

NOTTINGHAM

“Iter Malum”

a 12-page short.

Written by  
Michael Patrick Sullivan

Michael Patrick Sullivan  
[m@redrighthand.net](mailto:m@redrighthand.net)  
310.871.7920

**PAGE 1:**

**PANEL ONE:** Wide. Establishing, Night under a bright moon.

An inn, *built against the rock that Nottingham Castle itself is built upon*. We see a spire against the full moon as the castle looms over the Inn.

The sign hanging over the door reads "YE OLDE HOLY TRIP." Fire light through the windows.

NOTTINGHAM, 1191

1 SERVING WENCH/INSIDE: Your accommodations for the night are ready.

2 PILGRIM/INSIDE: As weary pilgrims, we thank you.

**PANEL TWO:** Dim, lit by candle and oven fire. Publick house having a quiet night,

Bearded ELDER PILGRIM OSRIC sits, flanked by THREE YOUNGER PILGRIMS (we'll call them GREGORY, ALDUS, & BERTRAM, all in sackcloth cloaks over simple garb . They sit at a table where they've demolished a decent supper, all backs to the wall on one side of the table.

*A long bread knife* sits on an empty (except for crumbs) cutting board.

Serving Wench, setting down a metal tankard, spilling over with beer foam directly in front of Osric.

4 ELDER OSRIC: I couldn't possibly—

Balloon 5 overlaps 4 to interrupt him.

5 SERVING WENCH: Courtesy of the proprietor.

6 ELDER OSRIC: I wouldn't want to insult...

**PANEL THREE:** Two-shot of a Younger Pilgrim GREGORY and the Wench. Between them, in the background, we spot the MILLER'S SON, a ginger-haired 12y/o with an apron tending a medieval oven. He's *familiar*; we'll get to that later.

3 PILGRIM GREGORY: I must admit, I've never had a tourte **this** good. My compliments.

4 SERVING WENCH: I'll pass them along to the son of our miller.

5 SERVING WENCH: He knows just the right pinch of this or sift of that to make the most flavorful breads.

6 ELDER OSRIC/OFF: Not mine.

**PAGE 1 (CONTINUED):**

**PANEL FOUR:** Osric holds aloft his tankard, as if to heaven, as the foam of the beer hangs in his beard. Beyond, the mug Serving Wench looks on, amused.

7 ELDER OSRIC: **My** compliments are to **Jesu**. It is **He** who has favored our journey with such sustenance and the security of this inn for the night.

8 SERVING WENCH: No safer place than in the shadow of Nottingham Castle. I hear tell that **Prince John** is to pay a visit to our lord.

**PANEL FIVE:** Back at the oven, Wench with Miller's Son, who uses a peel to slide loaves from the oven. In the background, the pilgrims at their table.

9 MILLER'S SON: He's so pious. How did you know he'd partake?

10 SERVING WENCH: He's **too** pious, if you catch my meaning.

**PANEL SIX:** Same shot except Osric has bolted up, spilling his tankard, sending dishware clattering off the table edge and scaring his young pilgrims.

11 ELDER OSRIC/OFF: **INFERNAL BASTARDS!**

SFX: CRASH!!

Maybe balloon 11 can disrupt the edge of panel five.

**PAGE 2:**

**PANEL ONE:** Half-splash. EVERARD BLACKTHORNE kneels over the corpse of Osric, who has that bread knife sticking out of an eye socket, as he lies in a pool of his own blood on the inn floor.

It's daytime now, windows are open and morning sunlight streaming in.

Over Ev's shoulder we see the remaining two pilgrims, Aldus and Bertram. Over his other shoulder, we see THE MILLER (ginger and apron'd like his son, stands with hands on his son's shoulders. The Wench stands a bit closer to Ev.

