

Felix the Formidable

Chapter 1

In High Rock, it was common to see travelers from Hammerfell. They would often stop to buy last minute supplies before they struck out into the wilds. Felix believed he could tell how long they would survive by simply examining the wear of their gear, the condition of their visible weapons, and by how they placed their feet as they walked.

He was in his favorite spot, on the roof of the bell tower, where he could see the entire town, and the edge of the giant city of Hammerfell looming in the distance. From here, with his feet carefully and comfortably placed on the edge of the roof, he could watch all of the people that entered and exited his home town. There was only one main means of access and egress through his town, due to the high circular wall that rose a dozen meters high, and one meter thick. The gates at the north and south of High Rock were enormous, and would allow 6 horses to fit through if they were standing shoulder to shoulder.

Felix always felt safe here. He had considered leaving some time ago, but he didn't want to leave his uncle. His parents had died when he was young, and he was raised by his uncle Felix, who had the same name he did. He had once asked his uncle why they both had the same name. His uncle's response was that all of the Formidable Family men were named Felix, out of respect for their great great grandfather, the First Felix, who had harnessed and mastered the power of lightning. No Felix since him had been able to duplicate his efforts, but the Formidable Family diligently trained all of their children in the art of warfare in the hopes that one day this ability would return. It had been generations, and so far this magic remained untapped.

This morning, Felix was thinking of his past. He had no memory of his parents, but his uncle told him that of course his father was also Felix, and his mother was Felicia. Were all of the women in his family also named Felicia? At breakfast this morning, his uncle confirmed that this was true. He seemed like he wanted to tell Felix more, but the bell tower had rung once loudly to announce a caravan heading towards High Rock, and Felix was expected to give the bell the single reply ring of all clear once he had looked them over from his perch atop the bell tower roof to confirm there were no dangers present.

As Felix stood atop the roof in his favorite spot and looked over and beyond the main gate, his heart began to pound. The caravan that was slowly heading toward High Rock looked innocent enough, with its line of a dozen horse drawn tented carts. But the carts wheels dug deep into the dirt of the road, and the horses were straining to pull their payloads. As he tried to determine what could be in the carts to make them so heavy, movement caught his attention out of the corner of his eye. As he quickly looked to the side, he could see shapes moving in the trees on either side of the road.

This caravan was bringing more than loaded carts. There were shadows alongside them. They darted through the trees, dashing ahead, and then doubled back, as if they were anxious to move farther ahead, but were held back by the slow moving caravan. There were many of these shadows. More than Felix could even count, as they moved too quickly to keep track of them.

Felix had seen enough. He quickly turned and struck the large bell several times to warn his town. The bell tones rang out loudly. He hopped down from his perch and scrambled down the side of the building. His heart raced as his feet touched down on the dirt. He ran, his legs pumping madly as he rounded the corner and headed to his uncle's little cottage. He jumped over the little fence that held the goats in, and ran in through the front door.

"Uncle!" He shouted. "There's danger coming, demons!"

Chapter 2

His uncle was sitting on a stool near the fire, and his strong hands held an axe that he had been sharpening with a whetstone. He had looked up quickly when Felix entered the room, and upon hearing his exclamation, rose and quickly began to grab his armor.

"Put this on", his uncle said firmly, handing Felix a mask and epaulets.

Felix was stunned. He held the mask and epaulets in his hands, as if he were not sure what to do with them. These had been his father's. His uncle had told him they were handed down as heirlooms to every generation. Felix thought they were kind of uncomfortable, and didn't understand why they kept them. But, he knew well enough that his uncle would not argue with him about this. He trusted his uncle's judgement, and he put on the mask and shoulder piece. He could almost feel the etchings engraved on the inside of the mask against his face. The strange letters spelled out ZAAN. He never understood what that strange word meant whenever he looked at it.

