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# 1602™

PART FOUR



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# 1602 *Part Four*

*In Which Much is Explained and Things  
Do Not Always Work Out for the Best.*

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April 1602.  
London.  
The Bleeding  
Heart Inn.

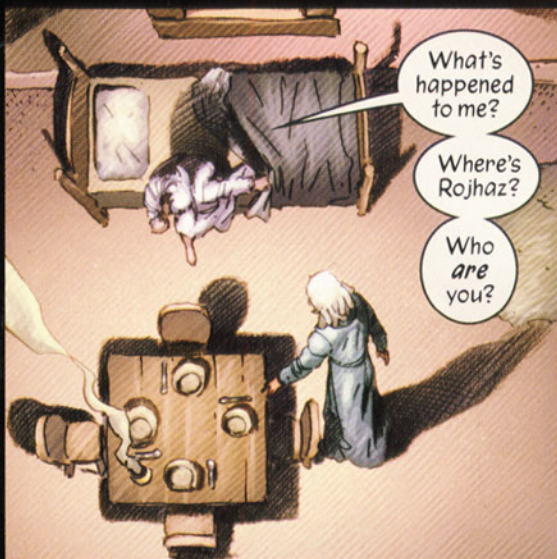


Rojhaz?



I'm  
hungry.

Who  
are  
you?



What's  
happened  
to me?

Where's  
Rojhaz?

Who  
are  
you?



Uhhh...

You must be  
weak as a kitten, pet.  
Back on the bed for  
now.



I am Mistress Clea Strange.  
I am the wife of your physician,  
and I have been your nurse  
for the last week.

Stephen-- my  
husband-- thought you  
would wake soon. He and  
Rojhaz are downstairs,  
making broth for you,  
in the kitchen of  
this house.





What do I remember, Doctor? I was going to see the Queen. And then...

...nothing. Not really. Just dreams.

What happened to me?



Let me see. Well, first, someone tried to kidnap you. A man, flying like a bird. Roj haz brought him down, but you had already... transformed.

"I transformed...?"

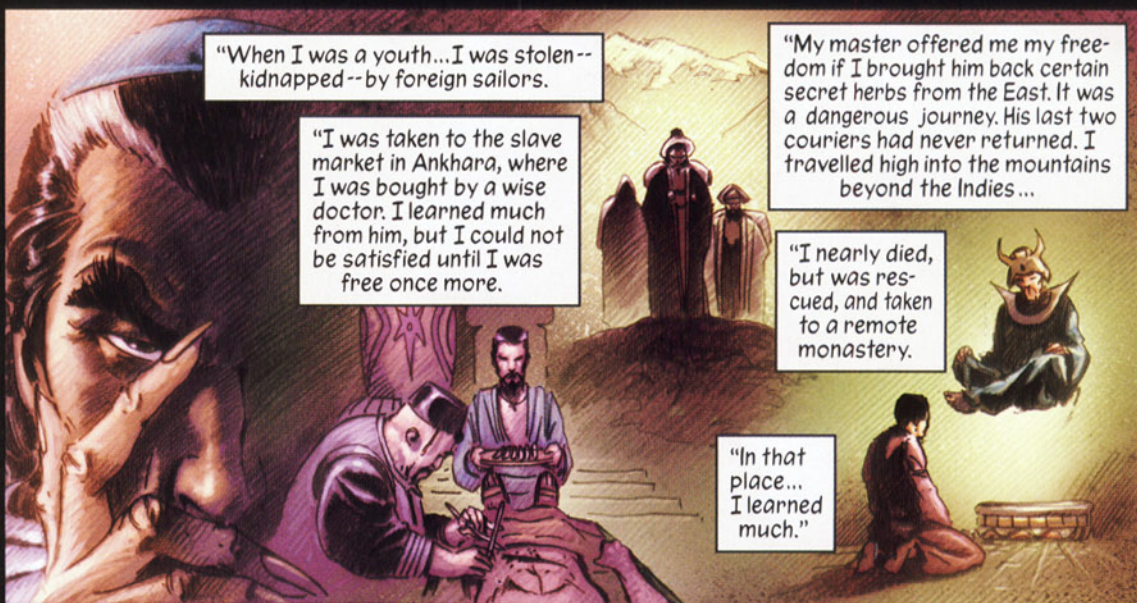
"Into a gryphon, I believe."



