

One morning while the sun was still rising, Sir Valor woke up and saw his trainer, Sir Righteous standing in the doorway. "Get up," he said, "it is time."

"Time for what?" asked Sir Valor sleepily.

"It is time for your quest to the Golden City," said Sir Righteous, "I will wait in the courtyard." Sir Valor got out of bed, got dressed and went down to the courtyard, where he saw Sir Righteous standing beside some armor.

"Put it on," he said. So Sir Valor put it on and took up the sword and the shield.

"Now," said Sir Righteous, "Do you see that path?"

"Yes I do," said Sir Valor, "though it's awfully narrow and very rocky and goes into a dark forest, look at that other path it's very wide and smooth and it goes through a meadow."

"Be careful of that wide path," said Sir Righteous, "for it is the Dark Knight's path, stay on the narrow path instead. Even on the narrow path there will be trials, now go."

Sir Valor started off and by sunset, came to the dark forest. He camped just outside the forest that night.

In the morning Sir Valor started into the dark and dreary forest. All was quiet, too quiet but as he got deeper into the forest he heard whispers and chants telling him to turn back. Sir Valor would not be turned back, though he was getting discouraged. Sir Valor then heard the noise of footsteps behind him, he whirled around and saw nothing. Now, Sir Valor was getting quite scared, then, everything fell silent. Sir Valor listened intently, suddenly he heard the footsteps again and they were getting closer and closer, then he heard the most evil voice right in his ear. "Turn around and go back to where you came from," said the voice.

"I will not," said Sir Valor.

"Then you will die here like this one here did," and as the voice spoke Sir Valor looked down and saw a dead body. He gave out a cry and jumped back as the evil voice began to laugh, then, suddenly all was quiet but soon the whispers and chants started up again. Sir Valor ran through the forest as fast as he could but night was

falling and he made his way through the forest by the light of the full moon. In the darkness Sir Valor saw a rabbit, so out came his knife and in a flash the rabbit lay dead. Sir Valor built a fire, cooked the rabbit and ate ravenously.

The sun was high in the sky when Sir Valor woke, a powerful man with polished, black armor was standing above him. Sir Valor's hand quickly went to his sword. "Are you the Dark Knight?" he asked.

"I am," said the man, "and I mean to finish you off." Sir Valor shivered for that man had the most evil voice. Sir Valor knew he had heard it before, suddenly, his thoughts were broken, for the Dark Knight drew his sword and aimed it right at Sir Valor's heart. Sir Valor drew his sword, as the Dark Knight thrust his sword down, Sir Valor swung his sword to meet it and made the Dark Knight thrust his sword into the ground beside him. Sir Valor sprang to his feet and there was a vicious battle that followed in which Sir Valor saw an opening and ran his opponent through. The Dark Knight gave a terrible scream and fell to the ground, dead. Sir Valor ran as fast as he could, though he didn't know why.

Something loomed in the distant fog, Sir Valor couldn't make out what it was though. Sir Valor walked closer and saw that it was a castle. The castle had grand walls and towers yet, it had a gloomy feel. As he got closer to the gates he saw a man come out of the castle. The man motioned to the guards at the gates and they opened them. The man looked very jolly and had a handsome face, he went over and greeted Sir Valor.

"My name is Lord Pleasure," he said. "Why don't you come into my castle and stay a night or two." So Sir Valor willingly went with the man into his castle.

After a pleasant dinner, Sir Valor was led down a hall, with many tapestries of pleasing scenes. Soon the servant and Sir Valor came to a door with jewels carved into it. The servant opened the door and inside the room there were marble walls, a marble floor and a marble roof. "This is your room," the servant said as he left Sir Valor to marvel at the place. In the room there was a single bed, an elaborate bed stand and on the bed stand a simple candle. Sir Valor crawled into the bed and fell asleep.

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It was the middle of the night when Sir Valor woke up, he sat up and listened. He could hear voices from another chamber. He grabbed the candle and went down the hall. He stopped at an especially colorful tapestry of some little children playing at a fair. He held his candle up to the tapestry and on it appeared the Dark Knight but now his helmet was off and he looked even more evil. Sir Valor drew back and dropped the candle, it extinguished on the stone floor. Now he could see nothing and what was worse, he didn't know his way through the castle at all. He stood there rooted to the spot, he didn't dare make a sound for the fear that something evil would hear him. Sir Valor stood there for nearly an hour, suddenly he saw a light coming around the corner. Sir Valor looked for a place to hide but there was none, besides, even if there was, he was so afraid he wouldn't have been able to move. There he stood, the light came closer and closer and then around the corner came, a dove. Its feathers were as white as snow and it glowed so much that it lit up the whole hall.

"My name is Truth," said the dove, "and I have come to set you free, it won't be easy though."

The dove took off and Sir Valor followed it. Suddenly a person jumped between Sir Valor and the dove. It was the dark knight, in his hand he held a torch which he put in a bracket on the wall.

"Your alive!" Sir Valor exclaimed.

"Yes," said the Dark Knight, "and my shoulder is healing well, no thanks to you."

The Dark Knight suddenly drew his sword and before Sir Valor could react, he was coming down with his first blow. Sir Valor jumped to the side quickly and the Dark Knight's sword hit the stone floor, which made a sound that echoed throughout the whole castle. Sir Valor drew his sword but now in one of the Dark Knight's fortresses he was no match for the Dark Knight. The Dark Knight had Sir Valor up against the wall. Suddenly the torch went out and everything in the room was plunged into darkness, everything that is except Sir Valor and Truth. Only Sir Valor could see Truth and for him Truth lit up the whole room. The Dark Knight stumbled around in the darkness, Sir Valor saw this as pretty funny and would've laughed had his circumstances been different.

