

TOIL AND TROUBLE™

Created & Written by
Mairghread Scott

Illustrated by
Kelly & Nichole Matthews

Letters by
Warren Montgomery

Cover by
Kyla Vanderklugt

Designer
Jillian Crab

Associate Editor
Whitney Leopard

Editor
Sierra Hahn

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THERE IS A KIND OF MADNESS IN THE RIGHTEOUS. THOSE WHO FIND SOMETHING TO DIE FOR HAVE FOUND SOMETHING TO KILL FOR IN THE SAME MOMENT.



AND WITH MY HEART BEATING IN THIS MORTAL'S CHEST, MY PAIN ENCASED IN HIS...I WAS TRULY RIGHTEOUS.



AND I SOAKED THE GROUND IN BLOOD.



SMERTAE...
NO.

THE THANE, MACBETH, AND I CUT THROUGH MACDONWALD'S ARMY NEARLY ON OUR OWN.

I SEE WHY CAIT FEARED THE RETURN OF GOD-KINGS SO MUCH. I ALMOST WISHED SHE COULD SEE US.



RIATA! IT'S SMERTAE!

WHAT HAS OUR SISTER SPOILED NOW?





THE BATTLE... IS NOT GOING WELL. PADDOCK HAS SHOWN ME; MACDOWNALD IS DEAD.

SMERTAE'S FAILURE TAKES YOU BY SURPRISE? AT LEAST YOU ARE ALONE IN THAT.



I KNEW SHE WASN'T READY TO RETURN. LIKELY COULDN'T EVEN PLANT HER CURSES RIGHT.

HER TENDER HEART IS A WOUND TO ALL OF US.

BUT, FORTUNATELY, NOT A SURPRISE.
GRAYMALKIN, RUN RAGE THROUGH BOTH FORCES.

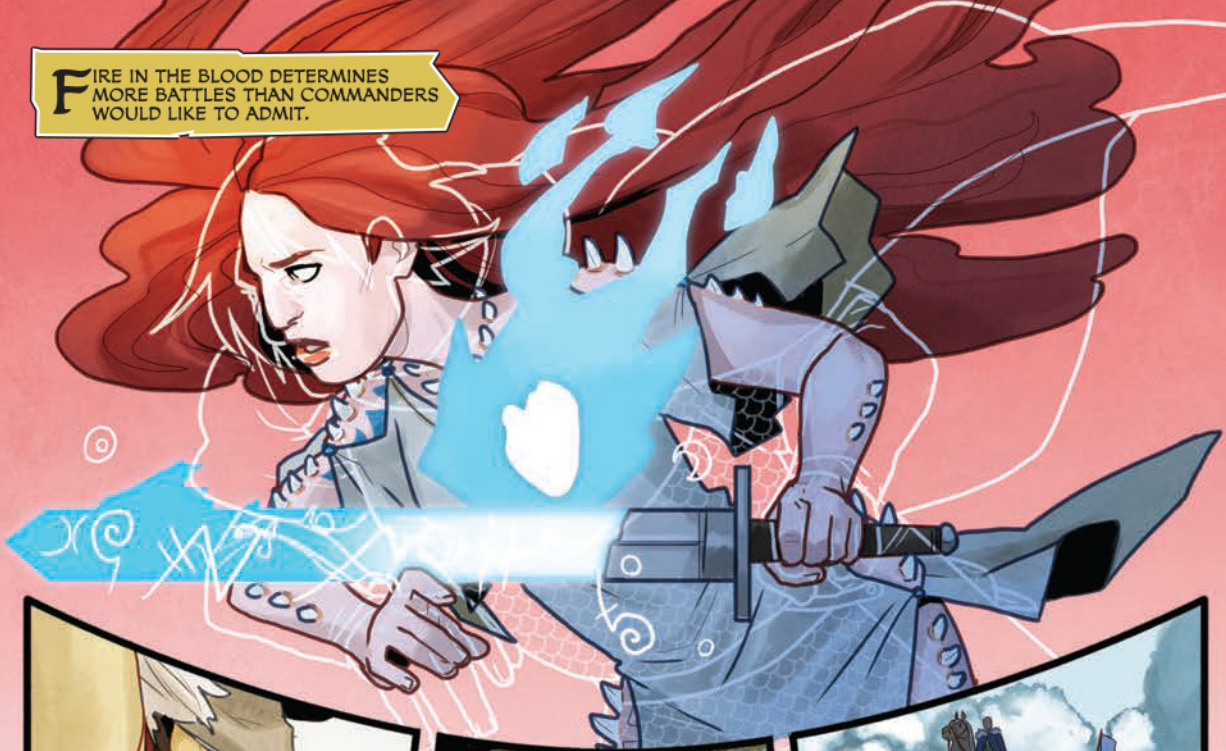


I WANT ONLY THE STRONGEST LEFT ALIVE.



WAR IS WON IN BLOOD. NOT JUST THE SPILLING OF IT, BUT THE BEATING OF IT.

FIRE IN THE BLOOD DETERMINES MORE BATTLES THAN COMMANDERS WOULD LIKE TO ADMIT.



