

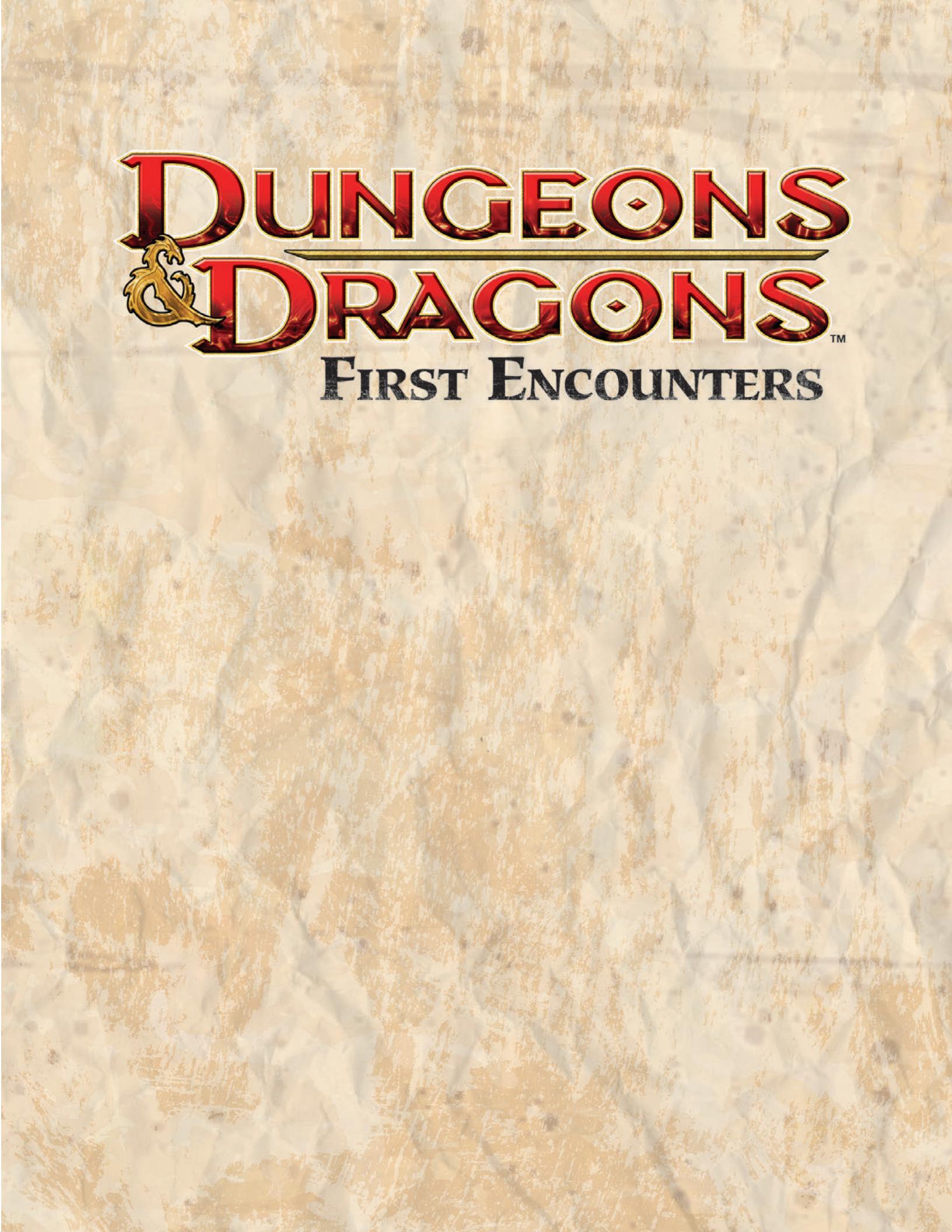
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

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FIRST ENCOUNTERS

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It is a time of magic and monsters, a time when the civilized world has been reduced to a few scattered points of light glowing with stubborn determination amid a rising tide of shadows. It is a time when only the bravest dare tread the wilds of the unknown.

A small town built upon the ruins of a larger city, Fallcrest lies at the crossroads of the Nentir Vale, a great wilderness dotted with a handful of inhabited villages and towns where bandits and monsters roam freely, threatening all who venture far from settlements.

This is a place in need of a few heroes.



Art by Tyler Walpole



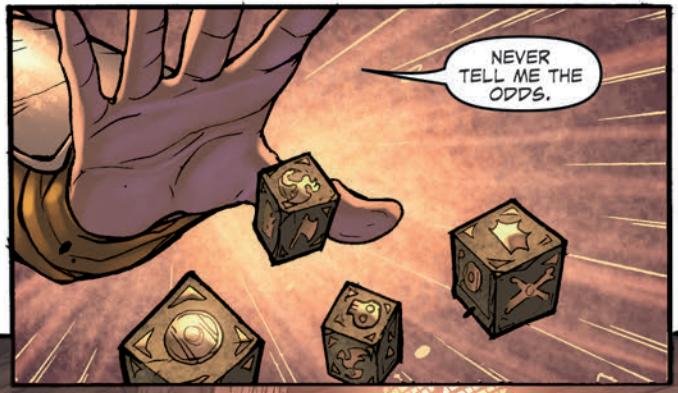
FALLING FOR A SECOND.

FALLING FOR A CENTURY.

TIME AND MEMORIES...
BLURRING TOGETHER.

NEED A MIRACLE THIS
TIME. THIS TIME...

...I NEED MORE
THAN LUCK.





LATER.

YOU MAY CALL ME TRASGAR.

SERGEANT—
ADRIC. ADRIC FELL.

WHAT DO YOU DO EXACTLY, FELL?

IN THE WAR, MY JOB WAS KEEPING CAP'N JINX HERE ALIVE.

JUST FILL HIM IN, TRASGAR.

WE ARE ON A SURVEY EXPEDITION TO SOME NEARBY RUINS.

THERE ARE NO NEARBY RUINS.

SO LITTLE MINDS BELIEVE, NO OFFENSE.

I DON'T FOLLOW.

GOOD, THEN NO ONE ELSE WILL. THAT'S JUSTIN, MY SERVING BOY, AND PHILOMENA, MY APPRENTICE.

H'LO.

FOCUS, PHILOMENA, OR THE FLAME WILL—

FOOM
AHHH!
ALTHOUGH MY RESEARCH CONCLUSIVELY PROVES THE RUINS ARE ABANDONED, I'VE HIRED GUARDS FOR THE JOURNEY.



—AND THEN
TRASGAR USED A
RESIDUUM INVERSION
SPELL, WHICH IS *SO*
EXPERIMENTAL—

—I MEAN NO OTHER
NO OTHER WIZARD HAS
EVEN TRIED TO CRAFT A SPELL
FROM NEGATIVE—

BREATHE,
PHILOMENA.

AND WHAT
ARE YOU
LEARNING,
JUSTIN?

OH, NOTHING,
SIR. I'VE NO HEAD
FOR MAGIC. I
SUPPOSE I'LL BE A
DIFFERENT KIND
OF HERO.

—HUUURK— EVEN
TRIED TO DO SUCH AN
AMAZING THING AS
TRASGAR, I'M LEARNING
SO MUCH FROM
TRASGAR—

"KIND OF
HERO"?

WAIT
FOR IT.

IN MY 14TH
YEAR AT THE
ORPHANARIUM I
GREW UP IN, THE
HEADMASTER
CALLED ME IN.

HE TOLD ME THAT
ANCIENT WITCHES LEFT ME
IN HIS CARE, AND I WAS
DESTINED TO BECOME A
GREAT HERO.

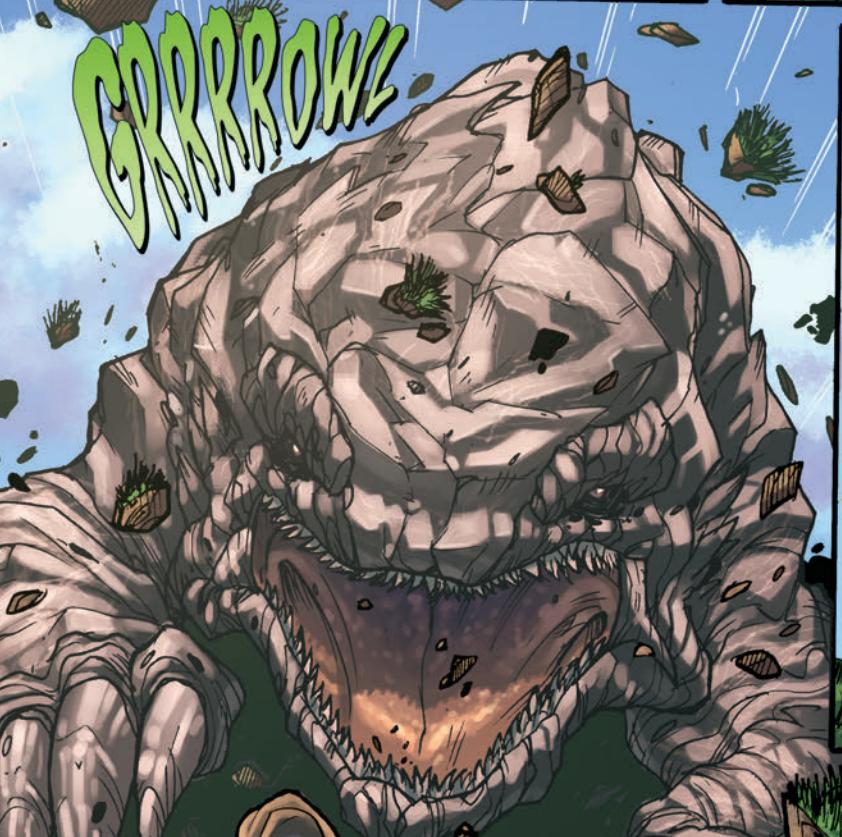
TEARS IN HIS
EYES, HE TOLD ME
THE STARS ANNOUNCED
MY DAY OF DEPARTURE
HAD ARRIVED. HE GAVE
ME THIS MAGIC DAGGER,
LEFT IN MY CRECHE BY
THE WITCHES. SO OFF
I WENT, AND NEVER
LOOKED BACK.

LUCKY, TOO. WE NEEDED
THE BEDS FOR SOME
YOUNGER CHILDREN
JUST IN OFF THE
STREET.



