



# *Of the Fox and the Wolf*

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Action/adventure, Animals, Fable

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Moira was with the tribe of the Wyron, a tribe of woman that worshipped the strength in the mind within the phalanx. This creature and shape intermingled as one entity and the word meant both things as the dwarf's eyes drifted back into the far off mountains. The dead winds and beyond this were the fallen towers of Crailos, father of the wind.

The mountains gleamed brilliant in the perpetual snows of the Butterdowns, which sparkled like a necklace around the titan black slope of Mount Orde. Southerners called this land the devil's garden for as legends thrived in this uninhabitable range out through the northern regions of ice held crags and snowfields which tore deep into the eastern plain.

This was a home for the omnivore where carnal ambitions heeded the reigns to survival in the mountain crests. This was a place of knowledge as near to the southern falling slopes and the snowline gave a hold, hidden from the world as was almost but a lost society.

The tribe of the Wyron, meaning phalanx or the griffin, was consisted solely of women who once had belonged to the tribes to the north, or they to this way when the time of man did not exist. Their strength of the old way held them to break from such things as war and ignorance as most all men craved as the Wyron was one of the last from the nubiant, or the right and peaceful way.

Over eleven hundred years of knowledge held the Wyron strong as they did not need men past the means of conception and few ever set foot so far into the pure snows of the devil's garden as the whole of the harsh

southern range was the hunting grounds for these women. The Wyron was a fierce tribe to which no beast or hapsome giant could wrangle with the likes.

Males were left to their fathers who prized a son above all else or to the will of Mother Nature if ever the child was not a female.

This elusive tribe existed just on the fringe of society where few knew of their hunt and in a place where most dared not venture into the infamous slopes of the high Butterdowns.

“They didn’t stand a chance,” the wooden door swung open where the girl called against the blistering cold wind as she could barely see let alone hear this call. Cali Nornstorm thudded in from the drifts, dragging most of this snow with her as the arctic blonde looked to her friend.

“What are you on about,” Moira asked her tall friend as they fought to close the door against this stubborn wind. The dwarf teased the more rugged woman who was soaked through with the blanketed snows.

“Seven Orcs and a fair sized hill giant, no less and not one held a chance,” Cali bragged as she brushed away the wet and ice from her long hair.

Moira chuckled as she studied Cali’s calm, as the warrior’s fierceness did not show through her innocent look. The dwarf did not joke of what this one was capable of, as nothing grew within the snows of the devil’s garden, only a few ancient trees, long dead and just as reverent. Moira saw this scarce growth in the woman’s eyes with the solitude, though the sense flickered as Cali’s blue orbs caught the firelight with the flames that trickled up, out of the stone hut.

These women of a lone tribe had no trouble in accepting the dwarf to learn in the ways of the great holds where lifetimes of knowledge were stored. An existence in the large tomes such as in knowing as it rested solely within the name of this creature’s fate. Palorette, the Sharealm of strife was in all sense the very life of the desolate land.

Ancient white marble, now mostly buried by the mountain and her snows stood as a testament to the creature's existence. This mere God of the flame and ice could be felt through the skins of stone and quelled words in the labored thoughts in the mountain, as was the knowledge this tribe protected.

Lost cultures and fallen lands, which seeped from the cracks of time where only a breath of their hardship lay in the tomes of Palorette as Moira could not begin to understand the fabric to know of this dual horned deity. The Wyron believed that they came from the very seed of this angel through the line of the one, a connective from nature though such a term as to Palorette, both were as far from the one God as the as the snows outside fell to flake.

The great phalanx of sisters, bending and in turn to the fallen beast as to turn on her golden ray was to push in her sharp horns. Feather and scales to hide the muscled hide where the knowing light could not touch such a depth. To capture the light in a word was to tip the ink and let its dark colors blot out each laboring page in the libraries of her loyal daughters.

The Sharealm was a motion, an emotive structure like a monster or metal chime eating the cold wind as all of her ice and snows made this dwarven lady deaf as her thoughts fell back upon the family she left in De'Thorbelhak. Moira was unsure of her mother's connection with the elusive tribe, but the queen had sent her daughter to absorb her own meaning to what destiny called of the dwarves in the great tomes of the Phalanx.

"You had better eat, you know," Cali said with a questioning look to the dwarf's absent face as Moira's thoughts lay in her mother who was a lifetime to the north of the Wyron. Cali did not question the girl's silence and only kept to her own angered appetite.

