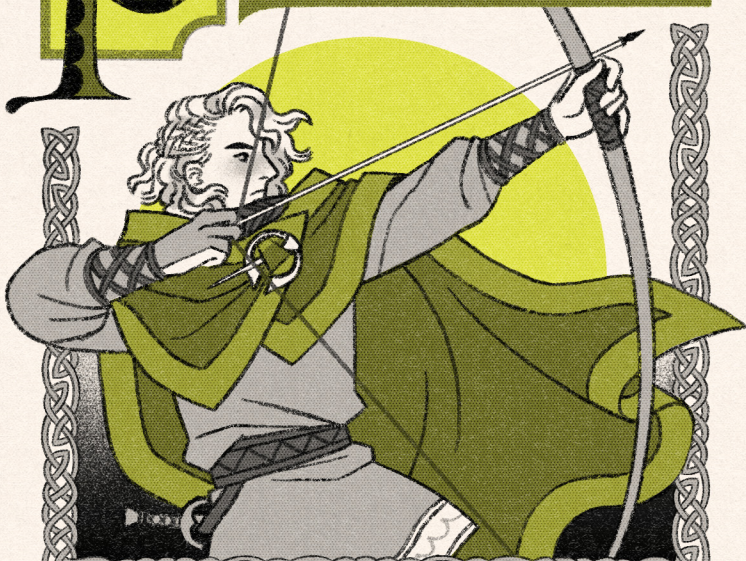


PERGRINE

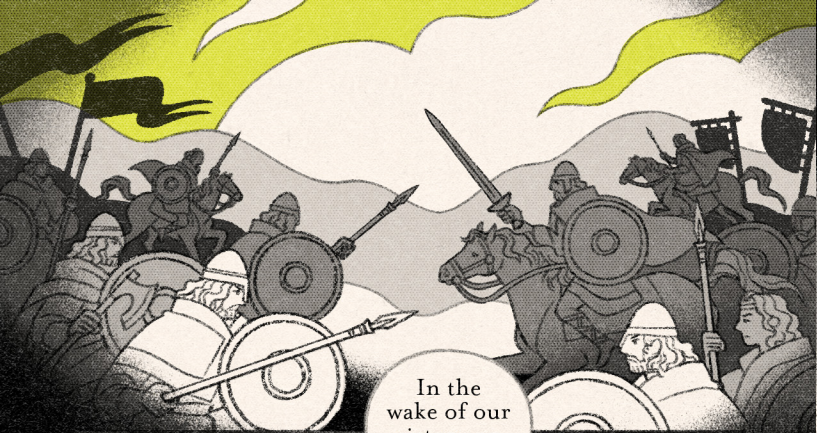


EMILY CHEESEMAN

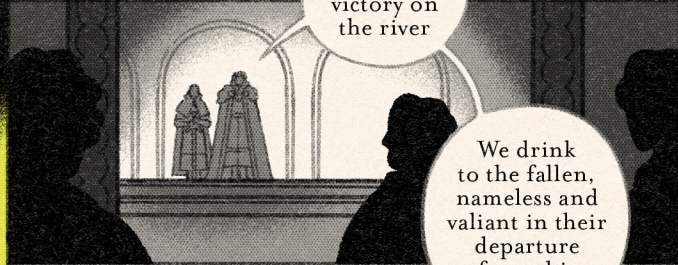


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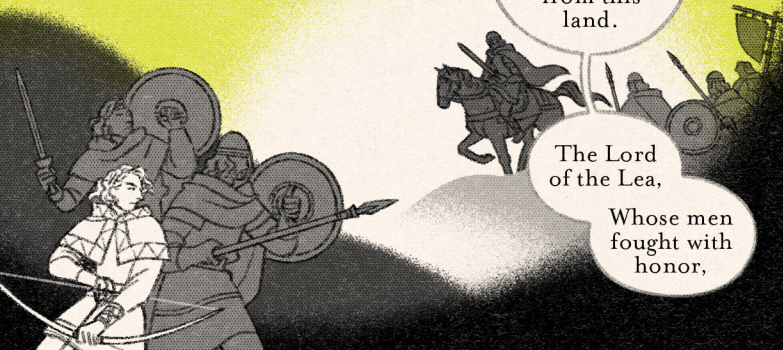
2025 / DIGITAL EDITION



In the wake of our victory on the river



We drink to the fallen, nameless and valiant in their departure from this land.



