

The Fellowship of the Fanfic

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Rated: G

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Summary: Terry's muses are at it again, and this time they're working together on a very special tale. Humorous crossover with Lord of the Rings, starring most of the major L&C characters.

Story Size: 2,598 words (17Kb as text)

Cast of Characters (required by this silly beast of a crossover)

| Actor | Character |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Perry White | Perdalf the Grey |
| Jimmy Olsen | Jimli |
| Lois Lane | Are-We-There |
| Clark Kent | Flyer |
| Ralph Spagoda | Boring-More |
| Cat Grant | Leggy Lass |
| Polyskitzodia | Poppin Take |
| Psychotropia | Marry BrandaBuck |
| Lex Luthor | Sore-man |
| Nigel St. John | Sorry-Man |
| Franklin Stern | Elround |
| LabRat | Froyo (primary author/scrollbearer) |
| Bobby Bigmouth | SamSmart GamePlan |

A/N – This came to me after reading a tortured twisting of Boromir's speech referring to writing a research paper on the Web. Boromir's face and posture at that moment has become a meme, with captions such as "One does not simply talk to a girl" or "Well, I feel stupid, Frodo – apparently you *can* just walk into Mordor." I hope you enjoy it reading it as much as I enjoyed

writing it.

A huge nod of appreciation goes to LabRat, who graciously agreed to appear in this fable. I promised to treat her with respect, and I hope that comes across as I intended.

I looked around my gray office. I noticed that my desk was the only one that had a nameplate on it. That must mean that Miles had followed his last suspect and that I was due for a visit from a prim prima donna whose every word would be a lie.

A knock on the door derailed my train of thought. A cute, athletic blonde stuck her head through the opening and said, "Sam, there are two women here to see you if you're not busy with something else. They say you know them well."

Two women? This I had to see. "Send them in, Effie dear. And if you haven't had lunch yet, go ahead."

"Of course, Mr. Spade." Effie smiled and stepped back into the outer office. I heard her say, "Please go ahead, ladies."

I wondered who they might be. The fake New York brunette was due back in to tell me how terrified she was of the man who'd kidnapped her sister – a very convincing lie, of course – and it was her job to get me chasing the black bird, the MacGuffin that would drive all the action. But she was supposed to be alone. And the women had told Effie that I knew them very well. The change made me curious.

And then my own personal muses, Polyskitzodia and Psychotropia, walked side-by-side through the door, and I went from curious to nervous in less than a heartbeat.

My first coherent thought was that two people wouldn't fit through that doorway at one time. My second thought was that Polly and Trope would rather eat jagged sheet metal fragments than cooperate on a story.

I had to be dreaming.

The outer door clicked shut and Polly chuckled. "Look, Sis, he's speechless. You ever see him like that before?"

Trope grinned and shook her head. "I think he's surprised to see us."

I knew I had to say something or risk irritating one or both of them, something I knew from hard experience I needed to avoid. "Hello, ladies. Might I inquire as to the reason you're wearing dresses half a century out of date with this time frame?"

"Polly wanted us to wear stuff from Star Wars, but I convinced her that she'd jiggle too much and we'd never get you to listen."

"Only because you wanted to wear the white Princess Leia outfits and didn't want us to wear bras because women don't wear underwear in space! Then you wanted homespun hippie ponchos and torn jeans."

"It was Woodstock chic! You suggested we wear Leia's metal bikini!"

"You wanted to wear the bottom and give me the top!"

The room was getting warm and I thought I smelled smoke, so I broke in. "Excuse me? I thought you had a story idea for me."

They turned back to me and smiled simultaneously. I don't think I've ever seen anything creepier.

"Oh, we do, Sam," Trope purred.

"And you'll love it," Polly breathed.

"And what, pray tell, is so different about this tale?"

"It's a truncated epic," Polly answered.

Uh-oh, I thought. "Truncated how?"

"You'll see." Trope was almost giggling.

My last coherent thought was that I needed Harley to save me from these two, and that meant that I was definitely dreaming because Harley was certifiable and only dropped by when she wanted to twist the readers' collective tails with a terrifying—

The room suddenly spun like a carousel and I closed my eyes.

I opened them to see Elround point at a scroll sitting on a huge tree stump. “This is the McGuffin of all McGuffins, gentle friends. This scroll will drive this tale.”

Wow, I thought, he really does sound like Darth Vader without the asthma.

Boring-more lifted his hand. “So where shall this fabled McGuffin drive us?”

Wow, I thought. Ralph is a slime mold no matter what story he’s in. And somehow he’s making everyone yawn.

Perdalf the Grey softly thumped his editorial staff on the stone paving. “What Elround means, my friends and companions, is that we must deliver this completed scroll to the Archives.”

The entire group gasped. “The Archives!” snapped Are-We-There. “And who shall transport this – wait, you said ‘completed scroll,’ did you not?”

“I did,” replied Perdalf. “The tale must be completed along the way.”

