

ROBERT E.
HOWARD™
OFFICIAL LICENSE

THOMAS ■ HAWTHORNE ■ GORDER



**DARK
HORSE
COMICS**

#4 | \$3.50

CONAN

ROAD OF KINGS



ROBERT E.
HOWARD™
OFFICIAL LICENSE



CONAN

CONAN®: ROAD OF KINGS #4 / APRIL 2011

Based on the work of Conan® creator ROBERT E. HOWARD

SCRIPT

ROY THOMAS

PENCILS

MIKE HAWTHORNE

INKS

JASON GORDER

COLORS

DAN JACKSON

LETTERS

**RICHARD STARKINGS
& COMICRAFT**

COVER

DOUG WHEATLEY

CONAN: ROAD OF KINGS

After the sinking of his Vilayet pirate ship by the Turanians, Conan sets out with Olivia upon the Road of Kings to restore her to her father, the king of gold-rich Ophir. Along the way, in the Zamorian city of Shadizar the Wicked, the Cimmerian and his former crewman Krimsar return to thievery to finance their endeavors. When they invade the mansion of the wealthy Nitos, they are lucky to escape with their lives and a few coins. But the vengeful Nitos sends after them a skilled assassin named Gamesh, one of whose arms ends in a deadly sword . . .

◆ NUMBER **79** IN A SERIES ◆



Publisher MIKE RICHARDSON • Editor DAVE LAND •
Assistant Editor PATRICK THORPE • Designer KAT LARSON •
Special thanks to FREDRIK MALMBERG, JOAKIM ZETTERBERG,
and LESLIE BUHLER at CONAN PROPERTIES. Special thanks to
Jimmy Betancourt at Comicraft. DarkHorse.com

Conan®: Road of Kings, #4. April 2011. Published by Dark Horse Comics, Inc., 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222.
Conan® © 2011 Conan Properties International LLC ("CPI"). CONAN, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN,
HYBORIA, and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks or registered trademarks of CPI.
All rights reserved. Dark Horse Comics® and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of Dark Horse Comics, Inc., registered in various
categories and countries. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any
means, without the express written permission of Dark Horse Comics, Inc. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in this
publication either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or
dead), events, institutions, or locales, without satiric intent, is coincidental. Printed by Cadmus Communications, Easton, PA, U.S.A.

