



Brown Roof
Studios

Issue 2



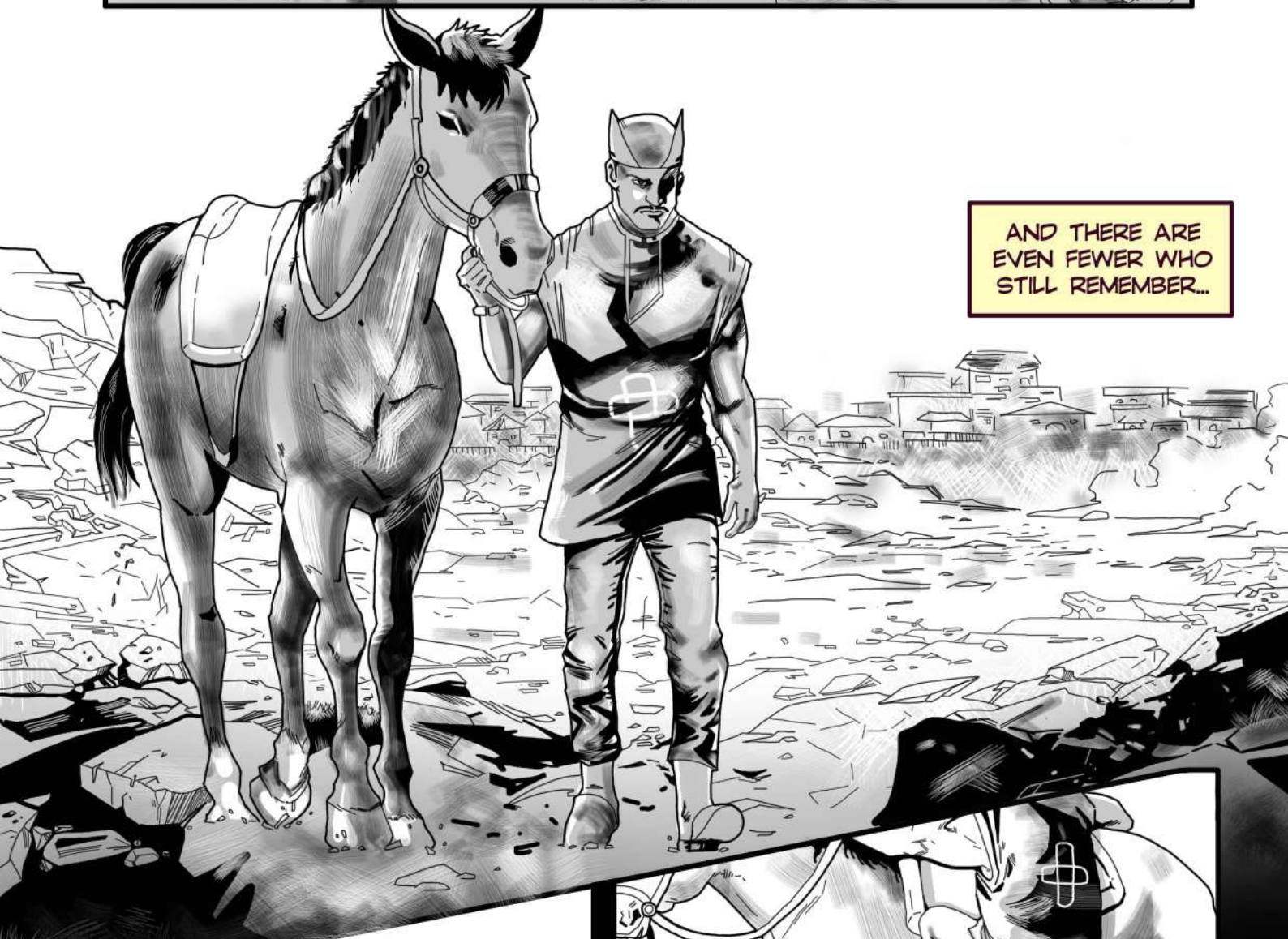
THE ART OF OKEREAFOR ANUOLUWA

AKU 21

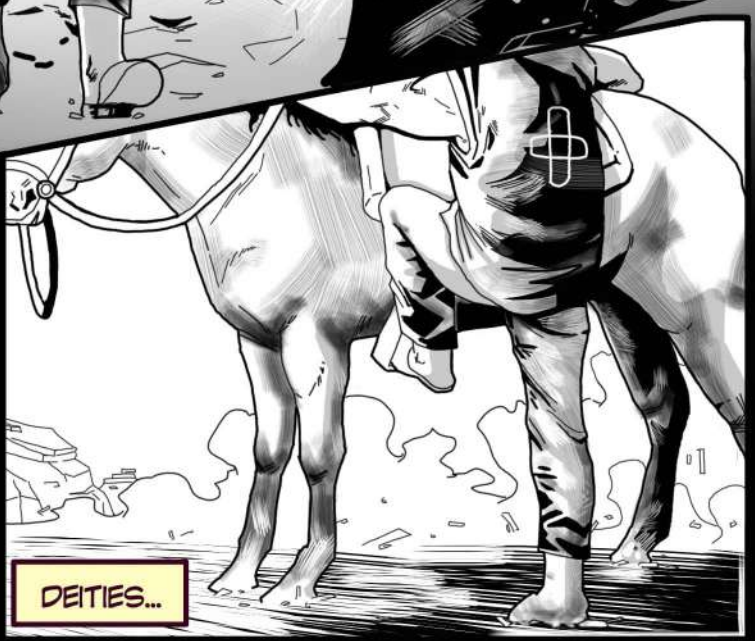
THERE AREN'T
MANY WHO STILL
BELIEVE.



AND THERE ARE
EVEN FEWER WHO
STILL REMEMBER...



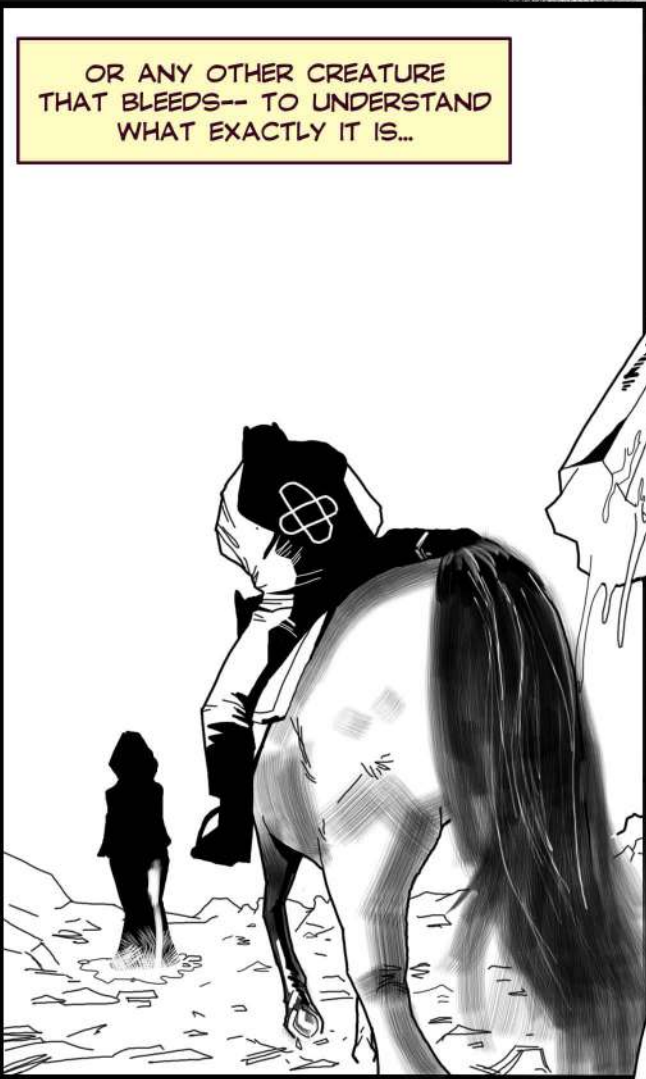
THE AGE OF THE ORISHAS.



DEITIES...



