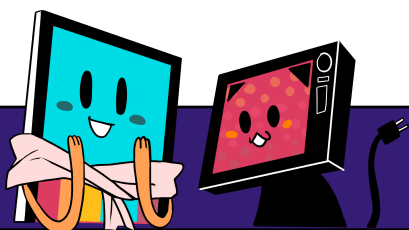




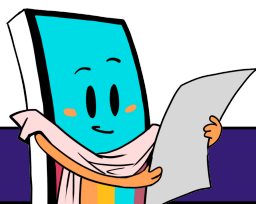
REVIEW FOR: [Light Within Shadow](#)



Summary:

Things our team absolutely loved about this comic:

- Once the tension ramps up and the action starts, it's impossible to put down! The action sequences are beautiful and eye-catching, and keep the reader on the edge of their seat.
- Intriguing mystery building connected to grounded and compelling characters.
- Great blend of high-stakes and high-octane drama and action with lighter moments—things like the way Sirocco looks at Jack are very charming and provide a lighter counterpoint to how heavy some of the action is getting.



Feedback we have for you:

- [Introducing The Hook](#)
- [Characters](#)
- [Final thoughts](#)

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# Introducing The Hook

The comic opens on a slow burn, which is fine in itself, though it does mean it takes a long time to show what the later tone of the story will progress towards. There's a lot of pieces to set up, a whole world and its baseline to establish, and plenty of characters, so it's natural that this will need some time to properly show the reader; it also helps to have a firm grounding in what "normal" is for these characters, so that the reader feels the full impact when it changes later.

With that said, it does spend a long time in those early stages, and it's also important to make sure that readers who may have come for the high-octane action and drama will feel like they're going to get that sweet candy they came for, even if it might take a bit of time to get to it. It may not hurt to be a little more overt with your hinting about the dark things happening elsewhere; darker forces at play are nodded towards, but readers of fantasy stories are used to the presence of monsters as a general ever-present threat, and what makes *these* monsters interesting and what makes *these* attacks different from random encounters is not yet clear.

Other elements that are critical to the story but don't grab attention in the early chapters are the fog-filled forest; and Jack, who doesn't grab much attention until after the forest sequence.

All the pieces are present, but some of them could be juiced up a bit, to show the reader earlier on that this is something cool or important they should pay attention to. If you ever do go back into the early chapters to rework things, here's some possible options to try:

- Show a bit more of Jack's journey before he arrives at the town, possibly opening on him fighting some monster he encounters on the road and using some intriguing-looking power; he's an important character, but a little too easy to overlook at first, and having him draw attention early on could help both make the reader blink and take notice, and also help to set up that there's more cool action coming up.
- Set up the thing that has changed, which will set everything else in motion. Is the orb newly come to the village, or has it been there a long time? If it's been there awhile, has Lysandra had weird visions near it in the past? When abnormal things happen and characters note it, include a few more specifics in their speculation— the more detail readers have to hold onto, the more they come to *feel* that something big is coming.
- Bring up the forest and Lysandra's dreams sooner, and tie them together more firmly. When she and Zack decide to go into the woods, it feels a bit out of left field. Once it becomes apparent that the fog is deadly, their attitude towards going in at all seems foolish and out of character. Planting more concrete reasons to believe the fog won't affect them (past experience, falsely-planted dream knowledge, etc), or proof that the string trick usually works, could mitigate this. Alternately, leaning harder into Lysandra's desire to go in— have her bring it up during multiple scenes, other characters comment about it being a common topic for her, that sort of thing. Relatedly, intensifying the dreams themselves may also help establish the darker tone sooner.

The story so far is a ton of fun, once that train gets its momentum going it's hard to stop! The tracks at the beginning could get a little more grease to bring in that energy earlier and make it a smoother ride, hopefully this gives some ideas as to how to approach it.



### Resources we recommend:

- [Screen Tones Webcomic Podcast - Hooks](#)

## Characters

The cast is a lot of fun! My sense of the cast's overall dynamics and personalities is quite clear, helped along by the expressive artwork. In the later chapters, Jack and Sirocco stand out in particular; Jack for stealing the scene whenever he jumps into a fight, and Sirocco for the great flustered energy and reactions; she feels very real. Theresa and Gallus also stand out, but for somewhat different reasons-- I was really rocked by seeing them meet their fates, especially so close together, I really thought we'd see more of them, and especially after Gallus's last stand, wrecking his arms to keep attacking... it leaves an impact for sure!

Lysandra was feeling a little less fleshed out comparatively, but with the scene happening right now (in particular what happened to Theresa), I suspect big changes are coming. How she reacts in the aftermath of All That will really be what lands her character; so far, I'm sure what's coming will be super cool.

Zack has had the least development so far; it feels like he may fill a role of being the reminder of normalcy for Lysandra, a counterpoint to everything else that's going crazy around her in the story, though it's not super clear yet. It can be tough to get a character to stand out when they're surrounded by so many gods and monsters and people going through crazy revelations, but leaning into that can also make for an interesting character-- although you may need to wait for quieter moments to really show it. Giving him a more concrete role in the party may help him feel more solid, and less likely to be overshadowed by everyone else.

### Resources we recommend:

- [Screen Tones Webcomic Podcast - Characterization](#)

# Other Impressions

- **Worldbuilding and fantasy language**

Even having caught up with the current pages, I'm still not super clear on what the different fantasy names mean within this setting. I'm not sure if the term Varan applies to anyone who gains powers (like benders in Avatar The Last Airbender), or if it refers to people from a certain place in the world, like if only people with a specific heritage can have these powers. I'm not sure what Omnir means, either, except that it relates to the gods. We really should understand these basics about the setting much earlier on, and it may also help with setting up the stakes and showing what's "normal" to the characters at the beginning of the story.

It might have been explained in a non-story bonus strip, but with things critical to the actual story, it's better to find some way to note it in the story itself.

- I am so invested in what's gonna happen next, aaaah. The action is so good, and the way Lizzie's energy-draining powers are introduced is perfect– setting it up with another character, showing it happening a little with Zack, and then that moment with Theresa.... MAN! That was intense. Really well done, the consequences of that sequence will be interesting to see play out.



## Resources we recommend:

- [Screen Tones Podcast: Lore](#) and [Exposition](#)

# You're doing great!

Whether you plan on sticking it out for the next couple years, or wrapping this up and shifting your attention to other projects, you should be proud of what you've put into the world! And the best is yet to come: you're only going to get better the more you make comic pages and take in new information, inspiration and feedback from your webcomic peers. **So keep creating and being awesome!**



## Resources we recommend:

- [The Screentones Webcomic Podcast](#) (that's us!)
- [The Cartoonist Co-Op](#)