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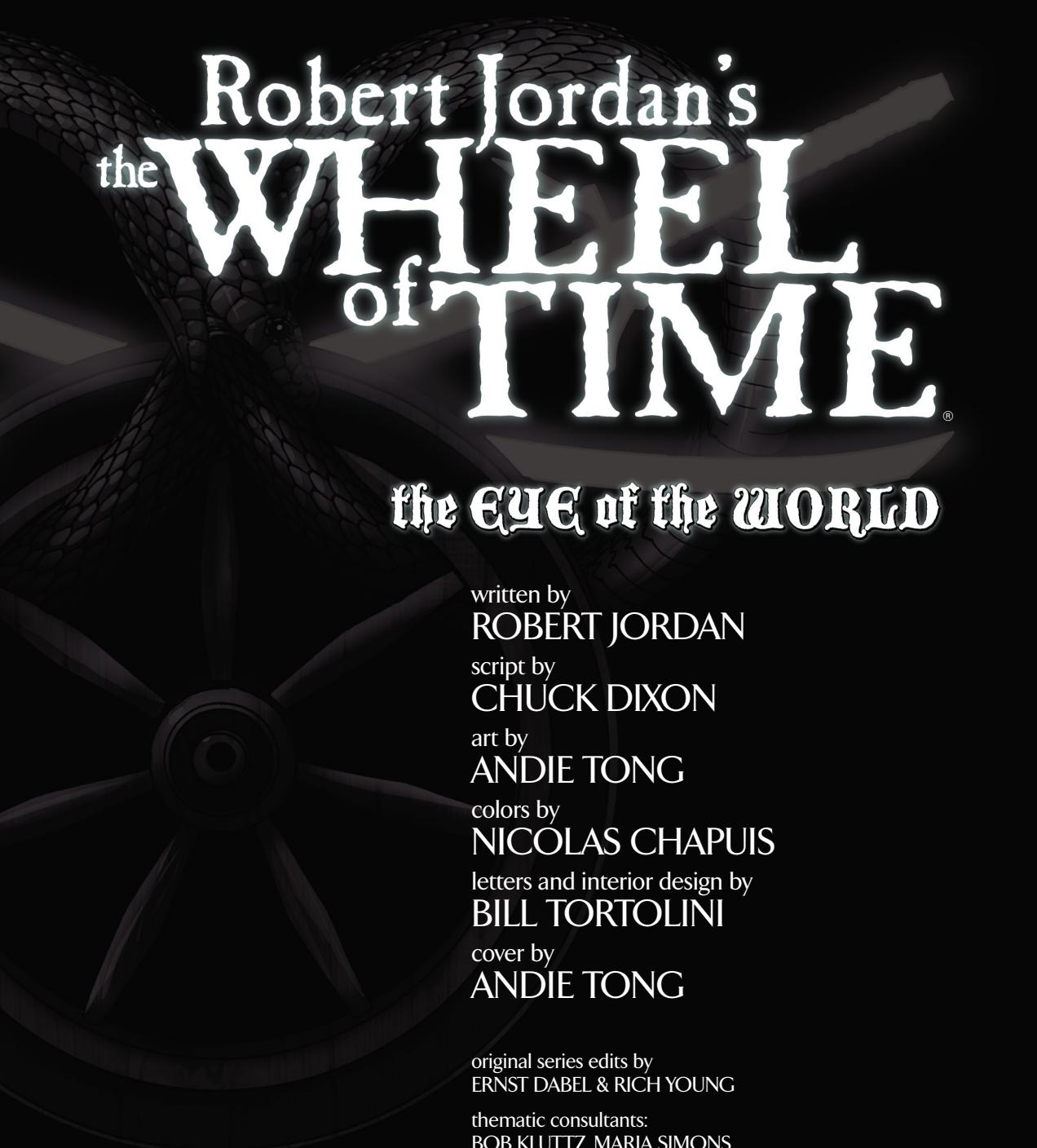
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Robert Jordan's the WHEEL of TIME®