TITLES/CREDITS

- |   |                |   |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | EV:            | Once again.   |
| 2 | EV:            | This time, <b>breathe</b> between sentences.  |
| 3 | SERVING WENCH: | He'd been a decent patron, though maybe a bit holier-than-thou. Suddenly he just erupted - shouting and raging like a maniac... |

**PANELS TWO-FOUR ARE FLASHBACK – MAYBE COLOR IN SEPIA AND RED (FOR BLOOD)**

**PANEL TWO** Close on the bread knife, as Osric's hand reaches for it.

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|---|------------------|---|
| 4 | ELDER OSRIC/OFF: | <b>Demons inside me! Blinding me with vile thoughts! Shouting damnations!</b> |
|---|------------------|---|

**PANEL THREE:** Gregory rushes toward Osric, his arms outstretched, holding up his hands for Osric to stop while Osric SLASHES him across this abdomen. Deeply.

- |   |                  |                               |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 | ELDER OSRIC:     | <b>They must be silenced!</b> |
| 6 | PILGRIM GREGORY: | <b>Osric! No!</b>             |
| 7 | ELDER OSRIC:     | <b>Get back!</b>              |
|   | SFX:             | SLASH!!                       |

**PANEL FOUR:** Gregory on his knees, clutching his bloody belly, dripping blood from his mouth, while over him Osric plunges the bread knife through his left eye in into his brain.

- |   |              |                                   |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8 | ELDER OSRIC: | My soul is tainted. God forgive-- |
|---|--------------|-----------------------------------|

Puts the bread knife through his eye and into his brain.

- |  |      |         |
|--|------|---------|
|  | SFX: | THWUNK! |
|--|------|---------|

**PAGE 3:**

**PANEL ONE:** Ev holds up Osric's limp hand while looking at the knife handle sticking out of Osric's face. Past him, feature The Miller and his Son.

1 EV: There are many indications supporting self-infliction. I'll be glad to put this to rest before Prince John's arrival.

2 MILLER'S SON: You don't suppose he might grace the inn?

3 THE MILLER: He won't leave the comfort of the castle, boy.

**PANEL TWO:** Aldus approaches Ev, hands out in supplication and faces long with worry. Behind him, Bertram is beside himself with worry of not terror.

4 PILGRIM ALDUS: Please, Lord Sheriff. It cannot be so cut-and-dried as that. Osric would **never** take his own life.

5 PILGRIM ALDUS: He was a stoic and holy man, not prone to wild outbursts. There must be something further at play.

6 PILGRIM BERTRAM: Or he was possessed...

**PANEL THREE:** Ev looks away from the pilgrims in front of him and back at the spilled tankard on the table

6 EV: Obviously, he was drunk out of his gourd.

7 PILGRIM ALDUS: But he **wasn't**.

**PANEL FOUR:** Ev puts his eye at the level of the table top, examining the tankard spill, estimating the puddle on the table's surface.

8 EV: You may be right. The size of this spill is consistent with the volume of the tankard, give or take a dram's worth. Scarcely enough to impair a man of his stature.

9 EV: Bring me a sample of this brew.

**PAGE 3 (CONTINUED):**

**PANEL FIVE:** The Miller's Son holds a tray as Ev samples from a cup (not a tankard).

10: EV: A bit hoppy, but seemingly ordinary.

**PANEL SIX:** Ev speaks to the wench, but in the background one of the pilgrims is clearly angered, pointing at the wench.

11 EV: I'll speak to the remaining witness. Where is the pilgrim he attacked?

12: THE MILLER: He was in a bad way, he was taken to the healer at the edge of town

13 PILGRIM BERTRAM: The **witch**, you mean!

**PAGE 4:**

**PANEL ONE:** Establishing, Day. The healer's hovel. A humble hut in a barren field. The silhouette of Nottingham Village low on the horizon.

1 HEALER/INSIDE: His injury is too grave.

**PANEL TWO:** Inside the Healer's hovel, looking over a bloodstained blanket covering the injured Gregory, we see Everard talking to the Healer. She has straggly hair, is wrapped in a dark shawl and wears a bit of a know-it-all smirk. On paper, the characteristics of a stereotypical witch, but in reality just a smart, middle-aged woman.

