

# MANY ROADS TO POWER



CRUSADER  
KINGS III



TAYLOR • RAGAZZONI • WRIGHT • REED



# ROADS TO POWER

CRUSADER KINGS III



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# MANY ROADS TO POWER

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SEPTEMBER 24th, 867 A.D.



WELCOME TO CONSTANTINOPLE, THE CAPITAL OF THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE.

AFTER THE FALL OF ITS WESTERN COUSIN, ROME, CONSTANTINOPLE HAS BECOME A SHINING BEACON OF CULTURE, GLITTERING WEALTH, AND DEVOUT PIETY.

AS EMPERORS RISE AND FALL, CONSTANTINOPLE HOLDS FIRM, SPREADING ITS VALUES, AND BRINGING ORDER TO AN EVER-CHANGING, UNCIVILIZED WORLD.

AND NOW, IT IS HERE IN THE GREAT PALACE THAT EMPEROR MICHAEL III HOLDS COURT IN HIS IMPERIAL RESIDENCE, ON WHAT WILL BECOME AN HISTORIC MOMENT OF HIS REIGN...

REJOICE!

THE EMPIRE IS AT PEACE, THE ACCOUNTS ARE IN RUDE HEALTH, THE PUBLIC LOVES OUR CHARIOT RACES, AND... WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH TO WARRANT ANOTHER CUP!



OH, DRINK SOMETHING, **BASIL**, YOU'RE MAKING ME NERVOUS.

I THINK YOU AND **BASILISKIANOS** HAVE DRUNK ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US, MY EMPEROR.

**CAREFUL NOW.** YOU MAY HAVE BEEN LIKE THE FATHER THAT I NEVER HAD, AND I MAY HAVE CROWNED YOU CO-EMPEROR, BUT I CAN JUST AS EASILY...



IS "**UNCROWN**" A WORD?

~SNORE~

IF NOT, I SHALL MAKE IT SO! **HAH!**



VERY DROLL, **MICHAEL**. WHAT A PITY THAT THERE IS NO ONE HERE TO MARVEL AND APPRECIATE SUCH **REFINED WIT**.

PLEASE ALLOW ME, MY LIEGE, TO REGALE YOU WITH A **FARCE** THAT YOU MAY FIND AMUSING.



WELL, YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS EVENING HAVE BEEN **NAUGHT** THUS FAR. SO HOPEFULLY YOU CAN REDEEM YOURSELF WITH A **MERRY JEST**.

CAN I OFFER OUR **HUMBLE** NARRATOR A CUP? THIS CAME JUST YESTERDAY FROM A MONASTERY IN **BITHYNIA**.

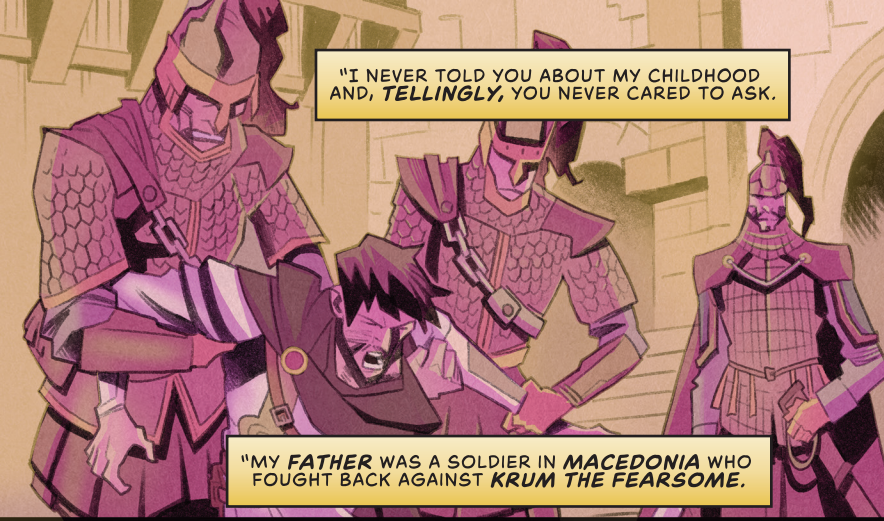


YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT TO LOOK AT THE SALTY OLD GOATS, BUT THE **MONKS** THERE HAVE CRAFTED SOMETHING **SWEETER** THAN FIGS IN HONEY!

THOUGH IT SOUNDS **DELIGHTFUL**, I MUST DECLINE.

THIS MERRY TALE IS BEST TOLD WITH A LEVEL HEAD AND CLEAR EYES.





