

DYNAMITE

#1

the Blood Queen



APARICETO
MAY/VERNES

the Blood Queen™

DYNAMITE

#1



the Blood Queen

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Once Upon
A Time



PLEASE
GOD MAKE
IT STOP!




ARE
YOU CERTAIN
THAT NO ONE
SAW YOU
ANSWER MY
SUMMONS?

I SWEAR
TO YOU...NO
ONE SAW.



ARRGG!!

I BELIEVE
YOU.



PLEASE
TAKE COMFORT
IN THE FACT THAT
YOU'RE CONTRIBUTING
TO A LARGER
PURPOSE.

YOU
SHALL MAKE
A DIFFERENCE
IN THE LIVES OF
KNIGHTS AND
KINGS. YOU ARE
BLESSED.



TRULY
BLESSED.



WHAT WE DO TODAY HAS NOT BEEN DONE IN MANY A YEAR. THIS CHANGES THINGS.

YOU ARE CHANGING THINGS.

TRULY, I OWE YOU MY THANKS. DO YOU FEEL MY GRATITUDE?

I... I DO.

THEN I AM PLEASED.

GUR--
GLUK!

SLICE

EVER AS IT WAS. IT IS DONE. IT IS BEGUN. ALL THINGS MOVING IN THEIR TIME. A REIGN IN BLOOD MAY BEGIN AGAIN.

Reign in Blood Part 1

On order of King Trevian ... Sir Ferenc, I dispatch you at once to the Far Forest. Fetch forth Elder Winnifred from her training of the Daughters of the Line.

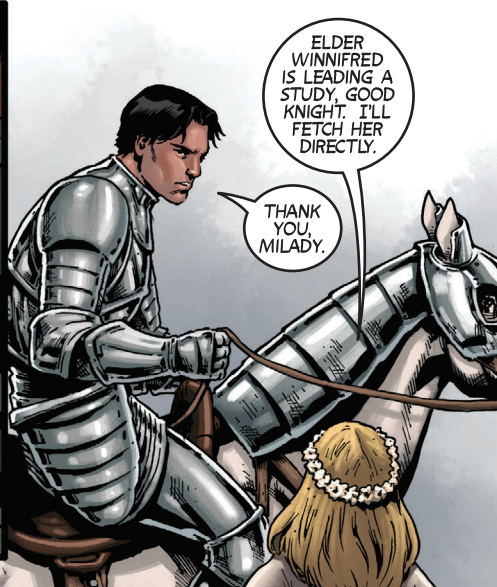
You know the nature of this urgency, Ferenc.



Make haste.
Your King.



LADIES!
I RIDE ON
URGENT BUSINESS
OF THE CROWN!
WHERE IS THE
ELDER?



ELDER
WINNIFRED
IS LEADING A
STUDY, GOOD
KNIGHT. I'LL
FETCH HER
DIRECTLY.

THANK
YOU,
MILADY.



SIR KNIGHT!

WHAT NEWS?



SIR FERENC, MILADY. KING TREVIAN HAS NEED OF YOU.

I AM SERVING THE KING RIGHT NOW. KNOW YOU THAT THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LINE ARE HERE FOR THEIR TRAINING.



OF COURSE, BUT...

THE RULES DICTATE THAT THE ROYAL LADIES COME TO ME IN THE SEASON TO LEARN THE HERBAL AND NATURE SPELLCRAFT.

THIS IS A DELICATE TIME, MANDATED AFTER THE KING'S COUNCIL AND THE BAN OF BLOOD MAGIC! KNOW YOU THIS?

YES, BUT--

THEN WHAT COULD BE SO BLASTED IMPORTANT--



LAURA! LAURA, GOOD ELDER.

LAURA? THE BABY?

THE SAME.

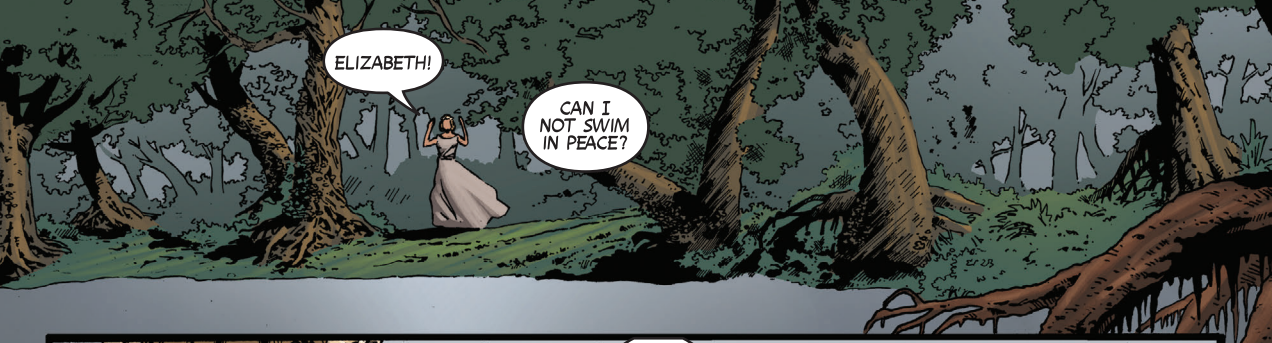
SHE IS ILL, ELDER. ILL UNTO DEATH.



GET ME ELIZABETH.

SHE'S IN THE FOREST--

THEN GO THERE AND RETURN HERE. GO!



ELIZABETH!

CAN I NOT SWIM IN PEACE?



WHAT DOES SHE WANT NOW?

THERE'S A KNIGHT FROM THE KING. IT'S A MATTER OF SOME URGENCY.

THIS HAD BETTER NOT BE ONE OF YOUR ROYAL JESTS...

