

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

FORGOTTEN REALMS®



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Welcome to a world where adventurers delve into the depths to win great treasures of old, heroes stave off the insidious plots of shadowborn fiends, undead necromancers vie for absolute mastery of life, and voracious dragons hunt. Welcome to a land whose magic-soaked bedrock has spawned millennia of eye-popping wonders and heart-stopping threats. Welcome...to the **Forgotten Realms®**.



Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

1



AS EVERY CITIZEN OF WATERDEEP KNOWS, STREET TRAFFIC IS A CONSTANT PROBLEM IN DOCK WARD.

HOPE
WE'RE...
NOT TOO...
LATE.

HUH!
WE'RE...
ALWAYS...
TOO LATE.



YEEEEAAARGH!



SKORLUS.

HUH-OH.





OH? HOW SO?

IF THEY SAW THEY SAW SOMETHING, THEY HAVE TO TELL THE WATCH WHAT.

THEREBY MAKING THEMSELVES THE NEXT VICTIMS. MY OH-SO-WORLDLY, CLEVER PARTNER IN CRIME.



CRIME IS SUCH A HARSH WORD. AND IF YOU'RE SO CLEVER, SAER TELMANTLE, WHO KILLED OLD SKORLUS?

HUH. I'M CLEVER ENOUGH NOT TO EVEN GUESS. WE'VE GOT TO KEEP WELL AWAY FROM THERE AND SAY NOTHING ABOUT IT OR WHOEVER DID FOR HIM WILL THINK SILENCING US IS A NECESSITY.

SO, A NEW BEGINNING. WHICH BRINGS US TO THE NEW CLEVERNESS YOU WERE ACHING TO SPILL, VESTEREVE...



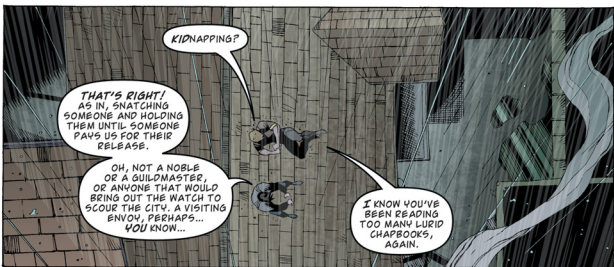
WE WERE ABOUT DONE WITH SNATCHING AND DAGGERWORK, EVEN BEFORE TODAY. SKORLUS JUST WANTED A READY SUPPLY OF BOOTS AND BREECHES AND THE LIKE...

...AND WE NEED A LOT MORE COIN AND A LOT LESS RUNNING PAST THE WATCH WITH JUST-STOLEN BOOTS IN OUR HANDS!



YOU RUNNING FOR GUILDMASTER? SLICE THE FLOWERY SPEECH, SAER RANDREAL DAUNTER, AND TELL ME YOUR IDEA. I GROW OLDER, I DO...

KIDNAPPING.



KIDNAPPING?

THAT'S RIGHT! AS IN, SNATCHING SOMEONE AND HOLDING THEM UNTIL SOMEONE PAYS US FOR THEIR RELEASE.

OH, NOT A NOBLE OR A GUILDMASTER, OR ANYONE THAT WOULD BRING OUT THE WATCH TO SCOUR THE CITY. A VISITING ENVOY, PERHAPS... YOU KNOW...

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN READING TOO MANY LURID CHAPBOOKS, AGAIN.



MEANWHILE, IN NORTH WARD—MORE PRECISELY, IN A ROOM OF THE HIGH HOUSE OF ROARINGHORN...

WE ROARINGHORNS HAVE SEEN DARK TIMES BEFORE. IT IS A MEASURE OF OUR HOUSE THAT WE WEATHER THEM AND GO ON.

SUCH IS THE MEASURE OF EVERY HIGH HOUSE, HAELEAM. WE ARE HARDLY UNIQUE IN HAVING A WAYWARD SON—

NOT WAYWARD—MISSING, AND PROBABLY DEAD.

DO WE KNOW THAT, BROTHER? YOU KNOW HOW BOLD WE WERE AT THAT AGE.



WE HAD MORE COIN AND FEWER AGENTS HUNTING FOR US—AND THERE'S BEEN NO WORD!

NO WORD AT ALL! IT'S NOT LIKE HIM... DARK DAYS, DARK DAYS.

TOO MUCH IS NOW RIDING ON A DAUGHTER WHO'S READY FOR NOTHING BUT PREENING AND POSING AND TEASING YOUNG BOYS TO THE VERY BRINK!



WHAT A CHARMING WAY OF PORTRAYING OUR DAUGHTER.

INDEED, BROTHER, INDEED. I FEAR YOU WRONG THE YOUNG LADY TALANDRA, DENYING HER THE VERY FIRE AND FREEDOM OF YOUTH. WHY, I—

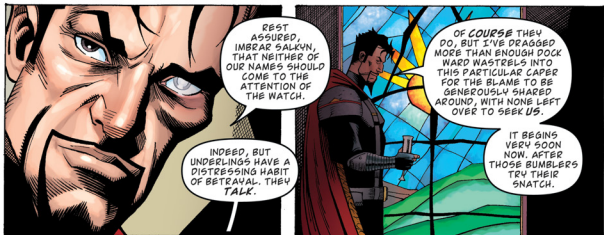
LORD HAELEAM! LORD HAELEAM!



'TIS THE LADY TALANDRA! SHE'S MISSING! GONE FROM HER CHAMBERS, AND HER BODYGUARD TOO!



GUARDS! GUARDS! RUELAND, BLAST YOU, CALL OUT ALL MY GUARDS!









ALL TOO FEW
BREATHLESS
MOMENTS LATER...

STOP AND
SURRENDER!
YOU CANNOT
OUTRUN THE
WATCH!

WE
CAN HAVE
A DAMNED
GOOD TRY!

BELT UP
AND RUN!

KEEP
RUNNING,
TORN!

URRRKH!

WALD

OH,
DUNG!
THIS IS
BAD!

HALT!
HALT FOR
THE WATCH!

STLARN
IT! THEY'RE
HERE
ALREADY!

AAAIGH!

YOU
CANNOT—
HOLD!

IT'S A
WOMAN!

I KNOW!
I'VE SEEN ONE
BEFORE!

A RESCUE!
A RESCUE!
THE WATCH IS
UPON YOU!

THEY CAN'T ESCAPE US! IF
THEY GET PAST VON RUIN,
THEY'LL RUN STRAIGHT
INTO LHORLAND'S
PATROL!

WHO GOT
CALLED DOCKSIDE
AWHILE BACK!
HEARD YOU NOT
THE HORN?

SO IT'S
ALL UP TO
US. AS
USUAL.

WHAT—?

YOU
IDIOTS.
YOU'VE LED
THE WATCH
RIGHT TO
US!

UH,
HI.

BUMP

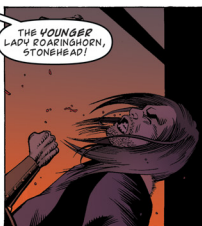
SWASH



THAT'S LADY
ROARINGHORN!



CAN'T BE!
SHE'S TWICE
AS OLD!



THE YOUNGER
LADY ROARINGHORN,
STONEHEAD!



THAT'S ALL OF
THEM, LADS!
NOW...



WRRRAAN



NO, IT'S NOT
QUITE ALL OF US,
WATCHCAPTAIN.
YOUR LAST
MISTAKE, IT
SEEMS.



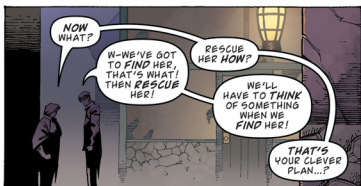
OUR
AIMING MAY
BE A LITTLE
RUSTY...



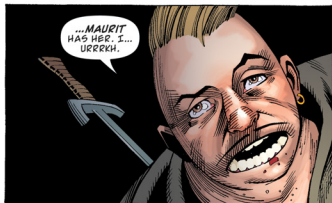
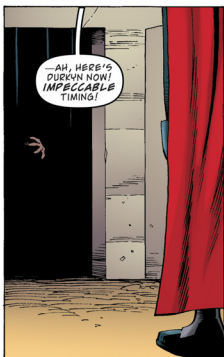
...BUT THE
POISON SHOULD
MAKE UP FOR
THAT.









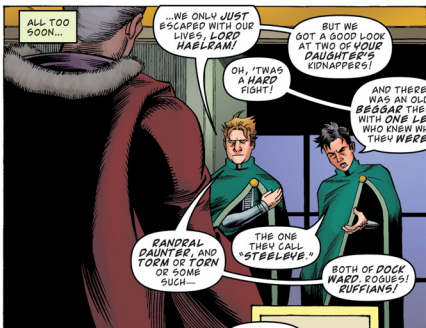




THE NORTH WARD.

THERE.
THAT'LL
DO IT, I
THINK.

AVE. LORD
HAELRAM
SHOULD BELIEVE
WE'RE SUITABLY
DISHEVELED.
WE'LL RUN FROM
HERE.



ALL TOO
SOON...

...WE ONLY JUST
ESCAPED WITH OUR
LIVES, LORD
HAELRAM!

BUT WE
GOT A GOOD LOOK
AT TWO OF YOUR
DAUGHTER'S
KIDNAPPERS!

OH, 'T WAS
A HARD
FIGHT!

AND THERE
WAS AN OLD
BEGGAR THERE,
WITH ONE LEG,
WHO KNEW WHO
THEY WERE.

RANDRAL
DAUNTER, AND
TORM OR TORN
OR SOME
SUCH—

THE ONE
THEY CALL
"STEEVEE."

BOTH OF DOCK
WARD, ROGUES!
RUFFIANS!



THEY GOT
AWAY, BUT I'VE
LEFT MEN AT
ALL THE CITY
GATES!

BY THE BLOOD
OF MY ANCESTORS,
I'LL SEE THOSE TWO
DRAWN AND TORN
APART, SLOWLY,
AS I WATCH!

