

▷ DONOVAN M. NEAL  
✦ MIDJOURNEY

THE  
PROVENANCE  
OF  
GODS  
AND  
MEN



# HUTARI

## THE PROVENANCE OF GODS AND MEN

*In a world where gods rule over all, M'Msee, the oldest living storyteller, tells the tale of how the god Akuma and his sons shaped the fate of the world. When one son's pride leads to the creation of cannibalistic life, Akuma must devise a plan to save them all - a plan that involves M'Msee and the very survival of humanity. But when gods turn against one another, can mere mortals hope to survive?*

*This Afrocentric Fantasy, blending elements of Gladiator and the biblical story of Joseph, follows the epic journey of one man caught in the crossfire of divine conflict. From Amazon bestselling author Donovan M. Neal, don't miss the origin short story for this exciting new fantasy series.*

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*Graphic Novel Version*



TornVeil



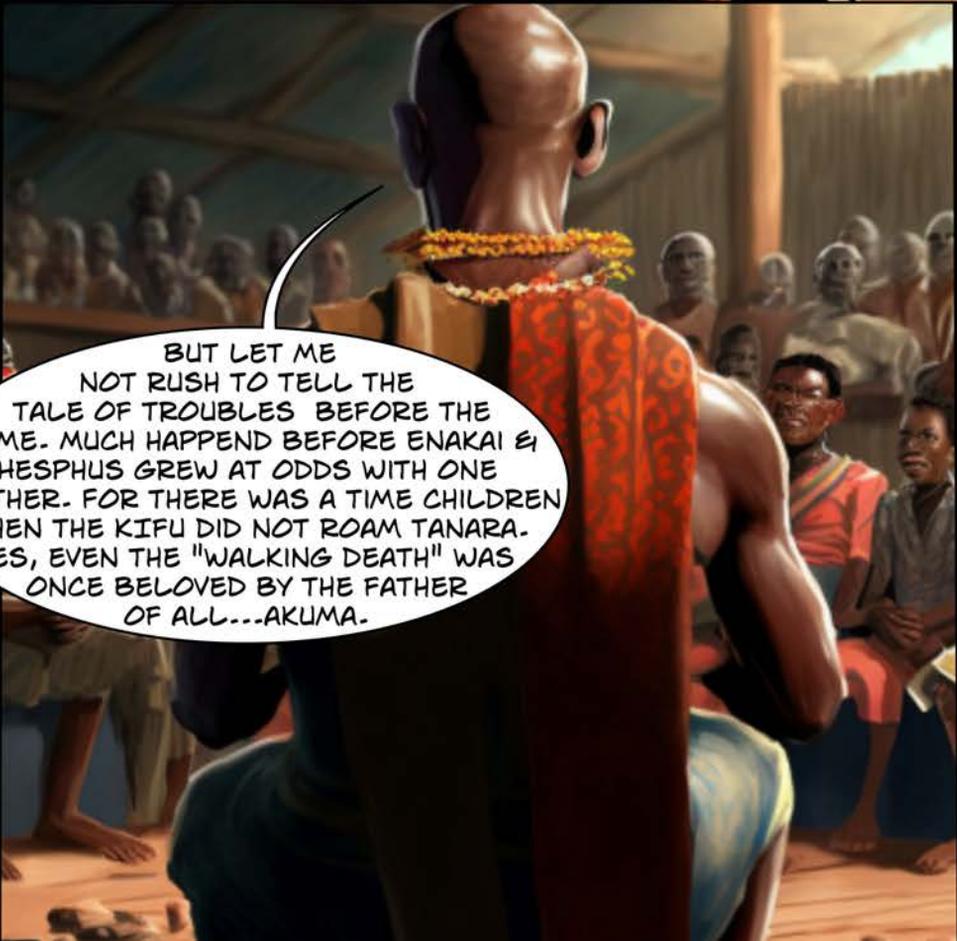
IT IS THE HUNDRETH MEETING OF THE FOUR CLANS AND M'MSEE THE OLDEST OF THE BUSSAR KINGDOM'S LEADERS WAITED FOR ALL TO ASSEMBLE.



AKUMA DID NOT KNOW THAT HIS SON WOULD ONE DAY SEEK TO KILL HIM...

...FOR WHICH FATHER AMONG YOU WOULD EVER CONCEIVE LOVE LOST BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS SON?

AND OPENED HIS MOUTH TO SPEAK...



BUT LET ME NOT RUSH TO TELL THE TALE OF TROUBLES BEFORE THE TIME. MUCH HAPPEND BEFORE ENAKAI & HESPHUS GREW AT ODDS WITH ONE ANOTHER. FOR THERE WAS A TIME CHILDREN WHEN THE KIFU DID NOT ROAM TANARA. YES, EVEN THE "WALKING DEATH" WAS ONCE BELOVED BY THE FATHER OF ALL...AKUMA.



BUT WHY WISDOM? WHY DID THE SON WANT TO DESTROY HIS FATHER?

I WOULD KILL MY FATHER IF I COULD.

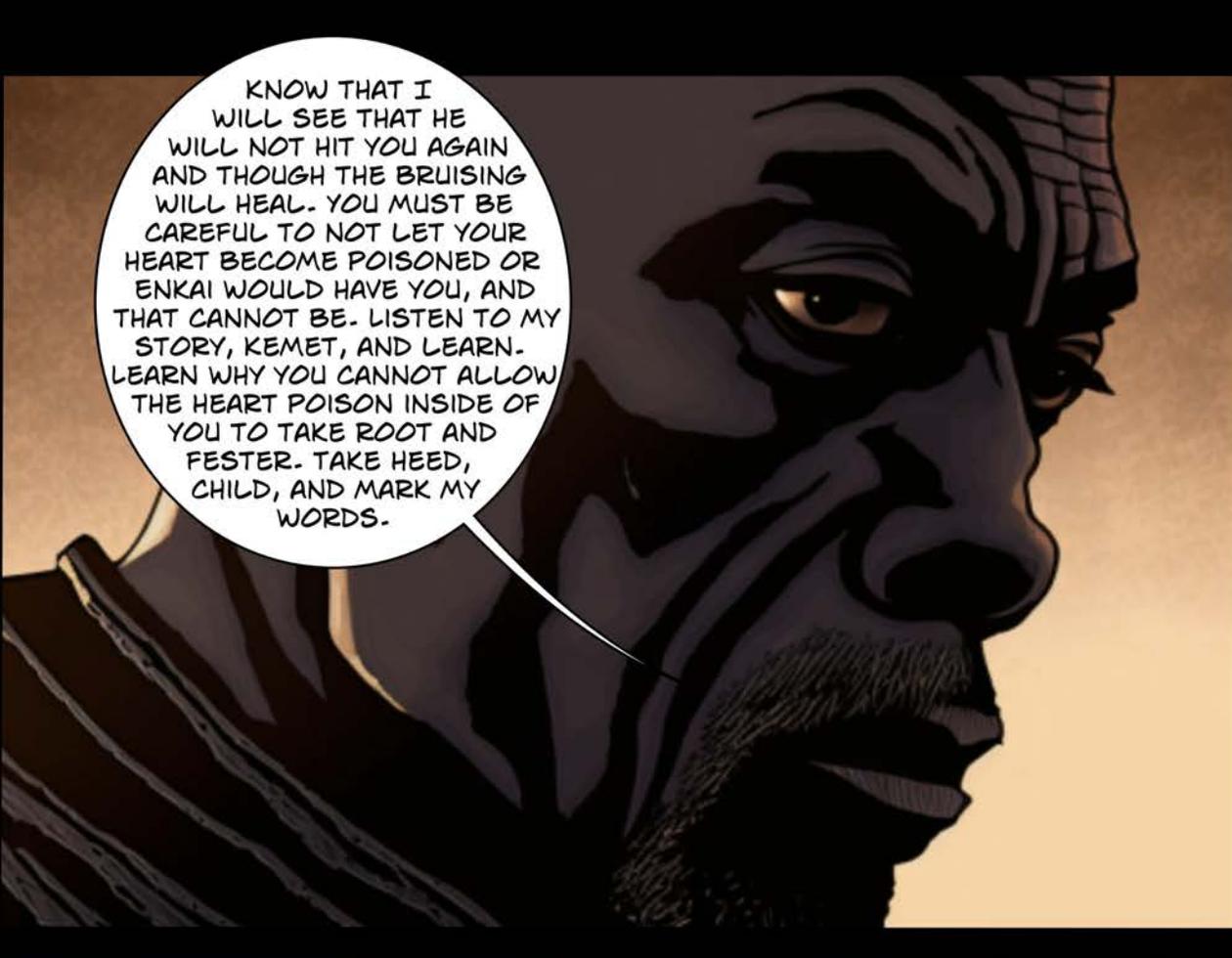


...



WHAT IS YOUR NAME CHILD?

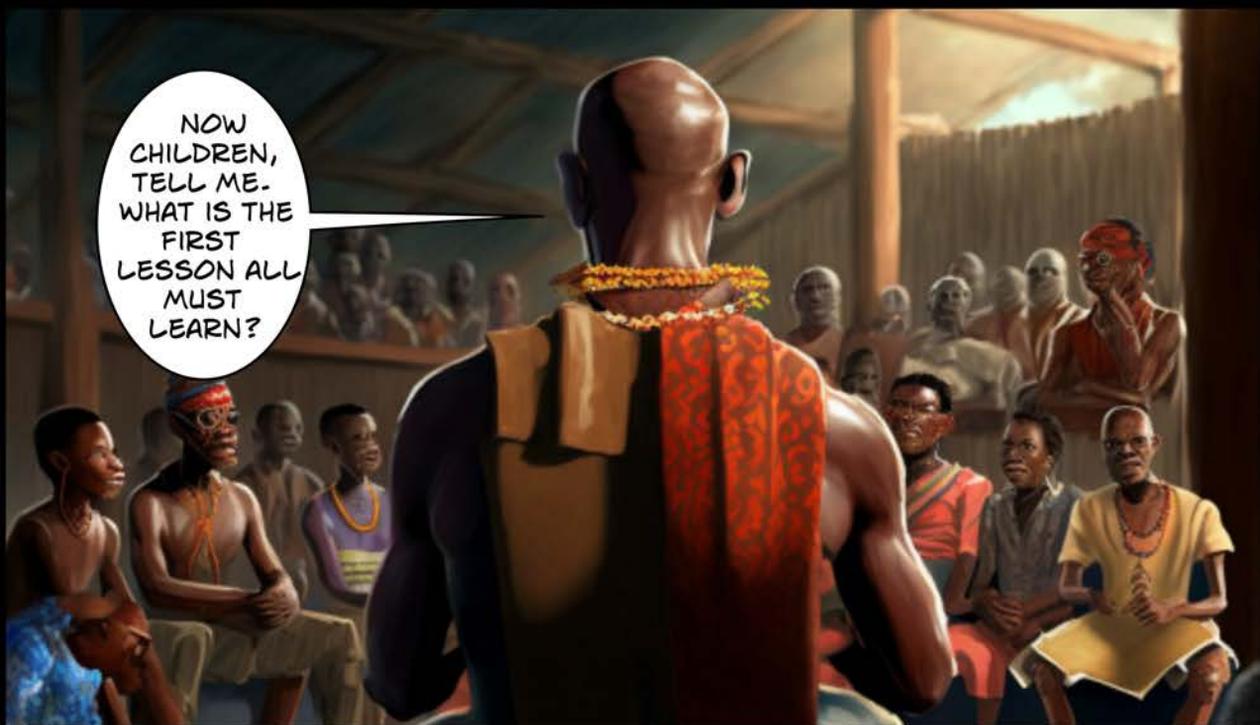




KNOW THAT I  
WILL SEE THAT HE  
WILL NOT HIT YOU AGAIN  
AND THOUGH THE BRUISING  
WILL HEAL. YOU MUST BE  
CAREFUL TO NOT LET YOUR  
HEART BECOME POISONED OR  
ENKAI WOULD HAVE YOU, AND  
THAT CANNOT BE. LISTEN TO MY  
STORY, KEMET, AND LEARN.  
LEARN WHY YOU CANNOT ALLOW  
THE HEART POISON INSIDE OF  
YOU TO TAKE ROOT AND  
FESTER. TAKE HEED,  
CHILD, AND MARK MY  
WORDS.



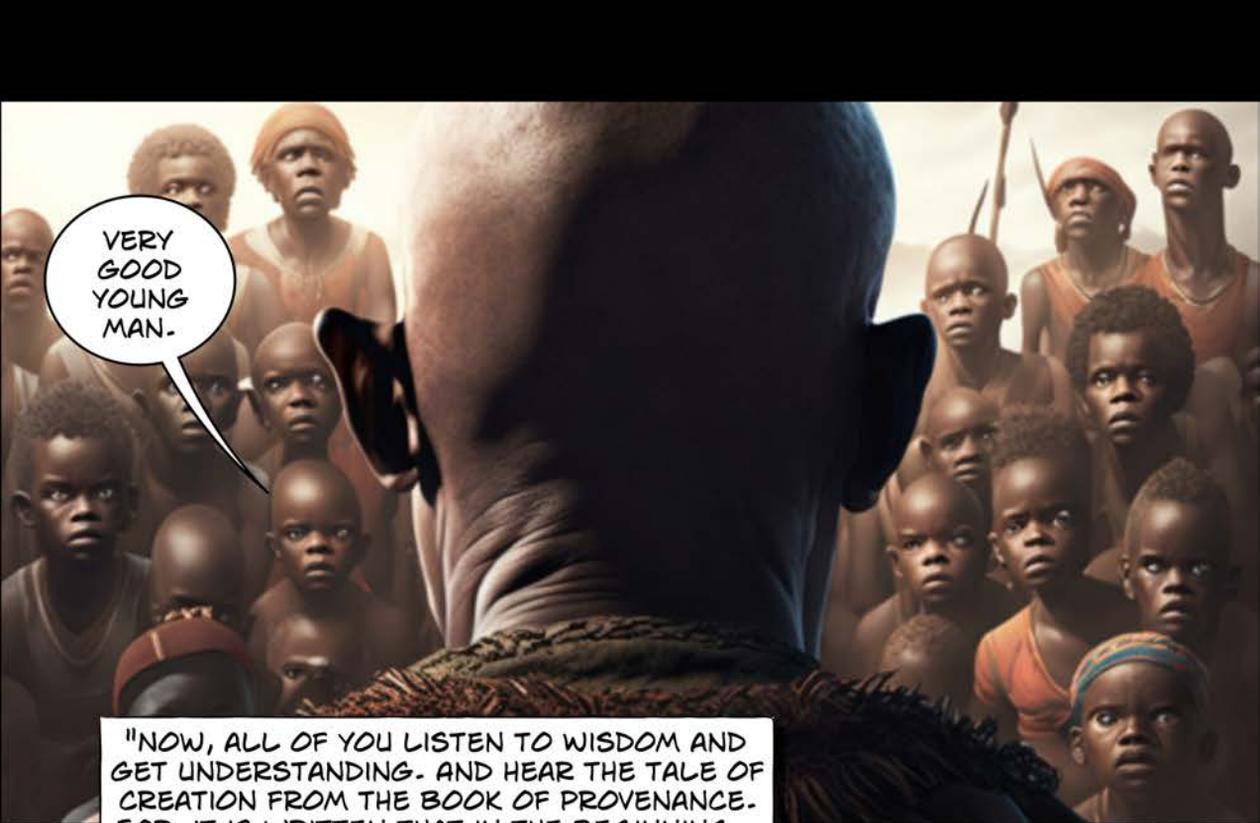
THANK YOU  
WISDOM.



NOW CHILDREN, TELL ME. WHAT IS THE FIRST LESSON ALL MUST LEARN?



WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING THEREFORE GET WISDOM: AND WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET UNDERSTANDING.



VERY  
GOOD  
YOUNG  
MAN.

"NOW, ALL OF YOU LISTEN TO WISDOM AND GET UNDERSTANDING. AND HEAR THE TALE OF CREATION FROM THE BOOK OF PROVENANCE. FOR, IT IS WRITTEN THAT IN THE BEGINNING, WHEN AKUMA HAD FINISHED HIS MAKING OF THE SKY, AND THE SKY ABOVE THE SKY. HE MADE ONE SKY DARK AND SET LESSER LIGHTS TO WATCH US WHILE WE SLEPT. HE THEN MADE THE GREATER LIGHT OF THE DAY AND RELEASED IT TO RUN ITS COURSE THROUGH THE LOWER SKY."



