

Best Left Never Forgotten

Chapter one: Croc

Filling up his backpack with all the necessary supplies, Croc put on a determined expression. He was ready to embark on the long and dangerous endeavour to rescue the creatures he considered to be his family. Croc had every faith in the abilities he was taught by the king of Gobbos to take down any villain that stood in his way, even the evil magician, Barton Dante.

The cackle of Baron Dante's underling alerted Croc of their presence. He turned and saw one charging at him, but easily dispatched it with one swing of his tail. Croc then caught something in the corner of his eye and turned to face it. One of his Gobbos friends was sitting upon a tree stump, trembling in fear with their eyes filling up with tears. Surrounding the terrified creature were three Dantini, all cackling menacingly and one shaking their fist at the Gobbos.

Croc jumped to action, smacking the closest Dantini in the back with one mighty swing of his tail. This caused a domino effect as the minion was knocked into his friend who fell onto the third one. The Gobbos's expression changed to joy as it leaped into its saviour's waiting arms. Croc smiled and gave a hug before gently placing it down by his feet. He pointed over at a grotto, signalling for his little buddy to go there with a gesture of his head.

The Gobbos nodded before hopping towards the haven, only to stop a few seconds later to curiously gaze over at a patch of uneven ground. It tilted its head to one side, letting out a cute mumble of confusion. It took a couple of hops towards the area, which caught the attention of Croc. The heroic crocodile called out to the Gobbo, but his warning cries fell on deaf ears. When the Gobbos was closer to the mound, a worm shot out from it and whipped its head at the furry creature like a whip.

"KA-SPLAT!" Croc bellowed as he dropped down from above, slamming into the enemy with his ground pound attack.

The brute force of Croc's scaly behind was enough to knock the villainous worm back underground. Now wearing a more serious expression, Croc turned his attention back to the Gobbos and pointed at the grotto once more. This time the Gobbos ran towards it, not stopping to investigate anything.

"You are a kind-hearted individual, my crocodile friend," a suave voice said from behind Croc.

Croc instantly turned around, ready to give whoever it was a helping of his tail wing. Standing over by the river was a creature that looked different from Baron's usual array of cronies. It was a small white rabbit wearing a pink top hat, pink tux with a yellow bow and had a monocle in his right eye. His fur was well-groomed and carried the scent of lavender. The rabbit did not seem like a threat, but Croc did not want to drop his guard.

"Good day to you, my fine croc, I am Professor Asobin," the friendly creature greeted, taking off his hat and bowing. "You can drop that defensive demeanour; I assure you that I am no minion of that ghastly Baron Dante."

Croc relaxed a bit, finding truth in the rabbit's words, though he kept his distance from him. He watched the professor as he took off his monocle to give it a clean, waiting for him to speak again.

"You may be a greenhorn, but I know a hero in the making when I see one. You, my boy, are destined for great things such as admiration and respect from everyone around you!" Professor Asobin informed Croc, smiling warningly at him.

Croc murmured, lost in bewilderment of this stranger's encouraging speech. Even his adopted father, the king of Gobbos, did not say anything like this to him. At least not to his face. Even though he believed Asobin was not a subject of his arch nemesis, his scepticism about his true motives remained.

"However, a rather grim matter must be addressed," the rabbit went on to say, his smile fading. "Currently your path to being a great hero is being blocked by the rock of ignorance. All the alternative paths will only lead you to obscurity where your deeds, and even your very being, will be forever lost in time. Now do not fear, my dear boy! I have discovered a sure-fire way to achieve greatness and prosperity!"

Professor Asobin took one short hop over to Croc. His friendly smile made a return as he placed his paw gently on the crocodile boy's shoulder. For the first time since the two crossed paths, Croc smiled at his new friend. His journey has just begun and already he has encountered a potential ally.

"While some may judge my methods problematic, the outcome will benefit us both in the end," Professor Asobin remarked, digging his other paw into his tuxedo pocket to take out a shiny golden pocket watch. He dangled it in front of Croc's eyes, its glimmering appearance attracting his gaze almost straight away. "Now, be a good fellow and keep your eyes on his wonderful watch."

While Croc's full attention was directed at the shiny object, he failed to notice that there was a devious grin upon his furry friend's face. Professor Asobin removed his paw from upon Croc's shoulder, moving it behind the pocket watch to press a hidden button camouflaged on the back of it. Upon pressing it, the clock face transformed into a display of white and pink spirals. They swirled fast, mimicking the speed of a foreboding whirlpool.

Croc was so taken aback by the spectacular transformation, his jaw dropped open in awe. Unaware of the true purpose of the alluring array, he continued to look deeply into it, becoming more engrossed by each passing second. His pupils shrunk down to the size of pinpricks before vanishing into a sea of white that had completely invaded his eyes. Pink spirals emerged from the whitewashed void and began to swirl at the same pace as the ones the watch was projecting.

"That path to greatness is being opened to you, my dear boy. The rock of ignorance must be shattered along with your mind. Those who express insolence and disrespect towards us must pay for their treachery!" Professor Asobin remarked, his evil smile opening to express a devilish grin. "You do not know, but how could your naive mind ever know what fate awaits you in the near future?"

The speed of the spirals in the watch hastened, as did the ones in Croc's eyes. Everything around him became a blur. The only things his mind was keeping track of was the spirals and the sinister rabbit's voice that boomed in his head. Asobin's loud tone held an element of authority to it that Croc felt strongly compelled to take whatever he says as the undeniable truth.

"We were all betrayed! We were all set upon a pedestal of popularity! Or so we were told by the powers that be!" The rabbit said, breaking into a rant. His calm tone escalated into anger-filled one. His eyes bulged in frustration, his grip on his pocket watch chain tightening. "They played us all for chumps! Their promises were as empty as their black hearts! One by one, we were chosen and lied to! None of us were deemed worthy to be anything more than a forgotten memory of a primitive era!"

Croc had no response to Professor Asobin's true nature emerging with such velocity due to the deep hypnotic trance he was under. Asobin took a long inhale before exhaling. His cheery demeanour made a comeback, shielding his raging emotions and hate towards those he thought wronged him. Even though it no longer mattered now Croc was under his power, Professor Asobin chose to maintain composure over a foaming at the mouth disposition.

"I apologize about my, ahem, unhinged outburst, my dear Croc. Anger gets the better of even the most sophisticated of us," Asobin explained, adjusting his monocle. "Still, my point still vigorously stands. I need your assistance in seeking revenge on the blackhearts that toyed with the lives of those who deserved prosperity. It involves you more than you think, Croc. I promise I shall elaborate at a future date. Right now, I must follow through with the reason I hypnotized you."

It was just the start of his quest to save his family, yet the young reptilian hero had fallen to the whims of some well-dressed fiend. Drool dribbled down his chin, silently signifying to the monocle-wearing rabbit that he was mindless and prepped for reprogramming.

To be continued