

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 23 ###
History is Doomed ###**

I can't remember the last time anyone went swimming. At first, I thought maybe the Zombies had gone cannibal or something. (They hadn't. Pity, that.) Or maybe, there was some kind of danger or scare afoot. But there wasn't. (Shame, that. I must admit, I was rather looking forward to having something to do.) No, instead of anything exciting or important like that, someone (and then everyone) had simply decided to go swimming.

So, to recap: the dancing had died down. The music had been over for hours. And then, the splashing began.

It's the type of behavior I find hard to condone. Seriously, who knows where the water in that stream comes from? Where it goes? And I know for a fact that at least a dozen Water Sylphs have taken up

residence. And though, technically not cannibals, they definitely have a hankering for the flesh. Of course, they're as dead as the next in these-there parts, but who wants to spend the next thousand years tied up tight and bound under the water as the Sylphs wait for your body to decompose (and then, for them to get hungry)? Well, not me. That's who.

But long story short, I guess someone (not as concerned about the Sylphs and whatever else lurks beneath) wanted to go swimming and sensing my absence took advantage of the situation. Not that I'm completely absent; but then, if I was making my presence felt, there likely wouldn't have been any dancing to begin with and Disgruntled Thrall would not have been allowed to play for as many days (yes, I do believe it was days and nights and days again) as they did.

For those of you who take their music seriously, which I for one do not, Disgruntled Thrall plays a style of music known as Shove. It has all of the poetic beautiful (and requires the same skill of execution and I'm being serious here) as Elvin Push, but none of the tranquility or grace. Push will lull you to sleep. Shove will Push you out the door and inspire you to start a revolution.

So, maybe that's why they don't play when I'm around (in full form and/or in top shape).

Oh, and Mog's in the band. He's the lead singer. Man, I hate that orc.

But Bones is on the drums, taking everything he knows about inspiring the troops and setting it to rhythm, so I'm willing to cut the ensemble a few breaks.

And yes, more than one member of the Assemblage plays in the band, as do a few Dwarves, and more than twice as many humans. But I've lost interest and no longer feel like going down the list. Besides, if they want me to give them free publicity, they should have comp'd me a front row seat or something.

Though even with all said and done, I feel compelled (blasted Wizards and their spells) that Wally fits right in with the rest of the band with his long hair and spaced out demeanor. I think he's the roadie (snap of the finger and the equipment is all set up waiting for the band to

play), sound check guy (double snap, all in tune), and pyrotechnics and special effects guru (he uses a wand for that last throughout the performance, so maybe he's actually part of the band) all rolled up into one.

Anyway, whatever Wally is, Disgruntled Thrall always plays to a sold out house.

And folks are just dying (no, literally, it's a joke, just dying) to hear them play.

Ha. Ha. Ha.

Drat. I'm forgetting myself:

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

I really am going to have to get it together sometime soon (pun intended).

#

After the music, swimming, bathing, and/or rechristening were over (for the most, folks can do what they want here, especially when I'm taking a breather), those not turned into 'creatures of the night' by the drip (i.e. Zombies) slowly (or not so slowly as the case may be) made their way up the hillside to the Diaz (the locale of our first game of Hide and Seek and/or Kick the Can so long ago).

There might have been some concept of drying in the sun. But I think the deciding factor was the defensible position. Zombies are not known for their balance. And scrambling up a rocky slope (even a semi-rocky slope with plenty of footholds and more a couple well-worn paths... with stair set in stone, no less) just isn't their mainstay. So, at the top of the overlook, it was easy enough to push any unwelcome Zombies (and that would be all of them) down the side to roll to the bottom; and being Zombies, why would they make the climb again?

Brains?

No, sadly Zombies have none. And it does not seem to matter whether the base being under it all is an Orc, Goblin, Human, Troll, or

whatever. Though, let's be honest. The Orc Zombies do seem a bit duller than the rest.

Ah, if only Mog would fall under the spell, then maybe I'd make the enchantment would last.

###

And after all, I do believe we have caught back up to the present. A rather large group of disparate beings lie on the Diaz, staring up into the sky, watching the clouds drift by.

Gary the Goblin has been going on for some time about a new theory of his, "I'm just saying, how do we know any of it is true?"

"You may not know," (but then, you're a Goblin), I do believe is the general consensus.

"You're not listening to me. All of us, Greg, Gavin, Gabriel, Gifford, we all died in battle in one ill-fated charge or another, never winning, always losing."

To which, someone (probably everyone) points out the obvious, "But you're Goblins."

"But all the Orcs think they've won. And have they? Did they? Or really, better yet, answer me this. Why is it that the Orcs have it in for the Humans, think they slaughtered millions in 'The War', but not a single Human remembers being killed by an Orc?"

"Eh, their probably just embarrassed."

"Won't own up to it."

"So, you're telling me, slipping on the soap in the shower is a better way to go? More respectable?"

"I missed the war. Don't know if I got lucky or not. But a few months, years before it all, I died in a car crash. My best friend was at the wheel," Ned offers.

