

DYNAMITE
12

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



the **EYE** of the **WORLD**

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

the EYE of the WORLD

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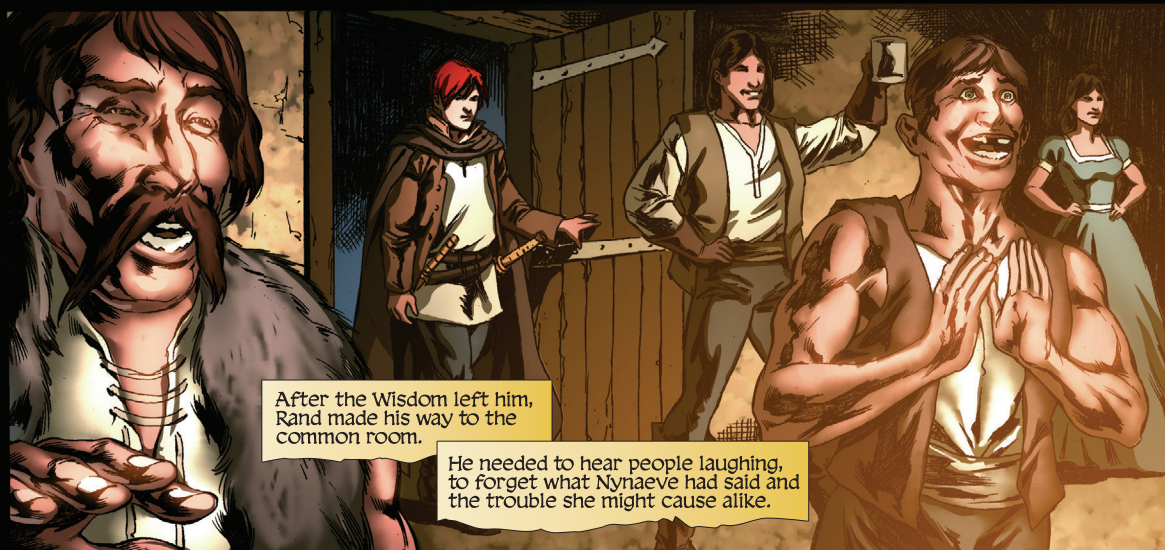
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After the Wisdom left him, Rand made his way to the common room.

He needed to hear people laughing, to forget what Nynaeve had said and the trouble she might cause alike.



As Rand sought out Mat and Perrin, he noticed that Thom was performing *The Great Hunt of the Horn* again, but no one complained. There were so many tales to be told about each of the hunters, and so many hunters, that no two tellings were ever the same.

Thom wound down 'The Bargain of Rogosh Eagle-eye,' paused to wet his throat from a mug of ale, and launched into 'Lian's Stand.'

And then 'The Fall of Aleth-Loriel,' and 'Gaidal Cain's Sword,' and 'The Last Ride of Buad of Albhain.'

Thom's pauses grew longer as the evening wore on, and when he eventually exchanged the harp for his flute, everyone knew it was the end of storytelling for the night.



Two men joined Thom then, and they began to play 'The Wind That Shakes The Willow.'

Rand clapped along with the first few notes, and he wasn't alone. Apparently the song, a favorite in the Two Rivers, was also one in Baerlon as well.

Here and there voices took up the words, not so off-key as for anyone to hush them.



MY LOVE IS GONE, CARRIED AWAY BY THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE WILLOW...

AND ALL THE LAND IS BEATEN HARD BY THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE WILLOW...

BUT I WILL HOLD HER CLOSE TO ME IN HEART AND DEAREST MEMORY...

AND WITH HER STRENGTH TO STEEL MY SOUL, HER LOVE TO WARM MY HEART-STRINGS, I WILL STAND WHERE WE ONCE SANG...

THOUGH COULD WIND SHAKES THE WILLOW!

Thom's second song was not so sad. In fact, 'Only One Bucket of Water' seemed even more merry than usual by comparison -- which might have been the gleeman's intent.



