

## The Forgetful Tauren

A tauren shaman who shall remain nameless liked to dine on Gnomes and other small Alliance. He often placed them in his large pocket that he sewed to his shirt, some dead, others only wounded or unconscious. This tale is about that pocket.

It was mid afternoon when a Tauren passed what looked like a recent battle. There was a dead troll in the middle of the road and just off to the side lay a gnome mage. Walking over and poking the gnome the Tauren picked him up by his cloak to inspect him.

“This one looks tasty. I’ll keep him for later.” With that he pulled his pocket open and dropped the poor unconscious gnome in. He looked about for other treats before continuing down the road; already forgetting the dead troll.

The gnome came to staring up into almost complete darkness. He sat up to find about a dozen or more other gnomes all around. He blinked and rubbed his eyes wondering if he was dead.

“You are not dead my friend. Although you might wish you were.” Said one of the gnomes as he stood and carefully walked over to the mage. The floor if you could call it that was strips of leather, some thick others thin a few had wood or metal lain between then as boards.

“What? Where is this?” The mage tried to stand but felt it would be too dangerous, the fall lead into darkness.

“I wouldn’t believe me if I wasn’t dropped in here myself. You are inside a pocket of a tauren. Its almost too complex to imagine but it seems the tauren has some sort of magic or engineering device to shrink us down so as we fit inside this pocket.”

The mage furrowed his brow as he looked around. It was dark expect for a few holes here and there that left light in.

“A pocket you say? Why not cut your way out or burn it?” A few laughs and grumbles are heard among the other gnomes.

“We’ve tried many things. The leather is very thick and we have only dull weapons. The fire led to a few gnome deaths and it was dangerous to our rigging. You see we need to stay up toward the top of the pocket. I’ll explain that later. The fire also after burning for a bit caused the tauren to slap it out smiting even more of us.”

“I see.” The mage said as he tugged on his beard thinking of a way out of this mess.” His eyes widened as he reached into one of his bags on his belt.

“I think I may have something.” He pulled forth a stick of dynamite.

“Behold!” He exclaimed as he stood although cautiously. There were gasps and yells of victory from the gnomes.

“Perhaps that would work but we would have to be very careful about how we use it. I should tell you first about our human friends that have found their way here as well.”

The mage looked about but saw no human faces.

“Oh no, they aren’t up here with us. You see, they came as a bunch. Four of them to be exact, young and stupid I suppose. They had little to no armor and they soon went mad.” The gnome shakes his head.

“They turned to cannibalism when they become too hungry. We had to force them deeper into the pocket and cut our ties with it. A few of us didn’t make it and they were eaten alive for all of us to hear.”

“How terrible.” The mage said somberly as he looked downward.

“They know were headbands made from the tattered cloths of the dead gnomes dyed red with their blood. We had a dwarf fall in a few days ago, he was headstrong and we down to take on the humans.” The gnome sighs.

“Well I’ve never heard a dwarf cry for his mommy till that day.”

The mage found it funny but stifled a laugh.

“So are we going to try the dynamite or what?” The mage said not wanting to spend any more time in this place then he already had.

“Well, we need to discuss where to place the dynamite.” The gnome said as he turned toward the others.

“Discuss what? I know where this one is going.” The mage said as he produced a small spark with his fingers lighting the dynamite. He turned and dropped it into the darkness. A few gasps broke the silence but soon everyone listened. Deep below they heard a few grumbles before a yell then burst of screaming humans no doubt scrambling away from the stick.

Suddenly the explosion filled the pocket with light and shook it slightly, a few gnomes lost their balance but lucky for them none fell.

“Hmm? Rain?” The tauren had been walking along the road glumly when he though he heard thunder. Looking to the sky he saw the bright sun and not a cloud in the sky. Thinking it was a sigh he began to do the rain dance.

“Oh my! What is that! Aftershocks?” Proclaimed a few of the gnomes now grabbing for straps of leather to hold onto.

“I think we may have angered the beast!” The mage said as he took a strap of leather into each hand. The gnomes made the straps from their armor, originally it was a plan to climb out but the flap at the top would prevent any escape. Now the pieces of leather are all that keeps them out of the human’s stomachs.

After almost five minutes the tauren wondered why he started dancing in the first place. Unsure, he began walking down the road once more.

“Ok, ok. Don’t do that again.”

“I won’t but I do believe I have seven more sticks.” The mage said checking his bag.

“Well maybe we can use them for one large explosion to escape.” The gnome said scratching his baldhead.

“Wait! Look!” One of the gnomes yelled as he pointed down and giggled with glee.

Below them was a large hole, large by the standards of their size and the other tiny holes in the pocket.

“Oh my. We might be able to fit through there but the humans might still be alive and we would be on the tauren still. Also I do not know if our size predicament is limited to this pocket.”

“Only one way to find out.” The mage said as he prepared the other sticks of dynamite so they would all light and explode at the same time. He moved toward one end of the pocket hoping to blow a hole in the corner.

“The corner is best, I’d hate to have it roll out the other hole and lose our only chance.” They were mumbles in agreement behind him as he lit the sticks of dynamite.

With a deep breath he released them and watched it drop into the darkness below.

“Cover your ears and close your eyes!” he yelled as he did the same.

The explosion was as expected much larger than the first, perhaps too large as the pocket rippled and shook throwing a few gnomes from their perches.

The tauren walked along calmly watching the clouds until he heard and felt the explosion. He stopped and looked down but didn't notice the small puff of smoke coming from his side. He placed one hand on his stomach as he sniffed the air. Shrugging he began walking again.

