

## The Eleknights

Lightning slashed the midnight sky and thunder roared in the heavens. The air was heavy with the prospect of rain. The mountain slopes shining in the light of the inferno that consumed The Hold. Banners of flame flew from the ancient citadel rising to the black clouds. The houses of the village that had stood for generations crumbled in the withering blaze. The ancient and majestic wall that encircled The Hold, symbol to the strength of the mighty clan lay broken upon the blood stained ground.

The bodies of the dead were sprawled everywhere. None were spared; not the old warrior, nor the young healer, or even the newborn child remained among the living. The air was rank with the smell of burning flesh and reverberated with the cries of the carrion fowl as they feasted on the fallen.

War cries, the clash of steel against steel, and the screams of the dying still echoed over this genocide. That some continue resisting his army's surprised Basilisk. Turning, he ripped his sword free from the heart of the young woman, letting her still warm body fall to the ground. Lengthening his stride toward the source of the sounds Basilisk took no notice of the bodies crushing beneath his boots.

As Basilisk followed the cries he reviled in the destruction and death he and his army had caused. Drawing near the citadel the sounds of conflict grow louder. The flames, on either side of the street, grew darker, as he passed as if for a moment they turning black.

Suddenly, as Basilisk approached across street one of his soldiers was thrown across his path smashing through the stone wall of a burning house. Ignoring his fallen fighter he turned into the street and there beheld a site straight out of legend. One man stood alone back to a wall

surrounded by foes, yet still he fought on. This last courageous champion of the clan was a man of mighty bearing and great dignity that neither the flames of war nor the bloody gore of battle could diminish. He continued to fight when a lesser man would have given up. Vengeance burned in his eyes brighter even than the flames consuming The Hold.

In one hand he bore a mighty flanged mace in which the patterns seem to constantly changing as if water, not steel had been used to make it. In his other hand he grasped a steel round shield. He wore a shirt of ring mail that shown like silver in the firelight. No helm or circlet did he bear, nor was one needed for upon the stone wall behind him stood a torn yet, mighty standard more noble than any crown. One half of it white and the other black and where the two met, a mountain of stalwart gray stood and at its feet a leak of deepest blue. Upon the white, a silver tornado raged and opposite on the black, a red flame blazed. Lightning strike the mountain's crown, and upon its slop shown a mighty sword. This was the crest of The Hold; this was the Christ of the Eleknights.

As Basilisk entered the street a small group of his soldiers gathered there began charging the Chieftain. As they drew nearer the Chieftain started laughing and raising his mace brought it swinging down before him! At the same moment a wave of water coalesced from every bucket, barrel, and puddle of water enveloped Basilisk minions. It slammed the foul creatures against the stone wall of a house like driftwood against the rocks. Those who were caught never stood a chance, however, not all were. Two were ahead of the others and avoided the wave interring striking distance of the Chieftain.

Screaming unintelligible war cries the first reached and struck. The Chieftain brought up his mace in a mighty blow, shattering the creature's sword and face. The grey skinned monster was sent crashing into a wall. Slumping to the ground its head was gone leaving only a torn and

bloody stump. Even as his fellow was thrown the second attacker reached the Chieftain. Without pausing the Chieftain swung around to face this threat, raising his shield and at the moment of collision a blinding flash lit up the street. The dark warrior was engulfed by lightning so strong that all that remained were ashes and melted armor. Those of the invaders who still faced the Chieftain quivered in fear; then they became aware of their Master, and fell to their knees in terror.

He was a terrifying figure in black plate armor. Flames, as fierce as a volcano's, rose from his shoulders. His helmet cast in shape to appear as the head of great serpent. Piercing red eyes shown in the firelight striking fear in even the boldest warrior's heart, but far more terrible were Basilisk's own eyes. Those orbs of terror shone out from behind the visor paralyzing all but the most stout hearted of men. Upon seeing him the gray skid soldiers scrambled over one another to be out of his gaze.

