

Streams of silver 24. eulogy for mithril hall

[Literature](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The burning dragon drifted lower and lower, the light of the flames slowly diminishing to a mere speck at the bottom of Garumn's Gorge.

Drizzt scrambled up over the ledge and came up beside Catti-brie and Wulfgar, Catti-brie holding the gem-studded helm, and both of them staring helplessly across the chasm. The two of them nearly fell over in surprise when they turned to see their drow friend returned from the grave. Even the appearance of Artemis Entreri had not prepared Wulfgar and Catti-brie for the sight of Drizzt.

"How?" Wulfgar gasped, but Drizzt cut him short. The time for explanations would come later; they had more urgent business at hand.

Across the gorge, right next to the lever hooked to the bridge, stood Artemis Entreri, holding Regis by the throat before him and grinning wickedly. The ruby pendant now hung around the assassin's neck.

"Let him go," Drizzt said evenly. "As we agreed. You have the gem."

Entreri laughed and pulled the lever. The stone bridge shuddered, then broke apart, tumbling into the darkness below.

Drizzt had thought that he was beginning to understand the assassin's motivations for this treachery, reasoning now that Entreri had taken Regis to ensure pursuit, continuing his own personal challenge with Drizzt. But now with the bridge gone and no apparent escape open before Drizzt and his friends, and the incessant baying of the shadow hounds growing closer at their backs, the drow's theories didn't seem to hold up. Angered by his

confusion, he reacted quickly. Having lost his own bow back in the alcove, Drizzt grabbed Taulmaril from Catti-brie and fitted an arrow.

Entreri moved just as fast. He rushed to the ledge, scooped Regis up by an ankle, and held him by one hand over the edge. Wulfgar and Catti-brie sensed the strange bond between Drizzt and the assassin and knew that Drizzt was better able to deal with this situation. They moved back a step and held each other close.

Drizzt kept the bow steady and cocked, his eyes unblinking as he searched for the one lapse in Entreri's defenses.

Entreri shook Regis dangerously and laughed again. "The road to Calimport is long indeed, drow. You shall have your chance to catch up with me."

"You have blocked our escape," Drizzt retorted.

"A necessary inconvenience," explained Entreri. "Surely you will find your way through this, even if your other friends do not. And I will be waiting!"

"I will come," Drizzt promised. "You do not need the halfling to make me want to hunt you down, foul assassin."

"'Tis true," said Entreri. He reached into his pouch, pulled out a small item, and tossed it into the air. It twirled up above him then dropped. He caught it just before it passed beyond his reach and would have fallen into the gorge. He tossed it again. Something small, something black.

Entreri tossed it a third time, teasingly, the smile widening across his face as Drizzt lowered the bow.

Guenhwyvar.

" I do not need the halfling," Entreri stated flatly and he held Regis farther out over the chasm.

Drizzt dropped the magical bow behind him, but kept his glare locked upon the assassin.

Entreri pulled Regis back in to the ledge. " But my master demands the right to kill this little thief. Lay your plans, drow, for the hounds draw near. Alone, you stand a better chance. Leave those two, and live!

" Then come, drow. Finish our business." He laughed one more time and spun away into the darkness of the final tunnel.

" He's out, then," said Catti-brie. " Bruenor named that passage as a straight run to a door out of the halls."

Drizzt looked all around, trying to find some means to get them across the chasm.

" By Bruenor's own words, there is another way," Catti-brie offered. She pointed down to her right, toward the south end of the cavern. " A ledge," she said, " but hours of walking."

" Then run," replied Drizzt, his eyes still fixed upon the tunnel across the gorge.

By the time the three companions reached the ledge, the echoes of howls and specks of light far to the north told them that Duergar and shadow

hounds had entered the cavern. Drizzt led them across the narrow walkway, his back pressed against the wall as he inched his way toward the other side. All the gorge lay open before him, and the fires still burned below, a grim reminder of the fate of his bearded friend. Perhaps it was fitting that Bruenor died here, in the home of his ancestors, he thought. Perhaps the dwarf had finally satisfied the yearning that had dictated so much of his life.

The loss remained intolerable to Drizzt, though. His years with Bruenor had shown him a compassionate and respected friend, a friend he could rely upon at any time, in any circumstance. Drizzt could tell himself over and over that Bruenor was satisfied, that the dwarf had climbed his mountain and won his personal battle, but in the terrible immediacy of his death, those thoughts did little to dispel the dwarf's grief.

Catti-brie blinked away more tears, and Wulfgar's sigh belied his stoicism when they moved out across the gorge that had become Bruenor's grave. To Catti-brie, Bruenor was father and friend, who taught her toughness and touched her with tenderness. All of the constants of her world, her family and home, lay burning far below, on the back of a hell-spawned dragon.

A numbness descended over Wulfgar, the cold chill of mortality and the realization of how fragile life could be. Drizzt had returned to him, but now Bruenor was gone. Above any emotions of joy or grief came a wave of instability, a tragic rewriting of heroic images and bard-sung legends that he had not expected. Bruenor had died with courage and strength, and the story of his fiery leap would be told and retold a thousand times. But it would never fill the void that Wulfgar felt at that moment.

* * *

They made their way across to the chasm's other side and raced back to the north to get to the final tunnel and be free of the shadows of Mithril Hall.

When they came again into the wide end of the cavern, they were spotted.

Duergar shouted and cursed at them; the great black shadow hounds roared their threats and scratched at the lip of the other side of the gorge. But their enemies had no way to get at them, short of going all the way around to the ledge, and Drizzt stepped unopposed into the tunnel that Entreri had entered a few hours earlier.

Wulfgar followed, but Catti-brie paused at the entrance and looked back across the gorge at the gathered host of gray dwarves.

"Come," Drizzt said to her. "There is nothing that we can do here, and Regis needs our help."

Catti-brie's eyes narrowed and the muscles in her jaw clenched tightly as she fitted an arrow to her bow and fired. The silver streak whistled into the crowd of Duergar and blasted one from life, sending the others scurrying for cover.

"Nothing now," Catti-brie replied grimly, "but I'll be comin' back! Let the gray dogs know it for truth.

"I'll be back!"