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ENTERTAINMENT™

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SWORD
OF
JUSTICE



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JUL 2012

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"FEAR IS THE FUEL
BLOOD IS THE SPARK
KINDLE THE RAGE
AND BRING FORTH THE DARK"

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I'VE NEVER BEEN GOOD AT RESCUES. IT'S WHY I GENERALLY WORK ALONE.

GET READY TO CATCH ME. OR AT LEAST PREPARE FOR ME TO FALL ON YOU.

WAIT, THE SWORD...

NO TIME.



THAT SPELL WAS NEVER... REALLY MEANT... FOR TWO...

I DO WISH... I DIDN'T FIND IT... SO USEFUL...

WHERE ARE WE?



YOU'RE WELCOME, SIR JACOB. SAVING YOU WAS A STROLL IN THE SUNSHINE.

THAT GARGOYLE... WE'RE IN THE GRAY WARDS.

WHEN I WAS A BOY, THE GRAY WARDS WERE A GOOD PLACE TO GET YOUR THROAT SLIT AT NIGHT, OR WORSE.



WERE THERE FERAL DOGS?

AND RATS THE SIZE OF CHILDREN. WHY?

AH, I SEE...



I WAS HOPING THEY WERE DOGS, TOO.

I HATE TO DO THIS...

IF YOU HAVE QUALMS ABOUT KILLING STUPID ANIMALS--





THEY'LL BLAME THIS ON ME, YOU KNOW.

ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT THE FREE SWORD I JUST GOT FOR YOU?

I WON'T IF HE WON'T.

WHY DID YOU BRING US HERE?

IT WAS AS CLOSE AS I COULD GET TO OUR GOAL.



THERE ARE SOME VERY CLEVER WARDS ABOUT THIS PLACE.



THEY'RE COMING TO SEE THE WIZARD.

THANK YOU, QUITE AWARE, SHUT UP...

...AND TWO MOON SIGLS TO REFLECT THE HOUR, AND THAT SHOULD BE IT!



WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH, STAND STILL AND TOUCH NOTHING!



THE MAGE WHO LOCKED THAT DOOR WAS AWFULLY PARANOID. THE COUNTERSPELL FOR THE LOCK CHANGES BY THE HOUR.

FEW HERE LIKED HIM, UNTIL THEY NEEDED HIM.



THAT'S WHY A LOT OF US AREN'T PUTTING UP WITH THAT KIND OF TREATMENT ANYMORE.

WE CAN ONLY STAY FOR A FEW MORE MINUTES. I PACIFIED HIS ANTI-INTRUDER SPELLS, BUT COULDN'T BREAK THEM.



WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE COME HERE, THEN?

JUST THIS.



THIS "BERTRAM THE APOTHECARY" WAS MORE THAN HE APPEARED.

HE WAS A FULLY TRAINED MAGE, JACOB. THIS SHOP WAS JUST A COVER FOR RESEARCH INTO MOUNT ARREAT AND SOME ARTIFACT HE WAS AFTER.

BUT THEN THE MADNESS TOOK HIM. AT LEAST HE TRIED TO FIGURE IT OUT AND DO SOMETHING INSTEAD OF SITTING ON HIS HANDS LIKE THE MAGES WHO TRAINED HIM DO.



DID HE?

NO. READ THIS.



HE CALLS IT A RAGE PLAGUE.

MANY MAGES ARE FRUSTRATED POETS. BE GLAD HE DIDN'T NAME IT AFTER HIMSELF.



HE SAYS IT STARTED AFTER THE BARBARIAN ATTACK, YEARS AGO, WHEN THEY LEFT SOME OF THEIR VICTIMS ALIVE.

"COULD THEY HAVE BROUGHT SOMETHING THROUGH THE GATES? AN INVISIBLE BARBARIAN EVIL?"

"THE CUTTING HELPS IT SPREAD, EVEN STRENGTHENING THE MADNESS IN THOSE ALREADY AFFLICTED."

HAVE A LOOK AT THIS.



RICK-CRASH

I FORGIVE OUR PARANOID MAGE FOR HIS FRONT DOOR NOW.

GOOD. GO ON. I'LL DEAL WITH THE GUARDS.



ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!

IF THEY HAVE ME, THEY WON'T HUNT YOU DOWN.



I AGREED TO COME ON THIS FOOL'S ERRAND TO TURN YOU IN BECAUSE I SUSPECTED SOMETHING EVIL WAS AFOOT! NOW THAT WE KNOW IT IS, YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE YOURSELF TO IT?!

