

The Tiny Crusader

As a young man, Ulric had been a fine blacksmith. His work had been sought throughout the land by every walk of life from the common man to royalty. However, over the past few years people seemed to be needing him less and less.

Ulric had started to become old and he feared, more than anything, losing his strength and becoming weak and useless. He could already feel his strength declining and the work becoming too much for him. Lifting the heavy metal hammer and replacing it on the anvil was a mighty effort.

One day, he was in his workshop working on crafting out a huge sword for the local knight. As he struggled to lift the sword, he accidentally dropped the red, hot poker on to the floor with a loud clang. Staggering back, he heard a noise. An old suit of armour, that stood in his darkened workplace, started to move. "Get a grip Ulric" he whispered to himself. The armour continued to move and suddenly the helmet fell to the floor. Nervously, he picked it up, fearing he was losing his mind as well as his strength.

Peering into the helmet, Ulric was caught by surprise when something jumped out of the helmet and landed on his nose. A mouse! "Argh!" he screamed and flicked it off. It landed near the fireplace. Orrick took a closer look. There sat by the fire was a tiny, white mouse wearing a saddle. Was he losing his mind after all?

Just then, trumpets sounded. Out of the darkness appeared a tiny knight. "Great! First, I lose my strength, now I've gone mad!" he said sadly.

"I assure you Sir, your eyes do not deceive you" declared the tiny knight.

"Oh! Here is a funny little thing. Boots and all and a rat with a saddle" replied Ulric.

"Gallahad is no rat. He is the finest stable mouse in all the land. I've come here for your help." Announced the knight.

"I'm of no use to anyone." Suggested Ulric. With that, the knight produced a miniature broken sword. Ulric looked carefully at it. "I can fix that" he said.

Opening his hand, he took the knight and Gallahad to his bench and set about fixing the minute weapon. He heated the sword in the fire until it too glowed red, moved it on to his bench and began tapping and shaping it. He then cooled it in a water trough. It gave off a huge hiss as he did so.

After this expert work, he presented it to the knight. "You have my thanks. But your task is not over yet. Swiftly Gallahad!" called the knight. He mounted his horse with one mighty leap, blow his horn and, before him, appeared a mighty army of tiny knights.

Astonished, Ulric looked around in gratitude. He had found his new usefulness, which didn't require all his strength. "Alright, who's next?" he asked, proudly.