the EYE of the WORLD

ROBERT JORDAN, CHUCK DIXON & ANDIE TONG



Robert Jordan's the WHEEL of TIME®

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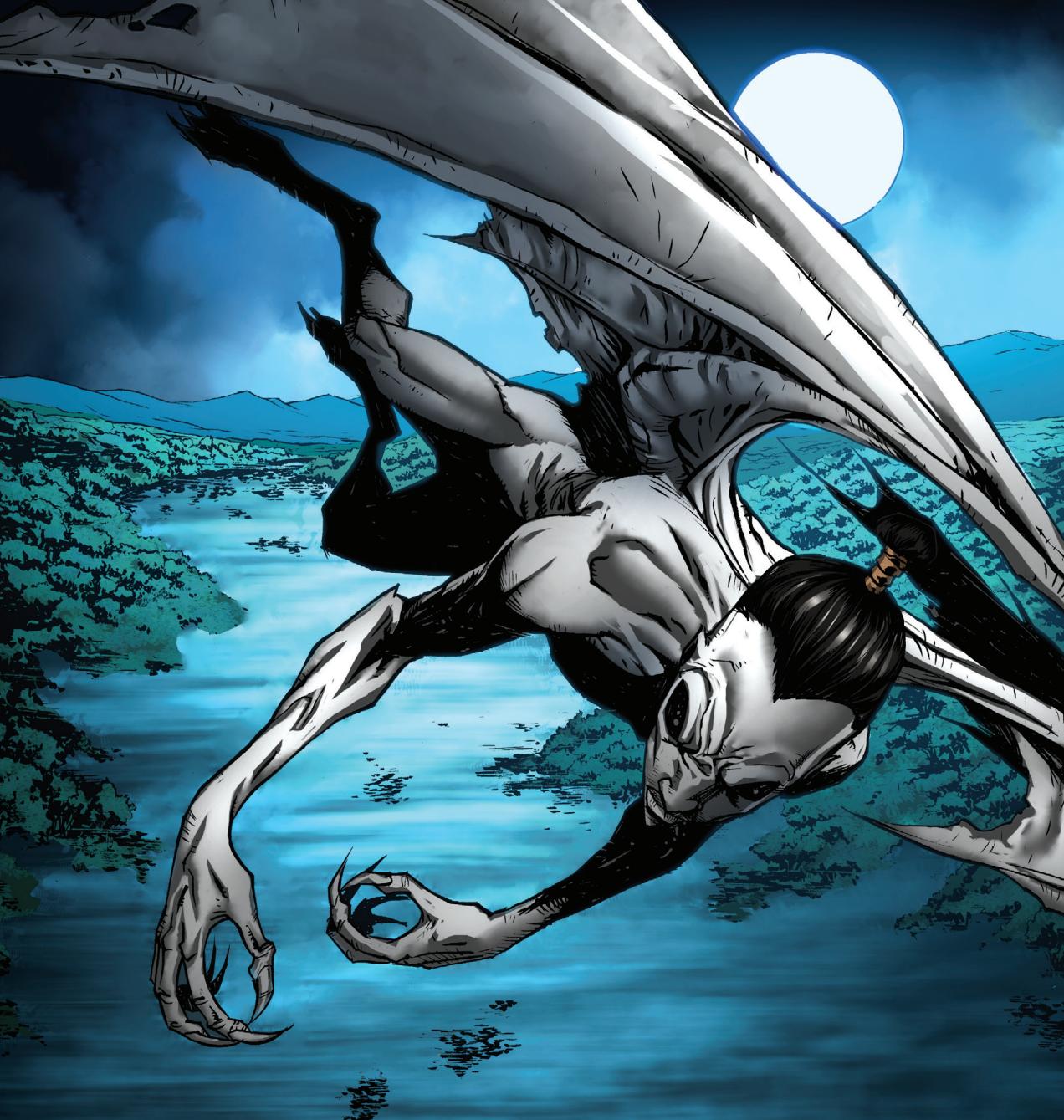
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IT FOLLOWS
THE RIVER AS IF
DRAWN WITH
A PEN.

THERE ARE
NOT TEN WOMEN
IN TAR VALON WHO
COULD DO THAT
UNAIDED. NOT TO
MENTION FROM A
GALLOPING
HORSE.

I DON'T MEAN TO
COMPLAIN, MOIRANE
SEDAI, BUT WOULD IT
NOT HAVE BEEN BETTER
TO COVER US A LITTLE
FURTHER? SAY TO BAERLON?
IF THAT DRAGHKAR LOOKS
ON THIS SIDE OF THE RIVER
WE'LL LOSE EVERYTHING
WE HAVE GAINED.

DRAGHKAR ARE NOT
VERY SMART, MASTER
MERRILIN. IT WILL TELL
THE MYRDDRAAL THAT THIS
SIDE OF THE RIVER IS CLEAR,
BUT THE RIVER ITSELF IS
CLOAKED FOR MILES IN
BOTH DIRECTIONS.

