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ISSUE
1
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GABRIEL RODRÍGUEZ

SWORD OF AGES



RODRIGUEZ • KINDZIERSKI

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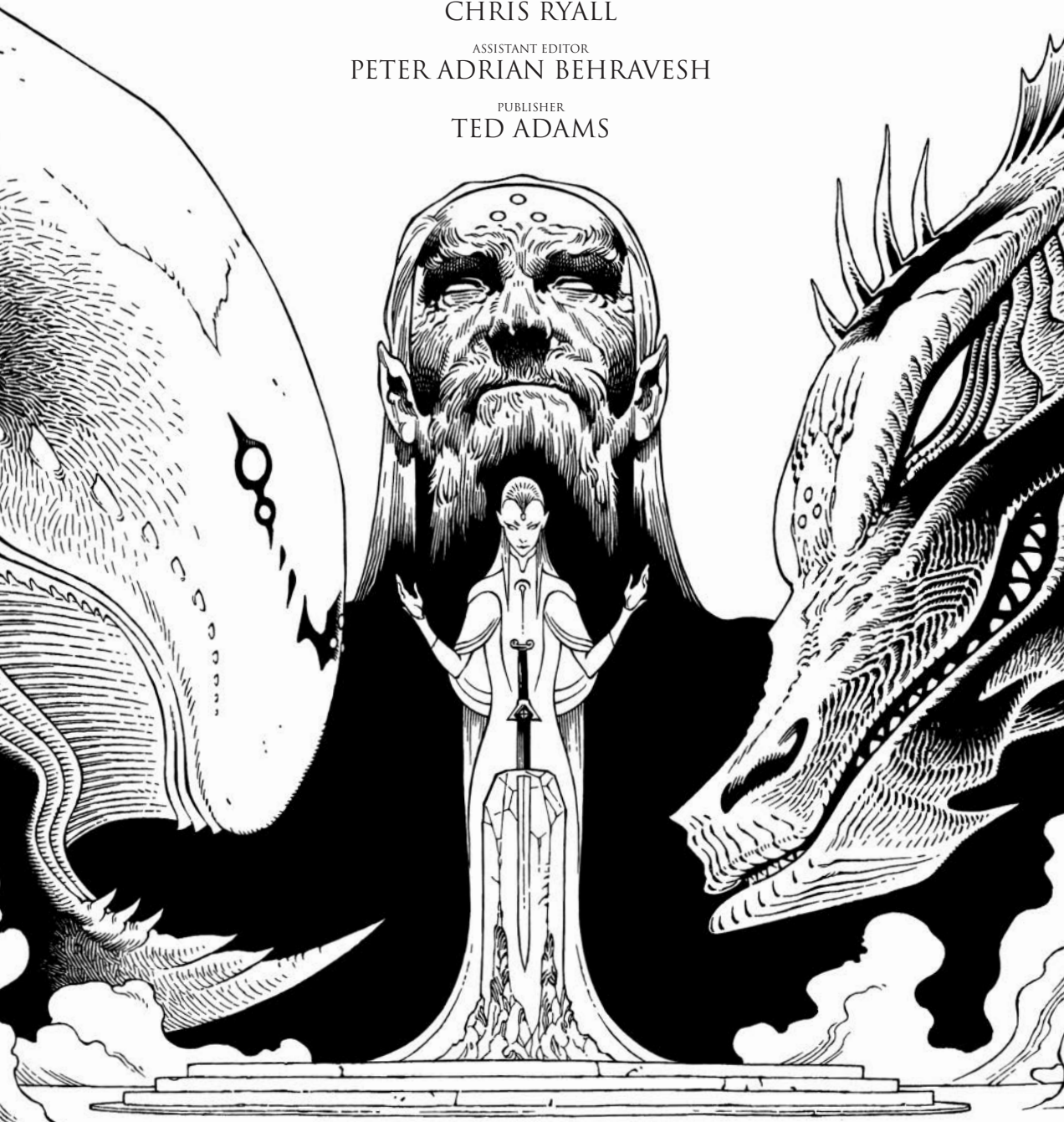
