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# Dragonslayer

By Hal Barwood

Unus in nihil...  
Omnia in duos...  
Duo in unum...  
Unum in nihil.  
Nec quattuor...  
nec omnia, nec unus, nec nihil sunt.  
- Is this...?  
- Yes, this is Cragganmore.  
Yes, this is the house of Ulrich.  
And no, he won't see you.  
- But...  
- I know. Your business is urgent.  
It doesn't matter. He sees no one.  
- Please...  
- Please yourself. Go home.  
Well, what do we do now, boy?  
You who knows so much,  
answer me that.  
Hear me,  
you who dwell in Cragganmore.  
Ulrich, we will stay here  
until we are heard.  
Magister?  
- What is it?  
- We have visitors.  
I know.  
- I will see them.  
- You will?  
Yes.  
There's a great task  
needing to be done.  
I have been witness to something -  
something of consequence to you.  
- To me?  
- Yes. My own death.  
I knew it. Thieves.  
Looks forbidding enough,  
don't you think?  
Oh, yes.  
Master?  
No. They'd think me infirm.  
Balisarius wore this before he died.  
You know, I actually  
saw him change lead into gold.

I could never do that.

Mmm... Too bad.

You'd have stood

to inherit some real wealth.

Magister, please,

don't talk like that.

- You're not going to die.

- Oh, I look forward to it.

All this magic,

what has it accomplished?

Tell me, how are your studies going?

Fine. They're going well.

You still wish to be a sorcerer?

- Oh, yes. More than anything.

- Well, then, adeptus minor,

get yourself a handful

of that sulphurous ash over there.

Nunc habeamus lucem...

...et calorem.

Welcome to Cragganmore. I am Ulrich.

Which of you men

calls himself Valerian?

- We are here on behalf...

- I know why you're here.

You're a delegation from Urland,

which is beyond Dalvatia.

Let's see the artefacts.

Scales.

- How did you come by these?

- I found them

at the mouth of the lair.

What else?

- A claw.

- That's no claw, by the gods.

It's a tooth!

You want me to do battle with that?!

- Who else can we turn to?

- Did you try the Meredydd Sisters?

What about Rinbod?

I heard tell he killed a dragon once.

They're all dead.

You're the only one left.

It's a long way to Urland.

Twice each year,

at the spring and autumn equinox,  
the King selects  
a new victim - virgins.  
A lottery. Barbaric.  
And in return, this dragon,  
it leaves your villages  
and crops unburned.  
Your king  
has made a pact with a monster.  
- Master, don't you think...?  
- Silence.  
Are you afraid of dragons?  
No.  
In fact, if it weren't for sorcerers,  
there wouldn't be any dragons.  
Once the skies were dotted with them.  
Magnificent horned backs,  
leather wings,  
soaring in their hot-breath wind.  
I know this creature of yours...  
Vermithrax Pejorative.  
Look at these scales, these ridges.  
When a dragon gets this old,  
it knows only pain, constant pain.  
It grows decrepit, crippled...  
pitiful... spiteful.  
Will you help us?  
Here. Good.  
Now let me go.  
No...  
No, not a bit too heavy.  
I'll conquer the highest mountain.  
What say you, Galen?  
Speak up, boy. Hodge?  
Er... If you say so, sir.  
When I've gone,  
see you keep your nose in your books  
and your hands out of my reagents.  
How far can you get? A league? Two?  
I'm not worried about the road.  
Tyrian.  
Good morrow.  
What do you want?  
Young Master Valerian,

The question is,  
what do you want so far from home?  
We're not afraid of you.  
Give us the road.  
Why, the road is yours,  
all the way to Urland.  
It's a long journey, isn't it?  
But when you're  
in search of a sorcerer,  
I suppose no distance is too great.  
- Say nothing.  
- Here's the mystical one himself.  
You'd best keep your distance...  
and your manners.  
If he's ready to slay a dragon,  
he's nothing to fear from me.  
I've no more love for that creature  
than you lot, nor has the King,  
but before you stir things up,  
don't you think you should find out  
if he's the right man for the job?  
Ah! So it's a test you're  
looking for? We don't do tests.  
Oh, I'm sure you don't.  
They never do tests.  
Nor many real deeds.  
Oh, conversation with your  
grandmother's shade in a dark room,  
the odd love potion,  
but comes a doubter -  
why, then it's the wrong day,  
the planets aren't in line,  
the entrails aren't favourable,  
"We don't do tests".  
We've got no doubts.  
We require no tests.  
- And you're not going to get one.  
- Enough!  
Here. Put this in the conjuring room.  
Go to the iron box.  
Bring me the dagger within.  
The dagger. Be quick.  
You shall have your test.  
Where are you, boy? I'm waiting.

