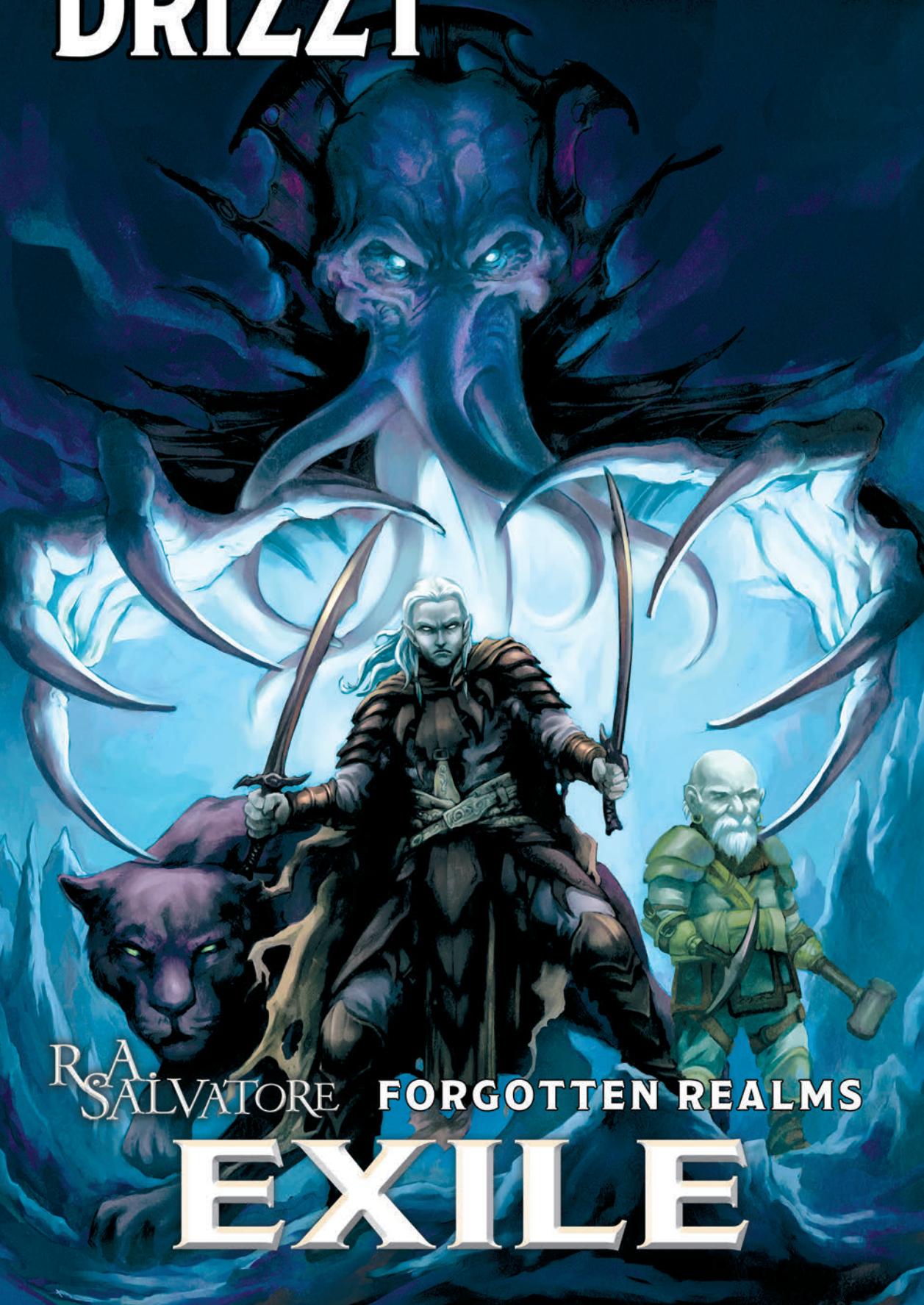


THE LEGEND OF
DRIZZT

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®



R A SALVATORE FORGOTTEN REALMS

EXILE

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THE LEGEND OF

DRIZZT



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R.A. SALVATORE FORGOTTEN REALMS

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CHAPTER 1

art by **TYLER WALPOLE**









Ten years?
Had it really been
that long?



Yet Drizzt's memories
of his previous life, fractured
though they were, remained.



He remembered discovering
that Matron Malice had
murdered Zaknafien, his
father and only friend.

A sacrifice to
the dark elves' vile
goddess Lofth, the
Spider Queen.



He remembered forsaking
his family and leaving
Menzoberranzan, with the
magical panther Guenhwuyvar
at his side.



MENZOBERRANZAN,
CITY OF THE DROW...

IT SHOULD
BE FINISHED
BY NOW.

PATIENCE,
MY DAUGHTER,
JARLAXLE IS A
CAREFUL ONE.

HE IS A
HOUSELESS
ROGUE, MATRON
MALICE, HE AND
ALL HIS BAND OF
PATHETIC
MALES!

THEY SERVE US
WELL, BRIZA. WITHOUT
BREGAN D'AERTHE, WE
COULD NOT TAKE ACTION
AGAINST OUR
ENEMIES.

USING
THEM ALLOWS
US TO WAGE WAR
AGAINST HOUSE
HUN'ETT WITHOUT
IMPLICATING OUR
HOUSE AS THE
PERPETRATOR.

WE SHOULD
HAVE ATTACKED
THEM OPENLY, TEN
YEARS AGO, ON THE
NIGHT ZAKNAFEIN
WAS SACRIFICED!

DO YOU FORGET HOW
THE ACTIONS OF YOUR YOUNGER
BROTHER STOLE LOLTH'S FAVOR
FROM US THAT NIGHT?!

NO, NOR DO
I FORGET THAT WHEN
HE KILLED TWO OF **THEIR**
WIZARDS, DRIZZT TOOK THE
SPIDER QUEEN'S FAVOR
FROM HOUSE HUN'ETT
AS WELL!

AND BECAUSE
NEITHER YOU NOR
MATRON SINAFAY
WILL ATTACK WITHOUT
THE GODDESS'S
BLESSING...

...WE HAVE SPENT
A DECADE DOING
NOTHING, SAVE EMPTY
OUR COFFERS TO ENRICH
A BAND OF LAWLESS
MERCENARIES!

GREETINGS,
MATRON
MOTHER.



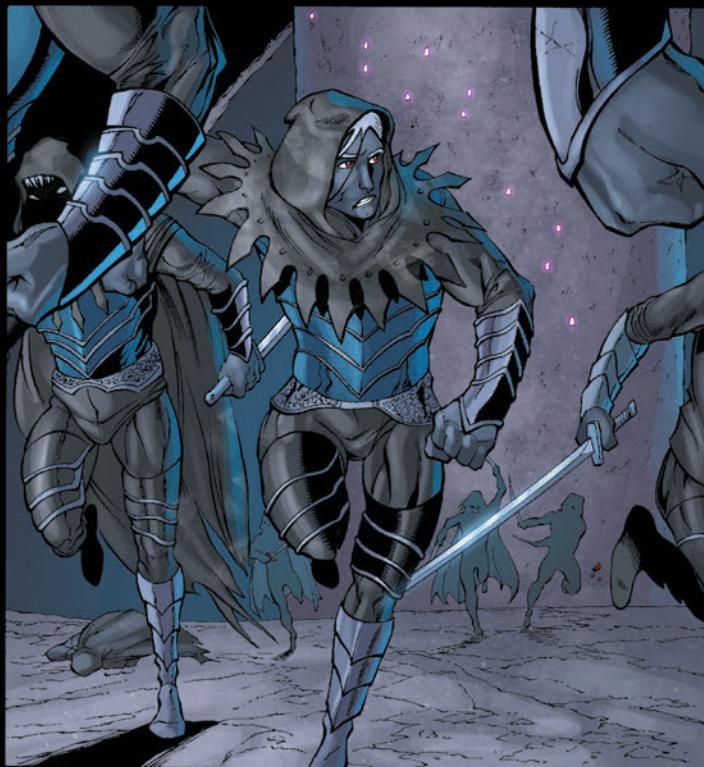


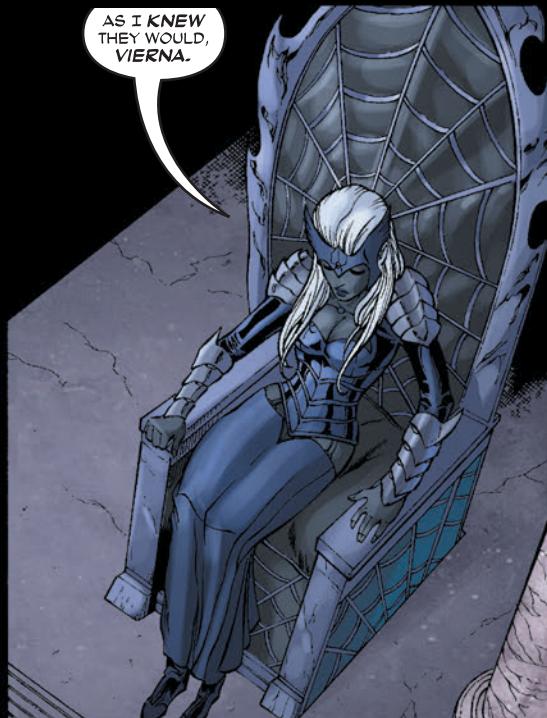
MATRON SINAFAY HAS NOT THE FAVOR OF LOLTH! SHE WOULDN'T DARE MOVE AGAINST US!

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD TELL HER SOLDIERS THAT!









The next morning, Malice received the summons from Matron Baenre—head of Menzoberranzan's most powerful house—with glee.

Malice knew what was coming, and only hoped she'd be allowed to watch her rival Matron SiNafay die a particularly horrible death.

WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS?



YOU DO NOT BELONG IN THIS PLACE, SINAFAY!

IT WAS HOUSE HUN'ETT THAT ATTACKED MY FAMILY IN THE LAST NIGHT! I HAVE MANY WITNESSES TO THE FACT, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT!

NONE. I ACTED AS THE SPIDER QUEEN DEMANDED OF ME.



IF LOTH APPROVED OF YOUR METHODS, YOU WOULD HAVE WON THE DAY.

MATRON BAENRE, I CLAIM THE RIGHT OF ACCUSATION AGAINST HOUSE HUN'ETT!

GRANTED. AS YOU HAVE SAID, AND AS SINAFAY AGREED, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT.

NOT SO.



THEN SHE
SHOULD NOT
BE HERE!

BY THE LAWS OF
MENZOBERRANZAN ANY HOUSE
THAT MAKES AN UNSUCCESSFUL
ATTACK AGAINST ANOTHER HOUSE IS
TO BE DESTROYED BY ORDER
OF THE RULING COUNCIL!



IT IS
ALREADY
DONE.

ACCORDING
TO OUR LAWS, THE
NOBLES OF HOUSE
HUN'ETT HAVE BEEN
SLAUGHTERED. IT
WAS, AFTER ALL, THE
CIVILIZED THING
TO DO.

YET
SINAFAY
LIVES!

BECAUSE
IN ORDERING LAST
NIGHT'S FIGHTING, SHE
WAS FOLLOWING THE
WISHES OF THE
SPIDER QUEEN.

FOR TEN
YEARS ALL OF
MENZOBERRANZAN
HAS SUFFERED THE
SPECTACLE OF YOUR
PRIVATE WAR!

THE INTRIGUE AND
EXCITEMENT WORE AWAY
LONG AGO. ACTION HAD
TO BE TAKEN, THUS HOUSE
HUN'ETT'S ATTACK.

NEITHER HOUSE HAD
THE FAVOR OF LOTH AND
SO SHE DID NOT INVOLVE
HERSELF IN YOUR BATTLE.
SHE ONLY DEMANDED IT BE
DECIDED ONCE AND
FOR ALL!

THEN
WHAT IS TO
BECOME OF
HER?

SIMPLE,
MALICE. SHE
WILL BE YOUR
DAUGHTER.





MANY YEARS AGO, LOTH MADE IT CLEAR HER DESIRES THAT YOU SIT UPON THE **RULING COUNCIL**, MALICE, AND NOW, WITH HUN'ETT GONE AND DO'URDEN THE **EIGHTH HOUSE** OF MENZOBERRANZAN, IT SHALL BE SO.

BUT UNDERSTAND YOUR **DILEMMA**: YOU HAVE LOST MORE THAN **HALF** YOUR TROOPS, AND IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT YOU STILL DO NOT HAVE THE FAVOR OF THE SPIDER QUEEN.

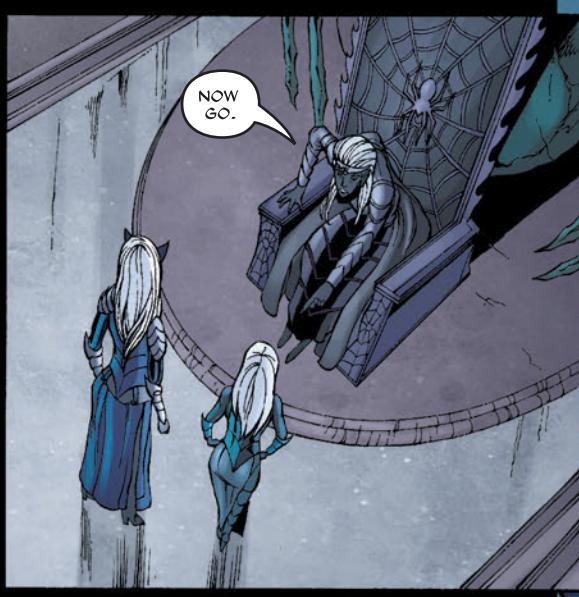
HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL BE UNTIL SOME **LOWER HOUSE** MOVES AGAINST YOU?

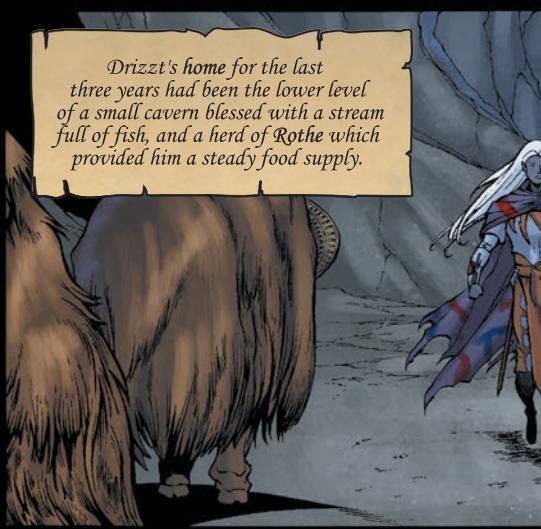


I HAVE HONORED LOTH'S WISHES, MALICE, YOU HAVE YOUR SEAT ON THE RULING COUNCIL.

BUT IF YOU WISH TO **KEEP IT**, YOU WILL GIVE THE SPIDER QUEEN WHAT SHE SO DESIRES.

YOU WILL FIND YOUR **WAYWARD SON**, AND YOU WILL TEAR OUT HIS HEART!





Drizzt's home for the last three years had been the lower level of a small cavern blessed with a stream full of fish, and a herd of Rothe which provided him a steady food supply.



Such a place was a veritable oasis in the wilds of the Underdark, and Drizzt had fought hard to protect it on numerous occasions.



Though it was not his alone.



For on the upper level lived a clan of Myconids, mute fungus-men who tended their grove of mushrooms and made it a point to ignore the dark elf living just below them.



Yet even in this relative tranquility, Drizzt could seldom find peace.

A courtesy Drizzt returned in kind.



He summoned Guenhwyvar as often as possible, and in her presence Drizzt almost felt normal.



Leaving Drizzt all alone.



But being in the material plane sapped the panther's strength, and after a few hours she was forced to return to her astral home and rest.



It was in these lonely times, surrounded by nothing but darkness and silence, that Drizzt Do'Urden faded away and the hunter emerged.



The hunter was a primal creature driven by instinct and rage.

...none could defeat the hunter.

And in the Underdark, where only the strongest survived...



Day and night were one, and all the days were one, in the life of the hunter.

And so did time pass...



Nothing mattered to Drizzt when he was in this state.

Not his past, and not his future.











