**Gimli Son of Glóin, King under the Mountain.**

After the armies of Sauron were defeated Gimli left for home, the Lonely Mountain. When he arrived the guards at the front gate snapped to attention “Hail Gimli son of Glóin! The King and your father await your arrival!” they called.

And so Gimli son of Glóin entered his home for the first time in over a year. Briskly he strode down the twisting winding tunnels until finally he entered the grand throne room of the kingdom of Erebor. Vaulted ceilings stretched up out of sight, huge braziers of fire lined the walls lavishly decorated pillars rose up and in the centre of the room on a golden throne sat Dain II son of Nain, King of Erebor, on his right stood Glóin. “Dain son of Nain I return!” cried Gimli. “So I see,” replied Dain “it is good to see you again.” Suddenly Glóin rushed forward and enveloped his son in an embrace “My son you are alive! I was so worried.” he said quietly. “You should not have worried,” said Gimli “but I have a rather urgent matter to discuss.” “Feel free to voice it.” Said Dain. And Gimli replied, “I wish to leave for the grey mountains and set up my own dwarf kingdom, let the dwarves’ former glory return. All I ask is fifty men some maidens and children.” “Very well.” Sighed Dain “all will be ready in a week’s time.”

Finally after a week of preparation all was ready and the company of about one hundred and fifty men, women and children set of to the grey mountains and finally arrived and work began they mined out an entrance hall then they carried on into the mountain…

20 years later.

Forty halls, ten guard rooms, fifteen caverns for mining stone and jewels, ten treasure houses, thirty five forges, five watchtowers, over fifty five miles of tunnels and enough housing space for three and a half thousand dwarfs, nearly half of which was filled as there had been a large amount of small dwarf tribes in the Grey Mountains who were happy to unite and join with this new dwarfen kingdom, all completed in twenty years. Gimli felt very pleased with himself, as he stood outside the massive iron gates of Ver Boldor (that was the name of his kingdom) staring at the sunset, when suddenly there was a cry and a small dwarf rushed towards Gimli out of the forest and cried “My king I come from the outermost watchtower. A small number of men all dressed in black attacked us and forced us to retreat, we are sheltering in outpost nine, ten to fifteen have been attacked and destroyed. I was sent to request help to hold them off.” “Of course,” cried Gimli “guards sound the horn now!” the horn was a huge tuba like thing set into the rock and when blown could be heard in every tunnel and hall and forge, if the horn was blown no one was to go past the gates unless ordered to do so and all one hundred and fifty dwarf soldiers on duty where called to the entrance hall.

“BROOMMM, BROOMMM” the unmistakable call of the horn echoed along the passageways and halls, instantly all one hundred and fifty dwarfs rushed in and stood to attention. Gimli turned and said “Head straight to watchtower nine the men dressed in black are your enemies, drive them of.” He paused and then continued “I will accompany you.”

“There is watchtower nine,” whispered Gimli motioning towards a pillar of smoke rising above the trees “we must make haste.”, so silently they crept on and finally out into the clearing where watchtower nine had once stood now there was nothing but a smouldering wreckage of wood and stone, littered around lay many dwarf bodies but there was no sign of any attackers apart from a few black clad bodies strewn about. “Let us return, this time I will take this as nothing more than a barbarian raid but next time I shall think differently.” So they returned.

“Double the watch, I want two hundred men at the ready and keep the doors locked.” Gimli was in the main war hall discussing what to do to keep everyone safe. It was about two hours since they returned from the wreckage of watchtower nine, and Gimli had decided to take extra precautions to ensure his peoples safety. So the doors were barred and the watch was doubled and all was well. For a time…

A week later a new section of forges was completed, to celebrate Gimli gathered all his advisers, captains, those who had built the forges, friends and family and held a celebration feast as was the custom of the dwarfs. Once everyone was seated Gimli clapped his hand and in walked a group of dwarfs each carrying a platter, some were covered in tankards and some were laden with meat, greasy chicken legs and roast beef. The tankards and meat was served out as everyone chattered and talked but when all the food and drink was ready Gimli called for silence and said “a toast to the fine builders of Ver Boldor!” everyone cheered and glugged down their beer. Then the feast began, tankard where drained and hands grabbed the meat. Some musicians filed in and began playing a jolly tune one stepped forward and began to sing in a low, deep voice.

May the ale flow,

And the wind blow.

But in the mountain where the air is still,

May the treasure rooms fill,

With gold and jewels till

It overflows with all sorts of riches

And us dwarves this gold bewitches!

(as you can see dwarves were not very talented song writers) Everyone cheered and clapped and was very merry when suddenly in burst a guard “Sir he cried there is a group of the black clad raiders at the gate, they say they want to talk to you.”

