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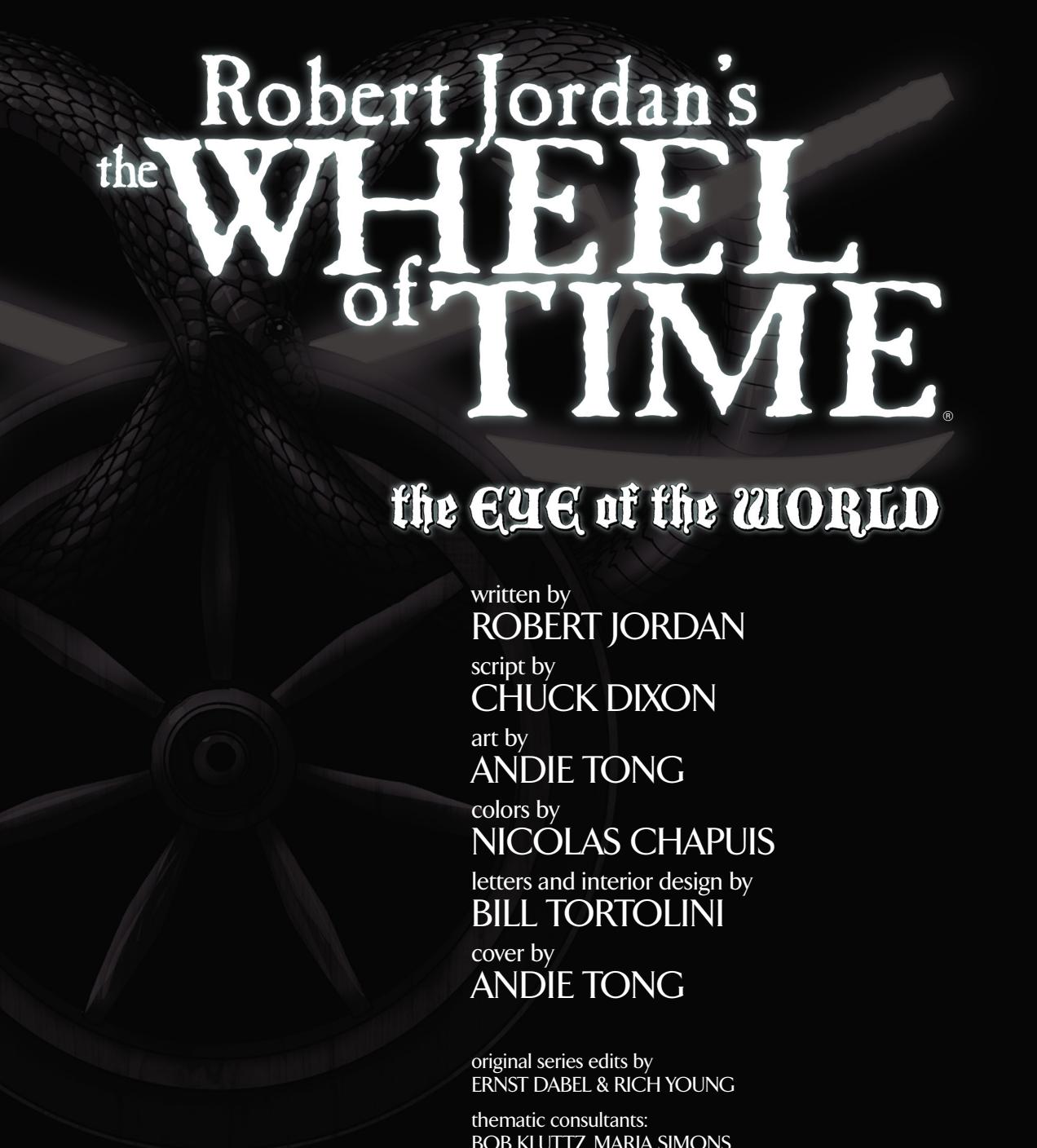
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# Robert Jordan's the WHEEL of TIME®



