

## Helgen

It was in moments like those that Aurelios Tybirios Zeranus really understood just how fragile life could be. General Tullius, had cornered the Stormcloak leader, Ulfric, inside the walls of Helgen, a small village that had been fortified in the southern region of Skyrim. His tactic had been a surprise assault just before dawn as the Stormcloaks prepared to execute imperial soldiers.

Aurelios was only eighteen, a native of Cyrodil, and a firm believer that the empire was a light in this dark world. A light that deserved to be preserved and fought for at all costs. That was how he'd ended up joining General Tullius's legion only a few short months back. That was why he was now present during this assault, in an attempt to restore peace to Skyrim and the empire.

As men and women fell from the walls of Helgen he could already see Ulfric, near the center of the village, rallying his troops and preparing a counter attack.

"We must hurry," the young infantryman realized.

Somewhere outside of Helgen he knew the Thalmor were watching. He was still unclear as to their role in all of this, but he guessed enough to mistrust them.

A Stormcloak soldier lunges towards him using a simple iron sword. Easily enough, Aurelios deflected it, but the force behind his opponents blade had been more than he'd expected. He lost his grip on his imperial sword and watched, horrified, as the blade crashed onto the floor below.

The nord's eyes widened with joy as he saw Aurelios's shock. The tall redheaded man prepared for a new strike as he raised the weapon over his head. Instinctively, Aurelios, ran forward and dove, driving his right shoulder into his enemies abdomen.

The crash caused the nord to lose his grip on his weapon and sent them both flying off the top of Helgen's walls. The ground was cold and humid as they crashed against it. Aurelios's mind was racing as he rolled desperately to his side and rose preparing to fend his opponents next attack, but the Stormcloak soldier was immobile.

His bright colored eyes stared up at the sky in lifeless awe. The crash had killed him. The iron sword he'd wielded hit the snow covered ground beside him, and the roaring of the soldiers returned Aurelios's attention to the battle.

He ran forward and took a hold of his previous opponents iron sword just in time to block the ax that had been swinging towards his head. The imperial light armor he wore would have done little to protect him against a strike such as that. Fortunately he'd managed to block, catching the hook of the ax on the lower part of his blade. Seeing that, Aurelios, heaved and felt the weapon rip free from the man's grasp.

With another quick spin Aurelios felt his enemy's head separate from his neck, and he charged the next Stormcloak that attempted to kill him.

Soon, the tide of the battle had turned in their favor. In less than a half hour the surprise attack had resulted in only a handful of Stormcloaks remaining just outside the central tower of Helgen. Their leader, Ulfric, was one of them.

Aurelios was one of the first men to charge forward. The battle ecstasy was upon him and he was convinced that he could end the rebellion with a swing of his sword. Ulfric lowered his weapon and stared down at the ground momentarily.

"He understands his doom!" Aurelios thought happily as he picked up a second iron sword from the ground, and continued his charge.

Suddenly the air cracked. There was a roar, like thunder crashing, and dozens of imperial troops to his right spontaneously flew back and into the air. Aurelios fell to his knees, dumbfounded, with a stinging ringing in his ears.

Somehow, Ulfric, had shouted and the power of his voice had managed to throw his enemies back like a blast of wind. Realization dawned on him then.

“The power he used to kill the High King!” it all made sense now.

Less than a half dozen Stormcloaks remained, the imperials would take Ulfric, but the rebellion leader would not go down without a fight. Again, he shouted and sent many more soldiers flying backwards.

Aurelios knew he had to do something. General Tullius was now directly within Ulfric’s line of sight. The Nordic leader inhaled again and prepared to shout the general away.

Feeling a surge of adrenaline, Aurelios, rushed forward again. He evaded the attacks of one Stormcloak soldier and used his dual blades to pierce the chest of another. The man’s armor caused the weapons to stick, and Aurelios decided to abandon them there. Ulfric was beginning his shout.

“Fus!” the man shouted.

Aurelios dove behind the man.

“Ro!”

He jumped to his feet with a large stone clutched tightly in his hand.

“D...”

Before Ulfric could finish Aurelios struck him in the back of the head and instantly rendered him unconscious. There was a moment of stunned silence that was quickly followed by thunderous cheers and shouts.

Aurelios still stood shocked at what he'd accomplished just as General Tullius walked towards him and patted him on the shoulder.

"Well done, soldier!" the general exclaimed.

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That same afternoon General Tullius had the few remaining Stormcloak soldiers tried and executed within the same central tower were they'd made their last stand. Aurelios had been eager to play a part in ending the rebellion, but he'd never imagined he would put an end to it himself.

"Once we reach Solitude I'll be sure to compensate your efforts, soldier," General Tullius had promised him.

"Serving the empire is compensation enough, Sir!" Aurelios had replied, and Tullius had simply chuckled at his response.

As the head of another rebel rolled across the floor Aurelios began to dream about his future in this strange new land. As a child he'd heard tales of Skyrim, but had never actually dreamed of visiting it. Now that he was here, gazing up at the snow covered peaks, he understood that there was something special about this place. Something worth defending.

“Ulfric Stormcloak, Jarl of Windhelm!” the officer shouted out loudly for all to hear.  
“Step up to the block.”

As the rebel leader, now gagged to prevent him from using his power, walked towards his doom Aurelios heard the low voice of one of his soldiers bidding him farewell.

