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27

# Robert Jordan's the WHEEL of TIME



## the EYE of the WORLD

ROBERT JORDAN, CHUCK DIXON & FRANCIS NUGUIT





# Robert Jordan's the **WHEEL** of **TIME**®

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Perrin could not sleep -- no matter how he shifted, he could not find enough comfort from the cold around him and the rocks beneath him to drift off.

Egwene had no such problem -- she lay huddled against Perrin's back for warmth, sleeping the deep sleep of exhaustion. She never even murmured at his constant shifting about.

Usually, Perrin collapsed like a wrung-out rag as soon as the Whitecloaks let him stop...

..but tonight, his mind was racing. His skin crawled with a dread that had been building for days. If he closed his eyes, he would only see the torture Byar promised for them once they reached Amador.

Worse was the fact that Byar did not appear to be trying to frighten them with talk of hot irons and pincers, knives slicing away skin and needles piercing.

In fact, Byar did not care if they were frightened or not, if they were tortured or not, if they were alive or not. The realization was what convinced Perrin that Byar was telling the simple truth.

Perrin wondered how they would ever make the Whitecloaks believe that he and Egwene weren't Darkfriends when they were already convinced it was fact?

And then Perrin saw the lantern light, and someone speaking to the guards. He could not make out what was said, but he recognized the tall, gaunt shape.

Byar.





WAKE UP.

I SAID--

I'M  
AWAKE!

WHA--  
WHAT?

THCK

WHY SHOULD  
DARKFRIENDS  
SLEEP WHEN  
DECENT MEN MUST  
STAY AWAKE TO  
GUARD THEM?



FOR THE  
HUNDREDTH  
TIME, WE AREN'T  
DARKFRIENDS.

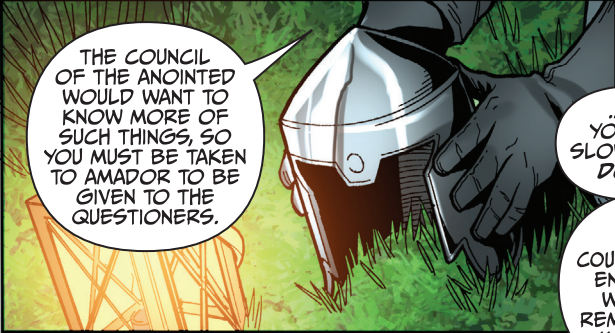


HM.





YOU ARE SLOWING US DOWN, DARKFRIEND. YOU AND YOUR WOLVES.



THE COUNCIL OF THE ANOINTED WOULD WANT TO KNOW MORE OF SUCH THINGS, SO YOU MUST BE TAKEN TO AMADOR TO BE GIVEN TO THE QUESTIONERS.



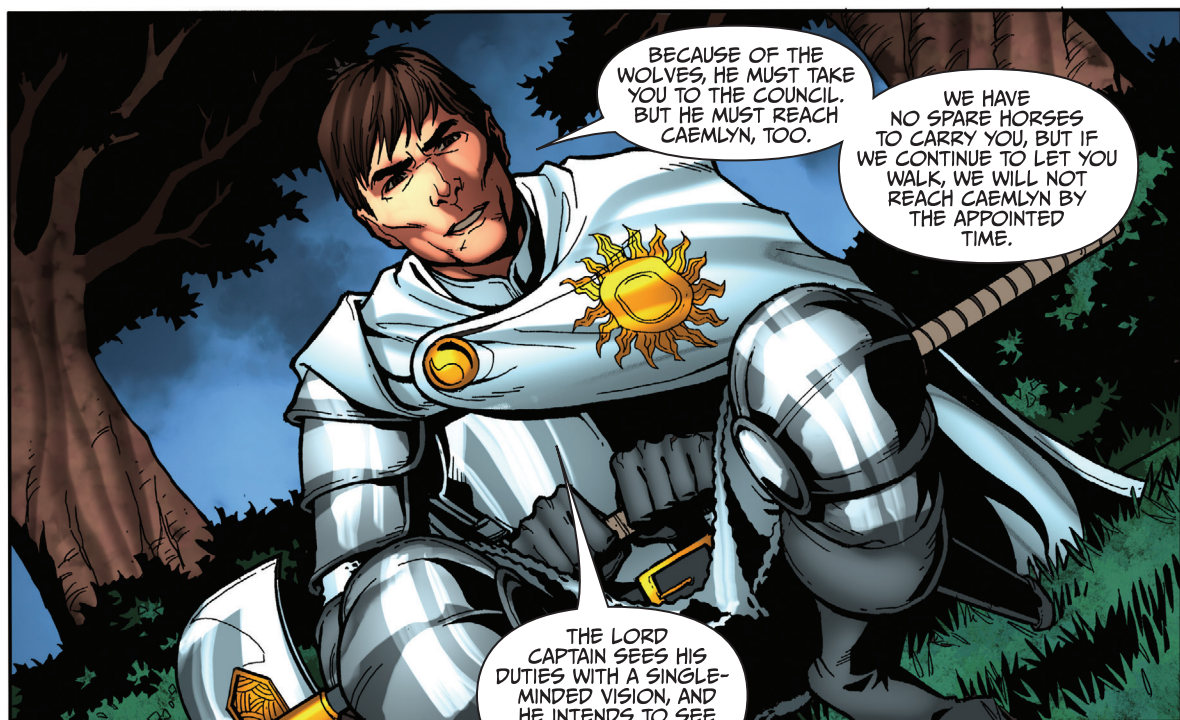
...BUT YOU ARE SLOWING US DOWN.