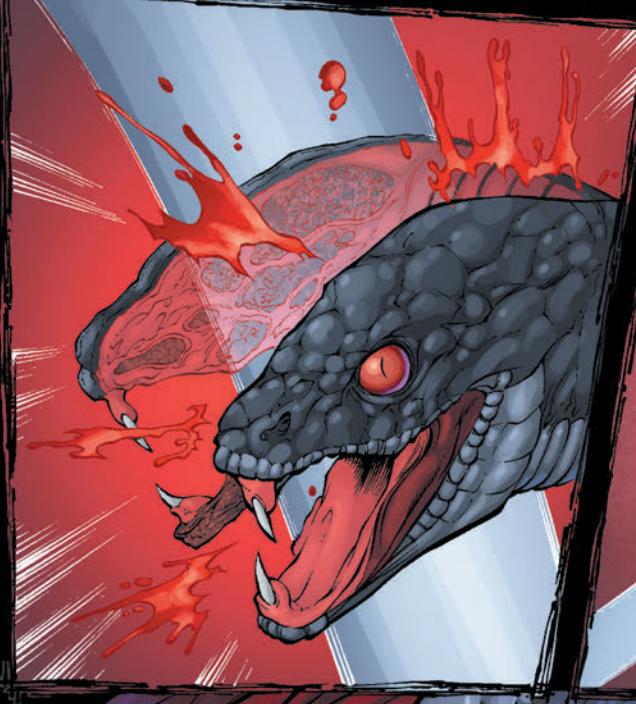
SURRENDER!

They moved so fast and with such precision that Drizzt had no hope of parrying them all.

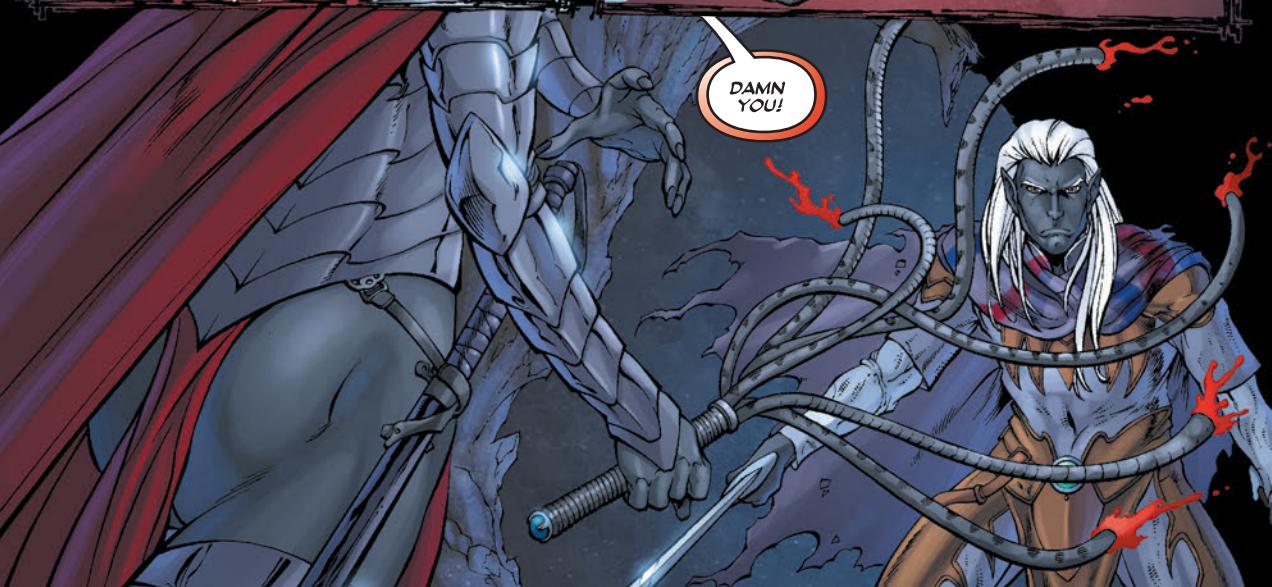


But the hunter would not be defeated.

The six viper heads of Briza's snake whip whirled and twisted, searching for the best angles of attack.



DAMN YOU!







Restlessness marked Drizzt's next days.

He kept on the move, not daring to return to the sanctuary of his small cavern home.

Matron Malice was still hunting him, of that Drizzt was sure.

She would never give up.

Yet he did not fear his mother.

Out here in the wilds of the Underdark, Drizzt could fight or hide from whatever nemesis she sent after him.

But still, alone in the darkness, he was afraid.

He knew that there was a battle raging within his very soul—a battle Drizzt Do'Urden was losing.

And no matter how far or fast he ran, he could not hide from himself.

They were Svirfneblí, deep gnomes.

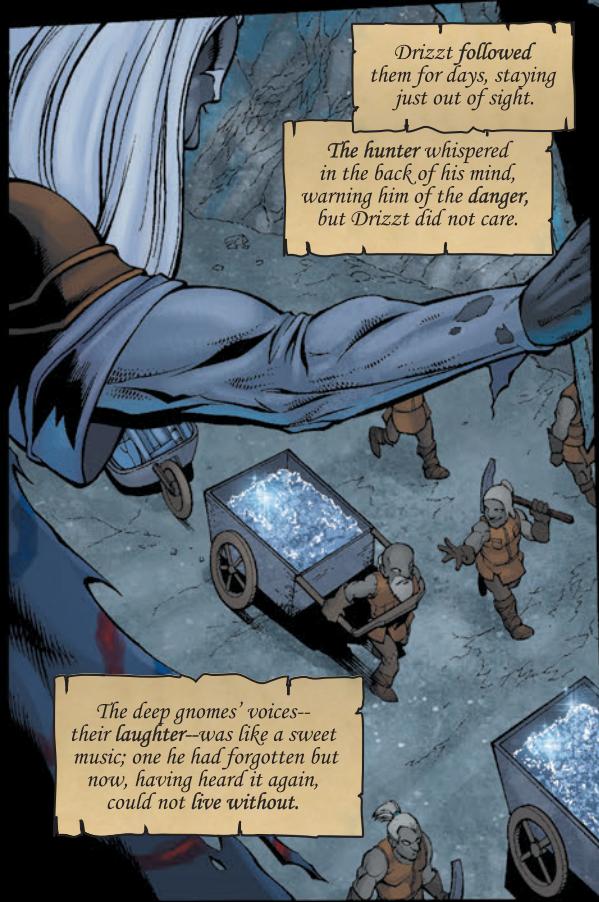
Once, long ago, Drizzt had led a Drow patrol against one of their mining expeditions. And when the battle was over, only their leader remained.

Drizzt begged his fellow dark elves not to kill the creature, and they had agreed.



Instead, they took his hands.

Such is what passes for Drow mercy.



Drizzt followed them for days, staying just out of sight.

The hunter whispered in the back of his mind, warning him of the danger, but Drizzt did not care.

Then, suddenly, the journey ended.



The deep gnomes' voices—their laughter—was like a sweet music; one he had forgotten but now, having heard it again, could not live without.

The Svirfneblí had arrived home to Bzilingstone, their fortress-like city.

And Drizzt knew what he had to do.





Drizzt knew they would most likely kill him.

Drow elves were the deep gnomes' most hated enemies. They would be right to attack him on sight.



Yet the idea of that did not frighten Drizzt—at least not as much as what waited for him back in the horrible isolation of the Underdark.



And so he kept walking, and hoped for the best.

HOUSE DO'URDEN...

YOU HAVE FAILED ME, BRIZA!

EVEN WITH DININ AND SIX TRAINED DROW WARRIOR YOU COULD NOT BRING DRIZZT BACK!

I WILL CAPTURE HIM, MATRON MOTHER.

HA!

HE WOULD CUT YOU DOWN IN AN INSTANT, MAYA. AS HE WOULD ANY OF US.

IT IS TRUE MATRON, SINCE HE LEFT MENZOBERRANZAN, DRIZZT'S SKILLS HAVE INCREASED TENFOLD.

YOU'RE AFRAID?

I KNOW THAT IF I MEET HIM AGAIN IN THE TUNNELS, I WILL NOT SURVIVE. AND THAT WILL ONLY SERVE TO WEAKEN HOUSE DO'URDEN FURTHER.

AND YOU BRIZA, YOU HAVE THE FAVOR OF LOLTH!

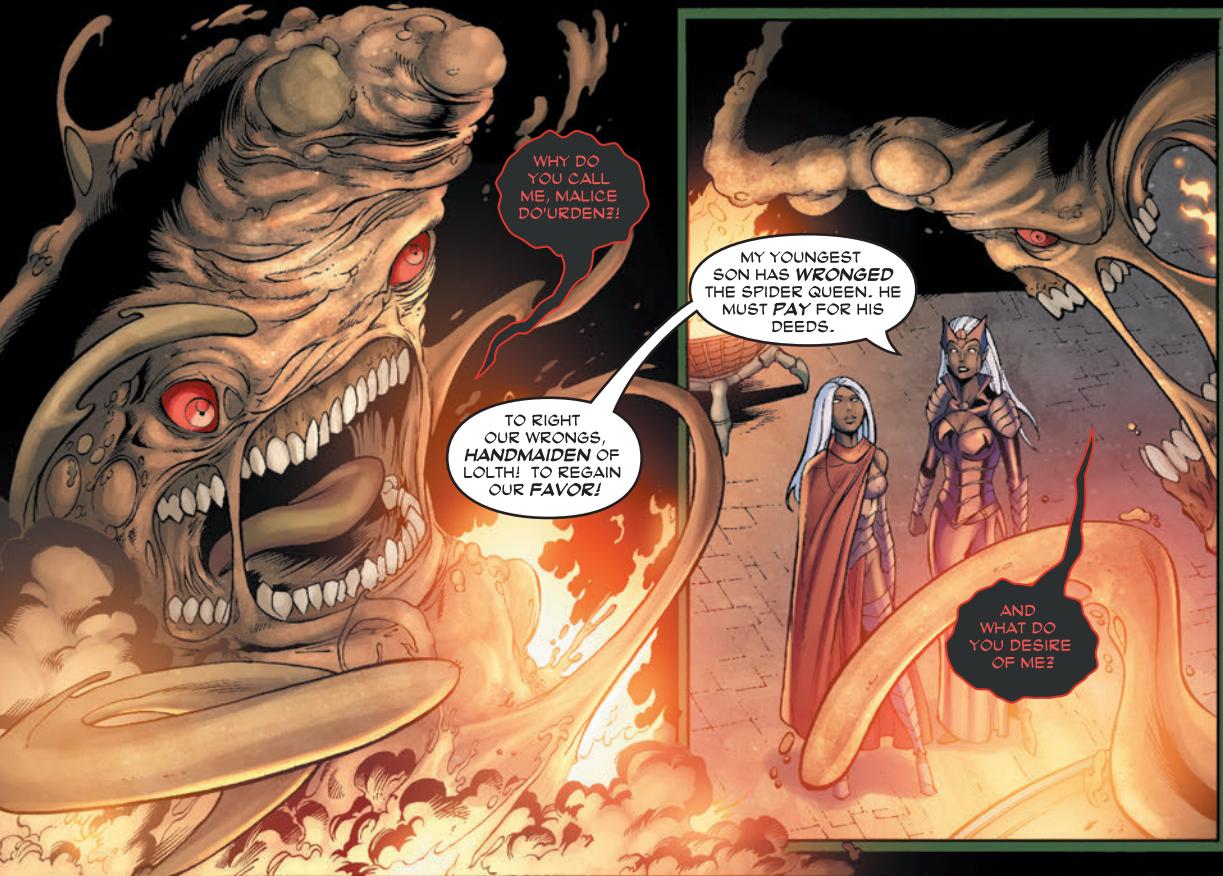
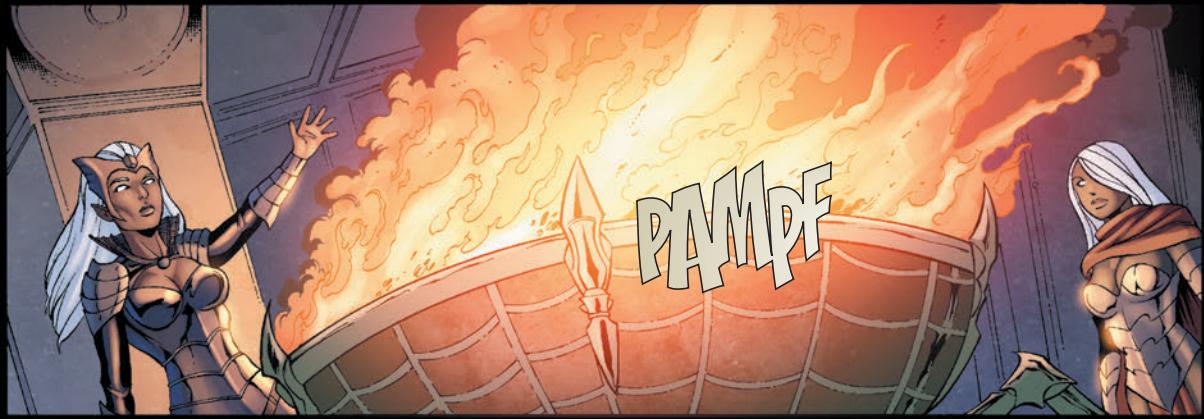
BUT DRIZZT IS BEYOND LOLTH NOW. THE WILDS OF THE UNDERDARK ARE HIS DOMAIN, WE CANNOT CATCH HIM OUT THERE.

JARLAXLE AND HIS BAND, MIGHT THEY--?

NOT FOR ANY PRICE. I HAVE ASKED.

SO ARE YOU-- WE TO JUST GIVE UP?

NO. THERE IS ANOTHER WAY.



YOU, WHO HAVE
NOT PLEASED LOTH,
DARE ASK FOR OUR
HIGHEST HONOR!!

LET DRIZZT LEARN
THE FOLLY OF HIS WAYS AND
THE POWER OF THE ENEMIES
HE HAS MADE!

LET MY SON
WITNESS THE TERRIBLE
GLORY OF LOTH REVEALED,
SO THAT HE WILL FALL TO
HIS KNEES AND BEG
FORGIVENESS!

ONLY
THEN SHALL
THE SPIRIT-WRAITH
DRIVE A SWORD INTO
HIS HEART!

SO ZAKNAFEIN,
THE WEAPONS MASTER YOU
GAVE TO THE SPIDER QUEEN,
MIGHT RISE AND CORRECT
THE WRONGS OF YOUR
YOUNGEST SON?

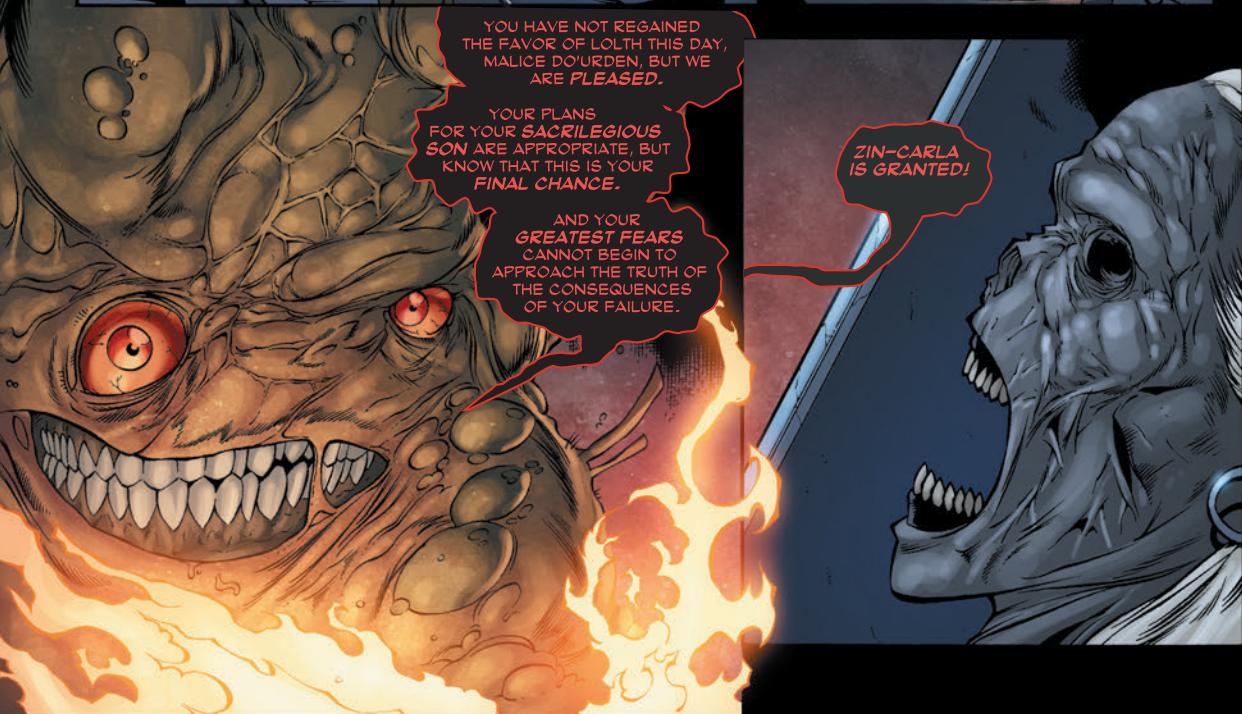
FITTING.

