

## Haven Hold

The day was absolutely terrible outside the carriage. The rain that started this morning was so thick one could barely see the tree line from the carriage window. Normally this would make Ner more weary of an ambush due to the loss of visibility however that worked both ways and the rain also added some additional benefits such as washing away the caravan's tracks, making it hard for anyone to hear their approach, and for the case of beastmen it made it difficult for them to detect them by scent.

Ner Neldrem was the second son of the lesser noble house of Neldrem of the Draconic Kingdom. Like many members of the nobility he was placed in an officer position however due to his inexperience and low noble standing he was only placed over a small detachment in charge of evacuating civilians from rural villages. When the situation became dire on the front as although the beastmen were not operating as a single organized army like the Draconic Kingdom does but rather a collection of different tribes that were eager to get their fill of the citizens of the draconic kingdom. Despite how unorganized they were, the fact that on average it took at least three soldiers for every beastmen and the presence of beast men lords makes it impossible for any standard army unit besides adamantine adventurers to challenge them. Ner had seen this first hand when his platoon was holding off a small tribe of beastmen when attempting to evacuate a village. Ner's unit was performing quite well until their lord appeared and slaughtered nearly everyone under his command. Ner was certain he was going to end up as another meal for the lion headed beast man until a blue haired swordsman appeared and challenged the lord.

Ner struggled to even follow the fight when the blue haired swordsman quickly cut the arm off of the beast man shortly before decapitating him. What shocked Ner the most was the fact that he heard the blue haired swordsman talk about how weak the opponent was and that for the next one he may need to fight it with his eyes closed to have a challenge.

“We should be arriving at Haven Hold just before nightfall.”

Ner was broken out of his thoughts from the past as he turned to the other occupant in the carriage. He was a short skinny man with wrinkled skin and with greying hair that made him appear far older than he actually was. The man’s name was Orion, a wizard of the second tier that was one of the few to survive in his unit alongside him after they had encountered the beastman lord.

“We had made better time than I was expecting with this weather but I’m sure Haven Hold is still running low on spell scrolls.” Ner said with an exacerbated expression.

Haven Hold was one of the largest forts in the east of the draconic kingdom. It had received its name as the most common location that civilians would evacuate to in the eastern territories when beast men invade. Normally the beastmen would invade a couple of frontier villages and leave but this invasion was different. The beastmen clans worked together in order to capture the fort and everyone inside. It was thanks to the loss of this fortification that the beast men clans were able to push so deep into the draconic kingdom. Normally during an invasion each clan would look for easy targets to eat such villages, unfortified cities, or cities without enough defenders to protect it. This would allow the draconic kingdom's army to attack each individual clan with a unified effort in order to overwhelm and overcome the beastmen’s natural advantages. With the loss of Haven Hold and the population inside of it this left the draconic kingdom army no stronghold in the east to deploy from leaving nearly a third of the draconic kingdom vulnerable to beastment attacks. Fortunately, as soon as the beastmen clans captured the stronghold they immediately started infighting over which clan deserves the right to keep it and who deserved to eat the most. This gave the Draconic Kingdom some much needed time to regroup what remained of their army and retake the strong hold. From what Ner has heard the encounter which normally would have been an extremely costly siege that would have taken a couple of months if it was even successful was finished in less than a week. This was

thanks to the blue hair swordsman and the large amount of spell scrolls they have received from the Re-Estize kingdom.

Ner turned to Orion “How do you believe Haven Hold’s stock pile of spell scrolls are faring?”

After Ner’s unit was nearly completely slaughtered Ner and the remainder of his troops due to their low numbers and the fact that there were no longer any more villages to evacuate, was reassigned to the transportation of supplies to the front primary spell scrolls purchased from Re-Estize.

“I only imagine they are running dangerously low on light spell scrolls, combat scrolls, physical enhancement scrolls, battlefield control spell scrolls, and transmutation scrolls. They may still have some utility scrolls but in large scale defense they would likely not be as helpful” Orion said with a worried expression.