The night's wind howling as the mountains began to sink further into the folding moonlight. Something that could not be grasped held such a sting to the dwarven girl's mind as this moan of winter's approach only added to the deepening snows as barely a notice when Moira looked out upon the high drifts. Little separating the creatures of the northern slopes from this ice and frozen land yet a queerly strong faculty drifted through the dwarf's thoughts as her worries played in these silent snows.

Something much darker than this night was upon them as the wind carried beyond the distance to the young warriors of the wolf near to Baruvnal. A fire pumping within this feeling as their veins told its relation and

taste of battle where behind them like the past was forgotten, the young pups tore on in their beating hearts.

The famed home of the great bear peered out of this aching sound as ahead they called out to the walled settlement, expecting council and the fierce warriors to join them this night. The Baruvnal was beyond numbers of the tall men and all tribes followed the bear in the northern plains.

The young wolves felt to this empty hold as they came to a halt, noticing two solemn figures now walking down from the dark path. Not a movement could be seen from those large walls and as well, Baruvnal was frozen into the cold wastes and the pups held their stealth to go unseen through the greyed, parted grass.

A familiar howl then, ringing out as these two approached their brothers and the land seemed to rise again as the band stood back to their feet, all of them returning this call as the sentries who had been sent a few days back now made their ways into the ranks of the younger wolves.

“We have come in aid of the great bear and dire this is, brothers,” one young warrior said as he stood to greet them, “Our wagons are full in flight from Kenitant and head north as we speak,” the young man stopped as he received their concerned glares but to this news was not the worry and the warriors spread in talk as the sentries were all but grim.

“All listen, my young brothers,” the lead sentry, Morin Olav spoke, calling for them to listen as all faces set to wait in his words, “We are all in peril here as Baruvnal is empty. They have gone north, maybe to Vileref for this season.”

“Did they desert us, knowing well the war that comes?” another older pup asked as the thought did not set well of this.

“We could find no such sign in there,” the second sentry said as his disagreeing look to Morin added to their loss, “Not a scratch or trace could we find and no blood, but I do believe they did not go north to the whale,” Ganen Poundn went on as he forced all eyes back from Morin, “The bear, they are wise to the times, yes, but again I do not think any of this can be counted to a war, what has happened to Kenitant, I do not understand?” the man was lost to imagine the armies these pups had seen as they fled long before the wagons, as most being too young to hold the shield lines, yet the darkness of such numbers could be seen for miles out as they ran to warn the Baruvnal.

All fell ahead to look on the emptiness of this place and still none of them knew of why or how the bear could be just simply gone as the cold laughed in this confusion. They all thought to what peril could befall the bear and only the guess fell back east to Oredabus and the lands of men, though this was well confusing, as they knew the army was well south and could not be in two places at once.

The sky's darkening rim gave shine to this pale sickness, blue with the light from the far off city whose fire far outreached the cold winds and such plans held no sense to these tall men as they looked to Morin who was their elder.

“The bear could not have fallen to such a trick and all I can gather is that they went north as I am old enough to not let the will of fanciful thoughts plague me at a time like this,” Morin said this, though all who held to it were equally unsure, but not even Ganen questioned the man's wisdom.

There were no real answers or reason here to be found and the only credible thought was to the north and of the Vileref as the enormous implementations of Oredabus fell back to the worries of their wagons and their families. Even in the best of times, the understanding with the great bear had become lessened as the lesser tribes of the wolf and musk ox kept to their own.

Ganen watched as his young brothers moved out north for the ice floes, as he would gather what little he could with Morin leading the pups to the safety and hope that the whale and their settlements were not as empty. Their greyed bodies fading with the furs to this ripping wind that held to the slower moving ocean.

The man did not like being alone in such a time as he knew it would rely on his word to get back to the wagons as he soon moved south toward his people, still unable to grasp the loss he did not witness of Kenitant and this

faded as Baruvnal with its eerie hold sank behind. The lone wolf making his way from the emptiness as not a soul of his fallen tribesmen or the countless dwarves could be heard on the southern wind. This grey birth of the poisoning fogs buried the wind to curl back tight, past the darkness of the following soldiers to wrap tightly around De"Thorbelhak.