THESE ARE MY PEOPLE. THEY NEED TO HEAR THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM.

EVEN IF THEY WON'T LISTEN.



GOT 'IM NOW!

HE'S ARMED!

WHY P

THACK THOMP

THEN ARREST HIM HARD!

WHAM

WHAT'S THE PENALTY FOR RESISTIN' ARREST BY GETTIN' KNOCKED OUT?

A KICK IN THE RIBS, AT LEAST.

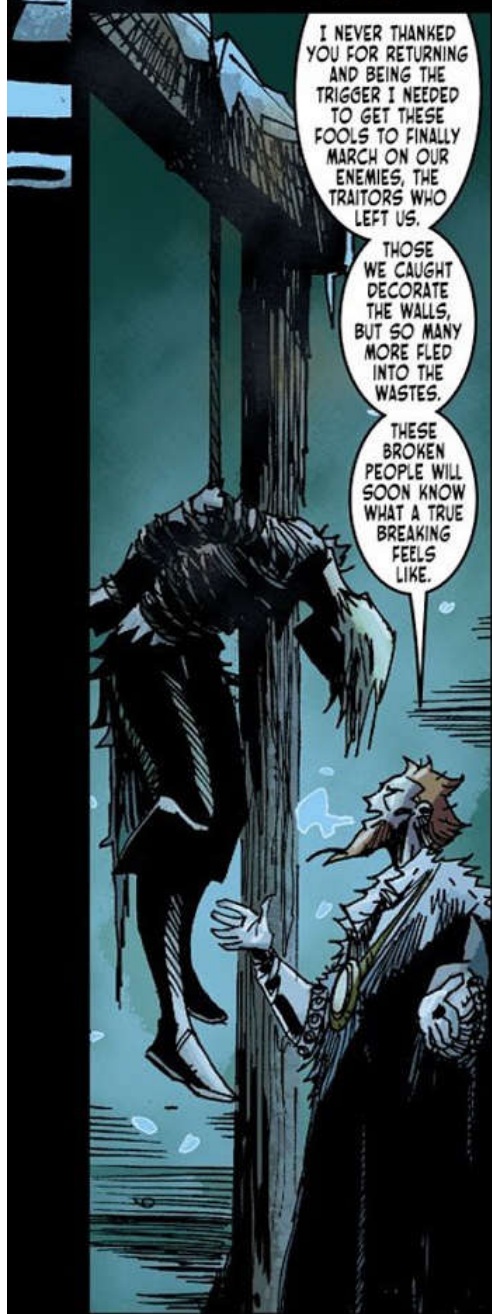
CRASH THACK



THE PRISONER IS SECURED, MY LORD.

AND HE'S STILL ALIVE.

VERY GOOD. RETURN TO YOUR POST.



I NEVER THANKED YOU FOR RETURNING AND BEING THE TRIGGER I NEEDED TO GET THESE FOOLS TO FINALLY MARCH ON OUR ENEMIES, THE TRAITORS WHO LEFT US.

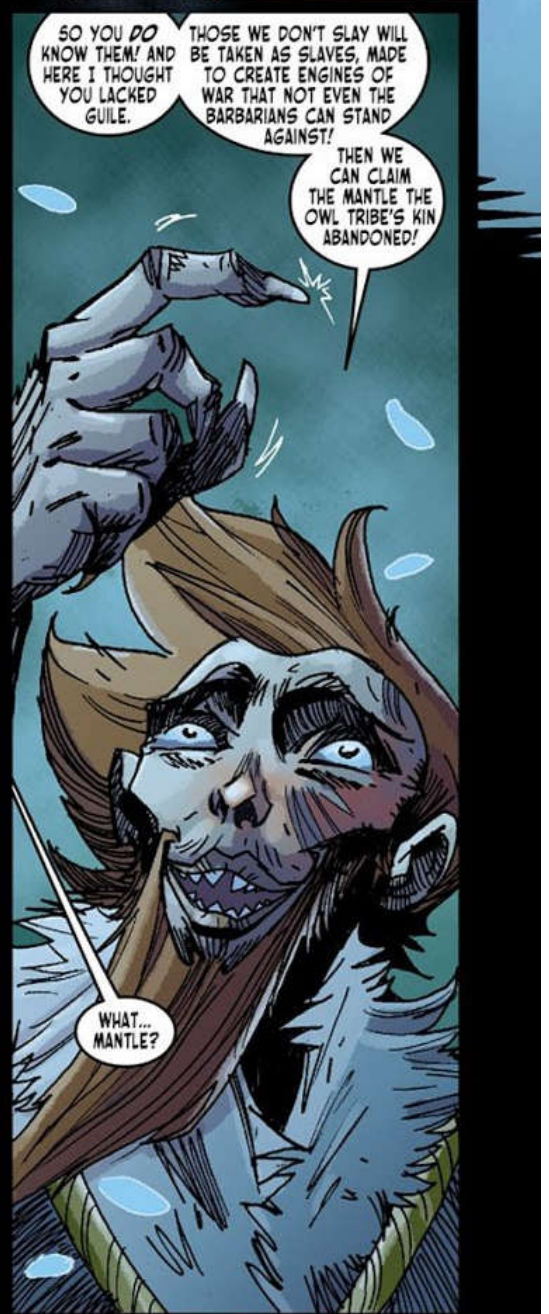
THOSE WE CAUGHT DECORATE THE WALLS, BUT SO MANY MORE FLED INTO THE WASTES.

