

EXALTED

THIRD EDITION



Tale of the Visiting Flare

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Vaneha, region of the East.

"A sword is only as strong as the soul beneath its steel."
- Eternal Nova



THIS ONE
SAW IT
AGAIN, JUST
FOR A
MOMENT...



AGAIN? JUST NOW?

YES... LIKE A DAYDREAM, BUT MORE VIVID.

CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC?

IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE...

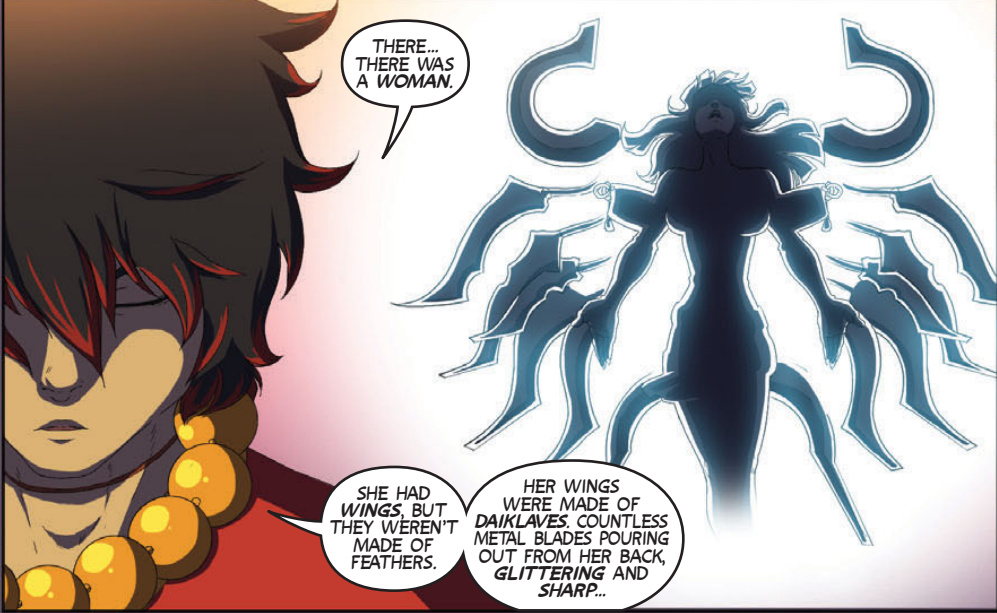


I KNOW IT'S UNNERVING, VISITING FLARE, BUT TELL US WHAT YOU SAW.



TH-THIS ONE DOESN'T KNOW, WE SHOULD JUST--

PLEASE.



THERE... THERE WAS A WOMAN.

SHE HAD WINGS, BUT THEY WEREN'T MADE OF FEATHERS.

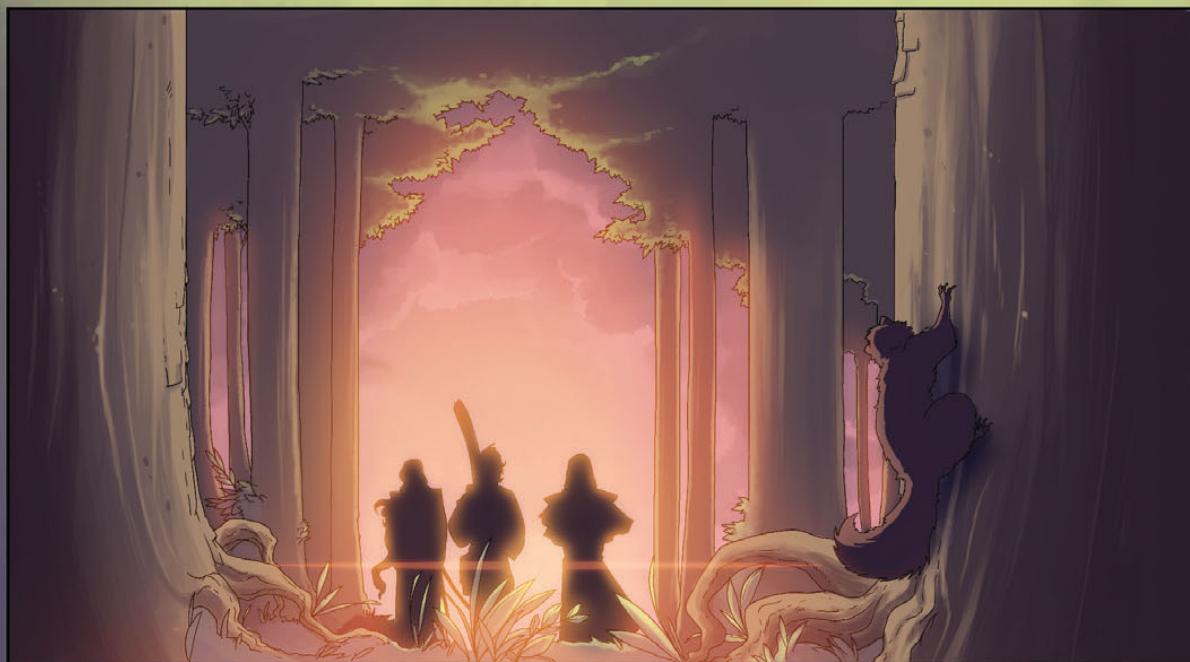
HER WINGS WERE MADE OF DAIKLAVES, COUNTLESS METAL BLADES POURING OUT FROM HER BACK, GLITTERING AND SHARP...



