

DISCLAIMER

A fantasy story within a fantasy world. A total fictional story within the universe of War hammer. The intention is to create a fun easy to read story with in this universe. The story may not be 100% lore accurate. It is intended to be a light read for the War hammer enthusiasts. I hope the you will enjoy the read. This is my first attempt to write something, anything, so be lenient with me.

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CHAPTER I

AN ORC JOURNEY

A long time ago, yes that's how the story starts, like they all do, in a small village somewhere in the Mountains of Blood-horn where everything was quite and peaceful. The sun was shining bright, with a small breeze and sweet smells from the morning preparations for the mid day meal. A day more beautiful than the others where all the people were going about their daily affairs and the children were playing with no worries in the world. All seemed to be just perfect with the world on this day. As any good story starts, this one also starts with.. Then..silence.. no movement, no noise, like everything slowed down to a full stop. All the sudden commotion, yelling, screaming and chaos and the beautiful, perfect day, was gone forever.

Women grabbing kids and running, men running for the armory. The sunny day was getting suddenly darker, from the smoke rising from afar. Sounds of combat, in the distance but getting closer by the minute. Heat is rising from the huts been on fire. In the chaos and panic many get separated, all running as fast as they can to either hide or fight. The chaos is from fighting, we are under attack, it is clear now, the sound of swords clashing, yes it is clear now.

This is where our true story starts. This day, this moment, while trying to get to safety my sister and my brother died. This day that I found myself in the middle of the village road covered in blood with my brethren lying dead next to me. This moment that changed it all. This day that would shape me into the Orc I would become.

Sitting in the middle of the road not knowing what to do, I never experienced combat before. It is chaos confusing. I am just staring on the road with shadows running, huts burning and smoke rising around. Then... five figures seemed to be coming closer, in a steady pace, but they are not Orcs. They are too skinny and too short to be Orcs. Everything is a blur. I can't see well with all the smoke around, my eyes are burning. Still, not sure if I should be frightened or relieved. As they get closer and closer, and as you think that it just can't get worse, a shadow coming from behind me is slowly and steadily growing.

My eyes are getting better the burning and itching, caused by the smoke is going away and the shadow comes closer but still, I don't dare to look behind me. I sit still, eyes peeled forward. Now that my eyes are getting used to the smoke and the itching is slowly leaving I can make out the figures approaching in the steady pace. They become so clear that I start to understand what is happening. DWARFS!

Moving in a slow military manner towards me. Shields front, axes and skinny heavy armor. Burning everything in their path. BUT what did we do? We did not hurt them. I can not understand this, we just live here in relative peace, why they attack now? We are in a truce! Why?. All it can do is sit there in the middle of the road, still, silent, in fear waiting and wondering. But that's not all. That shadow is still growing. Somehow it makes me feel calm, like everything will be alright, but then the dwarfs are getting closer. Doubt is creeping up again, wrapped up in fear.

This is the end, I thought. I will die here, next to my brethren. I close my eyes and I wait, thinking of what a beautiful day this was, in an attempt to clam

down a bit. A nice breeze is coming up..i can feel it on my face and I think this might be a good day to die! But I guess Gork & Mork had other plans!

The unexpected. The breeze is no longer a breeze.. it is .. somehow getting stronger. I open my eyes and i just can not understand this.. the wind.. what is going on? What is this, i wonder. The breeze that is getting stronger and stronger and it is only .. it is only around me.. I look further at the trees and bushes but they are all standing still, no movement. The breeze is now starting to lift the dirt of the road spinning around me faster and faster.

That shadow!. It must be the shadow. Is it the shadow? I am not sure of anything now. Too scared to look, to scared to move, all i can do.. is look forward. Everything now is spinning, fire, dust, figures. The Dwarfs now are so close that i can smell them. But they look different. Their steadiness seems to be crumbling. They...they... look different... somehow. The formation is changing but i can't say what is happening. Then, i spot it. As little as i can see through the dust spinning around me.. yes i can see it. It is FEAR. The dwarfs are frightened. Still.. i don't understand why! Its a bit of wind and just one Orc in the middle of the road. Am i so scary?

The shadow!!, it must be the shadow.. but i cant see the shadow anymore. There is only the wind spinning. Now, is even stronger. The Dwarfs seem like the want to flee.. but they are still there. They don't seem to be moving forward nor fleeing. Why are they standing still? Everything is crazy today.

What happened to that nice day i was having? Why all THIS had to happen today? My heart is racing faster and faster. Flooded with emotions of all kinds, from fear to despair and relief. Yes relief. I don't understand it myself either, but after that shadow appeared i started to feel this balance. Like everything will be OK.

Everything will take a turn for the better...but still, up to this point, fear is still strong. What is this is? a false sense of security? I mean i don't know what that shadow is. Maybe it's more Dwarfs! or worse. I am too tired to think anymore. I am too tired to move. I am too tired to care.

Eyes forward, i can't close them. It is getting harder to focus. The wind around makes everything harder to see. I must focus. I will not die with my eyes closed. I will die a a warriors death or close to it., facing whatever is coming. Focus... focus.. focus on the dwarfs. Its hard to see, hard to focus.. the wind is getting stronger and stronger and even stronger. I lost them. I cant see the dwarfs.

A wall of dust and dirty around me .. i lost them..i lost them. Then i see it, i don't believe it but i see it. The wind is around me. Only around me. It is peaceful and quite where i am sitting. Everything is around me. I look up and the sky is blue with a bit of gray, from the fires, i guess I look forward again and it flashes in front of me, but only for a moment. I need to focus more.

It flashes again. Like a bright light moving fast. There is something inside the dust spinning. Focus....focus.. focus... i can ... see.. i ... i.. cant believe it!... I see it now... that light, the flashes.. its the Dwarfs!. Yes the Dwarfs! They are caught up in the spinning wind. They are flying, spinning around and the flashes, i see it now.. its the shinny armor, reflecting whatever light its left in the wind spinning.

Then, my focus is broken again by the rain. I look up to complain to whatever

God allowed this to happen. Its not enough that my village is burning, that my brethren is dead and i am alone wrapped up in something i don't even understand or even want to understand, it had to rain too? But i am surprised once again today.

The sky is still blue with a bit of gray from the fires. The strangest thing. The rain it has this warm feeling. But..still..the sky is blue.. I raise my hand and wipe some of the rain of my face and look at it. Why did i do that? Now i am mortified. It is red. Red like blood. What is this? Fear is crawling up again. I am stuck, locked on staring my hands with the red rain, the blood, is it blood? Maybe! It can not be blood! Can it? The corner of my eye catches the "flying" dwarfs again.

I turn as fast as i can but i missed it. I keep looking, searching. I see them now. I see them now.. but they are not shining anymore. They look more like shadows now. The rain is getting heavier. I feel the rain and i can see the pools or red rain been created around me. Red pools.. i am soaking wet... red pools of rain.. red pools of blood. It must be blood. Why is it raining blood? What is this ? I am in denial,i suppose.. never been a combat situation before. Never seen so much blood before. Then again, is this combat? Who is fighting who? Dwarfs versus wind? This is not happening!!!

All the sudden before i even have time to finish my thoughts, the wind is coming down, the rain is stopping. A big thumping sound...like... dropping heavy armor on the floor... around me. The dust is settling and the Dwarfs are not in front of me anymore. They are around me! They are around me in pieces, dismembered. Blood..Blood.. everywhere. They shiny armor and the shields covered in blood, dimmed and buckled. The sky above, is still blue and gray from the fires. A sense of normality comes back.. but only for one second. Just for a second. Everything seem quite again and normal. Everything but one thing is still there.. The shadow.... The shadow is still there... behind me.....

I want to turn and see what is casting this shadow... Should i? Must i? I must turn to see.. I must know. The shadow is still there.. still. not moving .. not growing .. still there ... behind .. me. me.. i MUST turn.. i need to know.. now... I turn... there it is .. THE shadow.. Then darkness.

CHAPTER II

THE SHADOW COMES TO LIGHT

Flickering lights, like the trembling light of a dying fire. Images coming and going. Pain...all over. Images flashing..trees, a blue sky, a road backwards. Darkness again. The the images start again, after a while, but how long is a while? What is this? Am i sleeping? Is it a dream? Darkness....again.

The light.. oh the light it hurts, as i try to open my eyes. It hurts but i manage to open my eyes. I .. I am in a forest.. what happened to the village.. where am i? where is everyone? I look around, my body hurts all over. A clearing in the forest.. with tall trees and a small fire burning. Someone else is here, i did not do this.. i ..i would remember it. Ah there is some water and food next to me. I reach for the water .. God! i am thirsty!. My hands are covered in blood. What happened? What is going on? And as my mind dwells in those thoughts, a heavy thumb and footsteps. Fear creeping up on my again. Someone is coming.. Friend or Foe?

Fear is setting in. The footsteps getting closer and closer.. Rigid as stone i become and helpless as snot-ling. Fear is here! Oh! The steps have stopped. I can sense the presence, i can smell the blood. Fear is going. A sense of calm overcomes the fear. No movement, no noise, just a heavy breathing but calm. A breathing that sound familiar but i cant place it. Then i hear it. The voice, that heavy voice, sound like an Orc after a battle. My ... Brethren...!

Images flash before me with them dead, all dead, on the floor, NO.. on the road.. next.. next to me. Dead.... Fear is gone, Calm is gone, Anger is rising, pain is flooding in.. The voice again..Calm and heavy " Don't worry, young one. You are safe now" a touch, a hand on my shoulder. I turn around.. Stunned..

The Shadow is here. The Shadow. Yes.. the Village, the road.. the dead.. the Dwarfs.. all of it.. its coming back to me.. it was not a dream. NO..No it must be a dream.. i need it to be a dream.. Noooo.

The blood on my hands; the Dwarfs.

Boy: "Did the Dwarfs did this?"

Shadow: " Yes"

Boy: "The blood on my hands. Is it Dwarf blood?"

Shadow: "Yes"

Boy: "So they are all dead?"

Shadow: "Yes. at least those ones are"

Boy: " Why did they do this?"

Shadow: "They do what they do and we do what we do. That's all there is to it"

Boy: "No. there has to be a reason. My brethren did not die for this. There is a reason!"

Shadow: " We are mortal enemies for ages. It is the way of the world. You now need to live in this world"

Silence for a few moments between us... then like nothing had happened the shadow said " Come, eat you need to be strong for whats to come". I did not

reply. I just eat and drink in silence, wondering what comes next. What did the shadow mean what's to come? He said we are safe.. that i am safe. I just can't help myself. I need to ask what comes next.. i need to know.

Boy: " Shadow what comes next? What do you mean?"

Shadow: " Shadow? Why you call me Shadow boy?"

Boy: " I don't know what to call you.. Back in the village all i cold see was a shadow, your shadow."

Umgak: " My name is Umgak."

Ogit: "Ogit, my name is Ogit and not boy either"

Umgak: "Good now that we know either other names, we can get on with it"

Ogit: "Get on with what?"

Umgak: "Your training of course"

Ogit: "My training? train for what?"

Umgak: "Train you to avenge the loss of the our village, train you to be a warrior!. Eat now.. "

I realize now. that Umgak was just trying to give me a purpose, trying to keep me from thinking the loss. Not to forget, but to just take my mind of it, for a bit. He was trying to give me time for all theses to sink in. I needed that. I am glad he gave me that time as sort as it might have been. Sort yes, only a few hours. Next morning the training started. Moving every few days for safety looking for more survivors. Some might of took refuge in the woods like we did, or thye might have tried to get sanctuary to other villages in the near by areas. The lands had become unsafe for us, for our kind, but our kind is resilient.

A year have passed and i was still training in combat and learning how to chop dwarfs up, fast. Umgak was a good teacher, but like he always said, the best teacher is he battlefield itself and unless you battle out there... all else is pointless. No one can teach you or prepare you for what is out there.

So i had to get better. So i did. I started gathering some more of the Orcs that wanted to get involved started to train in real combat. Skirmish attacks on anyone coming through our woods for food or anything else of value trying to get the small fight whenever we could. Learning, training for the day that i would chop them all up and regain my village, rebuilt it.

All the years hiding, training, running, learning, i never asked Umgak about that day. Not even once. Never asked what was that gust of spinning wind that, i assume , saved me and maybe saved us? This question has been eating me up for a long time. Now i feel that this one question is the only thing holding me back to reach my full potential. Maybe its time to ask the question, and face whatever answer there is to face. I just hope that it is not "I Don't know" or "It was just a gust of wind".. I feel there is more to it.

So, one night i mastered all the courage to ask Umgak this question. You might think that a warrior could ask a question to his teacher simply. Why is he gathering his courage? Well the answer to that is simple. YOU don't know Umgak!!

Ogit: " Umgak, i have a question for you!"

Umgak: "Oh? what is it?"

Ogit: " Back when the village was burning, you saved me. I was in the middle of the road and the Dwarfs were approaching. Then a gust of wind came spinning swirling everything up and even the Dwarfs and cut them down to pieces! What was that?"

Umgak: "Oh that? that was nothing!"

I felt that Umgak was definitely hiding something from me. Its not like him to answer this way. So i pushed on!

Ogit: "You will tell me Umgak. I am older and stronger now. Waaagh! You will tell me!"

Umgak: "Make me! Waagh!"

Bring da Pain! he said and so I did! It was Hurtin' time! Reckless blows starting flyign around and I was going for he da soft spots. I knew now how to fight and where to hit. Its not in our nature to stop or to give up. The fight rages on for a while but the years on Umgak's back are stating to show. I do not ease up at all until he is down and unable to move. Sit Down and stay down I said. And as I stand above him...

Ogit: "You will tell me the truth! NOW!"

Umgak: "Git to Da Choppa"

Ogit: " You want your Choppa? (Choppa the orc sword) Why?"

Umgak: "That gust of wind was Git to Da Choppa"

Ogit: " I don't understand, what you mean.. Explain!"

I let him up and we sit next to the fire spitting blood and he starts to explain it to me.

Umgak: " That gust of wind was Git to Da Choppa. It is the ultimate warrior's battle technique that not every Orc can master. It is reserved for the few, the best, the Strongest among us."

Ogit: "You need to teach me this...this... Git to Da Choppa. It will help me to reclaim our lands!"

Umgak: "I can not! I will not!"

Ogit: "You need to teach me this Git to Da Choppa. It will help me reclaim our lands!"

Umgak: "I can not! I will not!"

Ogit: "What? Why?"

Umgak: "I am not the one to judge if you are strong, or worthy of this!"

Ogit: "Who is then?"

Umgak: "If you want to learn this you must find the mystics in the marshes of madness. You must survive, you must prove you are worthy"

Ogit: "How do i get there? I will survive!"

Umgak: "Many have tried and many have failed."

Ogit: "You survived! You made it!"

Umgak: "The prize was too high. If you are sure you want this; i will tell you but our ways shall part with this answer!"

Ogit: "Tell me!"

Umgak: "You must travel east to the lands of Black Fire Pass. Find a way to go go through the dwarven stronhold and enter the underground tunnels of the Skaven Vermine and make your way to the Marshes of Madness.

Ogit: "Thats it? what do i do when i get to the Marshes of Madness?"

Umgak: "Thats it? I fear you are not ready yet for this. The dwarves are no joke you know this and the Skaven will not just let you go throught their territory. Plus you have never fought a Skaven horde. You need to be more serious to embark on this journey!"

Ogit: "I will be fine. What do i do when i arrive on the Marshes?"

Umgak: "That is for you to find out!"

That was all that Umgak would say at this point. There was no need to try and get more answers at this point. Umgak treated his wounds and fell asleep. Soon after i did too. The next morning was a sad one but a necessary one. Umgak was nowhere to be found. I guess he did as he said "i will tell you but our ways shall part with this answer!"

I guess he took his path and now i need to take mine. East it is then.....

CHAPTER III

DUE EAST

Due east i go. The path is set and so is my mind. I will survive this, I will master this skill and I will have my vengeance. I took whatever little supplies we had left in our camp and started to head east through the forest. The entry to the Black Fire Pass (BFP) was only a day walk so my "quest" would start soon.

As i walk through the forest towards BFP my mind finds time to slip away to many of the things that troubles me. So many questions and so few answers. I wonder if i will be able to answer them all, IF i will find the answers. Why did Umgak leave?

What was the high price he had to pay for this? Why would he not train me for this or teach it to me? Why send me to the Marshes of Madness? If there are more that know of this skill then why i have never seen it before that day or ever again ? If we can do that much with one Orc mastering that skill I can not imagine what our kin can do with 100 warriors like that. So many questions!

As my mind drifts away it makes the time past very fast. Night fall is here. Time to make camp and rest. Tomorrow i walk to BFP! I find a quite spot a bit of the path and set up camp. Its a warm and calm night, easy to sleep under the trees and the stars. As i lay there, next to the fire, all the questions start spinning in my mind again making it hard to sleep. Still no answers. I must find some. Hours pass and finally i fell asleep, but only for short while.. Sun is rising.. time to get going.

Due east i go. A bit further. One foot in front of the other and i move forward. Today i am more focused. The time for answers will come. Right now i need to set my mind to the goal ahead. I need to stay focused. Black Fire Pass is no joke to go through. The Iron Dwarfs guard the passage and i need to go through it. Me alone, it seem impossible but how did Umgak did this? Did he have help? More questions and even less answers. DAMN IT! Once again my inner dialog make the time pass faster. I am here, the edge of the forest. The furthest i have even been away from "home" since that day. Since ever. One more step and i will be further than ever. One more step. One foot in front of the other; i move again.

The Iron Dwarf gate is ahead and i can barely seen it in the horizon but it is there. I cant go in a straight line, i will be spotted. I can't fight them alone, i will die. I need to go around this, but how? I take a min to see around, try to figure out a different way to approach this. I would love nothing more than to charge in there and chop them all up, leaving their small corpses to rot. BUT, this is not the goal today, their time will come!

Looking, thinking... then i see it. To the North East, there it is! My way around... That rock, i know it. I remember it, strange.. i have never been here before.. I don't think about it much and i start walking North East. The closer i get to the rock formation, the more familiar it is.. but, i cant remember why it seems and feels familiar. The sound of the a river is becoming clear now. Everything seems familiar. The closer i get to the river more things of the landscape become familiar. I am certain that i am on the right track, I am certain this is the safe way through BFP. How do I know ? i have never been here before.

I pull myself out of this mind trap.. No more questions i say to myself.. Focus..

Made it to the river but still the BFP and the Iron Dwarf gate is in my way to the Skaven tunnels. If this is truly a way around the gate then I must follow the river. I follow the river and it feels right, it feel familiar. All my senses are pealed and i stand ready. I must not ease up, stand fast. The river seems never ending, twisting and turning, rocks and rock formations make walking hard. The sounds of the water running make it hard to hear if anyone is around or approaching. I stand Fast! I am getting tired, the sun in above me.

Been walking for hours, starting to question if this is the right way. It must be, it feels familiar. Damn questions! get out of my mind. I push forward. No rest, no food, only water. I must keep moving, its not safe, not yet. The river seems never ending as night fall comes. Now i need to rest. I must find a quite spot again to rest, protected, hidden. I spot a small cavern in a rock formation near by. I got lucky. I sit down to rest and grab something to eat. Nothing great, just some stale bread. It will have to do, i am not here for the food! I am here for the Git to da Choppa. No fire tonight, no deep sleep. I cant risk a fire, the light , the smoke, no i cant risk it. It is cold so close to the water. No matter i must endure.

I close my eyes and i open them. Its morning. The sun only just breaking from the mountains. Did i sleep? i wonder. It felt like one sec. I must of slept but i don't feel rested. No mater, i must move on. I follow the river again. I stand Fast! The sun is hot today. I am tired, but the images of my destroyed village come to mind. DAMN IT, my mind is playing tricks on me again. My rage overcomes my sensation of tiredness. I move forward, I stand Fast! The sun is above me now and its burning my eyes. The end of the river! What? Noooo.

A waterfall ahead. No way around it? I cant see from here. I move further down and get a closer look. No, still nothing. This can not be the end! Was i wrong? Now what? I am tired. What a disappointment this is. At least now it makes sense that this path was not guarded by the dwarfs, it is a dead end!

I sit down holding my head, trying to think my next move. This is not the end!!! I stand up and start looking around again. Everything I am points here, in this direction. I will not be defeated by a river, NEVER! Waagh!

Thoughts come to my mind. Climb down? Jump down? is there a path down? there has to be something.. Something! Waaagh!

Standing in front of the waterfall, unable to do anything, lost in my thoughts.

"Standing in front of a waterfall, when the sun is high, the brave warrior will jump and will never die. IF his faith is strong! It will hold him high "

Where do i know this? Strange that i know it and even stranger that it comes to me now, in the time of need and despair. No time for questions. This, whatever this is, that comes to me and guides me has not lead me astray so far.. WAAAAGH! I jump!

Falling, Falling..and Splash. A lake, but not as far down as i thought. Not as far down as i could see. Not dead.. that's good, I thought. Water is falling with pressure on me, i need get our before it carries me away. Swim, fast, get to the sides, go..goo. I struggle, the current is strong, swiiiiim. come on.. my muscles are starting to hurt but i am moving to the sides slowly but i am moving. I am there.

Finally, i can get a breather. A take a minute to catch my breath and look

around thinking, what now? where do i go? Yes, i know you guest it already, you guys are smart and have done many quest before me. A cave and a tunnel. Typical. Maybe some traps in there? leading to the next part of the journey? Perhaps! Never the less you are right, and we move on, we start getting in the cave.

It is dark and dump. I can barely see in here. Touching the walls with my hand and i move slowly through the cave. I can feel a breeze coming, perhaps this is a small cave? I keep moving only a few meters and i can see better. Light is coming from the other side. Now i can walk easier, i can see better.

