

"Talitha and the Gnome"

episode #1
"The Warg"

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 1

The beautiful, rustic village is perched at the edge of an endless, rambling FOREST. SOUNDS of young children CHEERING.

Narrow streets bustle with happy faces hurrying in all directions. FARMERS work their well-manicured fields.

2 VILLAGE STREET/VILLAGE SQUARE - SAME 2

A wide stone-paved street leads into the square, and up to a huge, central FOUNTAIN. NOISY children line the street.

LOUD CHEER as TALITHA, a freckle-faced nine year old, sprints into view, bolting furiously towards the fountain. Some ways behind, three boys, all much bigger than Talitha, give chase for all they're worth.

MARIAH, 10, a pretty little blonde, stands at the fountain. She touches a COLORFUL GARLAND which she wears around her neck. Talitha reaches the fountain. Throws her hands up in victory. Another LOUD CHEER. The three boys reach the fountain, seconds after Talitha. Mariah scowls.

Talitha extends her hand, awaiting payment. Mariah drops the garland on the ground, and struts away from the group.

3 EXT. VILLAGE - BART'S FIELD - SUNDOWN 3

Adjacent to the village. BART hurriedly herds his SHEEP from the field into a nearby BARN. One of the sheep stands far from the rest, quietly grazing a patch of grass. From the forest, TWO HUGE RED EYES watch her.

A LOUD GROWL. With a WHOOSHING SOUND something flashes from the forest, latches onto the sheep, and drags her back into the darkness. Bart watches in horror.

4 VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - SAME 4

Talitha wears Mariah's GARLAND. She looks around. Points to a TREE STUMP, almost 20 yards from where she stands with two older boys, AARON and RANSELL.

TALITHA
There. Haddy's chair.

The boys contemplate the stump.

RANSELL
You can't.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

TALITHA

Can too.

RANSELL

What you got?

TALITHA

I got Mariah's flowers ...
'gainst your bug.

Ransell reaches into his pocket. Extracts a BUG, TIED TO A STRING. Looks at it for a long moment.

RANSELL

You gotta hit it three times.

TALITHA

Deal.

Talitha and Ransell shake on it. Aaron folds his arms. Nods his head, as in "this should be interesting".

Talitha extracts a SMOOTH ROUND STONE from her POCKET. Wipes it clean. Blows on it. She stares at her target, then, like a striking snake, unleashes a ferocious, whipping action, slinging the stone at the stump. THWACK. Direct hit.

AARON

Holy, moly, beat me slowly!

The SOUND of a LOUD, WOEFUL WAIL emanates from somewhere in the forest. The three children freeze, eyes wide.

TALITHA

It's not dark. Look, the sun.

Ransell drops his BUG. Runs towards the village. A moment later Talitha and Aaron give chase. Suddenly, Talitha stops. Runs back to the bug. Hastily unties it.

TALITHA (CONT'D)

(to the bug)

Our plan worked a pure trick.
Didn't it lil' fella?

Frees the bug.

TALITHA (CONT'D)

Go. Go. An' keep away from
boys.

Another WOEFUL WAIL blankets the village.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

MONTAGE

Window shutters BANG closed. The few people left on the streets scamper in all directions. Doors BANG closed. MEN grab RIFLES - run from their houses. WOMEN light candles. Men, with guns, gather in BART'S FIELD.

5 INT. TALITHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

5

Sparsely furnished with a home-made wooden table and chairs. A fireplace illuminates the room. HEBERT, a burly 32 year old, stands near the front door, RIFLE in hand. The door is ajar. FRANCINE, 30, homely but pretty, faces him. A scruffy little terrier, SCAMPER, watches Hebert intently.

HEBERT

Where is Talitha?

FRANCINE

I don't know.

A WOEFUL WAIL from the distance.

HEBERT

Do you hear that, mother? Do you hear? The beast howls and our child wanders you know not where?

Francine makes for the door. Hebert blocks her path.

HEBERT (CONT'D)

Do you not hear the cries? Sunset or no. It wakes. Stay here. I will find her.

Distant WAIL. Scamper WHIMPERS. Rushes past Hebert and out of the door.

FRANCINE

Scamper, NO.

HEBERT

Stay here.

Hebert charges from the house, clutching his rifle.

6 EXT. VILLAGE STREET - SUNSET

6

Talitha sprints down the street. As she runs past a small side street, something catches her eye. She skids to a halt.

TALITHA

Scamper?

She rushes down the side street. Peers into the distance. Catches sight of a small terrier running towards the forest. She gives chase.

TALITHA (CONT'D)

SCAMPER.