THESE BROKEN PEOPLE WILL SOON KNOW WHAT A TRUE BREAKING FEELS LIKE.



...WE ARE A BROKEN PEOPLE...

SHE WAS... HELPING THEM ESCAPE...



SO YOU DO KNOW THEM! AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU LACKED GUILF.

THOSE WE DON'T SLAY WILL BE TAKEN AS SLAVES, MADE TO CREATE ENGINES OF WAR THAT NOT EVEN THE BARBARIANS CAN STAND AGAINST!

THEN WE CAN CLAIM THE MANTLE THE OWL TRIBE'S KIN ABANDONED!

WHAT... MANTLE?

THEY HAD A SACRED MISSION, BUT THEY FAILED, AND THEY WERE PUNISHED WITH FIRE! WE SHALL BECOME THE APPOINTED SERVANTS OF THIS RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE! IT STILL LINGERS IN THE DREADLANDS, WAITING TO CLEANSE THE WORLD, AND I SHALL BE ITS HIEROPHANT WITH MY CHURCH OF RETRIBUTION MAKING THESE WASTES HOLY!

I SHALL MAKE THE PEOPLE FEAR, FOR FEAR IS THE FUEL, THEN COMES THE BLOOD, THE SPARK, TO KINDLE THEIR RAGE...



...AND BRING FORTH THE DARK?

YOU UNDERSTAND.

HOW SAD FOR YOU IT COMES TOO LATE. YOU COULD HAVE SERVED US IN BATTLE INSTEAD OF AS AN EXECUTED CRIMINAL.



YOU'RE WORSHIPPING A PLAGUE! IT CAME FROM KHELRIC! MY FATHER'S DYING WORDS WERE A WARNING!

STAALBREAK IS THE LAST HOPE TO STOP THIS BEFORE IT SPREADS! FIGHT IT!

THE RAMBLINGS OF A GUILTY FOOL.

EVEN IN THE CHILL AIR, I'M SLICK WITH SWEAT. I MUST HAVE A SLIGHT FEVER...

DAWN,
THE NEXT
DAY...

JUSTICE COMES
TO STAALBREAK AT LAST!
THE MURDERER WHO THRUST
THE OFFICE OF CONSTABLE UPON
ME FACES THE CONSEQUENCES
OF HIS VILE ACTS. THOUGH
MURDER IS BUT THE LEAST
OF HIS CRIMES!

AS AN AGENT OF
THE BROKEN PEOPLE, HE
HAS UNDERMINED OUR WAY
OF LIFE, HELPING TO WEAKEN
US BY TRICKERY OR FORCE,
LURING OUR OWN COUNTRYMEN
INTO THE WASTES, LEAVING A
DIMINISHED REMNANT AGAINST
THE BARBARIAN
MENACE!

TODAY, WE
MARCH ON THE
BROKEN PEOPLE, TO
RECLAIM THEM AS
SERVANTS TO OUR
CAUSE, OR TO
EXECUTE THEM AS
TRAITORS.

AND OUR CAMPAIGN OF
RETRIBUTION BEGINS
WITH SENDING JACOB
THE KINSLAYER
TO THE FATE HE
DESERVES!

LOOK
UPON THOSE
YOU BETRAYED,
BOY!



I WILL HAVE MY FINAL WORDS. IT'S MY RIGHT.

DIG THE HOLE A LITTLE DEEPER BEFORE YOU GO, EH?

I DID PROMISE HIM, AND WE'RE A PEOPLE OF LAWS, IF YOU'LL REMEMBER.

YOU ALL MUST SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING TO STAALBREAK! WE'RE IN A PLAGUE OF MADNESS, A PLAGUE THAT YOUR COUNTRYMEN SAW AND SOUGHT REFUGE FROM!