THE MYRDDRAAL
WILL KNOW THE
EXTRA EFFORT THIS
COST ME. HE WILL HAVE TO
CONSIDER THAT WE MAY
BE ESCAPING DOWN THE
RIVER, AND THAT WILL
SLOW HIM. HE WILL HAVE
TO DIVIDE HIS
EFFORTS.

THE FOG
SHOULD HOLD LONG
ENOUGH THAT HE WILL
NEVER BE SURE THAT
WE DID NOT TRAVEL AT
LEAST PART WAY BY
BOAT.

I COULD
HAVE EXTENDED
THE FOG A LITTLE WAY
TOWARDS BAERLON INSTEAD,
BUT THEN THE DRAGHKAR
COULD SEARCH THE RIVER IN
A MATTER OF HOURS AND THE
MYRDDRAAL WOULD KNOW
EXACTLY WHERE WE
WERE HEADED.

I APOLOGIZE,
AES SEDAI. I
HOPE I DID NOT
OFFEND.





WE MUST GO SLOWLY WITH THEM FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, UNTIL THEY RECOVER. MORE SLOWLY THAN I WOULD LIKE, BUT WITH LUCK IT WILL BE ENOUGH.

IS THAT... IS THAT WHAT SHE MEANT? ABOUT OUR TIREDNESS?

SOMETHING LIKE IT. BUT YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT RUNNING YOURSELF TO DEATH. NOT UNLESS THINGS GET A LOT WORSE THAN THEY ARE.

JUST THINK OF IT AS AN EXTRA NIGHT'S SLEEP.

SKRAAW

LUCK. IT SEARCHES THE RIVER FOR US.

LET'S GET INSIDE. I COULD USE SOME HOT TEA AND SOMETHING TO FILL MY BELLY.





THE ONE
POWER COMES
FROM THE TRUE SOURCE,
THE DRIVING FORCE OF
CREATION, THE FORCE
THE CREATOR MADE
TO TURN THE WHEEL
OF TIME.



SAIDIN,
THE MALE HALF
OF THE TRUE
SOURCE--

--AND SAIDAR,
THE FEMALE HALF,
WORK AGAINST EACH
OTHER AND AT THE
SAME TIME TOGETHER
TO PROVIDE THE
FORCE.

SAIDIN IS FOULLED BY THE TOUCH OF THE DARK ONE, LIKE WATER WITH A THIN SLICK OF RANCID OIL FLOATING ON TOP. THE WATER IS STILL PURE, BUT CANNOT BE TOUCHED WITHOUT TOUCHING THE FOULNESS.

ONLY SAIDAR IS SAFE TO BE USED.

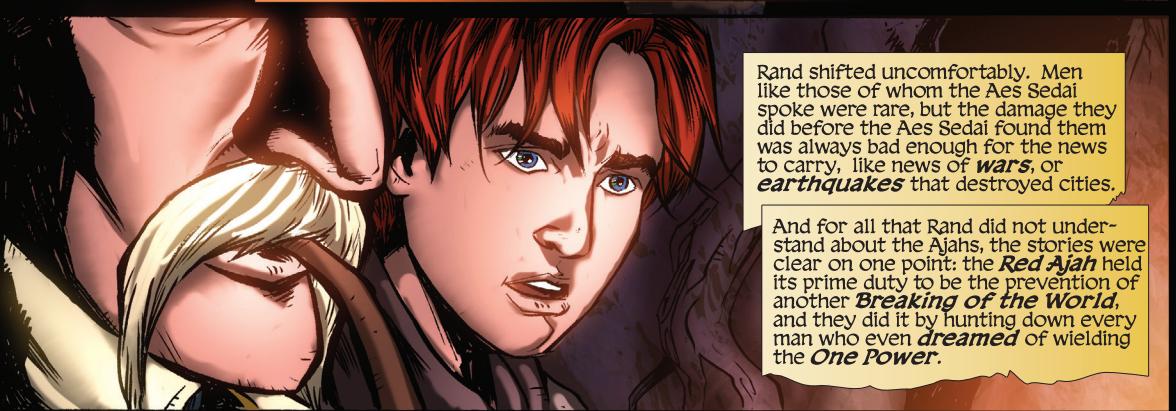
WHAT ARE YOU STOPPING FOR, RAND? LIGHT, I WANT TO BE NEAR THAT FIRE!

SORRY.

THE TRUE SOURCE CANNOT BE USED UP, ANY MORE THAN THE RIVER CAN BE USED UP BY THE WHEEL OF A MILL. THE SOURCE IS THE RIVER; THE AES SEDAI THE WATERWHEEL.

