



dufaux ✦ munuera

SPELLBOUND

BOOK I





dufaux ✦ munuera
colorist: Sedyas

spellbound

BOOK I



To François Le Bescond

For being open to our enchantments, and for his elegance.

The authors.

J . D . , J . L . M .

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FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN THAT SUMMER OF LOVE,
OF SWEET AND TENDER LOVE,
BLANCHE WAS LATE.

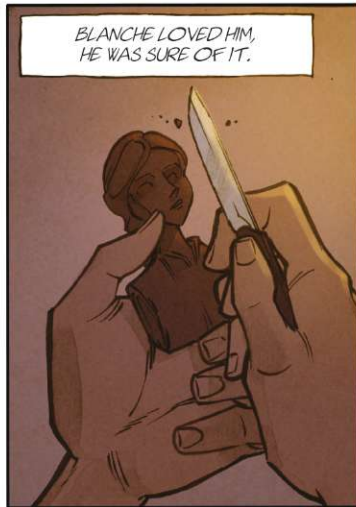


AS GASPARD WAITED FOR
HER, HE CARVED A FIGURINE
OF HIS BELOVED.

HE WAS TRYING TO KEEP HIMSELF
BUSY, SO AS NOT TO WORRY.



AND ANYWAY, WHY WORRY?



BLANCHE LOVED HIM,
HE WAS SURE OF IT.



BUT ON THAT FATEFUL DAY,
ILLUSIONS WERE COMING TO AN END.



HORSES!



WAIT FOR ME HERE.
I WON'T BE LONG.



BLANCHE!
IT'S...IT'S
YOU!

DON'T WORRY,
THOSE MEN ARE LOYAL
TO ME. THEY WON'T
BETRAY US.



I ASKED
THEM TO COME
WITH ME...

...I
COULDN'T
COME
ALONE.



BUT WHY?!

MY FATHER WAS AMBUSHED
LAST NIGHT. BEFORE HE
DIED, HE SHARED HIS LAST
WISHES WITH ME.



I'M TO
TAKE HIS
PLACE AS
HEAD OF THE
KINGDOM.



YOU! WHAT ABOUT ...
YOUR BROTHER?!

OGER? MY MOTHER AND
I THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD
BE OUR NEXT KING...



BUT MY FATHER HAS DECIDED
OTHERWISE, AND I SHALL RESPECT
HIS LAST WISHES. TOMORROW,
THE BISHOP WILL PRESENT ME WITH
THE HOLY CROWN AND SCEPTER.



WE CAN'T
BE LOVERS
ANYMORE.



FORGET ABOUT
BLANCHE. SHE LOVED
BEING WITH YOU IN THIS
COTTAGE, BUT THAT
WAS WHEN SHE WAS
JUST A GIRL.



NOW, SHOULD YOU ENCOUNTER THE
QUEEN, YOU'LL KNEEL BEFORE HER.

LIKE ALL HER
SUBJECTS.

AND BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND LEFT,
LEAVING GASPARD IN A STATE OF
CONFUSION AND DESPAIR.



THE TIME OF
ILLUSIONS
HAD BEEN
SHORT LIVED
INDEED...



HER EYES
WERE SO COLD
AND HARD!



SHORT...BUT
INTENSE.



THEN
GASPARD
MADE HIS
FIRST
DECISION.



HE SET FIRE TO
THE COTTAGE.



THE SECOND
DECISION
WOULD
REQUIRE
GREAT
COURAGE.



FOR IT LED HIM TO THE
VILLAGE WHERE LIVED
MIRANDA, THE WITCH WHO
WHISPERS TO SPIRITS.

WAS THIS MADNESS? CERTAINLY!
FOR ONE DOES NOT EMERGE UNHARMED
FROM SUCH AN ADVENTURE.



IN THE VILLAGE FORGOTTEN BY MAN
AND TIME, LIGHT FILTERED FROM A HOUSE,
AND GASPARD THOUGHT...



IT MUST
BE HERE.

THE IMAGE OF GASPARD GLIMMERED IN THE
EYE OF THE SPIDER, THE SHREW, THE CENTIPEDE.
AND THE SPIDER, THE SHREW AND THE CENTIPEDE
WERE THRILLED AT THE THOUGHT OF
THE FEAST THAT AWAITED THEM.



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GASPARD KNOCKED ON THE DOOR OF
THE HOUSE. A VOICE ANSWERED.



COME IN.

HE OBEYED. IT WAS TOO LATE
TO TURN BACK.



SLAM!



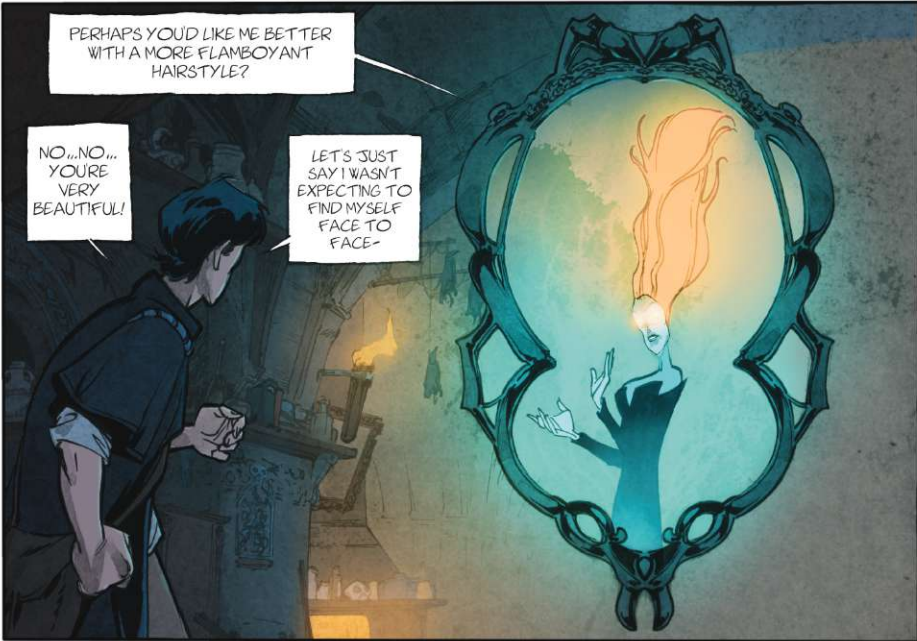
YOU SEEM
SURPRISED...
DON'T WORRY,
I OFTEN HAVE
THAT EFFECT.



PEOPLE ALWAYS IMAGINE ME AS AN OLD, TOOTHLESS HUNCHBACK WITH SCRAGGLY HAIR. SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU.



BUT I'VE CHOSEN A MORE PLEASANT APPEARANCE FOR MYSELF LATELY. IT SUITS ME, DON'T YOU THINK?



PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE ME BETTER WITH A MORE FLAMBOYANT HAIRSTYLE?

NO...NO... YOU'RE VERY BEAUTIFUL!

LET'S JUST SAY I WASN'T EXPECTING TO FIND MYSELF FACE TO FACE-



FACE TO FACE WITH A REFLECTION...

BE WARY OF REFLECTIONS! THEY ARE SHIFTY, CAPRICIOUS AND SELFISH, BUT TELL ME, WHY HAVE YOU COME ALL THIS WAY?



I WANT REVENGE ON SOMEONE WHO'S PUSHED ME AWAY, WHO LOOKS DOWN ON ME!

DO YOU LOVE THAT PERSON?

I HATE HER.

THEN YOU LOVE HER, WHICH MAKES THINGS CONSIDERABLY EASIER. WHO IS IT?



A...A GREAT LADY. BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND.



WELL, WELL, THAT IS MOST SURPRISING! AND POSSIBLY OF INTEREST TO THE ONE I SERVE.

BUT THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR THE FAVOR YOU ASK OF ME.



IT'S JUST THAT... I DON'T HAVE MUCH.

YES YOU DO.



ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS TAKE THE PEN OFF THE TABLE.

AND DIP ITS TIP IN YOUR BLOOD.

BUT-



DO IT!



I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO WRITE. JUST PUT AN 'X' AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE THAT APPEARS.



IS... IS THAT MY NAME INSCRIBED THERE?

YES. WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? SIGN!



GOOD. NOW, TELL ME, DO YOU OWN ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO PRETTY BLANCHE?



UM, NO. ALL I HAVE IS THIS FIGURINE...



THAT'LL DO. THROW IT IN THE FIRE.



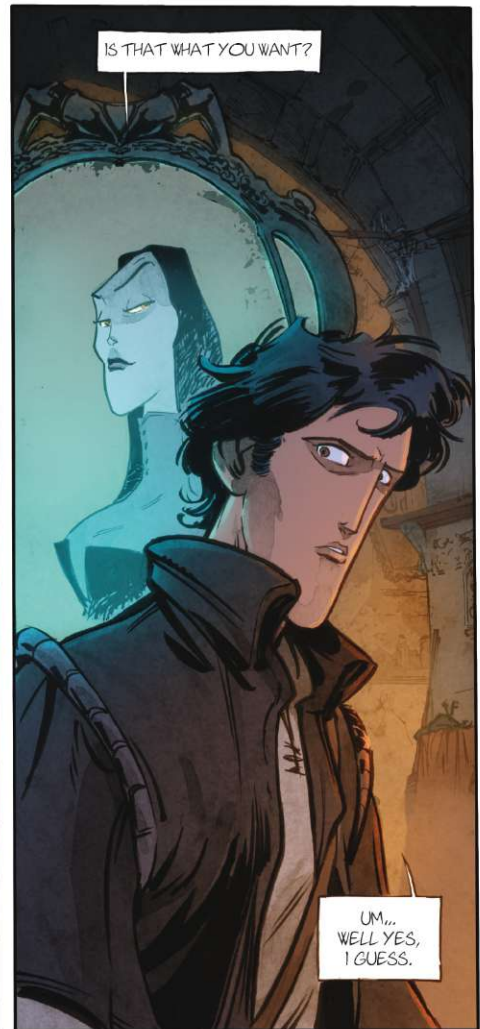
IS...IS THAT ALL?



REST ASSURED. THE MOMENT THE HAND OF GOD TOUCHES BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND...



...THE DEVIL WILL TAKE HOLD OF HER.



IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?

UM... WELL YES, I GUESS.



YOU'RE NOT SURE? WILL YOU REGRET WHAT YOU'VE DONE? YOU SHOULDN'T. WHAT'S SIGNED IS SIGNED.

IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE YOU.



ALL THOSE NAMES INSCRIBED IN MY BOOK OF SPELLS. SO MANY OF THEM. YOU CAN'T IMAGINE.

!?



NO!!!
Noooooo!!

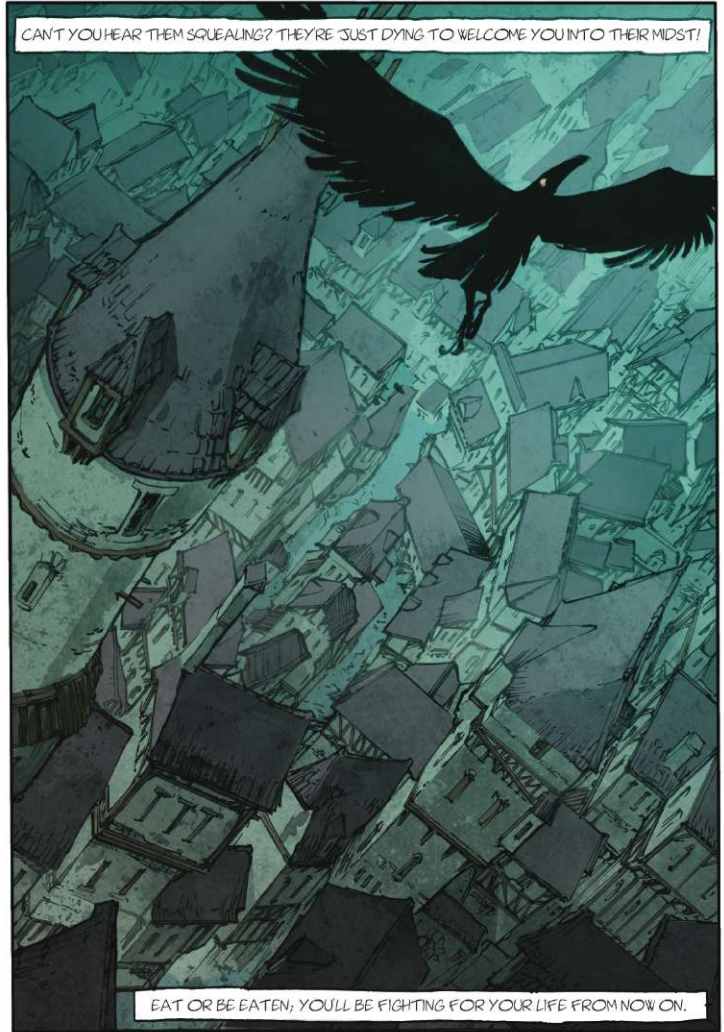
WHY ARE YOU SCREAMING? A WHOLE NEW LIFE IS OPENING UP BEFORE YOU.



LOOK AT THOSE NICE LONG LEGS. NOW CRAWL ALONG...