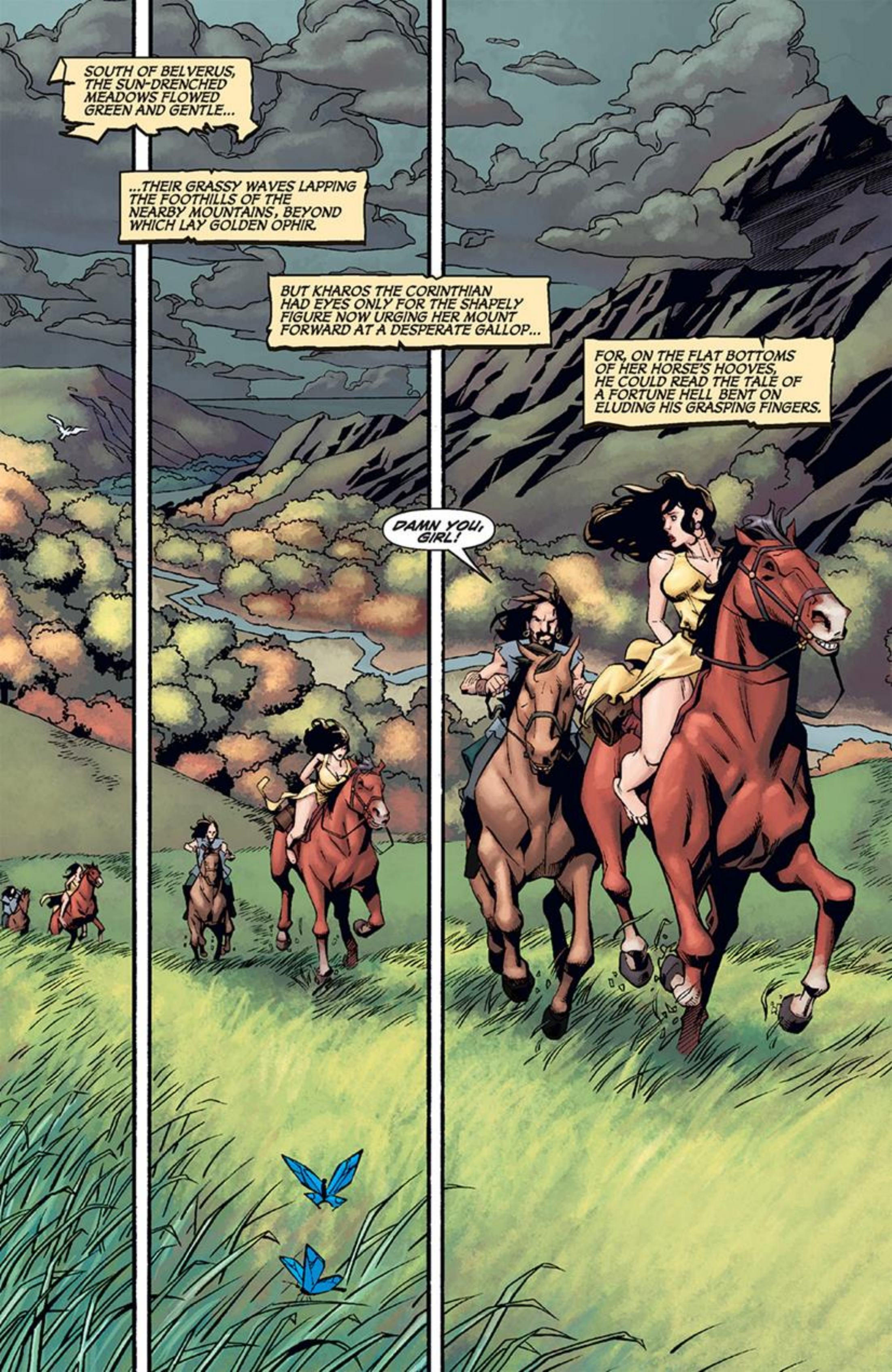
SOUTH OF BELVERUS,
THE SUN-DRENCHED
MEADOWS FLOWED
GREEN AND GENTLE...