People rushed to clear tables from the floor for dancing, and began kicking up their heels until the walls shook from the stomping and whirling.

Thom played a few notes of the next song, 'Wild Geese On The Wing', and then paused for people to take their places for the reel.



I THINK
I'LL TRY
A FEW
STEPS.

ME
TOO.

HEY!
I WANT
A TURN,
TOO!



THEN MAYBE
YOU SHOULD
MOVE A LITTLE
FASTER NEXT
TIME!

GRRR.



Everyone in the room seemed to be laughing, Rand thought as the dance began. The only unsmiling face he saw in the room belonged to a man huddled by one of the fireplaces.



The scar-faced man noticed Rand's gaze and scowled. Rand's cheeks grew hot and his step faltered - he didn't think he'd been staring.

But when Rand turned to meet his next partner, he forgot all about the man...

The next woman to dance into his arms was *Nynaeve*.

WHA--

Rand *stumbled* through the steps, almost tripping over his own feet and nearly stepping on hers.

Nynaeve danced gracefully enough to make up for Rand's clumsiness, smiling all the while.

I ALWAYS
THOUGHT YOU
WERE A BETTER
DANCER!

She laughed, and then it was time to change partners.

Rand had only a moment to gather himself before he turned his attention to his new partner--

--Moiraine.

If Rand had thought he was stumble-footed with the Wisdom, it was nothing to how he felt with the Aes Sedai.

Moiraine glided across the floor smoothly, her gown swirling around her.

Rand almost fell twice.

He was glad enough to return to the bench when the reel was done.

The music for another dance, a jig, began while Rand was sitting down. Mat hurried to join in, and Perrin slid on the bench as he was leaving.

DID YOU SEE HER?
DID YOU?

WHICH ONE?
THE WISDOM,
OR MISTRESS
ALYS? I DANCED
WITH BOTH OF
THEM.

THE AE--
MISTRESS Alys,
TOO?

I DANCED WITH
NYNAEVE. I DIDN'T EVEN
KNOW SHE DANCED.
SHE NEVER DOES AT
ANY OF THE DANCES
BACK HOME.

I WONDER
WHAT THE WOMEN'S
CIRCLE WOULD SAY
ABOUT THE WISDOM
DANCING? MAYBE
THAT'S WHY.

And then the music and the clapping were too loud for any further talk.

Moiraine had left toward midnight, and Egwene had hurried after her. The Wisdom watched them leave and deliberately joined in another dance before she left, too.

Soon Thom was putting his flute in its case and arguing good-naturedly with those who wanted him to stay longer... until Lan scared the stragglers away.

WE HAVE TO MAKE AN EARLY START, AND WE WILL NEED ALL THE REST WE CAN GET.

THERE'S A FELLOW BEEN STARING AT ME. A MAN WITH A SCAR ACROSS HIS FACE.

YOU DON'T THINK HE COULD BE ONE OF THE... FRIENDS YOU WARNED US ABOUT?

I SAW THE MAN.

ACCORDING TO MASTER FITCH, HE'S A SPY FOR THE WHITECLOAKS. HE'S NO WORRY TO US.

A SPY?


HOW EARLY ARE WE LEAVING?

Their jollity subdued, the others quickly followed the Warder up the stairs, leaving Rand in the hall alone.

After having so many people around, it was lonely indeed.

AT FIRST LIGHT.

AND REMEMBER, WE LEAVE WHETHER YOU ARE AWAKE ENOUGH TO SIT ON YOUR SADDLE OR HAVE TO BE TIED ON.



Rand hurried to the kitchen where a scullery maid was still on duty. She poured a mug of milk for him.

As he came out of the kitchen, a shape in dull black started toward him from down the hall.



YOU ARE ONE OF THEM, BOY.



PTUNK



WHERE ARE THE OTHERS? I KNOW THEY ARE HERE.



SPEAK, BOY, AND I WILL LET YOU LIVE.