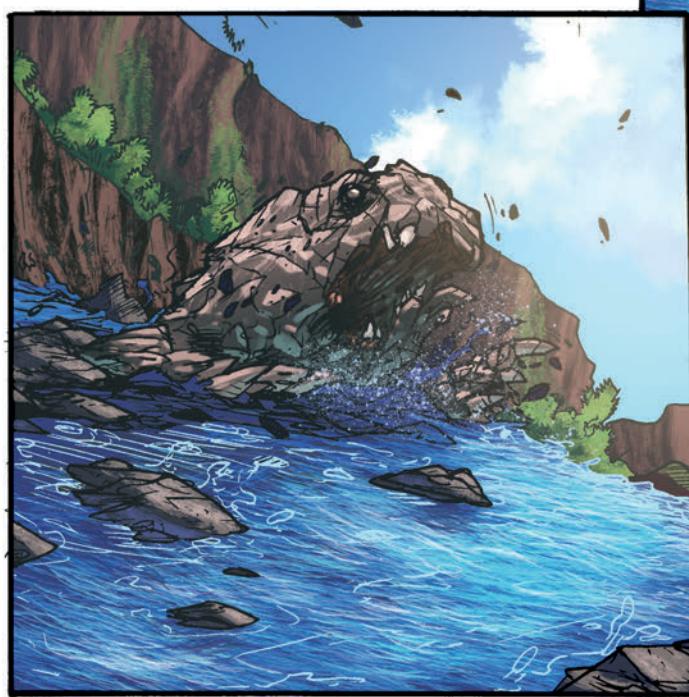


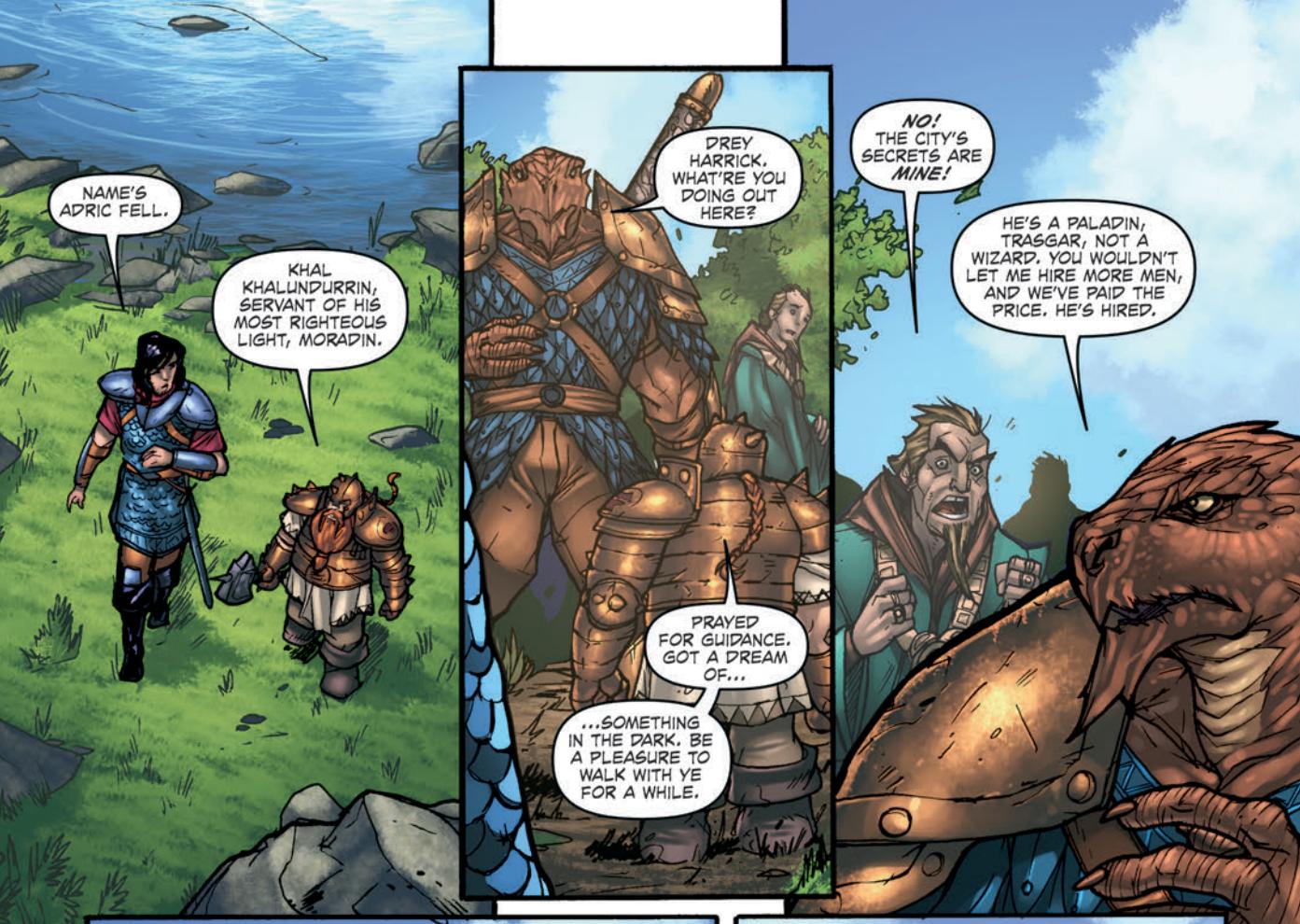


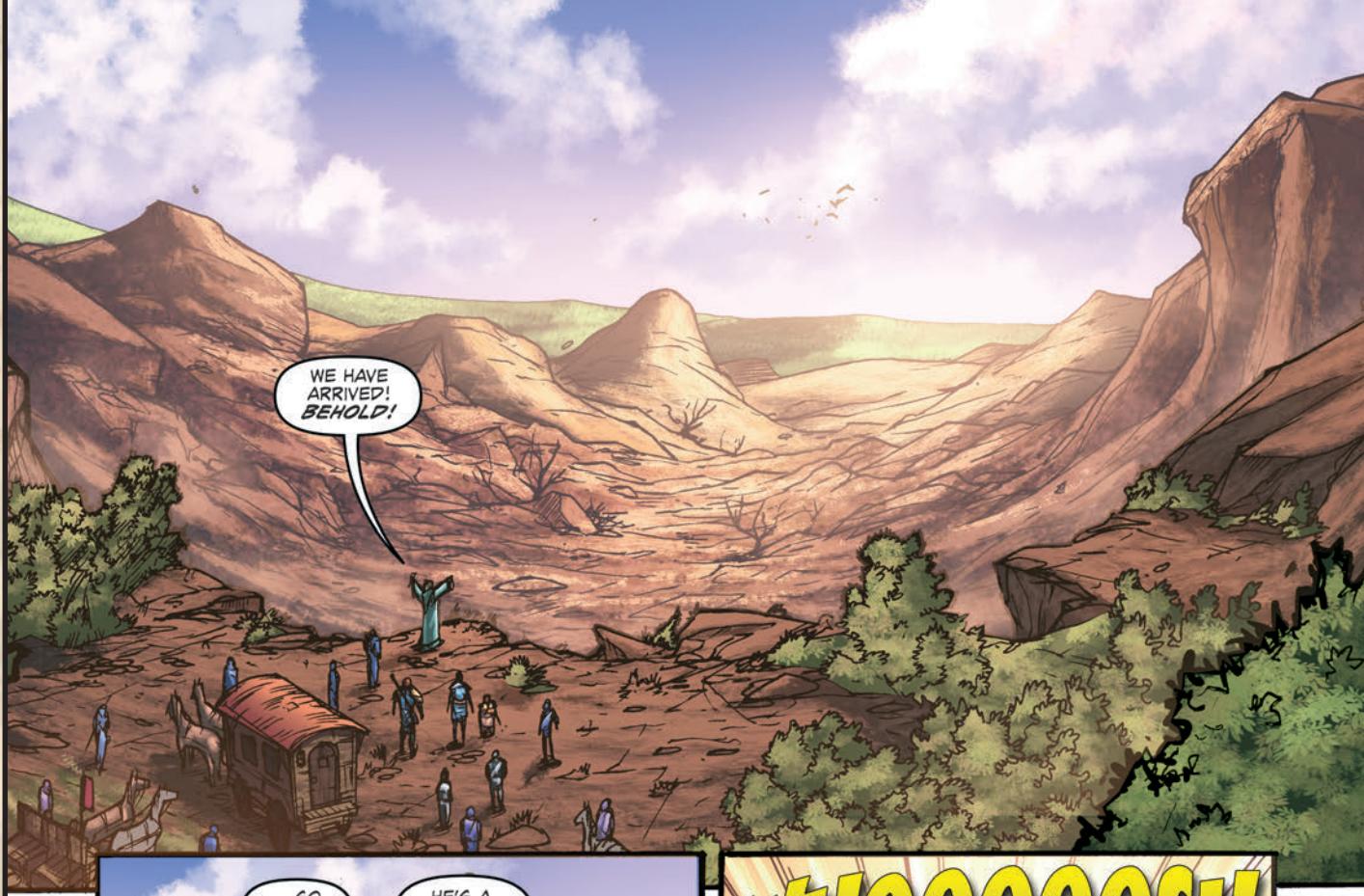


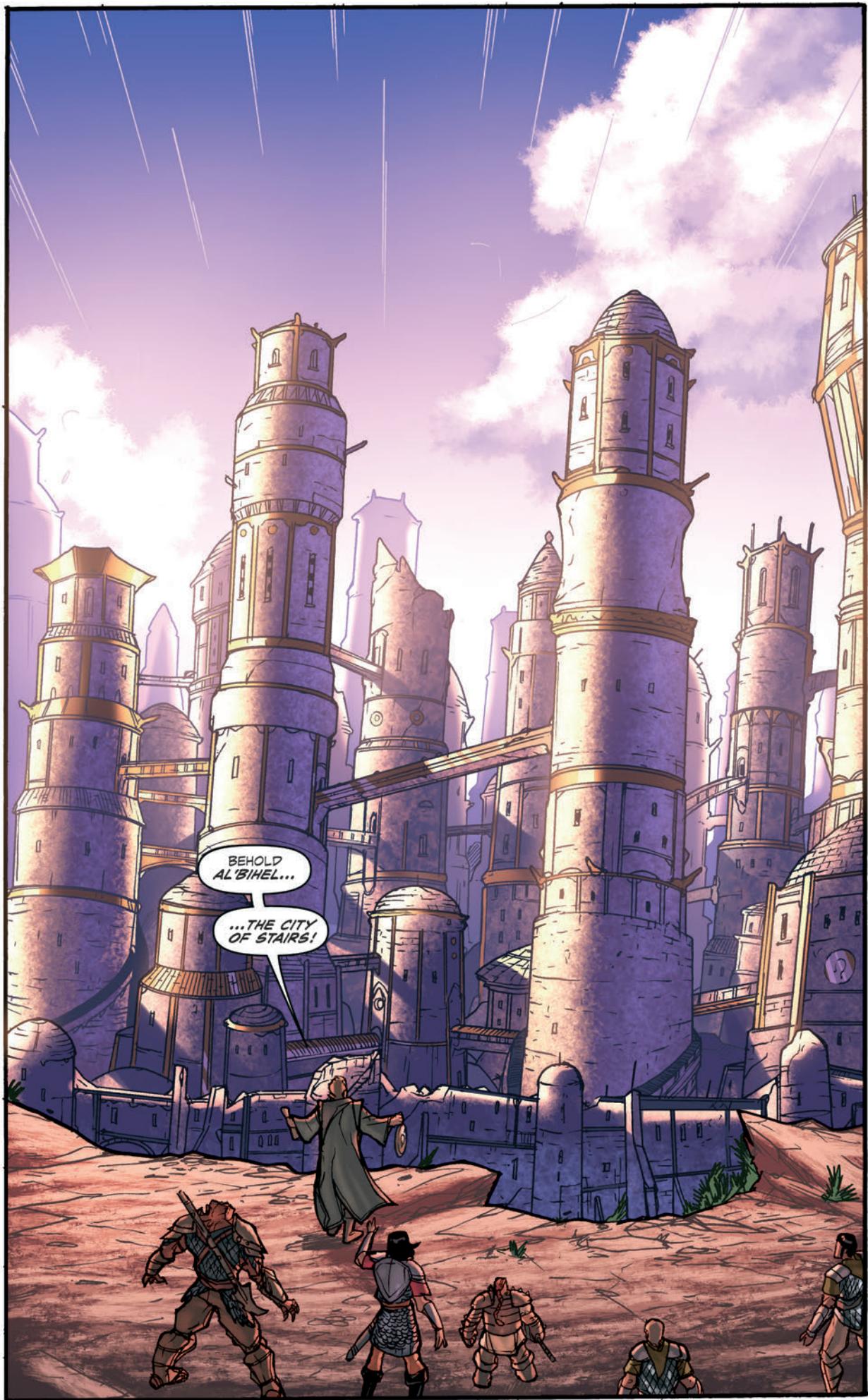


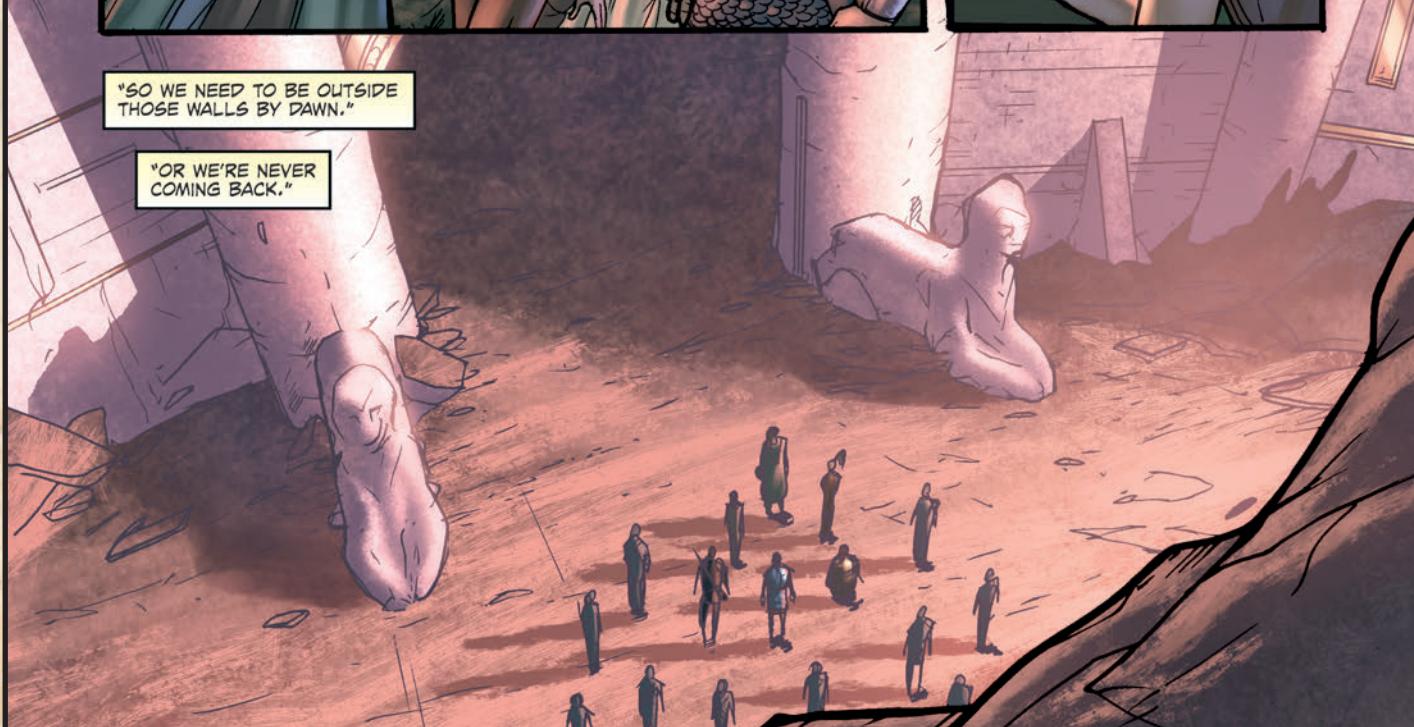












THE—WHADDYA CALL 'EM—THE HIGH ELVES WOULD'VE PICKED THIS CLEAN BY NOW.

NO, THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT. IN THE FEYWILD, THESE RUINS LIE PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO A GIANT'S STRONGHOLD AND A GREAT SWAMP. IT IS HIGH UNREACHABLE FOR THE ELADRIN IN THE FEY.

BUT HERE, IT IS BUT A DAY'S JOURNEY FROM A MAJOR ROAD. DIMENSIONAL SHORTCUT.

THERE, THESE STAIRS LEAD TO THE FIRST OF THE LABORATORIES I SEEK.

LEAVE THE WORKERS AND MULES DOWN HERE, WE'LL JUST TAKE THE GUARDS.

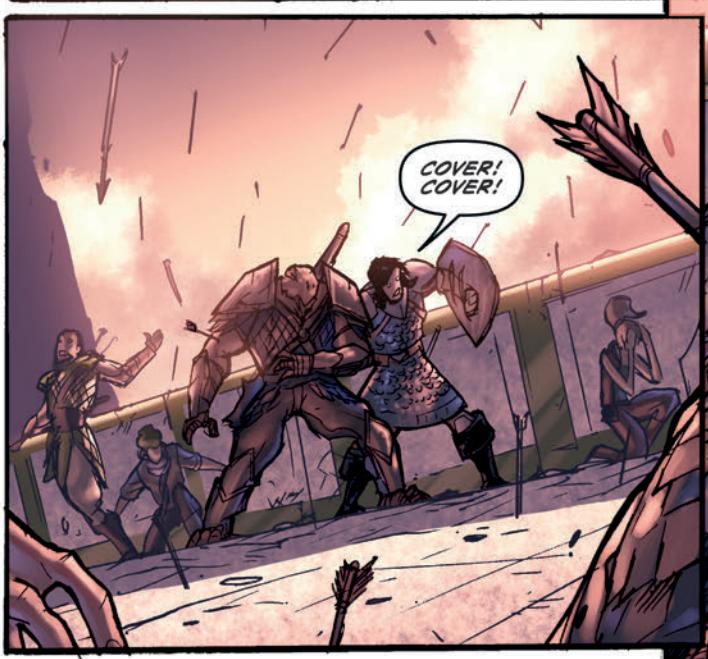
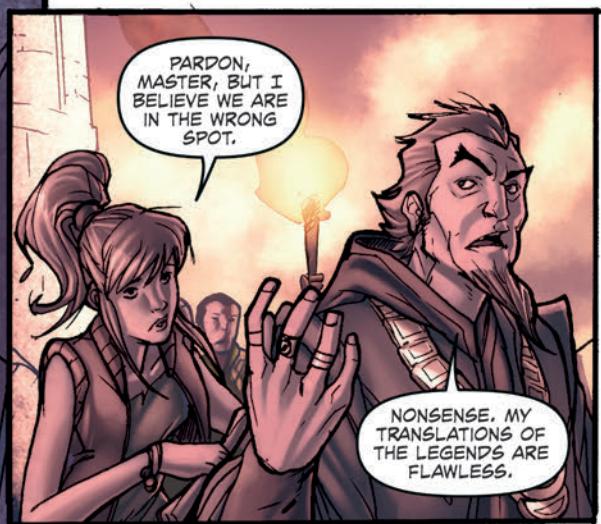
I WANT TO LEAVE A FEW SWORDS BEHIND TO WATCH THE SUPPLIES.

AS YOU WISH. BUT BE ASSURED, MY NOTES PLAINLY INDICATE THIS CITY WAS ABANDONED,

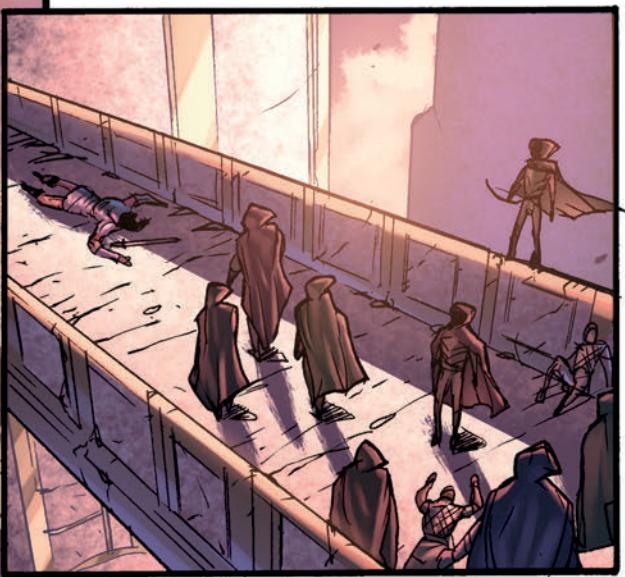
I WILL STAY WITH THE MULES FOR NOW. NO OFFENSE, BUT I DINNAE CARE FOR HEIGHTS.

BE ALERT. THE DARK'S COMING, AND TRASGAR SEEMS UNCLEAR ON SOMETHING.

"ABANDONED" JUST MEANS EVERYBODY LEFT. DOESN'T MEAN "EMPTY."









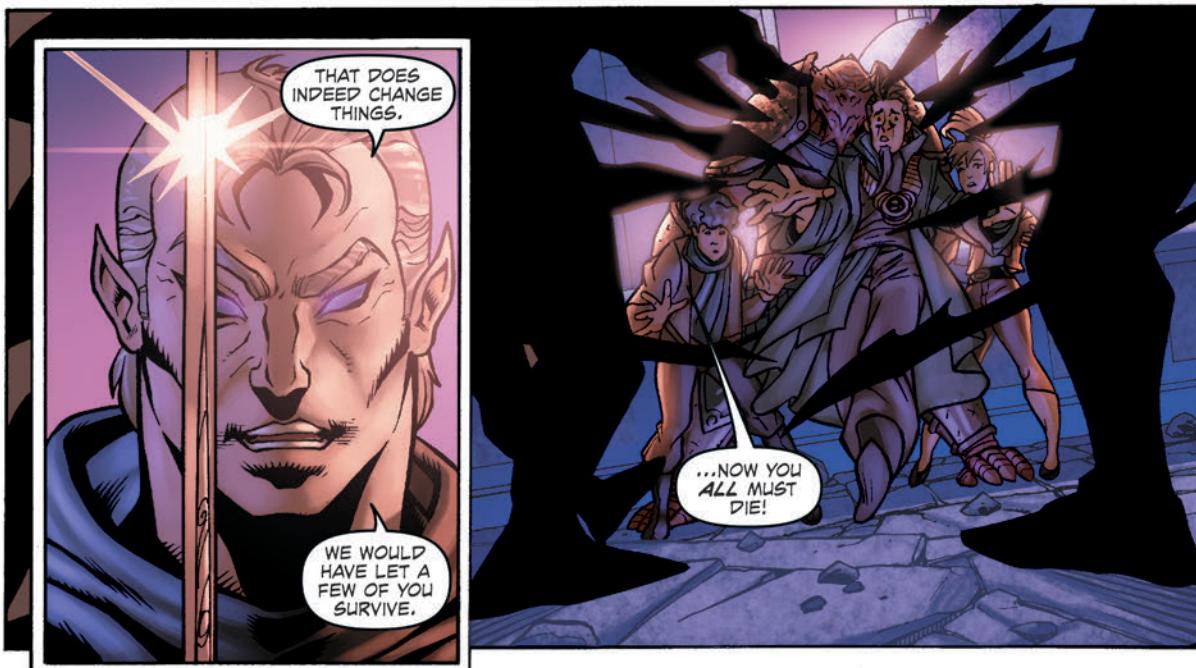
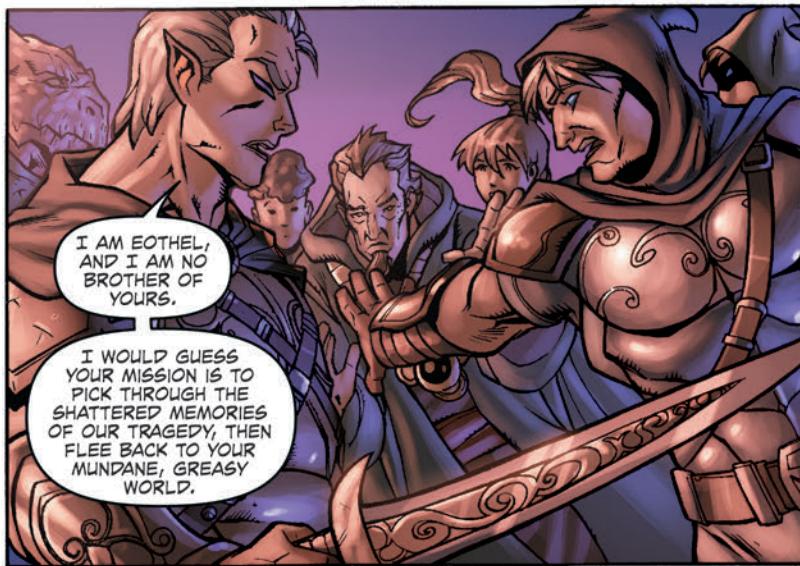




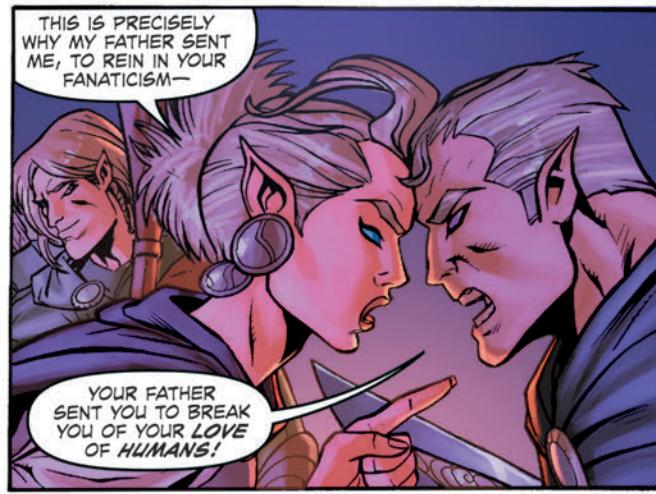
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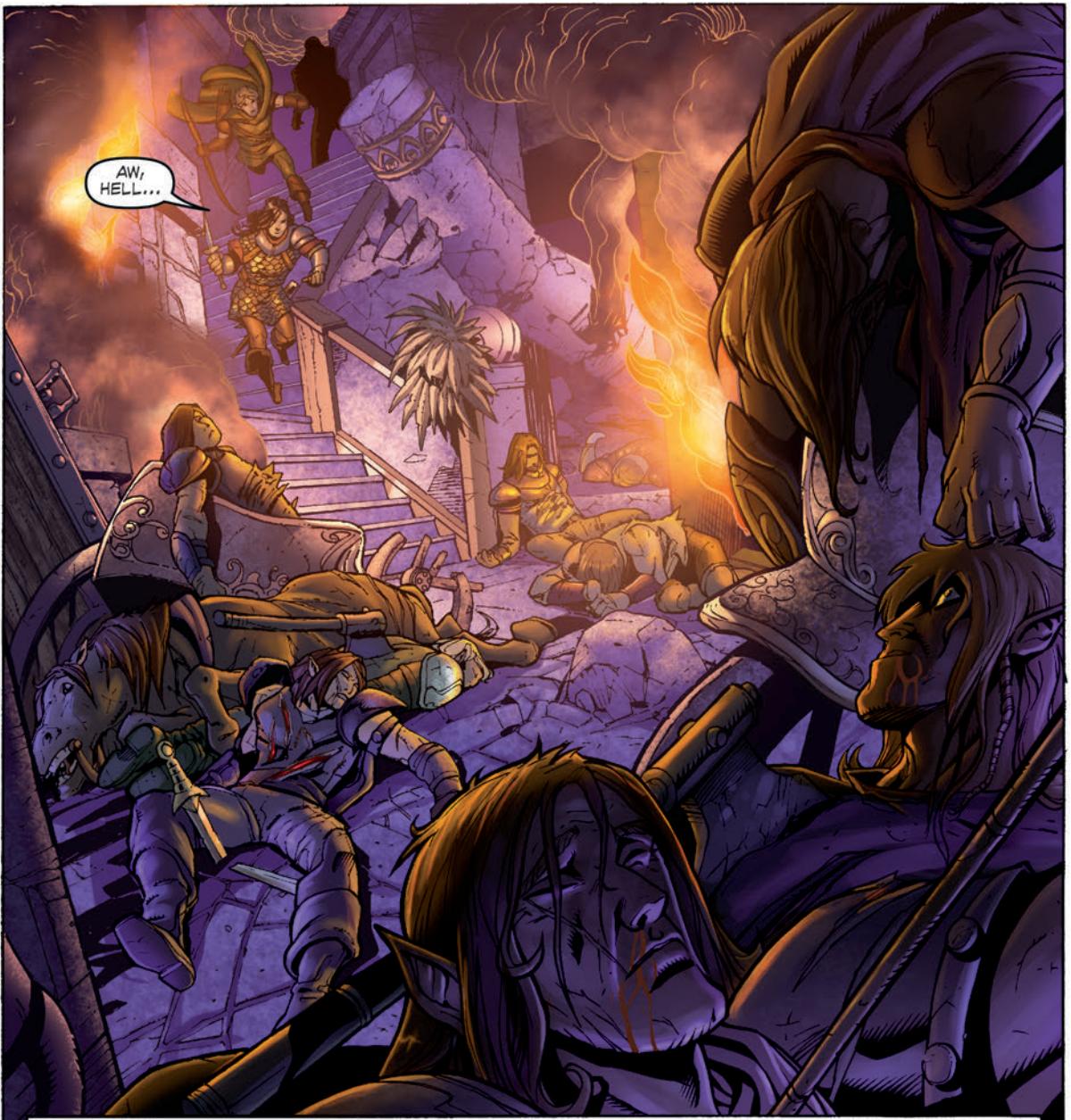