HEAVENLY BEINGS MADE
FLESH AND, PERHAPS, BLOOD;
FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR
ANY MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD--
OR BEAST OR CRITTER--

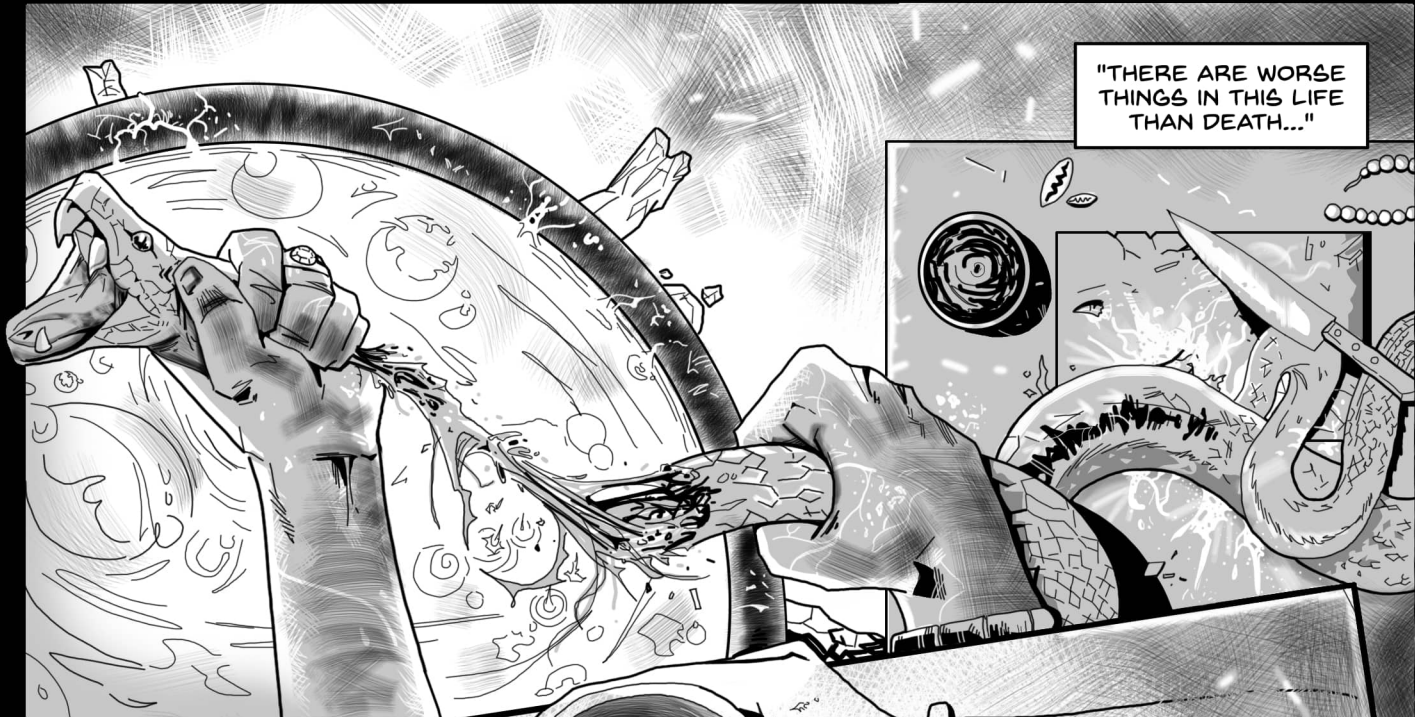


OR ANY OTHER CREATURE
THAT BLEEDS-- TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT EXACTLY IT IS...



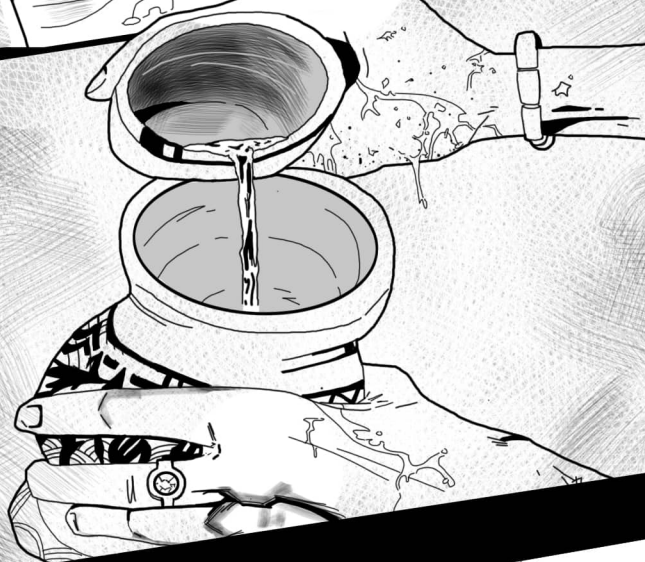
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...THAT KEEPS A GOD ALIVE.

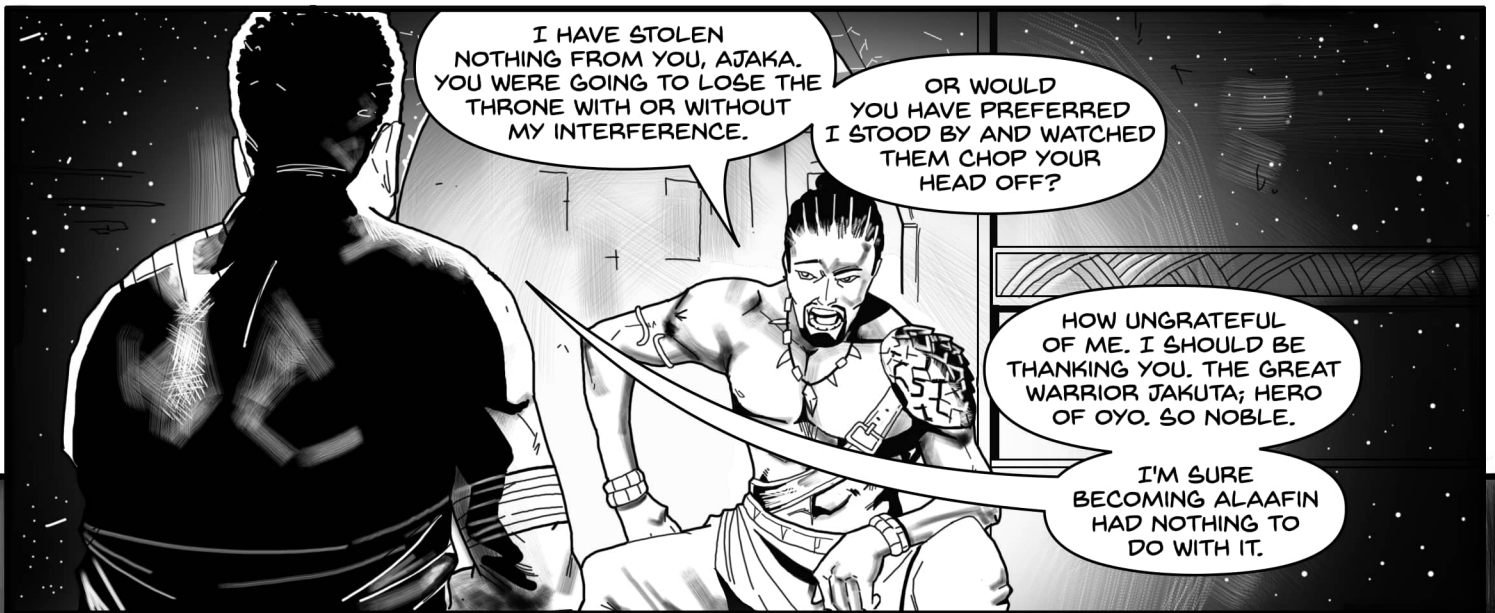


"THERE ARE WORSE THINGS IN THIS LIFE THAN DEATH..."

"BUT THAT ONE IS MY PROBLEM, NOT YOURS."



"YOU HAVE MUCH BIGGER PROBLEMS OF YOUR OWN **"KING JAKUTA"**. BIGGER EVEN THAN THE BIRTHRIGHT YOU HAVE STOLEN FROM ME."

