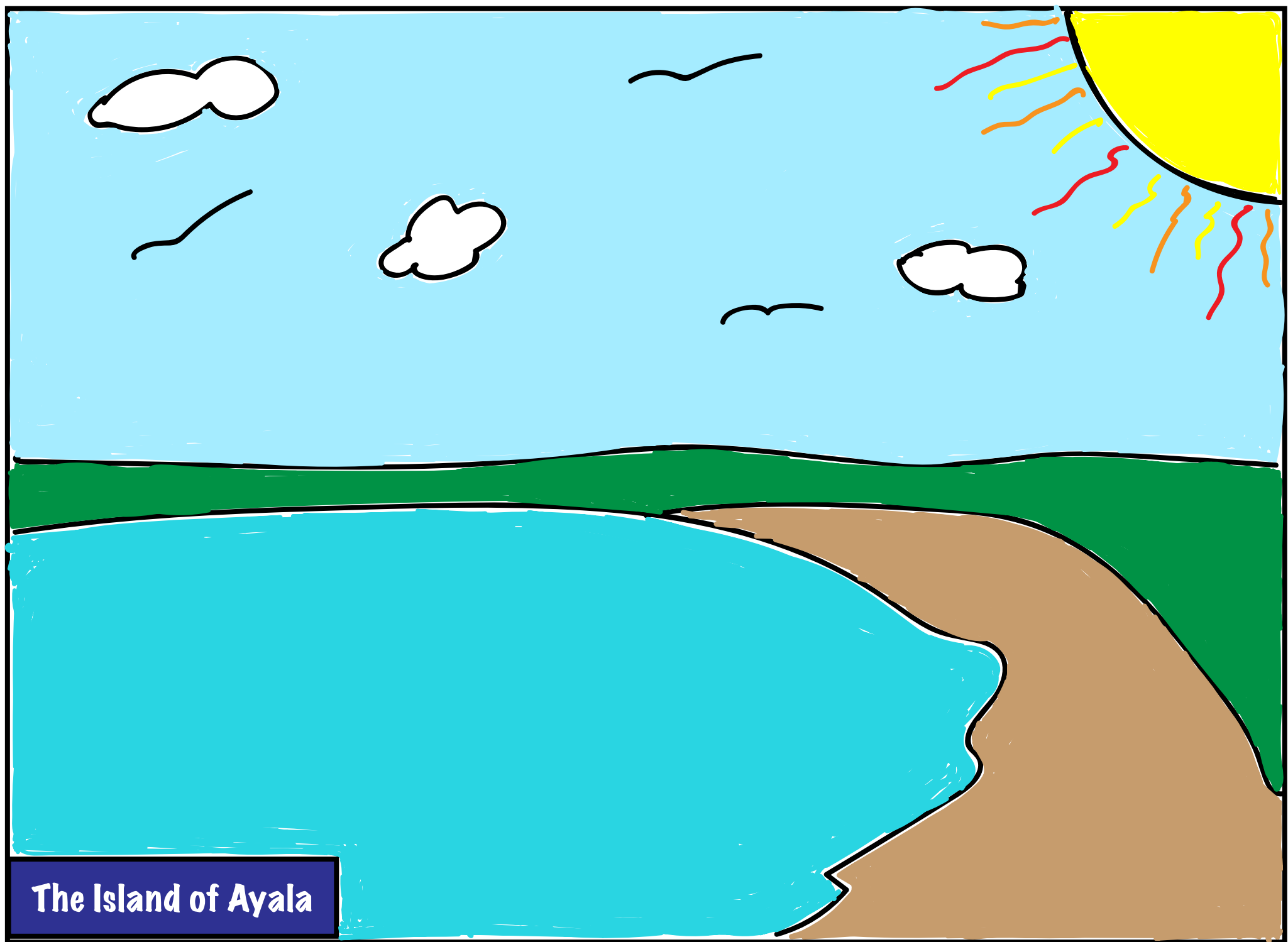


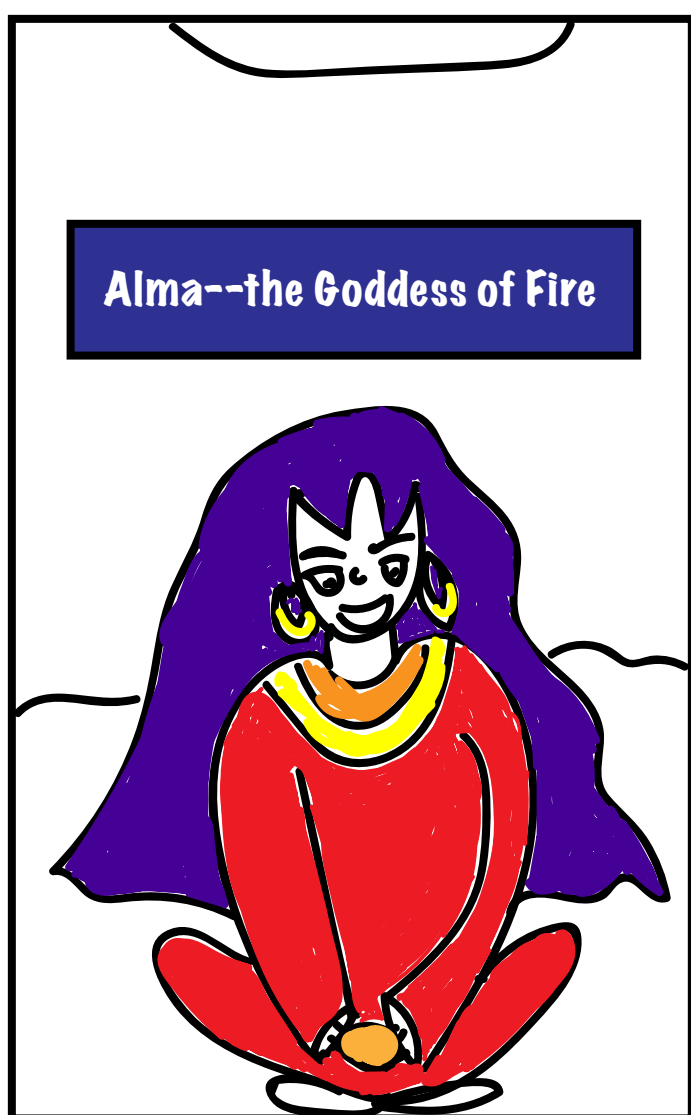
Firestorm

**By:
Katrina
