

FROM THE LEAD WRITER OF BIOWARE'S HIT *DRAGON AGE* GAMES

# DRAGON AGE™



## THE SILENT GROVE

DAVID GAIDER    ✎    ALEXANDER FREED    ✎    CHAD HARDIN









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STORY  
DAVID GAIDER

SCRIPT  
ALEXANDER FREED

ART  
CHAD HARDIN

COLORS  
MICHAEL ATIYEH

LETTERING  
MICHAEL HEISLER

FRONT COVER ART  
ANTHONY PALUMBO

TITLE PAGE ILLUSTRATION  
RAMIL SUNGA AND  
NICK THORNBORROW



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Ramil  
+  
Nick  
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**BRENDAN WRIGHT**

EDITOR  
**DAVE MARSHALL**

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SPECIAL THANKS TO BOWARE, INCLUDING:

Matthew Goldman, Art Director • Mike Laidlaw, Lead Designer  
Aaryn Flynn, Studio GM, BioWare Edmonton • Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk, BioWare Co-Founders

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DRAGON AGE VOLUME 1: THE SILENT GROVE

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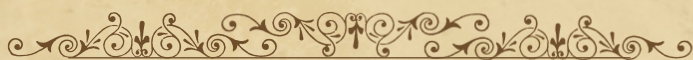
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Almost a decade ago, the terror of the Fifth Blight swept the nation of Ferelden. Civil war soon followed, as King Cailan died in battle against the monstrous darkspawn, and a usurper took his place.

Only the actions of a few heroes—King Cailan’s brother Alistair among them—prevented utter devastation. Since then, the new King Alistair has ruled with a steady hand and seen to his homeland’s reconstruction.

But Ferelden is not the world, and its troubles thread through distant lands. Today, a ship arrives in a northern port, and its passengers would unearth a secret that could change everything . . .







ANTIVA CITY, ON THE COAST OF RIALTO BAY. THE THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE DRAGON AGE.

WHERE THEY SAY EVERY MAN IS A POET OR A MERCHANT PRINCE, AND TREACHERY IS THE COIN OF THE REALM.

I'M GUESSING "POET" IS ANTIVAN FOR "ASSASSIN."

## CHAPTER 1



ALL I KNOW IS THAT EVERY STREET CORNER SMELLS LIKE SEAWATER MIXED WITH WINE AND SPICE --

-- OR MOLD MIXED WITH ROTTING FISH.

HEH.  
SO SHE PULLS  
OUT A DAGGER,  
AND I PULL OUT  
*MINE...*

ENOUGH.

I SHOULDN'T  
*BE HERE*,  
OF COURSE.

YOU!  
GIVE A NAME  
OR START  
RUNNING.

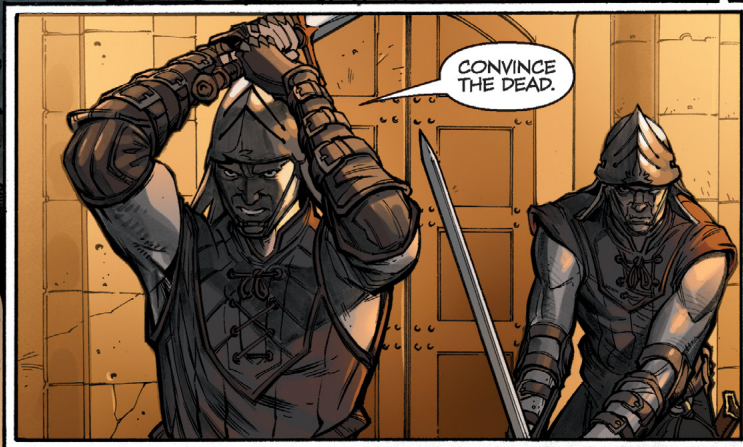




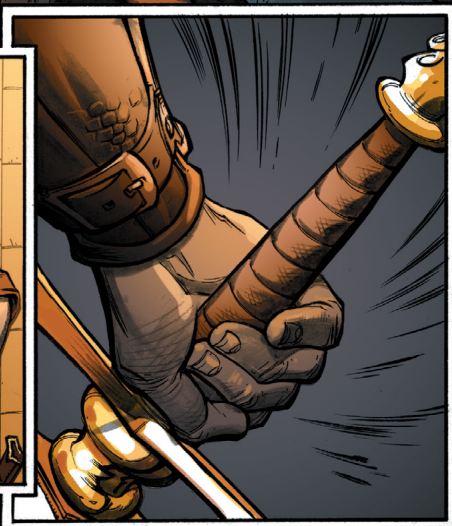
MY NAME IS  
ALISTAIR THEIRIN,  
AND I'M **KING** OF  
FERELDEN.

SON  
OF MARIC THE  
SAVIOR?

YOU'RE...  
REALLY NOT  
CONVINCED,  
ARE YOU?



CONVINCE  
THE DEAD.



I SHOULDN'T  
BE HERE  
ALONE...





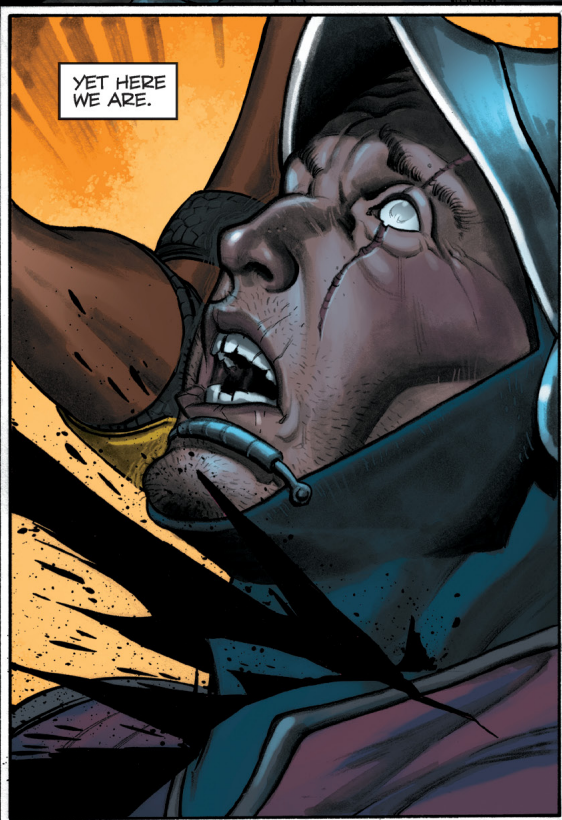
...AND I CERTAINLY SHOULDN'T BE HERE WITH HIM.




THREE NIGHTS IN ANTIVA, AND ALREADY THE SHOOTING STARTS.

IF ONLY I COULD BE SURPRISED.









SHE CALLS HERSELF ISABELA. PIRATE. THIEF. SHARPEST BLADE IN RIVAIN, AND AN OLD... ACQUAINTANCE, OF SORTS.

SHE KNOWS ANTIVA -- AT LEAST THE PARTS I NEED TO VISIT.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM.

YOU KILLED HIM -- THE MOMENT YOU GAVE HIM YOUR NAME.

WHO DOES THAT?



CUT HIM SOME SLACK, RIVAINI.

MOST KINGS CAN'T SPEAK A WORD WITHOUT A SCRIPT FROM THEIR ADVISORS.

THE DWARF IS VARRIC TETHRAS -- A MERCHANT WHO ACTS LIKE A BARKEEP OR A SPYMASTER, DEPENDING ON THE HOUR.

ISABELA'S TRAVELING COMPANION...AND NOW MINE, APPARENTLY.



FINE, FINE.

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH --

YOU THINK THAT WAS HIS COMMANDING VOICE?

-- BEFORE THE CROWS FIND US RAIDING THEIR ARCHIVE, PLEASE?

I'M SURE IT WORKS IF YOU'RE FROM FERELDEN.



AS FOR ME? I'M A KING  
WHO SHOULDN'T BE.

AND I'VE MISSED  
WALKING INTO  
DEATH WITH THE  
WRONG PEOPLE  
AT MY SIDE.

HAVE  
YOU EVER  
DEALT WITH THE  
CROWS BEFORE,  
OH KING?

SORT  
OF.

THEN  
YOU UNDERSTAND  
THEY'RE NOT MERELY  
ASSASSINS --

(VERY  
TALENTED  
ASSASSINING,  
MIND YOU.)

--BUT THE  
INSIDIOUS  
LITTLE VOICE IN  
EVERY ANTIVAN  
NOBLEMAN'S  
EAR?

THAT'S  
THE  
RUMOR.

AND WHEN  
YOUR SOURCE  
TOLD YOU THAT THEIR  
CONTRACTS, THEIR  
BLACKMAIL FILES, THEIR  
SECRET HISTORIES, AND  
THEIR RECIPES WERE  
ALL HERE --

--YOUR FIRST  
THOUGHT WAS,  
"I SHOULD KICK  
IN THE FRONT  
DOOR"?

IS THAT A  
CRITICISM?

NOT  
AT ALL. IN  
FACT, I'M  
IMPRESSED  
BY --

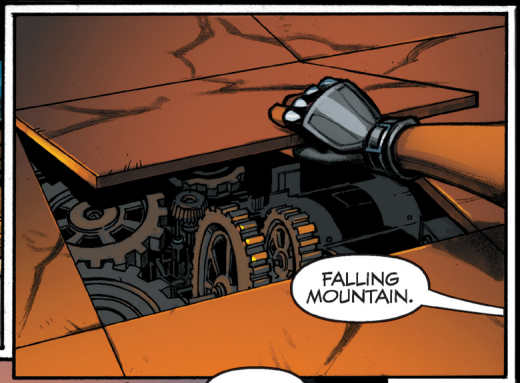
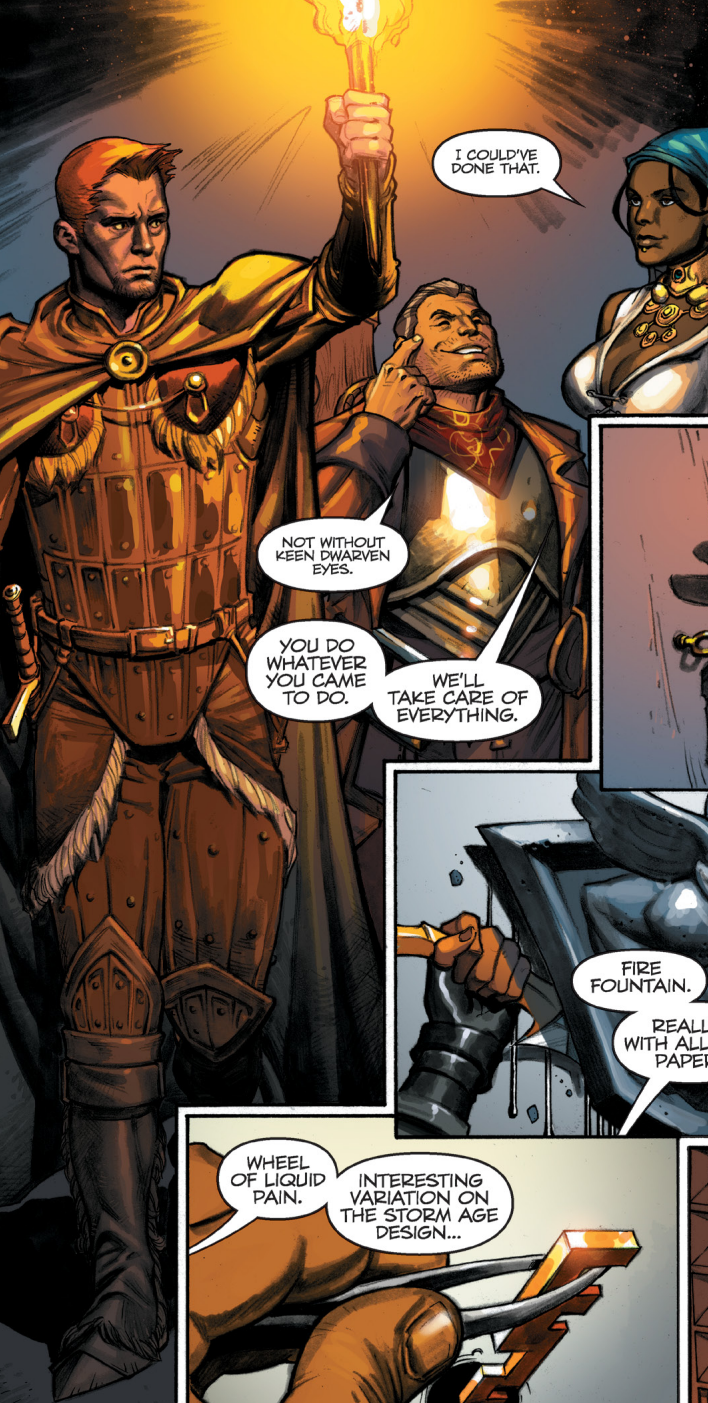
--STOP!

WHAT?

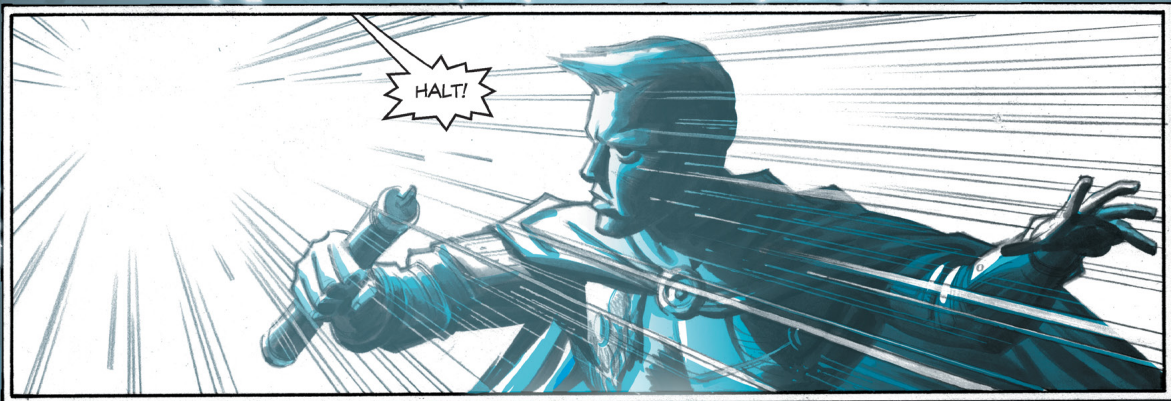




















THE  
PERFUMED  
SPRING.

ISABELA'S CHOICE AS  
A PLACE TO REGROUP  
-- NOT MINE.

PRINCE  
CLAUDIO  
VALISTI WAS  
MY HUSBAND'S  
BUSINESS  
PARTNER.



THE  
HUSBAND YOU  
KILLED?

THE  
HUSBAND I  
**HAD** KILLED,  
THANK YOU.

AND HOW DO  
**YOU** KNOW THIS  
"PRINCE AMONG  
CROWS," OH  
KING?

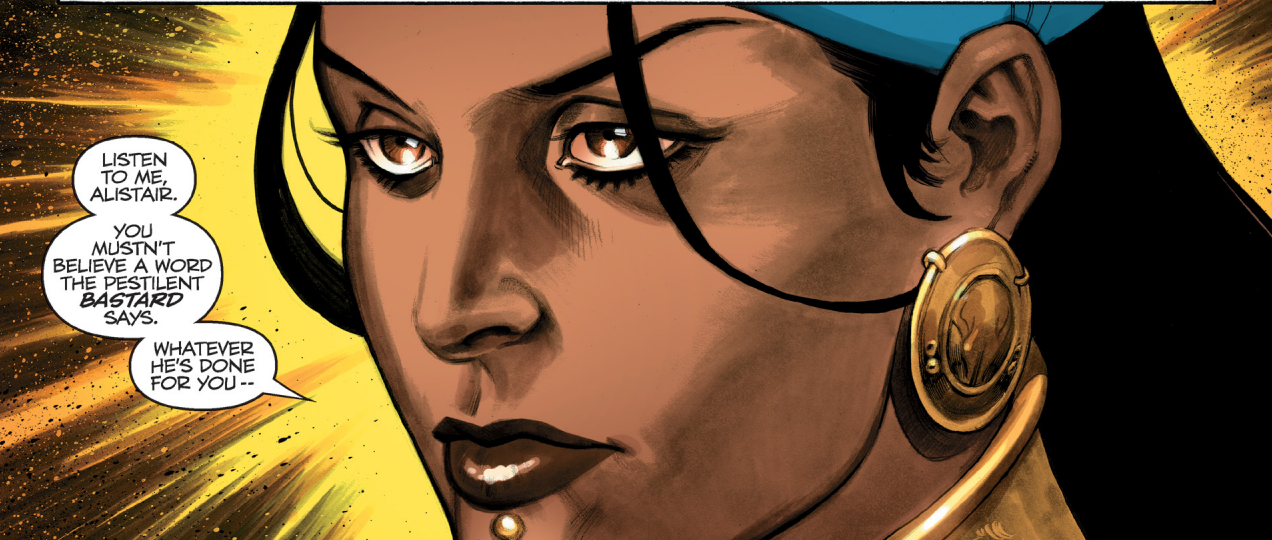
**ZEVRAN**  
PUT ME IN  
TOUCH WITH  
CLAUDIO, AND  
CLAUDIO'S  
INFORMATION  
BROUGHT ME  
HERE.



