

THE MATAWEHI FABLES



MEARIKI

THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

HELEN PEARSE-OTENE AND ANDREW BURDAN

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Text by Helen Pearse-Otene
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THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

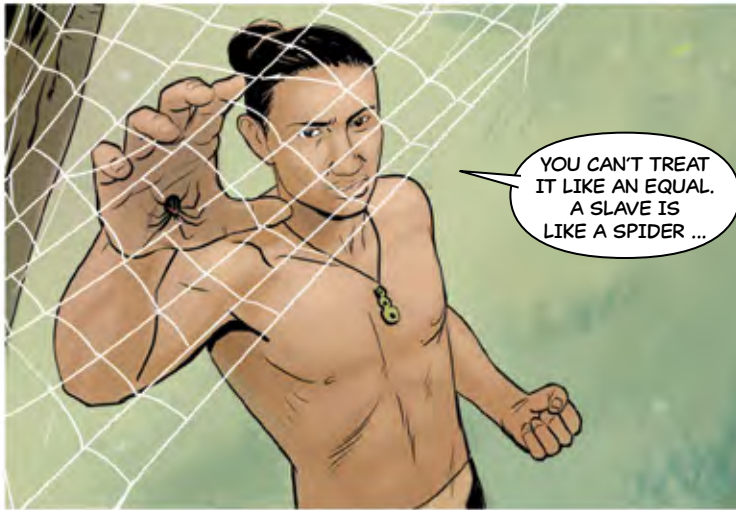
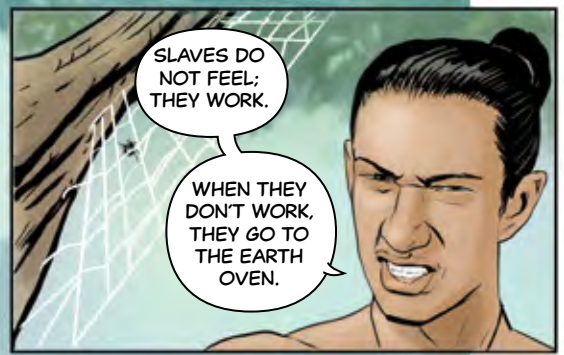
WRITTEN BY HELEN PEARSE-OTENE

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREW BURDAN

THE VILLAGE OF THE KŪWAI.







MEANWHILE, AT THE VILLAGE.

TE MIHIAU!
GREETINGS,
YOU MUST HAVE
MISPLACED MY
INVITATION ...

BE GONE
TĀNEKIKIWA.
RETURN TO
THE OTHER
SIDE ...

... WITH YOUR
BLACK MAGIC.

YOU FOOL! YOUR
WORDS CANNOT
HARM ME!

VILE DEMON!
WHAT DO
YOU WANT?

WHY, MY
BETROTHED
OF COURSE.

THAT IS ALL.

MĀKURA, I CAN
SMELL HER SCENT,
HER INNOCENCE.

SHE WILL COME
WILLINGLY, WITH
MY DARK MAGIC!

JUST GO!
SHE IS
NOT HERE.

FLAP FLAP

FLAP

FLAP

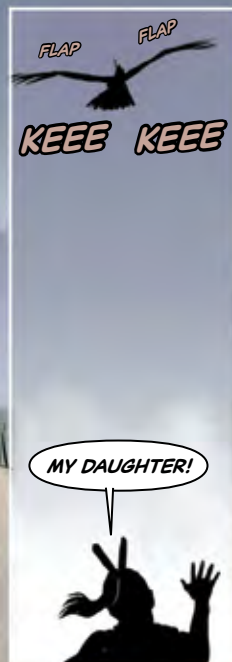
MY OATH
WILL NEVER
BE BROKEN!

NO!

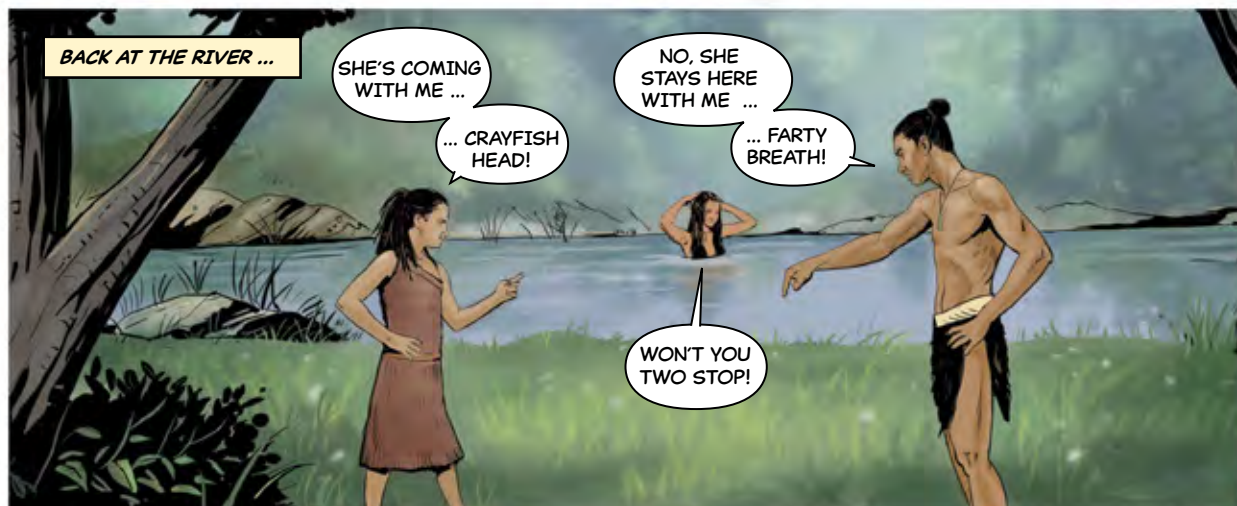


IN THREE DAYS' TIME, I WILL MARRY HINEAMURU.

THAT IS A PROMISE!



MY DAUGHTER!



BACK AT THE RIVER ...

SHE'S COMING WITH ME ...

... CRAYFISH HEAD!

NO, SHE STAYS HERE WITH ME ...

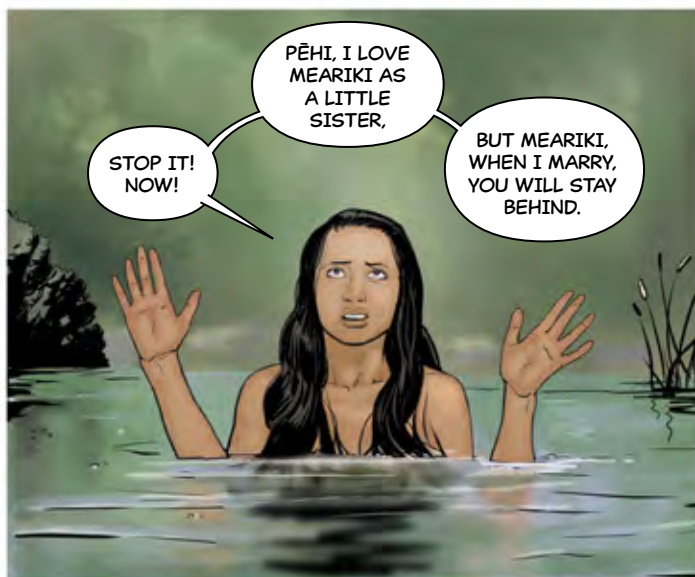
... FARTY BREATH!

WON'T YOU TWO STOP!



DID YOU HEAR THAT? YOU'VE RUINED HER DAY. NOW GET LOST!

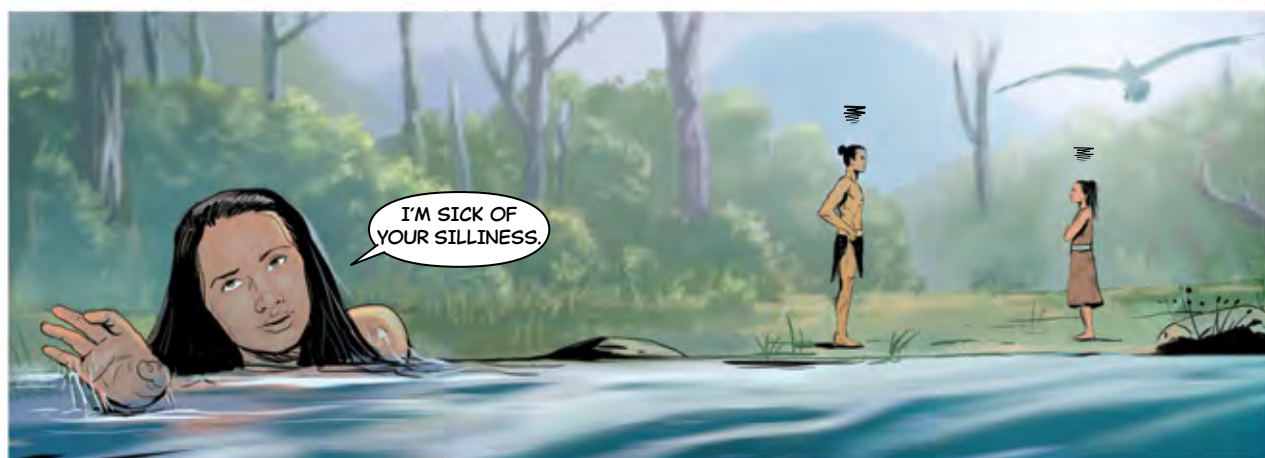
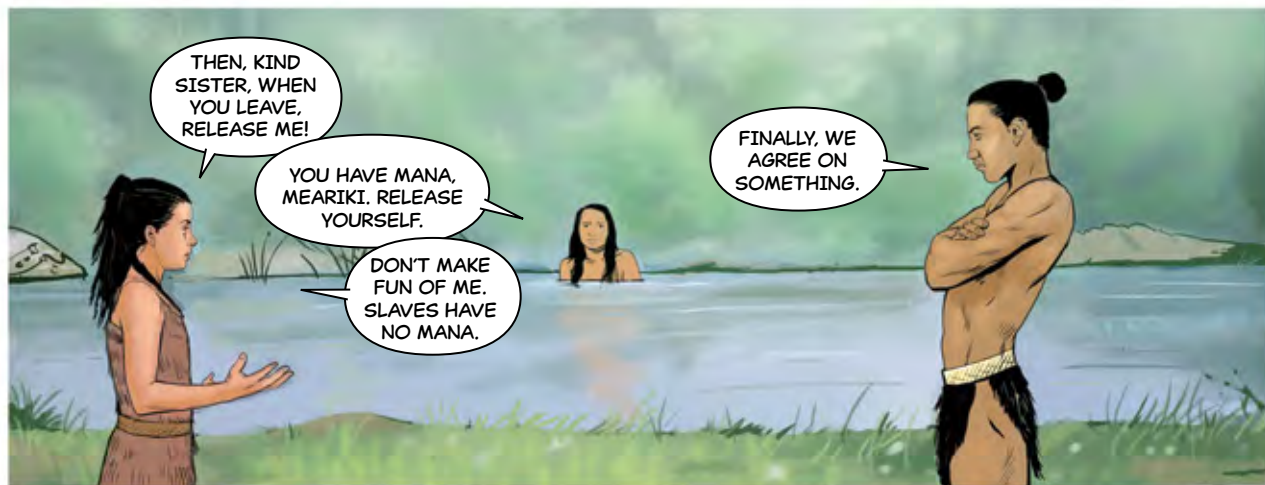
NO! YOU GET LOST!

