

D. A. Da Rosa

The Archeomancer

Echoes of the Shattered Empire

3

THE DEVOURING
TOURNAMENT!

MIDNIGHT JOURNEYS EDITIONS

PROLOGUE



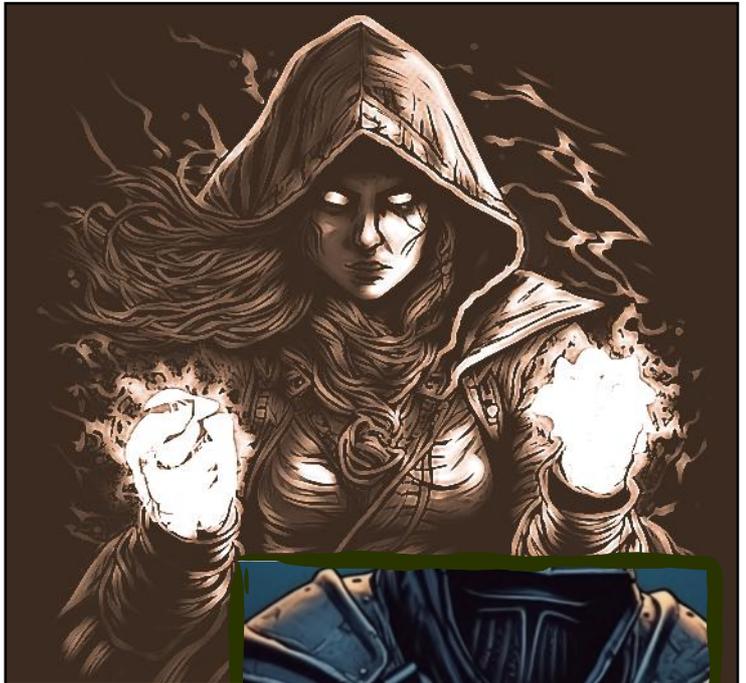
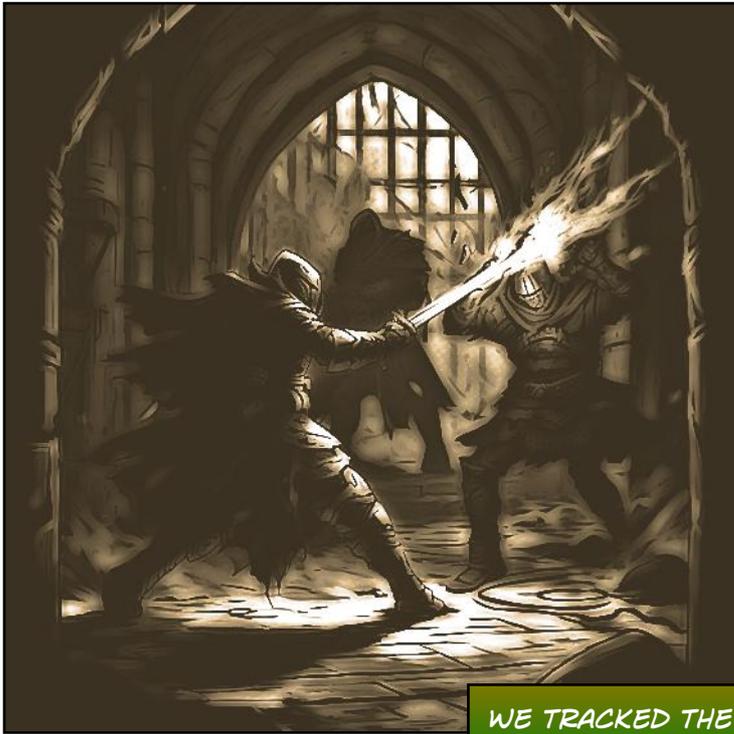
*CAPTAIN'S
REPORT.
DAY 14-716*



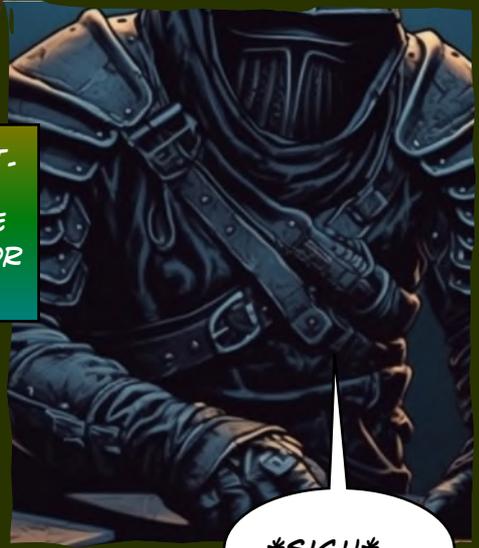
*IT HAS BEEN
A HARD DAY.*



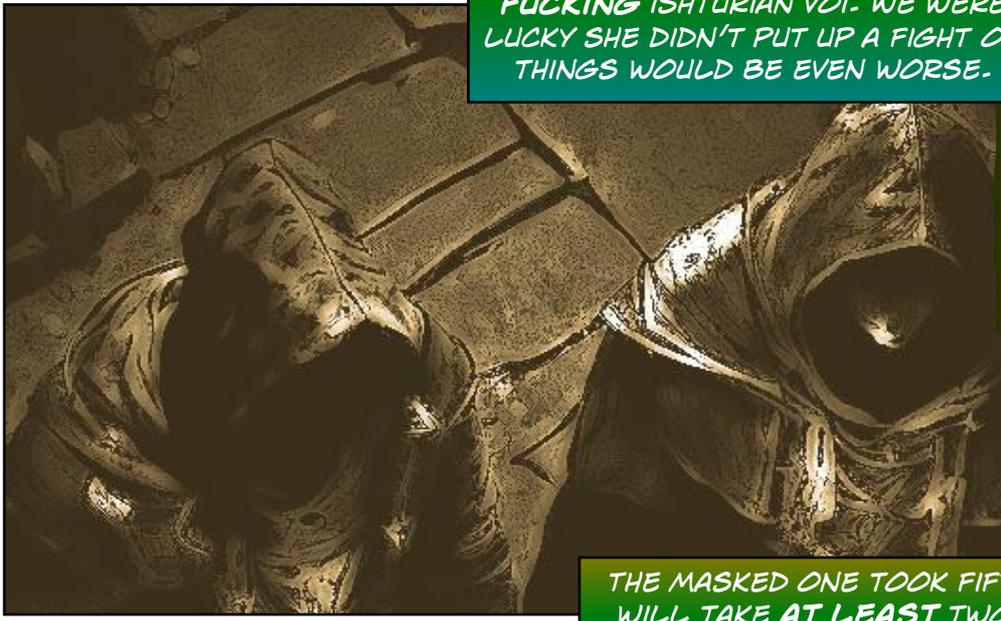
THE SCOUT BROUGHT INFORMATION ABOUT THE BASTARDS WHO KILLED MY BOYS AT THE SOUTH GATE.