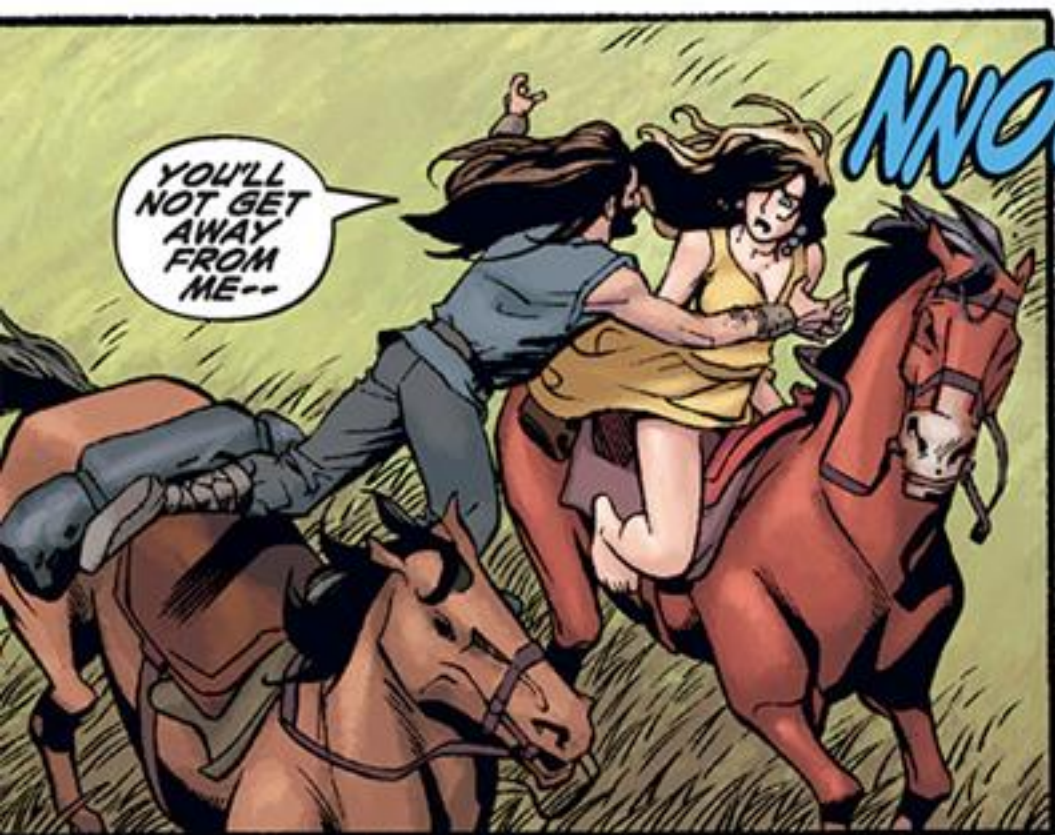
...THEIR GRASSY WAVES LAPPING
THE FOOTHILLS OF THE
NEARBY MOUNTAINS, BEYOND
WHICH LAY GOLDEN OPHIR.

