

Conspiracy

Ogre slowly clambered down the forest hill, each step leaving a deep groove in the soft earth. Paying no heed to the tiny drops occasionally falling on his light gray hide, he continually clenched and unclenched his fists, muscles larger than a man's head bulging with each flex.

Stepping into the valley, Minotaur Lord and Troll rose from behind a boulder, Troll barely avoiding falling back down. "We have waited for you, Ogre," Minotaur Lord began in a gravelly voice, silver warhammer, close in height to its owner, still lying at his hooved feet. Troll howled in agreement, green-brown fur coat shaking. He watched Ogre, all three eyes filled with suspicion. "We want to set aside our differences for a time, to deal with a much larger issue," Minotaur Lord continued. "The Elven warrior has leveled up again. He has already slaughtered many of all of our kind, and I fear with his now greater power he will continue the butchering. I have already spoken with the wolves and mountain lions. When I give the command they will attack with me leading the charge, we want to know if you're with us."

Ogre, chin resting on fist, looking from Minotaur Lord's horned bull head to Trolls short hunched body. "Me help." Ogre replied in a deep booming voice.

"Good. The wolves spotted him a short while ago heading north, apparently in search of the Ayleid ruins. We will wait for him to explore, and if the wraiths don't kill him while he's inside, we'll ambush him coming out."

"Sound good to me," Ogre answered, nodding his bald head.

"Then let's make haste." Troll immediately took off, an ape running on his arms as much as his legs. Picking up his hefty warhammer, Minotaur Lord followed, two legs taking large strides, leaving

easily traceable prints. Ogre hesitated a second, watching their receding backs. Thick legs began to move in a slow rhythmic fashion, each heavy step drawing another labored breath from his lips.

Ogre's eyes widened, his mouth gaping, trudging into view of the ruins. Pure white domes, larger than those of palaces, lay collapsed amongst equally large matching pillars, all at least partially crumbled. Piles of the white stone debris littered the surrounding area, forming many rubble piles nearly as large as the broken pillars. Minotaur Lord and Troll leaned against a pair of mostly intact pillars, mouths forming words Ogre couldn't hear.

Wolves howled in the trees to Ogres left, and the snarl of mountain lions could be heard from the right. Ignoring the sounds, Ogre made his way amongst the rubble to meet his co-conspirators.

"That is the only entrance and exit," Minotaur Lord explained, pointing down a short stairway to large white doors, engraved with what appeared to be a circle with a line down the middle. "We should split up and come at him from different directions. I'll go hide north, you two head south. The wolves and mountain lions will hit him from the east and west. He's been in there a while and should be making his way out soon." Ogre and Troll did as instructed, taking cover behind a large pile of broken stones. Shortly after a tall elf, wearing plain steel armor and wielding an undecorated shield, ascended the steps.

Minotaur Lord let out a roar and charged, bent over to lay the elf out with his horns. The Elf dodged the charge with ease, unsheathing his iron longsword in the same motion.

Facing the Minotaur Lord, howls and snarls suddenly surrounded him. Six wolves and mountain lions descended upon him, fangs trying to find an opening in his armor. Madly swinging his sword, the Elf managed to lop off various vital body parts, or cleave the bodies of his assailants in two, their blood staining his sword and armor.

Minotaur Lord charged again, horns glancing off armor, sending the warrior flying to the ground. The elf laboriously struggled to his feet, Minotaur Lord still attempting to regain his footing. Seeing their opportunity, Troll and Ogre charged.

Hearing Troll and Ogre swiftly approaching, the warrior grabbed a potion from his pack, quaffing its contents greedily. His assailants paused momentarily mid-stride, and immediately resumed their assault.

Feeling empowered by his health restoring drink, the elf arrogantly stood his ground as his enemies rushed in. Troll reached him first, unleashing a few quick jabs before quickly retreating, ready to sprint in and attack again. Ogre reached him a step later, pummeling the warrior with his bare fists. Ignoring the blows, the warrior attempted a counter-attack, barely managing to break the thick Ogre hide on its forearm. Grunting, Ogre cocked back his arm and let his fist fly, aimed dead center on the warrior's helmet. Knuckles snapping, Ogre let out a howl, as the warrior landed flat on his back.

Blinded by the sun, the elf vainly attempted to deflect Minotaur Lord's warhammer coming down on his head.

"WHAT THE- HOW THE- I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY ENEMIES AT ONCE!" Billy yelled at his monitor. "I swear the whole freaking game is plotting against me!" Slamming the escape key on his keyboard, he stalked out of the room, punching the wall on his way.