I HAD HOPED WE COULD MOVE FAST ENOUGH, EVEN WITHOUT THE REMOUNTS, BUT I WAS WRONG.



WHICH LEAVES THE LORD CAPTAIN CAUGHT IN THE CLEFT OF A DILEMMA.





BECAUSE OF THE WOLVES, HE MUST TAKE YOU TO THE COUNCIL. BUT HE MUST REACH CAEMLYN, TOO.

WE HAVE NO SPARE HORSES TO CARRY YOU, BUT IF WE CONTINUE TO LET YOU WALK, WE WILL NOT REACH CAEMLYN BY THE APPOINTED TIME.

THE LORD CAPTAIN SEES HIS DUTIES WITH A SINGLE-MINDED VISION, AND HE INTENDS TO SEE YOU BEFORE THE COUNCIL.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND.



THERE IS NOTHING TO UNDERSTAND. NOTHING BUT IDLE SPECULATION.

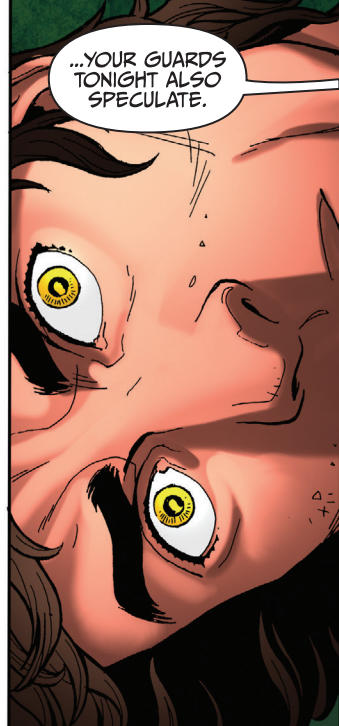
IF YOU *ESCAPED*, WE WOULD NOT HAVE AN HOUR TO SPARE TO TRACK YOU DOWN... IF WE ARE TO REACH CAEMLYN IN TIME.



IF YOU FRAYED YOUR ROPES ON A *SHARP ROCK*, SAY, AND VANISHED INTO THE NIGHT, THE LORD CAPTAIN'S PROBLEM WOULD BE *SOLVED*.

...JUST IDLE SPECULATION.



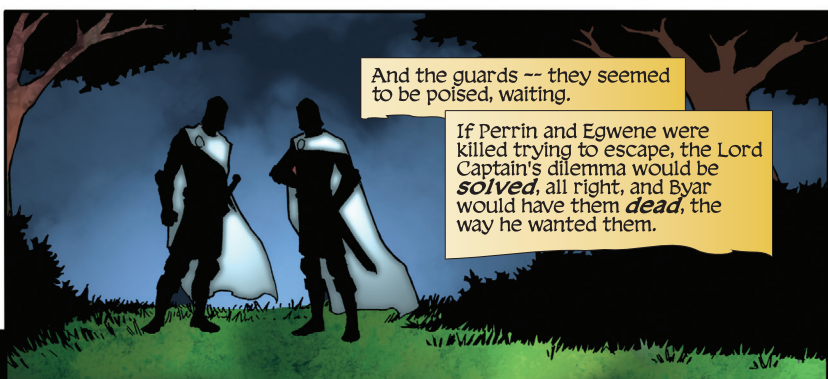


...YOUR GUARDS  
TONIGHT ALSO  
SPECULATE.



Could it be true? Could the  
Whitecloaks' need to get to  
Caemlyn quickly be important  
enough to let suspected  
Darkfriends escape?  
*Think it through.*

If Byar wanted them to  
*escape*, why not  
simply cut their bonds?



And the guards -- they seemed  
to be poised, waiting.

If Perrin and Egwene were  
killed trying to escape, the Lord  
Captain's dilemma would be  
*solved*, all right, and Byar  
would have them *dead*, the  
way he wanted them.



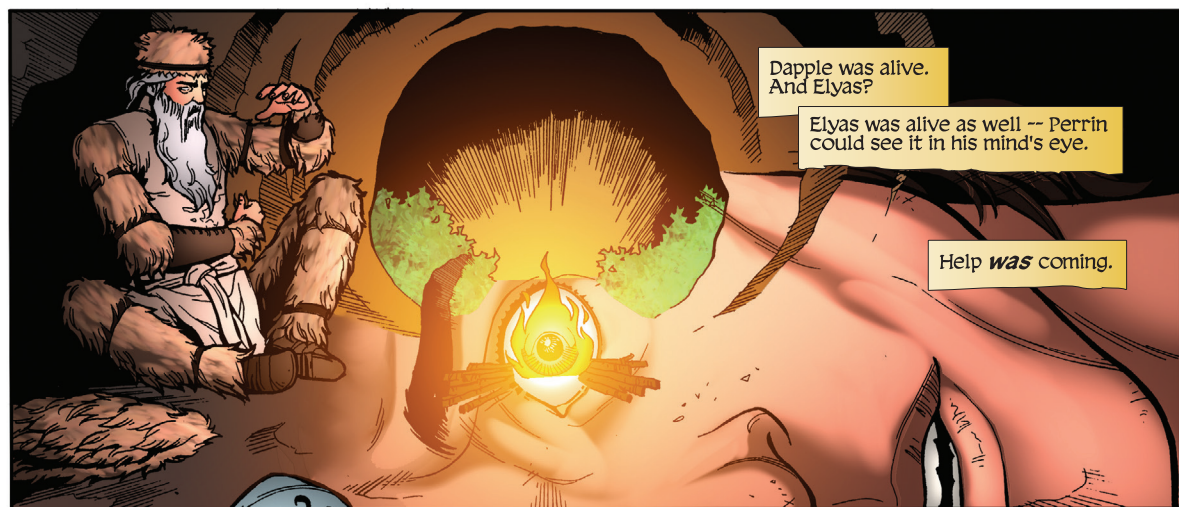
WAIT,  
DON'T GO. I  
WANT TO  
TALK.