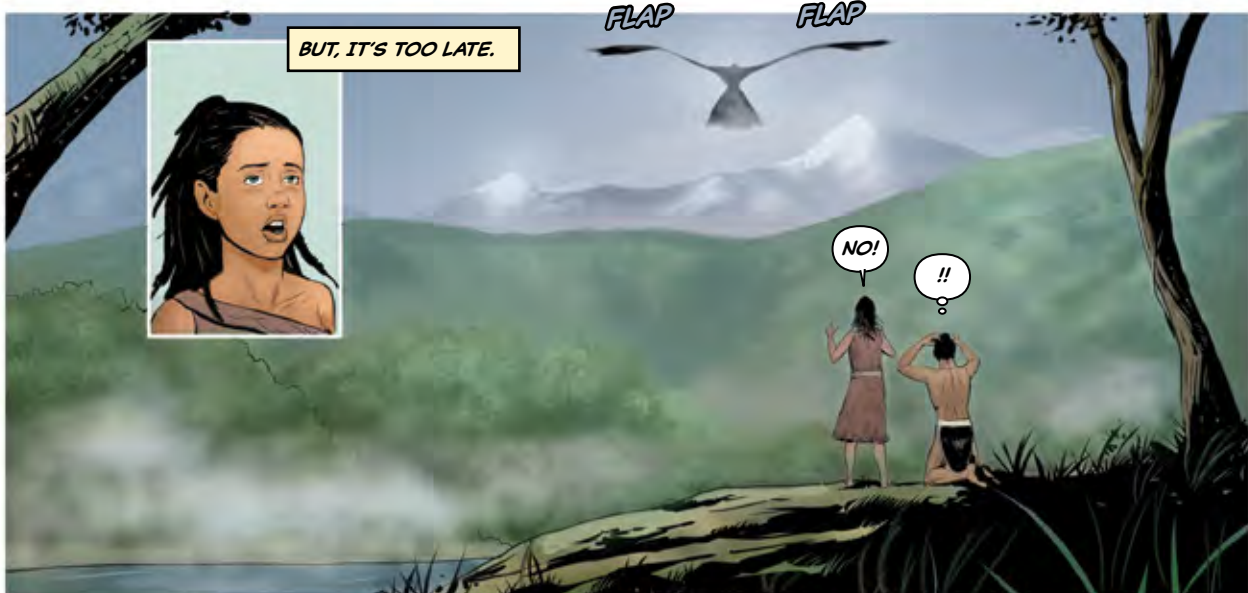
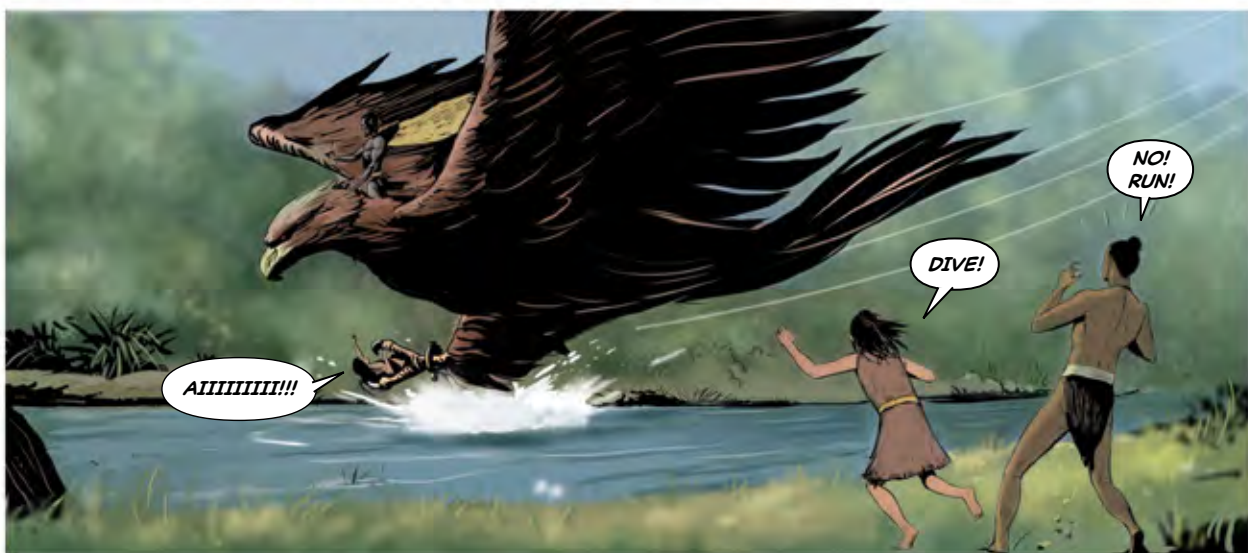


PĒHI, I LOVE MEARIKI AS A LITTLE SISTER,

STOP IT! NOW!

BUT MEARIKI, WHEN I MARRY, YOU WILL STAY BEHIND.





THE VILLAGE IS IN UPROAR.



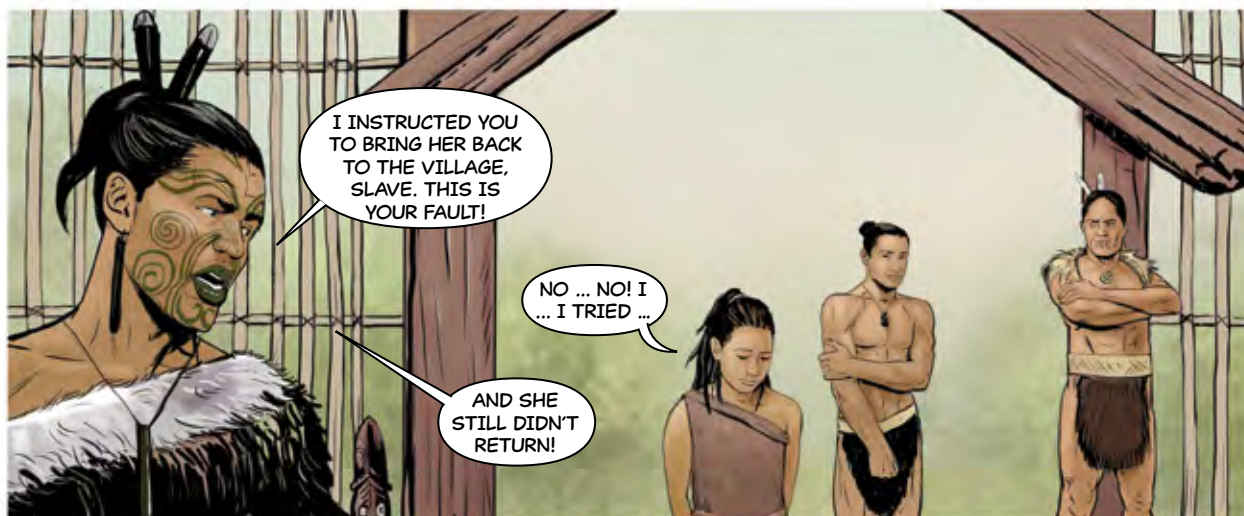
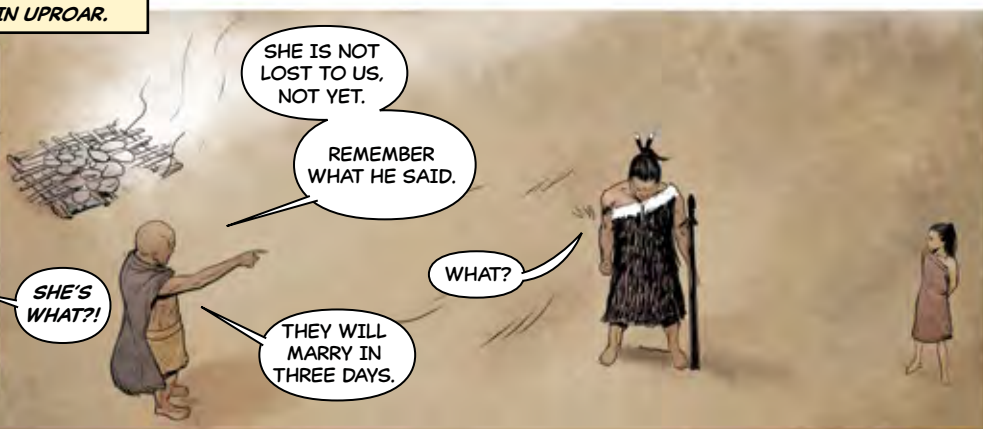
SHE'S
WHAT?!

SHE IS NOT
LOST TO US,
NOT YET.

REMEMBER
WHAT HE SAID.

WHAT?

THEY WILL
MARRY IN
THREE DAYS.



I INSTRUCTED YOU
TO BRING HER BACK
TO THE VILLAGE,
SLAVE. THIS IS
YOUR FAULT!

NO ... NO! I
... I TRIED ...

AND SHE
STILL DIDN'T
RETURN!

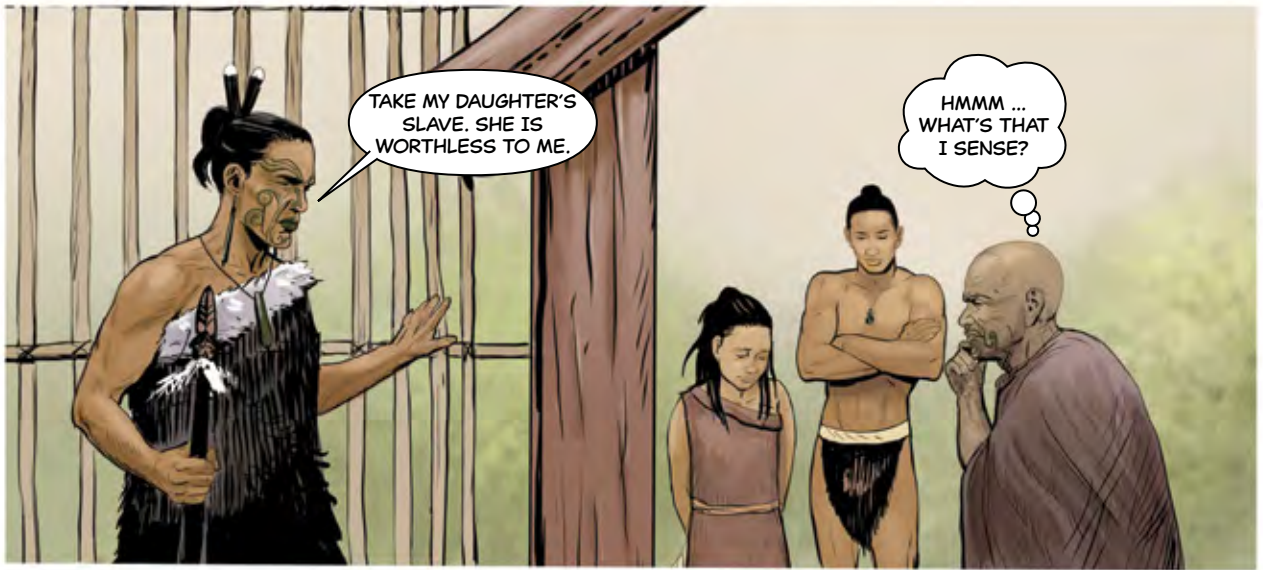


GO TO TE WAO,
TO THE CAVE
OF THE CRONE,
WHATUPAO.

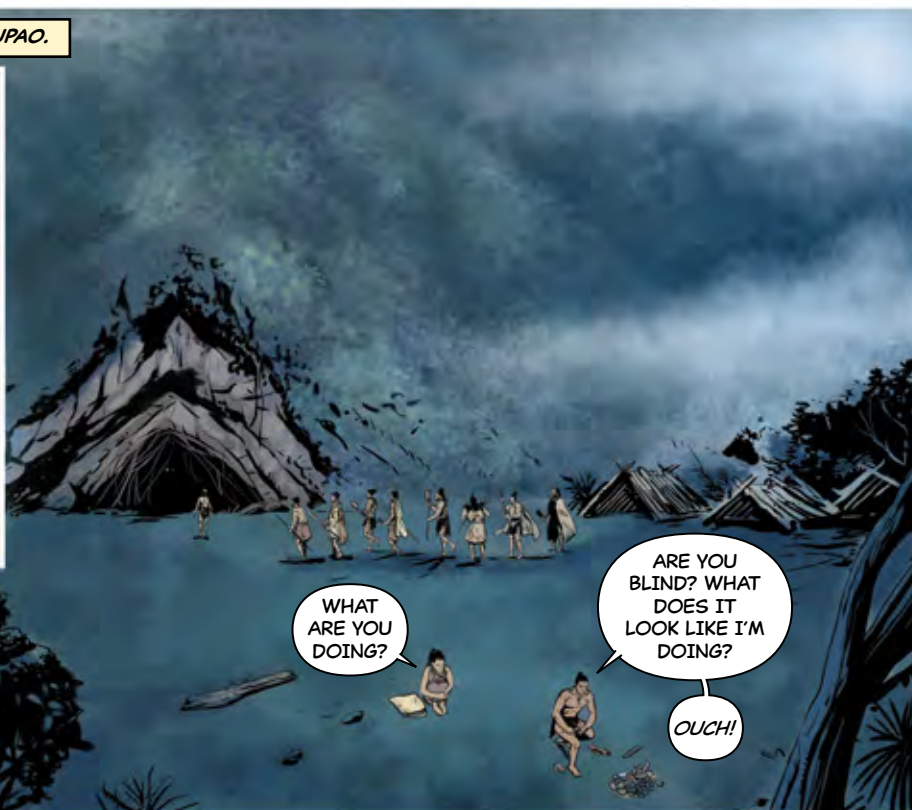
SHE WILL
LEAD YOU TO
THE LAIR OF
TĀNEKIKIWA.

KILL THE
DEMON BIRD,
SO THAT
HINEAMURU
MAY ESCAPE.

I WILL GO.
I WILL DEFEAT THE
DEMON BIRD OF
TĀNEKIKIWA.



AT THE CAVE OF WHATUPAO.



WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

ARE YOU
BLIND? WHAT
DOES IT
LOOK LIKE I'M
DOING?

OUCH!

JUST
ASKING.

