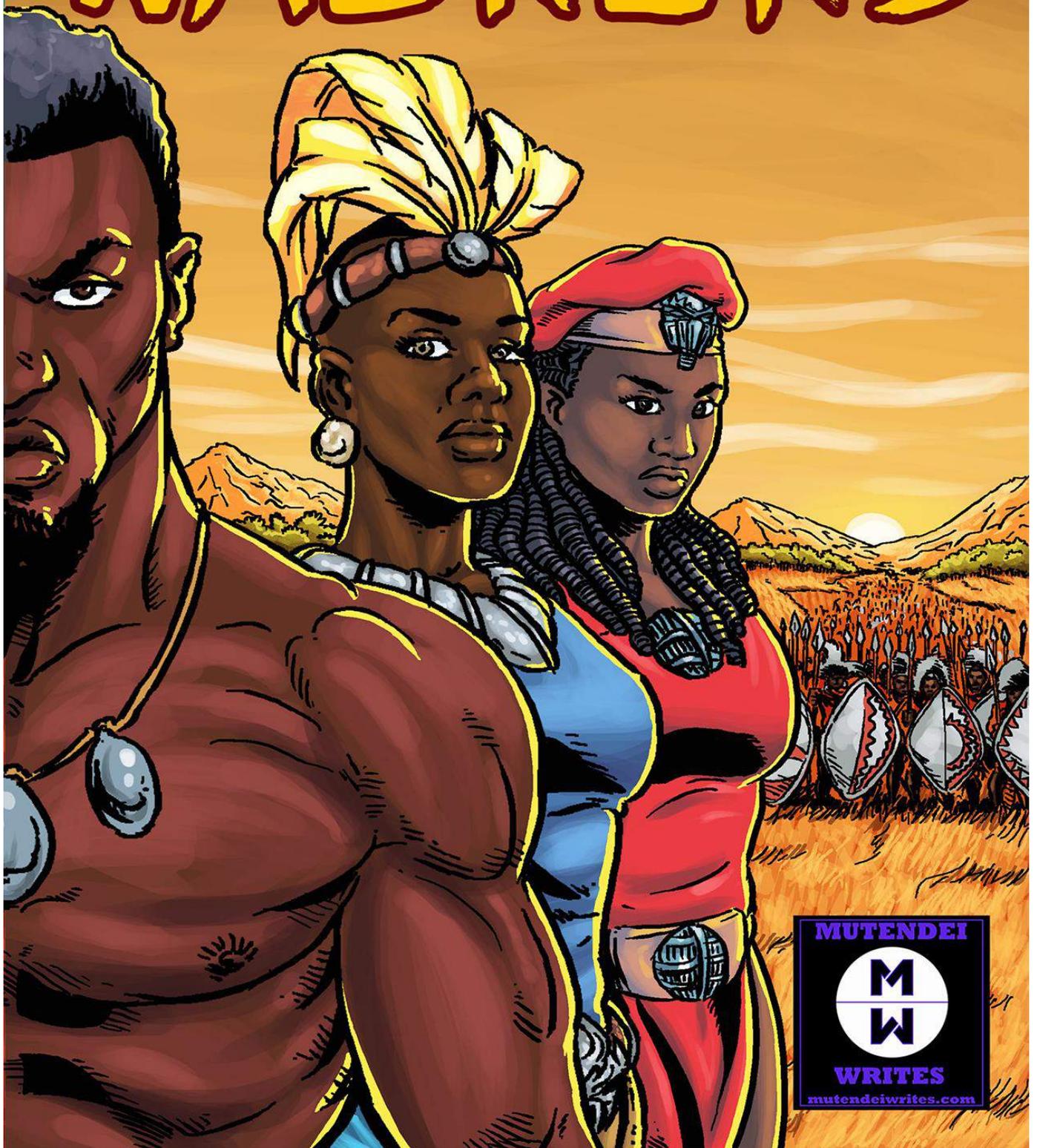


MUTENDEI AKHAYA NABUTETE

EMMANUEL OLUOCH NYAKWADA

SHADOW WALKERS



MUTENDEI



WRITES

mutendeiwrites.com

SHADOW WALKERS

CREATED BY **MUTENDEI AKHAYA NABUTETE**

MAGERE SEES THE SUNRISE.

ISSUE ONE.

WRITER & EDITOR

MUTENDEI AKHAYA NABUTETE

ARTIST

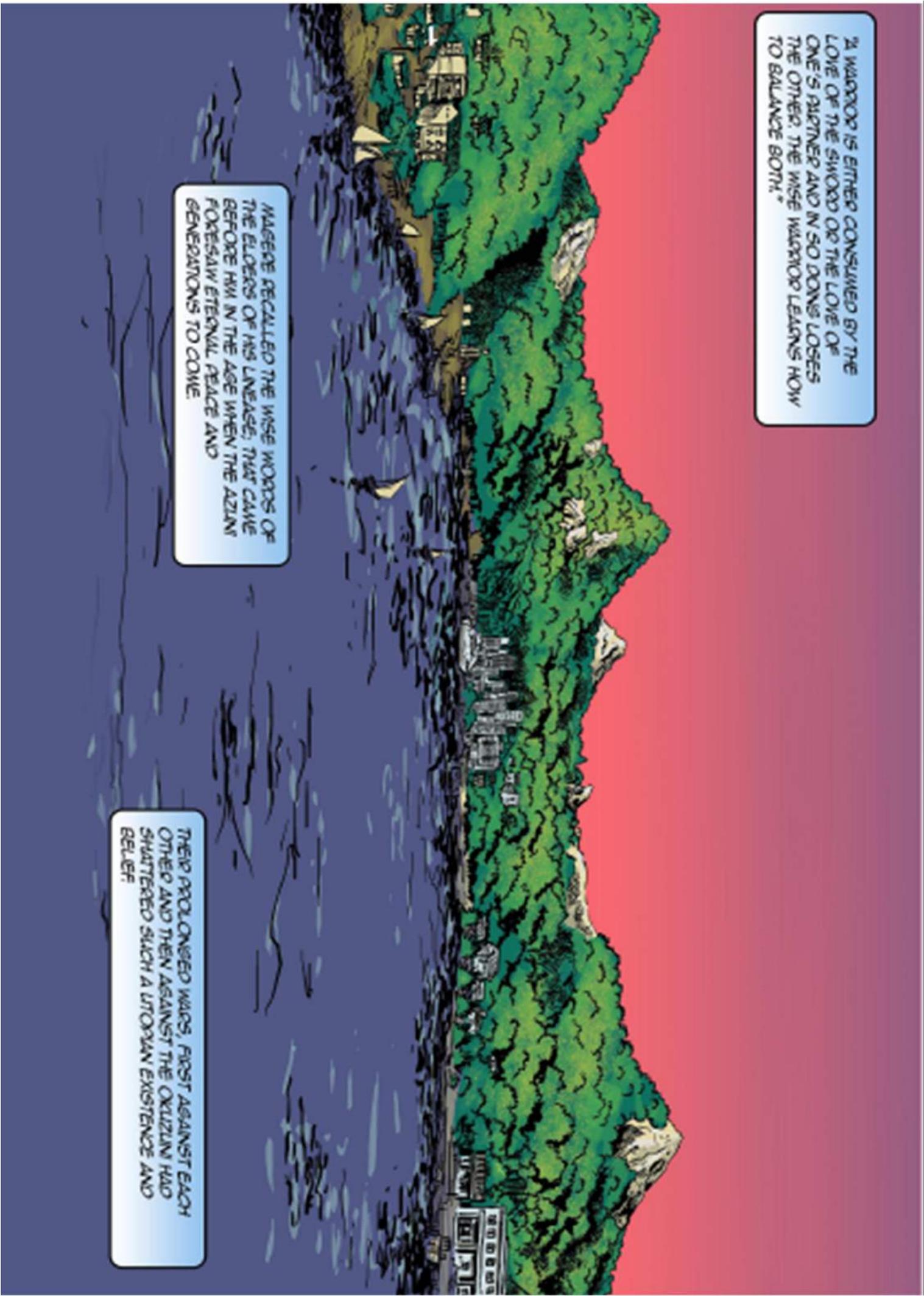
EMMANUEL OLUOCH NYAKWADA



"A WARRIOR IS EITHER CONSUMED BY THE LOVE OF THE SWORD OR THE LOVE OF ONE'S PARTNER AND IN SO DOING LOSES THE OTHER. THE WISE WARRIOR LEARNS HOW TO BALANCE BOTH."

