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2010

The Knight's True Tale

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Recommended Citation

Merrill, Travis J., "The Knight's True Tale". *The First-Year Papers (2010 - present)* (2010).

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The Knight's True Tale

Travis Merrill

I was responsible for creating a 12-15 page narrative set in a time period associated with any one of the readings assigned for class. There were specific guidelines such as including a character from the actual text, being historically accurate, including a conflict that grew out of the original narrative, and having an actual historical event included in our narrative. I took on the added challenge of writing my narrative in the poetic form, including rhyme scheme and meter, associated with Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale."

The Knight's True Tale

My breath was pale fire in the smoldered dawn mist, my
falchion stained crimson and a buckler about my wrist. Weak from
a wound by slanderer's steel, still I do persist, grasping the moist
hilt in the palm of leather clenched fist. The sun was veiled, but the
wind blew thick as if a woolen sheet, upon this day we spar a duet
of foes, the wretched Moors and the cursed heat. My heart
flickered wildly like a burning wick in a soft vernal breeze. Try I
might to hold them steady, my hands trembled as if ill by disease. I
had slain my first man just thrice dawns before and onto you I
promise and do assure. The virginal kill is not the marvel told in
fable or word of folklore; as my saber cast its gory spell, I went
rigid to the core. In youth a lad of purity was I. The sight of a
sparrow's broken wing brought tears for me to cry. Now I see a
mangled man butchered like a fly and my eyes are vacant wells:
barren and bone dry.

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Fear lingered laden in the musty morning air, yet crossed was my soul and to the Lord I did swear; to trek the lands from here to there and in Christ's name declare. Beneath a chapel tall and arched, swore to leave dear Gloucester for distant lands of dark. To follow the gilded crown of Richard; the one deemed The Lionheart. Upon a ship of oak we sailed forth upon the sapphire sea. I, a young English chap, now part of God's divine army. The voyage was a long and dreary trip, so I will keep its fable brief. Hold your droppings until you reach the deck, is solely the motif. Not long after breaching land, did we cross our enemy. It was there I lost my innocence and became a killer at Acre. Now I find myself on the brink of battle, my purity all forgotten. The time has come to reclaim this holy land that Saladin has rotten.

Earth and blood soil my sight; an ill-faired omen before a fight, but true to my heart is my father's insight: thrust ye blade with all ye might! Droplets glazed armor like the abbey's stained glass, red rain trickled upon chainmail like water upon grass. Beneath my helm I mutter a prayer that will perhaps be my last, I whisper to live on to greet good morrows sun and the next holy mass. Knights mounted steeds ashen and white, the shine of their suites cutting the mist with knives of light. The flame of battle was near to ignite; how I yearned to be knight. Archers in the rear tickle their twine, praying to pluck with precision that's fine. If

upon this day the sun did shine, a cloud of arrows would craft an eclipse divine. We Christian soldier's crouch in a crevasse below, a moat of silver flooded with men in rows, as we wait to ascend the wall of our foe, the sky is crowned with a wreath of crows. I had marched across bleak pastures just the other week, and saw these winged shadows feasting on corpses, dining with their beaks. But one mustn't cower in the cloak of death as the code does clearly plea; a knight must live by honor and always for glory. Then came the roar of the Lionheart as he led his faithful squad. "In the name of God" the King did cry in a violently beautiful ballade. Just then appeared the solace sphere peaking its auburn crest, it was then I absorbed the presence of the Lord, and beat twice upon my chest.

The sands of Jaffa were a burden to tread, eluding arrows and bodies of the dead. But as Richard on a horse of pearl led the charge ahead, my soul was assured, upon this day I mustn't have nay to dread. Quivers cascade from above in a flurry of dire peril; through the air of the sky echoed demise and cries of war carol. My vision was keen through my steely screen and upon the city wall was narrowed. A lad to my front was impaled in the clear and the footsteps of my dearest comrade ceased at my rear. The barrier of stone appeared to be very sheer but holding true to the code, I feel not any fear. Ducking a blow of a rival blade, deep within my core kindles a satanic tirade; with my crimson red saber, my aid of