## the EYE of the WORLD

ROBERT JORDAN, CHUCK DIXON & ANDIE TONG



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## the EYE of the WORLD

written by

**ROBERT JORDAN**

script by

**CHUCK DIXON**

art by

**ANDIE TONG**

colors by

**NICOLAS CHAPUIS**

letters and interior design by

**BILL TORTOLINI**

cover by

**ANDIE TONG**

original series edits by

**ERNST DABEL & RICH YOUNG**

thematic consultants:

**BOB KLUTTZ, MARIA SIMONS  
& ALAN ROMANCZUK**

consultation:

**ERNST DABEL & LES DABEL**

special thanks to:

**HARRIET MCDUGAL, NAT SOBEL,**

**ADIA WRIGHT, TOM DOHERTY,**

**MELISSA ANN SINGER & STEVEN PADNICK**

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**NICK BARRUCCI** • PRESIDENT  
**JUAN COLLADO** • CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
**JOSEPH RYBANDT** • EDITOR  
**JOSH JOHNSON** • CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
**RICH YOUNG** • DIR. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
**JASON ULLMEYER** • GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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On the hard-packed dirt of the North Road the horses stretched out, manes and tails streaming back in the moonlight as they raced northward, hooves pounding a steady rhythm.

On and on they sped, northward and into the night, time fading into an indistinct blur.



Abruptly, Lan slowed, then brought the file of horses to a stop.



Rand was not sure how long they'd been moving, but a soft ache filled his legs from gripping the saddle.



Ahead of them in the night, lights sparkled, as if a tall swarm of fireflies held one place among the trees.

They were **windows**. The windows of **houses** covering the sides and top of a **hill**.



It was Watch Hill. He could hardly believe they had come so far.

MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO PUT ALL THESE VILLAGES BEHIND ME, A FEW HOURS REST WOULD NOT GO AMISS JUST NOW.

SURELY WE HAVE ENOUGH OF A LEAD TO ALLOW THAT?

WE CANNOT STOP UNTIL WE'RE ACROSS THE TAREN. NOT FOR MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES.

BUT THE HORSES. WE'LL RUN THEM TO DEATH IF WE TRY TO GO ANY FURTHER TONIGHT. MOIRANE SEDAI, SURELY YOU--

Rand had vaguely noticed Moiraine move amongst the horses, but he had not paid any real attention to what she did. He fell silent as she laid her hands on Cloud's neck.

I DID NOT KNOW SHE COULD DO THAT.

YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED IT. YOU WATCHED HER WITH YOUR FATHER.

I DON'T NEED IT, NOT YET. AND NOT HER - WHAT SHE CAN DO FOR OTHERS, SHE CAN'T DO FOR HERSELF. ONLY ONE OF US WILL RIDE TIRED. YOU'D BETTER HOPE SHE DOESN'T GROW TOO TIRED BEFORE WE REACH TAR VALON.

TOO TIRED FOR WHAT?

THE REST OF US. NOT YOU?

YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT YOUR BELA, RAND.

SHE HAS A GOOD HEART. STRANGE AS IT SEEMS, SHE MAY BE THE LEAST WEARY OF ALL.

SKRAAAW



The wind of the Draghkar's wings beat at Rand with a feel like the touch of slime. He had not time to feel the fear of it, for his horse, Cloud, was twisting desperately, as if attempting to shake off some clinging thing.