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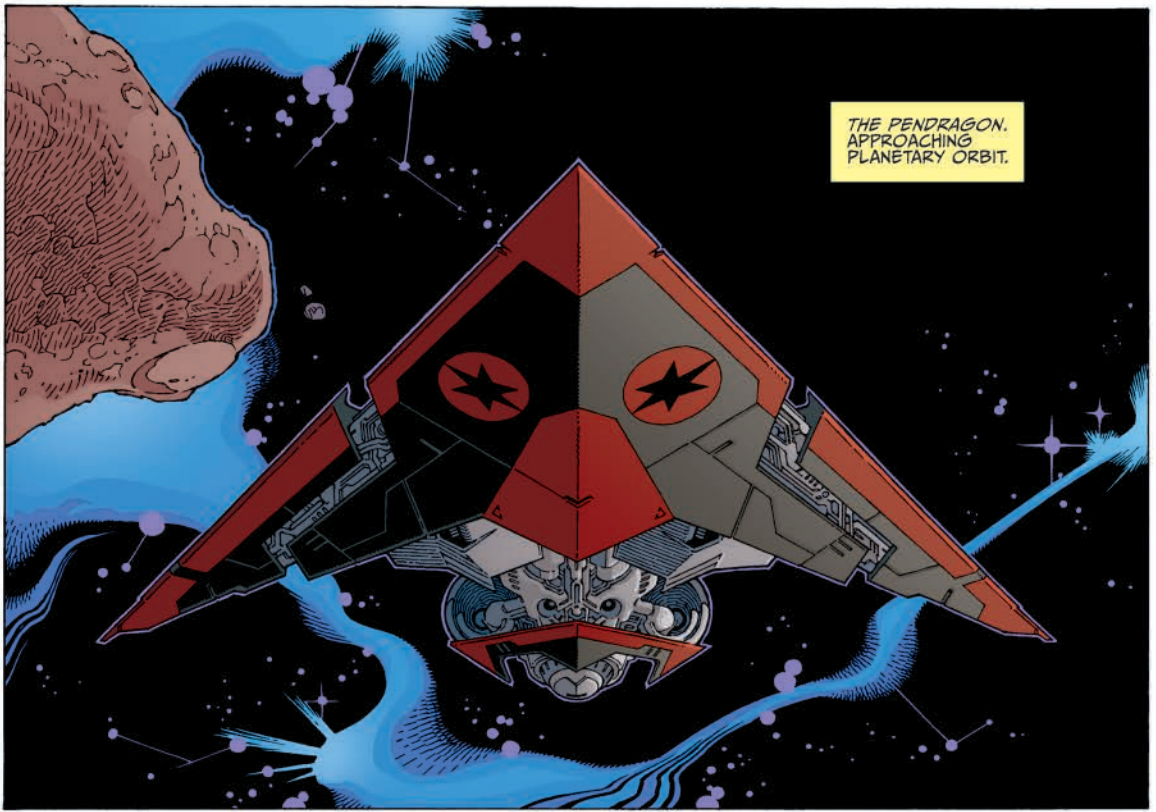
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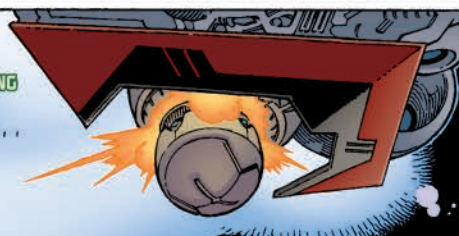
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PRELUDE: CASTAWAYS