ER, AFTER
THEY'RE
CAUGHT, OF
COURSE.



WE MUST
ENSURE THEY'RE
CAUGHT SOON,
BEFORE THEY CAN
DO ANYTHING TO
MY DAUGHTER!

THE FAIR
FLOWER OF HOUSE
ROARINGHORN!

INDEED!



ROUSE
ALL OF OUR
ARMSMEN!

AND COMPLAIN
TO THE WATCH,
JUST AS FAST AS
YOU CAN GET TO THE
CASTLE! I WANT
MY DAUGHTER BACK,
SAFE, BEFORE
DAWN!





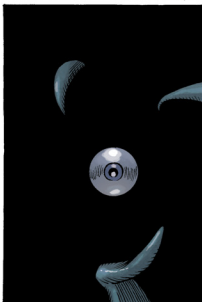
YES,
THIS
ONE.

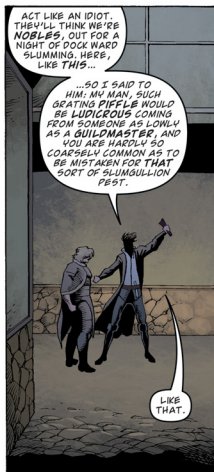


IF WE
TAKE "THIS
ONE," WE'LL BE
WALKING RIGHT AT
A WATCH PATROL.
LOOK AT THOSE
LANTERNS.



NO PROBLEM,
STEELEVE, MY
SWASHBUCKLING
FRIEND.





ACT LIKE AN IDIOT. THEY'LL THINK WE'RE NOBLES, OUT FOR A NIGHT OF DOCK WARD SLUMMING. HERE, LIKE THIS...

...SO I SAID TO HIM: MY MAN, SUCH GRATING PIFFLE WOULD BE LUDICROUS COMING FROM SOMEONE AS LOWLY AS A GUILDMASTER, AND YOU ARE HARDLY SO COARSELY COMMON AS TO BE MISTAKEN FOR THAT SORT OF SLUMGULLION PEST.

LIKE THAT.



IT WOULD HELP IF I UNDERSTOOD ONE WORD OF WHAT YOU JUST SAID.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO. JUST DRAWL "INDEED" OR "I SEE" EVERY TIME I STOP TO BREATHE. NOBLES DO IT ALL THE TIME.

NOW STAND UP STRAIGHT, WAVE YOUR ARMS AIRILY FROM TIME TO TIME, AND STROLL, LIKE A NOBLE WITH PLENTY OF WHIMS BUT WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD—

OR A THOUGHT IN HIS HEAD.



—INSTEAD OF SKULKING ALONG LIKE SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO SURVIVE IN DOCK WARD, AND IS THEREFORE GUILTY OF SOMETHING.



THE PROBLEM WITH YOU IS THAT YOU'RE MAD, SCREECH-CROW MAD—AND I AM, TOO, FOR GOING ALONG WITH YOUR FOOLISHNESS.

ONE GLIMPSE OF A PRETTY LASS AND YOU'RE LOST! LOST, I SAY, AND—



FOUND.



LOOK!





Art by Steve Ellis





Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

2





HALT!



DOWN
WEAPONS AND
SURRENDER!



OH, RANDAL—
IT GETS WORSE.
BEHIND US—



MISCREANTS!
DO NOT MOVE!

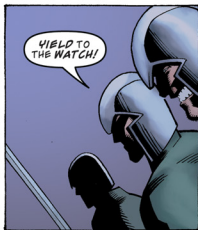
—SOME
MANNER OF HOUSE
GUARDS, BY THE
LOOK OF IT.



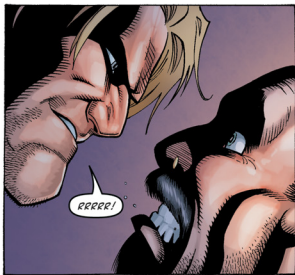
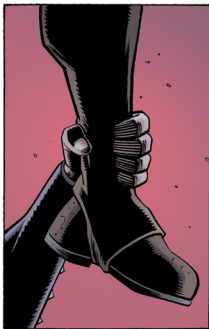
OH,
STLARN.

YOU
SAID IT.

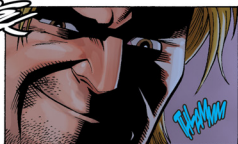
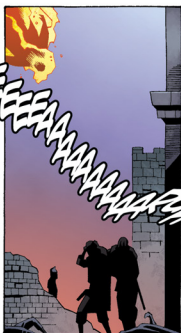






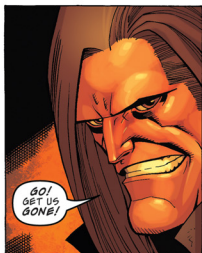














HRAH

...COME
ALONG,
WE'LL SLIP
OUT—



-UH-OH.



THERE SHE
IS! THE LADY
ROARINGHORN!

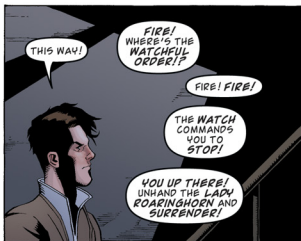
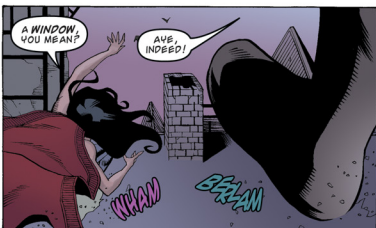
THIS WAY!
COME ON!



VON
WINDOW!



KERRRRRAASH!!





A SHORT ETERNITY OF ROOFTOPS LATER...

UNNNGH!



EEEEEE!

RGHH!



ARE—ARE YOU REALLY THE ONE THEY CALL STEEVE? I'VE... HEARD ABOUT YOU.

OH, NO.



WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU BACK TO THE HIGH HOUSE OF ROARINGHORN, RIGHT NOW, BEFORE—



LOOKS LIKE MAURIT GOT AWAY...



STLARN IT, DON'T—



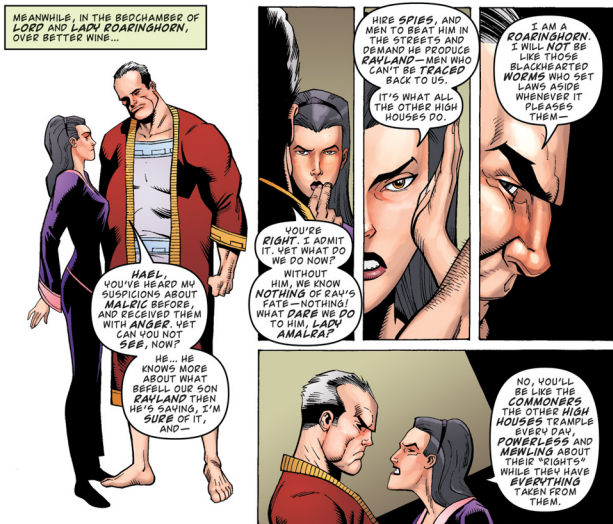
STLARN IT, DON'T—

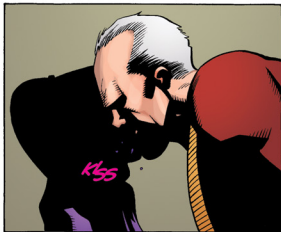


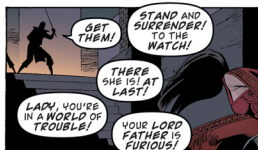
HERE WE GO AGAIN!



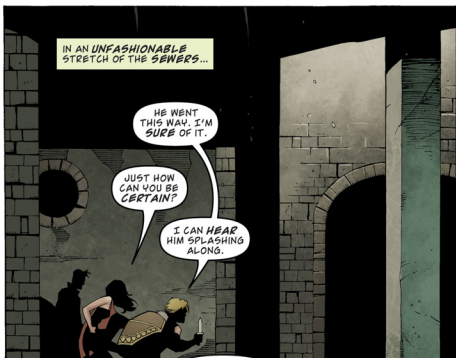
MEANWHILE, IN THE BEDCHAMBER OF LORD AND LADY ROARINGHORN, OVER BETTER WINE...











IN AN UNFASHIONABLE
STRETCH OF THE SEWERS...

HE WENT
THIS WAY. I'M
SURE OF IT.

JUST HOW
CAN YOU BE
CERTAIN?

I CAN HEAR
HIM SPLASHING
ALONG.



I COULD HEAR
HIM BETTER IF
YOU'D BELT
UP.

YOUR
LADYSHIP.

BELT UP, YOUR
LADYSHIP.

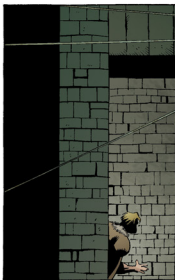


WHY DO
WE WANT TO
FOLLOW HIM,
ANYWAY?

BECAUSE HE
KNOWS ANOTHER
WAY OUT OF HERE,
AND WE DON'T ...



...WHICH
IS WHY WE'D
BEST NOT LOSE
TRACK OF HIM,
YOUR SILENT
LADYSHIP.



A
B-BEHOLDER?



OHNNNNN...



IT WAS ONCE,
BEFORE IT BECAME
SOMEONE'S
WARNING.

WHICH WOULD
FRIGHTEN ME MORE
IF IT WASN'T SO OLD
IT DOESN'T EVEN
SMELL, NOW.

YOUR
LADYSHIP.



KRASHAKADAROOM

WHAT WAS
THAT?



THE
WATCH,
COMING AFTER
US—AND
STUMBLING
OVER ALL THAT
RUSTY METAL I
PILED UP, BACK
IN THE DEEP
POOL.

THEY'RE
ONLY SEVEN
TUNNELS
AWAY, SO
LET'S GET
GONE!



I WAS
PROMISED A
GOOD BED...



NINE TUNNELS AWAY...

KRASHAKADAROOM

WHAT WAS
THAT?