YOU'LL NEVER
GET A FIRE
STARTED LIKE
THAT, THAT'S ALL.

SHUT UP
AND LET ME
— OUCH!

LOOK WHAT
YOU'VE DONE!

STUPID SLAVE!
LOOK AT THIS.

I DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING.

NOW I'VE GOT
A SPLINTER!

SO?
HERE, I'LL
LIGHT THE
FIRE.

NO!



BY THE TIME YOU GET THE FIRE GOING, HINEAMURU WILL HAVE DIED OF OLD AGE.

SHUT UP, WASTE OF SPACE.

YOU'RE THE WASTE OF SPACE!

SOME SORT OF PRINCE FROM A FLASH TRIBE CALLED KAITIPUA, AND YOU CAN'T EVEN START A FIRE.

MY SLAVES DO THAT FOR ME.



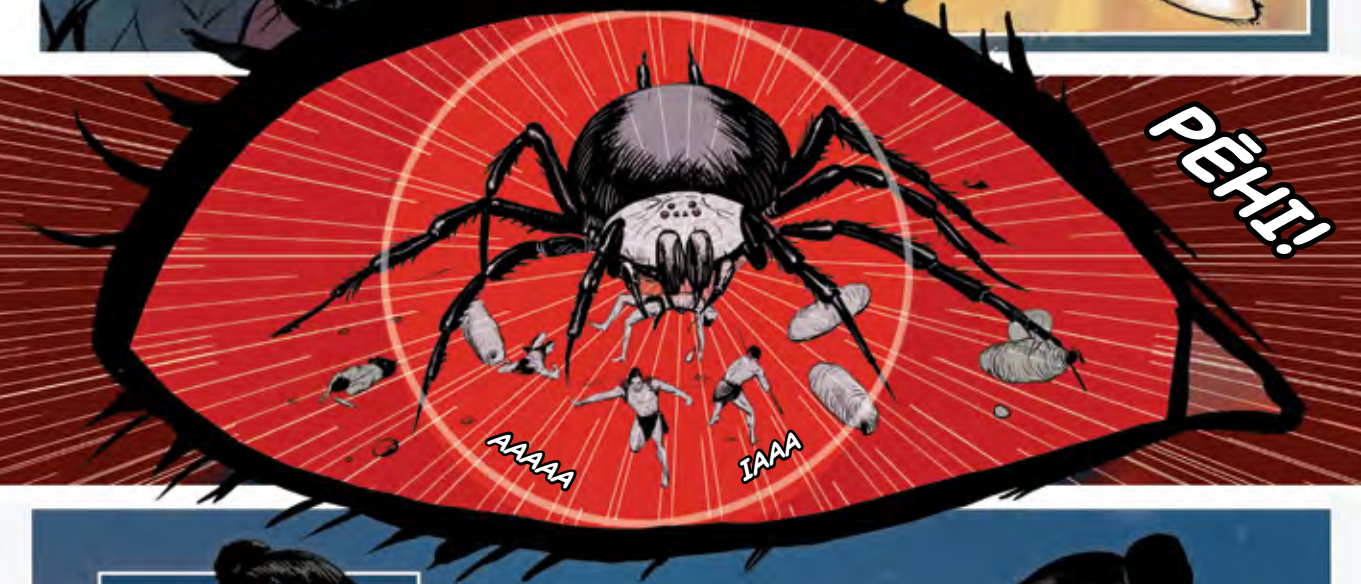
OH, GIVE IT HERE!

USELESS LITTLE PRINCE. I SUPPOSE THEY WIPE YOUR BACKSIDE TOO!

POP!

CRACKLE!

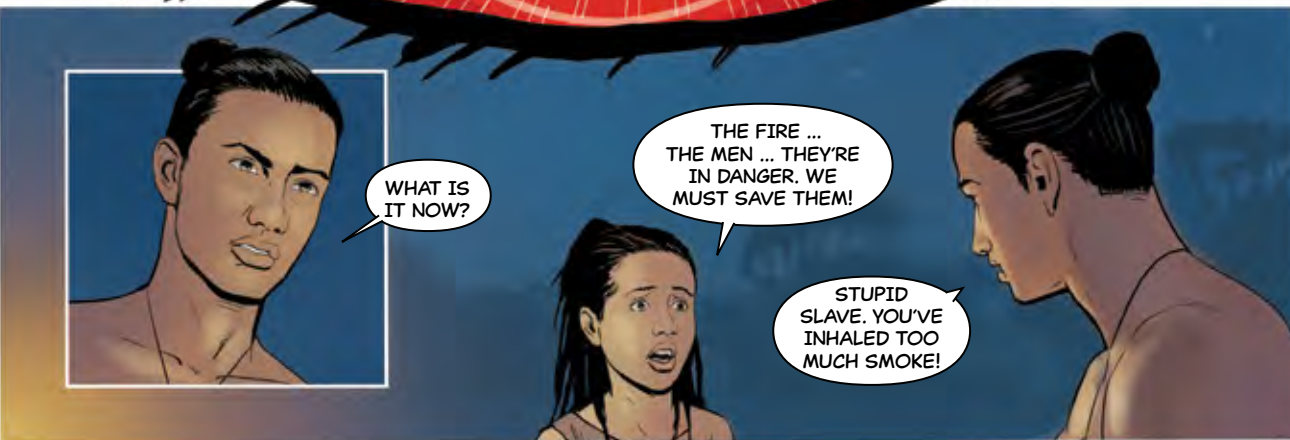
!!



PĒHI!

AAAAA

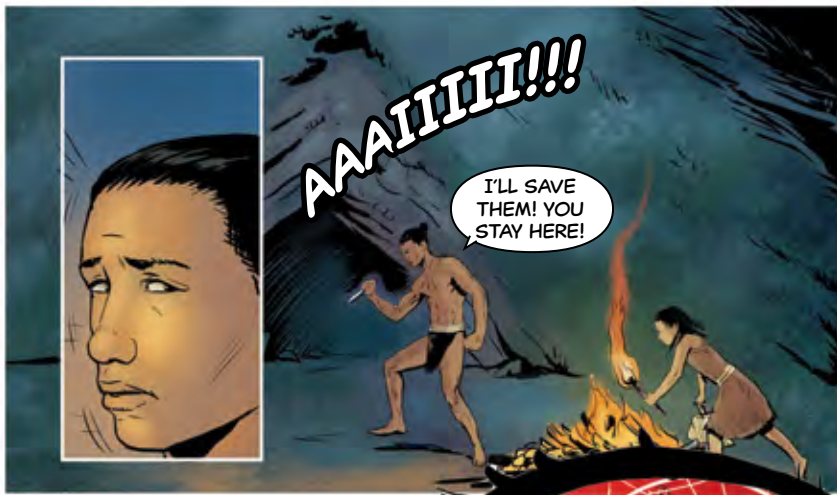
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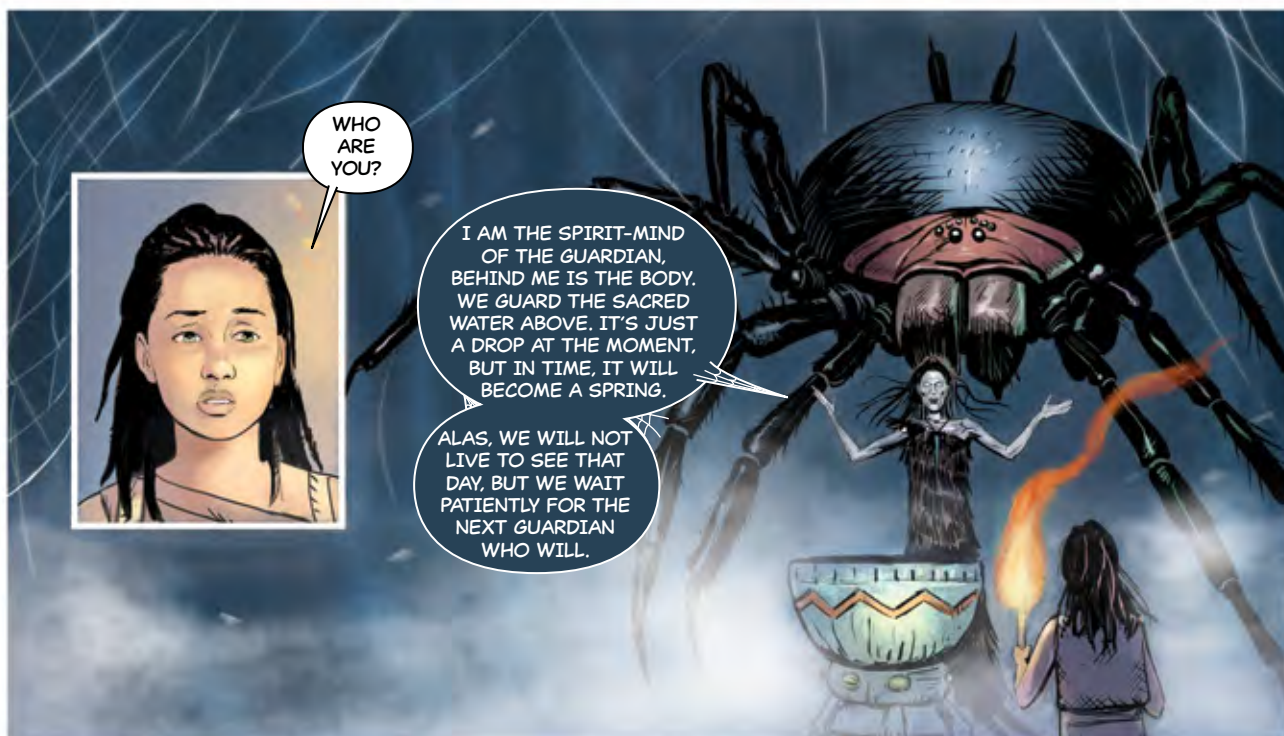


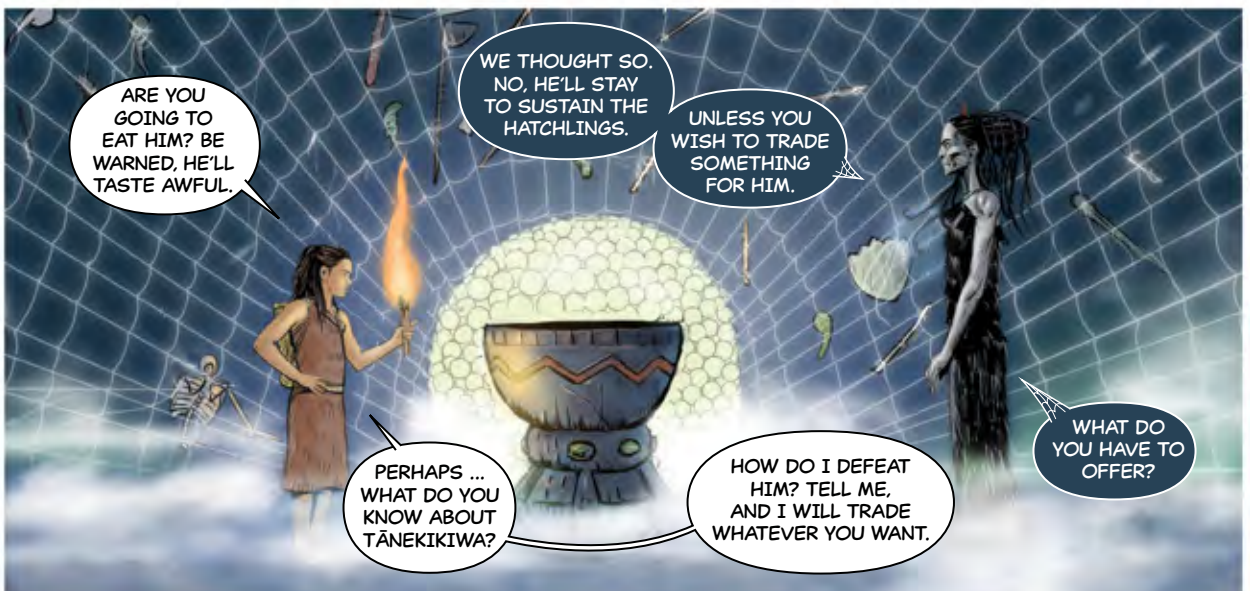
WHAT IS IT NOW?