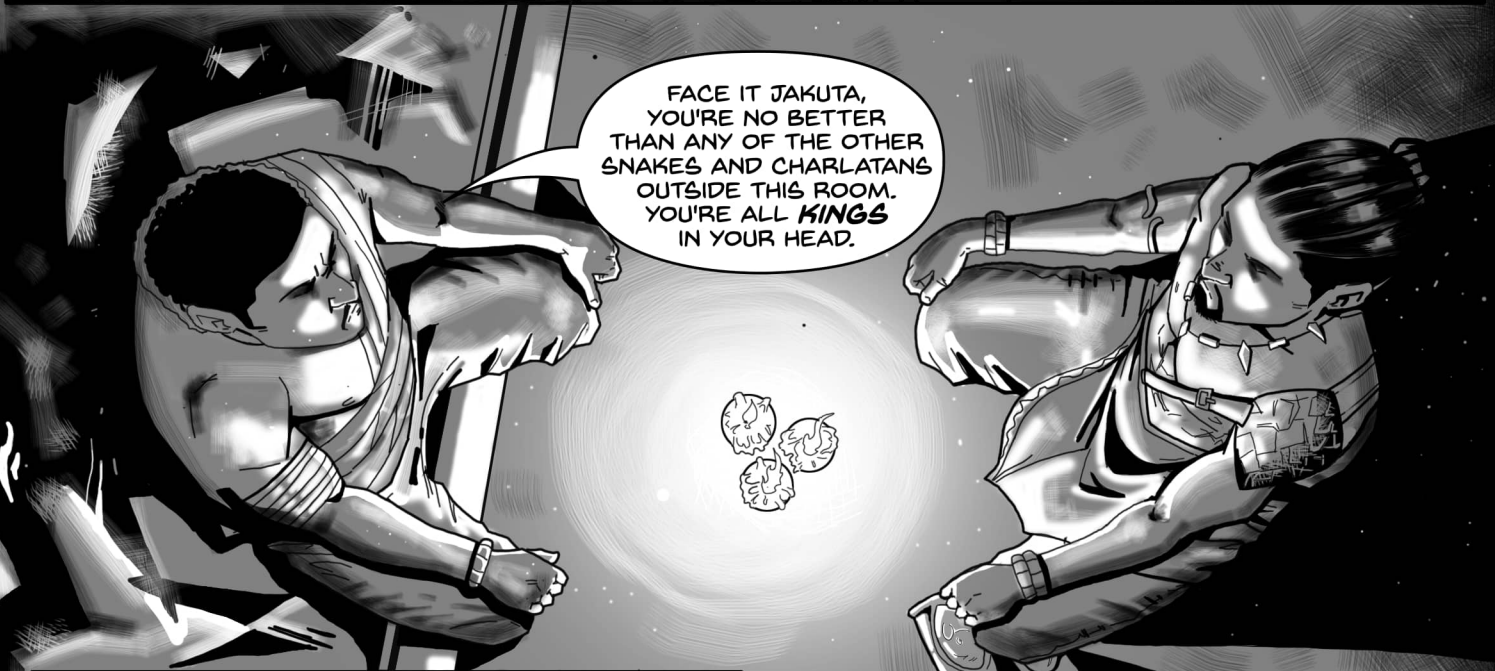


I HAVE STOLEN NOTHING FROM YOU, AJAKA. YOU WERE GOING TO LOSE THE THRONE WITH OR WITHOUT MY INTERFERENCE.

OR WOULD YOU HAVE PREFERRED I STOOD BY AND WATCHED THEM CHOP YOUR HEAD OFF?

HOW UNGRATEFUL OF ME. I SHOULD BE THANKING YOU. THE GREAT WARRIOR JAKUTA; HERO OF OYO. SO NOBLE.

I'M SURE BECOMING ALAAFIN HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.



FACE IT JAKUTA, YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN ANY OF THE OTHER SNAKES AND CHARLATANS OUTSIDE THIS ROOM. YOU'RE ALL **KINGS** IN YOUR HEAD.



THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS YOU GOT LUCKY AND WERE SHOVED INTO THE RIGHT WOMB. BUT I WAS ALWAYS BORN A KING.

AJAKA... BROTHER... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

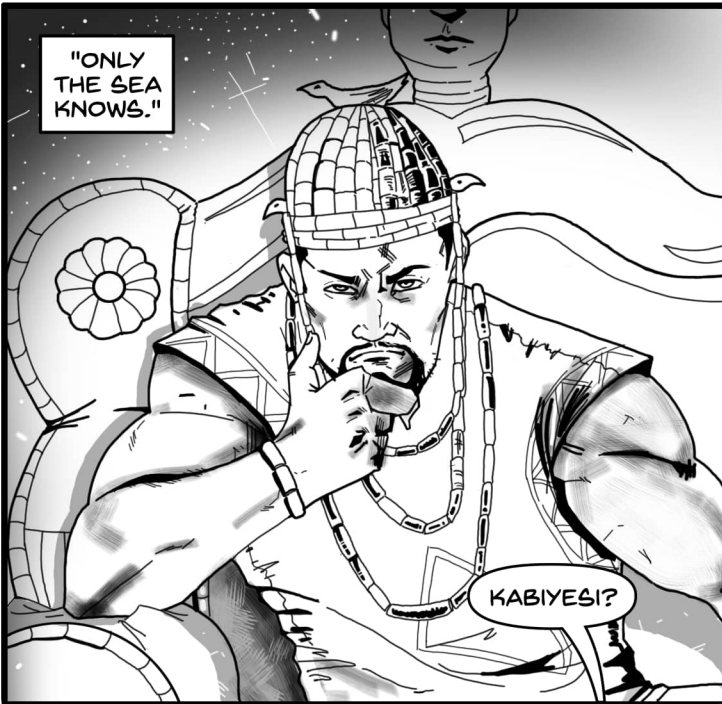


YOU STILL DON'T KNOW, DO YOU?

BUT SHE DOES...

ONLY SHE KNOWS...

"ONLY THE SEA KNOWS."



KABIYESI?

KABIYESI--

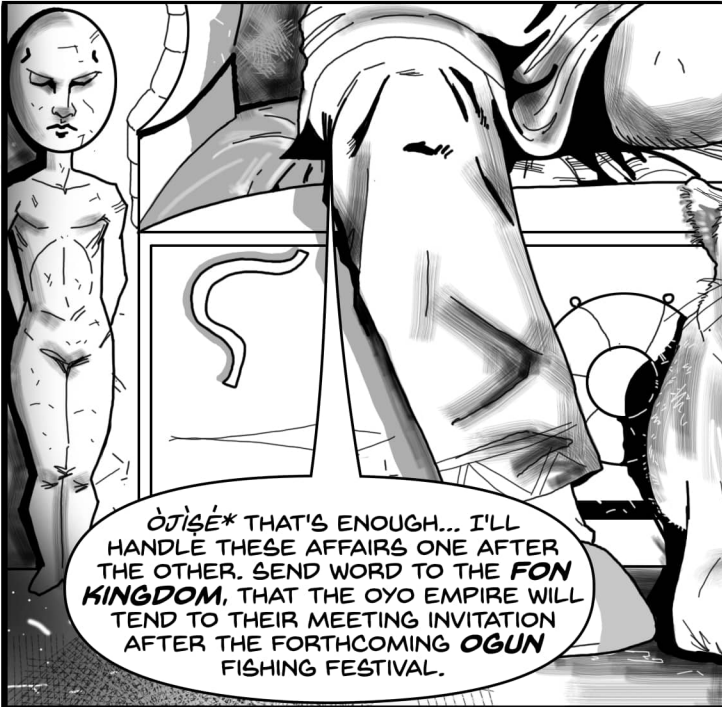


I'M LISTENING. YOU MAY CONTINUE.

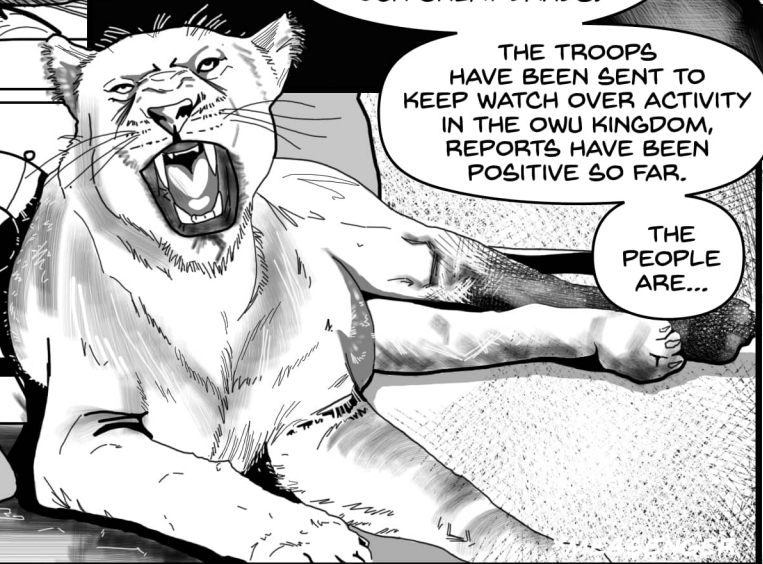
KABIYESI, THE KING AND CHIEFS OF THE FON KINGDOM OF DAHOMEY SEEK A MEETING TO DISCUSS THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR GREAT LANDS.

THE TROOPS HAVE BEEN SENT TO KEEP WATCH OVER ACTIVITY IN THE OWU KINGDOM, REPORTS HAVE BEEN POSITIVE SO FAR.

THE PEOPLE ARE...



ÒJÌSÈ* THAT'S ENOUGH... I'LL HANDLE THESE AFFAIRS ONE AFTER THE OTHER. SEND WORD TO THE FON KINGDOM, THAT THE OYO EMPIRE WILL TEND TO THEIR MEETING INVITATION AFTER THE FORTHCOMING OGUN FISHING FESTIVAL.



YES MY KING.



AKINIKU, WALK WITH ME TO MY CHAMBERS. THERE ARE MATTERS I NEED TO DISCUSS WITH YOU PRIVATELY.

OF COURSE MY KING. I'M AT YOUR SERVICE.

I MUST ADMIT, I'M GLAD YOU HAVE SUMMONED ME, YOUR HIGHNESS. SINCE YOUR CORONATION IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO SEEK A PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH YOU, EVEN AS YOUR CHIEF OF DEFENSE.

MY APOLOGIES AKINIKU. THINGS HAVE BEEN RATHER... HECTIC, SINCE MY BROTHER'S UNFORTUNATE EXILE.

AAAH YES... A TERRIBLE THING INDEED. PERMIT ME TO SAY; HE WAS NOT A GREAT RULER, YOUR PREDECESSOR, BUT HE WAS A GOOD KING. HE CHOSE NOT TO EXPAND OUR TERRITORIES THROUGH WAR WITH OUR NEIGHBORS.

YES. UNFORTUNATELY IT MADE HIM LOOK WEAK TO SAID NEIGHBORS, WHO **SOMEHOW** MANAGED TO STEAL AWAY AN ALAAFIN FROM HIS OWN KINGDOM WITHOUT **ANYBODY** KNOWING.