WE TRACKED THE KILLERS BY NIGHT. TWO MAGES. ONE OF THEM, A FUCKING ISHTURIAN VOI. WE WERE LUCKY SHE DIDN'T PUT UP A FIGHT OR THINGS WOULD BE EVEN WORSE.



SIGH...



THE MASKED ONE TOOK FIFTEEN SOLDIERS ALONE. IT WILL TAKE AT LEAST TWO MONTHS UNTIL OUR TRUE IRON IS PURIFIED AND READY TO BE OF USE AGAIN.

WE TRADED
THEM WITH THAT
SLEAZY
SHADOW KING,
BUT WE ONLY
ENDED UP
RECRUITING FIVE
KIDS.



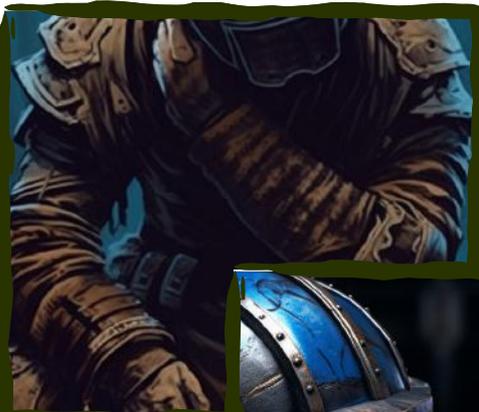
I HOPE THAT SOMEDAY,
LIEUTENANT KARIJJ LEADS THESE
CHILDREN AND MANY OTHERS TO
SAVE OUR BELOVED CITY.

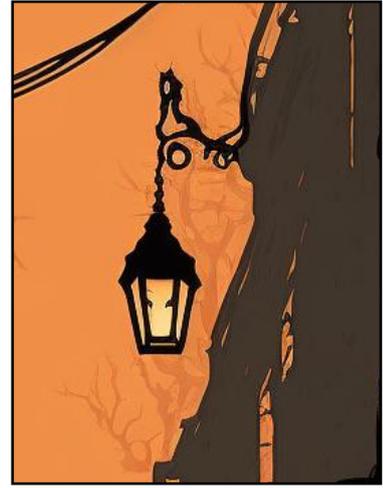


BUT I DON'T HAVE
THE HEART TO KEEP
DOING THIS, TO
KEEP RISKING MY
KIDS'S LIVES TO
SAVE OTHERS.

THESE STRANGERS
TOOK TOO MUCH OF
ME AND I WON'T
EVER FEEL WHOLE
AGAIN.

MY ONLY SOLACE IS THE
CERTAINTY OF THEIR
GRIM FATE.





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

3. FOOD CHAIN

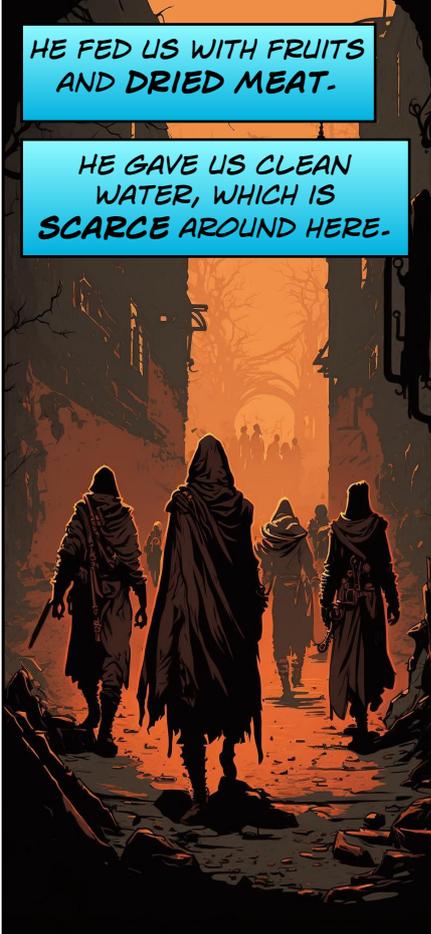
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE
HAVE TO HAND OVER
MAGES TO THOSE
FREAKS AGAIN...

CAPITAL'S
INNER CITY.

PRESENT DAY.

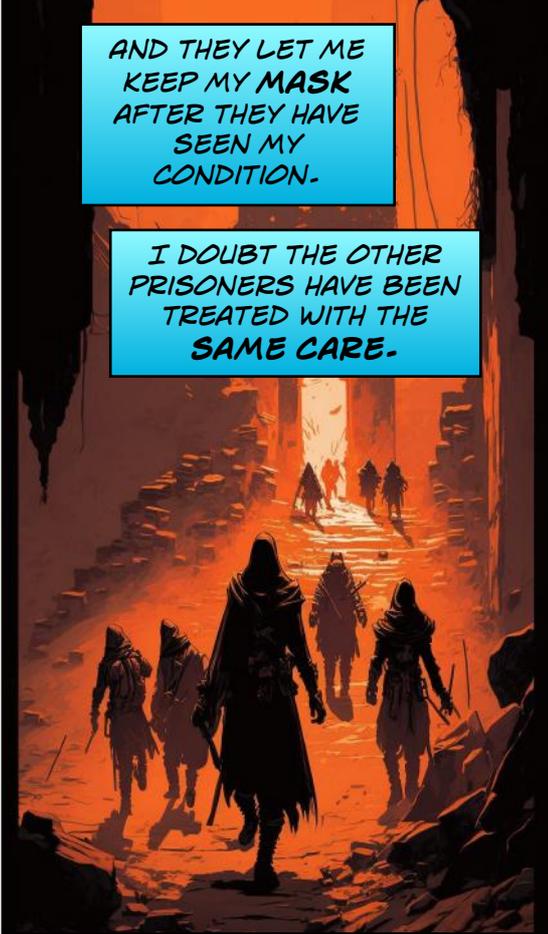


IT'S BEEN DAYS SINCE
PETARIAN AND I WERE
IMPRISONED AT THE
SHADOW KING'S CELLS.