ZIN-CARLA
REQUIRES GREAT
SACRIFICE.

OF
COURSE.

YOU
CAN'T!
I AM THE
PATRON OF
THIS HOUSE!

THE CEREMONIAL
DAGGER,
SHI'NAYNE.



DEEP WITHIN THE CITY
OF BLINGDENSTONE...



YOU CAME IN TO US FROM
MENZOBERRANZAN,
YOUR HOME?

IT WAS
NEVER MY
HOME.

BUT, YES, I
LIVED FOR MANY YEARS
IN THE CITY OF THE DROW.
I AM DRIZZT DO'URDEN,
ONCE SECONDBOY OF
HOUSE DO'URDEN.

BY OUR INFORMATION,
HOUSE DO'URDEN
SURVIVES! YOU ARE NO
ROGUE! YOU'RE
A SPY!

I AM A
ROGUE BY
CHOICE. I HAVE
FORSAKEN THE
EVIL WAYS OF MY
PEOPLE.

HE IS NOT
LIKE OTHER DROW, AT
LEAST NONE I HAVE
EVER SEEN.

...AN
ACT...

...HE MUST BE
JUDGED...

...AGREED...

OUR KING
WILL RULE UPON
YOUR FATE, DARK
ELF.

AND THOUGH
I BELIEVE YOU AND
SHALL ASK FOR MERCY,
I SUSPECT YOU WILL
BE EXECUTED.

YES.



HOUSE DO'URDEN...

HEAR ME LOLTH,
GREATEST OF ALL
THE GODS.

WE HAVE
WOVEN POWERFUL
SPELLS AND ANOINTED
THE BODY WITH PRECIOUS
SALVES, AS YOU
DEMANDED.

NOW, WE
BEG YOU, REVEAL
THE **GLORY** OF
ZIN-CARLA!

RAISE
THE **SPRIT-
WRAITH**!

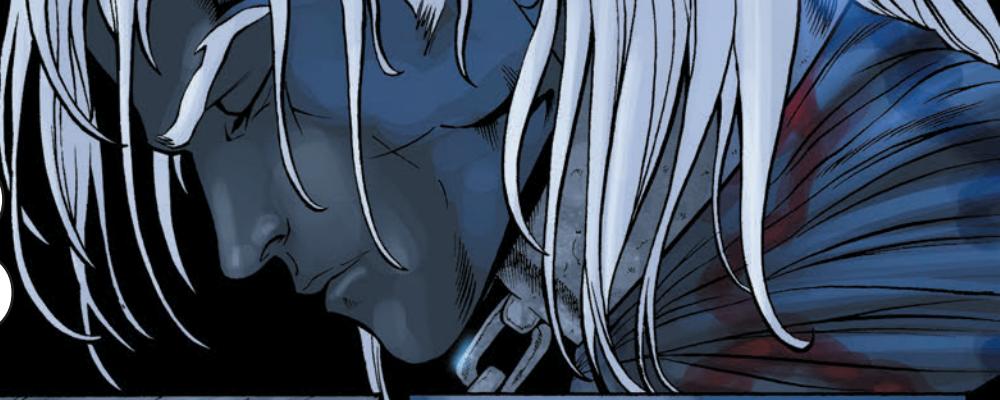


ZAKNAFEIN!

IT IS
HIM!





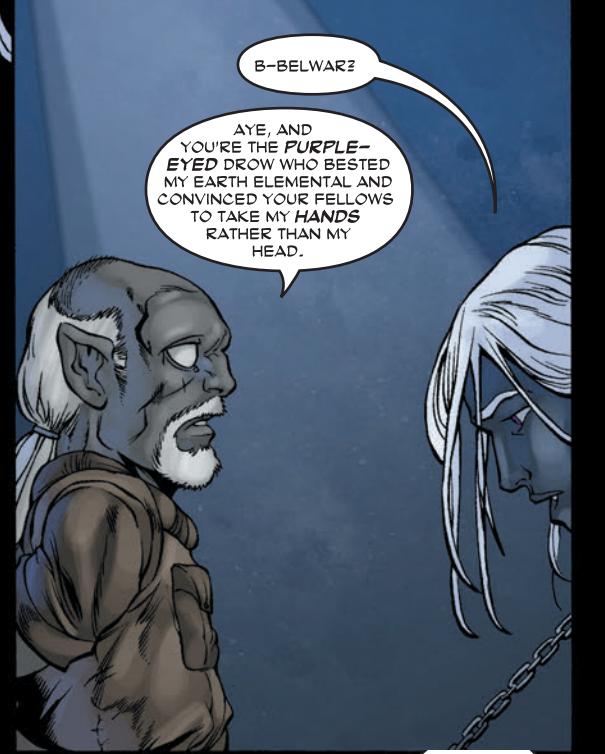


WELCOME
MOST HONORED
BURROW-WARDEN,
IT IS A PRIVILEGE
TO--

JUST
OPEN THE
CURSED DOOR
ALREADY!



MAGGA
CAMMARA, IT
IS YOU!



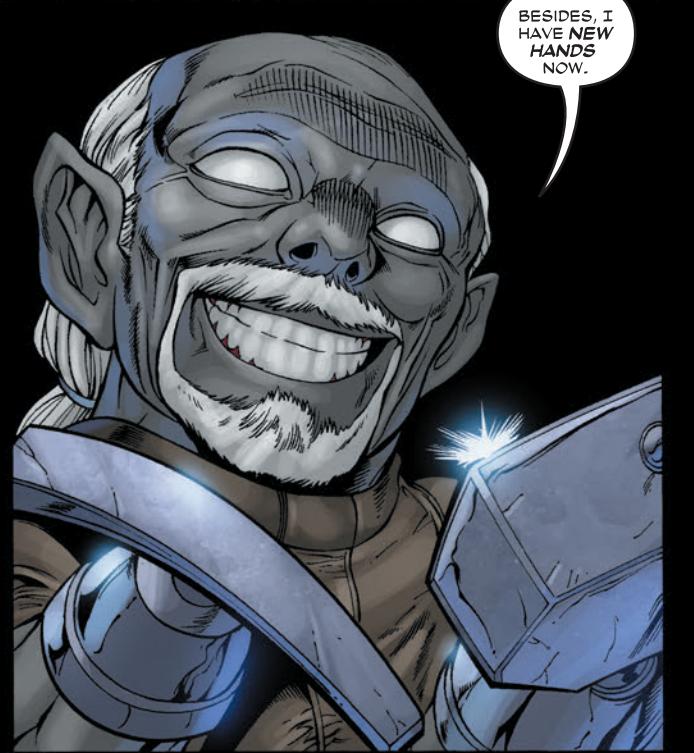
B-BELWAR?

AYE, AND
YOU'RE THE PURPLE-
EYED DROW WHO BESTED
MY EARTH ELEMENTAL AND
CONVINCED YOUR FELLOWS
TO TAKE MY HANDS
RATHER THAN MY
HEAD.



YES, I'M
SORRY.

BAH!
YOUR WORDS
SPARED ME THAT
DAY, AND I'VE NOT
FORGOTTEN IT.



BESIDES, I
HAVE NEW
HANDS
NOW.





IT WAS THE DECISION
OF KING SCHNICKTICK THAT
YOU BE EXECUTED. HE BELIEVED
YOU MEANT US NO HARM, BUT THE
DANGER OF HAVING A DARK ELF
IN BLINGDENSTONE WAS
TOO GREAT.

I GUESSED
AS MUCH. I
WILL OFFER NO
RESISTANCE.



NO, YOU WON'T,
FOR YOU'LL NOT
DIE THIS DAY.

WHAT?



TEN YEARS AGO,
YOU SAVED MY LIFE,
DRIZZT DO'URDEN.
HONOR DEMANDS I
DO THE SAME.



I'VE ACCEPTED
THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF KEEPING YOU.

YOU'LL BE A
GUEST IN MY HOME
AT FIRST, THEN WHO
KNOWS?



SO...
SO I'M NOT
TO DIE?



NOT UNLESS YOU
BRING DEATH UPON
YOURSELF.



Moving through the winding streets of Blingdenstone, Drizzt could barely believe what had transpired.

That Belwar would offer his protection-- his home-- to a drow was generosity beyond imagining.

The sort no resident of Menzoberranzan would ever extend, unless there was money or power to be gained.

But the burrow-warden was not motivated by such selfish concerns. His was an act of kindness.

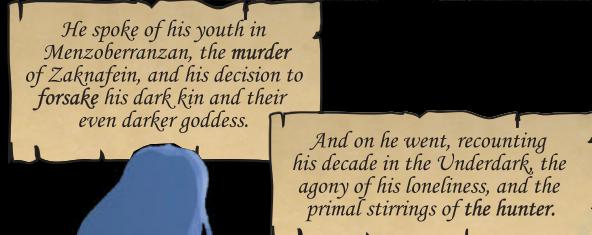
And knowing that shook Drizzt, so used to seeing everyone as an enemy, to his very core.

WE'RE HERE,
YOU CAN GO.

BUT MOST HONORED BURROW-WARDEN, THE KING HAS ORDERED US TO STAY WITH YOU UNTIL THE TRUTH OF THIS DROW IS REVEALED.

BE
GONE!

THIS
ONE IS IN
MY CARE
AND I FEAR
HIM NOT AT
ALL!



After that first night, the burrow-warden and his charge seldom spoke.

There was no animosity... Belwar was simply a private person. And Drizzt, still learning the svirfneblin tongue, did not trust his own words.

Blingdenstone was a bustling metropolis, and the sounds of life--of civilization... surrounded the dark elf from morning until night; keeping the hunter at bay.

And as the days turned to weeks, Drizzt found himself happy for the first time in what seemed like millennia.

WE'LL ASK THE DROW, HE'LL KNOW!

Yet though they were silent, the world around them was not.

YOU HAVE LIVED IN THE UNDERDARK, IT IS SAID. TELL THESE TWO THAT CREATURES LIKE THAT ONE ARE REAL.

BASILISKS? YES, THEY ARE.

HA! TOLD YOU!

HOW DO WE KNOW HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH?

I HAVE MET ONE.

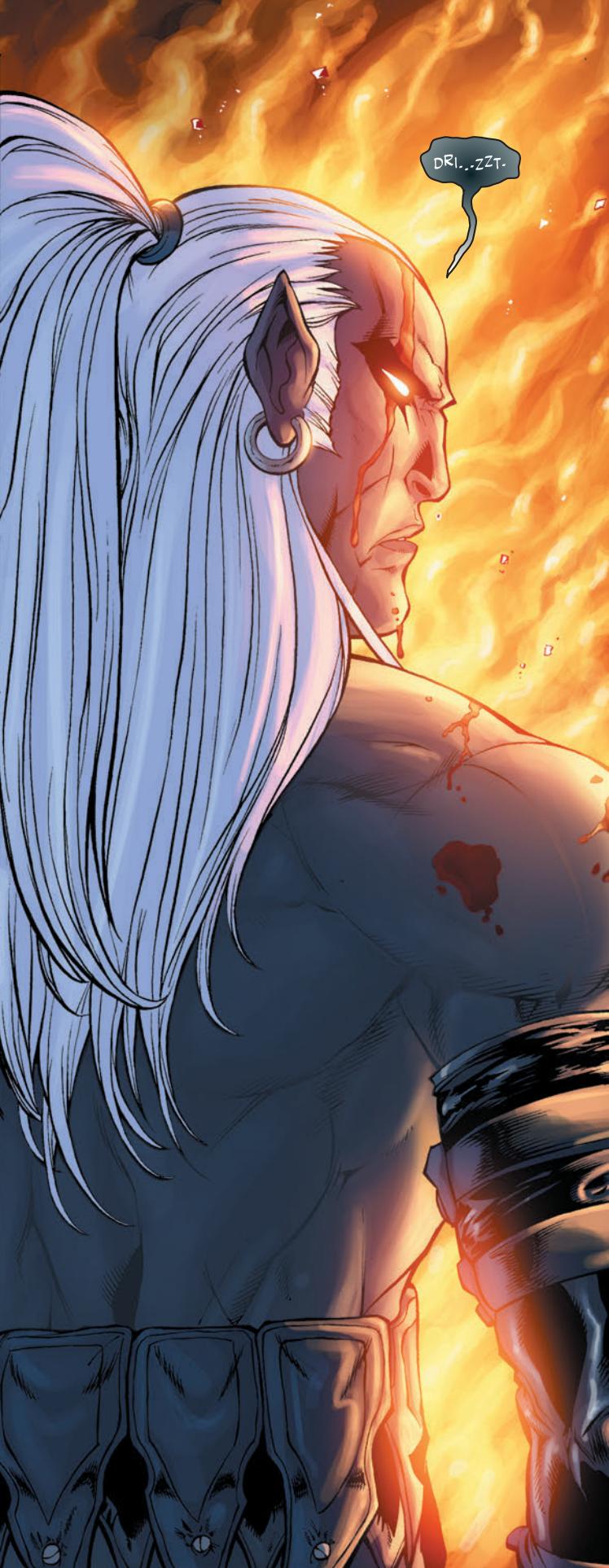
REALLY?!

AND YOU ESCAPED BEFORE IT COULD ATTACK?

ESCAPE? NO, I FOUGHT IT.







art by **TIM SEELEY, ANDREW PEPOY, AND BLOND**



CHAPTER 2

art by **TYLER WALPOLE**





A dark tunnel less than a day's march from the gnomish city of Blingdenstone...

W--WHAT
COULD DO THIS? HOOK
HORRORS, OR--

NO. THE CUTS
ARE TOO CLEAN,
TOO PRECISE.

ONLY ONE
CREATURE IN ALL THE
UNDERDARK COULD INFILCT
WOUNDS SUCH AS THESE.



DROW.

Blingdenstone...

DARK ELVES
SO CLOSE TO OUR CITY!
IT'S AN ACT OF WAR!

IF MENZOBERRANZAN
PLANNED WAR, THEY WOULD NOT
LEAVE A DOZEN DEAD GOBLINS FOR
ONE OF OUR PATROLS TO FIND,
KING SCHNICKTICK.

TRUE, TRUE.
THEN WHAT?

EXPANSION?

SLAVERS?
RENEGADE RAIDERS?

NO, NO, NO.
THEY ARE LOOKING
FOR SOMETHING, SOMETHING
THEY HAVE LOST.

OR SOMEONE.

YOU THINK THEY'RE AFTER
BELWAR DISSENGULP'S
DROW?

DRIZZT DO'URDEN
HAS DONE NOTHING TO
AROUSE SUSPICION DURING
HIS TIME IN OUR CITY,
MY LORD.

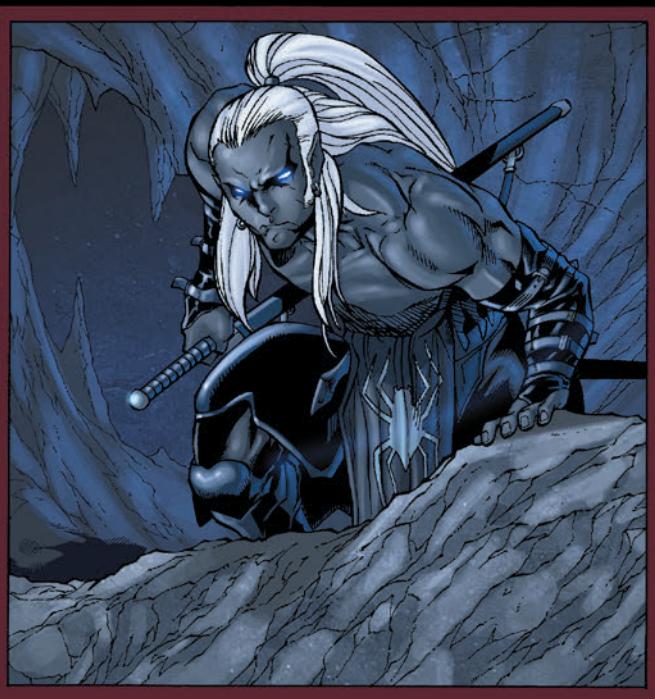
BUT WE HAVE LITTLE
INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT
DRIZZT DID BEFORE HE CAME
HERE, OR THE ENEMIES
HE MAY HAVE MADE.

