

MONSTRESS



MARJORIE LIU ISSUE 11



SANA TAKEDA

THE MONSTRESS STORY SO FAR...

With the help of the bone key her late mother left behind, Maika and her companions, Kippa and Master Ren, made their way through dangerous, ghost-haunted waters in search of an explanation for the presence of the terrible Monstrum living inside Maika's body. After negotiating with the skeletal Ferryman and fighting off a horde of angry sirens, they finally reached the shore of the Isle of Bones – an island they soon realized was formed by the bones of a dead Monstrum.

While Maika remained laser-focused on her quest, Ren grew suspicious and picked up an abandoned skull, hoping to use his nekomancy on it to draw out the island's secrets. Kippa, meanwhile, sensed an even greater danger: a powerful fox Ancient, bound by chains, at the center of the island's horrors. Now, they find themselves face-to-face with that Ancient, who claims to have once met with Maika's mother – and speaks ominously of prophecies fulfilled.

THE PLAYERS...



MAIKA

An Arcanic teen who survived the Great War, and slavery at the hands of the Cumaean witch nuns. Ruthless and haunted, she is determined to uncover the truth behind her mother's murder — and her mother's secrets — in the hope that she can free herself from an ancient and dangerous god called a Monstrum that is imprisoned inside her body and fills her with an otherworldly hunger for human flesh. In her current possession are two clues to her past: a photograph, and a fragment of a mask that many would kill to possess.



MONSTRUM

A mysterious, primordial being of tremendous power that shares Maika's body and mind, and fights her for control. Once considered a god, and drawn into this world by the Shaman-Empress, this Monstrum is driven by a deadly hunger, consuming the lives of humans and Arcanics alike, leaving only their desiccated corpses behind. Though it may give the impression that its only wish is to survive, there's far more to this creature, and its desires, than meets the eye...



REN

An enigmatic nekomancer cat with mysterious motives, he is one of Maika's companions on her journey, and perhaps an agent of the Dusk Court — or some greater power.



KIPPAA

An Arcanic fox girl saved from slavery by Maika. Innocent and optimistic, she is frightened by the Monstrum — but trusts Maika and will bravely defend her and others by rushing into battles too dangerous for a child.



MORIKO

Maika's mother, an Arcanic, whose obsession with uncovering the secrets of the greatest Arcanic ancestor, the Shaman-Empress, led to her betrayal and murder. Her reputation as a woman of single-minded drive and intellectual brilliance has only grown since her death.







IT WILL
NOT
COME TO
THAT.

EEEHHHH!

POOR
CREATURE.

THIS IS
WHY WE
CANNOT
STAY
HERE.

WE WILL KILL
ALL LIFE ON
THIS WORLD.
EVEN IF WE DO
NOT MEAN TO
DO SO.



WHERE WILL
WE GO? BACK
INTO THE SHADOW
PLAINS? NOTHING
IS THERE FOR
US, HAJIN.

WE WERE LOST
FOR EONS AND NOW
WE ARE NOT. THIS
WORLD IS LOVELINESS
BEYOND ANYTHING WE
EVER DREAMED. YOU
CANNOT ASK US TO
ABANDON IT.



WE WERE
EXILED -- THROWN
INTO THE SHADOW
PLAINS -- BECAUSE
WE WOULD NOT
BECOME
MURDERERS.

I WILL NOT
HAVE US DESTROY
OUR PRINCIPLES NOW,
AFTER ALL OUR
SACRIFICES, OUT OF
GREED OR
COWARDICE.

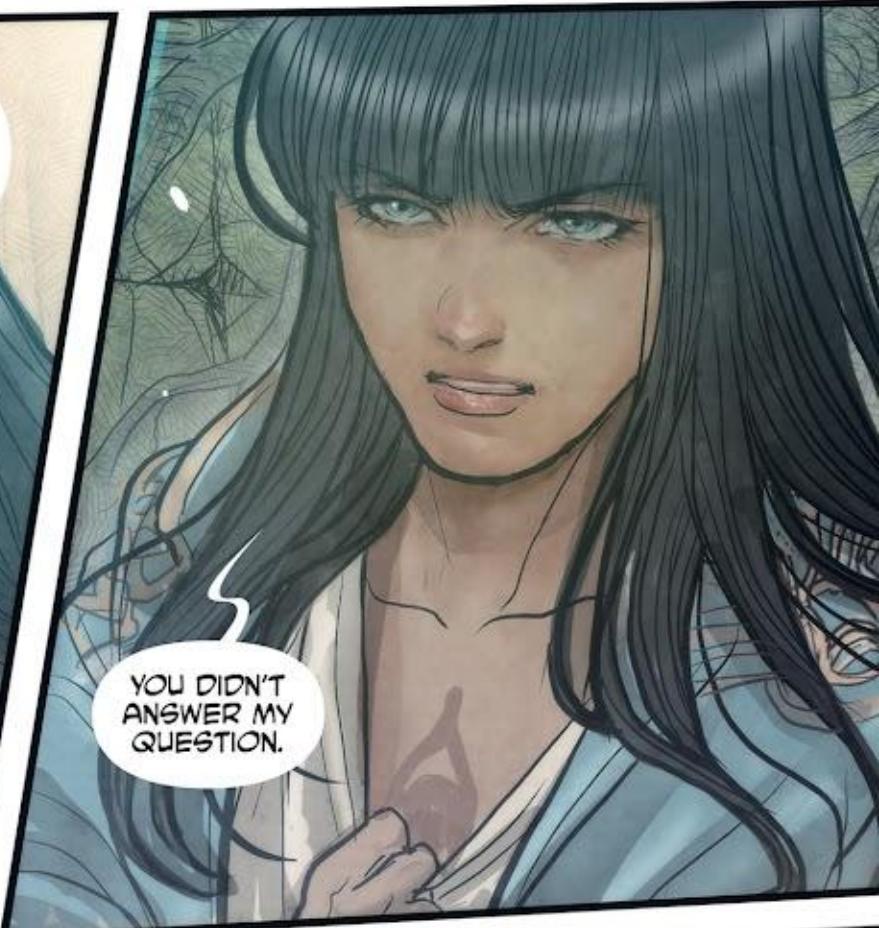
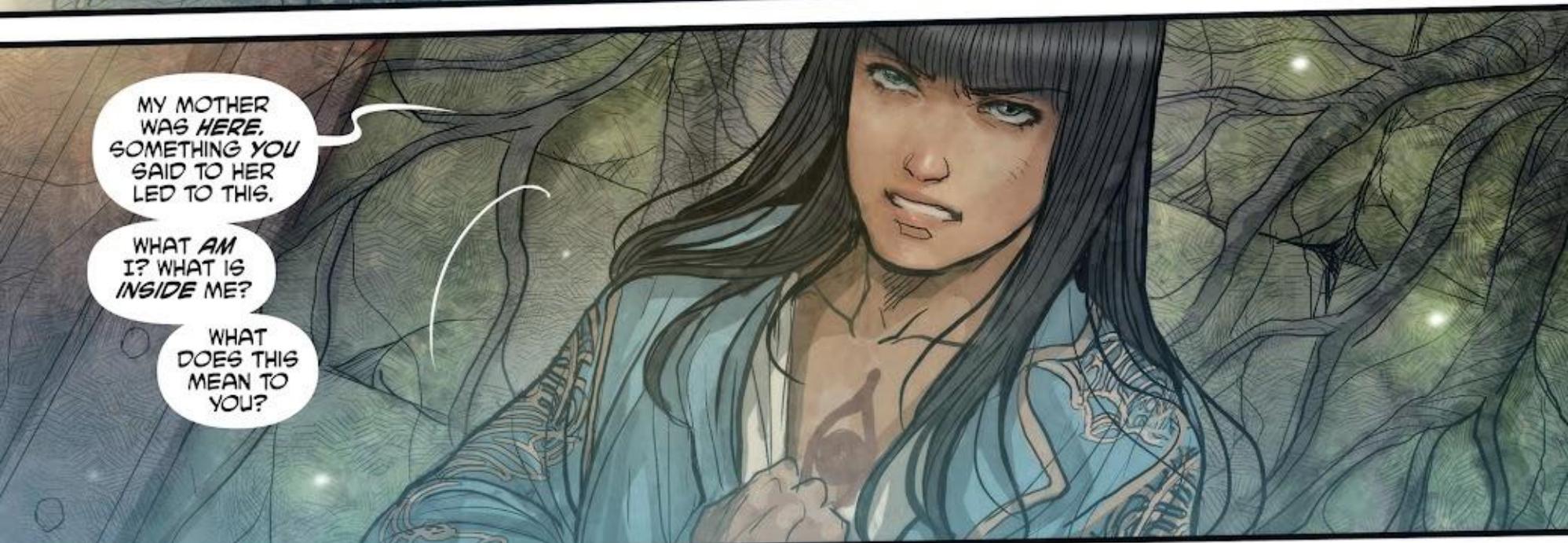


