“Ladies and gentlemen of Athkatla. My name is Flintheart Wildwind and I’m here tonight to tell you a story. Now being a half elf I do tend to keep things in a light that highlights our differences and maybe turn an ear or two in a direction they may not have turned otherwise. Now I’m going to say two words and I want to get your reaction to both. First…Goblin! Ooh yeah I see some have had encounters with the little buggers. Next…Kobold! Equal if not more vitriol there. Now what if I was to tell you that not all Goblins and Kobolds were inherently evil? Ah alright one or two people out there may have had a not so bad encounter with them before. But let me ask this. Have you ever seen one in a royal court or accompanying a royal party to a castle? No? Unthinkable I hear you murmuring. Well that is exactly what I’m here to let you in on; a little tale that is the story of two little outcasts. Outcasts named Drix…and Tug…”

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Our story begins deep in a moonlit forest. Far away from civilization and just the kind of area you would expect to find monsters. One such creature roamed here and there, checking around trees and looking under rocks. This is Tug, (Shows the image of a goblin modeled after RukRuk) and he’s hungry. (The sound of a grumbling stomach) He looked around, but he couldn’t find food. Not even a mushroom to nibble on. But what is that? A new smell caught his attention. Smoke. Smoke means fire. Fire might mean food.

He followed his nose and came to a small clearing. In it sat a lone kobold. (Image of a Kobold sitting in front of a campfire) In front of him was a small campfire and on a stick over it was a fish. Tug licked his lips as thoughts of that tasty fish filled his head. All he had to do was get it. He took a step forward. (Sound of a snapping twig) Uh oh. The kobold was alerted and turned to face him quickly. “Hand over fish!” demanded Tug.

“No! Drix fish!” replied the kobold.

“Fish! Or kobold life.” threatened Tug reaching for his knife.

The kobold saw his gesture and reached for a weapon of his own. “Knife sharp. But Drix secret weapon better!” he declared as he showed it proudly. A stick with a scorpion tied to it dangling in the air below it.

Tug’s eye twitched as he tried to keep his composure but broke into a fit of laughter at the idea. He rolled on the ground and beat his fist in the dirt in amusement at this “secret weapon”.

(Sound of high pitched snickering)

“No laugh! Secret Weapon not funny!” stomped the kobold angrily.

Tug continued to laugh until a new light caught his eye. His eye widened in horror as he saw the fish they were about to fight over catch fire over the campfire. “No! fish!” he yelled as he pointed at it.

The kobold turned equally flustered and smacked the stick skewering the fish away from the open flame. Both creatures scrambled to put the fish out as quickly as possible. When they finally did there wasn’t anything but ashes left. Both Tug’s and the Kobold’s faces soured at the outcome. “Stupid goblin! Goblin ruin Drix dinner!” shouted the Kobold as he turned to pounce on Tug. The two roll around in struggle for a moment before the sound of their combined stomach growls distract them enough to stop. (Louder stomach grumble)

A new sound catches their ears after. It was the sound of music. Tug climbed a nearby tree and could see that not too far away was a bigger clearing. In it sat a wagon, and with it a group of humans. Thoughts of what those humans might have crossed the little goblin’s mind. Food, coin, maybe a new knife. He gleefully jumped down and ran off. Drix watched him go and scratched his head at the goblin’s antics.

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Tug came to a stop just in the bushes on the outskirts of the clearing. He was silent as he took in the sight before him.

(Sound of rustling leaves)

A small group of humans were gathered around a campfire of their own. A bard with a lute walked here and there playing his tunes and singing while others got the camp set up. But what really got Tug’s attention had just been unloaded from the wagon. A rack with not fish, but meat hanging on it. A line of drool hung from his mouth before a figure crouched next to him. “What this? Humans?” asked Drix curiously as he peered through the leaves too at the scene.

The way they were dressed wasn’t like your average adventurers. Most of them didn’t look like they were used to being outside of a city.

“Humans have meat. I steal it.” Tug said simply.

“And how do you suppose you’ll do that?” asked a new voice as a knife came up from behind and stopped in front of both creature’s necks. (Sound of an unsheathing blade)

Tug and Drix turned slightly to see that behind them was crouched another human. This one wore a cloak that helped him blend in to the foliage. A mask covered the lower half of his face and he had a scar above his right eye. Tug reached for his knife but was surprised to find it wasn’t at his side. “I stole that while you were distracted. Now march. Forward.” said the man.

