

... Warmed By The Fire (B2)

Grand Duchy of Adventure

Continued from [Out of the Frying Pan... \(B1\)](#)

[The Hunters Camp](#)
[Wolves Come Calling](#)
[The Aftermath](#)

The Hunters Camp

Eventually, they arrive back at the hunters camp just as the sun is disappearing and Remar sees that there are several other hunters there as well. There are a total of 10 hunters in all. The camp is small though, and does not look too permanent. Several small fires ring the camp with animal carcasses slowly smoking over each one. Bunches of dried flowers and plants ring the campsite, hanging from overhead branches or stuck to sticks poking into the ground. Piles of spears and arrows lay ready around the camp as well. Remar seems to think that some of the tips shine brighter than they should in the pale moonlight.

The leader, whose name is [Elek](#), introduces Remar to his companions. Most of them greet him heartily, though none of them speak fluent Thyatian, they speak it well enough to get their greetings across.

Remar takes it all in, amazed at his good fortune. It wasn't that long ago that he was near starving and facing potential disaster. Not one to question fate's good grace he attempts to make the best of the situation.

He greets the hunters warmly and returns their hospitality as best he can. As he makes his way through the camp he offers what little healing aid that he can. He hopes to earn some measure of their trust by freely assisting them.

As he finishes making his rounds with Elek he asks about the group's plans. Where they are headed and how far to the nearest town or road even. He is eager to get back to more civilized territory.

Elek tells Remar that this is a roving hunting party and that some of them will be heading back to their homestead, Cherkass, the next day with the animals that have been caught. Elek also tells him that the nearest 'Thyatian town,' as he describes it, is Kelvin, about 100 miles downstream, at the confluence of 3 great rivers.

As they talk, a wolf howls loudly in the dark nearby. Remar sees many of the men in the

camp tense up and grip their weapons tightly as they watch the perimeter of the camp. The young mage has no desire to meet a wolf in these wild lands, but he seems to think that the hunters reaction to the sound is a little extreme, especially considering how many of them there are.

At the obviously wary reaction of the hunters, Remar wonders at what could make such a formidable group behave so. Undaunted by his fresh arrival into the group he asks Elek about the sounds. "Surely wolves will not trouble so large of a group as this Elek? I may not be the woodsman that you are but I have never heard of a wolf pack attacking an armed camp such as this?"

Elek shakes his head, "It is Bailakask. A werewolf. She is as old as the hills. She hunts us as we hunt for our food. Her and her son, Kalkask, run a pack of wolves in these hills. She is always trying to catch our hunters to bring them into her pack. And lone travelers too. Beware, friend, when traveling these hills alone." He reaches over and rubs one of the bunches of dried plants hanging from a tree nearby. "You should definitely stay with us this night if the wolves are that close. Kalkask and his mother are nasty enough without a spellcaster added to the pack."

Remar nods sagely, the story making sense of the hunters unusual reaction. "Pardon my rudeness for I mean no insult, but have you considered going after her? Attempt to take her on before her pack grows any stronger? Surely it will only be more difficult to rid the area of this menace if her pack doubles in size or worse"

"It has been done before, and after every attempt, her pack HAS grown in size. Those that fail end up under her sway. Years ago, my father and some of the leaders of the other homesteads agreed to stop going after her, for fear of making HER stronger. From what I know, it is only the two werewolves, but their pack of normal and dire wolves is good sized. She is smart, and has lived for generations, she is not so easily killed, I think. Though I do know she has enemies. These hills are the home to many wild horses, and some Centaurs as well. They are the mortal enemies of Bailakask and I have seen them fight before, though unfortunately, the wolves always seem to win." He pulls from his belt a long knife and turns it in the moonlight. It catches the light of the moon and nearly blinds Remar. "Silver is what they fear. Many of our weapons are silver, our spears, our knives and even some arrow tips. They are good defenses to have in these parts." He sheathes the blade again and continues, "I would love to put an end to this devilry, but to be honest, no one knows where the pack sleeps. We know these forests and hills very well, the wolves know them much better."

"What are those plants you have been rubbing against? Are those wolfsbane? Does that stuff really work against a lycanthrope?" Remar enquires of Elek.

