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MARCH 2015

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**GORDON
RENNIE
LEIGH
GALLAGHER**



AQUILA

I OF V

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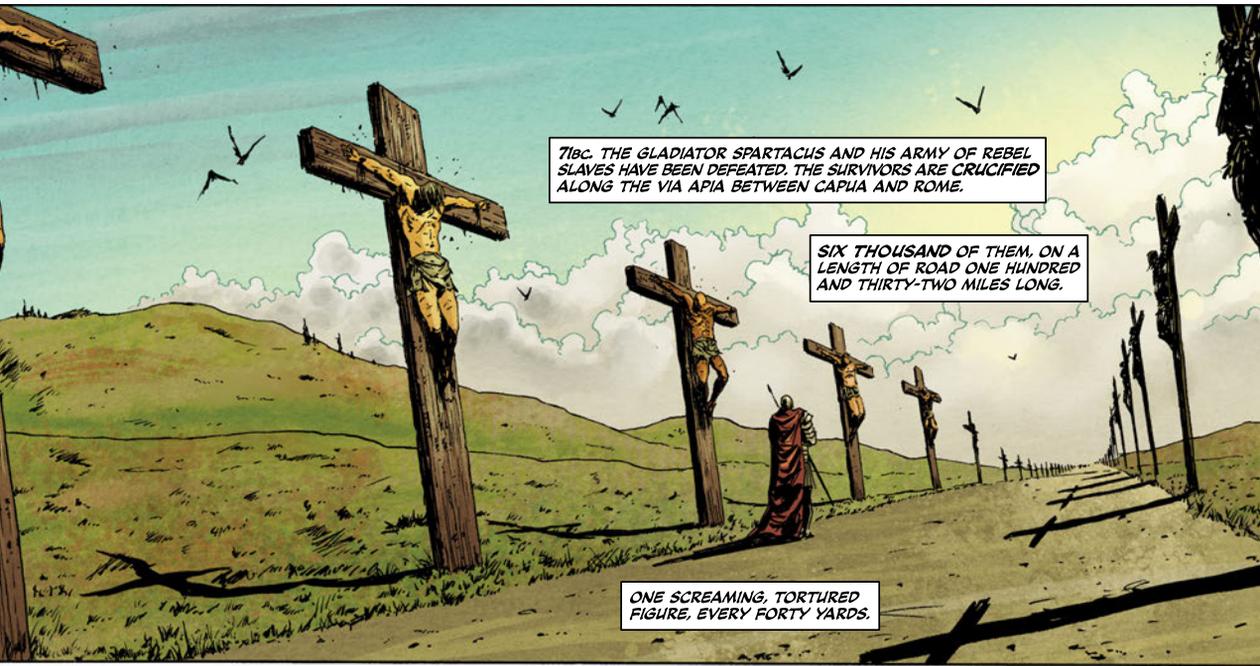
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71BC. THE GLADIATOR SPARTACUS AND HIS ARMY OF REBEL SLAVES HAVE BEEN DEFEATED. THE SURVIVORS ARE CRUCIFIED ALONG THE VIA APPIA BETWEEN CAPUA AND ROME.

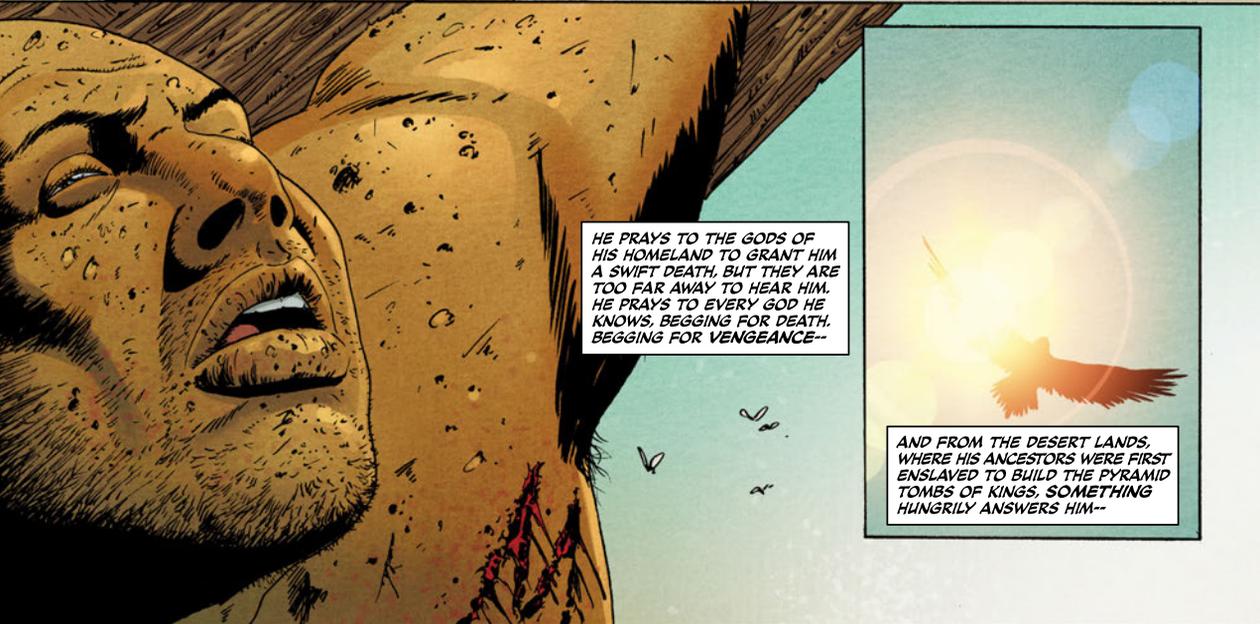
SIX THOUSAND OF THEM, ON A LENGTH OF ROAD ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO MILES LONG.

ONE SCREAMING, TORTURED FIGURE, EVERY FORTY YARDS.