That is exactly what Ner believed too. The light scrolls were necessary for fighting the beastmen that were able to see at night because unlike torches one could use the scroll and send it further away from the wall in order to help illuminate the area with little to no danger to the caster. The combat scrolls, physical enhancement, battlefield control spell scroll were likely used up in the last counter attack by the beastmen to retake the fort. The transmutation scrolls likely barely made it out of the chest before being used to restore the fortress after so many battles. While the utility scrolls which he heard was used to cast invisibility and spider climb on a small elite force in order to sneak over the wall and open the gates to allow the Draconic Kingdom army to retake the fort while the beastmen were still preoccupied with each other. Although the spells are extremely powerful they are not as useful when trying to defend a fortified position.

“DAMN THE HOLY KINGDOM! EVERYTHING WAS FINALLY GOING IN OUR FAVOR AND IT LOOKED LIKE WE WOULD FINALLY BE FREE OF THESE DAMN BEASTMEN!” Ner said in anger.

“ I still don't understand why the Holy kingdom would do such a thing. Yes, I know that Lord Satoru had made the faith of the four less popular in the Re-Estize kingdom but that was only by making it more affordable for commoners to receive healing magic. The man has been nothing but a saint. We can see that clear as day with the fact that he sells us spell scrolls for a silver; no coppers in profit. Even If I make a spell scroll myself my production cost would barely beat the price they sell it at and I could never make so many.” Orion said.

Orion continued “What's worse is the fact that they killed his wife and the princess of the nation just to try and hurt Lord Satoru. The Holy Kingdom (Orion Scoffed) I have never heard of such a hypocritical name”.

Ner Replied “Still because of this it caused a delay in the last shipment due to the Re-Estize kingdom needing to prepare for war. I don't blame Re-Estize. They had no choice if someone were to even harm our glorious queen the Draconic Kingdom citizens and nobility would stop at nothing to bring them to justice. What's worse is that I heard war could have been avoided if they just sent that monster of a cleric to face justice!”

“Has Master Brain made it back to the front yet or is he still in the capital” Orion asked.

“Unfortunately no, I heard he has become more focused on sleeping with every demi-human that he has come into contact with. I heard that he even brought Naga's to the royal palace that serves his every wish. It's truly lowsome bringing such creatures near the queen and I hope the rumors aren't true.” Ner replied.

The Carriage suddenly started to slow down when Ner looked outside it looked like the rain died down slightly and at least made visibility easier and he could see the walls of Haven Hold. The Guards outside were naturally wary of any arrival but once they recognized the Draconic Kingdom emblem and realized that it was a resupply the gates were quickly opened.

As soon as Ner's unit entered the base and were escorted to the courtyard. While entering the base even with the low light he could see many wounded and many of the fortifications destroyed. The situation appeared more dire than he thought it would be. Once

they entered the courtyard a heavily armored man approached them and said "WHERE THE FUCK HAVE YOU BEEN?! Do you have any idea how low on scrolls we are? You better have a damn good reason for being late or so help me I'll hang you off of these walls immediately!"

The heavily armored man was Commander Quil Montfort, a greater noble and one of the highest ranking men in the Draconic kingdom army.

"I deeply apologize Commander Montfort. The shipment of spell scrolls was delayed due to the Re-Estize Kingdom declaring war on the Holy Kingdom."

Despite not being able to see his face Ner could tell that Commander Montfort was shocked by the news.

"They did what!? When? Why?" barked the Commander Montfort

"Have you not been informed? There should have been multiple runners that conveyed this information?" Replied Ner

"We have not seen any runners since the last shipment and all of the runners we have sent out have not returned. That can only mean that a beastman clan is deliberately attacking them in order to try and isolate Haven Hold. Have your men distribute the spell scrolls to the master of scrolls immediately and then come with me and inform me of everything you know" Commander Montfort started to walk towards the main hall that appeared to have had better days and looked to be barely standing.