The light is getting stronger and brighter, but.. no this is not day light!. This is fire light.. someone is here? I start walking slower, trying not to make a sound. Try to listen to any noises. Nothing. I keep moving slowly. I see torches burning in the sides of the walls. Definitely someone is here or has been, recently. Maybe the top was unguarded but what about in here? I have no choice but to move forward. I pull my choppa out to be ready, you never know. My heart starts to race, still no sound. I move forward more, i can not stop now.

Man made steps, going up. Where do they lead? Skaven or Dwarfs? No choice, we made it this far, we move on for better or worse. I go up the stairs still slowly and carefully. I don't know what to expect in here. The steps are only a few. The looked more when I first seen them. A small plateau at the top of the steps. Two corridors in front of me. Both have torches burning in front of them but I see no light inside either of them. The way i see it, one leads to the Iron Dwarfs, the other to the Skaven tunnels and hopefully to the Marshes of Madness. Which one is which though? I take a moment to think which one to follow. If I take the on that leads to the Dwarves I will most likely die. Well that is more of a certainty at this point. If I take the correct one then I will be at the Skaven tunnels and I might die. I must pick the right one. Skaven I have better chances to live as things stand right now. I take the one the i feel it follows the river direction. I hope i have chosen correctly.

I grab on of the torches form the corridor entrance. Choppa on one hand, the torch on the other and we push on. I hope you are still with me!

CHAPTER IV

TUNNEL VISION

The Choppa on one hand, the torch on the other and we push on. The corridor goes on for a while, and it feels endless. Dump, cold and smelly. I wonder if this is worth it. I fleeing thought. Of course it is worth it. I loose sense of time in the tunnel, The torch maybe burning bright, still, but all I feel is darkness. Now the most important thing is to make it to the other side and even more important to be the right side. I can not see myself ready to face any dwarfs right now. The tunnel keeps going twisting and turning, getting darker, it feel like I have been here forever, endless. The air is getting heavier and it is harder to breath now. One foot in front of the other and i keep going, no way back now. I walk for a bit longer, not like there is a choice, and I see a small opening up head, i can barely see it. Still too dark and the torch's light is dimmed. The torch is dying out.

Yes, it is an opening. I pick up the pace a bit to get there faster. Now that i am here i am not so sure i want to be here. A large circular opening with 7 corridors around it. The floor filled with bones or different sizes. Just stepping on it makes noises which is warring. I don't want to attract any attention to myself, i just want to get to the other side, but getting to the other side just got a lot harder. Seven corridors, seven different directions, seven possible wrong destinations. Which one do i pick? Which one do i need to follow? There is no indication where they lead. Especially down here is even harder to get any clues to where they might lead and the torch is dying out. It has a bit more in it, but I am not sure if that will be enough to time to find some clue, some hint as to which one I need to follow.

I must do the best I can in the time, in the light, I have. I hurry up and go close to the first corridor. I want to see if there is a draft, a sense or smell of fresh air coming from there to see if this leads to an outside destination. Nothing. Moving to the next one, to the next one, to the next one. Nothing, and the only smell i get is a foul rotting vermin like smell. Vermin is good, it means i am on the right track but if i don't find the right corridor, i will end up like the rest that made it here. Another pile of bone in the room, forgotten and rotting. Searching for a clue to help me make up my mind which of the seven corridors I need to follow. I am rushing, the light is getting dimmer and dimmer. Time is running out. IF i don't find a clue i will have to pick one in random, which i don't want to. I might have had some luck so far, but there is no guarantee that I will last nor that I can relay on my luck for ever to get me out of trouble.

I take a second to calm myself up. Take a big breath. OH1 what a mistake that was! The smell gets me. I start to cough and then i hear it. Scratching, movement. Vermin rushing to my location. They are definitely not walking here. They are coming from everywhere. The Skaven are coming. It's too small in here for me to swing and move. They are coming. I am getting ready to fight. I cant fight them in the tunnels. I stand in the middle of the room spinning around looking at the corridors, listening, trying to understand from which ones they will come out. I need to be the first attacking. This might give me an advantage, Might. As i look around waiting, the voices and noises are getting louder and closer, closer and louder. Then i start to see some dimming light coming from the tunnels. They are near. As i turn to check the other corridors, I

notice that one is dark. Dark i think! No Skaven in that one? Maybe! I wait for a few second, focused on that one that is dark. Nothing yet.. Nothing yet, no light. My torch is dying.. This is it!!! Now or never!!!

I drop the my torch and i rush to the dark tunnel. I run into the tunnel, not looking back, only forward. I need to get out of here. I run, and i gain distance but the sounds are not getting any further. The Skaven seems to be following me. DAMN IT! they picked up my sent and they are following me. I need to get out to an opening, i cant fight in here. The tunnel seems too long, endless again. No sense of time, no light. I run, i stumble, I crawl.. i need to get out. No time to think, no time to stop! The Skaven are still in pursuit. They are coming. This tunnel will end, I will get out! I pick up the pace even more, and not too long i see the opening. It is still day time but dimmed. Now i can fight them. Let them come!

I am out now. But where am I? Never seen something like this before. I am stunned for a moment. Swamps, fog, moisture all over, dark mystical place. This must be the Marshes of Madness. You can definitely get mad in this place, and before i have a change to finish my thoughts in that moment i fell the claws of the Skaven on my back and their teeth in my flesh. Adrenalin spiking. I turn quickly i grab one by the head throw it down and smash its head my my foot. Choppas coming out! WAAAGH! and the chopping start.

They all come out of the tunnel, like a never ending wave. I am in for a lot of chopping. Oh yeah! and they are getting it. I try to hold them at the corridor to control them but no matter how fast and wild my copping is i cant hold that tide back. It hard to hold steady some have broken through and chopped Skaven on my feet don't help me to get a goof footing. So much blood that soaks the ground. I can't kill them all! Still swinging, still chopping in all directions. If I stop I die. Will this wave of Skaven never end? They are indeed a Horde!

Then a horn sounds and the Skaven are retreating! What is going on? The Skaven are retreating but they are not been summon back. This is not a Skaven horn. At least I think it is not. The horn sound did not come from the tunnels but from out here. They are frightened. They are retreating to safety? If that is true, is that why that tunnel had no Skaven? What does that mean for me? Well, i for one not sticking around to find out.. I mean if all these Skaven are scared, whatever or whoever blew that horn must be dangerous. East is it and fast just like Umguk said. I will keep going East, until I figure out what I need to do in this forsaken place. Until I can find the mystics. I make my way east with no delay looking for a place to rest in relative safety and patch my wounds up. My wounds maybe small but they are a lot. Those little vermin are nasty. I can let them untreated.

No need to go far just out of site. Luckily, this place seem to have a lot of places to hide and lay low for a bit. Heading east, along the mountain side looking for a place to hide. Not very far, i find one. Not sure if i will be safe here but i have no choice right now. New place, wounded, and a new threat coming this way that can scare the Skaven. If i am to fight that new threat i need to be in better shape.

CHAPTER V

THE MADNESS AND THE CHOPPA

At last a moment to my self. No more running, no more worrying. At least that's what I hope. I need to do something about these wounds. I look around the small cave I found to hide in, to find something to use as medicine for my wounds. I find some moss that I can identify, maybe the only thing that I can identify in this place. I can not trust the waters of this place. My pouch is empty. I use what ever spit I have left plus the mosh to create a poultice for my wounds. With the help of my trusty choppa I mash it together, but I need to do it slowly. I don't want to attract any unnecessary attention.

After a few minutes the poultice is ready and I apply it to my wounds. I better rest a bit and let it work on my wounds before I move on. I cant stay here. I don't know what that horn sound was. I need to get far from here. I wish there was a path I can follow. In this place there is nothing. A lot of swamps, which are unsafe and easy to get lost. No wonder this place is called the Marshes of Madness!!!

Time to move on. Time to find the mystics to learn Get to Da Choppa! Time to fulfill my destiny. After a while, and having caught a breather, I get up check outside the cave and move east again. I wonder how I will ever find those mystics. I really have no clue what to do, here to go or how those mystics look like. The only thing Umgak said to me was mystics, Marshes of Madness , east. THANK YOU Umgak!!! Thank you!

I am getting this strange feeling that someone is watching me. I had it since I left the cave but now it is a stronger feeling. Who could be watching me? Is it just on my mind?. Maybe that "thing" or "someone" that sounded the horn? Maybe. Never the less I need to stay focused and be careful. I check that my choppas are there and I stand fast to draw them.

Venturing through the marshes close to the mountain line has gotten me nowhere. I need to venture deeper into the marshes. I draw my choppa and move inwards. Slowly and carefully. The swampy waters not helping at all and I am making noise with the water moving. Lets hope we don't attract any more attention, I mean, I already have those praying eyes on me, right?

A spell of luck! Dry land ahead. Maybe now I will cover more ground. I come out of the swampy waters and stomp my feet to clean them, and before I make two steps forward, I hear foot steps. I turn to my right and a strange figure stands in front of me holding a spear, pointing it at me. I turn to my left. Another one! I start looking around me and there are more and more appearing from the cane fields around.

I am surrounded. No way out, but fighting. Well, if fighting is what they want then a fight they shall have! Pulling my choppas out and am getting ready .. I can see their grasps tighten on the spears. Let's hope that I pull this one off. My wounds still ache but that never stopped me before. They also getting ready standing fast for my move or for a command from that figure behind them all. Either way this is going to be bloody. It is them or me.... as it always has been

in my life.

I squish hard on my choppa's handles but something is not right. I feel my strength failing me. NO! I will not go out like this. NOT with out a fight! The choppas fall from my hands right next to me and then I knell down too. Maybe I have reached my limit. Maybe this is it. The end!?

The circle around me is closing slowly. Although I am on my knees unarmed and clearly tired they still approach slowly and with caution. I cant believe I have underestimated my strengths this much. I don't understand why I feel so weak. My wounds are not so severe, I had worst. Could it be some short of poison? Need to find a way to stand up. This is unacceptable. I can not fail this close. Looking up to the mysterious creature getting closer. I get the impression that I might not be only Orc they have seen in their lives. Maybe they know what an Orc can do. How dangerous and Orc can be especially a cornered Orc. I cant get up, I just can't. This is the end, I think and I look up to see the sky one last time. Just one last time, the blue sky. I look up I see it and I close my eyes while I can sense them coming closer, still.

As I close my eyes I hear this strange unknown voice in my head. It sounds like a goblin voice. Goblins? Here? I must be going mad!
The goblin voice keeps repeating....

“Git to Da Choppa!” “Git to Da Choppa! “Git to Da Choppa!

I feel empowered again, somehow, revitalized. In swift move I grab both choppas from the ground and I bring my wrists together breaking the heavy iron shackles that Umgak has places on my arms since I started training with him. I didn't even remember I had those! I been wearing them for so long that I didn't even feel them. But now that they are broken I feel my hands so light and the choppas feel weightless.

“Git to Da Choppa!” “Git to Da Choppa! “Git to Da Choppa!

The goblin voice keeps repeating, never stopping. It keeps repeating it like it is chanting to me and the choppas. Over and over and over. Then! My hands start moving. Faster and faster. A breeze is forming, growing into a wind, getting stronger and stronger to a tornado. I can not stop. I keep swinging and spinning. WAAAGH!!

The natives are frightened like they have seen this before and they know what follows. All the memories of “that” day are flooding my mind. I see it now, I am doing it as Umgak did. I am using it, I am creating Git to Da Chooppaaaaa! WAAAGH! The natives are taking a step back! Ha I think ... oh no they are not taking a step back they are trying to steady them selves. It is working, I am doing it. I swing harder and harder until the natives are starting to get lifted up in the air and then I feel it again. The hot rain falling upon me. I remember this feeling, but this time I know its not rain. It is Blood.. the blood of my enemies. It feels good. I want more. I swing faster feeling the choppas cutting deeper into the flying bodies of all the natives that where around. I want more...more...more...WAAAGH!

I get the sense that its time to stop. I don't know how I know but I do. I start to slow down to a full stop. The air slowly stops spinning and the lifeless body parts of the natives hit the ground with a thump. All dead. No one survived this. A sense of satisfaction runs through my body. Now I can do this to the Dwarfs! Yes, those damn Dwarfs! I will chop them like these natives! Into pieces! WAAAGH!

I look at my body, covered In blood, but I feel refreshed, anew. All my wounds are gone. Not a scratch! What happened? All my wounds from the Skaven healed! Where is the mystic? The voice! I look around and there it is standing. I look but I cant see it well. It is covered in a mist. A vision maybe? Magic? Perhaps. I try to move towards it. I cant! I cant move. The voice is in my head again. The same goblin voice!

“Git to da Choppa you have learned!
Use it to attack and kill
and your soul will surely fall ill
Use it protect and defend
and you energy will never end
Curse or blessing is it?
Decide wise before you use it”

These are the words in my mind. The figure fades way. I can move again. I run to it, in an attempt to capture it but I am too late I reach to touch it, to grab it.. and all I get is air. Nothing. Was that a warning? I don't care. I can't focus on this right now... whatever this was. I am now ready to fulfill my destiny. I am ready to face the dwarfs! Time to go home! Time for vengeance.!

Ogit knows the way back. Straight line to the mountain line and then west. Skaven are no longer a problem for Ogit. He feels so powerful, with a confidence like never before. The only thing in his mind right now is killing. Killing the dwarfs and anything and anyone getting in his way. His mind is focused on this one task only. His eyes are shining. He is on fire inside. He is starting to imagine all the horrors and pain he will inflict to the dwarfs. Is he loosing it ? Are the marshes driving him mad? Or is it the Git to Da Choppas? Maybe its normal for an Orc to be making those thoughts? So many questions and so few answers!

In his newly found blood lust Ogit, hears nothing, fears nothing, he totally missed the words and warnings of the goblin. He is so absorbed in this self righteous vengeance he is seeking that it will probably lead to his demise. Let both me and you hope that he will clam down think a bit more clearly soon.

CHAPTER VI

THE END IS THE BEGINING

He is back to the Skaven tunnels now. He got there so fast. His mind was so occupied with the things he will do to the dwarfs that time was lost to him. He was even laughing out loud with the thoughts he was..is doing. He is going mad. This new sense of power that came with Git to Da Choppas made him thirsty. Thirsty for blood. He is going insane. Maybe it is the Marshes, and it will wear out once he is away from this cursed place. Maybe.

Time to head back and track down those damn Dwarfs he thinks... and enters the tunnels. No torch, no hesitations, nothing. Just keeps moving. So confident. So arrogant. He keeps moving. The before so feared Skaven and the narrow tunnels are no longer a concern for Ogit. He can win any fight. He can kill anything now. If only Ugmak could see me know, he would have been so proud he thinks! I personally would doubt that. What do you think ?

Blood lust, blood thirst driving Ogit forward into a non stop crusade. The Skaven that were overrunning these tunnels hours ago, are all gone. No sound, no movement like they never existed. It all feels like a storm is coming and the animals know and hide or run away. I suppose the Skaven sense the blood lust and they might have witnessed what happened to the natives in the Marshes and prefer to stay away.. out of Ogit's way.

Revitalized from the last time that he used the Git to da choppa. Ogit feels no pain, not tired at all and like a well oil and focused war machine keeps pushing on. After a while and in half the time it took him to get there last time, he is in the small plateau and now he has two new choices to make. One corridor will lead back to the waterfall and eventually back to the forest. The other one most likely will lead him to the Iron Dwarf Stronghold. The so called guardians of the passage. He does not stop or paused even for a moment. He take the tunnel leading to the Dwarven stronghold. I don't know what will he be able to achieve alone in a stronghold full of Dwarfs. Ogit is determined thought. He feels this great need to fulfill his destiny. Some times I see his determination as if it is not even is own. As if he is driven to this actions but something. Soon enough he finds himself under the stronghold of the Iron dwarfs. These may not be the ones that burned his village, but they are dwarfs!

These are not the ones he is after but... they will be a good test of my new powers he thinks. A good message to the other Dwarfs... until...I kill them all, Waagh!.

The distance to the entrance of the stronghold felt like taking 2 steps. In front of him a small wooden door. The door seems neglected and old. The Dwarfs done a terrible job here. Good.. easier for me to get in. I would seem that the Dwarfs never expected that anyone would find that hidden passage. I would appear from the state of the door that even the dwarfs themselves had forgotten of that door and passage. A terrible mistake, that they might have to pay a steep price now that Ogit is here and staying right out side and is ready to kick it in.

Ogit is going insane I tell you. If you could see his face, his eyes you would understand. There is no stopping or reasoning with him now. He is now in a different plane than the rest of us. Ogit pulls his choppas out, take a big breath, focuses and with a loud Waaagh! Kicks in the door and rushes into the stronghold. He is In the dungeons and storage rooms. No Dwarf here. He will have to climb his way up to the top and kill the Master Dwarf of this puny stronghold. This is how big he sees himself now. SO big that the Stronghold it self feel small. Rushing from corridor to corridor, from room to room like a mad man. Looking searching for dwarfs to chop. This floor was empty...moving on.. fast.. focused.. precise.. nothing is left unchecked. No room, no corridor nothing.. He wants them all dead.

Kicks in the next door to go up the stairs... A strange flash appeared just for a moment as he kicked in the door. Temporarily blinding him. He startles but nothing like that will stop Ogit. Haha.. childish tricks, he thinks and moves on. As he climbs the stairs he can now hear the dwarfs in commotion, like they are getting ready to fight. The element of surprise is gone he thinks.. Good now we are in for a good Chooping! Waaaagh and continues to move up the stairs with an even bigger desire to fight, to kill and to taste blood. Dwarven Blood!

Ogit makes it to the next floor, ready to fight, he feels ready to face anything. As soon as he enters the next corridor a group of armored Dwarfs are waiting in formation blocking his passage to the rooms and the next staircase. So fast...so ready.. It seems that Ogit was expecting some resistance after hearing the commotion but not some thing so organized. At least not on this floor. Tricky Dwarfs he thinks, but of course, the flash..yes that flash..Silly little dwarfs had placed a runic ward on the door to warn them if it was opened. No matter. Child's play..Waaagh! and he charges in.

The Dwarfs standing in front of Ogit right now, are not just armored Dwarfs. They are Iron Breakers. The best armored Dwarfs in the region. Heavy armor, broad round shield and sharp axes that can cut a board's hair flying in the air. They block the corridor in an attempt to stop Ogit. Their shield overlapping, leaving no openings for anything to go through. Not even a High Elf archer would be able find a spot in that formation. However the Iron Breakers here seem to be young and inexperienced in combat, just like Ogit was. They must be the new recruits, Ogit thinks and smiles. Waagh!

No time to waste.. as he charges into Iron Breaker blockade, he starts to swing and the wind starts to rise. Get to Da Choopa is his only weapon to get this done fast. All the training of the past, gone, forgotten in the limbo of this newly found power. Why bother when this is better? The dwarfs have never seen this "thing" before they don't know how to react. They stand fast.. they hold the line. They feel safe in this stance. Holding the line has served the Dwarfs well in many battles against many foes. They stay true to their training. A few moments later though the Iron Breakers start to break formation and are pulled into the Get to Da Choopa's vortex and the story repeats itself.

Blood splatters all over the corridor walls and Ogit. As the blood covers him he gets more enraged and he seems to be enjoying this. Soon the bodies of the Iron Breakers are laying on his feet dead, broken, chopped up. Ogit is filled with pleasure with this outcome, fueling his blood lust and sense of invulnerability, he pushes on. Looking into the rooms, chopping everything he sees. No discrimination, women children all seem like objects to be chopped. Like a lumberjack in the woods he keeps chopping.. moving.. chopping.. moving.. chopping.

He clears floor by floor. Many dwarfs die trying to slow his down or stop him. This part of the stronghold is the living quarters and defenses were minimal. He got lucky again he did not end up in the barracks.

This was sudden and unexpected for the Dwarfs. Dwarfs work better when they have time to get in formation and fight. So far, in the first floors Ogit has chopped everything and mainly cleared the living quarters now he heads to the warriors part of the stronghold. Things might get a bit more difficult on the way there. Dwarfs are in a disadvantage they can't surround him in the corridors which makes this a more head on fight. The Iron dwarfs wish they had slayers in their ranks. This stronghold is mainly occupied by Iron breakers and engineers keeping the Iron gate closed and repaired.

Ogit is unstoppable..Fear is rising. But Ogit is more confident than ever now, with every kill his confidence and blood thirst is boosted. More lost than ever. More arrogant than ever. Will the dwarfs survive this or will it be a full massacre?

Finally the last room. The room of the Master Dwarf.. his head will be the message Ogit needs to send to the rest of the Dwarfs. Ogit stands at the door facing Deldrir Ironsight... formerly known as Deldrir Ironforge, Master engineer, of the Ironforge tribe in the Karak Azul region. Known for this stubbornness which was the reason he was cast out from the tribe and his strange ways and great inventions.

Ogit is ready to charge for his final kill.. but there is something wrong. Actually two things are wrong..Ogit feels weak.. very weak.. he tries to shake it off but he feels very weak.. not tired... no loss of desire ..weak.. he looks as his hands and they are old.. very old. They look almost as old as Ugmak's hands. He just cant understand it.. but he shakes his head and is ready to charge.. it doesn't matter now.. Can not stop now!

The second thing that is wrong is the calm face of Deldrir Ironsight. He is not afraid .. he is sitting on his chair.. facing me.. calm.. so sure of him self, like he will win this.. The fool, Ogit thinks and Waaaghs on charging in, channeling Get to Da Choppa... his best skill. He has invested so much in this on attack, this skill that he as forgotten all the thing Ugmak has taught him.

