

D. A. Da Rosa

# The Archeomancer

Echoes of the Shattered Empire

2

SURVIVING  
THE CAPITAL!

MIDNIGHT JOURNEYS EDITIONS

# PROLOGUE

AUSHULIA.  
THE CAPITAL'S  
WASTELANDS,  
18TH DAY OF MID-  
AUTUMN.

40 YEARS  
AFTER THE  
END.



**IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS SINCE WE ENTERED THE WASTELANDS THROUGH THE SOUTHERN GATE.**



**IT'S NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE VILLAGE WE WERE BEFORE WE GOT HERE - EXCEPT FOR ITS HOSTS OF NIGHTMARISH DANGERS.**





MY BODY IS REACTING TO THE VICIOUS KAYNN. THEY ARE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS TO ME. I COULDN'T KEEP TRAVELING, SO WE ARE STILL CAMPING AT THE HOVEL.



WHILE I WRITE, MARDRIGO, UQIJJ, AND MARCHIA ARE SEARCHING FOR A SAFE WAY TO GET PAST THE WASTELANDS, INTO THE INNER CITY.

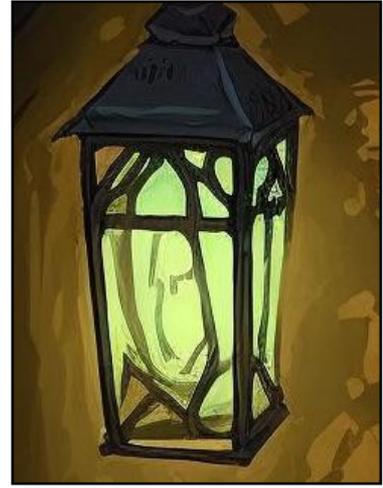


APPARENTLY THAT'S NOT SUCH AN EASY TASK AS I THOUGHT BEFORE.



IN THE MEANTIME, PETARIAN AND I WAIT AT THE CAMP. SHE'S NICE, FOR A VOI.

I HOPE THERE'S A PLACE IN THE WORLD FOR HER AFTER I SAVE IT.



# The Archeomancer

## Echoes of the Shattered Empire



ART BY MIDJOURNEY  
WRITING AND PROMPTING BY D.A. DA ROSA  
ENGLISH REVIEW BY CHATGPT  
SHOUT OUT TO BEATRIZ BARRETO, LEANDRO EUGÊNIO C.  
SANTOS, PAULO GALLINA, DANILO VIEIRA, SHAM BANGHAL AND  
DARKSTAR

**MIDNIGHT JOURNEYS EDITIONS**

# 2. TRIPLE VALUE





DORALAC  
SAVED OUR  
LIVES,  
MARDRIGO!



LISTEN,  
MARCHIA, HE'S  
HOLDING US  
BACK NOW.



YOU CAN'T BE  
SERIOUS.



HOW LONG  
WILL WE KEEP  
RISKING OURSELVES  
WHILE HE STAYS  
THERE WITH  
PETARIAN?

IT'S TOO  
RISKY. I SAY WE  
TAKE HIM TO THE  
SOUTHERN GATE  
AND LEAVE HIM  
THERE.



I'M A  
MERCENARY,  
NOT A  
PRIEST.



QUIET, YOU TWO.  
YOU KEEP TALKING  
AND THOSE  
DRIEDBODIES WILL  
CATCH US BEFORE WE  
GET BACK TO  
DOLARAC AND  
PETARIAN.



SO, HOW  
ARE YOU  
FEELING?



TERRIBLE.



YOU'LL BE  
FINE. YOU JUST  
NEED SOME  
REST.

AND PERHAPS  
YOU SHOULD EAT  
SOMETHING OTHER  
THAN MEAT.

MAYBE IT'S  
YOUR  
COOKING.

WHY  
DON'T YOU  
JUST CAST A  
HEALING SPELL  
ON ME?