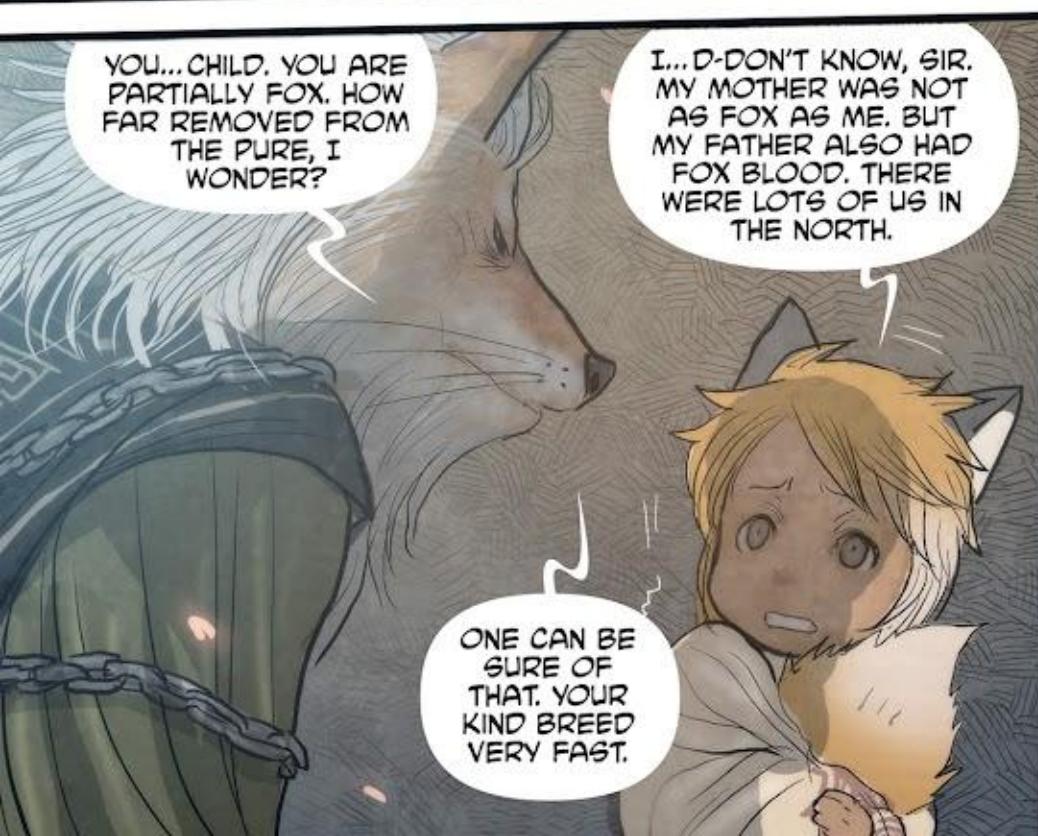
THE CREATURES
WHO INHABIT THIS
WORLD ARE
INSIGNIFICANT,
UNWORTHY OF OUR
BENEFICENCE.

...THAT
IS WHAT I
TOLD...
HAJIN...

...I
WAS... A
FOOL...



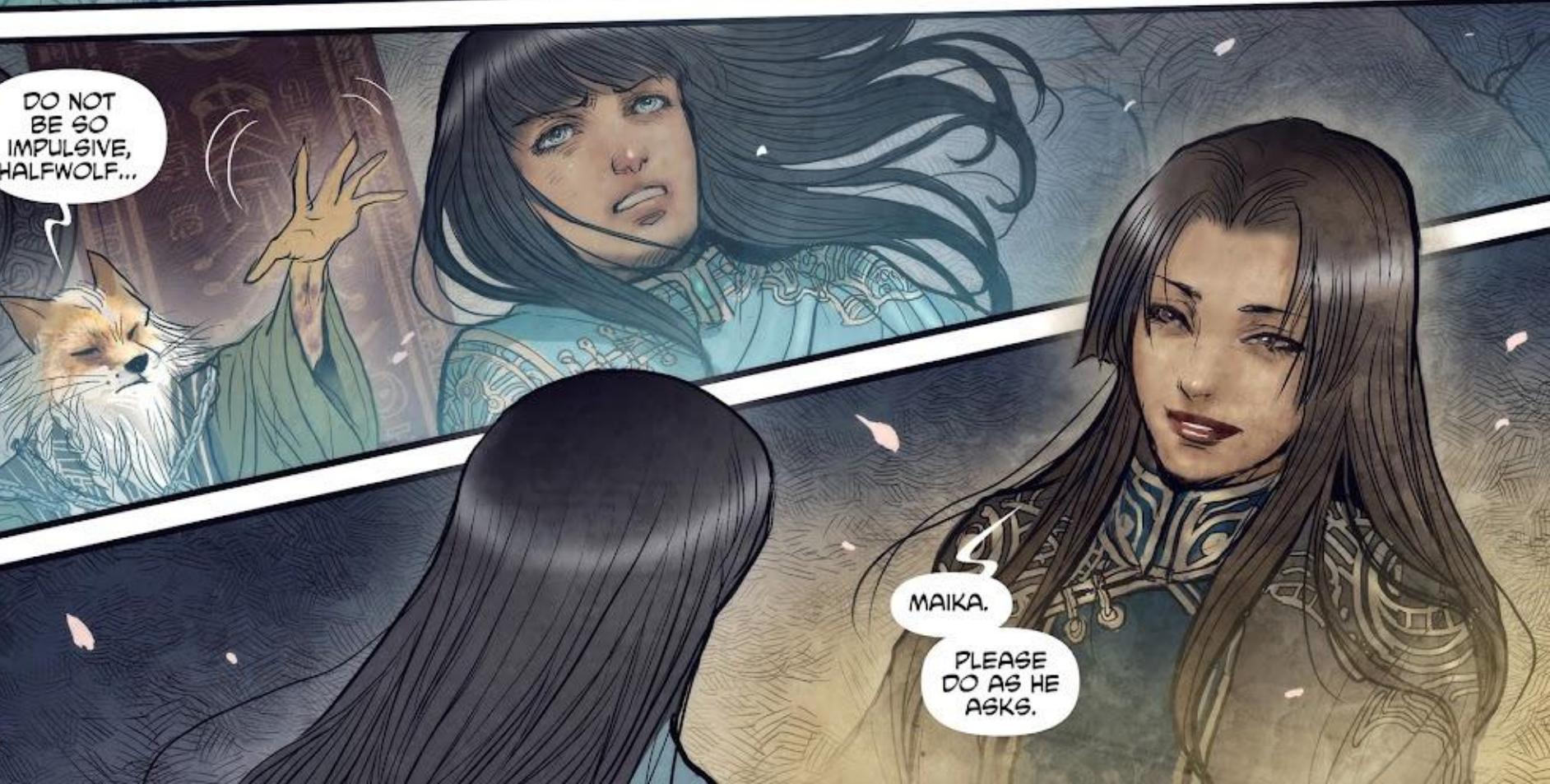
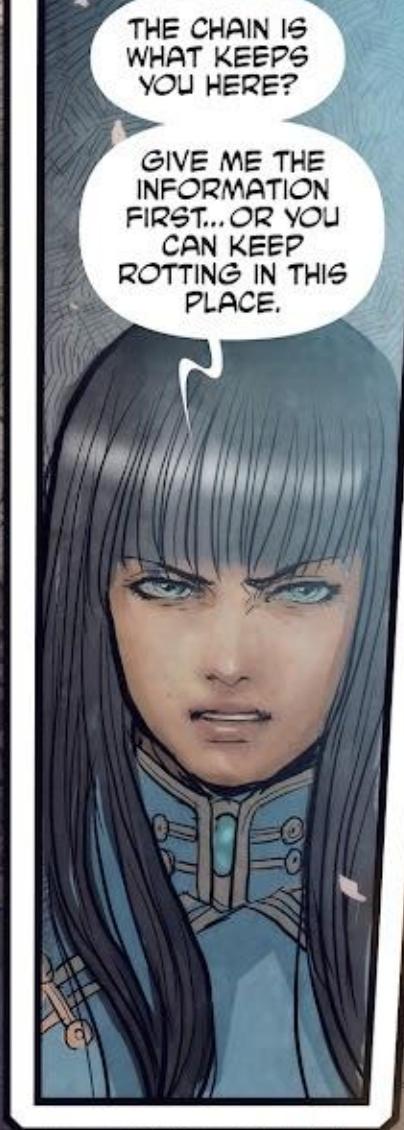