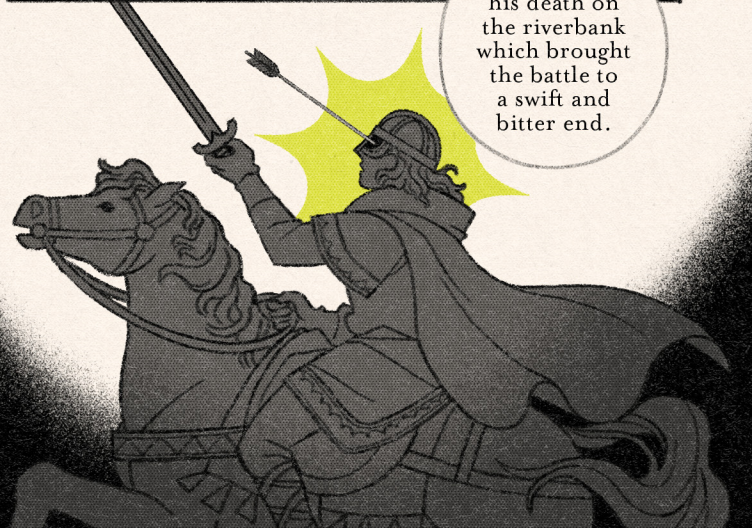
The Lord of the Lea,
Whose men fought with honor,

