

Grimwald's chronicles part 109

While abiding our time as the runes (which are only truly used by giants and dwarves not elves and certainly not dark elves!) have counseled an apparition delivers the message to our hostess than Evermeet is in dire need of assistance. Bound by her birthright our hostess cannot do anything but obey of course. Even though we are in her domain, we are not her subjects, but never the less she requests our aid. The vows of mutual defence between elf and dwarf have not been upheld since the fall of ancient Illefarn and certainly not since the cowardly retreat of the elves to the very Evermeet they went to hide from their responsibilities. Surely it is no more than just that they now lack the very allies they themselves have forsaken.

Still the enemies they face are probably mutual enemies and the one lesson learned by the shield dwarves is that to be outnumbered and alone is eventually to be destroyed. I hope the ancestors will forgive me that will try to I spare these cowardly traitors from the fate which befell our people. I can only hope they will learn from this example and that the elves will live to regret their shameful behavior.

Apparently to be able to travel to Evermeet we need to swear an oath of fealty to the lady Illiana, since only those of her house are allowed to go there. She however promises us she will not use her position to make demands upon us. A strange situation, being obliged to obey, without ever an order. How inefficient a construction. No wonder Illefarn fell if this is the way elven royalty direct their house! If I were still of a clan there could be no such oath of course, unless the clan elders ordered it. Now however I am free to do what needs to be done to halt the advance of evil at a cost only to my own honor. The honor which my grandfather showed me was still intact, even though I broke an oath. Now that honor will be reduced rather by making one. Must be this karma thing Reed keeps talking about, there is no escaping one's fate. A dwarf in thrall to an elf. I wonder if even in ancient Illefarn such a shame was carried by one of my people. Still the situation demands a sacrifice and my people may one day benefit from the duties which I now place upon this elven house.

As was to be expected Snake tries to get all the advantages without the cost. He manages to abuse the situation so as to extort a boon and do nothing more than stay loyal, which I guess to him would already be a major achievement. He gets the others to follow his example. Then we are transported to a grand fortification called the Dragon Wall where we can pray at dawn even though it is nighttime where we were. During these prayers I feel the presence of the divine draw closer. Is it because I have gone further east than even the Galena dwarves? No I feel the will of Moradin's hammer to forge his justice in unblessed places, the Silent Keeper's duty to find secrets unknown to any but the most favored of searchers. There is a WILL I should go to Evermeet, yet strangely enough not a simple command. The Soul Forger and the Soul Keeper reveal to me a part of the chant in the halls of the ancestors which before was hidden to me. I hear choirs of workmen chanting during their labours, the very power of their chant moving rock at speeds greater than any horse or even dragon could travel. This blessing takes hold in my mind just before my mistress commands our return to our new home.

She leads us to a strange realm called "Wildspace" high above even the highest peaks. Out of the divine blessings and the powers hidden by the Forger in my lifeblood a fortress containing a blessed forge is crafted by me and after a few hours I feel the stone starting to resonate with the ancestral rune chant as I begin my labors. I get stuck with the dark elf, although such a situation would normally clearly be a sign of disfavor my lady apparently does no mean it as such since he is her lover, well he may have fallen from her favor...

The island we are coming to pacify is ringed with fortifications protecting a central hold. Since this is clearly where the central command must be located we raise our lady's colors and proceed to report for orders. Still hundreds of yards from the walls a great bolt of lightning rips through our

fortress, the heat of the bolt cracking the very stones. It is clear that whatever magic our dark elf may bring must be puny in respect to the power at their command. I have never witnessed such power, not even Kendalan comes close. It is also obvious that I failed to fly the correct signals and that their protocols do not allow any craft to approach during the current state of emergency, regardless of colors. Since we cannot approach their fortifications lacking the proper preparation we land close to one of the border fortresses awaiting interception by their patrols. We restore our colors and await their arrival.

It is not long before a scouting party sends us a message, unfortunately the high winds must have blown away their missive since the arrow we receive does not contain a message. This method of notes attached to messages clearly is not meant for circumstances like these high winds. We patiently await the approach of their leader, hoping that we did not miss a vital part of the message to prepare for his arrival.

The elven leader is much more composed than I would have expected in the middle of a massed attack. I expected fear or panic, but he is quite unperturbed and informs us that the current events both weather and enemy wise are unplanned and highly disruptive of the planned festival. I am quite relieved the elves are turning out to be a lot more normal than I expected. One of the other elves has lost an eye, but is still clinging to his profession as an archer. Such perseverance, not giving in to infirmity. Not seeking regeneration, but honoring the reminders of battle, by the gods I am starting to have hope that these people may not be as lost to degeneration as I had feared. While the leader is clearly a bit puzzled at the arrival of a stone fortress bearing a dwarf and a dark elf, he respects the coat of arms we bear as mark of our station and allegiance and proceeds to brief us on the situation.

Unfortunately we are interrupted by the arrival of a hostile squad. We take our positions to repel the attackers. A horde of undead, accompanied by a walking piece of coral. Clearly the elven unit's mage is the weakest in discipline as he frantically releases bolts of magic, without having received orders to do so, instead of simply trusting in the forts defences. I guess the fear got to his magic addled mind. It is too much to expect all the elves to have such stable, normal compositions. Neither the undead nor the coral have the power to harm us, well the elves lacking proper armour get a bit scratched by coral flakes, victory seems assured at virtually no expense to our forces. Such a waste of magic though, I could have simply smashed the coral, sure it would take a bit longer, but no the elf has to overreact. Well it is not my place to tell the commander how to run his unit. Suddenly the elves start to gasp and collapse and I myself get a bit of a thick feeling in my throat. The ancestral whispers remind me of a story I heard while I was growing up in Neverwinter. A drowned must be near! An undead capable of visiting his doom upon all around him. I signal the elves to concentrate all fire on the air destroyer. Fortunately we manage to destroy him before we lose anyone.

Still where are all these undead, crabs and pieces of coral coming from? What is driving them? I consult the book of earthy knowledge and pray for the lore of the gods and start my investigation of the enemy. The coral turns out to be a golem, it's composition betrays that the coral came from the Lake of Steam. It still bears a serial number and marks of human crafting methods, since humans are not very long lived and crafting such a golem is quite time consuming their numbers cannot be too great. Besides his own mark the golem crafter has also clearly made concessions to the intended owners tastes: the shaping was clearly done in an imitation of gold elven style. Given the price of golems only those in the highest positions can have the resources for a series of golems and few enough of those ever depart from Evermeet. A traitor is behind all this and an elf of such standing and power can only be in one place at such an important time. The central fortress, for it must fall or else the island can never be dominated. It's defences will be breached from within if we do not act quickly enough.

We make our way to the central fortress searching for their hidden sortie tunnels when suddenly Rock alerts me something is terribly wrong. We rush to the others which are being held by a colossal crab. Fortunately their mage manages to teleport his captured comrades to safety. I warn

them not to get too close and try to keep it distracted so the elves can destroy it. I plant my feet firmly and feel my steadfast boots gripping the ground, my foundation of stone blessing drawing the stability into my body, I go into the roots of the mountain stance and feel my massive armour become immobile. I call upon the stone power further nutruring my body and await the attack. The first swipe of the gigantic claw scrapes of my armour, but my vanguard strike bounces of unnoticed as well. The crab's powerful second attack however manages to uproot me despite all my preparations. I valiantly try to lead the attack to inspire my comrades, but again the crab's armour prevails. Despite my warning the one-eyed archer got too close and was taken as well in his eagerness to slay his foe. I send some darts of life to heal his body, but against the power of the crab he cannot hold out for long. I must free him, but how?

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