

Brushtown StoriesBelow the Volcano

Dr. Hans Sprozler had revived the mummy of Ptolemy Antipides in a small gated community in Argentina. Dr. Sprozler was the head of a small group of Nazis who had escaped to South America after the war. Since then they've cultivated their little cult and grew their numbers. The mummy was smuggled out of Berlin toward the end of the war and even though it was Egyptian in origin the Ptolemy's were of Greek descent and had less than enlightened views on race. Since returning to life the Mummy had taken control of the Nazi enclave in South America. He decided to start a new Reich which he called the Reich and Roll because he was dumb.

But that wasn't my problem until the Mummy attacked a Buenos Aires museum that was displaying Incan mummies because he felt they were inferior mummies and diluted the proud mummy traditions and mummy heritage. Again because he was dumb.

Ugh. Nazis are the worst. Why? Because they're Nazis. End of story. So when the mission came down the pike - I volunteered. I'm Agent Squatch and love punching Nazis.

I was somewhere near the Chilean border near a volcano whose name escapes me when I saw her.

I hadn't come to tussle with Lady Jaguar but she was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. Lady J had worked for a slew of organizations running on the fringes of Latin America. FARC, Shining Path as long as they paid her she was happy to get her hands dirty. The locals called her Lady Jaguar because she was always ready to tear apart anyone and also because she had some Rosacea patches that looked like jaguar spots .

We had tussled in Venezuela a few years back. When I spotted her strutting down the dirt street of that nowhere Argentinian town I knew I had a rare chance to skin that Jaguar. She moved with the confidence of a ferret with a law degree. From her well-developed calves to her inky black eyes she was five foot eight inches of trouble. So I followed her into the little bar on the edge of town. I was itching to throw down.

I loped in and she turned immediately and threw a stiletto right at my head. I caught it between my hands thanks to my skunk ape

reflexes. I threw it into the dirt floor and cracked my knuckles. Then we ran at each other.

We busted up the place pretty bad. The patrons fled as Lady Jaguar smashed me into the bar. I flipped back onto my big feet and then cartwheeled forward knocking her back and onto a table. The table collapsed under her and she crashed to the ground.

She hopped to her feet and picked up a broken table leg and charged me. I got in a few hits before I gave her the heavy-ho and threw her against a wall of bottles. Several fell and shattered around her. She ducked down for what I thought was cover but she quickly popped up with an open bottle and a lighter. She took a big swig then spit out the alcohol lighting it. The fireball burst big and singed my fur. Damn this was getting good.

I body checked her hard and she brought the bottle down on my head. We tussled and threw down for another little while before we both collapsed, bleeding, exhausted but satisfied. We slumped next to one another under the destroyed bar. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a pack of cigarettes. She offered me one. I wiped the blood from my mouth and took it. I didn't light it as I'd given up the habit but I always craved a post-battle cigarette.

We pinkie swore a truce then Lady Jaguar asked my business in Argentina and I told her about the Mummy and his Nazis. She spat on the ground. "Well," she said, "they didn't hire me." I figured they wouldn't seeing as her skin tone was not pasty enough for Reich and Roll. She asked if I knew their target. If I knew their target I wouldn't be wandering from town to town.

Lady Jaguar considered the options. She mentioned the Diplomat Express -- a train that was traveling around South America with G8 members working on various treaties. The whole event was a publicity move to encourage investments in public transportation and cleaner energies. In two days their train would follow the route of the *Tren de las Nubes* and the diplomats would all disembark at San Antonio de los Cobres and release a basket of celebratory snakes. Because snakes were nature's trains according to Darwin. So with the big snake release there would also be the announcement of the 'inter-trans-multi-uni-way' a global transportation network.

This sounded like the ideal target. Mummies and snakes were a classic combo just look at half the hieroglyphics in the Valley of the Kings. I considered bringing Lady Jaguar in to the authorities but before I could a helicopter blasted the roof off the bar and she was airlifted to go cause trouble for the Shining Path. Next time Lady J, next time. And so I scooted on off to San Antonio de los Cobres.

The air was hot and dry. The train was scheduled for arrival in 10 minutes. I walked through the station and saw several blonde hair blue-eyed Aryans watching me. No guarantee on their Naziorocity -- that was until several bum rushed me.

