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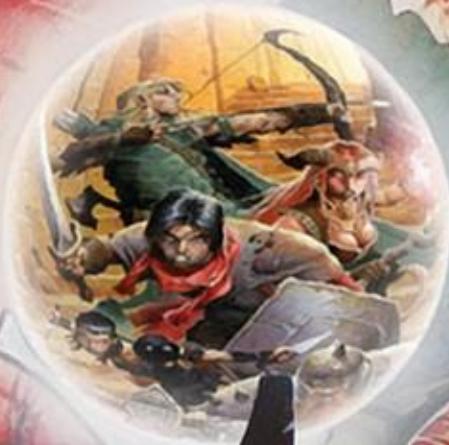
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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™



Welcome to a new realm of adventure.

Inside you'll find two stories that introduce the heroes and worlds of the upcoming *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* ongoing series and *DARK SUN* limited series.

First, a 10-page story establishes the cast for our *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* series, which debuts in November. Then a six-page story sets in motion the events of our *DARK SUN* five-issue series, launching January 2011.

The rest of this book contains backup material that gives you a behind-the-scenes view of how these series came together, as well as content that can be plugged right into your D&D campaign at home. This will be a regular feature of our comics, as we want them to be the best value for your hard-earned dollar.

In addition to original content, IDW will be producing deluxe editions of past material that has never been reprinted. Popular adaptations will be collected in the omnibus format.

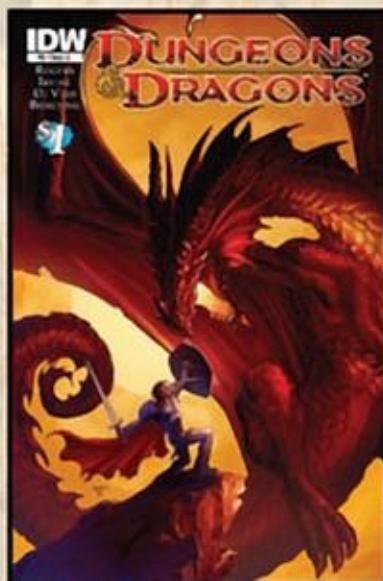
Say you still want more new material?

How about something set in the fan-favorite world of *FORGOTTEN REALMS*?

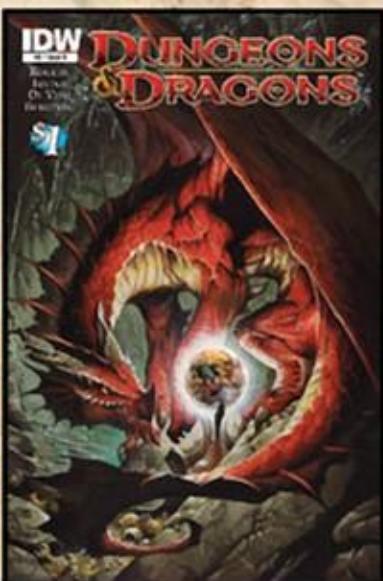
Trust me, the excitement is just getting started.

