

D. A. Da Rosa

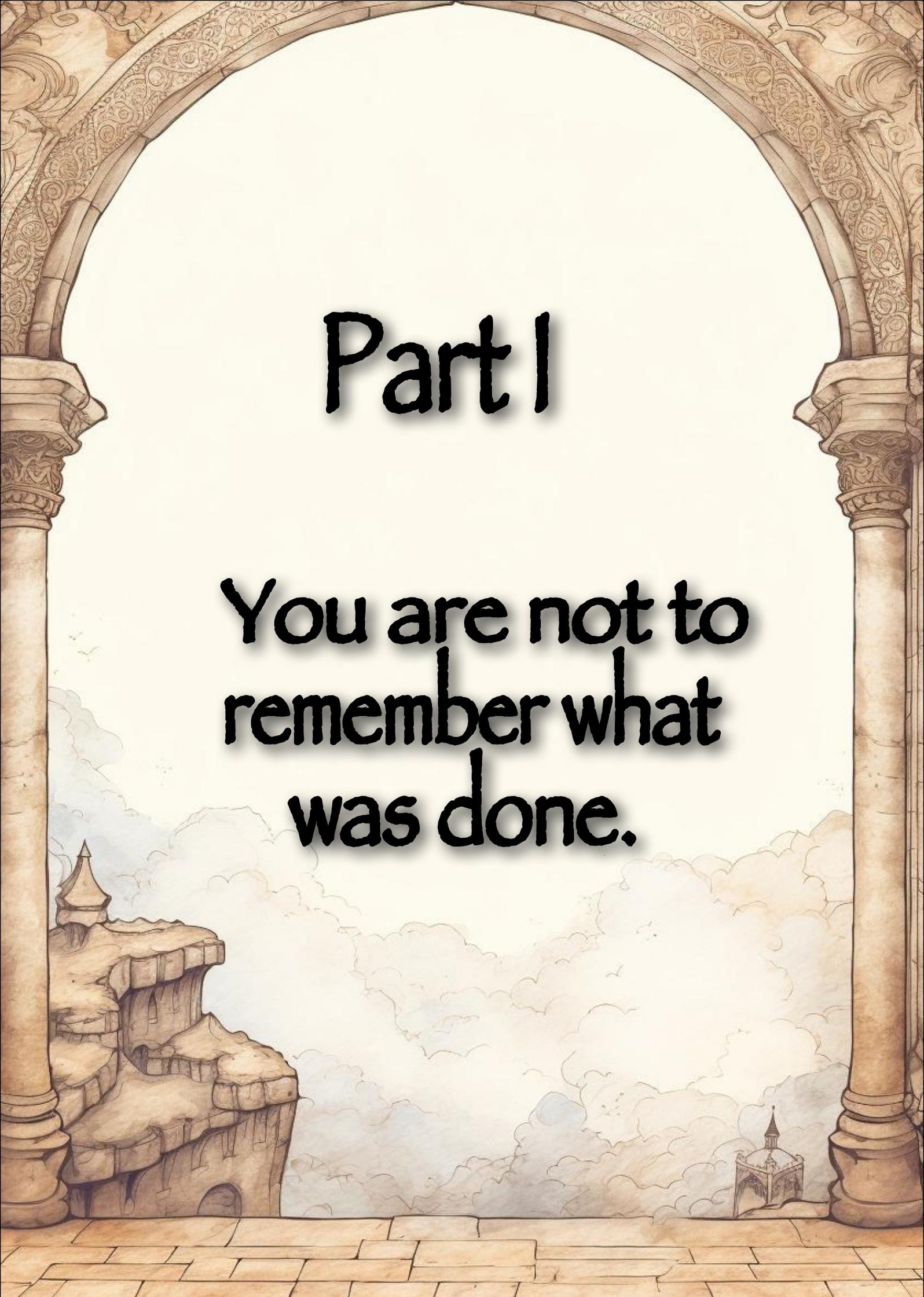
The Archeomancer

Echoes of the Shattered Empire

6

ALL THAT IS SOLID
MELTS IN THE AIR

MIDNIGHT-JOURNEYS EDITIONS



Part I

You are not to
remember what
was done.

PROLOGUE



I LOST THEM...
I... I LOST TRACK
OF THOSE
MAGES.

I CANNOT
SENSE THEM
ANYMORE!

OH, HERDA,
WHAT HAVE I
DONE?

YOU GIFTED
ME, BUT I
KILLED ONE AND
THE OTHERS
FLED...

Rghhhh...

Rghhhh...

THE CAPITAL'S
WASTELANDS.

WEEKS AGO.



W-WAIT.



I WANT TO... I WANT TO PARLEY.



SPEAK, MORTAL.



HM? LET HER COME, MY PETS.



I HEAR YOU ARE LOOKING FOR MAGES.

I... I KNOW WHERE TWO MAGES ARE, RIGHT NOW. I CAN TAKE YOU THERE.

I JUST WANT TO LIVE. AND... AND I WANT TO BE ESCORTED OUT OF THIS CITY ONCE I FIND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.



RHHHHH...

RHHHHH...

RHHHHH...

LATER.

WHERE ARE
THE MAGES?

THEY HUM...
THEY ARE NOT
INSIDE.

BUT WAIT, WAIT!
PLEASE, WAIT!
T-THERE'S A TRAIL IN
THERE! I CAN GO
AFTER THEM!

PLEASE...

YOUR FAILURE IS
UNFORTUNATE.

BUT HERDA IS A
FORGIVING DEITY.

IF YOU PLEAD,
MAYBE SHE WILL
EXTEND TO YOU THE
SAME GIFT SHE
GAVE ME.

BUT IN ORDER TO
PRAY TO HER, YOU
FIRST NEED TO DIE.

RGHHHH...

RGHHHH...

RGHHHH...



The Archeomancer

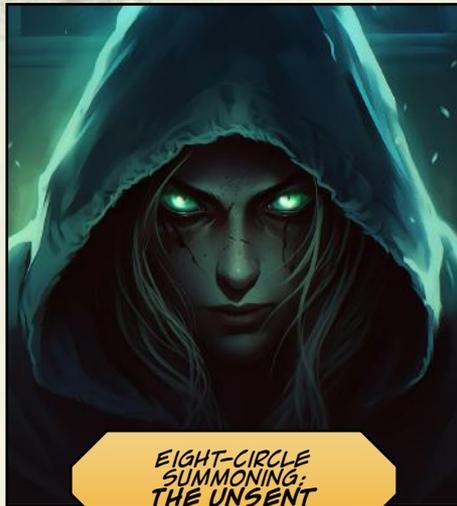
Echoes of the Shattered Empire



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

THE NECROMANCER'S TOOLS



EIGHT-CIRCLE
SUMMONING:
THE UNSENT

THE FIRST DOCUMENTED NECROMANCERS WERE HEALERS WHO THOUGHT THEY FOUND A WAY TO RESTORE LIFE. BUT WHAT THEY REALLY DID WAS TO ENCHANT BODIES WITH RUDIMENTARY MOVEMENT AND BASIC INSTINCTS.

AS NECROMANCERS PERFECTED THE FORMULA ALONG THE CENTURIES, THEY CREATED NEW KINDS OF UNDEAD, ALWAYS IN SEARCH OF TRUE IMMORTALITY.

IN THEIR SEARCH, THEY RECENTLY DEVELOPED A NEW POWERFUL AND CUNNING KIND. THEY ARE THE 'UNSENT' - UNNATURAL SENTIENTS. LIKE VAMPIRES, THEY ARE SMART AND POWERFUL, BUT WITHOUT NEEDING BLOOD OR FEARING THE SUN.

HOWEVER, THEY NEED COMPLEX NECROMANTIC RITUALS TO SUSTAIN THEIR ENCHANTMENTS FROM TIME TO TIME. AND ONLY THE MOST POWERFUL OF THEM CAN PRETEND TO BE A PERSON FOR LONG.

WHILE THEY TALK AND ACT AS SENTIENT BEINGS, THEY ARE NOT PEOPLE. THEIR FLESH SOMETIMES BETRAY THEM AND THEY OFTEN ACT IRRATIONALLY. AS TIME PROGRESSES, THEIR BEHAVIOR GET MORE AND MORE DERANGED AND ERRATIC.

6. UNMASKED

THE
DISTINCT
DISTRICT.

NOW.

DAMN IT.

THIS IS AN
UNSENT.

DIDN'T SENSE
OR HEAR HER
ZOMBIES. SHE
MUST BE GOOD
AT CONCEALING
ENCHANTMENTS.





UQIJJ?
CARE TO
EXPLAIN?



I'M
SORRY.



I HAD
LITTLE
CHOICE.



GO, MY PETS.
ELIMINATE THE
BLONDE ONE AND TAKE
THE OTHERS TO ME.
ALIVE.



RGHHHH!

RGHHHH!

RGHHHH!

RGHHHH!

RGHHHH!



YOU TWO.
GO ON.



SHE USES ALL
OF THE KAYNN
STORED IN HER
GLOVE'S
BATTERY.

THAT
BITCH'S GOING
TO PAY FOR
WHAT SHE DID
TO UQIJJ!



SHE'S GOING FOR
AN ALL-IN.

I'D FEEL GUILTY
FOR HER RISKING
HERSELF LIKE
THAT AFTER
USING THE
OATHBIND.

BUT IT WILL BE
WORTH IT.



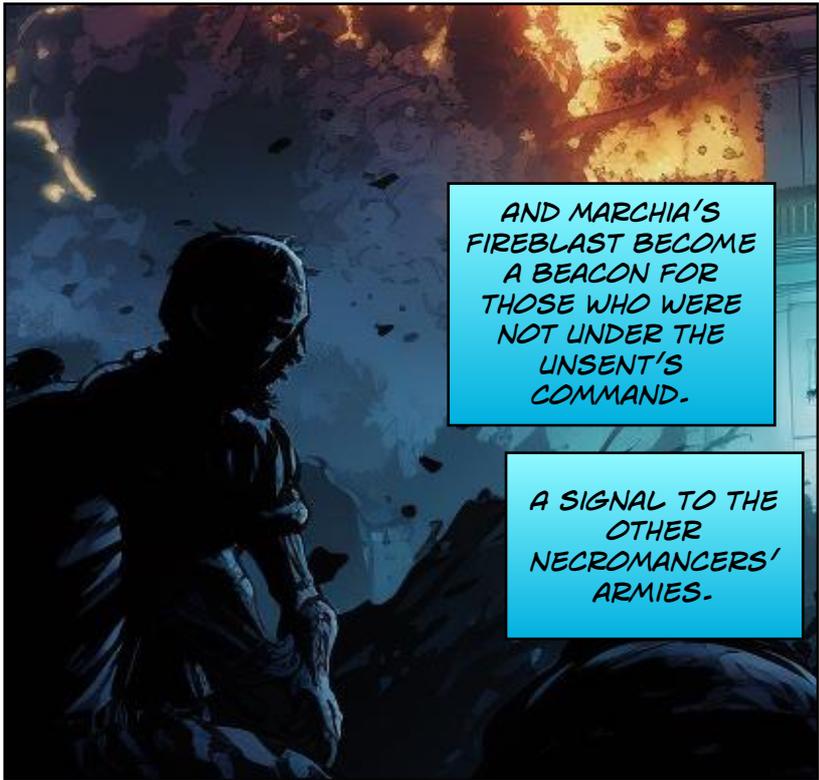
KA-BOOM!



DRIEDBODIES AND SKELETONS ARE VULNERABLE TO FIRE.



BUT WE ARE AT THE RUINED CAPITAL.



AND MARCHIA'S FIREBLAST BECAME A BEACON FOR THOSE WHO WERE NOT UNDER THE UNSENT'S COMMAND.

