

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

SHADOWS OF THE VAMPIRE



ZUB • DANIEL

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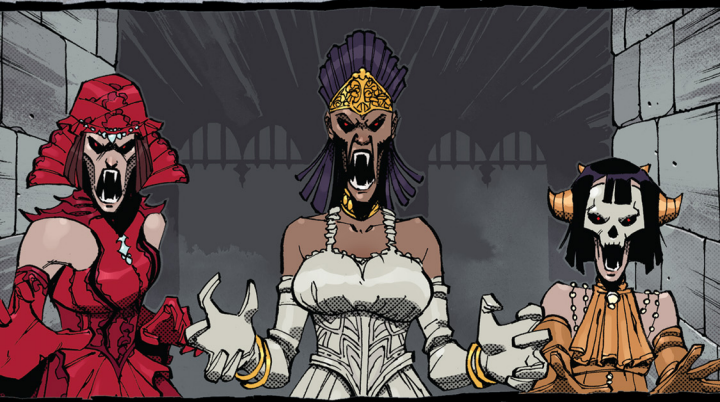
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Introduction

Welcome to a world of sword and sorcery adventure! Whether you're a longtime *Dungeons & Dragons* fan or a brand-new reader looking for a story filled to the brim with fantasy and fun, I hope you enjoy our series.

This same cast of heroes previously popped up in the *Dungeons & Dragons: Legends of Baldur's Gate* mini-series that came out in 2014/2015. You don't need to read that five-issue adventure to get on board here, but if this latest chapter hit the spot for you, I'm sure *Legends* will as well.

Prior to *LoBG*, Minsc and Boo appeared as cult-hit characters in the *Baldur's Gate* video-game series originally released in 1998. Even in their low-resolution pixelated form, this crazed Ranger and Hamster duo left an indelible mark on PC gamers everywhere, so it's an honor to bring them back and add new stories to their legacy.

Ravenloft has quite a legacy as well. First released in 1983, the original *Ravenloft* module has consistently topped fan polls as the greatest D&D adventure of all time. Its evocative gothic ambiance and memorable textured locations seamlessly blends horror and fantasy into an intoxicating mix of chilling drama.

Putting these two elements together—horror and humor—may seem at odds at first, but I think you'll be surprised at how well they complement each other to make something memorable and entertaining. Light and shadow create contrast and putting normally joyful sarcastic characters in the Realm of Dread is the perfect way to see what they're really made of.

Tabletop gaming is all about collaboration and social interaction. One of my goals with the *D&D* comic is to bring the same sense of camaraderie and fun that happens around the gaming table to the comic page. If this series brings a smile to your face and has you intrigued about what comes next for our heroes, I'll count that as a successful roll of the dice!

—Jim Zub

PART ONE: **DEAD OF THE NIGHT**



art by Nelson Daniel

KELEMVOR IS GOD OF THE DEAD. UNLIKE PAST DEITIES, WHOSE RULE OF THE DEAD MADE THE AFTERLIFE AN UNCERTAIN AND FEARFUL THING, HE URGES UNDERSTANDING THAT DEATH IS A NATURAL PART OF LIFE.

FOLLOWERS OF KELEMVOR, KNOWN AS THE "DEATH CLERGY," TEND TO THE LAST WISHES OF THE DYING AND PROVIDE BURIAL SERVICES TO THOSE WHO PERISH ALONE. THEY SET OUT TO CURE DISEASES AND DEFEND PEOPLE FROM PASSING ON BEFORE THEIR TIME. WITH A DEEP RESPECT FOR PROPER LIFE AND DEATH, THEY ARE SWORN ENEMIES OF THE *UNDEAD*.

THE LOWER CITY—
THE TEMPLE OF KELEMVOR

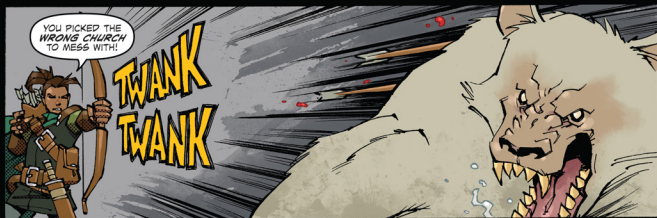
CRASH

GIRAAAAH

FURRY
INVADERS, YOU
SHALL NOT
PREVAIL!

SQUEE—!





YOU PICKED THE
WRONG CHURCH
TO MESS WITH!

**TWANK
TWANK**



WAAAA

PELINA,
BLAST 'EM
BACK, JUST
WATCH THAT YOU
DON'T LIGHT UP
THE WHOLE
CHAPEL!

CHAK



SCORCH!

FWI-ISH



ABOMINATIONS
OUTSIDE THE NATURAL
ORDER...

BEGONE!

FOOSH



DON'T
WORRY, PALE
PRIESTESS!
OUR BOOTS OF
GOODNESS
SHALL RE-KICK
DEATH INTO THESE
BAD DOGS AND
THEIR BONY
BROTHERS!

GRRRRRR

AS SOON
AS MY BLADE IS
FREED I'LL--



**SQUEE
SQUEE**

BOO, DO
YOU SMELL
THAT?

SQUEE?

12 HOURS EARLIER...

FRESH FISH! CAUGHT THIS MORNIN!

THOSE PASTRIES SMELL HEROIC!

C'MON, MINSC. NO TIME FOR THAT NOW.

CANDLES! CANDLES AN' LANTERNS!

KEEN BLADES! GET YER KNIVES SHARPENED!

TWO COPPERS FOR A DOZEN!

YOU THINK THEY RECOGNIZE US?

LET'S NOT TAKE ANY CHANCES...

I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S JUST OVER *HERE*...





I AM
ALBY, PRIEST OF
KELEMNOR.

I'M KRYDLE.
WITH ME ARE
SHANDIE, DELINA,
AND MINSC.

DON'T FORGET
BOO. HE IS A
MINIATURE GIANT SPACE
HAMSTER, BUT CARRIES
GREAT POWER
WITHIN.

SQUEE—I



I'VE GOTTA ADMIT, I WAS A BIT
SURPRISED TO HEAR YOU WERE
LOOKING FOR HELP THROUGH
OUR... HOW DO I PUT IT...
LESS THAN FORMAL
CHANNELS.

DEALING WITH THE
DEAD REQUIRES A GOOD
DEAL OF **COMPROMISE**.
WE'RE WELL AWARE OF THE
BLACK MARKET SUPPLYING
THE LOWER CITY WITH
MANY GOODS AND
SERVICES.

WE SEEK
PROTECTION FOR
THIS BUILDING.

I'M AFRAID WE'RE IN
THE MIDST OF AN EXTENDED
DISAGREEMENT WITH THE
FISTS OVER **UNPAID**
BURIAL FEES.

COULDN'T YOU
JUST HIRE THE
FLAMING FISTS
TO GUARD THIS
PLACE?

THEY
STIFFED
YOU, EH?

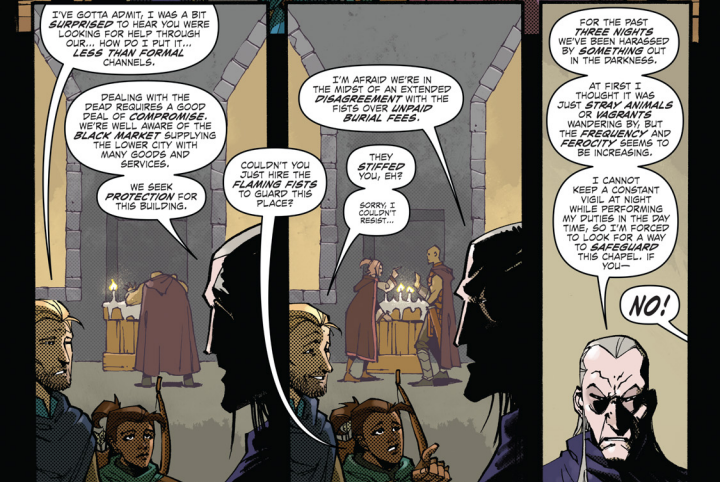
SORRY, I
COULDN'T
RESIST...

FOR THE PAST
THREE NIGHTS
WE'VE BEEN HARASSED
BY **SOMETHING** OUT
IN THE DARKNESS.

AT FIRST I
THOUGHT IT WAS
JUST **STRAY ANIMALS**
OR **VAGRANTS**
WANDERING BY, BUT
THE **FREQUENCY** AND
FEROCITY SEEMS TO
BE INCREASING.

I CANNOT
KEEP A CONSTANT
VIGIL AT NIGHT
WHILE PERFORMING
MY DUTIES IN THE DAY
TIME, SO I'M FORCED
TO LOOK FOR A WAY
TO **SAFEGUARD**
THIS CHAPEL. IF
YOU—

NO!



FATHER ALBY,
WHY WOULD YOU CALL
UPON THESE FAITHLESS
SELL-SWORDS?!

I TOLD YOU I
COULD DEFEND THIS
BUILDING FROM
INTRUDERS!



NERYS, YOUR FAITH IS
COMMENDABLE AND YOU
ARE BATTLE WORTHY, BUT
I CANNOT LET YOU GUARD
THE CHAPEL ALONE.

HEY NOW,
WE'RE ALL
HERE TRYING TO
DO THE RIGHT
THING...

THIS IS AN
INSULT!



THIS TEMPLE
CONTAINS DOZENS
OF PRICELESS
RELICS OF OUR
FAITH...



...THEY MUST
BE PROPERLY
PROTECTED BY
THOSE WHO
RESPECT OUR
TRADITIONS.

THIS MAN'S
TEETH ARE CROOKED
LIKE A VICIOUS
ALLIGATOR...

MINSC,
PLEASE PUT
IT DOWN.

