

# ROBERT for BARTLETT S RUIN MISTK



**BETRAYAL**  
**A DAUGHTER OF KINGS**  
COMIC #1

This mini-ebook contains a special preview of *Betrayal (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #1)*. A full color, deluxe size, perfect bound comic of approximately 5000 words.

A decade before the events of the bestselling author Robert Stanek's epic *Ruin Mist, Kingdoms and Dragons* books, a princess named Delinna Alder touches one of the Four Orbs crafted by Dnyarr, the last great Elf King of Greye, and is transformed forever. But Princess Delinna Alder has much to learn about the lethal price of being both within time and outside its bounds.

The special edition comic, *Betrayal (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #1)*, is the first of four that tells the never-before-told story of Delinna's journey into exile and threaded through them all are the tragic romances that will eventually tear nations apart and destroy worlds. Read *Betrayal (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #1)* first, continue on to *Deliverance (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #2)*, *Rebirth (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #3)*, and *Discord (A Daughter of Kings, Comic #4)*.

Robert Stanek is the bestselling author of the epic series *Ruin Mist Chronicles*, which includes *Keeper Martin's Tale*, *Kingdom Alliance*, *Fields of Honor*, and *Mark of the Dragon* and which was also released for young adults as *The Kingdoms and the Elves of the Reaches #1 - #4* and *In the Service of Dragons #1 - #4*. He has also written many other novels and short stories, and is well-known for his *Bugville Critters* children's picture book series.

It's been a fairly open secret that Robert Stanek is the name of the more familiar bestselling author, William Stanek. His books have been bestsellers on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Audible.com, and Apple iTunes. Robert's "Stormjammers" received a full-page review in *The Journal of Electronic Defense*. A review by the JED is as high an honor as it gets with a book by a military flyer.



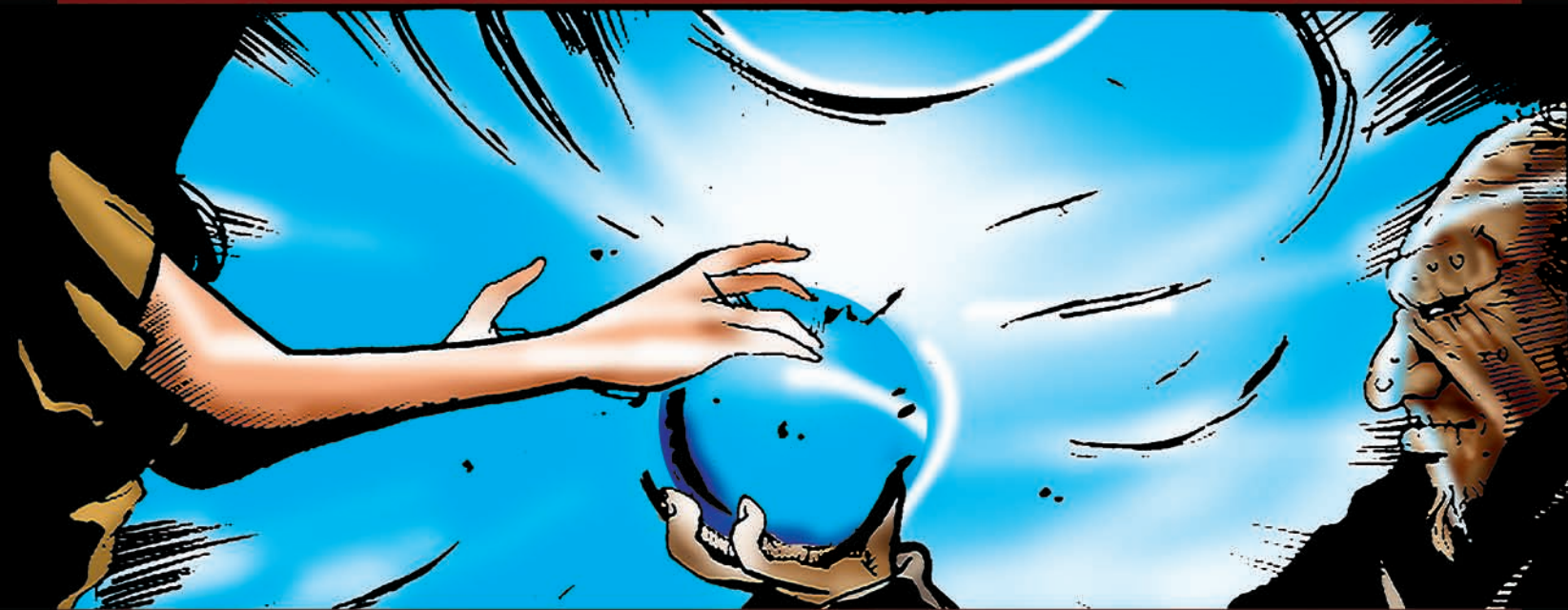
**BATTLE FOR RUIN MIST: A DAUGHTER OF KINGS, Comic #1.** First printing 2010. ISBN 978-1-57545-250-0. Published by Reagent Press, LLC, P.O. Box 362, East Olympia, WA 98540-0362. Copyright © 2010 Robert Stanek. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Robert Stanek. The stories, characters, names and incidents mentioned in this book are entirely fictional, and any similarity which may exist to any actual locale, person or event is entirely coincidental. Original printing in the U.S.A. For ordering or inquires, visit [www.reagentpress.com](http://www.reagentpress.com).