AND YOU REALLY THINK I CAN LEARN?





...BUT SOME OF THE WOMEN DIE, TOO. IT IS HARD TO LEARN WITHOUT A GUIDE. THE WOMEN WE DO NOT FIND, THOSE WHO LIVE... IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD THEY OFTEN BECOME WISDOMS OF THEIR VILLAGES.

THE OLD BLOOD IS STRONG IN EMOND'S FIELD, AND THE OLD BLOOD SINGS.

YOU ARE VERY CLOSE TO YOUR CHANGE, YOUR FIRST TOUCHING. IT WILL BE BETTER IF I GUIDE YOU THROUGH IT.

THAT WAY YOU WILL AVOID THE... UNPLEASANT EFFECTS THAT COME TO THOSE WHO MUST FIND THEIR OWN WAY.

IS... DOES THAT HAVE THE POWER?

OF COURSE NOT. THINGS DO NOT HAVE POWER. EVEN AN ANGREAL IS ONLY A TOOL. THIS IS JUST A PRETTY BLUE STONE.

BUT IT CAN GIVE OFF LIGHT. HERE.

LOOK AT THE STONE. CLEAR YOUR MIND OF EVERYTHING BUT THE STONE. CLEAR YOUR MIND AND LET YOURSELF DRIFT.

DRIFT, AND I WILL GUIDE YOU. NO THOUGHTS. DRIFT.



Rand's fingers dug into his knees
- he wanted egwene to fail.

Despite his wishes, light
bloomed from the stone.
A flash of blue and gone.

But another flash came, and another,
until the azure light pulsed like the
beating of a heart. Then it faded.
One last, feeble flicker and the stone
was merely a bauble again.





Later, before they went to sleep, Moiraine knelt by each in turn and laid her hands on their heads.

Lan grumbled that he had no need and she should not waste her strength, but he did not try to stop her.



Egwene was *eager* for the experience.



Mat and Perrin were *clearly* frightened of it...

...and just as frightened to say *no*.



Thom scowled through the entire thing, and Rand simply watched and hoped Moiraine would forget about him.



Moiraine did not forget him, though, and Rand flinched at the coolness of her fingers...

I DON'T--



...as *tiredness* drained out of him.

And then came
sleep.

When Rand was woken an hour later by Lan, he felt as though he'd had three days rest.

The Warder only allowed a short stay in the shelter, giving Moiraine some time to rest herself.

Before the sun was twice its own height on the horizon, all traces that anyone had stopped there were cleared and they were on their way to **Baerlon**.



There was nothing
leisurely about the slow
pace Lan enforced.

And, outside of the road
they were on, Rand saw no
evidence that men had ever
been in these woods.



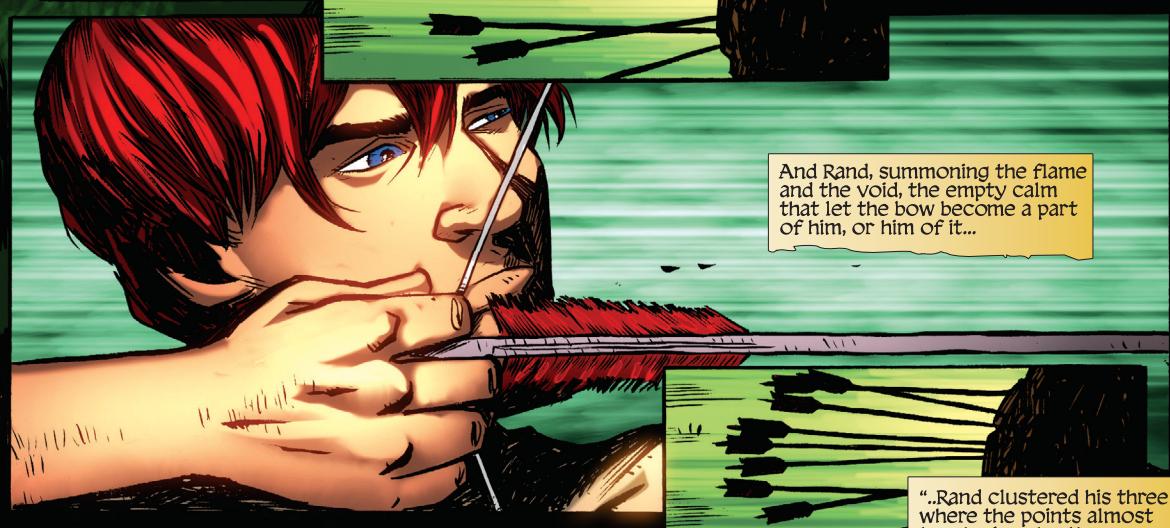
QUIET, YOU
TWO. WE DON'T
WANT TO BE SEEN,
REMEMBER?