The arctic blonde woman stood silent through the early hours, as the ice in this wind tore up from the old scorpion pass, bleak as the greying snows of the devil's garden below her. Cali Nornstorm was the daughter of the mountains and as the wind spread through the eastern Butterdowns, she always felt as one to the frozen land.

It was beginning to feel wise to give up, but the barbarian's patience was finally growing thin as the wind held from her to convince the woman how tired she was. Not more than a moment from this thought and the large wolf appeared, far down the mounding drifts where it skulked between the giving darkness.

Now she was ready and Cali stood, steadying to bring up her hand, silent as she placed the cold snow in her mouth, inching forward to bring up her weapon. The ancient long bow passed down from her great grandmothers, "Ruiner of livestock," she whispered as the bow was set to fire, ready as the long shaft fit to the massive cord.

Maybe even the better part of another hour came before she dared to pull it in full as this pose to strike the thing she had sought for so long as the months of this endless winter came back to full. This wolf was wise and old to every noise kept it in the shadow's embrace and the weary eye of a girl was something far less as this song came down through the buttered slopes like a child's song.

The black-gray motion of this form darting in and out of the voice sounded native to the wind's ear and she closed her eyes now. Cali spreading her numb fingers and pulling hard with her tight muscles, feeling to the wolf as this moved in her heating breaths. This pressing passed the pink in her cold lips as no longer did the land hide such a sound from her and the creatures, both integrated as one low growl when those eyes found this shimmer up the path.

The wolf's ear had been fooled and to that grey turning wind, Cali let go of her string as it played from the high pressed bank of snow.

“Cali!” came the piercing scream as the girl lost the great shaft, her hand jolting just enough to this surprise as the wolf turned. The sound slamming to thud in from behind her as the arrow fluttered and was lost. The arctic wind of pluming feather as despite her distraction, Cali opened her blue eyes to watch as the movement pulled as one, together, too fast as the shadow shattered and the crash of this expansive note.

The virgin snow spreading to the sinking arrow, barely skimming the creature’s leg, too unsure to draw blood as this stayed white and the wolf gave a yelp as it jumped away; never feeling the attack yet now, it knew of this danger and were gone with no promise to return. The perpetual snows of the steeped Butterdowns drifted down the wind as always no less than a scream and Cali’s roar pushed back up against those white held peaks catching to her long wet hairs.

Cali covered her face in frustration as more in the exhaustion as the proud woman watched this creature fall back into the black folds, running as if to dance away like a giant rattle of the dried gourd, less than the scream on the horizon. Her stern face falling back up the path to home as the long huts and their rising smoke filled into the lesser greys of the air.

A dance of bones as this spoke to the mountains like the range between the great passes and the peaks where Cali was lost to this dreadful view as above her now was the more cheerful Laylein who huffed back down the steep and silent snow. Moira did not seem very bothered to follow the girl through the high blowing drifts as the dwarf kept easily to this pace as now they found their friend.

Cali was beyond perturbed as she shook off the covering snows that had fell from that long wait and though Laylein was fairly tall and just as pretty with her strawberry blonde hair, Moira fell in awe how wonderful Cali looked in this place as her furs shook in the downed white and gray covering, frozen to this color and her temperament like the falling snows.

The woman’s hair was nearly silver in the shimmering air and wisped to blonde as it flowed down her back and leaning arm as she tapped her hand waiting for them to her great long bow.

Moira was nearly as tall as Laylein, yet she felt very plain amongst the tribe as all these women held such qualities, which overshadowed the dwarf's auburn curls. Cali offered her a smile as they climbed back up the higher ledge and there was no anger toward what had fallen.

"You have been out here all night, we were worried that something had gone wrong," Laylein said as she pulled her warmer arms around the tall woman yet the thought stung as it did when they had arrived.

"I would have gladly stayed until the morning yet all is well then," Cali offered her with a sour look to this smiling girl.

"You'll never get that wolf," Laylein scoffed as she watched the black and gray creature that now sniffed to the far down winds, looking back to this strange smelling women. The creature had been a menace on all the summer where the livestock was their crop and all year round for the last seven winters. Laylein was of the same tribe of the Wyron though her look was much different than Cali's as the phalanx of sisters all varied like Laylein and her red hair. It was not as long and she felt as pretty neither to catch the wind as Cali.

"You should have dressed warmer," was all Cali offered the drenched girls with the rosy faced dwarf as Moira stood shivering now next to Laylein.

