

The Twelfth Century
by
The Dark Lord Insidious
(just call me Sid)

**A New Beginning:
Zombies
&
Skeletons
&
Not So Elvin Princesses,
Oh my!**

(c) Brett Paufler 2013-2014
www.paufler.net
Brett@Paufler.net

**### Chapter 20 ###
Final Supper ###**

Weariness.

Or should it be weary?

Whatever.

Who cares?

Fact is, I feel tired, exhausted, out of sorts... or exactly in the sort of sorts that I seem to be in a lot as of late; and that sort of sort would be best described as being weary.

I have had enough. I am tired.

I would like to go to sleep.

Final slumber is sounding nice.

In fact, I have come to feel that a nap that lasted a thousand years (or even until the end of time itself) might be just what the Dark Lord ordered.

Turning to dust is starting to sound like an option -- the preferred option.

Often, I wonder what it is like: not being, not existing. Do you float around everywhere and nowhere like dust on the wind? So diffuse any concept of being is gone? Or do you simply evaporate? Not going anywhere? Simply not being?

But then, like I said, whatever.

Who cares?

#

I am at the Elves.

I sit in an overstuffed chair. It's actually sort of comfortable. Or to be more precise it is exactly unlike a bed of nails, which then, upon reflection, isn't entirely accurate either. The chair is comfortable -- I'll give it that -- but it could be more comfortable, more comfortable than I experience it.

No, that is not right either.

While I muse this over, a Kibber (Do they even have names?) serves wine to the group: Strathmore, Mine'irva, Mata, Neo'lander, and Bey'linda along with numerous other Kibbers who are standing around, pretending that they are on duty, are in 'service', but for the most, they look like they are on break, and taking far more liberties with the distinction of rank than I -- for one -- would like.

There!

It is something -- something to get angry about.

Damn the consequences!

Suddenly a frog (or is it a toad... no it is most definitely a frog -- a giant bullfrog) is hopping about the room. It gets everyone's attention. Well, perhaps that in itself does not get everyone's attention, but there is a lot of smoke, a small to middling explosion that sort of rattles the crystalline chandelier, shakes the furniture, and readjusts the angle that

the pictures hanging on the wall take, so perhaps it is all that -- rather than the sudden appearance of a bullfrog -- that gets everyone's attention.

Or perhaps it has been a few day (maybe weeks) since I last moved: lifted a finger, blinked an eye, or cackled a hearty:

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

And perhaps it is this last that gains their attention.

Of course, cackling ‘Mu-ha-ha-ha’ aside, I must confess, the entire thing might have been a bit more dramatic had I opted to transform one of the Kibbers into a toad, toadstool, or even a giant penguin in lieu of taking my vengeance on a glass of wine.

Still, it get/got everyone's attention.

So, savoring the moment, I take a sip of wine... and spit it out just as soon as I do. “This stuff is awful.” And it is (awful stuff), slightly vinegary, no depth at all, obviously an inferior vintage.

The Kibber by my side is quick to apologize in that non-apologetic manner that Kibbers have (someday, I will have to torture one, so there is that to look forward to, perhaps I should start a list of things to do before I go). But as is there way, the Kibber is aloof and indifferent in regards to the matter, “This,” as in, this I cannot bring myself to call wine, “is all that is left in the cellars, Sir.”

It has been a slow week, month, year, decade, century for funerals; and one would think that might increase their importance, but the quantity and quality of burial goods continues to go down day after day, year after year; and I even hear tell, at receptions, the wine often arrives in a plastic pouch these days -- not even boxed, as if boxed weren't bad enough.

But then, that is not my problem. “Get me better,” I instruct the Kibber as I throw the remains of the vile putrid vinegar instilled concoction (it would be an insult to call it an elixir) his way. “I wish to taste the best I've ever tasted -- not some inferior second rate memory of what could have been or times gone bad.”

“So it is not my imagination, then,” Neo’lander muses as he takes another sip of his wine. “Empty, hollow, almost not there; but then, there is something; and there is that,” he almost beams.

Another small explosion (just a puff of smoke really) and he is suddenly holding a salamander cocktail overflowing with all manner of amphibian delight -- frogs, snakes, and an assortment of geckos and lizards. “Drink up, Neo’lander. Drink up. In fact, all of you, drink up.”

