

Grimwald's thoughts part 62

As the ghost approaches darkness and chill comes over me and a sensation of falling into a bottomless pit of despair. I feel the dense fog of emotions clouding my mind and trapping me helplessly. For a moment I want to struggle, but then remember how my ancestor nodded and I try to bear this great burden. The pain, suffering, anxiety and crushing guilt are almost too much for me.

When I feel I will be trapped by these dark feelings I feel a presence reach out and find myself surrounded by a dense fog. In front of me stands the dwarf I sensed earlier in the ruins. I ask him if he is my ancestor Thorwald and he gives me a curt nod. According to the lore I must be in the ethereal plane now.

Thorwald motions for me to follow and as we pass through the endless fog I see my companions and my body among them. Their life force is pulsing strongly through their bodies giving them a kind of solidity in this world of shadows and fog. I can also clearly see the magical blessings we crafted giving strength and solidity to armor and weapons.

Thorwald points out that the ground beneath the feet of my body is also more solid. As if it is alive somehow. It radiates a feeling of family, which almost brings me to tears. Although I have become clanless the gods have sent me a companion from the ages past when the gods forged the dwarves out of the rock. This distant cousin radiates happiness at being noticed and we find we can share our feelings of joy and amazement. Thank the gods I have a semblance of a clan once more!

As my mind wanders back to my own youth and memories of my old clan my surroundings also change. Out of the mist high windowless walls now rise. As I rise up I notice roof gardens and crenellated walls spanning the top of the city, forming deadly fields of fire in the streets below. The human citadels of the shining marches a mere pale shadow compared to this ancient glory.

Thorwald beckons me to come along to the master tower in the north wall. Here I see wave after wave of attackers break upon the walls. Humans with various uniforms, trolls, orcs, ogres, goblins, an endless tide like the sea lapping at cliffs. Then it is as if a volcano erupts and red hot raging energy starts breaking up the cliffs from inside and they crumble into the sea. Suddenly I feel a sharp yank and feel pulled to my body. I see my body standing at the base of the ruined tower with my companions watching with some concern. Then Cuura darts forward and drags my body away moments before a large rock hits my helmet. What a leader, what a waste.

I float up to see more clearly and see Felina climbing up some mantelpiece. Sticking close watching over my body I find I can see the priest as a solid object inside the also solid body, maybe I could dislodge him to get back to my body if it is in danger and Cuura has no time to watch over me. It somehow managed to do it to me...

My companions pore over something I cannot make out and then head towards the town center. I ponder over what my ancestor has shown me. It feels much more violent than mere treason, but what would have the strength to break this bastion apart? Even if just from the inside.

With every step towards the center I get less and less contact with the stones and I notice my earthen friend grows hesitant and feels unhappy at having to go further. What could threaten stone?

When we approach the center I see faintly shimmering walls. Somehow they have the smell of silver and cold iron. The walls seem alive but deeply wounded, marred with ugly scars and smeared by a dark energy which slowly consumes them like an acid. As I gingerly pass through these walls I end up in a dark tide of negative emotions, anger, envy, distrust, lust, greed. Instinctively I almost recoil from such vileness, but manage to stand my ground although images of goblinkin slaughtering young dwarven puts me on edge. I watch as my companions pass the wards. The carefully nurtured hatred Kendalan bears in his heart towards dragonkind explodes outward and like a mad dog he tears into Jay. Amazingly Nethander keeps their inner darkness in check and Kendalan is given the chance to get a hold on his emotions. Reed is right that hate is bad for you.

We dwarves have always cherished our grudges and I still feel the ages old resentment rising up in me. I never thought this strength could be turned against me and my own. It is a very good thing Kakanos and the berserker Oddvar did not come with us. Reed said Kakanos has too much hate and well berserkers... The gods know what havoc they would have wreaked on us. I guess mercy does indeed carry its own rewards and even a priest of Bane can be a blessing in disguise.

When I look for a source of this vileness the very stones seem to breathe it out as if permeated by it. I heard of this phenomenon on the outer planes. It is as if a part of our world turned into a piece of the Abyss. What can be the source of this corruption?

I see Nethander happily and excitedly waving. Guess he feels right at home here! Then the group starts excavating a tunnel. I know I could probably pass through the stones blocking it, but I definitely don't want to so I wait until they are done.

Once inside my companions rush through many complexes of rooms blocked by magical walls. They crush some skeletons infused with the vileness which hung around the ruins. They do not bother to search so they must be in a hurry. I notice what must be magical guardians in many rooms, but they do not attack. Then they abandon their plan and start rummaging around with what seem to be books. Reed however sticks to the plan, good girl, and manages to open another magical wall.

Then a burning demon of the sort we have faced before rushes at them. Oddly enough he does not draw his sword, but merely tries to push past Cuura who stands her ground in her one woman shield wall. Perhaps it is seeking to escape? After blasting it with a magical blast which eats away the very rocks around its feet, Reed takes out her instrument and starts playing while Felina starts dancing! I guess the demon must carry some potent insanity power which has overcome them.