

FROM : <https://www.aftertheboardgame.com/>

Death (fiction) :

Death is official Warlord CCG fiction as written by Chris Burns.

Its original publication date is unknown. It reads:

Death.

by « Chris J. Burns ».

The Abyss, 750 years ago ...

Confusion.

Pain.

Defeat.

They had come to end the war, and met only defeat. Monsters, the Corpse, an armor plated man. Slaughter. His final thought, a massive sword striking him down as others fled.

Heartache.

Doubt.

Darkness.

Trapped beneath the remains of battle he floated in and out of hazy, incoherent dreams.

Life.

Friends.

Abandoned.

He lay still, his blood had been mingling with the dark ichors surrounding him, and now it boiled within him and he could feel his soul twisting, turning into something ... unnatural.

Alone.

Hopeless.

Forgotten.

Something opened underneath him. Inexorably, he slid down into it. A vast power washed over him, sending his already taxed senses reeling.

Death.

The Denskan badlands, five years ago ...

“You are sure it is here Malrog?” Bhaine asked.

“Somewhere,” the powerful Nothrog grunted, “but as to its exact location, your guess is as good as mine.” Malrog snorted. “You truly worry so much over such a trifling artifact Bhaine? Soon such a thing will do you as much harm as a splinter. You fret over nothing.”

“Perhaps,” Bhaine responded coolly, “but I have learned it is not wise to take unnecessary risks.”

Malrog shrugged. “It is your business, so deal with it as you will. Just do not let this small obsession interfere with your duties, Lady Bhaine.”

Bhaine bristled, but her reply was cut off as the ground they stood on shook fiercely.

Tightening her grip on Deathflail, she carefully scanned the surrounding area, wary of an ambush. Malrog was equally observant, his great iron hand flexing in anticipation. They did not have to wait long.

The ground in front of them cracked and split violently, chunks of rock and other detritus filling the air and littering the ground. A short, wide bulk of what appeared to be rock slowly rose from a crevice. Malrog and Bhaine stepped back cautiously. Mottled arms emerged and began to hoist the grayish bulk out of the hole. As it emerged its shape became clearer.

It looked vaguely human, if a stocky one. Its skin was rough and splotchy, having the appearance of dry, caked mud. Coal black eyes shone above a spiked, rocky beard. It blinked quickly, its eyes not used to the bright Denskan sun. Although it took the creature a few moments to notice Malrog and Bhaine, it reacted swiftly as soon as it did.

“Now this is a most interesting development,” the thing said. Its voice reminded Bhaine of boulders cracking and breaking in an avalanche. The small black eyes darted between Bhaine and Malrog, trying to determine which was the bigger threat. A sickly golden glow began to radiate from around the creature’s hands.

Bhaine moved herself between Malrog and the newcomer. “What manner of creature do you suppose this is?” she asked her companion.

“K'Hallaek and I have spoken at great length about the histories of the Accord. Much may be lost, but this is what he described as a dwarf. Quite possibly the ugliest dwarf ever, unless life underground has made them all look like this. I was told they were a fair looking race.”

Malrog turned his attention on the dwarf. “Before your impertinence leads to your demise little man, tell me, am I right? Are you the ugliest dwarf ever?”

The dwarf laughed. “Perhaps now I am. I shall accede to your wisdom in the matter, as you must be intimately knowledgeable on the subject.” The dwarf smiled at the glare Malrog shot him. “But do not think that my stature is a measure of my power. It is unfortunate that you were here this day ... for you that is.”

Bhaine’s knuckles grew white as she tightened the grip on her weapon. She launched herself at the dwarf, releasing a flurry of blows at him. The golden aura extended itself, encircling the dwarf like armor. As Lady Bhaine’s blows deflected harmlessly away the dwarf stepped forth and picked up a large piece of the rubble. He chanted and the rock changed shape, becoming a great double bitted axe. Bhaine struck again, aiming her flail at the dwarf’s left side. As he brought his axe up to deflect the blow Bhaine whipped the flail around deftly, its hateful bludgeon swinging towards the dwarf’s head. With equal dexterity the dwarf brought his axe over in time to block the blow. Bhaine snarled and leapt to the right, swinging her flail again. Before she landed, however, a great blast of light erupted from the dwarf, knocking her to the ground. The dwarf swung his axe in a deadly arc, intent on splitting Bhaine’s skull. The paladin rolled to her left and the axe struck the ground hard, its head shattering on impact. With the dwarf now slightly off balance, Bhaine whipped Deathflail around, striking at his shins. The dwarf stumbled, but did not fall. The distraction was enough though for Bhaine to regain her footing. The two warriors slowly advanced on each other.

“Enough!” Malrog’s voice cracked like a whip.

The dwarf eyed the nothrog suspiciously before backing away. Lady Bhaine, scowling at the dwarf, returned to Malrog’s side.

“You are most impressive indeed,” Malrog said. “I am Malrog and this is my associate, Lady Bhaine. Tell me, dwarf, why are you here?”

The dwarf smiled, his yellow and cracked teeth reflecting the sunlight dully, “I was abandoned by my god and my people, so I am going to take his place in the heavens and watch as the dwarves scurry beneath my divine wrath. This place is only one rung on the ladder I must climb to reach the heavens.”

Malrog barked a laugh, “We have much in common, though you may not think so. We must talk. Perhaps we could be of service to each other. What are you called?”

The dwarf paused solemnly. “I had a name once, and it made me proud to be called by it. Hearing it would fill me with such joy,” he replied. His face twisted into a mask of barely concealed rage. “That was before they left me for dead. Soon they will wish they had not forgotten me, for now ... now I have become Death.”