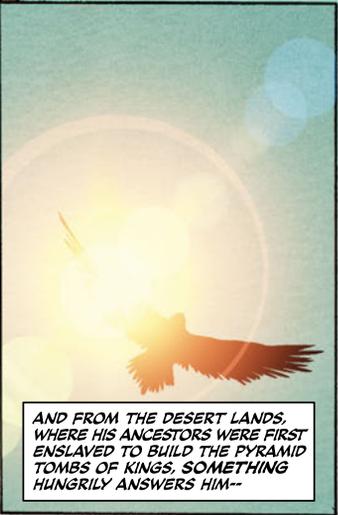


HIS NAME IS AQUILA, A GLADIATOR NAME, AND THE ONLY ONE HE HAS EVER KNOWN. BORN A SLAVE, AND TURNED INTO A KILLER IN THE GLADIATOR SCHOOLS OF CAMPANIA.

HE IS YOUNG AND STRONG, AND WILL BE DAYS YET IN THE DYING.



HE PRAYS TO THE GODS OF HIS HOMETLAND TO GRANT HIM A SWIFT DEATH, BUT THEY ARE TOO FAR AWAY TO HEAR HIM. HE PRAYS TO EVERY GOD HE KNOWS, BEGGING FOR DEATH. BEGGING FOR VENGEANCE--



AND FROM THE DESERT LANDS, WHERE HIS ANCESTORS WERE FIRST ENSLAVED TO BUILD THE PYRAMID TOMBS OF KINGS, SOMETHING HUNGRILY ANSWERS HIM--

58AD. PORTUS DUBRIS, THE SOUTHERN COAST OF THE ISLE OF BRITANNIA:

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FOOL ME? DO YOU THINK I DO NOT KNOW YOU ARE AWAKE?

I HAVE BEEN TOLD THE BURDEN OF SLEEP HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM YOU, JUST AS I HAVE HEARD THAT YOU CAN SURVIVE INJURIES THAT NO ORDINARY MAN CAN WITHSTAND.

GIFTS FROM YOUR MISTRESS? IN YOUR STAY HERE, I SHALL TEST BOTH THESE POSSIBLE TRUTHS TO THEIR FULLEST LIMIT.

YOU'RE SO SURE I AM THIS CREATURE YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR?

WELL, LET US SEE, THEN...

THE MARK OF THE ROMAN EAGLE, CARVED INTO YOU BY THE MEN OF THE LEGIONS AS THEY NAILED YOU TO THE CROSS.

OH YES, SLAVE OF THE DEVOURER. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

BESIDES, WE'VE MET BEFORE. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

NO, OF COURSE NOT. AFTER ALL, IT WAS SO VERY LONG AGO...



"YOU WERE THERE, HUNTER OF MEN. AND SO WAS I."



"WE WERE WAITING FOR THEM. WE LET THEM COME CLOSE TO THE SHORE, WE LET THEM COME WITHIN RANGE--"

"--AND THEN WE UNLEASHED OUR FURY UPON THEM."



"WE BOMBARDED THEM WITH THEIR OWN CATAPULT WEAPONS, SEIZED IN BATTLES AGAINST THE CAESAR IN HIS WARS IN GAUL. WE RAKED THEM WITH PITCH-COVERED FIRE ARROWS AND LEAD SLINGSHOT."



"I HAVE HEARD TELL OF SLINGERS OF THE BALEARIC ISLANDS, WHO SERVE IN THE LEGIONS, AND ARE FAMED FOR THEIR SKILL AT KILLING WITH A SINGLE SLINGSHOT."

ONWARDS!
FOR THE GLORY OF THE SENATE, AND THE PEOPLE OF ROME--



55bc. JULIUS CAESAR'S FIRST EXPEDITION ACROSS THE GREAT OCEAN.



"WE SOWED THE SHALLOWS WITH SHARPENED STAKES AND IRON CALTROPS. BY THE DOZENS THEY FELL, DROWNING IN THEIR HEAVY ARMOUR, CRIPPLED AND TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT BY THEIR CHARGING COMRADES.

"AND STILL THEY CAME.



"I CONTENT THAT OUR SLINGERS, REARED AMONG THE FENS AND DOWNS OF THESE MIST-COVERED ISLANDS, ARE STILL SUPERIOR.



"WE KILLED THE MEN OF THE EAGLE STANDARD IN THEIR HUNDREDS, AND STILL THEY CAME.

"LIKE MY GRANDFATHER, I HAD THE GIFT OF DREAM SIGHT. THREE NIGHTS BEFORE THE ROMANS CAME, I SAW A WAVE OF STEEL RISING OUT OF THE SEA--



"I UNDERSTOOD THEN WHAT MY VISIONS HAD BEEN SHOWING ME.



"THERE WAS A POINT, THOUGH, AS THE WAVES FOAMED RED WITH BLOOD, WHEN WE FELT THE ROMANS' RESOLVE FALTER IN THE FACE OF OUR FURY, AND IT SEEMED AS IF THE CAESAR WOULD BE DENIED HIS CONQUEST--



"THEN YOU APPEARED, TAKER OF MEN'S SOULS, AND THAT MOMENT WAS LOST TO US.



"YOU LED THE CHARGE ONTO OUR SHORES, AND THE OTHERS RALLIED IN YOUR WAKE AND FOLLOWED YOU, BUT IT WAS NOT FOR THE *GLORY OF ROME* THAT YOU FOUGHT--

"WHAT SPURRED YOU ON, MAN WITHOUT A SOUL?"



"WHAT LED YOU ACROSS THE OCEAN TO THE SHORES OF THESE COLD ISLANDS TO CLAIM THE PRIZE YOU SOUGHT?"

"DID YOU HEAR THE IMPATIENT GROWL OF YOUR MISTRESS, HUNGRY TO BE FED, GUIDING YOU TO THOSE WHOSE SOULS SHE MOST DESIRED?"



"OR WAS IT *SOMETHING ELSE*, SOMETHING UNKNOWN TO THE DEVOURER?"



"I SAW YOU, THEN.
MY FIRST ROMAN. AND
EVERYTHING THAT I HAD
IMAGINED THEM TO BE--

"TERRIFYING.
UNSTOPPABLE. THE
WAY OF THINGS TO
COME."

SIGNAL
GENERAL
CAESAR.

TELL HIM
THE BEACH
IS OURS.





THE BOY
THAT WAS
YOU.

AND YOUR QUARRY,
MY GRANDFATHER. HE WAS
A GREAT MAN, BUT A *CRUEL*
ONE. I LEARNED MUCH FROM
HIM, AND KNEW THAT ONE DAY
YOU WOULD COME FOR
ME TOO.

