

Tel Blackthorn, Earl of Monte, Protector of the Crown, Savior of the People, and hero of the Great War was dying. He lay back among the pillows of his ornate bed, and sighed. No one was talking about it, of course. They just went about their business, and conversed in hushed tones outside his chambers, as though age had made him deaf.

He knew that it wouldn't be long, now. His body, and the strength of his arm, had been his greatest asset for so long that he knew its condition and humors with a subconscious precision that dwarfed even the most learned physician's examination. He couldn't stay awake for long anymore, and even sitting up for dinner in the great hall had become a trial of will and pain.

Blackthorn's friends knew it, as well. They had been coming, in dribs and drabs, for the last few weeks. They came to reminisce about old companions long gone, or to seek his advice. They came to give gifts, or to brag of their latest adventures. They came, Tel knew, to say goodbye.

Today they came for a party. His granddaughter had reached her majority just a few weeks earlier, and every kinsman, friend, and potential suitor was coming to Bel Monte to celebrate with her. Since his son Devron was the royal consort, and Anya herself stood to inherit the throne should something happen to her younger brother Rillan, that list was long indeed. The castle was a kicked anthill of activity, with servants and guests scrambling in every direction to insure that all was prepared for the party. A veritable army of entertainers, tailors, carpenters and cooks had descended upon Kal Monte along with the guests. They overflowed the city's inns, and their wagons, tents and pavilions could be found shoulder to shoulder along the road to the castle.

The festivities had given Tel more energy than he had had in a year. He was fiercely proud of his children, and doted upon his grandchildren. He would no more miss a moment of Anya's great party than he would tear up one of little Rillan's drawings and throw it on the fire. So, aching joints and pounding head and all, he sat smiling in attendance for the juggling, and the plays, and the games. His doctors clucked behind their hands, and Lady Amber sent him back to bed at the least provocation, but not even his wife's admonishments or his own body's protests could keep him away for long.

A fanfare from the castle's main gate wafted through his grace's window. Another noble visitor had arrived, and a popular one at that, if the shrieks of the children playing in the courtyard were any indication. Tel drew himself slowly upright, and swung his feet over the bed and onto the deep rug spread across his floor. Breathing heavily, he walked to the window. Though his hips screamed with every step, his pride did not allow him to shuffle like the old man he couldn't quite believe he had become. His pain was momentarily forgotten at the sight of the banner that accompanied the small retinue that was making its way through the gate. The banner was carried by a powerful-looking man-at-arms, and its simple white snowflake on a dark blue field proclaimed that Baron Tagril Dire, master wizard and Blackthorn's oldest companion, had arrived.

"You there, Harold, bring the chess board and the deep chairs," Blackthorn called out in his age-cracked baritone. "I will not have Tagril find me laying about like some kind of rag doll. We haven't played in months."

Tel's valet came in from the apartments' main room carrying an ornately carved table inlaid with a chessboard and drawers full of pieces, and set it down carefully by the bedroom's large fireplace. Blackthorn's two guards followed closely after; their blackened pauldrons and swords made for a wonderfully absurd contrast to the delicate, deeply cushioned chairs they carried. Blackthorn knew that Tagril would seek him out as soon as he had made sufficient gestures to the Queen and court to satisfy protocol, and protocol was notoriously lax as it applied to "uncle" Tagril. Tel sat himself carefully in the chair closest to the fire, and began to set up the black pieces on his side of the board. Harold arranged the white king and his marble court, then disappeared to find a bottle of the iceberry wine that was a gift from Dire-in-exile, and a bowl of apples.

As he had predicted, it wasn't long before his friend made his appearance. Tel heard Tagril's approach from some distance down the hall thanks to the shrill piping questions of six year old

Rillan.

"Is it true a dragon attacked your tower, Uncle Tagril? Do you really know magic? Could you make me a frog? Are you older than grandpa? You don't *smell* older than grandpa."

Blackthorn chuckled as he listened to his friend's sputtered half-responses and attempted evasions. Tagril had never been comfortable around children, even his own, and Blackthorn's boisterous brood always put him off balance. Tel had just enough time to regain his composure while his valet sent the little heir apparent off to play before Tagril finally stepped into the room.

