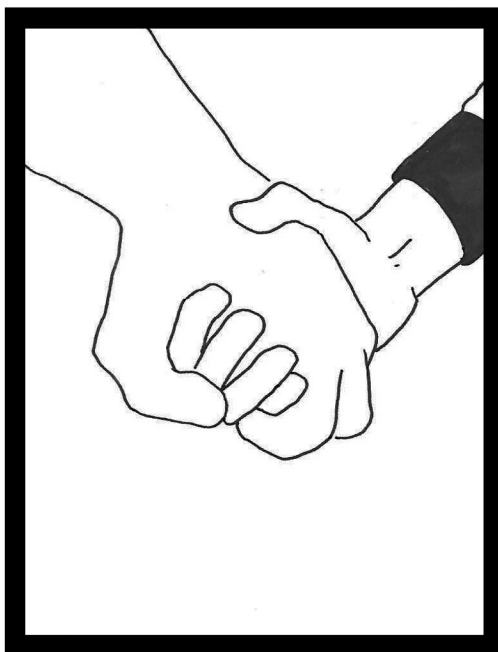


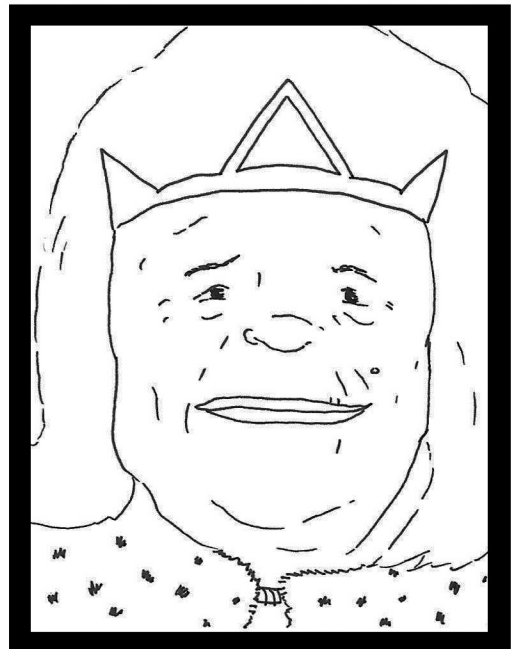
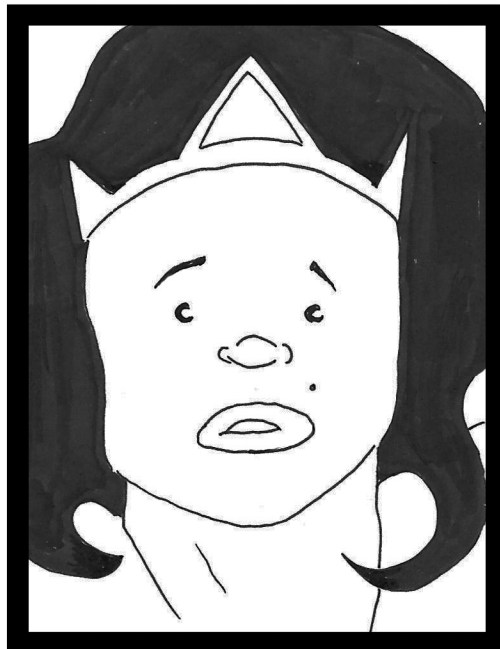
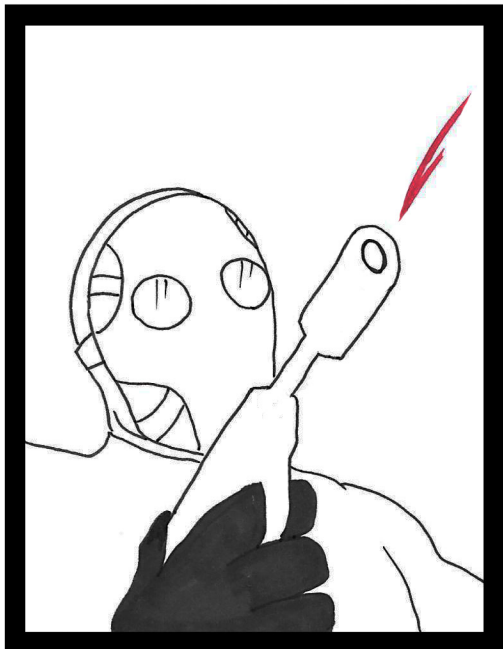
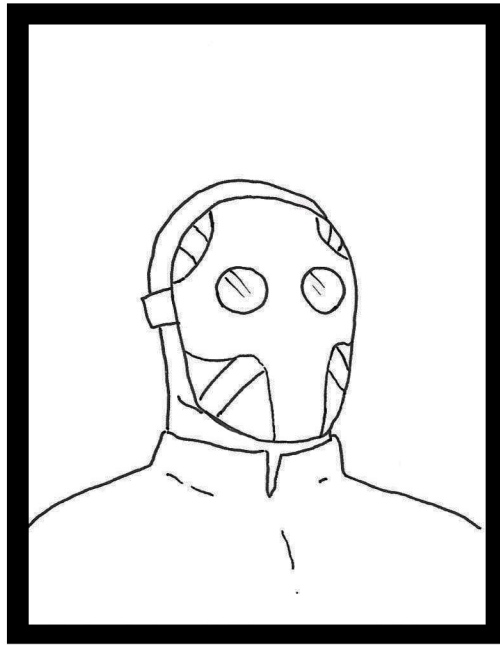
But religion? It has no borders.

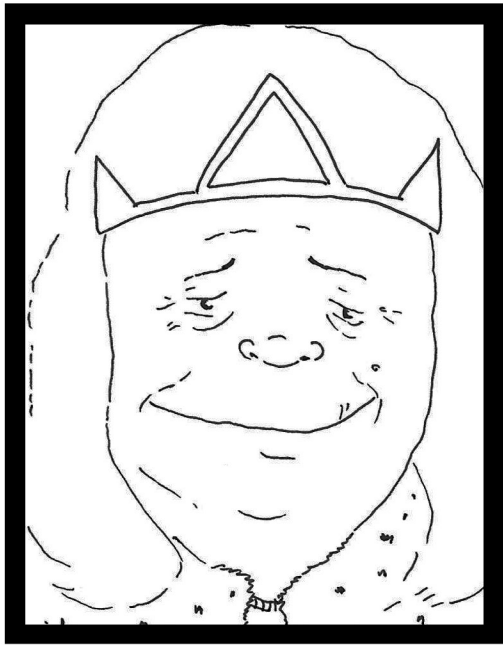


Only men in miters to lead it.