Tug and Drix put their hands up and walked forward into the clearing to the surprise of the humans in the camp. “What do we have here Jack?” asked a large man with short blonde hair as he stepped up. He was wearing heavy plate armor. On the breastplate was the symbol of Helm. He spoke and moved with an air of authority.

“They were spying on the camp from the bushes. Could be scouts.” said the cloaked man in response.

“Never heard of goblins working with kobolds.” said the blonde man in response.

“Should we just kill them? Send a message to their friends?” asked Jack.

“No! Drix alone! Please no kill!” shouted the kobold quickly as he covered his head with his arms.

“Always suggesting the most extreme of measures aren’t you Jack?” came a new voice as a female figure approached the group.

“It’s my nature Janice. I can’t help but be practical.” replied Jack to the robed woman.

She wore simple robes and held a staff with the holy symbol of Chantea on the top. She had raven hair and tan skin. She smiled warmly at the two creatures in question and turned to the other two men. “I have a simple solution to this.” she announced cheerfully and waved her staff through the air. (Sounds of chimes) She turned to face the two creatures again and asked a couple simple questions.

“What are your names?”

“Name Drix.” replied the kobold.

“Me Tug.” said the goblin

“Are there more of you around here?”

“No. Drix alone.”

“Tug alone.”

“What brought you to our camp?”

“Drix cook fish. Goblin try to steal. Fish burn. We look for more food.” answered Drix openly.

“Wanted to steal meat.” added Tug.

“Well it seems to me that now that there are two of you. You are no longer alone right?” asked Janice after hearing this. Both Drix and Tug turned to look at each other after hearing this and reluctantly nodded at the idea. “Well now that that is settled why don’t you both join us?” she continued to the surprise of those around her.

“Janice. That is a step too far. We can’t just have random monsters join us especially on the mission that we’re on.” objected Peter quickly.

“That’s actually not up to you, or me. It’s up to her.” replied the cleric with a smug smile as from behind her stepped a young girl.

She wore a very fancy dress; and a silver tiara atop her long brunette hair. Immediately upon seeing her; the others took a knee in respect. “Princess Marin.” said Peter quickly.

“Was what they said true?” asked the young royal curiously.

“Yes your highness. My divine spell made them unable to lie.” answered Janice quickly. The princess took a couple steps toward Drix and Tug and looked them over.

“They’re hungry and alone. I don’t see a reason to turn them away, let alone kill them. See that they are bathed and feed them. They can stay with us if they choose to.” she announced. Everyone bowed their heads in acceptance of her order before she turned to walk away with Janice at her side.

“A merciful decision your highness. You’ll make an excellent queen someday.” said the cleric.

Drix and Tug continued to fidget at the event before Peter stepped up to them again. His booming voice shook them slightly as he laid things out. “Princess Marin has decided to spare you. You will be bathed and fed. But you will be expected to work for your keep. Bartholomew!” bellowed the armor clad paladin before a new male figure stepped up. Without turning to look at the leather gloved and aproned man he belted out the next order. “This is Bartholomew. He’s our resident blacksmith. You! kobold. Bartholomew will be looking over you. You are to stay near him. Understood?” he asked quickly. Drix looked up and shook a little as he nodded his answer.

Bartholomew stepped up to the small creature and noted he carried a small box strapped to his back. “What’s in the box?” he asked curiously with a raised eyebrow.

“Oh! One of Drix secret weapons. Skunk!” started the kobold excitedly before the burly man reached a hand down to stop him from opening the box to show it off.

“Uh…maybe now’s not a good time to show me. So…secret weapon huh? You’re an inventor?” asked Bartholomew.

“Yes. Drix smart.” replied Drix quickly.

“Uh-huh. Why don’t you tell me about some of the other things you’ve made?” he asked intrigued as he began to walk off. Drix followed behind him. Eager to talk about the things he’s made and seen.

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“And what of this one? Tug was it?” asked Jack as he put his blades away.

“Me Tug.” repeated the goblin.

“He’ll be under my watchful eye.” replied Peter before a hand came to his armored shoulder.

“Are you sure about that? You’ve got enough on your plate escorting the princess. Leave the goblin to me. It was partially my decision to have him come along anyway. We can’t have you losing focus on your job.” said Janice comfortingly. Peter regarded her with a nod and turned to leave.