It was always a shock to see Tagril after some time had passed. Magic preserved the lives of its practitioners, and the baron was part of a long line of sorcerers. His slight frame was straight, seemingly untouched by the hand of age, and his hair in its queue at the nape of his neck remained darkest black. Once one achieved the mastery of magic that Tagril had, aging all but stopped, and the mage could live for centuries before the energies he harnessed finally consumed him in a blaze of power. Tagril's own father had been more than two hundred years old when he died in the invasion that had made Tagril a wanderer and had eventually led him to befriend a mercenary adventurer known only as Blackthorn.

Tagril's grin at seeing his old friend faltered just a bit as he took in Blackthorn's sunken eyes and pale complexion. His body, still powerful for a man of his age, sank more into the chair. It was obvious that Blackthorn required the deep cushions of his ornate seat.

"Well, Blackthorn, we appear to have been invaded again." Dire-in-exile was part of Monte, and Tagril was technically Tel's liegeman, but subservience had never been a question. "I believe the battalions of lace-armed, pin-wielding tailors alone might be more than we could have handled in our prime."

Blackthorn smiled in return. "We just need more friends," he quipped, and laughed aloud at Tagril's melodramatic groan. That statement had been Blackthorn's response to any seemingly hopeless task for time immemorial. It had gotten them into more tight situations than anyone would care to think about, particularly during the War, but Tel's sincerity and obvious skill had won them enough "friends" to make it true.

Tagril sat down at the board and took an apple from the bowl without looking at it. "You're giving me the advantage again? I think that perhaps the 'Black Knight' has been listening to too many of his own ballads. You know you can't outthink me; you should take any advantage you can get."

"Oh ho! We've begun the boasting a bit early this time, I see. Well, if your great intellect is such a dangerous weapon, then perhaps I *should* use every advantage available to me." Blackthorn reached into the back of the drawer from which he had taken his obsidian chess men and produced a dull-looking circlet of brass surmounted by a strange yellow-colored stone, and set it down atop his gray hair. He gasped and his eyes widened as the magic of the stone took hold of him.

The stone was one of a series of artifacts they had taken from the home of a wizard who had attempted to have them assassinated during the events leading up to the Great War. While he had it on, all of Blackthorn's thoughts were clearer and more precise. Connections, possibilities and consequences were more obvious, and decisions were faster and more sure. It did not truly make him more intelligent, but rather allowed him to near completely harness the native intelligence he already possessed. The near constant company of great scholars like his wife or Tagril sometimes made it hard to remember, but that was not inconsiderable.

"Angelique won't be here, my friend," Tagril said of another of their companions. She was also a wizard, but not nearly so puissant. "I received a letter from her just yesterday. She believes she has finally found her father's family, but it appears he came to Aurin from a great distance. She is across the Sword Sea. She promises you will be the first one she sees when she returns next year."

"Tell her I'd like some of those western orchids on my tomb then. I am afraid I won't make it to next year. It seems likely I won't survive the coming winter." Blackthorn smiled ruefully at the look of shock that crossed his friend's face. "Come now, we knew this would happen, and you can't make me believe you didn't know it already. Now look to your pieces unless you *want* me to thrash you."

Tagril smiled at the fierce look of determination on his old friend's face and made his opening move. Truth be told, he lost to Blackthorn as much as he won. Strategic thinking was not his forte, and he overcame the larger man's gifts in that arena through patience and his own powers of perception. He was also distracted by his friend's obvious frailty. Because the lords of Dire had been sorcerers for so long, Tagril had never had to watch someone close to him grow old or see their body betray them. His grandfather had been the last close relation he had to die of natural causes, and the old man had remained spry and young-seeming until one day he had woken with the knowledge that the magic's power was nearly spent, and went to meet his end in the ritual chamber. This slow degradation of what had been a powerful man frightened Tagril, and deteriorated his own frequently lugubrious state of mind. By the time dusk had fallen, Tel had won both games they played, and seemed poised to win a third.

Tagril looked up from the board during a particularly long period of contemplation by Blackthorn to realize that his old friend had fallen asleep in his chair. He sighed sadly to himself, and moved the board away from Tel's sleeping legs. He uttered a word of power, and hands of air picked the old man up gently, and lay him carefully on his bed. As he left the room, he doused the lamps with a gesture, and went in search solitude.