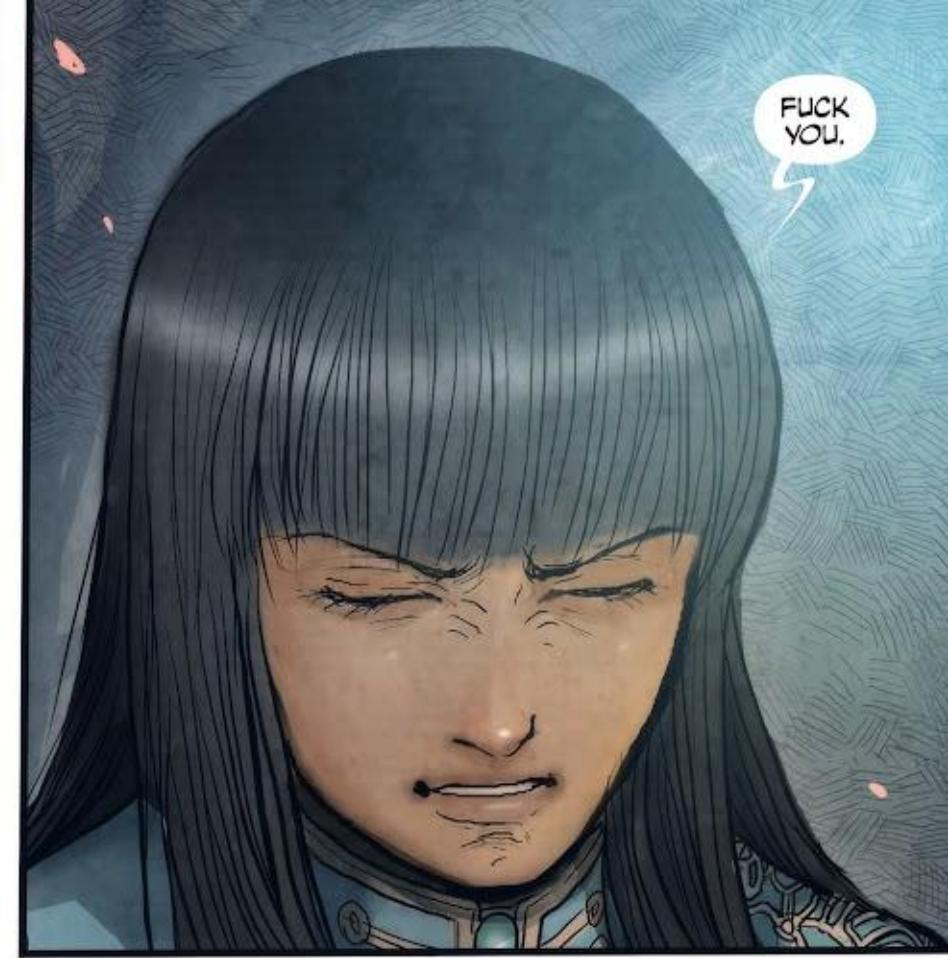
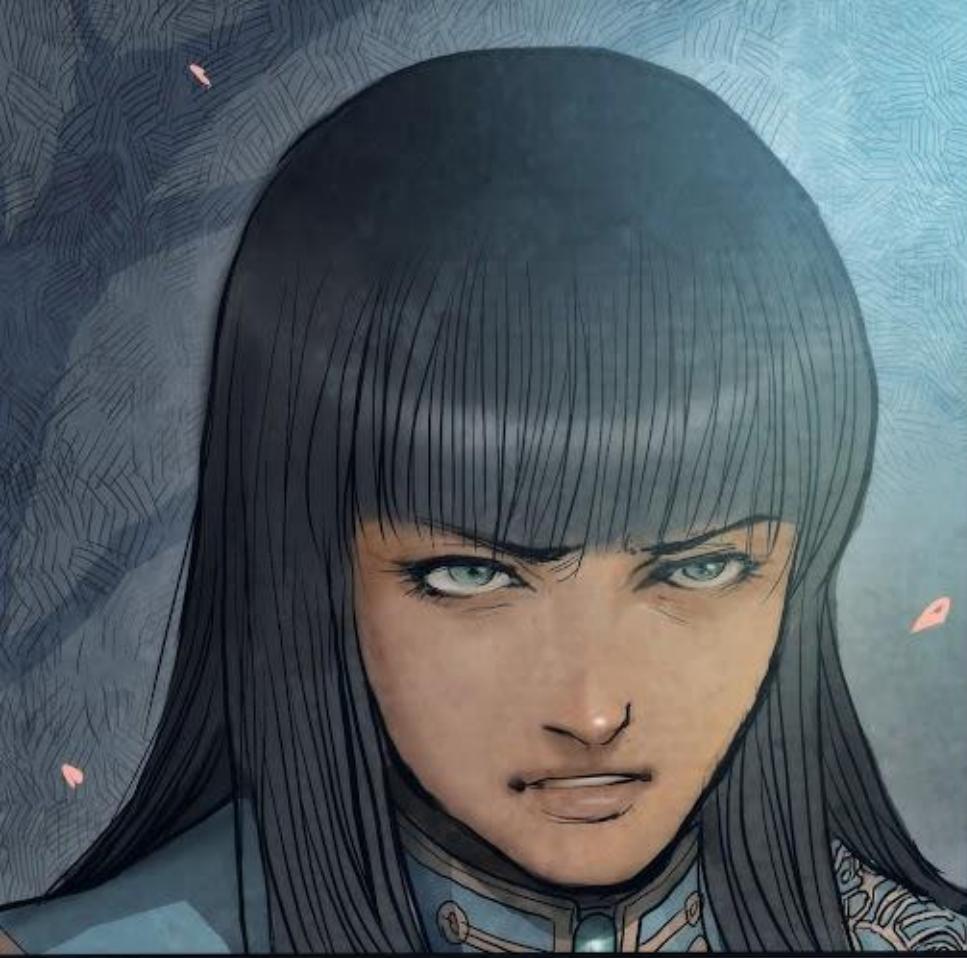


THE CHAIN IS
WHAT KEEPS
YOU HERE?

GIVE ME THE
INFORMATION
FIRST...OR YOU
CAN KEEP
ROTTING IN THIS
PLACE.

FOR TWO
THOUSAND YEARS
I'VE LANGUICHED
IN THIS CARCEL.
I CAN WAIT, CHILD.
BUT YOU, I
SUSPECT,
CANNOT.





