

THE ART OF MY MAGICAL DEMON LOVER

BY YAMILA ABRAHAM

**ART BY SHIROI RAVEN AND FELIX
WITH COLORING BY EJOW, JURA NESU, AND LUNABIH**

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◆◆◆ Beginning Again ◆◆◆

Back in 2004 I started Yaoi Press, a graphic novel publishing company that focused on yaoi. Things went reasonably well until Borders Books (a large book chain in the USA) closed down. Without them I knew the end was near for Yaoi Press.

I switched my focus to writing ebooks for Amazon's Kindle program. I grew my income as the ebook phenomenon grew and eventually I was back on my feet, making a very decent living solely from Amazon.com.

In 2016 I made the most money I'd ever made in my life through Amazon, but things were changing. Amazon switched to a subscription model that scammers were able to exploit. Scammers filled the bestseller lists where my books used to flourish. My work was no longer discoverable. My income went down, and down, and down.

I was working more than 70 hours a week to make less than minimum wage. Something had to give. I needed to reinvent myself.

My good friend Steve showed me how I could find success with visual novels. I'd looked into doing these years ago, but Steam wasn't selling them at the time and they didn't seem viable. That had changed in the last few years. Visual novels were hot. I saw I could make a living with them and get back to doing the more art focused writing I preferred.

So I went all-in. I was going to have to live off my meager savings for a few months. It was scary, but I couldn't keep going as I had been. No matter how hard I tried, even writing a 70,000 word book every month, I couldn't make the money I needed Amazon.

◆◆◆ The First Game ◆◆◆

My Magical Demon Lover was the first modest project for my new company. I wanted a 50,000 word game with 3 routes and 50 base pinups. At this size I could completely fund it through my savings if I had to. I ran an Indiegogo with a 'flexible goal' to help me pay for stuff, too. Many awesome supporters came through for me. Things didn't seem as dire anymore.

For My Magical Demon Lover I went to an artist I'd worked with for years. I told him I wanted MMDL to be a bara game. He signed up without hesitation, despite having a newborn baby and no time to breathe.

He sent me sprites and a few images. They didn't look right. MMDL was telling me it should be a yaoi game, not bara. I became conflicted. I didn't have the money to pay for images I wasn't going to use. I tried to stick with him and see things through, but then he stopped turning in work. He just didn't have the time for such a large project.

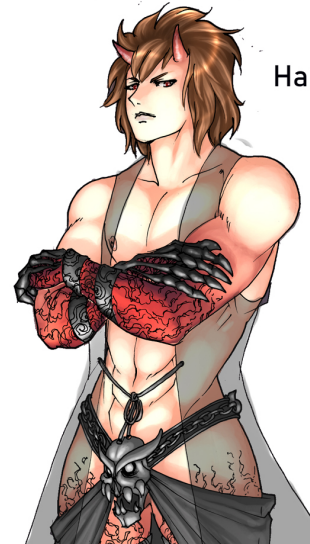
This was a blessing because Felix was not the right artist for MMDL. Take a look at his art next to Shiroi Raven's (our final artist) and you'll see what I mean.



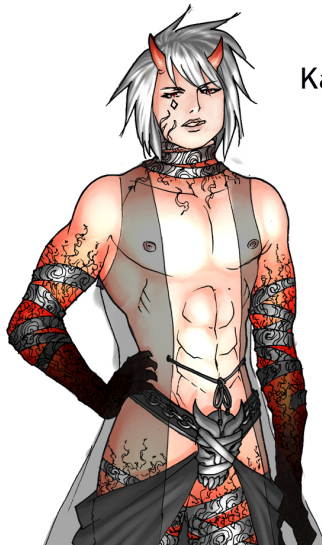
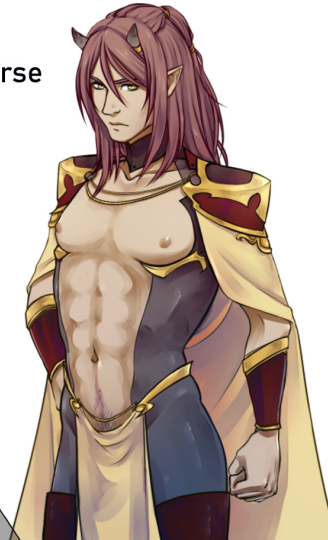
Tristan



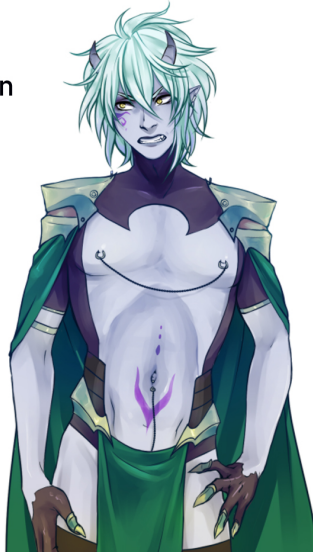
The original
designs are on
the left.



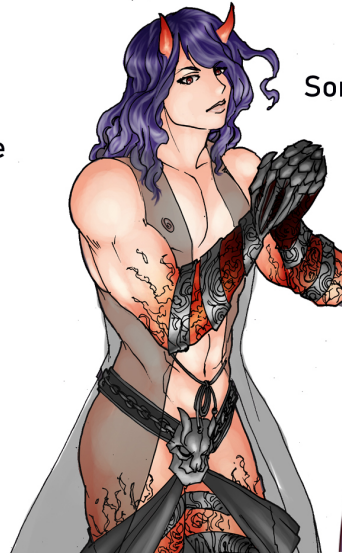
Harse



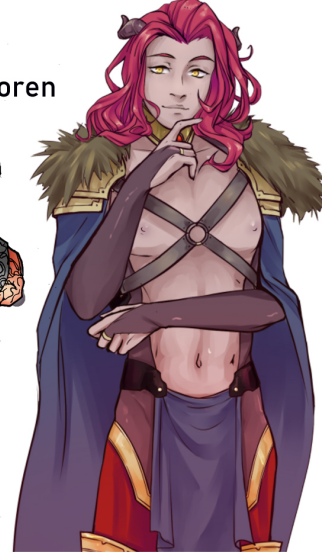
Karn



This is what
MMDL would have
looked like if it
was bara instead
of yaoi.