—Denton J. Tipton
June 11, 2010

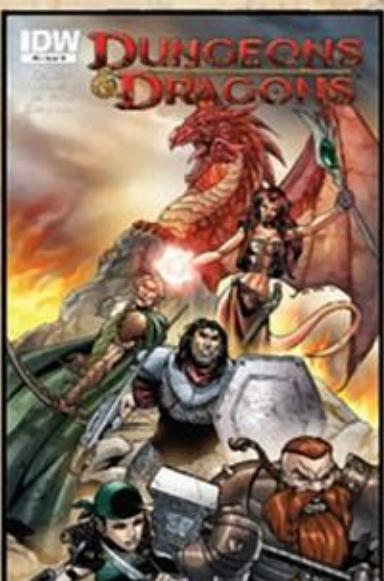
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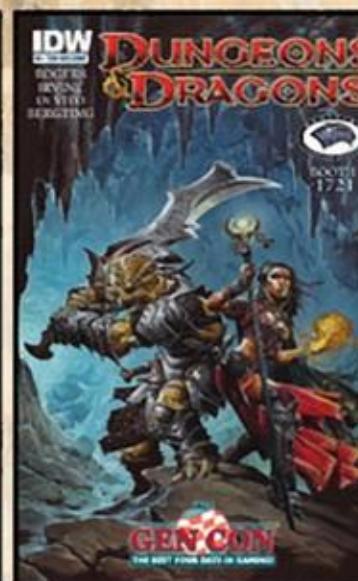
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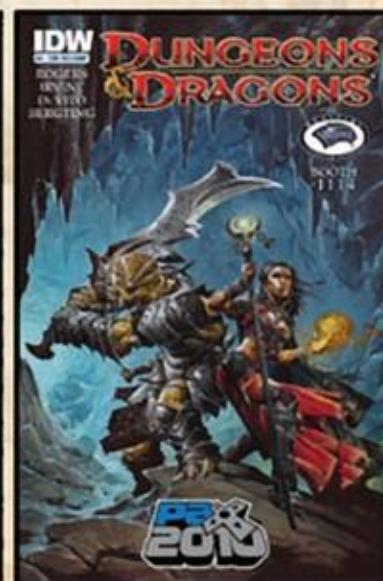
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Special thanks to Hasbro's Michael Kelly, Wizards of the Coast's Bill Slavicsek, Jon Schindehette, James Wyatt, Chris Perkins, Liz Schuh, Kierin Chase, Laura Tommervik, Shelly Mazzanoble, Hilary Ross, and Chris Lindsay.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

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.

“Fell’s Four Five”

