

# The story of Grimwald

## *Chapter 29: Expected Surprise*

Apparently our group has managed to get themselves into trouble... again. Even in this quiet little mining town. Amazing how they manage to get in trouble every time I turn my back. Perhaps there is some curse, doom or even "karma" haunting us. Apparently Cuura went looking for that human goddess of corruption called Sune and found an even worse one. From what I gather they were lucky to get out alive, although they were wounded and poisoned. The wounds were easily dealt with, but it took me some time to purchase and brew the herbs to combat the poison in Felina. The fate of our group reminds me of dwarven history. How great clans manage to win endless victories against incredible odds time and again, but in the end succumb alone and cornered. What a glorious path we are blessed with, but in these strange days since the thunder blessing the end may even be different.

Snake sneaks in with some 'leather' armor he found. Then he wants me to convince Dumathoin to enhance it. I search hard for reasons that I shouldn't, but don't manage to find anything other than a taint. Reeds seems to think he should not be convicted because his taint has not manifested yet. I have read his doom, so in the end it matter little since his doom is certain and overpowering. Dumathoin shows that helping him now will strengthen our group, which will allow us to persevere a little longer against the dark tide. So I accept and perform the ritual with him.

At least Cuura is now reconsidering her choice of deity. Now if I can get some common sense into Jay perhaps he will manage to survive long enough to perfect his craft. His master managed so it is possible for humans to become old enough to become decent fighters. Jay has the strangest ideas about using mobility. I guess some of it will probably hold true in some cases, but in a cramped corridor with your back to the wall and a sea of greenskins in front there is nothing like a good shield and armor. I try to get him to understand the spaced armor doctrine of the great loremaster Thurim Ironbeard: blindsiding, avoidance, deflection, shielding, parrying, armoring, toughening, strengthening and supporting and he seems to get it. According to the Ironbeard chant one who masters all arts of defense can stand alone against an army, which is something Jay seems to crave. Jay will not live long enough to master all disciplines as our great kings of old did, but perhaps together we can get close enough to let him create his masterwork.

I show him that he, even though his craft is war and mine is not, is no match for me in the most important attribute of a great warrior, his strength. Dumathoin can let me find greater strength than these gauntlets can so clearly he needs both these gauntlets and more devotion to hard work and heavy loads rather than all this dancing around. I'll see if I can train him a bit as my grandfather did me to strengthen my body. Perhaps we should see if he can work in the mines for a bit...

Apparently Jay correctly sees everything as a weapon. It is good that he values the practicality of all things, but he has a rather limited ideas when it comes to armor and shields. The weight of tower shields and extreme shields makes them to slow for one with his strength to use effectively as weapons. Given the utter failure of his ramming attempts against the Otyughs I don't think we should go for the shield bashes or spiked armor for a while yet. It is hard not to brain the lad for suggesting my workmanship is akin to that of mediocre humans when it comes to forging bucklers, I just have to keep reminding myself he grew up in the wilderness and means no harm. In the end I manage to convince him that the art of disarming and weapon breaking is not something he can manage without some proper tools yet and convince him to let me supply him with some. My dissertation and well build arguments are rudely disrupted several times by Snake claiming people don't like him. I am not surprised. Even the serving lass has given him a tongue lashing.

The elf has a bout of feeling penned in again and insists we open the window. I have neither time nor interest in another useless argument about the great protective value of tunnels and buildings

and just let him have his way. I should have known better than to let the elf have his way when it comes to how things should be when not in nature...

Jay tears me to the ground away from the window when a ball of flame erupts above our heads. I just manage to see it came through the window rather than from Reed before I close my eyes against the searing heat. I pray to Dumathoin to give us courage and start feeling better when a bolt of lightning strikes our room. Reed forgets herself and like a berserker storms for the enemy. I just manage to grab her ankle and restore her health as she exposes herself to the enemy assault, which never materializes. I wonder what happened outside but after having barely struggled to my feet I hear armored assailants in the hallway. A warrior storms in through the doorway and even in this tight enclosed space manages to swing his twohander deftly enough to bring down the sergeant. Damn I can understand someone not liking Snake, but to extend this hatred to those who travel with him is rather unjust. My new shield empowered by Dumathoin turns away the destructive lightning-sword. The electricity arcs across the peaks of the spine of world mountains worked into my shield. This time I am prepared!

The old chants swell into my mind as the voices of the ancestors sing the hymns of great battles. The chants foreshadow what will come and I am well prepared to strike at the gaps opening up at the joints in his armor and quickly and deeply strike into his flesh and bring him down. The next one falls quickly falls to the song of battle raging in my mind's ear and the guards show up.

The guards apparently have little interest in exactly what happened and quickly skip ahead with their questions, but I try to assist them as best I can to maintain order. Quickly a court is assembled. I had never thought Felina harbored such deep feelings for the sergeant. A dwarf driven from his hold has barely deeper pain than she carries for her lost love. Strange that I did not even suspect this before now. Very strange.

I am appalled to learn a dwarf was engaged in illegal activities and was part of the group who assaulted us. The wise judge knows how dwarves best serve their community and decides to send him to the mines. Somehow this twisted dwarf is not delighted at the prospect and apparently Felina takes pity on him. Perhaps Reed's talk about mercy and redemption is getting to her that she can be so gentle to the one who was part of the group who slaughtered her one true love. Perhaps the joy of hearing the sergeant will be with her again soon is befuddling her mind. But why is Snake looking so pleased. I thought he at least would bear more hate and ill will. Could Reed be right about him? No it must be something else, but what? I feel both I and the judge have just been tricked, but how and what part does Felina play in Snake's machinations?

The judge feels the world is better rid of our assailants and rewards us with some of the spoils. Dumathoin guides my hand and I choose a helmet which allows me to understand all languages, the hidden shall be revealed to the industrious seeker. Thank you lord for this boon and blessing.

Now I will have to warm up the forge again and set to making Jay a buckler and asking the blessing of Dumathoin so our leader can be protected by mail as well as practice her magical craft.