**ZEVRAN**  
THE ASSASSIN,  
HM?

**ZEVRAN**  
KNOWS A LOT  
OF PEOPLE.

LIKE  
**YOU KNOW**  
A LOT OF  
PEOPLE?



LISTEN  
TO ME,  
ALISTAIR.

YOU  
MUSTN'T  
BELIEVE A WORD  
THE PESTILENT  
**BASTARD**  
SAYS.

WHATEVER  
HE'S DONE  
FOR YOU--





I KNOW.

LOOK, NOBODY UNDERSTANDS COZYING UP TO SNAKES BETTER THAN I DO.

BUT THAT'S A JOB BEST HANDLED BY SOMEONE WHO CAN AFFORD BECOMING THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY.

NOT THE MAN WITH A REPUTATION... AND A CROWN... TO PROTECT.



MY REPUTATION IS THE LEAST OF MY CONCERNS NOW, VARRIC.

AND WITH RESPECT, I DON'T KNOW YOU OR YOUR FAMILY.



WELL, I TRIED.

WHAT ABOUT THIS "VELABANCHER," THEN? CLAUDIO MENTIONED --

IT'S A PRISON RUN BY THE CROWS.

MAKES THE ARCHIVE SEEM AS WELCOMING AS A BROTHEL.

PLANNING A VISIT?

SHOULD WE BAKE A CAKE WITH A FILE HIDDEN INSIDE?

THAT NEVER WORKS.



I'M PLANNING TO BREAK IN, TONIGHT.

WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR HELP.



## CHAPTER 2

I NEVER ASKED FOR AN EASY LIFE -- FRUIT EVERY MORNING, SERVANTS CLEANING MY FEET, BEDCLOTHES FREE FROM CRAWLING THINGS.

I CERTAINLY WASN'T RAISED TO *EXPECT* IT.

BUT THIS IS VELABANCHEL PRISON, THE HOUSE OF GRAVES, WHERE THE CROWS LOCK MEN AWAY FOR FUN AND TORTURE.

ONE MISTAKE, AND WE SPEND THE REST OF OUR DAYS SHACKLED AND FORGOTTEN IN CELLS BUILT BY LONG-DEAD SADISTS.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, I'M STARTING TO MISS THE ROYAL PALACE.

TOO DAMNED COLD.









REMINDE ME WHY WE'RE HERE, EXACTLY?

A RESCUE.

I WAS ASKING HER-- WHY ARE YOU AND I HERE?

I ASKED YOU TO COME.



WAS I DRUNK?

MAYBE.

SO WHY ARE YOU HERE?

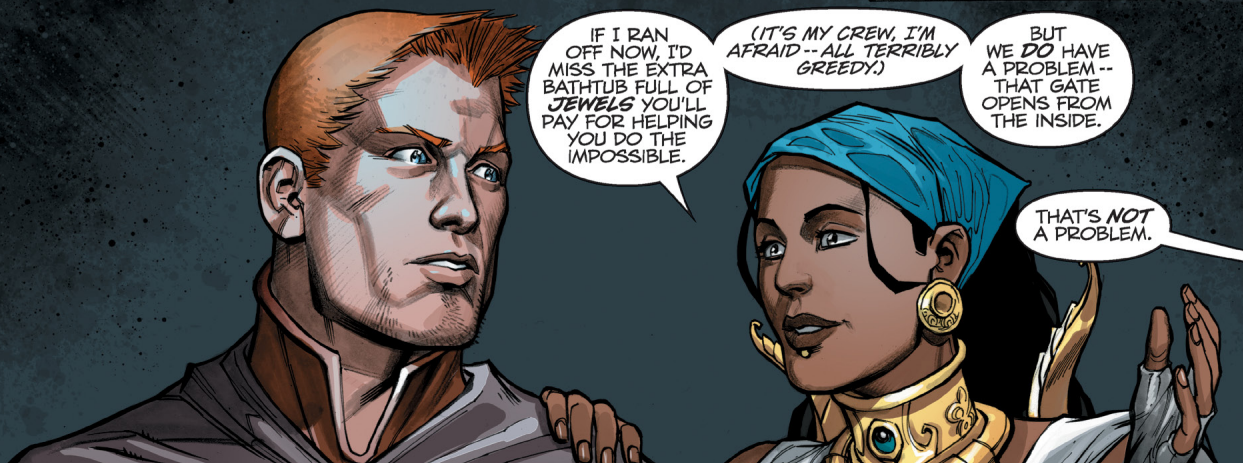
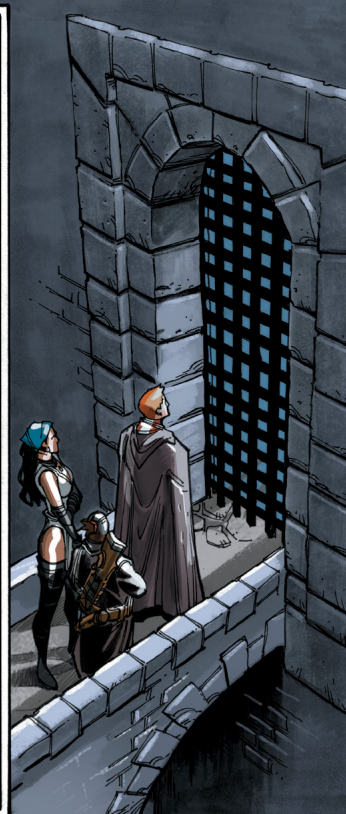
BECAUSE PIRACY IS EXPENSIVE, AND OUR FRIEND HERE IS DRIPPING WITH COIN.



I HIRED YOU TO BRING ME TO ANTIVA AND HELP ME REACH THE ARCHIVE.

IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE, THEN LEAVE-- AND I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY HOME.

WE'LL FIND A WAY HOME.



IF I RAN OFF NOW, I'D MISS THE EXTRA BATHTUB FULL OF JEWELS YOU'LL PAY FOR HELPING YOU DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.

(IT'S MY CREW, I'M AFRAID-- ALL TERRIBLY GREEDY.)

BUT WE DO HAVE A PROBLEM-- THAT GATE OPENS FROM THE INSIDE.

THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM.





I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH WEIGHT THE ROPE WILL HOLD, BUT DON'T WORRY--

--I'LL HAVE THE GATE OPEN BY THE TIME YOU'RE FINISHED GAWKING.

DID HE JUST CALL ME FAT?

I PREFER NOT TO ENCOURAGE HIM.

HE CALLS IT BIANCA.

THAT'S QUITE A CROSSBOW.

"YOU DON'T SAY, ISABELA? A CHANCE TO GAIN THE EAR OF A KING?"

"WHO COULD REGRET ASSOCIATING WITH ROYALTY?"

VARRIC, MY BOY...YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO PICK YOUR ALLIES.

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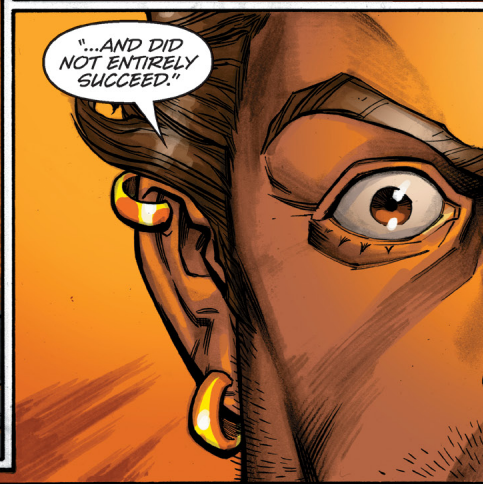
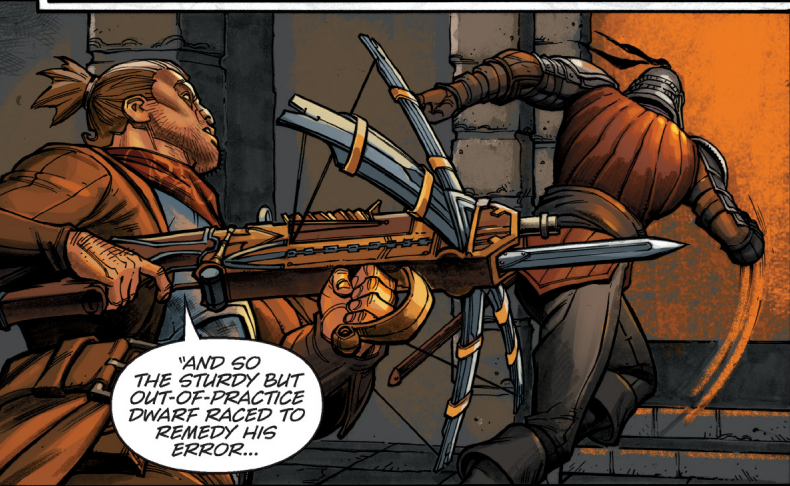
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"WHO COULD REGRET ASSOCIATING WITH ROYALTY?"









ALL RIGHT--  
NO VARRIC,  
NOTHING TO DO  
BUT WAIT.

YOU  
WANT TO TELL  
ME WHAT ALL  
THE MYSTERY IS  
ABOUT?

WHO ARE  
WE HERE  
FOR?



I...CAN'T.



DIDN'T YOU  
USED TO BE  
*FUN*?

I  
THOUGHT THIS WAS  
ABOUT RECAPTURING  
THE OLD DAYS FOR YOU--  
A DRINK, A SWORD, AND A  
PARTNER WHO DOESN'T  
GIVE A DAMN ABOUT  
YOUR BLOODLINE?

IF ALL YOU  
WANTED WAS TO  
SCOWL AND BREAK  
THINGS, WHY NOT DO  
THAT AT HOME AND  
SEND AN ARMY  
HERE INSTEAD?



IT'S NEVER  
THAT SIMPLE.  
BESIDES--

-- I'M NOT  
*DOING* THIS  
AS KING.

BUT  
YOU *ARE*  
A KING.



TRUTHFULLY?

I'M NOT A  
VERY GOOD  
KING.

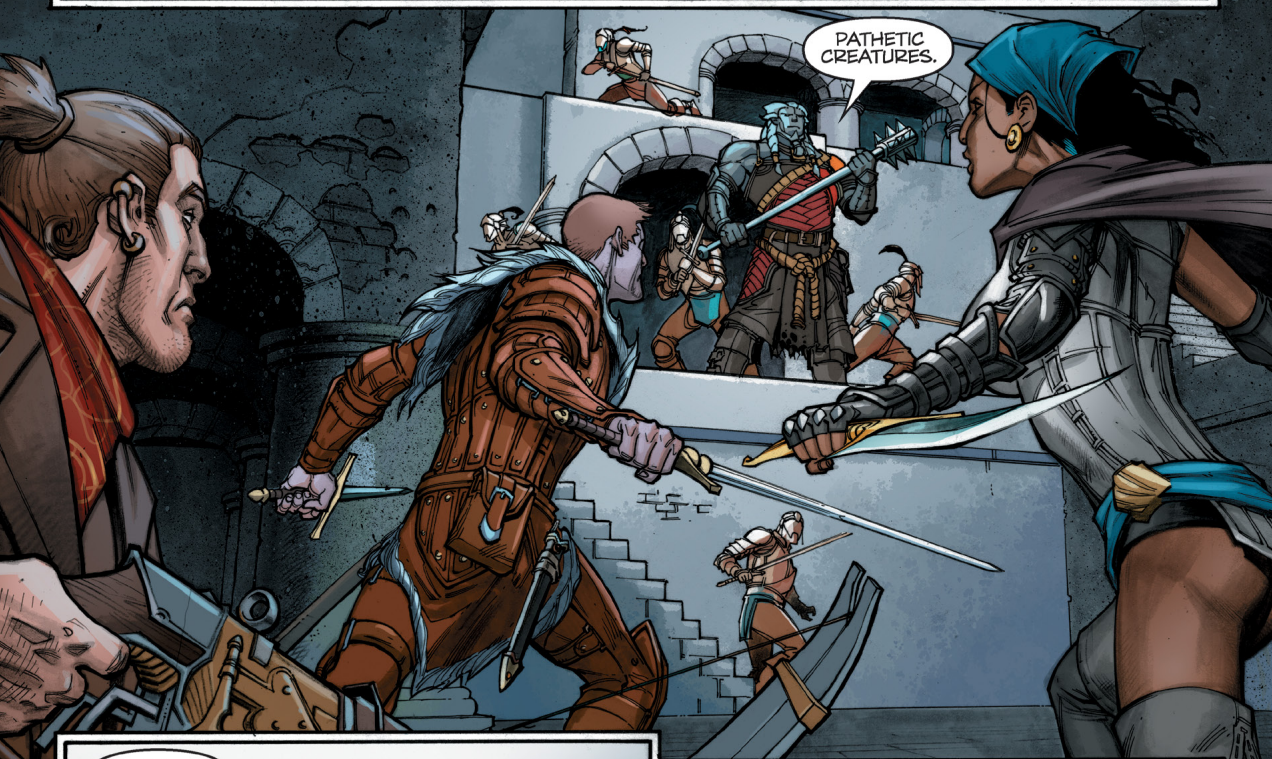
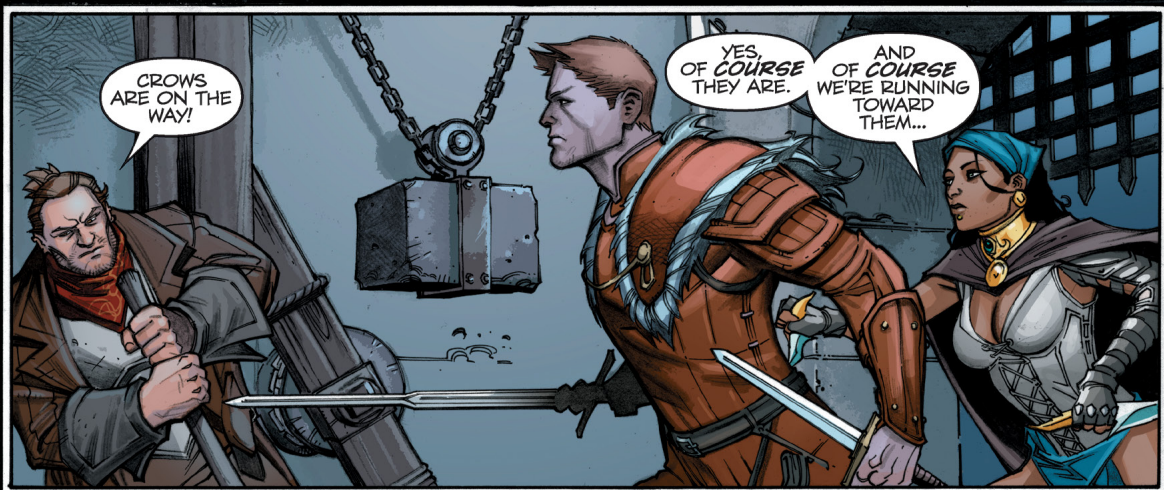
YOU'RE A  
DIFFICULT MAN,  
ALISTAIR.

BUT ONLY  
A GOOD KING  
WOULD SAY  
THAT.



STOP  
PRATTLING  
AND GET OVER  
HERE!











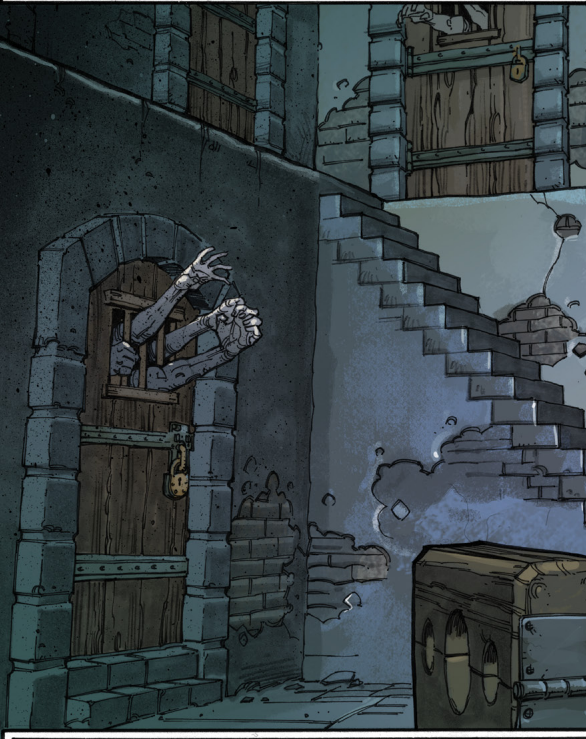


THE THIRD LEVEL. THE SEVENTY-NINTH CELL.

