Graphic Evangelism

The Mainstream Graphic Novel for Christian Evangelism

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Abstract

This thesis explores the use of mainstream graphic novels as a means of Christian evangelism. Though not exclusively Christian, the graphic novel, *The Beast Within*, will educate its target audience by using attractive illustrations, relatable issues, and understandable morals in a fictional, biblically inspired story. This thesis will include character designs, artwork, chapter summaries, and a single chapter of a self-written, self-illustrated graphic novel along with a short summary of Christian references and symbols. The novel will follow six half-human, half-animal warriors on their adventure to restore the balance of their world, which has been disrupted by a powerful enemy.
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Introduction

As recorded in Matthew 28:16-20, all Christians are commanded by Christ to
spread the Gospel to all corners of the earth. Many believers almost immediately equate
evangelism to Sunday morning services, church mission trips, or distribution of witty,
ever-popular salvation tracts; however, Jesus utilized other methods to teach His people,
such as telling simple stories and using familiar images and illustrations. Taking this into
account, evangelism should not simply be restricted to speaking and teaching – it is
expanded into art, literature, history, and other fields, which God expects us to use (Col.
3:17, Matt. 25:14-30). Ergo, a Christian designer’s purpose is to bring God glory through
his artwork and design, which is why the purpose of this thesis is to show the efficacy of
using art in evangelism.

In order to witness to an audience, one must understand it and find a medium it
will most likely respond to. In the last few decades, the general public has become
fascinated with the graphic novel, which has become increasingly popular due to the
release of several new comics-inspired films and video games.

Once thought as an elementary medium for the entertainment of younger readers,
the graphic novel has become more respected as their fans have increased in number and
diversity. Elizabeth M. Downey notes its expanding popularity in her article, “Graphic
Novels in Curriculum and Instruction Collections,” stating that ”the number of academic
libraries that carry graphic novels has increased.” She continues about how teachers and
educators have expanded its use in other realms, namely education, due to the text’s
enhancement by visual imagery, sequential art, and illustrated gestures. Some middle school curriculums have since used graphic novels to encourage disinclined readers. (181-182). Writers Thomas Juneau and Mira Sucharov even explore their use in teaching inter-national relations in their article, “Narratives in Pencil: Using Graphic Novels to Teach Israeli-Palestinian Relations” (172).

The specific purpose of this thesis is to combine the graphic novel’s use as an educational medium with God’s call to evangelize and present a imaginative, inspiring evangelism device in a graphic novel format. The proposed graphic novel, entitled The Beast Within, is inspired by fantasy and science fiction genre, taking place in Menagerie, a world inspired by ancient history. The Beast Within will revolve around six half-human, half-animal warriors appointed as champion protectors of their respective kingdoms. Opposing them is a dark spirit named Yakone and his magically-augmented minions who seek to overthrow the balance of Menagerie and claim it as their own. The characters and their exploits will mirror the stories of Old Testament figures such as David, Samson, Deborah, and others. The graphic novel will seek to evangelize to a mainstream audience and will better illustrate and apply abstract Christian truth and morals in a way they can enjoy and better understand.

Writing

Writing Theory

The graphic novel’s primary purpose is to entertain audiences of all backgrounds, using attractive and appropriate illustrations, understandable language, and applicable themes and conflicts. Secondarily, the novel will serve as a “seed” for evangelism without claiming to be exclusively Christian: using plot devices based on biblical
accounts as well as Christian morals and other concepts. Like other graphic novels, *The Beast Within* will primarily focus on artwork and dialogue between characters.

**Narrative Techniques**

*The Beast Within* will be told in first person through the inner dialogue of two main characters, Kurjak and Uzuri. The other four major characters of the story will narrate a chapter devoted to their backstories. Kurjak will convey more optimistic thoughts about his life, Uzuri will act and react negatively to the characters and events around her. As the characters are molded by the changing situations, their narrating tone of voice will also change. The differences between Kurjak and Uzuri’s narration will make the story more “reliable,” in a sense, showing two different points-of-view concerning other characters or events. Additionally, Kurjak’s ability to see into the memories of others will also allow readers to delve deeper into the backgrounds of the other characters without excessive dialogue by using flashbacks. Flashbacks, such as dreams or visions, will play a major part within the story by conveying why characters act the way they do.

**Narrative Strategy**

A major theme of *The Beast Within* is sight. The alternating narrators mentioned above would not only give the story reliability, but also strengthen the theme of sight and how characters see differently according to their origins. Changing events such as character deaths and introductions will reveal more about the characters through their reactions, such as the death of Uzuri’s father, or the introduction of Tadao. Though readers may find some of the differing narrating tones confusing or unrelatable, Kurjak’s
ability will also help establish an anchor or understanding of the differing moods as well as offer a more objective point of view.

Style

Being a graphic novel, *The Beast Within* will dwell more on illustrations and the layout of those illustrations rather than text. Writing and narration will be somewhat similar to stream-of-consciousness writing as readers will follow the reasoning and thought processes of different narrating characters. Speech bubbles will be more organized than normal graphic novels, since the fantasy is inspired by prehistoric fantasy rather than the superheroism of most comics.

Target Audience

*The Beast Within* will contain more mature and sensitive information, such as violence, rape, drug abuse, and self-harm. Though these actions will not be explicitly shown, they may be implied by dialogue or by cut scenes before the action takes place.