- It's not this one, is it?

- The very one. Let it fall.

Mortem confundit magus.

- No! Stop him!

- Go on. Don't worry.

You can't hurt me.

Magical powers indeed.

Look at you now - magical ashes.

Hodge!

Hodge!

The kindest lord

a man could ever wish for.

Now he's gone.

Ye gods! You'd think he could boil  
his own eggs at the snap of a finger,  
but no, he had old Hodge to do it.

Up at five every morning, clearing  
out the cages, emptying the slops.

Never a thank you

or a pat on the back.

I shall miss him.

- I do already.

- Oh, no, you don't.

All you think about

is your tricks and your knavery,

but you don't pull any wool

over these old eyes.

You'll have to walk far before  
you fill his shoes, mark my words.

What's the matter, Hodge?

Pack too heavy?

No! Don't! Stop that! I need that!

Oh, give it back to me! This way!

I think you're too warm.

Stop it!

Out of respect for the master!

I have as much respect

for the master as anyone, old man,

but I'm master now.

I left my farm and for what?

For a cremation, that's what.

All because

someone said find a magician -

not a local fellow, an import,

some 100 leagues from home -  
an all-powerful necromancer.  
Huh! That's some necromancer.  
Hold your tongue, Griel. Eat.  
I'll not eat. I'm not hungry.  
He's right.  
I brought us here for nothing.  
What is it? Who's there?  
Salvete, viatores!  
Good morrow.  
Good morrow. Peace be with you.  
What do you want?  
My lord Ulrich is no longer.  
All that you asked of him,  
you may now expect of me.  
The dangers he would face,  
I will now conquer.  
The task he would undertake,  
I will now fulfil.  
I am Galen Bradwardyn, inheritor  
of Ulrich's craft and knowledge...  
and I am the sorcerer you seek.  
Close enough. Bring her out.  
Now be it known throughout  
the kingdom that this maiden,  
having lawfully been chosen  
by a deed of fortune and destiny,  
shall hereby give up her life  
for the greater good of Urland...  
By this act shall be satisfied  
the powers that dwell underground  
and the spirits that attend thereto.  
In gratitude for this sacrifice,  
His Majesty declares the family  
Plowman to be free of obligations  
for a period  
not to exceed five years.  
Duly ordained!  
What have you got there, Hodge?  
- None of your business.  
- Gold, eh?  
- Shall I change it into lead?  
- Save your jokes for someone else.  
I do not care

for braggarts... or frauds.

- I'm no fraud.

- Fool, then.

Upstart. Whatever pleases you.

Look, Hodge,

nobody forced you to come along.

I came of my own

free will, all right.

We each do the Master's bidding

in our own way.

What are you doing? Don't come in!

- How's the water?

- It's cold.

I prefer to swim alone

if you don't mind.

Stay away!

- Look. Isn't that the...?

- Yes.

- The retainer from Cragganmore.

- Why is he here?

- Filling in for his chief.

- You going to allow that, sir?

Bring me my bow.

No, I'm not going to say anything.

I don't blame you.

I was careless. A silly woman.

Oh, I... I knew the moment I saw you.

I've known the whole time.

You never knew a thing.

No one's known, not since I was born.

The lottery.

- Daughters are chosen, sons are not.

- That's right.

- Unless you're the King's daughter.

- What do you mean?

If you're rich enough,

your name never goes in.

My father is poor.

So are a lot of fathers.

No!

No!

No!

Hodge!

Hodge!



Hodge.

- Galen, can you hear me?

- I hear you.

Do you know, somebody shot me,  
but I can still talk.

There's something  
that needs to be done.

- I know.

- No, no. Not the dragon.

The master's ashes. Here.

I'm sorry.

You'll have to peel it loose.

- Burning water!

- What?

Find the lake. Throw it in.

Hodge, what are you doing with this?

Burning... water.

Hodge, don't die.

Listen to me.

You're not going to die.

Urland.

Come on. Don't slow down here.

- Is the whole kingdom like this?

- No. We're near the lair.

The lair? Where is it?

- It doesn't matter.

- Show me. Where?

We're in no danger

if we just pass through quickly.

I want to see it.

Griel.

Malkin! Malkin!

- Are there other entrances?

- No. One's enough.

Don't be a fool! You'll provoke it!

How do you know it's in there?

Go on, then.

Get yourself burned alive.

What a fine trick that will be.

