

DC COMICS

#1
OF 5

DIABLO



SWORD
OF
JUSTICE

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"FEAR IS THE FUEL
BLOOD IS THE SPARK
KINDLE THE RAGE
AND BRING FORTH THE DARK"

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AS MAN'S SOUL
IS OFTEN A BATTLEGROUND
FOR GOOD AND EVIL, SO HAS
THE ETERNAL CONFLICT RAGED
ACROSS CREATION. THE HIGH
HEAVENS AND THE BURNING
HELLS SEEK...

...WELL, IT IS
NOT FOR MAN TO
UNDERSTAND. BUT AS
WITH MAN, THERE WERE
THOSE WHO GREW
WEARY OF ENDLESS
WAR.



THESE BEINGS CREATED
SANCTUARY, THE VERY
WORLD WE LIVE UPON, TO
BE A REFUGE OF PEACE.

BUT PEACE WAS NOT TO BE. NONE
KNOWS FOR CERTAIN WHAT THOSE
EARLY DAYS WERE LIKE FOR MAN,
ANGEL, OR DEMON. BUT THERE WAS A
RECKONING, AND SANCTUARY'S
EXISTENCE HUNG IN THE BALANCE.

IT WAS REVEALED TO ME THAT THE WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BUT FOR A SINGLE CHOICE, MADE BY MOST HOLY TYRAEL, A BEING OF PERFECT JUSTICE. THAT SANCTUARY SHOULD CONTINUE.

BUT THE WAR CONTINUED AS WELL.

THE ARCHANGEL WHO SPARED US GAVE HIS PROTECTION A SECOND TIME. MY THIRD EYE BEHELD A MYSTICAL STONE WHICH HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO SANCTUARY, BUT IT HAD BECOME CORRUPTED AND WOULD HAVE LET EVIL FLOW FREELY INTO OUR WORLD.

MOUNT ARREAT, HOME TO THIS WORLDSTONE, GUARDED BY THE MIGHTY AND NOBLE BARBARIANS, IS NO MORE. ITS SACRIFICE THWARTED ONE OF THE VERY PRIME EVILS FROM CORRUPTING EVERY LAST MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD.

WE HONOR THE BARBARIAN GUARDIANS OF ARREAT, WHOSE VIGILANCE OVER THE SACRED POWER THAT ONCE LAY WITHIN HAS ENDED.

AND THAT IS WHAT MY TALES SHALL BE OF TOMORROW, MY PEOPLE! RETURN TO BAHMAN THE STORYTELLER AT FIRST CALL TO HEAR MORE OF ARREAT'S DESTRUCTION AND THRILLING LEGENDS OF THE LOST BARBARIANS, WHO EVEN NOW SEEK A NEW DESTINY!

CHILDREN AND THE DELICATE SHOULD WAIT TWO DAYS TO HEAR LIGHTER FARE, FOR TOMORROW'S STORIES MAY OVERWHELM THE FAINT OF HEART!









BUT I AM
ZAFIK, FINDER OF
LOST TREASURES,
KAHRIN'S BEST
CUSTOMER!

AND
I AM STROM,
LOOSER OF ARROWS.
IVAN, BREAKER OF
SKULLS, BIDS YOU
FIND ANOTHER JUNK
MONGER!



I KNOW
WHICH WAY
HE WENT.

NO
NEED FOR
HASTE...

SHOULD
I GATHER
THE OTHERS,
IVAN?

"...THE DESERT
SHOULD SOFTEN
HIM UP NICELY."



...SUPERSTITIOUS
WORDS...

...AND I
LISTENED...

...DESERVE
THIS, DESERVE
IT TWICE
OVER...

...DOUBLE
GREATNESS,
DOUBLE THE
FOOL...



...DOUBLE...











YOU SHOW
COURAGE TO
CHALLENGE ME, BOY.
FOR THAT, I GRANT
YOU A WARRIOR'S
DEATH!

HOLD!!





THE SCOUTS REPORT THE BARBARIANS HAVE VANISHED INTO THE WASTES, MY LORD.

