



PRL
s e r i a l s

Meridian

Issue 2, VOLUME 6, FEBRUARY 28, 2026

FEBRUARY 2026

Everything marches forward, and the enemy unleashes its fury. The heroes of the PRL Serials say goodbye to their loved ones and hello to a threat to all existence.

In this issue:

THE DIVINE ESSENCE - THE DESCENDANT - MASTER'S LOG 2120

PRL

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from the editor

The drama in Issue 2 is my favorite kind; very unexpected and a show of the antagonist's powers. The heroes of the PRL Serials have done the unthinkable, they have confronted Une and came away alive to tell the tale. Une will not let this stand, and she goes off, stewing in her juices before she takes very decisive action. The results of her actions remain to be seen all across the serials of Issue 2. It's the high stakes action that I love that puts everyone on notice.

Issue 2 coincides with the last day of February, also known as Black History Month. We live in a very...let's say interesting time, when it seems that the gloves are off and racism is just a way of life. It always has been, but it seems that some white people are tired of pretending that they don't believe they are the default human being. There are white people who seriously think that all of existence was created just for people who look like them to preside over as the superior creation of their creator and nothing that you or I can say to them will avail them of that notion. We just have to share reality with those types of people.

I don't mean to be a bummer, but if we do what the month says and look at the trajectory of the history of black people in America, the last few decades have been iffy, to put it mildly. I am a black man, born and raised in North Carolina, and I will acknowledge both my suffering and my privilege. My family has never had very much, but I enjoy a drive and intelligence that afforded me things that weren't offered to others where I come from, so, again, I acknowledge both my suffering and my privilege, and my story is a sign of progress for black people in America because it could not have happened for many other

black men in the history of this country. But to think that there are people in this country who are want to remove aspects of American history from museums and textbooks because it makes the country look bad, to think that we would even be having that conversation in 2026 - a time that if you had told me I would be alive in as a kid, I would have imagined we'd be riding around in flying cars like the Jetsons - is a stark reminder that there are people in this world who genuinely believe that they are divinely superior and supreme and they will die with the delusion that they will rest happy in heaven as a reward for living as the chosen race of their god.

But this is the February Issue of the PRL Serials Volume 6, we don't need to get so heavy. If you want to enjoy and appreciate some art featuring black characters, you are in the right place. The majority of the characters featured in our publication are black, and it is such a default for us here that the instinct is to mention race when characters aren't black.

The Fonlands and the stories that take place therein are inspired by the myths, legends, folklore, and religions of the African continent, and filtered through the diaspora of black people around the globe. The Fèt Deads Special that we have planned for November 2, and the Fèt Gede Special from 2025, were inspired by the actual Haitian Fèt Gede Vodou festival that honors the spirits of the dead. Deads' Town that debut in Volume 4 is inspired by Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard*. Tutuola was born in Nigeria and the *Palm Wine Drinkard* inspired Zacchaeus's return to the Fonlands in the 2024 Interim Shorts. It's been an honor and an ongoing journey getting to know the works of fantasy by black artists and to have

that inspire what the Fonlands has become.

If you are looking for other recommendations of works of fantasy by black writers, you should check out Tutuola's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, Marlon James' *The Dark Star Trilogy* that starts with *Moon Witch*, *Spider King*, *Victor LaValle's The Changeling* and I would say *Lone Women* as well, but some might argue that it's more strange fiction, Lovecraftian even, but if you don't know Lovecraft, then *Lone Women* works as a historical novel with fantastical elements. Solomon Rivers' *The Deep* and *Sorrowland* are also good recommendations. P. Djèli Clark's "How to Raise a Kraken in Your Bathtub" is an awesome short story that is historical with fantastical elements. I think it's still available online from *Uncanny Magazine*, you should definitely check that out.

N. K. Jemisin's *The Fifth Season* is a very good novel. I intend to finish the series one day soon, but my list of things to read is very long. *Akata Witch* by Nnedi Okorafor was enjoyable, but definitely for younger readers, and there's a whole series so there's a lot to read there, too.

Octavia Butler, I think, is most well known as a science fiction or speculative fiction writer, and I won't dispute that. Her work puts sci-fi and fantasy elements on her projections for the future of people and particularly black people. Her novel *Fledgling* is about vampires so it feels like horror, but there's sci-fi elements to it as well, and there are fantasy trappings to the narrative. Butler is the truest definition of genre-bending writer and she definitely influenced the Fonlands. *The Pattern* was named in honor of her and Ursula K Le Guin.

- Roy Cureton, 02/2026
* * *

VOLUME 6

FEBRUARY 2026

Meridian

Issue 2

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The First Unrest characterizes the period in the history of the Fonlands when rifts appeared regularly in the Fonlands that led to the Earth of universe Prime 5. Portals between the realms still exist, but they appeared and disappeared more frequently during the First Unrest. This time lasted until the early 1900's of Prime 5 Earth and includes the time of the slave trade that resulted in the migration of black people and Fonlanders to the Americas. The Second Unrest is all about the looming threat.

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From her perspective, Une is the hero. She removes the fear of death from anything she deems beneficial to her continued existence. To protect her many children from destruction, Une will cleanse the entirety of the multiversal structure of anything that could harm her, and her children as a result. Recently, Une came face to face with things that meant her harm. She will split herself in two to conquer the realms that produced beings with such audacity.

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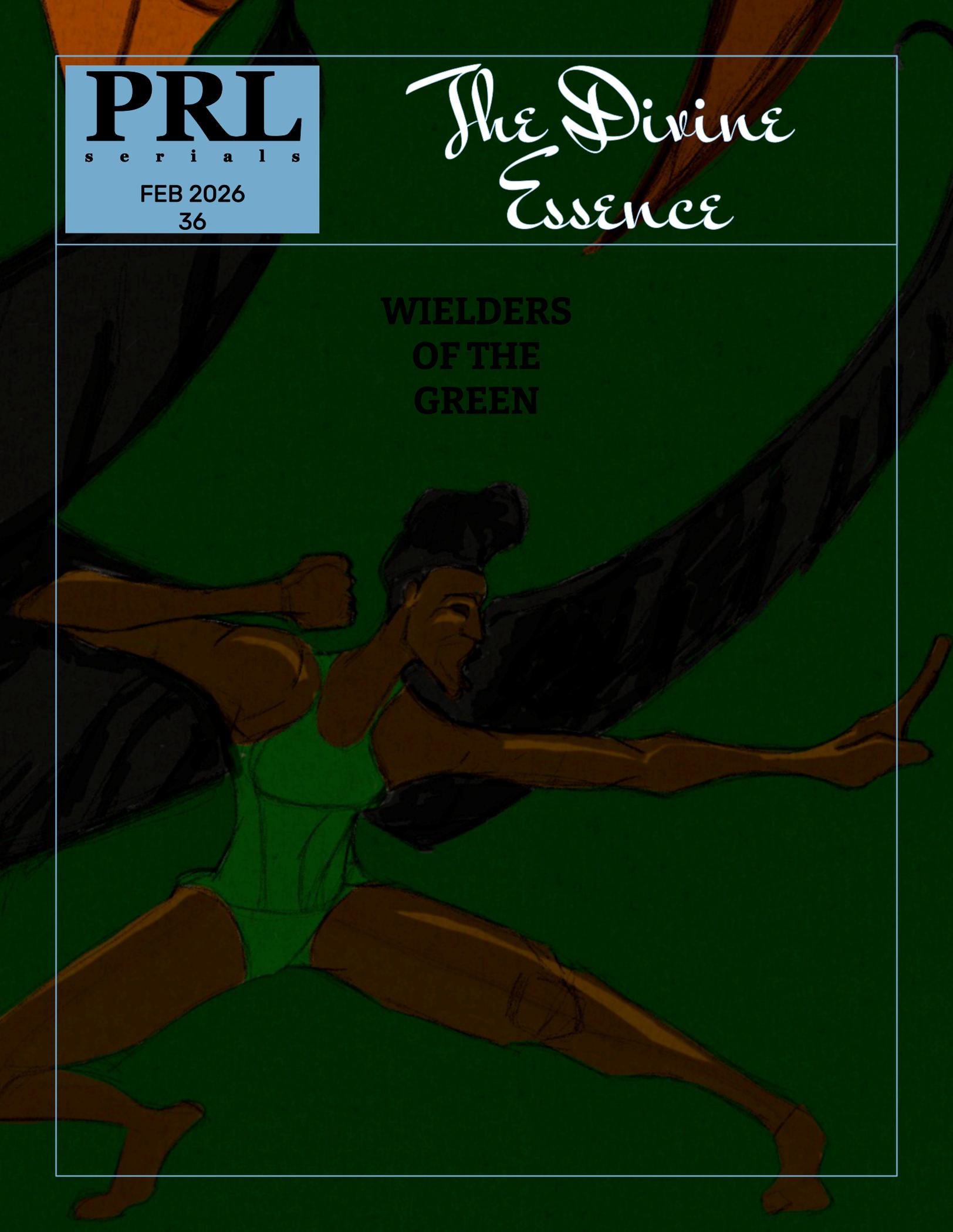
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FEB 2026

36

The Divine Essence

WIELDERS
OF THE
GREEN



- THE SECOND UNREST -

BY VIV

“It’s been a while,” Tracia says as she lands on the road leading to the Aziza mound.

“Not so long,” Pultine says and she hugs her sister in a way that the two haven’t embraced in a long time. Pultine holds Tracia at arm’s length and stares into her eyes. “We have come a long way together, haven’t we, sister? We have cocooned more times than we should have been able considering we haven’t even made it to recession, neither of us are shrinking. I am thankful for the time we had together and the times that are ahead, even if they lead to the destruction of everything.”

“It went badly in Paradise?” Tracia asks with concern. “I’ve never seen you this...nice, and morose. Is it that bad?”

“Une is a terror, she will enslave or kill us if we don’t kill her first. And she is coming. I am not afraid, not exactly.” Pultine thinks a moment as the sounds of the jungle sing around her. It is a beautiful day

and Pultine would rather be lying on the large branch of a tree and staring up into the canopy. “I just know that what comes soon is the most consequential thing we have done in all of our time, and it is time to go. Everyone is gathering, armies of Golden Executioners, the asaf warrior groups of the jungle Asanbosam and forest colonies, and the legendary Deads who now stand as Fâ’s sentries.”

“Who is Fâ?” Tracia asks, and she has many more questions but Pultine is in a talkative mood.

“The new Vodun of Death. You will like her when you meet her. Agê does not, but that is mostly resentment at the fact that she has resided in the Disc of Lêgba all this time and could have been cultivating the Death Magic of the Fonlands. But she was born from the underside of the Disc fully aware of what is coming. We will go to Une soon, it is all coming together. And though I have every intention of surviving this attack, just as I did in our last encounter, I would be remiss not to

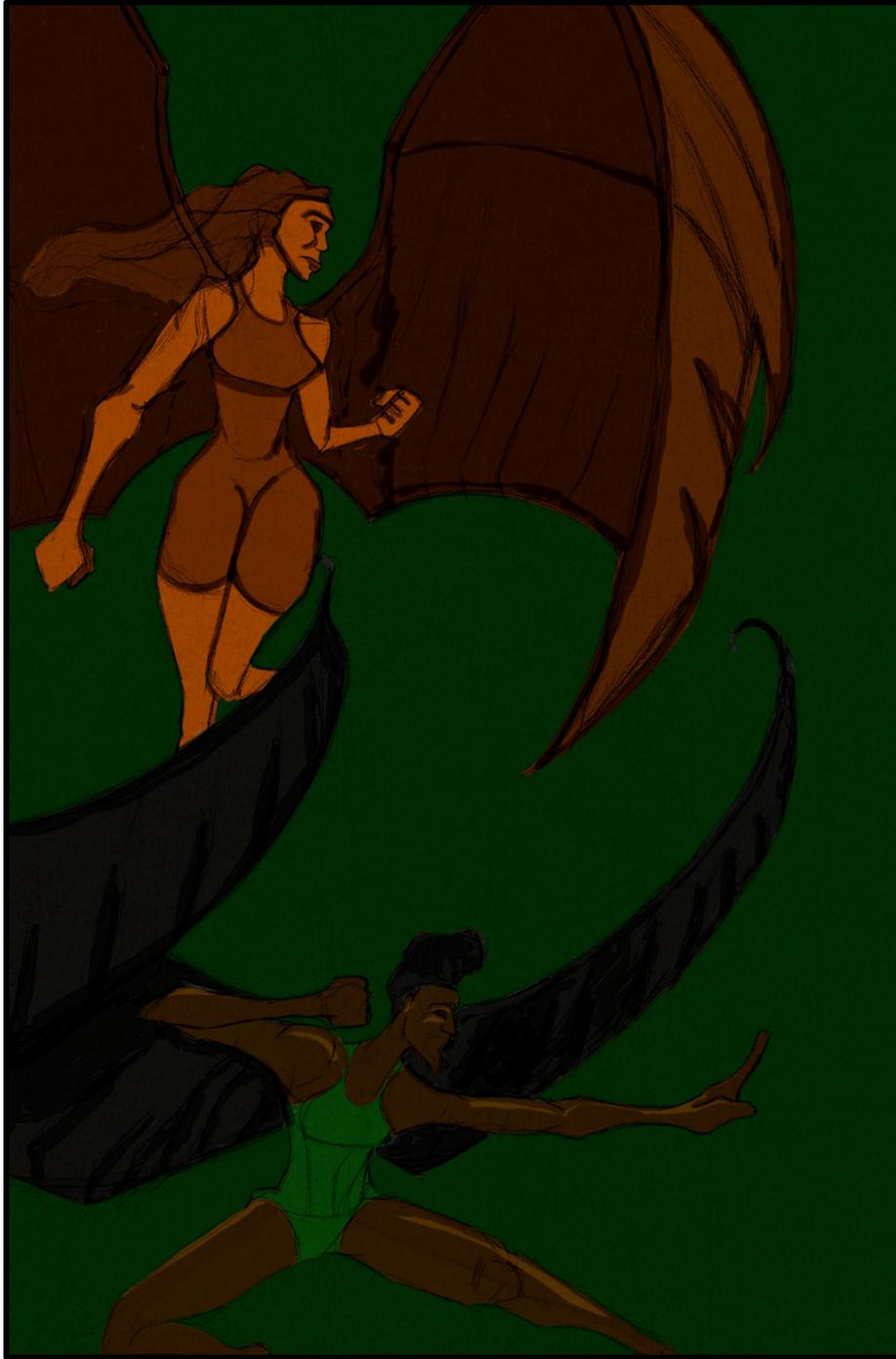
plan for the worst and to settle my affairs here. I want to appreciate being here on the Disc while I can. Before we go. You are going with me, aren’t you?”