I'M FOLLOWING TALLY MARKS DRAWN ON THE WALLS BY ILLITERATES.

I'M NOT SURE I'M GOING THE RIGHT WAY, BUT THERE CAN'T BE A WORSE PLACE THAN HERE.

THERE ARE SCREAMS FROM THE CELLS LIKE A CHORUS. I'M STUDYING WITH THE TEMPLARS AGAIN, LISTENING TO THE HOLY CHANT, AND I JUST WANT OUT.



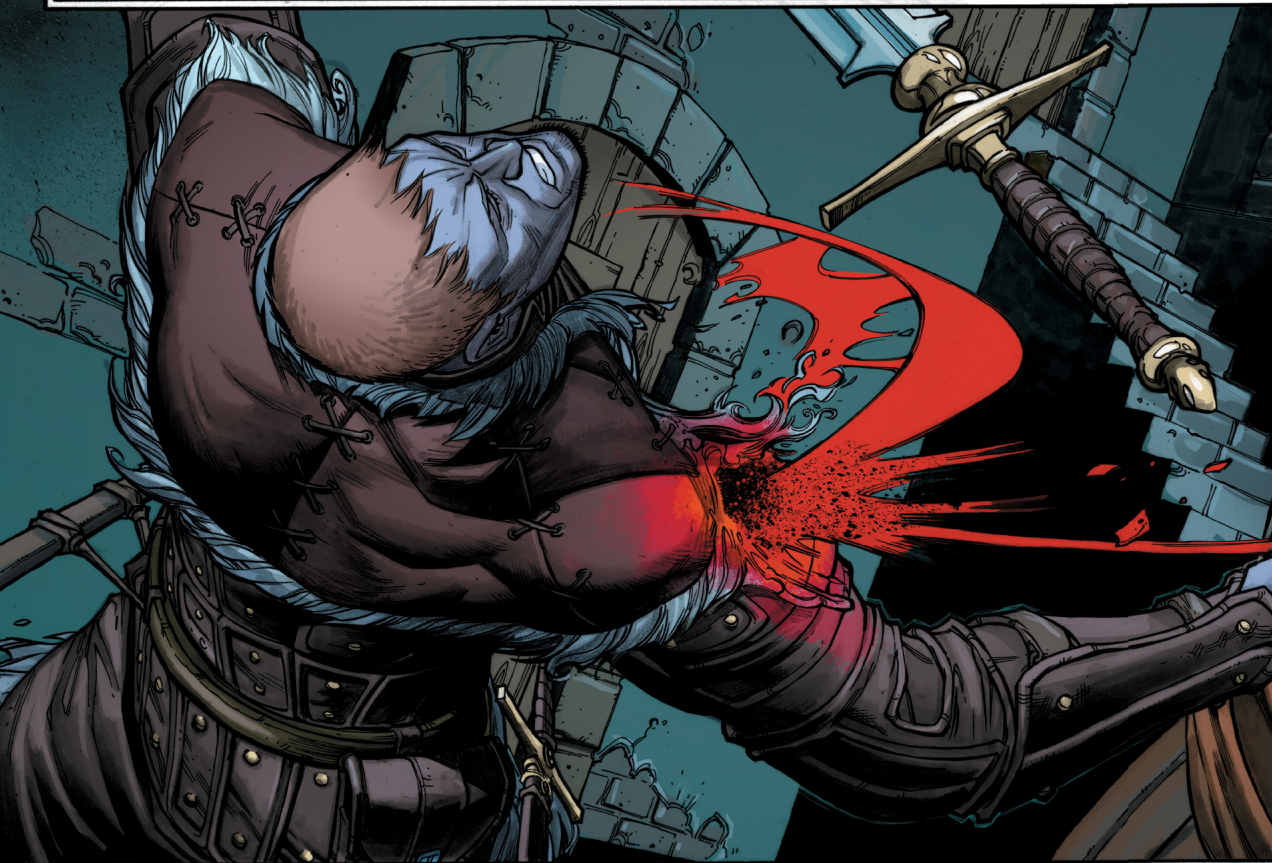
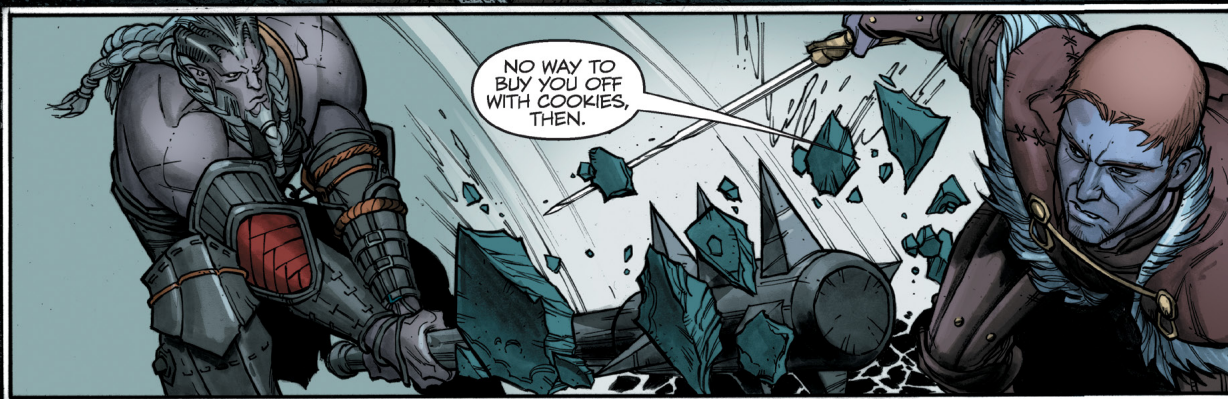
LIKE DOGS BEFORE A STORM.

THEY HOWL WHEN THE WINDS OF WRATH BLOW.

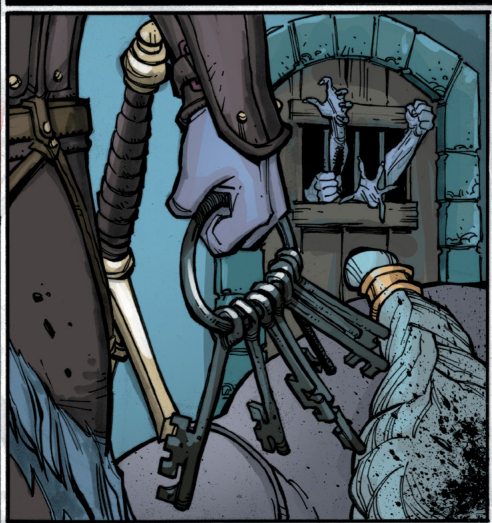
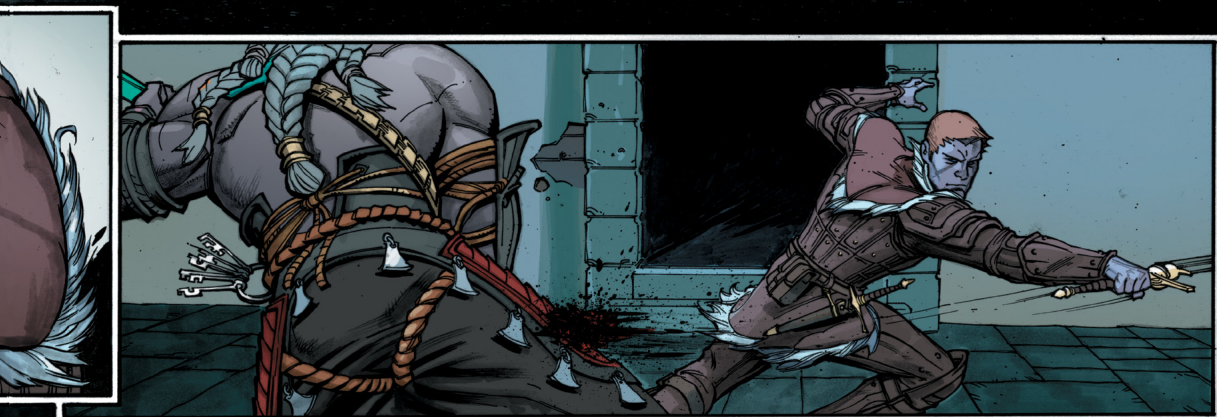


WHICH DOG ARE YOU HERE TO FREE?

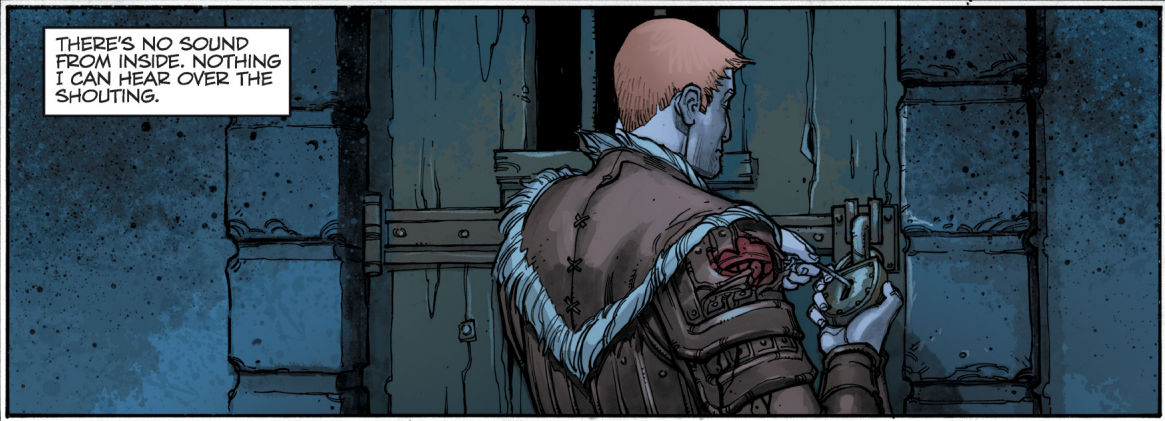




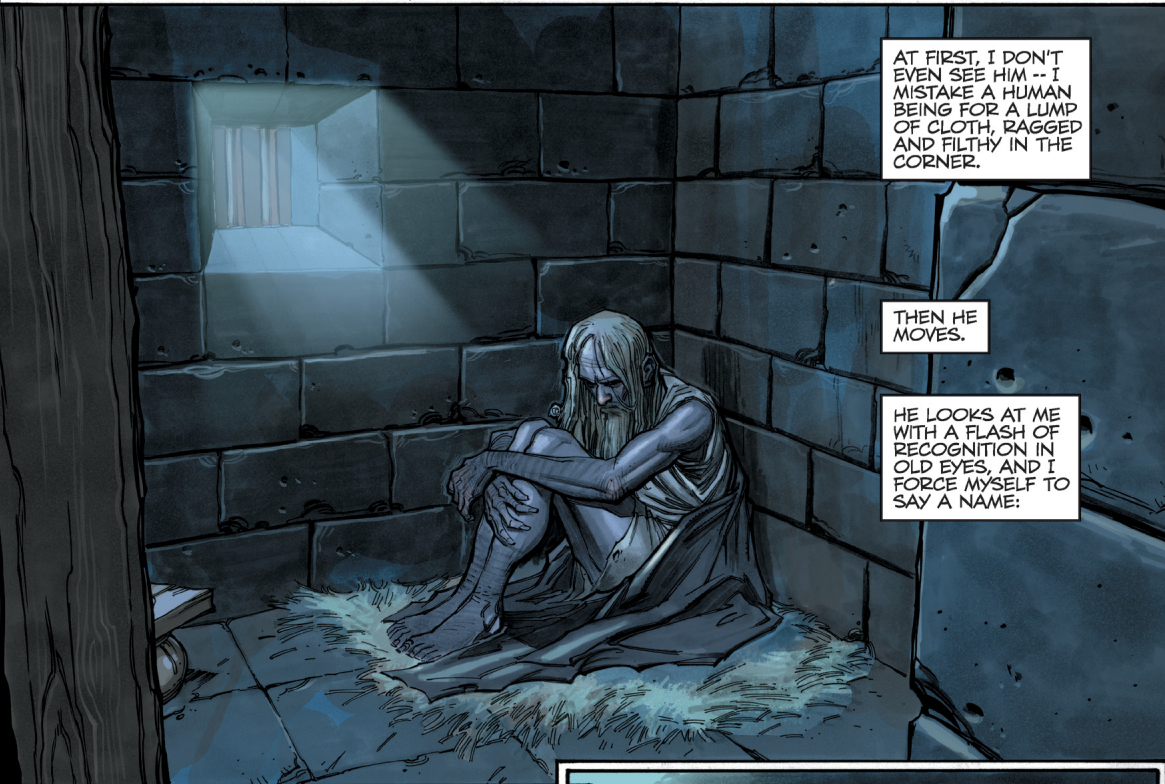








THERE'S NO SOUND  
FROM INSIDE. NOTHING  
I CAN HEAR OVER THE  
SHOUTING.



AT FIRST, I DON'T  
EVEN SEE HIM -- I  
MISTAKE A HUMAN  
BEING FOR A LUMP  
OF CLOTH, RAGGED  
AND FILTHY IN THE  
CORNER.

THEN HE  
MOVES.

HE LOOKS AT ME  
WITH A FLASH OF  
RECOGNITION IN  
OLD EYES, AND I  
FORCE MYSELF TO  
SAY A NAME:



KING  
MARIC...?

THE NAME  
OF MY  
FATHER.



TOO  
LATE.

MUCH  
TOO LATE.

AND WITH THAT, I  
LEARN MY QUEST  
HAS FAILED...



## CHAPTER 3

...THE CROWS WON'T CATCH A BOAT THIS SIZE, BUT WE'LL SAIL UNTIL MORNING TO BE SURE.

HOW'S THE ARM?

BETTER.

WHAT ABOUT OUR GUEST?

GORGING HIMSELF IN THE GALLEY.

NOT THE MAN YOU WERE HOPING FOR, IS HE?

I WAS LOOKING FOR KING MARIC.

MARIC DISAPPEARED THIRTEEN YEARS AGO AT SEA.

YOUR FATHER?

THERE WAS NO TRACE OF HIM, NOTHING TO **FIND**--UNTIL PRINCE CLAUDIO SENT ME EVIDENCE HE'D BEEN CAPTURED BY THE CROWS.

SO WHY'D WE RESCUE THE OLD MAN?

BECAUSE HE **KNEW** MARIC--HE **RECOGNIZED** ME AS MARIC'S SON.

AND I NEED ANSWERS.





WE  
BROUGHT  
YOU OUT OF  
THAT *PIT*.

NOW  
IT'S TIME TO  
TALK.

YES. OF  
COURSE.

YOU  
WANT KING  
MARIC?

HE WAS MY  
*CELLMATE*.



"OUR FOURTH YEAR  
TOGETHER, SIX DAYS  
INTO SPRING. I KNOW  
BECAUSE I COUNTED  
*FALCONS*.

"OUR CELL GOT  
*COLD* AND THE  
SCREAMING FROM BELOW  
STOPPED.

"SOMETHING  
*HIGGED*."

RELEASE  
HIM.





EVERY DAY,  
THE CROWS TOOK  
HIM AWAY TO ASK  
*QUESTIONS.*



HE  
DIDN'T TELL  
ME WHAT THEY  
*WANTED,* AND I  
NEVER TOLD HIM  
*MY CRIMES.*

YOU  
DON'T,  
IN THAT...  
PLACE.



IT WAS THE  
*WITCH OF THE*  
WILDS WHO  
FREED HIM.



"THERE WERE  
CROWS ALL  
AROUND HER,  
AND SHE DIDN'T  
MOVE. DIDN'T  
LOOK AT US.

"THEY CAME FOR  
KING MARIC, AND HE  
DIDN'T FIGHT THEM.

"I NEVER SAW  
YOUR FATHER  
OR THE WITCH  
AGAIN."





DAMN HER.

I **MET** FLEMETH IN THE KORCARI WILDS, AND SHE STARTED ME ON THE PATH TO BECOMING KING.

FLEMETH?

WE MET HER ONCE, TOO -- SHE PLAYED A FRIEND OF OURS.



BUT **FLEMETH** ISN'T THE ONLY WITCH OF THE WILDS.

THEY'RE AFRAID OF ANOTHER FABLE IN ANTIVA -- OR AM I WRONG?



NO.

THIS WAS YAVANA -- THE **BEAST** OF THE TELLARI SWAMPS.



ANOTHER WITCH?

