

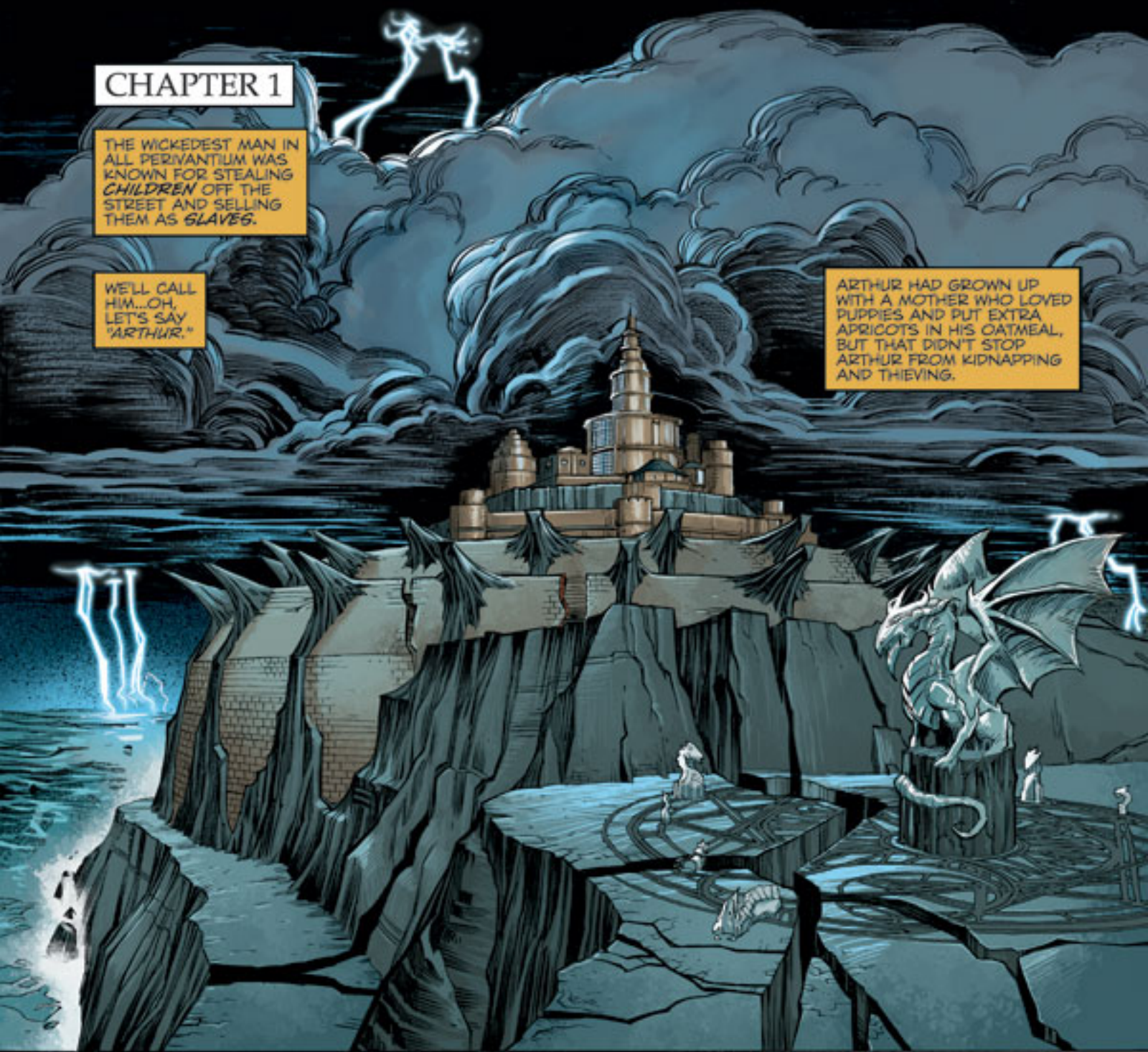


CHAPTER 1

THE WICKEDEST MAN IN ALL PERVANTUM WAS KNOWN FOR STEALING CHILDREN OFF THE STREET AND SELLING THEM AS SLAVES.

WE'LL CALL HIM...OH, LET'S SAY "ARTHUR."

ARTHUR HAD GROWN UP WITH A MOTHER WHO LOVED PUPPIES AND PUT EXTRA APRICOTS IN HIS OATMEAL, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP ARTHUR FROM KIDNAPPING AND THEIVING.



BEING AN ESPECIALLY BAD MAN, ARTHUR CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF AN ESPECIALLY WICKED MAGE -- AURELIAN TITUS, A MAGISTER OF THE TEVINTER IMPERIUM.

"ARTHUR," TITUS SAID, "I WANT YOU TO BE AN ENFORCER FOR MY EVIL CULT, AND TOGETHER, WE CAN RULE THE WORLD!"

ARTHUR AGREED. BAD PEOPLE ARE DUMB THAT WAY.



