

RUINS

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DEAREST HELENA,

YOU'RE ANGRY WITH ME, AND I
DON'T BLAME YOU.

I HOPE YOU KNOW BY NOW, I
WOULD NEVER INTEND TO BREAK
A PROMISE TO YOU.

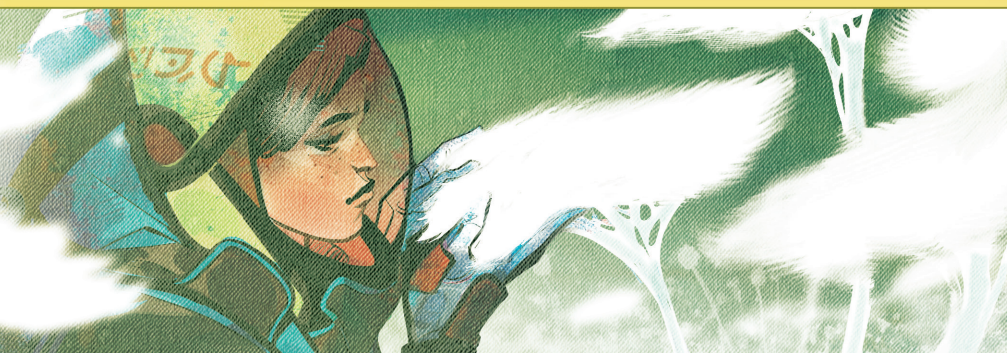
BUT STILL, I HAVE.

I TOLD YOU I WOULD BE HOME
BY NOW, AND YET...

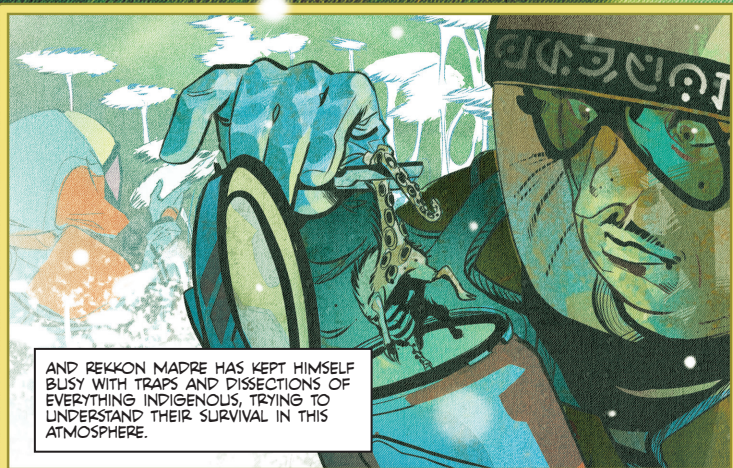
...THE MISSION
CONTINUES.



SKIE DESKII CONTINUES TO
MAKE INCREDIBLE PROGRESS IN
CATALOGUING THE SHIMMERS
OF FLOROJ WE DISCOVERED.



AND REKKON MADRE HAS KEPT HIMSELF
BUSY WITH TRAPS AND DISSECTIONS OF
EVERYTHING INDIGENOUS, TRYING TO
UNDERSTAND THEIR SURVIVAL IN THIS
ATMOSPHERE.



BUT IT'S UHL BAKKARI'S
TRANSLATION OF THE MARKINGS
AT THE KRIANT'AA CASTELO THAT
DELAYS OUR RETURN...



...AND PUSHES US
FORWARD.

I HAVE A DUTY, A SACRED
OBLIGATION. YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT.

BUT IF I COULD MAKE YOU
BELIEVE ANY WORDS THAT COME
FROM MY LYING MOUTH --

-- THE SAME MOUTH THAT SAYS
'SOON, THINGS WILL BE EASIER'
OR 'SOMEDAY IT WILL BE BETTER'
-- IT WOULD BE THIS...

NOTHING I DO IS FOR
THE INSTITUTE...

...IT IS ALL **FOR YOU**.



TAJO...

...WE'RE
READY.



GODS
BELOW US. THIS IS
RECKLESS AND WE
SHOULDN'T BE
DOING IT. ARE YOU
LISTENING...





OUR FILTERS ARE SHOT AND WE ONLY HAVE HALF A TANK LEFT, TAJO...

WE SHOULD GO BACK.



DO YOU HEAR ME? WE'VE GONE TOO FAR. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE SANCTION FOR THIS.

THE OBJECTIVE IS *DISCOVERY*, REKKON. THAT'S ALL THE SANCTION WE NEED.



BESIDES, IF UHL'S TRANSLATIONS ARE CORRECT...

...FORGIVENESS AND PERMISSION WILL BE ONE AND THE SAME.