Though these are mature topics, the purpose of this novel is to reach a group of young people that have witnessed or experienced these social issues firsthand. The target audience will primarily consist of these young people as well as others that may have undergone such problems. As well as an evangelism device, *The Beast Within* will also serve as an appropriate alternative to other titles that glamorize such issues.

Novel Summary

The people of Menagerie were once a perfect race, free of hunger, disease, and imperfection. They were ruled over by the Great Spirit Ignirtog, who blessed them and gave them dominion over the world of Menagerie. Ignirtog and his creation were opposed by the malevolent spirit Yakone, who, by trickery, cursed the humans into becoming half-
human, half-animal hybrids, not only affecting their appearance but their instincts and souls as well. In response, Ignirtog sacrifices his status as a spirit to restore balance to his people and imprison Yakone within a mortal form.

A thousand years later, that balance is interrupted by the actions of the evil warrior Prasad, who conquers the icy kingdom of Kalt, killing its leader and declaring himself king. The shift in power disrupts the harmony of Menagerie and eventually begins affecting the other five nations, causing water pollution, famines, and aggressive behavior among wildlife. In response, a mysterious man named Tog appears to a warrior from each of the five realms to unite and reclaim their sister nation: Uzuri, a rogue lioness from the savannas of Jagala; Berwick, a fidgety bird-like archer from the forests of Coeden; Toro, a bull of a strongman from the deserts of Caluroso; Cerulean, a piscine sage from the waters of Ardus; and Tadao, a young, reptilian ninja from the mountains of Horakatsu. The key in Tog’s plan revolves around Kurjak, a blind, wolf-like exile who possesses the ability to “see” through the eyes and memories of others. While Prasad and his dark army seem more than enough for the six warriors, there may be an even greater figure plucking the strings of Menagerie’s discord.

Symbolism

*The Beast Within* not only focuses on the physical conflict but rather the internal struggles of the people of Menagerie. The people of Menagerie possess not only an inhuman appearance but also a bestial instinct as a result of Yakone’s curse, alluding to the sinful curse of mankind today. The main characters of *The Beast Within* are striving to regain their humanity, and as they interact more and reveal their origins, they begin to
understand and realize deeper faults. Though they try to regain their humanity on their own, each of them only finds redemption within Tog, the symbol of Jesus.

Kurjak’s character parallels to the biblical judge Jephthah, an outcast who later becomes chieftain of the Israelites. Kurjak embodies individuals who are branded useless or worthless by society. Kurjak then learns his identity as a worthy warrior with help from Uzuri and Tog.

Uzuri represents various women of the Bible such as Tamar and Dinah who were unclean within their society. However, like people who suffer similarly traumatic calamity, Uzuri harbors anger towards her people as well as the Great Spirit and turns her back on both; however, her situation helps her better relate and minister to Kurjak, representing how God can work even the most horrible circumstance into something useful and important.

Cerulean’s character is inspired by the figures Joseph and Deborah. Placed in a spirit Joseph in that her haughtiness creates a rift between him and his family, and only his slavery in another land gradually changes him; and Deborah, in that she tries to support a male leader rather than take leadership. Deborah also represents legalistic individuals within the church, as well as those who possess a “Pharisee-like mindset,” valuing tradition and law over forgiveness and love for others.

Toro is the epitome of Samson, who relished in his God-given abilities rather than used them for God’s glory. Toro also represents Christians who seek the attention and admiration of the world rather than the glory of God. As Toro observes the effectiveness of the team as a whole, he grows humility and respect for each member, even the young Tadao.
Tadao symbolizes Biblical characters that suffered persecution for their youth such as David, Joash, and Josiah. In their youth, these characters remained faithful to God and waited patiently to rise to rule. Tadao represents the ideal Christian, as well as a Christian who should not be looked down on for his youth.

Berwick represents the struggle of cowardice and draws inspiration Old Testament figures like Gideon, Moses, and Barak. Berwick’s past verbal and physical abuse from his father rattles his confidence in himself. He shies away from confrontation, and maintains an underdog role with Cerulean, much like the relationship between Barak and Cerulean.

Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

Chapter 1

Kurjak dreams of when Prasad and his army conquered Kalt ten years ago. The nightmare shows that Prasad had intended to kill Kurjak, but Kurjak’s father Shekkar intercepts. With his dying words, Shekkar utters an old enchantment that magically protects his son from Prasad’s influence. Kurjak wakes up from the nightmare alone in a cave with his hunting dog Zrvta.

Chapter 2

In the pride lands of Jagala, Uzuri begins to find strange new effects from the shift of Kalt’s power, noting the salty taste of the Asha River, Jagala’s main water source. An encounter with two Jagalan tribesmen and her brother Akeelan reveals that Uzuri exiled herself from the tribe a year ago for reasons not very clear and that her father King Abdu has died. Uzuri retreats to her cave to find a strange old man with a rather adventurous invitation.
Chapter 3

Kurjak takes Zrvta out to hunt and gather supplies for his family back in Kalt. Though blind, Kurjak navigates by using his telepathic ability to see through the eyes of others, a side effect of the zinvši enchantment. While Kurjka hunts with Zrvta, more flashbacks reveal that Prasad blinded and marked Kurjak as an outcast since the zinvši blessing prevented Prasad from killing him directly.

