



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**®

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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JOSH JOHNSON • CREATIVE DIRECTOR
RICH YOUNG • DIR. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
JASON ULLMEYER • GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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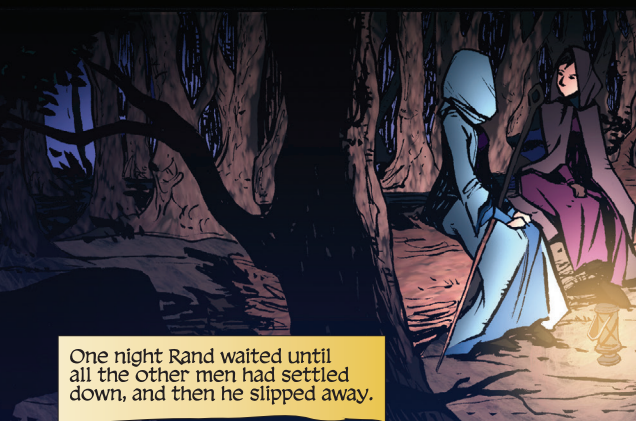


The nightly talks between Egwene and the Aes Sedai were a sore point for Rand.




Whenever they disappeared into the darkness, aside from the rest for privacy, he wondered what they were saying, what they were doing.

What was the Aes Sedai *doing* to Egwene?



One night Rand waited until all the other men had settled down, and then he slipped away.

Using every bit of skill he had gained stalking rabbits, he moved with the moon shadows, through the trees, until he was close enough to hear Moiraine and Egwene talking...



ASK, AND
IF I CAN TELL YOU
NOW, I WILL.

UNDERSTAND,
THERE IS MUCH
FOR WHICH YOU ARE
NOT YET READY, THINGS
YOU CANNOT LEARN UNTIL
YOU HAVE LEARNED OTHER
THINGS WHICH REQUIRE
STILL OTHER THINGS TO
BE LEARNED BEFORE
THEM.

BUT ASK
WHAT YOU
WILL.

THE FIVE
POWERS.

EARTH, WIND,
FIRE, WATER, AND
SPIRIT. IT DOESN'T
SEEM FAIR THAT MEN
SHOULD HAVE BEEN
STRONGEST IN WIELDING
EARTH AND FIRE. WHY
SHOULD THEY HAVE
THE STRONGEST
POWERS?



HAH! IS THAT
WHAT YOU THINK,
CHILD? IS THERE A ROCK
SO HARD THAT WIND AND
WATER CANNOT WEAR IT
AWAY, A FIRE SO STRONG
THAT WATER CANNOT
QUENCH IT OR WIND
SNUFF IT OUT?



THEY... THEY
WERE THE ONES WHO
TRIED TO FREE THE DARK
ONE AND THE FORSAKEN,
WEREN'T THEY? THE MALE
AES SEDAI?

THE WOMEN
WERE NOT PART OF IT.
IT WAS THE MEN WHO
WENT MAD AND BROKE
THE WORLD.






YOU ARE
AFRAID.

IF YOU HAD REMAINED
IN EMOND'S FIELD, YOU
WOULD HAVE BECOME *WISDOM*,
IN TIME. THAT WAS NYNAEVE'S PLAN,
WAS IT NOT? OR YOU WOULD
HAVE SAT IN THE WOMEN'S CIRCLE
AND MANAGED THE AFFAIRS OF
EMOND'S FIELD WHILE THE
VILLAGE COUNCIL THOUGHT
IT WAS DOING SO.

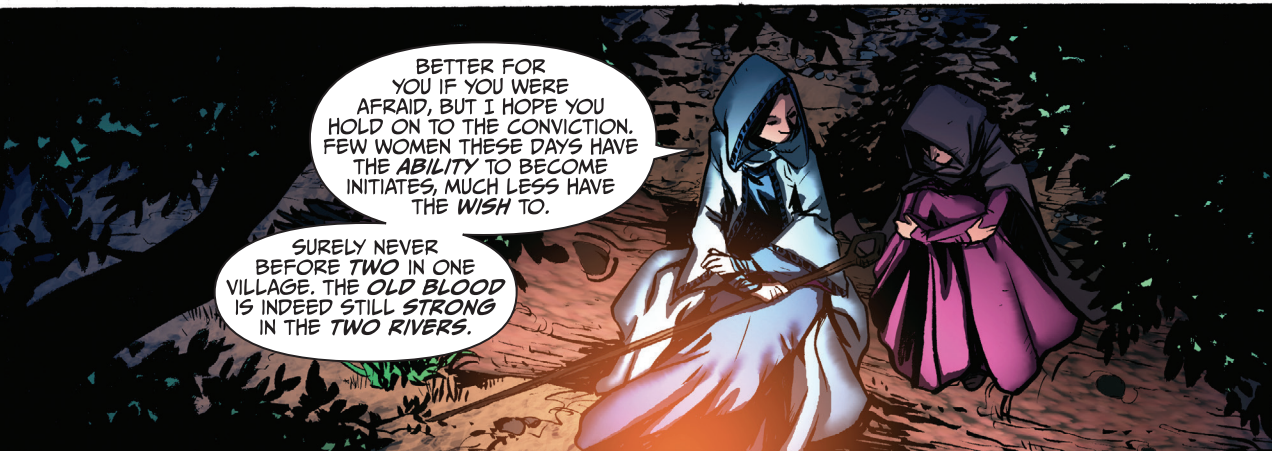
BUT YOU DID THE
UNTHINKABLE.