MAGEDE RECALLED THE WISE WORDS OF THE ELDERS OF HIS LINEAGE; THAT CAME BEFORE HIM IN THE AGE WHEN THE AZIANI FORGESAW ETERNAL PEACE AND GENERATIONS TO COME.

THEIR PROLONGED WARS, FIRST AGAINST EACH OTHER AND THEN AGAINST THE OKIZILINI HAD SHATTERED SUCH A UTOPIAN EXISTENCE AND RELIEF



MASERE HAD AWOKEN IN THE WORLD ALONE, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IT FELT ODD.



MASERE LOOKED BACK TOWARDS THE BED WHERE THE MEMORY OF HIS BELOVED LINGERED, ENVISIONED IN MEMORIES OF THE PAST.



IT WAS BECAUSE OF FEAR OF LOSING HIS OTHER THAT HE WELDED HIS GREAT WEAPONS TODAY.



THE SUN MUST NOT SET BEFORE WE FIND HER.



HE MARCHED FIERCELY AHEAD OF THE OTHERS, CUTTING SWATH THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH AND VEGETATION AS THEY TRAVERSED ACROSS THE MADAGASCAN FOLIAGE EN ROUTE TO THE KINGDOM OF MERINA AND ITS INTERIOR...

THE HIGHLANDS OF IMERINA WHICH LEAD ONTO THE SPIRITUAL CAPITAL OF ABOHIMANSA...

AS MAGERE MARCHED ON, HE THOUGHT OF HOW THEIR UNION HAD COME TO PASS...

DESPITE THE WOMEN WHO BY CLAN CUSTOM HAD BEEN HIS WIVES, MAGERE'S THOUGHTS WERE ON SOMEONE ELSE; THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE.



MAGERE'S ANXIETY WAS CALMED BY THE FACT THAT SHE HAD KEPT HER WORD AND AWAITED HIM IN THE FARTHEST EAST, WITHIN THE OLD KINGDOMS.



MAGERE SEES THE SUNRISE.

WRITER
WITENSEY AMANDA
NABUETE

ARTIST
EMMANUEL OLUOYI
NYAKAGA

THE MERINA KINGS AND QUEENS HAD LONG BEEN DISTANT INTROVERTS BUT SURPRISINGLY GOOD RELATIONS TO SEH DONS HONS GEH. SHE WAS AFTER ALL GOD SPEAKS TRUE. MABERE HOPED THOSE GOOD RELATIONS STILL EXISTED AND THEY HAD KEPT HER SAFE IN THE FACE OF THE WOKULO AND THE RISING OKUZUNI THREAT.



AT ANDRIAMANELO'S BEHEST, SHE HAD AIDED HIS EFFORTS, AS WELL AS THE EFFORTS OF HIS SON RALANGO, TO ESTABLISH A STANDING ARMY AND FORM A NATION OUT OF THE FRAGMENTED HOWA AND VAZIMBA COMMUNITIES.



SHE HAD BEEN QUESTIONED BY THE REST OF THE DAHOMEY CAPTAINS AS TO WHY SHE LED THEM IN SUPPORT OF THE HOWA OVER THE VAZIMBA AND HER REPLY WAS SIMPLE.



FOR A TREE TO GROW, A SEED MUST BE PLANTED.

THE QUESTION IS WHAT DOES THAT TREE THEN BECOME??

FOR THE DAHOMEY AND NON DAHOMEY AMAZONIAN WARRIORS, IT HAD BEEN A PLACE OF REFUGE WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES WERE NOT CONDUCTIVE TO THEM ESTABLISHING OR MAINTAINING A HOMELAND OF THEIR OWN. HOWEVER THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM

SEH DONS HONS BEH HAD ENSURED BEFORE EMIGRATING ON HER MOST RECENT JOURNALS, THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE WOMAN WARRIOR REMAINED ALIVE AND THRIVING, SOLIDIFYING THE PLACE OF THE DAHOMEYAN IDEOLOGY THROUGH THE AFRICAN WOMEN WARRIOR.

HER ACOLYTES INSPIRED BY HER PERSONA, KEENLY FOLLOWED HER INTO BATTLE SUCCESSFULLY REPELLING ANY ATTEMPT AT THEIR MARGINALIZATION.



SEH DONG HONS BEH'S LIFE AS A WARRIOR BEGAN DEEP WITHIN THE HEART OF AFRICA.



HER WARRIOR PHILOSOPHY HAD FIRST TAKEN ROOT UNDER KING HOUESBADUAJA'S KINGDOM, IN THE FORM OF THE RENOWNED ELEPHANT HUNTRESSES.

HIS SON AND SUCCESSOR, KING ASAOUJA TURNED THE DAHOMELIAN WOMEN INTO FORMALLY RECOGNIZED WOMEN WARRIORS WITHIN HIS ARMY.

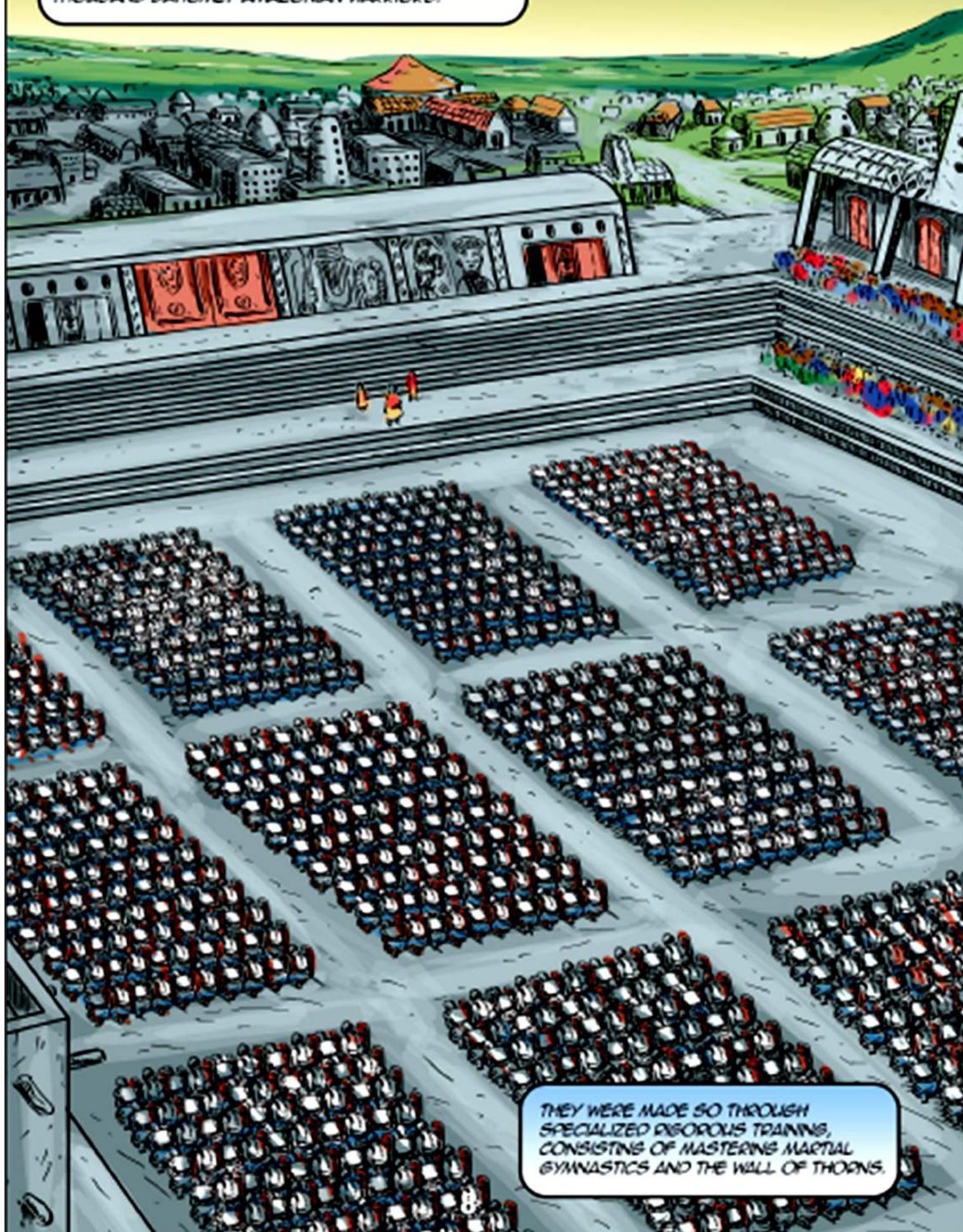


I HAVE CHOSEN TO DO THIS IN LINE WITH THE SAGE PROVERBS OF OUR COASTAL BRETHREN.