Soren



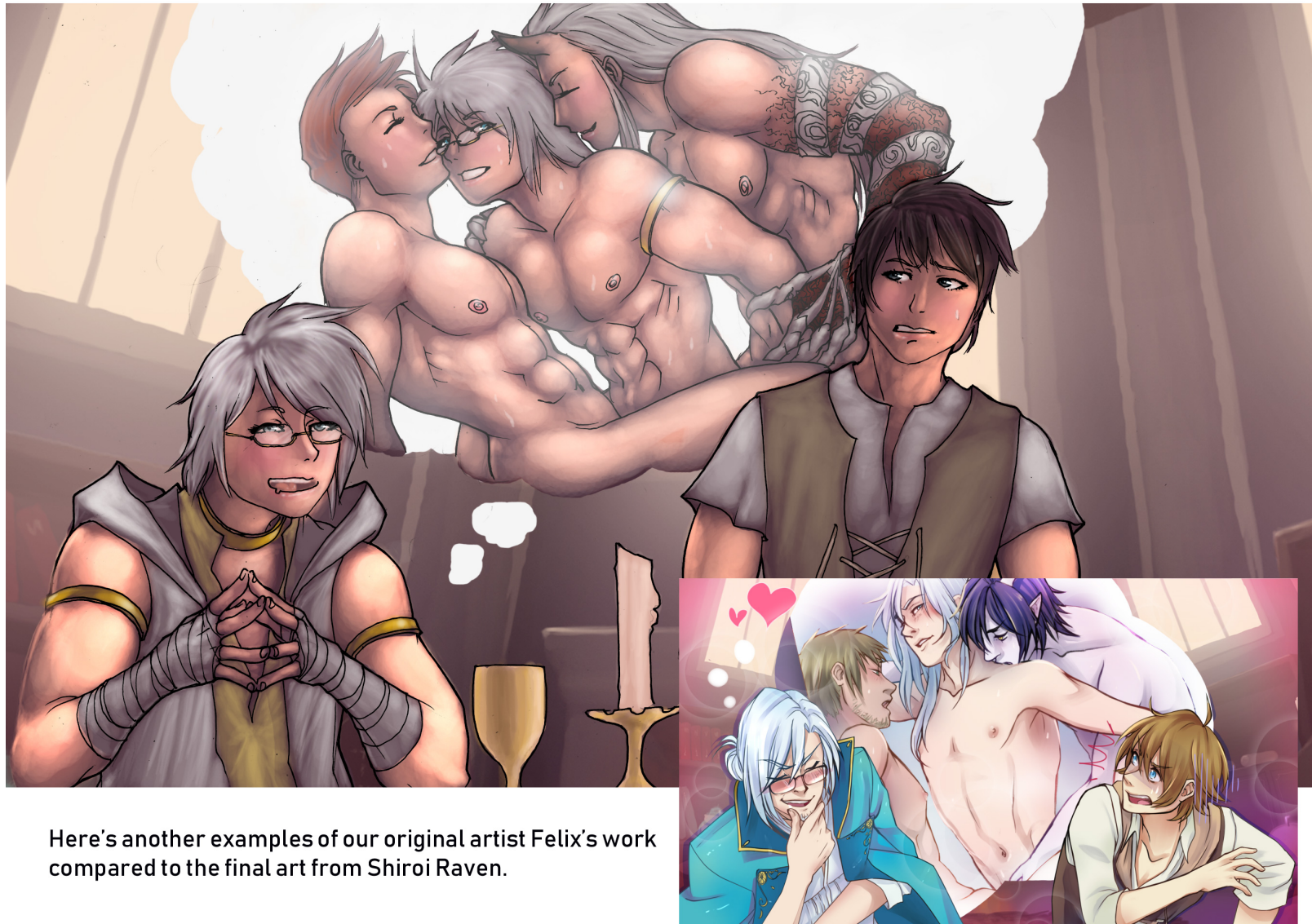


The Original
'Group Pose'



This is the
Final Used
For the Game






Here's another examples of our original artist Felix's work compared to the final art from Shiroy Raven.

It was time to replace Felix. I paid him for the work he did so far and went to Deviant Art.

You might notice that I'm extremely strict about deadlines. That's a problem I have. If an artist signs an agreement and says they can do X images in X amount of time, I expect it to happen. I lose a lot of artists by freaking out over missed deadlines.


gaijinmanga created a Forum thread
 Nov 18, 2017

Yaoi Game Artist Wanted - Must be able to draw beautiful bishounen, Must Keep Deadlines

Artist wanted for yaoi visual novel. Yaoi = anime gay romance. You must be okay with drawing adult/erotic work and homosexual erotic situations. Game is ichi heat level with sexual actions implied but not directly shown.

Payment -
 \$3,000 via Paypal
 1/3rd when 30% done, 1/3rd when 60% done, 1/3rd when complete

Deadlines -
 First 1/3rd January 1, 2018
 Final deadline March 17, 2018

Do not apply for this project if you are in a situation that will prevent you from meeting your deadlines. We need someone who takes deadlines seriously, who will turn in work consistently throughout the entire project, and who will communicate with us immediately if anything prevents them from keeping a deadline.

The game is fantasy yaoi, cute/funny with beautiful demon and human characters.

Art should be in the yaoi 'beautiful bishounen' anime style with simple cell-shaded cartoon-style coloring. For sprites there should be no blended shadows and no airbrushing, however there can be painting style art in the backgrounds at the artist's discretion. Character art should be clean and crisp. Lines should be varying widths to show depth.

Here is what we need for the game:

Sprites for 5 characters with 32 different emotions/poses in total for all characters (character 1 has 8 variations, character 2 has 4 variations, etc.).