"I don't think I'd ever get used to this cold," Moira chuckled as she put down her two leather cases that held all of her belongings as the girl would be off, back for her own home in the north was De'Thorbelhak to the west.

Cali and Laylein would take her down the paths of the Butterdowns to the town of Glaintfeld, which was just beyond their borders, and a place where the tribe traded if not relied on the summer's greener crops. Between the great vales and the towering mountain ranges there was a mere house where a small family lived.

Cali wrapped the girl in a great hug and then to Moira's relief, the woman as well wrapped her fur cloak around the chattering dwarf.

"We will miss you dearly," Laylein said to the smiling girl for they both got to know Moira quite well in the time she stayed with the elusive tribe.

"Well this is not so much as goodbye than I hope to fair well," Moira laughed as she pulled the intricate cloak in

tight, “and maybe Mother would come next when I return.”

“Well we have to get rid of you first before you start making plans to come back,” Cali said as they shared this laugh, giving a joking squeeze to the smiling girl.

The devil’s garden where the Wyron held no true name for this place was as to the snows of their home and Cali knew that the dwarf would do as she said and prove the fact of just leaving, back down the deadly paths would be the task in itself for all three as they went this way. Cali smiled as Laylein and Moira laughed and talked of these times they had shared and though far below, something changed this expression as two smaller shadows made their way from the bleak morning’s horizon.

The wolf only stood and accepted the playfulness of pups as they greeted her, giving brief glances to the far off humans though Cali’s mind whirred at what she had almost done. If not for Laylein’s call, these two would surely have been alone and this mother killed as Cali gave a wry smile, looking back to the girls who still laughed and giggled on how they spent their times in the mountains. Cali was thankful for such friends.

The evening’s light snow had turned quickly over the hours to a heavy downfall as Moira let the large flakes melt on her rose blanching cheeks. The Mamgamare tavern was waning as very few of the elven patrons still sat in the cozy atmosphere of a late night full of drink and more mellow talk.

The dwarven girl could not sleep as thoughts too horrid to explain haunted her dreams. Cali and Laylein, no doubt let nothing ruin the warm beds at the Mamgamare though Moira felt more than just a passing urge to run out into the drifting night and wanted nothing more than to return home to her mother, with safety in that dwarven stronghold.

“I hear it is a good place to visit,” a voice came from behind the girl’s anxious thoughts, which made Moira jump a little as the man approached her from the lofty tavern. Moira’s eyes drifting from this old dwarf’s white furred face to the small silver gleam that seemed to hold more than his cloak. Yellow and posh as it were to the dwarf’s shoulders, “Weren’t you talking of De’Thorbelhak,” the old dwarf gave as Moira’s eyes were still blankly upon that silver dragon clasp.

“No.., nothing,” Moira spoke softly back, answering her hopeless thoughts and then turning away from the man’s grayed eyes, “I didn’t say anything,” the girl whispered, thinking it odd that the stranger could be

reading her thoughts.

“De’Thorbelhak,” he spoke again as he moved in closer to the shivering girl, “Your stories you speak with such wonder as inside I listened to their tell as I have always wanted to travel to that mighty stronghold though I am afraid I have missed such chance in its splendor.”

“Why speak in such a manner,” Moira cut back as he caught her at first indeed to wonder only to upset her though the man stopped, no longer moving any closer as Moira’s eyes met with his, “All are welcome to intake on the sights of De’Thorbelhak and you act as though to be forever denied in seeing the place?” Moira did not know from where her anger came yet she did not excuse herself or relent in defending this toward the strange dwarf.

“You do not know then,” the man spoke solemnly which took a bit of the girl’s vile look from her face, which turned immediately to awe, even shock as this dwarf’s strange speech gave more than his words.

“Do I know you?” Moira asked more gently realizing how odd she was behaving toward him but this only brought an honest shrug from the man that in turn held no emotion one way or the other as he began to speak.

“There will be no caravan this year or the year after,” he said where Moira reeled to the sudden onslaught of imagery, becoming evident from the weird sensation that had been growing inside her thought. Possibilities igniting as returning home now held closer to that horrid sense where dread filled the world as it all seemed far too big.

This image of the great stronghold being under siege and in ruin was from its once impervious station and Moira felt very alone. Just a dwarven girl, a thousand miles from the home, which she somehow knew to be gone, “My mother,” she yelled out though when her eyes took focus in these surroundings and the stranger was gone.

