



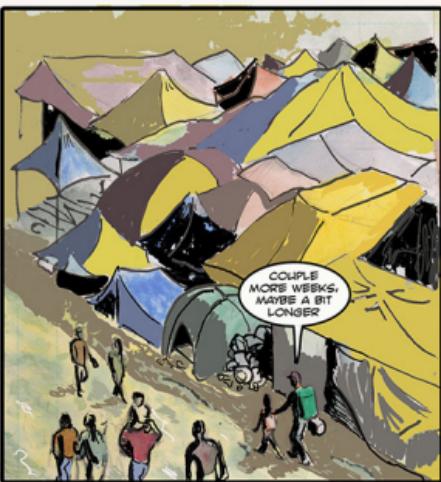
EL PASO TALES

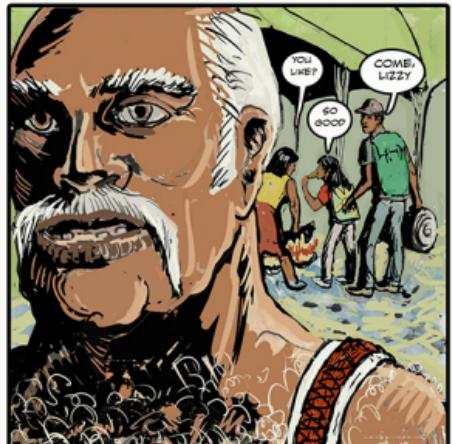


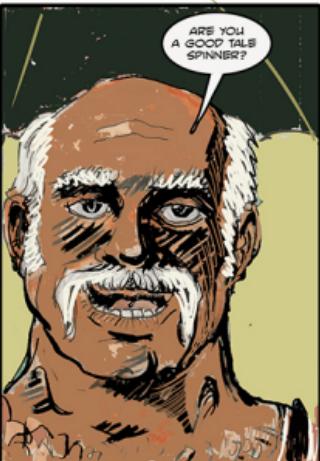
STORY AND ART BY J.M. R.

STORY AND ART
BY JIM RIEL

COPYRIGHT (C) 2024 JAMES RIEL









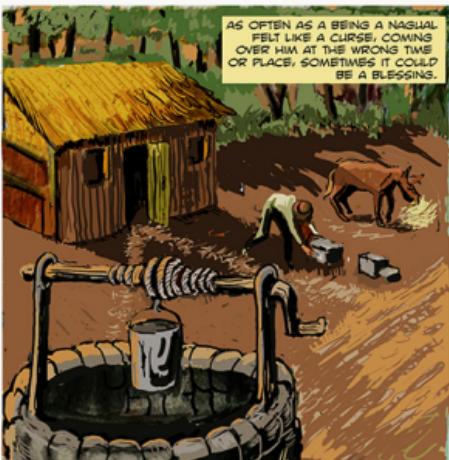
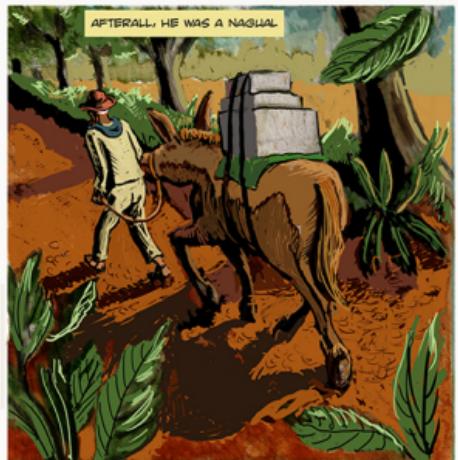