The pocket was much brighter than before when the gnomes started to open their eyes. The whole was rather large, strips of leather as big as they flapping in the wind. As the mage looked down he saw movement. It was a human he was trying to make his way out.

“Look!” he yelled and pointed. Everyone stopped talking and looked down at the human trying to climb out. He slowly lowered himself out until suddenly he lost his grip and fell. They were too far away to hear him scream but they could barely what looked like his growing form.

“I...I think the effects were reversed when he left the pocket.” The mage said scratching his beard.

“If that is true we need to lower ourselves so that the fall will be kills us. Come lets us descend and try to find a way to lower ourselves from this prison.”

Slowly they made their way down ever weary of the fact that the other humans may be around. Finally they reached the bottom, at first they thought all the humans has fled but they soon noticed that indeed one had been killed in the first explosion.

“Careful now chaps,” the mage said as he moved toward the opening.” The wind was coming in rather strong. He turned to address the others.

“Oh my!” he gasped. Sticking out like a very overgrown sore thumb was a human standing behind the gnomes.

“Don't kill me!” he screamed as he covered his face. The gnomes just looked at him, some tilted their heads.

“I didn't kill anyone, sure I ate some of you but that was after the others killed you. I was so hungry.” He dropped to his knees and started to weep openly. Nearly speechless the mage coughed.

“Ok then this will work even better then.” The mage clapped to gather everyone attention.

“We will need any scrapes we can gather from here and any other leather we can manage, including shoes and pants. We will do the best we can and attempt to make a rope to get us as far from this place as possible.” Almost immediately the gnomes started working on tearing up the leather they wore and from around.

“Once we are free we will judge the timing of our re-growth and hopefully we won't be too far from the ground and we can survive a jump. We will need to be on the tips of our toes from here on out even prepared to attack the beast should it come to that.”

A few gnomes stopped at hearing the latter but continued to work shortly after. Eventually making a long rope consisting of many different colors and textures they lowered it out the hole. The mage watched and as he expected the cloths slowly returned to their normal size.

“Ok stop, we don't want to lower it too far.” He said turning and walking back toward the human who was their anchor.

“You know what to do and how to do it, we trust you.” The mage said as the man nodded.

Slowly they gnomes climbed down the makeshift rope leaving a gap between each for growth. The first gnome stopped near the end of the rope where he felt odd. The others who followed felt the same.

“We must hurry!” Came a yell from outside as the mage was helping people down the rope.

“Lower it further so they may jump if they need!” He yelled back to the human who stepped forward. The first gnome that was out was nearly twice the size he was a half a minute before. As the rope lowered it continued to grow and it soon passed the Tauren’s knee joint. The others moved down as well although they were advised to wait as long as possible.

“This isn’t going to go as smooth as I would have liked.” The mage said as he grabbed the rope himself as the second to last gnome became to climb out.

“Its getting really very heavy.” The human said between gritted teeth.

“Well perhaps we should make haste with the rest of the plan.” The mage said releasing the rope. He had a few feathers on him and with them he could conjure the ability to slowly fall. It was a trick mages were taught in practice to use in the field to either escape or gain an advantage. The plan was to use the trick with the human in tow and with any luck they wouldn’t be killed from the impact.

The first few gnomes were getting to big for the rope even though it had grown with them it was still smaller and smaller the close it got to the pocket. Letting go the first gnome fell a bit but rolled and found himself on a dirt road. He was just about full size now but before he could stand and see a second gnome struck him from behind.

“Good they are jumping, time to go.” The mage said as the human inched forward toward the hole. Suddenly he lost his footing and fell forward loosing his grip on the rope. It whizzed by the mage nearly pulling him throw the hole.

“Oh no!” Came yells and gasps as the rest of the gnomes began free falling from the tauren. Their growth more rapid now the fall wasn’t nearly as far as it had been. They slid, plopped, slapped and dropped onto the dirt or the side of the road in the grass.

“Now!” The mage yelled as the human jumped.

“Hold me tightly!” he tried to yell over the rushing wind as he pulled a feather from his pouch and they suddenly slowed.

The tauren had been walking along deep within his thoughts when he heard odd sounds behind him. He stopped and thought maybe it was the wind, which was rather strong this day. When he turned he saw the road behind him was littered with gnomes.

He wasn’t sure what to make of it at first. He looked to the sky and wondered if he could find a zeppelin or perhaps one of those rumored Gnomish-flying devices. He saw only sky and clouds. Looking back at the gnomes, a few aware of his stares, the others rubbing their head or brushing dirt off their pants.

He began tugging on his braided beard when he head a thump right beside him. Startled he turned to find a human clutching a gnome in his arms, the gnome was turning blue in the face.

“Let.... go.... we landed...” The mage said between desperate gasps of air. The human opened his eyes as he slowly loosened his grip. The mage coughed and gasped for air as the other gnomes slowly approached.

The tauren took a few steps back dumbfounded at the sight. Gnomes and humans were falling from somewhere and he wasn't about to stay and find out or perhaps be struck by a fall dwarf. He turned and hurried down the road not looking back.

The gnomes were dumbfounded as well watching the Tauren run off down the road. The mage stood and rubbed his neck as he continued to try to catch his breath.

"Well... that went well," he said as he looked about. The others were looking around as well. Where were they?

"Out of the frying pan and into the fire I think the saying goes" the human said interrupting the silence.

They were finally back to their normal size but without weapons or armor and not having a clue where they were and the sun in its setting they wondered if perhaps the pocket wasn't so bad after all.