

## Chivalry's Champion

WHOOSH!

The dragon had returned to the realm. It moved with all speed careening this way and that to avoid collision. The beast was green with black striping. It boasted its name on its side in large chrome letters: 'Mustang'. The monster was the terror of all who lived in the kingdom. The creature had to be stopped.

A young boy (by all measures) stood at the curb waving a long wooden stick at the offending creature. The boy wore elbow and knee pads, like those one might wear to a skateboarding event. His torso was wrapped in bubble wrap, and he sported a plastic pail on his head. The pail had two eye holes cut out for vision and a 'T' shaped opening for nose and mouth.

The son of Margot and Bob Crenshaw, Kenny Crenshaw, was possessed of a healthy imagination. The Crenshaws loved to encourage young Kenny in his passions, and, to that end, Bob had helped the lad forge a rudimentary sword from a plank taken from an old shipping crate. Father and son had dubbed the weapon 'X Caliber'. The Father had proclaimed it to be one letter better than 'W Caliber': a blade of no equal.

Margot had helped the boy with the helmet. She overturned one of her plastic buckets and, using her kitchen shears, had cut the holes for the eyes, and breathing parts.

“I will have my revenge!” The boy shook his weapon with vigor and keen resolve. The dragon sped past. “Thou vile serpent!”

Behind the boy stood a frail older lady. “Slow down!” She shook her fist at the speeding vehicle of mayhem.

The dragon having passed, the boy turned to the lady. “The beast shall taste the edge of my steel ‘fore the sun doth set or my name isn’t Sir Kenneth!”

The old lady, Jean Marple, smiled. “You tell him Kenny!” She tussled Kenny’s auburn hair. “Just be careful. Dragons are not easily slain ... and can be very dangerous!” She grabbed Kenny’s arm to make sure he heard that last bit.

Sir Kenneth swung his leg over his faithful steed, Huffy, and started peddling. “I shall succeed! My quest is true!” Kenny rode his bike after the interloper to the peace of the neighborhood.

It being mid-day and Sir Kenneth’s innards crying for sustenance, Kenny steered Huffy toward the drug store. The drug store held many treats prized by knights and young boys alike. Laying his faithful steed in the steel rack provided for horses and bikes by the store, Kenny ventured inside for a look see. Perhaps there might be a maiden in need of rescue. Or maybe even there would be a troll or usurper of some ilk.

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Cameron Folk lived with his mother in her split level three-bedroom house. He found the arrangement to his liking. The chores were minimal, and he got his laundry done for free. The lack of rent provided Cameron with a healthy take-home income from his job at the grocery store. And Cameron saved a lot of that excess money.

From an early age, Cameron had coveted ownership of one of Detroit's biggest and fastest. The lad had made a name for himself in high school with being not only fast but furious.

It was no surprise, then, when Cameron arrived home with his previously owned lime green Mustang with the black racing stripes. His mother had found it an unnecessary extravagance for a young man. She would have rather seen that money used on a rented apartment. Or dare she even think it, paying his mother some rent. But alas, it was not to be.

This day was Cameron's day off from work. A day off required a sack of adult beverages in the young man's mind. Grabbing the keys from his dresser, Cameron ran up the stairs from the basement to the back door. Pulling the door handle for the driver side of his Mustang, Cameron plopped inside and made the engine roar to life.

Now on a day when Cameron was feeling sad or down in the dumps, the vehicle he drove would reflect that mood. Down days meant slower speed for the lime green muscle car with the racing stripes. But today, yes today, Cameron was feeling a rather great mood, and so the Mustang sprang to life and stretched her legs.

When the speeding combination of steel, rubber and gasoline rounded the turn into the shortcut to the liquor store,

which was Kenny and Jean's neighborhood, Cameron stepped on the gas. He had nothing but straightaway in front of him. That, and a weird little kid with a bucket on his head waving a stick at him. Oh, and a frail old lady shaking her fist.

Whatever. Cameron would ignore their attempts to harsh his mellow. The young man had racing in his blood. And that young man's blood was boiling.

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When Sir Kenneth emerged from the drug store, a Twizler firmly placed in his mouth, he beheld a beautiful sight. There, across the street, at the liquor store, was the foe he sought. Kenny couldn't believe his luck. Taking his right fist, the knight shoved the remainder of his treat into his mouth.

The green dragon with the black stripes seemed to be resting. Sir Kenneth moved gracefully, ever closer to the beast. He moved on tip toe so as not to startle the demon. A surprise attack was his best strategy.

Coming up in front of the mighty serpent, Kenneth drew his sword, X Caliber, from his belt.

"Aha! We meet at last!" Kenneth addressed the vile monster.

The dragon sat still in silence. Nary a word would be uttered. The beast cowered at the magnificence of Sir Kenneth. The brute somehow knew it had been bested. It sat with its wide black mouth agape between its two crustal eyes.

“You shall pay for your evil deeds.” Sir Kenneth was proclaiming his judgment on the speeding serpent. Kenny held his sword in a horizontal plane and, with as mighty a thrust as a young lad could manage, pierced the beast in the mouth. “In the name of the king I stab at you!”



The creature so wounded let forth a hissing cloud of steam, signaling its payment for what it had wrought on the realm.

Sir Kenneth resheathed his sword in his belt and stood upright. “Let that be a lesson to all who dare usurp the cause of the right!”

Kenny hopped on Huffy and left.

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Appearing from out of the liquor store, and pulling a beer from the sack he carried in his left arm, Cameron placed the bottle between his knees and twisted the cap. Gulping the foamy cold amber liquid down his throat, the bottle drained in seconds. The driver of the dragon Mustang hopped behind the wheel of the vehicle and started for home.

Traffic had increased, so the going home was tougher, slower. It was slower until it wasn't. When the Mustang turned into Kenny's neighborhood, Cameron downshifted and stomped the accelerator pedal of his car. The engine roared its pleasure at having been given a drink of gasoline and oxygen.

It was then that something curious to Cameron happened. His normally purring engine began to shiver. The mechanical heart of the machine began to stutter and groan. Its complaint not being addressed, the engine stopped altogether in time.

Cameron pulled the stalled car over to the curb and turned the ignition to the off position. He popped the hood of his beauty and jumped to investigate what might be the trouble.

It wouldn't take long to discover the problem. The radiator was empty and there was a nice hole on the front of it. Cameron let out a curse. What bad luck had found him. He did not know that his luck would get worse.

Walking toward the lime green Mustang with the racing stripes was a frail old lady, wagging her finger at Camron.

"Aha! I've got you now!"

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Sir Kenneth pulled up to the driveway of his home. Across the street, his comrade in arms was berating a young man standing beside the now dead dragon. A police cruiser had joined the party and the officer was writing notes on a notepad as the other two argued.

Sir Kenneth drew his sword and placed it to his chest in solidarity with Mrs. Marple. The older lady returned the salute by placing her hand over her heart.

Kenny rode his bike into the garage and parked it. It was time for his favorite TV program, 'The Camelot Diaries'. Sir Kenneth strode to the house, head held high in the knowledge that today he had bested the forces of evil. Today, goodness and chivalry had won.

