

Rock Falls

Wayne Basta

“Me? The Chosen One?” Bauer asked, incredulously, “But I’m just a simple farmer!”

Zauber smiled down at the young man. He was a frail grandfatherly figure, with a long, flowing white beard. Bauer, by contrast was a tall, well muscled teenager who hadn’t yet out grown his awkwardness.

“Yes, my boy. It was you whom the prophecy has declared will kill BeBe EeGee,” Zauber explained, “You are the only one who can save us.”

King Koenig looked down at the young man from atop his throne. “I ask you, will you save my kingdom?”

Bauer looked between the King and wizard. The boy’s expression revealed his nervousness and uncertainty. While the entire court waited in silence for his reply, Bauer looked over at the Princess Madchen, sitting beside her father. The girl smiled at Bauer and instantly his expression changed to one of determination.

“Your Majesty, I humbly accept this quest. I will save your kingdom from BeBe EeGee.”

Koenig smiled broadly, “Excellent. My finest knight, Lord Ritter, will accompany you. Along with the great wizard Zauber. May your journey be swift.”

Young Bauer was escorted from the king’s court chamber and taken to the stables. Waiting for them stood the towering figure of Lord Ritter, first knight of King Koenig’s court. Ritter wore a shining suit of fine plate armor and carried several swords. Behind him followed a magnificent stallion of pure white.

“Lord Ritter,” Bauer said, bowing.

“Farmer Bauer,” Ritter said, “Let us begin our glorious journey.”

“Where are our horses?” Bauer asked, seeing no other horses being saddled.

Ritter looked confused, “Do you own any horses?”

“No,” Bauer said, “I’m just a simple farmer. Isn’t King Koenig going to give us some horses and equipment to help? I don’t even have a weapon.”

Ritter laughed, “King Koenig can’t simply give you a horse or a sword. If you wish to purchase some equipment, we can stop by the blacksmith.”

Bauer followed Ritter through the streets of the city. Once at the blacksmith’s shop, Bauer looked over the array of weapons available. The blacksmith showed him several swords, each more expensive than the last. When Bauer asked why the swords were priced so differently, the blacksmith replied that some did more damage to the enemy. Neither the blacksmith nor Ritter could explain how that was possible. In the end, he found he could only afford an old rusty dagger with the few coppers he had.

After visiting the blacksmith, Ritter led them to a nearby shop. Bauer asked about purchasing food, but Ritter declared it unnecessary. Instead, he ordered the merchant to sell them an unusual array of supplies: ropes, a ten foot pole, candles and several flasks of an unusual liquid. The liquid came in two forms, a deep red and a bright blue.

Bauer was relieved when Ritter paid for all of the equipment, as all of his money had gone to buying the rusty dagger. Once outside, Ritter stowed all of the equipment, except the blue liquid which he gave to Zauber, into a backpack. He gave the pack to Bauer to carry.

The trio then departed the city, Zauber and Bauer walking behind the mounted figure of Ritter. They walked for days across the beautiful landscape of the kingdom.

Every evening, Ritter would train Bauer in the use of the sword and Zauber would train him in the use of magic. Both claimed they were impressed with his natural skills.

Several days out, as the group approached a bend in the road, a handsome man leapt down at them from the branches. He twirled a knife with a smile.

“Kindly hand over your money, gents,” he said, “You must pay a toll to pass through my forest.”

“This forest belongs to King Koenig,” Ritter snapped.

“You are mistaken. This is the realm of Dieb, the great Thief.” The man grinned, taking a bow as he spoke.

“I don’t have any money,” Bauer said, a sad expression on his face, “I spent all I had on this rusty dagger.”

“What a sorry lot,” Dieb said, frowning now.

“We’re on a quest,” Bauer said, “To stop the great and terrible BeBe EeGee.”

Dieb looked surprised, “You would dare take on that challenge? You are braver than you look. Very well, I shall join you on such a heroic adventure.”

He whistled and shouted, “Schutze! Kleriker! Come out here! We have a noble quest to join!”

A frumpy man in a cleric robe and an elf dressed in green emerged from the forest. They came to stand beside Dieb. Both men looked tough and dangerous.

The new party of six continued down the road for some time until night fell. They set up a camp and laid down to rest. Schutze, the elf archer, offered to take the first watch.

“My keen elven eyes will have no trouble seeing into the dark.”

After everyone went to sleep, Schutze peered into the darkness, watching for danger. His keen senses failed to notice the swarm of goblins approaching, however. One walked right into camp and stabbed him in the back. The blow hurt twice as much as a stab to his front would have.

He cried out, waking everyone else. Ritter, who slept in his full plate armor, leapt into action, swinging his mighty sword and cleaving two goblins in half. Dieb snuck into the darkness, moving to stab the goblins from behind. Kleriker rushed over and began praying over the injured form of Schutze.

