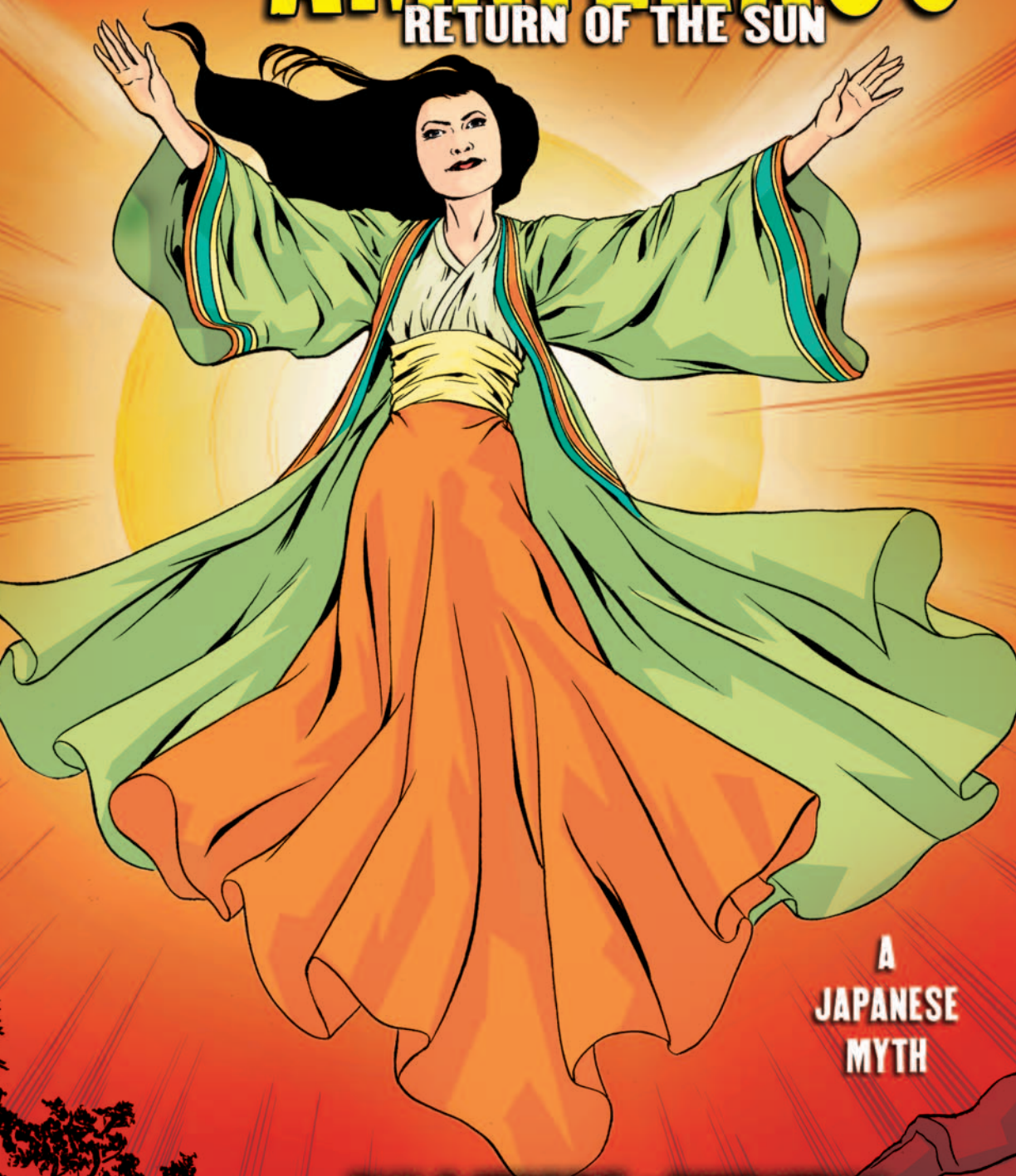


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# AMATERASU

RETURN OF THE SUN



A  
JAPANESE  
MYTH

**PAUL D. STORRIE • RON RANDALL**

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# AMATERASU

RETURN OF THE SUN

A  
JAPANESE  
MYTH







**STORY BY**  
**PAUL D. STORRIE**  
**PENCILS AND INKS BY**  
**RON RANDALL**

OHYOYASHIMA IS THE ANCIENT NAME FOR THE FIRST EIGHT ISLANDS OF JAPAN, CREATED BY THE GODS IZANAGI AND IZANAMI. THESE ISLANDS STILL BELONG TO THE MODERN COUNTRY OF JAPAN, BUT SOME OF THEIR NAMES HAVE CHANGED.

- AWAJI BELONGS TO THE MODERN HYOGO PREFECTURE (GOVERNMENT DISTRICT)
- IKI IS PART OF THE MODERN NAGASAKI PREFECTURE
- IYO WAS RENAMED SHIKOKU
- OGI IS PART OF THE MODERN SHIMANE PREFECTURE
- SADO IS PART OF THE MODERN NIIGATA PREFECTURE
- TSUKUSHI WAS RENAMED KYUSHU
- TSUSHIMA IS PART OF THE MODERN NAGASAKI PREFECTURE
- YAMATO WAS RENAMED HONSHU





# AMATERASU

## RETURN OF THE SUN

### A JAPANESE MYTH

CHINA



SEA  
OF  
JAPAN

SADO

OGI

TSUSHIMA

IKI

AWAJI

ITO

TSUKUSHI

PACIFIC  
OCEAN

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**T**HE GODS AND GODDESSES PORTRAYED IN *AMATERASU: RETURN OF THE SUN* BELONG TO SHINTO, JAPAN'S NATIVE RELIGION. SHINTO DOES NOT HAVE SCRIPTURES OR HOLY BOOKS, BUT IT IS EXPRESSED IN ITS ANCIENT TRADITIONS, ITS MYTHOLOGY, AND ITS FOLK BELIEFS. THROUGHOUT JAPAN, SHINTO SHRINES SERVE AS HOMES TO THE SPIRITS OF GODS AND GODDESSES. THE SHRINES ARE REGULARLY VISITED BY MILLIONS OF JAPANESE PEOPLE. ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST SACRED SHRINES IS THE INNER SHRINE AT ISE JINGU IN CENTRAL HONSHU. THE INNER SHRINE IS DEDICATED TO AMATERASU, THE SHINTO GODDESS OF THE SUN. THE SHRINE HOUSES THREE ITEMS ASSOCIATED WITH AMATERASU'S STORY—A MIRROR, JEWELS, AND A SWORD.

IN ADDITION TO BRINGING LIGHT AND WARMTH TO EARTH, AS SHOWN IN THIS STORY, AMATERASU TAUGHT THE JAPANESE PEOPLE TO GROW RICE AND WHEAT, TO CULTIVATE SILKWORMS, AND TO WEAVE CLOTH ON LOOMS. FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, THE JAPANESE ROYAL FAMILY TRACED ITS BEGINNINGS TO AMATERASU. TO THIS DAY, SHE IS HONORED IN FESTIVALS AND STREET PROCESSIONS THROUGHOUT JAPAN EVERY JULY 17 AND DECEMBER 21.

**STORY BY PAUL D. STORRIE**

**PENCILS AND INKS BY RON RANDALL**

**COLORING BY HI-FI DESIGN**

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**CONSULTANT: YUIKO KIMURA,  
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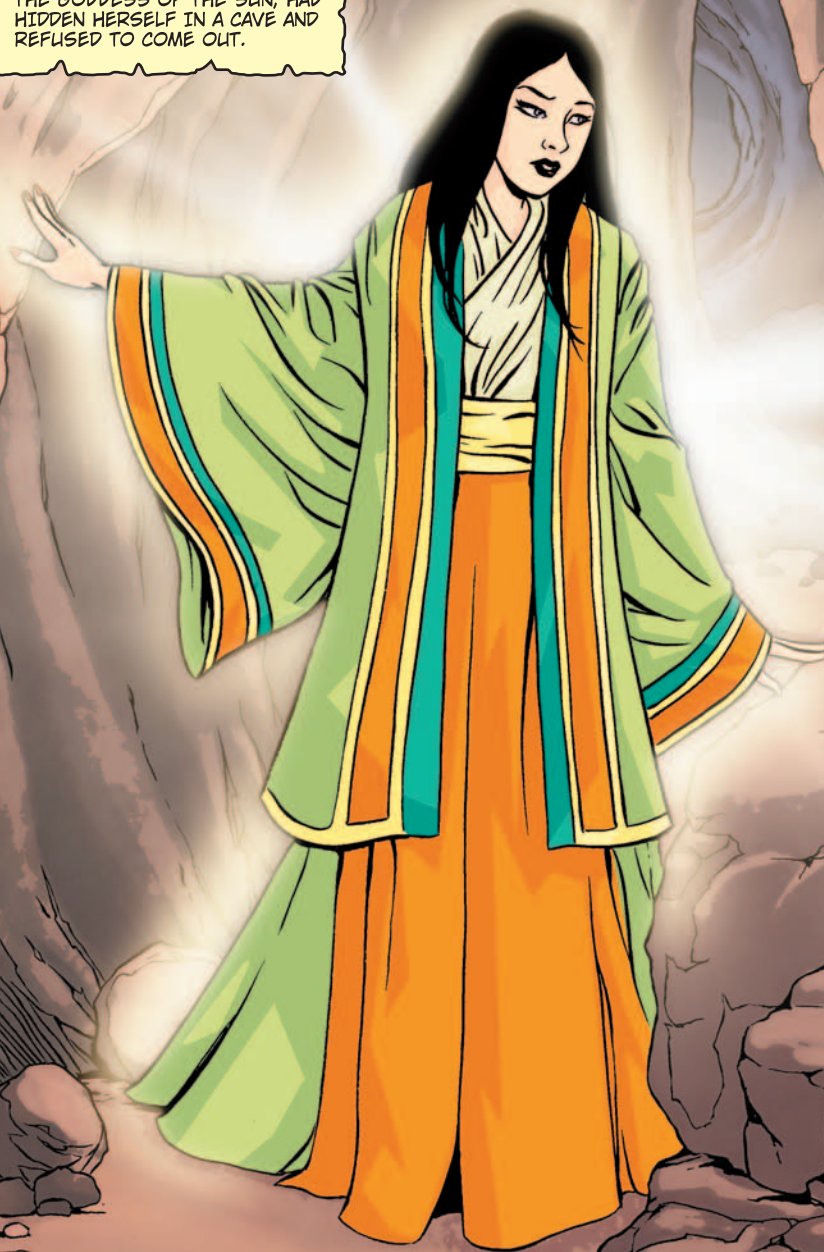
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## THE HIDDEN SUN

LONG, LONG AGO, THE ISLANDS OF JAPAN WERE THROWN INTO TOTAL DARKNESS. AMATERASU, THE GODDESS OF THE SUN, HAD HIDDEN HERSELF IN A CAVE AND REFUSED TO COME OUT.





