

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.







OH? HOW SO?

IF THEY SAY 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, YESTEREVE...



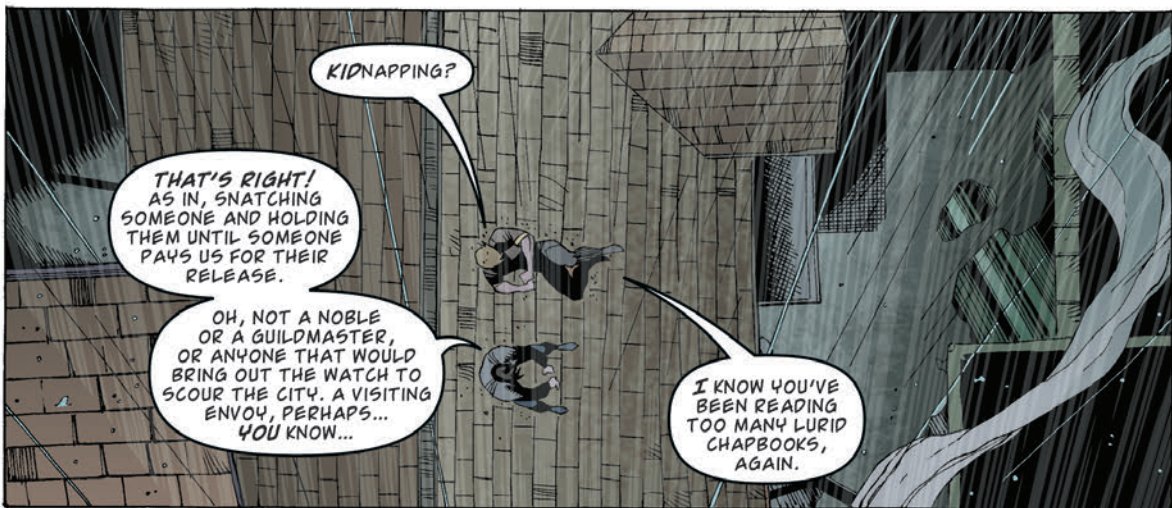
WE WERE ABOUT DONE WITH SNATCHING AND DAGGERWORK, EVEN BEFORE TODAY. SKORLUS JUST WANTED A READY SUPPLY OF BOOTS AND BREECHES AND THE LIKE...

...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 RANDRAL 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, HAE LRAM. 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 HAE LRAM! LORD HAE LRAM!

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

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

AND NOT FAR AWAY...

I DO HOPE YOU'RE GOING TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO GLOAT BEFORE ALL THE CITY, PROCLAIMING *BLAEVZ GLASGERD* AS THE BRINGER OF DOOM DOWN ON THE ROARINGHORNS.

IT'S TEMPTING, I KNOW, BUT HARDLY... PRUDENT.

I AM INDEED A MAN OF TEMPTATIONS, MY GOOD IMBRAR, BUT I'M HARDLY A *DULLARD*. AND SUCH BOASTING WOULD BE THE ACT OF... A *DULLARD*.

OH? AND YET YOU JUDGE ME "GOOD." MAY I REMIND YOU THAT I AM NO ONE'S "GOOD IMBRAR"?

YOU MAY.



REST ASSURED, IMBRAR SALKYN, THAT NEITHER OF OUR NAMES SHOULD COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WATCH.

INDEED, BUT UNDERLINGS HAVE A DISTRESSING HABIT OF BETRAYAL. THEY TALK.

OF COURSE THEY DO, BUT I'VE DRAGGED MORE THAN ENOUGH DOCK WARD WASTRELS INTO THIS PARTICULAR CAPER FOR THE BLAME TO BE GENEROUSLY SHARED AROUND, WITH NONE LEFT OVER TO SEEK US.

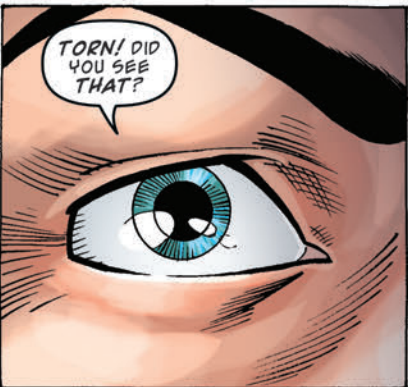
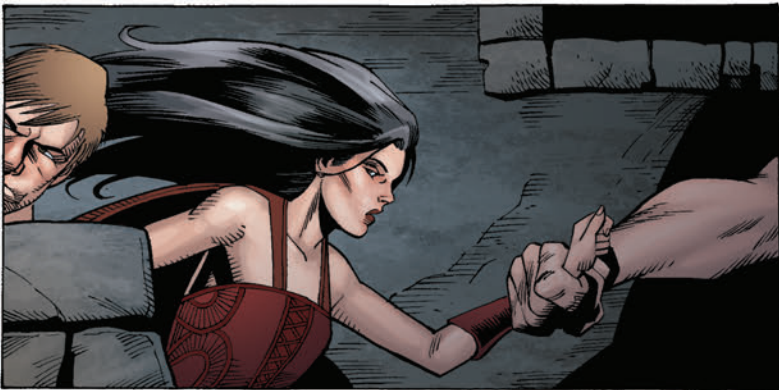
IT BEGINS VERY SOON NOW. AFTER THOSE BUMBLERS TRY THEIR SNATCH.





THERE!

I CAN
SEE!



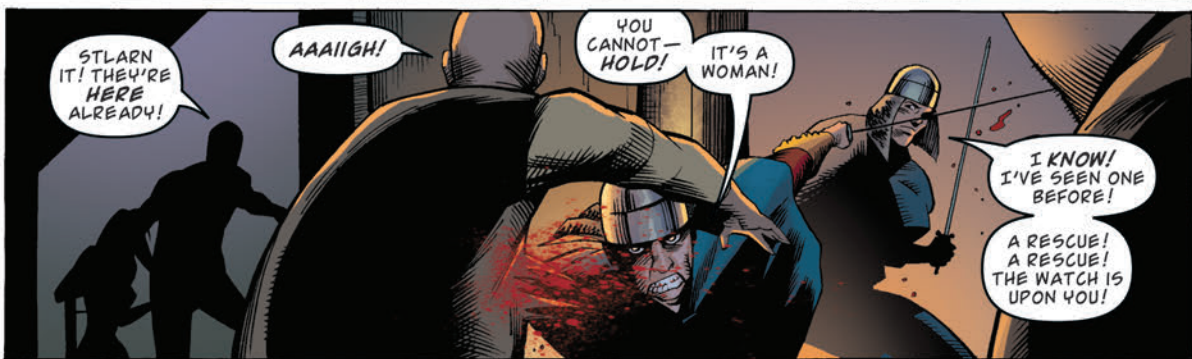
TORN! DID
YOU SEE
THAT?



SHE
SMILED
AT ME!

UH-HUH.
SURE SHE DID.
AND ALL OF HER
DANCING GIRLS
DID, TOO.



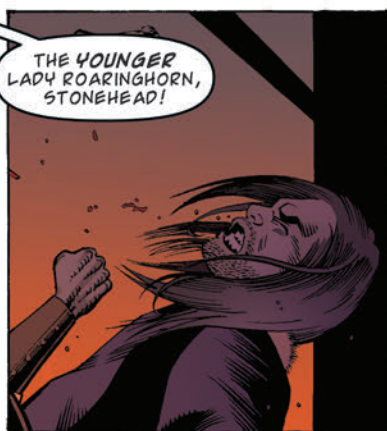




THAT'S LADY ROARINGHORN!



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



THE YOUNGER
LADY ROARINGHORN,
STONEHEAD!



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



WHRAAM



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.







US? SAVE A NOBLE LADY WHO GOT CAUGHT IN HER OWN PRANK?

A HIGHNOSE WHO WOULDN'T EVEN GIVE US A CIVIL WORD IN THE STREETS?



YOU WILL. MAKE YOU. TEMPUS... WARGOD AMONG GODS! HEAR ME!

YOUR CURSE... I... AND I CALL IT DOWN NOW... ON THESE TWO WRETCHES!



LORD OF BATTLES... MAKE THE LIVES OF THESE TWO A LIVING TORMENT IF THEY...

...DON'T DO ALL ANY MORTAL COULD... TO BRING... THE LADY TALANDRA ROARINGHORN SAFELY BACK HOME! I PAY THE BLOOD-PRICE... OF THIS SWEARING... WITH MY LIFE!

I—IIIEEEA
RRRAUHHHH.



HE'S DEAD!

WHAT'S THAT?



TEMPUS!
TEMPUS HAS COME!

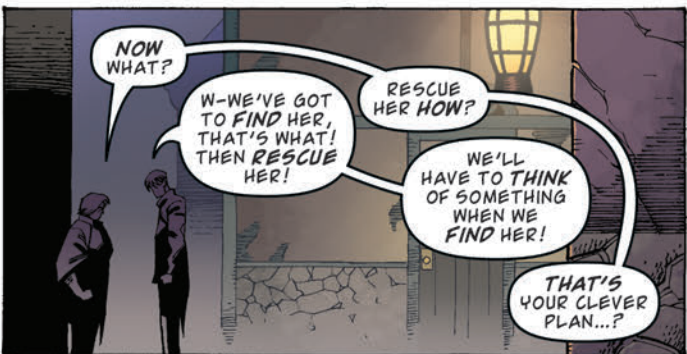


WE'RE CURSED!
WELL AND TRULY CURSED! JUST LIKE ALL THE PRIESTS' WARNINGS!



I FEEL IT. STARN.

WE'RE CURSED.



NOW WHAT?

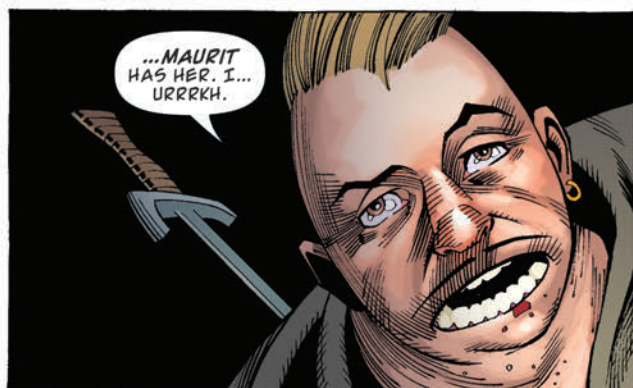
W-WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER, THAT'S WHAT! THEN RESCUE HER!

RESCUE HER HOW?

WE'LL HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING WHEN WE FIND HER!

THAT'S YOUR CLEVER PLAN...?



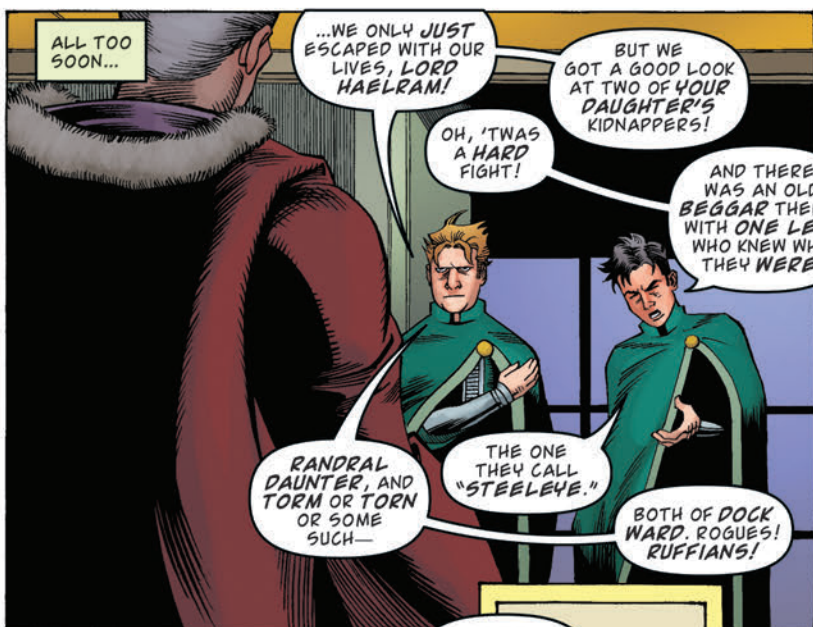




THE NORTH WARD.

THERE.
THAT'LL
DO IT, I
THINK.

AYE. LORD
HÆLRAM
SHOULD BELIEVE
WE'RE SUITABLY
DISHEVELED.
WE'LL RUN FROM
HERE.



ALL TOO
SOON...

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

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

OH, 'TWAS
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
"STEELEYE."

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!

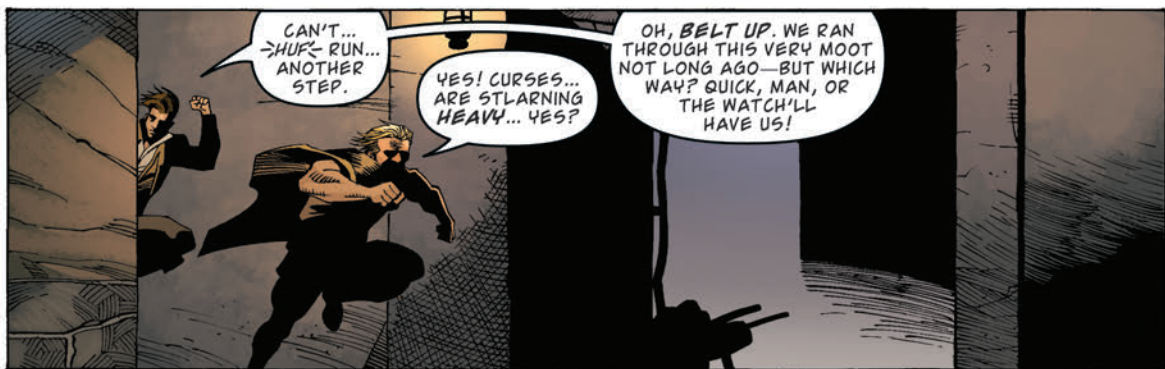
THE FAIR
FLOWER OF HOUSE
ROARINGHORN!

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!

