

Grimwald's chronicles part 73

Nethander comes out of his coma and is immediately up to his old tricks again. It must have been the will of the gods, and indeed luck, which caused him to miss the dragon hoard's temptations. His desire to better himself and his clan is of course admirable, his way of doing so is far less so. The idea of slaying a dragon to rob his treasure just shows you have become no better than the beast, since both are being devoured by greed. He at least was spared the humiliating memory of groveling before a dragon, what a shame we must bear to succeed in our mission!

A quaggot comes running up warning us that as we had expected our enemies have drawn up a net close to our goal to intercept us. Much to my surprise no single party has managed to secure the area, Red Wizards, Black, which are probably Zhents, and Purple ones all control part of the line. We must be quite close now to make such a net feasible. According to Reed the purple ones have the ability to charm dragons. Quite a preposterous notion. Every dwarf knows a dragon's magical defences are far too formidable for that. True or not they have somehow angered the deep dragon and she wishes to use us to slay them. Sounds more like dragonous treachery to me, first accepting their tribute then breaking her deal with them. Still it can work in our advantage.

Reed goes into one of her prophetic trances again and from what I gather our actions can hardly harm the Blacks nor the Red Wizards, but we could hurt the Purple ones. It is a good thing dragons are so territorial and intolerant towards each other, the world would be in real trouble if they weren't. Forewarned we proceed cautiously to probe the Purple defences.

Nethander puts down an idiot who thought he could roam the underdark alone and survive. By studying the symbols he was defacing the rock with I gather he was trying to summon a devil. Good riddance! Nethander plays a little game with Reed pretending the circumstances forced him to perform this assassination. What does he hope to gain with the apologizing he is into these last few weeks? Does he really believe us so gullible we cannot see his dark desires?

Our scouts report a guarded cave ahead, two creatures which from their descriptions I gather are dragon spawn and two armored humans. The ancestors warn me of the fire of the dragon spawn and Moradin shields us from their fires. Since there are only four of them we should have no trouble if we focus our attacks they will be down in no time. We start with our usual strategy, missile barrage to draw out the enemy followed by an ambush sprung by Felina and Nethander. The dragon spawn however possesses dragon senses and our scouts are found. After a dozen arrows Nethander tells us they have no effect. Our enemy was prepared for us! We must alter our strategy next time if there is a next time.

The good preparation on their part pays off and Felina is almost gobbled up only to be saved at the last moment by Reed and Nethander. Meanwhile Cuura decided to interfere in the duel between Jay and the dragon spawn. Well she is barbarian with a lust for battle so it was to be expected she could not contain herself. Reed asks for assistance in dealing with the mage and I and my elemental friend start making our way towards him.

Then everything starts to go horribly wrong: the dragon spawn eat Nethander and Jay and the mage I was looking for disappears. I rush to the dragon spawn which ate Jay and seek to avenge the poor boy. Then suddenly the beast explodes from the inside and a blood and intestine covered Jay steps forth victoriously. The spawn which ate Nethander chokes to death, not surprising given what it ate, but to my surprise Nethander steps out of its mouth as the beast collapses. Not fooled by magical tricks my elemental friend found the mage and trips him, but before we can get to him he teleports away.

I apologize to Jay for not having more faith in his martial skills and interfering in his duel. Fortunately he doesn't hold it against me. I guess it is a common enough mistake to think that when someone has been eaten he is also out of the fight. Still I should have asked.

As we secure our remaining enemy as our prisoner Nethander tries to convince me to hunt down fleeing enemies so we can loot their corpses. To my surprise Reed seems to agree with him, but voice of the gods or not this I will not do! This is lies, manipulation and trickery of the thiefling working through her, not the gods!

Reed seeks to leave her prisoner defenceless by taking his armor. Apparently she has learned too little from losing the last one in her charge. He may be our enemy, but we also share enemies and he may prove to be a useful ally against them yet!

Three of our group have been severely mangled in this breakthrough so I will have to use the emergency supplies to heal them and rotate them to the rear. We cannot afford to waste the small window of time we have before our enemies respond to this breakthrough and send in their reserves.

I should talk to Reed about the example she is setting for the boy. Always rushing into danger is going to get him killed someday and he is not like her protected by the gods.