Seeing his companions face the enemy, Bauer ran to join the fight. He swung his rusty dagger many times but was unable to hit a goblin. Frustrated, he cursed.

“Why can’t I hit them?” he cried.

“It’s their class of armor,” Ritter explained.

“Use the magic missile I taught you!” Zauber said, demonstrating by blasting a goblin to dust.

Bauer nodded and concentrated on the spell he had learned. He held a hand out to one of the goblins and it crumpled from the impact of the magical energy. Cheerfully he cheered at the victory.

“Good job!” Ritter declared. “Keep going!”

Turning to another of the goblins, Bauer waited patiently, giving the goblin a fair chance to attack. He then raised his hand to fire another magic missile but nothing happened. He scratched his head confused.

“I’ve forgotten how to do it,” Bauer said.

“You’ll have to relearn the spell,” Zauber explained.

“What? But I just did it. How could I have forgotten?” Bauer asked exasperated.

“It’s magic,” Zauber said simply. “Try the fireball spell.”

“Right!” Bauer exclaimed.

He thought about the fireball spell he had learned, intent on not forgetting how it worked and held his hand up again. The goblin waited patiently where it stood after having swung his sword a moment before. Again nothing happened.

“I can remember how it works but nothings happening!” Bauer whined.

“Drink the blue potion!” Dieb shouted from the dark. “It will restore your mana!”

”My what?” Bauer asked.

“Mana, where your magical energy comes from,” Zauber explained as he stood before another goblin.

Shrugging, Bauer took a flask with the blue liquid inside and drank it. He felt a power rise up within him. Readying himself he again raised his hand to the goblin.

This time, fire flared out from his palm. But instead of burning the goblin, it caught the end of Bauer’s sleeve and he was suddenly engulfed in flame. He freaked out at the sight of the flames creeping up his arm.

“I’m on fire!” he exclaimed.

“Forget about it. It will take a while to do much damage.” Ritter said dismissively.

While Bauer stood there, on fire, the goblin slashed at him with its sword. The blade came in directly for his heart but the blow only left a slight bruise on his chest. After the blow hit, the goblin turned and stepped to Bauer’s left.

“Don’t miss this opportunity to attack!” Ritter called out.

Bauer jabbed his rusty dagger out. He slashed it across the goblin’s armor and the creature let out an annoyed scream. It stood there for what felt to Bauer like an eternity, but probably wasn’t any longer than six seconds before turning to face him again. He stabbed his dagger out again and pierced the creature’s stomach, causing it to collapse in a heap.

“I got one!” Bauer shouted out.

“Nice, kid,” Ritter said, a pile of dead goblins at his feet. “Don’t get cocky.”

Still feeling very cocky, Bauer studied the battle. Everyone else in the party fought goblins with ease. Several burned corpses lay in a pattern near Zauber. Dieb continued to move in and out of the shadows, stabbing goblins in the back. Schutze sat up beside Kleriker.

Despite his intense focus looking around, he failed to perceive the goblin sneaking up beside him. The first indication was the sharp jab of pain in his side. The battle around him faded to blackness...

...and then faded back into focus. Kleriker stood over him, muttering a prayer. Feeling surprisingly spry, the wound to his side gone, Bauer stood up quickly. The goblins still swarmed over the campsite, but there were not many of them left.

Feeling ready to charge back into the fight, Bauer started to take a step, but Kleriker’s voice stopped him. “You might want to take care of that fire. I’m all out of Resurrection scrolls.”

Blinking in confusion for a second, Bauer glanced down and realized he was still on fire. How had he forgotten a thing like that? Spending several seconds, he patted

himself down until the fire fizzled out. By the time he finished, the remaining goblins had been dealt with.

“Everyone all right?” Ritter called out, his armor glistening in the firelight.

Aside for Bauer and Schutze, no one else had been seriously wounded. They all had small cuts and scratches on them, but nothing a good nights rest wouldn’t heal. Ignoring these small inconveniences, they began poking around among the goblin corpses.

“Come on, Bauer,” Dieb said gleefully, “Let’s get to looting!”

Feeling a bit queasy at the thought, Bauer joined them in looking over the corpses. He checked all of their pockets, finding a few coppers but little else. In his searching, Bauer came across a gleaming broadsword. He hefted it into the air, admiring the weight and power of it.

“Bauer, don’t waste your time with that.” Ritter said, “Your class can’t use it. Besides, there’s a knick. It’s worthless.”

Frowning at the way Ritter spoke so dismissively of his class, Bauer lowered the sword. One day the proletariat would rise up and overthrow the bourgeoisie. But not today. Today he was a traitor to his class working for the king.

