

# How Chief head-butted a dragon.

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for [@legendgerry](#)'s daily D&D game

*“What’s this? Wine? No, no, fetch me ale, this tale is for beer drinkers!”  
There are a couple of drunken shouts of approval from the back of the feast hall  
A servant scurries forth with a tankard, our story teller tastes it and nods in approval.  
“I’ll need another there lad, this is a two beer tale!” our storyteller throws a dramatic wink to the audience who duly laugh. The second tankard arrives and the tale begins  
“Have you heard of Goliaths? They’re a race of half giants who live atop the mountains yonder, huge big fellas, mighty fighters and drinkers they are, all about being the biggest and bravest. Imagine a whole clan of people like that! Well our tale starts atop one of those mountains.....”*

From a distance one might be forgiven for thinking they were looking at a dwarf worshipping some rocks on a mountain top, as he stood holding a bowl shape object in the air.

Only drawing closer would reveal the rocks were in fact a hunting party of Goliath's, a race that had adapted to their mountainous environment so well they could blend seamlessly with the background.

In this scene however that lone Dwarf ruined their expert work.....

Aukan “Hard-head” warrior of the Thugaga clan, looked down at the Dwarf in confusion

“What’s this?”

“It’s a helmet! Why? What did you think it was?”

Aukan spoke like someone teaching a child

“I don’t want to buy a helmet, if you want to trade go talk to the clan trader, I’m a warrior, we fight, we don’t trade”

“No Hard-head, I’m not selling it! It’s a gift, from my nephew”

“A gift? Dwarves don’t give gifts, dwarves trade”

“Yes we do, sometimes we do it to make trading partners...”

“I’m not a trader!”

Emnus was starting to regret agreeing to deliver this gift

“...And sometimes we do it as a token of appreciation. Remember a few years ago we rescued some of my people from orc raiders?”

“Yes that was a good fight, we had to go proper quiet to get close enough to protect the prisoners, then we killed all them Orcs. I killed the most that day!”

“Well one of those prisoners, my nephew, was a smiths apprentice and he’s been down with the Deep Dwarves learning to smith Admantine since.”

Emnus paused, mentally bracing himself for the next bit of conversation.

“To become a full smith he had to make something out of Admantine and he chose to make a helmet for the brave warrior who saved his life in that battle with the Orcs”

“So it’s a reward?”

“Uh, Yes?”

“Warriors don’t fight for extra reward, we fight for the good of the clan, Orcs are bad for everybody so we killed them. We saved your people because we trade with you, your people die in one of our fights, you might not like to trade with us any more. They didn’t die, no more Orcs, we still trade, reward enough”

Emnus briefly considered testing Admantines reputation as the hardest metal in the world against the thickness of Hard-heads skull.

His chief had dubbed him Hard-head for his stubborn dedication to the rules of his profession, though he claimed it was due to his fondness of throwing headbutts in close combat drills.

Fortunately Vima, head of the hunting party had gotten fed up waiting for them, it was getting late in the day and she didn't want to fight a Dragon at night. She stomped over like a mother about to deal out domestic justice to some errant children.

"What needs to happen to make this talk stop so we can go kill this blasted Dragon in daylight?"

"He needs to accept the helmet"

"Right..... Your nephew had to make this to complete his apprenticeship yes?"

Emnus nodded

"So the work can't be considered complete until it's tested right"

Emnus nodded

"Hard-head put the helmet on so we can see if it fits, your friend can tell his nephews teachers if he did his work right"

Hard-heads face did some contortions as he worked out if this was acceptable, apparently it was as he took the helmet.

Emnus exhaled, he hadn't realised he'd been holding his breath, still the Goliath had taken the helmet. his promise was kept.

"It fits" confirmed Hard-head smiling as he went to remove it.

Vima stopped him,

"Hold on we're not finished yet, this is meant to protect the head right?"

Emnus nodded again, he was afraid to say anything in case he interfered with Vima's flow and ended back in another discussion.