"AND AKUMA  
WIELDED THE  
POWER OF  
CREATION..."

"...AND THE FIRES OF  
CREATION BURNED..."

**ROAR**

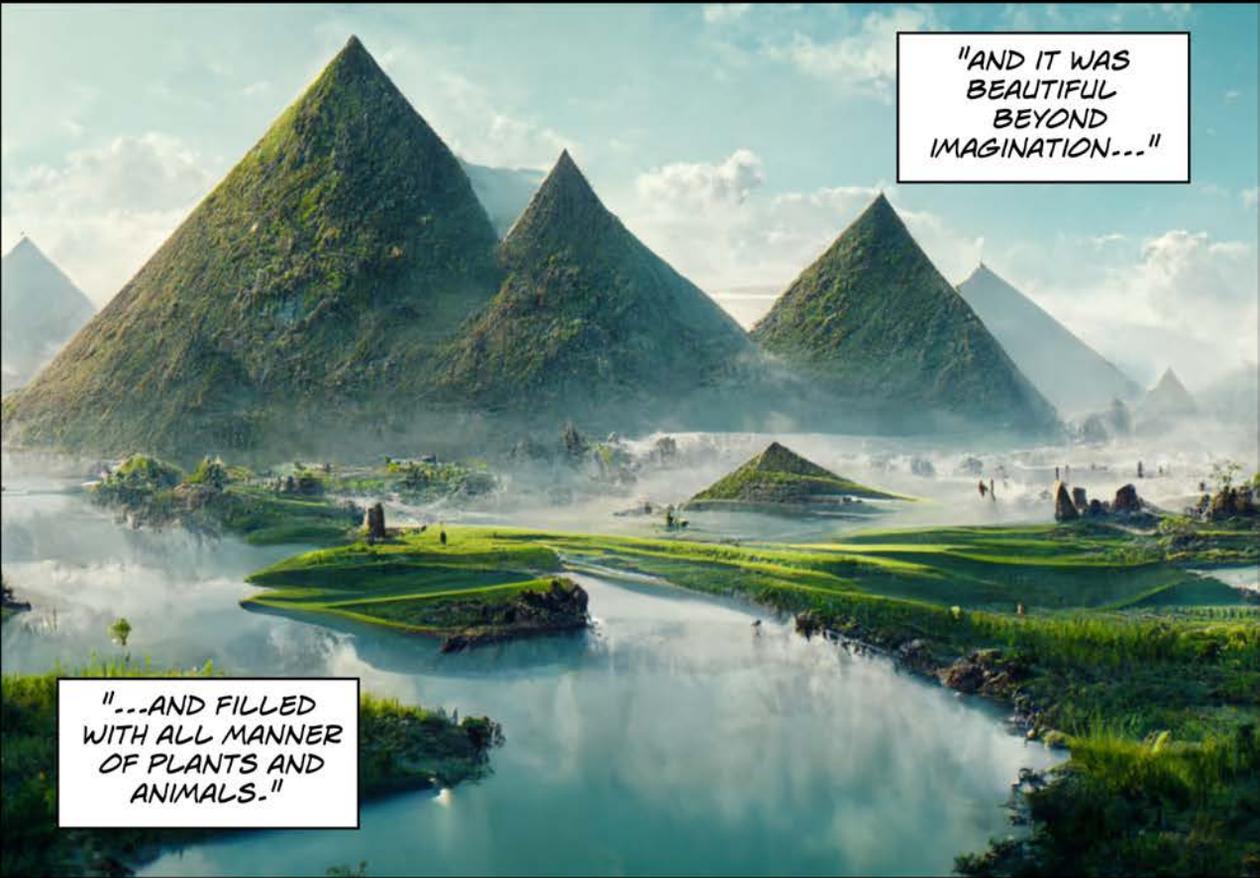
**WHOOSH**

"...AND SIMMERED..."

"...UNTIL  
LORD AKUMA  
MADE A  
THRONE  
WORLD..."

"A WORLD HE  
NAMED..."

"AARU."



"AND IT WAS  
BEAUTIFUL  
BEYOND  
IMAGINATION..."

"...AND FILLED  
WITH ALL MANNER  
OF PLANTS AND  
ANIMALS."



"BUT AKUMA DID NOT  
CEASE IN HIS CREATIVE  
ACTS AND FROM HIS OWN  
SKIN HE CRAFTED TWO  
BROTHERS..."

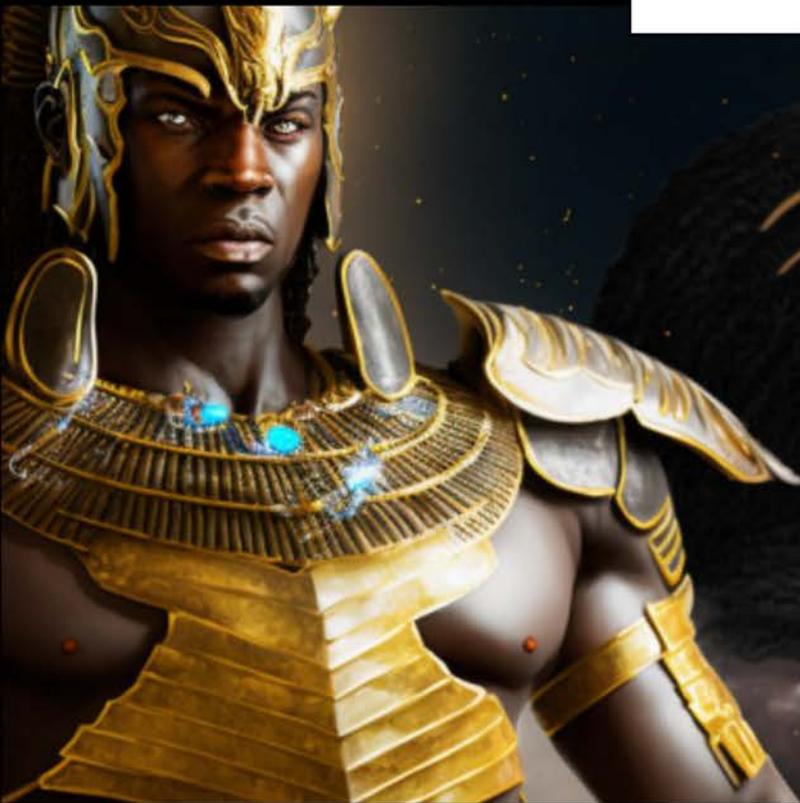
"HESPHUS..."



"AND ENKAI..."



"AND THE TWO WERE CHARGED BY THEIR FATHER TO DO AS HE HAD DONE AND TO CREATE A WORLD. BUT A WORLD THAT WOULD HOLD HIGHER LIFE..."



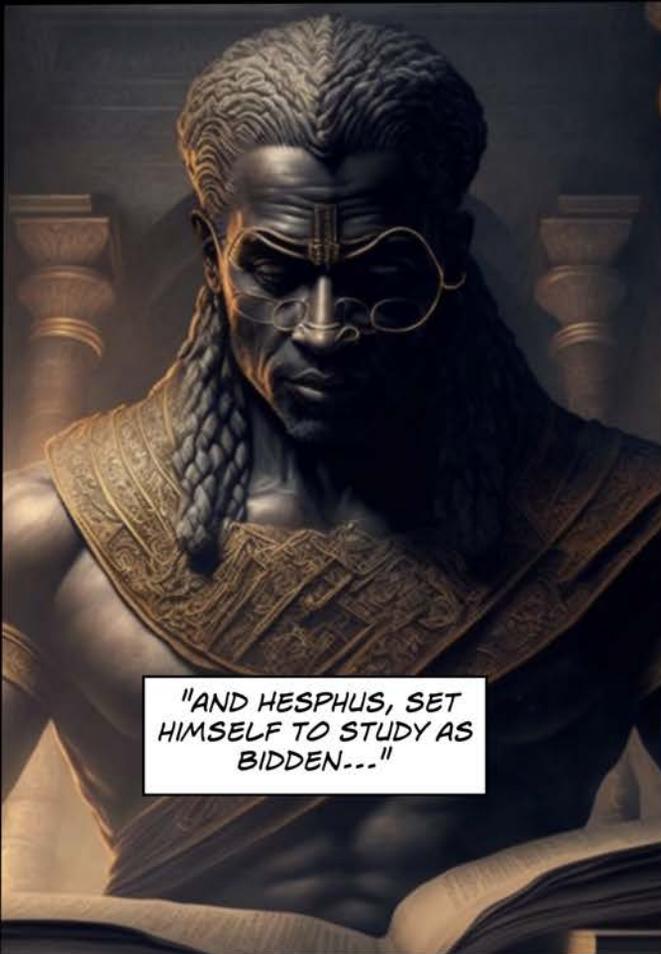
"AND HIS WORDS WERE ON THIS WISE..."



GO  
AND STUDY TO  
SHOW YOURSELF  
APPROVED TO DO AS I HAVE  
COMMANDED. STUDY LIFE  
AND THE WORLDS  
NECESSARY TO  
SUSTAIN IT.

BUT DO  
NOT CREATE  
HIGHER LIFE BEFORE  
YOUR STUDIES ARE  
COMPLETE NOR BEFORE MY  
RETURN. FOR I MUST LEAVE  
YOU FOR A SHORT SEASON  
TO PREPARE FOR  
EXPANSION.

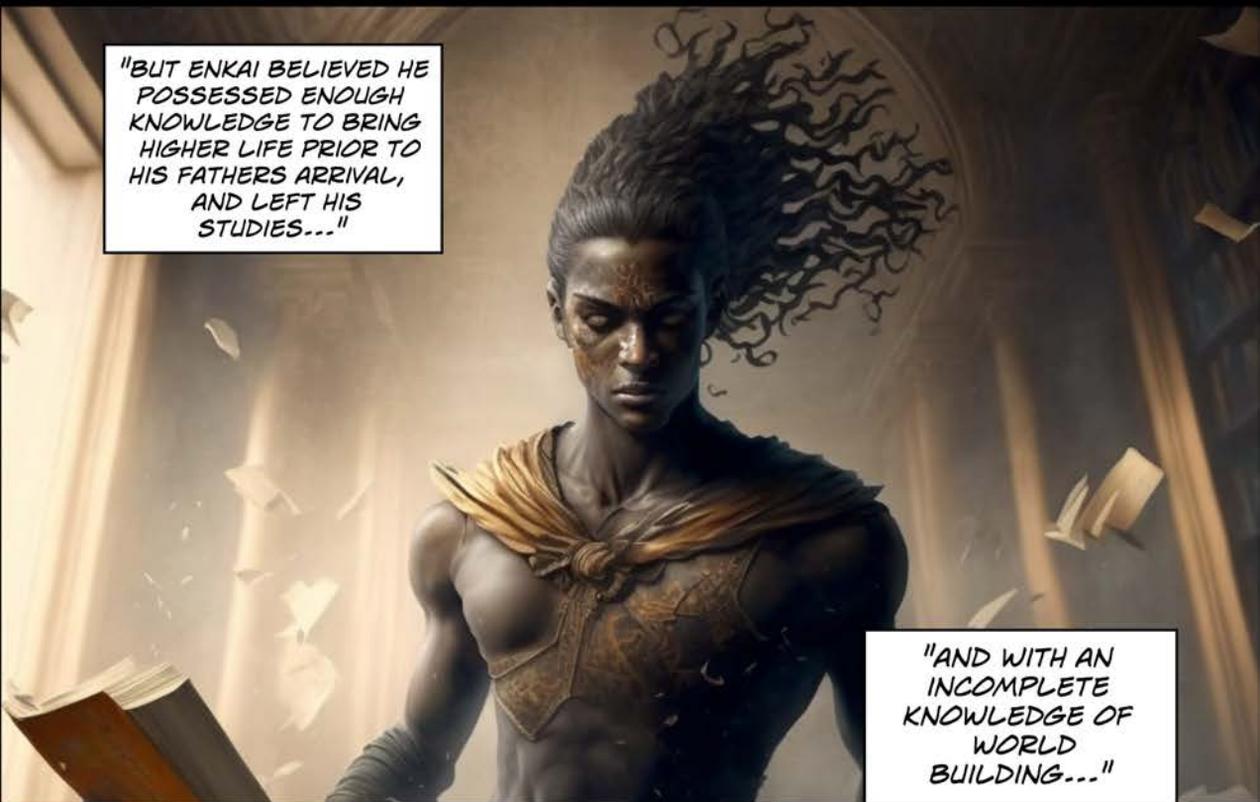
"SO AKUMA  
LEFT THEM  
TO THEIR  
STUDIES AND  
VENTURED TO  
EXPAND THE  
UNIVERSE."



"AND HESPHUS, SET HIMSELF TO STUDY AS BIDDEN..."



"AND ENKAI ALSO..."



"BUT ENKAI BELIEVED HE POSSESSED ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE TO BRING HIGHER LIFE PRIOR TO HIS FATHERS ARRIVAL, AND LEFT HIS STUDIES..."

"AND WITH AN INCOMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD BUILDING..."

"VENTURED TO THE ENDS  
OF AARU TO CREATE HIS  
OWN REALM.."



"AND WIELDED THE  
POWER GIVEN BY  
AKUMA TO CREATE A  
NEW REALM OF  
EXISTENCE..."

"AND THE UNIVERSE  
OBEYED THE SON OF  
AKUMA AND CHURNED  
OUT A WORLD FROM  
ITS BELLY..."



"A WORLD OF  
FIRE..."



"A WORLD OF TWILIGHT  
AND ASH..."



SIZZLE



"SPIT OUT FROM THE  
SALIVA OF A STAR."



"ROCKY AND  
CRATERED  
IT WAS..."

BLUR BLUR BLUR

"AND AS IT COOLED,  
MIST AND SMOKE  
FILLED THE LAND..."



SSSSSSSS

"AND WHEN ENKAI  
WAS DONE..."



"HE NAMED  
THE WORLD HE  
HAD CREATED.  
THE DUAT."



"AND LORD ENKAI  
WALKED THE LENGTH  
AND BREADTH OF HIS  
NEW CREATION, TO  
SEE WHAT HE HAD  
WROUGHT."

"AND ENKAI TOOK  
THE MIST FROM HIS  
COOLING WORLD  
AND FROM IT  
DEFYED HIS FATHER  
AND FORMED  
HIGHER LIFE..."

SSSSSSSSSS



"AND HE SHAPED  
IT..."

"AND MOLDED IT..."

SCHLOP



"AND WHEN THE  
FIRES OF THE DUAT  
WERE COOLED HE  
HAD MADE HIMSELF  
A PEOPLE..."

"AFTER HIS OWN  
IMAGE AND  
LIKENESS. AND HE  
NAMED THEM..."





THE  
NEPHTHYS.



FATHER...

FATHER...

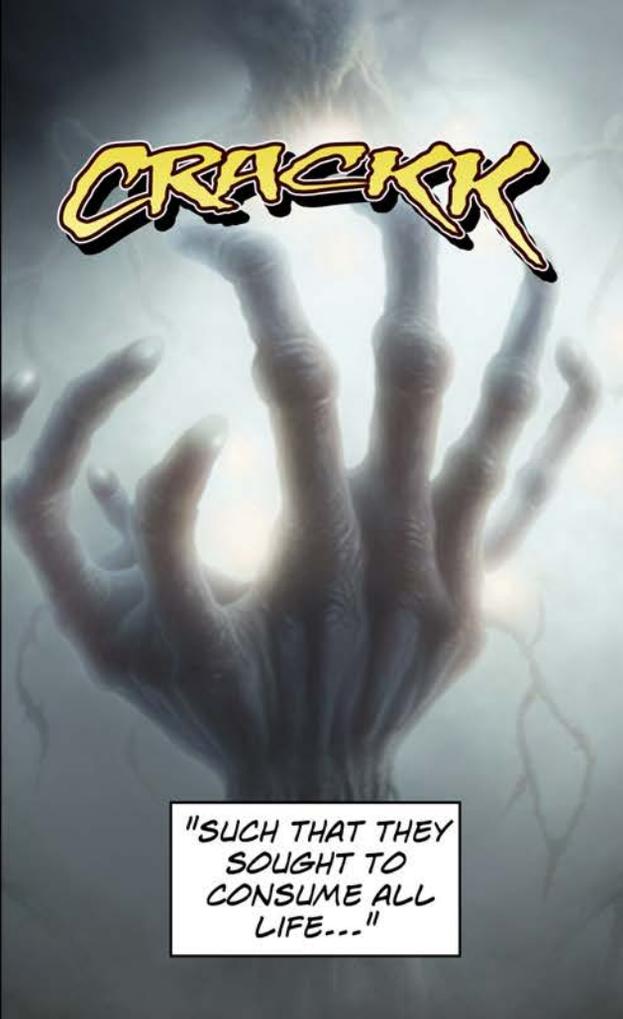
FATHER...

