

# The story of Grimwald

## *chapter 3*

In the year since I left Neverwinter every evening I prayed Dumathoin to sustain me, guide me and protect me and never has any bodily harm befallen me until this night. This night I prayed Dumathoin to aid us in finding our hidden enemy but not to shield me from harm. Foolishly I believed the power of seeing what is hidden, one of the blessings of the Silent Keeper, would grant us the advantage, but the gem I sought was shown to us by Dumathoin using me, one of his Dwarves as a tool. I am honored he heard my prayers and chose to use me as a tool to fulfill my own prayer, but this also shows how foolish and lazy I was in asking him to do what I could do myself and more over how foolish I am in choosing not to pray for his protection. I put faith in being surrounded by my companions; my companions, brave and well meaning, are scattered as mica before the pick, unable to protect the precious gem while my prayers have safeguarded me for a year and have kept the gem hidden, now I know where true power lies and not to pray foolishly for that which I should not reach for.

We are driven to hide from the greenskins as generations of shield Dwarves have been forced to do over millenia of death and war. The plight of my people weighs heavily upon me as I, for the second time in my life, have been driven away by the greenskins. Cuura as a brave warrior and leader has decided to put herself at risk to ensure the safety of her people, behavior befitting a dwarf! It is clear what we have to do now. The hidden have only survived by being just that. We should remove ourselves from harms way and build our strength.

The rest of the group have learned the hard way that battle formations are a great boon. I wish we had someone better schooled than I in the art of war to instruct and guide us in this. I shall have to try harder to uncover the secrets of war so my group will survive. The elf states he is most effective with a bow, figures, while Reed and Felina are obviously too frail to stand in harm's way without decent armor, but still too weak to wear such armor. Well I guess it is not their fault they were crafted so poorly.

Felina claims to be a magic user and I have heard most non-Dwarven magic users have problems in *performing* magic while in armor. What good will your magic do you if any two-bit goblin can carve you up? Felina has finally taken an interest in ranged weaponry (I knew there was elf in there somewhere) but has some weird idea of firing bolts without a crossbow. I really need to get her a crossbow soon before she goes all the way mad from the magic! The elf's idea of him and Felina up a tree with Reed, Jay and me guarding it's base seems a good one. Me and Jay can protect Reed, but not three people against a multitude of Orcs and Goblins.

In the militia I never trained as a front line soldier since I would be unable to aid my fallen comrades in so exposed a position. I guess I will have to lay my grandfather's axe to rest and take up a shield until I can forge a decent heavy front line armor for myself or until more warriors join our ranks. One day I may be able to forge an armor like my grandfather wore, an interlocking plate mail, but I guess I should practice making something simple first as well as crafting a lighter axe to use in tandem with my shield. Since Jay still has problems with the idea of holding his position in the ranks and is more mobile I guess he should be placed on the left flank while I take the center. The very idea still seems weird to me as a specialist to be in the front line. I guess we will have to break the enemy morale with missile fire before they hit our lines.

With the spoils of battle burdening us and in our wounded state we need to reach a place of safety soon to restore us to fighting trim before we engage the enemy again. Luckily the elf is adept at guiding and hiding in the surface world so we may avoid battle almost as well as if we had retreated into the underdark. Felina turns out to have some use after all, she can work leather to adjust armor and make slings for me and Jay. She also knows magic and has offered to use it on me to allow me to dodge blows and move faster. My grandfather warned me that magic has toppled many an empire and caused more harm than good,

Since the Thunder Blessing though, Moradin has forged Dwarves with magical powers. Are these powers indeed needed to strengthen the clans and restore the empires of old as must be Moradin's wish? Even Reed who is clearly blessed by the hidden keeper seems drawn to the power of magic. We shall see what will come of this magic in our group, it's power cannot be denied, but neither can it's dangers and drawbacks. Will Reed be guided by the Silent Keeper to use magic the Dwarven way by crafting runes? Obviously the weird ways she was led on so far doesn't seem to work.

The town we reached as a haven luckily has a smithy and some iron. The smell of glowing coal and red hot metal is an ointment to my tortured soul, but the elf has decided there is no time to properly equip and prepare the party. They did not have the necessary materials to properly harden the iron anyway, but this lack of wise preparation has almost destroyed us once and now we are thrown ill prepared in harms way again by the elf. He is right in that we should make sure Cuura is safe, but when we reach a city with a well equipped Dwarven smithy we really should see to our equipment.