KABIYESI.

YOU MAY LEAVE. I WON'T BE NEEDING YOU.

YES KABIYESI.

NOW THAT YOU ARE KING, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? ARE WE TO RETURN TO OPEN CONFLICT? **WAR** AGAINST OTHER KINGDOMS? IS THAT WHY YOU'VE SOUGHT OUT MY COUNSEL?

NO IT IS NOT, OLD SOLDIER. FORGIVE ME BUT I DID NOT CALL YOU TO DISCUSS STATE AFFAIRS.



I GREW UP IN THIS VERY PALACE, AMONGST THE OTHER ROYAL CHILDREN, WARDS AND CONCUBINES WHOSE NAMES I DON'T REMEMBER NOW.

THESE WOMEN, THEY WOULD TALK A LOT-- GOSSIP MOSTLY... THERE'S LITTLE ELSE FOR A CONCUBINE TO DO, YOU SEE. BUT I REMEMBER CLEARLY ONE NIGHT WHEN TWO OF THEM SPOKE OF MY MOTHER, QUEEN TOROSI.



"THE QUEEN HAS LOST FAVOR WITH THE KING", THEY SAID...



SERVES HER RIGHT, FLAUNTING HER BASTARD IN EVERYONE'S FACE LIKE THAT. THE BOY DOESN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE HIS MAJESTY.

I HEARD SHE SLEPT WITH A FOREST SPIRIT, MAYBE A BUSHBABY.

HEHEHE STOP IT, YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS.

BUT SHE COULD! THAT WOMAN WOULD DO ANYTHING TO KEEP KABYESI ALL TO HERSELF.



"I WAS A CHILD, I COULD BARELY UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE SAYING. OR WHY IT MADE ME CRY, BUT THEN THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE WAY THEY SAID IT..."

"AND IN THE WAY HE LOOKED AT ME..."



"...THAT'S STAYED WITH ME EVER SINCE."



AKINIKU, YOU HAVE BEEN CHIEF ADVISOR FOR MANY YEARS. IN FACT, YOU'VE BEEN HERE LONGER THAN ANYONE ELSE, HAVE YOU NOT?

I SUPPOSE SO. I SERVED THE FIRST ALAAFIN, KING ORANYAN, TILL HIS PASSING. THEN HIS SUCCESSOR, PRINCE AJAKA, TILL HIS EXILE. NOW I'M SERVING YOU. LONG MAY YOU REIGN.



AS I SAID, MANY YEARS, WHICH MEANS IF THERE'S ANYONE LEFT HERE THAT CAN TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT MY BIRTH, IT IS YOU.

FOR SO LONG, I'VE BEEN TOLD THE SAME LIES. NOW I MUST HEAR THE TRUTH.

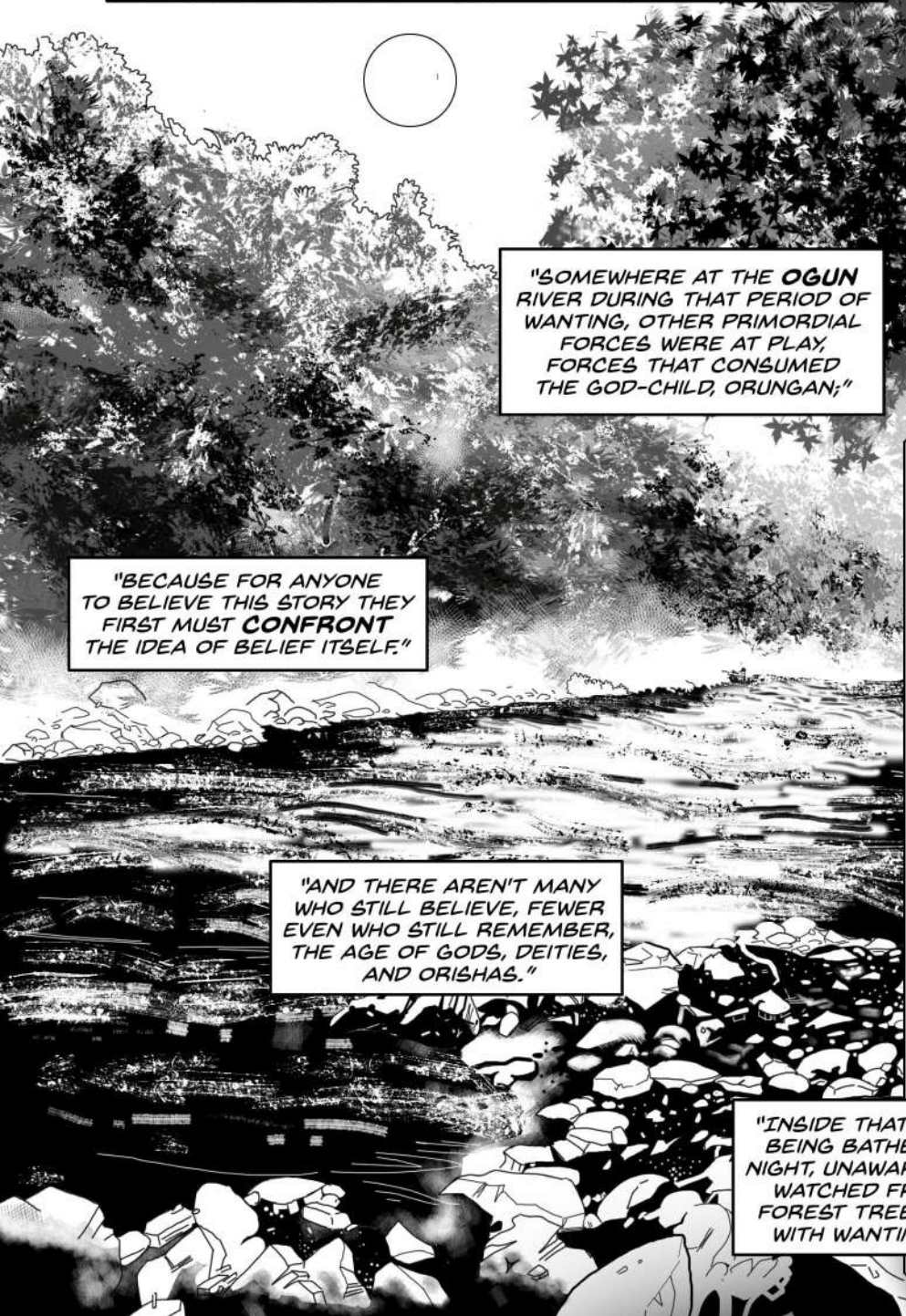


HMMM. YOU ARE NOW KING OF YOUR FATHER LAND AND WHATEVER HAS BEEN HIDDEN FROM YOU WHICH I KNOW OF, IS NOT FOR ME TO HIDE FROM YOU ANYMORE.



"YOUR BIRTH WAS A MIRACLE TO US-- FOR LACK OF A BETTER WORD. YOUR PARENTS WERE PROUD TO HAVE AJAKA AS THEIR FIRST SON, AN HEIR AT LAST."

"BUT THEY DESIRED ANOTHER FRUIT OF THE WOMB..."



"SOMEWHERE AT THE OGUN RIVER DURING THAT PERIOD OF WANTING, OTHER PRIMORDIAL FORCES WERE AT PLAY, FORCES THAT CONSUMED THE GOD-CHILD, ORUNGAN;"

"BECAUSE FOR ANYONE TO BELIEVE THIS STORY THEY FIRST MUST **CONFRONT** THE IDEA OF BELIEF ITSELF."

"AND THERE AREN'T MANY WHO STILL BELIEVE, FEWER EVEN WHO STILL REMEMBER, THE AGE OF GODS, DEITIES, AND ORISHAS."



"INSIDE THAT RIVER ONE SUCH BEING BATHED IN THE NAKED NIGHT, UNAWARE THE EYES THAT WATCHED FROM SHADOWED FOREST TREES... EYES FILLED WITH WANTING OF ITS OWN."

"IT WAS THE ORISHA YEMOJA; QUEEN OF THE OCEAN, WHOSE BEAUTY CAUSED MEN AT SEA TO DROWN THEMSELVES."

WHO IS THERE?

"IT IS SAID THAT ORUNGAN WAS FOND OF RAPING HIS MOTHER, AN ATROSSITY EVEN FOR ONES SUCH AS THE ORISHAS. BUT WHO ARE WE HUMANS TO JUDGE GOD."

"ORUNGAN TOOK ADVANTAGE OF YEMOJA TO PLEASE HIS DESIRE THAT DREADFUL NIGHT. AND THEN MANY MORE NIGHTS AFTER."

"OUT OF SHAME, OR PERHAPS A TWISTED MATERNAL LOVE, YEMOJA ALLOWED ORUNGAN HIS WICKED URGES."