Basilisk halted a short distance from the Chieftain, appearing to be relaxed yet at the same moment as taut as a drawn bow. The Chieftain stood as if he had not been fighting hundreds of enemies for hours. Still for an experienced warrior like his foul opponent, the signs of wariness were plain to see. His ragged breaths, the slight drop of his shoulders, and the subtle trembling of his hands showed that the Chieftain was at the limit of his strength. Suddenly Basilisk struck, surging forward and slashing his night black claymore up at the Chieftain's face. Even as the blow fell the Chieftain swung his mace to meet it. Driving Basilisk's claymore aside, and in the same motion the Chieftain brought his left shoulder ramming forward intending to smash his shield into his enemy's chest. Only Basilisk was not there for the shield to hit. Foreseeing the Chieftain's counter he reared back avoiding the blow and strike again, this time at the Chieftain's legs. Leaping The Chieftain managed to avoid the swing and brought his mace

down in a blow to break open Basilisk skull. Once again Basilisk moving as if to avoid the attack but one of his feet went sliding, though he did not fall, he did lose his balance for a moment, but that was enough.

The mace struck Basilisk's helmet a glancing blow but it was enough to completely crush the ornate eyes of the serpent helm. Staggering from the blow Basilisk brought one hand up to his shoulder and reaching into the flames he flung it at the Chieftain. Instantly the Chieftain raised his shield blocking the flames. Once again a flash lit up the street as the flames collided with the shield, but this time the shield was marred its shining brilliance dimmed. While this was going on Basilisk tore his helmet off as the Chieftain lowered his shield.

As the Chieftain saw Basilisk's face he staggered as if from a blow. The face he beheld was that of his greatest friend. A man who he had fought beside through a dozen battles and was as a brother. Taking advantage of the Chieftain's shock, the traitor raised his black Claymore and renewed his onslaught. Basilisk was a mighty warrior; his swordsmanship was legendary for he wielded his Claymore as though it were a lesser blade. Instinctively the Chieftain raised his shield to block the below. As the marred yet shining shield and the black claymore collided a piercing shriek filled the air.

Unbelievably the black weapon cut through the steel shield. Not faltering for a second the Chieftain threw what was left of his shield into the traitor's face and grasping his mace in both hands he raised it above his head for a mighty blow! As he raised the mace a sphere of water coalesced from the air around it, gathering about its head. Then within the water a lightning bolt sprang to life casting a blinding light upon the battle. As the light reached its peak the Chieftain struck but even as the blow fell, Basilisk with the speed of a striking cobra slashing through armor, cloth, and flesh cleaving open the Chieftain's belly.

So great was the blow that the Chieftain was thrown against the wall that bore the banner, falling to the ground. As he lay there he spoke, what Basilisk thought a curse.

"The clan of the betrayer will be destroyed, down to its name. Two of my blood will strike down its rotten trunk. One will be driven by duty and the other by his destiny."

Basilisk laughter at these words echoed in the street, as he said

"What bloodline, fool? I went to great length to make sure that every drop of your family's blood was here this night. Any who were not killed by my soldiers shall burn to death in whatever holes they hide in! What say you to that, old friend?" He would have no answer for soon as the last word left the Chieftain's lips he, who was Lord of the Hold and Chieftain of the Eleknights, had departed this world.

Shaking his head at the foolishness of his old friend, Basilisk approached the body idly swinging his Claymore, but before he could perform whatever desecration he intended the wall collapsed. Raising his arms to shield his head from falling debris, Basilisk stared stunned as the burning banner and wall fell across the body. Cursing while moving his hands to quench the fire, for an instant they vanished then the flames burst forth from the rubble blazing pure white and with a heat so intense that the stones melted like ice. Witnessing this Basilisk roared in rage and as he did so the flames on his shoulders erupted like twin volcanoes, only what they flung forth were jets and sparks of the blackest flames. The sparks flew in all directions, and burning to ash even stone. Enraged Basilisk spun to face his soldiers; the gray skinned monsters were still groveling in fear. One of Basilisk's hands lashed out and caught a spark, instantly it grew into a ball of black fire. He hurled the evil flames straight at his own soldiers; it struck one of the gray skinned on his back. No screams of agony did he give so quickly did the fire consume him, the ones to either side of him were not so lucky. Sparks from the body had landed on them and they

were slower to fade to ashes. Once more basilisk raised his hand to catch a spark, but just as he was about to be parsed. Lying sparkling in the light of the flames where it had fallen from its master's hand was the mace. Moving quickly to where it rested Basilisk seized the weapon. Rising once more he turned to face his minions raising the mace high shouting.