7 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

7

Talitha stands at the edge of the forest, staring into the darkness. She picks up a few medium sized rocks, pockets them. A BRIGHT MOON illuminates sporadic patches through the tall trees. Talitha takes a deep breath, SHUDDERS, then, very slowly, enters the forest. TWO HUGE RED EYES watch her. She whispers...

TALITHA

Scamp. Scamper.

DISSOLVE TO:

Talitha is deep in the forest. LOUD WOEFUL WAIL, very close. Talitha turns to run, and comes face to face with the WARG, momentarily bathed in bright moonlight.

It's a fearsome beast, with HUGE RED EYES, head like a wild boar, and body of a massive mountain lion. Talitha stares at the pointed, curved tusks, and a snarling, curled upper lip, revealing sharp yellow teeth. The tuft of hair on its neck bristles and quivers.

Terrified, Talitha slowly takes one step backwards, then another. Suddenly she turns and runs for her life. The Warg gives chase. With the speed of a desperate jackrabbit Talitha darts left and right through the trees.

8 EXT. FOREST - A CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

8

Bathed in MOONLIGHT, a SMALL FIGURE, GNOME, about three feet tall, lies prostrate. Talitha charges in from the darkness. The figure suddenly emits a DEAFENING WOEFUL WAIL.

For a few moments Talitha can only stare, her body trembling. Then she covers her ears, and falls to her knees. The warg stands at the edge of the clearing, unwilling to enter. He emits a LOUD GROWL, then slinks off.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

GNOME stops, mid wail.

GNOME
Who goes there?

No reply.

GNOME (CONT'D)
I SAID. WHO GOES THERE? SHOW
YOURSELF, OR... or... YOU JUST
BETTER SHOW YOURSELF.

Gnome catches sight of Talitha. He squints to get a better look. She looks up, directly into his eyes. They both SCREAM. Gnome disappears into thin air, then materializes behind a fallen log. Talitha dives behind a tree stump.

9 EXT. BART'S FIELD - NIGHT

9

Bart, excited, addresses Hebert and a LARGE GROUP of men. Each carries a rifle.

BART
I saw it plain. It came from
there.

HEBERT
Then there's nothing for it.
We must hunt it down.

LOUD CHEER from the group.

10 EXT. FOREST - A CLEARING

10

Talitha and Gnome peek out from their hiding places. Lock eyes. SCREAM. Hide again. Long silence. Eventually, from behind her stump, Talitha speaks, in a shaky voice.

TALITHA
Please don't eat me.

Gnome peeks out.

GNOME
What?

Immediately hides again.

TALITHA
I just want my dog, Scamper,
and I promise I'll never bother
you. Ever. Never again. Ever.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

GNOME
I don't know your dog. Why
don't you go away?

TALITHA
(looking around
nervously)
I have to find Scamper.

Gnome peeks out.

GNOME
A dog?

TALITHA
Yes.

GNOME
I hate dogs. They bite.

TALITHA
Not Scamper. He wouldn't bite
you.

Long pause.

GNOME
I don't eat people.

TALITHA
What?

GNOME
You said "don't eat me". I
don't eat people.

TALITHA
Oh. That's very good news.

Talitha peeks out from behind her stump.

11 EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST

11

The men approach. They fan out. A GROWL. CRACKLE of dry
branches. Something runs deeper into the forest, away from
the men.

BART
There. That way.

The men SHOUT, give chase.

12 EXT. FOREST - A CLEARING

12

Gnome peeks out from behind his log, Talitha from behind her tree.

TALITHA

What ... what are you?

Gnome slowly steps out from behind the log, indignant.

GNOME

I'm a gnome. Of the magic variety.

Talitha peers at him for a long while. He's only three feet tall, dressed in dull brown pants and a green tunic. Slowly, she slides out from behind her stump.

TALITHA

Oh.

GNOME

(apprehensive)

Are you going to throw things?

TALITHA

I beg your pardon?

GNOME

Throw. Are you going to throw things at me? Children usually do. That's why I don't like them.

TALITHA

I don't throw things at people...I mean...at gnomes, at...anyone.

GNOME

Well, I don't eat people. Not that I couldn't, mind. I could. I could eat... an entire child, if I wanted to. Even the toes. I can be very fierce, if I set my mind to it.

Talitha offers a glint of a smile.

TALITHA

I see. May I please sit down? I'm very tired.

Gnome nods. Talitha sits on the tree stump.

13 EXT. FOREST

13

Scamper dashes through the dark forest. Two men chase him. Suddenly, the men stop.

CHUBBY MAN

Where'd it go? Did you see it?

CHUBBY MAN

I heard it. It was big.

WEASELLY MAN

(with a stutter)

Yeah, big. Definitely. Big.