AYE.
CAN'T BE TOO
CAREFUL.

FIRBLE, MAKE INQUIRIES WITH OUR
SPY NETWORK IN MENZOBERRANZAN.
I WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THE
MOST HONORED BURROW-
WARDEN'S GUEST.

I LIKE NOT THE PROSPECT
OF DARK ELVES WANDERING ABOUT
MY FRONT DOOR.

IT DOES SO
DIMINISH THE
NEIGHBORHOOD.



Zak had been wandering these tunnels for weeks, searching.

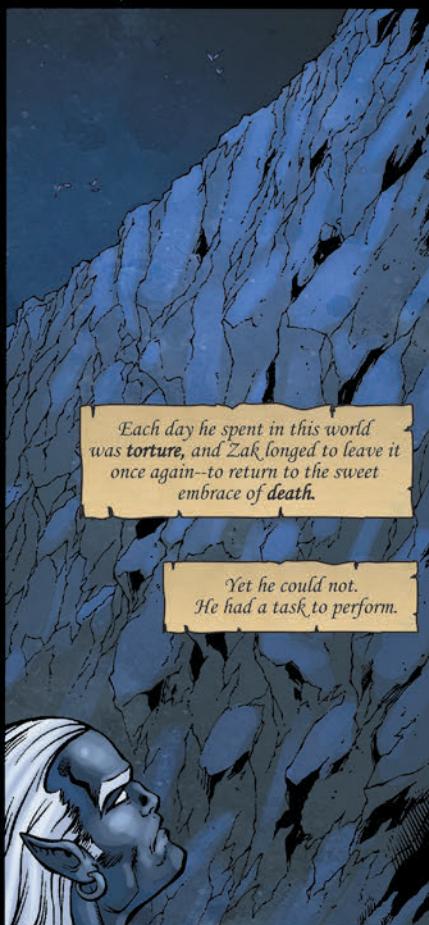


He knew Drizzt was close, but somehow the boy remained just out of reach.



Something was hiding Drizzt, protecting him.

The thought infuriated Zak.



Each day he spent in this world was torture, and Zak longed to leave it once again—to return to the sweet embrace of death.

Yet he could not. He had a task to perform.



In life, Zak would have rebelled. He had been a man of will and honor, one of the few in all the Underdark who could make that claim.



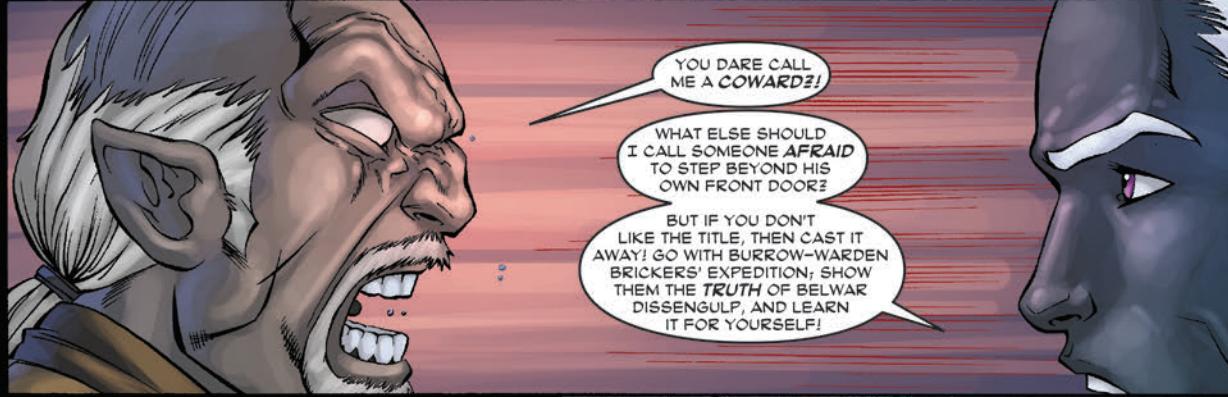
But no more. Now his body and soul belonged to Matron Malice.

And only when he drove his swords into Drizzt's heart would Zaknafein know peace once again.









Burrow-Warden Brickers accepted Belwar and Drizzt readily, honored by the presence of the former, and happy to have the blades of the latter...

...especially if the whispers of drow activity in the tunnels around Blingdenstone proved to be true.



But, as luck would have it, the expedition saw no activity or carnage on their way to the region named by the mineral scouts.



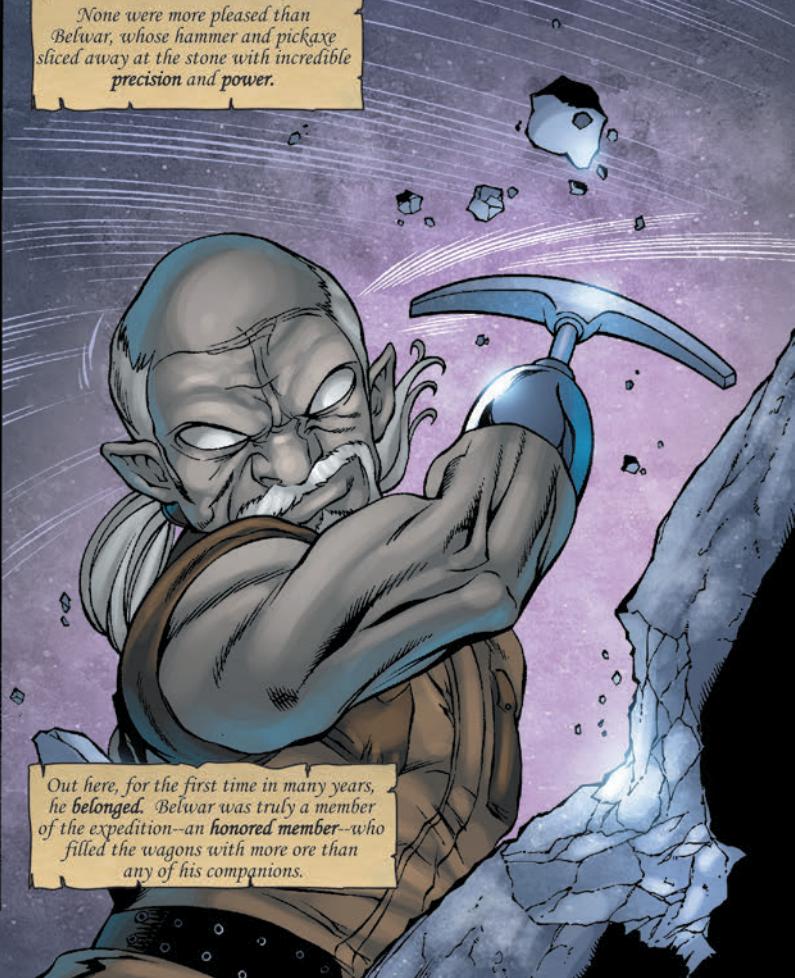
The reports of a thick vein of ore were not exaggerated, and the miners went to work with unmatched eagerness.

None were more pleased than Belwar, whose hammer and pickaxe sliced away at the stone with incredible precision and power.

For there is nothing a svirfneblin relishes more than the sound of his pick striking stone, and the sweet smell of freshly mined ore.



Out here, for the first time in many years, he belonged. Belwar was truly a member of the expedition—an honored member—who filled the wagons with more ore than any of his companions.





As for Drizzt, he spent the days patrolling the twisting tunnels around the dig site.

It had been months since he'd been in the wilds of the Underdark, the place that had been his home for ten years—the place Drizzt nearly lost himself.

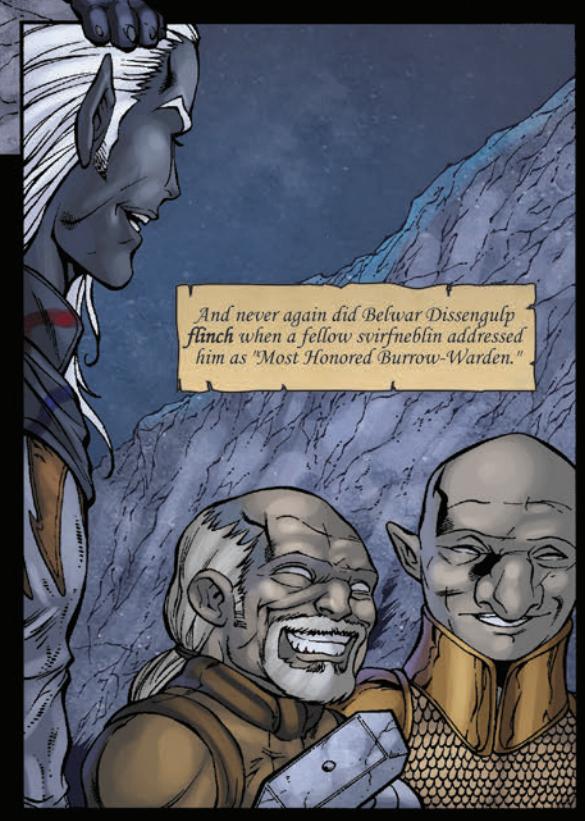


Once or twice, when he ventured too far from the expedition into the darkness and silence that had been his prison for so long, the hunter stirred inside him. But each time, Drizzt pushed the primeval beast back down.

He was stronger now.



In the end, it was an uneventful and profitable trip, just the way the deep gnomes liked it.



And never again did Belvar Dissengulp flinch when a fellow swirfneblin addressed him as "Most Honored Burrow-Warden."

Meanwhile, elsewhere
in the Underdark...

GREETINGS, LITTLE FRIEND
WITH THE BIG PURSE.

YOU COULD
EXERCISE SOME CAUTION,
JARLAXLE.

HAH! YOU HAVE AN
ARMY OF DEEP GNOME FIGHTERS
AND WIZARDS BEHIND YOU, AND
I--WELL, LET'S JUST SAY
THAT I TOO AM
WELL PROTECTED.

STILL, I WOULD
PREFER OUR BUSINESS
REMAIN PRIVATE.

OF COURSE, ALL OF THE
BUSINESS OF BREGAN D'AERTHE
IS PRIVATE, MY DEAR FIRBLE.

NOW, ASK
YOUR QUESTION.

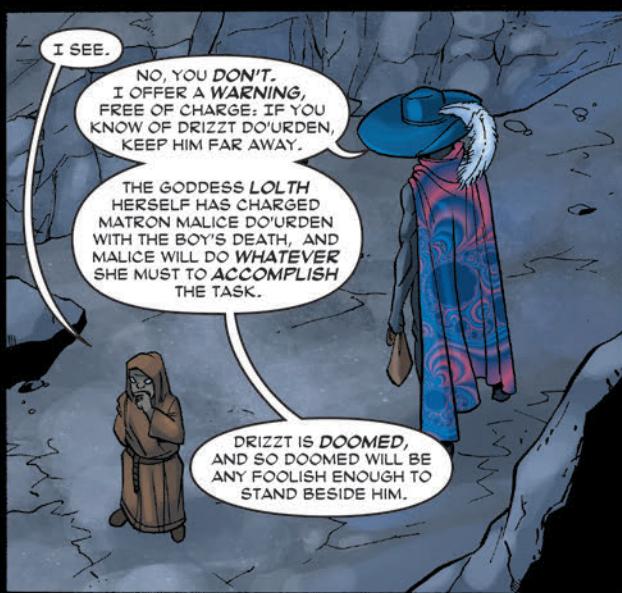
THERE HAS BEEN
AN INCREASE IN DROW ACTIVITY
NEAR BLINGDENSTONE, I WISH
TO KNOW WHY.

I SEE. AND
MY PAYMENT?

PAYMENT WHEN YOU
BRING ME THE INFORMATION,
THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN
OUR ARRANGEMENT!

AND IT
JUST SO HAPPENS
THAT I CAN ANSWER YOUR
QUESTION NOW, IF YOU
HAVE THE GEMS.

FIFTY AGATES,
FINELY CUT.



For Drizzt, the days after the expedition's return were filled with friendship and fun.

He was something of a hero with the svirfneblin who had gone out into the tunnels beside him, and already Belwar was planning another mining expedition.

It was indeed one of the happiest times the young elf had ever experienced.



And so when the urgent summons from King Schnicknick came that morning, he was hardly surprised.





A hundred deep gnomes came to say their farewells to the drow as he walked out of Blingdenstone's huge doors.

Their kind words comforted him and gave him the strength he knew he would need in the trials of the coming years.



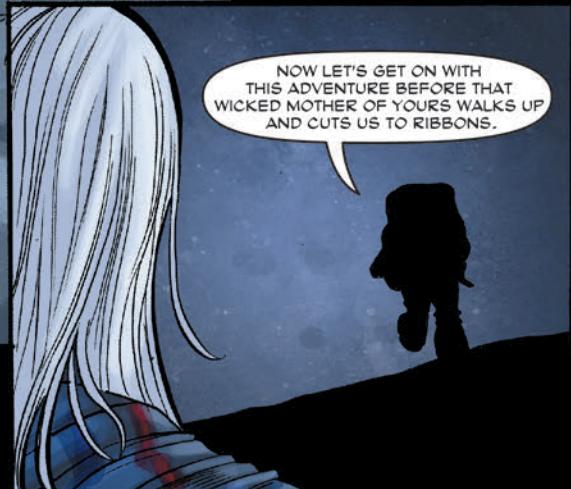
Still, when Drizzt heard the enormous gates slam shut behind him, he trembled.

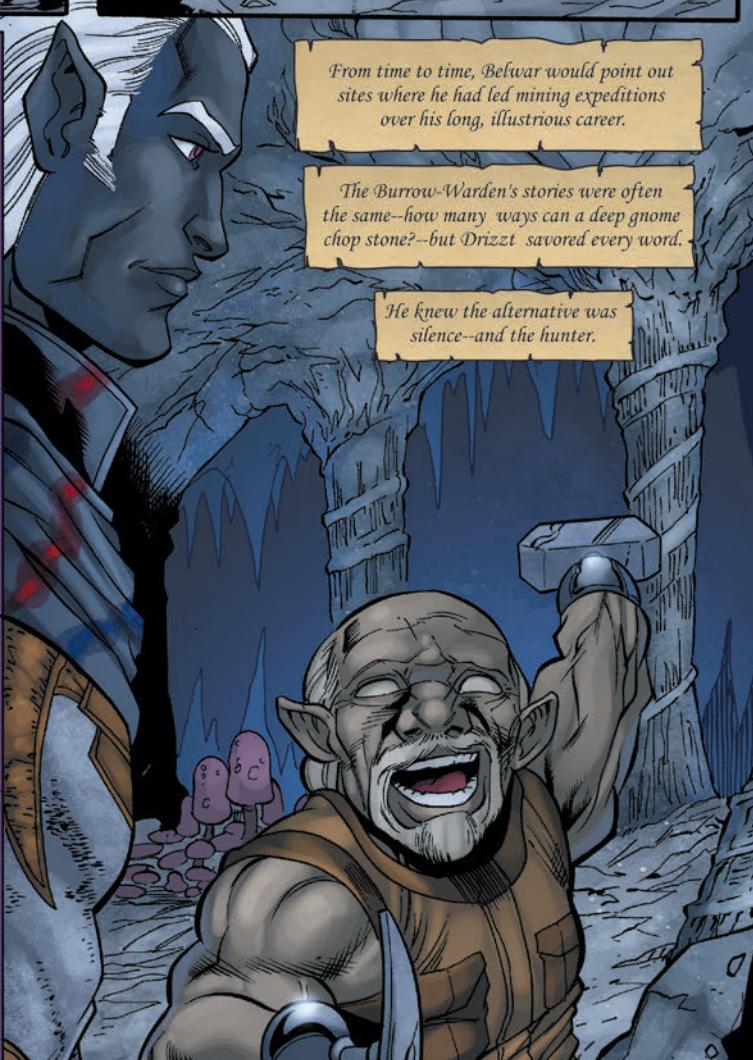
How, he wondered, could he survive his remaining centuries of life in the Underdark when a mere decade had nearly driven him mad?