Truth took off again and Sir Valor decided to follow.

“How was the torch extinguished?” Sir Valor asked Truth after a while.

“I saw you were in danger so I went over to the torch and flapped my wings as hard as I could,” Truth said, “We are now in the courtyard. When you get to the gate, slay the guards and then scale the gate, farewell.”

Sir Valor watched as Truth’s light got farther and farther until it disappeared over the horizon. As Sir Valor stared at the horizon he realized the sun was rising and he would soon be detected, Sir Valor quickly started toward the gate. At the gate the guards were sleeping, Sir Valor killed both of them, then he started to climb the gate.

“Prisoner escaping!” shouted the watch. Sir Valor nearly jumped out of his skin, he lost his grip on the gate and fell, then everything went black.

Sir Valor woke up to find a middle-aged, strong and sturdy knight, bandaging his shoulder.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“Lay still, I’m almost finished,” said the man, “by the way, my name is Sir Faithful.”

“How did I get here?” asked Sir Valor.

“Well,” began Sir Faithful, “I happened to pass by the castle and wouldn’t have even looked at it, had there not been such a ruckus, then I saw you lying there on the ground, suddenly an arrow whizzed into your shoulder, so I climbed the gate, jumped down, picked you up and because I was desperate, threw you over the gate.”

“So that’s why I have a headache,” Sir Valor said.

“Sorry,” said Sir Faithful. “There, I am done.”

“Thank you.”

“Always glad to help, now go back to the narrow path, it’s just beyond those bushes over there.”

So Sir Valor found the narrow path and started walking again. By nightfall he came to a river and decided to camp on the riverbank.

The next morning Sir Valor found the river as a rushing torrent with a boat tied to a tree in it. Sir Valor groaned when he saw the little capsule, he just knew if he took it, would capsize or fall apart. He finally decided to go upstream to find a safer place to cross. After he had walked about a mile, he came to a place that was calm enough and shallow enough to cross on foot. He stepped into the water and suddenly he found himself over his head in raging, churning water, the light from the sun had made it seem very shallow and only the surface was calm. He struggled to get to shore but could not, so he gave up and despaired. The only movement he made was taking a breath now and then. Soon he heard the sound of a waterfall and knew the end was near. Suddenly Truth entered into his mind and he felt his strength being renewed as he remembered the words of Truth. 'I have come to set you free.' Then Sir Valor found himself flying through the air and he realized that a giant wave had thrown him. Sir Valor landed with a "Thud!" which knocked the wind out of him. Sir Valor was happy to see that he had landed on the other side of the river. As soon as he could breath, Sir Valor got up and continued on his way.

Sometime later Sir Valor came to a great mountain and knew in an instant he must climb it. So he began the ascent, he grabbed rock after rock, it seemed like he would never get to the top. It was starting to get dark, so Sir Valor stopped on a ledge in the mountain and quickly went to sleep.

Sir Valor awoke to the sound of hissing and slithering. The ledge had been another trap of the Dark Knight. One of the snakes slithered across Sir Valor's nose and he saw it's color. It was completely red. He knew it was the Red Dragon snake, the most poisonous snake ever, the venom could kill you in seconds. Sir Valor lay there paralyzed not sure what to do. Then he heard a voice, "Yummy, very delectable." Sir Valor looked up to see Truth hovering above him. He found a power surging through him, like at the river. He jumped up, drew his sword and started to hack at the snakes.

Soon at his feet were ten dead Red Dragon snakes. Then from a cave that Sir Valor had not seen before, came two puffs of smoke. A red dragon emerged from the

cave, this time it was not a snake but a real dragon. The dragon made the first move and spewed fire from his mouth. Sir Valor dodged but the dragon got his sword hand in the flame so he was forced to fight with his other hand. The dragon brought a set of claws down on Sir Valor, he tried to cut off the dragon's foot but the blow only sent it into the ground without a scratch. In a rage, the dragon blew out a huge column of fire and the intensity of the flame made Sir Valor reel back. He went back a step to far and he started falling. Suddenly his fall ceased, his sword was wedged into the ground and he was holding onto it. With one mighty pull he found himself back on the ledge. He looked up and he saw the claws of the dragon were coming down once again. Sir Valor was still holding onto his sword, he gave a mighty pull while rolling to the side and his sword came out of the ground. The dragon's claws hit the ground again, while the dragon got his claws unstuck, Sir Valor jumped up. The dragon was now furious, his eyes turned from green to yellow and he blew a white column of fire. The fire missed its mark and made some of the ledge into lava, which ran down the side of the mountain. The dragon reared up, made ready another set of claws but sank to the ground. Sir Valor had noticed that the dragon didn't have scales on his belly and had run him through. At his feet was a dead dragon. Mysteriously, the dragon turned black and began to take the shape of a knight, it was the Dark Knight, who got up and with a terrible scream, jumped off the ledge.

It was twilight when Sir Valor made it up the mountain. At the top Sir Valor sucked in his breath for there before him was the Golden City. In the darkness it shone with an intense gold light and it's streets and buildings were made of pure gold. Sir Valor was so excited that he almost ran down the mountain but he knew better. Sir Valor started slowly down the mountain.

When Sir Valor reached the bottom a man dressed in white robes and scars on his hands came out of the city.

"Well done Sir Valor, you have reached the end of your quest for the golden city."
The man took Sir Valor by the hand and led him into the gates of the city.