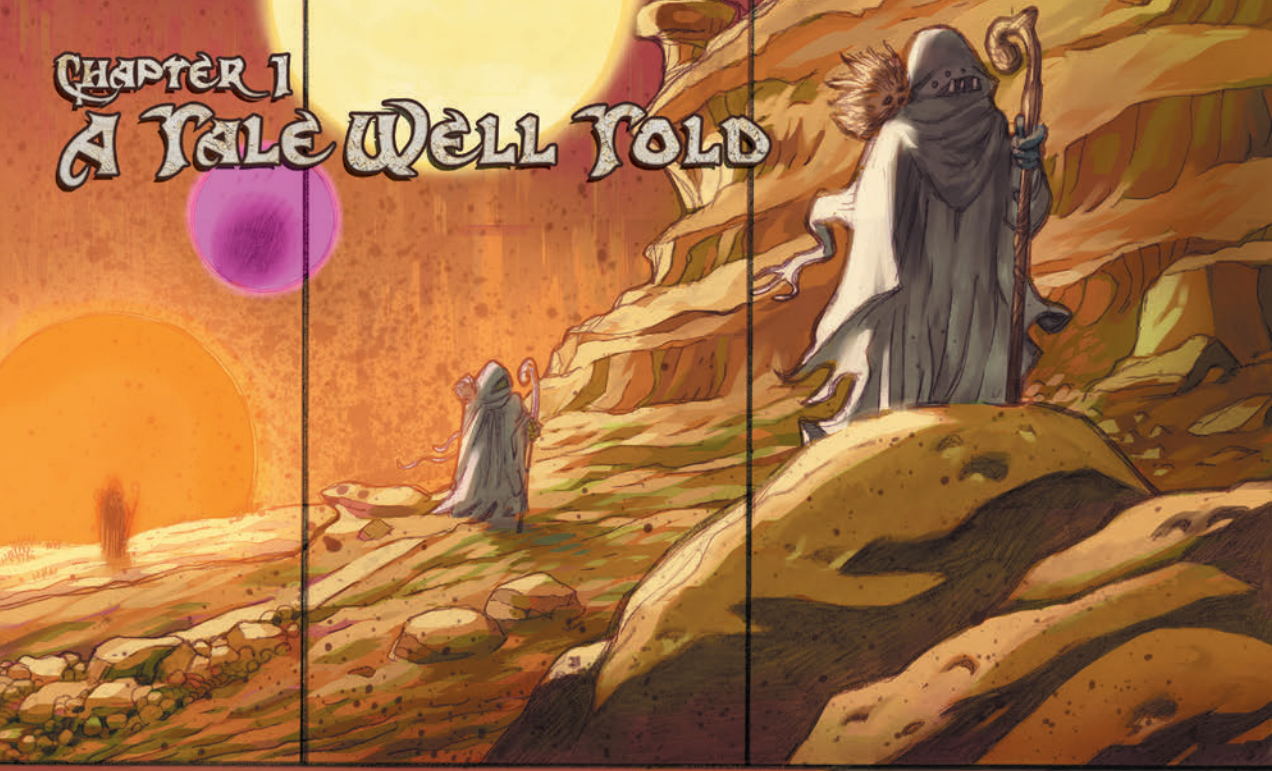



# CHAPTER 1 A TALE WELL TOLD







YOU WERE PROMISED A TALE, AND I WILL TRY NOT TO DISAPPOINT.

IT IS MEAGER PAYMENT, BUT IT IS ALL I HAVE TO OFFER. AND YET IT MAY PROVE MORE VALUABLE THAN YOU THINK.

YOU KNOW THE ANCIENT GELFLING RHYME, I'M SURE?



'Wish not for treasures you can hold  
No gleaming jewels, bright and cold  
For finer still than pearl or gold  
The treasure of a tale well told...'



YOU CANNOT KNOW THE PRESENT, NOR GRASP AT THE FUTURE, IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE STORIES OF THE PAST.

THE FOLLY AND THE GLORY OF THE WORLD...  
THE WILD, THE WISE AND THE WICKED... THE HERO, THE MADMAN, THE WANDERER AND THE FOOL...

