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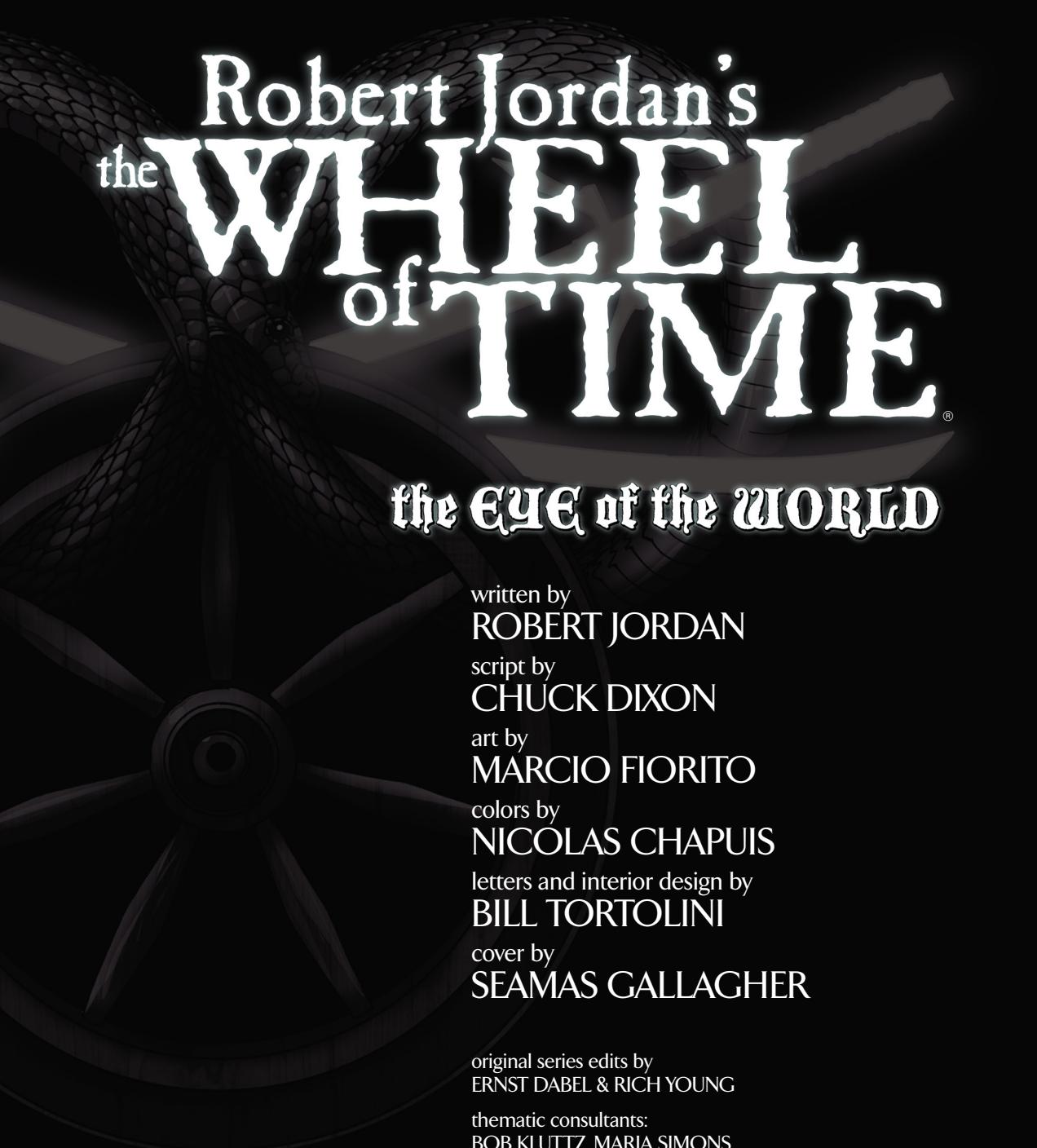
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# Robert Jordan's the WHEEL of TIME®