IT'S FOOLISH, RIGHT? TOTAL NONSENSE.

NOT AT ALL. VISIONS HAVE GREAT POWER.

SHE'S RIGHT. DON'T DISCOUNT THEM JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THEIR MEANING.





ARE YOU COMFORTABLE?

QUITE. THANK YOU.



MAY THIS ONE ASK YOU A QUESTION?

YOU MAY.



WHEN WE MET YOU TOLD THIS ONE YOU WERE AN "AGENT OF HEAVEN."

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? ARE YOU SOME KIND OF ORACLE?



SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YES.

SHE GOES WHERE SHE'S NEEDED.

SHE HAS TAUGHT ME MUCH ABOUT HELPING OTHERS.



AND YOU? WHERE ARE YOU HEADED? ARE YOU GOING TO JIBEI?

NO IDEA. THIS ONE'S BEEN WANDERING FOR WEEKS EVER SINCE...

EVER SINCE THIS ONE FELT THE MARK ON HIS HEAD. YOU CAN'T SEE IT RIGHT NOW, BUT IT WAS THERE.



TELL ME ABOUT IT. WHERE DID IT COME FROM?



IT WAS THE END OF A BATTLE, NEAR THE MARUTO RIVER.

AT FIRST THIS ONE ASSUMED HE WAS WOUNDED. THE MARK ON HIS HEAD *BURNED*, BUT THERE WAS NO BLOOD...



THE BATTLE NEVER ENDS.

WARRIORS KEPT APPEARING AND THEY KNEW THIS ONE'S NAME. THEY ALL WANTED HIM DEAD.



YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN, VISITING FLARE.

WE CAN TAKE YOU TO A MONASTERY OF *SHINING ONES* WHO CAN HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE.

TRAVEL WITH US.



NO. THIS ONE GOES HIS OWN WAY.



I UNDERSTAND.

BUT BEFORE WE TRAVEL OUR SEPARATE PATHS, I WILL TELL YOU A STORY...



