



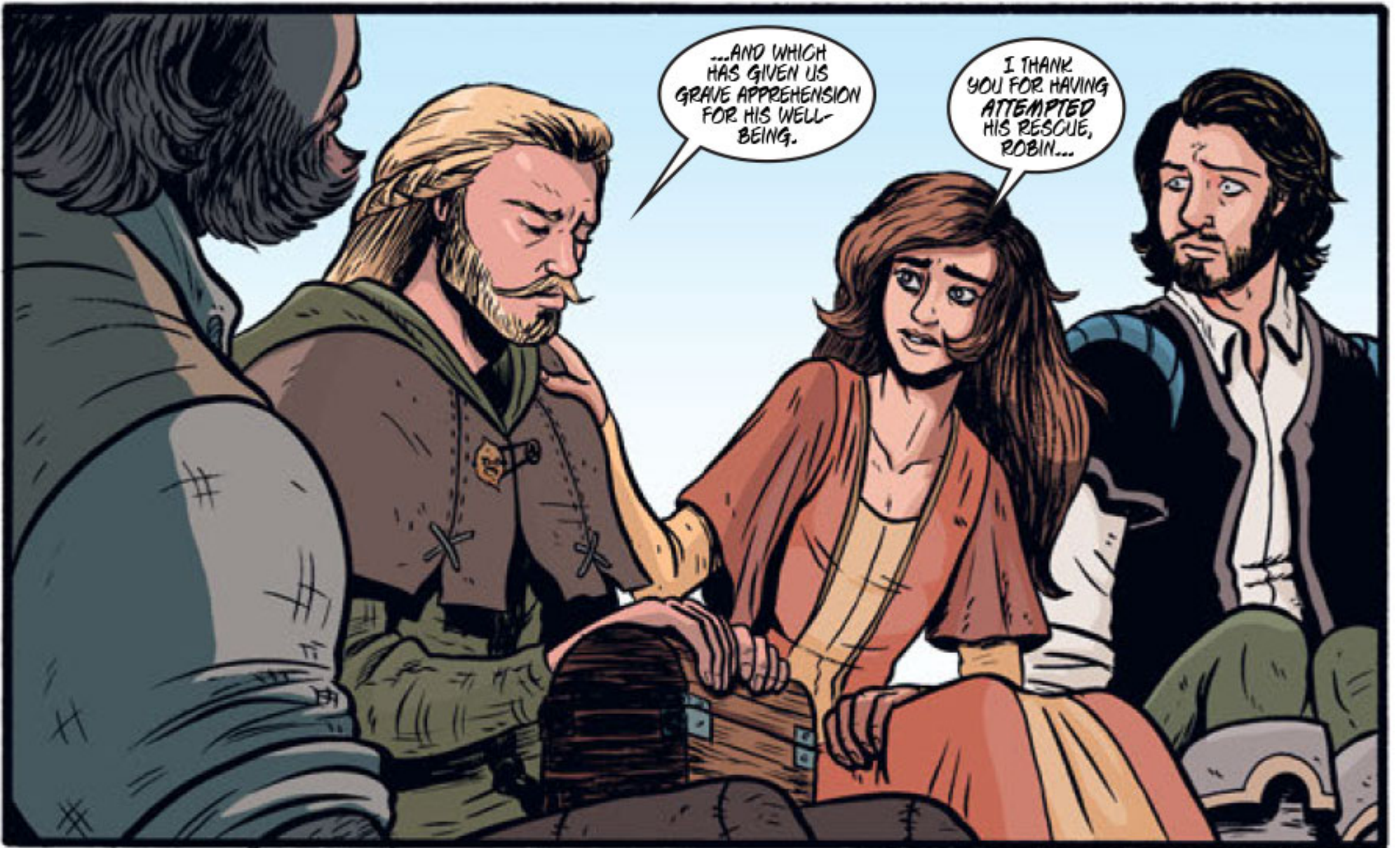
...AND THAT IS THE UNFORTUNATE TRUTH OF THE MATTER, MAID SCARLET.

WE WERE ABLE TO FREE THE PEOPLE OF ELTON FROM THE SHERIFF'S RUINOUS YOKE...



...BUT FOR ALL THAT, WE FOUND NO TRACE OF OUR MUTUAL FRIEND, DANIEL OF DON-CASTER.

THOUGH A TRACE WAS LAER DELIVERED TO US, TO OUR SHEEREST DISQUIET...



...AND WHICH HAS GIVEN US GRAVE APPREHENSION FOR HIS WELL-BEING.