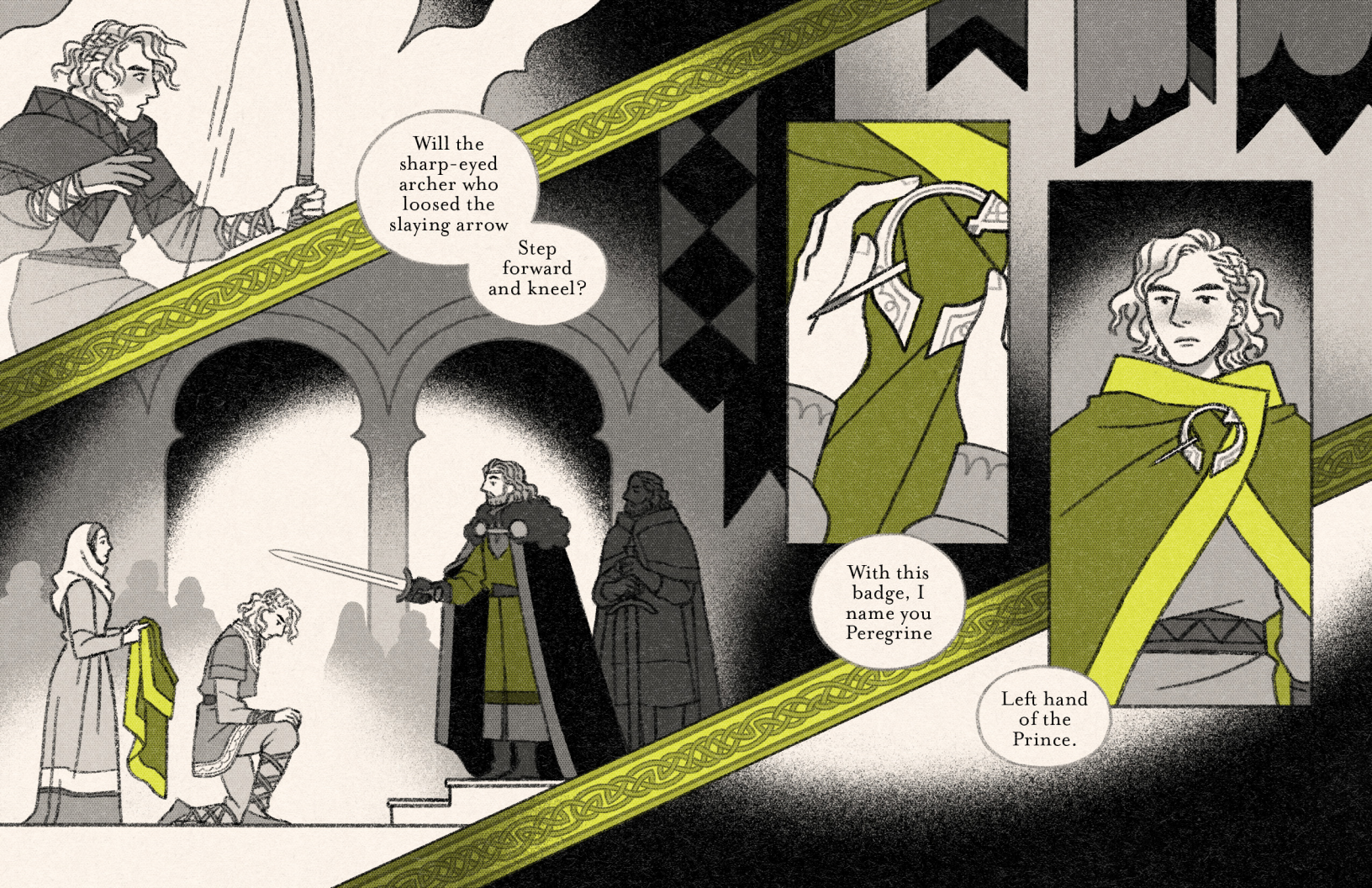


Nevertheless knew it was folly to meet us in the field—



And it was his death on the riverbank which brought the battle to a swift and bitter end.





Will the sharp-eyed archer who loosed the slaying arrow

Step forward and kneel?



With this badge, I name you Peregrine



Left hand of the Prince.



People of the Lea,

I stand before you not as a conqueror

But as a herald of peace.



Under my protection you shall keep your homes,

Your lands, your property, and your livelihoods.

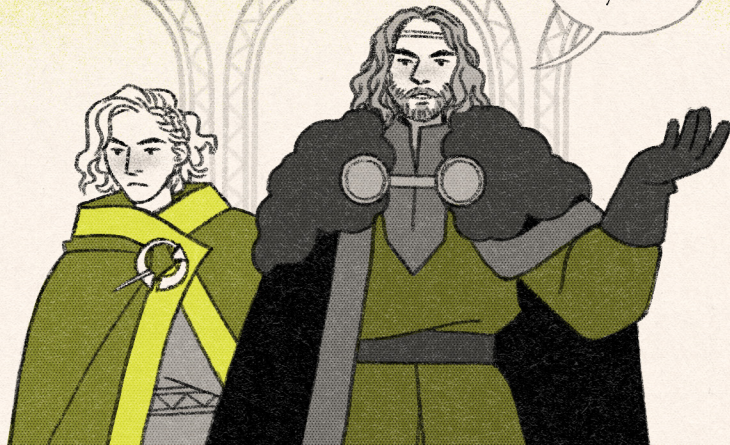


There is but one levy I require.

In accordance with the custom of my father, the King—

Surrender your name, and I will give you another.

With it, take your place by my side.





We now hold the river.



From this vantage I can see what few steps remain to the end of this pursuit.

My father did not believe it possible—



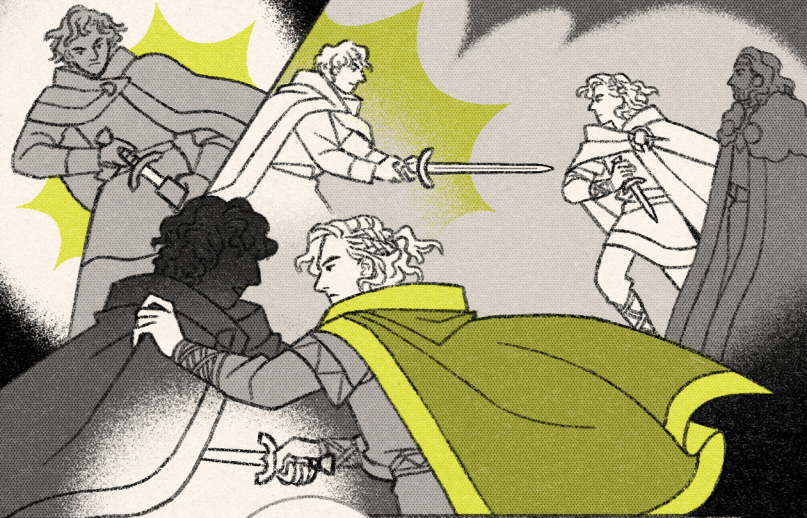
And by my hand, the bounds of his kingdom have nearly reached the sea.