THAT
WAS OVER A
CENTURY
AGO.



THE
THING YOU SERVE
GRANTS YOU GIFTS
TO PRESERVE YOU,
AND THOSE I SERVE
DO LIKEWISE.

THE FIRST:
THAT AGE OR
DISEASE WILL NOT
TAKE YOU, UNTIL
YOUR SERVICE
IS OVER.

THE SECOND:
THAT YOU CAN BEAR
WOUNDS THAT NO
MORTAL MAN CAN
SURVIVE.

THE THIRD: THAT
YOUR SOULLESS EYES
WILL SEE THE EVIL IN
OTHERS, SO THAT YOU
MAY BETTER FIND
FEASTS FOR YOUR
MISTRESS'S TABLE.

I DO
NOT THINK
ABOUT IT.

PERHAPS,
IN ANOTHER
HUNDRED
YEARS,
SOME *OTHER* OLD
FOOL WILL ASK THE
SAME QUESTION, AND
I'LL BE BETTER
ABLE TO REPLY.

MY MISTRESS'S
FOURTH GIFT: THAT
NO BINDS OR FETTERS
WILL EVER HOLD
ME LONGER THAN
I WISH.

I HAVE STUDIED
THE LEGENDS OF YOU,
TAKER OF SOULS. YOU
HAVE BEEN GRANTED
THREE BOONS BY THE
DEVOURER UNTIL YOUR
DEBT TO IT IS PAID.

TELL ME: HOW
DOES IT FEEL TO
BE THE UNDYING
PLAYTHING OF
A GOD?

IF SO, I WILL
SEARCH HADES
AND GIVE YOU
MY ANSWER.





I BEGGED THE GODS OF MANY LANDS FOR MERCY WHEN THE ROMANS PUT ME ON THE CROSS. ONLY **AMMIT THE DEVOURER**, WHO WAITS IN THE AFTERLIFE TO EAT THE SOULS OF THE WICKED, HEARD ME AND CAME TO MY AID.

SHE TORE MY SOUL FROM MY BODY, AND MADE ME HER SLAVE. SHE WILL RETURN IT TO ME ONLY AFTER I HAVE REPAID MY DEBT TO HER.



MY MISTRESS IS HUNGRY, AND REQUIRES MUCH FEEDING. I FED HER THE SOUL OF YOUR GRANDFATHER, OLD MAN, AND NOW I HAVE COME BACK FOR YOURS.



THE VOICES IN THE EARTH TALK OF A MAN FROM A LAND FAR FROM THIS ONE. THEY SAY HE DIED UPON A ROMAN CROSS, WAS REBORN BY HIS GOD AND THAT HE WILL ONE DAY CHANGE THIS WORLD FOREVER.

I HAVE HEARD THESE STORIES TOO.



THEY SAY HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A MAN OF **MERCY** AND **FORGIVENESS**. IF THAT IS TRUE, THEN I AM NOT HIM.

MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH YOUR GODS, OLD MAN. THE DEVOURER GROWS RESTLESS.





FROM OUT OF REBELLION, A REAPER WILL COME.
DOWN FROM CRUEL CROSS, AN AVENGER DESCENDS.
SERVANT OF A DEMON, SLAYER OF KINGS,
HUNTER OF GODS AND MEN,
THE WORLD WILL BE THIS GLADIATOR'S ARENA,
AND HE SHALL KNOW NO REST,
UNTIL HIS TASK IS DONE.

--LOST FRAGMENT OF THE SYBYLLINE PROPHECIES,
COMPOSED CIRCA 400bc.

