

Da Biggest Idea - Excerpt

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Warhammer 40,000 fan fiction by Mattias Andersson

PART FOUR: THE STUPID DECISION

Day three arrived with Nibblit still alive, which put him ahead of roughly sixty percent of his spawning batch. The exact number was hard to calculate since grotz died with such frequency that keeping track required more mental energy than survival allowed, but somewhere around half of the small green bodies he'd emerged from the pool alongside were now absent from the population count.

But he was hungry. Properly, seriously, dangerously hungry. The kind of hungry that makes you stupid because your brain prioritizes immediate food over long-term survival, gambling that there won't be a long term if you don't eat soon.

So Nibblit made a decision. A stupid decision, but desperation has a way of making stupid look like strategy.

He would attach himself to Warboss Grimfang.

The logic was sound, in the way that grot logic is sound when you don't examine it too closely. Warboss equals biggest Ork. Biggest Ork equals most important. Most important equals best scraps. Best scraps equals survival. Therefore: get close to Warboss, get scraps, live longer. Simple. Obvious. Foolproof.

In retrospect, there were several flaws in this plan. But hindsight is a luxury that grotz rarely live long enough to develop.

Warboss Grimfang's tent was hard to miss—it was the largest structure in camp, constructed from scrap metal and decorated with banners, trophies, and what Nibblit very much hoped were Ork teeth and not grot teeth nailed to the entrance posts. Probably Ork teeth. Almost definitely Ork teeth. He decided to believe they were Ork teeth because the alternative was too terrible to consider while walking toward the same tent. The fact that the teeth were almost as large as Nibblit's body, wasn't something that crossed his mind.

Inside, the Warboss held court. Surrounded by Nobz—massive Orks in heavy armor, each one capable of tearing a grot in half without thinking about it, possibly without noticing they'd done it—they were arguing about something tactical. Or possibly about whose shoota made the best noise when it fired. With Orks, the line between strategic discussion and aesthetic debate was essentially nonexistent.

Nibblit snuck in. Stayed low. Made himself small, which wasn't difficult since small was his default state. He looked for opportunities to be helpful, to make himself indispensable, to demonstrate value that would earn him protection and food and survival.

Opportunity one presented itself immediately: the Warboss's choppa was leaning against a post, just slightly out of the massive Ork's reach.

Nibblit grabbed it. Carried it over—the weapon was nearly as big as he was, but grotz developed surprising strength when survival was on the line. He presented it proudly, expecting praise or at least acknowledgment.

“Boss! Your choppa!”

Warboss Grimfang turned. Looked down. His face went through several expressions in rapid succession, none of them positive.

“I didn't ASK for my choppa!”

“But I thought—”

Boot.

Nibblit learned several things in the half-second it took for Warboss Grimfang's boot to connect with his body. He learned that Ork boots were steel-toed and surprisingly well-maintained. He learned that flight, while generally considered impossible for creatures without wings, was achievable under sufficient force. He learned that the camp had more airborne hazards than he'd previously appreciated, as he had an excellent view of them while tumbling through the sky.

He landed in dirt, tumbled, came to a stop against a truk wheel. Everything hurt in the specific way that suggested bruising rather than breakage. Not dead. Progress.

But he wasn't done being stupid yet.

Attempt two: he snuck back into the tent and tried to clean the Warboss's armor while the massive Ork wasn't looking. This lasted approximately four seconds before Grimfang noticed.

“WOT YOU DOING?!”

The Warboss's bellow could probably be heard in orbit. Nibblit froze, still holding the cleaning rag, suddenly very aware of how small and fragile and kickable he was.

“Cleanin' your armor, boss! Making it nice an'—”

“I LIKE IT DIRTY! SHOWS I BEEN IN SCRAPS! SHOWS I'M PROPER ORKY! GET OUT!”

Boot. Bigger kick this time. Nibblit flew farther, landed harder, ended up in an ash pile that got in his eyes, nose, and mouth. He coughed, spat, and seriously considered whether survival was even worth this much effort.

But he tried a third time.

Because hope is harder to kill than grotz, apparently.

Attempt three involved offering to write things down. This was actually clever, Nibblit thought. He'd discovered he could write—not well, not beautifully, but legibly enough to record information. Most grotz couldn't write at all. Most Orks couldn't write at all. This was valuable. This was useful. This would work.