WITH AMATERASU GONE,  
THE SUN DID NOT SHINE.



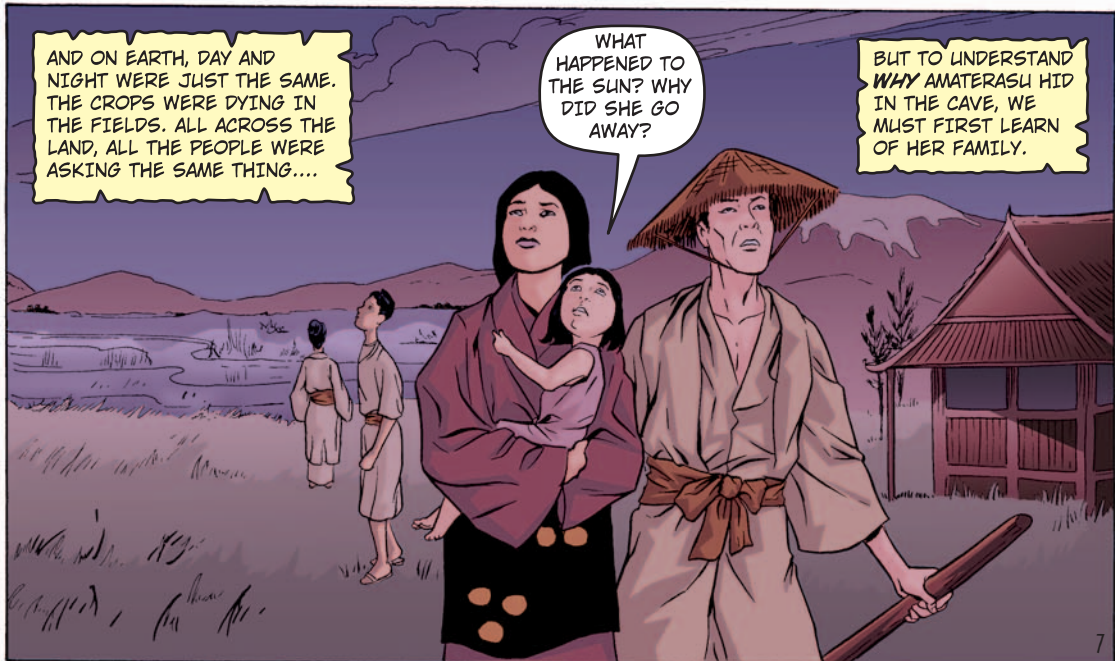
DARKNESS COVERED  
THE HEAVENS.



AND ON EARTH, DAY AND  
NIGHT WERE JUST THE SAME.  
THE CROPS WERE DYING IN  
THE FIELDS. ALL ACROSS THE  
LAND, ALL THE PEOPLE WERE  
ASKING THE SAME THING....

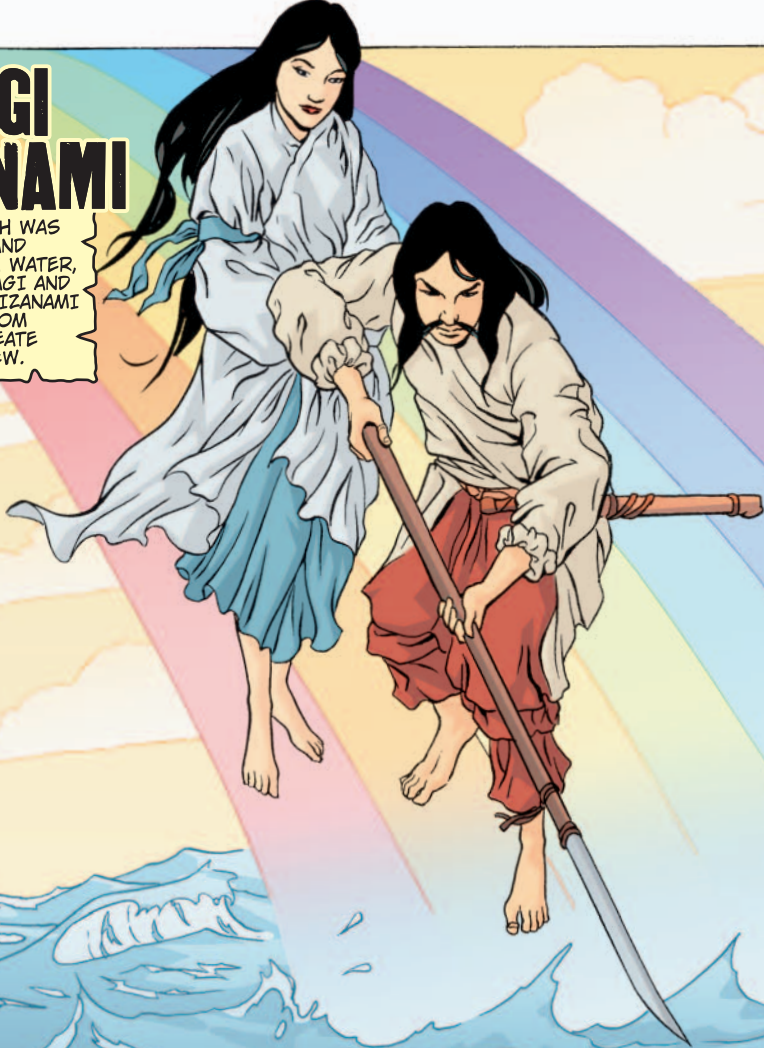
WHAT  
HAPPENED TO  
THE SUN? WHY  
DID SHE GO  
AWAY?

BUT TO UNDERSTAND  
**WHY** AMATERASU HID  
IN THE CAVE, WE  
MUST FIRST LEARN  
OF HER FAMILY.

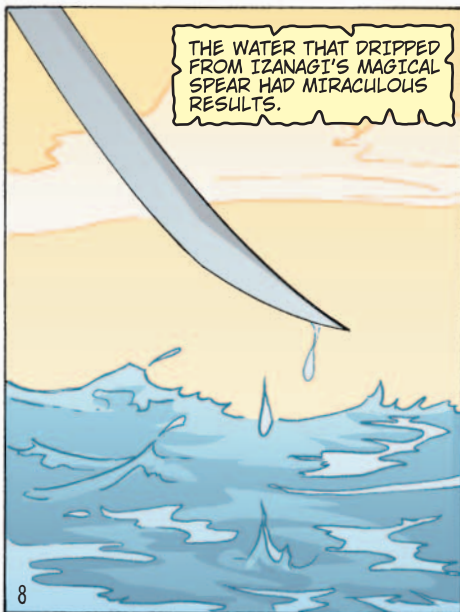


# IZANAGI AND IZANAMI

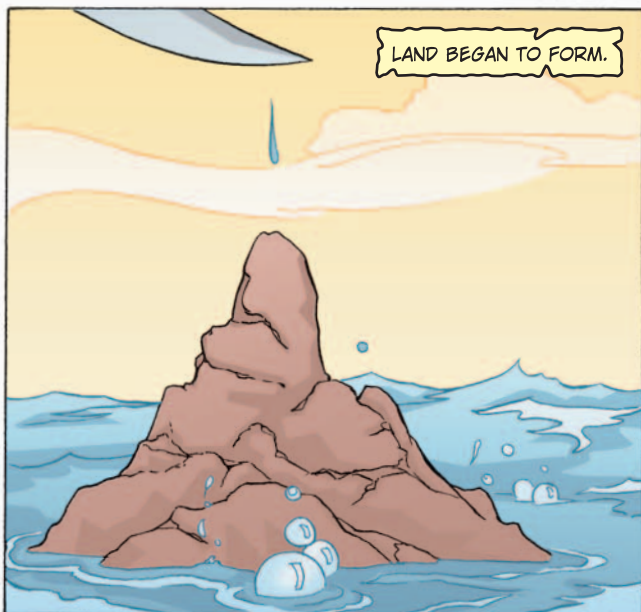
WHILE THE EARTH WAS STILL YOUNG AND COVERED WITH WATER, THE GOD IZANAGI AND THE GODDESS IZANAMI DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW.



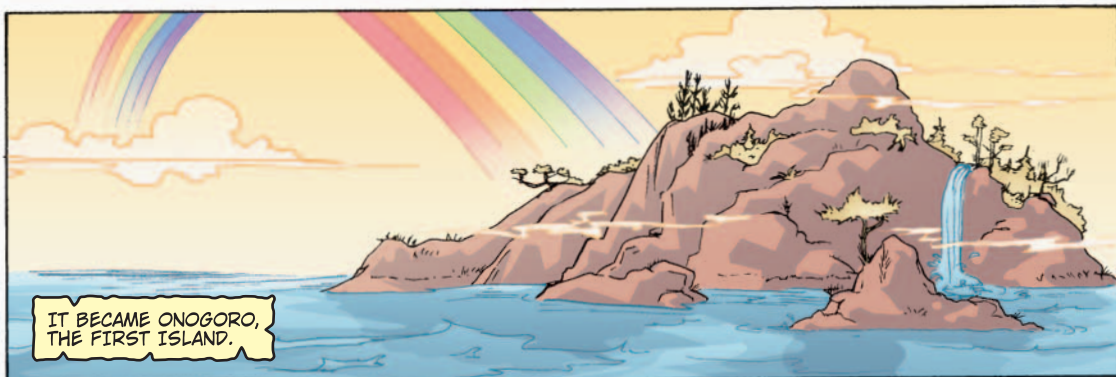
THE WATER THAT DRIPPED FROM IZANAGI'S MAGICAL SPEAR HAD MIRACULOUS RESULTS.



LAND BEGAN TO FORM.