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crusade, the poor Moor who lunged at me, I cut and lay he slain.
Yet, another fiend came forth to oppose, he was dark boy with a
face younger than my own. As our fates entwined, the young boy
had froze, the will of God he had imposed so I gutted him too for to
be a mere nibble for the crows. A cartel of foe figures hindered my
path, but they fell to my scepters wrath, and as I laid them to bathe
in bloody bath, I felt the nip of jagged bronze pierce my sacred
swath. Once as a petty child a bee stung me, but this sharp
sensation was a hive times it by three. The wound burnt and oozed
like the phlegm of leprosy and my blood coiled as if bitten by
banshees. It would be untrue if I told to you, that the piercing
arrow did not make me slew, but my father's last breath I heard in
a coo, and in the name of the Lord I still did ensued. I arrived in the
shade of the ominous citadel, as wood ladders rose and valiant
brethren fell. I grasped a pegging of this staircase that went to hell
and towards the enemy's jaws I began to propel. Fending off a
barrage of threats and shivering off blood and cold sweat, in
pursuit of the stony summit still I kept, when a man emerged; a
Moor most barbaric. His hands were that of giants in myth, his
arms were that of tree limbs in width, and he bore no armor for
could not fit; his frame could not be tailored by any mortal
blacksmith. He clasped my arm with an iron grip and from the

ladder my body he ripped. The brute sent me falling into a metallic abyss and as I fell the past my sight did trip.

I was engulfed within a bushel of hay, as my brother and I sparred and played, knights of the king's castle, our most beloved game. It was good morning in Gloucester town and beneath the orb's blissful rays; our imagination took us to lands of distant and astray. Brother was a knight of courtly love, salvaging the fair damsel in the tower above, atop the haystack he piped a sappy song I had grown weary of, so leap from the bristles and gave to him a playful push and shove. In my eyes a knight was I of King Arthur's rounded table, a famed rider whose name quills scribed in all glorious fables. My sword would be of glow a silver hue and was furnished with hands stable, but atop the hay I wielded nothing but a wooden soup ladle. Beneath thatch roofs we slept at night, but in daylight we would joyously fight, envisioning ourselves as chivalric knights; we simple peasant boy's sole and lone delight. My father paced his fields till the moon was high, tending his crops charily by and by. When the crescent white was aloft in the robe of the sky, he placed his spade upon his shoulder and walked home with a sigh. The soil brown tainted his coarsen skin; he was a man who never failed to mend the crack nor that which was broken. Nimble and sharp were his hands like the prick of a prickled pin. When his repairs were done, the fine craftsmen

always did wear a grin. Yet, it was a scarcity for him to crack a toothy smile, for my ill mother's death had been in a time not to long awhile. Her passing neither evoked a tear nor made the man hostile, he but only strolled to church, and prayed in elegant style. Then amidst a day under a blushing summer sun, my father jaunted up the hill and to him my brother and I did run. In his arms he carried planks of wood that he had carven and had shaved away. The old man had crafted swords with hilts and cast with wooden blades. From his brown and nimble hands he gave to our eager mitts, and to us he spoke with a toothy grin, "come hither my sons" and learn a swordsmen's wits. My father's father once knew a man who rode with the knights of old, and to my father's father his knightly prowess he had told. When my father was a chap, the same age as we, my father's father faired to him the skills he had seen. So, in the glare of the twilight sun, on grass plush and green, our farmer father shared with us his known knightly means.

Upon one dawn my brother rambled on, mischief for to seek, when we strode upon a fair-skinned lass fetching water down by the creek. She had locks of golden silk and a face with blooming cheeks; behind a tree trunk we fled to creep and take a further peek. My heart took wing, church bells did ring, and my brother's sappy songs I wished to surely sing. My brother, catching sight of the lustful flame ablaze behind my eye, stepped back one

pace for his eyes burnt the same blaze as mine. We two brothers, crossed in love, grit our grimy teeth, and from wool britches, the wooden swords, we do unsheathe. Akin in blood, the dual is dubbed, and we brothers unleash our learned knightly ways and clashed with a thud. Bludgeoning and brawling ruthlessly, slashing our fleshy coats, I brought my bother to the stake, claiming him at the throat. Just then my father walked into the shade of leaves of the Forest Dean and with wise eyes gazed upon the silly, savage scene. His temper did not heat and his hands did not churn; he gripped us by the collar quick and led us to the River Severn. He sat us down upon its banks and although parchment he could not read, he told a tale of fighting those of blood akin; the same that thy bleed.

Two brothers named they Palamon and the other Arcite, awake in a tower to rising Athenian morn and for a maiden with locks of gold, the kinfolk begin to fight. From this tower both brethren, in fee and trickery, escape to find they meet again beneath the shade of trees. The brother's feud viscously in a struggle for the maiden, named she Emelye, as Theseus, Duke of Athens, hunts in the evergreen. The great ruler overhears the fools combating for their lovely queen and while in stride Theseus decides to nobly intervene. The brothers confess their love for this maiden fair-haired, which by chance of luck or fate, is Theseus's