WONDERFUL.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN TELL US?



BEFORE MARIC AND YAVANA DISAPPEARED, HE LEFT A MESSAGE FOR HIS SON.

I HAD CHILDREN, ONCE.

HE SAID HE **HAD** TO DO IT.

HE SAID HE WAS SORRY.







HE MEANT  
CAILAN, YOU  
KNOW.

HIS  
REAL SON.

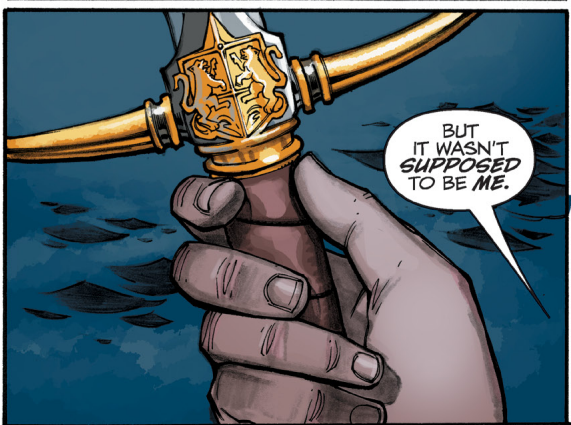
IT WASN'T  
SO BAD.

I  
GREW UP TO  
BE A **TEMPLAR**,  
NOT A KING --  
MY MOTHER WAS A  
SERVANT, AND MARIC  
BARELY KNEW I  
**EXISTED**.



THEN  
CAILAN DIES,  
YOUR COUNTRY  
GOES TO WAR, AND  
YOU COME OUT  
A HERO.

**SOMEONE**  
HAS TO BE  
KING.



BUT  
IT WASN'T  
**SUPPOSED**  
TO BE ME.



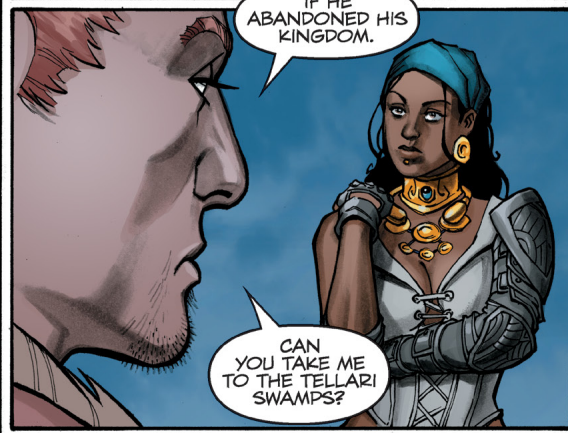
I  
THOUGHT MY  
FATHER WAS A  
PRISONER.

IF HE  
ESCAPED,  
I NEED TO  
KNOW IF HE'S  
ALIVE.

I  
NEED TO  
KNOW...

IF HE  
ABANDONED  
YOU?

IF HE  
ABANDONED HIS  
KINGDOM.



CAN  
YOU TAKE ME  
TO THE TELLARI  
SWAMPS?



FOR  
YOU?

ANYTHING --  
BUT JUST THE  
**ONCE**.

I'LL  
TELL THE  
CREW TO SET  
COURSE.





ANGELO!  
CELDO! HANDS  
OUT OF YOUR  
TROUSERS AND  
UP ON THE  
MAST!

SHE'S  
**DIFFERENT**  
WHEN SHE'S  
BEING  
CAPTAIN.

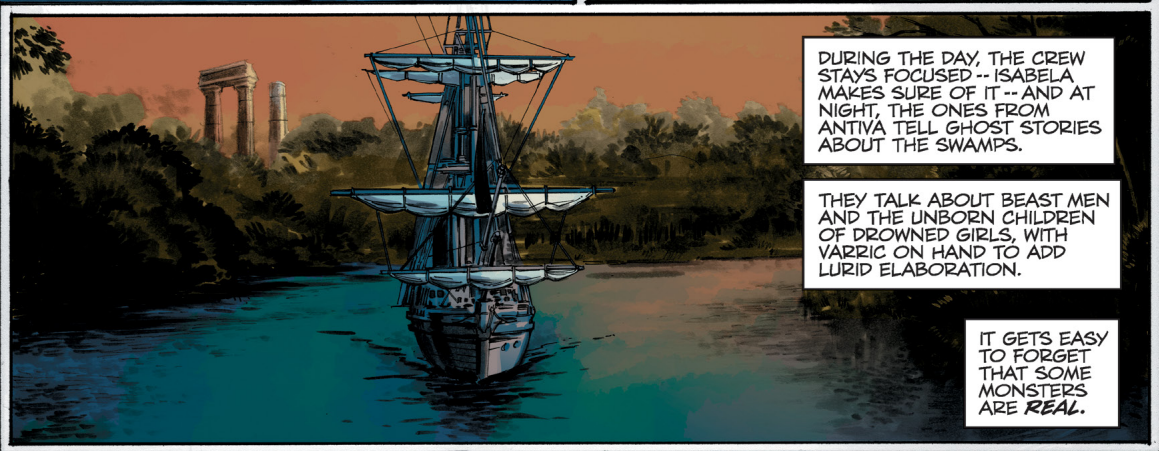
I SORT  
OF LIKE  
IT.

AND SO WE SET SAIL  
TOWARD TELLARI.



WE STOP IN SELENY AND LET THE  
OLD MAN DEPART WITH A PURSE  
FULL OF COINS. VARRIC TRIES TO  
HIRE A GUIDE, BUT NOBODY WILL  
COME -- NOT FOR A PITTANCE,  
NOT FOR A FORTUNE.

OMINOUS, THAT.



DURING THE DAY, THE CREW  
STAYS FOCUSED -- ISABELA  
MAKES SURE OF IT -- AND AT  
NIGHT, THE ONES FROM  
ANTIVA TELL GHOST STORIES  
ABOUT THE SWAMPS.

THEY TALK ABOUT BEAST MEN  
AND THE UNBORN CHILDREN  
OF DROWNED GIRLS, WITH  
VARRIC ON HAND TO ADD  
LURID ELABORATION.

IT GETS EASY  
TO FORGET  
THAT SOME  
MONSTERS  
ARE **REAL**.

WHEN THE CREW STOPS  
LAUGHING, NONE OF THEM  
OFFERS TO COME ALONG.







I  
KEEP HEARING  
SOMETHING...



HOW  
MUCH DO YOU  
KNOW ABOUT  
ME, O KING?

LET'S SAY,  
'MORE THAN  
YOU'D LIKE, AND  
LESS THAN I  
OUGHT TO.'

FINE  
ANSWER.



AND  
I'M TOLD YOUR  
BUSINESS WITH  
THE MERCHANTS'  
GUILD IS A COVER  
FOR YOUR TRADE  
IN **SECRETS**.

OR  
WAS IT THE  
OTHER WAY  
AROUND?

**STORIES,**  
NOT **SECRETS**.

ANYWAY,  
THAT'S WHY  
I'M HERE.



AND **SHE'S** HERE  
BECAUSE SHE THINKS  
YOU NEED A  
GROWNUP.

BUT PRINCE  
CLAUDIO WAS  
RIGHT -- YOU  
DON'T TRUST US,  
AND THERE MUST  
BE OTHER PEOPLE  
YOU COULD'VE  
TAKEN.



WERE YOU  
WORRIED YOUR **LOYAL  
SUBJECTS** WOULD KEEP  
YOU FROM DOING WHAT  
YOU CAME TO DO?

OR AFRAID  
THEY'D LET YOU  
GET AWAY WITH  
IT?

BLOODY  
SWAMPS...





I FOUND  
ANIMAL  
TRACKS, BUT  
THAT'S ALL.

WHAT  
ARE WE EVEN  
LOOKING  
FOR?

SOMETHING  
UNUSUAL.



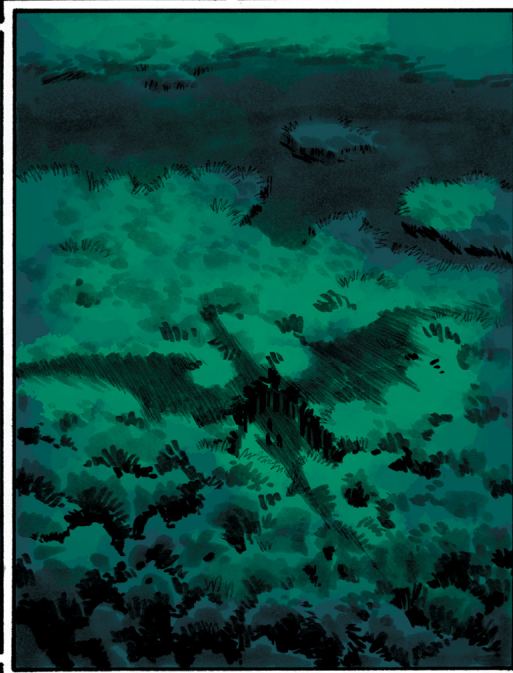
LIKE A WITCH  
WAVING AROUND A  
BROOMSTICK?

THAT  
WOULD  
DO.



OR A  
CROCODILE  
GNAWING ON OUR  
CORPSES?

NOT  
SO MUCH  
THAT.



THAT  
SOUND IS  
GETTING  
CLOSER.



CCCCRRRRRK

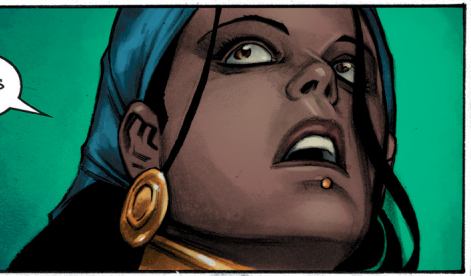
WHAT DO  
WE DO?

BROWN OUR  
TROUSERS.

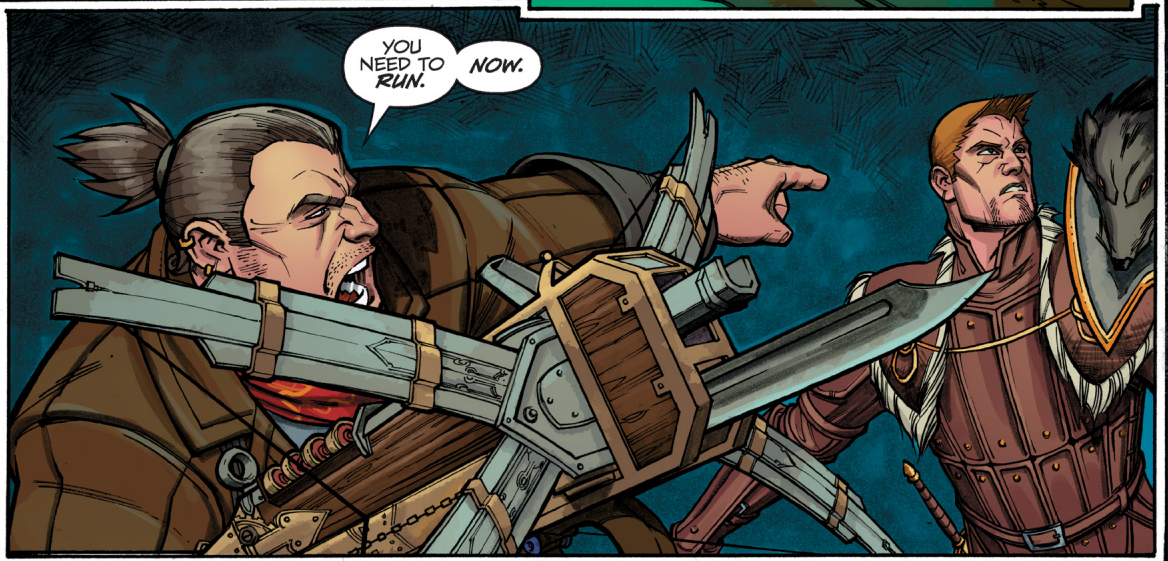




DOES  
THIS COUNT AS  
UNUSUAL?



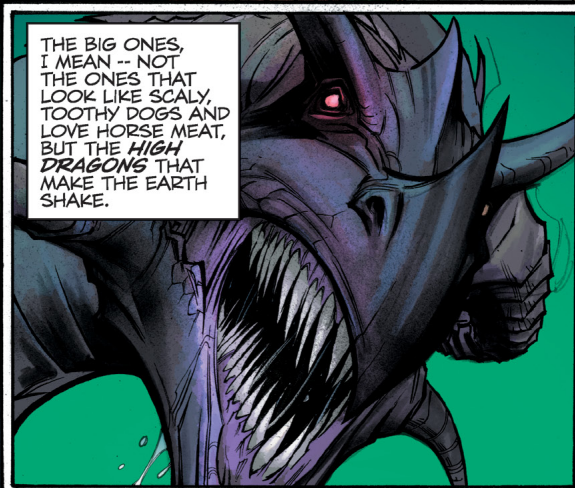




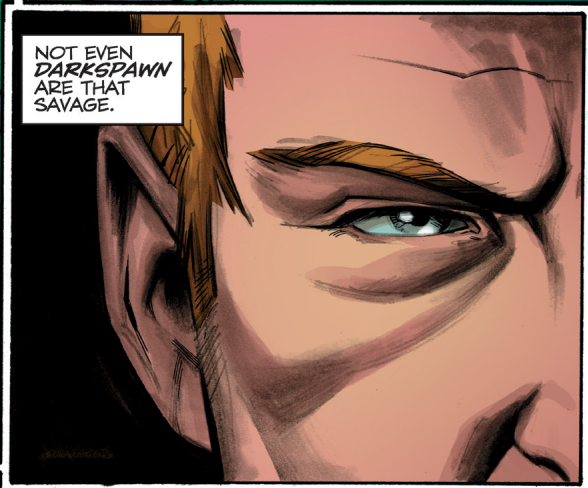




IN MY LIFE SO FAR,  
I'VE TAKEN SWORD  
TO THREE DRAGONS.



THE BIG ONES,  
I MEAN -- NOT  
THE ONES THAT  
LOOK LIKE SCALY,  
TOOTHY DOGS AND  
LOVE HORSE MEAT,  
BUT THE **HIGH**  
**DRAGONS** THAT  
MAKE THE EARTH  
SHAKE.



NOT EVEN  
**DARKSPAWN**  
ARE THAT  
SAVAGE.



A DRAGON FEEDS  
ON ANYTHING. A  
DRAGON EXISTS  
ONLY TO KILL.



IT'S NOT  
ATTACKING...?









MY DARLING.

A SMALL GROUP OF  
JAWED ON I THOUGHT  
WAS THE LAST OF THE  
BLOOD BROTHERS THE  
BROTHERS

## CHAPTER 4

RETURN TO  
THE GROVE.



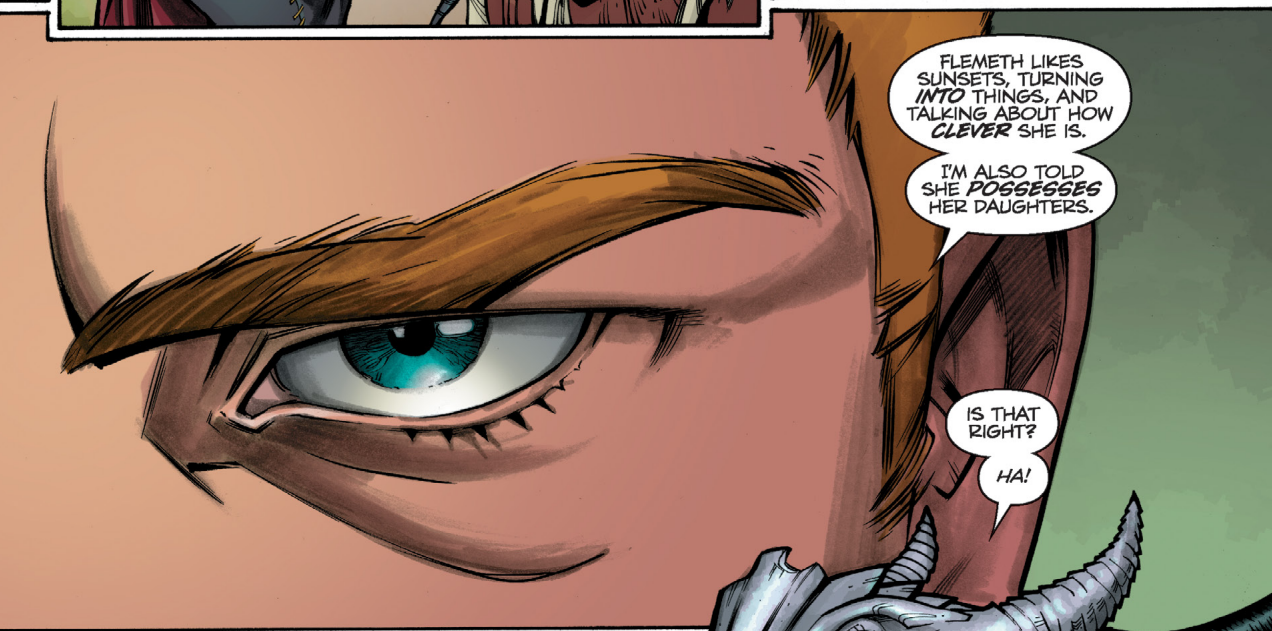
WHY  
DIDN'T IT  
KILL US?