"AS THE COCONUT FALLS, IT FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE BENEATH IT."

THE FERCE AND MIGHTY DAHOMEY KING BEHANZIN BOWELLE WAS BLESSED WITH A CONTINENT OF FIVE THOUSAND DAHOMEY AMAZONIAN WARRIORS.



THEY WERE MADE SO THROUGH SPECIALIZED RIGOROUS TRAINING, CONSISTING OF MASTERING MARTIAL GYMNASTICS AND THE WALL OF THORNS.



A HUGE PART OF THEIR MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND TENACITY SPRINGS FROM THEIR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN THEIR CHASTITY ESPECIALLY SO IN THE FACE OF LESSER MEN.



THEY ONLY TOOK AS MATES...



MEN THEY SAW AS THEIR EQUALS...



BOTH IN PHYSICAL PROWESS...



...AND MENTAL INSENNITY...

IT HAD BEEN A SHOCK WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE AZUNI WORLD AT LARGE...



...THAT SEH DONG HONS BEH HAD FOUND HER HUSBAND, KING AND MATE...

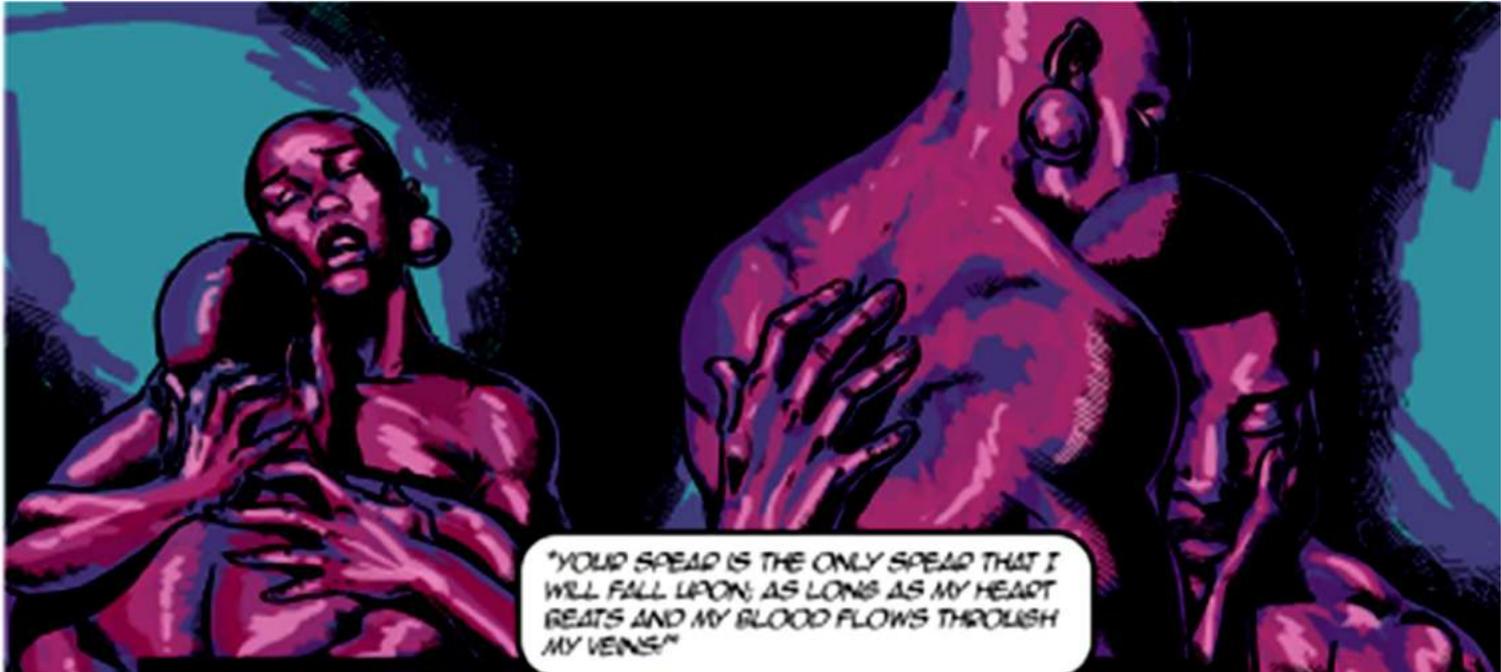


...IN LUANDA MASERE, TO WHOM SHE SWORE HER FEALTY...



HE STILL REMEMBERED HER WORDS TO HIM THAT NIGHT AND HOW SHE EASERLY AND AMOROUSLY PROCLAIMED, PHYSICALLY PORTRAYED HER SOLE DESIRE FOR HIM.





"YOUR SWEAT IS THE ONLY SWEAT THAT I
WILL FALL UPON; AS LONG AS MY HEART
BEATS AND MY BLOOD FLOWS THROUGH
MY VEINS!"



HE HAD ALSO PROMISED THAT SAME NIGHT TO HONOR
HER IN THE VERY SAME FASHION, SWEARING TO
ENSURE THAT HER HEART WOULD ALWAYS BEAT AND
HER BLOOD WOULD ALWAYS FLOW THROUGH HER
VEINS AS LONG AS HIS OWN DID.

