

## To Kill a King

Saturday, 08 November 2008

Last Updated Saturday, 08 November 2008

Breathe.

He couldn't move though it seemed as though he must be lying down. His armour caressed him like a cold unforgiving blanket. His lungs barely moved as the shallowest of breath kept him alive. The rain peppered his face and bare hands, finding a route down past his neck and soaking his liner like the fingers of a stream... yearning for their final resting place.

The crazed images of a sightless mind filled his thoughts. His eyes were sealed shut by muscles unable to execute his commands. All he could smell was destruction. Wood burned. Clothing burned. Flesh burned. The screams haunted his unwilling consciousness. He could hear what sounded like great structures being toppled. Stone, wood and steel collapsed in storms of sound.

He could sense a presence close. He could feel its... evil.

Just... breathe!

Â

~ One hour earlier ~

"Your Honour!" the young man yelled. "Throw me your helm my Lord! Let the heathens believe it is I that led this force! Live Sire! Live to fight another day!"

What did he say? A lifetime I've waited to hear those words. How could today... be the day?

Releasing the strap of the ornate headpiece, their eyes met. Not another word passed. It was a silent acknowledgement of regret and respect for the young knight. Near the chapel, the remaining Grails held steadfast. Only three stood of the score that had come. At the river, the garrison had broken. Men fled... and were cut down. The Daughters of the Lady had all been captured. Bound like animals... by animals.

Â "To me... to me!" the young knight called.

What was his name?

The knight rode directly away from his liege. The few remaining Realms turned to join him. A trumpet blew. One final lance had formed. His family's crest flapped ravenously on the banner in the young man's hand.

The beast's foul heads turned... two sets of eyes searching for the horn. Its master uttered a strange command in some long forgotten tongue and it took to the sky but an instant before the knights could reach it. Heading for another target, they rode on as hard as they could. The beast above stopped them short. Fire and gas from its cold heart ended the charge.

Â I cannot allow it. Standing... here... watching everything die. I cannot allow it.

SteppingÂ forward, drawing the Blade of Ages, he screamed at the creature. But before it reeled, something grabbed him from behind. Turning, he looked straight into the eyes of the Hand of the Lady.

"Live... but be dead," she whispered. He fell to the ground... pleading for the right to fight. His eyes closed.

There was nothing.

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Â He remembered the day she appeared to him. 'Hear these words' she had said, 'for they are your destiny.'

He sipped from the cup and his whole world changed. He believed he would hear those words that very day. He expected to hear them the next, and the next, and the next... but they never came. He'd forgotten all about them until this afternoon.

'Live to fight another day... and you shall save the world', she had said. But when he finally heard them... his heart had nearly stopped.

Â HE WILL COME

My Lady... so long it has been since I have heard your voice. I have longed for it so...

Why will he come to me?

HE MUST

Will he kill me?

YOU ARE DEAD

ONLY THE DEAD COULD KILL HIM

FAREWELL GREAT KING

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The dragon landed just beyond the newly ruined chapel. The white knights' lances were buried in the ground... sporting their owners' heads.

The army of this king had fallen so easily. Khorne's path of destruction continued under the merciless hand of the Chosen Warrior Lord.

Faithful bodyguards had discovered the king's body. What a naive attempt to protect him, he mused, putting the crown on some simpleton.

Â Walking up to the limp body, hanging in his men's arms, he removed his helmet to gloat over his prize.

"Where is his weapon?" he demanded.

"None was found master!" one of the men reported back.

He bent down to look for himself. Finding nothing he stood back up and found himself staring into the open... and very alive eyes of the dead king. A smile crept across the man's face as the glowing scarlet blade found its way deep into the neck of the Chaos Lord.

The King knew that this army would now break... unable to control itself as it self-destructed from within. He closed his eyes, as his neck was snapped, and beheld the pinnacle of beauty beckoning him to come to her.

The land would now have a chance as his destiny had foretold. He was going home.

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