After watching Mat put three arrows into a knot the size of a man's head on the fissured trunk of a dead leatherleaf at a hundred paces, he told the others to take their turns.



Perrin duplicated Mat's feat.



..Rand clustered his three where the points almost touched each other.



Lan set the big apprentice blacksmith to a series of exercises -- block, parry, and strike -- and he did the same for Rand and his sword.

Not the wild leaping about and slashing that Rand had in mind whenever he thought about using it, but *smooth* motions, one flowing into another, almost like a *dance*.

MOVING THE BLADE IS NOT ENOUGH, THOUGH SOME THINK IT IS. THE MIND IS PART OF IT, MOST OF IT. BLANK YOUR MIND, SHEEPHERDER.

EMPTY IT OF HATE, OF FEAR, OF EVERYTHING. BURN THEM AWAY.

YOU OTHERS LISTEN TO THIS, TOO. YOU CAN USE IT WITH THE AXE OR THE BOW, WITH A SPEAR OR A QUARTERSTAFF, OR EVEN YOUR BARE HANDS.



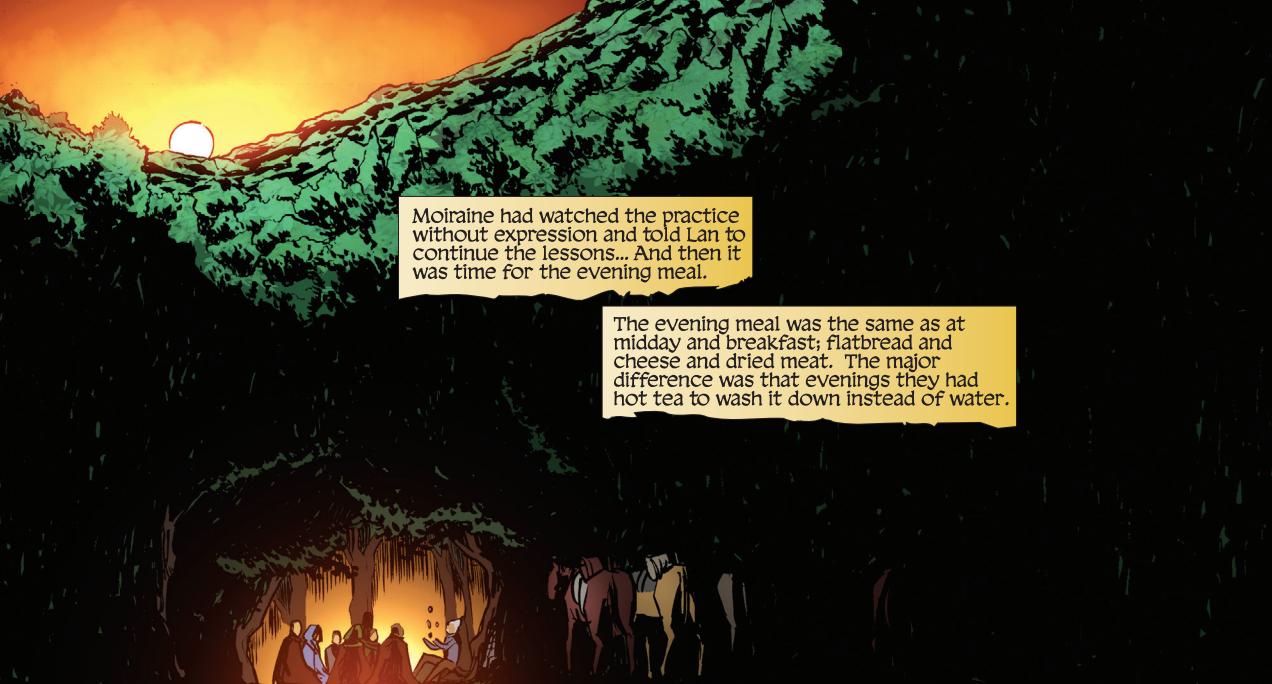
THE FLAME AND THE VOID.

THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN, ISN'T IT? MY FATHER TAUGHT ME ABOUT THAT.