Martinez**

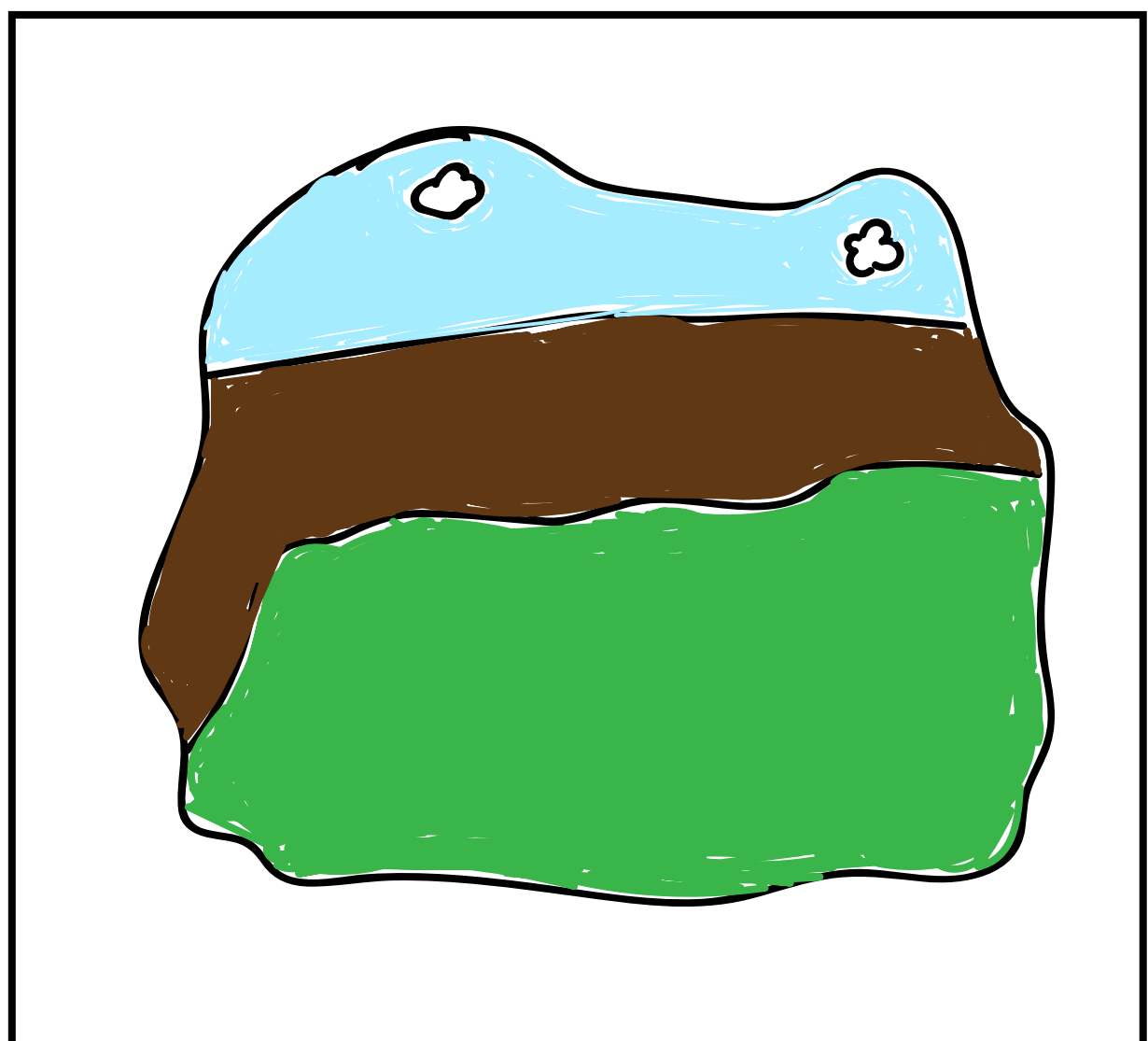




The Island of Ayala

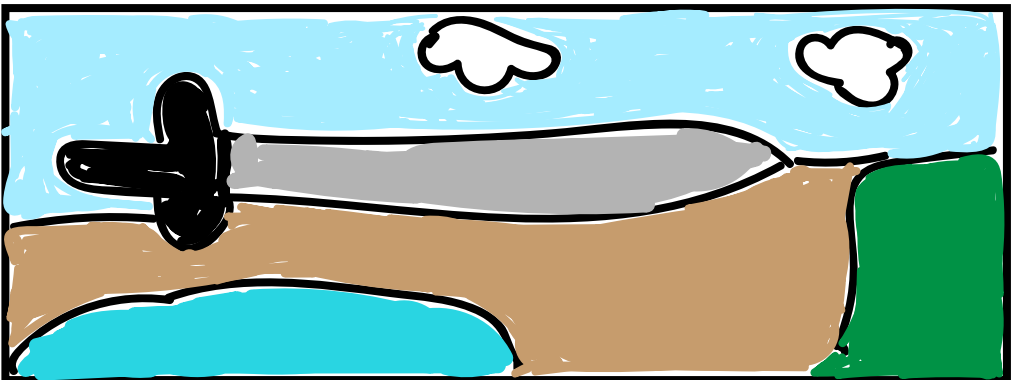