“Looks like you’ll be under my care.” said Janice as Jack turned to do the same. “My name is Janice. It’s nice to meet you Tug.” she said politely as she held out her hand. Tug looked at the gesture and slowly mimicked it. He tilted his head sideways when she simply shook his hand and let go. “Come. Lets get you bathed, and then get you some food.” she continued as she turned to leave. The concept of a bath was a new one for Tug, he didn’t quite know what to expect with that, but the idea of filling his belly was enough to compel him to follow the cleric without hesitation.

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Two months passed with the small pair accompanying the group. Over time most everyone grew used to seeing the kobold and goblin in their camp. Drix began to grow on Bartholomew, and before long was helping him with his blacksmithing duties. The inventor kobold’s inquisitive mind led him to learn much from the blacksmith. Though he didn’t have the physical strength to be of help with the actual hard labor of hammering, his dexterity and keen eyesight did allow him to help with more delicate work.

Tug on the other hand had caught the interest of Princess Marin herself. No. Not on a romantic note of course. But she insisted on keeping the little goblin near her. She liked having a simple companion who didn’t treat her differently because of her title. Tug for his part enjoyed the Princess’ company and liked playing games with her. He enjoyed being around someone who didn’t treat him poorly just because he was weaker. But the question is “could he be trusted?” That was the question Paladin Peter wanted answered. He didn’t think so, and despite Janice telling him to leave Tug to her, he continuously watched the goblin with mistrusting eyes. His job was to escort Princess Marin to her home kingdom safely, and he would be damned if he let a goblin be the one to make him fail in that duty.

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(Sound of chirping birds)

One day as Princess Marin lay asleep in a small clearing. Tug wandered nearby looking at different things that interested him. He looked at the young princess and then turned to pick up a large rock. A gasp of shock came from a nearby bush as Peter beheld the goblin approached the sleeping princess with it and held it above his head. (Sound of a dull thud) Peter moved as quickly as his armor would allow, but before he reached them the sound of a thud and a soft squish shook him to his bones. He fell to his knees in disbelief of what he’d just witnessed. Tug had crushed the Princess’ head with the rock. Myriad feelings of horror, anger, disbelief, and sorrow swirled through the man for a moment and he was only snapped out of the state by the sound of a scream echoing into his ears. He knew the voice. It was Princess Marins.

He looked up and was surprised to see her standing next to Tug looking down at where the rock now lay. “Peter! Peter come quick!” she called as she noticed the paladin in the clearing. Peter took shaky steps forward. What had happened? “Look! Tug saved me from this poisonous snake. I was sleeping and it was slithering up to me and he killed it. It could have bitten me.” she explained.

“H-He did?” asked Peter confused. He looked to Tug who returned a smile to him. Had he misjudged the goblin?

“You eat snake?” asked the goblin simply. Peter blinked a couple times at the question, but then couldn’t stop himself from laughing.

“No. You go ahead.” he replied. Tug didn’t need to be told twice. He took the remains of the snake and walked off on his own with it. Peter and Princess Marin smiled at each other as they regarded the simple creature called Tug.

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(Sound of crickets chirping)

Some time later Tug sat on a rock not far from camp. He was looking up at the stars. A soft set of footsteps approached him and he turned to see Drix there. He nodded to the kobold, and Drix took a seat on the rock as well. Over time the two had grown to accept each other. Being the odd ones out in a human party meant that the only one they felt normal around was each other, at least for a while.

“Humans weird.” said Tug absently.

“Drix think so too. But these humans nice.” replied Drix.

The pair sat there a moment more before Drix spoke again.

“Why Tug alone?” he asked.

“Other goblins angry. Boss call me coward. Goblins try to eat me. Me ran.” he explained simply.

Drix nodded his head to this revelation. He could understand that.

“What about Drix? Heard kobolds never alone.” asked Tug curiously now.

“Drix got lost. Drix looked for new things. Separated from group. Attacked by Owlbear. Drix ran. Drix alone since.” explained the kobold solemnly.

“Sorry.” replied Tug after hearing this.

“Other kobolds never like Drix. They laugh at Drix inventions. But Drix smart. Drix survive.” continued Drix.

Another moment passed between the two before Tug spoke up again. “Drix not alone anymore. Drix have Tug.” said the goblin thumping a fist on his own chest. The idea and notion brought a smile to the kobold’s muzzle.