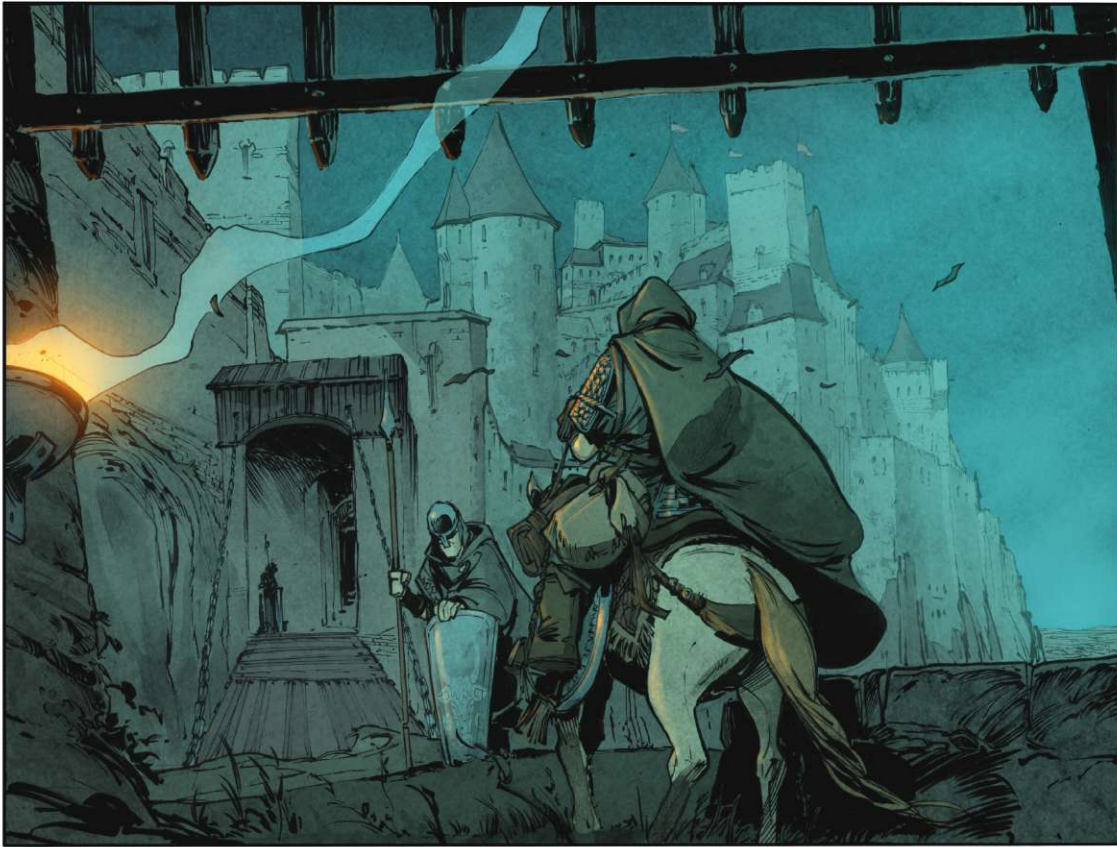


...AND GO JOIN YOUR FRIENDS.



CAN'T YOU HEAR THEM SQUEALING? THEY'RE JUST DYING TO WELCOME YOU INTO THEIR MIDST!

EAT OR BE EATEN; YOU'LL BE FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE FROM NOW ON.



POOR HUNCHBACK. SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL NEVER BE KING, THEN.



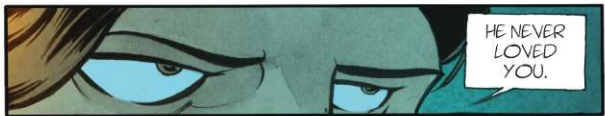
OH, MY HUMP! IT'S SUCH A BURDEN! I WILL NO DOUBT END UP CUTTING IT FROM MY BODY ONE DAY.



THERE YOU ARE, SON... YOU LOOK SAD.



ARE YOU MOURNING YOUR FATHER? YOU MISS HIM, THEN? THAT SURPRISES ME SOMEWHAT.



HE NEVER LOVED YOU.



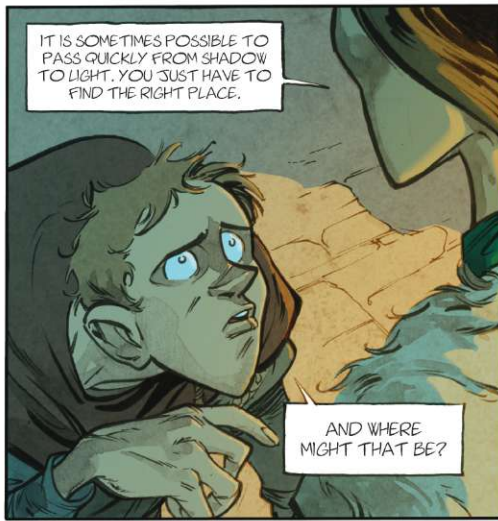
AS IF I DIDN'T KNOW! EVEN AT DEATH'S DOOR HE FOUND THE STRENGTH TO PUSH ME AWAY!

HE WAS ASHAMED OF ME, AND ALL HIS LOVE WENT TO MY SISTER, WHO WILL REIGN OVER THIS LAND AS OF TOMORROW, EVEN THOUGH THE THRONE WAS MEANT FOR ME!



BUT A HUNCHBACK CAN'T COMMAND, CAN'T LEAD AN ARMY, CAN'T GAIN THE RESPECT OF HIS ENEMIES.

A HUNCHBACK IS MADE FOR THE SHADOWS.



IT IS SOMETIMES POSSIBLE TO PASS QUICKLY FROM SHADOW TO LIGHT. YOU JUST HAVE TO FIND THE RIGHT PLACE.

AND WHERE MIGHT THAT BE?



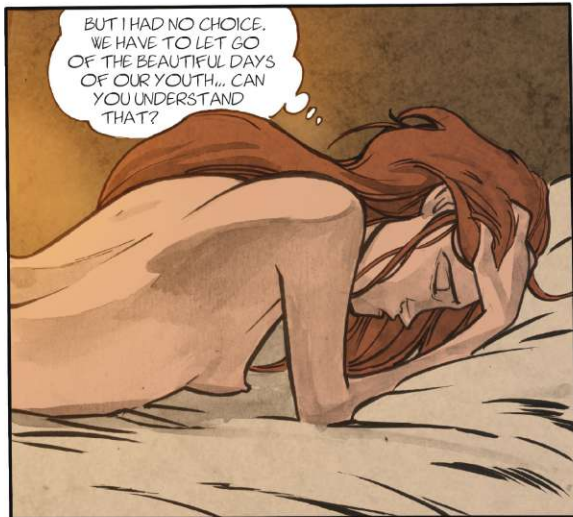
AT YOUR SISTER'S SIDE.

HER! ARGH! OH, HOW VERY PLEASED WITH HERSELF SHE MUST BE RIGHT NOW!



YES, SHE MUST BE JUST DELIGHTED! I BET HER PRIDE'S LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT!

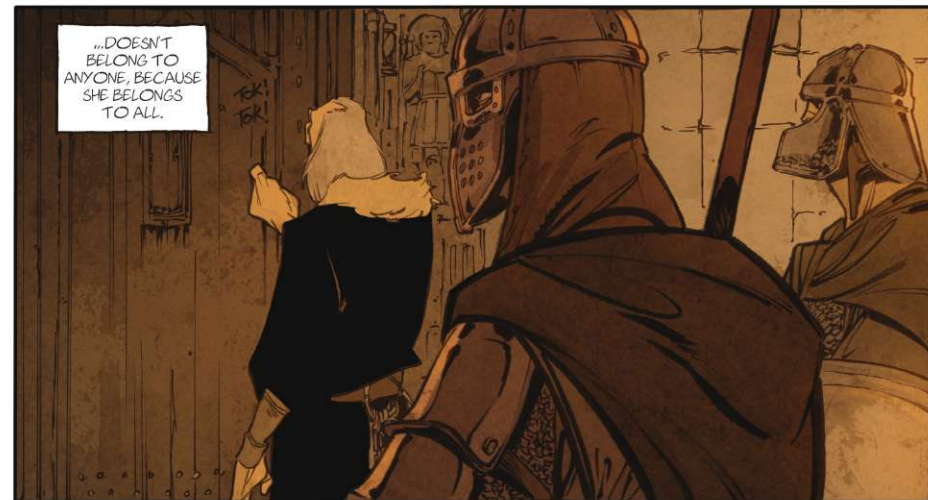
GASPARD! YOU SEEMED SO HURT, SO DISAPPOINTED!



BUT I HAD NO CHOICE. WE HAVE TO LET GO OF THE BEAUTIFUL DAYS OF OUR YOUTH... CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?



NOW YOU HAVE TO FORGET ME. THE BLANCHE YOU KNEW WILL FOREVER BE YOURS, BUT THE BLANCHE THEY'RE COMING FOR...



...DOESN'T BELONG TO ANYONE, BECAUSE SHE BELONGS TO ALL.



BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND, I CALL UPON YOU IN THE NAME OF THE KINGDOM!



AND ON BEHALF OF THE KINGDOM...

...I'M YOURS.



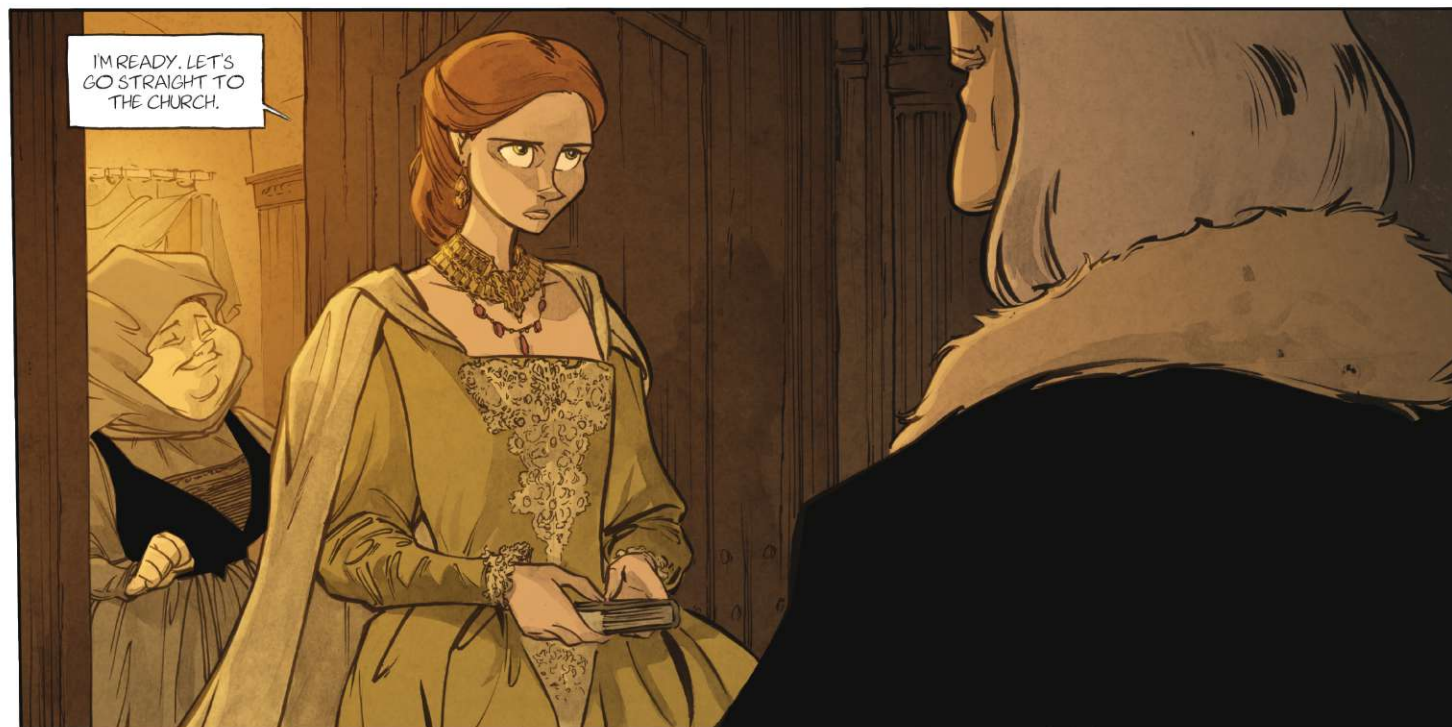
AS DAWN BREAKS, THE LADIES-IN-WAITING PREPARE THE YOUNG WOMAN FOR HER CORONATION. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. THERE'S NOT A MOMENT FOR GRIEF OR REGRET.



GRIEF FOR A BELOVED FATHER WILL HAVE TO WAIT. THE ENEMY IS AT THE GATES OF THE KINGDOM AND THE ARMY AWAITS A LEADER.



AND THAT LEADER SHALL BE A YOUNG WOMAN BARELY SEVENTEEN, WHO DRINKS FROM THE CUP OF RENUNCIATION WITHOUT FLINCHING.



I'M READY. LET'S GO STRAIGHT TO THE CHURCH.

AND AS THE COURT SAW BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND WALK
PAST ON HER WAY TO THE ALTAR OF SACRAMENTS...



...IN THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS, THERE WAS ALSO
A CELEBRATION.





AND WHILE THE RABBLE OF SOLDIERS WAS AMUSING ITSELF WITH GROTESQUE SHAPESHIFTING...



...THE MASTER OF THE REALM SEEMED TO BE BROODING ON SOMETHING.