"And this best friend of yours, where is he, now?" Gary presses.

"I don't know."

"Nor I mine."

"Or me."

“All of us died together in that charge. I mean, I would have expected a mass grave,” come on, I may be a Goblin, Gary Surmises, but even I’m not that stupid.

“So, what are you saying exactly?” Abby asks, something in the preceding having sparked her interest.

“Just that, well, if it’s true I don’t know, but the Lord Gob created the Great Mountain...”

“Yada, yada,” Strathmore sort of comments in that derogatory/insulting way that Elves have.

“Right, yada, yada. But Gob created it and Goblins die for it. It’s the way it is.”

“And Elves were made to correct your mistakes...”

“The Great Spirit called forth the first Elf so as to finish her work,” Mata says, correcting her brother, an individual who often needs correcting in such matters.

“Yeah, I get that,” Jack says from where he lies, using that book he’s been hauling around with him for the last few days (or has it been weeks now) as a head rest. Who knows, maybe he’s gleaned some ideas, insights, and/or inspiration from that book... or at least from the who and the what it contains (seeing as how Gloria still resides therein), so maybe Jack does have something useful to say. “I think Gary... it’s Gary, right?”

“Yes,” Gary sort of beams, glad anyone can remember his name.

“I think what Gary is saying is that it’s sort of ironic, no, unlikely, that’s it, like totally implausible that every Goblin died in a suicide charge, every Orc died at the end of a winning battle, every Human dies in some sort of freak accident. Lightning, I was hit by lightning, inside, at my desk, while studying, some freak power surge or something. I mean, now that I think about it, that does seem sort of unlikely,” me studying that is. “As does the fact,” or fact in question, I do believe would be the proper wording, “that every Dwarf died honorably, in some sort of Spartan last stand, while holding off the horde for the rest of the tribe or holding up a mine shaft with their bare hands while the rest of their buds escaped... oh, though I do sort of get a kick out of how all you Elves die from arrogance.”

“I was tricked. He cheated.”

“No, you took that whole ‘I’ll beat you blinded folded, standing on one leg, with both hands tied behind my back’ thing a little too far.”

“I was cheated.”

But everyone knows Strathford was a fool for letting himself be cheated out of an easy victory and undone by his own arrogance as Jack says.

“How about you Mine’irva? How’d you bite it?”

“A lady never talks about such things,” Mata answers for her.

“Bet it was embarrassing,” Jack muses. “Probably would have been fun to watch. I mean, not that I have it in for you, but come on, sorry Strathy, er, Strathmore,” for there is a tension growing in the air now, “I mean, in retrospect, you do see how, um, silly it was to trust in an Ogre’s honor. I mean, of course, he was going to cheat you.”

“It’s always easy to see such cognitive errors in retrospect.”

“Yeah, but anybody but an Elf would have dropped him where he stood, you had him surrounded and as good as dead when he called you out.”

“Oh, yeah. He had his chance by the time you caught up with him,” a nameless onlooker comments, for everyone knows this story.

“He’d be dead.”

“Without a doubt.”

“Any last words? Sorry, what was that? Can’t hear you, because he’d already be dead my sword through his heart.”

Ah, isn’t it cute listening to a Goblin cub describe how he’d eviscerate a full grown Mountain Ogre. Little tyke probably couldn’t even hold a broadsword level.

Ah, the innocence of youth -- too fast, we leave them behind...

###

Done with roadie duties (cleaning up, putting it away, getting it all ready for the next time -- three snaps in a circle, I believe is all it takes), Wally saunters up the hill, finds a place near Abby, and lies down with the rest. “Watching the clouds?”

“Yeah, trying to figure out where they come from.”

“I’ve never been very good at that myself,” Wally has to concede. “But now, where they go...”

“We’ve been talking about how we all died,” Jack advises. “How did you bite it?”

“Time,” Wally shrugs. “It was time. Same for Abby, only, you know, a different time... a different place, too, for that matter...”

But Wally is always a hard one to understand (for me, for everyone). I think he takes pride in being more than a little bit crypt. And right on cue, as if to prove this last, as soon as he gets here, he starts to go on about how he feels like a little music, it’s been such a long time since the band has played don’t you know. And off he goes (getting ready for the next set, show, whatever, I suppose), calling to Abby as goes, “And I thought you were supposed to be looking for a cat?”

“A dragon, I’m getting a dragon, old man,” and though the tone of voice might seem to indicate the contrary, I personally know it as fact that she loves the befuddled fool. I mean, how could she not? Birds of a feather and all that -- one for take-off and the other for landing.

###

And after Wally is gone (speaking words that would fill a tome and which I shall not reconstruct or try to decipher here), “Did Wally just call Gary, ‘Professor’?”

“He did.”

“Professor Gary.”

“Me? No. I’m just thinking out loud, asking a few questions.”

“But we all heard Wally.”

“Why would he say that?”

“Wally is seriously difficult to understand sometimes,” Abby explains; but then, in all seriousness, that explains nothing. “So, what do you propose to do with this theory of yours, Prof. G. Gob?”