“It has been an honor, Jarl Ulfric.”

The man did not beg. He did not show fear in the face of his execution. He walked straight with broad shoulders looking dignified. He was pushed to his knees and his neck was blocked across the chopping block.

“Good riddance,” General Tullius muttered as he watched the black executioners ax rising into the air.

Just then the light of the sun seemed to vanish and Aurelios heard a monstrous roar shake the earth just as he saw a pitch black beast land and perch itself atop the central tower. The creature roared and the sky seemed to split before its fury. The clouds swirled and the sunlight faded into twilight.

“Dragon!” the streaming voice of a woman exclaimed.

A ball of fire engulfed a nearby thatched roof and the powerful wings of the dragon buffeted the ground. Chaos ensued. Aurelios ran in fear trying to find a bow, or anything he could use to fend off the creature.

The imperial soldiers around him broke their formations and the majority of them ran in fear, while some, tried to protect the villagers of Helgen. In the madness Ulfric and his remaining supporters quickly ran away from their guards and headed directly towards the villages northern gate.

“Get below!” Someone was shouting. “Below!”

“General Tullius! Your horse!”

Aurelios watched as the man and his personal guards galloped out of Helgen’s southern gate where their Thalmor companions had already started to flee.

“He abandoned us?” Aurelios thought, shocked. “He really just…”

Another roar of the dragon returned his attention to the present situation and he realized he’d been standing in the middle of an open courtyard. As easy a target as there could be.

The dragons fire rained down like the fury of a god and all Aurelios could do was run. Flee and duck past the crumbling structures in search of a place to hide. The creature showed no regard for civilians or soldiers. Males or females. Even children could be found burned and charred as Aurelios ran without thinking.

He felt the hard stone of the Keep’s walls as he reached them. The gray stone would do little against the dragon’s fury.

“This way, soldier!” a voice cried out from beside him.

Aurelios turned and was surprised to see a Nord offering him his hand. Though, unlike the storm cloaks, this man was dressed in imperial armor. His hair was shoulder length, as was customary with Nords, but Aurelios recognized him as the man who had been noting the Stormcloaks identities for burial.

“Hadvar of Riverwood,” he recalled. He took the man’s offered hand and felt himself pulled inside the Keep just as the dragon made another fiery pass across Helgen.

Inside the Keep, the light of the torches looked dim and bleak when compared to the torrents of fire the dragon had rained down upon them.

“Come, soldier!” Hadvar shouted, trying to lift Aurelios to his feet. The walls won’t hold for long! We need to get further and into the subterranean levels!”

They ran across the room. It had been a barrack the Stormcloaks had been using. Aurelios grabbed two Iron swords from a stand on along the walls, and continued charging further into the keep.

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True to Hadvar’s word the walls of the keep began crumbling around them as they ran, but fortunately they’d run far enough underground that they were safe from any further structural damage.

They’d even found an abandoned torture chamber where Hadvar had found an iron shield, and Aurelios a strange book that read “Tale of the Dragonborn”.

He wasn’t sure why, but he’d decided to take the book with him, storing it in a pouch that had been hung along the chambers walls. Eventually all the cells and masonry gave way to moss covered cave walls where creeks poured out.

“This has to come out somewhere!” Aurelios stated happily.

“If we are where I think we are,” Hadvar added. “We Can make our way to my uncle’s place in Riverwood.

Aurelios nodded and, together, they continued down the damp caves.

They came across a large opening in the caves that was covered by shiny white fibers that coated nearly every inch of the room. It would have been interesting to look at, had it not been followed by the immediate attack that followed.

Four giant Frostbite spiders had dropped around them. Hadvar collapsed beneath one just as it crashed against his shield. Aurelios dove to his right and swung his blade at his attackers mandibles. The monster screeched just as a second spider shot it's venom in his direction.

Aurelios evaded the projectile and hurled one of his swords towards the creature. The blade struck the center of the spiders head and the insect collapsed like a heap of stone. Hadvar had managed to slay the spider that had initially attacked him, but the second had him pinned into a corner.

Aurelios ran forward, freed the blade he'd thrown, and used both weapons to stab down into the spiders head.

"Talos be praised," Hadvar panted. "I thought I was done for."

Aurelios smiled and withdrew his swords from the giant spider. Further inside the cave, they came upon a sleeping bear. A large powerful creature that would surely harm them if they came too close.

Just beyond him the shining light of day at the caves opening illuminated the world beyond. The snow covered peaks and trees of Skyrim.

"Think you can make that shot?" Hadvar asked him, holding a simple long bow with three arrows.

Aurelios nodded. "I'm a marksman as well as an infantryman." He took the weapon and crouched. Controlling his breath he aimed in the bear's direction and fired. True to



his marksman claims the arrow struck the creature between the eyes. The bear never so much as moved. It simply exhaled, as if passing in its sleep, and continued to lay motionless.

“Impressive,” Hadvar admitted.

Together they ran past the creature and back out into the cool air of the world beyond. As Aurelios thanked all the Divines that he’d survived he could not help but wonder at where the dragon had come from.

Off in the horizon he could see the gain shadow of the beast creating past a mountain and vanishing.

“I need to get back to the legion,” Aurelios thought to himself. “I need to find out what exactly is happening up here.”

To be continued....

**Bonus:** A look at what the actual character of Aurelios looks like in game!