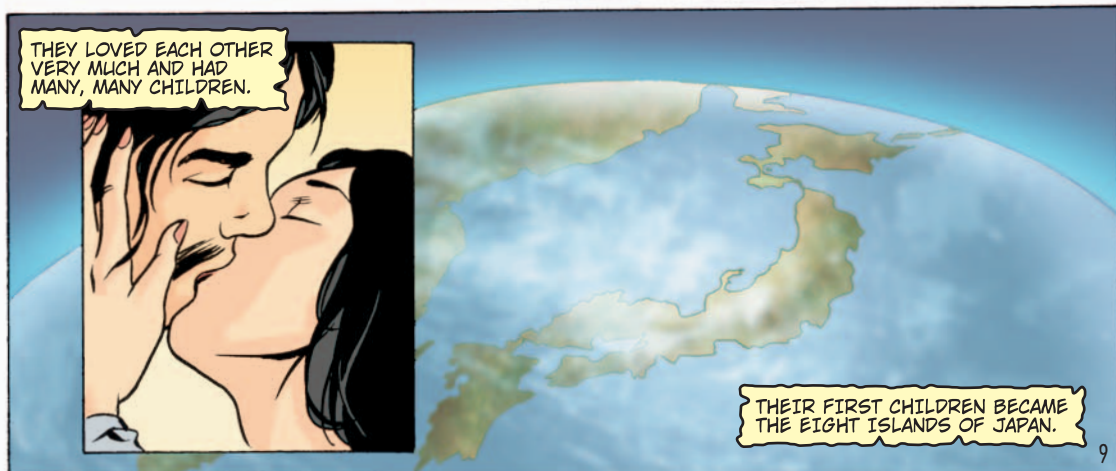




IT BECAME ONOGORO,  
THE FIRST ISLAND.



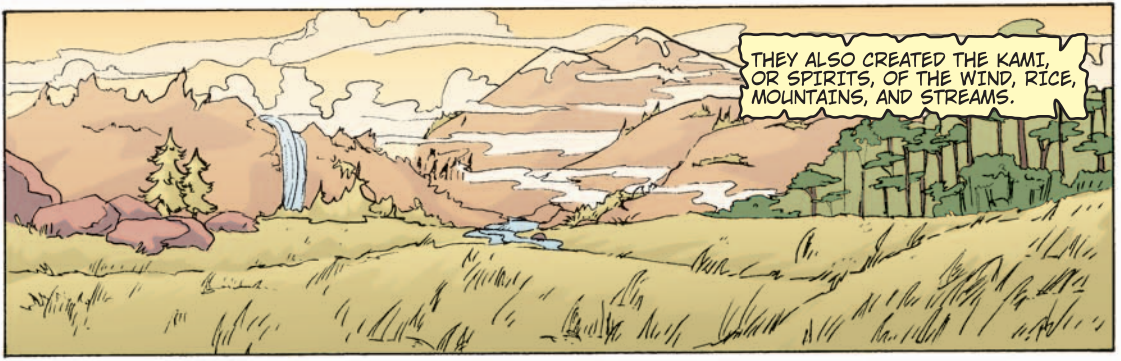
IZANAGI AND IZANAMI BUILT A SACRED PILLAR THERE AND  
A HOME THAT WAS WORTHY OF THEIR STATUS AS GODS.



THEY LOVED EACH OTHER  
VERY MUCH AND HAD  
MANY, MANY CHILDREN.

THEIR FIRST CHILDREN BECAME  
THE EIGHT ISLANDS OF JAPAN.

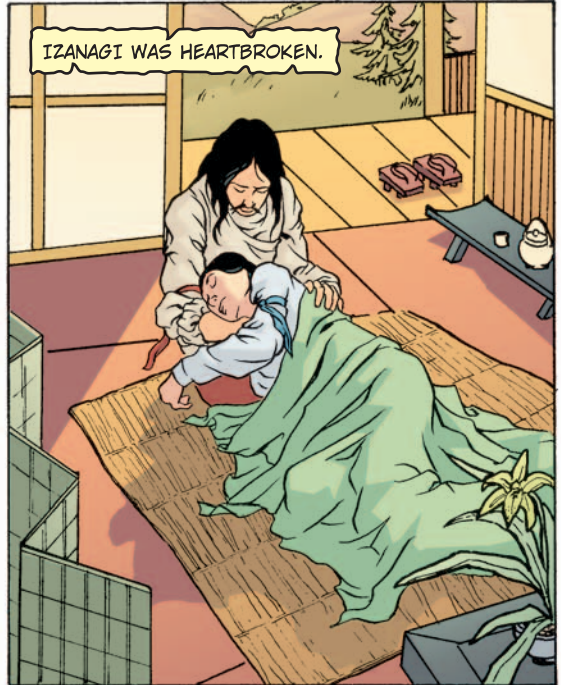




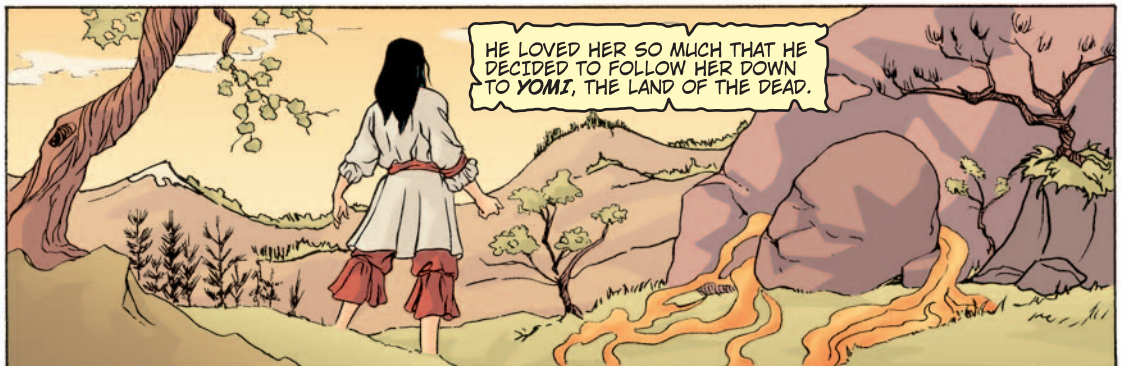
THEY ALSO CREATED THE KAMI, OR SPIRITS, OF THE WIND, RICE, MOUNTAINS, AND STREAMS.



BUT THEN IZANAMI DIED GIVING BIRTH TO THEIR SON KAGUTSUCHI, THE FIRE GOD.



IZANAGI WAS HEARTBROKEN.



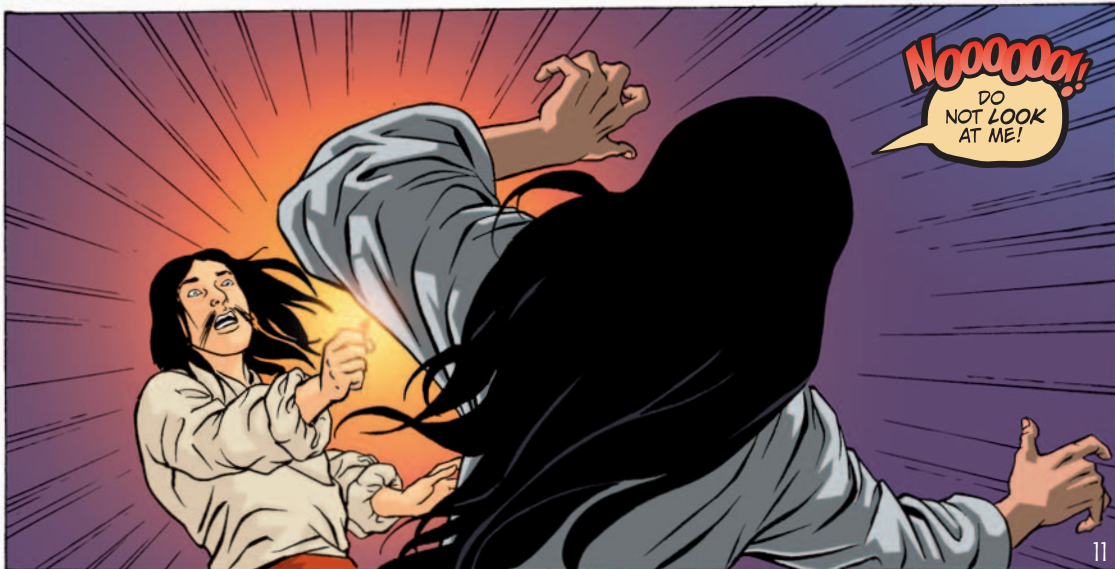
HE LOVED HER SO MUCH THAT HE DECIDED TO FOLLOW HER DOWN TO YOMI, THE LAND OF THE DEAD.



HE HOPED THAT HE COULD BRING HER BACK TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

IZANAMI!  
I HAVE  
COME FOR  
YOU!



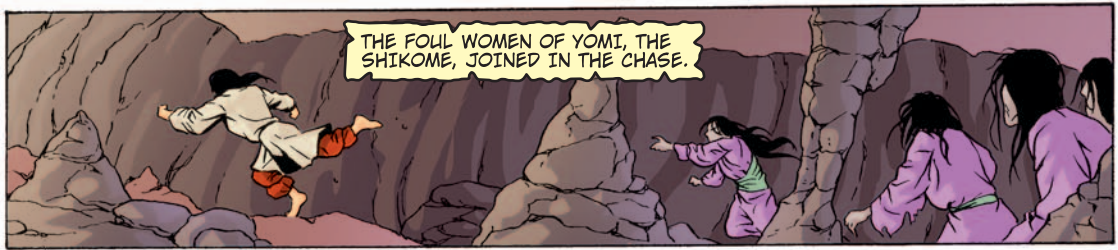






ONCE HE SAW WHAT  
AWFUL THINGS DEATH  
HAD DONE TO HIS  
BELOVED WIFE,  
IZANAGI FORGOT  
ABOUT EVERYTHING  
BUT ESCAPING FROM  
THE UNDERWORLD.

NO! YOU  
CANNOT RETURN TO  
TELL **ANYONE** WHAT  
HAS HAPPENED TO MY  
**BEAUTY!** YOU MUST  
STAY WITH ME  
HERE!!



THE FOUL WOMEN OF YOMI, THE  
SHIKOME, JOINED IN THE CHASE.



IZANAGI REACHED THE  
EXIT FROM YOMI JUST  
A FEW STEPS AHEAD OF  
IZANAMI AND THE  
SHIKOME.



GOOD-BYE, MY LOVE!  
I WILL ALWAYS  
REMEMBER YOU  
AS YOU WERE.

AAAHHEEEEEE!!