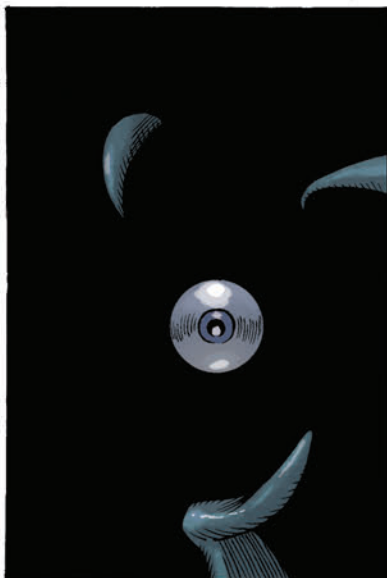
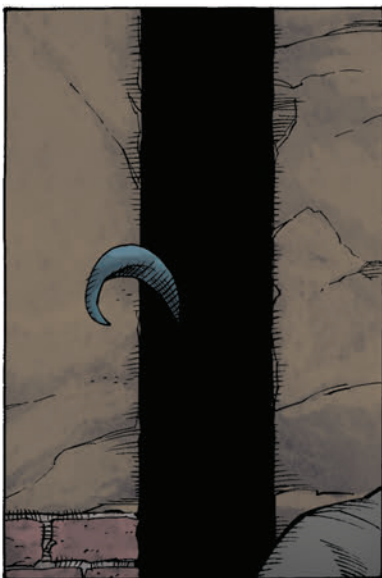




YES,
THIS
ONE.

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

NO PROBLEM,
STEELEYE, 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!









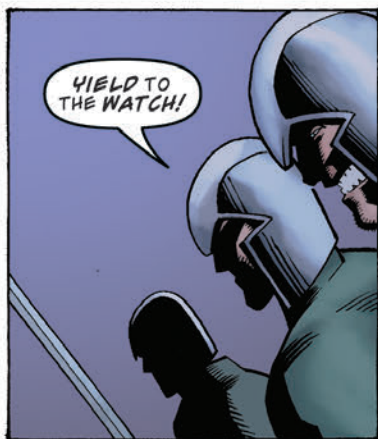
Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

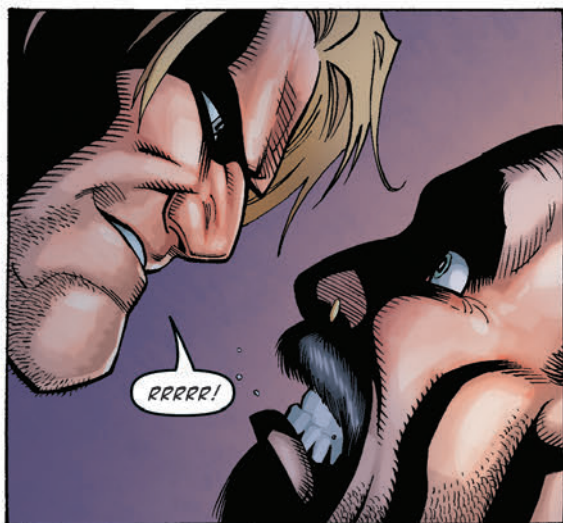
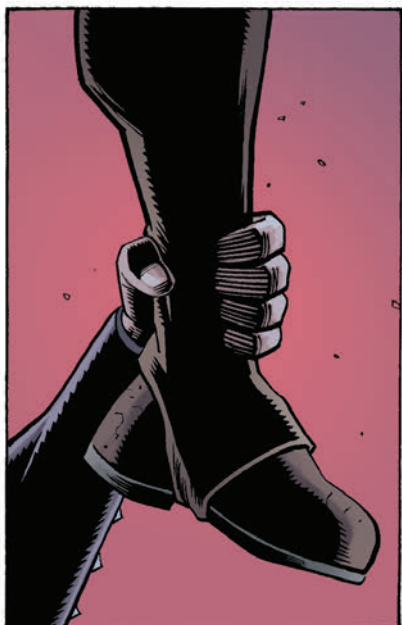
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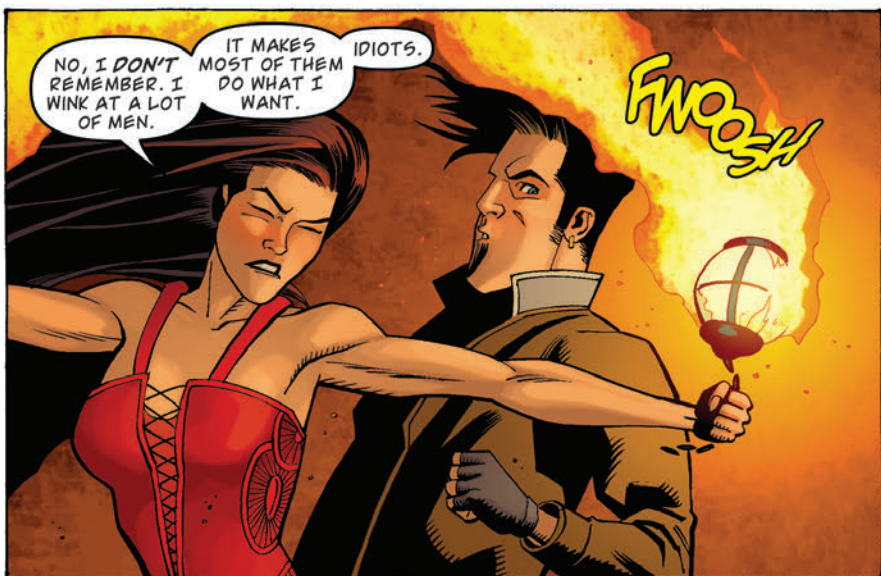
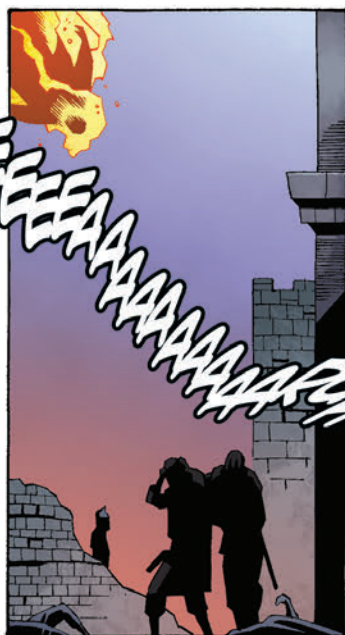


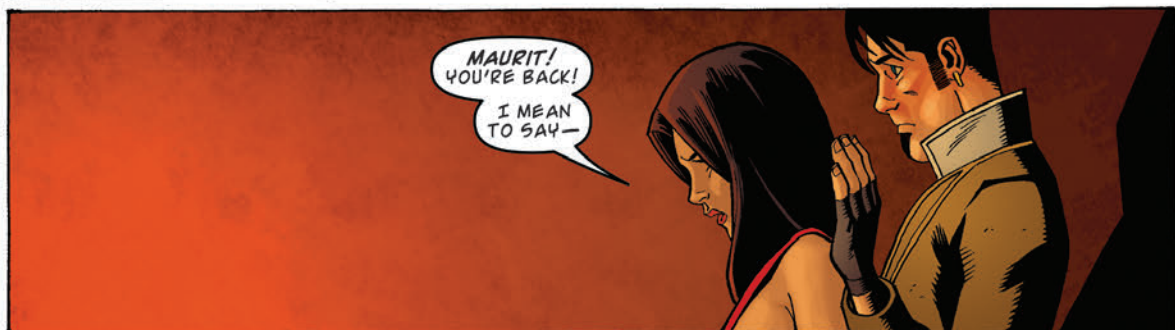


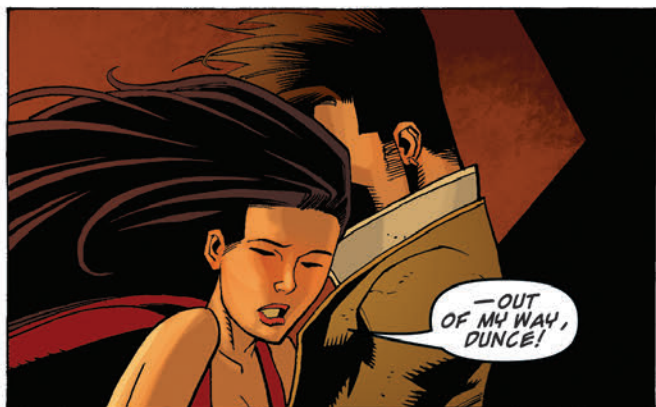


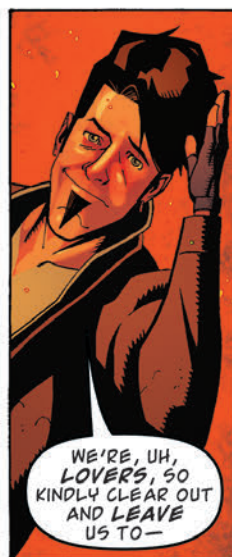
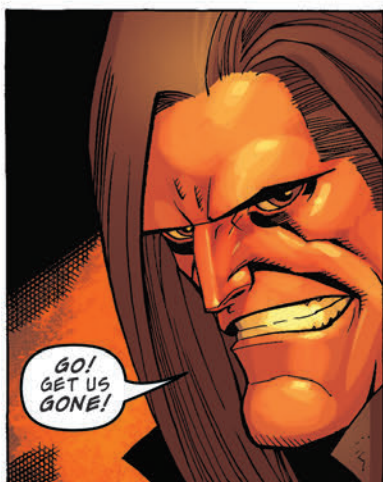




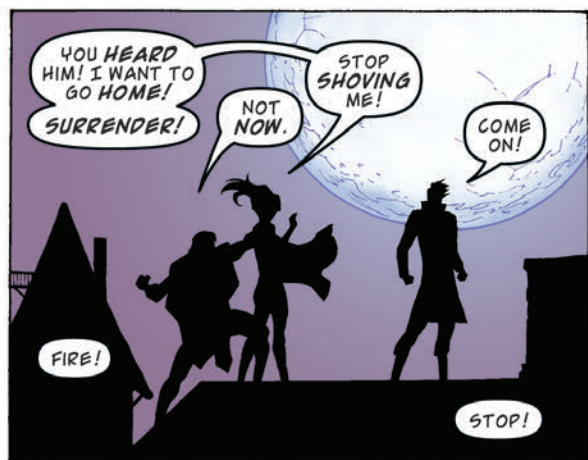














A SHORT ETERNITY OF ROOFTOPS LATER...

UNNNNGH!

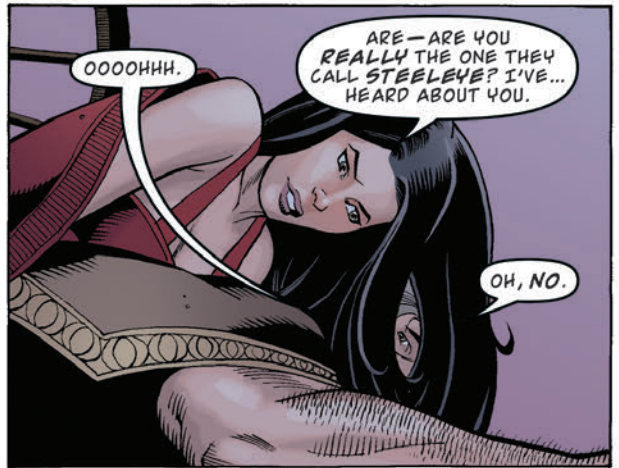
KEERASHH



EEEEEE!

RGHH!

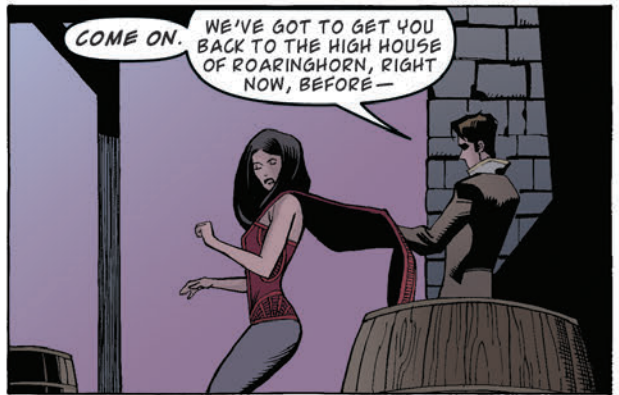
KKKRACCK!



OOOOHHH.

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

OH, NO.

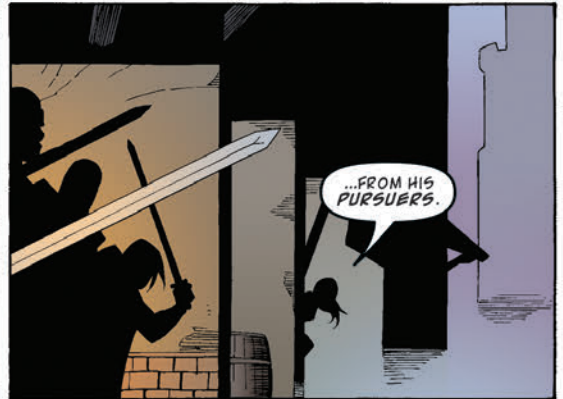


COME ON. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU BACK TO THE HIGH HOUSE OF ROARINGHORN, RIGHT NOW, BEFORE—



AAARGH! OOOH! MY FOOT! STLARN! AAAARGH!

LOOKS LIKE MAURIT GOT AWAY...

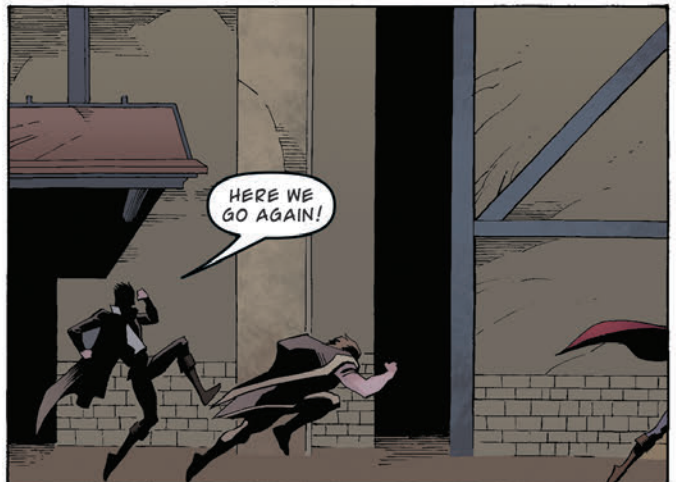


...FROM HIS PURSUERS.

