

Mengsk approached the small metallic insect that stood motionless upon his desk. "Jenson! Do you think this will really work?"

Jenson pressed a few small buttons on the plate protecting his skull, each giving off a distinct click as they depressed. The little insect began to animate on the table before them, its teeth chattering endlessly as it gazed back and forth in the room.

"Emperor. I present to you our ultimate weapon against the Zerg. What sits before you is the result of the combined knowledge power of the entire Terran people. This is the essence of all our intellectual accomplishments...the apex of our minds." Jenson snapped his fingers, the large doors to Mengsk's office opened to reveal a cage harboring something beastly: A Zergling.

"Are you mad! Bringing one of those foul beasts into my office! I should have you killed this instant!" Formless shadows moved around the room as the Ghosts of Mengsk targeted the Zergling.

"Madness and Brilliance truly look the same sir. But please allow me to show you where that line truly becomes grey." With another snap of his fingers the guards beside the cage opened the door. In a flash the Zergling launched itself towards Mengsk, as it did the chattering insect on the desk darted towards the face of the Zergling. It plummeted into an eye of the beast sending it straight to the ground screeching, in a matter of seconds an orchestra of grinding bones and splitting flesh filled the room. Not a speck of blood escaped the orgy of gnawing mouths and slurping tubes as the insect replicated countless times. As quickly as it began it ended, not a single sign of the Zergling was left. Just a pile of the insects all stacked upon one another like a house of cards.

Mengsk was speechless.

"You see sir. Project Sargeris will go off without a hitch. We have finally created something that can truly decimate the Zerg onslaught." Jenson walked silently out of the room, the tiny insects following him in a duckling like row. Their little metallic teeth chattering incessantly.

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"We-g-" The voice was broken...or perhaps it was just his ears. "-ou-her-"

Grunty's vision was foggy at best. His head turned left and right weakly as he tried to make sense of the watercolor painting that flowed before him.

Slowly the string of sounds began to form a tapestry of words. "Get you out of here!" The scratchy voice repeated. "The Worgen aren't going to let up! We need to get out of here!"

A stubby green hand reached down and lifted Grunty off the ground. "Come on friend! I can nearly see our home from here. We'll be safe!"

He stumbled on with the little green man away from the battlefield.

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"So what you think this is?"

"Dunno. Looks like something the Dwarves might have made. You think he's alliance?"

"Lots of thinkin' but no answers here."

Grunty sat up quickly as the voices nudged him back to consciousness.

"Oh good you are awake. You not alliance are you?"

Grunty gazed over at the little green people. His large pearl eyes focusing in on their exaggerated features. Ears like kites and long pointed noses.

"Alliance? I-I-I'm a Terran."

One of the green one's approached Grunty. "Terran? You look like a Murloc to me."

Grunty looked at his hands, slender three fingered hands, his skin oily and slick.

"Murloc? I'm just a Terran. I work under the order of Arcturus Mengsk..."

"Does this Mengsk require you be naked? Quite embarrassing bringing a naked man home, my wife here still doesn't believe the story."

Grunty went to speak but was interrupted.

The wife grinned, her teeth all jagged. "Yes when you brought home Audi the Needle I suppose she was merely a find from the last battle with the Worgen eh?"

Once again Grunty failed to interject.

The husband gulped. "That was different! She...she had lost her pants! Don't question me here I'm trying to help this fellow."

Finally he could take no more, shouting quickly his voice squeaked. "My armor! Have either of you seen my armor!"

The wife rolled a familiar item across their table. "Nope. Just this little toy here."

Grunty would recognize his rifle anywhere. The Terran army manufactured their weapons so that only those within a regiment could fire them, he was safe in knowing that it would appear to them to be nothing more than a shiny bauble...

"That's a very important possession."

The husband pulled up a small wooden stool and sat beside the bed. "You don't realize how lucky you are. Any other goblin would have left you to be gobbled up and taken this shiny thing here. But me and my wife are different. We are here to help."

The female goblin continued. "Yeah like you helped Audi."