Flyer adjusted his glasses and gave Are-We-There a slow once-over. She seemed to enjoy it, even smiling impishly and tilting her head and perching her hand on her hip as if posing for him. Then Flyer shook his head and muttered something that sounded like, “Later, Lois.” Then he turned to the group and spoke in a clear baritone. “Perdalf, who shall complete this tale? And who shall bear the scroll to the Archives?”

Perdalf gathered his gray robes around himself and smiled. “We are blessed to have a true Author in our midst. This Author shall bear the scroll.”

“And who is this true Author in whom you place so much trust?” demanded Are-We-There.

A short, slender figure stepped forward. “That would be me,” a woman’s voice said.

A tall man wearing a chef’s outfit spoke before anyone else could. “Froyo?” he cried. “You shall bear the scroll to the archives?”

Froyo reached out with what looked like a mouse’s paw and grasped the tall man’s elbow. “I must, my friend SamSmart GamePlan. This is my life’s great adventure.”

“You must not!” cried Sam. “The danger is too great! You must choose another to go in your place!”

Two slightly scary women with too many teeth were standing next to each other. They smiled to each other, then stepped toward Froyo. “We will accompany you, Froyo!” said one.

“Yes,” added the other, “to the very end of the journey!”

I suddenly recognized them and realized why Polly and Trope were so excited about this new story. They were playing characters in it, which I was pretty sure is against the rules of the Muse union.

Froyo smiled and bowed to the two rule breakers. “I thank you, Poppin Take and Marry Brand-a-Buck.” Then she turned to her tall companion. “I must go, Sam. Besides the fact that I already have escorts, it is evident that I have not chosen this mission but that this mission has chosen me.”

Are-We-There flipped her short brunette bangs to one side and stepped forward. “Then I and my sword, Reporter, shall accompany you.” The man wearing glasses lifted one hand and opened his mouth, but before he spoke, she added, “And Flyer shall also come. He must retrieve his Kryptonian sword from my father.”

Perdalf shook his head. “He must accept this assignment himself, Are-We-There. You cannot do so for him.”

She turned and stared at Flyer. It made me wonder which of them really had the superpowers.

Flyer grinned impishly and nodded. “I shall accompany Froyo.”

“As shall Leggy Lass of the Woodland Elves.”

I looked at the woman who’d spoken and wondered how I’d missed her. She had flaming red hair and emerald eyes, was

wearing a forest green outfit with a gray cape with a quiver of arrows strapped to her back and an unstrung bow in her left hand, and sported a very Freudian sword on her belt buckle which seemed to hug the inside of her left leg. She turned to face Are-We-There as if challenging the other woman. Are-We-There held the glance for a long breath, then nodded. “You will be most useful, Leggy Lass, so long as you remain on your feet.”

Before the striking redhead could reply, Perdalf thumped his editorial staff again and lifted himself to his feet. “I shall also come,” he said softly. “It may be that a wizard editor can keep the peace amongst this disparate team.”

Elround looked at everyone in turn, then tilted his head to Boring-more. “Is there room on your team for one more, Perdalf?”

Boring-more jumped up from the stone bench where he’d been sitting. “Are you insane, all of you? This venture is doomed before it begins! Did none of you hear Perdalf? The tale is not yet complete!”

Froyo stifled a yawn, then reached into her left sleeve with her right paw and drew out an object. “This is the device which will complete the tale about which Boring-More has complained. It is an Editorial Pen.”

The entire group gasped again. Froyo continued, “With this pen, I will finish the story before we arrive at the Archives. It will then be ready for enshrinement beside the other masterpieces now residing there.”

Boring-more stomped his boot on the stone flooring. “This is impossible, Froyo! You have set for yourself a fool’s errand! None can accomplish this task!”

A short, clean-shaven young man – a boy, really – lifted his camera and stepped to the big tree stump in the middle of the gathering. “If this is truly impossible, Boring-more, then I will destroy this aberration!”

Jimli leaned in and snapped the shutter. A blast of energy immediately radiated from the scroll and abruptly knocked him on his keister. He put the camera back in its case and stood slowly, reaching behind himself only once to rub his offended anatomy. A grimace betrayed his mood and his opinion of the scroll.

“(A grimace betrayed his mood?” Wow, I thought, I’m really getting into the story.)

Elround shook his massive head. “The scroll cannot be destroyed by any physical means. The only real danger is that it might be taken from its rightful owner and inscribed by an evil one to corrupt the drama stream.”

Flyer’s jaw dropped. “Do you mean that the scroll might be stolen by Sore-Man?”

Everyone else put his or her index finger over his or her mouth and forced air through his or her pursed lips. “Shh!” they all said to clarify their gestures.

After a long moment, Perdalf turned to Flyer and intoned, “That name shall not be spoken here.”

Flyer lifted his hands to either side. “Okay, okay! How Luthoresque for him to have a name we can’t speak aloud.”

Boring-more sighed as if he was tired of Flyer getting all the attention. “How can we fight one whose name cannot be mentioned?”

“You mean Voldemort?” blurted Jimli.