Chapter 4

At Laban, the center of Menagerie, Uzuri meets three of the other warriors Tog spoke of: Toro, Tadao, and Cerulean. They find that Laban’s Spring, the water source for all Menagerie has been contaminated. While Toro and Cerulean clash about who should lead the team, a dark, mysterious figure watches from the treetops, studying them.

Chapter 5

Kurjak secretly meets with his family: Aga, his mother and now a concubine of Prasad; Nakome, his younger sister; and Ko, his younger brother by Prasad. He leaves them, but before Kurjak can escape into the outskirts of Kalt, he is chased by two Kaltan foot-soldiers. The soldiers underestimate him for his blindness, which allows Kurjak to overpower both of them using Zrvta and both of the soldiers as his eyes.

Chapter 6

As they near Kalt, the team is attacked by three magically-enhanced monsters. As the four of them are about to be overpowered, the hooded figure intervenes and helps them subdue the monsters. The figure, revealing himself as a twelve-year-old warrior named Tadao, reveals that the monsters are normally peaceful creatures, but the force that
has been changing the climate has also changed their nature and instincts, making them more violent.

Chapter 7

After taking the armor and supplies from the foot-soldiers, a snowstorm begins, and Kurjak and Zrvta seek shelter with an old hermit woman named Sidna. Sidna reveals that she has observed Kurjak scaling the walls and wishes to employ this ability to kill Prasad. Kurjak feels uneasy about Sidna, but nevertheless takes the enchanted dagger she offers to kill Prasad.

Chapter 8

Upon reaching the edge of Kalt, the team tries to gather resources for shelter from the storm, whereupon Tog appears to them again asking them to seek out “a warrior who sees with no eyes of his own.” When they gather together around a fire, Toro suggests each of them telling their past, but before Uzuri can reveal her background, the group is ambushed by a brigade of Kalt soldiers.

Chapter 9

Kurjak wonders about Sidna’s credibility, as well as whether he should kill Prasad. While studying the dagger, Tog appears again and advises him to throw away the dagger: though powerful, the dagger contains powerful magic that may have disastrous effects if used. Tog then points him toward the edge of the forest, telling him that allies from the other nations are coming to aid him in reclaiming Kalt.

Chapter 10

The team subdues the soldiers and begins studying the deformed appearance and increased size. Cerulean believes that they have been altered by a dark art called Ledan
magic, which involves the drinking of a person's blood to gain that person's abilities.

Using the uniforms of the foot-soldiers, Uzuri and Tadao conspire to infiltrate Kalt.

Chapter 11

Kurjak ponders about throwing the dagger off a cliff, remembering the moment Prasad scarred his right eye and blinded him. Kurjak decides to keep the dagger, and when he returns to the cave, he senses the presence of three outsiders nearby and begins to spy on them. After hearing that they sent spies into the city, he leaves to follow them. Kurjak takes the dagger from Sidna and the armor from the soldiers he defeated and pursues Uzuri and Tadao.

Chapter 12

Uzuri and Tadao infiltrate Kalt and map out the transformed city within it, noting that instead of tents, vast contraction, smoke, and heat plague the small village. The two of them accidentally stumble into the throne room, where an aged, obese Prasad sits. Prasad notices their strange scents and eventually sees through their disguise. Uzuri and Tadao escape the throne room, but before they can escape the city, Prasad shouts an incantation that surrounds the city.

Chapter 13

Just as Kurjak enters the city, he turns to see the entrance covered in a thick forest of icicle thorns, trapping everyone inside. Using his powers to navigate, Kurjak reads the thoughts of Uzuri and Tadao and recognizes them as the spies. He leads the two of them to safety in his family’s home.

Chapter 14
Guards sweep the area looking for the two spies, and Kurjak hides Uzuri and Tadao in a secret compartment on the roof. When the guards leave, Kurjak tells them of what's been happening in Kalt, as well as his past. Uzuri's heart begins to soften toward Kurjak and their mission. When Aga and the children return home, Ko is frightened by Tadao’s appearance and secretly runs off to inform his father, Prasad.

**Chapter 15**

That night as everyone sleeps, Kurjak takes Uzuri to go find and kill Prasad. Kurjak goes on to explain his powers to her and how he got them. After finding Prasad’s master bedroom empty, the two of them are ambushed by guards and escorted to Prasad in his throne room.

**Chapter 16**

Prasad threatens Kurjak's family, bringing his mother and sister into the room, to which Kurjak reacts violently. When Prasad threatens to kill Aga, Kurjak violently lashes out with his powers, stunning everyone in the room and stabbing Prasad in the chest with the enchanted dagger. Rather than killing him, the dagger rather reduces him to a disheveled man and releases the magic that strengthened him and his soldiers.

**Chapter 17**

At the edge of Kalt, Berwick and Cerulean discuss the scars on Berwick’s arms. Berwick continues to discuss his cowardice as well as his father’s disappointment in him, while Cerulean tells her origin story as well. Berwick then sees the magic of Prasad leaving Kalt, as well as Kurjak's dog Zrvta running towards them, alerting the team to trouble.

**Chapter 18**
Back in Kalt, Prasad reveals that the released magic belonged to Yakone himself, and that the magic has now returned Yakone to his immortal form. Kurjak’s sight abilities begin fluctuating, and frightened, he runs out and hides away in an abandoned, run down tent that used to be his father’s.