How could he keep the hunter at bay?









And though Drizzt may have asked Belwar not to come, deep down he knew he needed the stubborn gnome.

For Drizzt, the Burrow-Warden was an anchor to reality—an antidote to the savagery of this dark place.



Days passed, then weeks, as the trio continued their journey out into tunnels even Belwar didn't know.

THAT LIGHT,
WHAT IS IT?

Tunnels that seemed darker and stranger than those that had come before.

SHALL WE FIND OUT?

MAGGA CAMMARA!

THE STONE, IT'S
BEEN MELTED AWAY.

AYE, THOSE
POOLS ARE FILLED
WITH ACID.

I DO NOT
LIKE THIS PLACE.

DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!



DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!

DOOM!

SCHLIKT

SCHLIKT

DOOM!

KACHINK!

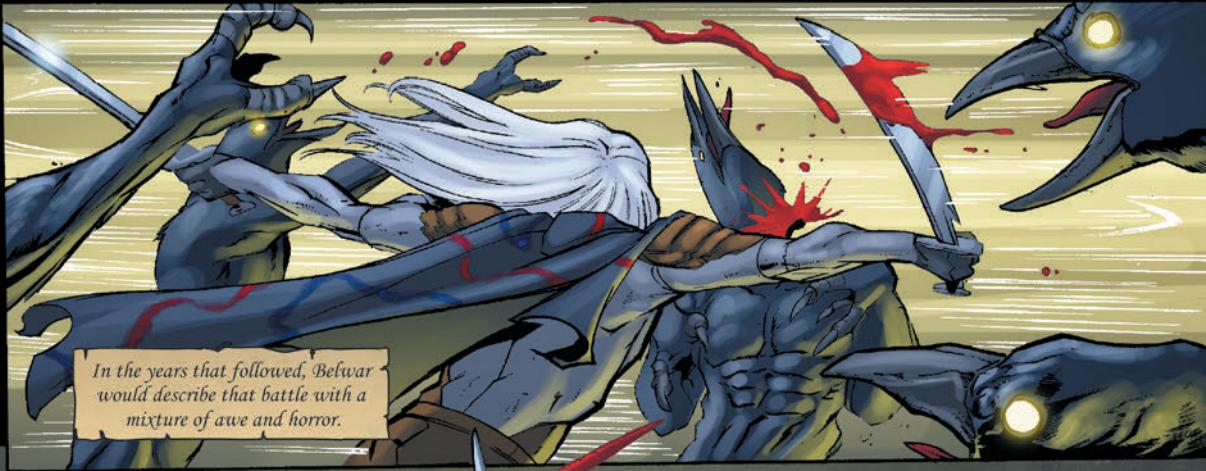
DOOM!

DOOM!



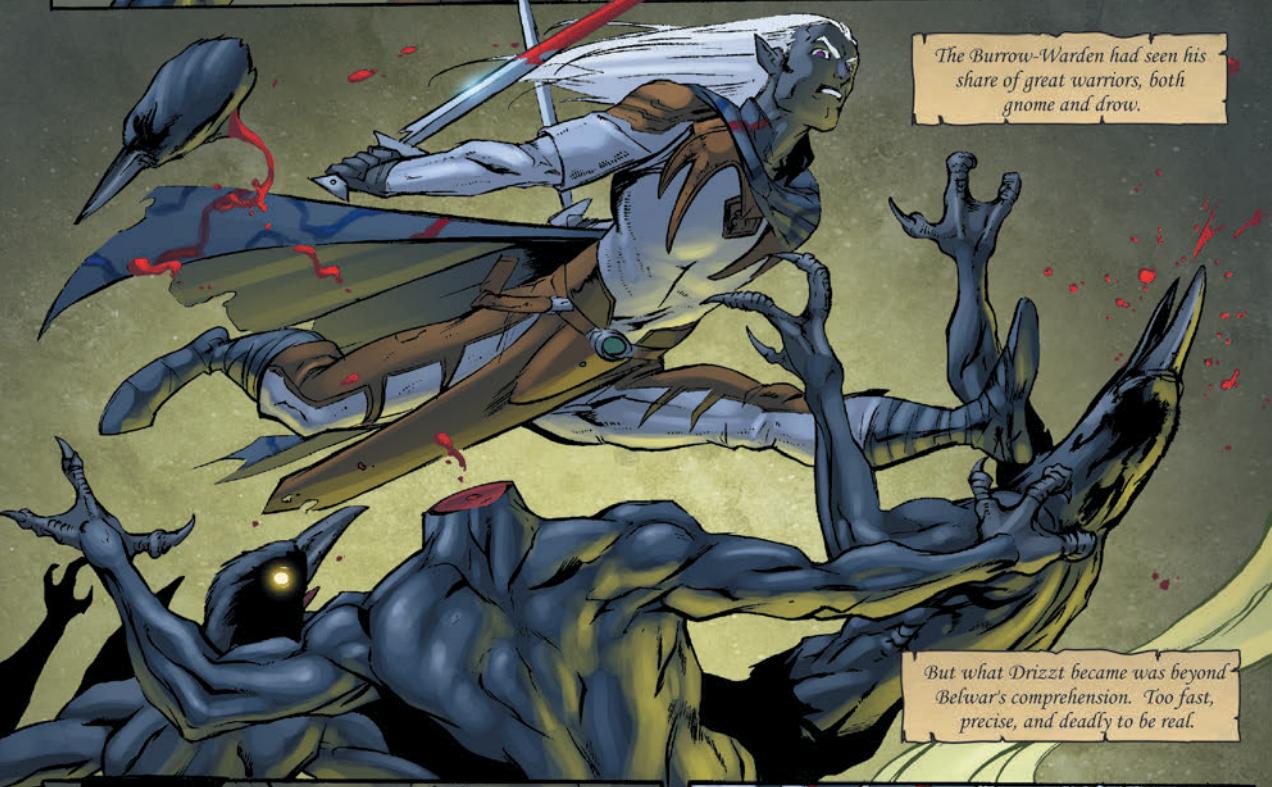
But that did not change the fact he had just watched his oldest and best friend suffer excruciating pain.





In the years that followed, Belwar would describe that battle with a mixture of awe and horror.

The Burrow-Warden had seen his share of great warriors, both gnome and drow.



But what Drizzt became was beyond Belwar's comprehension. Too fast, precise, and deadly to be real.



As the bird-men fell before the dark elf's spinning scimitars, the old gnome actually found himself feeling sorry for them.

They'd expected to trap a few wayward travelers...



...and instead come face to face with death incarnate.



The two friends continued on into the darkness, side by side.

Three days after the battle, Drizzt summoned Guenhwyvar from her astral home.

Her fur was still singed, but otherwise, the great cat was fine, and happy to see her master.

Then, quite by accident, they found it.

BEAUTIFUL!

SMALL ENOUGH TO DEFEND, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO LIVE IN, WITH MUSHROOMS TO KEEP OUR BELLIES FULL. AND A LAKE FULL OF FISH--MAYBE EVEN CRABS!

BELWAR, DO YOU MEAN--

MAGGA CAMMARA, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, ELF! WE'VE RUN LONG ENOUGH, AND THIS PLACE IS PERFECT!

IT'S HOME!



House Do'Urden...

FIND HIM!

MATRON MALICE,
WE HEARD YOUR CRIES.

ALL IS
WELL, VIERNA.

YOUR WAYWARD
BROTHER HAS MANAGED TO
ESCAPE US ONCE AGAIN, BUT NO
MORE. ZAKNAFEIN HAS
HIS SCENT NOW.

DRIZZT MAY HAVE A
WEEK OR MORE'S LEAD, BUT HE
ALSO MUST SLEEP, REST, AND EAT.
THE SPIRIT-WRAITH HAS **NONE** OF
THOSE WEAKNESSES.

THE HUNT
WILL BE OVER SOON
ENOUGH.

AND WHAT OF YOU,
MOTHER? YOU BARELY EAT,
AND HAVE NOT SLEPT IN SO
LONG. I WORRY.

I'M SURE YOU DO,
BRIZA. AFTER ALL,
WERE I TO PERISH, YOU
WOULD BECOME
MATRON.

I--- I DID
NOT MEAN--

OF COURSE
YOU DID. IT'S ONLY
NATURAL.

BUT KNOW THIS, MY
DAUGHTERS... I AM STILL
STRONG ENOUGH TO RULE
THIS HOUSE.

AND THOUGH ZIN-CARLA
TAKES A GREAT TOLL, THE REWARDS
WE'LL BE GRANTED WHEN I PRESENT
DRIZZT'S HEART TO LOTH SHALL
OUTWEIGH IT A HUNDREDFOLD!

HOUSE DO'URDEN
WILL RETURN TO THE
SPIDER QUEEN'S FAVOR,
AND A PLACE OF HONOR
IN MENZOBERRANZAN!

NO MATTER
WHAT THE COST, WE
WILL TRIUMPH!

As the days passed, Drizzt was forced to admit that Belwar had been right.

It felt good not to have to run anymore.

Indeed, the more time they spent there, the more the cozy little cavern began to feel like home.

This place, one he could call his own, rich in food and friends, was a greater gift than Drizzt had ever imagined.

KRAK! KLAK KRAK! KLAK

DARK ELF? WHAT--?

THAT SOUND, I KNOW IT.

HOOK HORROR!

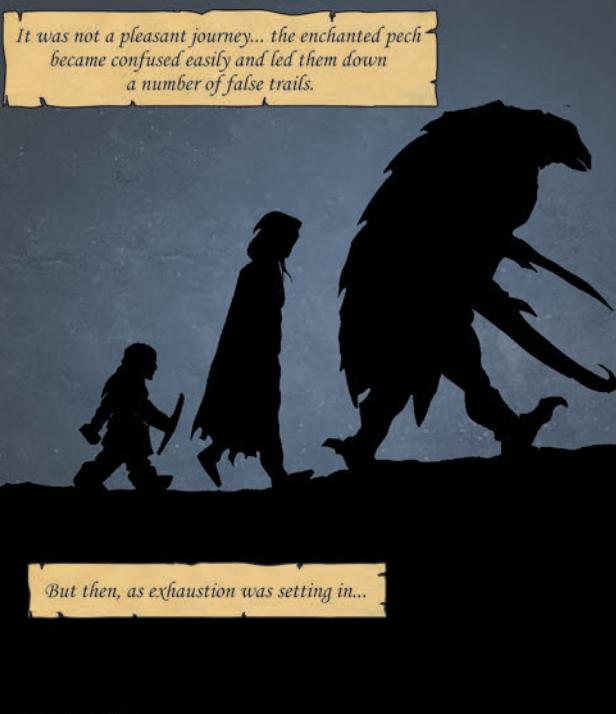








The unusual trio left the next day, traveling east; away from Drizzt's beloved cavern.



It was not a pleasant journey... the enchanted pech became confused easily and led them down a number of false trails.



Clacker led the way, re-tracing his path back to the wizard who had cursed him.



But then, as exhaustion was setting in...



A--A TOWER OF
PURE ADAMANTITE! I'VE
NEVER--HOW DID HE **BUILD**
SUCH A THING?



THERE!



MAGIC.

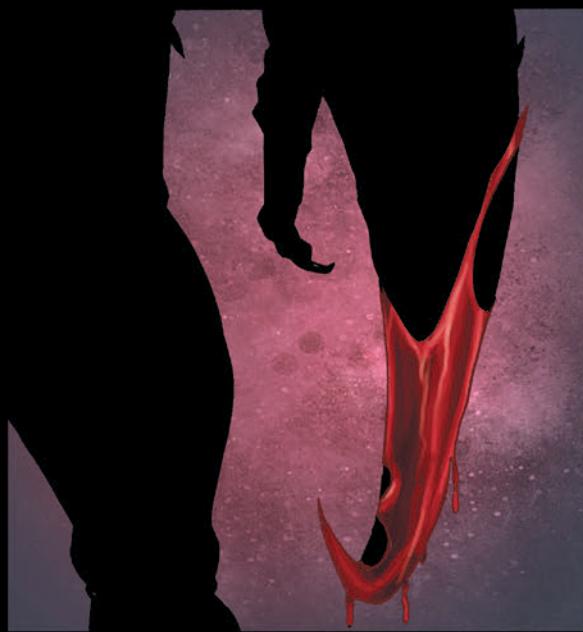








WRETCHED PECH,
I SHOUD HAVE KILLED
HIM AS I KILLED
THE OTHERS.



House Baenre, first
House of Menzoberranzan...



ANY INFORMATION I
MIGHT HAVE WOULD BE USELESS
TO YOU, MATRON BAENRE.

AFTER ALL,
MENZOBERRANZAN
IS YOUR CITY.

ENOUGH FLATTERY,
JARLAXLE. YOU ARE STILL
BEING EMPLOYED BY MATRON
MALICE DO'URDEN?

I AM.

SOMEONE MUST SEE
TO HER HOUSE'S SECURITY
WHILE THE MATRON GIVES
HERSELF OVER NIGHT AND DAY
TO ZIN-CARLA. A TASK FOR
WHICH YOU ARE WELL
COMPENSATED,
I'M SURE.





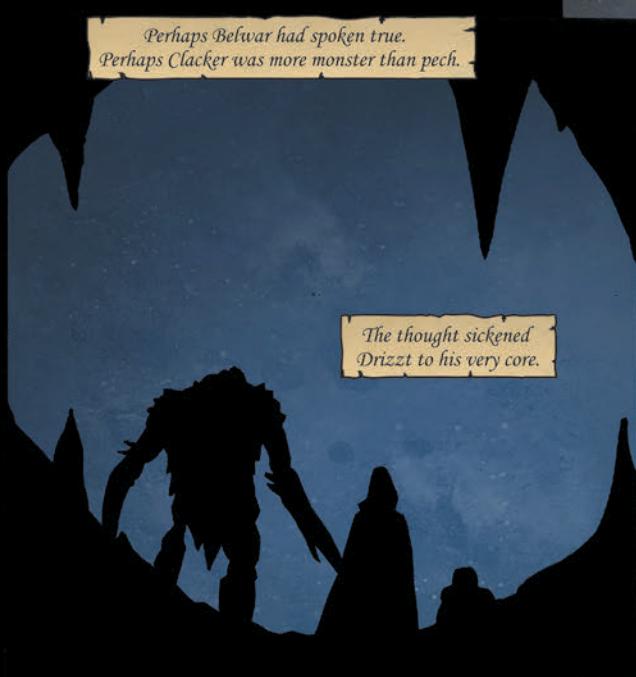
The journey from the adamantite tower was one of somber silence.



What Clacker had done to the human wizard made no sense. With one blow from his great claws, the pech had doomed himself to life as a hook horror.



No rational being would have done such a thing, but an animal...



Perhaps Belwar had spoken true.
Perhaps Clacker was more monster than pech.

The thought sickened Drizzt to his very core.



His only hope was that, once back in the comfort of their new home, he and Belwar could think of some other way to help their poor friend.

Drizzt was sorely disappointed.

MAGGA
CAMMARA!
WHAT BEAST
DID THIS!?



COULD THOSE
BIRD-MEN HAVE
FOUND US?

NO, THE
BLADES THAT MADE
THESE CUTS WERE
FINELY CRAFTED,
AS ONLY--



DRAW WEAPONS!
MY MOTHER'S
ASSASSINS HAVE
FOUND US!

WHAT? HOW?!

DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE MATRON
MALICE. WHOEVER SHE'S SENT
MUST HAVE FOLLOWED OUR TRAIL
TO THE WIZARD'S TOWER, BUT
THEY'LL BE BACK IN HOURS,
MAYBE LESS.

COME, CLACKER!
WE HAVE TO GO, NOW!

And thus did Drizzt Do'Urden
lose the only true home he had ever known.

The companions ran all day and all night, not daring to stop.

Drizzt knew he had to put more distance between himself and his evil kin.