THIS IS ALL SO BORING! EVERYTHING'S TOO EASY. THERE ARE NO SURPRISES. SOMETHING HAS TO HAPPEN! SOMETHING DANGEROUS THAT WILL FINALLY CHALLENGE ME... OTHERWISE-



WHEN SUDDENLY...



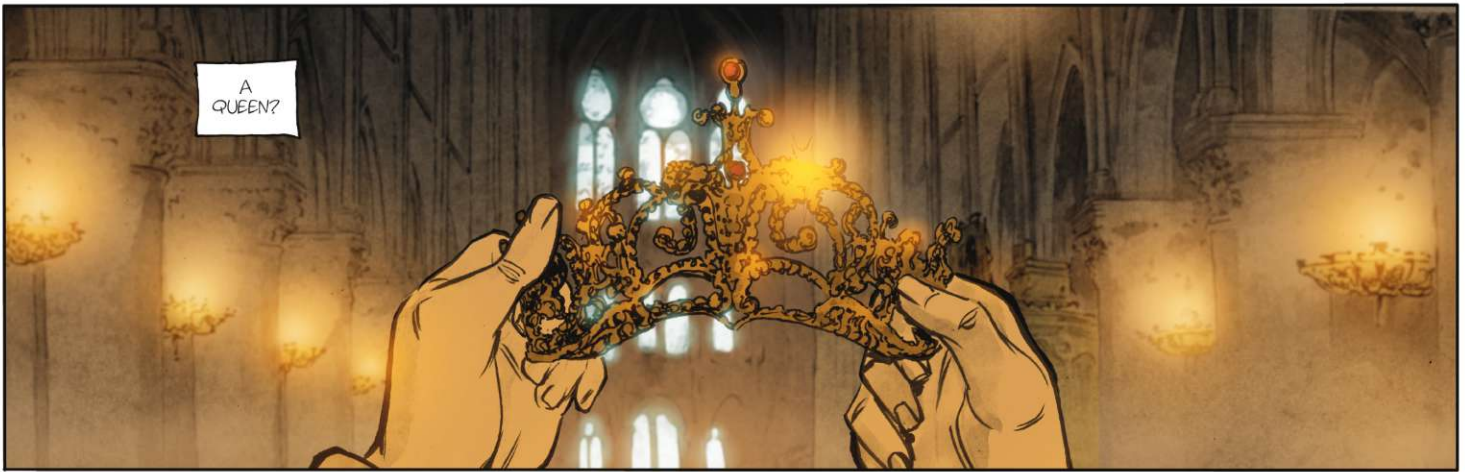
Psstccccchhhhhhh



!!?



WELL, WELL! WHAT CHILLY BEAUTY IS THIS? A BEAUTY SO ICY THAT EVEN THE FLAMES CAN'T TOUCH IT... IS IT A PRINCESS?



A
QUEEN?



YES, A QUEEN. FOR AT
THAT VERY MOMENT,
BLANCHE WAS TOUCHED
BY THE HAND OF GOD.



AND IN THE WORLD
BELOW...

BBBBBBRRRRROOOOOOMMMMM

THEY HEARD THE EARTH SHAKING...

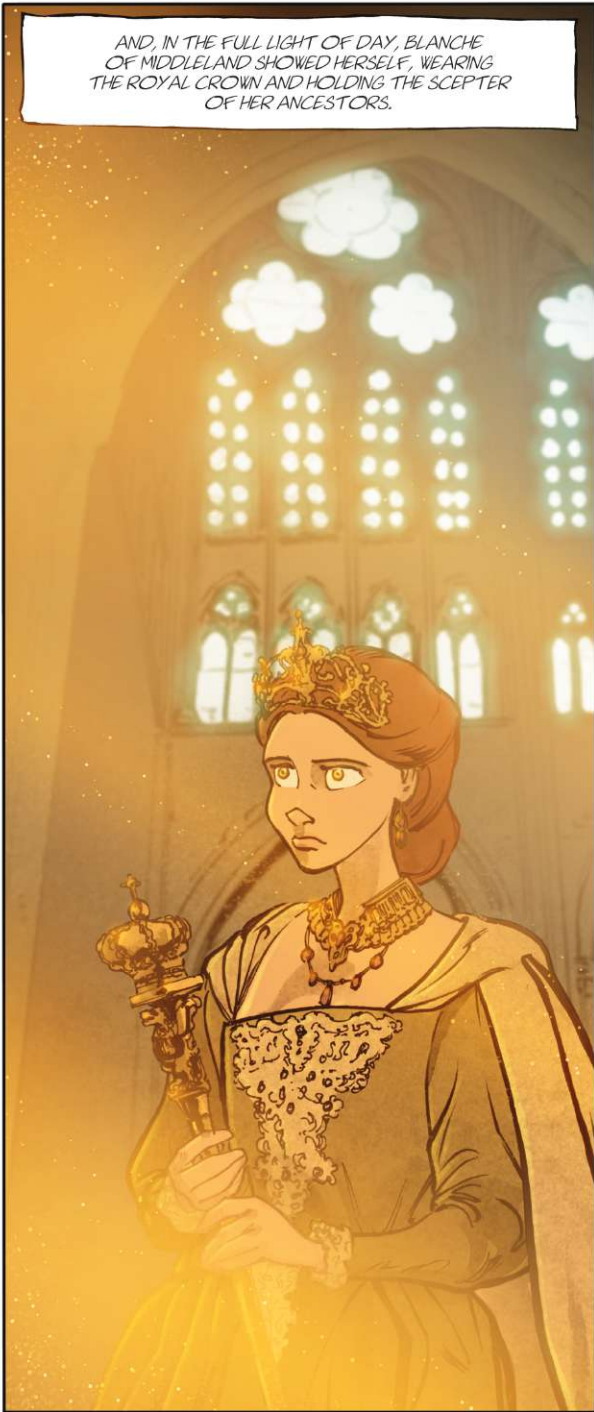


AND SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING
SHIFTED!

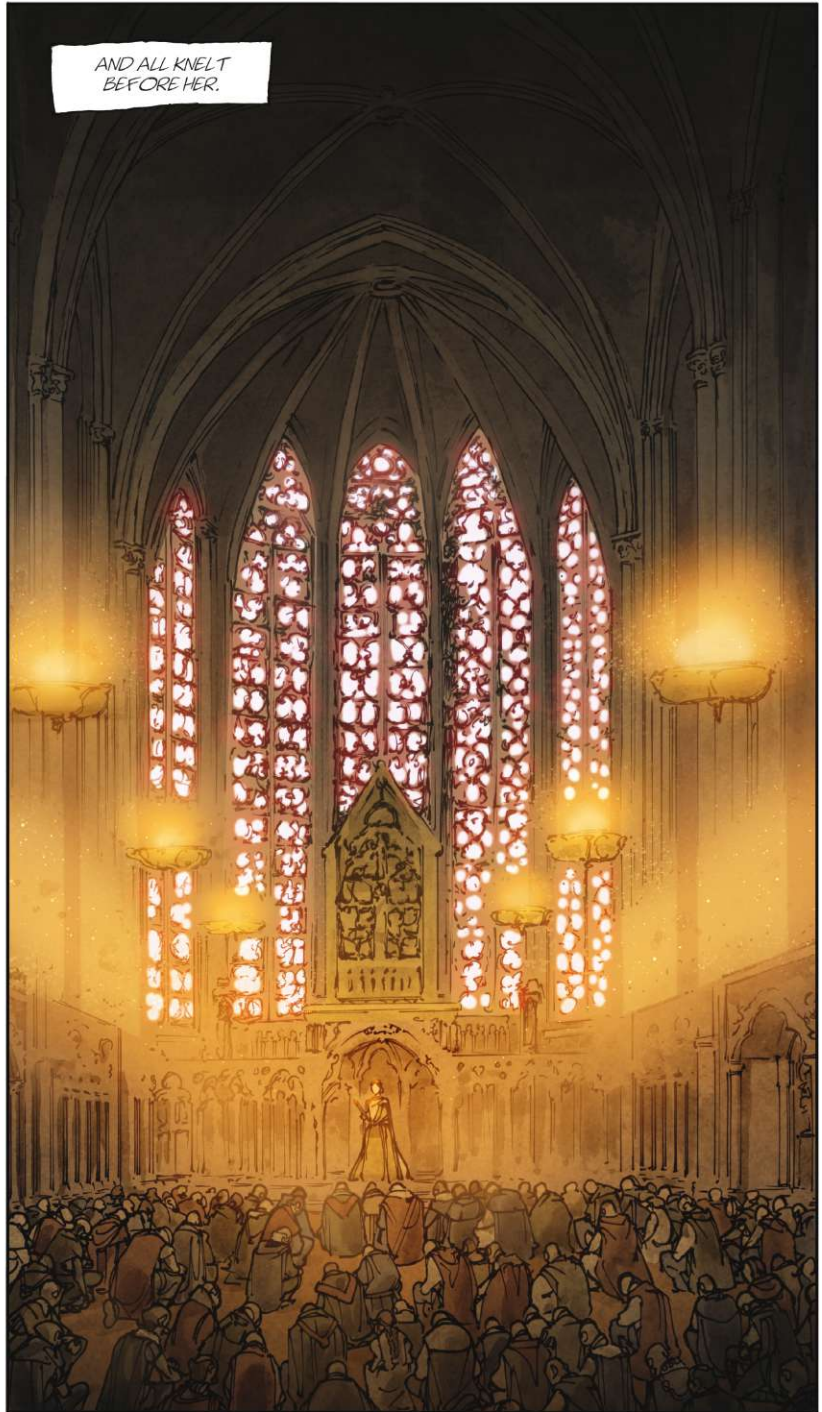
THE WORLD BELOW HAD
JUST COME UP TO THE LEVEL
OF THE WORLD ABOVE!

WHAT
THE...???

AND, IN THE FULL LIGHT OF DAY, BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND SHOWED HERSELF, WEARING THE ROYAL CROWN AND HOLDING THE SCEPTER OF HER ANCESTORS.



AND ALL KNELT BEFORE HER.



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ALL EXCEPT FOR A DARK HEART BEATING IN THE SHADOW OF A PILLAR.

COME INTO THE LIGHT, SON.



AND BOW BEFORE YOUR QUEEN.



SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL. HOW I HATE HER.



AND THE NEWS REACHED THE
COUNTRY'S BORDERS, WHERE THE
ENEMY'S ARMY WAS ASSEMBLED.
MIDDLELAND HAD A QUEEN,
MIDDLELAND WAS ORGANIZING
A RESISTANCE, MIDDLELAND
WOULD NOT SURRENDER!



A WOMAN! WELL I NEVER! A YOUNG THING
STILL WET BEHIND THE EARS WHO'S NEVER HELD
A SWORD! THINGS COULDN'T HAVE WORKED
OUT BETTER FOR US!



SO IT SEEMED AT FIRST, BUT SHE'S MANAGED
TO GATHER ALL HER CAPTAINS AROUND HER,
EVEN THOSE WHO HADN'T YET COME FORWARD.

AND SHE'S GOT THE PEOPLE
BEHIND HER. THAT'S A LOT
OF SUPPORT.





I WAS HOPING THE BROTHER WOULD BE THE ONE TO SUCCEED THE KING. THE HUNCHBACK.

I THINK THAT WAS THE PLAN ORIGINALLY.



THE KING DIDN'T DIE IN OUR AMBUSH. AT LEAST NOT RIGHT AWAY. HE HAD TIME TO GATHER HIS FAMILY AROUND HIM AND DICTATE HIS FINAL WISHES. MOST UPSETTING FOR OUR ALLY.



"OUR ALLY!" WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

PLEASE LEAVE US, CAPTAIN. I MUST SPEAK WITH THE BARON.

ALONE.



VERY WELL. I'LL LEAVE WINNING BATTLES TO THE DIPLOMATS. MY MEN AND I WILL JUST SETTLE FOR TALLYING THE DEAD!



YOU TALK TOO MUCH, BARON. I WOULD HAVE RATHERED HE NOT SUSPECT ANYTHING.

THEY'LL FIND OUT ABOUT IT EVENTUALLY. SUCH THINGS CAN'T BE KEPT QUIET FOREVER.



IF THAT'S HOW YOU SEE THINGS, THEN WE MUST ACT QUICKLY!

NOT US, BUT THE PERSON WE ARE RELYING ON. ONLY THAT PERSON CAN FIX THE SITUATION.

BY WHAT MEANS?



BY REPEATING THE OPERATION.



THE FATHER HAS FALLEN. THE DAUGHTER COULD MEET THE SAME FATE.

NEXT!



I GIVE YOU THIS COIN, FOR I WISH FOR THERE TO BE NO POOR PEOPLE IN MY LAND.

POOR I WAS, PRINCESS, UNTIL YOU CAME.



BY THE MADONNA! THIS IS TAKING FOREVER! THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING LEFT BY THE TIME IT'S OUR TURN!



BELIEVE NO SUCH THING. THE CHARITY OF HUMANS IS BOUNDLESS.

CHARITY, PERHAPS...



...BUT THE CUP IS EMPTY!



OH NO!
NOT HIM!



NOT THE SIMPLE ONE!

I GIVE YOU THIS COIN FOR I WISH FOR THERE
TO BE NO POOR PEOPLE IN MY LAND.

POOR, PRINCE...
I WAS...UNTIL YOU
DISAPPEARED.



ER, NO...
THAT'S
NOT IT...!
DISAPPEAR,
POOR, I AM
PRINCESS...



!!??

NO...IT'S...APPEAR, POOR,
DISAPPEAR, PRINCESS...
OR ELSE THE OPPOSITE...