SHE  
CAN SMELL  
THE OLD BLOOD  
IN YOU, SON OF  
KINGS.

YOU  
HAVE COME A  
LONG WAY.











YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

STOP!

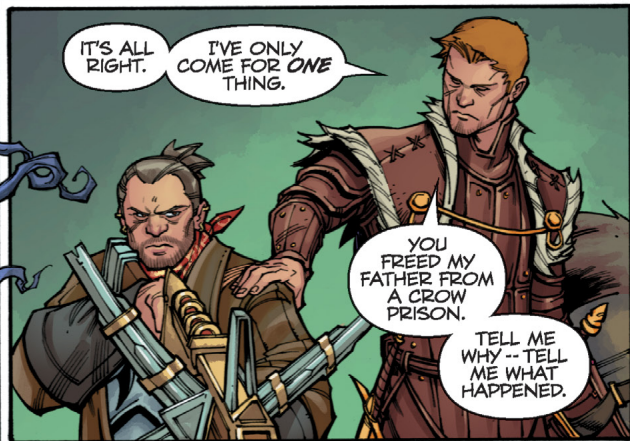
GO BACK WHENCE YOU CAME, SON OF KINGS.

NOTHING BUT MISERY AWAITS YOU HERE.



WHEN HAS THAT STOPPED A CHEERFUL BUNCH LIKE US?

DON'T MAKE ME INTRODUCE YOU TO BIANCA.

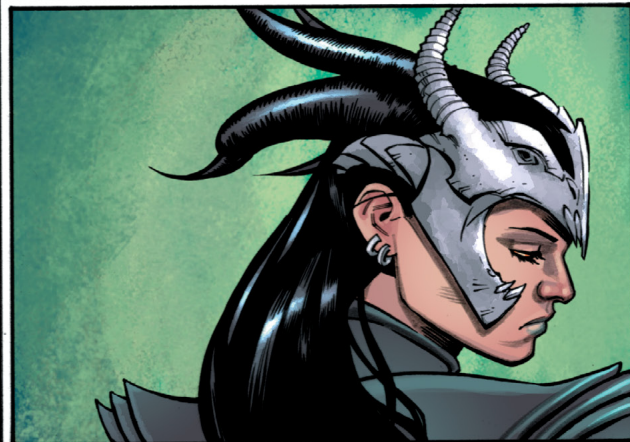


IT'S ALL RIGHT.

I'VE ONLY COME FOR ONE THING.

YOU FREED MY FATHER FROM A CROW PRISON.

TELL ME WHY -- TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.



VERY WELL.

FOLLOW.



THE  
SILENT  
GROVE.

BUILT AFTER  
THE FALL OF THE  
TEVINTER IMPERIUM,  
BY THOSE WHO KNEW  
THAT **DRAGONS**  
WOULD NEED  
PROTECTION.

WHAT WOULD  
**DRAGONS** NEED  
PROTECTING  
FROM?

THE  
IGNORANCE  
OF MANKIND.

HOW MANY  
"HEROES" HUNTED  
DRAGONS OVER THE  
CENTURIES, UNTIL  
ALMOST NONE  
WERE LEFT?

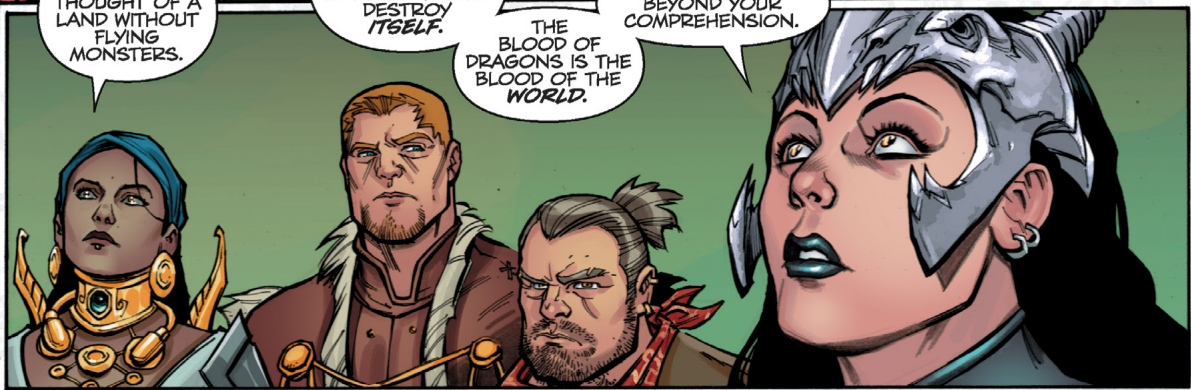
IT WAS  
NEARLY A  
TRAGEDY FOR  
US ALL.

YES --  
**TRAGIC**, THE  
THOUGHT OF A  
LAND WITHOUT  
FLYING  
MONSTERS.

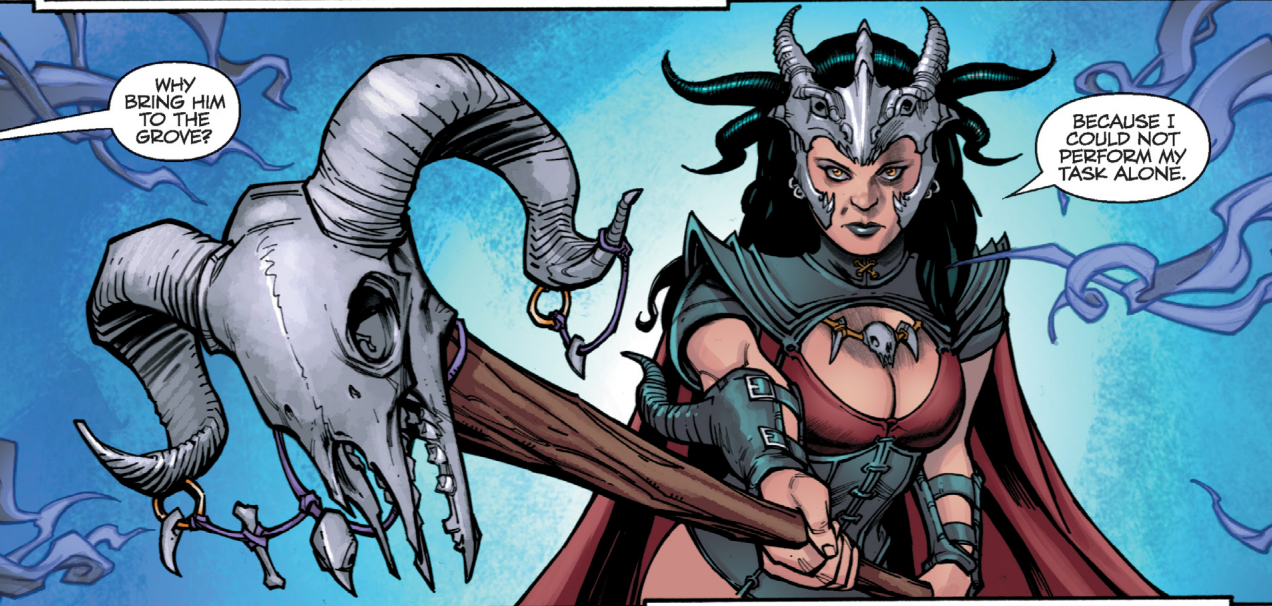
IN  
DESTROYING  
WHAT IT DOES  
NOT UNDERSTAND,  
MANKIND WOULD  
DESTROY  
ITSELF.

ANOTHER SUBJECT  
BEYOND YOUR  
COMPREHENSION.

THE  
BLOOD OF  
DRAGONS IS THE  
BLOOD OF THE  
WORLD.















I PERMITTED  
THIS MUCH OUT  
OF RESPECT FOR  
YOUR FATHER.

TAKE  
CONSOLATION  
IN THE FACT THAT  
HIS LIFE HAD  
MEANING.

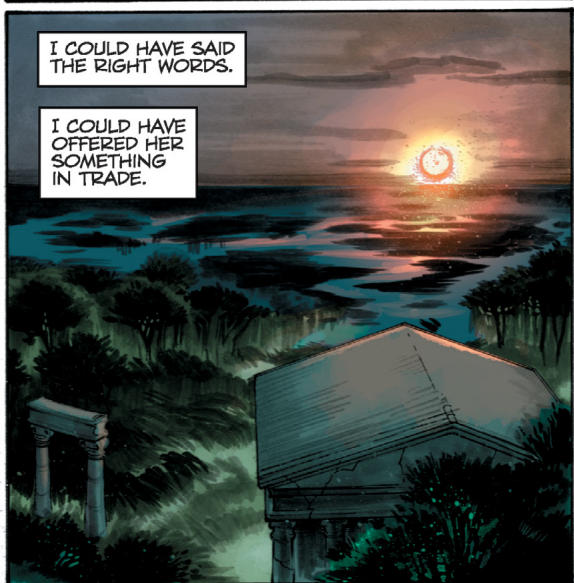
**MOST  
DO NOT.**



DAMN IT.

CUT  
HIM LOOSE,  
AND LET'S  
GO.

THE  
DRAGON  
LOOKS  
HUNGRY.



I COULD HAVE SAID  
THE RIGHT WORDS.

I COULD HAVE  
OFFERED HER  
SOMETHING  
IN TRADE.



I COULD HAVE  
GOTTEN A BETTER  
ANSWER, SOMEHOW.

WHAT  
NEXT?





SAY  
SOMETHING,  
AT LEAST.

YOU'RE NOT STUPID --  
YOU KNEW THE WITCH  
WOULDN'T BRING OUT  
YOUR FATHER WITH A  
CUP OF TEA AND  
A HUG.



WHAT  
WERE YOU  
EXPECTING?



JUST...AN  
ENDING.

EVEN  
A GRAVE.



YOU'RE A  
KING -- YOU GET  
TO WRITE YOUR  
OWN ENDING.

FOR  
NOW, LET'S  
GET BACK TO  
THE SHIP.

I DOUBT  
YAVANA WANTS  
US SPENDING THE  
NIGHT IN HER  
SWAMP.

AGREED.



AHH!





NEXT  
TIME, PIERCE  
THE HEART  
LIKE YOU'RE  
ASKED.

CLAUDIO!

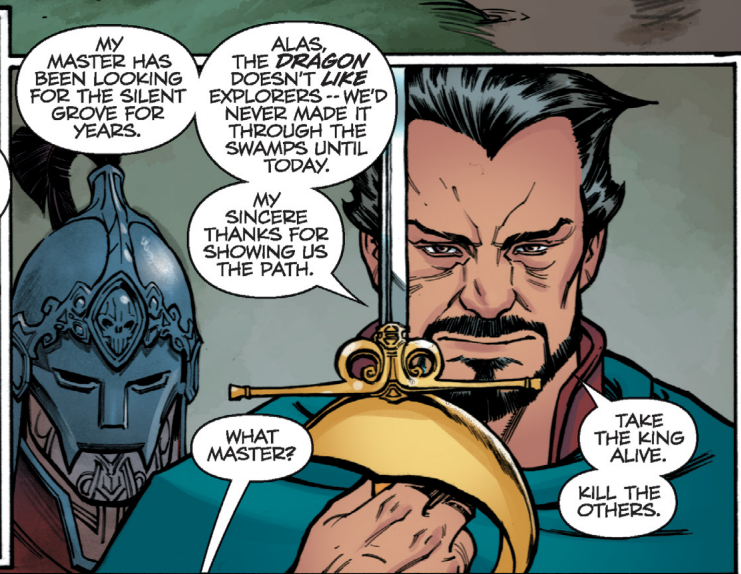
BASTARD.



WHAT IS  
THIS?

IF YOU  
WANTED US DEAD,  
YOU COULD'VE SAVED  
US THE TROUBLE  
AND DONE IT IN  
ANTIVA.

I  
COULD HAVE,  
YES, BUT THIS  
ISN'T **CROW**  
BUSINESS.



MY  
MASTER HAS  
BEEN LOOKING  
FOR THE SILENT  
GROVE FOR  
YEARS.

ALAS,  
THE **DRAGON**  
DOESN'T *LIKE*  
EXPLORERS -- WE'D  
NEVER MADE IT  
THROUGH THE  
SWAMPS UNTIL  
TODAY.

MY  
SINCERE  
THANKS FOR  
SHOWING US  
THE PATH.

WHAT  
MASTER?

TAKE  
THE KING  
ALIVE.

KILL THE  
OTHERS.













ALISTAIR...

GO  
BACK TO  
FERELDEN.

FIND ARL  
TEAGAN -- HE'LL  
PAY YOU -- AND  
TELL HIM WHAT  
HAPPENED.

THANK  
YOU  
BOTH.



WE  
SHOULD  
PROBABLY GET  
TO THE SHIP,  
RIVAINI.

BEFORE THE  
CROCODILES  
EAT US.

YES.

AND  
BEFORE  
YOU BLEED  
TO DEATH.

>GHI<

THAT  
WOULD BE  
BEST.



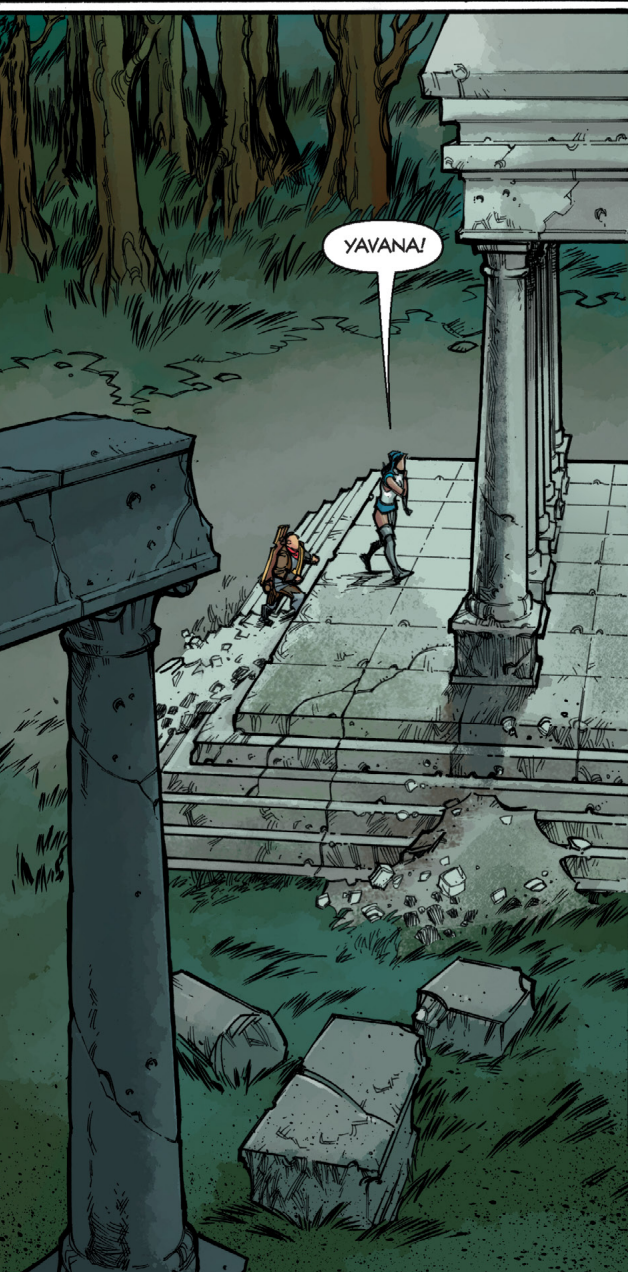
WE'RE  
NOT GOING  
TO THE SHIP,  
ARE WE?

NOT UNTIL I  
SLIT CLAUDIO'S  
THROAT AND GET  
HIS PRISONER  
BACK.

I WAS  
HOPING YOU'D  
SAY THAT...