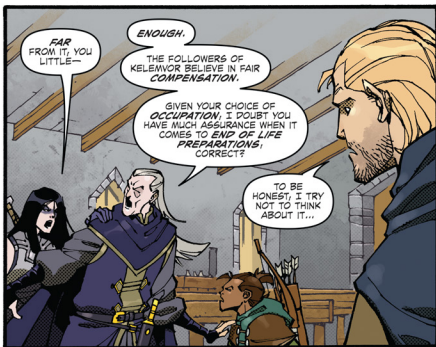


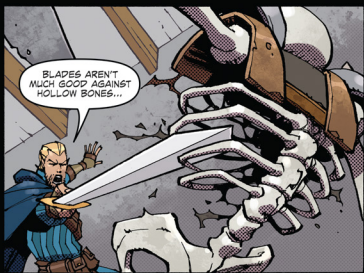
RESPECT.
PROTECT.

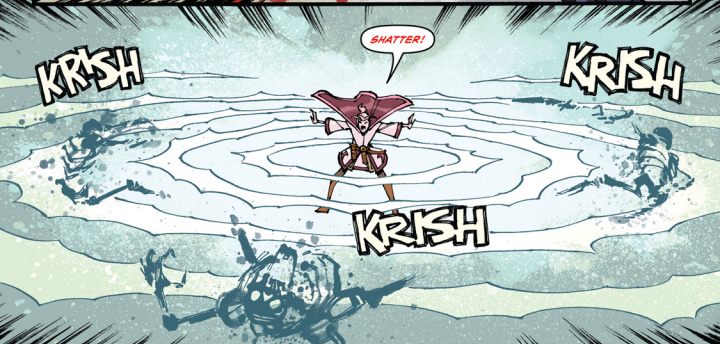
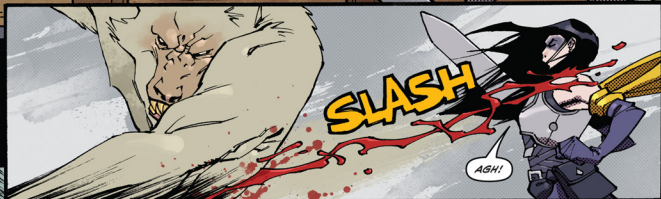
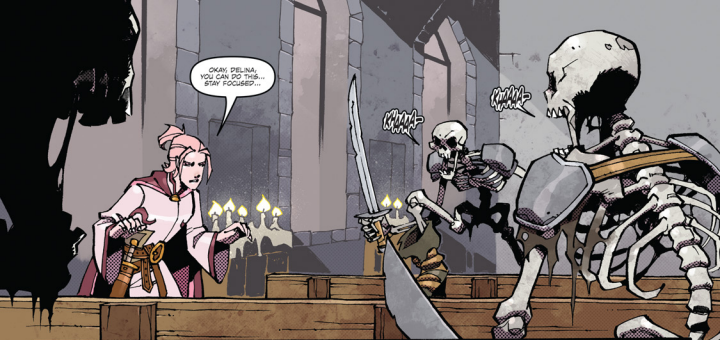
WE CAN DO
THAT. IT'S WHAT
WE'RE ALL
ABOUT.

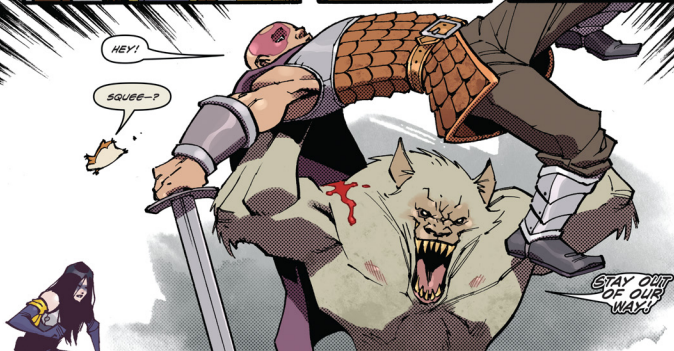
LET'S TALK
PAYMENT.

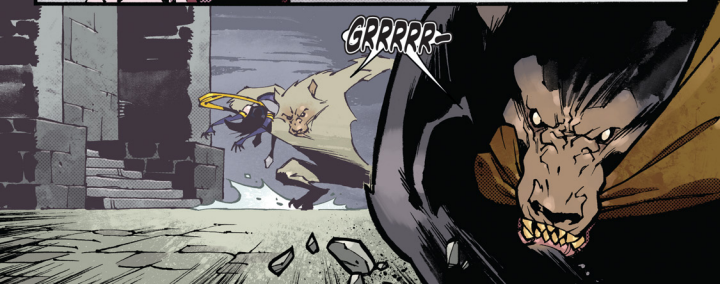
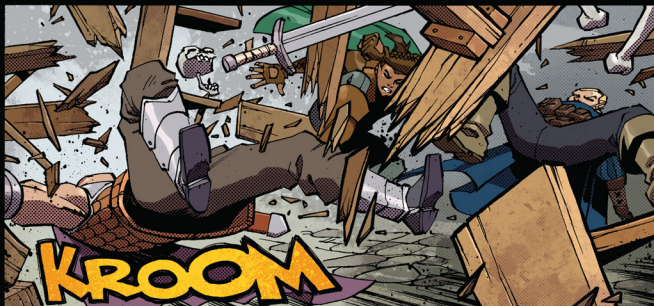


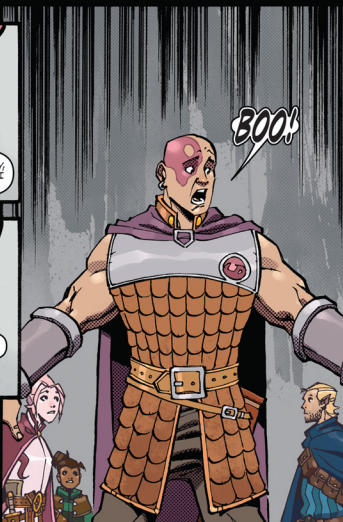












THERE WASN'T TIME TO CHECK!

SO YOU TOSSED THEM ALL IN A SACK? IF YOU DAMAGED IT, ALL THIS WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING!

I THOUGHT MAGIC ITEMS WERE **UNBREAKABLE**! WHO CARES ABOUT THE REST!

DO YOU RECOGNIZE IT?

OF COURSE NOT! IT WAS LOST LONG BEFORE I ARRIVED...

HUH?

SQUEE—

WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE STARTED THIS FOOL'S ERRAND. THE MASTER WILL KNOW; HE'LL—

SHUT UP! THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE TO ESCAPE ONCE AND FOR ALL.

SQUEE—

LITTLE HAMSTER, CAN YOU FIND THE OTHERS?

I'LL HAVE TO ASSUME THAT'S A "YES"...

THE GIRL IS AWAKE.

GOOD.

IT'S TIME FOR SOME ANSWERS...





GREETINGS,
YOUNG CLERIC...

MY NAME IS **SANGIN**.
MY LYCANTHROPIC COMPATRIOTS
ARE **DROW** AND **UTNA**.

WE HAVE
NEED OF YOUR
EXPERTISE.

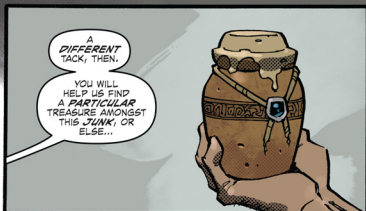
YOU ARE A
BLASPHEMER
AND A **FOOL**...
AND YOU WILL DIE
A **FOOL'S**
DEATH.



AS I WAS
SAYING, WE HAVE
NEED OF YOUR
EXPERTISE AND DO
NOT HAVE TIME
TO WASTE.

DO YOU
HONESTLY THINK
YOU CAN THREATEN
A SERVANT OF
KELEMVOR WITH
DEATH?

CHARMING...



A
DIFFERENT
TACK, THEN.

YOU WILL
HELP US FIND
A **PARTICULAR**
TREASURE AMONGST
THIS **JUNK**, OR
ELSE...



THE REST OF
YOUR CEREMONIAL
GARBAGE WILL BE
LEFT **UNHARMED** IF
YOU HELP US FIND
THE **ONE** WE
NEED.

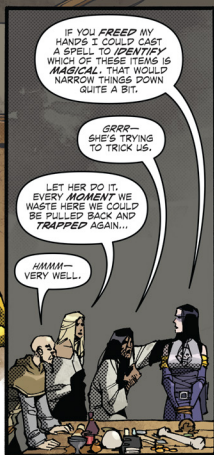
UNDERSTOOD?

YES.



WE BELIEVE ONE OF THESE OBJECTS CAME FROM FAR AWAY, A LAND CALLED **SAROVIA**. IT IS **ENCHANTED** WITH PROTECTIVE MAGIC.

THAT'S QUITE POSSIBLE, YES. OUR ORDER HAS RELICS FROM **MANY** STRANGE PLACES.



IF YOU **FREED** MY HANDS I COULD CAST A SPELL TO **IDENTIFY** WHICH OF THESE ITEMS IS **MAGICAL**. THAT WOULD NARROW THINGS DOWN QUITE A BIT.

GRRR— SHE'S TRYING TO TRICK US.

LET HER DO IT. EVERY **MOMENT** WE WASTE HERE WE COULD BE PULLED BACK AND **TRAPPED** AGAIN...

HAHM— VERY WELL.



BLESSED KELEMVOR... SCALE BRINGER, STEWARD OF DEATH...

...SHOW ME WHERE MAGICAL POWER LIES BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE MUNDANE...



NOTHING HAPPENED... **NONE** OF THEM ARE MAGIC?