THE WILL TO KILL IS WORTH FAR MORE THAN THE SKILL ONE HAS IN IT.



WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING, SISTER?

IF YOU KILL ALL THE NORWEGIANS, MALCOLM WILL HAVE NO CHALLENGE. IF YOU KILL ALL THE SCOTS, DUNCAN'S ARMY WILL NEVER WIN.



DON'T BE STUPID, CAIT. EVERY MORTAL IS A TRAITOR AT HEART.

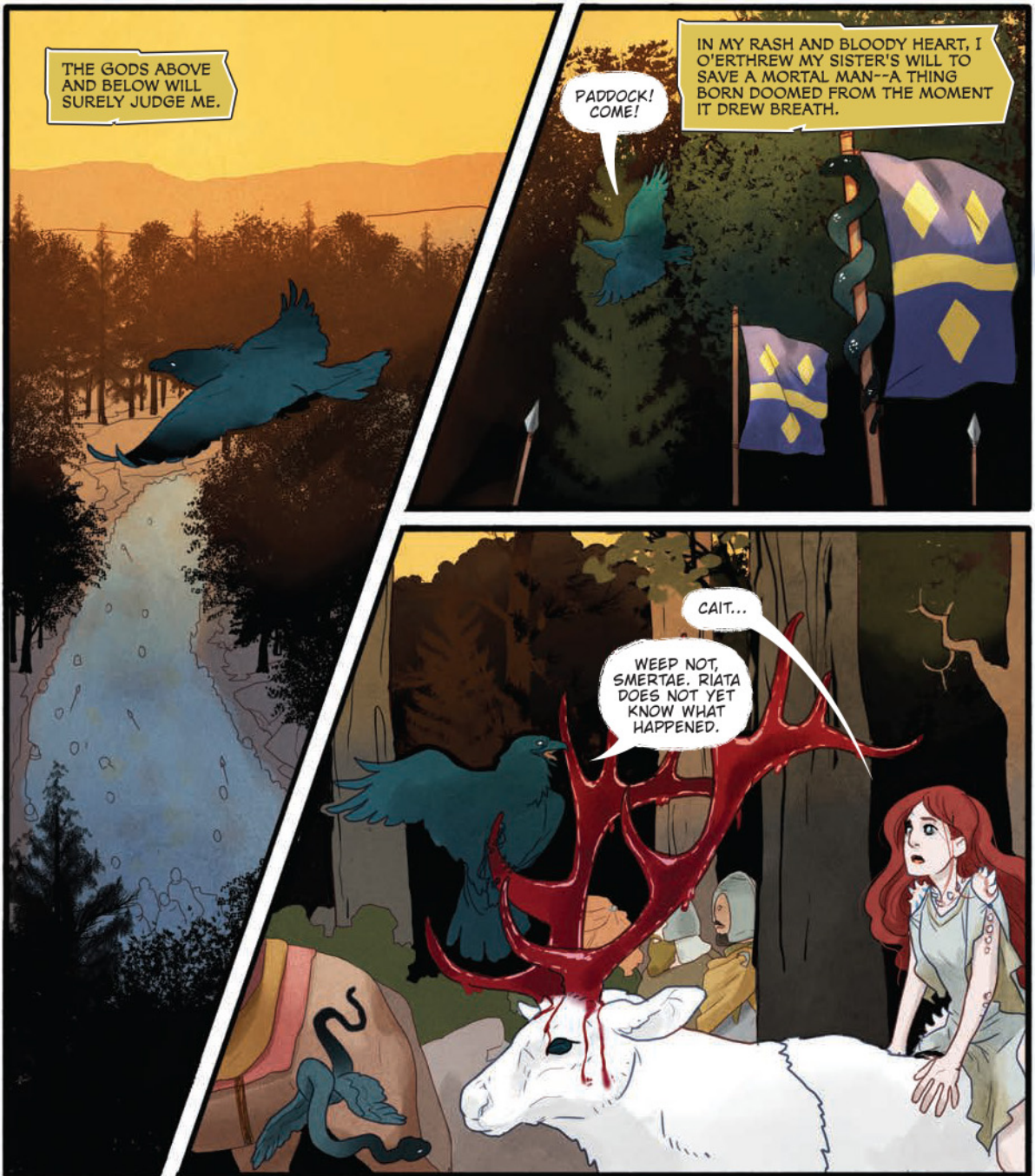




HOW DID THEY SLIP THROUGH OUR DEFENSES?

ALL IS CLOUDED BY THE BATTLE ITSELF, BUT THERE ARE WHISPERS OF A TRAITOR IN OUR RANKS. THOUGH I KNOW NOT WHO.

THE MARCH IS LONG AND, IN ITS PAUSE, GUILT GNAWS AT MY HEART.



THE GODS ABOVE AND BELOW WILL SURELY JUDGE ME.

PADDOCK!
COME!

IN MY RASH AND BLOODY HEART, I O'ERTHREW MY SISTER'S WILL TO SAVE A MORTAL MAN--A THING BORN DOOMED FROM THE MOMENT IT DREW BREATH.

CAIT...

WEEP NOT, SMERTAE. RIATA DOES NOT YET KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.