It could have been taken as a command, perhaps it should have been taken as a command, but Neo’lander does not take it as a command. “No thanks,” he says as he passes the vile concoction (and it truly is vile concoction now, not even a poor to middlin concoction) to a nearby Kibber who takes that as a hint to collect all the glasses in the area; and then, in turn, the food (after I turn the cakes into worm ridden morsels and the meats and cheeses into maggot filed delights).

###

“I don’t see why you’re in such a bad mood,” Mine’irva offers, reflects, observes, interjects, and/or says as all eyes in the room turn towards her (even those intimately connected to a smoking staff of power that is even now busy looking for its next target), somehow (but I think I may have explained the reason for this adequately -- staff of power and all) Mine’irva feels like there is something missing from her previous statement and so adds, “You have achieved...”

But why let her finish?

“What? What have I achieved? That which I set out to do? That which I wished to do? Oh, clearly you do not understand. Forgive me. As her Royal Elvin Princess Majesty Most Supreme, I would have thought you would have understood. Forgive me! Sour wine and stale leftover party pastries, I forgot, these are that of which the Elves speak when they talk of the good life?”

“It is something,” Mine’irva insists, less deterred than she should be (if you ask me, that is).

“And it is more than you had before,” Mata says, supporting Mine’irva. But to be honest, it is hard for me to determine whether she

is just doing her job and being loyal at this point or she is merely so stupid as to miss the entire point of our little exercise.

“I did not wish to taste wine,” I explain, quite reasonably (though, to be fair, a certain amount of spit and spittle might be seen flying about the room at this point, so I don’t know if reasonable is the image I project, but I do know, it is not the image I wish to project). “No, I wish to taste the best glass of wine I have ever tasted and then follow it up with an even better one.”

Now, I would hope that would explain the situation: a few choice words spoken through clenched teeth, accompanied by a certain amount of flying spit and spittle (always hard to pull off whilst clenching one’s teeth, but I practice) and the well placed aim of a fully charged and functional staff of power -- and/or (but probably and) with a general demeanor of evil, anger, and discontent that I’m hoping as a Dark Necromancer (that’s a DARK-DARK NECROMANCER! by the way) I should be able to pull off with some degree of authenticity and conviction.

But then, Mine’irva is an Elf (and maybe a full-blooded one at that), so one cannot expect (nor should one expect) anything better than, “If that’s the case, you shouldn’t have summoned the zombies,” vis-a-vie the K’fr Drip concoction as previously brewed for those of who may have partook of the offering when it was passed around and therefore so far gone one wonders why I bother to try to explain anything for their benefit.

Anyway, what Mine’riva just said could (if one wanted to) be interpreted as a criticism of my actions, which I can overlook because I am a sensible (nice, sweet, caring) guy; but then, so is the Kibber that was going to replace her wine glass with a fresh one (sensible, that is, and in love with his own good for nothing hide), so he wisely changes course and slowly backs away out of room, but most expeditiously out of the line of fire.

###

I may have said some stupid things at this point, so there is no need to recount them here. Suffice to say, the accusations flew long enough that we can rejoin them mid-flight and have not missed too much.

“I’ve been wondering if this entire thing,” alliance and all, “hasn’t been a mistake.”

“Well, it has been if you’re going to do another double cross. Zombies were not part of the bargain.”

“Yes, but keeping the orcs in line, was.”

Comments that to an outsider may be unclear, so let me gloss over the important points:

A) During the last war, I started on the side that ultimately lost, but fortunately found a way to join the winning side before it was over, thus the aforementioned, double cross. Call it what you will. To me it sounds like good strategic management and probably not the sort of thing one wants to hold against a guy if said ole switchero was to your benefit.

B) Elves and Orcs are mortal enemies; so why Mog is teaching a class and not doused in honey and staked to some anthill during this time of rebirthing, is beyond me. Of course, not that I’m sanctioning such behavior; as Keeper of the Crypt I must maintain my neutrality, but one simply cannot be everywhere at once; and Orcs have strange rituals. I mean, I find standing in their presence to be a sort of slow torture and they seem to do seem to stand in each other’s presence often enough of their own freewill and volition, so who knows what other sadistic rites they fancy.

And that was a short list.