SOMETHING
THAT SWIMS OR
SLITHERS, SO IT'S
NOT WHO WE'RE
LOOKING FOR.

THIS
WAY.



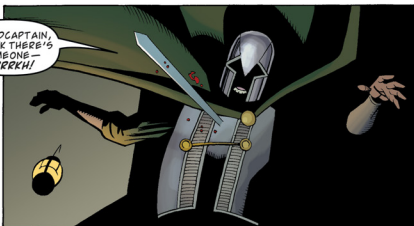
YON? HOW
CAN YOU BE
SURE?

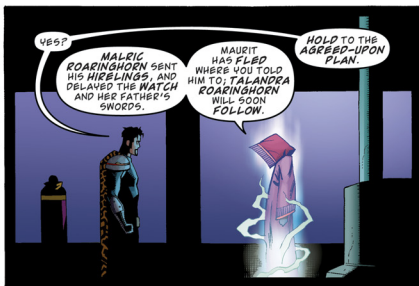
WE'RE TRAINED
TO MEMORIZE
THESE TUNNELS, SO
NO FUGITIVE CAN
ESCAPE US.



I SEE.
THIS WAY,
THEN?

ER...











Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

3



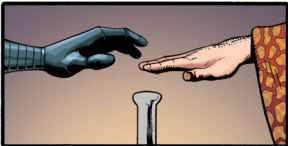
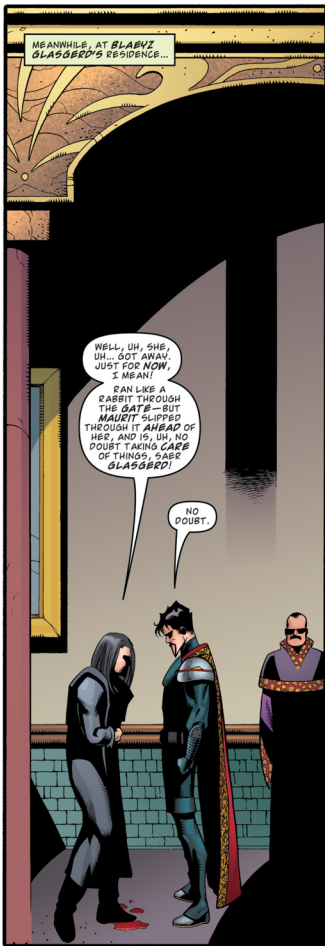


WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

AWAY!







BACK IN THE MOONLIT RUINS, THROUGH A DOOR RANDAL FOUND—HE, TORN, AND LADY TALANDRA PLUNGE INTO DARKNESS...

ALWAYS CARRY CANDLE STUBS, LADY.

I HAVE A SERVANT FOR THAT.

WHOM YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISLAID.

A BURIAL CRYPT.

NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHOSE, BUT I'M SURE THEY WERE SUFFICIENTLY NOBLE TO BE ACCEPTABLE COMPANY.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

ENOUGH, SAER. CAN WE GET OUT AGAIN?

SURE. IF I MOVE THE STONE THAT'S KEEPING THE DOOR SHUT. NOW TRY WHISPERING...

...THERE ARE MORE CONFOUNDED THINGS HUNTING AROUND HERE...

FWOSH
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP

WHAT DID THAT?

IT LOOKED LIKE SOME SORT OF BAT, M'LADY.

GET IT LIT AGAIN! I NEED LIGHT!

WE'LL SAVE IT FOR WHEN WE NEED TO SEE. TO LEAVE.

I NEED THE LIGHT BACK! DO IT—OR I'LL SCREAM!

SCREAM AND
I'LL KNOCK SOME
OF YOUR **TEETH**
OUT. M'LADY.

WHICH IS
NOTHING TO WHAT
THAT **FLYING THING**
WILL DO TO YOU, WHEN
IT HEARS YOU AND
COMES DOWN IN
HERE!

YOU—YOU ARE
MERE **BRIGANDS**,
SAERS! LOOTS AND
LOW-LIFES AND
RUFFIANS!

OOOH, HEAR
THAT, RANDAL?
WE'VE BEEN
PROMOTED!

RUFFIANS
AND BRIGANDS!
I THOUGHT IT'D BE
YEARS BEFORE I
MADE **BRIGAND!**

YOU ILL-BRED,
LOWBORN **SCUM!**
WHY, YOU—

BELT UP
OR ELSE, **LADY**
HIGHNOSE! WE'RE
ONLY HERE BECAUSE
YOUR BODYGUARD IS
DEAD, AND **CURSED**
US TO **RESCUE**
YOU!

T-TORLUN?
DEAD? B-BUT
HE WAS MY...

LOVER?

V-YOU
BEAST!

HOW DARE—
HE WAS THE ONLY
PERSON I COULD
TRUST!

DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND?

NO. I'LL NEVER
UNDERSTAND WHY
SOMEONE HELPS
WITH THEIR OWN
KIDNAPPING.

NOT UNLESS
SHE **Tells**
ME.

I WANT
TO ESCAPE...
MY HOME.

YOU CAN'T
KNOW WHAT IT'S
LIKE, TO BE
REARED AS I
HAVE!

THAT MUCH IS
CERTAINLY TRUE, LADY
ROARINGHORN.

YET I
KNOW ONE
THING VERY
WELL.

YOUR TRUSTED
LOVER—MAN CURSED US
TO RESCUE YOU—SO YOU'RE
STUCK WITH US UNTIL WE'RE
ALL SAFELY STANDING INSIDE
THE HIGH HOUSE OF
ROARINGHORN.

I'LL NEVER
RETURN THERE.
NEVER.

I'VE HAD
ENOUGH OF UNCLE
MALRIC'S LEEERS
AND VEILED THREATS
AND BULLYING...

RUN AWAY BY
ALL MEANS—BUT
LEAVE US OUT
OF IT.

THAT CAN BE
ARRANGED.

AT THAT MOMENT, SOMEWHERE
SORDID IN WATERDEEP... LORD
MALRIC ROARINGHORN POSES
AN IMPORTANT QUESTION...

YOU'RE SURE NO
ONE CAN OVERHEAR
US, OLJAK?

IT TWISTS
MAGIC, AS FAR AS
JUST BEYOND
THESE WALLS.

THE ENTIRE
WATCHFUL
ORDER COULD
BE LURKING IN
THE NEXT ROOM,
AND NOT HEAR
US.

AH-HAH.

ARE
THE ENTIRE
WATCHFUL ORDER
LURKING IN THE
NEXT ROOM?

TOO
EXPENSIVE TO
ARRANGE, LORD
ROARINGHORN. OR
I'D HAVE DONE
THAT YEARS
AGO.

SO, TALK.
IS YOUR NIECE
NOW A SAD
HISTORY?

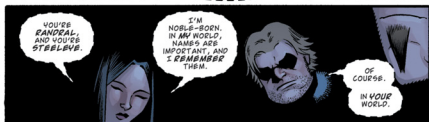
HER SEVERED
HEAD HASN'T BEEN
DELIVERED TO ME
YET, SO RIGHT NOW
THE ANSWER TO THAT,
REGRETTABLY, MUST
BE "NO."

ASK AGAIN
TOMORROW.

I WILL. OH,
I WILL.









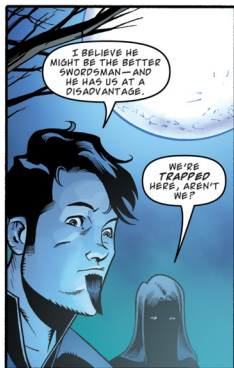
AH, HELLO
THERE, MAURIT...



...PERHAPS
WE COULD...



...ER...



I BELIEVE HE
MIGHT BE THE BETTER
SWORDSMAN—AND
HE HAS US AT A
DISADVANTAGE.

WE'RE
TRAPPED
HERE, AREN'T
WE?



THE OFFICE OF THE MERCHANT **OLJAK**
REMAINS AS BUSY AS USUAL...

MALRIC HAS
PROMISED ME THE USE
OF THE **ROARINGHORN**
RICHES ONCE HE'S
LORD—THAT IS, WHEN HIS
BROTHER **HAELRAM**, AND
HAELRAM'S DAUGHTER
TALANDRA, ARE DEAD.
HE'LL MARRY THE WIDOW,
OF COURSE. YET I TRUST
HIM **LESS** THAN
EVER.

LESS
THAN NOT
AT ALL?



YOU KNOW
HE'LL TRY TO
SWINDLE
YOU, AND THAT
MAKES HIM AN
EASILY LED
FOOL. SO
LEAD HIM.



HE WANTS
TO BE THE
LORD
ROARINGHORN,
AND HE SHALL
BE.



WHEN ALL
THIS **SETTLES**
AND HE STARTS
TO **PREEN** AND
SWAGGER AND BE
DIFFICULT, I'LL
SLAY HIM AND
TAKE HIS
PLACE.

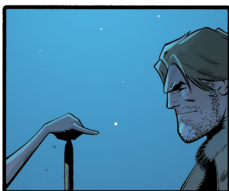
AND WE
KNOW HOW
FAR WE CAN
TRUST EACH
OTHER...



...DON'T WE,
OLJAK?

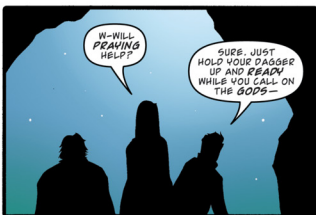


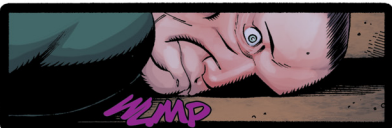
Y-YES.