She shifted her weight to her back leg, bringing up the butt of her spear, then she lunged forward, so fast it was barely perceptible, driving it hard and fast onto the front of the helmet with her full 350 odd pound weight behind it.

It was a blow that could have shattered rocks, big ones.

Emnus felt the impact in his bones and he was just standing near it.

The rest of the hunting party looked shocked too.

Hard-head staggered back but didn't fall over, he seemed surprised to be alive let alone still standing.

Vima looked amazed too.

"I think it works Dwarf" she said "What do you think Hard-head?"

Hard-head had taken the helmet off and was checking his head manually in case something had broken so fast he hadn't felt it.

A few seconds later Hard-head accepted the fact he was alive and intact and nodded at Vima, clearly staying where he'd stopped in case she decided to hit him again.

"Well Dwarf, I'd say your nephews work is complete wouldn't you"

Emnus nodded with a grin, he really had a great smith in his family.

"I'd say Hard-head deserves some payment for testing it so well, wouldn't you?"

Behind her there was a murmur of assent from the rest of the hunting party.

Emnus was a quick study.

"Oh yes, but I have no coin on me, perhaps you'd be willing to keep the helmet as payment?" he asked Hard-head.

"If you feel you haven't earned it we could always test it a few more times" added Vima, gently tapping the ground with her spear as she spoke.

Hard head visibly paled.

"No, no I think I earned it fair and square as the dwarves say" holding up his hands in surrender,

"Good, now get to your damn post and lets get this done, it's a hunters job not some quest for glory you're about today!"

Hard-head put his new helmet on, nodded to Emnus and took off towards a high vantage point midway between the dwarf and the spot where a dragon was setting up a lair.

Watching him go Vima turned to the dwarf

“Was the only reason your people insisted he came so you could give him that hat?”

“No, as we said we’ve fought side by side a few times and he knows our signals, if things go wrong he’s handy to have around. Giving the helmet was added value though now I’m not sure it was worth the effort”

“He’s not a hunter, this is a hunter job, having a warrior here is against the run of things, remember that, next time you need us. Your people might change jobs often but ours do not”

“I will, thank you for your help today”

“Just make sure your people do their part, remember this isn’t an epic quest or a food hunt we need to exterminate this thing fast before it brings more Dragons. Winter is coming and dragons scare off all the good prey.”

“Agreed, lets get to it, I’d prefer if we all made it through this alive and daylight is our best ally here.”

Vima nodded and ran to her Hunters

Emnus watched her go with a thoughtful gaze.

There’d been more to that blow than testing the helmet the dwarf had paid with,

Hard Head had better watch his back he thought as he went to his own position.

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Hard-head made his way up sheer mountainside, he was looking for a position between the dwarf and the area a female white dragon had decided to claim as hers.

The Dwarves Who Lived Below, to use their official title, used the area the dragon had settled in as a meeting point to trade with the clan.

They had sent word asking the clan to send the Hunters along with the warrior Hard-head to assist in a plan to quickly remove the beast. Hard-head was needed because he knew both the dwarves combat hand signals having fought alongside them a few times and the Goliath signals so he could interpret both quickly for the other.

It was a clever move on their part, the next Clan Chief was to come from either the Warrior or the Hunter factions and this could have soured relations with that future leader.

Hard-heads presence mollified the other Warriors chagrin at being left out but let the Hunters leader lord over a famous warrior for the day which was enticement enough for them.

It also neutralised the glory benefit as people from both factions were involved so the takle wasn’t likely to earn either side more favour than the other..

Hunters and Warriors respected each others skills but they fought for different goals with different methods and this led to occasional friction between them.

Usually, the Hunters wanted to take down beasts quickly and with minimum damage to the carcass. A warrior would happily return with just the head and the shredded remains of the hide of whatever it was, which was just wasteful in the eyes of the Hunters.

The plan here was relatively simple, the Dwarves had an entrance into the Dragons area which she was keeping a weather eye on, the Dwarves would attract her attention to the door then the hunters would hit her with spears from above, when she wheeled to attack them the dwarves would open the entrance, shoot her with ballista, when she turned to them the hunters would spear again and so forth until it died. It wouldn’t be a warriors way to do it but it was effective.

