

An illustration of a popcorn bucket with a red and white striped handle, tilted and spilling yellow popcorn. The word "Popcorn" is written in a large, bubbly, red-outlined font with a yellow popcorn kernel as the letter 'o'. The entire scene is enclosed in a white rectangular frame.

Popcorn

— THE POP-POP-POPTROPICA FAN MAGAZINE —

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A cartoon illustration of a girl with large, expressive eyes, brown hair, and a purple top under a black jacket. She is wearing a yellow backpack and holding a red and white striped candy cane. A video game controller is visible in her hands. The background is a snowy, blue-toned winter landscape with a hot air balloon and popcorn kernels scattered around.

**FEATURED
POPTROPICAN
SILVER WOLF
USERNAME:
NOT PUBLIC!**



Stories

THE RUBY THIEVES (CH. 1) by NineTenOnetyOne

The merchants of Arturus were all gathered around the outskirts of the docks, fidgeting impatiently for their imported goods to arrive. They tried to ignore the chills of the morning winds, as they've been standing there since the sun had begun to rise.

Along the edge of the pier stood a young man gazing off to the world outside of Astro-Knights Island. Gulls glided across the salty air, and the sun-kissed waves laughed across the seas. This magnificent scenery, however, left the man unfazed, as he had been witnessing all this for the last few hours.

He was a man of the middle class; born and raised in Arturus, properly clothed, and extremely intellectual. However, he wasn't familiar with the higher class of royalty. His face was lightly tanned, and his trimmed beard wrapped around his chin and cheeks. While his light orange hair fluttered softly in the wind, his beady eyes glared across the ocean to try and locate the ship. He wasn't a seller, but he was, too, fervently waiting for the overseas delivery ship, for the captain, of course, was a close companion.

The man shoved his hand in the pocket of his vest and pulled out his silver pocket-watch. Just one glance at the time made him sneer, and he jammed it back inside his pocket. 'Blasted captain,' he thought to himself. 'I haven't got all century.'

He and the captain shared quite a few things in common; both were quick minded, caused a bit of trouble on the pier every now and then, and had a particular fondness of the ocean. The two of them also had different coloured eyes; while

the man's left eye was bright lime green, and his comrade's was brilliant sapphire blue, their right eyes were a dull and cloudy grey. Strangely enough, even their right eyes also shared something in common: a prominent scar strayed down to their cheek underneath them, both similar in length and curve. Whether it was a strange coincidence or not, it was unknown how the two men got them.

Tilting his head up, the man suddenly saw the figure of a distant ship, floating towards the pier. A brief smile flashed upon his face before he was joined alongside by one of the merchants. "Finally!" she said, and turned her head halfway to him. "Which island does this root beer come from again?"

Not taking his eyes off the ship, he replied, "Skulduggery. The people there are greatly known for producing the finest in the land of Poptropica."

As the ship finally docked the harbour, more antsy merchants flocked the edge of the docks to start preparing to pick up their imported goods, depriving the man of his seclusion of the spacious pier.

Amongst the ship, the captain lowered the wooden ramp for him and his crew to maneuver the crates of root beer from the ships' cargo to the merchants' carts.

The man tried to push past the crowd to find his comrade. Once he caught a glimpse of the captain through the gaps of people, he began heading towards his direction.

"Cedric," he said, grabbing his attention. "Haven't seen you in hours." He tried not to sound angry at him, but the thought of the time he could have been spending on something else gnawed at him.

The captain, on the other hand, half grinned at him as he hoisted the crate in his strong arms. "Well, if it ain't ol' Francis Rebral," he said, keeping his steady pace towards one of the carts. "I'm doing just fine."

"That's SIR Francis Rebral to you," the man snapped. "What was the holdup?"

"Aye, there was a hiccup at Fort Ridley; a mate knocked over a few crates into the water and we had to fish 'em out before they sunk."

Francis stayed close beside him. "So you're giving these merchants wet crates?" They both stopped in front of the cart, and Cedric proceeded to place the crate atop another that had already been sitting inside the wagon, then looked over at him. "Well, it's better than nothing, ain't it?" He patted the surface of the crate and glanced up at the owner of the cart. "This should last ye about a good couple months, lad."

Rather than thanking him, the merchant just grimaced. "It's about time, pirate," he snapped, and mounted atop his mule before pulling the cart away.

A wry grin appeared on Cedric's face, and he looked back at Francis. "That's one wet crate less," he muttered. Francis stifled his laughter. "That old grouser isn't worth half our time," he stated, walking up to the wooden rail that separated the pier from the rest of the island. He put his hands on it and hopped up to sit on the steady rail. He couldn't help but smile at the feeling of the wind brushing against his face. "Ah... so tell me, you old sea dog, how's the lass at home?"