THE EARTH, THE SEAS, THE WILD HEAVENS... ALL ARE PART OF AN ENDLESS, UNFOLDING TAPESTRY, WOVEN BY TIME AND HEMMED BY MEMORY.



THERE.  
THE LAST SUN  
HAS SET.

IT IS  
TIME.

AND SO I  
BEGIN, WHERE ALL  
GREAT STORIES  
MUST...



AT THE  
BEGINNING...

FWOOSH

# CHAPTER 2

## THE BIRTH SONG OF AUGHRA

AT FIRST, THERE  
WAS SILENCE...

AND THEN THE  
SONG BEGAN.

SLOWLY AT FIRST,  
FAINT AND HALTING.

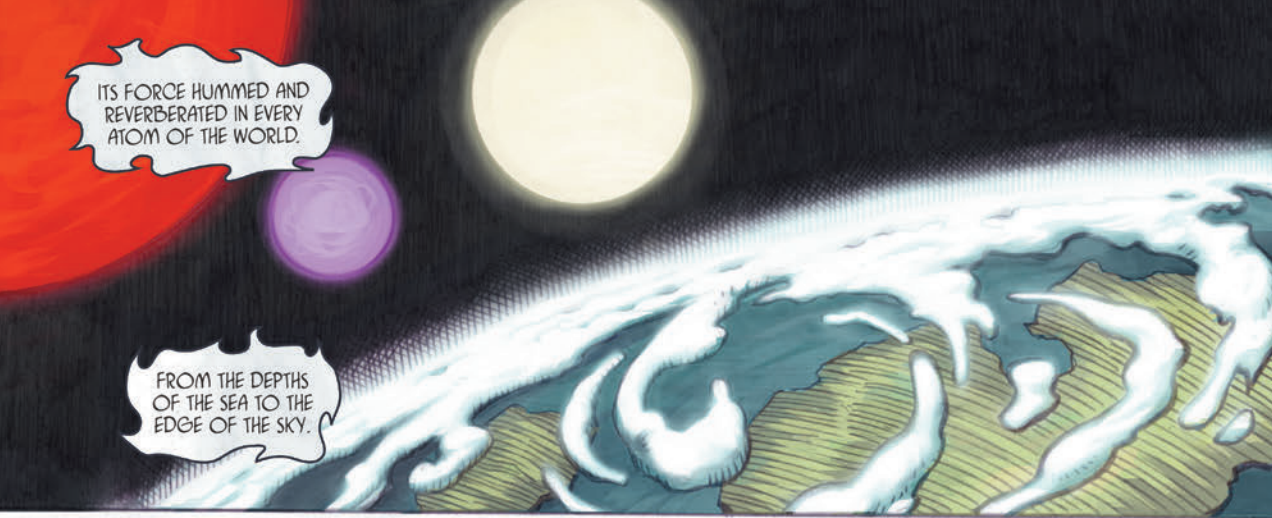
IT CALLED OUT TO THE  
HEAVENS, AND THE STARS  
OPENED THEIR EYES.

IT CALLED FORTH A GREAT  
FIRE, AND THE FIRE DIVIDED  
ITSELF INTO THREE. AND EACH  
PORTION WAS GIVEN A NAME:  
THE GREAT SUN, THE ROSE  
SUN AND THE DYING SUN.

AROUND THEM, A  
WORLD FORMED. AND  
DEEP UNDERGROUND  
WAS A MIRACLE.

THE CRYSTAL.

THE BRIGHT,  
BEATING HEART  
OF THE WORLD.




ITS FORCE HUMMED AND  
REVERBERATED IN EVERY  
ATOM OF THE WORLD.


FROM THE DEPTHS  
OF THE SEA TO THE  
EDGE OF THE SKY.



THROUGH  
FOREST DEEP AND  
DESERT BARE.



WITHIN EVERY HAIR  
AND SCALE ON  
EVERY BEAST.



IN EACH BLADE OF GRASS AND  
EVERY DROP OF RAIN, IT RANG  
OUT. A WORD THAT SPOKE OF LIFE  
AND BALANCE AND HARMONY.

THE NAME OF THIS  
WORLD. ITS NAME AND  
ITS NATURE...

THRA.