Writer: John Rogers

Artist: Andrea Di Vito

Colorist: Andrew Dalhouse

Letterer: Chris Mowry

Editor: Denton J. Tipton

Consulting Editor: Andy Schmidt

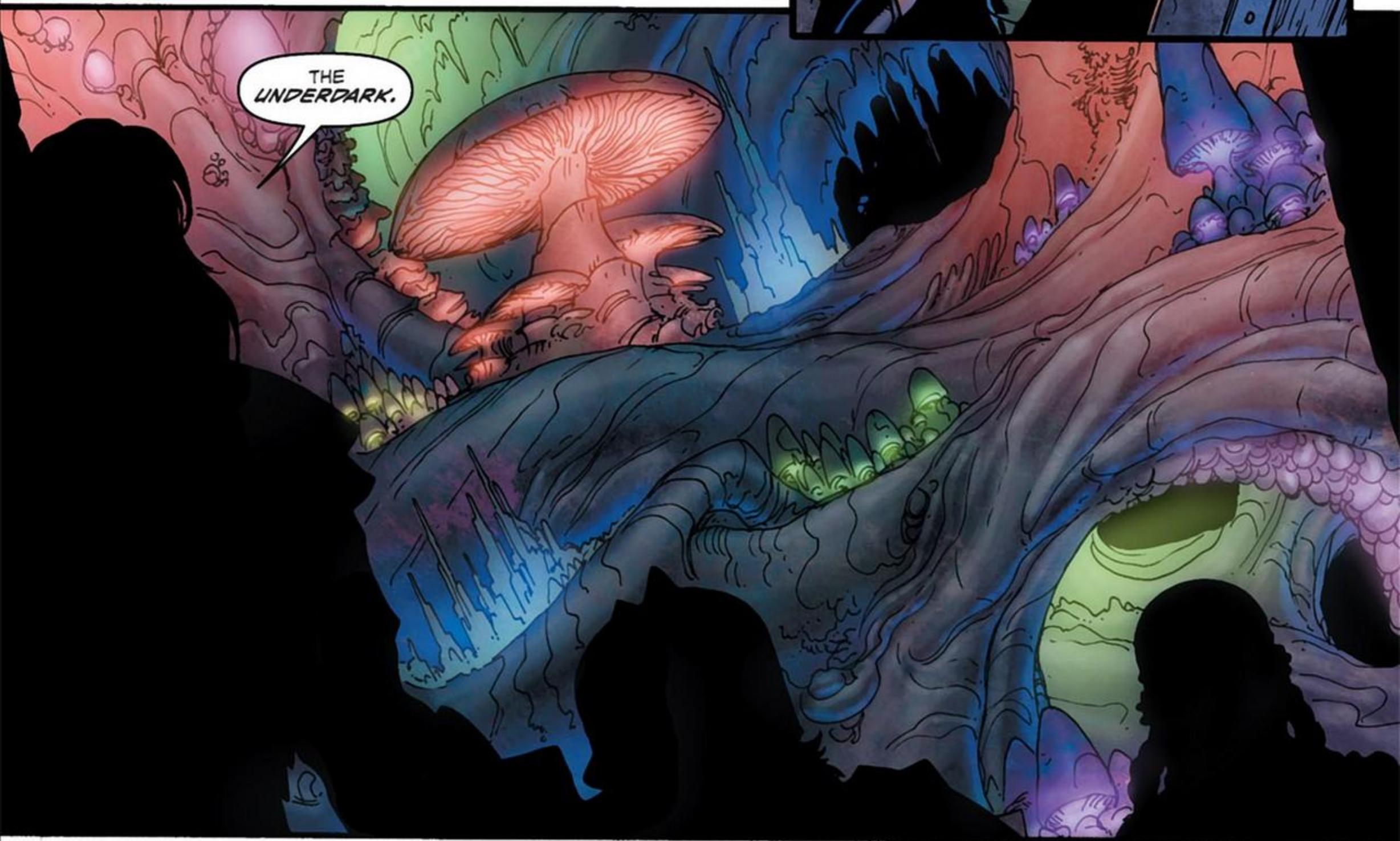
KRASH

THIS WAY!
WE CAN
CATCH THEM
IF WE-

-OH, HERE
THEY ARE.
GREAT.