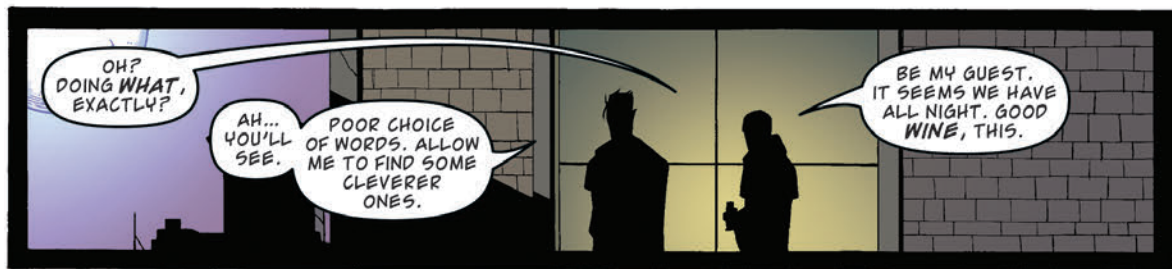


STLARN IT, DON'T—

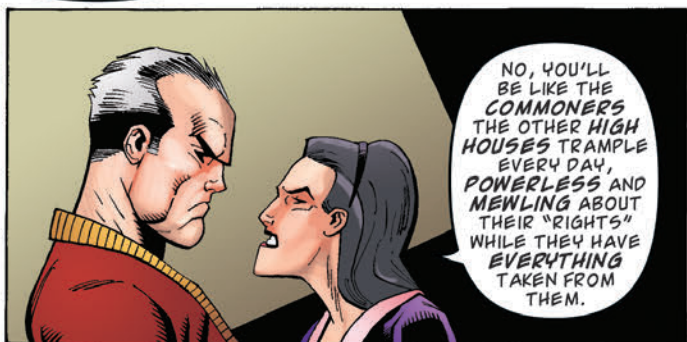
DID YOU NOT MENTION A "DEAD MAN'S CURSE" IF YOU DON'T "RESCUE" ME?

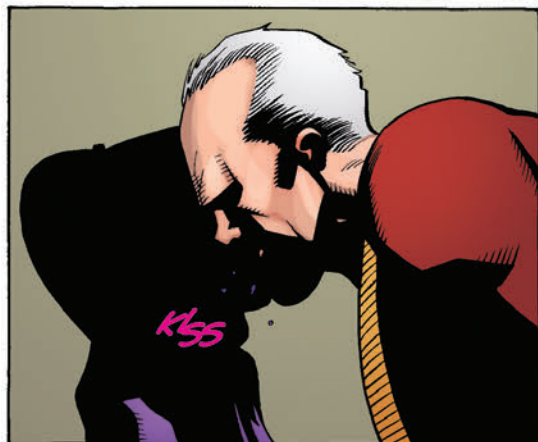


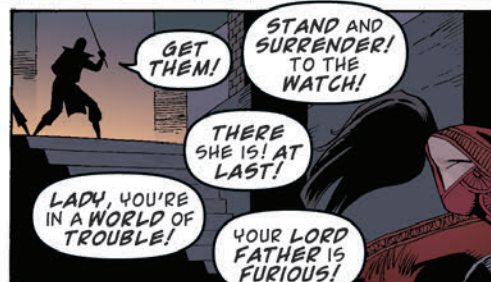
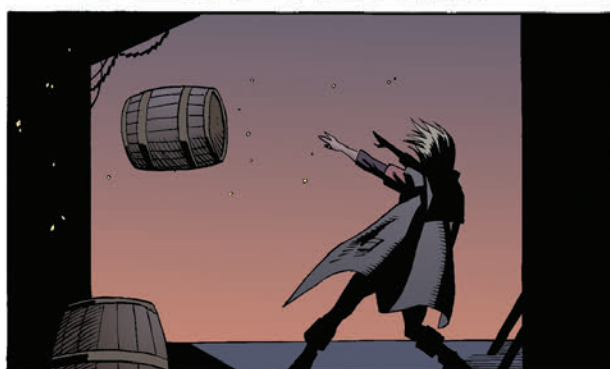
HERE WE GO AGAIN!



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

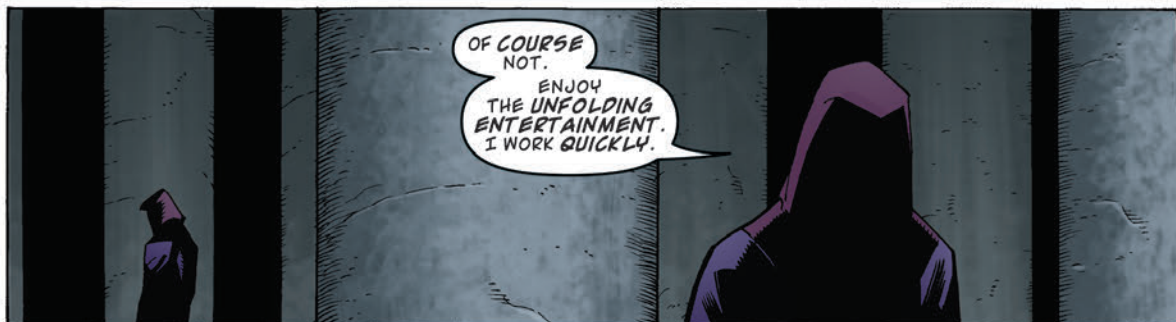
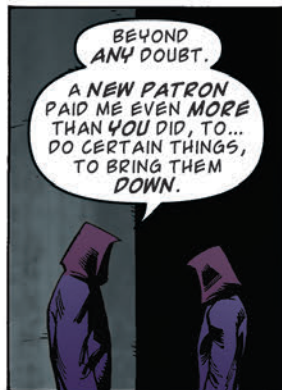
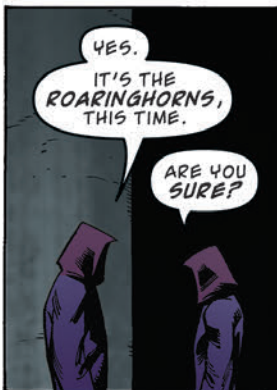








NOT SO FAR AWAY,
IN WATERDEEP...



OF COURSE
NOT.
ENJOY
THE UNFOLDING
ENTERTAINMENT.
I WORK QUICKLY.

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.

YOUR
LADYSHIP.

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

BELT UP, YOUR
LADYSHIP.

WHY DO
WE WANT TO
FOLLOW HIM,
ANYWAY?

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

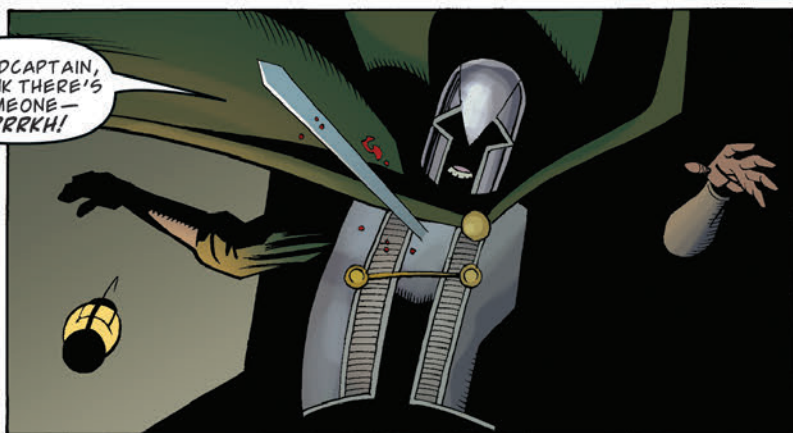
...WHICH
IS WHY WE'D
BEST NOT LOSE
TRACK OF HIM,
YOUR SILENT
LADYSHIP.

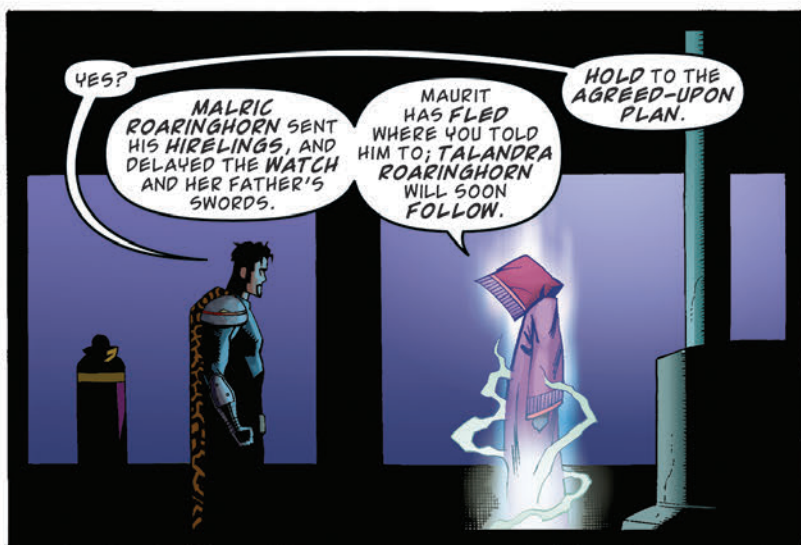


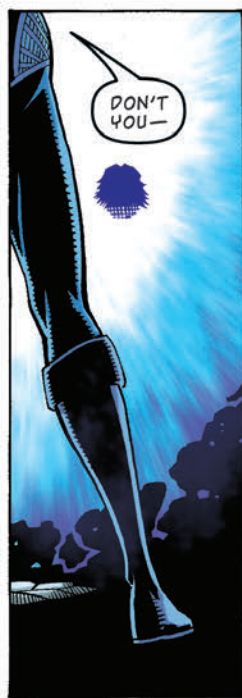
A
B-BEHOLDER?

OHNNNNN...













Art by Tyler Walpole

CHAPTER

3

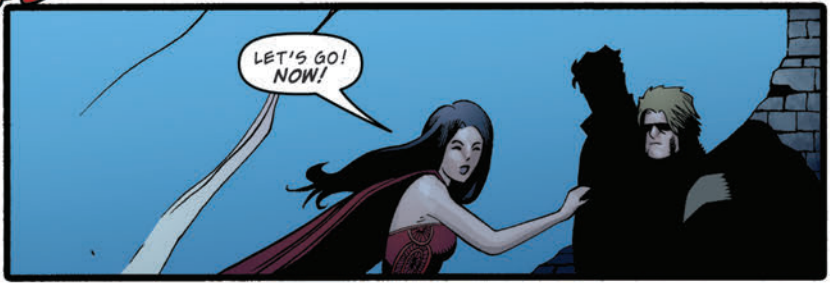
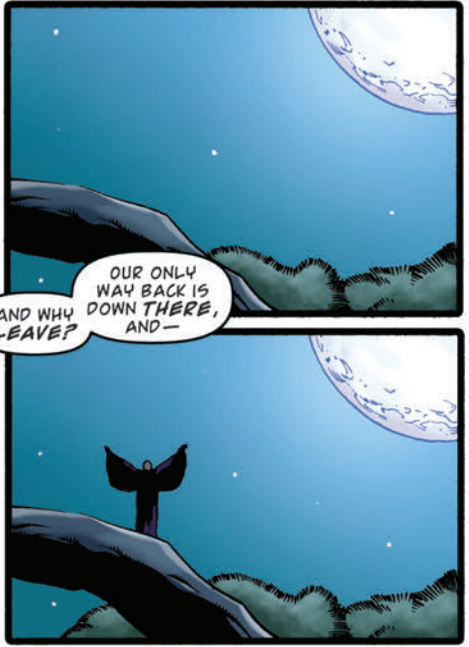


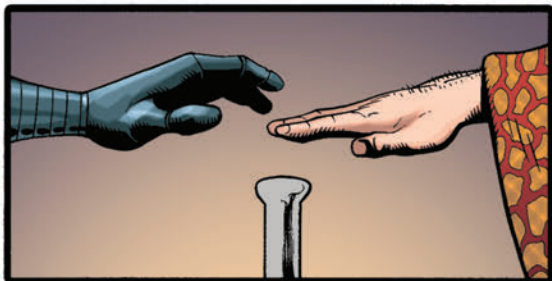


WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

AWAY!







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

I HAVE A SERVANT FOR THAT.

ALWAYS CARRY CANDLE STUBS, LADY.

WHOM YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISLAID.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

A BURIAL CRYPT.

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

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-LIVES AND
RUFFIANS!

OOOH, HEAR
THAT, RANDRAL?
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-TORLYN?
DEAD? B-BUT
HE WAS MY...

LOVER?

Y-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 LEERS
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, OLVAK?

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?

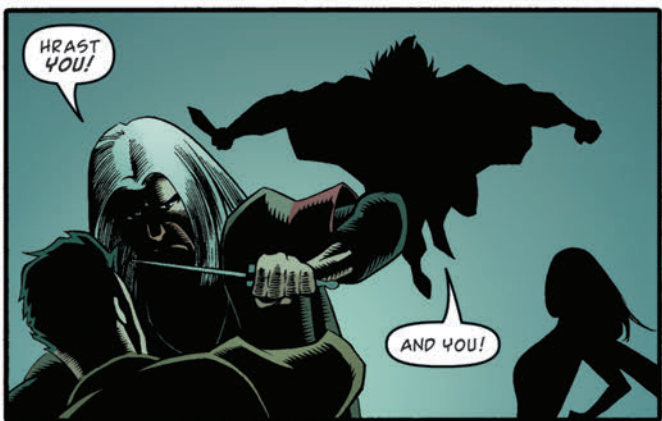
TOO
EXPENSIVE TO
ARRANGE, LORD
ROARINGHORN. OR
I'D HAVE DONE
THAT YEARS
AGO.

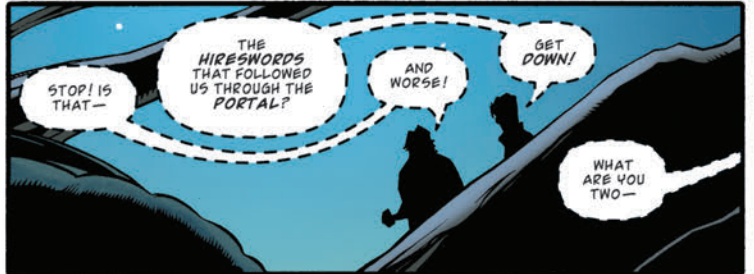
SO, TALK.
IS YOUR NIECE
NOW A SAD
HISTORY?

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.







HUH. MAKING
SHORT WORK OF
ONE ANOTHER,
AREN'T THEY?

DID YOU GRAB
THE GLOWSTONE
FROM MAURIT,
LADY?

OF COURSE NOT!
'TIS UNFAMILIAR
MAGIC—IT MIGHT
HAVE DONE
ANYTHING TO
ME!



NEXT
TIME...

I WASN'T
AWARE I'D
CONSENTED TO
A "NEXT TIME,"
SAER.

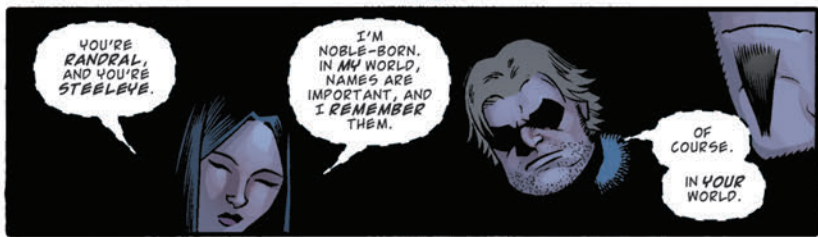
ENOUGH
"SAER"
CALLING!