SPEAK,
I SAY,
OR--

THRUMP BUMP THRUMP BUMP

From above came a clatter of boots, from the stairs up the hall, and the Myrddraal cut off, whirling. The pounding of boots grew louder, and the Fade spun back to Rand in an almost boneless movement.

The black blade rose, and Rand knew he was going to die. Midnight steel flashed at his head, and...

YOU BELONG
TO THE GREAT
LORD OF THE
DARK.

YOU
ARE HIS.

THRUMP BUMP
THRUMP BUMP

HRR...



F-FADE.

IT WAS...

YES.
IT'S GOING
FADING.

NO TIME TO
PURSUE IT NOW.
WE'RE LEAVING,
SHEPHERDER.

LEAVING?
NOW? IN THE
NIGHT?

YOU WANT
TO WAIT FOR THE
HALFMAN TO COME
BACK? FOR HALF A
DOZEN OF THEM? IT
KNOWS WHERE WE
ARE, NOW.

Later...

YOU MUST TAKE THIS **SERIOUSLY**. YOU WILL CERTAINLY HAVE TROUBLE HERE BY MORNING. **DARKFRIENDS**, PERHAPS; PERHAPS **WORSE**.

WHEN IT COMES, QUICKLY MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE ARE GONE. OFFER NO RESISTANCE, JUST LET WHOEVER IT IS KNOW THAT WE LEFT IN THE NIGHT, AND THEY SHOULD BOTHER YOU NO FURTHER. IT IS **US** THAT THEY ARE AFTER.

NEVER YOU WORRY ABOUT **TROUBLE**. IF ANY COME AROUND MY INN TRYING TO MAKE TROUBLE FOR MY GUESTS... WELL, THEY'LL GET THE **SHORT SHRIFT** FROM THE LADS AND I.

AND THEY'LL HEAR NOT A **WORD** ABOUT WHERE YOU'VE GONE, OR WHEN. NOT A **WORD**!

BUT--

MISTRESS Alys, I **REALLY** MUST SEE TO YOUR HORSES IF YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE IN GOOD ORDER.

MUTCH! STIR YOUR BONES!

YOU THINK **TROLLOCS** MAY COME HUNTING FOR US?

OF COURSE NOT! THERE ARE **OTHER** THINGS TO FEAR, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS HOW WE WERE **FOUND**.

MASTER FITCH TAKES **DARKFRIENDS** TOO LIGHTLY. HE THINKS OF THEM AS WRETCHES HIDING IN THE SHADOWS, BUT THEY CAN BE FOUND IN THE SHOPS AND STREETS OF EVERY CITY - AND IN THE HIGHEST COUNCILS, TOO.

THE MYRDDRAAL MAY SEND THEM TO SEE IF HE CAN LEARN OF OUR PLANS.



SO YOU'RE COMING AFTER ALL.

WAS THERE SOMETHING DOWN HERE? SHE SAID IT WAS--

A FADE.
IT WAS IN THE HALL WITH ME,
AND THEN LAN CAME.

PERHAPS THERE IS SOMETHING AFTER YOU.

BUT I CAME TO SEE YOU SAFELY BACK IN EMOND'S FIELD, ALL OF YOU, AND I WILL NOT LEAVE TILL THAT IS DONE.

I WON'T LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH HER SORT.



The streets of Baerion were abandoned at that hour of the night, though a dog barked now and again to mark their passing.

The Warder led the way, as usual, and he kept the horses moving at a brisk pace all the way to the Caemlyn Gate, where Lan dismounted and roused the Watchman.



YOU WANT TO LEAVE? NOW? IN THE NIGHT? YOU MUST BE MAD!



UNLESS THERE IS SOME ORDER FROM THE GOVERNOR THAT PROHIBITS OUR LEAVING.



NOT EXACTLY, MISTRESS. THE GATES STAY SHUT FROM SUNDOWN TO SUNUP. NO ONE TO COME IN EXCEPT IN DAYLIGHT.

NO ONE TO COME IN, BUT NOTHING ABOUT LEAVING. YOU SEE? WE ARE NOT ASKING YOU TO DISOBEY THE GOVERNOR.



