



IT SEEMS TATHRA GOT WHAT WAS COMING TO HIM, THOUGH. YOU HAVE MY THANKS FOR SLAYING HIM!

TRUTH BE TOLD: THE DEMON VERSION WAS VILE, BUT TATHRA THE MAN WAS NOT MUCH BETTER...

YOU SHOULD LET ME GO. SUTEKH HAS MY SCENT-- NONE AROUND ME ARE SAFE!

EVERY TIME I THINK I AM FINALLY SAFE, HIS FORCES INEVITABLY APPEAR!

FIRST COME HIS FOLLOWERS, LIKE TATHRA, PREACHING DOOM FOR ALL WHO WOULD RESIST-- THEN COMES HIS ARMY TO MAKE GOOD ON THE PROMISE!



SAY, LASS, YOU ARE A VIRGIN, AREN'T YOU? YOU NEEDN'T ANSWER: I CAN ALWAYS TELL.

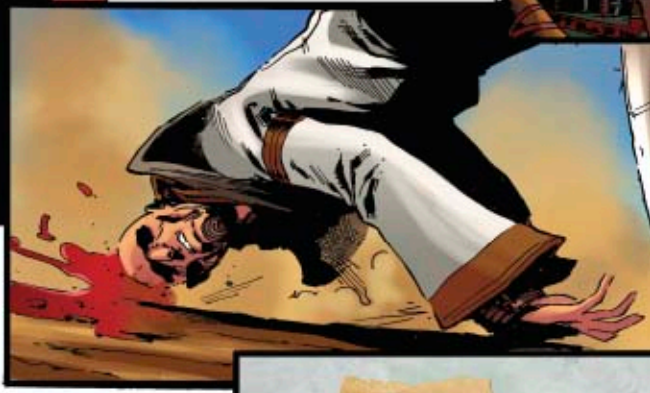
YOU KNOW WHAT SUTEKH DOES TO VIRGINS? FACE IT, LASS, IN THIS WORLD YOUR VIRGINITY IS A CURSE!

LUCKY FOR YOU, I HAVE SOMETHING THAT CAN FIX YOUR PROBLEM...



AND I HAVE SOMETHING THAT WILL FIX YOU, TOO!

THUD



SIGH

XOANA, YOU KNOW WE DON'T BEAT PRISONERS, IT'S NOT HONORAB--

NEVER MIND, WELL STRUCK.



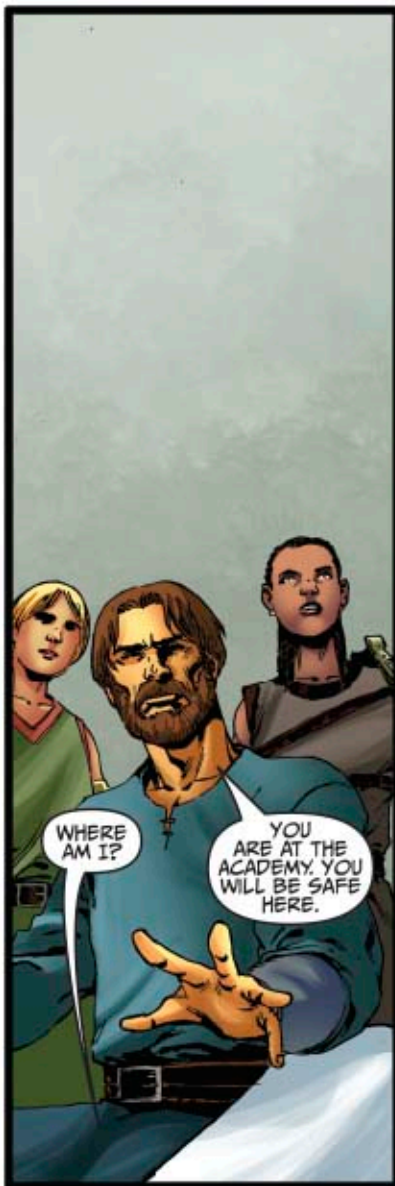
TWO HOURS LATER:

SNIFF
SNIFF



WHAT IS THIS DELIGHTFUL SMELL...?

TAKE IT EASY, PRIEST. XOANA GAVE YOU QUITE A WALLOP...



WHERE AM I?

YOU ARE AT THE ACADEMY. YOU WILL BE SAFE HERE.



EAT. WHEN YOU HAVE HAD YOUR FILL, MY MISTRESS WANTS TO SEE YOU.



CHOMP YOU SAY THIS IS A SCHOOL... *SMACK*... WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU TEACH HERE?

WE TURN YOUNG MAIDENS INTO WARRIORS.



HMPH THAT SEEMS LIKE A PERFECTLY GOOD WASTE OF BEAUTIFUL FLESH IF YOU ASK---



MEEEEEE--!