OH, YES, I FORGOT TO **MENTION**... I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN **SEE** IT WHEN THE SPELL ACTIVATES.

I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO **TRUST** ME...



Boooooo-!

MINSC,
THIS IS *NOT*
HELPING.

GUARDS ARE
GONNA SHOW UP ANY
MINUTE AND THEN
WE'RE IN *DEEP*
DOO-DOO...



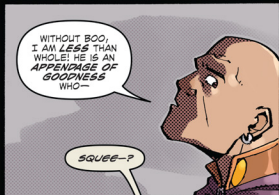
WHEREVER *EVIL*
HAS TAKEN YOU, I
WILL *PUNCH* THIS CITY'S
UGLY HAIRY BELLY
UNTIL IT *VOMITS* YOU
FORTH AND WE ARE
REUNITED!



HA?

I KNEW
OUR BOND WAS
UNBREAKABLE!

WELL, THAT WAS
ANTI-CLIMACTIC...



WITHOUT BOO,
I AM *LESS* THAN
WHOLE! HE IS AN
APPENDAGE OF
GOODNESS
WHO—

SQUEE—?



SQUE-SQUEE,
SQUEE-SQUEEE—!

I SEE.



BOO
COURAGEOUSLY
FOLLOWER *EVIL* TO
ITS LAIR AND WILL
NOW BRAVELY TAKE
US THERE!

PREPARE FOR
HEROISM, MY
FRIENDS!

IF YOU
SAY SO...



**JUSTICE
KNOCKS AND WE
HAVE ANSWERED IT,
STINKY DOGS!**

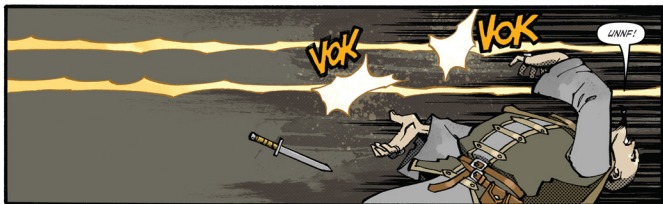
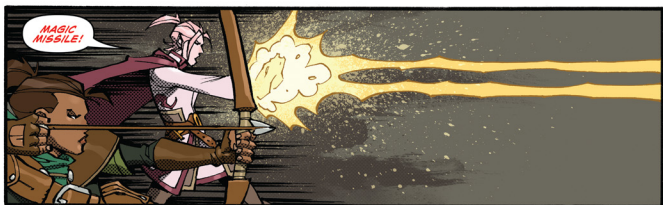
THOOM

ROAR!

GRRR—

**KILL
THEM ALL!**







MEDDLING
BASTARDS!
THIS WILL
BE YOUR
GRAVE!



I'VE BEEN
CHOKED BY
EVILLER THAN
YOU...



DON'T TURN
YOUR BACK ON
A ROGUE,
BUDDY!

SLASH

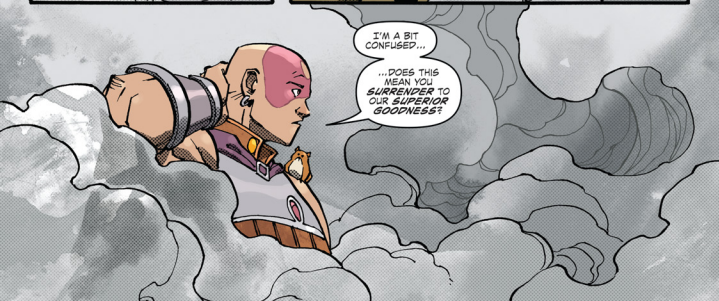


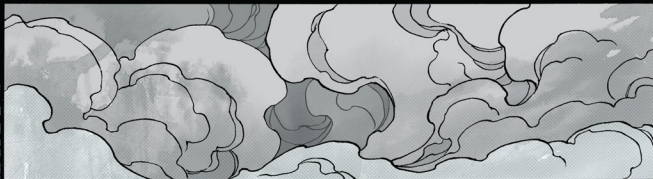
YOUR BLADE
DOES *NOTHING*
TO ME, FOOL!

WHAM

UHHH!

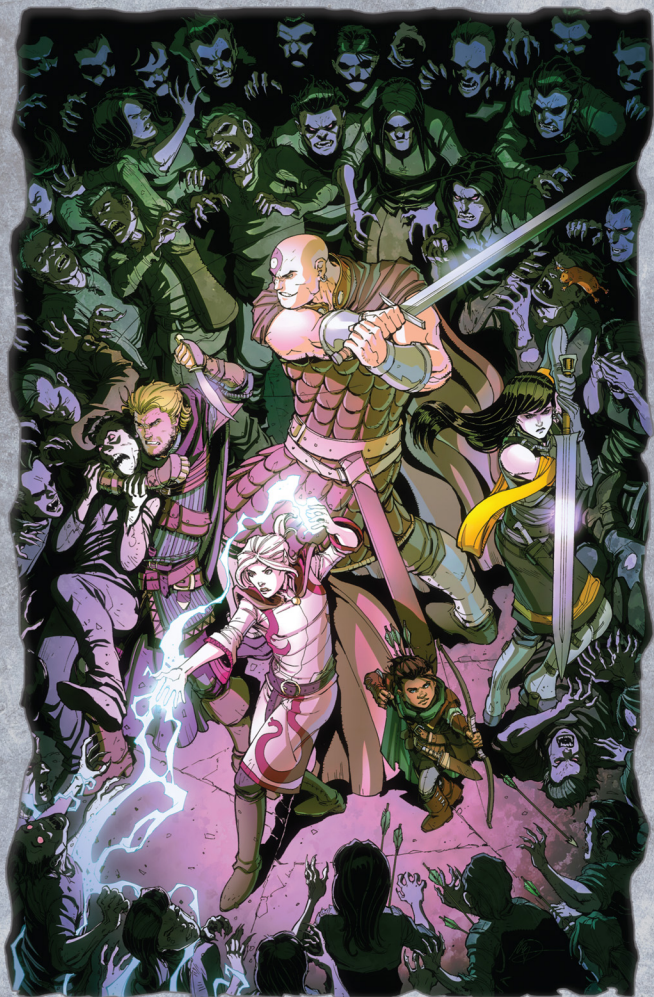









*...COUNT
STRAHD VON
ZAROVICH,
THE LORD OF
RAVENLOFT!*



PART TWO: **RAVEN** LOST



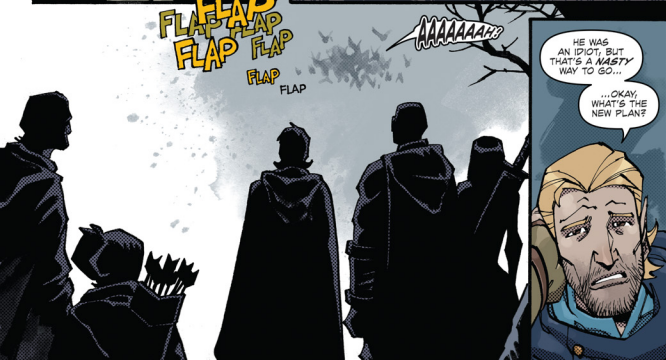
art by Nelson Daniel



RAVENLOFT IS A FEAR-DRENCHED LAND OF DARK POWER AND TEMPTATION. FEW HAVE TRAVELED TO THE INFAMOUS *DOMAIN OF DREAD* AND RETURNED TO TELL THE TALE.

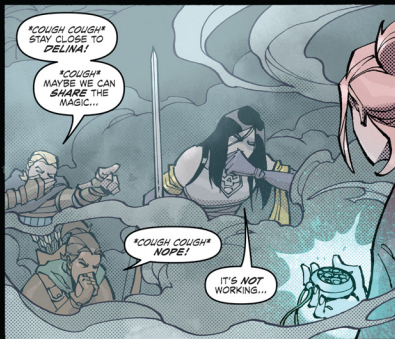
ALTHOUGH THERE ARE RUMORED TO BE MANY SHADOW-RIDDEN LANDS WITHIN RAVENLOFT, THE MOST FAMOUS IS *BAROVIA*, HOME TO *COUNT STRAHD VON ZAROVICH*, A VAMPIRIC OVERLORD WHOSE POWER AND CRUELTY ARE THE STUFF OF LEGEND.

WE'RE
ALL DOOMED...
DOOMED!











I'VE HEARD **LEGENDS** OF THIS HORRIFYING PLACE.

A REALM WHERE THE UNDEAD RULE WHILE THE LIVING STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE.

SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT VACATION SPOT...



YOUR GOD **KELEMVOR** IS PATRON DEITY OF THESE DEAD, IS HE NOT?

NO. HE IS GOD OF THE **DEPARTED**.

UNDEATH, THE CORRUPTED EXTENSION OF THAT WHICH **SHOULD** DIE; IS OUR **GREATEST** ENEMY.



THIS REPRESENTS **EVERYTHING** MY FAITH FIGHTS AGAINST.



I'VE HEARD A LOT OF "**LEGENDS**" IN MY TIME, AND THE REALITY RARELY LIVES UP TO THE HYPE.

DON'T LET OLD WIVES' TALES RILE YOU UP. WE CAN HANDLE WHATEVER THIS PLACE THROWS AT US AS LONG AS WE STICK **TOGETHER**.



LOOKS LIKE WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES OUT HERE AT NIGHT.

KEEP WEAPONS READY, AND LET'S CHECK IT OUT.



WELCOME,
STRANGERS.

I EXPECT
YOU'RE FEELING
A BIT *LOST*, AM
I RIGHT?

AS LONG AS
THERE'S EVIL TO
FIGHT, WE ARE
NEVER LOST!

