

KNIGHTS

"The Blade in the Boulder" (Pilot)

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

A gem-encrusted GOBLET is thrust into the air.

KING GAFFAN (O.S.)
To Sir Darwin Dagonet, Knight
Commander of the Pointed Table!

Pull back to reveal KING GAFFAN, well-fed and jovial as he toasts SIR DARWIN DAGONET (Jason Isaacs), who sits tall in polished armor.

KING GAFFAN (CONT'D)
For years, Sir Darwin has served
Ironhill faithfully. He's slain
dragons who burned our crops and
dodged our taxes.

A group of knights sits at a table before the pulpit. Darwin winks at a hungry younger knight: his son, DWAYNE. He beams.

DWAYNE TALKING HEAD

DWAYNE
Sir Darwin. A fierce warrior. The
epitome of chivalry. I guess it
runs in the family.

BACK TO SCENE

KING GAFFAN
Today, we celebrate his triumph
over the Peasant Rebellion!

On the other side of the king, his conspicuously evil vizier, the ARCHMAGUS, spikes the camera. He gestures for it to turn back to the knights and, as if compelled, it does.

It lands on Dwayne's squire WYNNE, filling Dwayne's goblet. Wynne stares back at camera, disturbed, overfilling the cup.

RAE & WYNNE TALKING HEAD

RAE has the gruff, battle-ready command of a Viking lunch lady. Next to her, Wynne seems to rattle inside his armor.

RAE
It was my honor to squire for him.
I mean, he was tough.
(MORE)

RAE (CONT'D)

Up before dawn, running the outer wall in full armor.

WYNNE

Yeah, Dwayne, too. Up at dawn, taking breakfast from the horse's feedbag. Walking behind him so he looks taller.

Wynne looks to Rae to commiserate. She looks away.

WYNNE (CONT'D)

Tasting his wine for poison.

EXT. IRONHILL KEEP - LATER

The sunset paints the scene in nostalgic, golden light.

Guests saunter out of the castle, cheeks rosy with drink.

STEFF

Let's keep the party going!

Sir Darwin pulls Dwayne aside for a heart-to-heart.

DARWIN

You did well today, son. You crushed many a peasant.

DWAYNE

D'aw. Only because I have such a steadfast commander.

DARWIN

Well. I won't always be commander.

Darwin draws his FAMILY SWORD, its pommel a golden fist.

DWAYNE

(awed)

The Sword of Dagonet.

DARWIN

My father gave it to me when I was named Knight Commander.

He presents it to Dwayne, who looks up at his father, agape.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Don't get ahead of yourself. I'm not done quite yet. But one day, it will be you. And I know you'll make me proud.

Dwayne fights back tears and turns to the camera.

Behind him, Darwin climbs atop his WARHORSE.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Onwards, Godfrey!

DWAYNE
That's my dad.

Godfrey SPOOKS AND BUCKS.

Darwin tips off, lands on his head. CRACK. Doesn't move.

STEFF & ELWYLYN TALKING HEAD

STEFF, her armor adorned with bits of personal flair, sits beside nature girl ELWYLYN.

STEFF
Right on his gourd. CRICKKK.
(remorseful)
Sorry, that was unprofessional.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT. IRONHILL KEEP - MORNING

A classic, medieval fantasy castle.

The knights are reciting the morning oath.

ALL

And I vow to do no harm to anyone
who does not deserve it, or who
just associates with someone who
does deserve it...

INT. CHAMBER OF THE POINTED TABLE - SAME

Pan across the surface of THE POINTED TABLE. It's shaped like a star with seven points of varying lengths.

The knights are arranged by rank, from longest to shortest point: DWAYNE, RAE, GUMSHOES, ELWYLYN, STEFF, JERYD, and WYNNE, who circles with a carafe of wine.

ALL

Or who's just in the wrong place at
the wrong time.

We see each knight as they finish the oath:

- DWAYNE is typically bombastic.
- It's too early for RAE, who hurries through the oath.
- GUMSHOES, an old gnome, is entirely out of frame, save the top of his cap.
- ELWYLYN coos at a bird at the window.
- STEFF mumbles, bored, twisting her rings.
- WYNNE pours wine into Jeryd's cup, pushing it over the edge of the table's impractically narrow point.
- JERYD gives him an apologetic nod and finishes the oath politely.