"AND ENKAI CONTINUED TO MOLD THEM, AND FOR A TIME THEY WERE INDEED BEAUTIFUL AND POWERFUL IN MIGHT."



"BUT ENKAI DID NOT POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE TO SUSTAIN HIGHER LIFE AND IN TIME THE NEPHYTS BECAME DEFORMED & RAVENOUS IN HUNGER..."

**CRACKK**



"SUCH THAT THEY SOUGHT TO CONSUME ALL LIFE..."

**GROWLL**



**GRRRR**

"EVEN ONE ANOTHER..."

"AND THE NEPHTYS  
OVERRAN THE DUAT, AND  
THOUGH THEY CONSUMED  
ONE ANOTHER EVEN THE  
BONES REGREW..."

**UGGHH**

**CRUNCH**

"SUCH THAT FOR A  
TIME THEY BECAME A  
SINGLE CANCER,  
CONSUMING  
RAVENOUS BEAST..."

**CHOMP**

**CHOMP**

"AND THEY GREW  
WITHOUT  
NUMBER TO  
SEEK OUT LIFE  
TO SUSTAIN  
THEM."

"...EVEN LORD ENKAI'S."



"AND WHEN HESPHUS HAD COMPLETED HIS STUDIES HE SOUGHT TO SEE TO HIS BROTHER'S PROGRESS..."

"AND BEHELD THE HORROR OF WHAT HIS BROTHER HAD DONE."



Do not come near brother, Or my children will overrun Aaruu.

"AND WHEN  
HESPHUS SAW  
THAT HIS BROTHER  
WAS OVERTAKEN  
BY THE NEPHTYS  
AND THAT HE  
COULD NEITHER  
PREVAIL NOR GIVE  
HIM AID..."



"IN DESPERATION HE  
PRAYED TO HIS  
FATHER TO  
RETURN..."





AND  
AKUMA  
HEARD HIS  
PRAYER.



"AND STRODE TO  
RETRIEVE HIS SON."



"AND WHEN LORD  
AKUMA SAW WHAT  
HIS SON HAD  
WROUGHT AND THE  
DEFORMATION OF  
HIGHER LIFE..."



"HE STOOD AS A  
STANDARD AGAINST THE  
UNDEAD..."



"AND SUMMONED  
THE POWER  
COSMIC TO  
DESTROY THE  
NEPHTYS..."



"BUT ENKAI HAD BOUND HIMSELF TO THE DUAT AND HE AND THE LAND WERE NOW ONE."

"AND WHEN IT WAS WOUNDED HE TOO WAS INJURED..."

**AARGHHH!!**

"AND THE GOD CRIED OUT IN PAIN..."

"BUT WHEN THE WHOLE OF THE LAND WAS REDUCED TO ASH..."

**CRACKLE**

"ASH ITSELF ROSE FROM THE GROUND TO REFORM AND..."

**SSSSSS**

"TO LIVE ONCE MORE..."

"AND IT WAS THEN THAT AKUMA KNEW THAT ENAKI HAD TIED HIS OWN LIFE TO THAT OF THE DUAT. AND THAT THE NEPHTYYS COULD NOT BE DESTROYED LEST HE DESTROY HIS OWN SON."

"AND THAT THE  
DEAD WOULD  
NOT DIE..."

**ERRRR**



"BUT WOULD  
MARCH TO ACCOST  
THE LIVING AS  
LONG AS HIS SON  
LIVED..."

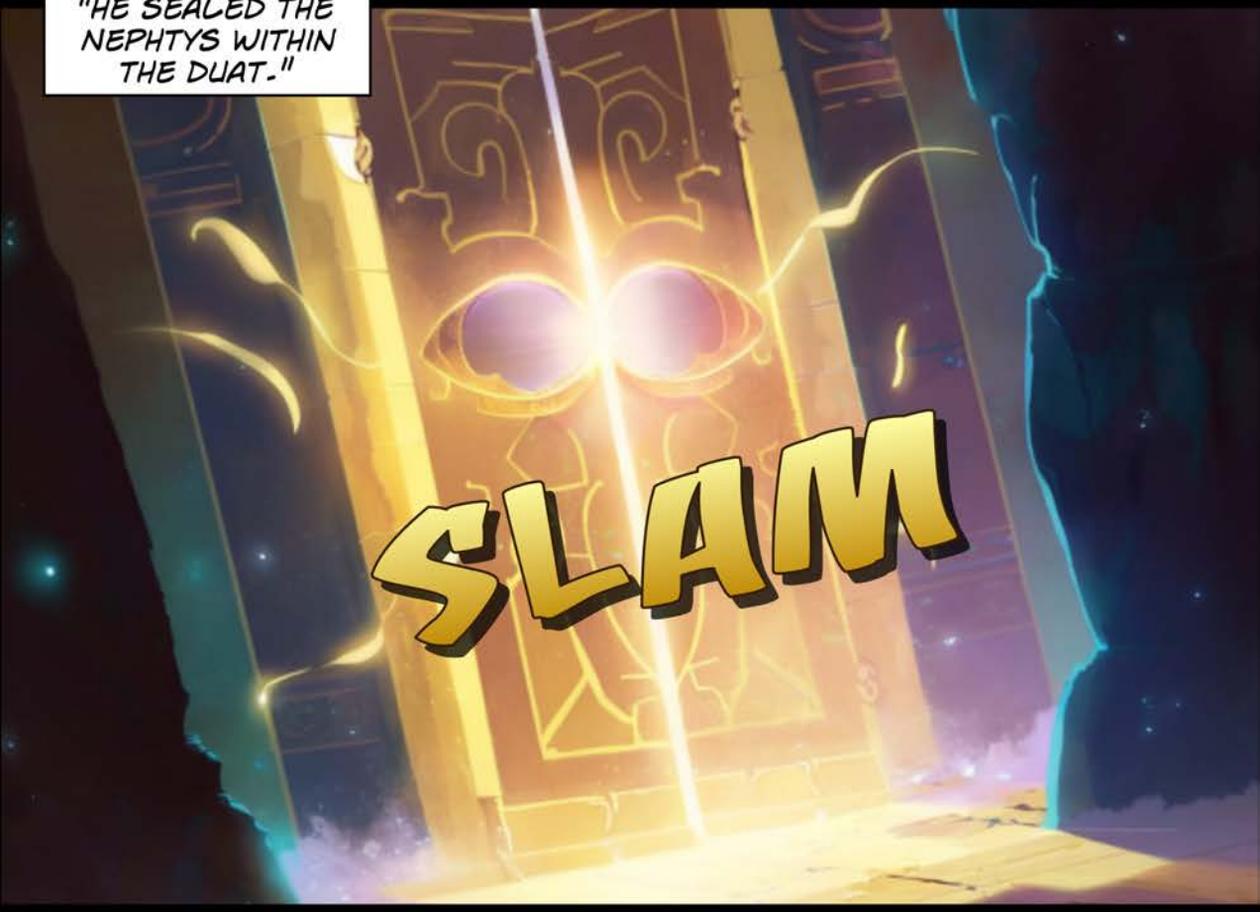
**GROWLL**



AND  
WHEN AKUMA SAW  
THE NEPHTYS WOULD  
COSUME ALL  
LIFE...



"HE SEALED THE  
NEPHTYS WITHIN  
THE DUAT."





"AND AKUMA  
RESCUED HIS SON  
AND WAS PLEASED  
HE WAS SAFE. HE  
THEN CHIDED HIM  
FOR DISOBEYING  
HIM."

YOU ARE  
NOW  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
LIFE MY SON. GO  
AND STUDY FOR  
WISDOM TO FIND A  
SOLUTION TO  
THEIR HUNGER.

"AND AKUMA  
CHARGED HIM TO  
GUARD THE  
ENTRANCE TO THE  
DUAT UNTIL HE  
COULD RESTORE  
THE NEPHTYS TO BE  
A FULLY LIVING  
PEOPLE."





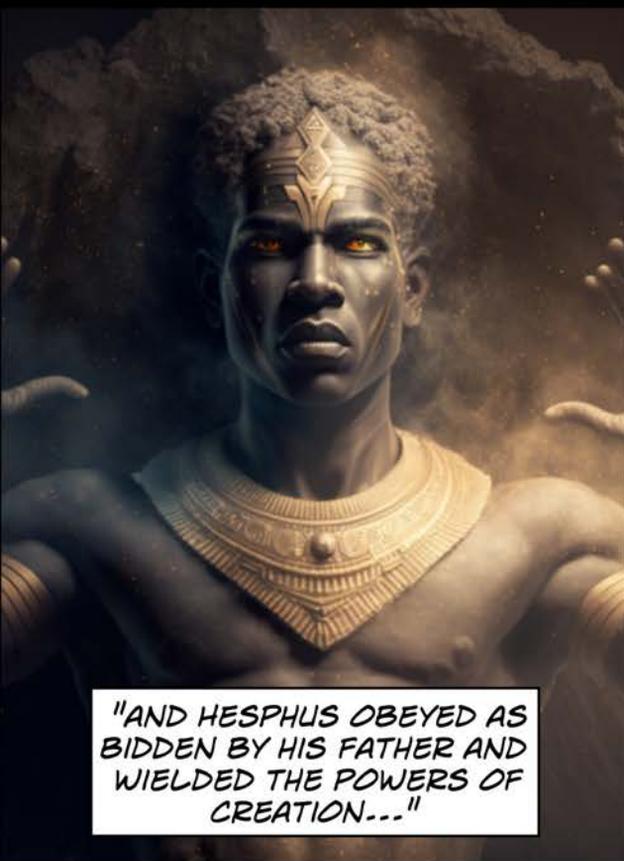
"AKUMA THEN  
TURNED TO  
HESPHUS...."

YOUR  
BROTHER HAS  
COMMITTED  
FOLLY. NOW GO  
AND WITH MY HAND  
TO GUIDE  
YOU...CREATE YOU  
A WORLD.

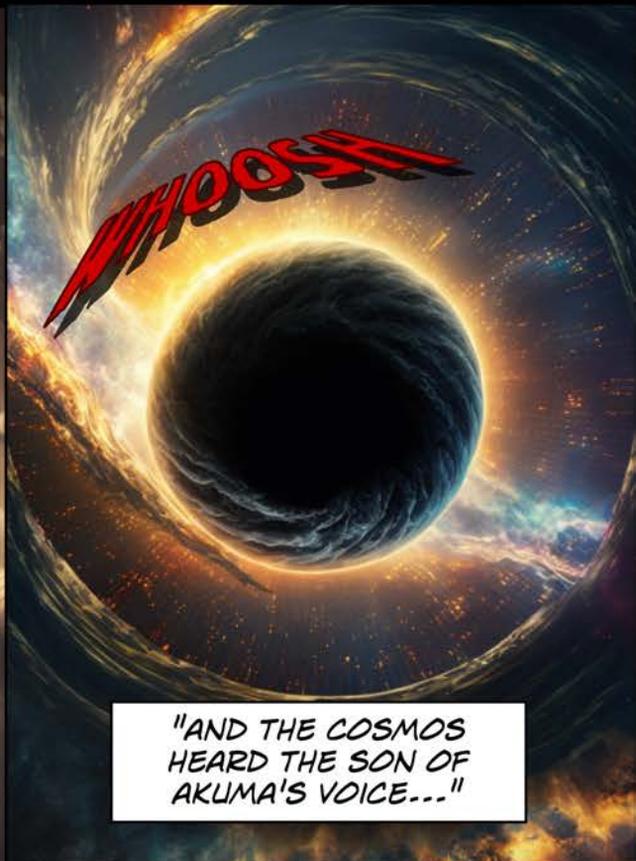
"AND HESPHUS UNDER THE  
WATCHFUL EYE OF HIS  
FATHER BEGAN TO SUMMON  
THE POWERS OF HIS FATHER  
TO CREATE A WORLD AND  
FILL IT WITH HIGHER LIFE."



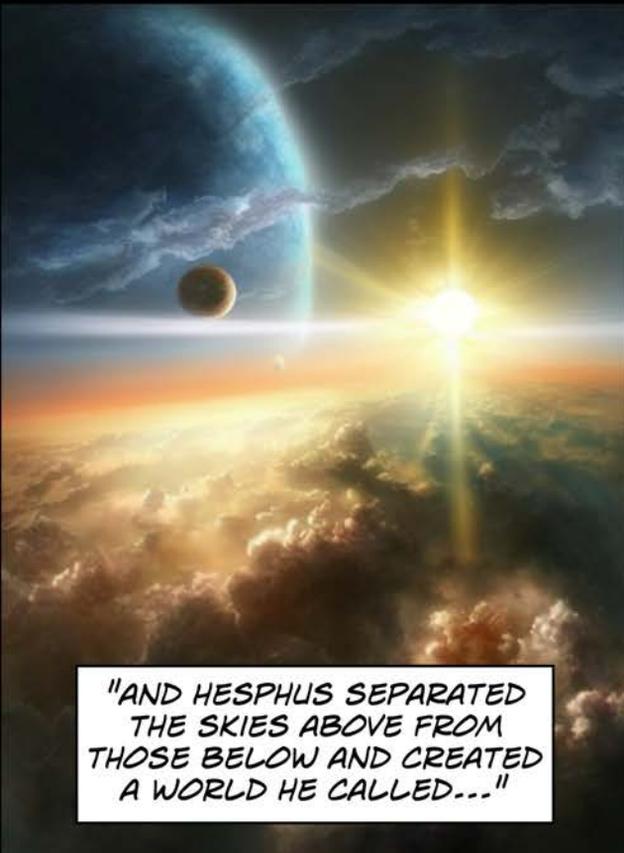
"AND ENKAI WATCHED FROM  
AFAR JEALOUS THAT HIS  
FATHER FAVORED HESPSHUS  
FOR WAITING TO CREATE A  
WORLD AND HIGHER LIFE."



"AND HESPHUS OBEYED AS BIDDEN BY HIS FATHER AND WIELDED THE POWERS OF CREATION..."



"AND THE COSMOS HEARD THE SON OF AKUMA'S VOICE..."



"AND HESPHUS SEPARATED THE SKIES ABOVE FROM THOSE BELOW AND CREATED A WORLD HE CALLED..."



"TANARA."

"AND ENKAI'S EYE  
TOWARDS HIS  
BROTHER BECAME  
EVIL..."



"AND HE VOWED TO  
SHOW HIS FATHER  
HIS ERROR..."

"AND HE RETURNED  
TO THE DUAT..."



"DETERMINED TO  
TAME HIS  
WAYWARD  
CHILDREN."



"AND ENKAI THROUGH  
FORCE OF WILL  
SUBDUED THE NEPTHYS.  
SUCH THAT THEY  
OBEYED THEIR  
CREATOR'S VOICE."





"AND WHEN AKUMA SAW THAT ENKAI WAS INTENT TO FOLLOW A PATH OF FOLLY HE GAVE COMMANDMENT TO HIS SON."

"FOR AKUMA EXPLAINED TO HIS SON THAT TO SAVE AARU AND THE NETHER REALMS FROM ENKAI THE BLIGHT OF THE NEPHTHYS MUST BE HEALED. LEST THEY WOULD COVER ALL EXISTENCE. BUT TO DO THIS HE MUST SEED HIS ESSENCE WITHIN TANARA THAT MEN BELOW MIGHT ASCEND AND WITH WISDOM AND HIS POWER DO WHAT HE COULD NOT...EITHER KILL ENKAI OR SAVE THE NEPHTHYS AND CONTEND WITH HIS SON."