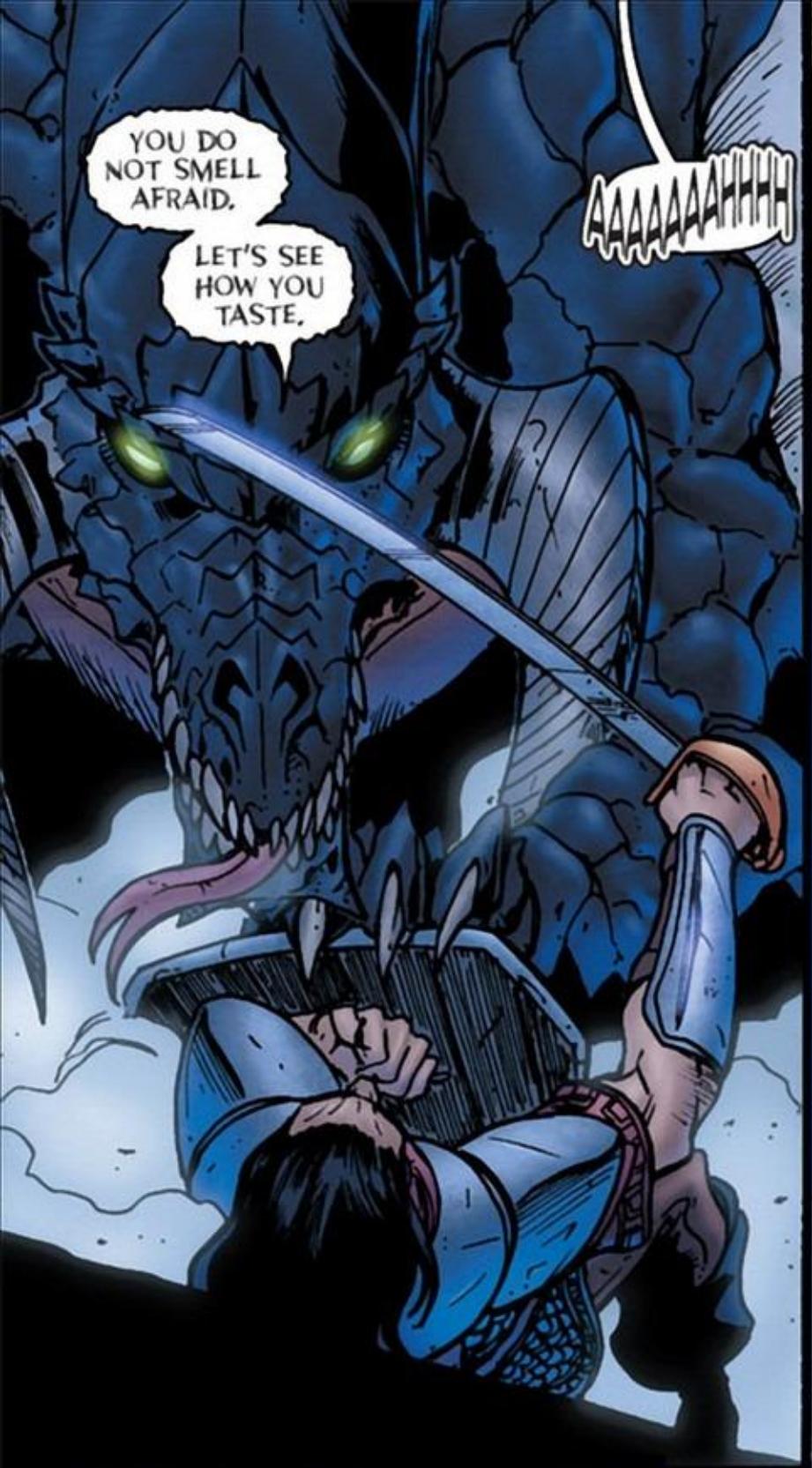


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Beneath a crimson sun lie wastelands of majestic desolation and cities of cruel splendor, where sandal-clad heroes battle ancient sorcery and terrible monsters. This is Athas, a dying planet of savagery and desolation.

Life hangs by a thread in this barren land, where bloodthirsty raiders, greedy slavers, and hordes of inhuman savages overrun the deserts. The cities are little better; each chokes in the grip of an immortal tyrant.

Only in the city-state of Tyr does a glimmer of freedom beckon, and powerful forces already conspire to extinguish it.

“Freedom”

Writer: **Alex Irvine**

Artist: **Peter Bergting**

Colorist: **Ronda Pattison**

Letterer: **Chris Mowry**

Editor: **Denton J. Tipton**

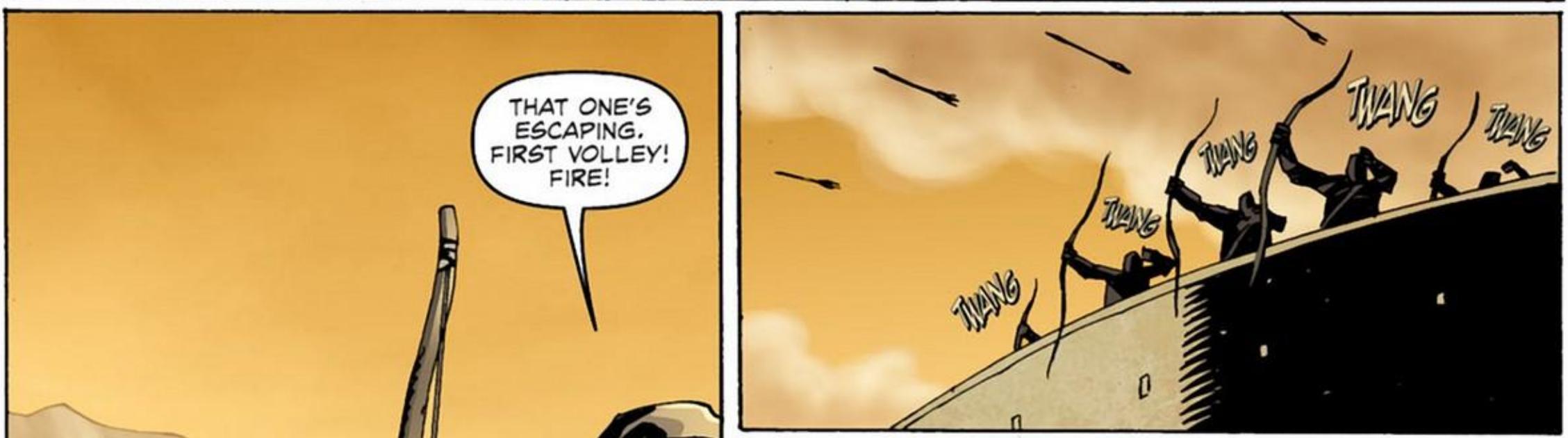
Consulting Editor: **Andy Schmidt**













CONTINUED IN "DARK SUN" #1, COMING JANUARY 2011!