**the EYE of the WORLD**

ROBERT JORDAN, CHUCK DIXON & MARCIO FIORITO



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## the EYE of the WORLD

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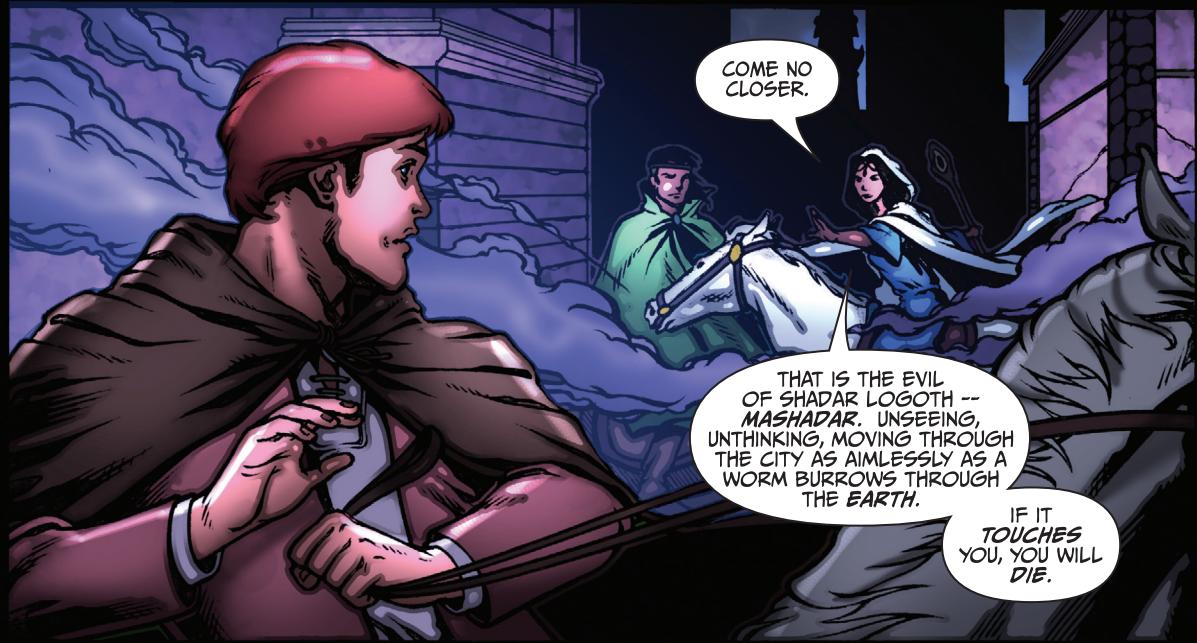
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Lan led the way down the street, and kept such a pace that it wasn't long before Rand noticed a distance had opened up, separating the Warder and the Aes Sedai from the rest of the group.







Everyone had been staring, wondering which way to go, no one wanting to make the first move.

When the tendrils of Mashadar began to drift nearer to them, Rand turned Cloud, the gray breaking into a half trot, tugging to go faster. As if moving first had made Rand the leader, everyone followed.

With Moiraine gone, there was no one to protect them should Mordeth appear. And the Trollocs. And...

Rand forced himself to stop thinking. He would follow the red star. He could hold on to that thought.

As they went, Rand caught himself gritting his teeth to stop panting -- he was telling himself to make the others at least think he wasn't afraid when a smoky tendril reached out towards them.

Wheeling, the group galloped away with no heed for the clatter of hooves they raised.

...and that clatter drew the attention of the other monsters in the city.