BEFORE WE BEGIN, SHOW ME THE MASK. I KNOW YOU HAVE IT.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE OLD GODS?

I USED TO THINK THEY WERE DEAD... THAT WHAT WE SEE IN THE SKY ARE THEIR GHOSTS. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANYMORE.

WHAT GHASTLY BEAUTY.

WE ANCIENTS REMEMBER WHEN THE OLD GODS FIRST FOUND THIS WORLD... AND TRIED TO DESTROY IT.

THE LONG WAR THAT LED TO THEIR IMPRISONMENT... LET US JUST SAY THAT FEW OF US ELDERS WILL EVER FORGET IT. THE SCARS ARE TOO DEEP...

THE ONE YOU NOW CALL THE SHAMAN-EMPEROR DID NOT LIVE THROUGH THOSE DARK TIMES. PERHAPS IF SHE HAD SHE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO FOOLISH...

UNDERSTAND: EVEN BEFORE HER ASCENSION, SHE WAS VERY POWERFUL. HER MIND WAS UNLIKE ANY THAT CAME BEFORE -- PROFOUND AND FAR-SEEING, BUT EVER RESTLESS.

IT WAS PERHAPS INEVITABLE THAT SHE WOULD BE DRAWN TO THE OLD GODS. PERHAPS IT WAS A MATTER OF AMBITION. PERHAPS THEY CALLED HER TO THEM. WHO CAN SAY?

THE ELDERS WARNED HER NOT TO TAMPER WITH THE FORBIDDEN ONES. BUT SHE WAS EVER WILLFUL, HER HUNGER FOR KNOWLEDGE IMPLACABLE.

LONG AND DEEP SHE DELVED INTO THE LORE OF THE OLD GODS. MUCH SHE LEARNED, AND AT THE HEIGHT OF HER SCIENCE AND CRAFT SHE FORGED THE MASK.

A SINGULAR CREATION THAT ALLOWED HER TO BREACH THE PRISON -- SOMETHING WE ELDERS BELIEVED IMPOSSIBLE -- AND DRAW FORTH ONE OF THE EXILED GODS.

NOT JUST ANY GOD... BUT THE MOST BALEFUL OF ALL. THE TERROR ITSELF...

SHE DREW THIS HORROR INTO FLESH AND WITH THE POWER OF HER MASK MADE IT HER SLAVE. AND THUS DID SHE BECOME THE SHAMAN-EMPEROR. ALL HAIL HER EVERLASTING GLORY.

LONG THE LADY AND HER MONSTER REIGNED. BUT NOTHING IS TRULY EVERLASTING. IT WAS SAID THAT THE VERY MONSTER WHICH HAD ELEVATED HER... SLOWLY DEVOURED HER.

PERHAPS THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE? DON'T YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MISS?

TO QUOTE THE POETS... IT IS POSSIBLE TO DROWN IN INFORMATION... AND DIE FOR LACK OF WISDOM.

IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR US TO BE DISTRACTED BY THE TALES OF THE BLOOD FOX, HOWEVER TRUE THEY MIGHT BE.

HOW DID YOU KNOW HIS NAME?

AN EDUCATED GUESS. LORD ROHAR WAS SUPPOSEDLY EXECUTED, BUT HIS BODY WAS NEVER FOUND. THE POETS SUSPECTED EXILE INSTEAD.

ମୁହଁ କେ
ଶରୀର ଆଜାନ
ଦାତାତ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭବ
ଫଳାପା ଦା
ଦାତାତ

THE BLOOD FOX WAS THE MOST CUNNING AND DANGEROUS OF THE ANCIENTS -- A RIVAL TO THE WOLF QUEEN. HE IS NOT BEING REASONABLE SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WANTS HIS CHAINS BROKEN... AND THE HALFWOLF IS TOO HOT-HEADED FOR CAUTION.

MMPH!

PERHAPS
YOU WOULD LIKE TO...
EAT... BEFORE
HEARING
MORE?

YOU LOOK... A
TAD... PECKISH.
THE SHAMAN-
EMPERESS WAS
THE SAME.

HER...
APPETITES...
WERE LEGION. IT
WAS UNWISE TO
REASON WITH
HER WHEN SHE
WAS... HUNGRY.

I'M
FINE.

HEH.

BEFORE THE
SHAMAN-EMPERESS
DIED, SHE BROKE THE
MASK AND HID IT FROM
THE WORLD... FOR AT
LAST SHE CAME TO
REALIZE THE PERIL OF
HER CREATION.

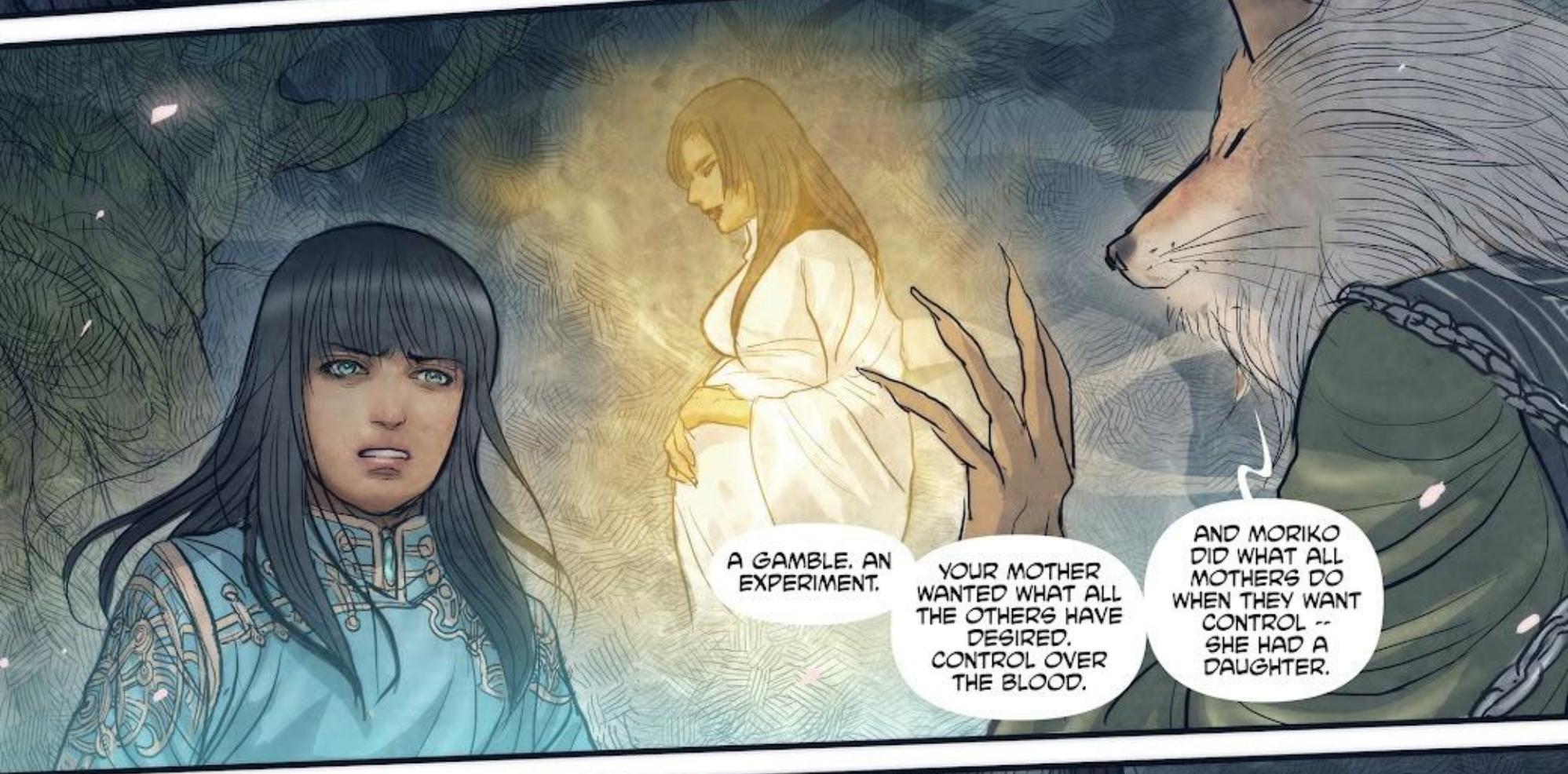
HER HEIRS,
HOWEVER, SHE
COULD NOT HIDE.
AND AS FATE WOULD
HAVE IT THE
MONSTER DID NOT
DIE WITH THE
SHAMAN-EMPERESS,
BUT PASSED INTO
THE BLOOD OF HER
CHILDREN.