I THANK YOU FOR HAVING ATTEMPTED HIS RESCUE, ROBIN...



...BUT YOU HAVE SAID THAT YOU KNOW WHY MY BELOVED DANIEL CAME TO THIS SORRY ESTATE.

TELL ME, PLEASE;

I WISH SO MUCH TO UNDERSTAND.

I WILL TELL YOU, THOUGH IT IS NOT A TALE WHOSE TELLING AFFORDS ME PLEASURE...



"...FOR I AM THE ROOT AND CAUSE  
OF OUR FRIEND'S PRESENT SUFFERING.

"BUT LET ME TAKE YOU BACK SOME HANDFUL OF YEARS,  
TO THE DAYS WHEN OUR NEWLY CROWNED KING RICHARD  
WAS ON CRUSADE IN THE HOLY LANDS... THAT SACRED  
ENDEAVOR IN WHICH HE EARNED HIS SOBRIQUET, LIONHEART.

"I WAS HONORED TO BE EVER AT HIS SIDE,  
HIS LIEGEMAN AND LIEUTENANT.







"WE HAD JUST TAKEN AN INFIDEL TOWN ON OUR MARCH TO ACRE, AND OUR SPIRITS WERE HIGH..."

A DAMNED GOOD DAY'S WORK, ROBIN.

WE HAVE EARNED REFRESHMENT AND SPORT, I SAY.

I CANNOT BUT CONCUR, SIRE.



...I INSIST THAT YOU DELIVER THE PRISONER INTO THE WARDEN'S CARE, SIR GUY.

AND I INSIST THAT YOU SIT ON YOUR MOTHER'S FAT FACE...

GOD'S TEETH. WHAT NOW?



EXPLAIN THIS UNGALLANT DISPUTATION.

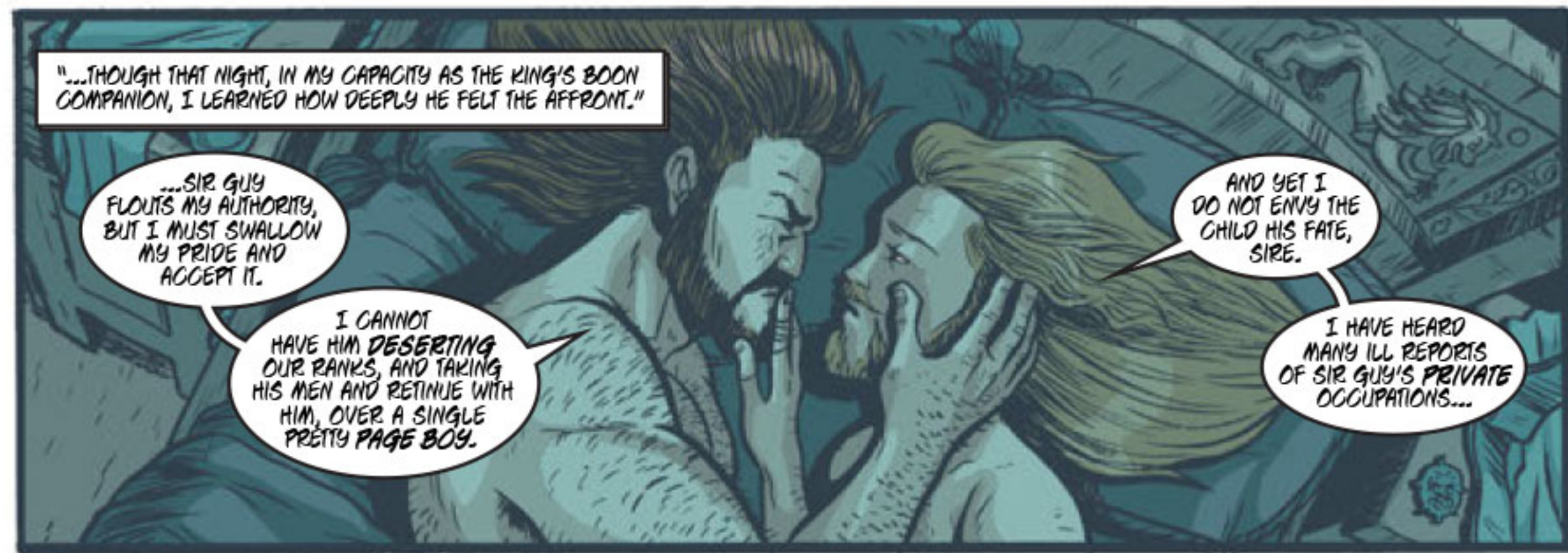
YOUR GRACE, SIR GUY OF GISBOURNE REFUSES TO RELINQUISH HIS CAPTIVE TO THE WARDEN IN CHARGE OF SARACEN PRISONERS.