And after much hemming and hawing -- and not so much false modesty but the real sort of modesty that goes along with being born a Goblin and remaining as one all of your life and death; and therefore,

knowing, just knowing your fate is to get mowed down with the masses and it's more than a small miracle that you're not already a Zombie, or dead, or dust, or you know what I mean, "I'm thinking it means everything we know is false, is wrong; and so, knowing that, what do we know?"

"Zombies."

"Brains."

"Or lack thereof."

"And Sid is up to something."

"Or was," Gary corrects. "Or was. He lost heart."

"That's right, he always checks out when the going gets tough. Mold, moss," two events we need not get into at the moment, a crypt is not without its parasites, "it's all the same with him," Jack sort of throws out with the sort of traitorous glee that could easily make me want to crush him underfoot and grind him into dust. Sure, Gloria chose you over me. But what if you are no longer around to choose? It's enough to make one turn to the Dark Side. Oh, wait. I already have. But then, that (all that) is a personal problem that Jack, Gloria, and I will have to work out on our own. Perhaps, Jack would be happier living out eternity as a frog or something, and Gloria and I could keep him in the lab as a pet.

Ah, but there I go, digressing again.

"The thing is, why would he 'check-out' when the Zombies are running rampage."

And as if on cue (been using that phrase entirely too much as of late, so) as if the Zombies are only around for comedic effect and background color, a contingent of them make their way to summit at this point, and there is an interlude during which they are pushed back down the slope (some roll, some do summersaults, but I like the ones that give it their all and do the end-over cartwheel thing, going head over heels all the way down the slope, crashing back into the creek with a splash).

If we give them enough time, they'll make their way back.

Who knows, maybe Zombies like rolling down hills, gives them a rush? Or maybe, it's just something to do?

Probably could say that about almost anything or anyone in these-them-there parts...

###

And, of course, there is more discussion that follows concerning Gary's little theory. But I don't think they get anywhere much, just that I am up to something.

OK. Yes. Isn't that obvious? The Dark Necromancer is scheming again and up to something. Wow! What a surprise. Today? Again? Really?

Yes, really!

However, the frustrating thing is that things are not turning out the way I'd planned.

I know, the sense of shock and amazement is nearly overpowering, staggering, the Nefarious One (Insidious I'll have you know is my middle name) said with no little bit of sarcasm.

I for one am getting more that a little sick of losing.

To which Abby observes (and/or comments and replies more directly than I would like), "So, then, at least, we know Sid's not an Orc."

"What?" Yeah, what?

"Because Orc's always win."

"Oh, right."

"So, is he, was Sid a Human Being at one point?"

And if so, "Where's the accident?" because they always die, thereby. (Get it?)

I suppose these are all in jokes, for no one else needs them explained. As the peanut gallery continues with, "The Zombies certainly seem like a mistake?"

"But they weren't an accident."

"So, maybe he's an Elf, caught up in the fall -- and his full Zombie arrogance."

"Elves don't use Dark Magic," Mata observes.

“And Sid would dress better if he was an Elf,” Strathmore counters.

“So, Goblin?”

“His name doesn’t begin with a ‘G’.” And leave it to Geoffrey to come up with an indisputable argument like that.

“So, what does that leave? Dwarf?”

“He’s not stubborn enough.”

“Doesn’t spend nearly enough time in the catacombs.”

“Ogre?”

“Doesn’t smell bad enough.”

And on and on, until Ned gets sick of the game. “He’s a Dark Lord, the Keeper of the Crypt, a Necromancer.”

“And that means?” Abby prods, sensing Ned is onto something.

“He’s the only one here by choice. He didn’t die. He transformed.”

“So?”

“So, maybe he’s the only one here who can leave?”

It’s a good theory, I like it. Fundamentally wrong. But I say give the little tyke-boy man-child the ball and let him run with it. And maybe once he’s past the goal posts and the bleachers and out of the stadium, he’ll keep on running; and if we’re fast enough, we’ll all be able to follow along as he breaks free to the other side.

And yes, in a nutshell, that is the plan -- always was, and ever shall be.

Which might still sound a bit cryptic (been hanging out with Wally too much if that’s the case), so let me just come out and say it. My plan is escape -- a pipedream to be sure. But in a place like this (like anywhere), once you stop dreaming, you’re as good as dead. And that’s one thing I’ve never wanted to do.

###

Ned! Ned! He’s our Man!
If he can’t do it, no one can.

And if the kids are still going to have ‘class’, maybe we’re still going to have a ‘game’.

One can always hope... or dream... or cackle madly at the setting sun:

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

#

I like the sound of that.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

Has a certain ring to it.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

Like the sound of thunder in the distance, the calm before the storm, the keeper rallying his troops -- his faithful minions -- and letting them know that they better get their acts together or there will be Hell to Pay.

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

“Mu-ha-ha-ha.”

Do not ask for who the madman cackles for the madman cackles for thee...

{{{Chapter End}}}