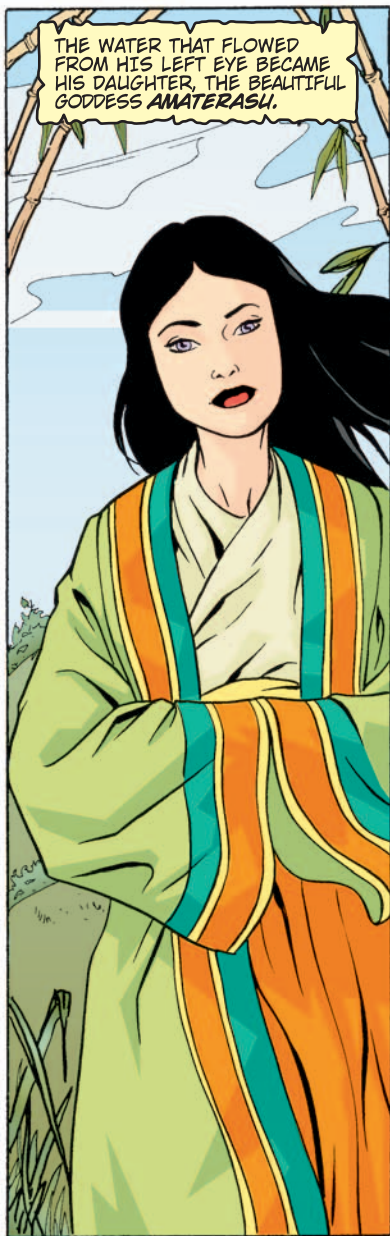
# AMATERASU AND HER BROTHERS

EVEN THOUGH IZANAGI HAD  
ESCAPED THE UNDERWORLD,  
THE SMELL OF IT CLUNG  
TO HIM.

HE USED THE PURE WATERS  
OF A NEARBY STREAM TO  
WASH AWAY THE STINK.

TO IZANAGI'S SURPRISE, THE  
WATER THAT WASHED HIM  
CLEAN TOOK NEW SHAPES.





THE WATER THAT FLOWED FROM HIS LEFT EYE BECAME HIS DAUGHTER, THE BEAUTIFUL GODDESS **AMATERASHI**.



THE WATER THAT FLOWED FROM HIS RIGHT EYE BECAME HIS SON, THE PALE-SKINNED **TSUKIYOMI**.

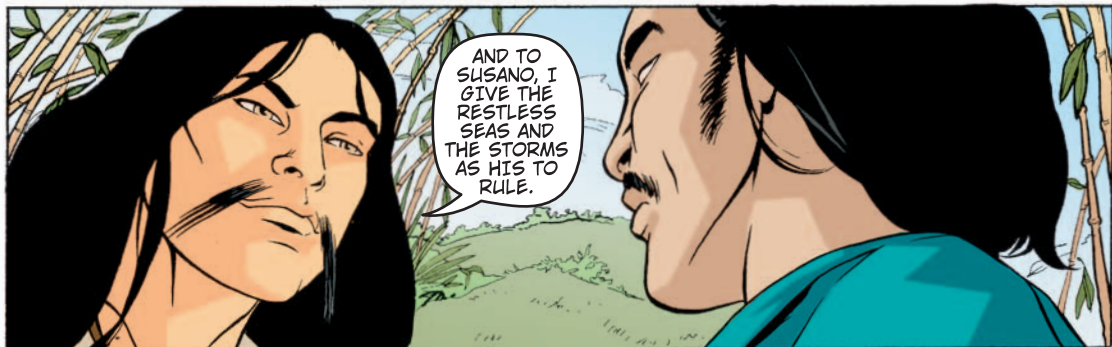
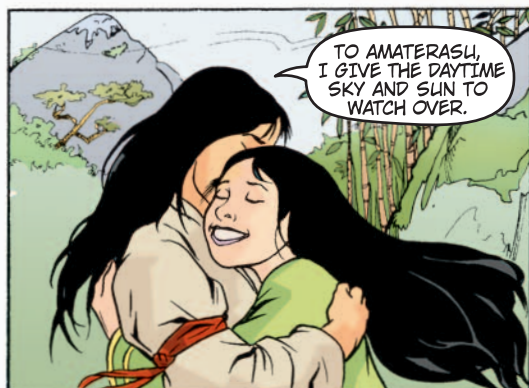


AND THE WATER THAT FLOWED FROM HIS NOSTRILS BECAME ANOTHER SON, THE FIERCE **SUSANO**.



MY CHILDREN!  
TO EACH OF YOU  
I WILL GIVE A  
PORTION OF  
THE EARTH TO  
RULE!







IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE SUSANO WENT TO TELL HIS FATHER EXACTLY HOW HE FELT.

THE SEAS? THE STORMS?!?



WHY AM I STUCK ON THE EARTH WHILE AMATERASU AND TSUKIYOMI LIVE IN THE HEAVENS?



BECAUSE I SAID SO! DO YOU DOUBT MY WISDOM?

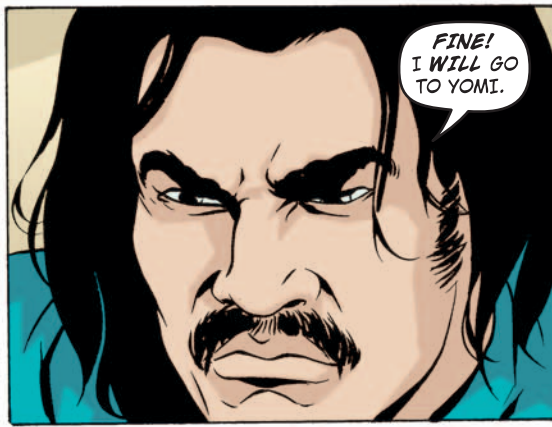


**Bah!** I MIGHT AS WELL GO DOWN TO YOMI WHERE IZANAMI LIVES IN SHADOWS AND DARKNESS!



SO BE IT. YOU CAN CONTROL THE SEA AND STORMS JUST AS WELL FROM THE UNDERWORLD!







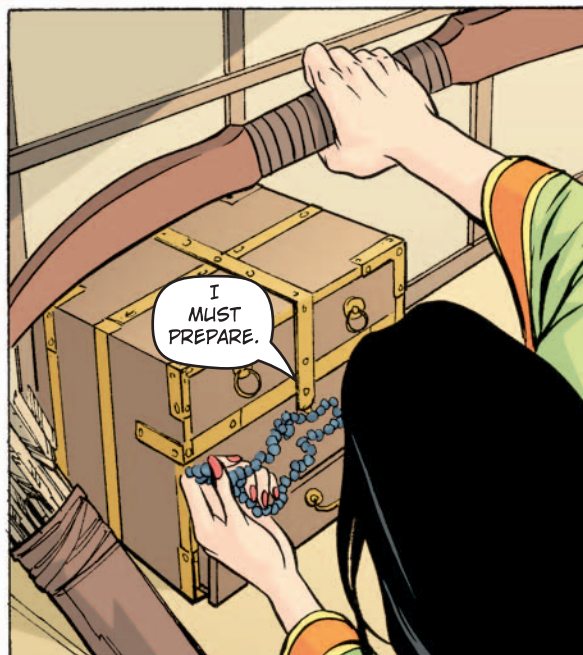
# SUSANO'S CHALLENGE

As SUSANO CLIMBED TO THE HEAVENS, HIS FRUSTRATION SHOOK THE WORLD WITH EARTHQUAKES AND MADE THE SEAS BOIL.



AMATERASU HEARD THE RUMBLE OF HER BROTHER'S APPROACH. SHE FEARED HE MEANT TO DO HER HARM.

SURELY MY BROTHER COMES TO TRY TO TAKE THE SUN AND DAYLIGHT SKY FOR HIS OWN.



I MUST PREPARE.





WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE, SUSANO, WITH STORMS AND EARTHQUAKES TRAILING BEHIND YOU?

I WILL NOT GIVE UP WHAT IS MINE WITHOUT A FIGHT.



WHY DO YOU TALK OF FIGHTING, SISTER? I HAVE ONLY COME TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOU AND TSUKIYOMI.

OUR FATHER HAS BANISHED ME TO THE UNDERWORLD!



IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN GIVE ME YOUR SWORD TO HOLD WHILE YOU ARE HERE.



CERTAINLY. BUT GIVE ME SOMETHING TO HOLD IN EXCHANGE.



THAT SEEMS FAIR.



SUSANO DIDN'T DARE GO AGAINST HIS FATHER'S WISHES. BUT HE WANTED TO PROVE HE WAS BETTER THAN HIS SISTER BEFORE HE DESCENDED TO YOMI.

IF YOU'RE HAPPY NOW, AN IDEA JUST CAME TO ME.

WHY DON'T WE HAVE A COMPETITION, YOU AND I?

WHAT KIND OF COMPETITION?

EACH OF US WILL CREATE NEW KAMI, AND WHOEVER CREATES THE MOST MALE KAMI WINS.

AGREED!

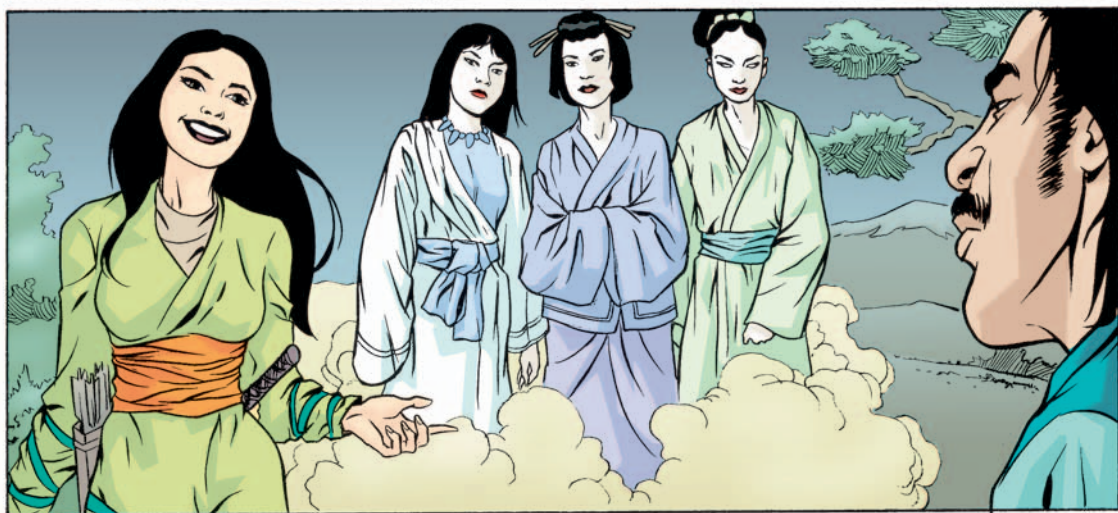
WITH THAT, AMATERASU DEVoured SUSANO'S SWORD IN THREE BITES!

CRUNCH!

CRUNCH!

CRUNCH!











## AMATERASU'S FLIGHT

IGNORING HER BROTHER'S ANGER, AMATERASU WENT BACK INTO HER PALACE.