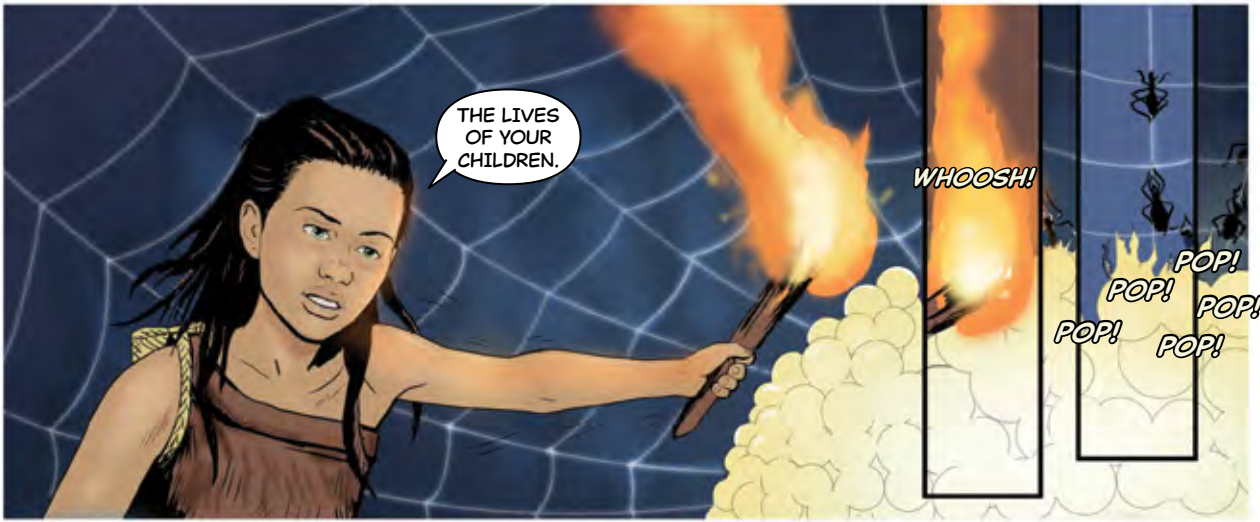
THE FIRE ... THE MEN ... THEY'RE IN DANGER. WE MUST SAVE THEM!

STUPID SLAVE. YOU'VE INHALED TOO MUCH SMOKE!









THE LIVES
OF YOUR
CHILDREN.

WHOOSH!

POP!
POP!
POP!
POP!
POP!

THE FIRE ACCELERATES THE HATCHING.



TIKTIKTIK



TIKTIKTIK



TIKTIKTIK



TIKTIKTIKTIK



POP! POP!
POP! POP!
POP! POP!



MY CHILDREN!
MY BEAUTIES!

THE CAVE TREMBLES.



SPLASH!

THE BASIN IS
FILLED AGAIN!



MEARIKI! GET
ME DOWN
FROM HERE!

OINK! OINK!
SQUEAL!



BUT, THAT WASN'T THE PLAN.

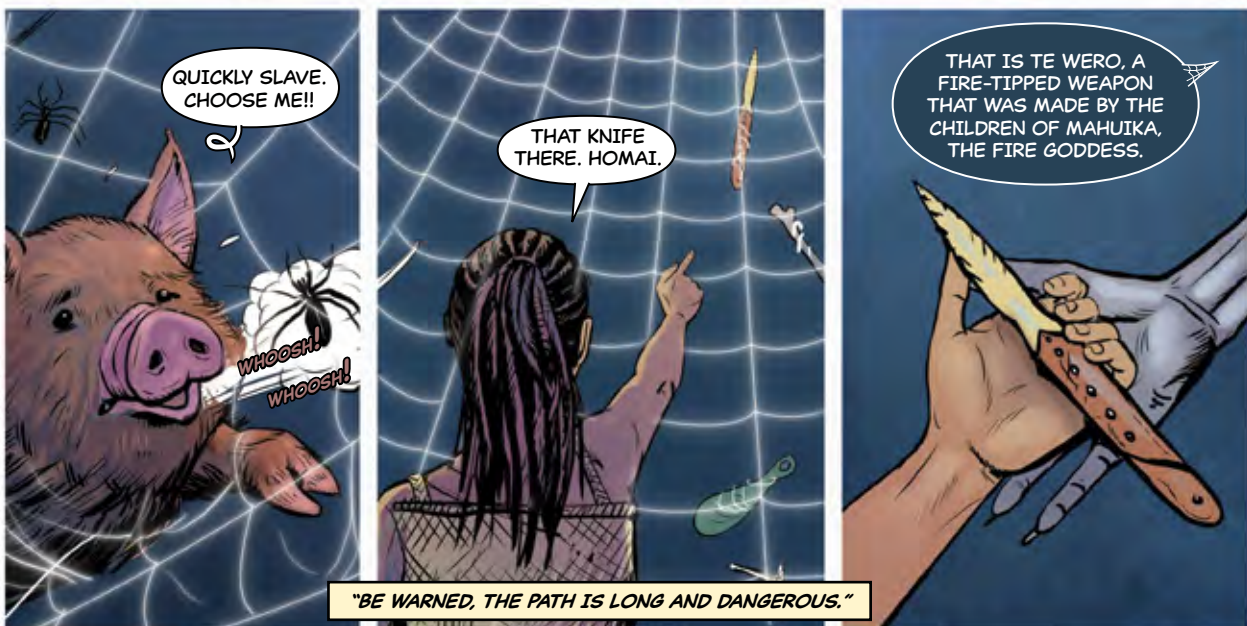
OOPS!

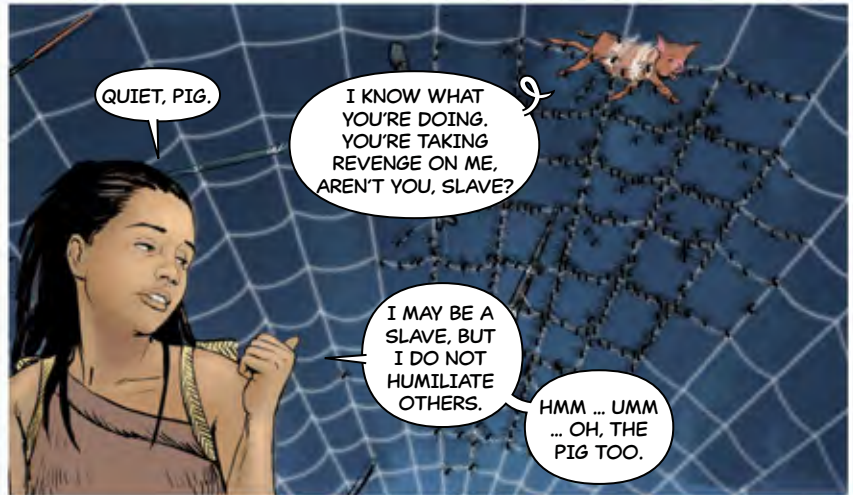
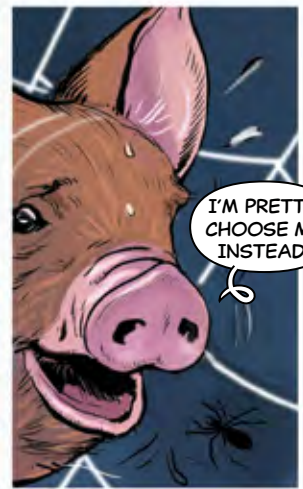


NOTHING,
YOU ARE A
FUNNY CHILD.

BUT YOU
HAVE
REFILLED
THE FONT!

GIVE ME
YOUR HAND.







GO QUICKLY, FOR MY CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY, AND THEY MUST FEED.

IF YOU SUCCEED, YOU MUST PROMISE TO RETURN.

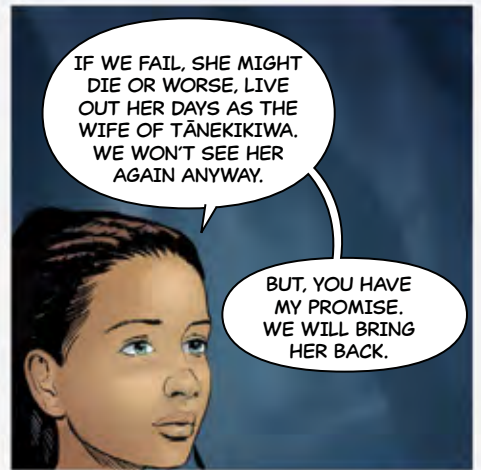
THANK YOU. I WILL FULFILL MY QUEST AND RETURN THE GIFTS TO YOU.



YOU MISUNDERSTAND CHILD. YOU WILL LOSE THEM ALL, AND YOU WILL NEVER SEE US AGAIN. BUT IF YOU SUCCEED, YOU WILL RETURN TO THIS PLACE. YOU WILL COME BACK WITH NOTHING, EXCEPT THE ONE WHO WILL TAKE MY PLACE.



NO! HINEAMURU IS MEANT TO MARRY ME AND COME WITH ME TO KAITIPUA. YOU CAN'T MAKE US PROMISE THAT!



IF WE FAIL, SHE MIGHT DIE OR WORSE, LIVE OUT HER DAYS AS THE WIFE OF TĀNEKIKIWA. WE WON'T SEE HER AGAIN ANYWAY.

BUT, YOU HAVE MY PROMISE. WE WILL BRING HER BACK.



THANK YOU. NOW GO!



COME MY BEAUTIES!

EAT! FEED!



NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM
NOM



AT THE LAIR OF TĀNEKIKIWA.

HELLO,
HINEAMURU.

TĀNEKIKIWA! I
THOUGHT YOU
WERE DEAD.

THOUGHT
OR HOPED?

I AM NOT
FOR YOU.
LET ME GO.

NO, NOT WHEN I'VE
WORKED SO HARD TO
PROVIDE YOU WITH A
HOME, A KINGDOM, A
RETINUE OF SERVANTS.

ooooooooooooo!!!

HERE, YOU
SHOULD EAT!

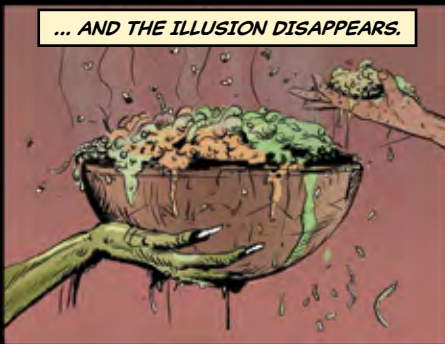
FOR A MOMENT, SHE IS TAKEN IN BY THE BEAUTY OF THE BLOSSOMS ...



... UNTIL SHE TOUCHES THEIR FOOD ...



... AND THE ILLUSION DISAPPEARS.



HIDEOUS
CREATURE!

GET AWAY!



HOW MANY TIMES
HAVE I TOLD YOU?
YOU CANNOT EAT HER!
THIS ONE IS MINE!



NEVER. I
WILL NEVER
BE YOURS. I
WOULD RATHER
STARVE TO
DEATH!



PERHAPS YOU WILL,
HOWEVER, UNLIKE
YOUR FATHER, I AM
GENEROUS, I WILL GIVE
YOU TWO DAYS TO
CHANGE YOUR MIND.

IT WOULD BE A
PITY FOR YOU
TO END UP AS
BIRD FOOD.

MEANWHILE ...

"SWEET WORM, SWEET WORM, BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU WRIGGLE. THERE'S A HUNGRY PIG, AND HE'S LOOKING FOR A NIBBLE!"

PĒHI, SLOW DOWN!

ARE THOSE TREASURES HEAVY? WHY DON'T YOU GIVE THEM TO ME?

YEAH RIGHT!

I'M STRONGER, SO GIVE THEM TO ME. I CAN CARRY THEM AS WELL AS LEAD US TO TĀNEKIKIWA.

YOU HAVE NO HANDS, PIG.

AT LEAST GIVE ME THE TRINKET AROUND YOUR NECK. I CAN CARRY THAT FOR YOU, SURELY?

DON'T PRETEND TO BE NICE TO ME. YOU WANT TO USE THE WATER TO TURN YOU BACK INTO A BOY. BUT IT'S NOT FOR YOU!

STUPID SLAVE. HOW DO YOU KNOW IT'S NOT FOR ME?

SHE WOULD'VE GIVEN IT TO YOU IF IT WERE.

NO.

STOP NAGGING ME.

GIVE IT!

THEN GIVE IT TO ME. LET'S FIND OUT.

GIMME, GIMME, GIVE IT TO ME!

IF YOU STOP NAGGING ME, I'LL GIVE YOU THE WATER WHEN WE REACH THE LAIR OF TĀNEKIKIWA.

AS MUCH AS I DISLIKE YOU, I WILL NOT LET HINEAMURU MARRY A PIG.

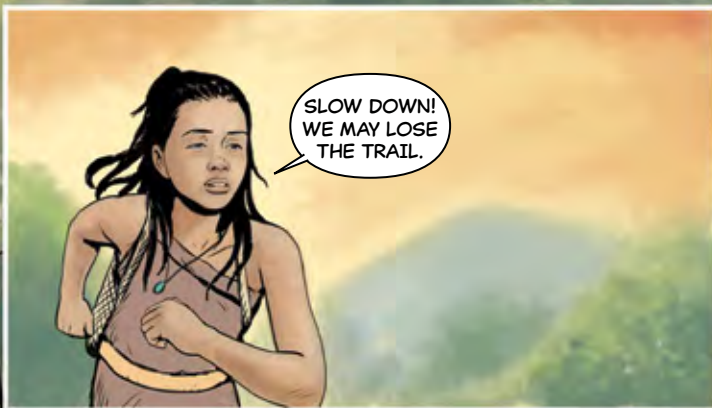
ALRIGHT. BUT YOU COULD ALWAYS GIVE IT TO ME NOW ...