GO  
TO MY KILN AND  
CRAFT A BOY WHOM  
YOU WILL TRAIN IN  
WISDOM. HE AND THOSE  
THAT FOLLOW WILL ONE DAY  
CONTEND WITH THE NEPHTHYS  
AND WITH ENKAI...HURRY  
WE DO NOT HAVE  
MUCH TIME.



"AND AKUMA GAVE HESPHUS THE HAMMER OF LIFE AND WITH IT HE WOULD CRAFT A BEING LIKE HIMSELF..."

A muscular man with a shaved head and a small tuft of hair, wearing a gold necklace with a large blue gem and a gold armband, is working in a kiln. He is using a long-handled tool to shape a piece of pottery. The background is filled with fire and smoke.

"AND HE TOOK  
STONE FROM  
AARU AND ASH  
WITH THEM  
SMELT IN  
AKUMA'S KILN A  
MAN CHILD..."

"AND LIKE HIS  
FATHER BEFORE  
HIM. HESPHUS  
CREATED  
CELESTIAL  
LIFE...A SON."

A young boy with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a gold shawl, is looking forward. He has a small gold crown on his forehead. The background is a warm, golden glow with some fire on the left.

"A CHILD  
CARVED FROM  
THE COSMIC  
ASH AND THE  
VERY BEDROCK  
OF AARU..."

"A CHILD BORNE  
FROM FIRE HE  
NAMED HUTARI."



"AND ENKAI SAW  
WHAT HESPHUS HAD  
DONE AND  
DESPISED THE  
BOY."



"AND HUTARI  
LEARNED FROM HIS  
FATHER."

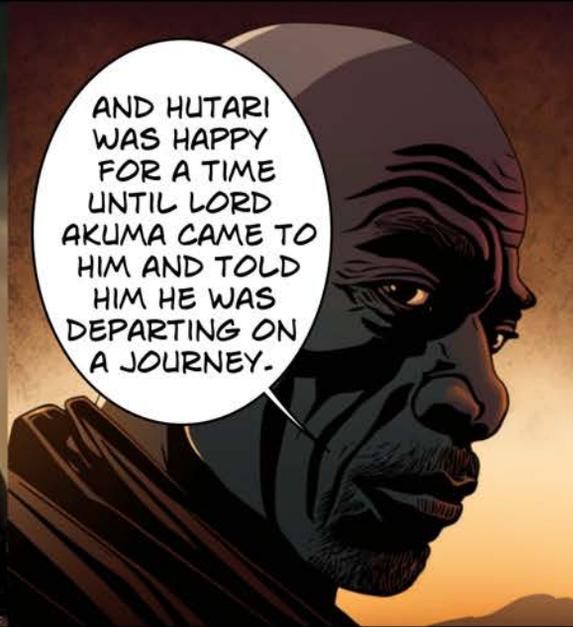




"AND UNDER  
HIS TUTELAGE  
HUTARI  
EXPLORED  
AARU..."



"AND STUDIED  
THE ELEMENTS  
AS BIDDEN BY HIS  
FATHER..."



AND HUTARI  
WAS HAPPY  
FOR A TIME  
UNTIL LORD  
AKUMA CAME TO  
HIM AND TOLD  
HIM HE WAS  
DEPARTING ON  
A JOURNEY.



I MUST GO AWAY HUTARI. BUT IF ALL GOES AS PLANNED I WILL ONE DAY SEE YOU AGAIN.

BUT WHY ALL-FATHER?

AH CHILD...YOUR UNCLE SEEKS A POWER HE CANNOT HAVE. I HOPE TO SAVE HIM WITH YOUR HELP.

BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

WHEN YOUR FATHER COMMANDS...YOU MUST RUN...AND THEN, THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN YOU TOO MUST SEED YOURSELF IN ANOTHER. TRUST YOURSELF AND DO NOT BE AFRAID..AND ALL WILL BE WELL. I MUST HURRY NOW...YOUR

CAN I COME?

NOT TODAY. BUT I PROMISE, I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN WHEN YOU ASCEND.

"AND THEN LORD  
AKUMA BEGAN TO SEED  
HIS POWER  
THROUGHOUT  
TANARA..."

REMEMBER  
YOUR FATHER'S  
LOVE TOWARDS YOU.  
AND KNOW THIS SON  
OF HESPHUS...

CRACKLE



I LOVE YOU  
TOO...

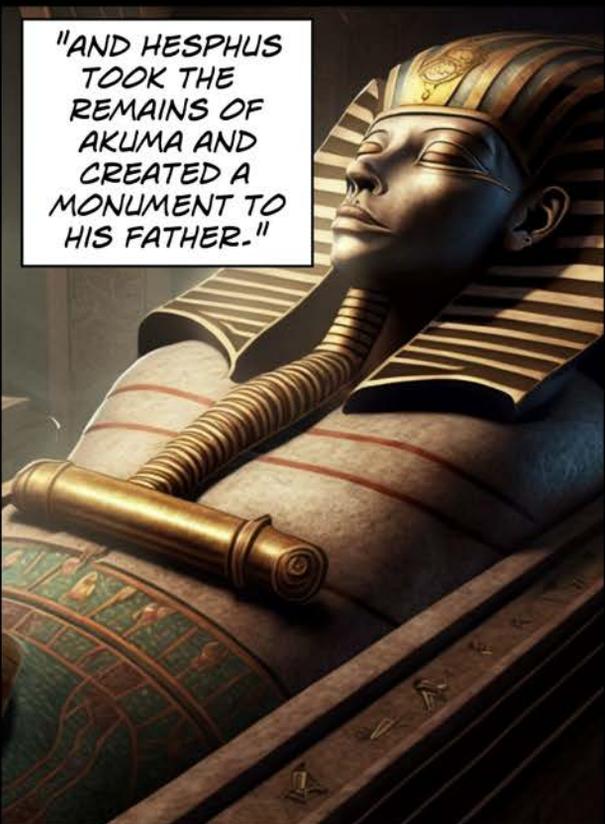
"AND THE BODY OF AKUMA  
TURNED TO ASH AND WAS  
SWEEP ALOFT BY THE  
CELESTIAL WINDS..."



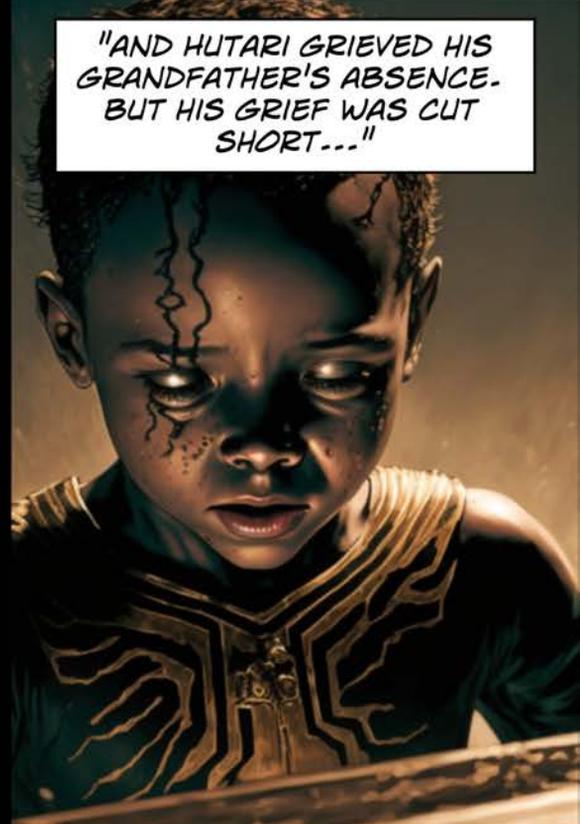
"AND HIS ESSENCE  
FELL AS RAIN  
UPON TANARA..."



"AND IT FORMED A  
BARRIER AROUND  
THE WORLD THAT  
NOTHING COULD  
PASS SAVE  
HESPHUS OR THAT  
WHICH HESPHUS  
HAD MADE..."



"AND HESPHUS  
TOOK THE  
REMAINS OF  
AKUMA AND  
CREATED A  
MONUMENT TO  
HIS FATHER."



"AND HUTARI GRIEVED HIS  
GRANDFATHER'S ABSENCE.  
BUT HIS GRIEF WAS CUT  
SHORT..."

**CRASH**



"FOR ENKAI  
HAD COME."

WHERE  
IS HE?

WHERE IS  
FATHER?  
I WOULD HAVE  
WORDS!



SO IT IS  
TRUE.  
FATHER HAS  
DEPARTED...

"ENKAI LOOKED DOWN UPON THE  
COFFIN MADE FOR HIS FATHER..."



FATHER  
ALREADY  
BEGINS HIS  
JOURNEY TO WALK IN  
THE LANDS BETWEEN. I  
HAVE COME FROM THE DUAT  
AND WITH LESSONS ATTAINED  
OUTSIDE THE SCHOOLING OF  
OUR FATHER. AS I SUSPECTED  
HE HELD BACK TRUTH FROM US,  
HELD BACK TRUTH FROM ME! HE  
HAS LIED HESPHUS, FOR THERE  
IS INDEED ANOTHER WAY TO  
RESCUE MY CHILDREN FROM  
THE PLAGUE OF HUNGER  
THAT RAVISHES MY  
HOUSE.

I KNOW  
OF THE BOY.  
SURRENDER HIM TO  
ME. HE HAS THE  
POWER TO SUSTAIN  
THEM. MAKE ANOTHER IF  
YOU LIKE BE GIVE HIM  
TO ME AND WE SHALL  
RULE ALL THE  
REALMS  
TOGETHER.





NO.



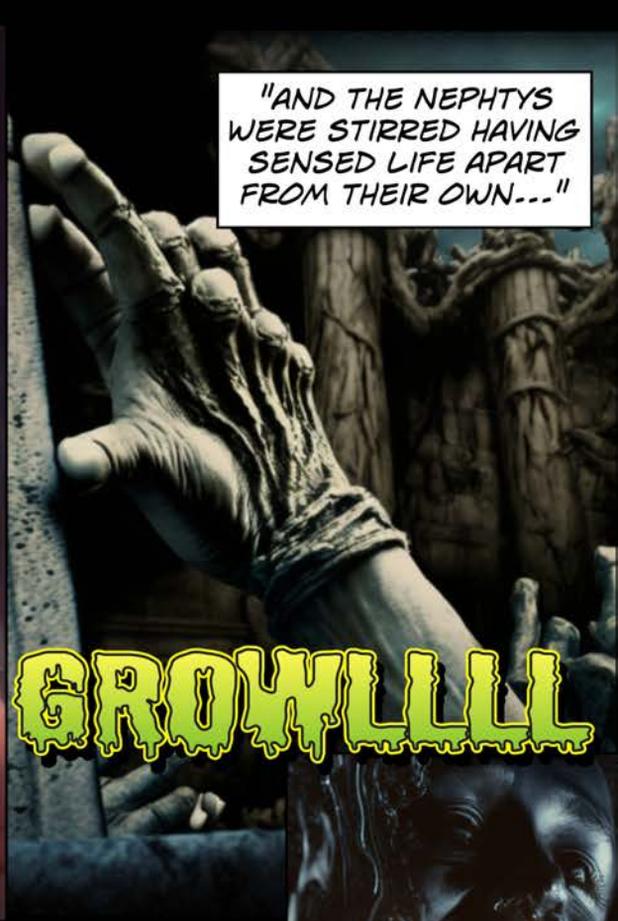
VERY WELL..

THEN YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE.



**CRACKLLL**

"ENKAI THEN OPENED  
THE DOORS TO THE  
DUAT..."



"AND THE NEPHTYS  
WERE STIRRED HAVING  
SENSED LIFE APART  
FROM THEIR OWN..."

**GROWLLLL**



"AND FLOODED AARU  
TO FEED UPON ALL  
THAT LIVED."

**CRASH**

HUNGER...

LIFE...

FEED...



**GRRRRR**



**DESTROY THEM!**



"AND HESPHUS  
WITHSTOOD BOTH  
ENKAI AND THE  
NEPHTYS..."

"AND FOR HUNDREDS OF  
MENS YEARS HESPHUS  
FOUGHT..."

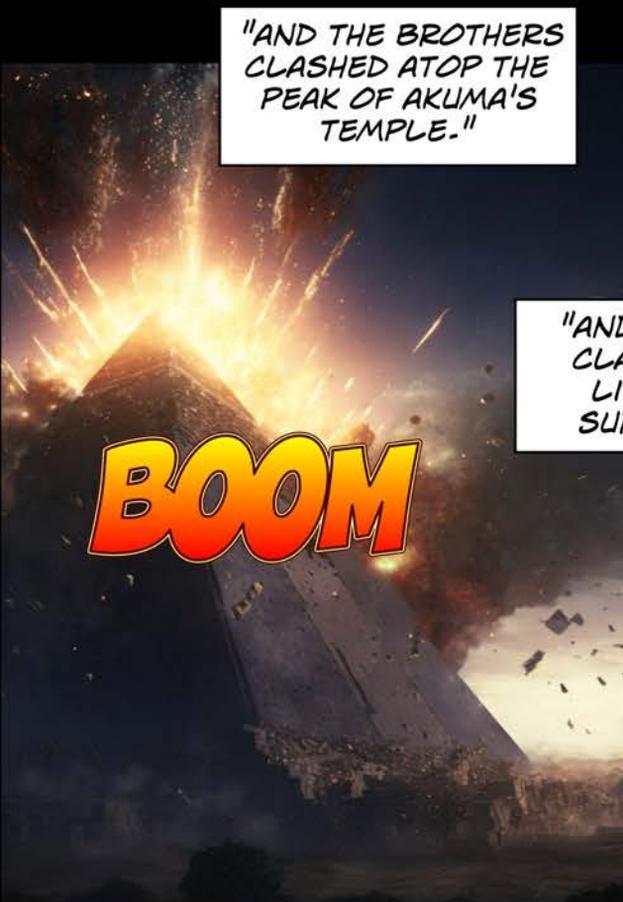


"DESTROYING THE  
NEPHTYS ONLY TO SEE  
THEM RISE AGAIN. SO  
HE DETERMINED TO  
PRESS HIS ATTACK  
AGAINST HIS BROTHER  
WHO WATCHED FROM  
AFAR..."



"UNTIL IN THE END  
THERE WERE JUST THE  
TWO CHARGING  
TOWARDS ONE  
ANOTHER..."

"IGNITING THE VERY  
AIR AROUND THEM..."



"AND THE BROTHERS  
CLASHED ATOP THE  
PEAK OF AKUMA'S  
TEMPLE."

"AND IN THEIR  
CLASH LEFT  
LITTLE TO  
SURVIVE..."





"ENKAI THEN  
HARNESSED THE  
POWER OF TWO  
DIMENSIONS TO  
STRIKE DOWN HIS  
BROTHER..."



**DIE!!**

"AND WHEN HESPHUS  
KNEW THAT HE COULD  
NOT PREVAIL AND  
THAT HUTARI WOULD  
PERISH. HE  
SACRIFICED HIS OWN  
LIFE THAT HIS SON  
MIGHT LIVE."



**HUTARI  
RUN!!**

# AARRGHHH!!

"AND HESPHUS  
WAS BURNED  
ALIVE..."

# KRACK-KOOOOOM

"AND AS HE LAY  
DYING HE UTTERED  
WITH HIS LAST  
BREATH THE ONLY  
WORD THAT  
MATTERED..."

**\*\*COUGH\*\***  
HUTARI...MY SON...

**NO!!**



"AND SEEING HESPHUS STRUCK DOWN, THE BOY OBEYED HIS FATHER AND RAN TO FLEE HIS UNCLE."

WHEN YOUR FATHER COMMANDS, YOU MUST RUN...

PRESSED FORWARD BY THE WORDS HE REMEMBERED FROM AKUMA...

"SO THE BOY DID AS BIDDEN AND RAN THROUGH THE LOWER DEPTHS OF AKUMA'S THRONE ROOM..."

"AND HE RAN THROUGH THE OUTSKIRTS OF AARU..."

"THE THOUGHT OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND THE PURSUIT OF ENKAI DROVE THE BOY TO RUN TO THE ENDS OF KNOWN CREATION..."