The Hunters were better at long range, warriors would have felt compelled to jump in and go head to head with the creature which if it worked would have been glorious, if it worked. If it didn’t of

course the Dwarves would have been stuck with at least one notoriously evil type of dragon on their door step and the Clan would be down a warrior.

He reached a point where he could see both the dwarf and the dragon. Now that he could see her, he had to admit she was pretty to look at. She stood howling out to the sky at the edge of an amphitheatre that had formed naturally about three quarters of the way up the mountain. It was a good sheltered spot which is why they used it for meetings with the dwarves. The dwarves had enhanced it with carvings over time because they liked to do that sort of thing. His people had cleared a rough track down to make hauling hides and the like easier for the traders, it wasn't stone craft like the dwarves but they had deliberately moved large rocks into rows above it to provide cover in case things ever got hostile. They probably hadn't thought the hostilities would be with dragons back then but it was a smart move that really helped them now. He signalled "in position" to Emnus and the waiting hunting party, the party moved off, from the height he was looking down from the hunting party looked a row of boulders rolling gently down the mountainside. Emnus signalled down the side of the mountain, the dwarves had set up a daisy chain of warriors, hanging from the mountain side on ropes to pass signals down to the nearest lookout and on to the dwarves behind the entrance.

While he waited for the hunters to get in position, Hard-head listened to the howls of the dragon, he noticed it wasn't just a call but rather had a discernable beat to it, it was a song rather than the come mate call of other creatures. He briefly wondered what it would sound like in common.

He looked to the hunting party, they had made it to their position undetected, Vima gave the signal to begin, Hard-head started counting as he passed the signal along to Emnus. It was important to know how long it would take the signal to get to the dwarves below.

"...28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 36, 37"

Horns sounded from below, the Dwarves door rattled like there was a creature about to burst out. The dragon wheeled round and prowled over to the door, hunkering down like a cat waiting to pounce on prey.

Vima gave the "We Go" signal, Hard-head signalled Emnus.

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The hunting party stood and as one hurled ripper spears on long ropes at the beasts flank, most hit, some bounced and fell to the ground, one sailed off into the sky, never to be seen again.

Ripper spears were short tipped but had many prongs. They were designed to attach to scales or armour, when the wielder hauled them back they would leave chunks of exposed skin or bleeding flesh behind.

The dragon roared in surprise and rage, she wheeled about, unleashing a cone of freezing air at the hunters, as they hauled back their spears.

Some of the hunters cried out in pain but they didn't stop hauling the spears. they truly had the endurance of stone. as she turned Hard-head heard the dwarves door open, three large ballista bolts struck the rear of the dragon

Thunk! Thunk! Thunk!

A fourth sailed off into the distance, Hard-head swore, they couldn't afford misses like that.

The dragon, definitely in pain now, wheeled about and lashed out at the quickly closing dwarf door with her teeth, they got it closed in the nick of time apparently.

Vima and her hunters were moving to a new position above the dragon and the door, she signalled "Again" Hard-head passed it on, he really hoped her timing was right.

Something in the clouds caught his eye, he wasn't sure if it was the sun catching some water or something else, he couldn't afford to take his eyes off the attack just yet anyway.

Below the hunting party unleashed a second barrage of the ripper spears.

The dragon howled and started climbing up toward them, leaving her belly exposed to the door, it opened seconds after the spears hit, the ballista bolts hit her exposed belly simultaneously, caught on her hind legs she was knocked off balance and staggered back.

The hunters unleashed a barrage of heavy hunting spears, a single one usually killed a bear so it was expected when she toppled backwards, the ballista sang one last time, four more heavy hits.

The dragon howled as it tried to roll on to its feet but that just drove the ballista bolts in even further, after full minute of thrashing about it stopped howling and started to whimper.

Vima gave the signal that the hunters were going to close in and grant it the mercy of a swift death. Hard-head passed it on.