SNIFF!



HURRY UP!

GRUNT!
GRUNT!



SLOW DOWN!
WE MAY LOSE THE TRAIL.

TRUST ME, I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I MAY BE A PIG, BUT I FEEL SO ALIVE ...

... THE COLOURS,
THE SOUNDS ...

SNIFF!

... THE DANGEROUS
PONATURI THAT'S
HIDING IN THE
SPRING AHEAD,
WAITING TO
AMBUSH US ...



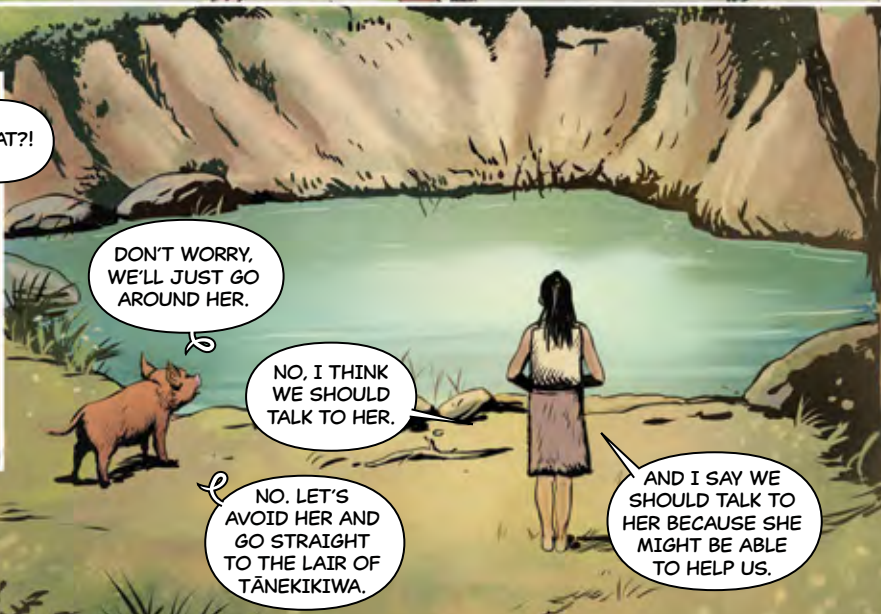
WHAT?!

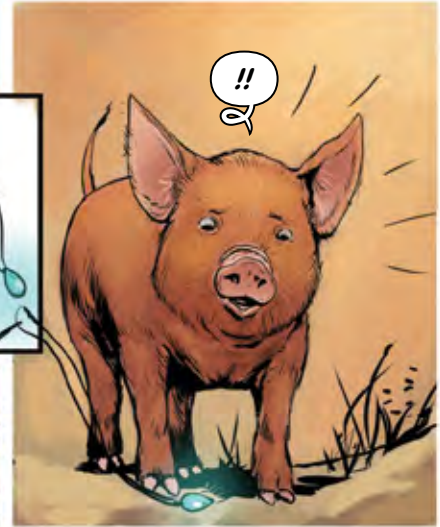
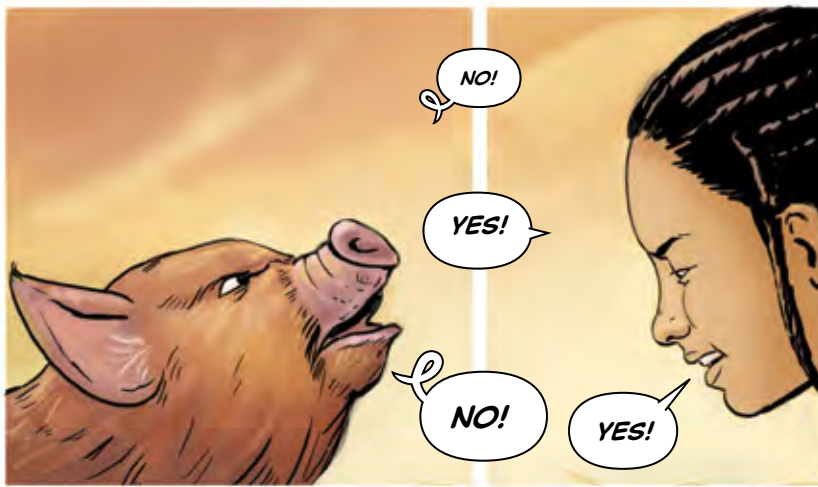
DON'T WORRY,
WE'LL JUST GO
AROUND HER.

NO. I THINK
WE SHOULD
TALK TO HER.

NO. LET'S
AVOID HER AND
GO STRAIGHT
TO THE LAIR OF
TĀNEKIKIWA.

AND I SAY WE
SHOULD TALK TO
HER BECAUSE SHE
MIGHT BE ABLE
TO HELP US.







I'M PUNISHING IT FOR LAUGHING AT ME.



BUT WHY DID YOU LAUGH?



SHE SAID SHE WAS THE BEAUTY OF THE SPRING, AND I LOOKED AT HER ...

... AND COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. HAHahaha!



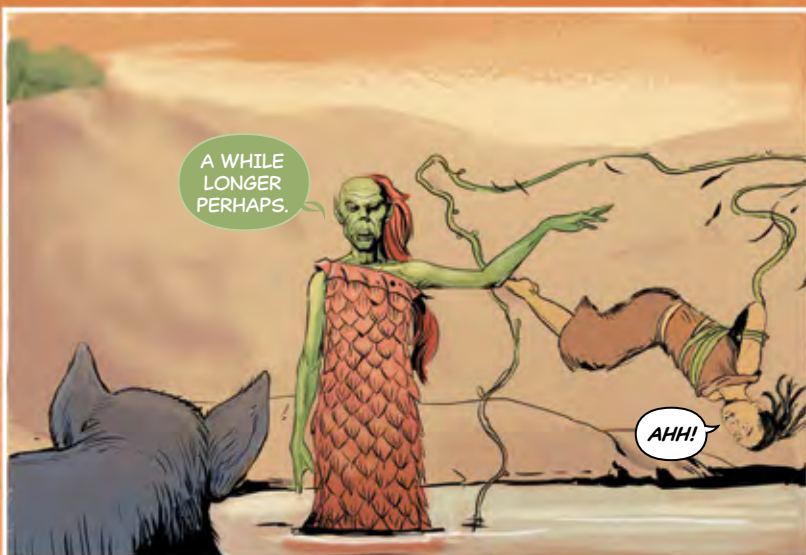
YOU SEE!

YES. IT WAS CRUEL TO LAUGH AT YOU, WHEN I SEE YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL.

I AM NOT BEAUTIFUL, I AM UGLY AND LONELY. YOU LIE TO SAVE YOUR FRIEND.

SHE'S MY SLAVE, NOT MY FRIEND.

YOUR SLAVE HAS DIMINISHED MY MANA. I DEMAND SATISFACTION.



BUT WE ARE
HUNTING THAT SAME
WARLOCK. PERHAPS
HIS ENCHANTMENT
WILL BREAK WHEN
WE DEFEAT HIM.



NO. MY
VANITY HAS
ENTRAPPED ME.

IT IS TOO LATE FOR ME,
BUT PERHAPS NOT
FOR MY SISTERS.

TĀNEKIKIWA WEARS
A VIAL AROUND HIS
NECK THAT HOLDS A
SPECIAL PERFUME.

HE TOOK
IT FROM MY
SISTERS.

IT ENSLAVES
THEM SO THAT
THEY ARE FORCED
TO SERVE HIM.

THEY FALSELY
HOPE THAT ONE
DAY HE WILL GIFT
IT BACK TO THEM.

GO NOW AND
SLAY THE WARLOCK,
BUT LET WAEHAPE
HAVE HER FOOD IN
PEACE.



LET ME TRADE
WITH YOU FOR
MY SLAVE.

YOU HAVE
NOTHING
I WANT.



I CAN
GIVE YOU
BEAUTY.

WAEHAPE,
TAKE THIS
SHIELD AND
LOOK INTO
IT. LOOK!

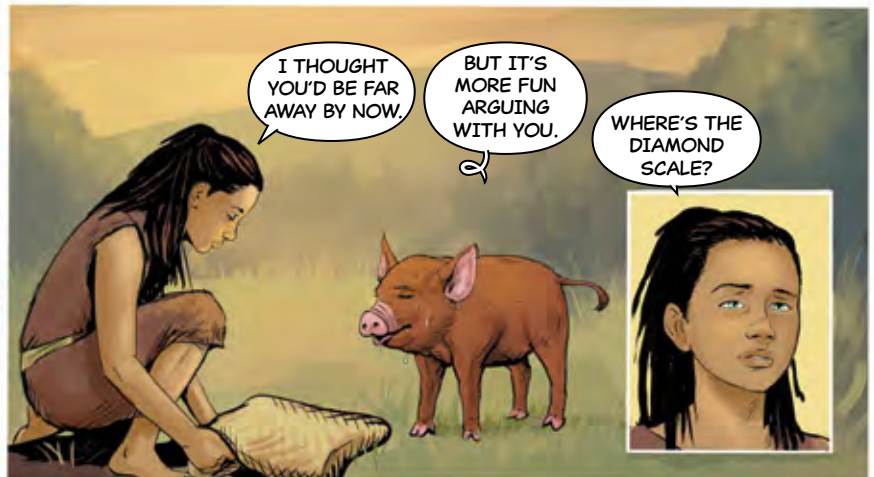
HUH!



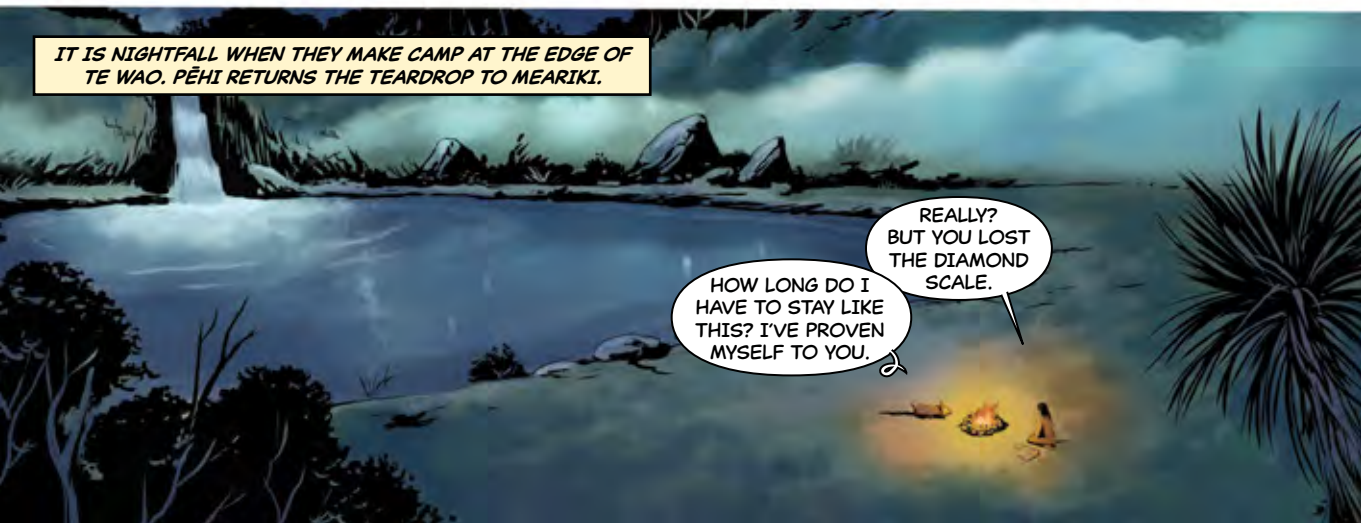
WAEHAPE ...

THE
BEAUTIFUL
MAIDEN ONCE
MORE.





IT IS NIGHTFALL WHEN THEY MAKE CAMP AT THE EDGE OF TE WAO. PĒHI RETURNS THE TEARDROP TO MEARIKI.



I TRADED IT FOR
YOUR LIFE. I
COULD BE MORE
USEFUL IF YOU
CHANGED ME BACK
INTO A PERSON.

WE SHOULD
PUT ASIDE OUR
DIFFERENCES.
FOR THE SAKE OF
HINEAMURU.

TWO GIFTS,
LOST IN ONE DAY.
YOU'RE DREAMING ...

... PIG!

CRACKLE!

HISS!

POPI!

I WAS NOT
BORN TO BE
AN ANIMAL.