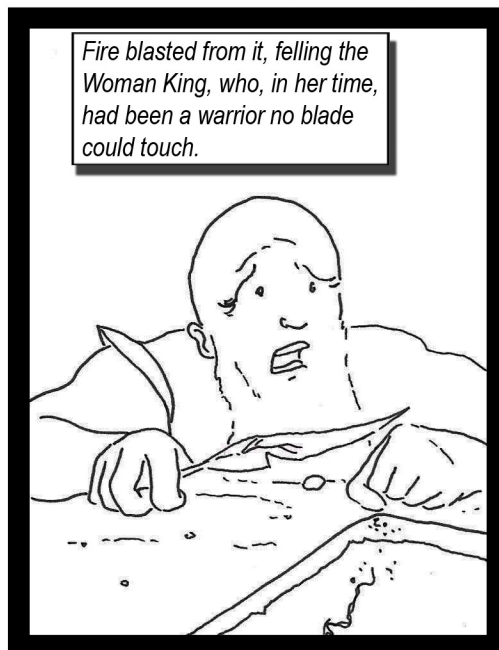
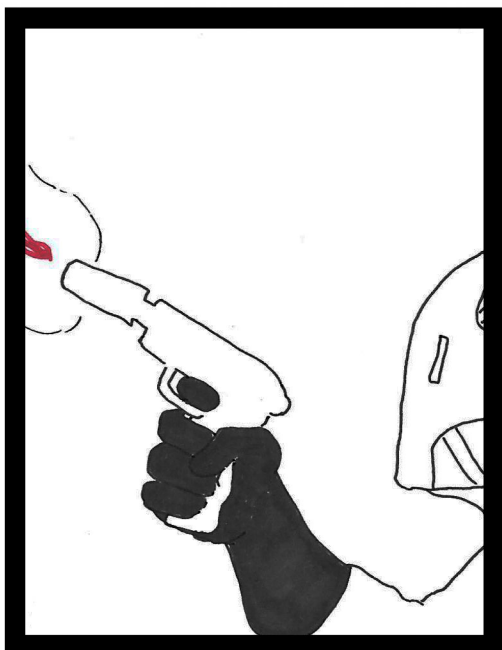
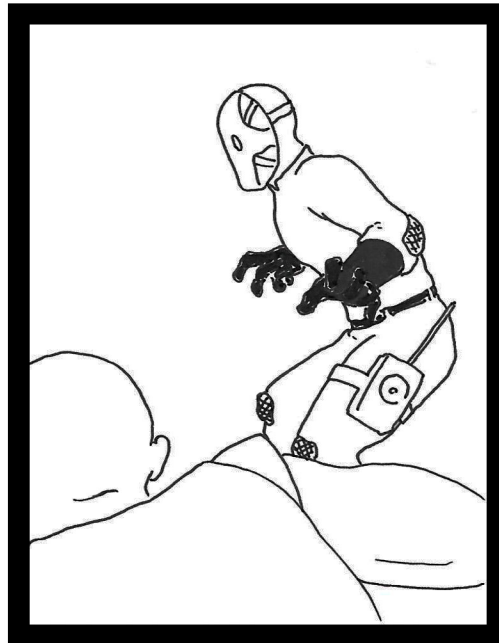
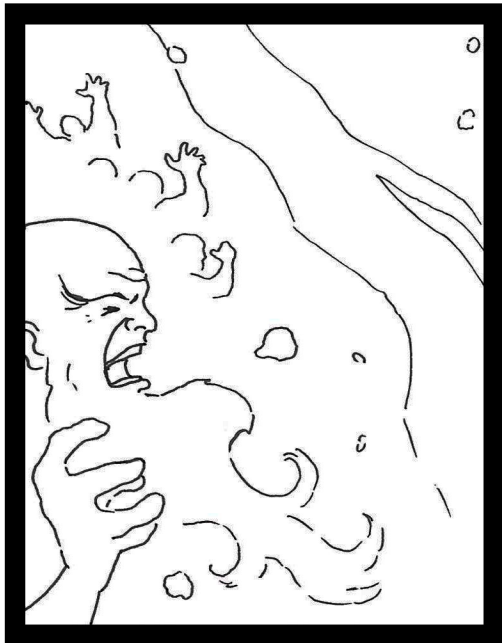
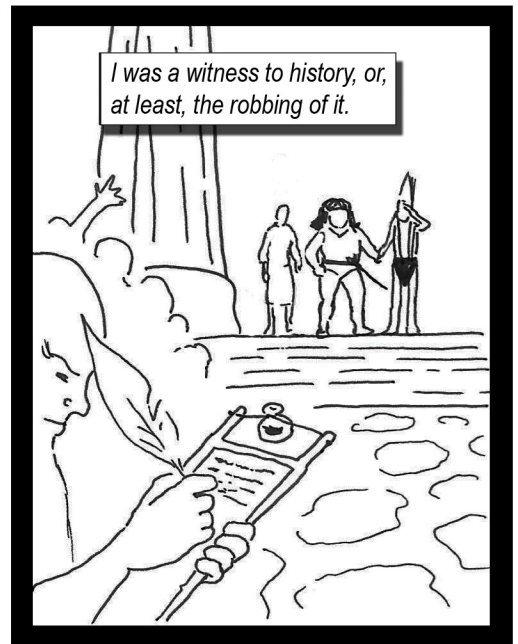
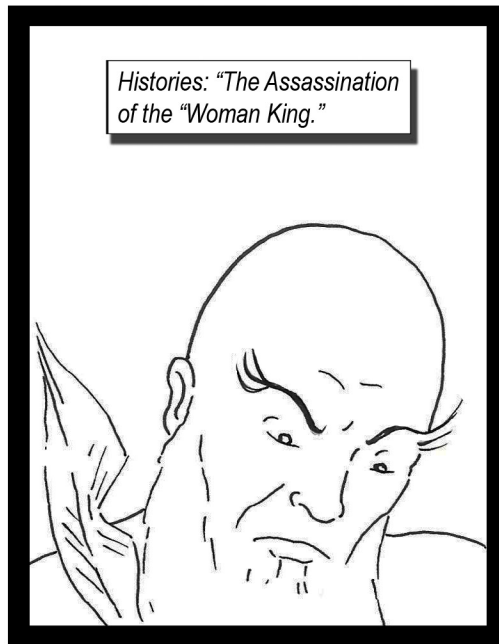






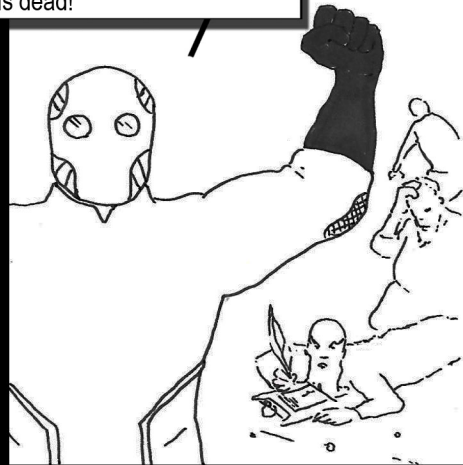


Continued next Wednesday



The assassin did proclaim:

I am from the future! Rejoice, brothers, the first Woman King is dead!



