

The story of Grimwald

Chapter 12: Caught between them

Apparently Snake has a stash of silver which he will allow me to use for making weapons. Well I guess his feelings for self preservation outweigh his greed. According to Reed these bats out of hell generally are part of a flock. We don't have nearly enough silver ammunition for that so let's hope the rest of them aren't near: it will surely try to bring them since it failed on its own. The power of Dumathoin manages to drive away most of the effects of the Demon's poison, but Cuura and Kendalan are still weakened.

At night we are surrounded by shapes sneaking through the dark seeking to encircle us, but our guards are watchful. Cuura decides to make a break for it. Arrows hail down on our carriage but we manage to break through between two groups of what seem to be large wolfmen. After our escape we seek cover in some limestone canyons. Reed again claims that the powers of the Silent Keeper should be used, not just on warriors and craftsmen. Instead of using them on criminals, she now feels His blessing should be given to animals. Since she's touched by the gods I again reluctantly agree, but once again I am proven right in staying within the strictures of my faith. I do not understand why she seeks my aid in this instead of asking for the Elf to perform the healing. He surely has more kinship with beasts.

Snake has slithered away during our stop but comes back to warn us that the enemy is on our trail. We make plans for our escape, but even though they outnumber us it is decided we should ambush our attackers since they will be expecting us to run and we do not want to risk their catching up with us unprepared.

Even in this boring landscape our scout manages to find a defensive position. We hide the wagon nearby and construct a simple rampart. Obviously they have learned from our great victory at the tower the value of good defensive preparations against superior numbers. The overconfident wolfmen try in vain to shoot us with their arrows as they try to climb up the hill. Their arrows are scattered by the rampart, but Reed just as in the tower is craning her neck to look out instead of hiding and gets struck. Didn't she learn anything from all those javelins which pierced her when the Orcs stormed the tower? No tower shield or mantlet to stand behind and she has even taken off her armor. Grandfather is right this magic use makes one extremely foolish. Fortunately the dwarven mages have remained sane enough to wear heavy armor and use runes instead of those weird incantations.

Reed's magic strikes hard though and many of them fall, but Cuura charging in alone is quickly surrounded by the pack and brought down quickly. Wolf tactics indeed!

Bruno and Snake take the right flank while Jay and me take the left. I had doubts, even fears, going into this battle without having had time to pray for my god's blessings, but as the battle progresses a new sense of clarity comes over me. Just as I have molded steel, copper, silver, and gold with my hammer so too can I mold bones, organs, muscles, and brains. They too yield to my blows and with the right timing and striking technique they can be deformed, crushed, broken, and rent. Even without the divine power of prayer the lore of my ancestors and the blessings of my god grant me strength and victory and many fall before me. I am just getting into the swing of things and start to understand the trance battleragers and Cuura can enter into when I notice Cuura's horse bearing her broken body closer. I reluctantly leave the rest to Jay. Fortunately she is still alive, but only barely and without the boon of the Keeper I cannot restore her quickly. But she is alive and with time her body will heal. I hope her spirit has also been tempered, but not broken so she will remain courageous, but no longer foolhardy.