THE COOK'S TALE

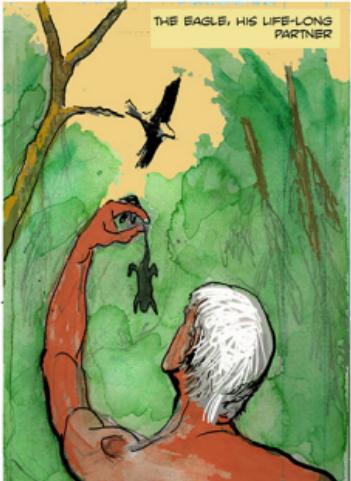
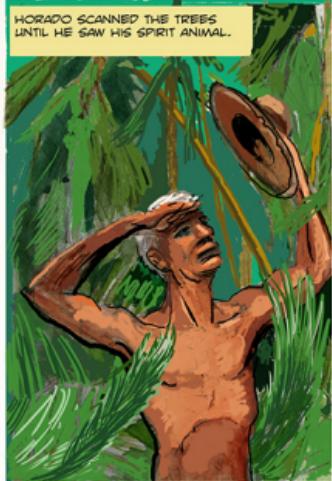


SAN TOMAS NESTLES CLOSE TO GASCANIL VOLCANO. HOTSPRINGS PROVIDE HOT WATER WHEN INDOOR PLUMBING FAILS, WHICH HAPPENS REGULARLY.

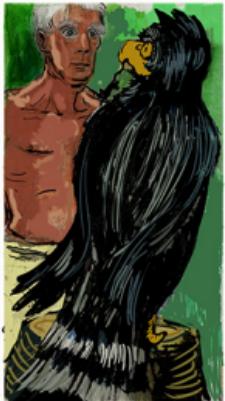




HORADO SCANNED THE TREES
UNTIL HE SAW HIS SPIRIT ANIMAL.

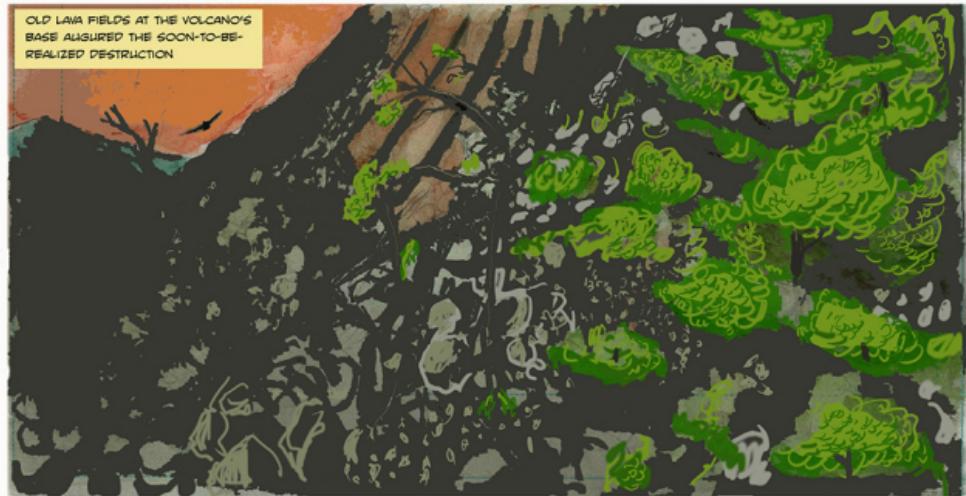


THE EAGLE, HIS LIFE-LONG
PARTNER



TO THIS DAY, NO ONE
KNOWS HOW THEY
TRANSITION, AND THE
NASHALS WON'T TELL.





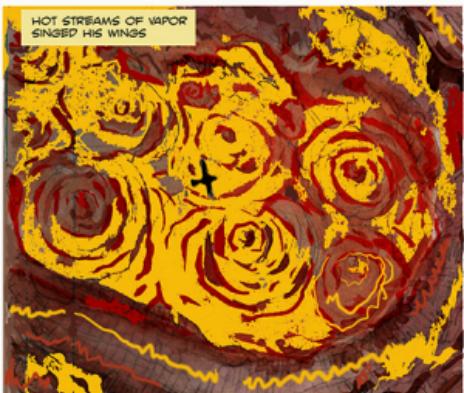
WHAT HORROR SAW
CONFIRMED HIS SENSE OF
URGENCY. ANIMALS LARGE
AND SMALL SCRABbled FOR
SAFETY OFF THE MOUNTAIN.