WELL THEN,
YOU'LL FIND NO
SHORTAGE OF THAT
'ROUND THESE
PARTS, WARRIOR.
THIS LAND IS *EVIL*
INCARNATE.

YOU WOULDN'T
HAPPEN TO KNOW
WHICH WAY TO GO TO
HEAD TO THE NEAREST
TOWN, WOULD
YOU?

IF Y' WANT
DIRECTION, MY
DEAR, Y' SHOULD
SPEAK WITH
MADAM EVA.

OH YEAH?
AND WHERE
WOULD WE FIND
THIS '*MADAM*'
OF YOURS?

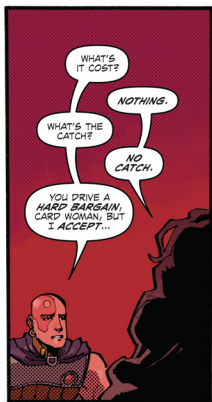
SHE HAS ALL
THE *ANSWERS*
YOU SEEK.

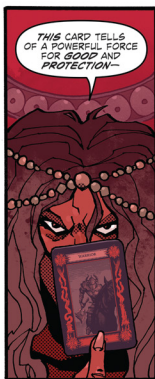
THERE. INTRODUCE
YOURSELVES AND SHE
MAY GIVE YOU
INSIGHT.

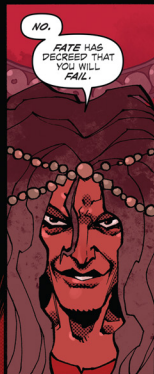
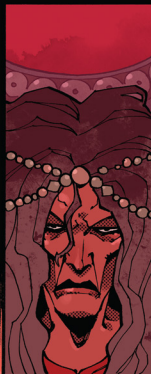
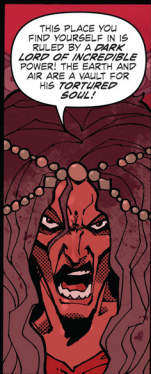
AT LAST,
A LADY WITH
A *QUEST*!

IF SHE POINTS US
TOWARD *BADNESS*,
WE SHALL SLAP THE
EVIL FROM THEIR
UGLY FACES!

OH?









GOOD
WILL ALWAYS
TRIUMPH, AND I
AM GOOD!



WE'RE VERY
SORRY, MADAM.
OUR FRIEND,
HE—

GRUMBLE,
GRUMBLE.

I KNOW
EXACTLY WHO HE
IS. THERE'S NO NEED
TO APOLOGIZE... AS
LONG AS YOU PAY
FOR THE DAMAGE.



THIS LAND
IS UNLIKE *ANY*
OTHER YOU HAVE
ENCOUNTERED.

YOUR
BODY WILL BE
PUNISHED. YOUR
SOUL WILL BE
TESTED.

EVEN IF YOU
ESCAPE, IT WILL *NOT*
BE *UNSCATHED*...



MINSC,
WAIT!

SHE WAS A LIAR
AND SMELLED LIKE
OLD CABBAGE!



I KNOW YOU'RE
ANGRY, BUT YOU CAN'T
JUST MARCH OFF INTO
THE DARKNESS
ALONE.

SHANDIE
WAS RIGHT.
WE MUST STAY
TOGETHER.



EVIL CANNOT BE DEFEATED BY *CARDS* OR *CABBAGE LADIES*!

THESE PEOPLE ARE SCARED AND DOWNTRODDEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT SEEN *TRUE HEROISM*!



I UNDERESTIMATED YOU. YOUR FAITH IS *ADMIRABLE*.



NEXT TIME WE'RE LOOKING FOR INFO FROM THE *LOCALS*, LEAVE THINGS TO KRYDLE AND I, OKAY?



UNTIL WE KNOW THE LAY OF THE LAND, WE'VE GOTTA BE MORE *CAREFUL*.



NO, SHANDIE! "CAREFUL" IS WHAT THE *ENEMY* WANTS!

VILLAINS TRY TO KEEP HEROES *QUIET AND AFRAID*, UNABLE TO DRAW THEIR *SWORDS AND FIGHT*!

I THINK IT'S A *WEE BIT* MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT...



BADDIES ARE NOT JUST GOING TO POP UP AND SAY HELLO, BIG GUY.

THE SOONER YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, THE SOONER—

HEEELP!

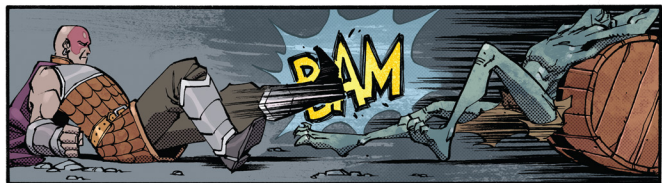
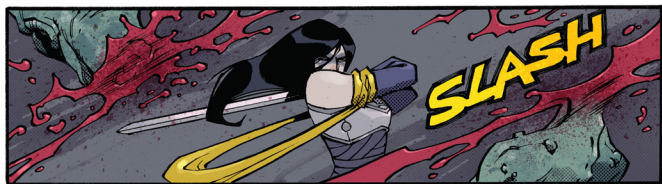
THE SCREAMING SOUND OF DANGER!



SERIOUSLY?











I'M ADRIAN, ADRIAN MARTIKOV.

WHAT YOU ALL DID THERE... IT WAS AMAZING!

I AM MINS.

WITH ME ARE BOO, NERYS, SHANDIE, DELINA, AND KRYDLE.

WE ARE SPECIALISTS IN AMAZING.



WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUT THIS LATE AT NIGHT?

DELIVERING WINE. THE ROUTE CAN TAKE ALL DAY AT THE BEST OF TIMES, AND I WAS DELAYED BY THE FOG.



WHERE WERE YOU HEADED?

WELL, THAT'S KIND OF THE CATCH. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE WE ARE.

THE FOG BROUGHT US HERE.

AH, YES. MORE STRANGERS FROM DISTANT LANDS. THAT SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING A LOT LATELY...



I'VE GOT AN IDEA. IF YOU HELP GUARD THE WAGON AS WE TRAVEL BACK TO MY FAMILY'S VINEYARD, I'LL ASK PA TO LET YOU STAY FOR A DAY OR TWO. GET YOU FIGURED OUT.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A FAIR TRADE, ADRIAN. CONSIDER IT DONE.



THIS WAS NOT A COINCIDENCE, MY FRIENDS. IT WAS A SIGN.

WE ARE MEANT TO BRING MIGHTY GOODNESS TO THIS UGLY PLACE.

SQUEE!

THAT'S RIGHT, BOO. IF WE SEE THAT COUNT WHATEVER-HIS-NAME-IS, WE'LL KICK HIS BUTT!





art by Max Dunbar | colors by Joana Lafuente

PART THREE: **FIELD OF REGRETS**



art by Nelson Daniel

WINE IS THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE BAROVIAN PEOPLE. IT IS ONE OF THE ONLY INDULGENCES LEFT TO THEM. WITHOUT IT, MANY OF THEM WOULD LOSE THEIR LAST SHRED OF HOPE AND SUCCEUMB TO UTTER DESPAIR.

MANY OF THE MALICIOUS SPIRITS ROAMING THE DEMIPLANE OF DREAD CAN SENSE WHEN MORTAL CONFIDENCE IS FLAGGING AND TAKE GREAT DELIGHT IN TOYING WITH THEIR PREY, TRYING TO PUSH THEM PAST THE BOUNDS OF SANITY.



THERE IT IS—
THE WIZARD
OF WINES.

THE VINEYARD
AND WINERY'S BEEN
OUR FAMILY'S PRIDE
FOR YEARS.

OH MAN,
AFTER THE DAY
WE'VE HAD, I AM
SO UP FOR A
DRINK...









KELEMVOR,
LORD OF THE
DEAD, HEAR MY
PRAYER...



YOUR SERVANT IS LOST
IN A PLACE OF EVIL AND THE
UNDYING. DARK FORCES COALESCE
AROUND US, AND I FEAR MY HOLY
MAGIC WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TO
SAVE ME AND MY FRIENDS.

GRANT ME
STRENGTH TO
DEFEND THE LIVING
AND SMITE THE
UNDEAD...



YES, MINSC.
CAN I HELP
YOU?

DID YOUR
GOD TELL YOU
GOOD STUFF?

IT DOESN'T
QUITE WORK
THAT WAY...



IF KELEMVOR IS THE
GOD OF DEATH, DOES
THAT MEAN HE'S JUST
A BIG OL' DEAD
GUY?

NO. HE IS
A GOD. HE IS
BEYOND LIFE
OR DEATH.

NEAT!



THIS LAND
BREATHES WITH
DARK FORCES
ANATHEMA TO
MY FAITH.

IF KELEMVOR
WERE HERE, HE WOULD
WIPE THIS BLASPHEMOUS,
DARKENED BLOT OUT
OF EXISTENCE.



UNTIL HE ARRIVES, WE WILL
USE HAMSTER POWER TO
PUNCH EVIL IN ITS STINKY,
MUSHY FACE!

SQUEE!

INDEED.

THE WEREWOLF CAVES
NEAR LAKE BARATOK—

STAND DOWN,
OR I'LL SLAY
YOU WHERE YOU
STAND...

KIRIL, DON'T
DO THIS. DRON
AND I ARE PART
OF THE PACK. WE'VE
RETURNED TO TAKE
OUR PLACE AT
YOUR SIDE.

HA! YOU
THINK IT'S THAT
SIMPLE?

YOUR PLANS
TO LEAVE BAROVIA
VANISHED, SO WE'RE
GOOD ENOUGH FOR
YOU AGAIN?

DON'T
ACT LIKE YOU
WOULDN'T HAVE
DONE THE
SAME!