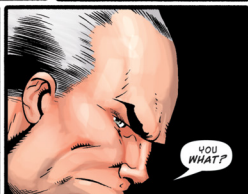
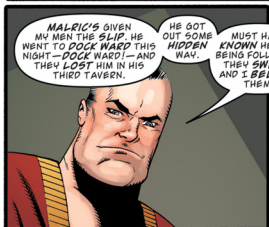
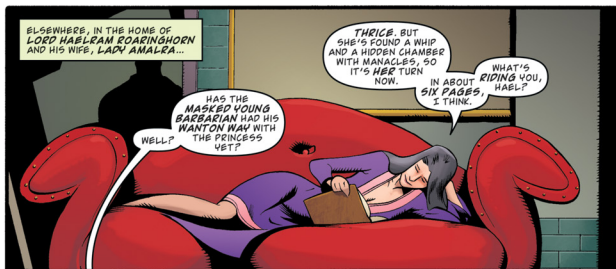














AND IN A SLIGHTLY
WILDER LOCALE...

RRRRRRRR



RRRRRRRR



TLOARAGHAST!



HOW MANY TIMES
HAVE I TOLD YOU,
TLOARAGHAST?

YOU ARE NOT
TO GO OFF HUNTING
FOR YOURSELF! I
NEED YOU OVER
HERE, ATTENTIVE
TO MY EVERY
COMMAND!

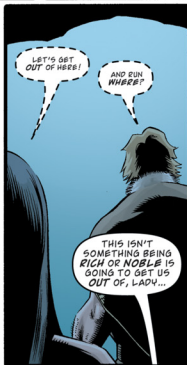


MUST I USE THE
GOAD-SPELL ON
YOU AGAIN?

OR SHOULD I
JUST FIND MYSELF
ANOTHER RAGE
DRAKE, A TRAINABLE
ONE THIS TIME, AND
START OVER?

HEY?

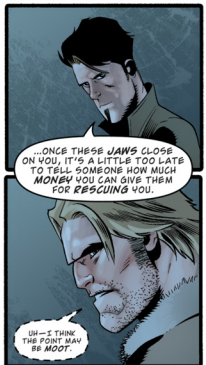
RRRRRRRR



LET'S GET
OUT OF HERE!

AND RUN
WHERE?

THIS ISN'T
SOMETHING BEING
RICH OR NOBLE IS
GOING TO GET US
OUT OF, LADY...



...ONCE THESE JAWS CLOSE
ON YOU, IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE
TO TELL SOMEONE HOW MUCH
MONEY YOU CAN GIVE THEM
FOR RESCUING YOU.

UH—I THINK
THE POINT MAY
BE MOOT.



I THOUGHT
THERE WAS
SOMEONE IN
THERE.

WHO ARE YOU
IDIOTS? SEMBIAN
RUNAWAYS?



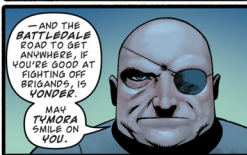
SEMBIA?

WHERE
ARE WE?



SENT HERE
BY MAGIC,
HEH? YOU'RE IN
THE GHOST
HOLDS.

FORTY-SOME
RUINED CASTLES
AND MANSIONS,
ALL AROUND US IN
THE FOREST. AN
OUTLAW TOWN. IF
YOU'RE STILL ALIVE
BY MORNING,
SEMBIA'S NOT
FAR—



—AND THE
BATTLEDALE
ROAD TO GET
ANYWHERE, IF
YOU'RE GOOD AT
FIGHTING OFF
BRIGANDS, IS
YONDER.

MAY
TYMORA
SMILE ON
YOU.



WAIT!
SAER, PLEASE
WAIT!



HUSH! BE
SILENT!

I WILL
NOT BE
SILENT!
WHY—

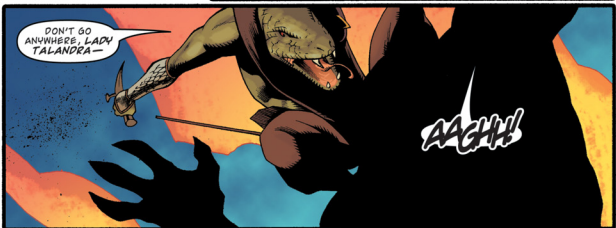
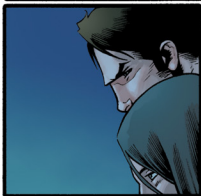


SOMEONE
ELSE IS
COMING.

A LOT OF
SOMEONES, I'M
THINKING.













Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

4

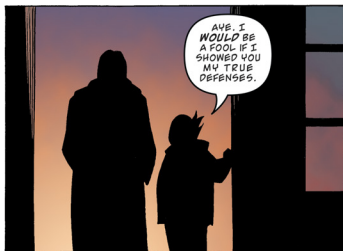


SOMEWHERE
UNFASHIONABLE
IN WATERDEEP...

AAAHH!
THAT'S
BETTER!

I'D BEEN
HOPPING ABOUT
WITH AN INJURED
FOOT FOR FAR
TOO LONG...

HERE'S
YOUR BOOT,
MAURIT.





MEANWHILE, IN THE
GHOST HOLDS...



I FEEL AS IF WE
SHOULD THANK IT
FOR DISPATCHING
OUR ATTACKERS.



IS IT GOING
TO TAKE CARE
OF THE REST
OF THEM,
RANDAL?



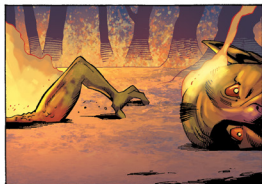
IT APPEARS
SO, M'LADY.



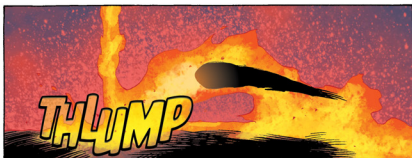
HEAAAAH!!!



WHERE
IS IT GOING
NOW?



FINISHING
THE JOB.



NOW
SHOULD WE
THANK IT?



AH... WHAT
DO WE DO NOW?
TORN?



GET OUT
OF HERE.

TROLLS
HATE FIRE,
AND WE'VE JUST
BEEN GIVEN
SOME, AND THE
ROAD IS THAT
WAY, SO...



UH-HUH.
HE'S RIGHT.

COME ON,
LADY TALANDRA.
OR D'YOU REALLY
THINK WE'LL BE LUCKY
ENOUGH, COWERING
HERE, TO LAST
UNTIL MORNING?



TYMORA
BE WITH US,
AND MALAR
BEASTLORD
FORFEND.

WHERE'S
THAT ROAD?

IN THE BED CHAMBER OF
BLAEYZ GLASGERD...



BLAEYZ.



WHO'S
THERE?



IMBRAR
SALKYN!



WHO ELSE
DOES BUSINESS
WITH BLAEYZ
GLASGERD,
THESE DAYS? GET
DRESSED AND COME
WITH ME, OR OUR
PARTNERSHIP IS
AT AN END.

COME WHERE?
AND WHY? AND HOW'D
YOU GET IN? I HEARD
NOTHING BREAK, THE
ALARM-SPELL
STILL—

YOUR MAGICS
ARE AS FEEBLE
AS YOUR EXCUSES.
WE SPENT TOO MUCH
TIME DRINKING AND
GLOATING.

NOW IT'S
TIME TO TAKE
A DIRECT HAND,
BEFORE THINGS
GO MORE WRONG
THAN THEY HAVE
ALREADY.

MORE
WRONG?



WE WERE TOLD
MAURIT HAD GONE
THROUGH THE GATE TO
THE GHOST HOLDS,
AND WOULD TAKE CARE
OF THE ROARINGHORN
WENCH THERE.

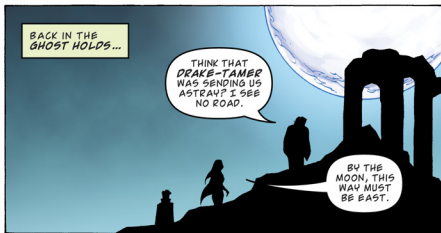
YET I JUST
SAW MAURIT STELLING
DOWN FISHWIFE ALLEY INTO
GARSAR'S— ALONE, LOOKING
PLEASED WITH HIMSELF, AND
NOT HEADING HERE TO REPORT.



SARK IT
ALL! AND ALL
BEBLASTED
HIRELINGS,
TOO!

THROW ME
MY BOOTS,
WILL YOU?





BACK IN THE
GHOST HOLDS...

THINK THAT
DRAKE-TAMER
WAS SENDING US
ASTRAY? I SEE
NO ROAD.

BY THE
MOON, THIS
WAY MUST
BE EAST.



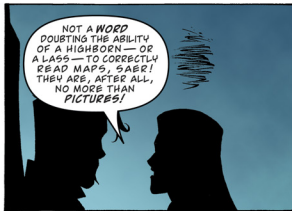
AND THE ROAD THROUGH
BATTLEDALE, FROM THE
STANDING STONE DOWN
INTO **SEMBIA**, IS EAST
OF THE GHOST HOLDS.
I'VE SEEN MAPS.



OH?



SHE'S
AN EXPERT,
THEN.



NOT A WORD
DOUBTING THE ABILITY
OF A HIGHBORN — OR
A LASS — TO CORRECTLY
READ MAPS, SAER!
THEY ARE, AFTER ALL,
NO MORE THAN
PICTURES!



I WAS ACTUALLY
LADY, TELLING **TORN**
HOW FORTUNATE WE
WERE TO HAVE YOUR
REASSURANCE.

NOW, IF WE
COULD ALL SEEK
SOME SILENCE,
OR AT LEAST
QUIETER, SOFTER
SPEECH...



RATHER TOO
LATE FOR THAT.
ANYTHING HUNTING
FROM HERE TO
BEYOND **ESSEMBRA**
HAS HEARD YOU
BY NOW.