NOR CAN ANY KING UNDER GOD'S HEAVEN INDUCE ME TO DO SO...



...FOR I AM SURE I AM OWED A PAGE OF MY CHOICE, AFTER ALL THAT I HAVE BROUGHT TO THIS CAMPAIGN.

"ALAS, IT WAS SO. FOR SIR GUY HAD DELIVERED MANY MEN AND MATERIALS INTO KING RICHARD'S SERVICE..."



"...THOUGH THAT NIGHT, IN MY CAPACITY AS THE KING'S BOON COMPANION, I LEARNED HOW DEEPLY HE FELT THE AFFRONT."

...SIR GUY FLOUTS MY AUTHORITY, BUT I MUST SWALLOW MY PRIDE AND ACCEPT IT.

I CANNOT HAVE HIM DESERTING OUR RANKS, AND TAKING HIS MEN AND RETINUE WITH HIM, OVER A SINGLE PRETTY PAGE BOY.

AND YET I DO NOT ENVY THE CHILD HIS FATE, SIRE.

I HAVE HEARD MANY ILL REPORTS OF SIR GUY'S PRIVATE OCCUPATIONS...





"THE NEXT DAY WE CONTINUED OUR MARCH. THE KING WOULD HAVE LIKED TO TAKE EVERY TOWN BY CONQUEST... HE LOVED THE DIN AND TUMULT OF THE FRAY.

"BUT HE BEGAN TO FEAR THAT OUR PROGRESS WAS TOO SLOW, AND THAT BY THE TIME WE REACHED ACRE WE WOULD FIND THE CITY HAD BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT US.



"ACCORDINGLY HE HOPED TO USE HIS MOSLEM CAPTIVES TO HELP NEGOTIATE THE SWIFT SURRENDER OF THE NEXT TOWN WE CAME UPON.

"BUT THERE AROSE A DIFFICULTY..."

"YOUR PARDON, MY LIEGE..."

"WE'VE FOUND YET ANOTHER ONE."



"...WE BEGAN TO DISCOVER BODIES, HORRIBLY DISMEMBERED.

"THE BODIES OF OUR CHRISTIAN FELLOWS."



"THE MEN BLAMED SARACEN ASSASSINS--AND THE CALL FOR VENGEANCE ON OUR SARACEN CAPTIVES GREW EVER LOUDER."

SIRE, THE MEN CRY FOR JUSTICE.

ALLOW ME TO APPEASE THEM BY MAKING AN EXAMPLE OF SOME HUNDRED OR SO OF OUR PRISONERS WHO ARE, AFTER ALL...

INFIDEL SCUM AND DESERVING OF NONE OF THE COURTESIES OF KNIGHTLY CAPTIVITY.

THEY ARE NOT YOUR PRISONERS, GUY, THEY ARE MINE. AND I DO NOT ALLOW IT...



...INSTEAD, I PUT THIS MATTER INTO THE HANDS OF MY TRUSTED LIEUTENANT, ROBERT GODWINSON.

HE HAS MY UNCONDITIONAL WARRANT FOR ALL HIS CONDUCT, AND HIS WORD CARRIES MY FULL AUTHORITY.



SIRE... RICHARD... HOW AM I TO PROCEED IN THIS IMPOSSIBLE TASK YOU HAVE GIVEN ME?

HOW AM I TO QUELL OUR ANGRY REGIMENTS, AND AT THE SAME TIME PROTECT THEM FROM HARM?

I AM BUT ONE MAN!