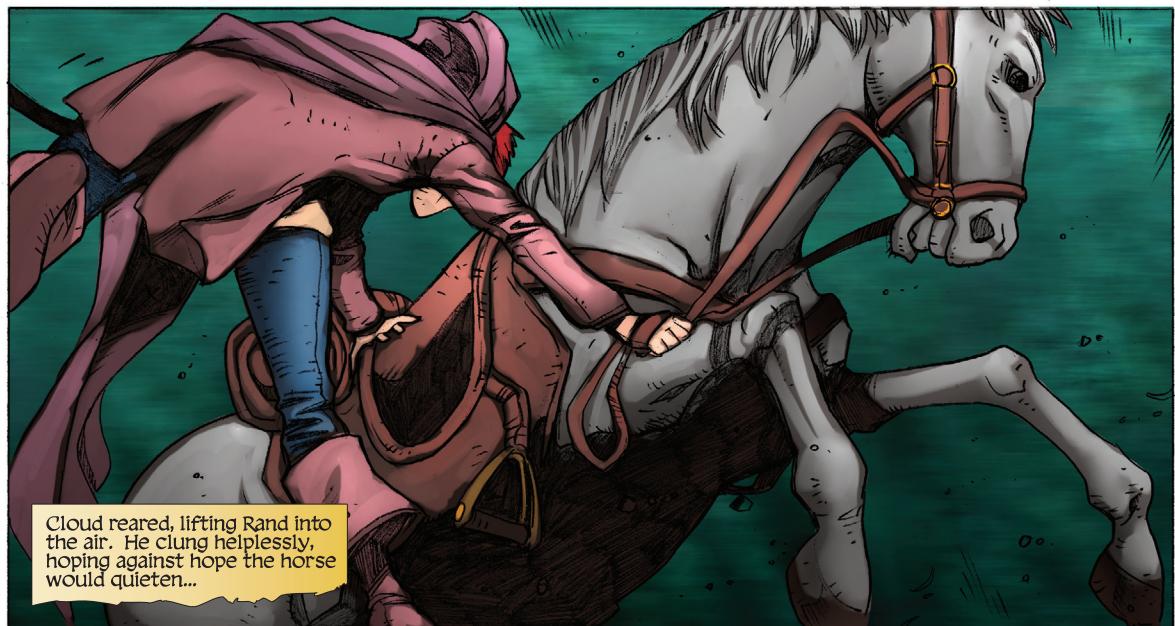


Rand, still hanging onto the reins, was jerked off his feet and dragged across the ground, Cloud screaming as though the big gray felt *wolves* tearing at his hocks.

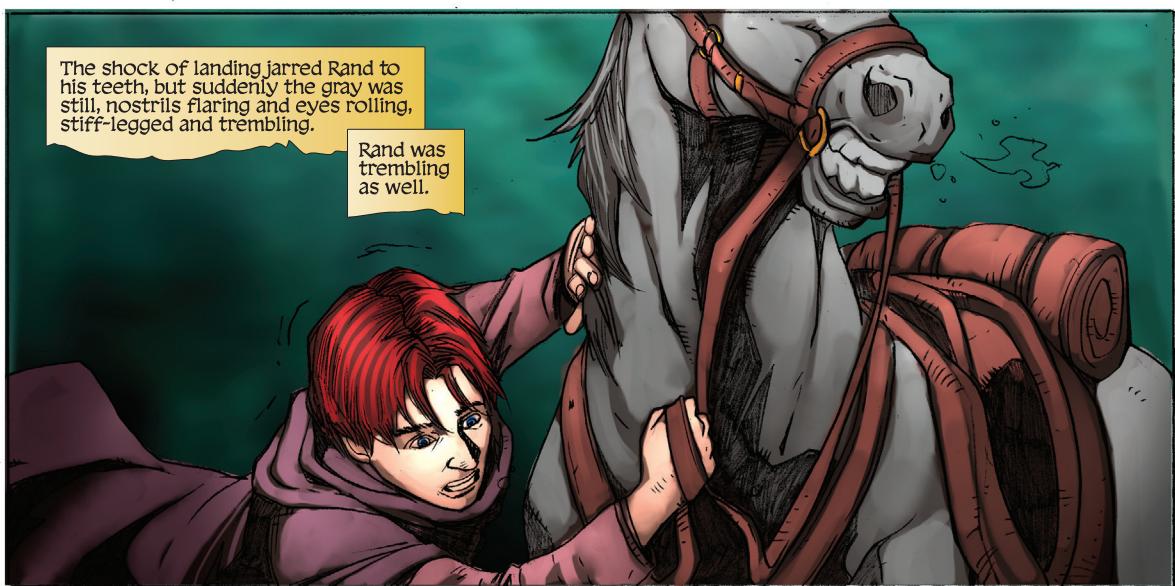


Somehow Rand maintained his grip on the reins; using the other hand as much as his legs he scrambled to his feet, taking leaping, staggering steps to keep from being pulled down again.

His breath came in ragged pants of desperation. He could not let Cloud get away. He threw out a frantic hand, barely catching the bridle.



