

THE KNIGHTS DISPOSABLE

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

LANCELOT	Lancelot du Lac, the fellow who didn't fare so well in that whole Guinevere thing.
ALONSO	Don Quixote de la Mancha, the fellow who, after a heck of time, finally wins the appreciation of Dulcinea, and then drops dead moments later.
STEVEN	A fine fellow who tries to do what's right, and is rewarded the way such people are.

SETTING

A simple bedroom in modern times.

SCENE

(It is a simple bedroom. Steven is sleeping in his bed, unaware that two ghosts - Lancelot and Alonso - are not-so-patiently waiting for him to wake up.)

LANCELOT

May I share a secret with you, Alonso?

ALONSO

Of course, my friend. We are knights! Our hearts are pure, and our purity is like a vault! If you cannot trust in—

LANCELOT

So that would be yes, then.

ALONSO

Yes, my friend. That the mighty Lancelot would deign to share a secret—

LANCELOT

I hate this.

ALONSO

Qué?

LANCELOT

I hate this.

ALONSO

Is this true? It is an honor to induct a new member into our ranks. That we were chosen—

LANCELOT

Not that. I love being the herald of an honor like this.

ALONSO

What then?

LANCELOT

The waiting. Almighty God, how I hate waiting. And just sitting here, waiting for him to wake up... *(He breathes a deep sigh.)*

ALONSO

Patience is one of the great virtues of a knight, my friend—

LANCELOT

I know. I know. *That's* why it's a *secret*.

ALONSO

Ahhh. Sí. I understand. Worry not, noble friend. Your secret is safe with me. My heart rings pure, and my purity is a vault—

LANCELOT

Yeah, yeah. A vault. Hey! I have an idea.

ALONSO

¿Cómo?

LANCELOT

Wake him up.

ALONSO

We are ghosts. We cannot touch him. How could we possibly rouse him from slumber?

LANCELOT

Maybe you could make ghost noises.

(Alonso thinks about this for a moment, then, very softly, caringly...)

ALONSO

Ooooooo—

LANCELOT

What in the name of God are you doing?

ALONSO

Moaning like a ghost.

LANCELOT

I can tell that you're *moaning*. But it sounds like you're trying to put him to sleep.

ALONSO

I am new at this. Where I come from—

LANCELOT

Loud. And angry. Like 'oooooo'!

(Steven stirs ever so slightly at this, but Lancelot and Alonso are not looking at him.)

ALONSO

I understand. (*He turns to Steven, and very loudly...*) Ooooooooo!!!

(In the middle of the moaning, Steven sits up sharply and looks around to determine what was making the sound. He sees Lancelot, who points a “he did it” at Alonso.)

STEVEN

Who are you? What are you doing here?

LANCELOT

Steven Adam Deering, we have come to you with great purpose!

STEVEN

Who are you?!

LANCELOT

I’m getting to that. (*Starting over...*) Steven Adam Deering, we have come to you with gr—

STEVEN

I want to know who you are!

LANCELOT

That comes a little later on.

STEVEN

No it doesn’t. It comes now, or I call the cops.

ALONSO

Cops?

LANCELOT

Like the constable.

ALONSO

Ahhh.

STEVEN

Who the—

LANCELOT

Very well. We’ll skip forward a bit. I... am Sir Lancelot du Lac, Knight of the Round Table!

ALONSO

And I... (*Beating an introductory "da da la da da da da dat!" on his chest or thighs, and then breaking into the song from the musical...*) I am I, Don Quixote, the Lord of la Mancha! My destiny calls and I—

LANCELOT

What did we agree about the singing?

(Alonso suddenly looks very sullen, but remains silent. Lancelot continues.)

And we bear for you an invitation to join our order! This is an honor so great that—

STEVEN

Am I dreaming?

LANCELOT

Indeed it might seem so, for such an honor falls not lightly upon—

STEVEN

Are you real? This has to be a dream.

LANCELOT

Oh. You meant that literally. No, valiant warrior, this is no dream—

ALONSO

Though it may surely have *seemed* that your deeds fade unnoticed in the misty graveyard of obscurity—

STEVEN

How'd you get in here?

ALONSO

Through the veils of hopes and nobility, carried upon the winds of purity and saddled upon the steed of fortitude, we did—

LANCELOT

We just popped in. We're ghosts.

STEVEN

I see.

LANCELOT

And we have come to confer upon you a great honor.