"Ahh, wolfsbane. Yes, it keeps them away. They do not like it. It grows in the meadows of

the hills and mountains to the east. We try to keep a good supply of it. It is much more potent when fresh, but even dried it tends to keep them away. It does nothing for Bailakask's wolves though, but it will keep the werewolves at a distance. You have to be careful with the fresh flowers though, they are dangerous to us as well. If you handle it wrong, you can get sick, even dead. Dried it is good for a few weeks maybe." Elek explains. "We gather it sometimes in the spring and will trade it down the river to the other homesteads and even to the Thyatians in Kelvin.

"Then perhaps I should try some of that as well." Remar blurts out rather abruptly. "It definitely can't hurt." Remar grabs the clump of dried herbs and rubs it vigorously all over his exposed flesh. "I want to make sure I smell as badly as possible to any werewolves." Satisfied that he has covered every possible square inch, he hangs the wolfsbane back in the tree.

"I wish there was something I could do to help your situation with Bailakask. You have saved me it seems from not only death of starvation but being torn apart by this wolf pack. I have heard stories of lycanthropes and that is just the way I want to keep it. As stories and nothing more."

Elek watches Remar as he rubs the wolfsbane on his body and chuckles, "You might just want to keep that sprig with you. Rubbing it on yourself like that won't help enough, I'm afraid. Bailakask would just have one of her wolves dunk you in the river a few times first before turning you. Come, let me show you where you can sleep for the night, friend. Tomorrow we will head to Cherkass and get you on your way to the lands of the Thyatians, if that is where you wish to go."

Heeding the chiefs advice he pockets a good sized portion of the wolfsbane. "Once again I thank you for your kindness Elek. I hope to be able to return the favor one day."

Wolves Come Calling

Later that evening, just as Remar is falling into a deep sleep, he is awoken by the sounds of howling, growling, barking and yelling. A pack of large timber wolves led by an immense Dire Wolf attack the camp!



Remar did his best to defend himself, but the charging wolves were very aggressive and powerful. He managed to get off a few magical bolts, but one of the wolves leaped on him and nearly knocked him unconscious. Elek and Tevnis come to his rescue, using their spears to fight off the wolves. Then, an enormous Dire Wolf, the leader of the pack, approaches. Remar uses his magic to Armor Elek as much as he is able to and then supports the two hunters with his magic bolts. The Dire Wolf is driven off and the remainder of the pack follows.

The Aftermath

After resting for some time, Remar helps with the cleanup of the camp and is able to put his magical healing spell to work again patching up the wounded hunters.

The hunters decide that they are all heading back to their homestead after the wolf attack and invite Remar with them. He accepts their offer, knowing that if he chooses to travel alone, it might be his last journey.

At Cherkass, Elek presents a silver knife to Remar for his assistance with the groups wounded. He also makes arrangements to get Remar downriver to Kelvin, the nearest large city. He is to travel with a group of traders that are heading to the city to sell off some Wolfsbane, furs and other items the homesteaders produce.

While on the way to Kelvin, Remar befriends a Traladaran man named Stephan, a trader from one of the nearby homesteads. He is heading to Kelvin to hire a group of guards

and herders to transport a large herd of horses from his brothers homestead to an Elf village. He says he could use the services of a mage and healer on the journey and offers Remar 100 Gold Royals for his time. Remar readily accepts the offer and the two spend the next few days talking about the job.

Stephan will not be accompanying the group on the drive, but the instructions should be pretty straight forward. From Kelvin, Stephan has arrangements to ride up river with an associate of his, Kalnos. About one days ride up the river, they will disembark and travel on foot through the forest to Susikyn, where the horses are. From there, they are to take the horses cross country, passing 3 ferrys (the only way to get a herd of horses across the larger rivers) and arriving in Rifflian. The whole trip should take no more than a 2 weeks tops. Remar isn't worried about the time, he is strictly focused on the chance to start building up some cash to establish himself.

Eventually, they arrive in the large river city of Kelvin and Stephan tells Remar where to meet him that evening, at a place called the Celibate Maiden, so they can meet the others coming on the drive. The plan is to leave in the morning.

Continued on [The Adventure Begins \(GDA 1\)](#)