Behind them, a work table with bottles and bowls.

2 HEALER: There's little I can do, but to prevent his pain. I don't think he's going to be able to answer your questions.

**PANEL THREE:** Over Ev's shoulder as he looks down on Gregory, we see that Gregory's eyes are dilated and his mouth in a twisted grin. Clearly heavily drugged.

3 EV: He's smiling. He's gashed open like a hog and he's **smiling** from ear to ear.

4 HEALER: It's not **witchcraft**, if that's what you're thinking.

**PANEL FOUR:** Healer at her work table, using a pestle to ground something in a mortar, as we see Ev over her shoulder.

5 EV: Isn't it?

6 HEALER: It's a tincture of certain mushrooms.

7 HEALER: If grain and alcohol can turn men into fools, why can't **other** things have different effects.

**PANEL FIVE:** Ev joins her at the table. He now holds the mortar. Sniffs the contents.

8 EV: Are there ingredients that could be used to craft a state of mind that would cause someone to behave as the Old Pilgrim did?

9 HEALER: Possibly. Ergot might. Dash of nightshade, Not something I'd care to find out.

**INSET PANEL:** Close on Ev's piercing eyes.

10 EV: How **do** you test these things?

**PAGE 5:**

**PANEL ONE:** In the Castle dining room. Stone walls, tapestries, a mighty wooden table and tall-backed chairs. Night, lit by torches, maybe moonlight through a window.

SIR GUY OF GISBORNE lounges at the head of the table, set for dinner, but the food is yet to arrive. Ev at one side, taking the opportunity of reporting to his lord to join for a meal.

1 GISBORNE: On herself? Perhaps not a witch, but mad certainly.

2 EV: She says some of her samplings were quite enjoyable.

**PANEL TWO:** Two-shot of Gisborne and Ev as, in the background, SERVANTS bring in trays of cooked pheasant, vegetables and tankards.

3 GISBORNE: And your findings regarding the mad pilgrim?

4 GISBORNE: I don't want even the aftertaste of trouble when Prince John arrives.

5: EV: Shuttering Ye Old Holy Trip isn't unwarranted. The beer may be tainted.

**PANEL THREE:** Servant sets down a tankard each in front of Gisbourne and Ev. Gisbourne wags a finger at Ev.

6 GISBORNE: No. It's popularity as a stop on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem provides an **exceptional** tax revenue.

7 GISBORNE: Aside from that, the inn uses a brewhouse built in the cave system below us. It connects to the inn **and** the castle

**PANEL FOUR:** Gisbourne half off-panel. Feature Ev as he lifts the beer to his lips.

8 GISBOURNE: It's the same beer as served here, and none of **us** has gone mad.

**PANEL FIVE:** Ev lunging and reaching out, knocking the tankard from Gisbourne's hand. Beer splashing through the air (and perhaps through panel borders)

9 GISBORNE: What the matter with you?

**PANEL SIX:** Ev stands hunched over, his chair kicked away. He's pulling his sword out and his eyes have gone light, maybe even swirly, indicating an altered state.

10: EV: It's **not** the same beer.

11 EV'S CAPTION: And hopefully not a swig too much.



**PAGE 6:**

**PANEL ONE:** TWO-THIRDS SPLASH: Ev stumbles down steps carved out of the sandstone, wielding his sword out in front of him. His eyes spaced-out by the drugs.

The cave walls blend into a mélange of images:

On one side of him, images from the slaughter of women and children during the Crusades. Screaming faces. Swords dripping with blood. Bodies everywhere.

On the other side, imagined horrors, demonic faces, fire, skeletons, snakes and the bloody hand of God reaching down.