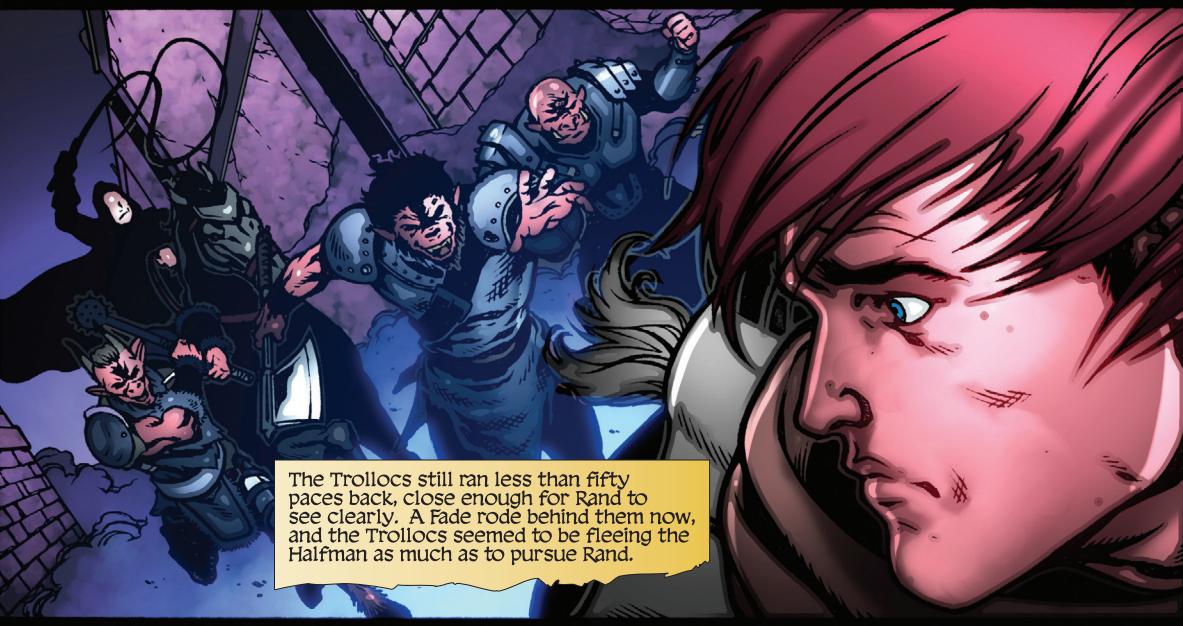
Even as Rand shouted 'this way,' he heard the same cry from five different throats, and a glance back showed his companions disappearing in as many directions, Trollocs pursuing them all.

Three Trollocs ran at his own heels, catchpoles waving in the air. Rand's skin crawled when he realized they were matching Cloud stride for stride.



The street was narrowing ahead, broken-topped buildings leaning out drunkenly. Rand could see the empty windows slowly filling with a silvery glow, a dense mist bulging outward.

*Mashadar.*



The Trollocs still ran less than fifty paces back, close enough for Rand to see clearly. A Fade rode behind them now, and the Trollocs seemed to be fleeing the Halfman as much as to pursue Rand.



Ahead of Rand, gray tendrils wavered from the windows, feeling the air.

Cloud tossed his head and screamed, but Rand dug his heels in brutally, and the horse lunged forward.

If one of those tendrils touched him...



Rand booted Cloud harder and the horse leaped forward into the welcome shadows.

Behind him, the waving gray tentacles of Mashadar blocked half the street and the Trollocs were balking in their pursuit.



The Fade snapped a whip to spur the Trollocs on, and instead attracted the attention of Mashadar.

The thickening tentacles of fog struck like vipers. Its prey tried to scream, but the fog rolled over open mouths, and in, eating the howls and transforming them into a piercing whine just beyond hearing, like all the hornets in the world digging into Rand's ears with all the fear that could exist.

Cloud heard too, and ran harder than ever.

After a time, Rand realized he could no longer hear the silent shriek of the Fade dying and reined Cloud to a stop.

Slumped in the saddle, he listened, but there was nothing to hear but the blood pounding in his ears.

The others. Why didn't they follow him? Were they free, or in the Trollocs' hands? If they were alive and free, they would be following the star. If not...

...The ruins were vast; he could search for days without finding anyone, if he could keep away from the *Trollocs*. And the *Fades*. And *Mordeth*. And *Mashadar*.

Reluctantly, he decided to make for the river.

Hidden in the shadows, Rand thought he heard something.

And then he thought he saw a catchpole... even as the thought flashed into Rand's head, he dug his heels into Cloud's ribs and his sword flew from the scabbard. A wordless shout accompanied his charge, and he swung the sword with all his might.

...Only a desperate effort stopped the blade short.

YAIOW!









Suddenly Thom galloped out of the night, hard behind the Trollocs...

...And then moonlight flashed off steel.

SKRAW!

MY SECOND-BEST KNIVES.  
THAT ONE WILL  
BRING OTHERS. I  
HOPE THE RIVER  
ISN'T TOO FAR.  
I HOPE...