A SIGNAL TO THE OTHER NECROMANCERS' ARMIES.



MY... PETS...

RGHHHH!

HERDA, GIVE US STRENGTH!



DOLARAC...
SHOULDN'T WE
GO BACK?
MARCHIA—

DON'T
WORRY. WE
ARE CLOSE,
NOW.



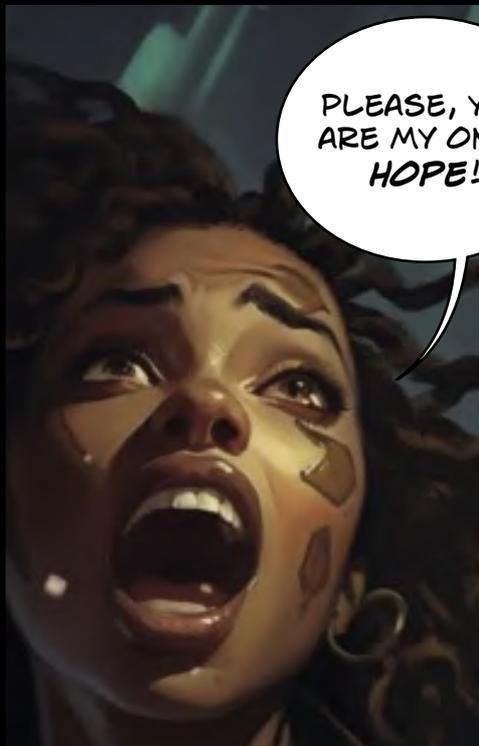
SHE WILL BE
SAVED.
EVERYONE WILL
BE SAVED.



SO LONG,
DEADBRAINS!



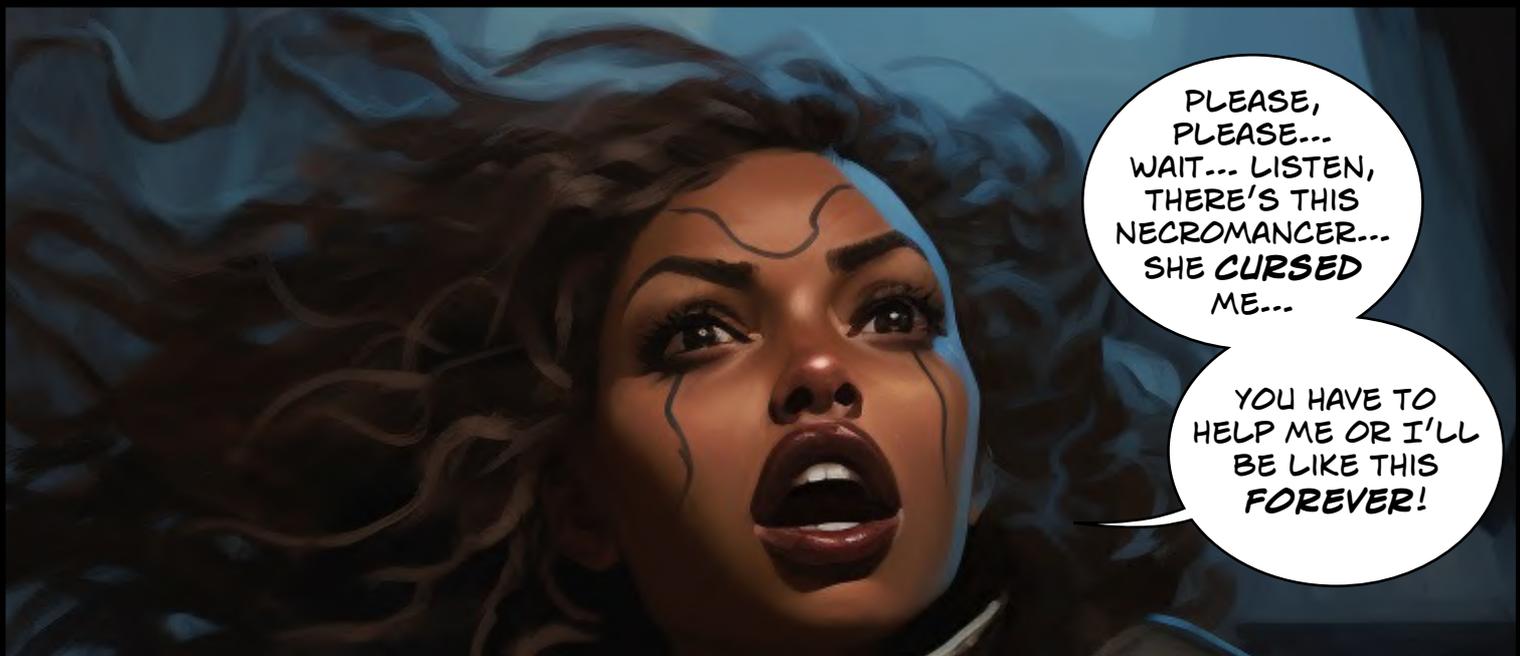
MARCHIA,
WAIT!



PLEASE, YOU
ARE MY ONLY
HOPE!



YOU ARE
NOT HER. YOU
ARE A FUCKIN'
ZOMBIE.



PLEASE,
PLEASE...
WAIT... LISTEN,
THERE'S THIS
NECROMANCER...
SHE **CURSED**
ME...

YOU HAVE TO
HELP ME OR I'LL
BE LIKE THIS
FOREVER!



WHAT DO YOU MEAN? HOW COULD I EVEN HELP YOU?



SHWINK!



I JUST NEEDED YOU TO STOP.

US ZOMBIES ARE NOT VERY FOND OF RUNNING, YOU SEE?



GET READY, PETS. THE OTHER LORDS ARE INVADING AND OUR GODDESS—

LISTEN, MY PRIESTESS. YOUR GODDESS COMMANDS YOU: LEAVE YOUR SOLDIERS AND GO AFTER THOSE MAGES YOURSELF.



IF THEY REACH THE PALACE... IF ONE OF THEM IS WHO I SUSPECT, THEN ALL WILL BE LOST TO US!



I'M SORRY, PETS. YOUR MISTRESS MUST GO, BUT HER HEART WILL BE WITH YOU.



**IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE TO
NOT BE AMAZED
BY THE IMPERIAL
PALACE'S
GRANDEUR.**

**AFTER BEING
DESTROYED IN THE
3RD CENTURY'S
QUESDUN CIVIL
WAR, IT WAS
REBUILT.**

**IT TOOK
SOME
INSPIRATION
FROM THE
CAPITAL'S VOI
TOWERS AND
FROM THE
BASHERÀNIAN
CASTLES.**

**IT WAS
SUPPOSED
TO
SYMBOLIZE
THE
IMPERIAL
UNITY.**

**IT WAS
HATED BY
AUSHULIANS,
BASHERÒ
AND
FOHRVOIANS
ALIKE.**

AS WE WALK ALL THE WAY THERE, I CAN FEEL PETARIAN'S DISPOSITION CHANGING.

SHE IS NO LONGER DISTRESSED ABOUT MARCHIA. SHE'S FOCUSED NOW. GOOD.

ARE YOU READY?

AS READY AS I'LL EVER BE.

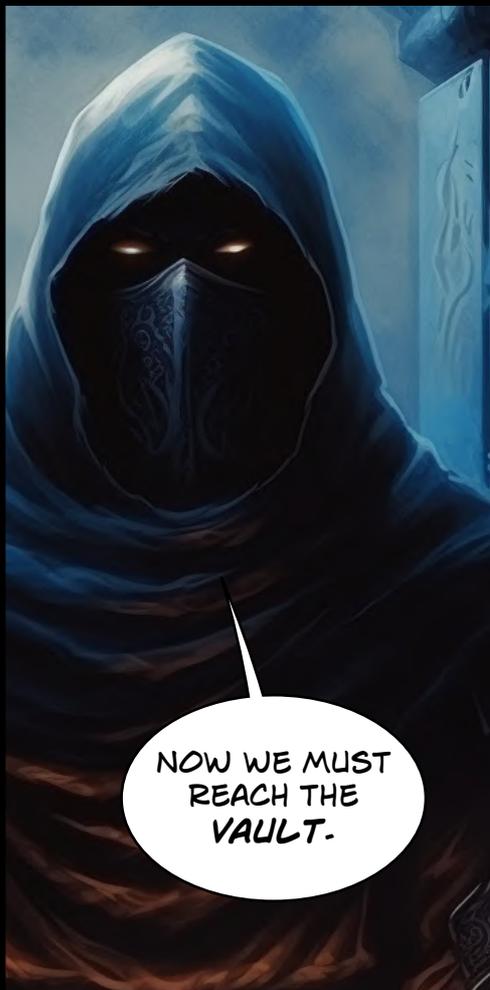
EVEN THOUGH THE PALACE HAS LONG BEEN RANSACKED BY NOW, FEW CAN ENTER IT FROM ITS FRONT DOOR.

EASTERN SANDS,
NORTHERN WINDS,
SOUTHERN SEA AND
WESTERN LEAFS.

click!



WOW.



NOW WE MUST REACH THE VAULT.



THOUGHT YOU'D BE MORE EMOTIONAL.



DOESN'T IT BRING YOU BACK MEMORIES?



WE MUST NOT TARRY. STOP TALKING NONSENSE.



NONSENSE? YOU WANT ME TO HELP YOU REACH DIVINITY AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU!



MY IDENTITY IS IRRELEVANT. I AM MY MISSION.



IT IS NOT IRRELEVANT TO ME.

MASTER GAMBE DORFF HAD SOME SUSPICIONS, BUT I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOU.



NOW TELL ME: WHO ARE YOU?



I... I TELL YOU WHILE WE WALK, OK?



BUT YOU MUST
UNDERSTAND: THIS IS
NOT ABOUT ME.

IT'S ALL
ABOUT HER.



WAIT,
MISTRESS. I
WANNA HEAR
THAT.



DON'T LOOK AT
ME LIKE THIS, WE
MIGHT LEARN
SOMETHING
INTERESTING...

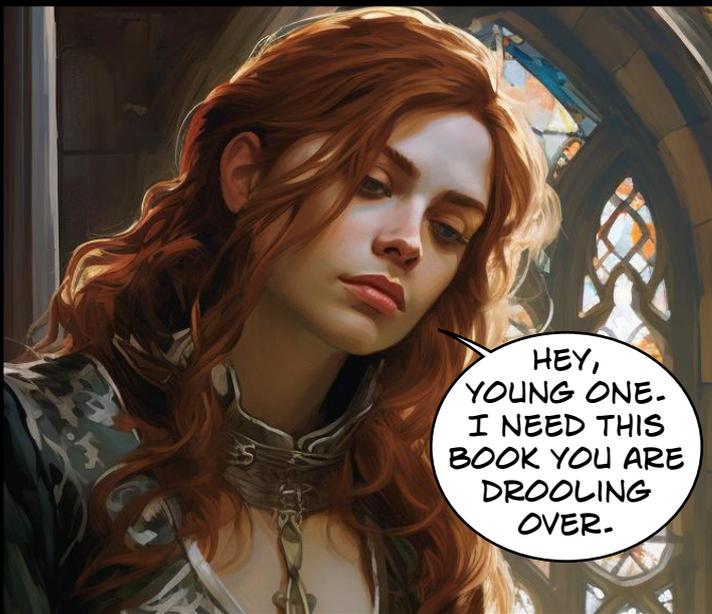


FOR OUR, HM,
GODDESS, I
MEAN.

THE IMPERIAL
CAPITAL,
AUSHULIA.

20 YEARS
BEFORE THE
FALL.

WE STUDIED AT
THE ARCADE
ACADEMY.



HEY,
YOUNG ONE.
I NEED THIS
BOOK YOU ARE
DROOLING
OVER.