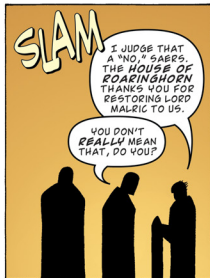
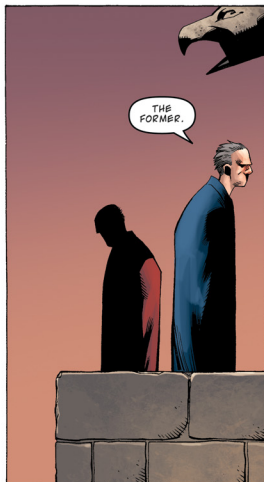
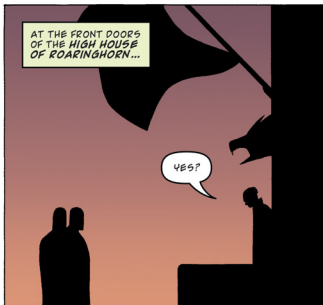
YET WILL
ARRIVE TOO
LATE.



TOO
LATE FOR
WHAT?



YOUR
SLAYING.
WE'LL BE
SEEING TO
THAT RIGHT
NOW.







SOMEWHERE ON THE
DARK STREETS
OF WATERDEEP...

ANOTHER
LITTLE TOV,
BLAEVIZ? A
BOMB, NO
LESS?

WE'RE ONLY
HEADED FOR
GARSAR'S.



YES. WHERE
I'M SURE THEY'LL
REMEMBER ME,
IMBRAR SALKVN.
ALL TOO WELL.



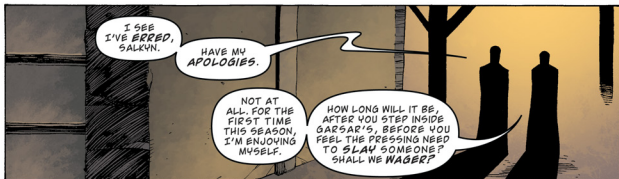
I SEE.



WELL,
YOU ARE NOT
ALONE...



...TWO
CAN PLAY
AT THESE
GAMES.



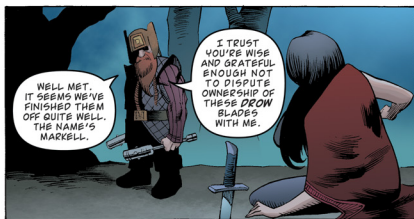
I SEE
I'VE ERRED,
SALKVN.

HAVE MY
APOLOGIES.

NOT AT
ALL. FOR THE
FIRST TIME
THIS SEASON,
I'M ENJOYING
MYSELF.

HOW LONG WILL IT BE,
AFTER YOU STEP INSIDE
GARSAR'S, BEFORE YOU
FEEL THE PRESSING NEED
TO SLAY SOMEONE?
SHALL WE WAGER?











MEANWHILE, IN THE GHOST HOLDS, TRAFFIC CONTINUES TO BE HEAVY...



HRAST!
WHO—WHAT
IS THAT?

I DON'T
KNOW, BUT
WE'LL BE GOING
A DIFFERENT
WAY.



I GROW
WEARY OF
THIS—



—NOT THIS
WAY EITHER,
SAERS.



YET
ANOTHER
DIRECTION,
THEN...



HRAST!
AGAIN?!

HOW DID IT
GET HERE SO
QUICKLY?



NO MORE
CHANGING
DIRECTION!

LET'S
JUST WALK
PAST—



AH!



SO... WE
WILL TURN
AROUND.



WE'RE
MOVING!

WE'RE
MOVING!

BACK IN WATERDEEP, ON A
(MOSTLY) DESERTED STREET...



➤AHEM<



WELL?



OH, THE
PASS-PHASE,
YES?



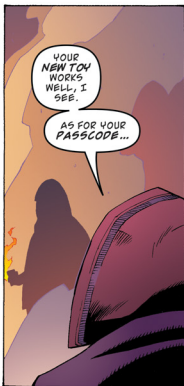


YEEAARGAH!



YOUR NEW TOY WORKS WELL, I SEE.

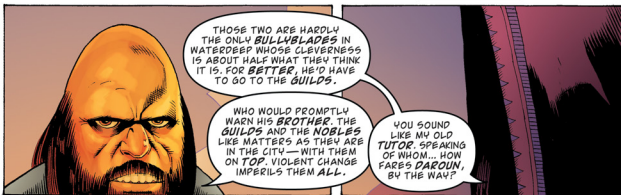
AS FOR YOUR PASSCODE...



...THE PRICE OF POTATOES CONTINUES TO RISE."

SO, OLJAK, HOW DOES THE ROARINGHORN MATTER?

WHAT D'YOU EXPECT, WHEN MALRIC HIRED THE LIKES OF MAURIT AND MRASSGURD?



THOSE TWO ARE HARDLY THE ONLY **BULLYBLADES** IN WATERDEEP WHOSE CLEVERNESS IS ABOUT HALF WHAT THEY THINK IT IS. FOR **BETTER**, HE'D HAVE TO GO TO THE **GUILDS**.

WHO WOULD PROMPTLY WARN HIS **BROTHER**. THE **GUILDS** AND THE **NOBLES** LIKE MATTERS AS THEY ARE IN THE CITY—WITH THEM ON **TOP**. VIOLENT CHANGE IMPERILS THEM **ALL**.

YOU SOUND LIKE MY OLD TUTOR. SPEAKING OF WHOM... HOW FARES **DAROUN**, BY THE WAY?



DEAD. **AWNGRYTH** GOT IMPATIENT. ATE HALF OF HIM, I HEAR, BUT DIDN'T FIND THE **MOONDAR**.

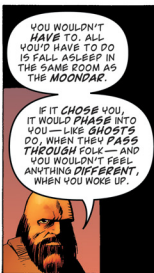
AND SO IS NOW HUNTING **DAROUN'S** TWO YOUNG HANDS, **PAUNTER** AND **TELMANTLE**, TO SEE IF EITHER OF THEM HAS IT.

DO THEY?



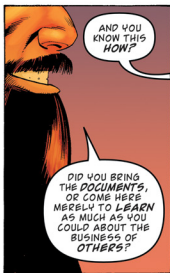
THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THEY'RE CARRYING IT. IF ONE OF THEM IS.

HUH. IF I HAD A SPELL-GEM THE SIZE OF MY FIST, I DON'T THINK I'D TRY TO SWALLOW IT. A MAN COULD CHOKe THAT WAY.



YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO. ALL YOU'D HAVE TO DO IS FALL ASLEEP IN THE SAME ROOM AS THE MOONDAR.

IF IT CHOSE YOU, IT WOULD PHASE INTO YOU—LIKE GHOSTS DO, WHEN THEY PASS THROUGH FOLK—AND YOU WOULDN'T FEEL ANYTHING DIFFERENT, WHEN YOU WOKE UP.



AND YOU KNOW THIS HOW?

DID YOU BRING THE DOCUMENTS, OR COME HERE MERELY TO LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU COULD ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF OTHERS?



THRUST
HEARD, AND
TAKEN.



OPEN THE TUBE, VARLUND. I WASN'T BORN YESTEREVE.



MERELY A SCROLL, OL-JAK. READ.



MM.



COME, NOW. TAKE THE RUBIES. THERE MUST BE SOME MEASURE OF TRUST BETWEEN US.

OH? WHY, EXACTLY?



IF WE TRUST NOT AT ALL, WE END UP LIKE HIM.

WE ALL DO. SOONER OR LATER.

ELSEWHERE, THE THREE WATERDHAVIANS ARE BEING HERDED THROUGH THE GHOST HOLDS...

AT LEAST THE... WHAT DID YOU CALL HIM?

A DIREHELM.

THIS DIREHELM ISN'T TRYING TO KILL US...

BUT WHERE IS IT LEADING US...?

AH— THIS THING AGAIN...

...PLEASE MOVE ASIDE AND LET US PROCEED.

WE WANT ONLY TO DEPART THIS PLACE, FIND THE ROAD, AND TAKE IT WELL AWAY FROM HERE.

A POPULAR DESIRE, IT SEEMS.

THE DIREHELM SERVES ME.

SOME CALL ME THE KING OF GHOSTS.

IF THE GHOST HOLDS HAVE A RULER, IT'S ME. THOUGH ALL I REALLY DO IS HELP OR HINDER, BY WHIM, AND PREVENT ANYONE WHO COMES HERE FROM MUSTERING AN ARMY.

I'D RATHER NOT SEE THE HOLDS DESTROYED.

DESTROYED? SAER, THEY'RE RUINS.

CRAWLING, IT SEEMS, WITH MONSTERS AND OUTLAWS.



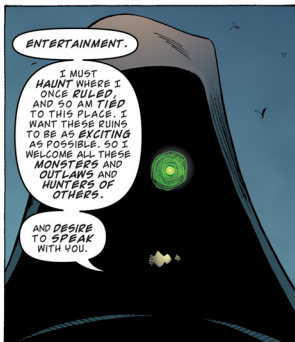
IT CRAWLS WITH
RUNAWAYS, TOO.

I DON'T WANT
SEMBIAN GOLD
TO SEND SCORES OF
WIZARDS HERE TO
BLAST THESE RUINS TO
DUST— AND DO AWAY
WITH THIS VERY USEFUL
MEETING-PLACE FOR
SMUGGLERS, NE’ER-DO-
WELLS, GRAY TRADERS,
AND RECRUITERS OF
THE DANGEROUSLY
CAPABLE.

THE **GHOST**
HOLDS ARE WHAT
MAKES THIS SIDE OF
THE **DRAGONREACH**
WORK.



AND YOU,
A **GHOST**—
IF YOU **ARE** A
GHOST— CARE
ABOUT SUCH
MATTERS **WHY**,
EXACTLY?



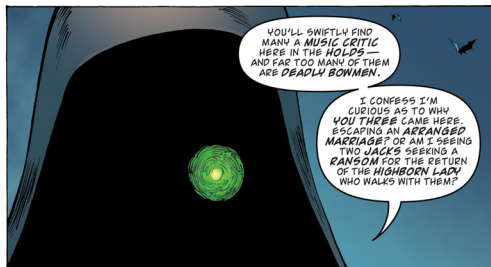
ENTERTAINMENT.

