



The Sundering

A Caravan Master's Tale

— 5th Marpenoth 1485 DR —

Father,

This morning we left Bremen, a feeling of resolve heavy upon our shoulders. The Speaker o' this small settlement at the end of the road; Shalæsear, is a goodly Dwarf hailing from Ironmaster on the Western shore of the Sea of Moving Ice, and he told us where to locate Davick Fain, the rumored High Priest o' Auril.

Grim was our company as we all turned our backs upon the picturesque views of fishing ships gliding across the nearby lake and bravely faced the howling winds of ice that made up the Western tundra. 'Twas a wasteland, bereft of anything in the way of shelter, save a single hill that thrust savagely out of the featureless terrain.


It was this hill that once was the lair of a clan of Verbæzgs, the giants o' Icewind Dale, and was now the hiding place of Davick Fain and his ally, Ryeher the Wild Man.

The journey was difficult, but after our time spent zigzagging all across the Dale it was no more harrowing than our usual travel, though as we set out into the bleak whiteness of the tundra, it did feel as if we had truly set out into the unknown.


Arriving at the hill, we approached with caution and made our way up a number of switchbacks to what seemed a looming entrance near the top. It was upon this path that goblin archers ambushed us! Charging up the hill, through the hail of arrows, we broke through their ranks and into the dark tunnel leading deeper into the hill.

Within was a filthy cave the goblins had used as a camp, but more alarming were the roars of rage we could hear from further within the tunnels that led from the underground camp deeper into the hill.

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Bravely pressing forward, we were confronted by an actual Verbeeg! The armed and angry giant led the goblins warriors and though we were able to parley with the giant, once his warriors were slain and he was bleeding profusely from the many wounds we'd caused him. Though the fury of battle was upon me, even I could see the wisdom in letting the Verbeeg keep his life for more information on Davick Fain.

Learning that both he and the Wild Man were making their camp deeper within the complex of tunnels and caves, we swiftly journeyed through the underground paths until we found the lair of Auril cultists!

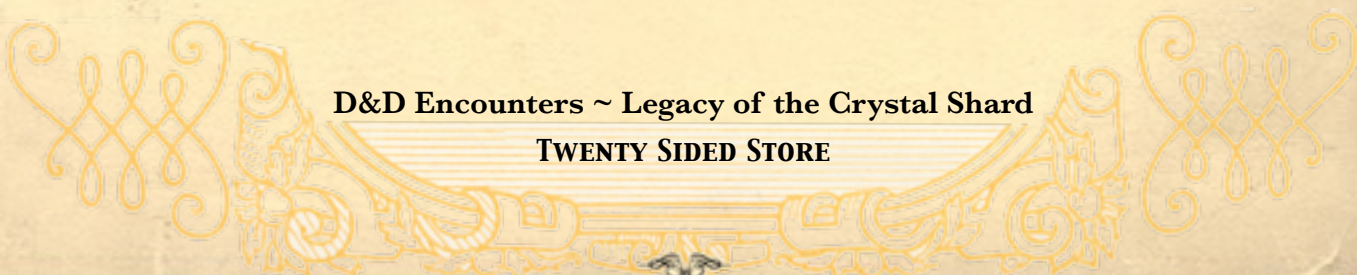
Quarter was not asked nor given as we fought through the frenzied zealots, one of them even channeling the harsh cold of his cold Goddess. We broke through the final barrier to find Davick and Rycher within a super heated chamber. There was a blazing bonfire within and having recently hatched, if the shards of eggshell upon the ground were any indication, was a huge centipede-like creature, a Remorhaz!

These vicious monsters can grow to rival a Dragon in size and have been known to battle with White Dragons for territory. Truly a fearsome foe and it seemed Davick Fain as attempting to control and guide the beast! Battle was now at hand and a most fearsome contest it was. Davick Fain's wraith was cold and the power given him by his Frost Goddess was terrible to behold. Heroes frozen in place, the very warmth sucked from their bodies, and everywhere ice. By the end, our blades were darkened with blood and our foes vanquished, though the dread Remorhaz could not be so easily contained.

I scribe this now from atop the hill we entered this afternoon. The weather has let up for a moment and my stout allies are prowling below to make sure the lair has been well and truly cleared. Those with me who are keen of eye now spot a great host gathering on the tundra and a sprawling camp can be seen. Banners proclaiming Danz Stokely of the Battlehammer Dwarves, King Elkhardt of the Tribe of the Elk, and a smattering of those loyal to Ten Towns can be seen.

We will find out what they're about and I will reveal all we discover upon my next communiqué. In Moradin's warmth I stand.

~ Beorne



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