HOLD THE SWORD AS I SHOWED YOU, SHEEPHERDER.

I CANNOT MAKE A MUDFOOTED VILLAGER INTO A BLADEMASTER IN AN HOUR, BUT PERHAPS I CAN KEEP YOU FROM SLICING OFF YOUR OWN FOOT.





Moiraine had watched the practice without expression and told Lan to continue the lessons... And then it was time for the evening meal.

The evening meal was the same as at midday and breakfast; flatbread and cheese and dried meat. The major difference was that evenings they had hot tea to wash it down instead of water.

Thom entertained them, evenings. Lan would not let the gleeman play harp or flute - no need to rouse the countryside, the Warder said - but Thom juggled and told stories.

"Mara and the Three Foolish Kings," or one of the hundreds about Anla the "Wise Counselor," or something filled with glory and adventure like the "Great Hunt of the Horn..."

...but always with a happy ending and a joyous *homecoming*.



Yet if the land was peaceful around them, if no Trollocs appeared among the trees, no Draghkar among the clouds, it seemed to Rand they managed to raise their tension themselves whenever it was in danger of vanishing.



There was the morning Egwene awoke and began unbraiding her hair. Rand watched her from the corner of his eye as he made up his bedroll.



And every night when the fire was out, everyone took to their blankets except for Egwene and the Aes Sedai. The two women went aside and talked for an hour or two, returning when the others were asleep.

The next morning, while Rand was saddling Cloud, Egwene combed her hair out - one hundred times, Rand counted - and pulled up the hood of her cloak. Rand couldn't stand it anymore.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

HRM?

ALL YOUR LIFE
YOU'VE WANTED TO
WEAR YOUR HAIR IN A BRAID,
AND NOW YOU'RE GIVING IT
UP? WHY? BECAUSE SHE
DOESN'T BRAID
HERS?

AES SEDAI
DON'T BRAID
THEIR HAIR.

AT LEAST,
NOT UNLESS THEY
WANT TO.

YOU AREN'T
AES SEDAI! YOU'RE
EGWENE AL'VERE FROM
EMOND'S FIELD, AND THE
WOMEN'S CIRCLE WOULD
HAVE A FIT IF THEY
COULD SEE YOU
NOW!







Two nights later.

Lan was off in the night, taking a last look around. Moiraine and Egwene had gone aside for one of their conversations. Thom was half dozing over his pipe, and the young men had the fire to themselves.

YOU KNOW,
I THINK WE'VE
LOST THEM
FOR GOOD.

IF WE LOST
THEM, WHY
DOES LAN KEEP
SCOUTING?

WE LOST
THEM BACK
AT TAREN
FERRY.

IF THEY
WERE EVEN
REALLY
AFTER
US.

YOU THINK
THAT DRAGHKAR
WAS CHASING US
BECAUSE IT
LIKED US?

I SAY STOP
WORRYING ABOUT
TROLLOCS AND SUCH.
WE'RE OUT WHERE THE
STORIES COME FROM.
WHAT DO YOU THINK A
REAL CITY IS
LIKE?

WE'RE
GOING TO
BAERLON.

BAERLON'S ALL VERY
WELL, BUT I'VE SEEN THAT
OLD MAP MASTER AL'VERE
HAS. IF WE TURN SOUTH
ONCE WE REACH CAEMLYN,
THE ROAD LEADS ALL THE
WAY TO ILLIAN AND
BEYOND.

YAWN.

WHAT'S SO
SPECIAL ABOUT
ILLIAN?

FOR ONE
THING, ILLIAN ISN'T
FULL OF AES
SE--

A DAY OR
TWO OF QUIET
AND YOU HAVE ALREADY
FORGOTTEN WINTER-
NIGHT.

WE HAVEN'T
FORGOTTEN.
IT'S JUST--

IS THAT THE WAY
YOU ALL FEEL? YOU ARE
ALL EAGER TO RUN OFF TO
ILLIAN AND FORGET ABOUT
TROLLOCS AND HALF MEN
AND DRAGHKAR?

THE DARK ONE
IS AFTER YOU THREE,
ONE OR ALL, AND IF I
LET YOU GO RUNNING OFF
WHEREVER YOU WANT TO
GO, HE WILL TAKE YOU.
WHATEVER THE DARK
ONE WANTS I OPPOSE,
SO HEAR THIS, AND
KNOW IT TRUE--

-BEFORE I
LET THE DARK
ONE HAVE YOU, I
WILL DESTROY
YOU MYSELF.

To be continued...