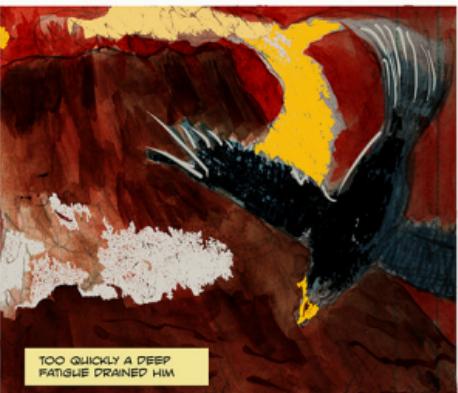
LONG STREAMS BOILED,
SWIRLED AND EXPLODED
LIKE A CALDRON OF
SIMMERING CORN SOUP.



HOT STREAMS OF VAPOR
SINGED HIS WINGS



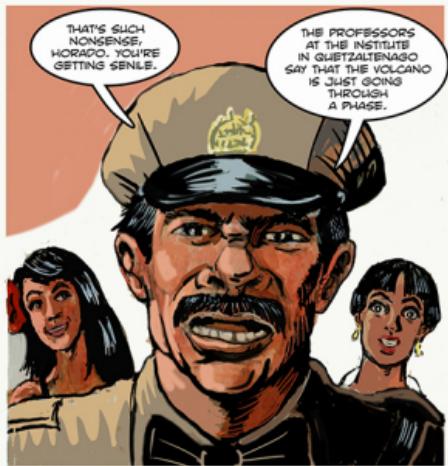
TOO QUICKLY A DEEP
FATIGUE DRAINED HIM



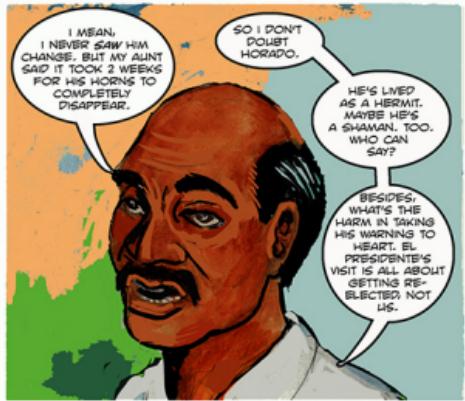
A WING TANGLED IN
TREE BRANCHES AS
GRAVITY PULLED HIM
DOWN FROM THE
VOLCANO'S SUMMIT