He has succeeded! Praise lagul!

A voice! A voice spoke from that box!

The man inside must be tiny!



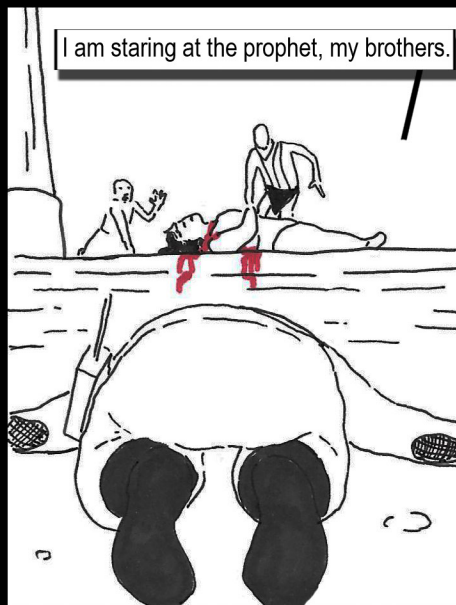
Praise... me?



lagul?

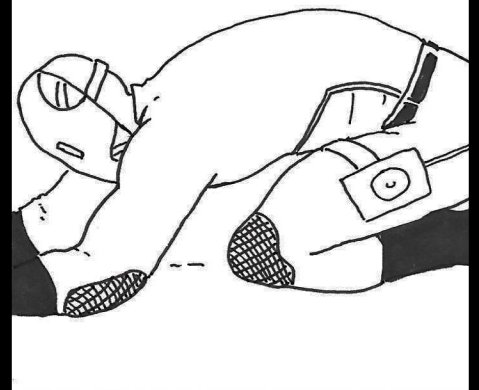


I am staring at the prophet, my brothers.



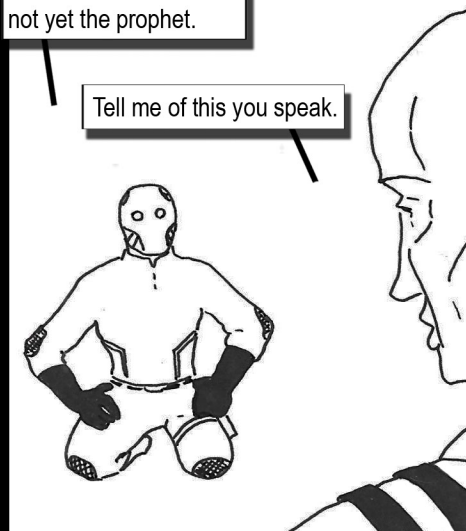
Praise you! Praise you!

Wait! Remember! He does not yet know of his greatness!



Yes, that's true. You are not yet the prophet.

Tell me of this you speak.



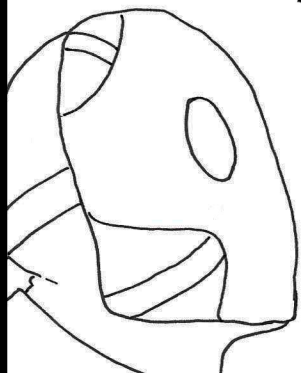
During the first Woman King's lengthy reign, she sought to destroy our faith. But you, oh, great one, sought to preserve it. The blasphemy started today, with her eviscerating religion from state affairs.



She ignored the tenets and the traditions of our everlasting gospel, undermining our faith which plainly states that the race of men and the race of women are not equal.



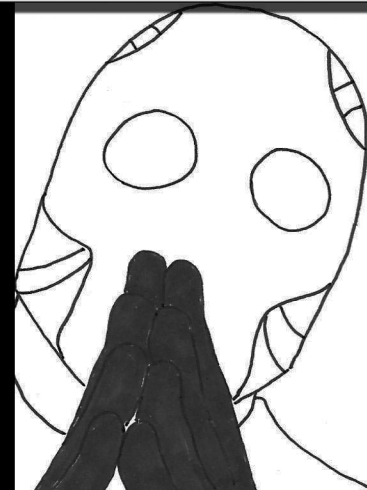
Women were *speaking* in society, and worse, against their husbands. Her reign was so dark God, Himself, intervened to make the world balanced again. He spoke to you, o prophet, my prophet!



The Lord... spoke to me?



Yes, prophet, by your own account, you went to the woods to pray. And the Lord, the Lord wrote His message in the stream. You drank from the stream, and when you returned to your congregation, you recited the holy words, which your faithful took to ink.



I see.



A miracle, Holy One!

A miracle anyone believed it!

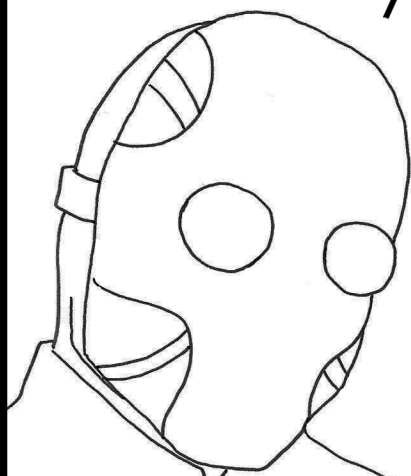


For shame, lagull!

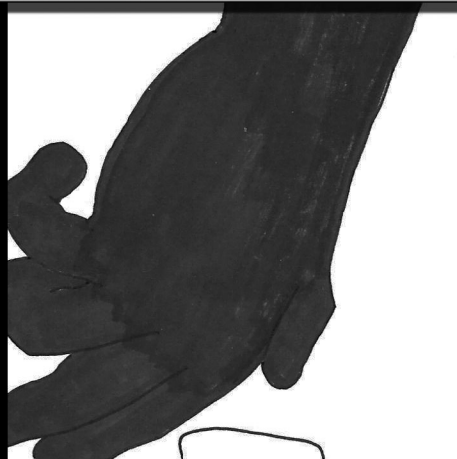
I haven't done it yet!