LET HIM GO, KIRI. AND YOU, "PRIEST," WOULD BE WISE TO KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF. YOU WILL NOT FIND ANY TIMID MAIDENS HERE.



WHEN WE MEET ONE, I'LL REMEMBER THAT. ALL I SEE IS AN OLD LECHER.

YOU ALLOW CHILDREN TO DISRESPECT THEIR ELDERS?!? SHE SHOULD BE CANED FOR DARING TO TOUCH A HOLY MAN!



QUIET, LYLA! NOW TELL ME, "HOLY MAN," WHERE IS THIS SUTEKH NOW? WHAT SORT OF ARMY DOES HE POSSESS?



SUTEKH'S ARMY IS THE LARGEST I HAVE EVER SEEN... NOT JUST STYGIANS, BUT THE ARMIES OF EVERY NATION HE HAS CONQUERED: KUSH, DARFAR, KESHAN, SHEM, ARGOS...



SHEM HAS FALLEN?

AH, YOU'RE SHEMMISH? I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN. SUTEKH CROSSED THE RIVER STYX TWO MOONS AGO, HIS FORCES SWARMED ACROSS THE RIVER LIKE BLOOD FROM A WOUND.

SHUMIR WAS SACKED IN A WEEK, AND THE TEMPLE OF BEL ROOTED UP FROM ITS FOUNDATIONS. ASKALON STILL STANDS, I HEAR, AT LEAST FOR NOW, IF THAT IS ANY CONSOLATION...



SHEM HAS STOOD SINCE THE OCEANS DRANK ATLANTIS!

MY PEOPLE HAVE WEATHERED EVERY WICKED THING YOU STYGIAN DOGS HAVE THROWN AT US. SHEMMITES WILL FIGHT TO OUR LAST DROP OF BLOOD!

"INDEED THEY DID! BUT SUTEKH'S ARMY IS NOT SIMPLY COMPOSED OF MEN-OF-ARMS. HE ALSO HAS, SHALL WE SAY... *SPECIAL FORCES.*

"IT IS WHISPERED THAT SUTEKH HAS THE POWER TO TAKE A MAN'S SOUL, MAKING THEIR ENERGY HIS OWN...

"AFTER HE IS FINISHED WRINGING EVERY LAST DROP OF VITAL ESSENCE FROM THEIR BODIES, HE CASTS THEIR HOLLOW CARCASSES ASIDE...

"ONLY TO HAVE THEM RISE AGAIN AS SLAVES TO HIS INFERNAL MAJESTY!

"THEY ARE CALLED 'THE EATERS OF THE DEAD.'"

"THEY ARE NO LONGER HUMAN, YOU SEE, BUT HAVE AN UNDYING HUNGER FOR HUMAN FLESH—BE IT WARM OR COLD—AND SUTEKH USES THEM AS HIS ADVANCE GUARD, TO STRIKE TERROR IN THE HEARTS OF HIS ENEMIES.



BESIDES THE EATERS OF THE DEAD, HE HAS A MORTAL ARMY AS WELL, MOSTLY STYGIANS-- BUT MANY WARRIORS HAVE DESERTED THEIR HOMELANDS TO JOIN SUTEKH, RATHER THAN FACE HIS MONSTERS.

IT IS RUMORED THAT AT THE BATTLE OF KOTH, HE BROUGHT FORTH MASSIVE BEASTS AND DEMONS FROM THE PITS OF HELL. HOWEVER, THE SURVIVOR WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN THESE BEASTS WAS RAVING MAD, SO WHO CAN SAY WHAT IS REAL?

I DO KNOW THIS: SUTEKH WILL NOT STOP UNTIL HE HAS DEFEATED EVERY KINGDOM, ENSLAVED THOSE WHO SURRENDER, AND DESTROYED ALL WHO DO NOT. MEANWHILE, HE IS TEARING DOWN THE TEMPLES OF HIS FATHER'S ENEMIES SO THERE WILL BE BUT *ONE* GOD ON EARTH: SET.

WHERE IS SHE GOING--?

WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

SONJA, YOU ARE SCARING THE STUDENTS, HIDING UP HERE.

GOOD. A LITTLE FEAR WILL KEEP THEM SHARP. AND I AM NOT HIDING, I AM THINKING.

I HATE MAGIC, IT NEVER ENDS WELL --UHHNN!

IT'S YOUR KNEE AGAIN, ISN'T IT? HERE, LET ME TAKE A LOOK.

THIS POULTICE SHOULD HELP TAKE THE SWELLING DOWN...

YUSEF'S TOUCH IS STRONG AND SURE. SHE HAS ALWAYS FELT SAFE IN HIS HANDS...

THE FIRST TIME SHE FELT THEM ON HER BODY WAS THE DAY HE SAVED HER LIFE...

SOMEONE GIVE HER A BELT TO BITE ON WHILE I STITCH HER SHUT!

COME ON, STAY WITH ME, GIRL!