Instead of saying what he hoped, Thom shook his head and took off at a quick canter, with Rand and Mat in tow.

When they reached the river, Rand could not see the far side at all. He didn't like the idea of crossing in the dark, but he liked the idea of staying on this side even less.

PICK A DIRECTION -- UPSTREAM OR DOWN?

BUT THE OTHERS COULD BE ANYWHERE. ANY WAY WE CHOOSE COULD JUST TAKE US FARTHER AWAY.

SO IT COULD... SO IT COULD.

They continued on, and, for a time, nothing changed. The bank was higher in some places, lower in others, the trees grew thicker or thinned out... but the *night* and the *river* and the *wind* were all the same. *Cold and black.*

And then, they saw a light ahead. As they drew closer, they could see it was well above the river, as if it were in a tree.

Finally they could make out the source of the light: a lantern hoisted atop the masts of a large trader's boat.

NOW THAT IS BETTER THAN AN AES SEDAIS'S RAFT, ISN'T IT?

IT DOESN'T LOOK AS IF THIS VESSEL IS MADE TO CARRY HORSES, BUT CONSIDERING THE DANGER HE'S IN, WHICH WE ARE GOING TO WARN HIM OF, THE CAPTAIN MAY BE REASONABLE.

JUST LET ME DO ALL THE TALKING. AND BRING YOUR BLANKETS AND SADDLEBAGS, JUST IN CASE.

YOU DON'T MEAN TO LEAVE WITHOUT THE OTHERS, DO YOU?

Thom had no chance to say what he meant to do, as several Trollocs burst into the clearing, with shouts in the distance indicating more were on the way.

ONTO THE BOAT! QUICK!  
LEAVE ALL THAT AND RUN!

TA-Rooooo



YOU ON  
THE BOAT! -- WAKE  
UP, YOU FOOLS!  
TROLLOCS!



Men ran everywhere on the boat, shouting, hacking mooring lines, and struggling with Trollocs.



Suddenly, something slammed across Rand's back, smashing him to the deck. His sword fell and skittered away from his outstretched hand.





Painfully, Rand managed to look over his shoulder and knew that his luck had run out. He struggled to move -- to get to his sword or to get away -- but arms and legs moved jerkily, only half as he wanted. Time seemed to slow as the Trolloc raised the jagged pole as if to spear him with it...



NO--!



Suddenly, the ship lurched and a boom swung out of the shadows to catch the Trolloc in the chest with a crunch of breaking bones, sweeping it over the side.

WOMP



WELL, THAT WILL HAVE USED UP MY LUCK.