The husband turned to his wife his face turning a deep brown with rage. "I'm sick of you accusing me! I swear I was just trying to help her! You just happened to come in when we were both naked. It was entirely coincidence and harmless!"

The wife scoffed and turned away from both Grunty and her husband.

The husband's face returned to its green...slowly. "I love my wife dearly but she is the most skeptical goblin I've ever met. Maybe that's how we've survived this long. So what exactly brought you naked to the battlegrounds like that little Murloc?"

"My name is Grunty and I'm not a Murloc."

The husband laughed. "Alright Grunty. You aren't a Murloc and I'm not Fizzlesticks Sprocketgear."

Grunty shrugged. "Alright then who are you?"

"I'm Fizz...Look let's just try and figure this out."

"Well I was investigating a wormhole via the instructions of my commanding officer. It was a rift created from a project of the Terran army that had gone awry."

"Wormhole? You must be living somewhere with some mighty big worms." Fizzlesticks shivered. "I hate worms..."

Grunty sat at the edge of the bed. "No a wormhole. You know...a portal. It is how I got to your planet."

"Our planet? You are starting to sound like those silly Dranei. As if there are other planets. The world is flat and we are just floating along in the middle of a bunch of decorations I say."

Grunty squinted one eye confused. "Dranei?"

Fizzlesticks pulled out a photo album and flipped a few pages, he turned the book towards Grunty and stuck his finger beside the picture of a Dranei. Grunty gasped.

"That looks exactly like Sargeras!"

Fizzlesticks' Wife stood up and approached Grunty. "Where on Azeroth did you hear that name. You will not speak it in our home."

Fizzlesticks placed his hand against his wife's belly and pushed her back a few inches. "Calm down Remi."

Grunty apologized. "I won't speak it again. But I am very surprised that you'd have a picture of the machine."

"They are a pain to deal with but I'd hardly call them machines." Fizzlesticks said.

"We built him. Or at least...we built what became him. My people were at war with a great evil, a biomass known as the Zerg. At first we thought it had been defeated, after defeating the overmind we thought we had won. But something happened. Suddenly the numbers boomed, Zerg spread across the Galaxy with a speed that had been previously thought impossible. We had to act fast.

That's when we began to fund Project Sarg..." Grunty pointed at the picture. "Him. At first it seemed perfect, we had produced a self replicating insecticide robot. It would consume the biomass and use the energy generated to replicate itself and continue the hunt. Once all the Zerg were eliminated it would simply die off. However to do this we had to give it an AI, an intelligence that literally expanded upon trial and error. It was in essence...alive.

Everything went well at first. Planet after planet were cleansed of the Zerg, no flora or fauna were harmed. It had a 100% success rate. The numbers of Project S expanded exponentially, their numbers quickly matched those of the Zerg. As they grew in mass their knowledge also grew, little did we know that just like the Zerg the machines had also begun to have a hive mind. An intelligence growing exponentially every single second.

It was only a matter of time before the create had begun to devise its own goals...its own moral structure. It was then that we realized what we had created. As the insects began to coalesce with one another forming a massive singular entity. It gave itself the same name as the project. Inevitably its knowledge became so great that it fully understood the workings of space and time, or so we assume. Because the machine ripped a hole in the very fabric of space and time. I was ordered to investigate this portal...to see where it lead.

Now you find me here. On your planet."

Fizzlesticks rubbed his muttonchops, the hair giving off an audible crunch as he stroked it. "I'd know a liar. You are no liar little Grunty. But I'm sure we'd know if some battle in the sky was going on. That little toy you got over there seems even too advanced for the best of the goblins...or...those blasted gnomes."

Grunty stood up, wrapping the blanket around his waist. "I am from the 26th century."

Fizzlesticks leaned as far back as his stool permitted. "The future...I'm starting to wonder if a Worgen bit me and I'm just hallucinating."

Remi grabbed a pair of Fizzlesticks pants from their drawer and chucked them to Grunty. "Here you go space fish. I'd rather your goods not be rubbing all over my blanket."

