

Sir Kanteline's Tale

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Prologue

Born in a city of weapon trade was a male child to warlord parents. Shortly after his birth, his warlord clan was attacked and defeated, and he was taken into slavery.

Many years passed and he grew into a strong, vibrant, young man, and he had come into the leader's favor. He took the young lad, still nameless, and began to train him to become the leader of his army and to replace him when he grew too old to lead any longer.

His training went forward, and this child moved on to become a great warrior, and he had much skill. He was unconquerable on the battlefield and learned as much as he could about war. He grew greedy and decided to kill the leader.

He awoke early on the darkest of nights, and prepared his armor and weapons. He slipped on his armor and secured his weapons tightly. He headed toward the tent of the leader, swords drawn. He slinked like a cat, and moved fast. Sliding into the leader's tent he went about his business, removing the leader's head.

He slipped back out and, just as he got back to his tent, the guards found the dead body. The camp was thrown into grief, and he fled the camp for fear of losing his life. He moved quickly and quietly out of camp, before the sun rose.

He hoped never to see any of those people again, except on the field of battle.

Chapter 1 :

It was a small place, which had been ruins for many years prior to the Great Wars. People had slowly begun to move back in after the wars calmed down to mere quarreling. It had only one inn, being as small as it was, and a couple of shops which were not frequented much. This was a small town being rejuvenated from scratch, and not much money flowed into it from outsiders, since they almost never came.

A small family, which had no business and was barely getting by, had chosen this place because they could get a house for free. There was the mother and the father, as well as their two children. They lived a happy life in this small town, days went by for them like seconds. Except for rainy days, which didn't come with much rain.

This was all that made up this lovely town. It began to rain one night, but that didn't seem too strange, until it picked up and the winds could be heard howling. The rain plopped onto the straw roofs of this town, tearing at them like ravenous beasts. The water ran along the roof, much of it seeping through onto the occupants. The wind ran around in circles howling louder and with more fury than wolves.

The poor family of four cowered under their straw roof, hoping it would hold up. The parents were comforting their children with words. The wind howled louder and the door

burst open, exposing a looming shade just outside. It moved quickly, its eyes flashing as it stepped up to the door and inside. It was large and shaped much like a man, bulging with muscles from tiresome work. It flowed like cloth in the wind, and it was apparent it was wearing a robe. Their candle flickered up to a brighter light and his dark black robe could be seen, covered in mud and coated in dry blood. He was tall as an oak, and as sturdy as well. He had two swords strapped at his side, one to his right and the other to his left. A bow was hanging on his back, attached to a quiver of arrows. His hood was up hiding his face and what race he may be. He looked human, but was as tall and strong as a giant might be. The children cowered away from him, and the parents looked frightened as well. He leaned against the door frame then collapsed, fresh blood coming from in his robe.

The family just stared at him for a time, not sure what to do. The parents decided to treat his wounds and went over to him, lifting him from the ground as high as they could to put him on a table. The mother got all of the cloth for bandages, and the father his whiskey. The father cleaned the wounds using his alcohol and the mother bandaged each cut. The storm died down and the clouds receded, leaving a lovely day for the morning.

A few weeks passed before the man awoke in a bed in the small hut. He was surrounded by townsfolk and their curious children. He began to sit up, but a sharp pain in his side forced him to remain down. "You should get some

more rest. You've been out for weeks," the mother said.

"I must get up and continue to fight," the man replied, trying to get up again.

"You can't fight in that condition."

"I will because I must. My men need me on that field," he said, biting down hard and sitting up.

"What field?"

"The one due east about an hour away. We've been fighting for months against the Arayons."

"There has been no one in that field except corpses for three days. They're all dead," piped in the mayor of this community.

"Aye, I saw it with me own two eyes," said another man.

"That can't be. We were winning and all the plans were right there. No one could have messed it up," the man said, sounding desperate for their survival.

"I'm sorry, but theys all be dead. No question in it," the other man said.

"But.....but.....," the man said, then he stood, wincing a little as he did so. His face turned to a warrior's stone, no emotion left showing. "I must go and be sure they are no more. I will identify each one and be sure we lost." With this he stepped through the curious crowd and headed off to the field, trailed by an orphaned boy about 15 years in age.

