

A Den of Wyverns – by Falgar Shinglefoot

One day in the month of January, 601, me and some of my buddies decided to go and poke around in the Dragon's Fire Peaks. I don't really know what we were looking for, but then again Baron Ashe was in charge. He said that he wanted to have a look-see and asked if I'd come along to help thump some baddies if we ran across any. I said that I would, but that everybody better behave themselves or it could get ugly. He said he wanted to put petty squabbles behind us and go as a unit. He said that we needed to put all the crap behind us and work together for the good of the people. I agreed, and so we went.

Well, the group came down to being me, Ashe, Sir Anselm, Noituak, Lord Fooz, Squire Gunter, and Vala. We went poking around through the mountain passes, not really knowing what we was looking for like I said before, when we come across this poor girl and her dead husband. She's crying and balling, and we're kinda all standing there not knowing what to do. I tried to talk to her, but I really didn't know what to say. Even Ashe was at a loss for words, and that don't happen too often. The situation was pretty awkward, and it wasn't too long til I was wishing that I had an ale.

Finally, after Ashe recovers some of his composure, we find out that the man was killed by some kind of flying things. Now we had fought some Rocs just before meeting up with her, and I thought that's what killed him, but she says that the things that tore him up were flying lizards. Well, I started thinking about dragons and all sorts of stuff, and then I really needed an ale. To take my mind off of it, I decided that we needed to bury the man proper, and so me and Sir Anselm and Gunter start to carry some rocks over to cover him up so as the critters couldn't get at him. Nobody else seemed to take an interest in the matter, and they stood around talking about what to do while the three of us did the work. Ashe gives the girl his political line of stuff and sends her off to look for Reesie, who I guess is some kind of official in Galavast! Don't that beat all. Now don't get me wrong, I like Reesie a lot, but what fool in their right mind would make him some kind of official person in charge of stuff? He's drunk more than I am! Well, unless he's changed that is...I haven't seen him for a while.

Anyway, so after the girl runs off to join Ashe's estate (what exactly that means I'll leave to the reader's imagination) we start to talking, and my dear old buddy Fooz tells me that he has some ale. By this time I'm cold, nervous about dragons and other such nonsense, and just about passing out from lack of drink. Fooz saved my life, and no sooner do I crack the seal on the ale and start to drink than we're off again. It seems Gunter knew a place where there were some caves in the area. We decided that, since they were the only caves we knew of, that's where we'd start. So, I take one more good slug of the good stuff, and start off with the others.

A little ways off we come upon the caves, and there's some kind of make-shift wall there that Gunter says he ain't seen before. No sooner does he say that than we see a large

group of War Ogres defending the entrance to the caverns. Well, I still got some ale left, and as precious as it is I don't want to spill it or lose it in all of the excitement, so I put it back in Fooz's pack and get up front with Sir Anselm. Right from the get-go we got a good plan, and Sir Anselm shows his experience by organizing a flanking maneuver. We catch them off guard, and break through the front line of defenders and start to push into the cave. Then we come to a problem.

As it turns out, the cave is a tunnel that ain't no wider than a Hobbling Tinker's pull-cart, and we can't get more than two of us in there at a time, and even two's cramped. These foul-smelling Ogres have a good defensive position, and we can't bring our strength to bear against them at all. I was pretty steaming mad, but we were forced to fall back and get a better strategy. It's then when I see Ashe start to conjure up some magic, and he let's loose with Amalyzik's Mystic Bombardment that gets the Ogres scared and confused. A brilliant piece of strategical work from the Baron if I do say so myself!

Well as the battle wore on, Ashe just keep pelting them with magical energy, and they eventually start to give way. After the stand-off wears on long enough, these critters eventually get restless and start to get sloppy in their defense. About that time Sir Anselm looks at me and I give him the go-ahead, and we push in and break through the tunnel to a wider corridor on the other side. Once there, me, Sir Anselm, Noituak, and Gunter can use our superior combat skills to square up with the Ogres, and things turn bad for them pretty fast. After we finish them off and rest up a bit, we press on down the corridor.

