

A Song of Woe

The History of Triskelion Apollo Goldenheart

Part 1; The Day Everything Changed

Triskelion's life began as many a young gnome. Days were filled with laughter and nights filled with song. The village he grew up in was a small farming community; only a dozen families lived and farmed there, providing vegetables and fruit to the nearest settlement a few days travel away. Travelers were rare, so the farming community was like one big family.

Many days Triskelion's parents worked the field half the day, then prepared harvest in the afternoon on into the evening. Young Triskelion, then just barely into his teens, would often help when he wasn't busy attending and playing with his younger sister, Pippy, who was only seven. Due to their kind and generous nature, the Goldenhearts were one of the more prominent families, acting in place of any formal counsel, something any proper gnome would be bored to tears by. Many times they were called upon when there was trouble or someone needed help, and it was their barn that acted as storage; and in times of bad weather, a safe house for all.

The most tragic of days in Triskelion's life started like any other. Pippy had bored of helping in the field early on, and by later morning had hopped off to the play field half the village away with a few of the other children and a few adults. Triskelion stayed with his parents to prepare the vegetables and set them into storage for shipment at week's end. It wasn't much past mid day when the screams could be heard in town. From out of nowhere a kobold raiding party had come upon the village. The screams came from the farms on the outskirts of town.

"Pippy!" Triskelion called out, hoping she was nearby. He dropped the vegetable he'd been preparing and ran out towards the play yard as quick as he could, calling out and hoping his sister was near. His blood pumped in his veins as he ran, his grip tightening on the dagger with every scream he heard. When he was nearly out of earshot of the village he heard people gathering towards the safety of the barn. "Hurry all, get inside. We'll bar th' door when all 'r safe." Said his father, as he and his wife helped usher people in to safety. All moved towards the barn. All save for Triskelion, who was running the opposite direction.

But he arrived too late. Kobolds were on that side of the village as well. They had torn through four children, stricken down two adults, and a third hit the floor just as Triskelion arrived. Blind rage consumed the young gnome; a rage he'd never known before. Though he'd

never before used his dagger for anything but cheese, fruit, and sweet rolls, it quickly found its way into kobold skulls. In a flash it was over. Triskelion stood there, dripping, soaked in blood. The warm sticky nature reminded him of pumpkins, which seemed oddly appropriate as their heads made the same pop noise when punctured by the dagger, repeatedly.

He could barely approach young Pippy's corpse. With each quivering step closer he felt ten times heavier. With each step the world seem to grow more and more silent, as a cold emptiness began to fill him at the sight of his sister lying still, as if death itself still lingered here and were cloaking him in her embrace. Another scream woke him from his daze. He ran back to the village as fast as his legs could carry him. The barn doors had been shut; those who survived were inside barring the door with their weight. The remaining kobolds frenzied, snarling and clawing at the doors; some covered with the intestines or other parts of villagers who did not escape their arrival. They banged and clawed against the doors trying to eat their way through to the gnomes inside. Triskelion again gripped the dagger so tight he thought his hand would burst. He remembers a scream, not one of fear, but his own, as he charged forward.

Claws... steel... blood... the barn doors opening and others rushing out to help... cracking bones... To this day Triskelion's mind is still unclear what exactly happened then, as the next clear memory he has is of returning from the play yard, young Pippy's corpse carried in his arms. The surviving villagers cried in a mix of pain and grief. A few carried the bodies of the other children and those who'd fallen back towards the center of town.

With tears streaming down his cheeks Triskelion thought of the great light that was his sister, now extinguished. Overwhelmed with grief, all he could do was think of how Pippy would ask him to sing the song, her favorite song she always asked him to sing to her before she went to sleep. But this time was different. As he sang the song and thought of her light he was surrounded by a soft yellow glow. A glow that began to waft off of him like small tendrils of smoke. But not all tendrils lifted to the sky, a few touched other nearby villagers, and their wounds were healed. But Triskelion did not notice through his tears. And with so many injured and what seemed such a long walk back to the others, only a few took note of the event.

In the following days as the town recovered and those lost were put to rest they discovered Triskelion could call upon this light through song. And while not everyone was healed, eventually smaller injuries were healed over time. But that which was lost could never be righted, in particular the greatest loss of all, Pippy.

