

THE MERCHANT

written by

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The panel descriptions and the number of panels on each page present a basic structure for the story. If you wish to tweak them a bit, go for it. You are the visual artist, after all. I would, however, like to preserve the flow of the individual pages, the story beats on them, and what happens before and after a page turn.

PANEL 1

INTERIOR. It's MORNING and we are inside a MEDIEVAL HUT. There is some furniture, but nothing fancy. We are focusing on THE MERCHANT laying in his BED. He has simple clothes on, maybe just slightly better than you'd expect from your average peasant.

NARRATION

I am awake.

And everything is **still the same.**

PANEL 2

Next to the bed there is a TABLE that THE MERCHANT is now sitting behind, eating soup. We may also see the other part of his one-room hut now. There is a counter and some shelves full of supplies that the Merchant uses for his trade.

NARRATION

I eat my breakfast.

The only meal of my day.

PANEL 3

EXTERIOR. THE MERCHANT is now walking through a village. We may still see his hut, but we also see other houses (huts, maybe a tavern) and other people. Merchants, knights, healers, bounty hunters. Some of them are human, some may be elves, dwarves or other creatures. The choice is yours, the only important part is to show that this is a fantasy world.

NARRATION

I walk around the village, greeting my neighbors.

They usually don't have anything new to say, though.

PANEL 4

INTERIOR, we are again in the hut, where THE MERCHANT is now standing behind his counter, focusing on his trade.

NARRATION

I attend to my shop, where I will spend the rest of this day.

Even though there usually are not many customers.

PANEL 5

SMALLER PANEL, a CLOSE-UP on THE MERCHANT, still standing behind his counter.

NARRATION

It is the same as every other day.

And yet something feels **different** as of late.

PAGE 2 - PANELS: 4

PANEL 1

SIMILAR PANEL to the one where THE MERCHANT is laying in his bed. Only now it is NIGHT and he is SITTING on the bed.

NARRATION Sometimes I cannot sleep.

 Strange thoughts keep me awake. Thoughts I never used to have.

 Thoughts about this place. About me. About **Him**.

PANEL 2

EXTERIOR. THE MERCHANT is just outside the village, seemingly observing the nature around him.

NARRATION Sometimes I want to take a walk.

 To see what is outside my village. The only place I have ever known.

 It now all looks more beautiful than before. In the times that I would have never even contemplated to leave my home.

PANEL 3

THE MERCHANT is standing in the grass on the edge of a forest. He blankly stares at it, but he doesn't enter.

NARRATION Now I suddenly feel the need to leave. To at least see what else is out there.

 Only to at the same time discover that I cannot leave. No matter how hard I try, my legs simply won't carry me.

PANEL 4

THE MERCHANT is in the village again, standing awkwardly next to another villager. I'll leave the specifics of how they look like to you.

NARRATION It is not true that I cannot talk to anybody here.

 With some I must endure the same simple greetings.

 But with others, our talks have become a bit more complex recently. We talk the weather, about our trades, about the events seemingly happening outside of our village.

 About **Him**. And all the brave things he has supposedly done for us.

PAGE 3 - PANELS: 5

PANEL 1

CLOSE-UP on the VILLAGER that THE MERCHANT(OP?) is talking to. It's hard to really describe their expression, so just base it on what you take from the following dialogue and the whole comic once you've read it in its entirety.

NARRATION It is not much, but it is more than it used to be.
Some of the people I talk to have this spark in their eyes that I cannot describe. A spark that I believe they also see in my eyes.
It is the **knowing**. The knowing that there is something wrong here. That there is a **distortion** that only some of us can see.
Merchants, bounty hunters, healers. All having one thing in common.

NARRATION We all have some dealings with **Him**.

PANEL 2

INTERIOR, THE MERCHANT is again standing behind his counter, attending to his shop.

NARRATION **He** is the only person I can have something resembling a proper conversation, though **He** does not want to talk much anymore.

NARRATION Whenever **He** arrives, **He** only wants to **trade**.

PANEL 3

REVERSE SHOT. We are now looking at the FRONT DOOR of the hut, so we are basically mimicking the POV of the Merchant. The sunlight is shining through under the door and also the surrounding windows.

NARRATION I used to think that I am in a **prison**.
And that **He** is my **prisoner**.

PANEL 4

SAME PANEL, only now a FIGURE can be seen outside the window, approaching the door.

NARRATION That we all are.

PANEL 5

SAME PANEL. The figure is standing outside the door, which we can see by their legs blocking the sunlight shining through under the door.

NARRATION But the more I think about it, the more I feel that such parable is not quite right.

PAGE 4 - PANELS: 4

PANEL 1

SAME PANEL, only now the door is OPEN, and in it stand THE ADVENTURER, ready again to deal with the Merchant. Once again, I will leave all the details of his looks up to you.

NARRATION I feel like a prisoner in a way a circus animal must feel in its cage.

Like a **slave** whose sole purpose is to **entertain**. To fill in a **certain role**. With only an **illusion** of its own purpose.

PANEL 2

THE ADVENTURER is approaching THE MERCHANT.

NARRATION It all seemed natural to me before, but then something changed. The world around me **evolved**, somehow.

And it all comes back to **Him**.

PANEL 3

We now see THE MERCHANT from over the shoulder view of THE ADVENTURER.

NARRATION No matter how often I think about it, each time I come to the same **conclusion**. The conclusion from which I was spared in the times that I wasn't even able to think about such things.

I am in hell.

PANEL 4

THE SAME PANEL, but yet different. Because now the whole panel is set as a VIDEO GAME SCREEN, where we even see a couple of dialogue prompts (CAPTION) that THE ADVENTURER can ask THE MERCHANT.

CAPTION: What can you tell me about this village?

Can we trade?

Never mind.

NARRATION **And he is my tormentor.**

THE END