

## Godsfall

### 697 After the Founding of Palnor

Simon Reis walked across the already muddy ground picking his steps. The stink of battle already hung in the air from the earlier skirmishes, but he knew this was all coming to a head soon. He made his way through the camp, keeping his head down and covered, his leather cloak and hood keeping his face from being seen. His cloak, emblazoned with the silver hammer and golden anvil, the day to day wear of a Forgemaster meant he was not to be bothered.

He was glad for the large hood; he didn't want the soldiers to see his face. Simon wasn't only a Forgemaster, he was the recognized chosen Maker of Amder. The living Avatar of Amder made flesh so to speak. On a normal day he'd not care, but he was already late. He'd gone back to the Reach for a day to see his family. He hadn't wanted to leave, he'd much rather be there any day.

But Amder had made it clear, today would be the end of the threat. He could feel the god in his head, even now. Amder didn't always make sense to Simon, but he was a God after all. Simon wasn't even sure Amder liked being a God, he wanted to make things, and help people. Worship and a Priesthood were an afterthought.

Simon continued through the camp, heading towards the prime forge. The Palnor army being the seat of Amder always traveled with a full foundry. Thanks to the Forgemaster it was a marvel of engineering. Collapsible, and easy to store, yet full featured enough that with enough raw materials, they could pretty much guarantee that they could make anything the army needed. As a result, the army was one of the most well equipped and well armored military forces the world had ever seen.

Simon finally reached the foundry, his boots muddy and stinking of the accumulated debris of horse, man, and blood. The guards at the foundry passed to let him in, as he headed towards the command tent. General Ashton stood arguing with Gerald DelFarn, High Priest of Amder. Simon's stomach soured at seeing DelFarn. Simon had always been at odds with Amder's priesthood to varying degrees. DelFarn was the most recent High Priest who felt that the Forgemaster should be part of and subservient to the Priesthood.

The Priests had always chaffed at the powers that Amder gave his Forgemaster. The ability to forge weapons that never needed sharpening, to make items that never seemed to tarnish, to make new and wondrous machines. The Priesthood in contrast could not do anything. They led the worship of Amder and being the Priesthood of the God of Craft did have its perks, but it seemed one High Priest after another craved the abilities the Forgemaster used. And Simon thought with a frown, setup a power struggle that had lasted for over a thousand years. His wife had even asked if the man was a Blood God follower, he had that reptilian cast to his features.

General Ashton noticed him first and raised a fist in salute. Simon liked Ashton. He was a solid military man and appreciated the edge the Forgemaster gave his army. He also unlike other officers Simon had worked with didn't come up with unreasonable demands for the Foundry.

"Hail Chosen!" General Ashton said with a grin. Simon glanced at DelFarn, rewarded with a tiny glower that flitted across DelFarn's face. Simon knew that General Ashton has done it on purpose, yet another reason to like him. "General Ashton, High Priest DelFarn." Simon replied, giving each a small bow as he approached them. "Forgemaster Reis." DelFarn replied, not mentioning his status as Chosen. Simon let it go, knowing DelFarn had only done so to get under his skin.

"Looks like the main force of the Chalzik Horde will be here today, and we can end this in one fell strike." General Ashton said, "The scouts report a large force to be sure, but as they are coming out of the Eastern Scrublands, they will be a less than well rested and fed force." Simon nodded, the Horde had crossed the scrublands after rampaging through the Eastern kingdom and ruining it. Driven by their bloodthirsty God, Valnijz, the Horde, while not a proper army, were a large and rapacious force.

But now they came against the Skyreach and the Palnor army. The Skyreach Mountains, rising high into the air behind Simon were the eastern border, and one of the largest and most diverse mineral and metal mining areas in the known world. It was the primary reason Amder based his worship here in Palnor. *Home as well. I will not let anything happen to them.*

"The Forgemaster and his associates I'm sure will be ready for their part in the fight." DelFarn added, with a tight smile. "The Priesthood of Amder will stand ready to heal and bless those who fall in Amders name." Simon resisted the urge to sigh. He was sure the Priesthood would of course, but he knew DelFarn would not. He wished Amder paid more attention to the Priesthood, but their leadership was a political one, which is why he got saddled with dealing with people like DelFarn. He was sure DelFarn thought of the Forgemaster as usurpers to the power of the Priesthood, and fools for how they used their gifts from Amder.