THE YEARS AFTER HER DEATH
WERE NOT A PROUD TIME FOR US.
BATTLES WERE FOUGHT OVER HER
BLOODLINE. ALL WHO SHOWED THE
MARK OF THE EYE WERE
IMPRISONED... EXPERIMENTED
ON... BRED...

...BUT NO
MATTER WHAT
CRUELTIES WERE
INFILCTED OR
WHAT SCIENCES
WERE BROUGHT
TO BEAR,
NOTHING
AWAKENED.

WE WERE
FOOLS TO THINK IT
WISE TO STIR THE
MONSTER... BUT THE
ALLURE OF POWER
IS BLINDING.

TO THINK...
ALL WE HAD
TO DO WAS
WAIT FOR YOU.



THERE'S NO POWER LEFT IN THE WORLD THAT COULD DO WHAT YOU ASK, SAVE THE MASK. ASSEMBLE IT, THEN PERHAPS...

...BUT THAT FUTURE IS DARK TO ME. I DO NOT SEE ITS POSSIBILITY.

I'LL TAKE EVEN THE SMALLEST CHANCE. I DON'T WANT TO BE A MONSTER.

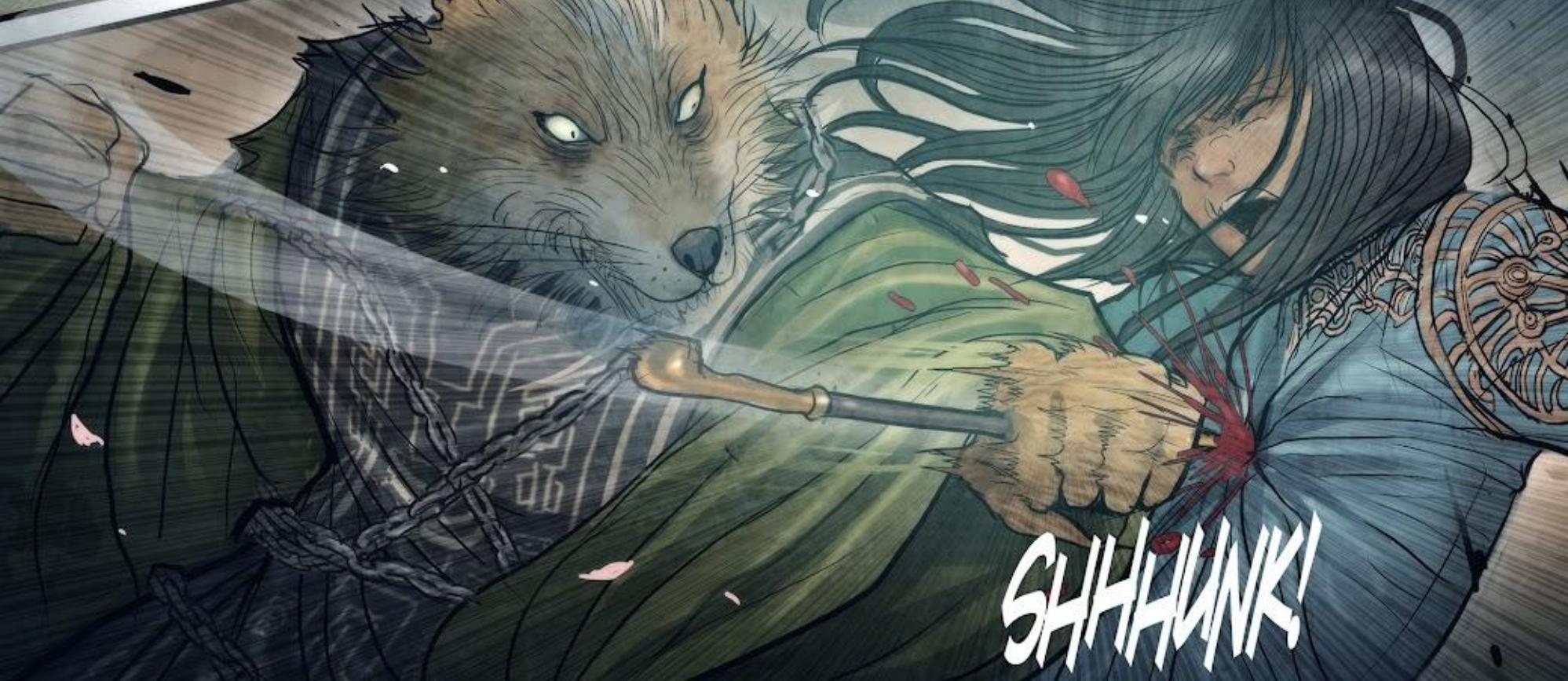
BEFORE HER DEATH THE SHAMAN-EMPEROR PROPHESIZED THAT AT THE END OF TIME HER BLOOD WOULD RISE AGAIN.

SHE SPOKE OF A FINAL WAR -- MORE TERRIBLE THAN ANY THIS WORLD HAD EVER SEEN -- AND THAT IT WOULD BE HER BLOOD THAT WOULD DECIDE THE FATE OF ALL OUR RACES.

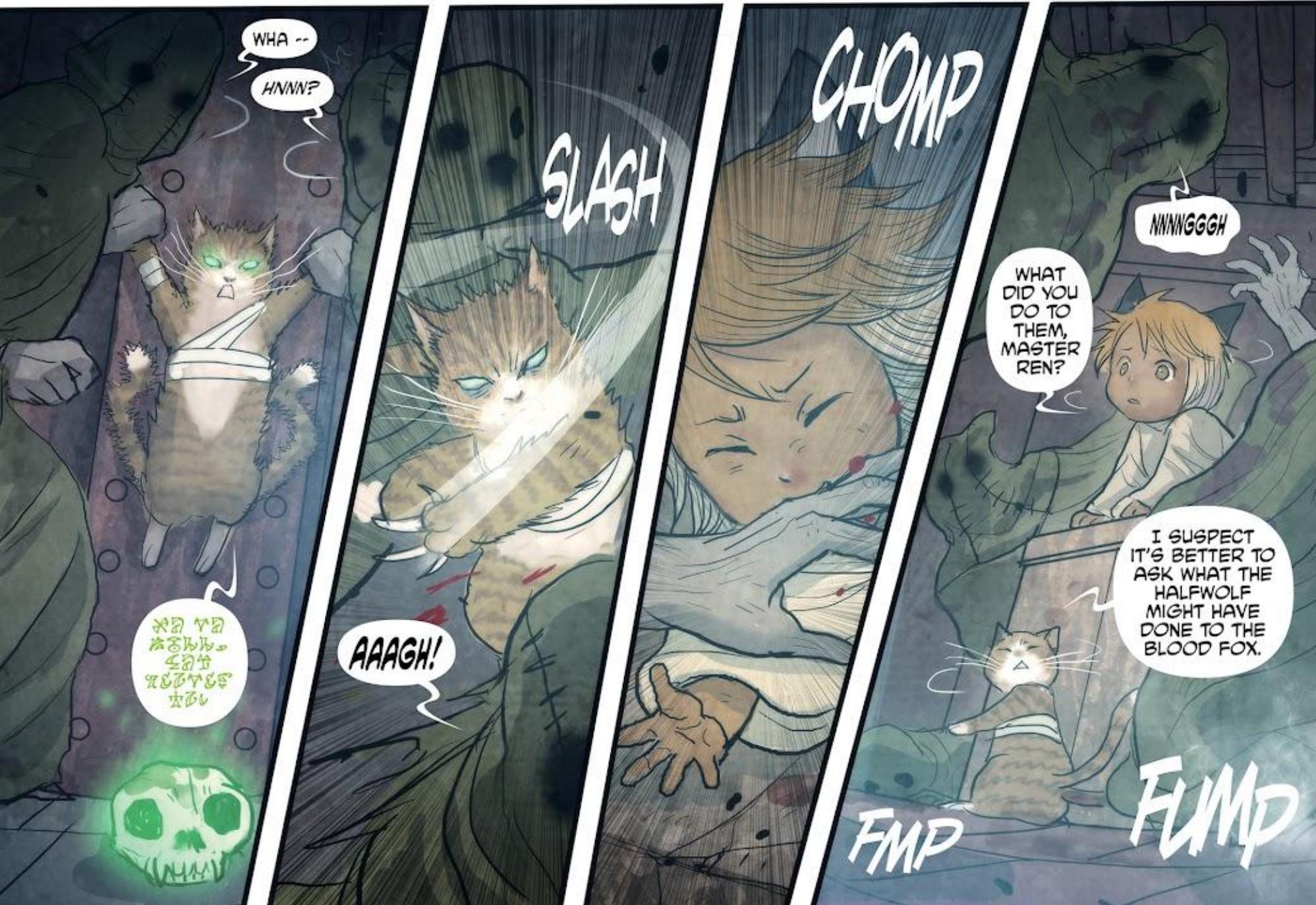
YOUR BLOOD.