He walked onto the field, where corpses were strewn, and glanced at each one, marking that name off of his mental list. The orphan standing next to him began rocking on his heels. He got to the last two names, and only had one body left of his side. He frowned with anger dancing in his eyes and only one thought crossed his mind,...* betrayal* .

“May death and pain come to your family, and my swords unto your heart Vile Brotu,” he said to the one who betrayed him, even though he wasn’t around.

The little child looked at him and said, “Who’s Brotu?”

“He has betrayed me and his brethren, and he will pay for that.”

“Ooohhh. Who’re you?”

“I have no name but may be called Vile Bruneye.”

“Hmmm....Bruneye, ay? I can call you that. I’m Murr.”

“Where are your parents? Shouldn’t they have kept you home?”

“I have no parents,” he said with a frown on his face.

“You should head back to your caregivers. I have a traitor to kill and this graveyard is no place for a child.”

“I’m not a child, I became a man two years ago. I’ll come with you, you could use some help tracking him.”

“I need no help, but since you have no family you may come, just tell your caregivers good-bye. You might never return.”

“Aye,” he said as he ran back to town. He returned a short time later with a little bit of food for the road. They took the food and headed off in the direction Murr led them.

They traveled north for a few days till they came upon a camp in the evening. This region was sparsely covered in trees, small patches were spread apart by only a few yards. These places had become homes to thieves, as well as resting-places for unlucky travelers. Vile Bruneye entered one of these patches to converse with a man inside. This man was much shorter than Vile Bruneye, only about 6’ tall. He had a patch over one eye, and the other looked as though it needed one too. His nose stuck out and made him look like a rat. Two daggers were strapped at his waist, and some vials of poison poked out of his pockets. He spoke with Vile Bruneye for hours on end, giving him explicit instructions on how to get to where he may find the Arayons who killed his people.

Vile Bruneye walked back out of the clump of trees and approached Murr. “We must head north for three more days, then west for four. There is a tower there which may hold Vile Brotu,” said Vile Bruneye. Murr agreed to keep track of their progress and remind him when they needed to make their turns.

They started walking north and made it all three days, Vile Bruneye stopping them so he could hunt only once. There was a large boulder marking where they were supposed to turn at, but it was growing late so they made camp. Vile Bruneye took off his bloody robe, exposing his shiny armor

to daylight for the first time in many years. He laid his robe out and folded it into a pillow, the orphan not having a bed, Vile Bruneye let him use his robe, before laying down to sleep on the ground himself.

He awoke in the middle of the night when Murr awoke him after a bad dream. He sat up and said, "You should get some sleep, Vile Brotu is no man to laugh at. We must be well rested before facing the most powerful mage in my army."

"But...I can't sleep. I keep having bad dreams. This man in all black keeps throwing things at me, and swinging a large sword when I least expect it. Every time I close my eyes, he's there waiting for his next swing," said Murr, trembling.

"Next time you close your eyes, just fight him back. Don't let him rule your dreams. Take out a sword and cut him into little tiny bits. You need to conquer your fear before you can conquer people in battle."

"I...I'll try," Murr said with a shaky voice.

They both went back to sleep, Murr making it through the night, still having trouble sleeping but making it to sleep for much longer amounts of time. They awoke the next morning before the sun and headed west for the tower. It seemed to take a long time for them to make each step. It had been a long sleepless night for Murr, and he was walking slower than usual.

"What's wrong?" asked Vile Bruneye.

“Nothing, I just didn’t get much sleep last night. I did much better after waking you up though,” replied Murr.

“Just remember, there’s nothing to be afraid of in your dreams. You have all of the control in your dreams, just fight the bad ones off.”

“I try, but they are stronger than me.”

“You must make yourself stronger than them, then you will be able to do anything against them. Conquer your dreams and conquer yourself.” With this they slowly picked up their pace, but not very much since Murr was still worn-out.

Four days passed, Murr catching up on his lost sleep as he got better and better at defeating his dream opponents. On the fourth day, they reached the tower. It was a long, tall, thin tower. Barely standing with its many stories. It stretched up into the sky, not seeming to ever end. Its gray color tended more towards a black than a gray. The stones at the base rested in a small swamp, seeming to waver as shadows beneath murky water. The very peak of the tower was a spire with a pole extending above, and a torn, faded banner waving from it.