Chapter 19

After freeing Tadao and asking him to gather Kalt warriors to their side, Uzuri pursues Kurjak. When she finds him, he threatens her and demands her to leave, but Uzuri stays and proceeds to tell him her story. She pulls out the mask from her father and gives it to Kurjak, telling him that the mask has a similar ability to his powers, in that the wearer can see the spiritual realm as well as spiritual creatures. The mask itself was created by the first king of Jagala, whose self-sacrifice saved Jagala from an enemy king. Uzuri tells him that the only reason the mask’s power works is because it was sealed with sacrificial blood, the zinvši magic and reasons that Kurjak acting out of hate disrupted the blessing he was given by his father.

Chapter 20

Berwick, Toro, and Cerulean follow Zrvta to the city of Kalt, but they are intercepted by two giant demon eels that surge from beneath the ice. The team barely subdues the two creatures, but Zrvta is gravely injured. Cerulean then uses her powers to propel the team toward Kalt before Yakone arrives.

Chapter 21

Tadao finds Kurjak and Uzuri and tells them that Yakone is about to arrive. Cerulean blasts through a wall of Kalt using her powers and unites the team. Kurjak mourns over the loss of Zrvta, then reveals to the others that his powers are fading. The
old woman Sidna approaches them, thanking Kurjak for using the dagger.

Chapter 22

Kurjak charges toward Sidna, but she sheds her form to reveal Yakone. Using his returned spirit powers, he summons demon creatures to surround them. As they take them on, Kurjak prays, asking Ignirtog to bless him one more time to right the things he has done wrong.

Chapter 23

As Cerulean, Toro, and Berwick gather warriors to fight the creatures, Uzuri believes the mask can help them fight Yakone. She finds Kurjak and gives him the mask, telling him that while wearing it, he can see and harm Yakone in his spiritual form. As Uzuri turns to aid the others, she asks for Ignirtog’s blessing over Kurjak. Uzuri calls for the others to gather around Kurjak and protect him from the demon creatures.

Chapter 24

Kurjak battles Yakone alone, with Yakone mocking his powerlessness against an almighty spirit. Kurjak still fights, but despite the power of the mask, he is overwhelmingly outmatched. However, both Kurjak and Yakone are startled to hear a third voice among them.

Chapter 25

The team is clearly outnumbered, but each warrior holds his ground against the creatures. Cerulean employs her water powers to hold the eel creatures at bay, while Berwick kills Prasad with an arrow before he can attack Uzuri. And injured Toro asks Tadao to lead him to the edge of the wall, where he collapses a section of the wall onto
the rest of the Kaltan army. A giant eel then strikes Tadao as he tries to save Ko and Aga from another rampaging minion.

Chapter 26

Kurjak looks to see the third figure, Tog, who reveals himself as Kurjak’s ally. The two fight together, with Tog sacrificing himself for Kurjak in the same way Shekkar sacrificed himself years earlier. Tog tells Kurjak to put Tog’s blood on the blade, and to strike Yakone with it, since innocent blood will harm him. With one strike, Kurjak uses the blade to strike Yakone. Before taking off the mask, Kurjak sees Tog, restored to his status as a spirit, as Tog reveals that sacrificing himself for Kurjak completed the prophecy and defeated the curse, as innocent blood was shed for another.

Chapter 27

Kurjak returns to find Toro holding a dying Tadao. As Tadao dies, Kurjak promises that in the same way Tadao aided Kalt, he will go and retake Horakatsu in Tadao’s name. The other team members agree, and Tadao dies, stating that he has never been more proud and more at peace. Tog then arrives to take Tadao up to heaven, and Tog offers Kurjak's full sight back. Kurjak refuses, wanting to help people with his gift.

Epilogue

Five years later, the team gathers in Horakatsu at Master Yong's coronation. Uzuri reveals that restoring balance to Menagerie has changed each member of the team: Kurjak regains his citizenship in Kalt and functions as Kalt’s doctor; Uzuri’s role in reclaiming Kalt wiped her past clean in the sights of Jagalans, reinstating her as princess and later Queen; Cerulean was accepted as a respected scholar of Ardus, Toro began using his strength to rebuild Kalt, and then Caluroso; while Berwick now trains an army
of archers as a respected weapon of choice. Master Yong erects a statue of Tadao for commemoration. In the Blacklands, Yakone watches the event and plots his revenge.

**Sample Chapter**

The following excerpt will be storyboarded and then illustrated in a graphic novel format (See Appendices H and I):

(A band of shadowy figures appear from the dark, revealing first one, then several pairs of glowing red eyes, which all fixate on the distant village of Kalt surrounded by a wall of ice. The figures gather together to form a giant herd of men with the claws and heads of wolves. Growling and snarling, they begin charging on all fours across a snowy landscape. They follow the leader of the pack— a giant werewolf-like creature with a mark across his left eye. After reaching the foot of the wall, the leader begins to dig his claws into the wall and scale the sides, leading several by his side. Organizing two lines of wolfmen on either side of them, the two lines begin scaling and digging into the ice wall, creating two weak indents in the ice to make it easy to knock down. The leader of the pack reaches the top of the wall, subduing the guards and looking down upon the village inside.)

(Within the walls is a system of igloos and tents made of animal skins, each group surrounding a large fire pit. The people within the village also possess lupine features, but with bright blue eyes and more human looking faces. A man and his pregnant wife look over their son, playing with other Kaltan children. They are all alarmed by a howl from the top of the walls. The man grabs his weapons and tells his family to remain hidden inside)

Shekka: “Aga, grab Kurjak and get inside. NOW!”
(Shekkar turns and rushes to the walls, uniting with other Kaltan warriors. Aga runs around the fire, screaming for her son Kurjak.)