YOU THINK
THAT I WAS
BORN TO BE
YOUR SLAVE?

I'M A WARRIOR,
A FUTURE CHIEF. I
SHOULD BE HOLDING
THAT KNIFE.
GIVE IT HERE!

GRUNT!
GRUNT!

NOT UNTIL
YOU GROW
HANDS, PIG.

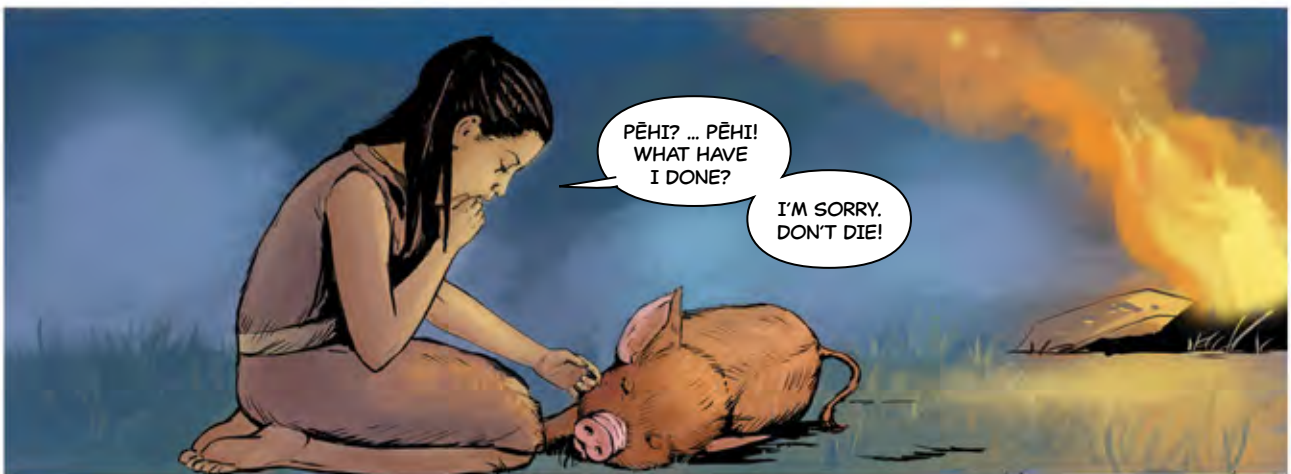
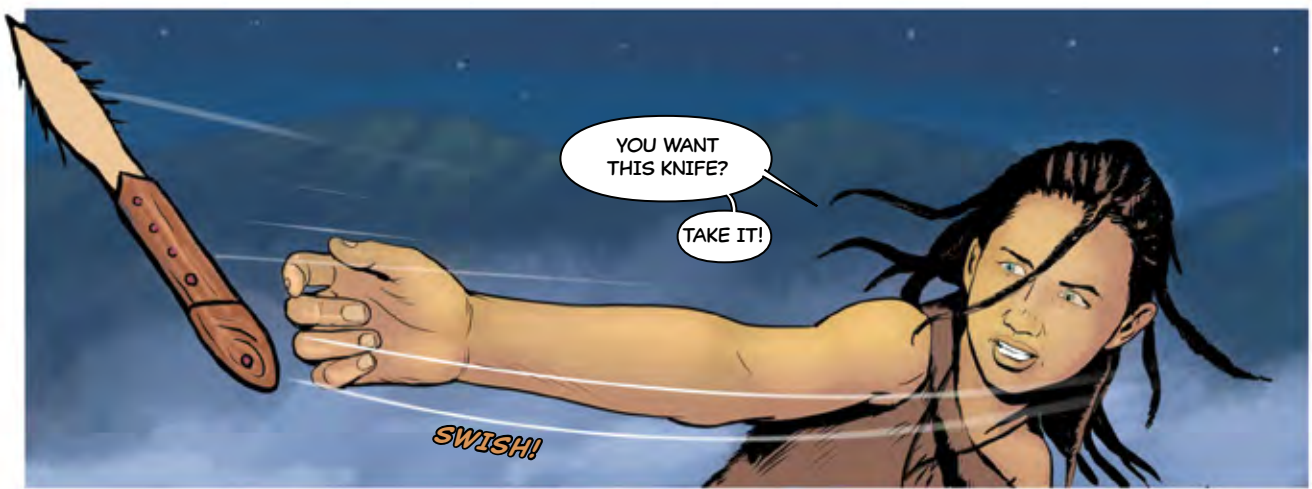
DO YOU LIKE
YOUR NEW-FOUND
POWER? LOOK AT
YOU ...

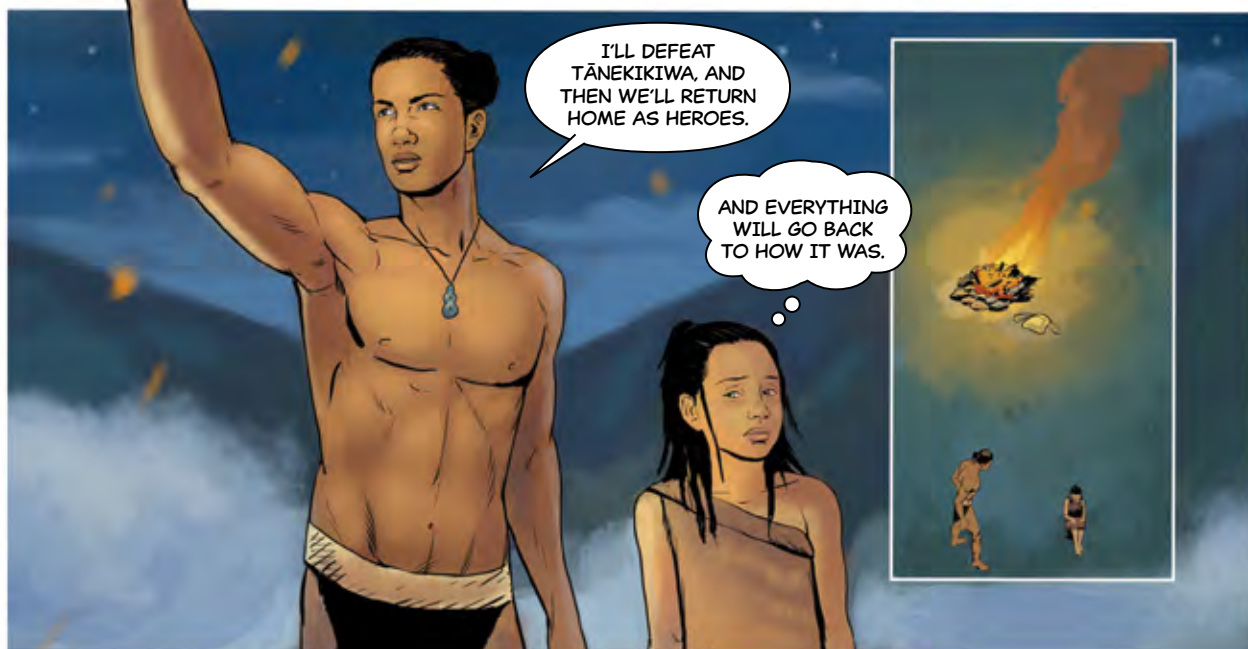
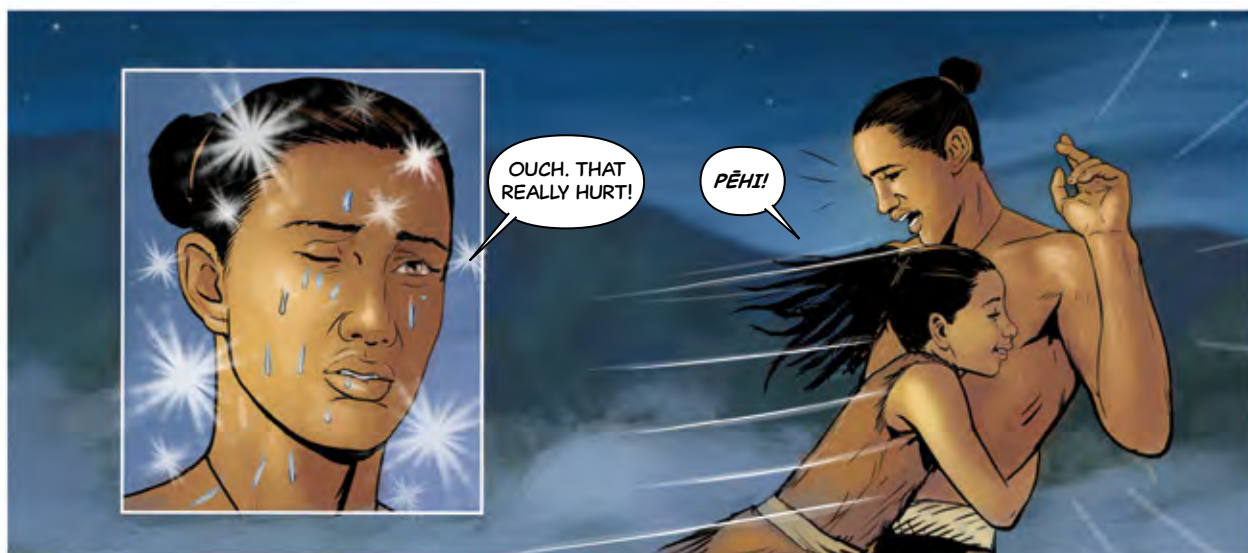
... YOU'RE
A FAKE!

SHUT YOUR
MOUTH, PIG OR
ELSE ...

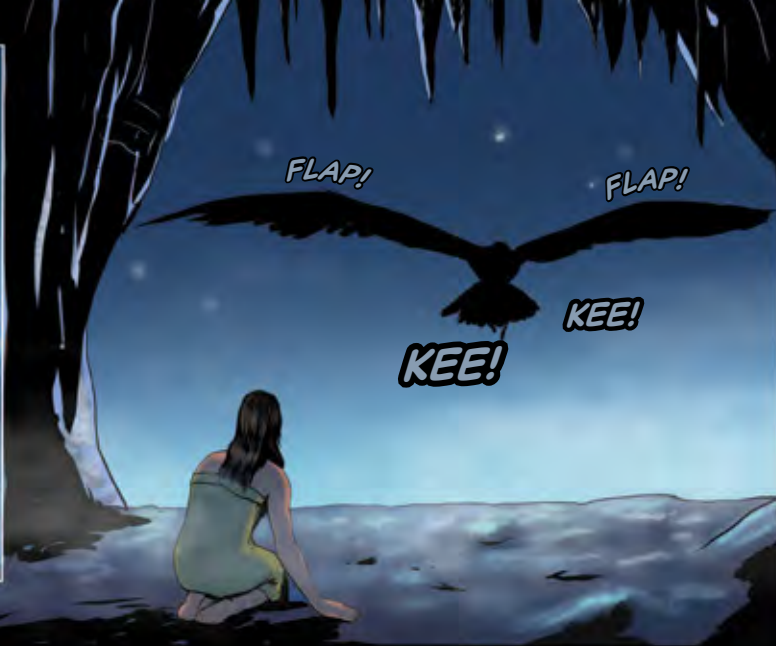
OR ELSE WHAT? YOU'LL
BEAT ME? LISTEN TO
YOU. YOU EVEN SOUND
LIKE A SLAVE OWNER,
A SPOILT BRAT. YOU
SOUND LIKE ... LIKE ME!

I WILL NEVER
BE LIKE YOU.
LEAVE ME
ALONE!





THE LAIR OF TĀNEKIKIWA.



FLAP!

FLAP!

KEE!

KEE!



I KNOW THE FOOD
IS CURSED. HE CAN'T
MAKE ME EAT.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT
EVIL. I CAN TELL
YOU'RE A PRISONER,
JUST LIKE ME.



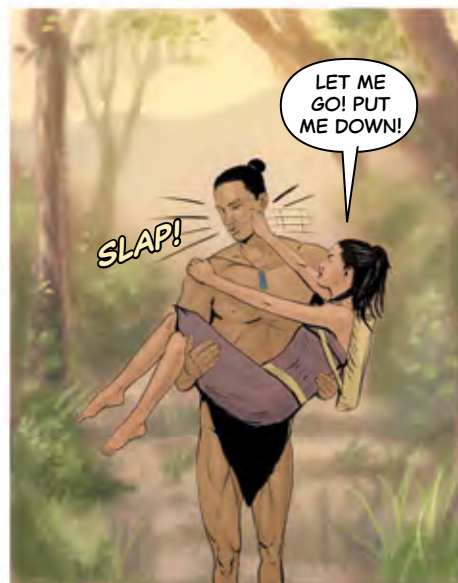
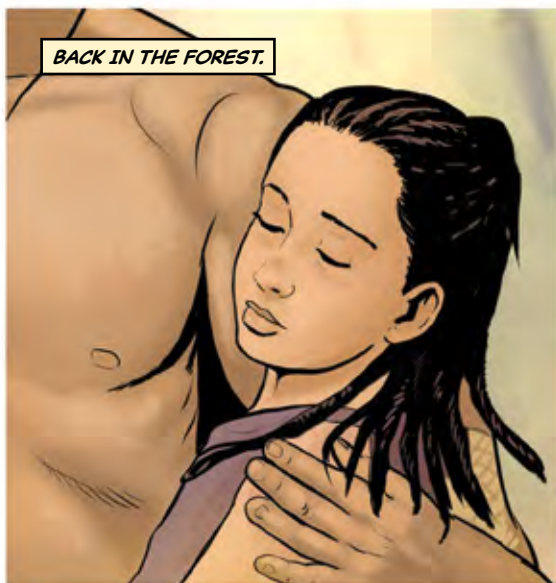
MAYBE WE COULD
BECOME FRIENDS AND
FLY HOME TOGETHER.