I MUST
HAUNT WHERE I
ONCE **RULED**,
AND SO AM TIED
TO THIS PLACE. I
WANT THESE RUINS
TO BE AS **EXCITING**
AS POSSIBLE. SO I
WELCOME ALL THESE
MONSTERS AND
OUTLAWS AND
HUNTERS OF
OTHERS.

AND **DESIRE**
TO **SPEAK**
WITH YOU.



TO KEEP
BOREDOM AT BAY,
YOU WANT US TO TELL
YOU **TALES**? JESTS?
I CAN **SING**, A
LITTLE...



YOU’LL SWIFTLY FIND
MANY A **MUSIC CRITIC**
HERE IN THE **HOLDS**—
AND FAR TOO MANY OF THEM
ARE **DEADLY BOWMEN**.

I CONFESS I’M
CURIOUS AS TO WHY
YOU **THREE** CAME HERE.
ESCAPING AN **ARRANGED**
MARRIAGE? OR AM I SEEING
TWO **JACKS** SEEKING A
RANSOM FOR THE RETURN
OF THE **HIGHBORN LADY**
WHO WALKS WITH THEM?



WE’RE NOT
KIDNAPPERS,
BUT SEEM TO
HAVE BECOME
ENTANGLED IN
ONE. CURSED
TO RETURN—



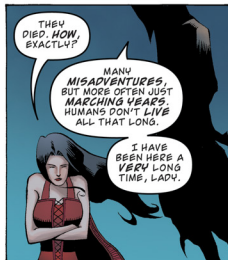
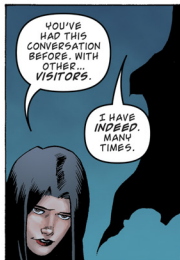
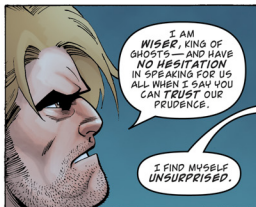
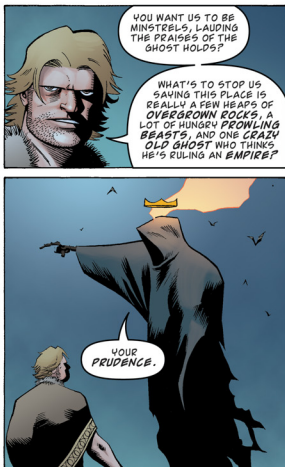
MY PRIVATE BUSINESS,
I BELIEVE. NOT TO BE SHARED
WITH **ALL** AND **SUNDRY**, STILL
LESS STRANGERS MET ON THE
TRAIL, EVEN IF THEY’RE...

GHOSTS?
HEH.

VERY WELL, LADY, I
RESPECT YOUR **PRIVACY**.
YOU REMIND ME OF SEVERAL
SPIRITED LADIES I KNEW A...
A VERY LONG TIME AGO.
SO LET US STRIKE A DEAL.



WHAT
SORT OF
DEAL?





I AGREE
TO YOUR DEAL,
SAER KING.

SO
DO I.

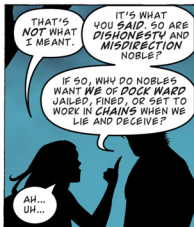


AS DO I,
OF COURSE.

I AM NOBLE
AND NOBLES DEAL
HONORABLY —
WHAT IS NOBILITY
BUT SURVIVAL
DOWN THE PASSING
CENTURIES?



SO THAT'S
WHAT BEING
NOBLE IS. LASTING
BY ANY MEANS, FAIR
OR FOUL... JUST
LASTING.



THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I MEANT.

IT'S WHAT
YOU SAID. SO ARE
DISHONESTY AND
MISDIRECTION
NOBLE?

IF SO, WHY DO NOBLES
WANT **WE** OF DOCK WARD
JAILED, FINED, OR SET TO
WORK IN CHAINS WHEN WE
LIE AND DECEIVE?

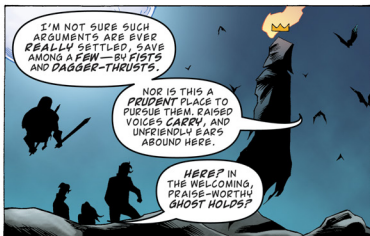
AH...
UH...



AH, THE OLD "WHAT
FAIRNESS LIES IN
UNEQUAL TREATMENT?"
ARGUMENT. THE "WHY DO
THE GODS ALLOW SUCH
UNFAIRNESS IN ALL
OUR LIVES?" DEBATE
CAN'T BE FAR OFF.

WELL,
WHY DO
THEY?

I KNOW NOT.
THE GODS SAY
ALL TOO LITTLE
TO ME — YES,
EVEN OVER ALL
THESE YEARS.



I'M NOT SURE SUCH
ARGUMENTS ARE EVER
REALLY SETTLED, SAVE
AMONG A FEW — BY FISTS
AND DAGGER-THRUSTS.

NOR IS THIS A
PRUDENT PLACE TO
PURSUE THEM. RAISED
VOICES CARRY, AND
UNFRIENDLY EARS
ABOUND HERE.

HERE? IN
THE WELCOMING,
PRAISE-WORTHY
GHOST HOLDS?



HEH.

THIS PATH IS
YOUR BEST WAY ON.
TARRY NO LONGER,
PRUDENT ONES.



OUR
THANKS.

I
THINK.

HAH-HA
HEH.



HAH-HA
HEH HA
HAH-HA!

LET'S NOT
TARRY. THAT
SELF-STYLED
KING IS A
LITTLE LESS
THAN SANE, IF
YOU ASK ME.



I DID
NOT ...



...BUT SANITY
IS SOMETHING I'VE
NEVER CLAIMED. MAY THE
GODS TREAT YOU KINDLY,
TALANDRA AMORA
ROARINGHORN.



AND YOU,
SABER. AND
YOU.



HOW
DOES HE
KNOW MY
NAME?



HAH-HA HEH.

LET'S
GET OUT
OF HERE.

OUR NEXT
MEETING MIGHT BE
WITH SOMEONE —
OR SOMETHING —
THAT DOESN'T HAVE
THE PATIENCE TO
TOY WITH US.

AND WHEREVER
WE ARE ON SOME
MAP OR OTHER, I
KNOW IT'S A LONG
WAY BACK TO
WATERDEEP,
AND...



DON'T
START.

TIME ENOUGH TO
TALK OF THAT WHEN
WE'RE SAFELY OUT OF
THE GHOST HOLDS, AND
IN PLACES WHERE THEY
HAVE LAWS AND FOOD
AND DOORS INSTEAD OF
ENDLESS PROWLING
MONSTERS.



ARE
THERE SUCH
PLACES?



THE
GHOST
KING!

HE'S
GONE!



I DON'T
BELIEVE THESE
MEN WANT TO
TALK.



WE'RE RINGED
ABOUT —
SURROUNDED.
TRAPPED.



LADY
TALANDRA.

GENTLEMEN.



COINS CAN BUY
A LOT OF LOYAL
SWORDS, HERE IN THE
GHOST HOLDS, BUT RIGHT
NOW, UNFORTUNATELY,
BOWMEN SEEM TO BE
IN SHORT SUPPLY.

SO WE'LL
JUST HAVE TO
DO THIS THE
HARD WAY.



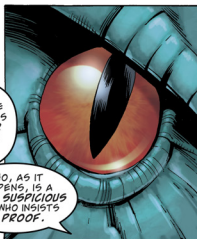
WHO BOUGHT
YOUR LOYALTY?



AND JUST
WHAT IS
"THIS"?

"THIS" IS THE
REMOVAL OF THE
LADY TALANDRA'S
HEAD FROM HER
BODY, TO TAKE
BACK TO MY
PATRON.

WHO, AS IT
HAPPENS, IS A
NASTY, SUSPICIOUS
MAN WHO INSISTS
ON PROOF.







Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

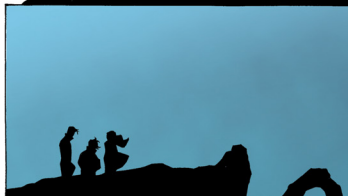
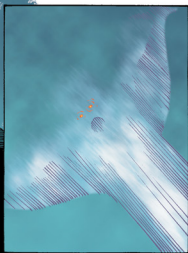
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MEANWHILE, NOT ALL THAT FAR AWAY...

HAVE A GOOD LOOK AROUND, SO YOU'LL KNOW HOW TO FIND THIS SPOT AGAIN. THESE RUINS AROUND WITH MONSTERS AND MEN EAGER TO KILL YOU, SO WATCH YOURSELVES.

ARE YOUR ORDERS QUITE CLEAR, PAUNDUR?

REMINDE ME.

FIND AND KILL THE LADY TALANDRA ROARINGHORN—ASK ANY YOUNG WOMAN YOU SEE HER NAME, WHILE ACTING AS IF YOU'RE HERE TO RESCUE HER—AND BRING HER HEAD TO ME.

IF I'M DOWN OR YOU CAN'T FIND ME, TAKE IT TO LORD MALRIC ROARINGHORN, BUT TAKE CARE THAT NONE OF HIS KIN OR THE ROARINGHORN SERVANTS SEE WHAT YOU'RE CARRYING. GOT IT?



KILL, BEHEAD, GET IT TO YOU.



GOT IT.



GOOD. LET'S GO. KEEP TOGETHER...



...FOR NOW.

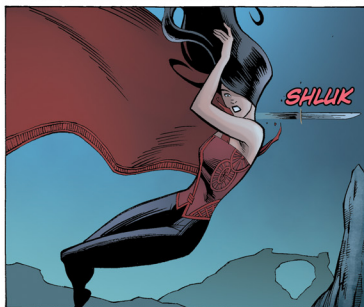
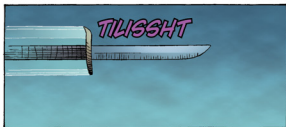


MEANWHILE, NOT ALL THAT FAR AWAY...

WHERE IS THAT HRASTED ROAD?