ESCAPE CAPSULE
DETACHED FROM SHIP
SELF-DESTRUCT
COMMAND STANDING
BY FOR LAUNCH
CONFIRMATION!

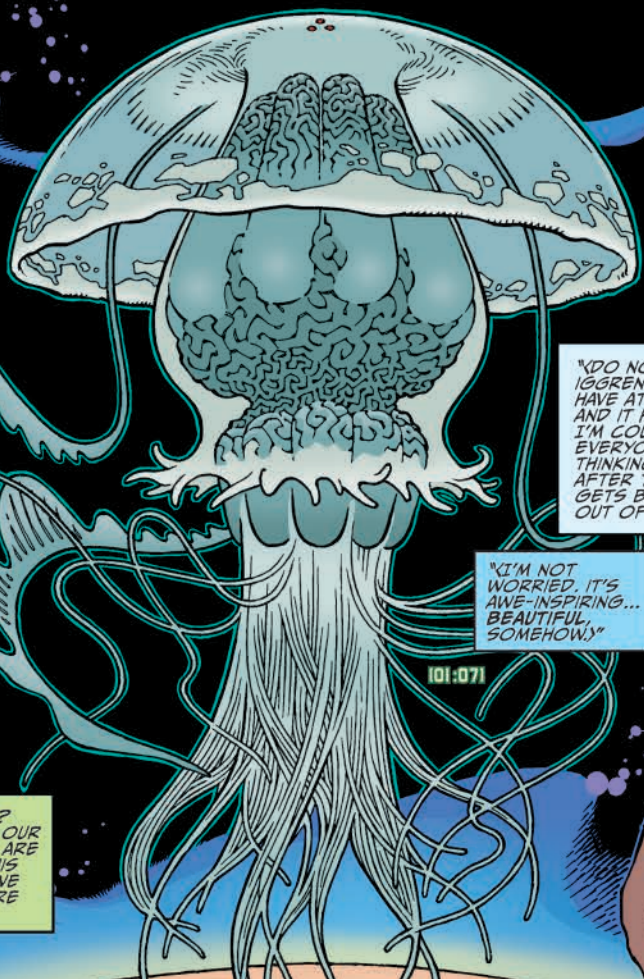


"LAUNCH CONFIRMED.
SET COUNTDOWN FOR
TWO MINUTES."

INVALID VOICE + RETINA IMPRINT
COMMAND: SCIENCE OFFICER
LOTHARR. LAUNCHING IN
T-MINUS 02:00!

"EVEN FROM THIS
FAR AWAY IT LOOKS
MUCH BIGGER AND
MORE MENACING
THAN I THOUGHT IT
WOULD, LOTHARR."

[01:49]



"DO NOT WORRY,
IGGREN. IT COULD
HAVE ATTACKED US
AND IT HASN'T. BUT
I'M COUNTING ON
EVERYONE
THINKING IT HAS...
AFTER THE SHIP
GETS BLASTED
OUT OF THE SKY."

"I'M NOT
WORRIED. IT'S
AWE-INSPIRING...
BEAUTIFUL,
SOMEHOW."

[01:07]

"BUT... MOTHER?
IF WE DESTROY OUR
SHIP AND THERE ARE
NO MORE ON THIS
WORLD... WILL WE
BE TRAPPED HERE
FOREVER?"

[00:38]

"EVERYTHING WE HAVE TO
FEAR IS BEHIND US NOW,
CHILD. WHATEVER WAITS
FOR US DOWN THERE WILL
BE BETTER—I PROMISE."

[00:09]

"YOUR ONLY CHANCE
FOR A FUTURE WAITS
BELOW, MORGAN. ON
THIS RED PLANET, WE'LL
FIND OUR DESTINY."

