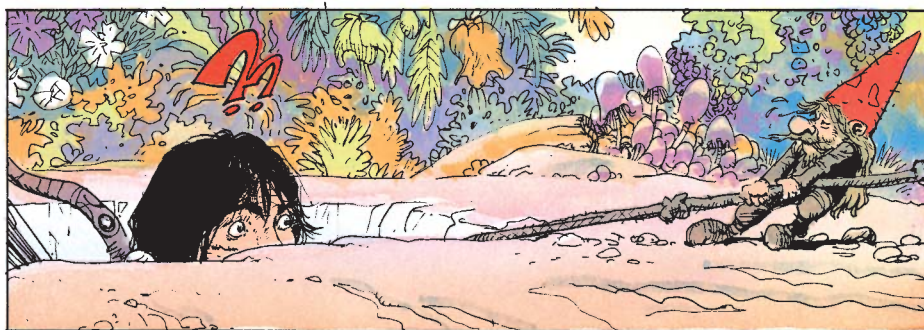


ROSINSKI-VAN HAMME

THORGAL

The Guardian of the Keys



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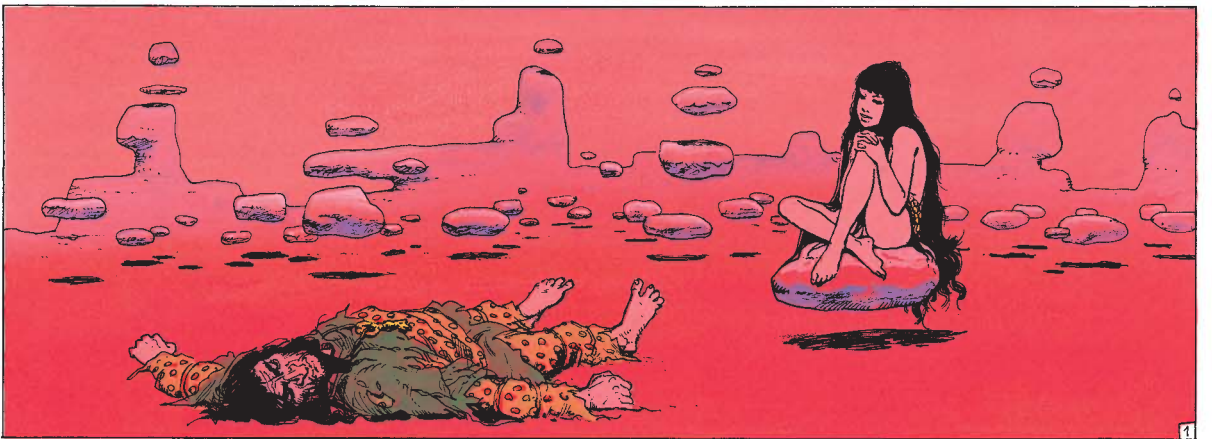
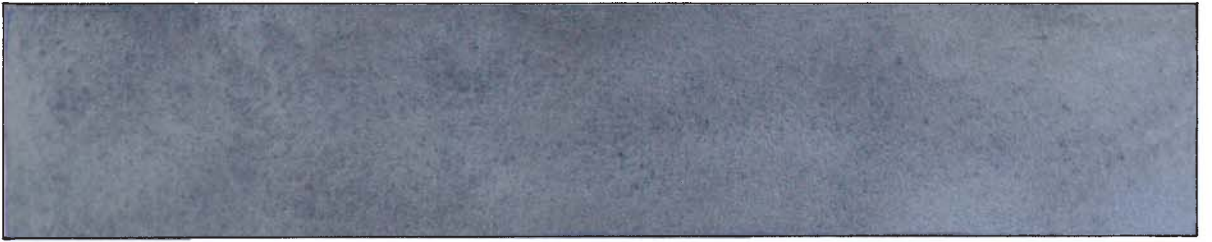
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WHAT... I...
I'M ALIVE?...
I'M ALIVE?...