Part 2; Shadows of the Past

Triskelion had great difficulty staying in the village. More and more he began to wander into the local forest in search of where the kobolds had come from hoping to find an answer, wondering why they had become so bold as to attack during daylight. Was it natural? Was it unnatural? Were there greater threats guiding them? Answers were never found.

Each night he returned he would stay in Pippy's room. Everything seemed so empty without her. The town was now quiet at night. Even two years after that terrible event, nights were filled more with tears and sadness than music and laughter.

Under the cloak of night he left, leaving a message for his parents that he was off into the world, and not to worry. He loved them greatly; but the loss of his sister, the reminders, the quiet of the village, it was all too painful.

He wandered. He had no direction and no destination. He wandered for so long he lost track of time. Eventually he came upon a small city. A civilization filled with people from all races and all places. Here he thought he could forget, or at least find distraction. But he was still young. No one would hire someone so young, and entertaining on the streets was met with little success.

On the verge of starvation he began to turn his talents towards easy acquisition of food. It seemed a simple matter to charm someone into bringing him food, or putting a couple to sleep and entering through the window.

Until the day he was half way through a window when he heard a voice from behind him. "Oi," said a dirty human. "Tha's quite a nice trick ya got there. I think tha's your name now, Trick. Why don't you come with me an' my lads and we won't mention this to th' guards, an' you can earn yer keep wif us." Not wanting to upset this person, or the two who wore leather and openly displayed weapons who stood behind him against a wall, Triskelion reluctantly agreed.

He was taken under the city, deep into the sewers, through a maze of tunnels that seemed to run forever. Eventually it came to an opening of sorts, a space two stories high, water draining through the middle, the edges surrounded by others in darkened leathers. Some were trying to sleep, others sharpening weapons, some negotiating trade. Only a few torches and candles lit this junction, a seeming hub for these people to rest, where many tunnels branched off this way and that.

The dirty human said, "Wait 'ere." He crossed the junction to an alcove where an old man sat at a desk writing in a book. He bent down and whispered something which caused the

old man to not only stop, but sit upright and look towards Triskelion as the man spoke. The man stepped away, nodded towards the other two, and the three disappeared down one of the side tunnels.

The old man had not stopped staring towards Triskelion. When the men were gone he beckoned Triskelion closer. "Welcome," he said. "You may refer to me as The Scribe. The man who brought you in is known as Scar. He tells me we should call you Trick, but here we choose our own names. It's safer that way." He smiled, set his quill down, and closed the book. "I hear you may be staying with us a while. If that's true, what would you have us call you?" Triskelion thought for a few moments while the old man reached for and opened another book. Triskelion had difficulty finding the words, as he was quite nervous at so many around him after being alone for so long. "I don't know sir. I've heard of a bard in a far off land who's quite famous." The old man took up his quill, patted young Triskelion on the shoulder and said, "That's quite a wish." Triskelion nodded, took a deep breath said, "David Hasslehoff." "So it is." The old man smiled, nodded, and wrote it in the book.

Part 3; Entering the Light

Triskelion stayed in the shadows with the thieves' guild nearly two years. In the first year, due to his age, he stayed close to The Sage, using his talents to identify stolen items or to heal the few injuries which would occur.

In the second year they decided his talents could best be used in the field. He acted as a persuader of the unwilling, helping during negotiations to ensure things went as favorably as possible, and when not, using magic to ensure it did.

It was the latter half of his second year with the guild that he discovered they were not as fair as he originally thought. Targets of robberies were not always rich nobles. And some in the guild were, in fact, assassins.

It seemed more and more the guild was leaning towards abusing his talents with blacker and blacker deeds. Again he left in the night, but this time he did not leave a note. He knew enough about the guild that they could not pursue him without incriminating or exposing themselves, so to his knowledge they have never tried to track him down.

Part 4; The Long Road

In the roughly twenty years since, he has traveled the land with no set destination. “Trick” still wishes to someday settle and become a celebrated and loved bard known all over the world, but that day may still be a long way off.

If he is not on the road you may find him wandering the open streets trying to lift the spirits of those around him; often in the less fortunate parts of town. When he is doing a longer set, particularly if he has even a smaller stage, you may hear him recount the tale of his youth, a ballad calls “The Hero of Canton; A man they call Jayne.”

Trick carries the light of his sister within him, trying to lighten the spirits of those around him, heal what he can, and distract that which he cannot.



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