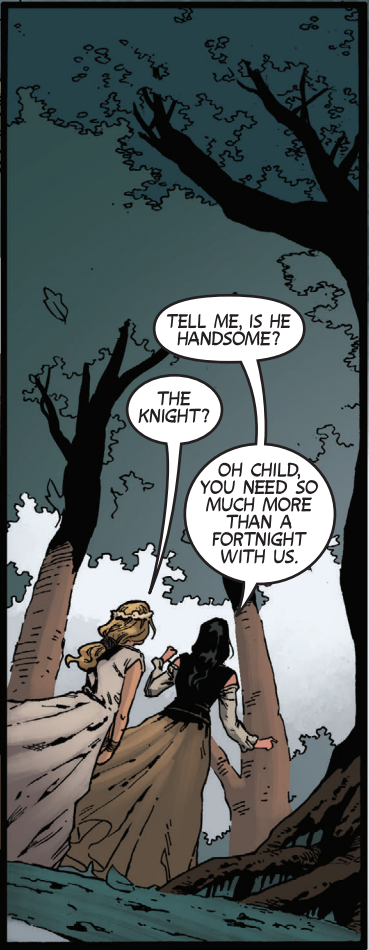


PLEASE HURRY, ELIZABETH!

WOULD YOU RATHER I WENT IN MY BATHING CLOTHES?

YOU HAD NO... OH.

QUITE. NOW LET'S GO.



TELL ME, IS HE HANDSOME?

THE KNIGHT?

OH CHILD, YOU NEED SO MUCH MORE THAN A FORTNIGHT WITH US.



MILADY, MY ORDERS WERE EXPLICIT!

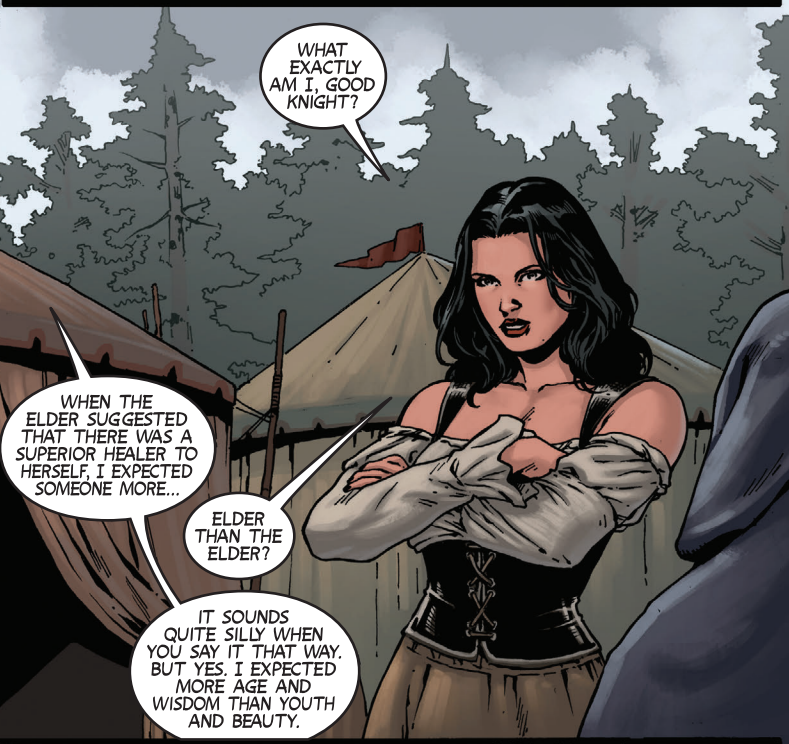
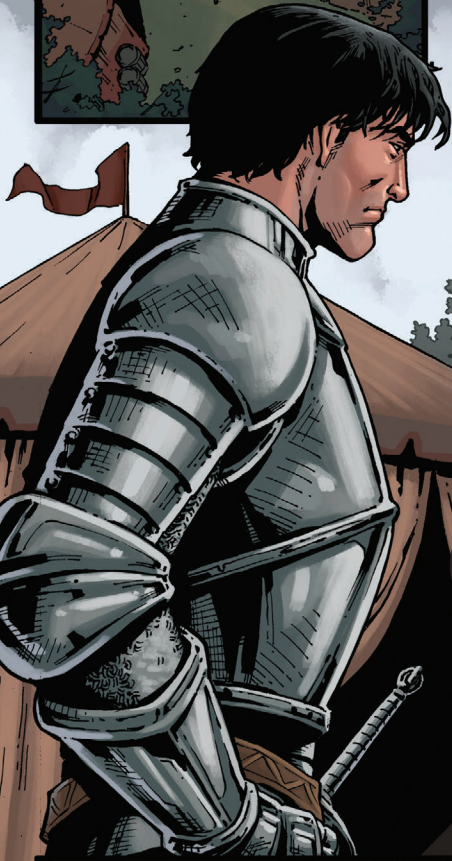
AND I'M TRYING TO AID THE KING IN THE BEST WAY!



WAIT, THIS IS THE ONE?!

THANK THE GODS YOU'RE HERE.

SHE'S SO...



WHAT EXACTLY AM I, GOOD KNIGHT?

WHEN THE ELDER SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS A SUPERIOR HEALER TO HERSELF, I EXPECTED SOMEONE MORE...

ELDER THAN THE ELDER?

IT SOUNDS QUITE SILLY WHEN YOU SAY IT THAT WAY. BUT YES, I EXPECTED MORE AGE AND WISDOM THAN YOUTH AND BEAUTY.



BAH!

THIS IS WHY MEN MAKE A MESS OF THINGS. IT MATTERS NOT THE AGE OR APPEARANCE.