14 EXT. FOREST - A CLEARING

14

Talitha sits on the stump. Gnome stands, not too close.

TALITHA

You make an awful lot of noise for such a litt...for a gnome.

GNOME

It's called a wail. We wail. That's what gnomes do. We wail.

TALITHA

Why?

GNOME

We wail when we're sad. I'm sad. Okay?

TALITHA

Why?

After a long pause, Gnome SIGHS.

GNOME

I really don't have any close friends. I mean, I talk to the trees, but only in a very casual way. They're not naturally friendly.

TALITHA

You talk to the trees?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

GNOME

Only when I'm really lonely.
 And, let me tell you, it's
 been pretty quiet around here
 for the past 100 years, or so.
 Well, that is, until the warg
 turned up.

TALITHA

The warg?

Gnome holds his hands up, like claws.

GNOME

Ooh, he's just the meanest,
 scariest creature in these
 woods. He has big, red eyes,
 and tusks - like this - and
 very large teeth, and he --

TALITHA

(eagerly)

I can be your friend, if you
 like.

Gnome is thrilled.

GNOME

Really? Really? Oh, oh, I
 would be ever so grateful.

He approaches, sits next to Talitha.

GNOME (CONT'D)

I have so much to tell you.

TALITHA

Mr. Gnome, sir, do you think
 you could help me find Scamper?

GNOME

(animated)

Yes, yes, of course. Now,
 let's see. Where shall I begin?
 Ah, yes. I was born--

A LONG HOWL, very close. Gnome disappears.

TALITHA

Where'd he go?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

She ducks behind the stump.

GNOME (OS)

That's the warg. That's him.
Downright nuisance, he is. So
loud. Very inconsiderate.

Gnome reappears, near Talitha.

GNOME (CONT'D)

Gave me quite a start. Come
on out. It's okay. He won't
come into the clearing.

Talitha stands, slowly.

TALITHA

He won't?

GNOME

Ask me, why not.

TALITHA

Why not?

GNOME

Because if he sees his own
reflection, he'll turn to dust.
I told him that this is my
home, and if he came near, I'd
dust him.

Talitha looks confused. Gnome waves his hand. A huge mirror
appears in the center of the clearing.

TALITHA

How...how'd you do that?

GNOME

Oh, I can do lots of things.
I'm a gnome of the magic
variety. I told you.

TALITHA

Can you show me how?

GNOME

No.

Awkward moment of silence, then ...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

TALITHA

Mr. Gnome. It's been very nice, but I have to find Scamper. Can you come with me?

GNOME

I need at least a little light to do magic. It's very dark in the forest.

(beat)

I'm afraid of the dark.

Talitha nods. Walks to the edge of the clearing.

GNOME

Talitha, take these.

A SMALL MIRROR appears in Talitha's hand. She stuffs it in her pocket.

TALITHA

Thank you. You said "these".

GNOME

You'll see.

He waves. She disappears into the forest.

15 EXT. FOREST - SCAMPER'S AREA

15

Scamper hears a DEEP GROWL. Sniffs the air. Huge red eyes watch him.

16 EXT. FOREST - NEAR KENNY TREE

16

Talitha, very nervous, steps on a dry twig. CRACK. KENNY is an enormous old tree.

KENNY TREE

Shh. Warg is near.

Talitha almost jumps out of her skin.

TALITHA

Who's there?

KENNY TREE

Quiet.

Talitha looks up at the tree.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 16

TALITHA
You're a tree.

KENNY TREE
I'm aware of that.

TALITHA
But, but you talk.

KENNY TREE
How very perceptive.

17 EXT. FOREST - SCAMPER'S AREA 17

The warg GROWLS loudly and pounces. In a swirl of dust, Scamper avoids the attack. The warg pounces again, GROWLING AND SNARLING. Scamper BARKS and SQUEALS. Desperately attempts to avoid capture.

18 EXT. FOREST - NEAR KENNY TREE 18

TALITHA
SCAMPER.

She takes a stone from her pocket. Runs towards the source of the GROWLING and BARKING.

19 EXT. FOREST - HEBERT'S AREA 19

SOUND of Scamper BARKING in the distance. Hebert grabs Bart by the arm.

HEBERT
There.

They run, rifles ready.

20 EXT. FOREST - NEAR JENNY TREE 20

POV TALITHA ON THE WARG

The creature has Scamper cornered.

TALITHA
SCAMPER.

The warg turns to Talitha. Claws outstretched, he sails through the air. Talitha flings the stone with all her might. It connects with a THUD. Right between the eyes. The warg crashes to the ground. His tongue flops out of his mouth. Talitha looks at him for a long while.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

TALITHA
I think he's dead.