I SUPPOSE... I SUPPOSE LEAVING WASN'T MENTIONED AT THAT. JUST A MINUTE.

FOR YOUR TROUBLE.

ARIN! DAR! GET OUT HERE AND HELP ME OPEN THE GATE! THERE'S PEOPLE WANT TO LEAVE! DON'T ARGUE, JUST DO IT!



The crank-and-ratchet made a rapid clicking sound, but the well-oiled gates swung apart silently. Before they were open, though, a cold voice spoke out of the darkness.

WHAT IS THIS?




ARE THESE GATES NOT ORDERED CLOSED UNTIL SUNRISE?



THIS IS NONE OF YOUR AFFAIR. THE CHILDREN HOLD NO SWAY HERE.

THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT HOLD SWAY WHEREVER MEN WALK IN THE LIGHT.

ONLY WHERE THE SHADOW OF THE DARK ONE REIGNS ARE THE CHILDREN DENIED, YES?



WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WANT TO LEAVE TOWN WALLS IN THE NIGHT DURING TIMES LIKE THESE? WITH WOLVES STALKING THE DARKNESS AND THE DARK ONE'S OWN HANDIWORK SEEN FLYING OVER THE TOWN?

TRAVELERS. OF NO INTEREST TO YOU OR YOURS.

EVERYONE IS OF INTEREST TO THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT.

Rand tried to make himself smaller, but his movement only served to draw the Whitecloak's attention.

WHAT HAVE WE HERE, SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE SEEN?

AH!

CLEARLY, WATCHMAN, I HAVE SAVED YOU FROM GREAT DISASTER. THESE ARE DARKFRIENDS YOU WERE ABOUT TO HELP ESCAPE FROM THE LIGHT.

INSTEAD I WILL TAKE THESE RUFFIANS TO OUR CAMP, THAT THEY MAY BE QUESTIONED IN THE LIGHT!

Moiraine's voice came suddenly from every direction at once.

YOU WILL TAKE ME TO YOUR CAMP, WHITE-CLOAK?



YOU WILL QUESTION ME?

YOU WILL BAR MY WAY?

AES SEDAI!

DIE!

CLANG

YOU DARE ATTACK ME!



KWIIMP



GO. NOW!



NO! HOLD THE GATES! WE MUST PURSUE THEM AND TAKE THEM!

Despite the Whitecloaks' demand, the Watchmen did not slow their pace of closing. The gates slammed shut, and moments later the bar slammed into place, sealing them.



YOU--YOU WERE TALLER THAN A GIANT.

WAS I?

I SAW YOU.

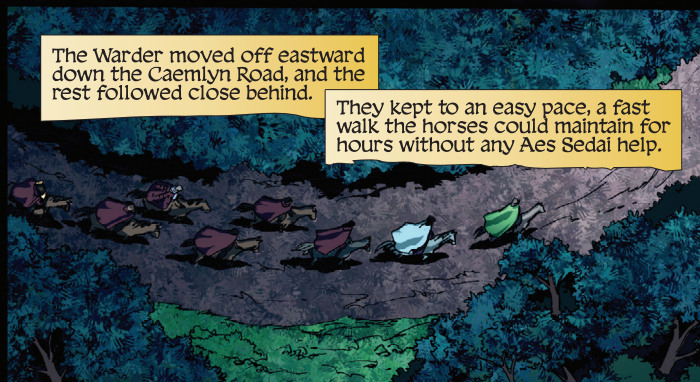
THE MIND PLAYS TRICKS IN THE NIGHT; THE EYES SEE WHAT IS NOT THERE.



THIS IS NO TIME FOR GAMES.