Roj haz and I captured you, up on the roof. And I bespelled you back into human form, before Fury could see you and all Hell break loose.

How could you...?

Child, I am a physician, true. But I am *also* a magician.



"When I was a youth...I was stolen-- kidnapped--by foreign sailors.

"I was taken to the slave market in Ankhara, where I was bought by a wise doctor. I learned much from him, but I could not be satisfied until I was free once more.

"My master offered me my freedom if I brought him back certain secret herbs from the East. It was a dangerous journey. His last two couriers had never returned. I travelled high into the mountains beyond the Indies...

"I nearly died, but was rescued, and taken to a remote monastery.

"In that place... I learned much."





I see.  
I think.

So if  
James is King...  
what does that  
mean?

Well, Clea and  
I will probably  
survive, as long  
as I practice no  
more magic. Drown  
my books, and bury  
my mirrors and candles  
and wands. There are  
others who may not  
be so lucky.



"Fury sent a man to  
Europe to bring back  
a weapon--some kind  
of ancient treasure,  
guarded by the  
Templars.

"My mirrors, and a voice  
deep in my soul, tell me  
that this treasure may be  
all that stands between us  
and the day of judgment."



And  
Peter,  
where is  
he?

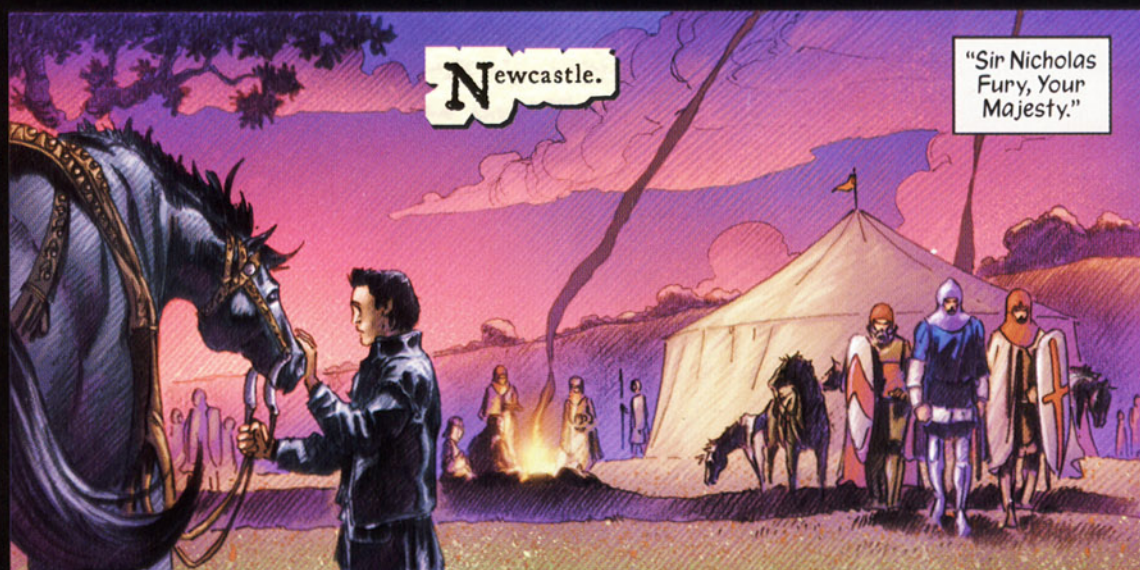
Sir Nicholas was  
ordered to ride north to  
Newcastle, to meet with  
our monarch-to-be. He  
took Peter with him.

Now, young lady,  
I want to know who you  
are, and *what* you are, and  
what part you play in all  
this madness.