Cloud reared, lifting Rand into the air. He clung helplessly, hoping against hope the horse would quieten...



The shock of landing jarred Rand to his teeth, but suddenly the gray was still, nostrils flaring and eyes rolling, stiff-legged and trembling.

Rand was trembling as well.



THE DRAGHKAR  
WOULD NOT HAVE SHOWN  
ITSELF UNLESS IT HAD  
ALREADY REPORTED OUR  
WHEREABOUTS TO THE  
MYRDDRAAL.



They galloped in a knot, horses all jostling together as they ran. Lan ordered them to spread out again, but no one wanted to be even a little alone in the night.

The Warder gave up and let them run clustered.





Spurred by the Draghkar's cries, they ran. Cloud strained to force himself between the Warder's black and the Aes Sedai's trim mare, yet the gray could not gain so much as a step on the other two horses.



Rand looked at Bela - who ran with neck outstretched, matching the larger horses' every stride - and thought the Aes Sedai must've done something more than simply ridding her of fatigue.

Lan must have asked a question then, for Moiraine suddenly shouted over the wind and the pounding of hooves.



I CANNOT!  
MOST ESPECIALLY  
FROM THE BACK OF  
A GALLOPING HORSE.  
THEY ARE NOT EASILY  
KILLED, EVEN WHEN  
THEY CAN BE  
SEEN.

WE  
MUST  
RUN AND  
HOPE.



They galloped through a tatter of fog. Cloud sped through it in two strides.

Rand wondered if he had imagined it. Surely the night was too cold for fog.



Another patch of ragged gray whisked by them to one side, larger than the first. It had been growing, as if the mist oozed from the ground.

Then a wall of pale gray loomed before them, and they were suddenly *enshrouded*.



Lan did *not* slow their pace.

THERE IS  
STILL ONLY ONE  
PLACE WE CAN  
BE GOING!



MYRDDRAAL ARE SLY.

I WILL  
USE ITS OWN  
SLYNES  
AGAINST  
IT.



Silvery mist obscured both sky and ground, so that the riders, themselves turned to shadow, appeared to float right through the clouds. Even the legs of the horses seemed to have vanished.



And hope.



It must have been hours that they rode. Rand was sure. Only the rush of wind and the stretch and gather of a horse beneath him told him he was moving at all.

SLOW.

DRAW REIN.

Rand was so startled at Lan's sudden command that Cloud forged ahead for half a dozen strides before Rand could pull him to a halt.

And then, Rand stared.

Houses loomed in the fog on all sides. Strangely tall to Rand's eye. He had never seen this place before, but he had heard descriptions.

That tallness came from high redstone foundations, necessary when the spring melt in the Mountains of Mist made the Taren overflows its banks.

They had reached Taren Ferry.

Rand had met few people from Taren Ferry. He tried to recall what little he knew about them.

They seldom ventured down into what they called the 'lower villages,' with their noses turned up as if they smelled something bad. The few he had met bore strange names, like Hilltop and Stoneboat.

One and all, Taren Ferry folk had a reputation for slyness and trickery. If you shook hands with a Taren Ferry man, people said, you counted your fingers afterward.



Before long, Lan and Moiraine stopped in front of a tall dark house that... looked exactly like any other in the village.

WAIT  
HERE.

WHAM  
WHAM  
WHAM

I THOUGHT  
HE WANTED  
QUIET.



WHAT'S THIS? WHAT'S THIS?



MASTER HIGHTOWER, JUST THE MAN I NEED. WE WANT TO CROSS OVER ON YOUR FERRY.

THE FERRY GOES OVER IN DAYLIGHT, NOT IN THE NIGHT, NOT EVER.



AND NOT IN THE FOG, NEITHER. COME BACK WHEN THE SUN'S UP AND THE FOG'S - HEY!



TINK TINK  
TINK TINK



AND AS MUCH AGAIN WHEN WE ARE SAFELY ON THE OTHER SIDE.

BUT WE LEAVE NOW.





After dealing with the ferryman, Lan came down the stairs, told the company to dismount, and lead their horses after him through the fog.