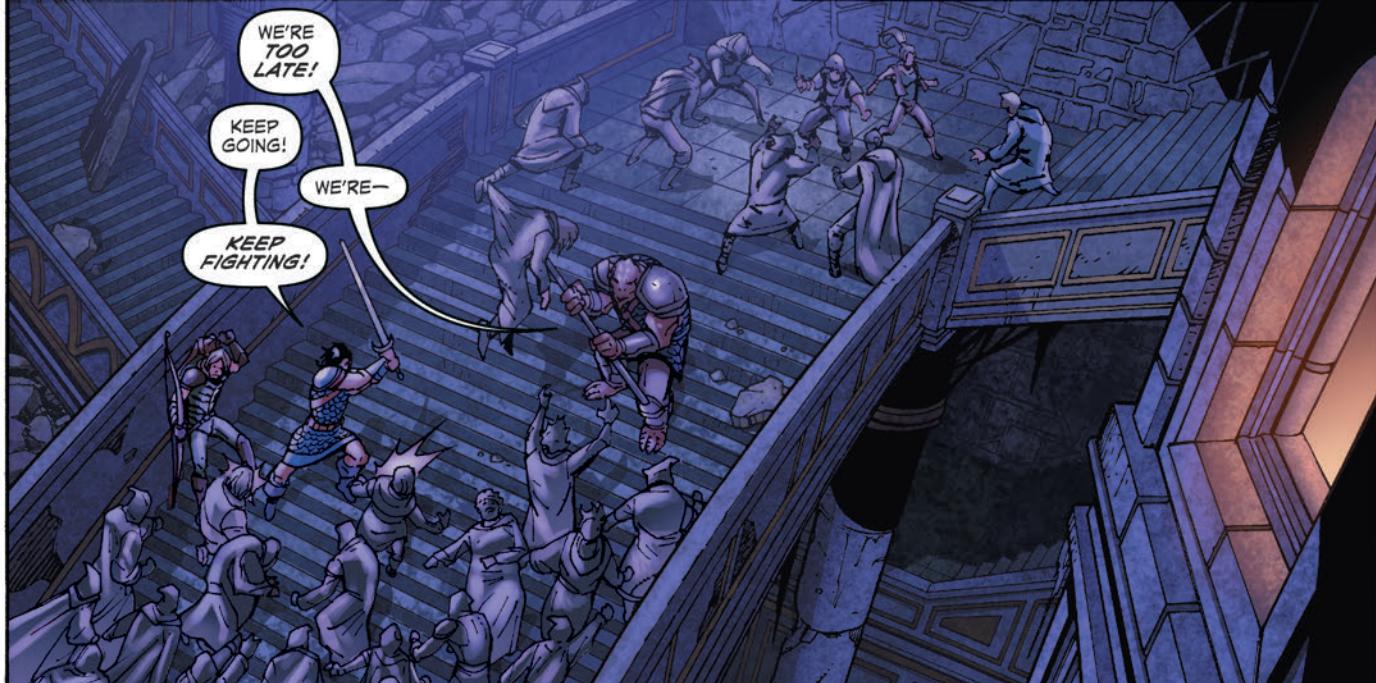






















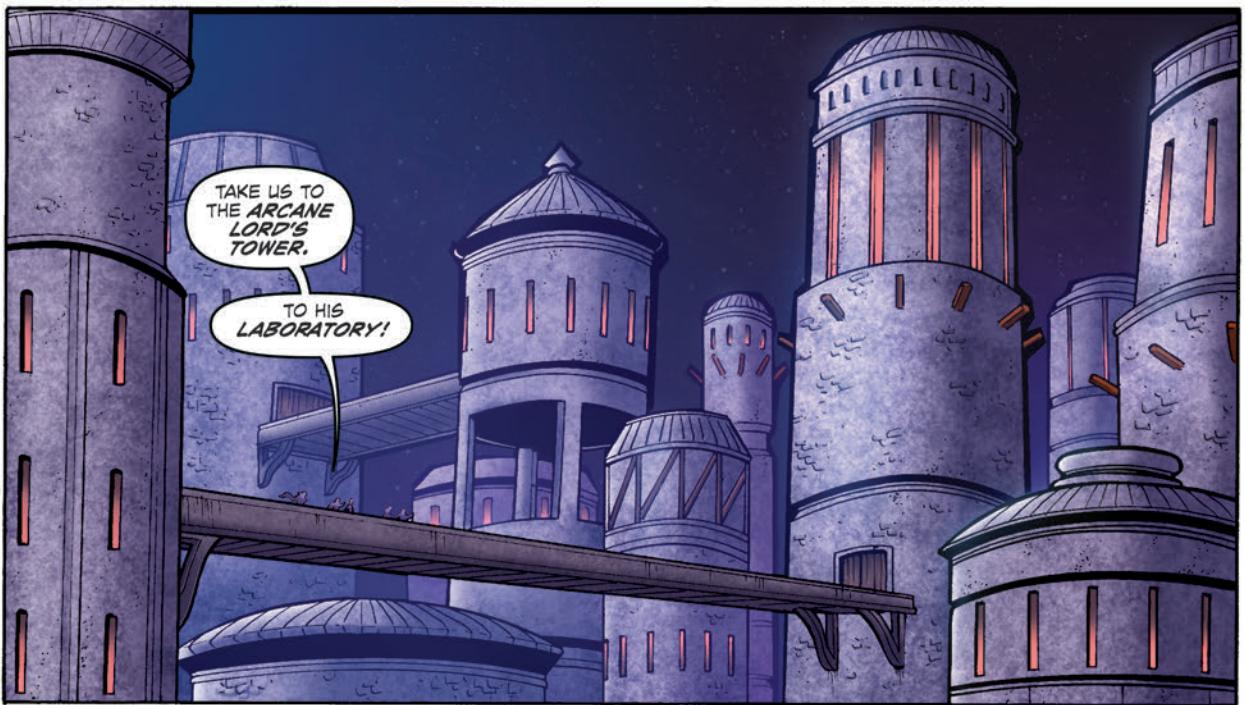


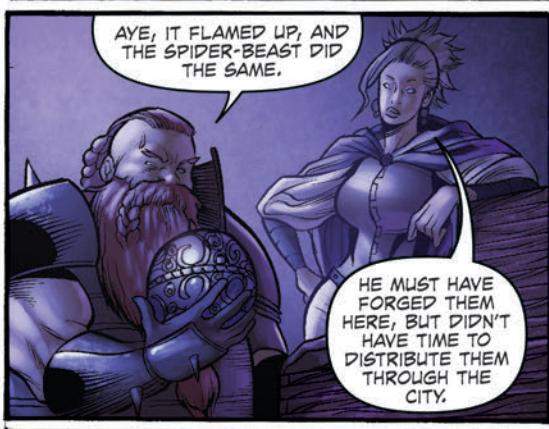
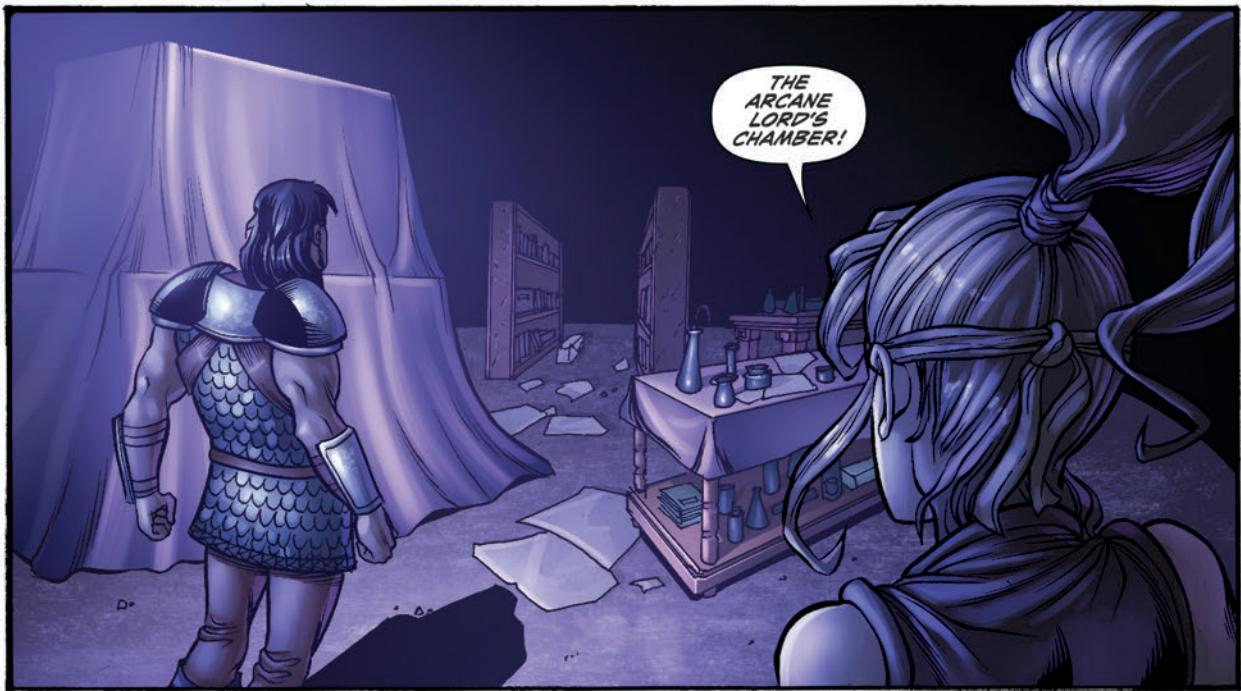


YOU CAN NEVER SAVE EVERYONE. JUST ONCE, IT WOULD BE NICE TO SAVE EVERYONE, WOULDN'T IT?















WAIT, THAT WAS THEN.
THIS IS THEN.

BEFORE, BEFORE WE
MADE OUR WAY BACK
TO FALLCREST.

BEFORE BREE STABBED ME,
BEFORE JINX LOST HIS ARM.

BEFORE VARIS TOLD ME
HIS SECRET, BEFORE
PHILOMENA'S POWER
GREW TERRIFYING, AND
JUSTIN BECAME—



—SO WHAT
IS NOW?



WHERE AM
I NOW?!



YEAH, HE'S ALIVE.

YOU OWE
ME A GOLD
PIECE.

SHUT IT,
VARIS.

WELL, THAT'S
THE GOOD
NEWS.

WHAT'S
THE ~~JUNGLE~~
BAD NEWS?

I THINK
WE'RE IN THE
FEYWILD.

WITH
NO WAY
HOME.





Art by Tyler Walpole



GOOD NEWS IS WE'RE ALIVE.

CHAPTER

3

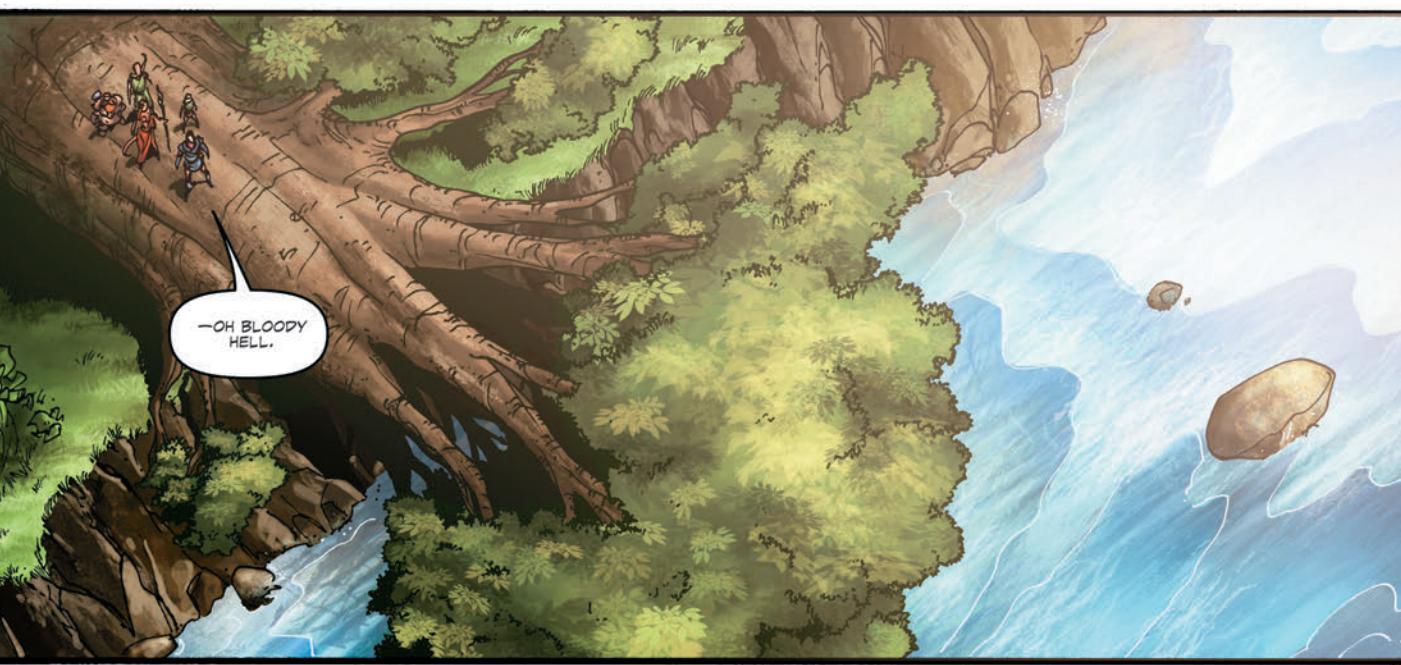
WHERE
ARE WE?

WE'RE IN THE
FEYWILD.

WELL THEN, THE GOOD NEWS
SHOULD CEASE TO APPLY IN
ABOUT FIVE MINUTES.







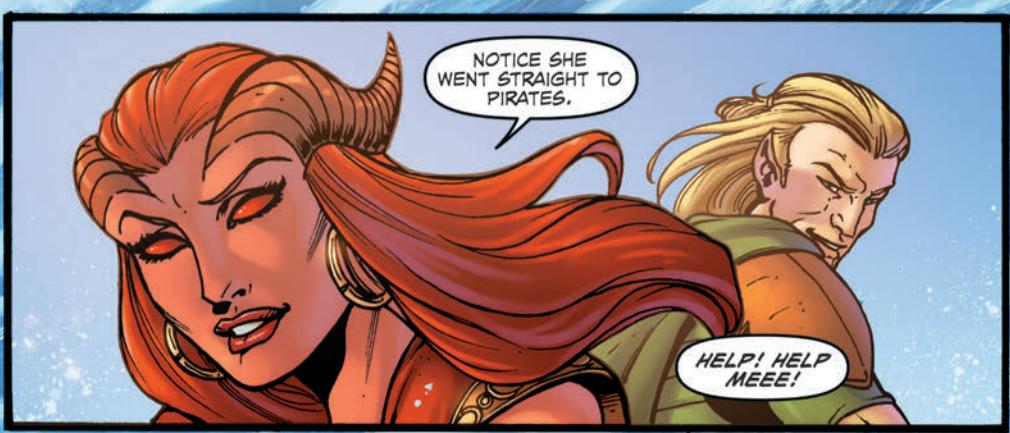
IT TOOK US A COUPLE HOURS.
WE SHOULD'VE RUN OUT OF
LIGHT, BUT TIME PASSES
FUNNY IN THE FEYWORLD.

YES!

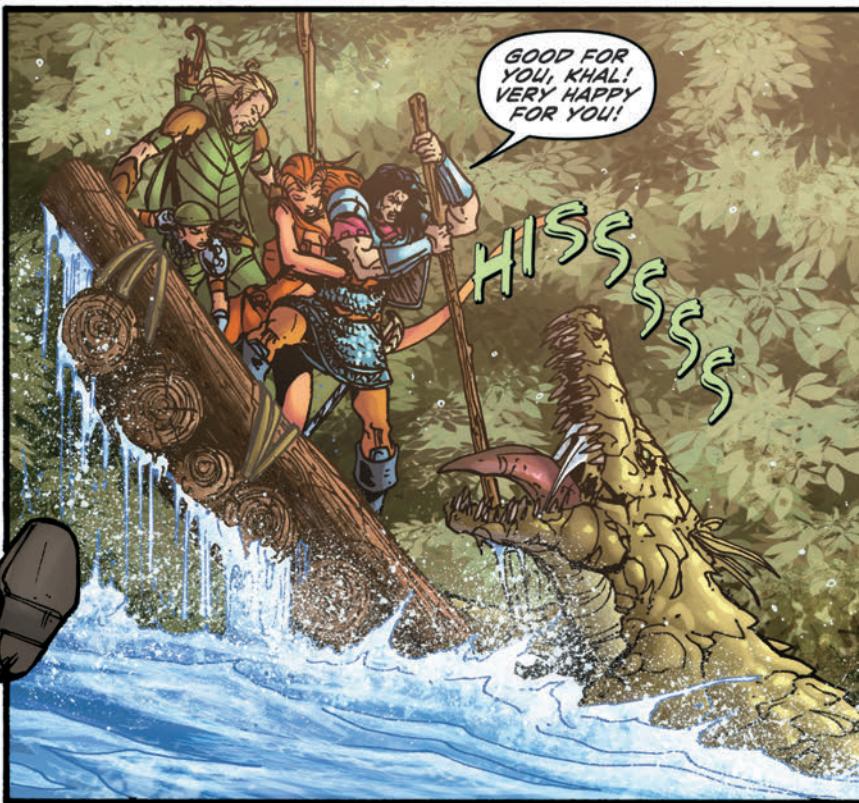
WE'RE RIVER
PIRATES!

