

OLTMAN

Origin Story



Squirrels hid in their tree-holes. A raven took off. A hedgehog tried to hide under the bushes. The forest was reacting to the rumbling passage of the uncaring giants as the rumbling of their steps moved between the pathways and the clashing of their weapons and shields produced a cacophony of sounds not natural to the arboreal environment.

While the sound of a dozen men disturbed the residents, none of the runners by themselves were strangers to the woods. In fact, the rustling of leaves and the occasional fall of snow from the leaves made this place home. They were Nordik Oltman and the snowy forests were where they grew up.

The men moved fast despite following a challenging route, switching between paths and rough floor and even through some tight spots between trees and branches that grew close to each other. They followed the lead of a single man that most would describe as pale, yet compared to the rest of the group, he looked darker, giving away his origins as a Südik, one of the Oltman born in the south.

His steps left a strong mark, yet but moved with the grace of a snow leopard. He seemed to have an easier time with this demanding run compared to his younger followers.

"Dróttinn!" one of the followers yelled with a booming voice with a small addition of panting. *"It has been long since we left the tribal land. Won't we turn back to our long houses?"*

The man continued running as he responded:

"Tormund! I know you aren't telling me you are tired - so tell me, are you implying your compatriots are?"

Tormund's flush face got even redder

"N-No Drottinn Samgar, I only-"

Samgar stopped, causing the band to halt suddenly.

"Save it Tormund. You are all young. Youth is strength. And the strong won't complain. If you say more, you'll only prove yourself weak."

The band looked at each other. Clearly the trek had taken a toll, but the point Samgar made seemed to resonate with the group. Samgar's eyes traveled between the men, observing each of them carefully.

"That being said, this seems like a good place to test your skills. Think of what you learned so far. Is this a good place to set-"

In a flash, Samgar produced his axe, followed quickly by the rest of the band. They didn't know why, nothing had happened. But they felt something off in their bones. It was instinct. They formed an outward facing circle quickly, no words being spoken. Their eyes started scanning the trees.

Then it started. First a rumbling that felt like an avalanche, which didn't make sense. There was no place it could happen for miles around them. Quickly, their weapons started shaking as if invisible hands were pushing the blades around. Their daggers danced in their sheaths, a couple of them ripping their way out.

Was this the work of gods? Was it one of the giant fathers? Could it be the end? The thoughts moved through the minds of all men.

Suddenly, a growing sphere of darkness appeared and swallowed their vision, then their hearing and finally, the men themselves.

When Samgar came to, he was lying on the ground. Barely able to open his eyes, he saw others from the band as well. His muscles were twitching and from the looks of it, it wasn't just him. Following a few seconds of uncontrollable spasms that felt much longer, Samgar got his senses back.

Water in his mouth. No... Mud!



He coughed the brown, turbid liquid out and managed to push himself and sit down. The rest of the band was around, collecting themselves. The pine trees they were traversing around were gone. The path he was getting the band to run through was not there. In fact, he had no idea where they were.

Samgar has been a traveler for years. He had seen all of Oltman lands. He could recognize all parts of it, even some of the Golden Empire's. For the first time as far as he could remember, he had no idea where he was and not a clue how they got there.

Could the gods have intervened? Could it be the Sun Bearer's magic?

Then he saw it - smoke from what was possibly a bonfire. He ordered Tormund to stay and gather the rest of the band and find a place to make camp and started moving towards the smoke.