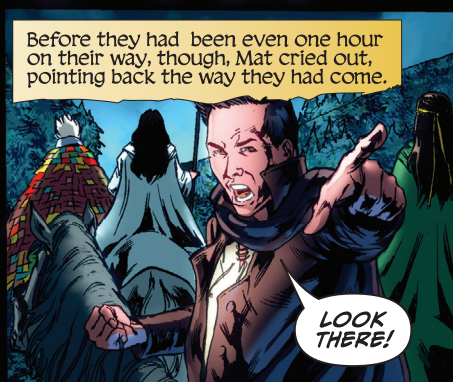
INDEED. WHAT WE GAINED AT THE STAG AND LION WE MAY HAVE LOST HERE. NO MATTER. THEY MAY KNOW THE WAY WE MUST GO, BUT WITH LUCK WE WILL STAY A STEP AHEAD OF THEM.

LAN!



The Warder moved off eastward down the Caemlyn Road, and the rest followed close behind.

They kept to an easy pace, a fast walk the horses could maintain for hours without any Aes Sedai help.



Before they had been even one hour on their way, though, Mat cried out, pointing back the way they had come.

LOOK THERE!



I WARNED HIM, BUT HE WOULD NOT TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.



THE INN? THAT'S THE STAG AND LION? HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?

HOW FAR DO YOU WANT TO STRETCH COINCIDENCE, BOY?



IF THEY HAVE ATTACKED THE INN, PERHAPS OUR EXIT FROM TOWN AND MY... DISPLAY WENT UNNOTICED.

YOU SAY THAT SO EASILY, MOIRAINÉ.

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE AT THE INN? PEOPLE MUST BE HURT, AND THE INNKEEPER HAS LOST HIS LIVELIHOOD, BECAUSE OF YOU!

FOR ALL YOUR TALK ABOUT WALKING AROUND IN THE LIGHT YOU'RE READY TO GO ON WITHOUT SPARING A THOUGHT FOR HIM -- HIS TROUBLE IS BECAUSE OF YOU!



BECAUSE OF THOSE THREE!

THE FIRE, THE INJURED, THE GOING ON -- ALL BECAUSE OF THOSE THREE. THE DARK ONE WANTS THOSE BOYS OF YOURS, AND ANYTHING HE WANTS THIS BADLY, HE MUST BE KEPT FROM.

OR WOULD YOU RATHER LET THE FADE HAVE THEM?



BE AT
EASE, LAN.

WISDOM, YOU
THINK I CAN HELP
MASTER FITCH
AND THE PEOPLE
AT THE INN?
WELL, YOU ARE
RIGHT.

I--

I CAN GO BACK
BY MYSELF AND GIVE
SOME HELP. NOT TOO MUCH, OF
COURSE. THAT WOULD DRAW
ATTENTION TO THOSE I HELPED,
ATTENTION THEY WOULD NOT
THANK ME FOR, ESPECIALLY
WITH THE CHILDREN OF
THE LIGHT IN TOWN.

AND THAT WOULD
LEAVE ONLY LAN TO
PROTECT THE REST OF
YOU. HE IS VERY GOOD, BUT
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN HIM
IF A MYRDDRAAL AND A FIST
OF TROLLOCS FIND
YOU.

OF COURSE, WE
COULD ALL RETURN, THOUGH
I DOUBT I CAN GET ALL OF US
BACK OUT OF BAERLON UNNOTICED.
AND THAT WOULD EXPOSE YOU
ALL TO WHOMEVER SET THAT
FIRE, NOT TO MENTION THE
WHITECLOAKS.

WHICH
ALTERNATIVE
WOULD YOU
CHOOSE, WISDOM,
IF YOU WERE
I?



I WOULD DO
SOMETHING.

AND IN ALL
PROBABILITY, HAND
THE DARK ONE HIS
VICTORY.



REMEMBER WHAT --
WHO -- IT IS THAT HE WANTS.
WE ARE IN A WAR, AS SURE AS ANY
IN GHEALDAN. I WILL HAVE GOLD
SENT TO MASTER FITCH, ENOUGH TO
REBUILD THE STAG AND LION, AND
HELP FOR ANY WHO WERE
HURT AS WELL.

