



THE LAND OF CIMMERIA WAS NOT EXCEPTIONAL IN THE WAYS HISTORIANS TEND TO VALUE SUCH THINGS.

IT BIRTHED NO SCHOLARS, PHILOSOPHERS OR ARTISANS OF ANY GREAT NOTE.

BUT FARMERS AND HUNTERS, THESE IT MADE OF HARDY STOCK.

AND ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASIONS, A CHILD OF THIS ARID LAND WOULD SEE ALL THOSE OTHER HOMELANDS, THE ONES WITH GREAT, PRAISEWORTHY SCHOLARS.

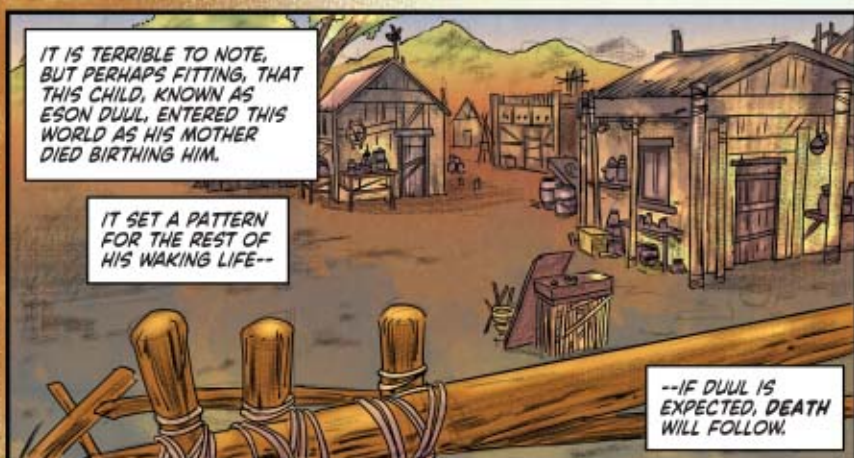
AND PHILOSOPHERS.

AND ARTISANS.



AND CRUSH THEM ALL BENEATH THEIR BOOTED HEELS.

THIS IS THE STORY OF ONE OF THESE MEN.



IT IS TERRIBLE TO NOTE, BUT PERHAPS FITTING, THAT THIS CHILD, KNOWN AS ESON DUUL, ENTERED THIS WORLD AS HIS MOTHER DIED BIRTHING HIM.

IT SET A PATTERN FOR THE REST OF HIS WAKING LIFE--

--IF DUUL IS EXPECTED, DEATH WILL FOLLOW.



ESON'S FATHER, AFTER HIS GRIEF, DISCOVERED A STRAIN OF AMBITION THAT WOULD ONLY GROW IN HIS SON. UNCHECKED, THE SENIOR DUUL BECAME LORD OF THEIR SMALL VILLAGE, K'HAL.

IT IS UNCHARITABLE TO SAY, BUT UTTERLY TRUE--



--THAT THE FATHER BUSIED HIMSELF WITH AFFAIRS OF THE STATE...

...BECAUSE HIS EIGHT-YEAR-OLD SON UNSETTLED THE OTHERWISE FEARLESS MAN.

UNSETTLED AND FRIGHTENED.

AT TWELVE, ESON WAS AS DEMANDING AS ANY MAN IN THE VILLAGE, AND TWICE AS FEARED.

IT WAS THEN THAT HE ASKED THE VILLAGE SORCERER TO MURDER HIS FATHER.

AND WHY WOULD I KILL MY FRIEND FOR YOU, YOUNG DEATH-ON-TWO-LEGS?

YOU KNOW WHY, MEDICINE MAN.

BECAUSE YOUR FRIEND WON'T SKIN YOU IN YOUR SLEEP.

WHEREAS I MOST CERTAINLY WILL.

AND IF NEARBY VILLAGERS SNICKERED AT THIS SMALL TOWN BEING LED BY A MERE CHILD, AN ORPHAN, NONETHELESS...

...THE UNSTOPPABLE RAIDING PARTIES UNDER HIS COMMAND SOMEHOW MANAGED TO STILL THEIR WAGGING TONGUES.

BEFORE THEY CHOKED ON THEIR OWN BLOOD.

BUT ALL THE LAND AS FAR AS HE COULD SEE WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR A CREATURE LIKE DUUL. NOT NEARLY ENOUGH.

AMBITION GREW IN HIS GUT LIKE A PARASITE.

MEDICINE MAN.

YOU KILLED MY FATHER USING YOUR ENSORCELLMENTS.

HE TOOK NO TRUE PLEASURE IN THE THREATS, THE VIOLENCE.

IT WAS SIMPLY THAT HE WAS BORN WITHOUT MERCY. WITHOUT RESTRAINT.

WITHOUT COMPUNCTION.

TEACH ME. TEACH ME EVERYTHING.

