



ICBS
COMICS

2

JUJUMAN

:NOIR CHRONICLES

KELLY
CHIMA
LASBREY

whispers of the igbo landing

JUMANJ



CHAPTER: 2
whispers of the igbo landing

CHRONICLER	Kelly Nenyne Kalu
VISUALS	Chima Kalu
CONCEPTS	Lasbrey Nwachukwu





AFRICA, CRADLE OF CREATION AND CIVILIZATION THROWN INTO OBSCURITY BY A MERE EPITHET 'THE DARK CONTINENT'. IN CONTRAST, IT IS ACTUALLY THE CONTINENT THAT BROUGHT LIGHT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

THE AFRICANS HAVE AN ADAGE THAT THE CRAB MAY SWIM ACROSS BIG AND SMALL RIVERS BUT WILL EVENTUALLY END UP IN AN OLD WOMAN'S SOUP POT.

AFRICA IS THE SOUP POT, THE REST OF US ARE BUT THE CRABS. AND THE OLD WOMAN? SHE IS FATE!

FATE BROUGHT GUSTAVUS VASSA, THE AFRICAN ACROSS THE MIDDLE PASSAGE BUT HE LATER LEFT AN INDELIBLE LEGACY WHEN HE RETURNED TO BRITAIN IN THE SERVICE OF KING GEORGE III.

THE CROWN WAS IN AWE OF HIS GREAT WISDOM AND INTELLECT, AND OF THE WRITTEN NARRATIVES OF HIS ABDUCTION FROM THE MOTHERLAND. THERE WERE ALSO UNWRITTEN TALES OF THE IGBO THAT PIQUED THE INTEREST OF THE MONARCH AND CABINET MINISTERS.



VASSA INUNDATED HIS AUDIENCE WITH TALES OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN BEING LOCATED AT THE EASTERNMOST GULF OF GUINEA ALONG THE WEST AFRICAN COAST OTHERWISE KNOWN AS BIGHT OF BIAFRA.

AMONG HIS FORGOTTEN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS WERE THE NARRATIVE THAT THE FIRST MAN EVER CREATED BY CHUKWU WAS ERI AND ANOTHER ON HOW HE AS IGBO WAS A DIRECT DESCENDANT FROM EDEN.



SEEKING PERMISSION FROM THE CROWN AND THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT DESPITE THE WHIGS BEING MIFFED AT THE IDEA, WE COMMENCED A FACT FINDING EXPEDITION. THOSE WERE DAYS OF ADVENTURE AND WITH A MOTLEY CREW OF SEAFARERS AND INDENTURED SERVANTS, WE EMBARKED ON A JOURNEY TO THE IGBO . . . CIRCA FEBRUARY 1803.



From the unpublished accounts of the African, Gustavus vassa.

Chukwu gave Eri dominion over all earth. His right arm was of Chukwu's living breath known as Ikenga wherein lies great supernatural powers.

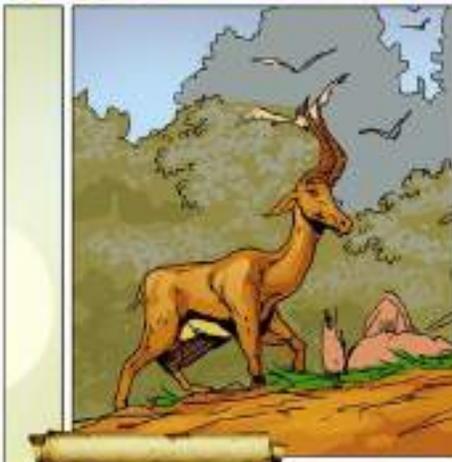
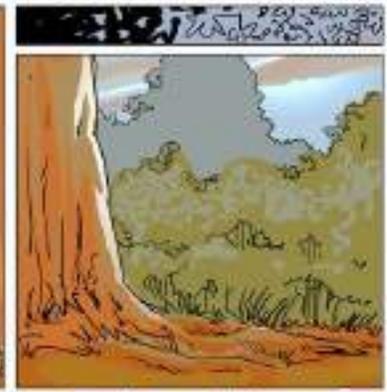


When Eri died, his first sons Agulu and Merri were so distraught and could not perform the rites needed to transfer Ikenga to either of them.



The Ikenga did not die with Eri. The living breath became a wandering soul, seeking for refuge from the unfamiliar realm of the mortals.

The earth Goddess Aja provided for it an abode deep in the jungle, an Iroko tree.



Anunuebe was an eponym for the great deluge of animal carcasses that littered around the tree. No creature except man got close to it.



It was Aia's routine to feed the Anunuebe. At first it was a blessing.