“No, you dunce, the forbidden name spoken by Flyer!” As Boring-more sharply turned his head, his long, straggly hair ended up in his mouth. He paused to spit it out. “Pffft! Pffffft!” Then he shook back his hair – in slow motion, yet – as if he were a L’Oréal shampoo model. Instead of making him appear impressive, he closely resembled a rock drummer who’d barely survived the 60s.

Froyo stepped toward him as he was fighting his hair. “Fear not, friend Boring-More,” she said. “The tale is fully formed in my mind. All that is wanted is to transcribe it to the scroll and deliver it to the Archives.” She smiled glowingly. “It will be the perfect fanfic.”

Elround stepped forward. (That group is starting to get really close to each other, I thought.) “Boring-more does state the truth, as much as I hate to admit it. There are many dangers along the way. Beside the crafts and treachery of the one whose name will not be spoken in this place, you would face the FDK-Hai, those ready to rend the tale to its smallest bits, or the Sorry-Man, the tall, white-haired wise man turned evil who is in league with the other whose name so closely resembles his own.” He took a step closer to the stump and reverently lifted the scroll with both hands. “Yet I have confidence in this company, this Fellowship of the Fanfic. I believe that, with wisdom and perseverance and a bit of unreasonable luck, you will win through to the Archives with the Perfect Fanfic.”

Boring-more shook his head in exasperation. “One does not simply write the perfect fanfic. Its paragraphs are guarded by more than just capital letters and careful punctuation. There is evil there that does not sleep, and the Grammar Nazi is ever watchful. It is a barren wasteland, riddled with metaphors, allusions, clichéd plots, and labored descriptions. The very words you read are a confused jumble. Not with ten thousand beta readers and a hundred General Editors could you do this! It is utter folly.”

I wanted to hear more. I wanted to know what happened on the journey. I needed to know for certain who Sore-man was! But the scene started spinning again and I—

I opened my eyes to see Trope and Polly smiling at me. “Well?” asked Polly. “What do you think?”

I picked up my gray hat and put it on my head, then stood and reached for my gray suit coat. “I think it’s a marvelous idea with terrific possibilities, but I’ve got several other projects at a standstill because you two won’t cooperate. I don’t have the time or the energy to write half a million words on a Lord of the Rings parody using Lois and Clark characters. I think you should find someone younger.”

“But we want you, Sam!” cried Trope. “You’re our favorite!”

Without actually saying it, I discounted that last statement. Polly and Trope picked favorites like most women picked out shoes for the day, and that was dangerous for the writer playing the part of the shoe. You never knew just what you were going to step in.

I did say, “I know why you want this story written. You just want to be a part of the tale instead of the one whispering in the author’s mind. I thought there was some kind of union rule against Muses becoming part of the story, kind of like reporters telling the story instead of becoming part of it. Besides, Merry and Pippin were pretty much the story’s comic relief characters.”

“Not the way we’re planning it,” they said in unison.

I shuddered. “Don’t do that, please. It’s mildly disturbing.”

Polly sighed dramatically and put her hand on her hip like Lois had when Flyer had checked out Are-We-There, but with a frown instead of a seductive smile. “Then what do you want us to do, Sam? We’ve got to stay busy! We can’t just make uncredited cameos in animated Disney movies.”

“You can give me some more jokes for the comedian story,” I said. “Or more of the third part of that airplane story. That’s lots of fun to research.” Trope drew her eyebrows together and narrowed her eyes as if she were getting mad, so I added, “Or some more about the Lucy Lane story? That’s got lots of possibilities to it. And remember, the show never explored the aftermath of Johnny Corbin’s death, especially the effect on Lucy.”

Her expression cleared and her gaze turned thoughtful. Polly pressed her lips together and smiled grimly. “You’re right, Sam, we could do some of those things.” She turned to Trope and nudged her shoulder with her hand. “Come on, Sis, let’s get to brainstorming. Sam’s right, we need to finish what we start.”

Trope slowly nodded. “Yeah.” Then she smiled with all her teeth showing. “Yeah! I’ve got some ideas for the airplane story.

You can help me flesh them out, hang some meat on those bones.”

I tried not to shudder at the metaphor. For these two, it was more than apt.

Polly turned Trope and hooked their arms together. “Uh-huh. And you could help me with the comedian story. I don’t think we want to kill anybody in that one, so let’s not have Sam write himself into a coroner.”

They started walking toward the office door, having forgotten I was there. Trope laughed with real amusement. “Write himself into a coroner! Oh, Polly, you’re hysterical!”

The door shut behind them and I breathed a sigh of relief. I buttoned my gray coat and checked the .38 special revolver in my shoulder holster and wondered how many shades of gray I had in my office. It was time to go home.

Then the inner office door opened and another woman stuck her head in, white face and jingle bells and black diamonds painted around her eyes and everything. “Hi, Sam,” she called as she hopped in on a pogo stick. “Got a minute?”

My stomach tightened and my navel puckered. I’d make time for her even if I didn’t have any to spare. “Sure, Harley. Come on in and take a chair – I mean, please sit down.”

~ The Twisted End ~