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Robert Jordan's
the WHEEL
of TIME

the EYE of the WORLD

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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.



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?

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

THUKK

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.

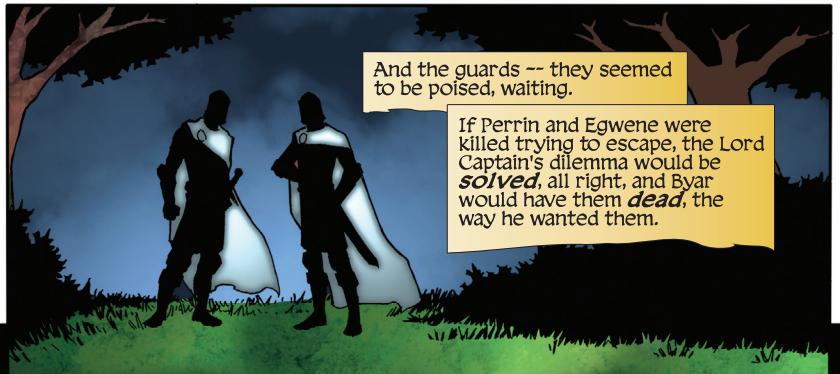
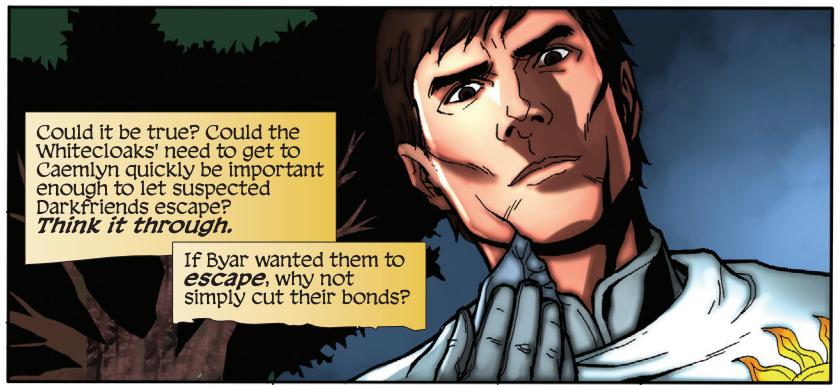
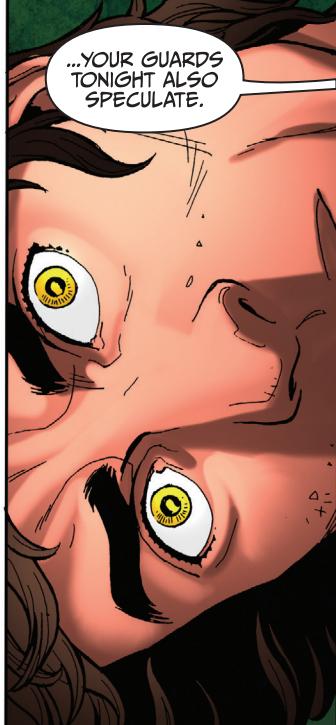
...BUT
YOU ARE
SLOWING US
DOWN.