IT'S SKILL THE KING NEEDS IF YOU'RE TO SAVE THE BABY.

WHAT?!

THE KING'S CHILD IS GRAVELY ILL. HE SENT FOR ME. I SEND HIM YOU.



BUT THE KING SENT FOR YOU, ELDER.

HA! FINALLY! REASON.

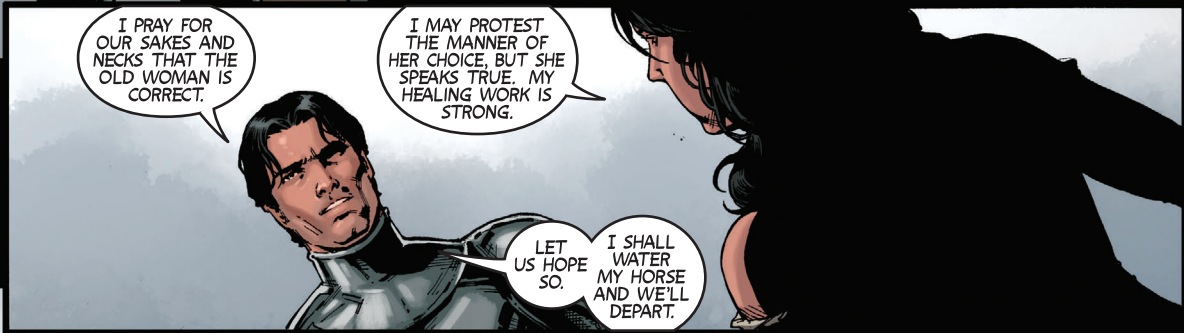
THE KING LACKS INFORMATION. I AM OLD AND MY SKILLS WANE. YOU'RE BETTER THAN I EVER WAS.



TO SERVE THE KING, I SEND THE GIRL.
REPEAT IT!

TO SERVE THE KING, YOU SEND THE GIRL.

EXCELLENT. I SHALL HAVE THE YOUNG ONES GATHER HER THINGS.



I PRAY FOR OUR SAKES AND NECKS THAT THE OLD WOMAN IS CORRECT.

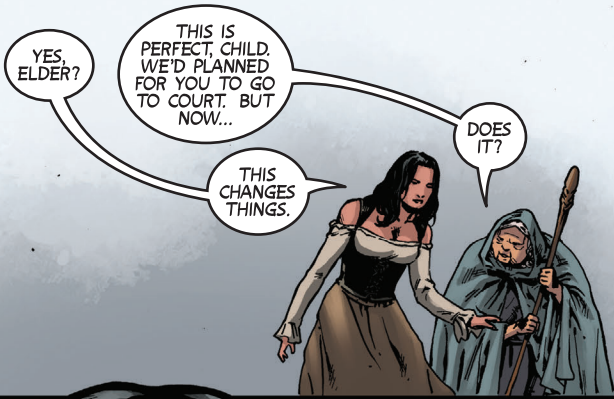
I MAY PROTEST THE MANNER OF HER CHOICE, BUT SHE SPEAKS TRUE. MY HEALING WORK IS STRONG.

LET US HOPE SO.
I SHALL WATER MY HORSE AND WE'LL DEPART.



HANDSOME INDEED.

YES, YES.
NOW LISTEN.



YES, ELDER?

THIS IS PERFECT, CHILD. WE'D PLANNED FOR YOU TO GO TO COURT. BUT NOW...

THIS CHANGES THINGS.

DOES IT?



GOING TO COURT AND FOLLOWING THE PLAN IS ONE THING. I HAVE TO BE CERTAIN WITH THIS CHILD. IT'S THE KING'S DAUGHTER, WINNIFRED!



I KNOW. JUST AS I KNOW THAT YOU WILL DO YOUR BEST. YOU HAVE A RARE AND WILD TALENT, ELIZABETH.

MAKE AN IMPRESSION UPON THE COURT. SAVE THE CHILD. OUR PLAN BEGINS NOW. FOLLOW IT.

YOU KNOW THAT I WILL.



EXCELLENT. THEN GATHER YOUR THINGS. YOU HAVE A JOURNEY TO ATTEND TO.



I DARESAY THAT ELDER WINNIFRED COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED THE RIDE.

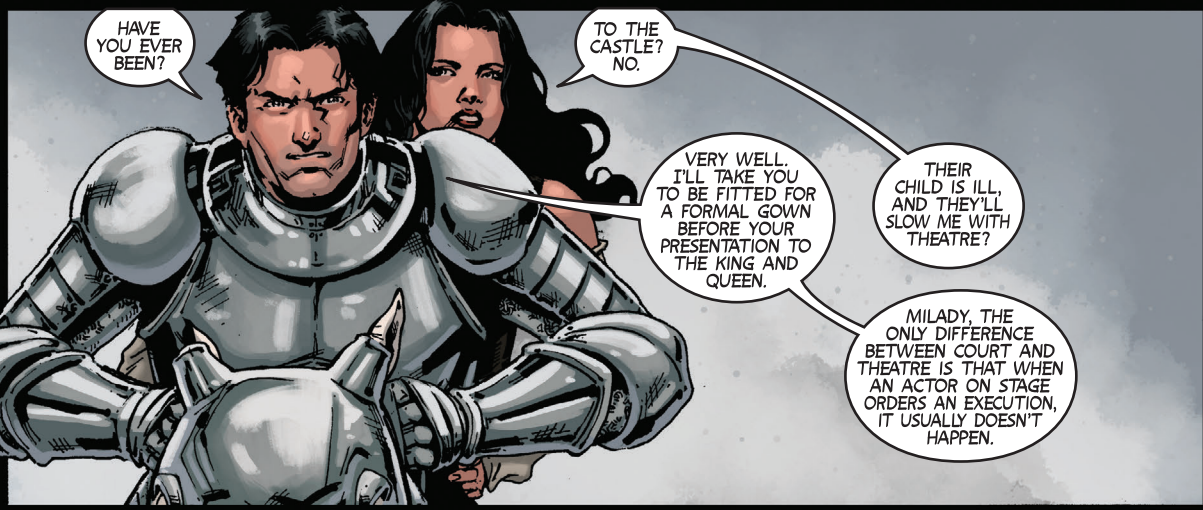
ARE YOU A STRANGER TO HORSES, MILADY?