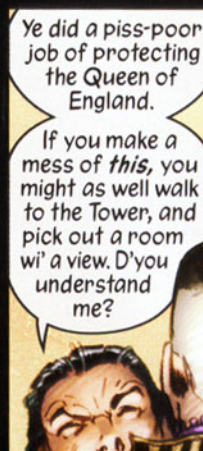
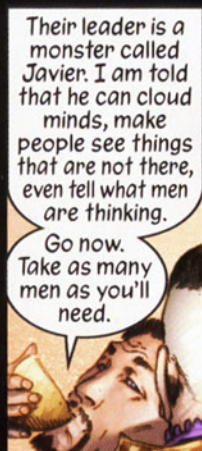
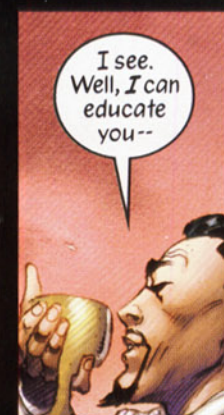
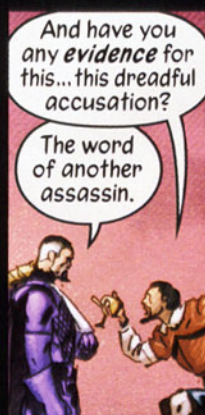
*Stephen.* She'll  
talk when she's ready. The  
child has not eaten for a  
week. Let her finish her  
broth.

Yes, my  
dear.



**N**ewcastle.

"Sir Nicholas  
Fury, Your  
Majesty."





Do you know where we are, Matthew?

I have a pretty fair idea, Natasha. I can smell the sea, to the south. It's distant, but it's there. So I'd say that we're probably less than half a day's ride to Trieste.

You amaze me. There's a bridge here, Matthew. We'll need to climb down and I'll lead the horses...



You haven't told me where I'm taking you once we get to Trieste.

Indeed I *haven't*. What if you'd been captured? You'd tell them where we were going, they'd scoop up the treasure and the Old Man, and Fury would have my ears. On a plate. For breakfast.



I bet he'd do that. I mean he *looks* the kind who'd eat ears. Not that I've *seen* him, of course, it's more something about the sound of his voice makes you think he'd be a bit of an ear-eater...



But Matthew, we're nearly there! We're so close we can smell the sea.

I need to know *where* I'm taking you!



Point taken. He'll be up in the hills. There's an old temple. From Roman days. It'll be *there* the Old Man will be waiting for us, with the treasure of the Templars all ready and neat as a pin.



I see. Matthew, are you thirsty? I've got some wine here.

Well, it's been a thirsty ride, after all.

Will you *sing* to me, while I get the wine?

You're asking *me* to sing to *you*? Natasha, you're becoming almost *human*. Of course. Now let me see...



♪ But just as they think that their troubles are o'er  
They re-al-ize what they've become,  
For the captain's a monster, which irks  
him full sore,  
♪ The bravo's a burning man,  
flames from him pour...



While the Lord was as pliant as gum, by gum,  
♪ With his lady-- ♪



Ut.



Goodbye, Matthew.

Tell your gods or your devils  
that the most dangerous woman in Europe sends them her love.





I received an order this morning from our King-to-be. He wants me to round up Javier and his pupils. I'll take a troop of soldiers, and capture them. Kill any who resist, take the rest to the Tower.



Why would he give an order like *that*?

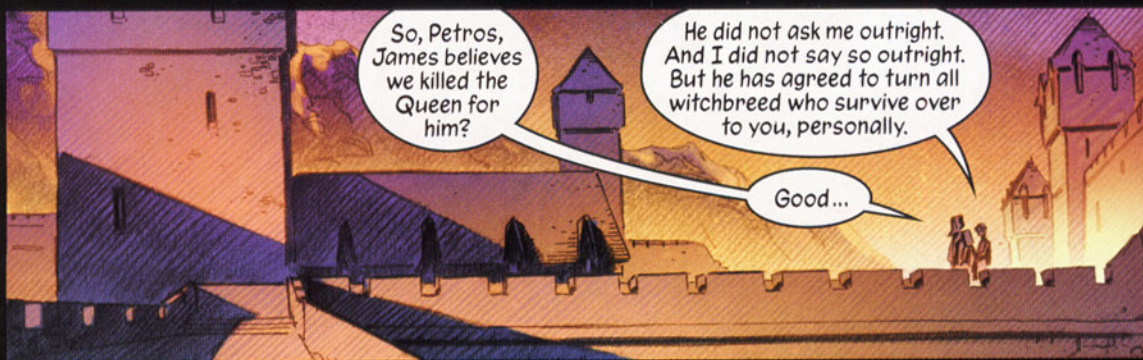
Fear. Stupidity. Who cares? Go to Javier, Peter. You must reach him before I do.

Shall I tell them all to flee?