12 Backgrounds. Backgrounds must have eye-level and central perspective so that it looks correct when the sprites are placed in front of it. No worms-eye or birds-eye views.

49 Pinups with an average of 3 variations each, creating a total of 158 images. Examples of variations are the character's eyes closing, his arm moving, his clothes removed, or his facial expression changed, etc. The variations will not be significant enough that any character or background element will have to be completely redrawn or repositioned. These are the typical variations seen in anime-style visual novels.

TO APPLY: Reply to this post with links to your artwork or galleries. In particular we want to see attractive male anime-style characters or other game-related art.

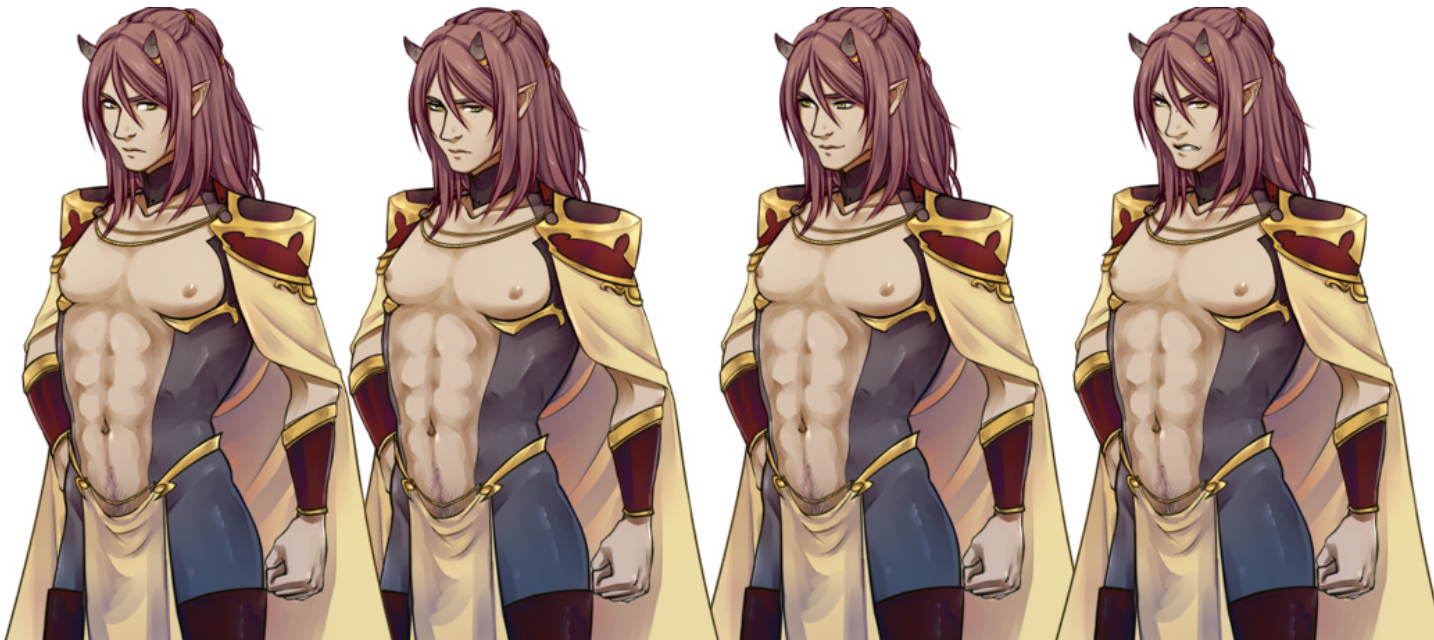
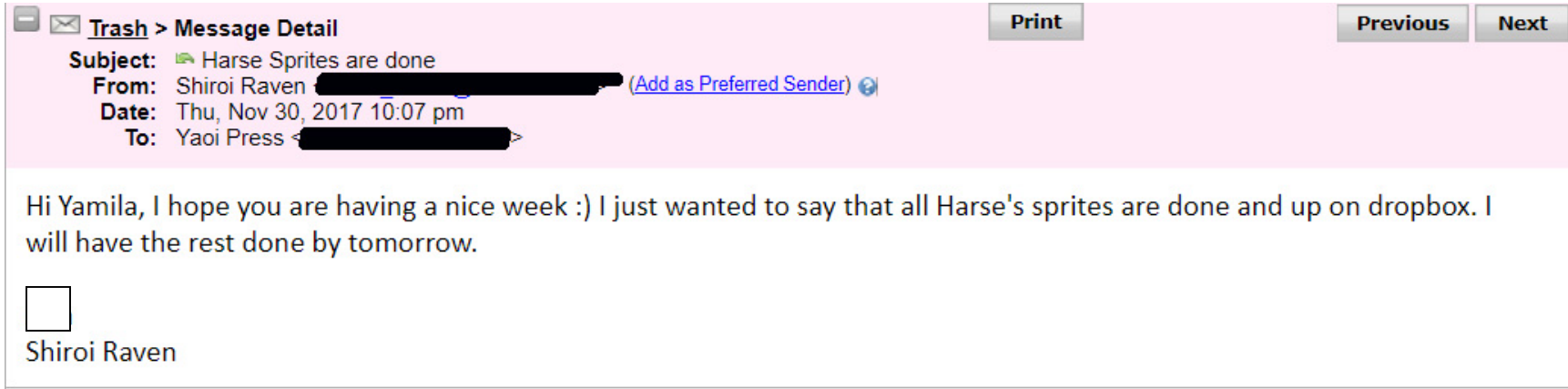
I got lots of awesome submissions. I really liked the art of a web comic artist who explained she was a professional and would not miss any deadlines. I offered her the project. She agreed to it. I posted on Deviant Art that we had found our artist and that the listing was now closed. I sent the artist I chose the contract. Here's her reply to me:

“After considering the schedule and the work required, please change the contract to give \$5,000 in compensation and resend.”