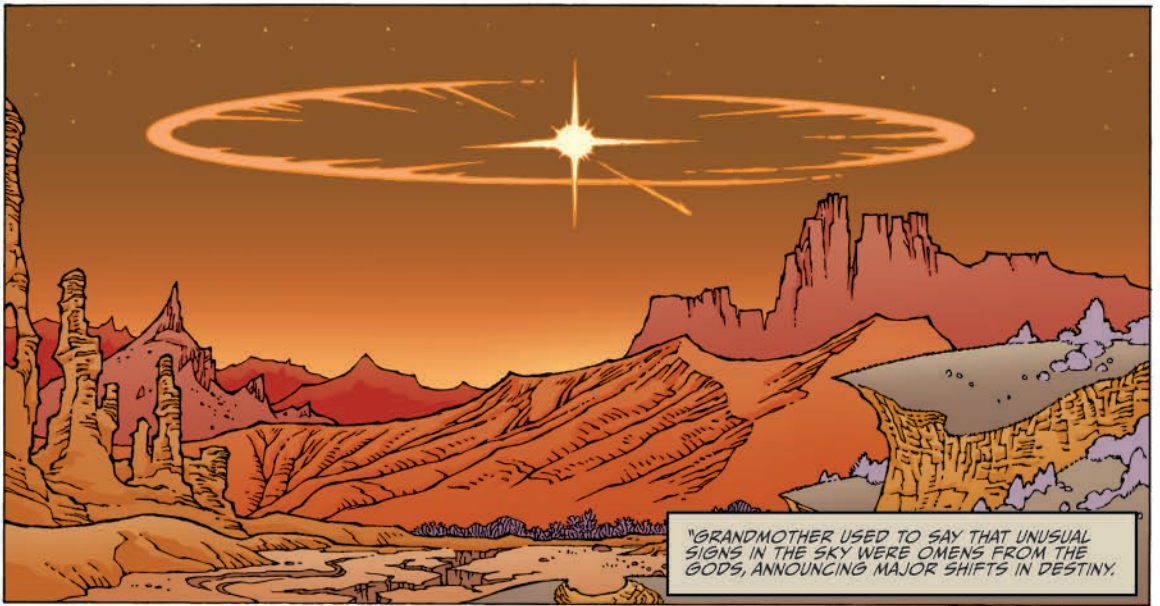
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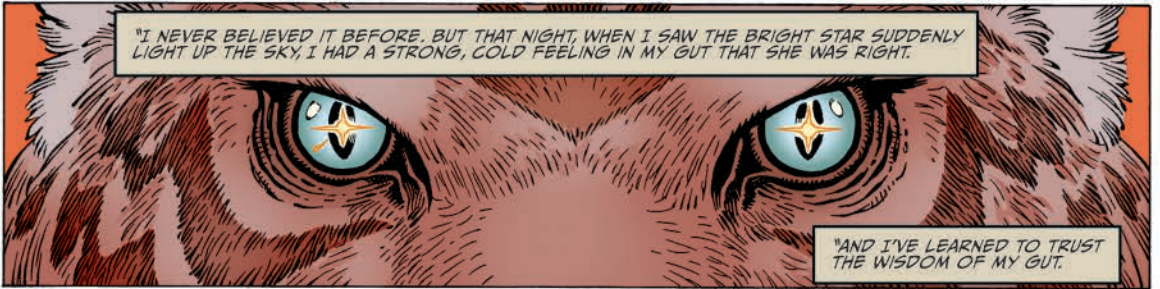
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"GRANDMOTHER USED TO SAY THAT UNUSUAL SIGNS IN THE SKY WERE OMENS FROM THE GODS, ANNOUNCING MAJOR SHIFTS IN DESTINY.



"I NEVER BELIEVED IT BEFORE. BUT THAT NIGHT, WHEN I SAW THE BRIGHT STAR SUDDENLY LIGHT UP THE SKY, I HAD A STRONG, COLD FEELING IN MY GUT THAT SHE WAS RIGHT.

"AND I'VE LEARNED TO TRUST THE WISDOM OF MY GUT.



"YEARS LATER, THE OLD MAN TOLD US THAT WAS THE NIGHT YOU ARRIVED.



"SEASONS PASSED. KILL WAS HUNTED AND EATEN. LITTERS WERE BIRTHED. THE OLD SLIPPED AWAY TO EMBRACE DEATH. SO HAS IT BEEN, SO SHALL IT ALWAYS BE.

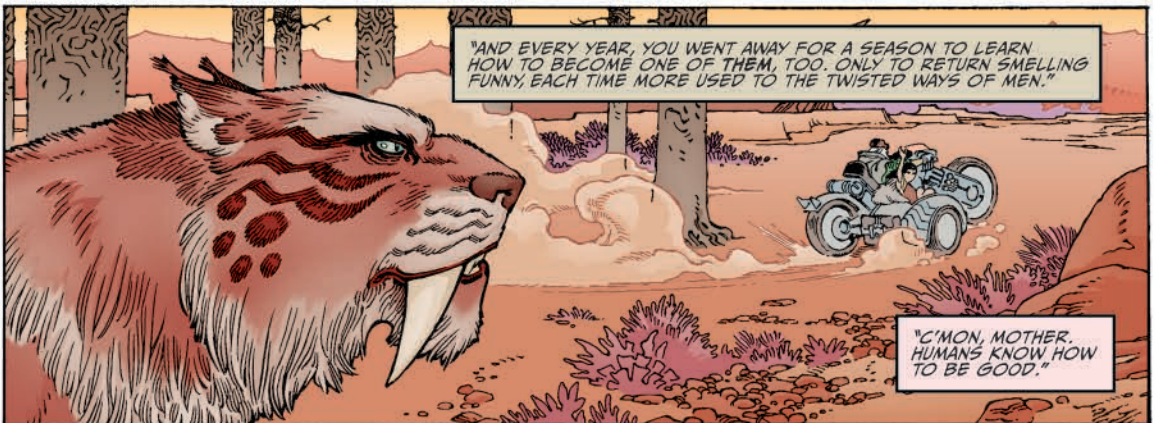
"OFTEN, THOUGH, I THOUGHT BACK ON THE STAR THAT BURST AND DIED, MARKING YOUR ARRIVAL ON THAT PEACEFUL EVENING.