“Of course,” Tracia assures, “and I’ve had the same thought. Metatron and I have taken up residence in the Aziza mound. I haven’t felt so at home there since before the Idols shrunk out of existence. We are the Idols now, that is hard to believe, and it has been so long, but it feels like home in the mound again.”

“I was with Rusa before coming here and I will see it all one last time, then we must go to the house of Agê to rendezvous with the other green generals before we are transported to the realm of Une.”

“So the battle is imminent?” Tracia asks as Pultine nods. She knew it was coming and she is prepared, but this seems sudden.

They fly to the Aziza mound



where Pultine receives a warm welcome from the mmoatia, the umbatia, even visiting yumboes, abada, and homun who are disturbing their regular movement in the jungle to see the classic Supreme Mmoatia before their big confrontation.

“Why isn't Ahdis here?” Pultine asks Tracia at the head of the large table made from the dirt of the mound and elegantly decorated by the aboatia Whil.

“She doesn't know?” Whil asks dramatically; he sits across from Tracia. “Why has no one told her? It's very heroic, just like you three, she is one of Sakpata's Seven that I read about in the exclusive scrolls from the Smiting Chamber. They have gone in search of the enemy across the multiversal structure to help Sakpata destroy it.”

“You spend too much time reading scrolls,” Lorr says with annoyance, sitting next to Whil. “I don't even have to read them because

he's always going on and on about them. Ask me about how things are going for him in the swamps, I couldn't tell you because he's been following this Une business like it is entertainment. It is very interesting to hear about all of the beings from other realms, though, I will admit that.”

“I would have gone with them,” Raius says next to Tracia. “But I'm happy to help defend the Fonlands.”

“She will be an asset to Sakpata,” Pultine says, masking her disappointment. “It would have been good to see her before we left.”

They are all silent for a moment as the Fonlanders at the table celebrate them and enjoy one another's company.

“Are you both afraid?” Whil asks.

“Of course not,” Raius says with a laugh. “You've read about the Pristine's triumph against Une.”

“A triumph that was short-lived,” Pultine says sternly, not hiding her frustration. “Did the scrolls tell of the realm of Talj that I fought to preserve? How the entirety of it was ripped in two? Because that hardly sounds like triumph to me.”

Raius and Whil are both embarrassed and look down at the food in front of them.

“What we face is serious,” Tracia says and they all look at her. “We can't underestimate it so we have to be sober about the reality. This may be the last time that we are all together like this. I am glad that we could be here together. It is not an occasion to be sad, we have had a good time, but we can't be flippant about what we face. Now is the time to renew yourself in the magic that made you because if the enemy gets its hands on you, it can kill you, but worse, it can bend you to its will. We know something of bending things to our will and we will not surrender easily to anything. We will not let our fellow Fonlanders surrender either,

not if we can stop it and be safe ourselves. The Fonlands survive if we survive and we will not disappoint the lands that made us." Tracia has been speaking loudly enough that others along the table, the younger mmoatia, the abada, the homun, the yumboes, the umbatia, they all pause in their revelry to be stirred by Tracia's words. They cheer when she finishes and then it is time.

"This is the end of an era," Lorv says after they wave goodbye to the last of the guests to the mound, the permanent inhabitants are still enjoying the spread on the decorated table.

"No," Pultine says. She had been largely silent since her outburst at Raius and Whil. "We have been in the time of the Second Unrest since the Outsiders arrived and alerted us to the threat that was coming, over a hundred Earther years ago. We go to the end."

"The Unrest," Lorv says with a slow nod. "That brings back memories I had largely forgotten considering how much time I've spent in the other realm. But those times in the Fonlands when the rifts to the Earther realm appeared spontaneously were so unsure and chaotic, Fonlanders were disappearing left and right. And I hadn't felt that level of dread since I brought Top back to Endla in the other realm. Second Unrest, indeed."

"Are you all joining the army to defend the Fonlands from Une?" Tracia asks, realizing that she isn't sure exactly what would happen if and when Une tried to land on the Fonlands.

"Lorv, Whil, and I have been training the forces of our disc in fortifying their psychic defenses. There is a sizable force, too," Raius says. "The younger mmoatia are studying as well, but they are creating safe havens to protect the defenseless in the event the enemy makes landfall. If that happens, the three of us will lend our talents in green magic to other discs that are organizing the same way. When she comes, she will be met with

considerable resistance."

"I don't doubt it," Tracia says with a smile.

Pultine and Tracia linger for a while longer before they say goodbye and leave the Aziza mound for the House of Agê.

* * *

"It is good to see you," the Vodun Agê smiles with her arms outstretched as Tracia and Pultine land on the wooden roof of the large House that straddles the jungle and the forest in the center of the Disc on top of the canopy. "It is always good to see the strong mmoatia you two have become. I remember when Tracia was a child obsessed with my calabash. Did you see all of this coming?" Agê asks genuinely as she stands before them in her long, strapless skirt that exposes her bare feet. The Vodun is tall, but the mmoatia aren't dwarfed by her.

"I knew we were coming to darkness, but then I thought that we had arrived at it multiple times already, and that is when the calabash lost its luster for me," Tracia admitted. "Divining is only helpful in times of peace and we have been at war for quite some time. I find it best to act."

Agê nods and then looks to Pultine, who smiles weakly at the Vodun. There are others on the rooftop, the Strange Witch is talking with the Luminary Aziza, Obea, and there is a group of large asanbosam in dark green tunic shirts to match the skirts that Pultine and Tracia wear. Agê sits in front of the mmoatia who sit cross-legged like the Vodun.

"You wonder if your best will be enough considering Talj," Agê says to her and Pultine nods. "I was there, I was outside of everything using all of my magic, every drop of Divine Essence, all my knowledge of the Green that we have cultivated with the Divine Essence, but it wasn't enough. I watched the Talj Junction rip down the middle and then curl up out of existence into oblivion, and I

TRACIA

of the Strange Lightning

from the Manual and Reference
of the Fonlands

SECTION 4 - 4

THE DISC OF AGÊ

TELLINGS OF THE DISC OF AGÊ

The Legend of Tracia

Tracia was born on the jungle side of the Disc of Agê, shortly before the birth of Pultine on the forest side of the disc. Tracia is the daughter of the first Aziza, but she was born with glorious, feathered wings that her father called Excellent, and she became the definition of the word on the disc. The first Aziza and his kin did not have wings, but they were born from the Essence-rich soil of the Disc of Agê, sprouting up like the flora until they reached maturity with humanoid bodies that they easily uprooted. The first Azizas were practically giants, they grew as tall as the tallest trees of the disc in order to receive the light of Age that shone down from the sky over the canopy. Subsequent generations of Azizas are smaller since they learned to migrate to less populated corners of the disc, usually on the jungle half, to root their off-spring.

The Aziza have brown skin that is rough like tree bark that sheds when they reach maturity to reveal smooth brown skin underneath. They can generate bark to heal their skin or as a protective layer, and they can grow other flora from their skin at will. Their hair is like moss and usually grows up from their heads, rarely hanging down.

Tracia's mother was the glorious Golden Trumpet that grew in the northern section of the jungle and presided over everything that laid eyes on her and couldn't resist bowing to her. She was yellow with five petals, each about eighty feet long, that formed a flute about forty feet across, and she rested on the leaves of the giant bush that was her throne.

When the first Aziza met Golden Trumpet, the two were instantly attracted to one another and Golden invited the first Aziza inside of her. Tracia was conceived at their first meeting. Golden was pregnant for many Earther years and the

first Aziza was there by her side. Until the day the lightning struck Golden Trumpet, and Tracia was born.

When Agê saw the lightning manifest over the canopy of her disc, seemingly from nowhere, she rushed out to the spot to investigate. She found Tracia, tiny compared to her parents, with golden brown skin and curly hair down past her shoulders, lithe limbs, brown feathered wings that matched her skin, with sparks of electricity jumping off of her. Both Golden Trumpet and the first Aziza were honored by the presence of Agê at the birth of their daughter, and when Tracia was given a Third Heart, they knew that all of the Fonlands would come to know that their daughter was special.

Even though the first Aziza was proud of his daughter, Tracia was not accepted as an Aziza by the larger community. She was revered for her beauty and her might, but she was something different, and she eventually became known as the first Red Mmoatia.



also felt it because I was trying so hard to save it.” Agê looks down at her hands and she cups them, her right hand on top of the left as tears fall from her cheeks. The tears are a subtle shade of Essence blue, and from two tear drops, dirt begins to fill the cup of her hands and when they are full to the brim, a sprout begins to grow in a vibrant shade of green. The sprout becomes a stem and then a flower that neither of the mmoatia have ever seen before begins to bloom and Agê wipes the last tear from her cheek. The flower is a vibrant shade of yellow with two clusters of stacked petals on either side of a large red receptacle.

“This flower will forever grow on this disc and be called Junction. It will one day give birth to a great Idol who will have legends like the two of you to inspire them, and they will be known as Talj the Living.”

Agê’s hands are inundated with green magic and then the flower and the dirt in her hands disappear.

“I was helpless,” the Vodun continued. “All I could do was watch Talj disappear, so I understand feelings of inadequacy. But you beat her, Pultine, daughter of Iuma, the sturdy and steadfast. You hurt Une and she fears us because of you. I think that she underestimates me because I have made contact with her many times with the aid of the Hyperion and I have tried to dissuade her from her plans to infect the Fonlands, but she is coming. We have more time than we thought to prepare here, but Xêvioso and the new Vodun Fâ are eager to catch Une unaware where she lives.”

“So Une is coming here?” Tracia asks. “If that is the case, we should meet her with all of our might in the aether around Aido Hwedo.”

“She won’t truly be here,” Agê explained. “She will see and feel, but she will be safe in her home realm, safe to die here if we manage to kill whatever form she takes. She is the Pito, she lives in everything that she infects, but they are her limbs, nothing vital that would cut her

down. She is not sending her heart to the Fonlands, and while she is so focused on revenge, we will drive a steak through that heart. It will not bring Talj back, but I know that every being of that existence that was lost would be glad to know that we ended the thing that ended them so casually. We are enough, Pultine, but we cannot let this enemy use our own strengths against us. She is trying to demoralize us, she is puffing up to be bigger, but it is bluster. She is scatter-brained and nervous. But she is very powerful and we can’t let doubt give her the edge, if we slip up or hesitate, we will miss our chance.”

“I won’t miss again,” Pultine says resolutely. “I brought backup this time,” and she smiles at Tracia.

“Une will know the true power of the green,” Tracia says, “and it will be the final death of her.”

“She is here!” The Luminary Obea yells and it disturbs the Vodun and the Mmoatia and are up on their feet in a second. “Jo has sent out a psychic message, she says that Une has been identified in the aether around Aido Hwedo!”

“How is that possible?” Agê asks. If she is panicked by the news, she expresses it with anger that rages on her face. “How did she catch us unaware?”

“Jo says that the enemy is being delayed with a spell by the Arcana Master, and powerful beings are learning what they can. She has fallen into the trap set by those watching for her. You should go to the Smiting Chamber, the Vodun are meeting there now.”

Agê disappears from the rooftop.

“She is here?” Tracia says to Pultine, both their wings high and on alert.

“She is here. It’s time,” Pultine says, but they have to wait for orders from their Vodun.

* * *

The Mmoatia

The mmoatia, or an aboatia, were described by the Earthers who encountered them in the vicinity of present-day Ghana. The mmoatia are said to be small compared to humans with round noses and faces. Their skin is light brown, almost yellow, and their toes are located on the heels of their feet.

They have a reputation for trickery and love a good laugh. It is said that they will give knowledge of the forest to any Earther that makes them laugh. Their knowledge of the flora of the forests is extensive and they can prepare cures for any Earther disease.

The mmoatia on earth are not the true Mmoatia of the Fonlands. Mmoatia of the Fonlands are taller than Earthers with feathered wings and humanoid bodies.

Black, Red, and White

There are three types of mmoatia, distinguishable by color. The Black are typically very beautiful with wings and a glittering aspect to their magic. They get along well with Earthers. The Red are very aggressive and generally view Earthers as nothing more than imbeciles to be manipulated for their entertainment. Wings are not common to Red mmoatia and there is a flame aspect to their magic. The White are among the most cruel Fonlanders to dwell the forests and are said to use trickery to trap Earthers for consumption. There is no aspect to their magic, meaning that there is no visual manifestation of the magic they wield. The White have the ability to mimic the bodies of Earthers that they consume, though they cannot increase their height.

Serials starring Mmoatia:

The Divine Essence

Mmoatia's

GREATEST

HITS

Mmoatia's

GREATEST

HITS

Mmoatia's

GREATEST

HITS

Notable Mmoatia

Tracia, of the Strange Lightning

Coffey, the Unbound

Pultine, of the Large Flower

Ariel, a Daughter of Pultine

Ahdis, of the Deep Plasma

Leilar, a Daughter of Lorv

Lorv, of the Rocky Forests

Zazel, a Daughter of Tracia

Raius, of the Lotus

Agiel, a Son of Pultine

Whil, of the Lilly

Mmoatia have appeared in these serials:

COTTON-WOOD

ÂMLUK

MASTER'S
LOG

THE DEFT HANDS
OF ZACCHAEUS

And in these major storylines

AN EARTHER
IN THE
FONLANDS

ARCH OF
HYSTERIA

DEATH-
GROWTH

PRL

s e r i a l s

FEB 2026

4

THE DESCENDANT





BY VIV

Shortly after the destruction of the Talj Junction, Une went silent. Her tendrils across the multiversal structure continued their work, there was a contingent of the Descendant converting the matter of a universe into food for their mother and there was a large force of Pito battering the resistance of another universe, but Une's consciousness was not in these efforts. Une was in the Une-verse that she'd created for herself by consuming all of the matter that she could digest and repurposing it in her image. The things that she could not consume, bore witness to Une's swift ascension from menace of Earth, to conqueror of everything and this is the only space where she feels safe to rest her consciousness because of her complete control over it. Every living thing in the Une-verse was alive because she allowed it and everything understood that they existed for the sole purpose of preserving their mother. Even the existences that she had conquered were not completely hers and it would take time to consume them to

her satisfaction that she would risk resting her mind in those places.

When she awoke from her rest, she occupied her physical form that is disturbing to view from a distance. Une is the horror of an overgrown cosmos, a tight ball of mycelium that looks like yarn around what had been Earth, with both thick and thin tendrils unfathomably long, stretching across the cosmos to the other bodies that Une had long ago reached and conquered. She thrives in the void of space, and she creates new environments of her being, the mycelium, on the new places her tendrils reach.

She managed to grow out of her existence when she conquered the Ascendant and she has taken exactly thirty-three universes since her emergence from the universe that bears her name and the scope of her influence varies across them. None are as completely hers as her home world, but she had a feeling that the beings she'd encountered who handed her the first defeat she'd ever known would be the key to

consuming existences more quickly and more completely. She had encountered beings like the ones who had defeated her. The one who called herself Pultine, Une had corrupted to Pulatas, who was theoretically the thirty-three iterations of Pultine that she had acquired in her conquests, though not every one of those existences had a being similar enough to the Pultine of the Node 5 Fonlands to be considered an iteration and Pulatas was actually just nine iterations of Pultine. And the one with Pultine, the one who had forced the meeting with the eyes of pure empathy, Une had seen her before and this one who had defeated her was the only one she had allowed to live. How was it possible that these things that she had already dominated were capable of threatening her very existence? How had they burned her and forced her out, that was an affront, and that existence had to disappear into oblivion to erase the proof of her mortality. She'd expelled so much of her energy at the entry point she had taken into the Talj Function, that was also the point at which she withdrew

the parts of her she could salvage, that it sent Talj into a shock and caused it to reverse the attraction that held the two parts of it together, and in the absence of that attraction, Talj ripped into nothing.

She had to do the same to the home world of Pultine and her companion and she would take the two of them herself and pilot their bodies as the two halves of her consciousness that she would split to lead her forces to the homes of those who had insulted her. It was easy for Une to find the Fonlands and the Hyperion universes and she plotted for her revenge.

* * *

Une is splitting herself down the middle when she makes her opening move against her enemies. Outside of everything, the corrupted Vodun of another Fonlands are conjuring her magic to launch it at the Fonlands of Node 5 and the Hyperion universe of Node 1 simultaneously. Two balls of mycelium that each contain the female form she had taken before Pultine and the Hyperion, blazing with the green, purple, and yellow energy of her are launched by two sets of Vodun and they both blaze like planet-sized comets at the toric visualizations of the existences from the outside vantage. Maybe they move fast, maybe they move at a snail's pace, but they move and they will arrive simultaneously and it will be worth it to lose the Vodun she had corrupted because they will perish in the nothingness outside before they can regain the Une-verse; the intensity of the spell weakens them and they blend into the fathomless nothing.

Une is two when her bombs breach the spacetime inside of her targets. Uneb is aware inside of the Hyperion Universe and Unea is aware in the aether around the slumbering snake known as Aido Hwedo where the Fonlands rest. Both Unea and Uneb slow their movement and come to a stop, still blazing with their energy, but still, and they sit as beacons. She gives a

command to everything she touches, ordering everything that she allows action and violence to one of two locations. And as her forces follow their beacons, Unea and Uneb both resume their incredible speed, Unea on course to the Disc of Agê and Uneb to the planet Earth.

"Once you have entered, follow my trajectory," both Unea and Uneb say to the forces traveling to the Fonlands and Hyperion universes. "Land on my mark and we will devastate the land and then everything else."

Since the failure in Talj, Une had lost trust in her Descendant and her Pito. She had allowed them to remain autonomous when she slept, but since awakening, she has limited their ability to make decisions for themselves, setting most of them to repetitive tasks. Her Descendant and Pito can only cut down opposition that they identify using primitive methods like identifying sentient things without dark coloring that is a characteristic of beings infected by Une, and this had led to considerable friendly fire among the Descendant and the Pito, but this was negligible to Une who would sacrifice any number of her forces to avoid the humiliating defeat she'd suffered.

Une has tunnel vision, Unea and Uneb will bring destruction, she is overwhelmed by her anger and the forms of her flare with her actual magic, her actual consciousness. Une is barreling toward...

* * *

Uneb is puzzled. The ground should have cratered and everything in a radius that would have leveled the east coast of the United States should have been instantly killed. She had imagined the devastation her impact on the ground would be and it made her smile to think of all the things that would die, how the empathetic one who dared stare upon her with fake understanding would weep at the sight of her impact. But her crash landing is interrupted. She lands on a cushion and she screams her frustration, stamping down hard on whatever

thing is at her feet.

"What is it, Neb?" Uneb recognizes the words of the empathetic one who had insulted her.

"A mushroom woman?"

"This is what Kyrie was talking about? She don't look so scary to me."

"Kyrie said Death spoke to him and he believed it because it was afraid and told him how to save many lives. Whatever she is, she means to do us all harm. Let's get her off-planet as fast as we can, Kevin."

Uneb is angry. She can move but she is contained. Something is containing her fury and this will not stand. She feels herself moving away from the surface she had hoped to shatter, back in the direction she had come and she explodes in a rage, her power pushing out green, purple and yellow and stressing her containment. She feels whatever it is around her give, and she explodes again, pushing the containment to its limits.

"Just get it out of the atmosphere!" she hears and Uneb knows that she will be free soon.

When she is free, she sees the blackness of space and the Earth that the Hyperion calls home in the distance.

"Why are you here?" Uneb hears and she sees two beings floating in space nearby her, but they aren't the source of the voice, though she knows that the voice speaks for them.

"This space belongs to Une," Uneb responds. "Give yourself and these beings to me immediately or face my wrath."

"This space belongs to the beings who occupy it and those beings you see are not mine to give. We don't want to kill you, but we will not give ourselves to Une, whatever that is. So go back to where you came from or those beings will kill you."

Uneb, in Hyperion



Uneb's energy flares and the force of it pushes the beings back, but they do not retreat. She flies at them but before she can attack, she feels the force of a fist smash into her head and then she is zooming backwards in space, too shocked to regain her composure, as though Une's awareness inside of Uneb is severed and has to reestablish a connection. When she does, Uneb is closer to the orbit of Mars than Earth and the two beings who had stopped her assault on Earth are there, watching her from a distance.

"I must say that I am galled by your ability to prevent me from doing what must be done," Uneb says to the voice that she had spoken to before.

"You must be a being of immense power to underestimate Kevin Blackmon and Nebuchad Abed. They are the beings that you see and they will not allow their world to be assailed. Leave this place now. We have no desire to harm you, but you have declared ill intent and

we will not hesitate to end your existence if you continue to threaten us. Leave now."

Uneb will not be denied. She extends a hand toward the beings and pale brown tendrils of varying thickness shoot across the void toward Kevin and Nebuchad.

They both wear suits to sustain themselves in the void, Kevin had made them in the blink of an eye and they mirrored the IP standard issue suits that he'd used in his time working with the Interstellar Panel. They also wore helmets that allowed them to talk to one another.

"Hit her again," Kevin says, confident that the suits he and Nebuchad wear are capable of standing up to whatever this thing is. It looks like a woman, an elegant woman, but her body is trama, the flesh of a mushroom, and it is fibrous and tan brown with spots of darker color. Her head is a mushroom and the cap looks like hair with two long brown tendrils like the ones shooting through space at Kevin and Nebuchad on either side of her head.

Nebuchad maneuvers through space toward Uneb and he easily dodges the tendrils that look hairy like yarn, but before he can hit Uneb as he had before, with the strength mastery he'd learned from the Kazi of Eel that was capable of generating immense power with concentration on very specific things that he held in his mind, Nebuchad is wrapped in hairy tendrils and he is suspended with his fist out just a foot from her face. He feels the strength of the tendrils tightening against his suit and pulling at his arm.

"You alright in there?" Kevin asks over the communicator. He has light weight but sharp swords in each hand, swinging them furiously and at such speed that his arms are a blur. He is slicing the tendrils that attempt to ensnare him and they are relentless.

"Im fine," Nebuchad replies as he concentrates on the sensation just when you lose your balance, when you realize that you are not

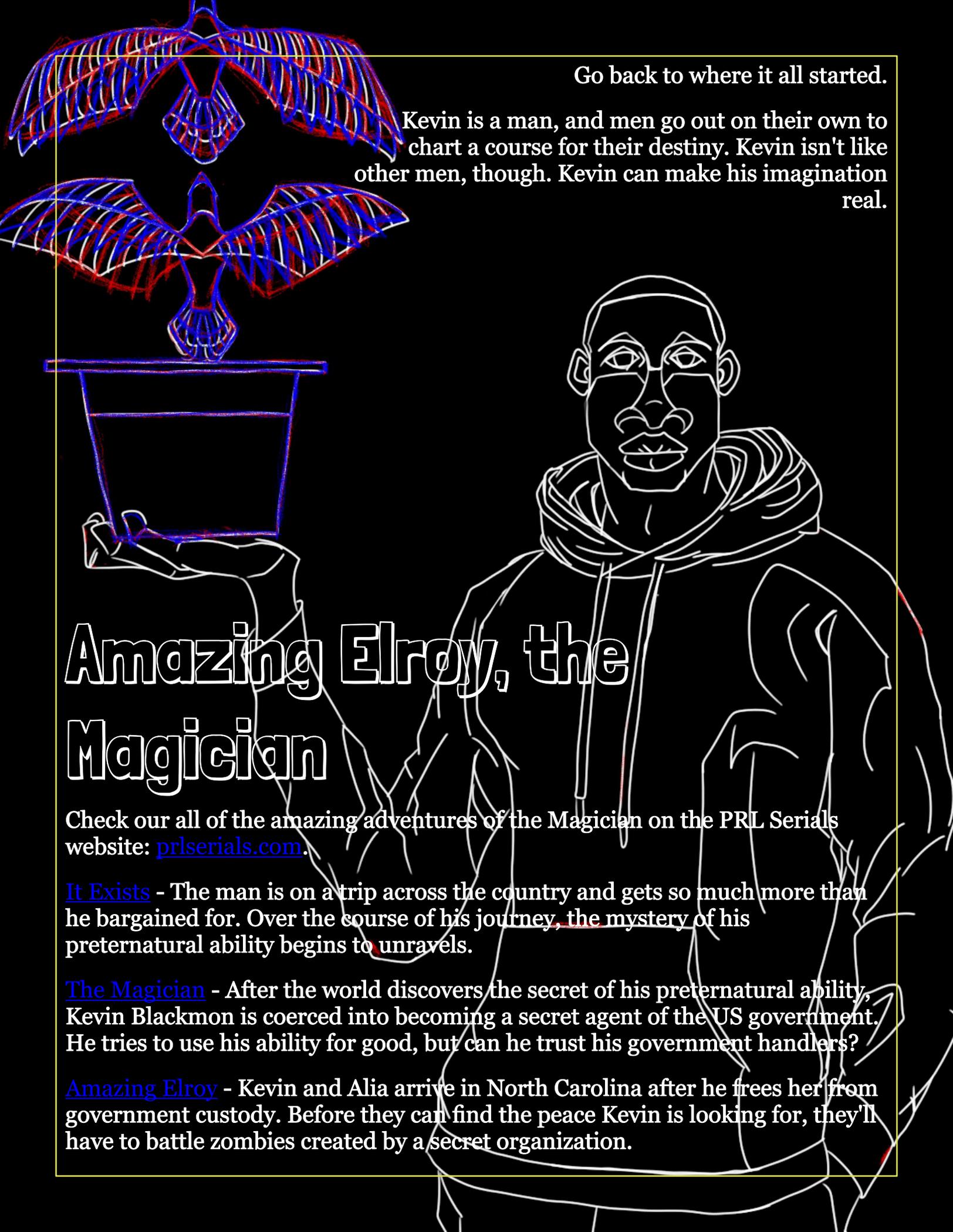
solid on your feet, as well as the feeling of something finally breaking under the weight of your strength, and his strength increases enough that he is able to pull his arm toward his body and snap the tendrils that hold him. As he frees his other arm, new tendrils try to wrap him and he moves faster each time he rips layers of the yarn. He retreats from Uneb who advances toward him until Kevin arrives to slice her with the fury of his swords. With Uneb distracted, Nebuchad is free to focus his energy to project it from his hands with his fingers splayed in a circle and his arms extended and it cuts through Uneb's tendrils as Kevin retreats just in time for the energy blast to connect to the pieces of Uneb and push them back until they are overcome and burned through by the energy. Nebuchad's energy projection pushes her towards Saturn's orbit.

They take time to burn away the tendrils and then fly back to Earth's surface, to Kevin's house where Kyrie is waiting on his front porch. He is an older man, in his sixties and it shows in the gray of his hair on his head and beard, but he is spry for his age and looks younger in the jeans and T-shirt he wears. He looks very worried at the moment.

Kevin makes the spacesuits and helmets disappear and he and Nebuchad are dressed similarly to Kyrie.

"What the hell was that?" all three say simultaneously.

Unea is puzzled. She has been moving toward the Fonlands in the aether around Aido Hwedo for a long time, but she is not coming any closer to it. Unea is frustrated and moves faster, propelling herself by exploding her energy behind her and the longer she moves and doesn't come closer, the angrier and more resolved she becomes.



Go back to where it all started.

Kevin is a man, and men go out on their own to chart a course for their destiny. Kevin isn't like other men, though. Kevin can make his imagination real.

Amazing Elroy, the Magician

Check out all of the amazing adventures of the Magician on the PRL Serials website: prlserials.com.

[It Exists](#) - The man is on a trip across the country and gets so much more than he bargained for. Over the course of his journey, the mystery of his preternatural ability begins to unravel.

[The Magician](#) - After the world discovers the secret of his preternatural ability, Kevin Blackmon is coerced into becoming a secret agent of the US government. He tries to use his ability for good, but can he trust his government handlers?

[Amazing Elroy](#) - Kevin and Alia arrive in North Carolina after he frees her from government custody. Before they can find the peace Kevin is looking for, they'll have to battle zombies created by a secret organization.

from

Made in America

(Series 1) – Issue 2 – Nebuchad One-Shot

by Wesley Livingston

World music is loud and it makes listeners dance, they have little say in the matter. It exists in abundance, that steady, pulsating baseline, the electronica accents that make it sound metallic, robotic, futurist. World music is default club and party music.

Nebuchad knows it well, he is always in a club dancing his way into Mondays, hoping to prolong the weekend for as long as possible. His friends; who include most of the bartenders and waitresses in downtown Charlotte, NC, his coworkers at the bank where he worked in customer service by day, and his friends from college who stayed in the city after they graduated from UNC Charlotte in 2004; call him Neb (sounds like Ted), and he is usually the only person of Middle Eastern descent wherever he goes. People are usually very surprised to learn that he is Christian, but his parents converted when they still lived in Iran, before they immigrated to the US permanently as refugees. Neb's father is an engineer for Duke Energy and he'd encouraged his son to follow in his footsteps, but Neb learned the joys of a good night out when he was in school and by the time he graduated, he'd hosted hundreds of parties at various venues all over North Carolina, and in three other states in the south.

Neb likes to be in a big room with hundreds of people, lights off with the swirl of LEDs and glow sticks illuminating the dark, bodies roiling like a body of water, controlled by the steady, pulsating rhythm and the sharp reprise of the synth. He doesn't necessarily look for a companion, he is not looking for his special girl to dance with, to go home with; the club is his domain, his job, and when he is there, he is king.

Neb schmoozes the VIP rooms, sits with big spenders and makes jokes, refills glasses, European kisses beautiful people dressed to the nine. He is making his presence known as the new manager of club Move, where he'd recently acquired a share of ownership sizeable enough to be the majority owner. It was his dream come true, he hoped soon that he could quit his day job at the bank.

Neb had taken to the deception that can sometimes be necessary in order to be successful in business. He'd convinced a close friend to invest in Move with him, but Neb had used the money to buy one huge share for himself. And it hardly weighed on his conscience, he was a club owner. He'd also slept with the wife of one of the club's richest patrons, a Thomas Helms whose father is a wealthy furniture maker with stores in eight cities. Helms swore vengeance on Neb that has yet to come to pass, though soon,

everything will catch up to Neb.

It can be argued that spending every night in a raging party is detrimental to one's morals, and more and more, Neb finds himself deep inside club Move, enjoying the perks of running the establishment. Women line up to impress him, men shower him with gifts, with money and drugs, and without even knowing it, without really making a conscious choice, Neb is a casual drug user, pills and powders exclusively, and then his arch rival Helms has his in.

World music and MDMA, sounds and chemicals, a blur, Neb is having a good night. And here is Danny with something new, a beautiful little pill that Neb had never seen before. Danny is new, but he is in the VIP room and insists that Neb sit with him and to thank him for a great night, he has something for Neb that is "better than ecstasy."

Down the gullet, and Neb is on his back, Neb is foaming at the mouth, Neb is raced to a hospital for help.

Danny is nowhere to be found, unless you look in Helms' limousine that cruises down Davidson.

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THE MASTER OF MULTIVERSAL ARCANA

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**INTRODUCING
THE ARCANE
WIZARD**

- THE ARCANES WIZARD -

BY WESLEY LIVINGSTON

I was lost in my studies when word came and I had already sensed something amiss. I was on the hidden summit of Sakpata before he gathered a team to travel the multiversal structure, and his guidance had been extremely helpful in understanding arcana in a way that I hadn't before.

"Your realm uses magic as a tool," the Vodun had explained. "You think of it as a means to an end, which is understandable, once the mysteries of arcana are uncovered we acquire tools to assist in our everyday lives. But the understanding of magic as a tool to solve a problem causes one to invoke it in times of peril. You are a student of arcana, for sure, you are a fast learner and well suited for the Fonlands way of thinking. Magic to us is more similar to the way Earthers have vital organs that animate the body to house and express the soul. Fonlanders, including the Vodun are made of the magic of the Mother-Father, the Divine Essence. Our ecstatic gland is

most like the Earther heart that pumps life-sustaining blood through the body, the ecstatic processes Divine Essence in our bodies and allows us to express magic as the colors we recently reviewed. Without Divine Essence, a Fonlander would shrink out of existence as soon as the stores in its body were depleted. We all have different skills as a result of the Essence, but our attachment to the Essence is the same; it gives us life. So we wield magic as a basic function of our existence, as a tool when called for, but mostly just casually as we live. I notice that there is a delay in the deployment of your magic, you put it on and then deploy it. My magic is always at my fingertips because I use it all that time. But honestly, that is nit-picking, it is hard to give lessons to a master."

I had asked the Vodun for an assessment of my abilities and we spent considerable time doing various arcane exercises to allow Sakpata that chance. I wanted to know if a Vodun assessed the

expression of my power to be on par with that of the Vodun, and he said that it was. Of course, I never felt that it was, the Vodun seem so grand, and I wondered if there was something I could learn to make me as confident and self assured as the Vodun.

"You go to the enemy's home?" Sakpata asked. "Then I feel good about our chances. You see the pattern, yes?"

I had seen it by that point. It looks like a grid of golden lines that appear over existence that dims to black. It is a beautiful thing to behold and comes with a combination of both luck, to be chosen by the pattern to see it, and precise execution of arcane movement, speech, and thought.

"You are a wizard if there ever was one. You should reconsider your moniker, the masters are old grey mages like myself. You are the Wizard of Multiversal Arcana, champion and steward of the Pattern all across the multiversal structure."

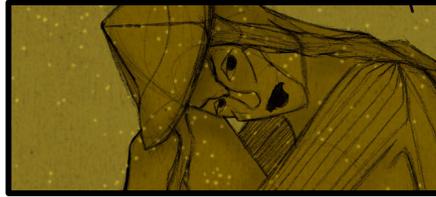
It definitely fit, I live in a museum of arcana in my normal life and I have been a student of it my entire life. Wizard does sound better than Master, I have to admit. So my time with Sakpata was educational even if he didn't feel that he had anything to teach me. He left soon after that conversation and stayed on his summit and immersed myself in the pattern. Until I felt the disturbance.

It was far away and I only noticed it because it was so familiar and undoubtedly bad. And as it grew steadily larger, as though it were approaching, I couldn't help but go toward it to satisfy the nagging feeling that it had created. I flew fast in the direction of it, off the edge of the Disc of Sakpata headed southeast, and it wasn't long before I realized that it was Une, our enemy had arrived very suddenly, without warning, and seemingly alone. I sent a message to all of the Vodun and every other being I had encountered in this endeavor who was in the Fonlands.

It was all very strange and to give myself and everyone else in the Fonlands more time to contemplate it, I stopped to tap the pattern to enact a spacetime loop spell that was difficult for even the most adept users of arcana to identify and escape. I had never laid eyes on Une before, and my understanding of what she was defied the healthy female humanoid form that she took, but I knew that it was her when I saw her suspended in the aether and glowing the eerie green, purple, and yellow energy that she exuded like a glowing lamp. I was transfixed on her form, the rough, but elegant tendrils that were suspended in her movements that gave the impression of hair and garments.

I didn't approach her. I connected mentally to Vodun Jo.

"How is this possible?" Jo asked angrily. "How did she manage to catch us unaware? This doesn't bode well for us in our efforts. We haven't even launched our attack on her realm."



"Maybe this is fortuitous," I offered. "All the Vodun are in the Fonlands except Sakpata. We should be able to prevent Une from landing in the Fonlands and avoid the risk of corruption."

"It is only her?" Jo said. "That makes me the most nervous. I know that her forces are coming, but when? She is playing mind games."

"I have pinpointed a large collection of energy that matches her signature approaching outside of the Fonlands. We have plenty of time to prepare for that. But we need to learn what this form of her is meant for while we can. She is a being of immense arcane power, my spacetime loop will not last forever. Even if she isn't savvy enough to recognize it, her powers will correct the pattern around her eventually."

"You should see Xêvioso by now, the mage Nova and the Luminary Nyame should be there soon. They will find out what they can. How long do they have?" Jo asked.

"If she hasn't already figured it out by now, I would say that by the time her magic reconciles the pattern, it will be fourteen risings of Fonlands day-sources, and another fourteen before her force arrives."

"That is all good news to me. I will ready the armies. Xêvioso, Agê and Fâ should go to her realm now. I will send warriors to guard you in the event Une wakes up prematurely."

"I am all the guard I need. But stagger warriors behind me, we want to prevent her landing on the Fonlands, that is the priority."

"Well said, Arcana Master..."

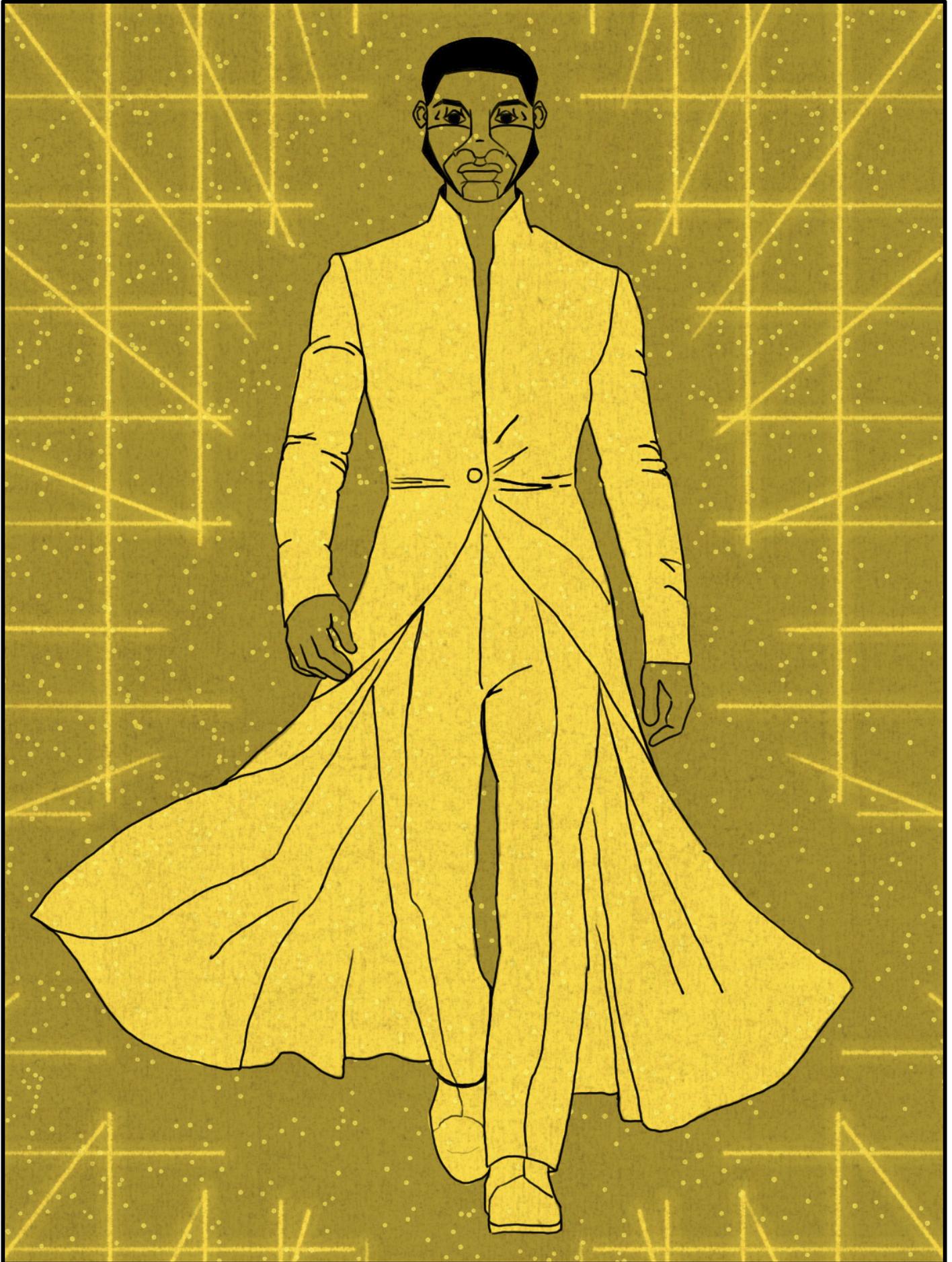
"Wizard," I interrupted. "The Arcane Wizard. I've been inspired by the Death Witches."