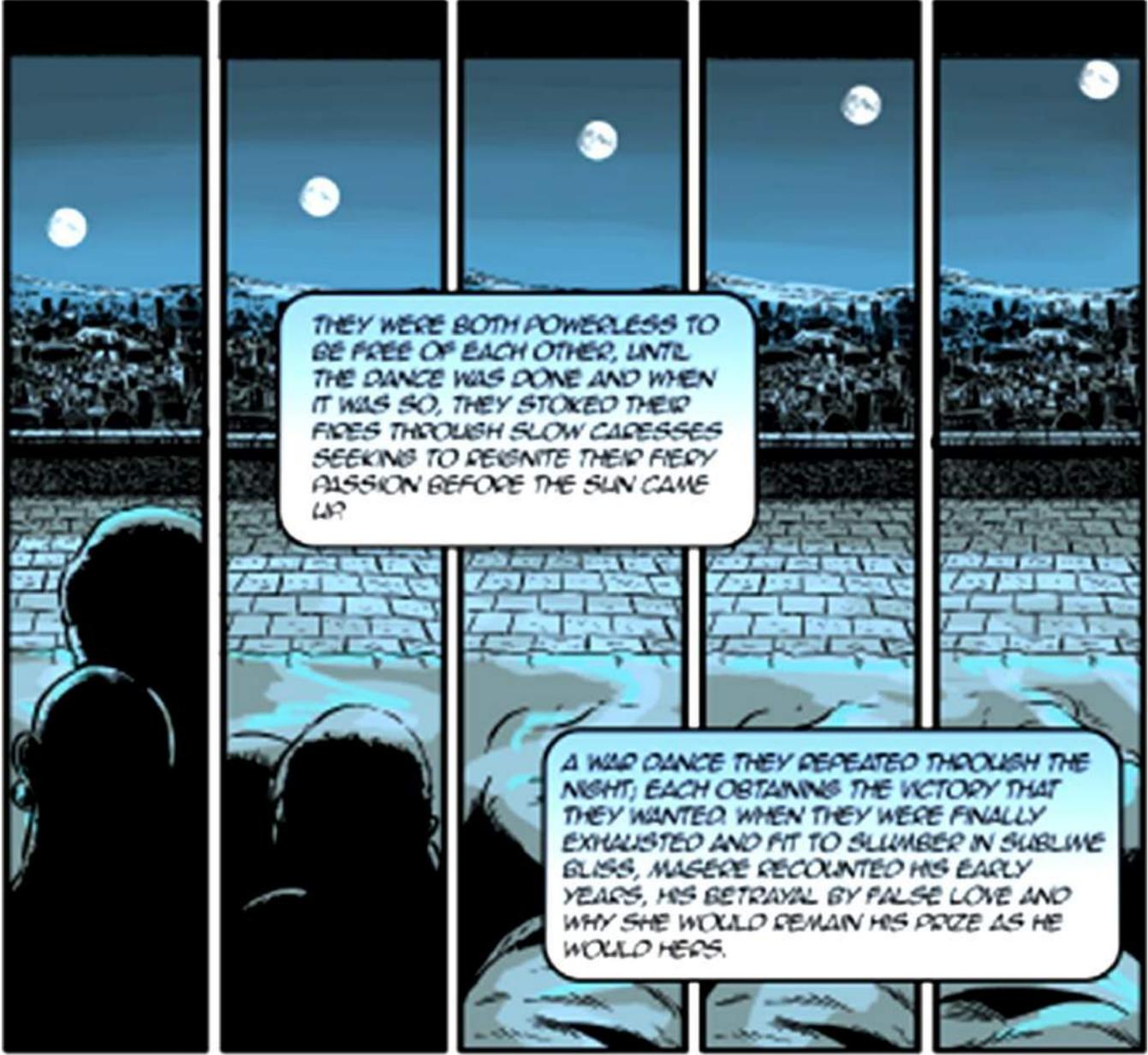


HE HAD TRACED EVERY FACET OF
HER BODY AS THEY SWORE THIS TO
EACH OTHER AND MADE LOVE
UNDER THE MOONLIGHT



IT BECAME A LONG
STANDING JOKE BETWEEN
THEM AFTER THAT NIGHT, AS
TO WHETHER SHE FELL
UPON HIS SPEAR OR SHE
CONQUERED IT.

REGARDLESS OF WHO ASSUMED CONTROL,
AS HE CARRIED HER UP, WRAPPED IN HIS
MUSCULAR FORM, THEY WERE BOTH
TRANSPORTED TO ECSTASY.



THEY WERE BOTH POWERLESS TO
BE FREE OF EACH OTHER, UNTIL
THE DANCE WAS DONE AND WHEN
IT WAS SO, THEY STOKED THEIR
FIRES THROUGH SLOW CAresses
SEEKING TO REIGNITE THEIR FIERY
PASSION BEFORE THE SUN CAME
UP.

A WILD DANCE THEY REPEATED THROUGH THE
NIGHT, EACH OBTAINING THE VICTORY THAT
THEY WANTED WHEN THEY WERE FINALLY
EXHAUSTED AND FIT TO SLUMBER IN SUBLIME
GLISS, MASERE RECOUNTED HIS EARLY
YEARS, HIS BETRAYAL BY FALSE LOVE AND
WHY SHE WOULD REMAIN HIS PRIZE AS HE
WOULD HERS.

EVERY WARRIOR WANTS TO BUILD A HOME AND SEE AN END TO WAR, WHETHER THEY REVEAL IT OR NOT. THE WICKED HOWEVER SHARE NO SUCH COMMON SENTIMENT.

THIS SENTIMENT MADE HIM RECALL HIS LIFE BEFORE HE HAD MET SEH DONS HONS BEH, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THEIR ENCOUNTER.



WHY HAVE I BEEN CURSED WITH BARRENNESS?



AS MAGERE HAD AWAITED
CONCEPTION...

...UNAWARE THAT HIS OFFERED
WIFE WAS BARREN...

FOR A LONG TIME MAGERE HAD WATCHED AS THE
LUO, THE DENZENS OF THE LAKE VICTORIA REGION,
WHICH STRETCHED FROM THE BASIN OF THE LAKE
UPWARDS TOWARDS THE NANDI HIGHLANDS HAD
BEEN REPEATEDLY HUMILIATED IN BATTLE BY THE
NEIGHBORING HILL DWELLING NANDI AND THEIR
ALLIES, THE LANGO.

HE HAD REMAINED STILL AS THIS
TRANSPIRED, THE BARRENNESS OF HIS
FIRST WIFE, GIVEN TO HIM BY THE SIDHO
CLAN THAT HAD ADOPTED HIM BEING OF A
GREATER CONCERN

TO THE POINT THAT IT HAD
ROOTED A MUTE DIVIDE
BETWEEN THEM HOWEVER
AFTER A SEVERELY BLOODY
BATTLE THAT THE LUO LOST,
THE WARRIOR CODE IN HIM DID
NOT ALLOW HIM TO STAND
STILL AS LARGE NUMBERS OF
THE LUO WERE FELLED WITHIN
ARM REACH OF THE
PROTECTION OF HIS GREAT
WEAPONS.

THIS
CANNOT
BE!



HE ROSE UP AND LIFTED THE LUD WITH HIM, TEACHING THEM SKILL IN BATTLE AND DEFENSIVE WAR TACTICS, CHANGING THEM FROM YOUTHFUL, SPARTED NOVICES INTO HARDENED RAZOR SHARP SKILLFUL WARRIORS.



AS A TEACHER MUST ALSO BE A LEADER, HE LED THEM INTO NUMEROUS BATTLES...

...BATTLES THROUGH WHICH THEY REGAINED THEIR CULTURAL WARRIOR PRIDE, TERRITORY AND POSSESSIONS PUTTING THE NANDI TO HEEL IN EVERY ENCOUNTER.



EVEN THOUGH THE WARRIORS BEHIND HIM SAW HIM AS THE REASON FOR THEIR VICTORY, ACTING AS THEIR SPEARHEAD, THEY HAD UNKNOWINGLY AND IN REALITY BECOME THE HAMMERHEAD THAT KNOCKED THE NANDI BACK SENDING THEM INTO RETREAT.



THE ELDERS SAW THIS AS WELL, AND SOUGHT TO ENSURE THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE POWER OF MANY ACTING AS ONE, REMAINED INSTILLED IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

WHEN THE NANDI AND LANSO REALIZED THEY COULD NO LONGER DEFEAT THE LIJO IN BATTLE AND ANY ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD RESULT IN SHAMING LOSS, THEY FEIGNED SEEKING TO TREATISE PEACE.

HOW CAN WE SUBDUCE THIS MAN WHEN NONE OF OUR WARRIORS CAN FACE HIM?

WE CAN GIVE HIM WHAT HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND.

A WOMEN ABLE TO BEAR HIM CHILDREN

THEY OFFERED MASERE WHAT HE INTERNALLY DESIRED MOST; A BEAUTIFUL AND LOVING WIFE WITH WHICH TO MAKE A HOME AND CHILDREN WITH.

THE LANSO SENT THE MOST ASTOUNDING BEAUTY FROM THEIR LANDS TO STAND BY HIS SIDE AND FULFILL HIS DREAM OF A FULL FAMILY.

SHE HOWEVER WAS NOT THERE FOR HIS LOVE BUT THE LOVE OF HER PEOPLE AND HATRED OF THE LIJO NATIONS' NEW FOUND STRENGTH.

THE LUGO ELDERS, WHO WERE KNOWN TO BE EXTREMELY WISE AND ABLE TO SEE SHADOWS WITHIN THE SHADE, UNPLORED HIM NOT TO TAKE THE LANGO PRINCESS AS HIS WIFE.



SHE WILL GIVE ME A GIFT THAT I HAVE NOT YET HAD.



THE GIFT YOU HOPE FOR THROUGH HER SHALL ONLY BE A CURSE.



TO DO SO WOULD BE TO WELCOME YOUR DOWNFALL.



THE STONE IN HIM BLOCKED OUT THEIR WARNINGS AND HE IGNORED THEIR CAUTIONARY ADMONITIONS...



HEEDING ONLY HIS OWN DESIRES.





TO THEIR CONSTERNATION, HIS LANSO WIFE, THROUGH REPEATED SEDUCTIONS AND EMPLOYING THE LANGUAGE OF HER BODY..

