

The story of Droyt

Chapter 124: Six Down (1st ride of Mirtul 1371)

Point is, my Lady is a strange woman. Not that I would have her any other way, but she's... odd. She's clever, I can see that. She also knows a lot, history, places, but she's so optimistic! Always assuming things will turn out well, always... like what she saw in me. And she has this way with people. Not all people, no only a few. But those few she binds, they become part of her. With some that turns out well, with others, like twisted Uziel, not so well. She's a bad person to try and emulate, worse to try and make happy. Not that she wants that, she just wants people to follow their own path, but those unsure, those looking for answers instead of finding them, they have a tendency to project. Sometimes I wonder if I should intervene, but this story too has to run its course. I saw what happens when people think they can control others. She'll either discover herself, or burn herself up. Or get burned to a crisp: She could still handle that human girl, but for how long?

As things usually are, a few adventurers popping up on the trade route were par for the course. Them not being interested in the castle, or trying to speak to my Lady was slightly off, and them almost spotting Uziel was a sign they were to be tracked. Our dear hunting elf of course jumped the flame and invited them in, but that turned out to be right – again showing how my vision was limited – as there was this strange aura around them which, of course, my Lady recognized without problem. Time travelers. I could understand the concept, but not how it could work, not anymore according to what she told me. Then again, isn't that exactly what the idea is? The barbarian, being straightforward, got through, the other, either through politeness or not enough focus, did not. I wasn't there, watching though, and these people they have something more. The elf was a hunter, like me in touch with Art, but also in touch with Millieki. A rare breed and he was likely even more dangerous with his bow. The dwarf was okay as dwarves go. Clearly a warrior priest, also clearly not a truly flexible mind. But he also was a craftier, obvious from how he studied my Lady's blade. The human barbarian woman was okay, nothing hidden, I felt I rather liked her. The tiefling was almost the reverse, except for his faith in Tymora. One to watch, one who would take risks. The last human girl was... a bard I suppose, but not like most would see it. Somebody who picked up nature, music, and Art and created their own style. I was right about the tiefling: he triggered dear Uziel, who almost killed that girl before they went 'back'.

Returning to my Dear she just mentioned offhandedly "They'll be back soon," so I made sure some rooms were prepared. Soon, of course, is a relative word, but not a tenday later they indeed returned with Wilden who had made his usual reconnaissance mission to Llorckh. The fact they saw that he was a 'spy' showed that they indeed were people to take serious, as Wilden had done this six times before without any problems. One of them I did not know: a half elven woman with a pleasant address and hidden skills. The dwarf reacted poorly at my presence, but he had more control than most as he stopped his attack before his weapon actually got close. As I looked them over it was clear some time had passed for them: the dwarf wore some serious new (old) armor, and they felt at least a circle stronger, if not two. Note to self, keep Uziel uninformed about their presence. They told us they were ordered to do something about a pitfiend trying to rule the moor. A **Pit Fiend**? To my amazement my Lady just nodded and told them it had been there for the past fifteen **millennia**, but that it was bound there by some magic she not yet understood. It had tried to rule the moor several times during that period but had never truly succeeded. The fact that it was now allied with the Red Wizards was news though. The dwarf wanted to leave immediately (doesn't he know the importance of solid preparation?) so I rummaged through our chest of reserve items to find some spell left by a friendly priest for just this occasion. The dwarf was suspicious, unhappy, and quite clearly frustrated at being bested by me. Understandable: they are admirable creatures, but just missing that final **something** that would make them perfect. They decided to stay the night, and the bard mentioned that it might be wise to go to bed early. Odd. The rest of them immediately acquiesced, and even my Lady concurs, while she usually likes to spend the evening talking. I made sure the rest of the group is picked up too (with a follower of the sublime way), and my Lady solved the problem of the dwarf's prayer time in her usual direct way. I'm still not

clear why one day of talking, planning, and spellcasting would be wasted, but I too can feel some kind of pressure building. It is the way that bard talks, I am sure, and the way the others react suggests that she's a seer of some kind. As those kind pop up when history gets 'interesting' I decide to make a thorough check of our defenses soon.

Late in the evening I woke. It was time for a little travel. We walked to the Gate when a presence appeared in the main hall. Somebody who knew the passwords, so it wasn't hard to recognize lady Silverhand. She warned us about an attack on Evermeet, and the fact all normal magical ways of travel were blocked. My Lady of course took her responsibility, and, being her, bound these adventurers to her house or to her person so she could take them along. Risky, but where would she get another group so capable? Kelderec's adventuring days were behind him, Shantarra had her duties as a mother... But I knew how to get hold of Eos. He doesn't like me, but if there are any extra-planars involved we'll surely use him. Uziel I had to warn too, even if I would need to make sure to keep her away from that bard. We gated to the Dragon Wall, where we were going to prepare because it was dawn there (my Lady has this interesting way of looking at reality), but then the bard interrupted with two poems:

The choice is:

*Save one not a kill
Save two barely alive
Save three standing still
Save four truly survive
Save five new age hail*

The fact is:

*Soul mauled except without land
Shield destroyed except without regret
Heart trapped except without time
Sword drowned except without clan
Mind twisted except without art*

Seers... I just hope her predictions will not take another millennium to come true. But if this had to do with Evermeet... Soul would be the grove, mind the magical academia, heart the capitol... the island Sumbrar should be a target too... drowned.. so it could be the sword. Shield, what other defenses did Evermeet possess? The dragons. Then the first poem would tell us what we would need to do to help Evermeet: save at least three of these, but of course my Lady went for five. But whom to send? Our bard also read the stars and informed in a more normal tone of voice that it seemed everything chaotic and evil was fighting. That would be the gods of destruction... mauled: Malar, drowned: Umberlee, destroyed: Talos... Twisted: Cyric would make sense and trapped... capitol... Lloth. Yeah this definitely seemed a poem about our current problems, we are in luck. So without... clan. The dwarf. And me. Bugger. With land would be my Lady. The copper elf and the half elf most likely the ones without regret. Without time was tricky, but we got a likely solution: those with a death mark, that bard, the barbarian, and Eos all have somebody hunting for them. Uziel and the tiefling then were without art, which left the sublime warrior as also 'landless'... what story is hidden there?