They walked up to the base of the tower, knee deep in water. They walked around in search of a door which turned out to be on the other side of the tower. They were large double doors, hung on rusty hinges, and made of aged wood. Vile Bruneye pushed on the doors, but they didn’t move very far, they were locked. He stepped one step back and ran his

shoulder into the door, splintering it all over the bottom floor.

There appeared to be only two floors this one, which contained the stairway all the way up, and the top floor, which the stairs went up to. It may have at one time been a lighthouse, if such a thing had been necessary in this region. It was dark and dank, like a dungeon, and it smelled of rotting flesh. They stepped into the room, making sure there was no ambush party here. Vile Bruneye approached the stairs, followed by Murr. He took the first step on the stone stairs, which went up in a long spiral to the top. They began their trudge up the unending stairway, hoping it actually had a reachable end.

It was a long journey up the flight of stairs, the top not appearing any closer after an hour than when they started. The bottom of course was quite a ways below by now, but the top remained high above their heads. Murr was keeping up with Vile Bruneye, but had to call for a break. They sat on those steps, not feeling any closer to the top.

They reached the end of their short break and began up the stairs again, but didn't walk far before running into the trap door at the top. They both looked confused, but decided to accept their good fortune and go in. They propped open the door, hoping no one was waiting for them. Vile Bruneye stepped out first, being the first one up. He looked around the half-circle room and thought, * only half of this floor is here, how do I get to the rest of it* .

Just as that thought entered his mind, Murr tripped up

the stairs behind him and landed hard on the floor. Vile Bruneeye didn't even look back, since the wall ahead of him had just fallen open. "You found it!" he said.

"I did? What did I find besides the floor?" asked Murr. "The other room! Come on let's find out what's in there!" With this, he walked into the other half of the floor.

It was a half-circle room, completing the floor, and only had two things in it. The first was a sword stuck in the floor. The second was a man, all in black, carrying a book and chanting to remove the sword from the floor.

Vile Bruneeye's eyes flamed with anger and he yelled, "Vile Brotu, you shall pay for your betrayal! Prepare for combat or be slain in dishonor."

"Good to see you again brother. I am much more powerful than you and I suggest you leave without me having to throw you down the stairs," Vile Brotu retorted.

"We both know that a craven rough-hewn hedge-pig, such as yourself, is no match for me!"

Vile Brotu chanted quickly in a magical tongue, "Sorru Chakra Femla!", a fireball rushed toward Vile Bruneeye, who dove off to the left drawing both swords in the blink of an eye. He rushed Vile Brotu with fire in his eyes, but didn't get there in time. "Shulak Comra Formine", Vile Brotu vanished in a flash of light.

Vile Bruneeye cursed under his breath, not letting his words carry beyond his mouth. He sheathed his swords and walked to the one in the ground.

It appeared to be made of gold, but gold was too weak for a normal sword to be forged in. He grabbed it by the handle and pulled it up, cutting the stone floor as it came out. * This sword must have been forged by God to possess such a power* , he thought.

- Nay. Twas an angel which forged me by God's command* .

Vile Bruneye could hear words in his head, which seemed to come from the sword, but swords can't think or talk, where did it come from?

- I can think all I wish to think, and being a sword won't stop that. Drop your other weapons and I will serve as your blade. I will guide your hand for more accurate swings, and slice into your opponents armor with the swiftness of the wind* .

Vile Bruneye, slightly confused, drew both of his swords and dropped them, placing the thinking sword into one of his sheaths

- Ye should go and get my companion. She's a shield and will defend you well* .

"We're going to get a shield, Murr."

“Why? Where? How do you know there is one to get? Why do you need one now, you’ve never needed one before?”

“This sword has magic to it and has told me where I may find it. We shall go, for I am sure Vile Brotu seeks it as well, he was after the sword and therefore must know of the shield too.”

“Fine, where is it?”

“Across the Desert of Shylim, over the Sister Peaks, past the Tomb of Ariath, and into the depth of the Gaping Maw.”