"Arcane Wizard, I leave this to your command. Alert us when things change."

It was hard to believe that Une had finally arrived. She was there, or a very powerful form of her that was like an explosion at its most explosive in still-frame, and her flames blazed in a rainbow of purple, green and yellow. Observing her up close, I could see that the yellow was tinted red, which suggested that her use of Pattern Magic was Chaotic, she derived arcane energy from disruption of the pattern. The Death Magic was the most pervasive, suggesting that she had stores of it from the unknowable amount of time she'd spent ravaging the multiversal structure. The Life Magic she wielded made sense just because of the amount of Death present, but it also suggested that Une was adept at persuasion and the control of sentient things, which we had all sense on display in Talj. It seemed that Une was able to infect others like an illness, bringing on Death that allowed her to take control of the mine and use the consciousness of the infected body at her whim. She appeared as a fungus, and maybe that was her first form, and is the organizing structure of her being as a result, but the Une that I watched frozen in place was more like a sentient virus that was determined to infect everything.

Analyzing her sentience, I could feel that she was angry, and becoming more so the longer that she was trapped in my spacetime loop. Her sentence was painful to encounter and gave me a headache, a dull feeling that buzzed at the edge of my consciousness. But then I realized that the buzzing was the many voices that she used to control her forces that were gathering and drawing closer to the Fonlands.

I withdrew from her mind and flew to float in front of her. I would be the first thing she would see or punch, when she managed to free herself from my spell and I was ready for anything that could happen.





SECTION 5 - 3

THE DISC OF AGBE

PHYSICAL, NATURAL, AND SOCIAL PROPERTIES

FROM THE MANUAL AND REFERENCE OF THE FONLANDS

The Manual and Reference of the Fonlands is the official guide of the Fonlands and the Prime 5 Universes, located on Node 5 of the Multiversal Structure. This month, we explore a few features on the Disc of Agbe.

DISC OF AGBE

BY WESLEY LIVINGSTON

Absence Trench Attendants

Most beings born from the Disc of Agbe emerge from Absence Trench. Beings of all shapes and sizes emerge there at the behest of the Disc itself. Dwellers of the Disc who observed the births from Absence noticed that some Fonlanders experiencing trouble emerging and they decided to help when the solution was easy. These Fonlanders became known as Attendants. Attendants are the only dwellers of the Disc to enter Absence Trench.

Central Kelp Forest

The Central Kelp Forest occupies much of the middle of the Disc where the most islands are congregated on the surface, making the middle of the Disc more shallow than the outer rim. The kelp forest is intersected diagonally by a seafloor

ridge that is an underwater mountain range. The forest is home to a diverse group of Fonlanders, some microscopic and others extremely large. The whale kins of the Disc congregate in the kelp forest, and it is believed that a kin of whales from the space of the Disc of Jo migrated to Agbe's Disc long ago.

Lifewell

The area known as Lifewell was one of the first forests planted by the homun on the Disc of Agê, and it was eventually submerged as the waters rose on the Disc of Agbe. Lifewell is not the majority of the overlap between the Discs of Agbe and Agê, but it is notable because the flora there is unique to the location and has restorative properties for anything that dwells inside. Historically, the area has been associated with the dingonek kin that live predominantly in the water, but regularly dwell on land. The dingonek are credited with cultivating the restorative fauna of Lifewell.

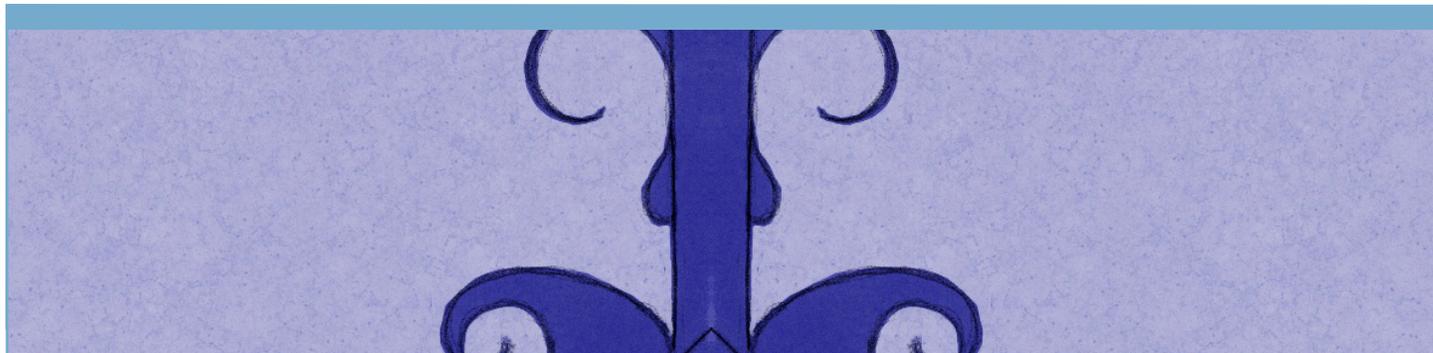
Merfon

Mer-Fonlanders, or Merfon, are characterized by humanoid torsos, heads and arms, with large fins or flippers. Many kin of the Fonlands are known as Merfon, including the Nommo, the Njuzu, and the Jengu. The Merfon are generally viewed as leaders of the Disc second only to the Vodun. The Merfon live exclusively in the water, but are able to dwell on land. Many use their long tail-like fins or flippers to slither over the dry land like a snake, while standing upright with their torso. The Merfon invented the language of the oceans, which is a sign language.

Pearl of Agbe

The Pearl of Agbe, along with the other light sources of their respective Discs of the Fonlands, was produced by the Disc after the naming of the Vodun. It is a luminous blue pearl that is the daylight source of the Disc. It travels north-south, moving from one extreme to the other at regular intervals.

'Young' Vodun Chronicles: Agbe's Advisers



BY MAXWELL ROBERSON

La Sirene signed emphatically to the warrior, who was paying very close attention and subtly nodding along with the movements of her hands and webbed fingers.

"Only Fonlanders born on this Disc are allowed to even approach Absence Trench. If they are not natives of the Disc and they refuse to cease their efforts to enter the Trench, then the Nommo have my authorization to use deadly force. Is that understood?"

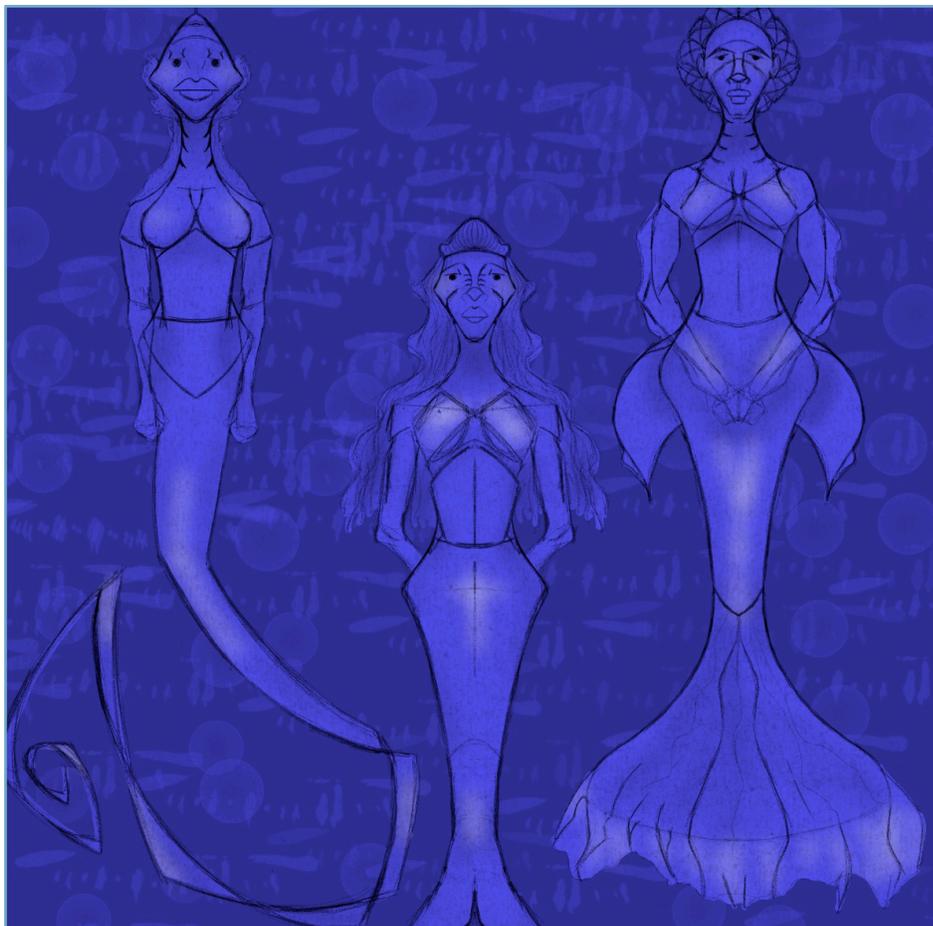
The warrior was Nommo, and despite his impressive size - he was about seven feet long from head to the tip of his flipper - he was afraid, and rightly so. Nommo warriors are large and as strong as any Fonlander of the Fonlands, but La Sirene was one of the first of the mer-Fonlander kin including the Nommo, the Njuzu, and the Jengu, many refer to her as one of the three mothers of the mer-kin because they emerged as the first of their kind from Absence Trench (along with Yemaya and Mamlambo), even though she didn't directly give rise to the kin. Sirene is sturdy to navigate the pressures of the depths with ease, but she glides in the waters so effortlessly that it is easy to underestimate her. The Nommo warrior does not underestimate her.

"Ma'am," the warrior stammered with his hands, "the young hippo king of the swamps is demanding access and he has brought a contingent. We have been told to respect the young monarchs, they are quick to violence if they feel slighted. That is orders from the highest command, ma'am."

"Young monarchs," Sirene

gestures like it sullies her hands to make the words, "there are no monarchs in the Fonlands, only the Vodun and the Mother-Father. Delay this hippo while I talk to Agbe, she won't be happy to hear that they even hope to approach Absence Trench."

The Nommo warrior was relieved to leave La Sirene, he was happy that he hadn't angered her



enough that she asked his name, that would mean reprimands from commanders.

Sirene left the shelter she occupied in the coral reef that housed millions of inhabitants of the Disc, and she went east to the central kelp forest where she found Yemaya and Mamlambo seemingly waiting for her.

"This should not be an issue," Mamlambo hissed as her long serpentine body looped in the water to keep her upper body stationary as she signed with her scaly arms and heavily webbed fingers. "Absence Trench is the Disc of Agbe, things born in the overlap are born of the Disc of Agbe, allow the annoying hippo king access to the Trench. They are only demonstrating its importance to all inhabitants of the Disc, whether they emerged from the Trench or not."

"I understand the sensitivities," Yemaya admitted, signing with her articulated fingers. Among the three of them, she had the most prominent humanoid features and she was the only one of them wearing a garment to cover her chest. "But I think that Mamlambo is right.

Absence is the Disc of Agbe and we shouldn't police who has access to it."

"Tell that to the Vodun," Sirene signed with her hands that were more humanoid than Mamlambo's but webbed with fins on her knuckles. "She holds Absence sacred, not really because it is desecrated by outsiders, but because it is a nursery, things are regularly born from there and to allow things to just swim in and out on a whim is irresponsible. Agbe puts the youngest of us first, she calls them the realization of the dreams of the Mother-Father."

"Maybe we can tell them that?" Yemaya offered with an unsure hand. "Maybe we can explain all this from a distance and it will force them to tread carefully or seem disrespectful to the Vodun.