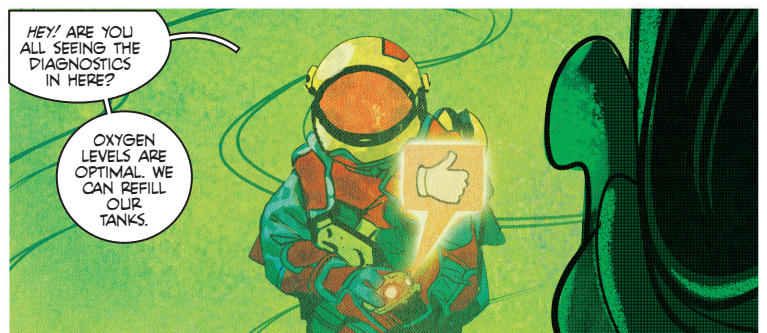
THIS IS... UNPRECEDENTED & THIS IS WONDROUS. THIS IS...

WHAT IS THIS?

THE WRITINGS -- THE APOCRYPHA OF KAOSO -- REFERRED TO IT AS THE TEMPLE OF VEILS.

HERESIES, OF COURSE. FABLES, AT BEST. BUT THEY TELL THE STORY OF HOW THE MONKS HERE...

...THEY WERE VISITED BY A SPIRIT WITH A FACE SO BEAUTIFUL -- A PRESENCE SO DIVINE -- THEY CHOSE TO TURN THEMSELVES TO STONE, RATHER THAN LET IT FADE IN THEIR MEMORIES.



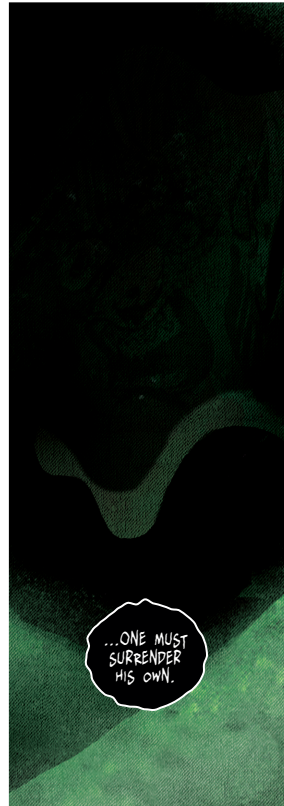
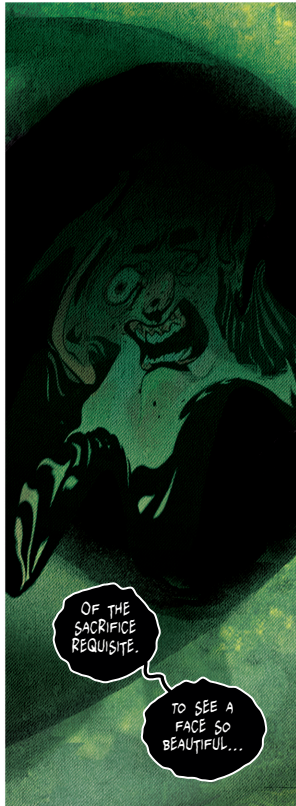
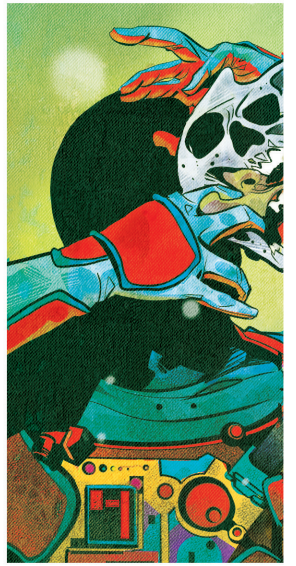
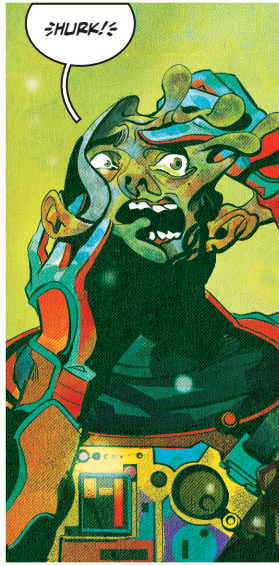
HEY! ARE YOU ALL SEEING THE DIAGNOSTICS IN HERE?