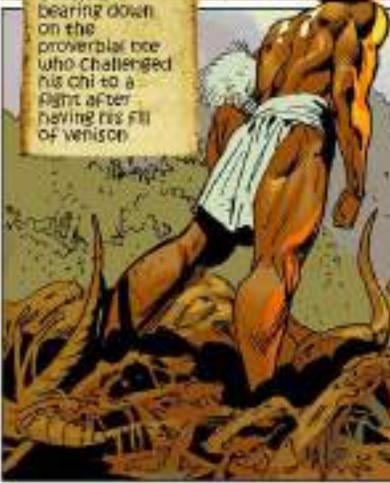
It eventually became a curse for the stench, which rose from the dead encompassed the whole region, spreading a pandemic.



A pandemic that evolved into a more spiritual essence with the passage of time, prompting migrations and great movements to establish other continents. J. Gustavus Vassa attribute the dark continent to this phenomena.



In the days when people resided within a stone throw to the Anunepo, they deployed all efforts into getting the tree felled down.



but for alas the Iroko stood like a stalwart bearing down on the proverbial ox who challenged his chi to a fight after having his fill of venison.



Over time, a Great Diviner arose amongst the people named Dibia Nwa Araka.

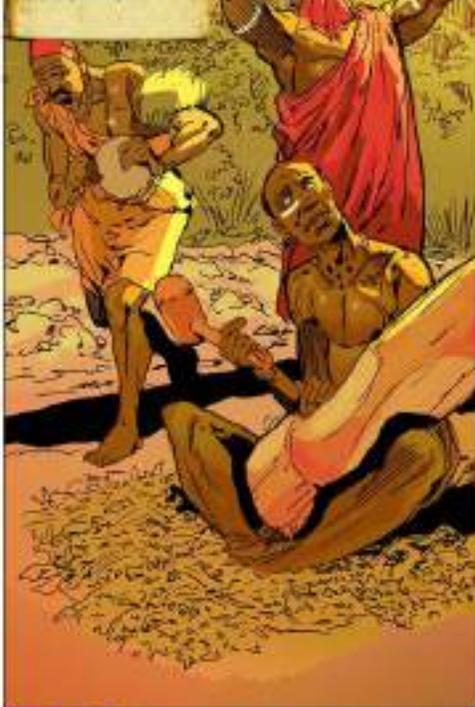


he struck a deal with the earth goddess Aja to allow Anunepo be cut down while in return, he ensures that the Ikenka goes back to the house of Metri, the firstborn of Eri.



In a preter natural sequence of divinations, and consultation with the Oracle of the gods, the deal was granted.

The dibia employed the services of blind Ararume, a great wood carver and Obiano the minstrel.



The spiritual venture also took its toll on the labourers.



But in the end Ikenga of Eri was carved into a figurine that became a master piece to follow for other variations of the Ikenga by the menfolk.

1803



LIKE OUR FATHERS BEFORE US, WHEN A BEARER DIES WITHOUT A HEIR, WE WILL CHOOSE ANOTHER FROM THE HOUSE OF ERI.



YOU ARE DESCENDANTS OF THE PROTECTORS OF THE IKENGA.

RUN AN ERRAND FOR ME FROM AGUKWU.



VISIT THE PATRIARCH OF OKAFOR MBILA CLAN FOR HE IS A SON OF MENRI. TAKE THE IKENGA TO NRI WERE HE RESIDES.

MY NAME IS NATHANIEL SWIFT. PEOPLE STILL QUESTION MY HERITAGE. MY GREAT GRAND FATHER JONATHAN SWIFT WAS WELL KNOWN. HE WROTE 'GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.

THIS HAS IN NO SMALL MEASURE DONE MY REPUTATION A LOT OF GOOD WHICH WAS ALSO HELPED BY THE SIMPLE FACT OF BEING A RENOWNED ARCHAEOLOGIST IN BRITAIN, MYSELF.

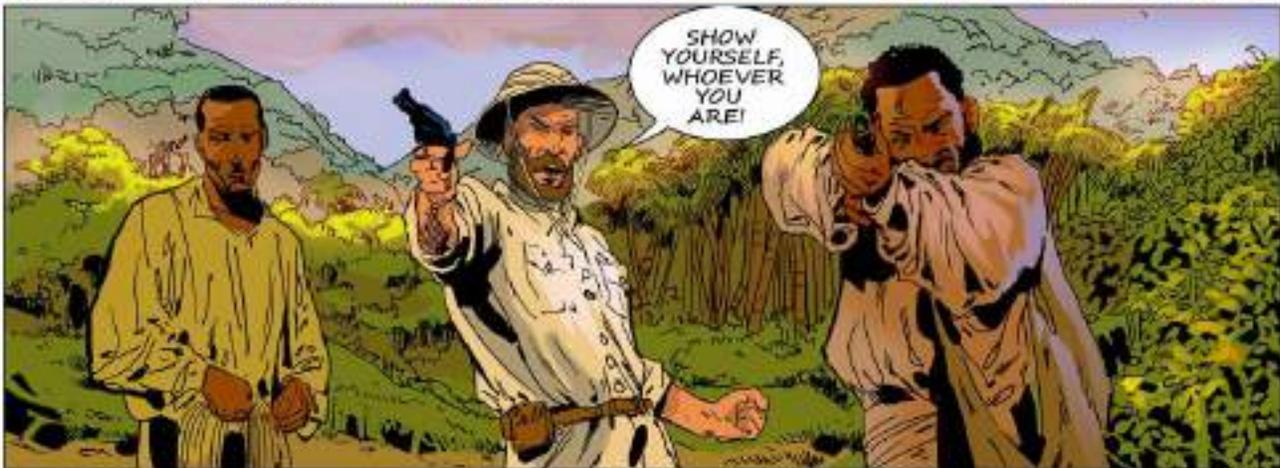
IN THE RENASCENCE THAT FOLLOWED VASSA'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL TAKE ON THE IGBO, I WAS THE GO-TO PERSON TO VERIFYING HIS CLAIMS.

