

Somber Knight

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This was a short story I thought of one night. I forgot what inspired me... probably a song. Anyways, please tell me what you think :)

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A war between two rivaling kingdom's has raged on for many years now. The war has been going on for so long people can barely remember why it even started. The deep hatred between the two kings of each kingdom has stood strong with their royal bloodline for as long as the war had begun, but their soldiers and people have become hallow inside by the travesties the war has brought them.

"Why, why must this go on?"

Everyone has asked themselves this question, they have even brought it up to their kings, but they won't listen no matter how hard their people plead.

"We shall not give up my people! Our soldiers are risking their lives for the benefit of our kingdom, for our survival! Trust me, we will be successful, so do not fret"

Those are the words each king has repeated over and over again to their people.

"My dear knights, my warriors, my champions. Though you fight hard, you fight bravely, and you fight for a good cause. Remember that when you slay the enemy on the battlefield. Though some of you may be sacrificed for this endeavor, your sacrifice shall not be forgotten! You will live on in the hearts and the soul of our new empire!"

Those are the fake words of encouragement the kings say to their loyal soldiers.

It was a middle of the week when the next battle happned. Every knight from both sides is fatigued and weary from this never ending war. They have become hallow on the inside, not knowing why or what they are fighting for anymore.

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Is it for the benefit of the kingdom?

Or is it because they will be rewarded handsomely?

Do they fight for honor?

Or glory?

Or do those traits even matter anymore?

That is what one knight, Gareth Lancer, asks himself every night and day.

Gareth was preparing himself for today's battle, he once again read the letters his wife, Cecilia, wrote for him.

My dearest Gareth,

It has been far too long since I last saw your face, far too long has it been since I heard you whisper sweet words into my ear. The children are also worried about you. They ask me every day when they will get to see their father again, and our newest child Simon, he hasn't even seen you yet has he? It's a shame you could not be there for his birth, he is a beautiful child. Simon looks just like you, and he gets along well with Mary and Joseph. Joseph seems to try to take your place as the man of the household you know, he is growing into a fine man, just like you. And Mother keeps mentioning about how Mary is looking just like me, except she has those strong grey eyes like you do. I can still picture them now, I remember you saying you didn't much care for your eyes, you thought of grey as an ugly color, but Gareth I always saw beauty in those eyes. Although they are grey, they are full of hope and courage. At least that is what I see.

This letter is starting to be really long isn't it? I'm mostly rambling now, silly meâ

But I truly do miss you, and never forget that your family is waiting for you here. I cannot wait to see you again my love.

Until we meet again, I will always love you.

-Cecilia.

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These letters give Gareth hope that maybe one day he will see his family again.

"Come Gareth, we're moving out!"

But that hope is shattered by the endless battles he must face. Those grey eyes Cecilia says had strength and courage, had grown to be more of eyes that wield sadness and guilt. Once again, on a plain, rainy battlefield, Gareth fights alongside his comrades against the "enemy."

One by one Gareth takes care of each opponent quickly; he is one of the best knights in his unit. After taking out his fifteenth or so foe, he began to battle another one. This one was very skilled; they were pretty much on the same wavelength of both strength and expertise. Both of the knights rushed at each other and clashed their blades against one another, but both of the swords broke almost instantly. They both threw their broken swords on the ground and started going at it with their fists. They both eventually knocked each other's helmets off, but that did not change anything. They still were going at it, just the two of them mercilessly beating each other as their comrades in the back were murdering each other.

They both stopped for a while to take a short breath. Gareth looked away from his enemy to see all the chaos around him. He took in almost everything on the battlefield. People getting stabbed right and left, friends and foes standing, and then falling. One minute someone is up and fighting strongly, but then gets cut down, like they were just an afterthought.

Gareth then looked back at his foe and began thinking.

Why are we still fighting? This isn't going to change anything. This person he was fighting, through their duel he could see them becoming good friends if it weren't for this dreaded war.

The enemy knight charged at Gareth and tackled him to the ground. The warrior started to pummel Gareth with quick punches to his face. Gareth reached for something, and grabbed a blade lying right next to him. Gareth grabbed the blade and quickly thrust it into the knight's chest. The knight stopped punching Gareth, and slowly fell off his body. The knight slowly died as Gareth got up whipping the blood from his own face. Gareth gave one last look to the knight as he went to go find another foe.

"Retreat!"

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The enemy began to retreat; it was a victory for Gareth's unit! But unfortunately nothing changed. The next day will be the same, and maybe Gareth will die tomorrow as well.

Gareth once again looks at the battlefield and notices all of the corpses that lie there. Some were friends; others were foes Gareth had taken down himself. Gareth then notices something peculiar though.

It was far away, but Gareth ran towards it wondering what it was. It was a flower. A simple white flower bloomed in the middle of this battlefield that had become nothing more than a gravesite. It was untouched, untainted, and pure. Gareth then thought of his beautiful wife, Cecilia. He began to think about her and his children. His older son Joseph, his daughter Mary, and the child he had not seen yet, Simon. Gareth could not help but start to cry at the thought of this, but it was both tears of sadness, and yet happiness at the same time. It gave him hope that someday he would see his family again.

Gareth, sitting there on the battlefield, began to pray. Gareth was not a spiritual man, especially after what he has been through, but he needed the excuse for someone or something out there to give him strength as he made a promise to himself.

"God, if there is one or if there is any sort of deity or whatever, here me! Please, let me live!"

He promised himself that he would make it home, and see his beautiful family again.

When Gareth fell asleep that night, he dreamt that he was his younger self, and there his wife was, standing by a tree with a beautiful grin upon her face. She smiled and said, "Welcome back Gareth" young Gareth ran towards her and hugged her.

The next morning, he went onto the battlefield with that image in his mind.

And so the somber knight continued to battle, but with hope and courage once again in his eyes.

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