HE FED US WITH FRUITS
AND DRIED MEAT.

HE GAVE US CLEAN
WATER, WHICH IS
SCARCE AROUND HERE.



AND THEY LET ME
KEEP MY MASK
AFTER THEY HAVE
SEEN MY
CONDITION.

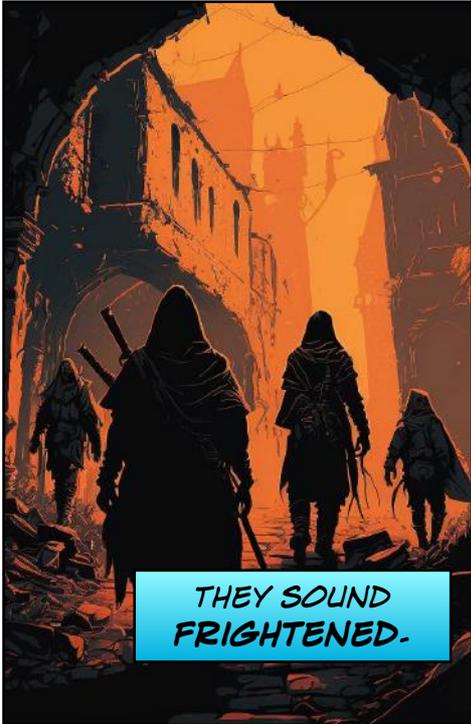
I DOUBT THE OTHER
PRISONERS HAVE BEEN
TREATED WITH THE
SAME CARE.



WALK
FASTER,
PRISONERS!



THE GUARDS
ESCORTING US HAVE
BEEN WHISPERING
ABOUT WHO THEY
WERE TAKING US TO
SINCE WE LEFT.



THEY SOUND
FRIGHTENED.



WHEN WE GET THERE,
THE LEADER OF OUR
EXPEDITION STEPS
FORWARD.

HIS VOICE IS
SHAKING AND HIS
HANDS ARE
TREMBLING.

HERE'S YOUR
TRIBUTE, **DEVOURING
ONES**. THE SHADOW KING
IS **HONORED** TO INFORM
YOU THAT WE HAVE AN
ISHTURIAN VOI AND A
COMMON MAGE WITH
US THIS TIME.

GOOD.

TELL YOUR
"KING" THAT THIS
GIVES HIM **FIVE
MONTHS**.

NOW LEAVE.



THE SHADOW KING'S
GUARDS **OBEY** THE
WOMAN WITHOUT
HESITATION.



WHO ARE THESE
PEOPLE?



AT FIRST, THERE'S LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM AND OUR FORMER CAPTORS.

THEN WE APPROACH WHAT LOOKS LIKE THE GATE TO AN IMMENSE ABANDONED **FORTRESS**. BEHIND THE GUARDS, THERE'S AN EERIE GLOW. AN ENCHANTMENT?



THESE RUINS ARE **NOTHING** LIKE I IMAGINED. I WAS EXPECTING ONLY DRIEDBODIES, BEASTS AND SOME SCAVENGERS, NOT **FACTIONS**.

HOLY FUCK.

A TOWN WITHIN
THE RUINED
CAPITAL.



HOW IN THE NINE
PROVINCES
COULDN'T WE HEAR A
THING OUTSIDE?



OR SMELL ALL THIS
MEAT THEY ARE
COOKING AND
SELLING?



EVEN THE BEST
ENCHANTERS OF OLD
WOULDN'T BE ABLE
TO HIDE A PLACE LIKE
THIS.



THESE PEOPLE LOOK
LIKE THEY ARE LIVING
NORMAL LIVES.



NONE OF THE TRAVEL
BOOKS MENTIONED IT.
THIS MUST BE NEW.

WHEN THEY ANNOUNCE
THEY HAVE MAGES,
THE CROWD
CELEBRATES US.



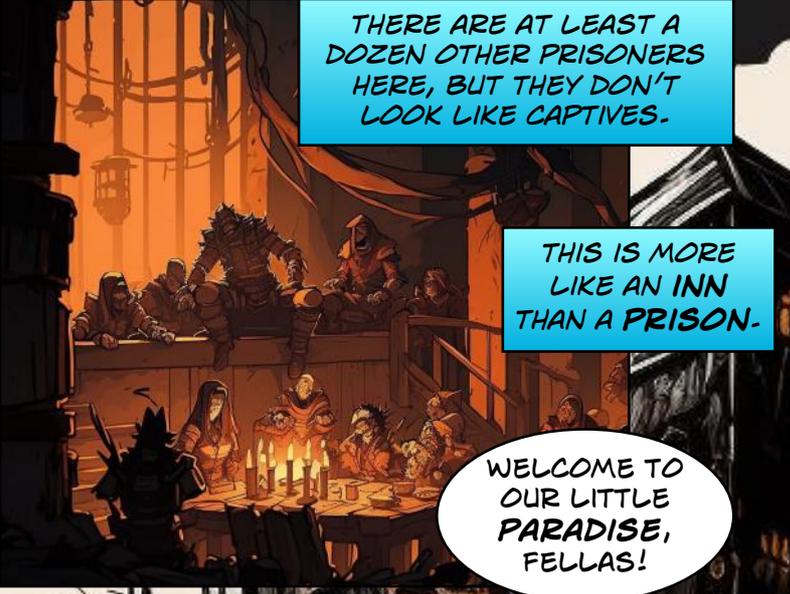
THAT'S WHEN I NOTICE
HOW WELL GUARDED
THEY ARE. THEY COULD
DEFEND THIS TOWN
FROM AN ENTIRE ARMY.



AFTER THAT WHOLE THING, THEY
TAKE US TO A PLACE AT A
MAKESHIFT TOWER IN THE
CENTER OF THEIR TOWN.



THEY SEPARATE US FROM
THE OTHERS AND PUT US IN
A LARGE ROOM BEHIND
TRUE IRON BARS.



THERE ARE AT LEAST A DOZEN OTHER PRISONERS HERE, BUT THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE CAPTIVES.