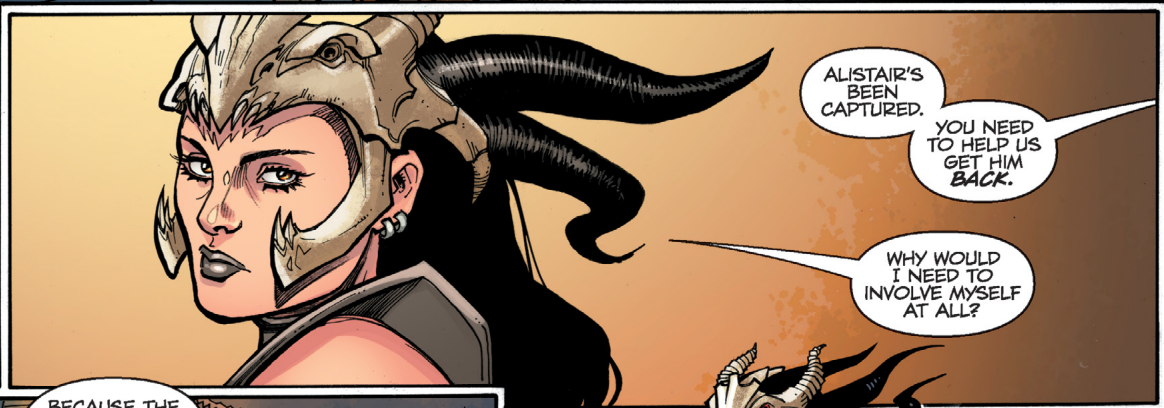
## CHAPTER 5







YOU!  
WITCH!



ALISTAIR'S  
BEEN  
CAPTURED.

YOU NEED  
TO HELP US  
GET HIM  
BACK.

WHY WOULD  
I NEED TO  
INVOLVE MYSELF  
AT ALL?



BECAUSE THE  
PEOPLE WHO  
TOOK HIM ARE  
LOOKING FOR  
THIS...PLACE.

THEY ALREADY  
KNOW THE WAY,  
AND I EXPECT THEY  
WANT ALISTAIR AS A  
SHIELD AGAINST  
YOUR DRAGON.

THAT  
AND MORE,  
YES.

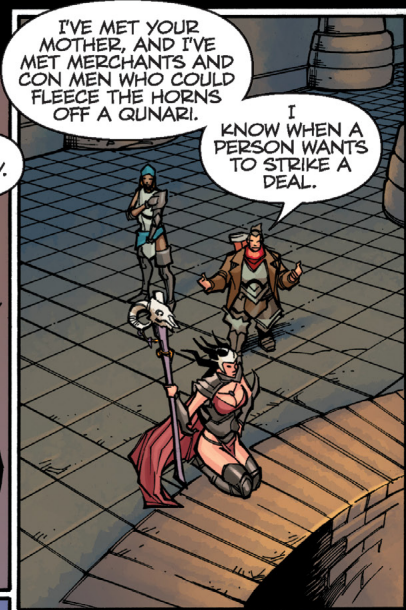


AND YOU'RE  
PLANNING TO,  
WHAT -- WAIT  
FOR THEM?

HARDLY  
YOUR  
CONCERN.

BESIDES, YOU  
CARE NOTHING  
FOR MY FATE.













...IF IT'S ANY COMFORT, I WAS IMPRESSED YOU CAME TO ANTIVA ALONE.

IT SHOWED COURAGE, IF NOT INTELLECT.



RIGHT-- BECAUSE YOU'RE THE *CLEVER* ONE.

YOU LURED ME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE TO GET INTO THAT GROVE?

I DID.

PITY YOU DIDN'T THINK TO JUST *KILL* THE DRAGON.



WE TOYED WITH THE NOTION OF *TRYING* --

-- BUT THAT BEAUTY IS WHY WE'RE INTERESTED.

WHEN YOU SAY "*WE*"...YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE CROW ASSASSINS.

WE ALL HAVE OUR PATRONS.



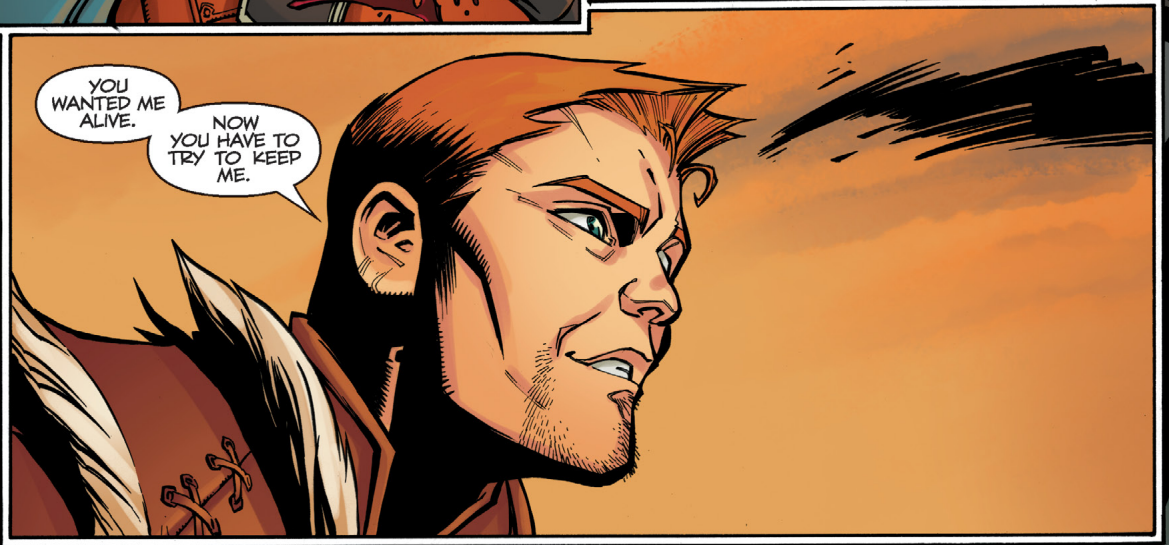
PROVE MORE TOLERABLE THAN YOUR *FATHER*, AND I MAY EVEN TELL YOU ABOUT MINE.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MARIC?

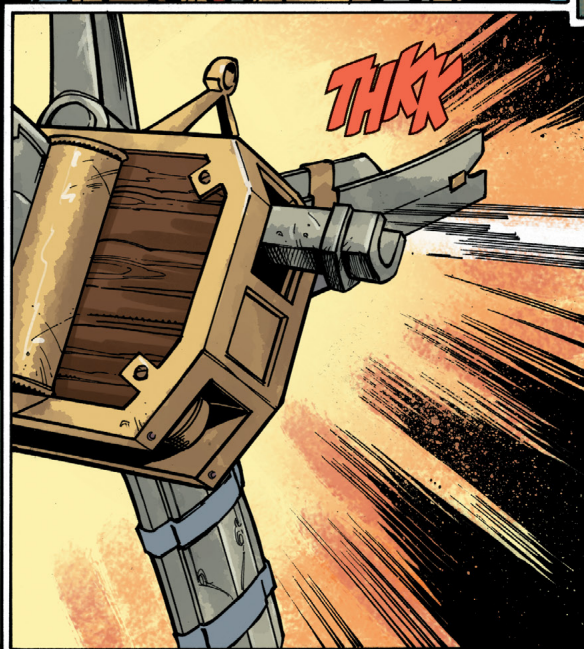
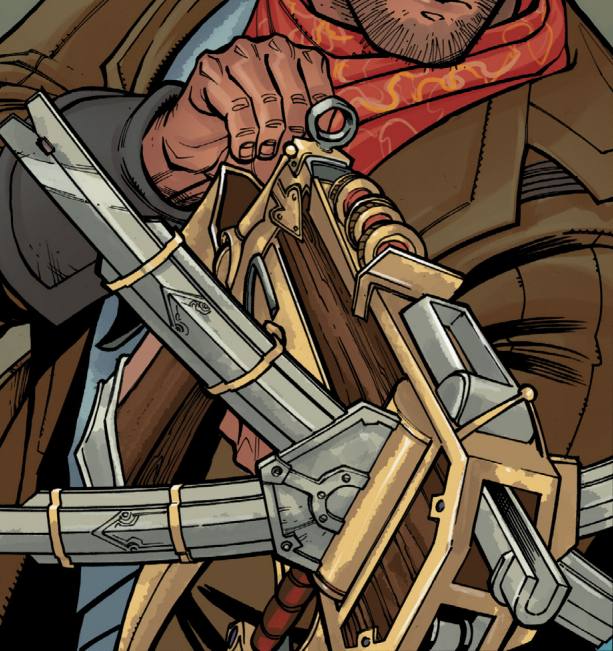
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER HE CAME HERE?









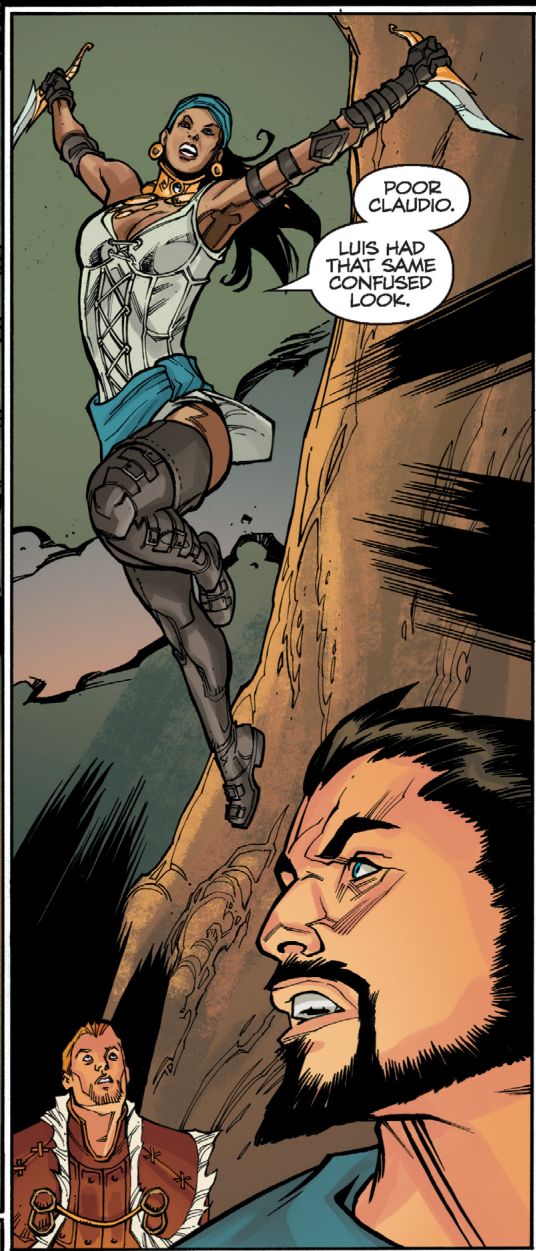






IDIOTS!

MAINTAIN A PERIMETER!



POOR CLAUDIO.

LUIS HAD THAT SAME CONFUSED LOOK.



YOU DON'T DESERVE TO SPEAK HIS NAME.

HE WAS MY HUSBAND, NOT YOURS.

PITY, TOO -- I'D HAVE LOVED TO SEE YOU LOCKED IN HIS "EVENING GALLERY" FOR A FEW DAYS.



DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO GO?

SO WHAT IF YOU DID?

YOU'RE NOT MY KING.





TRYING  
TO TRADE  
UP, THEN?

LUIS COULD PAY  
FOR YOUR WINE  
AND YOUR SILKS,  
BUT THIS MAN COULD  
GIVE YOU A WHOLE  
COUNTRY.

STAY  
CLOSE AND  
SHOW SOME  
FLESH--



SHUT  
UP AND  
FIGHT.



ALWAYS THE  
HYPOCRITE.

HOW  
MANY NIGHTS  
DID YOU WEAR  
THAT SHY LITTLE  
SMILE, WHISPERING  
MEEKLY IN YOUR  
HUSBAND'S  
EAR?





THEN  
WHEN HE ASKS  
YOU TO *ENTERTAIN*  
HIS FRIENDS, YOU DECIDE  
HE'S NOT *DOTING*  
ENOUGH?

YOU WERE  
*LUCKY* TO BE  
LUI'S PLAYTHING --  
NO ONE ELSE WOULD  
HAVE LIFTED YOU OUT  
OF THAT *FILTH* YOU  
CALLED A HOME!

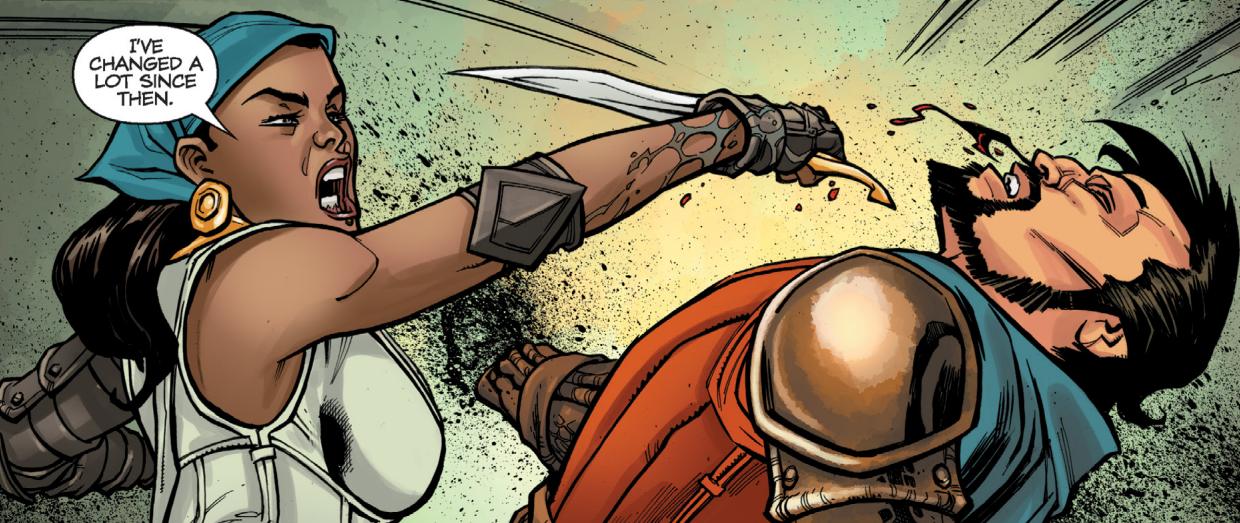


IF  
YOU THOUGHT  
YOU WERE TOO  
GOOD FOR HIM,  
YOU SHOULD HAVE  
CRAWLED BACK TO  
THE SEWERS ON  
YOUR WEDDING  
DAY --

-- NOT  
BEDDED AND  
*BETRAYED* HIM  
TO BECOME  
WHORE OF THE  
EASTERN  
SHORE!



YOU'RE  
RIGHT -- I  
*SHOULD*  
HAVE.

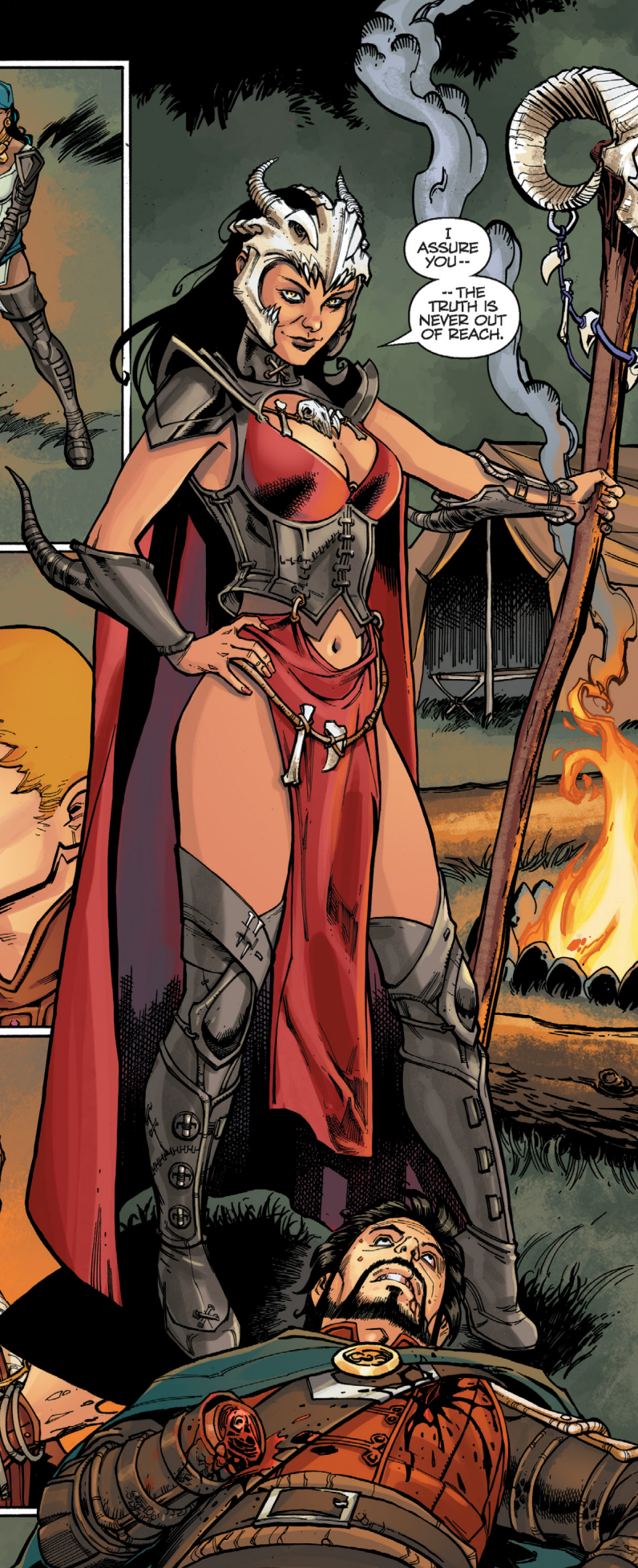


I'VE  
CHANGED A  
LOT SINCE  
THEN.