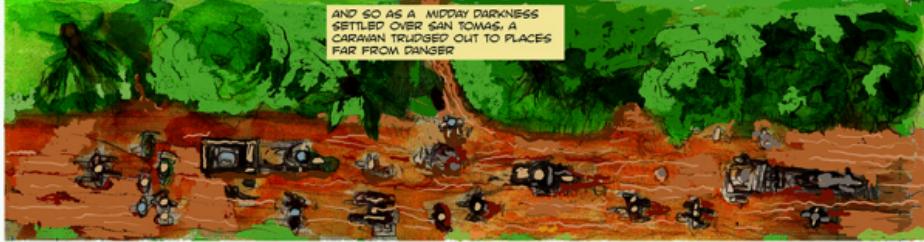




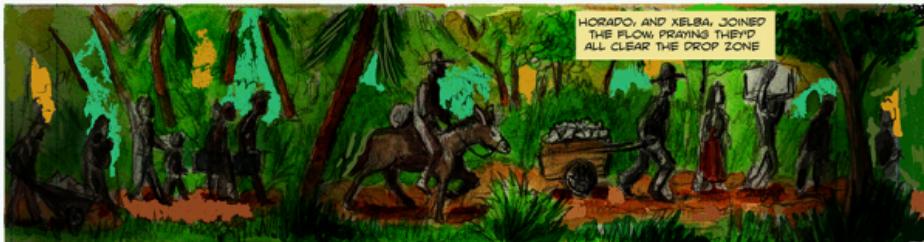




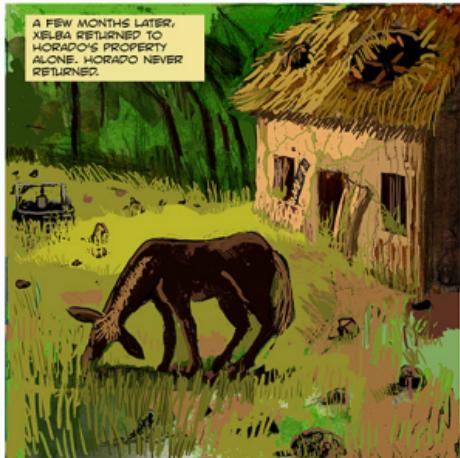




AND SO AS A MIDDAY DARKNESS SETLED OVER SAN TOMAS, A CARAVAN TRUDGED OUT TO PLACES FAR FROM DANGER



A FEW MONTHS LATER, KELIA RETURNED TO HORADO'S PROPERTY ALONE. HORADO NEVER RETURNED.



SOME SAY HORADO SHIFTED ONE LAST TIME. OTHERS THINK HE WASN'T ABLE TO SURVIVE THE ERUPTION. A DEBRIS SHOWER THAT DESTROYED FARMS AND VILLAGES FOR KILOS AROUND.



SAN TOMAS WAS PARTIALLY DESTROYED BUT ENOUGH OF THE ROADS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS STAYED STANDING TO MAKE IT WORTH REBUILDING. ONLY A FEW DIED THANKS TO HORADO'S WARNING.

A MASSIVE LAVA ROCK STILL SITS IN THE SQUARE TO THIS DAY AS A REMINDER OF GESKANLU'S POWER AND FURY IN 1902.



EL PASO TALES
- THE COOK'S TALE





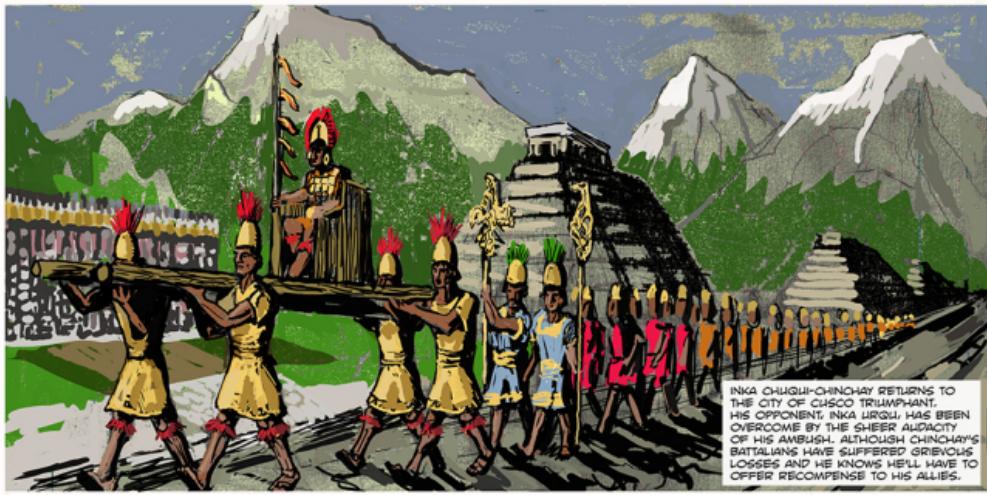
UNTIL MY ACTIVISM BECAME DANGEROUS, MY LIFE HAD ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT OTHERS.