BUT KHAROS THE CORINTHIAN
HAD EYES ONLY FOR THE SHAPELY
FIGURE NOW URGING HER MOUNT
FORWARD AT A DESPERATE GALLOP...

FOR, ON THE FLAT BOTTOMS
OF HER HORSE'S HOOVES,
HE COULD READ THE TALE OF
A FORTUNE HELL BENT ON
ELUDING HIS GRASPING FINGERS.

DAMN YOU,
GIRL!





NNOOOO





YOU--DIDN'T STRIKE ME. WHY NOT?

YOU ARE A VALUABLE PIECE OF MERCHANDISE, OLIVIA.

I MUST BRING YOU IN GOOD CONDITION TO YOUR ROYAL FATHER--



--IF I EXPECT TO WALK AWAY WITH THE *STAR OF KHORALA*.

THEN YOU MAY AS WELL BLUDGEON ME SENSELESS.



THOUGH I WAS FATHER'S FAVORITE, TILL I ANGERED HIM, HE COULD NEVER TRADE THAT FABLED RING FOR MY RETURN.

YEARS AGO, HE GAVE THE *STAR OF KHORALA* TO HIS *QUEEN*...



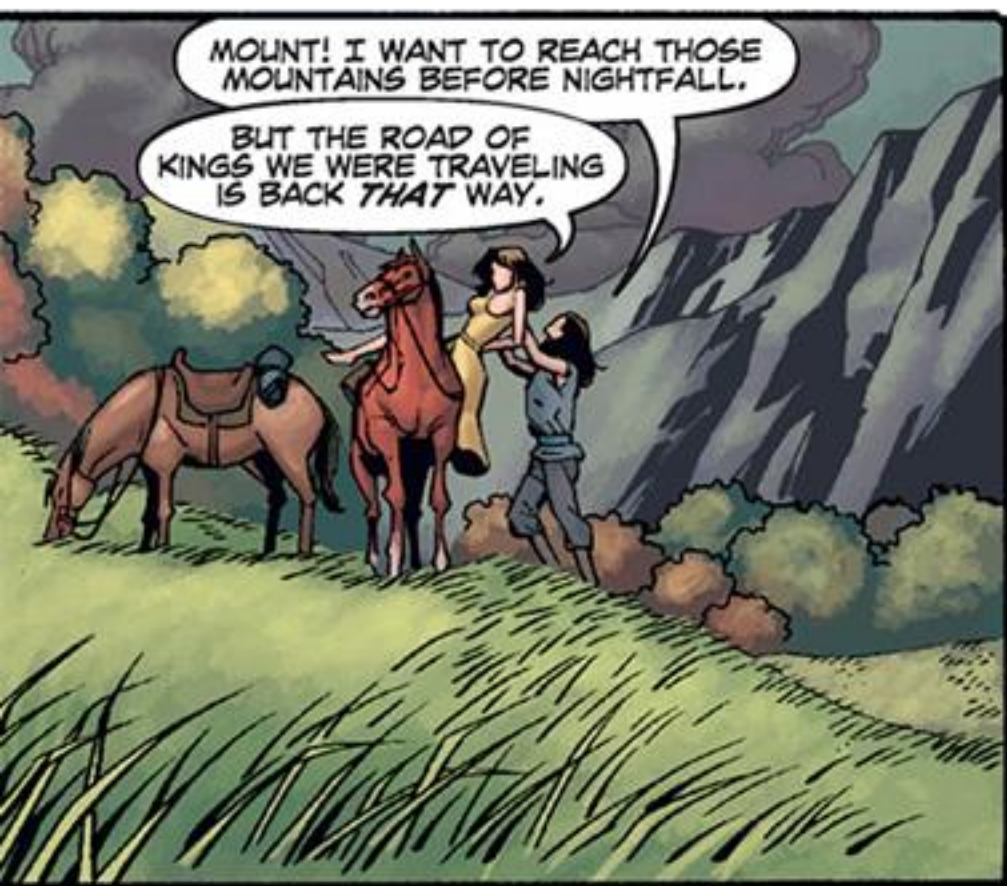
AND I AM NOT *HER* DAUGHTER...

...BUT ONLY THAT OF HIS FAVORITE *CONCUBINE*.



THE OFFSPRING OF LUST RATHER THAN MARRIAGE, EH?

OH, WELL. HE'LL STILL PAY IN GOLD FOR YOU, I'LL WAGER.




MOUNT! I WANT TO REACH THOSE MOUNTAINS BEFORE NIGHTFALL.

BUT THE ROAD OF KINGS WE WERE TRAVELING IS BACK *THAT* WAY.




WE'D HAVE HAD TO PART FROM IT SOON, ANYWAY, SINCE IT ONLY *SKIRTS* THE BORDERS OF *OPHIR*.

COME, AND NO MORE TRICKS, OR I *WILL* BEAT YOU!



PERHAPS BELVERUS, CAPITAL
OF NEMEDIA, WAS NOT QUITE A
CITY TO RIVAL TARANTIA, WHERE
THE PROUD KING OF PROUDER
AQUILONIA WAS RUMORED TO
SIT AN EMERALD THRONE.

STILL, IT WAS EASILY BIG ENOUGH,
AND GRAND ENOUGH, TO IMPRESS
A BARBARIAN WHO ONLY A FEW
YEARS AGO HAD NEVER SEEN A
VILLAGE HE COULDN'T TRAVERSE
IN A HUNDRED STRIDES.



TODAY, HOWEVER, CONAN
THE CIMMERIAN HAD OTHER
MATTERS THAN SIGHT-
SEEING ON HIS MIND...



...ALTHOUGH SOME SIGHTS
HE FOUND EASIER TO
IGNORE THAN OTHERS.



THEN, IT
ABRUPTLY
OCCURRED
TO HIM...



...THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN SOMETHING.



DAMN PRINCE MURILO,
WITH HIS CONSTANT
INTRIGUING AND HIS
THIEVERY OF
STATE SECRETS!

LET HIM COME TO
BELVERUS AND PUT
ON THIS RIDICULOUS
HEADGEAR--




--THIS EYE-BLINDING
TURBAN, WITH ITS BIG
FAT GREEN FEATHER!

WHO DO
THESE FOOL
FOREIGNERS THINK
THEY'RE IMPRESSING,
STRUTTING AROUND
LIKE HYRKANIAN
POTENTATES?

AYE-- BUT
DON'T SAY
THAT TOO
LOUDLY.