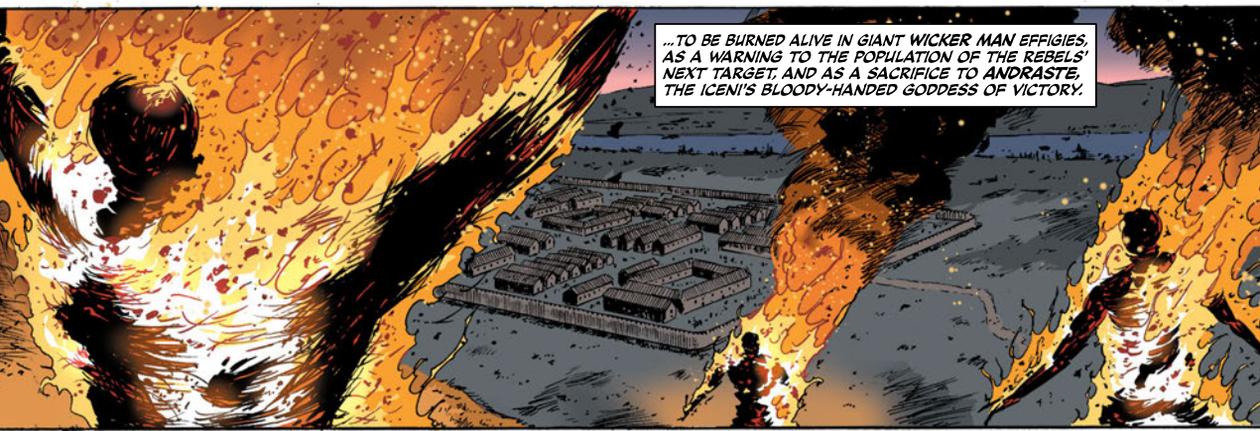


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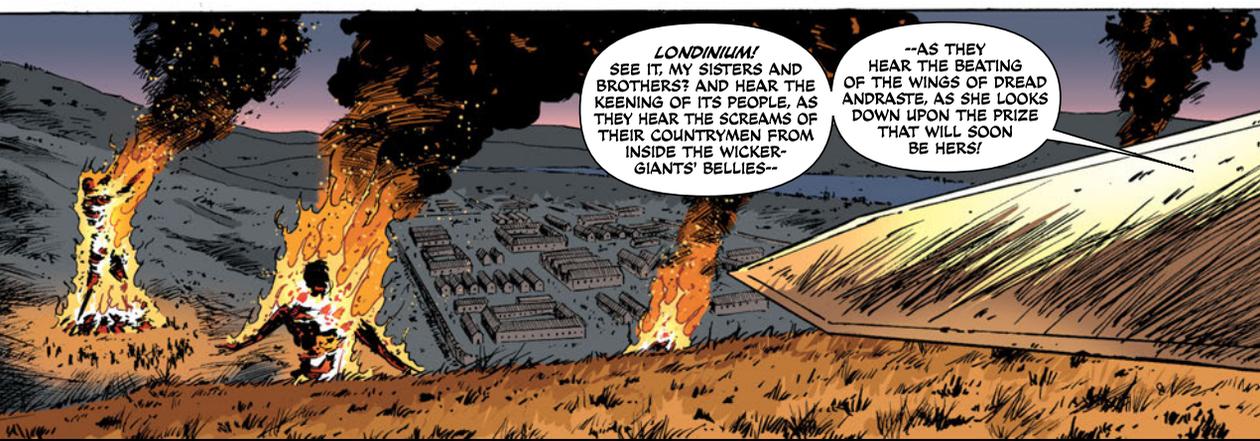
BRITANNIA BURNS. THE ICENI TRIBE LEADING AN OPEN REVOLT AGAINST ROMAN RULE. FIRST TO FALL IS CAMULODUNUM, OLDEST ROMAN TOWN IN THE PROVINCE.



THOUSANDS ARE PUT TO THE SWORD BY THE VENGEFUL BRITONS. THOUSANDS MORE--ROMAN CITIZENS AND SOLDIERS--ARE TAKEN ALIVE...



...TO BE BURNED ALIVE IN GIANT WICKER MAN EFFIGIES, AS A WARNING TO THE POPULATION OF THE REBELS' NEXT TARGET, AND AS A SACRIFICE TO ANDRASTE, THE ICENI'S BLOODY-HANDED GODDESS OF VICTORY.



LONDINIUM! SEE IT, MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS? AND HEAR THE KEENING OF ITS PEOPLE, AS THEY HEAR THE SCREAMS OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN FROM INSIDE THE WICKER-GIANTS' BELLIES--

--AS THEY HEAR THE BEATING OF THE WINGS OF DREAD ANDRASTE, AS SHE LOOKS DOWN UPON THE PRIZE THAT WILL SOON BE HERS!

DO YOU HEAR
THE AIR HOLD ITS BREATH
AT HER PASSING, MY SISTERS
AND BROTHERS? DO YOU
FEEL THE ROMANS QUELL
UNDER HER MERCILESS
GAZE?

SHE IS
HERE AMONG US,
BLOOD-SHARED OF
THE ICENI! THIRSTING
FOR VENGEANCE,
HUNGERING FOR
VICTORY--

ALL SHE
REQUIRES IS A *SIGN*
THAT HER CHILDREN
ARE STRONG, AND
READY TO DO HER
BIDDING!



THE ROMANS TRIED TO KILL ME BY NAILING ME TO A CROSS!

YOU THINK A RABBLE OF CATTLE-BOTHERING SAVAGES CAN SUCCEED WHERE THE GREATEST POWER IN THIS WORLD HAS ALREADY FAILED?

YOU SQUAT IN YOUR WOODEN HUTS, BABBLING PRAYERS TO YOUR WOODLAND GODS. YOU PRAY FOR VENGEANCE.

I TELL YOU NOW, THOSE PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED.



BRITONS, COME MEET THE VENGEANCE YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR!





GUTLESS ISLAND APES! AFRAID TO FIGHT A MAN, EVEN ONE ALREADY HALF-COOKED?

WHERE ARE YOUR MIGHTY GODS NOW?

STILL WAITING FOR YOU TO BUILD ANOTHER MAGIC STONE CIRCLE TO THEIR HONOUR?

UHNN!



IN A FEW MOMENTS, THOSE TALONS WILL HAVE LAID BARE EVERYTHING BENEATH THE MEAT OF YOUR BACK.

TELL ME, MAN WITH NO SOUL--WILL YOU STILL SEEM QUITE SO FEARSOME WHEN YOU ARE ALSO MAN WITH NO SPINE?

ENOUGH, ERYRI. THE GODDESS AND I HAVE NEED OF THIS ONE.

SKREEE!



SERVANT OF THE DEVOURER, I AM **BOUDICCA** OF THE ICENI.

I PRAYED TO DARK-EYED ANDRASTE FOR A SIGN, AND NOW SHE HAS SENT ME YOU.



THE AUGURS ARE...*MIXED*, MY LORD-GOVERNOR.

THE **BARRIER** I HAVE ERECTED WILL HOLD. THE BRITONS CANNOT ENTER THE CITY.



BUT?

BUT THE OTHER AUSPICES ARE ALSO *CORRECT*--

--THE BITCH-QUEEN OF THE BRITONS HAS FOUND HERSELF A NEW **CHAMPION**: THE ONE THAT BEARS THE EAGLE MARK.



I SEE...

JUST AS WELL, THEN, THAT WE ALREADY HAVE OUR OWN **SOULLESS** AND **UNKILLABLE FREAK** TO STOP HIM.



THE NUBIAN IS AN **ABOMINATION**, MY LADY. HIS PRESENCE HERE IS AN AFFRONT TO THE GODS.

TO **YOUR** TIMID GODS, PERHAPS. BUT NOT TO THOSE I'VE CALLED ON TO HELP ME.

AND YOU CAN BE SO SURE THAT HE'S THE SALVATION YOU SEEK?



DO YOU HAVE EYES IN YOUR HEAD? DID YOU SEE HIM BORN OUT OF THE FURNACE BELLY OF THE WICKER-GIANT? DID YOU SEE MY **ERYRI** FLAY THE FLESH FROM HIS BACK AND LAY BARE HIS SPINE?

HOW LONG AGO WAS ALL THAT? JUST A FEW HOURS? AND **NOW** LOOK AT HIM...



SO, YES, **BLATHMAC**, UNLESS YOU KNOW ANY OF OUR WARRIORS WHO CAN GROW THEIR SKIN BACK OVERNIGHT, THEN I AM SURE HE'S THE ONE WE NEED.

LEAVE US, ALL OF YOU.



HE FEARS ME, THAT ONE.

HE IS A GOOD MAN, BUT I HAVE NO NEED OF THE COUNSELS OF GOOD MEN IN THE BLOODY BUSINESS TO COME.

I NEED ONLY THE THINGS THAT ARE YOUR STOCK IN TRADE, MAN WITH NO SOUL.