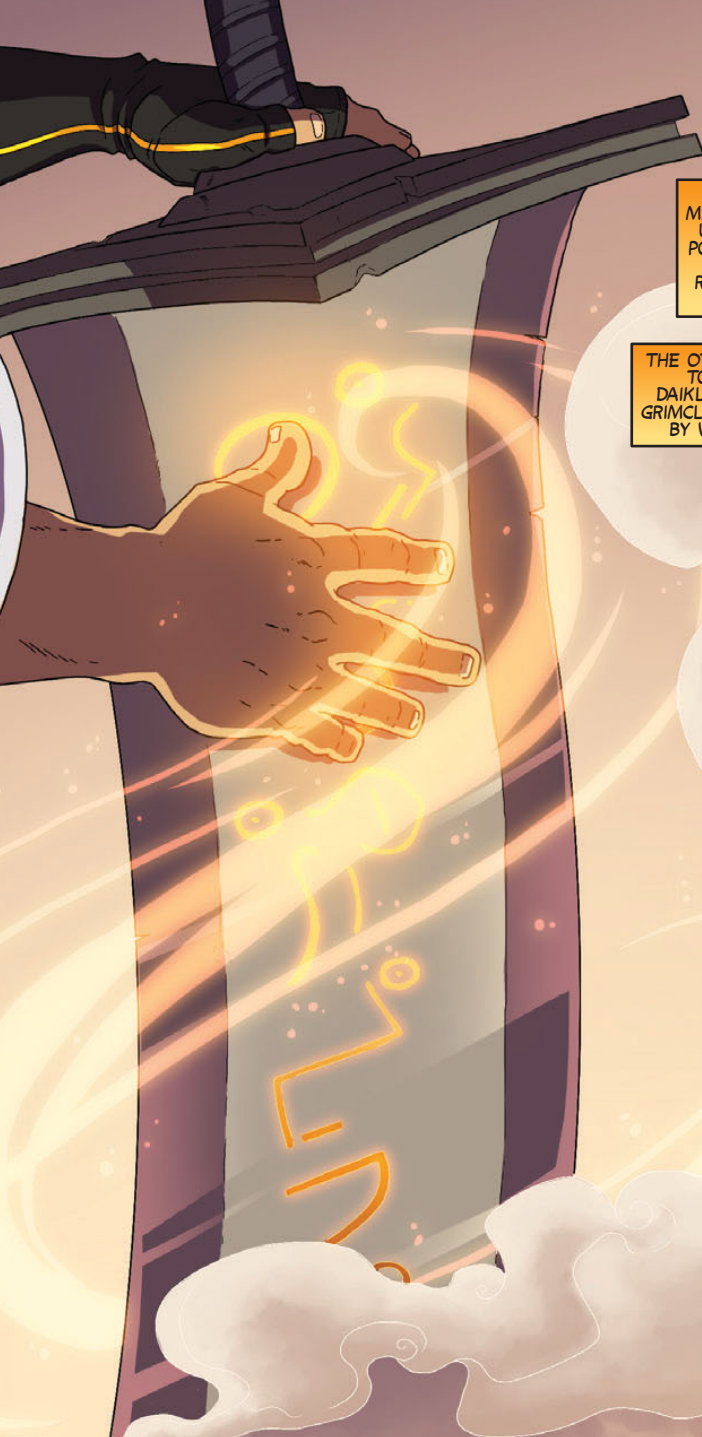
AN AGE AGO, THERE WAS A CHOSEN ONE NAMED *ETERNAL NOVA*.

THE SUNLIGHT OF THE *DAWN* BLESSED HIS PRESENCE AND GUIDED HIS ACTIONS.

IN ALL THE LANDS THAT COULD BE FOUND, HIS *SWORDSMANSHIP* WAS UNPARALLELED.


HE WAS THE FIRST TO TAME A *DAILKLAVE*, UNLOCKING THE MYSTIC MIGHT OF ITS EVOCATIONS.

AMONG WARRIORS AND WARLORDS ALIKE, HE WAS CALLED THE *SWORD PRIEST*.



ETERNAL NOVA'S
MEREST TOUCH COULD
UNLEASH SPIRITS OF
POWER FROM A WELL
MADE WEAPON,
REVEALING ITS TRUE
POTENTIAL.

THE OTHER CHOSEN FLOCKED
TO HIM WITH THEIR
DAIKLAVES, DIRELANCES, OR
GRIMCLEAVERS FOR ANOINTING
BY WORD OR BY BLOOD.



MANY LEGENDARY CRAFTSMAN
WORKED DAY AND NIGHT TO
FORGE GREATER AND GREATER
BLADES, SEEKING TO INCREASE
THEIR RENOWN BY HAVING
THE SWORD PRIEST AWAKEN
GREAT POWER FROM WITHIN
THEIR HANDIWORKS.

AS WORD SPREAD OF
HIS SKILL, THE
SWORD PRIEST'S
HOME WAS OVERRUN
WITH PATRONS.



HOW MANY
BLESSINGS COULD
ONE MAN GIVE?

WHEN THE PIOUS
ETERNAL NOVA FINALLY
BID THEM TO LEAVE, HE
WAS ACCUSED OF BEING
MATERIALISTIC AND VAIN.

HE VOWED THAT ANY WHO
DEFEATED HIM IN SINGLE
COMBAT COULD TAKE HIS
TITLE OF SWORD PRIEST, AND WITH IT,
HIS POWER OVER DAIKLAVES.

