

THE JOURNAL OF GRIMBOLD IRONSHANKS

SELECTED ENTRIES FROM COMMON YEAR 51-97

21 FIRESEEK CY 51

Got back ta' Irondelve yesterday. Good thing, too. Durak's not wantin' ta send out any more sueveyors. Thinks we have enough. Hah! He don't know a mine shaft from the shaft in his arse! The last one we found a month ago is already lookin' weak, and I told 'em so! The vein was tappin' out and we'd be needin to find another one afore long.

Got the latest batch o' arms and armor from the Keep today. Smaller than before, and the quality's slippin'.

Been gettin' reports that some of the miners in 'Nor been goin' missin'. Don't know what that's all about but it's got 'em spooked, that's fer sure. Ulfgar says they saw some duergar in the lower mine o' Nor, but he's also heard other things. Shadows that move when ye ain't lookin' at them.

6 REAPING CY 55

Got Irondelve secure today, headin' back to the Keep. We've lost four outposts in the past year, but Ulfgar don't think it's just the duergar – they've got help this time. Caught me a drow last week sneakin' through one o' the mineshafts. Damn elf was all blurry in the shadows and he got away. Told Ulfgar, but he think's there's still more out there.

30 SUNSEBB CY 56

Those duergar are gettin' smarter and smarter. Tracked a whole bunch o' them through one of the lower mines, and found a trap they'd set – simple poison dart. Got the thing disarmed and started to head off when the openin' to the tunnel started cavin'-in. Must have set off somethin' by disarmin' the first one. Got my head split open for my trouble, too, but Grobb patched me up. He's crazy sometimes, with his talk o' va-tun and a "comin' winter." He woke me up with his babblin' while I was tryin' to sleep.

*"In exile, the homeless are scattered
Like leaves in the winter's first gale
Their honor lies shredded and tattered
And darkness and shadow prevail."*

Whatever the hell that means.

15 HARVESTER CY 63

I ain't never seen anythin' like it. The rock's been rumblin' for the past couple o' years – gettin' a little bit worse each time. Mostly been centered 'below 'Nor. Yesterday, an explosion went off over the city, and it was darker than I'd ever seen it. Couldn't see me hand in front o' me face. It lasted for about a minute before I could see again, but still seemed darker than before.

Heard screams comin' from one o' the deeper mine shafts today. By the time I got there, all that I found was a couple o' bodies – Durak and Thuldar – with their heads torn open, but there was somethin' else, too. Their faces were white, like they'd been scared to death and they looked shriveled.

27 WEALSUN CY 75

The fightin' been goin' bad for a while now. The whole city seems like it's fallin' into darkness. The light don't work right – hasn't ever since that day.

It's more than the duergar out there now, there's somethin' else. They move between the cracks in the walls and the shadows. We've lost two patrols today. Ulfgar wants me to check out the last place one of them was seen. Heh – not without a brigade of battleragers to back me up! Told 'em so, too. But I'll prob'ly go. If this keeps up, fore long – we're goin' to be in a hurt of trouble.

Drow been steppin' up their attacks too. Looks like all our friends are comin' back to say 'hey.'

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10 GOODMONTH CY 81

We're in trouble.

They come out o'nowhere, like shadows or pieces of night. I can't hit 'em. Grobb's been dropping light spells on 'em' but the spells don't always go off. We've tried everything but nothin' we do stops 'em. The best we've done is slow 'em down. I've never seen nothin' like those 'flayers and I've fought 'flayers before. These is different. I've only seen 'em once or twice, and each time it was like they's there and not there. I thought I got one of the flayers when he wasn't lookin', but he just faded right before me and three more just appeared where he was standing.

Ulfgar's called for a retreat up to the Keep. Obon's been talkin' 'bout some strange glyphs he's found in the deeper mines. They've given him some idea 'bout keeping the flayers in some kind o' prison. Nothin' we can do but fall back and hope they don't get out.

17 COLDEVEN CY 87

'Nor's been overrun. The duergar and drow hold the place, and it looks like they're campin' out for a long time. They got some big help, too. I saw 'em workin' on some big statue – made out o' black stone with eight arms and lookin' like one of them drow gods.

We've been keepin' the flayers at bay for a while, but something tells me it's just a matter o' time. Grobb's been mutterin' in his sleep again.

*Bring the Blade from the mists of long history
The key of lost birthright's reclaim
Receive from the hand of the First Son's great clan
The Shield of honor and of fame
Find the Rod's silvery gleam wrapped with black iron's sheen
In the tomb of the Ward crafter's name
When Rod, Shield, and Blade to their lost home they aid
Then shadow shall pass in bright flame.*

I don't like it when Grobb talks about losin' birthrights. Him, Obon and Ulfgar have been talkin' a lot about sealing the whole place up and leavin' until we can get some help. We've been runnin' for the past six years, and losing the battle for a lot longer than that. But it's gonna take a lot o' help to get our home back.

4 PATCHWALL CY 93

They've taken the great hall and the gates of 'Nor. They got eight o' them black eight-armed statues – eight!! The only thing stoppin' them from coming up the stair is that they can't fit! And there's more – they've been raise'n our fallen dead to fight against us! We're fightin' ourselves on top of the duergar, the drow, and the flayers.

Grobb got hit in the eyes by a spray o' acid from one o' the drow mages as he was headin' up the stairs. I think he's lost all sight.

Ulfgar, collapsed the supports in the great hall – that slowed 'em down. But it ain't gonna last. It's lookin' like we're gonna have to fall back to Irondelve once we get out.

Obon's got a plan for sealin' up the place. He's been talkin' about some elven magic he's discovered in the rock. Been here a lot longer than we have, he says. Looks like some of our miners damaged it and let out whatever it was holdin' back. It's our own damn fault this happened, he says. We were diggin' where we shouldn't have been diggin'. Heh. Elven stuff breaks at the slightest chip, but I guess it don't matter any more. I just hope he's right and he can keep 'em from gettin' out. Moradin help us if they do.

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17 REAPING CY 94

Heh. Not so tough out of the mines, are they!

Looks like some of them got out, but not as much as we feared. They hit Irondelve with everything they had, but we fought 'em off.

I went back ta see the Keep once last time and Obon's wards seem ta be holdin' up. Him and Grobb have got a plan to help ulfgar hide the axe somewhere 'neath the town. Obon's been craftin' these statues and usin' the last scrap o' adamantine we brought out of .Nor. He says they'll protect Worm Slayer.

By Moradin's Hammer, I never thought we'd be driven from our own home. I can only hope no more of 'em get out - but if they do, they'll wish they'd stayed locked up."

30 SUNSEBB CY 96

ulfgar's left, headin' north and east lookin' for help. Gramdaug Granitespitter's gone - crazy druid. Obon's left, headin' west back ta where the clan first came from.

Reminds me of one of Grobb's blabblins. He had another dream last night.

*"From darkness, an anvil shall thunder
A forge, deep in shadow, shall burn
Reclaimed shall be Halls, torn asunder
The homeless and lost shall return"*

Woke up today and says he has ta' go too.

1 READYING CY 97

(*LAST ENTRY*)

I'm headin' out. Don't know where I'm goin', but I know I can't stay here. Irondelve's become a ghost town. No one left but me and a few others. I think I'll try and sneak back past Obon's wards. I gotta few scores to sell with them shadow flayers.