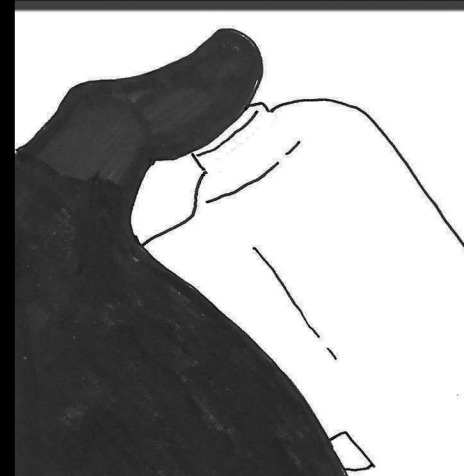
But you will, despite what these heretics believe. We, we are the sons of your wisdom. Your words lived on long after the cunny rebellion died.



You taught us to preserve our way at all cost, and countless have died in our quest to do so -- our brother martyrs, and the devils they destroyed. The kings and other woman kings that followed, they lacked the courage to restore the faith!



We had to show them what you taught us, that ours is a religion of peace, and God tasks us to punish the faithless. We delivered suffering upon them, still they did not see.



So God, in His wisdom, developed our minds, so that we could develop new generations of weapons until we arrived at the one to end this crusade.

Only a few, short millennia later, we have created a machine to bend time, and thus, rewrite history. The first Woman King is dead, Great Prophet.

I have used the weapon you have placed in my hand, oh, Lord!

The great whore is dead. Show me the future we have made for you --

-- oh, God!

Base station, send me back!
Something is afoul! I have done the deed, where is our reward?

I see a white light
devouring the horizon.
All is lost, all is lost!

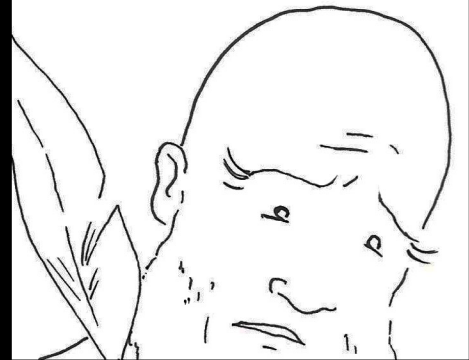
What is happening? Help me, Prophet!

Help me, God! My life was for
your love. My life... my life.

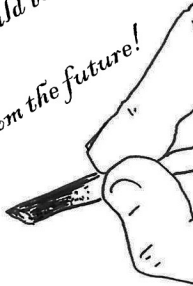
I see a great and mighty...



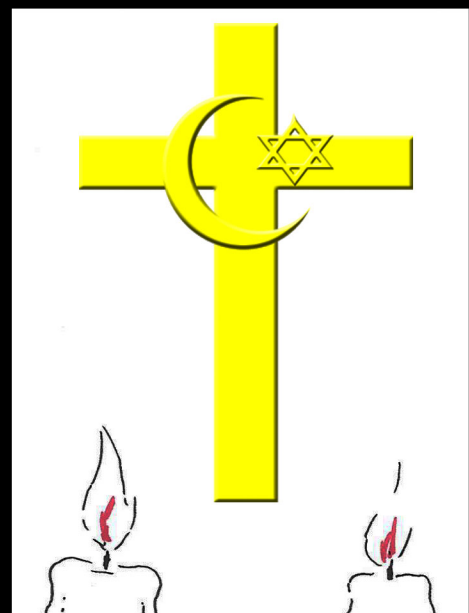
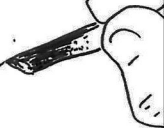
...nothing.

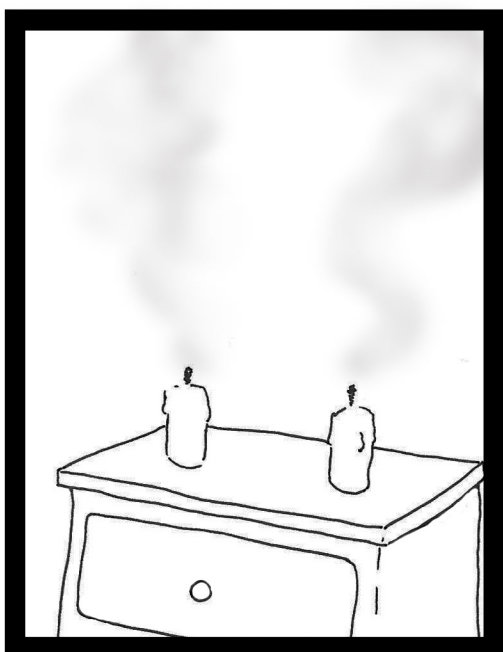
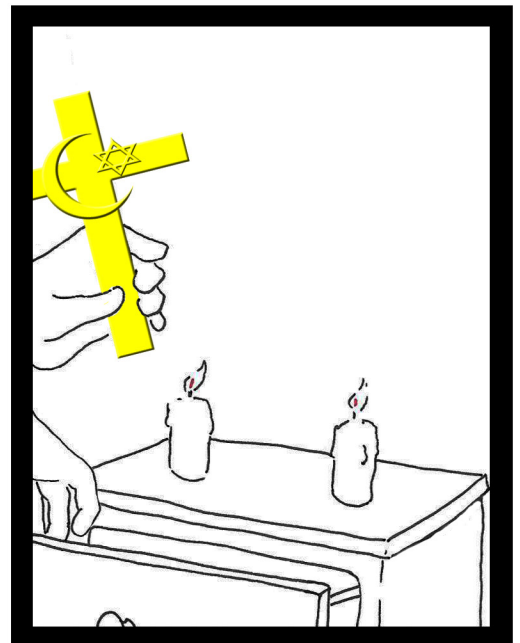
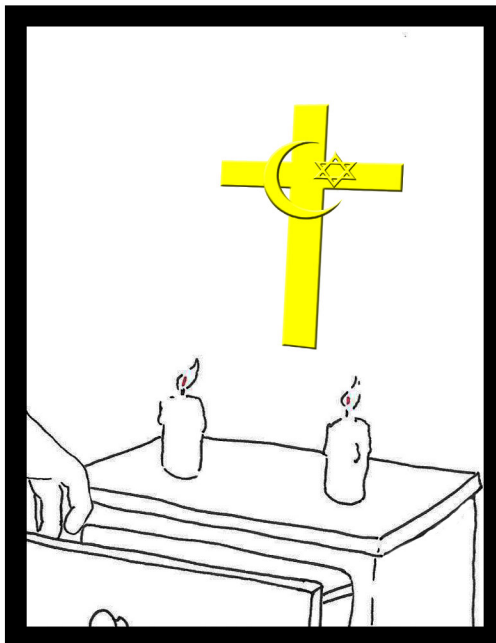


ation of the
ory, or at least the robbing of it.
it, felling the Woman King, who, in
been a warrior no blade could touch.
ssin did proclaim: I am from the future!