"That would be *treason*, lad.

"No. I shall tell you exactly what to say..."



So, Petros, James believes we killed the Queen for him?

He did not ask me outright. And I did not say so outright. But he has agreed to turn all witchbreed who survive over to you, personally.

Good...



Grand Inquisitor-- there was a message from Rome. They are concerned about the missing envoy.



It's too late for that, my dear. Too late for anything.

Now all their lessons begin.

The High Castle,  
Latveria.

Astonishing,  
is it not? Simply a jar,  
containing oil of vitriol  
and water, a rod of copper,  
a rod of Chinese zinc. Yet  
when we touch the rods  
to the frog...



...we  
see the  
twitch of  
life!

They  
would be  
unstopp--

Imagine,  
an army of  
dead men, their  
limbs moved by  
galvanic force,  
marching across  
Europe...



BOOOM!



BOOOM!



Unlock the  
vaults. I'm going  
down.

It seems  
that someone  
has forgotten  
his lesson.



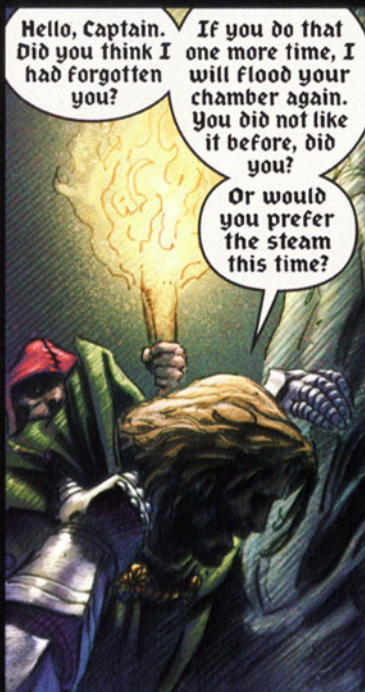
BOOOM!



Hello, Captain. Did you think I had forgotten you?

If you do that one more time, I will flood your chamber again. You did not like it before, did you?

Or would you prefer the steam this time?



Also, you and your friends will not be fed this week, to make up for the damage you just did.



That should teach him. Hunger is a fine teacher.

Now we're here, let us see how the others fare.




Hello, my young friend!

I am afraid it will now be several days before you get more bread to eat. Still, you are not short of water, here, eh? Heh.




Nearly there. It is so strange to be deep in the heart of the mountain.





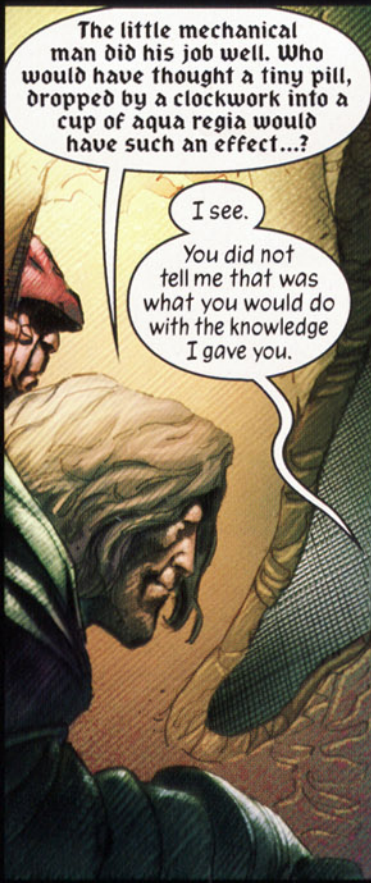
Did you feel the mountain shake, my old friend? I'm afraid that now you'll not be eating for a week.

So... apart from that, how are we today?



As well as can be expected, thank you, Otto. And you?


I am in a fine mood. Your Queen is dead.



The little mechanical man did his job well. Who would have thought a tiny pill, dropped by a clockwork into a cup of aqua regia would have such an effect...?

I see.

