

Mini Zine

Super Short

SFF Short Stories

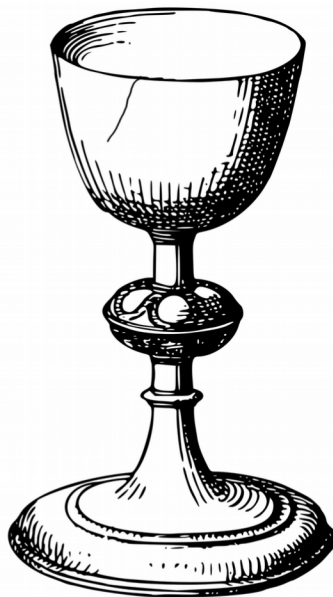
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Gimcrack's Cup by Larry Heyl



I reached down at me feet and grabbed a bejeweled chalice. "I'll drink from this." Walking boldly through the treasure toward the dragon I scooped up Gimcrack's Cup. "And you'll drink from this." I handed him the cup.

"Ho ho ho." laughed the dragon. "You're going to get me drunk with a cracked cup?" He dragged up a barrel of lager and topped of my chalice the ale running down the sides and soaking my sleeve. "You first human."

I looked him in the eye and said, "This is how you quaff. Turn it up and don't turn it down until it's empty." I turned up the chalice and went glug, glug, glug swallowing most of it but letting some run down my beard for good form.

breakfast. Not much of a bite but so

tasty, roasted".

"Wait!" I cried. "Don't kill me. The dwarves sent me."

"Dwarves" shouted the dragon. "Even less of a morsel and kind of tough. I'd rather eat you."

Impending death and the thought of dwarves gave me an inspiration. "I tell you what. Before breakfast how about a little drinking competition? Since dwarves sent me

We'll have a quaffing contest. We can each quaff a cup of ale and then another. I'm sure I can outdrink you."

"Ho, ho, ho." laughed the dragon. "Puny human you will never outdrink a giant red. All that alcohol will only tenderize you. So I say

yes! A quaffing contest."

Gimcrack's Cup by Larry Heyl

There it was, spread out in front of me. The dragon's horde. So beautiful, all the gold and jewels. It would be perfect if it wasn't for the giant red sprawled across the treasure snoring.

Focus, I told myself. Where's the cup? The dwarves were paying me for one thing and one thing only, Gimcrack's Cup, their holy chalice, and of course it was made of gold so of course the dragon stole it.

I knew from experience that I could spend through any treasure I could steal and I made my share of enemies learning this. The dwarves

were offering an annuity and safe harbor. I had to get that cup.

I crept slowly, keeping in the shadows around the edge of the cave. How can I see one cup piled amongst all that gold? Sharp eyes, I thought. Stay focused. Move slowly.



When I got to the far side of the cave I was looking right up the sleeping dragons nostrils. One puff and I'd be toast. But there it was.

About half way up the mound.

Shining with its own light and cracked right down one side. If you poured ale into Gimcrack's Cup it should leak right out but instead it

stayed everful as long as you were drinking from it. No wonder the dwarves worshipped it.

But how do I get it from the dragon? I'll draw my magic sword and cut his head off. But I'm no

warrior and I have no magic sword. I'll cast an illusion and distract him. But I'm no illusionist and I know no

spells. I know! I'm a thief. I'll creep up there and steal it from under his nose. But that might lead to a fiery death. I stood paralyzed looking

right at the dragon, scared shitless. He opened one eye. "Human, how good to see you. Just in time for

Even with an annuity I'm going to need a little bit of spending money. choice items.

On the way out I added a few threw it and the chalice into my

prided the cup from his talons. I he wasn't even snoring. I carefully

The giant red was so out of it that onto his face.

drinking Gimcrack's Cup emptied

When he stopped drank and he drank until he fell over

muzzle but he wouldn't give up. He Some of it started running down his

and pouring the fine strong ale. it down his throat. It kept pouring

He turned it up and started pouring noticing that the ale didn't even leak

off Gimcrack's Cup not even The dragon was ready. He topped