"AND WHEN THERE WAS NO WHERE ELSE TO RUN..."

"HE JUMPED..."



"FALLING INTO THE LIGHT  
AND THE WARM EMBRACE OF  
HIS FATHER'S CREATION..."



"TANARA..."



"AND AS HUTARI  
FELL, HE TURNED  
AND SAW INTO AARU  
ONE LAST TIME AND  
BEHELD THE FINAL  
ACT OF ENKAI."



"FOR ENKAI WOULD NOT  
LET DEATH CLAIM  
HESPHUS..."

RISE, SLAVE.  
RISE, AND BE  
REBORN.



"AND HE AWAKENED THE  
CHARRED CORPSE OF  
HIS BROTHER..."



"AND RESTORED  
THE BODY..."

"AND BREATHED INTO  
HIM THE MISTS OF  
LIVING DEATH FROM  
THE DUAT."



"AND PLACED A  
NEPHTYS WITHIN HIS  
BODY..."



URGG...

"...TO CONTROL  
HIS UNDEAD  
BROTHER."



THUS,  
ENKAI TURNED  
HESPHUS INTO A  
MONSTER HE COULD  
PUPPET FROM AFAR. A  
CREATURE LIKE THE  
NEPHTYS.



"AN UNDEAD CREATURE  
OF SMOKE AND ASH..."



"PLAGUE AND  
DEATH..."



"A CREATURE  
MEN WOULD  
CALL..."

"THE KIFU."



MASTER...



FATHER...

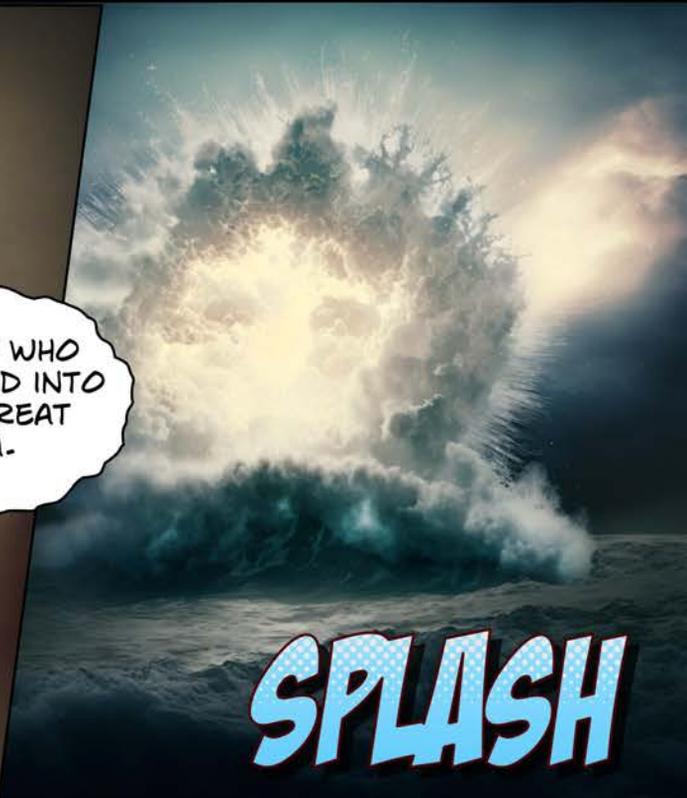


"AND SO THE  
BOY-GOD...A  
"GODLING" FELL  
TO TANARA. TO  
ESCAPE THE  
CLUTCHES OF  
ENKAI."

"A DEMI-GOD  
DESCENDING AS A  
FALLING STAR  
UPON THE  
LAND..."



A BOY WHO  
CRASHED INTO  
THE GREAT  
SEA.



**SPLASH**



"AND ENKAI GAVE  
COMMAND FOR THE  
KIFU TO FOLLOW...!"

GO.  
FIND THE  
BOY  
AND DESTROY  
HIM!



"AND WHEN ENKAI  
HAD LEFT THE  
KIFU...!"

"AND THE SKIES OF  
AARU HAD CLEARED...!"



"THE KIFU LEFT AARU  
TO SEARCH FOR  
HUTARI."

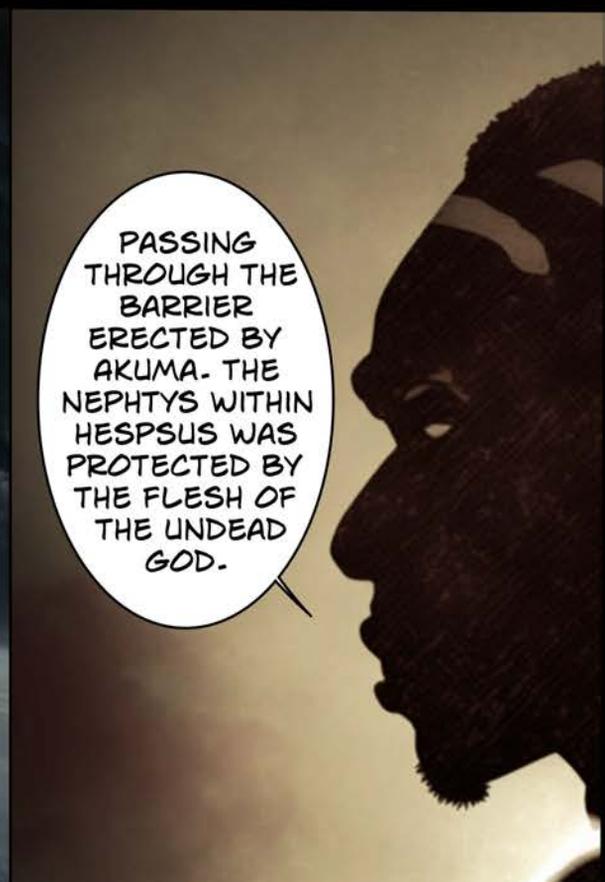


"DOWNWARD, THE  
WALKING-DEAD  
DESCENDED AS A  
DARK CLOUD TO  
TANARA..."

**SWOOSH**



**SHOOOM**



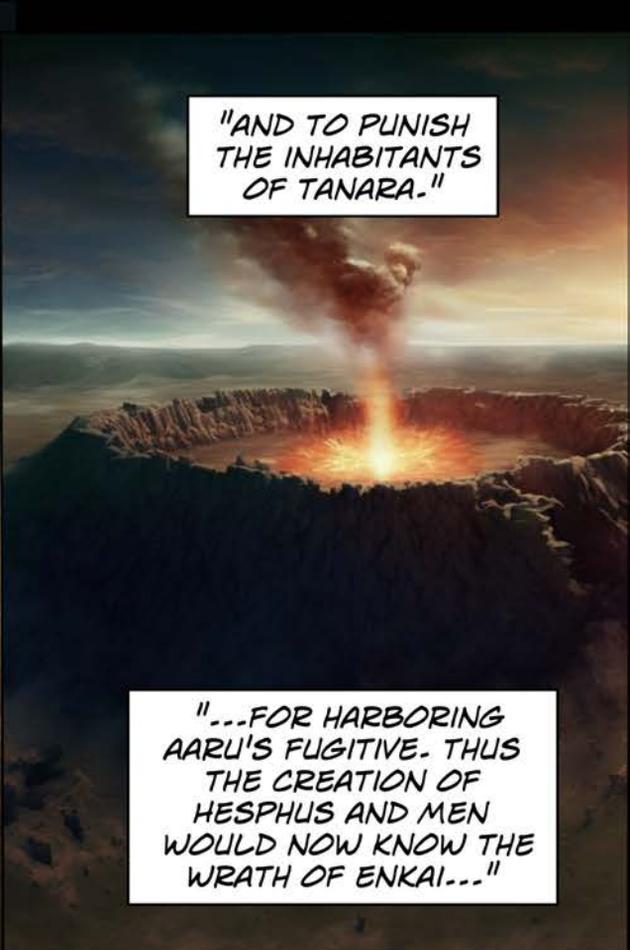
PASSING  
THROUGH THE  
BARRIER  
ERECTED BY  
AKUMA. THE  
NEPHTYS WITHIN  
HESPSUS WAS  
PROTECTED BY  
THE FLESH OF  
THE UNDEAD  
GOD.



"AN EVIL UNLEASHED  
UPON TANARA..."

**BOOOOM**

"TO HUNT THE BOY WITHIN  
THIS NEW WORLD..."



"AND TO PUNISH  
THE INHABITANTS  
OF TANARA."

"...FOR HARBORING  
AARU'S FUGITIVE. THUS  
THE CREATION OF  
HESPHUS AND MEN  
WOULD NOW KNOW THE  
WRATH OF ENKAI..."



**HSSSSSS...**

"FOR THE WALKING  
DEATH HAD NOW  
COME."



"AND THE KIFU  
STRODE TO AND  
FRO THROUGHOUT  
TANARA TO FIND  
THE CHILD..."

"A WALKING FORCE  
OF DEATH. THE  
HUSK OF A FORMER  
GOD..."

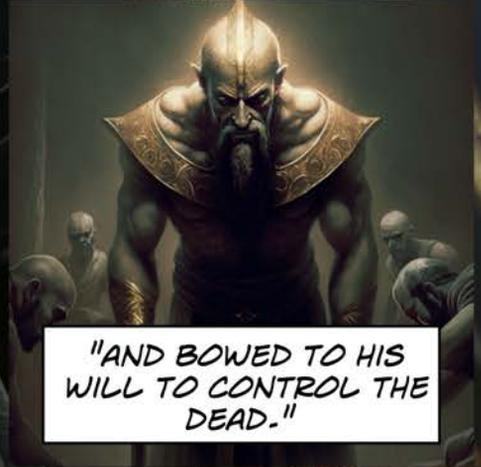
"A FORCE  
UNLEASHED BY  
ENKAI IN JEALOUSY  
TO DESTROY THE  
CREATION HIS  
BROTHER AND  
FATHER HAD MADE."



"AND WHEREVER THE KIFU ENCOUNTERED MEN, IT TURNED THOSE MEN  
INTO THE NEPHTHYS.

THUS, EACH PERSON TURNED INTO AN EXTENSION OF THE DUAT. AND  
THE GROWTH OF THE DUAT BECAME AN EXTENSION OF ENKAI'S REACH  
INTO TANARA. FOR ONLY THROUGH DEATH COULD ENKAI BREACH THE  
SHIELD THAT AKUMA HAD PLACED AROUND THE WORLD: A DIVINE  
BARRIER THAT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT THE GOD HIMSELF AT  
BAY AND FROM DESTROYING THE PEAK OF AKUMA'S CREATIVE WORK."

"BUT SOME MEN  
SOUGHT TO BARGAIN  
WITH THE GOD OF  
DEATH AND ALIGNED  
THEMSELVES WITH THE  
KIFU AND WORSHIPED  
ENKAI IN EXCHANGE  
FOR POWER."



"AND BOWED TO HIS  
WILL TO CONTROL THE  
DEAD."

"AND THE  
KIFU  
WALKED..."

"AND WHEREVER  
HIS FOOT STRODE  
DEATH, PLAGUE  
AND DESTRUCTION  
FOLLOWED."





ARRGH!

"AND IN EVERY  
TOWN AND  
VILLAGE..."



"DESPAIR REIGNED IN THE WORLD. FOR PLAGUE INFECTED ALL THAT ENCOUNTERED THE KIFU THAT WOMEN BURIED THEIR CHILDREN AND CHILDREN BURIED THEIR PARENTS."



"THAT THOUGH THEY BURIED THEIR DEAD..."



AND MEN DID NOT INITIALLY UNDERSTAND...



"THE DEAD REFUSED TO REMAIN BURIED..."



"AND IN TIME, MEN  
WERE CHANGED  
INTO NEPHTYS AND  
BEGAN TO  
CONSUME THE  
LIVING."

**GRRRR**



"AND THE DEAD  
FOLLOWED THE KIFU  
LEAVING NOTHING BUT  
ASH IN THEIR WAKE..."



"AND WHERE EVER MEN  
THOUGHT TO FLEE..."

"WHERE EVER THEY  
THOUGHT THEY COULD  
RUN..."

"DEATH FOLLOWED AND  
FOUND THEM."

AND THE  
EASTERN  
PART OF THE  
WORLD WAS  
OVERRUN SUCH  
THAT THE WHOLE  
OF THE EAST  
LANDS HAD  
SUCCUMBED TO  
THE WALKING  
DEATH.



"AND AN ARMY  
OF A  
THOUSAND,  
THOUSAND..."

"WERE ALL  
CONTROLLED BY THE  
KIFU, AND THE KIFU  
CONTROLLED BY  
ENKAI..."

"A VAST HORDE OF  
THE LIVING DEAD  
THAT STRETCHED AS  
FAR AS THE EYE  
COULD SEE..."



"AN ARMY THAT  
EVEN CROSSED  
THE GREAT SEA  
FLOOR TO  
SURFACE ON THE  
WESTLANDS..."

"BUT THE RACES OF  
MEN ASSEMBLED  
THEMSELVES TO  
CONFRONT THE  
UNDEAD..."



"DETERMINED THAT IF  
MAN WOULD FALL,  
HE WOULD FALL  
DEFENDING LIFE..."

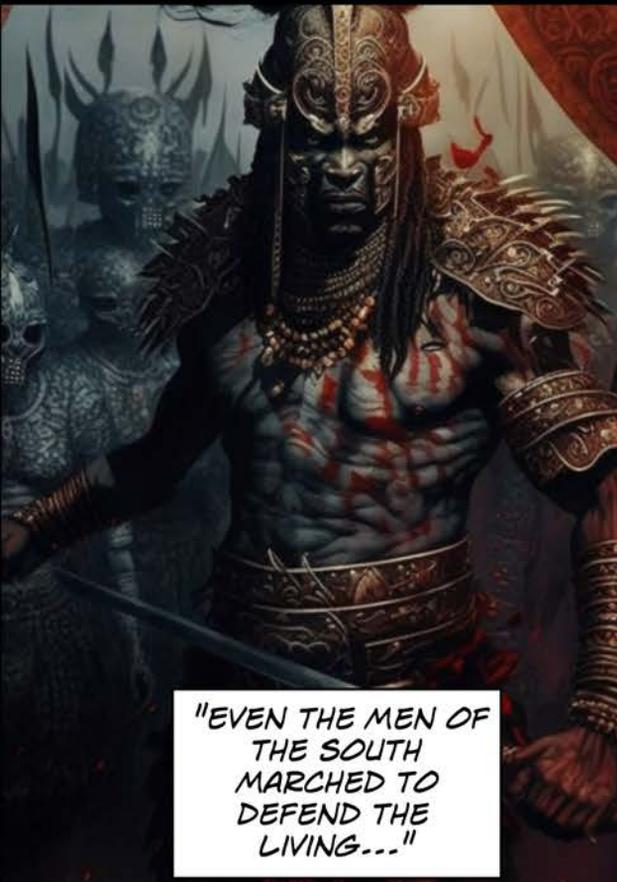
"AND SO  
THEY  
MARCHED..."



"THOSE STILL LIVING  
FROM THE LANDS OF  
THE EAST..."



"AND THOSE  
FROM THE  
ILES OF THE  
GREAT SEA..."



"EVEN THE MEN OF  
THE SOUTH  
MARCHED TO  
DEFEND THE  
LIVING..."



"AS DID  
THOSE FROM  
THE  
NORTHERN  
LANDS..."



"AND THE ARMIES OF THE DEAD  
CLASHED WITH THE ARMIES OF  
THE LIVING BENEATH THE  
SHADOW OF MT.-MOSHEK...."



"AND THE LIVING  
WERE LEAD BY  
THE GODLING...."

"HUTARI..."