"I NEVER TOLD YOU ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD AND, **TELLINGLY**, YOU NEVER CARED TO ASK.

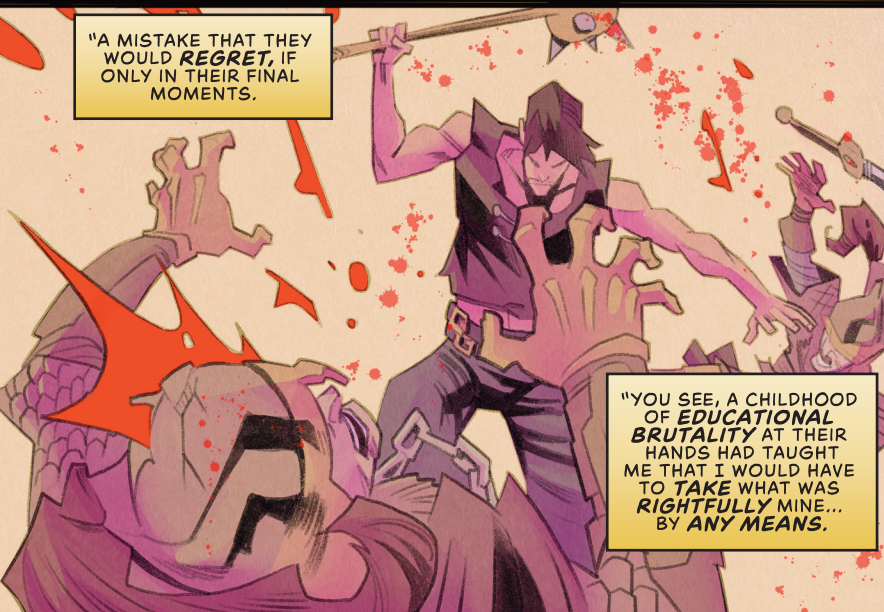
"MY **FATHER** WAS A SOLDIER IN **MACEDONIA** WHO FOUGHT BACK AGAINST **KRUM THE FEARSOME**.



"I WAS MERELY A BABE WHEN THE BRUTAL KHAN **SLAUGHTERED** MY PEOPLE, DRAGGED THE SURVIVORS ACROSS THE **DANUBE** AND INTO A LIFETIME OF **SERVITUDE**.



"AS THE YEARS WENT BY, AND DISCOVERING THAT I WAS A NATURAL **HORSE BREAKER**, MY CAPTORS BEGAN TO RELAX THEIR GRASP OVER ME.



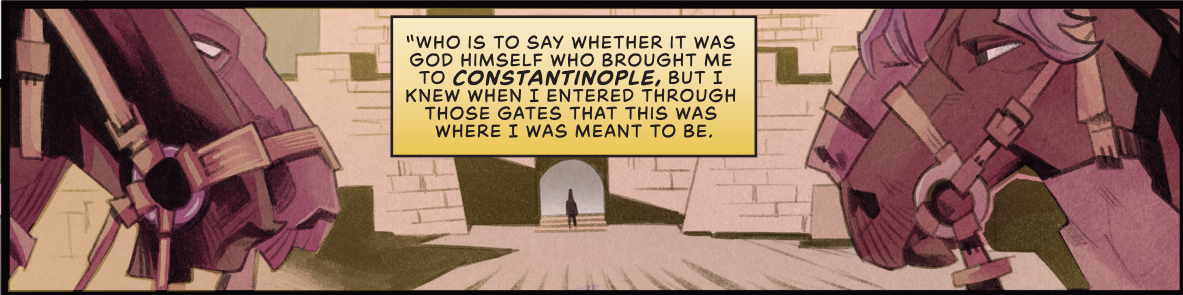
"A MISTAKE THAT THEY WOULD **REGRET**, IF ONLY IN THEIR FINAL MOMENTS.

"YOU SEE, A CHILDHOOD OF **EDUCATIONAL BRUTALITY** AT THEIR HANDS HAD TAUGHT ME THAT I WOULD HAVE TO **TAKE** WHAT WAS **RIGHTFULLY** MINE... BY ANY MEANS.



"WHILST SOME ARE BORN INTO A LIFE OF **SOFT LINENS** AND **SWEET TREATS**, MINE WAS ONE OF **HARD GROUND** AND **SCAVENGED SCRAPS**.


"BUT EVEN IN THE DARKEST OF TIMES, I KNEW THAT I WAS **DESTINED** FOR SO MUCH MORE.



"WHO IS TO SAY WHETHER IT WAS GOD HIMSELF WHO BROUGHT ME TO **CONSTANTINOPE**, BUT I KNEW WHEN I ENTERED THROUGH THOSE GATES THAT THIS WAS WHERE I WAS MEANT TO BE.