MASSA, THE PYTHONS ARE HARMLESS.

WE CANNOT PITCH OUR TENTS HERE. IT'S INFESTED WITH REPTILES THAT BURROW INTO THE SOIL.

IT IS THE MONITOR LIZARDS I'M WORRIED ABOUT. PETE THEIR BITES CAN BE POISONOUS.

MASSA, THERE IS SOMEONE IN THE BUSH.



SHOW YOURSELF, WHOEVER YOU ARE!





STILL DONT UNDERSTAND HOW THESE WHITE MEN HAVE THE POWERS OF AGBARA*

AND YET DESECRATE THE LAND BY THEIR ACTIONS.

*DEITIES



AND SETTING WORTHLESS RAT TRAPS ALL OVER THE PLACE.



HEY YOU SON OF A ...

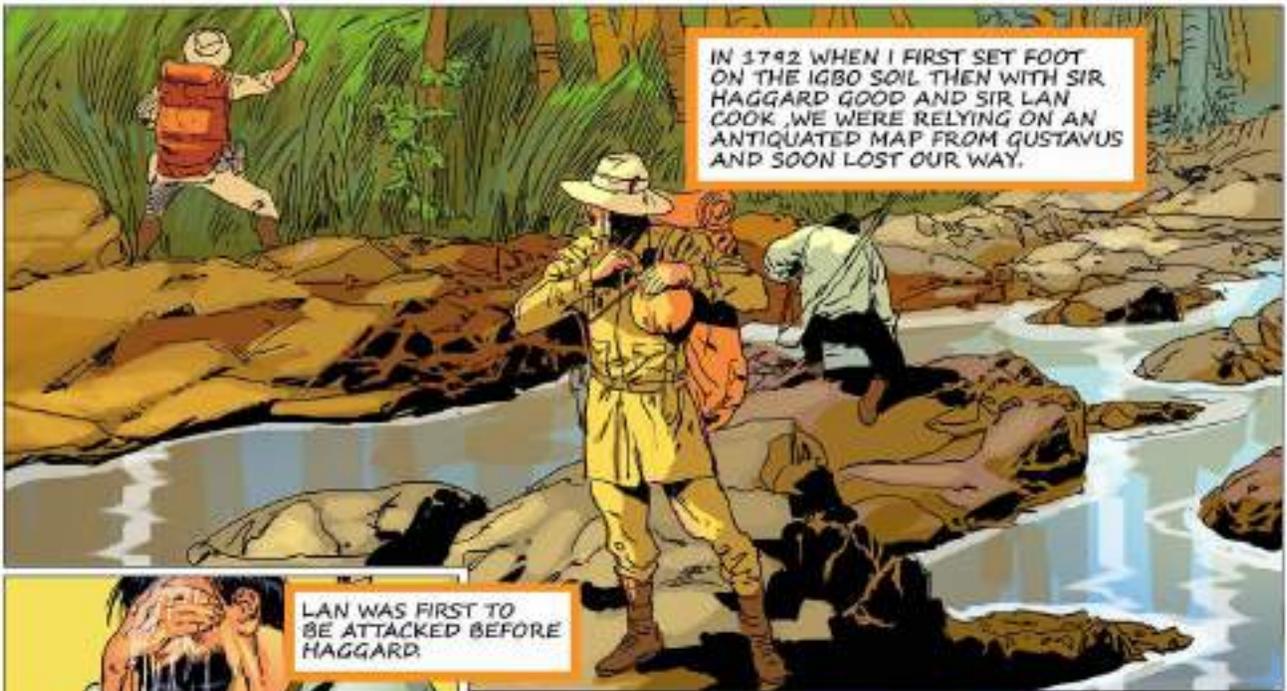
NOT A GOOD IDEA, MASSA. LET THEM GO.



THE ARROGANT PUFFED UP PIECE OF @!% SCATTERED MY TERRACING, PETE.



THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE ONE WITH THAT FIGURINE. LIKE WE HAVE MET BEFORE.



IN 1792 WHEN I FIRST SET FOOT ON THE IGBO SOIL THEN WITH SIR HAGGARD GOOD AND SIR LAN COOK, WE WERE RELYING ON AN ANTIQUATED MAP FROM GUSTAVUS AND SOON LOST OUR WAY.



LAN WAS FIRST TO BE ATTACKED BEFORE HAGGARD.





BAAM!



I REACTED OUT OF FEAR FOR MY LIFE.

IT WAS MUCH LATER THAT I REALIZED WE TRESPASSED A SACRED RIVER AND THAT I HAVE SHOT AND KILLED THE PRIEST OF THE GODDESS.



BEFORE I WAS STRUCK, I FELT THE SAME APPREHENSION ABOUT MY ATTACKER.



THAT WAS HOW I MET THE PROTECTOR OF IKENGA OF ERI, WHOSE DUTY WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE BEARER OF IKENGA IS PROTECTED AT ALL TIME.



I HAD PASSED OUT AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN DROWNED IN THE RIVER.

THE AFRICAN GUSTAVUS WAS KNOWN AS OLAUDAH EQUIANO BACK HOME IN AFRICA ACCORDING TO HIS NARRATIVE BUT SO FAR IN MY SOJOURN IN THE IGBO LAND, THERE SEEM TO BE LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF WHO HE WAS; NEITHER ANY ONE REMOTELY SO NAMED NOR RELATED.

AS AT THE TIME OF MY ACCOUNT, HE HAD BEEN DEAD SIX YEARS. I BEGAN TO DOUBT THE THEORIES IN THE TALES THAT HE HAD VEHEMENTLY ENUNCIATED.



I GATHERED MORE COURAGE AND ENTHUSIASM TO CONTINUE WITH THE EXPEDITION SIMPLY BECAUSE I WAS YET TO EXPLAIN HOW I SURVIVED IN THAT RIVER. AFTER BECOMING UNCONSCIOUS, I COULD NOT ALSO EXPLAIN THE HAZY VISIONS OF DEITIES AND SPIRITS THAT I HAD.



AND SO THIS PROMPTED ME TO ARGUE MY CASE BEFORE THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT. THEY WERE ABLE TO SECURE PASSAGE FOR ME TO THE GULF OF GUINEA ONCE MORE FROM KING GEORGE III IN 1803.

I KEPT PONDERING THE PLAUSIBILITY OF GUSTAVUS NARRATIVES.



YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE TONGUE I SPEAK AND YOU CAN SEE ME, CHILD

FOR WHAT MOTHER WILL NOT CHERISH HER CHILD WITH HER PRESENCE.



AM I HALLUCINATING?

NO YOU ARE NOT. YOU FEEL MY PRESENCE, CHILD.



YOU MUST BE SOME KIND OF A GHOST FROM MY DREAMS.



AND I AM NOT ABOUT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES.



YOU ARE MERELY FRIGHTENED, NWA BEKE*

I CAN NEITHER BE HERE NOR THERE YET HERE.

I AM AVA.

*FAIRER PERSON



IT COULD HAVE BEEN A DREAM BUT AVA, GODDESS OF THE SEA ASKED ME AS HER NEW CHIEF PRIEST TO FOLLOW THE IKENGA TRAIL



SPEAKING OF WHICH WAS FATE BOUND TO AMERICA ABOARD THE SCHOONER YORK. I LOST TRACK THE EXACT DATE THE SHIP SET SAIL ACROSS THE ATLANTIC BUT YEAR REMAINED 1805

MAY BE THIS WAS WHY FOR SEVERAL YEARS THIS TALE WAS REGARDED AS MYTH.



TAKE YOUR BATH CAP'N DESIRES YOUR COMPANY.



COME ON, GIRL.



I WAS TO LATER FIND OUT THAT THE OKA MGBA THAT ATTACKED ME AT THE RIVER AND SOME OTHER SURVIVING ELEMENTS CONNECTED TO THE IKENGA OF ERI WERE ALL ON THAT SHIP!



WE TRACKED THE RELICS HUNTERS ROUTE THROUGH NRI WITH PETE'S INGENUITY.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

PLEASE DON'T TAKE US, I PLEAD YOU.



CAN SHE TELL US IF THERE WERE OTHERS CAPTURED?

MASSA THEY ARE FRIGHTENED THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE-HOLD HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED BY THE RELIC HUNTERS WHO ALSO TRADE ON HUMAN CARGO.



THEY KILLED THE BEARER OF IKENGA OF ERI AND TOOK IT'S PROTECTOR.



AND THEY ALSO TOOK ORIEMMA, THE LAST SURVIVING CHILD OF THE HEIRLOOM.



AND SO YOUR PRECIOUS MORTALS CANNOT STOP AT NOT DEGRADING IKENGA.