Ogit swings as hard as he can and the wind starts to move but not enough, he just doesn't have the strength.. why? He aches everywhere with every swing, with every move. He feels old now, weak, confused and Deldrir Ironsight is there... so sure of him self. Ogit rages on... Waaagh.. no pain.. he swings like never before the wind picks up... spinning gaining power.. this is it!

Deldrir Ironsight, experienced in combat against many different foes. He had even fought in the Great (Dwarven) Campaign many years ago. He knows this skill. He has lost a lot of Dwarven brothers to this.. He knows. Poor Ogit.. so much potential, all lost in the blood lust and the altar of revenge. As Ogit speeds up and charges in ... Deldrir Ironsight stands up with this rifle and then a thunder a warm feeling in Ogit's chest. A quick gun blast. He slows down ... no breath.. no strength.. Ogit kneels down.

Deldrir Ironsight approaches the body slowly.. time seems to have stopped. Ogit comes to his senses at this final moment. Seeing all the things he did wrong. One more shot and he Ogit falls down. Still breathing, but not for long. And then at this last moment the mysterious goblin appears again, like back then in the marshes. Shrouded in a blur.,

“Poor Ogit, you should have heeded the warning I gave you. Poor Ogit.. So much potential wasted... Wasted all of your life force in killing and chopping..a waste indeed.”

Deldrir Ironsight boot is the last thing Ogit sees in front of him and the last words of the dwarf: “One foolish Orc to start a war.. One stubborn dwarf to end it..So be it”.

Deldrir Ironsight turns quickly with his gun pointed at the goblin. “I see you goblin, don't think you can fool me. This is your doing! Be prepared!”

The mysterious goblin fades away, like an apparition in somewhat fear. A dwarf maybe something that one may not fear. BUT a pissed off, stubborn, battle seasoned Dwarf can be.. IS a force to be reckoned with.

Maybe Ogit and this mysterious goblin got more than they bargained for. Ogit his death and the goblin a reckoning coming in the form of a stubborn Dwarf. What has transpired here today, in this stronghold will bring a tide or changes. The so delicate peace that excised, for so long after Great Campaign have been disrupted. The only way to avoid a full on war is for Deldrir Ironsight to settle this grudges as soon as possible, before its too late.

CHAPTER VII

PICKING UP THE PIECES

This battle was done, if you can call this a battle. The goblin has vanished, the Orc is dead. Deldrir Ironsight moves forward and kicks Ogit's corpse. He is dead. Now he really kicks the corpse in despite and anger. His body leans forwards slightly and his gaze is fixed in the corridor ahead. The same corridor Ogit came where all the Dwarven bodies are laying. His gaze is fixed but not at the dead laying there. Deldrir Ironsight he seems to be in a different plane than this, lost in his thoughts. This is not a man that is losing his mind in the sight of death, this is a man of focus and determination. He is planning.

Metallic sounds from afar approaching. They get louder. The guards are coming running, running as fast as they can in heavy armor inside the stronghold corridors. Passing the chopped bodies of their Dwarven brothers they arrive at the room of Deldrir Ironsight. The look in distress at first but then the guards calm down seeing Deldrir Ironsight standing there on top of the Orc's corpse. They were worried that they might have been late to assist or "save" Deldrir Ironsight from what ever was happening. It is clear on their faces that they still didn't know what has transpired here. Alto became clear after watching the Orc's body laying dead on Deldrir Ironsight's feet. What a sight a dead Orc on the feet of a Dwarf!

Deldrir Ironsight: "You are late!, Very late"

Guards: " But Sir...."

Deldrir Ironsight: "No but.. You ARE late! Look behind you. How many died Because YOU were late?"

Deldrir Ironsight: " Now... I want to know how he got in, why he got in, why he made it this far, why the guards were so slow to respond. And when I say now! I mean NOW! Thurug go find me those answers... Although I know most of the answers anyway...lazy Dwarfs!"

Thurug: " YES SIR"

Deldrir Ironsight: " Krugamm! Go and bring me Gadrin the Rune priest here NOW!"

Krugamm: "YES SIR"

Deldrir Ironsight:" Drardok, Alothig and Naikek! Go and move all the bodies and get them ready to be buried. Make sure they are put together before they are buried."

All together in one voice "YES SIR"

Deldrir Ironsight:"Saokoc and Aligoc! Cleaning duty GO!

Both with one voice " YES SIR!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Silget! I want you to get the top engineers and go through the stronghold from top to bottom and find all the weak spots and re-enforce them. Body trap them all and rune shield them immediately. Find Commander Migzom and double patrols and guards!

Silget: "YES SIR!"

No one dares to say anything to him. He is so absolute and determined that even his own guards are afraid of him right now. Gadrin the Rune priest arrives.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Gadrin... Look at this mess..you will have your hands full for a while.

Gadrin nods, both in agreement and despair from the thing he seen on the way.

Deldrir Ironsight: "I want you to bury them all with honors. I will be going for a while and I need you to take care of my Dwarfs until I return. They will need help to get through this."

Gadrin " Of course.. "

He bows and leaves quietly.

Deldrir Ironsight: " And will someone PLEASE take this filth of my floor and burn it?"

Now. Time to get ready he says to himself. Deldrir Ironsight moves slowly lost in his thoughts towards his workshop. Not his room... his workshop. On the way he grabs a guard from his neck and says in a commanding and threatening way "Let no one disturb me!".

He closes the door behind him and you hear the bolts securing the door . He really mean do not disturb!

A day goes by and Deldrir Ironsight is still locked in his workshop. No food , no water, no break. Truly a stubborn Dwarf! Noises arise from the workshop every now and then, signs that he is still alive. The noises are strange but also familiar. Deldrir Ironsight is know to work with explosives and other contraptions. The guards and the rest of the Dwarfs in the strong hold both wonder on what he is working on and if , maybe he gone insane with this incident.

A Few days later and the door bolts are heard again. This time unlocking and the door opens. He comes out, fatigued and hungry. He goes towards his private chambers. He turns to the same guard and..." I am going to sleep.. let no one disturb me!". If you could see the face of that guard. The fear in his face would make you either feel sorry for him or laugh.

The stronghold now is clean and he can walk in the corridors freely, however his walk is not steady. He seems to be moving in a strange stumbling way. The guards thinks that he is tired and he stumbles on this way to his chambers. they couldn't be more wrong. Deldrir Ironsight is avoiding the dead Dwarven

corpses on the floor. That day is still imprinted in his mind. He is re-living it ever since. A memory that both troubles him and strengthens his resolve.

Another two days pass. He is awake now. He goes to the throne rooms and shouts for food and drink on his way. Once he enters the room he pauses for a second. Then..He spits on the spot where the Orc as laying and moves to this chair. While he awaits his food and drink, he asks for Thurug to come.

A few moments Thurug arrives out of breath.. apparently he was running to get there with no delay.

Deldrir Ironsight:" So... you have my answers Thrurug?"

Thurug:" Yes sir I do...."

Deldrir Ironsight:"Good.. Go on then.. "

Thurug:" The Orc got in from the basement. There are some tunnels there that were not guarded. We never thought that someone could find their way there. AS to why he got in.. I am afraid I cant say.. and I was unable to interrogate him.. since you killed him.. and ..

Deldrir Ironsight:" DON'T YOU get smart with me... "

Thurug:" No...No.. Sir.. just stating the facts, nothing more.."
and he carries on fast to give the rest of the answers.

Thurug: " The guards were all posted on the outer walls and patrols. No one was near that secure location.."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Secure? Secure? You call this secure area? This would have never have happened in a "Secure" Area. IF YOU have done your job right, as I had instructed back then ... none of this would have come to pass!"

Thurug:"ehhmm...yes.. you are right..."

Deldrir Ironsight:"Right? RIGHT? I DON'T want to be right! I wanted those Dwarfs to be alive! Right..who cares about right? They are died!"

Thurug and the rest of he room stays silent. There is nothing to say to this response. They did die.. and it all comes to lazy Dwarfs not checking every crevice and corner to secure it as they were instructed years ago. Laziness has come back with a nasty bite.

Deldrir Ironsight:" Did you and Silget secured the entire stronghold now ?"

Thurug: " Yes Sir, Everything has been double checked. Barricaded, bobby trapped and rune shielded. THIS will NEVER happen again!"

Deldrir Ironsight:" You better hope that it doesn't it for your own good. At least I will not have to worry about any more dwarfs dying during my absence! NOW, all go and send the Twins and Dridrim in here!"

Thurug: "Yes Sir"

Guards and servants move out of the room. Wandering and whispering to each other two things. His absence? Is he leaving? And the second why he needs the Twins and that crazy man!

Deldrir Ironsight continues to eat trying to get some strength in him, until the three arrive.

A few minutes later the twins arrive. The twins were the two most famous dwarfs in the stronghold. Not because they were twins, thing very rare for the dwarfs, but also because of the way they were born. They were born in the night of the double blue moon. A rare event only happening once an eon. The twins ever since they were born they displayed excellent fighting skills and a sense for the mystical. They always seemed to be able to foresee some things before others. Not to mention that they are the top Iron breakers in the ranks of the stronghold. THE best!.

Deldrir Ironsight words to the twins are simple " Gear up, we leave soon. Time to settle some grudges!"

The twins look each other, giving a smile to each other excited to go to combat. Shortly after Dridrim the rune Priest arrives.

Deldrir Ironsight: "You are late... as always"

Dridrim: "I am never late ..brother"

Deldrir Ironsight: "ehhm.. Maybe.. I need you to come along and settle this!"

Dridrim: "This is not as simple as it looks.. Brother.. I sense Dark Magic in the room and the stench of the Orc!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Perceptive as always Dridrim! As always. Yes... there was a goblin shrouded in a mystical mist here.. But.. I didn't have the chance to capture it, or kill it. It vanished before I could do anything."

Dridrim: " Kill it? Hahaha.. Don't fool yourself brother.. You might be able to see it.. but kill it ? Its a different matter altogether!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Indeed. Isn't this why you are here?"

Dridrim: " Am I? I thought I was here because you send for me..."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Enough of this games brother.. Get what you need and we shall move out at dawn.. the twins will accompany us."

Dridrim:" Very well brother.. I shall be ready!

As Dridrim leaves the room he starts laughing like a mad man. Making the other dwarfs uneasy and even more baffled as to why Deldrir Ironsight would have such a person in the stronghold and even more call him a brother.

Dridrim was and still is unique. One of the few Rune Priest that would use the powers of he runes not only mend wounds but also to inflict them. Both of them had their share of combat, and blood. They had stood side by side in many fights, and in a mission like this you need someone that you trust to watch your back and fro Deldrir Ironsight there is no one better than Dridrim.

Night falls and all is quite. All except Deldrir Ironsight! Usually he sleeps like a baby in his mother's bosom, but not tonight. Something is troubling his mind and can not get any rest. The entire assault of this single Orc in the stronghold does not make any sense to him. Only one Orc? His mind dwells in any scenarios and why's and how's. Time passes. Almost dawn time..his eyes close and open imitatively. What felt for him only seconds was in fact 2 hours of sleep. Never the less a seasoned dwarf with a goal on his mind does not need more. He is ready to head out and settle those grudges that need to be settled. This can not go answered.

Dawn breaks. He stand up and gears up in a steady pace. No need to rush. He knows what needs to be done and it will be done. There is no time limit or rush. The grudges will be settled. That is the only thing for sure. He wonders if the Twins will be ready. This will be their first time out of the stronghold and they are young. Little beardslings. A quick thought passes from his mind that they might be too young to go to combat. Then it goes away.... no dwarf is too young to go to combat.. ahaha.. I am getting soft in my old age... and he laughs inside.

He is ready. Opens the door of his chambers and there they are both the twins and Dridrim waiting for him. The twins look excited that they have been there much sooner than Dridrim, waiting to get started.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Oh, ready I see! "

Dridrim: " You are late..brother.. as always"

Dridrim turns his back and starts to walk towards the stairs that lead out of the sleeping quarters and to the court yard.

Deldrir Ironsight: " Are you ready to twins?"

Twins: " Of course Sir.. we been ready for hours!!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "HAHAHA. Good! Lets go...we cant let an old fool beat us!"

As Deldrir Ironsight moves towards the stairs the twins fall slightly behind him one on each side, like proper body guards and as the etiquette commands. They know what to do, they are ready.

Dridrim waits out in the courtyard in front of the main gate. Deldrir Ironsight looks up and watches the fine iron gate. He looks at his brothers in arms and says "Grudges need to be settled for the fallen. WE are the ones to settle them on their behalf." All nod and move as one to the side gate to exit the stronghold. No need to open the main gate for a small group like theirs. Besides the gate opening can be seen from far. No need for this kind of attention.

They walk in the clearing in front of the stronghold with a steady pace, almost like a casual walk in the country side. Although it is clear and you have no defensive positions they have nothing to fear. At least not while they are in range of the guns and cannons of the Iron Gate's walls. Nothing is more empowering than to have 100's of dwarfs with such firepower watching your back. It can make you even feel invisible.

They gain some distance and the forest comes closer. The range of the guns is behind them. From this point on they are on their own and whatever comes they will have to deal with it, alone. As they get ready to enter the forest Deldrir Ironsight looks at the twins and says "From this point on be sharp like your axes. This is not a training exercise, this is as real as it gets. So no childish games. Those games will get US killed." The twins pick their posture up and with a firm look and steady voice together " We are ready Sir. Count on us". Shield raised on readiness stance, Axes too.

Dridrim with a strong pound on the ground with his staff and while looking at Deldrir Ironsight " Enough talking... those grudge will not settle themselves" and move in front of Deldrir Ironsight, making the twins frown. How dare he move in front of Deldrir Ironsight? They do not understand their relationship. Deldrir Ironsight simple moves forwards with a small smile on his face, baffling the twins again. They move pass those thoughts fast. They are here to protect Deldrir Ironsight and settle some grudges for their brothers, the rest do not matter.

One more step and they enter the forest. Beyond this point many Orc tribes live a nomadic life. After the end of the great Campaign, what was left of the Orcs was broken up into those tribes and tribes. Hiding and living in peace in the forest or beyond it. Until that one Orc assault in the stronghold, everything was quite and peaceful. Everything was in its place. Dwarfs had their lands and the Orcs theirs. Now Dwarfs are forced to take action again. Everyone knows that dwarfs live for a good fight and a honorable death in combat. There is another side to that coin too. They also love to drink ales and eat roasted boars, smoke a good pipe and of course mine gold and dig deep into the mountains. So some peace is not all that bad. Dwarfs could be resembled with hornets, you know. If you leave them alone to do what they do, you are safe. But if you bother them..they will sting you.. and hey sting bad!

This was the time for them to sting, after Ogitt rattled the hornet's nest. Nothing worse than a Dwarf with grudges to be settled.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHROUDED FOREST

They take that one more step and enter the forest. Dridrim stops as if he got ill. A small dizziness. It was just for a moment but Deldrir Ironsight notices, the twins are too excited and inexperienced to notice this slight change in posture.

Deldrir Ironsight to Dridrim “ I know..brother.. I know.. “

Dridrim “ One last time into the fray? “

Deldrir Ironsight: “ I hope not..you know what last would mean.. ahahahah”

Dridrim laughs too and they move on. The light is dimmer in the forest with all the trees branching out . The light is always dimmer in the forest, especially in one as dense as this not. However this time the light is more dim than one would expect. Their path lays ahead of them. No need to search for a direction. The paths on this forest are easy to see and follow. The Orcs are big and heavy. They leave a nice and easy trail to follow. They need to locate that one tribe to settle the grudges and go home. Simple mission, easy to accomplish. This should take no time. Maybe they they can be home for dinner if they get lucky.

They start to follow the path taking them deeper into the forest. They do not deviate from the path at all. They do not branch out in the forest. They are not here to site sighing they are here for one reason and one reason only. Dwarfs always move in close formations no matter the size of the party. From the first steps into the forest, they knew they were not alone. Someone is watching them. Their gaze has intensified as they move deeper into the forest. This makes both Deldrir Ironsight and Dridrim uneasy. On the other hand the twins are enjoying their walk in the forest. Deldrir Ironsight Seeing the twins like this is both angry that they are not “proper” soldiers in a mission and happy with how relaxed they are. If he sensed any immediate threat, he would pull them back in order and readiness, but since there is nothing threatening around, he decides to let them have this moment... I could be last relaxing moment they get for a while.

The “illness” of Dridrim was just a brief adjustment to the sudden sense of a lot of Dark Magic in the area. Deldrir Ironsight felt it too. Is the goblin watching them? Is it back again? Deldrir Ironsight wonders. Maybe, it is the goblin, maybe it is something or someone else. Easy mission, settle the grudges, he thinks. He is trying to even convince himself that maybe this whole thing is in his old battle worn mind. However he fails to do so. His instincts are too strong and too trained over time to ignore or dismiss the signs around them.

Deldrir Ironsight:” Twins keep walking.. don't change your pace.. we are been watched.. stay alert.”

The twins do as they are commanded. They are not sure what Deldrir Ironsight means. They have not sensed or heard anything, but they trust him. They keep walking with their military steady pace through the forest. Alert as ordered to

be. Ready to defend themselves. In a couple of hours they will reach the first Orc settlement. Deldrir Ironsight is no stranger to this forest. He knows it well. Better than he would like to have know it. He would rather had spend his time under the mountain and not under the trees, but again he has no choice.

As they get closer to the first destination. Deldrir Ironsight stops. Dead cold. Standing very still and quite.

Dridrim: "What is it brother? Whats wrong?"

Deldrir Ironsight: "There is a clearing up ahead"

Dridrim: "Yes. I can see it. What about it?"

Deldrir Ironsight: "There should not be a clearing there... unless I am getting to old."

Dridrim: " I see.... Well we are ready! No?"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Yes. We are"

adding a "i hope so" inside his head.

Deldrir Ironsight slightly punches one of the twins on shoulder and moves forward. The twins got the message, loud and clear. And they follow in formation, left and right of Deldrir Ironsight with Dridrim behind him. They move straight to the middle of the clearing that should not have been there.

The clearing is not big as natural clearing are. It feels man made. As the get closer and while looking around they notice the that this clearing is a perfect circles.. There is only one thing that can make "perfect" circles. Magic. And this must be Dark Magic. So much for an easy mission. Still moving in the same pace like nothing has changed. Need to go through the clearing to get to their first destination. Going around is no option. At least not for a dwarf that is.

They make it to the middle of the clearing. As they walk and almost at the middle Deldrir Ironsight shouts " Runic Shield". The twins break formation and the first twin moves forward rising the shield in defense while the second twins hides behind it putting Deldrir Ironsight behind him creating a linear formation, and rises the shield above his head and kneels in front of Deldrir Ironsight. At the same time as Deldrir Ironsight rises his hammer in the air and Dridrim throws a shinning Rune Stone in the air in the direction of the second twin which is holding the shield above his head. As the rune stone approaches the shield Deldrir Ironsight brings his hammer down with all his might and smashes the Rune Stone on to the shield in to dust. A bright glowing dust emanates from the location. The twin rises up fast and does a spin around himself spreading the dust around the tight Dwarven formation and take position next to his sister.

Tight formation two shields at the front, one engineer in the middle and a Rune Priest at the rear. Eyes open. Adrenalin rising. Is this it? The twins wonder while standing fast. The dust spreads slowly around them. They were right; some one

was watching them and it was not the goblin. Surrounded they are now. Not unexpected nor surprising. Dwarfs are used to be surrounded and fight bigger numbers. That was not the problem. The problem was that these foes should not have been here. They have no place in this forest. This is trouble at the least.

Witch Elfs!. The Dark elf assassins. One is enough to dispatch quite few enemies and NEVER be seen. But here, there are six of them. Six deadly enemies, versus four Dwarfs. Not a very fair fight... for them foolish Elfs that is, as they have never fought THIS master Dwarf before.

No more words need to be spoken after the magical shroud hiding the Witch Elfs is lifted with the power of the Runes. Surrounded... good Deldrir Ironsight thinks, we don't have to go chase to kill these ones. That small smile of satisfaction appears on his face again. All dwarfs attack with no delay or hesitation simultaneously the Witch Elfs. The twins charge with a shield reprisal on the Witch Elfs on the right and the left side of Deldrir Ironsight knocking them down on the ground and smash their faces in with their axes. The witch Elfs thought they were safe. They didn't realize that they have been detected and that their magic shroud was diminishing. Now they know. As the twins carry on their attacks, Deldrir Ironsight with one blunderbuss drops dead the two standing straight in front of them. That leaves the two Witch Elfs at the rear. Deldrir Ironsight fears that Dridrim will have no chance against two of them damn assassins, and as he thinks of this, the remaining two Witch Elfs seeing the others fall, leap out of the shadows with a treacherous assault with their daggers pointed at Dridrim's back.

As the daggers come close to Dridrim's back they shatter in to pieces and a shining glimmering light surrounds Dridrim. The Witch Elfs were startled by this and stand still for a moment trying to understand what happened. This one moment will also be their last. Our dwarfs don't need more than one moment to attack. The twins charge in again with a punishing blow and end those retched Witch Elfs. All six of them dead in mere seconds. Not a fair fight, indeed. Experience has beaten those over confident Witch Elfs feeling safe, hidden, in their magical shroud. Big mistake.

Dridrim's combat experience saved his Dwarven hide once again. It appears that Dridrim, since they entered the forest and felt ill from the amount of Dark Magic in the area he activated one of his Runes. The Rune of Shielding. A powerful battle Rune that works like an invisible shield against all physical attacks. The down side is that it can only fend off a few attack. It does not come close to the defense of a Dwarven crafted shield, but it comes handy in situations like this one. Good thing he is paranoid! Or is he? Either way. Deldrir Ironsight is happy that his brother made it and he gives him a nice friendly pounding with his fist on the shoulder. Well done, brother, you had me worried there for a moment, and he laughs.

