

# The Sundering

## A Caravan Master's Tale

— 25th Eleint 1485 DR —

Father,

My fingers tremble with more than cold as I scratch these letters. At long last we have achieved the blessed walls of Bryn Shander, may they stand for a hundred years. It was quite a scrape at that. Perhaps the fiercest I've seen in the last decades. Even now I scarcely believe our fortune in the face of such fury.

I am calmed, though the chill of the road clings to my bones and so I shall return to the beginning. As we set forth departing Luskan, all was in motion, even as the burden of conscience began to fall heavy upon all of those in our company. The drivers spoke of an ill wind from the North, unnatural early arrivals of the snows, and rumors of barbarian attacks. Those ranging about had little good news either. The beasts of Ice Wind Dale had begun attacking the citizens of Ten Towns more often of late while those same citizens had taken to making overwhelming sacrifices to Auril the Frostmaiden to stave off her fury.


The very roads we traveled were littered with copper and silver coins to appease the winter goddess, and the nights were a test even for this old bag of bones. Luckily I had many a fine compatriot to pass the hours with and have met truly interesting folk. One younger dwarf lass has truly warmed my heart though, a native of Ice Wind Dale by the name of Helda Silverstream. She holds the rank of Axe in the citadel of Mirabar far to the East, speaks of training in Mithril Hall itself, and seeks to return to her people's lands near Kelvin's Cairn in the North. She acquitted herself well today, and blood painted her axe by the end of it.

This morn, all in the caravan were joyful for the news that our destination was but a hard day's journey away. I pressed the teams to the task, however the weather seemed to rise right for us. I've seen many storms and have related my difficulties when last I was snowed in on the road... Those times still hover about my memory in a cloud of sadness. This storm however came upon us more quickly and with more ferocity than ever I had seen. A ragged cheer went up along the column as the hills of Bryn Shander resolved themselves in the driving snow of the oncoming storm. We were so close, only an hour or so away, that is when the Frost Maiden began to exact her price.

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**TWENTY SIDED STORE**



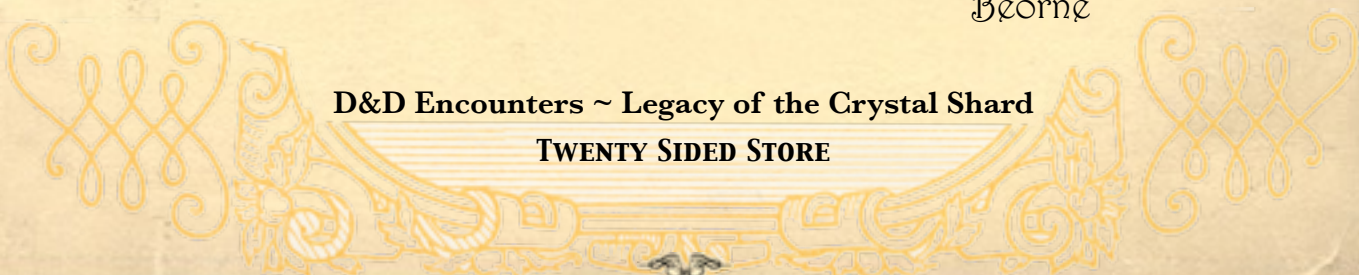
I was at the front of the column, in my customary lead position, when it seemed a pride of saber cats fell upon us. My fellows began to fall, but with the strength of our blades and the power of our spells, the beasts were driven back. The damage was irreparable. One of the wagons had been spilled. The drivers said it was the will of the Frostmaiden that the goods spilled upon the snow trail. Goods quickly being covered, so as to disappear with the thick flakes, were indeed a fitting sacrifice. Gods forgive me, but the one cannot jeopardize the many. I gave Aldo Fetcher the blessing of Moradin as he would not leave his valuable goods and ordered the caravan ahead. I was reluctantly humbled by the bravery of a few members of the crew who aided the ailing peddler in transporting some of his goods to their wagons.

We plunged back into the driving snow, the light of the day quickly drained to a dull leaden gloom but our spirits rose once again as the high walls of Bryn Shander rose before us, Gods bless them a hundred times. The gates opened and I made it through! Imagine my horror as a creature rose up behind me, its howls driving my team mad and shaking my own, ever steady, grip from the reins. It was the feared tundra yetis of Icewind Dale and a large pack of them was attacking my thrice cursed caravan! Chaos erupted as the yetis overtook the walls. Through the snow I glimpsed heroes unlike I've seen in years. Women and men of conscience and bravery took the battle from the column to the yetis. It was truly incredible to see their hard fought victory. As the gates slammed closed and the walls stood strong, we all thanked the Gods.

All save, our goods are secure and our people have made it to Bryn Shander alive. As the night sky falls upon us, we gather in the town square trying to make some sense of what is going on here. An Apothecary owner whose shop had been destroyed by the yeti attack is searching for someone named Slim. She claims a refund is due on his failure to adequately protect the property as he was hired to do. The sheriff in town, goes by Southwell, seemed to think the wild animal and yeti attacks had something to do with the Barbarians and that this one before us was a thief, to boot! An honest to goodness Reghed Barbarian stripped to the waist and tied to a stake in the middle of town!

Dark times seem ahead this winter in Ten Towns, I'll deliver the cargo to my contact and collect my fee as I am sure the others will do as well. Helda Silverstream will be heading out to Kelvin's Cairn in a few days time, after she's hired some stout shields to protect her goods on the way out there. I plan to be on that crew with the aim of tasting some o' that Flamebeard's Firebrandy in the halls of the Battlehammers.

With that good thought I leave you,  
Beorne



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