YOU LEFT EMOND'S
FIELD SEEKING *ADVENTURE*.
YOU WANTED TO DO IT, AND AT
THE SAME TIME ARE AFRAID OF
IT... AND YOU ARE *STUBBORNLY*
REFUSING TO LET YOUR
FEAR *BEST* YOU.

YOU WOULD
NOT HAVE ASKED
ME HOW A WOMAN
BECOMES AN *AES SEDAI*
OTHERWISE.

NO, I'M *NOT*
AFRAID. I *DO*
WANT TO BECOME
AN *AES SEDAI*.




BETTER FOR
YOU IF YOU WERE
AFRAID, BUT I HOPE YOU
HOLD ON TO THE CONVICTION.
FEW WOMEN THESE DAYS HAVE
THE *ABILITY* TO BECOME
INITIATES, MUCH LESS HAVE
THE *WISH* TO.

SURELY NEVER
BEFORE *TWO* IN ONE
VILLAGE. THE *OLD BLOOD*
IS INDEED STILL *STRONG*
IN THE *TWO RIVERS*.

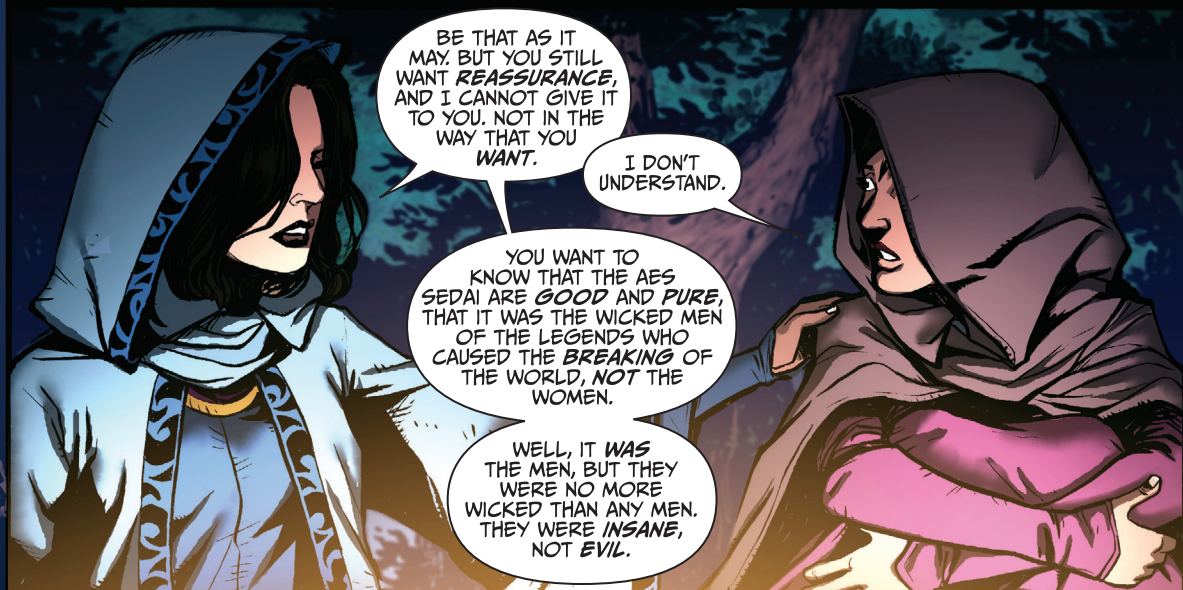


TWO?
WHO ELSE? IS
IT KARI? KARI
THANE? LARA
AYELLAN?



TSK - YOU
MUST *FORGET* I
SAID THAT. HER ROAD
LIES ANOTHER WAY, I
FEAR. CONCERN
YOURSELF WITH YOUR
OWN CIRCUMSTANCES.
IT IS NOT AN EASY
ROAD YOU HAVE
CHOSEN.

I WILL
NOT TURN
BACK.



BE THAT AS IT MAY, BUT YOU STILL WANT **REASSURANCE**, AND I CANNOT GIVE IT TO YOU. NOT IN THE WAY THAT YOU WANT.

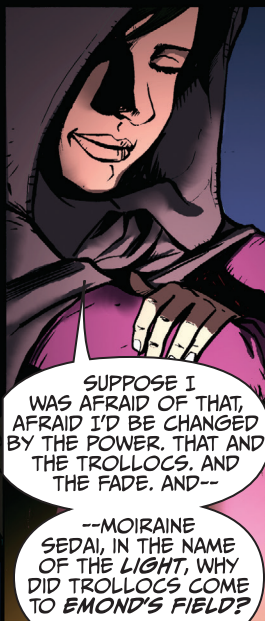
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YOU WANT TO KNOW THAT THE AES SEDAI ARE **GOOD AND PURE**, THAT IT WAS THE WICKED MEN OF THE LEGENDS WHO CAUSED THE **BREAKING** OF THE WORLD, NOT THE WOMEN.

