

Hearthfall: Ep. 2 | Rats In The Tower (Part II)

GENTRY

shocked Oh gods is.. is that...

ILYA

grim It's Thadd.

NARRATOR

Gentry's constitution fails him as he retches on the ground.

ILYA

Looks like Davos noticed he was being followed.

GENTRY

Ilya we have to go. He knows we're here!

ILYA

frustrated If he knew we were here, he would *be* here! That thing probably came back early to make Thadd talk.

GENTRY

panicked Look at him! That thing was carving his face off. Thadd was a rat, of course he talked!

ILYA

Look, Davos still doesn't know about us.

GENTRY

We don't *know* that! This was what that Wardmote was warning us about!

ILYA

And now *it's* dead. Davos probably sent back his horror puppet to make Thadd talk, and we killed the thing before it finished up with our *dear, departed* pal here.

NARRATOR

Ilya dips his head in mock reverence towards their hanging partner. The corpse does not seem to care.

ILYA

light hearted And now, that's one less split to worry about. Gold's split better two ways than three. Not as good as one way though, eh.

NARRATOR

Ilya laughs, slapping Gentry on the shoulder. A cold dread slithers along his spine.

GENTRY

Ilya, I-

ILYA

Ah come off it, I'd never do that to ya. Thadd might've! ***laugh* *lower, dangerous*** But I wouldn't.

NARRATOR

Gentry's mind races. His eyes dart from Ilya to the grand tower doors.

ILYA

low, dangerous That would be quite the treasure trove, keeping that box for hisself.

GENTRY

Ilya...

NARRATOR

Ilya stalks towards Gentry, one arm hanging uselessly at his side, the other conspicuously behind his back. The muscles around the wooden shard in Gentry's thigh pulse angrily, the fabric saturated with blood. Gentry would easily be caught in a pursuit.

GENTRY

pleading Ilya, don't do thi-

ILYA

You should go.

GENTRY

... what?

ILYA

casually, friendly mocking You take your cowardly ass out of here. I'll keep looking. I'll keep all the gold, you get to run away. No hard feelings!

NARRATOR

Ilya limply offers his mangled arm to Gentry. Gentry's leg continues to throb - he needs healing. A glint flashes in Ilya's eyes, his left hand still tucked behind his back. His muscles flexed, ready. Waiting. Gentry slowly steps back, understanding that he is not going anywhere.

GENTRY

resigned No... you're right. We should keep looking.

ILYA

Oh, you sure?

GENTRY

I'm sure.

ILYA

Excellent. After you, my friend. See those stairs over there? That's next. Down we go.

Dungeon

NARRATOR

Any bonds between the two thieves have all but waned. They descend the short staircase, Gentry's face wracked with pain at each passing step, blood dripping from the wound. Ilya walks patiently behind as Gentry silently opens the door. There is no reason for feigned arguments. The most honest conversations happen between a killer and their prey.

ILYA

You check it out. I'll keep watch.

GENTRY

Why?

ILYA

You're the one worried about ol' Dav-y coming back early. Don't want to get snuck up on again. Get in there. Take your time.

NARRATOR

Gentry stares at Ilya, who returns only a smirk. It seems Gentry is out of options. As he shuffles through the doorway into the dark, Ilya trips him, shoving on his back as he falls.

ILYA

Ah my mistake there lad! Up you go.

NARRATOR

Ilya pulls Gentry to his feet, shoving him onward. A chilling realization settles on the thief.

GENTRY

whispers He's going to lock me in here.

NARRATOR

He looks back expectantly at the door, yet it remains open. Ilya stands, reclining against the wall, eyes fixated on Gentry against the dark backdrop of the chamber.

GENTRY

slow realization No... no, he won't lock me in here. Not if he thinks I have... He can't risk losing it. What if he can't open the door again? Then what... He's waiting. Waiting for me to bleed to death.

NARRATOR

Gentry pulls out the moonstone Ilya gave him. The moonstone casts a soft blue glow on his drenched trousers. An outline of a shape pulls Gentry's attention towards the wall to his left.