JENNY TREE
That would be no loss.

Startled, Talitha looks up at Jenny Tree.

TALITHA
Did you talk?

JENNY TREE
I certainly did.

TALITHA
Mr. Gnome said he talked to
the trees. He didn't say they
talked back to him.

JENNY TREE
Every sound is saying something,
Talitha. You just have to
listen. The gnome gave you a
gift. Little by little, you'll
learn to understand.

TALITHA
He did? Hey, you know my name.

JENNY TREE
Of course. I know many things.

TALITHA
Oh?

Unnoticed, the warg opens one eye, just a little.

JENNY TREE
For instance, I know that today
you untied a little friend of
mine.

TALITHA
Ransell's bug?

JENNY TREE
Oh, yes. He told everyone.

A NOISE, very close, startles Talitha. Hebert and Barg charge
in. The sight of the warg stops them in their tracks.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

TALITHA

DADDY.

Both men point their rifles at the warg.

TALITHA (CONT'D)

It's okay. He's dead.

Hebert lowers his rifle.

HEBERT

Your mother has been worried.

(to Barg)

Call the others.

Barg runs off.

SCAMPER

I was worried about you, too.
That's why I came to look for
you.

TALITHA

(shocked)

Scamper?

Suddenly the warg pounces, pins Hebert to the ground. For a moment, Talitha is frozen.

Staring at Hebert, the warg speaks, in a deep, raspy voice.

WARG

Too late, little one, daddy's
done.

Eyes blazing, the warg opens his mouth wide, saliva dripping from enormous yellow teeth.

TALITHA

NO!

She leaps onto the warg's back. Scamper bites into his tail. The beast twists around, swats Scamper. The little dog spins through the air.

Talitha pulls at the warg's mane for all she's worth. He shakes his head this way and that, trying to dislodge the little pest.

Then, with a mighty heave of his massive shoulders, he sends Talitha over his head, and onto the forest floor.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (3) 20

She lands in a seated position, almost nose to nose with the furious creature. Talitha is seemingly mesmerized by the evil red eyes, and the huge yellow fangs, dripping saliva.

All seems lost, when...

21 ANGLE ON 21

Talitha's hand feels her pocket. The OUTLINE OF THE MIRROR.

Slowly, ever so slowly, her hand moves into the pocket. She inches backwards. GROWL. A few more inches. DEEP, RUMBLING GROWL.

Talitha scoots away from Warg. LOUD GROWL. Warg pounces.

In a flash Talitha's little hand produces the MIRROR, holds it up to the snarling creature, yellow teeth just inches from her face...

Deafening SILENCE. Everyone, everything frozen. The only sound, Talitha's HEAVY RASPING BREATHING. The beast stands over her tiny frame, motionless.

A gust of WIND. The warg's mane floats off in a gentle CLOUD OF DUST. His legs begin to slowly crumble.

Suddenly, the beast emits a HORRIBLE SCREAM as the massive body turns to sand.

Talitha jumps up, rushes to Scamper. Lifts him. His body is limp. Hebert stands.

22 ANGLE ON 22

the warg as it dissolves into a pile of dust.

Hebert cradles both Talitha and Scamper gently in his arms.

HEBERT

Come. We'll take him home.

A gust of wind scatters dust in all directions.

23 EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY 23

Filled with noisy people. Hebert enters, with Talitha on his shoulders. The crowd CHEERS, "TALITHA, TALITHA".

24 EXT. FOREST, A CLEARING - DAY

24

SUPER: "One week later"

Talitha and Gnome sit on the tree stump.

GNOME

You didn't tell them about me?

TALITHA

Nope. They'd bother you.
People are mos' times 'fraid
of things they don't understand.

(beat)

All the creatures in the
forest...they understand each
other?

GNOME

Ah. Wouldn't that be nice.
No, my dear, they can all talk
to each other, but they don't
always understand. There, we
all need a little work.

A bug lands on Talitha's nose.

TALITHA (CONT'D)

Oh, hi, lil' fella...Oh. Oh,
really?

GNOME

What's he say?

TALITHA

There's a strange six legged
creature near the lake. We
should find out what he's doing
here.

GNOME

We'll be back before dark?

TALITHA

Of course.

They stand.

TALITHA

Scamper. Here boy.

Scamper runs into the clearing.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

TALITHA (CONT'D)
Wanna go on a adventure?

Scamper, excited, jumps up and down.

SCAMPER
Yup. Yup. Yup.

CUT TO:

Gnome, Talitha, and Scamper leave the clearing, walk into the forest. Gnome takes Talitha's hand.

25

THE END

25