THIS IS MORE LIKE AN INN THAN A PRISON.

WELCOME TO OUR LITTLE PARADISE, FELLAS!



NAME'S **BORZAK**. LONGEST-LIVING RESIDENT OF THIS **GLAMOROUS LODGE**.



YOU SEEM TO BE **CONFUSED**. NEVER SAW A **HALF-NANASH** BEFORE?

LEAVE THEM **ALONE**, BORZAK!

HEY, YOU **TWO!** DON'T TRUST HIM.



AS A MATTER OF FACT, DON'T TRUST **ANYONE** HERE. WE'RE ALL YOUR **COMPETITION**.



OH, C'MON, **MARJA**, I WAS JUST BEING NICE TO THE **NEWCOMERS!**



COMPETITION?



NEVERMIND THE WITCH! WE CAN BE FRIENDS, TOO!



WANT US TO BE FRIENDS? YOU CAN START BY TELLING US ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE.



WHAT'S THERE TO SAY? USUALLY, WE JUST WORK FOR THEM WITH SOME ENCHANTMENTS. THEY TREAT US NICELY AND KEEP US SAFE AND FED.



JUST DON'T ASK WHERE THEY GET THE MEAT FROM.



VOI MEAT FOR SCAVENGED ARTIFACTS! VOI MEAT FOR SPARE PARTS!

FRESH SERVINGS TONIGHT, EVERYONE! STRAIGHT FROM THE BUTCHER!



SO, 2 KILOS OF HUMANS FOR THESE FIVE SCRAPS, WHAT DO YOU SAY?



NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU GUYS! YOU, **BLUE GIRL**, ARE YOU A VOI OF THE CASTES?



I FAIL TO SEE HOW THAT IS A CONCERN OF YOURS, **MUTANT**.



OHH! **FEISTY!** BUT WITH SUCH AN ATTITUDE, YOU OUGHT TO BE A CASTE VOI!

LET ME **GUESS...** PROTECTOR CASTE? MERCHANT? **SORCERER?** OH, LET ME SEE YOUR **MARKINGS!**



ASK THE GUARDS TO TAKE AWAY THESE **SHACKLES** FROM MY WRISTS AND YOU SHALL SEE THAT AND **MUCH MORE...**



HSSSS! NOW THAAAT WASSS A **GOOD OOONE!**



HEY, **CHILL OUT, GIRL...** SAVE IT FOR THE **TOURNAMENT!**



FELLOW
DEVOURERS,
VISITORS, AND
GUESTS! TONIGHT,
YOU ARE IN FOR A
TREAT!

THE
FLESHLORDS
SOLEMNLY OFFER
YOU THE
OPPORTUNITY OF
A LIFETIME!

FOR WE HAVE A
SURPLUS OF
MAGES AND, AS
YOU KNOW, WE
ABHOR WASTE.

SO,
EVERYONE, GET
READY FOR...



THE FIFTH EDITION OF THE
DEVOURING
TOURNAMENT!



THE WHAT NOW?



THE DEVOURING TOURNAMENT IS A GREAT **OPPORTUNITY** FOR SPELLSPITTERS LIKE US. ONE CAN BECOME A **FLESHLORD** BY WINNING IT.



THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU ARE SO **INTERESTED** IN US, HUH?



GUILTY AS CHARGED... THIS TIME, I'M GETTING PAST THE **FIRST STAGE** OF THE TOURNAMENT **NO MATTER WHAT!**



AND THEY WERE **WAITING** JUST FOR US? THIS IS HAPPENING **TODAY**, OF ALL DAYS?!

OH, BUT WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR **MONTHS!**



A **PAIR OF MAGES** WAS THE ONLY THING THEY WERE MISSING SINCE **ROBERLOS** AND **MARUIZA** WERE **KILLED** LAST YEAR...

IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG BEFORE WE ARE TAKEN TO THE HELLISH ARENA IN THE COURTYARD OF A HUGE BUILDING.

LOOK THERE! IT'S **BORZAK!** HOW THE FUCK DOES HE MANAGE TO SURVIVE EVERY TIME?

COMMENCE THIS ALREADY! TAKE AWAY THEIR SHACKLES!



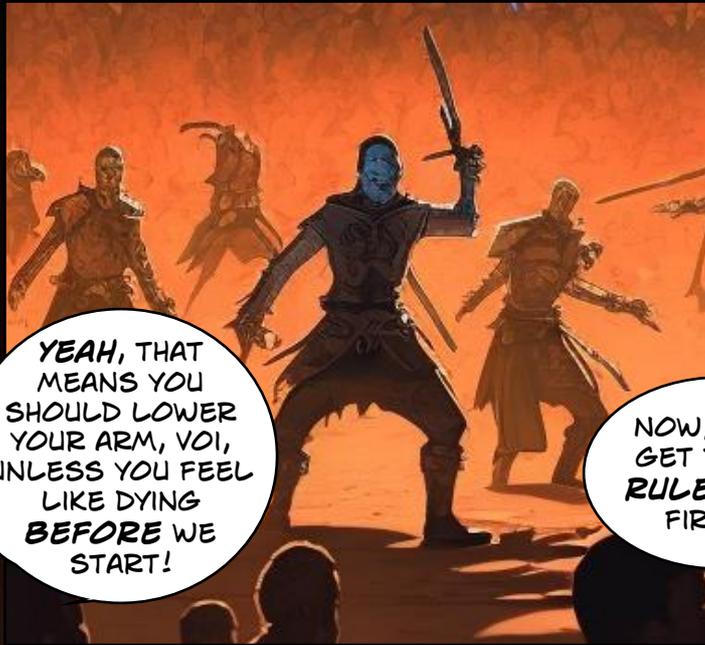
GOOD EVENING, DEVOURERS AND INVITEES! THIS IS THE FIFTH! ANNUAL! DEVOURING! TOURNAMENT!



SPELLCASTERS AND CRIMINALS! GET READY! YOU CAN ALREADY TAKE ANY WEAPON YOU WANT TO.

BUT, BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING STUPID, YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY...





YEAH, THAT MEANS YOU SHOULD LOWER YOUR ARM, VOI, UNLESS YOU FEEL LIKE DYING BEFORE WE START!

NOW, LET'S GET TO THE RULES! BUT FIRST...



