

KAMAPPA

By Jeff Dunne

© 2021 by Jeffrey A. Dunne
jeff@bearcreations.org

CHARACTERS

WOMAN

A woman (any age, ideally of African heritage) who is... well, you'll see and then you can decide for yourself.

SETTING

A remote and empty park.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a relating of the African legend of Kamappa and Ditaolane, albeit with a bit of variation by the author because, let's face it, I always have to tinker with things.

SCENE

(It is a quiet park. In the center is a statue of a man wearing simple clothing and a necklace of divining charms. After a few moments of silence, a woman enters the park and approaches the statue.)

WOMAN

Ditaolane.

(She studies the statue.)

Wake up. I know it's you.

(She waits patiently for a moment, but nothing happens. Suddenly her demeanor changes and she says...)

It's your mother. Wake up. Please?

(Silence.)

The world needs you again, my son. I do not know how, but the Kamappa has returned, and is devouring people once again. Perhaps it was brought back from the dead; perhaps this is a different one, spawn from whatever abyss begat the first. I don't know. No one does, but we are in terrible danger.

(She studies the statue. Nothing.)

Please, my son. You were a gift of the gods, and you have a purpose. You must save us once more. Without you, we are all lost. You would not let the Kamappa devour even me, would you?

(She waits. Nothing.)

I understand. And you're right. Maybe we aren't worthy. Heaven knows the people treated you poorly. No, not just poorly. Terribly. They were awful to you beyond words. You freed them. Risked your life, and freed them as no one else had been able and they turned upon you. Hunted you. Persecuted you across the world until you had no choice left but to take this form. And I'm sorry. My son, I am so sorry. Sorry for all of humanity that they reacted this way. But you must understand. They were scared. And a frightened person is not a sane person. They acted out of fear and did terrible things.

(She studies the statue in silence for a time.)

WOMAN (CONT)

Do you truly have no place in your heart for forgiveness? Will you not come back to me, to your own mother? Even just to speak for a few moments? Do you bear even me such vehement disdain?

(No response.)

Yes. I suppose you would at that. Perhaps I am the one truly at fault in this. I prayed for a savior, and the gods gave me you. You. A son. My son. Grown in but a day, and there you were. And what did I do? I sent you off. Away, to save us. Save us all. Perhaps I should have kept you hidden with me. At least for a time. Some moment of peace. Of comfort.

(Tears come to her eyes, and she wipes them away.)

Oh, Ditaolane! I'm so, so sorry! I failed you! I know I failed you! Please. Will you not come back to me, even just that I might apologize? Let me hold you, hold my son, one last time the way I should have a thousand times before?

(She looks at the statue, hopeful, but nothing happens. She gets control over herself.)

It's fair. And I want you to know that I understand. You gave and gave of yourself, and we all let you down. Isn't that always the way of it, though? Those who give so much receive so little, and those who give everything receive nothing at all in return from the people who gain the most. And then here I come, and I am the worst of them all. Before even saying thank you, I ask you to rescue us again.

(She turns away.)

How dare I? How DARE I? What kind of horrible *monster* am I to do this? To do all these things... I... I do not deserve you. I do not deserve to live. No. I should have ended this a long time ago. A long, long time ago.

(The woman takes out a knife concealed in her robes, and holds it up high, pointed down at her heart.)

I love you, Ditaolane!

(With one last glance at the statue, she plunges the knife towards her heart. She stops it only millimeters away from her skin, and looks at the statue out of the corner of her eye. After a brief pause, a wicked snarl comes across her face and she puts the knife away. She turns back to the statue.)

WOMAN (CONT)

Truly? Not even to save your own mother? You'd stand there and watch her kill herself rather than return from the stone.

(She stares, angry, at the statue. Then...)

Face me, *hero!* You know who I am. I know you do. But do you know what I have done? Hmm? While you have hidden away? I killed her. Your mother. I. Me. I was the one who took her life. In the middle of the night. When no one was there to weep at her last breath. She died alone. You weren't there. As I slowly killed her, and she cried out. Oh, yes. She cried out for you. "Ditaolane! Ditaolane! Please!" she cried. But you remained *here*. And then she died.

(The woman studies the statue, then becomes very cold and clinical.)

No one buried her, you know. She just rotted away in that tiny cave. Slowly rotted away. Even the vultures would not have her. Even the maggots refused to return her flesh to the Earth. Only the centuries stole her form, as the bits of flesh eventually dissolved.

(She stops, turns to look intently at the statue.)

Nothing? You truly are without a soul now, aren't you? What took it from you? Was it the betrayal of humanity? Did you fight the mighty Kamappa, only to fall to the hand of self-pity? Oh, woe is me! Look at how I have been wronged! How every wronged *me!*

(She pauses again, just a twinge of frustration starting to show that Ditaolane will not respond.)

Fine then. Remain stone. Perhaps you don't care. Don't care what I will do to this world of yours! What I'm doing to it now. I am *destroying* it! I will destroy it, and then you will have nothing! You will be truly alone then. A stone atop a lifeless orb, drifting through space with no witness but the stars apathetic regard.

WOMAN (CONT)

I'll do it! These pitiful humans cannot stop me! The squabbling creatures have neither the strength nor the foresight. They'll beat at each other until I have consumed them all! Are you going to let that happen, *hero!*? Will you let them all die this time?

(She stops. Faces the statue, waiting. She grips and ungrrips her fists in frustration, but finally spits out...)

Very well. Then so let it be.

(The woman turns on her heel and strides out. Lights fade to black.)