And all in all, it’s not that complicated and everyone in the room understands the ins and outs of the story (along with an intimate knowledge of the ins and outs of the ins and outs), so there is not a lot of need to get long winded about the entire thing, and probably best just to cut to the chase (especially after folks start to get personal and question my loyalty to the Cause -- which is Me, and trust me, I have been unwavering in my devotion said cause). And so, I and tactfully (or not so tactfully, as the case may be) remind everyone that, “Mine’irva is going to get a D- from Mog.”

And I mean, isn't music one of those 'gimme' classes? An easy A?

So, this sparks the sort of internal debate that I -- personally -- find so rewarding (amongst allies and the competition; and really, in this life and/or death, everyone is the competition -- and always will be).

Anyhow, I think some of the better lines from the ensuing battle went something along the lines of:

"This is not a dress rehearsal." I credit Bey'linda with this.

"We are Elves. We do not practice losing." Something Neo'lander might say.

"You are so F'd," has Strathmore written all over it.

While Mine'irva opts for the simple (yet forlorn), "So, now I have to clean up Sid's mess and get rid of the Zombies?"

Whilst Mata is strangely quiet. (I mean, isn't she usually the one who does all the talking for Mine'irva?)

And there you have it. I think that answers most of the questions I had... and certainly puts me in a decidedly better mood; there's nothing quite like Elves bickering amongst themselves to brighten one's day, I always say. But then, there might be others present (in the audience or playing along at home) who still have unanswered questions (or more importantly, have future actions that still need directing), so staff in hand, a fresh glass of wine for the road (it's still first class swill, if I do say so myself, even if it is the best my cellar currently has to offer), it's time for my big end of chapter soliloquy (which is probably a poor time to explain what's just happened. But then, this way in order to figure it all out you'll have to reread the chapter. And then, you can tell everyone you know, 'I had to read it two and three times and each time I understood more and more and it just got deeper and deeper', a sure mark of a crappy writer or an author with malignant intent -- trust me on this).

Anyway, where was I?

Oh, right. Time for a soliloquy by mentally unstable Dark Necromancer (as if that sort of double qualifier ever needs to be added), who wields a staff of power and who has been demonstrating both its functionality and his willingness to use it for quite some time now.

So, ahem.

Mee-mee-mee.

Hack-hum.

A little shoulder roll, crack the neck, and it's time to go.

"If I turn to dust, I'm going to take every one of you with me." I think that's clear enough. "And if you don't take care of this now," the zombies, Mog, backstabbing allies, or whatever, "you're just going to have to deal with it later." Which as I've said, might not sound all that clear, but for those in the moment it was crystal clear: victory is not victory if you have to share the podium with certain individuals -- Mog for instance, others might include zombies on that list.

As for my preference, well, let's just say, or rather that is to say, I just say, "Now, if you'll excuse me," taking a sip and spitting it out (I may be dead, but I'm not that dead -- if you catch my drift, meaning, and/or intent), "I've got a taste for something stronger," K'fr, Drip, who knows, maybe even darker and deeper stuff than that if that's what it takes. (I've never made Blood -- as in Demonic with malignant intent -- but if that's what it takes, then that's what it takes.)

And with that said, what else is there to say, but adios, sayonara, auf wiedersehen, "Good day. And let the best man win, Elf!"

And since actions sometimes speak louder than words, I punctuate it all with a flick of the cloak, a tap of the staff, a flash of the light, a puff of the smoke, and when it clears, what do you know? I am gone, while the the wine is, was, and always has been, nothing more than pond scum with toads swimming about croaking loudly. And although I may no longer be present in the room, my ringing laughter lingers on:

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

###

"So, it's war?"

"It's always been war."

"But now he's against us?"

“No, he’s just not for us.”

Which makes it the same as ever before, Mu-ha-ha-ha!

#

And as a postscript, as the anger fades and reason returns, let me just add that everyone thinks you become a Dark Lord out of some sort of nefarious desire or personal inner need; but the truth (for all who I’ve talked to -- and believe what they say, anyhow) is that the true desire is to merely avoid the alternative.

So, yes. I took my vows freely.

But it was after I had exhausted all other avenues and there was no other choice before me.

So as they say, I’m not evil, I simply not good.

Deal with it.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

#

Have I ever mentioned that back in the day, at Seminary I got an A in cackling. I didn’t study or practice. Somehow, it just comes naturally to me.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

{{{Chapter End}}}