-- Yeah. No. But thank you for pretending to agree until I closed the listing before telling me you wanted \$2000 more, you con artist.

She was right, though. I was low. I contacted Shiroy Raven, offering \$3,500, and she accepted. FYI: I ended up paying more than this.

Things started out great!



Harse is my noble 'alpha' character for players who want to be cherished. He also has a licking fetish.

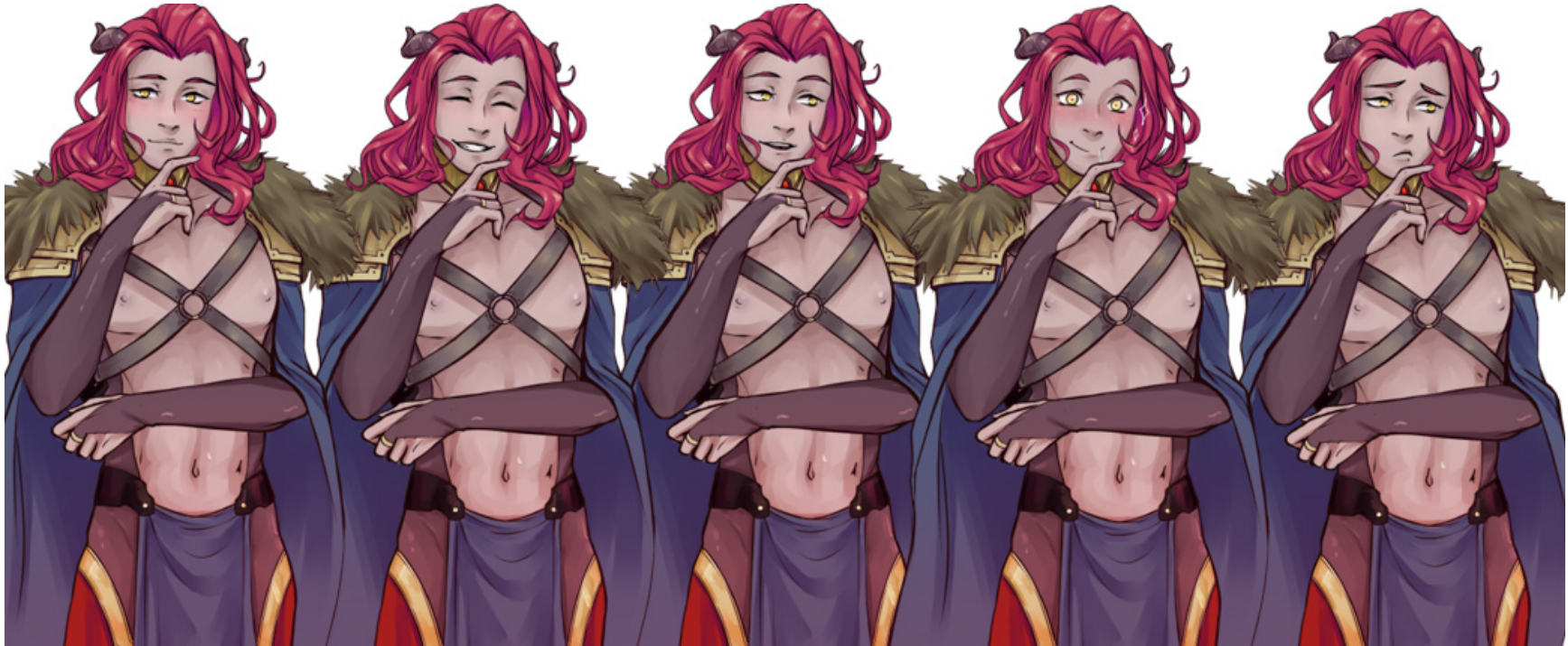
His flaw is that he's 'too noble'. Don't try anything kinky with him, and he's strictly monogamous.



Karn is for players who want to go full hardcore. He's evil in the 'feminine male is evil' anime style. (Not to be confused with effeminate male.)

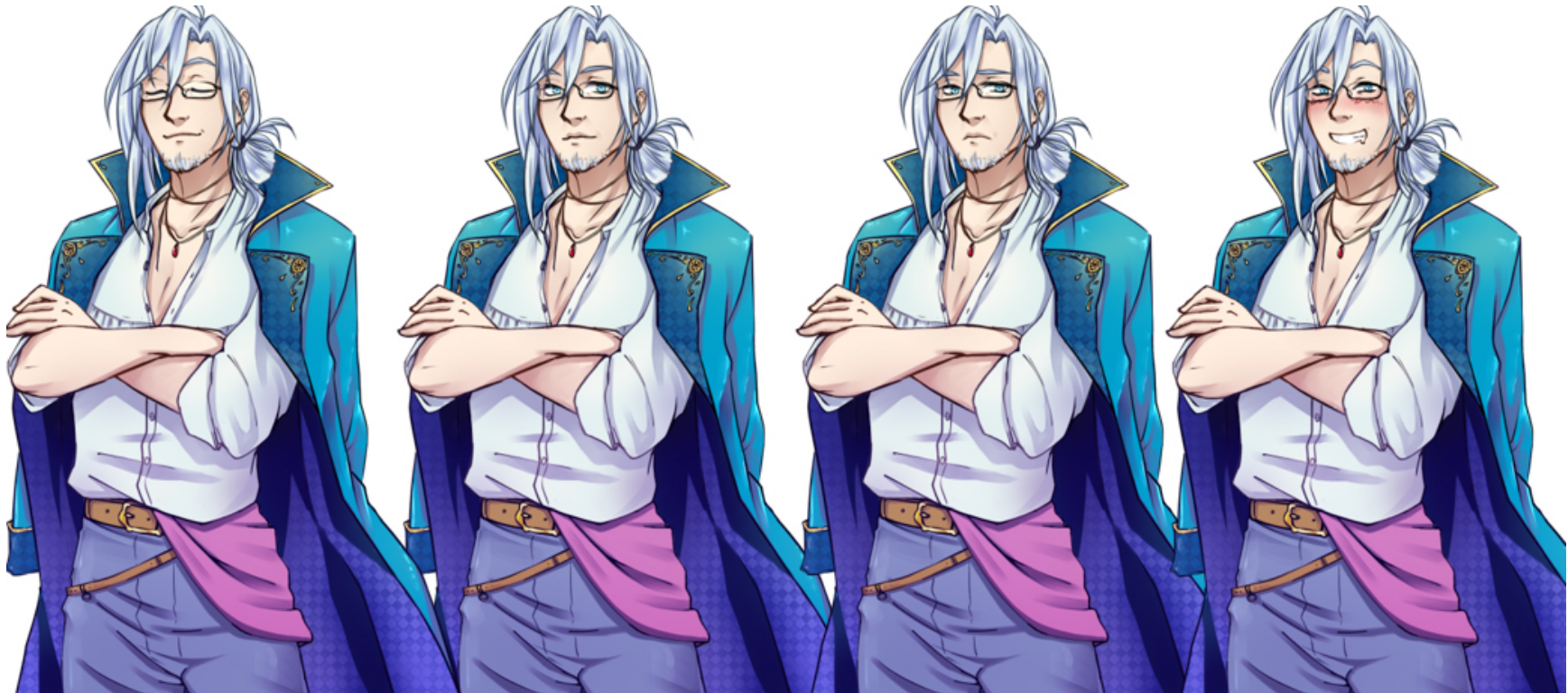
Karn will beat you to a quivering pulp, but he really does prefer being the uke.