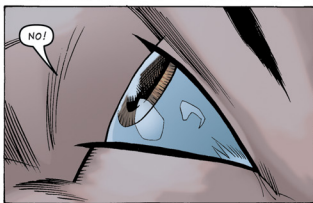
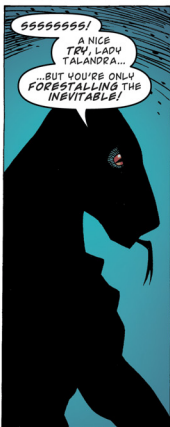
SOONER OR LATER WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND IT, SO LONG AS WE KEEP HEADING EAST. IT STRETCHES ALL ACROSS OUR PATH; WE CAN'T MISS IT.

OH, NO? WE'VE BEEN MANAGING THAT QUITE WELL, SO FAR.











SOMEWHERE UNSAVORY IN WATERDEEP'S DOCK WARD—BLAEYZ GLASGEED AND IMBRAR SALKYN CONTINUE THEIR SEARCH FOR THE ROGUE KIDNAPPER, MAURIT...

SOONER OR LATER, WE'LL CATCH UP WITH HIM. THERE AREN'T MANY PLACES IN ALL THE DEEP WHERE MAURIT IS STILL WELCOME.

WHAT IF HE WENT BACK TO THE GHOST HOLDS? THERE ARE OTHER GATES TO THERE THAN THE ONE IN THE SEWERS.

INDEED — AND HE CAN'T HAVE GONE THAT WAY. HE HASN'T COIN ENOUGH TO CORRUPT THAT MANY WATCHMEN. THERE HAD TO BE AT LEAST THREE PATROLS STANDING GUARD OVER IT.

AND NOT ONE OF THEM BELIEVED YOUR LITTLE TALE OF BEING NAMED A CELLARER AND SENT OUT ON YOUR FIRST SEWER INSPECTION.

DOLETALLOW DID NAME ME A CELLARER, AND I'VE EVEN HANDED OVER MY FIRST LOT OF GUILD DUES. THEY CAME TO ALMOST AS MUCH AS THE BRIBE I PAID HIM.

CLEVER OF YOU. SO TRY BEING EVEN CLEVERER, NOW: TELL ME WHICH GATE YOU THINK HE'S TAKEN.

I CONSIDER THE TWO IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD HIGHLY UNLIKELY.

HE DIDN'T USE ANY OF THE THREE IN THE CITY OF THE DEAD. MOST LIKELY HE PAID MORAURA TO USE THE ONE IN THE FALCON.

THE DUNTER'S NEARER.

COSTS MORE, AND OTHER PATRONS CAN SEE YOU USING IT...

...NO, HE'S A SLY WOLF, OUR MAURIT. UNSEEN AND CHEAP; IT'LL BE MORAURA OR THARRTHOUN.

THE FALCON'S CLOSEST.

SHUNK

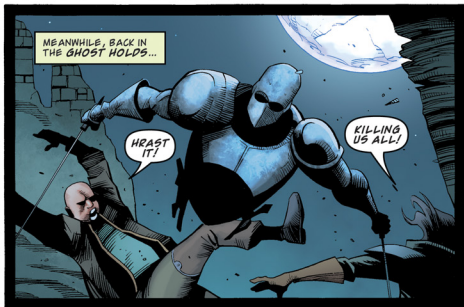


HRASTED SPIES. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. THICK AS FLIES.

THIS ISN'T GOING TO TURN INTO ONE OF THOSE "WHY, WHEN I WAS A LAD" COMPLAINTS, IS IT?

WHEN I WAS A LAD, SPIES IN THIS CITY WERE WISE OLD MEN, NOT CHILDREN. GUESS OLD AGE TOOK THEM ALL— AND LEFT US WITH THESE RECKLESS YOUNGLINGS.

NOW, LET'S GET TO THE FALCON BEFORE THE INEVITABLE SECOND AND THIRD SPIES REPORT WHAT BEFELL THIS ONE.



MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE GHOST HOLDS...

HRAST IT!

KILLING US ALL!



IT'S HEADING BACK TO THE TREES, BUT IT SURELY WILL RETURN! FORM A RING!



HOW MANY LOST AND FALLEN, NOW?

SEVEN, SAER MRASGUD! WE NEED A MAGE.



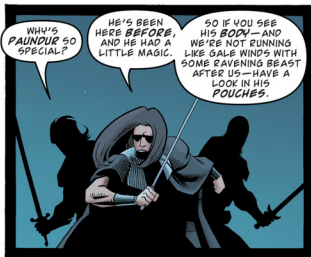
WE NEED TO FIND THAT NOBLE LASS AND GET OUT OF HERE. WHERE'S PAUNDUR?

GONE, SAER. THINK HE FELL THE LAST TIME THAT THING ATTACKED.



SARK AND BEBOLT! FORM A RING, HRAST IT!

OVER HERE, WHERE THERE'S ROOM ENOUGH!



WHY'S PAUNDUR SO SPECIAL?

HE'S BEEN HERE BEFORE, AND HE HAD A LITTLE MAGIC.

SO IF YOU SEE HIS BODY—AND WE'RE NOT RUNNING LIKE GALE WINDS WITH SOME RAVENING BEAST AFTER US—HAVE A LOOK IN HIS POUCHES.





MEANWHILE...

HERE, RANDAL—OUR DEAD "FRIEND" SNEEL HAS SOME POTIONS. MIGHT HELP WITH OUR WOUNDS.

YOU'RE GOING TO DRINK THOSE?

WHY NOT, M'LADY?



THEY COULD BE ANYTHING!

SO THEY COULD. RIGHT NOW, I... HURT TOO MUCH TO CARE.



SEE THAT CIRCLE ON THE VIAL? MEANS HEALING.

WE'LL SAVE THE OTHER TWO, FOR NOW.



UH, LADY TALANDRAP

I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY. GODS, I OWE YOU MY LIFE. YOU ARE... WELL...

...ANYTHING BUT "USELESS."

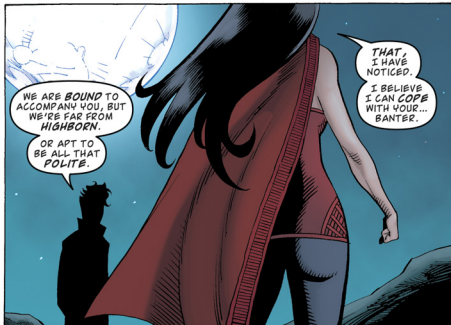


THANK YOU. AND THOUGH I'VE NEVER IN MY LIFE BEEN MORE SCARED THAN TONIGHT, I... THE TWO OF YOU ARE THE BEST GUARDS I'VE EVER HAD, AND THE MOST...

...REASSURING. YOUR COMPANY, SAERS, IS MORE PLEASANT THAN ANY I'VE YET EXPERIENCED.



I WOULD PREFER THAT WE WALK TOGETHER, HENCEFORTH.



WE ARE BOUND TO ACCOMPANY YOU, BUT WE'RE FAR FROM HIGHBORN.

OR APT TO BE ALL THAT POLITE.

THAT, I HAVE NOTICED.

I BELIEVE I CAN COPE WITH YOUR... BANTER.



SO IF WE
MUST GO DOWN,
WE'LL GO DOWN
TOGETHER.

TOGETHER.

SO, BACK TO
WATERDEEP?



I WOULD PREFER NOT. I
HAD GOOD REASON TO AGREE TO
MY ABDUCTION. I CARE NOT IF I
EVER SEE THE HIGH HOUSE OF
ROARINGHORN AGAIN.

BUT YOUR
LINEAGE, YOUR
PROUD NAME,
YOUR EASY
LIFE...



FAUGH! WHAT
EASE, SAER? A
SLAVE FROM BIRTH TO
FAMILY PRIDE. A COLD,
COMMANDING FATHER, A
MANIPULATIVE MOTHER, AND
UNCLE
MALRIC...

NO, LET US FORGE
NEW LIVES OUT HERE
IN THE WIDER REALMS,
FAR FROM THE CITY OF
SPLENDORS. BETTER
LIVES. TOGETHER. AS
FRIENDS — AND NO
MORE, MIND, AS
EQUALS.



AS
EQUALS.

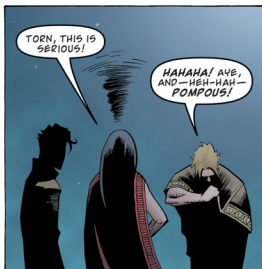


EQUALS. WE
STAND TOGETHER,
NO MATTER WHAT
BEFALLS.

WE DO. I GIVE
YOU MY WORD AS A
ROARINGHORN.

AND I GIVE
YOU MY WORD, AS
RANDAL.

AND I —
HEEHAHAHAW!



TORN, THIS IS
SERIOUS!

HAHAHA! AVE,
AND — HEH-HAH —
POMPOUS!



WHAT'S
THAT?



WHAT—
WHO GOES
THERE—?

I DON'T HEAR
ANYTHING—

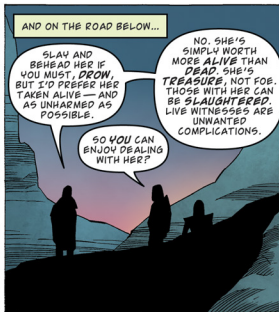


WELL, ONE
DOESN'T HEAR THE
DAWN, WHICH HAS
SNUCK UP ON US,
UNAWARES.



WELL, THAT'S AUSPICIOUS.
THE GODS SMILE ON OUR
NEW PARTNERSHIP. AND I
CAN SEE THE ROAD!

AND WHO'S
WAITING ON
IT.



AND ON THE ROAD BELOW...

SLAY AND
BEHEAD HER IF
YOU MUST, **DROW**,
BUT I'D PREFER HER
TAKEN ALIVE—AND
AS UNHARMED AS
POSSIBLE.

SO YOU CAN
ENJOY DEALING
WITH HER?