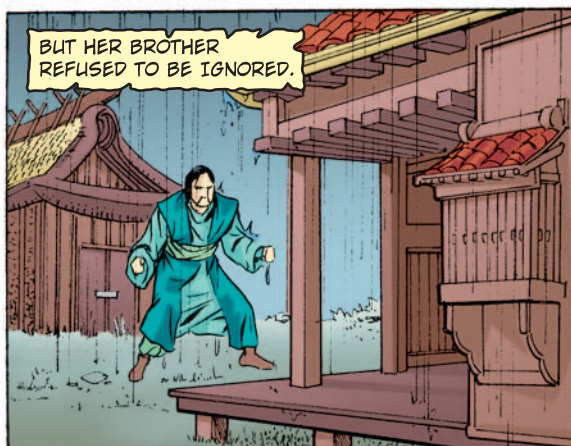
FURIOUS AT AMATERASU'S TRICK, SUSANO MADE A HUGE STORM.

HE WAS DETERMINED TO TAKE REVENGE, EVEN IF IT MEANT RUINING THE FIELDS OF HEAVEN WITH WIND AND RAIN AND LIGHTNING.





AMATERASU TRIED TO IGNORE HER BROTHER'S STORMS. SHE AND HER COMPANIONS WENT ON ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS, WEAVING CLOTH TO MAKE GARMENTS FOR THE GODS AND GODDESSES.



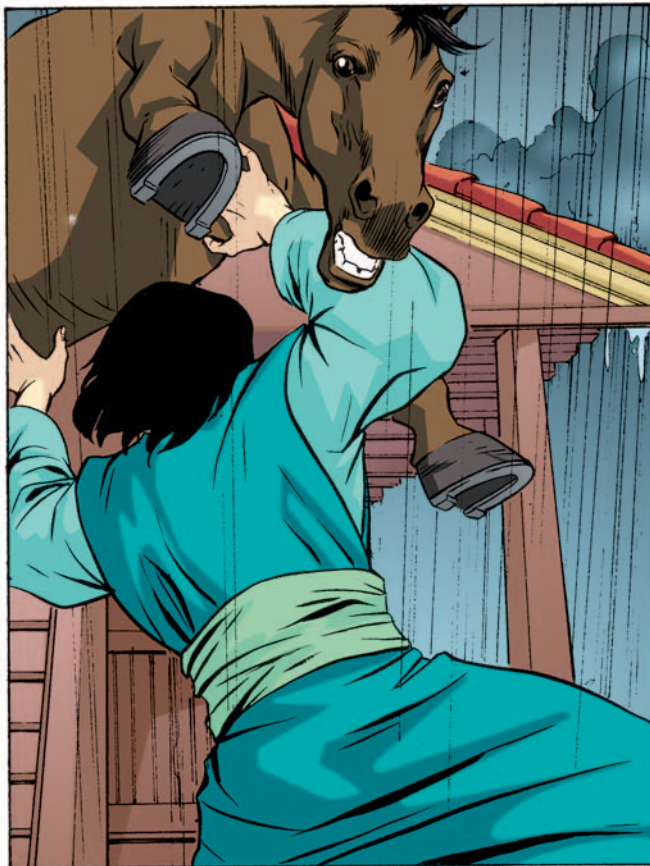
BUT HER BROTHER REFUSED TO BE IGNORED.



SUSANO KNEW WHERE HIS SISTER'S FAVORITE PONY WAS KEPT.



HE DECIDED THAT HE WOULD DO SOMETHING SO HORRIBLE THAT IT WAS SURE TO GET HER ATTENTION.











AMATERASU AND HER COMPANIONS WERE SHOCKED THAT SUSANO COULD BE SO CRUEL.



UNTIL THEN, AMATERASU HAD NOT REALIZED JUST HOW ANGRY SUSANO WAS AT HER.



SHE WAS AFRAID THAT HER BROTHER WOULD HURT HER TOO.



SHE THOUGHT THAT IF SHE DISAPPEARED,  
SUSANO'S TEMPER WOULD COOL.



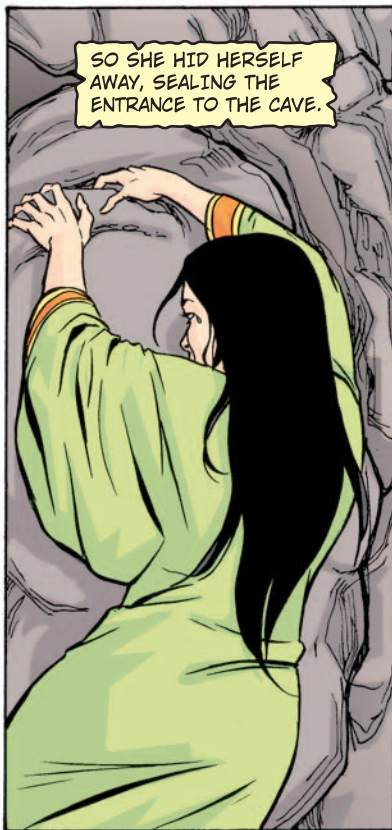
SHE LOOKED FOR A  
PLACE THAT WOULD HIDE  
HER GLOWING LIGHT.



WHEN SHE FOUND THE  
CAVE, IT SEEMED PERFECT.



SO SHE HID HERSELF  
AWAY, SEALING THE  
ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE.



SHE NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT  
HOW THE SUN GOING AWAY  
WOULD AFFECT THE HEAVENS  
AND THE EARTH.

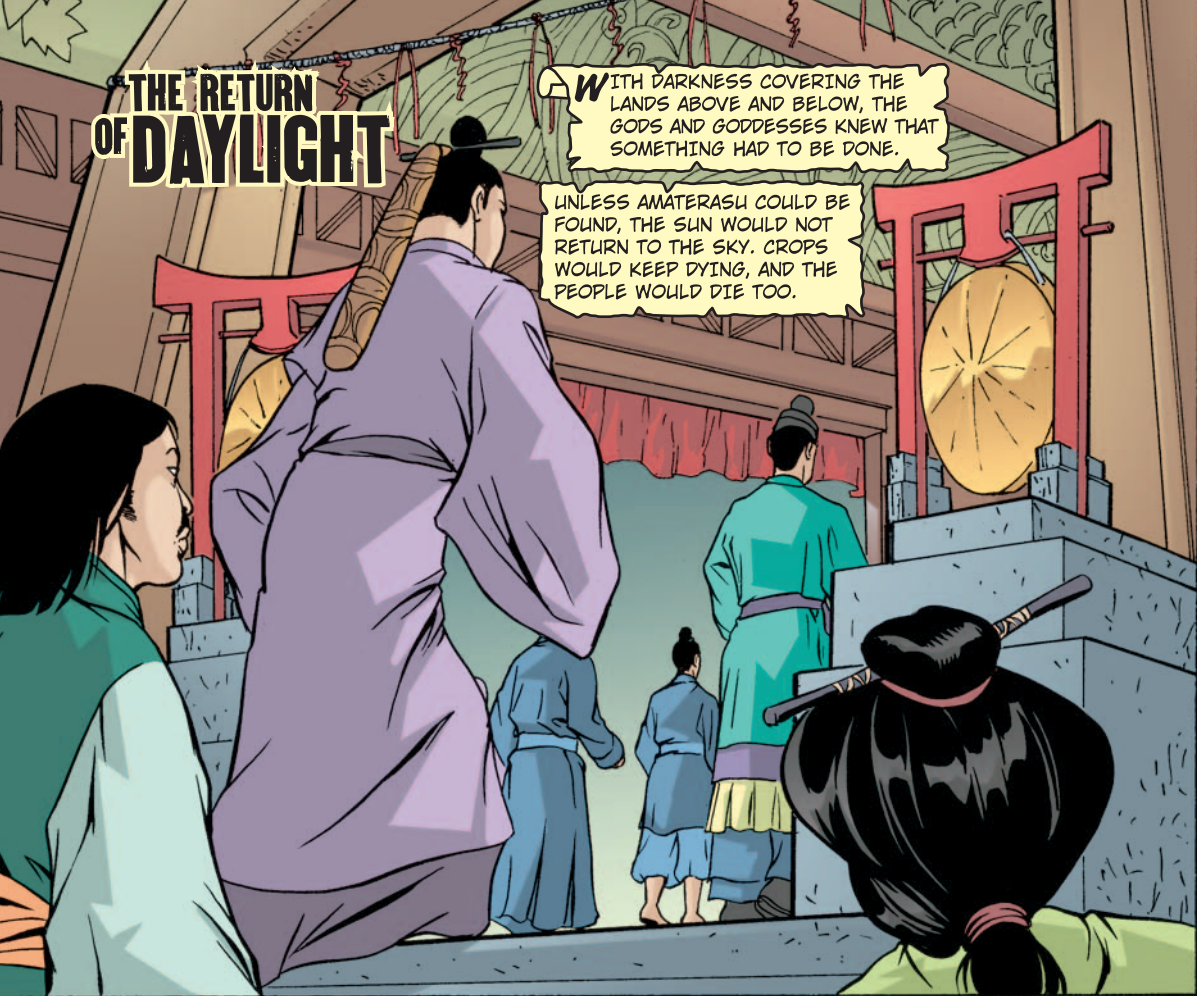




# THE RETURN OF DAYLIGHT

WITH DARKNESS COVERING THE LANDS ABOVE AND BELOW, THE GODS AND GODDESSES KNEW THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE.

UNLESS AMATERASHI COULD BE FOUND, THE SUN WOULD NOT RETURN TO THE SKY. CROPS WOULD KEEP DYING, AND THE PEOPLE WOULD DIE TOO.



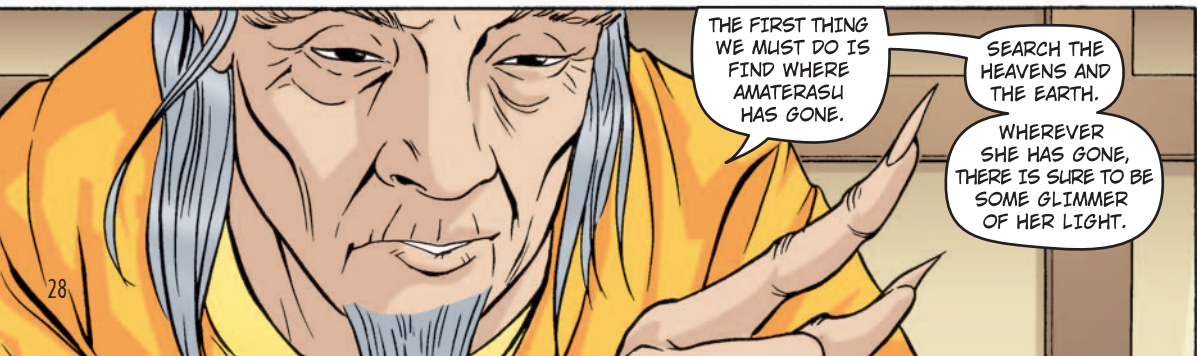
SO THE GODS AND GODDESSES TURNED TO OMOHI-KANE, PERHAPS THE WISEST OF THEM ALL, FOR ADVICE.