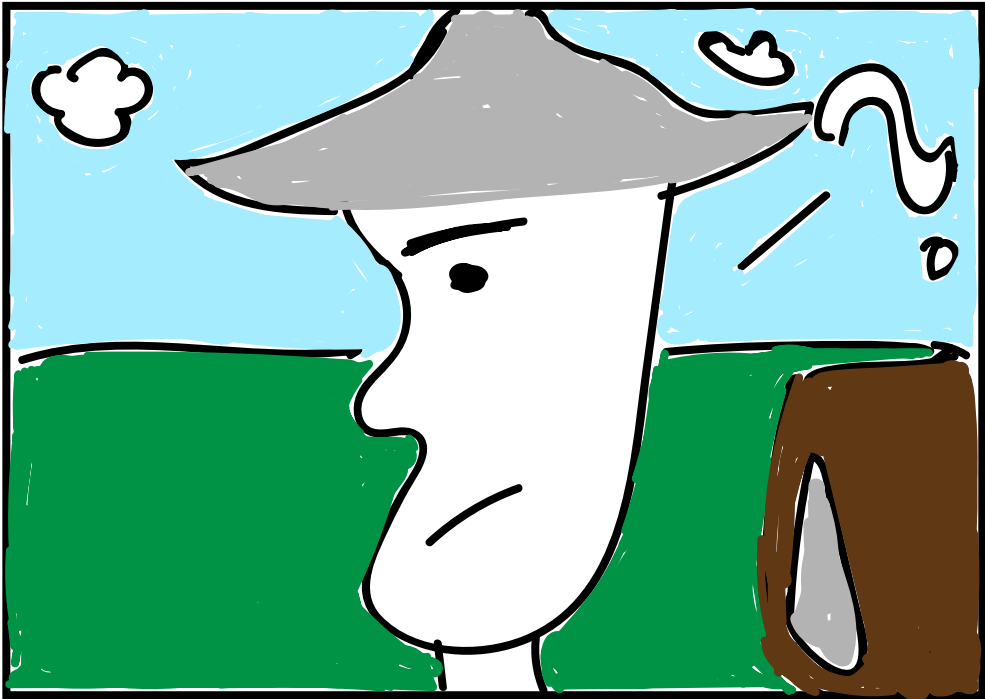
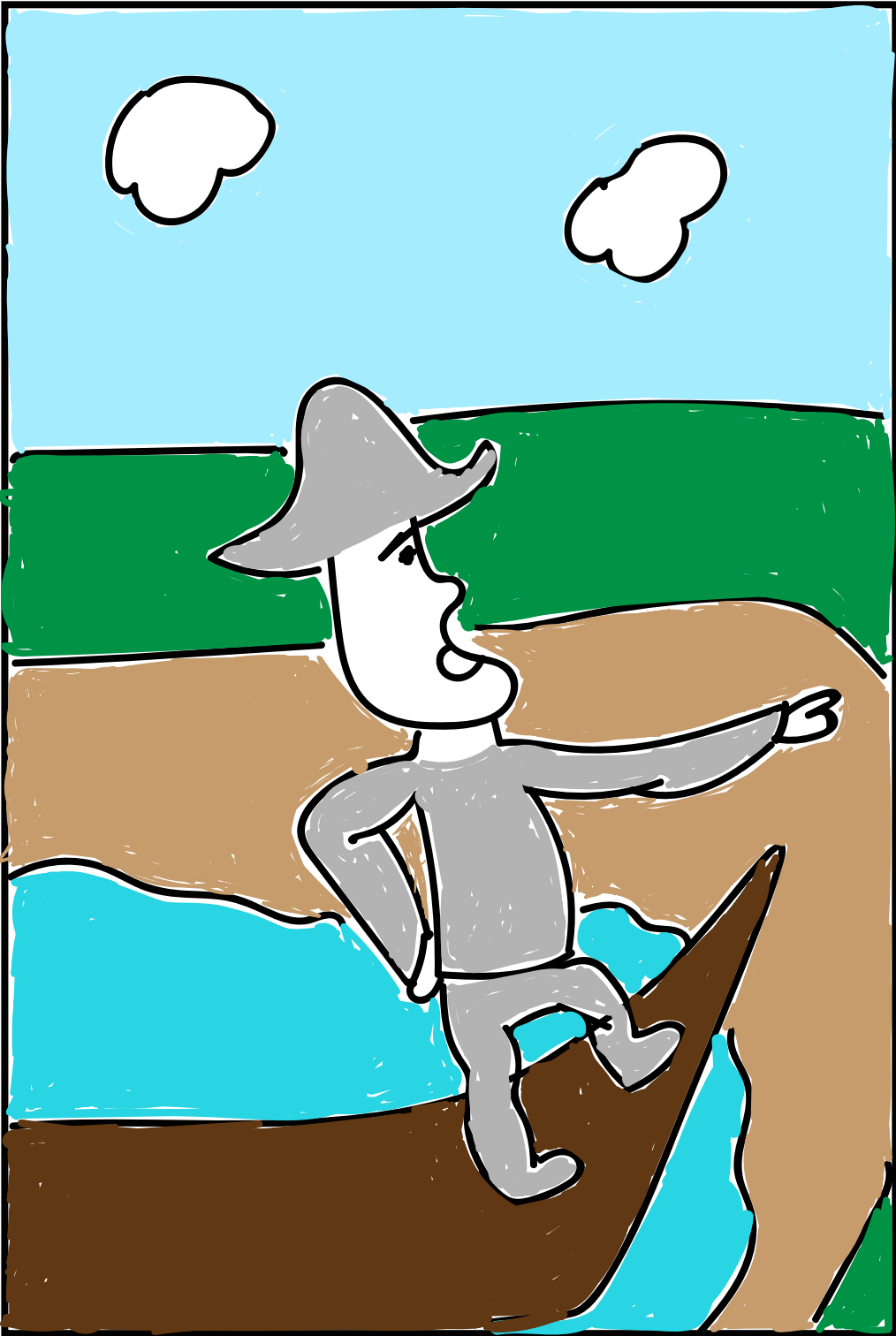


