

Dragon Day

The waning light of evening lit the streets of Bahroos, the great crossroads city. Crowds of people churned across the cobbles and past the many market stalls decorated with colorful paper cutouts. Nearly everyone is enjoying the atmosphere of celebration. One exception is Kite, who just came crashing through the doors of a tavern at a dead sprint. Kite caught a candy cart for balance, nearly toppling the delicate display of confections. Muttering a hasty apology, Kite looked back at the still swinging doors. Three large and rough looking thugs emerged and scanned the street. While Kite's bright red skin and messy black hair weren't uncommon in a city like Bahroos, the still wobbling cart and angry candy-maker made Kite much easier to spot. As Kite caught the eye of the leading thug, a barrel-chested man sporting a proudly curled mustache, Kite flashed a grin and darted into the crowd.

Kite's worn boots flew across the rough cobbles. Even at a run, their pounding footsteps were whispers in the festival's chaos. Kite could hear the growling shouts of the tavern's thugs only steps behind. Kite ran at a line of eager shoppers and slid through a narrow gap in the crowd, guessing it would be too small for their pursuers. This guess was confirmed by the eruption of shouts and scrabbling boots. Kite seized their chance and spun into a nearby alley. A dead end. Without stopping, Kite ran further in, hoping for any kind of hiding place. Hidden in the stretching shadows was a narrow doorway. Kite yanked at the handle, but the door held firm. Locked. A glance back down revealed one of the tavern thugs. Hoping they hadn't been seen, Kite shrugged off their pack and held it tight as they pressed themselves into the narrow frame.

The plodding thud of the thug's boots echoed off the alley walls as the thug sneered.

"Come on out little ember. You give back what you stole, and I won't take much from you." His statement was punctuated by the metallic ring of blades scraping together.