- 1 EV'S CAPTION: Descending down into Nottingham Rock, I grip my sword tight as if it were my sanity.
- 2 EV'S CAPTION: For all I know, right now, **it is**.
- 3 EV'S CAPTION: I hold fast to the knowledge that I have been drugged – that **none** of this real.
- 4 EV'S CAPTION: Meanwhile, every nightmare I've ever experienced, real or imagined, forces itself at the into my vision,...
- 5 EV'S CAPTION: ...aided by the fact that, past the dungeon, there is no torchlight until I reach...

**PANEL TWO:** Wide. Behind Ev, propping himself up against the wall of the cave where it opens into a chamber used as the brewhouse.

Torch light makes him a silhouette that frames the panel in which we find the Miller, stirring a gigantic cauldron with a giant wooden brewing spoon as his Son pours a sack of grain into the brew. Both startled.

The room is filled with stacked grain sacks, pails and barrels, and a bellows at the flame under the cauldron. A chimney hood over the cauldron, dug into the sandstone above.

- 5 EV'S CAPTION: ...**the brewhouse**.
- 6 THE MILLER'S SON: Dad! Look!
- 7 EV: The Miller...

**PAGE 7:**

**PANEL ONE:** As Ev stumbles in, The Miller takes a defensive posture, wielding his wooden cauldron stirrer/spoon as a staff. It's four feet long a got at least a three-to-four inch circumference and it gets as big as adult-sized head at the business end.

- 1 EV's CAPTION: I make my accusations and present my deductions not to justify my actions, but to keep my mind steady.
- 2 EV: You're a supporter of King Richard.
- 3 EV: Possibly in league with Hood.
- 4: THE MILLER: Get back, son. He's as mad as a rabid dog.

**PANEL TWO:** Ev swings a two-handed grip on his sword from overhead. Miller positioned under the coming blow with his mighty spoon set to take the hit

- 5 EV: You sought to assassinate Prince John on his visit to Nottingham Castle.

**PANEL THREE:** Ev's sword splinters into the spoon, but it's thick and doesn't break.

- 6 EV: Causing him to die by his own hand, in the throes of madness, leaving none to blame.

SFX: THWUNK!

**PANEL FOUR:** Miller pulled back.

Ev's sword remains lodged in the spoon – ~~pulled~~ yanked from Ev's open hands.

He's disarmed.

- 7 EV: There would be no reprisals.

**PAGE 8:**

**PANEL ONE:** Miller turns the spoon toward his Son, who reaches for the stuck sword to pull it loose.

- 1 THE MILLER: Get the blade, boy!
- 2 EV: You only have one shot at Prince John.

**PANEL TWO:** Ev dives at Miller's Son, knocking him away like a rag doll.

The sword, dislodged, hangs in the air.

- 3 EV'S CAPTION: I'm unsure of reality until I hit it.
- SFX: THUMP!

**PANEL THREE:** CLOSE ON EV on the ground. Ev reaches for the sword, landed a couple of feet out of his reach. The sword reflected in each drugged eye.

The shadow of the Miller comes up the bottom of the panel.

- 4 EV'S CAPTION: I keep speaking what I know to be reality...
- 5 EV: You needed a test of your concoction.
- 6 THE MILLER/OFF: How dare you put hands on my son?

**PANEL FOUR:** DOWNSHOT - SEEMINGLY THE MILLER'S POV: Ev, on his back, his hand outstretched on the dirt floor, just out of reach of the sword. He's looking up at the Miller, who we see reflected in Ev's eyes posed to strike. He's got the spoon and the apron, but his face is that of a demon.

The Shadow of the Miller over him highlights that reflection in his eyes.

- 7 EV'S CAPTION: ...but my eyes still show me only horror.

**PAGE 9:**

**PANEL ONE:** Two-shot as Miller swings down on the grounded Everard.

- 1: EV'S CAPTION: My words are my tether. I will not let go.  
2 EV: You thought a traveller wouldn't raise my hackles.  
3 THE MILLER: Shut! Up!

**PANEL TWO:** Closer on Ev, catching the spoon with both hands, just before it strikes his head. In the background, we can see the Miller's Son has recovered from being tackled and has eyes on Ev.