In an age long since lost to myth and memory, a race of supreme giants known as titans ruled over all the lands of Ruin Mist from their homes on Over-Earth. Without question, titans were the masters of the gates. They moved freely between realms and across lands. Darkness came to mark the end of the age of the titans as surely as there was ever light at the beginning. During this time of darkness, known as the Great Purge, it was the greatest of all titans, Ky'el, who gave men, elves, and dwarves their freedom.

By the end of the purge, the only known gate to Over-Earth was sealed for all time, ushering in a new beginning. A new age. An age of men, elves, and dwarves. After countless wars waged against themselves, each other, and the other races, men, elves, and dwarves settled in to an uneasy peace within their divided lands. In time, like the titans before them, dwarves became folk of myth and legend, leaving only absence like a darkness where once there had been a great presence and a light.

The age of men and elves had arrived, its arrival marked by the coming of the Great War. Some would call this war Dnyarr's war after the elven king who started it. Others would call it the War of the Thousand Year Siege. Those who fought and died would call it the War of Ten Million Tears. Victory for men above all others brought little joy even though it ushered in a new age. The age of men.

There are some who fear this age to be Ruin Mist's last. For if men succumb to darkness, there will be no beginning, and darkness will surely rule forever. It is in this time at the twilight of the age of men that those long lost have returned to thwart the darkness. They are the fallen sons of ages past and present. They are the keepers, the watchers, and the guardians. They are those who hold the key to Ruin Mist's future.



Enter the other realm now and see what she sees. Dark dreams disturb her sleep. She is a daughter of kings about to be dealt fate's darkest hand. Her name is Delinna Alder.



Hello?  
Hello?

Strange sounds awake her. Frightened, she sits up and looks around her room. She makes deep noises in her throat, can you hear them?




She puts a hand to her head, her eyes wide with terror. In her mind's eye she sees a phantom surrounded by tendrils of lightning and flame. It is magic. Darkness to those who believe the ancient texts; light to those who can see beyond prejudice and fear.






It is him.

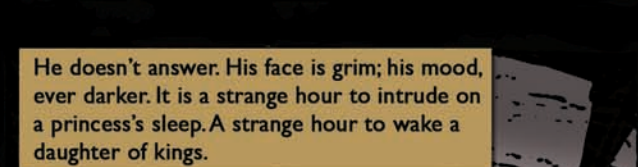


The one they call the Watcher, returned from afar. But she does not know that as she screams. She sees only the phantom emerging from shadows.



Shadows left behind, hood lowered, the face is revealed. She knows him. He is Xith, a shaman of the northern reaches and the last of the watchers. To some, he is an impish gnome. To her, he is salvation.

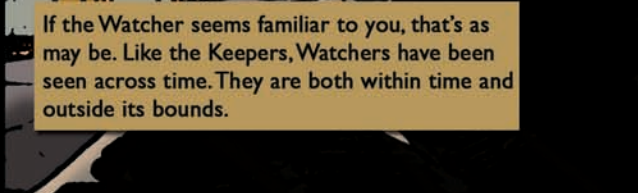
You found it at last?



