

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

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

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Chapter 25
Elf Song
*I Need a Hero*
As Sung by Mine'irva

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

It has a soothing familiarity about it -- makes it feel like all is right with the world.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Yes, things are definitely as they should be.

I could feel guilty -- I do feel guilty, you know, about certain things, sometimes. I don't consider myself a cruel person; but then, who does? Sometimes the wings need to be pulled from that fly one by one. The fly is just asking for it. Or the fly just so happens to be Mog.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Still, I don't think he's in pain. I don't think he suffers. Unless, he suffers from some internal Existential Dilemma:

'Mog must get to other side of tree!'

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

And so, he never does.

But then, Mog is a zombie, now (through and through). And as such, he suffers from no dilemma, existential or otherwise. To say he 'wants' to get to the other side of the tree -- Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree -- would be an overstatement (or simplification). As a zombie, Mog wants for nothing.

There, now we can all be jealous of Mog, he has attained Zen Enlightenment -- the complete transcendence of feeling and thought -- the first Orc to have ever done so. All thanks to yours truly. When you stop to think about it, he should be thanking me. But you and I both know that should he ever get the chance, he won't.

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It would be ironic if all that consciousness (all that mental thought that the Drip has consumed and made go away -- clearly I'm not talking about Mog, here, he had little to begin with) had been channel to some specific point or being, like, perchance, if some Denizen of the Deep (Gra'gl, maybe) was harvesting it. And if I think of something clever in this regards (or discover a more sinister truth), maybe I'll tell the kids a scary story some night (when they all come back and can listen, of course, and I take on a form); and if I do (or when I do), perhaps at the same time I will integrate whatever idea I come up with into the plot, make it sound like I had some master plan all along -- the type of plan

that didn't go awry (perhaps so early as it appears to have done) on account of how the power of thought that was lost to the zombies was in fact being harnessed by some nefarious (and/or Insidious) power.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

But then, as you may have noticed from the wording (or my attitude and/or behavior as of late) that things have gone awry. So much so, that I've given a good deal of thought (and/or seriously considered) ending the Zombie Plague by snapping my fingers and making it go away. But I'm kind of sick of being called a traitor. No sense making a habit of it. (Bones' thinks he's on a roll and would never forgive me if I was the -- direct -- cause of his fall.) And then, there is still hope yet (some little hope, yet). After all, not everyone has been zombified; and until that happens, there will always be some little hope yet for the rest...

Though, as I said, I admit to wondering as of late, what I will do when (or if, but it does seem more likely when at this point) everyone is a zombie. Having a few zombies around is fun. Makes the rest tremble in fear, cower in obedience, and become spooked by their own shadows or a gentle breeze.

I can just here them:

“Is that Sid?”

“Is that you, Sid?”

“Close the door. You don't know what evil is on the air tonight.”

Sort of reminds me of how it was in the old days.

Of course, in the old days (near old, as apposed to far old), there would also be children about, flying kites, playing catch, running around, screaming, and doing those things that children do (i.e. having fun).

For metaphor's sake, we can (and will -- Snap! There, it is done) have the tree against which Mog is battering himself (Note: Mog is a trained zombie professional, do not try this at home; besides, being undead, he heals almost as fast as he injures himself... almost); anyway, the tree against which Mog is battering himself shall have stuck in its branches (for I have decreed it to be so, and this is just an example of the awesome power at my disposal) a few of the toys that had only previously been scattered about and lying fallow across the field: a ball,

a kite, perhaps a cat. Abby needs one of those, and I can almost hear her say, 'No, I don't. I need a dragon,' in response, which at this point makes it being a cat all the sweeter...

Anyway, wilt all that stuff crammed into the branches of the tree. And Mog below, continuing ever ceaselessly with his...

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

It is only a matter of time -- Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree -- until the ball is finally shifted loose. (Ah! So, that's what that crafty Orc has been doing/up to all this time, trying to dislodge his toy ball.) And after coming loose, falling off the branch on which it has rested all this time, said ball bounces off of Mog's head (so, really, we can only hope it was a bowling ball and not one of those soft rubbery things) and shifts Mog in his tracks, sending him only Gob knows where -- as I'm sure the Goblin God is as happy take advantage of Mog's current situation as any (i.e. I or the rest.)

Which is probably just another way of saying, everyone hates Mog. Everyone. I mean, you don't get that ragged looking overnight. Clearly even Mog hates himself and has some serious self-loathing issues that he needs to work out. So, best to let him wander off and attend to his inner emotional needs as he sees fit, which of course (in and of itself) is just another way of saying that two steps later:

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into a different tree.

Thunk! Mog can't seem to help but stumble into every tree in his path.