Aga: “Kurjak! Kurjak, where are you!?”

(Kurjak runs with several other children, trying to find his father. He begins to cry and scream.)

Kurjak: “Papa! Papa!”

(Kurjak looks up at the top of the wall as he hears a loud cracking noise. Two large cracks begin to appear on the ice wall and ripple down. As Kurjak, Shekkar, and Aga look on with horror, the large section of broken ice proceeds to topple, crushing several men and tents beneath it. The leader of the enemy pack rides the toppling wall on the way down, landing just in front of Shekkar. Kurjak hides behind a cart of supplies, gazing at the giant figure.)

Prasad: “Remember me, Pup?”

Shekkar: “Prasad? What… what happened to you? What is the meaning of all this?”

Prasad: “It’s time to reclaim my birthright.”

(Prasad lunges toward Shekkar, and the two begin to fight. The woman continues to search for Kurjak, repeatedly screaming his name. Another Kalt woman grabs Aga’s arm and tells her to take cover. Kurjak, horrified, continues to watch his father fight Prasad, and Shekkkar is pinned to the ground by Prasad.)

Prasad: “It seems that time within Kalt has dampered your fighting skills.”

Shekkar: “It seems that nature hasn’t been kind to your appearance.”

(Shekkar kneels him in the gut and recovers).
Prasad: “Well brother, sacrifices have to be made. And now, I am more powerful than ever! More powerful than you and Father! And now, Kalt will be mine!”

Shekkar: “You were never good with self-control, Prasad. That is why Father made me leader here.”

Prasad: “Then your reign will be a short one, brother!”

(Prasad lunges at Shekkar again, but Shekkar dodges, sending Prasad to knock over the crate Kurjak hides behind. Kurjak shrieks and widens his eyes as Prasad’s face meets his. Prasad grins at Kurjak.)

Prasad: “Why Shekkar, brother. You never told me you had a son.”

(Prasad claws at Kurjak, who jumps away. Prasad claws again, grabbing Kurjak by the scruff of the neck.)

Prasad: “He has your scent.”

(Shekkar looks in horror as he recognizes his son. Kurjak screams for his father.)

Prasad: “And he smells delicious.”


Prasad: “I bet he and his mother will make a nice victory feast after I kill you.”

(Shekkar yells and flings his harpoon at Prasad’s arm, releasing Kurjak from Prasad’s grip. Kurjak begins to run, but Prasad chases after him. Shekkar jumps onto Prasad’s back and sinks his claws into Prasad’s back. Prasad roars.)

Shekkar: “Kurjak! Run to your mother now!”

Prasad: “But Shekkar, poor Kurjak hasn’t had quality time with his uncle Prasad.”

(Prasad rolls onto his back, crushing Shekkar beneath him.)

Prasad: “But I guess we’ll have to conclude our little reunion first.”
(Prasad raises an arm to strike Shekkar, but a snowball hits his face. Prasad looks over to see Kurjak, with another snowball in hand.)

Kurjak: “Let go of my papa!”

Shekkar: “That’s my boy.”

(As Prasad shakes off the snow from his face, Shekkar grabs a nearby harpoon and stabs Prasad’s left eye. As Prasad reels back in pain, Shekkar runs and scoops Kurjak in his arms, running through the chaos to return Kurjak to his mother. Prasad recovers and begins to chase after the two. Shekkar tries to evade Prasad’s attacks, but Prasad manages to pin knock him over and Kurjak is knocked against a tent. As Shekkar is incapacitated, he looks up into Kurjak’s eyes, and begins to whisper.)

Shekkar: “You delight in those who fear you, who put their hope in your unfailing love. You are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. Your love reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.”

(Prasad looks down and prepares to strike the finishing blow. Shekkar holds Kurjak’s gaze and sheds a tear.)

Shekkar: “Ignirtog, you have my son.”

(Kurjak screams, paneling to a teenaged Kurjak who frightfully awakens from his sleep. The older Kurjak has a large scar across his right eye, and the appearance of his eyes suggests that he is blind. Alone in a dark cave, Kurjak turns in response to the nuzzling of a white dog beside him. Kurjak embraces the dog’s neck, whispering to himself.)

Kujrak: “It was just another nightmare Zrvta. I’m fine. I’m fine…”
(Kurjak closes his eyes then opens them again, and Zrvta begins licking the tears away.)

Kurjak: “Papa…”

(The scene switches to the sleeping eyes of a young woman, lying in a cave. She slowly opens her eyes, revealing a peaking sunrise from the mouth of a cave. Sitting up, she gazes at the sunrise over the savannah, grabbing her spear and a string of crescent blades.)

Uzuri: “Breakfast.”

(Uzuri scouts the savannah periodically browsing the city on the other side of the river she follows. She begins thinking to herself of how the atmosphere of Jagala has changed.)

Uzuri: Jagalan hunters won’t depart for another hour. Hopefully this sunrise will be luckier than the last fifty. But who’s fooling who? Ever since I left those Jagalan jackals, game has been cruel. Six moons ago, I could have caught enough prey for a feast before those jackals put their belts on. But whatever this is: drought, famine— it tests even my abilities.

