

# INTRODUCTION

Admittedly, your chances of living to see another day have been better.

“Come on! Not so slow!” grunts your companion, pushing you forward. If only you could see where you were going. But this sack really doesn't let the slightest light through. So, carefully, one step at a time ...

In the darkness, you feel your nose throbbing with pain. If only you had anticipated the blow instead of being hit out of nowhere! However, the guy probably pulled his punches, because you're sure your nose isn't broken. If it were broken, it would have cracked, and the pain would be more intense. But all that's happening is a lot of blood, nothing more. The fluid is gradually coagulating into a viscous mass on your face.

Was that intentional? Did Grunt make a point of not hitting too hard? Maybe it's just a straw your clouded mind is grasping for ... But could it just be a warning? If so, it would be quite elaborately staged.

It's more likely that the guy politely pushing you through the alleys is a beginner. Maybe he's just playing with you, like a cat with a mouse. Or he's having a bad day, who knows? In any case, the Saber Crabs of Candarlin are not exactly known for being particularly forgiving.

Since you can't see anything at the moment, you try to concentrate on the sounds around you. However, there's not much to hear. A few distant voices, a dog howling, a cart rattling by ...

There's not much going on in the streets of the port city at night, especially not in the arena district. If someone sees a Saber Crab minion taking his sweetheart for a moonlit stroll, with a bag over their head and their hands tied, it is smarter to close the windows and go to bed.

After a while, you stop.

"Ah, already here?" The voice of another man. He sounds bored. You hear a door open. "Took your time."

"Bother someone else. Or shut up,' your companion grumbles. "Is the boss there?"

"Just through the back. You know your way around."

You are pushed over a threshold into the interior of a building. After a few steps, a pat on the back and a friendly kick in the legs suggest you should sit down.

With a jerk, someone pulls the sack off your head. Very hospitable, these guys, indeed.