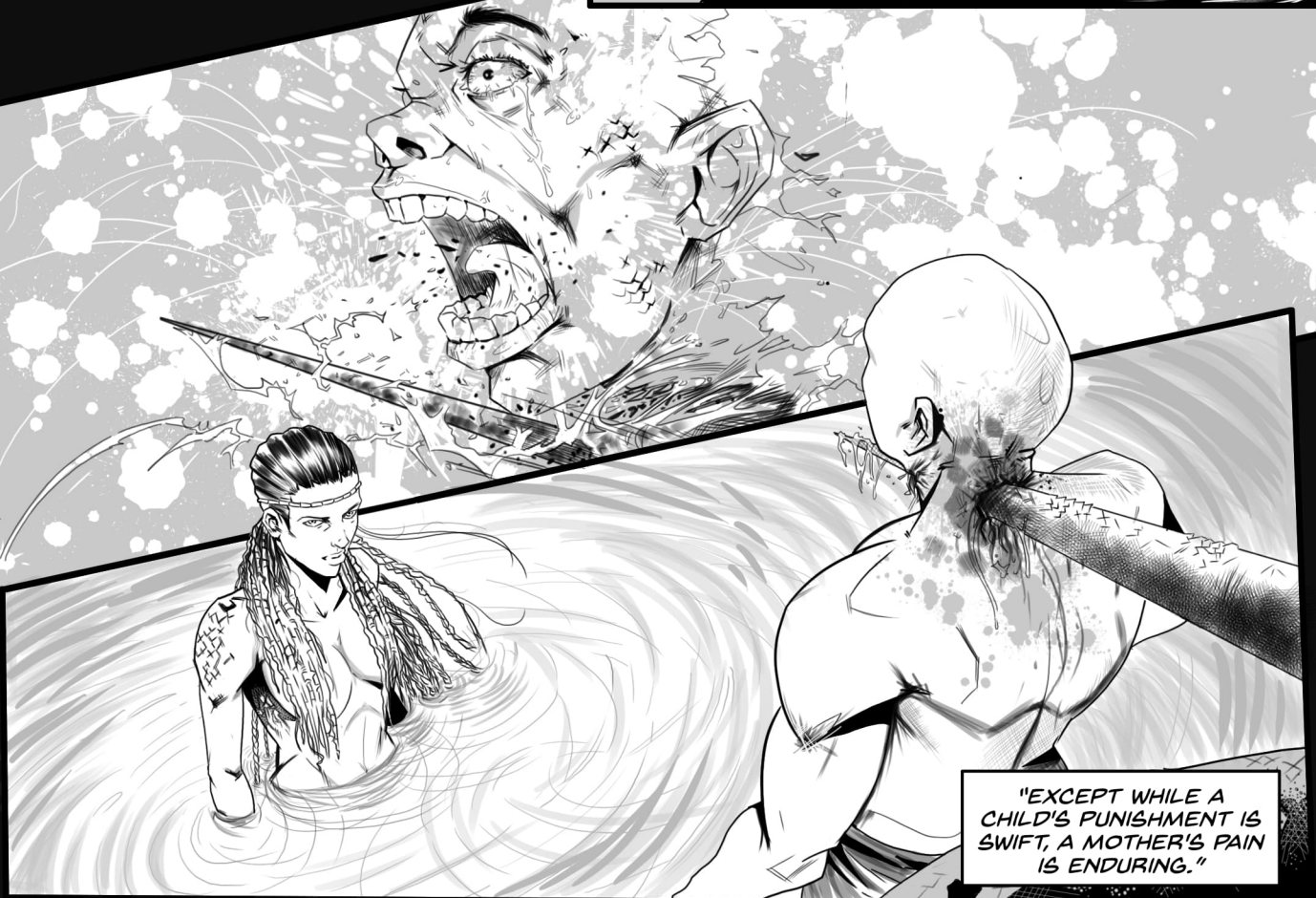
"UNTIL SHE
COULDN'T ANY
LONGER."




"THAT FATED NIGHT ORUNGAN
GAVE INTO HIS OBSCENE DESIRES
ONCE AGAIN. AND ONCE AGAIN HE
SOUGHT OUT THE DEITY YEMOJA TO
HER WATERS WHERE SHE BATHED."




"LITTLE DID THE GOD-CHILD
KNOW THAT BY LUSTING AFTER
YEMOJA, HIS OWN MOTHER,
HE WOULD DAMN THEM BOTH
THAT NIGHT."



"EXCEPT WHILE A
CHILD'S PUNISHMENT IS
SWIFT, A MOTHER'S PAIN
IS ENDURING."



"TORN WITH GUILT AND
DESPERATE TO HIDE HER
GREATEST SHAME, YEMOJA
CARRIED ORUNGAN'S BODY
DOWN TO THE DEEPEST
PARTS OF THE DEEP."

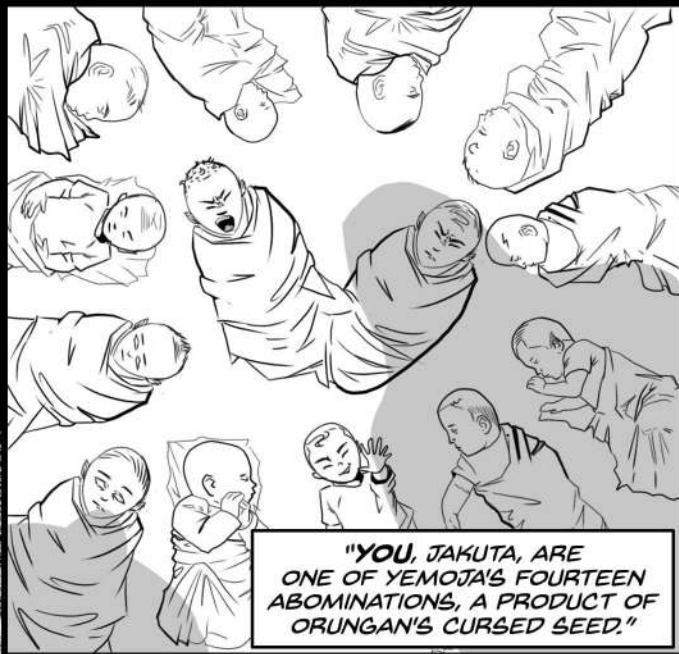


"THERE IN THE MURKY
VOID, ORUNGAN WAS LEFT TO
BE FORGOTTEN, A SECRET
KNOWN ONLY TO THE SEA."

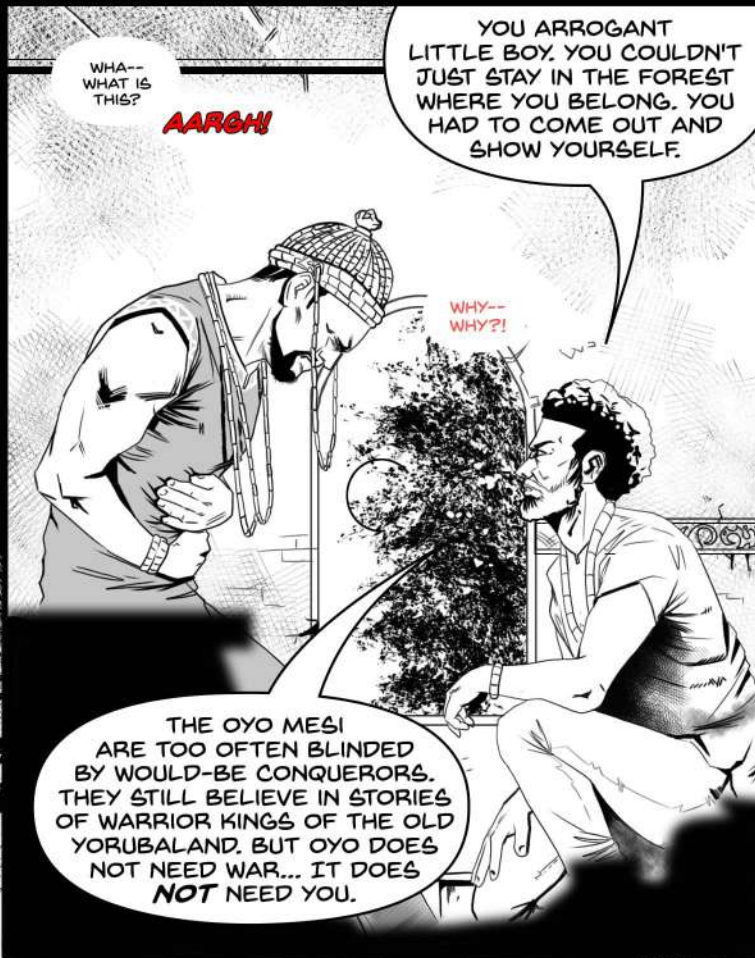
"BUT WHATEVER IS CONCEIVED
IN SECRET MUST SURELY BEAR
FRUIT SOMEDAY."



"SOON AFTER YEMOJA
BURIED HER CHILD, SHE BORE
FOURTEEN OF HIS FRUIT."



"YOU, JAKUTA, ARE
ONE OF YEMOJA'S FOURTEEN
ABOMINATIONS, A PRODUCT OF
ORUNGAN'S CURSED SEED."



WHA--
WHAT IS
THIS?

AARGH!