LORD ODIESHI, I HAVE NOT THE STRENGTH FOR YOUR RAMBLINGS. LEAVE THE MORTALS BE.



THE RAT SAYS IT HAS NO OBJECTION TO BEING KILLED. WHAT IT REQUESTS IS THAT IT SHOULD BE KILLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS ITS FELLOW ANIMALS.

THEN THE RAT SHOULD BEHAVE IN A LESS DEGRADING MANNER, ODIESHI.



HAVE I NOT MERITED GODHOOD, AVA?

DO YOU KNOW WHY NJOKU, ADAFU AND THE OTHER LESSER GODS ARE GIVEN HEARING IN THE COUNCIL?

PRAY DO TELL.

THEY RESPECT THE RULES AND THE OTHER GODS. THENCE AMADIOHA, ALA AND ANYANWU PAY HEED TO THEM.



ARE YOU INSINUATING THAT AMADIOHA HAD THE RIGHT TO STOP ME FROM MANIFESTING IN THE REALM OF MORTALS?

THE TITLE OF KAMALU LIES WITH HIM AND HE IS LORD OF THAT REALM. EVEN ANYANWU THE SUN GOD HIDES HIS FACE WHEN AMADIOHA STRIKES.

YOU NEED NOT BE CONFRONTING HIM LIKE YOU DID.*

GREETINGS AVA, GREETINGS ODIESHI.

*SEE CHAPTER ONE.



WHAT HERALDS YOUR GREETINGS, NNA OCHIE?

A TOAD WILL NEVER HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF WEARING A COAT.

THE MOMENT COMES WHEN I WILL DEMAND WHY YOU BESTRIDE THE CELESTIAL LIKE A COLOSSUS AMONG GODS EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE BUT ONYE ICHIE.*