Dridrim with a nod show him to look behind him. Deldrir Ironsight turns only to see one more Witch Elf coming out of the shadows walking slowly towards them. This one is different from the ones they just fought. It is clear that this one is different, very different. As she approaches, she claps and has a smile on her face.

Witch Elf: " Well done Dwarfs..Well Done!"

Deldrir Ironsight: " You don't belong here Elf! These lands belong to the Dwarfs"

The Witch Elf reply's with a condescending voice saying:

Witch Elf: " I go where I please "Dwarf" besides....

Deldrir Ironsight: "Besides what? There is no besides. You are not welcomed to these lands."

Witch Elf: "Besides...(she continuous) the Lands belong to the Dwarfs for now..."

Deldrir Ironsight: " For Now and for ever Elf. If you think you can take these lands think again, you pointie ear elf!

Witch Elf: "Now, now, Master Dwarf.. insults are beneath you. However I did not come here today to fight you. "

Deldrir Ironsight: "Oh?!! Oh?!! This should be good.."

and he looks are Dridrim.

Witch Elf: "My scouts, the ones you just killed by the way, were looking for something...that's all."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Hmm..Looking for something eh? I see.. and what would that be?...ehm..Elf?"

Pauses for a brief moment and continues with a more firm voice to say to the Dark Elf: "You tree folks think you can go anywhere and do anything as long as there are trees around. You better get out of our lands while you..."

And before he has time to finish his sentence with a swift move the Dark Elf makes a move like throwing something in their direction. A mere moment later a dagger appears as if shrouded in Dark Magic leaving a faint dark smoke on it's path which is straight to the dwarfs.

The have no time to react. Although they all were on their toes ready to fight this Elf or any other hiding the shadows; this attack got them out of balance. They try to make a move to avoid it, but it seen futile. Never the less they move as fast as they can while thinking their counter move. As they try to move out of the way they notice that the knife is not aimed at them. It was thrown to something behind them.

A sound of something getting hurt is heard and the dagger ends in a tree behind them. As they turn they catch a glimpse of a goblin vanishing in Dark Magic shroud. Blood on the grass where the goblin vanished.

Deldrir Ironsight shouts" No one walks these days!!! Everyone is using Magic!

And then he turns his eyes on the Dark Elf and “ You could of hit us you stupid Elf.”

Witch Elf: “If I wanted to hit you I would. The same that IF I wanted you dead, you would be Dead the moment you entered this forest. Like I said... we were looking for something, and your stink drove it away. At least now it will not go far, now that I wounded it.”

Deldrir Ironsight: “What is your business with the goblin?”

Witch Elf: “Oh ! I see that you know of the goblin! Aren't you full of surprises Dwarf. Maybe I have underestimated you.”

Deldrir Ironsight: “These are Dwarf lands. I know all that goes on here!!”

Witch Elf: “Dwarf lands for now..remember?.. and you don't know it all Master Dwarf ... not all”

The Dark Elf steps back into the shadows laughing and blowing a kiss to Deldrir Ironsight while vanishes as quick as she appeared. This encounter only created more question to Deldrir Ironsight and the kiss not a good sign. The kiss of the Witch Elf is a Kiss of Death. He now has been marked. Not the first time this has happened to him, but never a good sign to have a target on your back.

The Dark Elfs NEVER come to Dwarf lands. They know better than that. There is only one reason for them to be out here. Either they are after someone important that fled to this lands hoping to be saved knowing that the Dark Elfs will think twice to follow them. OR..OR..they have really gone insane. There is no way the Dark Elfs would even consider doing that. Nah, He thinks.. no Dark Elf Lord is that crazy to challenge the Dwarfs. The goblin however. IS that goblin so important for the Dark Elfs to venture into our lands? Hhhmmm, Maybe I need to capture that goblin and find out for myself what is going on.

Deldrir Ironsight after taking a brief moment in his thoughts says to the rest of his Dwarven brothers in a manner indicating that nothing has just happened:

“We need to move on lads, there are grudges to be settled and they will not settle themselves.” As they move he also points out to the party that they should be careful from now on for the Dark Elfs and the Orcs in a “funny” kind of way “Hehe, and don't forget to look out for those pointy ear pansies, they might want to give some more practice today!” and laughs out loud.

The twins fall on his sides again with a smile on their faces both for what Deldrir Ironsight just said and from the excitement of their first real fight. They did well.

They follow in a more confident manner. Deldrir Ironsight he can see this and hopes that their first fight with some scouts, will not make them overconfident. In the mean while, Dridrim also follows at the rear of the formation and he definitely looks worried and you almost can see the dark thoughts that go through his mind right now. Dridrim is not stranger to the Dark Elfs and their magic nor their vicious nature. He has fought them along side Deldrir Ironsight

many times. Perhaps more than he would like. The Dark Elfs are treacherous and full of deception. You can not trust nothing the say or do. They will do anything by any means necessary to get what they want. They have no honor, no code. Their mastery in the Dark Magic makes them even more deadly. They have a vast amount of dark tools in their disposal to kill and trick. Anyone near them is in danger and should look twice before acting or talking with them.

As they reach the other end of the clearing, the path lays in front of them once again. They pause for a moment look at each other and push on. They need to find that tribe the Orc came form and settle those grudges fast. Time is now of the essence. The presence of the Dark Elfs has changed a lot. This is no longer a simple mission to settle grudges. The grudges need to be settled and will be no matter what. Never the less they need to settle them fast and start dealing with the true reason or reason the Dark Elfs are here.

Many more questions come to mind as they walk down the path. This is not really a great time to get lost in your thoughts, but Deldrir Ironsight can not help it. He had some questions when they started this quest. Now he has more questions and even more serious ones. Everything that has to do with Dark Elfs is serious and can not be taken lightly. Taking the presence of the Dark Elfs lightly or anything regarding the Dark Elfs could be a matter of life and death.

CHAPTER IX

GRUDGES SETTLED

Our Dwarfs are on their way to settle those grudges they have with the orcs. The day was long and they are tired but yet they push on. Soon it will be night time. They need to find a place to rest and eat. As they follow the path towards the first tribe village that Deldrir Ironsight remembers, they come closer to the more rocky part of the forest. This might be good for them, as they could find some shelter under a rock. Much better to sleep under a rock or a small cave than just under the stars. Too many dangers out there in the open. Besides all dwarfs feel much better to have a "rock" above their heads.

The Dwarfs are lucky and find a nice small cave to rest for the night. Their luck was not the best so far, so this lucky break feels good. They were on a simple mission, to find the Orc's tribe and show them that you can not mess with the Dwarfs and settle the grudges. Now this mission has gotten even more complicated with the arrival of the Dark Elfs. The mission has become more dangerous, especially with the twins being so new to combat. Deldrir Ironsight is worried if they will all make it back, and even more the twins. Those Dark Elfs are not to be underestimated at all. Never the less he needs to keep appearance up and the moral, he can't be seen worried.

In the small cave after they secure it, they proceed to make a small fire to warm up and rest. The fire needs to be small, they don't need the extra attention after the day they had. Deldrir Ironsight is not willing to take any chances. The twins will start the night watch and they will rotate every a few hours until the morning comes. They can not afford let their guard down, even more now the the Dark Elfs are in play.

Although the twins are standing guards Deldrir Ironsight is still unable to sleep. His mind is troubled with thoughts of the events of the last few days and what it all means and whether they are connected or not. There has to be meaning to it all... the goblin, the Orc, and now the Dark Elfs. I can't be just random events. His mind keeps wondering, trying to understand all these, keeping him awake for most of the night. He managed to sleep only a little bit before its time to wake up and take his guard post. Dwarfs, they all do their part no matter the rank. They all do their part indeed.

Morning comes again and no closer to settling the grudges or getting any answers. From the little they can see from the tree leaves, a good day. But will it be a good day for them? That's the big question! They are all awake, no need for Deldrir Ironsight to wake anyone up. They secure their camp, gear up and getting ready to move out. In a few minutes they are all set and on their way to settle those grudges once again. They all have this feeling that today is the day for those grudges to be settled, you can see it in their eyes. In all their eyes, along with the great determination to get this done.

A few hours later and with no incidence they arrive to the first Orc village. Of course Dwarfs and Orcs are mortal enemies and one would think that they would attack Dwarfs on site and ask questions later. That would be true a few

decades ago. After the Great Dwarven Campaign the Orcs had been decimated, leaving only a few scattered tribes around. The Dwarfs wanted to kill them all and get rid of all Orcs and goblins from their lands once and for all, besides that was the purpose of the Great Campaign.

The campaign was a success but there was a small complication. The campaign had taken long to complete. The Orcs were not easy to kill, they put up a fight worthy of any Dwarf to fight and die. Towards the end however and as the Dwarfs were getting ready to track down the last remaining, few I might add, Orcs they had to stand down.

The High Elfs come forward, warning the Master Dwarfs that they need to stop. They must not destroy all the Orcs no matter how much they want. They still have a part to play in the future in this plane. The master Dwarfs of course laughed and they were very dismissive of the High Elfs, even when the warning come for the High Elf Lords themselves. Stubborn to the last. This is something that the High Elf Council had foreseen clear and they were prepared for this Dwarven decision. Most likely they even expected that the Dwarfs would react to their warning this way even with out their powers of foresight. The High Elf Council had not choice but to force the Dwarfs to stand down. The High Elfs, made a "deal" with the master Dwarfs to stay in their mountains that they understand and leave the forests to them or they will be forced to stand again the Dwarfs in this.

The Dwarf Masters reacted with aggression and after a few days of arguing between themselves, they decided that they did not have the resources to hunt the remaining Orcs and fight the High Elfs at the same time, plus the High Elfs had been their allies for eons and their foresight is not to be ignored. Despite the fact that Dwarf and High Elfs are not on a first name bases or break bread together they both understood the value of having a strong allies in times of need, even if you don't keep company in a daily bases. This Dwarf - Elf alliance was a necessity, and both sides knew that it needs to be kept intact. This was achieved by both parties staying in their lands and did not bother the other, unless it was absolutely necessary.

The Dwarfs argued to the High Elfs that if the Orcs and goblins are left unchecked they will gather their armies again and seek vengeance becoming a much bigger problem, than they were. The High Elfs took the full responsibility of keeping an eye on the Orc population to make sure that they live "peacefully" in the land with in the forest and prevent any massive gatherings.

No one, of course was fooled by this "check" the High Elfs spoke of. All the Dwarfs knew that one day will come and they will have to defend their lands again against the Greenskins. So the Dwarfs backed down and the few Orcs were allowed to survive. The Dwarfs up to this day they have no idea why they needed to back down or why they Orcs according to the High Elfs had to survive. They however were and still are getting ready with armor, weapons and gadgets to defend their lands from the Greenskins and anyone else that might want to taste Dwarven steel in their mouth.

Arriving at the entrance of the Orc village they are “welcomed” by an Orc, possibly the leader of this village. The size of this Orc was impressive. Tall and massive. This Orc looked battle worn, one of those that you never want to face alone when its angry. A true beast. The Orcs will not have any Dwarf stepping in their village for any reason. They may not have the power to kill them on sight these days, but that doesn't mean that their blood is not boiling for some Dwarf smashing, BUT they know the consequences. They also have learned how to be patient and buy their time until they are ready to strike back and take their revenge for the Great Dwarf Campaign.

Village Orc: “ You not welcomed er Stuntie”

Deldrir Ironsight: “Neither are you but here we are!”

Village Orc: “What da want?”

Deldrir Ironsight: “Looking for the tribe with the yellow Mork crest”

Village Orc: “We not it...go now!”

Deldrir Ironsight: “IF you know where I can find them you better talk, IF you know what is best!”

Village Orc: “Waaagh! Or what? You do what you stunties did to da village oda village?”

Deldrir Ironsight: “What we did? What happened to that village Orc?”

Village Orc: “Da stunties happened! YOU burned it down!! Waaagh!”

Deldrir Ironsight: “Hmm.. Where did we burn it down?”

Village Orc: “West, a day travel stuntie! Now Go!”

Nothing more is needed to be said. Deldrir Ironsight Spits in front of the feet of the Orc making him very angry. He can see the anger rising on the Orc's face. Been called a stuntie is no light insult. Never the less the Orcs will have to swallow its anger and blood lust. They lack the manpower to challenge to Dwarfs head on.

Deldrir Ironsight turns away from the villages entrance to continue west to track that village, but as he does, with the corner of his eye he sees that,by now, well know Dark Magic shroud dark smoke. It is small, it must be the goblin again. Deldrir Ironsight turns back to the Orc villager and asks:

Deldrir Ironsight: “Have you seen any goblins lately?”

Village Orc: “Goblins? By Mork NO!”

Deldrir Ironsight: “Very well!”

Village Orc: “Leave Stuntie. No more of da questions!”

Deldrir Ironsight got all he needed to know from this encounter and moves on with the rest of the Dwarfs. Unfortunately now he has more questions and mysteries to solve.

Dwarfs burning down Orc villages? Why? I mean we haven't done that for decades and the High Elfs.. where are they? They are the reason these abominations are still alive. THEY should have prevented this. At least now it makes sense why that one Orc came in to MY house raging, causing all that havoc. The goblin that used Dark Magic is everywhere. I need to catch that goblin he thinks, that one, will have answers. Maybe not all, but will have answers. For now we need to keep our eyes open and their time will come. Right now we have grudges to settle. One thing at the time.

Back on the road due west. Deldrir Ironsight not paying much attention to anything as he should. He is lost in this thoughts and memories. So many things are in motion and he needs to find the connection and why all this is happening. Is the same happening to the other Dwarf strongholds or only on his in the east. So many parts are moving. Orcs, Goblins, Dark Elfs, Dwarfs.

He misses the old days when things were a bit simpler. Dwarfs on one side, Orcs on the other, slaying and smashing each other for days. No plots, no conspiracies, no backstage dealings. Just honorable combat. Dwarf versus Orcs. Its a nice sentiment, but the past is the past and now if he wants to protect his brethren, he will have to figure this one out. Figure it out on his own. Besides Dridrim he can not trust anyone else, not now that the Dark Elfs are involved.

Their path to the next village on the west is clear so far and it has gone with no problems or otherwise unforeseen encounters. Finally a quite day, but Deldrir Ironsight is still uneasy. Since they started this journey, the days were full of encounters as unexpected as they might have been! He does not welcome the quite ..not just yet. It is time to take a break, they have been walking for hours.

As they sit down on the side of the road, under the shade of a oak tree. Deldrir Ironsight Brings out his pipe and starts smoking getting deeper is his thoughts. Dridrim starts to eat something while checking on what runes he has in his bag. He wants to make sure that he will be even more prepared for whatever comes next. That earlier encounter with the Witch Elf scouts, made him be more weary. The twins are eating while chatting about the earlier encounter, happy with how they performed. The young ones are feeling great right now and excited for more battles. Dridrim can see that and sees his younger self in them, putting a smile on his face for a while.

After this short break our Dwarfs are ready to get back on track. Nothing suspicious so far. It seems like this have calmed down a bit. In a few hours they should be arriving on the next village. If all goes well they will be there late afternoon. As the approach the next village Deldrir Ironsight doesn't want to go straight in to it. They leave the path and hide in the bushes near by. Dridrim asks why they do this. It is unlikely for Dwarfs to hide, make abuses yes, but hide?

Deldrir Ironsight: "Be quite Dridrim. I need to see what is going on here."

Dridrim: "Whats going on? We go in and we settle the grudges!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Dridrim be quite. WE do it my way!"

Dridrim stays quite now with an obvious disappointment in his face, but he knows when to he needs to stop arguing with his brother. Still he is curious now to find out what Deldrir Ironsight wants to see. They lay there quite for awhile. The Night falls and the dwarfs are still hiding in the bushes. Nothing has happened yet. It seems like the Orcs are just going on about their bushiness, as they should have as well. Dridrim gets more upset with this situation and mumbles "Sitting here like cowards and not settling the grudges already". Deldrir Ironsight hears this, but says nothing. Keeps watching the Orc village.

It will be a difficult night with no fire, possible no sleep, so close to an Orc village. Deldrir Ironsight now wants to get closer to be able to see inside the village walls. So far observing from this distance was not yielded any information or insight to help with some of the questions he has. He takes Dridrim and move closer while ordering the twins to stay put and be quite.

Moments later and to their luck Orcs are gathering around the main fire burning in the village. The Orcs seem to be calm and just enjoy the warmth of the fire. Again nothing out of the ordinary. Dridrim has not idea on what Deldrir Ironsight is expecting to see or find out with this hide and seek.

Then out of thin air the goblin appears again.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Look Dridrim.. the goblin is here"

Dridrim: "Oh that sneaky little thing!"

Now Dridrim know what Deldrir Ironsight was waiting for. The goblin looks wounded, possibly from the Witch Elf's dagger. The goblin starts talking with an Orc sitting next to the fire.

The Orc the goblin is talking to, who is it? Is it the village leader? Deldrir Ironsight curses for a while, for having even ore questions and no answers, but has no choice for now but to watch and see what happens next. As they watch the conversation between the Orc and the goblin carry on fro a while. All seem normal. But then all chance. The Orc gets a bit aggravated and moves around waving his hands threatening the goblin. The movements of the Orc next to the fire show off his tribe colors that can be seen thanks to the big bright fire burning. Now Deldrir Ironsight sees it. The yellow mark of Mork on that Orc and now he is sure that there is a connection between the goblin and that tribe.

However the rest of the tribe has a different mark. Strange the Orc tribes don't mix. Damn it! Deldrir Ironsight thinks.. more questions than answers again. Never the less now he has a plan of action. First thing in the morning, they will go in and get that Orc and even if for whatever reason is the only Orc of that tribe here... he will talk!! The conversation goes on between the goblin and the Orc for a while longer until the goblin seems to be in distress looking around

anxiously. The Orc seems to try and grab the goblin to calm it down but then the goblin vanished into the shadows again and before that Dark Magic smoke disappear a new one appears a few meters from where the goblin was.

The Dark Elf, of course. Deldrir Ironsight is intrigued to see if the Dark Elf will talk to the same Orc. She tries but the Orc ignores her and moves on. The Elf looks displeased but she can't do much at this point, not while in the middle of the village. Even she would not escape the clutches of the orcs if she tried something now.

The Orc moves to the sides and the leading orc of the village comes closer to the Dark Elf and they start talking. Deldrir Ironsight can't hear what they say but soon enough the rest of the village is gathering around. The leader at the front and the rest of the villager behind him. They are all listening to the Dark elf. Deldrir Ironsight cant make out if she is asking questions, maybe about the goblin she is after or addressing the entire village.

Deldrir Ironsight and Dridrim both keep watching carefully and wait. It seems that the Dark Elf is addressing the village. Deldrir Ironsight he sees a change in the Orc behavior. He knows that mood. He has seen it before. That is battle anxiety. Restless, blood thirst. Could it be? The Dark Elf is preparing the Orcs for war? They barely have enough to fight a Dwarven stronghold, that would be suicide he thinks. After a while the Dark Elf also vanishes in the Dark Magic shroud, like she was never here. Time to get back to the twins. They got all that they needed it from this.

The need to rest now and get ready to the next day. Slowly and quietly they make it back to the twins, in the bushes they were hiding. All together move even further from the village and the path to find a better spot to spent the night. It doesn't feel very safe so close to an Orc village at night. Deldrir Ironsight is still troubled with this situation, with the many unanswered questions. Every time the thinks he finds an answer he also gains two more questions.

The first one been, how do I get that dark a magic shroud...everyone seems to have one! Do you guys know?

They find a spot out of the beaten path to rest. Of course they will take guard shifts again but no one will really sleep well or a lot tonight. The dawn is near and yet everyone is awake and ready for whatever is to follow. There is only one thing sure for this day coming, at least some grudges will be settled.

CHAPTER X

GRUDGES NEVER END

The morning comes fast. No one slept again. Each one of our Dwarfs for different reasons. Deldrir Ironsight is troubled with the bigger picture, the plots and what is to come next. The twins from the anxiety of what will happen and they both can't wait to get into a fight again. And fro Dridrim.. well he is just insane.. lets leave it at that.

Ready to go and settle the grudges and maybe get some answers. They gear up, group up and they move to the village entrance. As they approach, they don't have to wait for someone to show up. There is already someone blocking, erm waiting for them at the entrance.

Orc Villager: "Go no further Stuntie! "

Deldrir Ironsight stops...

Deldrir Ironsight: "Grudges need to be settled. Send out the Orc with the yellow Mork Marking..NOW!"

Orc Villager: "We have no Orc with da! Go away!"

Deldrir Ironsight: " I will not ask again. The grudges must be settled!"

The Orc with the yellow Mork markings pushes the Orc Villager on the side.

Ugmak:"I am the Orc you seek. What grudges are there to be settled Stuntie?"

Deldrir Ironsight: " A tribe member of yours, has assaulted my stronghold and Brothers of mine have died. Their grudges need to be settled."

All Orcs know what it means for a Dwarf to settle grudges. The Dwarfs need to kill two for every one they have lost to settle their grudges. The Orcs know what is coming. Before the Great Dwarven Campaign this would have been dealt very differently. The Orcs would have already smashed to a pulp these few Dwarfs. Unfortunately for them, those days are gone. All they can do now is to watch if they don't want to be extincted. Not even the mighty High Elfs can stop a Dwarf from settling grudges.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Do you know why that Orc filth did this?"