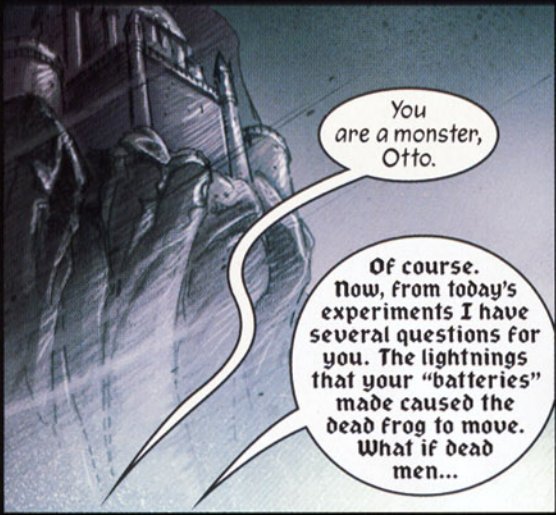
You did not tell me that was what you would do with the knowledge I gave you.



Why should I? You live because I let you live. And you live to serve me. Your knowledge is mine... or your friends die.

I shall have my hands on the Templar Treasure very soon now. Within a day, perhaps two.

Between your mind, and mine, I am certain it will give up its secrets.



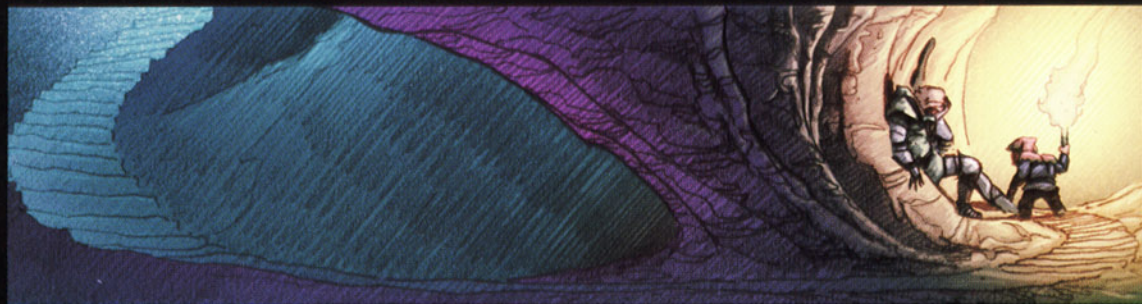
You are a monster, Otto.

Of course. Now, from today's experiments I have several questions for you. The lightnings that your "batteries" made caused the dead frog to move. What if dead men...




Let us go, Otto. I beg you...


GO? Where would you GO? Your country is in turmoil. You know, the common people say the strange weather signifies the end of the world.



What strange weather, Otto?




Nothing to worry your head about. Just strange weather.




Do you ever wonder whether light might have a speed?

No. There is **LIGHT** and there is **DARKNESS**. There is no **SPEED**. Why would I wonder something so foolish?



If the speed of light through a vacuum were a constant, it would explain so much.

Enough of this nonsense. Let us talk more about explosives. Let us talk of poisons and machines.



If you tell me about the strange weather, Otto.

Master Carolus Javier's  
Select College for  
the Sons of Gentlefolk.  
Warwick. England.



Now, reprobate and  
malefactor, what do **you** here?  
**Speak!** Are you a thief in the night?  
Or perhaps you have come to **spy**  
on us-- harmless boys at a quiet  
school, who hurt no man, and are  
here under the good grace of her  
late Majesty (God rest her  
soul)!/

Why do you  
not speak? It's **guilt**,  
I'll wager, that stops  
your tongue!

More likely it's because  
you won't let him get a word  
in edgewise, Hal.

You're Peter  
Parquagh, aren't  
you? Fury's man.  
Come inside.



Fury says that he's coming here  
with soldiers. They'll get here  
early tomorrow.

He's going to take you all to the Tower.  
He wanted me to tell you this: he says you  
should let him take you captive.

Don't fight  
back. Don't run  
away.





So Fury's turned his coat, and does the bidding of that monster.

He asks us not to fight? He'll get a fight he'll never forget.



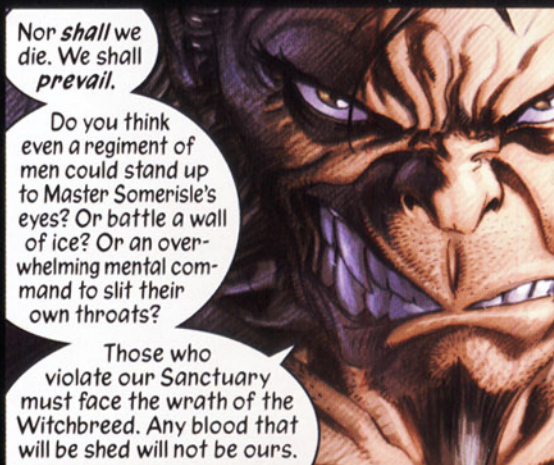
We've never taken on an army before.