Perhaps I should make myself a waraxe and warhammer soon so I can benefit from the shield I made with the villagers until I can forge decent armor. Me a smith with a wooden shield MADE BY PEASANTS! I am just glad my grandfather cannot see me now. I just hope it won't come apart on me in battle. At least we got some basic supplies again and I am holding a hammer (of sorts) again, finally a warm cloak, fresh food and some fresh bandages in case I need to tend to wounded again as well as some time to pray to Dumathoin to reveal our hidden strength. I am happy Felina has found some use in working leather, when we get back to Berdusk I should ask her to make me an explorer's outfit like the one I saw in Waterdeep which is better suited to adventuring than my artisan's clothes are.

Having quickly cast some sling bullets for Jay and myself I started forging bolts for Reed. I hope the tumbling bolts I've seen my grandfather make work well. They worked well enough with my grandfather's heavy crossbow, but it remains to be seen if this lighter crossbow can deal with a heavier bolt as well. I don't think the smith saw such hollowed and grooved bolts before. Perhaps their design is unknown here and much gold can be earned by crafting them, they almost always drop an Orc in one shot according to my grandfather so they should become popular in these parts. If they work well I shall see if I can outfit the whole group with light crossbows and normal and tumbling bolts, finally some uniformity in our unit! With some weeks time and a good place to work I could even craft some sniper crossbows, now that is a challenge I look forward to. I wonder if the group are any good in assisting in the forge...

The elf says it is time to leave again. Unfortunately the townspeople have no knowledge of what happened to the caravans so we are no closer to solving the riddle besides knowing that the javelins they used are human made so we will have to seek to uncover the secret of the disappearing caravans by looking for more clues. I wonder what happened up in this Darkhold keep they spoke of. Well that shall be a new secret to uncover sometime.

Because my pouch with my ritual supplies was taken I now find myself unable to complete various

ritual parts of prayers. My grandfather told me the souls of all things have been named by Moradin as he crafted them from out of Dumathoin's realm. These runic names should hold the power and essence of the soul of the created objects and creatures. Perhaps if I can inscribe these high Dwarven runes in the body of Dumathoin their power will transform it and the earth will become the object as was done by the soul forger or mayhap the soul of the object or creature will come to rest in Dumathoin's realm.

This must be a test set before me to see if I can uncover the secrets of the earth and creation. I shall set to work at once with that stone over there while the rest is doing their exercises.... That elf just took my stone! At first I thought he was just being intentionally rude because I mentioned cutting down his tree a few days ago. Taking a stone from a dwarf while he is working on it! Now really! Heads have rolled for less! He does not understand how important it is to perfect my craft and how great a secret I seek! He does have some point though in that unlike a city the sound of honest work stands out amongst the sounds of nature.

Unfortunately I have no engraving tools and my stone working chisels make too much noise. Well that is another thing I will add to my list of items to be made when we get back. We Dwarves persevere however but drawing in the sand just is not the same as working with rock. Besides if I do manage to perfect the rune how can I take it with me? Bah sand, almost as bad as the trash that is no longer part of the earth, like the failed creations Moradin threw out onto the surface world, like trees and such, before he crafted his people. Here I am now with a wooden shield drawing in the dirt. I am so relieved there is no other dwarf around to witness this low point of my life. But I must persevere even Moradin did not manage to craft Dwarves on his first attempt, sometimes I do wish he had been more careful disposing of his mistakes though.... elves, humans. What was he thinking? It is a good thing the Silent Keeper only grants ores and gems to the worthy to craft. I just can't wait to delve deeper into these secrets!

The uncomfortable messiness of the surface world keeps on astounding me. It is a good thing I tested each rock before stepping on it or else I might have fared as Reed, almost drowning slipping on wet rocks besides a small river. If the elf would not object to the noise and worry about time I could have carved some fine steps past this dangerous place in a few months and everybody would be safe for centuries. But the world is too big for a lone dwarf to restore order so I will humbly accept the inconvenience I guess. For some weird reason though it seems the elf and Felina actually enjoy it. Climbing up slopes and hiding in bushes with spirited joy just as if they would be working away at some worthy craft. They are weird. I think that because they are exposed to this chaos all the time they no longer appreciate the dangers it holds. I should help them be more cautious next time. I thought that just because they are used to it they would be more skilled than me, now after they let Reed almost drown I see they are just more foolish!

According to the elves there is a hidden underground hideout ahead. Finally some normal surroundings. Most hallways are two persons wide, with Cuura and Jay in front I am lacking a polearm to support them. Well I will make a Dwarven warpike when we get to the city. It seems we are hampered at every turn by lack of preparation and proper equipment. These expeditions into the wilderness take a lot more planning than I had prepared for. I wonder if any of the humans or elves thought of bringing a lantern or torch? Hah then it will be my turn to tell them that the light is unnatural and giving away our position or have them stumbling about in darkness. But I should not rejoice, I should pity them that they are not fit to live in Dumathoin's realm. Perhaps I can pray to the hidden keeper tonight so he will look upon their efforts kindly and guide us. They are my group now.