UHH... EEE...
MAYBE NOW IS NOT



MY TALE IS OF INTRIGUE AND BETRAYAL. IT DOESN'T MATTER THE TRUTH, BUT MISLEAD THE DREAMERS. THIS TALE CONTINUES TO HAUNT ME.







AND SO BEGAN A REGIMENT OF TORTURE NOT UNIQUE IN HUMAN HISTORY. IF YOU THINK IT'S A HORROR ON THE PART OF THE CIVILIZATIONS OF RECORDED WESTERN CIVILIZATION WHERE THE INQUISITION SAW FIT TO HANG OR BURN WITCHES OR INFIDELS TO DEATH, BUT ONLY AFTER TORTURING THEM TO GET A FORCED CONFESSION OR CONVERSION.

STEP UP THE PACE

WHEN YOU'RE DONE, BRING HIM TO THE RACK

THE TRAMPLING WAS BAD ENOUGH

I DON'T HAVE THE STOMACH FOR THIS



OUR ILLUSTRIOUS LEADER DIDN'T SEE FIT TO STAY. WHY SHOULD WE?

MORE TO DISCUSS IN PRIVATE, FRIEND!

I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY BUT I'M NOT THERE YET

OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH UPSET AND TUMULT, EVEN IF CHINCHAY HAS NO BUSINESS BEING KINGS, AND I AGREE HE DOES NOT WHAT COST TO THE CALMNESS AND WELLBEING TO OUR PEOPLE?



THE COST OF A VAIN, INSANE, AND INCOMPETENT MAN WHO TAKES NO COUNSEL FROM WISER MEN WHO ACTS ON IMPULSE, AVENGEANCE, AND CALLOUSNESS. DO YOU THINK HE CARES TO LOST IN THE BATTLE TO OVERCOME HIS BROTHER? OR FOR THAT MATTER THEIR FAMILIES?

ALL THAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, AMARIL. BUT HE'S ONLY DIFFERENT IN DEGREE FROM HIS TWIN OR EVEN HIS FRIENDS. LIKE I SAID, THAT FAWL BELIEVES THE GODS TALK THE WORLD AND NATURE TO MEET THEIR WANTS AND NEEDS.

WE GOT TO GO. SO MUCH TO DIGEST. MAYBE EVEN WE FOR DINNER.

ALL THE MORE REASON TO NP IT IN THE BUD KUNTR.

IM MEETING WITH SOME LIKE-MINDED FRIENDS. SUNSET TONIGHT. PERHAPS YOU'LL JOIN?

I'LL SEND A MESSENGER TO LET YOU KNOW WHETHER OR NOT I'LL ATTEND



I WOULDNT BE HERE IN THIS CURSED MONSOON IF I DONT BELIEVE YOUR PLAN IS RIGHTEOUS AND WILL WORK. AND IT DOES MAKE SENSE THAT THIS DEED IS DONE OUT IN THE OPEN.

AND THAT IT IS DONE BY THE RIGHT PEOPLE.



BUT I AM SURPRISED THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE TUPAC AND GUANA. TUPAC! I THOUGHT YOU WERE CLOSE TO CHUNCHAY AS AN AIDE, AND GUANA AINT YOU A MAN SERVANT?

ALL THE BETTER TO SEE HOW BAD CHUNCHAY WILL BE FOR US AND WHAT ACTUALLY MOTIVATES HIM GENERAL KUNTUR. HIS TERROR WONT STOP WITH HIS BROTHER - HE WANTS ALL THE CITIES NEAR US TO PAY TRIBUTE TO HIM.

WE ARE CLOSE AND KNOW ALL HIS PRIVATE ACTIONS AND THOUGHTS

AND OFTEN EVEN HIS DREAMS



KUNTUR, TUPAC AND GUANA ARE GOOD AND HONORABLE MEN



IT'S NOT THEIR COMMITMENT THAT WORRIES ME, AWARL.