HE LOOKS IN
A FOUL ENOUGH
MOOD TO TAKE
SOMEONE'S
HEAD OFF!



"THIS TRUTH
YOUR PRIESTS
AND ELDERS
RANT, WITH VAIN
AND HAUGHTY
BREATH..."




MMM...?



WELL?
ARE YOU GOING
TO SAY IT OR
NOT?



OH.
YES...



I AM
SHAYERA.




AND
I... AM NOT
COMPLAINING.



GOOD. BRING
THE SCROLL AND
FOLLOW ME.



BUT... MY
HORSE...




"LET THEM
GO FORTH AND
PROVE THEIR WORTH...
AYE, CHAIN AND
SHACKLE DEATH."





WHEN
MURILO GAVE ME
THE PASSWORD,
HE DIDN'T SAY IT
WOULD BE SPOKEN
BY A BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN.

OTHERS
WILL FETCH
IT.



CONAN HAD NOT EXPECTED THE NARROW, STONE-PAVED STREETS TO BE SO GLOOMY AND DARK SHADOWED, EVEN ON SUCH A BRIGHT-LIT MORN.


BUT IT SEEMED THE SUN WAS WARY OF PENETRATING TOO DEEPLY INTO THE WINDING WARRENS OF BELVERUS.



DESPITE MURILO'S ASSURANCES, HE HALF EXPECTED DAGGER-WIELDING BRIGANDS TO LEAP OUT FROM MURKY DOORWAYS...



...OR DOWN FROM OMINOUS OVERHANGS.



BUT, PERHAPS MURILO HAD BEEN RIGHT...



CROM!





A MOMENTARY SENSATION OF DROWNING...

...NO... RATHER, OF TOWERING WAVES CRASHING DOWN ON A SHIP'S HEAVING DECK...

SPLOOSH



AND THEN---

RISE UP, DOG!

JERK ON HIS CHAIN AGAIN! THAT'LL ROUSE HIM!

THE GIRL! WHERE'S THAT TRAITOROUS LITTLE--

SHE IS THE LEAST OF YOUR MANY WORRIES, OUTLANDER...