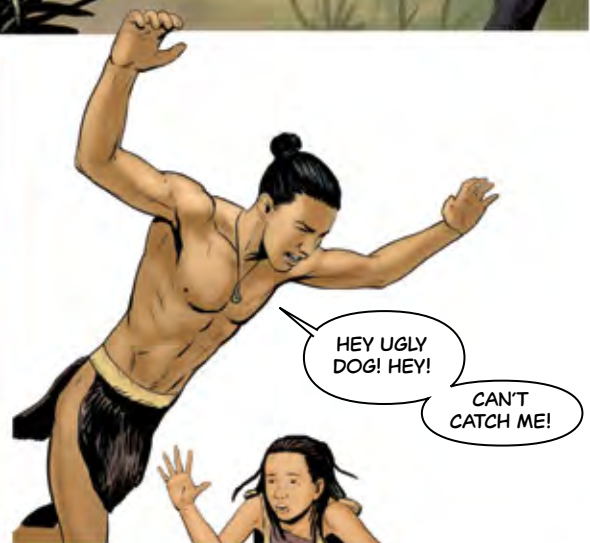


WHAT'S THIS?

KEE!









THANK YOU FOR TRYING TO RESCUE ME. YOUR FRIEND IS BRAVE, BUT HIS SACRIFICE WILL COUNT FOR NOTHING. MY PET WILL OUTRUN AND EAT HIM ...

... AND THEN RETURN HERE, AND I WILL BE FORCED BACK INTO THIS PRISON AGAIN.

TELL ME. DID TĀNEKIKIWA DO THIS TO YOU?



I AM TE MOEPAPA, THE DREAM WEAVER, AND YES, I WAS TRICKED BY TĀNEKIKIWA. HE OFFERED TO TRADE ME HIS FLUTE IF I WOULD WEAVE A CORD FOR THE LARGE ANKLET FROM THE RED HAIR OF A PONATURI.

BUT, WHEN THE WARLOCK RETURNED TO COLLECT THE PŌRIA, HE PUT ME IN THIS CAGE AND SET MY OWN DOG TO GUARD ME.



MY DOG WILL NOT LISTEN TO MY CALL UNTIL I GET OUT OF THIS CAGE.

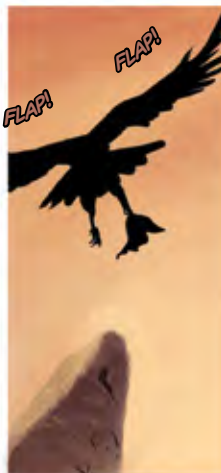


WELL YOU ARE FREE NOW, TE MOEPAPA. COME OUT AND CALL OFF YOUR DOG.



BUT THAT IS THE CRUEL TRICK! IF I STEP OUT OF THE CAGE ...

... THE DEMON BIRD THAT WEARS THE PŌRIA WILL TAKE ME AND FEED ME TO THE WARLOCK'S WIVES!





MUAHAHAHAHAHAHA!



YOU WEAR
THE DREAM
WEAVER'S
CLOAK, BUT YOU
ARE NOT HIM.
YOU STAND
BRAVE BEFORE
ME, BUT YOUR
VOICE WAVERS.

IS THIS ALL
TE MIHIAU
COULD SEND
AGAINST ME?
A NOBODY?

COME,
LITTLE ONE.

I SHALL
KNOW WHO
YOU ARE.

WHA ...

NO ...

NO ...

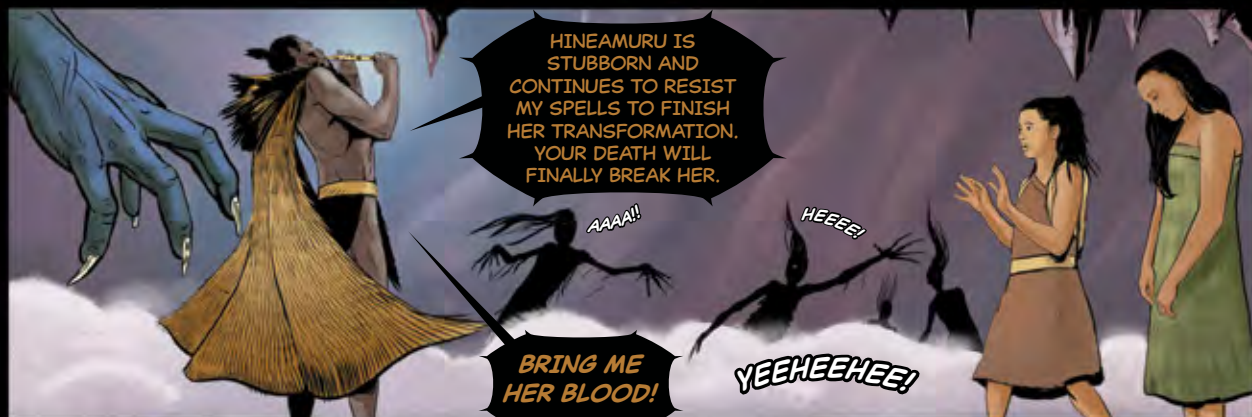
NOO!



WHAT WAS
THAT?

YOU HAVE FEY
ANCESTRY. FROM
THE PAREHE,
MOST LIKELY.

FROM WHO?







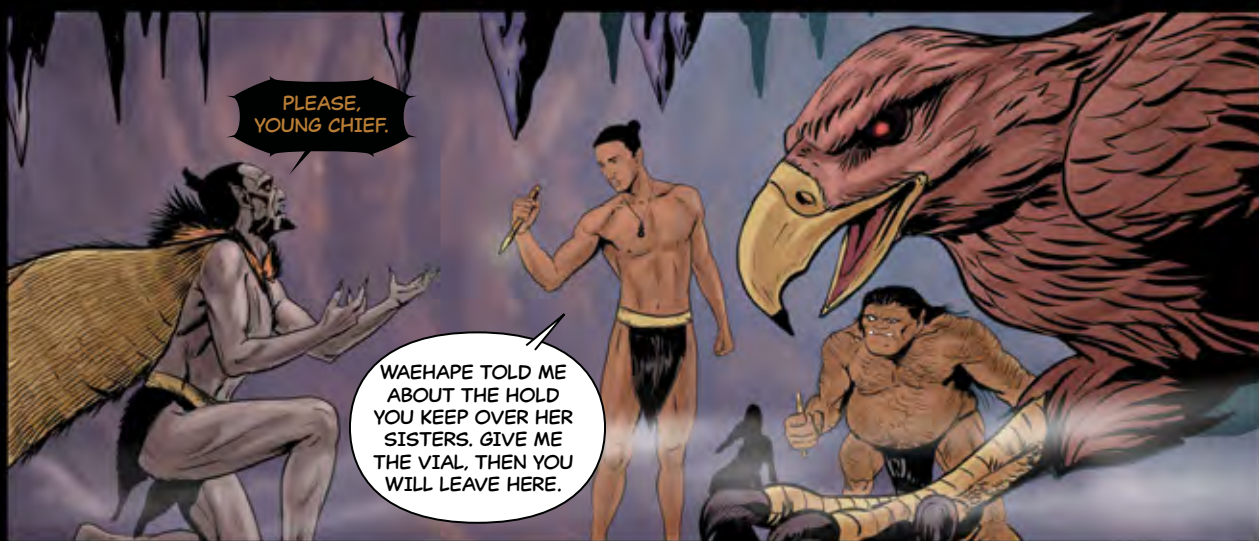
MINE AT LAST!



BIRD, KILL THEM!



MY PET! NOOOO!



PLEASE,
YOUNG CHIEF.

WAEHAPE TOLD ME
ABOUT THE HOLD
YOU KEEP OVER HER
SISTERS. GIVE ME
THE VIAL, THEN YOU
WILL LEAVE HERE.



THANK YOU.
THANK YOU,
KIND CHIEF.



LEAVE AND
NEVER RETURN.



BY MY WORD,
YOUNG CHIEF.

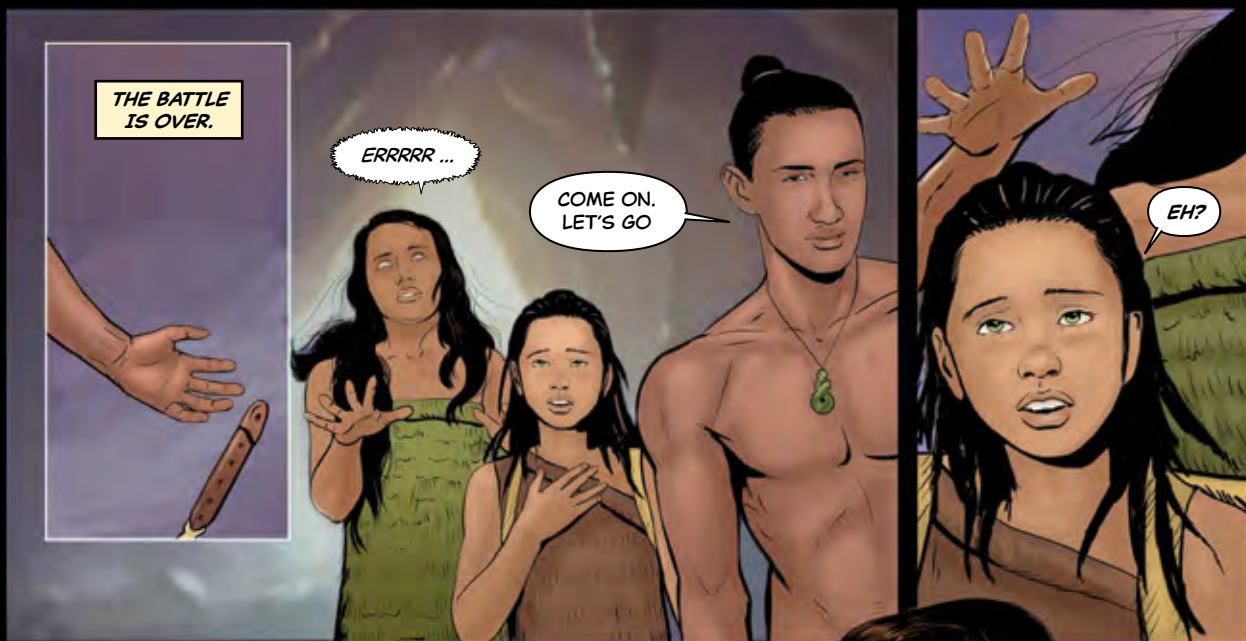
PĒHI, DON'T LET
HIM GO. FINISH
HIM OFF!

NO MEARIKI. HE'S
UNARMED AND
ON HIS KNEES.

HE'S EVIL.
YOU HAVE
TO KILL HIM.

DO IT!

I CAN'T, MEARIKI.
IF I AM TO BE A
GOOD AND WISE
LEADER, I HAVE TO
RESPECT LIFE. YOU
TAUGHT ME THAT.



THE BATTLE
IS OVER.

ERRRRR ...