I DON'T KNOW
ANYMORE...MY POOR
HEAD...WHICH ONE'S
THE PRINCESS?



SAY NO MORE,
MY FRIEND.
I UNDERSTAND YOU.
ACCEPT THIS COIN.

OH, THANK
YOU, KIND LADY!
PLEASE THANK
THE PRINCESS
FOR ME!



AH,
WE'RE
DONE!





THERE IS ONLY ONE COIN LEFT, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WHAT?!



YOU'RE MISTAKEN! LOOK!



BUT...UM... I TOO COULD HAVE SWORN THAT...



WE MUST KEEP GOING. I GIVE YOU THIS COIN...

AND TIME WENT BY, UNTIL...



THIS TIME...

THE LAST ONE WILL BE FOR YOU. REMOVE YOUR HOOD, THAT I MIGHT SEE YOUR FACE.



MY HAND BETRAYS WHAT MY FACE MIGHT BE, SWEET PRINCESS.

BETTER FOR IT TO REMAIN IN THE SHADOW, BELIEVE ME.



NO! DON'T TOUCH ME! THE ILL FROM WHICH I SUFFER COULD CONTAMINATE YOU. THROW THE COIN, I'LL PICK IT UP.



I DO NOT FEAR YOUR HAND.



AH, TRUE BLOOD CANNOT LIE! SHE IS HER FATHER'S DAUGHTER!



HERE, GO NOW, AND MAY GOD COMFORT YOU IN YOUR SUFFERING.



GOD IS LISTENING, I KNOW THAT MUCH.



YOU'LL SEE, ALL THOSE FLEE-RIDDEN WRETCHES WILL END UP LOVING HER. OH HOW I HATE THIS RABBLE!



DO I SPEND MY TIME BEGGING OTHERS FOR THEIR PITY? BECAUSE OF MY HUMP AND MY UGLINESS?



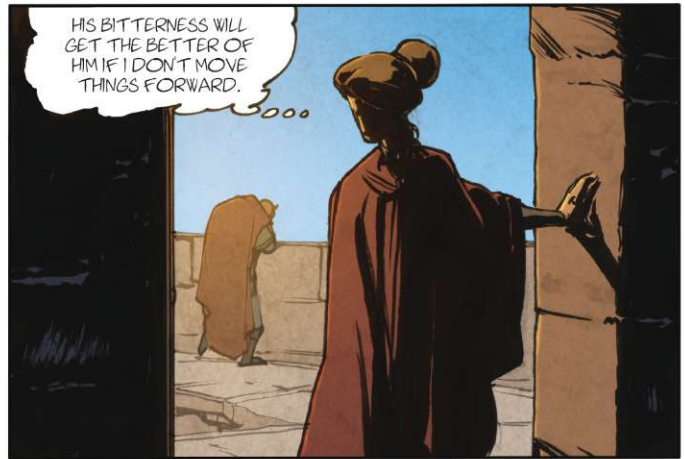
A PRINCE DOES NOT BEG.

A PRINCE MAKES HEADS ROLL.

YOU SHOULD REMEMBER THAT, SON.



THE DAY THE PEOPLE HAVE BUT ONE HEAD, MOTHER, I WILL CUT IT OFF!



HIS BITTERNESS WILL GET THE BETTER OF HIM IF I DON'T MOVE THINGS FORWARD.



SPEAKING OF WHICH...

CAPTAIN HORATIO! YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ME?

INDEED, YOUR GRACE. I COME WITH NEWS.

YOU MAY SPEAK, NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU HERE.



OUR... OUR FRIENDS CONTACTED ME. THEY ARE DISAPPOINTED, NATURALLY.

WE ARE NOT TO BLAME. EVERYONE PLAYED THEIR PART. THEY SET UP THE AMBUSH...



...AND IN THE CONFUSION THAT FOLLOWED, YOU STRUCK MY HUSBAND IN THE BACK.

A DEADLY BLOW, I COULD HAVE SWORN. AND IT WENT UNNOTICED. I MUST ADMIT I WAS RATHER PROUD OF MYSELF.

BUT HE DIDN'T DIE ON THE SPOT. NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO SORT OUT THIS MESS WE'VE GOT OURSELVES INTO.

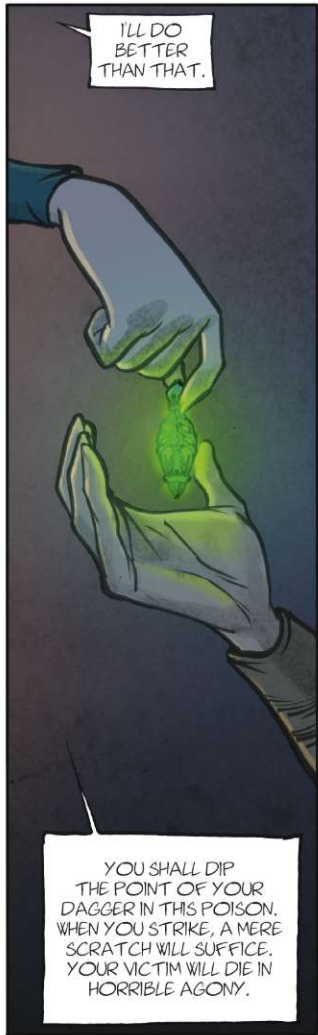
AS A MATTER OF FACT, THEY'RE ASKING ME TO FINISH THE TASK.

MEANING...



...THAT THE DAUGHTER MUST SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS THE FATHER.

I NEED YOUR APPROVAL.



I'LL DO BETTER THAN THAT.

YOU SHALL DIP THE POINT OF YOUR DAGGER IN THIS POISON. WHEN YOU STRIKE, A MERE SCRATCH WILL SUFFICE. YOUR VICTIM WILL DIE IN HORRIBLE AGONY.



ONCE YOUR TASK IS COMPLETED, YOU SHALL BRING ME HER HEART.

AS YOU WISH, MY LADY.



I'VE LEARNED THAT YOUR DAUGHTER OFTEN GOES TO THE FAIRY WOOD...

...TO HER FATHER'S TOMB. WE COULDN'T ASK FOR A MORE DISCREET PLACE...



FLOWERS FOR YOU, FATHER.
THE ONLY ONES, I SEE.



YOU WERE A GOOD MAN, FATHER.
AND JUST. THAT MEANS YOU WILL
BE QUICKLY FORGOTTEN.

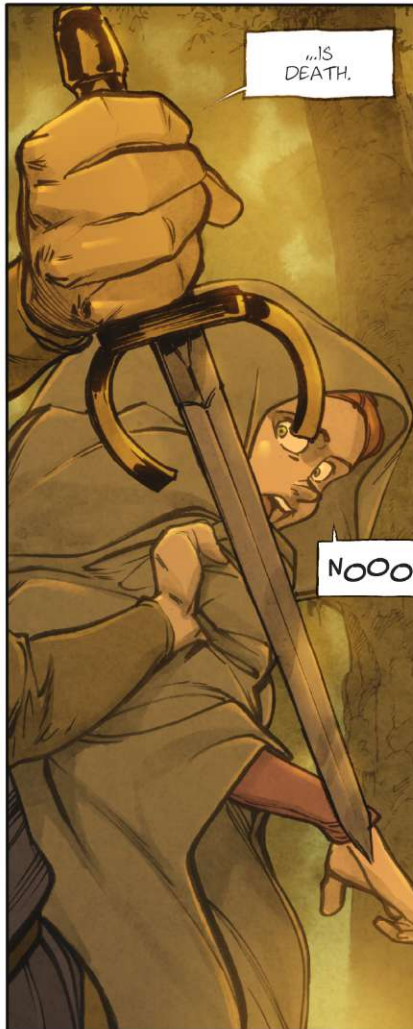


AS FOR ME, WHAT PLACE DO I HAVE IN YOUR
SHADOW? SHOULD I COME OUT OF THAT
SHADOW, OR TAKE REFUGE IN IT INSTEAD?



THE ONLY
REFUGE I CAN
OFFER YOU...

!!??



...IS
DEATH.

NOOOOO!



COME NOW!
THIS CAN BE OVER
QUICKLY, IT'S ENTIRELY
UP TO YOU!



NOT THAT QUICKLY, THOUGH!

WHAT THE...? HOW DARE YOU? I'LL-



DON'T MAKE THREATS AS DEATH APPROACHES. I TOUCHED YOU...



...THUS PASSING ON TO YOU THE TERRIBLE ILL FROM WHICH I SUFFER.



IT WILL SOON BE OVER. YOU WON'T SUFFER LONG.



AAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHH!



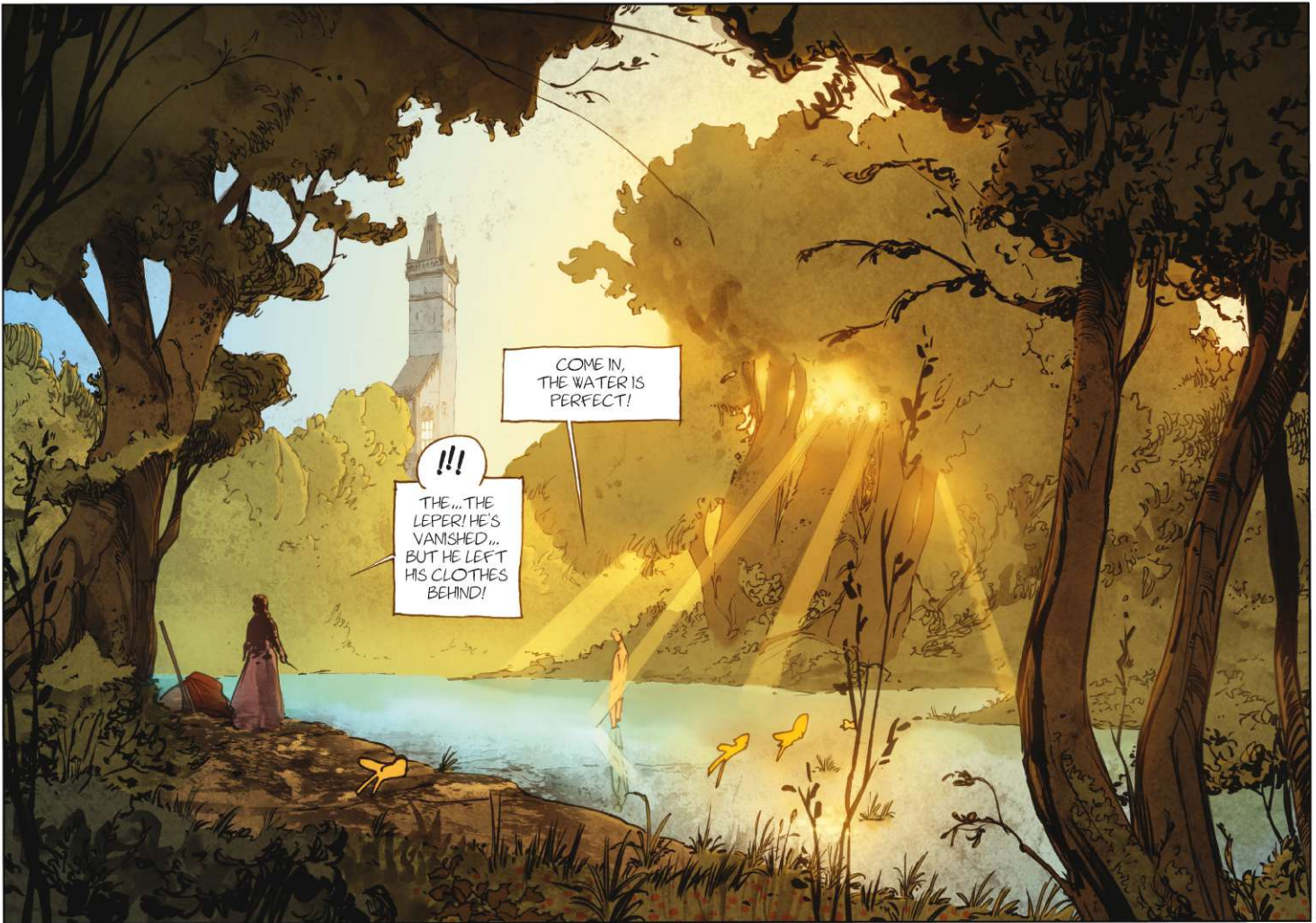
GOD IN HEAVEN! MAKE IT STOP!!!

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING FOR HIM, BUT DON'T WORRY...



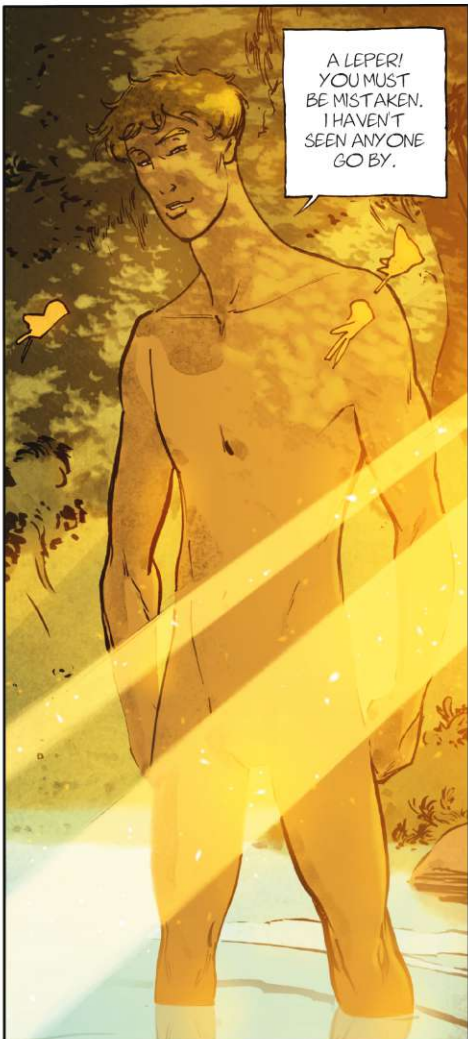
...I PURIFIED HIM ALL THE WAY THROUGH TO THE BONE!





