

When God fell on Kerethim, the impact was felt everywhere.

A physical thing. Land recoiling from the touch of the divine. Mountains shaking, the sun blotted out with soil.

Carrying an ethereal message to all kingdoms beyond.



Into the opulent lands of The Dominion, overseen by its masked king.

A veil concealing a rapidly changing succession of victors in a bloody, constant war for control.



Through the Kingdom of The Rule, whose subjects would struggle in the aftermath as they had before.

Led by a family more interested in filling their private coffers than taking on the mantle of their ancient and dwindling King.



It echoed in the ruined proscenium of The Fellnacht, to whom it resounded like angelic music.

Their debased gospel now proven inarguably true.



Down through the shadowy warrens of The Nihli, scattered throughout Kerethim's undergrounds.

Bonded only by their shared darkness, they began to decipher what the reverberations truly meant.



The Orphans marched through it.

Those who'd lost everything to the war, growing as they wandered through ruined battlefields. They'd seen the worst atrocities this world could offer.

But they knew in their bones *this* was different.

Something bigger than the slaughter of The Grand War. Something that felt alive and hungry.

Eyes gleaming with how much more there was still left to devour.





The peace between The Dominion and The Rule was built on threads across a rift.

The Grand War had burned them to ash.

And the fall, when it came, tore that rift into a chasm.

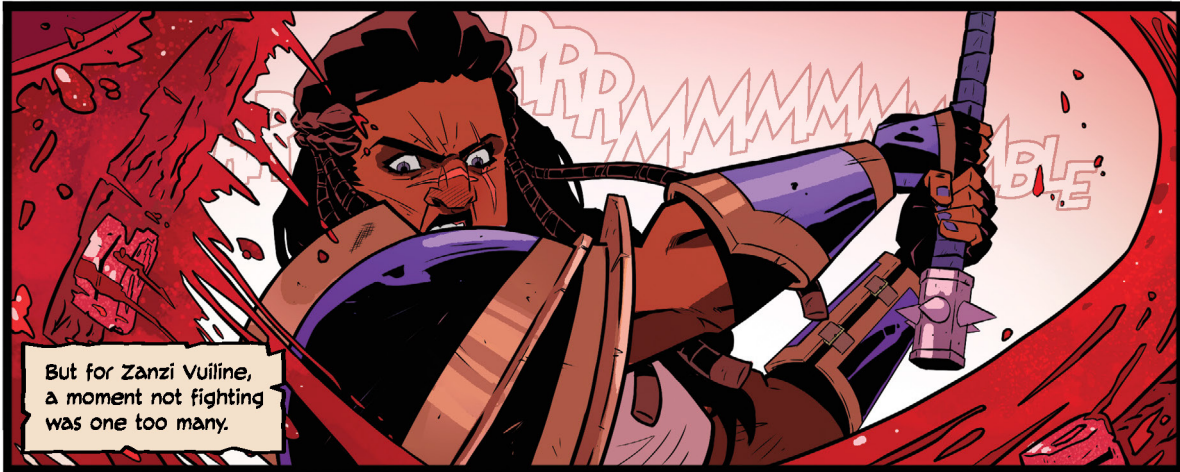
All who felt the impact of God heard the same message carried through the ground in waves. They knew it to be true.



The world had changed forever.



For a moment, it humbled them.

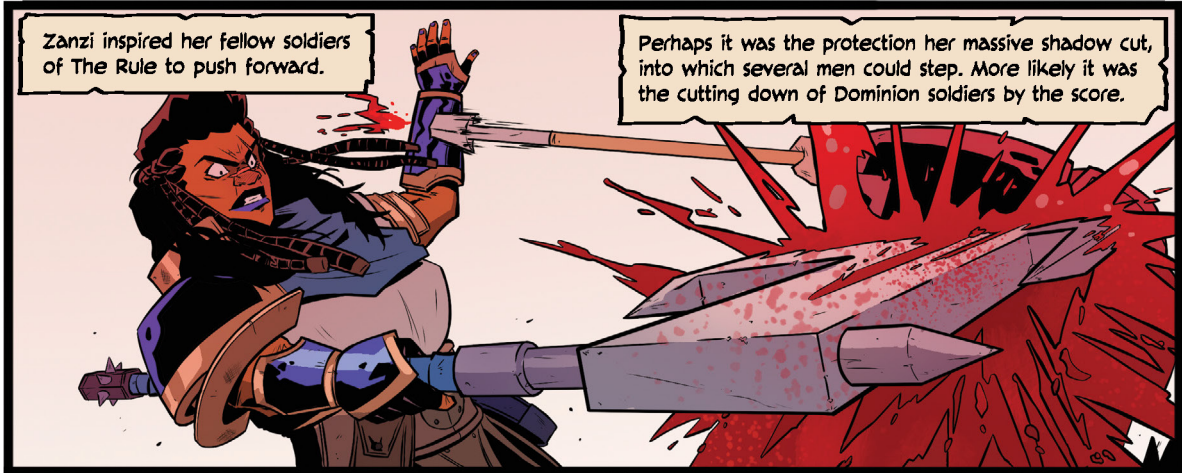


But for Zanzi Vuiline, a moment not fighting was one too many.