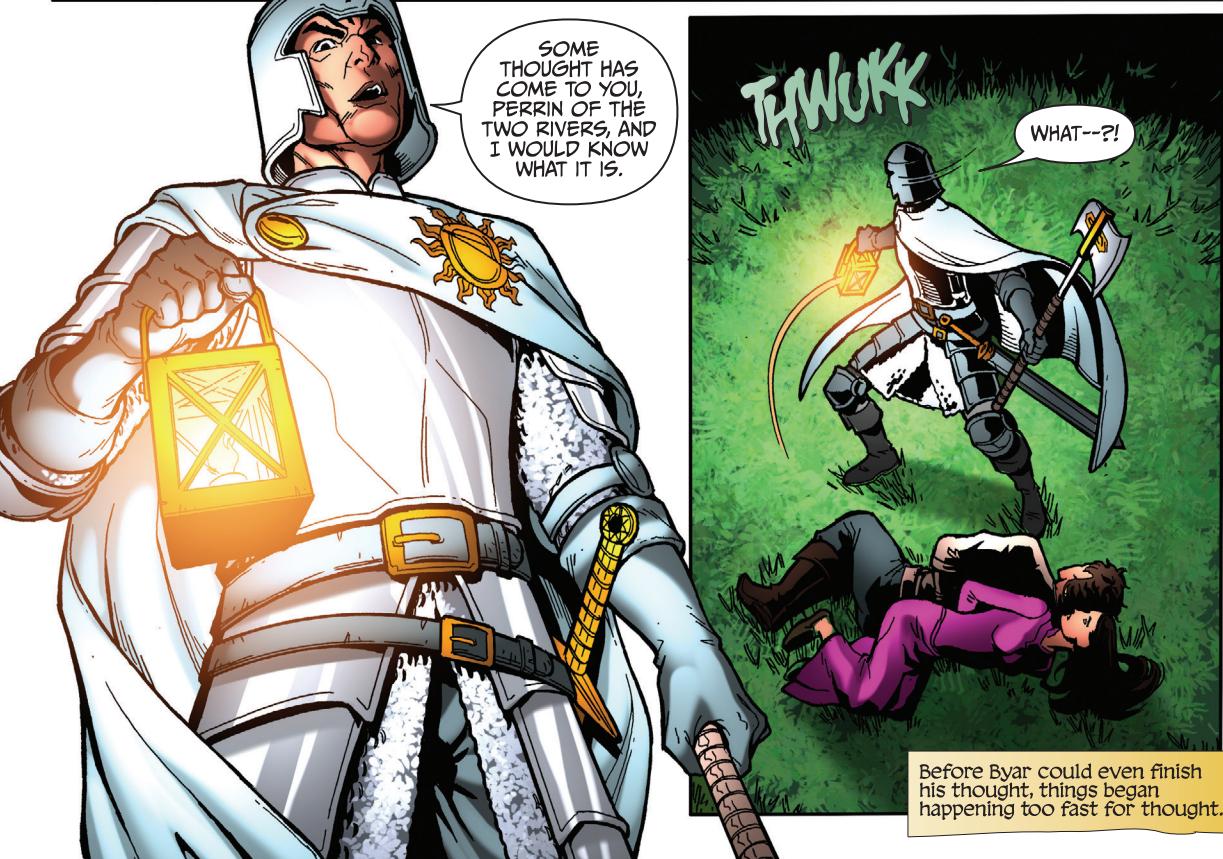
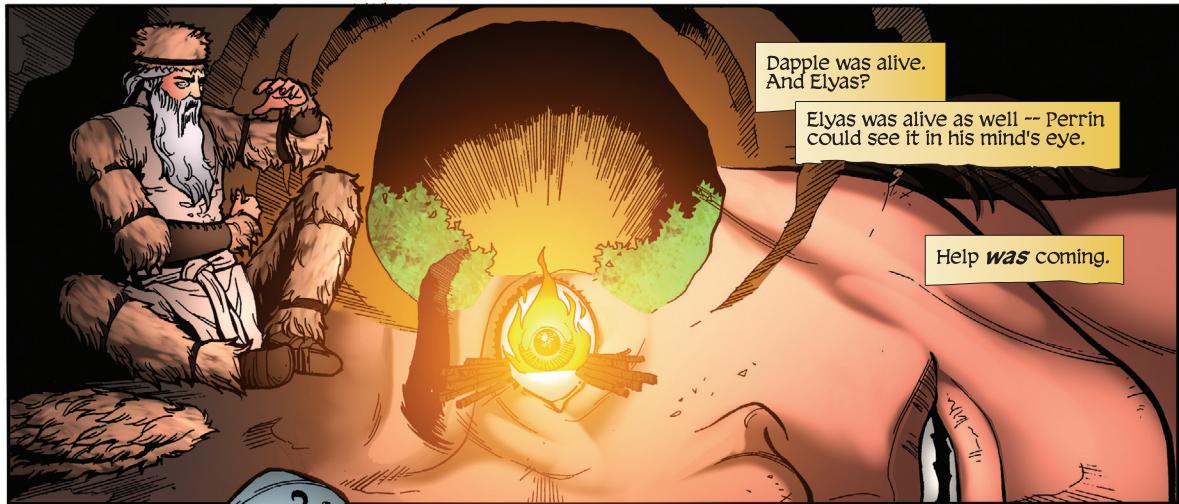
I HAD
HOPED WE
COULD MOVE FAST
ENOUGH, EVEN
WITHOUT THE
REMONTS, BUT I
WAS WRONG.