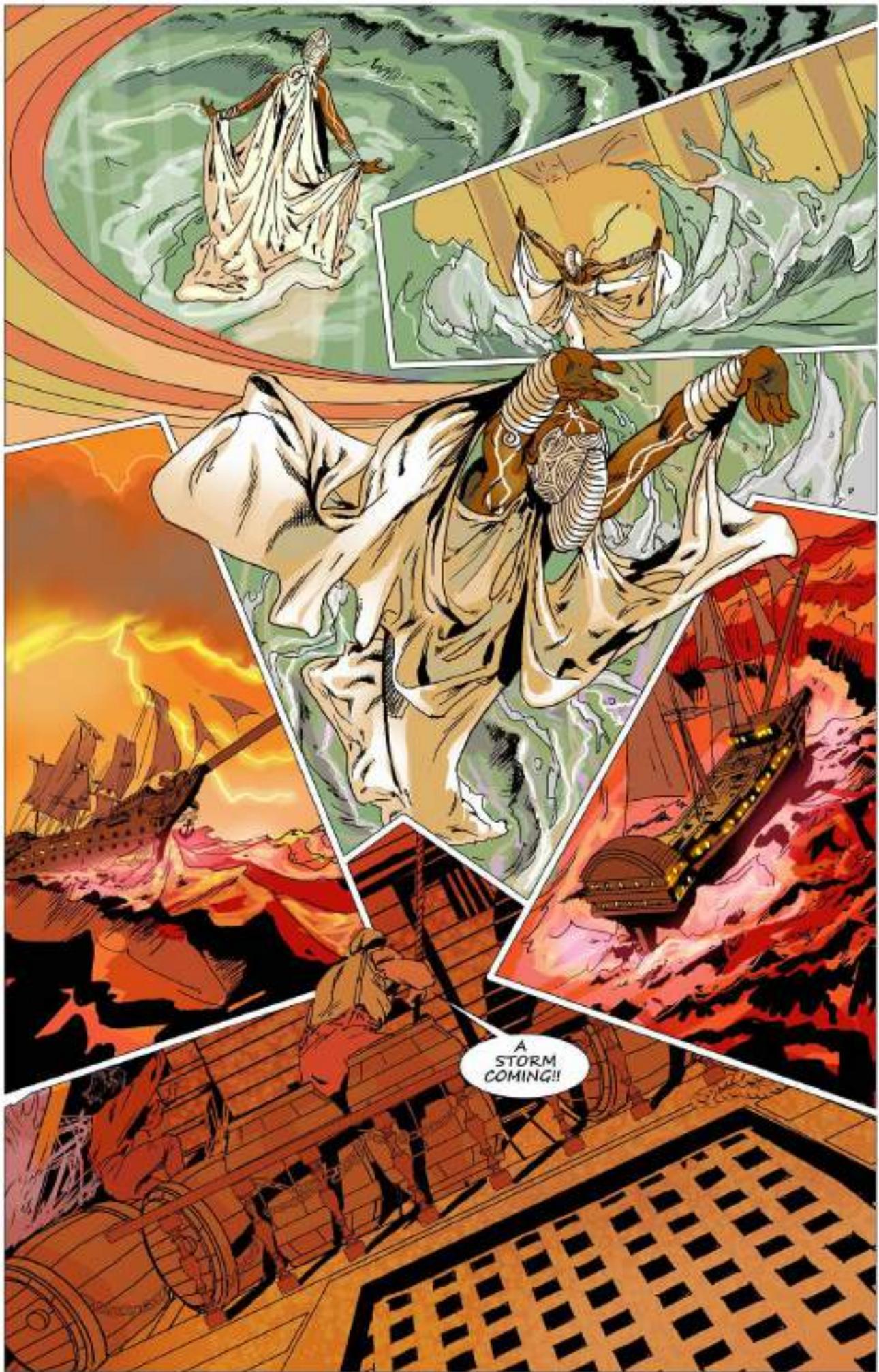
*AN ANCESTOR

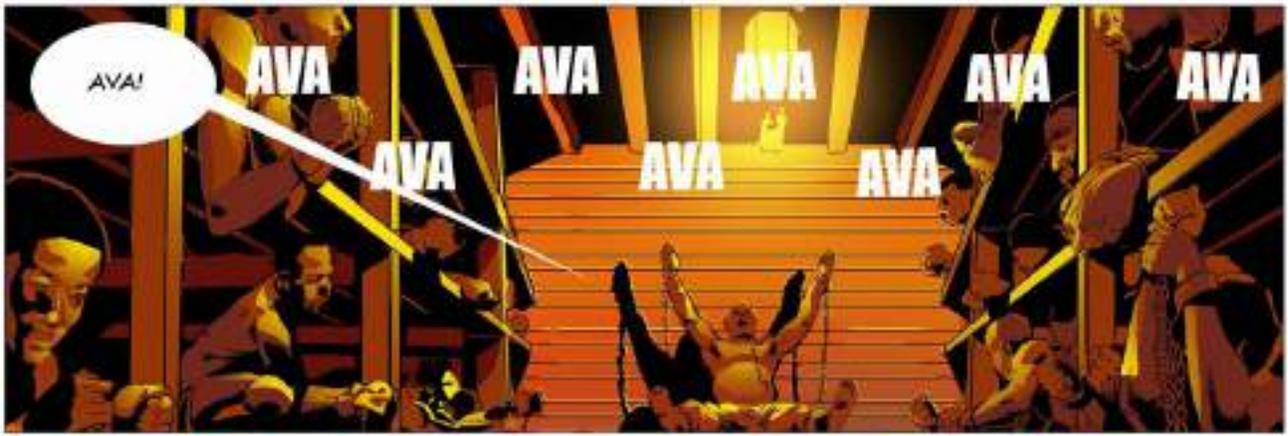
UNTIL SUCH A MOMENT EXIST, I BRING PRAYERS FROM OUR CHILDREN WHO ARE TAKEN FROM THE OMAMBALA TO AVA, THE GODDESS OF ALL SEA.



BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THEY HAVE THE IKENGA OF ERI IN THIS VESSEL. LET US CHANT TO AVA, THE UHAMIRI* FOR THE OCEAN TO YIELD.

THEY HAVE CHAINED US BUT THEY ALSO TOOK US THROUGH THE OMAMBALA RIVER AND AVA WILL HEAR OUR CRIES.





AVA!

AVA

AVA

AVA

AVA

AVA

AVA

AVA

AVA



AVA

AVA

AVA



AVA

AVA

AVA

THE
TEMPEST
IS BUILDING.



THE NEGROES
ARE BECOMING
RESTIVE BECAUSE
OF THE STORM.

WILL
SOMEBODY
SHUT THEM
UP.

ORJEMMA,
THE LAST OF
ICHIE OKAFOR MBILA
IS HERE, THE IKENGA
IS HERE

MY
BROTHERS AND
SISTERS ARE YOU
WITH ME?