I'M NOT A STRANGER TO MANY THINGS.



I APPRECIATE YOUR WIT AND WILDNESS, BUT YOU MAY WISH TO QUELL IT AT COURT.

AND I APPRECIATE YOUR COUNSEL, SIR FERENC.



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?

TO THE CASTLE? NO.

VERY WELL. I'LL TAKE YOU TO BE FITTED FOR A FORMAL GOWN BEFORE YOUR PRESENTATION TO THE KING AND QUEEN.

THEIR CHILD IS ILL, AND THEY'LL SLOW ME WITH THEATRE?

MILADY, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COURT AND THEATRE IS THAT WHEN AN ACTOR ON STAGE ORDERS AN EXECUTION, IT USUALLY DOESN'T HAPPEN.



USUALLY?

THE KING IS NOT FOND OF CRITICS.

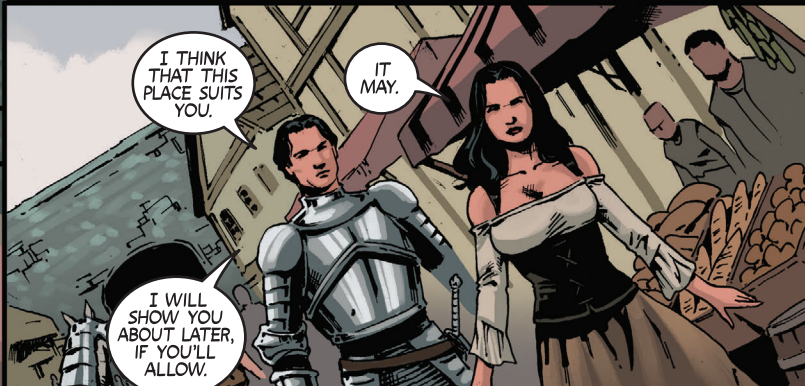


WELCOME TO CASTLE VARANNO, MILADY.

PAGE! MY HORSE!



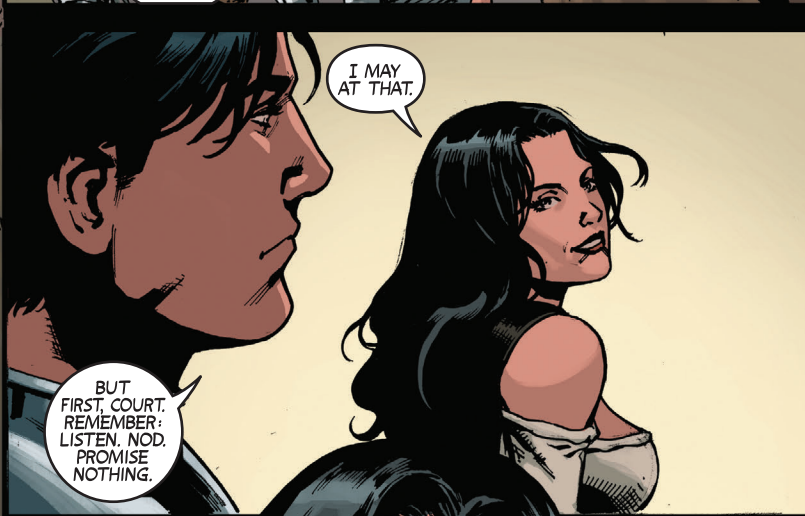
I KNEW IT WOULD BE BUSY BUT IT'S SO... ALIVE.



I THINK THAT THIS PLACE SUITS YOU.

IT MAY.

I WILL SHOW YOU ABOUT LATER, IF YOU'LL ALLOW.



I MAY AT THAT.

BUT FIRST, COURT. REMEMBER: LISTEN. NOD. PROMISE NOTHING.



WHAT WOULD I PROMISE?

NOTHING. KEEP IT THAT WAY.

Later...



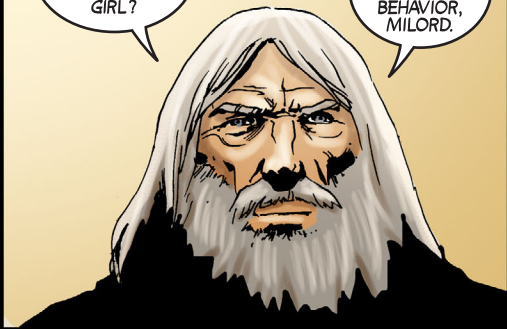
The Court of King Trevian

KING TREVIAN AND QUEEN ELANOR, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT ELIZABETH, HEART-DAUGHTER OF ELDER WINNIFRED. THE ELDER RECKONS THERE IS NO FINER HEALER FOR THE PRINCESS LAURA.



THE ELDER PLAYS US FOR FOOLS. SHE SENDS US THIS GIRL?

