

What are we even doing out here?!?

It was a bitterly cold evening. Only the fire and the shelter of the rocks kept the cold at bay. "Why must we scout in the winter," young Farah asked through chattering teeth. "What or who would be so bold as to attack us in this?" Her incredulity was apparent even through the noise of her molars. The other young scouts nodded their heads in agreement. Old Man Gruit the Scout answered, "We'd all like nothing better than a warm fire, indoors. A hearty meal And boon companionship or an accommodating partner." The scouts nodded enthusiastically in agreement. Old Man Gruit raised a single finger, "But..." A chorus of groans greeted both the finger and the utterance. "But", he continued. "It is our sworn, no our sacred duty to keep an eagle eye out for threats. We may not have experienced them in your or even your parent's lifetimes but there are horrors in these mountains. The wizards do not keep watch for them so we must. The giants keep the worst of them away but sometimes smaller things slither through their legs. We must be ever vigilant." Grumbling greeted this assertion but it was half-hearted.

"Wouldn't it be an easier life if we left these mountains and lived on the Sea of Grass?" Hoots and catcalls met this statement. Old Man Gruit shook his head gently. "And how would we few defeat the centaurs or the minotaurs? They would not willingly share their land. And don't forget that we cannot readily use the Path of Skulls. If you do not have one of the magical tokens of passage the skeletal guardians of the path will rise us and destroy you. Each one may be weaker than the feeblest human warrior but they are countless. And if you fall your body will join their numbers!" The young scouts all shuddered at the thought. Or maybe it was from a particularly cold gust of wind! "No, better to stay in our beloved mountains where we know we are safe.

November 27, 2024