MYKELLA
WAS ONLY
TWO YEARS
OLDER THAN
ME.

BUT SHE WAS
FIVE YEARS
AHEAD.



WE RAN INTO
EACH OTHER AT
THE LIBRARY
ALL THE TIME.



AT FIRST,
COINCIDENTALLY.



BUT
THEN...

HEY,
YOUNG
ONE.



WE WERE TOGETHER
WHENEVER WE
WEREN'T STUDYING.



I STUDIED
ARCHEOMANCY AND
LITERATURE,
ALWAYS WITH MY
HEAD ELSEWHERE.



MEANWHILE, SHE
BECAME THE
YOUNGEST HEALER
AT THE EMPEROR'S
SERVICE.

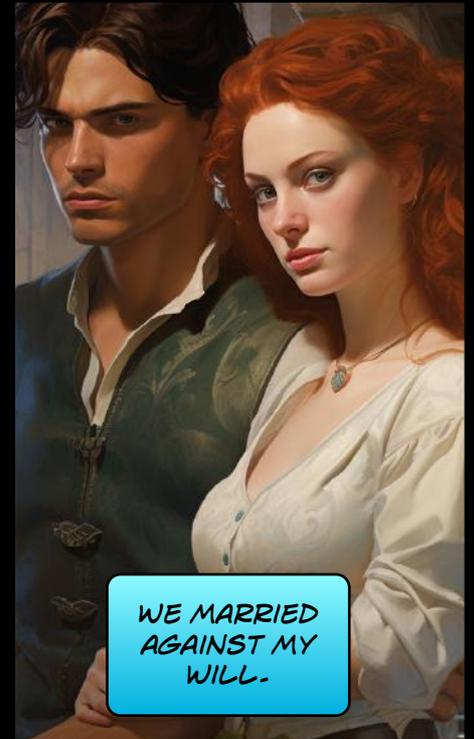


SOME YEARS LATER,
I WAS ABOUT TO
BECOME A MASTER
MYSELF WHEN WE
FOUND I WAS ILL.

TERMINALLY
ILL.



SHE NEVER
GAVE UP
FINDING A
CURE.



WE MARRIED
AGAINST MY
WILL.



BY THE END OF
THAT SAME
LATE-SUMMER
I WAS DEAD.

MY STORY WAS
SUPPOSED TO
END THERE.



BUT
MYKELLA
NEVER GAVE
UP FINDING
A CURE.

AND IT
DIDN'T TAKE
HER LONG
TO FIND A
WAY.

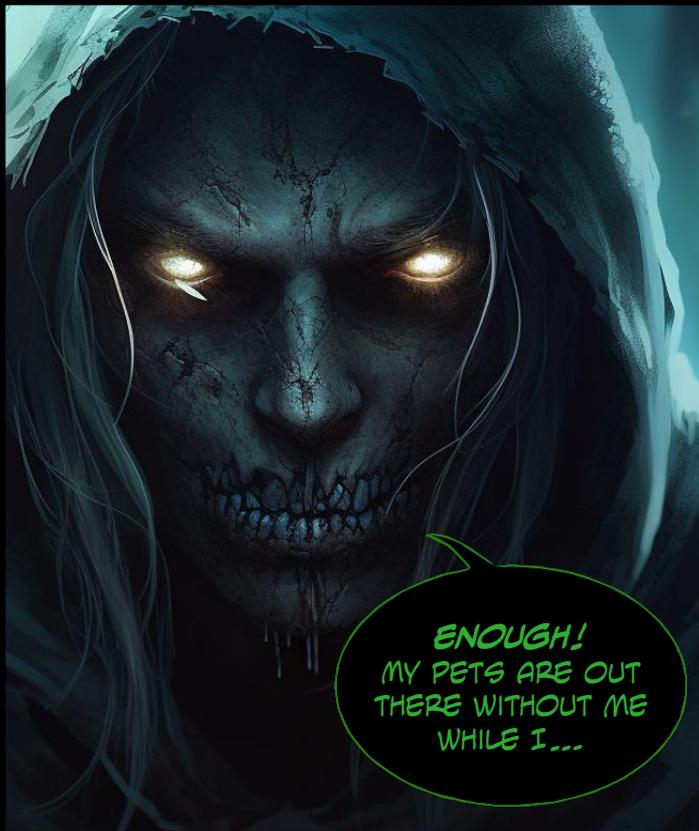


SHE BECAME
THE YOUNGEST
MEMBER OF
THE ORDER
OF THE
ROSE.

A SECRET
ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO
PROTECT THE
QESDUN
LINEAGE NO
MATTER
WHAT.

AN ORDER OF
ASSASSINS,
SPIES AND
RESEARCHERS.

AND BY RESEARCHERS,
I MEAN NECROMANCERS.



ENOUGH!
MY PETS ARE OUT
THERE WITHOUT ME
WHILE I...



SHHHH, ALRIGHT!
GO AHEAD, I'M
RIGHT BEHIND YOU.



YESSS...
FOLLOW MY
LEAD, PET.

SWASH!



UGHHH!

WOW.
HAH! THIS IS
FUNNIER NOW
THAN WHEN I
WAS ALIVE!



LIGH!
WHAT DO YOU
THINK YOU ARE
DOING?! YOU ARE
SUPPOSED TO
WORK
TOGETHER!



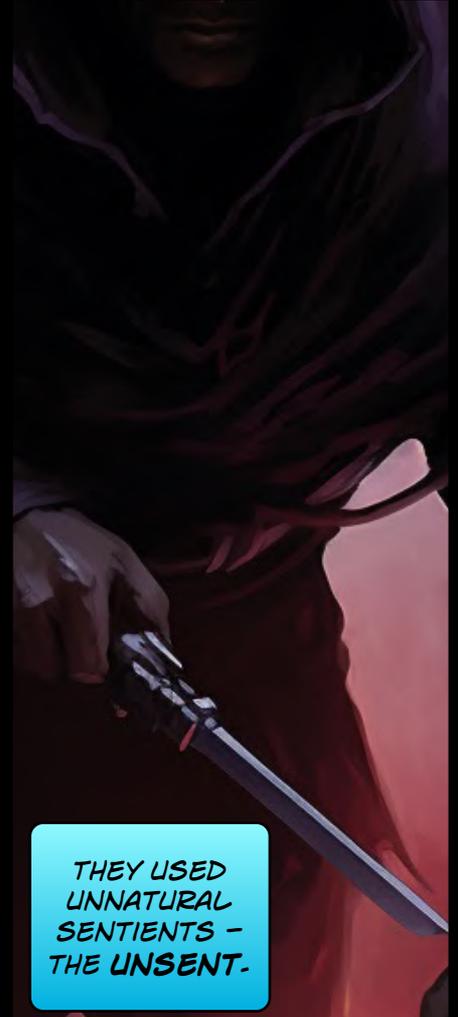
DON'T
WORRY, MY
LADY.
I WORK
BETTER
ALONE.

WAIT. HEARD
SOMETHING?
NO, I'M NOT
STALLING.

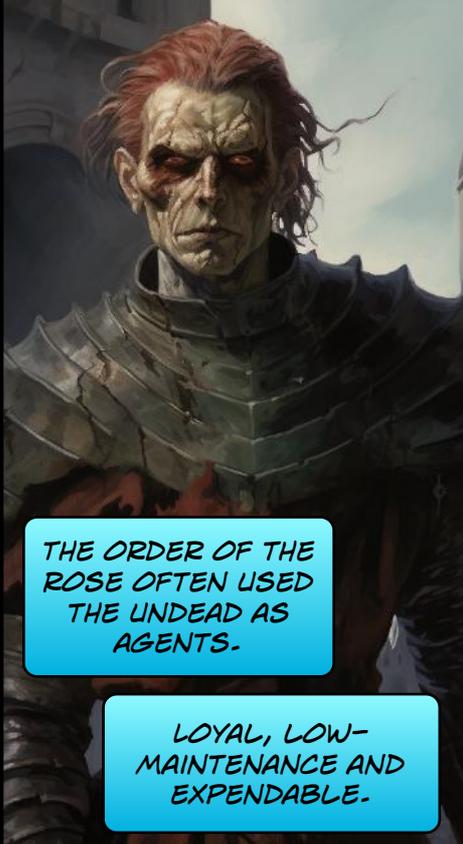
VERY WELL. KEEP
MOVING AND I'LL
KEEP TALKING.



FOR DELICATE
OPERATIONS, THEY
DIDN'T USE
DRIEDBODIES OR
SKELETONS.



THEY USED
UNNATURAL
SENTIENTS -
THE UNSENT.



THE ORDER OF THE
ROSE OFTEN USED
THE UNDEAD AS
AGENTS.

LOYAL, LOW-
MAINTENANCE AND
EXPENDABLE.



THE UNSENT CAN
PASS FOR
PEOPLE FOR A
WHILE.

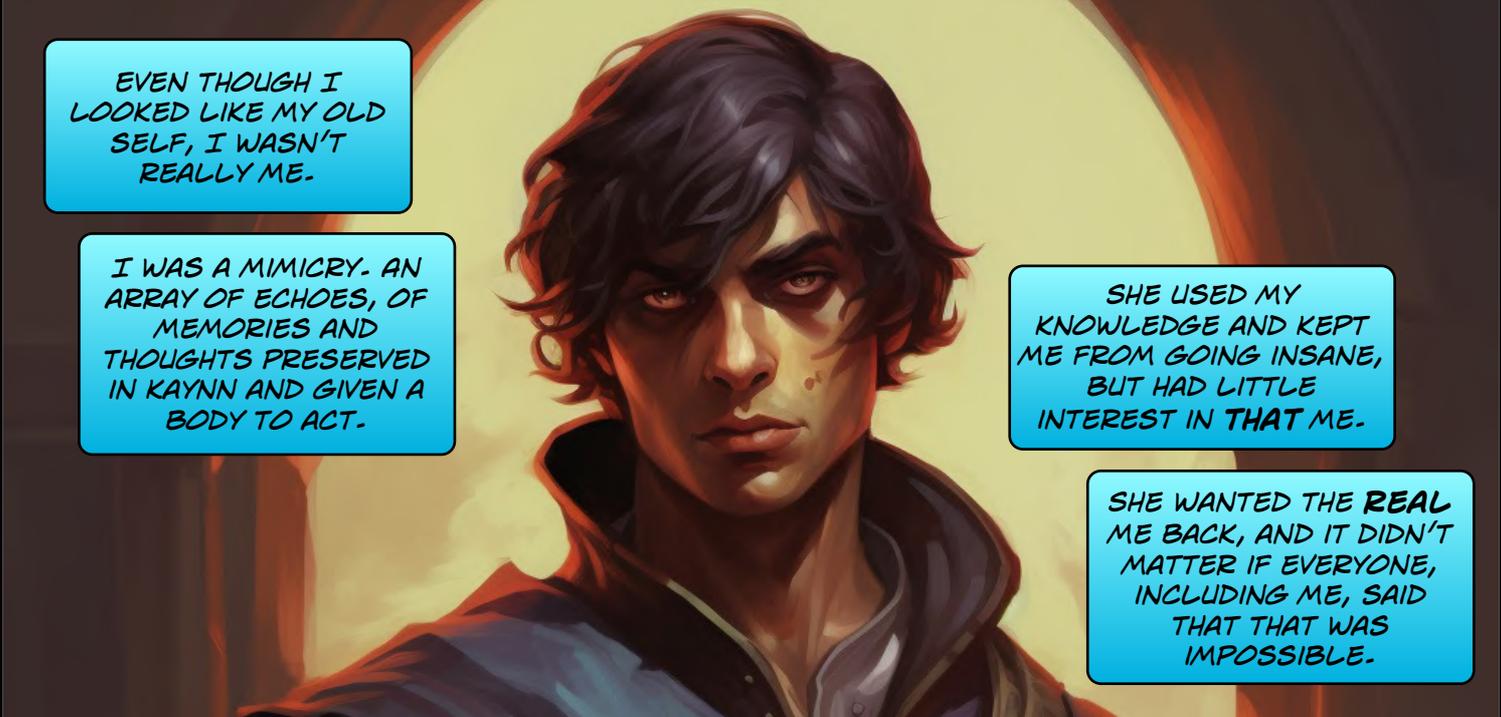


HMM...