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









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...





DID YOU... IS HE...?

NO, I DO NOT KILL UNLESS I MEAN TO--BUT HE WON'T BOTHER ANYONE FOR A WHILE.



NOW STOP ASKING QUESTIONS, GET A PAIR OF THEIR CLOAKS, AND FOLLOW ME. WE DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME.

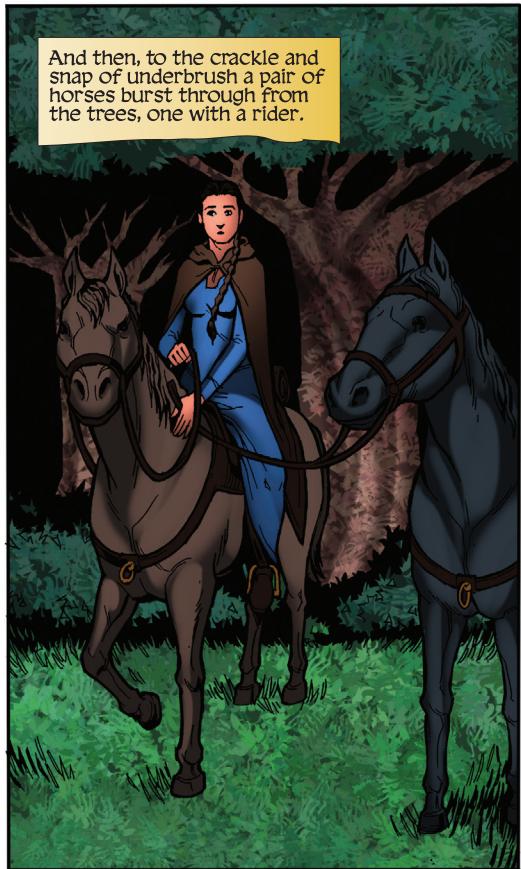


Lightning came like hail as Lan led Perrin and Egwene out of the camp. Whitecloaks looked at them, wild-eyed, as they passed. A few shouted at them, but no one tried to stop them.

Eventually, the ground turned uneven under Perrin's feet, and brush began to slap at him. The lightning flickered fitfully and was gone.

Behind them, men still shouted, voices tiny in the night, trying to restore order and find out what had happened.