ANY MORE
THAN THAT WILL
ONLY ENDANGER
THEM. IT IS FAR
FROM SIMPLE,
YOU SEE.

The Caemlyn Road was not very different from the North Road through the Two Rivers... the land itself it was different, though, for by midday the road entered low hills.

From time to time, Lan had them dismount atop one of the hills where he could get a good view of the road both ahead and behind, and the surrounding countryside as well.

Though they couldn't be seen yet, Lan knew they were being followed. Followed by Fades and Trollocs, who knew they were on the Caemlyn Road.

IF THEY
KNOW WE'RE ON
THE ROAD, WHY
DON'T WE JUST GO
STRAIGHT ACROSS TO
WHITEBRIDGE?

EVEN LAN
CANNOT TRAVEL
AS FAST CROSS
COUNTRY AS BY ROAD.
ESPECIALLY NOT
THROUGH THE HILLS
OF ABSHER.

TA-ROOOOO



NOW WE
KNOW FOR
CERTAIN THERE
ARE TROLLOCS
BEHIND US.

KEEP
THEM MOVING,
MOIRAINÉ SEDAI. I
WILL RETURN AS
SOON AS I AM
ABLE.




YOU
WILL KNOW
IF I FAIL.



THE LIGHT
GO WITH YOU,
LAST LORD OF
THE SEVEN
TOWERS.




WE MUST
GO ON.



The horns called and answered
once more behind them.

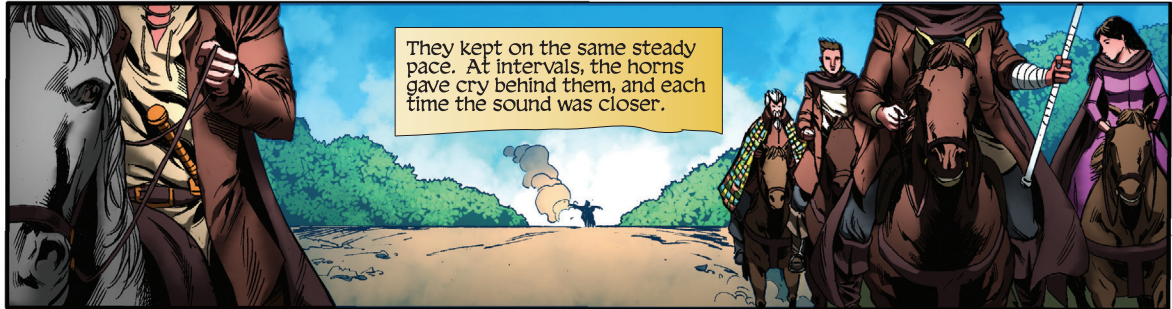
They were closer this time;
eight miles, maybe seven.

TA-ROOOOO

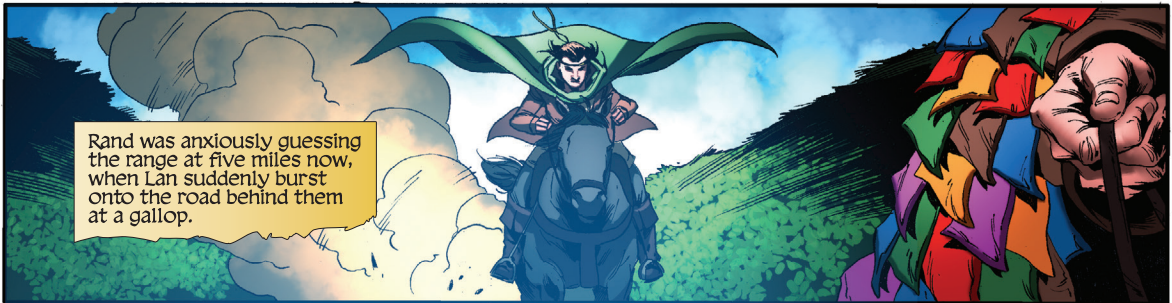


CAN'T WE GO
ANY FASTER?
THOSE HORNS
ARE GETTING
CLOSER.