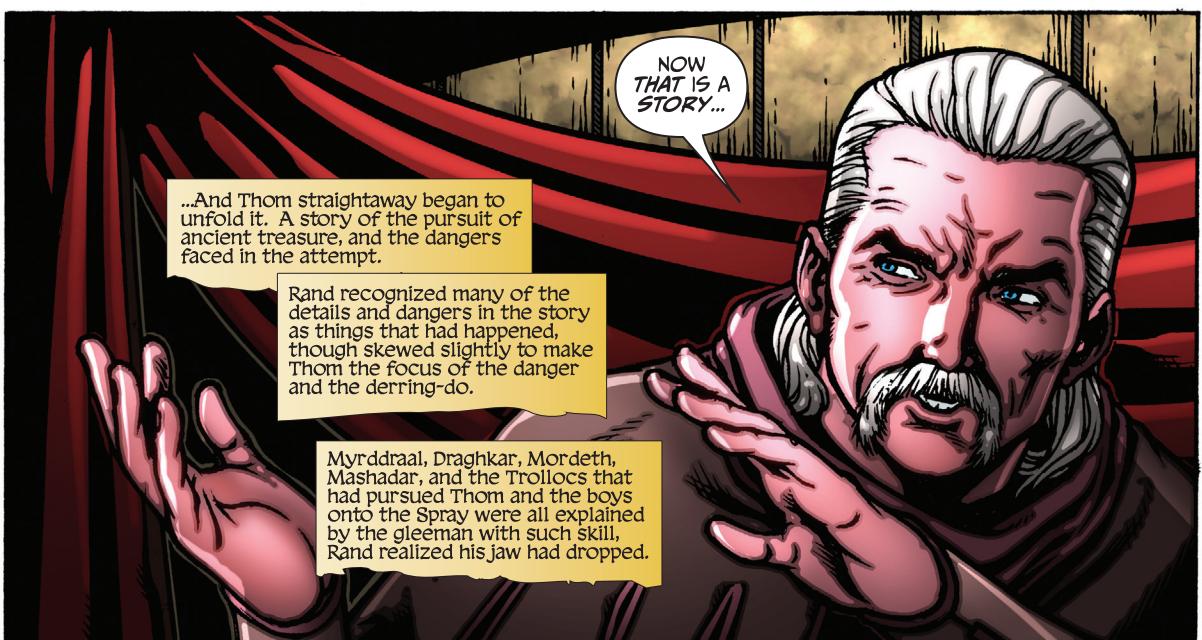
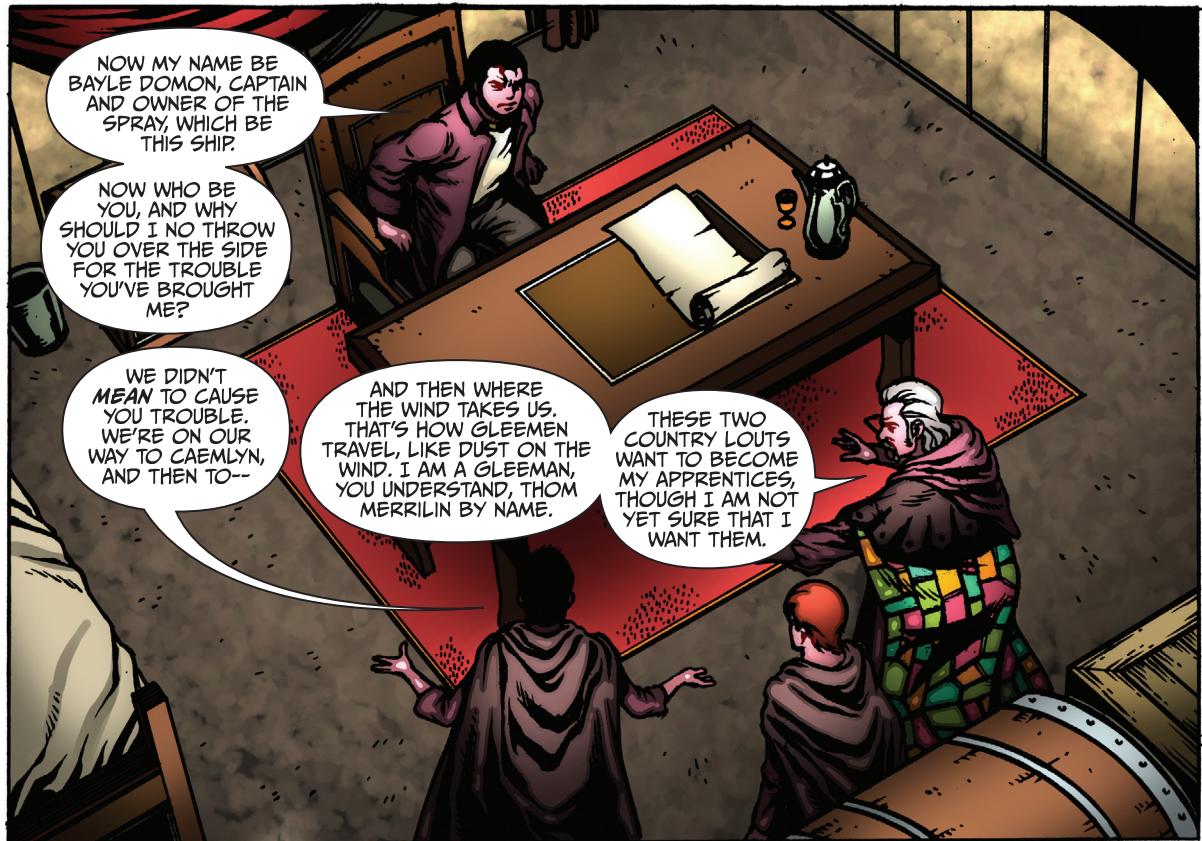


GELB! FORTUNE, WHERE DO YOU BE, GELB? YOU CAN NO HIDE FROM ME ON MY OWN SHIP! GET FLORAN GELB OUT HERE!