Cedric's eyes lit up for a split second, altering from bright and dancing to misty and a bit apprehensive. He wet his lips with his tongue and admitted, "I don't know. Elise hasn't been acting herself lately. I'm starting to worry about her."

"Oh no?" Francis kicked his feet in the air below him while staring at him with great curiosity. "How so?"

"The other day," Cedric began, turning around to

lean the back of his forearms on the rail, right beside his comrade, "about a week before we left, she developed a strange appetite. At suppertime, she told me she wanted salmagundi and porridge."

Francis was silent for a moment as the wind whisked past both of their faces. A lump rose in his dry throat, but he instantly pushed it down and mumbled, "Is that so?" Before he knew it, he had his eyes glued to the wooden ship which rocked slowly back and forth like a cradle. Leaning his body slightly towards Cedric, he asked with a hint of passion, "Have you two ever... talked about it?"

"No," Cedric flatly responded. "She hasn't really talked to me at all recently." A frown came about, and he stared down at the splinter-ridden planks. "Sometimes I wonder what I did wrong. I'd give up me entire ship to make up whatever it was to her."

His companion gaped his mouth open, but then immediately shut it. 'He's not ready,' Francis thought. He moved his eyes halfway to his direction when he felt him move off the rail. "But enough about me!" Cedric hastily concluded, returning to his light-hearted tone. The look in his eyes said the opposite, however. "How, eh, how is life in Astro-Knights while I was away?"

Francis reluctantly shifted his gaze back towards the ship. The sight of it started to make him uncomfortable, and he didn't even know why. He furrowed his eyebrows at it for the longest moment, as to try to move it with his mind. That would have been such an amazing ability to obtain, for him. If only...

"Francis?" the voice beside him spoke up, making him pivot his head toward him in reaction. There, he first met Cedric's grey and blue eyes, both bright and mysterious. His wavy, dark brown hair was beginning to turn grey, along with his mustache and short-cut beard. He was also so tall that, even when sitting upon the rail, Francis still needed to tilt his head slightly upwards to see his face. Suddenly, he smiled at him and said, "That's SIR Francis to you."



Stories

THE RUBY THIEVES (CH. 2)

by **NineTenOneyOne**

Continued from the above.

Cedric's eyes once again sparkled in amusement before he snickered and shook his head. "Ye still believe you're part royalty, huh?"

Francis scoffed. "Believe?" He leapt off the rail. "What a word! I know that I have royal blood rushing through my veins. One evident piece is that I resemble most of the queen herself. Haven't you noticed?" He put his hands behind his back for his friend to examine his "queenly" features. Cedric was, indeed, keeping his focus him, but rather ambiguously; right when the queen was brought up into the topic, he suddenly had the vivid image of her in his thoughts. Cedric had only seen her once before, when he had last visited Arturus for a royal ball that Francis was formally invited to; he was allowed to bring him as a guest.

The captain moved his fingers up to his mouth at the memory of that very evening. The moment he and Francis were introduced to the queen, he could never forget how she gazed at him. It was as if she were caught in a brief trance, staring at him in great awe and interest. He had no idea why, but it seemed, to him, like she wanted -no- NEEDED something from him. All the other men her grace had bowed before, she hadn't given the dark, sultry gaze towards any one of them except him. An inquiry still perplexed him: What did he have that the others lacked?

"Well?" Francis asserted, causing him to snap

back into reality. "Do you now see what we have in common?"

Cedric's eyes darted down to his taut chest, then back up at his face. "I don't see it," he commented.

"Wh- NO! Not like that!" The younger man's tone was admonishing, in contrast with his coy gesture of regarding his friend in a modest fashion. "It- It's our hair and skin tone we share. That's where I've been hinting at!" He felt some remorse from snapping like that.

Francis shouldn't have been taken aback by his comrade doubting his beliefs. Others whom he had shared his other theories with were incredulous in response, as well; some of which, including his favourite theory of the existence of extrasensory perception, or ESP. Even so, Cedric was a very close friend, despite having a very distant home island. True, two people did not have to have the same positions, but he strongly felt that he needed support on his behalf, especially from a comrade like Cedric. And in situations like these, Francis had no one else to turn to. A mild shudder trickled down his back at the heavy sigh his comrade made, seemingly in frustration. Me: I guess it was kind of fun.

Cedric's shoulders drooped down, and his gaze cut to the stony ground below his boots. He then spoke, with affection, "Physical appearances don't say anything."

"Pish-posh," Francis muttered with a wave of his hand, as to shoo away the words, and turned nearly completely sideways from him. "I won't hear this anymore."