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Finally, the evening's festivities arrived. Tel dressed in his finest black tunic and hose, and even donned the heavy gold-and-ruby chain that symbolized his authority as Earl of Kal Monte. He made his way, slow but proud, to the grand dais in the feast hall, and sat beneath the stuffed head of Cormirax, the dragon from whom he and his companions had liberated this very castle. Lovely Anya sat on his right, seeming every bit a woman and a princess in her blue silks and gold tiara. Amber was on his left, and when she walked into the hall in her scarlet gown, carrying her ebony and ash harp, the entire crowd fell silent. Her Majesty, Katerine, ceded the place of honor to him in deference of his position as her father-in-law and grandfather of the guest of honor. She and Devron were seated to Anya's right; not even Katerine's quiet authority or the Protector's Sword, always at Devron's side when the queen was in public, could dampen the festival mood of the night. Even stern-miened Tagril had a fond-smile on his face from his place at the foot of the dais. Little Rillan ran around the dais as though possessed. Clowns, jugglers, storytellers and sweets were almost too exciting to bear.

Once the royal party were settled in their places, the brief inescapable formalities that followed the queen everywhere began. In an attempt to keep Rillan from causing too much disruption for the envoys and ambassadors that lined up before dais to issue formal congratulations to the royal family, Blackthorn took the boy into his lap and began to tell him stories.

"What do you want grandpa to tell you about today, Rillan?"

"Monsters! Tell me a story about monsters, grandpa!"

It was a common request from the precocious youngster. Whenever Blackthorn, Amber, or any of their old friends began to tell stories in the boy's presence, he always asked for tales of monsters and magic. Dragons were his particular favorite. Tonight Blackthorn decided to tell him again of the time that Tagril's tower was assaulted by Cormirax's mate, apparently driven mad by desire for revenge. By that time the baron's mastery of magic had more than sufficed to protect

them from the monster's most potent weapon - its fiery breath - and Tel himself had been able to deal a blow severe enough to convince the bull drake to quit the field.

By the time he finished with the tale, dressed up with enough drama and suspense to intrigue any number of diminutive monster-hunters, protocol had been satisfied and the party was truly underway. There was music and dancing, juggling, feats of acrobatics, and even a play. During the dancing, young noblemen (and some not so young) crowded around Anya. They were on their best behavior, trying to catch her attention, or even better, that of her parents. The princess danced the evening away with all of them, very carefully paying enough attention to capture their interest, but not so much as to make it seem that she had a favorite. Clearly, she had been spending a great deal of time listening to her grandmother.

The play was of particular interest to Tel and Amber. Though the evening was meant as a tribute to the princess, it was clearly intended to flatter the hosts of the gathering. It told a dramatized and wildly inaccurate account of their efforts to uncover and foil a conspiracy to assassinate King Maximilian in Blackthorn's youth. At that time, he had been nothing more than a mercenary wanderer, scion of a family disgraced so long ago that only dedicated historians had recalled the reason for it. Good fortune had placed him in position to see the first assassin taking aim at the king during a public appearance, and his quick actions had set him on the path to restoring the honor of the Blackthorn family. They had discovered a particularly sadistic noble at the heart of the spider's web of lies and treason. When the players began to portray some of his more gruesome proclivities, even bloodthirsty Rillan covered his face. Blackthorn leaned closed to him, and said quietly, "See, Rillan? The most terrible monsters always walk like men."

Since the Lady Amber had walked through the great double doors carrying her harp speculation had run rampant. She had not performed in public for nearly five years, and was considered the foremost minstrel in the kingdom. Her grasp of history and music were almost unsurpassed, and her ability to use magic to complement and amplify her performance was legendary. When she stepped into the cleared area before the dais where all the performers had displayed their skills, the entire hall fell instantly into silence. Her beautiful face lit with a smile at the vast compliment so implied, and she spoke.

"Lords, ladies, companions and friends, today my granddaughter comes into her majority. Today she is, in every measure we know, a woman. I know that some of you have noticed this already." There was a low current of good natured but knowing laughter. "You in particular, Geoffrey of Grandmouth!" she quipped, as the young man she singled out turned beet red to the roots of his hair and his companions doubled over in laughter. "Part of being a woman or a man is the search for the perfect companion. We all seek that which is outside of ourselves that complements us perfectly, and to which we can attach ourselves until our days are done."