Horrible feelings now pulled in harder upon the girl’s shaking shoulders as if hands to bring her down to unsteady knees. The warmth of the elven tavern ahead of her was foreign and anything it held was gone as the relativity fell as the cold snows around. Moira did not know what pushed her, but she moved away now eyeing the inviting lights of this place and instead of falling back toward the safety, she turned and began to run.

Moira Ledzor was one to think her problems over yet she knew the world would pass her by just a little at a time, leaving her far from the solution in her emptying thoughts. What if her dwarven homeland had fallen, then what and what could she do? She wanted to turn back to the tribe of the Wyron and back to her studies among the snowy peaks of the Butterdowns. Little known to anybody in the devil's garden and she could be safe, but that was not it.

Her feet kept moving and the girl followed this path as a tiny sparkle caught her eye far to the southwest. Moira stopped and turned the direction she had come and could see nothing through the snowy light. She had been heading west along the mountain ridge with hopes of reaching the old mountain pass, the one she had traveled with her father here before his death when she was only young.

Far beyond the cobbled hills, she could reach De'Thorbelhak through that pass faster than any could. Under these vast enormous peaks only made the girl wonder, what she was doing and who had ever named such giant hills. Moira stood still as the snow-filled wind blew a bit harder as it drifted up into the girl's long dark brown strands. Her hair flowing as she did not think of turning back anymore as the cold breeze mingled with the thought as that strange spark held gold through its silvered tones to the horizon.

The long green grass now near to frozen in this early winter's stance, still stubbornly blew as the girl moved westward, stabbing back to the spiky rocks of the cobbled hills as she knew would not set well to her thin leather boots. Nothing seemed to matter as she walked thoughtless through this night.

Moira did not understand the sky's violent tones as out of nowhere it covered in the color of dark brown mud. The clouds were horrid in turning raged fits as they spanned further north past the high western mountains, morning had not come that day, and the next night's angry voice covered any signs of life or the sun's early rays.

The usual early winter's inhabitants, most a plenty of brownish-greyed rabbits that were too busied with the warm sun were all but gone as the occasional deer at rest in the tall snow held grasses was sure to frighten the girl as she moved southwestward along the cobbled hills, neither frightened or startled as the deer all vanished as well.

Moira stopped and began to smile as over the next tiny hillock she spied a black furred fox who scurried with a

strange type of gallop to its careful run only stopping every now and then for a fast look behind where her kit strayed with just as much oomph to its stride as its larger mother. The sky rumbled angrily and both creatures hurriedly ran for cover into the tall hiding grass.

Moira did not regret now coming alone or even meeting with that old dwarf who she could barely place to her thought having run from the elven tavern. Her memory mingled with dream as neither seemed to care to be real. The airs drifted ever sweetly through the open window where summer always was holding this room heavy to the midday sun. A heat in the smell of wild flowers and sweat awoke the dwarven girl with the sound of this surrounded city in wait.

The girl turned to peer out from the heavy woolen blankets to see this vast glistening from the giant ward towers. Gold and silver sparkled blue with the savored sight of the burning sun held high in the day's clear sky. Its rays beheld the twin shimmering of the monoliths that well protected this city settlement of elves. Moira was sure that she saw through another's eyes as she rose to see the ethereal beings whose garb matched their porcelain skin held black to the shining hair.

The glossy yellow flesh of smooth marble held much more than a brilliant build of this architecture as ages upon ages of elven knowledge and wisdom rang out clear above the bustling city withheld in the pulsing of the towering glare. A power that had kept many evils of the surrounding western mountains at bay, a power so rich in the fabric of this land that time itself was hard pressed to find holds upon the gigantic makes. All had been well in this nubiant society of vigil and learning and though the wards kept from them any potential dangers it as well kept much of the outside world from these marigold elves.

Many elves she could feel as they basked in the nervous sun. They ranged in beauty and long stemmed structures with anticipation that the winter's gardens were in full bloom.

The dwarf's face brightened to the cooling breeze as she stretched this sleep from her limbs. Her dark auburn hair curled long down from her back with a beauty no less than these elves. An exact fright passing over her body as the girl's bare feet thumped over the cold wooden floor. No longer was she asleep or walking out near to the ominous mountains as she asked, "Am I dreaming all of this?"

Moira's whispers grew part in the dream, which she could not separate or discern where she was and to the

girl's embarrassment, this rose as she moved down a small rise of steps from this single room.

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