Again, they had the trust that the Warder knew where he was going.

Rand moved stiffly from the ache of the long ride, wondering if there was any way he could walk the rest of the way to Tar Valon.

Not that walking was much better than riding at that moment, of course, but even so his feet were almost the only part of him that was not sore.

Only once did anyone speak loud enough for Rand to hear clearly.



YOU MUST  
HANDLE IT.  
HE WILL  
REMEMBER TOO  
MUCH AS IT IS,  
AND NO HELP FOR  
IT. IF I STAND  
OUT IN HIS  
THOUGHTS...



Beyond that, Rand could hear only grumbles and muttering.

Mat and Perrin muttering with bitten-off exclamations whenever one stubbed their toe on something unseen in the fog, and Thom grumbling words like 'fire,' 'mulled wine,' and 'hot meal.'



Egwene marched along without a word. She was getting her adventure, and as long as it lasted Rand doubted she would notice little things like fog or damp or cold.





Later, at the docks, Lan gave specific instruction to Rand, Perrin, and Mat, moving swiftly back to his horse when bobbing lights appeared in the mist, signaling the approach of the Ferryman and his haulers.

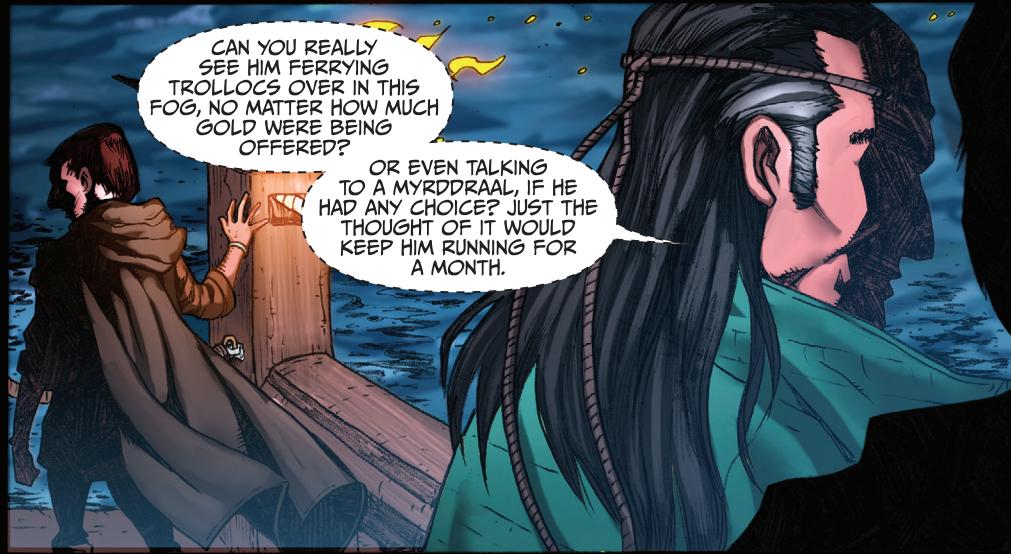
THERE WAS  
MENTION MADE OF  
MORE GOLD FOR  
THE CROSSING.

WHAT YOU  
GAVE ME BEFORE IS  
IN A SAFE PLACE NOW,  
HEAR? IT'S NONE OF  
IT WHERE YOU CAN  
GET AT IT.

THE REST  
OF THE GOLD  
GOES INTO YOUR  
HAND WHEN WE ARE  
ON THE OTHER  
SIDE.

LET'S BE  
ABOUT IT,  
THEN.





Abruptly, pilings loomed in the shadowy mist before them. The ferry thudded on the far bank, and the haulers hurried to lash the craft fast and let down the ramp.



HMPH. THE TAREN'S NOT THAT WIDE.

