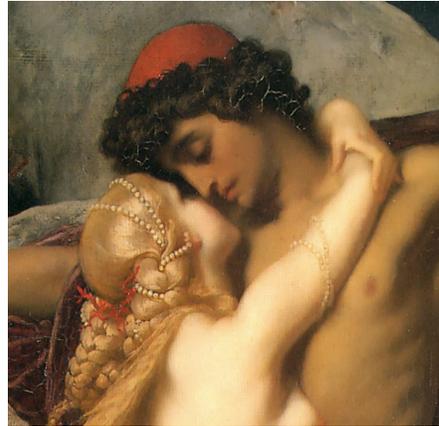


The first problem I had with this illustration was deciding whether to show the kissing scene in the kitchen or the invisible dragon attack on the faerie tree. While elements for the dragon scene were abundant, I decided to go with the kitchen drama. Minka deserves that much.

Still, it was just about the hardest thing I've ever done on this series, and I'm not sure how well I did it. I attempted to do a mash-up of two couples kissing—or about to. First is the couple from [this photo](#)¹. Then there is [*The Fisherman and the Syren*](#), depicted in the famous painting by Frederic Leighton².



Besides the similar poses of the couples, the theme of Leighton's painting speaks directly to Leila's effect on Efran: "According to Jones, *et al.*, Leighton's literary pictures 'suggest a preoccupation with women as destroyers,' and *The Fisherman and the Syren* represents that theme 'quite unequivocally'" (from the Wikipedia link above).

Watching from the pantry is poor Minka, depicted by [this photo](#)³. The kitchen setting is from [here](#).⁴ According to [Wikimedia](#), this is the Pena Palace in Sintra, just about an hour from Lisbon. So no one will feel cheated at missing out on a dragon, however, below is the [one](#)⁵ I intended to use for Sivalik, spitting [bonus fire](#).⁶



Robin Hardy
April 27, 2024

PS. I am not claiming copyright on this illustration.

1. Photographed by [Nathan Dumlao](#) on Unsplash
2. Leighton painted the Condottiere referenced in Watching The Flood, the illustration for book 3, *Lord Efran at the Flood*.
3. Photographed by [ian dooley](#) on Unsplash
4. Photographed by [Oleksandr Kurchev](#) on Unsplash
5. Created by [ractapopulous](#) on Pixabay
6. Compiled by [Placidplace](#) on Pixabay