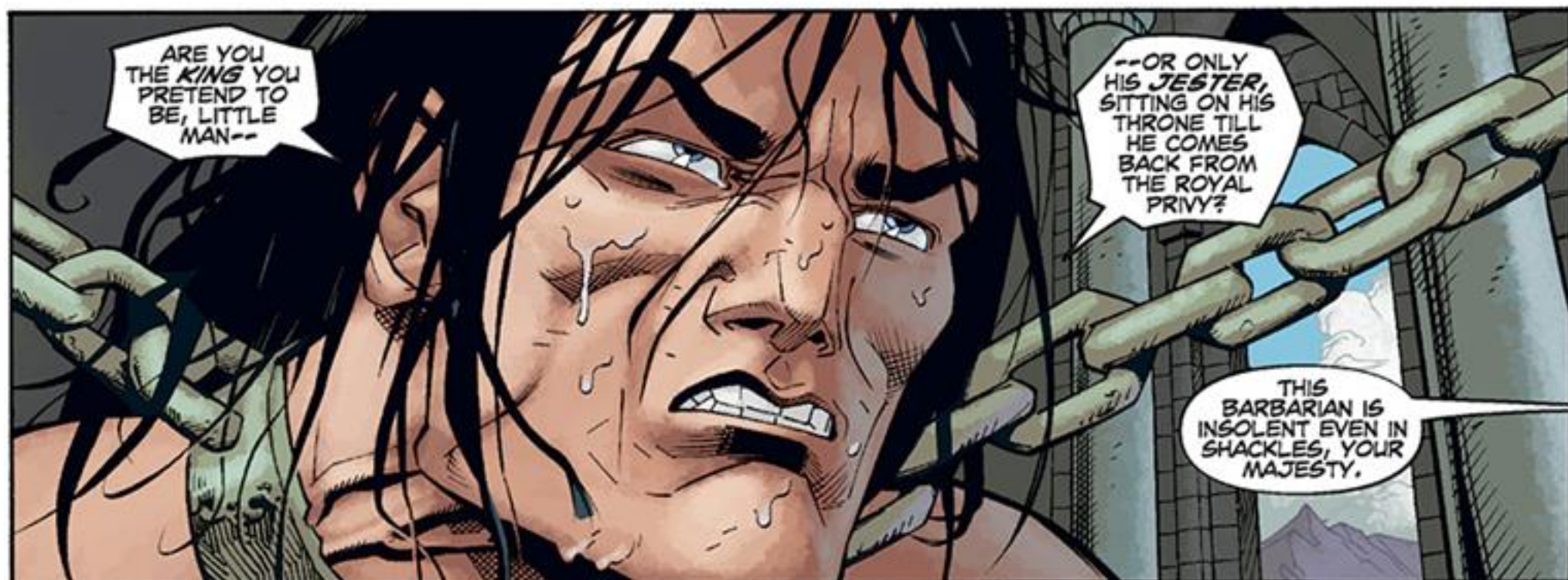


STILL, IF YOU MUST KNOW, SHE HAS GONE BACK TO THE BROTHEL FROM WHICH WE RECRUITED HER...

...AFTER WE TORTURED THE PASSWORD OUT OF THE POOR DEAD WRETCH YOU WERE INTENDED TO MEET IN THE SQUARE.

DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME SPEAKING TO HIM OF LESSER MATTERS, INQUISITOR.

WE ARE THE ONE HE MUST FEAR.



ARE YOU
THE *KING* YOU
PRETEND TO
BE, LITTLE
MAN--

--OR ONLY
HIS *JESTER*,
SITTING ON HIS
THRONE TILL
HE COMES
BACK FROM
THE ROYAL
PRIVY?

THIS
BARBARIAN IS
INSOLENT EVEN IN
SHACKLES, YOUR
MAJESTY.



I ADVISED YOU TO
LET ME SOFTEN HIM UP
WITH MY ARTS BEFORE
YOU BOTHERED
WITH HIM.

WHEN *YOU*
ARE DONE WITH
PRISONERS, THEY ARE
USUALLY BABBLING
IDIOTS, UNABLE TO
REMEMBER EVEN
THEIR NAMES.

WE ARE
NOT OUR YOUNGER
BROTHER, PRINCE
TARASCUS, TO GLORY
IN PAIN FOR ITS
OWN SAKE.

IT IS
INFORMATION
WE WANT...NOT
SCREAMS OF
AGONY.



AND YOU'LL
GET *NEITHER*
FROM ME.

ALL WE
WANT, FOOL,
IS THE *NAMES*
OF THE SCHEMERS
WHO SENT YOU TO
BELVERUS WITH
THIS *SCROLL*.

WE
CANNOT READ IT
OURSELVES, OF
COURSE...

WASTE OF
TIME FOR KINGS,
READING...



BUT *ARIXTHEUS*, OUR
CHIEF INQUISITOR, IS A
LEARNED MAN.

HE CAN READ ORDERS OF
EXECUTION IN FIVE TONGUES...
SIX, IF HYPERBOREAN
IS COUNTED AS A
LANGUAGE.

I NEED
NOT SEE IT AGAIN,
YOUR MAJESTY.



IT IS A SECRET
COMMUNICATION FROM
CERTAIN *EXILED*
NEMEDIANS
NOW LIVING IN
CORINTHIA...

...TO SOME
UNNAMED
DENIZEN OF
BELVERUS WHO
APPARENTLY
WOULD LIKE TO
SEE A... CHANGE
OF REGIME.

IN SHORT,
SIRE--IT IS AN
INCITEMENT
TO YOUR
MURDER.



YOU WOULD BE WISE, SAVAGE, TO TELL US WHO GAVE YOU THIS SCROLL.

CORINTHIA'S LILY-LIVERED KING, PERHAPS?

THE EXILES THEMSELVES, TO WHOM YOU COULD LEAD OUR ASSASSINS?



