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THOMAS ■ HAWTHORNE ■ LUCAS

# CONAN

## ROAD OF KINGS





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# CONAN

CONAN®: ROAD OF KINGS #1 / DECEMBER 2010

Based on the work of Conan® creator ROBERT E. HOWARD

SCRIPT

**ROY THOMAS**

PENCILS

**MIKE HAWTHORNE**

INKS

**JOHN LUCAS**

COLORS

**DAVE STEWART**

LETTERS

**RICHARD STARKINGS  
& COMICRAFT**

COVER

**DOUG WHEATLEY**

ALTERNATE COVER

**DALE KEOWN**

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## CONAN: ROAD OF KINGS

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Know, O Prince, that 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 when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles beneath the stars. But the proudest kingdom in the world was Aquilonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west. Hither came Conan the Cimmerian; black-haired, sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth, to tread the jeweled thrones of the Earth under his sandaled feet.

◆ NUMBER **76** IN A SERIES ◆



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BETWEEN A DARKLING SKY  
AND A DUSKY, HEAVING  
SEA, TWO VESSELS ROSE  
AND FELL LIKE FIERCELY  
EMBRACING LOVERS...

...LASHED TOGETHER  
AS THEY WERE BY  
TAUT, STRAINING  
ROPES AND CLAW-LIKE  
GRAPPLING HOOKS...

...WHILE THOSE ONBOARD DANCED THEIR OWN DEADLY  
DERVISH ON DECKS GROWN SLIPPERY WITH GORE.

THIS  
SHIP'S CREW  
ARE FOOLS,  
IVANOS--

--AND  
WE EVEN  
GREATER  
ONES--

--KILLING  
MEN WE COULD  
USE TO REPLACE  
THOSE WE LOST  
TO THE IRON  
SHADOWS!

WE--DIDN'T  
MAKE THESE  
HYRKANIAN  
DOLTS--RESIST  
US, CONAN!

URRGGK





THEY'D HAVE  
SURRENDERED  
IN A DROVE,  
AT FIRST SIGHT  
OF OUR PIRATE  
COLORS--



--BUT FOR  
THAT GROSS  
CLOWN--  
--THEIR  
CAPTAIN!



RALLY  
ROUND ME,  
LADS!

GIVE NOT AN  
INCH, NOR ANY  
QUARTER!



CROM'S BONES! IF  
THAT'S OUR ONLY  
RESISTANCE--



--IT'S SETTLED,  
SOON ENOUGH!



NGGNNN



HE'S  
DOWN!

OUR CAPTAIN  
DROWNS IN HIS  
OWN BLOOD!

OHhhh









WHAT SAY YOU, KRIMSAR?  
ISN'T THIS BETTER THAN  
SLASHING AND *BEING*  
SLASHED?

MAYBE OUR  
NEW CAPTAIN'S  
SMARTER THAN  
WE THOUGHT!



AND *MAYBE*  
ONE DAY SOON  
HE'LL PROVE TOO  
SMART FOR HIS  
OWN GOOD!



HEAR ME,  
YOU LAND  
LOVERS!

THE SAUCY WENCH CAN  
USE MEN WHO'D PREFER  
A PIRATE'S LIFE TO  
FETCHING AND CARRYING  
FOR THE LACKEYS OF  
KING YILDIZ.

ANYONE  
CARE TO FOLLOW THE  
COLORS OF THE *RED*  
BROTHERHOOD?



AND IF WE  
*DON'T*?

WE  
KNOW THE  
ANSWER TO  
THAT! WE'LL BE  
*SHARK'S*  
MEAT!



I WAS BORN A  
*BARBARIAN*--BUT  
I TAKE NO PLEASURE  
IN KILLING FOR ITS  
OWN SAKE.

THERE'S THE  
*LIFEBOAT*, FOR THOSE  
WITH NO STOMACH FOR THE  
SCARLET ROAD WE TRAVEL.



R-ROW  
FASTER, MEN!  
AGHRAPUR'S  
THAT WAY...  
I THINK.

IF THAT  
BLOATED TOAD  
REACHES SHORE  
BEFORE WE SHOVE  
HIM OVERBOARD,  
HE'D BE WISE  
TO GIVE THANKS  
TO *ERLIK*!





WE'VE  
CREW ENOUGH  
TO HANDLE  
ONE VESSEL,  
NO MORE.