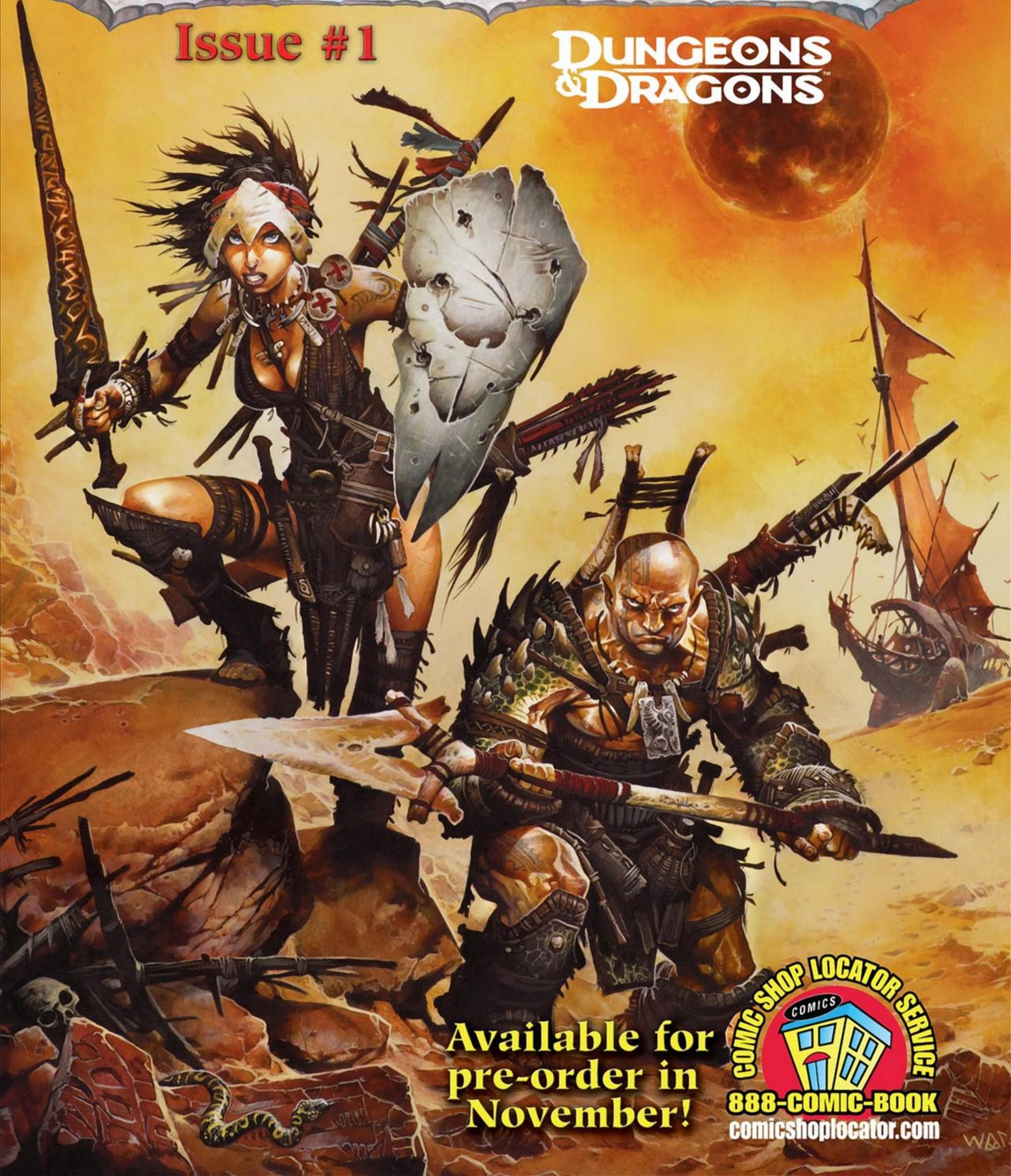
A NEW SUN RISES — JANUARY 2011!