Shakily, Rand got to his feet and picked up his sword, for once holding it in both hands the way Lan had taught him, but there was nothing left on which to use it.









The next day...

THEY ARE ALL GONE.

FOUR HALFMEN STARTED SOUTH ABOUT TWO HOURS BEFORE DAWN, AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, BUT THE TROLLOCS HAVE VANISHED. EVEN THE CORPSES.

ONE COULD ALWAYS HOPE THEY HAD GONE BACK INTO SHADAR LOGOTH AND BEEN CONSUMED BY IT, BUT THAT WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO WISH FOR.

THERE WAS NO CLEAR SIGN OF THE BOYS, OR ANY OF THE OTHERS. THE TRACKS ARE TOO MUDDLED TO TELL ANYTHING. BUT THIS OTHER IS IMPORTANT, MOIRANE.

I COULD ACCEPT TROLLOCS IN THE TWO RIVERS -- EVEN A HUNDRED TROLLOCS -- BUT THIS? THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A THOUSAND IN THE HUNT FOR US YESTERDAY!

IF THOSE THOUSAND WERE HERE TO BE SENT INTO THE TWO RIVERS, WHY WERE THEY NOT? THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER -- THEY WERE SENT ONLY AFTER WE CROSSED THE TAREN, WHEN IT WAS KNOWN ONE MYRDDRAAL AND A HUNDRED TROLLOCS WERE NO LONGER ENOUGH.

HOW? HOW WERE THEY SENT? IF A THOUSAND TROLLOCS CAN BE BROUGHT SO FAR FROM THE BLIGHT -- SO QUICKLY, UNSEEN -- CAN TEN THOUSAND BE SENT INTO THE HEART OF SALDAEA, OR ARAFEL, OR SHIENAR? THE BORDERLANDS COULD BE OVERRUN IN A YEAR!

THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BE OVERRUN IN FIVE IF WE DO NOT FIND THOSE BOYS.

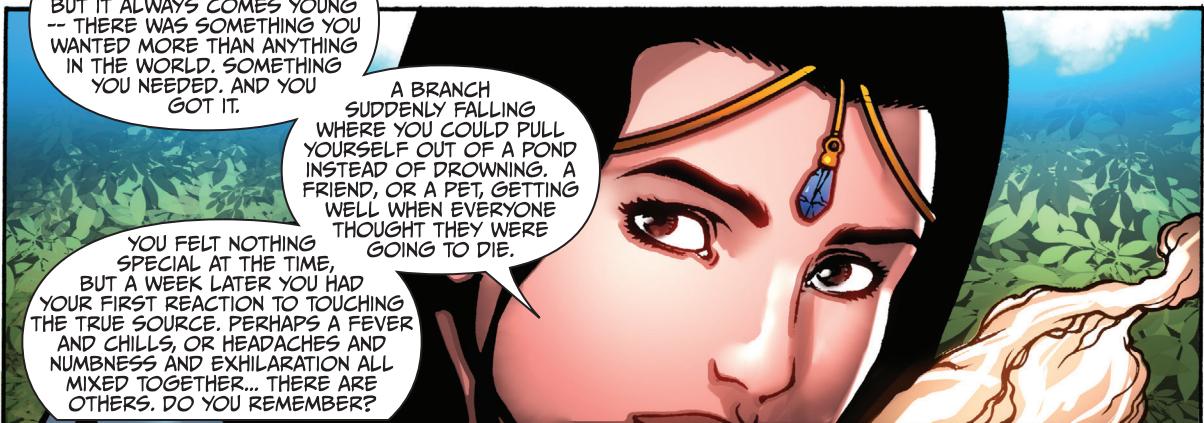
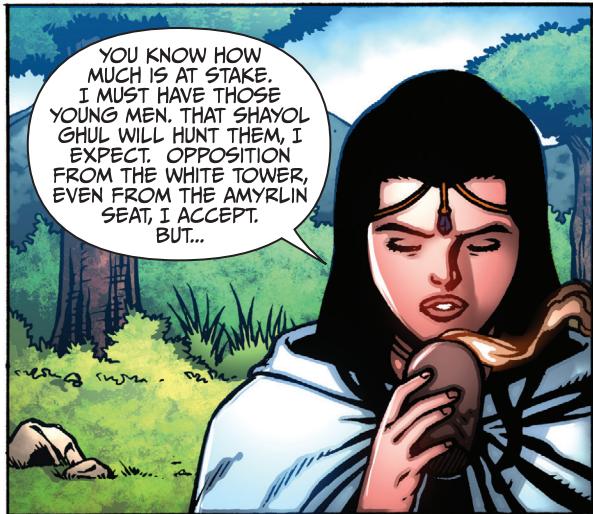
THE QUESTION WORRIES ME ALSO, BUT I HAVE NO ANSWERS. LET US DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT FACE US HERE AND NOW; EVERYTHING ELSE MUST WAIT.