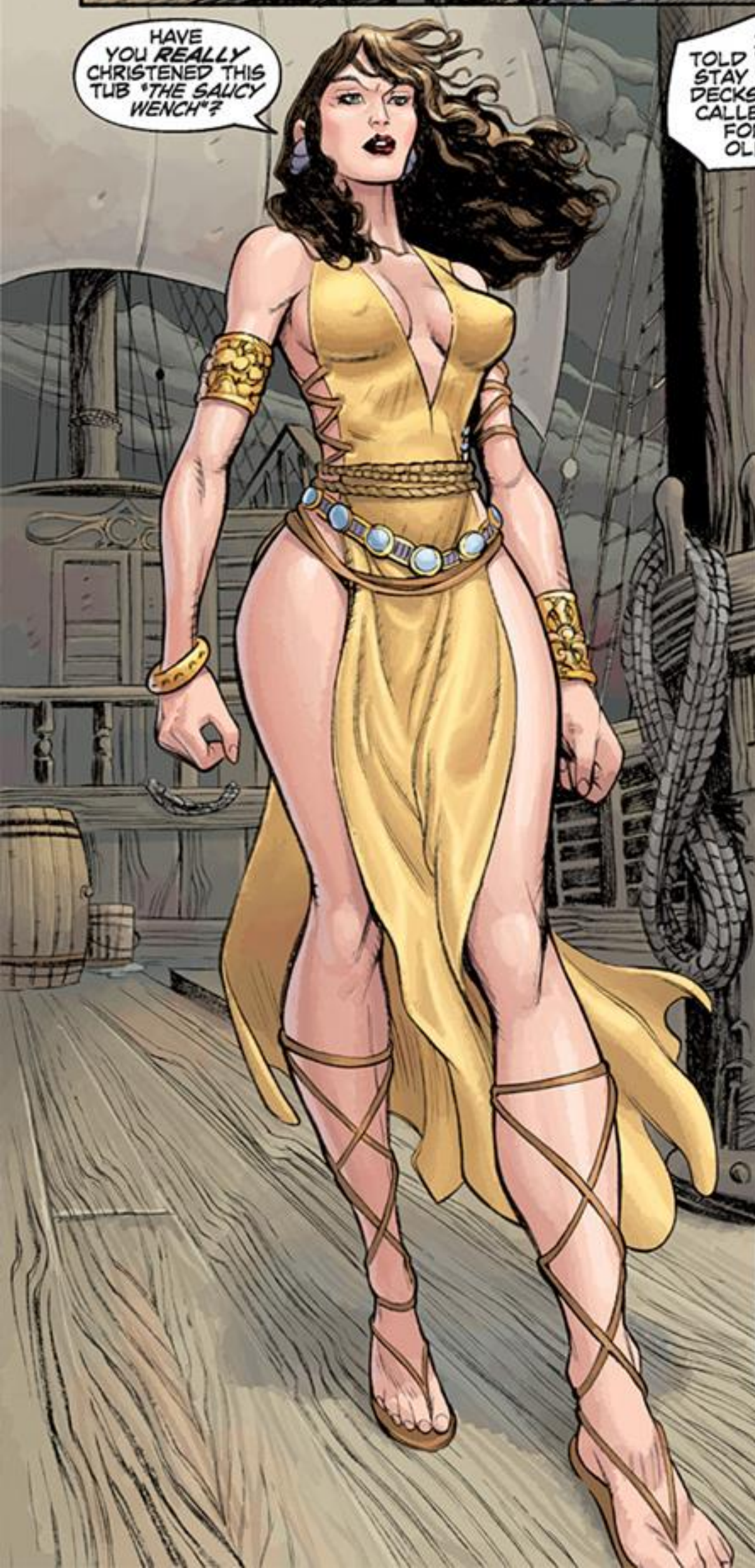
...A  
PITY TO  
SINK A PRIZE  
LIKE THAT,  
CONAN.

YOU'VE  
MADE  
A GOOD  
START AS  
CAPTAIN.



PERHAPS,  
BUT WE'LL  
SEE WHAT--

THE SAUCY  
WENCH!?



HAVE  
YOU *REALLY*  
CHRISTENED THIS  
TUB 'THE SAUCY  
WENCH'?

I  
TOLD YOU TO  
STAY BELOW  
DECKS TILL I  
CALLED YOU  
FORTH,  
OLIVIA.

MY HAIR'D  
GROW WHITE AND MY  
BOSOM SAG BEFORE  
YOU REMEMBERED  
ME LANGUISHING  
DOWN THERE!



I  
THOUGHT YOU'D  
TAKE THE NAME  
'SAUCY WENCH' AS  
A COMPLIMENT.

BUT IF YOU  
DON'T LIKE IT, WE'LL  
HANG ANOTHER  
ON THE MIZZEN-  
MAST.



LIKE  
WHAT?





LIKE--THE OLIVIA.

THE... OLIVIA.

I DO LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.



IT'S SETTLED, THEN!

BY CROM, YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, AND SWIFTLY, FROM THE FRIGHTENED LITTLE GIRL I SAVED FROM THE CLUTCHES OF SHAH AMURATH!

TAKE ME BELOW... AND I'LL SHOW YOU JUST HOW FAR I'VE COME!



I TELL YOU, NUBON, IT'S NOT RIGHT--THAT BARBARIAN HAVING A WOMAN, WHEN WE DON'T!

SEPHUS... YOU'RE BEGINNING TO REMIND ME OF THAT WEASEL ARATUS...



...AND YOU RECALL HOW HE WOUND UP.



Night upon the Vilayet...

OOHHHH...



IT'S YOUUUU...





FATHERRRR

OLIVIA...  
MY DAUGHTER...  
FORGIVE  
ME!

I SOLD YOU  
EAST--BECAUSE YOU  
WOULD NOT DO MY  
BIDDING--

--WOULD  
NOT WED THE  
KOTHIAN PRINCE  
I'D PICKED OUT  
FOR YOU!

HOW COULD  
I HAVE DONE  
SO WRETCHED  
A THING?

YOU WERE EVER  
MY FAVORITE--  
THE GOLDEN APPLE  
OF AN OLD KING'S  
RHEUMY EYE!

I SHOULD  
HAVE KEPT YOU  
CLOSE--NOT SOLD  
YOU TO THAT  
SHEMITE--



FORGIVE  
ME, BELOVED  
OLIVIA...

FORGIVE  
ME...AND  
COME BACK TO  
MEEEEEE

FATHER!



OH,  
FATHER...

WHAT'S...  
WRONG, GIRL?