When you first play him, he'll seem like an irredeemable asshole, but wait. There's more to this sexy sadist than first appears.



Soren was the wild card meant to be different from any anime archetype out there. He's the horniest of the three demons, and yet will play hard to get if you try to sleep with him.

He'd rather have sex with magnificent shoes, Poofalump.



Percival, a certified GGILF, was the character people said was the sexiest. He's a pervy old wizard, not particularly that skilled in magic, but definitely DTF.

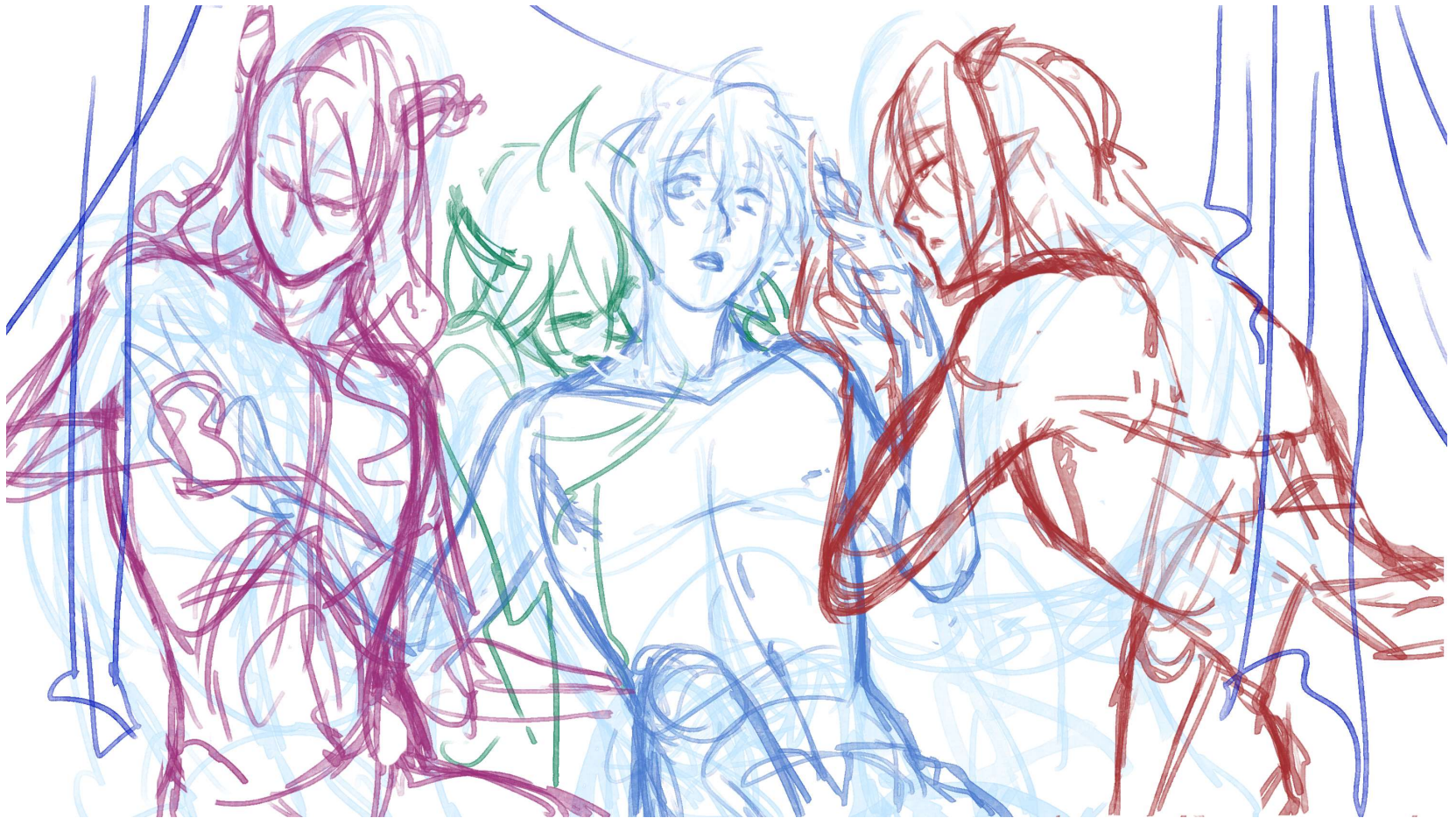
A sequel featuring just him was tossed around. If MMDL is a big success I might pick it up.