Ugmak: "Maybe cause you stunties destroyed our village almost killed everyone?"

Deldrir Ironsight:"Almost everyone, so there are more of you left then?"

Ugmak: "No stuntie. We are... we were the last two of my tribe. Your grudges will end here with me!"

Deldrir Ironsight:"I see...."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Before we settle this... can you tell me why we destroyed your village?"

Ugmak: "That's what stunts do!"

Nothing more need to be said. The grudges will be settled and both parties know what needs to be done. Deldrir Ironsight pulls his gun out and shoots Ugmak at the entrance of the village. Ugmak falls on the ground and the blood runs down to touch the boots of Deldrir Ironsight. Quick and painless, a courtesy to the last member of the tribe. Everyone knew this was coming.

With a loud steady and commanding voice courtesy says for all to hear. "The grudges have been settled. No more blood needs to be spilled today." And he starts to move backwards, always keeping eye contact with the rest of the Orcs in the village. Every step he and the other Dwarfs take backwards the Orcs take one forwards. Every step Deldrir Ironsight takes also leaves a bloody boot print on the ground making the Orcs even more angry. This "dance" continues until the Orcs are above Ugmak's dead body and the Dwarfs in a safe distance to turn their backs and be on their way.

Since the Orcs are in such a bad shape and they don't have the resources to start a war why are the Dwarfs so weary as to walk backwards? Well.. you can never be too sure of the Orcs for one. Secondly they are severely outnumbered. There is really nothing stopping the Orcs of kill them and disposing their bodies so that no one will ever find them. The Only possible reason is that they know who Deldrir Ironsight and if he is killed found or not....the Dwarfs will never stop searching making their lives even more miserable.

Now they feel that they are in a safe distance and they turn their backs to the Orcs. After taking a step and feeling a small relief that this part was completed and that the grudges were settled fully, then it happened. Disaster struck. A warm feeling cover the entire body of Deldrir Ironsight and then excruciating pain on both side of his body, and a female voice at the same time whispering: "Today I want you dead Dwarf. Today you die!". Deldrir Ironsight falls to his knees. The pain is too much but still no sound. He will not give the satisfaction to that tricky Dark Elf, not him.

The other Dwarfs turn around again as fast as they can but it is too late. Deldrir Ironsight all ready has fallen. The twins make an attempt to attack the Dark Elf but she vanishes in the Dark Magic shroud leaving behind only an evil dissipating laughter.

Deldrir Ironsight is still breathing. The twins take defensive positions between them and the Orcs, while Dridrim rushes to Deldrir Ironsight and attempts to contain the bleeding, trying to save him. Double stab wounds, one on each side. The vehement blades of the elf seems to have been poisoned with a heart render toxin and enchanted with Dark Magic. This makes it difficult to deal with. Especially with only one Rune Priest. Dridrim tries to help. He does his best, using all the runes he knows. He tries a combinations of them. The rune of restoration, the rune of mending but nothing works. He invokes the protection of the ancestors in a final attempt to buy time but nothing works.

The damage is too much, the magic is too strong. Dridrim is so angered after realizing that there is nothing he can do, at least not alone and not out here.

In his grief and anger, Dridrim starts to chant. This is not good, the twins think and look at each other. The Orcs are approaching them as well. They need to retreat and come back with reinforcements. Orcs on one side, possible Dark Elfs on the other and Deldrir Ironsight is dead. The Twins simple cant handle this. Dridrim's chanting is getting stronger. The Orcs know this..oh .. they know this.. Dridrim is getting ready to attack them. The Orcs may have stood down for the grudges to be settled, but this is unprovoked and they will defend themselves. Dridrim is clearly not thinking straight. This will get them all killed and there will no one left to come back and retrieve Deldrir Ironsight body nor to inform the rest of the Dwarf of this Dark Elf treachery.

The twins have no choice but to leave Deldrir Ironsight's body laying there and restrain Dridrim before he kills them all and retreat. They do this no pleasure, leaving Deldrir Ironsight's body, but they must. Dridrim is up set and resists the efforts of the twins to restrain him. He wants blood, don't care who's.. he just wants blood right now. Finally the twins get a good hold of him and start to move away from the body and into somewhat safety.

Grudges were settled toady indeed but new where made too. It seems that this mission, this quest, was not as simple as it looked a few days ago. A lot have transpired in these few days. So many that it would make anyone wonder how did all these came to pass, with out the Dwarfs ever realizing all this event were in motion. The destruction of the Orcs village that set Oggit in a destructive path. The Dark Elfs roaming the Woods so close to the stronghold. A mysterious goblin leaving a trail of Dark Magic in the region. The Orcs talking with Dark Elfs at night. They hate them as much as the Dwarfs do. The High Elfs not noticing or if they did not informing the Dwarfs of all this? So many events with so many question still to be answered.

All these will need to be answered, and as Deldrir Ironsight used to say, one thing at the time. However it looks like the time will never come for him now. It is up to Dridrim to find the answer for his brother and brethren before is too late. The stakes have been upped a lot. Dark times are coming for everyone. Both grudges and questions must be answered.

On the way back Dridrim rages on. Cursing everyone and everything starting with the twins. Blaming them for not reacting faster and protecting Deldrir Ironsight. Blaming them for not dying in this place. Cursing this damned moment in time. Cursing the Elfs for been the "protectors" of this forest and did nothing to protect Deldrir Ironsight. The Dwarfs for been lazy and not seeing this and prevent Deldrir Ironsight from going out to settle the grudges. The cursing and the raging has no end. Every one and everything is accountable and to be blamed for this. At least this blood lust has calm down a bit. Now the twins know why the other Dwarfs call him Dridrim the mad. Never the less the twins themselves wish that it was them that died and not Deldrir Ironsight. Besides that was their duty.

Dridrim can not carry on, in this course. He just can not. He stops and turns to the twins and says: "This is not happening. We are going back to take my

brother, our brother home. No arguments twins.”

The twins look at each other for a moment and nod to Dridrim. They are all in agreement that for better or worse they need, they must go home all of them. No one will be left behind and especially in Orc hands. They only wonder is fear and this time the took to calm down will cost them. Well, there is no need to waste time and dwell in thoughts like these. The need to get going and going they are.

They have not moved to far away. As the come closer to the village and near the spot of the incident, they do not see Orcs around the body of Deldrir Ironsight. The Orcs are still around the body of Ugmak and are getting ready to pic it up and take it to the village to get it ready for their rituals of the dead.

Deldrir Ironsight still lays face down on the ground, in the middle of the road in a blood of his own blood. Not a pretty sight to see for a Dwarf. An Orcs would welcome this sight and Dridrim is certain that the only reason the Orcs did not touch the body was to enjoy this view for as long as they could. Good thing for them. The now can take their brother back without been touched by filthy Greenskins.

As the approach the Orcs see them but they pay no attention to them. They have their own to tend to. Dridrim is somewhat relieved, but the twins are not. They are uneasy and it is not the Orcs. The look around. Dridrim there is something coming we can sense it. Strange Dridrim thinks they can sense it and I can not? They haven't sensed any of the Dark Magic or users of it so far. What can it be that hey sense and got them so weary?

The twins get more scared and uneasy the closer they get to the body of Deldrir Ironsight. It seems the thing they sense is emanating form the body or at least near the body. A few more steps they take and then a bright light breaks the dim light of the forest. The light is like a bream coming from heaven directly on top of Deldrir Ironsight body. The light is bright and it only become brighter with every moment. The twins can no longer look at it and rise their shield to cover their eyes. Dridrim on the other had been a rune priest and having been in the “presence” of GOD he still can watch with some difficulty but he can see. A hand comes out of the light and grabs the hand of Deldrir Ironsight and pulls him into the light. The hand pulls him like he is weightless. He is a fat old stubborn Dwarf but that seems to have no effect here.

Dridrim smiles. That is high magic. Valaya her self came down for you brother he thinks. Years of prayers were worth it. Dridrim's faith seems to be restored to some extent after all the cursing and the blaming. This is heard warming sights. But it does not settle any grudges. The Orcs are amazed with this sight. For a few moments everything and everyone is standing still. No noise, everyone is locked in their own thoughts of amazement or fear.

The moment has passed. The bright light is gone now and along with it the body of Deldrir Ironsight. The only thing remaining in the middle of that road is the blood pool. Even that is fading away from the heat the light did. Soon it will be like it never happened. But it did happen and Dridrim will make sure that those treacherous Dark Elfs will pay the price.

Time to go home and prepare to settle these new grudges, Dridrim says to the twins. The twins nod as usual and follow. The way back seem that it will be uneventful. This is a feeling Dridrim has right now. The few moments in the presence of the light calmed him down and now he thinks more clear than before. Now he has that look that Deldrir Ironsight had when he was thinking and creating a plan.

Some questions seem to have been answered for Dridrim now, but he is not sure if they are correct. He will have to find evidence before he is 100% certain and ready to call the council. One thing that seems clear to Dridrim is that the Dark Elfs, might have been looking for something or someone in the forest; however he can not shake the feeling that they were also targeting Deldrir Ironsight specifically. Why kill him... those Dark Elf assassins - Dridrim spits on the ground - could have killed us all in that moment. All of us were out of position and not ready. Instead the assassin got her one kill and vanished. Definitely he was THE target but why?

Perhaps back in the stronghold he will be able to figure out he answers to all these questions. There he can have the quite and peace needed to think and pray. Perhaps the divine can shed some light to this whole story. After all Valaya herself came down to welcome Deldrir Ironsight to the next life.

CHAPTER XI

DARK ELF AMBITIONS

The Dark Elves, or the Druchii as they call themselves in their own tongue, also known as Dark Ones", are one of the most ancient, powerful, and certainly the most sadistic of the three Elven civilizations of the world. A realm born from the depths of malice and hate, a kingdom that seeks nothing more than to despoil the world.

The Druchii are raiders, slavers and heartless reavers of the first degree, their every whim being nothing more than to sow misery and pain to all that oppose them, for misery and pain is the very lifeblood of their existence. The Dark Ones are so vicious that they don't even trust their own kind. They live in a world of deceptions, lies and treachery. Only the strongest survives and can rule through fear and cruelty. This way of life has led to many deaths and civil wars. There are plenty of civil wars in the history of the Dark Ones. The last civil war has brought two things. First, a new leader has emerged out of the conflict to lead the Dark Ones to a "new" era. The second one, a crippled realm with not many resources.

The rules are simple, the strongest rule and the rest follow for better or worst. That is, until the "weak" are given the opportunity to backstab the strong and rise to power. A vicious cycle indeed. The new leader of the Druchii, Rarzuk Dreadslayer, a bloodthirsty, throat slicing, psychopath. He has slain many of his own kin without a second thought or delay. His brutality is only rivaled by his own ambitions and delusions of grandeur. An Dark Elf with his personality, as a leader, can only mean one thing for the Dark Ones and that is war, bloodshed, spoils and plenty of death in their future.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer, in his own delusions of power, wants to conquer the known world. His only needs to do this is to fuel his own ego, and feed his blood thirst by killing everything in his path. He wants to drown the High Elves in blood for pushing them to that forsaken part of the world and helping others when they were trying to expand in the past. Annihilate the Dwarfs to steal their gold and fuel his bloody campaign and of course weaken the High Elves since they are allies with the Dwarfs. The Orcs are filthy creatures and make no sense to him to even exist and that goes for the goblins too. The humans need to die because they have a tendency to get involved in their plans since they are so "righteous".

His hate for the peoples of this world is immense and never ending. Now, he is setting his focus on achieving these ambitions. He has been planning and plotting towards this end for many years now, and in many ways. The only thing that he needed to set his plans in motion was to take the leadership of the Druchii so that he can get command of all the resources of the realm. Now he has it; and he is ready to unleash his hate to the world.

He may be a psychopath, but he is a patient psychopath with some very powerful Dark Magic on his side. He will not rush into decisions nor actions. He is savoring all the moments of slaughter and torture that will come in the future. He is already imagining the battles, the kills, the blood and all the things

he will do, to his enemies soon.... He is getting excited just on the thought of killing, pillaging and torture.

The plan is simple to its conception. Manipulate the key leaders and people in the other realms to do the hard work and when the time is right attack and conquer. This might sound like a simple and easy plan to accomplish, however, it takes time to find the right people, to build fake trust and to manipulate them to do your bidding or even worse to make them willing to betray their own kin.

These actions may take years sometimes. This is why Rarzuk Dreadslayer started on this path many years ago. He was so sure that one day he will rise to power, sooner than later, and he will need to be ready to execute his plans. He started slowly and locally as anyone would. You must first build a good and loyal group of followers to your cause. For this reason why he started a raiding guild. Druchii are natural raiders and slavers. With his ambition and his blood lust he soon became known and "loved". He was very successful and relentless in his "job". Anything not worth trading was killed and thrown away. No one was left to tell a tale. Many wanted to join his raiding guild, which was gaining fame and supporters by the day, and earn some of the gold and fame.

Using his newly found guild, he started to recruit more and more brutal and deranged Dark ones, promising them freedom to "express" themselves in the battles to come against the world. Filling their minds with delusion of grandeur like in his own mind. For many more years he was doing raids, saving gold, making connections in many areas in the Druchii realm and outside of it. Some times "friendly" connections and other times not so "friendly". He did not care why people were with him or afraid of him, he only cared to get his job done and get what he wanted.

A few years passed and the guild grew in members and in fame. It was time for Rarzuk Dreadslayer to move on to the next step of his grand plan. Now it was time to start "planting" people that he had groomed for the past few years in the right places. He needed to have people in the areas of power in the Druchii realm and permanent spies, reporting back to him directly, in all other regions to start gathering information about who would make a good candidate to use for his plans. With every move he did, with every successful step of his plan going in to motion, the more devious and delusional he would become.

He placed his spies in all the regions. In the Empire he needed spies to make sure that they will not interfere with his plans. He didn't want then to get any ideas that they need to be "righteous" and if they did, to be ready. In the High Elf regions he also needed eyes AND ears to make sure that if they even thought to get in his way to stop them with a preemptive strike. The Orcs were not a threat at this point, especially after the Great Dwarf Campaign, but they could be useful in his plans. In the Dwarf regions he needed to learn about their forces, weapons and intentions. Dwarfs are mighty and you never know what they might hide under those mountains. Very soon the information came in and the new plots started in his head, trying to formulate the best course of action to achieve his ambitions of grandeur and conquest.

While his spies were settling in, in the various regions he had to settle in his new position of power as well. Being in power in the realm of Druchii means

more enemies and more danger than any other position in the realm. Rarzuk Dreadslayer had to secure his position and find out who was on his side and who could turn on him and threaten his position. This had to be done before he could go to war, otherwise there was a great chance to be overthrown before or during his campaign. During this "investigation" many Druchii were tortured and killed even on the suspicion that they might betray him. This gave time to the spies to gather a lot of information and be useful. Been useless in Rarzuk Dreadslayer mind meant instantly death.

Securing and court was done in record time, since almost every single Druchii was afraid of Rarzuk Dreadslayer. Now time to focus again on initiating chaos. Going through the information gathered from the regional spies, he is looking for allies, weak spots and a reason to "justify" his campaign of terror. So far is not looking good for Rarzuk Dreadslayer. The Believers of Chaos are still trying to take over the Empire which means not an ally and also that the Empire and those "righteous" bastards will be busy and out of his way.

The High Elfs seem to be "quite" for now. This leaves the Dwarfs and the Orcs. Both enemies of the Druchii. Nothing seems to be helping him to move his plans forward. If there is a move to be made it has to be with the Orcs and the Dwarf regions, he thinks... the has to be something there. He ordered the spies in the region to find him a way to start his campaign and an ally since the resources on his disposal were not many after the civil war. The orders were sent via the most trusted messenger he had. He wanted.. he needed to make sure that the presence of the messengers. This would also signify the importance of the orders and the consequences for not following or accomplishing them with a positive end result.

The orders were sent. Now he needs to wait but he is restless. As patient as he might have been, now that he is so close to achieve one of his bigger goals after so long... he is restless. Restlessness sometimes leads to mistakes. He as seen it many times in the past. He needs something to clear his mind and relax. He can not afford mistakes now.. not now.

Torturing some pour soul would diffidently relax him. It's been a while since he personally tortured anyone. All he has been doing recently was to order others to kill and torture. He was too busy, establishing himself to power. They had all the fun so far, now it's my time to have some fun, he thought and made his way to the dungeons, to find a new toy. Many choices in those dungeons, from Druchii to High Elfs. His raiders never stopped doing their "job". Many of those prisoners, where there to be tortured for information and it might be good to do it himself. This way he can relax and gain information, a win - win situation. This will keep him busy for a few days and hope that by then the spies will have something for him and with a relax clear head he will be able to continue his plans.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer from nobody, has become the number one Druchii. From nothing to what most Druchii, dream of. He has reached his first goal, his first conquest. But he is not even, at the least satisfied. He sees this newly won position as a stepping stone for a lot more. His ambitions are endless and greedy.

CHAPTER XII

PARTS ARE MOVING

The messenger arrives to the Orc forest with the message of the Druchii ruler.

The messenger is a surprise to the regional spy, for more than just one. The messenger is a goblin which is strange on its own, but a goblin coming out of a Dark Magic Shroud is even more strange. Goblins do not possess the knowledge nor the skills for something like this. Why the goblin knows what he knows will have to be investigated later, now the only thing that matters is the orders from Rarzuk Dreadslayer .

Goblin: "Are you Sosah Pyrebreker? "

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Yes", with a condescending tone and looking the goblin from top to bottom.

Goblin: "Here are your orders from master Rarzuk Dreadslayer."

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Master?" interesting she adds.

Goblin: "Read and start work now... "

Sosah Pyrebreker: "You are not to give me orders goblin!"

Goblin: "I..not.. Rarzuk Dreadslayer..is!"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "hmmmm. Let me read"

She reads the orders send by Rarzuk Dreadslayer and they are clear. Very simple and straight forward "Find a reason to attack the Orcs or the Dwarfs. Find any potential allies to assist as in the coming war fast."

Goblin: "You..not..looking too good rlfie!"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Shut it... !"

Goblin: "heheheh...Elfie ..in..trouble? Eh?"

Sosah Pyrebreker does not reply to that last comment of the goblin. She is really troubled with the orders she received. Up to this time, her life was easy, since nothing was really happening in that forest. So boring, that sometimes she felt like, she was in exile. Never the less, now she has to figure out a way to fulfill those orders and fast.

This will not be easy, she thinks, the Dwarfs are never here and finding a reason to attack the dwarfs? That is impossible. The Orcs is not even a challenge at their current state and if we attack it will only bring the High Elfs to their defense like during the Great Campaign. Not to mention that we are risking to bring the Dwarfs in this since they are allies with the High Elfs and

technically they own this forest. There has to be another way, she thought. For allies, what I do? There is no one really, there is only the Orcs, but then again not they way they are...

Sosah Pyrebreker sits down and gets lost in her thoughts. She is troubled about what course of action is there to take. She needs to find a way and fast. Indeed fast, because when Rarzuk Dreadslayer says fast he means fast. A few hours later she still has nothing, no ideas, no plan. It is better if she takes a break to clear her head, so she starts to talk to the goblin.

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Hey! Little man. How taught you Dark Magic? Eh?"

Goblin: "Master did!"

Sosah Pyrebreker: " Rarzuk Dreadslayer? Why would he do that? Teach a worthless goblin Dark Magic."

Goblin: "Master knows.. .i obey.. I do what masters says"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "And what master says?"

Goblin: "Bring Orders to you fast.. watch.. if you not do.. I kill!"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "You? Kill? Me? Don't make me laugh!"

The goblin starts to mumble what appears to be a high ranking Dark Magic spell. Sosah Pyrebreker cant even understand what spell it is. A few seconds later the goblin changes form to a horrific daemon. That demons was tormenting Sosah Pyrebreker since childhood. The daemon speaks to her.."master says do.. not talk... two days.. or Die".....

The goblin changes form again back to a small green goblin. Sosah Pyrebreker is now terrified of the power given to that little goblin. This is no joke, she thinks and gets back to her chair thinking.

It would seem that this vision of torment the goblin created, gave her an idea. That transformation of his inspired a devious plan in her mind. She will have to work on the details a bit before she is ready but it could work. She stays awake all night and so does the goblin. Loyal to this master the goblin obeys the commands of Rarzuk Dreadslayer to the letter.

Morning comes faster than she expected. So lost in her own thoughts and plots that she lost track of time. She calls for her aids to come and send out a message to 6 nearby witch elf assassins, to come at once and work for her, promising very high rewards. Well, the rewards need to be high so that they will drop any other "jobs" they might have and come at once. Time here is of the essence. Her plan is now in motion. Next move is to send a message to Rarzuk Dreadslayer and let him know that her plan is in motion and soon he will have a reason and an ally. She needs to make this work otherwise she will be in trouble for the last time in her life. The goblin takes the message and vanishes in the Dark Magic shroud. To her surprise the goblin appears again in a few minutes in front of her and say:

Goblin: " Message delivered... Masters say you have a few days to show results... or I ..."

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Yes, yes I know..You Kill me!"

The goblin laugh in the most sinister way possible... He is really looking forward in killing her.

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Don't get excited..Little man. I will make this work!"

Goblin: "You bet'er or....."

She turns around and starts to work on her plan. She needs to wait for the assassins to arrive to explain her plan to them and get started. Of course this plan as you can imagine will be in many steps to make it all work. The only problem here is that even Sosah Pyrebreker is not sure of all the steps yet. She has a bit of time, a day, to get everything sorted in her mind. Tomorrow the six assassins should be arriving and there will no time to waste. They need to act immediately.