COME IN,
THE WATER IS
PERFECT!

!!!
THE... THE
LEPER! HE'S
VANISHED...
BUT HE LEFT
HIS CLOTHES
BEHIND!

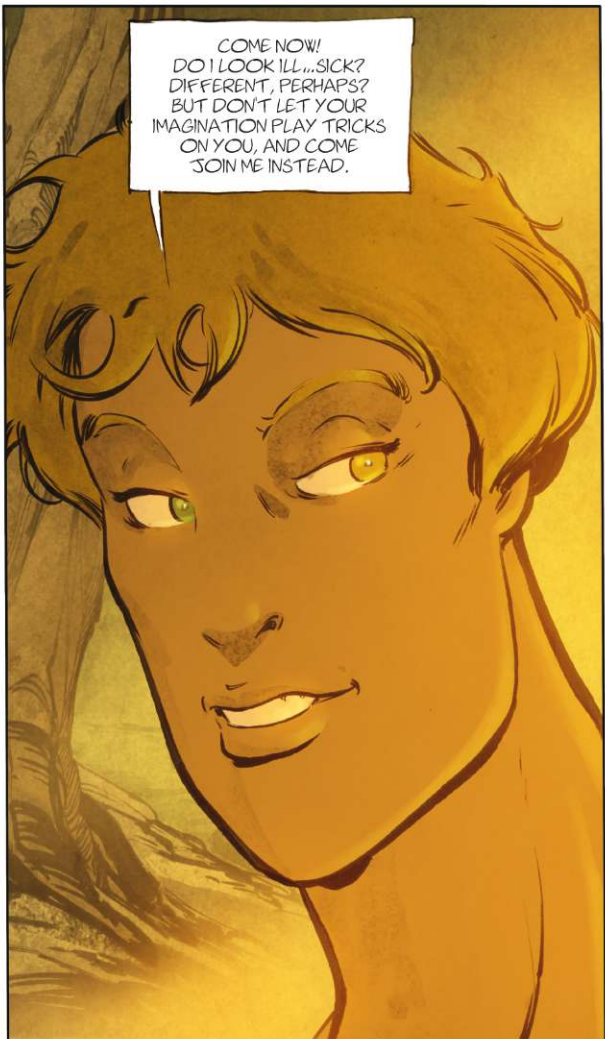


A LEPER!
YOU MUST
BE MISTAKEN.
I HAVEN'T
SEEN ANYONE
GO BY.



SO THESE CLOTHES DON'T
BELONG TO YOU?

TO
ME?



COME NOW!
DO I LOOK ILL...SICK?
DIFFERENT, PERHAPS?
BUT DON'T LET YOUR
IMAGINATION PLAY TRICKS
ON YOU, AND COME
JOIN ME INSTEAD.



JOIN YOU! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, MY FRIEND, THAT I AM A PRINCESS.

WELL THAT'S FORTUITOUS, FOR I AM A PRINCE.



PRINCE? OF WHAT COUNTRY, PRAY TELL?

OH, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT. IT'S VERY FAR AWAY. AND IT'S VERY HOT THERE.

TOO HOT, ACTUALLY.



WHICH IS WHY I'M ENJOYING THIS SO MUCH, THIS COOLNESS... AH! I FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN!



YOU ACT LIKE A CHILD.

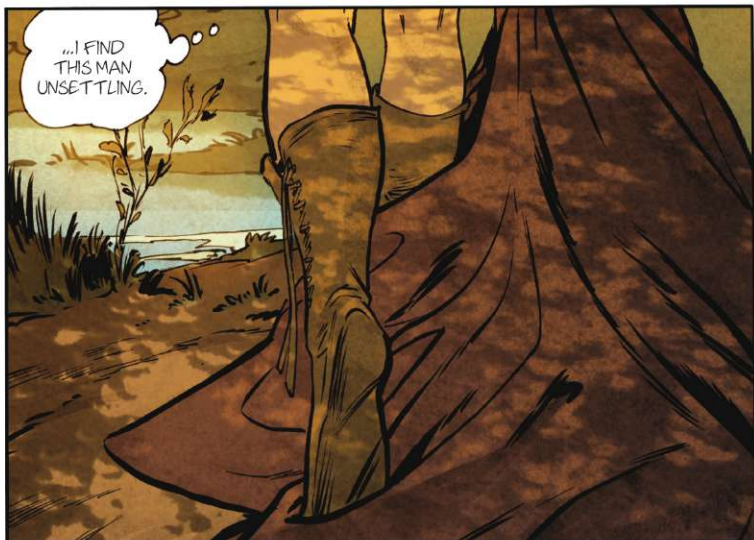
BUT I AM A CHILD! WHICH IS WHY MY NUDITY MUST APPEAR NATURAL TO YOU.



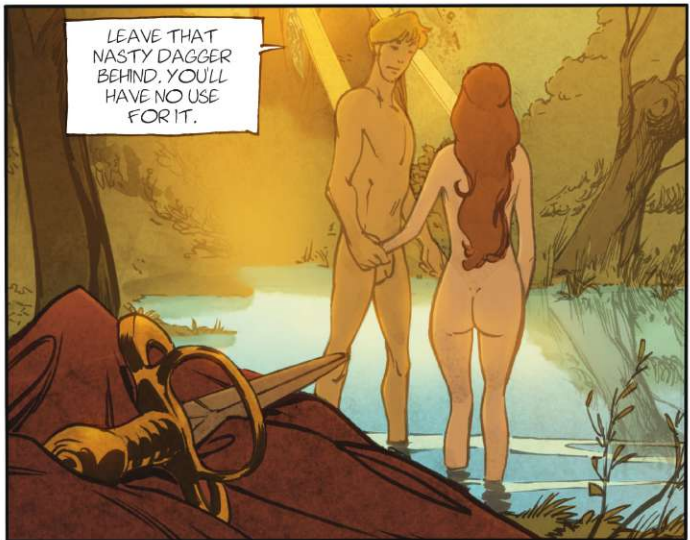
AS YOURS SHALL BE IN MY EYES.



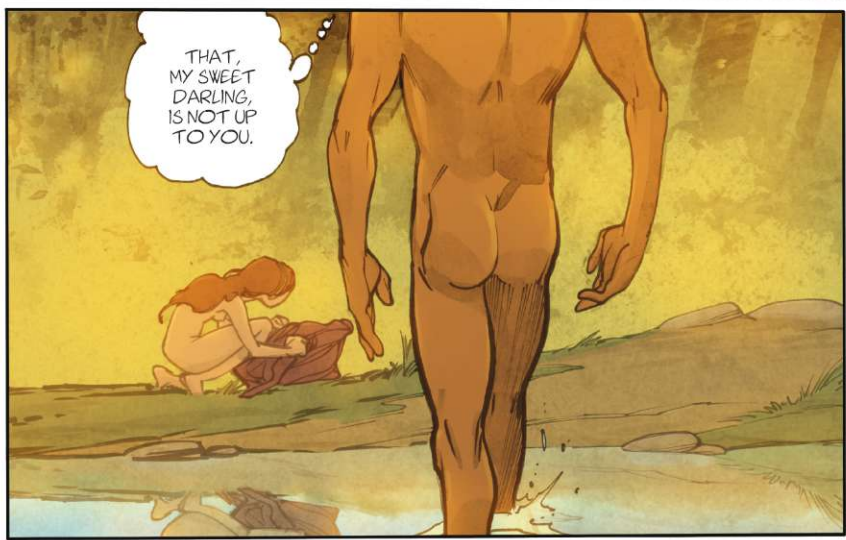
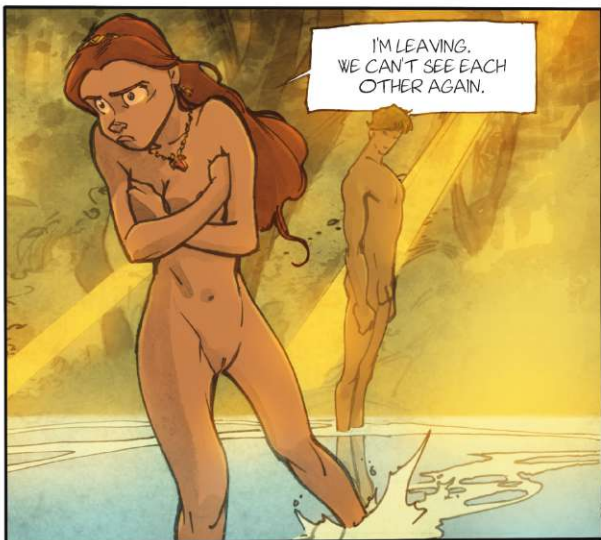
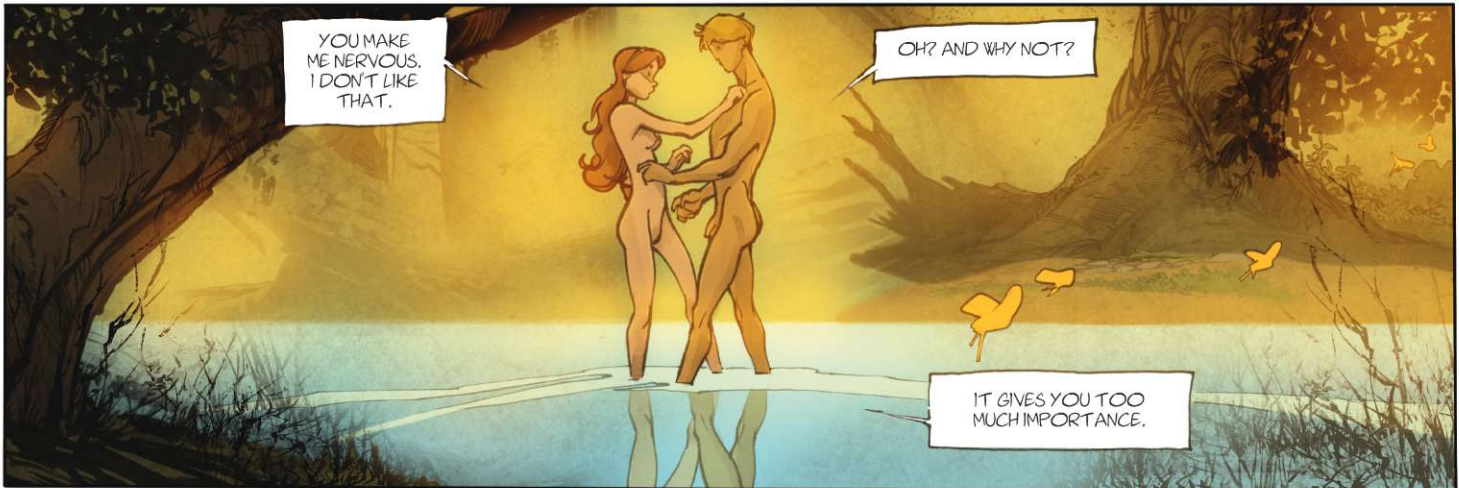
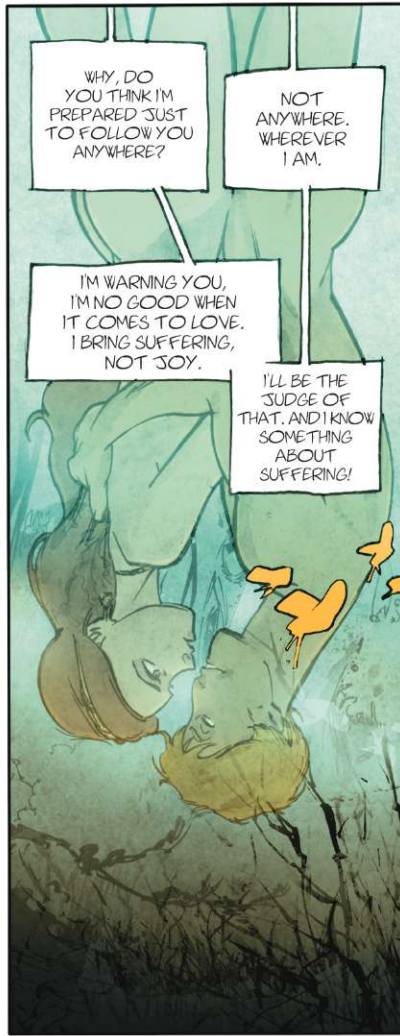
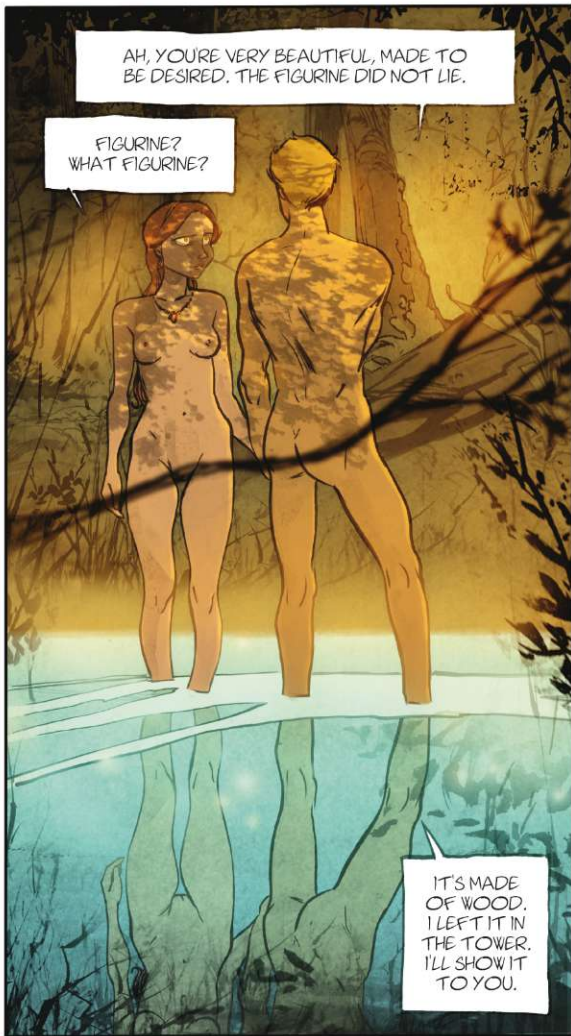
I REALLY SHOULDN'T. AND YET...