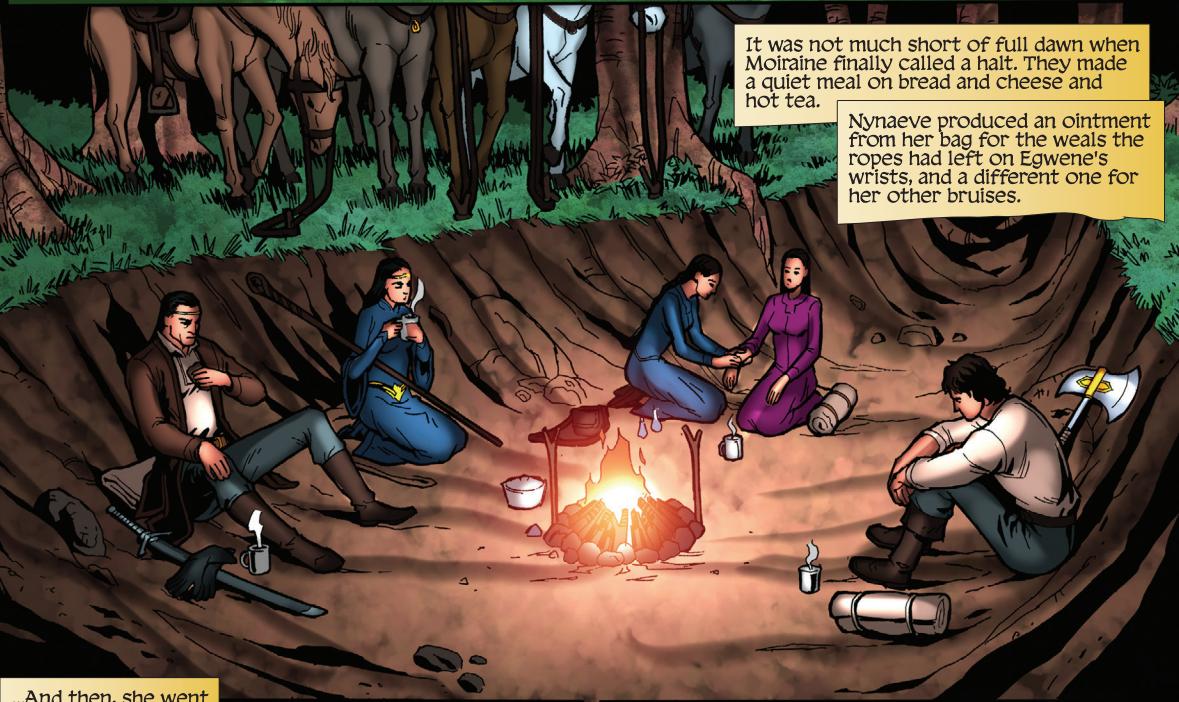


As they started out, Perrin felt Dapple's touch on his mind once more. Her message, more a feeling than words, was One Day Again. It hung haunting in his mind long after awareness of the wolves winked out.



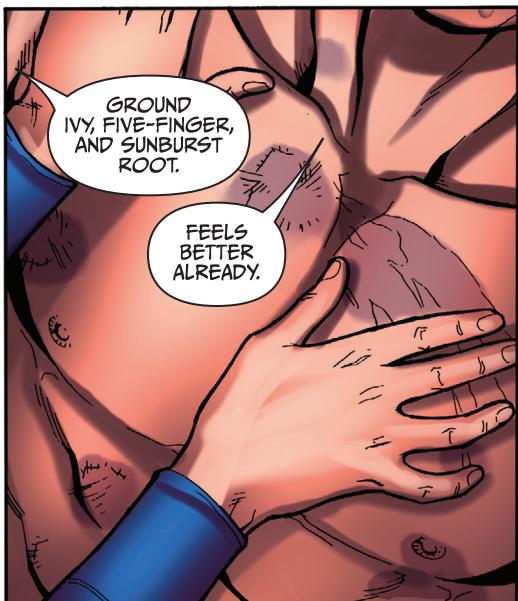
It was not much short of full dawn when Moiraine finally called a halt. They made a quiet meal on bread and cheese and hot tea.

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.







IF IT WAS

YELLOW EYE FEVER, YOU
WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO STAND.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FEVER,
AND THE WHITES OF YOUR EYES
AREN'T YELLOWED, JUST
THE IRISES.



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?

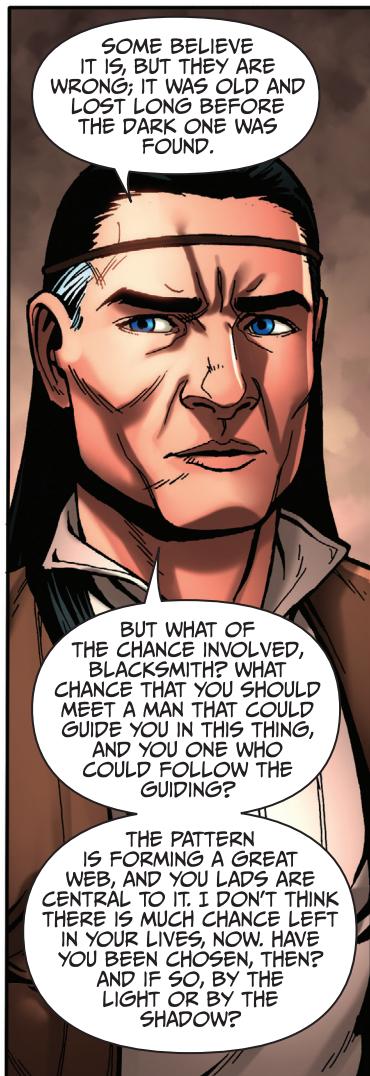
SOME, NOT ALL.