UGH.

FROM NOW ON, NO MORE GAMES OF CHASE THE DWARF.

YOU'RE NOT JUST A DISTRACTION, VARRIC.



YOU'RE USEFUL FOR MORE THAN LURING AWAY GUARDS--

## CHAPTER 6



--WHILE EVERYTHING MEMORABLE HAPPENS SOMEPLACE ELSE?

GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

YOU ALMOST MISSED THE FUN.

EVIDENTLY, WE'RE GOING TO ASK CLAUDIO HOW IT FEELS TO BE STABBED IN THE CHEST.





WE  
BEGIN.

HIS SPIRIT  
LINGERS IN  
THE FADE.



WHO  
ARE  
YOU?



I AM...  
CLAUDIO  
VALISTI.

PRINCE  
OF ANTIVA AND  
THIRD TALON OF  
THE ANTIVAN  
CROWS.

I AM  
DEAD?



TELL  
ME, OR I WILL  
PIN YOUR SPIRIT  
TO THIS ROTTING  
BODY FOR  
ETERNITY.

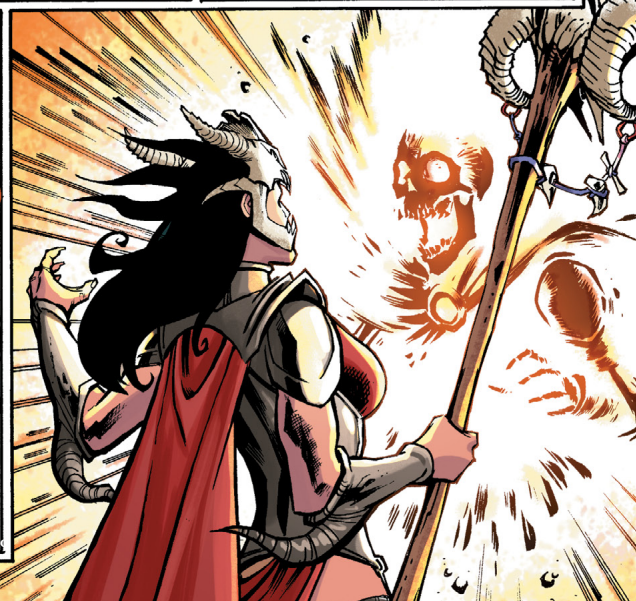
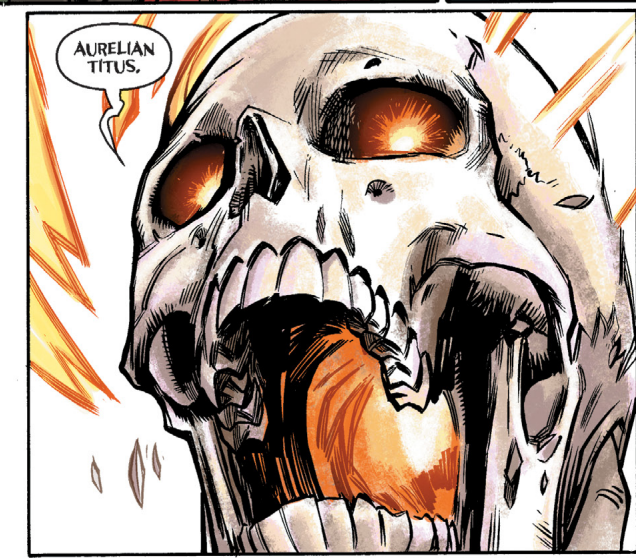
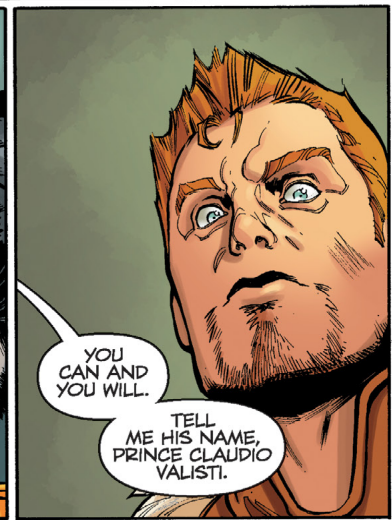
TELL ME, OR I  
WILL LET MAGGOTS  
EAT YOUR **ESSENCE**  
AS THEY EAT YOUR  
FLESH, AND PROTECT  
ONLY ENOUGH OF  
YOUR SOUL TO KEEP  
YOU **AWAKE**.



YOUR  
MASTER'S  
NAME!

I...





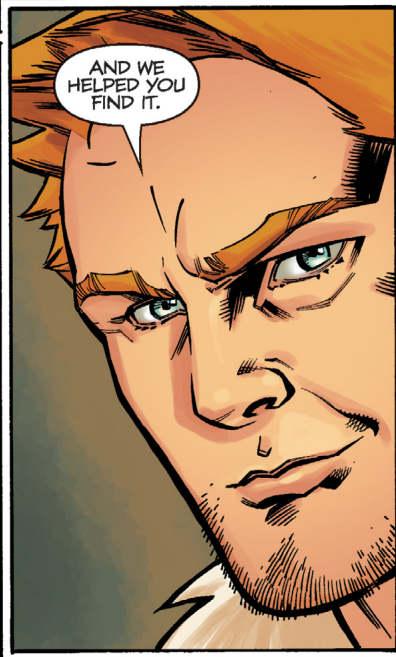




WHO'S  
AURELIAN  
TITUS?

FOR  
NOW?

A NAME --  
BUT IT IS A  
NAME I HAVE  
SOUGHT FOR A  
VERY LONG  
TIME.



AND WE  
HELPED YOU  
FIND IT.



WHAT  
DO YOU  
THINK?

YOU  
DREW OUT HIS  
SERVANTS, AS I  
THOUGHT YOU  
MIGHT.

COME -- YOU  
HAVE EARNED  
ANOTHER  
CHANCE.



HAS SHE BEEN  
TESTING YOU, OR  
JUST SCREWING  
WITH US?

OR A  
LITTLE OF  
BOTH.

THAT LAST  
ONE -- I NEVER  
PASS TESTS.



IT'S ALMOST DAWN  
WHEN WE RETURN  
TO THE GROVE.

YOUR  
FUTURE LIES  
BELOW.

YOUR  
FRIENDS  
CANNOT  
FOLLOW.

ANY IDEA  
WHAT'S DOWN  
THERE?

BESIDES  
"YOUR  
FUTURE"?  
NO.

YOU'VE  
COME THIS  
FAR FOR  
ANSWERS,  
O KING.

PLANNING  
TO STOP  
NOW?

WHAT IF  
I DON'T  
LIKE WHAT  
I FIND?



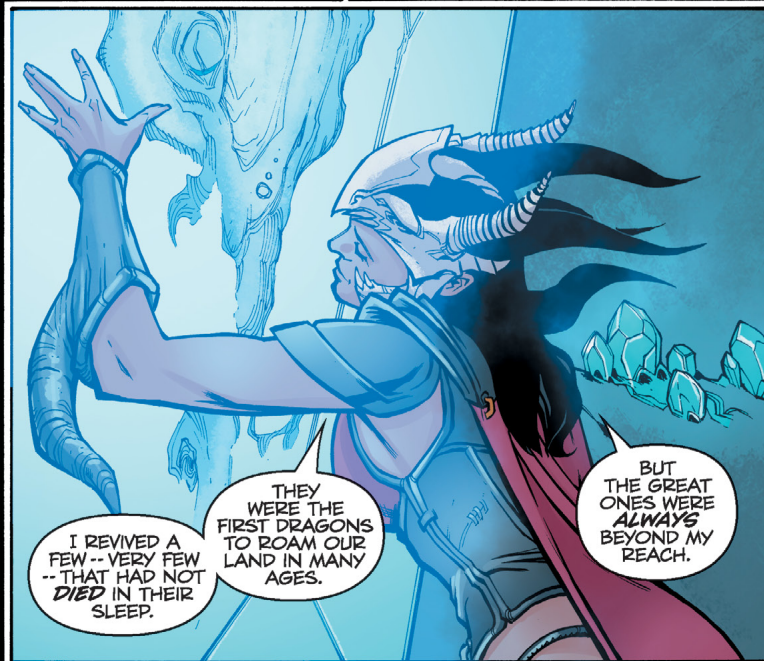


IT IS  
PERMITTED.

TONIGHT,  
AND ONLY  
TONIGHT.



WHERE  
ARE WE?



I REVIVED A  
FEW--VERY FEW  
--THAT HAD NOT  
DIED IN THEIR  
SLEEP.

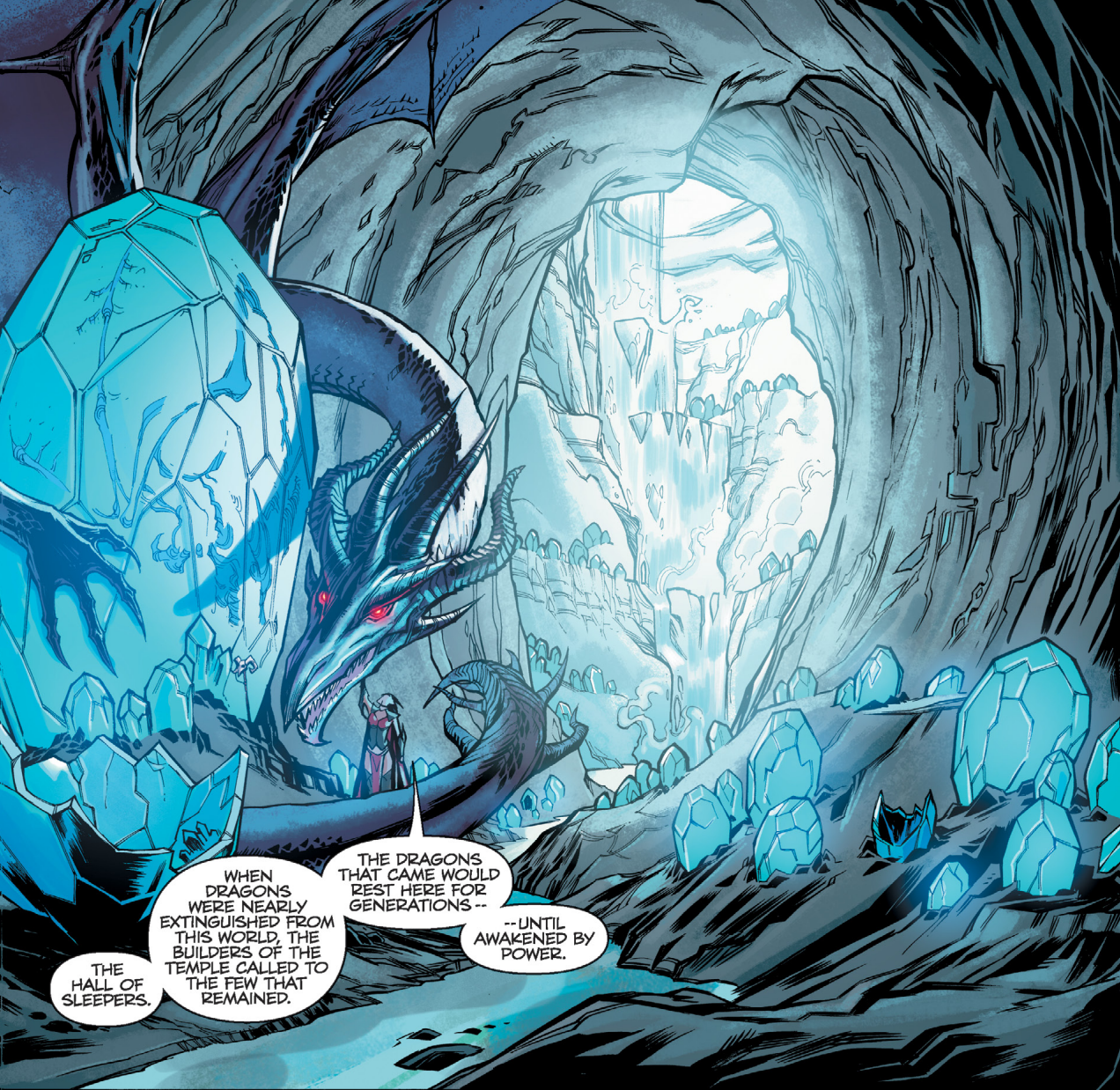
THEY  
WERE THE  
FIRST DRAGONS  
TO ROAM OUR  
LAND IN MANY  
AGES.

BUT  
THE GREAT  
ONES WERE  
ALWAYS  
BEYOND MY  
REACH.



MARIC  
CHANGED  
THAT.



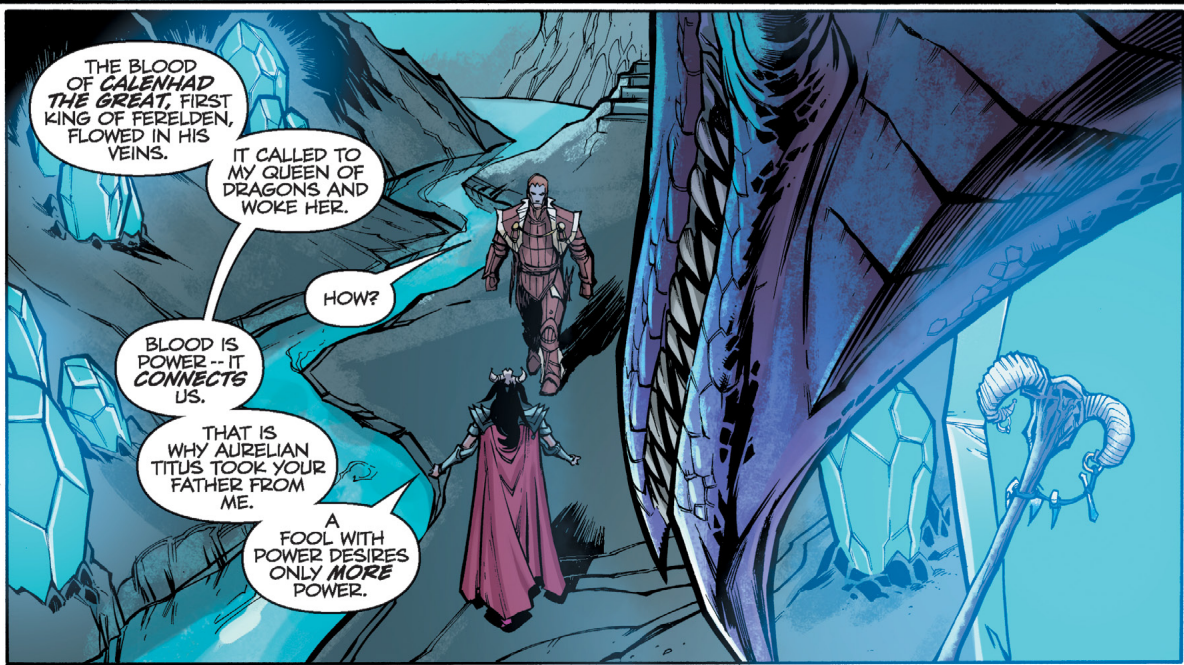


THE  
HALL OF  
SLEEPERS.

WHEN  
DRAGONS  
WERE NEARLY  
EXTINGUISHED FROM  
THIS WORLD, THE  
BUILDERS OF THE  
TEMPLE CALLED TO  
THE FEW THAT  
REMAINED.

THE DRAGONS  
THAT CAME WOULD  
REST HERE FOR  
GENERATIONS --

--UNTIL  
AWAKENED BY  
POWER.



THE BLOOD  
OF **CALENHAD  
THE GREAT**, FIRST  
KING OF FERELDEN,  
FLOWED IN HIS  
VEINS.

IT CALLED TO  
MY QUEEN OF  
DRAGONS AND  
WOKE HER.

HOW?

BLOOD IS  
POWER -- IT  
**CONNECTS**  
US.

THAT IS  
WHY **AURELIAN  
TITUS** TOOK YOUR  
FATHER FROM  
ME.

