

Roberto felt the air whoosh by his ear as the knife went by. The blade was so close to him he could almost feel the coolness of the bronze on his ear. Across from him about five Roberto-sized paces across from him, the goblin licked its blade before sighting in again.

Roberto was tied, quite expertly in his opinion, to a large metal grate. A couple of finger-widths below his feet a small stream of water flowed past and down a small trench to head out of the mine. It was safe to say his plan had not gone to plan exactly. Fortunately, his current predicament had made the list of possibilities. Well, not the whole being lashed to a grate and having knives thrown at him part. He'd planned for the whole "Goblins not accepting him as their ruler and devoting their lives and service to him and trying to kill him" part. Realistically he'd expected to be roasted over a fire with some nice vegetables.

I could go for some veggies about now, Roberto daydreamed. Voluptuous radishes kept appearing in his mind's eye. He should have eaten before coming out.

"Try more time, Urgl. The Baby Longshanks not died!" the one goblin muttered to the other. "Hey! I take offense to that!" Roberto shouted. He'd had the wisdom to have tongues cast on himself before coming down here. One cannot negotiate with goblins if one is drawing pictures in the dirt.

How day they call him a baby longshanks. Seriously. They called him, Roberto, human. He could not be any less human if he were a stone or a dragonfly or not a human!

"I'll have you know that I am a Gnome, Distinguished Ripmaster of the Wigglerump Clan, and three-time published author! Eat me, skin me, or kill me, but never mistake me for human. That mistake will cost you."

The goblins simply looked at one another, shrugged, and took aim once more.

"I have the distinct impression you aren't taking me seriously!" Roberto shouted. They could understand him. He hadn't paid that awkward hedge mage two bits for a simple comprehend languages spell. He wanted tongues!

"Baby longshanks talk many. Burgth hungry. Kill now, we eat for long time," the goblin said as his companion aimed again.

Roberto could feel his ears turning red which conveniently meant his hair was turning less of the ruby-red he liked it and more the color of scarlet flames.

"You have been warned once. This is twice. If you continue to insult my heritage, I will come off this grate like you wouldn't believe, pluck off your slimy goblin ears, and shove them so far up your rear end... that... that... that you will not be able to crap for a week!" His insult fell a little flat on the end, but it was far from his worst insult.

The goblin let its knife fly. The blade spun a few times in the air and landed just above where the first one had landed. Fortunately for Roberto these goblins sucked at throwing knives. Roberto watched as a lock of hair the color of crimson flames floated down to land in the shallow stream below him.

"Give me knife, Stupid," the goblin named Burgth demanded giving his partner a shove. He grabbed a knife from the table and took aim.

What's My Fandom
Jinius Griffin, 10545

"WAIT!" a raspy voice bellowed.

A moment later a rather rotund goblin sauntered into the room. Around him were a harem of topless female goblins who were handing him food or fanning him with large eagle's feathers. He stopped his wobbly walk near the goblin's who'd been throwing knives at Roberto. Both goblins who'd been handling the knives portion of the adventure quickly bowed low and moved out of the fat goblin's way.

"Finally!" Roberto exclaimed, "The management!"

The fat goblin looked towards Roberto whose hair had gone from fire to ruby red in a span of a few seconds. The goblin looked greedily at Roberto for a moment and then back at the other two goblins.

"I want his hair," the fat goblin said very plainly. "Whoever gets me the changing hair of the little human gets to have one of my wives."

Both lesser goblins looked at the harem with a hungry expression.

"Hold on? You want to scalp me?" Roberto demanded. He was kind of surprised by that. People had threatened to skin him before and castrate him at least a thousand times. This was easily the first time someone wanted his hair. "I don't think you understand how this work..."

Roberto stopped. In his surprised he'd missed something. The fat goblin. It'd called him human. It was time for a paddlin'.

Immediately Roberto entered a rage. He felt his skin thicken and his blood begin to boil. He strained his muscles and felt the ropes fight back. He strained harder. The ropes gave under the stress and flung themselves off Roberto like a sexually repressed gnome during Nivi's Birthday party.

Roberto landed to the floor before the ropes did. He looked down at the ropes and shook his head. Stupid goblins couldn't tie knots to save their lives. He looked across the room at the surprised goblins who were looking back at him with hunger in their eyes.

"You ever dance with a pissed off Gnome in the pale cave light?" Roberto asked a second before charging in.

Roberto's first punch landed firmly on one of the smaller goblins. Its nose made a satisfying crunch with the blow and followed by a fountain of dark, nearly purple, blood. The goblin tried to scream. Roberto's second fist connected with its throat.