His uncle asked him what the demons had looked like, as he was quickly equipping his gear. Felix tried to describe them, starting with how they seemed to move like shadows through the trees. When his uncle heard his words, the blood drained from his face. Felix had never seen this reaction from his uncle. For his entire life, this man had been as strong as a mountain, solid as a giant rock, and fearless. But when he heard about the shadowy shapes approaching the gates, he looked suddenly much older than Felix had ever seen him.

"Felix," his uncle said as he quickly grabbed his shoulder, "I wish I had more time to talk with you about this, but our time has now been stolen from us."

Felix's already pounding heart was now threatening to jump out of his chest as he tried to gather his wits. What could scare his uncle? The strongest man in High Rock, who won every wrestling contest ever held in this town for Felix's entire life?

"Felix," his uncle was saying, "listen to me. You have sisters out there. I don't know how many. And I don't know where they are. I wanted to talk with you about this when the time was right. But it always seemed..." his uncle trailed off as he heard loud crashes against the front gate. He turned and grabbed the staff that he always had leaning in the corner of the cottage. It had eagle wings on the top of it, and Felix had always wondered why anyone bothered to decorate it in such a fashion.

“Take this,” his uncle told him.

“But uncle,” Felix said, “I should bring my sword! I’ve bested most of the men in town with it.”

His uncle shook his head, “No. You can keep your sword at your side, but today you carry this staff. Don’t let anyone take it from you.”

Felix took the staff, and his fingers closed over it. It was almost as tall as he was, and it was surprisingly comfortable to hold. Felix felt kind of naked, as he was much more comfortable with his sword in his hand. But he again trusted his uncle, and gripped the staff tightly.

“Did you say sisters?” He asked as they ran out of the cottage and towards the sounds of loud banging coming from the gate.

“Yes,” his uncle said as he stopped several meters short of the gate. “Sisters. If you ever meet one, you’ll need to touch them to know for sure. Formidable Family Blood knows its own. I wish I could tell you more. But I just don’t know, and we are running out of time.” His uncle took a stance with his two handed axe held firmly. Felix could hear the other men from High Rock gathering behind them. “Felix, if we survive, I will tell you everything. For now, make sure we keep these bastards away from the women and children here. This is where we hold them. We can’t let them behind us.”

Felix nodded, and thought about all of the people that lived in High Rock. So many families lived here. He gripped his staff, and focused on the gate, waiting for it to come crashing down.

Chapter 3

The loud banging and slamming against the gate continued. Felix wondered what they were hitting the gate with that could make such a loud sound. He was considering this when pain erupted across the side of his body. A loud thud echoed in his ears as he was thrown sideways several meters and crashed into the wall of the stable.

His ears rang, and his vision swam, but he could see that the men were fighting. While the gate was being assaulted, and everyone was facing it, the enemy had scaled the wall and came at them from the side. Men were yelling, grunting, swinging wildly with pick axes, short swords, and huge hammers. The men they fought were skeletal, with tattered armor hanging off of them. There were dark shadowy hounds that ran alongside them. Their teeth were long, their eyes red, and blood covered them. Felix couldn’t believe what he saw. Could the blow to his head have driven away his wits? Skeletons? Moving as men? And there were so many. That was why the wagons had been so heavy. They had to be hauling half a hundred each.

Things seemed to be moving in slow motion. He pulled himself up from the ground. He could see his uncle. He was roaring in defiance, his axe taking the head off of an armored skeleton. He was moving quickly to hack the arms off that clutched at the farmer who lived 2 cottages away from them. He didn’t see the sword coming that rammed through his back and out of his chest.

He seemed surprised to see it there, pointing out of the front of his body. Blood fountained out as the skeleton yanked it back out of him and kicked him in the back.

Felix's uncle fell face down in the dirt, and as his blood pooled out around him, the world stopped moving. The battle was frozen. Skeletons surrounded them, hell hounds were mid leap with their jaws gaping open. Felix could hear his blood. It pounded in his ears. He had been standing still, his staff clutched tightly in his hands. His heart was breaking, his anguish was stealing away his knowledge of self, and tears ran down his face. His uncle was dead, his town was dying. The horror of it all was crushing him. The fear had locked him up tight, and kept him from moving.