THE BOYS.

I HAVE NOT BEEN IDLE WHILE YOU WERE AWAY. ONE IS ACROSS THE RIVER, ALIVE. AS FOR THE OTHERS, THERE WAS A FAINT TRACE DOWNRIVER, BUT IT FADED AWAY AS I FOUND IT. THE BOND HAD BEEN BROKEN FOR HOURS BEFORE I BEGAN MY SEARCH.

YOU THINK THE HALFMEN HEADING SOUTH HAVE THEM?

PERHAPS. BUT I WILL NOT ADMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF THEM BEING DEAD. I CANNOT. I DARE NOT.



I WILL GO FURTHER. YOU USED THE POWER TO HEAL PERRIN OR EGWENE AT SOME TIME. AN AFFINITY DEVELOPS. YOU CAN SENSE THE PRESENCE OF SOMEONE YOU HAVE HEALED.

IN BAERLON, YOU CAME STRAIGHT TO THE STAG AND LION, THOUGH IT WAS NOT THE NEAREST INN TO ANY GATE YOU COULD HAVE ENTERED... AND ONLY EGWENE AND PERRIN WERE AT THE INN WHEN YOU ARRIVED, SO WAS IT PERRIN, OR EGWENE, OR BOTH?

EGWENE.

SHE HAD BREAKBONE FEVER. I WAS STILL APPRENTICE TO MISTRESS BARRAN, AND SHE SET ME TO WATCH EGWENE.

I WAS YOUNG, AND I DIDN'T KNOW THE WISDOM HAD EVERYTHING WELL IN HAND. I THOUGHT EGWENE WAS DYING. I USED TO LOOK AFTER HER SOMETIMES WHEN SHE WAS A TODDLER -- WHEN HER MOTHER WAS BUSY -- AND I STARTED CRYING BECAUSE I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO WATCH HER DIE.

WHEN MISTRESS BARRAN CAME BACK TO CHECK ON HER AN HOUR LATER, THE FEVER HAD BROKEN. A WEEK LATER I FELL ON THE FLOOR IN THE SITTING ROOM, SHAKING AND BURNING UP BY TURNS... MISTRESS BARRAN BUNDLED ME INTO BED, BUT BY SUPPERTIME IT WAS GONE.

YOU WERE VERY LUCKY. YOU HAVE MANAGED A CRUDE CONTROL OVER THE POWER, EVEN IF TOUCHING THE TRUE SOURCE COMES AT RANDOM. IF YOU HAD NOT, IT WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU, EVENTUALLY.