"Some find it in music, or magic, or service," she continued, "but I believe that most of us seek it in other people." She turned and graced Blackthorn with her brightest smile yet. "This is a song I wrote, long ago, about that search and what it feels like to end it. Today, I give it to Anya. May you know its truth, dearest."

Blackthorn felt his throat tighten as the first strains of the melody issued from Amber's harp. She had written the song for their wedding, and played it for him in the great cathedral of Lord Mikhail in Kal Iban itself. As she sang the song, ghostly images formed in the air above her head and began to subtly depict the song's narrative of longing, loss, and love. Anya, who had never heard the song as only her grandmother could perform it, sat enraptured. When Amber was finished, the room was stock still as she strode back onto the platform and kissed Tel gently on the forehead. "I love you, my knight," she whispered, before the roar of applause deafened them both.

The remaining performers' efforts were even more intense following Amber's ballad. None of them had known they would be sharing a stage with a living legend, and even the most renowned felt the pressure. Several performances were so inspired as to become famous themselves, had

the events to follow not overshadowed them.

Blackthorn knew none of this, however. Age and excitement can overcome the strongest wills, and both Blackthorn and Rillan had been defeated. They slept, slumped together in the old knight's great chair, before the soup appeared to begin the banquet. The captain of the guard and the royal nurse were well acquainted with this turn of events, and had the pair safely abed without a stir.

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Blackthorn awoke in the dead of night. He had been driven from sleep by the aching of his empty stomach and full bladder. Once the more immediate complaint had been addressed, he looked about for the food Harold always left him when he fell asleep before dinner. By the fireplace was a wood-handled pewter flagon of soup, placed expertly to keep it warm without boiling away. He drank the soup absentmindedly and thought about the day. It was one of the best he had seen in many months. Should the gods take him tonight, he could go happy.

He was roused from his reverie by a tickle in the back of his mind. From long familiarity he recognized the touch of magic on his mind. It was strange; neither his wife nor Tagril were given to the frivolous use of magic, and sending a message mind-to-mind instead of walking down the corridor definitely qualified. He turned his attention to the contact.

*Blackthorn! Blackthorn! Merciful gods, please be awake enough to hear me. Tagril's mental voice was strained, almost panicking. Old friend, you have to wake up. Your children are in danger.*

"Tagril! It's me, I am here." In his shock, Blackthorn answered the sending aloud. "What is wrong with the kids? What's going on?"

*Treachery! Someone tampered with the feast. Drugs to make us sleep, and still more to be certain that Amber and I could not use our magic. Thankfully they aren't great poisoners, so they did not dose me thoroughly enough. Even so, it has taken me almost a quarter hour to break the drugs' hold enough to call out, and anything beyond purely mental magic is still beyond me.*

"Okay, do you know who it was, or what they want?"

*I know it has something to do with the southerners, came the reply. I have been able to determine for certain that your cook is involved, and this man.* Tagril sent a mental image of a hard-faced soldier wearing the livery of one of the southern nobles.

*He is unshielded, so I know it is his intention to kidnap Rillan. I am guiding the boy to you through the family tunnels. Be ready.* Tagril's mental voice took on a grim tone. *Get Dancer. I am afraid you will have to use it. I am doing everything I can to wake myself and your guard, but it is taking a lot of time.*

"Understood, my friend. He won't take the child."

Tel moved as quickly as his creaking joints would allow. His first act was to change his nightshirt for a stiff tunic and breeches. Then he took *Dancer* down from its place of honor on the wall above his bed. *Dancer* was a light sword, hardly heavier than a rapier. Tagril's apprentice had forged it three years previously, and the mage himself had enchanted it to be light, unbreakable, and eternally sharp. He had told Blackthorn it was to replace the Protector's blade that had been given up when Devron became Prince-consort, but both of them knew it was really so Tel would still have a weapon he could wield.

He unsheathed the blade and made a few exploratory passes in the air. The sword was a bright bar in the lamplight, and it felt good in his hands. Even with the enchanted lightness, however, he could already feel the strain in his hands and forearms. "Alright, old man," he murmured. "Whatever you do, you'd best do it quickly."

Finally, he opened the chest at the foot of his bed and drew out his tabard. It was black as

the armor for which he was famous, and emblazoned with the fiery sword of the Protector. Pulling it over his head was like coming home after a long journey. Everything was different, but familiar at its core. He sheathed the sword again and belted it around his waist, and set himself before the concealed doorway that led to the family's hidden escape tunnels.