DO YOU REALLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU'D SPARE MY LIFE IF I TOLD YOU?

OH, YOU WILL DIE, WITHOUT FAIL...



BUT, IF YOU TALK, YOU WILL BE SPARED THE TENDER MERCIES OF OUR INQUISITOR...



...AND OF HIS MAN LOTOR, WHO HAS ALREADY GIVEN YOU ONE LOVE TAP TODAY...

...AND WHO WOULD, WITH VERY LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT, REDUCE YOU TO A CRIMSON PULP BEFORE OUR EYES.



EVEN IF I WANTED TO--

--I KNOW NO NEMEDIANS WHOSE NAMES I COULD GIVE YOU--EITHER HERE OR IN CORINTHIA.



THE NAME, THEN, OF HE WHO GAVE YOU THE SCROLL?

SPEAK IT... AND YOU HAVE OUR WORD THAT WE WILL ORDER YOU SLAIN HERE AND NOW.

A CLEAN, SWIFT DEATH.



LEAN CLOSER AND I'LL WHISPER IT TO YOU--

--WHILE I BITE OFF YOUR EAR!





SOON...

THE WALLS
OF MY CHAMBER
ARE THICK AND
STONE LINED,
BARBARIAN...

...SO THAT
THE ANGUISHED
SCREAMS OF MY
VISITORS MIGHT NOT
DISTURB THE ROYAL
FAMILY, LUXURIATING
IN THEIR OWN
APARTMENTS
ABOVE.

THEN WHAT
ARE YOU *WAITING*
FOR, TORTURE
MASTER?

UP THERE,
YOU WERE IN
THE KING'S
REALM.

DOWN
HERE, YOU
ARE IN
MINE.

IN A REGRETTABLY
SHORT TIME, YOU WILL
BE BEGGING YOUR
LITTLE CLAY GODS
TO GATHER YOU TO
THEIR TATTOOED
BOSOM.





GGGGKKKKK...

THE
WORD YOU WERE
GROPING FOR,
TORTURER...