THEY FOUL THE VERY AIR, MY LORD.

THEY FIGHT LIKE DEMONS. IF I DON'T CLEANSSE MYSELF OF THEIR VILE BLOOD BEFORE THE PASSING OF THE HOUR, I FEAR I'LL GO MAD, MYSELF.



LORD CONSTABLE!

PEACE, MAN. WHAT'S SO URGENT?

YOUR SON, MY LORD! AND HIS FRIEND! COME QUICKLY!



WHAT IN THE NAME OF AKARAT...?

WHERE IS JACOB? WHERE IS MY SON?!

THERE, MY LORD.



JACOB! WHAT THE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE OF THE WALLS?!

THIS WAS IVAN'S DOING, WASN'T IT?! I THOUGHT YOU HAD MORE SENSE THAN TO FOLLOW HIS IDIOCY!

HE WANTED TO HELP PROTECT US, FATHER.

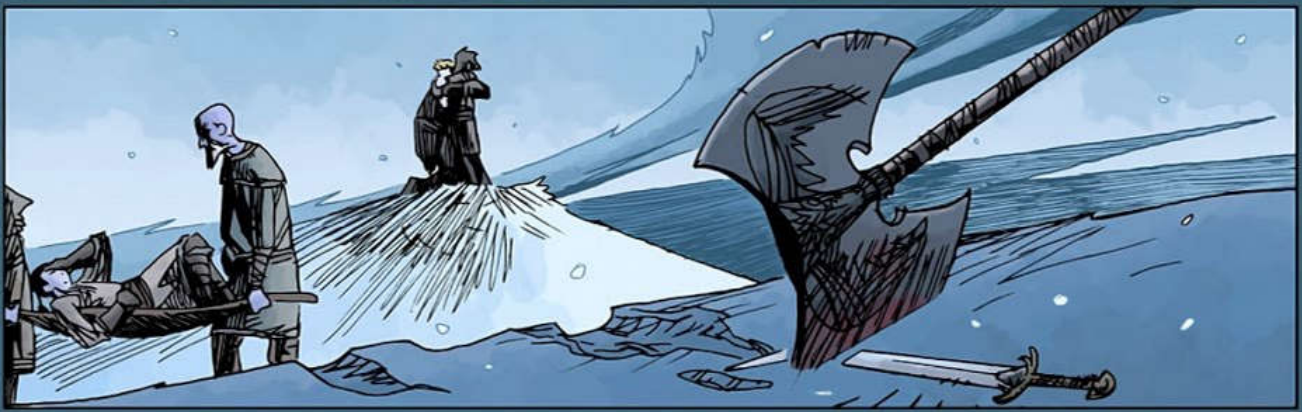


JACOB, LOOK AT ME WHEN I SPEAK TO YOU!

I DON'T CARE IF HE WAS THE LAST DEFENDER OF STAALBREAK AND BAAL HIMSELF WAS BREACHING THE WALLS! YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED WHERE IT WAS SAFE!

YOU ALWAYS TELL ME HOW IMPORTANT YOUR OATH TO PROTECT OUR PEOPLE IS. HOW COULD I LET IVAN OR ANYONE GO INTO DANGER WITHOUT TRYING TO PROTECT THEM, TOO?





I REMEMBER.
I HELPED THE
SMITH TO MEND
THE BLADE.



NO.
NOT
THIS...



READY
AT LAST,
BOY?

THIS IS IMPORTANT.
THE PEOPLE MUST KNOW
THE LAW IS THERE TO PROTECT
THEM AND WILL DO SO WITHOUT
WEAKNESS OR PAUSE. THEY
MUST ALSO KNOW THAT THE
LAW IS SWIFT AND
INESCAPABLE.

IF FOR ONE MOMENT
THEY THINK OTHERWISE, WE
MIGHT AS WELL CAST DOWN THE
WALLS AND GIVE OURSELVES
OVER TO THE BARBARIANS'
SPEARS.