Alma--the Goddess of Fire

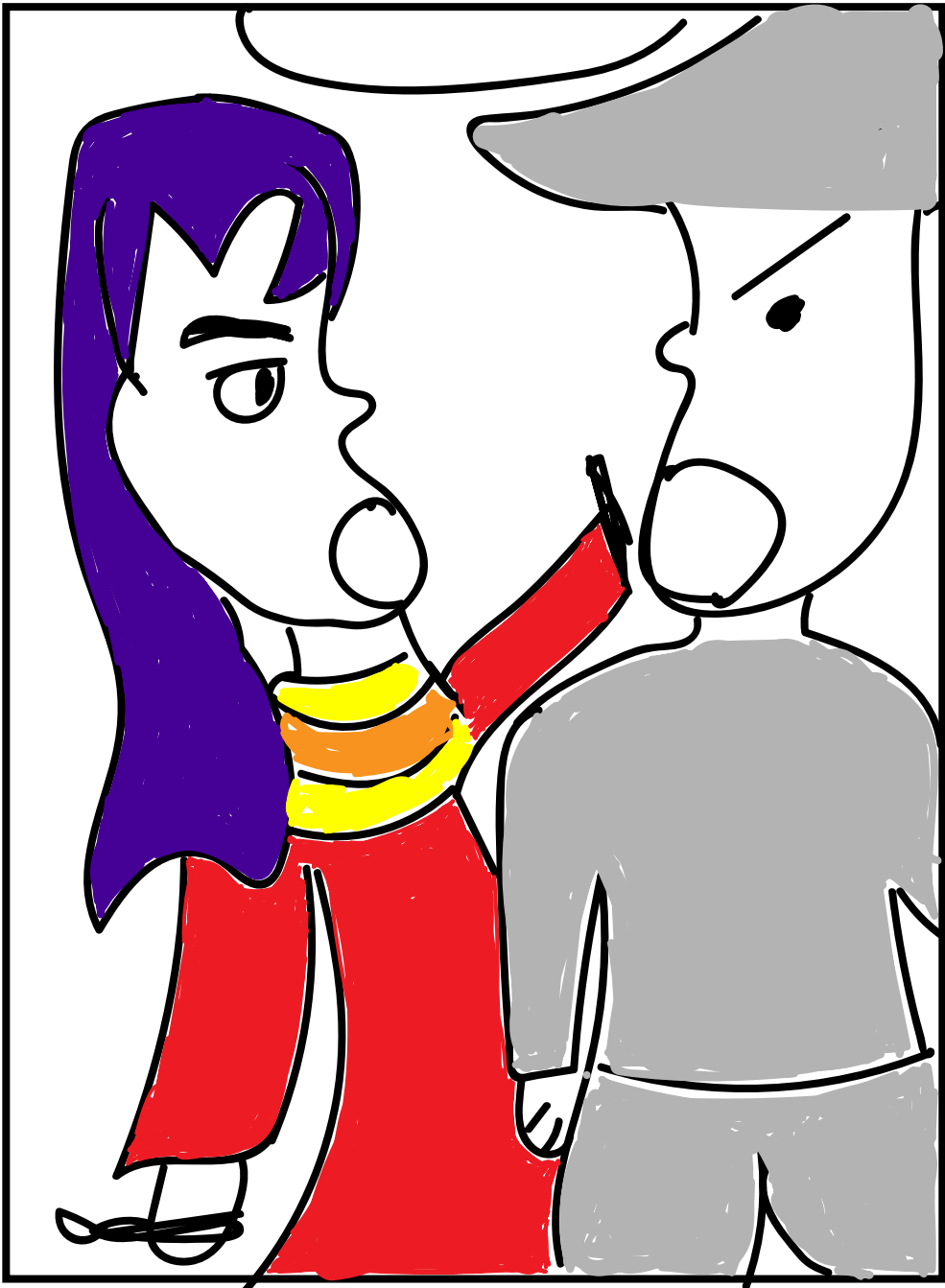


On the island of Ayala, powerful spirits were required to mark themselves once they began their spiritual training. A young woman at the time, Alma mixed oranges, yellows, and reds because she was the Goddess of Fire. She sat in her cave, marking her arm with small flames she would later use for protection.