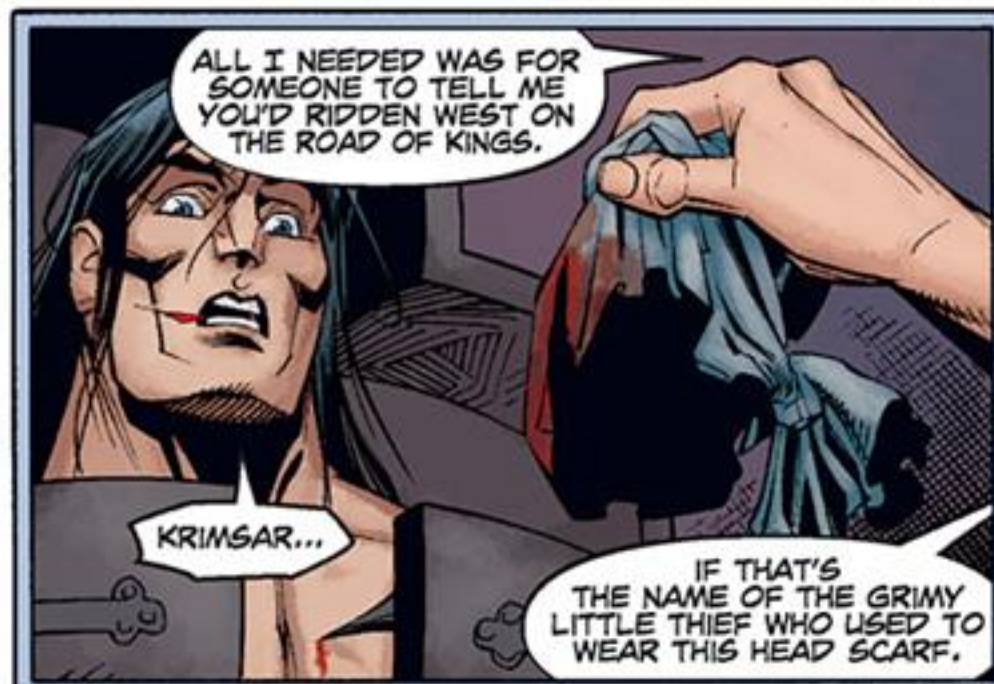
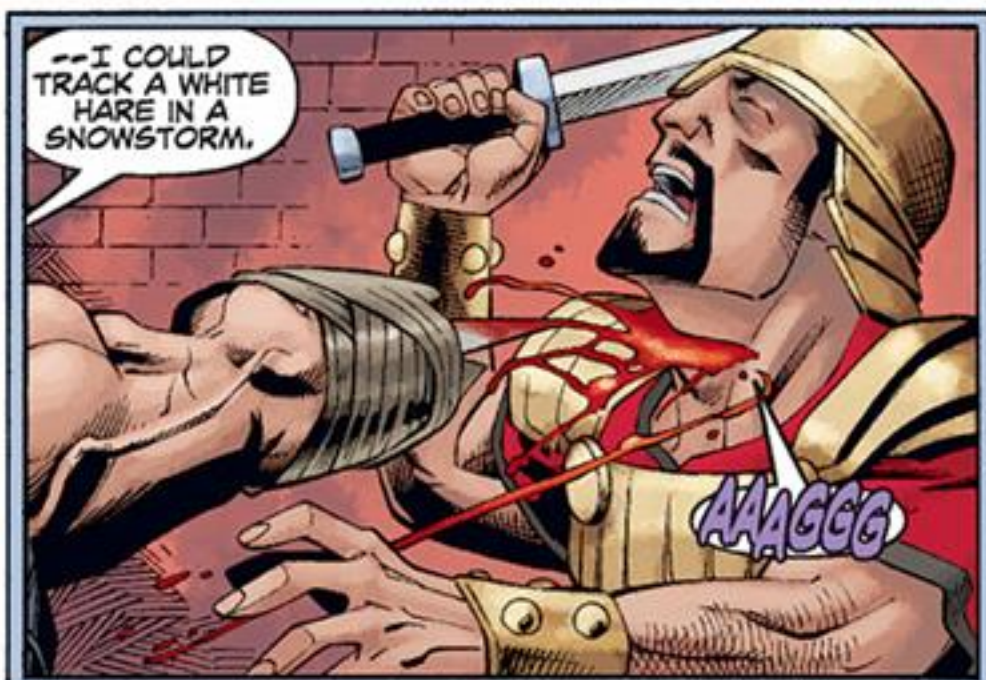


...WAS
"DEATH."

THERE'S
THE MAN WE SEEK,
GAMESH--



--THE
ONE OUR LORD
NITOS TOLD US
TO KILL!











ONE OF THE NEXT TIMES YOU LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER, CIMMERIAN--
--I'LL BE THERE DRIVING MY ARM BLADE THROUGH YOUR WILD HEART!



AND I'LL BE CARVING UP YOUR GUTS WITH MY DYING BREATH!

THEN BOTH MEN WERE GONE... ONLY THEIR SHOUTS ECHOING, STONE TO STONE...

...WHILE, BEHIND THEM IN THE TORMENTOR'S CHAMBER, ONLY ONE MAN STILL REMAINED ALIVE...

...AND HE WAS HOWLING A CRY OF INSANE, SINISTER JOY.



LOOK! LOOK, ALL YE GODS AND SPIRITS OF DEPARTED SOULS!

LOOK! MY MASTER IS SMILING!

HE IS HAPPY--FOR WITH HIS DYING GASP, HE UNLEASHED THE DEATH AND SUFFERING THAT WERE HIS LIFE'S BLOOD!

NOR SHALL ANY MAN IN NEMEDIA--BE HE COMMONER OR KING--

--KNOW THAT IT WAS TO ARIXTHEUS THE INQUISITOR THAT THE CORINTHIAN SCROLL WAS SENT!



NEXT:
SINISTER HOMECOMING--
OLIVIA IN OPHIR