FIRE IN THE PIT!



AS YOU SHALL SEE, THIS FIRE IS **MAGICAL** IN NATURE. IT WILL SURROUND THE **ARENA** AND IT WILL **CONSUME** ANY MAGIC THROWN AT OR ABOVE IT.



ANYONE PRESENT MAY GET INSIDE THE ARENA FOR THE NEXT TEN MINUTES, BUT **NO ONE** CAN GET OUT UNTIL THE END OF THE **FIRST STAGE!**



CONTENDERS, YOUR OBJECTIVE IS TO KEEP YOURSELF **ALIVE** FOR THE NEXT THIRTY MINUTES!

BUT WHOEVER INCAPACITATES **THREE** OR MORE OPPONENTS GETS DIRECTLY QUALIFIED FOR THE **THIRD STAGE!**



THIRD STAGE?!
I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THIS, DOLARAC... I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF A **SHOW** FOR THESE SAVAGES...



WE MUST GET THROUGH THIS, PETARIAN.

YOU CAN DO IT, I'VE SEEN WHAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF.



I'M NOT A **FIGHTER**... WITH THESE SHACKLES ON, I WON'T STAND A CHANCE...



DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. JUST DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SURVIVE. I GOT YOUR BACK, OK?



HEY, **LOVEBIRDS**... IF YOU WANT TO LIVE, YOU BETTER BE CLOSE TO ME... I KNOW THIS SHIT LIKE THE PALM OF MY HAND...



AND THIS TOURNAMENT IS ABOUT TO GET **STARTED!**



GOOD EVENING, LOYAL SUBJECTS!



YEEEEEAHHH!!!!



I TAKE IT THAT **THEY** ARE THE ONES IN CHARGE HERE, RIGHT, BORZAK?



YEAH... THE LEADERS OF THE FLESHCOURT. THE OLD ONE ON THE LEFT IS **PUQ, THE BUTCHER**. HE **HATES** THIS TOURNAMENT, AS YOU CAN SEE BY HIS FACE.



THE VOI IN THE MIDDLE IS **YOUNGER AMEIJJ, THE JUDGE**. SHE GOT HER NAME FROM **EATING** HER PREDECESSOR, OLD AMEIJJ. SHE'S THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF EMPLOYING MAGES IN THIS TOWN. **SHE'S OUR BOSS.**



THE OTHER HUMAN UP THERE IS **CAPTAIN ALQDUS**, LEADER OF THE **HUNTSMEN**, THE TOWN'S SKULL-MASKED WARRIORS. THIS TOURNAMENT IS **HIS** SHOW, **HIS** IDEA.



AS AN ENVOY OF THE FLESHCOURT, I HAVE THE HONOR TO ANNOUNCE...

THAT THE GAMES HAVE NOW **BEGUN!**



WITH A **CLICK**, OUR CHAINS FALL TO THE FLOOR AS THE LOCKS UNLOCK.

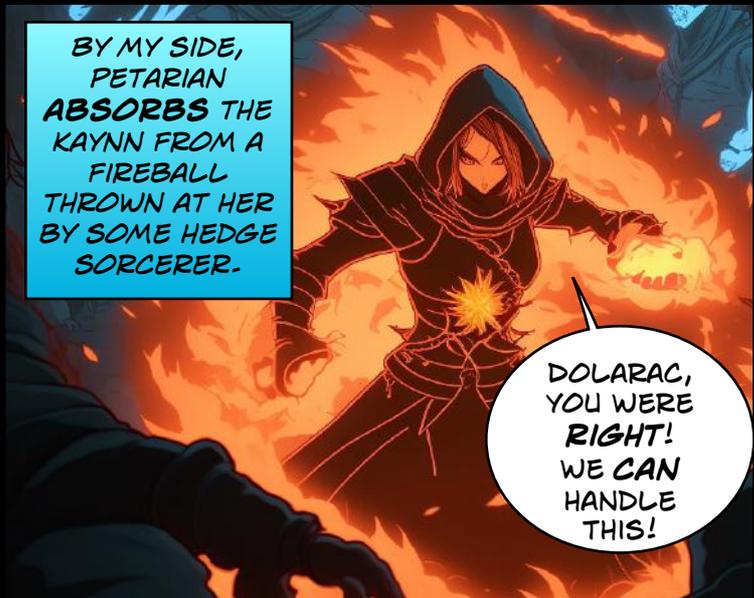


THE LOCKS WEREN'T MADE OF TRUE IRON, SO THEY COULD BE ENCHANTED. **INGENIOUS.**



THE LAST CHAINS HAD YET TO TOUCH THE FLOOR WHEN THE OTHER COMPETITORS STARTED CASTING THEIR SPELLS.

BORZAK ISN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO FIGHT IN THIS...



BY MY SIDE, PETARIAN ABSORBS THE KAYNN FROM A FIREBALL THROWN AT HER BY SOME HEDGE SORCERER.

DOLARAC, YOU WERE **RIGHT!** WE CAN HANDLE THIS!



AND, AS NANASHIN OFTEN DO, BORZAK SPIKES HIS HAIR AND FUR.

AS FOR ME...



---I HAVE TO
HUMILIATE
MYSELF.

HEY, THAT GUY'S
PICKING UP THE
CHAINS ON THE
GROUND, THAT'S NOT
HOW A PROPER MAGE
FIGHTS!

"OOOHH! THAT'S A
FIRST! SMART MOVE,
ISN'T IT, BABY?"

"YOU KNOW IT'S
YOUNGER AMEIJJ IN
PUBLIC, MY DEAR
CAPTAIN."

"UGH..."

"WHAT A
WASTE OF
MEAT ON
THIS IDIOTIC
GAME..."

"OH, COME ON,
OLD MAN! THIS
IS FUN! LOOK
OVER THERE!!"

"NICE DODGE!
THAT MASKED MAN
HAS SOME
MOVES!!"



SWOSH!!

AAAAIEEEEEEEEE!!!

SKRRRRRR!!!

"AND FRIENDS TO
SAVE HIM IN THE
NICK OF TIME. SEE,
PLUQ? YOU COULD
LEARN
SOMETHING
HERE..."



THANKS, PETARIAN! THAT WAS CLOSE!



"SO, WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE SO FAR?"

"THE GIRL WITH THE SWORD?"

"HER NAME IS VALIJJ. SHE'S A GREAT WORKER".