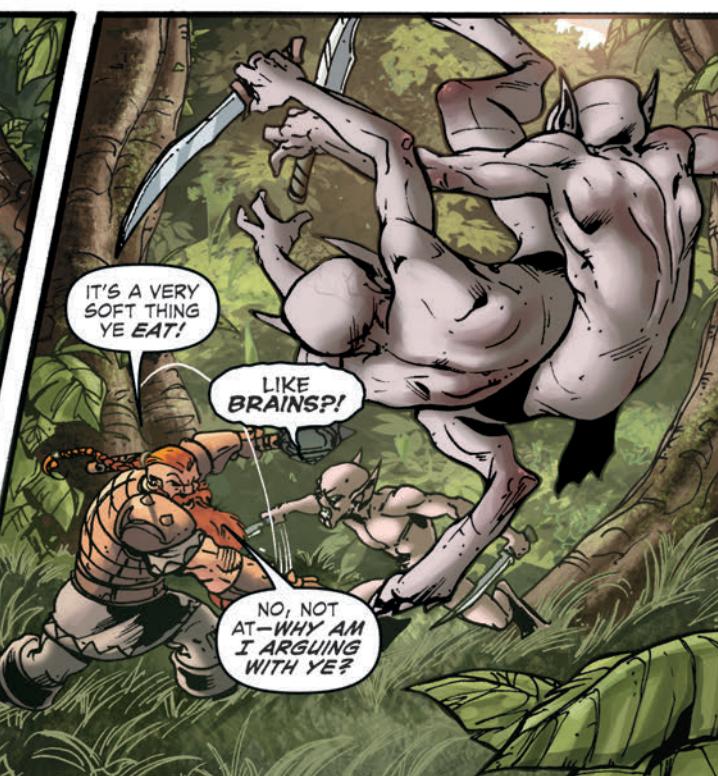


AH, BREE. IF YOU ONLY KNEW.



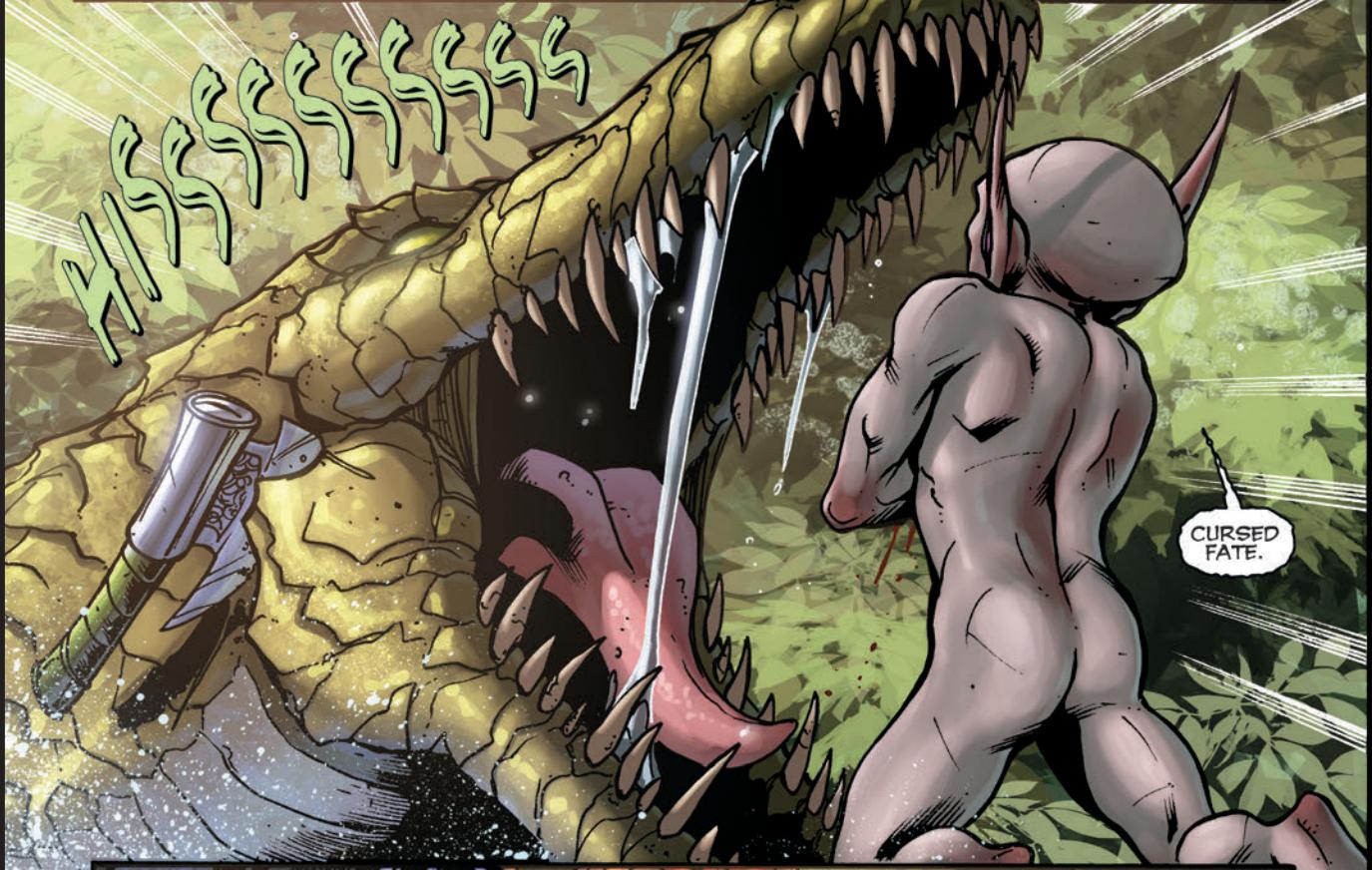






















"I'VE GOT A LOT OF IT."



OH, COME ON!



HURRY!
HURRY! WE MAKE
FOR GORMEN'S
PEAK BEFORE
DARKNESS
FALLS!



NICE OF
YE TO WAKE
UP.

WE
HELPED
YOU!

YOU SLEPT LIKE
A WEE BABE. EVEN
BREE WOKE UP
BEFORE YE.



AH! YOU'RE
AWAKE!

FINALLY.
WANT A
BINKY?

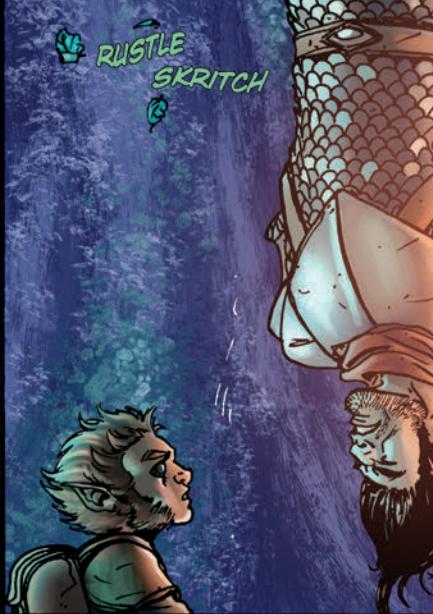
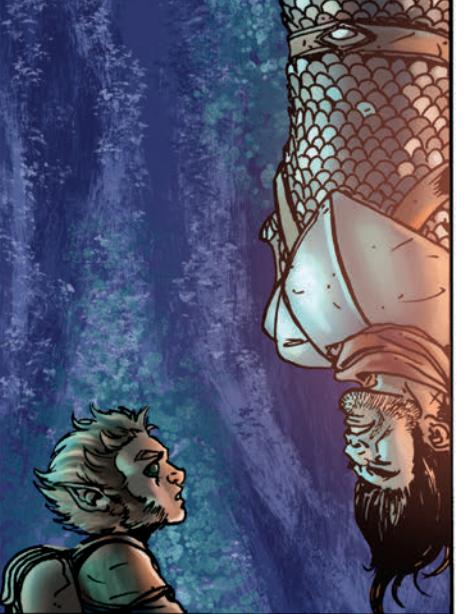
COULD
WE NOT DO
THIS RIGHT
NOW?



NO, I'M SURE THIS IS
SOME OBSCURE GNOMISH
FRIENDSHIP CEREMONY—
LET ME DOWN!

















Art by Tyler Walpole



THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE FEYWILD AND BACK TO OUR OWN WORLD IS WITH THE HELP OF AN ELADRIN, A HIGH ELF. GOOD NEWS IS, WE FOUND ONE.

I AM
TOVELISS
ETEALL! LORD OF
CYDARIA, GUARDIAN
OF THE SILVER
MOUNTAINS!

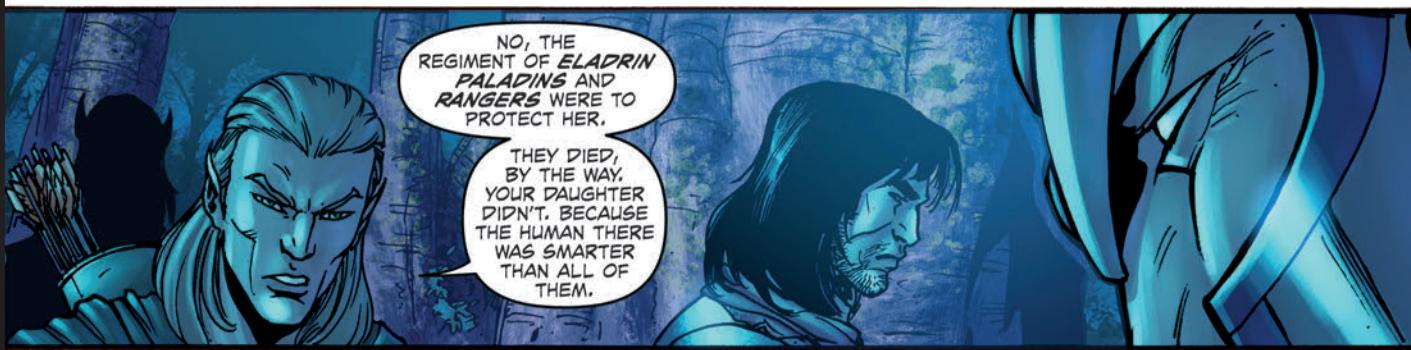
BAD NEWS IS HE'S THE FATHER
OF THE ELADRIN PRINCESS I'M
CURRENTLY, CURRENTLY, AH...

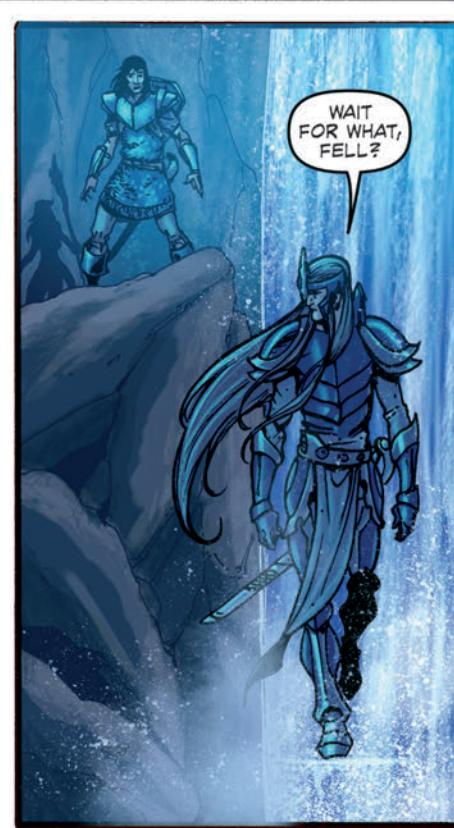
...YOU KNOW, I'M
NOT SEEING THE
GOOD NEWS HERE.













...HOW
ABOUT A
WHOLE CITY
OF IT,
KHAL?









LATER.

AL'BIHEL IS BUT A DAY'S JOURNEY ALONG THE RIVER, AT THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP.

WE'RE NOT DOING THIS.



ONLY AN ELADRIN CAN OPEN A PASSAGE BETWEEN THE FEYWILD AND YOUR MUNDANE WORLD. WITHOUT MY AID, YOU CANNOT RETURN HOME.

THERE ARE OTHER ELADRIN.

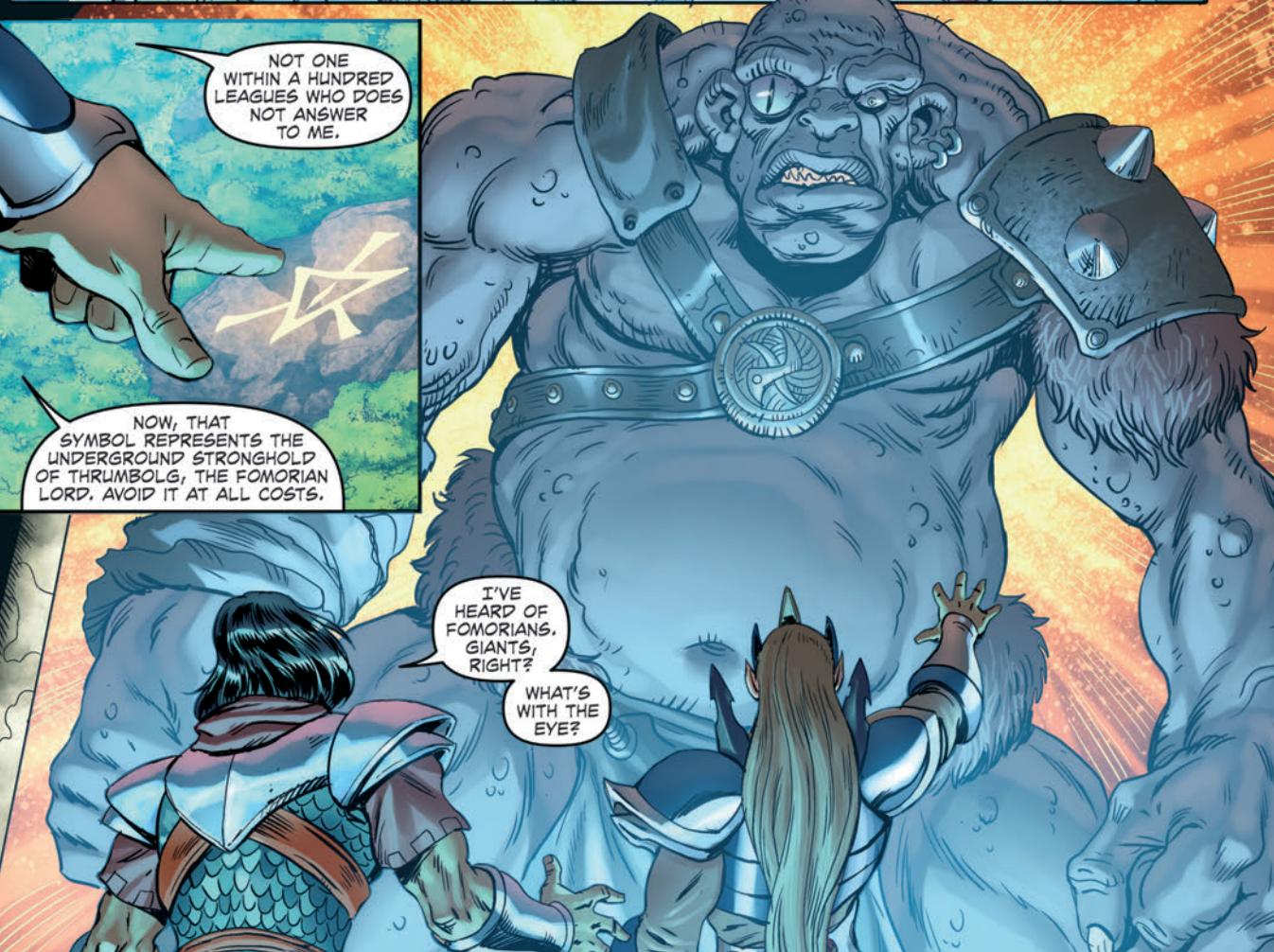


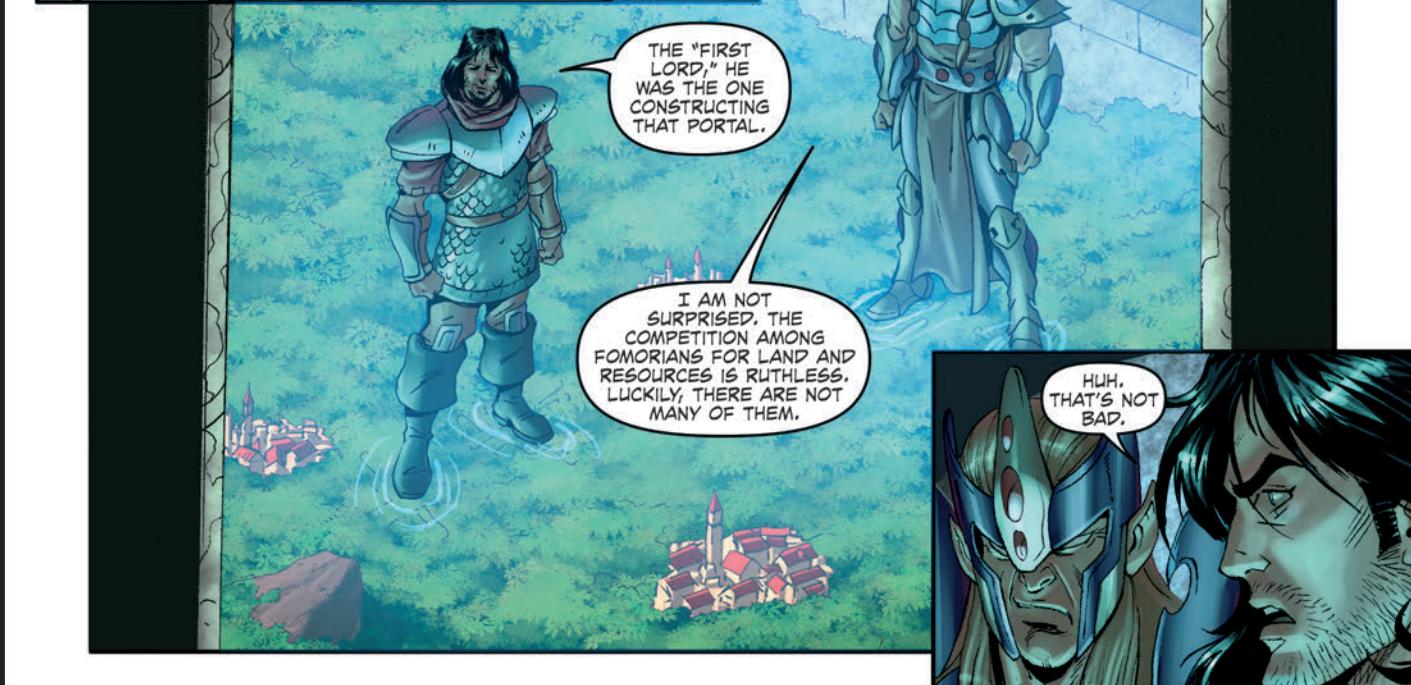
NOT ONE WITHIN A HUNDRED LEAGUES WHO DOES NOT ANSWER TO ME.