AND THEIR MINDS
ARE INCOMPLETE.
DEEPLY DISTORTED
VERSIONS OF THOSE
OF THEIR LIVING
SELVES.



SO WHEN MY WIFE
SECRETLY TURNED
ME INTO AN
UNSENT, IT DIDN'T
TAKE LONG FOR
HER TO BE
DISAPPOINTED.

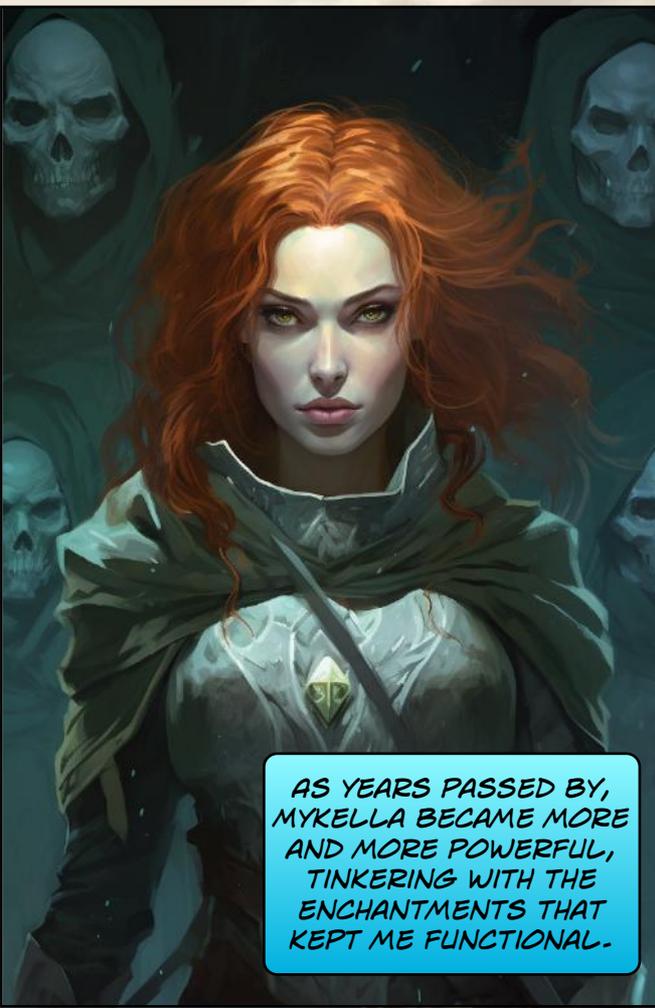


EVEN THOUGH I LOOKED LIKE MY OLD SELF, I WASN'T REALLY ME.

I WAS A MIMICRY. AN ARRAY OF ECHOES, OF MEMORIES AND THOUGHTS PRESERVED IN KAYNN AND GIVEN A BODY TO ACT.

SHE USED MY KNOWLEDGE AND KEPT ME FROM GOING INSANE, BUT HAD LITTLE INTEREST IN THAT ME.

SHE WANTED THE REAL ME BACK, AND IT DIDN'T MATTER IF EVERYONE, INCLUDING ME, SAID THAT THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.



AS YEARS PASSED BY, MYKELLA BECAME MORE AND MORE POWERFUL, TINKERING WITH THE ENCHANTMENTS THAT KEPT ME FUNCTIONAL.



AFTER ONE OF THESE IMPROVEMENTS, I FINALLY CONNECTED SOME INFORMATION I REMEMBER BUT COULDN'T CORRELATE BEFORE.

THAT'S WHEN I TOLD HER ABOUT THE ORB OF DIVINITY. SHE THOUGHT THIS WAS A MYTH.

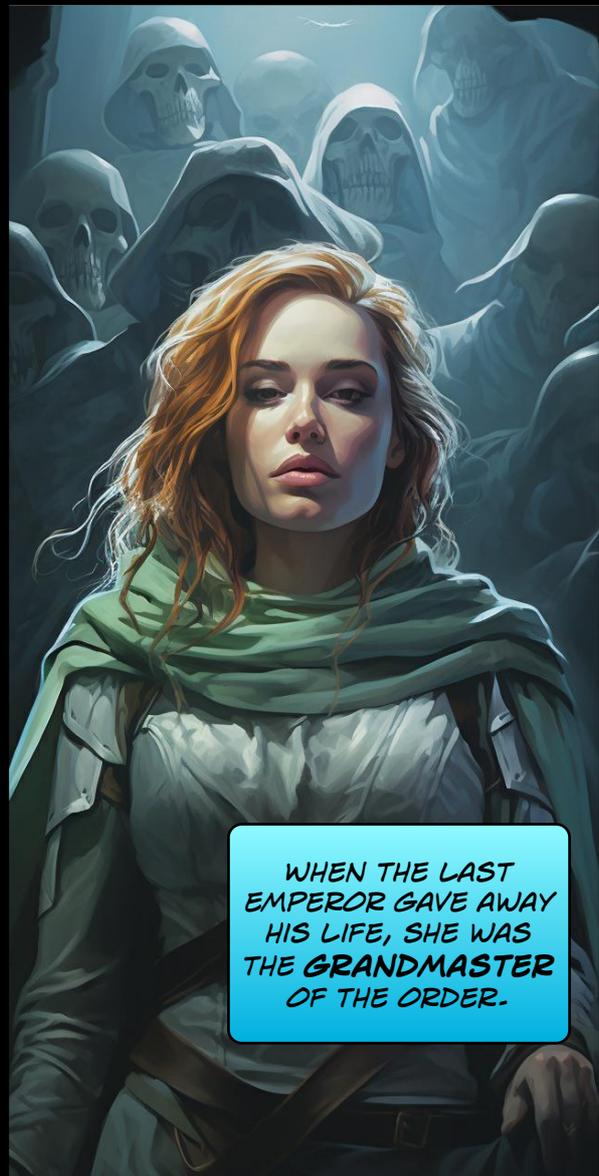
MYTH OR NOT, ONLY DIVINE MAGIC COULD TRANSCEND THE LIMITS OF MAGIC. THAT WAS OUR ONLY HOPE.



MYKELLA WAS TOO LOYAL TO STEAL FROM THE QUESDUN. BUT SHE KNEW THE EMPIRE'S DAYS WERE NUMBERED.



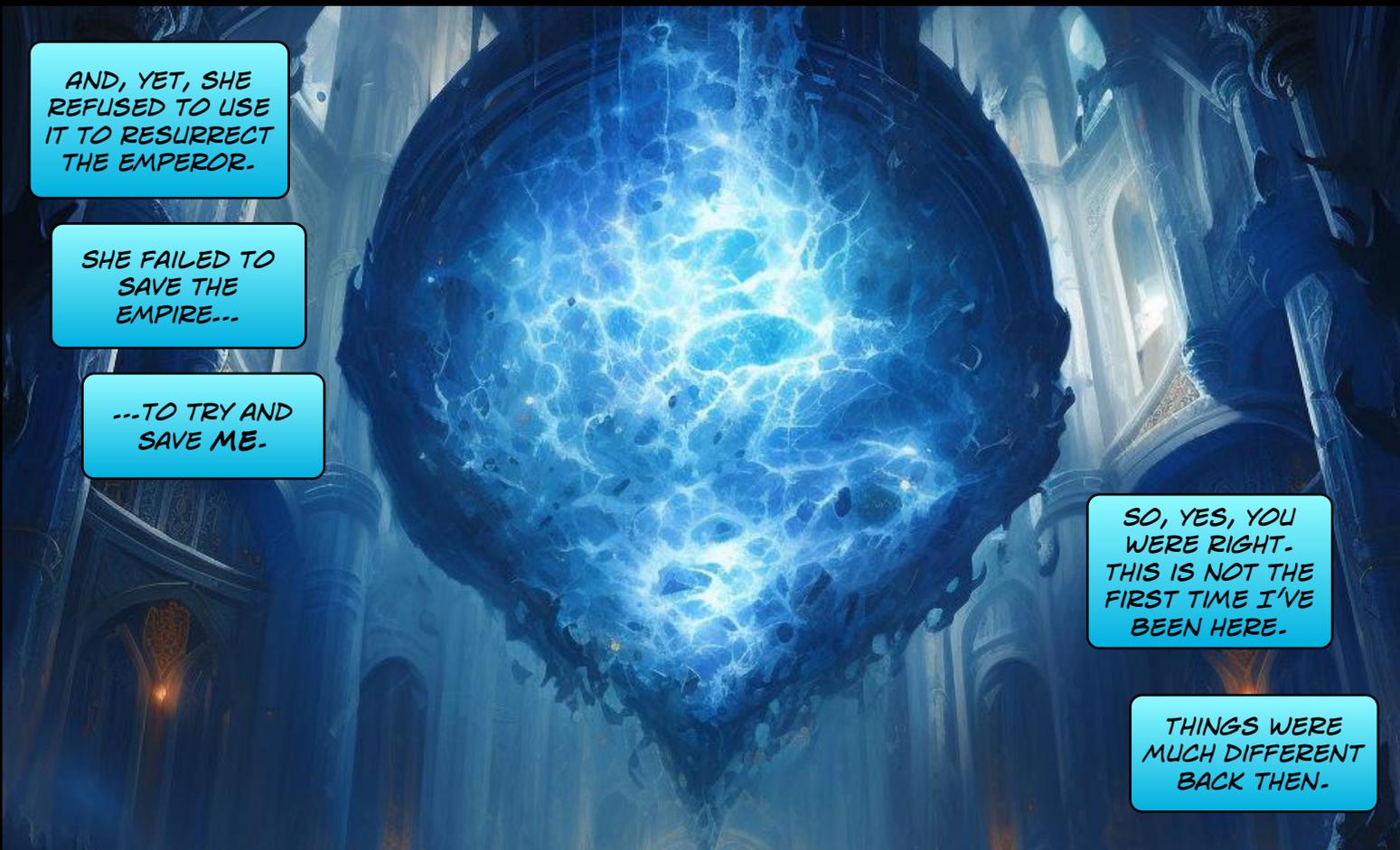
THEY WERE EXPECTING AN ASSASSIN. THEY WERE WRONG.



WHEN THE LAST EMPEROR GAVE AWAY HIS LIFE, SHE WAS THE **GRANDMASTER** OF THE ORDER.



AS SUCH, SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW HOW TO ACTIVATE THE **ORB OF DIVINITY**.



AND, YET, SHE REFUSED TO USE IT TO RESURRECT THE EMPEROR.

SHE FAILED TO SAVE THE EMPIRE...

...TO TRY AND SAVE ME.

SO, YES, YOU WERE RIGHT. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN HERE.

THINGS WERE MUCH DIFFERENT BACK THEN.



SHE MADE US THINK SHE DIED.

BUT I KNEW THAT THAT WAS NOT HER END.

WHERE IS SHE?



UQIJJ? WHERE'S MARCHIA?



I'M AFRAID YOUR COLLEAGUE IS GONE. MY CONDOLENCES.

E EK!

NOW, WHERE'S THE GRANDMASTER?



IT'S NOT HER. THAT'S A DEADLINK SPELL.



SHE'S GONE, NECROMANCER.