THEY ARE NOT EXPERIENCED WARRIORS. WHOEVER STRIKES THE FIRST BLOW MUST MAKE IT COUNT. IF IT DOESNT HURT HIM ENOUGH, HE COULD ESCAPE!

I WILL STRIKE FIRST, ISR. WITH PLEASURE AND TO THE HIT.



SO BE IT, HONORED FRIEND.

WE MUST EACH STRIKE A BLOW. AND BEFORE THE PRIESTS INVEST HIM, THIS CONSPIRACY CAN HAVE NO BACK SEATERS.

THEY WILL NOT SHRK OR EVADE THEIR OATH



THE BEST TIME TO STRIKE IS WHEN CHUNCHAY REACHES THE TOP OF THE CEREMONIAL PYRAMID. IT'S REQUIRED THAT HE BE ALONE. HIS GUARD MUST WAIT BELOW.

CHUNCHAY WILL BE FOCUSED ON THE RITUAL AND WON'T BE AWARE OF US.

WE SHOULD EACH LEAVE SEPARATELY NOW.



EVEN IF WE SUCCEED THERE WILL BE TARGETS ON OUR BACKS. CHUNCHAY'S COUSIN WIRNA WORRIES ME.

MAY HUARI GUIDE OUR BLADES TOMORROW. SLEEP WELL, COMRADE.



















A HOT HUMID NIGHT AND FIERCE MOSQUITOS TOOK THEIR TOLL ON KUNTUR'S SLEEP AS IF THE GHOST OF INKA CHUQUI-CHINCHAY WANTED TO EVEN THE SCORE.





EVEN OVER 500 YEARS AGO BEFORE THE SPANISH CONQUEST, THE INCA WERE MUSING ON DURING THEIR DREAMS AND ACTING ON THEM TO SATISFY THEIR EGOS, AS POWERFUL MEN TEND TO DO AFTER EVENTS SPIN OUT OF CONTROL, AND DISASTER ENSUES. AWARU WAS KILLED SOON AFTER HIS HEART-TO-HEART WITH KUNTUR, IN A SURPRISE ATTACK BY HIS OWN TROOPS.



KUNTUR, PROBABLY THE MOST UPSTANDING, INTELLIGENT, AND YES EVEN NOBLE, OF THE CONSPIRATORS, STILL RESOLVED HIS GUILT IN THE ONLY WAY HE KNEW - THROUGH A VIOLENT ACT.

ON HEARING OF AWARU'S DEATH, KUNTUR PERSUADED A TRUSTED SLAVE, ON THE PROMISE OF HIS FREEDOM, TO RUN HIM THROUGH WITH HIS OWN SPEAR.



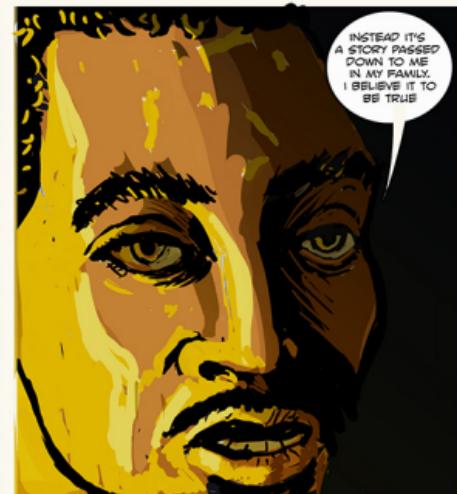
OVER THE THREE PLUS YEARS OF WAYNA'S REIGN AND HIS CONSTANT WARRING, THE WARI PEOPLE GREW TIRED OF HIS STEADY DEMANDS FOR TRIBUTE INCREASES.