MANY WOULD
TRY, BUT NONE
COULD TAKE
HIS TITLE.

EVEN ETERNAL
NOVA'S MIGHT COULD
NOT STAND AGAINST
AN ARMY OF SOLDIERS
GUIDED BY FATE ITSELF.

THE SWORD PRIEST WAS
DEAD AND HIS TITLE
SLIPPED AWAY TO A JADE
CAGE AMONG THE STARS.



IF A LIFE IS A STRING AND DEATH IS THE END OF THAT STRING, THAN THE MAN WHO CUT THE SWORD PRIEST'S THREAD WAS A SIDEREAL NAMED RAKAN THULIO.

HE DID NOT WIELD THE SPEARS, BUT HE ORCHESTRATED THOUGHTS, SWAYED MINDS, AND ENHANCED EMOTIONS UNTIL THERE COULD BE NO OTHER CONCLUSION.

RAKAN LOVED ETERNAL NOVA.

A TWISTED LOVE THAT STAINED EVERYTHING IT TOUCHED.



HE LOVED THE MAN AND HE LOVED HIS BLESSED CONNECTION WITH WEAPONS OF WAR.

HE LOVED HIM SO DEEPLY AND SO JEALOUSLY THAT HE HAD TO SEE HIM SLAIN SO NO OTHERS COULD EVER FEEL AS HE DID.

LOVE CANNOT
DIE.

THE CHOSEN
CANNOT DIE.

RAKAN KNEW ETERNAL
NOVA WOULD RETURN
AND TAKE HIS SECOND
BREATH OF
REINCARNATION.

HE STOOD ON MOUNT
NAMAS IN THE EAST AT A
SPOT WHERE THE LOOM OF
FATE HAD SUNKEN A LINE
INTO CREATION ITSELF.



HE TOUCHED THAT LINE
AND SPOKE THROUGH HIS
SWORD, WHISPERING WORDS
THAT ECHOED LIKE MUSIC
THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTS
OF VIOLENCE.




"SWORDSMEN NOW AND
FOREVERMORE-- THE
BOND WITH YOUR BLADE
HAS MADE YOU STRONG,
BUT TRUE MASTERY
YET LIES AHEAD."



"THE SWORD PRIEST HAS RETURNED AND HIS TITLE CAN BE YOURS."

"SLAY HIM AND TAKE HIS BLESSED POWER FOR YOURSELF."



"SLAY HIM AND YOU WILL BE THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN IN ALL OF CREATION."

THEN HE SHOWED EACH OF THEM, IN THE WHIRLING OF LEAVES, IN SHADOWS ON WATER, IN FLAMES DANCING WITH SMOKE, A VISION OF THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS ONCE THE MASTER.

YOU CARRY A GREAT
LEGACY WITHIN
YOUR SOUL AND
THAT POWER MAKES
YOU A TARGET.

I DO NOT KNOW WHERE
YOUR LIFE THREAD LEADS,
BUT MANY TWISTING
PATHS LIE BEFORE YOU.

ENEMIES WILL HUNT
YOU, BUT YOU WILL
ALSO FIND ALLIES
THROUGHOUT YOUR
TRAVELS.

YOU WILL NEED
THEIR SUPPORT IN
THE DARK DAYS
AHEAD.






DO NOT LET THE
COUNTLESS
BATTLES HARDEN
YOUR SPIRIT.

MEDITATION, MUSIC,
AND COMPANIONSHIP
WILL RENEW YOU.



DO NOT LET THE
DISTANCE TRAVELLED
WEAR YOU DOWN.

YOU DO NOT
CLIMB ALONE.



EMBRACE YOUR FADED
MEMORIES AND UNLOCK
THE TRUE POWER OF
THE SWORD PRIEST.

THE FUTURE
WAITS TO
MEET YOU...



WHA-?!

WHERE DID SHE GO?