After entering the main hall Commander Montfort took off his helmet to show a 40 year old bald man covered in scars and missing his left eye. After filling the Commander in on everything they knew, Commander Montfort looked like he was barely containing his rage.

"So your telling me why we have been struggling to hold the fortress for the last couple of weeks is due to some cleric in the holy kingdom no longer getting rich off of the commoners and a damn mercenary that would rather fuck snakes and only the gods know what other beastmen he brought TO OUR CAPITAL IN THE HEART OF OUR COUNTRY WHERE OUR GLORIOUS QUEEN RESIDES!" Commander Montfort yelled while throwing a glass at the wall.

“Fortunately her Highness Druidiron was able to secure an earlier shipment from the Re-Estize kingdom for no additional cost” replied Orion

The mention of queen Druidirion seemed to instantly calm Commander Montfort and said “Our Queen has always done what is best for us and without her grace this kingdom would have fallen ages ago. That being said, we can not waste the opportunity she has given to us.”

He continued “ That being said, why wasn’t your caravan attacked? We have not received any messages or have been able to send any runners out for the past couple of weeks which means they are being targeted so why weren’t you?”

Ner replied “I believe it is due to the heavy rain they may not have been able to track us or see our approach to Haven Hold”

Commander Montfort nodded in agreement “that may be the case however the storms have just started this morning, so that means.” The Commanders' words were cut off by the sound of the alarm bells going off. Commander Montfort quickly ran outside with Ner and Orion following closely behind.

When Ner walked outside he could see soldiers frantically running to a section of wall that has not been fully repaired yet instead having multiple destroyed wagons placed in the gap fortified with loose dirt and spikes. Ner could see multiple light scrolls being used by soldiers over the area in order to quickly turn the dark of night to near daylight. That is when he saw multiple hyena headed beastmen assaulting the wall and already nearly making it over the fortification.

The Commander immediately started yelling “FORM THE SHIELD WALL! GET THE BATTLEFIELD CONTROL AND AREA OF EFFECTS SPELLS READY! MOVE IT!”

Ner watched as by the time the veterans formed a shield wall to stop the enemy's advance 20 hyena headed beastmen had already made it over the fortification and quickly charged the shield wall killing multiple soldiers with little effort. Ner could tell immediately that the line would break soon. Everyone knew beastmen were significantly stronger than humans.

That is when he says multiple soldiers use scrolls. The scrolls burst into flames and a large amount of thick tar-like substance soon covered the advancing beastmen, restraining them in place stalling their advance and giving the shield wall time to replace the already injured or dead and making it easier to attack the beastmen with spears. The effectiveness of the tar-like spell was quickly losing its effectiveness as the beastmen started to break out.

That is when Commander Montfort gave the order “LIGHT THESE BASTARDS UP” while grabbing Orion and pushing him closer to the battle.

Orion quickly responded as well as another nearby mage with a fire spell that lit the tar-like substance on fire. The Beastmen began to run around frantically trying to put the fires covering themselves out. It was to no avail as the panicking beastmen were easily killed by spears and arrows.

That is when Ner saw more hyena headed beastmen atop the make shift fortifications. These ones were even larger than the ones before and he watched as 5 of them lift up huge spears and he watched as they used *Ability boost* and threw the spears into the shield wall. Multiple soldiers were blown away and killed. Ner watched as one of the largest beast men he has ever seen was following behind them the Hyena headed beastmen was wielding an ax with a blade the size of Ner’s torso and immediately knew it was a Beastmen Lord. The Beastmen Lord let out a thunderous howl and Ner was immediately gripped with fear and he saw many other soldiers. He felt compelled to run and said

“We have to fall back and regroup. That's a lord without an Adamantine adventurer we don't stand a chance.”