EVENTUALLY ENTICED THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH FROM HIM AND LEARNT THAT HIS PROMESS LAY IN HIS SHADOW



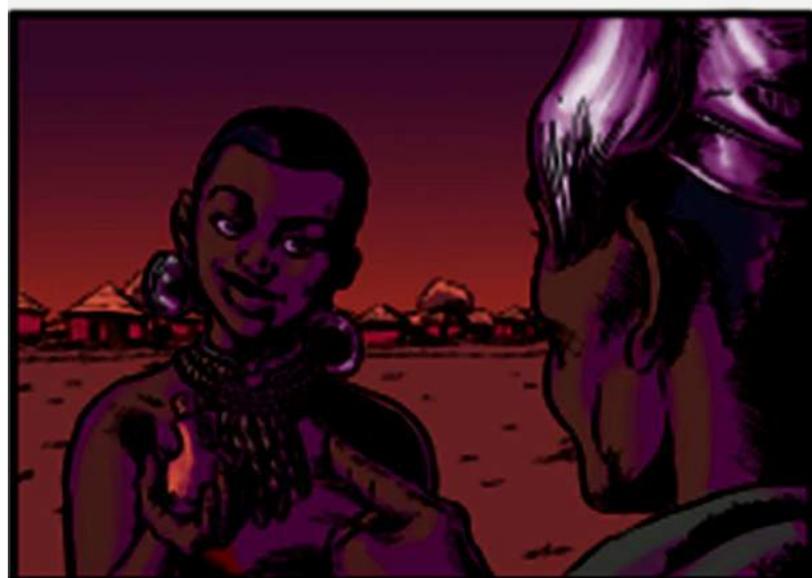
NO SOONER HAD HE DISCLOSED THE SECRET OF HIS STRENGTH, WHEN SHE FOCUSED ON ENSURING THE DIALOGUE OF THEIR BODIES DROVE HIM TO SLUMBER.



THAT NIGHT AS MAGERE TOOK HIS REST, HIS FALSE WIFE SLIPPED INTO THE NIGHT AND BACK TO HER PEOPLE.

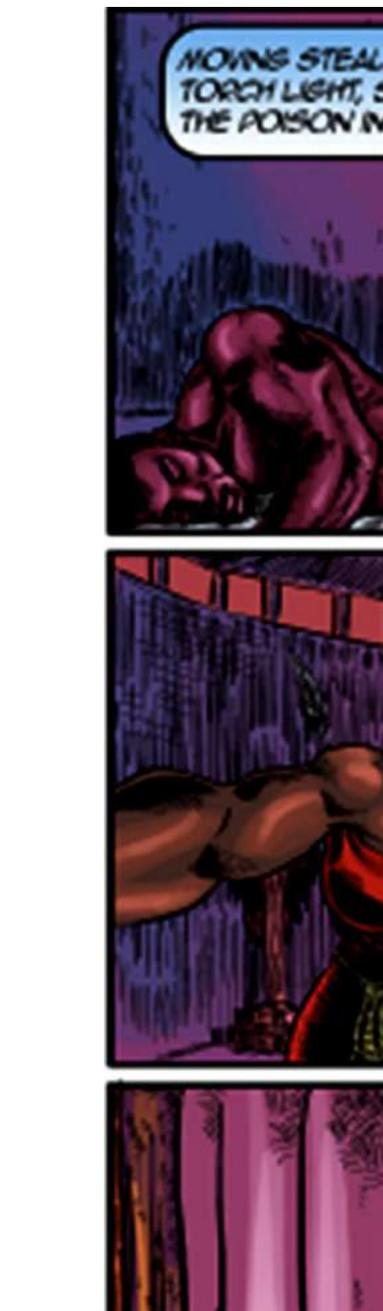


SO DRIVEN SHE WAS BY HER WICKEDNESS,



... THAT SHE MADE IT BACK WELL BEFORE THE ROOSTERS FIRST CROW SIGNALING THE IMPENDING DAWN.





MOVING STEALTHILY BY SHIELDED TORCH LIGHT, SHE ADMINISTERED THE POISON INTO HIS SHADOW.



...WITH THE INTENT NOT TO KILL BUT WEAKEN HIM SO HE WOULD MEET HIS DEATH ON THE BATTLEFIELD



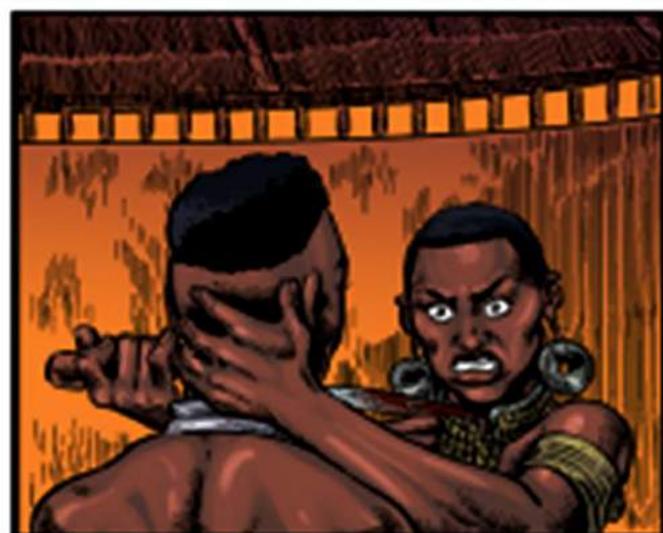
THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HER ELDERS, WHO WANTED HIS DEATH TO OCCUR ON THE BATTLE FIELD AND SHATTER THE LUO SPIRIT.

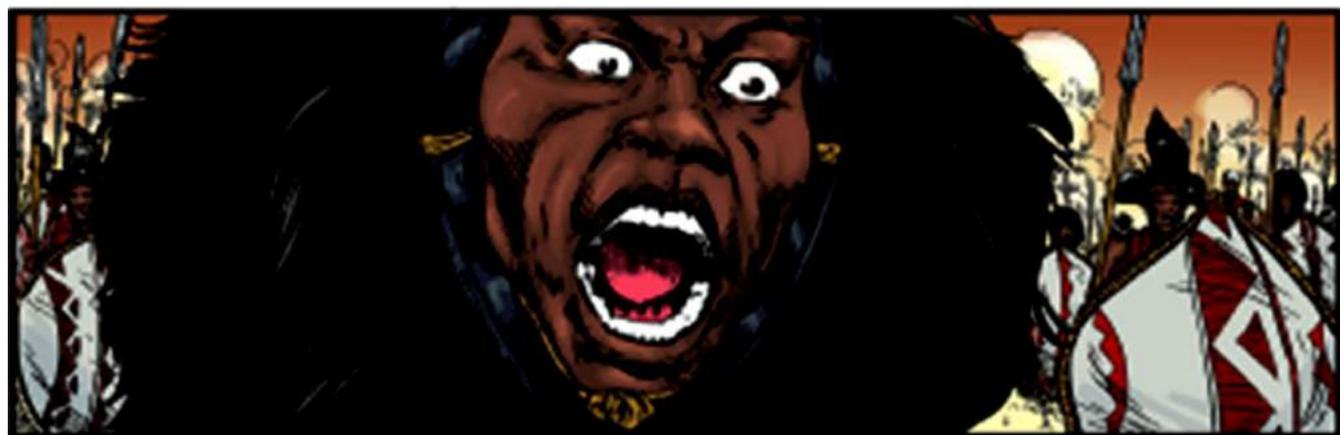
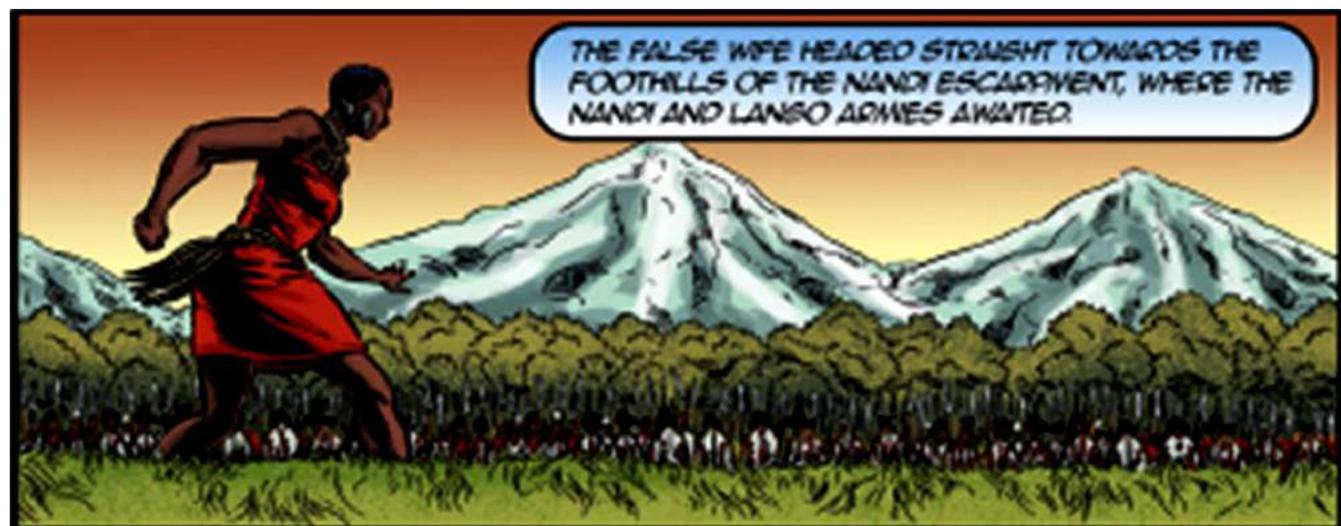


SHE HOWEVER WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE AWAKE BEFORE THE COCKEREL CROWED



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?