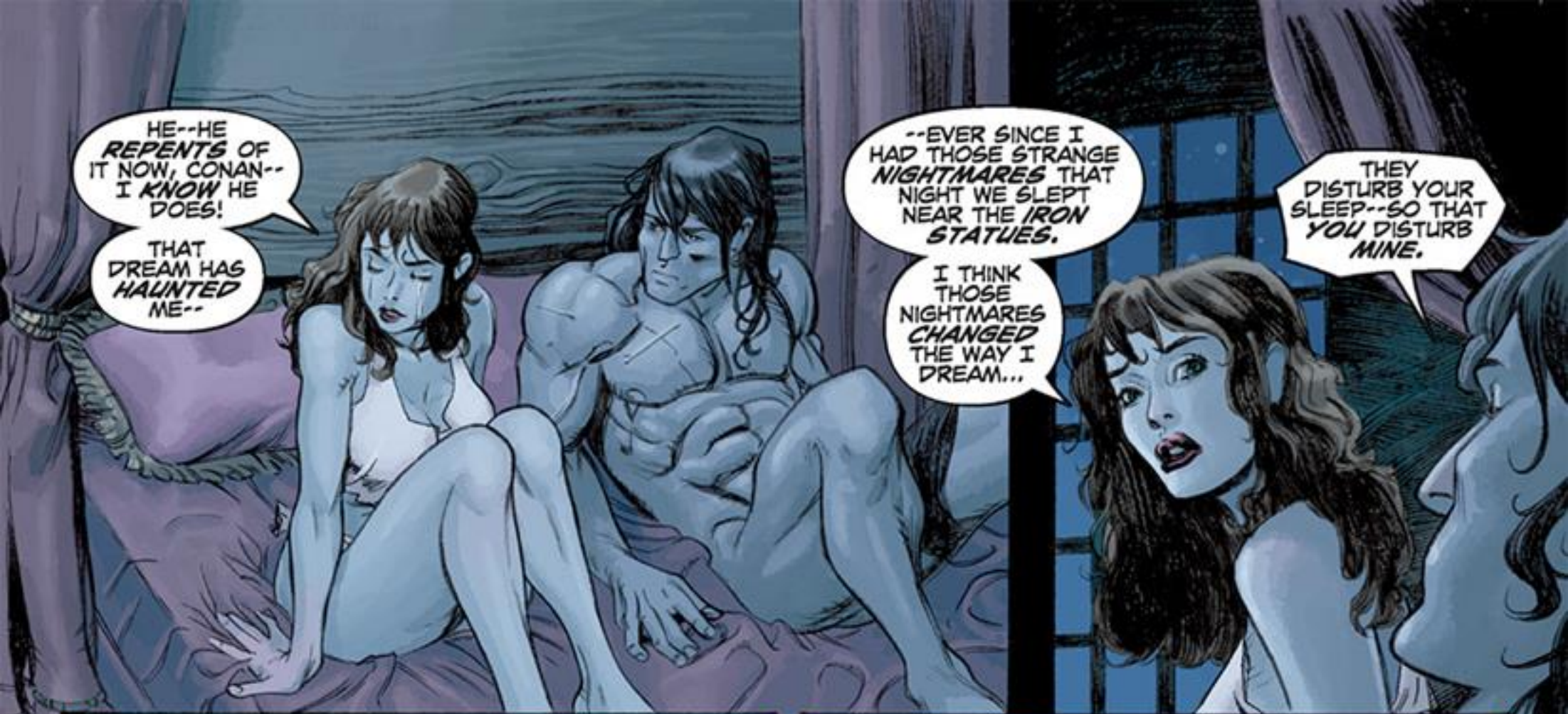


I DREAMT--ABOUT  
MY FATHER.

AGAIN?

YOU  
SQUANDER YOUR  
DREAMS ON ONE  
WHO DELIVERED  
YOU INTO  
SLAVERY.





HE--HE  
**REPENTS** OF  
IT NOW, CONAN--  
I **KNOW** HE  
DOES!  
THAT  
DREAM HAS  
**HAUNTED**  
ME--

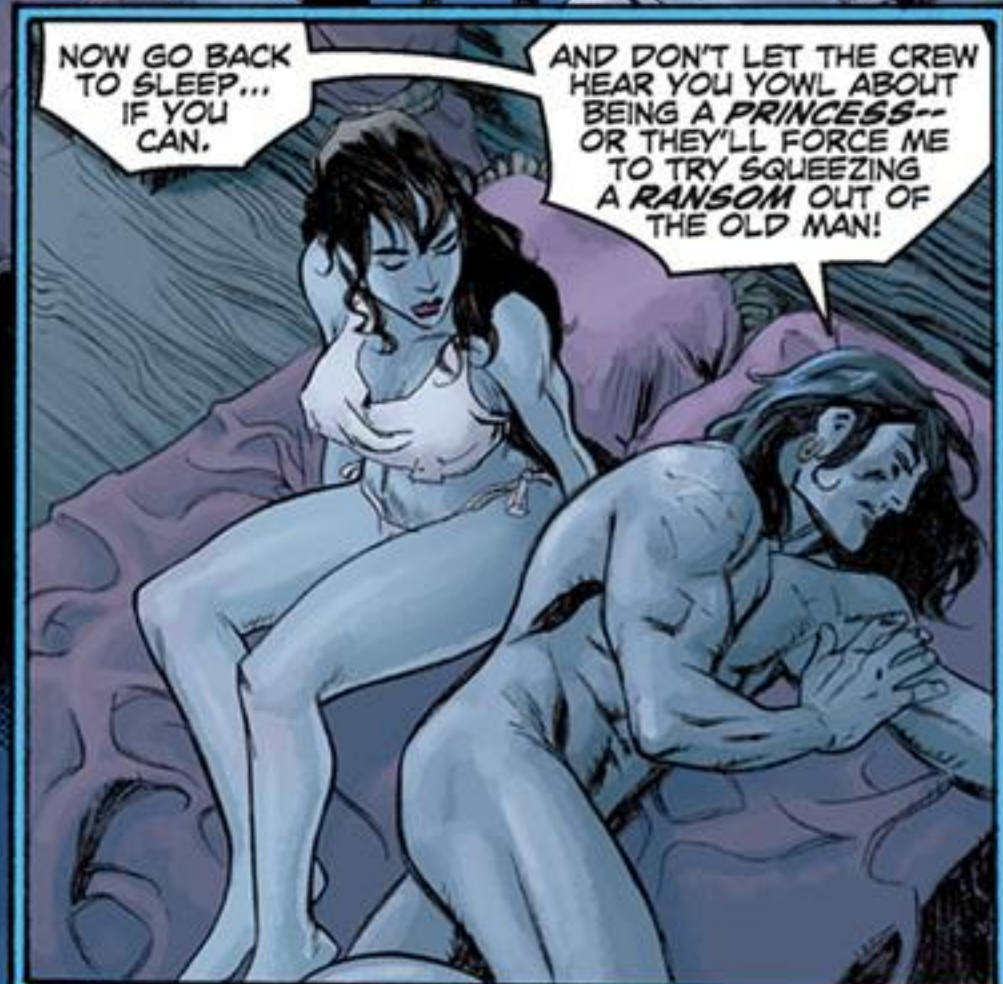
--EVER SINCE I  
HAD THOSE STRANGE  
**NIGHTMARES** THAT  
NIGHT WE SLEPT  
NEAR THE **IRON**  
**STATUES**.  
I THINK  
THOSE  
**NIGHTMARES**  
**CHANGED**  
THE WAY I  
DREAM...

