

# The story of Grimwald

## *chapter 2*

The Great Crafter shaped my thoughts, but I failed to recognize his craft. After the elf killed the orc I was thinking how they could be just a valley away without us knowing it... and they were! What I fool I am and my unworthiness has been reprimanded sorely. I know all knowledge lies in Dumathoin's realm, but I did not see the gold he had hidden amongst the stones of my baser thoughts.

After we killed the orc and looted his body I tried to make Felina some use in a fight. She seems to have some elven blood so I thought she would take to bows as a mole takes to dirt. Her aim is quite good but she is just too weak to pull and hold the bow steady. I am happy now my grandfather made me carry barrows of coal and ore during my youth, he was wise, unfortunately Felina had no such wisdom to bless her youth. Luckily the rest has found the wisdom to see the importance of strength and have set themselves to educating Felina. I had hoped the elf would be able to adjust the bow to Felina, but apparently the orcish craft is too crude for elves to work with. I guess it will just have to do until I can make her a good light crossbow or the elf can cut her a good bow.

After stripping the orc we went looking for a good defensive position so we would be prepared for the patrol which will come looking for the orc we killed. The position I judged most wise was apparently overrun a few weeks ago by forces who had a mage capable of casting evocation spells of the fifth circle of magic. Few defenses can stand up to such power. I found an amulet dedicated to one of the goddesses of the humans, according to Felina she is called Sune. Apparently Sune is devoted to fertility and jewelry craftsmanship so it probably was owned by a merchant, farmer or jeweler from one of the caravans. Good workmanship and probably worth quite a bit to a believer. Reminds me of some similar pieces I crafted in Waterdeep. No other traces remained, not even gnawed bones, so the person behind these attacks is no petty orc warlord. Where are the bodies? Slaves, undead or destroyed? When they have such power, why hide the tracks so well? Perhaps these orcs and goblins are merely guard dogs for the true master of this domain, but who or what can it be? I just hope there isn't a dragon around these parts. A great secret has been set before us to uncover, but like a mountain it guards and hides its secrets well and ferociously. Praise the blessing of Dumathoin for rewarding my insight and diligent searching with such valuable clues. I do think I was the only one who knows how to search properly. The rest seem to be wandering around following their hunches or intuition rather than working hard and methodically.

Since the position just below the ridge line was a known site and because I think the elf was afraid for restless souls we found a new camping ground. The elf found us a spot in the middle of a thorny thicket. Not as good as a stone tower of course, but given the circumstances the elf did well. It is also good to learn more of the elven ways, perhaps it will give me insight into the ways of the foul drow. I was repeating and pondering the litany of the topaz when I heard a small group of goblins scouting around. I remember the sound of their skittering about from my nightmares. I used to dream of a small group of them chasing me through the corridors of the clan hold, this sounds just like them. But I will not be stopped by fear. I craved the secret of the location and composition of their camp so I quietly snuck out of the thicket to follow them. **BUT THOSE BLASTED THORNS MUST HAVE UNHOOKED A STRAP OF MY PACK!!!!** Just when I got up all my tools fell out and the goblins were over the hills and far away before I could finish silently swearing over the hammer which fell on my toes. I knew I hated the outdoors, now I remember why! There are no thorny bushes in cities, the ground is nice and even. No twigs snapping every time you take a step. No branches flying in your face

when you walk behind someone. I thought I had been cautious enough planning every move before making it, but I was not careful enough. Nature bah, elves can have all of it see if I care! Nicely plowed fields and rows of fruit trees in orchards have some usefulness, but this mess...bah! I packed everything neatly in my pack, but it must have shifted when I was dodging the thorny branches. I should have moved more carefully and checked my pack before getting up. Damn my carelessness. My grandfather must have told me ten thousand times to check everything before proceeding!