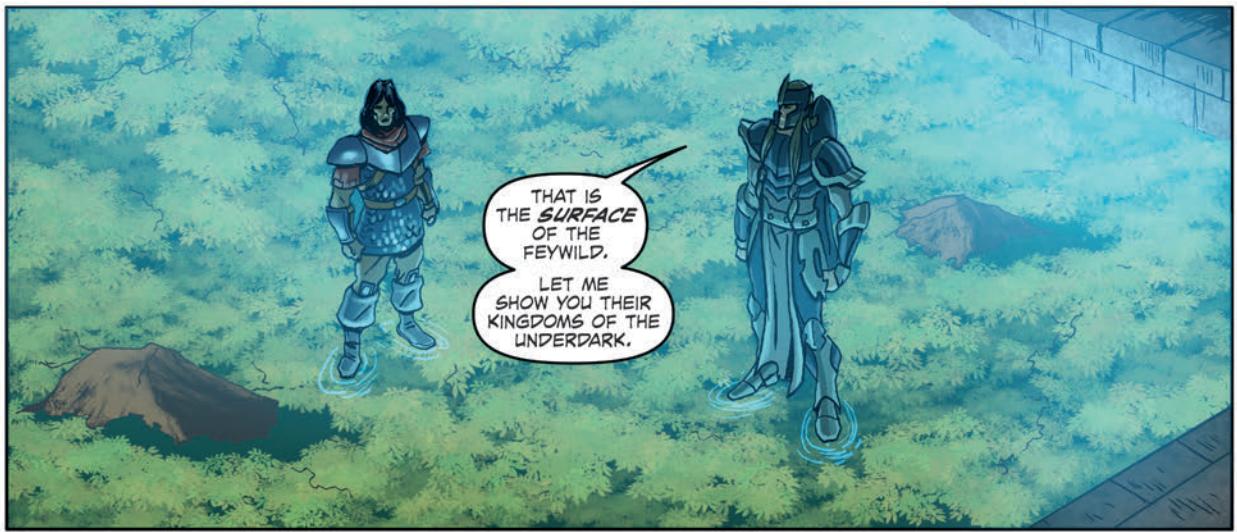
NOW, THAT SYMBOL REPRESENTS THE UNDERGROUND STRONGHOLD OF THRUMBOLG, THE FOMORIAN LORD. AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS.

I'VE HEARD OF FOMORIANS. GIANTS, RIGHT?

WHAT'S WITH THE EYE?







AFTER A LONG DISCUSSION, EVERYONE AGREED THAT FINDING THE GUIDE OF GATES WAS OUR BEST POSITION.

OUR POSITION?!, OUR POSITION IS BENT OVER TO BE—

KHAL!

TO BE FAIR, TRADING FAVORS WITH FEY IS NOT A GOOD IDEA.

RUSTLE
SKRITCH
RUSTLE

BUT YOU MADE A TRADE FOR YOUR POWERS, RIGHT?
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WIZARDS AND WARLOCKS?

I DID NOT TRADE WITH FEY, MY TRADE WAS WITH...
...SOMETHING ELSE.

THAT'S WHY YOU'RE EVIL, RIGHT? OR IS IT BECAUSE YOU'RE A TIEFLING?

WIZARDS STUDY AND EVENTUALLY COME TO BELIEVE THEMSELVES MASTERS OF THEIR POWER.

WARLOCKS ARE ALWAYS AWARE SOMETHING MUCH, MUCH BIGGER IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF MAGIC.

SKRITCH
SKRITCHY
TSSSS



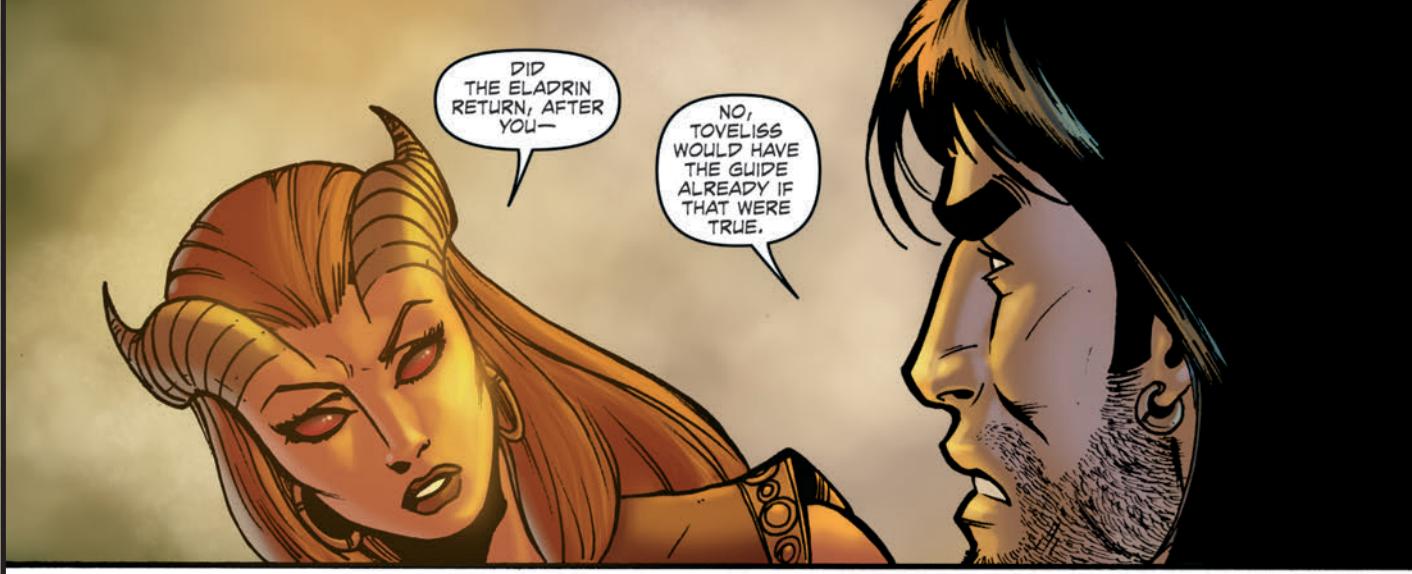












IF HE FOUND IT...
IF HE FIGURES OUT
HOW TO USE IT...

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT IS
THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD.







Art by Tyler Walpole

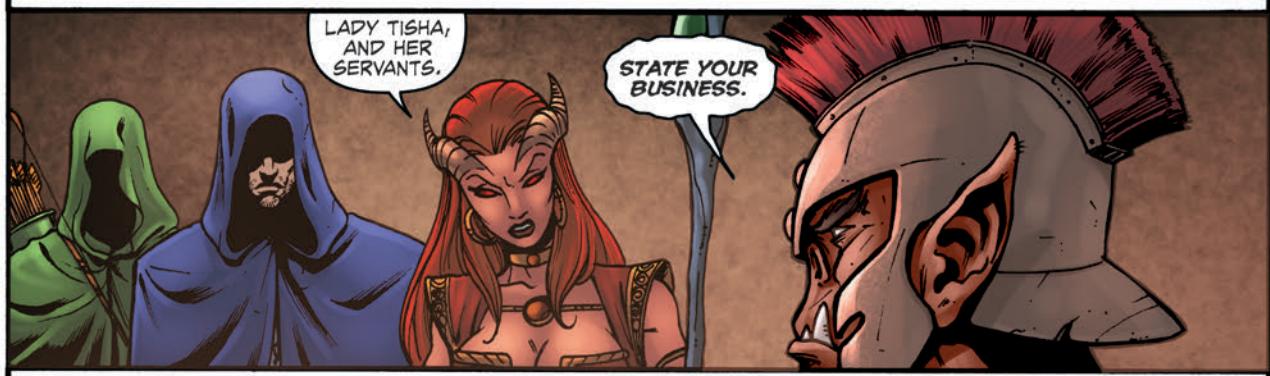


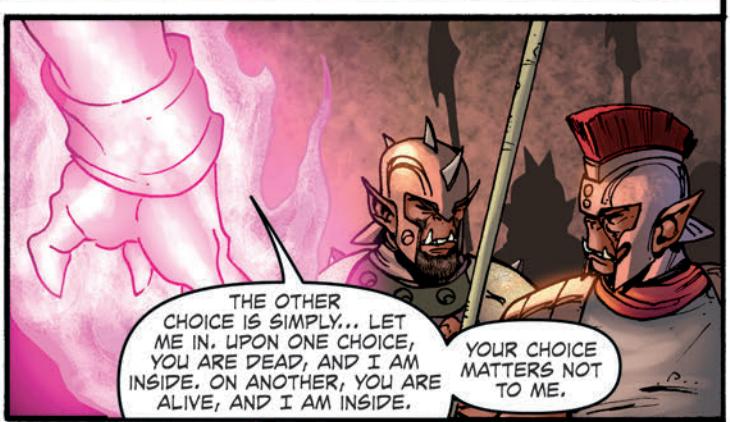
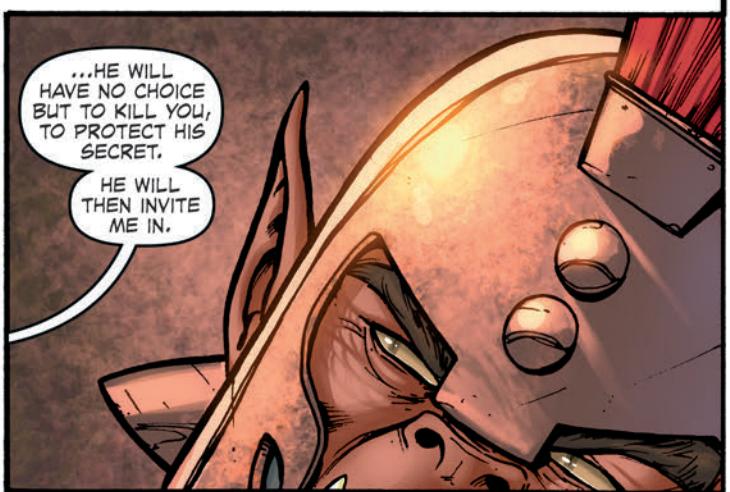
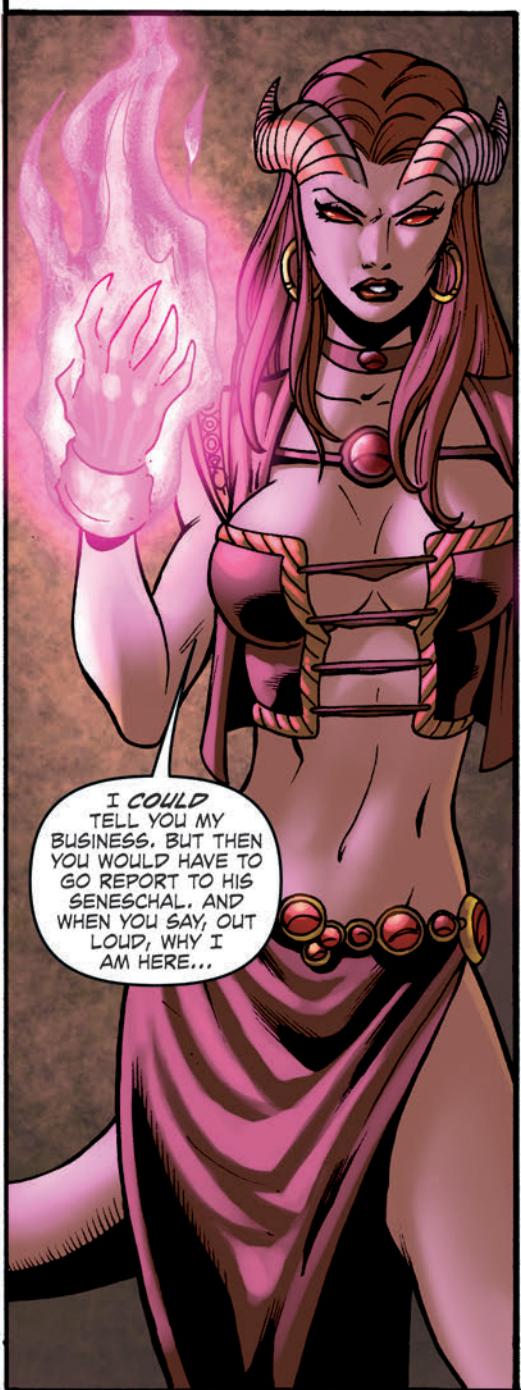
SIMPLE ENOUGH FAVOR. GO TO A RUINED CITY, FIND THE GUIDE OF GATES, HAND IT OVER TO THE LOCAL ELADRIN LORD, AND GET SENT HOME TO OUR OWN WORLD.

PROBLEM IS, THE HAUNTED ELADRIN CITY'S ALREADY BEEN PILLAGED... BY THE CRAZY ONE-EYED GIANT EVERY LIVING THING IN THE FEYWILD FEARS.

GOOD NEWS
IS... IS...







LATER.

THE
FIRST LORD'S
SENESCHAL WILL
HEAR YOUR
TALE.

YES,
YES.

YOU ARE
DISMISSED.



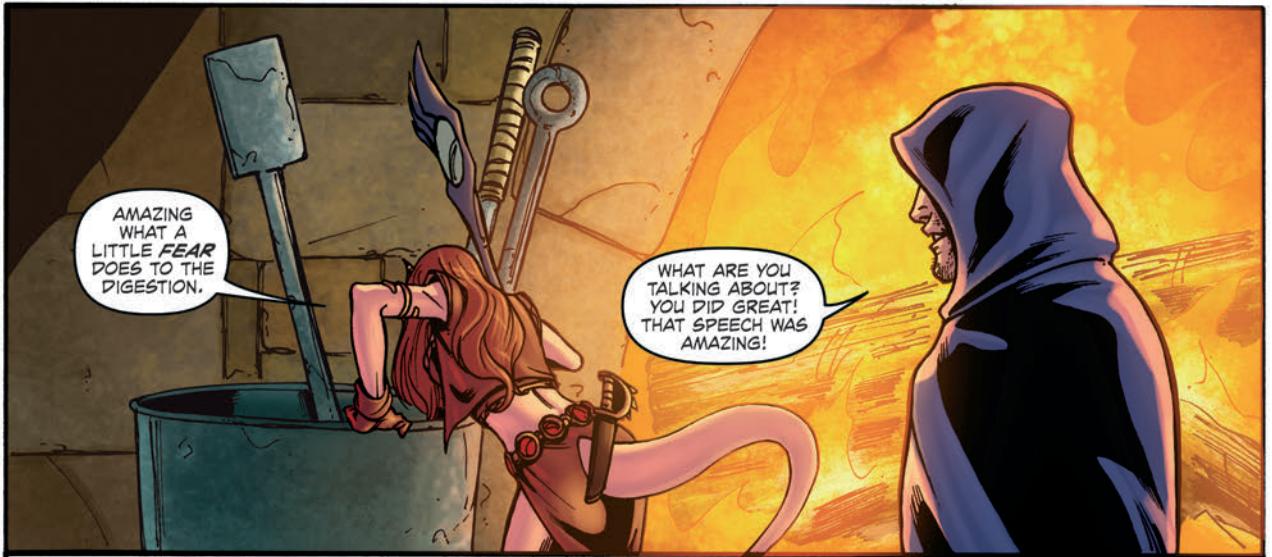
GRRRRRRRR...

CREEAK

SLAM

HUURRK-
GAACKKS

THERE
YOU GO, LASS.
BETTER OUT
THAN IN.



EARLIER.

SIMPLE ENOUGH FAVOR. GO TO A RUINED CITY, FIND THE GUIDE OF GATES. HAND IT OVER TO THE LOCAL ELADRIN LORD, AND GET SENT HOME TO OUR OWN WORLD.

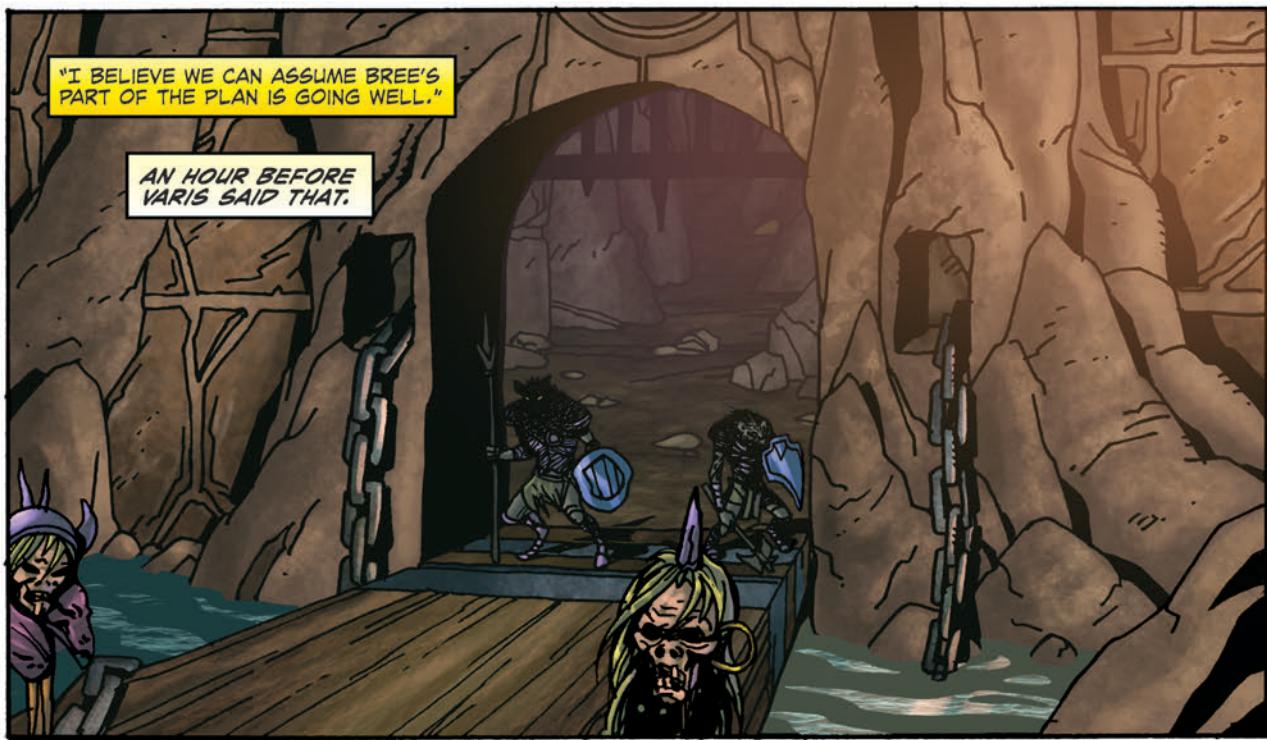
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GOOD NEWS
IS... IS...