Ah, you know what they say: find a job that you enjoy and you'll never work a day in your life.

Thunk! Mog stumbles into tree.

I think I've found my calling.

But even so, eventually even I tire of this game.

###

And time passes.

And, eventually I find myself at the Elves. They are slobs. Who knew the high and mighty lived so low. It is clear they haven't cleaned the place in, well, it looks like years, but it's probably only been days (eh, maybe weeks).

What food is left is in decay. The wine is all gone or spilled on the floor. And the furniture! It is in serious need of repair. It's almost as if they live in a graveyard... or that the Kibbers have gone away, deserted the Elves at last.

Yes, that last does seem the most likely.

And as we arrive, before even settling in properly (whatever that might mean at the moment, lacking a corporeal form as we do), we can hear yelling emanating from the inner chambers. If I did not know better (and recognize the silver service and crystalline chandelier -- dusty and full of cobwebs as it is, but at least the spiders are happy), I might think I'd stumbled into the wrong burrow, perhaps the hovel of some Orc or Troll -- but certainly not a Goblin, Goblins live better than this...

The pertinent point is that Neo'lander is yelling. "You've got to do something!"

"What?" Mine'irva yells back.

"What? She says, 'What?'" Bey'linda cries, cackles, says in that sarcastic way that certain mothers have, in a way that is designed to inspire guilt, but if used often enough is doomed to eventually fail at inspiring, well, anything.

"Yes, what! What am I supposed to do, mother?"

And we could recount the conversation (if that's what a heated exchange more designed to hurt the other person's feelings than convey information is to be called):

"Maybe we made a mistake!"

"I thought you could be a Princess!"

"Perhaps, we were mistaken!"

But I think you get the drift. The love of an Elvin mother (or father) is quite conditional and presupposes success. I mean, they already replaced Mata, their true daughter; from there, replacing the

replacement, well, let's just say, they've already demonstrated an appalling lack of loyalty.

And then, after the parental figures have had their say, it is time for Mine'irva to do some serious yelling back of her own (the best defense being a strong offense and that sort of thing).

"Well, if either of you were any sort of help!"

"And don't get me started about Mata. If she were doing her job, I wouldn't even have to be talking to the two of you!" Touche, I say. (Seriously, and I do seem to like that word today, if your own Hand Maiden won't run interference with the old parental units, what good are they?)

And perhaps it is with that thought in mind that our lone Elvin Princess storms out the door (well, where the door would be if it were still on its hinges), tries to slam said door shut, gives up, walks up the stone steps, pauses, looks around, turns to make sure that Mata and Strathmore are indeed trailing after her (and therefore, is indeed still the Elvin Princess), sighs, and takes a deep breath.

"Sorry, about what I said back there. I guess I got caught up in the heat of the moment"

Mata shrugs.

"She's heard worse," Strathmore reassures Mine'irva.

"As have you, I am sure," Mine'irva counters.

And then, she is off.

"To where?" Strathmore asks as he trots after her.

"To find a hero. That's how this is done. That's how we Elves always solve our problems, isn't it? Our world goes to crap, the Goblin's invade or some Insidious Nightmare Menace releases a zombie plague."

Ah, whisper sweet nothings into my ear, my dear. I do love it when she talks about me that way, with that edge of helpless anger in her voice, sort of sends a warm tingle up my spine or where my spine might be if I had a spine at the moment.

But the moment doesn't last and Strathmore is quick to advise, "It was Drip, actually."

But nobody likes a know it all.

“I know what it was. And I know the solution. I need a hero.”

#

And here, if I were musically inclined (‘I never learned, but if I had, I would have been a true proficient’) is where the song and dance number would start. I’m thinking it’s the big number and probably the reason you had bought a ticket to see the show in the first place.

I mean, we’re talking Mine’irva, here, Chaos Elf -- Chaos Elf on the make -- which means, after she sings her few lines of repetitive lyrics:

The zombies have come.

There are Orcs on the border.

And all hope is lost.

I need a hero.

Are you my hero?

After she sings this, she then turns to the nearest living creature, duck, swan, squirrel, monkey, chimpanzee, whatever (not that there are a great number of monkeys or chimpanzees in the graveyard, so maybe we’d just use toads, I know where I can get more of those if we ever need them, disgraceful job those Kibbers are doing at the Elves...)

Anyhow, Mine’irva turns to face whatever (and by turn to face, I mean flashes her best face at them) and asks of whoever she is facing:

Are you my hero?