YOU STAND AT THE CENTER OF THIS PROPHECY. YOU ARE THE SHAMAN-EMPEROR'S DOOM...

...BUT YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT POWER. NO MORE THAN SHE DID. THE FATE OF MY GREAT RACE SHOULD NOT BE IN THE HANDS OF THE DEFILED. OF MONGRELS.







WHAT'S
HAPPENING
TO THIS
VILLAGE?

IT WAS NOTHING
BUT AN ILLUSION THE
FOX LORD CREATED...
AND NOW IT IS
SLIPPING FROM HIS
CONTROL.

JUST AS ALL THE
PEOPLE TRAPPED HERE
ARE FINALLY FREE OF HIS
GLAMOUR. EVEN IF THERE'S
LITTLE ENOUGH LEFT OF
THEIR MINDS TO
APPRECIATE IT.

EEEP!

WHY ARE YOU
DIFFERENT?

CRASHH

RUMMMBLE

I WAS STRANDED HERE
SEVEN YEARS AGO DURING A
RECONNAISSANCE. THE FOX
HAD NEVER MET A CUMAEA.
MY... SLIGHT RESISTANCE...
TO HIS GLAMOUR
INTRIGUED HIM.

SO I
LIVED.

TELL ME,
DEMON
CHILD... WHO
WON THE
WAR?

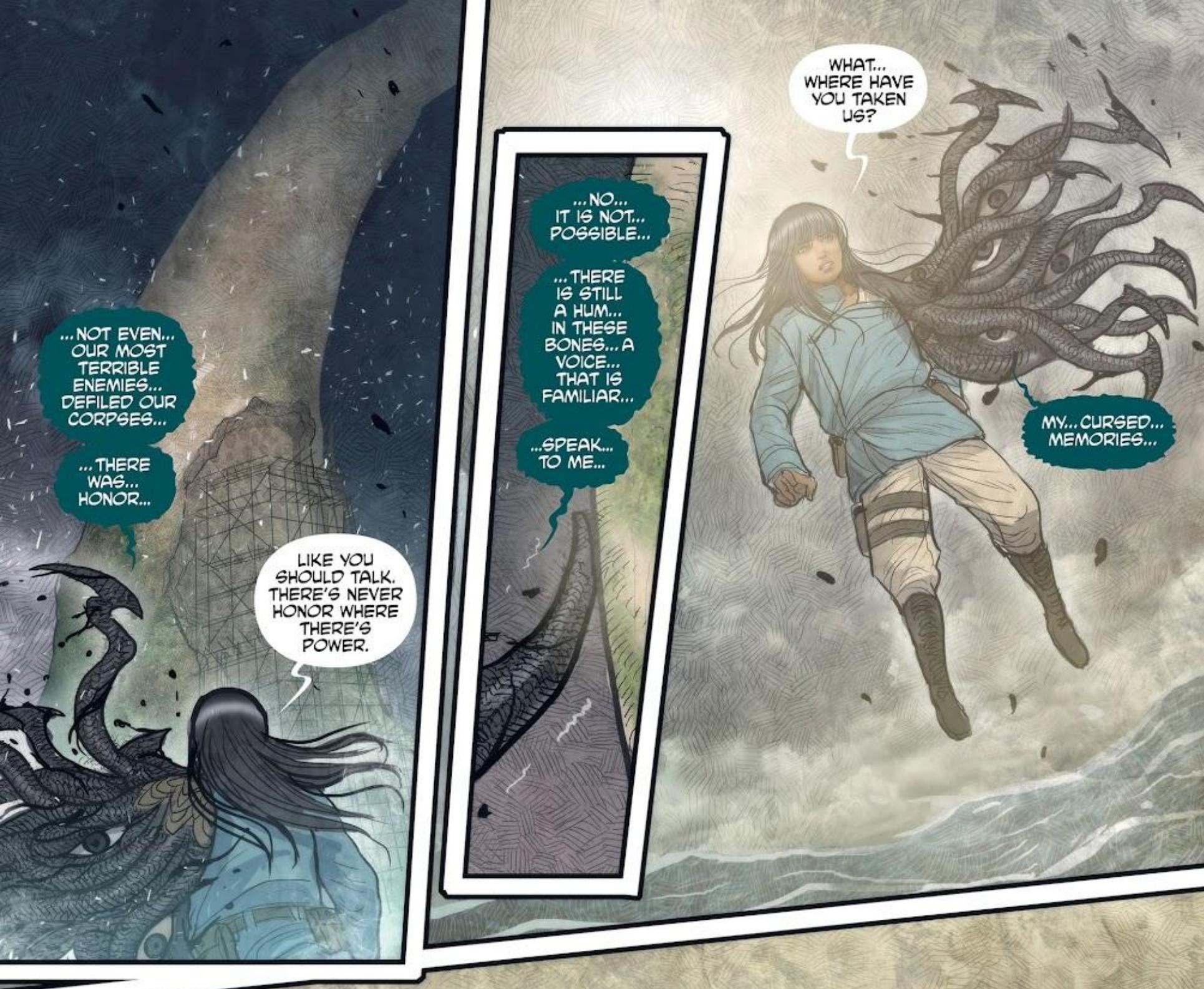
CRASHH

WE DESTROYED
EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU
FUCKING WITCHES. ARCANICS
OCCUPY THE FEDERATION OF
MAN AND EVERY HUMAN WHO
WORE THE UNIFORM NOW
LIVES IN THE SAME SLAVE
CAMPS YOU KEPT US IN
DURING THE WAR.

AH, I KNEW IT
WAS NEVER
GOING TO END
WELL.

HURRY. THE
BEACH IS
JUST BEYOND
THE MINE.

RUMMMBLE



...YOU
HAVE NO
CHOICE...

...I HAVE
ALREADY BEGUN
TO OPEN THE
GATE...AND I
WILL NOT LET YOU
STOP ME...

EVEN IF IT
MEANS WE
MUST
BATTLE!

BOOM!

I AM THE
RUINER-PROXY, THE
DESTROYER OF
SPHERES...
AND YOU
PRESUME TO
CHALLENGE
ME?

ZINN!

SHLUKK!



...YOU...
BETRAYER...YOU...
WHO COULD NOT
TOLERATE...MERCY FOR
THOSE LESS POWERFUL
THAN YOU...

...YOU WILL
NEVER...BE
REDEEMED...