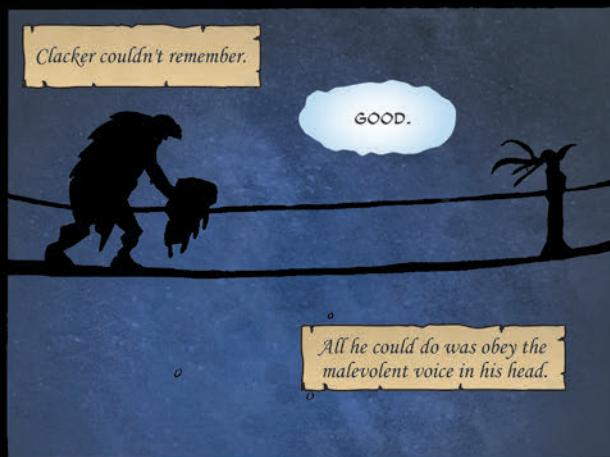
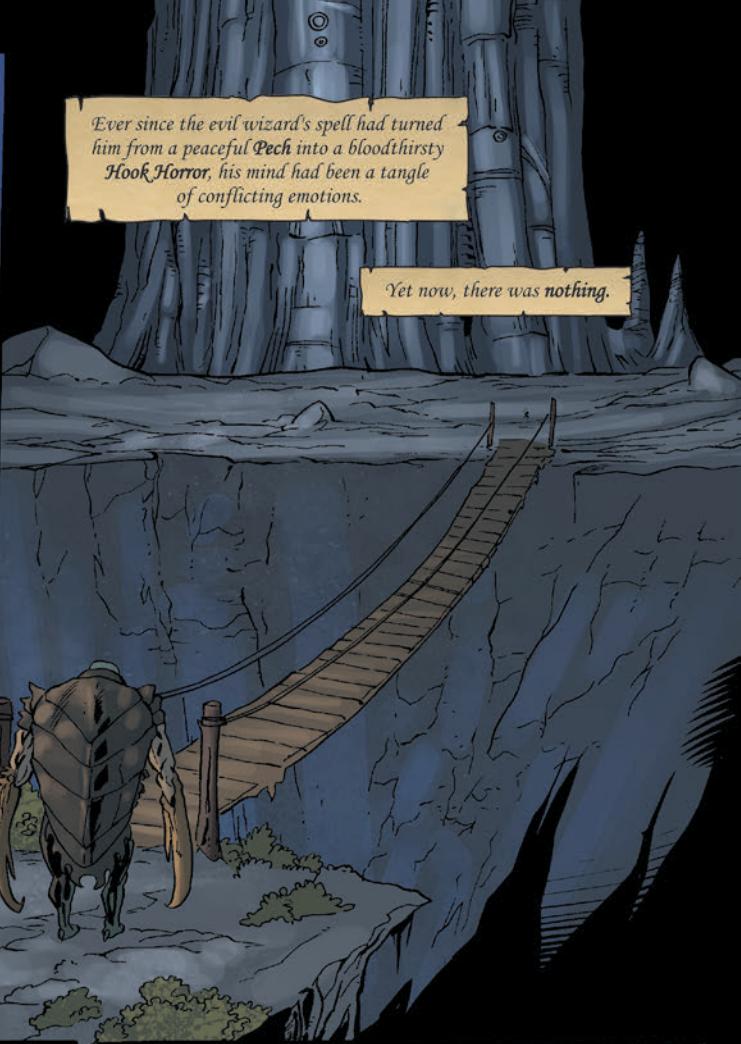
art by **TIM SEELEY AND RI KAI**



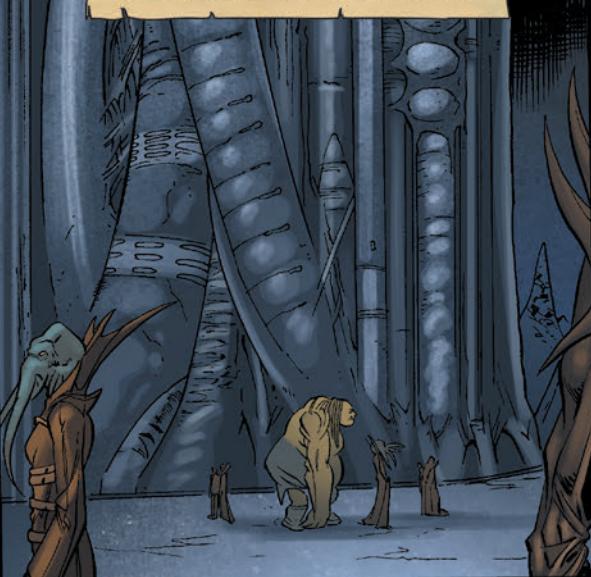
CHAPTER 3

art by **TYLER WALPOLE**



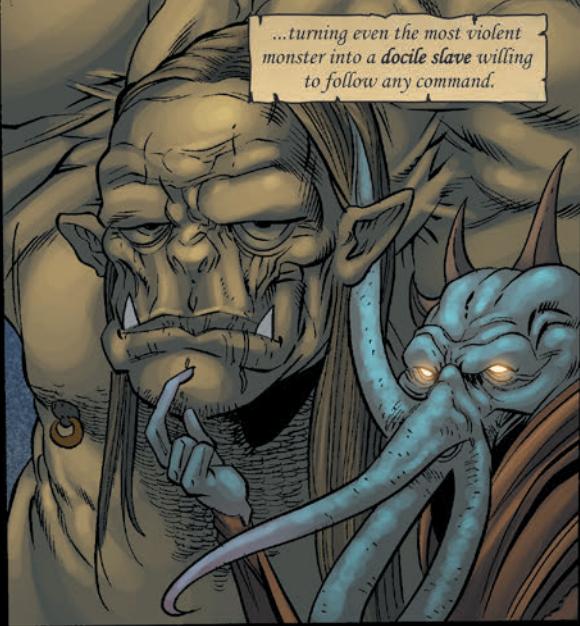


Lying deep in a remote cavern of the Underdark, the Illithid castle housed a hundred Mind Flayers, and twice that many slaves.



Using their telepathic powers, Mind Flayers could twist the thoughts and desires of any creature to their own needs...

...turning even the most violent monster into a docile slave willing to follow any command.



Those with some skill were put to work in the mines, digging precious metal from the unforgiving stone...



...while the more bestial were sent to the arena, where they fought and died for the Illithids' amusement.



There was no escape from a Mind Flayer's psionic grasp—no freedom granted for a job well done.

And in the end, after they'd become too old to work, or had their minds warped beyond repair, every slave went to the same destination:



His master's dinner table.

Of all the creatures recently captured in the tunnels outside the Illithid castle, Belwar Dissengulf was the most sought after.



His metallic hands made him perfectly suited for the two duties most desired in an Illithid slave: working the stone and fighting in the arena.



Indeed, Belwar brought the highest price ever paid for a slave; a combination of gold, magical potions, and tomes of forbidden knowledge.

And even at that, he was considered a bargain.



Of course, Belwar understood none of this. He only knew that he had a new master now.

One he would do anything to please.



As the gnome was led away, the six Mind Flayers who'd captured him, the Hook Horror, and the dark elf congratulated themselves.

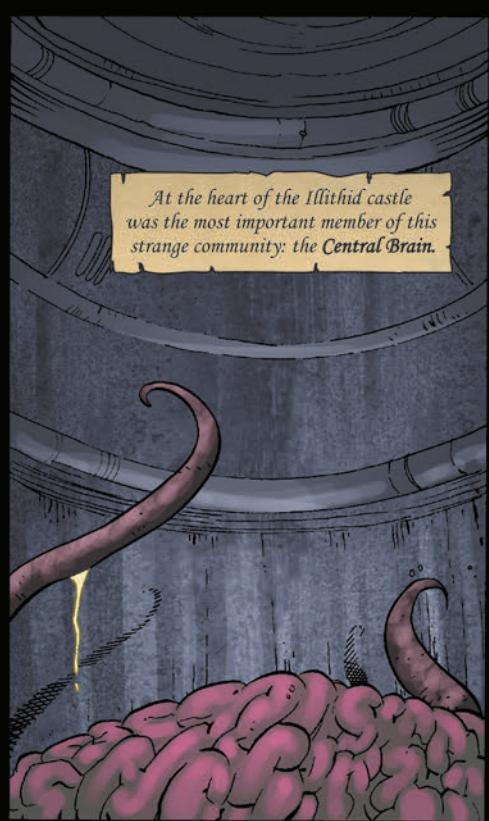
They'd made a vast profit... so much in fact, that they were able to hold one magic item back from the auction block.



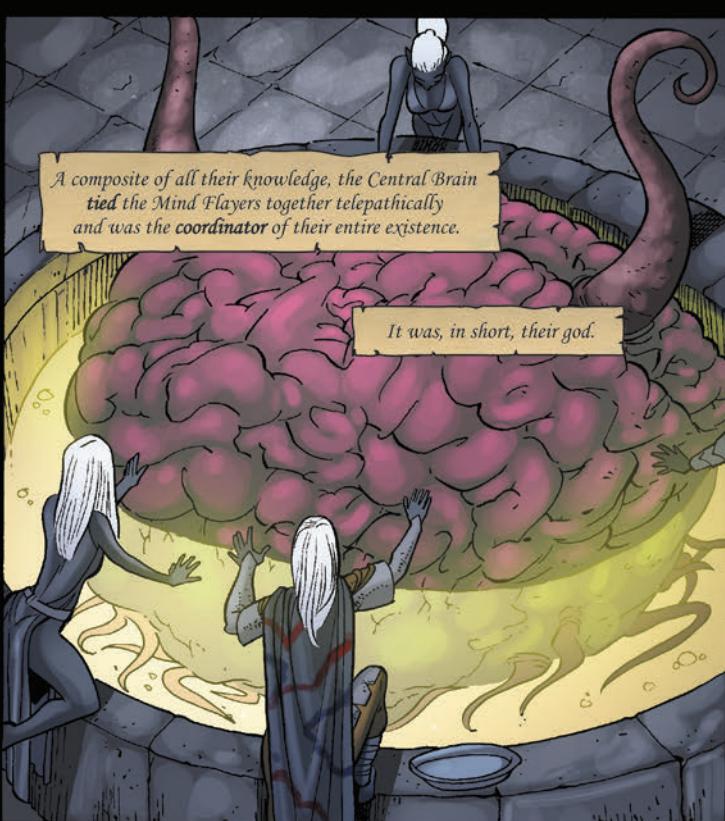
A small onyx figurine which pulsed with arcane power, and no doubt held many secrets.



Secrets they would soon uncover.



At the heart of the Illithid castle was the most important member of this strange community: the Central Brain.



A composite of all their knowledge, the Central Brain tied the Mind Flayers together telepathically and was the coordinator of their entire existence.

It was, in short, their god.



The Drow stood beside the amorphous mass, feeling its **pleasures** and **displeasures**.



Nothing else in the world mattered; the renegade dark elf had found his **purpose** in life.

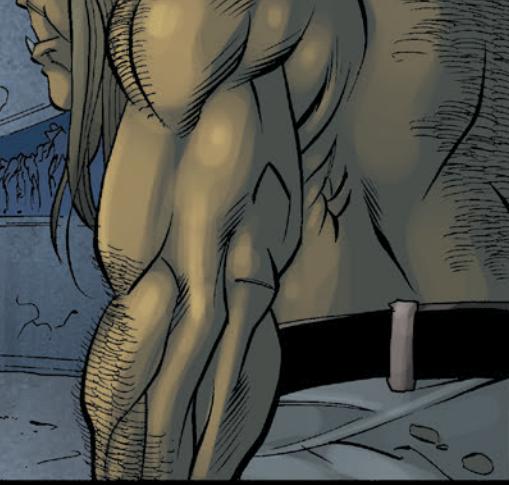


When the brain became **upset**, Drizzt would massage more forcefully, easing his beloved master back to **serenity**.



Drizzt had come home.

The gladiatorial arena...



A HUNDRED
GOLD PIECES ON
THE OGRE!

TWO HUNDRED ON
THE SVIRFNEBLIN!

THE GNOME HASN'T
A CHANCE. THREE
VIALS OF SICKSTONE
UNGUENT SAY THE
MONSTER WILL WIN!

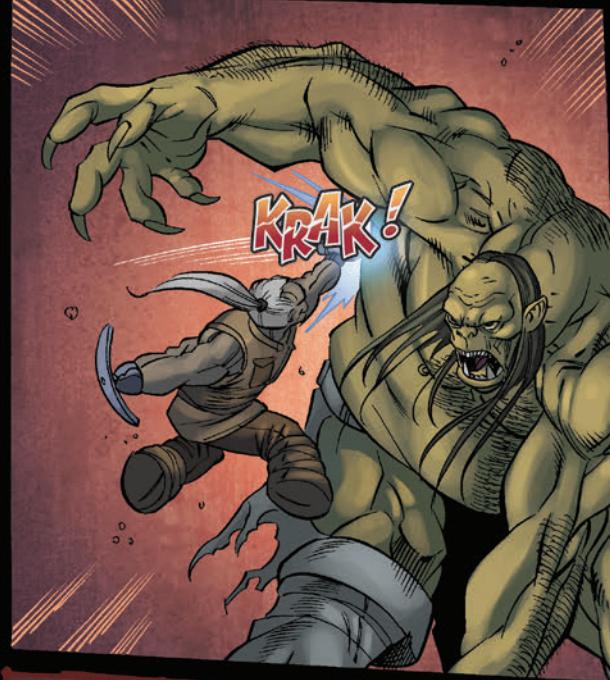
ONE OF
ELMINSTER'S
OWN SPELLBOOKS
SAYS IT WON'T!

THIS EVIL OGRE
BEAST HAS THREATENED
ME, MY BRAVE SVIRFNEBLIN
CHAMPION...

...DO DESTROY
IT FOR ME!

RAAAAH!





Frantic, the Mind Flayer scoured his slave's mind, searching for any possible advantage--



Belwar's jaw was bruised and three of his ribs were broken, but he felt no pain.

He had pleased his master, that was all that mattered to the burrow-warden—all that would ever matter.

The thought made him smile.



Elsewhere.

Zaknafein picked his way through the stalagmite field, moving quickly and quietly.

He had been following Drizzt's trail for days, and he sensed his wayward son was close—that the mission for which he'd been resurrected was almost over.

For their part, the mind slayers couldn't believe their luck.

Another Drow had wandered into their trap, and the price this one brought at auction would be split four ways instead of six.

Giddy with the thought of further profit, the mind slayers blasted Zak with bolts of stunning energy.

Nothing happened.

A lesson the Illithids learned too late.

The spirit-wraith was an undead thing, a being not of this world. He was impervious to such mental attacks.



Zak barely paused after dispatching the Mind Flayers, not even bothering to wipe the blood from his swords.

He knew that very soon there would be more killing.



Meanwhile, on another plane of existence...

Guenhwyvar romped through her astral home in pursuit of the entity of the Elk, continuing an endless cycle.

The two ethereal creatures had played out this scenario a million times...

...only now they were being watched.

A POWERFUL BEAST, IT WILL PROVE USEFUL IN THE ARENA.

OR IN FINDING US NEW SLAVES TO SELL, THE CAT IS A HUNTER AFTER ALL.

In the astral plane, where smell and taste had no meaning, Guenhwyvar used other, subtle senses.

Senses which allowed her to see the Mind Flayers...

RRRRRR

NO! OUR
SPELLS -- IT'S NOT
POSSIBLE!

RWARRR!

P- PLEASE...

KRUNCH

FUMPH



There was no subtlety to Zaknafein's entrance as he strode into the Illithid castle.

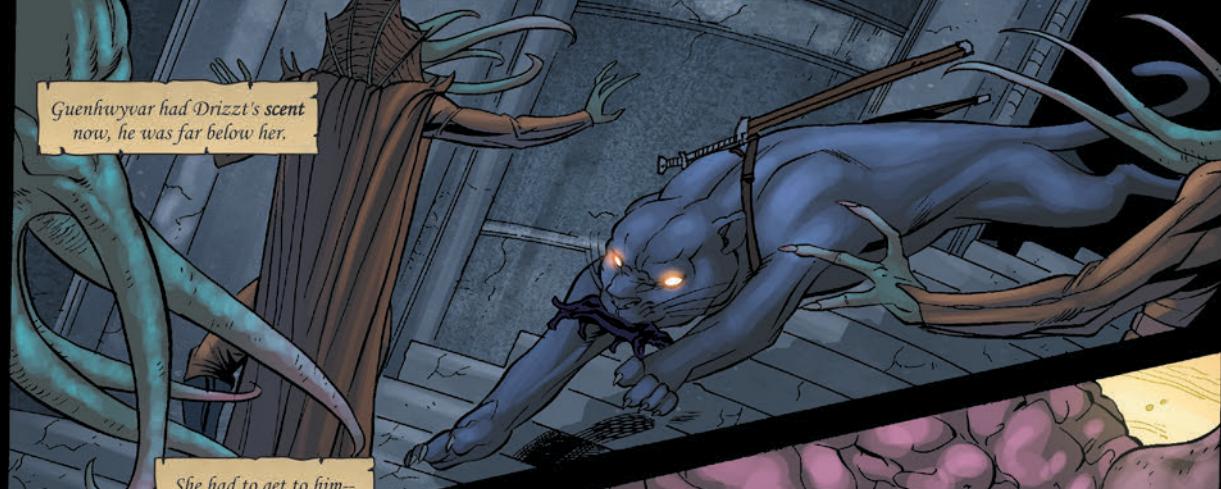
The first two Mind Flayers he encountered had blasted him with their *useless* mental attacks—and died screaming.