SO ARTHUR LEFT PERIVANTUM,
AND MADE THE LONG JOURNEY
TO THE ANCIENT FORTRESS OF
ATH VELANIS.

ATH VELANIS HAD
FALLEN INTO RUIN,
BUT THE BLOOD
MAGE TITUS HAD
CHOSEN IT AS HIS
HEADQUARTERS -- IT
WAS A PLACE WITH A
DARK AND TERRIBLE
HISTORY.

WHEN IT WAS BUILT,
ATH VELANIS WAS USED
BY MALGORTHIOS THE
BLACK AS A PLACE OF
SACRIFICE TO SEND
WOMEN SCREAMING
TO THE OLD GODS.

IN THE CENTURIES BEFORE ITS
ADOPTION BY AURELIAN TITUS,
IT HOUSED MADMEN, DEMONS,
AND THE FRATERNITY OF THE
GRINNING ABOMINATION.

SHOULD'VE
WORN
GLOVES...

ARTHUR FIT IN
PERFECTLY.

UNTIL ONE DAY, A
DWARF -- HIS HEART
PURE, HIS INTENTIONS
JUST, AND HIS
QUARRELS SHARP --
CAME TO ATH VELANIS
WITH HIS NOBLE
COMPATRIOTS.

BRAVEST OF HIS BRAVE
BAND, THE DWARF
ENTERED THE DARK
FORTRESS ALONE.

ALL OF
YOU, BE
READY!





THE CRIMSON ACOLYTES ARE PREPARING A DEFENSE, BUT THERE'S NO TIME.

NICON, FESTUS-- WITH ME!

QUICKLY!



KRRRROOOOM

THOSE GUNAZI MEAN BUSINESS, DON'T THEY?

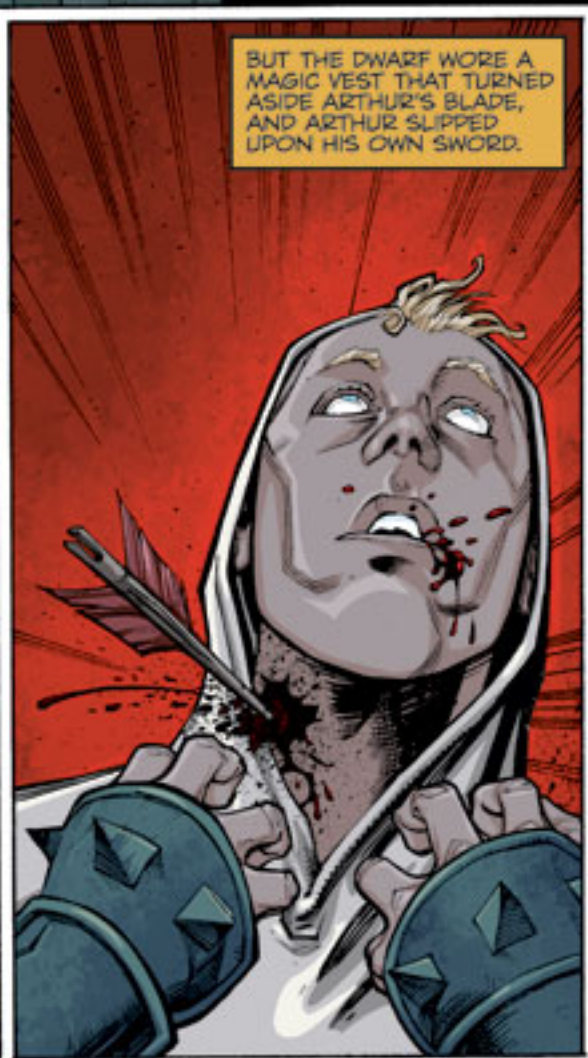


ARTHUR NEVER LET HIS GUARD DOWN.



WHEN THE DWARF CAME FOR HIM, HE SHOUTED VILE THINGS AND CHARGED.

"FOR ALL THAT IS WICKED!" HE CRIED. "FOR TITUS!"



BUT THE DWARF WORE A MAGIC VEST THAT TURNED ASIDE ARTHUR'S BLADE, AND ARTHUR SLIPPED UPON HIS OWN SWORD.




WICKED ARTHUR WAS DEAD, MOURNED BY NO ONE.



BAD TIME TO JAM, BIANCA...



NOW, YOU MAY BE ASKING, "HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS, VARRIC?"



TO WHICH I SAY:
DO YOU WANT A
DIFFERENT STORY?

DO YOU WANT TO
FEEL SAD FOR A
LUCKLESS, NAMELESS
THUG WHO JOINED
THE WRONG CULT?



OR DO YOU WANT TO
ACCEPT THAT ARTHUR
THE WICKED HAD TO
DIE, AND MOVE ALONG?



AFTER ALL...

...A FEW SCRAGGLY GUARDS
WERE THE LEAST OF OUR
PROBLEMS AT ATH VELANIS.





VARRIC,
MY BOY--

-- YOU NEED
TO INVOLVE
YOURSELF IN
FEWER WARS.

MAYBE I
SHOULD
EXPLAIN.

