



THERE'S **MAGIC** IN THIS WORLD, LITTLE ORIANNA.

THAT'S WHAT MY FATHER USED TO TELL ME WHEN WE'D LOOK UP AT THE NIGHT SKY TOGETHER. I STILL HEAR THE WONDER IN HIS VOICE, AND ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, I ALMOST BELIEVE IT.



STAY OUT OF THE BLACK WATER.

I BELIEVED EVERYTHING HE TOLD ME--TALES OF BEAUTIFUL MERMAIDS AND FAR PAVILIONS. HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND, MY PROTECTOR AND MY GUIDE TO THE WORLD.

OF COURSE I BELIEVED...



KEEP OFF THE TALL ROCKS.



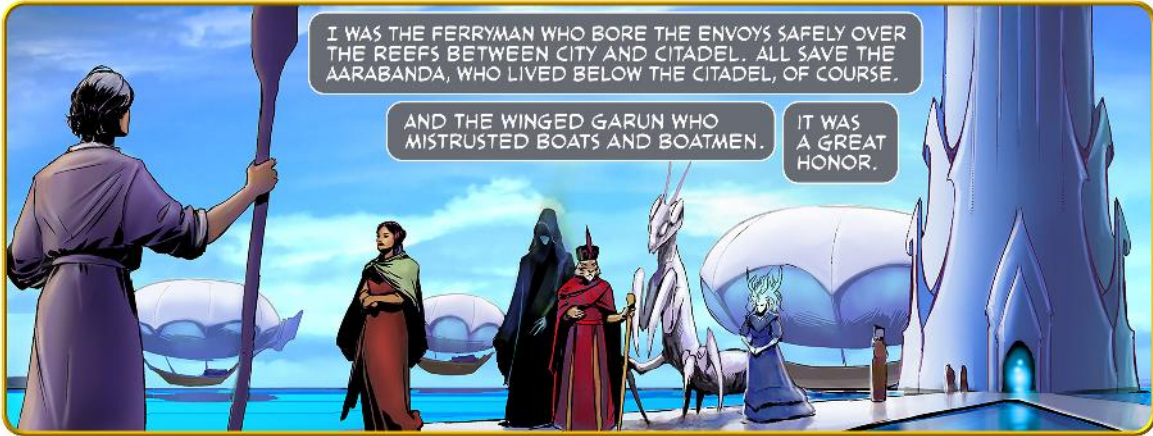
MOST IMPORTANTLY, **NEVER** DRAW THE COVENANT'S ATTENTION.

WHEN THE COVENANT FINALLY CAME FOR HIM, HE FOUGHT HARD. BUT THE GUARDS OUTNUMBERED HIM. I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT HE WHISPERED AS THEY DRAGGED HIM TO HIS DEATH.



I LOVE YOU, DAUGHTER.

"WHY?!" I ASKED. WHY DIDN'T THEY TAKE **ME** TOO? BECAUSE THEY WERE **CIVILIZED** MEN WHO'D NEVER SACRIFICE AN INNOCENT CHILD TO THEIR RED GOD. NO **CHILD** NEED FEAR THEM.



I WAS THE FERRYMAN WHO BORE THE ENVOYS SAFELY OVER THE REEFS BETWEEN CITY AND CITADEL. ALL SAVE THE AARABANDA, WHO LIVED BELOW THE CITADEL, OF COURSE.

AND THE WINGED GARUN WHO MISTRUSTED BOATS AND BOATMEN.

IT WAS A GREAT HONOR.



YOU KNEW ALL THE ENVOYS? ALMERIQUE TOO?