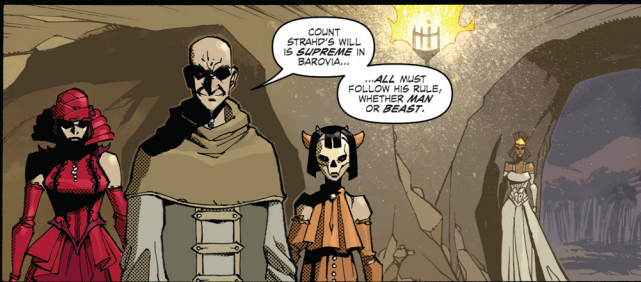
WRONG! I'M
SMART ENOUGH TO
ACCEPT MY FATE
HERE IN THE DREAD
REALM. THERE IS
NO ESCAPE.

WE MADE
A MISTAKE.

THAT
YOU DID,
UTNA.

WHERE'S THAT
FEEBLE WARLOCK WHO
LEAD YOU ASTRAY? HE WAS
SO SURE HE COULD TRICK
COUNT STRAHD AND
BREAK FREE...

I WAS
WRONG.



COUNT STRAHD'S WILL IS SUPREME IN BAROVIA...

...ALL MUST FOLLOW HIS RULE, WHETHER MAN OR BEAST.



SANGIN, YOU'VE BEEN TURNED!

THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS "BLESSED," MY LUPINE FRIEND,

BLESSED BY OUR LORD AND MASTER...



THE COUNT WAS DISPLEASED THAT WE ATTEMPTED TO HIDE OUR TRUE MISSION FROM HIM WHEN WE WERE SENT TO RETRIEVE ARTIFACTS FROM ABROAD.

I WAS DISCIPLINED, BUT THEN, IN STRAHD'S DIVINE MERCY, HE GAVE ME NEW LIFE.

HOWEVER, YOUR PRICE MUST STILL BE PAID...



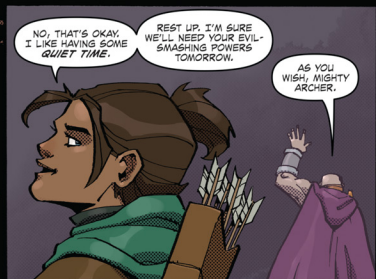
KIRIL, YOU ARE LEADER OF THE PACK.

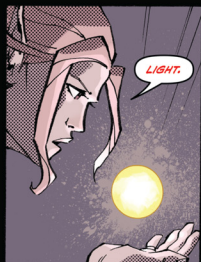
CHOOSE ONE OF YOUR WOLVES TO CARRY THE BURDEN OF THIS MISTAKE OR ELSE THE MASTER WILL PUNISH ALL OF YOU.

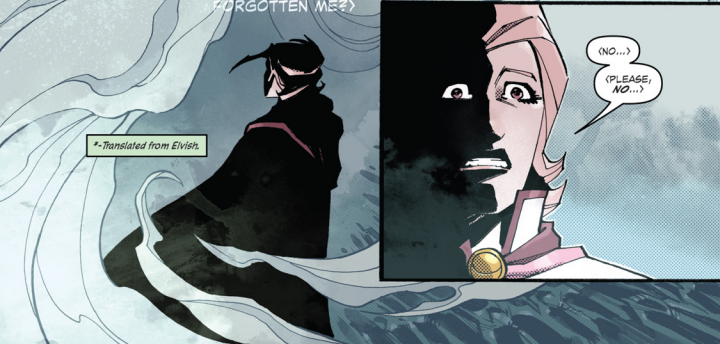


RoOoAR





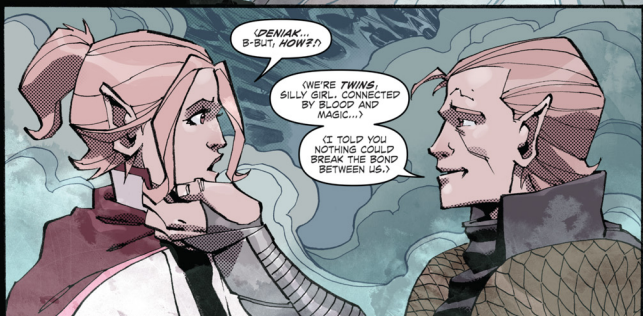




*-Translated from Elvish.



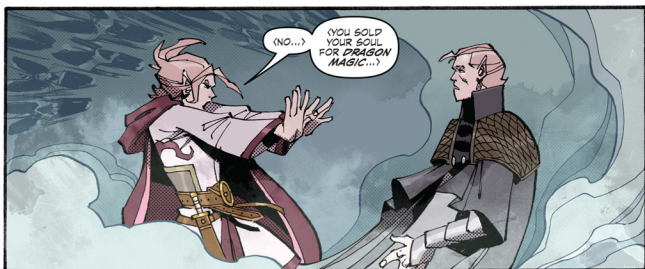
(YOUR OWN
BROTHER?)



(DENIAK...
B-BUT, HOW?)

(WE'RE TWINS,
SILLY GIRL. CONNECTED
BY BLOOD AND
MAGIC...)

(I TOLD YOU
NOTHING COULD
BREAK THE BOND
BETWEEN US.)



KRYGLE...

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT IF YOU KEEP CALLING MY NAME ALL WHINEY LIKE THAT, YOU'RE GONNA GET A *KNIFE* IN THE FACE.

ALWAYS SO REBELLIOUS...

...JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER...

BY THE GODS...

MOTHER!

WE BOTH LOVED YOU SO VERY MUCH...

...BUT THEN, YOU BETRAYED US.

NO! IT WAS NEVER LIKE THAT!

I HAD TO FIND MY OWN PATH!



YES...
A LIFE OF
CRIME...



...AND WHEN
YOUR CRIMINAL
"FRIENDS" DECIDED
TO EXACT REVENGE
UPON YOU...

I WAS THERE
WAITING FOR
THEIR HUNGRY
BLADES...



I'M SO
SORRY...

I... I
COULDN'T STOP
THEM.



CHILD,
THERE'S SO
MUCH **BLOOD**
ON YOUR
HANDS...

I... I'D DO
ANYTHING
TO MAKE IT
RIGHT.



OH, WOULD
YOU NOW?



WELL THEN...

...LET'S
BALANCE
THE SCALES,
SHALL WE?!

AHHH!









LEAVING
ALREADY? PA SAID
YOU COULD STAY
TWO NIGHTS...

YOUR
HOSPITALITY
IS APPRECIATED;
BUT WE SHOULD
MOVE ON.

THE SOONER
WE DISCOVER THE
FORCES THAT BROUGHT
US HERE, THE SOONER
WE CAN RETURN
HOME.



IF YE'RE WISE,
YE'LL STICK TO THE
ROADS AN' KEEP YER
WITS ABOUT YE.



EVIL DOES
NOT STAY ON PATHS
WELL-TRAVELED,
AND NEITHER
SHALL WE.

SUIT YERSELF,
BALDY. DON' SAY
I DIDNA WARN
YE...



HERE'S A
BOTTLE TO HELP
KEEP YOU WARM
ON THE JOURNEY
AHEAD.

THANKS.



CAN WE GO
ALREADY?

DELINA, ARE
YOU ALRIGHT?

JUST...
JUST LEAVE ME
ALONE...



A GOOD
NIGHT'S REST AND
A BRACING SHOWER
TO CLEANSER OUR
SPIRITS...

EVIL BEWARE!
WE ARE CHIPPER
AND READY FOR
BUTT-KICKING!

SQUEE!



PART FOUR: **PARADE OF PAIN**



art by Nelson Daniel

LIFE IN BAROVIA IS HARSH AND UNFORGIVING. WITH UNDEAD FORCES CONSTANTLY LOOMING JUST OUT OF SIGHT AND BLEAK SKIES THAT NEVER SEE SUNLIGHT, IT CAN BE A STRUGGLE FOR THE PEASANTRY TO CARRY ON WITH THEIR LIVES.

FROM TIME TO TIME THE EERIE MISTS BRING STRANGERS BOASTING THAT THEY WILL DESTROY COUNT STRAHD AND FREE THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR STRIFE, BUT NONE HAVE SUCCEEDED. THE LOCALS NOW KNOW BETTER THAN TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE FOOLED BY WELL-MEANING, BUT ULTIMATELY POINTLESS, ATTEMPTS AT HEROISM.



I'M GETTING THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION WE'RE NOT WELCOME HERE...





IT'S TIME
FOR THIS WEEK'S
FESTIVAL TO
BEGIN!



"FESTIVAL?"

MORE LIKE
"FUNERAL."

YEAH. THIS
IS STARTING TO
GET WEIRD...



HERE TO BEGIN
THE FESTIVITIES, OUR
BURGOMASTER, **BARON
VARGAS!**



I SENSE
THAT HE IS *NOT*
A NICE MAN...

GREETINGS,
FINE CITIZENS
OF VALLAKI.

AS ALWAYS, WE
MUST KEEP OUR SPIRITS
WHOLE WITH THE POWER
OF **CELEBRATION** AND
GOOD CHEER.

LAST WEEK'S
"MERRIMENT OF MUSIC"
WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS
AND SO IT IS MY DISTINCT
PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE
**THIS WEEK'S NEW
THEME...**





THE PARADE
OF PURPLE!



PURPLE! PURPLE! PURPLE!
PURPLE! PURPLE! PURPLE!
PURPLE! PURPLE! PURPLE!

THIS COLORFUL
CELEBRATION WILL
WARM YOUR HEART AND
PUSH BACK THE DREARY
WORLD OUTSIDE.



UM...
HELLO?



WELL
NOW, LOOK
THERE...

A VISITOR
ALREADY IN
THE SPIRIT OF
OUR NEW
HOLIDAY!











