

Tales of Azeroth

A Minor Enterprise (Winter Veil 2016 Special)

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“Taking some time off?” Rupert asked.

“Yeah, our other matters can wait until the new year. When we have this case solved, we deserve a few holidays to spend Winter Veil with our loved ones”, Faradin replied.

“I know what you mean. Still, I also know how you love your job and I’d never believe for a second that you could simply stop thinking about it.”

Faradin laughed. “You may be right, but I’ll manage. What’ll you do during Winter Veil?”

The undead shrugged. “Probably travel to the Undercity and see some old friends.”

“How do Forsaken celebrate Winter Veil?”

“We try to cherish our hopes and dreams. Values that keep us alive. Besides, it’s a habit from our human lifetimes and it takes our mind off of...well...being a corpse.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. Winter Veil is great. You should celebrate it heartily and enjoy the time of peace.”

“I will”, Faradin agreed.

The two of them continued on their way through the streets of Silvermoon City until they arrived at an inn and entered. They made their way towards the bar, intent on asking the bartender for information about their client, when somebody began to speak.

“Are you tha lads who’re supposed tae be helpin’ me with me matter?”

A dwarf stood behind them, clearly in turmoil. A long, red beard went all the way down from his bald head to his crossed arms.

“You’re our client?”, Faradin asked.

“Dinnae expect a dwarf, aye?”

“Not really. What brings you all the way to Silvermoon?”

“Ye see, laddie, I’m a merchant who’s started a wee business endeavor. Dimri Emmason the name, proud owner o’ tha Emmason store. We sell an’ ship all kinds o’ goods that people order through tha MagiNet.”

“The MagiNet?”, Rupert asked.

“It’s a magical network fer communicating all o’er Azeroth. Ye can buy stuff from our store and we’ll be shippin’ it within days. Our latest device, which is called the ‘Echo of Emmason’, allows ye tae order goods with just yer own voice. It even features a human voice interface that can talk back. I like tae call her Alyx.”

“Never heard of the MagiNet”, Rupert said. “I doubt it has any commercial potential in the next 10 years.”

“I would’na think so, sir. Me goblin investors are really excited ‘bout its future.”

“How can you possibly deliver packages all over Azeroth?” Faradin wondered.

The dwarf grinned. “We’ve created a teleporter system fer that. Goods are sent tae tha nearest distribution center an’ our local employees deliver ‘em tae tha customers. We’ve also tried usin’ a few o’ these goblin drones fer shippin’, but they keep explodin’ half-way there.”

“Alright, but what brings you to Silvermoon, now?”

“I was gettin’ there, mate. As ye proly know, it’s time fer tha yearly Winter Veil celebrations. In order tae promote me business, I’ve started a cooperation with yer elven government. This year, I’ll play Greatfather Winter an’ hand out presents tae tha wee elves. Yer kids could use some hope an’ happiness - an’ I could use a few more customers an’ a local facility”, Dimri Emmason laughed.

“That’s nice”, Rupert said, “but what are you hiring us for?”

“Alright, alright, let’s get tae tha point”, Emmason said. “I arrived here yesterday an’ rented a room at this fine establishment. When I wanted tae go fer settin’ up me booth today, I found that me cart with me goods was stolen. I could’ve called tha guards, but the bartender told me ‘bout ye an’ I bet ye can help me better an’ faster, aye?”

“This is where I’d parked me cart”, Emmason explained.

Faradin looked around the courtyard. “The only way to get a cart out of here is through the front gate.”

“Someone must have seen it from the plaza outside”, Rupert concluded.

“Yeah, it probably looked so natural, they didn’t realize the thief was actually stealing the cart.”

“Oh bugger”, Emmason sighed. “I dinnae think ‘bout that; some goon steals me wares an’ everyone believes they’re just transportin’ their own stuff. That’s bloody insane!”

Rupert shrugged. “It’s called hiding in plain sight.”

“Let’s ask around, shall we?” Faradin suggested, and the three of them left for the plaza near the inn.

They had obviously missed the beginning of a show. During their talk with Emmason, a few dozen elves had gathered in front of a wooden stage that had been built on the opposite side of the plaza. A human male and female were pacing around on the stage, speaking words they couldn’t quite hear from their distance.