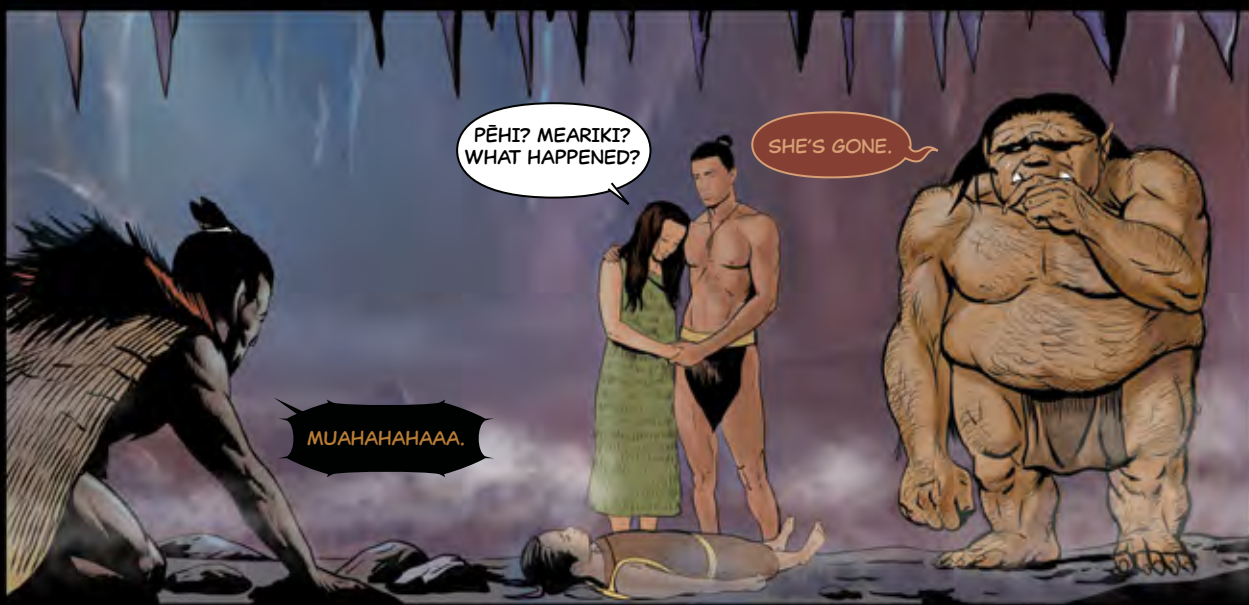
COME ON.
LET'S GO

EH?

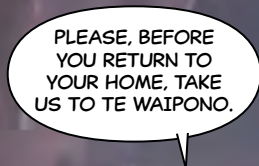


AAAAIIIEEEE!!!

BRRZZT!



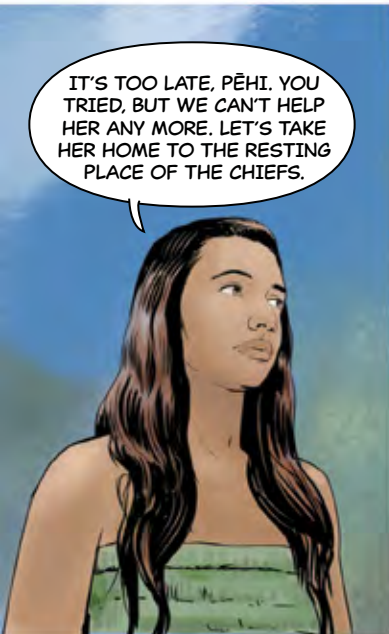




THE CAVE OF WHATUPAO.



IT'S TOO LATE, PĒHI. YOU TRIED, BUT WE CAN'T HELP HER ANY MORE. LET'S TAKE HER HOME TO THE RESTING PLACE OF THE CHIEFS.



NO. SHE WILL STAY IN TE WAO.

REST EASY ...

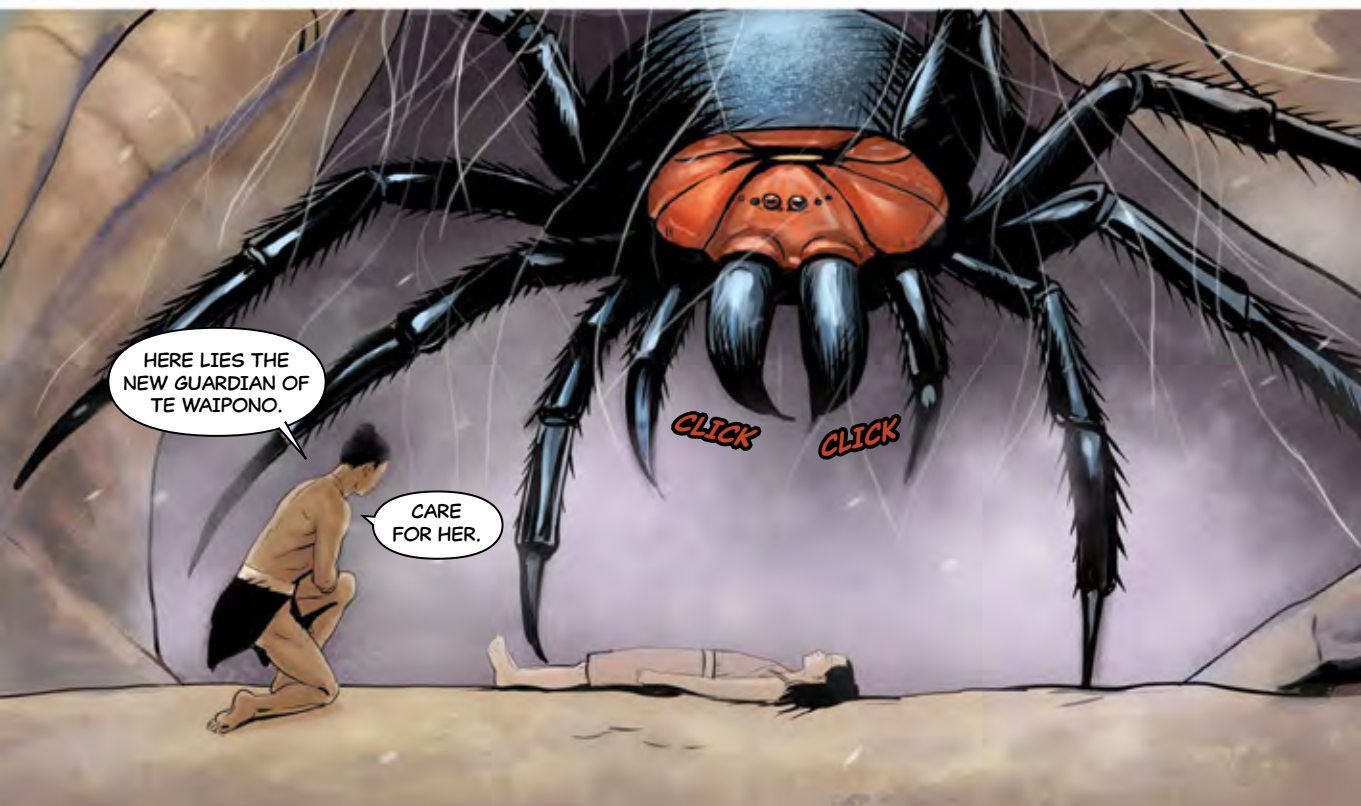
... MY FRIEND.



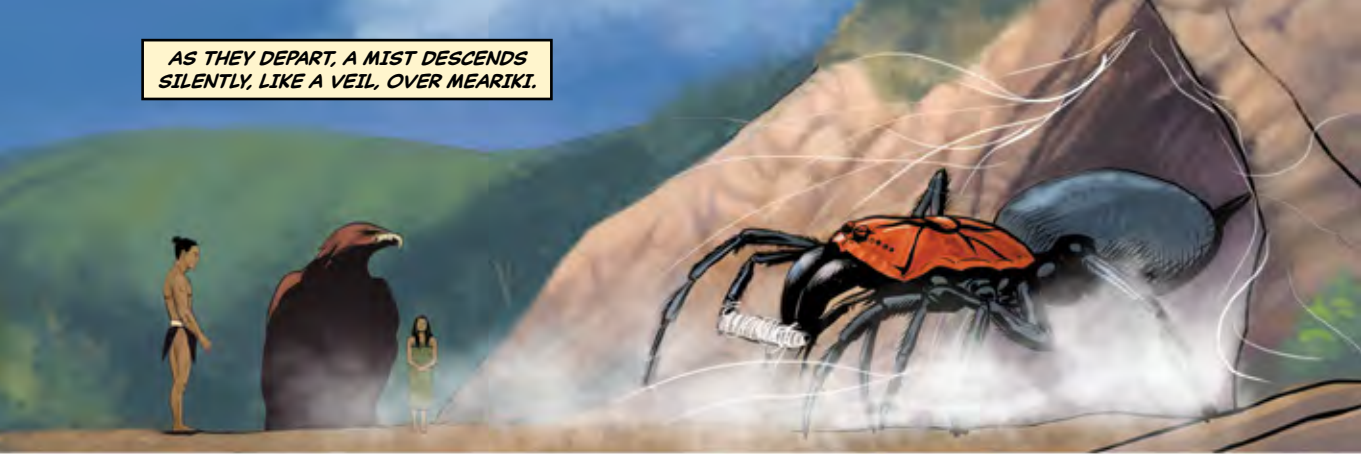
THE GIANT ARACHNID LOOKS ON.

HERE LIES THE NEW GUARDIAN OF TE WAIPONO.

CARE FOR HER.



AS THEY DEPART, A MIST DESCENDS
SILENTLY, LIKE A VEIL, OVER MEARIKI.

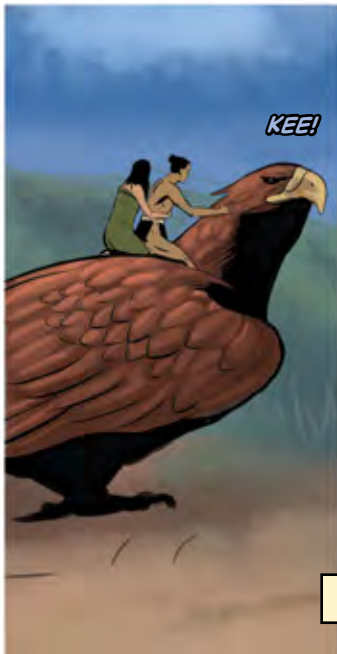


COCOONED IN THE SPIDER'S THREAD ...

... SHE IS THEN TAKEN INTO THE CAVE ...

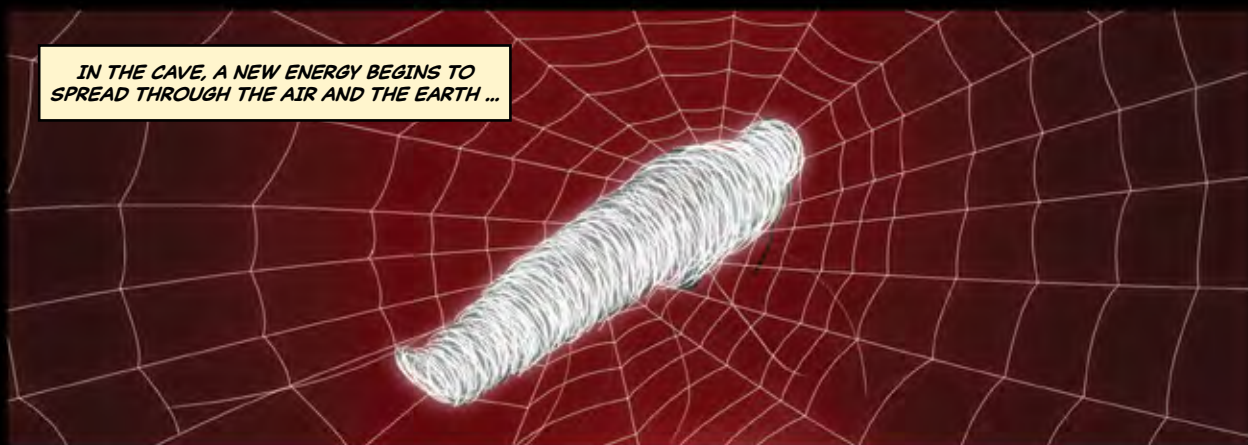


... TO LIE IN STATE.



THE BETROTHED ONES LEAVE, NEVER TO RETURN.

IN THE CAVE, A NEW ENERGY BEGINS TO
SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR AND THE EARTH ...



... THE BODY STARTS TO GLOW AND TREMBLE ...

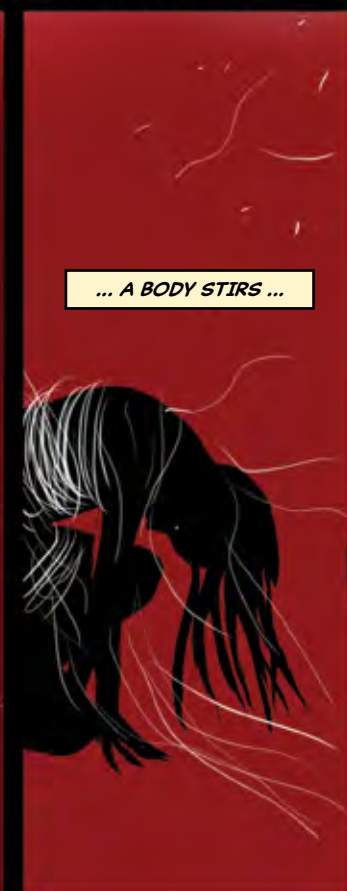


... THE STRANDS UNRAVEL.

AN ARM EXTENDS ...



... A BODY STIRS ...



HAA!

... AND A SINGLE BREATH.



AS ONE FALLS, ANOTHER RISES IN HER PLACE.



THE GUARDIAN ...



... KATIPŌ.



TO BE CONTINUED