And the squirrel in question drops his nuts (figuratively speaking) as a cartoon heart shoots out of his (or her) chest and goes Thump! Thump! Thump! Poor little fool thinks he’s in love. (Yeah, and you may have some sob story about the woman/man/monkey in your life that you loved with all your heart, but who ‘treated you very ill: very ill, indeed!’ but your story has nothing on the wake of destruction Mine’irva is planning on leaving in her, er, um, path that follows behind her -- in her wake, I guess you’d say.)

So, the squirrel is in love with the perfect visage of squirrelly love that he now beholds in the face of Mine’irva. And better yet! He even knows what he needs to do to secure said love. Destroy the Zombies!

Only, you know, he's a squirrel, so fat chance on that (so, um, broken hearts being that which Elven Princesses most often leave in their wake if I wasn't clear on this before).

Anyhow, after a few salacious winks, maybe a kiss on the cheek, and all of a sudden Mine'irva realizes the ludicrousness of the situation (or then, perhaps she is just practicing), so (not being as evil as she might have first appeared) releases the squirrel from her Black Widow Snare, and is on her way as she belts out in perfect soprano:

You are not my hero.

But, of course, the squirrel will never be the same, has found a new mission in life, and wo unto the zombie that crosses his path.

Thunk! A nut pelts Mog in the head.

Thunk! A nut pelts Mog in the head.

And as all the creatures have turned to fight the zombie menace, Mog is once more being needlessly harassed -- Thunk! A nut pelts Mog in the head -- and all is right in the world... except for that hero thing that Mine'irva seems determined to make a musical scale production about.

#

Anyhow, after practicing on the squirrel, a rabbit, and a crow (Splat! Mog gets splattered on the head! It just gets better and better), Mine'irva moves on to bigger and better things.

So, she sings to a Goblin, flashing her best face forward. But then, I've never really heard of a Goblin hero... and neither has Mine'irva or the Goblin

So no sense drawing it out (and very quickly thereafter), we find Mine'irva asking of an Orc, "Are you my hero?" But it turns out he's not really her type; and besides, he's already (all of them, to the last) a zombie.

But then (in all honesty), Mine'irva is still practicing, trying her skills out on a few bit players, a human, an old man, and even a horse, before we get to the majors -- the named cast members. And it is here (and only here) that the song and dance number gets in full swing (the previous just being a warm up number for the orchestra, as it were).

So, with that in mind:

“Wally, will you be my hero?” Mine’irva sings in high falsetto, whatever that means, to which the Wizard responds (slightly off key), “In younger days I might, but now, my heart belongs to another.” And by this, he means Abby just in case you didn’t know or that hasn’t been made abundantly (like super-duper) clear.

And since Mine’irva is in their cottage (interrupting what looks to be a quiet evening at home cooking up some sort of potion/brew), Mine’irva shrugs (“What the hey?”) and asks the same of Abby (“Will you be my hero?”), who replies (in song, no less), “Ditto for me, but maybe if you ask again when I’m bit older.”

And there, I think we have the pattern.

Mine’irva asks, “Nicki,” the ninja, “how about you?”

To which Nicki response, “I could rock them, I could sock them,” which she does by way of demonstration (i.e. smacking about a few zombies), “But clearly, it has no effect,” which clearly it doesn’t.

So, Mine’irva declares, “I do not think you are the hero I seek,” and quickly moves on, happily running into another individual (only a few steps away and apparently oblivious to the proceeding chorus) conveniently in time for the next line of her song.

“Darren, I know you’re a Dwarf...”

“And you an Elven Queen, but my hammer blow,” which for whatever reason he tries out on Mog (that’ll teach him to wander around the set), “Is as pleasing as ever, but it has no lasting effect.”

To which the chorus replies, “But it has no lasting effect. But it has no lasting effect,” during which time Darren gives a few extra (and quite gratuitous) swings of his War Hammer at Mog just to make sure.

But Mine’irva has already moved on, dancing her way to her next... er, um, victim?

“Gwyneth? How about you?”

To which the gender confused boy/girl replies, “I don’t know my own mind, so how can you?” and I think that settles that. For how can Mine’irva take on the form of Gwyneth’s dream lover if no such lover as yet exists? Riddle me that?

Sadly, popular mythology and fairy tales to the contrary, Elves are not big on riddles. And Mine'irva knowing when she has met her match has already moved on to Frank of the Assemblage for whom she takes on the form of a corpse bride. But Frank is a clever chap and is quick to point out (and/or sing in rising crescendo) that it would never work out. "I don't need a single piece to fit, but rather the entire puzzle." (I guess, someone has been going to glee club).

Next up, Ned (poor Ned) is just speechless at the beauty he beholds, and Mine'irva is forced to sing his line for him, "I guess, I'll answer for you, as it's clear you have nothing to say." And then, as an afterthought, she adds a drawn out, "Humans!" as if that says it all, which it probably does.

