

Grimwald's chronicles part 128

Now that the threat to Evermeet has been dealt with and we have managed to break the Pit Fiend's contract with the Red Wizards we can move forward.

The Pit Fiend is much friendlier than I had imagined and is oddly cooperative. He explains to us the necessity of his sacrifice. How he and his kind have pledged themselves to the preservation of the cosmos, which is threatened by the elemental chaos. He tells us that without his kind the multi-verse would be doomed. I look at Reed and Nethander to see if there is any falsehood, but they also detect none. He then continues to tell us that he is duty bound to save our world from a demon prince, but unfortunately the elves have interfered with his duties. He tells us that his duty is paramount and that he is willing to forego the harvesting of souls here, even though they are necessary for the war-effort, if we would aid him in his quest.

The demon prince came here with his legions and the names of several of his commanders are in a book, which may even contain the name of the prince himself. His possession of the book would help his preparations for the final confrontation and so he requires us to bring it to him, since he cannot go himself.

After some arguing he is willing to forgo the harvesting of souls for a year and a day and withdraw his advisors if we manage to bring him the book within a year and a day. If we fail however we will need to compensate his loss of souls, but he is willing to offer a bonus if we manage to bring it to him in time. A wager. Apparently he is lacking a copper elf and a dwarven paladin soul in his collection of harvested beings and is willing to release woodland beings, now extinct in the world, and captured paladins if we are willing to wager our souls. I am willing to risk myself for the salvation of my brothers, but I am forbidden by our leaders. The Pit Fiend however insists on letting Kendalan en me take them with us for a while whilst we think on his offer.

In the next few hours I learn of the halfling paladin who gave his life and soul to save his village from marauding orcs, of the human paladin who traded his soul to restore to life the young prince whom he had failed to protect of the elven paladin who failed to return with an elven high mage in exchange for the spirits of the woodland creatures. All worthy, noble souls, undimmed by time, but doomed none the less unless I save them. I argue and plead with my leaders, but they decide to sacrifice Reed instead of me. I remind them of what an Erinyes with Reed's skill at music and diplomacy could do once she transforms, but they are not to be swayed and the captured souls will remain lost to us. I do not understand what trickery the Pit Fiend worked to cause our leaders to risk a soul of such rare purity as Reed's instead of mine.

We gather for counsel and once again Nethander's fate is placed in my hands. This time the challenge is even greater. Rather than him being petrified, which would allow me to work my stone-crafting to alter only his outside, I am given the chance to deliver his soul to his goddess, rather than face his and our doom. I am sorely tempted to save him and us all and defy his fate, but Dumathoin shows me that there is a chance of salvation even for him. It is a small chance and hard work, but it can be done. After much doubt and indecision I decide to follow Reed's advice and grant him a chance at self redemption. I do however feel responsible for him now since by doing this I may well have delivered his soul to the Abyss rather than to Tymora and all of us into great peril.

We avail ourselves of the expert advice of Aristoteles Mephistopheles whom we hire to forge a contract which will hold up well in the infernal court and we put in a clause where by we gain the right to barter for the return of Reed's soul should we fail to complete the contract in time. The Pit Fiend however mockingly points out various loopholes and how he could profit from them and offers us to make an

amended version, which we wisely decline. The Pit Fiend somehow seems rather too easy and lackluster in his attempts to barter with us and lure us. Either there is more to this deal than we understand or his depression is getting to him, even though he is managing to hide it. After this great success we return to report to major Oresund on the success of our mission.

To our surprise the army is already marching back to Neverwinter and Waterdeep and the officers are summoned to Waterdeep. After having been transported to Waterdeep we learn that a peace agreement has been drawn up between the “Empire of the High Moor” and the Lord’s Alliance. In essence I gather that any attack on caravans will be compensated for, but any border transgressions will be penalized and the displaced population beyond the borders of the High Moor is to be returned by us to their rightful emperor who calls himself Willam Great Horn the First, Champion of Eliador, Master of the High Moor. When we learn what fate these nobles and merchants have devised for our allies and auxiliaries we become furious.

The barbarians are right to distrust the weaknesses of society, which corrode honor and justice held in such high regard among them. We argue on their behalf as do major Oresund and captain Ogg. To the great chagrin of the various representatives of the merchants and farmers we convince the league to pay the fines required to ensure their freedom, they are however unwilling to grant them any place to settle or provisions. Cuura and I will have to bring them the sad tidings that their ancestral grounds are lost to them and they will have to live in exile for now. I have seldom tasted a victory as sour as this one.

The victory celebrations on Evermeet, are much more to my liking. Here there is a proper form and respect for honor, duty, sacrifice and bravery. The due rewards are granted to those deserving. I am asked to step forward to receive my rewards and a strange feeling comes over me. First I feel as if I have been gilded then as if some strange energy is annealing with me and finally I become alloyed. I don’t know exactly what change I have gone through physically, but I feel more stable. The vision I had during the blessing is a mix between horror and revelation. I saw endless waves rising and falling, rebounding and mixing, pure chaos I thought and I felt as if I was drowning in it, but then I started to see the pattern behind the chaos, the essence, the power of balance, purity and elegance. I am starting to grasp that movement can be strength as well as stability as long as it is like a wave, never ceasing just adapting. I am also granted a set of magical armoring tools of fine quality. But more impressive than any of this is that I am now named “Worthy Creator” by the queen of the elves. A prize beyond all measure, especially for a clan-less dwarf like myself.

But even though I have been granted this honor I know I should have prevented the deaths of my elven companions. I should have been a worthy companion as well. I have failed the pledge I took when I took my armor “To stand between the innocent and harm”, but I will do my utmost to prove worthy of this distinction as well one day!