It wasn't long before he heard rapid footsteps in the short hallway behind the door. He reached out and opened the panel beside the fireplace, and was almost bowled over by his grandson, who clung to Tel and quaked with fear.

"Shh, now, Rillan, Grandpa's here," he said. He stroked the boy's hair, and his mouth set in a grim line. "The villain is coming, though, and we need to get ready. Do you understand?"

The boy sniffled, but nodded, and looked Tel straight in the eye. He held up his left hand to display the plain-handled, elegantly balanced dagger that Blackthorn had given him for Midsummer. "I'm ready, Grandpa. I grabbed it on my way out of the room when Uncle Tagril was talking in my head."

"No!" shouted Blackthorn and the boy pulled back like he had been slapped. "No, Rillan. It's good that you are ready, and I know you are brave. But this man is a grown soldier, and if he gets past me you have to do whatever he says, do you understand? Do whatever he says, then find a way to escape later, and come back to us. That's the only important thing. Promise me!"

"I promise, Grandpa," he said. "It doesn't matter anyway; he can't beat you, you're the Black Knight!"

Blackthorn grinned at his grandson's confidence. "I sure hope so, Rillan. But just in case, you remember what I said. Now duck down over there out of the way and leave this to me."

Tel stood square to the entrance of the escape tunnels. He could hear the boy's pursuer now; the soldier was stumbling and cursing the tunnel's low ceiling and sudden changes of direction. Blackthorn took a large ember from the fire with the tongs, and drew *Dancer* with his left hand. As soon as the armsman rounded the last bend in the tunnel, Tel flung the burning brand at his head, and tossed the sword into his right hand.

The man was startled, but got his gloved left hand up to shield his face. Tel could see a few scorched marks in his beard, but most of the embers bounced harmlessly off his thick leather jerkin. Blackthorn had been denied the advantage of a blind opponent, but he had at least stopped any sudden rushes that might have overwhelmed him by sheer strength.

"We don't have to do this," said the man. "I am not going to hurt the boy. Just give him to me, and no one has to die today." His voice was smooth and deep, and there was no hint of fear in it. Why would there be? Blackthorn was an old man who couldn't even stay awake for dinner. "I have the greatest respect for you, Your Grace. I have no wish to fight you."

"You will have to forgive me if I don't put much stock in the assurances of a traitor and a poisoner. So, if you want him, you will have to come and get him." Blackthorn's face took on the mocking smirk he always wore before engaging in battle. Even on his time-worn face it was clearly recognizable.

"So be it, then. It's too bad I couldn't face you before age crippled you."

With those words he launched himself from the tunnel entrance and smashed into Blackthorn's guard. The older man was not surprised by the move, but he was taken aback by the man's strength. Even for his broad frame, the southerner generated tremendous power. Tel immediately began to circle, taking the other's blows at an angle and attempting to snake his much lighter blade over the younger man's guard for some small but telling blow.

Just as Tel had feared when he first unsheathed the sword, his arms began to tire almost immediately. He used his unencumbered left hand to throw anything he could reach, hoping to upset his opponent's balance. The half-full flagon of soup (now too cold to burn, more was the pity) sailed through the air, and an ornately inlaid dressing table slid into the attacker's legs. He batted them both away without opening himself for more than minor cuts from Blackthorn's dancing blade.

As he reached for the blanket thrown over his bed, Tel was struck by a terrible, shooting pain in his left shoulder. The makeshift weapon fell, unused, from numb fingers, and it was all he could do to keep a cry of pain from escaping. His breath was coming in difficult bursts, now, and he was running out of room to run.

The younger man sensed his advantage and began battering Blackthorn's guard at a hectic pace. The massive power he generated was clearly the southerner's primary offensive strength, and it seemed like it would be enough to finish Tel in short order. Blackthorn's retreat was cut off, except in the direction of the cowering Rillan, and he was not going to allow their assailant within sword's length of his objective. He took blow after blow on the flat of *Dancer's* blade, and each time his guard was a bit lower, and a bit slower to return.

