






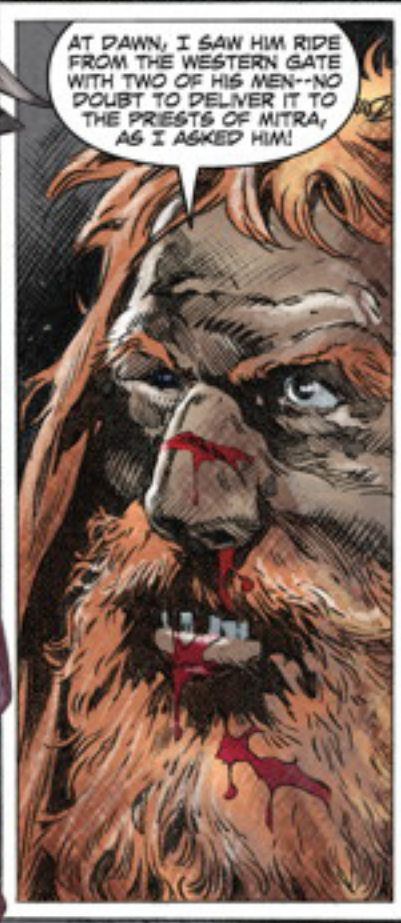
YOUR NAME IS SAULT, IS IT NOT? HOW FAR YOU HAVE FALLEN, RANGER! DO YOU REMEMBER ME? YEARS AGO, YOU TOOK SOMETHING FROM MY CARE!

WHERE IS THE CROWN?




CONNIVING PICT WITCH! I REMEMBER YOU--AND I SEE THAT YOU STILL BEAR THE MARKS THAT MY BROTHERS AND I GAVE YOU!

YOU'VE COME TOO LATE! THE CROWN IS FAR BEYOND YOUR REACH! I GAVE IT TO THE KING!



AT DAWN, I SAW HIM RIDE FROM THE WESTERN GATE WITH TWO OF HIS MEN--NO DOUBT TO DELIVER IT TO THE PRIESTS OF MITRA, AS I ASKED HIM!



AH... WEST, YOU SAY?



THEN WE CAME TO THIS STINKING CITY FOR NOTHING! THE PRIESTS WILL SEAL IT IN THEIR VAULTS FOREVER!

NO. THE CROWN ITSELF WILL NOT ALLOW IT!

YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE LIVING SPIRITS THAT DWELL WITHIN IT!

IF THE CROWN IS NOW FREE LIKE THE WRETCH SAYS, IT WILL SEEK A PATH HOME-- WEST--NOT SOUTH WHERE THE MITRAN TEMPLE LIES!

FLY, DARK SISTER! LET OUR BROTHERS IN THE FOREST KNOW THAT WE'LL SOON RETURN! AND BID THEM TO KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE FOR OTHERS WHO MAY CROSS THE BLACK RIVER!

AND THE OLD RANGER?

RELEASE HIM OR CUT HIS THROAT--I CARE NOT! JUST DO IT QUICKLY! WE'LL STEAL A BOAT AND BE RID OF THIS FILTHY PILE OF STEEL AND STONE!

"THE OLD FOOL MAY HAVE DONE US A GREATER FAVOR THAN HE COULD EVER GUESS!"

FIVE DAYS LATER, WESTWARD...ACROSS THE BLACK RIVER IN THE PICTISH FRONTIER OF CONAJOHARA...



MITRA'S
██████, WHAT
A CURSED LAND!
THE FLIES SWARM
AND BITE LIKE
HORNETS!



WHY DON'T
THEY BOTHER *HIM*?
THE KING SEEMS TO
PAY THEM LITTLE
ATTENTION.

HA! EVEN
THE DAMNED
BUGS THINK IT
UNWISE TO ANGER
THAT MAN,
DARLIN.



YOU DOGS
HAVE BEEN IN THE
SADDLE FOR ALMOST
A WEEK. PERHAPS
IT'S YOUR *STINK*
THAT'S DRAWING
THEM.



BE CERTAIN
THAT THE FLIES
AREN'T THE *ONLY*
THINGS IN THIS COUNTRY
THAT WANT OUR BLOOD.









PICTS!
AND HUNGRY FOR
A TASTE OF
STEEL!



THEN
LET'S SEE THAT
YOUR GUESTS
ARE FED,
SIRE!

CHOKK



AGULONIAN
PIG!



ARRH!

WHNNK