The lords of the coast will promise their fealty

And all the land will be united under one banner.



The right hand offers peace—



The left holds the blade to ensure it.





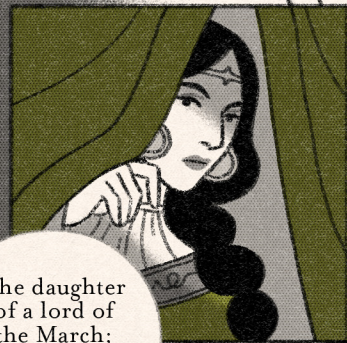
That's no war party.

Who is in that carriage?

Now that the prince has taken the castle,

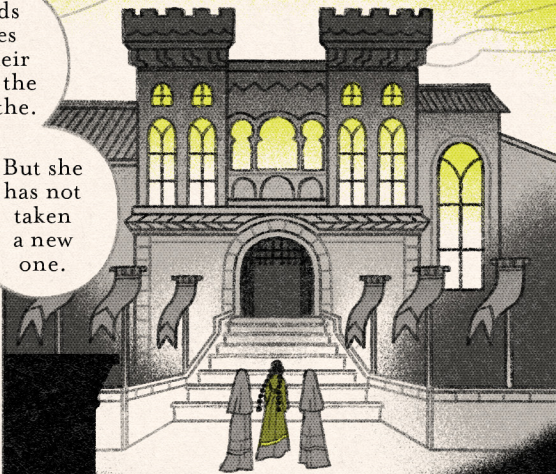
He has brought his consort to the seat of his new court.

The daughter of a lord of the March; one of the first to bend the knee.

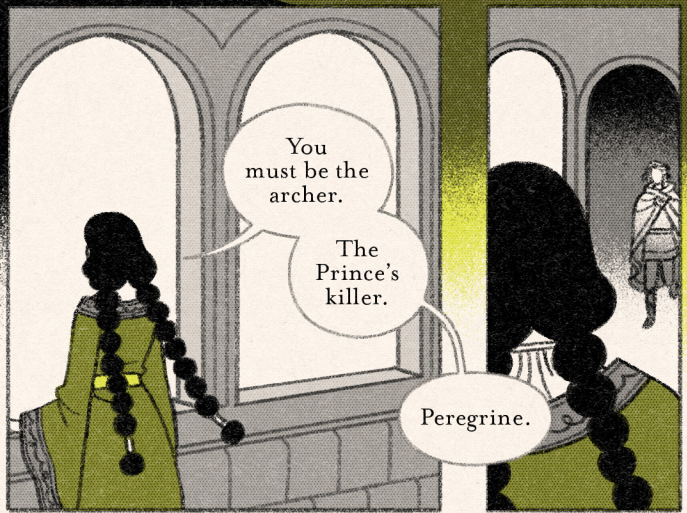


Even lords and ladies give up their names for the Prince's tithe.

But she has not taken a new one.



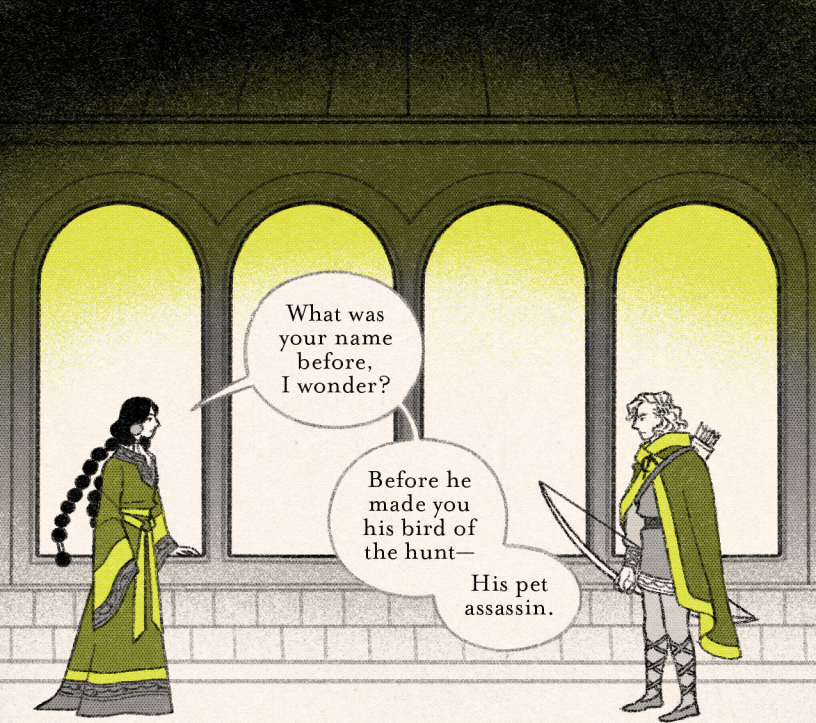
They call her the Nameless Princess.