Looking closely, he saw the small knick Ritter spoke of. It didn’t look very bad and he thought it worked just fine. But what did he know? He was just an ignorant farmer.

He casually tossed the sword aside, into a big pile of other obviously defective weapons, and continued searching. Soon, the rest of the party finished their search of the goblin corpses and then moved back toward the campfire. Without another word, they all lay back down in their bed rolls and fell fast a sleep. Bauer sat there in shock, looking into the darkness filled with goblin corpses, unable to sleep.

When the sun came up, the party continued their journey down the road. Before long, they came to a small town at a crossroads. The town looked like many others they had passed before, filled with non-descript townspeople going about their business.

“We should find a shop and sell our loot,” Dieb said, “then hit the tavern and listen for rumors.”

“Agreed,” Ritter said, leading them down into the town.

In such a small town, finding the shop took no time at all. Bauer watched as Dieb handed over their looted weapons. The big merchant man didn’t ask any questions or show any interest in where they had gotten such a large arsenal.

The merchant took one of the short swords from Dieb. He studied it for a long moment and then smiled. “Good find, friend; this is a fine craftsmanship. A Plustwo I’d say.”

“Bauer,” Dieb said, “you should keep this one. Pay the man for identifying it.”

Taking the weapon, Bauer fished out the few silvers he had found on the goblins and handed them to the merchant. He then tested the weapon, pleased with its feel. He then followed the rest of the party out of the shop and across the street to a tavern.

Stepping into the tavern, Bauer sat at a table with the rest of the party. A barmaid came over carrying tankards of ale. Beside him, Schutze whistled.

The archer winked at the barmaid. “I’m going to seduce her.”

With a sigh, the barmaid shook her head. “You critically fail.”

“Then I’m going to try,” Dieb said, and the barmaid threw herself into his lap, lustily covering him with kisses.

Schutze grumbled as the barmaid and Dieb fumbled with each other into another room. He downed his ale and gestured to Bauer, “Let’s go gambling.”

Following the elf, Bauer walked over to another table where a group of unsavory figures were rolling dice. Schutze winked at him and whispered, “I’m going to use my special elf luck.”

Schutze threw his bag of coins down and then picked up the dice. As Bauer watched, the elf tossed the dice around in his hands before setting them down gently as two sixes. He grinned fiercely.

“Perfect roll. I win.”

The gamblers at the table grumbled and slid over their money to him. Confused, Bauer turned to Schutze. “But you cheated?”

He shrugged, “They didn’t notice. So that means I won.”

Unsure how the other gamblers had failed to notice what Schutze had done, Bauer decided they must be really stupid. He placed his own money down on the table and picked up the dice. With a shrug, he gently placed the dice down as two sixes.

As he took his hands away the table suddenly wobbled and the two sixes rolled over to show two ones. One of the gamblers stood up, his voice angry. “Hey, you cheated!”

The rest of the gamblers stood up, all drawing weapons and turning to face Bauer. With a gleeful shout, Schutze called out, “Bar fight!”

Suddenly the men charged and Bauer fumbled for the new short sword at his belt. He got it drawn and swung to defend himself. To his surprise, the blade cleaved clean through the first man and he collapsed. His sword continued in an arc, slicing into the next man charging him as well.

“Nice one, Bauer!” Ritter said, stepping up to join the fight.

Bar patrons swarmed all around them, wielding all types of weapons. The melee became a confusing mess for several moments. Bauer continued to defend himself, surprised by the ease with which his weapon cut through the men. He’d hardly been able to hit the goblins.

Suddenly a shout could be heard over the sounds of fighting, “Bullshit!”

Bauer looked over to see Schutze laying on the ground, townsfolk standing over him with a club. Blood poured from Schutze’s head and he looked very angry. He pointed up at the townsfolk.

“I’m a tenth level ranger. No way some stupid townsfolk could put me down. That’s bullshit.”

The townsfolk shrugged, “It was a lucky hit.”

“You didn’t heal up after the last fight,” Kleriker reminded.

“That’s still bullshit,” Schutze complained. “Get over here and heal me.”

“You’ve already been resuscitated once today. I can’t do it again,” Kleriker said, his tone matter-of-fact.

“That happened yesterday,” Schutze argued.

“It’s the same day as that though,” the townsfolk insisted.

“You suck,” Schutze hissed. “I quit.”

“Big surprise! Rage quit, just like you always do,” the townfolk said, throwing up his hands.

Bauer looked on in confusion, the fight frozen around them as everyone watched the confrontation between the wounded Schutze and the townfolk. No one else moved and Bauer wasn't sure what to make of it all.

“I didn't want to play your stupid campaign anyways,” Schutze said.

“Bah!” The townfolk said.

Suddenly, a rock fell from the sky. Everyone died.