“Tug have Drix too.” he replied as he bumped hands with the goblin. The pair continued to look at the stars after that. Nearby unbeknownst to them Janice cracked a smile at the scene as she silently watched them from the camp.

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A few days later the group was within sight of the castle. (Image of a far off castle) Their journey was near its end. But all was not well this day. An ambush was lying in wait for the party. When night fell and the camp was set; bandits descended on the group from the nearby mountains. Their sheer numbers overwhelmed the camp and even those who were not fighters were forced to defend themselves.

(Sound of clashing swords)

“They’re after the Princess! Hold your ground!” bellowed Peter valiantly as he waded into the carnage. A knife flew through the air and sank into the back of a bandit sneaking up on him. He turned at the cry of pain to see Jack there in the after stance of throwing the blade. He gave a nod to the cloaked man before turning back to fight again.

Janice was busy healing those who had been injured in the initial attack. They were holding their ground, but had taken a few casualties so far. She turned to see the young Princess nearby crouched behind a box in hiding with Tug right beside her. The cleric turned to her and spoke softly. “You need to run Princess. We may not be able to protect you in the shuffle and chaos. Sneak into the forest and return only once it is safe. Should we fall make your own way to the castle. Do you understand?” she asked seriously. The young princess nodded as she wiped tears from her eyes. The sight of her friends and guardians fighting and falling around her saddened her greatly. “You have to be brave. And Tug. I want you to go with her. Protect Princess Marin. Do you understand?” she asked seriously.

“Me understand.” replied the little goblin with a nod of his own.

“Good. Now go.” said Janice as the pair turned to leave. Unbeknownst to them as they turned to sneak away a pair of eyes watched them heading out of the camp into the forest followed by the sound of metal scraping. (Quick metal scraping sound)

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Princess Marin and Tug run through the darkened forest under the light of the full moon. Rays of moonlight dimly lit the area around them. They hid in the brush and both tried to catch their breath. Before they could the sound of heavy footsteps approached their position. (Sound of heavy footsteps) “Did you think I wouldn’t see you leaving the camp? You didn’t even hide your footprints! Come out! I know you’re in there!” came a loud voice from the other side of the brush. “My patience runs thin little princess! It would be in your best interests to come quietly!” he boomed as he swung a large sword through the brush and cut many branches and twigs.

Princess Marin covered her head and tried not to scream as the man took a few more swings through the brush. “I can take you alive, or dead. It means little to me which you choose!” he continued before soft footsteps approached him from the brush. An amused smile crossed his face as Tug stepped out of the brush alone. “And what do we have here? Goblins? I don’t have time for you right now. Move along.” he said dismissively.

“Leave Princess alone.” said Tug defiantly.

“You’re with the princess? You’re the last line of defense?” he asked unable to stop a raucous laughter from escaping his mouth.

“Leave now. Or Tug make you.” said the small creature.

“Well now aren’t you brave? I didn’t send my men to attack that camp to get her to run only to be stopped by you. But very well little guy. Go ahead and make me.” said the bandit leader as he sheathed his sword and balled his fists up in preparation.

(Sounds of a fistfight)

Moments passed as Tug tried to attack the burly man, but try as he might. He was outclassed in both strength and size. But the little warrior refused to give up. A fact even the bandit had to acknowledge as he geared up to end the fight.

“I have to admit you have a little more fight in you than I’d normally give your kind credit for, but it’s time for me to end this.” said the human as he unsheathed his sword again and raised it above his head. (Sound of an unsheathing sword) Tug sneered at his attacker from the ground. The moonlight glinted off of the blade as he swung down before…

(Sound of a metal clang)

Both the bandit leader and the goblin are surprised to see Drix standing there in front of Tug having blocked the sword with a cylindrical metal bar the length of a sword. “Tug okay?” asks the kobold as the bandit stepped back from the attack. Tug groaned but nodded his answer.

“First a goblin, now a kobold. This has to be the weirdest royal party I’ve ever seen. But it doesn’t matter. I’ll kill both of you weak stupid monsters. The princess is coming with me.” said the bandit as he shook his head. His patience was already used up.

While keeping his gaze trained on the bandit; Drix reached back behind him and opened a corked vial at his side. From it he pulled a small damp cloth pinched between his claws and threw it at his foe. The cloth unfurled in the air but was caught before it could reach the bandit. “Now what’s this supposed to be?” he asked before a new potently pungent smell hit his nose and eyes. It was the distinct smell of skunk spray.