Two other goblins had leveled dog-slicers and were charging. Their blades failed to reflect much of the dim cavern light from the thick layers of rust and mud that dulled the shine of the blades. Roberto dodged the first cut with a spin. The second goblin came with a jab time to land where Roberto was going to be. Roberto tensed his abs and pulled his mass downward. The jab connected with the naked flesh of his shoulder rather than his vulnerable belly.

Roberto kicked the second goblin in its goblinoids. It was a dirty move, sure, but all was fair in love and war. Robert loved war.

The gnome bounded and pushed off the crumpled form of the second goblin that was crying in a foul, caterwaul-type screech. Roberto soared through the air. He was aiming to land a few strides away from the fat, mean goblin that seemed to be in charge.

What's My Fandom
Jinius Griffin, 10545

Agonizing, paralyzing pain exploded through Roberto as a cloud of crimson arcs of light grabbed him and held him fixed in the air. Roberto's innards sloshed with the sudden change in momentum. A wave of nausea nearly overtook him.

"Stupid, ugly gnome," the fat goblin rumbled disdainfully. The green blob of a creature spat a green slimeball into the corner. "

The goblin sneered at Roberto and lifted his hand to poke at Roberto's toe. "We will take your hair, gnome, and then we will pulverize what is left and I will sprinkle it on my lunch tomorrow."

Roberto threw up all over the fat goblin.

The room was silent for a moment. Roberto finally broke the silence in a strained voice, "I feel better now." The gnome continued forcing himself to speak through the strange spell that held him, "I gotta say, Mr. Fat Goblin, you sure do use bigger words than most goblins I've met."

The fat goblin glared at Roberto and then gave him a crooked smile. The goblin made a fist and a pulling motion and Roberto inched down closer so the two of them were staring almost eye to eye. Roberto's feet were scraping the floor.

"You talk to too much, gnome," the fat goblin said with a dripping malice in his voice. "I want to savor your demise."

"Ooooo," Roberto taunted, "Demise is a good word choice. It conveys the right attitude here. Most bad guys would use destruction or just declare 'I'm going to kill you, slowly', but, you see, that is a far overdone trope. Demise does the trick – it conveys anger and hatred but tells the reader what is going to happen."

The goblin stared at Roberto. Its hardened, cruel expression drained to genuine bafflement. It shook its head and glared again at Roberto, "Stones and slime, creature, I grow weary of your babbling."

"And there you go, right back on the bad guy tropes band-wagon. Take it from me, pal," Roberto suddenly gagged and strained against the red energy that held him. He continued forcing himself to speak despite the pain and difficulty, "I'm a published... author. You need... to run... from tropes,"

"SILENCE!" the goblin bellowed and tightened its fist. "I won't skin you. I won't cut you. I will drain from you your will to exist."

The goblin raised a staff and began to chant over Roberto's hovering form. The words that rasped from the goblin's lips were a harsh language with clipped and tattered phrases that seared the mind and ears that bore witness to the sound. Immediately after Roberto convulsed as a gross yellow wave of energy flowed from the goblin's staff that mixed with the red arcs. Rather than forming a natural orange color from the mixing of energy, the combined energies took on an eldritch tone that defied reason. It became a mix of yellow and red but without ever becoming orange.

Roberto fought against the current of energy. He could feel his life force bleeding off of him as if the energy were some crooked spider that had just sunk its fangs into him. Years of hardening himself and years of fighting had allowed Roberto to store up vast amounts of strength and life-energy. He felt it all escaping him.

"LUX CAELESTIS!" a strong voice bellowed from behind everyone. The room suddenly exploded with light. The remaining goblins in the room recoiled and hid from the overwhelming brightness.

Roberto watched as from the brightness behind the fat goblin a glowing silver ray of light shot out and into the fat goblin's back. The light vanished as quickly as it had come into a gigantic silver corona of light. Roberto then fell to the ground.

The fat goblin barked in alarm and wheeled around to face the source of the light. He pointed his staff forward and snarled a phrase in the same unbearably strange language he'd used before. Two black ribbons of smoke exploded from the staff and towards the now dimming light. The black ribbons collided with the source of the bright light – a man.

The man was tall and had brown hair that just touched his shoulders. He wore a rough, dark beard the same color as his muddy hair. He wore loose fitting chain armor and had a dark blue cloak draped over him. He held a longsword in one hand as he stared down the goblin.

Roberto recognized the man. It was the wizard who'd sold him the tongues spell.