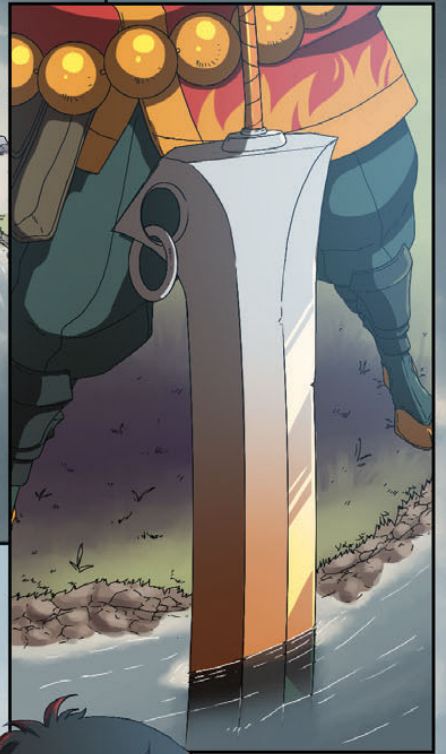


HER WORDS... SO RICH WITH VISION.

WAS IT JUST A DREAM?



...THE SWORD PRIEST...



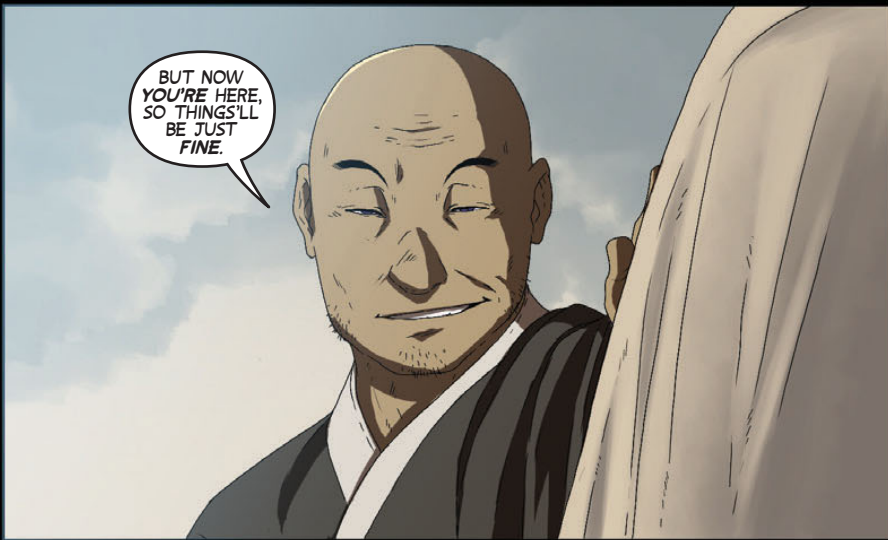


GREETINGS
BACK AT
'CHA.



WAGON
TROUBLE?

AYE.
I HEARD IT
SQUEAKING ALL
MORNIN', BUT
DIDN'T PAY IT NO
MIND. NOW I'M
STUCK.



BUT NOW
YOU'RE HERE,
SO THINGS'LL
BE JUST
FINE.