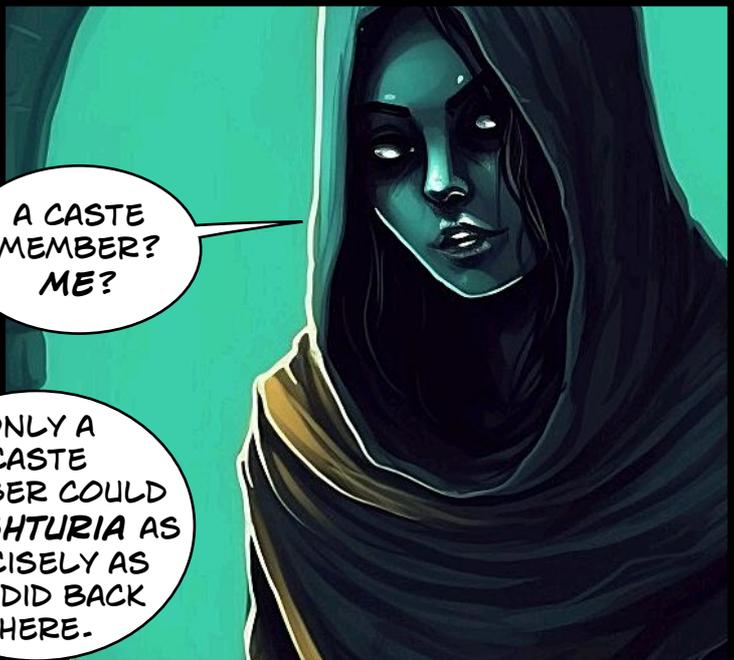
AND RISK  
BEING AS SICK  
AS YOU ARE?  
PASS.



HEH. SO THAT'S HOW THE HEALER'S CASTE TREATS IN NEED?

A CASTE MEMBER? ME?

ONLY A CASTE MEMBER COULD USE ISHTURIA AS PRECISELY AS YOU DID BACK THERE.



ERM... I WONDER HOW THE OTHERS ARE FARING.

HOW SUBTLE, PETARIAN.

PSST. LOOK THERE. WHY ARE THEY HITTING EACH OTHER? ANYHOW, BETTER GO ANOTHER WAY.



I MEAN IT, DOLARAC. THEY ARE TAKING TOO LONG.



DON'T WORRY, THEY JUST NEED TO AVOID THE MAIN STREETS. THEY'LL BE FINE.

C'MON, WE'RE CLEAR!



MARDRIGO, WAIT! WHAT'S THAT SOUND?



Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

Rennnn...

ZOMBIES! BUT  
THEY ARE ALMOST  
SILENT! ARE THEY...  
HUNTING?



**BASHER'S MANE!**  
THEY ARE LUMBERING  
OUR WAY! DO YOU  
THINK THEY  
NOTICED US?

Rghhhh...  
Rghhhh...  
Rghhhh...



Rghhhh???  
Rghhhh!?



Rghhhh?!

Rghhhhh!



C'MON. LET'S  
SLOWLY WALK  
AWAY...



OH, CRAP!  
THEY ARE COMING  
TO US!



Rghhhhh!

Rghhhhh!  
Rghhhhh!  
Rghhhhh!



FUCK! LET'S  
GET OUTTA  
HERE!

Rghhhhh!!

Rghhhhh!!!



YOU RUN. I'LL DEAL WITH THEM.

**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**

**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**



WHAT?! NO WAY!

**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**

IT'S JUST MORE OF THOSE DUMB FUCKS!



JUST DO IT!

**RGHHHH!!!**



OH, STOP TRYING TO BE A HERO, MERC!

**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**



**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**

**RGHHHH!!!**

**RGHHHH!!!**  
**RGHHHH!!!**



**RGH!**

**CRACK!**



WHEEERE... ARE... THOSE MAGESSS?

WHAT THE FUCK?! SHE SPEAKS!



LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE, PETARIAN. ASK ME SOMETHING ABOUT THE CAPITAL.

HMM, OK. HOW COME ALL THESE LIGHTS AND LAMPS ARE **STILL** WORKING?



**IMPERIAL TECH.** BACK THEN, PEOPLE USED RECHARGEABLE **KAYNN BATTERIES** IN ALL OF THEIR ARTIFACTS.



AND WHY DON'T WE **USE** THEM IN EVERYTHING TOO?



IN THE **LONG RUN**, THOSE BATTERIES ARE BAD FOR THE KAYNN AND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.



IS THAT WHY THE KAYNN HERE IS SO **VIOLENT**?