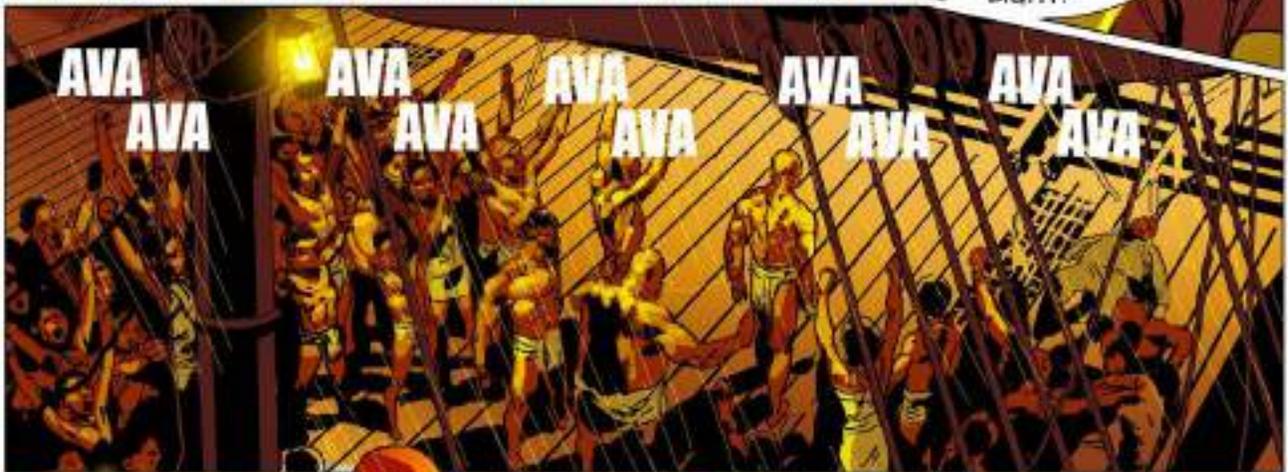
AVA

AVA

AVA

HUHI!







DO NOT DESPAIR, THEY CAN'T KEEP US IN CHAINS ANYMORE.

WE HAVE OUR IKENGA AND WE ARE TAKING IT BACK HOME.



KA ANYI SO ANAI!

KA ANYI SO ANAI!

KA ANYI SO ANAI!

KA ANYI SO ANAI!

OMAMBALA KA ANYI SO BIA, OMAMBALA KA ANYI SO ANA.

RIVER OMAMBALA BROUGHT US, RIVER OMAMBALA WILL TAKE US BACK.



KA ANYI SO ANAI!

KA ANYI SO ANAI!



THEY DROWN THEMSELVES ...

THEY JUST DROWN THEMSELVES ...

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GAYN COUNTY GEORGIA

FIRE AT
WILL! FIRE
FIRE!

TOOM!

KABOOM!

TOOM!

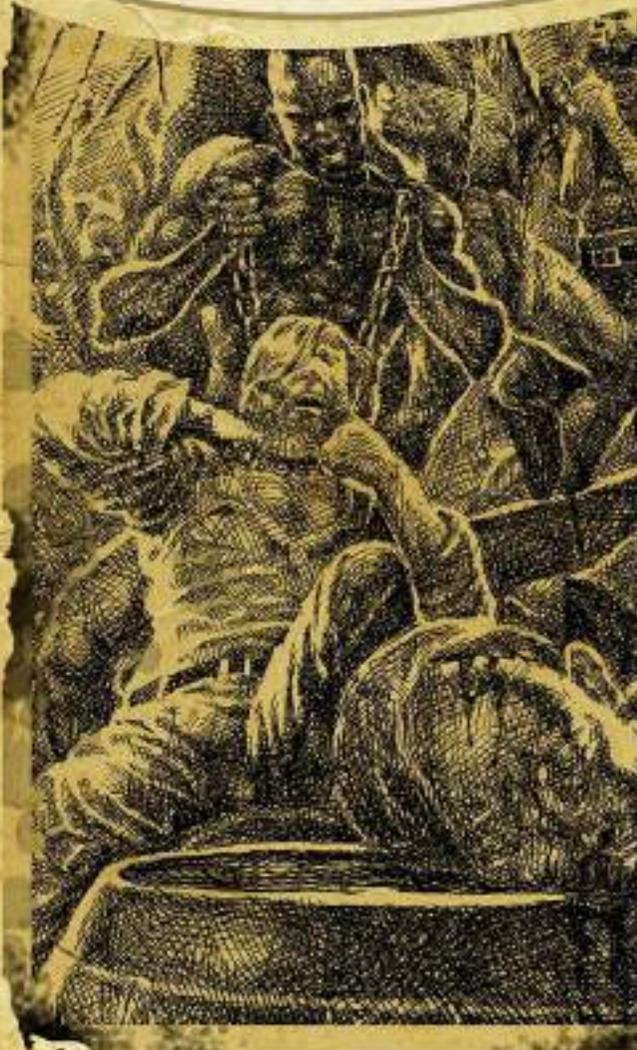
TOOM!

TOOM!

HOLD!

THEY ARE
AGBARA.

...ON MARBLE



In Igbo folklore, the tortoise otherwise known as Mbekwu is usually a cunning and clever creature. It will outsmart other animals but eventually shoots itself on the leg; becoming too smart for itself in a detrimental way. In contemporary folklore as depicted by the actor Nkem Owoh in comedies such as OSUOFIA IN LONDON, IKUKU, LONGJOHN via the Nigerian movie industry with its generic identity Nollywood; the same characterization is heavily imbued with Igbo innuendos.