"WHEN THE OLD MAN BROUGHT YOU TO US, HE SAID YOU WERE A MESSENGER FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE... OF SOMETHING ELSE.

"BUT I COULD ONLY SEE A FRAGILE, NOISY, NAKED LITTLE MONKEY WHO TURNED MY GUT FEELING WARM AND COMFORTING."

CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAIN FORESTS





BUT ONLY IN TORTUOUS WAYS. THEY WALK AROUND PROBLEMS, SPEAK IN RIDDLES, AND LEAVE EVERYTHING IMPORTANT OR MEANINGFUL UNSAID. ANYONE WHO DIDN'T KNOW YOU WOULD THINK YOU THOUGHTLESS OR RECKLESS FOR CHOOSING *THEIR* PATH.

BUT I *DO* KNOW YOU. YOU CAN BE THOUGHTLESS AND RECKLESS, YES, BUT YOU ARE ALSO BRAVE AND DETERMINED. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU... I JUST CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER WHY.



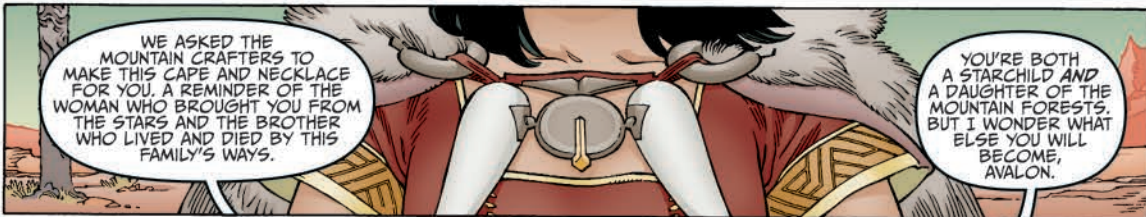
BECAUSE IT'S *NECESSARY*. AND IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO. MANY TWISTED WAYS TO STRAIGHTEN OUT, AS YOU SAID.

BAH, WORDS. HUMANS AND THEIR HUNGER FOR PURPOSE. I'D RATHER HAVE A FULL BELLY. INSPIRING TALK JUST MAKES ME WANT TO CURL UP IN THE SUN AND TAKE A NAP.



BEWARE OF THEIR PRETTY WORDS, THEIR PRETTY IDEAS. SMELL THEIR REAL MOTIVES AND HUNGERS.

DO NOT LET THEM TURN YOU INTO SOMEONE YOU ARE NOT. KNOW YOURSELF. REMEMBER WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE.



WE ASKED THE MOUNTAIN CRAFTERS TO MAKE THIS CAPE AND NECKLACE FOR YOU. A REMINDER OF THE WOMAN WHO BROUGHT YOU FROM THE STARS AND THE BROTHER WHO LIVED AND DIED BY THIS FAMILY'S WAYS.

YOU'RE BOTH A STARCHILD AND A DAUGHTER OF THE MOUNTAIN FORESTS. BUT I WONDER WHAT ELSE YOU WILL BECOME, AVALON.



I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR MY DAYS HERE, DAYS OF TRUE HAPPINESS.

I DON'T KNOW HOW SOON I'LL BE BACK, MOTHER, BUT I WILL RETURN. YOU'LL BE IN MY HEART EVERY DAY UNTIL I DO.

TELL MY STUBBORN OLDER SISTER SHE STILL OWES ME A BIG FAREWELL HUG.

KAI'S REFUSAL TO SAY GOODBYE IS HER WAY OF EXPRESSING HOW MUCH SHE LOVES YOU, CHILD. IT WILL HAVE TO BE ENOUGH FOR NOW.

I KNOW. I'LL NEVER RESENT HER FOR THAT. GIVE HER MY LOVE, AND MY CERTAINTY THAT OUR PATHS WILL CROSS AGAIN. THIS ONE IS MINE...



"...BUT I'M SURE SHE HAS HER OWN, WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED."