

Silly old dog! What is life if not the adventure of one story after the other? Take this one, for example.

Once, a long time ago, off the shore of a very prosperous land, there was an accursed place known as the *Okī Islands*.



A nasty place, really. Filled with monsters and demons. Oh, yes! Poor were the souls that lived in such a terrible land.

There, one wrong turn could mean death...or worse.



There was no hope left in the hearts of its inhabitants.

SHIKKK

SHURK

SHUNK

Until one day a rumor spread.

GRRR?

The rumor of a young warrior, a heroine named *Tokoyo*, who had come to save their land from the creatures that lurked among them.

WHUSHH

Besides her skill with the sword, little was known about the mysterious girl.

She was recognized only by her *armor*, worn by the army of the neighboring mainland.

In gratitude, the locals would thank not the girl but her master, *Lord Hojo Takatoki*, for sending help to their impoverished island.

And, boy, was that the wrong thing to do! For just the mention of the Lord's name boiled the blood of our young warrior.

YOU CAN THANK HOJO FOR THAT.

RIP



SOME
HEROINE SHE
TURNED OUT
TO BE.

AH, BUT YOU SEE, A
HERO, A *TRUE* HERO,
IS NOT ONE THAT
BATTLES JUST THE
DEMONS AHEAD...

BUT, ALSO,
THOSE THAT
LIVE *WITHIN*.



Demons had brought
our heroine here.

You see, it was in searching and
not protecting, that Tokoyo
arrived on the Oki Islands.

Searching for her
banished father, the
warrior *Oribe Shima*.



A noble act, in fact! Yes, yes.
But *tainted*, much like the
islands, by darkness.

For deep inside her heart, the
seed of hatred grew. Hatred for
the man who had *condemned*
her father to the islands.



Hatred for *Lord
Hojo Takatoki*.

And perhaps, beneath
all that, hatred for
something more...



...FATHER...

TOKOYO,
WHEN IT COMES
TO THE ONES
YOU LOVE--



--THERE'S NO
SACRIFICE BIG
ENOUGH...



A terrible thing, *hate*.

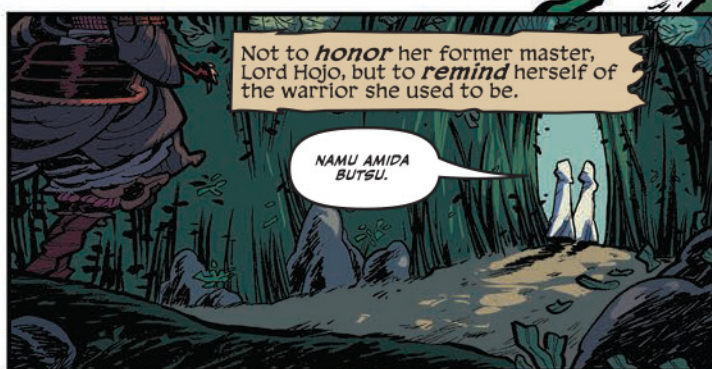
It takes root deep within your heart, expanding, like branches from a tree, until it turns you into something you barely recognize.

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.



For this reason, and this alone, Tokoyo wore her armor.

CLAP!



Not to *honor* her former master, Lord Hojo, but to *remind* herself of the warrior she used to be.

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.



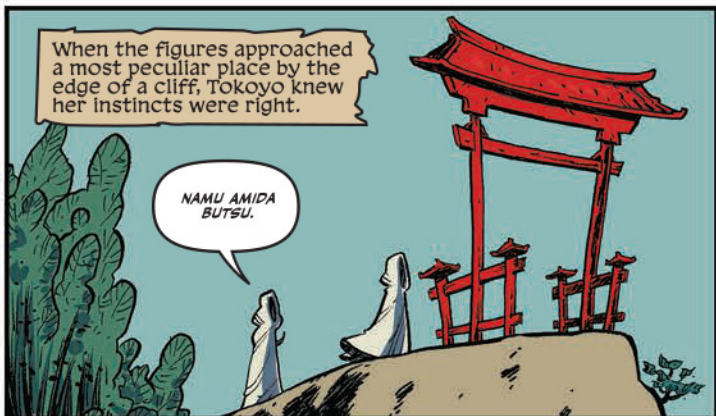
Of the oath she made. To be a blade for those who could not wield one for themselves.

So the morning came that Tokoyo--woken by the sound of mysterious *prayers*--decided to follow two odd looking figures across the accursed forest.



Something didn't sit right with our warrior.

When the figures approached a most peculiar place by the edge of a cliff, Tokoyo knew her instincts were right.



NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!