The Forgemaster was granted a tiny portion of Amders power. They used that power in service to not only the crown, but the common people of Palnor. They made items as they were needed for the common folk, with no charge. A Forgemaster made item may last for years, even generations with no sign of any wear. Oh, to be sure, sometimes Forgemaster made items did break, usually when taken to far from the land. Or when someone tried to sell them. The Smithing Guild were the ones who spread the name of Amder outside the land of Palnor. While they couldn't bless items the way Simon could, they were Smiths at the pinnacle of their craft.

"Yes, we will ALL do our parts" Simon said, with a bland smile. "Do you need anything from the Foundry for today's battle General Ashton?" he continued, pointedly ignoring DelFarn's attempt to make another comment. "I and the Guild stand ready to provide anything you need." General Ashton, sensing that the sooner this meeting ended the better, not wanting to get in-between the two factions of Amder worship, provided Simon with a list of some more weaponry and catapult changes. "Very good General, this will be ready in under two hours." Simon replied, and turned on his heel and left.

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General Ashton turned to DelFarn and watched as DelFarn stared after Simon Reis. “He’s a good man DelFarn, I don’t understand why you fight like this.” General Ashton said as he went back to his maps. “A man? Maybe. Good? Maybe.” DelFarn replied, with a right smile and slight bow, DelFarn took his leave of the General and went to make his own preparations for the coming battle.

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Simon felt the Horde before he saw them, the very ground shook with their steps. They darkened the land, swarming towards the Palnorian lines like suicidal ants. Simon and the Guildmasters had completed the work General Ashton had asked them to only 20 minutes before, and had been pacing, waiting for the coming fight. While a Forgemaster didn’t as a rule, get involved in the thick of battle, he was armed. A Forgemaster upon being raised was gifted the insight to make his or her own Hammer of Amder. Magical items, they were both Forge Hammers and weapons. They would resize to whatever was needed when creating, but in the case of battle, they became large two-handed hammers, each with its own look, based on the desire of the creator on the hammer.

Simons hammer was worked into the bearded face of Amder in Silverlace and Drendel Steel. He had rarely used it to fight with, but he knew today he would could have to. He surveyed the seething approaching Horde, by Amders brass ones, there were a lot of them. He steadied himself, he was the Chosen of Amder, with the well trained and best equipped army in the world. A Horde of Eastern blood lusting ragtag fighters and bezerkers were no match for the Palnor army, though while surveying the roiling mass of enemy fighters, he wasn’t sure that he was correct.

Simon noticed the change in the air before the silence fell across the battlefield. Anticipation seemed to fill the space between the two armies, one a laid out force, gleaming steel and iron, discipline and confidence given form. The other, a mass of ragtag fighters, armed with any random assortment of equipment, some clean, some not. Though he could not see their faces from this distance, Simon pictured them as crazed zealots, their prayers to their Blood lusting God being the wholesale pillaging and destruction of everything and everyone who stood in their way.

Howls and screams broke forth and the Horde surged forward, reminding Simon of nothing more than a carpet of ants, eating everything in their path. If Palnor did not stop them here, the horde could go through all the North. The stand had to be here and now. The mountains would help funnel the horde into the army, they had to stand and kill.

The clash of the two forces was near deafening. Simon was used to the sound of metal on metal, but this dwarfed the sound of the forge. Add the screaming and howling of the attackers and defenders, the moans of pain and death, and the noise was almost unbearable. Simon stood and watched the battle from the Foundry site for now. He could see General Ashton watching the battle from the command pavilion, shouting orders and sending pages running to each brigade.

High Priest DelFarn stood next to General Ashton, looking somewhat surprised and pale for once. Simon shook his head with derision, DelFarn had expected this to be a simple fight. Simon was somewhat surprised at the size of the Horde that had made it through the scrublands himself. But it didn't matter, they had to stand here.

Hours passed, and Simon watched. Slowly but surely, the tide was turning towards the Palnorian force. The Horde had the numbers, Palnor better equipment, and far better strategy was forcing the Horde into the main body of the army, where they were being wiped out. Simon felt some of stress leave him, though he knew that he and the Guildmasters would be busy after the fight reforging weapons and fixing damaged catapults and other gear. Simon had about decided to stand down, when the roar came.

