

Hero's Return

A young man abandons his village before a battle and
meets the ghost of an old man.

Dalong Hu

EXT. TREE OF HERO'S REST - DAY

In the middle of a vast clearing, there is a single, giant tree. DALE, a strong young man in travelling clothes, stops his walking and sits on a large rock.

DALE

Finally reached the Tree of Hero's Rest.

Dale looks up at the vast branches and sighs.

DALE

A coward like me doesn't deserve to stop here. Abandoning the village, my friends, and sister Laurel. Maybe I should go back... But I'm not about to kill myself resisting Demon King's Army.

ROLT

Hoooh? The Demon King's Army?

Dale shoots up and turns around. Standing by the trunk of the tree is ROLT, a half-transparent, slightly blurry old man in a rough cloak and wide brimmed hat.

DALE

A ghost? One of the demons? You stay away from me!

ROLT

How rude. I don't have much patience with gutless fools. I am the great Roltaviar Raktus Revaldo. Or Rolt, in short.

DALE

Uhh, Rolt? I'm... Dale.

ROLT

Dale, get your ass right back to where your family and friends all are.

DALE

I can't! We'll all die if we resist. The demon lord's army, and maybe even one of the Four Heavenly Generals might come by.

ROLT
We all die sometime...

DALE
Easy for you to say.

ROLT
I see you were already considering
returning. Think more about it.
Deeply.

At this point, Rolt starts to float around Dale and talks in
an airy, mystical voice.

ROLT
Your family. Your friends. Dying one
after another. Alone. Without you by
their side. You, having betrayed
them...

DALE
Stop, stop, stop! And stop circling me
like that, you batty old man!

Dale breathes heavily, and looks up at the leaves of the
giant tree, and closes his eyes.

DALE
...I got it. I'll go back.

Rolt suddenly pulls out a sword from beneath his cloak. It is
gorgeous, unlike Rolt's shabby appearance, and glowing a
fiery red. He slightly cuts his hand, and spectral blue blood
flows out and drips onto the ground.

ROLT
And, I'm dooone. Here, boy, you can
borrow this.

Rolt throws the sword over, and Dale awkwardly catches it.

ROLT
That's the Sword of Promised Victory.
You should be able to feel its great
power. I was quite strong back in my
day, and downed many foes with it.

DALE
Thank you. I'll return it for sure.

Dale runs out from under the shade, and towards the forest.

Rolt, who is watching him leave, sniggers.

EXT. VILLAGE GATE - DAY

There are rough, wooden barricades set up loosely in the outskirts of the village. A few shoddy trenches have also been dug out. The villagers are standing about, some with rusty swords and weathered armour, while others have only makeshift wooden spears. Their formation is messy with many weak points, and their number few in comparison to the massive Demon King Army standing before them.

On the opposite side, the ghastly Demon Lord's Army is lined up in neat array, fitting the entire width of the valley, all imposing in size, ferocity, and armaments.

A horn is blown, and a demon dressed in priest robes steps forwards.

DEMON

Our leader draws near! Troops! Stand ready!

The troops start to thump their weapons on the ground, creating an intimidating, rhythmic beat.

At this moment, Dale rushes out of the nearby forest to stand before the villagers. He holds the Sword of Promised Victory up high, and it emits a fiery glow.

DALE

Halt! I hold the Sword of Promised Victory. Even one of the Four Heavenly Generals would perish under its might!

The sword glows brighter. The booming sounds coming from the Demon Lord's Army stop and the troops stand still.

LAUREL

Brother! You've returned!

Dale turns back to smile at the villagers.

DALE

Don't worry Laurel. With this sword, we can at least bargain with them.

Behind Dale, the Demon Lord's Army suddenly stamps the ground, and shouts.

DEMON LORD'S ARMY
WE ARE UNDER YOUR COMMAND, OUR GREAT
DEMON LORD, THE SOLE THRONE ATOP THE
FOUR HEAVENLY STARS, WRAITH LORD
ROLTAVIAR RAKTUS REVALDO.

ROLT
Be at ease, my people.

Dale faces the demons again, and sees Rolt at their forefront. He is twice as big as before, and wearing green spectral armour.

DALE
...eh? Rolt? You...

ROLT
I am the Demon Lord himself. Know that I can crush all your resistance with a single finger. But since you amused me so much, I will grant you two options. If you duel and scratch me with that sword before you die, I can spare those who do not resist. If you run, then I will allow you to escape unharmed.

Dale is silent, feeling the gazes of the villagers behind him. Laurel steps up.

LAUREL
Dale, it's alright, we-

DALE
I accept the duel.

Rolt stares menacingly at Dale for a moment, before suddenly throwing his head back and laughing. With the sound of a balloon letting out air, his form shrinks to his former size, and the spectral armour fades away.

ROLT
That's the spirit my boy!

With a wave of his hand, the glowing sword flies out of Dale's hand and neatly cuts a small wound on Rolt's palm. Rolt lets a few drops of his blue, mist-like blood flow down to the ground, and a grand portal leading to the Tree of Hero's Rest is made.

ROLT
Proceed on, my people!

The army cheers and swarms into the portal like a fluid tide.

DALE (BEWILDERED)
Rolt, just what is going on?

ROLT
Before I died, I was a human born in your village. In my life, I had a few accomplishments, and was the one buried under that big tree. Now, we, the demons, are leaving the continent and heading for the sea.

Rolt holds out the Sword of Promised Victory.

ROLT
Here. You keep it.

Hesitantly, Dale takes the sword.

DALE
Thank you.

Rolt steps into the portal as well.

ROLT
Take it, as a gift from your great-great-great-great-awesome grandpa.

And he was gone.