NO. SHE'S
SIMPLY WORTH
MORE ALIVE THAN
DEAD. SHE'S
TREASURE, NOT FOE.
THOSE WITH HER CAN
BE **SLAUGHTERED**.
LIVE WITNESSES ARE
UNWANTED
COMPLICATIONS.



I SEE YOU KNOW ALL
THE STOCK PHRASES,
MAURIT.

I'M USED TO **HUNTING DOWN** AND
SLAYING, NOT STANDING AROUND
WAITING FOR QUARRY WHO COULD
BE ANYWHERE TO COME
TO ME.



SOME DWELL
IN VON RUINS
FOR YEARS.

WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK **THIS**
LITTLE NOBLE
GIRL WILL COME
PRANCING OUT AND
RUN RIGHT INTO
OUR ARMS?



I HAVE A
PARTNER IN
THIS BUSINESS:
MRASGURD.

HE'S ON THE FAR
SIDE OF THE HOLDS, AND
COMING THIS WAY, WITH HIM
ARE ENOUGH **HIRED SWORDS**
TO DEAL WITH ANYTHING
SHORT OF A **WYVERN**.



HE'LL DRIVE **LADY
ROARINGHORN** AND HER **LACKEYS**
TOWARDS US. IF THEY DON'T WANT
TO FIGHT, THEY'LL END UP CAUGHT
BETWEEN US AND **MRASGURD**.

THEN
YOU CAN
HUNT.

I SEE
THEM.





WHERE DOES IT
LEAD? SOMEWHERE
SAFER THAN THE
GHOST HOLDS?



WELL, THERE'RE
SOME AS SAYS YES,
AND SOME AS SAYS
NO. ON THE FAR SIDE
OF THIS ONE LIE
THE **BORDER
KINGDOMS**.



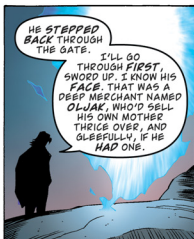
YOUR
CANDOR
CONVINCES
ME.



LET'S
GO.

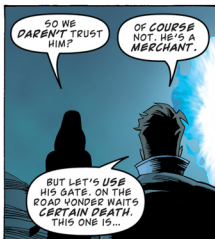


AND THESE
BOR—
OH.



HE **STEPPED
BACK** THROUGH
THE GATE.

I'LL GO
THROUGH FIRST,
SWORD HIS
FACE. THAT WAS A
DEEP MERCHANT NAMED
OLJAK, WHO'D SELL
HIS OWN MOTHER
THRICE OVER, AND
GLEEFULLY, IF HE
HAD ONE.



SO WE
DAREN'T TRUST
HIM?

OF COURSE
NOT. HE'S A
MERCHANT.

BUT LET'S **USE**
HIS GATE. ON THE
ROAD YONDER WAITS
CERTAIN DEATH.
THIS ONE IS...



LESS
CERTAIN. COME ON.
TOGETHER,
REMEMBER?



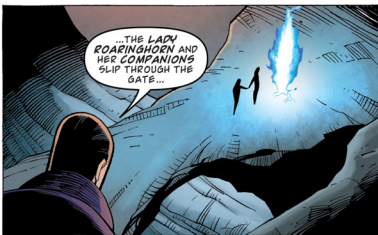
LOOKS
GOOD.





BUT OUR HEROES' ESCAPE DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED, AS BLAEVZ GLASGERD AND IMBRAR SALKYN HAVE ARRIVED IN THE GHOST HOLDS.

THERE, BLAEVZ...



...THE LADY ROARINGHORN AND HER COMPANIONS SLIP THROUGH THE GATE...



...AS DOES MAURIT, IN PURSUIT.



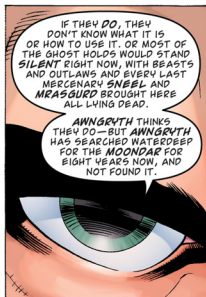
AND THIS LAST ONE, IMBRAR—IS THIS THE SHAPESHIFTER?



YES, IT'S ANNGRYTH. EVER HUNGRY FOR THE MOONDAR.

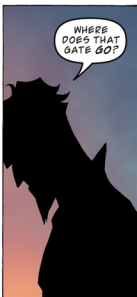


THOSE THREE YOUNG FOOLS HAVE THE MOONDAR?



IF THEY DO, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS OR HOW TO USE IT. OR MOST OF THE GHOST HOLDS WOULD STAND SILENT RIGHT NOW, WITH BEASTS AND OUTLAWS AND EVERY LAST MERCENARY SNEEL AND MRASGURD BROUGHT HERE ALL LYING DEAD.

ANNGRYTH THINKS THEY DO—BUT ANNGRYTH HAS SEARCHED WATERDEEP FOR THE MOONDAR FOR EIGHT YEARS NOW, AND NOT FOUND IT.



WHERE DOES THAT GATE GO?

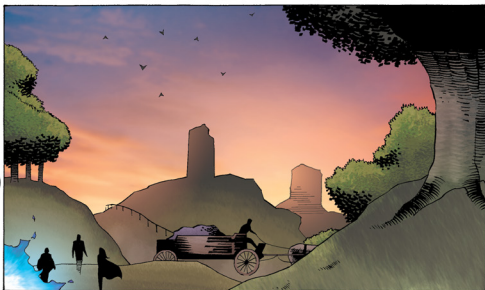


I KNOW NOT, BUT THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.

EMERGING FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PORTAL, RANDAL, TORN, AND LADY TALANDRA KNOW NOT WHAT TO EXPECT...

WE'D BEST HIDE OURSELVES ELSEWHERE FAST, IN CASE ANYONE SAW US AND IS FOLLOWING.

LOOK! WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

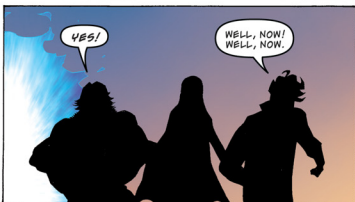


HEADED FOR THE MARKET? HOP ON, IF YOU WANT A RIDE!



YES!

WELL, NOW! WELL, NOW.



SAER, WHAT PLACE IS THIS?

I'M LADY TALANDRA R—
UH, OF WATER—
WATERLAKELAR.



ARE YOU NOW? WELL, I'M A LORD MYSELF...

...YOU'RE IN THE BORDER KINGDOMS, WHERE EVERY COTTAGE AND HOVEL HOLDS LORDS, LADIES, BARONS, AND EMPERORS!

WHATEVER YOU'RE RUNNING FROM, LEAVE IT BEHIND! WE LIVE NEW LIVES HERE!



DANGEROUS ONES?

OF COURSE.

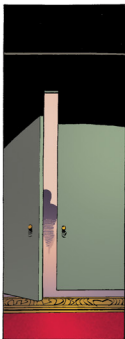


MEANWHILE, IN THE HIGH
HOUSE OF ROARINGHORN,
LORD MALRIC APPROACHES
A SERVANT...

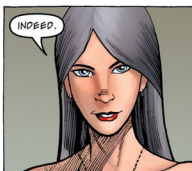
HER
LADYSHIP—
WHERE IS
SHE?



LADY
ROARINGHORN
IS IN THE RED
CHAMBER,
M'LORD.



YOU.



INDEED.



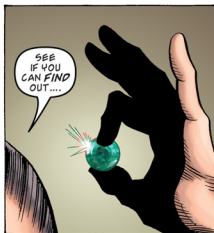
YOU—YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO
FIRED THAT
DART AT ME IN
THE STREET—
I SHOULD—



I'D NOT DARE
EVEN TO TRY TO
DO ANYTHING TO ME
IF I WERE YOU,
LORD MALRIC.



I EAGERLY
AWAIT OUR NEXT
MEETING, LADY.



THE ADVENTURE NEVER ENDS!



Art Gallery

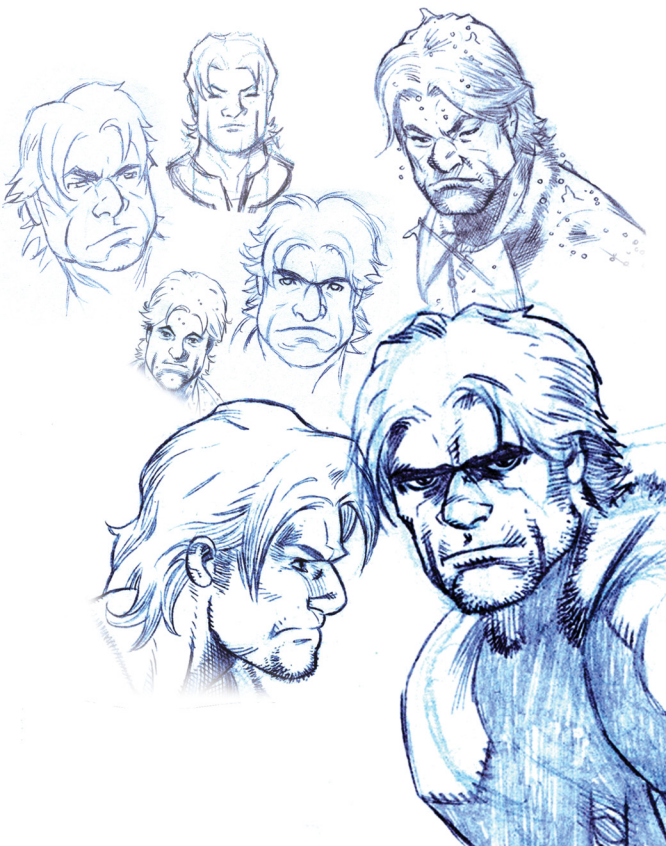
Art by Steve Ellis





Art by Lee Ferguson







Art by Lee Ferguson







Art by Lee Ferguson





FORGOTTEN REALMS®

FORGOTTEN REALMS®
creator **Ed Greenwood** and
artist **Lee Ferguson**
open the adventures
of an unlikely new
band of heroes who
get into a bit more
trouble than usual in the
fabled port city of
Waterdeep, but soon
discover some of the
seedier corners of
the wider Realms—
the hard way!

IDW

