

## Grimwald's thoughts part 45

After leaving the stone our party falls strangely silent, each wrapped up in their own experience. Occasionally we discuss religion. What a wonderful effect this stone is having. My companions are becoming more taciturn and thoughtful, more dwarvish. Great indeed are the blessings of the Maker.

The landscape becomes more rugged and defensible and when my wary eye spots a denizen of the lower planes I call the party to a halt. After wracking my mind for tales of my ancestors about these fiends I conclude this one to be a *Marilith*. A foul beast of the Abyss and a mighty combatant. It is immune to fire and resistant to other elements and its hide can only be pierced by blessed weapons made of cold iron, well that and Jay of course. What does a dwarf have to do to be properly prepared! The cold iron we have, but we have not had occasion to invite the blessings of Moradin. We discuss our chances of slaying the fiend, but they are not good given our lack of effective weapons and its combat prowess. I feel strongly this blight should be removed from the world, but I lack the strength to do so in direct confrontation. Perhaps there is a banishment scroll somewhere in the tower or we may be able to force the summoning demonist to banish it after defeating him. Nethander communes with the fiend, but it quickly becomes clear it is trying to bring us down to its own level of hate and abuse. It tries to lure us into staying close by intimating it holds secret knowledge of what lies ahead, but I steer away my companions from this ruse to infect them with its presence and words.

Later we discuss what could be done to remove this blight, but I lack the devotional power to banish it and the others also have few means. Jay and I forge ahead and in the distance I see what looks like funeral mounds. From the mounds fly translucent shapes and the chill in my bones tells me we are facing the undead. I tell my companions to ready themselves. I search my ancestral memory and conclude we are not facing mere mindless automatons this time, but wraiths powered by anger and hate having the ability to suck the life force from a body. I pray for protection and prepare for their charge.

Cuura's lone, and as usual foolish, charge (uphill and without a horse, what is she thinking, is she even thinking?) unearths that the mounds have been desecrated. I have judged the wraiths, who turn out to have been dwarves, wrongly, they seek to punish the perpetrators of this crime, but have lost their way. I call upon the power of Dumathoin their guardian and Moradin their maker to drive them back into their mounds. We take it upon ourselves to restore the sanctity of their last resting places rolling the boulders back before the entrances to the mounds they were guarding. After a service to Dumathoin to watch over them and a service to Moradin to help them find a new birth we continue onwards.

Looking back I feel ashamed and chastened. I let fear guide my prayers and expended the gifts of the gods needlessly. I judged the wraiths wrong before learning their motivations. Yes they are abominations against the divine order, but they deserve more study and consideration because of this not less.

Also I worry about Nethander, when the power of my gods compelled the wraiths to return to their mounds I saw the bloodlust and disappointment in his eyes. He may think that he like Jay is honing his skills as a swordsman, but there is an impurity in his heart a chaotic lust rather than military discipline.