THEY  
DISTURB YOUR  
SLEEP--SO THAT  
**YOU** DISTURB  
**MINE**.



TAKE ME BACK TO **OPHIR**,  
CONAN--BACK TO MY FATHER,  
WHO IS ITS **KING**!  
HE'LL **REWARD**  
YOU WITH THE **GOLD**  
FOR WHICH **OPHIR** IS  
FAMED...

HE'D  
REWARD ME WITH  
A **SPEAR** UP MY  
BACKSIDE.



NOW GO BACK  
TO SLEEP...  
IF YOU  
CAN.

AND DON'T LET THE CREW  
HEAR YOU YOWL ABOUT  
BEING A **PRINCESS**--  
OR THEY'LL FORCE ME  
TO TRY SQUEEZING  
A **RANSOM** OUT OF  
THE OLD MAN!



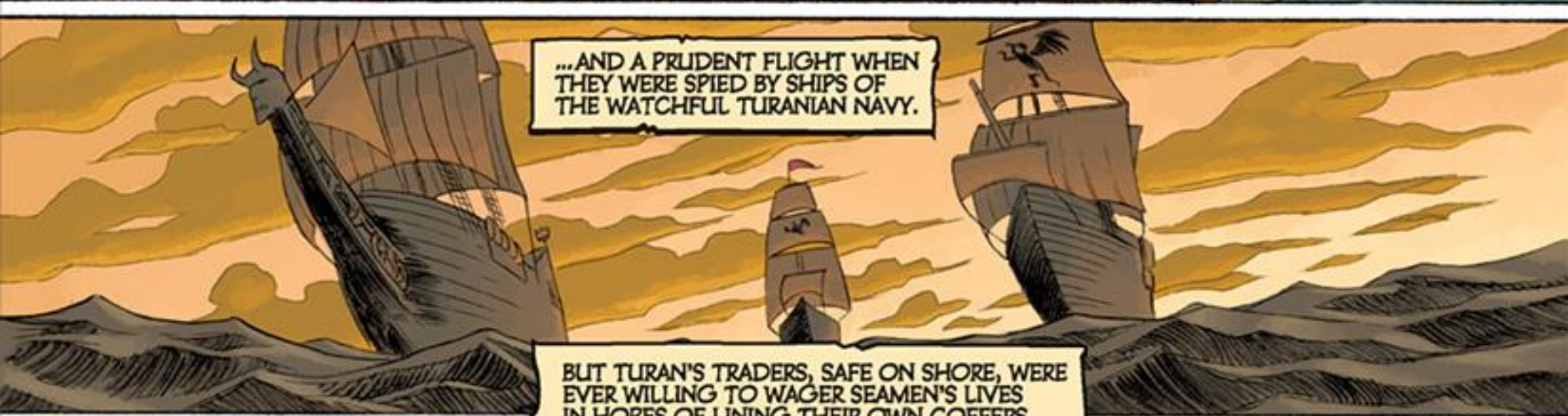




IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, THE OLIVIA BECAME THE SCOURGE OF THE VILAYET SEA...



...WITH RAUCOUS CELEBRATIONS WHEN ITS CREW ENCOUNTERED LOOT-LADEN MERCHANT CRAFT OUT OF AGHRAPUR OR SULTANAPUR OR THE HYRKANIAN COAST CITIES...



...AND A PRUDENT FLIGHT WHEN THEY WERE SPIED BY SHIPS OF THE WATCHFUL TURANIAN NAVY.

BUT TURAN'S TRADERS, SAFE ON SHORE, WERE EVER WILLING TO WAGER SEAMEN'S LIVES IN HOPES OF LINING THEIR OWN COFFERS...



...WITH THE RESULT THAT THE PIRATES' TREASURE CHEST GREW FAT AND FULL.

AND OLIVIA COULD LOSE HERSELF IN THE JOY OF THE MOMENT, AND IN THE WARM STRENGTH OF HER LOVER'S BRAWNY ARMS...

...AT LEAST WHEN SHE WAS AWAKE.





I'VE  
WAGERED A  
FEW CROWNS  
ON THE KHITAN...  
BUT IT WON'T  
HURT ME TO  
LOSE, I  
THINK.

AND, ON DAYS WHEN  
NEITHER PREY NOR  
PURSUERS REARED THEIR  
CROW'S-NESTS ABOVE  
THE HORIZON...