Jack is more interested in his books at the moment, "The body is fine," he says as looks up and takes a break from his reading. And truthfully, I don't know how clear I have been on this, but Mine'irva does have the ability (curse and/or habit) of turning into the form of whatever her beholder most desires, so when he says 'The body is fine,' it's more than an understatement. The body is all one could ever dream of and more. Jack is staring at bombshell. But it's not enough. He wants more. "But what of your mind? Your thoughts? Your actions? Your deeds? I need more than mere flesh to quench my thirst." Which is all high and mighty (and easy to say), but one need only look at the Brick House Beauty that Mine'irva has become to see what's really on his mind (and his true heart's desire).

Oh, and just by-the-by, please make note, it's not Gloria that Jack sees reflected in Mine'irva's eyes, not in the least. Poor girl, I think I can hear her heart breaking in the background over the music... or maybe that's just the cymbals crashing at the end of the choral line as Mine'irva jumps into the next verse (time for her next victim, interviewee, claimant, hopeful, whatever) who at the moment just so happens to be S-Kelly, who is more than happy to click his heels together as he dance/walks at Mine'irva's side, declaring (offering, singing, suggesting), "Together we could rule the world!"

"But what kind of world would it be?" Mine'irva asks before countering, in rapid counter punch, "I'd rather live like a tree."

Which Trent is more than happy to take her up on, having put on his best suit and tie for the occasion (or moss and a bit of lichen depending upon your point of view). But I think you get the drift: there is no hero to be had.

Nowhere.

So finally, alone on the old stone Diaz, looking down into the old section of the forest, where the dark spirits dwell, while a gentle fog rises about her (a comforting fog, an enveloping fog), with Mine'irva set slightly above the viewer, silhouetting the moon, her sword drawn (don't ask me where that came from or why), Mine'irva belts out with a final(?), "I need a hero!"

And here, she looks right at me, the fog, the cemetery, the world around her, flashes her form into the cruelest wicked stepmother evil princess fairy my heart's desire Elvin Maiden Princess with hips that won't quit, blood red lips, and oh, such...

But here, she breaks the mood (and I thought we were getting on so well, I mean, her finally realizing who the real hero in the current situation might be, um, that it might be me, the most powerful person in these parts).

But, No! It is not to be!

For, Mine'irva suddenly (or not so suddenly, it's been going on for some time) ends her song by belting out a final, "The Hero will have to be Me!"

Not, me-me (as it should be).

But, her-me (the sort of self-centered nonsense, I should be used to getting from elves by now).

And with that, the trio descend into the fog, disappearing down into the gulch to meet with Lorien'thral, no doubt, and whatever other past-their-prime gods as they might be able to conjure.

Oh, and rather than ending the production with an echoing:

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

Which would really sound quite nice in this fog (it certainly would send shivers down my spine, if you know what I mean).

But rather and instead, Mine'irva (et al, which is a fancy way of saying, Mine'irva, Mata, and Strathmore) descend the slopes, whistling and laughing, and singing together in choral refrain:

“The Hero will have to be Me!”

“Forrrrrr, if there is no Oooo'therrrrr.”

“The Hero will have to be Me!”

“The Hero will have to be Me!”

“THE! HERO! WILL! HAVE! TO! BE! MEEEEEE!”

Ending drum roll.

Trio drops from view.

Screen drops.

Audience goes wild.

And chapter out.

Yes, indeed. ‘Had I ever studied music, I would have been a true proficient,’ a line from Pride & Prejudice if you must know (as is ‘ill, very ill indeed’). And for my money, P&P is a far more romantic than that Wuthering Heights deng, which of course, is perhaps why Jack wound up reading the later (“Mu-ha-ha-ha!” Take that Romeo. ‘A Dark Lord in possession of a large cemetery must be in want of an apprentice.’ I mean, I think it just goes without saying.)

So, if you will excuse me. With any luck there is a ghost wandering about with a broken heart, sad and vulnerable, who might even now be seeking the lonely embrace of the cruel night air...

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But alas, unrequited or not, her love is unready to quit.

Drat that Jack, if I could come up with a witty rhyme, he'd be going down yet.

###

“The Hero will have to be Me!”

“The Hero will have to be Me!”

OK, elves, you can shut up now. Song's over.

“THE! HERO! WILL! HAVE! TO! BE! MEEEEEE!”

Good, fine. Give it a rest.

“That was good, but I think I stumbled a little,” Strathmore observes.

“Yeah, I feel like we were just starting to pull it together,” Mata agrees.

“So, from the top?” Mine’irva suggests. “And a one, and a two...”
And a NOoooo!

{{{Chapter End}}}