THEY FOUND OCCASION TO DEPRIVE WAYNA OF HIS EXALTED POSITION AND LIFE ON A TRIBUTE VISIT TO ONE OF HIS HOLDINGS AND QUICKLY DISPATCHED HIM.

MEN! WAYNA COMBINED THE WORST QUALITIES OF HIS TWO UNCLE'S, WITH A STRIKE WHICH'S GROSSLY PROFOUND WHICH IS WHAT HE BASICALLY WAS ANYHOW.

NONE OF THE PEOPLE IN MY STORY HAD A CLUE TO THEIR PERVERSED VIEW OF LIFE BECAUSE THEIR ENTITLEMENT BLINDED THEM. THE CONQUISTADORES WHO OVERCAME THE INKANS WERE AS BAD IF NOT WORSE. THE MALE DEFECT IS NOT BOUND BY ANY CREDIT OR IDEOLOGY.

Men are still in control of most facets of life today. There is a drive to expand power is a constant for us all. That is my tale. Make of it what you will.



THE KNIGHT'S TALE

IN 1968, TECIO MENENDEZ, A VERY RICH SWAGGGER, LIVED ON A COMPOUND NEAR THE CITY OF LA CEJA, HONDURAS.







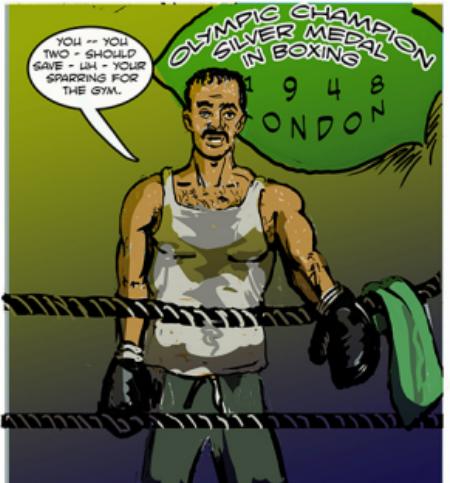












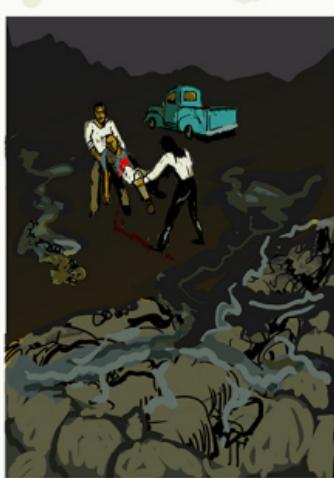