“What’s going on here?”, Rupert asked as they moved closer.

“Ah, that’s the Traveling Theatre”, Faradin said. “They come here every year just before the Feast of Winter Veil. With a cast of actors from many different races, they usually play performances about peace and tolerance.”

A muscular orc entered the stage. His movements were brutish and his expression that of stone. In his hand, he carried a red rose, and like a guard holding out a halberd, he offered it to the human female. The other human looked at him in disbelief.

Then, the orc began to speak, “With love’s light wings did I o’er-perch these walls; for stony limits cannot hold love out, and what love can do that dares love attempt; therefore thy kinsmen cannot hold me out.”

Clearly angered, the human male drew his sword. “Stop thy unhallow’d toil, vile orc! Can vengeance be pursued further than death? Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee: Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.”

With a fierce roar, he charged at the orc, who was still calmly holding the flower. Just before the human could land a blow, the orc’s left arm flicked forth and hit the other’s chin, sending him tumbling back and leaving him unconscious.

With an expression of pure happiness and ignoring the man’s body on the floor, the female jumped into the orc’s arms and kissed him.

A red curtain closed the stage and the crowd applauded. During the applause, a tauren climbed a small podium, and once the audience had calmed down, said, “Thank you, dear audience. It has been an honor to act out our latest play here in Silvermoon City. I hope we can see you all the next two days as well, when we will play ‘Goblins and Gnomes - An Unusual Collaboration’ and ‘United We Stand - Against the Lich King’. In the name of the Traveling Theatre I wish you all a nice day and - Moo.”

Another round of applause started and the crowd began to dissolve.

“Moo?”, Rupert asked.

“Yeah”, Faradin said. “It’s become a running gag that the tauren says that at the end.”

“Strange.”

They went to the podium and Faradin began asking the tauren about Emmason’s cart. There was nothing special the tauren had seen, but he was willing to help, nevertheless.

“Did you have cinnamon loaded on your cart?” the tauren asked after inspecting the area near the inn.

Emmason thought about it for a moment, then said, “Aye, how do ye know ‘bout that?”

“I can still smell some of it in the air”, the big guy answered.

“Really?” Rupert asked intrigued. “I can’t smell a thing.”

“I suppose that’s because of your body’s... reanimated condition. I’m very aware of your smell as well, by the way. Still, it’s only faint scent but my tauren nose seems to be able to pick it up.”

“Impressive”, Faradin remarked. “I know elven senses are also better than, for example, those of humans, but even I cannot pick it up. Can you follow the scent so we can locate the cart?”

The other wrinkled his nose and nodded. Together they slowly followed the trail of cinnamon throughout Silvermoon. At some point, the tauren halted and pointed at the closed gate of a building - it was a bank.

“I’m quite sure your cart is in there, dwarf.”

Emmason said, “Well, whatta we waitin’ fer? Let’s get in there.”

“It is time for me to leave again. I am glad I was able to help”, the tauren said.

“Yes, of course”, Faradin said, “thank you very much, mister...?”

“I am called ‘Red Bull’ and you’re welcome”, the tauren answered and left.

Rupert threw Faradin a wary look. “Someone from the bank stole the cart?”

With a shrug, Faradin said, “We shall see”, and entered the bank.

Inside, the group went to the nearest counter and Faradin cut to the chase, “Hello. We’re looking for this dwarf’s stolen cart. We have information that leads us to believe it found its way here.”

The man at the counter looked at him in disbelief. “No, I don’t know of any cart. Is there anything else?”

“Look, laddie, I’ll not be goin’ away until I’ve spoken tae someone who can help me”, Dimri said. “Also, I’d like tae see yer courtyard, ‘cause I got reason tae believe me cart is there.”

“Mister dwarf, I’m not able to help you. If you want to speak to our supervisor-”

“I certainly would”, Emmason insisted.

“Then, you will need to speak to the lady at counter two.”

“Why’s that?”, Rupert asked.

“Because that’s not my department”, the man answered.

Rupert sighed and the three headed for counter two on the other side of the hall.

“We’d like to talk to the manager”, Faradin explained.

The lady at the counter nodded, “Certainly, no problem. I can arrange an appointment. I’ll just need the completed Form S-201.”