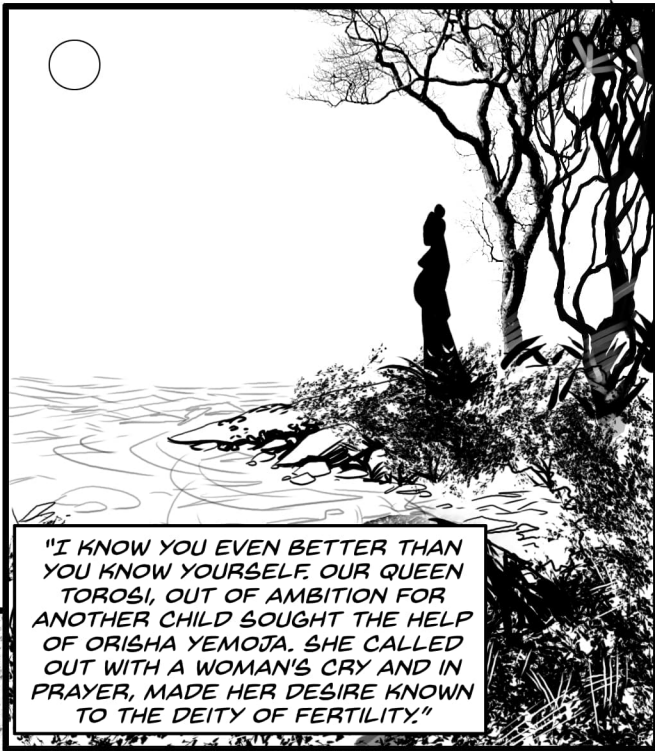
YOU ARROGANT
LITTLE BOY. YOU COULDN'T
JUST STAY IN THE FOREST
WHERE YOU BELONG. YOU
HAD TO COME OUT AND
SHOW YOURSELF.

WHY--
WHY?!

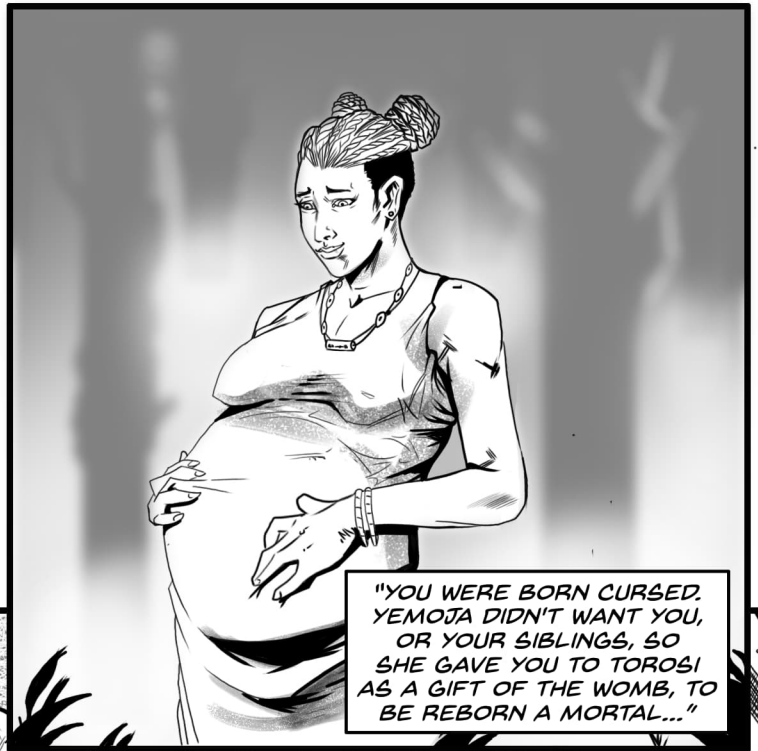
THE OYO MESI
ARE TOO OFTEN BLINDED
BY WOULD-BE CONQUERORS.
THEY STILL BELIEVE IN STORIES
OF WARRIOR KINGS OF THE OLD
YORUBALAND. BUT OYO DOES
NOT NEED WAR... IT DOES
NOT NEED YOU.

"I'VE SEEN WHAT THE
REIGN OF SANGO WILL
BRING TO OUR DOORSTEP.
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE..."





"I KNOW YOU EVEN BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF. OUR QUEEN TOROSI, OUT OF AMBITION FOR ANOTHER CHILD SOUGHT THE HELP OF ORISHA YEMOJA. SHE CALLED OUT WITH A WOMAN'S CRY AND IN PRAYER, MADE HER DESIRE KNOWN TO THE DEITY OF FERTILITY."



"YOU WERE BORN CURSED, YEMOJA DIDN'T WANT YOU, OR YOUR SIBLINGS, SO SHE GAVE YOU TO TOROSI AS A GIFT OF THE WOMB, TO BE REBORN A MORTAL..."

FLESH AND BLOOD.

THIS IS HOW YOU CAME TO BE. YOU WERE RIGHT TO SEEK THE TRUTH. NOW YOU CAN DIE WITH A BIT OF DIGNITY.



GUARDS... HELP.



THE OYOMESI WERE RIGHT TO EXILE KING AJAKA, HE WAS LEADING US NOWHERE, BUT THEY WERE WRONG TO PICK YOU.

I'VE BEEN ADVISING FAR TOO LONG. I HAVE GROWN TIRED OF KINGS WHO HAVE EARS BUT DON'T LISTEN, WHO HAVE EYES BUT CAN'T SEE...

I WILL BE KING NOW.



YOU POISONED ME JUST SO YOU CAN RULE? YOU COWARD! YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS... GUARDS!

WITH YOU OUT OF THE WAY I CAN STEER OYO BACK WHERE IT NEEDS TO BE. THE PEOPLE WILL MOURN THE DEATH OF THEIR WARRIOR KING FOR NOW, BUT ONE DAY THEY'LL THANK ME FOR SAVING THEM.

YOU-- **GRRK!**
YOU'RE NO SAVIOR
AKINIKU. YOU SPEAK
ABOUT THE GOOD
OF THE PEOPLE BUT
IT'S GREED THAT
DRIVES YOU.

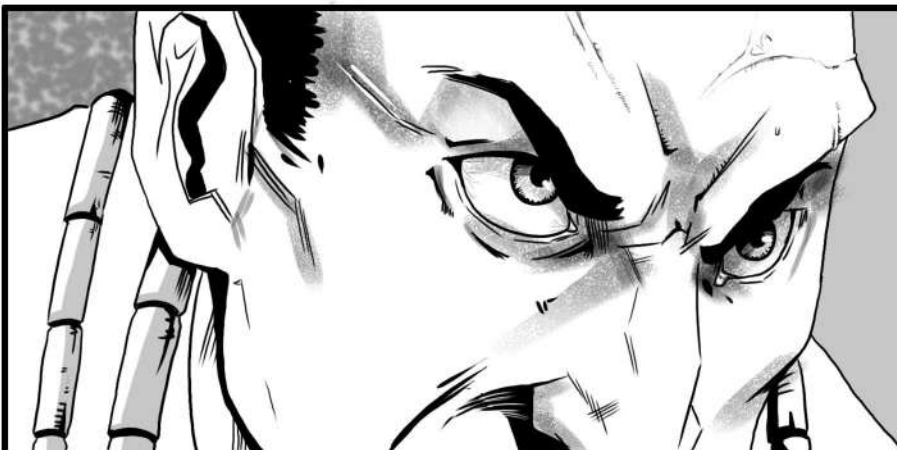
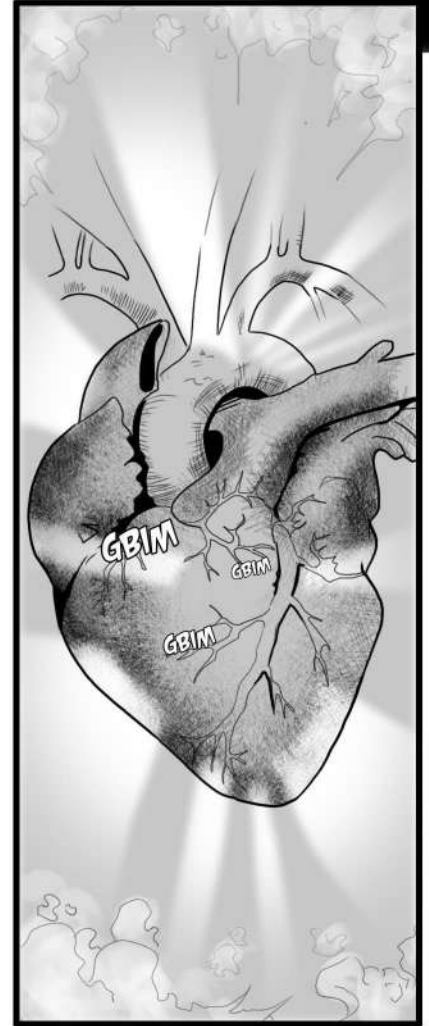
YOU'RE
A SNAKE--

AARGHHK



STAY DOWN.
THIS RING **CURSES**
THE FOUR ELEMENTS
WITH POISONS.

I CURSE
THE AIR YOU
BREATHE, DON'T
STRUGGLE AND
THIS WILL BE
OVER QUICK.