“Boss! I can WRITE things! When you need to remember stuff!”

Warboss Grimfang squinted down at him. “WRITE?! I don't need no WRITIN'! I got a good memory! I remember EVERYFING!”

There was a pause. The Warboss's expression went distant, like he was trying to recall something just out of reach.

“Now wot was I talkin' about?”

“You was sayin' how you remember—”

“NOBODY ASKED YOU, GROT!”

Mega boot.

This kick was different from the previous two. This kick had intent behind it, focused force, the kind of violence that comes from genuine irritation rather than casual dismissal. Nibblit flew higher than he'd ever been, higher than any grot should reasonably fly, and as the camp spread out below him he had time for one crystal-clear thought:

This is how I die. Kicked to death. On day three.

PART FIVE: THE FOOTBALL

What followed was pain set to a rhythm.

Nibblit hit the ground, rolled, and immediately got kicked again.

“Oi! BALL!”

Boot. He flew sideways, hit dirt, rolled.

“MY TURN!”

Boot. Different direction this time. The camp spun around him in a blur of rust and fire.

“OVER 'ERE!”

Boot. He was airborne again, tumbling through space like the universe's least aerodynamic projectile.

Somewhere in the repetitive cycle of impact and flight, Nibblit's thoughts became simple. Primal. Reduced to their most basic components:

Ow.

OW.

Maybe this wasn't a good—OW!

Why do I keep making bad decisio—OW!

Grotz watching from the sidelines winced with each kick. Some laughed, that nervous laughter that comes from relief at not being the one getting kicked. One particularly enterprising grot started taking bets on whether Nibblit would survive, what his maximum altitude would be, and how many pieces he'd be in when the game finally ended.

The kicks continued. Nibblit became a ball in the most literal sense—passed from Ork to Ork in an impromptu game that had no rules except "kick the grot" and no objective except "kick the grot some more."

Between impacts, in those brief moments of flight where pain paused just long enough for thought to squeeze through, Nibblit had fragments of realization:

I'm going to die.

This is actually happening.

Nobody's going to stop this.

I'm just entertainment.

OW.

Then a Nob stepped up. Big Boy Snikgob, armor-plated, massive even by Ork standards, the kind of Ork who could kick a grot into orbit if he really tried. And from the way he was winding up, he was really going to try.

"Lemme show you gitz how it's REALLY done!"

The other Orks cheered. The grotz watching fell silent. Even the ones taking bets paused, suddenly uncertain whether there would be anything left to bet on.

Big Boy Snikgob wound up. Massive boot rising. Muscles tensing. The kind of wind-up that suggested this kick would be measurable in kilometers rather than meters.

Time didn't actually slow down—Nibblit's brain just sped up, survival instinct kicking into overdrive, processing final moments with crystal clarity. He saw the Nob's boot descending. Saw other Orks grinning in anticipation. Saw grotz turning away, unable to watch. Saw his entire brief life flash before his eyes, which didn't take long because his entire life had been three days old.

The boot connected.

For a moment—a beautiful, terrible moment—Nibblit flew higher than he'd ever flown. Higher than any grot should reasonably fly. High enough to see the entire camp spread out below him: Warboss's tent, workshops, fires, the chaos and violence and bizarre functionality of Ork civilization rendered small and almost comprehensible from altitude.

Then he started falling.

Down. Faster. The camp rushing up to meet him with terminal velocity and terminal implications.

He saw where he was going to land: a pile of scrap metal. Sharp edges. Rusted pipes. Jagged bits of machinery. The kind of landing that turns grotz into paste and doesn't even have the decency to be quick about it.

He hit.

CLANG. CRASH. CLATTER.

Metal bit into flesh. Pipes compressed under sudden weight. Something sharp cut something important. Pain exploded everywhere at once, comprehensive and absolute.

Then darkness. Sweet, merciful darkness.

Silence.

Heartbeat.

Silence.

Heartbeat.

Silence.

Then... a voice.

“Oi. You. Grot.”

Nibblit opened his eyes. Everything hurt, but it was the good kind of hurt. The kind that meant he wasn't dead. Not dead was basically winning at this point.

“You just dented my favorite pipe.”

This excerpt is from “Da Biggest Idea” - a Warhammer 40,000 fan fiction following Nibblit, a grot who accidentally becomes assistant to a Mek building something that shouldn't exist.

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