MY NAME
IS—

NO! IF
SHE CAN'T
RECALL, DON'T
HAND IT TO
HER AGAIN.

I'D RATHER
NOT HAVE THE
ENTIRE WATCH
KNOW YOUR
NAME—OR
MINE.



YOU'RE
RANDRAL,
AND YOU'RE
STEELEVE.

I'M
NOBLE-BORN.
IN MY WORLD,
NAMES ARE
IMPORTANT, AND
I REMEMBER
THEM.

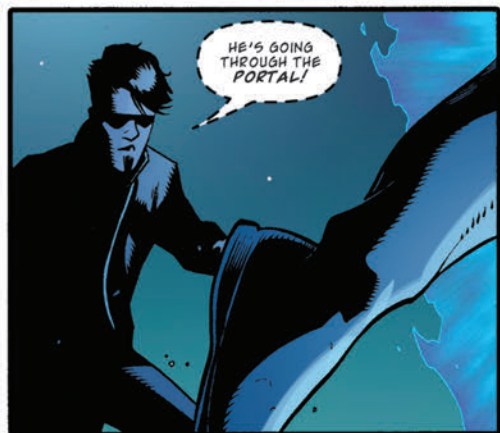
OF
COURSE.
IN YOUR
WORLD.



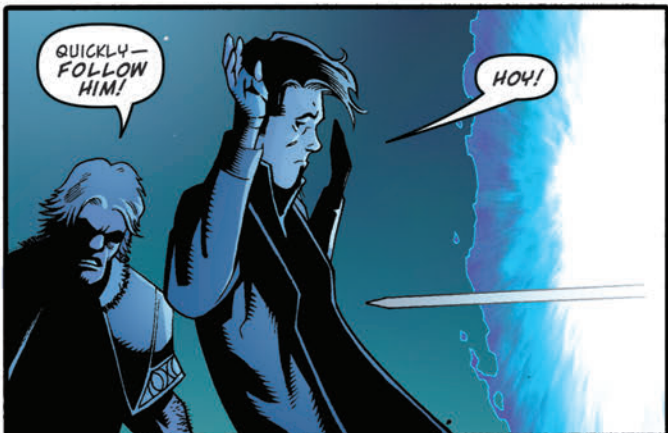
COME
ON—THERE
HE IS—



—THERE'S
MAURIT!



HE'S GOING
THROUGH THE
PORTAL!



QUICKLY—
FOLLOW
HIM!

HOY!



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 HÆLRAM, AND
HÆLRAM'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
LONE 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.

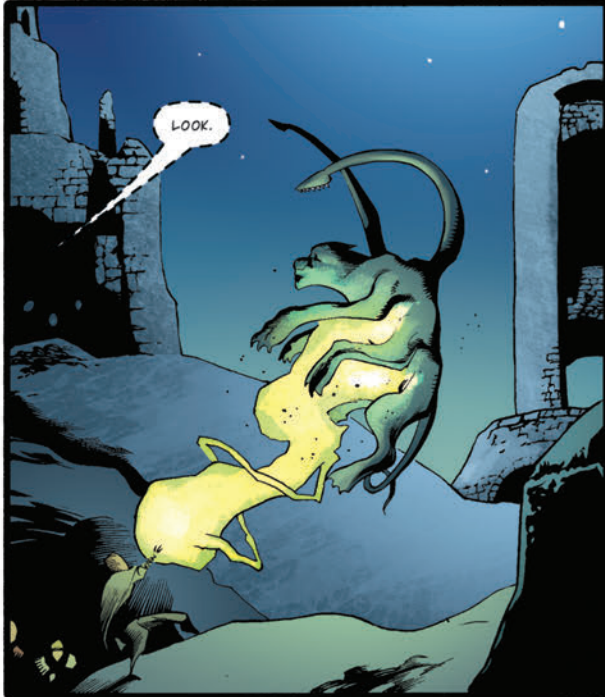
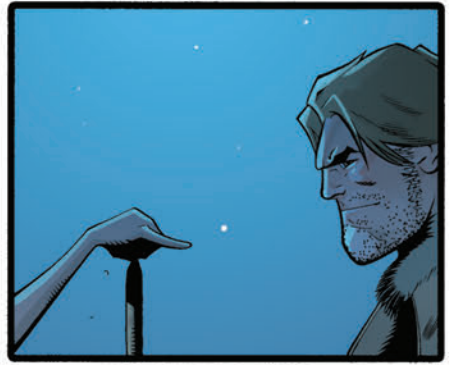
AND WE
KNOW HOW
FAR WE CAN
TRUST EACH
OTHER...

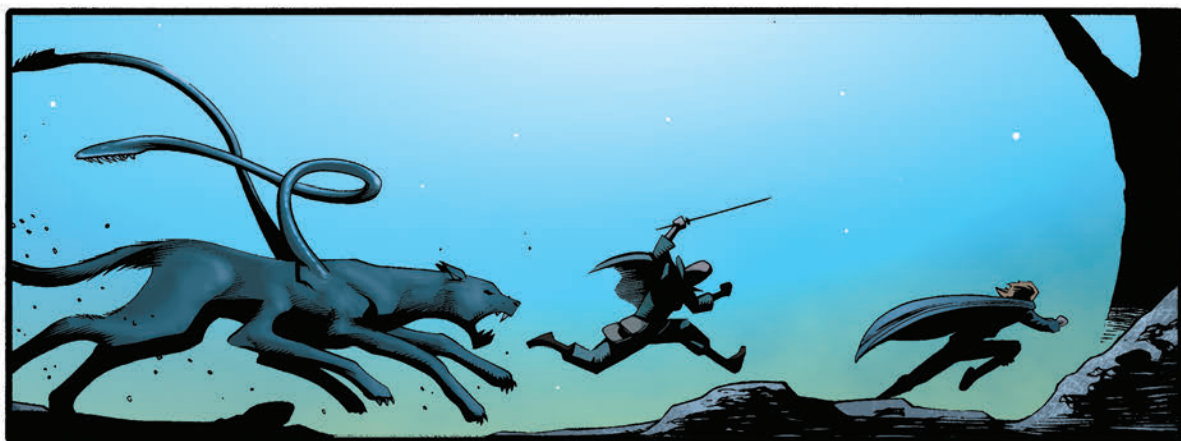


...DON'T WE,
OLJAK?

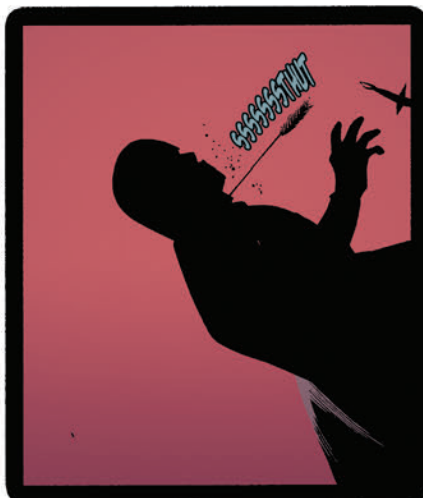
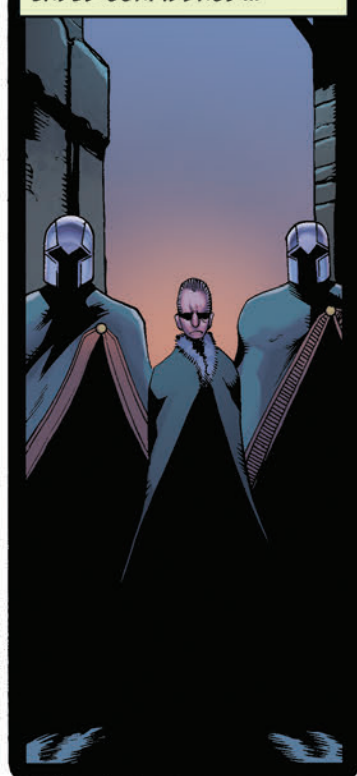


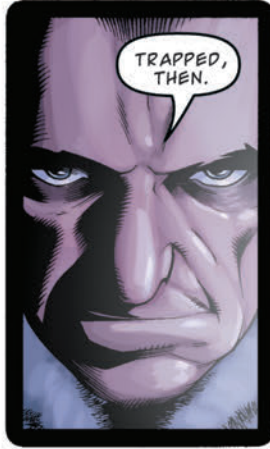
Y-YES.

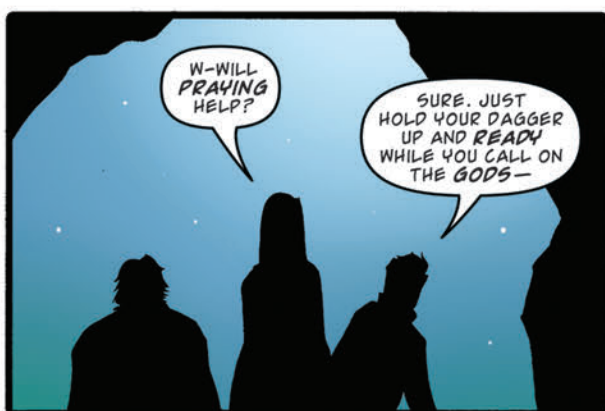


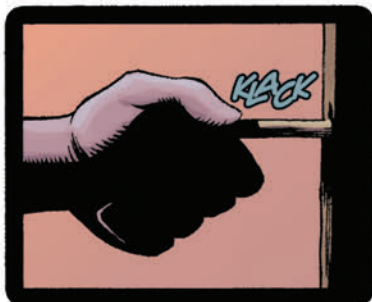


AND ON AN UNFASHIONABLE
STREET IN WATERDEEP, LORD
MALRIC ROARINGHORN AND
HIS GUARDS STRIDE WITH AN
UNDUE CONFIDENCE...









ELSEWHERE, IN THE HOME OF LORD HAE LRAM ROARINGHORN AND HIS WIFE, LADY AMALRA...

HAS THE MASKED YOUNG BARBARIAN HAD HIS WANTON WAY WITH THE PRINCESS YET?
WELL?

THRICE. BUT SHE'S FOUND A WHIP AND A HIDDEN CHAMBER WITH MANACLES, SO IT'S HER TURN NOW.

WHAT'S RIDING YOU, HAE L?
IN ABOUT SIX PAGES, I THINK.

MALRIC'S GIVEN MY MEN THE SLIP. HE WENT TO DOCK WARD THIS NIGHT—DOCK WARD!—AND THEY LOST HIM IN HIS THIRD TAVERN.

HE GOT OUT SOME HIDDEN WAY.

MUST HAVE KNOWN HE WAS BEING FOLLOWED, THEY SWEAR, AND I BELIEVE THEM.

WHAT'S HE UP TO?

HAS HE GOT OUR SON RAYLAND TIED UP IN SOME ROTTING DOCK WAREHOUSE?

MAYHAP. WE'LL KNOW MORE SOON ENOUGH. I PUT A HANDFUL OF OUR COINS TO GOOD USE.

RIGHT ABOUT NOW, IF THOSE I HIRED FOUND HIM, THEY'LL BE BEATING SOME ANSWERS OUT OF HIM.

YOU WHAT?

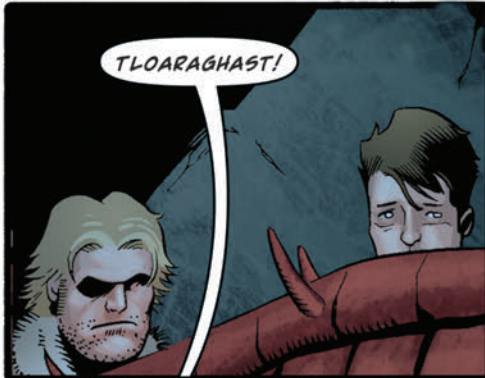
YOU... TRULY THINK THAT'LL WORK?

ONE CAN LOOSEN A MAN'S TONGUE, I'M TOLD, BY THREATENING TO SLICE OFF A CERTAIN OTHER PART OF HIM.

SO I'M TOLD.



AND IN A SLIGHTLY
WILDER LOCALE...



TLOARAGHAST!



HOW MANY TIMES
HAVE I TOLD YOU,
TLOARAGHAST?

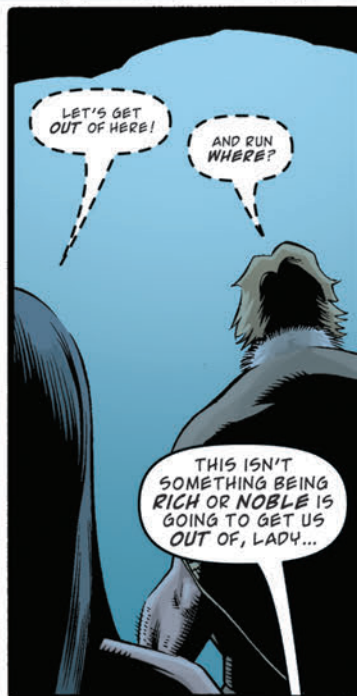
YOU ARE NOT
TO GO OFF HUNTING
FOR YOURSELF! I
NEED YOU OVER
HERE, ATTENTIVE
TO MY EVERY
COMMAND!



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?

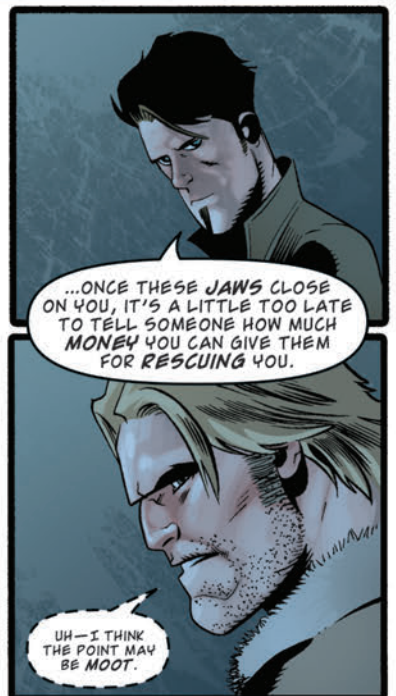
HEY?



LET'S GET
OUT OF HERE!

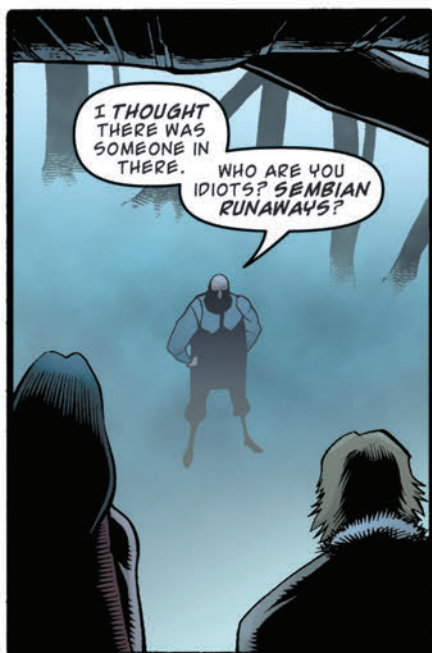
AND RUN
WHERE?