Perrin was interrupted by a thought that blossomed in his mind, a clear burst of light in the midst of chaos, so startling for a moment he forgot everything else:

**Help comes!**



Dapple was alive.  
And Elyas?

Elyas was alive as well -- Perrin  
could see it in his mind's eye.

Help *was* coming.



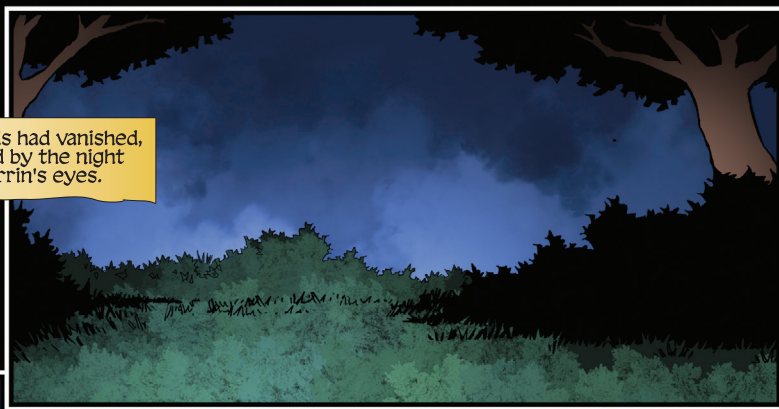
SOME  
THOUGHT HAS  
COME TO YOU,  
PERRIN OF THE  
TWO RIVERS, AND  
I WOULD KNOW  
WHAT IT IS.



Before Byar could even finish  
his thought, things began  
happening too fast for thought.



The guards had vanished,  
swallowed by the night  
before Perrin's eyes.



Perrin's eyes bulged as the  
night seemed to flow into the  
lantern light... and then...

Then the darkness invading  
the light became *Lan*.

The axe in Byar's hands lashed  
out like lightning... and Lan  
seemed to lean casually aside,  
letting the blade pass so close  
he must have felt the wind of it.

And then...











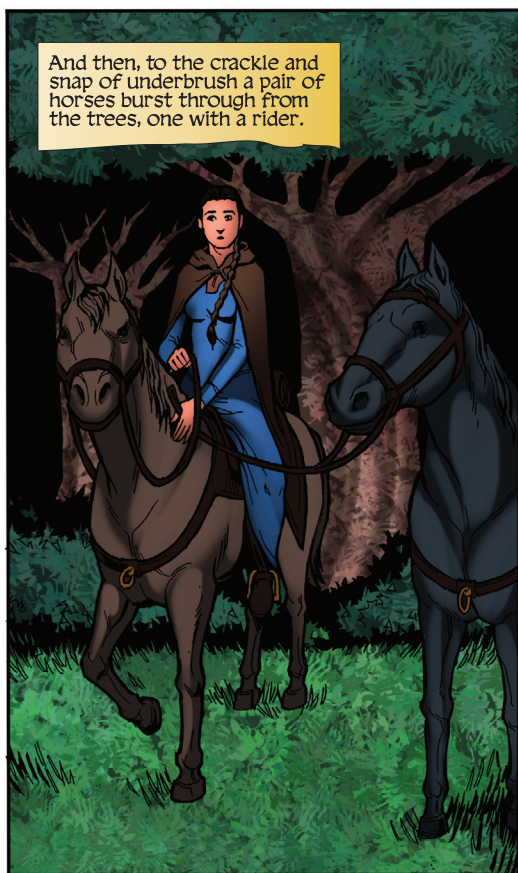








In two long strides, Lan was between Moiraine and the sound, the pale moonlight rippling across his sword.



And then, to the crackle and snap of underbrush a pair of horses burst through from the trees, one with a rider.



NYNAEVE!

EGWENE!  
THANK THE  
LIGHT YOU'RE  
ALIVE!

WHERE  
ARE MAT AND  
RAND?

ELSEWHERE.  
THE LIGHT SEND  
THEY ARE  
WELL.



WE WILL  
NONE OF US  
BE WELL IF THE  
WHITECLOAKS  
FIND US.

CHANGE  
YOUR CLOAKS  
AND GET  
MOUNTED.

