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Raiders of the Lost Orc

by [Martie Benedict O'Brien](#)

You want something done right, get a professional. Sauron the Base, erstwhile Dark Lord of Mordor, and since his resounding defeat on the slopes of Orodruin, wherein his Ring was forcibly removed, know as "Old Four Fingers," was becoming fond of that bit of wisdom, and flagellating himself in the privacy of his thoughts as he dwelt upon his misfortunes, he began, upon a time to see a light at the end of his exilic tunnel.

There being no particular rush, this Master of Evil set out on a leisurely search across the Time Lines and Dimensional Indices for a Treasure Hunter with impeccable credentials, a Professional with wit, cunning and imagination. A resourceful man. A tenacious man!

It was slow going for Sauron, but at last he thought he'd found the one he wanted.

Although contacting this would-be retriever of Rings seemed to present an insuperable problem, for a Mighty Wizard, even a temporarily vanquished one, very little is eventually impossible...

Prof. Indiana Jones, Ph.D., B.S., M.A., etc., Archeology Department, Marshall College, was occupying a seat at one of the teacher's tables in the cafeteria. Before him was a scholarly journal containing an article by Rene Belloq, and a bowl of vegetable soup, the former engrossing him far more than the latter.

After a bit Jones flipped the magazine shut with an expression of contempt and turned his attention to lunch. He smiled slightly. By some coincidence the letters

in the center of the bowl had formed his name. He stir-red the rapidly cooling soup and the name vanished... only to immediately reappear, a little floating monogram on a tomato sea. He blinked, stirred again. JONES, said his soup.

Indiana Jones was, above all, a pragmatist.

"Okay, I'm Jones," the professor said to the bowl.

The letters broke up and reformed. "Got a job," indicated his lunch. "Sure, I got a job," he replied frowning, "I teach."

"No, no, I got a job..."

"Well, congratulations, friend..."

". . for you."

Indiana peered at the macaroni message through oversized spectacles. "For me?"

"You got it fella," the soup replied.

"Right," he responded after a moment. "And, who are you, with a job for me?"

"The name's Sauron. It means 'lizard'. So you can call me 'Snake' if you want. Lot of the guys do."

"How about if I call you Sauron?"

"Whatever. Say, you ARE the Indiana Jones I'm looking for, aren't you? Six foot, well-built, ruggedly hand-some?"

"You can't tell?"

"This bowl look like an eye to you?"

"Guess not."

"So are you the treasure hunting Jones, seeker after lost relics? Antiquarian?"

"Yeah, that's me all right, but..."

"Then I have a QUEST for you, Jones." Somehow the little macaroni letters managed to achieve portentousness. Indiana mulled that over for a moment. "What," said he, "is a bowl of soup doing employing treasure hunters?"

The letters formed rapidly and precisely. "Jones, I am not a bowl of soup. I am a Lord Of Darkness, I rule, or will rule, a vast world separate and different from your own. This is not a game."

"O.K., don't get hostile. Tell me, where is this vast world of yours?"

"That's a little difficult to explain, dimension-wise..."

"Are we talking... uh..." Indy thought quickly, "Buck Rogers?"

"Welllllll..." the soup hedged, "Kinda. Actually it's more like H.G. Wells."

"And how do I get there?"

"Now THAT'S more like Buck Rogers."

Despite himself, and beyond his bewilderment, Jones was intrigued. "What exactly is it you want me to go after?"

"Ring."

"There's your phone."

"Ha. Ha. That's a good one, Jones. A ring, a little keepsake, you know, inscribed."

"What's it say?"

"Mushy stuff. Wouldn't interest you."

"How did you come to lose it?"

"Elves. Damn Elves ripped me off."

"The Elves took it, huh?" Jones' mobile mouth quirked at one corner. "Some Elves you got."

"Listen, Chucki I'll give you Elves! Seven foot tall, every one of them and no sense of humor at all! Great big tax accountants. Listen, you find 'em and rescue that Ring - get my FINGER back! On second thought, never mind. GIVE 'em the finger. Elves! God!"

Indiana was astonished at the amount of verbiage a bowl of Campbells could provide... all the little barley-pearl punctuation... "O.K. Elves. Anyone else I have to look out for?"

"Bunch of sword-swinging yahoos ... you pack some heat?"

"Smith and Wesson .45."

"Good! Won't have any problem with swordsmen then. So when can you leave?"

Indiana paused in surprise. The question made it all seem suddenly quite real. "Well, I don't know..." he replied slowly.

Marcus could restrain himself no longer. He took the two steps that separated him from the cafeteria table and Jones' back. "Indiana, whatever are you doing?"

"Holy shit, Marcus! You damn near scared me to death!"

"Indiana, you've been talking to your soup."

"Marcus, look," Jones was excited. "I've been communicating with someone from another world..."

Marcus' gentle brown eyes poured out compassion upon his friend and fellow-educator. "Of course, Indiana."

"No, really, Marcus. Listen to me! Another dimension He wants me to go after a lost treasure, and ... you don't believe me, do you?"

Marcus eyed the archeologist sadly.

"Well, look! Look right here! He's been spelling out messages in the soup..." Both men stared at the bright surface of the bowl. It said SPAGRMALIK.

"Indiana, do come away for a bit, there's a good fellow." Gently he helped the bewildered professor to his feet.

"But... but..."

"Now, Indiana, I want you to take the afternoon off. Go home, relax. Take a nap, perhaps. You've been working very hard lately."

Indiana frowned at Marcus, perplexed, kneaded his forehead. "But it seemed so real!" He peered at the bowl in puzzlement. A sturdy porcelain receptacle it was, containing an unremarkable vegetable brew.

"Yeah, maybe you're right, Marcus," he sighed. He removed his glasses, peered through them, reset them and took one more half-hopeful look. "I'll have a drink, then take a nap."

"Right, Indiana!" said Marcus jovially. "Run along now. Do you good." He nodded encouragement and smiled, then 'tsked' sadly to himself as he watched his friend walk slowly away. Lad HAD been off his feed he thought. He looked down at Indy's cold, uneaten lunch.

"Fuck you," said the soup.

"Snake," said Marcus, "behave yourself."

end

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