YOUR *LATIN*. YOU SPEAK IT WELL, FOR A BRITON. YOU KNOW ROMAN WAYS?



MY HUSBAND WAS ANOTHER GOOD MAN, WHO KNEW TO DEAL ONLY FAIRLY WITH OUR NEW MASTERS. WHEN HE DIED, HE WAS CAREFUL TO LEAVE HALF OUR ESTATES TO THEIR EMPEROR, AND THE OTHER HALF TO HIS DAUGHTERS AND I.

DESPITE THAT THEY STILL TOOK *EVERYTHING*. WHEN I COMPLAINED TO THEIR GOVERNOR, HE HAD ME *FLOGGED*, AND MY DAUGHTERS *RAPED* IN FRONT OF ME.



SO, YES, SERVANT OF THE DEVOURER, I AM QUITE FAMILIAR WITH THE ROMANS AND THEIR WAYS.

COME. WALK WITH ME AMONG THE ICENI.



YOU THINK YOU CAN DEFY THE ROMAN TIDE? I ONCE FOLLOWED A MAN WHO THOUGHT THE SAME.

ARMED WITH LITTLE MORE THAN FOOLISHNESS AND BRAVERY, WE FOUGHT AND DEFEATED ONE LEGION AFTER ANOTHER. AND YET STILL OUR ONLY REWARD WAS THE ROMAN CROSS.



YOUR SLAVE-GENERAL SPARTACUS FOUGHT AND DIED FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED IN-- VENGANCE AGAINST THE ROMANS--

--AND LED ALL WHO FOLLOWED HIM TO DISASTER, JUST AS YOU WILL TOO, QUEEN OF THE ICENI.

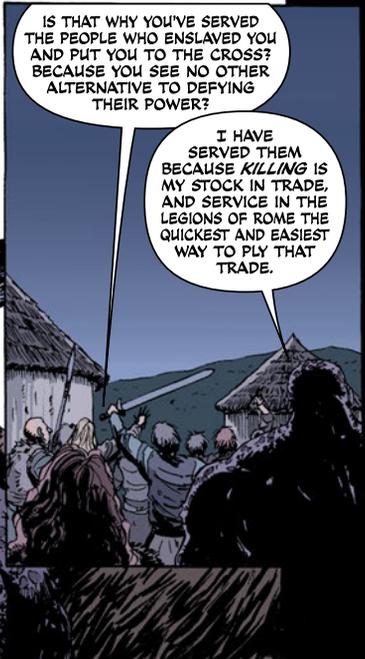


THE GODS WHO SWARM IN THE AIR ABOVE THE MARBLE TEMPLES AND GOLDEN PALACES OF THE SEVEN HILLS ARE GREATER THAN YOURS. THIS IS *THEIR* AGE, AND THEIR POWER CANNOT BE DEFIED.



RAZE LONDINIUM. BURN IT TO THE GROUND AND PISS ON ITS ASHES, AS THE ROMANS ONCE DID TO CARTHAGE.

THEY WILL REBUILD IT, AND SEND A LEGION--AND THEN ANOTHER ONE, AND ANOTHER ONE, IF NEED BE--TO PUNISH AND DESTROY YOU.



IS THAT WHY YOU'VE SERVED THE PEOPLE WHO ENSLAVED YOU AND PUT YOU TO THE CROSS? BECAUSE YOU SEE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE TO DEFYING THEIR POWER?

I HAVE SERVED THEM BECAUSE *KILLING* IS MY STOCK IN TRADE, AND SERVICE IN THE LEGIONS OF ROME THE QUICKEST AND EASIEST WAY TO PLY THAT TRADE.



YOU HAVE WORK FOR ME. YOU WISH A MAN DEAD, THE GOVERNOR WHO SHAMED YOU?

HIM I WANT FOR MYSELF. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WITH HIM--

A *SORCERER* IN HIS EMPLOY. *HIM*, I NEED DEAD.



HE HAS ERECTED A **MAGICAL BARRIER** AROUND THE CITY. AS LONG AS HE LIVES, THE BARRIER REMAINS, AND MY WARRIORS CANNOT ENTER THE CITY.

NONE BORN OF THESE ISLANDS CAN PASS THROUGH IT AND LIVE...

"THEIR SKIN BLACKENS AND ROTS. THEIR BLOOD THICKENS TO SLIME IN THEIR VEINS, AND SERPENTS HATCH OUT FROM INSIDE THEIR VERY BODIES.

"AS LONG AS THE BARRIER STANDS, LONDINIUM SURVIVES."



THERE ARE MANY EVIL MEN, WITH SOULS TO SEND TO THE DEVOURER. WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT ONE SORCERER?

BUT THEN I HAVE NOT TOLD YOU OF THE **BODYGUARD** HE HAS WITH HIM. THE ONE WHO IS JUST LIKE YOU.



THERE ARE NO OTHERS LIKE ME.

THEN THE SPIRITS WHO ALSO TOLD ME OF YOU MUST BE LYING, AND A CREATURE THAT CALLS ITSELF **THE DEVOURER** MUST ONLY TELL THE TRUTH TO THOSE IT MAKES ITS SLAVES.



THEY CALL HIM *THE SPARTAN*. OLDER EVEN THAN YOU, AND MORE EXPERIENCED...

"THE SPIRITS SAY HE IS--OR WAS-- ANOTHER SLAVE OF THE DEVOURER..."



...EXCEPT HE FOUND A WAY TO *BREAK* THE CHAINS BINDING HIM TO YOUR MISTRESS.



HUH--?