"BUT I'M MORE OF A FAN OF NAGUI, THAT CHAP FROM THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT".



"THE MONK? ALL HE DOES IS BLOCK!"

"NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING SMART. THAT'S WHAT MADE BORZAK SURVIVE ALL THESE TOURNAMENTS.."



"I PREFER THE VOI WARRIOR OVER THERE. POWER AND STYLE IN ONE BLUE PACKAGE".

"KALLIAN. HIS ENCHANTMENTS ARE GREAT."



"WHAT ABOUT YOU, PUQ? STILL IN LOVE WITH THE WITCH?"

"HER NAME IS MARJA."



BY NOW, SOME OF US HAVE ALREADY FALLEN- MOST OF THEM, THOSE WHO DREW TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES.

THIS TOURNAMENT FAVORS THE DISCRETE...



...AND THOSE WHO ARE GOOD AT DEFENDING THEMSELVES.



(HOW THAT GUY EVEN DOES THAT? HE BLOCKS LIKE HE HAS EYES IN HIS BACK!)

SUDDENLY, WE ALL HEAR IT, THE ENVOY'S VOICE AMPLIFIED BY THE KAYNN:



HUNTSMEN, HEAR ME OUT! YOU MAY NOW ENTER THE ARENA AT YOUR OWN PERIL!

"THIS IS WHERE THE FUN BEGINS!"

IT'S TIME TO SHOW THESE SPELLSPITTERS WHAT WE ARE MADE OF!



YEEEEAAAAHHHH!



WHAT?

FSHHHHH!

SHHHRANKK!



-UFF!



GRR...
AHHH!



NICE **BLOCK!**
WHAT A DANGER
SENSE!

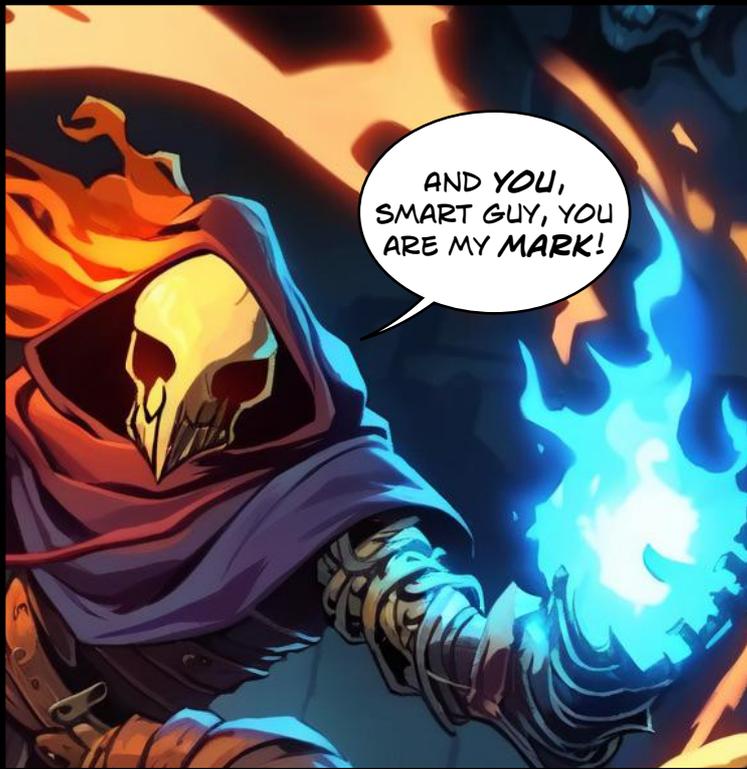


SO THERE WERE
SPELLCASTERS
WAITING TO GET IN
HERE, TOO...

YOU ARE **MISSING**
THE POINT. THIS WHOLE
THING, THE
TOURNAMENT? THAT'S
TO TEST US, THE
HUNTSMEN.

WHOEVER TAKES
ONE OF YOU DOWN
BEFORE TIME'S UP
WILL GET
PROMOTED!





AND YOU, SMART GUY, YOU ARE MY MARK!



THE TRUE IRON! DAMN IT! IT'S TOO CHARGED! IT WON'T REPEL KAYNN ANYMORE!

WAIT! I HAVE AN IDEA!



FIRE FOR THE FLAMING DIVINE!

FSHHHHH!



I TOSS THE CHAINS AT HER...

SWOSHH!



WHAT? DO YOU THINK YOU... UH?

SHCLANG!

...AND SHE BLOCKS IT!



SHSHSHSHSHSH!

JUST LIKE I PLANNED.



FSHHHHH!



FSHHHHH!

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!

AS THE BATTLE GOES ON, THE ENVOY CALLS THOSE OF US WHO TOOK DOWN THREE OPPONENTS.

THE ENVOY SAID THAT IF THEY SURVIVE THE FIRST STAGE, THEY GET DIRECTLY TO THE THIRD STAGE.

KALLIAN OF EL-PAMSU!



MARJA, THE WITCH!



BORZAK OF FRANKHURT!

THE NEWCOMER PETARIAN!

WOW! GOOD FOR HER!

I DID IT!
I FUCKING DID IT
THIS TIME!



AS FOR ME... I GOT ONE DOWN. TWO TO GO.

BUT I DON'T HAVE MY TRUE IRON PROTECTION ANYMORE AND THAT LAST ENCHANTMENT LEFT ME PANTING...

ALRIGHT!
TIME'S UP! YOU THERE, SHARLOS!
SEND THE SIGNAL TO THE ENVOY!

IT'S TIME TO PART WITH THE WEAKLINGS!
IT'S TIME FOR THE CULLING!



THE CULLING?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?





THE SIGNAL! OH, THE CHAINS ARE CHARGED... IT'S ABOUT TIME I HAD SOME FUN TOO!

SHSHSHSHSH---



HUH? WHAT'S WITH THIS PURPLE LIGHT?!

AND THE FIRES, THEY ARE BECOMING PURPLE TOO!



THE ENVOY'S GLOWING! UNHOLY SHI-!



WHAT THE-?

SHHHHRAAAAK!!!



IN AN INSTANT,



THE SPELL GOES FOR EVERYONE,



THE TOURNAMENT IS OVER.

THIS IS A FULL-FLEDGED MASSACRE.



EVERYWHERE,

ALL AT ONCE.