OR I'LL MOUNT YOUR HEAD DEEP IN MY LATRINE.

CAN A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL BE SO BLESSED OR CURSED AT BIRTH THAT HIS DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES BECOME NOT JUST LIKELY, BUT INEVITABLE?

PERHAPS SO. FOR WHEN THERE WERE NO CLOSE LANDS FOR ESON TO CONQUER...

...HE SET HIS SIGHTS ON THE VERY ORDER OF TIME ITSELF.

AND BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE AGES LEARNED TO FEAR HIS TREAD.









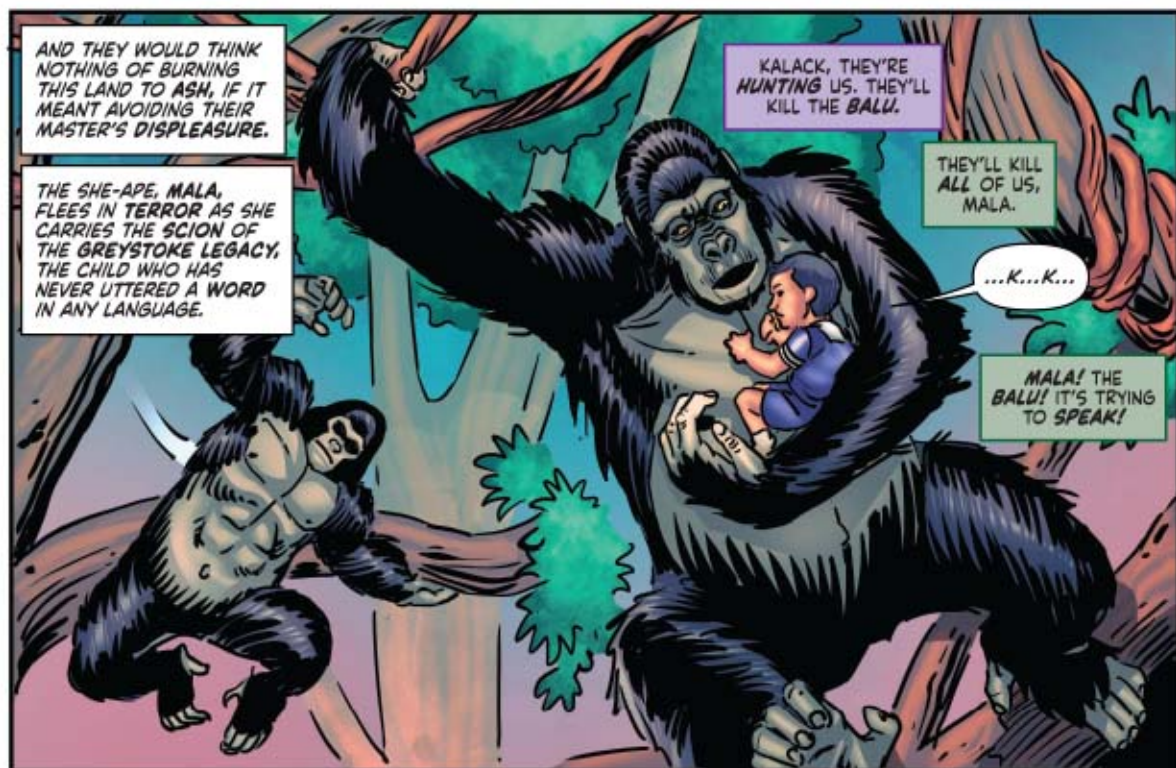
"...BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME."

CAMEROON.

HEED!
HASTE!

WE'VE FOUND THE BRAT AND THE HAIRY DEVILS WHO TOOK 'IM!

HALF A WORLD AWAY, ESON'S HUNTERS SEEK TO COMPLETE THE TASK HE WAS FORCED TO ABANDON.



AND THEY WOULD THINK NOTHING OF BURNING THIS LAND TO ASH, IF IT MEANT AVOIDING THEIR MASTER'S DISPLEASURE.

THE SHE-APPE, MALA, FLEES IN TERROR AS SHE CARRIES THE SCION OF THE GREYSTOKE LEGACY, THE CHILD WHO HAS NEVER UTTERED A WORD IN ANY LANGUAGE.

KALACK, THEY'RE HUNTING US. THEY'LL KILL THE BALU.

THEY'LL KILL ALL OF US, MALA.

...K...K...

MALA! THE BALU! IT'S TRYING TO SPEAK!



WHAT IS IT, BALU? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

KKKR.

KREEGAH.

KREEGAH BUNDOLO.

KALACK, WHAT...WHAT COULD IT MEAN?

LIKE HIS FATHER, KORAK, AND HIS GRANDSIRE, TARZAN...



YOUNG JACK IS A CREATURE OF FEW WORDS INDEED.

IT MEANS WE STOP RUNNING.