Then came the slaves, eager to protect their frightened masters.

It didn't matter. The spirit-wraith sensed that his son was *near*, and a dozen enemies would not stop him, nor a *hundred*, nor a *thousand*.

He could almost feel his swords plunging into Drizzt's chest; cutting out his *heart*...

...freeing Zak at last from this horrible half-life with which Matron Malice had cursed him.



Guenhuwyvar had Drizzt's scent now; he was far below her.

She had to get to him--



...and so the great cat took the quickest route.



The Central Brain's psychic scream burned like lightning in the Illithids' minds.

They had already been thrown into a state of confusion by Zaknafsein's arrival, but this was worse than any could imagine.

Their god was dead.

...and chaos began.

In an instant, the mental bond which had held the Mind Flayer community together was destroyed...

BIVRIP!

ZZAK

DRIZZT! DRIZZT!



YOU SAVED
ME, OLD FRIEND!
ONCE AGAIN, YOU
SAVED ME!

EEEEEE!



Explosions of burning pain racked Drizzt as the Mind Flayer's tentacles burrowed into his skull, searching for the soft, savory flesh of his brain.

WE--WE
MUST GO.

But the hunter would not surrender.

SPLASH!!





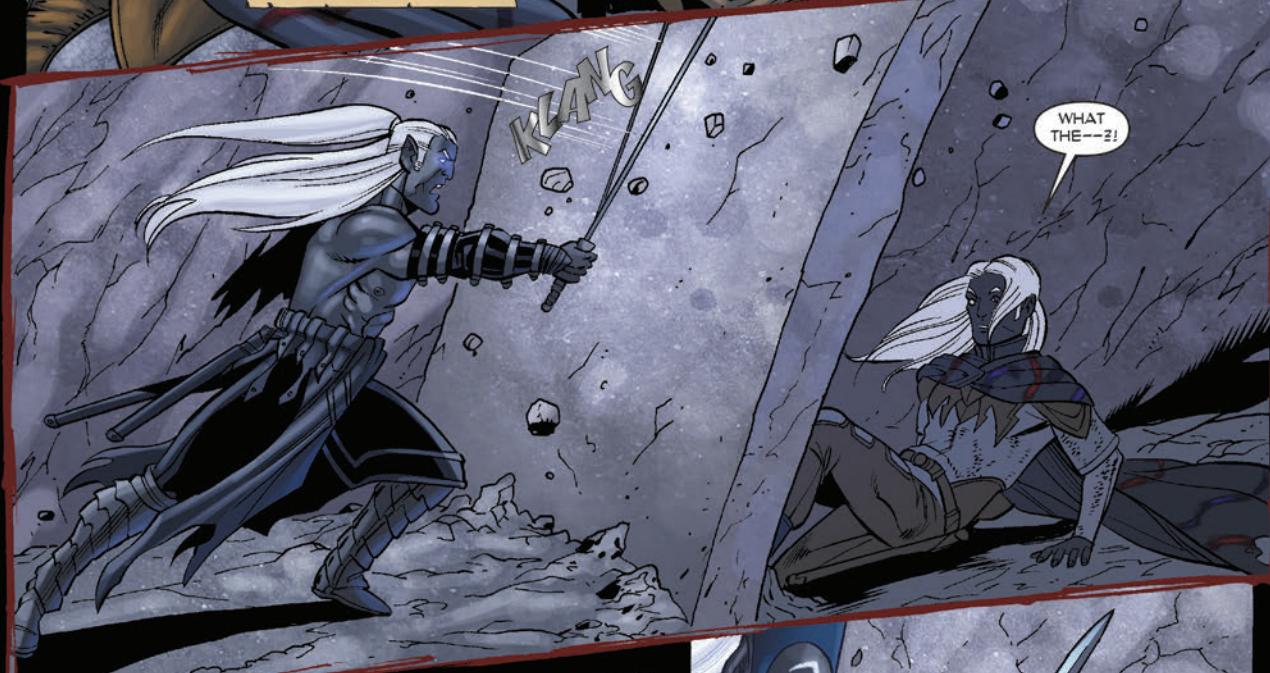


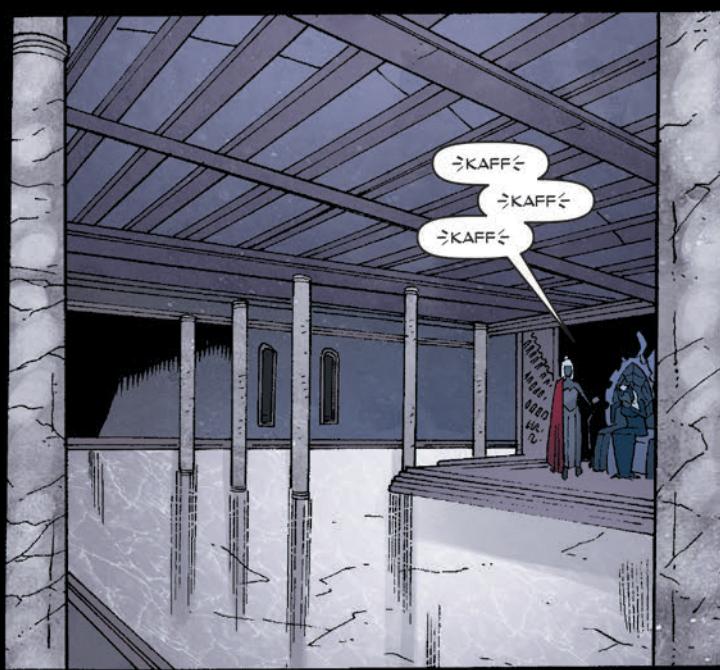






Now, looking into his son's eyes, Zak felt a strange new emotion stir inside him—fighting against the anger and rage that had consumed the Spirit-Wraith these many weeks.







The companions had fled the Illithid castle, running blindly through miles of the Underdark's twisting tunnels.

Until sheer exhaustion forced them to stop.



WHO WAS THAT DROW?



ZAKNAFEIN DO'URDEN.

IT WAS HE WHO TRAINED ME. ZAK WAS MY ONLY FRIEND IN MENZOBERRANZAN-- MY CLOSEST COMPANION FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES.



YET HE MEANT TO KILL YOU.

THAT WAS NOT MY FATHER, HE... HE IS DEAD. SACRIFICED BY MY MOTHER TO THE SPIDER QUEEN.



I DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT MONSTER MATRON MALICE HAS PUT IN ZAKNAFEIN'S GUISE.

BUT WE ESCAPED, THANKS TO YOUR WALL.



MY WALL? NO, DARK ELF, SUCH MAGIC IS BEYOND ME.

THEN WHO--

I-I MADE IT.



TH-THE PECH
ARE A PEACEFUL
RACE, WE DESIRE ONLY
TO WORK THE STONE.
IT IS OUR CALLING,
OUR LOVE.



AND THE
STONE TALKS TO
US; AIDS US IN
OUR TOILS.

YOU SPEAK OF
THE EARTH AS IF
WERE A SENTIENT
BEING.



IT IS,
FOR THOSE
WHO CAN
HEAR IT.

YES, PECH
KNOW THE STONE
BEST OF ALL. BETTER
THAN EVEN DWARVES
OR GNOMES.



FOR AN INSTANT I WAS
NOT THIS MONSTER,
I WAS PECH—MORE
PECH THAN EVER
BEFORE.

TO CREATE
SUCH A WALL SHOULD
TAKE A G-G-GROUP OF
ELDERS, BUT I DID IT
ALONE. I WAS
THE EARTH.

BUT NOW I AM FALLING,
I--

YOU'RE
BECOMING THE
HOOK HORROR
AGAIN.



YES.

Y-YOU MUST
PROMISE...M-MY
FRIENDS.



W-WHEN THE
P-PECH IS NO MORE,
YOU MUST... YOU MUST
KILL ME.



Drizzt returned Guenhwyvar to her astral home that night. The cat had exerted herself greatly; she needed rest.



THIS PATH
YOU'RE LEADING US ON,
DARK ELF, IT BEARS EAST,
TOWARD--

MENZOBERRANZAN,
I KNOW.

And the next morning, the odd trio...
Drow, gnome, and hook horror... set off.



HRMPH

AND ASSUMING WE CAN FIND A WIZARD BEFORE WE'RE MURDERED BY YOUR RELATIVES, WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE TO OFFER HIM FOR DISPELLING CLACKER'S CURSE?



House Baentre...

ZIN-CARLA IS A TRIAL, MALICE. ONE THAT EXACTS A HEAVY PRICE ON BOTH THE BODY AND THE SOUL.

BUT WHEN IT IS COMPLETE--WHEN YOUR WAYWARD SON IS DEAD--THE GODDESS LOLTH WILL GRANT YOU HER FAVOR AND MORE!

HOUSE DO'URDEN WILL RECEIVE GLORY AND POWER BEYOND IMAGINING!

A-AND IF IT FAILS, MATRON BAENRE?

SPEAK NOT THE WORDS! DO NOT GROW DISTRACTED BY DOUBT!

THE SPIRIT-WRAITH IS AN EXTENSION OF YOUR FAITH--YOUR STRENGTH! IF YOU FALTER, IT WILL FALTER AS WELL!

AND IF THAT HAPPENS, YOU WILL HAVE BROUGHT DOOM UPON YOUR HOUSE AND YOURSELF!

I-I WILL NOT FAIL! I SHALL DELIVER DRIZZT TO LOLTH, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST!

GOOD. NOW, THIS OTHER MATTER?





Drizzt set a brutal pace over the next few days, determined to keep ahead of the thing pursuing them...

...and reach Menzoberranzan before Clacker lost himself to the monster completely.



Soon the trio came to a familiar green-glowing cave; home to the wicked bird men Drizzt and Belwar had fought what seemed like a lifetime ago.

To go around would add weeks to their journey, and so the companions entered with weapons drawn. Ready for-



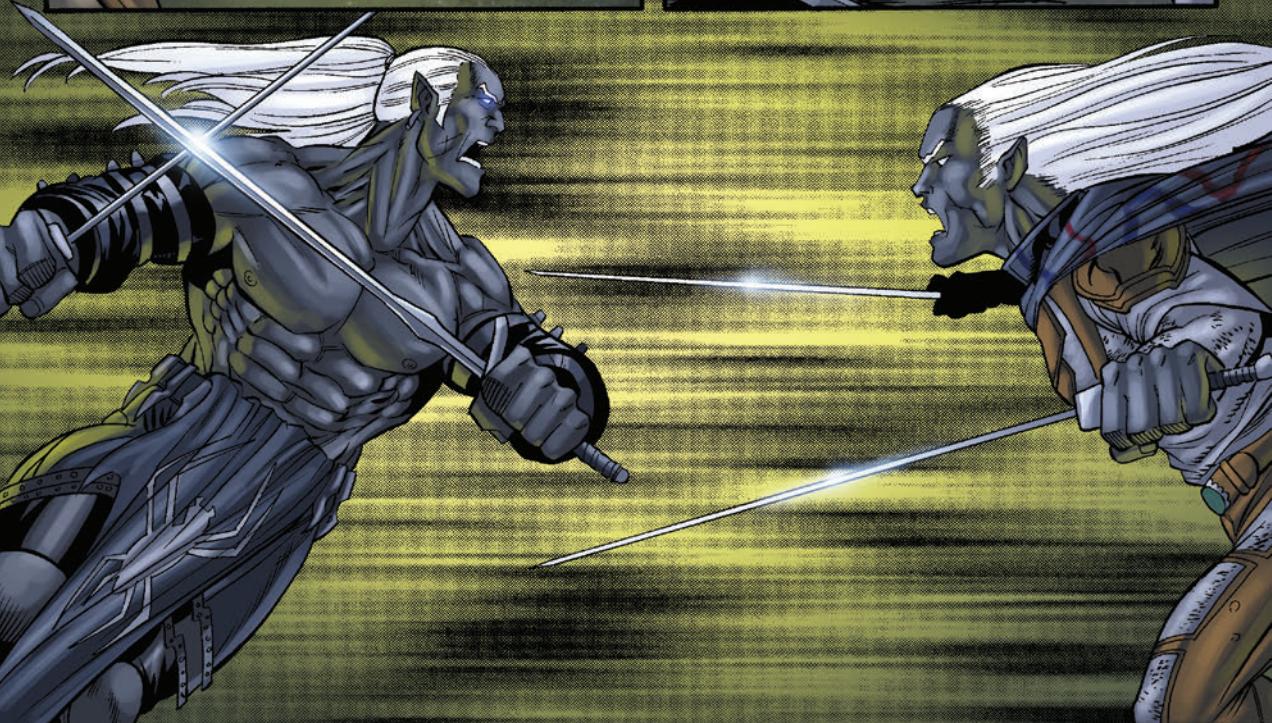
THE BIRD MEN CAN'T HAVE JUST VANISHED, UNLESS-- UNLESS WE CHASED THEM OUT.

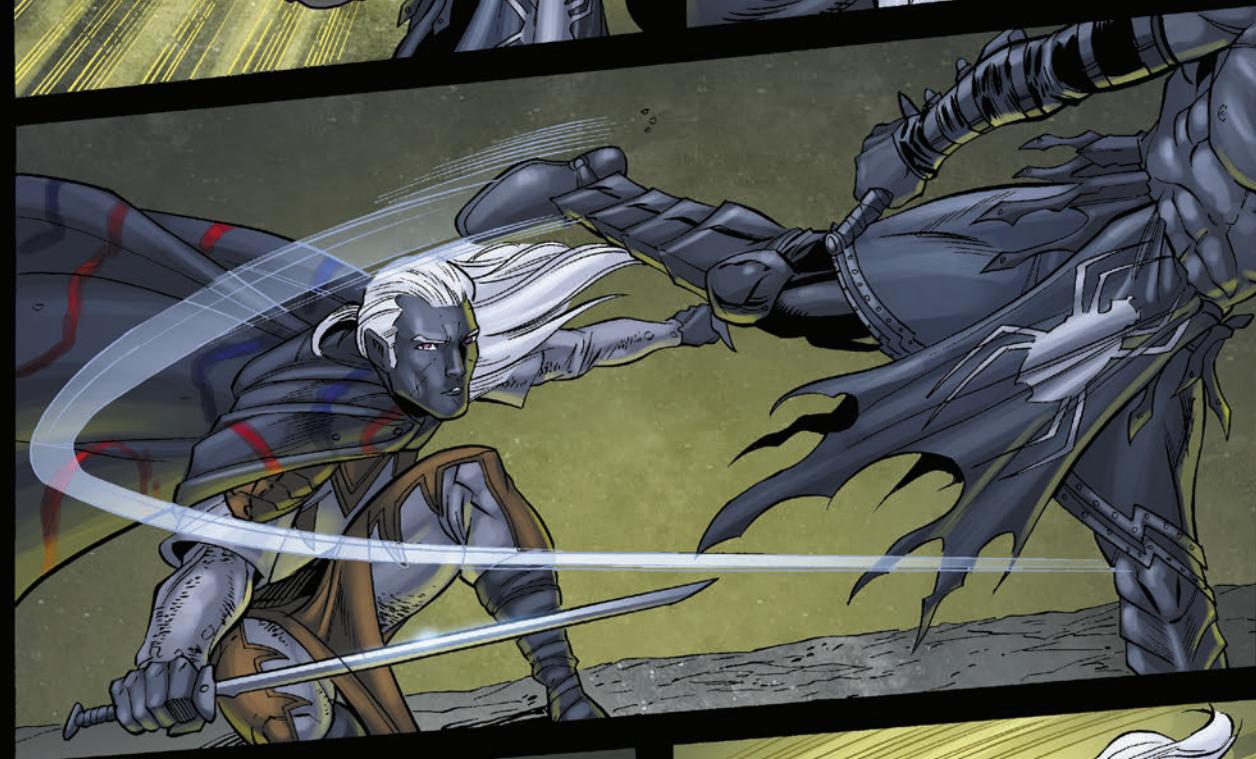
OR SOMETHING ELSE DID.