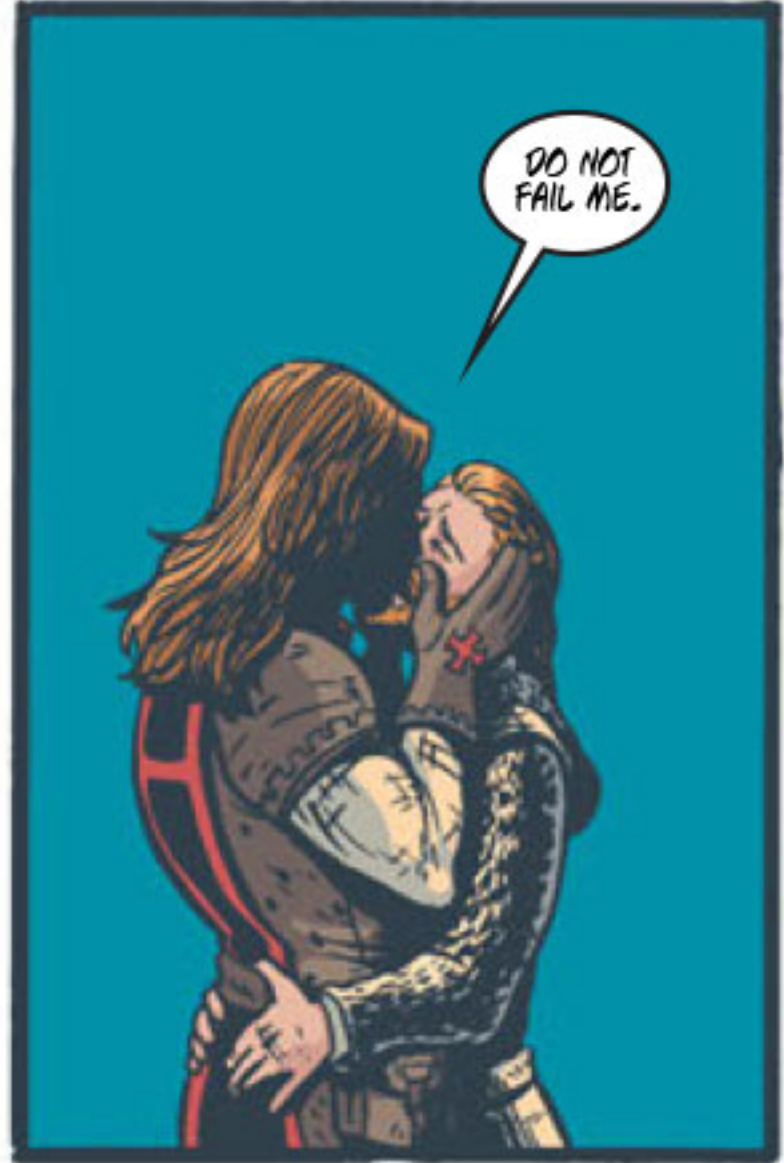
SO, I AM CONVINCED, IS THE AGENT OF THESE BRUTAL MURDERS.

FORGIVE ME, SWEET ROBIN; I FEAR TREACHERY AT EVERY TURN.

AND I REQUIRE THAT ONE I TRUST UNDERTAKE TO DISCOVER IT.



DO NOT FAIL ME.





"BUT IT SEEMED I WAS FATED TO FAIL."

"THE MEN CLOSED RANKS AGAINST ME. THEY RESPECTED MY BRAVERY IN BATTLE, BUT AS THE KING'S FAVOURITE I WAS AN OBJECT OF SCORN AND SUSPICION."



"IT WAS ONLY LATER THAT I LEARNED GUY OF GISBOURNE HAD DONE MUCH TO STOKE THE FIRES OF THIS RESENTMENT."

"...ARE WE TO SUFFER THIS? THE KING'S BUM BOY, TO HOLD SWAY OVER US?"

"THE MAN'S AN UPSTART... BEFORE HE TOOK UP ARMS HE WAS A MERE MERCHANT IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE."

"THE ARMY IS SUCH A BOON TO THESE AMBITIOUS PROVINCIALS..."

"BUT THEY WON'T VAULT OVER MY HEAD SO EASILY AS THAT."



"THE KING GREW RESTLESS WITH MY LACK OF PROGRESS..."

"I WANT NO EXCUSES FROM YOU, ROBIN!"

"ANOTHER BODY TODAY-- AND YOU CANNOT YET TELL ME OF A CERTAINTY WHETHER THE ASSASSIN IS FROM WITHIN OR WITHOUT?"

"I WILL NOT SUFFER A MUTINY BECAUSE OF YOUR LACK OF BEAL!"



"RICHARD HAD RAISED ME HIGH BECAUSE OF MY SERVICE TO HIM, IN BED AND IN BATTLE."

"NOW IT SEEMED THAT HE MIGHT CAST ME DOWN AGAIN, FOR MY INABILITY TO SERVICE HIM IN A CAPACITY FOR WHICH MY TALENTS DID NOT RECOMMEND ME."