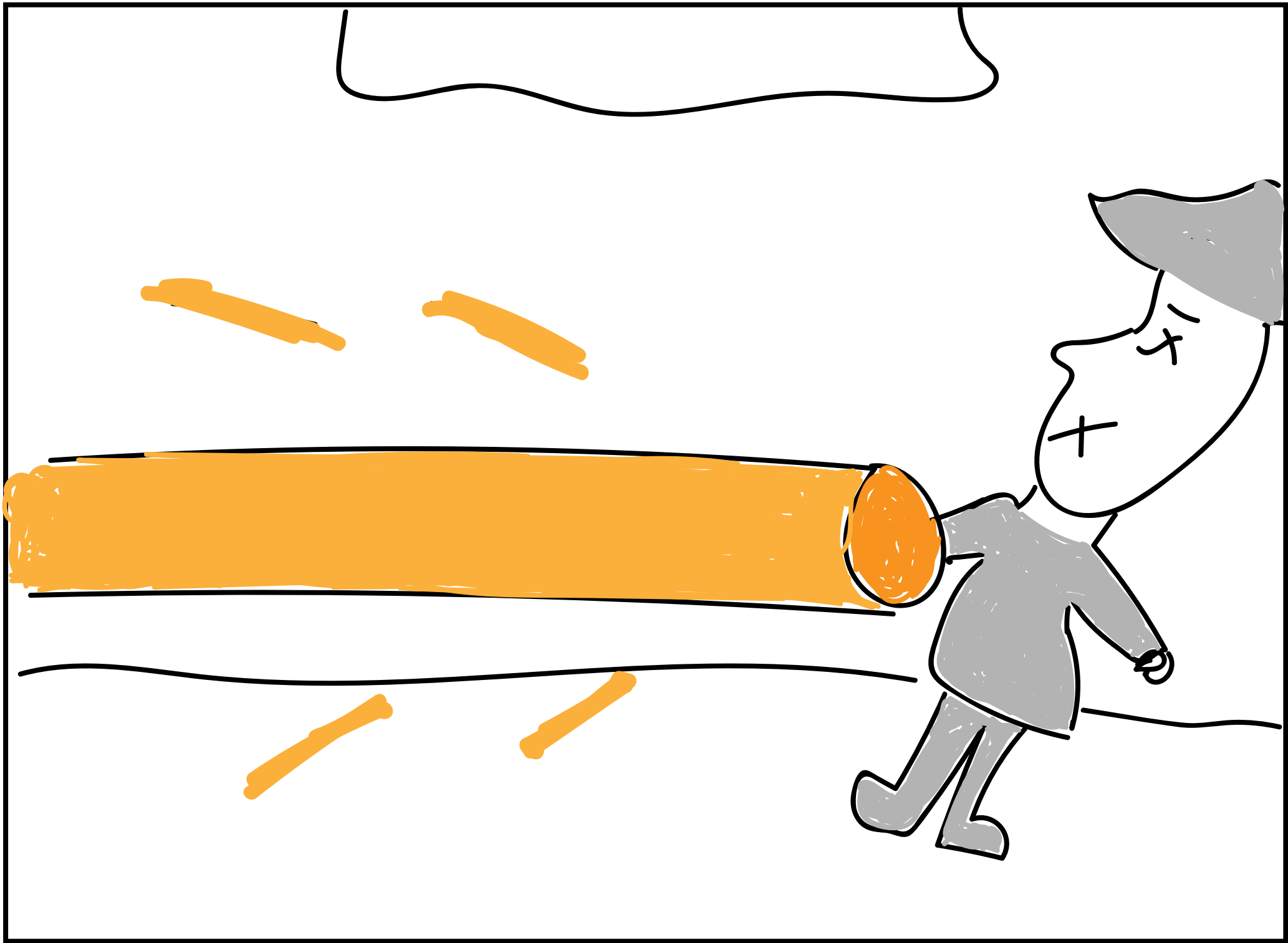


As Alma mixed her dyes, she sang to herself until she sensed an evil spirit approaching Ayala. While she never saw the white man land on the shores, she sensed something terrible was about to happen. She quickly stained her wrist with the reddish orange mixture to protect herself and her people against the impending doom. As she felt the spirit approach her dwelling, she knew she needed to act fast.

