

The Knight

--a glorious piece of fan literature by vD

Introduction

...a piece of story for WingMcCallister: The Knight – A Wing Fantasy.

It's called a Wing Fantasy because it's centered around the figure of his endlessly struggling hero, the young Wing T. Faulkner McCallister. You might call it a tribute and be not far off. You might call it a gift and do me honor.

The illustrated and extended edition of his book is even now resting on my nightstand, daring me to read it.

The darkness was total.

At first the young knight thought he'd been blindfolded, then, for a terrible couple of seconds, his mind did a panicked dance around the possibility he had been blinded. However wide he strove to open his eyes, however he turned his head, not a single feature or contour relieved the absolute pitch-black.

Drawing on his fast-dwindling reserves of inner strength, he had to settle for the desperate conviction that it was not possible to be blinded that painlessly, for indeed his eyes felt all right.

But he couldn't see a thing.

And the wind didn't help at all.

It was only the gentlest of breezes, really, and wouldn't have registered on even his sharp senses if he hadn't been so starved for exterior sensation. And maybe the fact that it wafted *upwards*. It eddied and swirled imperceptibly slightly, but mostly it brushed the tips of his hair from the direction he attributed as down.

He would cheerfully have given a year of his life to be able to see.

For in order for the air to be able to move up past his feet, there mustn't be a lot of floor down there, apart from the two very small areas he was using to push up from. Cautiously.

His calves were trembling.

The slightest motion would have him teetering, fighting for balance, fighting against

the rising panic induced by being wholly sightless and possibly standing on small pieces of matter suspended over an abyss. Every couple dozen heartbeats, the animal instinct screaming 'danger' at him and would make him try to improve his stance.

The chains would grate faintly whenever he did.

And that was it.

He wasn't quite sure if the bands around his ankles were latched over his boots, or were part of the boots themselves. They were tight enough to be either. Their unyielding pull would propagate along his entire lower legs, telling him stories of knee-high leather laced tightly enough to feel like faintly pliable steel. Stories of slightly less unforgiving leather encasing his legs, gripping his buttocks and crotch and clinching his hips in palms of clinging, smooth, sweat-slicked cured hide, pinching with fingers of belts above the knee, over his thighs, below his butt, never more than an estimated two inches apart, never less than fully tightened.

Stories he could feel but not see.

If he extended his middle fingers far enough, fought against the resistance of the impossibly stiff leather gauntlets determinedly enough, he would just be able to touch a link of chain on either side as it ran unseen from his wrists away into the unrelieved darkness, keeping his arms stretched helplessly to the sides and a little upwards.

Pulling hard enough to make his joints ache with the strain, yet at an angle shallow enough to do nothing of any help in his ceaseless struggle to maintain his balance.

Quite the contrary.

Every movement of his upper body, every little straying from the direct line prescribed by the terrible symmetry of his chains, immediately translated into a sharp increase in the pull mounted on his leather-encased wrists. The shackles felt like the jaws of a bear trap when he was in blessed equilibrium and instantly transformed into the jaws of the bear himself when his tiring muscles caused him to sway. The acute discomfort was quite enough to make it wholly impossible to stabilize with the help of his arms, leaving him totally dependent on the awkward, splay-legged stance enforced by his leg chains.

He guessed his heels to be about three feet apart.

And about four inches in the air.

That was all he still managed.

But trying to lower his heels invariably left him gasping at the immediate punishment inflicted on his wrists and shoulder joints, forcing him to remain as still as he could, rigidly suppressing the urge to wriggle imparted by the feeling of the tight jacket's leather lining rubbing against his naked skin, as sticky with his own sweat as the pants

were. And every bit as tight. There were three distinct bands across his arms between his shoulders and the tight band of ache where the long gauntlets ran through, or were crimped by, or molded to, his wrist shackles. Four or five belts more seemed to be circling his chest. He couldn't be too sure on that account because they seemed to be crossing each other. What he was sure about was that he could have used more breath than the restraining gear allowed him to take.

And he flatly hated how each sharp intake and exhalation sounded when the air whistled from his nose, breaking on the edge of the muzzle gag pressed up immediately on the hurting bit of bone and skin parting his nostrils. Hated how each wisp of moisture carried by his breath seemed to creep beneath the tight leather sheath cupping his chin, making it stick, making it itch against the faint stubble having crept over the lower half of his face. It was by no means a dense beard, but although his memories were very fuzzy on the details, he obviously hadn't had the use of his hands for long enough that it could make itself felt, adding to the discomfort of the hard, totally form-fitted leather shell strapped over the lower half of his face, held in place by several sets of straps crisscrossing and supplementing each other and encasing his head in a web of leather bands.