(Uzuri bends down toward the river and scoops up a handful of water. She winces and spits the water out).

Uzuri: “Son of Akkela!”

Uzuri: Salt?! Now where am I supposed to get water? Asha was the only water source left in Jagala.

(Uzuri looks up to spot two grazing gazelle-type creatures. Licking her lips, she crouches low and takes shelter by a bush.)
Uzuri: Gemsbok. Scrawny little runts, unfortunately; yet still bigger than the ones I've seen. Alright Uzuri, get your tail up. Remember to keep air current upwind- they will smell you. Keep low…still…NOW!

(Uzuri charges outward, launching her spear at the nearest of the two gemsbok. The spear is intercepted by an arrow from above, with two other arrows striking down the two gemsbok calves. Uzuri prepare a fighting stance as she looks up two three shadowed figures.)

Ashanti: “Why Uzuri, you seem to have lost your touch. Six moons ago you could have downed the prey and disarmed the other hunter with a flick of your tail. I guess the life of an exile life doesn’t pay off.”

(The female hunter approaches Uzuri, with two male hunters accompanying her. One of the males avoids her gaze and goes to prepare the calves for transport. Uzuri keeps her fighting stance, squinting her eyes at the three warriors.)

Uzuri: Ashanti…if that she-devil thinks those two males will stop me from clawing her face off…

(Uzuri relaxes when she notices the other male who returns from packaging the Gemsbok calves.)

Uzuri: Akelan. It’s been so long since I’ve seen him…So they’ve even forced princes to hunt. The famine really has gotten bad.)

Uzuri: “Ashanti. I feel honored that Jagalan backbiters still grace me with their presence. To what do I have the honor?”

Ashanti: “Six moons and you still haven’t lost your pluck? Who knew a whore could make it this long on her own?”
(Uzuri lunges forward and strikes Ashanti in the throat, pinning her to the ground.)

Uzuri: *Even exile wasn’t enough to forget. I would never escape that title. The persecution. The hurt… Pelting Ashanti’s face isn’t going to heal my wounds… but it does provide some satisfaction.*

Uzuri: “I dare you to say that again once I rip off your tail and strangle you with it!”

Akelan: “Uzuri!”

(The other male puts his spear against Uzuri’s neck, but Akelan grabs Uzuri from behind before the male can attack. Uzuri struggles from Akelan’s grip, but keeps her murderous expression aimed at Ashanti.)

Ashanti: “The wild has changed you more than I thought. Before long, you’ll become as mindless as the rest of those wild jackals. And as a jackal, we expect you to keep your distance from Jagalan hunting grounds. We’ve had to expand them since you’ve left.”

Uzuri: “Perhaps if you were better hunters, you wouldn’t have to.”

Ashanti: “The hunt has been just fine as far as you’re concerned. Cross borders again, and I’ll kill you.”

Uzuri: *Your brilliant display of fighting skill suggests otherwise.*

(The three hunters begin to leave, but Akelan stops to turn around, holding out the cut of the antelope’s thigh.)

Akelan: “You could come back. We always need good hunters, and no matter what Ashanti says, you were the best.”
Uzuri: “Jagala is considering taking back a nymphomaniac? You are desperate.”

Akelan: “Uzuri regardless of what you think, some of us still care for you.”

Uzuri: “That’s not what I remember.”

(Uzuri takes the Gemsbok meat and throws it to the ground, looking up angrily, then turning to leave.)

Akelan: “Uzuri, Abdu… father is dead… I’m sorry.”

(Uzuri freezes and her eyes grow sad.)

Uzuri: “How?”

Akelan: “He was very weak already. After you left, he had very little to live for.”

(Uzuri turns around to meet Akelan’s gaze, trying to keep her composure).

Uzuri: “Thank you for telling me, Akelan. Kwaheri.”

Uzuri: You have to hold yourself together, Uzuri. Remember, you have to show them you can fend for yourself. You are strong. You are unbreakable.

Akelan: “Karibu, Uzuri.”

(As Akelan turns to leave, Uzuri picks up the meat she threw to the ground.)

Uzuri: “Who’s fooling who, Uzuri?”

(Uzuri sits on top of a tree, gazing over the city of Jagala in the sunset.)

Uzuri: “Babangu… father… I’m sorry. You and Akelan still loved me, I know.

But I couldn’t stay. I could hunt. I could fight. But I couldn’t face the shame. I couldn’t.”

(Uzuri looks up quickly, sniffing the air, then looks around.

Uzuri: “Dinner? Someone’s cooking…”

(Out of curiosity, she tracks the smell to the mouth of her cave. She stands outside, sniffing the air to make sure what the smell is.)
Uzuri: *Six moons ago, I would consider it humiliating to steal a jackal’s prey, but desperate times... Besides, they’re in my cave. And as far as I’m concerned, whatever is in my home is mine.*

(Uzuri readies two of her crescent blades. But before charging in she pauses.)

Uzuri: *But what if there’s more than one? Maybe if I surprise whoever it is, I might be able to take on two.*

Tog: “Is that Uzuri I smell? Abdu’s daughter?”

(Uzuri looks bewildered.)

Tog: “That old dirty smell of baboon fur and old bone weaponry?”

(Uzuri peeks in to see the man, cooking meat at a fire. The cave has several animal furs hanging along the walls and placed on the floor like mats. Tog motions for Uzuri to come and sit. Uzuri inches forward, firmly gripping her blades and aiming them at the stranger.)