DOLARAC, PROTECT YOURSELF!

PETARIAN?!

IN A HEARTBEAT, I
CAN SENSE WHAT'S
COMING.

ISHTURIAN SPELLS
ARE HARD TO
COUNTER.

SKRASH!

COUNTERSPELL!

JUST ONE SLIP
AND I'M GONE.

JUST... A LITTLE...
BIT... NOW...

SKRSHSHSHSH!

SHSHSHSHSH...

CAN'T... LOSE...
CONTROL...

OOF... THAT WAS
TOUGH...

SHSHSHSHSH...

SKRAAAASH!

I DID IT!

PETARIAN'S
TELEPATHIC
MESSAGE GAVE ME
JUST ENOUGH
TIME TO REACT.

SHE SAVED
MY LIFE.



PETARIAN, IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU...

YOU'VE GOT MY BACK AND I'VE GOT YOURS, RIGHT?



WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! THEY ARE KILLING EVERYONE!



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, CAPTAIN?



THIS IS ME CUTTING OUT THE EXCESSES, BABY.

OH, AND SHARLOS? TAKE CARE OF THE BUTCHER.



WHERE DO WE GO? THESE LUNATICS ARE EVERYWHERE! THE ENCHANTED FIRE WON'T ALLOW US TO LEAVE!

GET BEHIND ME. I THINK I CAN USE A SPELL TO FIND A WAY...



I PICK UP A BLADE FROM A DEAD GUY ON THE GROUND AND TRY TO CHANNEL ITS PAST.



YOU SEE, ME AND MY GUYS ARE TIRED OF THIS. TOO MANY MOUTHS. TOO MANY MAGES AND PAMPERED NOBLES FOR US TO FEED. THE TOURNAMENT IS NOT ENOUGH ANYMORE.

SO I HIRED AN ISHTURIAN MASTER AND MADE HIM TAKE THE PLACE OF TONIGHT'S ENVOY.



THIS BLADE BELONGED TO A POOR GUY NAMED SHARLOS.

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF OF ME!



ALL THIS TIME WE'VE BEEN SLEEPING TOGETHER, I'VE BEEN WORKING, BABY.

YOUR ENCHANTMENTS WERE MAKING US WEAK. NOW, IT'S TIME FOR THE STRONG.



BUT THANKS TO HIS MEMORIES, I HAVE FOUND THE KEY TO SURVIVE THIS.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT DAMNED ENVOY.

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE ARCHEOMANCER'S TOOLS



NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL OR HOW THEY ARE CAST, EVERY SPELL IS DONE THROUGH KAYNN MANIPULATION. THAT'S WHY COUNTERSPELL IS ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES TAUGHT AT THE ARCANE ACADEMIES SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE NINE PROVINCES.

BY ANALYZING HOW A SPELL WAS CREATED AND WHICH KAYNN ENERGIES WERE USED TO DO SO, A MAGE CAN UNRAVEL A SPELL BEING CAST, NULLIFYING ITS EFFECTS AND DISPERSING THE KAYNN BACK TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

SINCE NOT ALL SPELLS ARE CREATED THE SAME, SOME ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO COUNTER THAN OTHERS. THAT'S WHY, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS SUCH A BASIC SKILL, FEW MAGES ARE SKILLED ENOUGH TO USE IT EFFECTIVELY AGAINST SEASONED MAGIC USERS.

ISHTURIAN SPELLS ARE NOTABLY HARD TO COUNTER, SINCE THEIR RAW POWER MAKES THEM QUICK TO CAST AND TOO DENSE TO UNRAVEL. TECHNO-RITUALISTIC SPELLS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE EASIER TO COUNTER, SINCE THEY ARE MORE LOGICAL AND UNDERSTANDABLE THAN ANY OTHER METHOD OF MAGIC.

DARING TO KNOW

EXCERPTS FROM ARCHMAGE GAMBE DORFF, AT **MAGICRAFT THEORY FOR APPRENTICES**. PUBLISHED IN THE CAPITAL, AUSHULIA, TWELVE YEARS BEFORE THE FALL.



ON THE NATURE OF THE KAYNN

"OUR WORLD IS FILLED WITH KAYNN. THEY FLOW THROUGH THE AIR, THEY REST WITHIN LIVING BEINGS AND THEY CAN EVEN BE FOUND INSIDE OF SOME MATERIALS.

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE FOR SURE. THERE WAS ONCE A THEORY THAT DIVIDED THEM INTO THREE CATEGORIES: CREATION, INERTIA AND DECAY. SOME OTHERS THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE DIVIDED INTO TEN OPPOSING ELEMENTS.

WHAT WE DO KNOW IS THAT, WITH TRAINING, ONE CAN FEEL THEM, SHAPE THEM, AND CRAFT THEM INTO SPELLS, ENCHANTMENTS AND TRICKS".

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

"THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF SHAPING THE KAYNN, OF MAKING MAGIC.

SOME PRAY, LIKE PRIESTS AND CLERICS; OTHERS FORCE THE KAYNN WITH THEIR WILL AND INNER KAYNN, LIKE THE ISHTURIANS; THEN THERE ARE THOSE LIKE US, WHO STUDY TO LEARN AND REPLICATE TECHNIQUES AND RITUALS THAT CAN EASE OUR KAYNNCRAFTING; AND THERE ARE OTHERS MORE EXOTIC PATHS.

THESE DIFFERENT APPROACHES ARE CALLED BY ME 'METHODS OF MAGIC'. SOME PREFER 'SCHOOLS', OR 'STYLES', BUT 'METHODS' IS CERTAINLY MORE APPROPRIATE".



LIMITS OF MAGIC

"DESPITE BEING THE MOST POWERFUL ACT OF AGENCY THAT A SENTIENT BEING CAN DO, MAGIC IS NOT WITHOUT ITS BOUNDARIES. (...) WE CAN SUMMARIZE THE LIMITS OF MAGIC AS FOLLOWS:

MATTER AND RESISTANCE - MAGIC CANNOT CREATE TRUE MATTER. WHATEVER IT CREATES IS DISSIPATED AFTER A WHILE. IT ALSO CAN BE RESISTED BY SOME METALS, LIKE TRUE IRON, OR NULLIFIED BY SILVER. GOLD CAN AMPLIFY IT, AND SOME GEMS CAN STORE KAYNN.