THE FIRST THING WE MUST DO IS FIND WHERE AMATERASHI HAS GONE.

SEARCH THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

WHEREVER SHE HAS GONE, THERE IS SURE TO BE SOME GLIMMER OF HER LIGHT.







IT WAS A LONG AND DIFFICULT SEARCH, BUT EVENTUALLY THEY DISCOVERED THE CAVE WHERE AMATERASU WAS HIDING.

NOW THAT WE HAVE FOUND HER, OMOHI-KANE, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?



Hmmm. FIRST, WE MUST DRAW HER OUT OF HIDING.

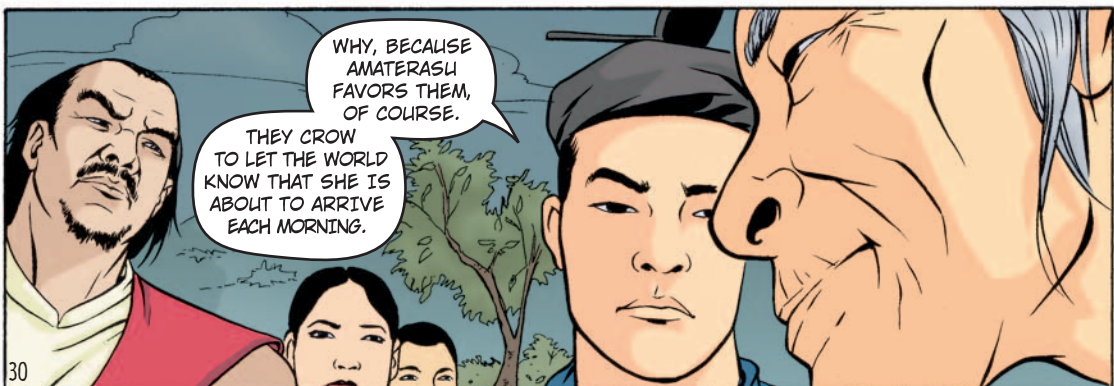
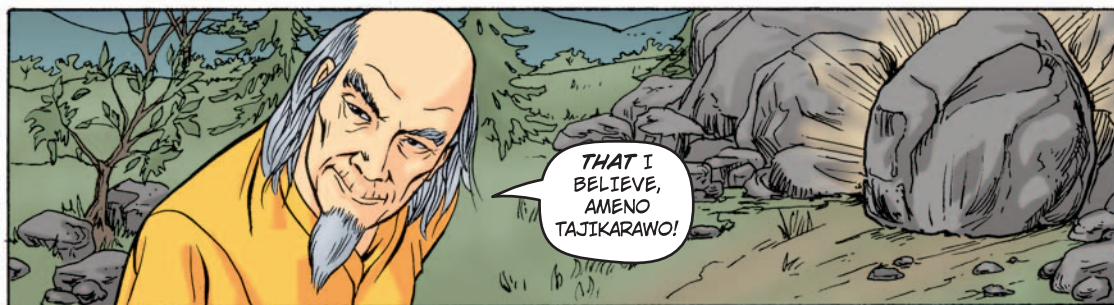


THEN WE MUST MAKE SURE SHE CANNOT FLEE BACK INTO THE CAVE!



IF YOU CAN GET HER OUT, I THINK I'M MORE THAN STRONG ENOUGH TO KEEP HER FROM GOING BACK IN.





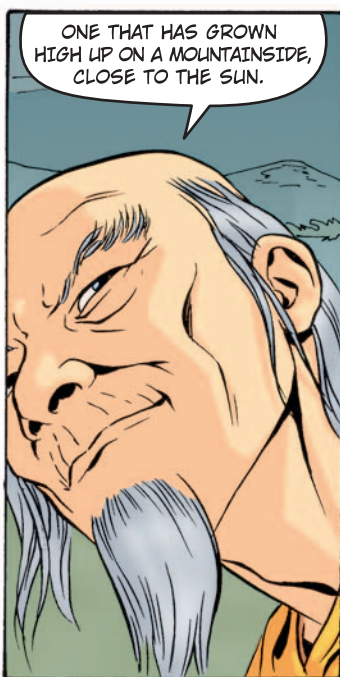








THE LAST  
THING WE NEED IS  
A SACRED SAKAKI  
TREE.



ONE THAT HAS GROWN  
HIGH UP ON A MOUNTAIN INSIDE,  
CLOSE TO THE SUN.



A SACRED  
TREE? WHY MOVE  
IT HERE?



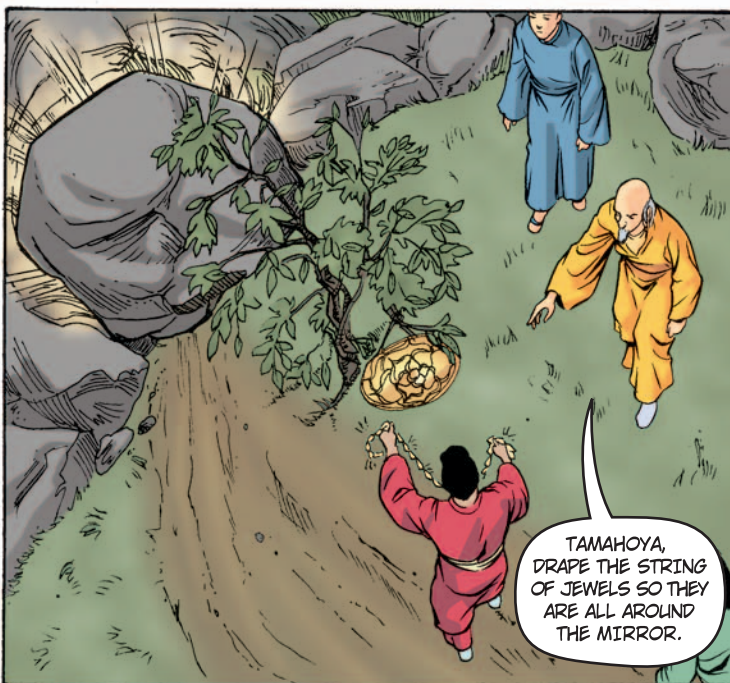
YOU  
WILL  
SEE!



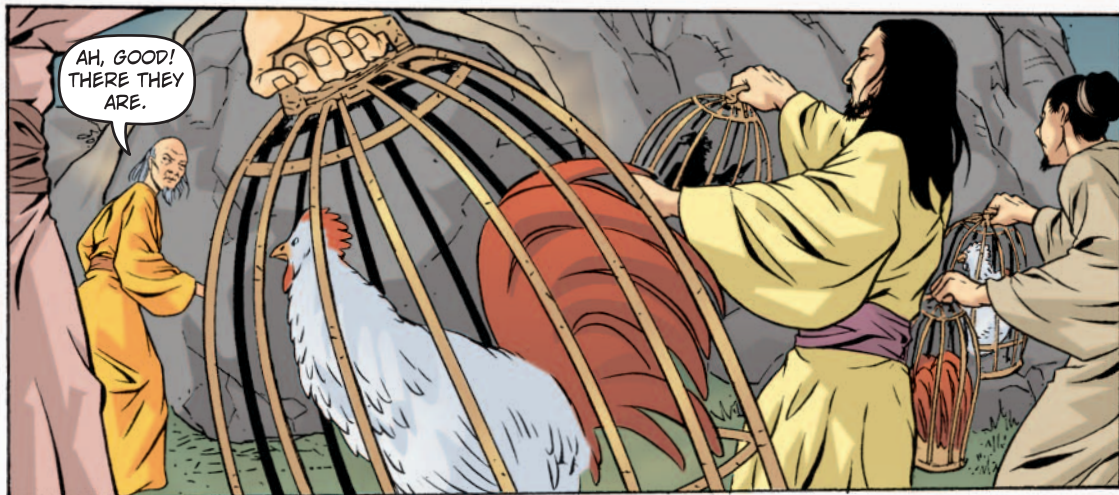
GO ON!  
GO ON!

GATHER THESE  
THINGS AND BRING  
THEM HERE. THERE  
IS NO TIME TO  
WASTE!

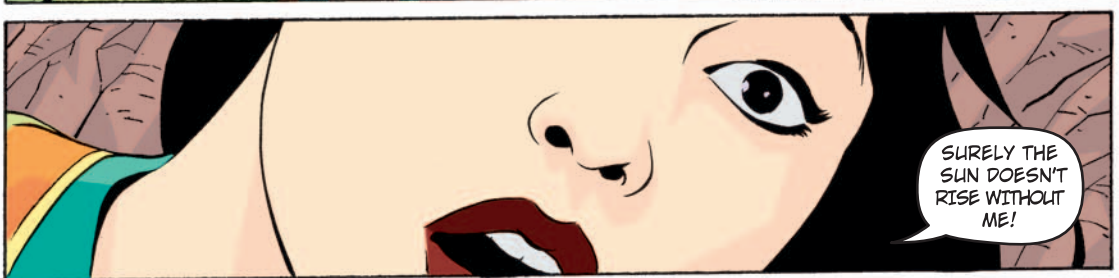
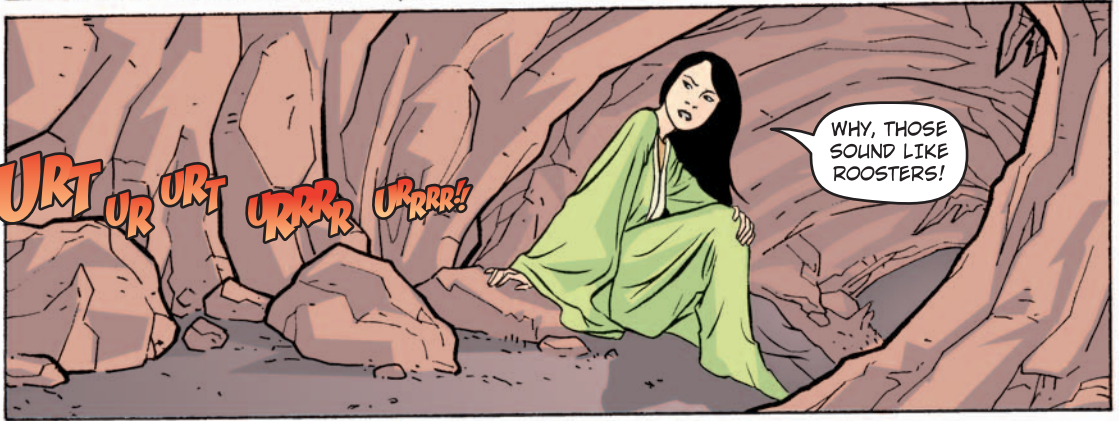
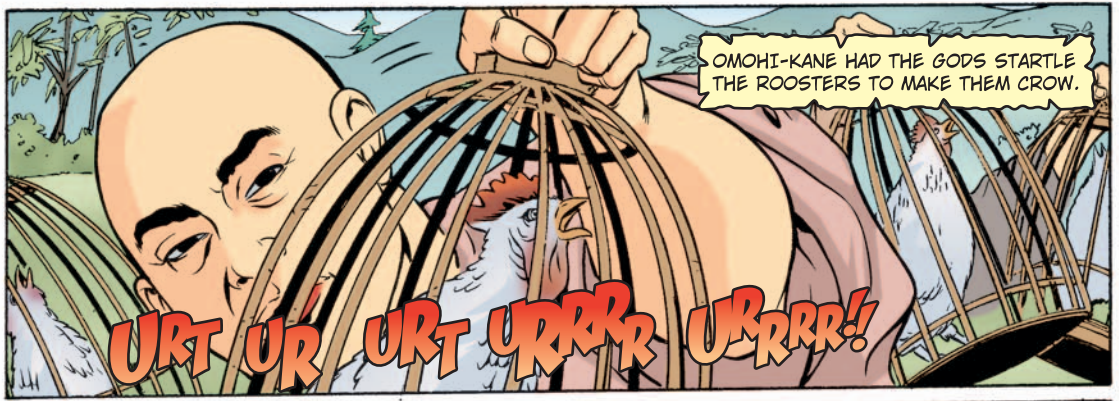