“Form S-201? We dinnae have that”, Emmason said.

“Well, without Form S-201, I can’t help you. You’ll need to get it from counter one.”

“That’s where we just came from”, Rupert protested.

“Then you know where to go.”

Back at counter one, the window was closed. A woman serving at the neighboring counter three explained, “My colleague for counter one is on a break. You’ll have to wait until he gets back.”

Faradin asked, “Can’t you give us Form S-201 so we don’t have to wait?”

“I’m afraid not. I only hand out forms from the A and M series. Counter one is the only one for S-forms. Feel free to sit down for the time being.”

Emmason mumbled something incomprehensible and sat down on a nearby bench. Faradin followed the dwarf and shook his head. When he looked around, he found that Rupert was gone.

“Where’s tha Forsaken?” Emmason asked.

“I don’t know”, Faradin replied, “but I believe he prefers to take matters into his own hands.”

They had to wait for almost half an hour before the elf at counter one came back.

“Can you give us Form S-201 please?” Faradin asked when they stepped back up to the counter.

“Form S-201, let me see”, the man said and dug through piles of papers in several drawers. Finally, he took out a six-page form and gave it to Faradin. “There you go.”

Together with Dimri Emmason, Faradin worked through the huge form.

“Fer a form that’s supposed tae be gettin’ us an appointment with tha manager, this thing has a lot o’ nonsense questions”, Emmason noticed. “What’s it matter which banks ye have used before?”

“Yeah”, Faradin agreed. “Half of the questions are irrelevant. Let’s just fill this in as best we can and sign it.”

Once they were done, they went to hand the form in at counter two. Unfortunately, the blood elf lady at the counter was deeply immersed in a conversation with her neighbor at counter four.

“Excuse me”, Faradin started.

“... and you can’t imagine what happened as soon as we left the gates of the city”, she said without paying them any attention.

“Tell me”, her neighbor said.

“It began to rain.”

“Oh no.”

“I’m serious. Drops just poured down and my whole beautiful dress got wet. It was disgusting, you can’t even imagine how my hair looked; not to mention my nail polish...”

Faradin coughed and tried again, “Excuse me.”

“...but the *worst* thing”, the lady continued, “was the mud. They can rebuild Silvermoon all they want, but the roads outside are a catastrophe. The rain made them so muddy, I could basically throw away my shoes after that.”

“You mean the ones you always wore for your journeys? Those were wonderful”, her neighbor said.

“Yes, and quite expensive. As I said, it was horri-”

“Listen up, lassie”, Emmason interrupted in a harsh tone. “I dinnae care ‘bout yer elven beauty palace problems. Here’s yer freakin’ form S-201 an’ now we’d like tae see yer manager, okay?”

“There’s no reason to be this unfriendly, mister dwarf. Didn’t you see I was busy?”, she sighed and took the form without looking at it for even a second. “The manager has time for you in about 30 minutes. Feel free to sit down for the time being.”

“30 minutes?” Faradin asked. “Why so long a wait? I haven’t seen anyone enter since we got here.”

“In 30 minutes or not at all, your choice.”

“Hello, what can I help you with?” the manager asked when he joined Emmason and Faradin in the hall of the bank.

“Good day”, Faradin said. “We have reason to believe Mister Emmason’s stolen cart is on your courtyard and we would like to verify that.”

“What!?” the manager gasped in irritation. “A stolen cart? Here? We shall have a look at that immediately. Follow me!”

Together, they walked through the hall and left the building using the back door. In the courtyard, Rupert was already waiting for them - in front of Emmason’s cart. Standing closeby was a helpless elf, a knife held by the Forsaken pointed uncomfortably close to the elf’s throat.

“What’s going on here? Who are you?” the manager inquired frowning.

“Ye’ve found me cart!” Emmason called out in relief.

“Indeed”, Rupert nodded. “I caught this man while he was trying to smuggle it out again. He must have seen us in the bank.”

“You broke into our courtyard to spy on my employee?” the manager assessed.

“I’m glad I did”, Rupert responded. “This way I could catch him in the act while the others were busy with that paperchase inside.”

“Why should I believe you and what gives you the authority to threaten one of my employees?”