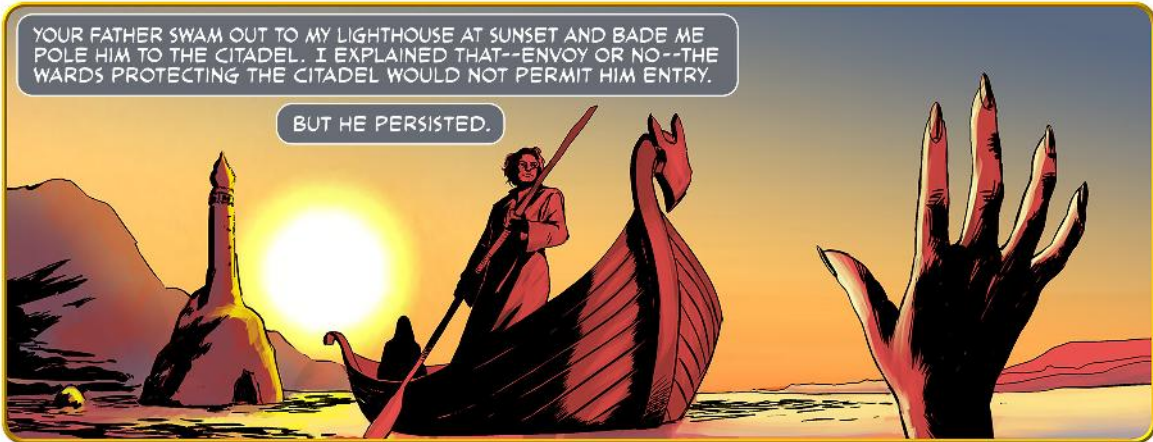


MY DEAR, I KNEW HIM BEST OF ALL. IN FACT...

ALMERIQUE IS... I MEAN WAS... MY FATHER!



Ah! OF COURSE HE WAS! YOU SO RESEMBLE YOUR... oh, I'VE QUITE THE TALE FOR YOU.



YOUR FATHER SWAM OUT TO MY LIGHTHOUSE AT SUNSET AND BADE ME POLE HIM TO THE CITADEL. I EXPLAINED THAT--ENVOY OR NO--THE WARDS PROTECTING THE CITADEL WOULD NOT PERMIT HIM ENTRY.

BUT HE PERSISTED.

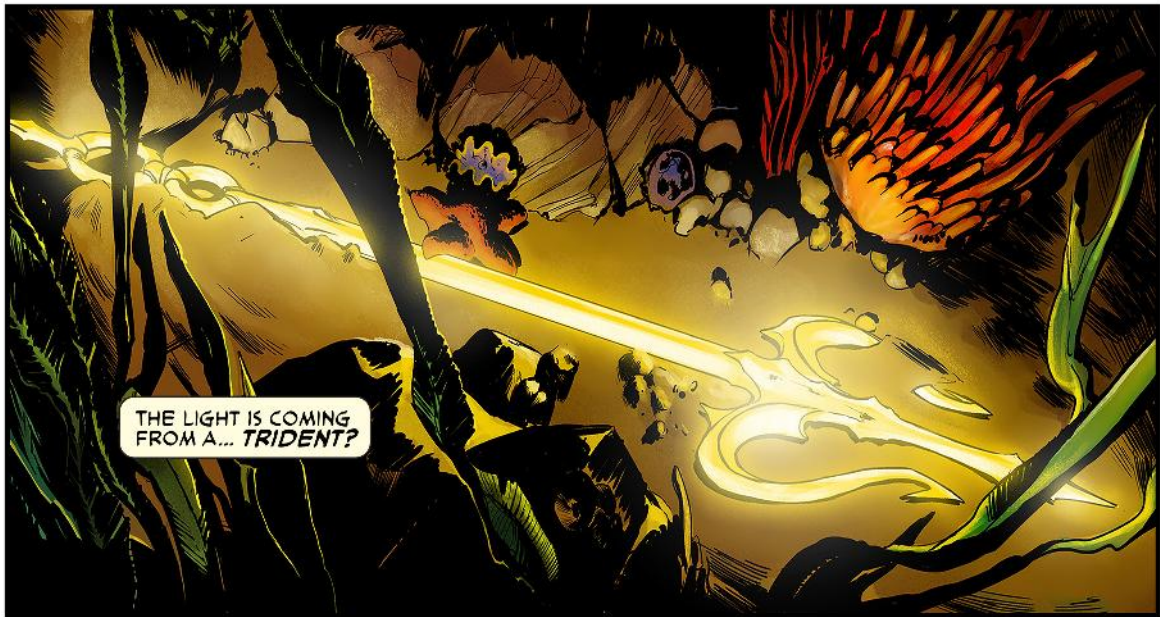


WE NEVER GOT TO THE CITADEL OF COURSE. INSTEAD, AT THE EDGE OF THE REEF, WE ENCOUNTERED--

THE AARABANDA?

NO, A WOMAN. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. CLAD ONLY AS NATURE INTENDED. HER EYES AND SMILE FOR YOUR FATHER ALONE.

MY MOTHER?



THE LIGHT IS COMING FROM A... TRIDENT?



THE CLOSER I GET TO IT THE WARMER I FEEL.



THERE IS MAGIC LEFT IN THE WORLD!



THE TRIDENT IS... WHA...? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? CHANGING.

I AM...

HOME?

AT LAST!