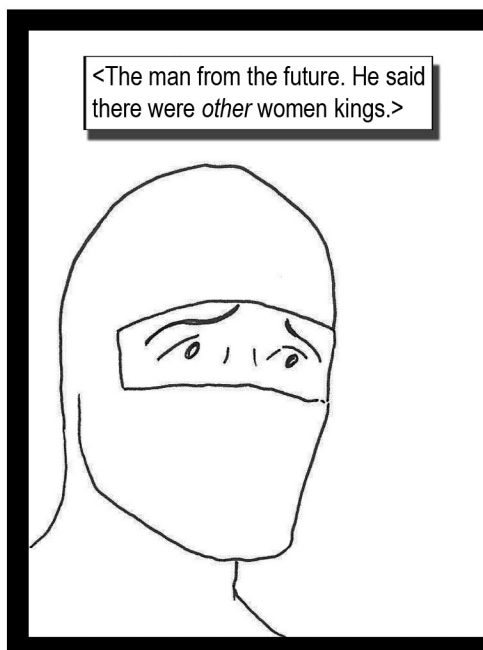
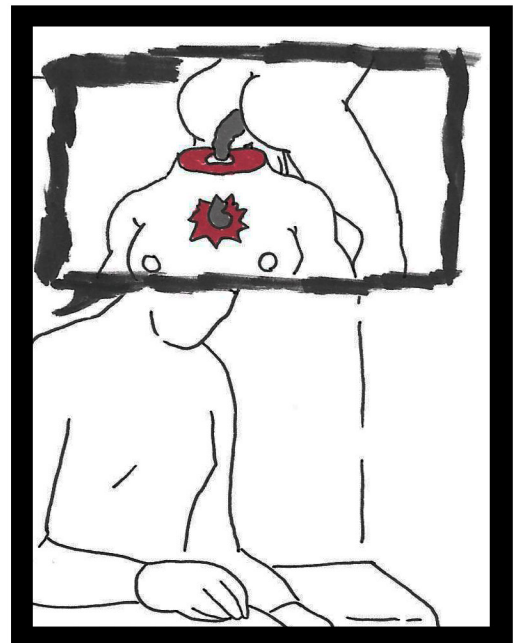
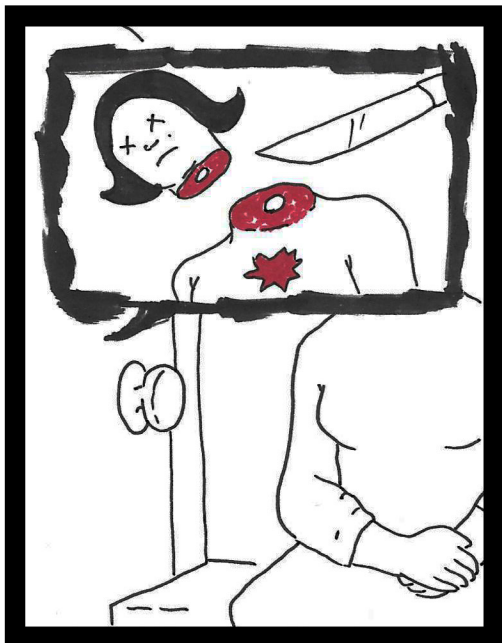