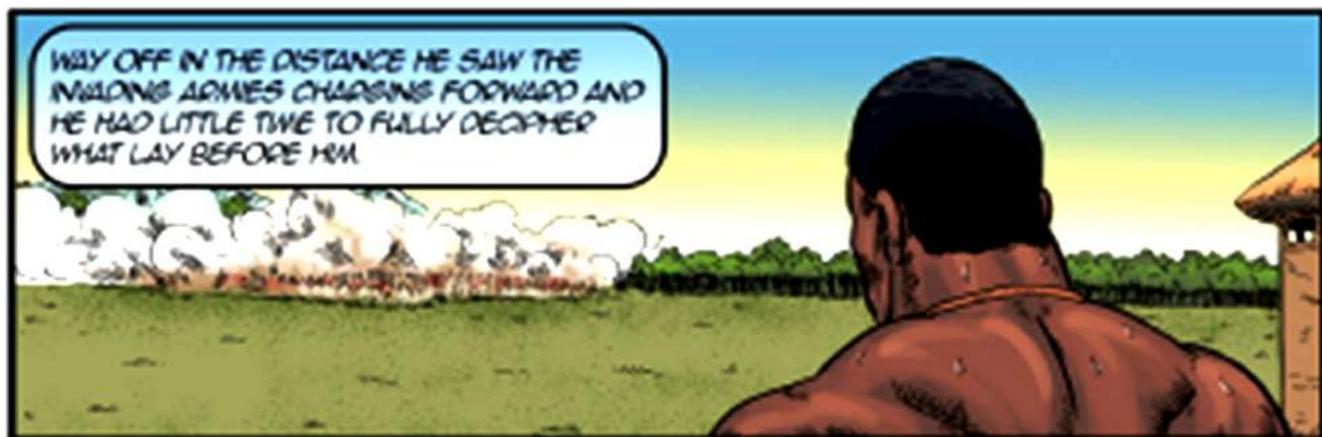


IN THE LILO ENCAMPMENT
THE WILD ALARM WAS
RAISED AND MASEKE
SPRANG UP TO FIND ONE
WIFE DEAD AT THE FOOT
OF HIS BED.



..THE BLOODY HAND MARKS
OF HIS FALSE SECOND WIFE
PLASTERED AGAINST THE
WALLS AND DOOR FROM
WHICH THE TRAIL OF HER
BLOODY FOOT PRINTS LED
OUT OF THE VILLAGE.

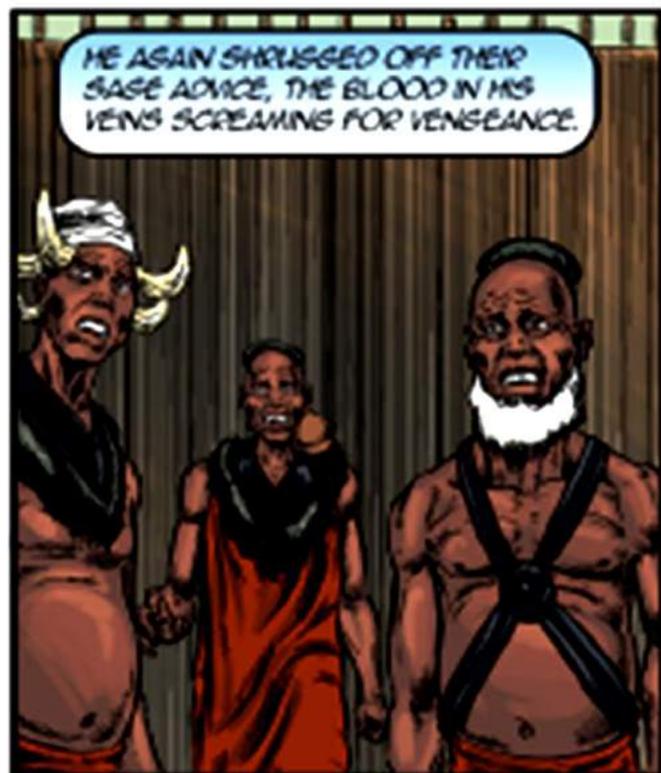
WAY OFF IN THE DISTANCE HE SAW THE INVADING ARMIES CHARGING FORWARD AND HE HAD LITTLE TIME TO FULLY DECRYPTER WHAT LAY BEFORE HIM.



THE ELDERS DESIRED TO HAVE THE ARMY FIGHT INDEPENDENTLY OF HIM AND ESTABLISH THE FULL EXTENT OF THE TREACHERY OF HIS SECOND WIFE.



HE AGAIN SHRUGGED OFF THEIR SAGE ADVICE, THE BLOOD IN HIS VEINS SCREAMING FOR VENGEANCE.





IN HIS BLOOD LUST, HE BROKE AWAY FROM THE PROTECTIVE BATTLE FORMATION HE HAD TAUGHT THE LUO TO EMPLOY AND RAGED THROUGH NANDI AND LANSO WAR PARTIES, STRIKING MANY ASUNDER.



THE FEROCITY OF HIS RAGE FUELLED CHARGE MIMICRED THAT OF THE NYATI BUFFALO, WHICH HE HAD ADOPTED AS HIS SPIRIT ANIMAL.



THE NYATI, THE BUFFALO OF THE PLAINS, TO THOSE FAMILIAR WITH IT, THROUGHOUT ITS EXISTENCE HAD PROVED UNTAMEABLE.



IN HIS RAGE HE FORGOT TO GUARD HIS TOTEM SHADOW SHIELD.



THE POISON THAT HIS TREACHEROUS WIFE ADMINISTERED DID NOT WEAKEN HIM AS THEY EXPECTED BUT BIZARRELY PRECIPITATED HIS REFORMATION PREMATURELY HIS TOTEM REJECTING THE FOREIGN SUBSTANCES.



ENCIRCLED BY HIS ENEMIES, SEVERAL OF THEIR SPEARS FOUND THEIR MARK, STRIKING AND EMBEDDING THEMSELVES IN THE FRONSES OF HIS TOTEM.



THE SHARP PAIN CAUSED HIM TO PALISE AS HIS BLOOD SPILT FORTH FROM HIS WOUNDS.



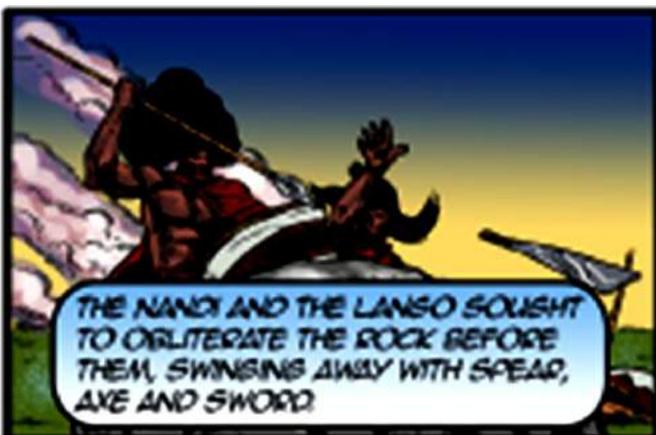
REALIZING HIS UNEXPECTED VULNERABILITY, HE PUSHED FORWARD REACHING AS FAR AS THE FOOTHILLS OF THE NANDI ESCARPMENT.



...THERE HE INVOKED HIS STONE FORM TURNING INTO A SOLID IMPENETRABLE HUMANSOUS CRAS.



KEEPING HIS WITS ABOUT HIM BEFORE HE DID SO, HE THROUGH HIS CONNECTION TO THE CONDUIT HE URGENTLY COMMUNICATED VIA THE MENTAL BRIDGE TO THE AZUNI COLLECTIVE, HIS NEED FOR ASSISTANCE, WOUNDED AS HE WAS.