WELL, IT **WAS** THE MEN, BUT THEY WERE NO MORE WICKED THAN ANY MEN. THEY WERE **INSANE**, NOT EVIL.

THE AES SEDAI YOU WILL FIND IN TAR VALON ARE HUMAN, NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER WOMEN EXCEPT FOR THE ABILITY THAT SETS US APART.

THEY ARE BRAVE AND COWARDLY, STRONG AND WEAK, KIND AND CRUEL. BECOMING AN AES SEDAI WILL NOT CHANGE YOU FROM WHAT YOU ARE.



SUPPOSE I WAS AFRAID OF THAT, AFRAID I'D BE CHANGED BY THE POWER. THAT AND THE TROLLOCS. AND THE FADE. AND--


--MOIRAIN SEDAI, IN THE NAME OF THE **LIGHT**, WHY DID TROLLOCS COME TO **EMOND'S FIELD**?

The Aes Sedai's head swung, and she looked **straight** at Rand's hiding place.

Rand's breath seized in his throat; Moiraine's eyes were as hard as when she had made her threat to the boys, and he had the feeling her gaze could penetrate the leatherleaf's thick branches.



LIGHT, WHAT WILL I DO IF SHE FINDS ME LISTENING...?



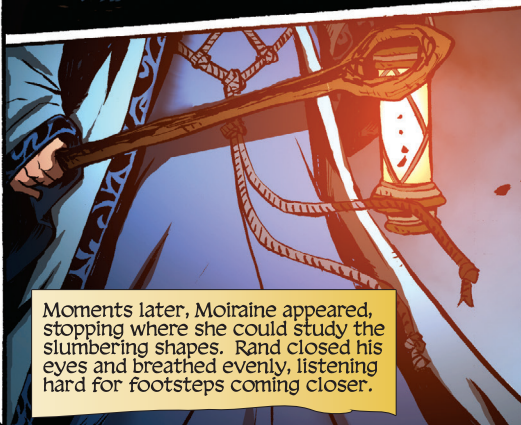
When Rand tried to melt back into the deeper shadows, a root snagged his foot and he barely caught himself from tumbling into dead brush that would have noisily given him away.

Panting, he scrambled away on all fours, keeping silent as much by luck as by anything he did. His heart pounded so hard, he thought that might give him away itself.

He was a *fool* for trying to eavesdrop on an Aes Sedai!



Back where the others were sleeping, Rand managed to slip in among them silently.



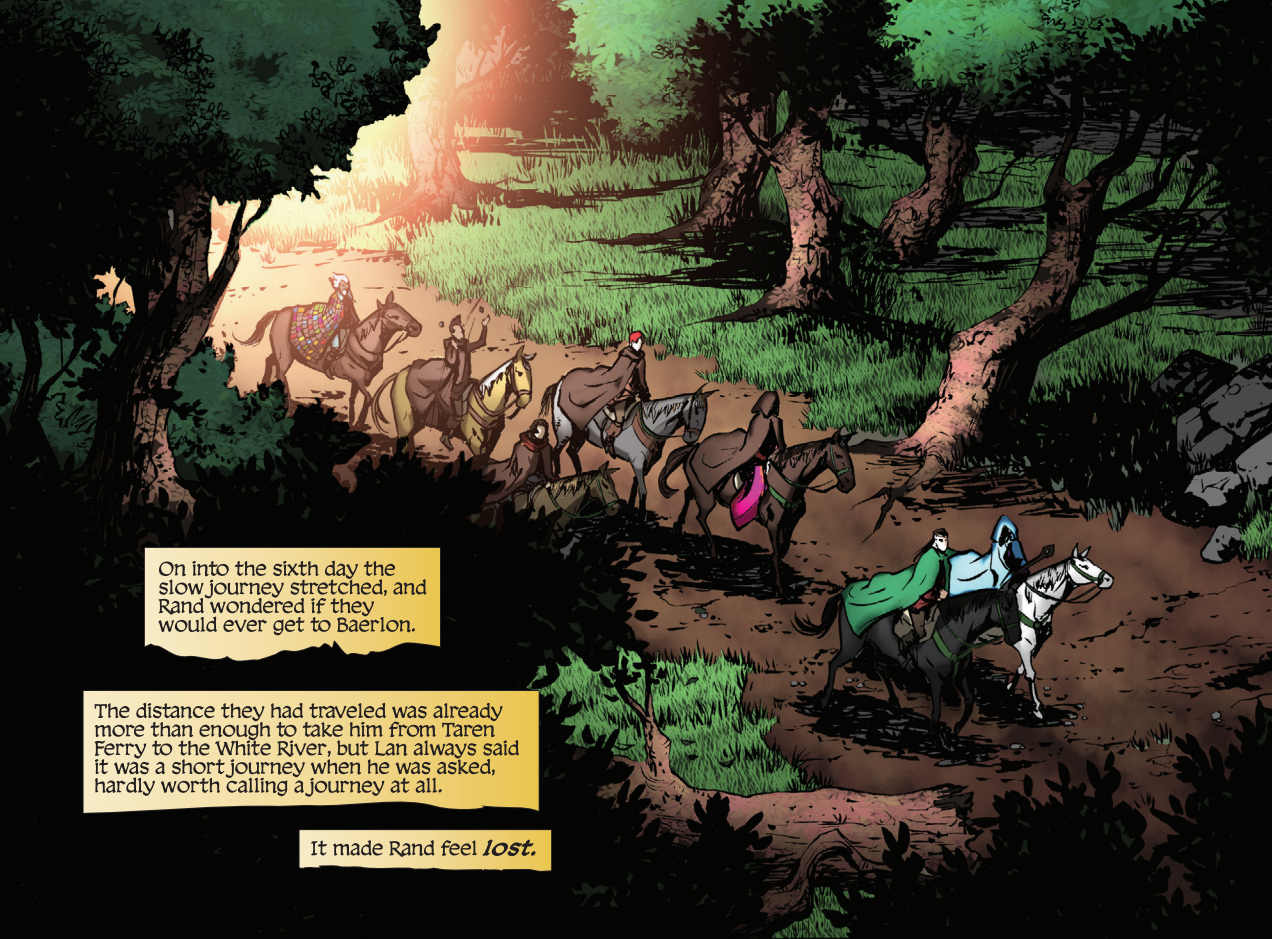
Moments later, Moiraine appeared, stopping where she could study the slumbering shapes. Rand closed his eyes and breathed evenly, listening hard for footsteps coming closer.