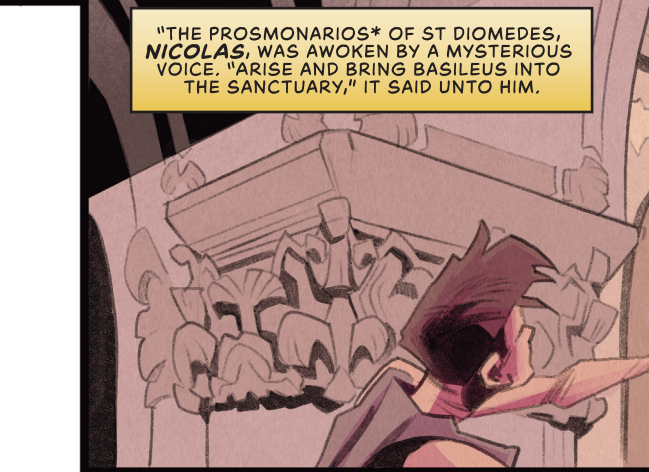
"FOR AN ILL-EDUCATED PEASANT WITH A MYOPIC VIEW OF THE WORLD, THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS WERE **OVERWHELMING...**



"SO, I TOOK **REFUGE** AS CLOSE TO THE COMFORTING EMBRACE OF THE DIVINE AS POSSIBLE, PUTTING MY **FAITH** IN THE ALMIGHTY THAT HE WOULD SHOW ME GUIDANCE.



"AND THERE, **HE** PROVIDED THE KINDNESS OF A STRANGER.



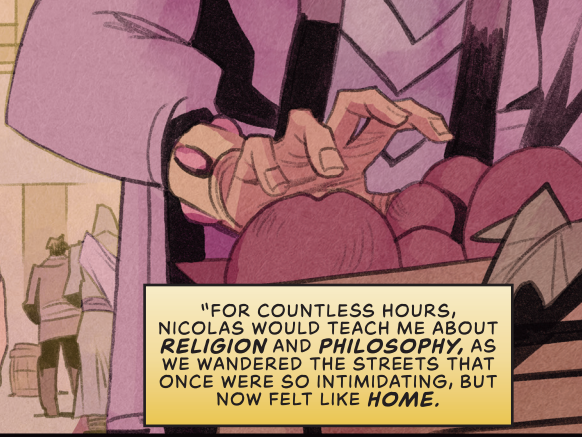
"THE PROSMONARIOS\* OF ST DIOMEDES, **NICOLAS**, WAS AWOKEN BY A MYSTERIOUS VOICE. "ARISE AND BRING BASILEUS INTO THE SANCTUARY," IT SAID UNTO HIM.



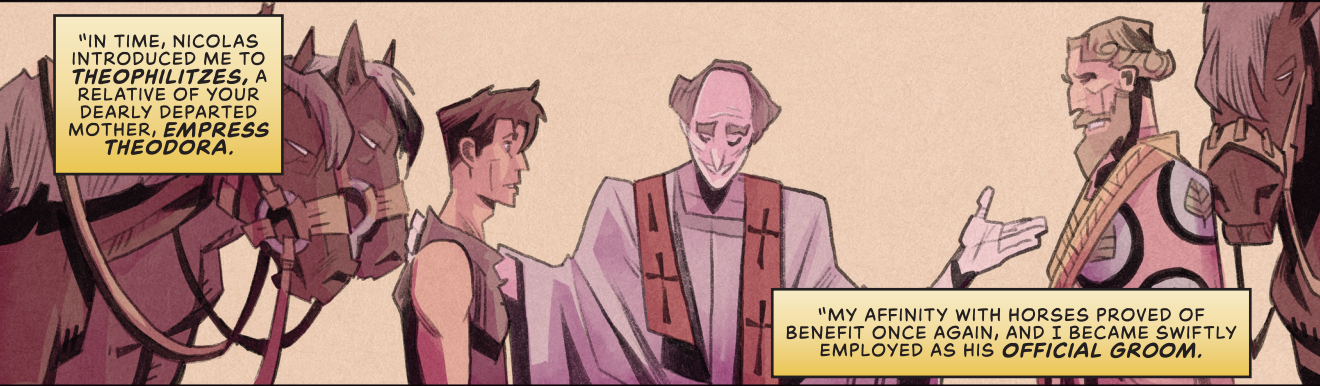
\* CONCIERGE OF A CHURCH OR MONASTERY.