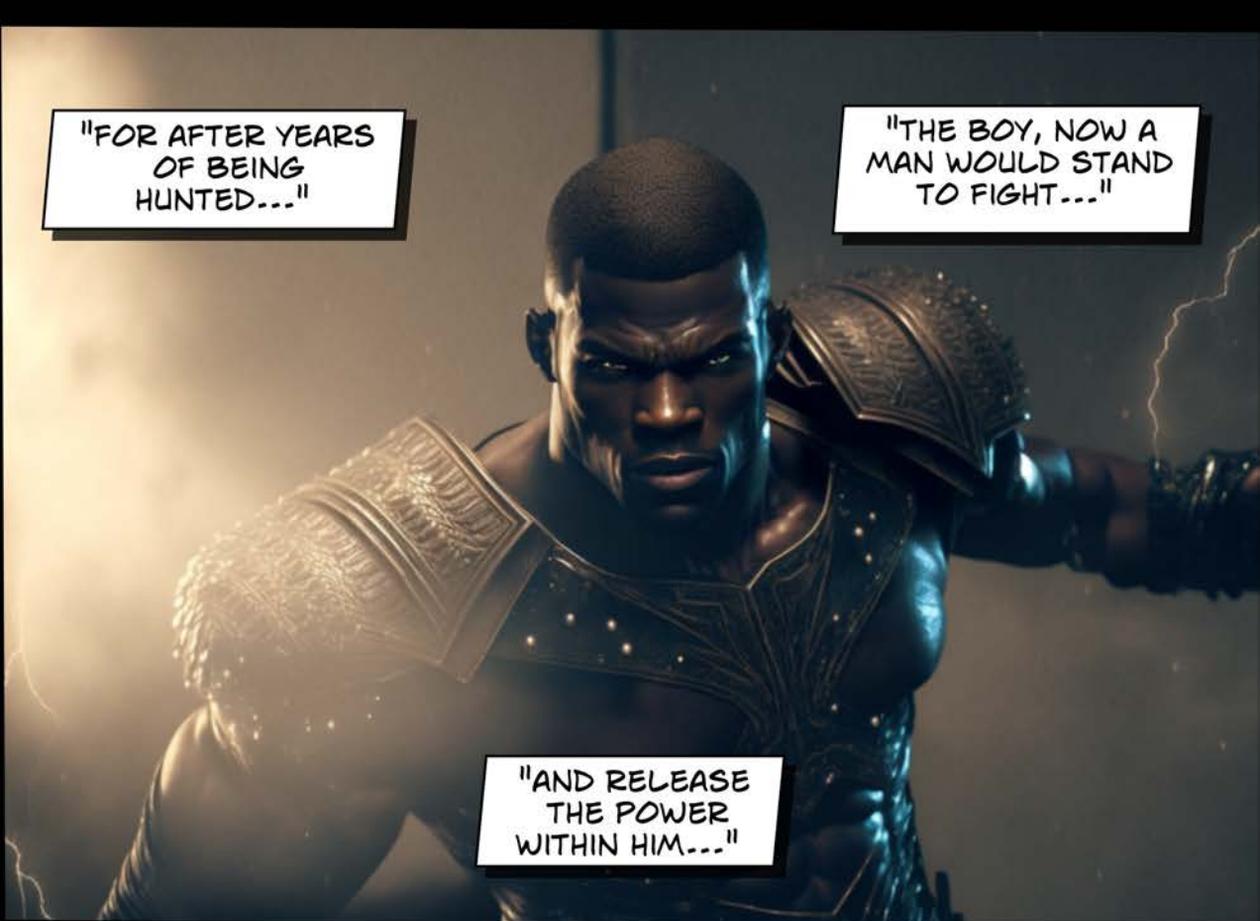
FOR THE BOY  
HAD BEEN FOUND ON  
THE SHORES OF THE  
WEST-LANDS OF BUSSAR AND  
THERE HE LEARNED TO FIGHT, AND  
TO USE HIS POWER TO DEFEND HIS  
PEOPLE. THERE AMIDST THE  
BUSSAR CLANS HE OVERCAME  
FEAR OF ENKAI AND THE KIFU AND  
CALLED MEN TO HELP HIM  
STOP THE ADVANCE OF  
THE NEPTHYS.

TO FACE DEATH  
ITSELF...



**ROARRRR!!**

"AND CONFRONT THE  
CREATED HORROR OF  
ENKAI, AND DESTROY  
THE ABOMINATION  
THAT WAS ONCE HIS  
FATHER."



"FOR AFTER YEARS  
OF BEING  
HUNTED..."

"THE BOY, NOW A  
MAN WOULD STAND  
TO FIGHT..."

"AND RELEASE  
THE POWER  
WITHIN HIM..."



"AND HE WOULD  
RUN NO MORE."

**ENOUGH!!**



AND FOR A  
MOMMENT...

"THE LATENT POWER OF AKUMA  
BECAME UNLOCKED. AND THE  
POWER TO CREATE AND DESTROY  
WORLDS WAS UNLEASHED..."

"A POWER NOW  
FOCUSED ON  
TANARA..."



"A POWER NOW  
CONCENTRATED ON  
A SINGLE BEING..."

**CRACKLE**

**ROAR**

**BA-CHOOM**

**EEEARGHH!**

"THE KIFU."

**KRACKKOOM**

"AND MEN, FOR A  
MOMENT PAUSED IN  
THEIR FIGHTING...."



"TO BEHOLD FROM AFAR  
WHAT SEEMED TO BE THE  
END OF THEIR WORLD."



FOR TANARA  
COULD NOT ENDURE  
SUCH POWER. AND  
MOUNTAINS WERE  
CLEAVED, AND  
CONTINENTS RAISED.



"SUCH THAT THE  
WORLD WOULD  
BREAK IF HUTARI  
DID NOT  
RELENT..."



"AND THE LAND GROANED ITS  
DISDAIN."

"FOR THE CLOUDS WAILED  
AND SCREAMED..."



"MOUNTAINS RAINED  
FIRE..."

"AND THE FOUNTAINS  
OF THE DEEP BROKE  
AND BROUGHT FORTH  
DESTRUCTION..."



"AND THERE WAS NO WHERE ON  
THE WHOLE OF TANARA WHERE  
MEN DID NOT FEEL THE POWER  
OF THE GODLING'S MIGHT."



REGRETFULLY  
MANY LIVES WERE  
LOST THAT  
DAY...



"BUT THE BATTLE HAD  
COME TO AN END AND  
THE DEAD RETURNED TO  
ASH WITHOUT THE  
POWER OF THE KIFU..."

"AND MEN  
CELEBRATED THE  
BATTLE'S END..."



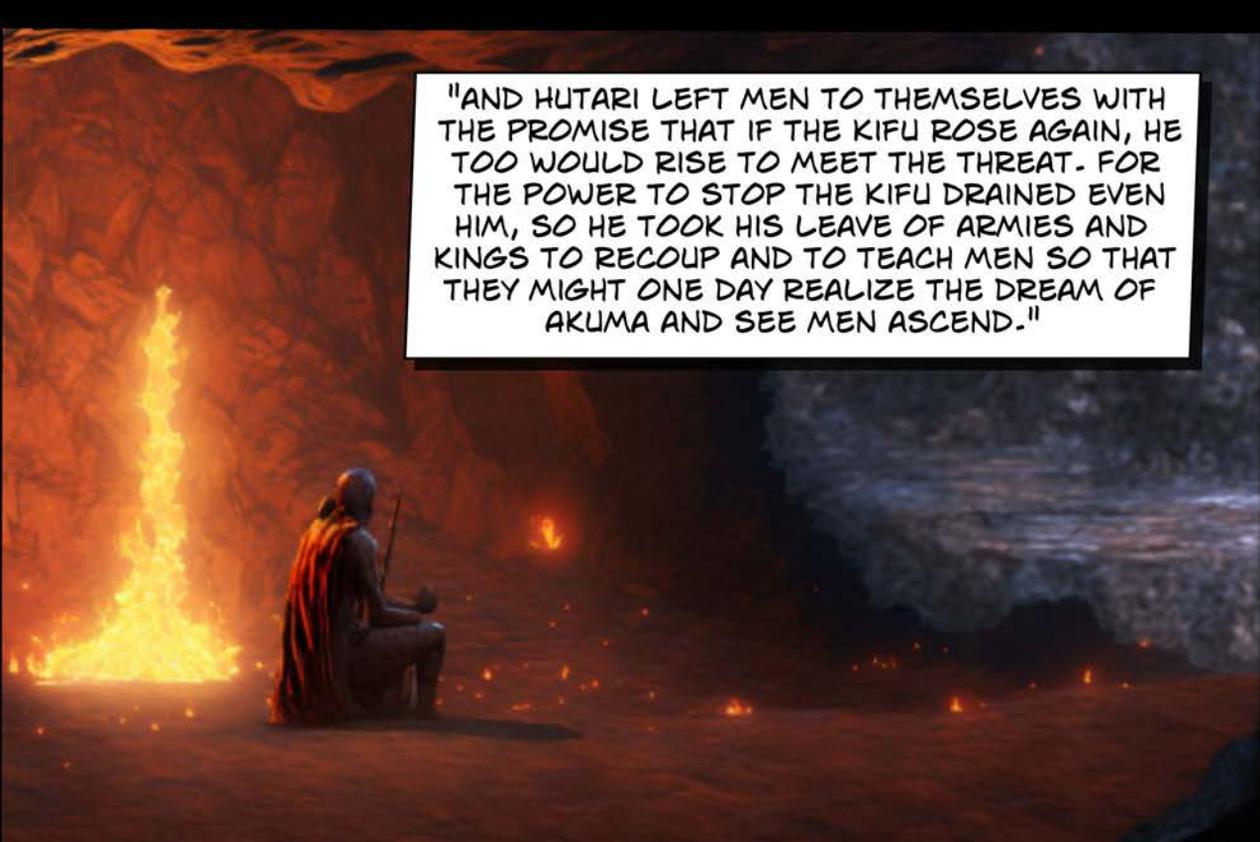
VICTORY IS  
OURS!!



TO OUR  
LORD  
HUTARI!!!



"AND MEN WANTED TO  
CROWN HIM THEIR KING, TO  
LEAD THEM---BUT HE  
WOULD NOT."



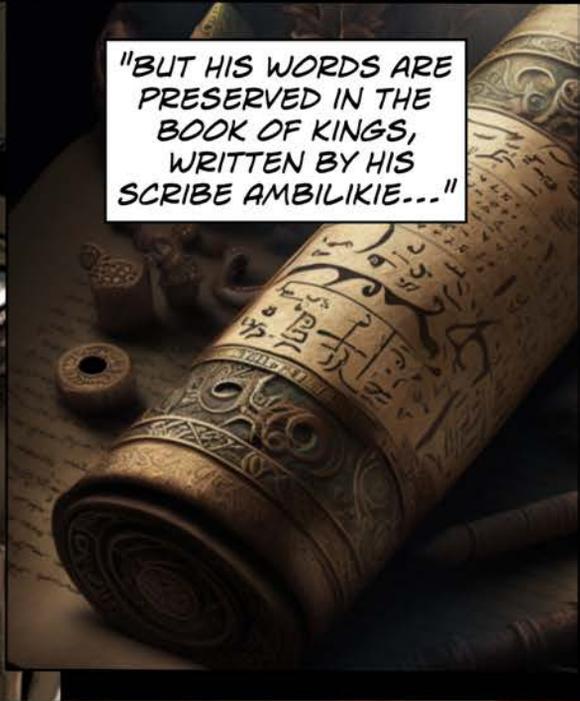
"AND HUTARI LEFT MEN TO THEMSELVES WITH THE PROMISE THAT IF THE KIFU ROSE AGAIN, HE TOO WOULD RISE TO MEET THE THREAT. FOR THE POWER TO STOP THE KIFU DRAINED EVEN HIM, SO HE TOOK HIS LEAVE OF ARMIES AND KINGS TO RECOUP AND TO TEACH MEN SO THAT THEY MIGHT ONE DAY REALIZE THE DREAM OF AKUMA AND SEE MEN ASCEND."

"AND OVER TIME, MEN FORGOT WHO THE HUTARI WAS AND HIS WHEREABOUTS..."

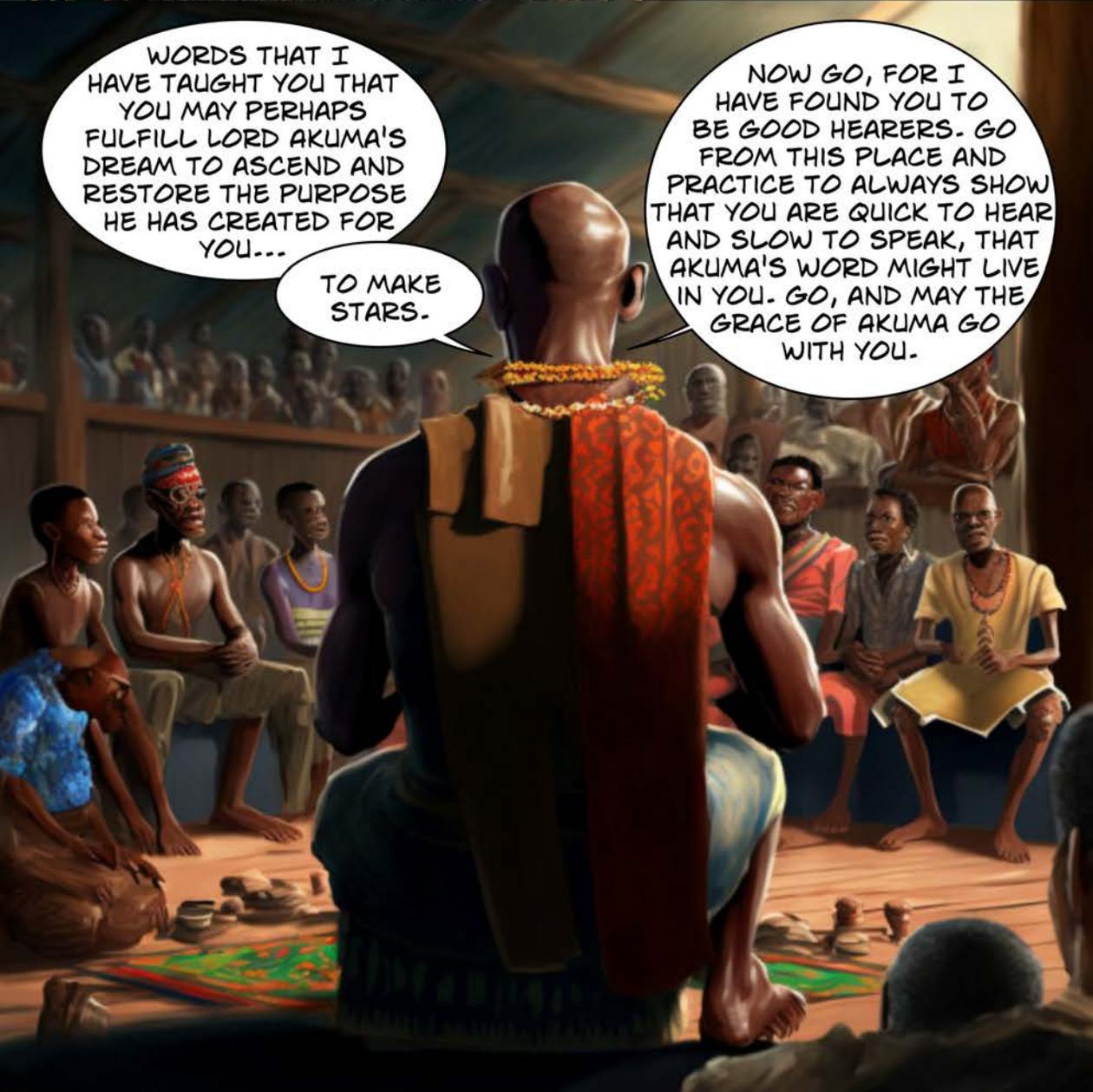




FOR ALL HAVE DIED WHO ONCE KNEW HIM.



"BUT HIS WORDS ARE PRESERVED IN THE BOOK OF KINGS, WRITTEN BY HIS SCRIBE AMBILIKIE..."



WORDS THAT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU THAT YOU MAY PERHAPS FULFILL LORD AKUMA'S DREAM TO ASCEND AND RESTORE THE PURPOSE HE HAS CREATED FOR YOU...

TO MAKE STARS.

NOW GO, FOR I HAVE FOUND YOU TO BE GOOD HEARERS. GO FROM THIS PLACE AND PRACTICE TO ALWAYS SHOW THAT YOU ARE QUICK TO HEAR AND SLOW TO SPEAK, THAT AKUMA'S WORD MIGHT LIVE IN YOU. GO, AND MAY THE GRACE OF AKUMA GO WITH YOU.