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



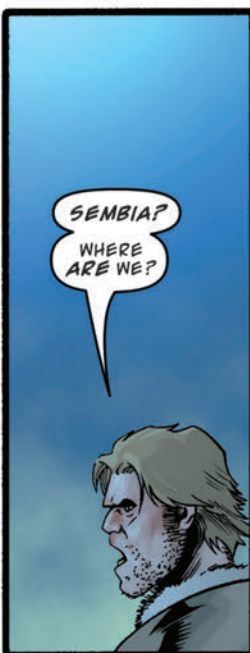
...ONCE THESE JAWS CLOSE
ON YOU, IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE
TO TELL SOMEONE HOW MUCH
MONEY YOU CAN GIVE THEM
FOR RESCUING YOU.

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, HEY? 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—



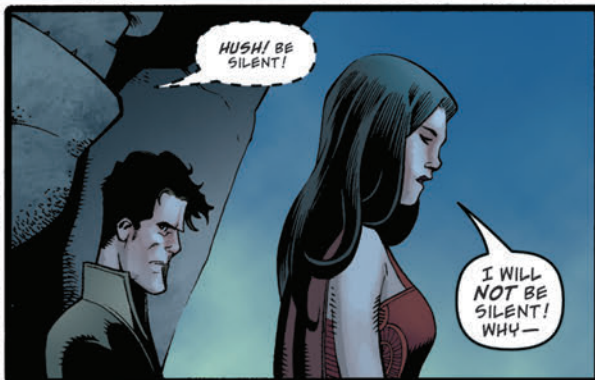
—AND THE BATTLEDALE ROAD TO GET ANYWHERE, IF YOU'RE GOOD AT FIGHTING OFF BRIGANDS, IS YONDER.

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...

AAAAHH!
THAT'S
BETTER!

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

HERE'S
YOUR BOOT,
MAURIT.



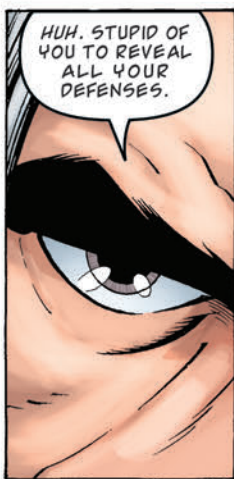
WHAT IF I
JUST GUTTED
YOU NOW
AND TOOK MY
GOLD BACK?



OH, I'D
KEEP CLEAR
OF THE
"WHAT IF'S,"
SAER.



THEY'RE
APT TO BE
DANGEROUS.



HUH. STUPID OF
YOU TO REVEAL
ALL YOUR
DEFENSES.



AWE. I
WOULD BE
A FOOL IF I
SHOWED YOU
MY TRUE
DEFENSES.

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?



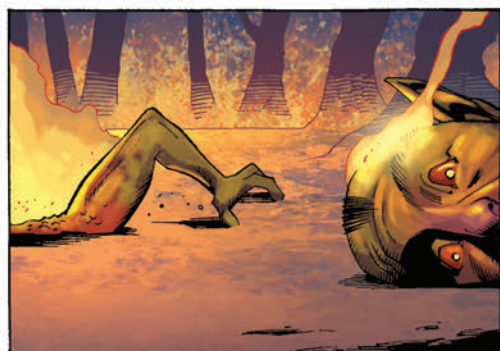
IT APPEARS
SO, M'LADY.



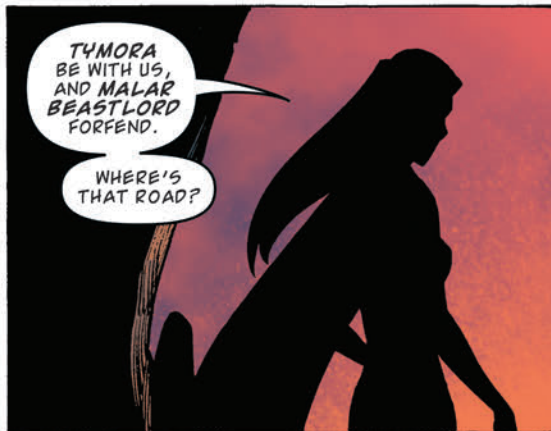
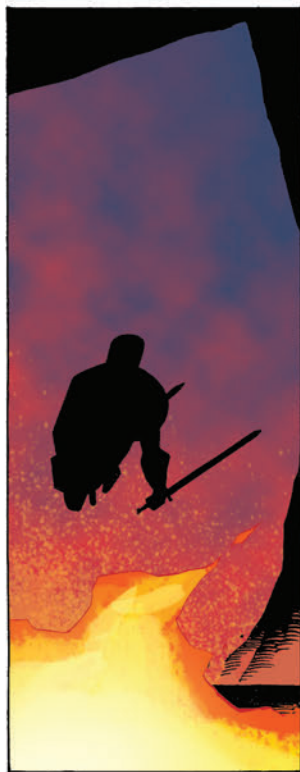
YEAHHH LULU!



WHERE
IS IT GOING
NOW?



FINISHING
THE JOB.



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?



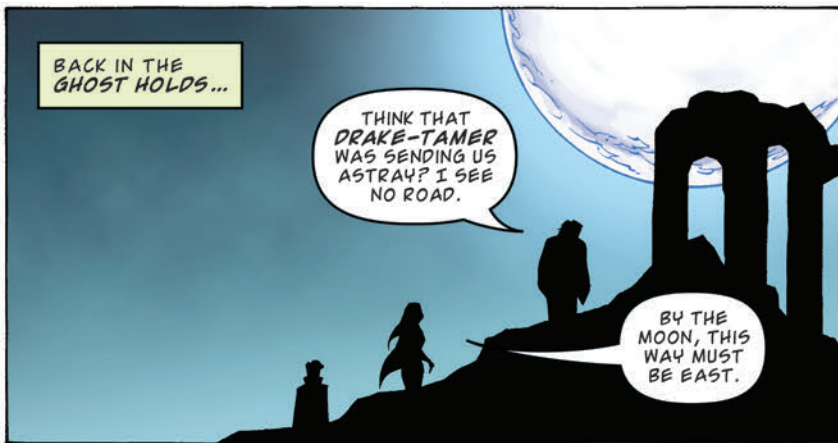
WE WERE TOLD
MAURIT HAD GONE
THROUGH THE GATE TO
THE GHOST HOLDS,
AND WOULD TAKE CARE
OF THE ROARINGHORN
WENCH THERE.

YET I JUST
SAW MAURIT STROLLING
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.



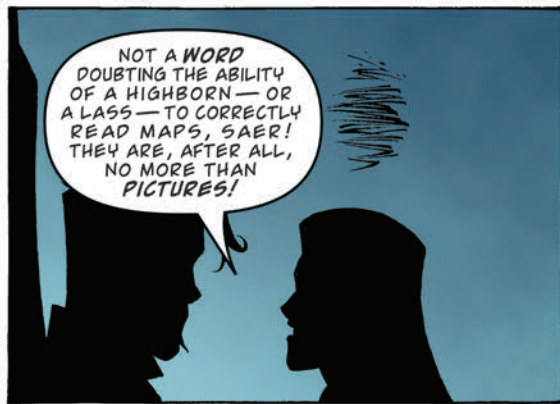
AND THE ROAD THROUGH
BATTLEDALE, FROM THE
STANDING STONE DOWN
INTO SEMBIA, IS EAST
OF THE GHOST HOLDS.
I'VE SEEN MAPS.



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.



AT THE FRONT DOORS
OF THE HIGH HOUSE
OF ROARINGHORN...

YES?



YOU'RE NOT LORD
ROARINGHORN.

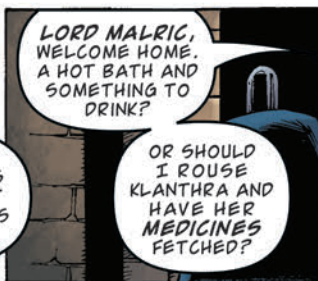


I AM AWARE
OF THAT. SAER
OF THE WATCH,
LET ME IN TURN MAKE
YOU AWARE THAT
GIVEN THE HOUR, THIS
IS AS CLOSE TO LORD
ROARINGHORN AS
YOU'RE LIKELY TO
ACHIEVE.

NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING
WITH LORD MALRIC?

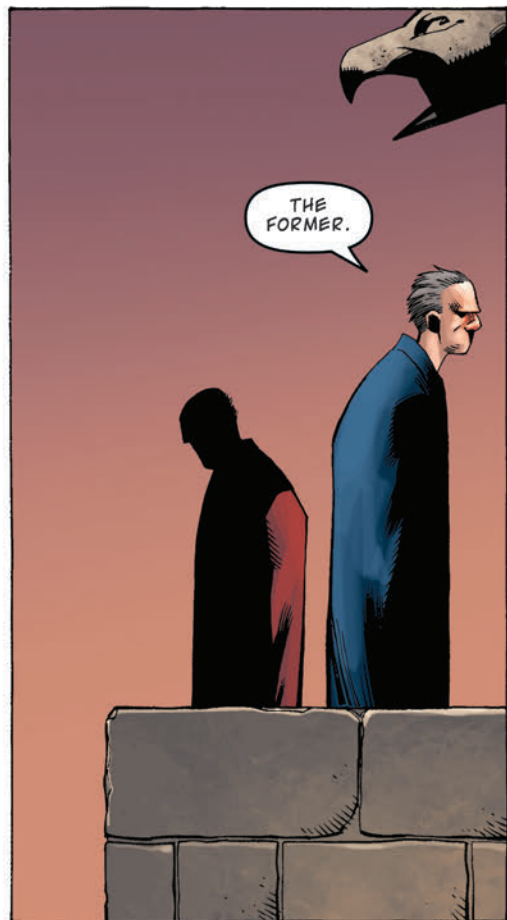


WE FOUND THIS
LYING SENSELESS
IN A BACK STREET
IN DOCK WARD. HIS
FACE, WE KNEW.



LORD MALRIC,
WELCOME HOME.
A HOT BATH AND
SOMETHING TO
DRINK?

OR SHOULD
I ROUSE
KLANTHRA AND
HAVE HER
MEDICINES
FETCHED?



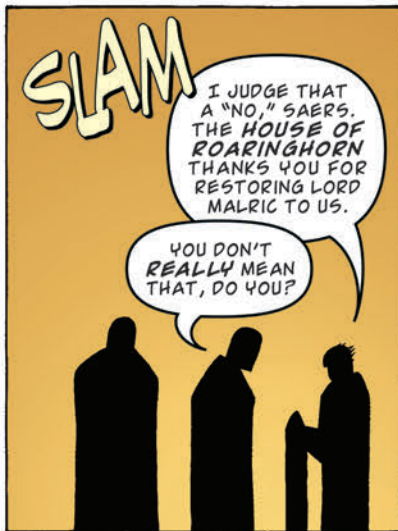
THE
FORMER.



KINDLY
RETURN THIS.
I'D NOT WANT
THE WATCH TO
ACCUSE ME OF
THEFT.



ARE YOU NOW
WILLING TO TELL
US HOW YOU CAME
TO BE LYING STARK
NAKED IN THE
STREET, LORD
MALRIC?



SLAM

I JUDGE THAT
A "NO," SAERS.
THE HOUSE OF
ROARINGHORN
THANKS YOU FOR
RESTORING LORD
MALRIC TO US.

YOU DON'T
REALLY MEAN
THAT, DO YOU?







SOMEWHERE ON THE
DARK STREETS
OF WATERDEEP...

ANOTHER
LITTLE TOY,
BLAEYZ? A
BOMB, NO
LESS?

WE'RE ONLY
HEADED FOR
GARSAR'S.



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



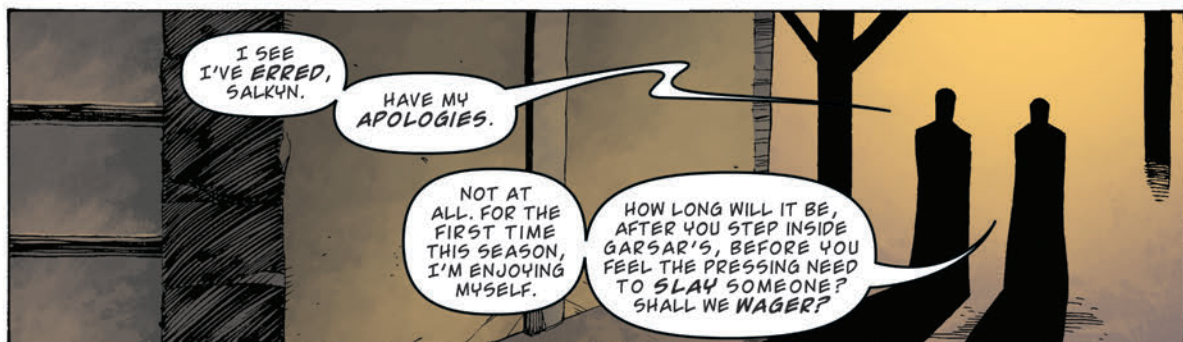
I SEE.



WELL,
YOU ARE NOT
ALONE...



...TWO
CAN PLAY
AT THESE
GAMES.



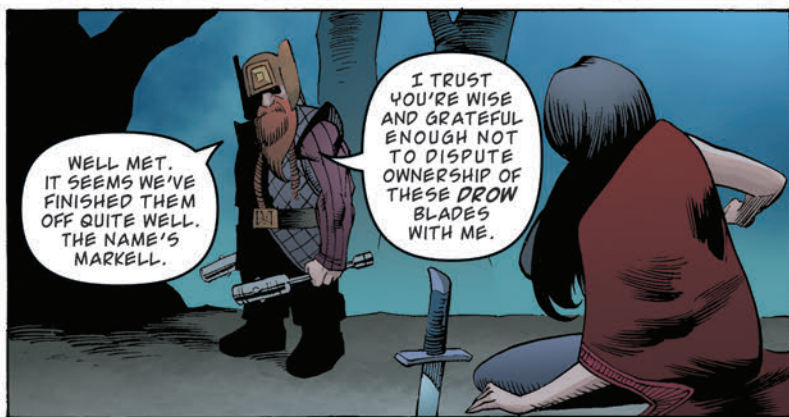
I SEE
I'VE ERRED,
SALKYN.

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!

