



# The Sundering

## A Caravan Master's Tale

— 27th Eleasias 1485 DR —

Father,

Forgive any difficulty reading my words, for my fingers shake with frost though I sit fairly astride the campfire amidst the wagons. I can't adequately describe the beauty o' the legendary Kelvin's Cairn as our camp hunches in its shadow. Even now, as the wicked winds tear at our cloaks and cargo, I marvel at the vista's truth and stolidity. Now that my stalwart companions and I have split ways, a shadow also falls over my mind. I can only pray fervently for our timely arrival in the halls o' the Battlehammer Clan, though even this prayer is tinged.

Yes, I have quit Bryn Shander almost as soon as I found it. All part o' the vagabond life o' the road you warned me about all those years ago. It was prudent, as the settlement seemed to have much trouble brewing, an' those sellswords I'd traveled with were intent to leave as well.

Last I wrote to you I had rushed off towards the roaring blaze which, indeed, was the good merchant Dunavan's warehouse. As I arrived so did my companions to find that the good people o' Bryn Shander put out the eerie alchemical green flame, that had destroyed most o' the structure, before it spread to the other buildings. The merchant himself was there, as well as Helda Silverstream. Good Dunavan gathered us all together and explained, with much relief from those assembled, that the crate o' silvered weapons was located at a second warehouse!

As we rushed that way a grisly truth was revealed. Those stalwart souls who'd traveled and battled with me here to leeward Dale spoke o' a man named Slim. A man who was also a rat. A lycanthrope in the settlement! If such an infection spread, it could well spell the end o' many lives in Bryn Shander!

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Dunaven informed us that this Slim was a Ship Renthor recruiter building up a protection racket ring over the past couple months here 'n Bryn Shander. He was one o' those ruffians who traveled from Luskan on the caravan that arrived just before our own, the same scoundrels that good Dunavan believed set his warehouse aflame! It seemed that this were-rat fiend had also murdered Harun, the very contact many o' my companions allied with the Harpers sought to deliver the silvered weapons to.

Before we left, I heard a rumor that Lady Duvessa Shang, Speaker o' Bryn Shander, trusted the merchant-wizard Vaelish Gant, also on the caravan with the Ship Renthor thugs, with a task o' seeking out the criminal element within the settlement. Perhaps this Slim was whom they sought.

It made little matter, for once we arrived at the second warehouse, good Dunavan distributed the contents of the crate. Within lay a cache o' silvered weapons and while their craft was not masterwork, they seemed solid enough. Spending the rest of the chilly night upon the cold grounds of the warehouse, a watch was set to ensure the safety o' Dunavan's last building. The Merchant had done so much to aid us and was much saddened when it became clear that we had agreed to leave.

Hengar, the tall nomad barbarian from the Tribe o' the Elk who was saved by the bravery of those stout warriors with me, had long bemoaned his people's plight. The attacks by the Ice Witch and her beasts, as well as the Tribe o' Bear warriors, were weakening all the other clans. However, many among us, myself included, wished to travel with Helda to the halls o' the Battlehammer Clan. No final decision was made between the two pathways though, as we all finally caught some rest.

As the dawn crept into the dale, we once again put our boots upon the road and turned to face the morning's light down the Eastway. Though we were assailed by camouflaged goblins, as noon struck we turned North and left the road. It was then the frozen teeth o' the North began to dig in to our column and our vision was obscured by the heavy fall of snow. 'Twas then a cavebear's roar was heard through our ranks, and though the beast was driven off, at least one soul fell to its might. We will praise his passing when next we sing the song o' the dead amid the halls of the Battlehammer. In the crush of the snow during our rushed escape, I spotted another faint light amidst the press and we crept on. Blessedly, it was another peddler's wagon, and it was then that our fates truly turned truly dark.

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The merchant had left the halls o' Battlehammer, and it seemed there was much disharmony in the valley. The Dwarves had split into a pair of factions. The Dang of the Clan, Stokely Silverstream, Helda's cousin, was leading one group, while those who split off were being led by a dwarf named Barick Hammerstone. We parted with the peddler at the crossroads even as the group who'd traveled North with me decided to escort Hengar o' the Elk back to his people. Helda Silverstream and I said our farewells to them an' then turned the wagons towards the valley.

We now sit atop the entrance to the valley below Kelvin's Cairn, and a situation that is very different than the one I expected. I am perturbed by the possibilities especially because of the peddler's last words. He said the schism in the dwarves seemed to revolve around the black ice we have been hearing so much about.

May Moradin keep us and you,  
Borne