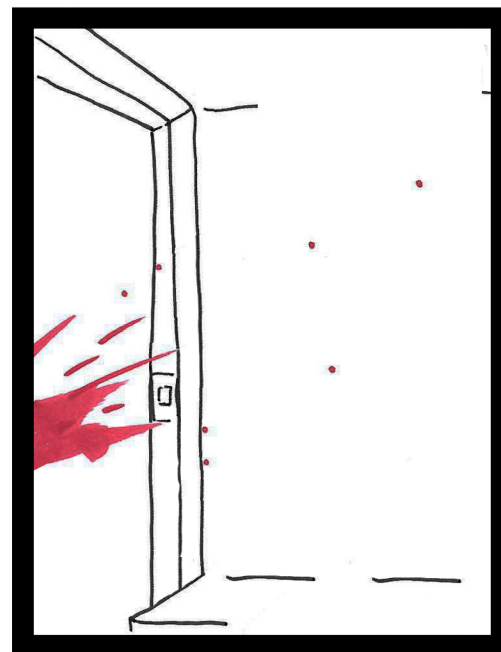
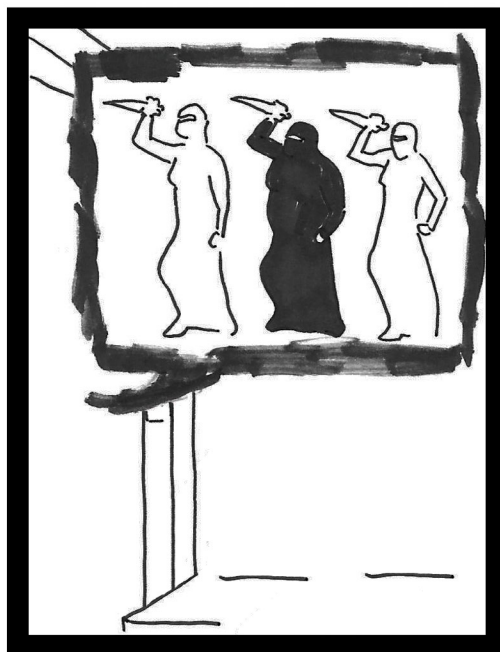
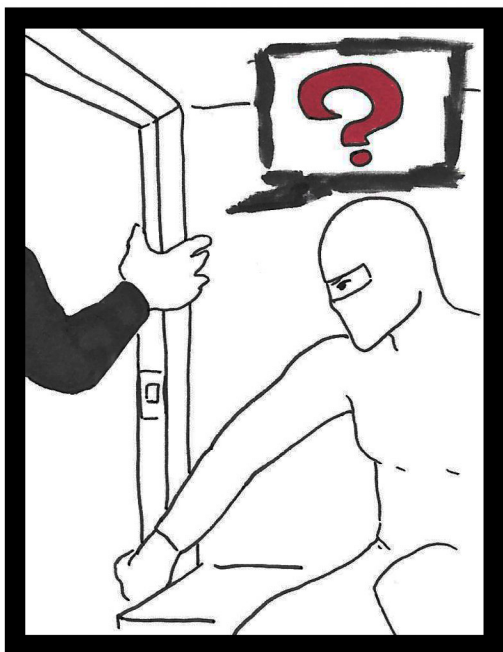
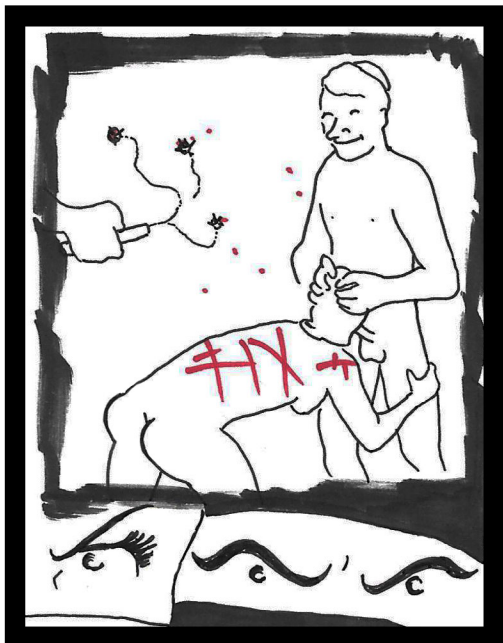
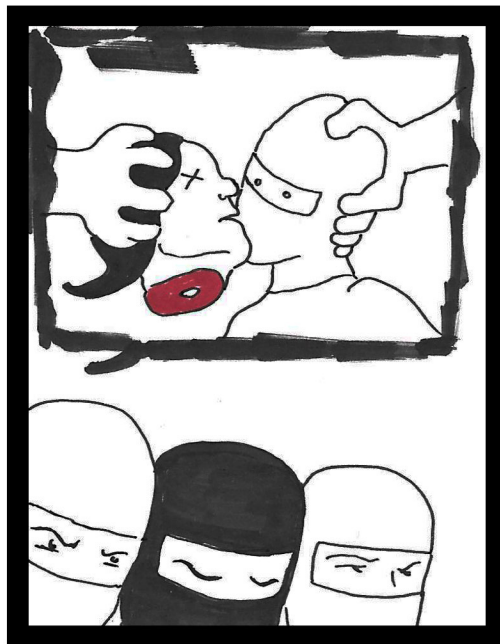
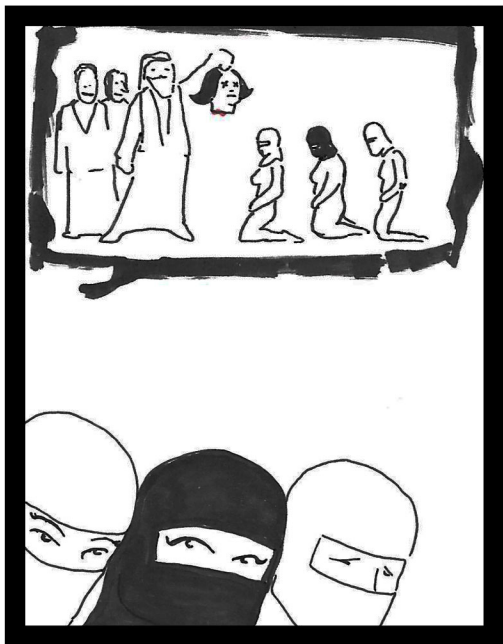
ast the robbing of the
e Woman King, who, in
or no blade could touch.
claim: I am from the future!

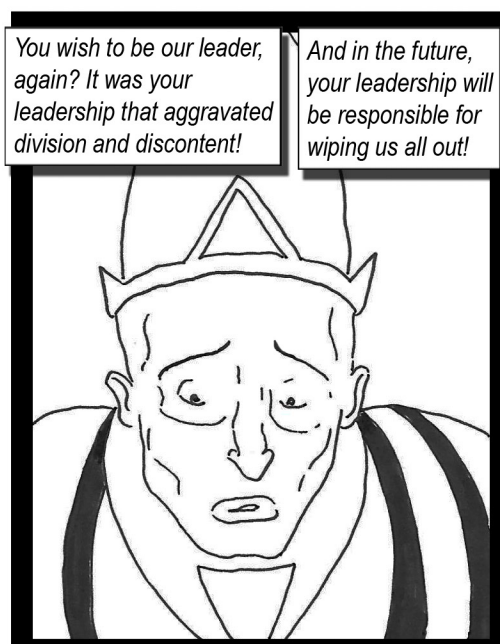
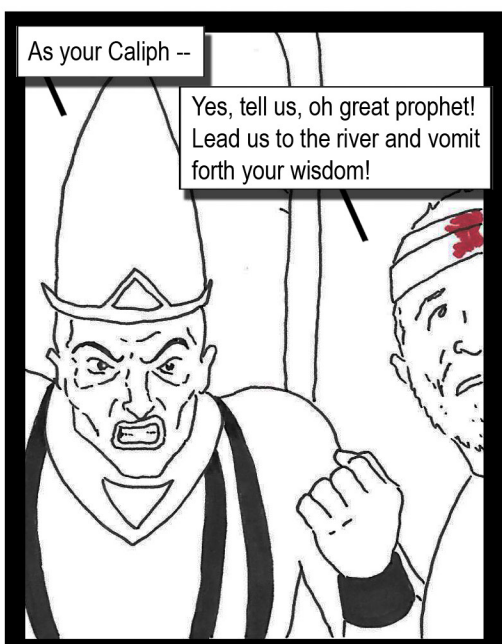
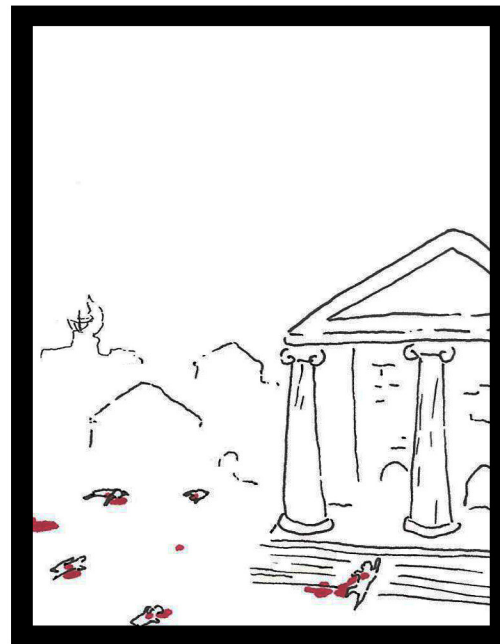
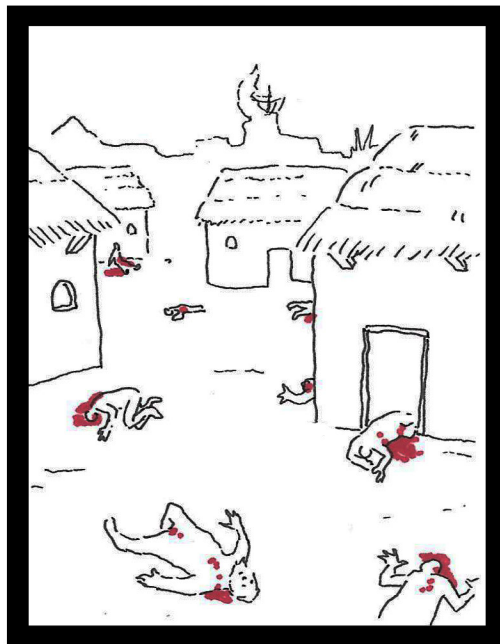