GENTRY

What is... oh, gods.

NARRATOR

Gentry holds the stone aloft, shining the light on a row of corpses that line the wall.

ILYA

What is it?

GENTRY

Bodies. They're... they're like Thadd was. All cut up. But these... they all have bags over their heads.

ILYA

Huh. Maybe the box is hiding in one of those bags.

GENTRY

You can't be serious.

ILYA

Can't be sloppy now! Gotta check every inch. Might as well start pulling them off.

GENTRY

anger rising I'm not pulling shit off! Ilya we can still get out of here! We'll come back, we can still do this together!

NARRATOR

Ilya does not answer the liar.

GENTRY

mutters I won't die like this. Not bleeding out in a cell while that bastard watches. If he wants me dead, he'll-

NARRATOR

Gentry reaches behind his back to pull his dagger but grasps only cloth. His chest tightens as he looks at Ilya, who now casually balances Gentry's dagger on an outstretched palm.

ILYA

You're a clumsy guy, you know that. Always dropping things when you trip.

GENTRY

Fuck you.

NARRATOR

Ilya sprints into the room, slamming his shoulder into Gentry's chest. The two fall to the floor, Ilya scrambling on top of his accomplice. One of Gentry's arms lies pinned between his back and the ground - Ilya holds the other with his one good hand.

ILYA

angry, betrayed I know you have it. I saw you. Show it to me!

GENTRY

I don't-

NARRATOR

Ilya slams his head into Gentry's face with a sickening crunch.

GENTRY

cry of pain

ILYA

I saw you in Davos' workshop. Saw you grab it instead of helpin' while that beast was snapping me in two. Show. It. To. Me.

GENTRY

I'm not! I-

NARRATOR

Ilya jams his knee into the shard of wood in Gentry's knee.

GENTRY

screams

ILYA

Show me. Show me! Show me, you son of a bi-

NARRATOR

The sound of large doors scraping across stone interrupts Gentry's pantomime of innocence. Ilya's head snaps towards the stairs. Gentry scans the room, but there is nowhere to hide.

GENTRY

Oh no, Ilya...

ILYA

breathing fast from fight Shut up. ***gets breathing under control*** That could be Davos... and that changes things. Now look at me. We're out of time, and like it or not we need each other. But if we leave here without that box, Corvo will slaughter both of us. Look at me! Do. You. Have. The. Box. ***intense*** And don't you fucking lie to me.

NARRATOR

Gentry stares at Ilya's hard visage, before silently pulling the metal box out of his boot. Ilya snaps it out of Gentry's fingers.

ILYA

low Fuckin' knew it. ***regular*** Let's go. C'mon, we gotta get up those stairs and outta here.

GENTRY

Wait, you're not... I mean, I thought that, that you were going-

ILYA

What? Kill you? Thought about it. Could've killed you long before we got down here. But right now, we need each other to get out. Corvo said we can kill Davos if we need to. And neither of us are fit to take him down alone.

GENTRY

Kill Davos?! How, exactly?

ILYA

Stab him in the back. You're good at that.

NARRATOR

Ilya stands up and tosses Gentry's dagger onto the floor beside him.

ILYA

I'll check the stairs. Can you walk?

GENTRY

grunts Despite all of that, yeah.

ILYA

Good. -pause- Stairs are clear, let's go. Wait at the top of the landing. If it is him, hopefully he's distracted by the workshop. ***urgent*** Stop, stop! I hear footsteps... yeah, it sounds like they are going for the workshop. Okay, the front doors are unlocked, right?

GENTRY

Yeah, I think so.

ILYA

You fuckin' think so?

GENTRY

No, I mean, yeah, they're unlocked.

ILYA

Alright, we run for it. Both my legs work, so I'll go first and try the doors. If he comes out, I'll distract him while you circle around behind.

GENTRY

Are you insane? I'm not sneaking up on Davos. He'll catch me. We should head back out through the grotto.

ILYA

The study is too close to his workshop. Too risky. We go through the front.