AND WHY DO
THEY LET US KNOW
THEY ARE THERE?
PERHAPS SO WE WILL
HURRY ON WITHOUT
THINKING OF WHAT
MIGHT BE AHEAD.



They kept on the same steady
pace. At intervals, the horns
gave cry behind them, and each
time the sound was closer.

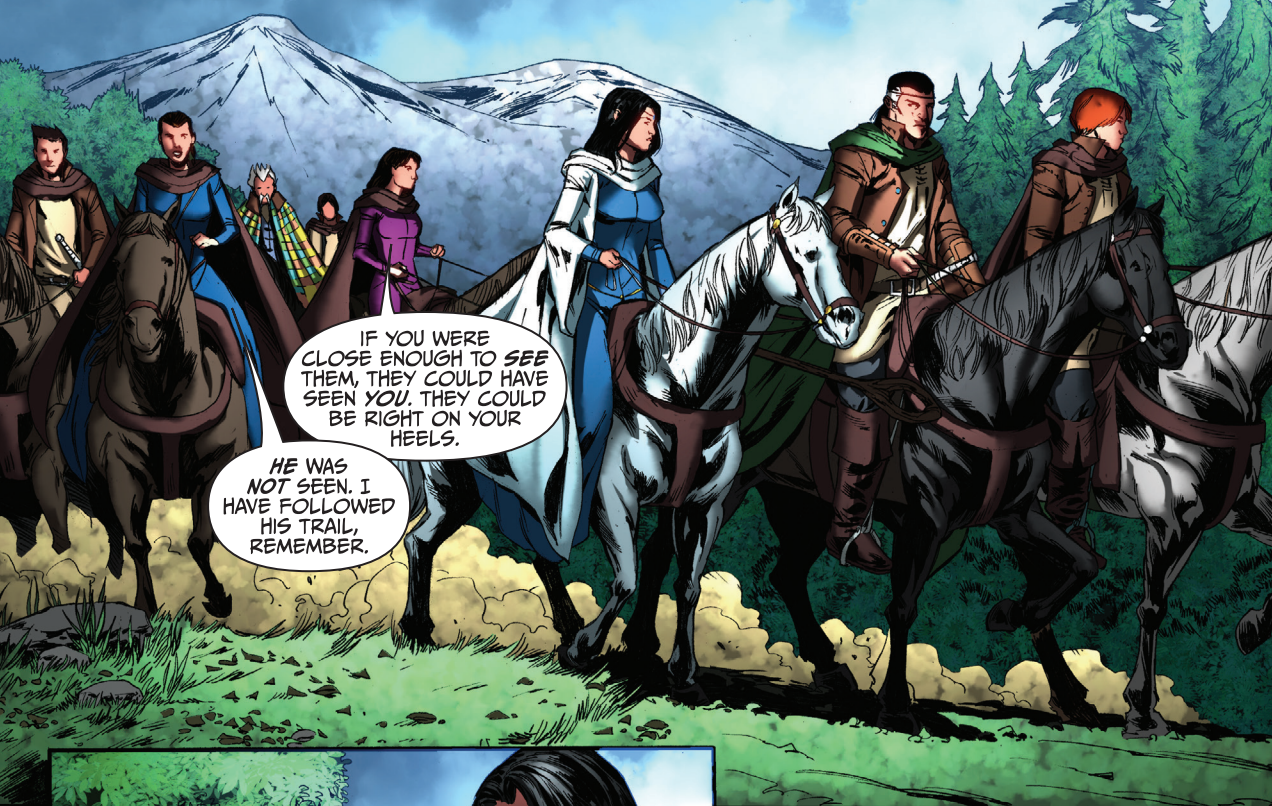


Rand was anxiously guessing
the range at five miles now,
when Lan suddenly burst
onto the road behind them
at a gallop.



AT LEAST
THREE FISTS
OF TROLLOCS,
EACH LED BY A
HALFMAN.

MAYBE
FIVE.



