

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

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

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



SKORLUS.

HUH-OH.









OH? HOW SO?

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

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



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

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

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



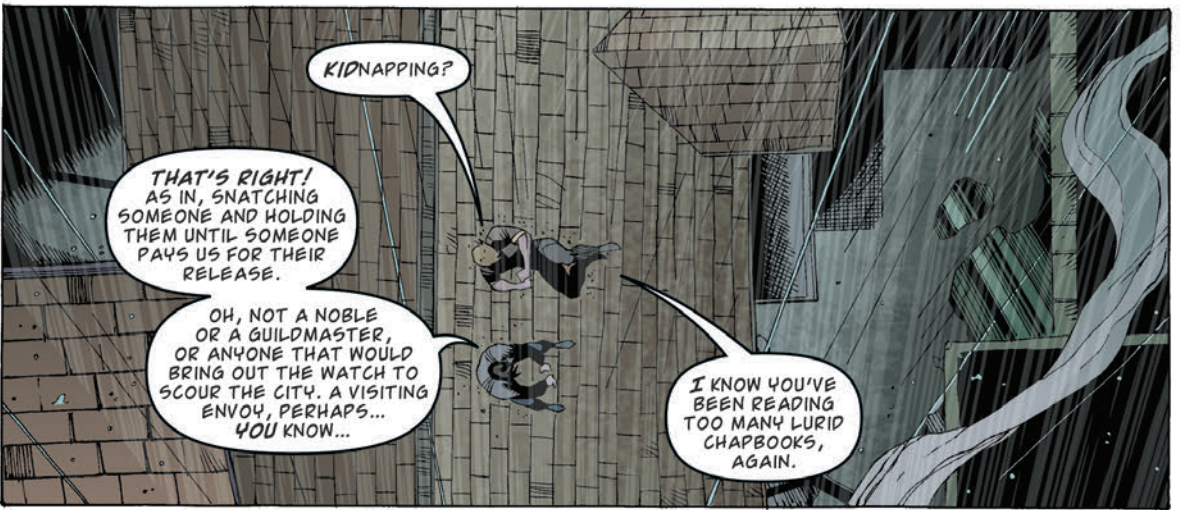
WE WERE ABOUT DONE WITH SNATCHING AND DAGGERWORK, EVEN BEFORE TODAY. SKORLUS JUST WANTED A READY SUPPLY OF BOOTS AND BREECHES AND THE LIKE...

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



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

KIDNAPPING.



KIDNAPPING?

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

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

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







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

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

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

NOT WAYWARD—MISSING, AND PROBABLY DEAD.

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

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

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

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

WHAT A CHARMING WAY OF PORTRAYING OUR DAUGHTER.

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

LORD HAELRAM!  
LORD HAELRAM!

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

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