This characterization tend to suggest a lesson to the Igbo to rethink her steps, as if she is entirely cursed with such traits; being too clever and cunning for her own good. But this is entirely wrong as the Igbo is a peculiar people who prides themselves with virtues of not only smartness and intelligence but industriousness, democracy and ambition. There is a better argument that these traits are not negative in their face value but only in the extreme. Taking their democracy for instance, most Igbo communities are governed by a council of elders or ndi ichie therefore leaving no room for kings. This is better illustrated in a democratic setting by the house of assembly consisting of the senate and their representatives. The flip side is that this setting tend to elicit the stubborn spirit of the Igbo person as he places no man above him, regardless of kings. Although there are a few acceptable instances where kingdoms are allowed notably Aguleri and Nri which two communities are instrumental to the creation story of the Igbo man being direct descendants of Eri, the firstman created by God or Chukwu.

There wouldn't be JUJUMAN NOIRCHRONICLES if there wasn't the Igbo. Writing the graphic novel itself presented a difficult challenge in that by employing the Igbo mythologies, the Jujuman character becomes the byproduct of the story rather than the central focus it started out to be. The ultimate aim has always been to introduce the Jujuman character to the main stream comic fan and not to tell controversial tales of the Igbo people. The readership was not to be subjected to that excessive education, that was never the intention. However the concept eptleaning towards that and it became so overwhelming that it afforded us no alternative than to educate. That was how NOIR CHRONICLES was born. It is actually an origin story but also tied to the origin of a great eridea, peoples and myths.

Perhaps it is the belief that the Igbo is a frontline African who first made an appearance more than 5000B.C on earth or that the African by being in the epicenter of the world suggests to the evolutionist, the central point of take off of the great migrations. The Igbo by being in the equatorial belt with the abundant natural resources narrows the take off for this journey further. Hence the concept arguably elicited by the graphic novel of being the light of the entire world may tend to the subjective and monotonously consistent with sentiments regarded in some quarters as ethnocentric or racist. It will prove very insurmountable to convince the readership who are immediately not Igbos that this is otherwise but hey, we will try.

The Igbo herself has hampered her image and existence more than this article is trying to rebuild as she is readily willing to hide her identity, erode her culture and traditions and imbibes newly learnt traditions. This has subjugated her history, her myths and her originality; even her language has been bastardized and other foreign cultures and languages has replaced some of hers. An argument can be advanced albeit that the Igbo is the mother of all cultures and like a mother will readily allow her children to acculturate her. After all a mother is ever willing for her children to be greater than her even though fate and time has perpetually placed her superior; the Igbo names their female children Nneka meaning 'Mother is Supreme'.

Therefore for millenia, evolution theories and proofs by science has suggested huge migrations from the epicenter of the world which is Africa. As the human race traverses across wide regions of the global divide, there were variations in their physiognomy, and inherent biology due to climate, food and geography not exempting intrinsic activities which include norms, values and traditions inculcated over time.

The myth of Eri is well known in Igbo land but this in itself has been retold, re-imagined and interpreted in other climes to suit their narratives, each claiming it was their land where the first man was created. The nearest melting point of acceptance by all becomes Egypt which is being lauded as the cradle of civilization. The presence of historical facts dating back to 5000B.C corroborating this narrative. It should be seen insame light that the Egyptians too were first black people and had migrated from same epicenter as earlier mentioned.

Presently this graphic novel is not to persuade and inadvertently ensnare others to accepting the Igbo as their tribe, however it is to sell a valid point long kept obscure; that a people had a culture and beliefs and that there were greater positives in remaining true to their identity. Apart from the education, Jujuman will not just be a superhero comic fantasy. But as the Igbo will say, 'slowly slowly a hot soup is licked'.

By Kelly Nyenye Kalu

TO BE CONTINUED IN

JUJUMAN
NOIR CHRONICLES

CHAPTER 3

RISE OF THE SCORCHING SUN



I HAD RECKONED A FRIEND WHO WAS STATIONED AT CALABAR. IT WAS HE WHO RECALLED THE SCHOONER YORK MAKING A BERTH BRIEFLY. HE HAD AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE AMONG THE CREW.



I WAS MERELY A DAY BEHIND BUT I DID GET TO GEORGIA IN THE UNITED STATES. PAPERS FORWARDED TO THE BRITISH CONSULATE ON MY BEHALF WAS TREATED WITH DESPATCH.



I SURVEYED ST. SIMON'S ISLAND. IT WAS A LITTLE TURBULENT WHERE THE DUNBAR CREEK MET WITH THE OCEAN; AS IF THE IGBO WHO DROWNED AT THE SPOT WERE STILL SWIMMING.



SUCH ACT OF BREVIETY BY THE IGBO WAS UNHEARD OF, COMMITTING MASS SUICIDE RATHER THAN BE TAKEN AS SLAVES OR GIVE UP IKENGA.

THERE WERE RUMORS ABOUT SURVIVORS ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES WANTED TO KEEP IT HUSHED, BUT NO ONE CAN SILENCE THE GODS.