Morning came fast again and as Sosah Pyrebreker expected the next morning the six assassins were there. The high promised rewards brought the assassins to her doorstep fast, just as planed. A good start, she thinks. Now to explain the details of the plan to them and get things started. They are running out of time as it is.

Since they can not attack the dwarfs or befriend the Orcs then they need to create a situation they can exploit. They need to make the Orcs angry with the dwarfs to want to fight them again. Of course the Orcs hate the dwarfs for the current state they are in, and for the Great Dwarven Campaign. With the passage of time though they have grown content with the current situation. The plan is to re-ignite this blood feud between the Orcs and the Dwarfs.

This will be hard to do with out showing that it is the Druchii behind this. For along time now Sosah Pyrebreker has been building relations with the Orc tribes. Getting contracts to assassinate some tribe leaders, change tribe votes here and there. With this interaction, she has both allies and enemies within the Orcs. This means that she might be able to ask some "favors" when needed. This also allows her to know which tribes are more blood-thirsty than others and this can give an edge to her plans.

The first step will involve using some of the witch Elfs and a powerful transformation spell, like the one the goblin used before. They will be transform themselves to Dwarfs and attack the weakest Orc village. This should be enough to start the feud again. Once this is done the Orcs will retaliate. The most likely attempt would be to try and kill a Master Dwarf as payback. This will force the Dwarfs to come out in force to settle those silly grudges of theirs. If they fail, then we are certain that this Master Dwarf will be the one to carry out the settling of the grudges and when he comes out of his stronghold we kill him for the orcs and start ourselves a nice little war!. The Orcs will be outnumbered and of course with a little help from my contacts they can ask us to help them

destroy the Dwarfs...in silence. This will come as a surprise and the dwarfs will not have time to request support from the High Elfs. That alliance maybe is not dead but it is not an active one either. This is an advantage for us.

Druchii live for these kind of deceptions. The plan is easy accepted from the Witch Elf assassins. This spell maybe powerful but is also well know from the Witch Elfs that pray on deceit, deception and hide in the shadows.

Witch Elfs: "The plan sounds easy to do. This will not be a problem"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Good!. I expect you to leave no witnesses. No one can know it was us."

Witch Elfs: "Do you think we are amateurs?"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Of course not. I am simply setting my term of payment"

Witch Elfs: "Good to know"

Witch Elfs: "Any more payment term we should be aware?"

Sosah Pyrebreker: " No. Just, kill them all, leave no witnesses. When its done you will be paid in full. Three of you will be needed for this assignment. Which three is up to you.

Witch Elfs: "Very well. 3 of us will get it done in the morning."

Witch Elfs: "What about the other three? We did not come here not get paid!"

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Don't you worry. I have something else in mind for you. An information gathering task. Goblin you go inform Lord Rarzuk Dreadslayer on the details of the plan. He waited enough, he will be pleased to know we start tomorrow and the details of the plan.

The third morning is here. I have managed to get it in time and send word to Lord Rarzuk Dreadslayer, let's hope this progress pleases him. The three witch Elfs are ready. Sosah Pyrebreker supplies them with some dwarf armor she has gathered over her time in the forest. The only thing left is to cast the spell, dress up and they are ready to start their killing and pillaging.

The Spell of transformation is both difficult and demanding. The amount of Dark Magic required to perform it are extremely high. This is a reason why it is rarely used or in emergencies. This definitely qualifies as an emergency. While the three witch Elfs are focusing to cast their spells, they sense someone watching them. Dark Magic can make you a little bit paranoid, especially if you are an assassin. Also when you tap into the Dark realms you never know who you will find staring back at you daemons? Fiends? They don't pay too much attention to this sense.

All is ready and the they start their journey to the Orc village. The goblin is still with Sosah Pyrebreker, watching waiting to see if he will get to kill her or not. The plan seems promising, he thinks, but that's for the master to judge.

Sosah Pyrebreker: "Aren't you supposed to go report to "Master?" "

Goblin: "He knows... "

Sosah Pyrebreker: "I am tired of having you around watching my every move!"

The goblin vanishes in his dark shroud.

Sosah Pyrebreker: " Finally some peace and quite."

Now that we have some peace and quite, we can talk about your tasks. I need the three of you to head out to the forest and find a good ambush spot for us. We might need that later on. Find a spot that we can modify to fit our needs and report back to me. We need to be prepared for all contingencies. Rarzuk Dreadslayer will not tolerate any mistakes. No mater how good a plan might be there is always something that can go wrong, so for all our sake lets be ready and have back up plans. Go!

CHAPTER XIII

THE PROPHECY

Our Witch Elfs are moving towards the Orc village they plan to initiate their plan. A bloody and messy plan, but that's how they like it. Their plan however did have a "small" flaw in it. They used the transformation spell. IF they had used one maybe thing could be different maybe. Not that they used three times the same powerful spell, they have conjured so much Dark Magic that the High Elfs sensed it. They sensed it in a big scale.

Although the Druchii come and go from the forest for quit a while now they have never had intrigued the High Elf interest. It is known that the Druchii have "people" in all regions. This amount of Dark Magic though, it was like an alarm going off. The amount of Dark Magic used to initiate their plan was so much that it was capable to interrupt the meditation of the Arch mages.

The Arch mages as many other magic using races tend to meditate a lot to calm their spirits and recharge themselves. Using magic of any kind has its side effects. Usually High Magic just wears you down and Dark Magic can change your psyche or even kill you. The Arch-mages where disturbed with this sense they got most of them. The Eldest Arch-mage Giolran the Elegant was also able get some foresight on the location that the magic was used. He got a glimpse of the what was happening. He saw three Witch Elfs changing into Dwarfs. He did not understand what he was watching at the moment. The sock of been awoken from this meditation along with the vision rendered him unable to distinguish between vision and reality.

It took him a little while to settle down and clear his head. Once he did he was able to look back into his vision and clarify what he seen. It was clear now that the Druchii where here and planing something to do with dwarfs. His mind did not connect this, at the time, with anything else. He immediately informed they high lords of this vision. It was at this moment, when he saw the High Lords face change, that he thought of the prophecy. It was a moment that both Elfs had the same freighting revelation of this vision. The High Lord orders Giolran the Elegant to fetch the prophecy parchment form the library, and carries on saying " We must revisit the prophecy to make sure!". We not delay or words Giolran the Elegant rushed out of the room and heads to the library's archives.

The High Lords is worried. He does not want this to be the case. Reading, understanding and preventing a prophecy is very hard and dangerous. There are no margins of error, not to mention that some may have to die. Tough choices all over. He needs to get himself ready to face whatever is coming, IF this is indeed the prophecy. He is almost certain in his mind though, that this is the one true prophecy starting. The only questions in his mind is where to start.

A few moments later and after a lot fo passing on the High Lords parts Giolran the Elegant returns with the parchment from the library in his hands. HE goes to the table near by and opens the parchment and proceeds on reading it. All doubts are cleared.

The Druchii are here fro sure. The amount of Dark Magic hey sensed confirms

their presence and their intent. Also it is clear that they need to start acting. According to the prophecy they have no time to rest or hesitate. Next thing they should do according to the prophecy, they need to locate a goblin that can use Dark Magic shroud? This seems impossible and wrong. Goblin with such powers? They are starting to slightly question the prophecy in their minds. However if the Prophecy says so there has to be some truth to it. Reading on they feel sad for the goblin's future. So much pain and suffering. Can a little goblin endure all that? They wonder....

The prophecy goes on about sacrifices people will have to make and how everything will be very delicate, on the edge and that the High Elfs will have to be very careful. Their intervention will have to be accurate to make things go the right way. At least that's how they interpreted the prophecy.

The other parts of the prophecy will fall into place as time goes by. Prophecies tend to follow events that happen in sequence. This is good. It gives time to the High Elfs to read, understand and interpret the prophecy. They should have done this years ago, but like everything else that is not an immediate interest they get forgotten to some degree over time.

They keep reading the Prophecy and the more complicated it gets for them to interpret. How will they help a stubborn Dwarf? Especially when he is wounded. He will want to settle his stupid grudges. Why is the prophecies never easy to understand or prevent?

The Dark Ones come in disguise, the prophecy says, but they are already here, no? Or is the prophecy talking about more Dark ones coming to our lands? We need to start watching everything and anything from now on the High Lords says, and Giolran the Elegant agrees. The rest of the prophecy is talks about that end and the bravery they will need to show. Never the less the prophecy does not seem optimistic for a positive outcome, if there is nowhere to run.

The High Elfs, The Eldest Race, The Asur, a proud and mighty nation of masterful warriors, peerless mages and lords of the sky and sea. They are an ancient race with powerful armies and even grander magic, a grand and all-mighty civilisation who, alongside the Dwarfs, the world was truly theirs for the taking.

Some of their mages, The Arch-mages, are so powerful that they can pierce the fabric of time. Their magical affinity gave them the ability to foresee past, present and future events. Unfortunately some times the events of the future were not so clear, as they tend to be prone to changes. For this reason the future fore sights were always treated with skepticism but never rejected.

One of those fore sights was the reason for the survival of the Orcs many years ago from the dwarf with the intervention of the High Elfs. As it is known the High Elfs intervened and "forced the Dwarfs Master Dwarfs sitting in the Council to seize their attacks on the Orcs during the Great Campaign, as a result the genocide of the Orcs was prevented. No one knew why they High Elfs did this, since they don't get along with Orcs any better than the Dwarfs do.

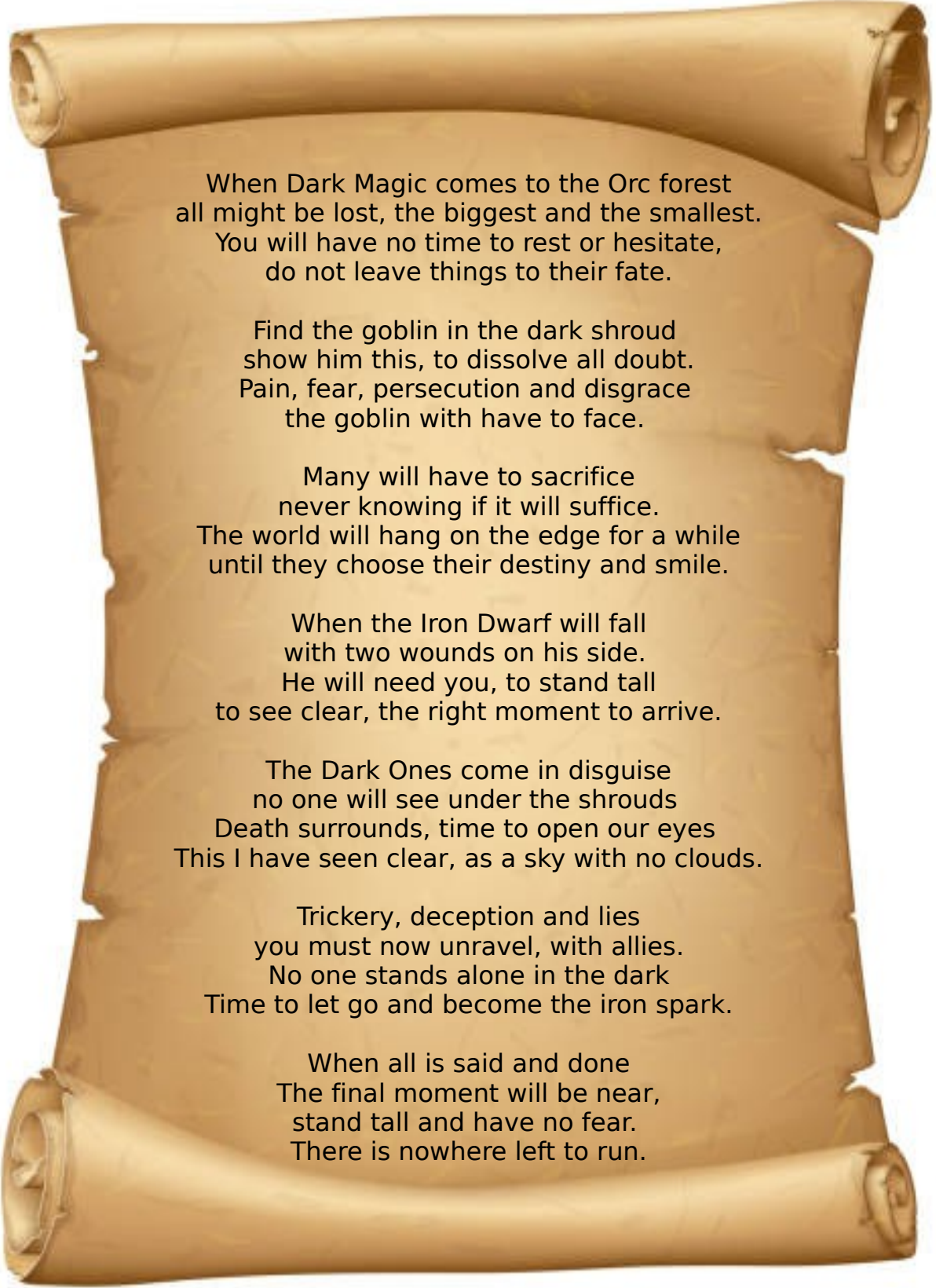
During the Great Campaign, the Arch mage Tezella the Wise, foresaw a very

horrifying future. The vision is told to have been so terrible that Tezella the Wise, cried black tears while the vision lasted. Her tears were collected and locked away in safety as a single tear infused with so much magic and pain could be disastrous. A single drop could destroy an entire forest in a matter of moments. This foresight, troubled the High Elf council that they never let it become forgotten.

Tezella the Wise, after the foresight she, was weakened. She used all of her life force to maintain the foresight to see as far as she could in the future and it came with a high cost, her own life. Once the vision had ended she called the high Lords and told them to stop the Orc genocide as the fate of the world depended on it. The High Lords did not question her demanding request and they acted immediately, as in these matters time is of the essence. Never the less, they expected more information and an explanation after this time sensitive mater was taken care of. Tezella the Wise, was know to give accurate fore sights and she was trusted by they High Elf Council unquestionably.

Unfortunately by the time the High Elfs intervned and came back to Tezella the Wise, for the explanation they wanted, it was too late. She had died with a single tear of hope on her cheek. A bright glowing tear, almost blinding. This tear was also collected and kept in safety. A tear with all the hope, magic and powers of an elder Arch mage. Someone could call this, her last will. As much power and life essence she had left, condensed into a single tear, to carry on her legacy. These tears were rare as the Arch mages usually had nothing at the time of their deaths, to make them cry with join or hope. Those tears were as powerful as the black tears, but with a significant difference. The tears of hope had the power to create a forest in a few moments or even bring back to life a loved one that was recently deceased. These tears were used only on people that were important in prophecies and other world threatening situations would other wise fail if they were not alive. The High Elfs did not use them for any other reason.

All the Lords assumed that she saw a last vision, a hopeful foresight at the time of her demise. It was also believed that she wanted to see more of this terrible foresight, to make sure that it could end well, that expedited her death. The only thing the left behind besides her tears, was a prophecy she wrote moments before her passing. A prophecy that would trouble the High Elfs up to this day. Always wondering, when it will come to pass and if they will be able do all that is needed to prevent that horrible future of Tezella the Wise vision.

A scroll of parchment with text. The scroll is unrolled, showing a central rectangular area with text. The edges of the parchment are slightly frayed and uneven. The text is centered and consists of several paragraphs of prose.

When Dark Magic comes to the Orc forest
all might be lost, the biggest and the smallest.
You will have no time to rest or hesitate,
do not leave things to their fate.

Find the goblin in the dark shroud
show him this, to dissolve all doubt.
Pain, fear, persecution and disgrace
the goblin with have to face.

Many will have to sacrifice
never knowing if it will suffice.
The world will hang on the edge for a while
until they choose their destiny and smile.

When the Iron Dwarf will fall
with two wounds on his side.
He will need you, to stand tall
to see clear, the right moment to arrive.

The Dark Ones come in disguise
no one will see under the shrouds
Death surrounds, time to open our eyes
This I have seen clear, as a sky with no clouds.

Trickery, deception and lies
you must now unravel, with allies.
No one stands alone in the dark
Time to let go and become the iron spark.

When all is said and done
The final moment will be near,
stand tall and have no fear.
There is nowhere left to run.

CHAPTER XIV

PART ONE THE MASSACRE

The Witch Elfs arrive at the village disguised by Dark Magic as dwarfs in heavy armor. They assemble several meters away from the village to go over plan. They need to make sure that they move and behave like dwarfs. They need to walk in a steady manner, straight into combat, no hiding, lurking or back stabbing. This needs to look like it was done by Dwarfs. Years of lurking in the shadows and using deception and trickery needs some sort of reminder not to come out "naturally". Once they got the basics down they move out and towards the Orc village.

It is a nice sunny day, with a small breeze and little clouds. The light is a bit dimmed due to the high density of the forest. The Witch Elfs move in a V formation one at the front two on each side, resembling Dwarven tactics. Everyone who has at one time or another has fought against dwarfs, they know a thing or two about their tactics. Its is not like they ever hide them, tight formations, slow moving formations, solid as a rock.

The village door is open, since no one is expecting nor has foreseen an attack. There has not been a village attack since the Great Dwarf Campaign. This attack will surely find the Orc under surprise not to mention the High Elfs and Dwarfs. As they approach they pick up the pace a bit, to make sure they get the first kill. Their first victim is a young orc at the gate, possibly one of his first posts. A straight swing of the axe from head to ribs and the Orcs drops down instantly. No mercy they shout, Kill them all at the top of their voices. Orcs are coming out of huts and stop doing whatever it was they were doing. They all look indeed surprised. As soon they look at the gate and see the young Orcs dead, the screaming starts.

At this point the witch Elfs, disguised as dwarfs, move further in the village and kill anything sight, no discrimination. Young, old, brave and cowards, everything even cattle and sheep, taking the extra time to throw a burning wood from the cooking fires on the huts to burn everything down as well. The screaming and the commotion alerts some of the elder warriors in the village, which reside at the back of the village. They know what is happening and they get armed to move to intercept them.

Our devious, deceptive witch Elfs got a bit of luck on their side today. The village seems relatively empty and not a lot of men are around. Maybe they are on a hunt today. The slaughter continues the move from hut to hut and they make sure that is clear. Clear, all dead and the hut on fire. They need to make sure they get every single one. No witnesses. Half into the village, their first challenge presents itself. A group of four Orcs armed to the teeth, standing in their way. They look at each other for a moment, but only for a moment before WAAAAAAGH! And the fight is on! Get 'Em!

The Orcs waste no time and charge in, head first. It is scary to see a massive Orc in full gear speeding in your direction. No matter what race you are from. But sometimes you have no choice but to face your fears. This is something

both the Dwarfs, as their main adversary, and the Dark Ones learned how to do many years ago. They charge, the pick up speed. As soon as they get close the orcs attack with their shields first. The Dwarfs were holding their positions with the shields raised. Their shield attack hit harder and the orc themselves are tuffer n' nails. Last thing you want it to get hit by this attack, if you don;t have a shield to take the initial blow, you will end up with most of your bones broken and shattered, unable to move or fight back. This is why the witch Elfs are holding their positions with raised shield, they know. Most likely this attack will break their shields and will have to fight with out them. They are glad they were given shields and not just axes.

Those attack made our assailants to move a few steps back. Time to counter push this. Now that they survived this attack the true fight starts. Some heavy blows from the dwarfs put the orcs on a more defensive stance. But that is only temporally, since orcs don't really do defense. It is more or a breathing moment for them. The battle rages on for while exchanging several blows and words. The dwarfs have a "superior" attitude:

Dwarf: "Watch n' Learn Orc..."

Orcs: " You Wot?"

Dwarf: "Taunt the Orcs" in an attempt to provoke a mistake.

Orcs: " Can't Hit me!"...Stuntie!

The blows give and take and so do the words. In a more coordinated attack the Dwarfs manage to kneecap one of the Orcs and get the first kill. The other Orcs seen this, began to do some big swings with their heavy maces. Unfortunately for them they were not very well aimed and gave an opening to the Dwarfs to finish this with some serious Punishing Blows. More blood and corpses added. This was the moment that the Witch Elfs realized that this Job is no joke. They can really loose their heads on this.

No matter. This was a small delay. They push on, and continue their killing and burning. They need to hurry up and finish this. Maybe they got lucky and most of the orcs where not in the village. They are almost done here and ready to move out. Then they spot one last Orc in the middle of the road, looking lost. Damn they think, lets go and get this done properly, NO witnesses. They all move towards the one young Orc in the middle of the street. They are getting paid a lot to get this done right and considering the their boss they better do it well or else. They approach the young Orc, easy to kill, alone, lost, no weapons.

Our confident and with a smile move even closer. Then suddenly their faces change to a more serious look. Just behind the young Orc a battle brewed, massive Orc hold two choppas stands still. They have no choice in this, they must move on. The only worry in their minds is that they have to fight like dwarfs and they luck the mobility they are used to. This Orc means business. As the move forwards the Orc stands to swing in a circular manner the choppas. A breeze come about and its getting stronger and stronger. They can feel the effect, they are been pulled in. They make an attempt to steady themselves and move forwards but this every second the pull is getting

stronger, even with the heavy armor as added weight its almost impossible to stay still. A few more seconds and they are lifted up in the air spinning around in the vortex of the Orc. Fear, arises, from the inability to understand what is going on here. Then, pain!, as they spin around the choppas are slicing them them up. No defense, no stance in this whirlwind of doom. In less than a minute all three dwarfs re chopped up in pieces, laying in a pool of blood and armor.