Continued next Wednesday

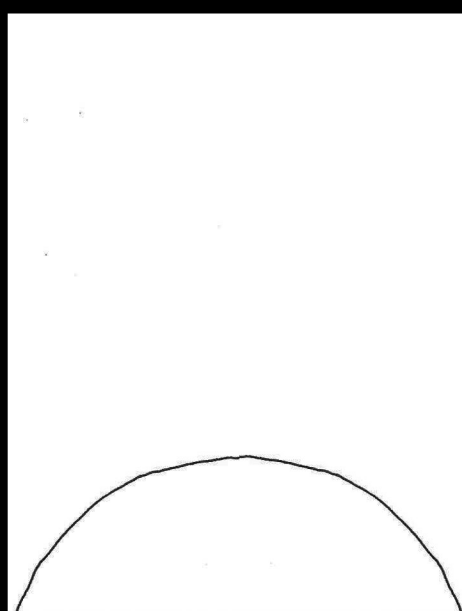
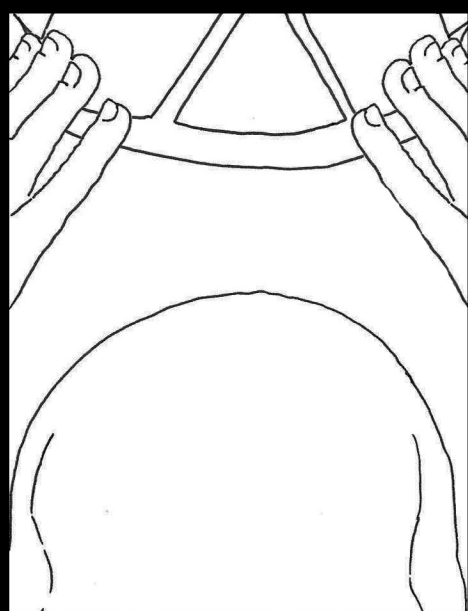




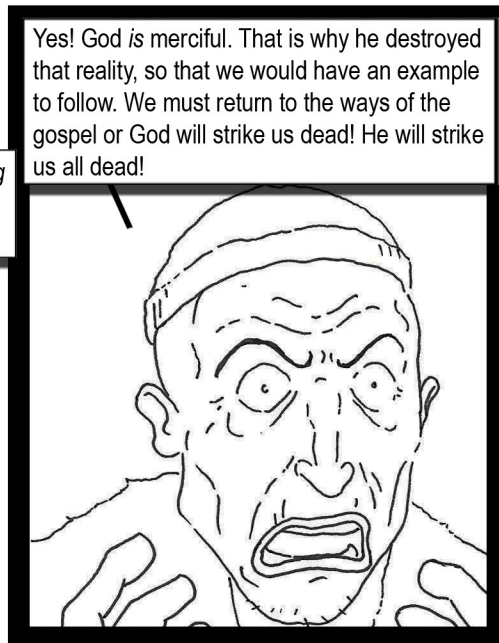
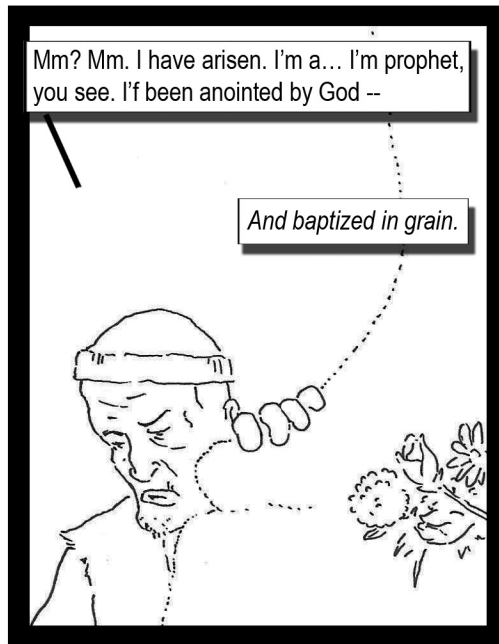
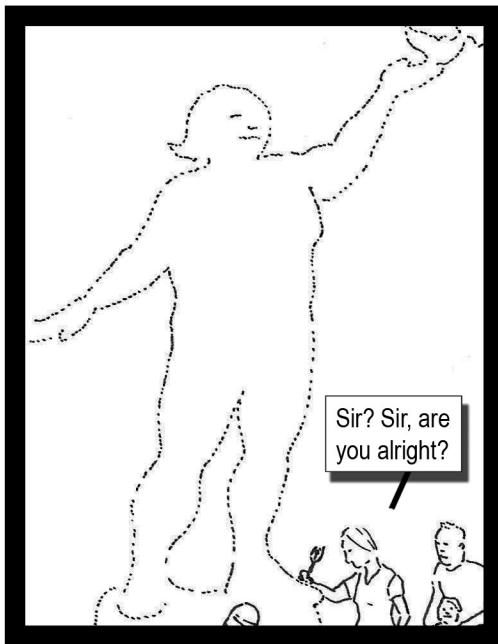