DURATION AND DISTANCE - MAGIC CANNOT TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES AND SPELLS DISPERSE AFTER A WHILE. THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE MAGIC LAST IS THROUGH ENCHANTMENTS - ANCHORING A SPELL INTO AN OBJECT OR BEING.

LIFE AND DEATH - MAGIC CANNOT CREATE NEW LIFE, NOR CANNOT TRULY RESURRECT THE DEAD. IT CAN HEAL AND MEND FLESH AND BONES, BUT CANNOT CAUSE A LOST LIMB TO REGROW."



THE HISTORIAN'S REFUGE.



I'VE BEEN USING MIDJOURNEY FOR A WHILE NOW AND I'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH USING MY OWN DRAWINGS AS THE BASIS FOR NEW IMAGES.

HERE'S MY VERSION OF THE ARCHEOMANCER. I'M NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH IT, BUT I THINK IT'S ONE OF MY BEST DOODLES. I GOT KINDA LAZY WHEN DOING THE SHADOWS, HATCHING IT LOOSELY WITHOUT EVEN USING A PEN, BUT I LIKE THE RESULT.

PERHAPS HE LOOKS TOO STRONG AND I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT THE SPELL EFFECT EITHER, BUT I'M PROUD OF IT.

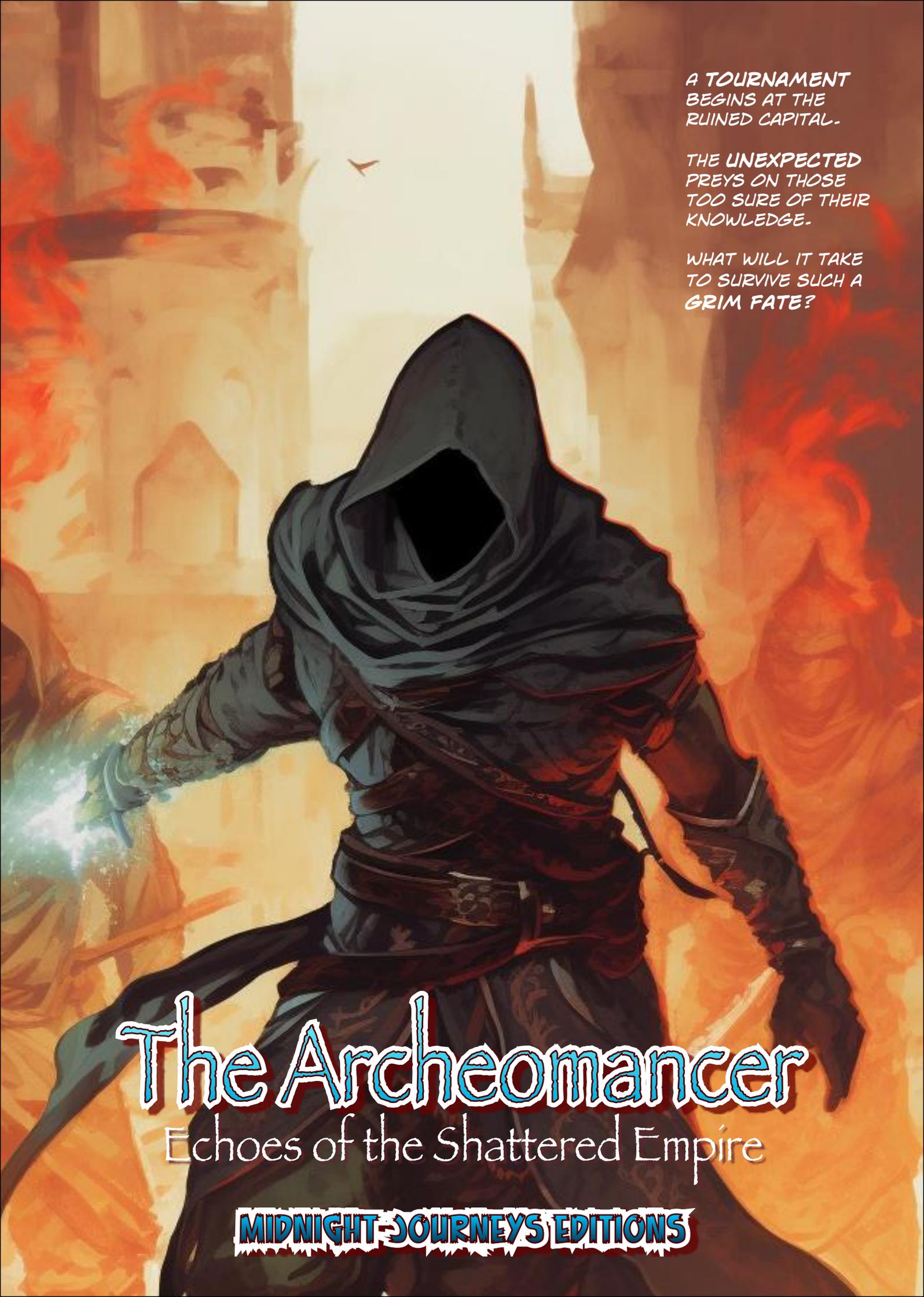


THE ARCHEOMANCER IS A SEASONED ADVENTURER, NOT JUST SOME BOOKISH MAGE, SO THAT'S WHAT I WAS AIMING FOR WITH THOSE PIECES OF ARMOR, BELTS AND POCKETS. KINDA LIKE ROB LIEFELD'S 90'S TOUGH GUYS SUCH AS CABLE AND DEADPOOL.

AS YOU CAN SEE, MIDJOURNEY USED THE BELTS, THE TEXTILES, CREATED A MUCH BETTER SPELL EFFECT AND IMPROVED THE SHADOWING, BUT LEFT OUT THE POCKETS.

I LIKED IT, BUT IN THE NEXT ISSUE I'LL SHOW HOW MUCH BETTER IT CAN BE IMPROVED.

D.A. DA ROSA, JUNE '23.



A TOURNAMENT
BEGINS AT THE
RUINED CAPITAL.

THE UNEXPECTED
PREYS ON THOSE
TOO SURE OF THEIR
KNOWLEDGE.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE
TO SURVIVE SUCH A
GRIM FATE?

The Archeomancer

Echoes of the Shattered Empire

MIDNIGHT JOURNEYS EDITIONS