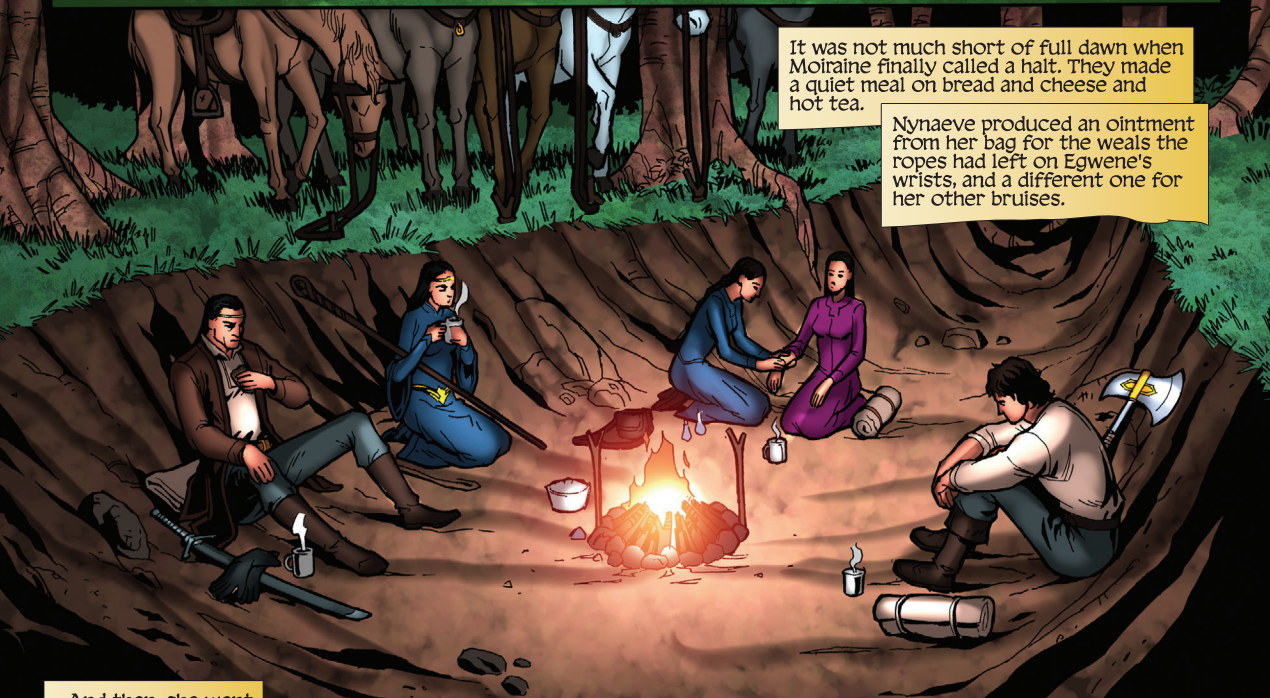


As they started out, Perrin felt Dapple's touch on his mind once more. Her message, more a feeling than words, was One Day Again. It hung haunting in his mind long after awareness of the wolves winked out.



It was not much short of full dawn when Moiraine finally called a halt. They made a quiet meal on bread and cheese and hot tea.

Nynaeve produced an ointment from her bag for the weals the ropes had left on Egwene's wrists, and a different one for her other bruises.



...And then, she went to see to Perrin.

TAKE YOUR COAT AND SHIRT OFF, PERRIN. THEY TELL ME ONE OF THE WHITECLOAKS TOOK A DISLIKE TO YOU.

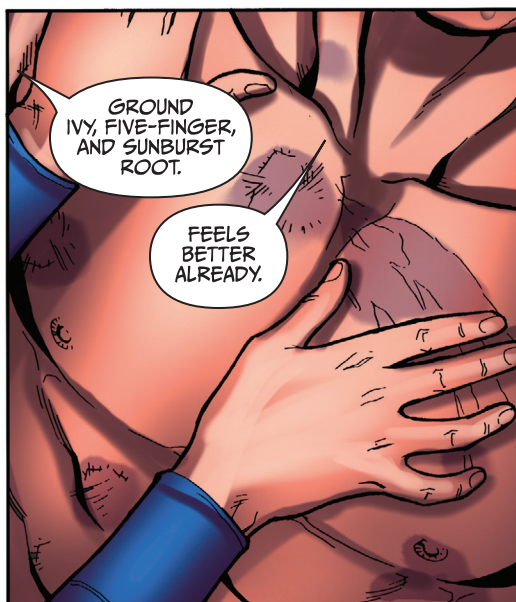


OH!

HOW COULD THEY HAVE DISLIKED YOU SO MUCH?















HEALING CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THIS, IT IS NOT AN ILLNESS. IT WILL NOT...

I WAS GOING TO SAY IT WILL NOT HARM HIM, BUT WHO CAN SAY WHAT THE END WILL BE? AT LEAST I CAN SAY IT WILL NOT HARM HIM DIRECTLY.

WHAT IS ALREADY WOVEN IS PAST CHANGING. WE MUST SLEEP NOW, WHILE WE CAN, AND LEAVE SOON. WE MUST REACH CAEMLYN QUICKLY.

But Perrin was unable to sleep. The Aes Sedai knew about wolves, and she obviously thought that... *this*... could be the Dark One's doing.

Perrin did not even hear Lan come and sit next to him. For a long moment, they simply stared at each other. And then, Perrin asked:

YOU KNOW?

SOME, NOT ALL.

DID IT JUST COME TO YOU, OR DID YOU MEET A GUIDE, AN INTERMEDIARY?



THERE WAS A MAN. HE SAID HIS NAME WAS ELYAS. ELYAS MACHERA.



I KNEW ELYAS. HE TAUGHT ME MUCH.

HE WAS A WARDER, BEFORE... BEFORE WHAT HAPPENED. HE IS WELL, ELYAS?