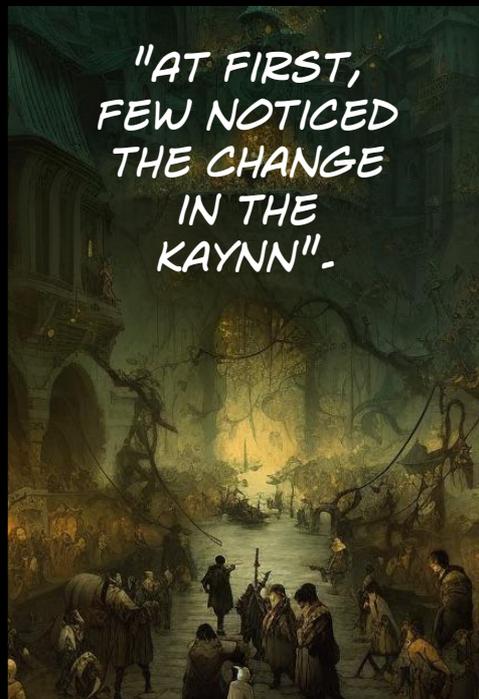
I DON'T THINK SO.



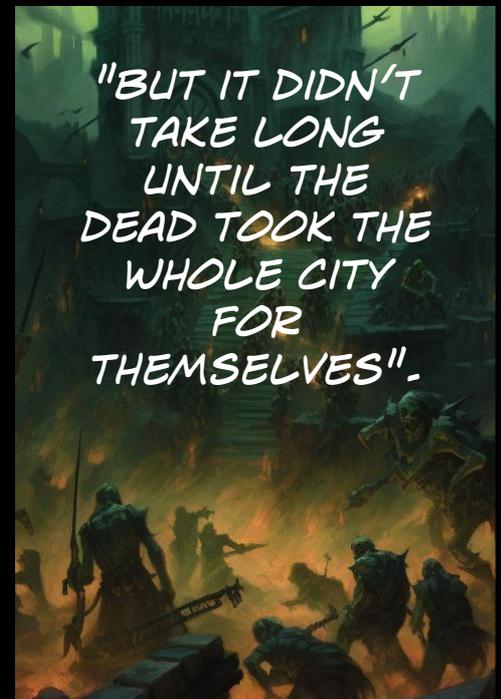
"THE BOOKS SAY THIS WAS ONCE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY IN THE WHOLE WORLD. EVEN BY THE END, WITH THE EMPIRE STRUGGLING".



"UNTIL THE NECROMANCERS ARRIVED".



"AT FIRST, FEW NOTICED THE CHANGE IN THE KAYNN".



"BUT IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG UNTIL THE DEAD TOOK THE WHOLE CITY FOR THEMSELVES".

"THEIR LEADER WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW HOW TO CREATE DURABLE UNDEAD SENTIENTS, BUT SHE DIED IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THEIR INVASION."

"IT'S BEEN FORTY YEARS. BY NOW, THOSE NECROMANCERS MUST BE TOO OLD OR JUST LIKE THE OTHER MINDLESS DRIEDBODIES: MINDLESS AND FERAL".



SKRAGH!





MADRIGO!



GHHH...



GHHH...



HMM,  
FASTER,  
STRONGER.

WAIT!



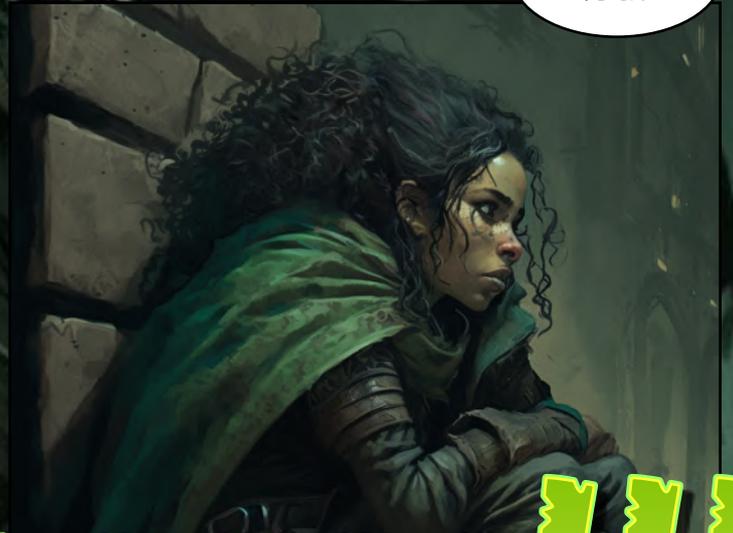
*PRAISED BE THE  
GODDESS!  
THE FOG DISSIPATES  
AND I CAN FINALLY  
THINK STRAIGHT!*