All of us in the sloop was a bit cramped. The reduced horse and bear did not have the right shape, and the adamantine plate of the dwarf cracked at least two cross connections. It was that the half elf and the tiefling managed to fold themselves in the baggage hold, and that Enfira could fly a dragon shaped sloop like only a dragon could. I was utterly stiffened when we landed on a storm wracked island. The tiefling and Uziel left for the twin spires, I would join the dwarf, Grimwald, as he created his own jammer. We would drop of Eos, the bard, and the barbarian with her horse. My Lady would go north, drop of the copper elf and half elf, and them continue with the sublime warrior for the grove of Corellon. The flight to Sumbrar was roomier but also a lot more stressful. Would my Lady be careful for her and our children's sake? Her protective magic is second to none and she is more dangerous in battle then I will ever be, but still... I saw the bard looking at me with a mirror of my expression, and I realized I wasn't the only one worrying. Where Enfira had flown through the storm as only a dragon could, the dwarf flew his stone tower straight on. Hurricane winds versus a rock, and the wind was not really winning. I expected treason – how else would they conquer – and when the jammer was blasted by an immense lightning bolt as it closed in to the main fortress I was less than surprised. Still them blasting my Lady's colors meant I was in my right to fight anyone I could reasonably suspect of that act. We landed close to a small

outpost near the coast and got a friendly welcome – things considering. The lieutenant in charge had more depth than I expected from a Evermeet elf, and a combat against some undead and a golem was rather good for trust. Grimwald now accepted treason in the main fortress so we found a back entrance guarded by a big crab. We lost an elf to that, and another to an abysmal undead, but Grimwald and the lieutenants showed their faith by restoring a destroyed artifact by the elf sea god, and we entered the fortress proper with the help of a surviving guardian. There the traitors were plotting, but my spells and Grimwald's wrath cut that rather short. Having the guardian around was fortunate: the soldiers storming in just took us prisoner.

You couldn't really blame them, but my cousins were really a bunch of xenophobic poor losers. My Lady and these adventurers truly saved them from a plot that I could have seen coming from miles. Too much trust in their primary defenses, too little backup plans, nasty surprises, and just plain experience. Most of them were like larva in an isolated cave, totally unprepared for a common spider. Oh well, there were a few that were able to rise over their fixed ideas. The dwarf was still stand-offish, but he didn't call me names once... he probably took his vow seriously. Surprisingly none of them had died, I had the tiefling pegged as somebody who took too big a risk. Dear Uziel still had that maniacally look in her eyes for that bard. Perhaps I will have to intervene a bit... not yet, though. We were given quarter, but were quickly sent back home. The sloop is a bit damaged, but getting again worked. There the adventurers went back planning to detach the fiend from the Red Wizards. Taking out the head honchos of that mage cabal, and try to talk to the fiend to see if it was willing to tell what kept it here. The cabal group was a bit understaffed in my opinion (just Eos, the tiefling, the bard, and some Zhent spy), but the bard at least understood how to prepare. I gave her a true-vision scroll, and an emergency disjunction. Would she be able to handle it? Time would tell. The sublime had stayed with my Lady, so it was the barbarian rider, the dwarf warrior-priest, the copper elf hunter, and the half-elf ... to do the talking with the fiend. I was sure my Lady would prefer that I help them, so I went. The dwarf hadn't planned on that. We met an erinyes who told us that we needed to pass six tests, or make a deal six times. Those deals? No thanks. It showed their strength when none of them wanted to do the first (and likely easiest) test, so I went and bested an invisible hellcat, so I knew I had most of my spells available to support them later. The half-elf woman made good use of my *improved invisibility*, and she had some transmutation magic herself, so her fight was rather one-sided. After that she continued getting the erinyes to talk. Clever girl. The next two were for the dwarf: a fiendish pikeman, and some kind of soul-eating undead, who got totally owned by the dwarf. Well done. The copper elf had to do a more serious opponent, an ice devil of some kind. I helped him by pointing out his hiding places, but what won the battle was the elf's relentlessness. The devil thought that he could outlast a mortal with his at-will powers, but he clearly had a lack of knowledge of druids. Paladins are a focused bunch (hm, the dwarf? probably), but not as much as those tree huggers. The barbarian was to fight again a horned devil, a battle she really wasn't up to. Not because she was a bad fighter, but he clearly outclassed her. Well he did, but our half-elf had gotten some good intel on the guy, and I had packed three disks with some serious protective magic. Were a bit low now, but I'm sure we'll manage until we can get things back to normal again. So the battle was pretty to watch, and I think the horned devil actually was in some risk. He rather liked that. So we got a pass. Talking to the big boss.

Drow male Paragon/3, Battle sorcerer/4, abjurant champion/5