DESTROY THEM!



YOU CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD LAST TIME, FUZZY FACES, BUT NOW I AM PREPARED FOR YOUR—



KER THUD



OUR MEAT-SHIELD JUST WENT DOWN... DELINA, COVER THE GAP!

I'M ON IT!

TANG TANG

FOOM







LIGHTNING
BUUUU

AW GEEZ...

...THIS REALLY
ISN'T A GOOD TIME
FOR MY CHAOS
MAGIC TO FLARE
UP...



LINSH!

HA, HA
DELIGHTFUL
DISTRACTION!

STAB

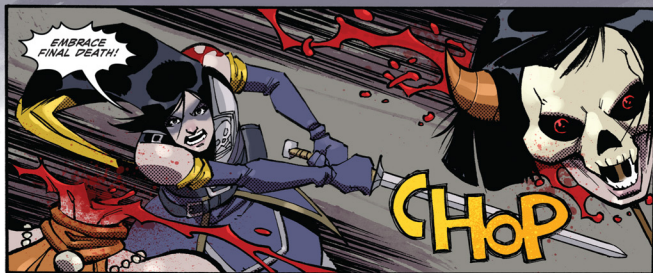


NOW YOU'RE
FINISHED! YOUR
SWORD IS
TRAPPED...



EVERY PART OF MINSC
IS PRIMED FOR BATTLE,
ANIMAL-PANTS!

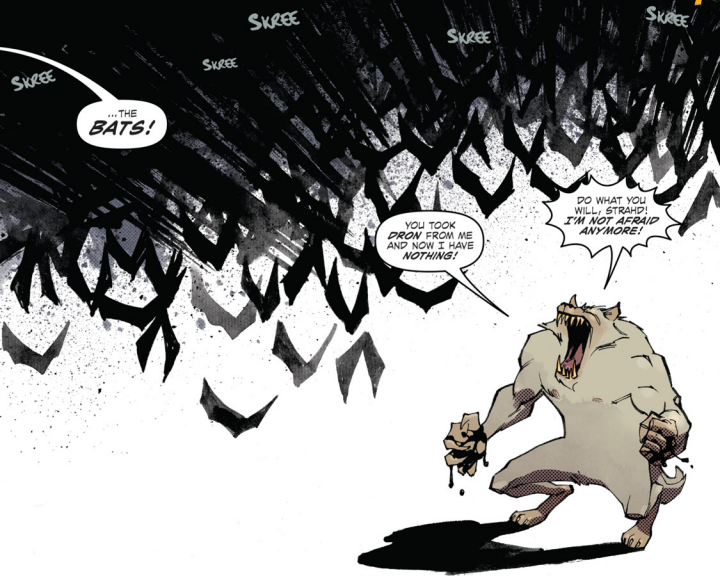
NRF-!





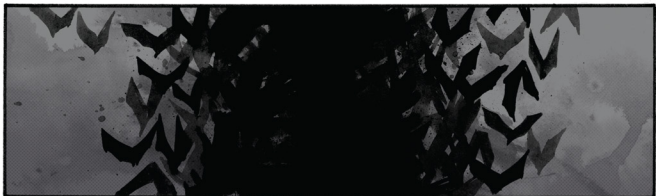
KA-SHAK





FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP





CLEARLY SANGIN'S
PROWESS WAS *LESS*
THAN SUFFICIENT TO
DEAL WITH YOUR
INSOLENCE...

...THUS, I
SHALL NO LONGER
UNDERESTIMATE
YOU.

I AM
STRAND...

...LORD OF
BAROVIA AND
MASTER OF
RAVENLOFT.

YOU CARRY
AN ITEM THAT IS
NOT YOURS TO
POSSESS....

...THOUGH YOU
SHALL WISH OTHERWISE,
YOU NOW HAVE MY *FULL*
AND *COMPLETE*
ATTENTION.





PART FIVE: **BEYOND THE MISTS**



art by Nelson Dániel

A WAKENED TO AN ENDLESS NIGHT; VAMPIRES HUNGER FOR THE LIFE THEY HAVE LOST AND SATE THAT HUNGER BY DRINKING THE BLOOD OF THE LIVING. THEY ABHOR SUNLIGHT; FOR ITS TOUCH BURNS THEM.

BREATHLESS, DEATHLESS—VAMPIRES ARE A DISTURBING ECHO OF LIFE DESTINED TO AN EXISTENCE OF EVIL AND PAIN, BUT THE POWER OF THE DARK CURSE THEY CARRY IS STILL INTOXICATING TO MANY SOULS IN SEARCH OF IMMORTALITY.



GIVE ME THE
LOCKET TAKEN
FROM THESE LANDS,
OR YOUR LIVES WILL
BLEED OUT HERE IN
THE DIRT AND **NONE**
SHALL MOURN
YOU...



SQUEEEE!

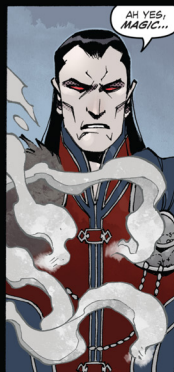
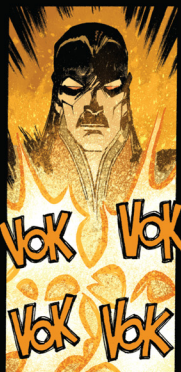
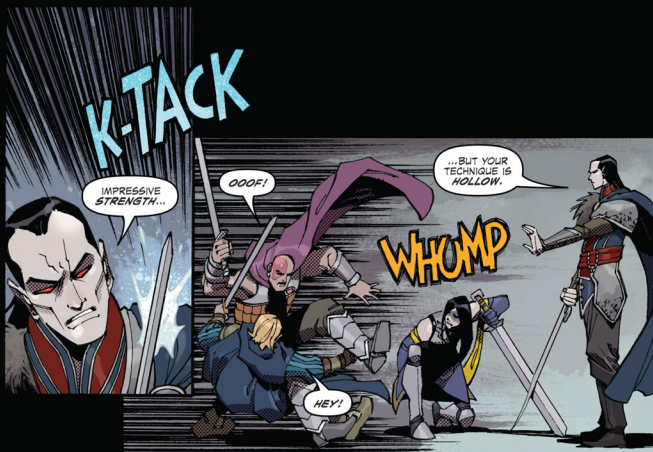
WE WILL
SMASH YOU IN
THE NAME OF
GOODNESS!

YOUR UNDEAD
REIGN OF TERROR
ENDS HERE!

HERE
WE GO...









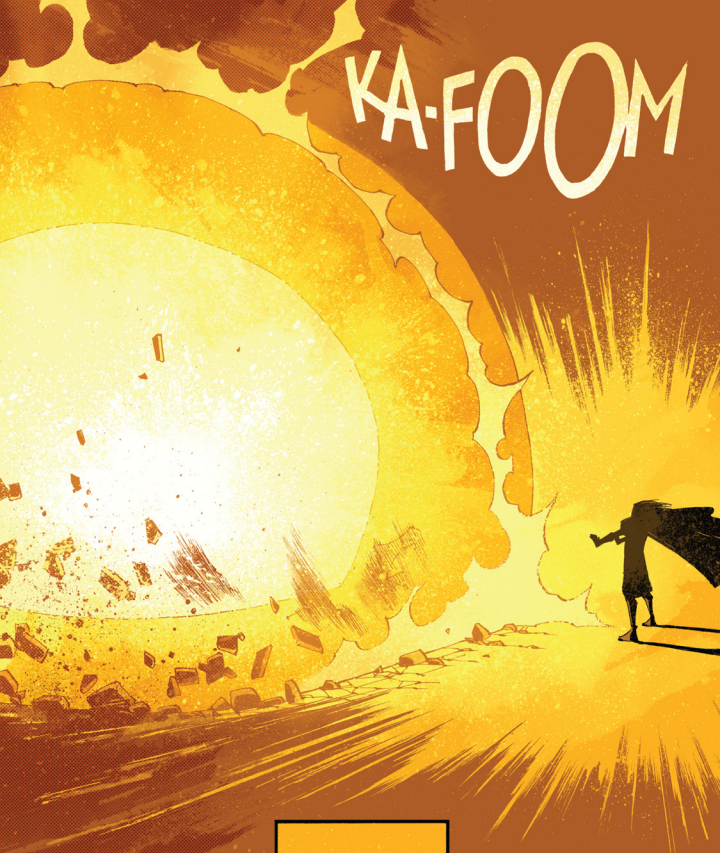








KA-FOOM



...AND
THE *BURNING*
HATE WITHIN MY
HEART.

FSSSSSSSSSS



IMPETUOUS
CHILD...

...DID
YOU HONESTLY
THINK YOU COULD
DEFEAT ME?



DAMN YOU...



YES, DAMN ME
AND THE HUNDREDS
OF OTHER SCREAMING
SOULS TRAPPED IN
THIS PLACE...



WE ARE **ALL**
DAMNED FOR THE
LIVES WE'VE
LED...



...BUT WITH THIS
LOCKET BACK IN MY
POSSESSION...



...PERHAPS I
CAN FINALLY
ESCAPE.



EEEEEE



EEEEEE

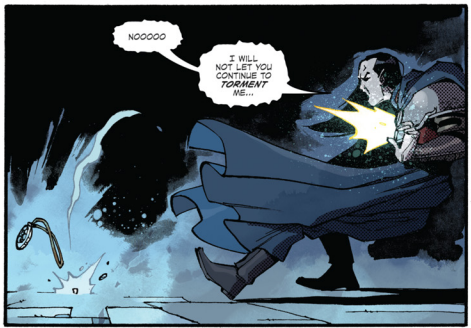
WHAT IS
THIS?!