GENTRY

I don't know-

ILYA

impatient Do you have a better plan? We're out of fucking time! And don't you fucking think of leaving me. I have the box. You leave without it, Corvo will gut you and we're both dead. You hear?

GENTRY

Yeah... I hear.

ILYA

Good. If we get separated, meet at the Thirsty Goat.

GENTRY

meek defense, like a child Ilya, the box, I, I was going to tell you. I just...

NARRATOR

Ilya makes no indication that he hears Gentry's pathetic attempts of self absolution. Silently, he holds up three fingers. Two fingers. One.

ILYA

Go.

Grand Tower Hall

NARRATOR

Gentry watches as Ilya sprints towards the large tower doors, Thadd's dead eyes staring sightlessly after him. He yanks on one of the handles, falling backwards as his grip slips from the golden metal. He scrambles to his feet, throwing his weight against the immovable wardens that stand between him and freedom.

Ilya turns, and Gentry shrinks even deeper into the shadows of the stairwell. Panic steeps in the air. Ilya frantically scans the room, his breath coming in desperate heaves - until his gaze freezes on a figure emerging from the open workshop door.

DAVOS

bemused My, my, my. You made quite the mess in there. I was so curious to learn why our friend here had been following me for so very long.

NARRATOR

Davos walks calmly to the center of the room, nodding sympathetically to the corpse of Thadd. Ilya acts, hurling his dagger directly at the approaching mage. It halts, suspended in air mere inches from Davos's eye, before falling harmlessly to the floor. He seems to have barely even noticed.

DAVOS

You can imagine my surprise on returning home. Still without answers, and now I come to find my dear pet

naught but a pile of ichor and teeth. Those aren't easy to make, you know.

ILYA

stalling for time Aye, ah... sorry about that, Davos. Truth be told, I think your... pet, did finish up with ol' Thadd here. Maybe on the next one you add in a few more arms with the faces. So he can write it down for ya.

NARRATOR

Ilya keeps his eyes locked on Davos. Gentry's mind screams at his legs, urging them to move. Yet he remains cowering by the stairs, more mouse than man.

DAVOS

Ahh, I see. So you two were acquainted, then.

NARRATOR

An invisible force pins Ilya's arms to his sides, lifting him into the air. His feet dangle above the ground as he slowly floats towards the tower's master.

DAVOS

mock empathy That is good. I would have hated for our encounter to have been merely an unlucky coincidence. I wasn't due back until tomorrow, but I suspect you knew this. I do apologize, though. I did have other plans for your friend, such a shame for him to pass on in this way.

ILYA

Nah, he was a right bastard. Seems appropriate.

NARRATOR

Gentry legs finally start to move, agonizingly slow, as if he were trudging through quicksand. He inches closer, prowling along the wall of the tower.

DAVOS

curious Indeed? I see that you did not escape unscathed either. I must admit, my curiosity remains... unsated. So...

NARRATOR

Ilya's remaining good arm floats up, locked in place despite his every muscle straining to reclaim control.

DAVOS

dark Who sent you?

NARRATOR

Ilya's arm snaps, flopping back down to his side where it hangs at an unnatural angle. Gentry freezes, eyes flashing between Davos, Ilya, and the open study door.

ILYA

screams Oh you fucker, you fucker!

DAVOS

mock defense, bemusement Now, now. You've come into my home. Uninvited. I'm frightened, after all! But allow me to help you answer. You are no simple-minded burglar. No, your friend here did offer up some information before I turned him over to my pet. He told me that you are under someone's employ. Unfortunately, whom that may be I still could not say.

NARRATOR

Gentry regains power over his legs, stalking slowly towards Davos. He is nearly behind him. Ilya's leg falls victim next, snapping grotesquely to the side.

ILYA

screams Okay! Okay, you fucker. Just stop! Stop!

NARRATOR

Davos smirks, bringing Ilya even closer to him. Gentry crouches only a few feet behind Davos, eyes locked in horror on Ilya's broken limbs.

DAVOS

Tell me, *rat*.

ILYA

Okay, okay, please. Just, no more.

DAVOS

Speak!

ILYA

It... It was Lynn... she just really, really misses you.

