

# How the Druchii Stole King's Sleep

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darkness. Slow hours pass as the demons of our world dance freely on the plains. Unchecked they rule their greatest friend, the night. The pitch black makes them grow bold as they venture from their hiding. No wise men witness their passing and none know their deeds. One might even believe they are not here safe for their devilish prints on virgin snow the next morrow: gone as twilight breaks the curse. The night belongs to the tainted ones, young ones, and their frigid worlds. The cold seems to seep through every crack this night, both here as in your heart. But let piety warm you. Believe in Her and Her divine servants. Know that they -as the trees- slumber but can be woken by faith.

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At the storm-ragged shores of our fair land, there lies a village not unlike this one. It was sheltered inside the dunes of the shore. The weeks before the long night, the villagers knew from experience that it would be a harsh and cruel one. The raw wind tore at their hovels with unyielding strength. The furious waves thrashed against the jagged rocks, frustrated as its malice was just out of reach of the village. It had already claimed the sloops of the fishermen but its clammy hands reached out for more, spraying the shore with salty foam. The furious gust brought a tempest of snow and ice to the village. The unfortunate huddled in their hall where they feasted upon cod, fresh seaweed and dark bread, still warm from the oven. The elder even brought a keg of mead over from a neighbouring town. To them it was a true feast to honour the holiness of the day. As the children filled the hall with solemn chants to praise heroes of old, their families drank from the mead, seated around the great hearth where a mighty fire warmed the hall. Heartened by song and drink, steeled by their faith, laughter soon ringed through the hall.

Off the coast however

the dark fey stormed towards the unsuspecting village. They used the dark of the night to cover their approach as they came for plunder and slaves. They did not mind the cold as their hearts bore ice, their eyes the deep of the sea. Despite the thrashing waves the prows of their feared ships cleaved the water clear. Just in sight of the shore, dangerously close, they halted and launched smaller raider boats. The elements seem to favour the dark as the waves brought their boats quickly in. Their bows grinded to a halt upon the rocky shore. Quick and silent the raiders moved through the village. The empty hovels they looted. The snow however prevented them from burning. Then as sudden as nightfall they bursted into the town hall. First bewilderment set upon the villagers by the unexpected intrusions but then panic arose as they saw the drawn blades and their cruel eyes. There was no escape as the corrupted elfkin surrounded the hall. They were herded outside into the cruel cold by spiked whips and cold steel. Instantly they shivered against the brute cold as they had nothing to protect them safe for clothes they wore. The children cried as they hugged their mothers for warmth while fathers tried to protect them in vain. As they reached the beach, they saw a ponderous boat headed towards them. It was bigger than the beached others and could probably hold them all. The elder saw the uncertainty and fear in their downhearted eyes. With whispers he gathered them round in prayer. Hesitant at first the others soon fell in with the familiar and heartening words. Their pious words angered the dark fey and they lashed out with their whips. The villagers however were now steeled by faith and the pain did not disturb their piety. Just as the big barge arrived, dropping a jagged ramp, the elder led them into a chant. Their pious tones droned inland with the wind. The dunes heard their prayers and beneath the wind-swept cover a force of good stirred. Awakened by the warmth of their piety and need, it rose from the sand upon a mighty and huge steed. Clad in dark green armour which mirrored the otherworld, it quickly charged through the dunes without heed for his own safety. Its hooves thundered through the dunes, alarming the dark ones but in the night and over the trashing of the waves and wind, they could not discern where it came from. Unnerved the black elves drew their cruel crossbows and nervously looked around. Suddenly the spirit broke through the dunes and immediately set upon his foe. The blade shimmered green light as it slew the first one. Bolts flew towards the riders but its divine protected him and the quarrels merely glanced off his armour. A skirmish erupted but quickly it became apparent that the dark fey were powerless before the holy wrath of Her servant. Faced with a spirit they could not harm, the hearts of the dark ones shrank three times. Hunted down they fled to their vessels but few managed to escape the deadly blade. The destrier impatiently trotted through the surf as the last one disappeared in the snowy mist followed by the eerie eyes of the guardian. Minutes past and nothing happened: the hapless villagers staring at their saviour, their hero scanning the seas for foes. The only sound was the waves breaking and the howling wind. Suddenly the spirit turned around, gazed upon each and every villager in turn. His stare seemed to pierce into their souls but it warmed their hearts. The spirit then nodded once and spurned his horse. As quickly as it came to their rescue, it disappeared in the mist. The elder guided them once more in prayer to thank Her benevolence and Her servant. They never felt safer then that King's Sleep.