daughter for whom he deeply cares. The brothers must assemble an army of one hundred men, the finest that they can, and fifty weeks from the day the brothers will battle; the victor dubbed champion with the trophy of Emelye's hand. For the battle, Theseus erects a magnificent arena with great temples of three: in honor of the god of war, the goddess of love, and the goddess of chastity. Fifty weeks since the day they coiled beneath the trees, Palamon arrives in Athens with a stifling armory. To the temple of Venus, Palamon goes to see, and pleads to Venus, in the name of love, to bring him victory. That very dawn, Emelye arises and to the temple she does flee, to ask Diana to savor her purity, her holy virginity. Upon that day, the end of fifty weeks, Arcite arrives with a force equal to Palamon no lesser and no more meek. He too, seeks the temples for triumph to assure, Arcite enters the Temple of Mars, the great god of war. The following dawn, proceeding a rich and plentiful feast, the time had come for the force of brothers to meet to compete. The battle is a bloody montage, like a dream of which you cannot awake. It was as if the neither army would ever fall or ever be forsake. Then the fight came to a halt in a flash of fickle fate. To the stake Arcite claims Palamons throat, his for to take. Victorious for the moment being, Theseus is triumphant, or so it would seem, but a weeping Venus in the sky is sickened at the sight she has seen. As Arcite rides towards Theseus, Emyle's hand

to him delivered, the earth beneath his horses hooves began to shake and quiver. Thrown from the broad shoulders of the steed, the earth his body does not wither, as Arcite falls to the ground, he lives no longer hither. The descent from grace took his decisive breathe, as he perished with a shiver. Now, Polamon, still blessed with the gift of life, took the hand Emyle and in the name of love, Venus, and holy matrimony, he claimed her as his wife. Thus, all is alike in war and love, but when you coil with your own true blood, the strings of loyalty are frayed and fate is decided by the power up above.

Many moons pasted from my father's tale of a pair of brothers Greek, then by luck or dare say fate, my brother tied the knot with that lass down by the creek. The merry couple strolled to London, business for to seek, leaving me beneath thatch roofs with my father growing weak. No longer could he pace his fields or mend with nimble hands, but his labors I endured and prospered into a man. My frame grew stalwart and strong like the back of a youthful colt. Returning from the pasture, I found my father lying cold, life he did revolt. He lay still as slab of stone beneath the wool of sheep, the trance of his deathly stance, brought a tear for me to weep. He summoned me to his bedside; a mattress stuffed with straw, and slowly from his icy state his spirit began to thaw. His jade eyes veiled to half mass and his mouth hung agate, he

muttered words in a gentle, whispered breathe, that chiseled upon my fate. With his nimble hands of old, before he ascended to the clouds, he grasped me by the collar, drew me close, and cooed the words, "son, make me proud". That night, under a crescent moon I set our home aflame, atop the thatched roof was his body, engulfed in a colossal flaming mane. The fire's flare danced with the stars and tickled the moon's crest, my father's soul I had put to rest with the wooden sword he crafted in my youth, like a cross upon his chest. Hides were packed and strewn across my back, while London obsessed my sight; I heard the word of a traveling man that the Lionheart was seeking men desiring to fight. So in the silent cover of the cape of night, in the abbey I uttered a prayer promptly, and began upon my plight, to make my father proud, and to be dubbed an English knight.

My fall of reminiscence came to cease as I met the Jaffa sands, by the hands of God I was embraced, delivered from death of the heave of a Moor; that barbaric, giant man. To my feet I swiftly flew, although shaken and askew, the plunge to the past had alas fashioned me a warrior anew. I stricken my grasp reborn upon my sabers hilt, as a gust of wind wafting through must have blown astray my guilt. The mercies of man, like a lover, I did suddenly jilt as a deathly flame of desire parched my soul with a thirst for Moor blood spilt. I am not a man of stature small, but the spark in my

soul gave me poise of the tall, as if mounted upon stilts. My frame was draped in blanket of true bravery: an invincibility quilt. I gazed upon the battlefield; a cluttered, collage of force, and within the wrath of war King Richard the Lion Heart fell from his pearly horse. The stallion ran wild in the craze of combat; his eyes cursed with frenzy, trotting over both friend and foe, the steed galloped toward me possessed by insanity. My feet held true, neither faltering nor did they fret, and upon the spooked horse's back I stepped and leapt. Seizing the reins of the crazed charger, I steered him to sanity, and upon his hind hoofs the colt did stand, rearing in glory. Pointing my falchion onto paradise, the blade radiant with sun, as all hooves touched to the earth, the horse began to run. And dash he did, both bold and gallantly; we cut through the battle's haze like a sharp knife does a garden pea. In a stunning onslaught, a bloody array dare say, the tip of my sword took the form of the Lord's looming finger upon Judgment Day. Moors were cast to the sands of the grave beneath my livid blows, their final gasps were haunting howls as they perished to Lucifer's inferno. Now, strive do I to live life humbly as can be, but upon this morn my aura was the epitome of humanly bravery. Arrows that wane like a tempest rain or a vile storm of hail could not impede the bodies of thy steed or mine from hastening to prevail. Tipped edges of hostile steel, my skin they could not peel, for thy hands were blessed nimble,

