

illion ferrets gasping in unison.

"Of COURSE there's a way, Azhol!" Ir'tran said next.

"But how will we do it? Surely it can't be just as easy as walking up to Egwa and waving a bit of tuna under his nose!"

"We shall see, my friend Azhol. We shall see. Let us be off then."

"Hold it!" said Azhol. "I must seek something that flew off over here."

"What is it, my friend Azhol?" said Ir'tran.

"My bit of whimsy that you so callously refrained from catching when I launched it at you, thus causing it to fly right over your head and somewhere into this tall grass! It will take hours to find again!" lamented Azhol.

"My friend Azhol, be not so distraught. It was only a bit, as you said. You may take some of mine, if you'd like. We have not the time to spend hours searching for a bit of whimsy such as yours. I am sure it will benefit some tree frog someday."

"All right." Azhol gave in. And thus did they continue on their way, with Azhol just as whimsical as he had been, Ir'tran slightly less whimsical as he had been, and, far in the future, some tree frog quite a bit more whimsical as he had been, and thus probably getting the best part of the deal, even though the bit of whimsy that had previously been Azhol's had not been of the highest quality to begin with, and was now a bit frayed and worn.

Many moons later, after a series of adventures that we won't bother to discuss here, save a certain encounter which, suffice it to say, left Azhol with a third ear. However, as this newfound ear was affixed to the inside of his liver, it did him very little good and often caused him to be in a state of confusion, but as this was quite normal for one such as Azhol, there was not too much difference, and in fact the new ear was oftentimes useful for distinguishing between the times when his liver cells were doing their usual duties and the times when they were partying with the bacteria from his intestines. This caused his liver cells no small amount of grief, for up until that point they had been spending quite a bit of time partying with these bacteria and had gotten to know most of them by name, and now that Azhol could listen in and tell them to cease their merriment at once and threaten to send his various stomach acids after them if they did it again, most of their parties now had to consist mainly of watching silent movies like "Intolerance" and eating JELL-O, none of which was any fun at all. However, Azhol did not care. There are very few things that Azhol cares about, and those he does

care about he does only because they often give him money.

Anyway, it was at this point that they arrived at the Temple of Chaos and String, which was a giant building with a perpetual pall of smoke hanging about it. The smoke was thick, inky, black smoke that coated one's lungs and caused health problems in 5 out of 6 laboratory rats, but there was nothing anyone could do about it, as any health inspector that approached the place was burned to the ground by the magic of Eegwa and his disciples. Thus, the hardy villagers who were foolish enough to stake their claim to the surrounding land should have made a killing off of gas masks, but, sadly, for some reason there were never enough visitors to the area to make such a business profitable, and thus the peasants remained cliche, subservient peasants. Ir'tran and Azhol, fortunately, had not chosen to disguise themselves as health inspectors.

Ir'tran marched right up to the door. It opened without anyone touching it, which was quite ominous. "That was quite ominous, my friend Azhol."

"It was indeed, my friend Ir'tran." said Azhol.

"Shall we continue, then?" asked Ir'tran.

"We shall." said Azhol. And thus did the two brave adventurers enter the Temple of Chaos and String.

Inside, they wandered a bit, hacking at guards and dropping rocks on guards and doing various other things to annoy the guards, which is always fun. Eventually, they found their way to a huge room in the middle of the Temple, one filled with flaming braziers and pools of lava and the occasional pentagram and such. In the center of the room sat the mighty Eegwa, Lord of the Dark, Keeper of the Runes of Horror, and the Creator of Those Who Walk

With the Night, in his Throne of Flaming Chaos. Ir'tran walked right up to him and glared, hands on his hips. "You're not so big." he called up to the mighty and powerful god.

Eegwa leaned over in his throne, considering the duo that stood before him. "Who are you," he said in a voice that sounded like the screams of seven hundred souls being torn apart by inhuman grinning skulls, "who are you to stand before me and call me not so big?" Flames shot out of his nostrils.

"I'm Azhol." said Azhol.

"I'm Ir'tran." said Ir'tran.

"He's right, you know." said Azhol. "You're not so big."

"And what," roared the terrible Eegwa, "do you plan to do about it?"

In a flash Ir'tran scaled the leg of the mighty Eegwa, and clambered up his chest to the god's nose. He had produced a bit of tuna. "Take THIS, evil one!" Ir'tran shouted heroically, and he waved the bit of tuna under the god's nose.

There was a shriek like the shattering of a thousand heads by a mace wielded by a four-armed warrior king named Zed. The Great God Eegwa flew into several tiny pieces which promptly shriveled up on the spot. The temple began to quake, and fire and brimstone began to fall from the ceiling. Elsewhere in several spots across the continent, townspeople were puzzled by the sudden screams and subsequent implosions of several innocent-looking townsfolk who had looked normal and healthy but were later found out to be High Disciples of Eegwa, including Khal Yikhmar. Ir'tran and Azhol dashed out of the collapsing Temple of Chaos and String, as often as not mere inches away from being crushed by tons upon tons of falling rock. The terrible smoke had dissipated, and years later the ruins became quite a tourist spot, thus prompting thousands of people a year to flock to that area. Now that there were more people there, the villagers finally got their act together and did indeed make a killing on gas masks, although no one quite knew what they were there for anymore.

Ir'tran and Azhol hobbled home, salad fork and all, thankful that this perilous quest was at last over. One night, as they were camping by the road, Azhol initiated a conversation with Ir'tran, for there was no one else around to talk to.

"My friend Ir'tran," said Azhol, "I saw that part with the bit of tuna coming for a long time, you know. Ever since you first mentioned it, it was fairly obvious that that would indeed work, because it would be delightfully absurd."

Ir'tran looked up from his side of broccoli. "I know. Your point?"

Azhol shrugged. "There isn't much of one."

And so they returned home, to the cheers of the Chosen Ones of Puzzywug and the exultations of The Mighty One True Great Slartibartfast. Ir'tran and Azhol had many more great adventures together, although Azhol was once hospitalized for two and a half years with liver trouble. (There was this rebellion, you see, and...)

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