"THE MONK PROVIDED ME SHELTER AND HIS COMPANIONSHIP. AND SOON, WE BECAME LIKE **BROTHERS**.



"FOR COUNTLESS HOURS, NICOLAS WOULD TEACH ME ABOUT **RELIGION** AND **PHILOSOPHY**, AS WE WANDERED THE STREETS THAT ONCE WERE SO INTIMIDATING, BUT NOW FELT LIKE **HOME**.



"IN TIME, NICOLAS INTRODUCED ME TO **THEOPHILITZES**, A RELATIVE OF YOUR DEARLY DEPARTED MOTHER, **EMPRESS THEODORA**.



"MY AFFINITY WITH HORSES PROVED OF BENEFIT ONCE AGAIN, AND I BECAME SWIFTLY EMPLOYED AS HIS **OFFICIAL GROOM**.



"AND THEN, IN TIME, MY SOCIAL STANDING ELEVATED TO DIZZYING HEIGHTS WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WIDOW, **DANIELIS**, DURING A CHANCE VISIT TO THE **PELOPONNESE**.



"FROM FINEST SILKS, GOLD AND JEWELS, TO PROPERTY OF MY OWN, VASSALS TO TEND TO MY NEEDS...



"IT WAS THANKS TO HER PATRONAGE THAT THIS ONCE-IMPOVERISHED PEASANT **EMBRACED** THE TRAPPINGS THAT YOUR ILK TAKES FOR GRANTED.

"WHEN I FELT IT WAS **APPROPRIATE**, I ENDED MY TIME WITH DANIELIS, RETURNING TO THEOPHILITZES IN CONSTANTINOPLE.



"AN OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF WHERE I COULD DEMONSTRATE THE **STRENGTH AND TENACITY** HONED WITHIN THE FIGHTING PITS OF MY YOUTH.

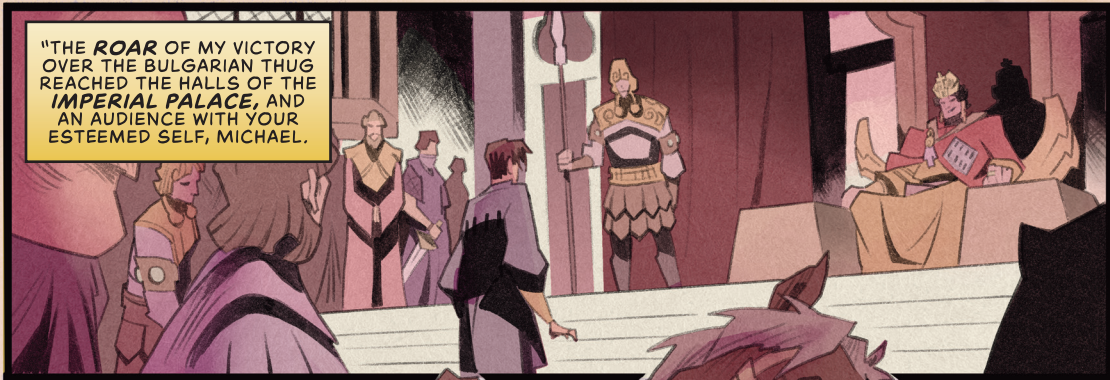


"FATE SMILED THAT DAY, AS THE WRESTLING CHAMPION WAS **BULGARIAN**.