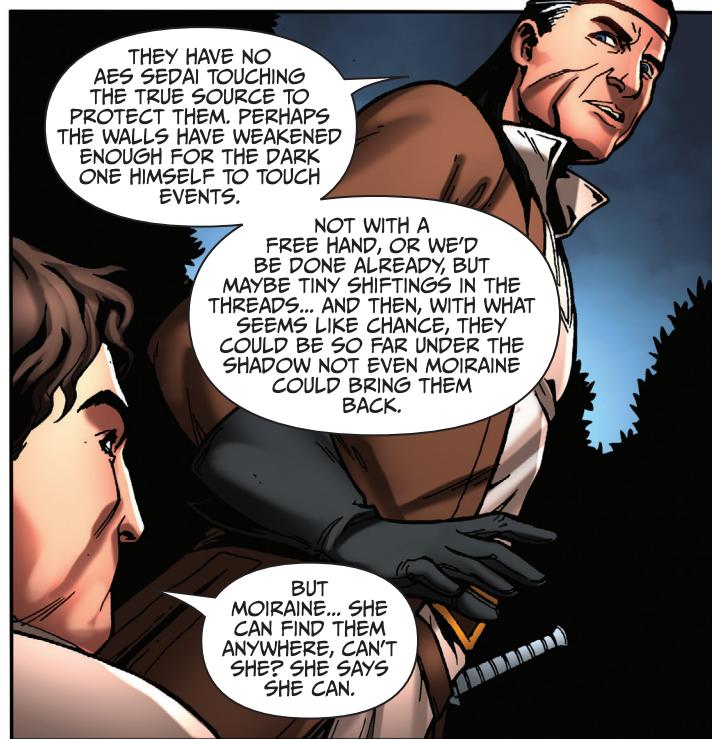
DID IT JUST COME TO YOU, OR DID YOU MEET A GUIDE, AN INTERMEDIARY?

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?





Caemlyn.

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!

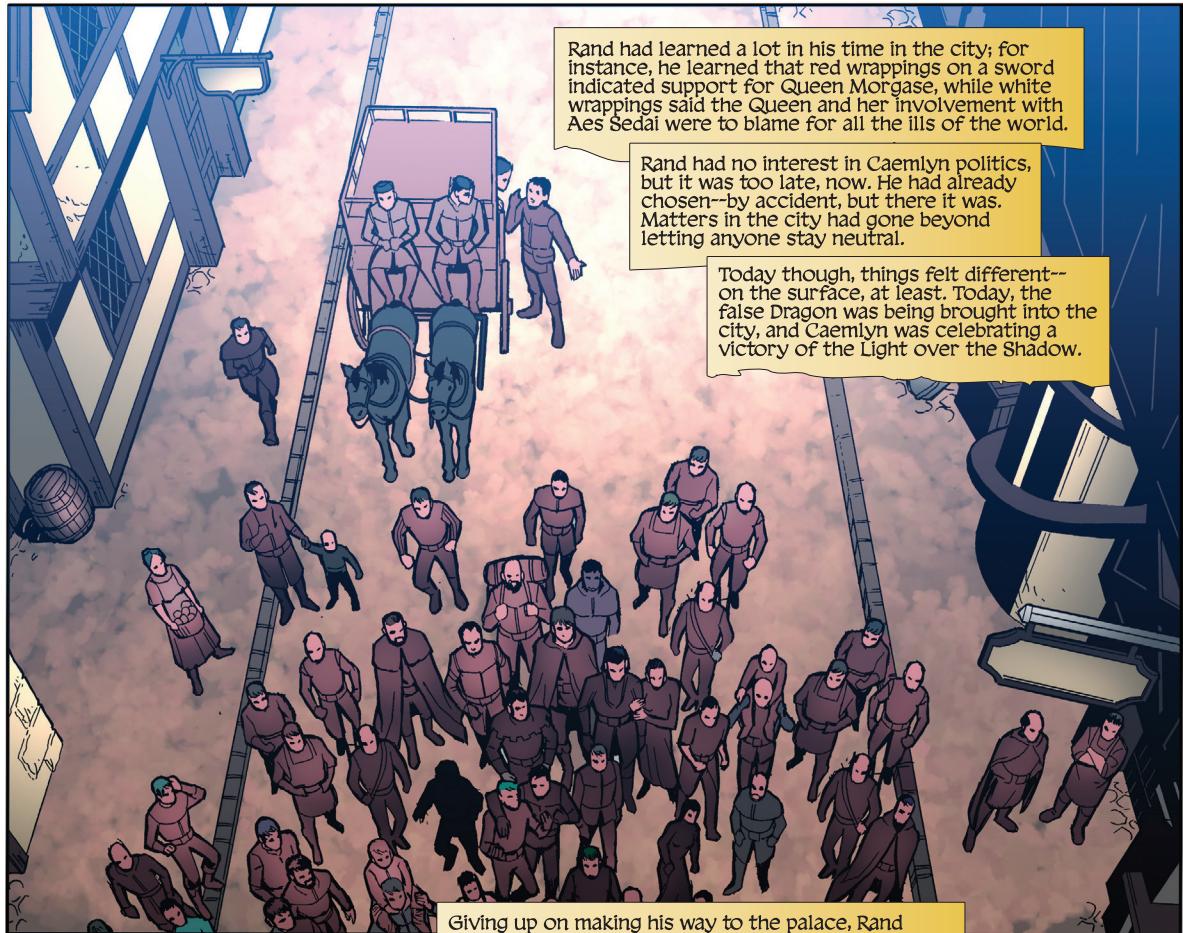
AH WELL, IT'S NONE OF OUR WORRY. GOING OUT, ARE YOU? NOT YOUR FRIEND?