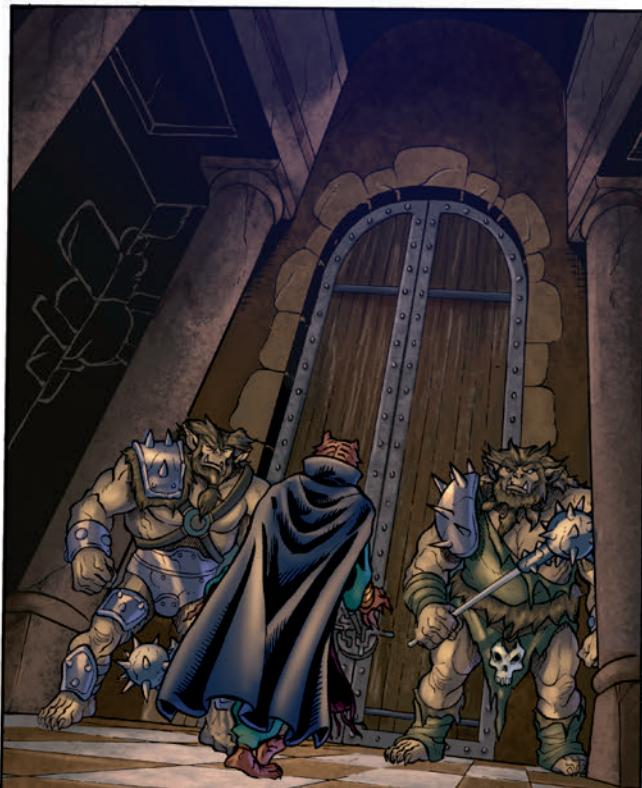


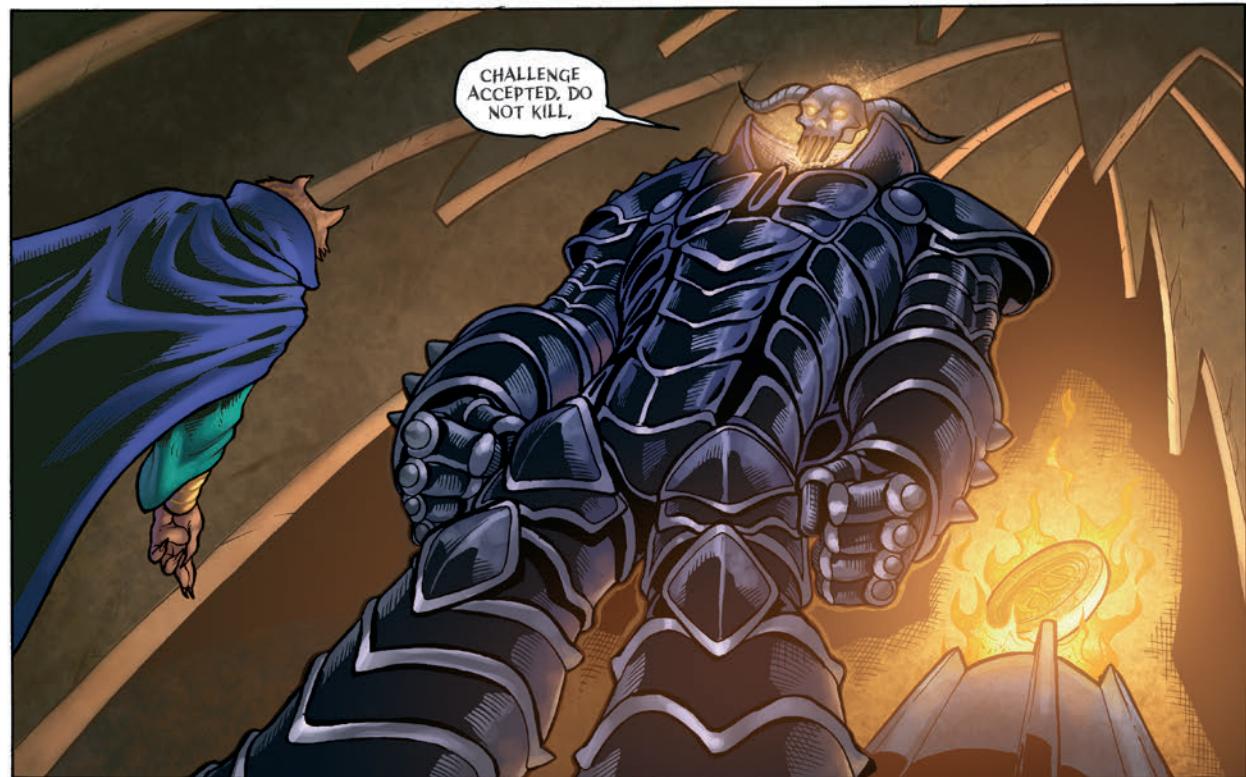


















FOR I AM
TRASGAR THE
MAGNIFICENT!
AND I—

—WAIT.
I KNOW
YOU!





Art by Tyler Walpole



SMALL PROBLEM.
THE MAGE IN CHARGE
OF THE ARTIFACT
WE'RE STEALING?

I KNOW YOU!

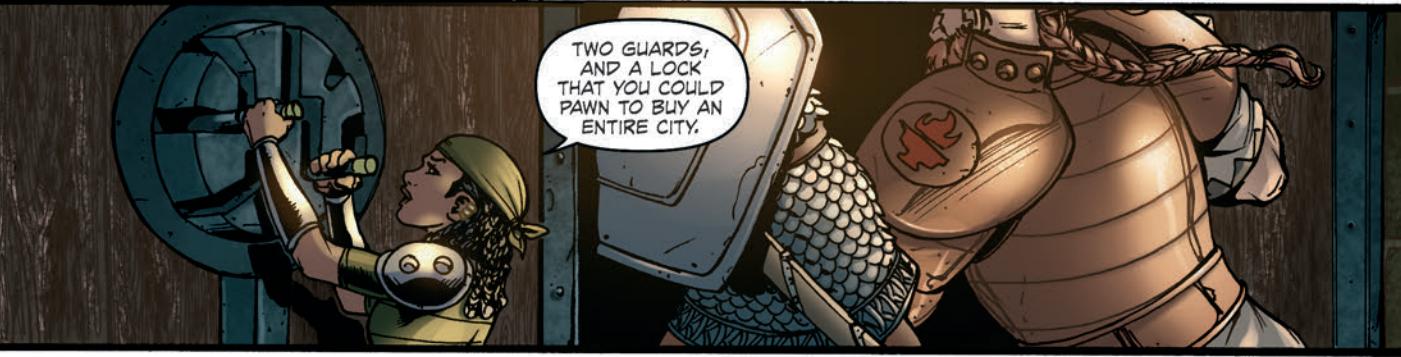
YOU
WERE AT
AL'BIHEL!



I MAY HAVE LEFT HIM
TO DIE AT THE CLAWS
OF MUTATED DROW IN
AN EXPLODING TOWER.













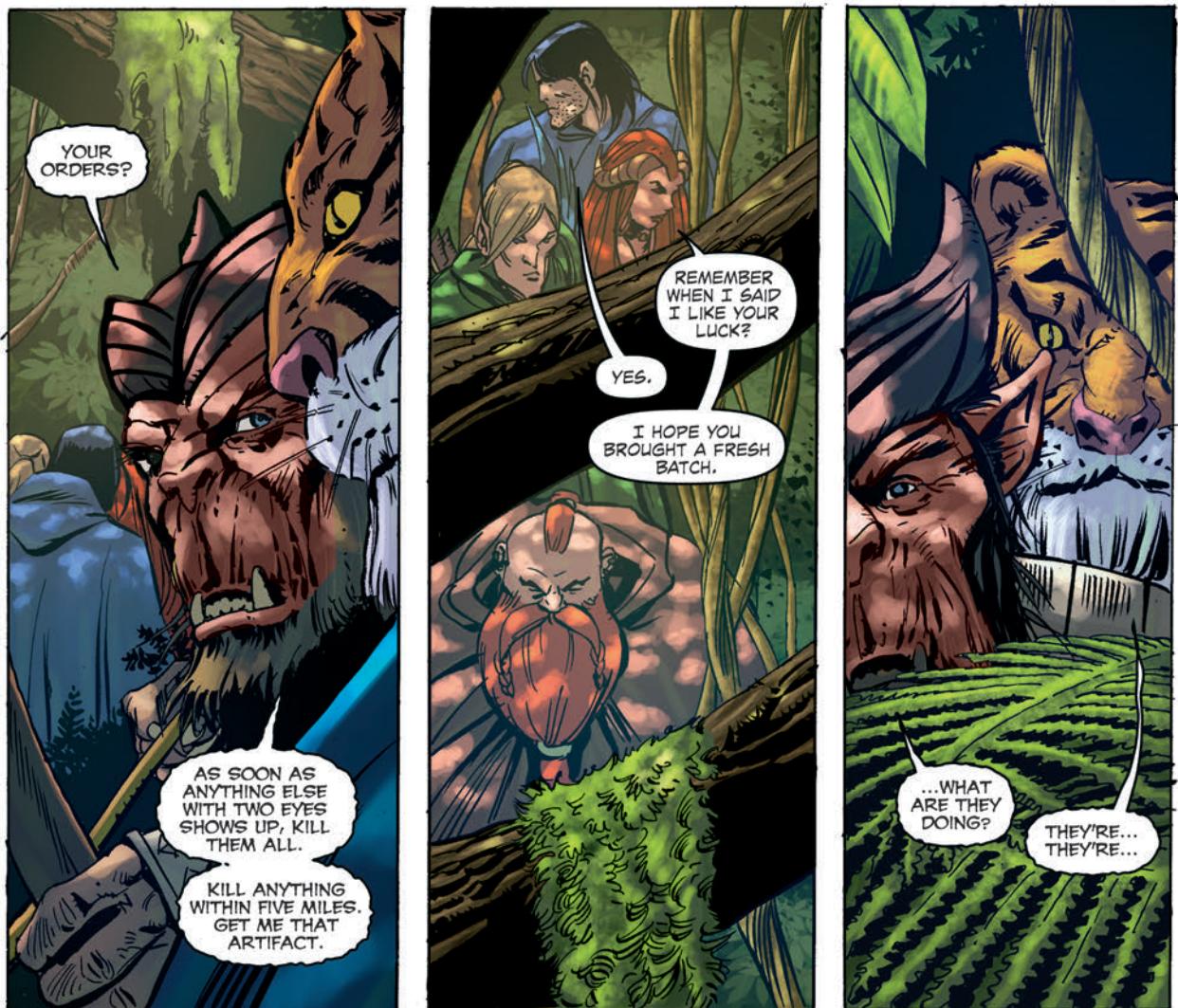




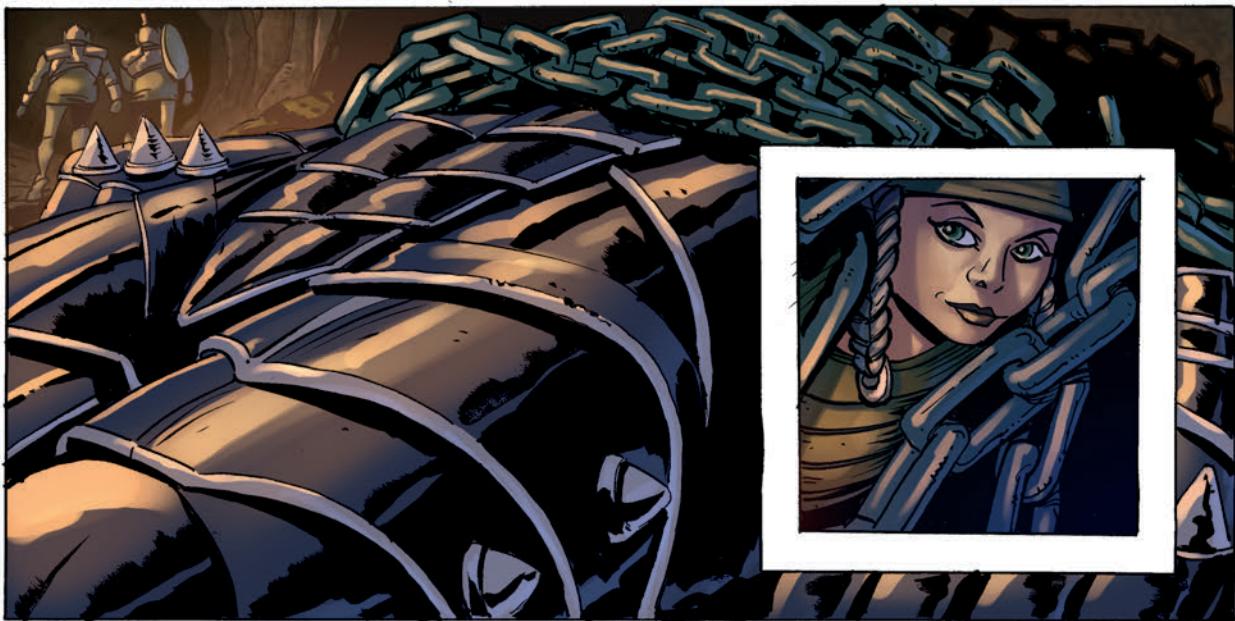


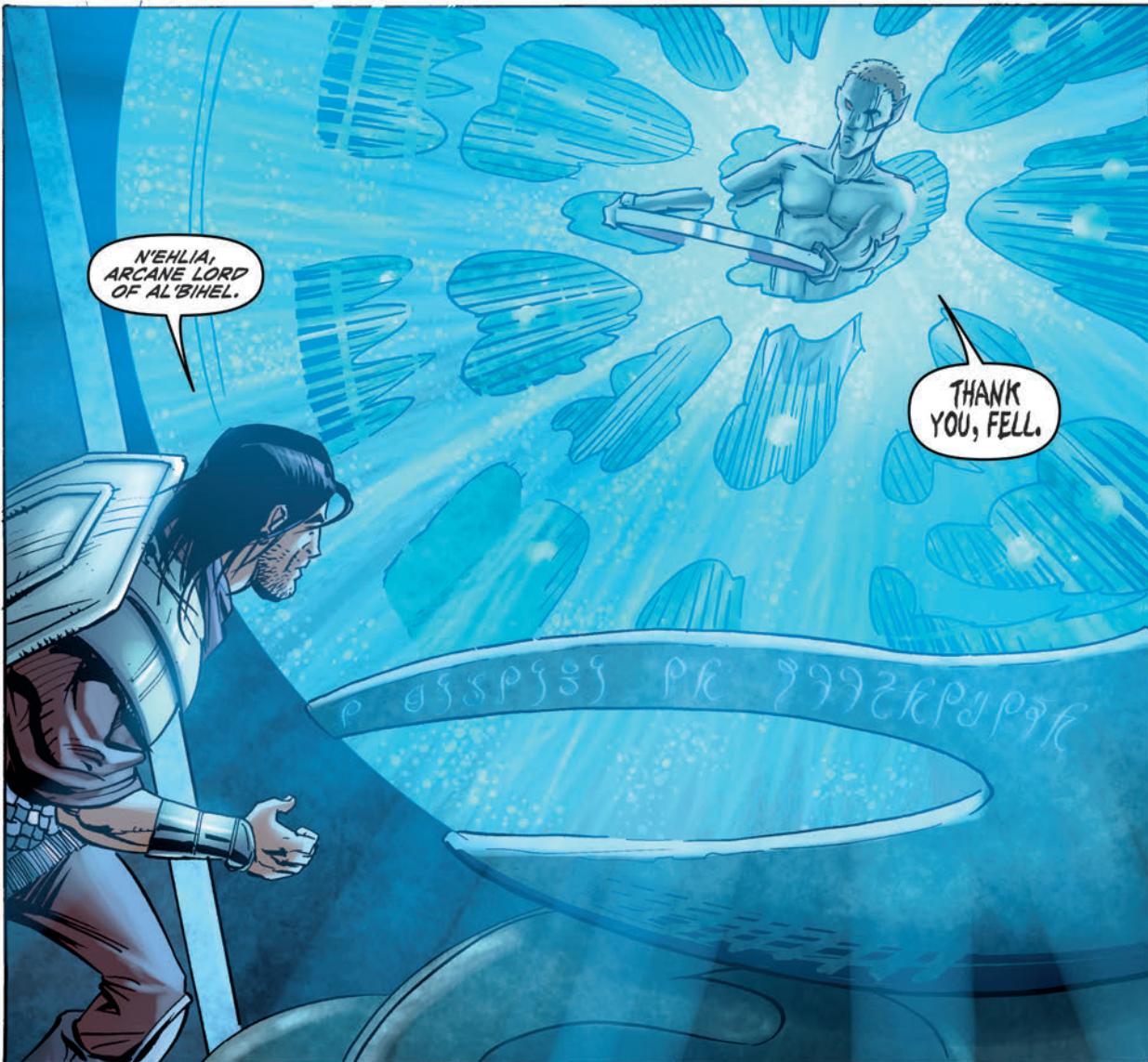


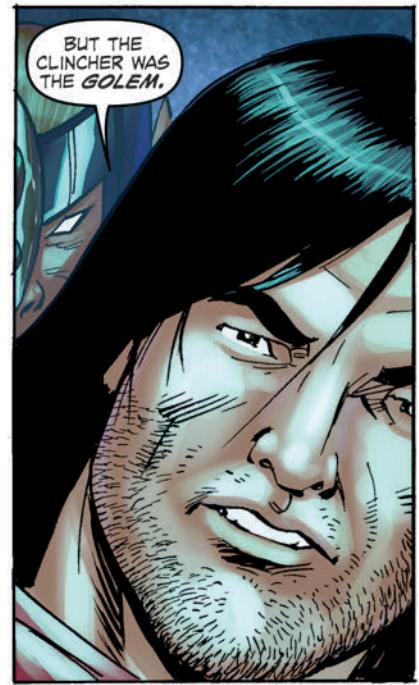












A FEW THINGS. FIRST OFF, WHEN WE FOUND YOU IN CHAD'MARAGH, WHY WERE ALL THE FOMORIAN'S CAPTIVES ELADRIN?