HOW IS
THIS POSSIBLE?
HOW ARE YOU
EVEN STILL
STANDING?

WHAT
ARE
YOU?



ARRGHH!
MY HAND!

WHAT
SORT OF
EVIL IS
THIS?





HAHAHAHA!!!

THE ONLY EVIL HERE IS YOU, AKINIKU.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE CURSED STONE NOW ALTERS YOUR BEING, YOU'RE STILL GOING TO DIE. YOU'LL BE DUST FASTER THAN A CHEETAH RUSHES HER PREY.

THAT'S PLENTY MORE TIME THAN YOU HAVE, CHIEF ADVISOR.

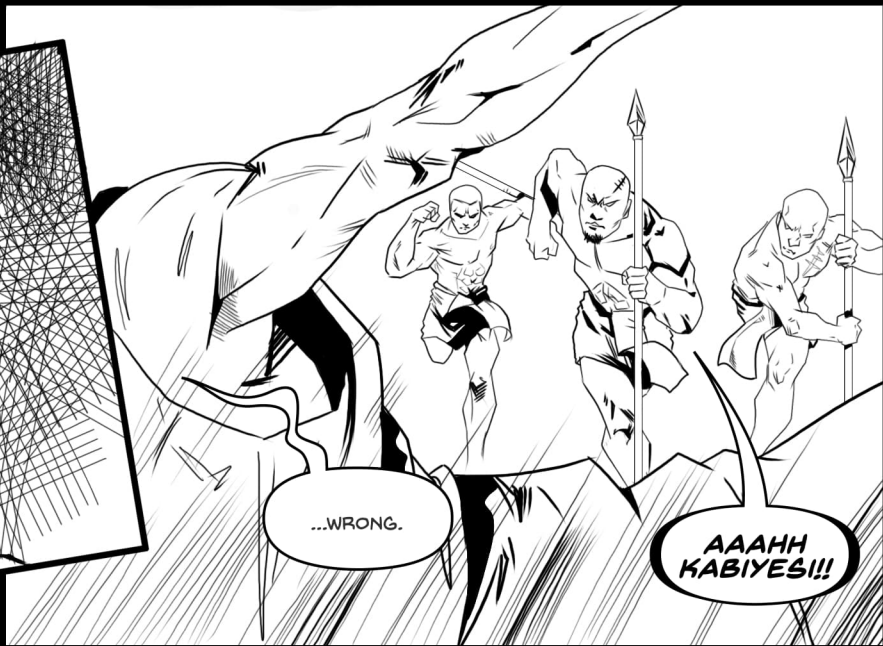




YOUR MAJESTY!!



G--GET...
HELP...
SOMETHING
IS...



...WRONG.

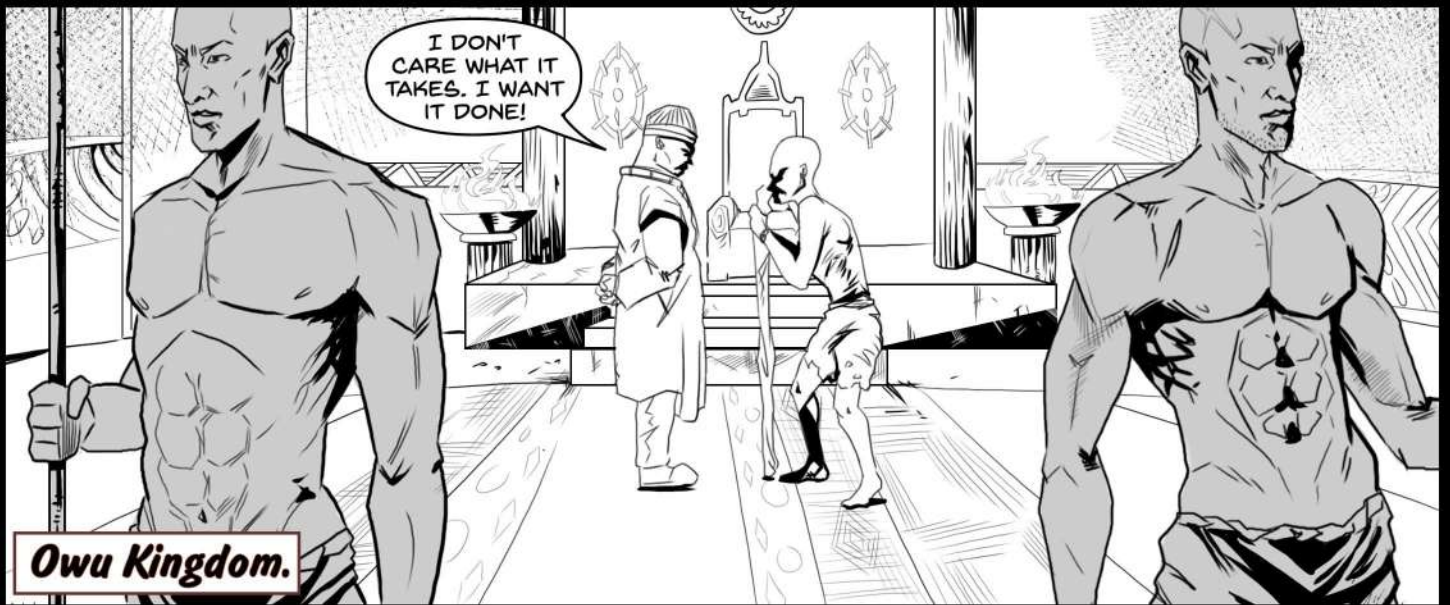
AAAHH
KABIYESI!!



JAKUTA!


MY KING!!!

"THAT MAN
JAKUTA, MUST
DIE..."



Owu Kingdom.





HHMM... YOU ARE AWARE THAT SOR-CE-RY DEMANDS A KOST BEYOND SCALE OF MERIT.

I ALREADY TOLD YOU I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR RUBBISH COSTS AND MERITS.

HNNN. FERY WELL...

I WANT YOUR MOTHER'S ASHES.

YOU WANT MY-- YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. HAS OLD AGE FINALLY MADE YOU SENILE, KORO?

I'M NOT GIVING YOU MY MOTHER'S ASHES. ASK FOR SOMETHING ELSE.

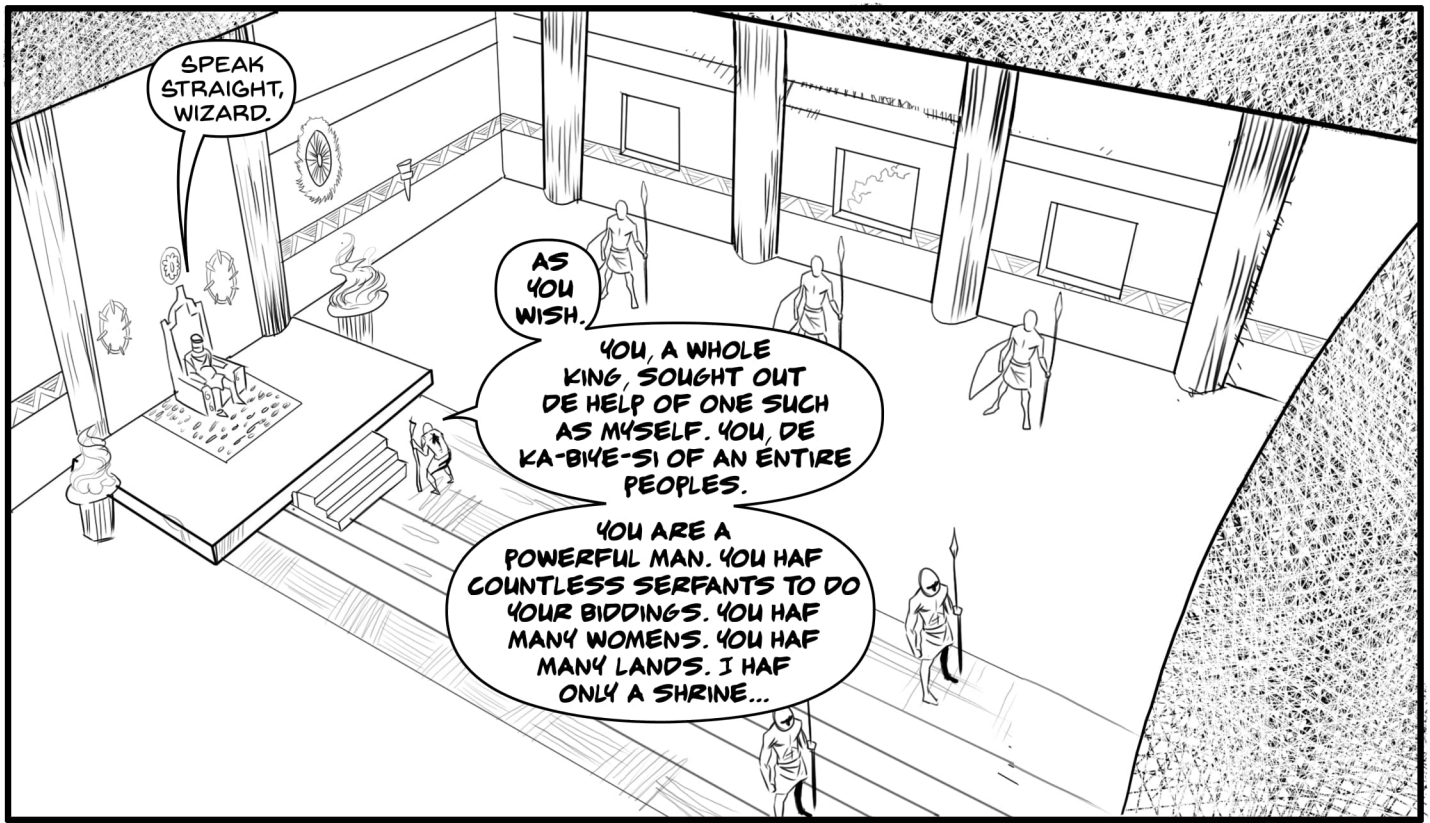


SO NOW YOU KER-ABOUT "RUBBISH KOST'AN MERITS"?