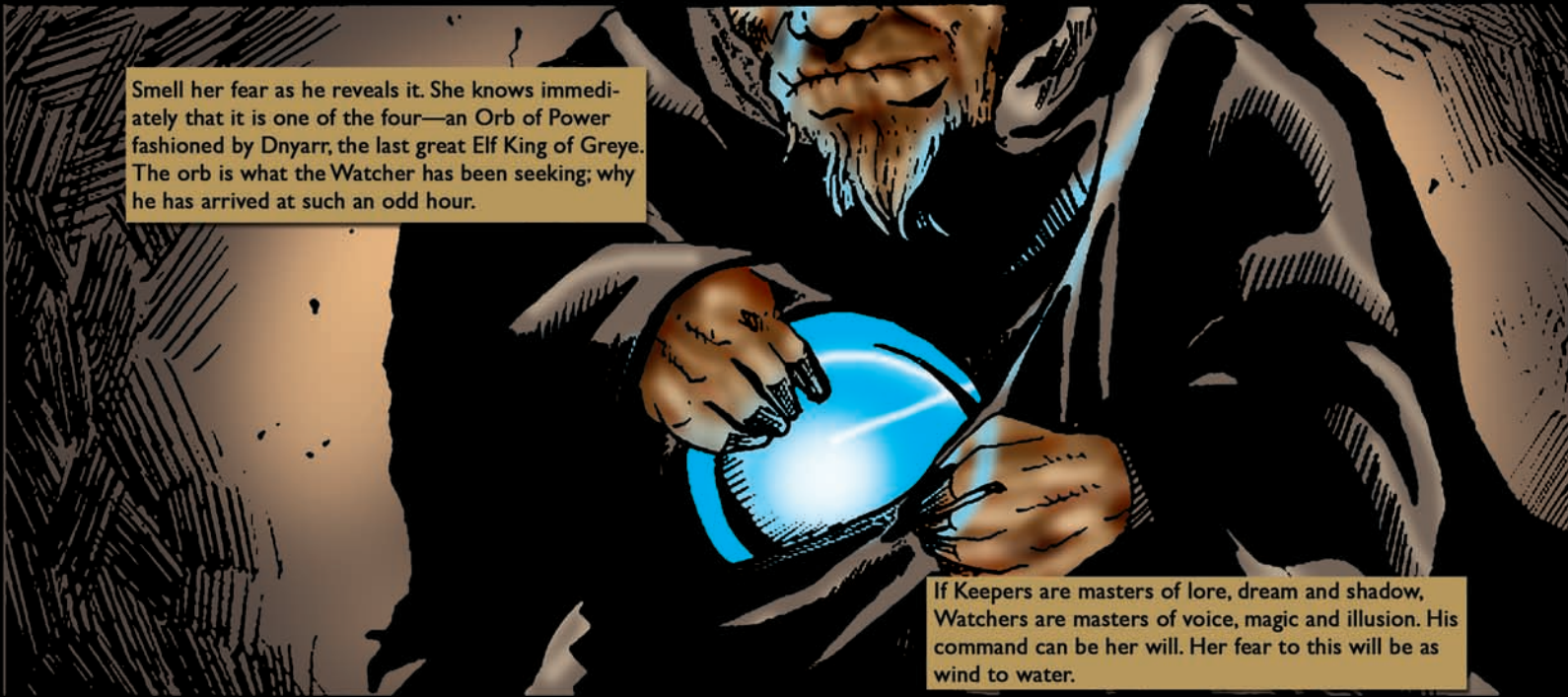
He doesn't answer. His face is grim; his mood, ever darker. It is a strange hour to intrude on a princess's sleep. A strange hour to wake a daughter of kings.



You startle me awake and say nothing?



If the Watcher seems familiar to you, that's as may be. Like the Keepers, Watchers have been seen across time. They are both within time and outside its bounds.



Smell her fear as he reveals it. She knows immediately that it is one of the four—an Orb of Power fashioned by Dnyarr, the last great Elf King of Greye. The orb is what the Watcher has been seeking; why he has arrived at such an odd hour.

If Keepers are masters of lore, dream and shadow, Watchers are masters of voice, magic and illusion. His command can be her will. Her fear to this will be as wind to water.

He shows it to her.