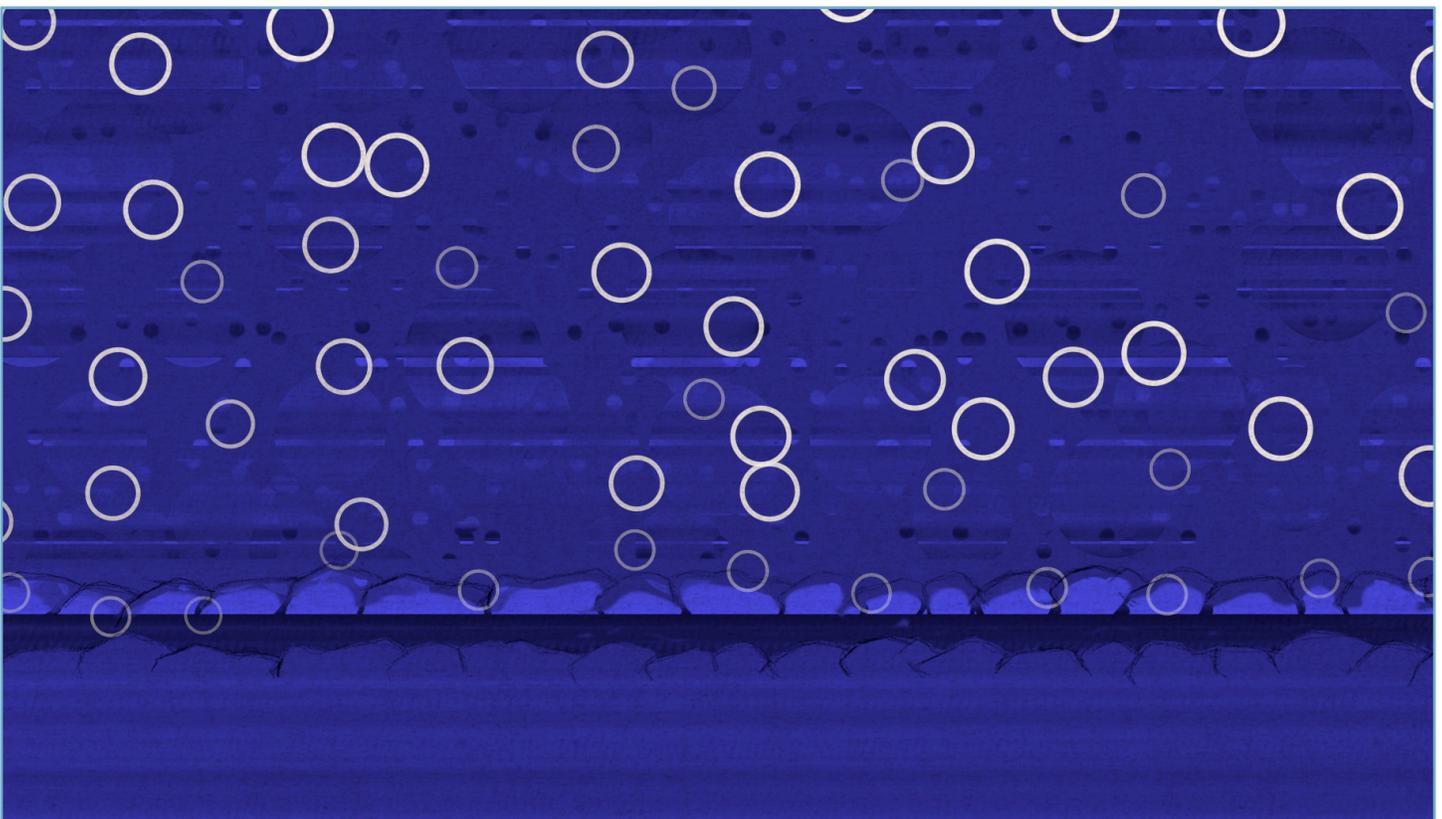
"I always forget that Agbe uses the 'not born from the Trench' thing as a way to discourage frequent visitors," Mamlambo signed. "Let's go see if we can satiate the hippo king and keep them from angering the Vodun."

They all agreed and swam quickly toward Absence Trench that

is located deep in the northern oceans, close to the pillar to the Lofted Disc. They caught up to the long procession of hippos that led the hippo king to the trench and lucky for the three merfon, the hippo king was in the back of the procession as they caught up to it. He was relaxed in what amounted to a comfortable couch that was round like a wheel and large enough to accommodate the three other passengers that were being pulled by other hippos with ropes clenched in their teeth. Only Sirene could rest comfortably on the couch when they caught up to it and the other two swam close enough to watch the conversation.

The hippo king was surprised by the sudden arrival of Sirene but when he recognized her, he smiled and introduced himself with a bow.

"I am Choer of the marshes and swamps, newly crowned king," he signed with both hands on his short arms and he moved the digits of his hands quickly. The hippos walk on all fours when they are on land and their digits aren't ideal for signing the language of the oceans, but he managed to get his points across. "I am honored to bring my



family to see the Absence Trench..."

"Absence Trench," Sirene lifted a hand before his face to correct him. "It is not the Absence Trench, just Absence Trench."

"Hardly seems like a difference," Choer chuckled to himself. The members of his family that accompanied him were not well-versed in sign language and could barely understand what was being said. "It is an honor to see the Trench and that the first of the merfon are here to show me."

"And we are happy to escort you," Sirene signed. "What do you know about Absence?"

"That it is the womb of the Disc, everything of the oceans was born from it. I was born in water, but on shallow ground, far from the Trench, but it is the same ground, no?"

"Indeed it is," Sirene said. "I understand why you all have come here, every dweller of the Disc should see Absence at least once, and not just this city that has grown up around it," Sirene indicated to the villages that they swam over that glowed with the bioluminescent flora and swirled with the activity of Fonlanders. "Absence welcomes you as a child of the Disc, but it is a place of birth, new things emerge here all the time and the beings that live here permanently are charged with their care if they require it, or at least to guide them towards the oceans that are best suited for them."

"Are we close?" Choer asked absently with one hand, looking over the side of the circular couch as the view below whizzed by.

They were approaching Absence Trench, and it looked like the sea floor in the distance had opened like a mouth with rounded edges of Essence blue rock for lips. Absence was alive with activity, things were constantly emerging from it along the long line of it that stretched beyond the view of the horizon on either side of it and there was a line of attendants being as

much help as the new Fonlanders required. But Choer was distracted by the view of the city, and Sirene understood, seeing the glowing city on the bottom of Agbe's oceans was a sight that few born of those depths could handle. Even the things born from Absence that found lives at shallower depths cannot withstand the pressure of the floor of the oceans for long because they lose their acclimation. Choer and the other hippos were sturdy Fonlanders and they had trained for this trip, which any Fonlander of any Disc could do with time.

"We are here, your kingliness," Sirene signed after tapping his shoulder, only barely hiding her mockery of the monarch. "You should stop your procession."

When Choer looked up from the city, he saw the gaping trench in the distance, but his procession was slowing on their own accord, as though they had expected the king to slow them well before that point, but weren't willing to go any further.

"I had thought we could go inside of it," Choer signed as the circular couch was surrounded by the hippos who had been pulling it and they carried it on their backs to lift the king and the passengers of his circular chair above the procession. They stopped at a distance, on a high ragged cliff so that they could see it from a high vantage.

"Truly a wonder," Choer signed, "I am glad that I made this journey. It was worth the acclimation exercises. My family is pleased as well."

"I admit that I came with Mamlambo and Yemaya because we were worried that you would disturb the nursery that is Absence Trench."

"Everyone voiced that objection to my traveling here, but seeing it, I understand better. No one explained to me that it was this. I'd be a fool, or pervert, to try and explore the trench. Does anyone ever go inside?" Choer asked.

"The attendants will if they

spot something struggling beyond what is normally expected of a newborn, but only so deep. They try not to interfere, if something can't emerge from Absence then maybe it was not meant to."

"That is a harsh reality," Choer signed as he stared at Absence Trench like he was hypnotized by it. "I will ponder my position on that. Maybe the attendants should dive down as deep as they can to ensure that everything the Disc makes has a chance to thrive. But there are so many bursting out of that seam unaided. So many, I know the Disc is big, but if this is always like this, there must be so many Fonlanders of this Disc."

"There are, and Agbe's oceans accommodate them."

"I would like to meet the Vodun as well," Choer signed. "I have never even seen her in person. Is she here at the Trench?"

"Agbe likes to swim the oceans. If you want to meet her, you have to catch her. She is a very strong swimmer and only gives words to those who can keep up. She does rest every now and then, but the oceans are vast and she can only be found by one who knows all of the oceans as intimately as she does. Some have gotten lost in their pursuit of her, but know that if she is needed anywhere on the Disc, she will be there."

"You know her? You swim with her?" Choer asked.

Sirene nodded. She watched Mamlambo and Yemaya in the distance, they had gone to a lower part of the ledge that was closer to Absence and they were conversing between them.

"We are the only ones who can keep up with her, but some Fonlanders are getting faster. I'm sure you can if you train at it. Acclimating to these depths is no small feat. I think that Agbe would be honored to know you," Sirene signed earnestly.

All conflicts avoided, the

procession of the hippo king enjoyed the wonder of Absence Trench and then went back west to the marshes and swamps. When they were gone, the three merfon huddled together.

“He better not go looking for Agbe!” Yemaya signed emphatically. “If he manages to catch her, I’m telling her you told him how to speak with her. She said that we should keep it a secret. She’s not interested in playing wise god, he can go hike the mountains to find Sakpata if he wants that.”

“That tubby thing?” Sirene asked mockingly, then apologized for her callousness. “But I honestly don’t feel that he will ever be able to catch up to Agbe, even if he is fast, he’s not

made for those speeds.”

“You will live to regret those words,” Mamlambo signed with a look of pity on her face. “Hopefully it’s later rather than sooner, but judging by the overall obnoxiousness of the monarchs, I feel like it will be soon.”

* * *

Agbe can become the water and allow herself to be at the whim of gravity and the currents of her oceans. She likes to be frozen water, there is something very satisfying about solidifying and being as hard as a rock. As satisfying as that feeling is, she loves to swim more than everything. She likes moving

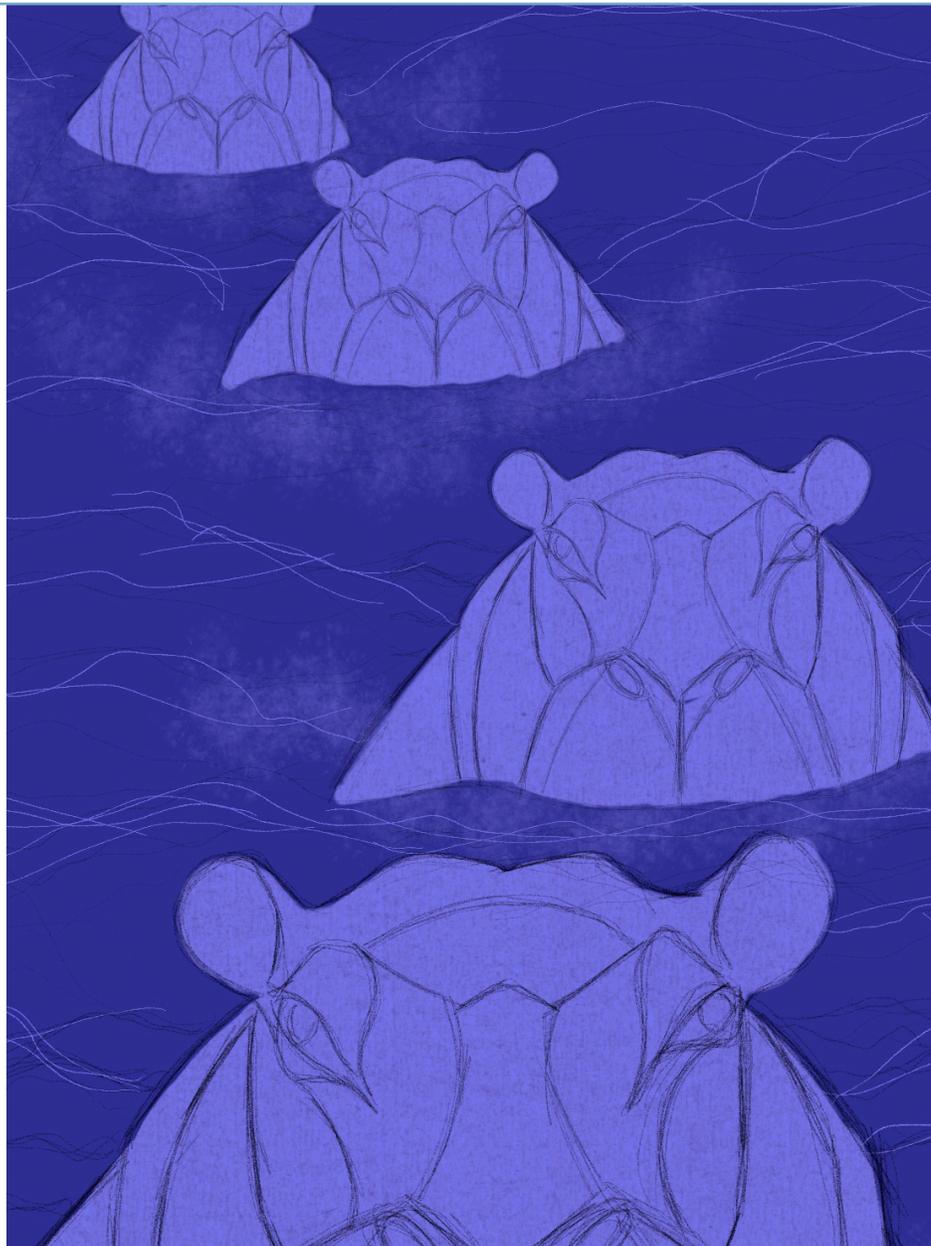
her body through water and she can lose entire days in constant movement, not seeing the same terrain more than once. Yemaya had accused her of running from the leadership role the Vodun enjoyed on the Disc and Agbe shrugged it off.

“I wasn’t made to lead the Fonlanders born on the Disc, that is the delusion of Agê.”

“Then why were the Vodun created if not to be the leader?” Yemaya asked. They were on an island of black sand and Yemaya rested on a rock. She had long hair that was wet past her shoulders, and occasionally she grabbed chunks of it to rend water from it to wet her skin that preferred being in water, though she could manage on dryland with little difficulty.

“We are the embodiment of the Disc. When you communicate with me, you are talking to this land, these seas, the body is just a vessel. Fonlanders don’t need to be led, we are expressions of the Mother-Father, stewards of the Disc to maintain it until the Mother-Father says otherwise. We don’t need anyone between the directive of the Mother-Father and our actions because our actions always line up with the mandate.”