But now, as he watched his uncle lie in the dirt, and he saw these skeletal monstrosities carelessly chop him down like he was nothing, the fear left him. In its place was a rising heat. From deep within him he felt a fire swell. It was searing hot, and alongside it he could feel a pulse. The pulse hammered with his heartbeat. This fiery pulse was connected to everything around him. As he looked around him, he began to see thin blue strings that were bound together, like intertwining cords. They were in the walls of the stable, the walls of High Rock, the large gate, the grass poking up through the dirt, and the blood on the ground. It was as if all things were made out of a web of these thin blue lines.

As he stood, with his staff pressed into the ground, he could see currents flowing through these blue lines. The currents were all flowing to where his staff touched the ground. The blue light flowed from everything around him, and up into the staff he clutched. It was glowing brighter and brighter, pulsing with blue energy.

His hands gripped the staff, and his rage flowed into it. Power from generations of his family began to radiate from him. He understood it now. He pulled the lightning from the fabric of all things, and he pulled his rage from deep inside of him, and he screamed.

Time erupted into motion as Felix slammed his staff down hard into the ground. A thunderous rage of lightning swept out from him in an expanding circle. The roar of it was deafening. Skeletons and hounds arched in pain as they were enveloped in powerful blue lightning. As the lightning poured out from him, he could see a beam of fire shooting out from his father's mask. He turned his head from side to side, and the beam of fire engulfed skeletons and hounds as he turned towards them. The walls of High Rock were blown outward, and the gate flew back with such force that it crushed the covered wagons that were wedged up against it. Devastation radiated outwards from Felix in waves. The armored skeletons exploded into dust, and the shadowy hell hounds were melted into burning piles of black ash.

The remaining men of High Rock looked around them in awe, as they saw that they were unharmed by the power that flowed out and away from Felix. It had passed over them leaving their hair standing up straight, but without injury. Right next to them, skeletons had exploded into piles of dust and bones. Smoldering piles of black ash were all that was left of the hounds.

At the middle of the quickly vanishing storm stood Felix. The young man they had known since

he was a child was gone. Before them stood Felix the Formidable, he who had awakened the sleeping power of the Formidable Family.

Chapter 4

Felix had wanted to stay in High Rock, but along with his newly discovered power came a powerful feeling of responsibility. He stayed as long as he could, helping to repair the damage he had caused when his power had erupted through the village. He had saved everyone and slain the entire army of skeletons, but he had also damaged many buildings in the village, and the entire wall near where the front gate used to be. So, his first task when the dust had settled was to help repair and rebuild his home's defenses. It had taken weeks to get things put together in a way that resembled the previous assembly. It would still be a few more weeks for the men of the village to finish, but they had assured Felix they could take care of it, and that they understood he had a greater job ahead of him to fulfill. With sadness in his heart, Felix had packed up his few belongings and borrowed a horse from Karul, the cooper that lived across the street. He had insisted on paying him for the horse, but Karul had refused saying his life was payment enough. Felix reluctantly agreed, but managed to sneak and hide a small bag of coppers behind the feed bag in the stable. Karul would find it after Felix was gone. He smiled as he thought about it.

On his way out of High Rock, he stopped at the top of the first hill and looked back at his little home town. From here he could see the little cottage he had grown up in. He had buried his uncle there, in the back yard of the cottage. He had stacked a large pile of stone, and wedged a banner for the Aldmeri Dominion down into the middle of it. His uncle had always loved the Aldmeri Dominion, and had been fiercely loyal to the Royal Family. Felix would respect his uncle's values and do what he could to make sure they lived on in him.

He took a deep breath and turned his horse towards the south. He had a long trek ahead of him, and a very important person to talk to when he got there. He would swear fealty to Queen Ayrenn, and he would use his powers the same way his fathers had before him. He would protect those that couldn't protect themselves. He would fight to make the Aldmeri Dominion a place his ancestors would be proud of.