*NOW, MY PETS,  
GET ME THOSE  
MORTALS!*

**FUCK!  
WE MUST GET  
OUTTA HERE,  
UQIJJ!**

**UQIJJ?**

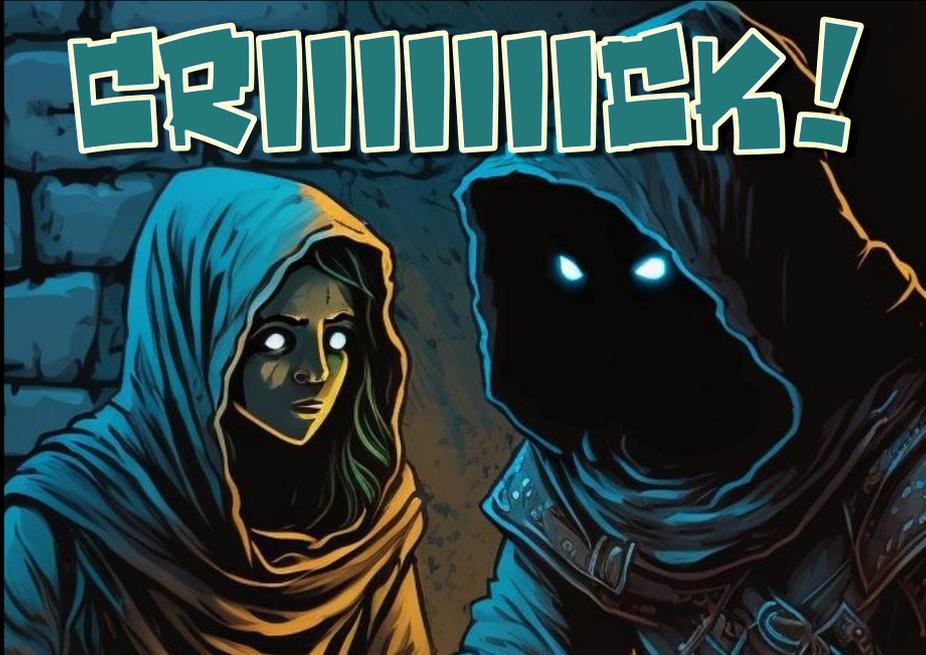
**WHERE ARE  
YOU?**



**RWAR GGGHHH!!!**



SO I THINK  
THERE'S **NOTHING**  
WE SHOULD BE  
WORRIED ABOUT.  
TOGETHER WE CAN  
BEAT **ANYTHING**  
THESE RUINS  
THROW AT US.



**CRIIIIIIICK!**



WAIT, CAN  
DRIEDBODIES  
OPEN DOORS?



MORE  
IMPORTANTLY,  
CAN YOU  
FIGHT?



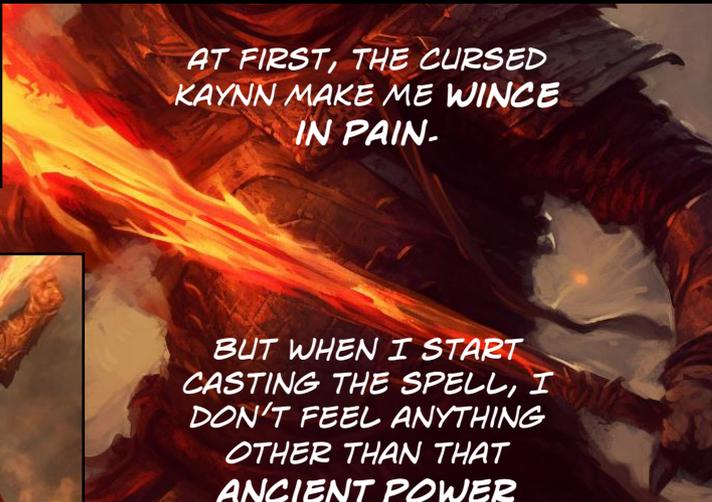
DO I HAVE A  
CHOICE?



I JUST NEED SOME TIME TO CHANNEL THE PAST.