DARK·SUN™

C A M P A I G N S E T T I N G

Issue #1

DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS™



Available for
pre-order in
November!



NOTES FROM THE UNDERDARK

Welcome to *Notes From the Underdark*, the official letter column of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS line of comics. I'm your guide and Dungeon Master, Denton J. Tipton.

In addition to your missives, these pages will contain announcements, background information about the world, behind-the-scenes looks at the creative process, and gaming content that you can plug into your campaign.

For this inaugural edition of Notes, we'll be taking a look at the shared history of comics and D&D.

In the early '80s, a series of ads ran in DC and Marvel comics offering a free catalog for the D&D line of games. The ads themselves were one-page comic strips, many of which were drawn by a young **Bill Willingham**, who is known famously as the creator of *Fables*.

Regular D&D comics finally arrived when DC picked up the license and produced several series, including *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, *FORGOTTEN REALMS*, and *SPELLJAMMER*. Talents such as writer **Jeff Grubb**, and artists **Rags Morales** and **Jan Duursema** enjoyed long runs on this successful line, which will be reprinted for the first time starting in February 2011.

After a few short stints at small publishers, Devil's Due Productions began producing adaptations of some of the finest prose



stories in D&D lore. Many of those will be collected, including *FORGOTTEN REALMS: THE LEGEND OF DRIZZT*, in the omnibus format.

And that brings us to now with this copy of *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* #0. I hope what you've seen grabs you, and you'll be joining us in November for *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* #1 and in January for *DARK SUN* #1.

Tell us your thoughts (mark "Okay to print") e-mail: letters@idwpublishing.com; snail mail: Attn: Notes From the Underdark, 5080 Santa Fe St., San Diego CA 92109; message boards: www.idwpublishing.com.

About the creators:

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS **JOHN ROGERS** has signed on as writer of the D&D ongoing series. John's a talented creator who has made his mark across media, in Hollywood for writing the first draft of the blockbuster *Transformers* movie for **Paramount**, on the small screen for creating and producing *Leverage* for **TNT**, and in comics for co-creating the new *Blue Beetle* for **DC Comics**.

Bringing the world to life on the page is artist **ANDREA DI VITO**. In the Italian maestro, we've landed a big-time talent

Young Black Dragon

Large natural magical beast (aquatic, dragon)

Level 4 Solo Lurker

XP 875

Initiative +11

Perception +9

Darkvision

HP 208; Bloodied 104

AC 18, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 15

Speed 7 (swamp walk), fly 7, swim 7

Resist 10 acid

Saving Throws +5; Action Points 2

TRAITS

Acidic Blood (acid)

Whenever the dragon takes damage while bloodied, each creature adjacent to it takes 5 acid damage.

Aquatic

The dragon can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Instinctive Devouring

The dragon can use a free action to charge or use bite on an initiative of 10 + its initiative check. If the dragon cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of the dragon making the attack.

Action Recovery

Whenever the dragon ends its turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on it ends.

STANDARD ACTIONS

• Bite (acid) • At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Miss: 5 acid damage.

• Claw • At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC. The dragon makes the attack twice, distributing the attacks between two targets or making both attacks against one target.

Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

• Breath Weapon (acid) • Recharge 2

Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +7 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 3 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Shroud of Gloom • Recharge 1

Effect: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst). The target gains vulnerable 5 acid and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter. A character can use a standard action to attempt a DC 10 Heal check to end this effect on him- or herself or an adjacent ally.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

• Tail Sweep • At-Will

Trigger: An enemy misses the dragon with a melee attack.

Attack (Opportunity Action): Melee 3 (triggering enemy); +7 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target falls prone. In addition, each of the target's allies adjacent to it takes 5 damage.

• Bloody Breath • Encounter

Trigger: The dragon is first bloodied.

Effect (Free Action): Breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it.

Skills

Stealth +12

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 20 (+7)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 12 (+3)

Cha 10 (+2)

Alignment evil

Languages Common, Draconic

who flexed his artistic muscle on *Thor* and *Annihilation* for **Marvel Comics**.