...I FIND THIS MAN UNSETTLING.



LEAVE THAT NASTY DAGGER BEHIND. YOU'LL HAVE NO USE FOR IT.





I'M TAKING THE DAGGER BACK.



I COULD USE THIS, IF YOU KEEP INSISTING...

PLEASE DO.

YOU'RE POINTING THAT RIGHT AT MY HEART.



OH REALLY?



AAAAAAHHHHH...

!??? DID I HURT YOU???
I... I BARELY EVEN SCRATCHED YOU!!



I... I THINK THE BLADE'S BEEN POISONED.

THE CUT'S GETTING BIGGER.



TAKE ME BACK TO THE TOWER...

I...

I CAN HEAL MYSELF THERE.

I... I'M SORRY...
I... I DIDN'T KNOW.



UNBELIEVABLE!
I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD GET SO WEAK!

KEEP THE DAGGER.
I...

...I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.

VERY... VERY WELL.





AND HE HAS A FIGURINE OF ME!



PwWw00000



THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME. MY PEOPLE ARE WORRIED.

THEY MUSTN'T FIND HIM.



I'LL LEAVE HIM THIS, IN EXCHANGE FOR THE FIGURINE.



GOD IN HEAVEN! THERE YOU ARE AT LAST! I WAS ABOUT TO SCOUR THE COUNTRY TO FIND YOU!

THANK YOU, UMBRA.



BUT I WANTED TO BE ALONE. I CAME TO PRAY AT MY FATHER'S TOMB. I GOT LOST IN MY THOUGHTS AND DIDN'T SEE THE TIME GO BY...

I UNDERSTAND.



BUT I BEG YOU, NEVER DISAPPEAR AGAIN WITHOUT TELLING US.

I PROMISE. I WAS CARELESS.



SHE STRUCK ME...
AND SHE SAVED ME.



BUT WHAT WAS IT
THAT STRUCK ME?

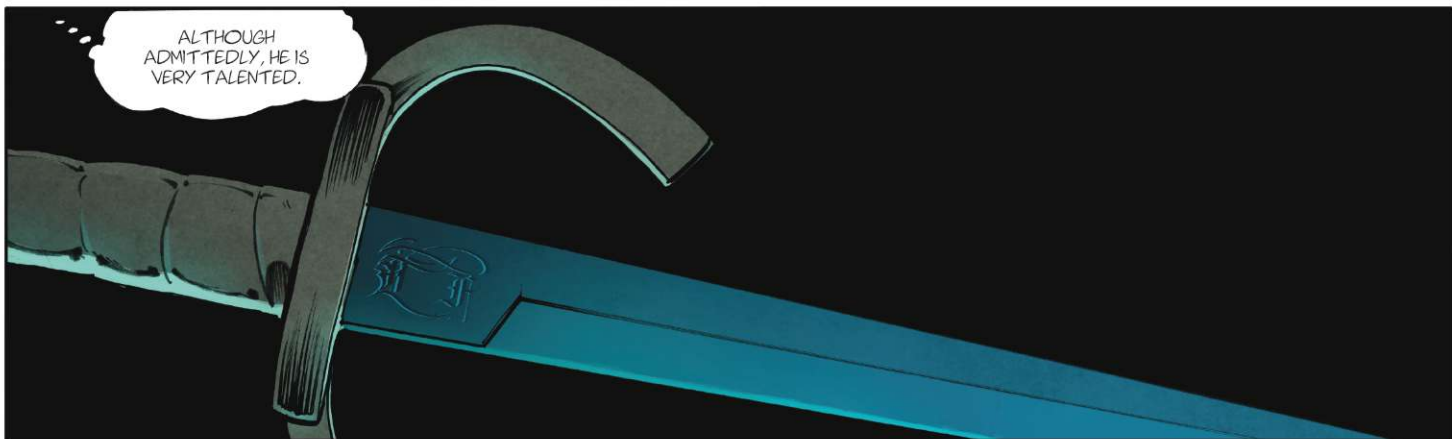


WHAT CUNNING
IS THIS?



WELL, WELL! NOW
I UNDERSTAND...

HE ALWAYS SIGNS
HIS WORK. VANITY WILL
BE HIS DOWNFALL!



ALTHOUGH
ADMITTEDLY, HE IS
VERY TALENTED.

I BET HE'LL BE SURPRISED TO SEE ME...IF I MANAGE TO FIND HIM.



HE'LL HAVE CHANGED HIS NAME, I IMAGINE. TOO RISKY, OTHERWISE.



A SMALL, HEAVY-SET MAN...AND WHO'S AFRAID OF THE LIGHT...NO, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE...

HE LIKES WILLOW WINE, WHICH IS PRETTY UNUSUAL.

?!



I SELL IT TO HIM. HE'S THE ONLY CLIENT I HAVE WHO LIKES THAT DRINK... A DRINK THAT'LL DRIVE YOU MAD IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.



HE'S ALREADY MAD, SO NO RISK THERE. CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE HE'S HIDING?

HE'S HIDING, ALL RIGHT. UNDER THE NAME OF MASTER HAAS.



LEFT SIDE OF THE NO-GO ALLEY, UNDER A NASTY LOOKING SIGN.



HMMM. I SEE WE HAVEN'T STRAYED FAR FROM OUR ROOTS.



DINNAGGGGGG

MASTER HAAS?



YES. WHAT IS IT?





WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED! IT REALLY IS HIM!

OUR SORCERER OF ILL REPUTE, HORRIBILIS JUNIOR, WORTHY OFFSPRING OF HIS FATHER.

YOU! YOU, MASTER!?!?

I AM NO LONGER YOUR MASTER, SINCE I EXPELLED YOU FROM MY COURT! BUT I SEE IT HASN'T STOPPED YOU FROM DOING WELL FOR YOURSELF.



SO YOU'RE A SHOPKEEPER! AND WHO DO YOU LEND YOUR VILE SERVICES NOW?



ME? I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MASTER...



I'M TALKING ABOUT THE DAGGER ON WHICH YOU ENGRAVED YOUR SIGNATURE. YOUR VANITY MAKES YOU RECKLESS!

WHO ORDERED THAT WEAPON? I WANT TO KNOW.



I... I CAN'T DIVULGE THAT! A... A DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY VIS A VIS MY WEALTHY CLIENTS FORCES... FORCES ME-



ENOUGH!
YOU VILE WRETCH, DO YOU WANT ME TO SET YOUR STORE ABLAZE?

NO... NO... I... DON'T DESERVE THAT.



TRUE, YOU DESERVE MUCH WORSE! SO?

IT...IT'S AN ARISTOCRAT, A LADY. FROM THE CASTLE NEARBY.

MIDDLELAND?



YES, QUEEN SOPHORA IS A GOOD PERSON WITH A FONDNESS FOR DEADLY POISONS. AND I-



DINNGGGG



QUICK! HIDE IN THE BACK ROOM! SHE MUSTN'T SEE YOU!



STAY HERE! I...I'LL BE BACK!

?!



...20 F skull pentagram hand dagger !!



WHAT? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? NOW I'M IN HIDING?!

AND WHO IS THIS PERSON THAT-



BY ALL MY ANCESTORS!!



HER?? MIRANDA?

WHAT...WHAT AN HONOR, PRETTY LADY! I...I WASN'T EXPECTING YOU SO SOON!

MY DEAR HORRIBILIS...



ER...PERHAPS BETTER TO CALL ME BY MY BORROWED NAME...

COME NOW! WE'RE BOTH CITIZENS OF THE WORLD...THE OTHER WORLD...THE WORLD BELOW. THERE ARE NO SUCH LITTLE SECRETS BETWEEN US.



HMM! SPEAKING OF THE WORLD BELOW...

...WHAT IS THAT SWEET SCENT OF SULFUR, WHICH REMINDS ME OF ITS BLAZING LANDSCAPES? HAVE YOU HAD A VISITOR?

M...ME?.

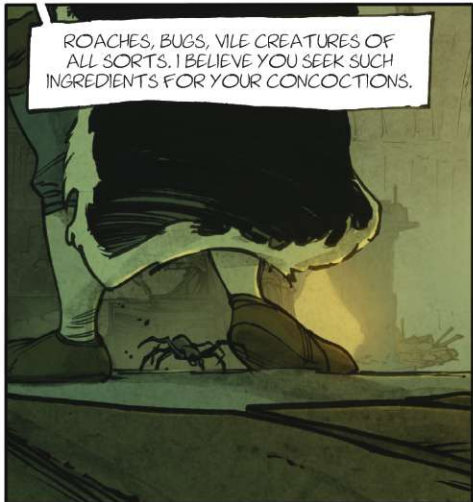


ER...NO...NOT LATELY. DID...DID YOU COME HERE FOR A REASON?

YES. I'M BEING OVERRUN BY MY GUESTS. I WANT TO BE RID OF THEM. OR AT LEAST SOME OF THEM.



THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM. I EVEN FIND THEM IN MY BED.



ROACHES, BUGS, VILE CREATURES OF ALL SORTS. I BELIEVE YOU SEEK SUCH INGREDIENTS FOR YOUR CONCOCTIONS.



FREE!!!



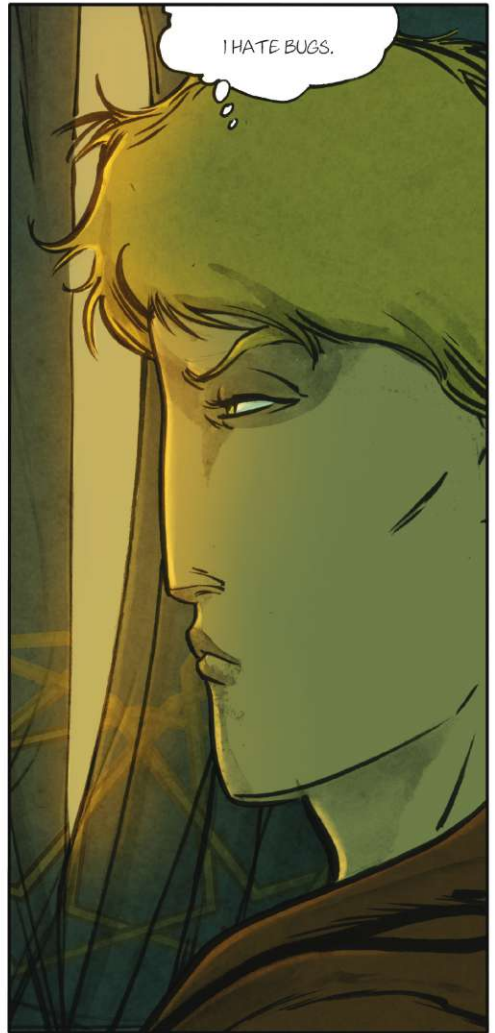
I, GASPARD AM FREE!!



I'M FINALLY FREE OF THAT HORRIBLE HOUSE... THOSE SLIMY WALLS... ALL THOSE EYES WATCHING ME. FREE... FREE!



SPLOCH



I HATE BUGS.



AND... HOW SHALL I PAY YOU?

OH, THE USUAL WAY. YOU KNOW ME.



I STILL CARE ABOUT MY LOOKS. A FEW BEAUTY-ENHANCING OINTMENTS WILL DO.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN BEAUTIFUL...



YOU FLATTER ME JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT ME, YOU MISERABLE WORM. PERHAPS ONE OF THESE DAYS, I'LL LET YOU KNEEL DOWN AND KISS MY TOE.



YOUR TOE? OH, BY THE DEVIL...



ER... I MEAN, BY ALL THE SAINTS...



A TOE! THAT'S... THAT'S TOO MUCH!
I MIGHT FAINT...