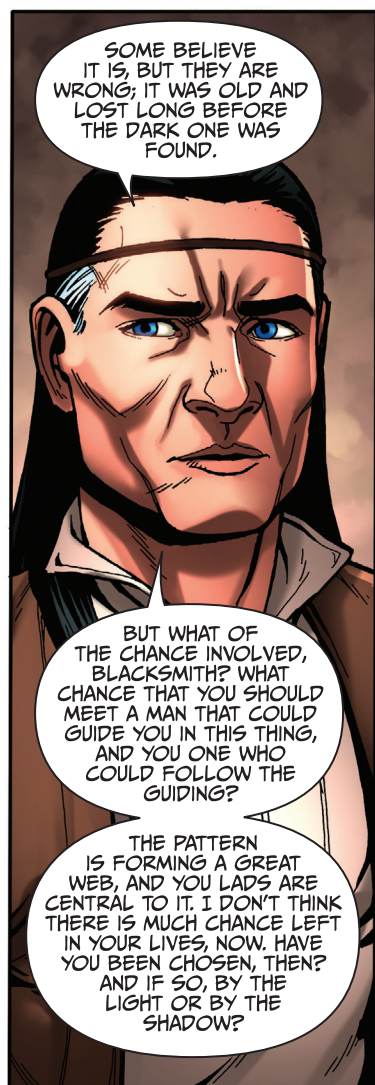




I THINK  
SO. THE WHITE-  
CLOAKS SAID  
THEY KILLED HIM,  
BUT DAPPLE--

I DON'T KNOW.  
THIS COMMUNICATING  
WITH THE WOLVES.  
MOIRAIN SEEMS TO  
THINK IT'S SOMETHING  
THE... SOMETHING  
THE DARK ONE  
DID.

IT ISN'T,  
IS IT?



SOME BELIEVE  
IT IS, BUT THEY ARE  
WRONG; IT WAS OLD AND  
LOST LONG BEFORE  
THE DARK ONE WAS  
FOUND.

BUT WHAT OF  
THE CHANCE INVOLVED,  
BLACKSMITH? WHAT  
CHANCE THAT YOU SHOULD  
MEET A MAN THAT COULD  
GUIDE YOU IN THIS THING,  
AND YOU ONE WHO  
COULD FOLLOW THE  
GUIDING?

THE PATTERN  
IS FORMING A GREAT  
WEB, AND YOU LADS ARE  
CENTRAL TO IT. I DON'T THINK  
THERE IS MUCH CHANCE LEFT  
IN YOUR LIVES, NOW. HAVE  
YOU BEEN CHOSEN, THEN?  
AND IF SO, BY THE  
LIGHT OR BY THE  
SHADOW?



THE DARK  
ONE CAN'T TOUCH  
US UNLESS WE  
NAME HIM. HE  
CAN'T.



ROCK-HARD  
STUBBORN. MAYBE  
STUBBORN ENOUGH  
TO SAVE YOURSELF  
IN THE END.

REMEMBER  
THE TIMES WE LIVE IN,  
BLACKSMITH. REMEMBER  
WHAT MOIRAIN SEDAI TOLD  
YOU. THIS MAY BE THE END  
OF AN AGE. WE MAY SEE A  
NEW AGE BORN BEFORE WE  
DIE, OR PERHAPS IT IS  
THE END OF AGES.

THE  
END OF TIME  
ITSELF.

THE  
END OF THE  
WORLD.





BUT THAT'S NOT FOR US TO WORRY ABOUT, EH, BLACKSMITH? WE'LL FIGHT THE SHADOW AS LONG AS WE HAVE BREATH, AND IF IT OVERRUNS US, WE'LL GO UNDER BITING AND CLAWING.

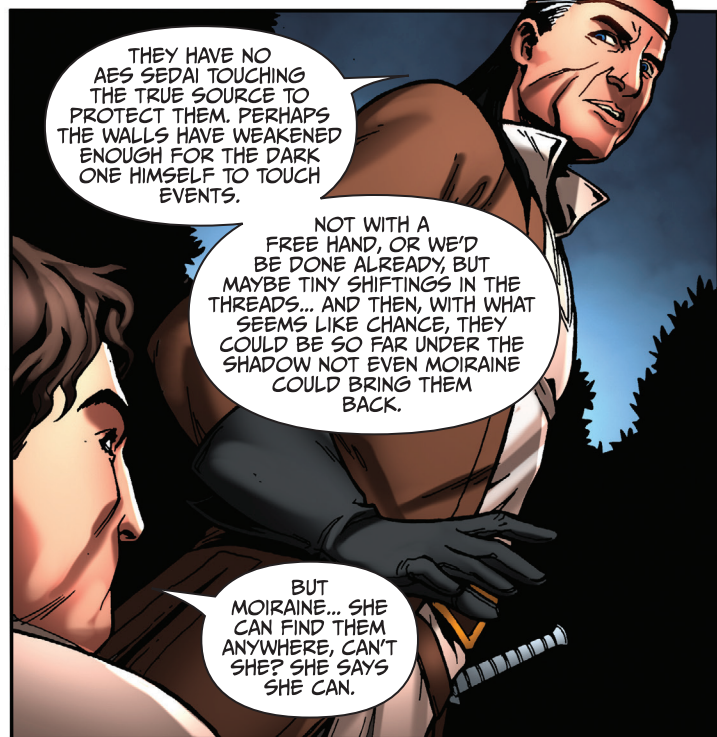
YOU TWO RIVERS FOLK ARE TOO STUBBORN TO SURRENDER.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DON'T YOU WORRY WHETHER THE DARK ONE HAS STIRRED IN YOUR LIFE. YOU ARE AMONG FRIENDS, NOW.

REMEMBER, THE WHEEL WEAVES AS THE WHEEL WILLS, AND EVEN THE DARK ONE CANNOT CHANGE THAT, NOT WITH MOIRAINÉ TO WATCH OVER YOU. BUT WE HAD BETTER FIND YOUR FRIENDS SOON.



THEY HAVE NO AES SEDAI TOUCHING THE TRUE SOURCE TO PROTECT THEM. PERHAPS THE WALLS HAVE WEAKENED ENOUGH FOR THE DARK ONE HIMSELF TO TOUCH EVENTS.