STEVEN

I don't mean to sound ungrateful or anything, but... why?

LANCELOT

Are your intentions not honorable? Are your deeds not brave? Steven, do you not live in accordance to the principles of chivalry?

STEVEN

I... try.

ALONSO

And is your love not true?

STEVEN

(Unsure exactly what he is referring to...)

What love specifically are you talking about?

ALONSO

Of your lady Stacy. Is your love not pure and true?

STEVEN

Yesss...

(Pause.)

ALONSO

Do you mean yes, it is not pure and true, or yes it is pure and true?

STEVEN

I guess it's... true... ish.

LANCELOT

Son, you can't be knighted-*ish*. Is your love true or is it not?

STEVEN

Yeah. Yeah. It's true.

LANCELOT

Let's move on then. I have a joust at ten, and I need time to warm up first. No more questions, if you don't mind.

STEVEN

Okaaayyy...

LANCELOT

Alright. Where were we... come with great purpose... told you about the order... went through introductions... confirmed nobility...

STEVEN

Wait.

LANCELOT

Now look here, Steven—

STEVEN

Steve.

LANCELOT

(A tad annoyed)

Steve *(pronounced Ste-vuh')*... I told you, no more questions. If you keep interrupting—

STEVEN

But you didn't tell me about the order.

LANCELOT

This is the problem when you try to jump around. We're all out of sequence, and nothing makes sense.

ALONSO

We forgot to recount his deeds.

STEVEN

What dee—

LANCELOT

Enough! You, no more talking until it's your turn. Understand?

STEVEN

I—

LANCELOT

That's talking! Stop it! Now just sit down until it's your turn.

(Steven, confused, sits on the edge of the bed.)

Good. Alright, let us read aloud his...

(Lancelot stops and stares at Steven, realizing for the first time that he is wearing pajamas.)

ALONSO

What is it?

LANCELOT

The pajamas. I can't do this with him looking like that.

ALONSO

Maybe the blanket?

LANCELOT

That'll have to do. Steven... Steve (*pronounced Ste-veh', less emphasized this time*) Can you just wrap the blanket around your shoulders. Yes, like a cape. Good. (*He takes on an air of ceremony.*) Having dedicated your love to the lady Stacy...

ALONSO

He has!

LANCELOT

And having proven that love with actions brave and selfless...

ALONSO

He has!

LANCELOT

Having endured dangers, and sacrificed of self and soul...

ALONSO

He has! (*And then echoing it several times "he has... he has... he has..."*)

(Lancelot stops and stares at Alonso.)

It makes it sound like we are in a great hall instead of... this tiny bedroom.

(Lancelot shakes his head.)

I like it. (*To Steven...*) Don't you think it sounds better—

LANCELOT

Don't answer that. No speaking. (*Returning to the ceremony.*) And having sacrificed of self and soul...

ALONSO

He has! He—

(He stops at a glare from Lancelot. They lock glares for a moment. Lancelot makes a lancing gesture to remind Alonso that he has a joust soon, and Alonso gives him a resigning “okay fine” look)

LANCELOT

And having completed wondrous and heroic deeds for and, in the name of, his lady...

ALONSO

He has!

LANCELOT

And having been cast aside once need is gone...

ALONSO

He has!

LANCELOT

Having been forgotten for all his labors and sacrifice...

ALONSO

He has!

STEVEN

(Unable to stay quiet...)

Whoa. This has *got* to be *the* most depressing ceremony I've ever seen.

ALONSO

Are these statements not true?

STEVEN

Oh, no. They're true, alright. Just didn't really need it thrown in my face in the middle of the night.

LANCELOT

It's eight thirty in the morning.

STEVEN

Like I said. The middle of the night. Look, I know you said not to ask questions, but since we've stopped anyway...

LANCELOT

No—

ALONSO

Go on, lad. Ask your questions. You deserve it.

STEVEN

Just what is this order that I'm being inducted into?

LANCELOT

We've been through that.

STEVEN

No, we haven't. That part got skipped.

(Lancelot and Alonso confirm in whispers for a moment.)

LANCELOT

We are so sorry. You're right. And that's kind of important.

ALONSO

We are here to invite you to join our order... The Knights Disposable!

STEVEN

The Knights... what? What does that mean?

LANCELOT

You know, I am sure, that there are many orders of knights?

STEVEN

You can order knights? Like from a catalog?

LANCELOT

You're sleepy, so I'll let that pass, but try to not be stupid for a few minutes here, alright?