And if it *takes* an army to kill us, well, death comes to us all. But a hundred of them will die for each one of us they murder.



Why *should* we fight? We can outrun an army-- we could be at the coast by dawn. We could take a boat to-- to-- somewhere...

We don't have to die.



Nor *shall* we die. We shall prevail.

Do you think even a regiment of men could stand up to Master Somerisle's eyes? Or battle a wall of ice? Or an overwhelming mental command to slit their own throats?

Those who violate our Sanctuary must face the wrath of the Witchbreed. Any blood that will be shed will not be ours.



Fury is not such a fool as to lead a regiment of men to their deaths. Nor does he wish to see the slaughter of our kind that would follow such a massacre of his people.

You say Fury wants a bloodless surrender, lad?

Y-yes, sir.

And they'll be here shortly after dawn? Well... tomorrow will be *most* interesting.



"I was born just after they landed in the New World, fourteen years ago..."

"My father says that it was a miracle that we survived, the first year. We did not know what to eat. We were colonists in a hostile wilderness. We did not know who our friends were, nor who our enemies."

"There was no food. The crops they planted did not grow in time, and the animals were so hard to find..."



"The year before we came, Sir Walter Raleigh had tried to set up a colony on Roanoke Island-- it had lasted only a few months, but those settlers had been cruel to the local Indians, and they have long memories..."

"We almost starved. But then, one day, several Indians arrived, with Roj haz at their head. They saw our plight, and returned several hours later with turkeys, and a deer, and grain."

"The people of the settlement ate that day and through that winter, with the help of their friends. In the spring the other Indians moved on, but Roj haz stayed."

"My father says that he was the settlement's guardian angel. He told us when to plant, helped us build, taught our people to hunt. When we were attacked by leatherwings-- huge ones, bigger than eagles, much bigger than the kind you have here-- he helped to drive them off..."



"After the Spanish killed Sir Walter Raleigh and my grandfather, our first governor, on their way back to us from England, our little colony was almost forgotten.

"We had much to contend with-- the new land, and the strange weather, which scared almost all of the native people away from that area. But always, with the help of Rojhaz, we survived.

"And then...



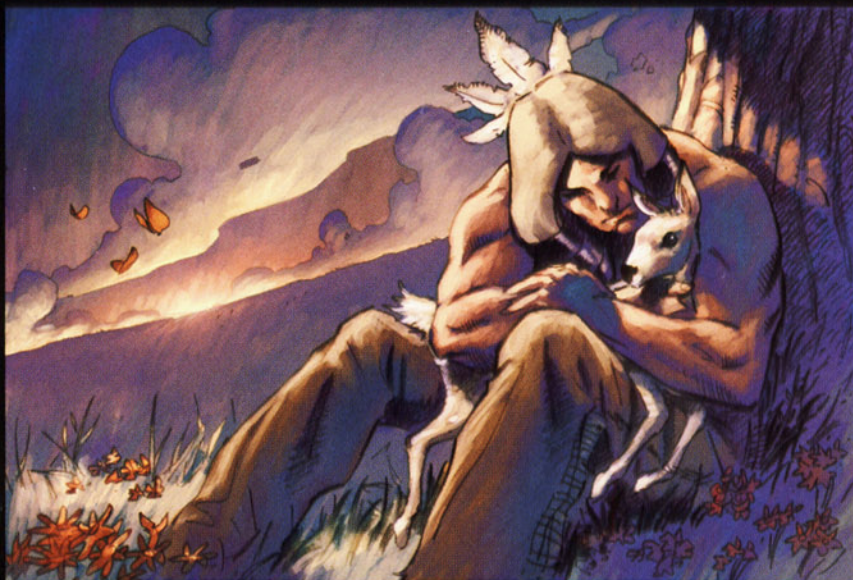
"Rojhaz took a few of us across to the mainland, to trade some of our fish and crops for meat. I was eight, the other children were younger. And while my father and the rest of them smoked their pipes, I wandered off with my friends, across the marshes. I climbed some rocks.

