

## Grimwald's thoughts part 44

The last few days I have been giving of myself to purge my sins from me. In a way it feels good to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves. "Be prepared" is indeed the best cure for anything which may befall you. Somehow it doesn't feel enough though. It is not the dwarven way to seek out problems, we prefer to let them come to us. Still I feel there has to be a way to be ready to counter any evil we encounter while we seek to hammer out injustices.

We arrive at the domain of what is most likely the gnomish community. They have declared their domain by setting up a border station. It is however unmanned, a bit sloppy, but we ring the bell and when no one arrives we proceed. We arrive in a well defendable community. How nice it is to be again amongst people who have the wisdom of years. For some reason Felina is sulking and Cuura is rather unimpressed with the standing of my smaller cousins so Nethander decides to represent our group.

Although the gnomes look at him rather warily in the beginning he quickly wins them over and they become more responsive. More responsive does not necessarily mean more informative with gnomes, but slowly we gather some information about what may lie ahead.

Apparently it is not wise to stay in the tower since those who do are eventually replaced by the next group of arrivals. Somehow the tower has the ability to trap and sap those who would rule it. Those who return have varying tales. Apparently it is something of a monster magnet attracting horrors which come to it. The gnomes have no idea of what kind of creatures may be living in it now. There are those who return in a state of shock having lost their companions and those who return and leave unspeaking, but contend. What lies within and what they have found is a mystery to be unravelled.

The gnomes point our attention to a strange rock which we seek out. At night the rock seems to sleep, but still as I discuss archery with Kendalan I can hear the voices of my ancestors in the great halls of Dumathoin almost clearly. Apparently the art of what Reed and Jay call 'Zen Archery' and the fighting arts of the crusaders are taught in the ancestral halls. Kendalan's instructions to become one with a piece of carved wood were obviously hard to follow, since by our nature dwarves are more metal and stone than wood. I was already considering trying to forge a bow out of spring steel so I could follow her instructions. Then my ancestors made clear to me that the weapon is not merely in the hand, but in the heart. Just like a barbarian berserker who has rage in his heart can strike shattering blows so one who carries other powers in the heart may come to exhibit other powers. I need to know and purify my heart more to gain the battle inspiration of the crusader and the ability to let my spirit guide my arrows.

While pondering these experiences I got the feeling that to follow the way of the heroic ancestors I need to understand more of what the great leaders of clans and noble houses of man and elf had wrought so I can be guided by their example. That is what I should have been studying instead of stonecarving. I also felt that my current style of fighting is not quite trusting or courageous enough. I try to make sure I strike a true blow, but somehow I am missing something. Perhaps I should rely more on my ancestral knowledge about my foes to make my aim true, yes that seems to be part of it, continuing the fight with the ancient champions as my teachers. Somehow the way I was taught to fight in the army and by my grandfather is thorough and simple, which is more than well enough for a priest, but not for a warrior. It does not express faith in guidance nor intimidate like a charge does. Somehow my fighting should inspire some awe in the enemy.

After the stone awoke it showed it's contentment with how I am trying to remold myself. It also showed me a wonderful vision of there it came from. A glorious vision of what must be a higher world, perhaps even an abode of the gods themselves. Should I prevail in my reforging myself I may one day even find my way to this domain. It is one thing to know the Great Mountain exists as I had always done, it is something else to see it and *know* it exists with every fiber of my being.

Even Nethander and Kendalan seemed moved by their contact with the stone. Reed however seemed worried rather than elated. Usually she has not been troubled by her visions, perhaps now she is become strong enough to carry the burden instead of forgetting straight away? Nethander has suddenly become quite interested in preventing himself from going to the home of his infernal parent. He does not understand yet that the gods meet out perfect justice and that it is not some game you can cheat to win.