MYKELLA GAVE HERSELF TO THE ORB. THAT'S PART OF THE UNLOCKING SPELL.



WAIT... SO THAT MEANS YOU...



THAT I'M GOING TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.



I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU--
UGH!

I HAVE BEEN TRAINED BY THE BEST MINDMAGES OF THE CONTINENT, BITCH.



MUCH BETTER. NOW, DOLLY-BOY AND PET-GIRL, WHERE WERE WE?

OH, YOU WERE ABOUT TO MONOLOGUE ABOUT HOW YOU ARE GUILTY OF EVERYTHING TERRIBLE THAT HAPPENED SINCE THE END OF THE EMPIRE.

UQ... UQIJJ... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

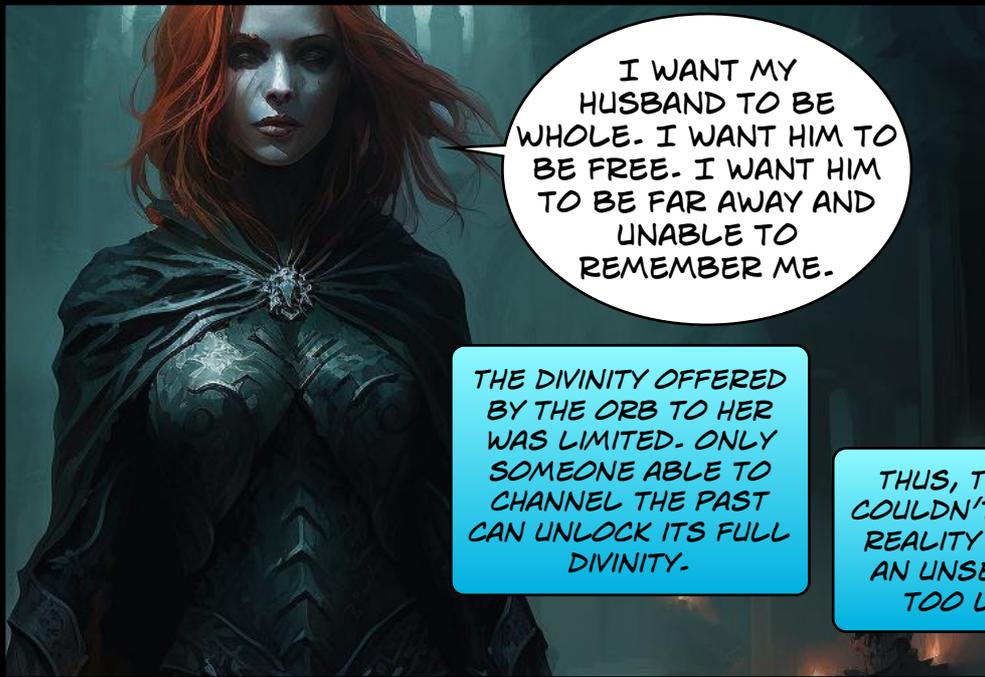
GET LOST!

I... I LOST CONTACT?! HOW?!



WELL, FUCK THAT. WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW IS: HOW CAN YOU GO ON WITHOUT A MASTER REFUELING YOUR ENCHANTMENTS EVERY FEW DAYS?

I MEAN, WHATEVER YOUR WIFE DID, IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU ARE STILL ONE OF US.



I WANT MY HUSBAND TO BE WHOLE. I WANT HIM TO BE FREE. I WANT HIM TO BE FAR AWAY AND UNABLE TO REMEMBER ME.

THE DIVINITY OFFERED BY THE ORB TO HER WAS LIMITED. ONLY SOMEONE ABLE TO CHANNEL THE PAST CAN UNLOCK ITS FULL DIVINITY.

THUS, THE ORB COULDN'T CHANGE REALITY - I WAS AN UNSENT FOR TOO LONG.



BUT IT MADE ME CLOSER TO THE REAL ME. ALL THAT I FELT AND KNEW...



EXCEPT I HAD NO MEMORY OF HER. SHE WANTED ME TO MOVE ON. SHE WANTED ME TO BE FREE OF PAIN.

BUT I'M AN ARCHEOMANCER.

WHEN I FOUND CLUES ABOUT WHO I ONCE WAS, I SOON FOUND THE TRUTH.

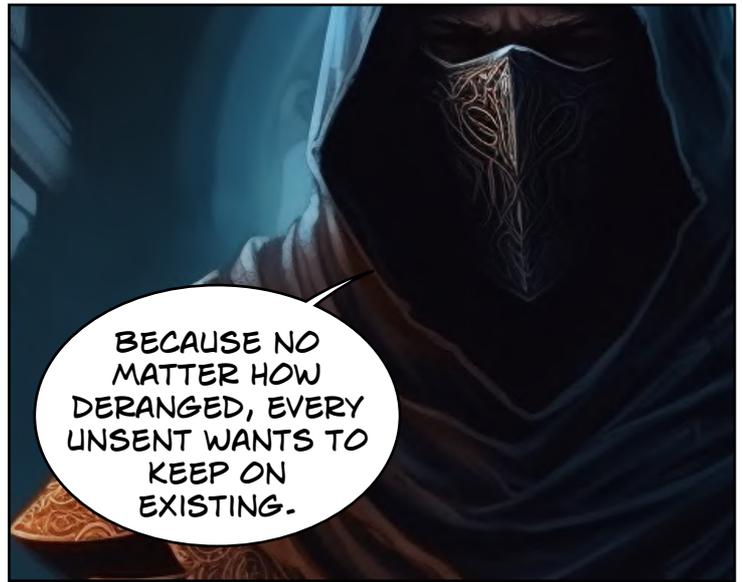


SHE USED DIVINITY TO MAKE ME BOTH DEAD AND ALIVE.

IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.



WHY ARE YOU TELLING HER ANY OF THIS? SHE'S OUR ENEMY!



BECAUSE NO MATTER HOW DERANGED, EVERY UNSENT WANTS TO KEEP ON EXISTING.



SO... UNLESS SOMEONE USES THE ORB OF DIVINITY FOR ME, I EITHER CRUMBLE TO DUST OR KNEEL BEFORE A NECROMANCER?



THERE IS **ANOTHER** WAY. A WAY TO RESTORE YOUR LIFE.

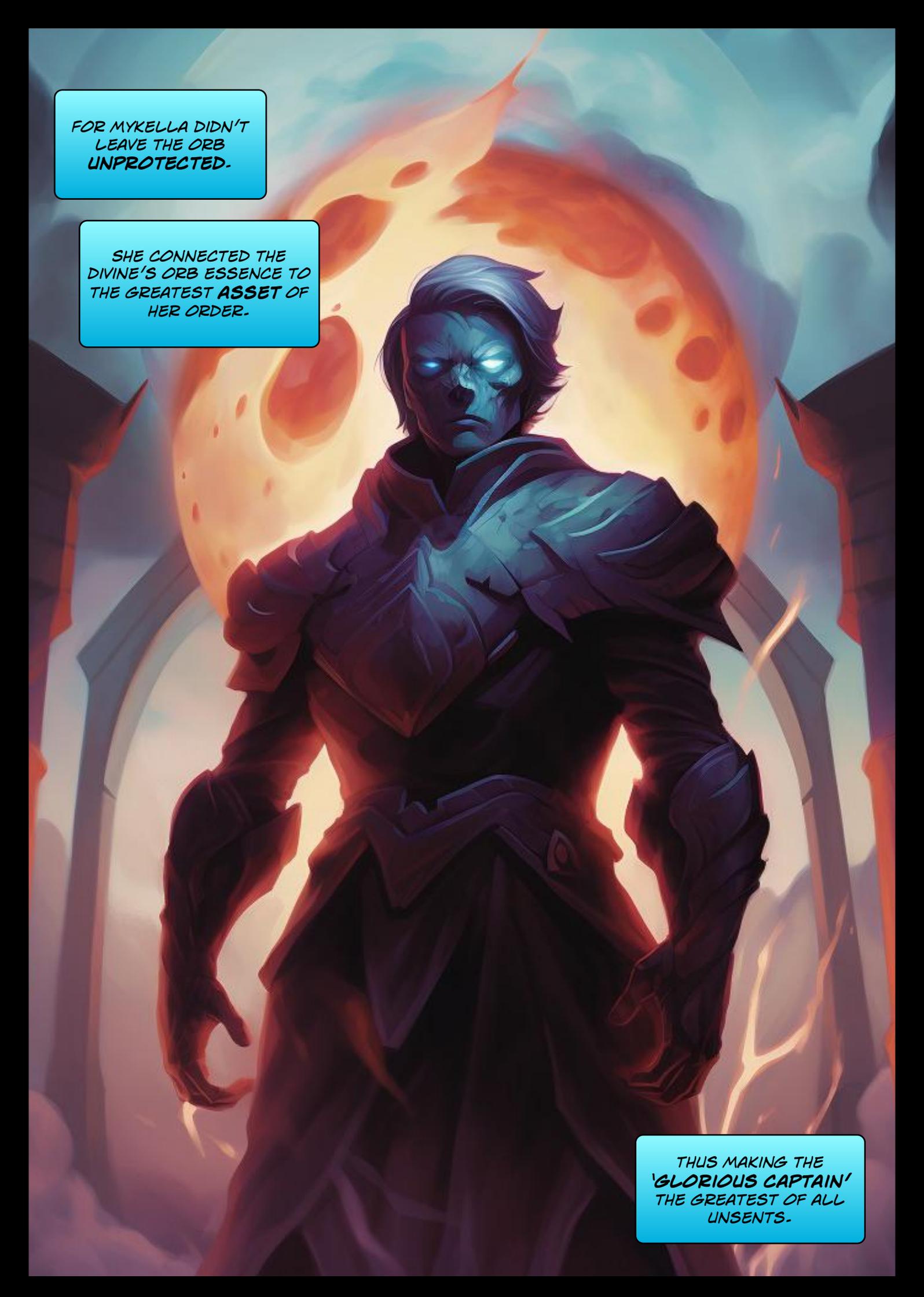


YOU SEE THAT **GLOW** DOWNSTAIRS?

THE **ORB** IS RIGHT THERE.

I CAN SAVE YOU, UQIJJ. I CAN SAVE **EVERYONE.**

BUT WE WILL NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET...

A character with short, dark hair and glowing blue eyes stands in the center of the frame. They are wearing dark, intricately detailed armor with a high collar and shoulder guards. The character's expression is serious. Behind them is a large, glowing orange orb with a mottled, crater-like texture, set within a stone archway. The background is a mix of blue and orange light, suggesting a dramatic, possibly underground or cavernous setting.

FOR MYKELLA DIDN'T
LEAVE THE ORB
UNPROTECTED.