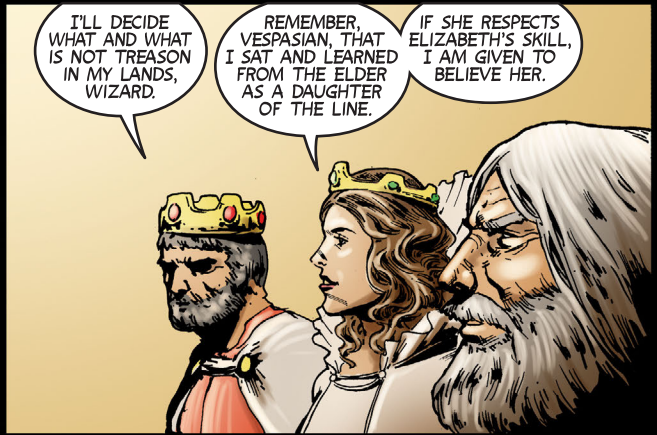
THAT'S BORDERLINE TREASONOUS BEHAVIOR, MILORD.



I'LL DECIDE WHAT AND WHAT IS NOT TREASON IN MY LANDS, WIZARD.

REMEMBER, VESPASIAN, THAT I SAT AND LEARNED FROM THE ELDER AS A DAUGHTER OF THE LINE.

IF SHE RESPECTS ELIZABETH'S SKILL, I AM GIVEN TO BELIEVE HER.



MY QUEEN, YOU KNOW THAT ANNAUD IS A FINE APPRENTICE, AND HE CANNOT DISCERN THE CAUSE OF THE ILLNESS.

I CANNOT DISCERN IT.



MASTER VESPASIAN, I BELIEVE THAT IS PRECISELY WHY THE ELDER WAS SUMMONED AND WHY I AM HERE.



YOU SPEAK OUT OF TURN, GIRL.





AGAIN, WIZARD, I RATHER THINK THAT I MAKE THE RULES. SHE IS WELCOME TO SPEAK.

MY HUSBAND IS CORRECT. WE ONLY CARE ABOUT OUR DAUGHTER.
IF THERE IS A CHANCE, IT MUST BE TAKEN.



IF I MAY, YOUR HIGHNESSES...

YOU'RE MY ADVISOR, JON HUNTER. ADVISE.

THEN I ADVISE THAT THE ELDER KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

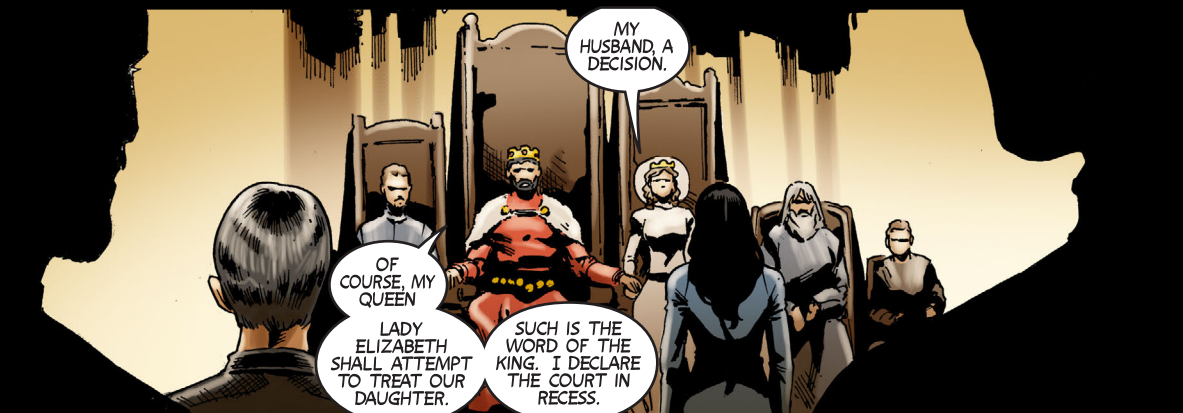
SHE'S BEEN A LOYAL SERVANT AND MAKES NO MOVES CONTRARY TO OUR INTEREST. WHY SEND THE LADY ELIZABETH UNLESS SHE'S THE BEST SOLUTION?



FORGIVE YOUR ADVISOR, MY KING. HE SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME WITH HIS BURNING STONES.



YOU KNOW THAT I RESPECT AND PRACTICE THE MAGICS. BUT YOU FAIL TO RECOGNIZE ALCHEMY AND THE SCIENCES. WHO IS THE GREATER FOOL?



MY HUSBAND, A DECISION.

OF COURSE, MY QUEEN

LADY ELIZABETH SHALL ATTEMPT TO TREAT OUR DAUGHTER.

SUCH IS THE WORD OF THE KING. I DECLARE THE COURT IN RECESS.



SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, LITTLE ONE? LISTLESS... WON'T EAT PROPERLY...



A BIT OF RASH...



DAMNATION.



YOU'VE BEEN BEWITCHED, POOR LITTLE THING. LET'S KEEP THAT OUR LITTLE SECRET FOR NOW.



I HAVE SOME THOUGHTS. I MUST GATHER COMPONENTS IN THE WOODS.

CAN YOU HELP HER?

I PROMISE.



BALSAM? YOU MAKE THE BALM OF GILEAD?

PERHAPS.



WHAT DID YOU SEE, MILADY? YOU NOTICED SOMETHING THAT THE REST OF US DID NOT, AND IT ONLY TOOK YOU MOMENTS.

PERHAPS.



I RESPECT THE DESIRE OF ONE TO HAVE SECRETS. MY CURIOSITY IS NOT ABOUT YOU, BUT ABOUT THE CAUSE. I DID NOT FIND IT, AND I WANT TO KNOW.

YOU AREN'T CURIOUS ABOUT ME?




I'M GENERALLY CURIOUS ABOUT MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

I SUPPOSE IT'S A QUIRK OF MY CHARACTER.