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.

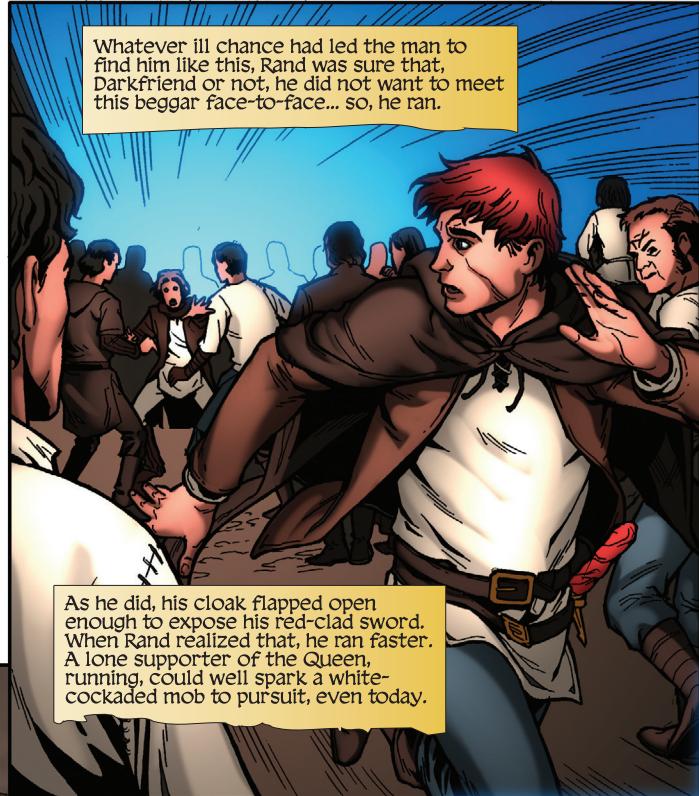
And then, across the street...



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.