A LITTLE
SHAKEN FROM
THE VOYAGE,
THOUGH?

WHO?... OH!
THE GUARDIAN OF
THE KEYS!



I'M HAPPY TO SEE
THAT YOUR LONG
SLUMBER IN THE
FOLDS OF SPACE
HASN'T ERASED YOUR
MEMORY, VOLSUNG
OF NICHOR.

BUT I'M NOT WHO YOU THINK I AM.
I'VE ONLY TAKEN ON THE APPEAR-
ANCE TO BETTER EXPLAIN THE
MISSION THAT I'M GOING TO
ENTRUST TO YOU.



WHO ARE YOU, THEN?
WHAT MISSION DO
YOU MEAN?



ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW
IS THAT I'M SOMEONE
WHO CAN, AT THE CLICK
OF MY FINGERS, SEND
YOU BACK TO THE VOID
I JUST PLUCKED YOU
FROM. SOMETHING
I'LL DO IF YOU
FAIL.



NOBODY. ALL YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IS
BRING ME THE TRUE GUARDIAN OF THE
KEYS' BELT. AND LEAVE HER WITH THIS
ONE INSTEAD. NOTHING VERY HEROIC,
AS YOU CAN SEE.



BUT IF YOU
SUCCEED, I'LL TAKE YOU
TO MIDDGARD, THE WORLD
OF MORTALS, WITH AS MUCH
GOLD AS YOU CAN CARRY.
THE DEAL SEEMS HONEST
TO ME, AND I WON'T
EVEN ASK IF
YOU AGREE.

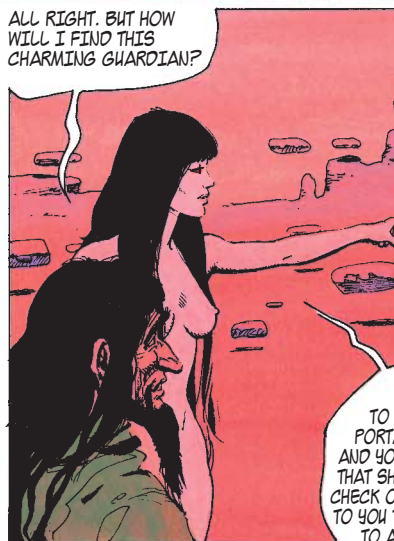


THAT
SUITS ME
PERFECTLY.
WHOM MUST
I KILL?



OH... IS THAT
ALL? WHAT'S SO
SPECIAL ABOUT
THIS BELT?

THAT'S NOT
YOUR CONCERN.
ACCOMPLISH THIS
SIMPLE TASK WITHOUT
ASKING QUESTIONS
AND YOU'LL HAVE
YOUR PREVIOUS
LIFE BACK,
WITH MORE
RICHES.



ALL RIGHT. BUT HOW
WILL I FIND THIS
CHARMING GUARDIAN?

SHE'LL BE THE ONE
TO FIND YOU. GO THROUGH THE
PORTAL YOU CAN SEE OVER THERE,
AND YOU'LL ENTER THE **SECOND WORLD**
THAT SHE PROTECTS. SHE'LL APPEAR TO
CHECK ON YOUR PRESENCE. THEN, IT'S UP
TO YOU TO SHOW YOURSELF SLY ENOUGH
TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR MISSION.

YEAH. THE PROBLEM IS THAT SHE KNOWS ME. AND OUR LAST ENCOUNTER WASN'T THE... FRIENDLIEST*. SHE'LL BE WARY.

I KNOW. BUT SHE HAS TO BE WARY OF ANY INTRUSION INTO THE **SECOND WORLD**. THE GUARDIAN HAS NEITHER FRIENDS NOR ALLIES.

BUT IMMORTALS CAN ALSO HAVE THEIR WEAK POINTS, AND IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I KNOW HERS. IT'S A MAN FROM **MIDGARD** LIKE YOU, A SIMPLE HUMAN WHOM YOU'VE ALREADY MET BEFORE.