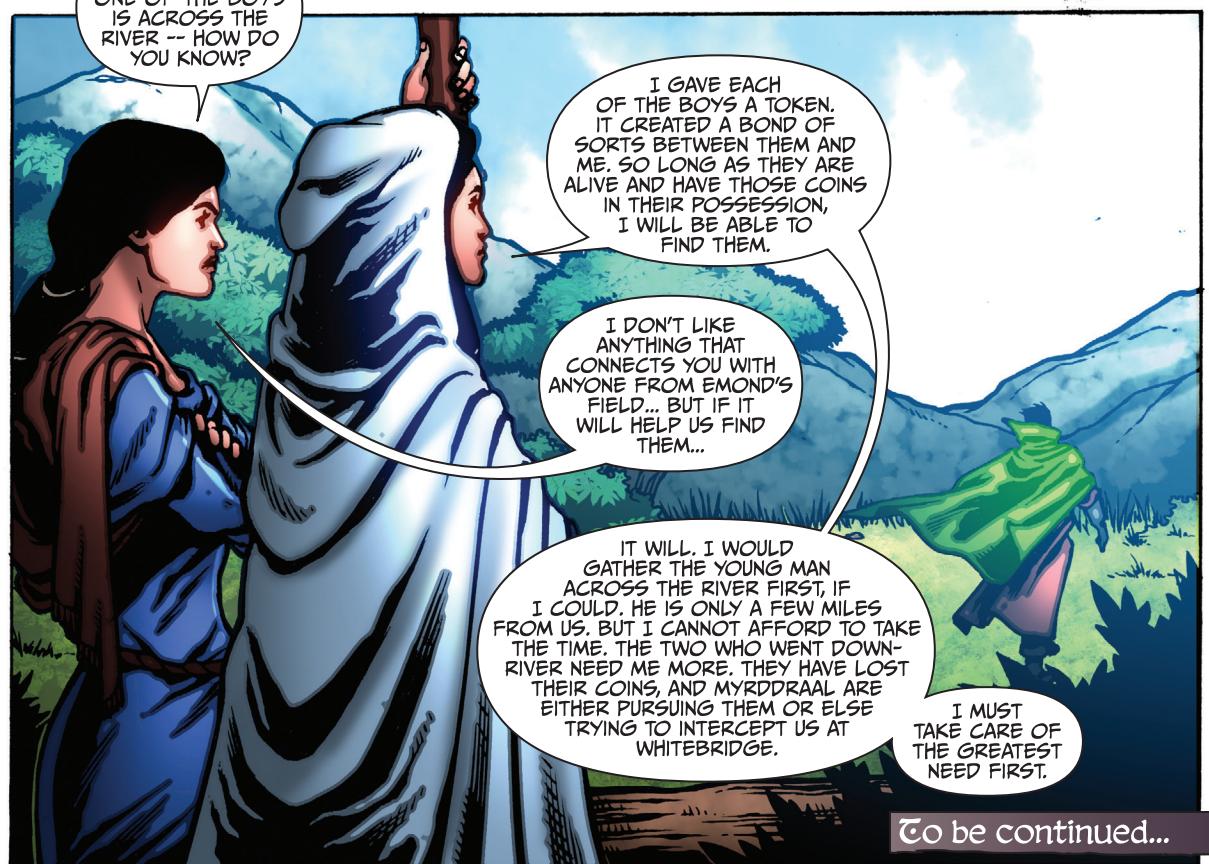
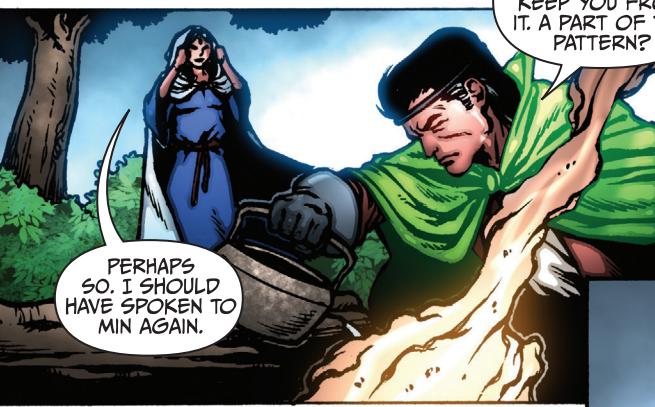
YOU HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL, I THINK WITH TRAINING, YOU MIGHT BECOME EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN EGWENE, AND I BELIEVE SHE CAN BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL AES SEDAI WE HAVE SEEN IN CENTURIES.

NO!  
I'LL HAVE  
NOTHING TO  
DO WITH--

WITH...

...I WOULD  
ASK YOU NOT  
TELL ANYONE  
ABOUT THIS.  
PLEASE?

AND NONE  
OF THIS EXPLAINS  
WHAT YOU WANT  
WITH RAND, MAT,  
AND PERRIN.



To be continued...