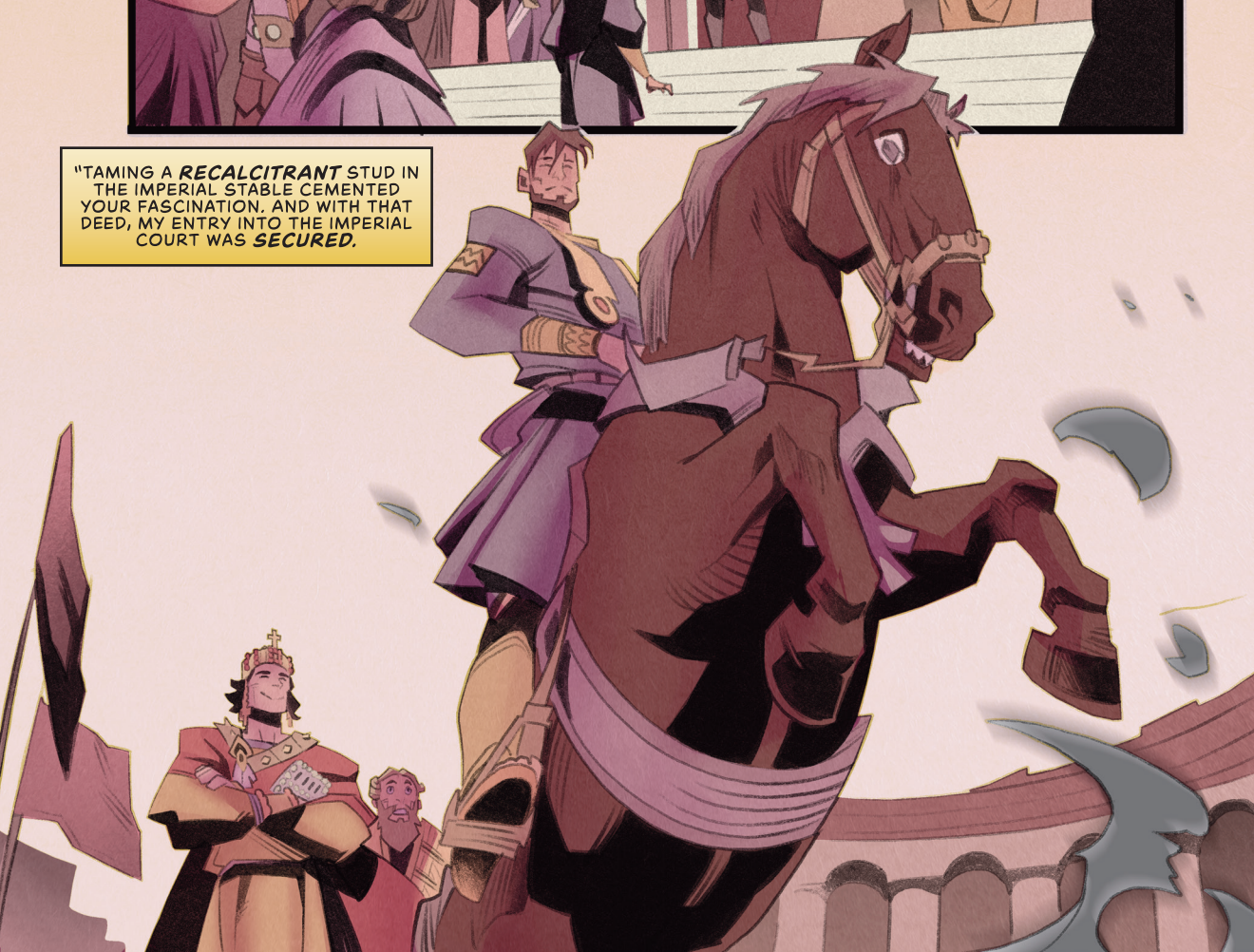
"SO, I SAW THE FACE OF EVERY ONE OF MY JAILERS ETCHED ON MY OPPONENT, AS I **SQUEEZED** THE BREATH OUT OF HIS LUNGS.



"THE **ROAR** OF MY VICTORY OVER THE BULGARIAN THUG REACHED THE HALLS OF THE **IMPERIAL PALACE**, AND AN AUDIENCE WITH YOUR ESTEEMED SELF, MICHAEL.

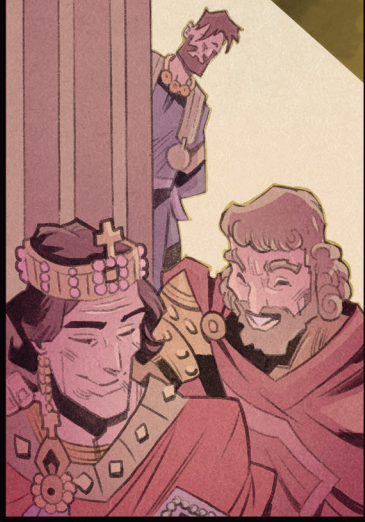


"TAMING A **RECALCITRANT** STUD IN THE IMPERIAL STABLE CEMENTED YOUR FASCINATION. AND WITH THAT DEED, MY ENTRY INTO THE IMPERIAL COURT WAS **SECURED**.



"HOWEVER, TO HAVE YOUR **EYE** WAS NOT ENOUGH. I NEEDED YOUR **EAR** TOO.

"AND FOR THAT, I HAD TO REMOVE AN **OBSTACLE**.



"IT WAS SURPRISINGLY EASY TO SOW THE **SEEDS OF DOUBT**, TURNING YOU AGAINST YOUR **UNCLE BARDAS**.

"BELIEVING MY **HONEYED WORDS** THAT BARDAS WAS GOING TO DEPOSE YOU...