None did. When Rand opened his eyes again, Moiraine was *gone*.



When finally sleep came, it was fitful and full of sweaty dreams where all the men in Emond's Field claimed to be the Dragon Reborn and all the women had blue stones in their hair like the one Moiraine wore.

Rand did not try to overhear Moiraine and Egwene again.



On into the sixth day the slow journey stretched, and Rand wondered if they would ever get to Baerlon.

The distance they had traveled was already more than enough to take him from Taren Ferry to the White River, but Lan always said it was a short journey when he was asked, hardly worth calling a journey at all.

It made Rand feel *lost*.

The horses' slow walk allowed Mat to practice juggling under Thom Merrilin's watchful eye. The gleeman gave lessons each night too, as well as Lan.

HEY
RAND! I
CAN JUGGLE
FOUR!

MM.

I TOLD
YOU I'D GET TO
FOUR BEFORE
YOU! I--

LOOK!



SO
THAT'S A
CITY.

HOW
CAN SO
MANY PEOPLE
LIVE IN ONE
PLACE?



AND YOU, RAND? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR FIRST SIGHT OF BAERLON?



I THINK... IT'S A LONG WAY FROM HOME.

HAH!



YOU HAVE FURTHER TO GO YET, *MUCH* FURTHER. BUT THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE OTHER THAN TO RUN AND HIDE AND RUN AGAIN, FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES.

AND *SHORT* LIVES THEY WOULD BE. YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT, WHEN THE JOURNEY BECOMES HARD.

THE DANGER BEGINS AGAIN HERE. WATCH WHAT YOU SAY WITHIN THOSE WALLS. DO NOT MENTION TROLLOCS OR HALFMEN, AND DO NOT EVEN THINK OF THE DARK ONE.

THERE ARE THOSE IN BAERLON WHO HAVE EVEN LESS LOVE FOR AES SEDAI THAN DO THE PEOPLE OF EMOND'S FIELD, AND THERE MAY EVEN BE *DARKFRIENDS*.



WE MUST ATTRACT AS LITTLE ATTENTION AS POSSIBLE, AND WE DO NOT GO BY OUR OWN NAMES HERE. HERE, I AM KNOWN AS *ALYS* AND LAN IS *ANDRA*. REMEMBER THAT.

GOOD. NOW LET US BE WITHIN THE WALLS BEFORE *NIGHT* CATCHES US. THE GATES OF BAERLON ARE CLOSED FROM SUNSET TO SUNRISE.

Lan led the way down the hill and through the woods to the log wall.

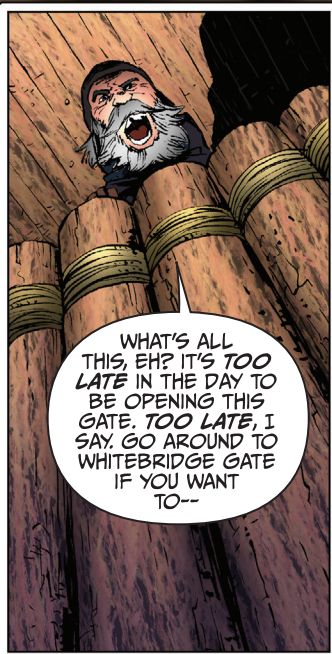
The road passed half a dozen farms - none lay close, and none of the people finishing their chores seemed to notice the travelers - before ending at heavy wooden gates bound with wide strips of black iron.



The gates were closed *tight*, even though the sun was not down yet, so Lan rode close, to announce their presence.