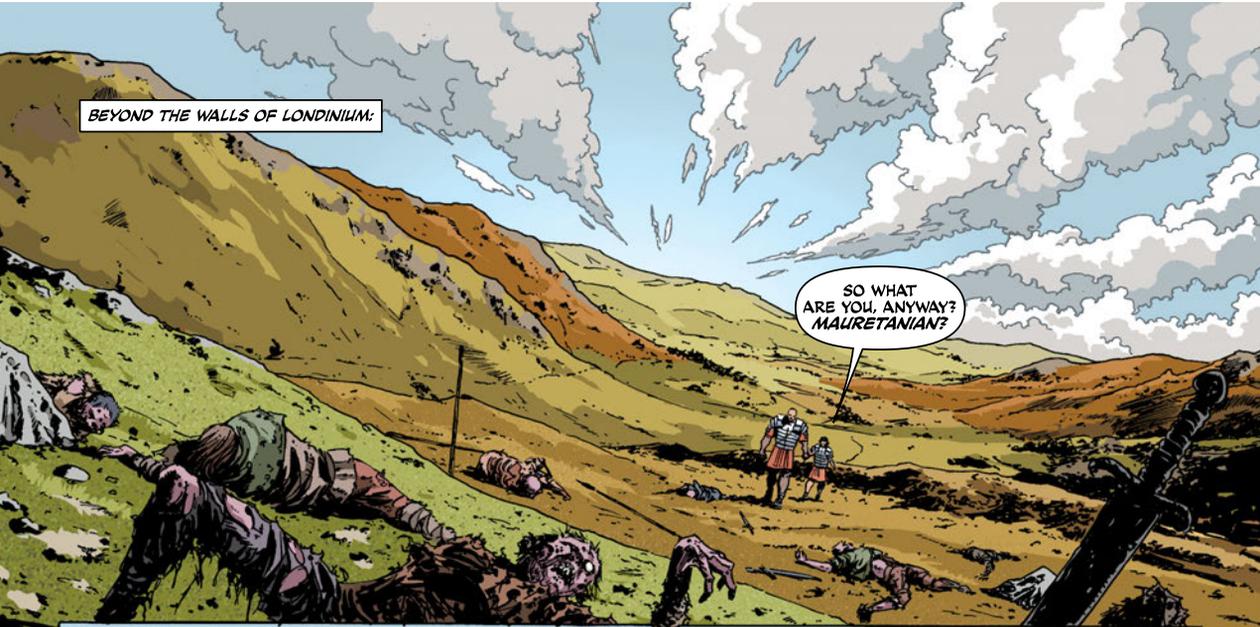
CALL OFF YOUR HOUNDS, MISTRESS OF THE ICENI. THIS ONE, I NEED *ALIVE*.

I NEED TWO DAYS TO HEAL AND HALF A DAY MORE TO PREPARE. THEN, WITH THIS ONE AS MY GUIDE, I WILL ENTER THE CITY AND KILL YOUR SORCERER.

AFTER THAT, LONDINIUM WILL BE YOURS...



BEYOND THE WALLS OF LONDINIUM:



SO WHAT ARE YOU, ANYWAY? MAURETANIAN?



NO? NUMIDIAN, THEN?

GOOD BLOKES, THE NUMIDIANS. SERVED WITH SOME OF THEIR CAVALRY AUXILIARIES. BLOODY MAD GAMBLERS, TOO, WHICH IS ALWAYS A PLUS POINT IN MY BOOK.



CYRENAICAN, MAYBE? NOT SUCH BAD TYPES, YOUR CYRENAICANS, LONG AS YOU REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR BACK TO THE WALL WHEN YOU'RE AROUND THEM DOWN THE BATH-HOUSE.

MITHRAS'S ARSE, BUT THIS THING'S BLOODY ITCHY...



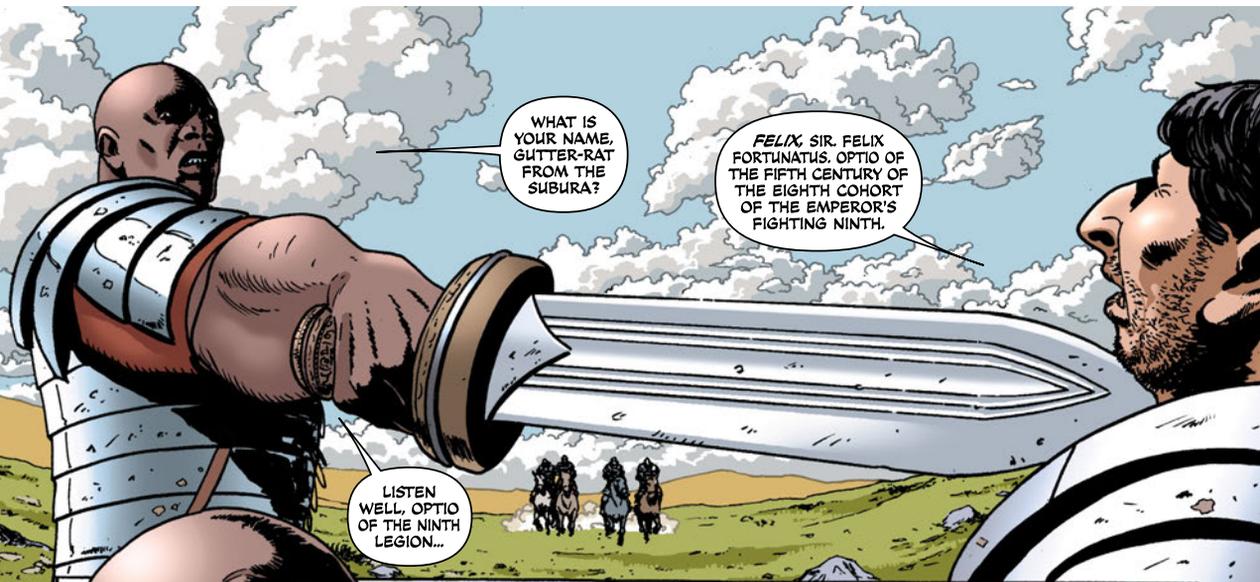
WHAT IS IT, ANYWAY? SOME KIND OF LOCAL SPEAR-CHUCKER MUMBO-JUMBO, I BET.

NOT THAT I'M JUDGEMENTAL, MIND. SEE, I'M FROM THE SUBURA.

YOU KNOW THE SUBURA? JUST NORTH OF THE FORUM, BETWEEN THE VIMINAL AND ESQUELINE, SO ALL THE PISS AND CRAP FROM OUR SOCIAL BETTERS RUNS DOWNHILL ON TO US.

WE GET ALL TYPES THERE, ALL YOUR FOREIGNERS AND PROVINCIALS, SO--





WHAT IS YOUR NAME, GUTTER-RAT FROM THE SUBURA?

FELIX, SIR. FELIX FORTUNATUS, OPTIO OF THE FIFTH CENTURY OF THE EIGHTH COHORT OF THE EMPEROR'S FIGHTING NINTH.