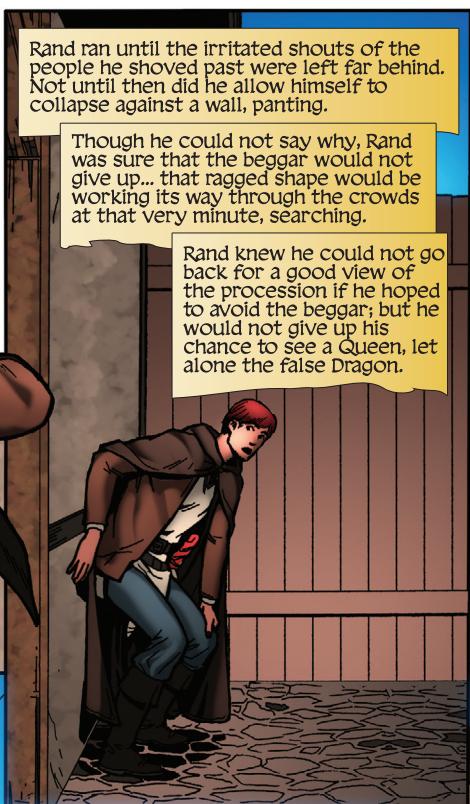


As he did, his cloak flapped open enough to expose his red-clad sword. When Rand realized that, he ran faster. A lone supporter of the Queen, running, could well spark a white-cockaded mob to pursuit, even today.

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.



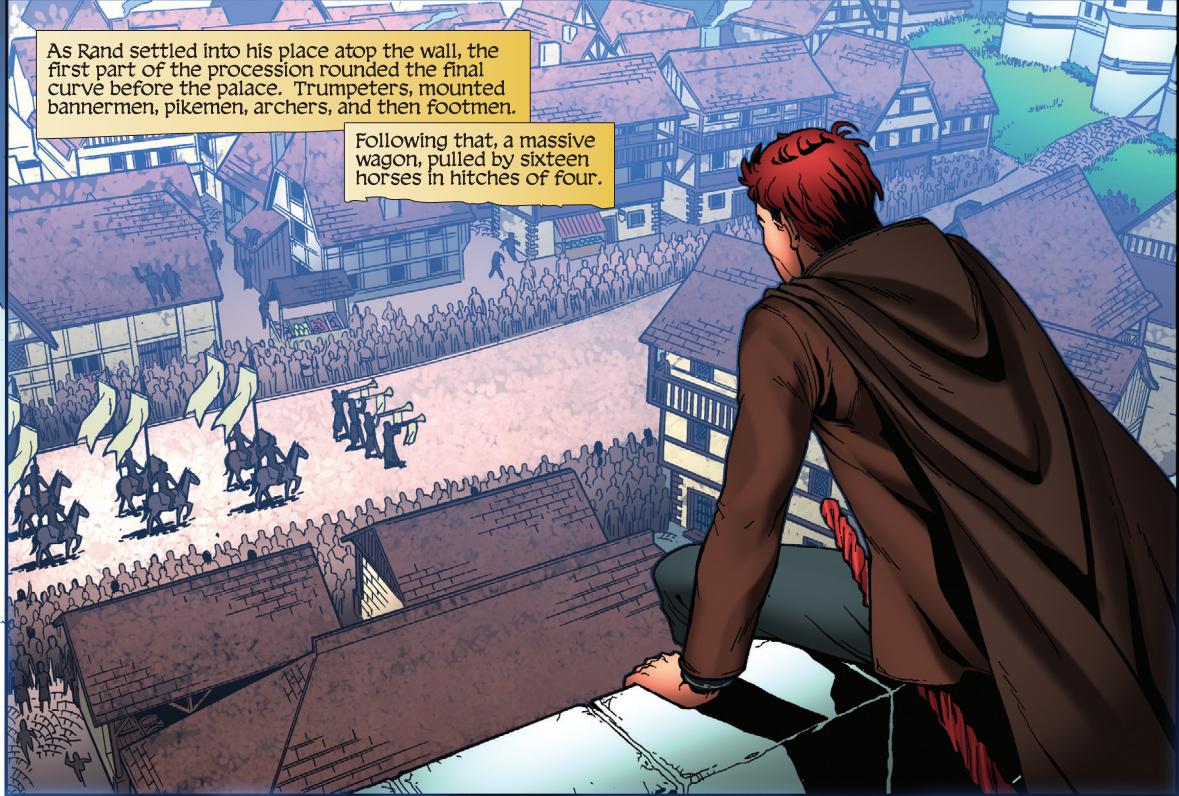
After walking around for an hour or so, looking for a decent vantage point, Rand spotted a wall atop a steep slope.

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 a 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...