AND SO I WILL GIVE YOU HIS APPEARANCE...

LETS GO!



MY BODY!... MY FACE!... IT'S ALL BURNING!... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?...

YOU'LL ALSO HAVE HIS VOICE, HIS MOVEMENTS, HIS STRENGTH...

TO SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION, YOU WILL BE **THORGAL AEGIRSSON!**

BUT, WHY!? WHY HIM!?

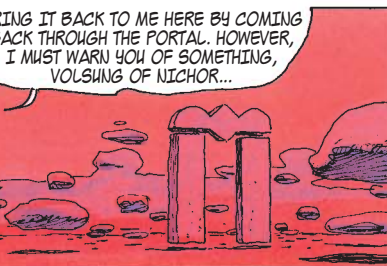
I TOLD YOU: HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BREAK THROUGH THE GUARDIAN OF THE KEYS' WARTINESS. BUT BE CAREFUL, IF, FOR ANY REASON, YOU SHOULD LOSE THE SMALLEST DROP OF BLOOD, THE SPELL'S HOLD WILL FADE AND YOUR NORMAL APPEARANCE WILL RETURN. SO, YOU MUST AVOID ANY INJURY AT ALL COSTS.



IF I MUST... AND WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I HAVE THE BELT?

BRING IT BACK TO ME HERE BY COMING BACK THROUGH THE PORTAL. HOWEVER, I MUST WARN YOU OF SOMETHING, **VOLSUNG OF NICHOR...**

I CHOSE YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE DISHONEST AND COWARDLY, CRUEL, A LIAR, GREEDY AND UNSCRIPULOUS—ALL QUALITIES THAT PLEASE ME IMMENSELY.



BUT, IF YOU DARE TO TRY AND CROSS ME, YOUR PUNISHMENT WILL BE **INDESCRIBABLE!**

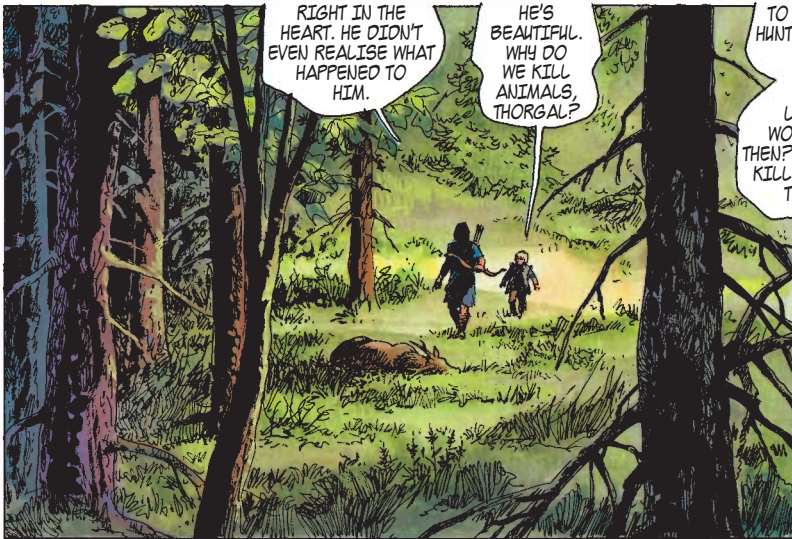


*SEE THE THREE ELDERS OF ARAN.



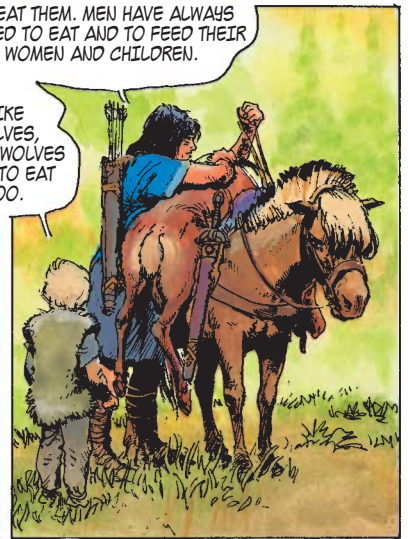
THERE, IT...