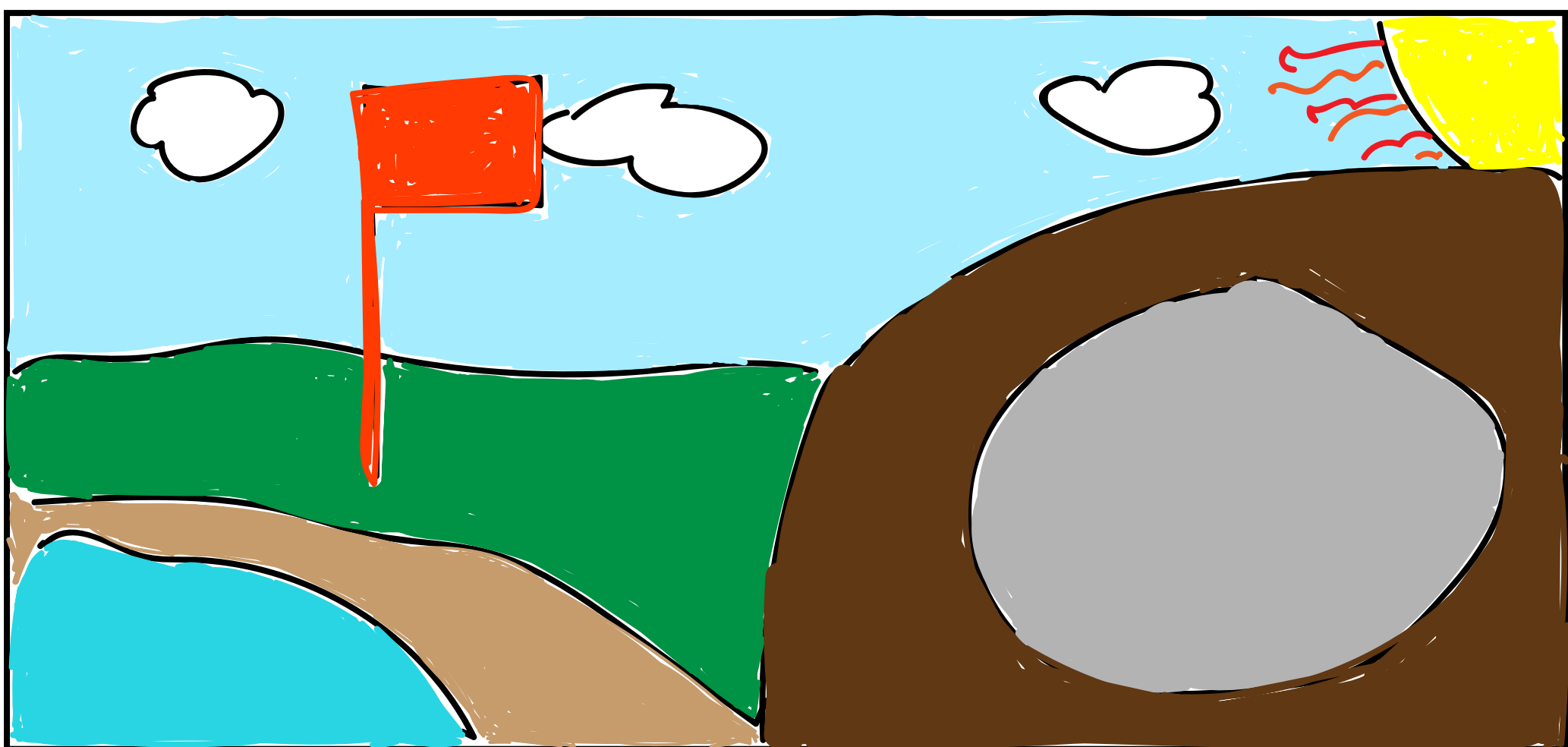




The white man brought weapons and Alma's nascent powers would need years of practice to be able to fully control. But in that moment, Alma knew what she needed to do to protect her island. With the ink on her wrist still wet, she makes a fireball with her hands, guided by the spirits of her ancestors and her future descendants. With bright white eyes and yellow hair powered by the sun...