He snatched the pants out of the air, the force of which sending the blanket to the floor. Remi caught a glimpse and blushed. Fizzlesticks quickly lifted it back up. "Hey! Now who is the philanderer! Double standards not be the Goblin's way!"

Remi eyed Fizzlesticks.

He reprimanded himself. "Alright...alright...they *are* the Goblins' way. But still!"

Grunty slipped on the slacks. They were loose but otherwise fit him well. Grunty grabbed the rifle from the table and turned to Fizzlesticks.

"So where can I find my armor?"

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It turned out that being found by Goblin's was one of the luckiest things that had happened to Grunty lately. Fizzlesticks had helped Grunty work out some of the greater intricacies of his plight. They had acquired a boat to a port known as Booty Bay. On their way it had become quickly apparent to Grunty that he had not only landed on a distant planet...but likewise an entirely new period of time. He wondered if Sargeras too was here.

He even learned of people just like him far to the north. A race of 'Murloc' that much like him could actually speak. Grunty did not know how long he would be within this land and time but he was very interested in meeting his likely ancestors.

"Come on Beardo! Just tell me who bought it!" Fizzlesticks was notably upset with his fellow Goblin.

Beardo jiggled a sack of coins and grinned ear to ear at Fizzlesticks. "Looks like you need some information my brother...perhaps we could make a *trade*."

Fizzlesticks put a hand over his mouth and leaned in to whisper to Grunty. "How good are you at acting?"

Grunty responded quietly. "I won an award for a high school play. But that was ages ago."

"Good enough. I need you to start rambling off as angrily and drunkenly as you can possibly imagine. Make it look like you are going to eat him. I'll *save* him and we'll get that info we need...follow my lead."

Beardo attempted to lean in and listen on the conversation. But to no avail, the moment he heard a single syllable Fizzlesticks clapped his hands and Grunty jumped onto Beardo gnashing his sharp teeth and drooling madly.

"Alright Beardo! My little entranced pet here is going to consume you unless we find out where that armor went. He's right mad that his trophy was stolen."

Beardo shrieked. "Guards! Guards!"

Fizzlesticks laughed loudly. "They'll never hear you over his grunting! It is only a matter of seconds he is going to gnaw your face off brother!"

Beardo began to wet himself and cry. "Alright! Alright! Put him back in the trance!"

Fizzlesticks clapped his hands once more and Grunty gave the cutest puppy dog face he could muster then backed off of Beardo.

"So let's hear it Beardo."

"Kumi'isha! The Collector bought it up and went back to the blasted lands!"

Fizzlesticks grabbed Beardo by the collar. "Don't lie to me! You know as well as I do that he is dead!"

Beardo opened his hands in surrender. "I swear it! I never question a sale and anyone who can return to life is certainly not to be questioned!"

"What on Azeroth is going on!"

Grunty walked out to the edge of the dock and stared off to the horizon. "Could this be the work of him? Why would he want my suit."

Fizzlesticks walked up behind Grunty. "Who?"

"Sargeras." Grunty looked over his shoulder to Fizzlesticks. "I think he's taken the form of this Collector person. Why would he need my armor?"

Fizzlesticks grew pale. "The Dark Portal is in Blasted Lands..."

"There is a Portal here! Why didn't you tell me before?"

"We try to forget about that Portal in Azeroth. It has brought nothing but tragedy to us all."

Grunty rubbed his slick oily chin. "What would he be planning with my armor at the port...oh great emperor. He is going to unleash the Zerg here!"

Fizzlesticks stood noticeably confused. "Why?"

"He can consume nothing but the Zerg. If he releases them here he will once again have a supply of food. He must have run out of energy doing whatever he has done in the past. My armor likely has the parts necessary to alter the portal. We haven't much time!"

Fizzlesticks grasped Grunty by the wrist and rushed up a series of steps. Rushing through building after building they reached a stern faced bipedal cow and another goblin. Fizzlesticks bowed to the goblin.