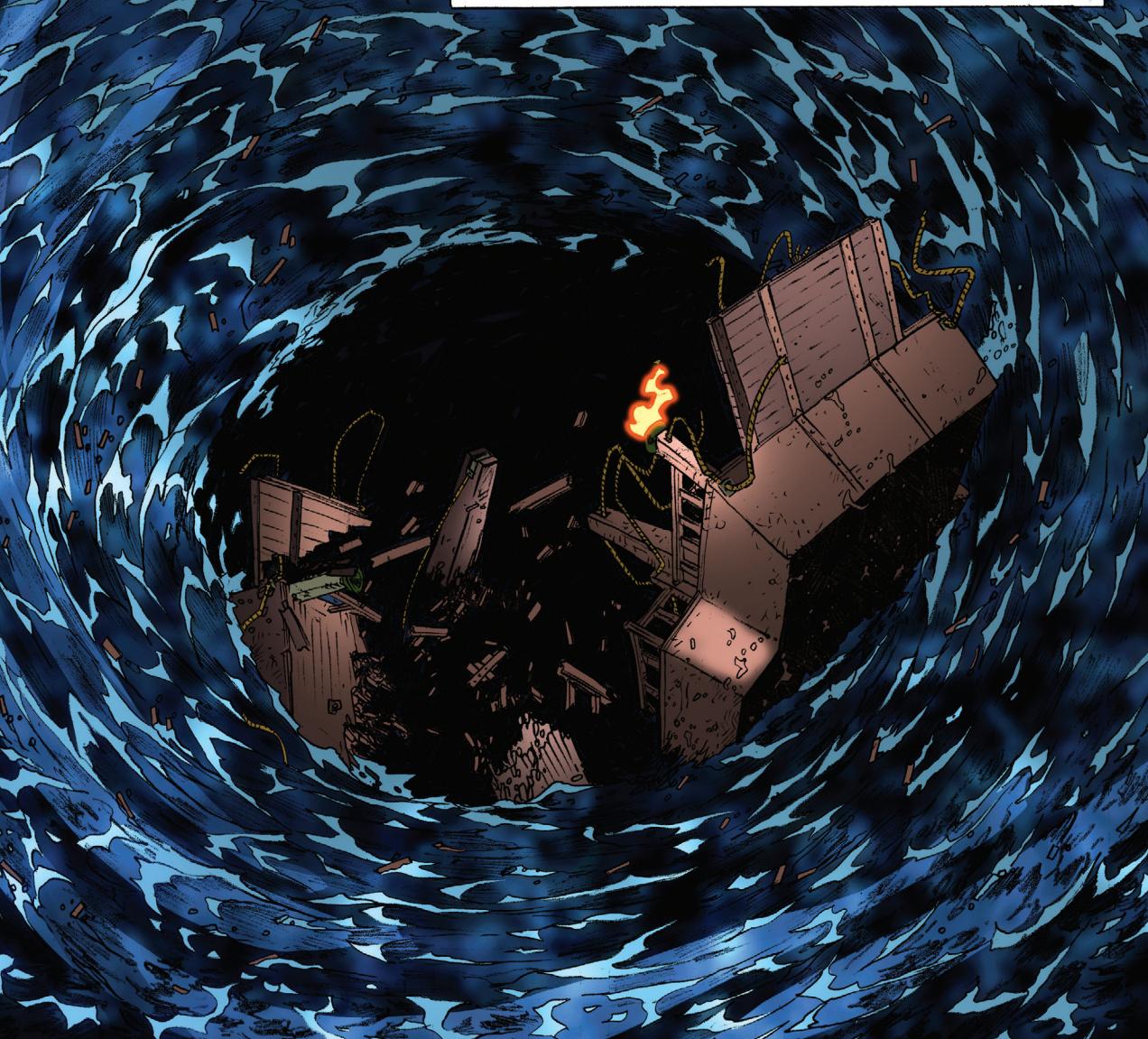
FROM ALL I'D HEARD, YOU'D THINK IT WOULD'VE TAKEN A WEEK TO CROSS!



IT SHALL BE PAID. AND A SILVER MARK FOR EACH OF YOUR MEN, FOR THE QUICK CROSSING.









AN UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE.

UNFORTUNATE, IT SEEMS YOU'LL BE CARRYING NO ONE ACROSS THE RIVER FOR A TIME.

AN ILL THING, YOU LOST YOUR CRAFT IN OUR SERVICE. THIS SHOULD REPAY YOU.

I-I--

AIYEE!

THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO KEEP US HERE, NOW.

To be continued...