RELAX. DO YOUR STUFF, AND I'LL KEEP WATCH.



AT FIRST, THE CURSED KAYNN MAKE ME WINCE IN PAIN.

BUT WHEN I START CASTING THE SPELL, I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING OTHER THAN THAT ANCIENT POWER RUNNING THROUGH ME.



Oh, Dragon-Mother, I ask thee for thy help.



Bestow unto me . . .

. . . thy Holy Claw-Breath!



**FWOSHNNNN!**



AN OLD  
DRAGON  
CULT  
ONCE  
RESISTED  
THE  
EMPIRE  
BRAVELY.



THEIR  
FIREBLADES,  
A LEGACY OF  
THEIR  
RESILIENCE.



**FWOOOSH!**

AFTER  
THEIR  
DEFEAT,  
THEIR  
PRAYERS  
WERE  
TURNED  
INTO  
SPELLS  
TAUGHT AT  
THE  
ACADEMIES  
OF THE  
VICTORS.



I'M READY  
NOW.



COOL. NOW,  
DO YOU HEAR  
ANYTHING?

NO.

LET'S LOOK  
AROUND. LET'S  
SPLIT.



HMM?



WHAT THE...?



GET 'IM, BOYS!



**FWOOOSH!**

THEY'RE SCREAMING  
AND TRYING TO  
STRATEGIZE. I'M  
OUTNUMBERED, SO  
THEY TRY TO FLANK ME.



**SHWASHH!**

**SHWASHH!**

BUT I'M NOT THAT  
EASY A PREY.  
NEITHER IS  
PETARIAN.





SIR, MY KAYNN SENSORS MUST BE DEFECTIVE! THERE'S A HUGE SOURCE OF KAYNN MOVING OUR WAY!



THE ARTIFACT'S NOT WORKING PROPERLY. UNLESS... UNLESS THERE'S AN ISHTURIAN INSIDE.

SO, WHAT CAN YOU SEE?



LET'S GET READY! PREPARE AN AMBUSH!

CRAPSACK! WE'RE GOIN' TO HAVE TO USE METAL! SEND THE IRONFIST IN ALREADY.



SHE'S A DIVA, BUT WITHOUT HER, THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN FACE AN ISHTURIAN.

I WONDER HOW MY COMPANIONS ARE DOING.



ARE THEY RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES?



ARE THEY HIDING OUT OF FEAR?



ARE THEY EVEN ALIVE?



AT LEAST, PETARIAN MUST BE WIPING THE FLOOR WITH THESE MOOKS BY NOW.

THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE. SHE'S TOO SMART, AND TRUE IRON IS RARE.

AS FOR ME...



...I DISPATCH  
MOST OF  
THOSE  
SOLDIERS WITH  
EASE.

**FWOOOSH!**

AAAAARGH!



AAAAHHH!

**SWASHHHH!**



HELP!  
HEEELP!

**SHHAAHHH!**



UNTIL A DOZEN  
OTHER BASTARDS  
ARRIVE.



**SWASHHHH...**



AND ONE OF THEM  
HAS TRUE IRON  
WITH HER.

FUCK.



**PFFF...**

AS MY MAGIC  
FIZZLES OUT,  
SO DOES MY  
CHANCE TO  
OVERPOWER  
THEN.

YIELD,  
TRESPASSER.



SO, IT WAS YOU WHO MURDERED THE SOLDIERS OF THE EMPIRE? WITH THIS STICK?



SOLDIERS? FROM THE EMPIRE? YOU PEOPLE?

*\*SIGH\**

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US? GEAR? SUPPLIES? TAKE IT, JUST LET US GO.



NO. THESE ARE JUST EXTRA, BOY. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

YOU MURDERED MY GUARDS AT THE GATE.

YOU KILLED MY SOLDIERS.



ALL OF THIS IS ON ME. JUST LET THE VOI GO.



YOU WERE IN THE SAME PARTY. YOUR DESTINY SHALL BE THE SAME.

YOU ARE CURRENCY NOW. AND SHE'S WORTH THREE OF YOU.

OUTSIDE, THEY ARE REORGANIZED BY THE ONE WHO TALKED TO ME.



THESE 'FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS' CALL HIM "THE CAPTAIN".



THEY MAKE PETARIAN AND ME MARCH BEHIND THEIR SCOUTS, BOUND BY TRUE IRON CHAINS.