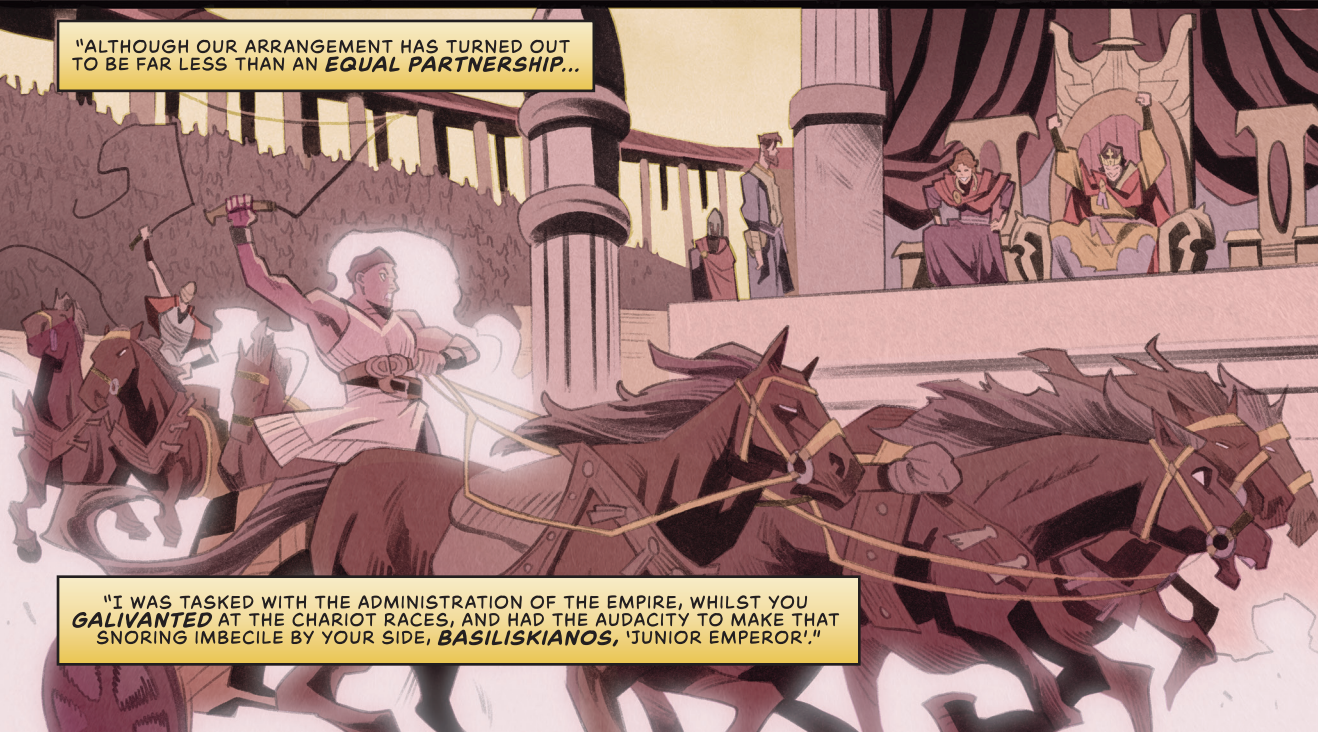
"...YOU GAVE ME YOUR **HOLY BLESSING** TO REMOVE THE FINAL OBSTACLE TO MY **RIGHTFUL ASCENT**.