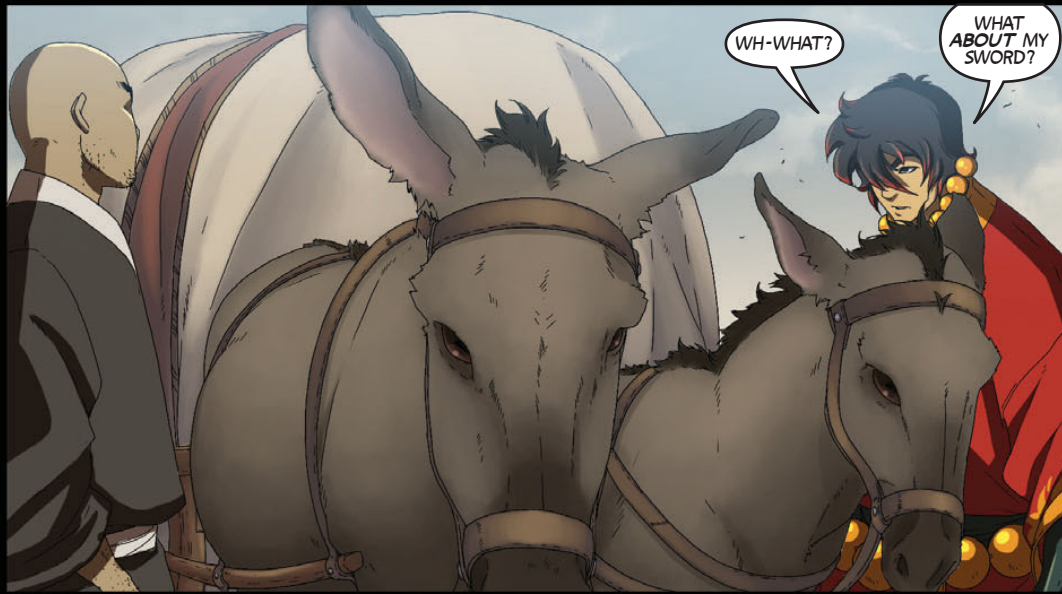


THIS ONE
ISN'T MUCH OF
A REPAIRMAN.

WHAT DID
YOU HAVE IN
MIND?



...SWORDS.



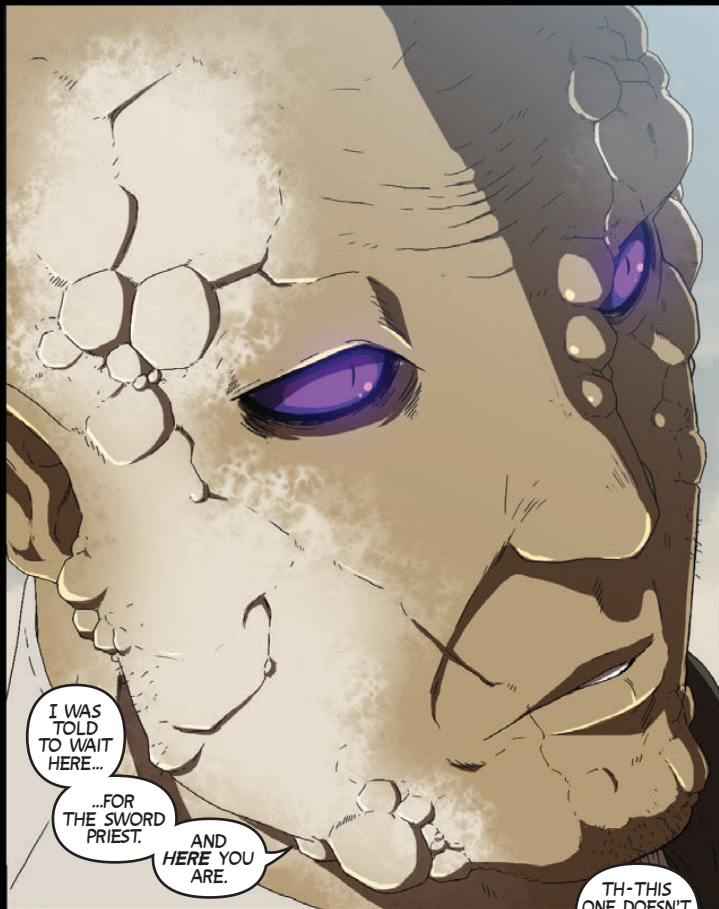
WH-WHAT?

WHAT ABOUT MY SWORD?



NOT YOUR SWORD. ALL SWORDS.

A BLESSING OF BLADES.



I WAS TOLD TO WAIT HERE...

...FOR THE SWORD PRIEST.

AND HERE YOU ARE.

TH-THIS ONE DOESN'T WANT TO FIGHT!



"THIS ONE" HAS NO CHOICE!