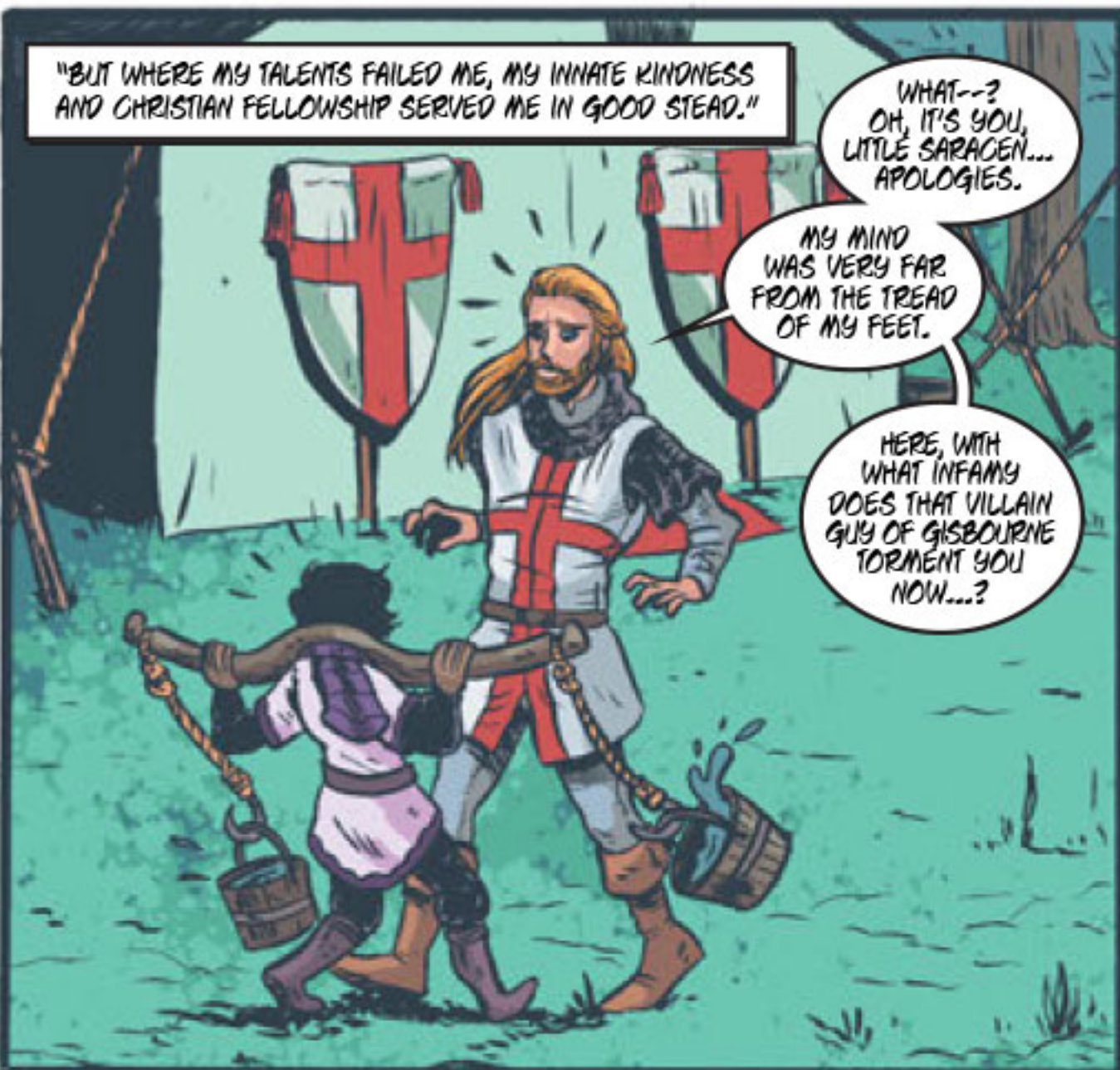


"BUT WHERE MY TALENTS FAILED ME, MY INNATE KINDNESS AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP SERVED ME IN GOOD STEAD."

"WHAT--? OH, IT'S YOU, LITTLE SARACEN... APOLOGIES."

"MY MIND WAS VERY FAR FROM THE TREAD OF MY FEET."

"HERE, WITH WHAT INFAMY DOES THAT VILLAIN GUY OF GISBOURNE TORMENT YOU NOW...?"



"...NEVER MIND. LET ME SHOULDER YOUR BURDEN FOR YOU."

"I CAN BUT WISH YOU COULD AS EASILY SHOULDER MINE..."