"You!" Roberto shouted cheerfully as he picked himself off the ground. He glared at the fat goblin and then cocked a smile, "Alright fatso, you are officially screwed."

Roberto charged forward toward the goblin. At the same moment, the man charged forward his sword in hand suddenly becoming a glowing blue column of light in his fist. Roberto arrived first and immediately ducked into a slide to go in for a leg sweep on the goblin. The goblin batted Roberto away with a surprisingly dexterous slap of its staff. It wasn't enough to send Roberto too far off but enough to halt his attack. The man arrived a second later and brought his sword down in a heavy overhanded strike.

The goblin held his staff up to block the attack. As he did, ribbons of smoke crept up the staff and seemed form solid when they found the top. The sword slammed into the goblin's staff. In that instant a wave of scarlet energy shot out in all directions from the impact. Roberto went flying across the room, as did the remaining not-fat goblins and anything not nailed down in the room.

Roberto stood up and looked towards the man and the fat goblin who were fighting. With each attack and parry from either, pulses of red energy shot through the room. None were as powerful as the first, but they would all kick up debris or dust with each blow.

"You get him...." Roberto started to shout. He wanted to encourage the poor human who was fighting. Humans were so weak like that. They needed constant encouragement, or they would lose their confidence. That is why they grew so tall so they could tower over most other species and feel good about themselves for it. Unfortunately, Roberto had forgotten the wizard's name. Roberto improvised, "Wizard!"

A series of strikes landed against the sword from the fat goblin. The man strained with every attack but held off the assault. He glanced over at Roberto for an instant. "I'm not a wizard," the human corrected.

"You're throwing around magic and all kinds of fancy sparky hoodoo. You're a wizard, human," Roberto countered. The goblins that had been thrown had started to stand and look at Roberto menacingly. Roberto couldn't complain, he wanted something to do.

What's My Fandom
Jinius Griffin, 10545

"I'm a cleric you baffling twit," the man shouted as he ducked a sweep from the staff. He quickly muttered an incantation, the symbol on the man's chest glowed, and Roberto watched as several of the man's wounds close up leaving pink flesh in the gaps of his armor. "And my name is Jinius."

"Right, Janus," Roberto said. He was never good with names. He had learned as a youngling back at the Wigglerump Barbarian Camp that if you weren't good with names to memorize the first letter. People got far less uppity if you remembered at least the important letter in their name. All the others were fluff and mostly pointless.

A goblin dove at Roberto. He clocked it in the head with a punch as it dove in close and knocked the goblin out cold. The other had had the sense to grab a short spear and was charging. Roberto swept the legs and watched it slide past and into the wall. These goblins weren't really up to his caliber. He'd have to choose tougher jobs in the future.

Roberto turned towards the fat goblin and the silly wizard who thought himself a cleric. The wizard would need him. Most people didn't realize how much they needed Roberto when it came to a fight, but they did.

However, when Roberto looked over the wizard stood over the fat goblin and he held the goblin's amulet in his hand. Roberto scratched his head. He hadn't expected the new guy to win without him.

"Look at you, Johannes!" Roberto shouted, "You beat him. What do you have?"

Jinius stared at the amulet in his hand. The glowing gem at its center radiated power. He looked towards the gnome, "This is what was tainting the town and causing all the trouble. We can now have it properly destroyed."

"Look, James, I don't know if you know how this works but the one who finishes the fight gets to claim first loot. I want the shiny rock!" Roberto said as he sauntered over. He gave the fat goblin a firm kick once he arrived.

Jinius glared back at Roberto, "Finishes the fight? You think you did?"

"Yep," Roberto answered confidently.

"I was the one who took at this one," Jinius said. He prodded the fat goblin's corpse.

"Finishes the most bad guys. I killed a boat load more goblins than you did. I mean, really, you only killed one, Jimmy."

Jinius rolled his eyes to turn and leave. He wasn't giving the gnome the amulet. Not today. Not ever.

"Hey! Wait for me," Roberto shouted as he quickly chased after the man. "By the way, I want a refund. Your tongues spell didn't work."

"Of course, it didn't," Jinius answered. "I never cast it on you. I cast Comprehend Languages. I figured you wouldn't know the difference."

As they left, Jinius held the amulet firmly in his hand as he noticed the goblins at the corners of the room look at him. Absently he wished they would all just go away and hide. To his surprise, they did. Every single goblin near him vanished into the shadows.

What's My Fandom
Jinius Griffin, 10545

"Interesting," Jinius muttered. "This could be useful later."