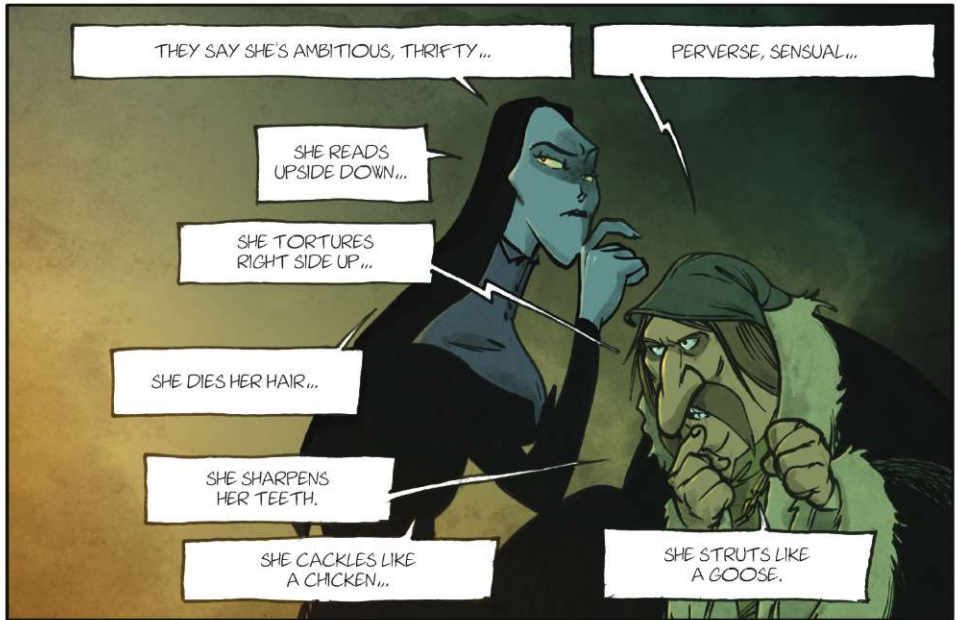
OH, IF ONLY MALDOROR'S
DESIRE FOR ME HAD NEVER FADED,
LIKE THE DESIRE THAT BURNS IN
YOU... HOW BEAUTIFUL LIFE
WOULD HAVE BEEN...
AND DEATH...

BUT HE GOT
BORED. HE PUSHED
ME AWAY BECAUSE IN
THE END HE TIRED OF
MY AFFECTION. HOW
CRUEL ARE OUR
LORDS.



HAVE YOU HEARD
THAT MALDOROR
HAS GONE AWAY? HE'S
LEFT THE THRONE TO
ALDORA, HIS SISTER,
WHO'S RULING IN HIS
STEAD UNTIL HE RETURNS.
PERSONALLY, I DON'T
THINK THAT'S WISE...

IT'S TRUE NO
ONE COULD EVER
FIGURE OUT WHAT
GOES ON IN THAT
HEAD OF HERS...



THEY SAY SHE'S AMBITIOUS, THRIFTY...

PERVERSE, SENSUAL...

SHE READS
UPSIDE DOWN...

SHE TORTURES
RIGHT SIDE UP...

SHE DIES HER HAIR...

SHE SHARPENS
HER TEETH.

SHE CACKLES LIKE
A CHICKEN...

SHE STRUTS LIKE
A GOOSE.



I THINK I'D BETTER
LEAVE.



I'VE FOUND OUT WHAT I WANTED
TO KNOW ANYWAY.



HOW COULD THEY BE
SO RUDE ABOUT MY SISTER!
I'LL ADMIT SHE CAN BE MOODY
AT TIMES, BUT STILL...

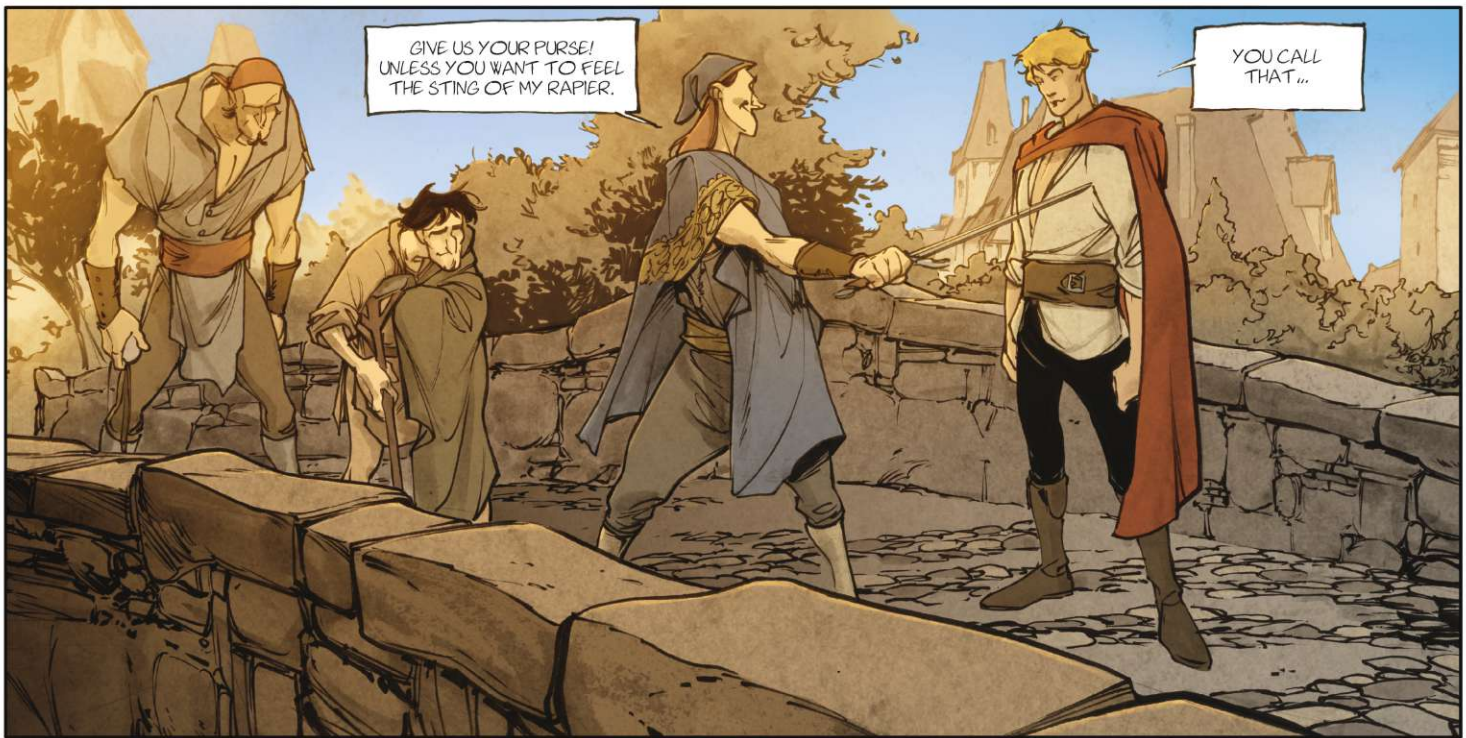


SO, WERE MY LORD'S INQUIRIES FRUITFUL?

!!!



MY LORD WON'T MIND TOO MUCH IF WE ASK HIM FOR A SMALL FEE...



GIVE US YOUR PURSE! UNLESS YOU WANT TO FEEL THE STING OF MY RAPIER.

YOU CALL THAT...

44



...A RAPIER?

??!



I'LL BASH YOUR HEAD IN!!



MY RAPIER!
MY BEAUTIFUL
RAPIER!!





I HATE TAKING
THE STAIRS.

I'M GOING
TO BLOCK
THEM OFF
ONE OF
THESE DAYS.

I'M THE ONLY ONE
WHO STILL USES THEM,
ANYWAY.

I COULD EASILY
STAY ABOVE. I FEEL GOOD
THERE, ACTUALLY.

AND THEN THERE'S
BLANCHE... I LIKE HER A LOT.
SHE WAS SO GENTLE AND
AFFECTIONATE.

I'VE ALWAYS
FOUND THAT KIND
OF THING IRRITATING,
UP UNTIL NOW...

OPEN UP, YOU
CONTEMPTIBLE
FIENDS, IT'S ME...
MALDOROR!

BOM!
BOM!
BOM!



I SAID
OPEN UP!!



BOM!
BOM!
BOM!

IT'S HIM! OUR
MASTER!! WHAT
DO I DO?

YOU FOLLOW
THE ORDERS!
DON'T OPEN
THE DOOR!

NOT UNTIL WE
INFORM PRINCESS
ALDORA!

YOUR GRACE!
MALDOROR IS AT
THE DOOR! HE WISHES
TO COME IN!

REALLY? AND WHAT
HAPPENED WHILE HE
WAS GONE?

UM...YOUR GRACE
TOOK POWER!

AND SO...?

WE...WE MUST
OBEY YOUR
EVERY WHIM...

PERFECT...
AND WHAT IS ONE
OF MY WHIMS?



UM...PRISONERS AREN'T ALLOWED TO WHISTLE WHILE BEING TORTURED.

AND WHAT ELSE?

UM...IT IS FORBIDDEN TO YAWN WHILE MASTER CANTHO IS SINGING.

AND WHAT ELSE?

UM...IT IS FORBIDDEN FOR MASTER CANTHO TO SING.



AND WHAT ELSE?

UM...IT IS FORBIDDEN TO TELL THE TRUTH WHILE LYING OR TO LIE WHILE TELLING THE TRUTH. OR... THE OPPOSITE?

AND WHAT ELSE?

UM...



IT IS FORBIDDEN FOR MY BROTHER TO ENTER UNLESS I HAVE GIVEN THE ORDER, YOU MORON!!!



CUT HIS THROAT!!



AND SOMEONE GO FETCH THAT DIM-WITTED HORRIBILIS!

UM...YOUR INFINITE GRACE! HORRIBILIS WAS EXPELLED FROM THE KINGDOM BY YOUR BROTHER.

HE NOW LIVES IN THE WORLD ABOVE. HE GOES BY THE NAME OF MASTER HAAS.

AH YES, I'D FORGOTTEN... MY BROTHER AND HIS STUPID DECISIONS!

I HAD BECOME QUITE FOND OF LITTLE HORRIBILIS, HIS CRUELTY WAS SOPHISTICATED, HIS CUNNING CHARMING, AND HIS FLATTERY ABSECT.

IN OTHER WORDS, JUST MY KIND OF PERSON.

AND NOW I'M SURROUNDED BY MORONS! HOW TRAGIC!

HAHA! DO YOU HEAR THAT, MORON?

YOU'RE A MORON!

ARE... ARE YOU CALLING ME A MORON?

HEY! THE ONLY MORON HERE IS ME!

YOU? YOU'RE NOT A MORON! YOU'RE TOO MORONIC FOR THAT!

WH...WHAT?!

YOU DON'T HONESTLY THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY MORON HERE, DO YOU??

BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU LOOK LIKE A MORON?!

ABSOLUTELY! IT'S NOT HARD TO BE MORE OF A MORON THAN YOU!

YOU MORON!!! I'M GONNA-

HEY! DON'T TOUCH MY MORON OF A BROTHER!



OOOWWW! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU, YOU MORON!

EXACTLY! MORON!

ISN'T YOUR INFINITE GRACE HUNGRY ANYMORE?

NO, I'M WEARY. HAS THE GUARD BEEN WARNED?



YES, HE UNDERSTANDS PERFECTLY. LETTING SIR MALDOROR IN IS OUT OF THE QUESTION!

UNBELIEVABLE! THE DOOR'S NOT OPENING! I CAN'T EVEN COME HOME ANYMORE!!



MY SISTER HAS SEIZED POWER! BUT WHAT POWER?

SHE'LL NEVER GET ALL THOSE SILLY FOOLS STUMBLING ABOUT IN THERE TO LISTEN TO HER!

IT TAKES A DEVIL TO MAKE THE DAMNED DANCE! OTHERWISE THEY REBEL.



THAT'S WHAT'S BOUND TO HAPPEN, IN FACT, AND SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THAT!



MY FATHER WARNED ME.

NOTHING COMES OF TRYING TO LIVE IN THE WORLD ABOVE! IT'S AS THOUGH PARTS OF OUR POWER JUST VANISH UP THERE!

AND NOW WHAT DO I DO?



MIRANDA!

YES... I DON'T REALLY HAVE A CHOICE. SHE'LL LISTEN TO ME. SHE'S ALWAYS GIVEN IN TO ME.

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME... THOUGH IT COSTS ME DEARLY TO GO TO HER.



I KNOW WHERE SHE LIVES. I'LL WAIT FOR NIGHTFALL TO GO TO HER.



OPEN UP, MIRANDA!



YOU CERTAINLY TOOK YOUR TIME!

MY...MY LORD!

YOU...YOU? HERE?!

YES, AND AGAINST MY WILL, BELIEVE ME!



BUT...BUT...MY HAIR, MY MAKEUP, MY NIGHT MASK, MY EYE CREAM, MY SLIME BATH!

I...I'M NOT DRESSED PROPERLY... I'M NOT AT ALL PREPARED TO SEE YOU!!



IT DOESN'T MATTER! YOU'RE FINE AS YOU ARE! PERFECTLY GLOOMY, WITH CREAKING BONES AND A GRATING VOICE, WHICH I USED TO FIND RATHER ATTRACTIVE, ACTUALLY... YOU KNEW WHAT YOU WERE DOING.

WHEN I BANISHED YOU, YOU LEFT OUR WORLD BY A SECRET DOOR, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.



I THINK I MIGHT EVEN HAVE BEEN A BIT IN LOVE WITH YOU... BUT ALL GREAT PASSION MUST COME TO AN END, MUSTN'T IT?

IF...IF YOU SAY SO.