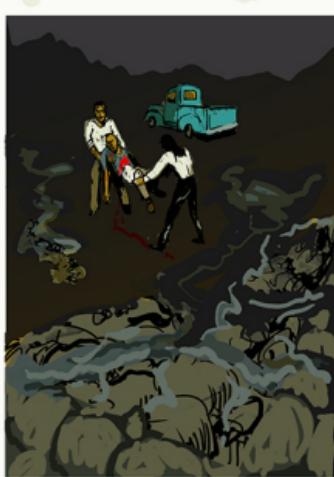




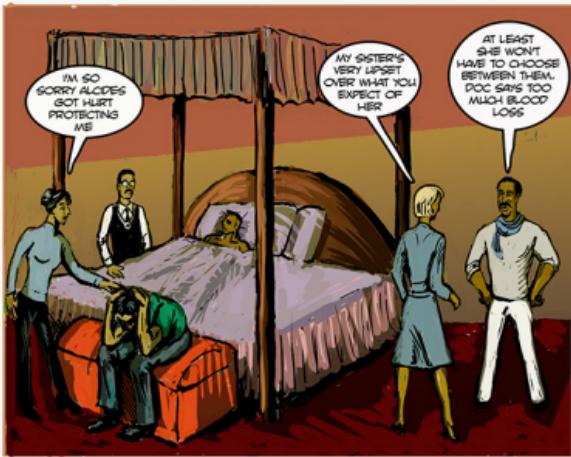


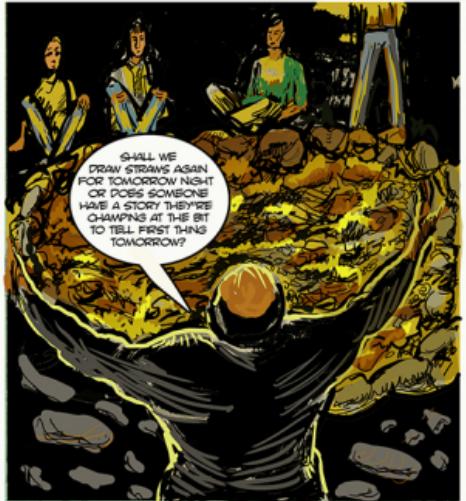
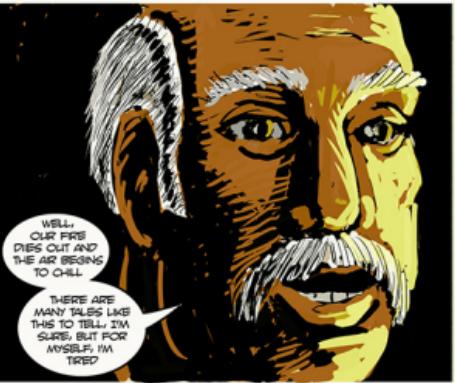
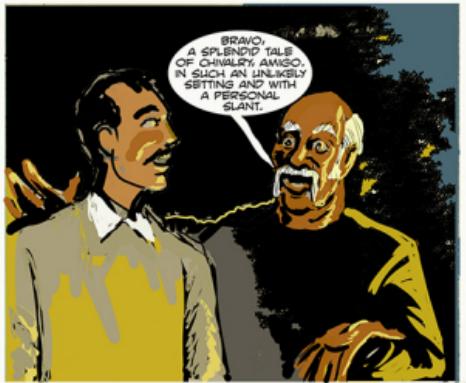












THE TWO SPIRIT'S TALE







PAPA HAD BEEN A CAPTAIN DURING THE PEASANTS REBELLION AND STILL PRACTICED HIS FENCING



I LOVED TO WATCH HIM AND SOON HE DECIDED I MUST LEARN THE ART OF FENCING



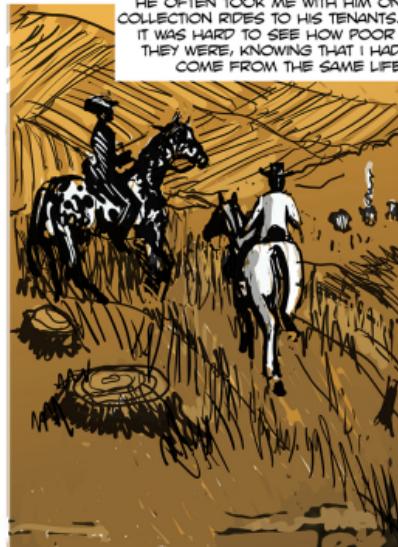
I LEARNED QUICKLY AND GOT BETTER, BUT HE WAS A DEMANDING TASK MASTER



BY THE TIME I TURNED 13, I WAS BESTING HIM REGULARLY BUT THAT ONLY GAVE HIM PLEASURE



HE OFTEN TOOK ME WITH HIM ON COLLECTION RIDES TO HIS TENANTS. IT WAS HARD TO SEE HOW POOR THEY WERE, KNOWING THAT I HAD COME FROM THE SAME LIFE.



THE DROUGHT SENOR. I'LL HAVE IT ALL NEXT MONTH









TAKE THIS DEADBEAT TO THE BACK AND ACQUAINT HIM YOUR WHIP



YOU MUST KNOW CHURCH PEOPLE PAY NO TAXES