"Alright Baron. We need to get to Blasted Lands a minute ago. What is the fastest Wyvern you have?"

The Baron grinned and pointed towards a Wyvern whose color was slightly off from the rest. "If you can manage to hang onto Gertrude the entire time I'll pay you."

Fizzle sticks threw Grunty onto the back of Gertrude and then hopped on behind him. "Deal! I'll be back for my money!"

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He had battled on the front lines of some of history's worst battles, he had looked a Hydralisk right in the face. However holding onto the back of a Wyvern soaring through the sky at breakneck speeds put a feeling of terror in Grunty that he had thought was otherwise impossible.

The Wyvern scouted over the blasted lands as Fizzlesticks looked around for the Collector. As they approached the Dark Portal he pointed and shouted to Grunty over the rushing wind. "Right there!" Fizzlesticks slapped the Wyvern on the backside and shouted something in Goblinic. The Wyvern quickly took a nose dive towards the collector, just as impact seemed inevitable it barrel rolled around the collector and latched onto the ground.

Grunty went flying off the back of the Wyvern. Fizzlesticks shouted out to him. "My bad! I meant to say hold on tight!"

Grunty stood up slowly, his back cracked as he straightened out. "Gah! That sucked." The Collector shoved the Wyvern out of the way effortlessly with one hand, in his other Grunty's armor.

Fizzlesticks shouted as the Wyvern smashed into a nearby boulder.

Grunty picked up his rifle and pointed it towards the Collector.

"Stop right there Sargerass!"

The Collector paused. "Sa-rg-e-ras." He began to rub his head. "Sa-rg-e-ras." His eyes grew hollow and colorless. "I-am-sar-ge-ras."

Grunty armed his rifle and shot the Collector in the chest. The illusion of the collector broke at the impact point revealing a series of damaged robotic insects. A few of the highly damaged ones crumbled off the front of the machine.

The head of the collector rolled off and burst into dozens of the insects. Grunty began firing on them as they approached him. The rest of the collector collapsed into a pool of insects, in their center the armor, too rushing towards Grunty. For each that he destroyed there seemed to be four more. The gap was closed quickly, Grunty closed his eyes preparing for the worst. The familiar chattering of teeth was not accompanied with a single pinch or pain. He opened his eyes slowly to find he was standing alone. Behind him the chattering of Sargerass.

"The Portal!"

Sarger was rushing towards the portal with the Armor in tow. His many forms prying and clipping pieces of the armor to prepare the proper reaction to the technology he had used to initially open the dark rift.

Grunty chased on firing as he went. He feared that he'd run out of ammunition before he could stop Sarger. Worse still this small clutch of insects was merely a fraction of the tiniest amount compared to his full girth.

Sarger crawled up the side of the portal and as he moved pieces of the armor were left behind filling in cracks. Grunty fired on with no avail as the creature slid like a slug around the surface leaving a trail of mechanics behind him.

"If I can't kill you I'll at least trap you here!"

Just as the last piece was placed Grunty fired upon an emplaced chunk of his suit shattering it. The portals color shifted into a miasma of a thousand different hues. It bubbled and frothed, Sarger hissed loudly.

The bits of Sarger rushed into the portal, Grunty shouted and rushed after him.

"You will not win!"

Grunty dashed into the portal, ripples traveling out from his impact point.

Fizzlesticks pushed the Wyvern out of the way, he groaned with pain, a few of his ribs broken.

"Great. I owe the Baron some money."

Fizzlesticks held his chest and approached the Portal. For a moment there was nothing but silence, just a pool of rippling color that had seemingly no purpose.

Without warning a roar blasted out from the portal with such force that it knocked Fizzlesticks to the ground and sent him sliding along the crater the portal resided in. Dust plumed up into the air a mile high, amidst the dust Fizzlesticks could just barely make out the silhouette of something...something as wide and tall as the portal itself. The stone holding the portal in place began to crack as the figure expanded further. The pain in his chest grew ever worse and Fizzlesticks slowly slipped out of consciousness.

"By-the-gods..."