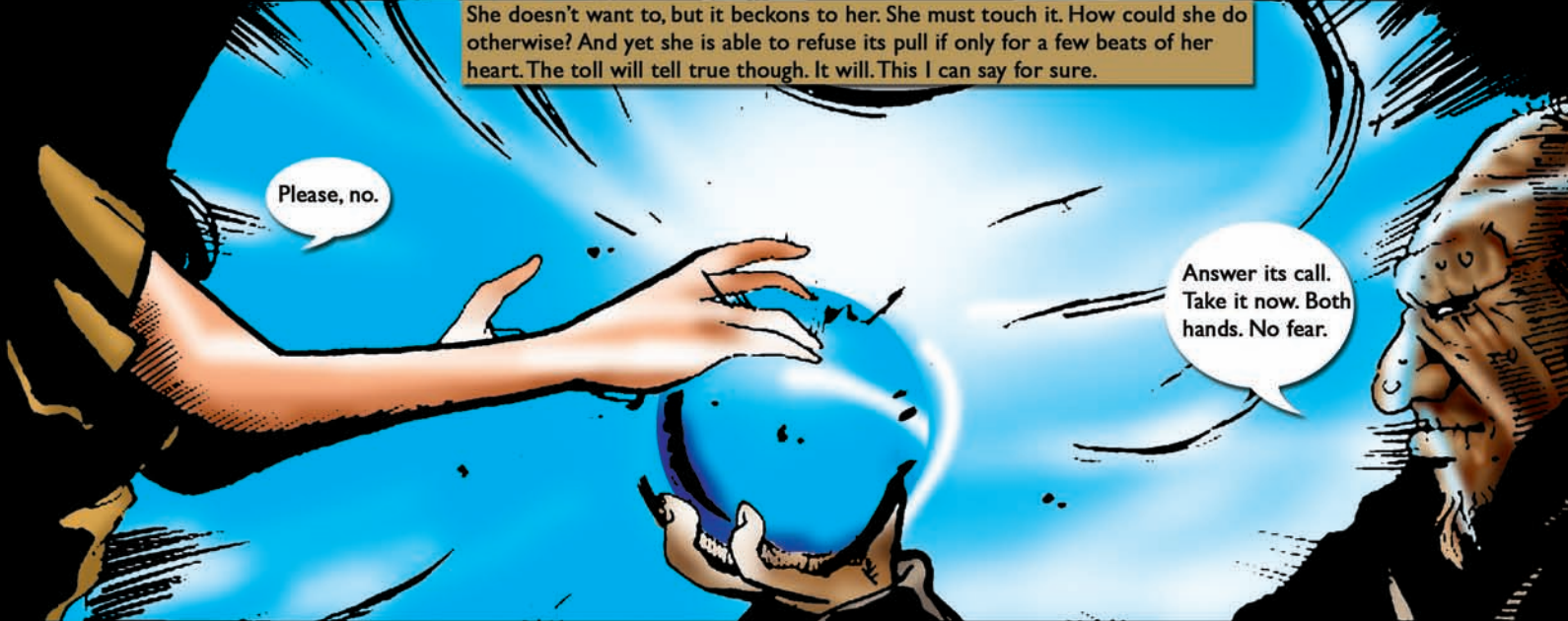


Touch it!



I mustn't!


You must!



She doesn't want to, but it beckons to her. She must touch it. How could she do otherwise? And yet she is able to refuse its pull if only for a few beats of her heart. The toll will tell true though. It will. This I can say for sure.

Please, no.

Answer its call. Take it now. Both hands. No fear.



It responds to her touch, exploding to life as legend says it must, for she is a daughter of kings. It feeds on her earliest memories first, ripping them from her and leaving her gasping before tearing through all the days of her young life. It knows her now as even she does not yet know herself.

Hungry still. It looks for more; it reaches out to him. He holds the power back, keeps it from consuming him and her.

Stop! No more!

How? Is it even possible? It wants so much more. It hungers.

It wants ME-E-E!

We've only begun. The orb gives as much as it takes. You must ask it to give back.

The keys, you have them. Don't think, do, and it will respond.

Then give yourself to it!

The Watcher commands and Delinna gives. She hopes it has the answers she's long sought, but at what cost? Her salvation? Her damnation? There's always a cost. Sometimes, a cost in flesh. Other times, a cost far greater for just as the ages cut across time, so does the power of the orb. It knows no bounds and no one person can truly contain its power.

But will it tell her who lives and who dies? These are the answers long sought and the reasons for the Watcher's long journeys across dark lands. True enough, death and sorrow have been foretold, but can these things be undone before they are done? Will the Alders end truly bring down the Kingdoms of Men?

The One True Path has many turnings and a woman's quest must begin with a girl's decisions. But who can be saved and who must be lost? Difficult choices for anyone. For one as young as she, choices that will haunt the days of her life.



BETRAYAL



REBIRTH



DELIVERANCE



DISCORD

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