

The Sundering

A Caravan Master's Tale

— 2nd Marpenoth 1485 DR —

Father,

Praise Dumathoin, Clangeddin, and Moradin! Yes, we have been victorious. As I write these words, I am catching my breath alongside the band of stalwart companions I traveled North along the Sword Coast with.

The Gods were with me as I rushed to aid Helda for I found her free already and in the company of our mutual friends from the road. Helda had apparently freed herself from her captors and as she made her escape, our allies from the caravan suddenly arrived to aid her!

I myself came on the scene very quickly thereafter and was overjoyed to be reunited with these boon companions. After our reunion we spoke most seriously about the origin of Black Ice. I told them of how the Wizard Pallidor hired Bagrick Hammerstone some months ago and when Bagrick returned, he carried small chips of the Black Ice. They realized, as I did, that the Black Ice did not come from the Dwarven Valley, but from somewhere else. We thought that this unknown place was one that Bagrick and Pallidor must have found.

I recounted for my allies the dangers of the zombie plague within the deepest tunnels of the Dwarven mines, though my allies suggested a Necromancer might be creating the zombies. Perhaps it was the Wizard Pallidor himself.

In any case, we all resolved to make a dangerous journey and press further on into what the Dwarves who followed Bagrick Hammerstone called the Halls of Black Ice. Our aim was to destroy the Black Ice forge that Bagrick had created to make weapons and armor of the dread material. I also shared reports that a human woman, an emissary from Ten-Towns, had been spied entering the Halls of Black Ice.

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With that, we split into a number of different groups to maximize our chances of winning through to the Forge and we set off. The tunnels were dangerous and patrolled by Dwarves bearing Black Ice axes and shields. We were able to elude these sentinels through wit and luck, though we did eventually get into a scrape. By Moradin I swear I did not take the life of another Dwarf and the majority of my companions were also staging their killing strikes. We all understood that our true goal was to heal the schism between the two factions of Dwarves.

At last we arrived at the Black Ice Forge and came face to face with Barick Hammerstone. The blonde dwarf was encased in a full plate suit of Black Ice and held within his large hands an impressive maul made of the stuff. Barick was truly an imposing figure, flanked by his guards toting black ice weapons and the human woman I came to know as Baecha, emissary of Vaclish Gant, now Speaker of Bryn Shandar. This was news to my ears, for when last I left that town, Duvessa Shan was still the Speaker!

My companions engaged Barick in a strong debate regarding the intentions of Vaclish Gant, and the human was revealed as a member of the Arcane Brotherhood, a most despicable group of for-hire Mages. The zombies were also discussed and it was suggested that Pallidor might be raising the dead, though for what reason we could not fathom. It seemed the feelings of paranoia, fear and anger that the Black Ice brought out in people who carry it worked in our favor for Barick heard our arguments well. It seemed an accord might be in the offering until one of my more rowdy allies began smashing the forge and calling for Barick's head!

The outcome of this I will leave for next time though, for what is a tale without a cliffhanger or two?

~ Beorne