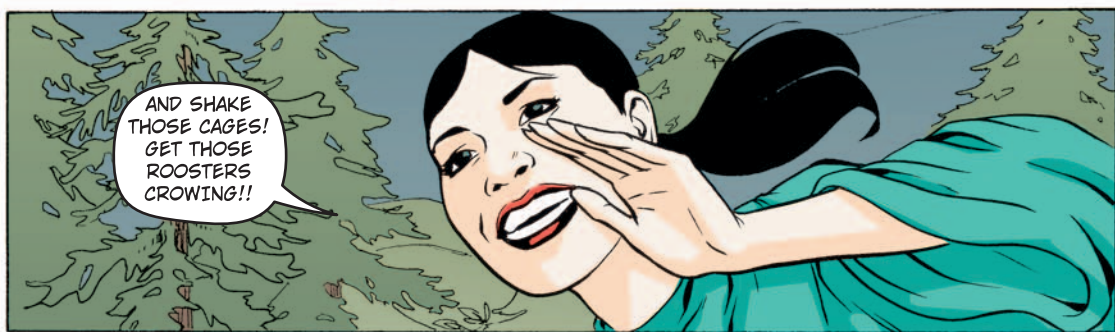




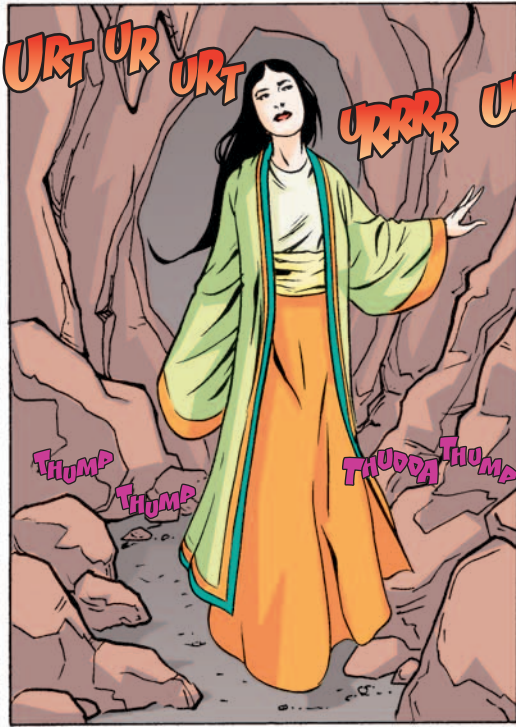








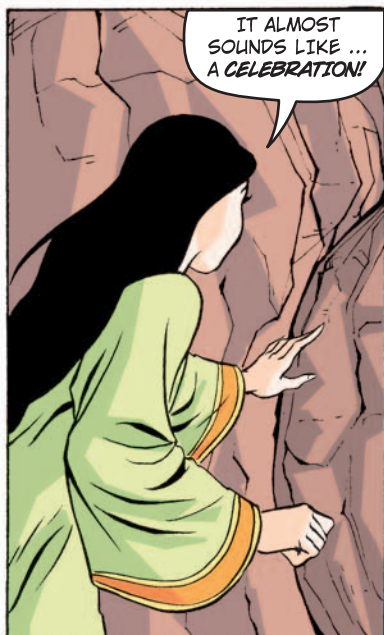












IT ALMOST  
SOUNDS LIKE ...  
A CELEBRATION!



BUT WHAT  
COULD THEY BE  
CELEBRATING?



DOESN'T ANYONE  
MISS ME? DON'T  
THEY MISS THE  
SUNSHINE?

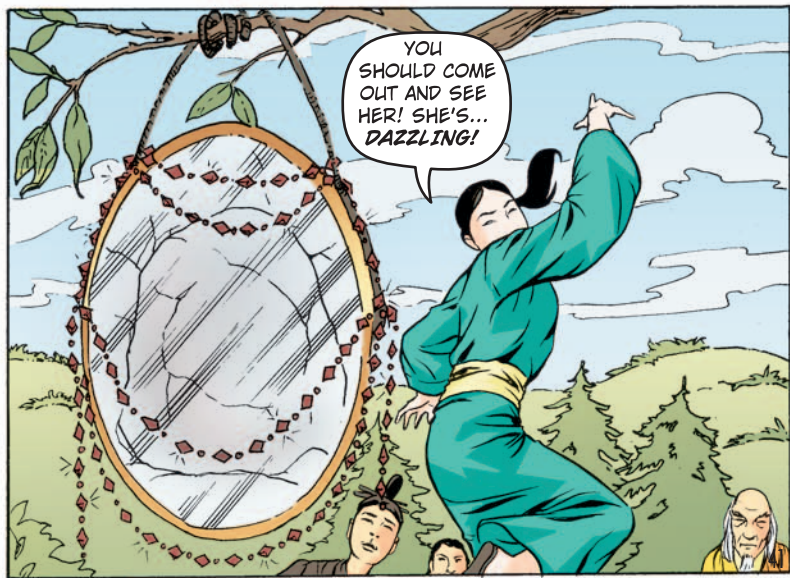


WHAT'S  
GOING ON  
OUT THERE?



WHAT ARE YOU  
CELEBRATING?



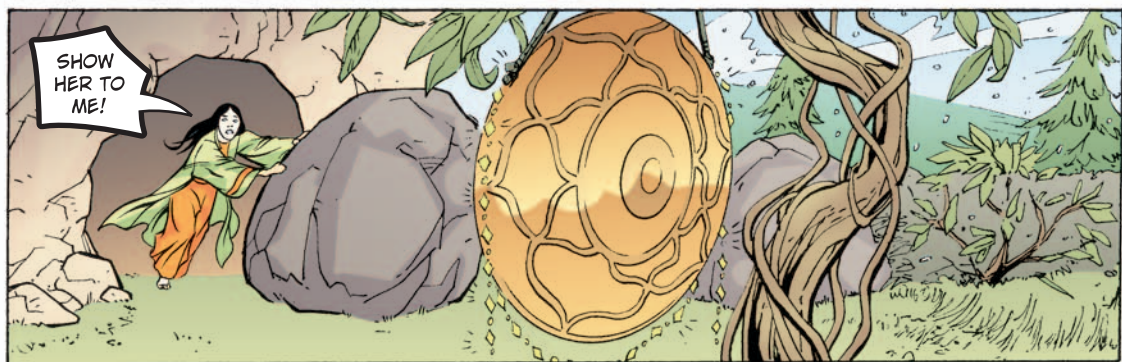




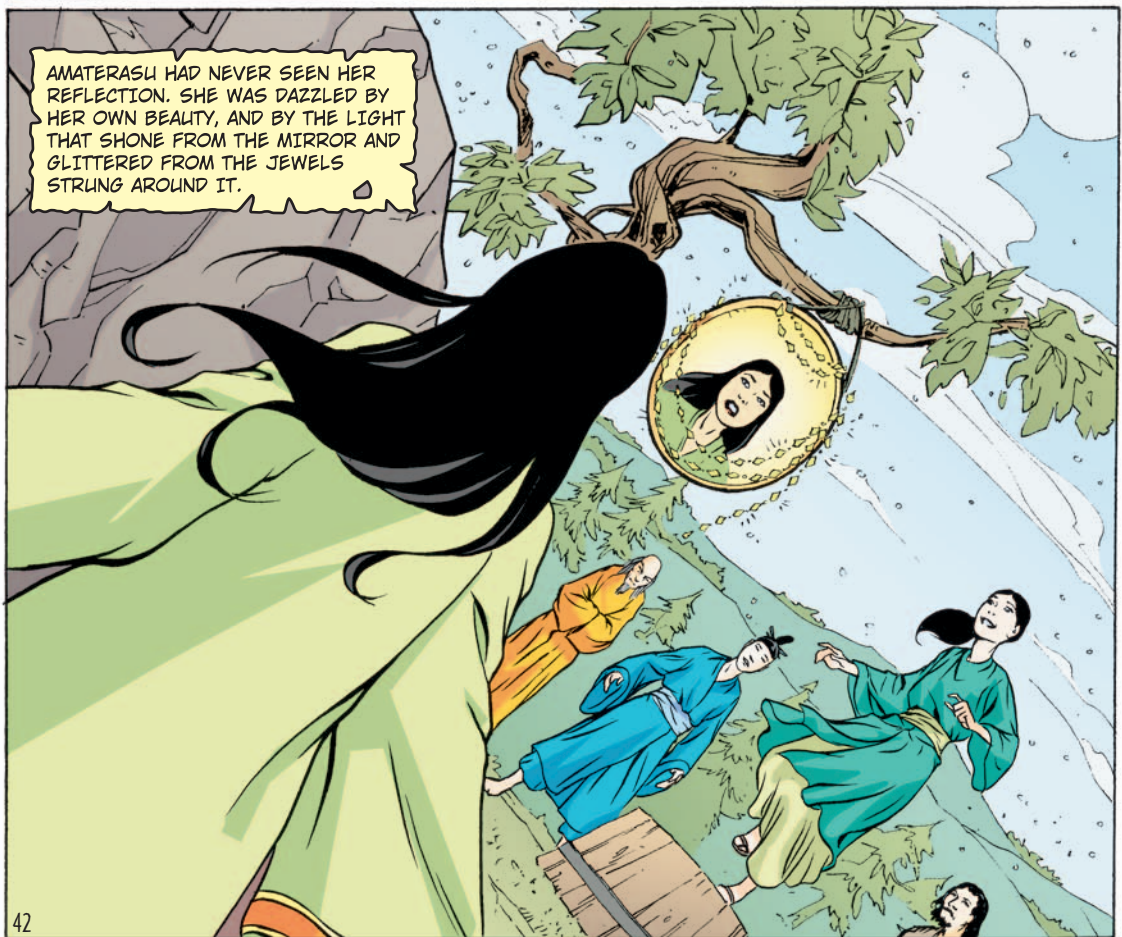


WHO IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?