The bandit recoiled from the smell and coughed as his eyes began to water and his vision was clouded quickly. It wasn’t as effective as a full on jet from a live skunk, but it was enough to disorient him.

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(Sound of blacksmith’s hammer striking repeatedly) “About this secret skunk weapon of yours. How might we improve it?” Drix remembered Bartholomew’s words not long ago. The blacksmith had been helping him improve his own inventions. Keeping a rag soaked in skunk spray in a cork stoppered vial would be easier than lugging around a live skunk that may well have turned on Drix in the long run.

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The bandit threw the cloth down angrily. He looks up to barely see Drix going on the attack with another improved weapon. The metal pipe he now wielded wouldn’t lose to a sword easily. He blocks the attack, but fails to attack back as the smell of the skunk spray still stinging his nose nearly makes him retch and he drops to one knee just in time to hear two words shouted in common.

“Drix win!” shouts the kobold swinging the pipe at the bandit’s head in an overhead arch.

(Sound of a sword clash)

All motion came to a stop after the attack. Blood dripped to the ground, but it wasn’t from the bandit. The bandit managed to swing his own sword up to block the attack, but more than that he’d managed to pull a dagger from a sheath hidden on his boot and stab the kobold in the stomach at the same time.

Princess Marin gasped in horror as she watched this from the brush.

“Looks like you lose. You stupid…weak…little monster.” said the bandit smugly as Drix fell over.

Drix clutched his stomach at the pain from the stab wound, but continued to stare defiantly at the bandit. The light in his eyes showed that there was still more fight left in him. A smile crept across the lizardlike creature’s muzzle to the surprise of the bandit. “You wrong. Everyone look down on kobold. Say kobold weak because small. But kobold smart. Kobold survive. Use things to kobold’s advantage like nature. Kobold invent things, like scorpion stick.” says Drix as a peculiar skittering feeling is felt on the bandit’s hand. The man turned an eye to see a scorpion sitting on the back of his hand. There was a thin string around its midsection. It had been tied to the metal rod that Drix was wielding, and had been cut loose by his swords’s upward swipe to block that last attack. He barely had time to blink before the arachnid sank its venomous stinger into the back of his palm.

The bandit recoiled in pain and shook the scorpion off as he turned and threw up on the ground. The effects of the poison were starting to set in quickly. He turned back toward Drix with hate in his eyes. “Why you little…” he started before Drix spoke again.

“You forget another thing. Kobold never fight alone.” finished the little lizard creature as a shadow fell on the bandit from behind. The bandit leader turned to see Tug jumping down at him holding a large rock in his hands. (Sound of dull thud) The surprise attack struck home and spelled lights out for the bandit leader.

Princess Marin came out of hiding and moved to check on the goblin and kobold that had protected her. More footsteps approached from the forest, and the Princess was relieved to see Peter stepping into the clearing.

“Princess! There you are. Are you okay?” asked the paladin concerned.

“I am. But Drix was stabbed, and Tug was hurt too.” she replied quickly as she drew their attention to the wounded pair.

Peter stepped up as his hands began to glow. “If you’d told me at the beginning of this mission that I’d use my healing on a goblin and a kobold before the end of it I’d have laughed and called you mad. But I have to say, these two have done good.” he said as he began to concentrate.

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A couple days later the party arrived at the castle. The bandits driven off by Peter, Jack, Bartholomew, and the others did not try to attack again. The party was slightly smaller in number, but in high spirits. Drix and Tug were taken into the castle with the appreciation of the royal family and given positions within the royal court. Tug was made an officially unofficial member of Marin’s personal guard, and Drix was put in the employ of the royal blacksmith Bartholomew.

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And that completes this little tale.

How many of you thought the pair would fail?

The moral here is to keep this in mind.

That there is value in everyone you find.

Even those not of the same race

Can be a staunch ally, or just a friendly face

So keep an eye out in royal courts.

You might see folks of all different sorts.

In places you’d never think you’d see

Doing things you’d never think they’d be

Thank you for hearing this fable through

A question some have now, more than a few

Is it true this tale I know so well?

Whether it’s fact or fiction I’ll never tell.

(Sound of a twinkle as I give a wink)