Vermithrax?

Tu saxum saxorum

in adversum montem operam da!

Inatibulum inquinatum draconis!

No! Consistete!

Redite... No!  
Ascedete!  
He's done it!  
Put that away!  
What if you were seen?  
Musicians?  
She was twice the man  
of anyone in the village.  
Now she's twice the woman.  
Would that I was  
as clever as her father.  
Come, Griel.  
Don't begrudge a life spared.  
No, I... I begrudge nothing.  
But I wonder at what we have seen...  
and how it was done.  
- You were there.  
- Aye. And isn't it strange  
that the very moment  
that the beast was put down,  
there should be a holy man  
in the village?  
Now, isn't that strange?  
Could the Christian god  
bring down a mountain?  
- Is it possible, Father?  
- Of course. Why not?  
A celebration!  
Well, don't stop on my account.  
Musicians, more music.  
A toast... to the deed of the day.  
What would you have of us?  
With you? Not a thing.  
It's this one.  
The King would meet  
our new-found benefactor,  
and offer his gratitude  
to the one man who has succeeded  
where so many have failed.  
What sort of gratitude?  
A knife in the belly?  
An arrow in the chest?  
My young friend, I would as soon  
dispatch you as I did the rest,

and for the same reason,  
but His Majesty would have a cosy  
little chat and commands otherwise.  
Behold. Eggs fit for a king.  
All right...

How many of you  
have ever seen a table fly?  
None of you. None of you  
have ever seen a table fly.  
Stand back.

Heus... mensa... surge!  
Surge mensa.

- Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.
- Enough. That'll do.
- I can do this.
- It's not necessary.

Tell me, the landslide,  
it was accomplished this same way?  
Er... yes.

Did you ever hear of King Gaiseric?

Oh, no. Of course not.

You weren't even born.

He was my brother. A great king  
and a valiant man-at-arms.

When he ascended the throne,  
the dragon was unbridled.

No one knew where  
it might strike next,  
so he brought forth  
his broadsword and his spear,  
assembled his fighters  
and went out to do battle.  
He was never seen again,  
but his attack provoked terrible  
reprisals - villages incinerated,  
entire crops burned, death, famine...

Horrible.

How did you arrogate  
to yourself the role of saviour?

- I was invited.
- Not by me.

I think you're nothing  
but a boy... an apprentice.

Have you considered

the consequences of failure?  
What failure?  
You want the dragon back?  
You came here  
and toyed with a monster!  
Who are you  
to risk our people, our villages?  
- But your children were dying!  
- Only a few.  
It is better they die  
that others might live.  
I created the lottery - me -  
and from the moment it began,  
the dragon was tamed.  
- The kingdom has prospered.  
- At what price?  
You can't make  
a shameful peace with dragons.  
- You must kill them as I have done.  
- The beast is dead?  
Yes, it's dead.  
We shall see.  
Caela... orrida... aperere.  
Open up, I say! Caela orrida aperere!  
Salve, magister juvenilis.  
I studied Latin. Greek, too.  
Me apellant Elspeth, filiam Regis.  
Filiam Regis? You're his daughter.  
Please don't think ill of us.  
Father is a wise  
and even-handed man. He's...  
What happened to you?  
Nothing. Just some  
of the King's even-handedness.  
It... It's better  
for everyone this way.  
A king must protect his people.  
Naturally.  
Just as he protects his daughter.  
What do you mean by that?  
- Are you referring to the lottery?  
- You know about the lottery?  
I have participated in every  
choosing since I came of age.

The whole kingdom knows that.  
You don't have to pretend.  
Not to me. Not down here.  
Everyone knows  
how this... choosing works -  
the families  
with money, royal connections...  
You've participated  
in a lie. You know it.  
- I have to go now.  
- You know I'm right.  
Vale. Dorme bene.  
Horsrik, remove all but one bar.  
We'll try it one at a time.  
- I, Casiodorus Rex...  
- Father...  
do some families pay bribes  
to stay out of the lottery?  
Nonsense.  
By the power of this amulet,  
justly wielded by my hand  
in accordance  
with the laws of Urland,  
now, lead, be thou gold.  
I'm burnt!  
Have you ever kept  
my name off the lottery list?  
What are you suggesting?  
Am I not exposed to the same risk  
as other men's daughters?  
There's been a loose tongue  
here somewhere, sire.  
- Where did you get such ideas?  
- Answer my question.  
Please... Don't think  
of such things, I beg you.  
- Answer me.  
- The answer is no.  
I mean yes. You are a participant.  
We have seen to that.  
How could we not?  
Yes...  
The answer is yes.  
- You are lying to me.