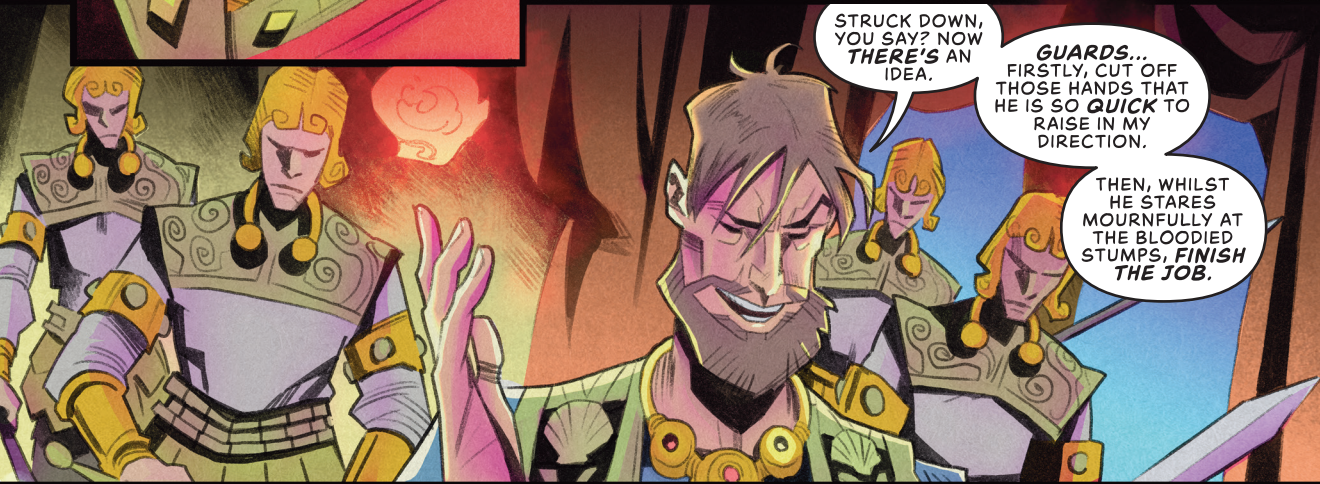
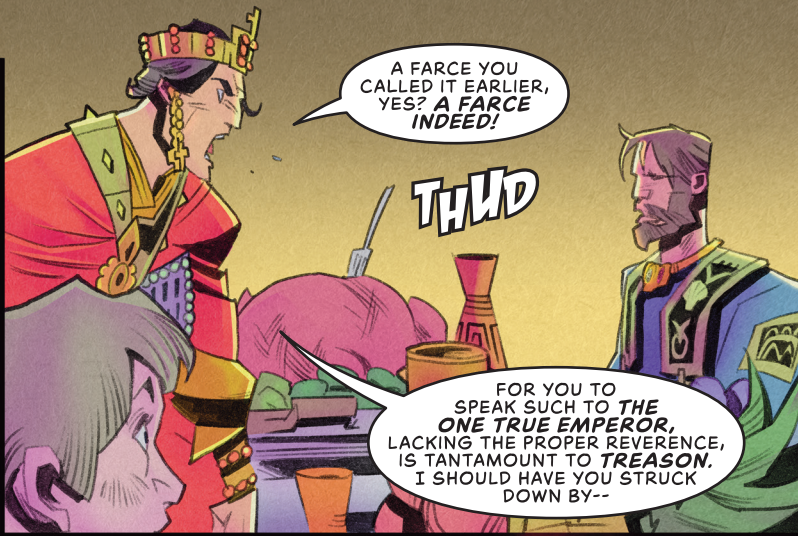
"AND MY **JUST REWARD** FOR THE SELFLESS ACT OF DELIVERING YOU FROM A VIPER IN THE NEST WAS TO BE CROWNED **CO-EMPEROR**.



"ALTHOUGH OUR ARRANGEMENT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE FAR LESS THAN AN **EQUAL PARTNERSHIP**...



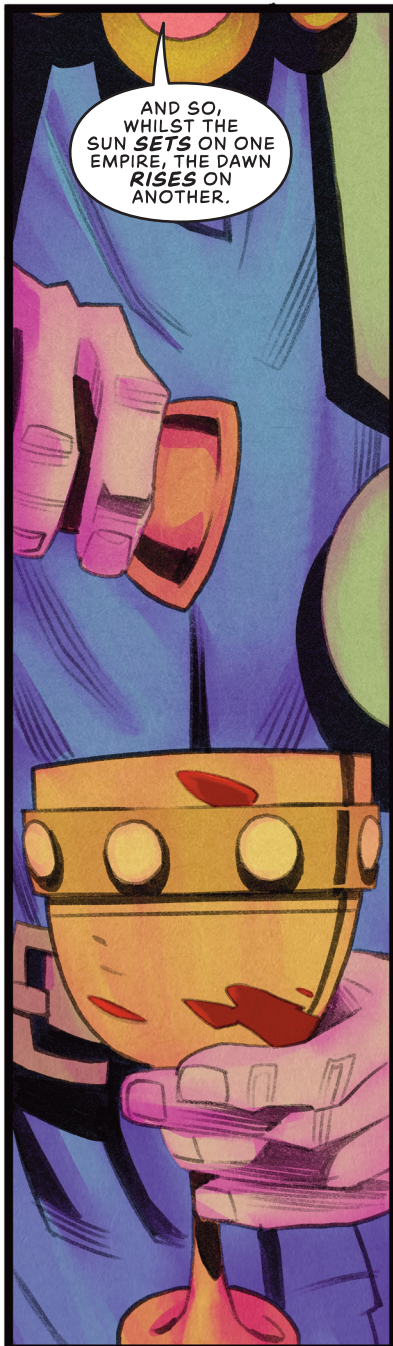
"I WAS TASKED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE, WHILST YOU **GALIVANTED** AT THE CHARIOT RACES, AND HAD THE AUDACITY TO MAKE THAT **SNORING IMBECILE** BY YOUR SIDE, **BASILISKIANOS**, 'JUNIOR EMPEROR!'!"