NOT WITH A FREE HAND, OR WE'D BE DONE ALREADY, BUT MAYBE TINY SHIFTINGS IN THE THREADS... AND THEN, WITH WHAT SEEMS LIKE CHANCE, THEY COULD BE SO FAR UNDER THE SHADOW NOT EVEN MOIRAINÉ COULD BRING THEM BACK.

BUT MOIRAINÉ... SHE CAN FIND THEM ANYWHERE, CAN'T SHE? SHE SAYS SHE CAN.



BUT CAN SHE FIND THEM IN TIME? IF THE DARK ONE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE A HAND HIMSELF, TIME IS RUNNING OUT.

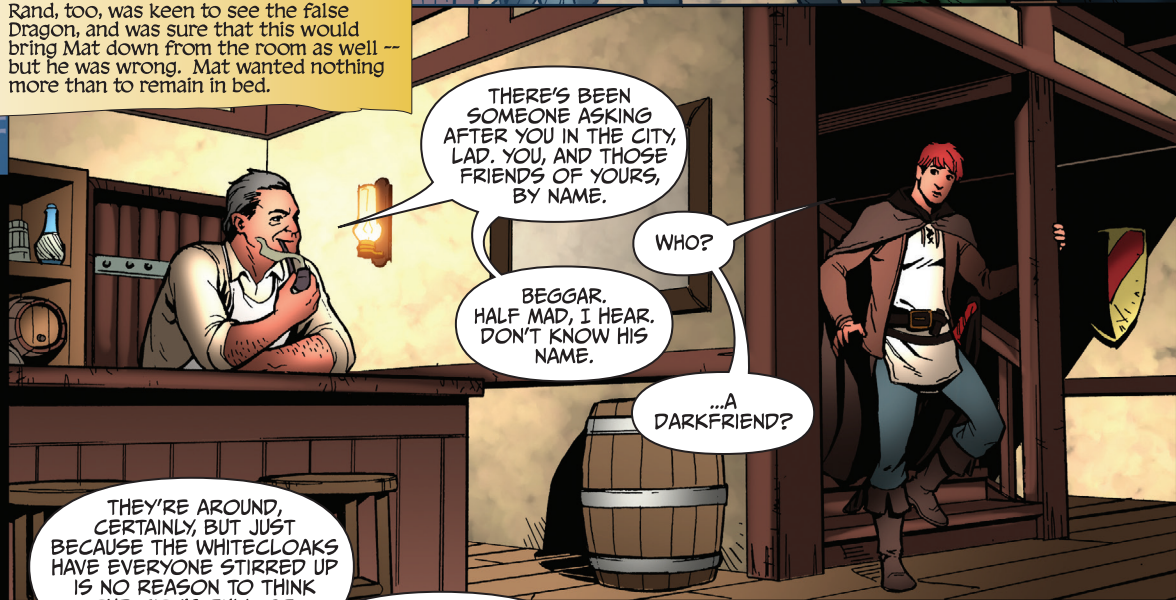
YOU PRAY WE FIND THEM IN CAEMLYN, BLACKSMITH, OR WE MAY ALL BE LOST.



Today was the day that the false Dragon was to arrive, and the excitement was palpable.



Rand, too, was keen to see the false Dragon, and was sure that this would bring Mat down from the room as well -- but he was wrong. Mat wanted nothing more than to remain in bed.



THERE'S BEEN SOMEONE ASKING AFTER YOU IN THE CITY, LAD. YOU, AND THOSE FRIENDS OF YOURS, BY NAME.

WHO?

BEGGAR. HALF MAD, I HEAR. DON'T KNOW HIS NAME.

...A DARKFRIEND?

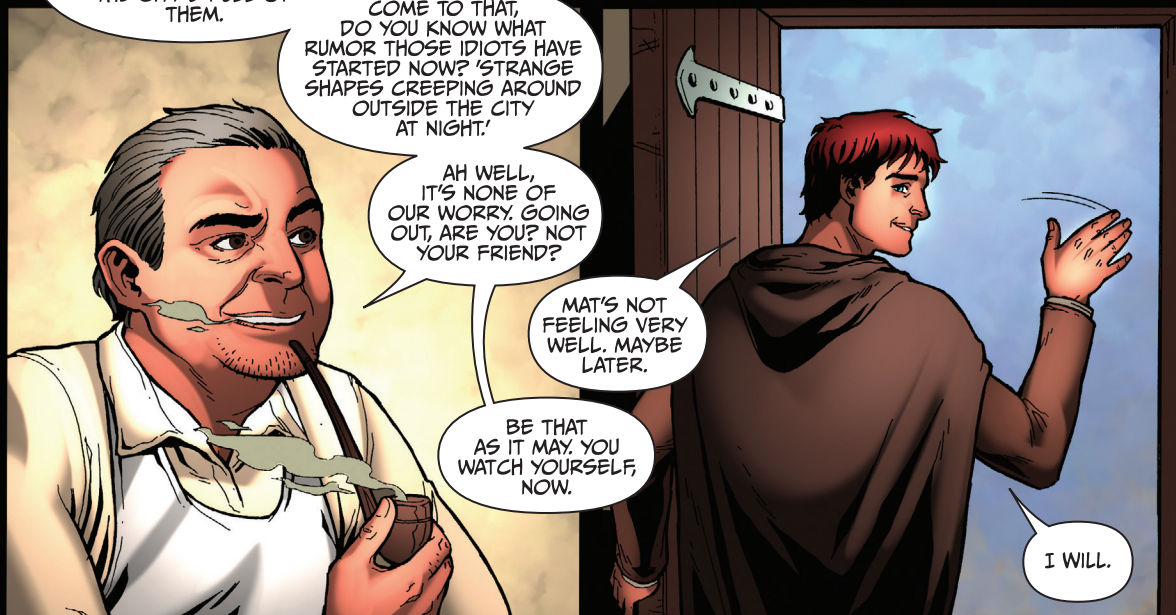
THEY'RE AROUND, CERTAINLY, BUT JUST BECAUSE THE WHITECLOAKS HAVE EVERYONE STIRRED UP IS NO REASON TO THINK THE CITY'S FULL OF THEM.