DARK SUN

Award-winning novelist **ALEX IRVINE** will pen our *DARK SUN* limited series. Not only did Alex earn the *Locus Award for Best First Novel*, joining the likes of **Carl Sagan**, **Cory Doctorow**, and **Joe Hill**,

but he's also well versed in comics, having written several for **Marvel**.

Illustrating the five-issue series is Swede **PETER BERGTING**, whose graphic novel, *The Portent*, became an international sensation, published in seven languages and lauded by the likes of **Mike Mignola** and **Michael Wm. Kaluta**.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™

Q&A with D&D writer John Rogers and artist Andrea Di Vito

Notes: Tell us a bit more about our initial cast of characters.

John: Fell's Five is a ragtag group of troubleshooters and adventurers led by accidental hero Adric Fell. Adric's a veteran of the last war (there's always a "last war" in fantasy fiction), and has found that his only marketable job skill is pulling off the vaguely impossible while other people try to kill him. He'd claim he was just trying to run a little mercenary company, but there is some fundamental anger at the injustice of a dark world. Fell's

Five always get paid, but they usually throw a little rough justice into the mix along the way.

Everyone else's backstories actually evolve into stories for the comic, so I don't want to go into too much detail. Khal Khalundurrin, the dwarven paladin of Moradin, is on the road not just for justice, but for love. Varis, the elven ranger, has some very unusual attitudes that make it difficult for him to live in the forest with other elves. Tisha Swornheart, our tiefling warlock, has made a very bad bargain for a very good reason—she's going to find her missing sister, no matter what. And Bree Three-Hands seems to be a typical halfling rogue, but she's got a second agenda that goes much, much deeper than picking locks for a party of adventurers.

Andrea: I tried to have their look reflect their persona a little. Most of all I tried to give visual hints about what kind of people they are. Most important of all I tried to give them a "real" adventurer's look, all their



APRIC

clothes and armor are used, dented, scratched. These guys are in a very dangerous line of work and I thought they must not care too much about their looks, all that matters is to get the job done, either for money or glory!

Notes: Can you give us a rundown of what we can expect in the series?

John: Fun. I think one of the main problems with fantasy comics stems from them being very serious, almost reverential, when it comes to their source material. But D&D is a game



KHAL



Q&A with DARK SUN writer Alex Irvine and artist Peter Bergting

Notes: Tell us a bit more about the initial cast of characters. Who are they and what do they want?

Alex: Our two main characters are a mul gladiator named Grudvik and a dune trader named Aki, who comes into our story trying to catch Grudvik, who's technically a runaway slave. Grudvik's trying to figure out who had him arrested, reenslaved, and separated from the woman he loves...who happens to be a noble in House Ianto of Tyr. Her name is Rubi, and she's got a thing for gladiators and a history that surprises everyone. Aki's always on the move, and he thinks that a medallion Rubi gave Grudvik will make them all rich. Of course they're going to have to head down into the

ruins below the city of Tyr first...

Peter: There was a bit of back and forth with the characters, and it took a few weeks before they had found their respective races (mul and human) and professions, they even switched back and forth a couple of times. The only thing consistent was the mohawk on Grudvik. The look was challenging, I had a specific image in mind, but there was precious little reference material to go about in the beginning so I didn't really know if I could take it in the direction I wanted. The one thing to keep in mind was that there was no metal in DARK SUN so I had to work around that. As soon as the reference material started to show up, the design process got easier and I was able to realize what I had wanted to do in the

beginning. Grudvik was approved pretty much on the spot, and Aki just a little later after I had added a bit of armor to him. I like to keep a reference to a living person so I have something to come back to when I start to sway, and I envisioned Aki as Shane MacGowan, but heroic and with better teeth. I don't like clean-cut heroes, but Grudvik is close. I love the way Alex writes him, which gives him a bit of a tragic slant that I can play with so he's not just another Conan derivative.



GRUDVIK

you play to have fun with your friends. Expect this title to have lots of door-kicking, monster-slaying, and quips while running from Giant Things with Teeth.

Notes: Will readers familiar with the roleplaying game see a lot of it reflected in the comics?

