

MARVEL

4

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AGE OF CONAN™

VALERIA



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BONUS **DIGITAL EDITION** — DETAILS INSIDE!

Between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the years of the rise of the sons of Aryas, there was an age undreamed of, an age of barbarism and fierce warriors, an age of magic and treasure, known as the Hyborian Age. This is the...

AGE OF CONAN™

AMONG THE MERCENARIES AND PIRATES OF THE AGE, ONE FIGHTER STANDS OUT IN LEGEND.
BUT BEFORE SHE WAS PART OF THE RED BROTHERHOOD, SHE WAS KNOWN SIMPLY AS...

VALERIA

chapter four

LORD OF LIES

When her parents were killed by Zingaran pirates, young Valeria was raised by her older brother, Cassian, a royal guardsman-in-training, and his mentor, Antonius, a Mitran Knight. After she witnessed Cassian's murder by a hooded figure, Valeria spent her life training to become the best swordfighter in all of Aquilonia while also hunting her brother's killer.

Valeria's quest led her to a Mitran monastery, where she discovered Antonius was also seeking shelter. After the monastery was attacked by Lord Blasius, who demanded Antonius' surrender within 24 hours, Valeria finally confronted the man she suspects killed her brother...

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CONAN CREATED BY ROBERT E. HOWARD.

Mitran Monastery.

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOU SO MANY TIMES OVER THE YEARS. AND LOOK AT WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN YOU'VE BECOME!

I came here to confront the man responsible for killing my brother...and before I even knew what was happening...I found myself sitting in his room, in front of his fire... like old times.

WORD AROUND THE MONASTERY IS YOU KILLED THREE MERCENARIES BEFORE YOU COLLAPSED ON THEIR DOORSTEP.

THREE-TO-ONE, VAL?! **HAHA!** YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!

And, as I looked at him, almost unchanged, my heart was filled with memories of how much I had looked up to him... how much I had loved him.

CASSIAN WOULD BE FURIOUS IF HE--

I'M SO SORRY, VALERIA. NOT A DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T MISS HIM. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE FOR YOU.

His mention of my brother brought it all back. This was the man responsible for spilling my brother's lifeblood onto the dusty ground, and he was going to pay.

ANTONIUS. WHO WAS THAT MAN WHO ATTACKED THE MONASTERY TODAY? HE LOOKED... **FAMILIAR.**



I just need to keep him talking...

BLASIUS? HE WAS LORD HIGH STEWARD WHEN CASSIAN AND I WERE IN THE KING'S GUARD. HE USED TO COME BY THE HOUSE FROM TIME TO TIME... TO SEE YOUR BROTHER...



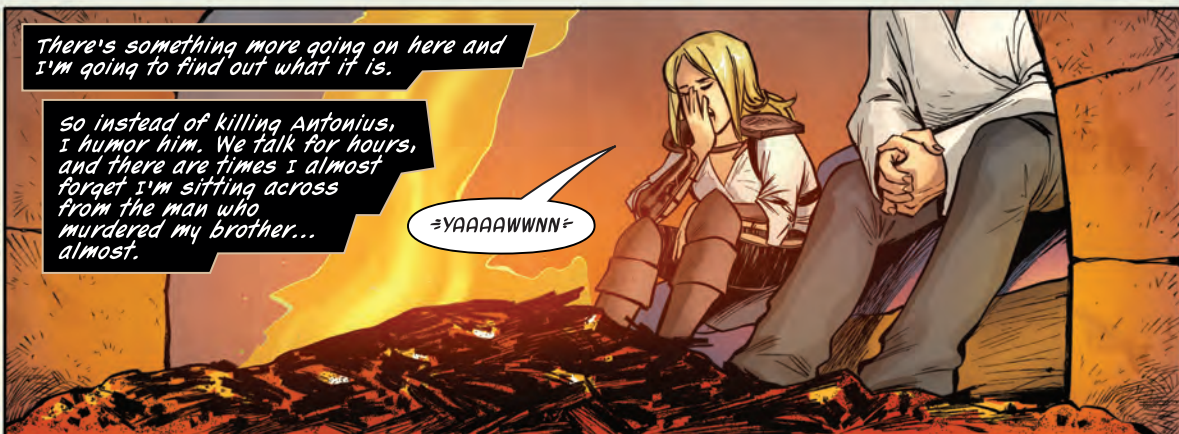
THE LORD HIGH STEWARD? WHAT BUSINESS COULD HE POSSIBLY HAVE HAD WITH A KING'S GUARDSMAN? WITH CASSIAN?

SOMETIMES POWER AND POLITICS MAKE STRANGE BEDFELLOWS. I JUST WISH I'D...



NO! ENOUGH TALK ABOUT SOME FEUD BETWEEN A COUPLE OF OLD MEN. TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR TRAINING! IF YOU CAN HANDLE THREE MERCENARIES ON YOUR OWN, THEN MAYBE THIS OLD KNIGHT COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM YOU.