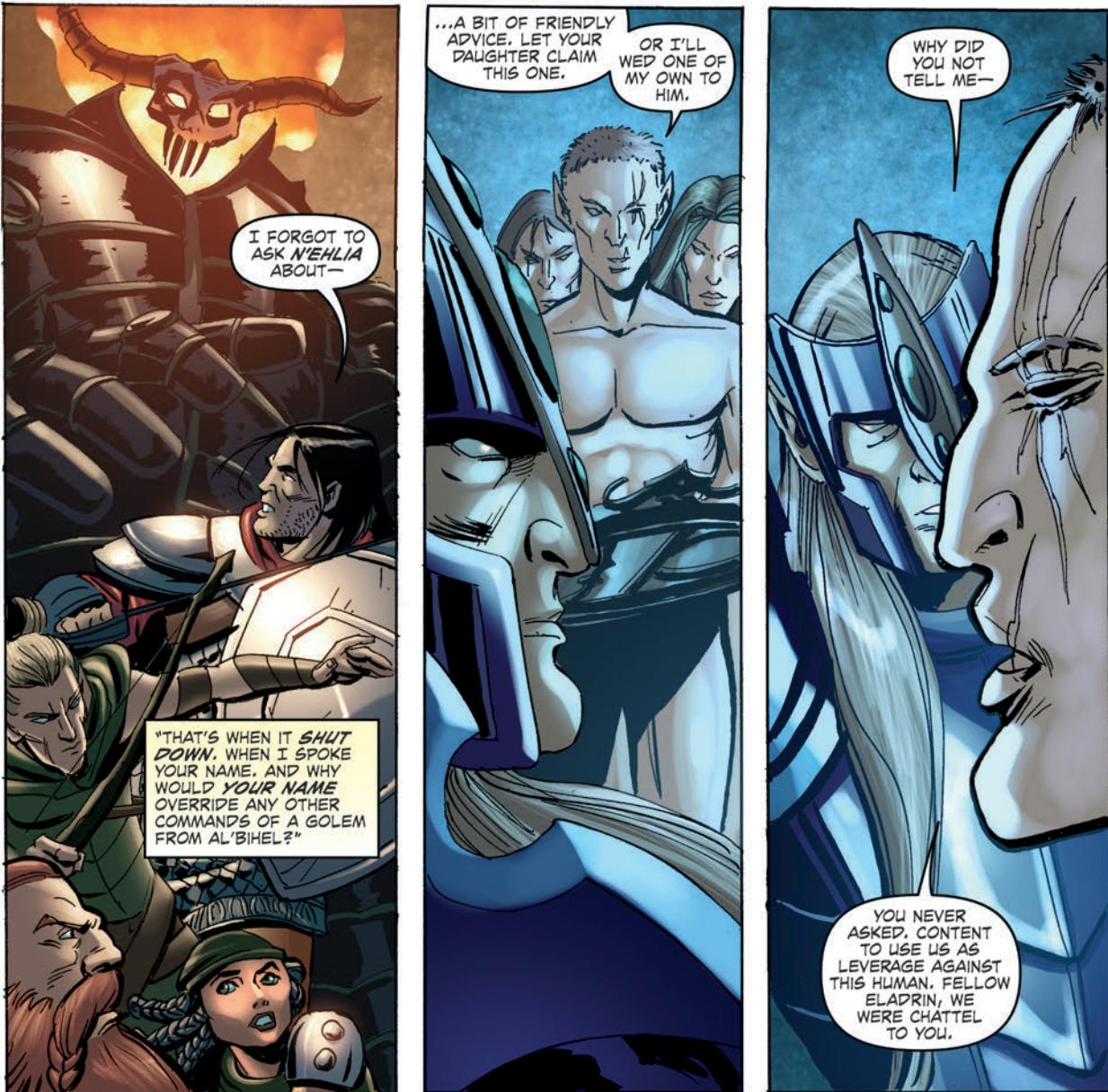
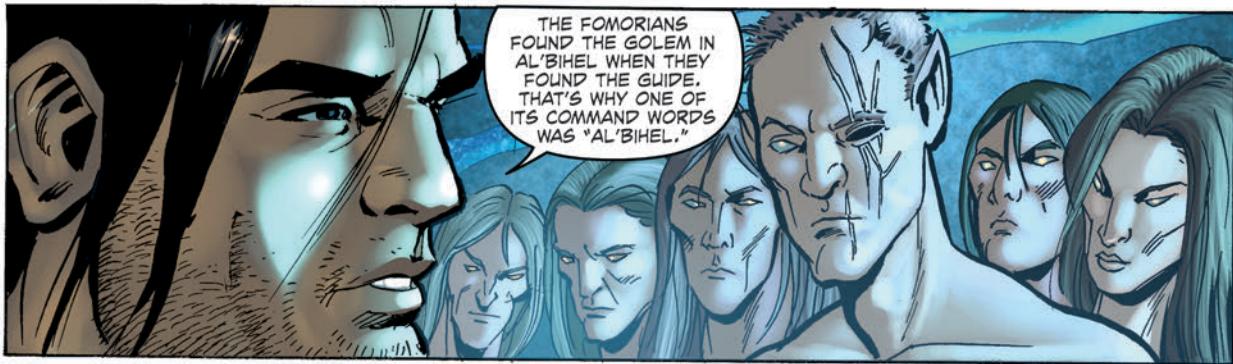
IT SUGGESTED YOU'D BEEN CAUGHT TOGETHER, WITH YOU AS THEIR LEADER.

YOU WERE AN EXPERT IN DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL, WHICH IS WHY THEY HAD YOU CREATING THE WORLD KEYS.

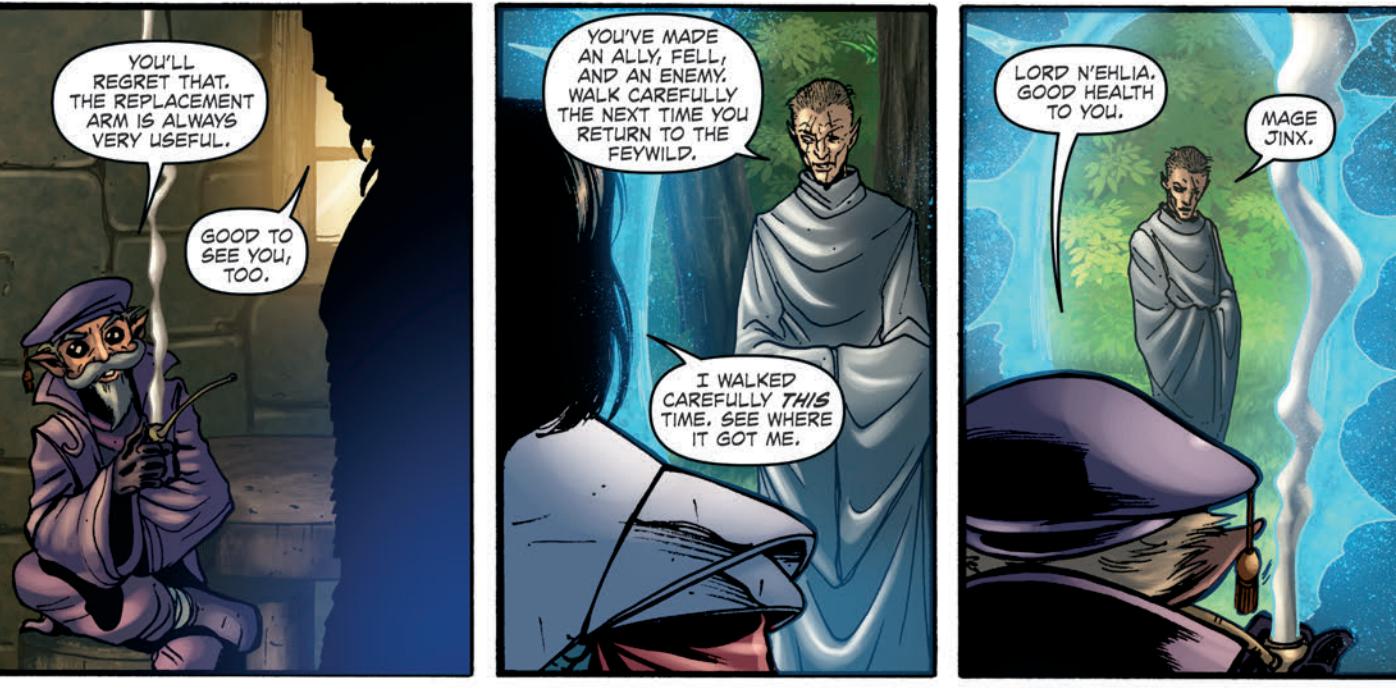
BUT THE CLINCHER WAS THE GOLEM.

I AM THE ARCANE LORD OF AL'BHEL, LOST THESE CENTURIES.

ALTHOUGH I AM A BIT PUZZLED AS TO HOW ADRIC DISCOVERED THAT.









IT'S AMAZING HOW CLARIFYING
A FEW DRINKS CAN BE.

YESTERDAY'S TROUBLE IS
YESTERDAY'S TROUBLE. ANY
JOB YOU COME HOME ALIVE
FROM IS A GOOD JOB.

THE TIEFLING SEEMS UPSET,
BUT I'M SURE THAT WAS JUST
A BIT OF THE BATTLE-SHOCK
FROM HER FIRST TIME WITH US.

I'M SURE IT'LL PASS.

NO, I WILL NOT
TELL YOU OF THIS
OTHER TIEFLING. I
KEEP MY GUEST'S
SECRETS.

THERE IS
NOTHING YOU CAN
TRADE—

I WILL
TRADE YOU
FELL.

I WILL TELL
YOU HOW TO FIND
ADRIC FELL.

IT WAS, AS USUAL, A FINE DAY.
UNTIL KHAL GOT ANOTHER
LOVE LETTER.

BUT I'LL TELL
YOU THAT ONE
NEXT TIME.

END "FEYWILD."

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

Comic & Game Adventure

It Goes Horribly Right

by John Rogers, Andrea Di Vito, and Logan Bonner



The First Lord's underground stead in the Feywild is choked with stale air and the stench of slaves. A bargain has been struck with a powerful Rakshasa, bringing you one step closer to an artifact that could send you home. But an old acquaintance recognizes you and is about to blow your cover. Will you continue the bluff or stand and fight?

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Comic and Game Adventure

It Goes Horribly Right

By Logan Bonner

Cartography by Jonathan Roberts

Introduction

Fell's Five grabbed the Guide of Gates and got out alive in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS #11. Now your adventurers can dupe Declan, skirt the spear trap, grapple with the guardian golem, and retrieve the relic in your home D&D campaign!

These encounters are best for characters of level 5–7.

Adventure Background

The fomorians. Malformed, insane, megalomaniacal giants. Nasty customers. They corrupt the underworld of the Feywild, and sometimes their rot creeps up to the surface.

The eladrin do what they can to stop the giants' advances into the world above, but Toveliss E'Teall, Lord of Cydaria, has bigger plans. He wants to recover the Guide of Gates, an artifact tied to planar travel, and use it to create portals into the fomorian caverns. The eladrin could negate the giants' advantage by taking the fight right to them. Toveliss might even be able to banish the misshapen creatures out of the Feywild entirely.

The Guide sits inside a vault in what was once Al'bihel, the City of Stairs. This majestic city fell long ago, abandoned by the eladrin who built it. Toveliss seeks out the adventurers to travel there and retrieve it for him. It could be they need a favor from him (such as a return trip back to the natural world), or that respect for the dead keeps the eladrin away from the city.

Toveliss warns the adventures that the powerful fomorian Thrumbolg, the First Lord, has strongholds near the old city, and that they should be wary. Unfortunately, the eladrin doesn't realize that Thrumbolg seized Al'bihel itself, filling it with hobgoblin

forces and putting his seneschal Declan in charge of everyday operations.

Getting the Guide will require outsmarting the masters of the evil city. Are your adventurers up to the job?

Using N'ehlia

We find out in this issue that N'ehlia was the arcane lord of Al'bihel all along! It's an interesting puzzle, and a great twist, but requires more setup than this adventure has space to cover. If you can, bring N'ehlia's people into the story before the adventurers meet Toveliss, and plant some major clues about him—the same sort Adric figured out!

Quests

Look for ways to put your adventurers in debt to Toveliss, get them on Thrumbolg's bad side, or secure something else they care about inside the vault along with the Guide.

QUEST: RETRIEVE THE GUIDE OF GATES

6th-Level Major Quest (1,250 XP)

If the adventurers manage to break into the vault and snag the Guide of Gates—and manage to get back out—they complete this quest. Whether or not they need to return it to Toveliss is up to you.

Getting Started

The Dungeon Master needs a copy of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game rules, which you can find in either the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game Starter Set or the Dungeon Master's Kit. Players need a copy of *Heroes of the Fallen Lands* or *Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms* and a character sheet to make characters to use in the adventure.

Once you're ready to begin, flip to Encounter 1 and give your players a glimpse of what terrible things the future might bring!

Encounter 1: In the First Lord's Realm

It should be clear to the players that their characters can't simply fight their way into the city. The following skill challenge covers some ways to gain entry. Reward clever thinking, and have characters say what they want to do rather than just rattle off skills they want to use. After all, Tisha didn't just say "I roll a Bluff check." She came up with a story about other thieves and backed it up with bravado that impressed Declan!

Skill Challenge: Get Inside

The adventurers need to bypass the guard posts to enter the city. They also need to find the vault once they get inside.

Level: 6 (XP 250).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Success: The adventurers are inside the city and are able to sneak away or explore freely, depending on how well they convinced Declan to trust them.

Failure: The adventurers are inside the city, but under arrest or stuck in a torture room they'll need to escape from.

First, read or paraphrase:

The journey from Cydaria to Al'bihel doesn't seem long, but time passes strangely in the Feywild. Apart from some minor animal attacks and a tense journey through a dryad's grove, the trip is largely uneventful.

The great towers of Al'bihel stand cracked and ruined. Between their sheer sides stand the gates into the city, each guarded by a group of hobgoblins or bugbears. None of these guards looks particularly smart. It seems the First Lord didn't expect intruders to dare enter his realm.

Inside the city gates, all sorts of humanoids roam back and forth, doing whatever business Thrumbolg demands be done. The streets bustle with activity, and it would be difficult for outsiders to pass by unnoticed.

Stage 1: Front Gates

After one or two successes, the adventurers can get past the gates.

Talk to the Guards: A clever story, or even a not-so-clever one, can fool the guards (Bluff DC 15). They can be negotiated with

(Diplomacy 23), and money makes things run smoothly (automatic success for a bribe of 300 gp or more). If the adventurers mention something the guards haven't heard about, they might be taken to Declan to sort it all out. They'll have to tell him their story and hope it still holds up (DC 15 in the same skill already used).

Sneak In: Staying out of notice is tough in the busy streets (Stealth DC 23).

Characters who look monstrous (like minotaurs or even shifters) might be able to pass more easily. Eladrin and elves have no chance.

Tunnel Under: Fomorian tunnels run below the city. Adventurers who realize this can travel through them to get inside (Dungeoneering 15). A secondary Nature check doesn't give a success, but lets a character find out about the tunnels.

Scale the Walls: The eladrin-crafted towers are practically impossible to climb for characters of this level.

Stage 2: Getting to the Vault

If the adventurers meet with Declan, he introduces them to Trasgar. It's easy to tell that they can trick the blind mage if they get Declan out of the way. If the PCs made it in without meeting Declan, they need to find the vault.

Get Declan out of the Way: The adventurers might create a distraction (Bluff DC 15, but many other skills could apply) to get Declan to leave them in Trasgar's care while he takes care of other matters. If the adventurers are clever, they might be able to watch Declan like Bree did, and figure out clues for bypassing the vault's defenses.

Locate the Vault: The Guide can be found in many ways: sensed magically (Arcana DC 15), found after asking around (Streetwise DC 15, though word might get around), or recalled from the lore about Al'bihel (History DC 15).

Encounter 2: The Vault

Encounter Level 9 (2,150 XP)*

*That includes the golem. They probably won't kill the golem. If they correctly guess or research the passcode for the golem, they receive half XP for defeating it (600 XP).

1 vault golem (G)

4 bugbear thugs (B)

1 spear trap hallway

This encounter really contains several stages that can be completed in a hurry or done sporadically.

First comes the trapped hallway, where only the white squares are safe. Second come the bugbear guards (who might take on adventurers while they're still on the tiles). Then the vault door needs to be opened, and that's a little tricky. Now that the vault's open, the adventurers need to dodge the golem or deactivate it. Beyond the golem, the adventurers can finally find the Guide of Gates—the grand prize.

Cheating

Fell's Five made short work of the challenges in the hallway and vault, mostly thanks to Bree's scouting. In other words, they cheated. You might set up a chance for your adventurers to spy on Declan or find some diagrams in Trasgar's study that show how the vault lock works.

Have the adventurers place their miniatures on the bottom edge of the map.

When the adventurers enter the hallway, read or paraphrase:

A long hallway tiled in white and brown stone, stretches out ahead of you. At the end of the hall, four bugbears stand guard. They look nervous, and they seem to be moving very carefully. Their attention isn't totally focused on their job.

The bugbears stand in front of a pair of massive wooden doors with a giant metal disk-shaped lock. The mess of levers on the lock probably needs to be switched into a certain configuration, and it certainly looks complicated.

If the adventurers stay at the end of the hall and don't make too much noise, they have a

bit of time before the bugbears notice them. Since the bugbears are distracted, their passive Perception is only 11.

Tactics

The bugbears take great care to avoid stepping on the trapped tiles. They won't go past the center point of the hallway unless they're being torn up by ranged attacks. In combat, they try to flank for combat advantage. A bugbear might even bull rush an adventurer onto a brown tile to trigger the spear trap.

Vault Lock

The doors to the vault can be opened by correctly positioning a series of levers. This requires two consecutive successful DC 15 Thievery checks. Each check takes a standard action. If a character succeeds once and fails with the next check, he or she can use a minor action to reset the lock to last correct position.

If the lock is successfully opened, the doors swing wide to reveal the golem.

Golem

Before the adventure, decide on the golem's passcodes. By default, it has three: two rotating passcodes that allow the speaker to pass, and one master key that shuts down the golem. The "Golem Passcodes" sidebar gives suggestions for ways you might make the passcode fit your campaign.

The golem is a simple creature, built only to guard the vault. Either the person who enters says the passcode and is trustworthy, or says the wrong passcode and must be KILLED.

When the adventurers get into the vault and first see the golem, read or paraphrase:

The massive doors swing inward to reveal a stone vault. Inside stands a giant-sized golem. Its body is made of fine metal plates, and its head is a flaming skull with long horns.

Behind it, a golden sextant-like object floats above an ornate pedestal. It gives off ripples of arcane power, and it feels like the very fabric of the Feywild pulses in its presence.

The golem peers down, then speaks one word in a gravely voice: "Challenge." It seems to be asking for a passcode of some kind.

The golem waits about 1 round before issuing its challenge again. Attacking the golem or trying to get past it to reach the Guide of Gates causes it to begin fighting immediately.

If an adventurer recites the correct passcode, read:

The golem says, "Challenge accepted. Do not kill." It then stands aside, allowing full access to the Guide of Gates.

If an adventurer recites the wrong passcode or waits too long, read:

The golem pulls back its massive fist and intones, "Challenge failed." The flames around its head flare, and it strikes!

Now the golem rolls initiative and fights the adventurers. Its words can appear in another language, like they did in the comic, or in Common, depending on how you alter the golem to fit your campaign.

While the golem fights, it gives a second chance to recite the password. If a character understands the golem's language, read:

The golem says, "Rotating password incorrect, answer secondary password or master key."

The master key shuts down the golem entirely rather than just making it step aside. It's the last resort!

Golem Passcodes

The golem in the vault with the Guide of Gates requires a passcode to bypass. It's entirely likely your group won't know the passcode and will just need to fight or run, but you have some options to drop passcode hints.

In the comic, all of the passcodes we heard were eladrin words. Adventurers who do research into the history of Al'bihel might figure out the passcodes. You can use N'ehlia's name even if you didn't incorporate him into the backstory. He can just be the last arcane lord of Al'bihel.

You can instead adapt the passcodes to use something else from your campaign. You can add decorations to the golem that match ones the adventurers saw earlier, then have the passcodes fit another civilization they've encountered.

Remember, nobody says you have to know for sure what the passcodes are! If one of your players makes a guess that seems pretty plausible, roll with it. They'll always talk about the time they figured out the golem's password with a wild guess.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Tiles: The goblins have already started up their campfire. Any creature that enters or ends its turn in the campfire takes 5 fire damage.

Vault Doors: Opening the lock is detailed in the "Vault Lock" section. The doors are sturdy wood (AC 3, Fortitude 15, 150 hit points). Breaking them down requires a DC 20 Strength check.