With a quick big chop I disabled two of them and then flipped up and kicked off the wall to turn another brown shirt into a black-and-blue shirt. But suddenly I was roped by several Reich and Roll *Guachos*. Their lassoes held my arms and legs as they tied their ropes to the nearby pillars.

"We have the whole town," a voice said, as from out of the shadows shambled the Mummy himself.

"Yeah I gathered," I replied.

"It's pointless to struggle. Such an interesting specimen," the mummy said as he put a withered hand on my face.

"You smell like mothballs." I pulled my head away.

"It's the embalming process they - I NEED EXPLAIN NOTHING TO YOU!" The mummy then calmed himself. He continued trying to look cultured, "It must be interesting being one of the mud people. A true representative of the lower order. Fascinating really."

"This your plan?" I asked, "You're going to chat me to death? Wow and I thought the Loch Ness Mobster was annoying."

"YOU WILL SHOW ME RESPECT! I am a Ptolemy! I come from the line that brought true and real leadership to the mongrels of Egypt. We made Egypt royal again. We dignified them." The Mummy had a wild gleam in his eye.

"OK," I replied. "A - not true. And B - you're like a walking talking Slim Jim."

"I am power! I am the Reich reborn!"

"Oh great," I rolled my eyes, "here we go. Now I have to listen to your dumb-ass plan to destroy the world, or conquer the world, or whatever the world."

"I shall reveal nothing! Rather you shall perish from the earth!"

"So," I calmly replied, "you're not going to try to sabotage the whole inter-trans-multi-uni-way the global transportation network via getting the ceremonial snakes to eat tiny bombs? Since snakes have a prolonged digestion period the bombs would stay in the snakes for month or so. Normally the snakes upon release would just slither away, however using some sort of let's say magical flute you got from the mad Nazi musician Hermann Von Muzik you'd charm the snakes and have them curl up around the legs of each diplomat. Their ankles would be numb because you slipped handru root into their celebratory hot toddies last night. Handru root being known to numb the ankles which is why it was used to fight ankle sprains by the pre-Colombian societies of this region. Thus when the diplomats return to the UN you're undercover agent probably some sap from Bazamia plays a note from the previously mentioned magic flute which was smuggled into the US by an unscrupulous antiques dealer most likely in exchange for some bauble you were pyramided with - the snakes will uncoil and then quickly slither over to the UN Under Secretary General of Planes, Trains, and Monorails and blow him up. This normally wouldn't matter but he just happens to be the son of Chad Chadman the president of the Sudan. He'll blame his arch enemy Chad - the country because of a recent falling out over the rules of Monopoly. Mostly regarding the use of free parking and why a thimble gets to own property. Monopoly having recently becoming popular in that region of sub Saharan Africa - recently because of a mysterious spate of donations to the Board Games for Africa charity. With Sudan and Chad at war the African Congress would be thrown into Chaos. Nigeria would have to side with Chad because of their reliance on dried fish. South Africa would side with Sudan because of its need for the new fad beauty product Scented Nile Water. And then the mutual African Defense Treaties would be triggered and - BAM! - World War Whatever-We're-Up-To. Is that how this bad fad Chad via sad rad lad dad plan would work? Ammight?"

"No! No. Um. It's not. I mean. Oh. How'd you know about the flute?"

"Please I know a classic mummy flute-un-common plan when I see it. Ya basic, gauze paws." I smirked. This annoyed the mummy very much.

"Well I applaud your acumen at sussing out my plan but it matters not for you are my prisoner," the Mummy sneered.

I just smiled and narrowed my eyes and then in a great yank I snapped the ropes that bound me. The ropes now hung like limp overcooked spaghetti noodles from my arms. So I used them like whips to take out the gauchos. Then I went straight for the mummy. With one great Big Punch his head went flying and landed in a trash can. The other Nazis surrendered because Nazis are cowards.

I found the magic flute on the Mummy's body and snapped it in half, and then preformed a reptilian Heimlich maneuver on the ceremonial snakes to get them to vomit up the bombs. I took the bombs tied them to a bunch of weather balloons and kicked them into low orbit where they exploded. It disrupted cellphone service for an hour but it was worth it for world peace.

When I returned state-side I plopped that mummy head in the Haunted Hell House down on the Jersey shore. I think the brain might still work so now that dumb-mum will spend its days stuck in an endless loop of chain rattling sounds, paper maiche skeletons, and kids screaming as rubber spiders dropped down from the ceiling. Another big case big solved by Agent Squatch.

END OF STORY