THIS ENSURED THAT THE NANCY OR LANSO WOULD NEVER AGAIN INVADE; NOR WOULD THE LILO STRAY BEYOND THEIR OWN BORDERS.



THE BATTLE HAD LASTED FOR HOURS AND COUNTLESS SCORES OF THE DEAD ON BOTH SIDES LAY AT THE FOOTHILLS.

THE REST OF THE DAY WAS SPENT REMOVING THE DEAD AND PREPARING THEM FOR BURIAL, ALONGS WITH SANITIZING THE BLOOD STAINED GROUND.



FROM THE EDGE OF THE FOREST ATOP THE ESCARPMENT, SEH DONS HONG BEH AND ASASE-YAA STOOD WATCHING AS THIS PROGRESSED.



IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE AZUNI, ASASE-YAA HAD TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY WITH SEH DONS HONG BEH.



MANY OF THE PEOPLE THEY ENCOUNTERED, AZUNI AND HUMAN ALIKE...



...REQUIRED HEALING FROM THE WOUNDS INFLICTED BY SEH DONS HONG BEH'S INSTRUCTION IN THE SKILLS OF WAR...



...WHETHER FRIEND OR FOE.



THE DUO WAITED UNTIL NIGHTFALL WHEN UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS...



...WITH BOTH COMMUNITIES ENGAGED IN MOURNING THEY SPURTED AWAY MASERE'S ENCASED FORM.



SEH DONS HONG BEH HAD REPLACED THE BOULDER SHAPE HE HAD TAKEN WITH A REAL BOULDER CLEFT FROM ATOP THE ESCARPMENT...

...AS ASASE-YAA HAD INITIATED HIS HEALING PROCESS.



WHO ARE YOU?



I AM SEH DONS HONG BEH, GOD SPEAKS TRUE!



ASASE-YAA, REALISING THAT THERE WAS AN IMMEDIATE CONNECTION ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE TWO, DURING THAT FIRST ENCOUNTER.



SINCE THAT MOMENT SEH DONS HONG BEH HAD STAYED TRUE TO HER MEANING...



... ALWAYS SPEAKING TRUE WITH HIM IN ALL DIALOGUES AND DISCUSSIONS THEY HAD IN PUBLIC AND WITHIN THEIR OWN PRIVATE LANGUAGE.



HE WOULD SEE HER DO SO AGAIN...

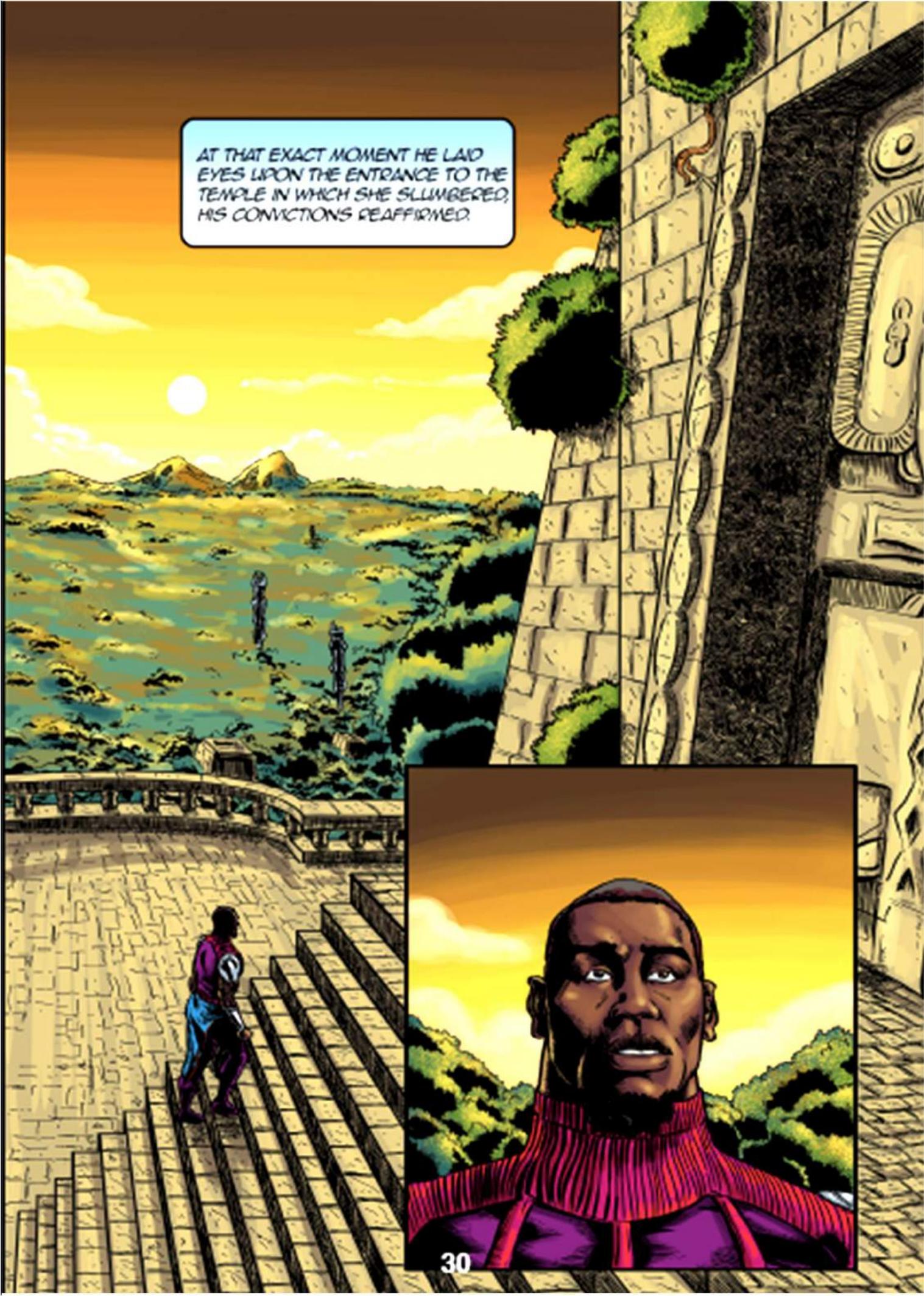


...AS THE SUN BECAME VISIBLE RISING ABOVE THE HORIZON AND HILLS FAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE...