How does Percival in the Pleasure Realm sound to you?



Tristan is eager and young. He's naïve, but he can learn fast when he has to. His desire to become a wizard is so strong he'll literally do anything. Of course, once he signs up he realizes he loves sex with sexy demons. Isn't that always the way?

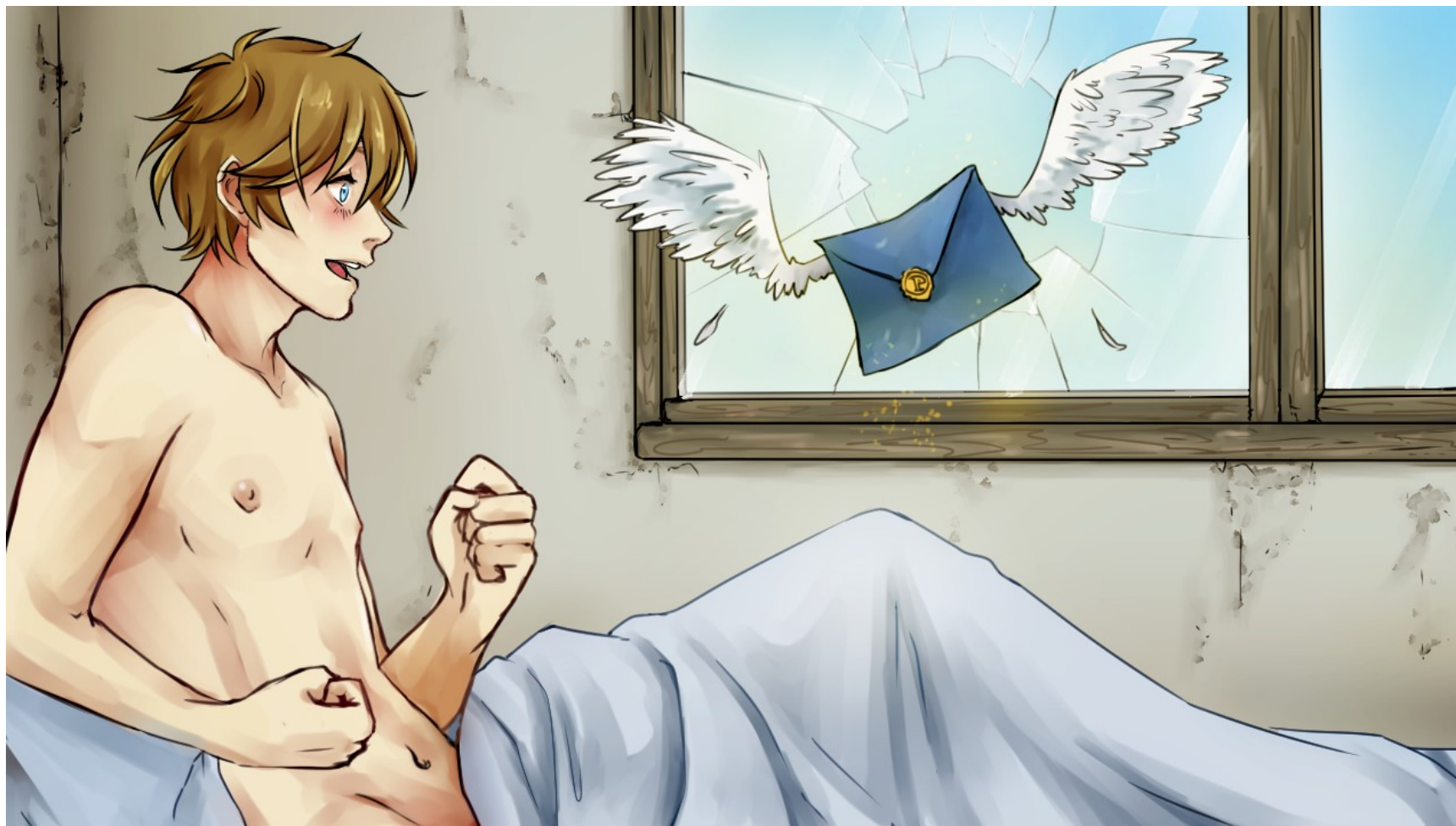
I received all these amazing sprites with no problems, and then the images for the demo game started coming in. I asked my artist to turn in sketches to be approved before she did the final art. I expected clear sketches that would tell me if the pictures were right or not. Here's what I actually got:

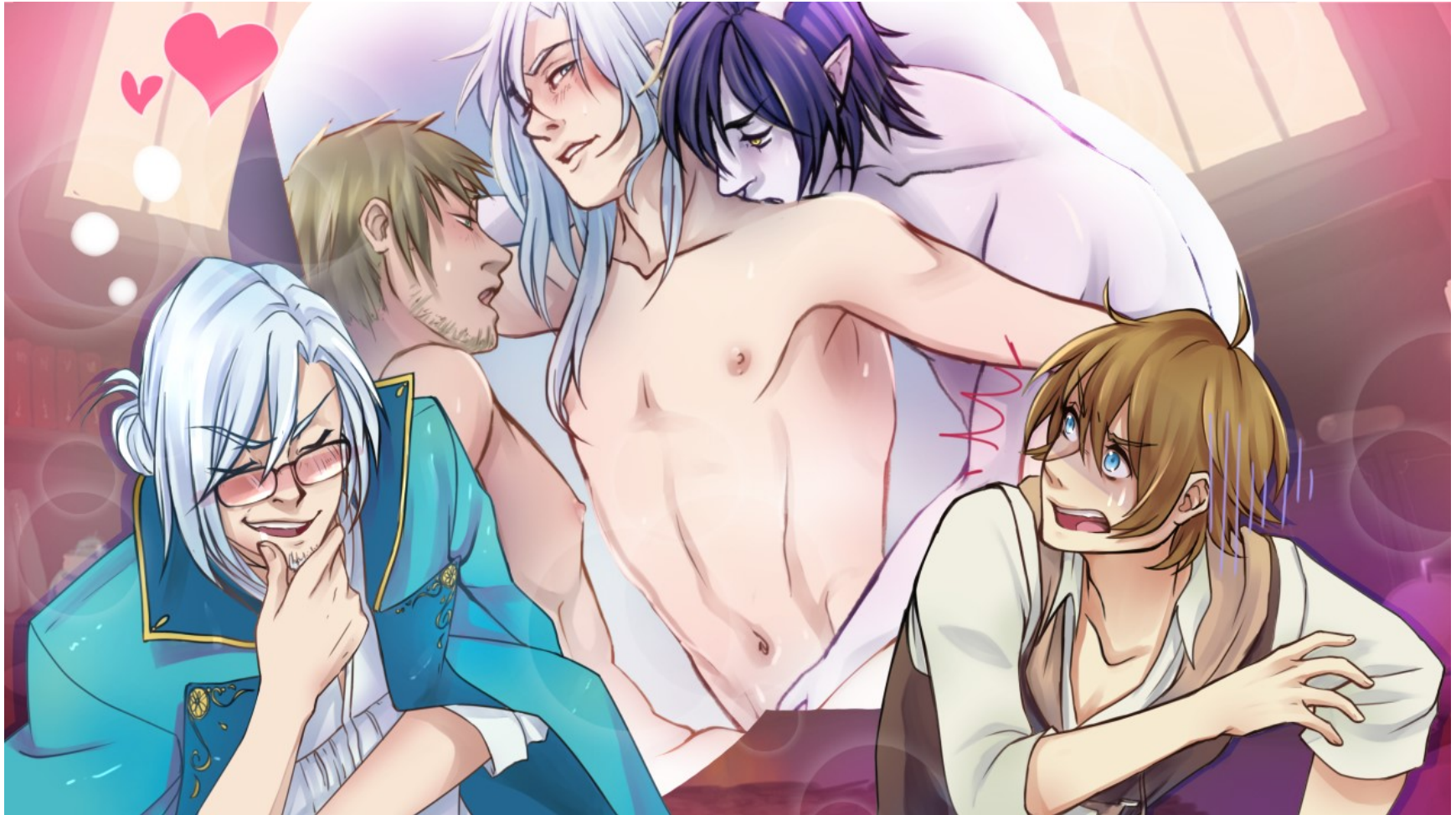


@_@ wtf? Wtf even is this?



Oh. It's this. Well, I guess I just have to trust her to do great art, because I can't make heads or tails of her sketches. That was fine. I loved all of her art. Just take a look at what she turned in for the demo:













This background was done by my first artist Felix, and Shiroy Raven drew the demons on top of it.

After I had the art I needed for the demo I focused on getting it programmed and preparing the Indiegogo campaign. In the meantime, I was having problems.

I had to take drastic action to save this project. I switched Shiroy Raven to only doing the line art for the game, and hired three colorists. This put us way over budget—but it was my only option. I paid every time an image was turned in. This helped new art to be submitted at a steady clip.

In the end my main artist only did full CGs for the demo, line work for the remainder of the game, one background, and all the sprites. I shouldn't have put all the artwork for the game on the shoulders of one artist...but by the same token an artist shouldn't take on more work than she can handle.

Keeping deadlines is hard. If an artist knows she can do an image a day, she will sign up to do 30 images in a month. You respond by saying that's too much, and just do 5 images a week. They say that's fine.

Me: Are you sure?

Them: Yes.

Me: Are you sure?

Them: Yes.

Me: Are you sure?

Them: Yes.

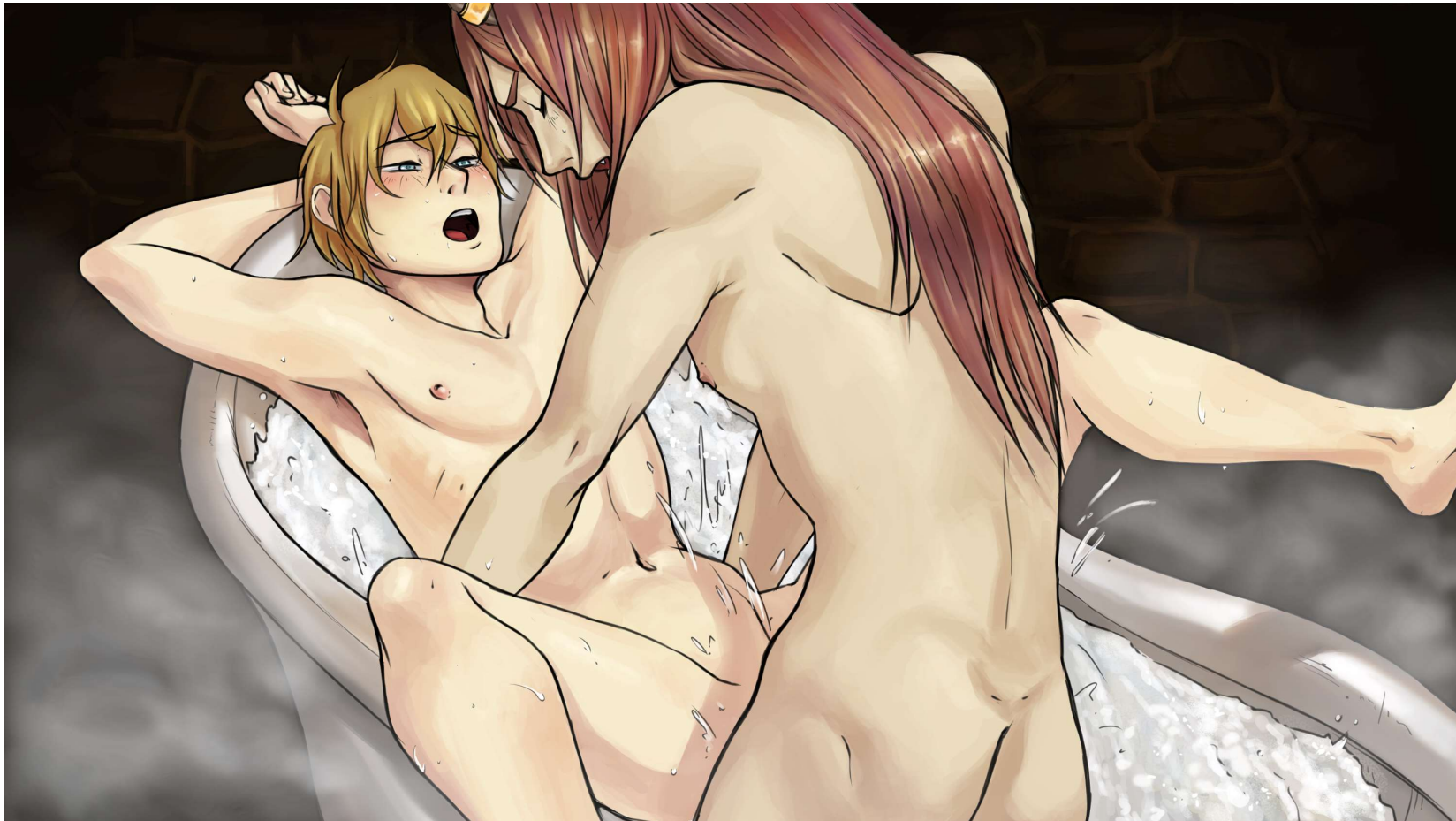
Then they only turn in four images over two weeks, or something like that. Artists don't consider that even five images a week means that if a friend comes up to them and says, 'You want to go out for drinks?' the artist has to say no, because they have work to do, because they need to keep a deadline. No one is willing to sacrifice to keep a deadline.