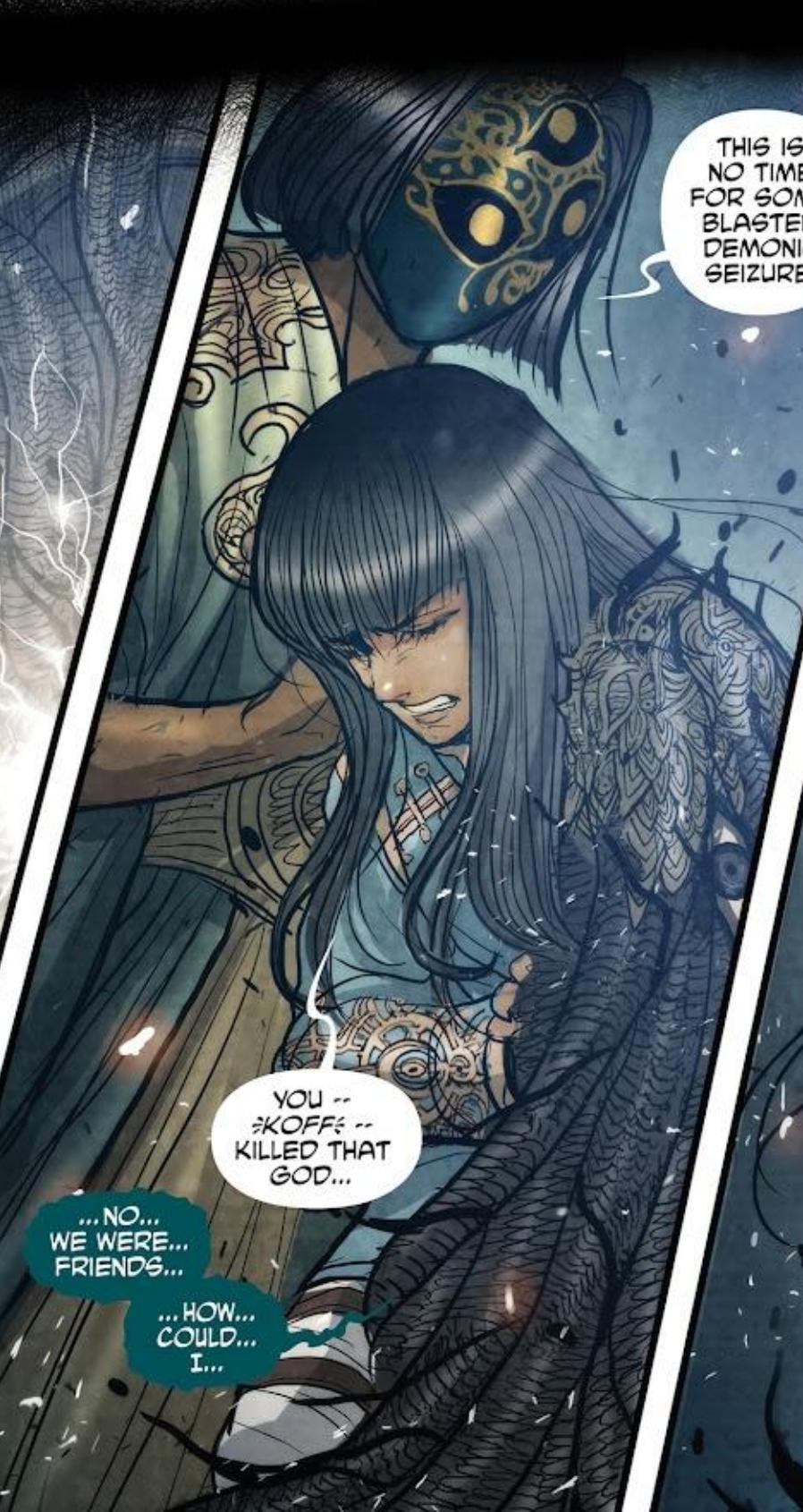


AAAHH!

...NO...NO...
THESE BONES...
BELONG TO
MY...SISTER-
BROTHER...

...NO...
WE WERE...
FRIENDS...

...HOW...
COULD...
I...



YOU --
SKOFF --
KILLED THAT
GOD...



THIS IS
NO TIME
FOR SOME
BLASTED
DEMONIC
SEIZURE.



BECAUSE
YOU ARE A
MONSTER.



YOU LED THE
CHARGE THAT
WOULD HAVE
DESTROYED
MY KIND.

AND HERE
YOU ARE,
WEAK AND
ALONE.

YOU ARE
MINE NOW.
BOTH OF
YOU.

To Be Continued...

DEGRADATION

INSANITY

A
FLOWER
FROM
THE
DEMONIC
GARDEN

DREAMJAR

A VICIOUS VICE CORRUPTING OUR YOUTH!

IMMORALITY

ONE MOMENT OF BLISS

A LIFETIME OF REGRET!

An excerpt of a lecture from the esteemed **Professor Tam Tam**, former First Record-Keeper of the Is'hami Temple, and learned contemporary of Namron Black Claw...

The years immediately following the Great War were difficult ones for the Arcanic Realms. Whole families, entire bloodlines, had been wiped out, countless communities ravaged, a generation of youth enslaved by the Cumaea and the Federation of Man – or fallen in the desperate fight for freedom. Not a single Arcanic across the known lands, from Dusk to Dawn Court, could say they had not lost friends or family in the Great War.

It was a collective wound – and like many wounds, this one festered. In the aftermath of the war, Arcanics were left disillusioned, disoriented, traumatized. And into this desolation, came dreamtar.

A powerful narcotic derived from the mature blossom of the popei flower, dreamtar is viciously addictive to non-cats. Few who smoke it escape the extract's terrible grasp. In what became an all too familiar irony, many of the same Arcanics who survived the horrors of the war succumbed to the ravages of addiction.

Cats who long cultivated the popei flower for its aromatic qualities are often accused of introducing dreamtar to Arcanic populations. Never speak of the flower or carry it or its essence on your person in non-cat lands. Many a cat has been lynched for carrying as little as a petal in their pouch...

MONSTRESS MAIL, ART, CRAFTS

Dear Readers,

MONSTRESS is a labor of love, and as we near the end of our second arc we want to thank you all again for being such wonderful, supportive readers. Keep writing to us, keep sending us your fan art (and crafts) – we love seeing your creations!

Marjorie & Sana

Hi Marjorie and Sana, and the whole MONSTRESS team,

This is the first fan letter I have ever written to anyone, but I just have to praise this series. The story is great, and the art is gorgeous. I am no artist, but it is one of the most important things to me in any movie, TV series or graphic novel.

I am from Pakistan and not many people here read graphic novels. When they hear comics, they think superhero drawings. But we need more amazing Asian-themed series to bring newer generations to this medium. Keep up the good work.

Your newest and hopefully loyal fan from now on,
Ehtisham U.
Islamabad, Punjab, Pakistan

MARJORIE: Thank you so much, Ehtisham! We appreciate that tremendously.

Miss Liu, Miss Takeda, and the entire MONSTRESS team,

I love your work! Your world is full of lore and history that is brutal and alluring. The artwork is beautiful and lush. Sorry to gush, but it's refreshing to see a comic that brings something new to the table. (Main characters of color; powerful women; consistent lore.)

I hope MONSTRESS lasts for years to come, and that there may be bomb merchandise in the future!

Junior T.

MARJORIE: Junior, thank you! And don't worry, there just might be some fun MONSTRESS swag in the very near future...

Let me say this from the bottom of my heart – thank you for this amazing comic. I was

already sold when I knew it would be a fantasy steampunk story set in Asia with a female protagonist, but it turned out to be a bit different from what I expected, and everything I wanted. I love the richness of the setting, the ambiguity of almost every character (Kippa is a shining beacon of light, so I had to add that "almost") and the denseness of the plot. Sana's art is breathtaking and, if I could, I would hang MONSTRESS cover art on every inch of my walls.