“Tell that to the dingonek who got pushed out of Lifewell. The dingonek went from Absence to that sunken forest, but those hippos whose king Sirene went to Absence with recently have been pushing in and making life uncomfortable for the dingonek. It is not your business, it is not mine, even though I enjoyed time in Lifewell because the dingonek had made it peaceful and welcoming. The hippos are loud and they have no concept of personal space. But the worst is that the dingonek are welcoming, and intimidating enough to forcefully remove the hippos if they wanted, but they only attack when attacked and the hippos aren’t threatening exactly, they are just annoying in a way that the more of them visit or settle Lifewell, the less the dingonek want to reside there and now more hippos live there than the dingonek.



Hippos, dwellers of the overlap between the Discs of Agê and Agbe



The hippos only came because of the good time the dingonek created, but they overstay their welcome and disrupt the balance. It isn't life threatening, nothing has ground to a halt as a result, but that is the reality and unfortunate for Lifewell that should be a place like Absence that all Fonlanders of the Fonlands should experience at least one. And a leader

of the Disc could make gentle suggestions to correct what amounts to an unfortunate reality. I'm not making the strongest argument, but there is something there I suppose."

"Then I anoint you leader in my stead, fair Yemaya," Jo said and she bowed at her waist. She was the shortest Vodun but solid and

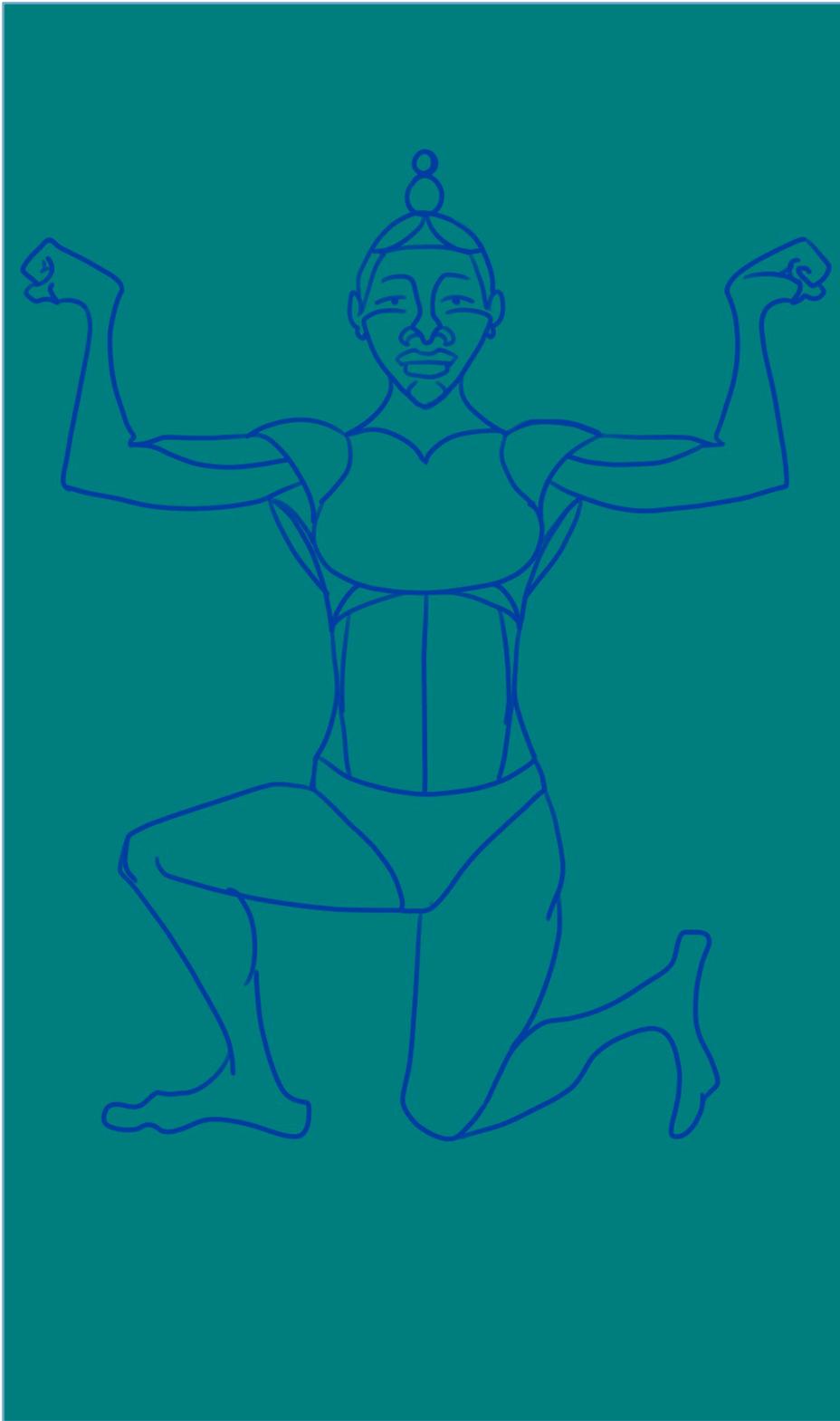
muscular and she wore garments that clung tight to her body when she was on her disc, like a wetsuit that covered her torso, thighs and shoulders. "And Mamlambo, and Sirene. You three can swim as fast as me, I think that affords you stewardship of the flock."

"How did I know you would say that?" Yemaya said with anger that she didn't bother to veil. The merfon had infinite respect for her Vodun, but they had grown up together on the Disc as inseparable friends, and they were more mature by that point, though they were very young compared to the lives that lay before them, and they shared a familiarity that superceded the hierarchy of the Fonlands.

"If or when these unfortunate realities arise and I can actually be of assistance, I am happy to intercede, but you are well suited to intervene in a natural way, and not to be crass, I couldn't honestly care less," Agbe admitted and she was pacing on the sands as Yemaya wet her body with the water she rung from her hair. "I would like every Fonlander of the Disc to be happy and comfortable, but shepherding the flock in the way that you describe sounds like the hobby of someone who is bored and looking for a reason to matter. And I really don't mean that to sound as aggressive as it does, but I have already said it and I offer my apologies." Agbe put a hand to the back of her head and stared down at the sand in embarrassment.

Yemaya was used to Agbe being frank and rude in the process.

"I presented it as a me problem, but everyone who doesn't spend all of their time swimming as fast as they can go has mentioned it to me as well. The monarchs aren't just annoying, but they are attempting to rewrite the reality of the natural flow we have settled into on this Disc. They only care about their own renown and want to be legendary without having really done anything of note. Nobody wants outright aggression, so it's allowed to get bigger and more obnoxious, and that's what's happening, which you



separate ways in the oceans.

* * *

“It will not stand a chance in the waters,” Mamlambo signs to Agbe. “We should flood the entirety of the Fonlands. It will be another layer for the enemy to get through before landing on the Fonlands. You control the waters better than Jo controls space and there is so much of it before they will arrive to the Fonlands.”

“That idea sounds ridiculous,” Agbe signs very deliberately, “but there is a kernel of good in it. What if there was a layer of water around the Fonlands, like a moat? Then we could use the might of the oceans to slow it down in the worst case, or stop it completely if things go well.”

Yemaya and Sirene exchange looks of doubt.

“They’re are just mad that it was my idea,” Mamlambo signs.

“I was trying to decide if you all were serious,” Sirene signs with one hand. “How will we make a moat around the Fonlands? Will we have to drain the Disc, where is the water coming from?”

“I can become an ocean,” Agbe says. “But can I become an ocean to completely surround the Fonlands? That is the question.”

“No,” Yemaya says, “you are going to drown everything if the enemy doesn’t kill them. There is no need for an ocean around the Fonlands. Maybe we can’t travel to the ether where Aido Hwedo floats, but we can make the waters rise up from the surface. We will find a way to do what we can.”

Agbe is silent for a moment.

“Do that as soon as you can. The enemy has arrived to the Fonlands!”

* * *

could be helpful with if you were to go to these self proclaimed monarchs and educate them so trips to Absence Trench don’t become full on panics because we don’t think they understand. You could talk to them and change their behavior and the oceans can remain one of the few

Discs that hasn’t devolved into factions warring for dominance or over oppression.”

“Fine, I will think on it and talk to you soon” Agbe said. She hugged Yemaya without another word and then they both went their

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— THE VODUN DOING WORK —

BY ROY CURETON

Xêvio is already in the Smiting Chamber observing Sakpata's first mission to the tendrils of Une that snaked across the multiversal structure where she had taken existences. He can link his mind to Sakpata's even when the Vodun and two members of his team disappear from inside the mists of the heptagon, and he sees them in an existence called Red of Node 1. There is so little left there, just lifeless gray shapes that had once been the stuff of existence. There are large gray spheres that had once been stars blazing hot enough to melt gasses, now inert and drifting in the lack of gravity; everything lacks mass so nothing pulls anything toward anything, and when things drift into one another, they bounce in the opposite direction. There is no light in this place called Red, so there is no color. Nothing is dark and that is curious.

"How would you explain that?" Xêvio asks Sakpata through their mental connection as he spectates Sakpata's view.

"It is the most curious thing about this very curious realm," Sakpata replies. "Azalaan, do you sense Une here?"

"I feel something in very deep slumber," Azalaan says. He wears a gray suit that Sakpata had constructed with his hand spells for the team to protect them against extreme levels of force and to allow the Vodun to always be in contact with them in the realities they explored. The suit is simple, like a jumpsuit with a helmet and it is adorned with Sakpata's Veve, the Ore Amulet. "Its dreams are curious. There are so many, from times long ago, from disparate realities. There are too many dreams for one thing. But I only sense a singular thing resting."

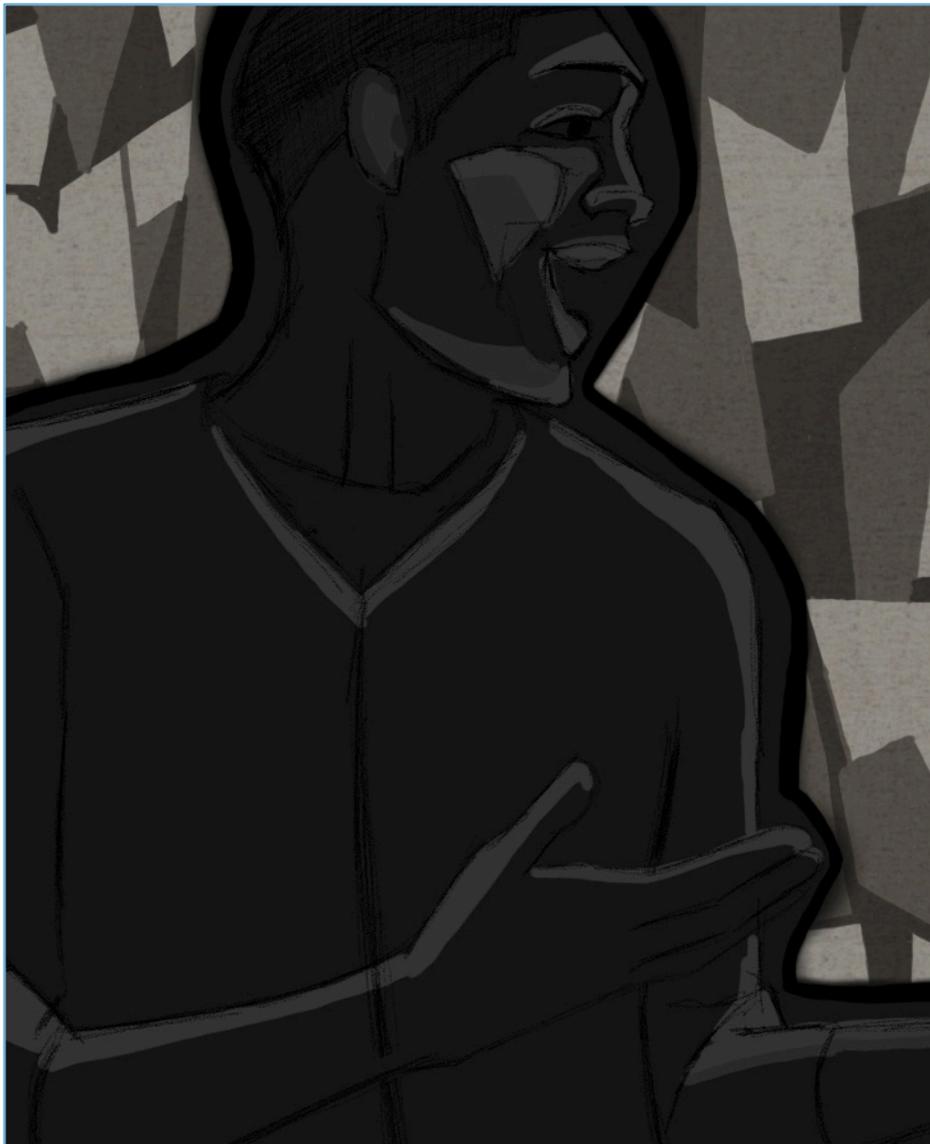
"It is Une, this, everything we see is Une resting," Sakpata reasons. "I imagine that if we kill her in her home realm, this realm is one that she is likely to wake up inside of."

"That is truly frightening,"

Shini, the muthi Sorcerer, says wearily. "That means she could wake up here at any second."