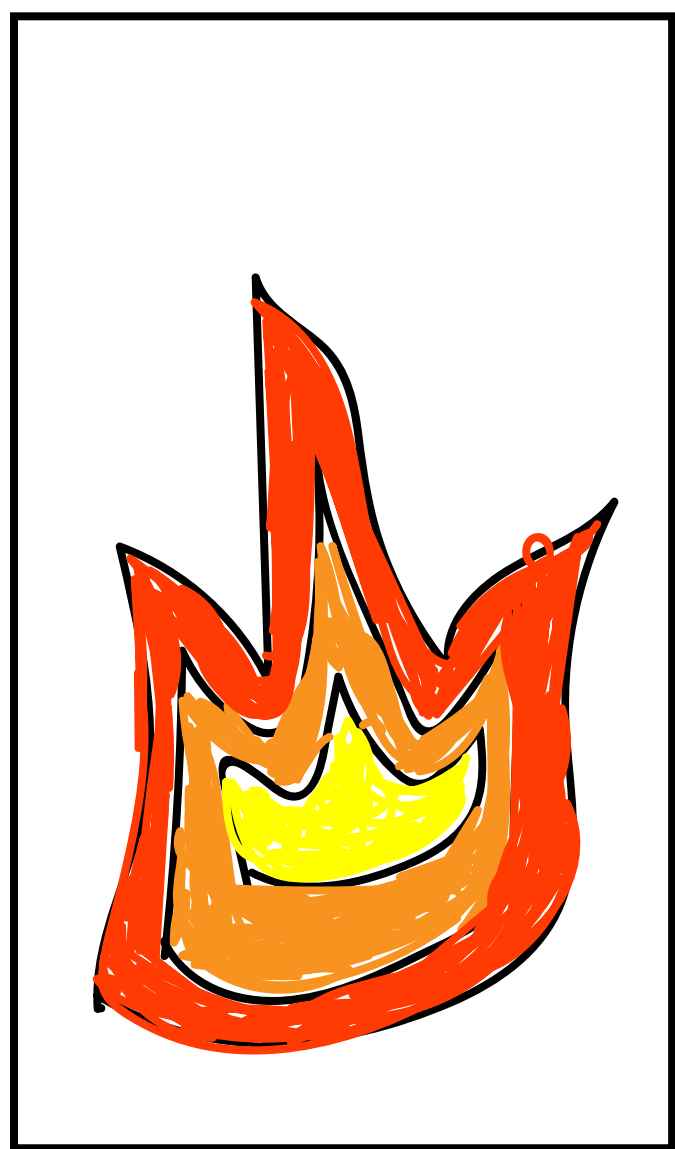


Alma was able to stop the white man and exile him and his evil spirits from her cave. However, she knew more would come. And even more after them. She and the people of Ayala would never be safe again. The fighting would never stop and the island would forever be occupied by colonial forces. She closed the entrance to her cave, never allowing in another being for the rest of her mortal life.