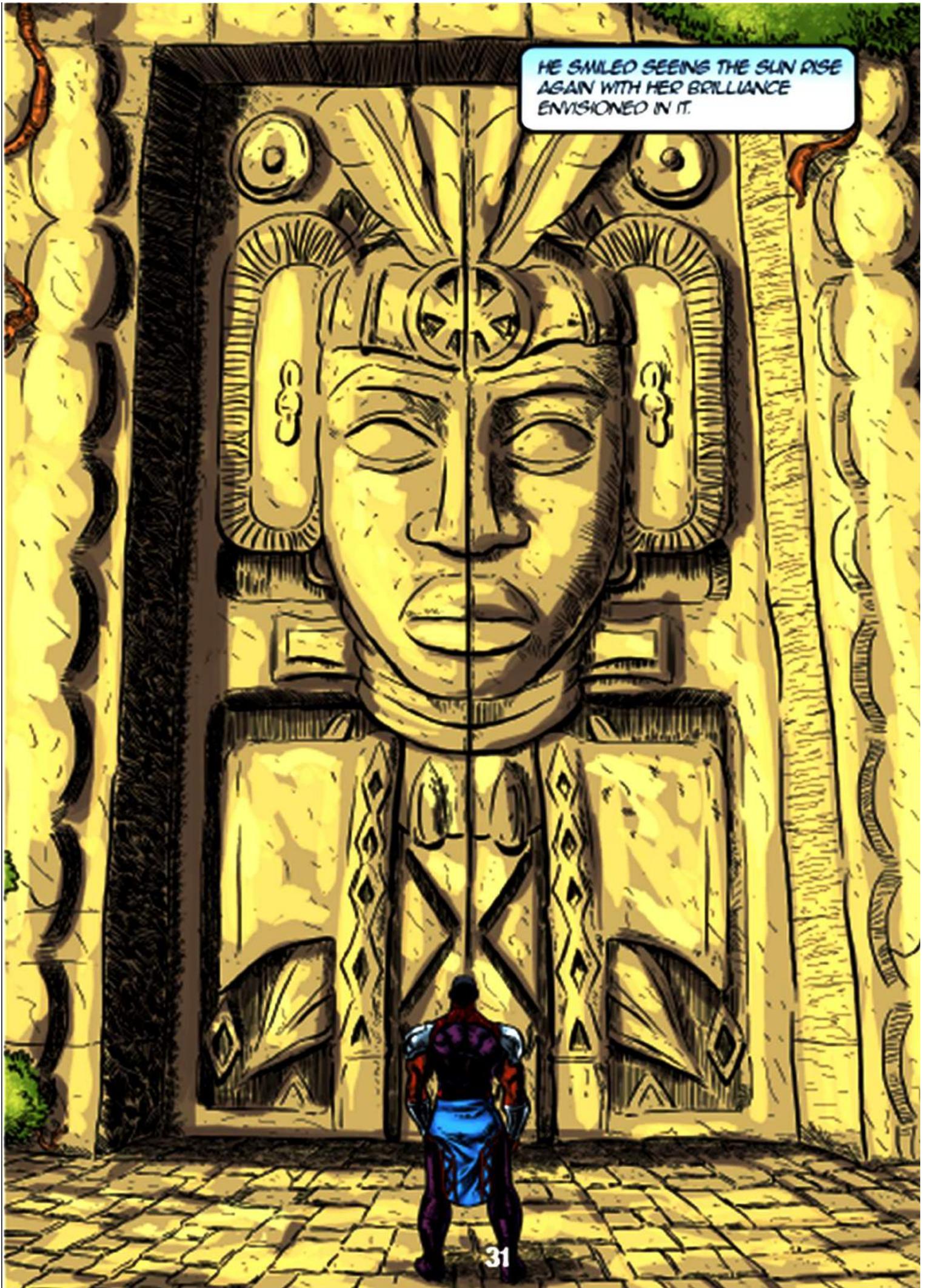


...ANANSI, MAKEDA, THE CARTHAGINIAN AND THE GRAND VIZIER CAME UPON HIS BACK.

AT THAT EXACT MOMENT HE LAID EYES UPON THE ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE IN WHICH SHE SLLUMBERED, HIS CONVICTIONS REAFFIRMED.



HE SMILED SEEING THE SUN RISE
AGAIN WITH HER BRILLIANCE
ENVISIONED IN IT.



"Hello! I hope you are as excited as I am (and was when I saw the completed comic, courtesy of the artwork of Point Blank Evumbi), after having read the first issue of Shadow Walkers Awakening, and just like me, you are anticipating what is set to come next.

Before I get into that, let me say a big thank you to you, for your interest and support of Shadow Walkers Awakening with the purchase of a copy of the comic.

It has been a journey moving from the thought of developing an Afro-futuristic, historical mythology novel that encompasses the multitude of Africa's own deities and cultural and historic legends, presented as a race of Gods fighting for their survival and that of the human race.

With so many vivid characters and as much rich history embedded in the book as possible, along with under and misrepresented iconic characters from other cultures, it was a challenge to balance them out in the novel.

In creating the comic, it was as equally a challenging endeavor, with the starting point of the comic series being a heavy decision. As has been the trend with Hollywood productions, black characters have always played second fiddle, or been portrayed in a diminished role, up until the release of Black Panther. (Shadow Walkers the novel and the production of the comic was a thing before the Black panther movie, I'm just saying!)

Consequently, I chose to launch the series with two of the most renowned, celebrated, historic and mythological warriors in Africa's history, namely Luanda Magere and Seh Dong Hong Beh. They both occupy a pinnacle position in the Azuni hierarchy, that will reveal the complexity and depth of Africa's mythological, cultural and historic legends.

I hope you enjoy the read and I welcome you to the awakening!" - Mutendei Akhaya Nabutete.

15th April 2018



THE AZUNI



A COLLECTIVE OF MYTHOLOGICAL & HISTORIC WARRIORS, WHO ARE NOW IMMORTAL GUARDIANS AGAINST THE OKUZUNI, WHO SEEK STAR POWER & A CALAMITY BEYOND THEIR CONTROL.

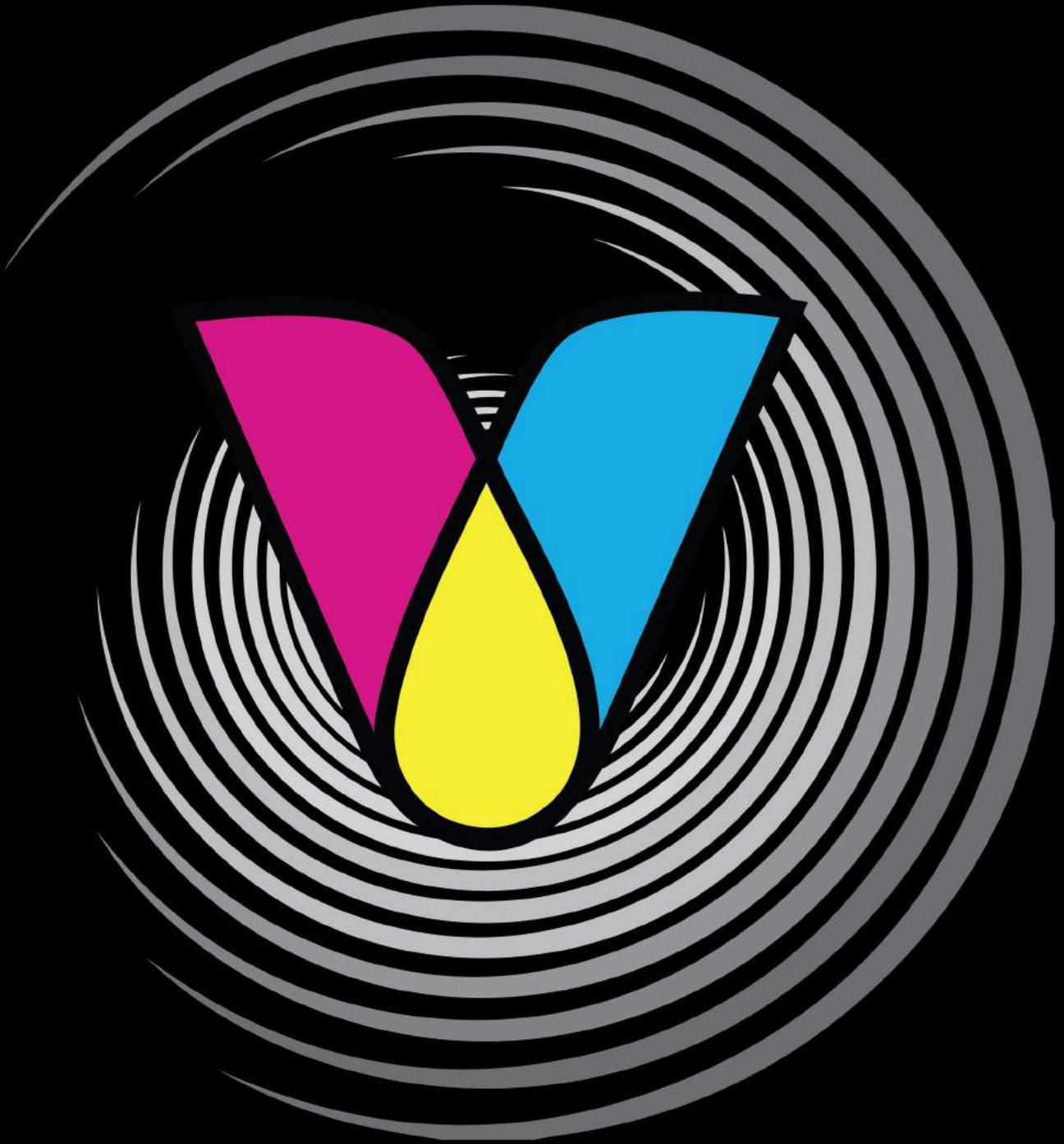
THE OKUZUNI



FORMER AZUNI & NOW THEIR FIERCE RIVALS. ONCE SCATTERED BUT NOW UNITED BY THE MYSTERIOUS KIZAMEN, THEY SEEK TO USURP THE AZUNI WHO DENIED THEM THEIR ASCENSION TO THEIR OWN FULL STAR POWER.



KUUNGANA



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