She warred as if she were born to it.

A heritage of violence rather than an oath of service.



Zanzi inspired her fellow soldiers of The Rule to push forward.

Perhaps it was the protection her massive shadow cut, into which several men could step. More likely it was the cutting down of Dominion soldiers by the score.



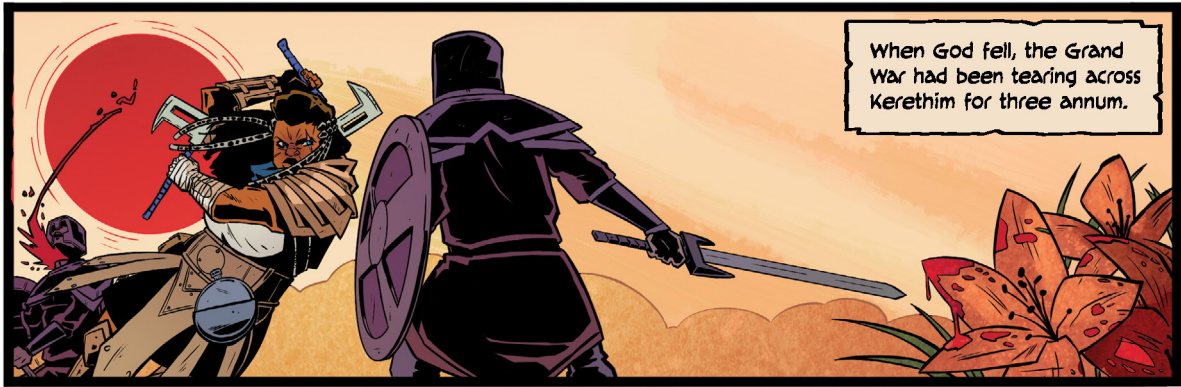
Zanzi fought for nothing more complicated than her own will to survive.

She had pledged herself long before The Rule decreed every citizen must be a soldier.

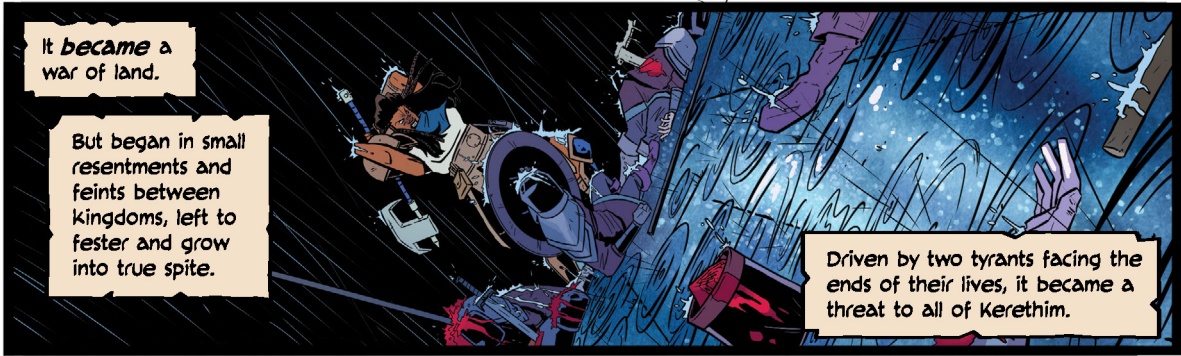


If she were motivated by anything else, she never spoke of it.

Zanzi was always more apt to express herself in direct ways.



When God fell, the Grand War had been tearing across Kerethim for three annum.



It became a war of land.

But began in small resentments and feints between kingdoms, left to fester and grow into true spite.

Driven by two tyrants facing the ends of their lives, it became a threat to all of Kerethim.



To the soldiers fed to its engines, it made little difference what The Grand War was truly about.

Surviving to collect the victory at the end of the carnage occupied all their thinking.



Some earned calm. A legacy, stories of their own to tell across a table. To pass down.

A return to the lives they had too easily given up.



If it was possible to return from the horrors of war. To fill that lack of roaring sound and the taste of blood.