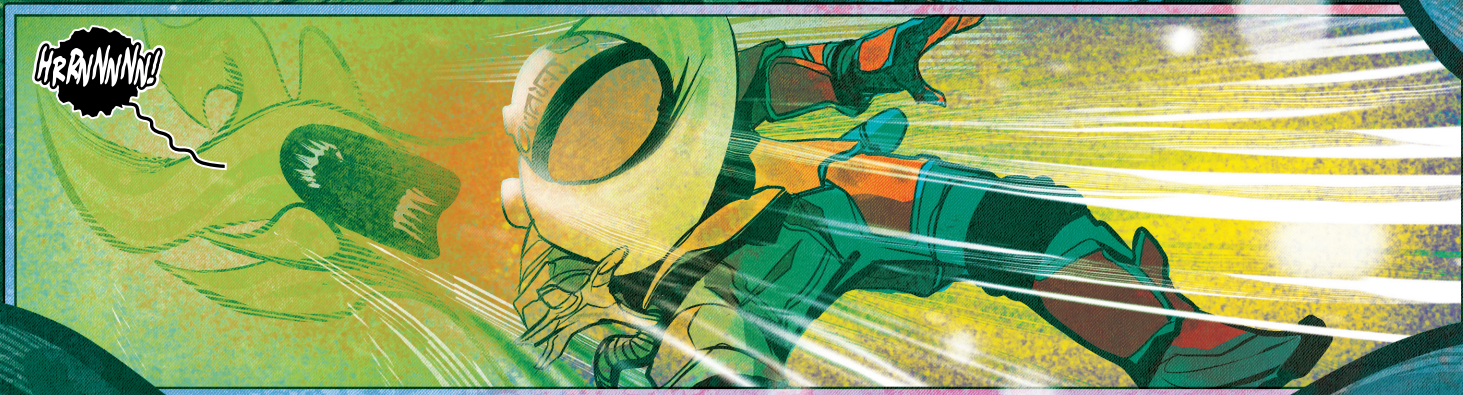
OXYGEN LEVELS ARE OPTIMAL. WE CAN REFILL OUR TANKS.

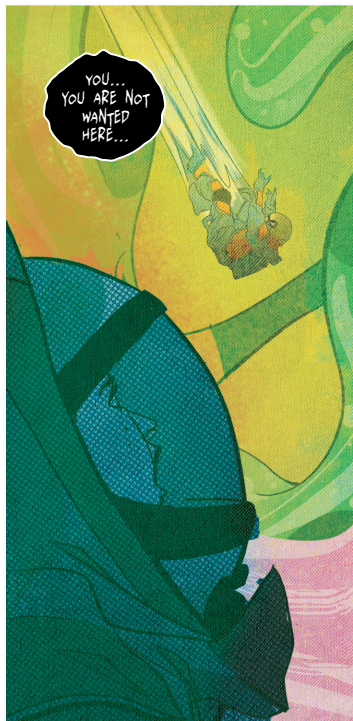
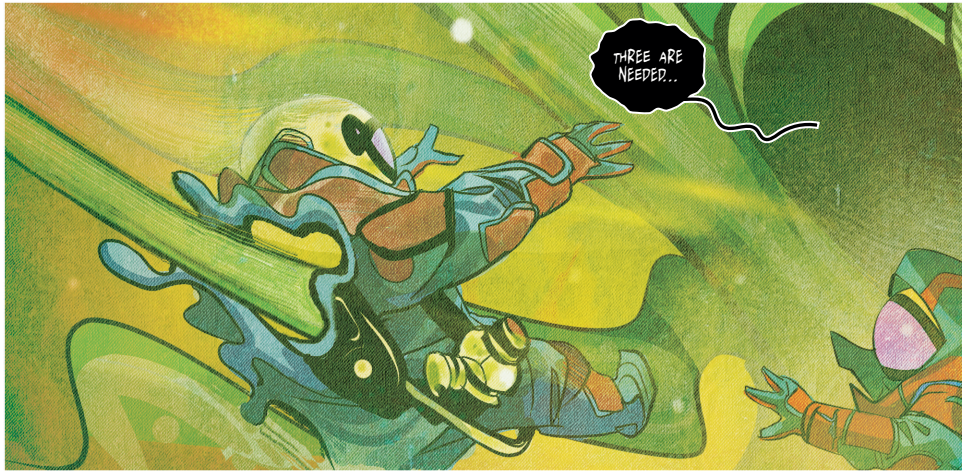
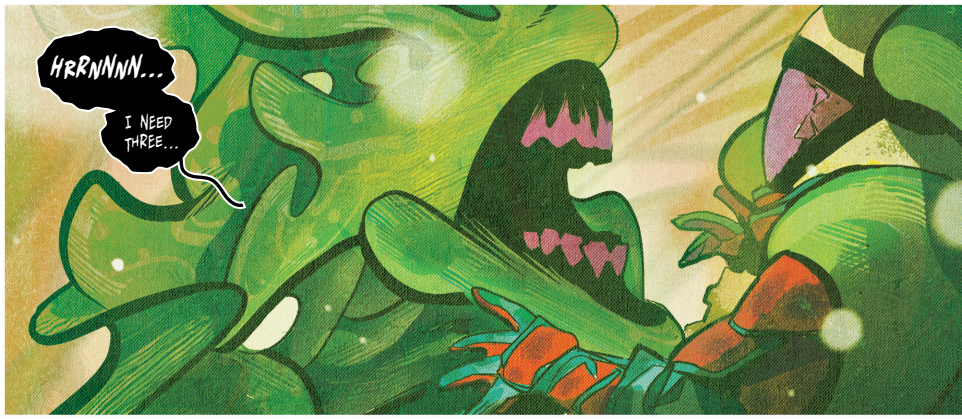