Tog: “The daughter of Abdu! You’ve grown so much since I last saw you, considering the last time I saw you weren’t really born yet … As you can see I did some redecorating. The cave looked a little plain for an exiled princess, so I spiced it up with some of my old furs. Started dinner while you were gone, hope you don’t mind.”

Uzuri: *Seems a few horns short of a rhino. Normally I would chase you out, but you’ve got me intrigued.*

Uzuri: “Why are you here? Who are you? *How do you know my name?*”

Tog: “Questions, questions, questions! Back in my day, strangers would introduce each other without aiming sharp things at each other.”

Uzuri: “Times change. Now who are you?”
Tog: "I suppose it is rude of me. My name is Tog."

Uzuri: *Your mother must not have been the creative sort.*

Tog: “Plain and boring I know, but it’s a lot easier to say than my real name. And it’s just fun. Probably a lot easier to read too. *Tog.* Plain and simple.”

Uzuri: “What are you doing here?”

Tog: “I had a little business with your father. Two decades ago, when the sorceress Wangari attacked Jagala, tried to conquer Jagala, Abdu asked me to command his infantry. We fought side by side at the front line.”

Uzuri: "So you did know him…”

Tog: “Yes. He was a great man. A great warrior... A great king.”

Uzuri: *Great father, too.*

Tog: “Before we parted ways, Abdu entrusted me with a possession of his. He wanted me to keep it hidden from those who would wish to use it for evil. I wasn't supposed to give it to you until you turned eighteen, but considering the circumstances, I feel you should have it now.”

(Tog pulls out something from the pouch beside him. He begins to unwrap it, revealing a mask.)

Tog: “The Mask of Behndari”

Uzuri: “What's so special about it?”

Tog: “The wood was painted with the blood of the Great Spirit. Whoever wears the mask can see and harm both visible and invisible beings.

Uzuri: “And what would you have me do with it? Unless wearing that mask and prancing around a fire can bring rain and prey to Jagala, it seems pretty useless.”
Tog: “This was your father’s. And now it is yours. It was your father’s wish to have it given to you. You were the eldest child. It was your birthright.”

Uzuri: *He wants something.*

Tog: “This mask is a gift. No strings attached…”

Uzuri: *But?*

Tog: “No buts.”

(Uzuri seems mildly surprised.)

Tog: “However... I do ask a favor of you.”

Uzuri: *Should’ve seen that coming.*

Tog: “You may have heard the rumors about Kalt. They are true. Kalt’s siege is why the harmony of Menagerie has been disrupted. As long as Kalt remains under an evil power, Menagerie will disintegrate into desolation. I need warriors. And I need help.”

Uzuri: *Sounds like fun. It beats lounging around this jackal-nest. But I am rather curious...*

Uzuri: “Why me?”

Tog: “Uzuri, I knew your father, and though you and I haven’t met before, I trust you.”

Uzuri: “You would trust a whore?”

Tog: “I trust the daughter of a great warrior. I trust a formidable huntress. You can't let others define you just by your past mistakes, Uzuri. There's more to you than that.”
Uzuri: “Those past mistakes were enough for my people to exile me. They will never see me differently. Maybe being the king’s daughter or the greatest huntress will never be enough. I will never be enough.”

Tog: “You’re right. You need to be more. I need you to be more. And you can't change anything about yourself unless you leave this dingy cave and prove your people wrong.”

Uzuri: I’m probably going to regret this...

Uzuri: “Alright Tog, what would you have the king’s daughter and Jagala’s greatest huntress do?”

**Conclusion**

*The Beast Within* is not designed to be a Christian graphic novel; it is a Christian-inspired novel. It is meant to be an aesthetically pleasing piece on the surface but also a piece that depicts biblical truths that are easy for an audience with no Christian background to understand and enjoy. The symbolic figures of Tog and Yakone more concretely establish representations of Jesus and Satan, respectively, while Kurjak, Uzuri, and other warriors reflect relatable role models to non-Christian readers.

**Marketing Plan**

After the completion of *The Beast Within*, I plan to patent the rights to the characters with the United States Patent Office (USPTO) and register the manuscript via a writer’s guild. After the patent process is complete the story is registered, the designs and manuscript would then be sent a reliable and respected agent in the comics industry. If the agent finds potential in the piece, he will distribute it to several different comics publishers. The credibility of the agent will give the work a better chance for publication
than submitting the designs and story alone. The manuscripts will hopefully be distributed to mainstream comic book publishers such as *DC Comics* to publish the title in one of their smaller branches such as *Wildstorm* or *Vertigo Comics*. Publishing *The Beast Within* underneath a mainstream title liked *DC* or *Marvel Comics* will garner a larger audience than selling it under Christian publishers, as well as better reach the target audience.

Many Christian graphic novels similar to *The Beast Within* have tried to self-publish their titles, which will serve as a backup plan if publishers reject the graphic novel proposal. In her article “Biblical Superheroes,” Stacy Gilliam quotes producer Michael Davis, who advises writers and illustrators who wish to self-publish graphic novels to also attend conventions like Comic-Con and consulting with retailers about popular trends. According to Davis, graphic novels require “around $6,000 to 8,000 to publish a ‘decent’ 32-page book,” as well as other expenses such as illustration and networking (50).