NoOoOoo!

I AM YOUR  
EMPEROR!



AND SO,  
WHILST THE  
SUN **SETS** ON ONE  
EMPIRE, THE DAWN  
**RISES** ON  
ANOTHER.



OH, YOU  
WERE **RIGHT**,  
MICHAEL...THOSE MONKS  
CRAFTED SOMETHING  
TRULY QUITE  
**EXQUISITE**.

IN MEMORY  
OF YOUR GOOD  
TASTE, I'LL MAKE  
SURE THAT ONLY **THIS**  
IS SERVED AT MY  
**CORONATION**.

AND SO, WITH THE BLOOD ON HIS HANDS SCARCELY DRY, THE REIGN OF **BASIL I "THE MACEDONIAN"** BEGAN.

THE 50TH EMPEROR OF THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE, BASIL WOULD RULE OVER WHAT HISTORIANS WOULD EVENTUALLY REFER TO AS THE **BYZANTINE EMPIRE** FOR ALMOST 20 YEARS.

BUT HOW WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO STEER THE FATE OF BASIL AND THE MAJESTY OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE? WILL YOU CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE EMPIRE OR SET OUT ON AN ADVENTURE TO FORGE A NEW DESTINY-- THE ROADS TO POWER LIE BEFORE YOU.

"ROADS TO POWER" THE NEW MAJOR EXPANSION FOR CRUSADER KINGS III IS RELEASED ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2024.



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# Chapter



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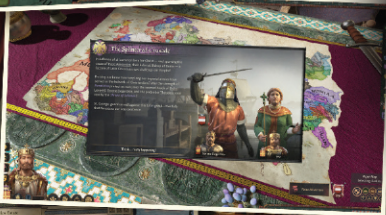


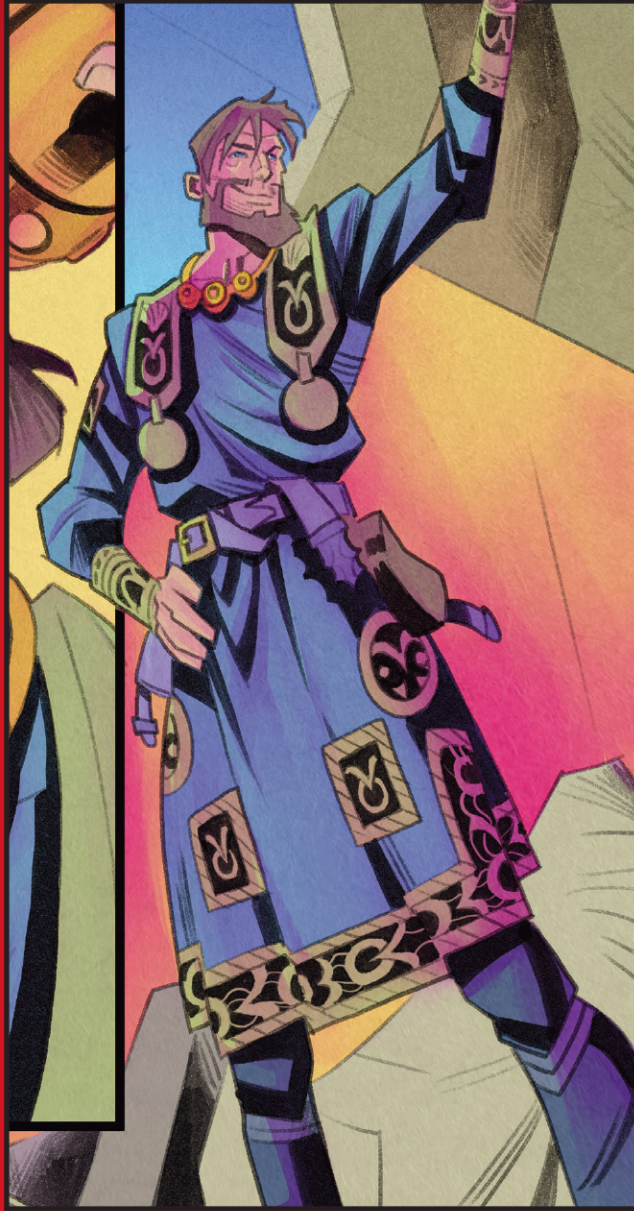
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NEW MAJOR EXPANSION COMING SEPTEMBER 24



# ROADS TO POWER





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