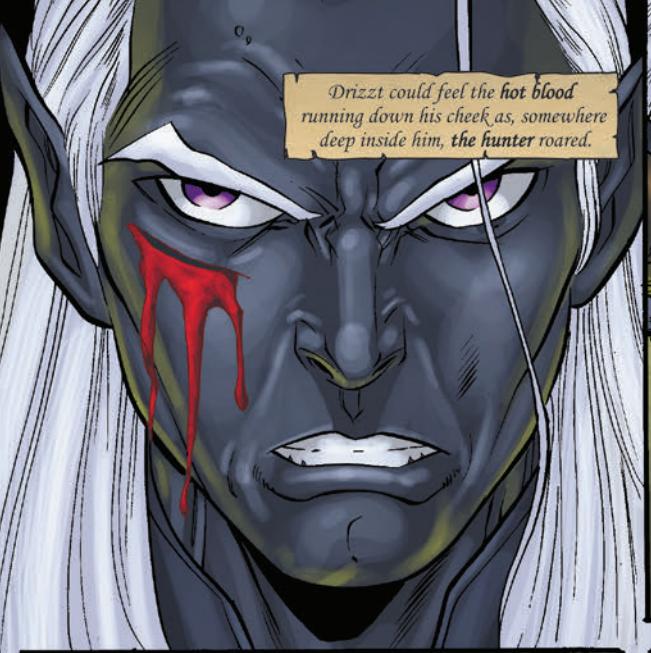


SKREEEEEEE!





















OF COURSE,
THERE ARE ALWAYS
CHOICES. YOURS JUST DON'T
HAPPEN TO BE VERY GOOD
AT THE MOMENT.



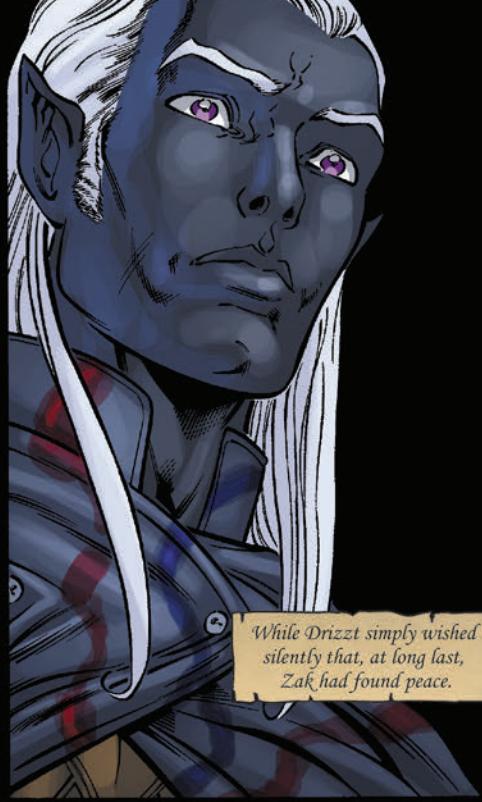


They erected Clacker's burial mound in a small, remote cave—one no creature would ever disturb.

And built another for Zaknafsein, because even though his body had been lost in the acid, Drizzt thought his father deserved a proper grave.



Belwar said a prayer to the gnomish gods, returning Clacker to the earth he so loved.



While Drizzt simply wished silently that, at long last, Zak had found peace.



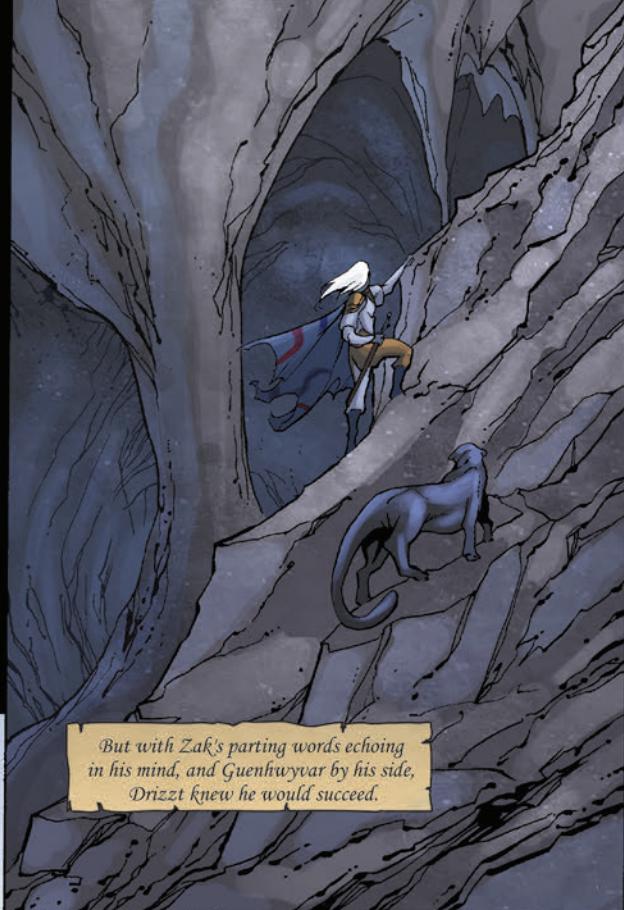
Then the two friends, who had been through so much, turned and headed north...

...to Blingdenstone.





Belwar was right, what Drizzt planned had never been attempted.



To stay in the Underdark was death, either quickly at the hands of one of Lolth's foul servants, or slowly into madness and the hunter.



But with Zak's parting words echoing in his mind, and Guenhwyvar by his side, Drizzt knew he would succeed.



And so, there was only one place left to go...



THE END.

THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT
CONTINUES IN FORGOTTEN REALMS.

SoJOURN





Glossary



BASILISK: A reptilian monster that petrifies creatures with a mere gaze, then consumes the helpless victim.



BELWAR DISSENGULP: A gnome (Svirfneblin) whose life was saved by Drizzt ten years before the events of Exile. Belwar was the sole survivor of a Svirfneblin mining expedition attacked by a Drow raiding party. Drizzt convinced his comrades to spare Belwar's life. In an act of cruel Drow "mercy," they took "only" Belwar's hands. Belwar now has mithral prostheses infused with magical energy.



BLINGDENSTONE: The fortress-like city of the deep gnomes (Svirfneblin). Hewn from the living rock itself, this vast metropolis is home to thousands of gnomes.

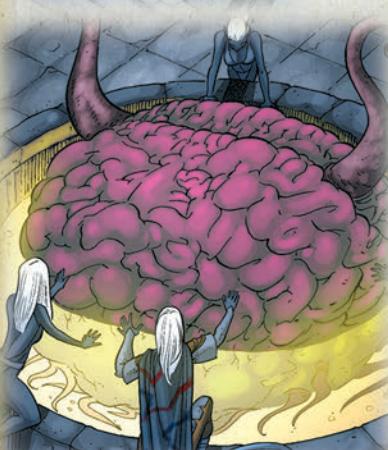
BREGAN D'AERTHE:
A Drow mercenary cadre comprised of rogue males and led by the infamous Jarlaxle. Bregan D'Aerthe is rightfully feared and respected throughout Menzoberranzan.



BRISTER FENDLESTICK: A human wizard who makes his home in the Underdark. He lives in a tower made of adamantite and rarely ventures from it.



BRIZA DO'URDEN: The eldest daughter of Matron Malice Do'Urden, Briza is a High Priestess of Lolth. As such, she is extremely powerful, but hungers for her mother's seat of power. She is the archetypal Drow female: arrogant, selfish, beautiful, and distrustful of everyone.



CENTRAL BRAIN: The brain-like mass that comprises all the combined knowledge of the Mind Flayer (Illithid) society; telepathically connects every individual Mind Flayer, and coordinates their entire existence.



CLACKER: An innocent Pech trapped in the monstrous body of a Hook Horror, because of the spells of the human wizard Brister Fendlestick. He loses a little more of his Pech personality with every passing day.



DININ DO'URDEN: Elderboy of House Do'Urden, and older brother of Drizzt.



DIRE CORBY: A predatory race of avian creatures who inhabit a cavernous lair filled with pools of glowing green acid.



DRIZZT DO'URDEN: A Drow warrior of exceptional ability, possessed of rare purple eyes and a noble heart—a trait almost unknown among the Drow. Son of Matron Mother Malice. Rejecting the violence and debauchery of Drow society, Drizzt underwent self-imposed exile in order to escape the bloody machinations of his mother.

DROW: An ebony-skinned race of elves, also known as "dark elves," who make their home in the subterranean world of the Underdark. Their violent society is ordered along matriarchal lines and is dominated by its Matron Mothers. The Drow are motivated by a hunger for individual power and wealth, and will employ any means, no matter how sadistic or treacherous, in pursuit of these goals.



FIRBLE: Chief of security for the Svirfneblin city of Blingdenstone.



GUENHWYVAR: A black panther conjured through an onyx figurine, and the constant companion of Drizzt.



HANDMAIDEN OF LOLTH: A Yochlol, the tentacled, otherworldly entity who speaks for the evil goddess Lolth.

HOOK HORRORS: Predators of the Underdark, these huge, armor-plated beasts utilize razor-sharp, hooklike appendages to attack their prey.



HOUSE DO'URDEN: The eighth house, or family, in the Drow city of Menzoberranzan. Ruled by the conniving Matron Malice, their quest for power has been hampered by the actions of the house's rogue son Drizzt.



HOUSE SYSTEM: The system of government employed by the Drow of Menzoberranzan. The city's eight most powerful families (or Houses) are represented on the Ruling Council. Every House is constantly plotting against its rivals, either in an effort to maintain position, or to ascend to the ruling eight. Warfare is the most common result of this race for ascendancy.

ILLITHIDS: Telepathic creatures (also known as Mind Flayers) who mentally enslave unsuspecting pilgrims in the Underdark, forcing them to compete as gladiators in their arena of sport. When their usefulness is finished, slaves are generally consumed by their Illithid captors.

JARLAXLE: Leader of Bregan D'Aerthe, a drow mercenary company. With his unique combination of charm and cleverness, this houseless rogue has managed to carve out a position of independence for himself and his elves.

KING SCHNICKTICK:
The Svirfneblin king
of Blingdenstone.

LOLTH: The queen of the Demonweb Pits, and the principle deity of the dark elves.

MATRON BAENRE: Matriarch of the House Baenre. So long as her House remains at the top of the House System, she is the most powerful figure in Menzoberranzan.

MATRON MOTHER MALICE: Matriarch of the House Do'Urden, and the mother of Drizzt. Considered one of the most fearsome leaders in all of Menzoberranzan.

MAYA: Youngest daughter of Matron Malice, also a high priestess of Lolth.

MENZOBERRANZAN: The largest and most powerful Drow city in the Underdark.



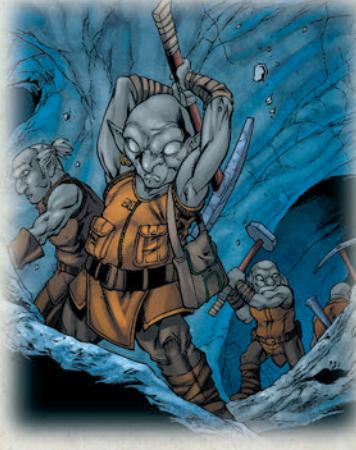
PECH: Small, peaceful creatures who desire only to commune with the living rock of the Underdark.



RIZZEN: Current Patriarch of House Do'Urden, and one in a long line of Matron Mother Malice's companions.



SHI'NAYNE DO'URDEN (SINAFAY HUN'ETT): Former Matriarch of House Hun'Ett, later adopted into House Do'Urden following the defeat of her House. Upon her adoption, to disguise her identity, her name was changed from Sinafay to Shi'Nayne.



SVIRFNEBLI: Also known as Deep Gnomes. Neither kind nor evil, the Svirfnebli are content to live peacefully while mining the rich ore of the Underdark.



UNDERDARK: An extremely dangerous and expansive subterranean wilderness. Populated by races of many varieties, including the Drow, Illithids, Dire Corbys, Svirfnebli, Hook Horrors, and untold others. Central Cities include Menzoberranzan and Blingdenston.



VIERNA: Second daughter of Matron Mother Malice. Responsible for the rearing of her younger brother, Drizzt, in his earliest years.



ZAKNAFEIN: Father and confidante of Drizzt. Former Weapons-Master of House Do'Urden, once considered the most fearsome Drow warrior in all the Underdark. Allowed Malice to sacrifice him to Lolth in order to save his son. Resurrected as a mindless slave by Matron Mother Malice through the arcane Zin-Carla ritual in order to hunt down and destroy Drizzt.

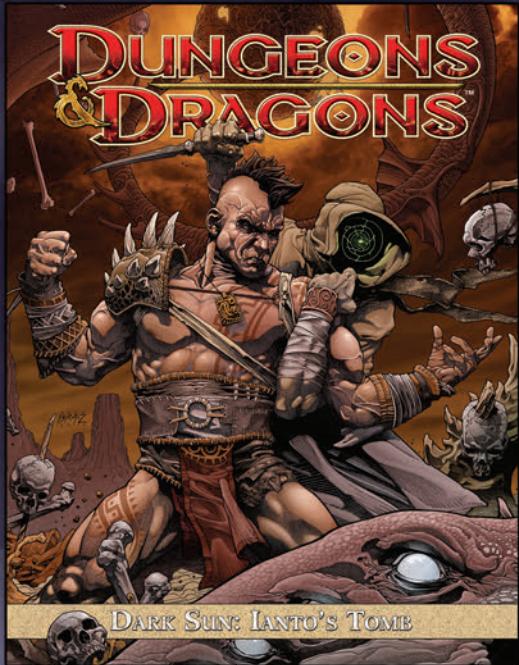


ZIN-CARLA: An arcane ritual in which the goddess Lolth grants the power to raise the dead as slaves. The power of the spell derives from the power of the priestess who casts it, slowly draining her life force away. Very powerful and very dangerous, Zin-Carla occurs very rarely, even in fractious Menzoberranzan.



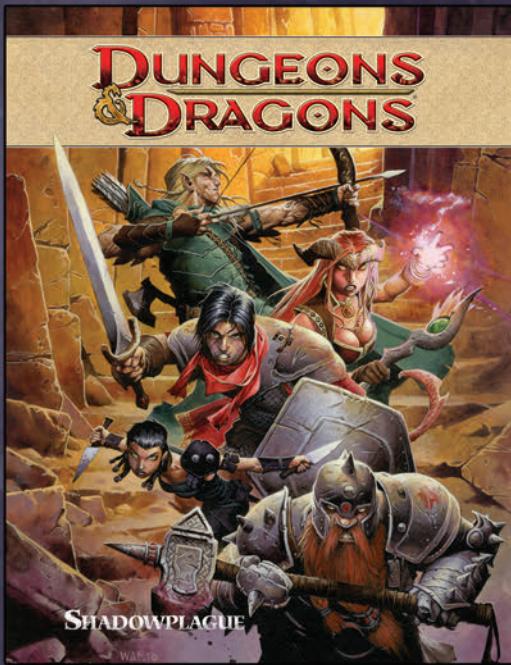
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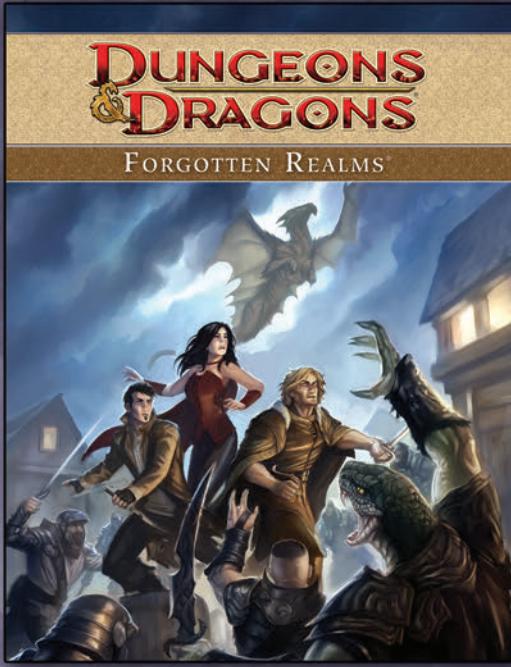
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