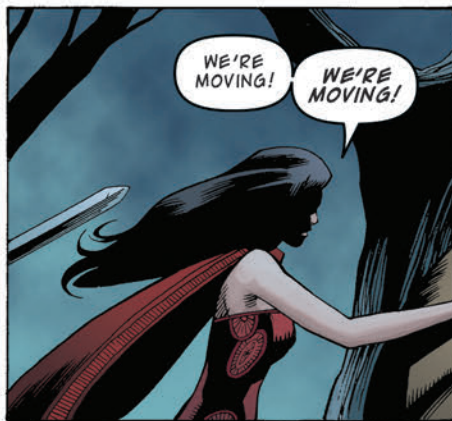
LET'S
JUST WALK
PAST—



AH!



SO... WE
WILL TURN
AROUND.

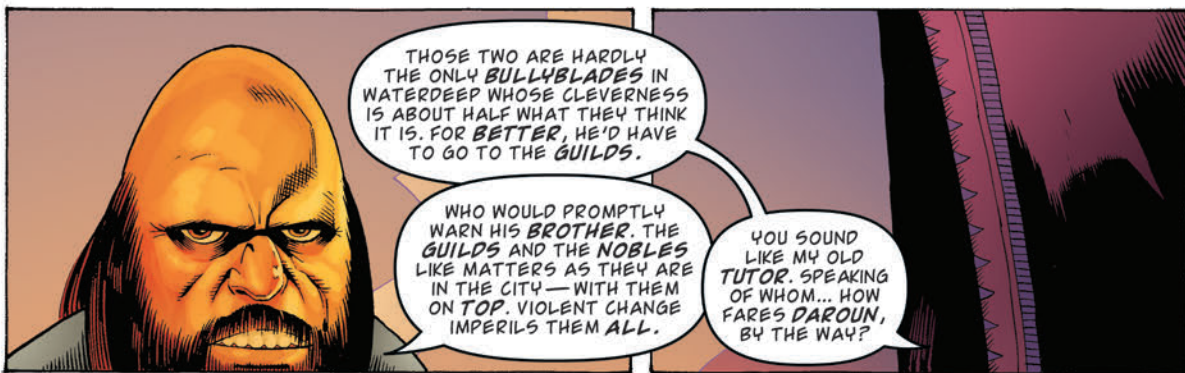
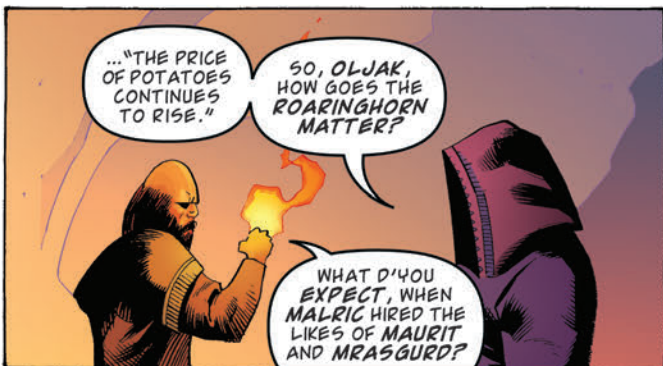
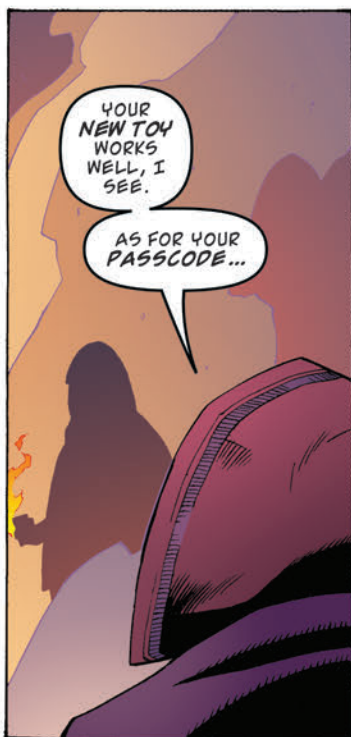


WE'RE
MOVING!

WE'RE
MOVING!

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

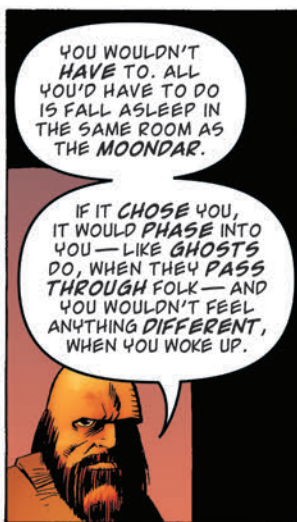






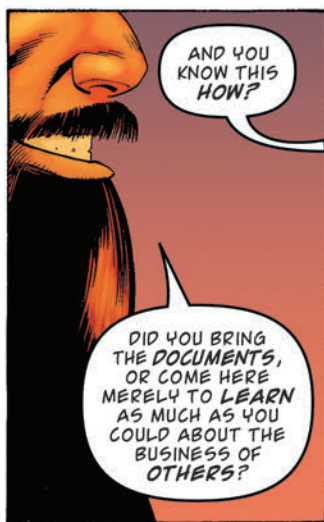
THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THEY'RE CARRYING IT. IF ONE OF THEM IS.

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 YESTER EVE.



MERELY A SCROLL, OLVJAK. 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, 'TIS 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.

→SIGH←
OF COURSE IT DOES. AND WHO BY THE NINE HELLS ARE YOU?



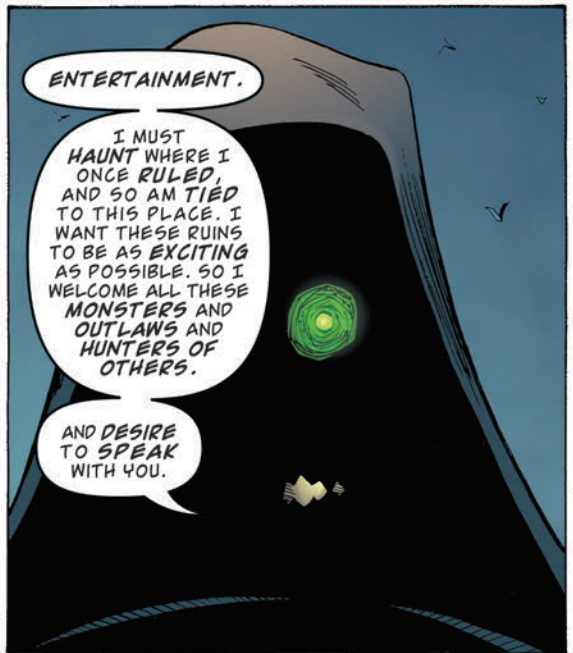
IT CRAWLS WITH
RUNAWAYS, TOO.

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?



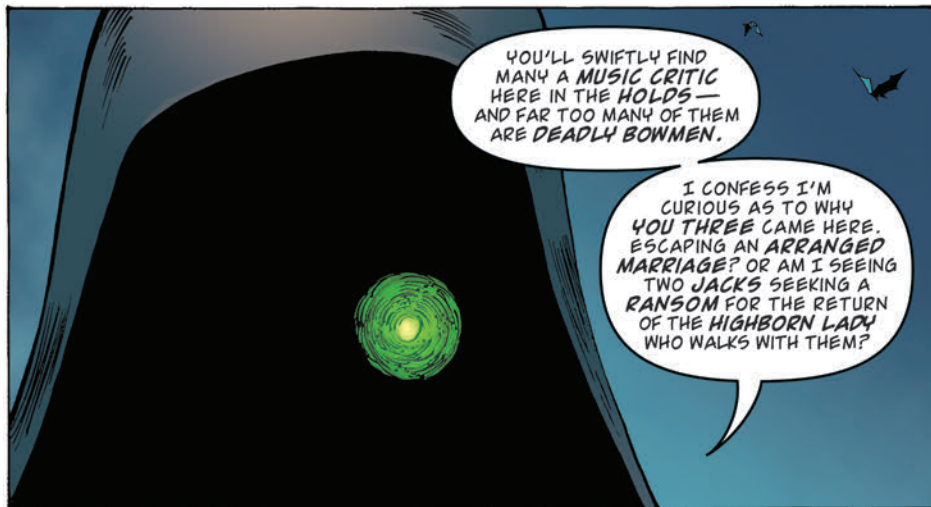
ENTERTAINMENT.

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...

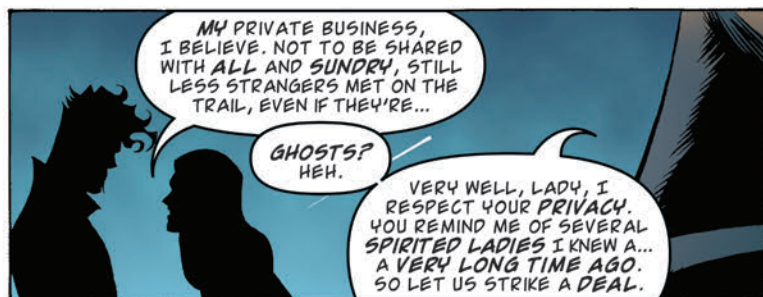


YOU'LL SWIFTLY FIND
MANY A **MUSIC CRITIC**
HERE IN THE **HOLDS** —
AND FAR TOO MANY OF THEM
ARE **DEADLY BOWMEN**.

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 —



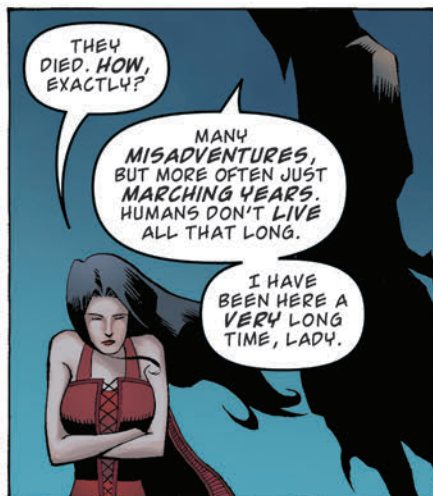
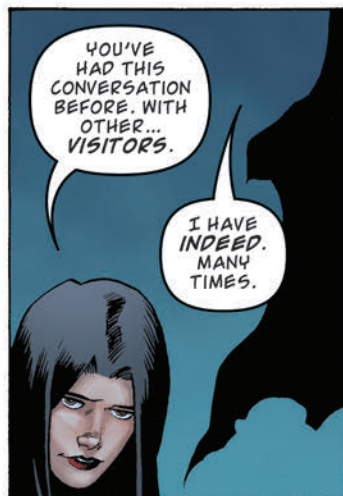
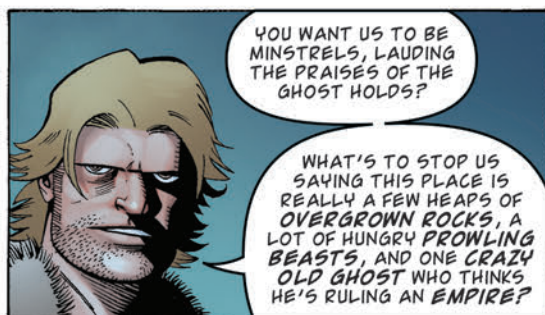
MY PRIVATE BUSINESS,
I BELIEVE. NOT TO BE SHARED
WITH ALL AND **SUNDRY**, STILL
LESS STRANGERS MET ON THE
TRAIL, EVEN IF THEY'RE...

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.

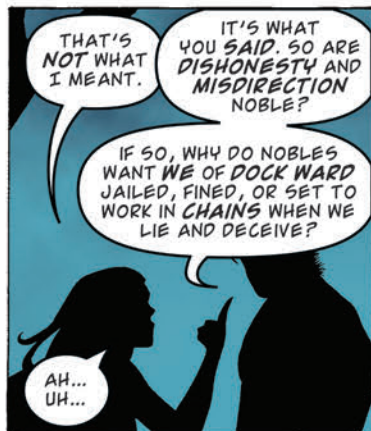


AS DO I,
OF COURSE.

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.

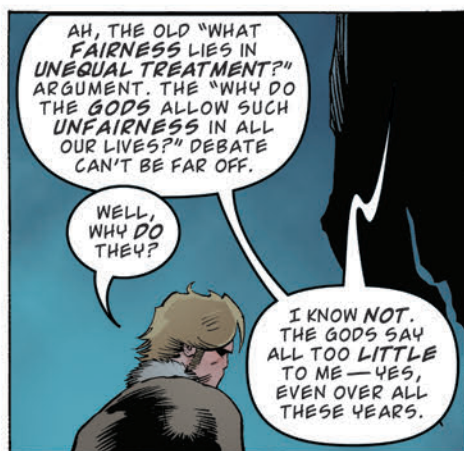


THAT'S
NOT WHAT
I MEANT.

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?

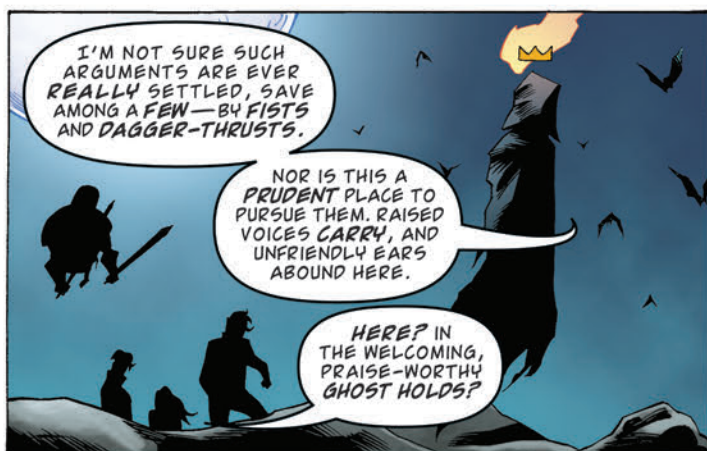
AH...
UH...



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?

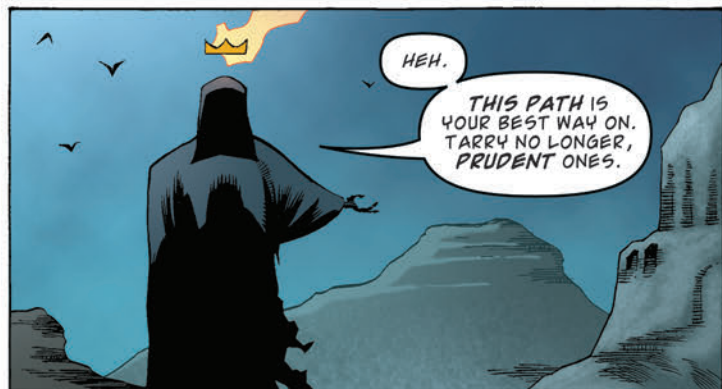
I KNOW NOT.
THE GODS SAY
ALL TOO LITTLE
TO ME—YES,
EVEN OVER ALL
THESE YEARS.



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.