Pretty soon we start hearing all of these noises that sound kinda like birds. You know, skwawking and squeeking, and flapping and such. Well, we send Noituak ahead to scout out what's going on. It weren't long before he comes back and says that he sees a bunch of Wyverns in the cave ahead, at least seven or so. I ask Ashe and them if these critters is very smart being that I ain't never fought agin them, and Vala says that they are about as smart as Trolls. I got no problem with that, because I've killed more Trolls than anybody I know personally, and I ain't never been outsmarted by a single one.

Well, we head down to where the cave starts to open up, and figure out that we got an advantage. The Wyverns is too big to get into the corridor, and we set up a place to lay down Bertold's Mystic Barrier, just in-case. I turn to the Baron, but he looks a little nervous, so me and Anselm pretty much takes over what's going on. We head out toward the closest nest, which has got about three birds in it, and Noituak is moving around to flank a bit. While we're moving in I get a good look and see that we're dealing with five nests, and a total of about 13 of the flying lizards in all. Not knowing what to expect, we creep in a little bit and pretty soon, as my buddy Dakota likes to say, the fur really starts to flying.

Well it all starts off when one of them critters spews out some kind of poisonous spittle at Noituak. Him, being a lizard kinda like what they are, just shakes it off, but we tell him to get back so he don't get separated. He comes back to the group and we start to tear into the Wyverns full-force. Me, Anselm, Noituak, and Gunter start dealing out a bunch

of damage, and Ashe and Fooz are casting like madmen. Vala's there too, and he's keeping us all together and alive. Things are working out just as we planned.

Pretty soon it breaks down into an all-out slug-fest, and the Wyverns is losing. They're going down pretty easy, except that at one point there's one that seems to be the big mama or something. She was giving us some trouble, when all of the sudden out of nowhere Sir Anselm lands a good blow to her face. She staggers a bit and I see my opening, and so I catch her a nice one right up under the left wing. She's really hurting now, and I see Noituak on the other side of her just cutting her up like rabbit stew! She's a tough old bird though, and she's still fighting. By this time her black blood is flowing pretty freely, and she's taken and dealt some damage. She catches me and Sir Anselm each with a couple of sturdy blows, and I start to wonder if we're gonna be able to take her down or not. It's getting serious now, and the three of us are swirling around her dealing damage with a fury that I ain't seen for some time, but she's still fighting! Just then Sir Anselm sees an opportunity, and in one mighty blow he jams his sword up through the lower jaw of the beast, and into her brain. She crumples and expires in a heap, and I can tell you that by this time I'm starting to really need an ale.

That's when we turn to see Fooz, Ashe, Gunter, and Vala standing between us and the rest of the Wyverns. As tired as we are by this time, we rush over to form up again, and meet the oncoming beasts with renewed fury. We fight well together, but we're starting to get too tired to take on so many. We fall into a defensive position around the mages, with Wyverns all around us and closing. Seeing that we're pretty tapped, Ashe, Fooz, and Vala waste no time in using their powerful spells to eliminate the remaining Wyverns. When they start casting, we take the cue and start attacking again before they have a chance to recover. The big lizards fight hard, but in the end they just get overwhelmed by the sheer power of our steel and magic.

It was a good day, as none of us died and we were able to rid the mountains of quite a few of the man-eating predators. The Wyverns was tough, but at the end their blood covered the ground of the cavern. It was black and slimy, but it didn't taste too bad. After we searched around we went on to the girl's village, and saw that it had been destroyed. We burned the bodies of the villagers in a big funeral pyre, and Baron Ashe said a few words. I finished off Fooz's ale, and wondered why I didn't bring any of my own. The funny part was that me and Vala got along together for the first time since this whole Horde War has started. Maybe it's a sign of good things to come. I guess we'll see...