A  
FOOL WITH  
POWER DESIRES  
ONLY **MORE**  
POWER.





YOUR HEART  
BEATS WITH THE  
OLD BLOOD, AS  
WELL.

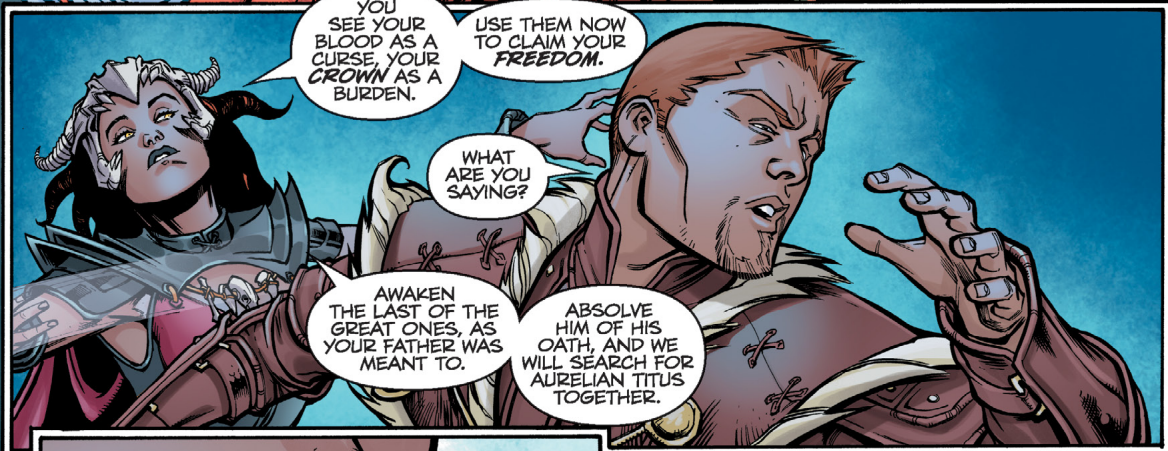


WHERE DO  
YOU THINK  
IT COMES  
FROM?

IT SINGS  
OF A TIME WHEN  
DRAGONS RULED  
THE *SKIES*.

A TIME  
BEFORE THE  
VEIL, BEFORE THE  
MYSTERIES WERE  
FORGOTTEN.

CAN YOU  
HEAR IT?



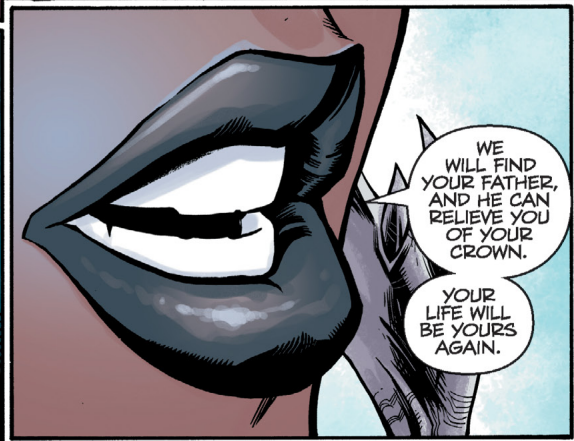
YOU  
SEE YOUR  
BLOOD AS A  
CURSE, YOUR  
CROWN AS A  
BURDEN.

USE THEM NOW  
TO CLAIM YOUR  
*FREEDOM*.

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
SAYING?

AWAKEN  
THE LAST OF THE  
GREAT ONES, AS  
YOUR FATHER WAS  
MEANT TO.

ABSOLVE  
HIM OF HIS  
OATH, AND WE  
WILL SEARCH FOR  
AURELIAN TITUS  
TOGETHER.



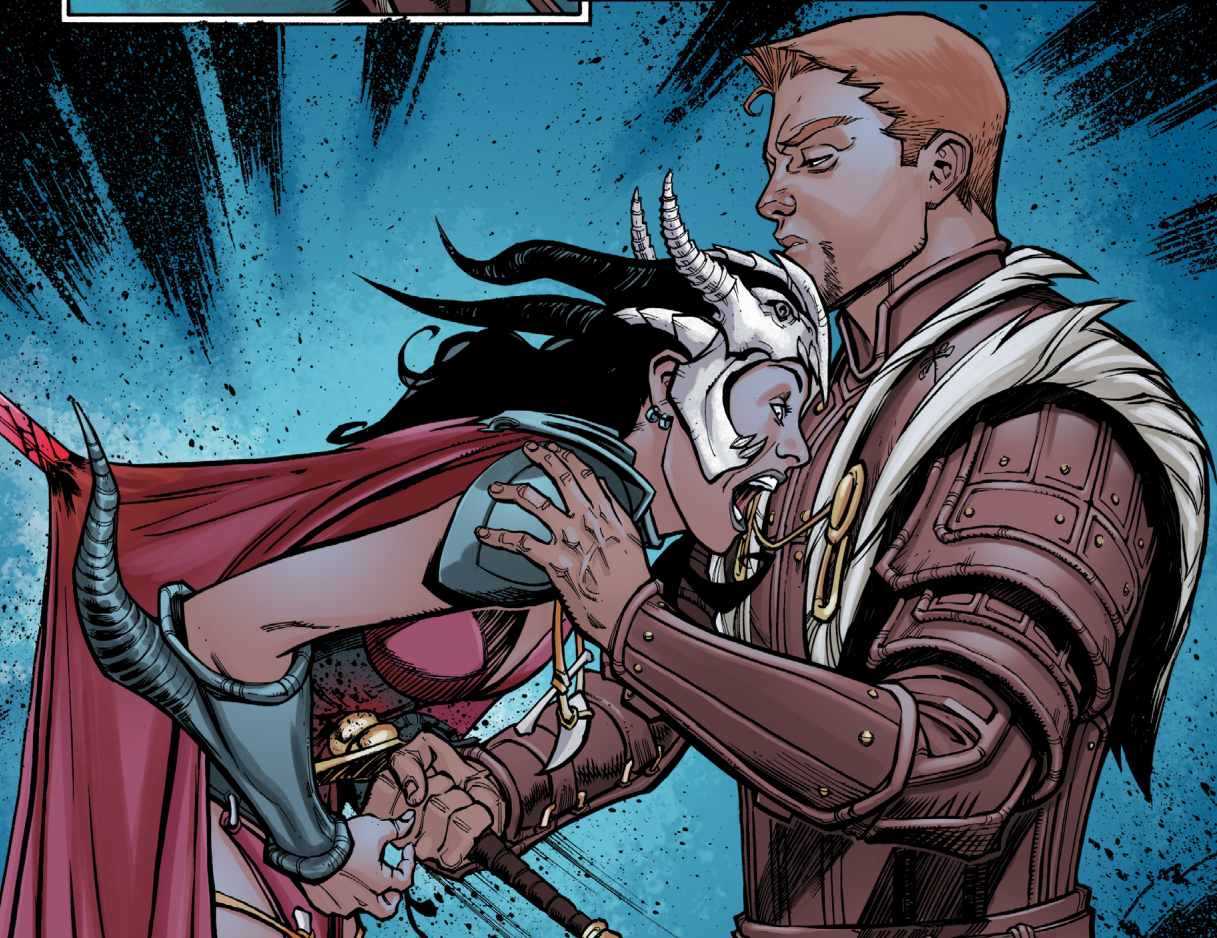
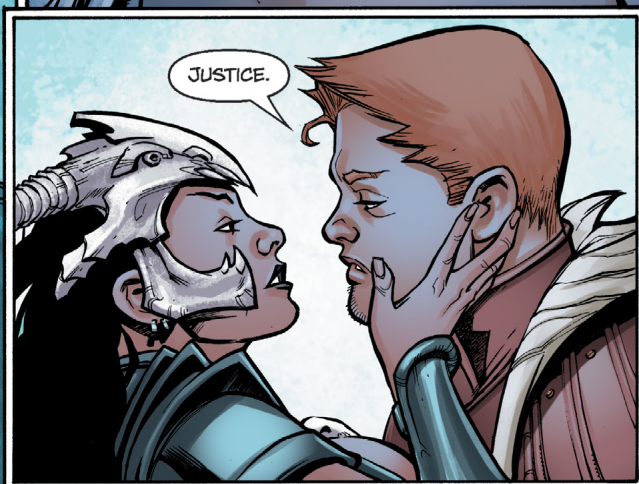
WE  
WILL FIND  
YOUR FATHER,  
AND HE CAN  
RELIEVE YOU  
OF YOUR  
CROWN.

YOUR  
LIFE WILL  
BE YOURS  
AGAIN.



WHY IS IT  
ALWAYS A  
RITUAL?







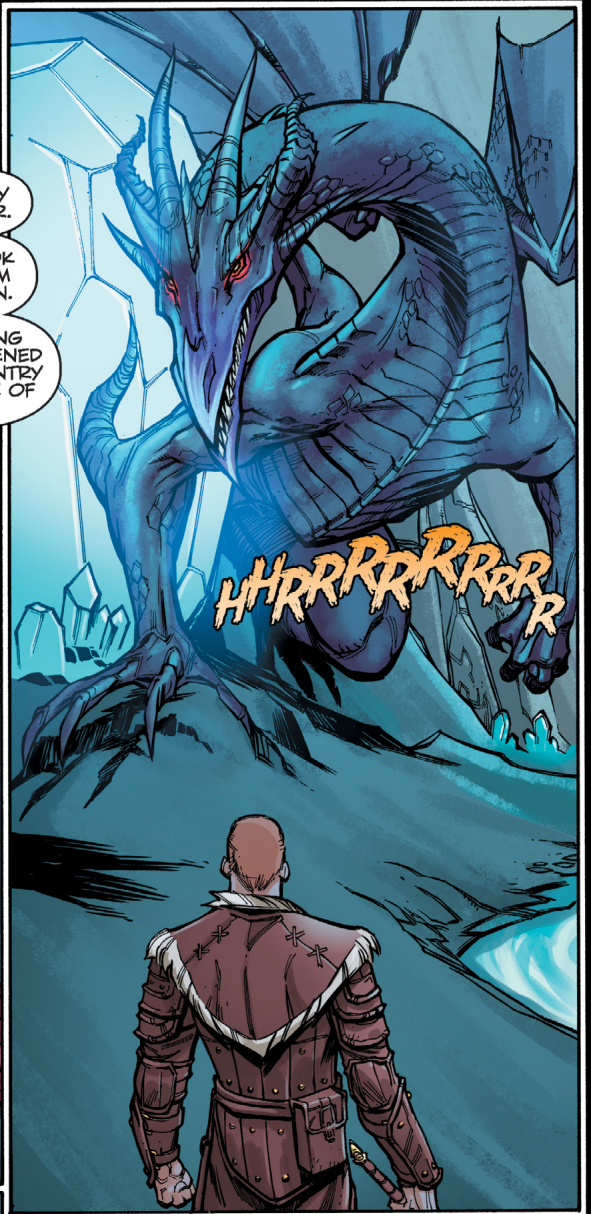


YOU  
TOOK MARIC  
FROM ME.

FROM MY  
BROTHER.

YOU TOOK  
HIM FROM  
FERELDEN.

EVERYTHING  
THAT HAPPENED  
TO MY COUNTRY  
IS BECAUSE OF  
YOU.



HHRRRRRRRR

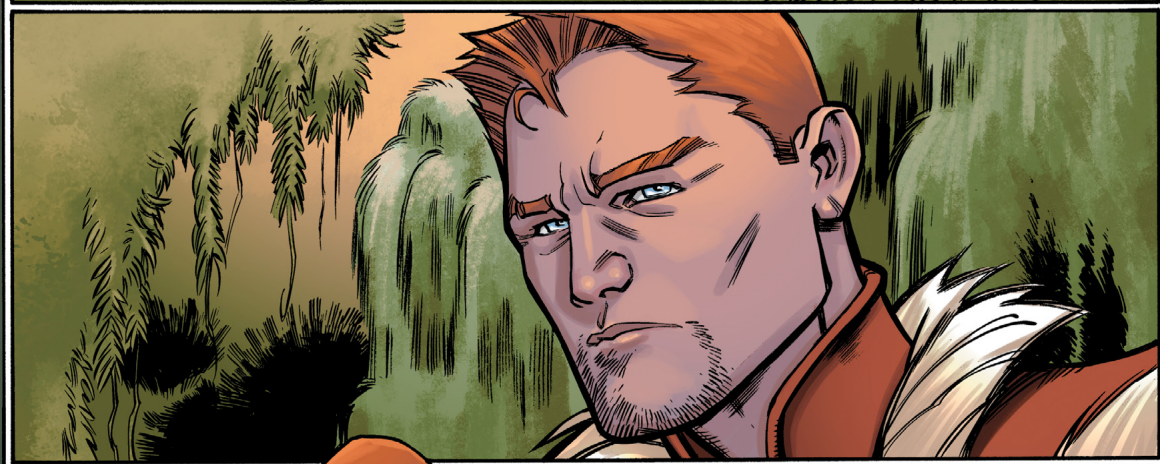


GOING  
TO EAT  
ME?

I  
DIDN'T  
THINK  
SO.











WHEN  
THAT'S DONE,  
I'M GOING TO  
FIND MARIC.

AND THEN  
I'M GOING  
HOME...TO  
BE KING.



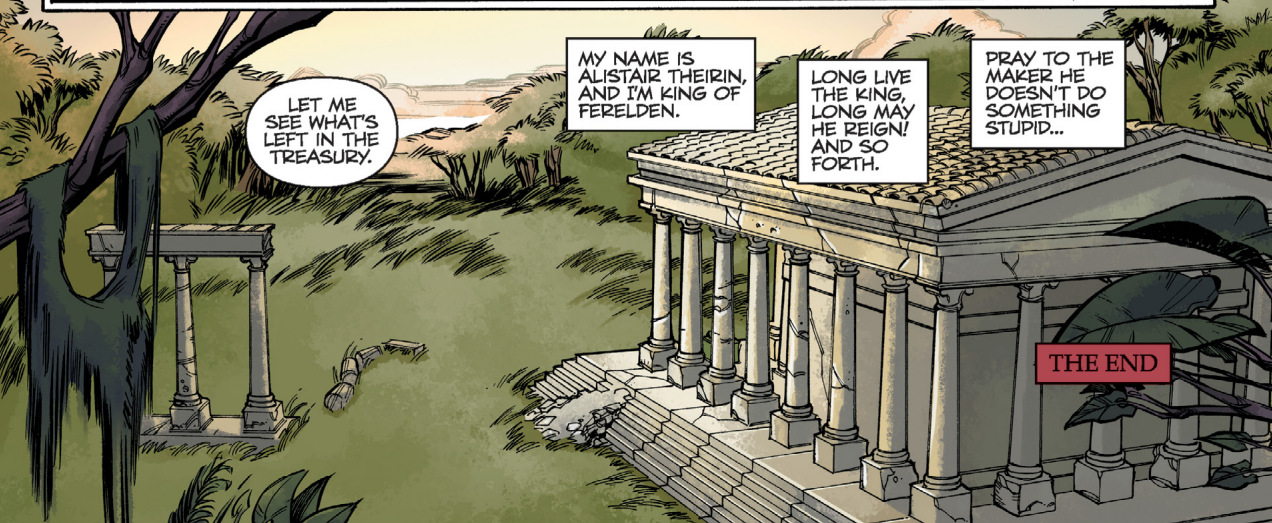
IT'S ABOUT  
TIME YOU  
SAID THAT.



I SHOULD  
ASK FOR A  
SECOND  
SHIP.

OR A  
TITLE.

YOU  
DO INTEND TO  
PAY US TO STICK  
AROUND...?



LET ME  
SEE WHAT'S  
LEFT IN THE  
TREASURY.

MY NAME IS  
ALISTAIR THEIRIN,  
AND I'M KING OF  
FERELDEN.

LONG LIVE  
THE KING,  
LONG MAY  
HE REIGN!  
AND SO  
FORTH.

PRAY TO THE  
MAKER HE  
DOESN'T DO  
SOMETHING  
STUPID...

THE END









# DRAGON AGE™

## THE SILENT GROVE

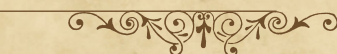


*From David Gaider, lead writer of the blockbuster  
Dragon Age games, Dragon Age: The Silent Grove is the  
perfect introduction to BioWare's world of dark fantasy!*

It's unusual for a king to embark on a dangerous quest himself rather than send emissaries, but King Alistair Theirin has caught wind of a rumor big enough, and personal enough, that he is compelled to investigate. With the deadly pirate Isabela and underworld merchant Varric Tethras by his side, Alistair travels to Antiva—the nation of assassins—to learn the fate of his long-lost father, King Maric. There, they will engineer a prison break, battle an assassin prince, encounter the mysterious Witch of the Wilds, and uncover the secret history of dragons!



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