

Grimwald's chronicles part 90

After having crafted a warhammer to be recognized as a master smith by the Waterdeep smithing guild I am ready, well as ready as I will ever be, to face my grandfather. We sail to Neverwinter with a favorable wind and arrive there without delay.

As I stand before the smithy where I have lived most of my years doubt fill my mind. What will he do? How I have failed him... Left the clan and even worse to have a clanless as his grandson. As a clanless I will never be allowed to forge great artifacts for the clan in the Everfire under the world's edge mountains as I set out to do. I left the path of runesmith to become a warrior, champion for my gods and people. What a foolish occupation for one of the Hidden. I am truly only a Wanderer now. Clanless, homeless, but fortunately I have at least some position even though it is in a human smith's guild in Waterdeep. Hardly anywhere close to satisfactory. How I have failed his training, his efforts, his hopes. The weight of my armor and gear is nothing compared to the immobilizing and crushing weight of my shame.

Reed is still far away from her home, but I understand her pain and I feel sure she knows mine as no other among our companions can. Well perhaps Jay has an inkling. Ever since he took the sleep draught though he has been in a daze. The gnome assured us it would wear off eventually, but I see no signs of it yet. Scary how he behaves almost like a mindless zombie rather than his impetuous self.

What must be done, must be done. I walk to the door and knock. I step back and wait. My companions look at me when nothing happens. The hammering continues inside without any response. I wait. My companions get restless. I wait. Nethander seems about to try the door again when the hammering ceases. I wait. The door is opened and my grandfather stand before me and eyes my companions with his usual critical look. He sees little to his liking, but goes back inside without closing the door so I gather we are welcome at this time.

He gets back to his work, I fight the urge to assist him as I would have in the past. I no longer have that position. He continues as if all is as it should be. I start to tell him what has befallen me since I left. I inform him I abandoned the clan, adopted myself into the lost clan Gold Rock and then destroyed the Gold Rock clan hammer as well as an oath ax. He asks me about the blue star metal doors. I inform him this is the bloodmoney I offer to the clan for robbing the clan of a smith.

Then he stops working on and starts clearing away his tools....

I look on in shock. In the forty five years I have been his apprentice I have only seen this happen once. When we got the news our clan hold had been recaptured. He then ceased his work to bring out a bottle of dwarven spirit to drink to the victorious dead who are now with the ancestors before resuming his work. Now also he puts away his tools. I look on worried that my worthy grandfather may have become overburdened by the shame I brought to him. So burdened he cannot continue and will be lost to the clan as well. Woe is me. My name will become a curseword to the clan!

I am relieved to see him bring out his Great Hammer. He commands me to place my hand upon the anvil. He will merely make sure the craft he has bestowed on me will not be shamed further by maiming my hands. No more than just what I deserve for my treachery and dishonourable conduct, relieved I entrust myself to dwarven justice.

He finishes his incantation and with all his might crushes my hand. The pain is like nothing I have ever experienced before even though my battles have often brought me close to death and immersed me in fire and acid. He pulls away the hammer with a wet sucking sound, but my hand instantly transforms from a red paste into my hand again. I quickly look to see if Reed has worked some miracle, but no. My hand has been restored. Now that justice has been served I try to apologize to my grandfather, but he angrily corrects me: "There is no dishonor. If you dare claim there is I will kill you! Let no more be said. You are still blood."

I am so relieved that despite the throbbing pain I am in an euphoric rush. My grandfather's elation is also out of bounds. He even speaks to my companions! He confirms my suspicions about Cuura agreeing she may become a dwarf some day.

It is not long before two captains of Neverwinter find our group and request our assistance. Well they claim my assistance, since I am still a part of the Neverwinter militia, and request that of my companions. One of the captains is a stickler for rules and regulations, I like him already, but Reed recognizes her opposite number straight away. It is good to see the battle between justice and mercy played out before my eyes, but it is not long before I see a Reed who is different. There is fire in her eyes and voice. She hurls threats and intimidations towards the captain and promises acts of vengeance. It seems she has lost her way in the heat of battle. It must be the lingering influence of that infernal lout loafing about in Baldur's gate. She is behaving just like that uncouth "bard" fellow! Why didn't Jay stand up to him and run him off! Damn that boy's insecurity when it comes to matters of the heart! It just goes to show that with enough pressure every minor imperfection will manifest itself. Dealing with Nethander is already a heavy strain on one so pure, but dealing with that numskull adventurer as well is too much.

I will speak to her about this imperfection in controlling her inner fire and hate. Perhaps Kendalan and I can teach her how to harness her rage better, even Cuura's blood lust has become milder over the past few months. Strange that with an opposite on the same side she feels more competition than with the forces of injustice and cruelty for which she can feel compassion. Perhaps she does not know how to act if there is a struggle, but no saving of the soul is needed. It must be frustrating to be caught in a position where your portfolio is unsuited while there is such a strong urge to act.

Despite the flaring tempers the needs of the peasants and traders must be met. Over the past year the goblin raids have become ever more frequent and there have been reports of goblins taking over farmsteads as their new lairs even! If there would be a strong leader this would be a war of conquest of new territories, but it seems the goblins are quite disorganized. Still it proves the necessity of regular culling of their numbers to prevent invasions. The captains are ill at ease however and Reed's premonitions also hint at something more sinister going on.

Hunting goblins is seen as good training for the new recruits and the recent levies are being sent out to perform this task. Still I am confident we will be up to the task since the Neverwinter Militia training is excellent compared to the sloppy, city-weak, degraded Waterthavians who will be proving the bulk of the punitive expedition's forces, Silvery Moon will send a company of rangers to assist.