AND I CAN FINALLY TAKE THIS DAMN THING OFF AND--

REKKON, NO!









"IT ENDS, THEN..."

AS THESE THINGS ALWAYS DO, I SUPPOSE...

THE OLD MONKS ARE SAVAGES -- THIS IS TRUE -- BUT THEY HAD CAUSE...

DID THEY? SHARP TEETH AND ETERNITY ARE POOR COMPANIONS. AND TO DESTROY THEM FOR TRESPASS? WE MIGHT AS WELL JUDGE THE UNIVERSE AND FIND ALL LIFE GUILTY.

PFFAHH! THEY CAME TO ACQUIRE -- TO EAT OUR BONES, TO STEAL OUR SACRAMENT, AND SEED OUR LAND.

NOT ALL OF THEM.

THE STAG SPEAKS TRUE. YOU HEARD THE ONE AT THE MOUTH OF THE TEMPLE -- YOU SAW THE SPIRIT OF HIM. HE HUNGERS FOR KNOWLEDGE.

NOT OF THE LINE, OR OF THE BEGINNING AND END, BUT OF THE CIRCLE. THIS HAS VALUE TO US.

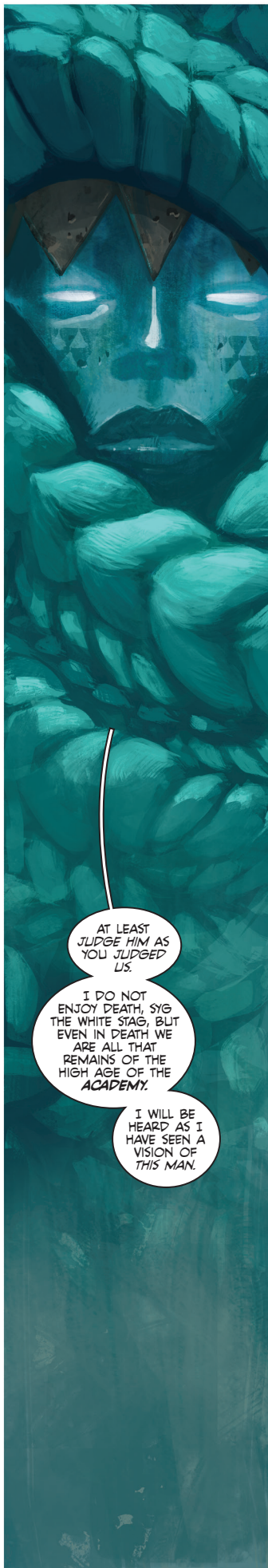
TRUE KNOWLEDGE? YOU WANTED IT WASTED ON THIS MAN? NO!

I WANT HIS BLOOD AND I WANT IT TO WATER THE LAND.

WELL, I WANT HIS HEART...

BECAUSE IT IS MINE. AND I CARE NOT FOR THE OPINIONS OF GHOSTS.





AT LEAST
JUDGE HIM AS
YOU JUDGED
US.

I DO NOT
ENJOY DEATH, SYG
THE WHITE STAG, BUT
EVEN IN DEATH WE
ARE ALL THAT
REMAINS OF THE
HIGH AGE OF THE
ACADEMY.

I WILL BE
HEARD AS I
HAVE SEEN A
VISION OF
THIS MAN.



AS
HAVE
I.

I SEE THE
FIRES AND FALLEN
WORLDS...BUT I
SEE THE WHAT IT
WILL BRING...

AND I
SEE THAT
HE IS
GOOD.

CAN
HE STAY THAT
WAY -- WILL
HE, WHEN WE
KNOW WHAT
IT WILL COST
HIM...

WHEN WE
KNOW HOW
HE WILL
SUFFER?



**TAGO
VALLAR.**

YOU SEEK
TRUTH, BUT IT
WILL COST
YOU. SO REST,
SLEEP..

AND WHEN
YOU ARE
READY -- WHEN
YOU WAKE --
TAKE MY
HAND..