with spiteful swiftness quite the unreal. Neither anlace nor falchion could blemish me a scar; the will of God was hence my shield, yet I pondered that of the ancient god named Mars. Villains tumbled like ripples on a river when lofty waters cause for it to flood; my demeanor of menace was this lofty water, summoning a flood of blood. Still I rode for the sake of God, embodying the Lord's sheer might. Behind the mask of steely armor my eyes were burning bright. A soldier of the trinity was near thy death; a black and endless night, as a blade of the Moor descended on him with all the villain's might. In haste I guided the pearly steed with reins to the right, and halted the Christian's ill demise with a thrust of Moorish spite. The soldier on foot, peered up to me and questioned, "thy name to cite", I glared from his eyes to horizon a glow and cried out, "ye shall call me THE KNIGHT!"

Amidst the fury of the day, ye vision shall not be blind in spite or nay be put at bay, for as I peered through the muddle of battle, came a test of my fidelity. Upon the pearl horse of dear England's king the reins with palms I cling, but as I saw Richard brawling foe on foot, his stallion I must bring. In gilded stirrups of bronze I clicked thrice upon his side, and parted the seas of the battle yonder, and through the divide on beam of white I did trot and ride. Entering the realm of ground of the great Lionheart, from the shoulders of his fine pearl steed I hastily did dart. "Your horse of

pearl Sire, I deliver for thou to reclaim", then bowed and handed forth to the Lionheart the decorative horses reins.

The battle ceased with the ensuing sun down upon the tropical eve. The poor Moor's surrendered and the will of God claimed his good Christian men triumphant in victory. I removed my helmet, unmasked my face, and was brought to the sand on one knee, as King Richard the Lionheart sauntered unto me. Dismounting his noble steed the color of pearly white, his eyes, wise alike my fathers, glared upon me in an expression stern and forthright. "Sire" was the lone word to my lips I was able to invite, then a slight grin cracked the King's cheeks, a look of pure excite. From a glistening sheath he beckoned a saber the most glorious to ever adorn my sight, and placed its sterling blade atop my shoulder and declared in a roar of exulted height, " By acts of chivalrie, trouthe, and honour and in the name of God, I dub thy a Knight!"

Ventures of far and ventures of wide, I roamed on back a horse of pearl my own; a fabled Knight crusading for God in hope of Christian chapels topping in domes of all holy stone. And now I stood a hardened man wise to the ways of war. While glorious battles came and went, I began to wonder to what it all was for. Soon the lust to kill in spite had vanished from my bones and when

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the crusades came to cease, back to London I did roam to claim a wife and a home. At Kingdom of London beneath the halls of the nobility, I fell for a spell that I could not quell of the Duke's daughter's beauty. We were married at dawn on a mild May morn, our vows to the Lord we'd sworn, and in that very month of May, a son to us was born. As he grows and prospers, his youth I do admire. Vibrant colors of light and bright adorn his every attire and all young lasses of the court his eye they do desire. He is most surely becoming a fruitful and prolific squire. Yet, I catch myself pondering at certain times of day, if growing up a richly lad, is leading my boy astray. So to the canopy of chapels tall, at the abbey of Canterbury, I wish to tell a tale to my son and present a true martyr for him see.

Now as we embark on a journey to Westminster abbey, I do not find it to be of sin for a father and son to have a drink at the tavern, so we enter the Tabard Inn. Here we stumbled upon merry pilgrims with a destination akin, then the cheery host within sat us down and a banquet did begin. He posed his desire to here the tales of folk of near and far, a vote was keyed and all agreed to speak stories unto Canterbury, so no folk needed to spar. After a hearty meal of feast and drink, we pilgrims stood outside the tavern chirping in great guffaw. As we mounted our steeds, the host presented to we, telling us to draw straws. He or she, who

summoned the hay of the largest degree, would be the first to reveal their story. I took a chance and drew the golden hay that first caught my eager glance. To my bliss I found this, straw like a chip off a shattered lance. All upon this pilgrimage gave to me their ear, my father and my past paraded admits my mind as I spoke clear for all who wished to hear. I was to speak the words spoken to me on the banks of the River Severn, posed on the green of grass. Peering into the eyes of my son, I finally spoke alas, "here is a tale of joye and greet solas".