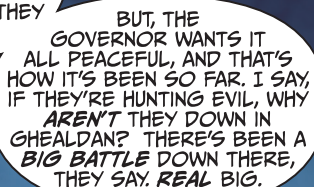
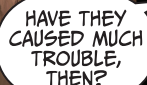
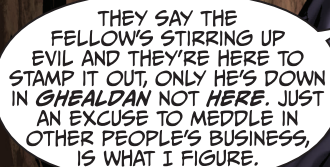
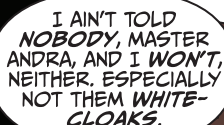
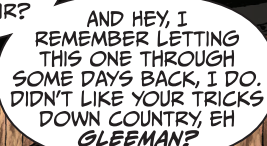


WHAT'S ALL THIS, EH? IT'S *TOO LATE* IN THE DAY TO BE OPENING THIS GATE. *TOO LATE*, I SAY. GO AROUND TO WHITEBRIDGE GATE IF YOU WANT TO--




OH, I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS *YOU*, MISTRESS. WAIT. I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN. JUST WAIT. I'M COMING. I'M COMING...







I HAD
HEARD THAT
AES SEDAI WERE
GOING TO
GHEALDAN.



AND THAT'S
WHAT *STARTED* THIS
BATTLE, OR SO I HEAR.
THEY SAY SOME OF
THOSE AES SEDAI ARE
DEAD. MAYBE ALL
OF THEM.

SOME SAY -
NOT THE WHITECLOAKS,
MIND, AND NOT ME - THAT
THIS FELLOW REALLY *IS*
THE *DRAGON REBORN*. HE
CAN DO THINGS, I HEAR.
USE THE *ONE POWER*.
THERE'S *THOUSANDS*
FOLLOWING HIM.

DON'T BE
A FOOL.

JUST SAYING
WHAT I HEARD, MASTER
ANDRA. SOME SAY THAT
HE'S MOVING HIS ARMY
EAST AND SOUTH, TOWARDS
TEAR. THEY SAY HE'S
NAMED THEM THE
PEOPLE OF THE
DRAGON.


NAMES MEAN
LITTLE. YOU COULD
CALL YOUR MULE
PEOPLE OF THE
DRAGON IF YOU
WANTED.

NOT LIKELY,
MISTRESS. NOT
WITH THE
WHITECLOAKS
AROUND, FOR
SURE.



NO
DOUBT
A WISE
DECISION.

AND
NOW WE
MUST BE
OFF.



AND DON'T
YOU WORRY,
MISTRESS, I AIN'T
SEEN NOBODY. IN
FACT, THIS GATE
AIN'T BEEN OPEN
IN *DAYS*.



THOM, WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT TEAR AND THE PEOPLE OF THE DRAGON? TEAR IS A CITY ALL THE WAY DOWN ON THE SEA OF STORMS, ISN'T IT?

THE KARAETHON CYCLE.

NO ONE TELLS... THOSE STORIES IN EMOND'S FIELD. THE WISDOM WOULD SKIN THEM ALIVE IF THEY DID.

I SUPPOSE SHE WOULD, AT THAT.

TEAR IS THE GREATEST PORT ON THE SEA OF STORMS, AND THE **STONE OF TEAR** IS THE **FORTRESS** THAT GUARDS IT.

THE **STONE** IS SAID TO BE THE FIRST **FORTRESS** BUILT AFTER THE **BREAKING** OF THE **WORLD**, AND IN ALL THIS TIME IT HAS **NEVER** FALLEN, THOUGH MORE THAN ONE ARMY HAS TRIED.

ONE OF THE **PROPHECIES** SAYS THAT THE **STONE OF TEAR** WILL NEVER FALL UNTIL THE **PEOPLE OF THE DRAGON** COME TO THE **STONE**.

ANOTHER SAYS THAT THE **STONE** WON'T FALL UNTIL THE **SWORD** THAT **CANNOT** BE **TOUCHED** IS WIELDED BY THE **DRAGON'S** HAND.

THE **FALL** OF THE **STONE** WILL BE ONE OF THE **MAJOR PROOFS** THAT THE **DRAGON** HAS BEEN **REBORN**. MAY THE **STONE** **STAND** TILL I AM **DUST**.

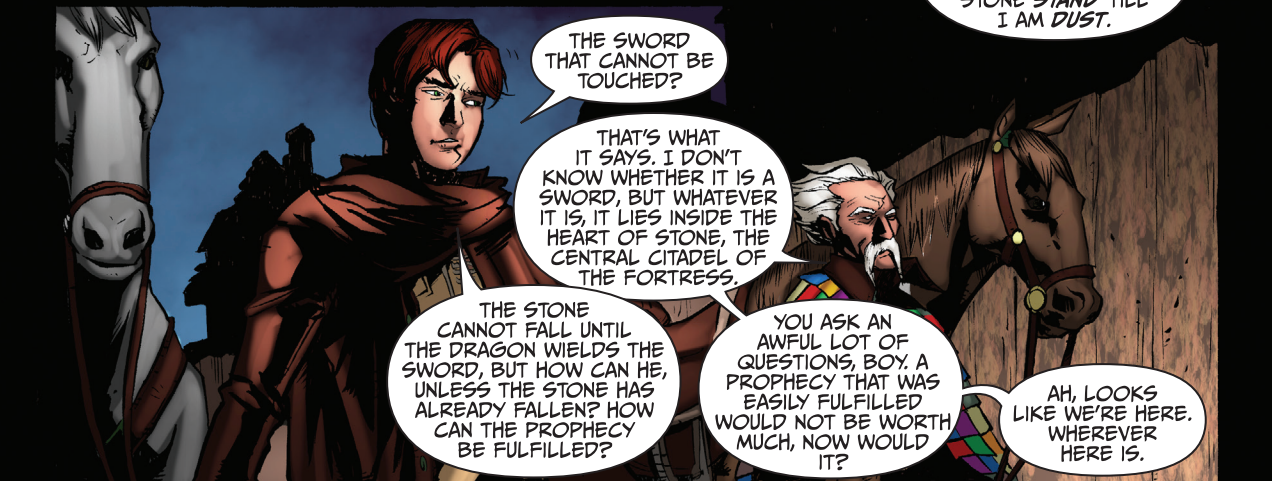
THE **SWORD** THAT **CANNOT** BE **TOUCHED**?

THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT IS A **SWORD**, BUT WHATEVER IT IS, IT LIES INSIDE THE **HEART OF STONE**, THE **CENTRAL CITADEL** OF THE **FORTRESS**.

THE **STONE** **CANNOT** FALL UNTIL THE **DRAGON** WIELDS THE **SWORD**, BUT HOW CAN HE, UNLESS THE **STONE** HAS ALREADY FALLEN? HOW CAN THE **PROPHECY** BE FULFILLED?

YOU ASK AN **AWFUL LOT** OF **QUESTIONS**, BOY. A **PROPHECY** THAT WAS EASILY FULFILLED WOULD NOT BE WORTH MUCH, NOW WOULD IT?

AH, LOOKS LIKE WE'RE HERE. WHEREVER HERE IS.





HERE!
HERE! YOU CAN'T
COME IN THAT
WAY!



YOU'LL HAVE
TO GO ROUND TO
THE FRONT -

IT'S
ALL RIGHT,
MUTCH...

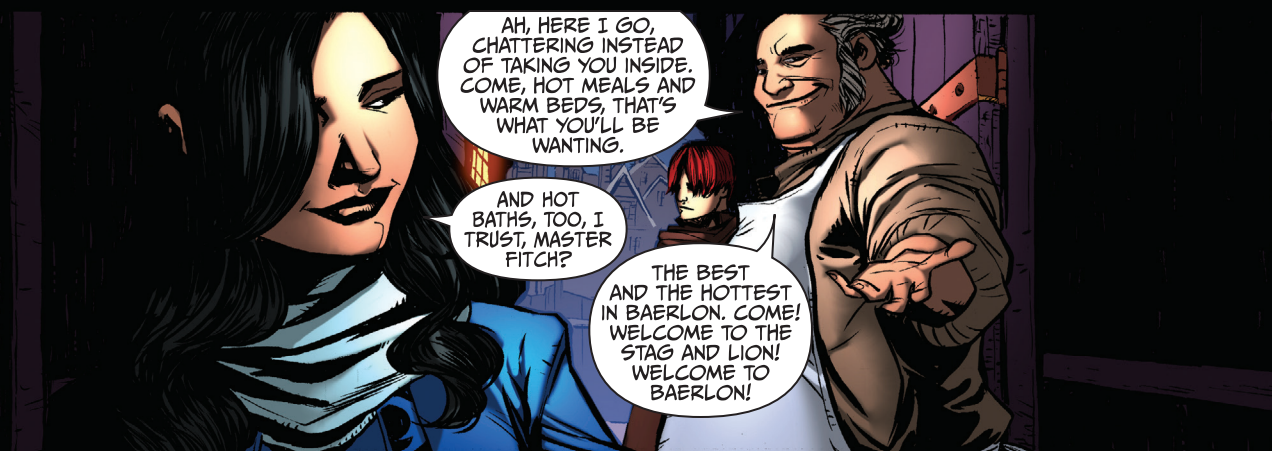


IT'S ALL RIGHT.
THESE FOLK ARE
EXPECTED GUESTS.
TAKE CARE OF THEIR
HORSES, NOW.
GOOD CARE.



WELCOME, MISTRESS Alys.
IT'S GOOD TO BE SEEING YOU
AND MASTER ANDRA BOTH.
YOUR FINE CONVERSATION
HAS BEEN MISSED.

I MUST SAY, I
WORRIED, YOU GOING
DOWNCOUNTRY AND ALL,
WITH THE WEATHER ALL
CRAZY AND THE WOLVES
HOWLING RIGHT UP TO
THE WALLS IN THE
NIGHT...



AH, HERE I GO,
CHATTERING INSTEAD
OF TAKING YOU INSIDE.
COME, HOT MEALS AND
WARM BEDS, THAT'S
WHAT YOU'LL BE
WANTING.

AND HOT
BATHS, TOO, I
TRUST, MASTER
FITCH?

THE BEST
AND THE HOTTEST
IN BAERLON. COME!
WELCOME TO THE
STAG AND LION!
WELCOME TO
BAERLON!



NEED
ANYTHING ELSE?
MORE TOWELS?
MORE HOT
WATER?



NOTHING.
GO AND ENJOY THE
EVENING. AT A LATER TIME, I
WILL SEE THAT YOU RECEIVE
MORE THAN ADEQUATE
RECOMPENSE FOR
YOUR SERVICES.





NOW THIS
IS WHAT I HAVE
BEEN WAITING
FOR!



SHALL
I--

NO, I WILL
SEE TO MYSELF.
GO AND ENJOY
YOUR EVENING.