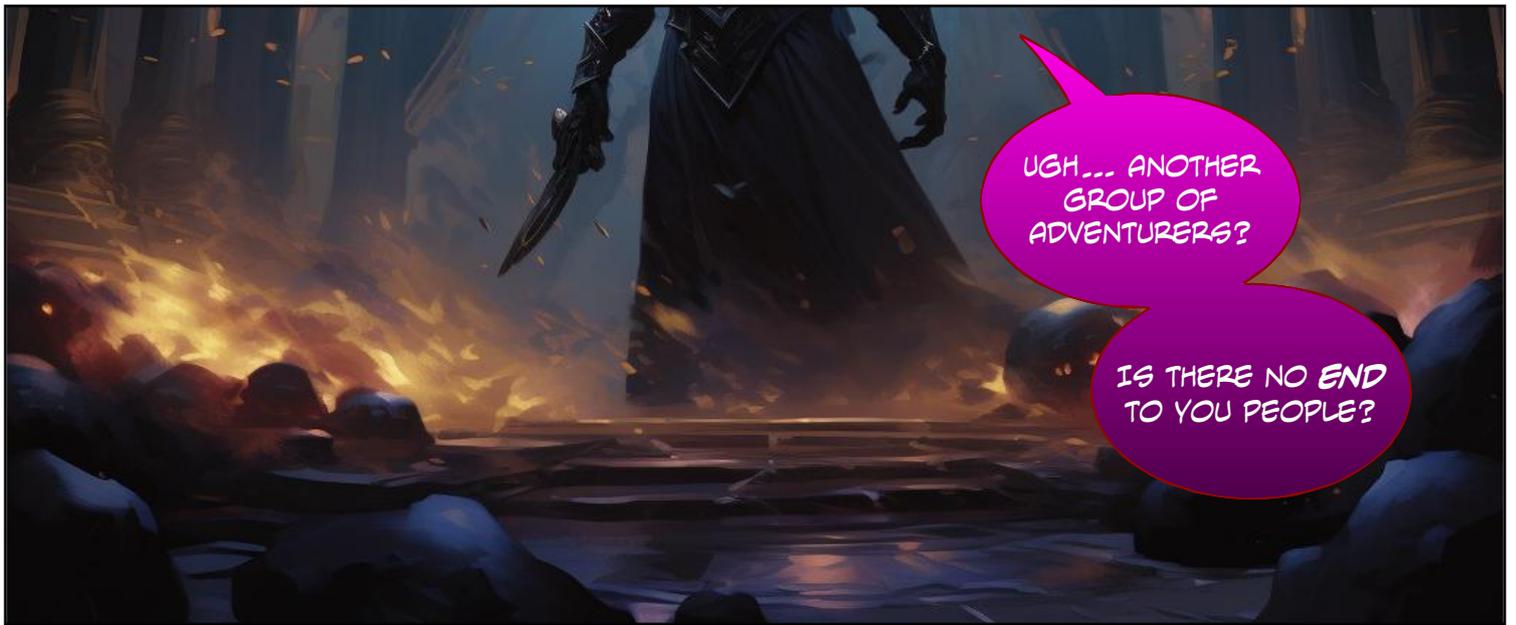
SHE CONNECTED THE
DIVINE'S ORB ESSENCE TO
THE GREATEST **ASSET** OF
HER ORDER.

THIS MAKING THE
'**GLORIOUS CAPTAIN**'
THE GREATEST OF ALL
UNSENTS.



Part II

You are to remember
the trail of curated
memories.



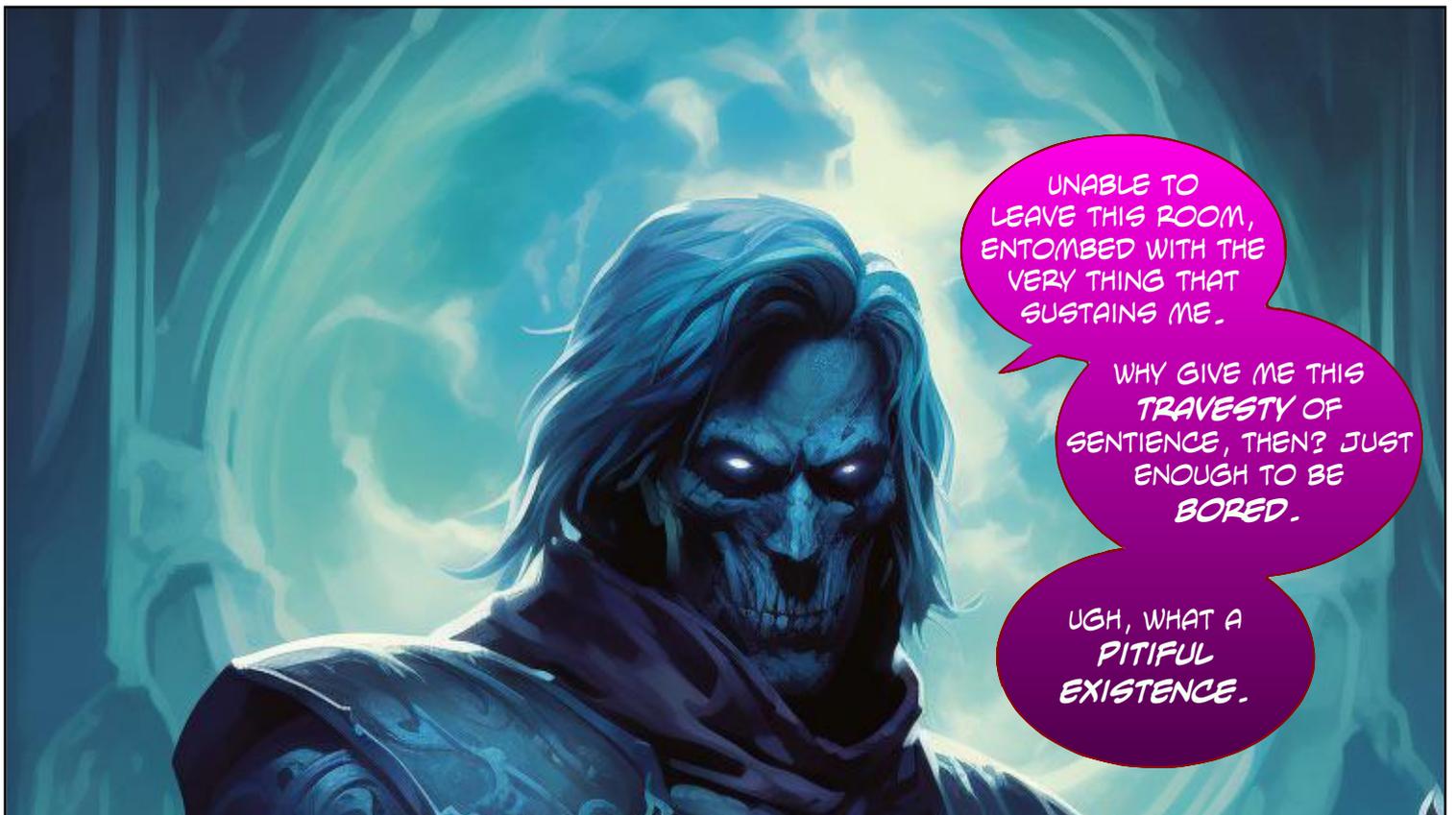
UGH... ANOTHER
GROUP OF
ADVENTURERS?

IS THERE NO **END**
TO YOU PEOPLE?



I WAS ONCE THE
MOST ADORED AND
FEARED **HERO** OF
OUR EMPIRE...

AND NOW,
HERE I AM,
FOREVER CURSED
WITH SUCH A MENIAL
TASK... A
GUARD.



UNABLE TO
LEAVE THIS ROOM,
ENTOMBED WITH THE
VERY THING THAT
SUSTAINS ME.

WHY GIVE ME THIS
TRAVESTY OF
SENTIENCE, THEN? JUST
ENOUGH TO BE
BORED.

UGH, WHAT A
PITIFUL
EXISTENCE.



I DESERVED MY REST.

BUT ALL I'M LEFT WITH IS TO LECTURE PEOPLE I'M ABOUT TO MAIM OR KILL...



WE DEvised A STRATEGY.



IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHETHER I CAN GIVE PETARIAN AN OPENING.



I LOVE IT WHEN THEY ARE THE SILENT, FOCUSED TYPE.

IT PREVENTS ME FROM CARING.



UGH, LOOK AT THAT SPELL. I WAS MORE CONFIDENT WHEN WE WERE JUST TALKING.



LUCKILY, I KNOW THAT ONE.
IT COULD KILL US ALL AT
ONCE, BUT ONE SMALL
SYMBOLIC DISSONANCE AND...



IT CAN'T
BE...



**IT
WORKED!**



**PETARIAN'S
GOING FULL
POWER!**





UFF...
UFF...

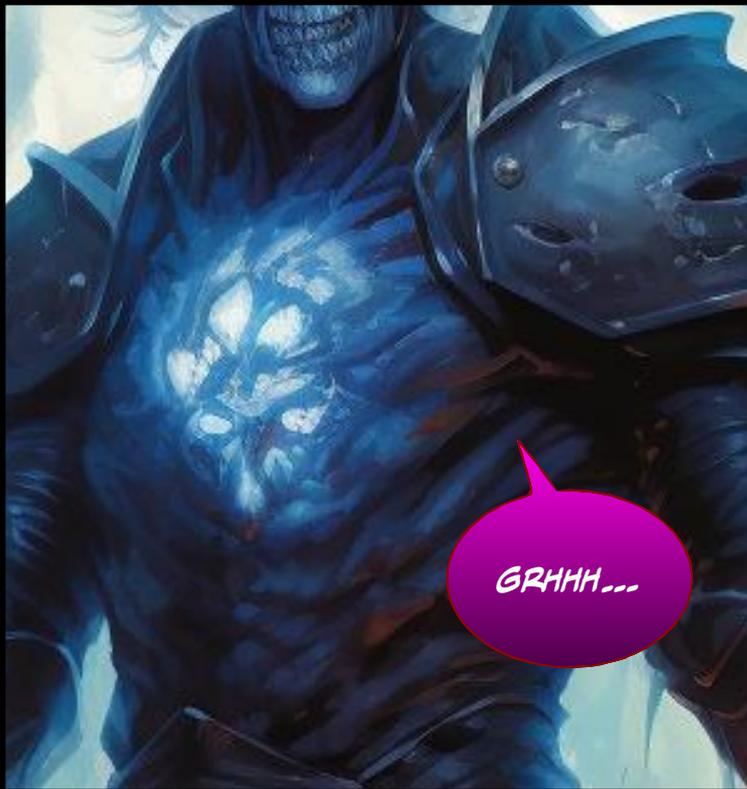


HE DIDN'T
EVEN
BLOCK!

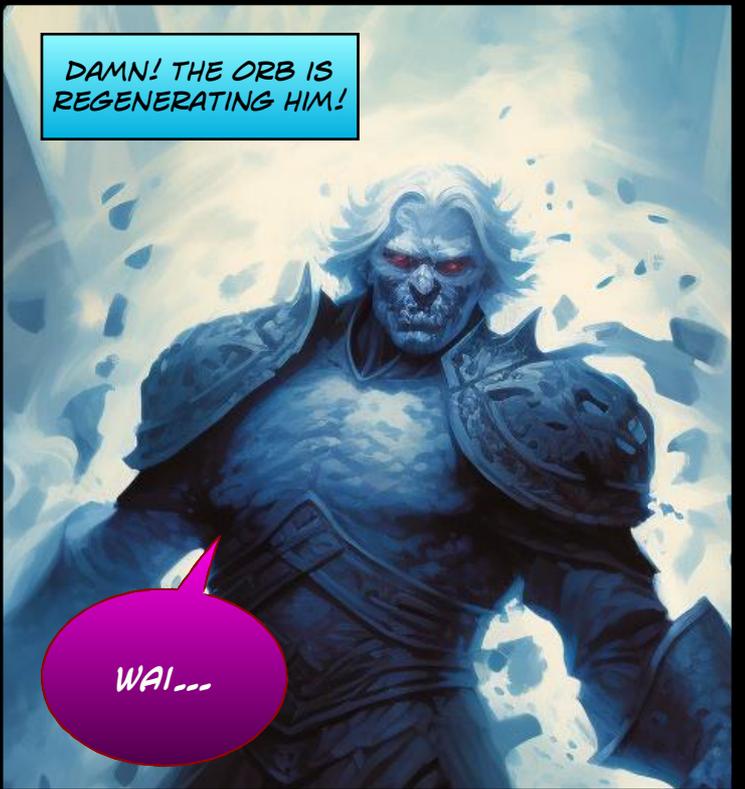
DID WE JUST
BEAT ONE OF
HISTORY'S MOST
POWERFUL
HEROES EVER?