ALL (CONT'D)

With chivalry and justice for all,
until death or retirement or career
change, in the name of King Gaffan.

All the knights sit except Dwayne, who stands in front of a wooden QUEST BOARD:

- Mob Goblins, cockatrice fights
- Swamp Necromancer, improper disposal of remains
- Twang the Wonder Bard, noise complaint

DWAYNE

Alright, everyone. Good morning. So, I know this is an adjustment, me being Knight Commander and all. I just want to say that nothing's changed except where everyone sits and the hierarchy that implies.

ANGLE ON: The side of Rae's table point, showing multiple attempts to etch the initials D.D. in "cool" designs.

Dwayne reads from a scroll.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Alright, open quests and news. Oh. The Lady in the Loch drowned three children this week. Oof. So guys, we really need to crack down on trespassing. Put up a sign or something. Um. We've got a lot of public hangings coming up --

RAE

Should we talk about the Eyes?

DWAYNE

(feigning ignorance)
Eyes? The eyes of... Oh! You mean the Scrying Eyes?

REVEAL: Floating over Dwayne's shoulder is a SCRYING EYE, about the size of a basketball. Its lids are solid white and quivering. A bundle of optic nerves hangs like a TAIL.

These grotesque Scrying Eyes are our cameras. Indeed, there are two or three more in the room, providing coverage.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Yes. As you're all aware, after a number of incidents...

STEFF

That number being one.

DWAYNE

The Council of Magi has decided that all knights in Ironhill must be accompanied by Scrying Eyes, to see we are fulfilling our oaths.

Gumshoes unscrews his flask, spikes his wine.

GUMSHOES

Suits me just fine. Things get weird, I'll throw a sheet over it.

DWAYNE

No, they said don't do that.

GUMSHOES

Well, it's not a Scrying Ear. I say what it can't hear can't hurt us.

ELWYLYN

I think it does hear. It's magic.

GUMSHOES

Oh.

(to camera)

You're gross and I resent your presence.

Gumshoes lights his pipe with a snap of his fingers.

JERYD

(to camera)

He meant the Eye, obviously. I'm sure you're lovely.

ELWYLYN

Why is the Glade of the Blade on the Quest Board?

DWAYNE

I was getting to that. Trespassing.
(off their reactions)
The Blade in the Boulder is a royally protected artifact.

STEFF

It's a carnival game. I sell shirts there that say "Future King." Let the people have their fun.

RAE

He can't do that, Steff. What if it turns out some peasant is more worthy than our Knight Commander?

DWAYNE

Oh, please. Magic swords don't make you special. I don't have one. Look, Wynne and I will deal with the trespassers. Everyone else just look at the Quest Board. Or just wander around until some crime happens. Okay? Let's do some good.

They rise. Rae's chair BACKS OVER an Eye's tail, but she doesn't notice. It THRASHES in silent agony.

QUICK SHOT FROM ITS FLAILING POV as the knights exit.

WYNNE (O.S. FROM TALKING HEAD)

Whoever draws the Blade is supposed to be king one day.

EXT. GLADE OF THE BLADE - LATER

A CROWD OF COMMONERS gathered before THE BLADE IN THE BOULDER: a sword embedded to the hilt in a three-foot rock.

A strapping FARM BOY rubs his hands together.

The crowd goes hush as he grips the hilt...

WYNNE TALKING HEAD

INTERCUT WITH:

- A LANKY WOMAN does stretches, lunges before the Blade.
- A MUSCLEBOUND FREAK flexes before giving it a try. Immediately throws his back out and hobbles off.

WYNNE

You don't actually become king. Obviously. I'm sure some people believe that. And if enough people believe it, then... well, the king probably has you hanged. Just in case. But, otherwise: free sword.

BACK TO SCENE

The farm boy pulls with all his might... to no avail. The crowd applauds his effort.

REVEAL: Wynne and Dwayne, who cheers too enthusiastically.

DWAYNE

Yes! A fine effort!