"All right," Cedric gave in, raising his broad shoulders once more, "all right. You believe what you want to believe, mate. But I'll have naught judgement in it. Besides, what you believe is all that matters."

A crooked grin appeared on Francis's face in satisfaction. "That's just like you... isn't it, Cedric?"

A mere spark of bliss arose in between the two as yet another cool wind pushed past them. Unanswered, he breezily continued, "Let's endure this at the inn later on. I've got some news to tell you, as well." He nodded at the stationed wooden ship

as his hasty gesture. "Go on, get your things. I need to meet up with someone, anyway."

Cedric strode towards the docks a couple steps while he was talking, but paused at the final remark. "Who?"

Francis chewed on his lip, then retorted, "Never mind that, just go." His right hand flew up to the chest pocket of his vest, and he tapped his fingers on the smooth surface of his pocket-watch that peeked out. "I've a tightly scheduled meeting with her and I don't wish to keep her waiting."

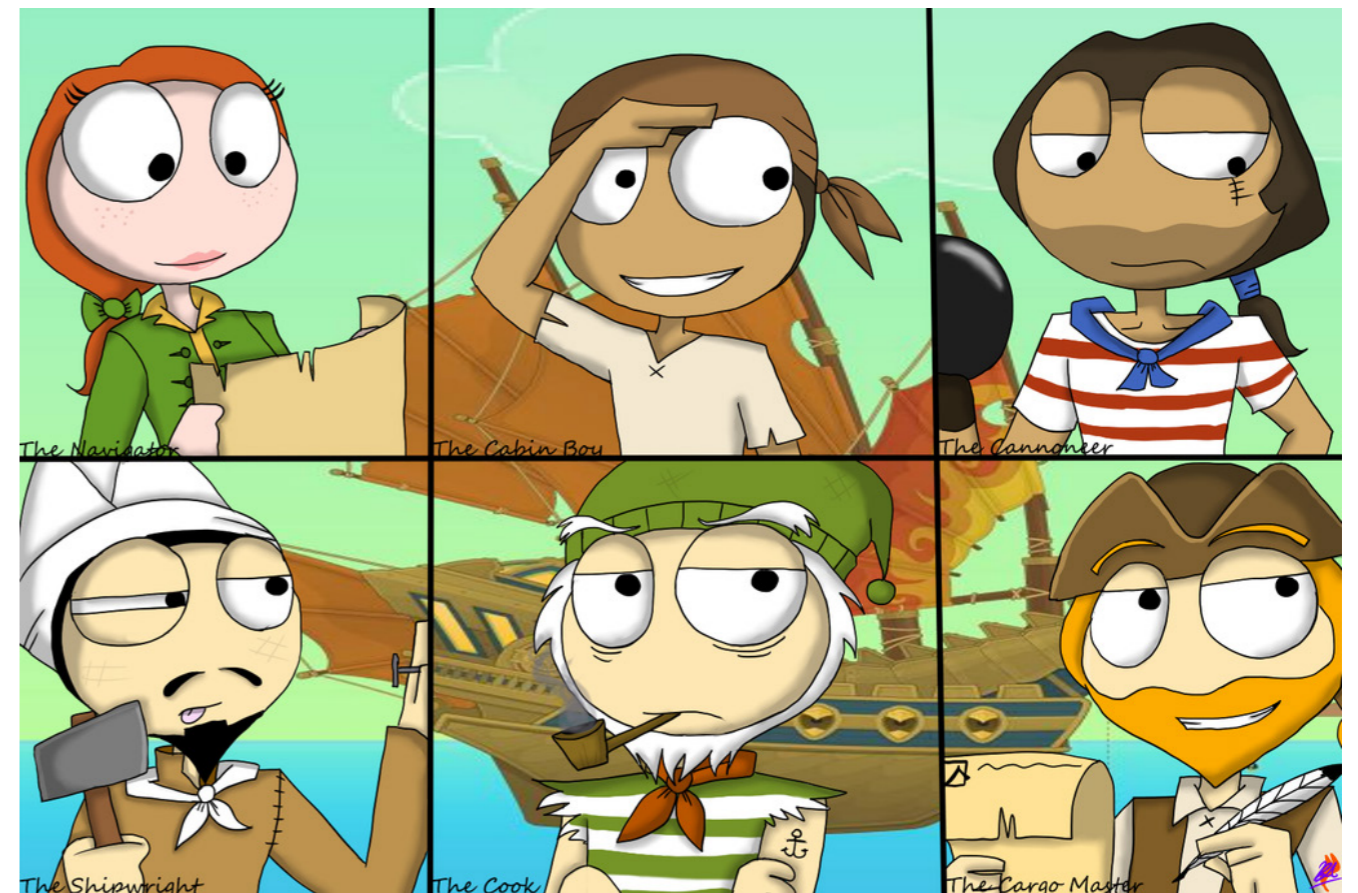
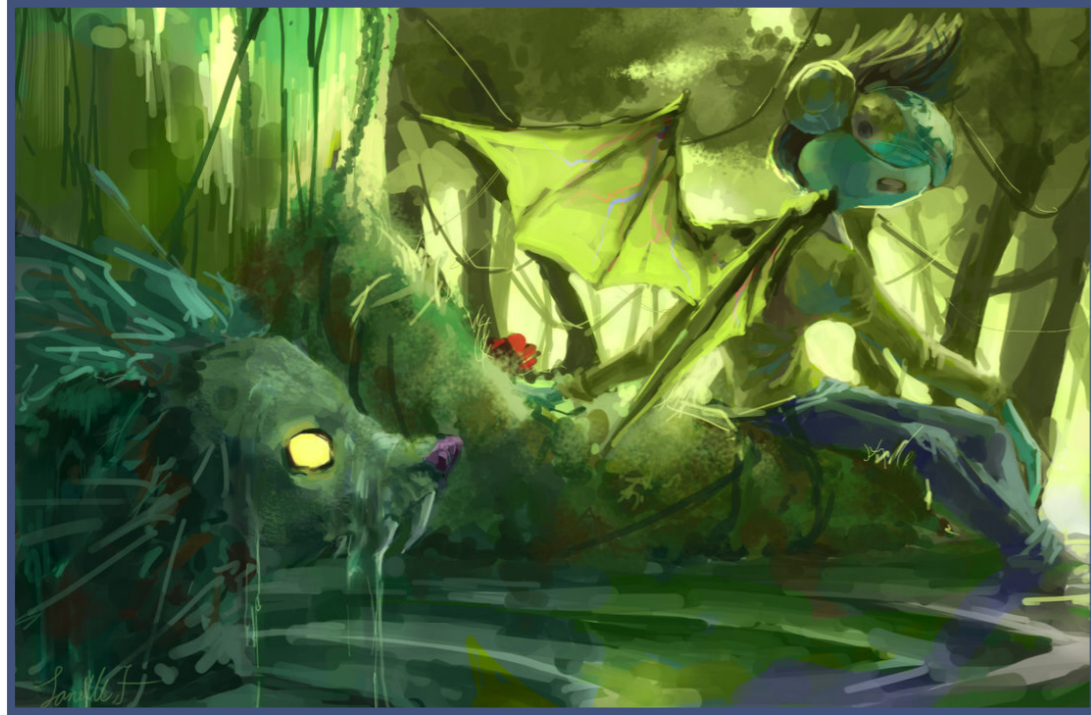