"There was something hanging in the air. Something that glittered. You may think me foolish, but I could almost see it better with my eyes closed. It was so beautiful, like a gossamer veil, that glittered and gleamed and twisted.

"And I touched it...

"When I came to... Rojhaz had found me. He'd tracked me all across the marshes. He said that the others said there was a white flash, and that Jackie Harvie had said that where I was, a fawn had been. The others laughed at him.

"Rojhaz hunted the fawn, and waited until nightfall, when I became myself once more..."



"That was the first time I changed. It's happened twice since then-- each time when I was upset or angered. Once into some kind of lion. Once into a white horse.

"Each time Rojhaz found me, and brought me back safely."



And your father does not know?

Nobody knows. Only Rojhaz.



For most of my lifetime it felt as if our colony had been forgotten. The strange storms discouraged ships and new settlers as badly as the stories about the giant thunder-lizards of the plains.

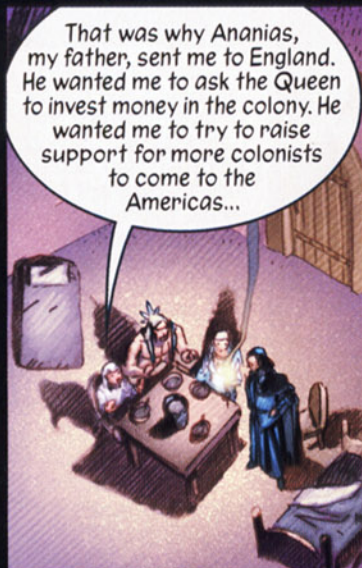
We've scraped by as best we could, but we need more people. We need help.



That was why Ananias, my father, sent me to England. He wanted me to ask the Queen to invest money in the colony. He wanted me to try to raise support for more colonists to come to the Americas...

The strange weather only started here in the British Isles less than a year ago. Yet you say it has always been there where you are.

No. It started shortly before the first colonists landed. Then it spread across the Americas.



And now it covers the world. Virginia, I want you to come to my house in Greenwich. I can protect you there, more easily than I can protect you here...

But Stephen, Sir Nicholas said she was to stay here until he returned.

Fury has other things to worry about, my love.



A hill outside Trieste.

I was sent to make sure you get safely to England.

You are the Old Man of the Knights Templar?

I am.

And you have something that you have brought with you?

On my cart.

It's a weapon, I understand?

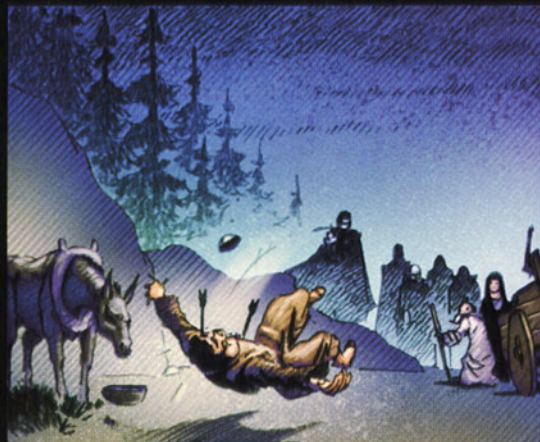
In the wrong hands, all tools are weapons. In the right hands, everything is a weapon, or nothing is.

It's gold.

Very good. Gentlemen, we have our quarry.

I'm afraid the Queen of England is dead, old man. A much more reliable monarchy will be taking possession of your prize.

Kill the servant.





Good evening, Matthew.

You can't *see* them, but let me promise you that if you move an inch, both of you will be skewered by several hundred arrows and crossbow quarrels.

Just pretend you're a statue. Don't even breathe if you can help it.



I'm truly sorry we had to meet again like this.



To be honest, Matthew, I had hoped that you would have the grace to lie down and die.



I had your best interests at heart.

After all, if I take you back to Count Otto's castle, he'll just lock you up in the mountain until he takes all your secrets, and leaves nothing behind but a sad, blind corpse.



But it's too late for regrets, isn't it?

Tomorrow, Count Otto will have the weapon, the Old Man, and the daring master-spy.



The day *after* tomorrow... he'll have the world.

*To Be Continued...*