WASN'T THAT A WONDERFUL STORY?

WILL WE HEAR IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

...MAKE STARS?

I WANT TO ASCEND!

ME TOO!



YOU, YOUNG MAN WILL TAKE ME TO YOUR FATHER.

YES WISDOM!



THANK YOU WISDOM FOR TEACHING MY SON.

?

IT WOULD SEEM I MUST ALSO TEACH HIS FATHER ALSO.



I AM SORRY WISDOM, BUT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

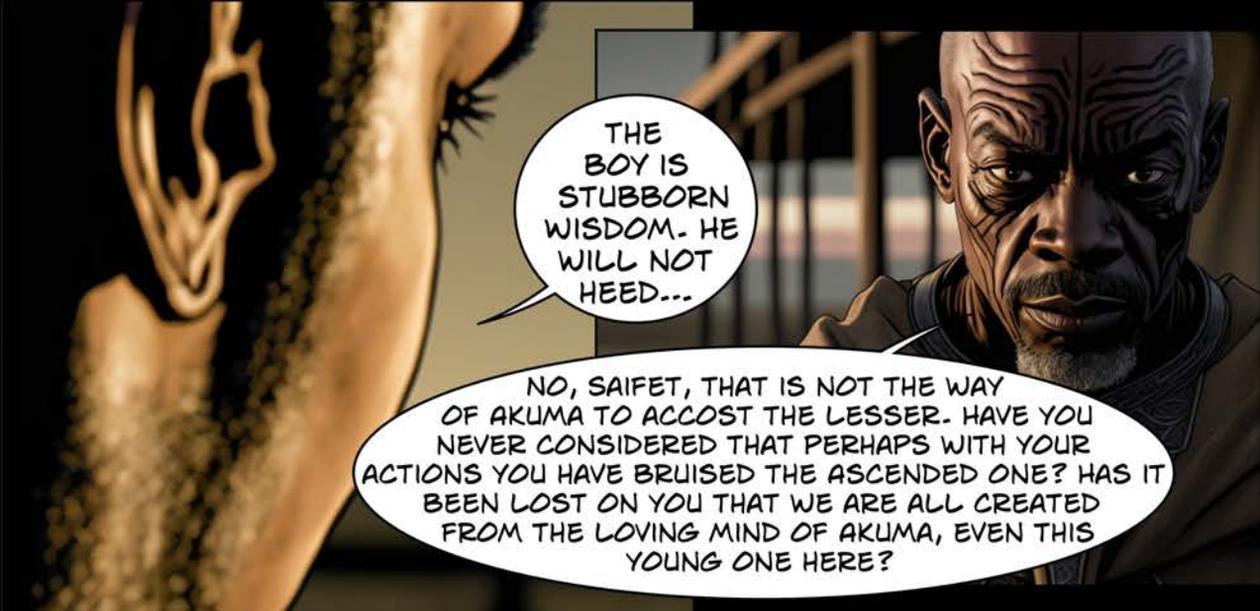


NO, IT IS CLEAR YOU DO NOT. DID YOU HEAR THE LESSON TODAY?



I DID, TEACHER. AND I HAVE REMEMBERED IT EVEN FROM MY YOUTH.

WHY THEN, DID YOU NOT FEAR TO STRIKE YOUR SON AND DISCIPLINE HIM PROPERLY AS TO KEEP HIM IN THE WAY? TO STRIKE HIM AS TO LEAVE SUCH BRUISES... THIS IS NOT THE WAY OF SOMEONE WHO HAS LEARNED THE WISDOM OF THIS STORY.



THE BOY IS STUBBORN WISDOM. HE WILL NOT HEED...

NO, SAIFET, THAT IS NOT THE WAY OF AKUMA TO ACCOST THE LESSER. HAVE YOU NEVER CONSIDERED THAT PERHAPS WITH YOUR ACTIONS YOU HAVE BRUISED THE ASCENDED ONE? HAS IT BEEN LOST ON YOU THAT WE ARE ALL CREATED FROM THE LOVING MIND OF AKUMA, EVEN THIS YOUNG ONE HERE?

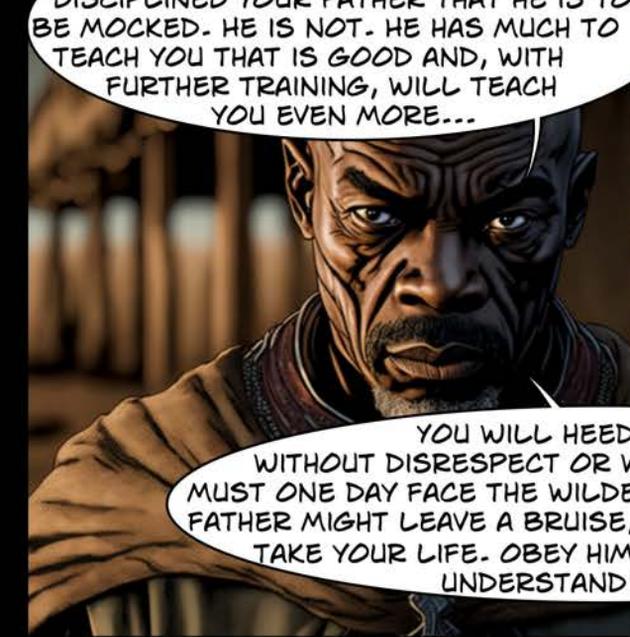


YOU WILL NOT TOUCH THE BOY IN THAT MANNER AGAIN.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

YES, WISDOM.

KEMET, DO NOT THINK THAT BECAUSE WISDOM HAS DISCIPLINED YOUR FATHER THAT HE IS TO BE MOCKED. HE IS NOT. HE HAS MUCH TO TEACH YOU THAT IS GOOD AND, WITH FURTHER TRAINING, WILL TEACH YOU EVEN MORE...



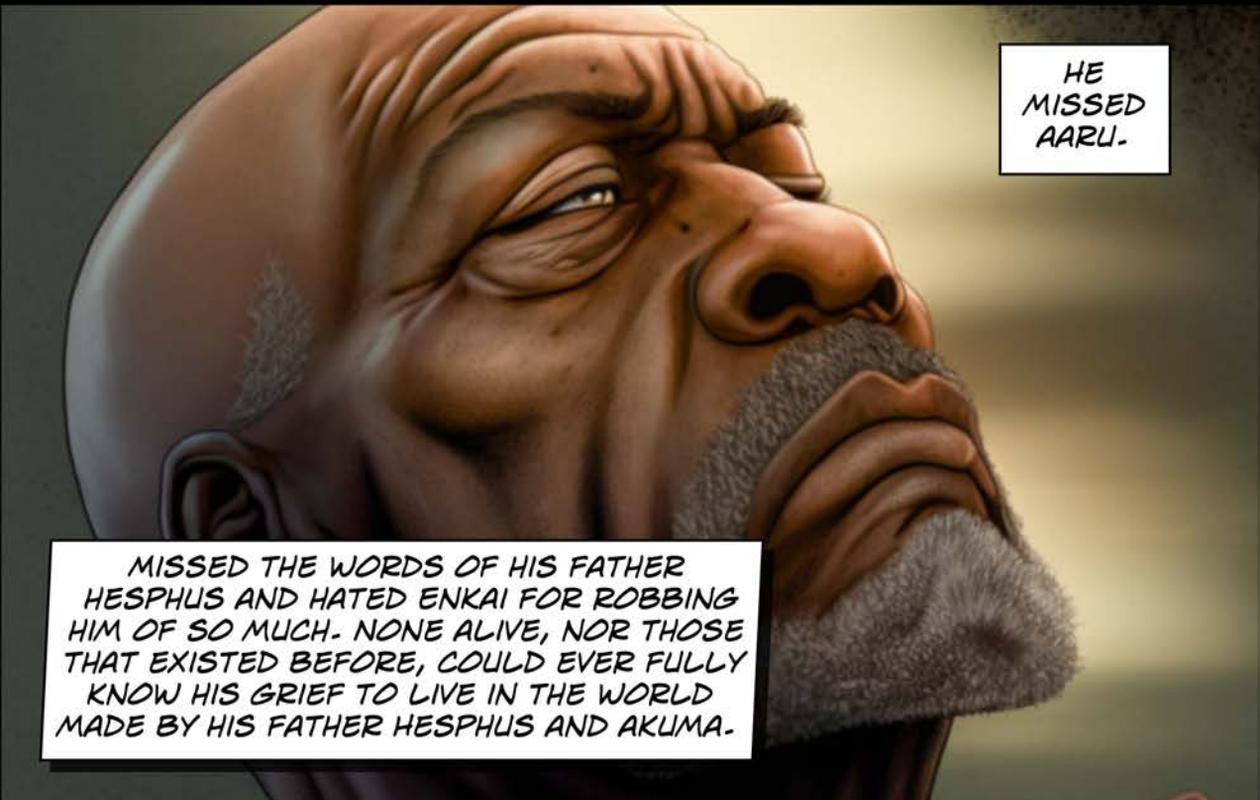
YOU WILL HEED HIS WORD WITHOUT DISRESPECT OR WILLFULNESS. YOU MUST ONE DAY FACE THE WILDERNESS, AND WHILE YOUR FATHER MIGHT LEAVE A BRUISE, THE WILDERNESS WILL TAKE YOUR LIFE. OBEY HIM. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



YES, WISDOM.



M'MSEE SEATED HIMSELF AND SIGHED AS HE WATCHED MANY OF THE VILLAGE'S PEOPLE DEPART. HE COULD NOT RECOUNT HOW MANY CENTURIES NOW HE HAD TOLD THAT STORY. HOW REPEATEDLY, EACH YEAR, PEOPLE GATHERED TO HEAR IT, AND WITH EACH TELLING, IT SADDENED HIM MORE. IT WAS AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE TO RELIVE. UNPLEASANT INDEED SAVE THE CHILDREN. THEY ALWAYS BROUGHT A SMILE TO HIS FACE, AND THEIR INNOCENCE WAS A BRIGHT REMINDER OF HOME.

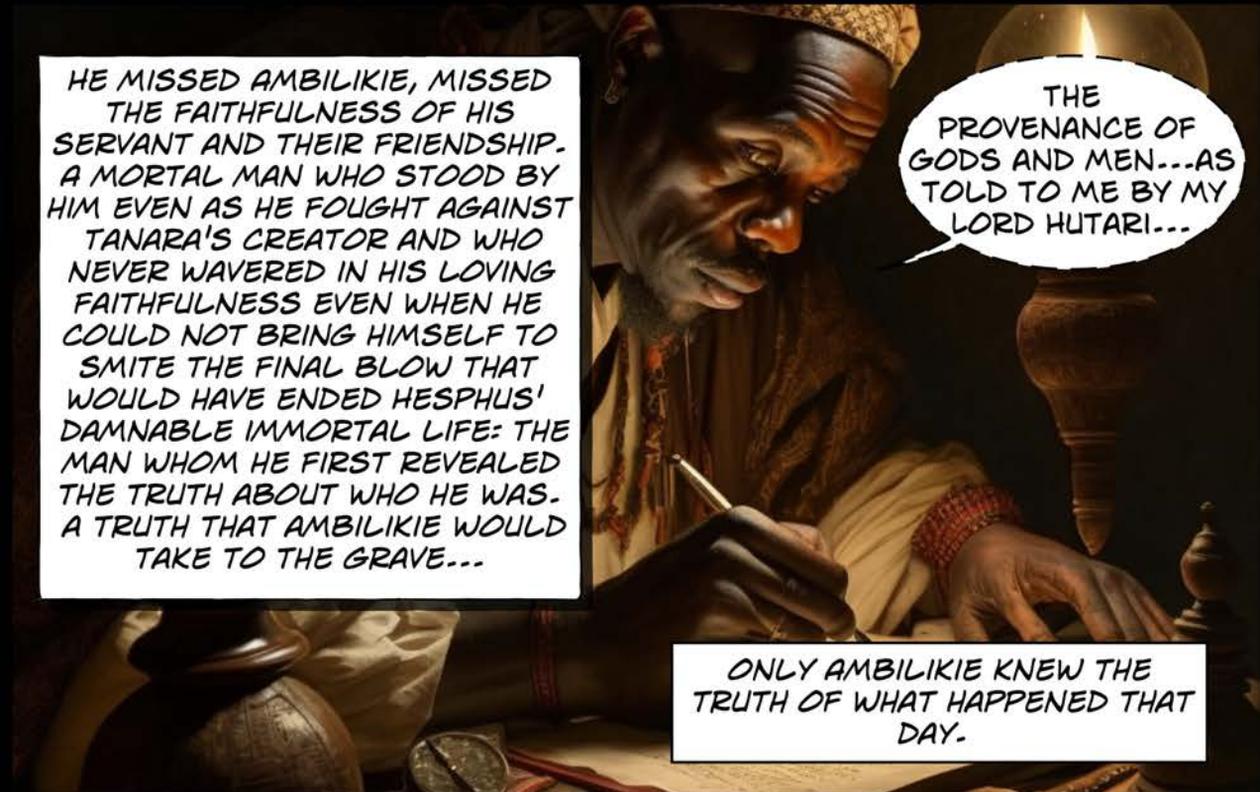


HE MISSED AARU.

MISSED THE WORDS OF HIS FATHER HESPHUS AND HATED ENKAI FOR ROBBING HIM OF SO MUCH. NONE ALIVE, NOR THOSE THAT EXISTED BEFORE, COULD EVER FULLY KNOW HIS GRIEF TO LIVE IN THE WORLD MADE BY HIS FATHER HESPHUS AND AKUMA.



BUT THE SAME, HAVING FALLEN SO SHORT OF WHAT HIS FATHER AND AKUMA INTENDED. M'MSEE WHOSE TRUE NAME WAS HUTARI; KNEW THAT MANY OF THE CLAN'S PEOPLE THOUGHT HIS TALES WERE JUST FABLES TO GIVE LESSONS TO CHILDREN. BUT SUCH WAS THE WAY OF MEN TO FORGET THE WAYS OF OLD.

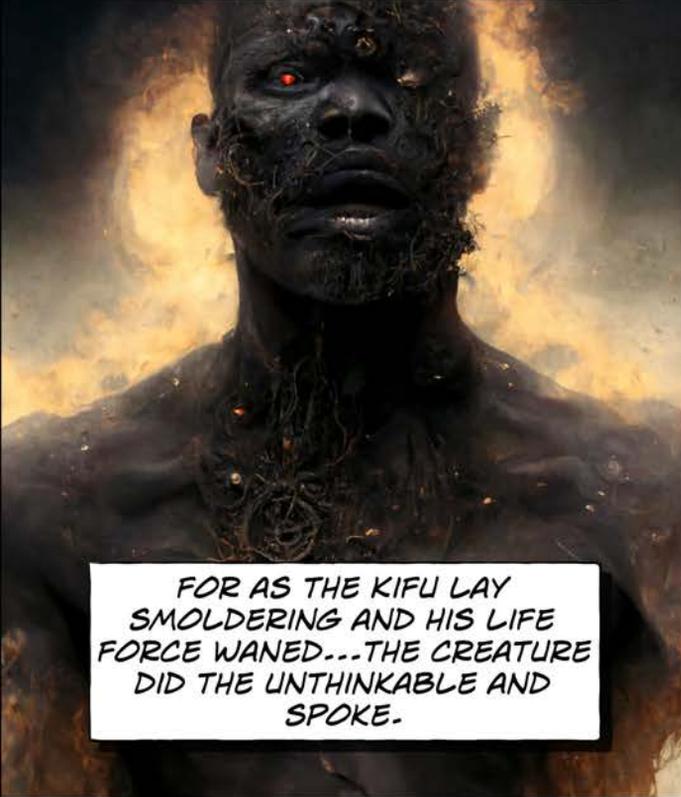


HE MISSED AMBILIKIE, MISSED THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS SERVANT AND THEIR FRIENDSHIP. A MORTAL MAN WHO STOOD BY HIM EVEN AS HE FOUGHT AGAINST TANARA'S CREATOR AND WHO NEVER WAVERED IN HIS LOVING FAITHFULNESS EVEN WHEN HE COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO SMITE THE FINAL BLOW THAT WOULD HAVE ENDED HESPHUS' DAMNABLE IMMORTAL LIFE: THE MAN WHOM HE FIRST REVEALED THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO HE WAS. A TRUTH THAT AMBILIKIE WOULD TAKE TO THE GRAVE...