"Azalaan, keep monitoring for anything that might be helpful for us to know, Shini and I will see if we can cleanse an entire universe. Shini, I need you to create a magnet for all of the latent death magic around us. I'm going to build a self-perpetuating construction that we can leave here that will be made entirely of Death Magic and will smother out any living and dreaming thing. Une is made of Death Magic, but Une is not here, only the flow her slumbering subconsciousness that gives this place its eerie grayness, but the Death Magic construction should render these structures unsuitable for Une's consciousness, permanently severing her link to this realm."

Xêvio is impressed watching Sakpata work so well with his team to do what seemed like an insurmountable task; even the Vodun is small compared to the size of the scope of the Une-infected



realm and it is hard to believe that any of their efforts would be effective for ridding the entire realm of their enemy. But Sakpata makes complex arcane constructions while he sleeps, when he is awake and working intently as he does in the Uneinfected realm, and supplied by one as skilled at Death Magic as Shini, he manages to make an extremely large construction that gets bigger as he continues his work repurposing the latent Death Magic that Shini attracts, and as the seemingly inert objects connect to it in their random floating trajectories around the realm. The gray matter of the objects that dissipate into nothing against Sakpata's construct, is instantly killed and converted to purple energy and whatever was inside dissipates.

Sakpata and Shini work for a

long time before Sakpata is satisfied that their efforts will eventually clean the realm completely and they retreat back to the Smiting Chamber.

"That went well," Xêvioso congratulates Sakpata.

"Azalaan helped me select the right beings to aid in these efforts. He will continue to monitor progress there while I jump into another existence with other members of the team."

As Sakpata decides who will accompany him to the next existence, Fâ, Gu, and Lêgba are also in the Smiting Chamber, on the high ledge that looks down over the heptagon.

"It just seems redundant, that's all I'm saying," Gu grunts with

his arms crossed at his chest, resting on his stomach. "I am the Vodun of War, and what does war bring? It brings death, so that means that I am already the Vodun of Death."

"But doesn't war also bring peace?" Lêgba asks.

"Shut up," Gu says, "it's not some philosophical thing. I am the warrior and the armorer, made to do one thing, to kill! Death has always been my purview."

"Wars on your Disc aren't about killing, though," Lêgba says, "you all do it for the fun of it. You aren't squeamish about death by any means, but it's more about the battle than the kill. You aren't the Vodun of Death, you are the Vodun of Chaos, war is always chaos, upending order. It's why you enjoy fighting Xêvioso so much."

"Shut..." Gu stops himself to think.

"Are you done?" Fâ asks. "Have you gotten it now? Can we stop talking about inane things? I was disturbed because something that is capable is coming to kill us, not to go around in circles with an idiot. I have no doubt in my mind that we will work well together, big brother, but that's only after you drop all the gruff posturing. I get it, you're grumpy and like to fight, but that's no excuse for dumb arguments."

"Are you reprimanding me and calling me an idiot?" Gu asks and he steps in front of Fâ, glaring down at her.

She pushes him violently and he tumbles over the ledge, screaming the entire time, not out of pain, but out of pure surprise. Lêgba laughs uncontrollably as Fâ jumps down after Gu.

"I know you're not an idiot!" Fâ screams at Gu and everyone in the Smiting Chamber stares at them. "But I don't have time for feeling each other out and giving me the business or whatever. I think that it would be wise for us to work together so that I can take the most effective

Deads and Wraiths, dwellers of the underside of the Disc of Lêgba

beings with me when we go to Une's realm."

"Fine, let's talk, but we will do battle, little sister, and I will show you my true might."

Fâ nods and rolls her eyes as the two huddle together to talk.

Then everyone in the Chamber receives a mental alert from Issac Washington. Then Jo arrives, then Agbe, then Agê.

"Une is here!" Xêvioso says and Jo nods solemnly then looks to Agê and Fâ.

"I think it is time for you all to go," Jo says. "Gu, Agbe and I will make sure there is a Fonlands for you all to return to."

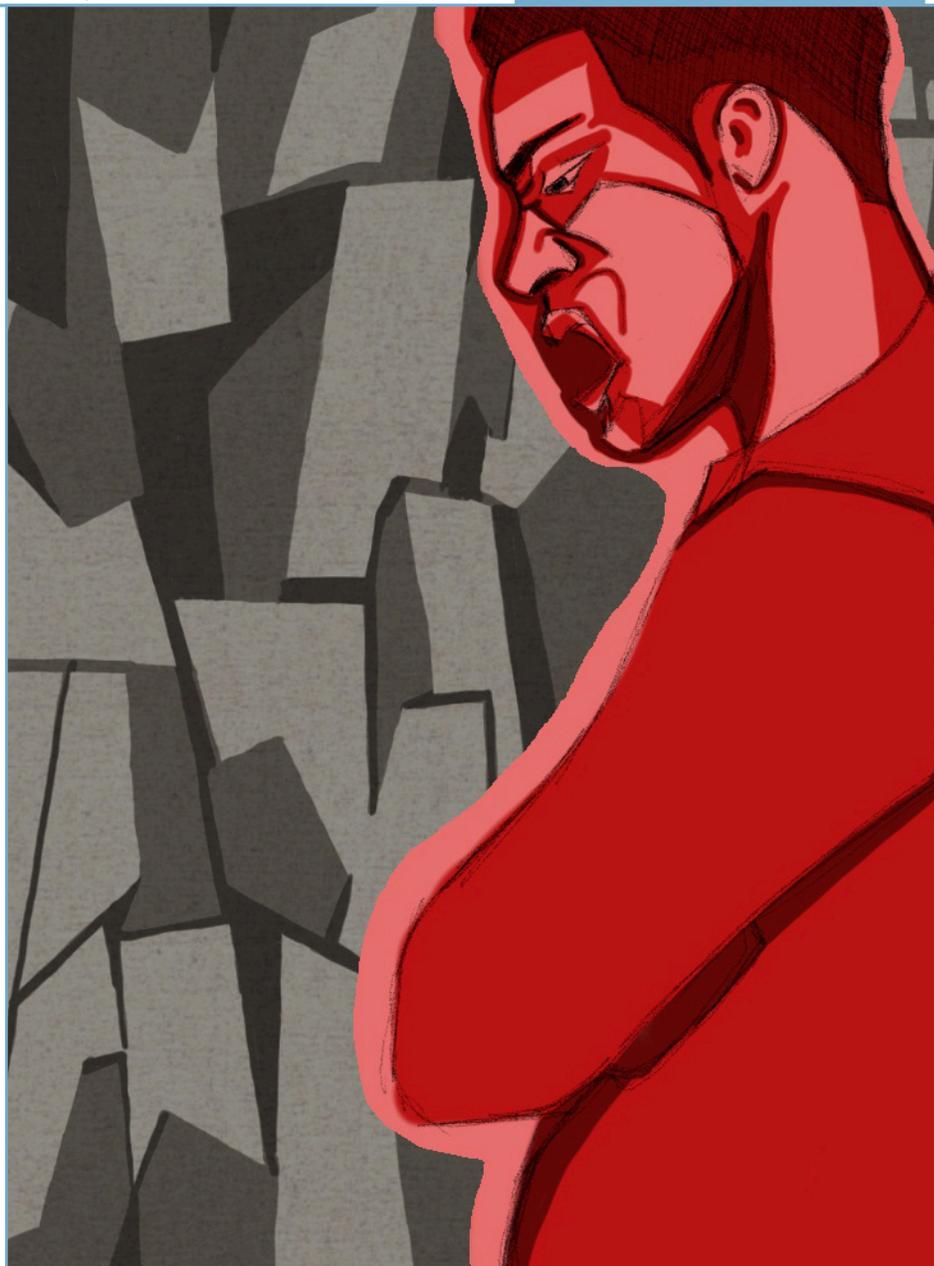
"We have to go now?" Fâ asks with annoyance. "My force only includes my sentries, I don't have the numbers that Agê and Xêvioso have."

"We can send reinforcements if they are needed," Jo says. "The Arcana Master, he's the Arcane Wizard now, but he will stay here while we confront this form of Une, but he can come to back you all up with reinforcements when that is necessary. I truly feel that this is our best shot. Arcane says that this form contains a lot of Une's consciousness, which means that she isn't her whole self in her home realm. We have to take advantage. You all should go, and make sure that Wazad the Transverse is with you. Go!"

Xêvioso, Agê and Fâ all link hands and then they disappear from the Smiting Chamber. They go first to rally their forces, then with the help of the being known as Ogi of the Paradise Universe, they begin their journey to the Une-verse.

"Arcane says that we must be ready for the arrival of Une's forces very soon," Jo says to Agbe, Gu, and Lêgba. "Go to every Disc and make sure that their defenses are ready."

"I want to become a water barrier around the Fonlands," Agbe says. "I know how it sounds, but I am



not the only Fonlander who can become water, and we should be able to link up to create a barrier around the Fonlands that heavy hitters from my disc can occupy to act as a moat around the Fonlands, another protective layer before the enemy can reach the surface."

"It sounds like a good plan to me. I will gather beings of mine and Xêvioso's Disc to guard in a sphere around your water layer, and Gu, your forces will be the last defense. Construct a layer of iron around the Fonlands with the largest Fonlanders on the surface to meet anything that gets through the water. I will coordinate all of the ground forces through Arcane who will only retreat

from the aether outside of Aido Hwedo if Une overpowers him. He is our vanguard and we have to be in position if or when Une or her forces become too much for him. We will make Une regret leaving her home realm."

Fâ isn't nervous, it's just that things have happened so fast since she emerged from the Disc. She did have time to settle on the Disc of Deads and Wraiths, enough time to meet many of the dwellers of her Disc who felt her and came to pay their respects, and that time had made her happy that she had emerged. It was good to

be among beings that were made of the same stuff, who understood the existence of a being of Death Magic. All the time she spent watching her siblings before she emerged from the Disc, she was nervous that she wouldn't fit in with them. They had taken to being stewards of the powerful beings of their Discs, and they had lived long enough to find a rhythm with one another that allowed them to get along and to work together. Fâ worried that she would disrupt the rhythm that the Vodun had established and she worried that she didn't have the personality to be a steward of powerful beings. Her time on the Disc had alleviated many of those fears. But she hadn't emerged to be a steward of the Disc of Deads and Wraiths, not exactly. She had emerged to fight alongside Xêvioso and Agê against a being that mastered Pattern, Life, and Death Magic to the point that it was able to conquer sections of the multiversal structure, and Fâ had never been in a fight before. She had never wielded her magic to cut something down,

Fâ, Vodun



she had never been attacked. But even those fears were assuaged by her time with Gu, the two of them sparred often in the little time they had spent together and he had shown her that it was easy to attack something that was annoying and aggressive to her. She was familiar with battle, too, even if she hadn't been in one, she had observed countless battles from her position inside the disc.

So no, Fâ isn't exactly nervous, she isn't afraid that Jo had arrived out of nowhere and she, and Xêvioso, and Agê, had been flung into action. She isn't even afraid to face Une. She just can't be completely optimistic because everything she was experiencing was very new to her and she couldn't be sure if they would succeed. She wants to believe that they would triumph, but that doesn't erase all of the unknowns that she was racing toward.

"I worry that we didn't spend time actually fighting together," Agê says as she stands with Fâ and

Xêvioso on a large platform from the Disc of Lêgba occupied by a large number of their forces, the most powerful Fonlanders and beings of the multiversal structure that they were able to contact and recruit who wielded Yellow/Gold, Green, and Purple Magic. "But Gu trained our forces in fighting together so at least we have that."

"If you weren't so hostile to the idea of me," Fâ says, "I don't think it would be difficult for us to wield our powers in tandem."

"I am not..." Agê starts but Xêvioso interrupts.

"Since we saw her emerge from the tree," he says. "You are resentful, Agê."

"We would have a lot of experience with one another if she had emerged from the Lofted Disc like we did," Agê says angrily.

"If I had, Lêgba would have been an underside twin, and if he's been that, none of you would have been aware of Une and her harm to the multiversal structure!" Fâ is angrier and both Agê and Xêvioso lean away from her. "Tell her, Pattern Master! Surely you are aware that things happened as they had to, and if they had been different, we might not even exist!"

"She speaks the truth," Xêvioso says to Agê. "You resent her for things beyond her control."

"It's not real resentment, not of you, Fâ," Agê admits. "I'm mad that there is a possibility we will not be enough. That she took us by surprise and entered the aether around Aido Hwedo! That is an affront to the Mother-Father and I'm taking that frustration out on you, I see that now. I'm sorry. While we have this time, we should get to know one another well enough to strategize in the event of a battle with Une."

Fâ smiles at her sister and the three of them extended a hand inundated with their magic and they shared their psyches in a way that allowed them to train together.

Magic in the PRL Serials

Some describe the things they do not understand as magic. The first PRL Crossover dealt with that very idea:

[THE ORIGINS OF MAGIC](#)

The Kazi of Eel of every existence in which they exist are powerful wielders of magic. You can learn more about the Kazi of the Node 1 Hyperion universe in the 2020 Interim Shorts:

[HYPERION](#)

The Dark universe of Node 1 has a hierarchy of magic that includes the Aether and the Quintessence at the top, and arcane distinctions like The Master of Universal Arcana, and Wazad, the Wonderful. Learn more about the origins of that universe's magic and arcna distinctions here:

[THE TRUE START OF THE DARK PARALLEL \(2\) - THE ORIGINS OF UNIVERSAL MAGIC](#)

The Fonlands of Node 5 are a fount of incredible magics. Created by the Mother-Father on behalf of their enigmatic creator, and overseen by the Vodun who are masters of the colors of magic, the Fonlands is the source of Divine Essence that fuels all of the life of the realm.

[The Manual and Reference of the Fonlands](#)

[The Divine Essence](#)

ACÉ

**See you
next
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