The young orc passes out and the Older Orc grabs it and walks away from the village. As they walk away the goblin appears and look at this massacre of the orc village. He needs to know and report back to it's master. Surely this part did not go according to Sosah Pyrebreker's plan. The goblin looks at all those green skins dead and memories of its youth start to flash in his mind. He is remembering the time when he was part of green skin village as well, a long long time ago. Memories he had buried deep inside are resurfacing. The goblin look a bit lost in this thoughts and memories.

As the goblin stands there lost in his mind, a party o high elf arrives in the orc village. They are also stumped by the sight that lays before their eyes. They did sense the Dark Magic and tracked it there, but they never expected to witness some thing like this. As they look around to see if anyone has survived this, massacre, they spot the goblin gazing into the nothingness. They shout out to the goblin but there is no response. They start to move closer while trying to get the attention of the goblin, but so far not success. As they get even closer the goblin turns and looks at them, tilts his head to the left and then he vanishes in a Dark Magic shroud.

The High Elfs are again confused and peculiarly happy. Confused as to why the goblin run so fast and in the way he did as well as for the reason it was there. On the other hand happy, because they were meant to track a goblin that can use Dark Magic. That was something that was troubling them. No goblin is even known to use Dark Magic, but now they know that it exists and that it is near. This possibly, will make it easier to track down and fulfill the prophecy.

The goblin is gone but the three corpses of the “dwarfs” are still there. After their deaths the Dark Magic spell was broken and now there are three Witch Elfs laying on the floor dead. The High Elfs see the footsteps of one Orc, presumably leading out of the village in the opposite direction of this massacre. At least someone survived. They thought. The High Elfs need to make a choice now. To leave the bodies as they are to be found by other Orcs or to remove them and conceal the fact that this was the work of the Druchii. They can not leave things to their fate, so they pick up the witch elf chopped bodies and take them with them, leaving no evidence of the Druchii. This attack was made by Dwarfs, the armor on the ground will confirm this to anyone looking for who did this.

This day is done. A sad day, but a necessary one. The prophecy is at hand and the parts are moving, and so must the High Elfs if they want prevent the prophecy coming true.

CHAPTER XIV

PART TWO

A GOBLIN'S DILEMMA

The goblin fled the village but the village and all that he saw there did not leave it. His mind is trapped in that moment watching all those green skins dead. These are his kin. Maybe, he is gone to long to remember how it is to be a "true" green skin, but still he is feeling sorry for their demise. Some thing woke inside this goblin in those few moments that he was standing in that village. Anger, hate, but also sadness and hope. The most dangerous of all those emotions, hope.

Anger. Anger that his kin was slaughtered like this. Although he has witnesses a lot of green skins and others to be tortured brutally, die and be disposed like nothing, he never felt like this. Now he is angry with what happened to them. He is not sure why he feels like that but he does.

Hate. Hate for those that did this. He does hate the Druchii for all that they have done to him over the years, but he had no choice but to keep it deep inside him, just to survive. Maybe he did the right thing back then, surviving and not giving up. Maybe he survived for this moment, to help.

Hope. Hope that he might be able to get away from the Druchii after all these years. Hope that maybe, just maybe, if he helps he can go back in being a green skins and to a pet, a toy to be used whenever the master pleases. Hope, such a dangerous emotion. It can make all living creatures to make bad choice. Hope gives no guarantees.

He now re- appears in the hideout of Sosah Pyrebreker and reports back what happened in the village and the failure of the Witch Elfs and their deaths. They left two survivors. Sosah Pyrebreker is not happy with this news. She is now in panic. This was meant to go smoothly and be quick. How did they fail, she wonders. It doesn't matter, the plan is in motion. The High Elfs will think it was just a Druchii raid and nothing more. The Orcs will think it was the dwarfs and start the commotion "We" want. All is well. The goblin then steps up and says "what about, you know, those two survivors? Where they part of the plan too? If they talk to the other Orcs, you plans will not work!" oh, goblin shut up, she quickly replies. This is a minor issue. You been itching to kill me since you got here. Well here, I offer you a chance to kill and prove your self to your master as well. Use your Dark Magic skills and track them down and kill those two and help your Master to achieve his goals, like a good little pet.

This will make you look good too, but I will do it. We don't want the Master to be upset with your incompetence. Neither of us can afford this. The goblin vanishes. He has time before he needs to report back to his Master. He is still troubled with the incident in the village. The new emotions that has risen inside him are worrying him. His master is no fool, not the forgiving type, if he fails to break free, he will probably break him in two. It is time for him to make a choice. Until he is ready to make that choice he intents to track down those two orcs that fled the village and hope that he will have an answer to his question: Help them? or kill them?.....

CHAPTER XIV

PART THREE A GOBLIN'S LIFE

Our goblin was not always been a pet. Was not always a slave. Hew was a normal goblin living with this green skin brothers and sisters. A normal Green skin life. The disaster struck. A raiding Druchii party in there settlement. Those were the days after the Dwarven Campaign, when green skins all over where trying to rebuilt. They had little resources and organization. Those days where all about survival. A try to keep the green skin nation from becoming extincted. In that aftermath a raid happening was like a gift to Druchii raiders, almost no resistance no fighting. It was like walking in a market and getting anything you wanted for free. In one of those raids our goblin was taken captive by the Druchii. They grab all the valuables and also take prisoners to sale in their slave markets, age does not matter.

Been a Druchii prisoner is no joke. Been a prisoner is never easy but especially a Druchii prisoner. Very little food and water, almost daily torture for fun. One would thought that they would be treated well since they were merchandise, but no, that that was the good treatment. This is something that many came to realize after been sold to their new masters.

Our Goblin however, was not sold. Seen what happened to others he felt lucky at the beginning. While sitting there waiting fro this fate, he had to watch many others die. Some were bought because the new owners never kill a orc, or human or goblin. They would buy the salves and slit their throats right there so they didn't have to clean up. A quick fix and bragging rights. He spend the first few weeks of this captivity in chains on the floor mainly hungry watching everyone else been tortured or killed. He felt so lucky that he only had to deal with hunger and cold.

Then things changed. His new master starting paying some attention to him. His new master Rarzuk Dreadslayer the leader of the raiders, as viscous and blood thirst as they came. Having seen what he has done to others and even other Druchii he started to really feel fear. He payed attention to him.. more than he ever wished. At first he was used as a cleaner forced to lick up all the scarp that fell from the table and clean the floors with his tongue while everyone there would laugh at him and kick him form left to right endlessly only to end up chained up, hungry and cold on a floor corner.

The scraps he did not mind so much as he was getting more food than before and the beating became a "normal" thing for him. As soon as he was getting used to that a new torture would come about more cruel, and painful. He was given some clothing now. He is not cold anymore. No he is in the service of his master as a courier, still sleeps on the floor. He just take the messages where he is told to and fast. Unfortunately he never gets them fast even, not as fast as his master wants. Even when it is in the next room. For every failed message he would be punished by hanging upside down ganged until his eyes would bleed and pass out. Revived and hang up again and again until his master thought I was enough. Of course some extra punching was every now and then to make sure he was still alive.

He is not sure if he was lucky because he was alive or the others were lucky that died. Never the less he was not ready to give up yet. He is delivering messages, maybe, just maybe he can make a run for it during on of those massages and get free and away from all these. So our goblin is plotting an escape. A bolt plan given that he know what will happen to him if he fails. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is not to be trifled with.

So he saves as much of is energy as he can and on the first opportunity he is make a run for it. The opportunity does not take ling to appear. His one chance is here. A message to be delivered in a region at the edge of the Druchii capital close to the gates that he will ever get. He is ready. Hope feels him with energy . He take the message and runs to the destination. As he get closer to his destination, he can see the gates and his way to freedom. He has no idea where to go but anywhere else must be better than here. He changes direction and heads for the gate. He has no intention to deliver anything just run. He makes it to the gate, he can smell the clean air. The guards he did not account for that. He was so excited that he never thought of that, so naive of him. The guards stop him and ask where he things he is going. He stops, he looks frightened and confused. He doesn't know what to do. Thankfully he is holding the message in his hand. The guards see this and ask him where he is taking it. The he come out of this fear and he says “ Non of your businesses where master Rarzuk Dreadslayer sends messages!”

The guards now look frightened them selves after hearing he name of Rarzuk Dreadslayer. The let the goblin go. He is smiling again after so long. He is free. One more step and he is out of the city. He takes that last step with such confidence and happiness like never before. But that is the last step he takes. He can not more anymore. He is frozen. He tries to move, to walk, to run, nothing. His entire body is just frozen. He cant control his limbs. He is trying to understand what is happening. Why can't he move. This is not how this should work. He was free. As he is standing there he notices two things. The guards are coming for him and the second is the seal on the message in his hand. It is glowing. He does not understand what is happening. He does understand one thing thought and that is that the has failed and no one know what are the consequences. He can only hope for a quick death, because is this does not happen he is in for a much worse fate than death.

The guards come closer and say “it seems that you were going the wrong way to deliver this message and got lost. We will return you to you master now”. Still frozen unable to move the guards grab him and take him back to Rarzuk Dreadslayer. The guards are happy to do so, they will look good in his eyes. The goblin sheds a tear and that's it. He she a tear not because he is going back and what might happen to him. He shed a tear cause he lost his last chance to freedom.

He is back on the floor of his master frozen. Now pain is kicking in. His muscles are starting to ache been frozen for so long. Rarzuk Dreadslayer looks upset. “Did you think I would let you run around freely with no leash? Did you?” and starts to kick the goblin with all this strength. He cant even scream this time, he is frozen. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is taking all of this frustration out on him, with repeated kicks everywhere with no pauses.

After a while Rarzuk Dreadslayer says something the goblin can not understand and the message still in his hand full of blood now stops glowing and he can move again. "Take him to the dungeons" Rarzuk Dreadslayer commands his guards. The dungeons, a place that our goblin is familiar but only as a visitor so far. He was sent to observe tortures and bring food to others. A place that he does fear. He has seen things that he never thought could happen to a living creature.

His punishment cruel as all before but this one has no pain. At least no physical pain. He is thrown to a hole in the ground and then a lip on top. Little air to come through and no light. He can barely fit, let alone to move around. He stays there with little food and water in his one escarpments for over a long time. It seemed like years for him. He has not sense of time, day or night. Suddenly he is pulled up and thrown in the most freezing water ever in his life. The little light in the room is hurting his eyes. He is being scrapped clean by hard brushes, that almost make him bleed from the hard use on him. Then he is moved to the Rarzuk Dreadslayer. It is day, he can't open his eyes at all. After so long in the darkness he will need time to adjust. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is having none of that. He is forcing his eyes open. The goblin is in excruciating pain, and virtually blind. Rarzuk Dreadslayer whispers something again and the eyes stay open. While the goblin is screaming in pain Rarzuk Dreadslayer is laughing and enjoying himself. He does not need anymore entertainment for now. He just leaves the goblin on the floor screaming.

After a few hours the goblin stops screaming and adjusts to the light. Still in pain on the floor. He wishes he would kill him and be done with all these tortures. He still has no idea why Rarzuk Dreadslayer is keeping him alive. Maybe for fun. As he is thinking of all the possible reasons he can think of why he is going through all this, Rarzuk Dreadslayer approaches him. He paces one foot on this temple and presses down until the goblin screams again in pain and agony, and then he says "Let's see if you will try something like this again!".

The goblin wants to say no master never again but he is in so much pain that the only thing he can do is scream. The pain goes on, but our goblin is getting better at tolerating the pain. This is something that Rarzuk Dreadslayer also is noticing and losing interest in it fast. "I have something for you to do..." Rarzuk Dreadslayer says with a smile on his face and grabs the goblin from the throat and takes him back to the dungeon. The goblin is trembling in fear of the hole. He does not want to get back in there.

He is thrown in the floor of the dungeon. In front of him is a human tight up, covered in blood. Two Druchii are torturing him, doing things unspeakable and unimaginable to him. The goblin is forced to look away. He can't watch this. He does not want to. Rarzuk Dreadslayer simply grabs his head forces him to watch the entire torture. The goblin is trying constantly to look away but Rarzuk Dreadslayer will not let him. He wants the goblin to see this. Our poor goblin is in pain even more than he was before with all the torture that was done to him. He learned to tolerate pain made it a friend, but watching other people be tortured he just can't handle. He starts to beg to let him look away, to let him go, but Rarzuk Dreadslayer is not listening, he is enjoying this too much.

"Next time you try to run you will watch the entire dungeons tortures day and night" Rarzuk Dreadslayer says. The goblin begs him to stop this, not so much for the human's sake but for his own. He just cant watch any more.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer: "You want this to end, goblin? Then end it!"

Goblin: "What can I do they want listen to me!"

Rarzuk Dreadslayer: "You want this to end, goblin? Then end it!" repeats...

the goblin runs to the two torturers and tries to push them away, to do anything to make them stop. He lack the strength to do so and the Elfs simply push him away. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is standing there laughing at the site of he little goblin trying and been pushed away.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer: "IF you want this to end, goblin, here!"

and he throws a dagger on the floor. "The only way to end this is to kill him!" He has never killed anyone. He has seen a lot dying but never by his hand. He dagger is there in front of him. The though to grab the dagger and try to kill Rarzuk Dreadslayer did cross his mind but then he remembered what happened when he tried to flee and if he cant even push away one elf there is no chance to kill Rarzuk Dreadslayer.

He does not want to kill, but he cant watch either. Maybe killing him would be the merciful thing to do. The idea of releasing the human from the torture and pain, the idea of mercy is a way to justify the killing. He is still hesitant, but the human's screaming are demanding to make a choice. The goblin takes the dagger to his hand and approaches the human. He is gasping for air, bleeding, in pain, exhausted. The Elfs are waiting with excitement to see the goblin kill this human. They are done with him anyways. The goblin is standing there with the dagger in his hand, still cant master the strength to do it. Seeing the delay on the goblin the two Elfs start the torture again. The human is screaming again.

The goblin is grasping the dagger tighter in his hand as the human is screaming in pain. He screaming "i am sorry" and stubs the human in the gut. Laughter from all the Elfs in the room. "Again, stub his again" say the Elfs. "I am sorry" and he stubs him again with tears in his eyes. He keep apologizing and stubbing him until he moves no more. Then he drops the dagger and kneels too. He is broken.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer " Put his in a cell. We will need his services tomorrow again". And he leaves the dungeon. The goblin is thrown in a cell, at least is not he hole. He looks lost, almost deranged. He is lost in he images of him killing that human. He cant believe he did this. The blood ls still on his hands. He can smell it. He is disgusted with him self. He is trying to rationalize it. He had no choice. It was the best thing he could do for him. No mater how hard he tries he cant make this right.

Next day comes. He has not slept. The images and thoughts did not go away for him to get some rest. He is rushed out of the cell with pushing and kicks.

There is High elf now in the chair but she is not tortured. Just tight up and gagged. The throw a dagger on the floor again..” Slit her throat goblin!”. The goblin take a step backwards. He is kicked back towards the dagger. He is not willing to take that dagger. The Elfs around are getting their torture tools. “I will not do it the goblin says. “Very well then, if he will not do it, start the torture” the Elfs said. Tortures the goblin thinks. The images of the human come to his mind. He cant let her go through all this and most important he cant watch it again. No he cant watch it again. Not again. Without saying anything the goblin grabs the dagger and with a quick move goes behind the chair and slits her throat. Drops the dagger on the floor and goes on his own in the cell he was before.

The Elfs laugh loud and seem to be pleased with he goblins progress. He seems to be more compliant to commands. A few more times and he will be ready. Although he seems to be changing to a mindless machine under the dark elf commands, his master is loosing interest. It seems that now that he has achieved his goal and having a very obedient pet he needs something more, this is not enough anymore.

Our goblin has accepted his fate and place in his new “home”. Torture and pain are now his new friends. Killing other means nothing to him, just a command to obey. Since this happened and he is obeying, although mistreated, the tortures seem to be less. He is surprised that this is happening, he always though that this will never end. He also hasn't seem his master recently and he is not sure if he should be happy or worried.

These thoughts were short lived, as his master just came down to the dungeon and he has that look in his eyes, the look that he has something new to do to him. Now our goblin is starting to worry, I mean what else is there left to be done to him. Haven't they done it all ? He wonders.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer approaches the cell and whispers something that the goblin do not understand. Mere seconds later the goblin is engulfed in a purple smoke and is in excruciating pain. Despite the screams and the groveling on the floor Rarzuk Dreadslayer seems he is not pleased. He has seen all this before. He needs something more. He needs something different. He enters the cell grabs the arm of the goblin and cuts him deep. Then he holds his hand above the wound and starts a new chant-like whisper. Then a purple mist comes out of his hand an enters the wound. The goblin again starts to scream in pain, but now it is different somehow.

The Goblin is not only in pain he is changing as well. His veins are becoming purple and look like they will explode. He is twisting and turning on the floor, his body is on fire and he feels like he is coming undone. Every single bone and muscle aches. His eyes are now changing color as well. The are becoming black. He passes out from the pain and agony.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer is pleased and has a big smile on his face. He leaves but it looks like he will be back soon. The results seems to have triggered his interest. On his way back to his chambers he is thinking that this was an interesting experiment with some promising results. Infusing the goblin with a small amount of Dark Magic seemed to have a totally different result that he

expected. The most unexpected one was that he actually survived. Most die almost instantly. He is starting to wonder if this is due to tortures causing a change in the goblin's mentality after all this time. Could this have been the missing ingredient all these years? Tolerance in pain? I must increase the dose and see what happens he thinks. I AM in the brink of a breakthrough!

Poor goblin. How much more can he take. How much more can he withstand? He wakes up in his dark, cold, dump cell in pain. He moves to a corner and stays there whipping. He has lost all hope for a better life, let alone escape. As his mind drifts away, trying to numb the pain, he is starting to have a vision. Dark visions, from dark places. He has never seen to these places before. The vision comes and goes. He is really starting to loose his mind.

The night is rough, but nothing new for our goblin. He had worst nights than this. Morning comes too soon again. Morning means a new day of torture for our goblin and he wishes that this and every other morning would come later or never. Never the less it is here and with it, Rarzuk Dreadslayer coming in earlier than ever. Our goblin curls in his corner in his cell, he does not dare to move out despite the callings of his master. Last night was the worst he has experienced this far. Rarzuk Dreadslayer enters the cell upset with the goblin's disobedience, and grabs his arm again and starts to chant the same thing he did last time. The same purple mist comes out again and enters the goblins wound but this time the chanting lasted twice as long. The goblin starting to feel it coursing though his veins. He is in pain again but not as much as last night. He is feeling really warm but not burning like last time. He is getting a new feeling of, yes, power and he is calm. He can now see the vision more clear as well. There are not flashes anymore. He is in a trance.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer is observing in silence with a smile on his face even bigger than last time, wondering what the goblin is experiencing. One could swear that he is ready to burst into laughing. Spells of Dark Magic are potent because they use all available magical energy in an area. But this also releases a lot more unguided and partially activated magical residue into the material world.

This undirected magical residue can manifest itself in all sorts of unwanted ways and with often, unintended side effects. The side effects can manifest as, physical mutations, or psychological alterations. Rarzuk Dreadslayer stays silent watching the goblin's reactions to the Dark Magic infusion.

The goblin is lost between the mortal plane and the realm beyond. Not many have that ability to see the realm beyond. This will be the fist goblin ever known to have this ability, if this is true, and not just mind tricks of a deranged tortured goblin.

The goblin in no longer groveling on the floor, and is now standing with an offensive posture facing his master. It look full of rage, growling and ready to attack. His eyes black with a purple mist coming out like he is on some sort of magical fire. His fingers nails have grown into claws. Sharp as well by the looks of it. He also seem more muscular. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is so pleased with this results. Someone could say that the goblin right now looks like a mini fire daemon with purple fire. The goblin, unexpectedly, lashes out and attacks Rarzuk Dreadslayer, with a swift move. A rush attack with no real direction.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer easily fends off the goblin, which lands on the floor. Rarzuk Dreadslayer leaves the cell. As he exits the guards lock the cell door behind him and the goblin jumps on the cell bars raging and screaming. It seems it wants a second round the guards say and laugh. Rarzuk Dreadslayer gives a quick look with not a lot of meaning and walks away.

The goblin continues to rage on around his cell slashing the bars and tearing apart anything around. After a while he calms down and the rage goes away as well as the physical changes, but not completely. His claws are only gone partially. Now the pain kicks in again. Tonight it might be a difficult night, again.

As the goblin calms down, regardless of the amount of pain he is in, his visions of those dark horrible places come back. This time they are more coherent. It seems like a new world to the goblin. A world of darkness. The vision is like watching this new place through a window. He can see it but he is not in that world. He stands up and goes through the window, slowly, carefully always looking around, cautiously. Now he looks back and he sees the cell like through a window. He is in the "other" place now. Am I free, he thinks? No it cannot be, this is just a dream. A dream he had many times before, a dream of freedom that felt nice but always gone with the first morning light.

The goblin moves forward to explore this "other" place. As he moves the window behind him is getting smaller and smaller but our goblin is so excited to be out of the cell that he does not notice this. This place is dark and scares him but it is at least, he hopes, from Rarzuk Dreadslayer. How bad can it be?

As he walks around he does not see anything familiar. No trees, no water, no people, no animals. A barren land, wind, and purple flames burning all over the place. What is this he wonders, where is this? Then noises arise. Something is approaching. Growling noises, heavy foot steps, he hides as fast as he can behind a small rock. What is this creature he wonders. There is only one thing for sure, he does not want to know nor to find out. Time to go, he thinks but he looks behind him and there is no window to go back. Panic is starting to kick in now. He puts his hand on his mount to stay quiet. That creature, whatever it is, is big and centerly unfriendly. Need to find a way out NOW!