MY FATHER CARRIED IT TO US FROM THE BARBARIANS, AND IF YOU WOULD NOT BE ITS MINDLESS SERVANTS AS WELL--

ENOUGH LIES.



THE APOTHECARY... HIS CELLAR-- THERE IS EVIDENCE...



IT CAUGHT FIRE LAST NIGHT. LIGHTNING, THEY SAY, FUNNY, EH?



IF MY AXE WERE TO MISS, AND YOU SOMEHOW GOT LOOSE, I COULD SEE YOU MADE IT OUT OF THE CITY, FREE AND CLEAR.

NO RUNNING. IF YOU WON'T LET ME STOP VARIK AND THIS PLAGUE, KILL ME NOW.

THAT'S ABOUT WHAT THE WITCH THOUGHT YOU'D SAY.

JUSTICE SWIFT AND TRUE! HEADSMAN?

AS YOU WISH...



FOR STAALBREAK!



LET'S SEE HOW GOOD SHE WAS.

YOUR WITCH ADDED TO YOUR HANDIWORK, JACOB.



LIKE DOGS BEFORE THE MASTER'S BOOT!

TRY KEEPING YOUR BLADES STEADY, AT LEAST.



PROMISE ME YOU WON'T LET THEM RECAPTURE YOU ON PURPOSE AGAIN.

IF IT'S JUST US THREE AGAINST EVERYONE, THEY'LL KILL US.



IVAN HELD HIS FRIENDS DOWN FOR ME WHILE I COPIED THE RUNE-CUTS YOU MADE ON HIM ONTO THEM.

ONCE THEY WENT FROM CURSING MY SOUL TO STARING AT MY CHEST, I KNEW IT HAD WORKED.



THIS IS WHEN YOU GET THE SWORD AND HELP US NOT GET KILLED!

I'M... WORKING ON IT...



I HAVE A DESTINY, YOU FOOL! YOU COULD HAVE BEEN THE START OF A GREAT CLEANSING, A SYMBOL OF THE MIGHTY EMPIRE I WAS TO LEAD TO GLORY!

NOW YOU'LL BE A NAMELESS CRIMINAL, GROUND BENEATH MY HEEL!



THIS CALLING ISN'T ABOUT ENDING LIVES, SON, THOUGH IT SOMETIMES COMES TO THAT.



AND WHO WINS ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT WHO'S HOLDING THE BLADE.



A MAN WITH A LOT OF EMOTIONS RUNNING THROUGH HIM ISN'T THINKING, AND HE FORGETS THAT NOT ALL WEAPONS ARE STEEL.



BRINGING JUSTICE TO THE PEOPLE IS MORE THAN PUNISHING THE GUILTY AND PROTECTING THE INNOCENT...