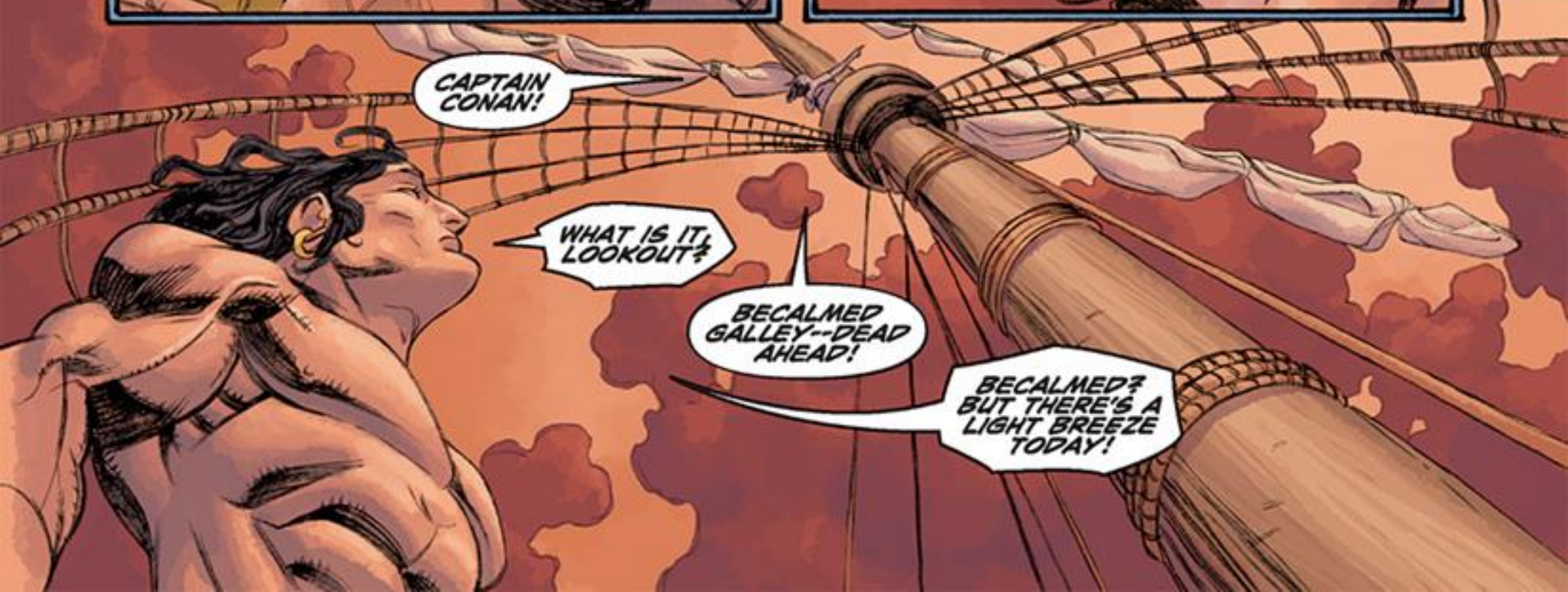
...EVEN PIRATES  
KNEW HOW TO PLAY.

CONAN... IF I CAN'T  
GO BACK HOME, I  
THINK I'D RATHER  
BE WITH YOU THAN  
ANYPLACE ON  
EARTH.

IT'S GOOD KNOWING I'M  
YOUR *SECOND* CHOICE,  
AT LEAST.

DON'T BE ANGRY  
WITH ME... I WAS  
ONLY...

I WAS BUT JESTING,  
GIRL, YOU'RE--



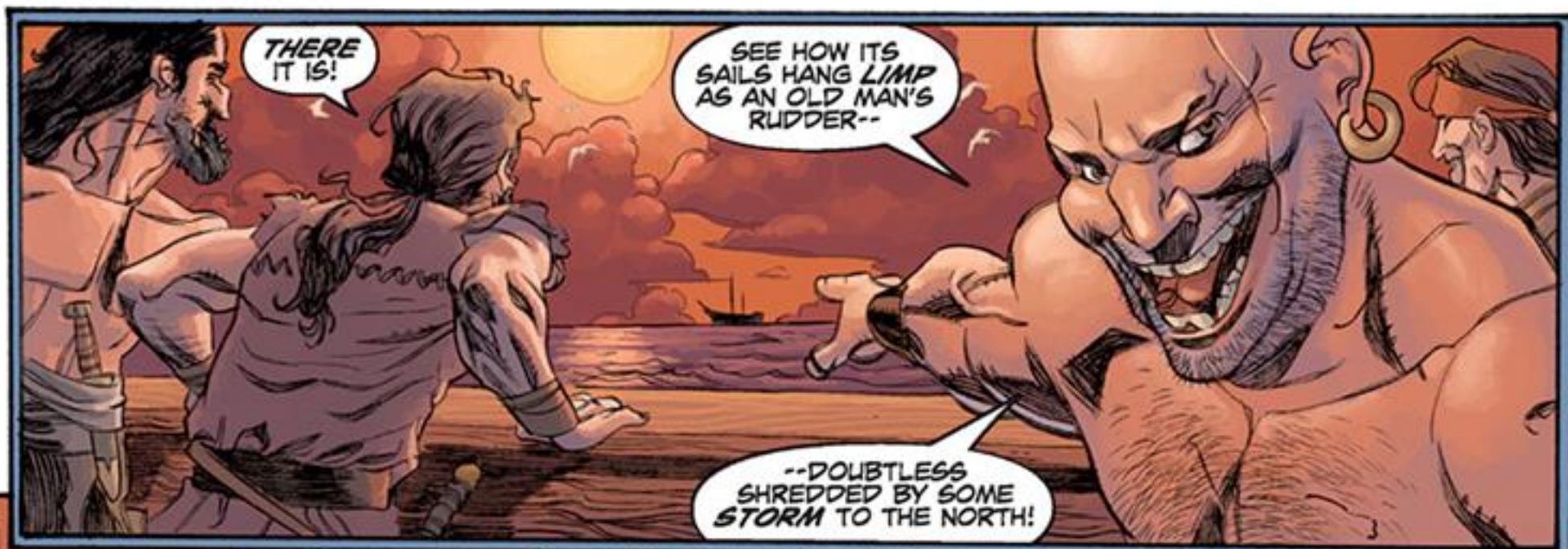
CAPTAIN  
CONAN!