NARRATOR

Davos' eyes flash dangerously. Ilya's other leg snaps at the knee, his foot kicking his own stomach.

ILYA

screaming

DAVOS

genuine curiosity I wonder, how did you get in here? Through the grotto, of course. A necessary vulnerability I'm afraid I must keep. But you... ***long inhale through nose*** no, I sense there is not an ounce of the true blood in you. The Waystone would not serve you. They can be... temperamental. So how did you get out of my study? Unless...

NARRATOR

A small orb of silver light rises in front of Gentry, pausing for but a moment before floating through the open door of the study. Gentry's eyes follow it. He hesitates, only briefly, before slowly backing away towards the study. Ilya's eyes widen with despair.

DAVOS

Ahh... I see. You are not alone in here.

NARRATOR

Gentry abandons his once-partner to the clutches of the deranged sorcerer. He turns, hobbling as fast as he can toward escape as Ilya's eyes snap to the side, causing Davos to look over his shoulder.

ILYA

visceral betrayal, yelling Gentry you fucking coward!

NARRATOR

Davos hurls Ilya backwards, his body slamming into the tower doors with a crunch. He collapses in a crumpled heap, a single, low death rattle escaping his lips.

DAVOS

disappointed Such a waste. As for you...

NARRATOR

Davos walks towards the study. Gentry is barely over the threshold - his head spins from blood loss, every step searing agony as his muscles coil around the wood in his thigh. His feet lift off the ground, his body encased in the same invisible force that held Ilya, slowly floating away from his only chance at salvation.

DAVOS

Another rat.

GENTRY

hysterical No, no, no. No, no, nonononono!

DAVOS

Ahh yes... ***long nose inhale*** you are the one that has stolen my Waystone. There so few of your kind these days. Most have the wherewithal to not come traipsing about my home unbidden.

GENTRY

whimpering Please, don't hurt me.

DAVOS

I believe you have something that belongs to me.

NARRATOR

Gentry thrusts his hand into his pocket, pulling out the stone and offering a shaking, open hand to Davos. Unlike with Ilya, the stone radiates with warmth at being offered to its master. Davos grabs it delicately, tutting with disappointment at the stone.

DAVOS

mock disappointed Letting strangers into our home... ***sigh***. Turning a Stonemote into a Waystone does nothing to diminish their... personality, I fear. But these are matters we need not burden your mind with, little rat.

NARRATOR

Gentry's limbs rise to the sides, stretching away from his torso. His joints flare as his limbs are slowly pulled away from his body, his skin threatening to rip.

GENTRY

hysterical No, no please! I don't have it! Ilya has it! He has the box!

NARRATOR

Gentry's quartering pauses, although there is no respite for his limbs.

DAVOS

slowly What box?

GENTRY

The coffer. The Aldaz Coffer! He has it.

NARRATOR

Gentry flies forward until he floats directly in front of Davos. His limbs continue to scream in desperation.

DAVOS

Who sent you?

GENTRY

Corvo! It was Corvo. That's all I know, I swear!

NARRATOR

Confusion flashes across Davos's face, but it is quickly replaced by amusement.

DAVOS

amused My, how quickly you rats will sacrifice your plague to save yourselves.

NARRATOR

Davos turns from Gentry, approaching Ilya's broken body adorning his entryway. Gentry falls to the ground, welcoming the stones' cold embrace.

GENTRY

confusion What... You're, you're letting me go?

DAVOS

matter of fact It is no matter. You are already a dead man.

NARRATOR

Gentry stares disbelievingly at Davos before dragging himself into the study. He crawls through the trap door, descending the ladder without sparing even one last glance for the man he betrayed so readily. Davos kneels by Ilya's corpse, stroking his blood-matted hair.

DAVOS

affectionate Ah. Do not worry. I will return you to your slumber, but I have need of you now. A wounded rat will always make its way back to its nest. And we will find it... together.

NARRATOR

Davos tenderly picks up the small black and gold box that has fallen out of Ilya's outturned pocket.

DAVOS

Ah... Corvo.