SHHH!



RIGHT IN THE HEART. HE DIDN'T EVEN REALISE WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.

HE'S BEAUTIFUL. WHY DO WE KILL ANIMALS, THORGAL?



TO EAT THEM. MEN HAVE ALWAYS HUNTED TO EAT AND TO FEED THEIR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

LIKE WOLVES, THEN? WOLVES KILL TO EAT TOO.



THAT'S RIGHT, EXCEPT WOLVES ONLY KILL TO EAT.



LET'S STOP A MOMENT; WE HAVE AWHILE BEFORE MAKING IT BACK TO THE VILLAGE.

THORGAL, WHEN CAN I HUNT TOO?

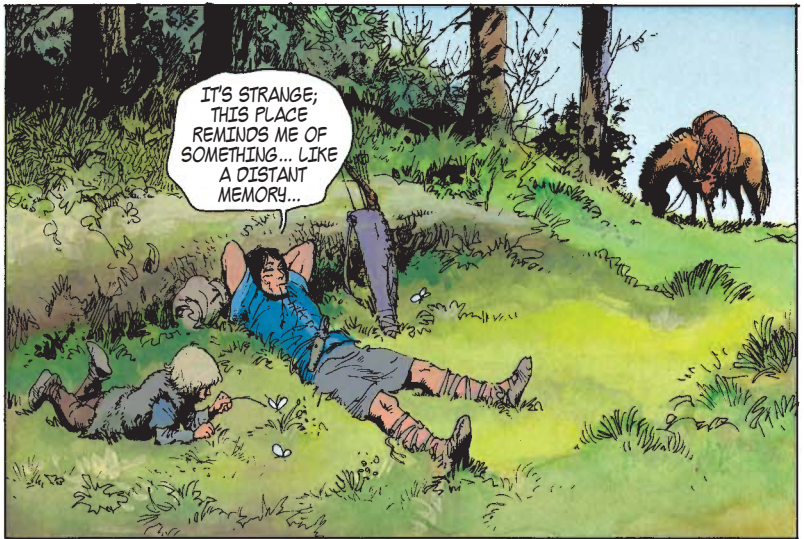
WHEN YOU'RE ABLE TO DRAW A BOW, PAL. WHICH IS STILL FAR FROM BEING THE CASE.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO TEACH ME.

WE'LL LOOK AT IT WHEN YOU'RE GROWN UP, JOLAN.



IT'S STRANGE; THIS PLACE REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING... LIKE A DISTANT MEMORY...



I'VE GOT IT... IT WAS HERE THAT T'JAHZI PASSED US OVER TO "THE OTHER SIDE."

T'JAHZI? THE DWARF YOU GAVE THE METAL THAT DOESN'T EXIST?*



DID YOU REALLY DO ALL THAT WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY LIKE ME?

NO, JOLAN, THAT STORY ISN'T REAL. IT'S A SORT OF DREAM.

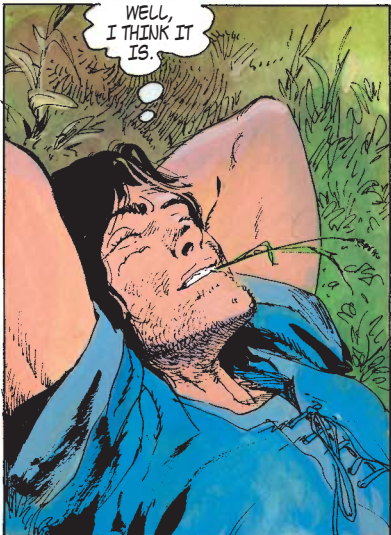


HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?