- 4 EV: You thought wrong.  
SFX: THWACK!

**PANEL THREE:** UPSHOT/EV's POV looking back up the spoon staff, past the hands gripping it, seeing the shock on Miller's face at this development

- 5 EV'S CAPTION: I realize, I'm no longer looking at a demon. I'm looking at a **man**.

**PANEL FOUR:** Same shot, but the shock has turned to rage.

- 6 EV'S CAPTION: This is reality.

**PANEL FIVE:** Miller's son kicks Ev in the head.

- 7 EV'S CAPTION: Unfortunately.  
SFX: THUNK!

**PAGE 10:**

**PANEL ONE:** Ev, having ripped the spoon out of Miller's hands swings the handle into the Son's head.

1 EV: You needed to deal with me before I dealt with you.

SFX: WHOOOSH!

**PANEL TWO:** Ev, again, reaches for the sword as the Miller puts his foot down on it, holding it down.

2 EV'S CAPTION: This isn't me regaining myself.

**PANEL THREE:** Ev grabs the sword by the blade with both hands. We see blood seep out between his finger and under his grip.

3 EV'S CAPTION: I **never** let go to begin with.

**PANEL FOUR:** Ev yanks the sword out from under the Miller, sending him falling on his back, like pulling a rug out from under him, feet in the air and going to land on his spine.

4 EV: Unlike the pilgrim, I understand what's happened to me.

**PAGE 11:**

**PANEL ONE:** TWO-THIRDS SPLASH/UPSHOT: Ev stands over The Miller with his sword poised over Miller's heart.

The Miller's Son, in the background, frozen in fear seeing his father an inch from death.

1 EV: Do you?

**PANEL TWO:** DOWNSHOT/EV's POV: Close on the Miller under Ev's sword. Defeated, looking to his off-panel son.

2 EV: (OFF) Did I get anything wrong? Speak true.

**PANEL THREE:** MILLER'S POV of his son, his eyes filled with fear. Fear for his father's life. Fear of the answer to Everard's question.

4 THE MILLER'S SON: Dad.

5 THE MILLER'S SON: Don't.

**PANEL FOUR:** Same shot as Panel Two, but the Miller looking up at Everard to confess with just one syllable.

3 MILLER: No.

**PAGE 12:**

**PANEL ONE:** Inside the Inn. Day, once again.

Everard leads two of HIS MEN as they take The Miller out in manacles. The Serving Wench stands by, stunned. She has her hands on the tearful Miller's Son's shoulders.

There's a HOODED MAN at one of the tables, his face in shadow.

1 EV'S CAPTION: With this matter closed, all will be set for Prince John's arrival.

2 EV'S CAPTION: Hopefully my head stops pounding before then.

**PANEL TWO:** From the Hooded Man's table, we see a Merry Man's mask on the bench beside him. He curls his finger at the Miller's Son, summoning him.

3 HOODED MAN: You, there. Boy! What's your name?

**PANEL THREE:** The Hooded Man leans over the table at the Miller's Son on the other side, we see his face out of the hoods shadow. It's the fair-bearded HOOD, himself, with a big grin on his face.

The Miller's Son remains tearful and obviously in a state of despair.

4 MILLER'S SON/MUTCH: Mutch, sir. The Miller's Son.

5 HOODED MAN/HOOD: Your father's a loyal, man, Mutch. He knows how to keep a secret, doesn't he?

**PANEL FOUR:** Hood shows the mask to the Miller's Son. His eyes bug in amazement.

6 HOOD: As do you. Don't be afraid. I'll look after you now, me and my friends.

**PANEL FIVE:** Outside at the edge of the forest. The silhouette of Hood, with hand on Mutch, as they walk into the woods.

Eyes populate the shadows amongst the trees.

7 MUTCH: Will I be a Merry Man?

8 HOOD: Maybe.

9 HOOD: For now though, we could use a good cook.

**END**