

# The story of Grimwald

## ***Chapter 24: Ogre Management***

We rush into the dark forest and Felina and Kendalan split off to set a false trail with Jay's blanket. I hope Jay smells like good troll bait. If the brute overtakes us we are done for.

Cuura rushes us onwards on a bumpy ride through the underbrush, but as the trees grow larger the underbrush becomes sparser and we make better speed in the starless gloom. Just when I start to feel comfortably hemmed in beneath the heavy branches blocking out the too vast sky I hear a whisper in the air and suddenly a dozen arrows land around us in a circle. Cuura immediately reins in the horses. I curse the foolishness to have both the Elf and Felina gone when the wood elves are about to butcher us for trespassing into their domains.

Much to my surprise Snake steps forward and in a manner even I find unoffensive starts approaching an elf. Probably he is arranging to betray us and pledge his loyalty to them, just like he did with the Zhentarim. I prepare for the onslaught of arrows and resign my soul to the halls of the ancestors. But our end is delayed as the elf retreats to consider whatever Snake dripped into his pointy ear. Meanwhile I try to spot the elves, but whenever I think I spotted one I become assured moments later that it must be just a branch or trunk, when I look back though the landscape seems different from the way I remembered it.

The elf returns and beckons Snake to step forward again and they seem to reach an agreement. Then just before his betrayal can take place Reed returns with an elf who is treated with reverence by our captor. There is a short discussion and Felina and Kendalan are also escorted back to our wagon by grim looking elves. The elves look like hunting dogs unwilling to relinquish their prey. Apparently they even hunt their own kind, truly a feral people these wood elves.

Snake's treachery gave Reed just enough time to save us all through divine providence. The elves will shield us from our pursuers in exchange for forcing a band of ogres to take up their nomadic lifestyle again. It becomes clear that ogres and trolls are the unwitting guards the wood elves manipulate to patrol their forest. I start to wonder how many attacks on dwarf holds have been orchestrated by cowardly, sneaky elves over the ages and if we will ever know...

We are escorted through the forest and I perform rituals and prayers which restore even the most severely wounded through the powers hidden in the earth. Bless the craft of the Hidden Keeper in restoring those crafted from his realm.

The ogres have perched on a low hill and erected a wall, of sorts, from boulders and trees. Kendalan spots ten ogres and several goblins rushing about on chores. Snake and Felina decide to take a closer look and come back reporting a cave entrance with a goblin breeding lair. Apparently the ogres are breeding an army. There is also food being brought up from the cave. Cattle would normally need to graze outside. Who is feeding them and why? Kendalan finds a track leading north, who or what lies in the north in connection to this cave?