Guide of Gates: The Guide itself rests on a pedestal in the vault. .

Spear Trap Hallway

Only the white squares in the hallway are safe. Stepping on a square of brown stone triggers the spear trap in the ceiling above.

Spear Trap Hallway

Level 6 Trap

XP 250

Initiative —

Object

Detect Perception DC 24

HP 15 per spear, 40 per trigger plate

AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will —

Immune necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

← **Attack** ♦ **At-Will**

Trigger A creature enters one of the brown trigger squares or starts its turn there.

Attack (Opportunity Action) **Melee 1** (triggering creature); +11 vs. AC

Hit 2d6 + 7 damage.

COUNTERMEASURES

• **Disable:** Thievery DC 23. *Success* A single trigger square and its associated spear no longer function.

4 Bugbear Thugs (B)

Level 4 Brute

XP 175 each

Initiative +7

Medium natural humanoid

HP 65; **Bloodied** 32

AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 11

Perception +8

Speed 6

Low-light vision

TRAITS

Bushwhack

The bugbear gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against a creature that has no allies adjacent to it.

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ **Morningstar** (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 6 if the bugbear has combat advantage against the target.

† **Handaxe** (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit 1d6 + 6 damage.

Skills Stealth +12

Str 20 (+7) Dex 20 (+7) Wis 13 (+3)

Con 15 (+4) Int 8 (+1) Cha 10 (+2)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common,

Goblin

Equipment leather armor, morningstar, 2 handaxes

1 Vault Golem (G) Level 11 Elite Brute

Large natural animate (construct) XP 1,200

HP 276; Bloodied 138

Initiative +XX

AC 23, Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 21

Perception +XX

Speed 6 (cannot shift) Darkvision

Immune disease, poison

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

TRAITS

Interfering Bolts

When the golem takes lightning damage, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ **Slam** (keywords) ♦ At-Will

Attack Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC

Hit 2d10 + 13 damage.

† **Double Slam** ♦ At-Will

Effect The golem uses *slam* twice, each time against a different target.

† **Golem Rampage** ♦ Recharge 

Effect The golem moves up to its speed + 2.

During this movement, the golem can move through enemies' spaces, and when the golem first enters any creature's space, it uses *slam* against that creature.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

† **Thundering Stomp** ♦ At-Will

Trigger The golem starts its turn with two or more enemies adjacent to it.

Attack (Free Action)  burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +14 vs. Fortitude

Hit 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 22 (+11) Dex 18 (+9) Wis 14 (+7)

Con 18 (+9) Int 3 (+1) Cha 3 (+1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven



Encounter 3: Not Out of the Woods Yet

Encounter Level 8 (1,850 XP)

Declan the Seneschal (D)

9 hobgoblin battle guards (H)

1 dryad witch (D)

As the adventurers exit the city, hopefully with the Guide of Gates in hand, Declan and his troops follow in hot pursuit. This scenario assumes the adventurers are on the run, but many different plot developments could lead to a situation with the adventurers outside between Declan's forces and an angry dryad.

If the adventurers make it out without Declan in pursuit, add more dryads and fight only them. *Monster Vault* contains more versions of dryads you can use to fill out the encounter.

Have the players place their miniatures just barely in the grass, north of the chasm.

Read:

Declan rushes out of one of the towers, hobgoblin troops swarming around him. He shouts, "They have the Guide! Bring me their heads, preferably in pieces!"

Whenever a creature reaches the southern part of the map just past the chasm, read:

The trees rustle, and a female form steps out, wreathed in leaves. The dryad stares at you and the hobgoblins. "You intrude in my grove! What can you offer to save your lives?"

Roll for initiative.

The Dryad's Allegiance

The dryad isn't on either side: She hates everyone equally. Adventurers could convince her to attack only Declan's forces. The dryad asks for an offering, but it needs to be a thing of beauty or something related to the woods. Even just explaining that the hobgoblins are the ones who maintain this foul city in the middle of the forest could be enough. Anyone who attacks the dryad is in for serious retribution.

Tactics

Hobgoblins advance in waves rather than rushing in. Don't have them all attack the adventurers at once.

Declan will help solve the "too many hobgoblins" problem by blowing them up with *death bloom*. The rakshasa likes to stand safely behind his hobgoblins and shout orders

The dryad attacks both sides equally, going after whoever seems like the easiest target at the time. See the sidebar.

Conclusion

The adventurers escape with the Guide of Gates. Assuming they go back to meet Toveliss in Cydaria, he makes good on any promises he gave them. He might even have some future work for them once he finishes unlocking the secrets of the Guide and sending forces into the fomorian realms.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Trees: Creatures can stand in the smaller clusters of trees. A creature in the same square as a tree has partial cover.

Chasm: The pit in the middle of the map is 20 feet (4 squares) deep. A creature that falls in takes 2d10 falling damage. Climbing back up requires a DC 15 Athletics check.

Fallen Tree and Giant Root The large fallen tree serves as a bridge over the chasm, as do the massive roots coming from the southeast corner of the map. Moving onto one of these costs 1 extra square of movement.

Declan the Seneschal Level 8 Artillery

Medium natural humanoid, rakshasa XP 350

HP 66; Bloodied 33 Initiative +7

AC 22, Fortitude 19, Reflex 22, Will 21

Perception +6

Speed 6 Low-light vision

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Claw ♦ At-Will

Attack Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

② Acid Bolt (acid) ♦ At-Will

Attack Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit 2d6 + 8 acid damage, and each creature adjacent to the target takes 5 acid damage.

✿ Death Bloom (necrotic) ♦ At-Will

Requirement One of Declan's allies must be in origin square of the burst.

Effect The ally in the origin square dies.

Attack Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +13 vs. Fortitude

Hit 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

Miss Half damage.

MINOR ACTIONS

Deceptive Veil (illusion) ♦ At-Will

Effect The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 29 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Illusory Escape (illusion) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Trigger An enemy makes a ranged attack against Declan.

Effect (Immediate Reaction) Declan becomes invisible, and an illusion of him appears in his square. The transition is indiscernible to observers, and the illusion lasts until the start of Declan's next turn or until a creature attacks the illusion. After the illusion appears, Declan shifts up to his speed.

Str 15 (+6) Dex 16 (+7) Wis 15 (+6)

Con 12 (+5) Int 20 (+9) Cha 18 (+8)

Alignment evil Languages Common, Elven

10 Hobgoblin Battle Guards (H) Level 3

Soldier

Medium natural humanoid

HP 49; **Bloodied** 24

AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

Perception +8

Speed 6

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ Flail (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit 1d10 + 5 damage, and the hobgoblin marks the target until the start of the hobgoblin's next turn.

MOVE ACTIONS

Phalanx Movement ♦ At-Will

Effect Close burst 1 (allies in the burst). The hobgoblin and each target can shift 1 square as a free action. The target must shift to a square adjacent to the hobgoblin.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Share Shield ♦ At-Will

Trigger An adjacent ally is hit by an attack against AC or Reflex.

Effect (Immediate Interrupt) The ally gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex against the triggering attack.

Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+3)
Con 17 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, flail

1 Dryad Witch (W) Level 8 Controller

Medium fey humanoid (plant)

HP 84; **Bloodied** 42

AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22

Perception +14

Speed 8 (forest walk)

STANDARD ACTIONS

④ Thorny Vine ♦ At-Will

Attack Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

Hit 2d8 + 7 damage.

Effect The dryad can slide the target 1 square.

✗ Beguiling Verdure (charm) ♦ At-Will

Attack Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +11 vs. Will

Hit The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.

↳ Soporific Fragrance (charm) ♦

Recharge

Attack Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +11 vs. Will

Hit The target is dazed (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS

Treestride (teleportation) ♦ At-Will

Requirement The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.

Effect The dryad teleports up to 8 squares to a square adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.

MINOR ACTIONS

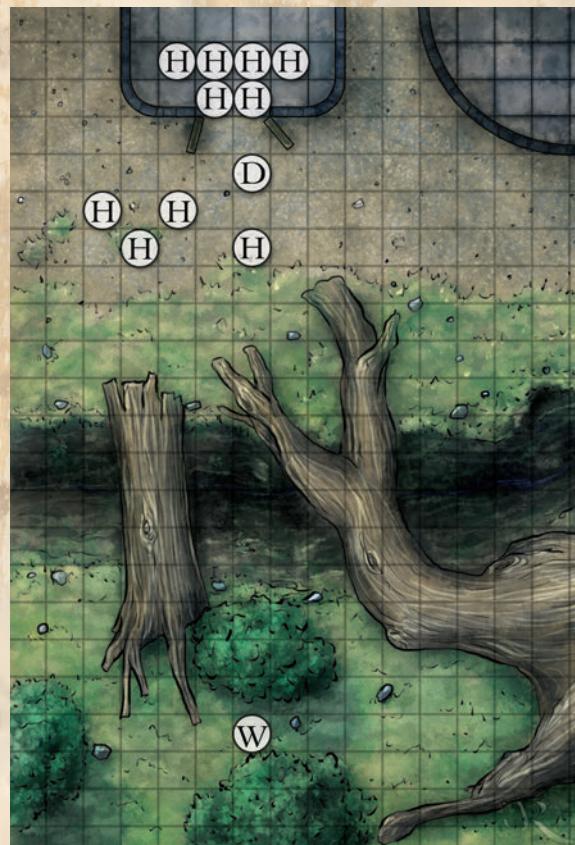
Deceptive Veil (illusion) ♦ At-Will

Effect The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses *deceptive veil* or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 29 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 20 (+9)

Con 12 (+5) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+7)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Elven









Art by Jorge Lucas





Art by Jorge Lucas











Glossary

Bulette: The creature that attacked the caravan in this issue is a bulette. Heavily armed predators that burrow through the earth, bulettes hunt for morsels to slake their appetite and once satisfied, retreat underground.

Bulette	Level 9 Elite Skirmisher	
Large natural beast	XP 800	
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +5; darkvision, tremorsense 20	
HP 204; Bloodied 102; see also <i>second wind</i>		
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 21, Will 21		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, burrow 6; see also <i>earth furrow</i>		
Action Points 1		
④ Bite (standard; at-will)	Before it bites, the bulette can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +14 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage, or 4d6 + 7 damage against a prone target.	
↳ Rising Burst (standard; at-will)	Close burst 2; the bulette sprays rock and dirt into the air when it rises out of the ground; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.	
‡ Earth Furrow (move; at-will)	The bulette moves up to its burrow speed just below the surface of the ground, avoiding opportunity attacks as it passes underneath other creatures' squares. As it burrows beneath the space of a Medium or smaller creature on the ground, the bulette makes an attack against the creature: +8 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target is knocked prone.	
Ground Eruption		
The squares into which a bulette surfaces and the squares it leaves when it burrows underground become difficult terrain.		
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ Healing		
The bulette spends a healing surge and regains 51 hit points. It gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Athletics +16, Endurance +15		
Str 24 (+11)	Dex 13 (+5)	Wis 12 (+5)
Con 22 (+10)	Int 2 (+0)	Cha 8 (+3)

Drow: The drow are a cursed people, a deviant and evil race firmly in the grasp of Lolth, a dark goddess. Exiled from the Feywild for rising up against their eladrin kin, the drow nurse ancient grudges. They wallow in lies and cruelty, plotting vengeance against their ancestral enemies. Few drow escape their treacherous communities, instead finding an early death on the end of a poisoned blade or strapped to an altar of Lolth.

Dryad: Dryads are wild, mysterious creatures found deep in secluded woodlands. Fierce protectors of the forest, they brook no insolence from interlopers. See below for this creature's stat block.

Dryad	Level 9 Skirmisher	
Medium fey humanoid (plant)	XP 400	
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +12	
HP 92; Bloodied 46		
AC 23; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 21		
Speed 8 (forest walk)		
④ Claws (standard; at-will)	+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, or 1d8 + 9 damage if the target is the only enemy adjacent to the dryad.	
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion	The dryad can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid, usually a beautiful elf or eladrin. A successful Insight check (opposed by the dryad's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.	
Treestride (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation	The dryad can teleport 8 squares if it begins and ends adjacent to a tree, a treant, or a plant of Large size or bigger.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Skills Bluff +10, Insight +12, Stealth +12		
Str 19 (+8)	Dex 17 (+7)	Wis 17 (+7)
Con 12 (+5)	Int 10 (+4)	Cha 13 (+5)

Quickling: Quicklings are swift, wicked fey that kill other creatures for food, treasure, or sport. They like to set ambushes and outwit enemies, and they frequently ally with other creatures that share their desires. If their escapades enrage an adversary too strong to overcome, quicklings have no problem fleeing in a chorus of nerve-grating laughter, leaving their so-called allies to fend for themselves.

Quickling Runner	Level 9 Skirmisher	
Small fey humanoid	XP 400	
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +7; low-light vision	
HP 96; Bloodied 48		
AC 24 (28 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 20, Reflex 24, Will 20		
Speed 12, climb 6; see also <i>fey shift</i> and <i>quick cuts</i>		
④ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage.	
‡ Quick Cuts (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	The quickling moves its speed. At any two points during its move, the quickling makes a melee basic attack at a -2 penalty. The quickling cannot use this power while immobilized or slowed.	
Fey Shift (standard; encounter)		
The quickling runner shifts 10 squares.		
Maintain Mobility (minor; recharge 2:2:2)		
An immobilized quickling runner is no longer immobilized.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +9, Stealth +16		
Str 9 (+3)	Dex 24 (+11)	Wis 17 (+7)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 14 (+6)	Cha 10 (+4)
Equipment short sword		



Rakshasa: Despite their bestial features, rakshasas are clever, malicious, and sophisticated. Although rakshasas come in many varieties, they all share some common traits, namely their feline heads, backward claws, and taste for luxury. Rakshasas often conceal their true appearance, using illusion magic to adopt whatever disguises serve them best. Rakshasas prefer to mislead would-be adversaries instead of fighting them, but if combat becomes necessary, rakshasas are fierce and ruthless.

Rakshasa Noble

Medium natural humanoid

Level 19 Controller

XP 2,400

Initiative +14	Senses Perception +19; low-light vision
HP 178; Bloodied 89	
AC 33; Fortitude 31, Reflex 33, Will 34; see also <i>phantom image</i>	
Speed 7	
④ Claw (standard; at-will)	+22 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the rakshasa noble's next turn.
⑦ Mind Twist (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	Ranged 20; +22 vs. Will; 3d6 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
⑦ Phantom Lure (standard; at-will) ♦ Charm	Ranged 10; +22 vs. Will; the target slides 5 squares.
⑦ Frightful Phantom (standard; recharge ④ ⑦) ♦ Fear	Ranged 5; +22 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares, and the target is stunned (save ends).
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion	The rakshasa noble can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.
Phantom Image (minor; recharge ④ ⑦) ♦ Illusion	Until the end of the rakshasa noble's next turn, any creature that attacks the rakshasa's AC or Reflex defense must roll twice and use the lower attack roll result. If either result is a critical hit, use that result instead.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Arcana +20, Athletics +17, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +20, Insight +19, Intimidate +21	
Str 16 (+12)	Dex 20 (+14)
Con 18 (+13)	Int 22 (+15)
	Wis 20 (+14)
	Cha 24 (+16)

Iron Golem: Created to guard their masters and their masters' secrets, golems have no sense of self and follow orders without question. Infused with potent toxins, iron golems thunder toward foes and bash them into mush.

Iron Golem

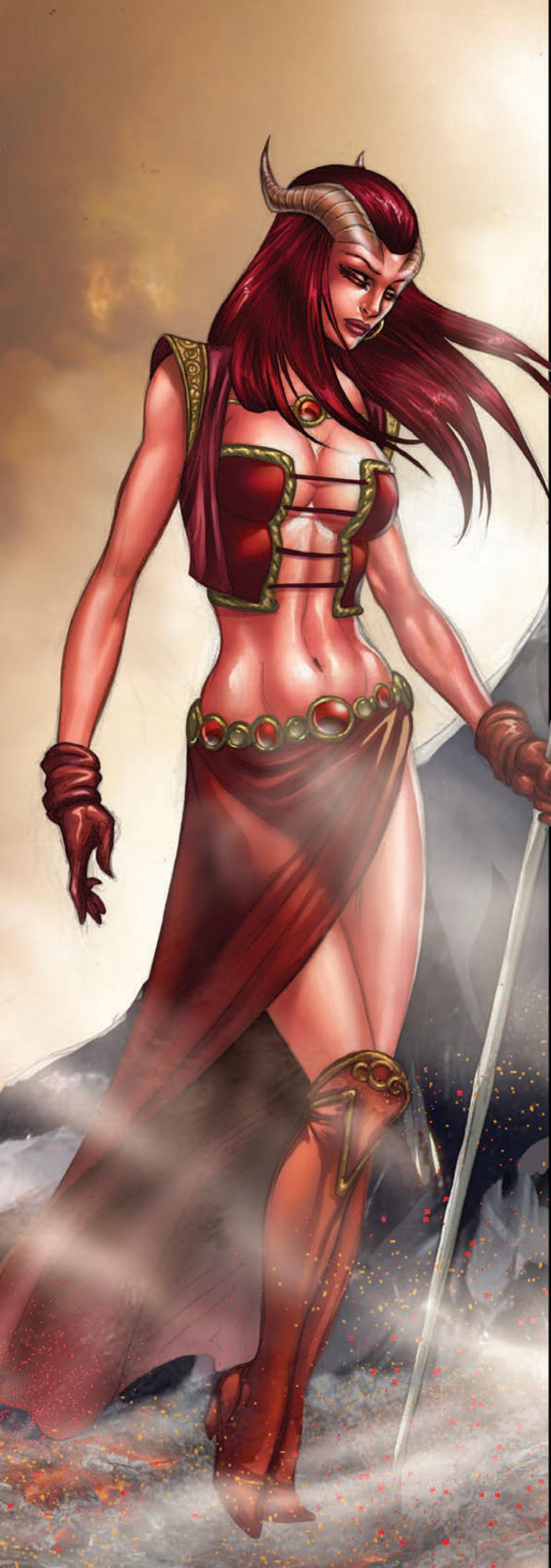
Large natural animate (construct)

Level 20 Elite Soldier

XP 5,600

Initiative +14	Senses Perception +10; darkvision
Noxious Fumes (Poison) aura 2; while the iron golem is bloodied, each creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 5 poison damage.	
HP 386; Bloodied 193; see also <i>toxic death</i>	
AC 36; Fortitude 36, Reflex 30, Will 28	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6 (cannot shift)	
Action Points 1	
④ Iron Blade (standard; at-will)	Reach 2; +27 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked (save ends).
⑦ Cleave (standard; at-will)	The iron golem makes two <i>iron blade</i> attacks, each against a different target.
⑦ Dazing Fist (immediate interrupt, when a creature marked by the iron golem and within its reach moves or shifts; at-will)	Reach 2; targets the triggering creature; +25 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed (save ends).
④ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ④ ⑦) ♦ Poison	Close blast 3; +25 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
④ Toxic Death (when first bloodied and again when the iron golem drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Poison	Close burst 3; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 poison damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 27 (+18)	Dex 15 (+12)
Con 25 (+17)	Int 3 (+6)
	Wis 11 (+10)
	Cha 3 (+6)
Equipment longsword	





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