THE PROVENANCE OF GODS AND MEN...AS TOLD TO ME BY MY LORD HUTARI...

ONLY AMBILIKIE KNEW THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.

FOR AMBILIKIE WITNESSED THE WORDS EXCHANGED BETWEEN...A FATHER TO HIS SON...



FOR AS THE KIFU LAY SMOLDERING AND HIS LIFE FORCE WANED...THE CREATURE DID THE UNTHINKABLE AND SPOKE.



SON?  
HUTARI?



FATHER?

KILL ME  
SON...DO NOT  
ALLOW MY  
EXISTENCE TO  
CONTINUE TO  
BE USED BY  
ENKAI...



PLEASE  
SON...

AND WITH THOSE WORDS HESPHUS COLLAPSED STILL ALIVE. BUT HUTARI COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO KILL HIS OWN FATHER AND DETERMINED TO SAVE HIM. FOR IT WAS CLEAR THAT DESPITE THE NEPHTYS LIVING WITHIN HIM, SOMEHOW HESPHUS STILL BATTLED AGAINST ENKAI'S INFLUENCE. SOMEHOW RETAINED A PORTION OF HIMSELF.



AND SO HUTARI TOOK HIS FATHER INTO THE GREAT SEA AND SEPARATED THE WATERS ABOVE FROM THOSE BELOW...

SHOOOM



AND DRIED LAND IN THE  
MIDST OF THE GREAT  
OCEAN...

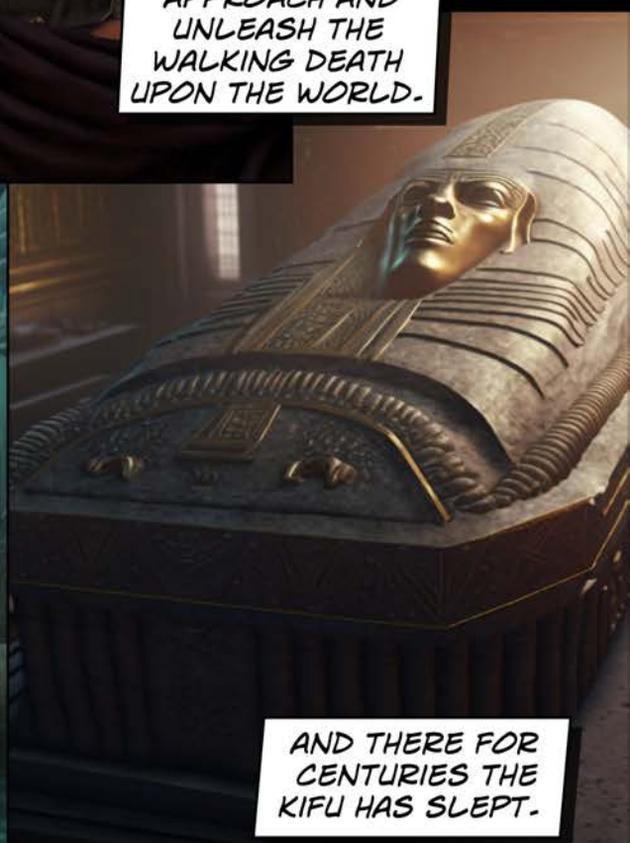
**SWOOSH**



ASSURING THAT  
NONE COULD EVER  
APPROACH AND  
UNLEASH THE  
WALKING DEATH  
UPON THE WORLD.



...AND HUTARI BUILT A TOMB  
FOR HIS FATHER, AS HIS  
FATHER HAD DONE BEFORE  
HIM. AND HE SUBMERGED THE  
KIFU AWAY FROM THE PRYING  
EYES OF MEN.



AND THERE FOR  
CENTURIES THE  
KIFU HAS SLEPT.

SURROUNDED BY THE MOST  
POWERFUL STORM ON  
TANARA.

A STATIONARY STORM  
ABOVE THE KIFU THAT  
ALLOWED NO SHIP TO  
PASS.

AND ALL THAT  
DARED...

MET THEIR  
IGNOBLE END...



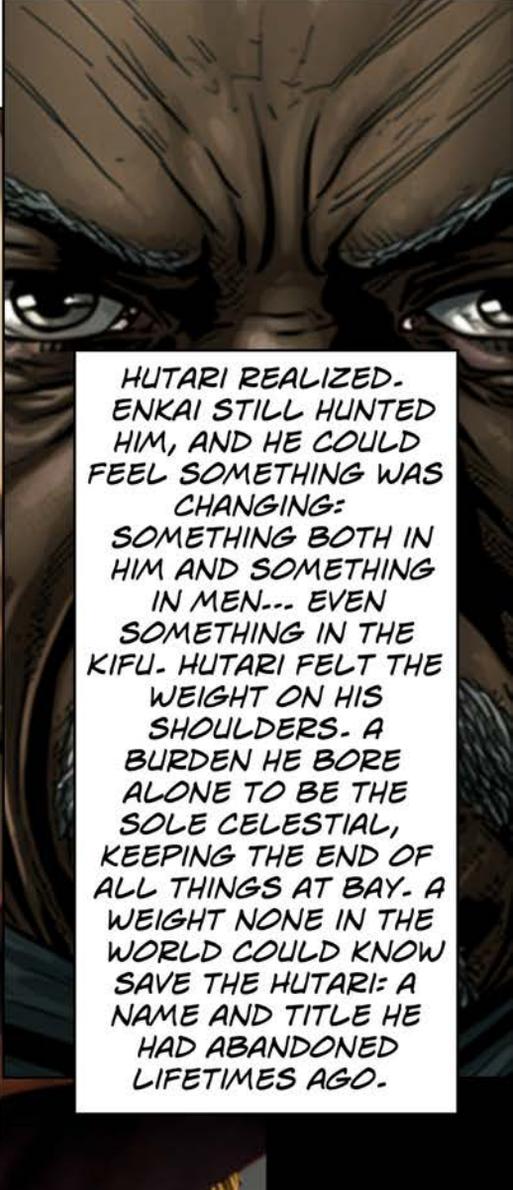
HUTARI KNEW THAT AKUMA'S PLAN REQUIRED PATIENCE...BUT HE WAS TIRED...

THE YEARS OF SEEING THOSE THAT HE LOVED, AGE AND DIE, STRETCHED HIM: STRETCHED HIM AS A THINNING PARCHMENT READY TO TEAR. FOR SUCH GRIEF WAS NEVER IN THE DESIGN OF AKUMA. AND THE DEATH OF EACH LOVED ONE ONLY HARDENED HIS RESOLVE TO SEE DEATH ITSELF UNDONE.

AGED BY THE EXERTION NEEDED TO HOLD THE STORM ABOVE HIS FATHER AND TO KEEP HIM DORMAT.



A PRICE HE WILLINGLY PAID FOR CHOOSING TO FIND A SOLUTION OTHER THAN THE COMPLETE ANNIHILATION OF HIS FATHER. HE DIDN'T MIND GROWING OLD. AGING ALLOWED HIM TO BLEND IN AND ALLOWED MEN TO FORGET WHO HE WAS. TO DISTRACT HIM FROM THE REALITY THAT HE AS A GODLING. AND BEFORE ANY GREW WISE TO HIS TRUE NATURE, THEY PASSED THE WAY OF ALL MEN ON THE EARTH: TO THE GRAVE. BUT THIS WAS A DANGEROUS GAME.



HUTARI REALIZED. ENKAI STILL HUNTED HIM, AND HE COULD FEEL SOMETHING WAS CHANGING: SOMETHING BOTH IN HIM AND SOMETHING IN MEN... EVEN SOMETHING IN THE KIFU. HUTARI FELT THE WEIGHT ON HIS SHOULDERS. A BURDEN HE BORE ALONE TO BE THE SOLE CELESTIAL, KEEPING THE END OF ALL THINGS AT BAY. A WEIGHT NONE IN THE WORLD COULD KNOW SAVE THE HUTARI: A NAME AND TITLE HE HAD ABANDONED LIFETIMES AGO.



THE OLD MAN FELT A  
TUG AT HIS ROBES.

BUT HE WAS  
DETERMINED THAT HE  
WOULD FIND A WAY  
TO FREE HIS  
FATHER...WHATEVER  
THE COST. TO SEE  
AKUMA'S WILL DONE.  
UNTIL THEN HE WAS  
CONTENT TO BE  
KNOWN BY MEN AS  
M'MSEE.



HELLO  
M'MSEE!



MUDIWA!



IT IS A  
PLEASURE  
TO SEE YOU  
LITTLE  
ONE.

AND  
HOW IS MY  
FAVORITE CHILD IN  
ALL THE CLANS?





M'MSEE,  
YOU SAY THAT  
**EVERY** CHILD IS  
YOUR FAVORITE  
CHILD.



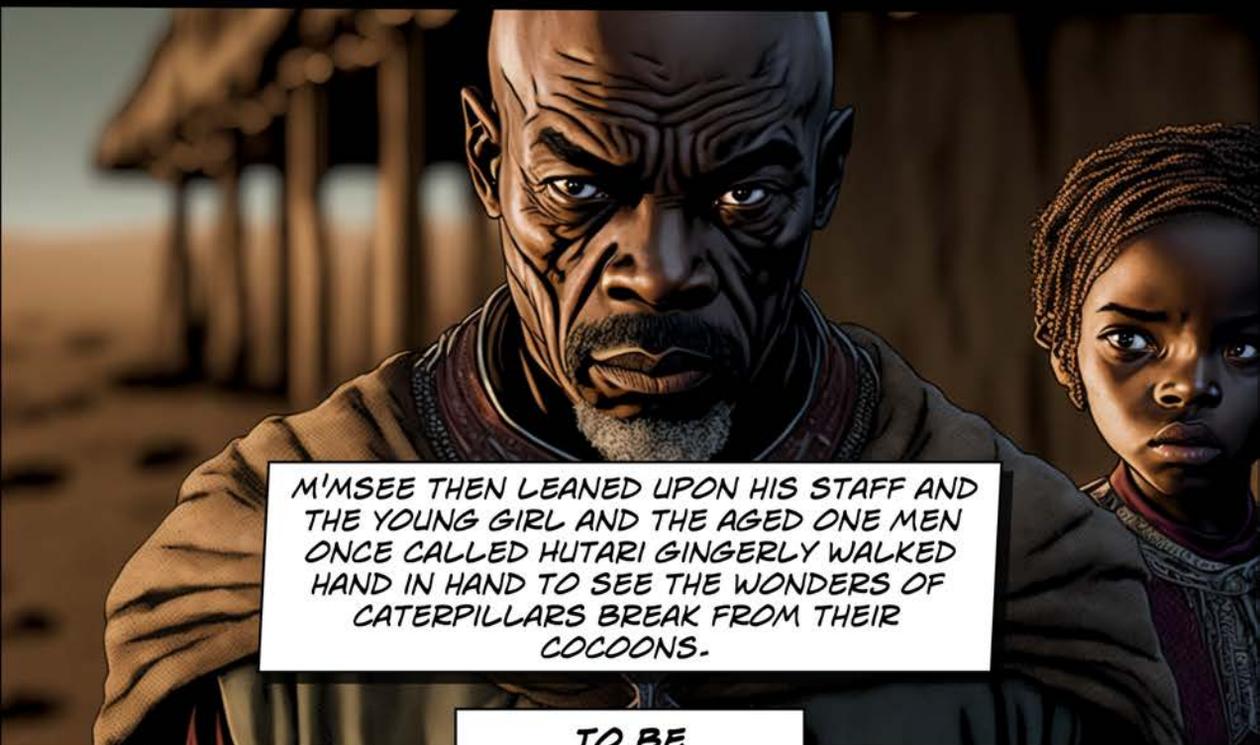
WELL  
TODAY YOU  
ARE MY  
FAVORITE!



YOU SAID  
YOU WOULD  
TAKE ME TO SEE  
YOUR BUTTERFLY  
SANCTUARY. WILL  
YOU TAKE ME  
NOW?



HOW COULD I EVER DENY SUCH A WONDERFUL SMILE? IT WOULD BE MY HONOR, LITTLE ONE. COME, BUTTERFLIES WOULD BE A WELCOME REPRIEVE FROM THE THOUGHTS OF THIS OLD MAN.



M'MSEE THEN LEANED UPON HIS STAFF AND THE YOUNG GIRL AND THE AGED ONE MEN ONCE CALLED HUTARI GINGERLY WALKED HAND IN HAND TO SEE THE WONDERS OF CATERPILLARS BREAK FROM THEIR COCOONS.

TO BE CONTINUED...

SCION OF PROPHET AND CROWN BOOK 1

# HUTARI

Read the exciting upcoming novel!

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I appreciate your help in spreading the word and reviews make an enormous difference in helping new readers find the series. God bless you and I hope to see you within the pages of the next book!

Remember... to sign up for the mailing list at [donovanmneal.com](http://donovanmneal.com)

## About the Author



Donovan is a lover of thought, the Bible, the Art of War, and gaming. He has a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management and works in the Human Services field. Throughout his career, Donovan has spent over 20 years serving the Christian community as an ordained clergy member, teaching the Bible. Now retired from the clergy, Donovan has turned to writing fiction in order to express his desire to reach people through his work. In addition to his ministry pursuits, Donovan has also dedicated his time to working with individuals who have experienced abuse and trauma, using his skills and expertise to help them heal and recover.

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# PALADIN



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THE RISE OF FALLEN STARS

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# THE THIRD HEAVEN

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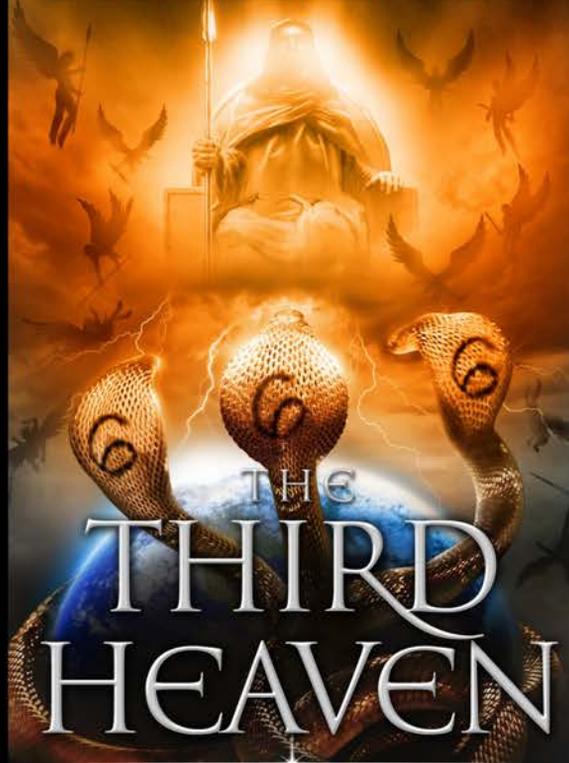
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# THE THIRD HEAVEN

REALM OF THE DEAD

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IN A WORLD WHERE GODS RULE OVER ALL, M'Msee, THE OLDEST LIVING STORYTELLER, TELLS THE TALE OF HOW THE GOD AKUMA AND HIS TWIN SONS SHAPED THE FATE OF THE WORLD. WHEN ONE SON'S PRIDE LEADS TO THE CREATION OF CANNIBALISTIC LIFE, AKUMA MUST DEVISE A PLAN TO SAVE THEM ALL—a plan that involves M'Msee and the very survival of humanity. BUT WHEN GOD TURN AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, CAN MERE MORTALS HOPE TO SURVIVE? THIS AFROCENTRIC FANTASY, BLENDING ELEMENTS OF GLADIATOR AND THE BIBLICAL STORY OF JOSEPH, FOLLOWS THE EPIC JOURNEY OF ONE MAN CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF DIVINE CONFLICT. FROM AMAZON BESTSELLING AUTHOR DONOVAN M. NEAL, DON'T MISS THE ORIGIN SHORT STORY FOR THIS EXCITING NEW FANTASY SERIES.