FINE THEN. YOU TELL ME ONE THING ABOUT JON HUNTER, AND I'LL REVEAL SOMETHING MEMORABLE ABOUT MYSELF.



I AM NOT JUST A SERVANT OF THE KING. I AM HIS FRIEND. AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF LAURA IS AFFLICTED WITH SIMPLE ILLNESS OR SOMETHING ELSE.

WHAT IF IT ISN'T A SIMPLE ILLNESS?

THEN THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY WILL ANSWER MOST SEVERELY.



YOUR TURN TO REVEAL SOMETHING... MEMORABLE, MILADY.

I SUPPOSE IT IS.



THE MEMORABLE THING ABOUT ME, JON HUNTER...



...IS THAT I'M RATHER SHY.



I SHALL SEE YOU AT THE CASTLE, GOOD SIR.

Later...

JUST A FEW MORE MOMENTS, YOUNG ONE.



I'M GOING TO END YOUR SUFFERING.



DRINK DEEP LITTLE PRINCESS.



AND NOW WE SHALL SEE.





LADY ELIZABETH!
THE PRINCESS'S FEVER BROKE BEFORE DAWN!



WHY SO VEXED?
THIS IS JOYOUS NEWS.

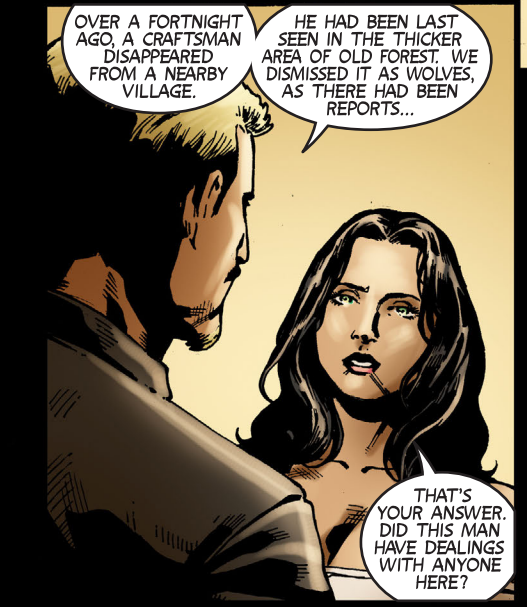
I'M DELIGHTED THAT THE CHILD IS WELL. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT FACT LEADS TO ONLY ONE CONCLUSION.
THAT BABY HAD BEEN BEWITCHED BY BLOOD MAGIC.



RIDICULOUS. IT WAS BANNED...

I KNOW WELL THE HISTORY, AND I ANTICIPATED THE REACTION TO SUCH SUSPICION, SO I DID NOT VOICE IT BUT MY TREATMENT HAS BORNE OUT. SOMEONE DID THIS.

YOU MUST SEARCH THE CASTLE. THIS REQUIRED MURDER. AND THERE WOULD BE EVIDENCE OF SUCH, I'M SURE OF IT. HAVE THERE BEEN RUMORS OF ANYONE VANISHING?



OVER A FORTNIGHT AGO, A CRAFTSMAN DISAPPEARED FROM A NEARBY VILLAGE.

HE HAD BEEN LAST SEEN IN THE THICKER AREA OF OLD FOREST. WE DISMISSED IT AS WOLVES, AS THERE HAD BEEN REPORTS...

THAT'S YOUR ANSWER. DID THIS MAN HAVE DEALINGS WITH ANYONE HERE?



CERTAINLY. HE WAS A BIT OF A JACK-OF-TRADES. HE REPAIRED ROOFS. HE FITTED WAGONS FOR WHEELS. HE EVEN MADE SOME WROUGHT-IRON STANDS AND MANY OTHER DEVICES FOR--



FOR WHOM, JON?

FOR ANNAUD. THE WIZARD'S APPRENTICE.



THE APPRENTICE MUST HAVE DONE THIS.

COULD IT NOT BE VESPASIAN?

A FAIR QUESTION, BUT THAT MAN'S HATRED FOR THE BLOOD MAGIC IS WELL KNOWN. IT COULD HAVE BEEN A RUSE...



LET US SEE.

BALSAM... CONNECTION TO THE EARTH...

AND THE ROOM IS STONE.



THERE.

THE CROWN WILL BE SATISFIED WITH THIS.

I'LL MUSTER THE GUARD.

BEST BE QUICK BEFORE HE DISCOVERS--



I SEE.



MIR BAY



VILLAIN!
YOU
ENSORCELLED
AN INFANT!

NO.
I SERVED
MY PURPOSE.
AS SHOULD
ALL.