Emnus gave the signal that the dwarves were retreating and added a salute by way of thanks.

Hard-head was about to give his own version of the salute back when his had formed the "Hold" signal before he knew what his eyes had seen.

There! Coming through the clouds, fast, was another white dragon!

His hand flashed the signal for two enemies to Emnus,

He looked to the hunting party they were already down at the dragon, one cutting it's throat while the others pulled their spears out to ensure she would bleed out quickly.

They had no idea of the danger swooping in on them.

The dwarf was sending a frantic "hold them off" signal

They must have already started dismantling the ballista!

Hard-head thought fast or at least in years to come he claimed he did.

The oncoming Dragon wouldn't wing or breath attack that would risk damaging its potential mate, a swoop attack would expose it's belly to the spears below.

He found himself running down the mountain.

It would come in land and turn below him, likely do a breath attack at the Dwarves door and drive the hunters off the edge of the cliff with tooth and claw.

He heard screaming, it was coming from him. His axes were in his hands somehow.

That would mean it would be directly below him in

3.

He launched himself into the air. He hadn't quite grasped how high up he was until he was over the edge.

The dragon skidded past the hunters with a furious roar

2.

He was falling so fast the air was tugging at his armor.

He brought up his axes over his head

The Dragon looked up.

It wasn't supposed to do that!

1!

The dragons mouth opened to catch him

He swung his axes down on the top of the Dragons mouth like a swimmer doing the butterfly stroke, he propelled himself forward, out of sheer instinct he brought his head down.

His head hit the dragon right between the eyes.

He heard a crack, then all was darkness.

The dwarves by the door charged out and made sure the dragon stayed dead, Vima finished the other dragon off.

The dwarves had sense enough to bring healers with them and they had rushed to Hard-heads body once they were sure the dragons were dead.  
Hard-heads new helmet had split in two, Emnus arrived and picked up the pieces as he went over to the body, two ballista engineers came racing over.  
“Was he wearing that?” they asked, clearly very excited.  
“Yes, it’s admantine. Didn’t do him much good though”  
“Oh I wouldn’t bet on that” one of them said lining up the two pieces  
“Yes see here? There’s a bump dead centre where the parts join? All the force must have transferred here and when it came back out to it instead of transferring it straight back the helmet split and divided it!  
Oh this is most interesting! Let’s see he had to leap from there, that’s what? About 200 feet? And he weighs what 350, 360lbs?”  
Emnus left them discussing physics and helmet design and went to Vima.  
She was looking distraught  
“Told you he was handy to have around! Uh, Is he dead?” asked Emnus  
“Mostly” piped up a healer “I think we can get him to half dead”  
“Let me help” said a nearby cleric.  
Hard-heads body glowed briefly.  
“Now he’s not dead” confirmed the healer “He’s very broken though, he’ll need complete rest for a month and no strenuous activity for at least another month after that.”  
“So he’ll be fine before years end?” asked Vima clearly disappointed  
“Yup. He’ll be as good as new physically, though I can’t speak to how good his brain will work” said the healer.  
“Shite!” said Vima.  
Emnus looked at her in shock  
“You want your comrade dead?”  
“No, but our people are picking a new chief at years end. It was going to be me or him. If he’s able to walk and talk it will be him after this. Bastard just head-butted a dragon to death, I can’t beat that.”  
“Your people are very odd”  
“Your one to talk dirt digger”

To help his mental recovery the clan druid taught him to read common, something Hard-head discovered he really liked doing.

At years end Hard-head was named chief.

Emnus sent a congratulatory note for him to read rather than a gift!

*“For years afterwards he gathered books like a dragon grasping gold.  
Whenever someone left the clan in search of adventure he’d ask them to go visit one of the places he read about and see if the tales were true.  
Those adventurers would always tell his tale in exchange for ours and that’s how I came to learn it and other tales of the Thugaga. Like what happened when Hard Head married Vima.  
Maybe you’d like to hear another? I mean the nights young yet after all. Oh you would? Well this next one will be at least a three beer...”*