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Fansite Spotlight

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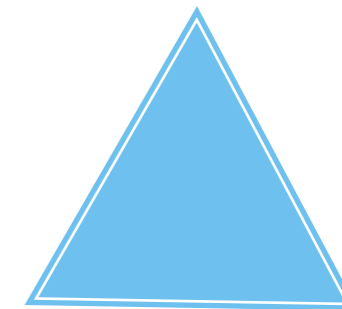


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Artwork



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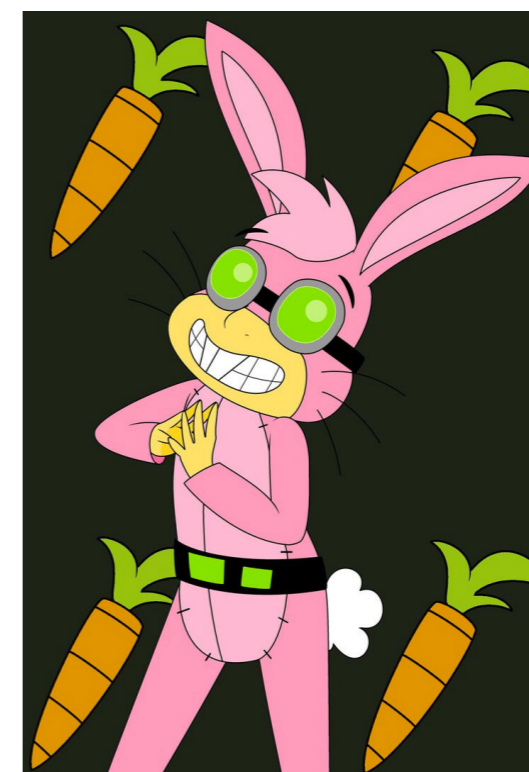
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