Gimli finally arrived at the huge iron gates followed closely by the head of the guard, Omnud Flaskpike “Guard open the doors!” barked Omnud. Slowly the doors creaked open to reveal a small party of about twenty men none could be seen as they were all covered in black armour apart from the man standing in front of all the other men who had taken of his helmet. His face was handsome and tanned, his eyes where black, he had a long thin scar running through one eye and down his cheek and his short hair was straight and brown. He looked middle aged. “Greetings,” he said with a faint hint of an accent “My name is Novil Dragonwolf and my farther is king of the Orithage people of the west, we are powerful and we will attack your kingdom if you surrender you will be permitted to live here still but must obey us, if not you will be destroyed.” “Be off with you!” cried Gimli “We do not want your nonsense here. We will hold of the ‘might of the Orithage kingdom’” “You will regret this.” Said Novil as he turned and marched off.

Novil and his companions walked into the forest and were their horses where hidden mounted up then raced away. Meanwhile the dwarven gates had shut and every solider was armed and told to prepare for war. Barely three days later a scout burst into the throne room and cried “My lord there is a large gathering of the enemy barely five miles away!”

“Soldiers of Ver Boldor to me, we must hold of the enemy in open ground!” and so it was that Gimli king of Ver Boldor marched out with his army to confront the Orithage. As the dwarfs marched out of the gates on the large plain before the forest stood an army, they were all dressed entirely in black with black shields and swords, black armour, a black banner with a wolf on it “Dwarfs ready yourselves!” shouted Omnud as the enemy charged, and suddenly they were on them attacking the dwarves fiercely and the dwarves fought back just as fierce and in the centre of it all stood Gimli son of Glóin, hewing armour and breaking bone he called out the number of those he had slain as was the custom of dwarves “24, 25, 26!”. Although they did not know it reinforcements were moving in and would arrive in less than half an hour and even at that time without the reinforcements of the enemy they were fighting a losing battle. Slowly they were being driven backwards toward the gate soon Gimli realised this and saw many soldiers were injured or dead and they did not have enough men to hold their lines much longer. So Gimli called a retreat to the gates and a small circle of the bravest men held of the hordes of the enemy while the injured were cared for and the other soldiers opened fire with bows on the battlements above. Then on all the surrounding hills great horn blasts where heard and more and more black clad men poured down the hills, finally the reinforcements had arrived to assist those who had already arrived. Cries of dismay came from the dwarves as these new enemies arrived, although they still fought on, desperately, fighting for their lives, for their people, but no matter what they did, no matter how many enemies they slew another always took their place. They were hopelessly outnumbered but still they fought on and finally when all hope seemed lost on the hills a great host was spotted. The elves had come.

They ran down the hill. The fair folk, arrows flying, capes fluttering. Seeing help was on its way the dwarves fought back harder than ever. Their enemy was bewildered and confused as the elves crashed into their back and the dwarves broke through their ranks. The Orithage where ensnared hopelessly and many broke ranks and ran while they could but many still fought on hoping the people of Orithage might still prevail, so they fought on and of those who still fought none escaped the death trap.

Inside the throne room stood Gimli son of Glóin, founder of Ver Boldor a grand figure with a few strands of grey hair growing, next to him stood Omnud head of the guard dressed in full armour, in front of them stood Legolas son of Thranduil tall and wise, king of the wood elves. For once they were alone, not even the guards where with them. Quietly they were discussing what had happened, “When we saw those men passing through Mirkwood we instantly suspected that something was wrong,” Legolas was explaining how he knew of the attack. “my spies listened in and when we realised their motive we set off with all speed but by then they were long gone and it appears we arrived in the nick of ti-” his words were cut short as an arrow shot out of one of the dark corners of throne room and headed straight for Gimli, but at the last second Omnud jumped into the path of the arrow and it pierced his heart. “Guards!” Gimli cried and they rushed in Gimli directed them to the corner from which the arrow had come suddenly they rushed in and dragged out two men one was middle age with long, matted, black hair while the other was young barely a man with short, fair, blonde hair. The first one Gimli instantly recognized “Novil Dragonwolf prince of the Orithage kingdom we meet again, and who is this?” Gimli said to the pair “My good for nothing cousin, Zalba**.**” spat Novil. “Take them to the dungeons I will attend to them shortly” said Gimli to the guards, and so they were taken out and put in a small cell deep in the mountain. A small time later, although it seemed like an eternity to the prisoners, Gimli came with his guards “Now you are going to tell me everything.” said Gimli “Never.” said Novil “I will tell you.” Said a small voice, it belonged to Zalba. “You nasty pig, you lazy toad, you fat oliphaunt!” cursed Novil “That will be all Novil, Zalba you come with us.” Said Gimli

In a different cell Gimli sat down by Zalba and said “It is quite obvious you do not think in the same way as your cousin. I want you to tell me everything, is that all right?” “It all started about a year ago, my uncle the king used to be kind and loving but then one day he changed. He prepared us for war and told us to call him Lord of Barad-dûr.” Gimli gasped, the Lord of Barad-dûr was another name of Sauron “So he is back.” muttered Gimli “Thank you Zalba you are now free to go if you wish.” Zalba thanked him and left. Gimli turned to his guards and said to one of them call a council in Ver Boldor. Ask for Gondor, Rohan, the Ents of Isengard, also the king of the eagles must come. Go, go now they must be warned, we must unite.”