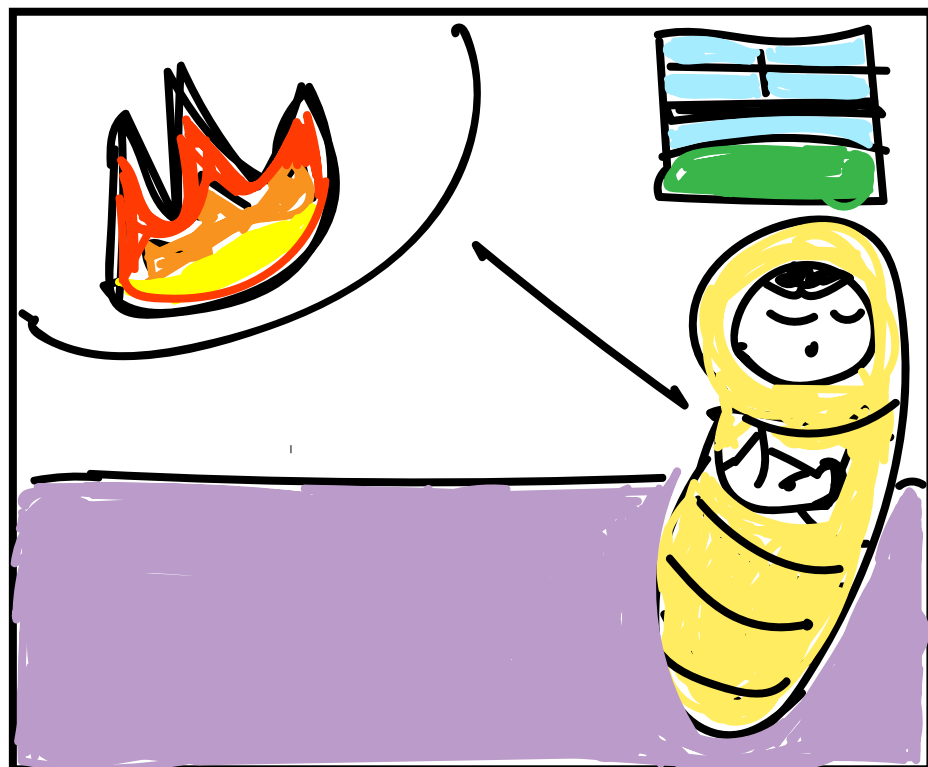
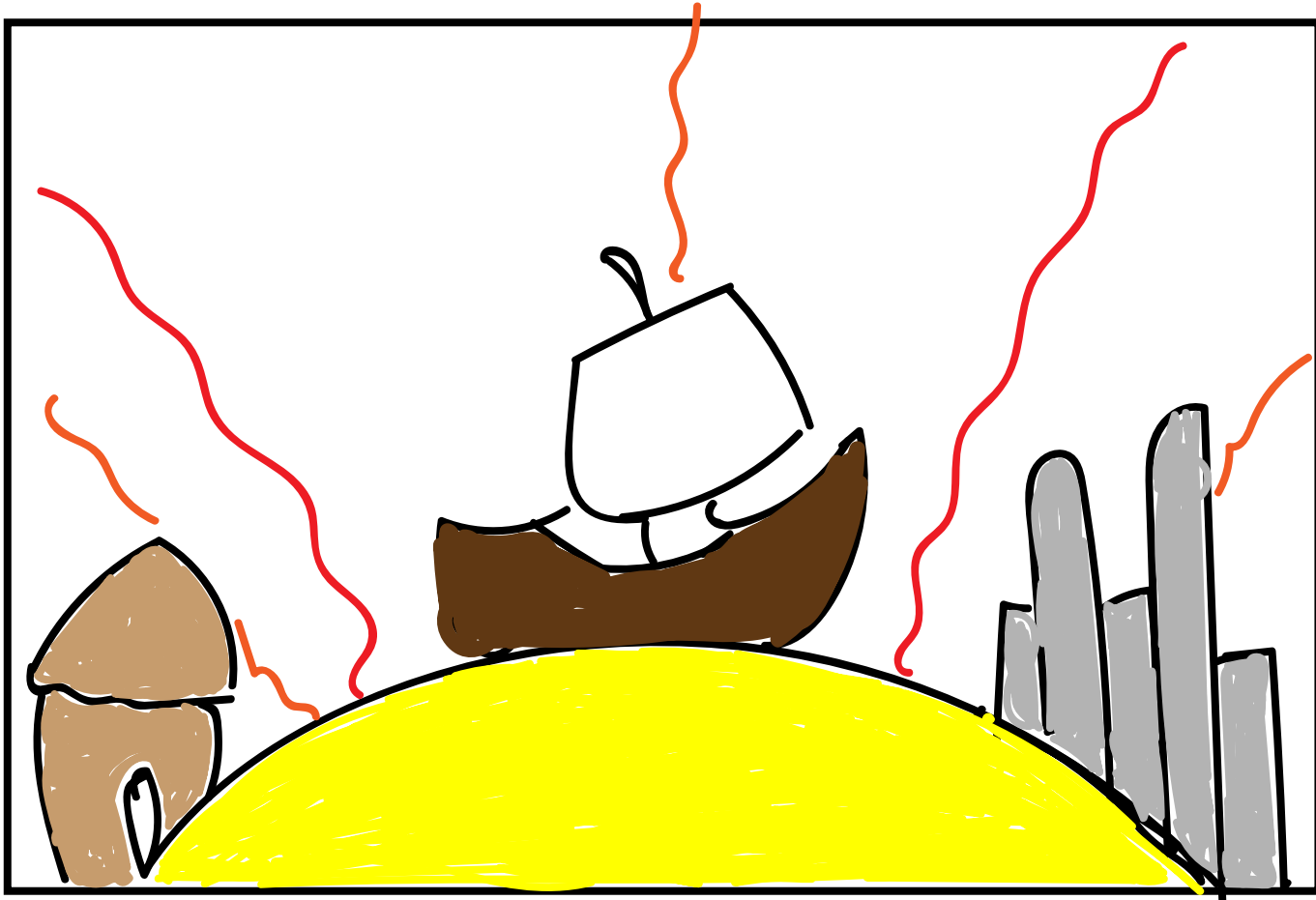




Centuries passed and Alma's predictions came true. Her light kept burning amidst the disaster, but the genocide of her people caused her immense pain. She became an immortal spirit after decades of silence and sorrow.



The people of Ayala are no longer known as such and have been forced out of their homes and into various places around the world. Legend has it that one day, a baby will be born with the spirit of Alma. Like Alma, flames will appear on their wrist and they will be given great powers.



The End...