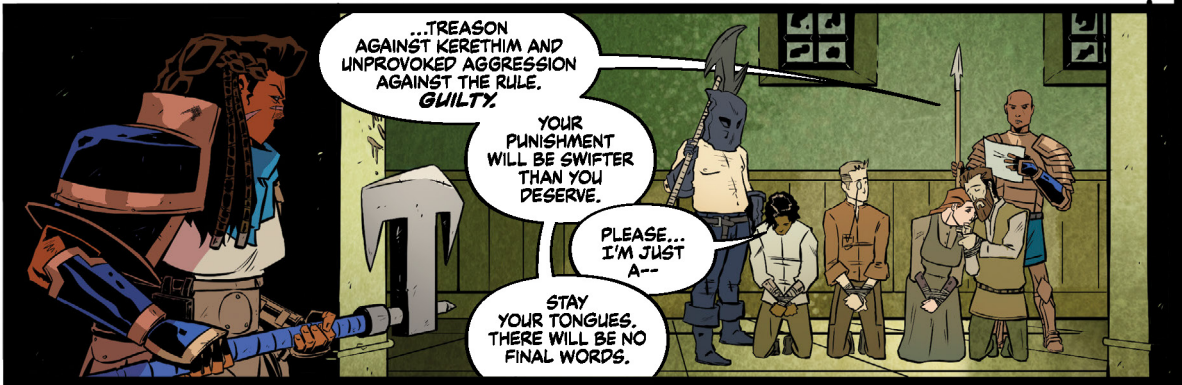
This was one of countless questions in search of an answer.

That grew all too loud in the sudden silence of victory.



TAKE THEM OUT WITH THE REST AND WAIT FOR THE CARAVAN. KING FIYLOK WANTS THEM IN THE CAPITOL CITY.

WE SHOULD SLAUGHTER THE LOT AND SAVE THE WEAR ON OUR STEEPS.

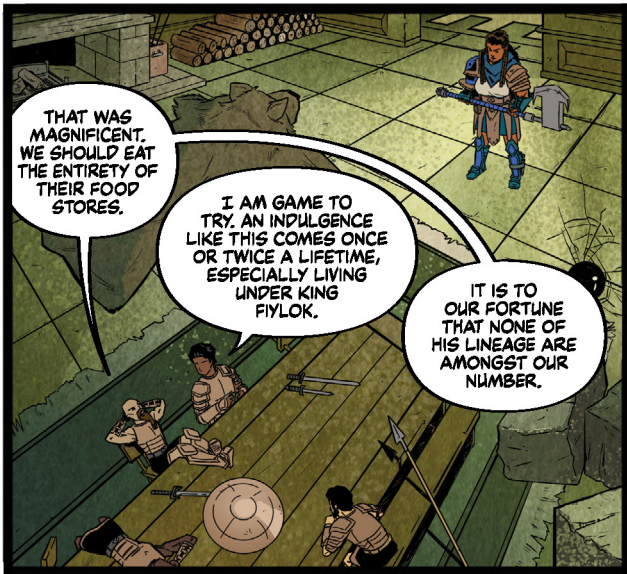


...TREASON AGAINST KERETHIM AND UNPROVOKED AGGRESSION AGAINST THE RULE. **GUILTY.**

YOUR PUNISHMENT WILL BE SWIFTER THAN YOU DESERVE.

PLEASE... I'M JUST A--

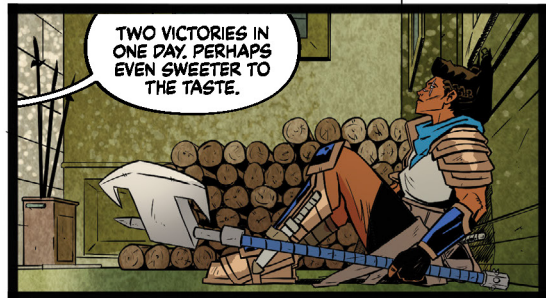
STAY YOUR TONGUES. THERE WILL BE NO FINAL WORDS.



THAT WAS MAGNIFICENT. WE SHOULD EAT THE ENTIRETY OF THEIR FOOD STORES.

I AM GAME TO TRY. AN INDULGENCE LIKE THIS COMES ONCE OR TWICE A LIFETIME, ESPECIALLY LIVING UNDER KING FIYLOK.

IT IS TO OUR FORTUNE THAT NONE OF HIS LINEAGE ARE AMONGST OUR NUMBER.



TWO VICTORIES IN ONE DAY. PERHAPS EVEN SWEETER TO THE TASTE.



GOD MUST BE SMILING UPON US.