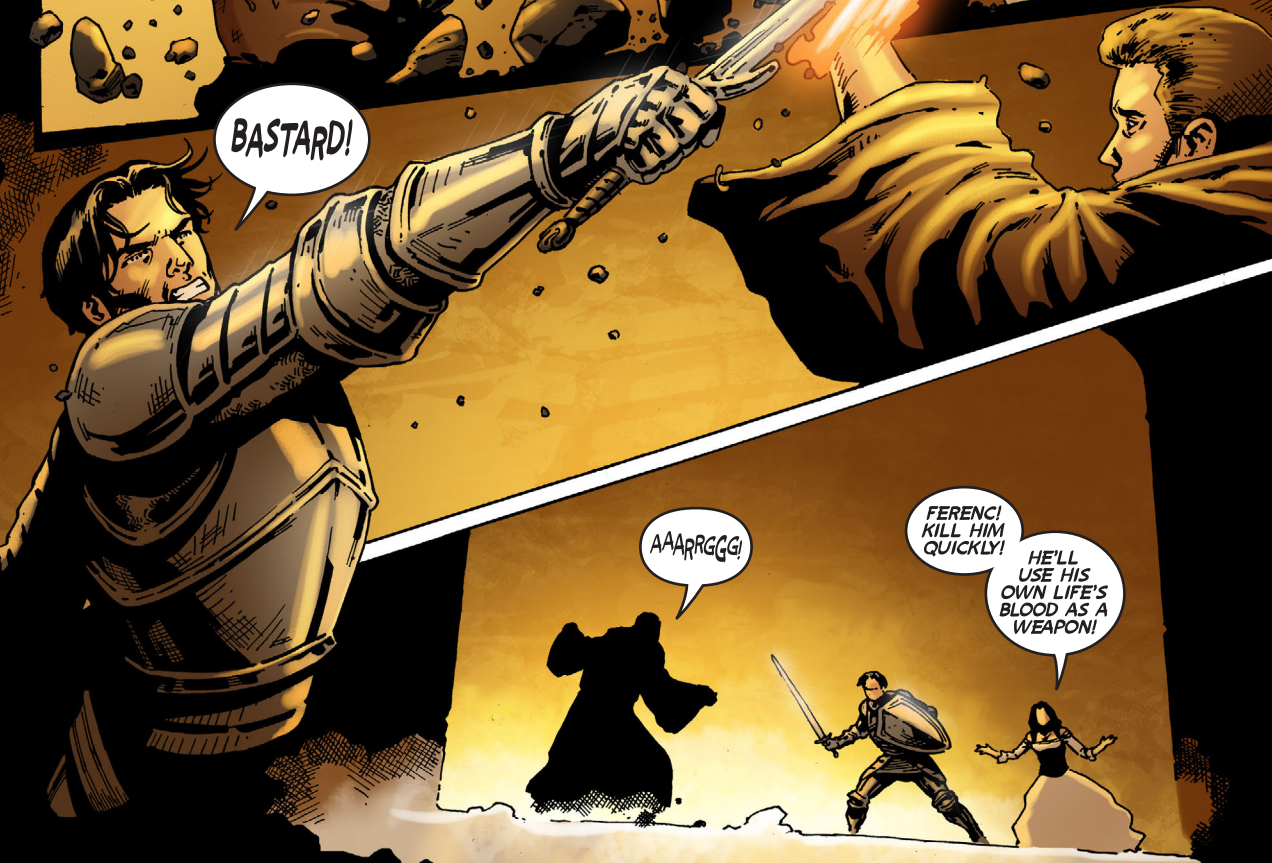


THANK
YOU FOR YOUR
KINDNESS, JON
HUNTER. I'LL
REPAY IT
READILY.



WITCH!!

BASTARD!



AAARRGGG!

FERENCI
KILL HIM
QUICKLY!

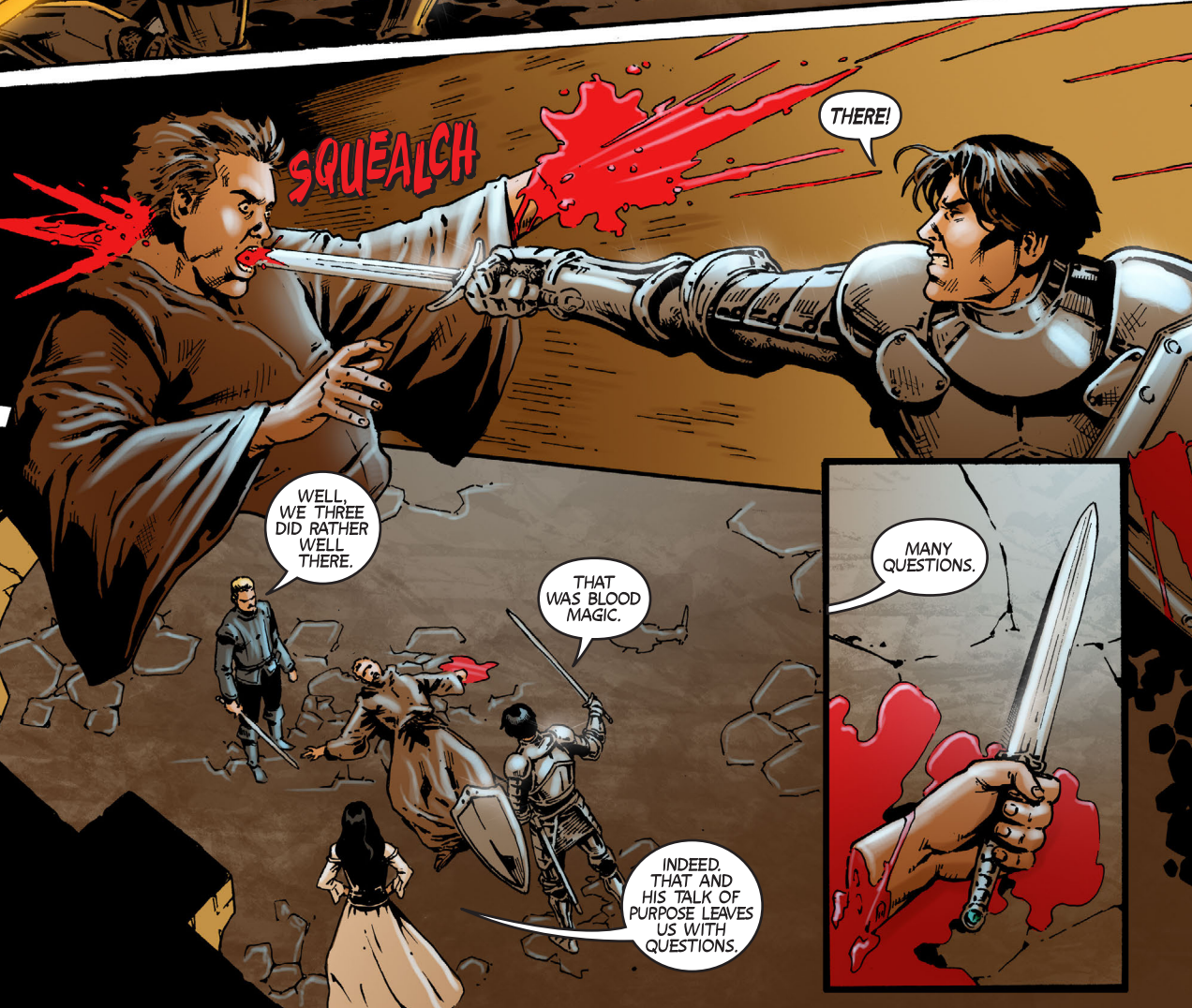
HE'LL
USE HIS
OWN LIFE'S
BLOOD AS A
WEAPON!