UH? THE ORB'S
DIVINE KAYNN ARE
FLOWING TO HIM?



GRHHH...



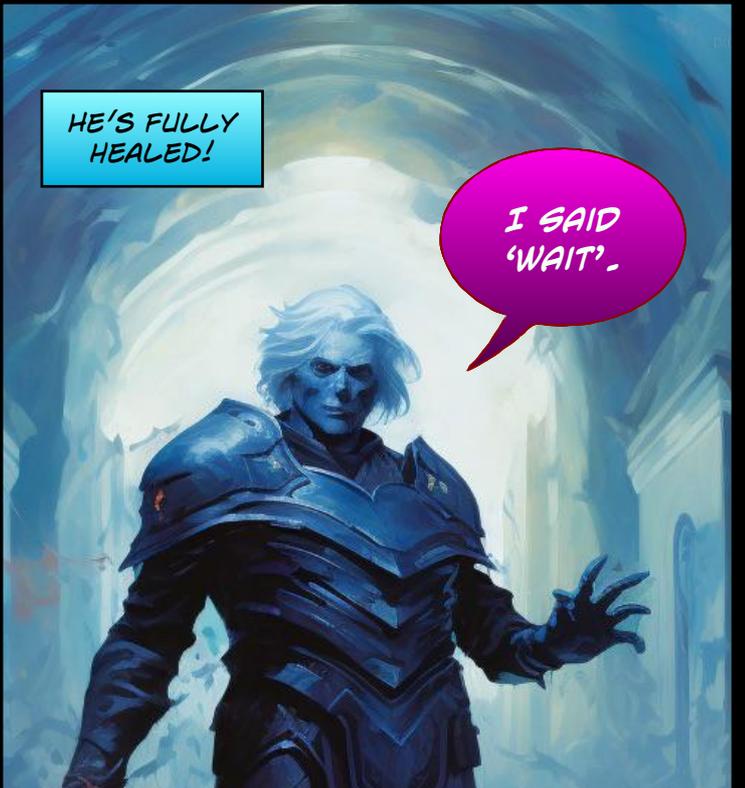
DAMN! THE ORB IS REGENERATING HIM!

WAI...



PETARIAN TRIES ANOTHER ATTACK, BUT SHE'S TOO SPENT.

UGH!



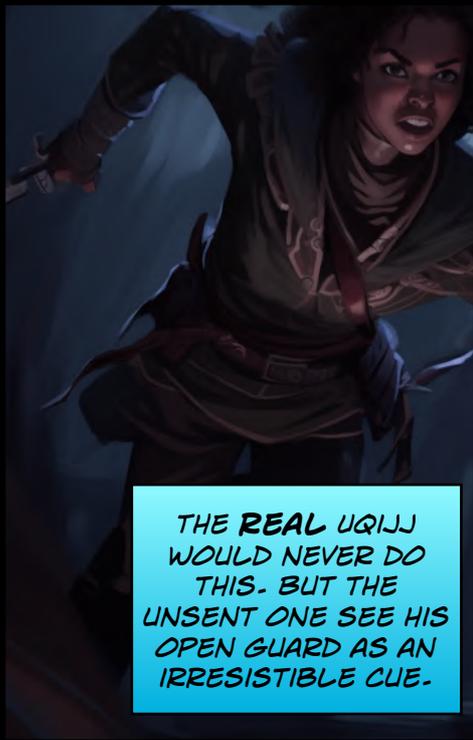
HE'S FULLY HEALED!

I SAID 'WAIT'.



YOU ARE... HIM.

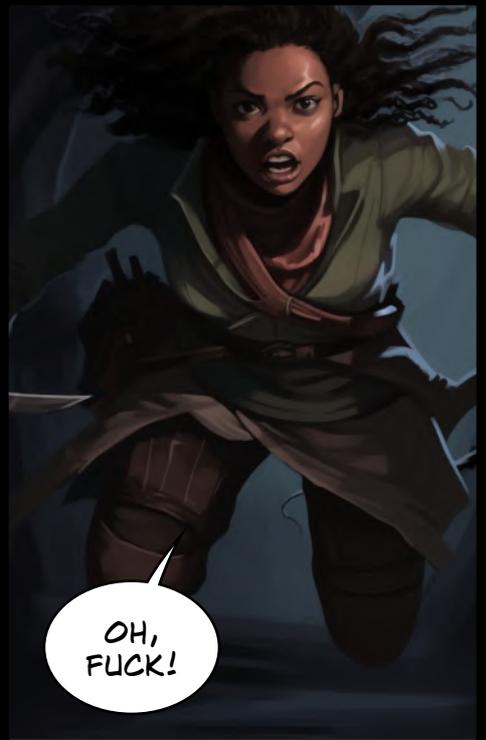
YOU KNEW MY SPELL. AN OBSCURE SECOND-CENTURY SPELL. HEH. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.



THE REAL UQIJJ WOULD NEVER DO THIS. BUT THE UNSENT ONE SEE HIS OPEN GUARD AS AN IRRESISTIBLE CUE.



BEGONE!



OH, FUCK!



OH, THIEVES. I MEAN, I CAN SENSE ALL THAT HAPPENS IN THIS HALL, SO WHAT'S EVEN THE POINT?

NOW, YOU. COME.



YOU ARE HERE TO SET ME FREE.

SHE'S WAITING FOR YOU.



DOLARAC, WAIT!



LISTEN... I NEVER THOUGHT WE WOULD COME SO FAR. I SHOULDN'T HAVE DOUBTED YOU.



I AM SORRY. AND I'M SORRY I LIED TO YOU.

BUT I CAN'T LET YOU GO AHEAD.



I NEED YOU TO UNDERSTAND, IT'S NOT THE EMPIRE YOU MISS THE WORLD NEEDS BACK.



THE EMPIRE YOU KNEW WAS JUST THE SHINY VENEER, DOLARAC. IT WAS GILDED BY PRIVILEGE AND POWER.

BUT BENEATH THAT SURFACE, THERE WAS PAIN. THERE WAS SUFFERING.



THIS GREAT VOI CAPTAIN IN FRONT OF US? HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

JUST BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE RULED BY FOREIGNERS OR BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO SPEAK FREELY.





OH, PLEASE, YOUR PAVOI ARE EVEN WORSE.

I'M GLAD I WAS TAKEN BY THE EMPIRE WHEN I WAS A CHILD.



I WORK FOR THEM, THAT DOESN'T MEAN I AGREE WITH THEM.

I'M NOT A BELIEVER. I'M AN EMPLOYEE. I HAVE TO WORK TO LIVE.



PETARIAN...

NO, DOLARAC, LISTEN TO ME.

WE CAN'T REPEAT HISTORY. WE HAVE A CHANCE HERE TO USE THIS POWER FOR A BETTER FUTURE.



THIS EMPIRE BIRTHED EVERY HORROR WE SAW AND FOUGHT SINCE WE GOT HERE.

THE UNDEAD, THE DEVOURING TOWN, THE SHADOW KING, THE NECROMANCERS. THE VERY THINGS THAT GOT OUR COMPANIONS KILLED.



PLEASE, LET'S CREATE A WORLD WITHOUT EMPIRES OR DEMIGOD RULERS...



I AM SORRY. I MUST ATONE FOR WHAT SHE DID. THAT'S MY ONLY PURPOSE.



DON'T MAKE ME STOP YOU!



I HEARD YOUR WORDS, MY FRIEND.

DON'T WORRY. THINGS WILL BE **BETTER** NEXT TIME.

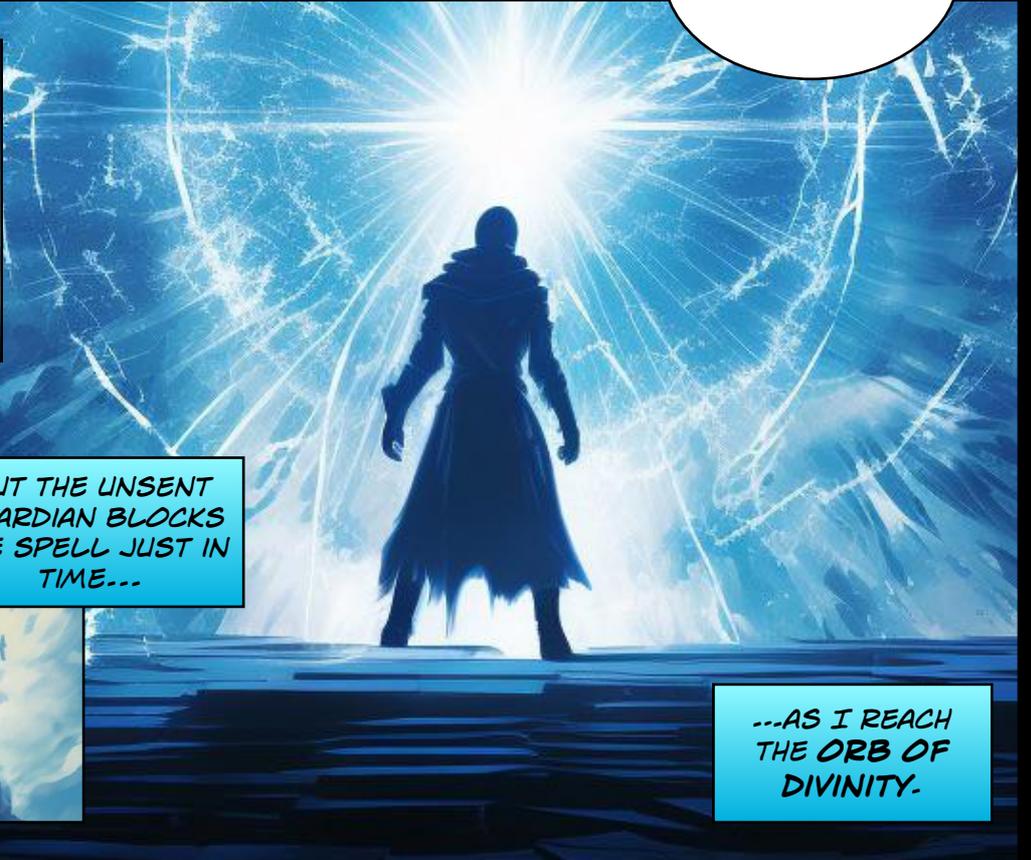
I'LL MAKE **SURE** OF IT.



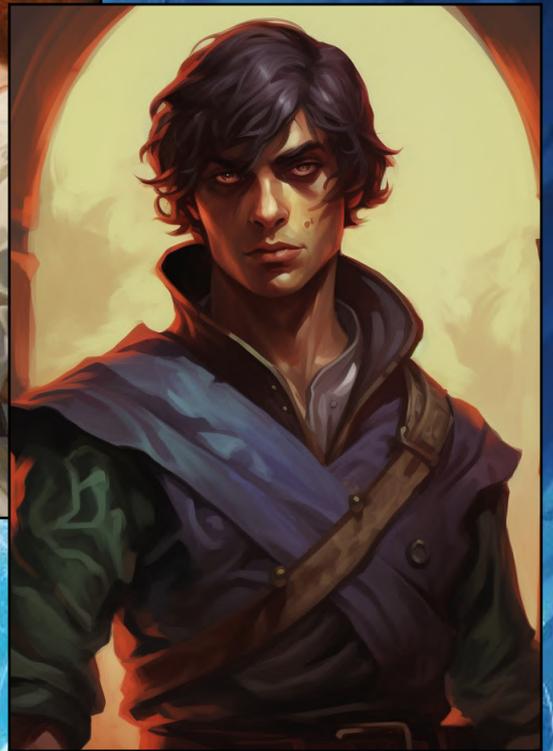
IF SHE WASN'T SO TIRED, HER SPELL WOULD HAVE FLOWN FASTER AND HIT ME.