Take a moment to breathe and he closes his eyes thinking this is a dream, it must be a dream. I am in my cell dreaming. He repeats it a few times inside his mind, then he opens his eyes to see if that is true. Well, partially true, one could say. The "window" is in front of him and he can see the cell. No delay this time, no hesitation. With a swift move the goblin goes through and is now back in his cell. Panic is gone but fear is back. Fear of tomorrow. The goblin cannot understand what happened. Right now is just pleased that he is not a meal for that big ugly thing out there, wherever that was. Slowly fall asleep on the, so familiar cold stone floor.

As it happens every day, morning is here again, too soon, too fast. Rarzuk Dreadslayer is already there when the goblin wakes up. He must have been standing there for a while. He enters the cell as soon as he sees the goblin waking up. The goblin doesn't even have a moment to fully open his eyes and he is in pain. Rarzuk Dreadslayer wasted no time and started to torture the goblin with Dark Magic. The goblin is in pain but not as much. Still he screams. He is getting

better at numbing the pain. He just focuses on other places, like the market place with all the nice food, he never has, or the blue clear sky he so rarely see nowadays. This thoughts help him to stay alive. But this time it is a bit different. The thoughts are not just in his head. Now he can see them. He can see those places lie that strange dark place windows all over him. A bit different from the one last night but still there. These new windows are double. A window here, where he is then the strange place and then other window to the place he is thinking. Is more like a corridor than a single window. ESCAPE. A clear loud thought, that the goblin does not overthink. He jumps up goes through the window that leads to the market and just runs. It is a sort distance, he can do it. As he runs through, he also spots that ugly big foul creature coming for him. He just keeps running as fast as he can. A few moments and he is actually at the market place. People, smells, noises, blue clear sky. A dream. A short lived dream, as before he can even take one step the guards grab him and drag him back. This was short lived but precious to the goblin. A moment of normality". One could say he got a a bit of hope in him.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer stands in the cell surprised but also excited with the disappearance act of the goblin. Now that the guards are bringing the goblin back he also has a big smile on his face. Unbelievable he says, just unbelievable. The goblin is back in the cell now with a certain peace in him. He know what will happen soon but right now he is holding on that one moment.

Rarzuk Dreadslayer "You will never escape this place. You belong to me". The goblin hears this but does not care. His mind is re-living that one moment he had of clean air.

The few following months were difficult for the goblin. Constant torture with Dark Magic and with every torture his ability to open windows getting better and better. However he can only see the places now. He can not go. Rarzuk Dreadslayer has erected many magic barriers that block the goblin form traveling through his windows. And every time he tries he get tortured more and more.

The goblin has finally accepted that there is no escape, yet. Best accept and serve Rarzuk Dreadslayer, stay alive! At least now he has three things in his life. A window to see something nice and keep his spirit up. A strange growing power that might allow him to be free one day and finally the means that might help him one day to return all the "favors" Rarzuk Dreadslayer has done to him. Perhaps the only true escape will come with death. Rarzuk Dreadslayer death!

CHAPTER XIV

PART FOUR

CHANGING SIDES

And so our goblin friend starts this search for the two surviving Orcs from the village massacre. His dilemma is still very much in his mind. To help them or to kill them. He has to kill them to make sure there no witnesses and minimize the possibility that Sosah Pyrebreker's plan fails. His master will be very angry if that happens, and angry means that most likely he will end up dead. This is big and it can not go wrong. Now that he started to feel again all those things he had to suppress he cares for the fellow green-skins. He also might have a chance to a normal life with the green-skins again and he needs to start somewhere. Also, there is a chance that if this plan of Sosah Pyrebreker's works there will be no green-skins left. A heavy burden for such a small creature, don't you think? There has to be another way to do this, he thinks and continuous his search in the forest and near by rocky areas.

While he is searching for the two Orcs, in the same time the High Elfs are searching for him. Their first encounter in the village did not go very well. The High Elfs on their part need to talk to the goblin and see if he will be willing to help to resolve the prophecy for better or for worse. Never the less this conversation needs to held and it needs to sooner rather than later.

As our goblin is teleporting all over the place trying to locate the two Orcs at the same time the High Elfs are tracking his Dark Magic. For the High Elfs is imperative that at least they talk with the goblin. Even if he does not help them or join them in their effort, at least they might get some useful information from him. A few days go by and finally the two meet in a small cave in the near by mountains. The goblin is cornered. This meeting is happening whether he likes it or not. The High Elfs are prepared now. Last time in the village they did not expect to see the goblin nor that he would be able to use dark magic. They always thought that this reference in the prophecy was some sort of metaphor. Or an exaggeration on the prophets part.

This time they came prepared to counter his dark magic and prevent his escape by teleporting. At least now they will have a chance to talk before the goblin has the chance to vanish. They have no intention to harm or imprison the goblin, only to have a moment to explain. Of course this will be a difficult conversation as it is certain that the goblin will feel trapped and will reluctant to co operate. We are at this impasse now and it has to be resolved. The goblin is the one that starts this so difficult, but necessary conversation.

Goblin: "What do you want pointy ears? Leave goblin alone! "

High Elfs: "We just want to talk! Nothing more... Calm down!"

Goblin: "Calm Down!???, I AM CALM!!, you blind elf?"

High Elfs: "Well you seem a bit agitated to be honest!" Looks around to the rest of the Elfs.

Goblin: "Would you be calmer if you were surrounded by goblins? Trapped? Eh?"

High Elfs: "You are not trapped. You can go anytime you want. We just want to talk with you about a very important matter, if you give us a moment to explain."

Goblin: "Speak fast. Goblin has places to be!. Not have time for silly Elfs!"

High Elfs: " Tell me please, how come and you can use Dark Magic. Never seen another goblin like you. "

Goblin: "Is that it? No business of yours Elf! I go now!"

High Elfs: "No please, stay. We have something we want to show you. Something we need your help with. If you could just come with us to the enclave we could show you and explain."

Goblin: "Me, in the enclave? You kill me? No..no.no..! Crazy Elf!"

High Elfs: "You have our bond you will not be harmed and free to go after you listen to what we have to say."

Goblin: "Your bond?"

High Elfs: "Yes, you will not be harmed or imprisoned".

Goblin: "OK, goblin will listen, but I will be watching you Elf!"

Goblin feels that he might be able to find something he can use to his advantage. Also is reluctant to subconsciously want to delay finding the two Orcs. Maybe the Elfs will help him get free.

The High Elfs open a portal back to their enclave. Two Elfs at the front goblin in the middle and two more Elfs at the back. The goblin follows them into the portal. He is feeling a bit easier now that the Elfs gave him their bond that he will be safe. The Elf bond once given can not be broken. Now now that it was given in front of other Elfs is even better. The other Elfs will make sure that the Elf that gave the bond will up hold it and they will respect it was well. It is one of those unwritten laws that the High Elfs Keep. More like the Dwarven grudges that need to be settled and is passed on from one to the other, in case of a death.

After entering the portal, they instantly arrive at the enclave. The goblin is amazed with he beauty and the light. After living for so long in dungeons and dark places this fells like a dream world. Everything is so clean and shiny. He does a good job to hide his amazement and surprise. He is good at that. He had to hide a lot for so many years.

He is escorted to a room like he has never seen before. It looks like a library but its not a library. It is something different. Archives!

This chapter was written but as the story developed it needed to be much later but since it was written here it is. The total story was meant to conclude in 19 chapter and 8 sub chapters .. maybe one day !

CHAPTER XV

GRUDGE BORN FURY

Laying on the ground surrounded in warm blood. Deldrir Ironsight is almost dead. The poison from the Dark Elf dagger is coursing through his body and he can feel it slowly moving. The Dark Magic oozing out of the wounds feels like some one is choking him. The end is near. The end is certain in his mind. The only thing left is to see if he will be deemed worthy to enter the halls of the forefathers or not. Deldrir Ironsight welcomes the end. It is also a way to stop the pain he is in right now.

All that is left for him to do is wait. At least he knows that he will not have to wait long. After all he was stabbed by a Witch Elf Assassin. The chances of survival are slim to none. The rest of the world around him is gone. He hears nothing, he sees nothing only the ground. The a bright light appears from above. It is warm and blinding. This is it he thinks my time to be judged and see if will be joining my forefathers.

A hand extends from the light making a gesture to follow it. He grabs on the hand as tight as he can and then he starts to elevate. He has no weight, flying like a bird in the sky, with no worries or burdens. The the light goes away. Darkness, emptiness. No sound, no sight, nothing. In the darkness from time to time he can hear voices. Male and female. He can not understand everything they say or what they are.

The voices come and go. Strange he thinks. This is not how I have imagined this hour. I was almost certain that it would be more light, Grimnir, Grungi and Valaya judging me to deem me worthy. What is this? Am I in the underworld? Those voices... he starts to understand somethings. At the same time as he understands them he also experiences pain. A lot of pain...."Hold on Master Dwarf.. Hold on..." the voices go again... darkness..silence.

Hold on? Hold on to what? This makes no sense... he thinks. "Almost there Master Dwarf...almost" another voice, different from the last one. Hello? Where am I ? he shouts... no answer... what is this????

A long time passes by..at lest that's what he thinks. Then the voices come back again. This time they are different. Calm somehow, talking more steadily and they are clear. He can make out what they say better.

Voice one:"He will be pull through. He is a stubborn one!"

Voice two: "Are you sure?"

Voice one: "Nothing is certain..hmm. .this is not exact you know?"

Voice two: "So he is not going to make it?"

Voice one: "Let' wait and see.. he is stubborn!"

The voices stop again...

Pull through? What? I am not dead? If not where am I? Why can I not see or move? By Grimnir! More questions? Even here in the after life? This must be hell.. my punishment for my failures. My punishment... to never learn the answers to all the questions to be tormented for eternity.

All he can hear again is only his thoughts. This is driving him mad. He wants to know what is going on. Stubborn old Dwarf just will not rest. He is pushing himself to try and listen, to move. He can not move no matter how hard he tried. His body just will not respond to his will... he has no sense of self.. he can not feel his body parts at all. However he is able to listen a few more words from the voices. This time is also different. The are the same voices as before but now he can make them out. Elfs! That is Elfs talking. He get a bit weary. He cant tell if that is Dark Elfs or High Elfs. Their tongues are similar and its hard to tell them apart.

The light was bright. It must have been the High Elfs doing. Why would the Dark Elfs save me after stabbing me? That would make no sense. Unless... unless they wanted my people to think I was dead. Am I a prisoner or a patient? His heart is starting race as he get more stressed within his thoughts trying to figure out where he is. He has never been in this situation before and he is having a great trouble understanding how to behave. He has been imprisoned before, but at least he know by how and why. Those two questions are burning him.

His body temperature is rising, his heart beat is racing, his entire body is in shock. The voice come and go again.. like before... he is drifting.. in and out of consciousness. The voices are rough, sharp and loud... something is happening. "Hurry before it's too late"... "stay focused".... strange chanting and words he can not understand... something is wrong here he thinks... Basing his assumption on the voices he hears. He is feeling fine, besides the heat and the his heart beat been elevated, but that seems normal to him.. he got stressed.

Now he is also getting annoyed. Those damn voices come and go, this whole situations is starting to infuriate him. "Damn Stubborn Dwarf..calm down!". That is the last voice he hears before he loses them again. Calm down? Me? Now he is focusing as much as he can in that damn darkness he is in. It is hard, no sense of time or place. He is trying to piece all the voices together to make some sense. At his state he can to recall everything. He can however recall some words and pieces " Pull through...sure?... make it... wait and see... stubborn... too late.... focused... Damn... Calm down..."

Those words starting to make some sense. He is starting to believe that his captors are trying to heal him. To what end he still does not know. Never the less

for better or worse and if he wants to learn why and also have a change at escaping he must wake up. So hearing the last sentence "Calm Down" he starts to relax and calm down. He wants to pull through. Now he knows, partially, what is happening, he calms down. His temperature is dropping, he stops stressing, his heart beat is normalizing again.

He sinks into darkness and silence again. This time it feels good. He now has a plan, a goal, he is ready. Best to rest and have strength to face what comes after this whole thing.. whatever this is.

Some time has passed with no improvement. No sight, no sound, no voices. It feels like he was asleep and is waking up. Waking up but still darkness. He however feels a bit different. He can feel his body again. A little bit, but, he has sense of self and body, arms, legs, head... he can't move them yet, but they are there now. He must focus and see if he can move them all. He is focusing hard, Dwarf like stubborn focus and effort. Still, he feels nothing moving but he does listen..."He moved!...His finger moved!" Did it move? I did not feel it. The voices continue..."Good! Soon then... we are close". Close to what? Torture or freedom he thinks?

Whatever it is, he will find out soon. Now he needs to be patient and wait. Buy his time and he does. He is calm and patient. Now he is more aware of self and he takes this time to try and piece together all he knows about the events that have transpired and see if he can come up with some answers or theories. There is no need to waste any time, especially now that he can not do anything else.

As he is working on the problems of the past trying to figure them out a new problem comes to the foreground. The darkness in which he has been so long is slowly breaking up. His environments becoming brighter by the minute. Now he focuses on this. Everything else he had in mind can wait. A little bit of time passes by and now he is starting to see his true surroundings. Dim at first but getting better fast. He is starting to figure now, while he is still able to hear what they say clear now and without any interruptions.

Voice one: " He is coming about!

Voice two: "Finally. I was getting worried.. now we can talk!"

Deldrir Ironsight eyes are finally open. He can now see everything. Now all he needs is some so deserved answers before he can start to ask more questions! Some of the simplest but vital questions are answered immediately, such as, am I alive? Yes! Am I a prisoner? No What Elfs are these? High Elfs! Those answers are enough to put his mind at peace for now and start asking new questions.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Where am I?"

Elf: "You are in the glorious Tor Achare"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Who are you?"

Elf: "I am Thezryar the Giving but you can call me Therzyar."

Deldrir Ironsight: "What happened?"

Thezryar: "Simple you..Died.. Well you almost Died!"

Deldrir Ironsight:"Died? Almost? And you say it like its a usual thing?

Thezryar: "Well...i would not call it usual..but not unusual either!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "You High Elfs! Crazy you are! By Grimnir!

Thezryar: "Come now Master Dwarf.. Calm down.. you are among friends here."

Deldrir Ironsight: "ehhmm.. Well.. Why you saved me?"

Thezryar:"Well that is some thing that our Lord will have to answer and discuss with you. Not me."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Very well.. where is he?

Thezryar: "it is not time for this yet Master Dwarf. For now you must rest you will need your strength"

Deldrir Ironsight: "I want to see HIM now! I demand it!"

Thezryar: "Like I said, Master Dwarf, when you are better for now I suggest you get some rest.. *you stubborn little....*"

Deldrir Ironsight: "What did you say?"

Thezryar: "Nothing Master Dwarf.... rest now.. rest."

Deldrir Ironsight: "When can I leave?"

Thezryar: " When you have recovered and had your audience with Lord Gheles I suppose. You are not a prisoner here!."

Deldrir Ironsight: "If I am staying here you better have some good food here Elf!"

Thezryar: " Yes. Of course Master Dwarf. I am certain that you are hungry after all this time. I shall sent some food at once. However I must warn you to eat slowly. Its been a while since you have any food."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Oh and ale!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Oh wait.. what you mean a while? How long have I been here?

Thezryar: "A few weeks Master Dwarf. Healing Dark Magic is not easy you know!!!"

He pauses for a moment.. pondering Dark Magic. Then he continues with his Dwarf attitude...

Deldrir Ironsight: "Get now.. get me some food and ale Elf! Hahaha"

At least his spirit is recovering well, Thezryar thought.

Almost immediately the food arrives. Those Elfs are fast he thought, but then he realized he spoke too soon. The "food" was not so much the kind of food he had in mind. Fruits, vegetables, and some other green things on a platter. What is this he thought again. Unfortunately he thought this out loud, creating an awkward situation. From on side he was grateful for the assistance he got, but on the other side he wanted some "proper" food, some meat. Dwarven food, some roasted boar, some stone bread that kind of things. Never the less he laughed as loud as he could and thanked the for their hospitality and efforts. Then he whispered..This will do for now I suppose.. damn elf food..with a smirk on his face. This is one "nasty"dwarf isn't he?

Deldrir Ironsight remains in this room for a few more days to recover his strength is able to sit up and later on to move around slowly. His strength is coming back. This elf food seems to be doing a good job getting him his strength back. He has realized this fact and he is eating the food easier now to get back on his feet faster. He wants to get answers and go home, he is missing his kin. Never the less he would never admit to this fact, so he continues to complain about the food to the Elfs driving them crazy. Every time he complains and sees the face of the Elfs he gets a smirk smile of satisfaction.

Now he looks like he as almost fully recovered. Both his mobility and complaining have increased to a "proper" Dwarf level. Now he is getting impatient to see the High Elf Lord. But he is in luck. Today is the day he gets to see the High Elf Lord Gheles and get maybe some answers.

Thezryar: " After you are done with your meal Master Dwarf I shall take you to see Lord Gheles. He is ready to see you."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Meal? Who cares! I am ready now lets go."

Thezryar: "Like I said Master Dwarf. AFTER your meal. You need to eat!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "You Elfs and your fairy food. Very well I shall do as you ask!"

Thezryar: "Good....good. I will be back shortly them. Enjoy your meal!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Enjoy my meal? Enjoy.. you call this a meal. You should really come over the Dwarven stronghold, then you will see a meal. A proper meal."

Thezryar: "Enjoy!"

Deldrir Ironsight mumble some Dwarf words that not even I can understand and he carries on to finish his "meal". He want to go to that meeting. He stuffs

his face with food and tries to eat it as fast as he can. Some of the Elfs around watching this spectacle are amused and start to laugh. He looks at them with a hard authoritative look and they immediately stop. A moment of silence. Then Deldrir Ironsight with a full mouth start to laugh with this situation and right after the Elfs continue as well, only to be interrupted by Thezryar to announce that is time to meet Lord Gheles.

On they way to see Lord Gheles,our Dwarf is admiring the High Elf craftsmanship. It is not as good as the Dwarven one of course but still has a certain skill in it as he would put it. The city is bright and the sky as a ceiling. He really misses his stronghold and the rock above his head. Too much wood here. The short walk is over and now they stand in front of the door or Lord's Gheles's chambers. It is costumed to wait for anyone to be announce first to the Lord before he or she can enter. Deldrir Ironsight knows this and no matter how impatient he might be he stands still and waits. Every second seems like hours to him. Finally he Is announced and allowed to go in and see Lord Gheles.

Deldrir Ironsight: "Finally, that took you a while! Its not like I have a long name now is it?"

Lord Gheles: "Now..now..Master Dwarf! We are all friends here no?"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Yes, I suppose so, but you took your time admit it!"

Lord Gheles: "Very well Master Dwarf. We did took our time.. But it is our way!"

Deldrir Ironsight frowns but there is nothing he or his complaining will change now and he knows it.

Deldrir Ironsight: "So, do you care to explain to me what is going on here?"

Lord Gheles: "Of course. It is very simple really. You where stabbed but a Witch Elf. Twice I might add. The daggers where poisoned and enchanted with Dark Magic. You would of died if we did not teleported you here to treat you."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Yes, I remember all that Lord Gheles. Why am I here?"

Lord Gheles: "I see... You are here because you must be here!"

Deldrir Ironsight: "Lord Gheles! We both are too old for this games. Why am I here?"

Lord Gheles: "You are here my friend because you still have a part to play in this.."

Deldrir Ironsight: "in this? What is this you speak of?"

Lord Gheles: "Many years ago we stopped your "Great" Campaign and stopped you from eradicating the Orcs."

Deldrir Ironsight: "Aye, I remember well. Not a good day! Big mistake!!"

Lord Gheles: "That is what you say. Kill them all would be THE mistake. We had foreseen the future events and those events are now unraveling. When the time is right you will get all your answers. For now I must ask of you to stay here, rest, recover and trust me. When the time is right we will get you home. Unfortunately it is not time yet. "

Deldrir Ironsight: "No time yet? Trust you? You cant be serious right?"

Lord Gheles: "I am! Master Dwarf. The fate of our world is in stake here. I am serious...Dead Serious."

The manner at which the Elf Lord Spoke made Deldrir Ironsight understand that this is no joke or trick. The Elfs take their prophecies and visions very seriously. He needs to know more. He summed that it will be better to stay and try to learn more about this prophecy. "Perhaps you are right and it is not time to go home just yet, I like the food here, so I will stay a bit longer", he said. Lord Gheles smiles," Very well". On the way out Deldrir Ironsight turns and says to Lord Gheles:

Deldrir Ironsight: "Don't you think that I have forgotten of my grudge with that Witch Elf!"

Lord Gheles: "Of course not. I am aware of this. I am grateful you can hold your grudge born fury within... for now!"

"I cant hold for ever Lord Gheles.. but I do it for you.. for the old times!"

Lord Gheles: "Smiles again"

On the way back to his room Deldrir Ironsight wonders if his friends they are aware that he is alive or not. Never the less they are Dwarfs and will manage a few days with out him.

Lord Gheles, stays alone in the room. He is looking out of the window in this wonderful city and thinks: "The first part is complete. Good. Now to see if we can get the rest of the pieces in motion and get this done right!"

It would appear that saving Deldrir Ironsight was the beginning of the prophecy foreseen a long time ago. Now the only thing is to find out what the rest of the parts are. There is however another question is his mind after learning all these. Why did the Witch elf not kill him in the clearing and did it later. What was her plan there? Maybe if he can figure that out he might unravel more of the Druchii plans.

I hope it was a good read.. Please remember this was my first ever attempt to write something.. no experience.

Thank you for reading this far.