LISTEN WELL, OPTIO OF THE NINTH LEGION...



THE TATTOO THEY HAVE GIVEN YOU IS A SNAKE TORC, MAGICALLY BINDING YOU TO ME. DISOBEY ME, BETRAY ME OR TRY TO FLEE ME, AND THE SERPENT WILL TIGHTEN ITS COILS, CHOKING THE LIFE FROM YOUR BODY.

WE ARE SURVIVORS FROM THE MASSACRE AT CAMULODUNUM, FLEEING THE WRATH OF THE BRITISH. ONCE WE ARE INSIDE THE CITY WALLS, YOU WILL DO AS I COMMAND.



DO WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING, FELIX OF THE SUBURA?

ABSOLUTELY, SIR. NO WORRIES AT ALL ON THAT SCORE--

--AND, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, IS THAT AN AEGYPTUS ACCENT I DETECT, WITH A HINT OF TIME WELL SPENT IN THE FAIR REGION OF CAMPANIA, LEARNING TO SPEAK ALMOST PROPER LATIN?



ALL RIGHT, LADS? TWO HEROES OF THE FIGHTING NINTH, REPORTING FOR DUTY. AND, BLOODY HADES, BUT DO WE HAVE A TALE OR TWO TO TELL...



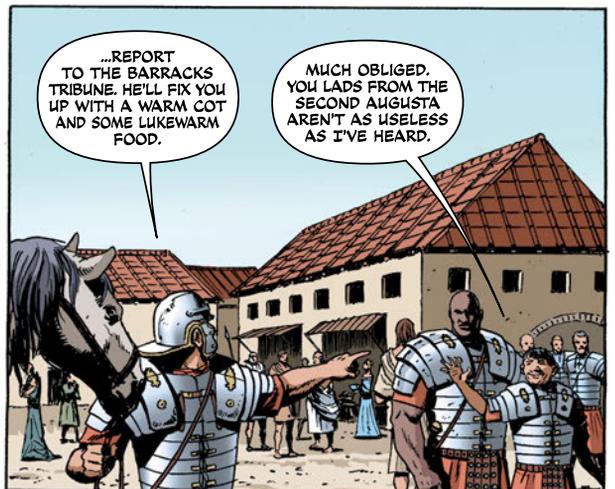


SO FEW SENTRIES. YOU HAVE NO FEAR OF A SUDDEN ICENI ATTACK?

IT'S THOSE SAVAGES THAT SHOULD HAVE FEAR OF US, FRIEND...

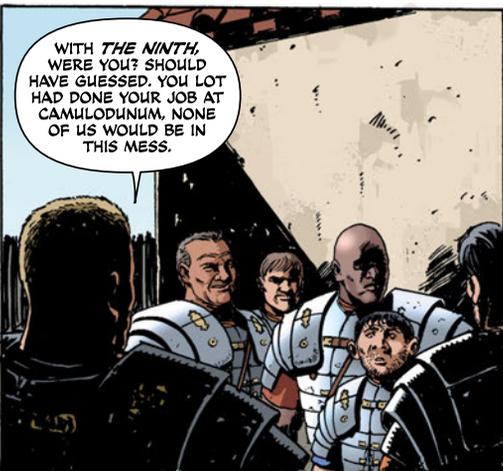


...THERE'S MORE GUARDING THE APPROACHES TO THESE WALLS THAN SOME OF OUR LADS AND A COUPLE OF RUSTY OLD BALLISTAS.



...REPORT TO THE BARRACKS TRIBUNE. HE'LL FIX YOU UP WITH A WARM COT AND SOME LUKEWARM FOOD.

MUCH OBLIGED. YOU LADS FROM THE SECOND AUGUSTA AREN'T AS USELESS AS I'VE HEARD.



WITH *THE NINTH*, WERE YOU? SHOULD HAVE GUESSED. YOU LOT HAD DONE YOUR JOB AT CAMULODUNUM, NONE OF US WOULD BE IN THIS MESS.



AND WHAT IN HADES IS *THIS*? IT'S NOT EVEN ROMAN. THAT WHAT THEY LET INTO THE NINTH THESE DAYS? NO WONDER THE BRITS SLAUGHTERED YOU LOT.

EASY, MATE. HE'S AN AUXILIARY SCOUT. NONE TOO BRIGHT, BUT A GOOD LAD. SO HOW ABOUT WE--

I SAY I WAS INTERESTED IN YOUR OPINION, SHORT-ARSE?





I LEAVE YOU USE OF YOUR SWORD ARMS. YOU WILL HAVE NEED OF THEM, WHEN THE ICENI COME.



WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING?

"DISOBEY ME, BETRAY ME OR TRY TO FLEE ME, AND THE SERPENT WILL TIGHTEN ITS COILS."

NO WORRIES, CHIEF. I GOT THE MESSAGE.



The GRIEVOUS JOURNEY of *Q*
**ICHABOD
AZRAEL**
(and the DEAD LEFT in His WAKE) *Q*

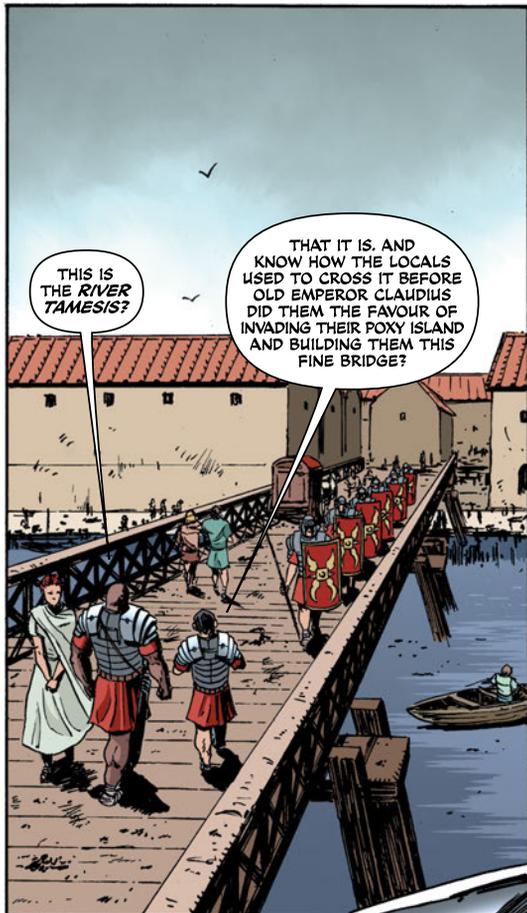


A STUNNING SUPERNATURAL WESTERN

from **ROB WILLIAMS** (*The Royals*) & **DOM REARDON** (*Caballistics, Inc*)

ISSUE TWO OF SIX ON SALE NOW





THIS IS THE *RIVER TAMESIS*?