COME TO THAT, DO YOU KNOW WHAT RUMOR THOSE IDIOTS HAVE STARTED NOW? 'STRANGE SHAPES CREEPING AROUND OUTSIDE THE CITY AT NIGHT.'

AH WELL, IT'S NONE OF OUR WORRY. GOING OUT, ARE YOU? NOT YOUR FRIEND?

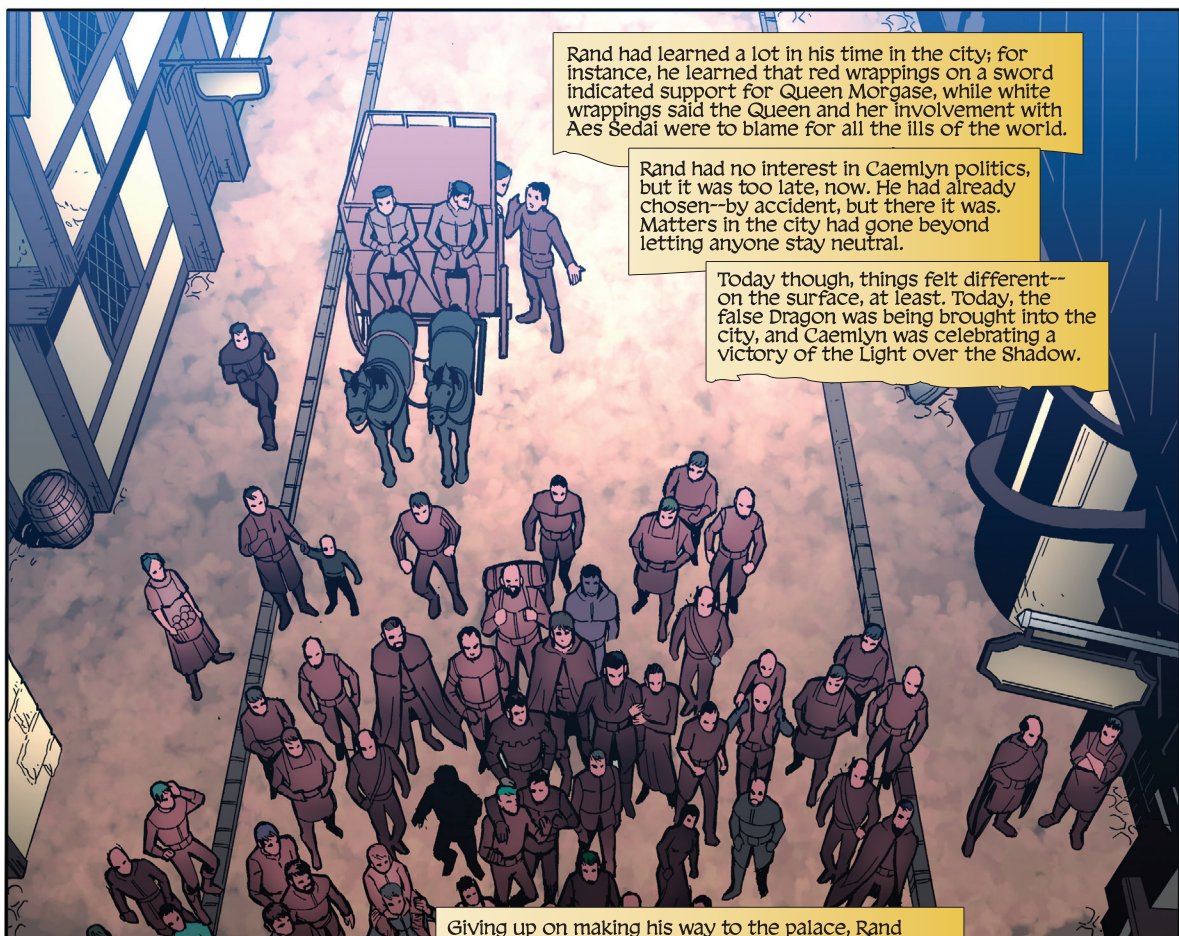
MAT'S NOT FEELING VERY WELL. MAYBE LATER.

BE THAT AS IT MAY. YOU WATCH YOURSELF, NOW.



I WILL.





Rand had learned a lot in his time in the city; for instance, he learned that red wrappings on a sword indicated support for Queen Morgase, while white wrappings said the Queen and her involvement with Aes Sedai were to blame for all the ills of the world.

Rand had no interest in Caemlyn politics, but it was too late, now. He had already chosen--by accident, but there it was. Matters in the city had gone beyond letting anyone stay neutral.

Today though, things felt different--on the surface, at least. Today, the false Dragon was being brought into the city, and Caemlyn was celebrating a victory of the Light over the Shadow.

Giving up on making his way to the palace, Rand looked around for a place where he could use his height to his advantage... where he could watch from a distance, but still see the false Dragon's face.



And then, across the street...