Another approach would be to convert *The Beast Within* into an animated web comic. Darren Wershler recounts in “Digital Comics, Circulation, and the Importance of Being Eric Sluis” of the web comic’s popularity ever since *Marvel Comics* uploaded some of their titles onto the Internet in 1996. Since their creation, web comics have become better-developed and enhanced with animated text and sound (131). Other than illustration expenses, converting *The Beast Within* could be a more affordable way to self-publish the title and reach the target audience.

**Marketability**
The majority of today’s generation holds a deep love for adventure and fantasy, but they still value elements of realism or tragedy. Several recent literary successes such as *Harry Potter*, *The Twilight Saga*, and *The Hunger Games* have proven popular among teenagers because they contain fantasy and realistic elements, namely characters that have tribulation thrust upon them and portray realistic emotional response. Though seemingly juvenile, animation and cartoons such as *Adventure Time* or *Avatar: The Last Airbender* have also proved popular among teenagers and young adults for the humor and their in-depth storylines and character development. The realism within the characters and the realistic events within the plots attract teenagers and young adults that are struggling with similar circumstances.

While *The Beast Within* is inspired by biblical figures and morals, it is not an explicitly Christian graphic novel. According her article “Religious Comics in the Book Trade,” Juli Cragg explains that Christian graphic novels are only distributed in the children’s section of Christian bookstores, with bookstores like Barnes & Noble hesitating to distribute such a new and specific genre (82). However, Cragg notes the commercial success of Doug TenNapel’s *Creature Tech*, a graphic novel that encompasses Christian ideals, even citing a secular critic’s positive review of the work (84). *The Beast Within* is essentially the same principle, wanting to advertise the same Gospel message in a more attractive and contemporary style to target today’s leaders.
Works Cited


Downey, Elizabeth M. "Graphic Novels in Curriculum and Instruction Collections."


Appendix A
Appendix B

BERWICK

My name is Berwick, and I hail from Coeden, the forested realm of Menagena. As the son of a military captain, I was expected to follow in my father’s footsteps as a swordsman and military strategist; however, my preference for the bow and arrow and other range combat weapons over “manly” swordsmanship branded me as a coward. Though I continued as a military archer, I was never quite good enough for my father. However, I found redemption in an invitation from Tog, who asked me and four other Menagrans to find a warrior “who sees with no eyes of his own” in order to restore order to Menagena.
TADAO

I'm Tadao, and I come from the mountains of Horakatsu. Though I was born the son of a king, I was orphaned and banished from the palace by my grandmother, Queen Dairyu, at the age of eight. Though terrified and confused, I was taken in by a military commander named Master Yong who raised and trained me to become a ninja warrior.

Because I'm Horakizwan, I can spit poison and heal really fast, and I can do a really cool trick with my 10-foot tongue. My ninja training has heightened my already formidable agility and speed. I can also use pretty much anything as a weapon: eskrima sticks, blades, daggers, a fighting staff, you name it! People tend to underestimate me because of my age, though I'm a lot smarter than I look.
I'm Uzuri, and I'm an outcast from the savannas of Jagala. I used to be royalty— I used to be the region's most accomplished huntress, but all that didn't matter after I was raped, when my family and people saw me as "unclean" and unworthy of the throne. After much persecution, I exiled myself from Jagala and learned to survive on my own.

As a Jagalen, I have enhanced agility, speed, and sense of balance, as well as a prehensile tail and razor-sharp claws. After my father's death, I came to possess my father's ceremonial mask, which allows me to see invisible objects or dark spirits.
TORO

I am Toro, the renowned champion and monster slayer of Caluroso, the desert region of Menagerie. I have been fighting monsters and other rival warriors all of my life, but the last few years of pride and recklessness put my people in harm’s way, forcing my king to send me to the boring, predictable labor in the mills. Like all Calurosans, I possess great strength and durability, as well as five years of monster tracking and fighting experience.
CERULEAN

I am Cerulean, and I hail from Ardus, the underwater realm of Menagerie. I served as hand-maiden to Queen Selacia. Because I hailed from a poor background, I vigorously studied Ardan history, ethics, and philosophy to gain the respect of my peers, though my attempts seemed in vain. Like other Ardans, I am amphibious, able to breathe underwater and swim at great speeds. My physiology also grants the ability to emit and interpret sonar waves, camouflage my appearance, and control the tentacles of my “hair.” I also possess the bracelets of Voltumus, which allow me to manipulate water.
Appendix G

KURJAK

My name is Kurjak, and I live in the icy realms of Menagerie called Kalt. When I turned eight, Kalt was conquered by an evil being named Prasad, disrupting the balance of power in Menagerie. The new leadership forced all handicapped natives to be branded across their right eye and exiled to the outskirts of Kalt to die. Though blind, my dying father used an ancient blessing that allowed me to telepathically see through the eyes of others. In addition to this power, I also possess heightened physical abilities, as well as an extremely keen sense of smell. I travel with my canine companion, Zrva, who also serves as my guide.
YOU DELIGHT IN THOSE WHO FEAR YOU, WHO PUT THEIR HOPE IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE. YOU ARE FORGIVING AND GOOD, ABUNDING IN LOVE TO ALL WHO CALL TO YOU. YOUR LOVE REACHES TO THE HEAVENS, YOUR FAITHFULNESS TO THE SKIES. LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON YOUR SERVANT; SAVE ME IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE.

IGNIRTOG,
YOU HAVE MY SON.
Appendix I