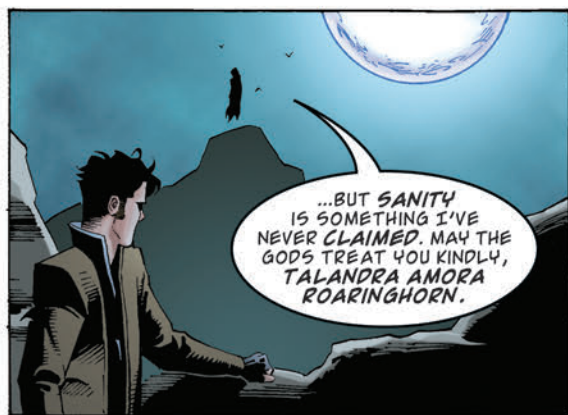


HAH-HA
HEH HA
HAH-HA!

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,
SAER. 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?

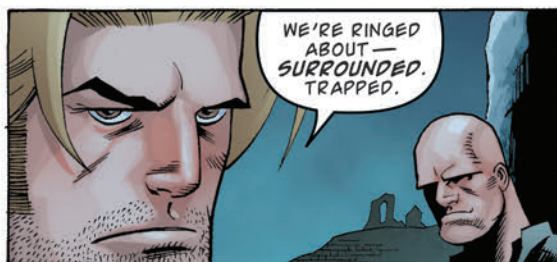


THE
GHOST
KING!

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.



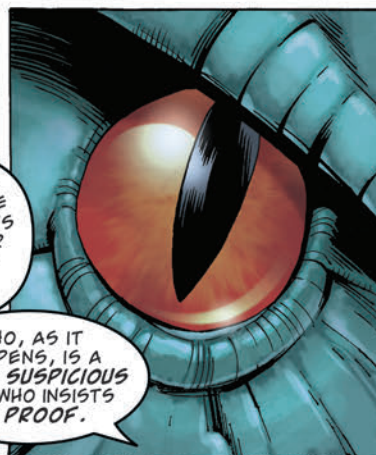
WHO BOUGHT
YOUR LOYALTY?



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

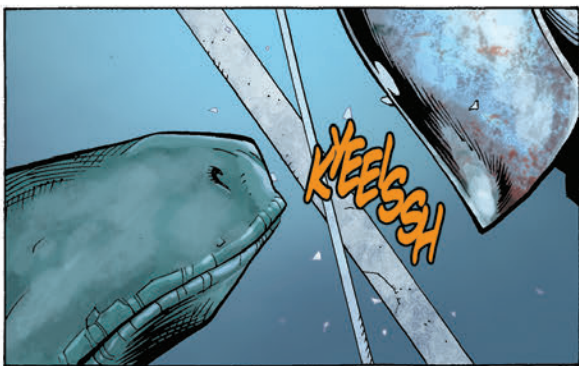
CHAPTER

5









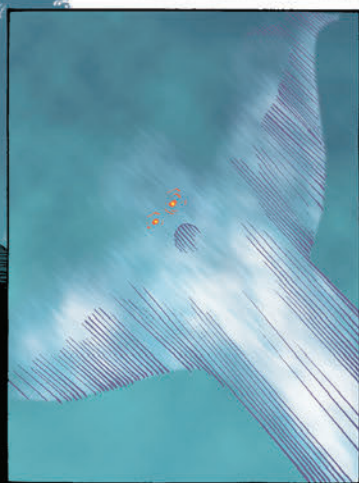


YOU'RE
WELCOME.
NOW EXPECT
NO MORE
RESCUES.

THE—THE
KING OF
GHOSTS!



Y-YES.



DID THEY WARN
YOU ABOUT ANY OF
THIS, WHEN THEY
TALKED ABOUT
KIDNAPPING
YOU?



ANY
OF IT?

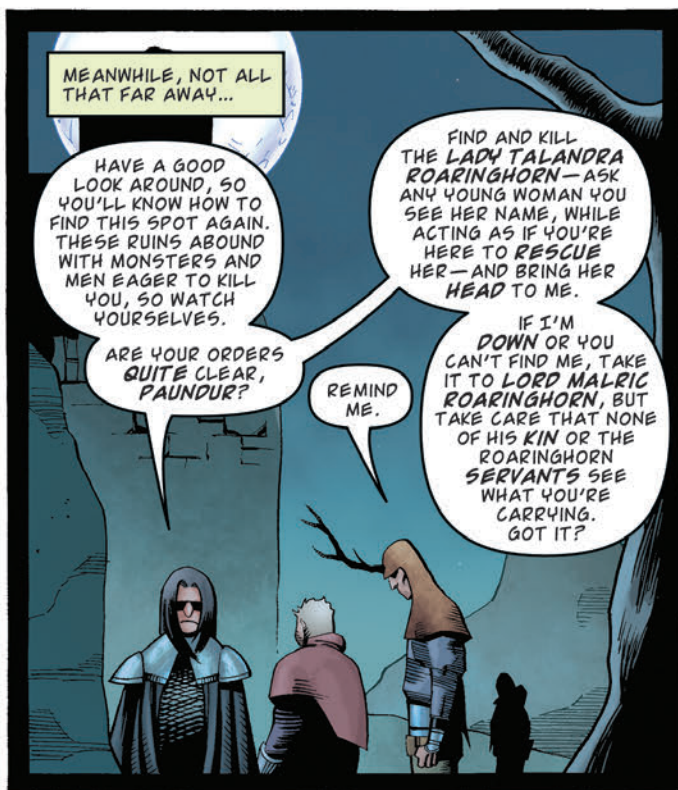


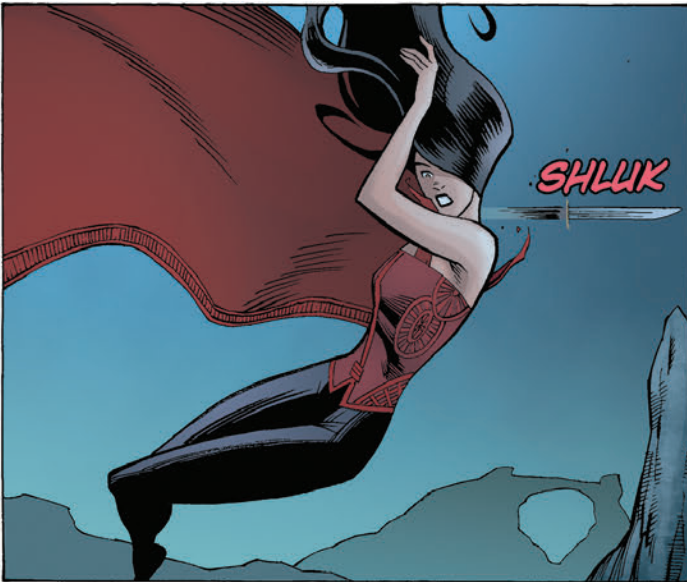
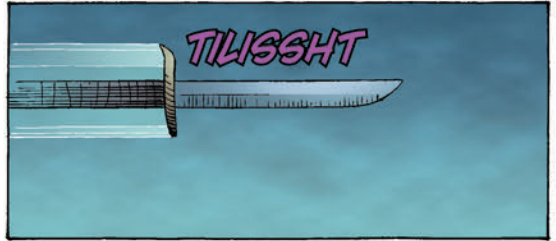
NO. IT'S ALL A
MISTAKE, A HORRIBLE
MISTAKE.

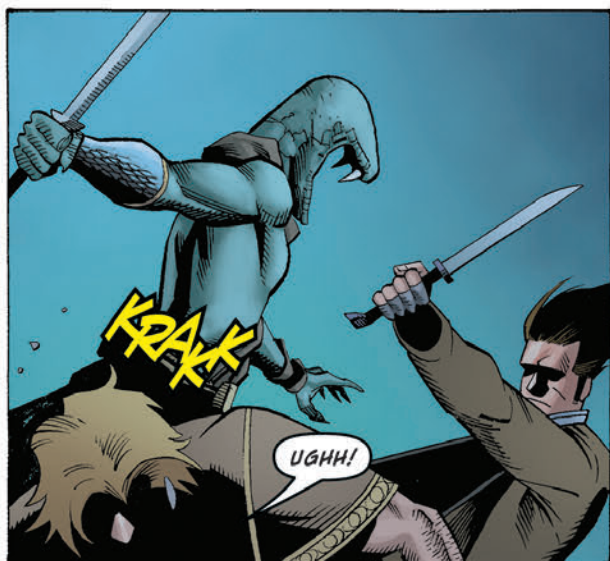
I... WELL,
HAVEN'T
EITHER OF YOU
EVER MADE
MISTAKES
BEFORE?



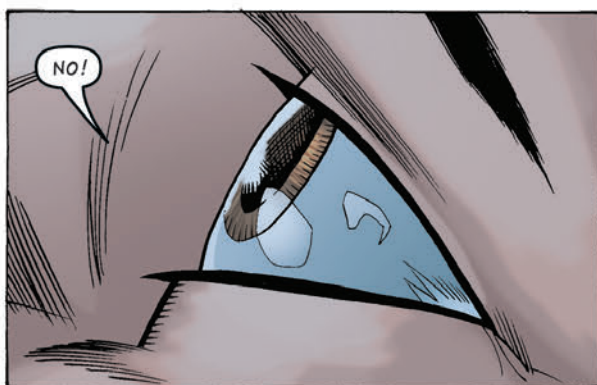
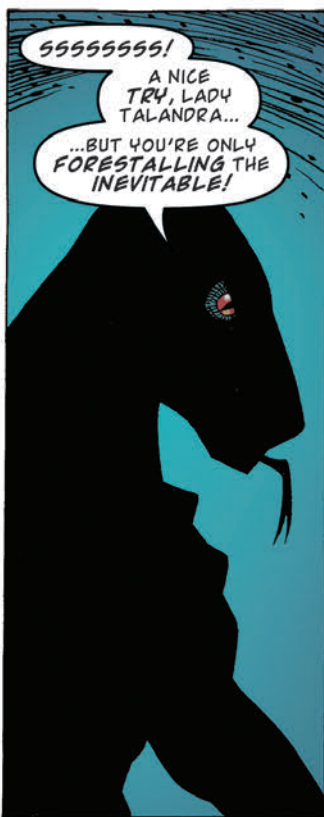
YES. OH,
YES.

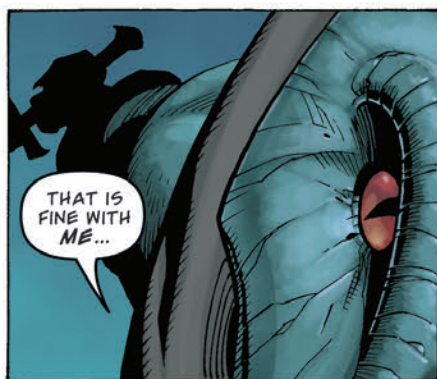












SOMEWHERE UNSAVORY IN WATERDEEP'S DOCK WARD—BLAEYZ GLASGERD AND IMBRAR SALKYN CONTINUE THEIR SEARCH FOR THE ROGUE KIDNAPPER, MAURIT...

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.

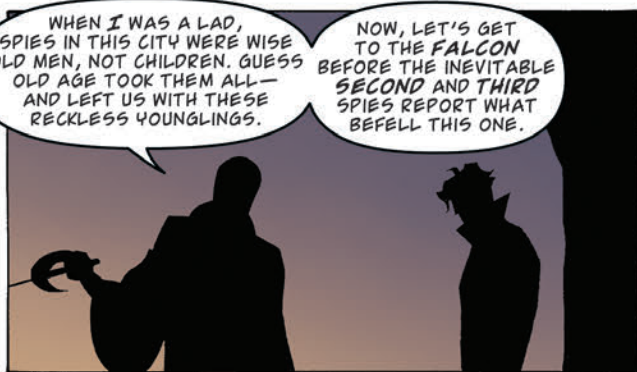
SHUNK



HRASTED SPIES.

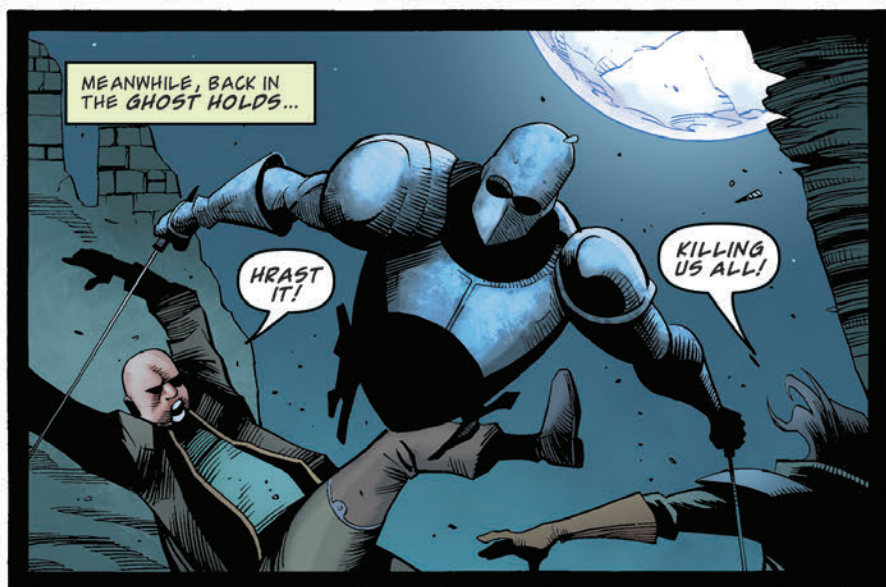
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. THICK AS FLIES.

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 MRASGURD! WE NEED A MAGE.



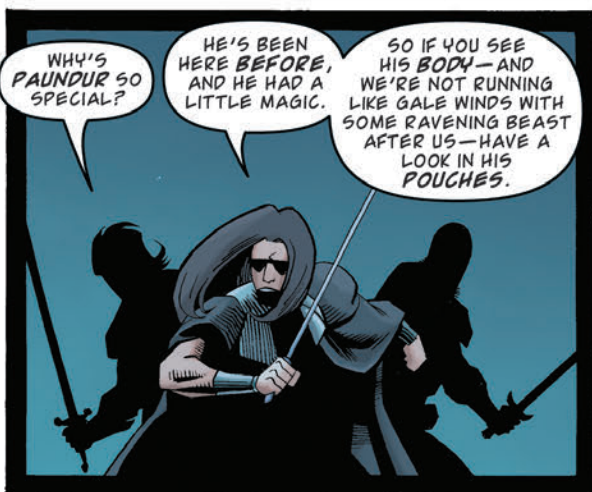
WE NEED TO FIND THAT NOBLE LASS AND GET OUT OF HERE. WHERE'S PAUNDUR?

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



SARK AND BEBOLT! FORM A RING, HRAST IT!