THIS LAND IS
YOUR *ETERNAL PRISON*,
BROTHER!

YOU SHALL
NEVER BE FREE
FROM IT...





NOOOOO

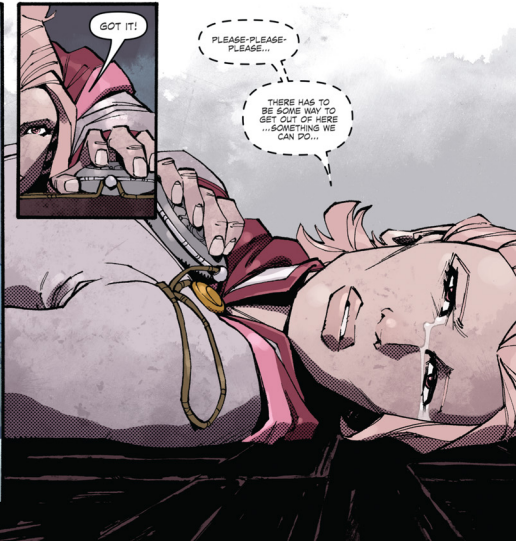
I WILL
NOT LET YOU
CONTINUE TO
TORMENT
ME...



YOU CANNOT
FORGET WHAT YOU
HAVE DONE.



YOU CANNOT
HIDE FROM
YOUR *TRUE*
SELF.

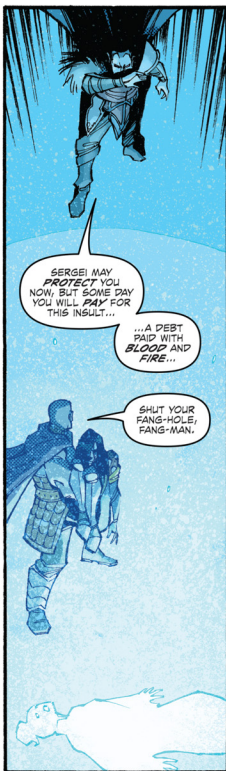


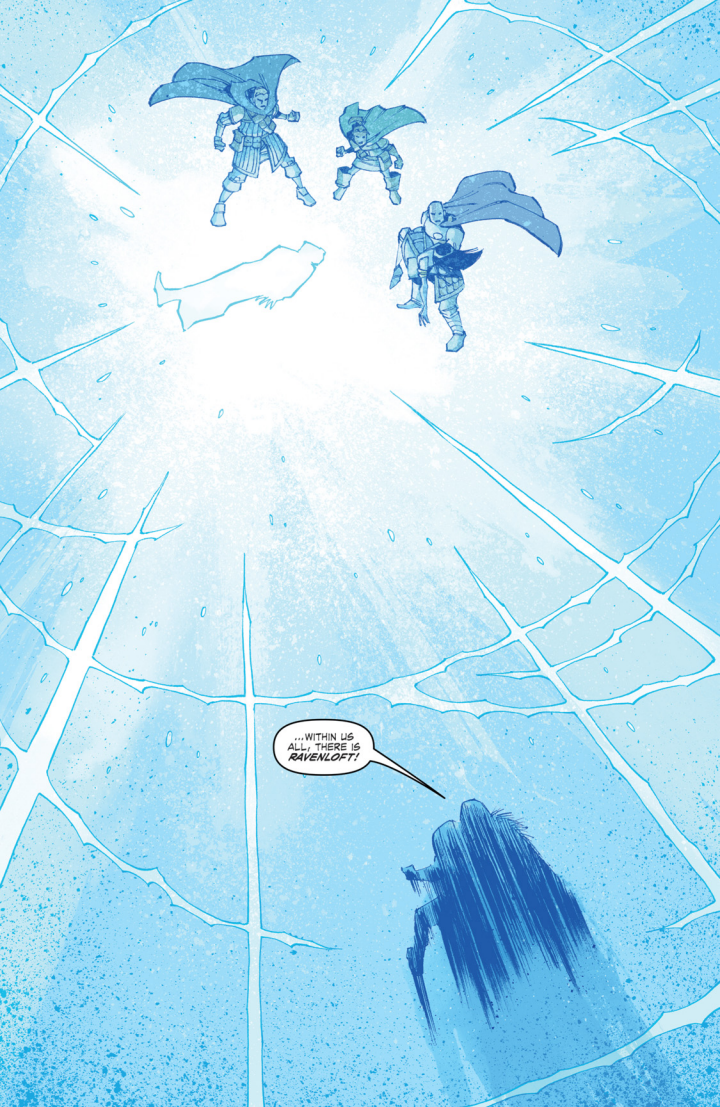
GOT IT!

PLEASE-PLEASE-
PLEASE...

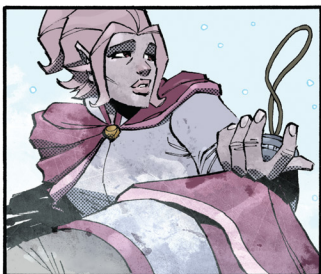
THERE HAS TO
BE SOME WAY TO
GET OUT OF HERE
...SOMETHING WE
CAN DO...







...WITHIN US
ALL, THERE IS
RAVENLOFT!





OKAY...

...NOW
WHERE ARE
WE?


OUR STORY CONTINUES IN
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS:
FROST GIANT'S FURY!



art by Max Dunbar | colors by Joana Lafuente

TYRANNY of DRAGONS

Writer: **Bart Carroll**
Artist: **David Baldeon**
Colorist: **Joana Lafuente**
Letterer: **Neil Uyetake**
Editor: **John Barber**




THROUGHOUT ICEWIND DALE, ITS PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED AND THREATENED BY THE MOST TERRIFYING OF ALL POSSIBLE DANGERS—DRAGONS!

ROAMING THE SKIES, RED AND WHITE DRAGONS HAVE RENEWED THEIR TORMENT AGAINST THE SPINE OF THE WORLD.




WORD FROM ICEWIND DALE HAS REACHED LORD NEVEREMBER, HIS OWN PEOPLE SAFE ENOUGH—FOR NOW—IN DISTANT NEVERWINTER.

BUT THE NEWS IS EXCEEDINGLY GRIM.

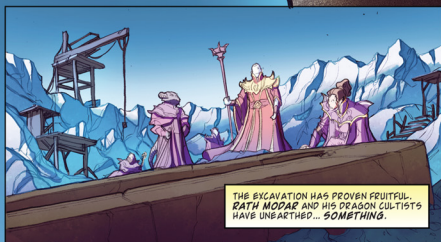


AS REPORTED, THE DRAGONS' PRESENCE PROTECTS A GROUP OF CULTISTS—LED BY RATH MODAR—UNDERTAKING AN EXCAVATION, SEARCHING FOR LOST DRAGON MASKS.



THE DRAGON CULTISTS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED.

ALAEROS, BARROWIN, AND NYMMESTRA, AGENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE FACTIONS, ARE CALLED UPON TO TRAVEL TO ICEWIND DALE—NO EASY JOURNEY, UNDER THE SHADOW OF DRAGONS.



THE EXCAVATION HAS PROVEN FRUITFUL. RATH MODAR AND HIS DRAGON CULTISTS HAVE UNEARTHED... SOMETHING.

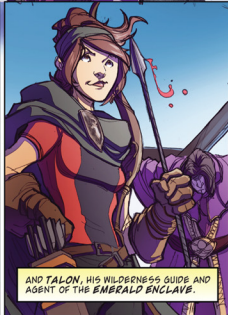


WHILE NOT THE RED DRAGON MASK THEY SOUGHT, THE STONE PORTAL IS VERY CLEARLY A DEVICE NOT TO GO UNUSED. LOYAL CULTISTS ARE QUICK TO VOLUNTEER (OR BE VOLUNTEERED) FOR ITS TRIAL ACTIVATION.

FIRST BATTLE GOES TO THE HEROES! HOWEVER, IT'S UNEXPECTED HELP THAT WINS THEM THE DAY.



FIRST, RATSHADOW, AGENT OF THE ZHENTARIM...



AND TALON, HIS WILDERNESS GUIDE AND AGENT OF THE EMERALD ENCLAVE.

AS MEMBERS OF THE FIVE FACTIONS, EACH WITH THEIR OWN STAKE IN THE MISSION, THEY ARE AT LEAST AGREED TO CONTINUE ON TOGETHER.

WHEREVER THAT MAY LEAD...





THANKFULLY, THE PORTAL DID NOT LEAD TO INSTANT ANNIHILATION.



INSTEAD, IT BROUGHT ALAEROS AND HIS FELLOW HEROES TO TUERN—BUT WHERE, IT SEEMED, THE ENTIRE ISLAND WAS SET AGAINST THEM.

MONSTROUS DENIZENS COULD ALWAYS BE COUNTED ON FOR A FIGHT. WORSE WERE TUERN'S BARBARIANS—SEAFARING PEOPLE WHO WORSHIPPED DRAGONS AS GODS.

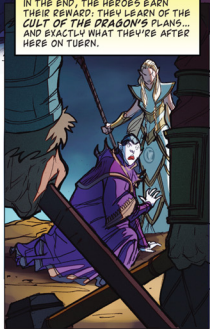
THE BARBARIANS MIGHT BE FINE ALLIES FOR THE DRAGON CULTISTS... BUT WHICH HAS ALSO SET THEM AS TOUGH FOES ENTRENCHED AGAINST THE HEROES.



IN THE END, THE HEROES EARN THEIR REWARD: THEY LEARN OF THE CULT OF THE DRAGON'S PLANS... AND EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE AFTER HERE ON TUERN.

AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH TUERN'S BARBARIANS, AS FELLOW DRAGON WORSHIPPERS, THE CULTISTS WERE GIVEN FREE REIGN OF THE ISLAND TO SEARCH FOR THE RED DRAGON MASK.