BUT THE UNSENT GUARDIAN BLOCKS THE SPELL JUST IN TIME...



...AS I REACH THE ORB OF DIVINITY.



THE HIDDEN ENCHANTMENTS I ENGRAVED ON MY MASK UNLOCK THE ORB'S FULL POWER. AND THEN, THE ORB REACHES ME.



AND IT
WELCOMES
ME.

HEY, YOUNG
ONE.

AND IT TAKES
ME TO MY
MOST
BELOVED
PLACE.

M-MYKELLA...

I DIDN'T MAKE IT
EASY FOR YOU, BUT
I KNEW YOU WOULD
GET HERE,
EVENTUALLY.

AND
WHAT'S WITH
USING MY
BROTHER'S
NAME AND MY
ACCENT?

LISTEN,
I...

I'M SORRY.
I'M SORRY FOR
WHAT I MADE YOU
DO.



WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THIS?



FOR YOU ARE A LOVELY DORK.



WHAT DO YOU M—



NOW, ABOUT YOUR... QUEST.

YOU ARE **NOT** TO BRING THE EMPIRE BACK. YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOUR VOI FRIEND.



WHAT?

I HAD TO MAKE CERTAIN YOU CAME IN HERE. I **KNEW** YOU WOULD USE ARCHEOMANCY TO RECOVER YOUR MEMORY.

THIS WAS THE ONLY WAY FOR US TO BE **TOGETHER** AGAIN.



WAIT. YOU DIDN'T JUST ERASE MY MEMORIES OF YOU. YOU **MESSED** WITH THEM.

YOU... YOU **MANIPULATED** ME.

I HAD TO BE **SURE** YOU CAME. I'M SORRY, BUT I COULDN'T LET YOUR MEMORIES OF US TO BE TARNISHED BY WHO I BECAME AFTER YOU WERE **GONE**.

AND, BESIDES...





---THIS WHOLE THING? IT WAS **YOUR** IDEA.

YOU TOLD ME WHAT TO ASK THE ORB, HOW TO TRICK YOUR ARCHEOMANCY, HOW TO MAKE YOU COME HERE.

EVEN AS MY INCOMPLETE UNSENT ASSISTANT YOU WERE STILL BRILLIANT.

YOU LEFT YOURSELF A TRAIL OF FRAGMENTED HALF-TRUTHS.



YOU LEARNED QUICKLY TO HIDE YOURSELF AND TO FEAR OTHERS.

THUS, YOU HAD NO ONE TO DEFY YOUR TRUTHS.



YOU WOKE UP BESIDE BOOKS THAT PRAISED THE EMPIRE AND NOTHING ELSE.



BUT... THAT'S...

I MEAN... I'M A LIE.



YOU ARE NOT A LIE. YOU ARE AN **ARTIFICE**. AND NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, OUR REAL WISH CAN BE FULFILLED.

THIS VERSION OF YOU WILL BE **GONE**. THE **REAL** YOU WILL BE HERE AT THE ORB WITH ME, **FOREVER**.



BUT THAT'S NOT **FAIR**! I DON'T WANT TO **DIE**!

I WANT TO SAVE THE **EMPIRE**!

I WANT... I WANT **YOU**!



OH, BABY. YOU ARE AN **UNSENT**. A SPECIAL ONE, BUT THAT'S IT.

YOU PERFORMED YOUR JOB QUITE WELL. NOW, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO.



NO! THAT'S NOT MY WISH! YOU HEAR ME, **ORB**? THAT'S NOT MY WISH!

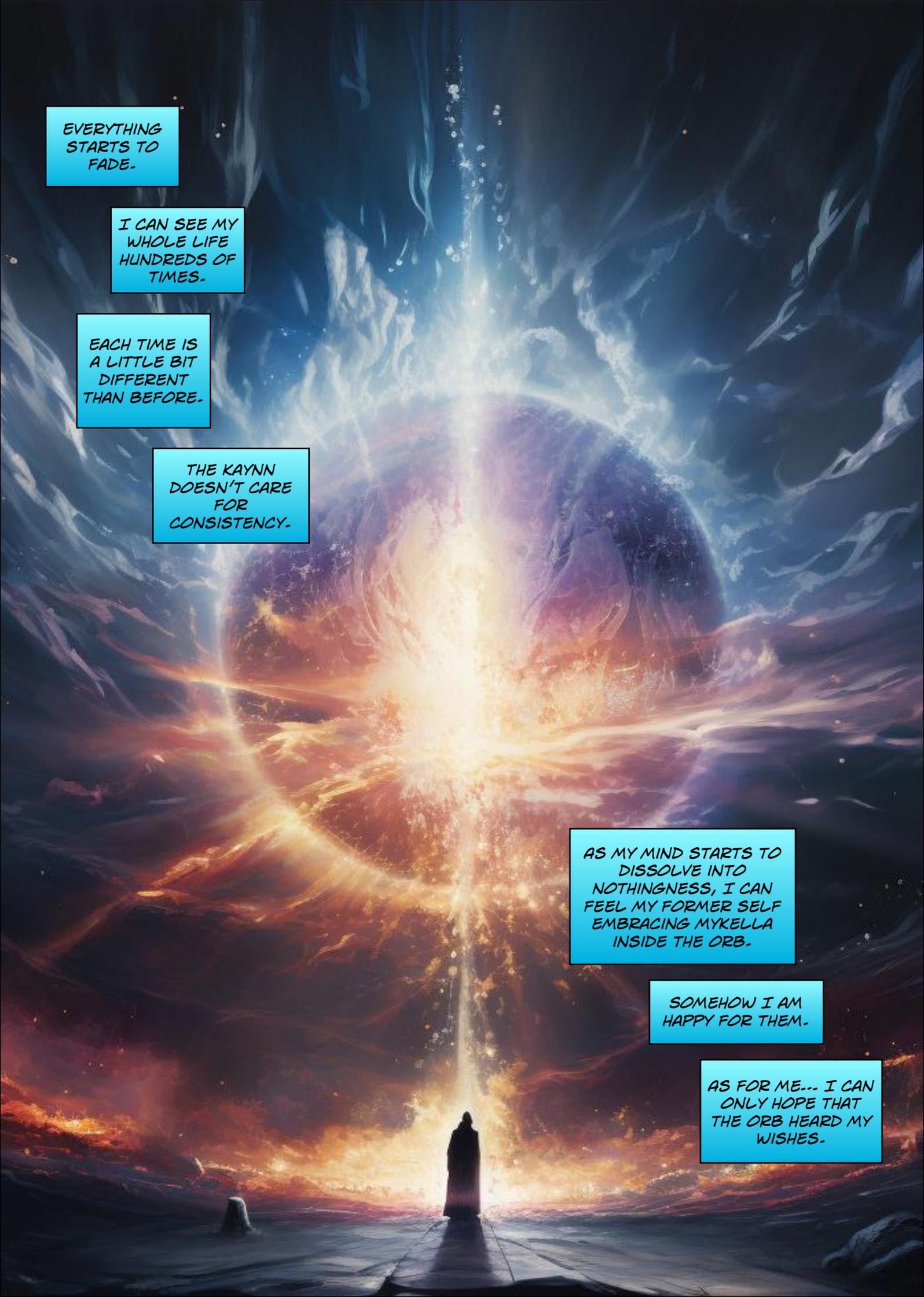


AND WHAT IS **THY WISH**?

WHAT WOULD YOU USE **DIVINITY** FOR?



I WANT TO GO **BACK**! I WANT TO HAVE A **REAL LIFE**! I WANT TO... I WANT TO HAVE **YOU**!



EVERYTHING
STARTS TO
FADE.

I CAN SEE MY
WHOLE LIFE
HUNDREDS OF
TIMES.

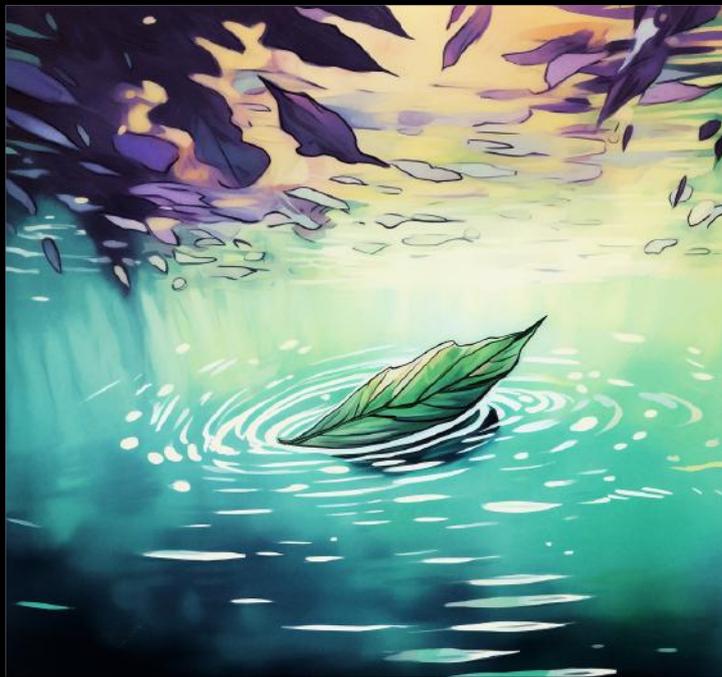
EACH TIME IS
A LITTLE BIT
DIFFERENT
THAN BEFORE.

THE KAYNN
DOESN'T CARE
FOR
CONSISTENCY.

AS MY MIND STARTS TO
DISSOLVE INTO
NOTHINGNESS, I CAN
FEEL MY FORMER SELF
EMBRACING MYKELLA
INSIDE THE ORB.

SOMEHOW I AM
HAPPY FOR THEM.

AS FOR ME... I CAN
ONLY HOPE THAT
THE ORB HEARD MY
WISHES.



THE... END?

EPILOGUE



SO... WHAT NOW?

THE ORB WILL BE INACTIVE FOR THE NEXT FIVE OR SIX YEARS.

BUT I WOULDN'T ADVISE YOU TO GET NEAR IT AGAIN. THIS IS NOTHING BUT A TRAP.



I MEAN... THAT'S IT? HE'S GONE? I MEAN, I'M GLAD IF THE EMPIRE STAYS RUINED BUT... IS HE DEAD?

OH, I COULDN'T CARE LESS. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I NEED TO FIND A NEW SOURCE OF KAYNN FOR MY BODY.



HM. YOU KNOW WHAT? I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO BORROW SOME OF YOURS.

THE ARCHEOMANCER'S JOURNEY ENDS, BUT YONGUN'S IS JUST BEGINNING! AND WHAT ABOUT UQIJJ? DID SHE REALLY DIE (FOR REAL, I MEAN)? AND PETARIAN? WILL SHE SURVIVE THE CAPTAIN'S THIRST FOR KAYNN?

STAY TUNED! THIS IS JUST THE FIRST STORY SET IN THE ECHOES OF THE SHATTERED EMPIRE! I CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW YOU WHAT'S NEXT!

THE
ARCHEOMANCER'S
SECRETS ARE
UNVEILED, ONE BY
ONE.

BY THE END OF THEM
ALL, IS ANYTHING, OR
ANYONE, LEFT?

FACE THE SURPRISING
CONCLUSION OF THIS
TALE AT YOUR OWN
PERIL.

IS IT A TRAGEDY? AN
EPIC? AN ACTION-
PACKED HIGH-OCTANE
ADVENTURE?

WELL, THERE'S ONLY
ONE WAY TO KNOW
FOR SURE.

The Archeomancer

Echoes of the Shattered Empire

MIDNIGHT-JOURNEYS EDITIONS