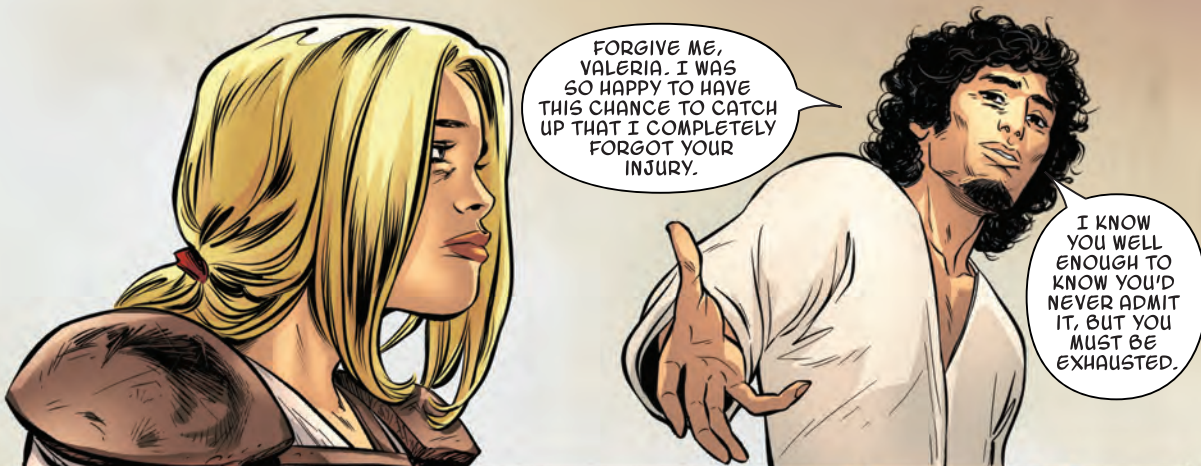
From what I saw on the wall earlier, there's more than just a feud between Blasius and Antonius.



There's something more going on here and I'm going to find out what it is.

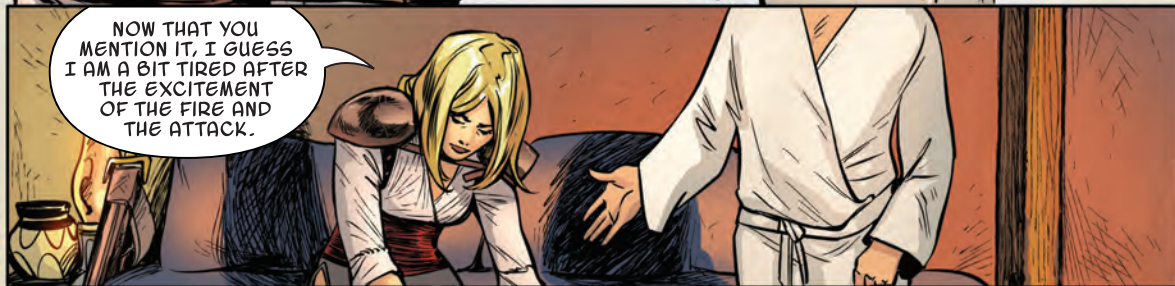
So instead of killing Antonius, I humor him. We talk for hours, and there are times I almost forget I'm sitting across from the man who murdered my brother... almost.

≡YAAAAWWNN≡



FORGIVE ME, VALERIA. I WAS SO HAPPY TO HAVE THIS CHANCE TO CATCH UP THAT I COMPLETELY FORGOT YOUR INJURY.

I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU'D NEVER ADMIT IT, BUT YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.



NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I GUESS I AM A BIT TIRED AFTER THE EXCITEMENT OF THE FIRE AND THE ATTACK.



HMMM, YES. BUT RIGHT NOW, THE **ONLY** THING YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT IS GETTING WELL.



LET ME WALK YOU BACK TO YOUR ROOM.



WE HAVE SO MUCH CATCHING UP TO DO, VALERIA. SLEEP WELL.

He's right. I have a lot of catching up to do...but sleep isn't on the list.

Did the enmity between Antonius and Blasius have something to do with my brother? With why he had been killed?

I need answers. It's obvious I'm not going to get them from Antonius, but I have another option.

I'm young, and I've always been a quick healer.

...doesn't pose a challeng--

UMMMPPF!

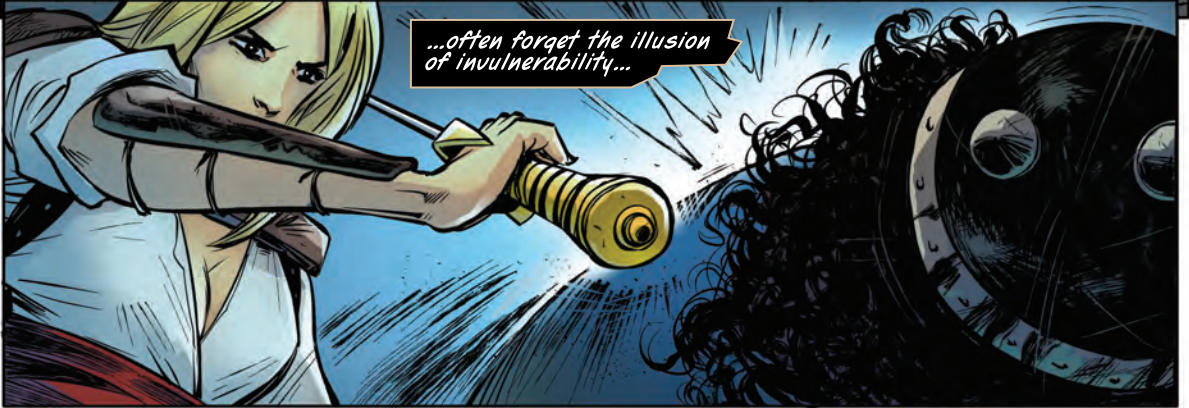
Add a few climbing tricks I learned during a brief stint in Cimmericia...

...and the wall guarding Lord Blasius' keep...

Or not much of one, anyway.



It also doesn't hurt that powerful men...



...often forget the illusion of invulnerability...



...is only ever just that...



...an illusion.