- Elspeth!  
Stay calm.  
Go on.  
You little meddler!  
Stop him!  
Close the gate!  
What are you waiting for, idiots?  
Stop him!  
Tyrian!  
In here! So much for your magic.  
So much for your sorcery.  
Feel that? It's alive.  
Listen to me. The moment of our fear  
is the hour of our triumph.  
This is a sign from God.  
Horns, tail, wings  
and clawed feet - this is no dragon.  
This is Lucifer!  
Dear Father, we beseech thee,  
show us thy goodness  
in this evil place.  
Show us thy power.  
Cursed worm, a devil flung  
from Heaven will now rise from Hell!  
Stay and fear the word of God!  
You call yourselves Christians?!  
Fear not, brethren.  
There is no dragon.  
Unclean beast! Get thee down!  
Be thou consumed  
by the fires that made thee!  
- Where is he?  
- Not here. Can't help you.  
As the proud new father of a daughter  
who has somehow  
been overlooked all these years,  
it may interest you to know  
the King has called a new lottery.  
It's months to the solstice.  
In view of what's happened,  
we all know what's required.  
I've never taken part  
in your cursed lottery. I won't now.  
You were very clever, but

she will take part like all the rest.

No exceptions.

- I want to be in it.

- Silence, child.

I'm no different to any other girl.

My name will go in.

Nothing.

If he was here, he's gone now.

Blacksmith,

have you ever forged a weapon?

This is "Secarius draconum" -

Dragonslayer.

- The best I ever made.

- It's beautiful.

But I never had the nerve to use it.

That won't help. What you want

to kill isn't flesh and blood.

- It'll bleed.

- How do you know?

- No one's so much as scratched it.

- She's right. I'll need the amulet.

Stir the tiles!

Stir the tiles!

Stir the tiles! Stir the tiles!

Draw the name! Draw the name!

Draw the name!

Draw the name!

Draw the name!

Now, my countrymen, hear me.

Behold, for I am chosen.

I shall die that many may live.

I shall lay down my life

for family and fellows.

I shall go to my grave for the love

of our king and his wise policy.

And my name is...

- Read the name!

- Read the name!

Read the name!

Read the name! Read the name!

Read the name.

The name

is Princess Elspeth Ulfilas...

...filia Regis.

That is not the name.  
It has been misread.  
There's no mistake.  
The name's been drawn. Let it stand.  
No. The good Horsrik  
has misspoke himself.  
In fairness to this individual,  
we will destroy this tile.  
No!  
No. What better name  
than your own kin?  
- At last, we see justice done.  
- Silence!  
We will have a new choosing.  
I will draw the name myself.  
Let it stand! Let it stand!  
The name is as Horsrik read it...  
Elsbeth.  
And this one... And another...  
Another... And another...  
And another. What treachery is this?  
- The lottery is invalid.  
- Hear me, good people.  
It is true that my name  
appears on all the lots.  
This does not invalidate  
the lottery, it certifies it.  
It redresses an injustice.  
I have learned that my name was kept  
from jeopardy in all past drawings.  
Therefore, I have substituted  
my name for yours  
for the risk that over the years  
you have taken and I have not.  
You, Tyrian.  
Surely you'll do something.  
If not for me,  
out of loyalty to the kingdom.  
But that's just it, Your Majesty.  
My first duty  
is loyalty to the kingdom.  
Don't go to all that trouble.  
If you want a fight,  
give me a weapon.



- I think not.  
- Stop!  
Don't harm him.  
And... you, please...  
I'm a great admirer  
of the black arts.  
You chaps  
with your... mysterious spells.  
I didn't think it would be necessary.  
Vermithrax is an old dragon.  
That, I thought,  
was the beauty of my plan - time.  
We'd wait it out.  
I'd live to see the end of it...  
I will see the end of it.  
Sire, consider what you are doing.  
Give him that,  
he'll destroy all you've built.  
He shall have it.  
It's my daughter.  
Save her, I beg you.  
The princess - what's her name? -  
Elspeth. Her name's Elspeth.  
There, good and hot.  
That's not the kind of fire we need.  
Nunc per potestatem  
hermeticum ex flammis,  
ferrum sanguinarium.  
Good. Now turn it over.  
An edge like no other on this earth.  
I'll say goodbye to her for you.  
Sorry she's not here.  
You know how she is.  
I understand.  
Fare thee well.  
It's a shield. I made it.  
It might keep the fire  
off you, it might not.  
You know, you're an idiot.  
You're going to die tonight.  
You'll be ripped limb from limb.  
This is the last time  
I'll ever speak to you.  
- Thank you.

