

Grimwald's thoughts part 43

Kendalan and Cuura may be good archers but good teachers they are not. Kendalan is forever asking me to move this way or that in the most minute ways. How to hold my little finger, how to breathe and to change the slant of the bow. When I do so he gets all upset and tells me I'm doing it wrong. When he says left or up I comply but he seems more like a jeweler than a smith with all his minute details. It seems that to him archery is more like a graceful dance than a way to focus your aggression. I try to be patient, but I don't feel I will ever master the elven way.

Cuura's ways are almost as difficult to follow. She simply does and probably does not understand the why herself. She fires without thought or consideration for the difference in elevation, wind, state of the fletchings and humidity. Somehow she compensates for the combination of factors, but does not know how herself.

Reed and Jay then started to give advice. Apparently in their lands there is a branch of philosophy devoted to archery, but neither of them has practiced it. They explained that it is a deep meditative state where you become aware of all the factors and know the solution. I tried praying for the solution, but merely dropped my arrow while trying to do the signs. This "zen archery" is akin but different from the knowledge I have gathered so far. I devoted myself to deciphering the stories I heard about fell monsters, but here the knowledge of the beast is not the focus, but rather of how to use yourself and your weapon. Still listening to my ancestors whisper about their battles is teaching me much. The way Reed and Jay talk about it reminds me a little of how the ninja moved, somehow feeling or knowing what his opponents were going to do. Knowledge is the key as to how to unlock the secrets of the bow. This meditating must be different somehow to praying, I should pay closer attention to Reed.

Jay explained to me a bit of what he was doing in his exercises. Apparently similar fighting skill is used by servants of the gods called crusaders. They follow the way of the devoted spirit, while there are dwarves who follow the way of the stone dragon. Apparently the way of the crusader is not so much technique, but a divine power guiding you. There is also a third power, that of the white raven, which leads others to work together in battle. It does seem to be what our group needs. From what Jay tells me and what I know from our history several of the ancestors must have practised this crusader craft. It is too bad us latter day dwarves know merely how to swing an axe and have forgotten this more refined fighting craft inspired by the gods and practiced by our ancestors. Perhaps there is a way to open myself to this devout warrior way.

The horse riding lessons remain quite frustrating and vexing and I have started marching again as we did before we all had horses. The day marches make me feel at lot more fit and firm touching all the different kinds of rock and soil along the way. I think all this traveling is good for my stamina since I don't tire as quickly anymore. Ever since we picked up the masterwork breastplate I have taken to sleeping with it. The other breastplate was just too uncomfortable, but this one being better craftsmanship doesn't disturb my rest.

My understanding of armour has also increased a lot recently with all the forging and now trying to make adjustments on the road rather than in the forge. I feel I am developing a deeper understanding of the gifts of Dumathoin. Before I merely imitated my grandfather, now I am starting to understand metal itself. The beauty of it and how it can do an infinite number of things.

I have started inscribing some more runes for the party as part of my atonement to Dumathoin. These mere specks of light cannot compare to the great power which I laid to ruin, but perhaps one day I can craft something to sort of replace what was lost. Perhaps Dumathoin will forgive me if I craft a rod of dwarven might. A weapon encompassing the dwarven way of fighting. I have been studying the meta magic rod we found and feel I might be able to unravel the secret of it's construction eventually, but since I feel I should become more of a fighter for the good cause this may take a while.

One night as we were resting Nethander kept on harassing us with stories of rustling sounds. Well what do you expect outdoors? It is messy and confusing! Later on we were awakened because Cuura thought we were under attack. We decided upon a hammer and anvil approach. I prayed to Moradin to support us and felt a surge of power I had never felt before when praying to Dumathoin. Clearly Moradin is more keen on helping us in battle than Dumathoin ever was. While me and Kendalan were awaiting the onslaught Cuura and Jay rode out to flank the enemy. From the sounds of the horses they gave battle, but we saw none of it.

Eventually we found the very plants had been attacking us. They were easily cut asunder and in the light of morning we could see them clearly. Rebecca gathered some thorns. I remembered the bloody hand goblin clan which according to the stories shot arrows which opened wounds which would not close. They must have used these thorns as ammunition. If we had not rode out we would have been able to finish them off when they came upon the stony ground without losses to our side. The art of protection is one I am slowly learning to appreciate more and more.