In a flash, he realized that it might be possible to use the larger man's own best asset against him. As the other man's curved blade descended again, Blackthorn forced his aching left arm onto *Dancer's* blade in a half-sword grip and caught the blow between his two hands. With a scream torn from the bottom of his lungs, he held off the other's attack without losing his feet. The magically sharp blade cut deeply into his palm, and he felt an awful tearing in his chest, but he stood.

Blackthorn saw the traitor's eyes flick to his unarmored fingers. As Tel had hoped, the bigger man twisted his sword and began to run it down the blade in an attempt to shear off his fingers. As soon as his opponent committed his weight to the new attack, Tel allowed his left arm and shoulder to collapse, and stepped into his attacker. He brought the pommel around in a short, vicious arc with all of his weight behind it and smashed it into the unprotected jaw.

Even though the tactic had worked perfectly, his opponent's skill was almost too much to overcome. He was off balance and dazed, but his guard was already returning to true. Only the strength of Tagril's enchantments saved the day. The magically lightened blade whistled over the half-raised guard in a backhanded cut and bit into the side of his neck. The unnaturally sharp blade sheared through the bones of his spine, and the southerner's head fell next to his body on Blackthorn's rug strewn floor.

Tel followed his opponent to the ground. He collapsed to his knees, his left arm useless, and his weight resting heavily on the hilt of the sword he had stuck into the floor. His pulse hammered in his ears, and every beat was an agony. Blackthorn became aware that Rillan was next to him, saying something that he could barely hear over the rattling of his own breath.

"... I knew it! That was amazing! The other kids say it's all stories, but wait until I tell them you could beat their fathers even now that you are old! I can't wait until I..."

"Yes, yes, Rillan. You tell them," Blackthorn gasped. "Uncle Tagril and your grandmother will be here soon." Every word, every breath was agony now. "Grandpa needs to rest, okay? You just wait here and don't go anywhere until Tagril comes."

The Earl of Monte sagged to the floor and closed his eyes. Almost immediately, darkness claimed him.

When Tagril, Amber, and the two youngest of Blackthorn's Sable Guard came through the tunnels almost half an hour later, they found little Rillan kneeling in the floor with his grandfather's head in his lap. He was crying quietly, and stroking the old man's thin white hair. Amber saw her husband's unmoving chest and stark white face, and her hand flew to her mouth, and a keening sound began deep in her throat.

Rillan raised his chubby little finger to his lips and made a shushing sound. "Grandma, quiet! He beat the bad man, but then he had to rest. If you aren't careful, you'll wake him."

The cry grew to an outright wail as Amber gathered Tel's body to her. Tagril picked up the little prince and drew him away.

"What's wrong with Grandma, Uncle Tagril? Grandpa's just sleeping, isn't he? Isn't he?" The boy's voice grew shrill as he demanded reassurance from the wizard. Tagril could not speak,

but his tear-filled eyes were all the answer Rillan needed. He buried his head in Tagril's mane of black hair and sobbed out his broken heart.

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Tel Blackthorn, Earl of Monte, Protector of the Crown, Savior of the People, and hero of the Great War lay in state in the great hall for a week. His body was spared the ravages of weather and decay by the sorcerous arts of his best friend. The sable guard had, to the last man, blackened their armor until it matched that of the man they had served.

Every noble, save the one to whom the kidnapper owed allegiance, came to the castle in the mountains to mourn the death of the fallen hero. The kings of neighboring Pryan and Malfedor attended, their courts clad all in black. Even the long-absent Angelique came, carried on eldritch winds.

Blackthorn was interred in his armor, with *Dancer* clasped in his gauntleted hands. A great tomb had been raised in a sheltered glade in the mountain slopes near the castle, and the greatest sculptor in the kingdom had already begun work on the monument that was to sit atop it.

A great many people spoke at the funeral, for the Black Knight had touched many lives. Amber did not speak; the famous minstrel had spoken to no one but family since that awful night. She simply wept, and smiled through the tears as Devron told stories of growing up with his father.

The final speaker was Tagril, who had known him longer than any other there save Amber herself. His speech was short.

"Tel Blackthorn stood when his fellow man needed him. He did it because it was not in him to watch an injustice pass unchallenged. He did it no matter what it cost him, and those who traveled and fought with him could not help but try to live up to his example. I will miss my friend, but I know he passed in the way he would have wanted: standing between evil and the helpless. In the end, who among us can hope for a better epitaph than the one earned by the Black Knight?"

"He Stood."

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