- Another thing...  
I've been up there.  
That thing isn't alone.  
It's got little ones. Young, I think.  
- I don't know how many.  
- They must be killed, too.  
Anything else?  
You're in love, aren't you?  
Yes.  
It's all right.  
I understand.  
She's very beautiful, very brave.  
Who is? What do you mean?  
Your princess.  
But I don't care.  
Listen to me, Galen Bradwardyn,  
sorcerer's apprentice...  
you're going to be dead...  
the dragon will be worse than ever,  
there will be more lotteries...  
and I'm not a boy any more.  
- And you'll be eligible because...  
- Because I'm still a virgin.  
I am in love...  
...but not with the Princess.  
Your Highness?  
Now be it known throughout  
the kingdom that Princess Elspeth,  
having lawfully been chosen  
by a deed of fortune and destiny...  
No more smoke, I beg you.  
Begone!  
I declare these proceedings...  
duly ordained!  
I knew I'd find you here.  
Well, I'm not  
as sentimental as His Majesty.  
The kingdom, every one of us,  
needs this sacrifice.  
If you intend to interfere...  
you'll have to kill me.  
I've plenty of reasons to kill you  
that have nothing to do with this.  
Most impressive.

- Can you use it?  
- No! Stop!  
Tyrian is right!  
This is our only hope!  
Tyrian!  
This is no warrior.  
Run!  
Run!  
Where are you going?  
You've failed, my friend...  
and I thank the gods for it.  
Now prepare yourself...  
Elspeth.  
It's still alive.  
You know what we have to do.  
We have to leave.  
You said you loved me.  
Is it true?  
If it is...  
it's the only good we've done.  
Let's not lose that, too.  
Galen?  
She's right. What kind  
of life could you have here?  
You know what I think?  
Magic, magicians -  
it's all fading from the world.  
Dying out. That makes me happy.  
That means  
the dragon will be dying, too.  
Valerian.  
Something from your father.  
You want me to wear this?  
What harm can it do?  
What is it?  
What's the matter?  
What is that?  
Look.  
- At what?  
- There.  
That old trickster.  
The burning water.  
The lake of fire.  
He had it planned...

from the beginning.

He knew this was going to happen.

Who did? What happened?

We've got to go back.

I have to talk to him.

Where are you going?

We can slay this dragon with prayer.

If we but join together in faith,

we shall live,

and the beast shall die.

Galen, stop!

I won't let you kill yourself.

He couldn't make the journey,

so he had us make it for him.

Don't you see?

All right. I'm coming, too.

- No. This is for me to do.

- I'm not afraid.

After all, I was a man, remember?

Nunc... fax... incendere.

Stay close.

- What's that?

- Nothing.

- I want to see.

- No, you don't.

All right. Wait here.

Galen?

Galen?

Where are you?

Ex favilla...

vita... nova!

Sic redit magnus ex terra mortuorum.

You're back!

- I thank the powers that made me.

- Glad to see you, too.

You didn't bring along anything

to eat, by any chance?

- Food?

- But come along. There's much to do.

No, please...

I thought I was a sorcerer. I'm not.

I thought I had power. I don't.

You said to be strong. I wasn't.

But you were, my boy. You were.

And you'll be stronger yet.  
Thou art baptised in the name of  
the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost.  
And may the Lord lead us  
from darkness and demons...

Look!

Draco... draconum.

Galen!

This is Valerian.

I know. I remember.

The girl who came to us as a boy.

There's something you must do.

Anything.

I want you to destroy the amulet...

...and me along with it.

You brought me from the flames,

you must send me back.

You'll know the time.

You must act

while life is still in me.

Tempestus!

Imber!

Fulmen!

There.

Here, Galen. Do what he said.

Destroy the amulet. Smash it.

No! He said I'd know the time.

- He told you to do it!

- Not yet!

Galen!

Let us pray. We thank thee, Lord,

for this divine deliverance.

Verily is thy presence

amongst us fully manifest

in this, thy great work.

Arise, children of the Lord.

Forsake forever the pagan mysteries,

the superstitions of the past.

Rejoice in the power of God...

All hail Casiodorus Rex -

Dragonslayer.

- You miss Ulrich?

- Yes.

- And the amulet?

- That, too.  
I don't. I'm glad it's gone.  
You may not be a sorcerer,  
Galen Bradwardyn,  
but that doesn't matter, not to me.  
I know. I just wish...  
- What?  
- We had a horse.