WHAT IS IT,  
LOOKOUT?

BECALMED  
GALLEY--DEAD  
AHEAD!

BECALMED?  
BUT THERE'S A  
LIGHT BREEZE  
TODAY!





THERE IT IS!

SEE HOW ITS SAILS HANG LIMP AS AN OLD MAN'S RUDDER--

--DOUBTLESS SHREDDED BY SOME STORM TO THE NORTH!



IF ITS SAILS ARE TORN, HOW DID IT DRIFT HERE?

IVANOS IS RIGHT. IF IT'S STILL THERE TOMORROW DAWN, WE CAN--

NO, BY ERLIK!



WE'VE HOURS OF SUNLIGHT YET TO LOOT HER, STEM TO STERN!

ATTACK!

ATTACK!



IF THAT'S YOUR WILL--WELL, MOST OF YOU HAVE SPENT MORE TIME AT SEA THAN I HAVE, SO--

MAKE FOR THE GALLEY!

ALL HAIL CAPTAIN CONAN!



WITHIN MINUTES, THE OLIVIA WAS PLOUGHING THE RESTLESS FURROWS OF THE SEA...



YOU LUST LESS AFTER SEA TREASURE THAN THE OTHERS, IVANOS.

I WAS BORN IN LAND-LOCKED CORINTHIA...

...THOUGH, WHEN I SERVED IN ARGOS' ARMY, I SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME IN MESSANTIA.



THAT'S HER CHIEF PORT, ISN'T IT?

AYE, AND A PART OF ME WISHES I WERE BACK THERE RIGHT NOW.

JUST BEFORE YOU JOINED US, I HEARD RUMORS OF WAR IN THE OFFING THERE...



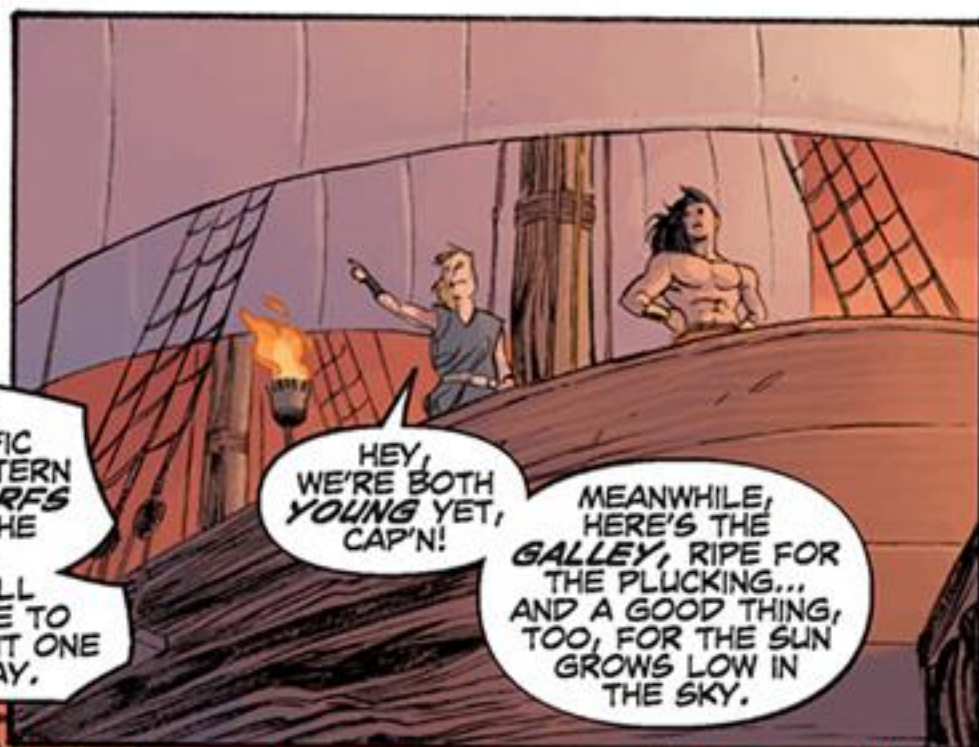


...BETWEEN ARGOS AND ITS NEIGHBOR ZINGARA.

OVER SEA TRADE ROUTES, OF COURSE.

I HEAR THE TRAFFIC ON THE WESTERN OCEAN DWARFS THAT ON THE VILAYET.

I'LL HAVE TO SEE IT ONE DAY.



HEY, WE'RE BOTH YOUNG YET, CAP'N!

MEANWHILE, HERE'S THE GALLEY, RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING... AND A GOOD THING, TOO, FOR THE SUN GROWS LOW IN THE SKY.



THERE'S NOT A MAN IN SIGHT UPON HER BOARDS!

NOR ANY LIFEBOATS, EITHER.

THE CREW MUST'VE TAKEN TO THEM AND ABANDONED SHIP, DESPAIRING OF REPAIRING THE SAILS.



THROW GRAPPLING HOOKS!



DECIDED TO JOIN US, OLIVIA?

KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS ABOUT YOU, LADS!

I SWEAR, SOMETIMES OUR CAPTAIN ACTS LIKE AN OLD WOMAN!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE--LONG AS HE LEADS US TO FOUNTAINS OF LOOT, AND LETS US DRINK OUR FILL?





YOUR  
LADY COULD'VE  
TAKEN THIS SHIP,  
CAP'N!  
THERE'S  
NO SIGN OF  
ANY--



LOOK  
OUT!



GGKKKK



BEL SAVE US!  
TURANIAN  
SOLDIERS--  
--STEM TO  
STERN!



IT WAS  
A TRAP, YOU  
LUBBERS!