"Thus ends the Eleknights, strongest clan of Rift. To you my monsters of death I gave whatever you want from the wreckage. Only this do I claim; I Basilisk, Black Flame, Chief Slayer!" Finishing, he swiftly made his way out of the flames and carnage; returning to his camp as his army began tearing what was left of the Hold apart.

Upon entering the camp Basilisk immediately went to his tent, entering he swung one of his hands in a gesture at the tortuous standing about the tent causing them to light. Never stopping to admire his trappings of power or grisly trophies of victory, ignoring all he went straight to an overly shape covered by a blood red sheet. Basilisk tore away the sheet revealing a mirror darker than Ebony that even in the torch light remained a sheet of darkness. Kneeling before the mirror Basilisk held up the Chieftain's mace above his head and spoke.

"The Hold has been destroyed my Lord, the Chieftain, his family, and his clan have been annihilated, all is as you command."

For a moment Basilisk word seemed to hang in the shifting heat and smoke filled air of the tent. Then a voice like a raging forest fire came roaring out from the mirror depths.

"You were also ordered to bring me the Chieftain's head! Why is it not before me?!" Basilisk hesitantly answered unsure of what his master might do.

"Before I could cut off his head the wall above him caught fire and collapsed burying his body." At these words a roar of fury issued forth from the mirror and with it Black flames shaping themselves into a grasping hand stopped inches from Basilisk's throat.

"Why didn't you simply command the flames to allow you passage?! Are you not a caster of fire and have I not given you the Black Fire?!"

For the first time that night Basilisk felt fear. Knowing his life depended on how he answered his master Basilisk spoke quickly.

"The flames would not have obeyed me for they were White."

For a moment the hand of Black Flames grew darker with rage, and then it released Basilisk and slowly withdrew back into the mirror.

"What matters the head, so long as the clan was destroyed. Of which you are certain?"

"Without a doubt my Lord" Basilisk assured "none could have escaped my ambush."

For a moment there was silence once more then the voice roared forth again though not in rage but in a fierce and fearful glee.

"At last, the line of the Element Lord has been broken, the prophecies of old are broken and now there is no one who can destroy me."

On a small hilltop overlooking the remains of The Hold as the fire finished its deadly work huddled a small group of men and women in disheveled and much stained garments with tear streaked faces. One of the women clutched her infant son close as she kneeled on the ground staring at the utter destruction and carnage below her slender body wracked with silent sobs. After some time one of the other women approached her.

"My lady what should we do?"

"Do!" said a man who held the hilt of his sheath sword in a white knuckle grip. "We summon our allies. Gather their warriors and crush these murdering bastards that destroyed our home and killed our family."

"No" shouted an elderly man "if we do that we risk our deaths and with them the destruction of our clan."

At this moment before the argument could go any further the lady of The Hold rose to her feet and turned to face the group. An instant silence fell as the entire assembly waited for her to speak.

"We will leave our lands before we are discovered." Shock shown on ever face as she continued "You all know I have the power to touch the minds of others. I touched my husband's just before he died I heard his final words, now listen!" After telling the Chieftain prophecy to her companions she said, "This prophecy is not for us nor is it for our children, but for those of our blood yet unborn who one day will avenge our clan. Until that day comes our clan is dead and we with it. If the clan is to have a future, then we must hide ourselves until the day our descendants call themselves Eleknights once again."

With that the woman turned steadying the black crossbow on her back and started walking down the hill into the forest below. After a moment the others began following her. As she walked one of her hands' went to rest on the head of her husband's ax which hung at her side. With the other she cradled her son. To her husband's memory, she promised that her son would survive and that his children and their children would remember what had befallen her clan, her family this night; the night the Eleknights were destroyed.

Eleknights =El-e-Knights

## Biography

I have always been hooked on fantasy from the first time I read "the Hobbit" to now. I hope to one day be a great teller of tells and with the help of my family I'm on my way.