

Sir Owen: Champion of Murhaven

written by
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The National Autistic Society

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This is a haiku,
Five, seven, five syllables,
I cannot count...

Chapter 1: Ride to Don Castle

In the days when sturdy steel castles stood tall,
There lived a young man named Owen.
From the town of Scawsbury he rode his grey horse,
And a favourable tailwind was blowing.

The bright orange sun in the red morning sky
Was still in the process of rising.
A ride of three days lay ahead of our hero,
For years he had been organising.

Not a word he had said to his mother or father
Of his dream of becoming a knight.
The life of a Regent just wasn't for him,
His Dad's job called for someone polite.

He had planned to arrive on his thirteenth birthday;
Old enough to begin his training.
He would join the brave knights of Don Castle,
At the court where King Mason was reigning.

But then without warning, just a bang and a flash,
Black smoke billowed into the sky.
Young Owen turned to see the dark plume;
He regretted not saying "goodbye".

A fleet-footed horse and its red-hooded rider,
Fled past in a crimson blur.
The sound of uncountable horsemen approaching,
Told him he should chase after her.

Through the forest of Cuswood he followed the trail,
'Til he came to a wide-open clearing.
From the path through some ivy he saw her run by,
Just right for someone disappearing.

Chapter 1: Ride to Don Castle

Through the bushes he followed with quiet dismount,
Cautious Owen stared outward aghast,
With a thunderous rumble the ground seemed to shake,
As hordes of armed soldiers on horses ran past.

Uncountable hooves choked the dawn air with dust,
Causing Owen to call out in awe.
His eyes opened wide and his chest filled with breath,
When a soft hand impeded his jaw.

A high muffled squeal made the hand squeeze him tight,
The boy's mouth had been firmly shuttered,
"Who are you?" he finally asked with a turn,
The instant his face was uncluttered.

"I'm Gabby," she said with a weary breath,
"I'm my village's messenger girl.
Those brutes have chased me from Cartcroft,
For I have news of Ernie the Earl."

"Who's he?" pondered Owen with a hushed voice,
He patted his trembling horse.
"He plots to take over Murahven,
And rule it with chaos and force."

Afraid for the family he'd left, Owen pointed,
"What of the town of Scawsbury, there?"
His voice seemed to be all aflutter,
With his quivering hand in his hair.

"I'm sorry," said Gabby who blamed herself,
The young woman was clearly abash,
"When they run through a village they greatly dislike,
They can't wait to turn it to ash."

Chapter 1: Ride to Don Castle

Owen glanced at her mount, and inquired composed,
“So, where to on that poor weary thing?”
With a stroke of her brown horse’s mane she replied,
“I ride to Don Castle to inform the King.”

Gabby was ready to climb on her mare,
But the horse was quite out of breath.
Owen plucked a long stick from the ground and announced,
“We must halt his army of death!”

With a sceptical look, the messenger muttered,
“We’ve lost too much ground; I fear we’re too late,
We must find a shortcut and take back our lead,”
She said as she struggled to stay stood up straight.

With a moment of thought, the lad stood and smiled.
“Miss Gabby, no fear! I’m Sir Owen, the knight!”
A glance up and down didn’t make her so sure.
“But you’re so small, you can’t possibly fight.”

“Don’t lose heart yet, for we still have three days.
And an army needs food and rest.”
“But they have a head-start and we have no supplies,”
Stated Gabby who grasped at her chest.

Young Owen reached out with a confident hand
And snatched from his saddle, a gourde.
“Drink deep, my fair lady, for I have a plan,”
He said in the voice of a lord.

“And what of my steed? She’s so tired and thirsty,”
Asked Gabby once she’d gulped the drink.
“Hear that over there?” the lad asked with a grin,
Then he led out her horse with a wink.

On the bank of a stream, the pair did emerge,
As the horse dipped its lips in the waters.
“Wait here,” said the boy as he left on his own,
To track down his enemies’ quarters.

In a gap in the woods, had the warriors stopped,
And dismounted their vigorous steeds.
Owen crept with a hush and gazed on in surprise
At the men of such villainous deeds.

A team of ten men wearing hooded black cloaks,
Each armed with a gigantic key,
Tended to the slouched knights with big holes in their backs,
While Owen hid behind a tree.

One by one, with a click and a whirr,
Each knight stood proud and tall.
Owen pilfered an unguarded bow,
And escaped through the trees with a crawl.

By the time he returned with Gabby in tow,
The vast army of knights had moved on.
For three days and nights the pair tried to keep up,
Til the race to Don Castle was won.

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