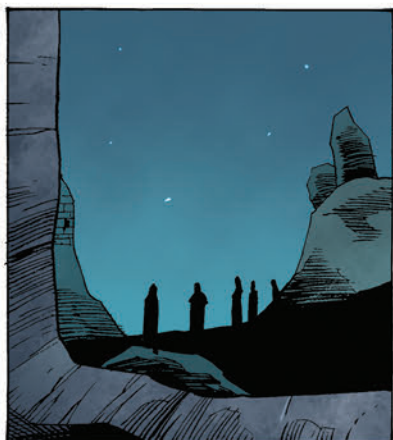
OVER HERE, WHERE THERE'S ROOM ENOUGH!



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 TALANDRA**?

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.

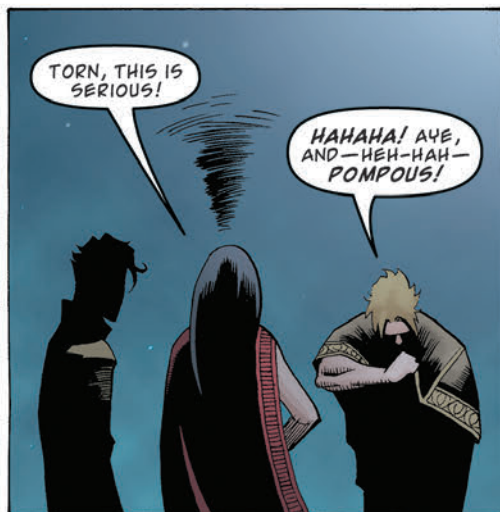


EQUALS. WE
STAND TOGETHER,
NO MATTER WHAT
BEFALLS.

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! AYE,
AND — HEH-HAH —
POMPOUS!



WHAT'S
THAT?



WHAT—
WHO GOES
THERE—?

I DON'T HEAR
ANYTHING—

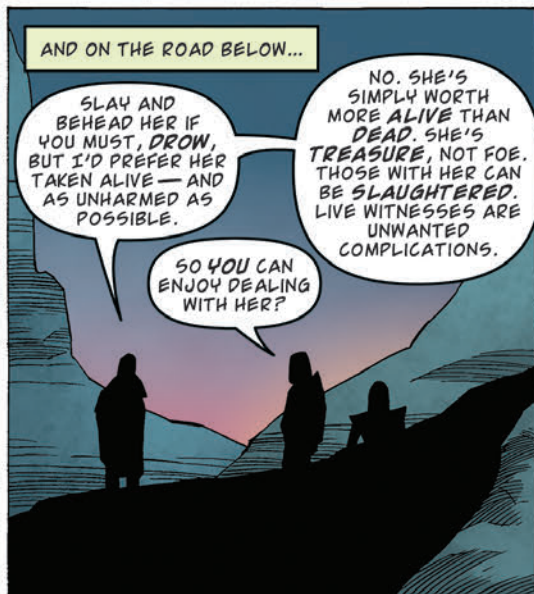


WELL, ONE
DOESN'T HEAR THE
DAWN. WHICH HAS
SNUCK UP ON US,
UNAWARES.



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.



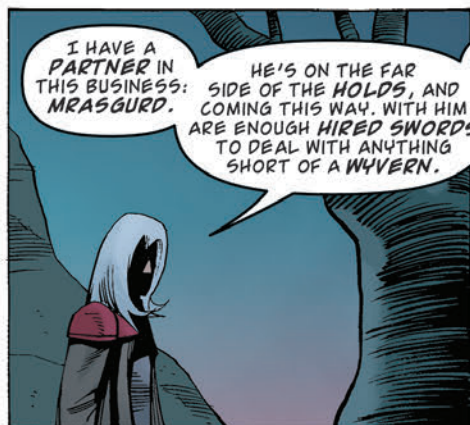
I SEE YOU KNOW ALL
THE STOCK PHRASES,
MAURIT.

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 YON 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.

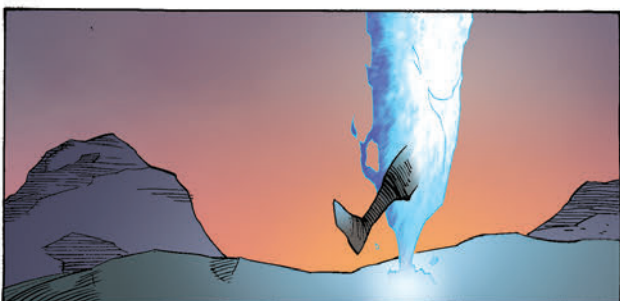
HE'S ON THE FAR
SIDE OF THE HOLDS, AND
COMING THIS WAY. WITH HIM
ARE ENOUGH HIRED SWORDS
TO DEAL WITH ANYTHING
SHORT OF A **WYVERN**.

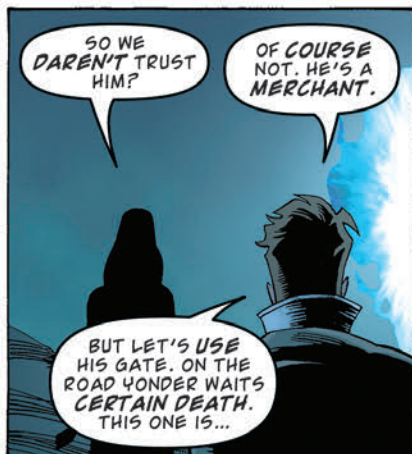
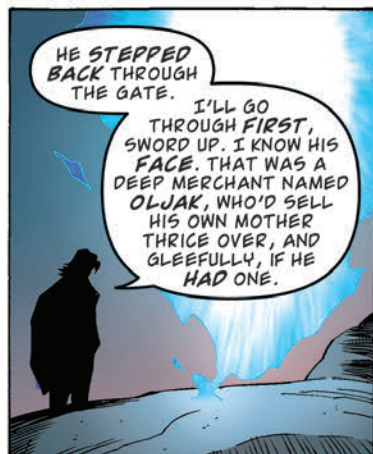


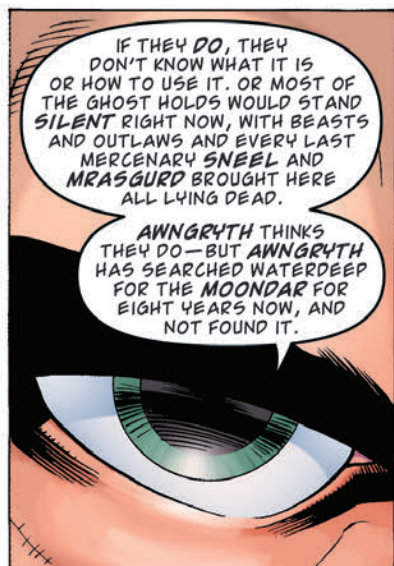
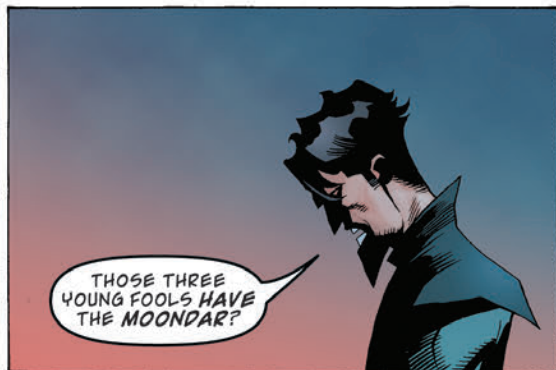
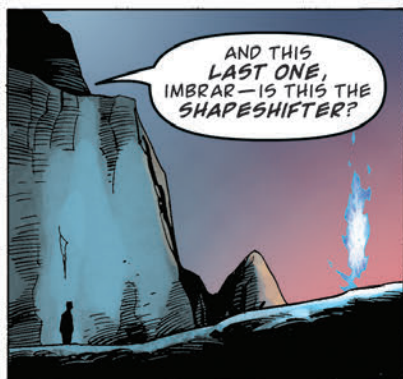
HE'LL DRIVE **LADY
ROARINGHORN** AND HER **LACKEYS**
TOWARDS US. IF THEY DON'T WANT
TO FIGHT, THEY'LL END UP CAUGHT
BETWEEN US AND **MRASGURD**.

THEN
YOU CAN
HUNT.

I SEE
THEM.







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?

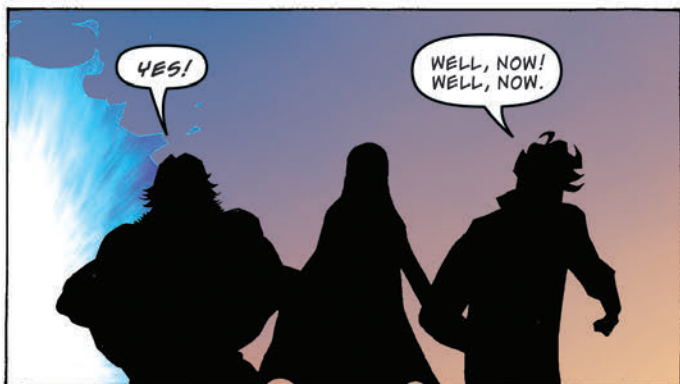


HEADED FOR THE MARKET? HOP ON, IF YOU WANT A RIDE!



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.

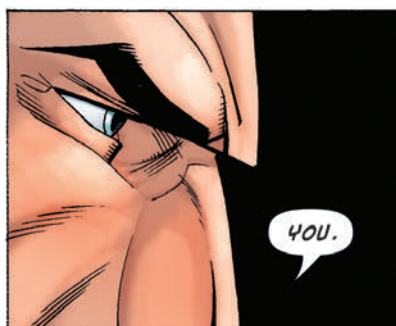


MEANWHILE, IN THE HIGH
HOUSE OF ROARINGHORN,
LORD MALRIC APPROACHES
A SERVANT...

HER
LADYSHIP—
WHERE IS
SHE?

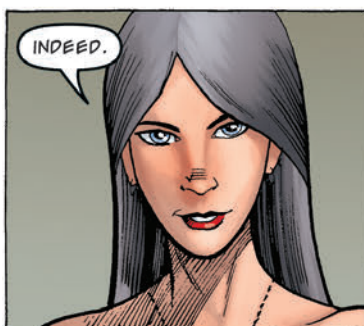


LADY
ROARINGHORN
IS IN THE RED
CHAMBER,
M'LORD.



YOU.

INDEED.



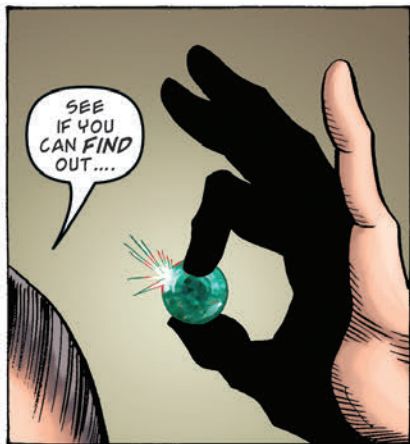
YOU—YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO
FIRED THAT
DART AT ME IN
THE STREET—
I SHOULD—

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

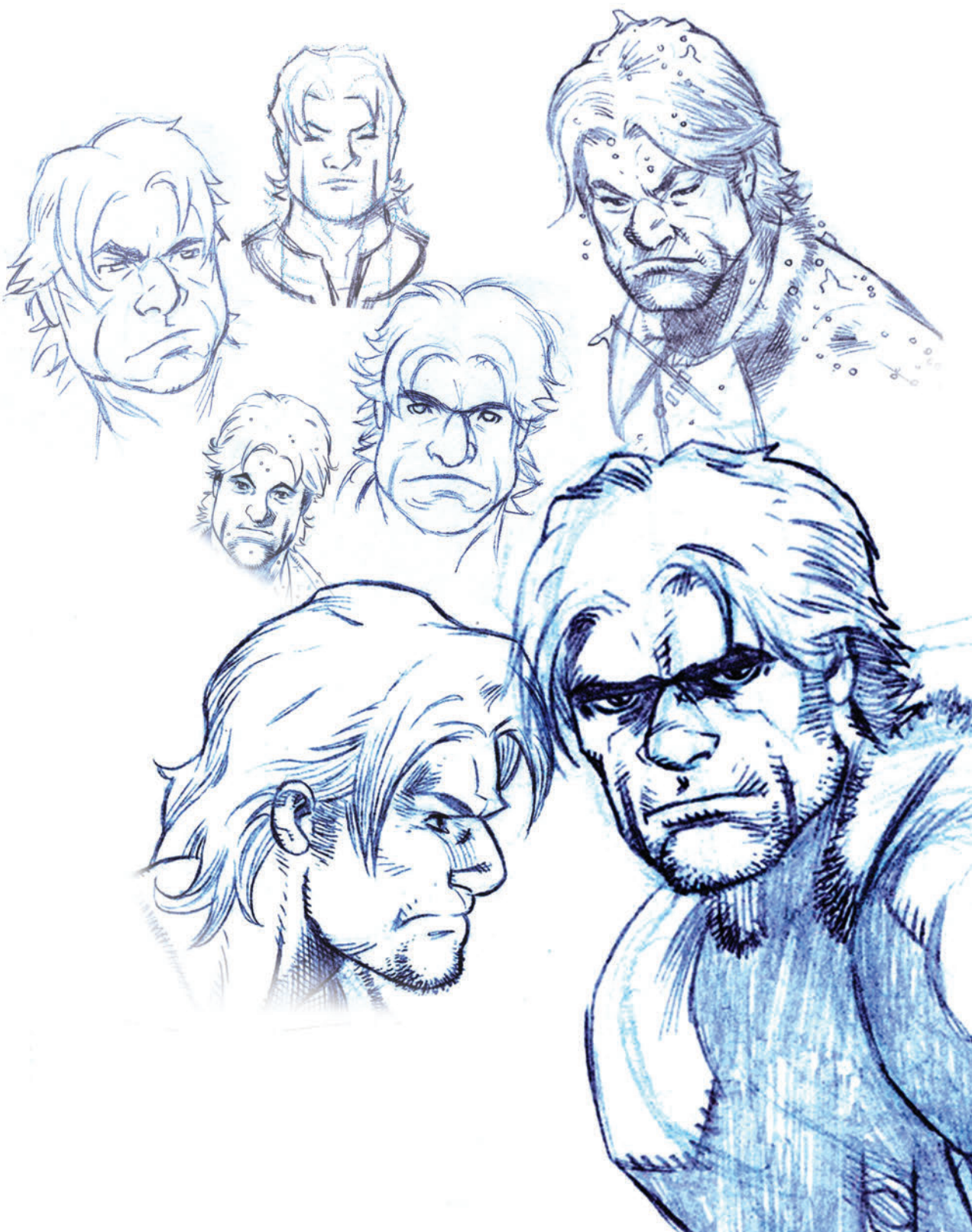
Art by Steve Ellis





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!