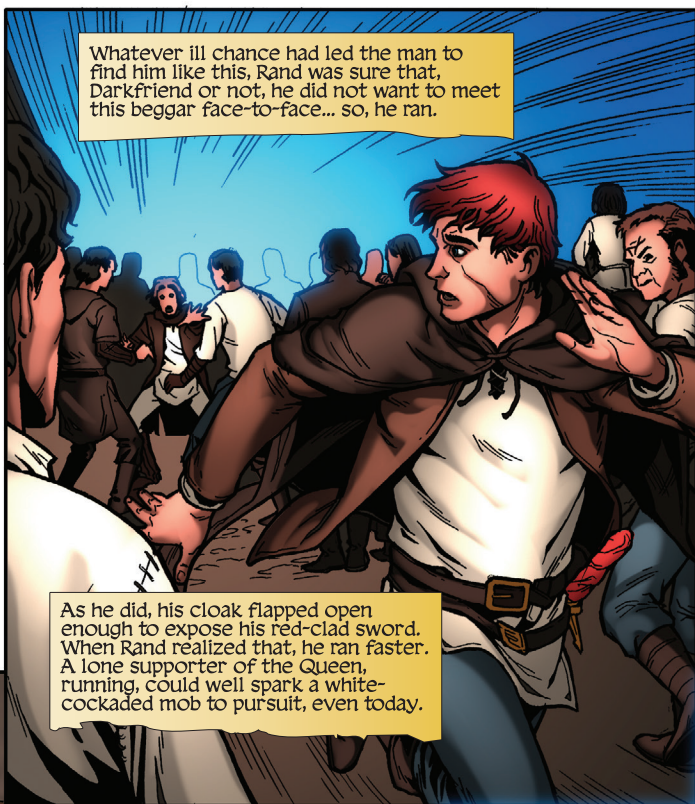


The beggar that Master Gill had mentioned. It had to be.

The little man gave a wordless cry and pointed straight at Rand, and then he began to scuttle across the street.



Whatever ill chance had led the man to find him like this, Rand was sure that, Darkfriend or not, he did not want to meet this beggar face-to-face... so, he ran.

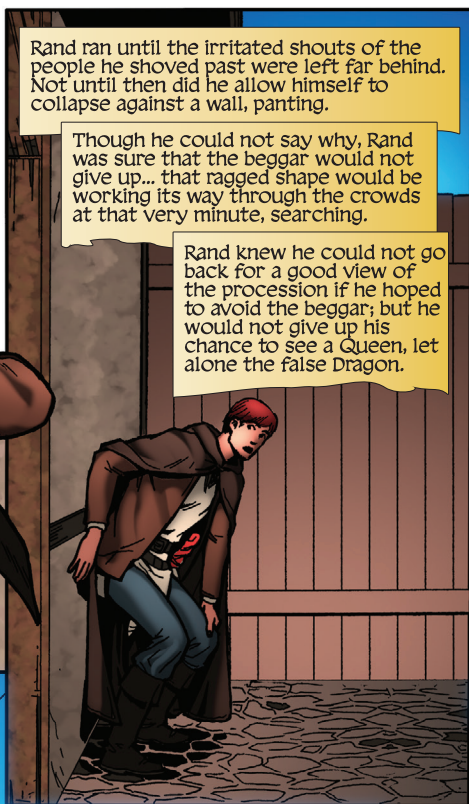


As he did, his cloak flapped open enough to expose his red-clad sword. When Rand realized that, he ran faster. A lone supporter of the Queen, running, could well spark a white-cockaded mob to pursuit, even today.

Rand ran until the irritated shouts of the people he shoved past were left far behind. Not until then did he allow himself to collapse against a wall, panting.

Though he could not say why, Rand was sure that the beggar would not give up... that ragged shape would be working its way through the crowds at that very minute, searching.

Rand knew he could not go back for a good view of the procession if he hoped to avoid the beggar; but he would not give up his chance to see a Queen, let alone the false Dragon.



After walking around for an hour or so, looking for a decent vantage point, Rand spotted a wall atop a steep slope.

It wasn't meant to be clambered up, but the cliffs just beyond the Sand Hills were higher, and even Perrin had climbed those.







As Rand settled into his place atop the wall, the first part of the procession rounded the final curve before the palace. Trumpeters, mounted bannermen, pikemen, archers, and then footmen.

Following that, a massive wagon, pulled by sixteen horses in hitches of four.

And on the wagon, trapped in a cage of heavy iron bars, was Logain, the false Dragon.

Rand's perch was not close enough for him to see Logain's face, as he had wanted to, but suddenly he thought he was as close as he cared to be.



The way he held himself, Logain was a king in every inch of him. The cage might as well not have been there.





Other contingents followed behind the wagon, with banners representing more who had fought and defeated the false Dragon. The Golden Bees of Illian, the three White Crescents of Tear, the Rising Sun of Cairhien, and many others.

The sight was anticlimactic after Logain.



Logain. He was defeated, wasn't he? He wouldn't be in a cage if he wasn't defeated...

Rand could not shake the images from his head; the cage and the Aes Sedai, Logain, undefeated. No matter the cage, that had not been a defeated man. He had actually thrown back his head and laughed as they brought him to the palace.

BUT WHY WERE THE AES SEDAI WATCHING HIM...?

THEY'RE KEEPING HIM FROM TOUCHING THE TRUE SOURCE, SILLY.



WHAT? WHOAH!



Rand jerked to look up towards the girl's voice, and suddenly his precarious seat was gone.

He had only time to realize that he was toppling backward, falling...

To be continued...