

## “A GNOME FOR BREAKFAST”

By Alexander G. Tozzi

When the goblin awoke it was often to the sound of pots and pan clattering. For this goblin lived in a burrow, and each morning there came a light quake from gnomes, who mined for diamonds and other jewels further below. Each time the goblin awoke to the clattering of pots and pans, which had fallen from the quake, the goblin would rub his eyes and wander into the kitchen to pick up the mess.

Gathering those pots and pans, the goblin would become hungry, and set about to cooking his breakfast. While the mug-wump eggs sizzled in the pan, and the goblin reached for putrid spices like fungus shavings and worm guts, the goblin would think of those annoying gnomes, and how tasty one would make its morning breakfast.

On this particular breakfast the gnomes were quite busy, for there came more quakes-violent quakes. The goblin's pots and pans fell down again, rattling a twangy cacophony as his eggs bounced with his plate on the tree stump table. When the quake ended with an abrupt rumble, and the goblin surveyed the dented pans, the eggs on the floor, he gnashed his teeth and set to burrowing deeper through the ground.

Goblins have very sharp claws, so burrowing through rough dirt and jagged rocks was no trouble for the goblin. Along the way to the gnome's mine, he gnashed at whatever came his way, imagining how tasty one of the gnomes would be, how wonderful it would be to both get his revenge and a meal in one bite.

When at last the goblin could burrow no further, he fell with a 'thwump' onto a floor made of stone. It was dark where he stood, but yellow eyes could see dim outlines of wooden buttresses holding up the dirt above, and for any eye one could see the glinting of diamonds in the dirt walls. This was the gnome's mine, and where there were plenty of diamonds there

would soon be plenty of gnomes.

At once the goblin heard the sound of pitter-pattering feet, and he jumped back into the burrow from whence he came. Digging his claws deep into the dirt, he listened closely to the sound of approaching gnomes grow louder. When the gnomes, their pointy hats bobbing beneath him, he began to salivate, knowing that the gnomes below were so tasty!

Drool dripped from his yellowed teeth and fell onto the gnome's hats, alerting them to his presence. They looked all around to see where the wet stuff had come from, finally looking up to see the goblin, claws dug into the dirt wall. Jabbing their fingers at him, the gnomes called in a high-pitched voice for help, and then began throwing their pick-axes at the goblin!

Pick-axes were sharp, and made little welts on the goblin's hide. The goblin yowled and snapped his claws at the gnomes, but the bombardment continued. Gnashing his teeth, the goblin wanted to jump down and grab on of the gnomes, figuring a few welts were worth a decent breakfast. But just as it was about to let loose its hold, it caught a growing, glinting light speed towards it.

That light was a pick-axe made of diamond, the same diamond which was found in the gnome mine. One of the gnomes had thrown it, and now it smashed right through the goblin's yellowed teeth, giving it a jagged hole in its smile, and a lump in its throat.

Choking, the goblin spat out the pick axe and climbed, squealing and gibbering, back up the burrow. Gnome laughter echoed the whole way, and still sounded back in the goblin's kitchen. Once in it's kitchen again, the goblin plugged the hole to the gnome mine with its tree stump table, and whined for awhile, both despondent and angry over its teeth. A gnome would have made a tasty breakfast, but with a jagged hole in its smile, this goblin would stick to mug-wump eggs.

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