

IN ALL MY
FIVE LIVES I
NEVER THOUGHT
I'D SEE A NARAKA
SARCOPHAGUS.

LET ALONE
A FUNCTIONING
ONE.

THIS MUST
BE AT LEAST A
THOUSAND YEARS
OLD. ARE YOU
SURE IT WILL
HOLD HER?

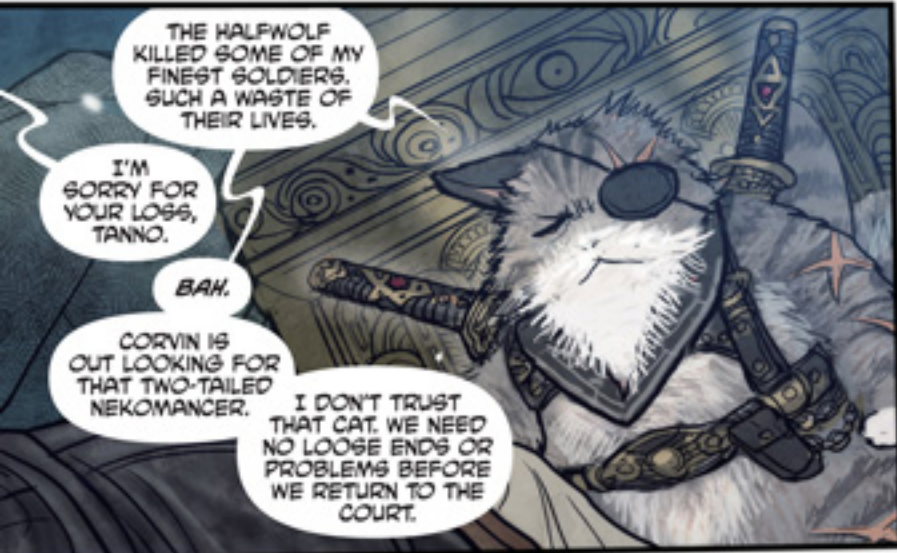


THE NARAKA GARGOPHAGI HELD THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE DIRE ANCIENTS, AND KEPT THEM DEEP IN SLEEP.

BUT MAIKA HALF-WOLF ISN'T AN ANCIENT. AND WHAT SHE HAS INSIDE HER IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

SO NO... I'M NOT SURE. BUT IT'S ALL WE HAVE.

I FIND THAT ILL-COMFORT, BARONESS.



THE HALF-WOLF KILLED SOME OF MY FINEST SOLDIERS. SUCH A WASTE OF THEIR LIVES.

I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS, TANNO.

BAH.

CORVIN IS OUT LOOKING FOR THAT TWO-TAILED NEKOMANCER.

I DON'T TRUST THAT CAT. WE NEED NO LOOSE ENDS OR PROBLEMS BEFORE WE RETURN TO THE COURT.



WILL THE COUNCIL LET HER WAKE BEFORE THEY KILL HER?

NO. SHE WILL NEVER OPEN HER EYES AGAIN.

GOOD. AND I HOPE THEY DESTROY THAT BLASTED MASK FRAGMENT, TOO. JUST KNOWING IT EXISTS MAKES MY PELT ITCH.



WHAT A DECEPTIVELY PEACEFUL FACE SHE HAS.

WHAT GOES ON IN THE MIND OF SOMEONE LIKE THAT, I WONDER?

WHAT DOES A MONSTER DREAM OF?



OH... ...I THINK I KNOW THE HALF-WOLF'S DREAMS...

STUPID FOOL.

YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO ME...AND RUN. I MAY HAVE SLEPT THROUGH GENERATIONS OF YOUR BLOODLINE...BUT SOME THINGS DO NOT CHANGE.

THE ANCIENTS... THE DUSK COURT AND THE DAWN... THEIR MINDS ARE EVER SMALL AND RESENTFUL.

AND NOW... YOU ARE IN AN UNNATURAL SLEEP.

A SLEEP THAT HAS IMPRISONED...EVEN ME. I COULD BE TRAPPED HERE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS...UNABLE TO MOVE ON TO ANOTHER BODY.



AND IF THEY FIND A WAY...TO DESTROY ME...WHILE YOU ARE IN THIS STATE...



... THEN MAYBE I SHOULD THANK YOU. ISN'T DEATH WHAT I WANT?

STILL... WHY ARE YOU SO DIFFERENT... THAN THE OTHERS? WHY ARE YOU SO HUNTED?

IT CANNOT BE JUST... THE MASK OR ME...

YES, YOU ARE RIGHT... I KNOW TOO LITTLE ABOUT THE CHILD. I HAVE NOT CARED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HER LIFE...

... I DID NOT THINK I WOULD BE AWAKE LONG ENOUGH FOR IT TO MATTER.

BUT SHE IS TOO MUCH LIKE YOU, TOO STRONG.

I FIND THAT... STRANGE, AND STRANGE IS DANGEROUS... IS IT NOT?

STRANGE IS HOW WE FOUND EACH OTHER... AND STRANGE IS HOW WE LOST EACH OTHER, AS WELL.

SO WHO ARE YOU, FOOLISH CHILD?

WHO IS BEARING ME... INTO THIS NEW LIFE?