OLIVIA! GET  
YOUR TAIL BELOW--  
NOW!

WE'LL  
HAVE TO  
LEND  
THE LADS  
A HAND,  
CAP'N!









NNNNNNNN



KILL THEM--EVERY LAST ONE--

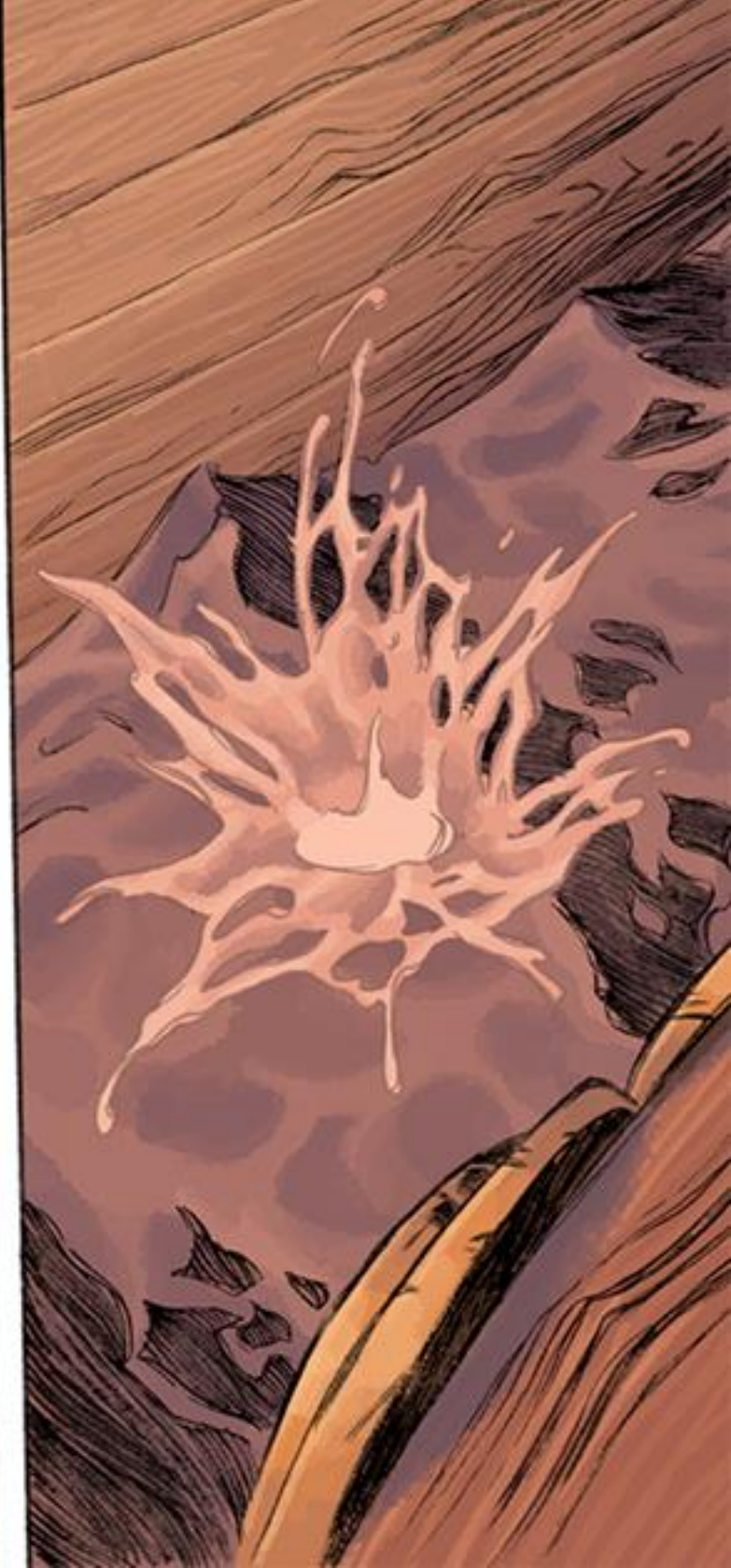
--WHILE YOU CAN STILL SEE THEM!

THEN CAST OFF LINES, AND HURL SOME TORCHES TO SINK THAT WRECK!

IF ANY ARE STILL SKULKING ABOARD 'ER, THEY CAN SIZZLE--



--OR SWIM!









GLUBBB...

YOU'RE  
JUST LUCKY  
YOU CAME UP  
AS FAR FROM  
THE SHIPS AS  
YOU DID.

BUT--WHY ARE  
YOU THRASHING  
AROUND LIKE A SEAL  
WITH A BROKEN  
FLIPPER?

B-BECAUSE--

I CAN'T  
SWIM!

KLOP

THE GROWING DARK AND THE  
DISTANCE AND THE DEEP STRETCHED  
BEFORE THEM, HORIZON TO HORIZON.

BUT CONAN WAS  
BORN AMID HILLS,  
NOT HIGH TIDES...



...AND PERHAPS SOME FORGOTTEN  
SENSE TOLD HIM IN WHICH  
DIRECTION DRY LAND WAS NEAREST.

HHNNNN...

PTUUIII

I FEEL--LIKE I  
SWALLOWED A  
MERMAID--

A FAT  
ONE.

CONAN...?

WH-WHERE  
ARE WE?

HOW DID  
WE--

NOW I  
REMEMBER.

YOU HIT  
ME!

ONLY TO  
STOP YOU FROM  
DROWNING  
BOTH OF US!

YES,  
I--SUPPOSE I  
MIGHT HAVE.  
SO YOU  
SAVED ME...  
ONCE AGAIN.

SAVED YOU...  
AND LOST A  
SHIP.

MY FIRST  
SEA COMMAND.

HIGH  
CHANCE  
I HAVE OF  
EVER HAVING  
ANOTHER!