IT'S A GOOD
THING I GOT
BACK WHEN I DID,
FARMBOY. DON'T
YOU LISTEN TO
WHAT YOU ARE
TOLD?



I DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING. I WAS
JUST GOING TO
TELL HIM ABOUT
THE TROLLOCS,
NOT ABOUT...



DON'T TALK
ABOUT TROLLOCS.
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT
TROLLOCS.



BLOOD AND ASHES, YOU HAD BETTER **REMEMBER** THE DARK ONE HAS EYES AND EARS WHERE YOU **LEAST EXPECT**. AND IF THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT HEARD TROLLOCS WERE AFTER YOU, THEY'D BE **BURNING** TO GET THEIR HANDS ON YOU.

IT MAY NOT BE WHAT YOU ARE USED TO, BUT UNTIL WE GET TO WHERE WE ARE GOING, KEEP YOUR TRUST **SMALL** UNLESS MISTRESS **ALYS** OR I TELL YOU **DIFFERENTLY**.



THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT FELLOW WOULDN'T TELL US. SOMETHING HE THOUGHT WAS TROUBLE, BUT HE DIDN'T SAY WHAT IT WAS.



PROBABLY THE **CHILDREN**. MOST PEOPLE CONSIDER THEM TROUBLE, SOME DON'T, THOUGH, AND HE DID NOT KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO RISK IT.



HE SAID THERE WERE TROLLOCS IN... **SALDAEA**, WASN'T IT?



YOU **WILL** TALK ABOUT IT, WON'T YOU?

THERE ARE **ALWAYS** TROLLOCS IN THE BORDERLANDS, BLACKSMITH. JUST PUT IN THE FRONT OF YOUR MIND THAT WE WANT NO MORE ATTENTION THAN MICE IN A FIELD. **CONCENTRATE** ON THAT.

Later.



MY APOLOGIES, MISTRESS ALYS, FOR MAKING YOU ALL WAIT SO LONG, BUT WITH **SO MANY** PEOPLE AT THE INN, IT'S A WONDER **ANYBODY** GETS SERVED AT ALL.

I'M AFRAID THE **FOOD** ISN'T WHAT IT SHOULD BE, EITHER. JUST THE CHICKENS AND SOME TURNIPS AND HENPEAS, AND SOME CHEESE FOR AFTER. I TRULY DO APOLOGIZE.

FOR **THESE** TROUBLED TIMES, A FEAST INDEED.



MY **THANKS**, MISTRESS ALYS.

IT ISN'T WHAT I WOULD HAVE LAID BEFORE YOU A YEAR AGO, OF COURSE. MY CELLAR IS ALMOST BARE, THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN THE FARM FOLK WILL HARVEST ANOTHER CROP, AND THE WOLVES ARE TAKING ALL THE MUTTON AND BEEF THAT--



HOW I DO RUN ON. FULL OF OLD WIND, THAT'S ME. OLD WIND. MARI, CINDA, LET THESE GOOD PEOPLE EAT IN PEACE.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY YOUR MEAL, MISTRESS ALYS. IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED, JUST SPEAK IT. IT IS A **PLEASURE** SERVING YOU. A PLEASURE.

Moments later...

THEY'RE GONE. WE CAN TALK SAFELY.

I KNOW YOU SAY NOT TO TRUST ANYONE, BUT IF YOU SUSPECT THE INNKEEPER, WHY STAY HERE?

I SUSPECT HIM NO MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. UNTIL WE REACH TAR VALON, I SUSPECT EVERYONE. THERE, I'LL SUSPECT ONLY HALF.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN THE COMMON ROOM?

LITTLE THAT'S GOOD. THERE WAS A BATTLE IN GHEALDAN, AND LOGAIN WAS THE VICTOR. A DOZEN DIFFERENT STORIES ARE FLOATING ABOUT, BUT THEY ALL AGREE ON THAT.

BETTER NEWS ON OUR OWN CIRCUMSTANCES. NO ODD HAPPENINGS, NO STRANGERS WHO MIGHT BE MYRDDRAAL, CERTAINLY NO TROLLOCS, AND THE WHITECLOAKS ARE BUSY TRYING TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR THE GOVERNOR...

GOOD. THAT AGREES WITH WHAT THE BATH MAID SAID - GOSSIP DOES HAVE ITS POINTS.

NOW, WE HAVE A LONG JOURNEY STILL AHEAD OF US, BUT THE LAST WEEK HAS NOT BEEN EASY, EITHER. SO I PROPOSE TO STAY HERE TONIGHT AND TOMORROW NIGHT, AND LEAVE EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

...THEY WILL NOT NOTICE US UNLESS WE ADVERTISE OURSELVES.

WHAT DOES MASTER ANDRA SAY TO THAT?

WELL ENOUGH.

IF THEY REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD THEM, FOR A CHANGE...

With the crowding at the inn, there were only three rooms to be had, one for Moiraine and Egwene, and two to take the men.

Rand found himself sharing with Lan and Thom. The gleeman had stayed in the room just long enough to uncuse his flute and harp before heading to the common room, and Lan went with him.