MIRIAM



FERENCI NOW!



SQUEALCH

THERE!

WELL, WE THREE DID RATHER WELL THERE.

THAT WAS BLOOD MAGIC.

INDEED THAT AND HIS TALK OF PURPOSE LEAVES US WITH QUESTIONS.



MANY QUESTIONS.

Later, as a jubilant kingdom celebrates the recovery of the princess...

I AM MOST PLEASSED THAT YOU'LL STAY AT COURT FOR A TIME, ELIZABETH.

THANK YOU, MY QUEEN.

MAY I INVITE THE NEWEST MEMBER OF YOUR COUNCIL FOR A DANCE, MY QUEEN?

I WOULD HAVE BEEN RATHER SURPRISED IF YOU HAD NOT.

I SEE THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS ONE.

I MAY HAVE GROWN UP AWAY FROM THE CASTLE, BUT I WAS SURROUNDED BY THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LINE. I LEARNED MUCH.

I'M QUITE CERTAIN THAT YOU DID.

HOW DID YOU HELP THE CHILD, ELIZABETH?

THAT'S NOT NEARLY AS IMPORTANT...

...AS HOW YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME.

To Be Continued...

WRITTEN IN BLOOD

Welcome to the first issue of *Blood Queen*! Thanks for joining us on this dark ride. Things are going to get even more intense over the next few months, and we can't wait to show you where we are going.

You may have noticed that we've taken some inspiration from the real-life story of Elizabeth Bathory, also known as—among other things—the Blood Countess. But I'm warning you: don't be fooled by what you think you know. We don't want to meet your expectations; we want to leave them in the dust. We've got horror, we've got fantasy, and we've got high drama. We've got witches, wizards, knights, knaves, betrayals, war, and so much more.

There is one thing that you **can** expect: our goal is to entertain you all. We want you to be intrigued, surprised, and occasionally freaked out.

With this first issue, I want to acknowledge a few people: there's Nick, who first welcomed me to the land of Dynamite in 2011. There's *Blood Queen*'s editors, Joe Rybandt and Molly Mahan, who are terrific, who have put together an excellent team. Your artist is Fritz Casas and he is absolutely killing it with each and every issue. Each page is better than the last. This book is also defined by colorist Kirsty Swan and letterer Marshall Dillon, both of whom are doing great work. I'm tremendously excited to be working with such awesomely talented people, and I'm equally excited to hear what all of you have to say. Let us know at the usual places, like Dynamite's Facebook, site forums and @DynamiteComics (don't forget our hashtag: #BloodQueen).

The Reign in Blood is just getting started.

– Troy Brownfield

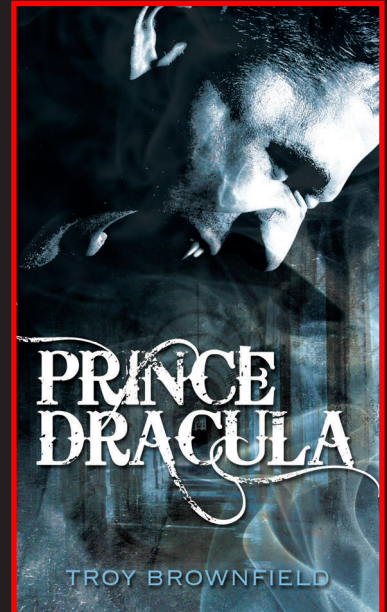
NEXT MONTH:



BLOOD QUEEN #2

Dynamite's new dark fantasy epic continues! Elizabeth's new life at court grows more complicated as the king's niece and the Elder arrive. How does this affect her mission, and what secrets do another investigation in the kingdom hold? And, as passions ignite between Elizabeth and Sir Ferenc, prepare yourself for a shocking final panel! It's all from writer Troy Brownfield and artist Fritz Casas, and we're just getting started.

**AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD
ON AMAZON.COM**



PRINCE DRACULA A NOVEL BY TROY BROWNFIELD

London, 1893. A tide of gloom and fear rises from the dark heart of Europe, taking aim at the modern world. A student of sciences, recently returned from Paris, finds herself caught between the man she's promised to marry and a mysteriously hypnotic stranger; even as her best friend struggles with an unknown illness and bloodless bodies are being found at an alarming rate. A professor with a troubled history comes to the aid of a former student, a doctor hopelessly in love with the same dangerously ill woman desired by his closest friends. You know their names. You may have even known their story. But not now. Witness a delicious new vision of the classic horror tale as you go on a journey into the awakening of Mina Murray. Erotic, action-packed, and absolutely frightening, this is Prince Dracula

DYNAMITE DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE CONTENT