What's are the consequences for missing a deadline? Getting the deadline moved to a later date.

Things continued all the same... Now my artist was turning in this:

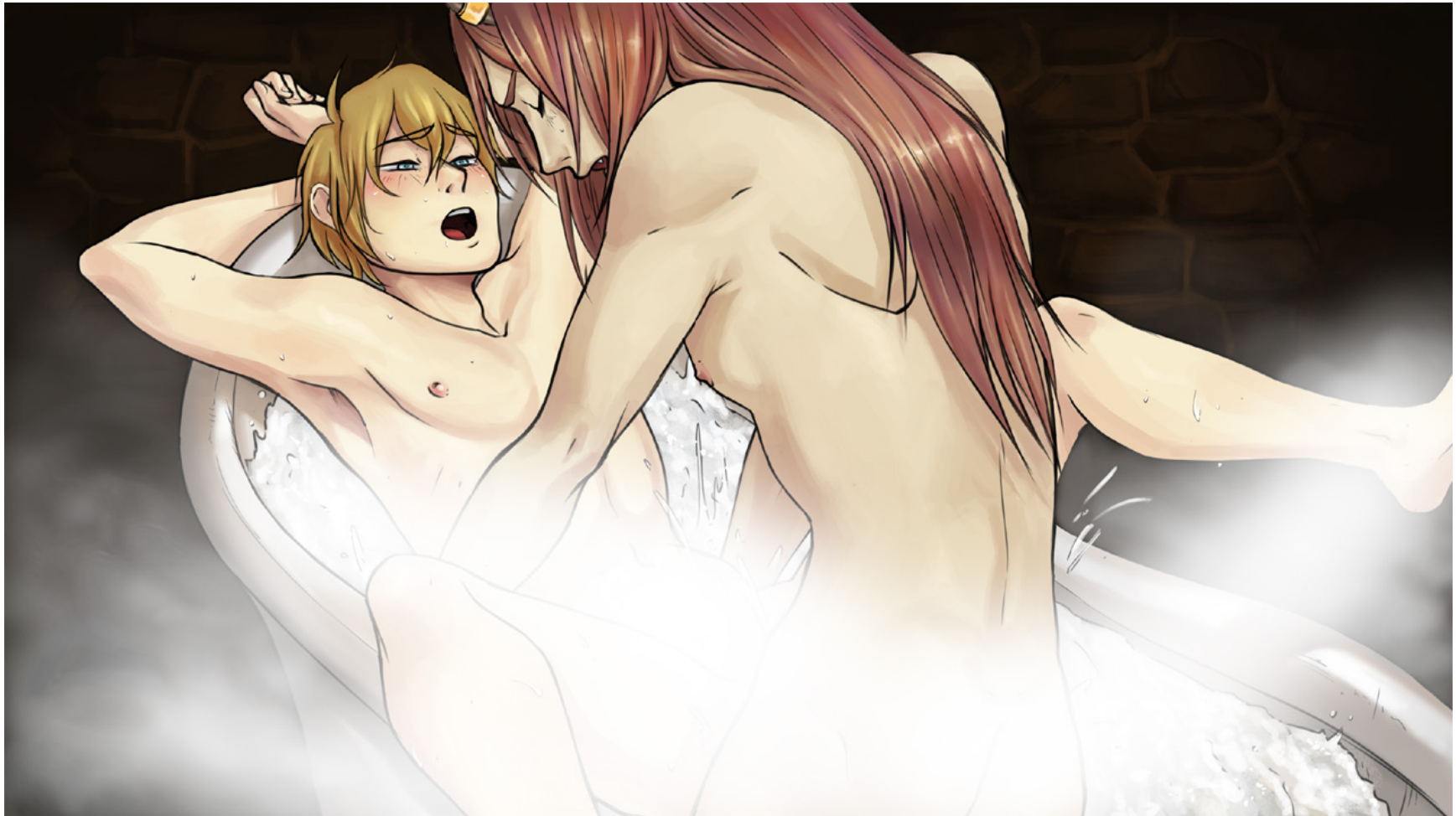


I would pay a colorist to finish it:



But that's not the end of the image...

We still have to censor it for Steam. (Not Itch.)



Well, enough gabbing. Without further ado, here is the best art from My Magical Demon Lover!