John: Absolutely. There's a reason that, when approached with the job, I took the "core" universe book. I wanted to take the most archetypical characters I could design and make them fun. You'll see full stats for all the characters and their villains, and although I don't want to be locked into slavish detail, most players will recognize the spells that are being slung and the feats being used.

Notes: What is it about D&D appeals to you and why do you think it has remained in pop culture for so long?

Andrea: The reasons are many, I think. Mainly, it's the social side of the game that hooks people. You give someone the chance to be a hero, or somebody entirely different from who they are, and they get the chance to express themselves without bounds.

Notes: Can you give us a quick rundown of what we can expect in the series?

Alex: The series will feature (among other things): Grudvik wishing he had killed Aki; Aki continually inventing reasons for Grudvik not to kill him; a fight on top of an airborne cloud ray elder; an expedition to the deepest darkest corners of the Under-Tyr; the revelation of Veiled Alliance activity within Tyr; a bunch of monsters; and some unrequited love thrown in for good measure.

Notes: Will readers familiar with the roleplaying game see a lot of it reflected in the comics?

Alex: They sure will. **Peter Bergting** has done a great job of evoking the feel of the game, and I've tried to weave the story around all of the stuff that makes Athas such a compelling setting. It's harsh, unforgiving, lethal territory, populated by unforgiving and lethal people, and some outstanding monsters. But one of the things I always loved about RPGs was the banter among the players, so I tried to preserve some of that in the interactions. Especially between Aki and Grudvik.

Much of the popularity of D&D extends from players creating their own



It's almost intoxicating at first, all of a sudden you are allowed to do anything with your imagination. And the best part is that you get to do it playing along with your friends. Also D&D is very fundamental, you just need dice and paper to play, all the rest is up to you and the Dungeon Master!

Much of the popularity of D&D extends from players creating their own characters and building upon them. How does that aspect play into creating these comics and how do you offset the lack of interactivity?

characters and building upon them. How does that aspect play into creating these comics and how do you offset the lack of interactivity?

Alex: That's a big part of roleplaying's appeal, sure. But D&D also provides a great set of stories built into the worlds and campaign settings. When I was a kid, I loved the modules because they were kickass world-building that I got to plug my characters into. Even today, I think of the Tomb of Horrors fondly. The great D&D worlds—Greyhawk, Athas, et al.—were more of the same, you know. (I was yelling about the Nyr

John: D&D really came into its own as the Tolkien-reading crowd embraced it. By which I mean reading fiction and then injecting your favorite elements of that fiction into the D&D game is a long-standing tradition. Besides enjoying the story and characters, I hope D&D players will be lifting these comics wholesale as one-offs and scenarios for their own campaigns. For the D&D crowd, I hope it'll be "come for the game, stay for the banter and sword fighting."

The idea of the comics certainly appeals to many D&D fans, but what about those not familiar with the games? What aspects of the comic will draw their interest?

Andrea: Fantasy genre has seen increased attention during these last years, and I believe many people are thirsty for a good fantasy comic. And if you say fantasy, it does not get much better than the D&D world. It's all about adventure, humour, suspense, and struggle. It is about what makes life (fantasy or not) interesting!

Read the interview in its entirety at: <http://fromthetip.blogspot.com/>

Dyv to a friend not too long ago because he didn't know it was modelled on Lake Superior.) Those places become some of our favorite places to tell stories. Athas is like that for sure, and these comics—like a Dark Sun campaign—are stories told in Athas, right?

The idea of the comics certainly appeals to many D&D fans, but what about those not familiar with the games? What aspects of the comic will draw their interest?

Alex: Even if you've never played D&D, this story will give you violence, sex, conspiracy, and adventure. How can you resist that? You don't have to know the difference between a dune reaper and an id fiend to get a kick out of an adventure into the haunted ruins below an ancient city.

Peter: I hope they will be sucked in by the art, which is what people will see when flipping through the book, and then get hooked on Alex's awesome story and characters. DARK SUN is such a cool (hot) world that people not familiar with the game will find a refreshing take on the fantasy genre.

Read the interview in its entirety at: <http://fromthetip.blogspot.com/>



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**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS**
ENCOUNTERS



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