

# Unremembered Loss

*For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss*

Issue 43

March 2013

For a change, here's a look into the heart of a dwarven city - the communal forge.  
To receive future issues of the newsletter sign up at <http://www.douglasclarke.com/lists>

## A Connection

The racket was deafening – three hundred hammers pounding steel. Many of them crashed in unison, others were a fraction of a second early or late, still others ignored the order and clinked out their own patterns.

Red Beard brought his hammer down on the naked metal of the soon to be sword. He knew the crash was coming. He tried to time his own to synchronize with the majority, but still when it came his muscles tensed in anticipation, throwing off his own timing and aim.

“Dragon’s breath,” he muttered to himself. Every bad hit, took ten to fix. If he had a private forge he would be done by now, but he so seldom needed one it made no sense to buy his own, and the rent on one was more than he could sell this sword for. So, he took a deep breath and waited for a few of the never ending cycles to pass, then joined in again, matching his swing to those on his left and right.

Back with the rhythm, he quickly repaired the damage and started making progress again. He could see the sword that lay within the bar of steel he held in his hand. Already its shape was showing through, its multiple layers of folded steel making it sing as the hammer struck it. Its curved blade already promised to hold a razor's edge.

More than that, Red Beard could see the special qualities of the sword. The way the small amount of mithril gave it an extra shine, an extra tone to its song. Red Beard could also feel the magic in it. He could tell that Samuel’s enchanting had taken well, that when he was done, that the rest of Samuel’s spells would also take well.

Already he could feel the sword awakening. He felt like a proud parent, every swing of the hammer teaching a lesson, embedding the traits that would serve it well in life. He knew the sword would be exceptional, but he wondered how exceptional. Would this one be able to talk? To speak to my mind? Would it develop powers on its own above what Samuel planned to bestow on it?

Red Beard slipped again, the infernal noise overwhelming his timing. He felt a pain in his heart as the hammer stuck crooked. He heard a cry in his mind. He stopped – the hammer clanking on the ground at his feet. Had he heard the sword cry out? He had never worked on a sword that could communicate before it was completed – had never heard of one that had.

He picked up his hammer and tentatively took another swing. He didn’t hear anything in his mind, his ears only hearing the three hundred hammers. He swung again, removing the nick he had caused. He started to feel a peace come over him as he massaged the nick away. As he

continued, the noise that surrounded him seemed to fade away.

He was alone with the sword – feeling strength build within it with every strike. He felt a bond with the sword. He wondered if it was like a father and a son. He began to wonder if he would be able to sell it – to give it to another. Was that the feelings of a father and a daughter when she was wed?

As he continued to bring the sword to life, his hands felt more sure. He didn’t have to think about how to work the metal, there was only one way. The fatigue he had been feeling was gone. He was aware of nothing but the sword and himself. He felt the sword sigh as its imperfections were removed. He felt its joys as it neared completion – as it became what it was meant to be.

Red Beard put the hammer down – the sword was now too perfect to use such a crude tool on. The forging was done, now was the time to finesse. He spent the next four hours sharpening the sword's blade, missing his dinner – not noticing that the rest of the dwarfs had long since left for a meal or a tankard.

As the night watch rang the bell for two, Red Beard slid the sword into its scabbard and noted that he was alone. No, he wasn’t alone – the sword slept beside him, laying on the anvil right beside Red Beard’s head. Both content at the end of a long day.

Douglas G Clarke