I could seriously compliment you on every part of MONSTRESS, but that would take too long. So I'll focus on particulars. My favourite thing about the worldbuilding is probably Marium's story. I didn't connect the dots the first time I read the name – but then came that lecture from Professor Tam Tam in issue #6. I think the idea of making Mary the central figure in a fantasy alternate world religion is just genius, and I love everything about it. And how she and the Shaman-Empress can be read as parallels. I wonder though – I feel the map at the end of the trade paperback has to correspond at least partially to "our" maps, but I can't figure out how to read it. Is Africa part of the known world in MONSTRESS?

I wouldn't have said it before issue #7, but you've done a truly horrible thing and made me fall in love with the Sword of the East. She didn't really grab my attention in the first arc in the one issue she appeared – but then came issue #7. And her reaction to finding out about Maika's existence, and that heartbreaking face when she lifted the mask.

She falls right into my favourite fictional character type – a dark-haired fighter doing morally ambiguous things, probably troubled and with a softer side. I don't know her name and she appears sparsely and briefly (and that's that horrible part) – but she is amazing, and I love her. So of course she's in every MONSTRESS fan art I've ever drawn. I've imagined her a bit younger on the coloured one I'm sending you, fighting the Cumaea during the war. I can't wait to see the warlord in her – and I'm on the edge of my seat thinking about the aunt/niece meeting with Maika.

I hope that creating MONSTRESS is as satisfying as reading it. The whole team is making something truly great and I for one am dying to see where the story leads. Just wanted to let you know that there's a girl in Poland anxiously waiting for every issue and grinning at the thought of MONSTRESS.

Orsula

Send letters & fan art to: [monstress.comic@gmail.com!](mailto:monstress.comic@gmail.com)
#Monstress on Twitter and Instagram!



Art by Orsula

MARJORIE: Orsula...thank you very much for your kind words. I will confess: the Warlord is also one of my favorite characters, and you'll be seeing much more of her in the future. Also, we love your version of her! As for the shape of the known world, stick around -- more answers will be revealed soon.



Art by Trinidad Escobar
www.trinidadescobar.com

MARJORIE: What an amazing Yvette!

Finally, MONSTRESS readers continue to blow us away with all the amazing objects they've been inspired to craft. Y'all are super talented. Anna, for example, created her very own Professor Tam Tam plushie (which had us all screaming with delight) and was kind enough to send us a breakdown of her process. Turn the page for more...



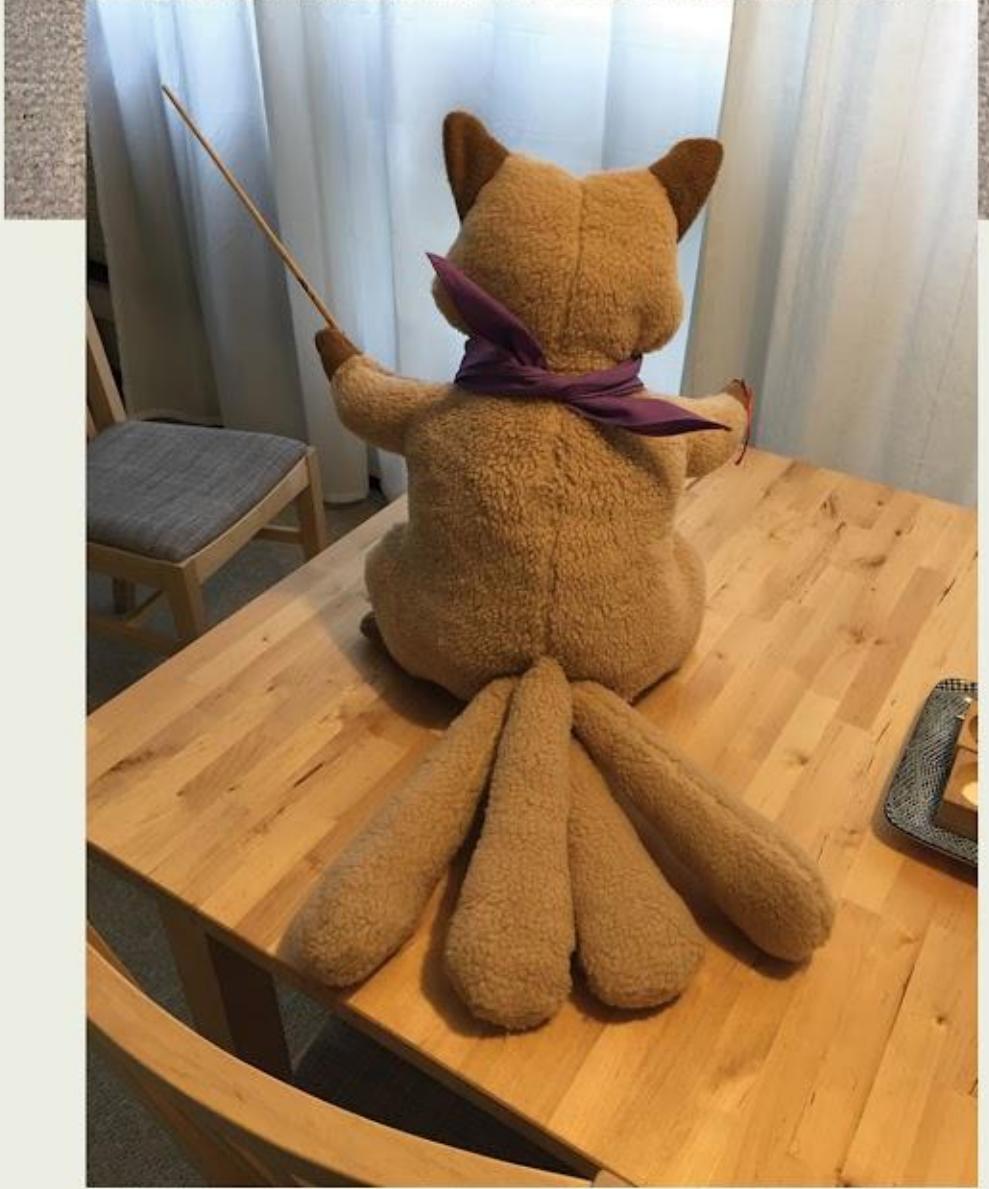
Art by Orsula



monSTRESS mail, ART, CRAFTS



I started by sketching out a pattern based on Professor Tam Tam's appearances in Volume 1, and made a small prototype just to see what it would look like fully assembled. Figuring out how to arrange the four tails took a bit of work — I tested out a couple different variants with fabric scraps before I came up with a solution I was happy with (the trick was to arrange them like furry flower petals).



After making some modifications to the neck, legs, and feet, I had my final 35-piece pattern. I cut out all the pieces and got to work attaching them together inside-out. The fabric had a maroon backing, so it looked pretty creepy right until the very end!

As I was completing the head, I assembled the eyes out of pieces of felt and attached them to her face, trying to keep the proportions right. After turning her right-side out, the next step was to stuff her with some fiber fill and add the finishing touches! I embroidered the last few details onto her face, like her spectacles (wouldn't want her to lose them) and gave her her signature neckerchief to complete her professorial look.

- Anna

NEXT ISSUE

MARJORIE LIU

SANA TAKEDA

MONSTRESS

#monstress

\$3.99

ISSUE 12



MONSTRESS™ ISSUE 11

WRITTEN BY MARJORIE LIU
ILLUSTRATED BY SANA TAKEDA

LETTERED BY RUS WOOTON
EDITED BY JENNIFER M SMITH
CERI RILEY : EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
AKI YANAGI : TRANSLATOR

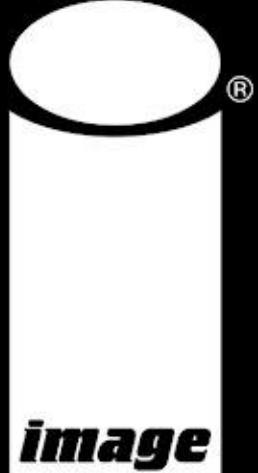


MONSTRESS™ CREATED BY
MARJORIE LIU & SANA TAKEDA

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