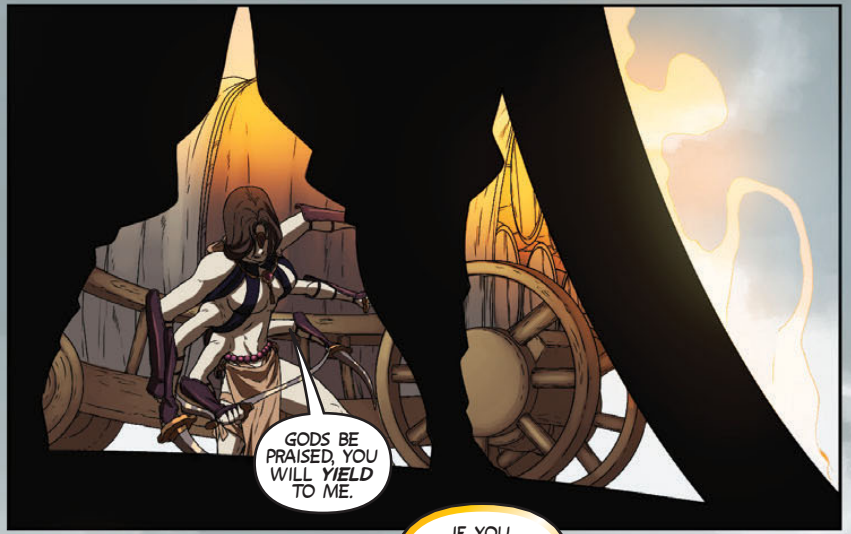


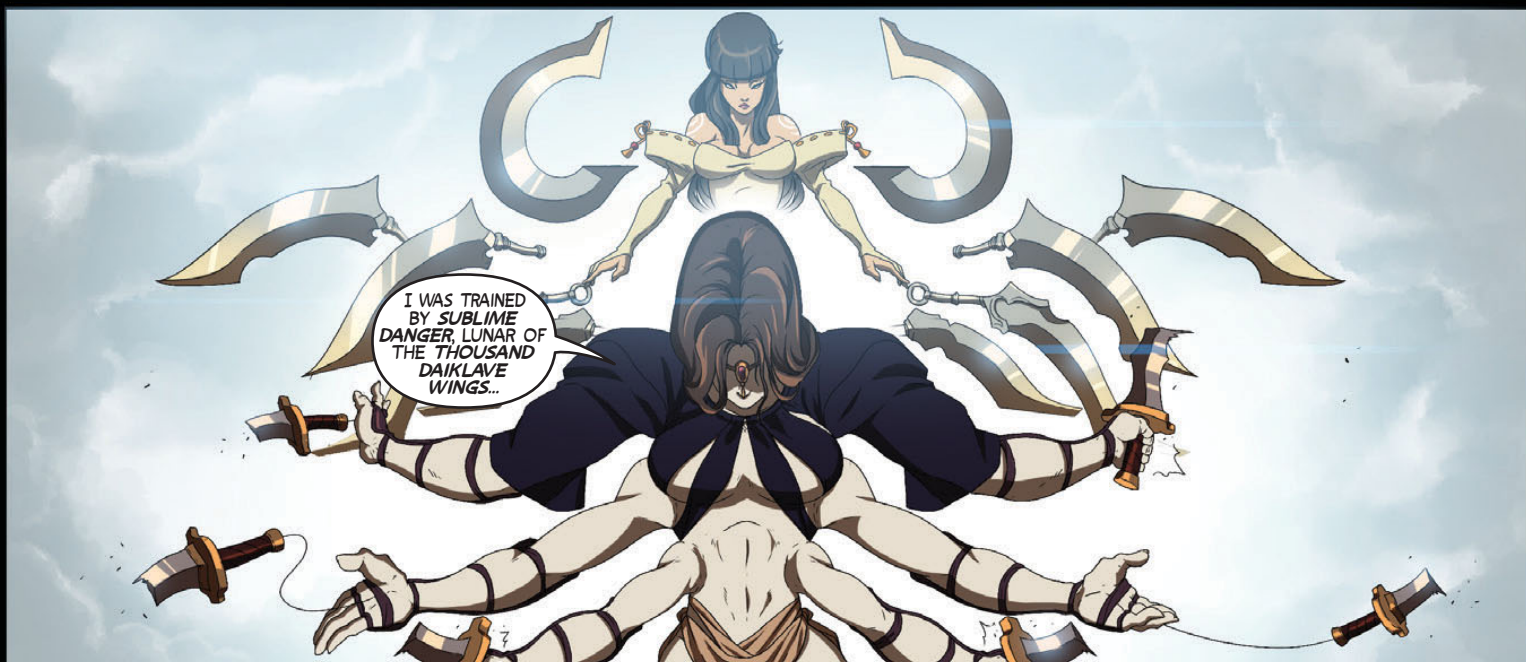


DEFEND
YOURSELF,
MIGHTY SWORD
PRIEST!

















End.

The young warrior known as Visiting Flare wanders Vaneha in search of the answers to the jumbled broken puzzle that is his past. In times of stress he catches fleeting glimpses of a time when his power reshaped history, but he does not know whether those visions are real or what they mean. When the truth is revealed to him, his past and present will collide and legends will come alive once more.

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