AARICIA TOLD ME. SEVERAL TIMES. WITH THE VAMPIRE-SNAKES. AND THE GODDESS FRIGG'S FLYING CATS. AND HOW YOU FOUGHT AGAINST THE 12 TAILS OF THE NIDHOGG DRAGON... WOW!



WELL, I THINK IT IS.



HEY!?...



*SEE CHILD OF THE STARS.



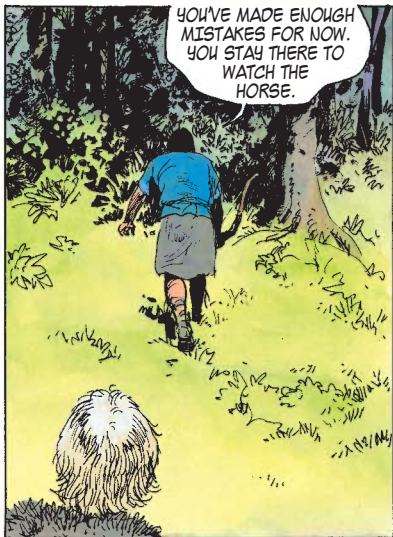
THAT WAS SILLY!
YOU KNOW FULL
WELL THAT THIS BOW
IS MUCH TOO BIG
FOR YOU!

WELL...
I WANTED TO
PRACTISE...

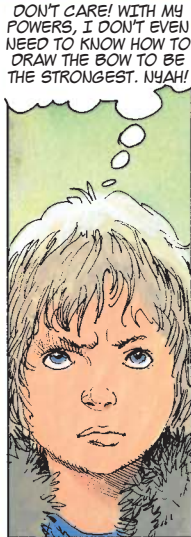


RESULT: ONE
LOST ARROW! YOU
CAN TELL YOU'RE NOT
THE ONE MAKING
THEM.

ALL RIGHT,
OK. I'LL GO
AND GET YOUR
ARROW.



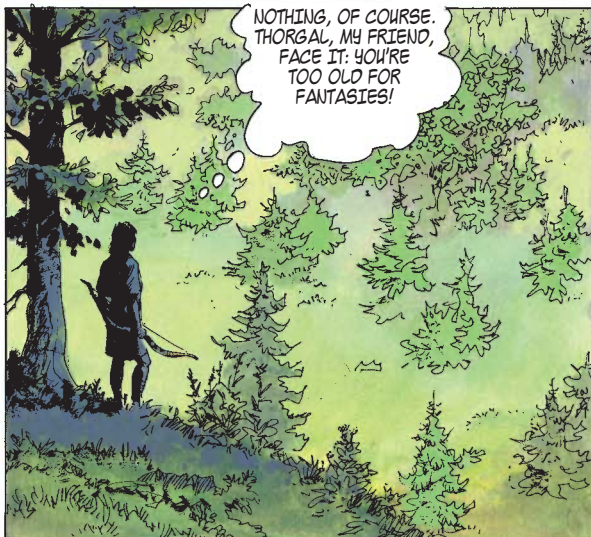
YOU'VE MADE ENOUGH
MISTAKES FOR NOW.
YOU STAY THERE TO
WATCH THE
HORSE.



DON'T CARE! WITH MY
POWERS, I DON'T EVEN
NEED TO KNOW HOW TO
DRAW THE BOW TO BE
THE STRONGEST. NYAH!



TĀAHĒI... WINGED CATS...
IT WOULD BE FUNNY IF, ON
THE OTHER SIDE, I SAW
HĀJALMBUNNAR, THE HORRIBLE
GREEN GIANT WITH FOUR
ARMS WHO SCARED
US SO MUCH...



NOTHING, OF COURSE.
THORGAL, MY FRIEND,
FACE IT: YOU'RE
TOO OLD FOR
FANTASIES!



I'LL JUST LOOK
FOR THIS CURSED
ARROW. WHERE
COULD IT HAVE
GOT TO?...



IS THIS
WHAT YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR,
THORGAL?