The Red Year, Vol. I

The Red Year
Volume I

by
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Foreword

When I originally decided to write this accounting of the Red Year, I elected to travel across Morrowind and speak to the Dunmer people themselves. I sought first-hand accounts and personal views about the cataclysmic event. I felt that if I simply did the research in the library stacks at the College of Winterhold, I wasn't really telling the tale that needed to be told. What struck me as I moved from city to city, town to town, camp to camp is that all of the Dunmer I met shared an incredible bond of sheer courage and unshakable faith. So what began as a chronicle of one of the worst events in the history of Morrowind became something altogether different, the celebration of a people who can never be defeated.

Drallin Vess
Tear

"The ground... it just turned into mush. There was almost no warning. I mean, we were what... perhaps a mile from the nearest swamps? It was like the swamp suddenly swallowed up half of the city."

I asked him to describe what happened from the beginning.

"I owned a farm just outside of Tear at the time. We were planting the next season's crops and getting ready to store what we had harvested. Everything was going well until the Red Mountain exploded. Almost immediately, the ground rumbled and shook.

Cracks started forming everywhere and then the water just started seeping through. It was awful. In a matter of hours, I was knee-deep in swamp water running for my life. Where I was running, I had no idea. At first I ran towards the city itself, but it looked like the walls were cracking. All around me, people were desperately trying to save their livestock and their families from the rising water. Just when the ground shaking finally died down, and I had a moment to think, there was a horrible cracking noise. I'll never forget it, because I knew what it was before I looked. The entire southern wall of Tear collapsed sending guards tumbling into the swamp. I heard people screaming as they were covered by the rubble and forced down into the water. Forgetting my own problems, I looked over at my fellow farmers who were all staring at the carnage unfolding before us. Suddenly, we all just forgot our own problems and ran to help. There must have been hundreds of the poorer folks who lived outside the walls helping the richer ones who lived in the city. Never saw anything like that. I think we must have saved hundreds more that day."

Neria Relethyl
Gnisis

Neria was badly burned by the eruption, and had trouble speaking to me. She is currently convalescing at the Temple of Azura in Blacklight even after all these years. I've tried to record her story to the best of my ability.

"It was such a terrible thing... the fire. It burned everything in its path. It flattened trees, turned our huts into splinters and knocked over towers like they were made from parchment. It all happened in an instant. A rumbling sound, then a massive wall of flame... it was so high it blocked out the sun. I thought that the world itself had split apart. It passed over the water and turned it to steam... vaporized everything it touched. When it finally hit us, I was blown off of my feet... didn't even have time to run away or seek shelter. I ended up in the riverbed next to town, which kept some of the flames off of me. All around... could smell the charred stench of death. There were Dunmer that were burned alive and some never even saw it coming. I lay in that riverbed for two days before the healers found me. When I could finally stand, Gnisis was gone. There wasn't a thing left... it's as though it was wiped from the face of Tamriel."

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