ALONSO

There are many orders of knights. The Royal Victorian Order.

LANCELOT

The Order of the Thistle.

ALONSO

Order of Saint Lazarus.

LANCELOT

Order of the Garter.

STEVEN

No way.

Hush, we're on a roll. LANCELOT

Order of the Bath. ALONSO

Order of the Golden Spur. LANCELOT

And perhaps most famous of all... ALONSO

The Order of Solomon's Temple. LANCELOT

Never heard of it. STEVEN
(Shaking his head...)

You have never heard of the Knights Templar?!? LANCELOT

Oh, oh. Templars. Yeah, sure. I've heard of them. You're Templars? STEVEN

No. LANCELOT

The Knights Templar are just one of many orders of knights. We are of a different order. ALONSO

A nobler order. LANCELOT

A prouder order. ALONSO

The Knights Disposable! LANCELOT AND ALONSO

Is that a real thing? STEVEN

LANCELOT

Of course it is. Our order was established long, long ago.

ALONSO

Long before those silly Templars, or the order of the Ermine...

LANCELOT

Or the Order of the Frozen Monkey.

ALONSO

They're the worst. (*Conspiratorially to Steven...*) They cheat at bowling.

LANCELOT

And we are the noblest, and most revered, of all the orders of knights.

STEVEN

No kidding.

ALONSO

Oh yes. For our knights are the most deserving of recognition.

STEVEN

Because they're disposable?

LANCELOT

Exactly!

STEVEN

How come I've never heard of you? How big is this order?

ALONSO

Bigger than it should be.

(Lancelot and Alonso both breathe wistful sighs of sadness.)

LANCELOT

We offer knighthood to those who exhibit the most honorable traits, and yet are rewarded only with rejection and abandonment.

ALONSO

Noble warriors for whom their deeds are thanked with naught but loneliness.

LANCELOT

Discarded once they are no longer needed.

ALONSO

Brave souls, used and abandoned.

LANCELOT AND ALONSO

(Now standing on either side of Steven to hit him in stereo with...)

Sound familiar?

STEVEN

God yes.

ALONSO

Our ranks are, alas, all too plentiful.

LANCELOT

Myself, and don Quixote...

ALONSO

Prometheus, Hercules...

LANCELOT

Ghandi, Joan of Arc...

ALONSO

Severus Snape, Socrates...

LANCELOT

Tyco Brahae, Duckie Dale...

ALONSO

Poor Duckie.

LANCELOT

And so many more. All good souls who fought to do what was right.

ALONSO

Only to be told at the end... How did that Adams fellow put it?

LANCELOT

So long, and thanks for all the fish.

ALONSO

(Wistfully...)

Right.

LANCELOT

Anyway... (*Looking at the clock in the room...*) I do have a joust at ten, so we should try to wrap this up.

ALONSO

(*Snapping out of it...*)

Of course, mi amigo.

LANCELOT

So... did we cover everything? Great purpose... the spiel about the order... who we are, how great you are... I think that pretty much wraps it up.

ALONSO

My fine knight, you have forgotten the most important part!

LANCELOT

No, the banquet comes afte— Oh, right! Ha! How could I forget? (*Ceremonial again...*) Steven Adam Deering, we do hereby and with great sincerity offer to embrace you into the Order of the Knights Disposable! What say you?

STEVEN

I... I don't know. Are there dues or something?

LANCELOT

We're knights, not the PTA.

STEVEN

So, no dues?

LANCELOT

I just told you—

STEVEN

Just making certain.

LANCELOT

I don't mean to rush you, but if I don't get to the lists in about ten minutes...

STEVEN

I...

(*Lancelot is looking very impatient.*)

I...

LANCELOT

If you don't mind my saying, this is really a no brainer. If you could just—

STEVEN

Fine.

ALONSO

Fine?

LANCELOT

Fine?

STEVEN

I mean yes. Yes, I accept.

LANCELOT

Excellent.

ALONSO

Congratulations.

LANCELOT

Well, that's it for now then. We'll send you a note with details for the induction. Try to be a little more decisive at the ceremony, as it's the last thing we go through before dinner. You understand.

(Lancelot and Alonso start exiting.)

Oh, and wear something comfortable, but not too comfortable, if you know what I mean. There's dancing, but no one wants to look like... *(he glances at Steven's pajamas...)* Well, do your best.

(Lights out)