

## **Besties**

2/6/22

"What... what are you doing over there.. What's that moist sound?" Karnak said as he twisted in his shackles as best he could from where the chains were bolted. He looked over to see his friend Viltis the human licking his wrists and ..spitting on them and then working them against the shackles.

"I'm...trying to...wet my wrist. Spit works great for that.. I should have hydrated better," Viltis replied grimacing at what he must have tasted as he worked his strategy. Karnak frowned a bit, which on his handsome and rugged orc face seemed somehow heroic even in their current situation as if he was resigned to help that poor human no matter what. Looking back now to the cave opening and their deep goblin guards, Karnak began to speak at a whisper, "There's two guards. One that was mean to you earlier.. With that hat.. And another with a pole arm. They seem drowsy. I think if we can get them in here and I can get them close enough, I can wrap my chains around one and threaten to kill them. Then the other would maybe unlock us." The Orc stared still at the guards and to the side he heard "I want that hat" from his friend between sounds of Viltis liberally applying his attempt at escape.

Karnak thought back to the Cairn and the life they had lived thus far, to his new wife that Viltis introduced him to, and to the family he intended to have. Orcs were on a dire timeline. Ten years and a day he had learned. Then they simply just died as if a cord were cut. He had to find answers. If this was a result of magic then magic could counter it. Magic could give his future children a better life. That magic won't be found within the Cairn. Those answers aren't here. That's what he and Viltis were out working on in forbidden forgotten areas of the Cairn when they stumbled across an ambush. They had been avoiding a troll when the goblins got them. The goblins still had to deal with the troll and it took away some of their forces which allowed them this opportunity. Karnak set his jaw while his hands reached to his hip and the belt favor he wore, fingers running over it idly as he did when deep in thought when he felt a tug. His head snapped to the source and he saw the human looking to him raising a finger to his lips to silence him. A finger on a hand unchained. Both were unchained! How did this damn Null do it? Amazing creatures.

Within moments Viltis had the manacles off of Karnak and they both stalked towards the cave opening. Grupik was very proud of his day. He had found this great hat. He won two shinies and a day-old snake from Fleek and they took part in an ambush and captured people-food. They also didn't get selected to fight the troll. This day was GREAT! Even as tired as he was, he beamed a toothy grin to Fleek who stood guard with him and held the polearm they had taken from the green people-food proudly. Today was a great day! What was that sound...?

Viltis brushed off the hat from the goblin. He and Karnak had snuck up on them easily enough and made quick work. Now they salvaged their gear as best they could. Chief among these were the maps they had acquired and the backpack. Karnak was making sure the pack was on right so he could run with it and the maps were tucked away. Viltis was marveling at his hat and

how it folded to be a totally different kind of hat. This fairly innocent minute was ruined not by their actions, but instead by the distinct sound of a goblin scream and it being torn in half and then by the awkward floppy wet sound of half of a goblin being hurled at them through the air and landing on the cave floor. Both friends looked at the half-corpse, then to each other. Sighing as one they looked to the cave entrance where a troll, riddled with goblin arrows growled and then roared a challenge.

Picking up a shortsword and battered shield, Viltis smirked and asked Karnak, “I go low, you go high? I'll give you a ramp?” Karnak nodded and readied his polearm as they both rushed forward. Feinting to slash at the troll's abdomen, Viltis crouched and with one hand and slashed at the troll's knee causing it to bend down slightly. Viltis' other arm with the shield strapped to it moved to lay the shield across his back. In an instant Karnak was dashing forward using the shield as the ramp promised earlier and with all of the rage in himself went high and for the head. “What odd little moments are these that make such a difference and give hope,” thought Viltis as he saw the troll's head land before him and the body start to slump. “And boy, do I hope we can find a torch fast.”