IF YOU WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE THEM, THEY COULD HAVE SEEN YOU. THEY COULD BE RIGHT ON YOUR HEELS.

HE WAS NOT SEEN. I HAVE FOLLOWED HIS TRAIL, REMEMBER.



HUSH.

LAN IS TELLING US THERE ARE PERHAPS FIVE HUNDRED TROLLOCS BEHIND US.



AND THEY ARE CLOSING THE GAP.

THEY WILL BE ON US IN AN HOUR OR LESS.



IF THEY HAD THAT MANY BEFORE, WHY WERE THEY NOT USED AT EMOND'S FIELD? IF THEY DID NOT, HOW DID THEY COME HERE SINCE?

THEY ARE SPREAD OUT TO DRIVE US BEFORE THEM WITH SCOUTS QUARTERING AHEAD OF THE MAIN PARTIES.

DRIVING US TOWARD WHAT?

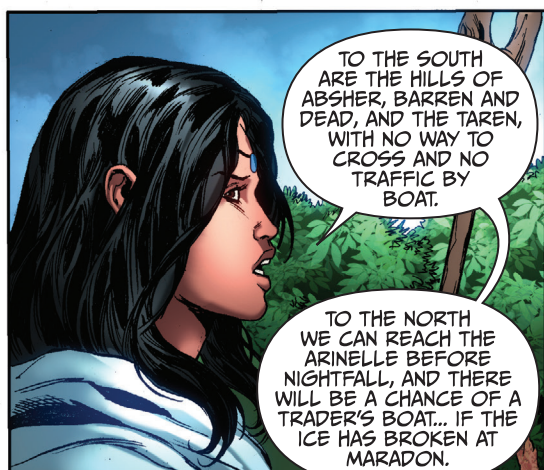
TA-ROOOOO



WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

WHERE DO WE GO?

ALL THAT IS LEFT IS NORTH OR SOUTH.



TO THE SOUTH ARE THE HILLS OF ABSHER, BARREN AND DEAD, AND THE TAREN, WITH NO WAY TO CROSS AND NO TRAFFIC BY BOAT.

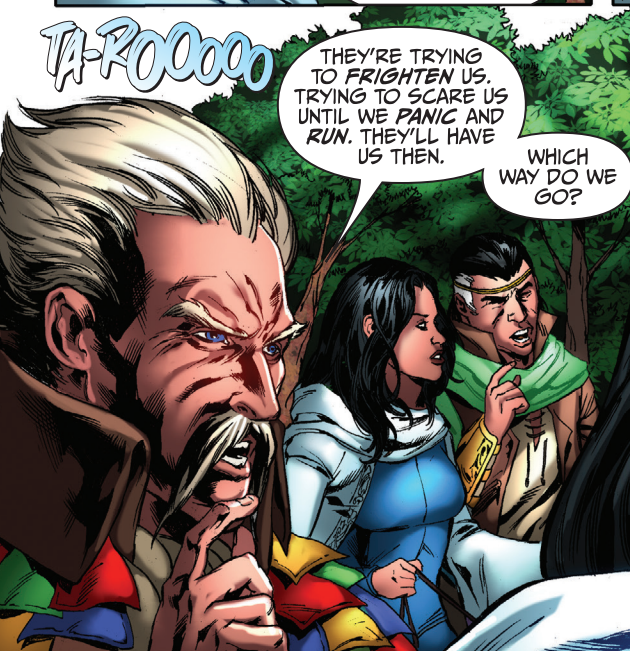
TO THE NORTH WE CAN REACH THE ARINELLE BEFORE NIGHTFALL, AND THERE WILL BE A CHANCE OF A TRADER'S BOAT... IF THE ICE HAS BROKEN AT MARADON.



THERE IS A PLACE THAT THE TROLLOCS WILL NOT GO...

NO!

TA-ROOOO



THEY'RE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US. TRYING TO SCARE US UNTIL WE PANIC AND RUN. THEY'LL HAVE US THEN.

WHICH WAY DO WE GO?



WE GO NORTH.

To be continued...