

effect, and the creature tore the weapon free and tossed it aside.

It was then that more cries rang out from the rear of the group, rung from the throats of my men. I knew it meant that the other sentinels had reached them, and that they were fighting in vain with weapons that were useless against their foes. Zadeshkem's belief had proved true—only the stone sword, the Sacred Destroyer, could harm these loathsome things.

I realized our one chance for survival in that instant; slim though it was, we had nothing more. I launched myself into the two creatures in front of us with an order of, "Follow me!" Slashing back and forth, striving to keep just out of reach of their sweeping arms, I began to drive the monstrous things back. After the first few deep gashes they had sustained, the sentinels actually seemed to sense the danger that the razor-honed stone posed to their otherwise impervious bodies, and they began to unwillingly retreat before my onslaught. Within a minute I had driven them passed the openings through which they had come, all the while the tunnel reverberating with the cries of my frantic men and of my own howls of fury as I struck again and again.

"Into the passage!" I commanded, knowing full well that in so doing they all might charge into yet more jeopardy rather than safety. It was a slim and hazardous chance. Everyone scrambled into the left-side entrance while I held the guardians at bay. Gajot's body was left to remain where it lay upon the floor, unmoving. Lastly were Sageebna and Zadeshkem, who remained behind me as I backed into the branching tunnel and the four creatures closed in upon us.

"What now, woman?!" I bellowed. "What of the aid of your devil-gods?!"

"*Rahnekallja!*" it was Mobaca's voice calling out now, "this passage ends in a solid wall! There is no way out!"

*Don't miss the full adventure of "Child of Ocean, Child of Storm" by James Stuart Anderson, appearing only in the Spring 2019 issue of Startling Visions Magazine.*