

THE COOK'S TALE



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



MANY STREAMS FROM THE VOLCANO NOURISH COFFEE TREES PARTICULARLY OUR COFFEE TREES



ON THE DAY BEFORE ITS ERUPTION GAGXANLIL WAS SHOWING ITS DARK SIDE, GRUMBLED DEEP INTO THE NIGHT, SHAKING BUILDINGS.



MOST VILLAGERS WERE DEEP IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT DAY'S ARRIVAL OF EL PRESIDENTE AND HIS FIESTAS MINERALIAS.

WATCH YOUR STEER XELHA.



BUT ONE VILLAGE ELDER FELT THE VILLAGERS NEEDED TO PREPARE FOR A DIFFERENT EVENT.



HORADO GASTRONO HAD LIVED THROUGH PREVIOUS ERUPTIONS AND KNEW HOW UNPREDICTABLE AND DEADLY THEY COULD BE.

EASY BABY LET'S GET AWAY FROM THESE COAGS.



HORADO SCANNED THE TREES UNTIL HE SAW HIS SPIRIT ANIMAL.



THE EAGLE, HIS LIFE-LONG PARTNER



HIS PRAYERS AND INCANTATION TOOK AWHILE BUT EVENTUALLY THEY MERGED

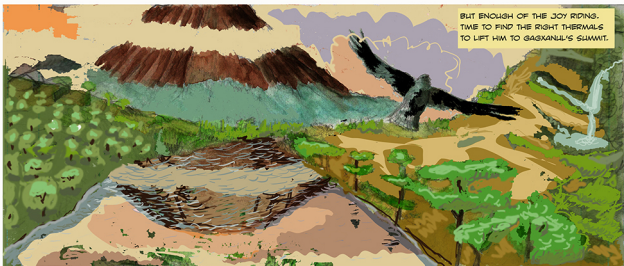


TO THIS DAY, NO ONE KNOWS HOW THEY TRANSITIONED, AND THE NAGUALS WON'T TELL.

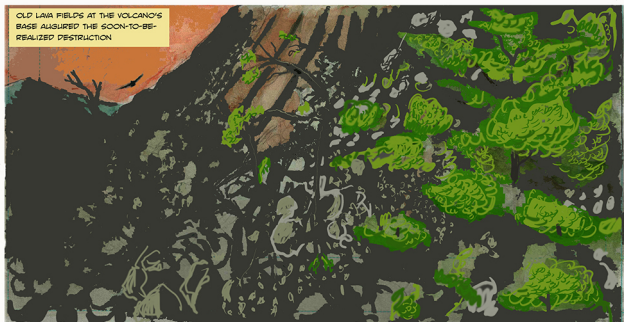




IT HAD BEEN AWHILE SINCE HORADO HAD MERGED WITH WITH HIS EAGLE SPIRIT-MATE AND HE'D FORGOTTEN HOW WONDERFUL FLOATING ON THE THERMALS FELT.



BUT ENOUGH OF THE JOY RIDING. TIME TO FIND THE RIGHT THERMALS TO LIFT HIM TO GASKANUL'S SUMMIT.



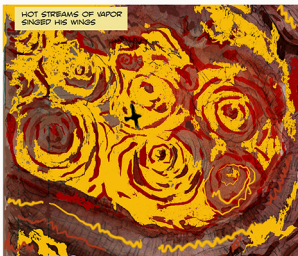
OLD LAVA FIELDS AT THE VOLCANO'S BASE ASSURED THE SOON-TO-BE-REALIZED DESTRUCTION



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



LAVA STREAMS BOILED,
SWIRLED, AND EXPLODED
LIKE A CAULDRON OF
SWIMMING CORN SOUP.



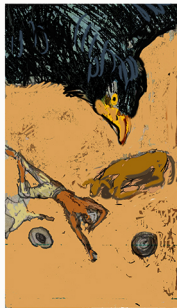
HOT STREAMS OF VAPOR
SINSED HIS WINGS



TOO QUICKLY A DEEP
FATIGUE DRAINED HIM



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





HORADO FELT WEAK
BUT HE KNEW WHAT
HE HAD TO DO.



MY SWEET
BABIES!



THE VILLAGERS CARRIED
ON BLIND TO THE DANGER



NO PISS,
HORADO? SO
TASTY - I'VE ALWAYS
LOVED THEM.

OOO... WHAT
HAPPENED TO
YOUR ARM,
SEÑOR?



YOU HAVE TO
FLEE NOW

THIS IS NO
TIME FOR A
FESTIVAL MY
FRIENDS!



NOW!
GASKANJIL IS
GETTING READY
TO BLOW ITS
TOP!

UH PARDON SEÑOR,
BUT HOW DO YOU
SEE SOMETHING
WE DON'T?







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



HORADO, AND XELBA, JOINED
THE FLOW PRAYING THEY'D
ALL CLEAR THE DROP ZONE



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



SOME SAY HORADO SHAPE-SHIFTED ONE LAST TIME. OTHERS THINK HE WANTED ABLE TO SURVIVE THE ERUPTION OR THE DEBRIS SHOWER THAT DESTROYED FARMS AND VILLAGES FOR KILOS AROUND.



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

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



SUCH A SPLENDID TALE, JAMIE, AND AN EXCELLENT WAY TO KICK OFF OUR STORY HOUR.

GRATIAS, SENOR. SAN TOMAS IS MY HOME AND I ALREADY MISS IT. HOPEFULLY I'LL MAKE ENOUGH MONEY AS A CHEF TO RETURN THERE SOON.



NOW! WHO ELSE HAS A TALE AS ENTERTAINING TO TELL US?

COME NOW! DON'T BE SHY. COME FORWARD AND BE HEARD!



IT WOULD BE SUCH A SHAME TO WASTE SUCH A WARNING FIRE -

I WILL DO IT, SENOR, ALTHOUGH MY TALE MIGHT NOT BE AS ENTERTAINING AS OUR YOUNG COOK'S.