There might have been some running partially in front of his eyes, but he had no way to tell.

A faint hope that his eyes would adjust to the darkness had withered quietly and died without a sound.

There was nothing to adapt to.

Even a hero's retinae needed the slimmest sliver of light to work with.

So he stood in total darkness, insecure in stance and mind, helpless to the core, bound in every limb, every inch of his body imprisoned in slick, hard leather, and fought his hopeless war against fatigue, gravity, angst and the strange ...fog... in his mind that kept every memory indistinct, denied any sharply focused thought. It eddied and swirled faintly, so faintly, like the unseen breeze playing along his restrained body, teasing the few slivers of hot, moist skin exposed between rims of leather garments. A drop of sweat rolled lazily down his rigidly erect spine. In the absence of any meaningful sensation except pain and fear, its halting travel, its annoyingly leisurely way down his skin tormented him no end. It was leaving in its slow wake an ice-fire streak of tickling, tingling sensation which screamed an impossible urge to shiver and twitch, to arch his back, to slap and tear at the hard shell gripping his upper body.

The young knight moaned with frustration and the sheer strain of keeping still.

An eddy of wind seemed to curl around his forehead, seemed to laugh at his

helplessness, brushing a touch of vaulting emptiness, a promise of soaring heights, a threat of gaping abyss against his taut, frightened frame.

A second drop of sweat began its agonizingly unhurried way out of his hairline. It traversed the bold sweep of forehead with a feeling like a sharp nail being drawn over his smooth skin. Almost sobbing with the effort of enduring the excruciating counterpoint to the mounting pain in his stretched arms and strained, shivering calves, he tried to will it to speed up, to scowl it into acceleration.

And then it hit the edge of the blinder.

And dispersed.

And the tickling wake subsided.

And the fog cleared.

And he knew where he was.

And he screamed.

The wind, the gentle, feather-light, almost unfelt breeze, cupped his sweaty forehead in its cool touch, gently lifted the wet strands of hair away from the sticky bands of leather, whose clinging touch had totally obscured the fact that there was an impeccably crafted, impenetrable shield in front of his eyes, molded so perfectly to the contours of his face that even now, as he knew it existed, he could not in any way guess where it began and the leather straps holding it in place ended.

His screams subsided into harsh panting. He hadn't even realized how he had unconsciously fought his bonds, had raged and strained to escape the merciless bonds. The ache in his limbs told him, far too late.

He couldn't help the moan as he felt another drop of sweat gather right above the tip of his nose, where the blindfold must end. Shaking his head even a little made his shoulders ache but he couldn't hold wholly still any more.

No avail.

Totally unperturbed by the young man's desperate, largely chain-thwarted struggle, the bright, tight knot of tickling, of fizzing, sparking, tingling, pleasure, pain, promise, threat, inescapable point of his utter helplessness, made its way down over the tip of his nose.

And hung.

Braving the invisible abyss, defying the gentle brushes of wind, summarily ignoring the knight's screaming cries, the destitute twitches and moans bearing witness to his rage and his embarrassing, utter, defenseless bondage, it hung.

In the his mind, it blazed like a knot of malice, like a minute door into the densest core of hell.

It itched.

It burned.

It filled his whole perception.

It felt, again, like the unendingly sharp point of a nail slowly, ever so imperceptibly slowly, teasing, worrying, sinking into his skin.

Drawing a bead of blood.

Mingling, they both dropped.

The nail remained.

Under the harsh blindfold, his eyes were wide as coins. His breath whistled in and out of his nose like startled deer tearing away through the underbrush, and for once he didn't mind how it sounded, how it epitomized his hopeless situation.

She was there.

As he had known the instant the fog had cleared, or rather, as he had known the instant he had recognized the clearing mental fog as sorcery, his corporeal bondage was immaterial. A circumstance. A symptom. A mere outer sign.

Like a brush of wind, a gentle, feather-light, almost unfelt breeze, her delicate touch cupped his sweaty forehead in its cool touch, gently lifted the wet strands of hair away from the sticky bands of leather.

The infinitely gentle sensation, the sharp, stark contrast it made to the incredible discomfort his bound body was in, made him want to weep.

The discomfort, the pain, the strain, the struggle, it was his.

The only ease there ever would be was hers.

His bondage would never end.

She would see to it.

He was hers.

Body and soul.