I WILL NOT
SEE OUR PEOPLE
SUCCUMB TO
ENEMIES WITHIN OR
WITHOUT.

LOOK
AT ME WHEN
I SPEAK TO
YOU!

YOU WILL
ATTEND ME AS I FULFILL
MY DUTY AND YOU WILL
SAY NOTHING, DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

IF BUT ONE
PROTEST, ONE WORD,
ONE *SIGH* REACHES MY
EARS IN THE NEXT HOUR,
IT WILL BE THE END
FOR YOU IN
STAALBREAK.

THESE ARE
DARK TIMES, AND I
WILL NOT ALLOW EVEN
A HINT OF REBELLION TO
ERODE OUR PEOPLE'S
RESOLVE...

...AND
SO WHILE THE
DICTATES OF THE LAW
MAY SEEM HARSH, KNOW
THAT THEY ARE AS IRON
WALLS BETWEEN OUR WAY
OF LIFE AND THOSE WHO
WOULD CONQUER
US!



A MOMENT, PLEASE. I WOULD SPEAK WITH MY SON.

AND YET THERE ARE THOSE AMONG US WHO WOULD BETRAY EVEN THEIR LOVED ONES FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL GAIN...



MOTHER!

ONLY A MOMENT, LADY. THE CONSTABLE...

CAN WAIT. CALM YOURSELF, JACOB. I DON'T WANT YOU TO DRAW YOUR FATHER'S WRATH TODAY.



WHAT FATHER SAYS CAN'T BE TRUE! NO ONE IN STAALBREAK WOULD BETRAY US TO THE BARBARIANS!

DID YOU KNOW THAT ONCE, UNIONS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE AND THE BARBARIANS WERE COMMON?



YOUR FATHER AND I WERE THE LAST SUCH MARRIAGE. OUR "COURTSHIP" ADDED MANY TROPHIES TO THE CONSTABLE'S HALLS.

OF COURSE, THOSE WERE LESS TROUBLED TIMES, BEFORE THE CATASTROPHE THAT TOOK ARREAT.

BUT THAT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH TODAY! I WON'T LET YOU GO THROUGH WITH THIS...THIS...

WE REAP THE LEGACY OF TOO MANY SECRETS AND TOO MUCH PRIDE AMONG THE BARBARIANS. NOW, WE ARE A BROKEN PEOPLE.

WE CAN TARRY NO LONGER, LADY. WE MUST JOIN THE CONSTABLE OR IT'LL BE OUR HIDES.

OF COURSE.

NO! I WON'T LET HIM DO THIS!

BE STILL, LAD. YOU'LL JUST MAKE THINGS WORSE!

...AND THUS IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART BUT STERN RESOLVE THAT I BRING BEFORE YOU THE TRAITOR WHO HAS LIVED AMONG US, ALL THE WHILE GIVING AID TO THE EVIL THAT WOULD GLADLY END OUR LIVES.

DOES THE CONDEMNED HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY BEFORE JUSTICE IS DONE?

IF MY WORDS EVER HELD ANY PURPOSE, I WOULD NOT BE HERE, MY HUSBAND.

LET THE SENTENCE BE CARRIED OUT!

NO.

NO!

NO!!





WHAT I SAW...

...WAS THE MURDER OF AN INNOCENT WOMAN.



YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'VE DONE TO PROTECT US! WHAT I'VE ENDURED! WHAT I'VE SACRIFICED!

YOU KNOW NOTHING!

THE BURDEN I BEAR IS GREATER THAN ANY YOU CAN IMAGINE! THE HEADSMAN'S BLOCK WOULD DRINK OF EVEN MY SON'S BLOOD IF THE LAW DEMANDED IT!



MY MOTHER COMMITTED NO CRIME. IT WAS YOUR MADNESS THAT CONDEMNED HER, NOT THE LAW!



YOU DON'T--!

AH, THEN THAT IS HOW IT IS TO BE...



IT WOULD SEEM THAT YOU ARE CONDEMNED AS WELL.

• TO BE CONTINUED •