You must be the archer.

The Prince's killer.

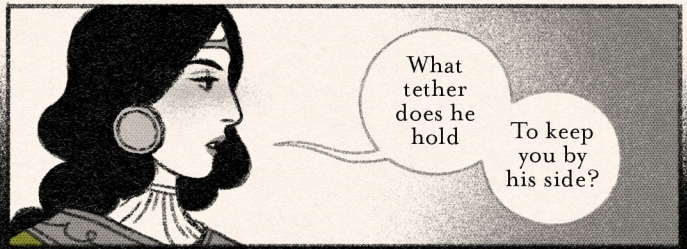
Peregrine.



What was your name before, I wonder?


Before he made you his bird of the hunt—

His pet assassin.



What tether does he hold

To keep you by his side?





There was no glory in the battle on the river—



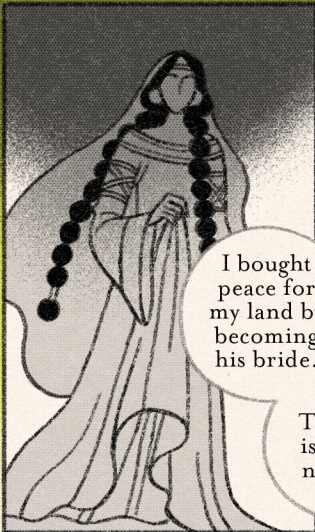
Only death.

With that arrow,


I sought merely to end it.



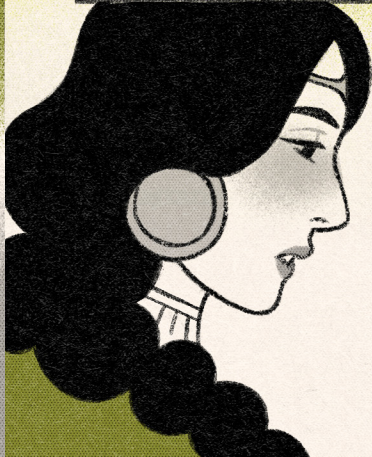
And now here I am.




I bought peace for my land by becoming his bride.



The March is a border no longer.

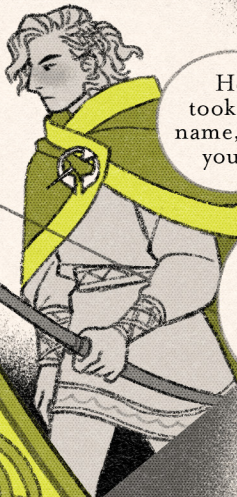


And now here I am.



Peace is
what he
promises—


But what
peace can
endure
when it is
purchased
by force?



He
took my
name, and
yours

And when
there is no
one left
to make
nameless,


Whose
blood will
pay his
toll?