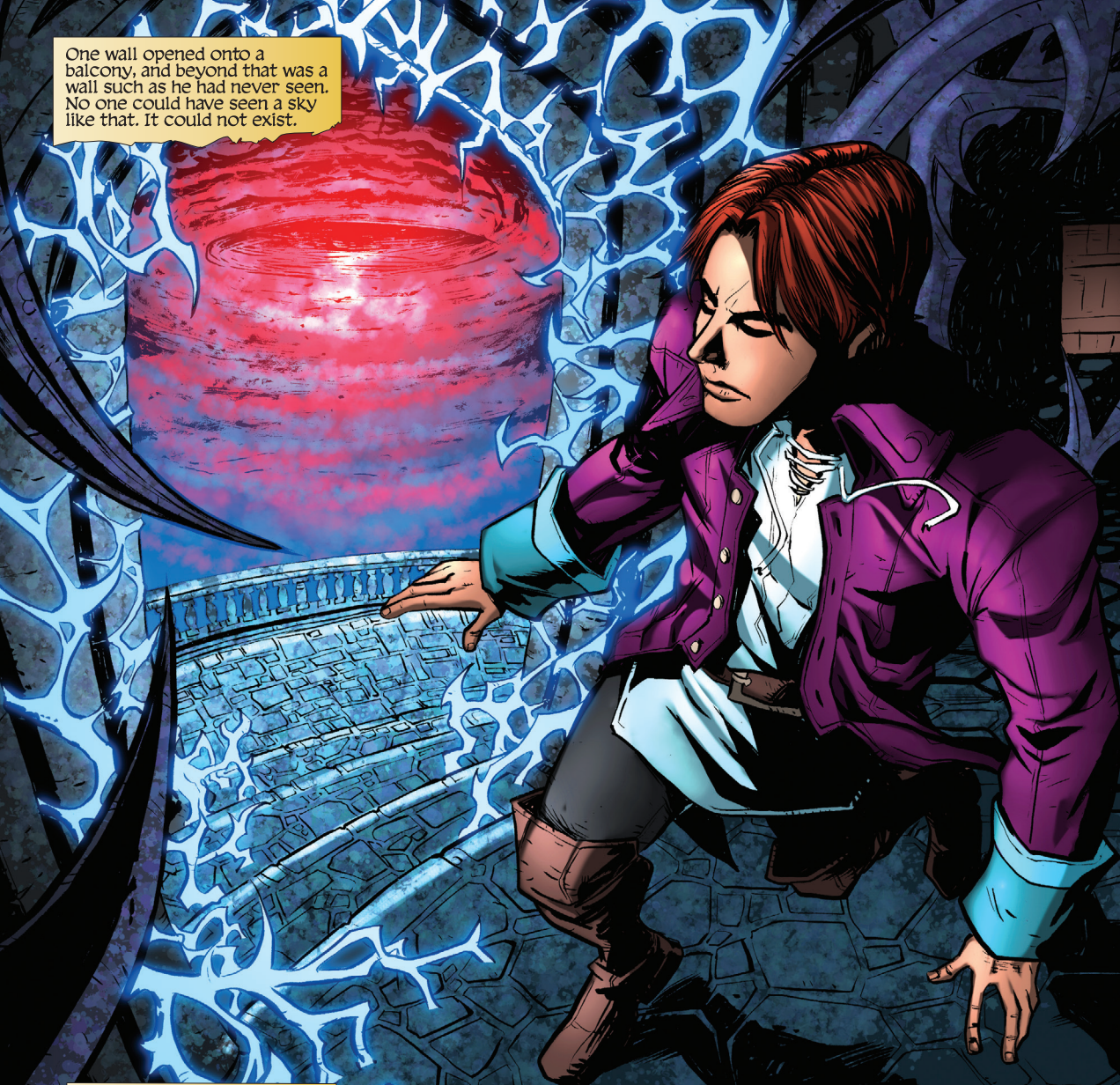
A week ago, Rand would have fallen all over himself for the chance to see a gleeman perform. But he had heard Thom tell his stories every night for a week, and the hot meal had oozed lethargy into him.

A muffled shout came from downstairs, the common room greeting Thom's arrival, but Rand was already asleep.


The stone hallway was dim and shadowy, and empty except for Rand. His head hurt, and thoughts were hard to hold on to. There had been something about... an inn? It was gone, whatever it was.

He licked his lips and wished he had something to drink. He was dry-as-dust thirsty. In the distance, he heard a dripping sound. With nothing to choose by except his thirst, he moved down the hallway, and toward it.

After a while, when he realized the dripping sound wasn't getting any closer, Rand decided to try one of the doors. It opened easily, and he stepped into a grim, stone-walled chamber.




One wall opened onto a balcony, and beyond that was a wall such as he had never seen. No one could have seen a sky like that. It could not exist.




Flames roared on the hearth like a forge-fire with bellows pumping, but gave no heat.

Strange oval stones made the fireplace; they just looked like stones, wet-slick despite the fire when he looked straight at them...



...But when he glimpsed them from the corner of his eye, they seemed to be *faces* instead, the faces of men and women, writhing in anguish, screaming silently.



A single mirror hung on the wall, but that was not ordinary at all. When Rand looked at it, he saw only a *blur* where his reflection should have been. Everything else in the room was shown true, but *not him*.



ONCE
MORE WE
MEET.

FACE...



...TO
FACE.

To be continued...