I'VE COME TO YOU BECAUSE I'M HAVING A BIT OF A PROBLEM WITH MY SISTER. SHE'S SHUT ME OUT OF THE WORLD BELOW.



YES, THAT'S CORRECT, BUT... I DON'T THINK I HEARD YOU RIGHT. MY LORD HAS BEEN SHUT OUT OF HIS OWN KINGDOM? DESPITE HIS POWERS?!!

AH, YES... MY POWERS...



I'M AFRAID THEY'VE BEEN SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED. I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE IT.

THEN MY LORD IS NOT AT HIS BEST?



NO...

EVER SINCE I MET HER-

OH? WHOM DID YOU MEET?



SHE IS SO PURE...



...THAT SHE SEEMS TO ATTRACT FIRE!

THE ENEMY'S ARMY IS ADVANCING QUICKLY!



AND NOTHING SEEMS TO WITHSTAND ITS FURY!

THE COMMANDER, SIR KRADOK, HAS PROMISED MIDDLELAND TO HIS MEN.



THERE IS ONE LAST SOLUTION, MY QUEEN.

ME.



YOU MUST TAKE UP ARMS.

I AM READY.

AND I WON'T DISAPPOINT YOU. I SHALL DO BETTER...



...THAN MY BROTHER OGIER. I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND HIS DESPONDENCY AT SUCH A DECISIVE TIME.

ALIVE!



SHE'S STILL ALIVE!!

WHAT HAPPENED, MOTHER? HORATIO WAS MEANT TO BRING US BLANCHE'S HEART! INSTEAD, SHE'S PREPARING TO CONFRONT THE ENEMY, CONFIDENT IN HERSELF, CONFIDENT IN HER MEN, WHO ALL PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HER! MEANWHILE, I'M HERE MOPING.



MOPING!



I MUST ADMIT I DON'T UNDERSTAND EITHER. CAPTAIN HORATIO HASN'T RETURNED TO COURT.



DID HE FAIL? DID HE LOSE HIS NERVE? HOW CAN WE FIND OUT?

HOWEVER, I DO BELIEVE THAT WE FIND OURSELVES ON THE EVE OF A MOST INTERESTING SITUATION...WHICH COULD WORK IN OUR FAVOR.



I'VE MANAGED TO GET A MESSAGE TO SIR KRADOK. HIS ARMY HAS OVERTHROWN ALL OF OUR VANGUARDS. NOTHING CAN RESIST IT. HE HOPES TO REACH THE HEART OF MIDDLELAND BY THE END OF THE MONTH.



HE'S DESTROYING EVERY VILLAGE IN HIS PATH! HE'S RAZING IT ALL TO GROUND SO AS TO REDRAW THE MAPS OF THIS COUNTRY...

A COUNTRY THAT SHALL NO LONGER BE CALLED MIDDLELAND...

A COUNTRY THAT SHALL NO LONGER BE UNFAIRLY RULED BY YOUR SISTER!

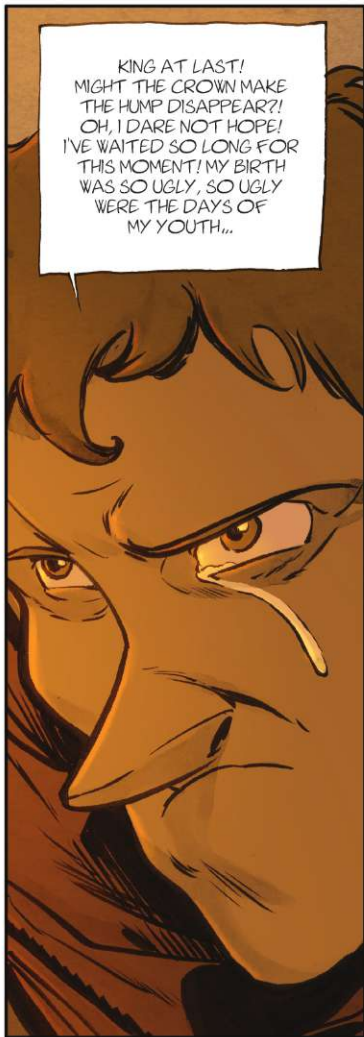
EVEN THOUGH SHE IS GATHERING HER FORCES TO COMBAT AN ALREADY VICTORIOUS ENEMY...

...AN ENEMY WHO'LL GIVE YOU THE THRONE, MY SON.



THE... THE THRONE!

THAT IS MY PRICE FOR DELIVERING MY FAMILY'S LANDS IN THE SOUTH TO HIM.

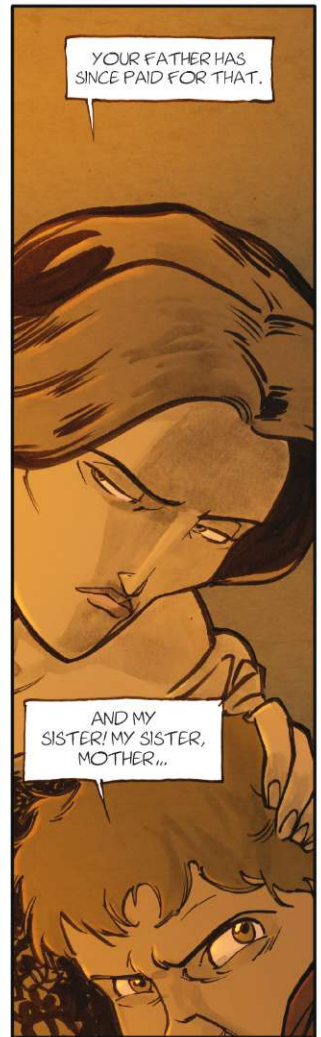


KING AT LAST! MIGHT THE CROWN MAKE THE HUMP DISAPPEAR?! OH, I DARE NOT HOPE! I'VE WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS MOMENT! MY BIRTH WAS SO UGLY, SO UGLY WERE THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH...



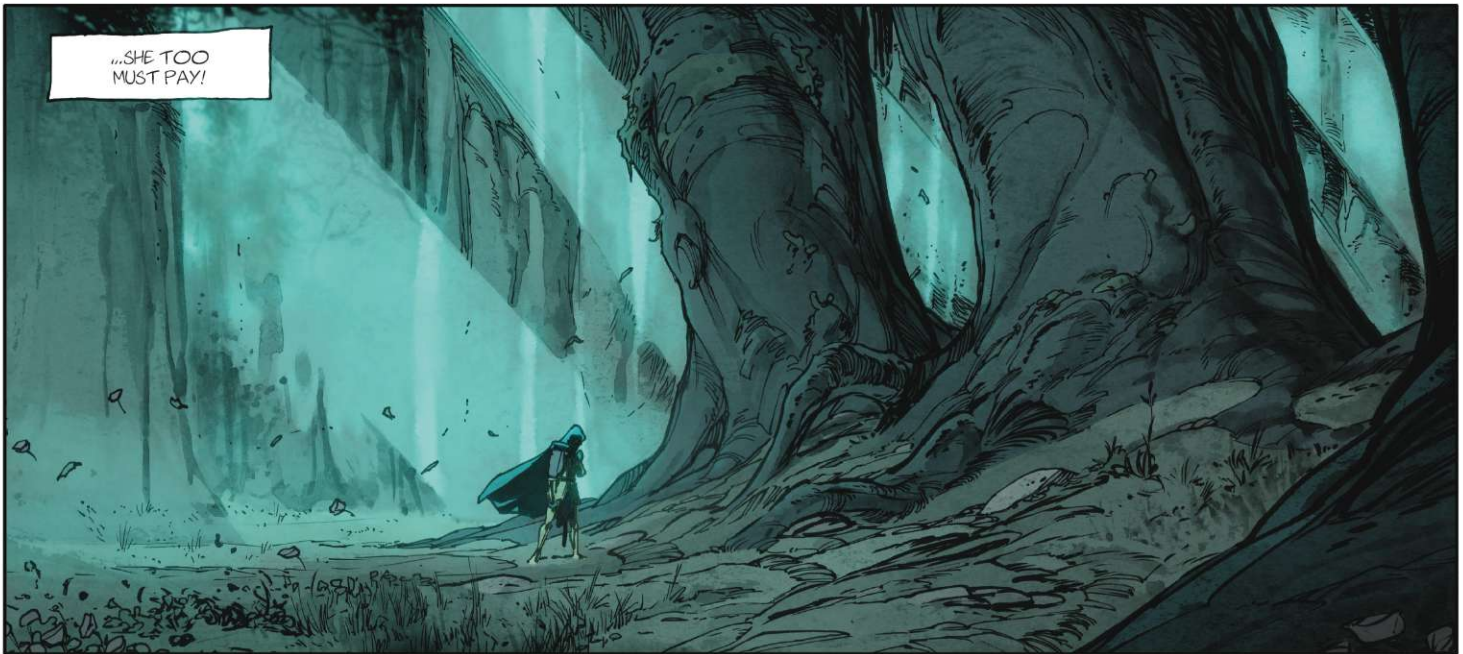
POWER AS REVENGE... POWER AS A CALL TO MURDER... THAT WOULD BE DIVINE.

MY LITTLE ONE... I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU'VE SUFFERED, BECAUSE OF A FATHER WHO FOUND YOU UGLY AND WHO PUSHED YOU AWAY AS HE PUSHED ME, HIS WIFE, AWAY. HE ALWAYS FELT THAT I WAS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUFFERING.



YOUR FATHER HAS SINCE PAID FOR THAT.

AND MY SISTER! MY SISTER, MOTHER...



...SHE TOO MUST PAY!



WHY, WHY DO I FEEL SO ALONE, EVEN AS THE ENEMY DRAWS NEAR?



BUT PERHAPS I AM NO LONGER ALONE? THE FIGURINE OF ME WAS IN THAT BEGGAR'S LUGGAGE...



...OR THAT PRINCE. CAN A FIGURINE BRING TWO BEINGS TOGETHER? OR IS IT HERE TO TEMPT US?

TO TEMPT US WITH HAPPINESS, WITH UNATTAINABLE LOVE...



BUT...DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE WHEN WEARING ARMOR?



NO. TENDERNESS IS A GAP IN THE ARMOR!



BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND!

THAT'S... THAT'S WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!? THAT'S WHO YOU THINK OF AS SO PURE, SO VULNERABLE?!

HAHAHA! THAT IS TOO FUNNY!



HERE. LET US DRINK TO THAT ARROGANT LITTLE THING WHO'S TAKEN HOLD OF YOUR HEART. YOUR TIMING FOR ROMANCE, HOWEVER, IS UNFORTUNATE...

HOW SO?



THE ENEMY HAS INVADDED THE LAND. HIS FORCES OUTNUMBER THE FORCES OF OUR DEAR BLANCHE, AND WILL CRUSH HER ARMY, WHOSE DAYS, I FEAR, ARE NUMBERED.



NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT! IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE CHANGED THE COURSE OF EVENTS.

THE DEVIL COMING TO VIRTUE'S RESCUE! WELL I DO BELIEVE THAT DESERVES A TOAST!



IF WE ARE TO TOAST, I'D RATHER SERVE MYSELF.

YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I WISH TO AVOID YOUR SPELLS.



I'M FAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THEIR EFFECTS.

YOU USED TO ENJOY THEM FROM TIME TO TIME.

I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BUT ONE CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL AROUND A SORCESS SUCH AS YOURSELF...



EXACTLY!



BUT... WHAT'S THAT STRANGE TASTE!?

IT'S THE CUP! THE RIM OF THE CUP IS POISONED, NOT THE WINE.



MY...MY HEAD IS SPINNING...



THAT'S NORMAL. ALL YOUR STRENGTH IS LEAVING YOU...



YOU WILL LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS FOR A FEW HOURS...



...JUST ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO GET WHAT I WANT FROM YOU...

YOU SHE-DEVIL!



HARDLY. YOU NEVER MEANT TO MARRY ME. I WAS JUST A DISTRACTION TO YOU.



BUT NOW THE DISTRACTION WANTS REVENGE.



THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO GO BACK TO THE WORLD BELOW. YOUR SISTER WILL LISTEN TO ME. I'VE GOT JUST THE THING TO NEGOTIATE MY RETURN.



AS FOR YOUR LITTLE BLANCHE, FORGET ABOUT HER... SHE'S LOST FOREVER!

THE NEXT MORNING, BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND LEFT HER LOVED ONES FOR THE BATTLEFIELD. THE CROWD CHEERED HER, HOPE WAS STILL ALIVE IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SOLDIERS.



THEY'RE SINGING, MOTHER. THEY REALLY THINK SHE'LL WIN.

THAT'S JUST FINE. DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY PLAN TO FIGHT SIR KRADOK?



NO...

I CONVINCED YOUR DEAR SISTER TO FIGHT ON LAND THAT WILL BE A DISADVANTAGE TO HER...



IN SAINT-ALBAN, IN THE SOUTH, WHERE MY FAMILY IS TO PROVIDE HER WITH REINFORCEMENTS. AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I LED HER TO BELIEVE... BUT ACTUALLY...



...IN SAINT-ALBAN, YOUR SISTER, BLANCHE OF MIDDLELAND, WILL MEET HER END.



Her name is **Blanche**. She is the new queen of Entremonde, a land of war, conspiracy and betrayal.

Soon she will have to choose between love and power, between the light of the World Above and the darkness of the World Below...

This is a fantasy tale both cruel and fascinating, with drawings that light up the page. A cross between Tim Burton and Walt Disney, **Spellbound** is sure to bewitch you...

Code prix : DA07

