

Blinded

Alexander Drummond (2022)

People make up false stories when they see something they cannot explain. And in a small village called Idmo, the people liked one of these stories so much they started thinking that the creature from the story was a god. They called it Aret and then Aret was my name. I am a servant of God, but not a god, simply someone sent down from the heavens to protect Idmo. If the villagers are in danger, they put a notice on the news board. The notice contains a sketch of a person/creature and its last seen location. After the notice has posted, I come and collect it, then eliminate the threat. To help kill the creatures, the gods gifted me weapons like my sword, my ancient book of magic and my armour, which is magic and makes me invisible to humans.

Mumbles about me echo throughout the town, like mice. Wind whistles along the horse stables and inns. I approach the news board and see that a new notice has been put up. The poster has a sketch of a tall creature with blood-stained rags covering its vast body. Its grey hand holds a crimson sword that looks like it is made from flesh. A white ceramic mask covers its face, it looks like a human face, oddly, this attracts my eye the most. Something tells me that this is not going to be a normal quest.

I start making my way over to where this *thing* was last seen. I rip my book off my belt, and flick to page 27. I chant the words ‘naag kyju’ from the ancient pages. Bones start forming from the dust and dead cells in the air – the bones create a skeleton of a horse. I mount the horse and start my journey to the *thing's* location.

I arrive at the forest in no time. I pull my ankh off my belt and wave it in front of the skeleton horse. The creature vanishes, and I make my way over to the entrance of the dark forest.

I enter the forest and the soft mud and tall, old trees seem almost untouched, since I first saw them around eight hundred long years ago. The forest feels unsettled, as if the *thing* I seek is waiting for me somewhere in the depths of the army of wooden soldiers. My armor is very heavy and for a mere human it would leave tracks in the mud, but being pure at heart, the mud is barely touched as I advance into the forest.

I spot a set of tracks in the mud and head over to them to inspect them closer. I notice they are very deep and the vegetation around them is frosty.

‘This isn’t good the tracks are significantly deep and cold, which can only mean one thing. The *thing* that left these tracks aren’t that far away and they are pure evil,’ I say to myself.

When something is sinful, their souls become colder and heavier, and this *Thing* has got to be the most sinful being I have ever come across. Out of nowhere, the aura of the forest shifts from a sense of undisturbed ancient calmness to an angry and raging fire that seems to be fueled by sin and pure evil. The forest feels like everything is set ablaze, but it remains ice cold. I get the feeling that I am not alone. There is something or someone waiting nearby, very quietly but at the same time brimming with fury.

I continue the path of sin until the forest clears, an open field of grass is exposed. A boulder lies at the other end of the field with a tall figure on top. The rags that it uses as clothes flow in the wind like a flag. A sword starts to form in its palm, the sword springs to life like vines growing rapidly. The sword seems to be made of flesh, bones, and organs and the white mask finishes off the Gruesome effect. I now know this is the *thing* that I have been looking for.

I approach it. ‘I will end you, so no one else falls victim to you.’ I start running and then draw my sword, leaping into the air and swinging my sword. But it disappears. ‘Where did it go? How did it vanish? That strike should have hit him, no nor...’ I get cut off and I hear a voice from behind me.

‘You’re fast, but not fast enough,’ it said before slicing off my arm.

I stumble to the ground and the stub where my arm used to be, regrows within seconds.

I stand up and ask, ‘No mere *thing* can move that fast, who are you and what is your intention?’

‘You’re right, I am no mere *thing* Aret, and my goal is to kill you and replace you.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘No one put up my notice, it was me and I have successfully lured you here and this is where you will die.’

‘You can only try, but you will not succeed, I assure you.’ I tighten my grip on my sword and pounce on the *thing*. Our swords clash as we dance around each other. I try to take off its head, but it blocks my sword. We are both held in a bind. Teeth suddenly grow out of the *thing’s* sword; they bite down on my blade, hard, attempting to break it. The teeth shatter under the strength of metal. I jump above the *thing* and split its mask in two.

It drops its sword and covers its face with its hands. It bends over screaming with its back facing me. A shockwave from it sends me flying back into a boulder. The grass around the *thing* start to die and the trees all shrivel up.

‘Aret, you are very old and the anger that you have brewed over the time of your life has created another world, which is identical to this world. With the only difference being me. I am here to take your place Aret, and did you wonder why I was so fast? Well, that’s because my name is Tera, and I am you.’

Tera slowly stands. His aura is strong and feels like all the wrath of the world is screaming in my ear. He turns, only to reveal that underneath his mask is a giant hole in his face.

‘No, you can’t be me, y... y... you’re lying!’

‘I am not deceiving you; I am you.’

‘That’s it I can’t take it anymore. I am going kill you, I am going to rip you to shreds!’

My movement is no longer elegant or graceful, it is fuelled with disbelief and rage. My steps gain weight, and my sight blurs. I use all my might and slash him; Tera gets sent flying back. I can see the fear in the black abyss where his eyes should be. Tera summons his horse and climbs on it; he rides off into the distance.

‘Oh no you’re not getting away,’ I say. I proceed to say the magic words ‘naag kyju’.

My Skeleton horse fully materialises and I mount myself on it. We chase each other across the lands until we finally arrive at a village. I follow Tera through the front gate and spot him resting on the ground against a wall. Tera signals to me and demons emerge from the buildings—they approach me, but they stand no chance. I leave them as a bloody mess on the ground.

‘Tera, did you seriously think that your measly demons could defeat me? Did you think you could defeat me?’

‘Look at yourself Aret, I have already won.’

‘What do you mean? I have killed all your minions and am about to kill you.’

‘Aret, I don’t need to kill you to replace you, when you have already become me.’

‘You’re insane, how...’

‘You have been blinded by anger and rage! You cannot see right from wrong anymore. I don’t have minions, those were people!’

My heart drops and I turn around to see that the demons I killed were actually people. ‘But... but... but they were demons.’

Tera snickers at me. 'You can't turn back now Aret, I have won and now, we both are identi...'

Thud! His head hits the ground.

'You're wrong Tera. I will never be you, I...I haven't lost my mind. I...I didn't mean to kill them, I thought I was protecting them from demons.' I take off my helmet and throw it to the ground. I start to walk away, trailing footprints of blood that does not belong to me.

I stand on a tall hill and stare into the distance towards the sunrise. The horizon is stained red. God knows of the sins I have committed. He knows that I must be punished. 'I have failed you, Lord,' I yell towards the sun. 'I have failed my purpose – I haven't protected the innocent, instead I have killed them. I should not be allowed to live any longer.'

The sun stares back into my soul. I take off my armour and lay it on the ground Infront of me, I kneel on the ground and stare at the sunrise. A tear rolls down my cheek and my long hair flows in the wind, the wind which is cold against the scars of my face. 'I protected everyone for a long time and in the end, I was the one to kill them. Forgive me my Lord.'

I raise my sword with one hand and turn the blade towards my chest, preparing myself for that I know must be done. My vision will blur into darkness. My body will become still and cold like a statue. Moss will grow over my gear and my body will decompose, the people of Idmo's blood will soak into the ground and a new group of people will start to live there, a new person will be sent to protect them. But I will never see as I have been blinded by rage, sin, and anger.