Rage incarnate. That was all Simon could think when he heard it. Raw unbridled rage and destruction. The roar overcame the sound of battle, the sound of the Horde screams, and the crash of weapons. Simon turned to the battlefield once more and went pale. Behind the Horde, stood a huge blood red scaled figure. Valnijz, the God of Bloodlust and Rage, had come to the battlefield in the flesh. Simon knew, that this was not supposed to happen. But there stood the Blood God, regardless of whatever rules were supposed to deny it. The Horde surged forth, renewed in their rage. The Palnorian Army fell back, you could feel the panic start to surge through the Army. A few squads on the flanks even ran. Simon looked at the command tent, General Ashton stood pale faced, and unsure. High Priest DelFarn was nowhere to be seen, Simon wondered if he had fled.

Simon Reis, Forgemaster and Chosen of Amder, was at a loss of what to do himself. But at that moment, instructions from Amder filled his head. *Simon, you must use the final action.* Simon went down to both knees, both wonder and despair filled him. He knew that that moment his life was gone. But if Amder's plan worked, all Alos might still know peace. He despaired of never seeing his family again, but if the Horde got through, they wouldn't have a life themselves. Simon turned to the assembled Guildmasters and explained Amders plan. Their eyes widened but they as one nodded their agreement.

Simon steeled himself, he imaged this was going to hurt, a lot. Simon stripped down to his under robes, but for his hammer. He walked towards the main reservoir of molten metal and stood in front of it, looking into its red roiling depths. With a deep sigh, he nodded to the assembled Guildmasters and one at a time, they threw their hammers into the pool. Each hammer seemed to alight in the pool and melt slowly. The metal changed colors with each hammer, getting lighter, from a deep angry red, to by the last hammer other than Simons, had progressed to a bright silver, with gold and copper highlights. Simon turned to each Guildmaster, as one by one they touched his hammer, and collapsed. The Hammer glowed with each transfer. Finally, Simon Reis, Forgemaster and Chosen of Amder turned to the now glowing white pool of metal and stepped on to it. He did not sink; and he did not burn. The metal flowed over him, and he grew. He grew until Simon Reis was no more. All that stood there now, was the Avatar of Amder, God of the Forge.

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Twenty feet high, silver metal and holding a large Glowing Hammer, the form of Amder stood, looking across the already blood-soaked land. Valnijz looked back, scaled, reptilian spirit, but upright as a man. Neither form spoke, but those who survived that day swore that some communication passed between the two forms, some way of talking that only the Gods could know of. A scream rent the air as the Blood God leaped forward, only to be met with a blow from the Hammer that Amder carried.

The two titans joined battle as their followers ran. Not even the Horde in its lust for blood and battle dared to stay where the Gods themselves fought. Valnijz leaping and clawing at Amders metal form, his red scaled skin glinting in the afternoon sun. And giant metal Amder, swinging his hammer, each blow shaking the very earth if he missed, or a bruising scale breaking hit when it connected. Amders form was not without damage either, the claws of Valnijz scraping long furrows in a metal form that would normally be impervious to harm.

The fight went on for hours, with a handful of mortals on each side watching. The Blood Priests of the Horde on one side, and General Ashton and High Priest DelFarn on the other. Finally, the two forms parted and started at each other. Amders form was more scratches and gouges than metal, and occasionally liquid metal would flow from a crack. Where it touched ground, a silvery crystal would sprout, glowing with its own inner light. Valzinj was bleeding from half a dozen wounds now, and where his blood fell, a red mist erupted, and corrupting everything it touched.

Without a sound the two Gods rushed at one another, Valnijz claws finally piercing the Chest of Amder, and Amders hammer finally bursting the head of Valnijz. An explosion that shook the very foundation of the land knocked everyone down. A tearing sound, as Alos itself was wounded by the fall. And there, across the battlefield a huge rent in the earth a rent that spread wider and longer, until the ends could not be seen. Both forms fell into this new valley with an earth-shaking thud, and began to dissolve, filling the surrounding earth with a mix of pure silver crystals and a noxious red mist.

And so, at the Battle of Skyreach did fall the Forgemaster and Chosen of Amder, leaving only the Priesthood behind. Later known as the Godsfall, all was changed.