HOWEVER WELL-FOUGHT THIS DAY... IT'S CLEAR THE PARTY STILL HAS THEIR WORK CUT OUT FOR THEM...





THEIR SEARCH FOR THE RED DRAGON MASK HAS LED ALABROS AND HIS COMPANY TO THE ISLAND'S GREAT VOLCANO.



IT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS TRAPS OR GUARDIANS.

HOWEVER SMALL THEY MAY BE, THEY ARE VICIOUS AND WITHOUT NUMBER. (TUCKER HIMSELF WOULD SCARCELY HAVE FOUND BETTER ODDS.)



NOR IS IT WITHOUT ITS RULER.

A RED DRAGON—ONE OF TUERN'S THREE SIBLING OVERLORDS—GUARDS ITS TREASURE: TRIBUTE AND PLUNDER, GATHERED AFTER CENTURIES OF RULING OVER THE ISLAND'S BARBARIANS.



ULTIMATELY, TUERN LOSES ONE OF ITS DRAGONIC OVERLORDS.



NEWS OF THE DRAGON'S DEATH SPREADS QUICKLY—AS ITS SURVIVING SIBLINGS SHARE THEIR FURY.

BEFORE THEY INVARIABLY TURN AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, THE DRAGONS WORK TO SET THEIR PART OF THE WORLD ON FIRE.

BUT STILL, THE RED DRAGON MASK IS NOT TO BE FOUND WITHIN ITS HOARD. THE SEARCH CONTINUES...


A close-up of a dark, metallic mask with red, flame-like patterns and glowing red eyes.

IT HAS BEEN FOUND—
THE RED DRAGON MASK!

A man in a purple robe stands on a raised platform, addressing a crowd of people. A large, glowing circular portal is visible in the background.

HOWEVER, IT'S
SEVERIN WHO
FOUND THE MASK.

AND HE ALONE WILL ESCAPE THROUGH THE PORTAL
WHILE HIS FANATIC CULTISTS DESTROY IT BEHIND
HIM... UNTIL THEY TOO ARE CONSUMED BY THE
DRAGONS' FIRE.

A group of people, including a man in a red and gold outfit and a woman in a yellow and gold outfit, are gathered around a fire. A large, glowing circular portal is visible in the background.

THE PORTAL DESTROYED,
OUR HEROES MUST FIND
ANOTHER ESCAPE FROM
THE ISLAND.

A large, intense fire burns on a rocky shore, with smoke rising into the sky. In the background, there are mountains and a body of water.

THEY MIGHT SEARCH FOR
A SURVIVING LONGSHIP,
AND SET SAIL...

...OR VENTURE TOWARDS THE RUINS OF AN OLD
KEEP, WHERE *NYNMESTRA* MIGHT ACTIVATE
A RUMORED TELEPORTATION CIRCLE.

A group of people are gathered around a large, ornate structure, possibly a ship or a building. A large, glowing circular portal is visible in the background.

THE HEROES HAVE AT LEAST
PREVENTED AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN
THE CULTISTS AND BARBARIANS...

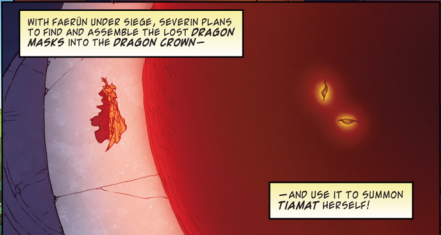
A group of people are gathered around a large, ornate structure, possibly a ship or a building. A large, glowing circular portal is visible in the background.

...BUT BACK AT *NEVERWINTER*,
SEVERIN'S ESCAPE MEANS EVEN
GREATER DANGER FOR THE
REST OF *FAERUN*.

SEVERIN, LEADER OF THE CULT OF THE DRAGON, HAS BEEN BUSH UPON HIS RETURN... RECRUITING FURTHER DRAGON ALLIES INTO HIS CAMP.



WITH FAERÛN UNDER SIEGE, SEVERIN PLANS TO FIND AND ASSEMBLE THE LOST DRAGON MASKS INTO THE DRAGON CROWN—



—AND USE IT TO SUMMON TIAMAT HERSELF!



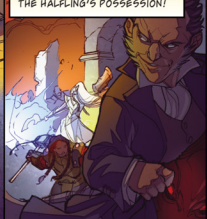
WHILE SEVERIN CONTINUES HIS SEARCH, HIS DRAGON ALLIES HAVE ARRIVED AT NEVERWINTER TO HINDER ANY OPPOSITION.

WHILE THE DRAGONS ATTACK, THE CULTISTS PILLAGE AND LOOT.



SOME LESS SUCCESSFULLY THAN OTHERS.

OF EVERYONE INVOLVED, IT'S RATSHADOW WHO FINDS THE MOST SUCCESS—THE WHITE DRAGON MASK HAS COME INTO THE HALFLING'S POSSESSION!






THE WHITE DRAGON MASK—STILL IN RATSHADOW'S POSSESSION.



DELIVERED BACK TO HIS FACTION—THE ZHENTARIM—THE MASK'S NEW HOME IN WATERDEEP PROVES LITTLE MORE THAN A WAY STATION.



THE MASK HAS BEEN STOLEN YET AGAIN; TAKEN, ACCORDING TO RUMOR, TO THE VILLA OF LORD ARTHAGAAST ULBRINTER.



THE DRAGON MASK IS A DANGEROUS PRIZE—EVEN FOR A LORD OF WATERDEEP.

ALAEROS AND HIS COMPANY HAVE ARRIVED, BUT NOT BEFORE THE CULT OF THE DRAGON.

LORD ULBRINTER HAS VANISHED ALONG WITH THE MASK. LADY HAVENTREE, WHATEVER HER ALLEGIANCES, CAN ONLY CONCERN HERSELF NOW WITH THE RETURN OF HER HUSBAND.





THE WHITE DRAGON MASK HAS MOVED ON. AND WITH IT, LADY HAVENTREE HAS BEEN MADE WIDOW HAVENTREE.



VARRANZORD, THE WHITE DRAGON WHISPERER, CONFIRMS THE WORST OF THEIR FEARS.



THE WHITE DRAGON HAD BEEN THE LAST MASK NEEDED BY THE CULT OF THE DRAGON.

WITH IT, SEVERIN CAN NOW COMPLETE THE DRAGON CROWN...

...AND ENACT THE RITUAL TO SUMMON TIAMAT, QUEEN OF EVIL DRAGONS!





LADY HAVENTREE HAS RALLIED
TOGETHER THE FACTIONS—

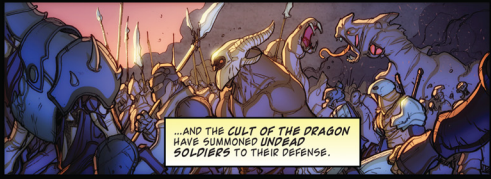
—THE HARPERS, ORDER OF THE
GAUNTLET, EMERALD ENCLAVE,
LORDS' ALLIANCE, AND ZHENTARIM.

TOGETHER, THEY MARCH!



YET, THE RITUAL IS
ALREADY UNDERWAY.


TIAMAT'S TEMPLE
RISES...



...AND THE CULT OF THE DRAGON
HAVE SUMMONED UNDEAD
SOLDIERS TO THEIR DEFENSE.



THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO
STOP SEVERIN FROM USING
THE DRAGON CROWN.



EVEN THE EVIL DRAGONS,
SENSING THEIR QUEEN'S
RETURN, HAVE JOINED THE
FIGHT IN FULL—

—TO THE EXTREME
DETRIMENT OF THE
FACTIONS...

THE RITUAL HAS
BEEN COMPLETED.

AND YET, HOPE.

METALLIC DRAGONS HAVE
JOINED WITH THE FACTIONS,
FIGHTING FOR THEIR CAUSE.

TIAMAT HAS ARISEN...

...THOUGH THANKFULLY
THERE ARE **HEROES** IN
THE WORLD WITH THE
COURAGE TO FACE HER...

...AND HOPEFULLY THE
SKILLS TO DEFEAT HER.

IF SUCCESSFUL, EVEN **SHE**
CAN BE HURLED BACK DOWN
THE WELL OF DRAGONS.

EVEN SEVERIN CAN
BE CAPTURED, AND
THE CULT OF THE
DRAGON DISPERSED.

AND, FOR A LITTLE WHILE AT
LEAST, THE FACTIONS CAN
CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESS.

THE END!



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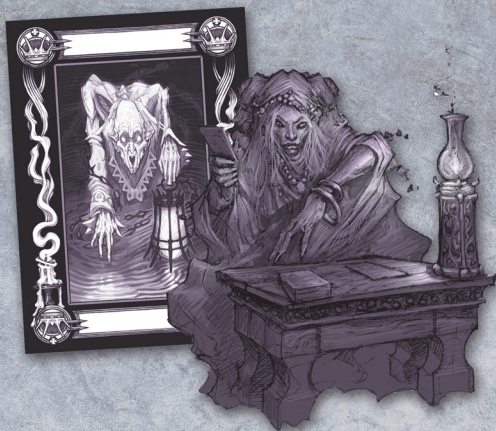
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Take a closer look at the tarokka deck and Eva
from the *Curse of Strahd* gaming module!

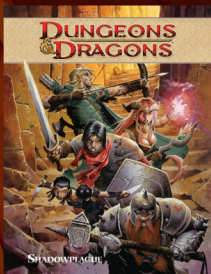


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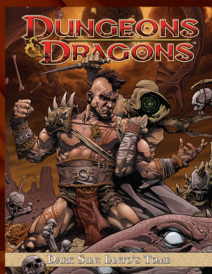
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