COULD THEY REALLY WANT TO MAKE SOMEONE GODDESS OF THE SUN INSTEAD OF ME?



SHOW HER TO ME!



AMATERASU HAD NEVER SEEN HER REFLECTION. SHE WAS DAZZLED BY HER OWN BEAUTY, AND BY THE LIGHT THAT SHONE FROM THE MIRROR AND GLITTERED FROM THE JEWELS STRUNG AROUND IT.





WHILE AMENO TAJIKARAWO TALKED WITH AMATERASU, ANOTHER GOD QUIETLY STRUNG A SHIRUKUME-A MAGICAL ROPE MADE OF RICE STRAW-ACROSS THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE TO KEEP HER FROM GOING BACK INSIDE.



WE BEG YOU, AMATERASU, PLEASE DO NOT DEPRIVE US OF YOUR LIGHT AND BEAUTY EVER AGAIN.

WITHOUT YOU, THE EARTH IS DOOMED AND THE HEAVENS ARE FULL OF SADNESS!

YOU WON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT SUSANO ANYMORE. WE PLAN TO PUT HIM ON TRIAL FOR HIS CRUEL AND RECKLESS BEHAVIOR!



# THE TRIAL OF SUSANO



WE HAVE  
TALKED A LONG  
TIME ABOUT WHAT TO  
DO WITH YOU,  
SUSANO.

YOUR  
TANTRUM  
RUINED THE FIELDS  
OF HEAVEN AND, BY  
SCARING AMATERASU  
INTO HIDING, DID  
GREAT DAMAGE  
TO THE EARTH  
BELOW.



OUR FATHER  
HAD ALREADY SAID  
YOU MUST GO AND  
LIVE IN YOMI.

WE  
WILL MAKE  
SURE THAT  
YOU DO.



ALSO, TO TEACH YOU HUMILITY,  
YOUR FACE AND HEAD WILL  
BE **SHAVED** BEFORE  
YOU GO.

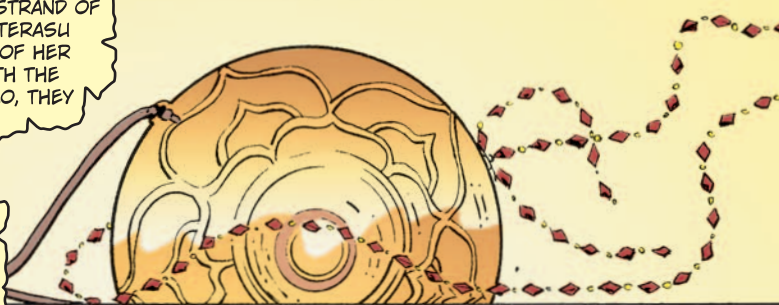


AND SO SUSANO, THE GOD OF SEA AND STORM, WAS SENT DOWN TO THE GLOOMY UNDERWORLD, FOREVER BANISHED FROM THE HEAVENS.



THE MIRROR AND THE GREAT STRAND OF JEWELS THAT HAD LURED AMATERASU FROM THE CAVE BECAME TWO OF HER SACRED SYMBOLS. ALONG WITH THE LEGENDARY SWORD, MURAKUMO, THEY WERE GIVEN TO AMATERASU'S GRANDSON, NINIGI.

NINIGI'S GREAT-GRANDSON BECAME THE FIRST EMPEROR OF JAPAN, AND HIS HEIRS KEPT THE SACRED RELICS FOR CENTURIES TO COME.



AND AS FOR AMATERASU HERSELF, SHE TOOK UP HER RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE HEAVENS, SHINING HER LIGHT DOWN ON THE EARTH AND BRINGING HOPE AND JOY TO ALL WHO SAW IT.





# GLOSSARY AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

**AMA-NO-UZUME** (*ab-mah-no-oo-zoo-meh*): the goddess of joy and happiness in the Japanese religion of Shinto

**AMATERASU** (*ab-mah-teh-rab-soo*): the Shinto goddess of the sun. Amaterasu is also revered as the inventor of wheat and rice cultivation, silk production, and loom weaving. In Japan, street processions and festivities in her honor are held each July 17. December 21 (the winter solstice) is also sacred. It marks the day she emerged from the cave and the sun returned.

**AMENO TAJIKARAWO:** (*ab-meh-no tah-jib-kah-rab-woh*): the Shinto god of strength

**FIELDS OF HEAVEN:** paradise, the home of the gods high above the earth

**ISHIKORI-DOME** (*ee-shee-kor-ee doo-mee*): a Shinto smith (someone who forges metal objects) goddess. She is credited with creating the mirror used to lure Amaterasu from her cave.

**IZANAGI** (*ee-zab-nah-gee*): the Shinto sky god who created the world with his wife, Izanami

**IZANAMI** (*ee-zab-nah-mee*): the Shinto earth goddess who created the world with her husband, Izanagi

**KAMI** (*kab-mee*): divine spirits. Kami can take the form of gods and goddesses, and they are also found throughout nature.

**OMOHI-KANE** (*oh-mob-jih-kab-neh*): a Shinto god of wisdom

**SHIKOME** (*shih-kob-meh*): foul women who inhabit Yomi

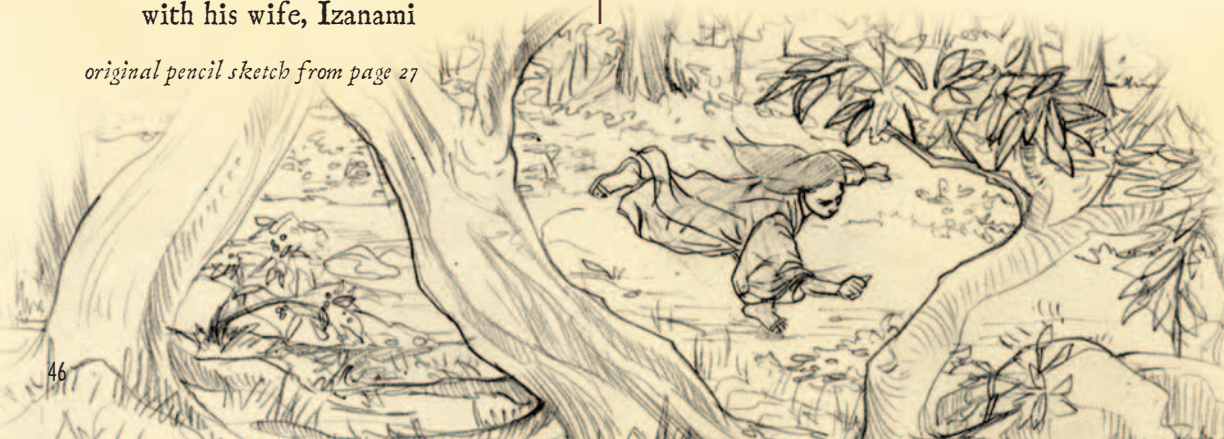
**SHINTO:** the native religion of Japan. *Shinto* means “the way of the gods.” Shinto includes many gods and spirits, prayer and traditional ceremonies, and special foods.

**SUSANO** (*soo-sab-noh*): the Shinto god of the seas and of storms

**TSUKIYOMI** (*too-kee-yoh-mee*): the Shinto god of the moon

**YOMI** (*yoh-mee*): the land of the dead

*original pencil sketch from page 27*





## FURTHER READING AND WEBSITES

Behnke, Alison. *Japan in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2003. This book features maps and full-color photographs illustrating Japanese geography, history, and culture.

*Japanese-Myths.com*.

<http://www.japanese-myths.com/index.htm>. This site features information on Japan's gods and goddesses, heroes, and monsters.

*Jingu*.

<http://www.isejingu.or.jp/english/index.htm>. This website explains Amaterasu's Shinto shrine, Ise Jingu. "Manga: Ise Jingu" is an illustrated section for kids on activities at the shrine, the tale of Amaterasu's mirror, and more stories about the goddess.

McAlpine, Helen, and William McAlpine. *Tales from Japan*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002. Originally published in 1958, the McAlpines' classic book retells Japanese myths and folktales.

"Religion and Ethics: Shinto." *BBC.co.uk*.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/>. The British Broadcasting Corporation's website looks at the basic beliefs and traditions of Shinto, the native religion of Japan.

Richardson, Hazel. *Life in Ancient Japan*. New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2005. Richardson details the events and cultural influences that shaped early Japan. Topics include the beginning of rice cultivation, the development of towns and trade, and the rise of religions, including Shinto.

## CREATING AMATERASU: RETURN OF THE SUN

As with many myths and legends, some details about Amaterasu's tale vary. In creating this story, author Paul Storrie relied on *Realm of the Rising Sun: Japanese Myth* (edited by Tony Allan *et al.*), the *Encyclopedia of Eastern Myth*, and other sources on Asian mythology. Artist Ron Randall used details from Japanese art, costume museums, and traditional architecture to shape the story's visual details—from Amaterasu's gown to the mirror used to lure her out of the cave. Yuiko Kimura of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts used her knowledge of Japanese culture and art to ensure content and visual accuracy.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THE ARTIST

**PAUL D. STORRIE** was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He has returned to live there again and again after living in other cities and states. He began writing professionally in 1987 and has written comics for Caliber Comics, Moonstone Books, Marvel Comics, and DC Comics. Titles he has worked on include *Hercules*, *Robin Hood*, *Robyn of Sherwood* (featuring stories about Robin Hood's daughter), *Batman Beyond*, *Gotham Girls*, *Captain America: Red, White and Blue*, and *Mutant X*.

**RON RANDALL** has drawn comics for every major comic publisher in the United States, including Marvel, DC, Image, and Dark Horse. His work includes *Thor and Loki: In the Land of Giants*, *Justice League*, and *Spiderman*. He has created art for a wide range of genres, including science fiction (*Star Wars* and *Star Trek*), fantasy-adventure (*DragonLance* and *Warlord*), suspense and horror (*SwampThing*, *Predator*, and *Venom*), and his own title, *Trekker*. He lives in Portland, Oregon.