THEY ARE A WELL-ORGANIZED AND WELL-TRAINED TROOP OF RUFFIANS.



IT'S ALMOST LIKE I'M WATCHING A REENACTMENT OF AN IMPERIAL UNIT, BUT WITH SALVAGED EQUIPMENT.



WHILE WE MARCH, THE TRUE IRON CLEANSSES US OF THE TAINTED KAYNN, SO THERE'S THAT. ALSO...



THE FAKE SOLDIERS  
GET US PAST THE  
INNER GATES, INTO  
THE INNER CITY.

THE KAYNN HERE, INSTEAD  
OF SICKLY, CORROSIVE  
AND TAINTED, ARE  
WARM, SAVAGE AND  
CHAOTIC.



SO...  
WHERE ARE YOU  
TAKING US?

SHUT UP,  
TRESPASSER!



I'M JUST  
CURIOUS, THAT'S  
ALL.

BE  
QUIET,  
TRESPASSER!



WHY DO YOU  
KEEP  
PRETENDING TO  
BE THE IMPERIAL  
GUARD?

BY THE  
SACRED HEART,  
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST  
BE QUIET,  
TRESPASSER?

AND YOU KNOW  
WHAT? WE ARE  
PRECISELY WHAT'S LEFT  
OF THE CAPITAL'S  
IMPERIAL GUARD!



I DON'T  
THINK YOU WERE  
EVEN BORN WHEN  
THE EMPIRE  
FELL.

YES, WE ARE  
MOSTLY ORPHANS  
OF THE RUINS,  
RAISED BY THE  
CAPTAIN.

BUT HE WAS  
HERE THE DAY THE  
NECROMANCERS  
INVADED AND  
NEVER LEFT.



ORPHANS?  
BUT WHERE DID  
HE FIND YOU?



HE  
TRADES GOODS  
FOR YOUNG  
RECRUITS. AT FIRST,  
CHILDREN WERE CHEAP.  
BUT NOW THAT OTHERS  
KNOW WHAT HE'S  
LOOKING FOR...



...NOW  
IT TAKES A  
MAGE OR  
TWO.



LOOK WHO IT IS,  
IT'S THE **CAPTAIN  
BRATSEEKER!** YOU TOOK  
YOUR TIME... SOME OF THOSE  
KIDS WERE **ALMOST** THE  
RIGHT **AGE** FOR THE  
ZADAARIAN PITS.

OH, AND YOU  
SHOULD KNEEL  
WHEN TALKING TO  
THE **SHADOW  
KING.**



NOW... SHOW ME  
YOUR **WARES,**  
BRATSEEKER.



HERE THEY ARE, **YOUR  
GRACE.** AN ACADEMIC  
BASHERO AND AN  
ISHTURIAN VOI.



**HOW  
MUCH?**



TWO FOR THE  
**TECHNIC-  
RITUALIST...**



THREE FOR THE  
**ISHTURIAN.**



THE CAPTAIN SAVED  
FIVE CHILDREN  
FROM THE  
SEWER'S  
MONARCH. ARE  
THERE MORE  
CHILDREN TO BE  
SAVED HERE?

PETARIAN MUST BE  
TAKING IT AWFULLY  
HARD SINCE SHE'S  
BEEN QUIET FOR A  
WHILE NOW.

IT'S NO USE  
DWELLING ON THAT.  
RIGHT NOW, WE MUST  
FOCUS ON SAVING  
OURSELVES.

BUT HOW CAN MAGES  
ESCAPE FROM A TRUE  
IRON PRISON?

**TO BE CONTINUED...**

# THE ARCHEOMANCER'S TOOLS



THIRD-CIRCLE  
TECHNIQUE:  
THE CLAW-BREATH.

FEW OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE EMPIRE WERE AS FIERCE AS THE KHALIITH-KSHASEN, OR THE 'DRAGON-MOTHER'S CHOSEN', A GROUP OF DRAGON-WORSHIPPING CROCODILIANS FROM STERDN-INLII.

IN SPIITE OF THEM NOT BEING DRACONIDS BY BIRTH, THEY USED MAGIC TO ADOPT DRACONIAN CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS HORNS AND SPIKES. THEY BECAME WIDELY KNOWN, HOWEVER, FOR THEIR ABILITY TO WIELD THEIR 'CLAW-BREATHS'.

WITH A PRAYER AND A RITUALISTICALLY PREPARED STICK IN THEIR HAND, THESE REPTILIANS WERE ABLE TO SUMMON FEARSOME FIREBLADES TO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR ENEMIES. INTIMIDATING AND EASY TO CAST, THE MAIN DOWNSIDE OF THIS SPELL IS THAT IT'S NOTORIOUSLY HARD TO MANEUVER AND CONTROL, REQUIRING GREAT CARE AND SKILL FROM ITS USER TO NOT GET BURNT BY ITS OWN BLADE.

THE CLAW-BREATHS WERE NO MATCH AGAINST THE IMPERIAL IRONGUARD, BUT THE FACT THAT ARCANIC ACADEMIES ALL OVER THE CONTINENT STILL TEACH THIS SPELL IS A TESTAMENT TO ITS POWER AND USEFULNESS.

# DARING TO KNOW

EXCERPTS FROM AFIJJ UXER, AT *OUR EMPIRE'S JEWEL: THE CAPITAL*. PUBLISHED AT THE CAPITAL, AUSHULIA, FIFTY YEARS BEFORE THE FALL.



## THE IMPERIAL WOODS

"AS SOON AS WE LEAVE THAT QUAIN TOWN AND TAKE THE TRUSTY IMPERIAL ROAD, WE CAN SOON FIND OURSELVES MESMERIZED BY THE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE IMPERIAL WOODS SURROUNDING THE CAPITAL.

TENDED WITH MAGIC AND ARTIFICE BY THE IMPERIAL BUREAU OF FORESTRY AND HUNTING, THESE WOODS ARE OFTEN THOUGHT AS THE CAPITAL'S FIRST WALL OF PROTECTION, PACIFYING ENEMIES WITH ITS SHEER BEAUTY."

## THE FENCE-LANDS

"AS WE LEAVE THE STUNNING WOODS, WE REACH THE IMMENSE SOUTHERN GATE, WHERE ONE MUST WAIT IN LINE AND BE INSPECTED BY THE IMPERIAL GUARDS BEFORE ENTERING.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THE FENCE-LANDS WERE SMALL VILLAGES AND POPULAR COMMUNITIES DOTTING THE FARMLANDS BETWEEN THE INNER CITY AND THE FENCE, THE OUTER WALL THAT PROTECTS THE CAPITAL. NOWADAYS, IT'S A BUSTLING URBAN SIDE, WITH ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURE, WHERE COMMONERS DWELL AND LIVE THEIR, WELL, COMMON LIVES."



## THE INNER CITY

"AFTER A LONG WHILE WE FINALLY GET TO THE CAPITAL ITSELF! THIS IS WHERE THE COMMON FOLK USUALLY THINK OF WHEN MUSING ABOUT OUR BELOVED CAPITAL.

THE FABLED MARKET STREET, THE REPURPOSED INDUSTRIAL PARK, THE BEAUTIFUL TOWERS OF THE VOI, THE SOUTHEASTERN GREAT PLAZA, THE PORT: IT'S ALL HERE!

AS FOR ME, AS I'M NOT A TOURIST NOR A MIDDLE-CLASS MERCHANT, MY FAVORITE PLACE HERE IS THE DISTINCT GATE AT THE END OF IT: IT ALLOWS FOR PEOPLE SUCH AS US TO PART WITH ANY COMMONER OTHER THAN THE HELP."





# THE HISTORIAN'S REFUGE:



*THIS IS THE VERY THING THAT MADE ME COME UP WITH THIS COMIC. A DRAWING I DID SOME YEARS AGO.*

*I MEAN, I'M A HISTORIAN AND A FANTASY FAN, SO THIS HAS BEEN HANGING IN FRONT OF MY NOSE FOREVER, BUT IT WAS THIS DRAWING THAT MADE ME WANT TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT AN ARCHEOLOGIST-LIKE ADVENTURER EXPLORING THE RUINED CAPITAL.*

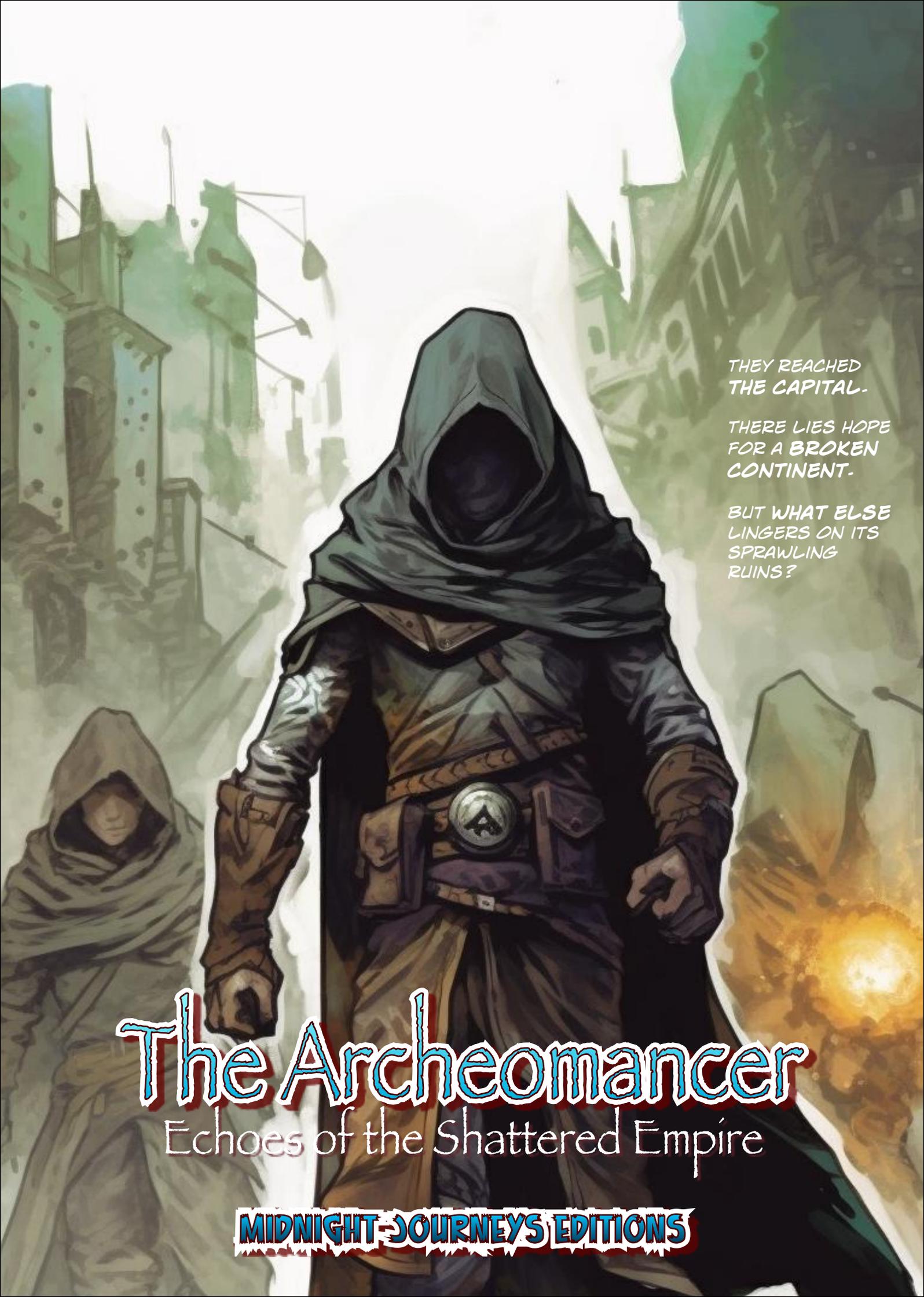
*THANKS TO MIDJOURNEY, YOU CAN APPRECIATE IT AT A MUCH BETTER ARTSTYLE.*

*SO, THESE SHOTS FROM BEHIND OUR PROTAGONIST? THEY ARE NOT A COINCIDENCE: THEY ARE ALL RIP OFFS FROM BLOODBORNE.*

*WELL, TO BE MORE PRECISE: THEY ARE RIP OFFS OF MY OWN DRAWING, WHICH WAS INSPIRED BY BLOODBORNE.*

*D.A. DA ROSA, MAY '23.*





THEY REACHED  
THE CAPITAL.

THERE LIES HOPE  
FOR A BROKEN  
CONTINENT.

BUT WHAT ELSE  
LINGERS ON ITS  
SPRAWLING  
RUINS?

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