

## The Quest's End

Contributed by Lady Tiranth  
Friday, 23 September 2005  
Last Updated Saturday, 24 September 2005

She trudged through the forests as the thick fog swirled at her feet. She was tired, the shield strapped to her back was getting heavier by the day as was the sword at her hip. It was getting hard to even keep her feet moving but she had to. If she did not then she would never be accepted as the heir, despite her father's decree. She brushed a few strands of mouse brown hair that had come loose from the tie, from her face and paused. This forest was so still, she was beginning to wonder if there was any life here at all. Then a sound reached her ears. She cocked her head to the side in curiosity. Was that? Yes, the sound of a horse.

The thud of its hooves in the dirt, the jangle of bridle as it shook its head with a snort. Her initial elation at finding another being in this place dimmed quickly. What if the rider was not one she would want to encounter. The young knight quickly slipped behind a nearby tree, hiding in the roots that rose from the ground, waiting for rider and horse to pass. She peeked around the tree. The mists seemed to part as the horse approached. She was amazed by the great size of the beast. The eyes of the animal seemed to glow with a strange light. The rider looked to be another knight. As they came closer she could see the barding on the horse was forest green, decorated with golden leaves. The armour of the knight was also green. Her eyes widened in surprise, could this be him? She sucked in a breath as the rider pulled his mount to a stop. The helmeted head turned left, then right, finally it seemed his gaze settled on her hiding place.

A voice drifted from the depths of the helmet, deep and commanding. "You seek the Grail?"

It must be him. The guardian of the grail, the one she must challenge before she could drink from the holy relic. She gathered her courage and stepped out from behind the tree. "Yes..I seek the Grail."

Without a word, the Green Knight raised himself from the saddle, swinging his leg over the back of his great steed, dropping to the ground. The horse, pawed the ground, shaking its great black head, snorting. The Green Knight began a slow steady walk toward her, drawing his sword without a sound. She watched in a trance as he raised the sword, glowing with a strange green light. Somehow she managed to the first swing, drawing her own sword at the last possible instant. The ring of steel on steel drew another snort from the Green Knight's steed, as it raised up on its back legs, front hoofs kicking at the air before it landed once again with a thud to stand absolutely still. "None

shall pass," came the ethereal voice of the Green Knight.

"I will," she said through gritted teeth, leaning to the side, releasing the taller knight's blade, causing him to fall forward. She swung her sword aiming for his now exposed back but with nimbleness that surprised her he blocked the blow. This time however the Green Knight did not lock blades with her. The two fighters traded blows with lightening swiftness. She knew she had to end the battle quickly, for she could not keep pace with him for much longer, not as tired and hungry as she was. She ducked under an incoming swing and charged forward, surprising the unearthly knight, the tip of her sword finding a chink in his armour. She felt the blade pierce through flesh and bone. The Green Knight took a step back, wrenching the sword from her hands. He stance was not that of a man who had just received a fatal wound but that of one freshly ready for battle.

Everything was still once again. The only sounds she could hear were that of her own ragged breath and her heart thudding in her ears. The Green Knight started towards her again. She stood ready to dodge any blow he might try to deal but all he did was walk slowly past her. He remounted his steed and with a slight tug on the reins the animal turned, walking back from the direction it had come.

"No, wait!" she cried, breaking into a run, somehow barely keeping up with the seemingly slowly moving horse. Soon she lost sight of him in the swirling mists. "Wait!" she called again but to no avail. She was alone again.

She fell to her knees in the dirt. Had she come all this way only to fail? Bright light exploded around her, causing her to throw up her arm to shield her eyes. In the light she could make out a form. The light faded a little, revealing the form was a female, clothed in the purest white robes, hair flowing down her back in a golden cascade. Tiranth stood, taking a step towards the new comer. "Who...who are you?"

The woman smiled but did not answer. She turned and lifted a golden chalice from a stone that young knight did not remember seeing there before. The beautiful woman stepped forward, bare feet making no sound, and held out the chalice. "Drink Tiranth of Acadia. You have proven your valor before me. Drink."

Tiranth reached out and took the Grail, raising it to her lip she took a drink of the liquid that appeared within. Warmth flooded through her body, chasing away the weariness and hunger. Strength returned to her journey weary limbs. She looked up at the Lady, then fell to her knees before her deity. "I pledge my allegiance to you and the lands you hold sacred. I would give my life to protect the ideals you embody," the words poured from her lips like water from a spring. She continued, pledging her body and soul to the Lady.

The Lady reached out with a snow white hand and took the Grail from Tiranth, smiling all the while. Then in another blaze of blinding light was gone. When she could see once again, she found that she was no longer in the mist enshrouded wood. Instead she was laying beneath a huge pine tree in soft green grass. A noise to her left drew her attention and she gasped in wonder. There looking at her expectantly was the most magnificent creature she had ever beheld. It stepped closer to her, nuzzling her stomach. Tiranth sat up, tentatively reaching up a hand to stroke the silver muzzle. Black tipped wings flared out from its shoulders, as it shook its head, the black mane tossing from side to side. She laughed, the pegasus seemed to be telling her to get up. "All right, all right," she said, standing. "Will you carry me home noble pegasus?"

The great head nodded up and down. Then it turned to the side, encouraging her further to mount. Soon Tiranth was soaring with the clouds, on her journey home. She wondered as they flew what the others would say when she returned. She knew that most of them expected that she would die on her quest. She smiled and patted the pegasus's neck. "Well, I'll certainly show them a thing or two."