AFTER THE ZAMORIAN'S LEG  
HAD BEEN BANDAGED...

SO YOU  
SWAM ALL  
NIGHT--THE  
GIRL IN YOUR  
ARMS--TO  
REACH THIS  
SHORE?

BACK IN  
CIMMERIA, I  
BROKE A BULL'S  
BACK ON MY  
DAY OF  
MANHOOD.

IF I  
CAN'T SWIM  
FOR A FULL  
NIGHT, WHAT  
AM I GOOD  
FOR?

NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO STOP MY  
MEN FROM FOLLOWING DEATH'S  
SIREN CALL, IT SEEMS.

WE WERE  
MADMEN, IN THE  
GRIP OF GOLD  
LUST.

WELL, MY  
SAILING DAYS  
ARE DONE.

I THINK I'LL  
HEAD BACK TO  
SHADIZAR THE  
WICKED...AND  
SEE IF I STILL  
KNOW HOW TO  
THIEVE.

WHERE  
ARE YOU  
BOUND,  
CONAN?

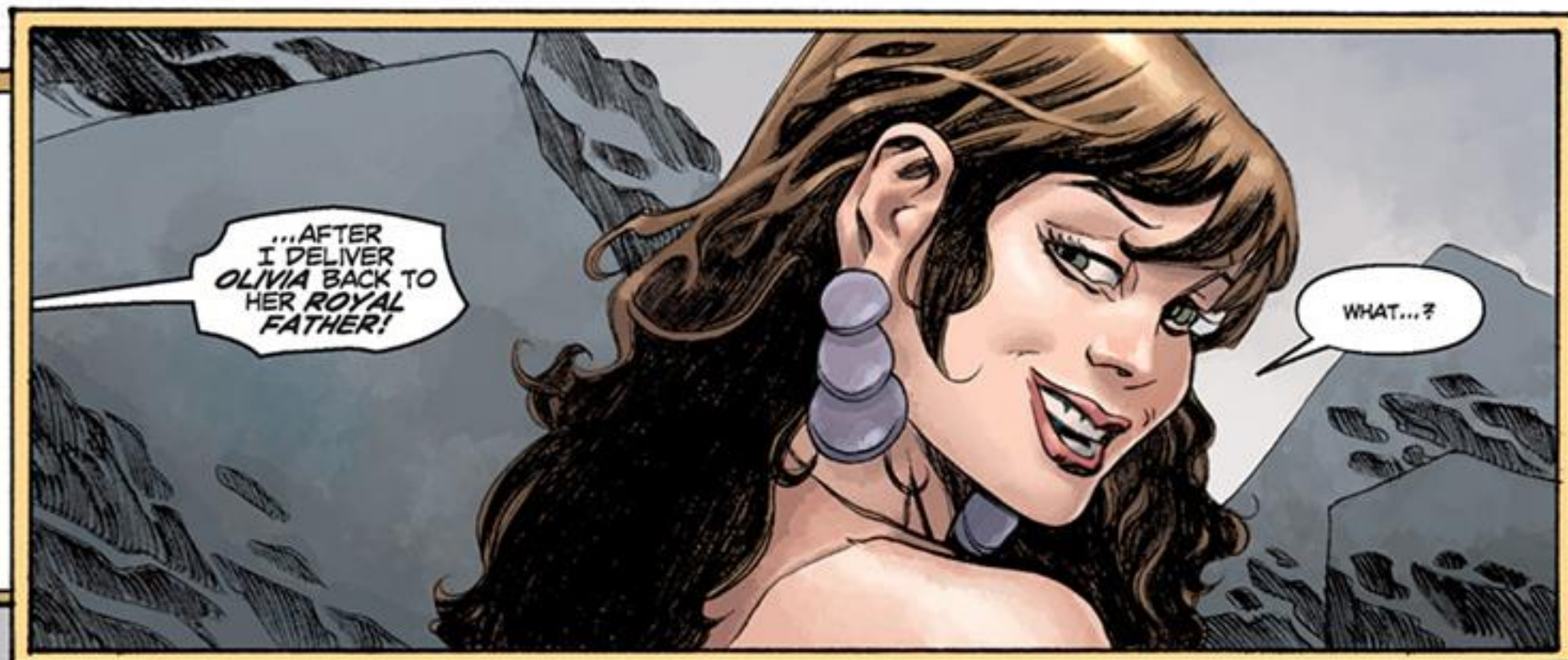
I...  
DON'T  
KNOW...

OR  
PERHAPS  
I DO.

I'VE HEARD  
THE KNIGHTS OF  
OPHIR WEAR MAIL  
PLATED WITH  
GOLD--

--AND I'VE  
BEEN WONDERING  
HOW I MIGHT  
LOOK IN GILDED  
ARMOR...





...AFTER  
I DELIVER  
OLIVIA BACK TO  
HER ROYAL  
FATHER!

WHAT...?



OH, YOU  
GREAT, WONDERFUL  
BARBARIAN!

MY FATHER  
WILL REWARD YOU  
FOR RESTORING ME,  
CONAN--I SWEAR  
HE WILL!

WE'D BEST  
GET MOVING.  
OPHIR'S A LONG  
WAY.

AYE--BUT THE  
ROAD OF KINGS,  
WHICH I MEAN TO  
FOLLOW BACK TO  
ZAMORA, STARTS  
NOT TOO FAR  
INLAND--

--AND IT SKIRTS  
OPHIR AS IT WINDS  
ITS WAY TO THE  
WESTERN  
SEA.



SO--YOUR  
LADY'S BEEN  
A PRINCESS  
ALL ALONG,  
HAS SHE?

PERHAPS...  
IF THE TWO  
OF US...

DON'T EVEN  
THINK ABOUT  
IT.

NEXT MONTH:  
SHADIZAR THE WICKED!