Faradin coughed and intervened, “Rupert belongs to me. I’m private investigator Faradin, authorised by Lady Silvarea Veovis, and Mister Emmason hired us to get his cart back. Sometimes, Rupert prefers to handle things his own way, but you can’t deny his efficiency.”

He showed the manager a badge and Emmason handed the man his ownership papers for the cart.

“I see”, the manager said. “Explain”, he ordered his subordinate.

The man who was locked in Rupert’s grip had obviously given up resistance and sighed. “I did steal the cart, yes.”

“Why would you do that?”, the other asked.

“Because he’s a dwarf”, he said pointing at Dimri Emmason and spitting in his direction. “Dwarves are part of the Alliance. We can’t have people from those human-allied traitors roam through our city freely. They don’t belong here, not if we are to join the Horde...and *especially* not for trading and giving out Winter Veil presents. I won’t allow an enemy to manipulate our children.”

“Calm down, mate”, Emmason responded quite offended, “I’m just a merchant mindin’ me own business without worryin’ ‘bout politics. Besides, I’ve got a deal with yer government.”

“Didn’t you notice the Traveling Theatre?” Faradin asked the man. “They are from different races and factions too. Why do you want to fight symbols of peace?”

“Pah”, the man spat out, “the same disillusioned scum. We’ll be at war with the Alliance soon and you all know it. We can’t pretend to have a peaceful world after all that’s happened.”

“I disagree”, Faradin said. “Especially in times where we all have our differences and we feel like the humans betrayed us after the Third War, we mustn’t forget that we are still living on Azeroth together, with common enemies like the Scourge and the Burning Legion still out there. We have to cherish these moments of love, especially during Winter Veil.”

“Well said, laddie”, Emmason clapped Faradin on back.

“Alright”, the manager said, “enough philosophy. No matter which perspective, this man is a criminal. Get him out of my sight!”

“Gladly”, Rupert said with a grin and arrested the man.

“What are you going to do now, Emmason?”, Faradin asked after turning the thief in for a hearing at the Ranger’s headquarters and escorting the dwarf and his cart to the inn.

“I still have a booth tae set up. It’ll take some time, but I’ll manage. Thanks fer yer help, ye just saved a many wee elves’ Winter Veil, ye know?”

Emmason handed Faradin a pouch of coins and made his farewells, leaving Rupert and Faradin behind.

“Glad we could solve this case in time”, Rupert said after a moment.

“True”, Faradin agreed. “Also, I’m glad you decided to take my offer and join me back in Easthaven.”

“Ah, I’m just thankful I can use my skills and strengthen the bond between blood elves and Forsaken by helping you.”

“Well, then, it’s time to close our office and celebrate Winter Veil, right?”

“You going to see your girlfriend?”

“That’s what I have in mind.”

Faradin had put his best set of clothes on for the Winter Veil celebrations when he knocked at the door. After a short period of time, it opened and a red haired face smiled at him with delight.

“You made it”, Silvarea said and the two locked their lips in a kiss.

He handed her a beautiful bouquet of flowers. “We agreed not to get any presents, but I couldn’t resist to at least get you a few flowers.”

“That’s sweet of you”, she answered smelling at the flowers. “Come on in.”

They made themselves comfortable in the living room when Eireenia joined them.

“Faradin”, the 14-year old girl called out running towards him for a hug.

“I got a present for you as well”, Faradin said. “Your big sister told me you want to become a priest one day?”

Eireenia nodded.

“Well, she recommended to get you some books for your studies, but I thought of something else you might like.”

He pointed at a rather big present he had put on a table and Eireenia went over to carefully unwrap it. When she was done, the packet revealed a small, portable harp.

“I figured you would probably like to spend your time playing some music as well.”

“That’s awesome”, Eireenia said, her eyes sparkling with joy. “Thank you!”

“What a nice idea”, Silvarea said from his side and, when a sequence of random notes sounded through the room, she laughed and added, “Now she’ll just have to learn how to play it.”

“I’m sure she will”, Faradin said. “Happy Feast of Winter Veil, you two!”

Silvarea gave him another kiss and said, “Happy Feast of Winter Veil! And now, let’s have a good meal.”

THE END