THAT IT IS, AND KNOW HOW THE LOCALS USED TO CROSS IT BEFORE OLD EMPEROR CLAUDIUS DID THEM THE FAVOUR OF INVADING THEIR POXY ISLAND AND BUILDING THEM THIS FINE BRIDGE?



YOU GUESSED IT-- *CORACLES*.

WE BRING THEM BATH-HOUSES, PROPER FOOD AND DECENT ROADS AND BRIDGES, AND THEY REVOLT AGAINST US, BECAUSE THEY'D RATHER STILL BE PADDLING ACROSS RIVERS IN BITS OF BLOODY *BASKETWARE*.



BUT THAT'S YOUR BARBARIANS FOR YOU. NO APPRECIATION FOR EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE FOR 'EM. NO OFFENCE, MIND...

"THE RIVER TAMESIS. I SEE IT IN MY DREAMS."



ANDRASTE HERSELF HAS SHOWN ME IN THE VISIONS SHE SENDS ME. I SEE A *GREAT PALACE* STANDING ON THE RIVER BANKS. FROM THIS PALACE, THE PEOPLE OF THIS ISLAND WILL ONE DAY RULE OVER AN EMPIRE FAR GREATER THAN THAT OF THE ROME.

I SEE *MYSELF* THERE TOO...



IS THAT HOW PEOPLE OF THIS FUTURE LAND WILL KNOW ME? A *WARRIOR GODDESS*, VENGEFUL AND VICTORIOUS, REMEMBERED FOREVER AS THE ONE WHO DROVE THE ROMANS FROM THESE ISLANDS?

I BELIEVE SO, MAN WITH NO SOUL. WE WILL TAKE LONDINIUM, RAZE IT TO THE GROUND, AND ON ITS ASHES BUILD THE CAPITAL OF THIS EMPIRE THAT WILL ONE DAY ECLIPSE THAT OF THE HEIRS OF AUGUSTUS.



YOU DO NOT BELIEVE ME? BUT *YOU* ARE THERE ALSO, IN THE VISIONS THE GODDESS SENDS--

LONDINIUM DIES, BY YOUR HAND. YOU WILL SUCCEED IN THE TASK I GIVE YOU, AND, IN A RIVER OF BLOOD AND FIRE, YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWERS YOU SEEK.



AAHH!

CERES'S WITHERED TEATS! GET THESE BLOODY BARBARIANS AWAY FROM ME!



WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO HIM?

THE ONE YOU CHOSE TO HELP YOU?



"JUST A LITTLE ENSLAVEMENT MAGIC TO PROPERLY BIND HIM TO YOUR SERVICE."



...ANYWAY, SO I ASKED AROUND A BIT, AND EVERYONE RECKONS THE *TEMPLE OF SATURN* IS YOUR BEST BET.

WHAT YOU LOOKING TO FIND THERE, ANYWAY?



ANSWERS.
BOUGHT WITH A
MAN'S DEATH.



AND HERE HE
IS. THE WHORE-QUEEN'S
ASSASSIN, HIS ARRIVAL
FORESEEN BY THE VERY
MAN HE WAS SENT
TO KILL.

IN THE DUST OF
WHAT MISERABLE LAND
DID YOUR MOTHER SQUAT
DOWN AND PUSH YOU OUT,
SAVAGE? WOULD THEY
EVEN KNOW THE TERM
/RONY/ THERE?



LORD-GOVERNOR
SEUTONIUS...

REMOVE
ALL FEAR,
MAGUS.

HAVEN'T YOUR OWN
SIGN-DELVINGS AMONG
THE GUTS OF BIRDS AND
BRITON CHILDREN ALREADY
FORETOLD ALL THIS?



"NO, THE SAVAGE
KNOWS HE IS BEATEN."



EASY
THERE,
LADS.

HE BLOODY
MADE ME,
DIDN'T HE?

GOT HIS
BRITISH MATES
TO PUT SOME
KIND OF HEX
ON--



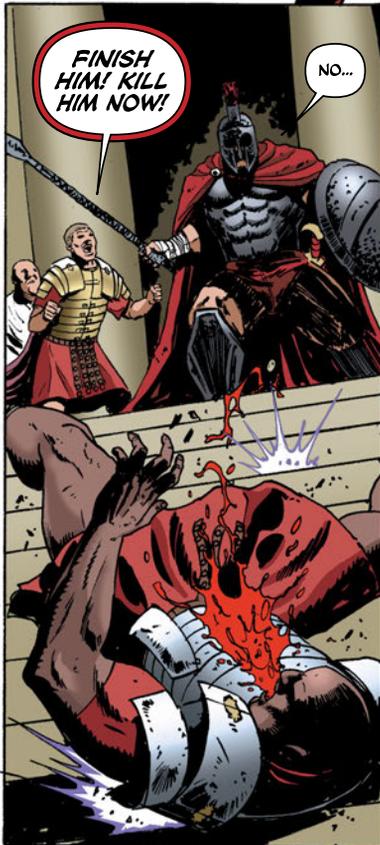


TWENTY GOLD
AUREI AND A CORONA
CIVICA AWARD TO THE
MAN WHO CUTS HIM
DOWN!



THIRTY
AUREI!
FIFTY!





FINISH HIM! KILL HIM NOW!

NO...

I CAME TO YOU OFFERING PROTECTION FOR YOUR PET SORCERER.

I HAVE DONE THAT. AS PAYMENT, I CLAIM THE LIFE OF THIS ONE. TO DO WITH AS I WISH.



YOU CAME HERE SEEKING ANSWERS, BROTHER. I WILL GIVE THEM TO YOU...

NEXT ISSUE A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE!

AQUILA



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