I'D WATCH MY TONE IF I WERE YOU, OLD BAT. WITH THE SORT OF MOOD I'M IN, I MIGHT ENJOY HAVING YOU CANED IN THE MARKETPLACE TILL THERE ARE MORE WELTS ON YOU THAN CHARMS.



KA-BIYE-SI, OUR PEOPLE HAF A SAYING, ABOUT HOW DE RAGING FIRE DAT BELIFS ITSELF PROUD, MUST BE MOST WARY OF DE RAIN DAT DRIZZLES...



SPEAK STRAIGHT, WIZARD.

AS YOU WISH.

YOU, A WHOLE KING, SOUGHT OUT DE HELP OF ONE SUCH AS MYSELF. YOU, DE KA-BIYE-SI OF AN ENTIRE PEOPLES.

YOU ARE A POWERFUL MAN. YOU HAF COUNTLESS SERFANTS TO DO YOUR BIDDINGS. YOU HAF MANY WOMENS. YOU HAF MANY LANDS. I HAF ONLY A SHRINE...



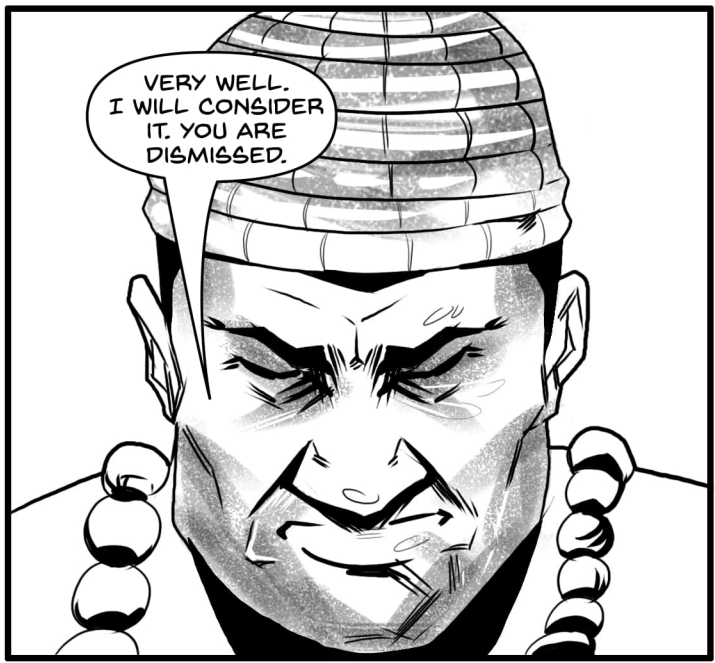
AND YET, WITH ALL DAT YOU POSSESS, DIARIS SOMTIN DAT YOU CANNOT DO, O GREAT KING, WI-DOUT MY HELP.



YOUR MOTHER'S ASHES. DATIS DE KOST.

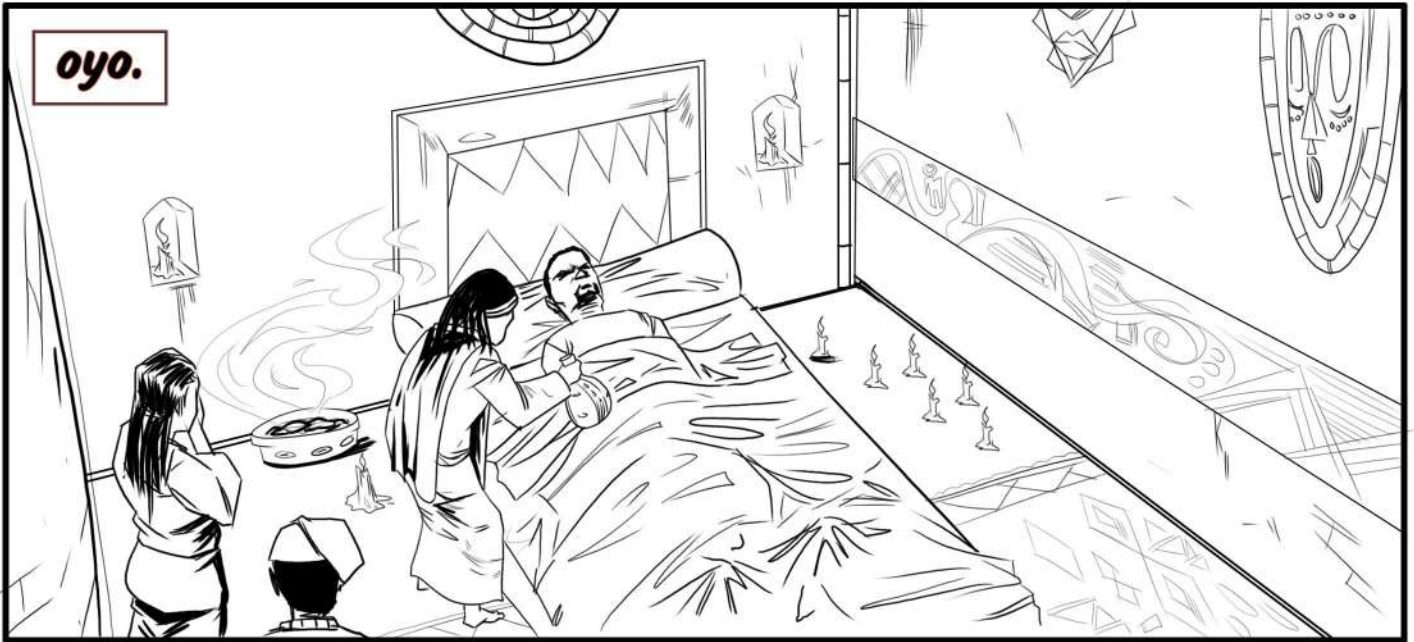


DAT IS WHAT YOU MUST PAY FOR MY HELP KA-BIYE-SI.



VERY WELL. I WILL CONSIDER IT. YOU ARE DISMISSED.

oyo.



HE IS AGING, HE IS AGING FASTER THAN NORMAL AND AT THIS RATE... HE'LL BE DEAD A THIRD SUNSET FROM TODAY.

GODS FORBID!

THERE IS A SOLUTION MY QUEEN, I CAN CREATE AN ANTI-TOXIN TO CLEANSE HIS SYSTEM OF THE POLLUTION BEFORE IT COMPLETELY CONSUMES HIM.

BUT I WILL NEED EKUN OHUN OGBIN*. A RARE PLANT FROM THE SOKA FOREST.

*LEOPARD PLANT

BABATUNDE! BABATUNDE! BABATUNDE CAN YOU HEAR ME?

YES I HEAR YOU AYAABA.

BABATUNDE IF MY HUSBAND SHOULD DIE, EVERY OLOYE IN THIS PALACE WILL HANG BY THEIR TREACHEROUS NECK! THAT INCLUDES YOU.

YOUR MAJESTY, LET'S NOT RAISE CAUSE FOR ALARM YET, I WILL CALL FOR ALL THE GENERALS IMMEDIATELY AND INFORM THEM OF THE QUEST AT HAND. THEY WILL SEEK OUT THIS PLANT, AND THE KING SHALL BE RESTORED.

NO.

NO GENERALS. MY HUSBAND WAS BETRAYED BY A MEMBER OF HIS COURT, RIGHT IN HIS OWN HOME! I WILL NO LONGER PUT HIS LIFE IN THE HANDS OF MEN I DO NOT KNOW OR TRUST.

YOU WILL SEND TIMI AND GBONKA. THOSE TWO WOULD DIE FOR HIM IF NEED BE. THEY WILL RETRIEVE THE PLANT.



I FEAR YOU MAY BE RIGHT MY QUEEN. WORD OF THIS MUST NOT SPREAD. WITH THE KING WEAKENED...



WHO KNOWS WHAT HIS ENEMIES MAY TRY NEXT.



"PLEASE, I HAVE TRAVELED MANY MILES JUST TO FIND YOU."



LET ME
SERVE YOU,
MISTRESS.

GODS AND DEITIES,
BETRAYALS AND DEATHS...
WHAT NEW MYSTERIES
LIE AHEAD? FIND OUT IN
JAKITA #3