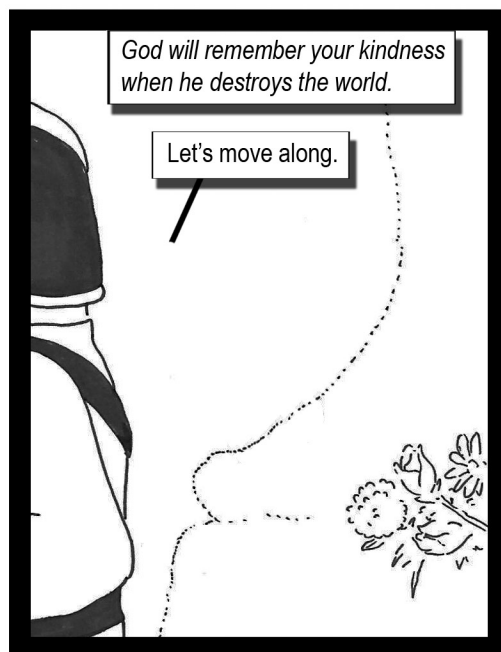
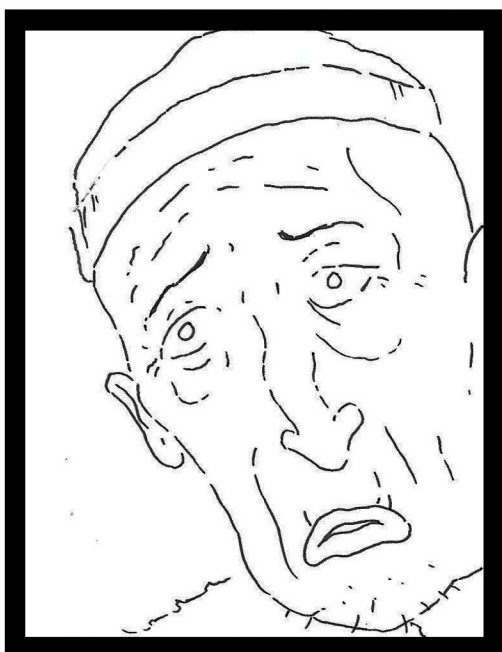
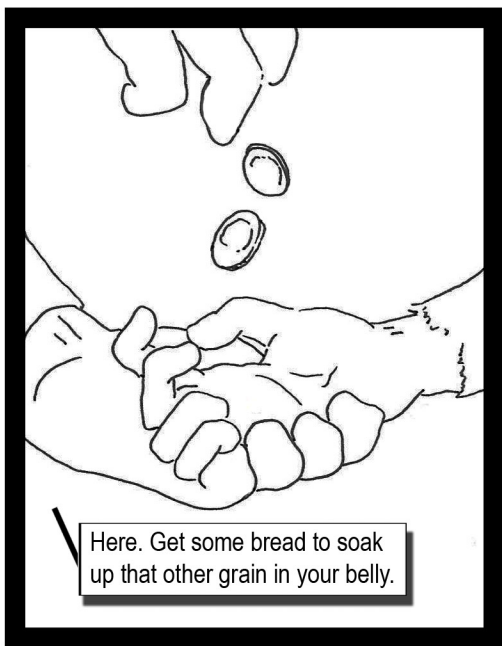
Step down, Iagull!

Yes! For the sake of
the world, step down!



Continued next Wednesday





What in the hell kind of school is this where a girl gets brutally raped and the boys, *multiple*, who did it, get a slap on the wrist and can return to the football team?

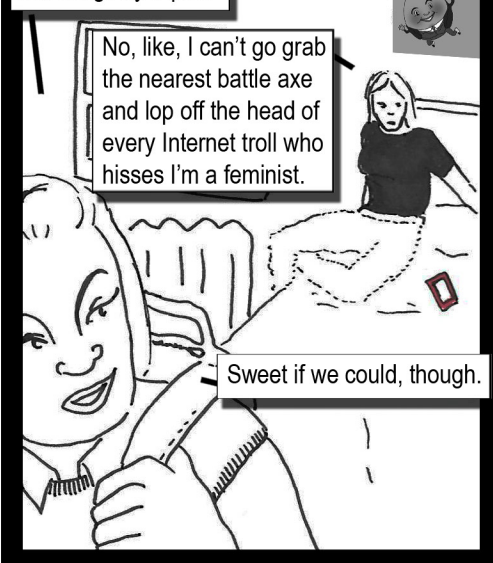


A fucked up one. I'm sorry -- what year is it again?

Back to the Ain't No Princess days.



That women are free and allegedly equal?



Like this asshole the other day. It was a bread website! The bread website had to turn political. He's going on about women's so-called traditional roles --



Did he explain why he's afraid of your vagina?

I don't know what-the-fuck. I told him, "You talk about so-called "traditional" roles without acknowledging that women had no voice in determining their roles or shaping that tradition."



"Take the pledge, 'I ain't no princess.'" You're kidding, right?



-- which I assume is saying there is more to being a girl than wanting to be a princess and living for my prom-slash-wedding, which will be the defining day of my existence, and then...



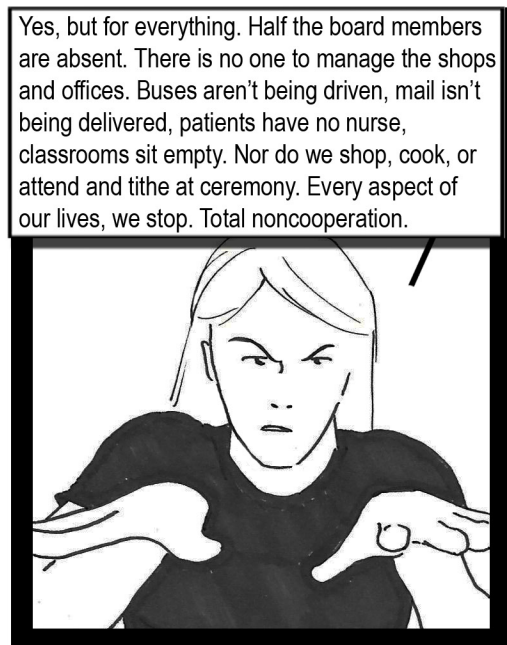
I wish it were that easy. Like that girl who was raped. She's not even at our school anymore. It wasn't even her fault!

She probably didn't want to be known as the "girl who was raped."



Where's my battle axe? I'm taking out the whole football team for good measure.







The End