

“They always open their mouths a little wider and lock their jaws when they’re about to swing. And their nostrils flare just a little bit. Did you ever notice that?”

“What?”

“But it’s only the ones with the flat noses, none of the others ever flare their nostrils. It’s the weirdest thing.” He paused a moment. “I bet it’s because they forget to breathe, since they have to focus so much on the strike!”

“Why would they flare their nostrils if they’re forgetting to breathe? Wouldn’t they flare them because they’re trying harder to breathe?” Alric asked as he removed the cranequin from his crossbow and mounted it back on the turret.

“No no no, when they lock their jaw. It’s the best time to shoot them too, since it goes right through the mouth and they drop before they even finish lifting their arm.” Torrad said, pulling the trigger before he finished the last word of his sentence. “Nailed it!” He shouted, watching the bolt pierce the neck of the orc he had been aiming at, entering through its gaping mouth.

“Do you ever notice that when they’re about to swing, there are always thousands of other orcs swarming around them?” Alric asked sarcastically, glancing at Torrad for only a moment as Torrad began cranking his crossbow.

“Well, yeah. That’s because they’re trying to raid our castle. I thought that was obvious. What else would they be doing with that many orcs, trying to bake a cake? I don’t think so!”

“They could at least attack us during the daytime when I can actually see what I’m trying to shoot, instead of relying on torchlight.” Alric muttered, clearly ignoring Torrad, as he stared down the sights of his crossbow.

“I guess, but there are so many of them that, even if you don’t have great aim, as long as you point your crossbow vaguely toward the middle you’re bound to hit one.” Torrad explained, looking from his cranequin to Alric, just before Alric pulled his trigger.

“You’re probably right, I’m sure I was bound to hit one of them.” Alric said, frustrated, removing his crossbow from the turret and replacing the cranequin.

“Exactly! When there are hoards of them packed together like sardines, they’re basically asking to get shot from the ramparts.” Torrad said as he pulled the trigger again, seconds after placing his crossbow back on the turret. “Nailed it!”

“Jesus fucking christ, do you have to shout that every time you hit one?” Alric shouted and turned to face Torrad.

“No, of course not.” Torrad paused and stared blankly at Alric, “Just when I hit them in the mouth, or get them to drop mid-swing. But those two usually aren’t mutually exclusive.”