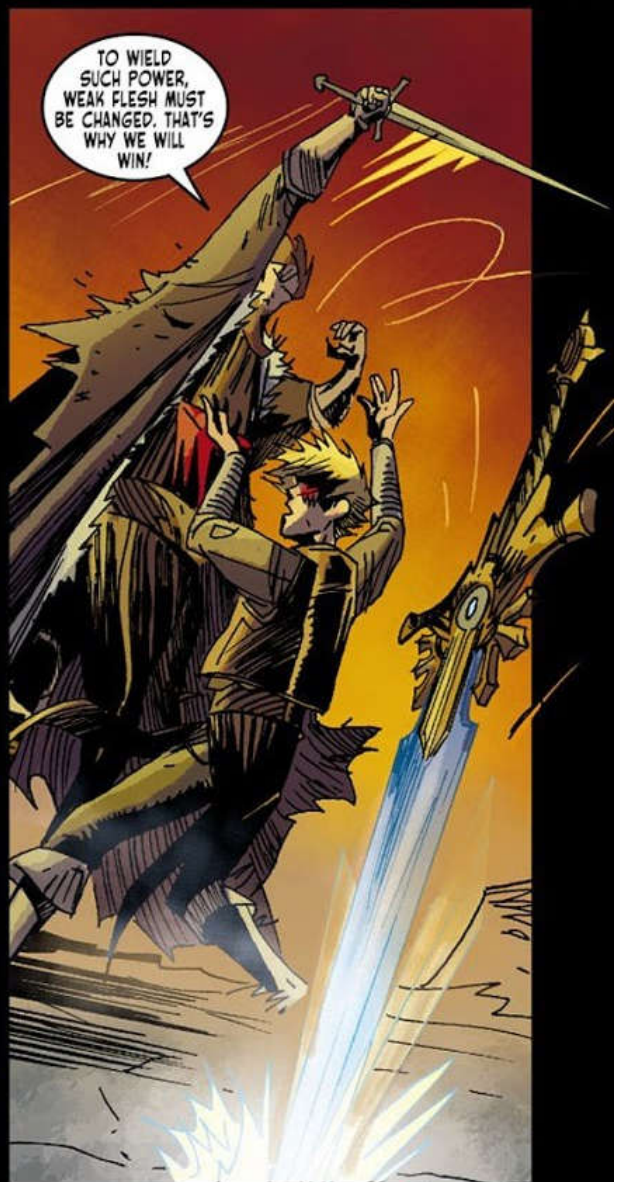
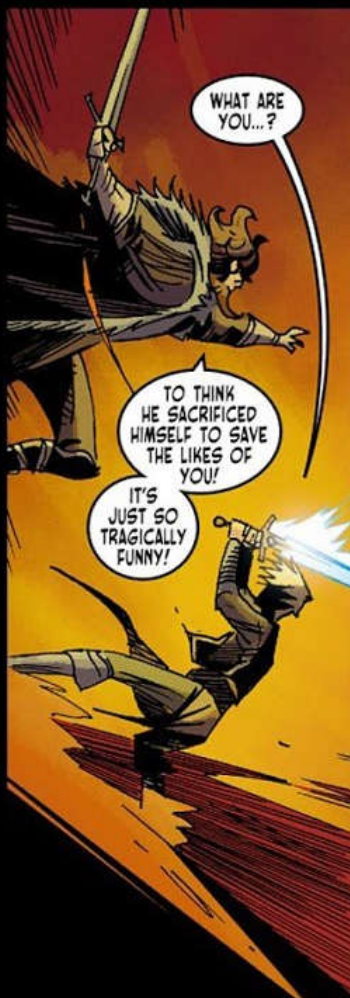


...IT'S GIVING PEOPLE HOPE THAT THE FUTURE CAN BE BETTER THAN TODAY.



YOUR WAR IS OVER, VARIK!

JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE... THAT TOY IN YOUR HANDS...?







DRINK THAT. I WANTED YOU TO HAVE IT BEFORE YOU TOOK ON VARIK, BUT THERE WASN'T TIME.

WHAT IS IT?

SOMETHING I RESCUED FROM THE SECRET PASSAGE BEFORE THEY TORCHED THE APOTHECARY'S SHOP. MY FATHER ALWAYS KEPT ONE HANDY FOR EMERGENCIES, TOO.



TASTES LIKE THE INSIDE OF A CORPSE'S BOOT!

JUST LIKE MY TELEPORT SPELL, HEALING POTIONS ARE EFFECTIVE BUT CAN HAVE DRAWBACKS.



...ABOUT VARIK WILL BE EXPLAINED AFTER! ANYONE WHO DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION NOW GETS TO SEEK IT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL, NAKED!

IVAN'S A GREAT MOTIVATOR.

SO IS A RAIN OF DEATH. ALSO...

...HE WANTS YOU TO LEAD THE DEFENSIVE STRIKE.

YOU KNOW MY PAST, SHANAR...

...IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME IVAN'S DRAGGED ME OUTSIDE THE WALLS FOR SOME 'FUN.'



HRMM. THAT'S ENOUGH OF THEM TO FLATTEN THE WALLS AND REBUILD IT AS THEY PASS. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THEY WANT, IS IT?

THEY WANT TO CREATE INFECTED REFUGEES WHO WOULD SPREAD THIS RAGE PLAGUE INTO LANDS SOUTH.

WE SHOULD STRIKE BACK NOW, OR THEY'LL THINK THEY CAME ALL THIS WAY FOR NOTHING.





I HOPE YOU CAN MAKE THAT SWORD OF YOURS SING A BETTER TUNE TODAY THAN IT DID FOR ME AND MY MEN.

I WAS TRYING TO *NOT* KILL YOU.

REALLY? I THOUGHT YOU MERELY LACKED THE WILL AND TECHNIQUE.

I DIDN'T WANT TO FACE CHARGES FOR LITTERING.

EXCUSE ME, BOYS? WOULD YOU MIND STANDING JUST A FEW MORE INCHES APART? THANKS.

MY LADY? I DON'T...



FOR STAALBREAK!

THANKS, I THINK I SET A NEW RECORD FOR DISTANCE.

FOR STAALBREAK!

ANYTIME, MY LADY. TRULY!

FOR STAALBREAK!