Commander Montfort quickly grabbed Ner and threw him back into the battle and he watched as the Commander activated some kind of ability Ner has never seen before “ ARE YOU NOT SOLDIERS OF THE DRACONIC KINGDOM?! HOW DARE SOLDIERS OF OUR QUEEN BE FRIGHTENED BY A MANGY MUT! REFORM THE SHIELD WALL!”

Ner felt the fear that was compelling him to run away, vanish being replaced with new found bravery and he ran to the front to help hold the shield wall. When he looked over to the side he could see other soldiers doing the same, seeming to find new resolve as well.

When the Beast men jumped off of the fortifications to destroy the shield wall Commander Montfort ordered "NOW!!! SEND OUT THE SPELL VOLLEY!!!"

Ner had never heard the command and before he could figure out its meaning that's when three soldiers behind him used a fireball, electroshpere, and a thunderball scroll attempting to destroy all of the beastmen. Ner felt like he was going to be blasted back or caught up in the explosion and barely held his ground. That's when one of the large beastmen charged him looking to be barely holding on to his life due to the damage but still attempting to fight. Ner thrust a spear out in an attempt to stab the beastmen but despite his injury the beastmen dodged the attack and killed the soldier next to him with a swing of his mace. Before the Beastmen could take a swing at Ner Orion shot an acid arrow at the beastmen's head killing him.

"Thank you" Ner said with relief.

"The Beastmen Lord is still alive, don't let your guard down." Orion reminded him. As Ner turned he could see that the large beastmen had been taken out from the explosion, however the Beastmen lord charged out of the explosion and used *Greater cleave* which immediatly killed 10-15 soldiers making a huge hole in the shield wall. The Beastmen Lord then activated *ability boost* and charged at the casters and soldiers holding spell scrolls before they could cast another spell.

"SEND ANOTHER SPELL VOLLEY HURRY" Commander Montfort ordered however it seemed that the Beastmen lord had already reached and killed nearly all of the casters and soldiers with spell scrolls. That is when Orion attempted to shoot another acid arrow at the Beastmen Lord that was able to effortlessly dodge it which caused him to immediately charge at Orion in order to kill one of the few casters here. Ner knew that if he didn't do something fast his

friend would be dead. That is when he looked down at one of the nearby dead soldiers and saw an unused scroll. Ner had little to no knowledge of spells and had no idea what the scroll did but he knew whatever it was would be more helpful than him trying to charge the Beastmen Lord. He quickly ran to the scroll and used it like he has seen a spell scroll used so many times before. That is when a thick tar-like substance appeared and was able to cover the beastmen lord believing that he killed all of the casters in the area except Orion was not expecting another spell slowing him down from behind. Orion, seeing the tar covering the Beastmen Lord, quickly cast a firebolt spell in order to ignite it on fire. The beastmen howled in pain and slowed its advance which allowed multiple soldiers to surround and continuously stab spears into the beastmen.

“DON'T LET IT ESCAPE KEEP ATTACKING” The commandeered ordered  
After so many spears, arrows, and spells the Beastmen lord finally fell to the ground dead.

Ner couldn't believe his eyes; they actually took down a Beastmen Lord he thought was impossible for normal soldiers to do. Ner and Orion as well as many other soldiers in the area collapsed to the ground exhausted. Ner's rest was short lived when Commander Montfort walked up and spoke “You and your men get the rest that you can. That was a small Beastmen Clan and you will be leaving first thing in the morning. We are already running low on spell scrolls again.”

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**Hey there I hoped you enjoyed the story! This was the first story that I have ever written and I wanted to try and capture how terrifying fighting on the front line would be for a normal soldier in the Draconic Army and to also show how much the spell scrolls would likely greatly shift the battle in their favor. I hope that it captured that feeling. I wish I could have made the story longer and get into more detail but I was extremely busy the past couple of weeks and was only able to work on this at the last second. Even though it**

is pretty short I hope you enjoyed it and please let me know how I could improve my writing as I am trying to start and writing this was a lot of fun. Thank you and I can't wait to read everyone else's stories.