

I Don't Do Dying

[RIOT CREATIVE CONTEST 2017] [Narrative] [WIP]

by SableV

Thresh admired the magnificent work of art in front of him. The bones of the defeated warriors were bare and twisted, turned into grotesque flowers, the blood on them sparkling like a broken mirror. The killer was a true artist, an exquisite addition to the suffering souls in Thresh's lantern.

Thresh discovered he was lucky soon enough. His future toy was here, standing in the circle of ruined bodies, barely visible in the dim moonlight.

For a moment it appeared like his eyes were glowing, but that was probably just an illusion. The stranger wasn't tall and surprisingly thin, not the type to tear an army apart. Thresh didn't care, he was filled with anticipation of the misery to come.

"Oooh, shiny!" the stranger chuckled, turning to Thresh. His voice was a bit high, hoarse and free of any fear. That annoyed Thresh, but not too much: the braver that warrior was, the more fun it would be to break him, turning him into nothing but a husk of his former self. "Who are you supposed to be, Shiny?"

"I am the terror of the night, the thing under the bed", Thresh growled.

"A chamber pot?"

"What?... No! Not a chamber pot!"

"Then you should be more specific, things under my bed aren't too terrifying", the stranger laughed. "How about a magic trick?"

Things weren't going the way Thresh planned. Even the best warriors became alert around him, sensing he was the power of true evil. But not this one, he was... mocking Thresh?

Mocking him, the master of insanity, the lord of agony?

Thresh let his rage move his chains, dashing forward, coiling around the stranger, cutting through his gut. The one who had just defeated an army was overpowered easily, like a child: his bones crushed and cracked, his insides a mess, he was choking on his own blood, coughing... No, not coughing.

Laughing.

That pathetic insect, caught in Thresh's chains, was laughing merrily!

"That was a nice trick!" he commented. "I like it! I'm in pain, trust me, everything hurts, great job!"

No-one said they were in pain in such a cheerful tone. Was that insolent fool bluffing? He should learn that was only the beginning, Thresh could do so much more to him than mere physical pain. Death of the body is nothing compared to the demise of the soul!

"Torment comes in so many flavors," Thresh warned him.

"Cool, can I have a strawberry one?"

"What is wrong with you? Are you... insane?"

Before finishing the question, Thresh already knew the answer. His anger blinded him at first, but now he could finally sense it through the chain binding them: the pure insanity filling the stranger to the brim. He wasn't just crazy because of fear, or hatred, or bloodlust. He didn't become this way, he was born this way, his whole existence was the embodiment of lunacy... and that made him a perfect enemy for Thresh, who found his sole joy in driving his victims mad.

"You're trying really hard, I appreciate it, but still, let me give you a hand", the stranger suggested, his voice full of compassion.

He freed his arms from the chains... and tore one of them off. He just tore his own arm from his shoulder and threw the bloody limb at Thresh! And then he laughed – a wild, psychotic laughter that made Thresh's undead blood chill.

"Get it?" he asked through the laughter. "A hand! Come on, you have to appreciate it!"

Thresh couldn't stand this. This joker was having fun? Let's see him do it inside the lantern, his soul ripped from his body!

Thresh threw his lantern forward, ready to pull that perverted soul out of the tortured body – and again, there was nothing. The creature in front of him had no soul! The one whom he was planning to turn into an empty shell had been a shell to begin with.

For the first time in his life Thresh felt something strange, cold... something that felt a lot like fear, though it couldn't be fear, not in his heart! He just knew he had to kill the creature. Not for fun, this time he was actually fighting something greater than magic: the insanity that had always been his obedient slave suddenly betrayed him. Thresh felt like a god in front of his victims screaming for mercy. But in the stranger, he saw his own reflection, they had control of the same weapon, and that was unacceptable.

Thresh sent more chains flying forward, striking the stranger, pulverizing every bone, mincing his muscles until nothing but a pile of useless flesh was left of him. It was a clear victory, but Thresh didn't feel relieved. He was tortured by the nasty feeling he missed something.

"Told you I'll show you a magic trick", a now familiar voice whispered right into his ear.

Daggers stabbed his back, bringing a flash of pain – something he had last felt an eternity ago. Thresh turned around and saw his opponent, alive and well, standing on top of the pile of fresh corpses. This time the moon was shining right on him, and Thresh could finally get a good look at his nemesis.

It was a jester... no, a demon, his skin pale and his eyes glowing. The jester was smiling, and Thresh could sense the soul in him, but he wasn't ready to touch this soul, not after everything that had just happened.

"I can't kill you", the jester sighed. "And I just don't do dying, sorry, we can't play any longer. But it was fun. I think I'll find you again when I have a new trick ready. And the name's Shaco, by the way, nice to meet you, Shiny!"

Without waiting for Thresh's answer, he jumped back, hiding in the darkness, with nothing but a small Jack in the Box toy falling straight to Thresh's feet...

And then an explosion shook the night.