I knew the patrol would go back to camp to warn them. At least now we would know in which direction their camp lies, but I had not imagined they would already be back when we had finished breaking camp. They truly were in the next valley as my thoughts shaped by Dumathoin had spoke to me! Curse my foolishness in not having recognized the greater craftsmanship of these thoughts. It must have been because of my foolishness Dumathoin decided to make their location known in this way any idiot could read. Our attempts at sneaking away in the darkness to maintain the initiative failed because of the noisy nature obstructing our movements. Luckily my grandfather's stories served me well and I remembered a ruse the great hero Morgrim Iron First had used once. Like him we stayed still and I started hurling stones with my sling to mimick our movement in another direction so we could either sneak away before they came upon us or charge them from the rear if our strength would prove sufficient. At first they fell for it. Truly dwarven craft and knowledge will best the greenskins time and again. As I had to throw stones further I put more strength in my spins and I forgot the whizzing sound otherwise so quiet slings can make when spun so rapidly thus giving away the secret of our true location. What shame I failed in guarding it's secret! The second time I was too hasty and thoughtless in the same evening! I shame my clan and my grandfather.

I must confess I thought our lives were lost. Such a small, ill equipped group as ours could not prevail against their numbers. They could move with greater speed in the darkness over ground known to them than we could find our way. Our only chance lay in breaking their morale, greenskins are cowardly and when their most mighty would be killed or flee the rest would not stay and fight, fear would do what our weapons could not. This strategy has saved many a dwarf, but would it save us? I place my faith in Cuura and the elf since this is their craft. As I had expected Cuura deployed us as light skirmishers while we fired a barrage of missiles at the approaching enemy commander. The goblins in the front either used a ruse to draw Cuura forth to box her in or played dead in fear of her wrath as she charged what can only be an Ettin commanding the war band. We were quickly surrounded by a multitude of orcs and goblins before we could rush in to fight the Ettin. We failed to capitalize on Cuura's strategy, but in hindsight I must say that against light infantry a light infantry approach with lesser number is hardly ever succesfull. We should have advanced using a heavy infantry block approach according to traditional dwarven lore. As soon as I am able we should outfit our group with shields and pole arms. I knew there were goblins and orcs, why had I not insisted on retreating, reequipping and practicing shield wall and polearm manouvers? Come to think of it why hadn't Cuura or the elf? War is their craft. I had barely the time to pray for Dumathoin's blessing before I was beset by the enemy wounding me heavily. Damn those foul thieves in Waterdeep, otherwise I would have had the means to wear a more solid armor, which could have turned away their unskilled blows. I staggered back swinging my axe to hold them at bay and hoping one of the bold one's would fall beneath it. I tried to make my way to the elf which hung from the tree pierced by javelins but the orcs blows felled me.

When I awoke it was not from Dumathoin's sleep in Moradin's great forge to have my soul melted down and recast, but still in my original body. From the tingly taste in my mouth I gather that Reed must have had a healing potion. She was already reaching up to the elf whose body was barely twitching. I hurried to lift her so she could administer to the elf. I found that I could not have aided the elf even if I had reached the tree since she was suspended too high by a rope. Luckily Reed weighs next

to nothing and even in my weakened state I could lift her easily due to the steel my grandfather trained into my arms. What great foresight he has. I waited breathlessly to see if the potion would have any effect on the elf or if we were too late. The elf gurgled and sputtered so I turned to see to it that my other companions would not die due to my lack of action. Dumathoin's blessing must have guided my companions to victory against all odds, may they be the instrument of His vengeance on greenskins for many more battles.

I noted that my grandfather's axe and tools as well as my hammer had been taken by the greenskins, but first things first I had to take care of the members of my group. Apparently my humble acceptance of this punishment and shame and my devotion to duty and the group pleased the Silent Keeper. He guided Reed to bring down the orc carrying my grandfather's axe and tools and so restored them to me. Dumathoin's chosen weapon, the hammer, was not among the remains of the orcs. Clearly I must redeem myself before I am worthy again to wield this sign of His strength and craft. From the body of the Ettin it is clear that my companions managed to complete my strategy and it worked despite our initial tactical failure and losing the initiative, but I wonder how they managed to win...