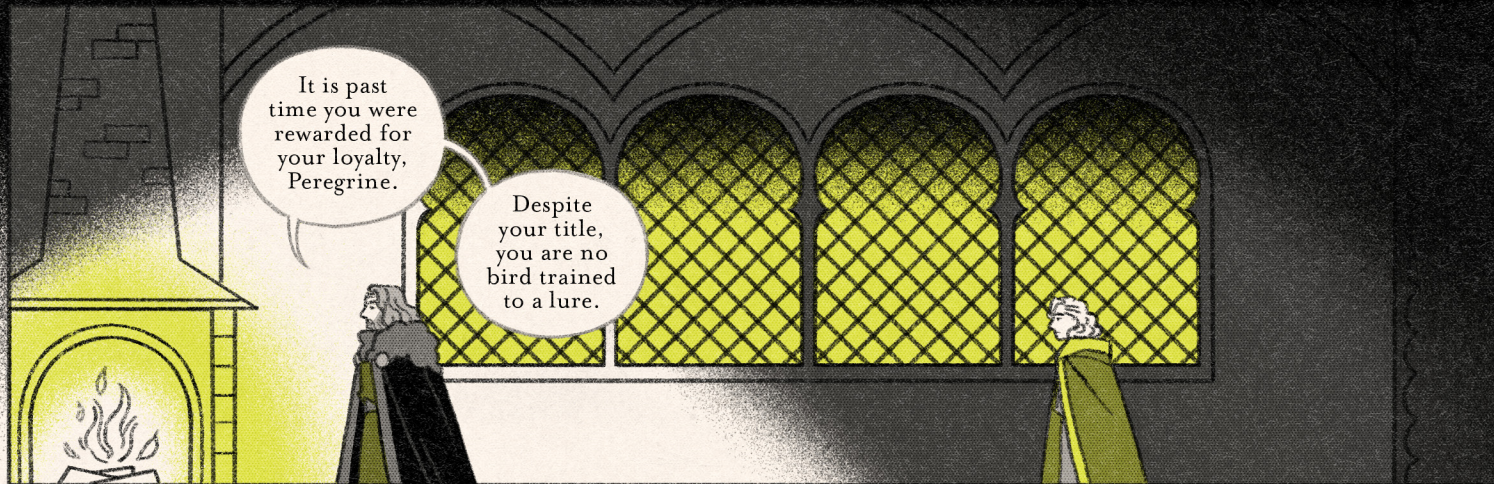


It is a
wheel
ever-
turning,

Violence
its axis,

And
we are
but its
spokes.





It is past time you were rewarded for your loyalty, Peregrine.

Despite your title, you are no bird trained to a lure.



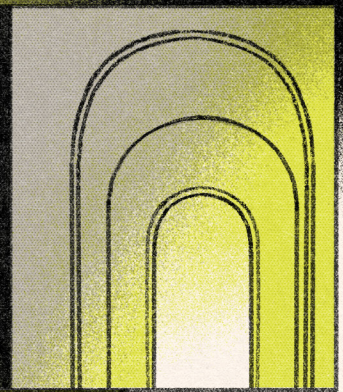
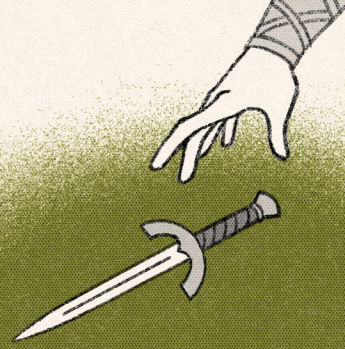
Ask of me anything—

For any answer is within my power.

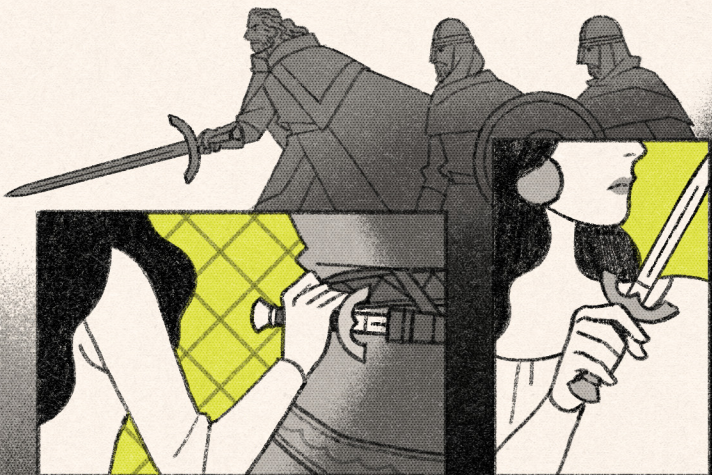


What is my true name?









Thus,
the wheel
turns.

