

This is a sample copy of  
The Prologue & Chapter One  
for

# The Brave Squire

Book One of the  
Everfaith Series

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# PROLOGUE

## The Boy Who Wouldn't Quit

Sir Rowan, a knight in the kingdom of Everfaith, was new to the village of Alderwyn. Since arriving a week ago, he has enjoyed sitting at a table outside a small café in the village of Alderwyn, sipping a cup of warm spiced milk. Each morning, he noticed a young boy working tirelessly at the Riverside Stables across the street. The boy caught the knight's attention. He appeared to be about ten years old and a hard worker, refusing to give up on even the toughest job.

On this particular day, the boy struggled to carry heavy pails of water to fill the water trough. With each step, the water sloshed over the edge, the bucket heavy in his hands, but he refused to give up. The filled pail weighed almost as much as he did. Sir Rowan, a gentle and compassionate knight, had to stop himself from jumping up to help. His duty as a knight gave him a better reason to sit and watch. He needed to see how the lad handled himself. The knight was impressed with his determination. He would carry the pail a few feet, then set it down, rest for a minute, pick it up, and carry it a few more feet. Step by step, pail after pail, without giving up.

The owner of the nearby market stepped out to check his product display, and Sir Rowan called to him. "Good sir! Do you know who that lad across the street belongs to?"

The market owner glanced at the stable and answered the knight with confidence. "Benjamin? Aye sir. Good lad. Works hard. His father keeps the livery there." When he turned back to the knight, seeing the Ribbon Crest on his chest caused him to pause for a moment. Regaining his composure, the market owner continued. "Has the lad done something wrong, Sir Knight?"

"No, he has done nothing wrong. What is his father's name?"

"Joseph, sir. Joseph Aldwyn. Owns Aldwyn Riverside Livery, he does. Honest man. Keeps his horses and his word well enough. Raises the boy right too, if you ask me."

"I can see that." Sir Rowan stood, turned toward the market owner, and placed a hand briefly over his own chest. "You have my thanks, good sir." Then walked across the street to the stables.

Benjamin was making another trip with a heavy bucket of water. As he set it down to take a rest, the knight picked it up to offer a hand. "Allow me to help, lad. You've been working hard. You deserve a rest."

"Thank you..." Benjamin began—then he looked up.

The Ribbon Crest over the knight's heart caught his eye. His mouth dropped open.

"Um... sorry, Sir Knight. You're... you're with...The Order?"

The knight smiled. "Yes, lad. You may call me Sir Rowan."

"Thank you, Sir Rowan. I am Benjamin. Benjamin Aldwyn."

"I am pleased to meet you, Benjamin Aldwyn."

Benjamin's father noticed his son speaking with the knight and stepped over to see if he needed help. "Good day, Sir Knight. May I be of service?"

Benjamin jumped into the conversation, "Father, this is Sir Rowan. He's with the Order of the King's Shield, and he offered to help me with this bucket."

With a smile, Sir Rowan explained, "Yes, I was at the café across the street and noticed how hard working your son is. He works with a determination I have rarely witnessed in such a young man." Sir Rowan paused for a moment to think. "Mr Aldwyn, I would ask a brief word with you and your wife in private, if it would please you."

Puzzled, the boy's father looked to his son and back to Sir Rowan. "Yes, of course, Sir Rowan." He looked again to Benjamin. "Benjamin, finish your task here, then take a break. But take care of any customers who come by." Then Sir Rowan followed Mr Aldwyn to the house.

When the men returned with Mrs Aldwyn, Benjamin was finishing his work, sweat streaked with dust across his brow. He straightened quickly when he saw them. Sir Rowan studied him for a moment, then nodded once, as if confirming something already decided.

"Benjamin Aldwyn," he said, "I have spoken with your father and mother. They are willing—if you are—to have you come and work with me. You will learn the ways of a knight. You will serve as my squire in King Aldric's court."

Benjamin quietly gasped. He looked to his father, whose hand rested firmly on his shoulder. "I would work for a knight in The Order of the King's Shield?" His father nodded in consent. "Yes...yes, sir. I would be honored, sir!" His voice was steady despite his pounding heart threatening to burst from his chest.

Sir Rowan's expression softened. He turned briefly to Joseph. "I will come for him in the morning."

Joseph nodded. "We will be ready."

# Chapter One

## The Squire Who Longed to Be Brave

In the weeks that followed Benjamin's coming to work as a squire for Sir Rowan, Benjamin both enjoyed his new life and found it challenging. His days were spent polishing the knight's armor, caring for the knight's horses, and running errands. Benjamin remembered what Sir Rowan told him at his father's livery, "You would learn the ways of a knight," but he didn't really believe someone like him could ever be one. He knew that only the bravest of men earned that honor—or so he believed. As far as Benjamin was concerned, Sir Rowan was one of the bravest in the kingdom.

It is rare for a young boy to rise to such a calling. But his parents had told him of a boy long ago who earned it through an act of great courage. They told him that maybe one day he could do the same and help protect Everfaith. But he didn't really think he would.

Lost in his thoughts, Benjamin didn't realize how full the water bucket had become. THUMP! SPLASH! The bucket slipped from his grasp, soaking his feet and the ground around him. Frustrated, he picked it up and started to fill it again. One of the older teenage squires walked by and started laughing at him. Sir Rowan followed close behind. "Don't worry about it, Ben. You're doing well. We all drop things from time to time." Benjamin liked Sir Rowan. He especially liked it when he called him "Ben."

After filling the bucket...again, Benjamin went to the barn to water Sir Rowan's favorite horse. Starfire, a golden-red mare with a white star on her forehead and a white mane. Benjamin loved Starfire. A tall and gentle horse. Sir Rowan had five horses, but he loved Starfire the best. He enjoyed riding her on his patrols around town. Benjamin believed Starfire was the most beautiful horse in the stable. He poured the water into her water-trough, and she nuzzled him before she started to drink. Benjamin knew this was her way of thanking him. He smiled as he patted her thigh, wishing he could reach higher to scratch her back.

Sir Rowan stepped into the stable with a lunch bucket. "Ben! I was told you missed lunch again. You get so wrapped up in your work that you forget to come. So, I brought a meal for you. Take a break and eat. A squire, as well as a knight, needs to keep up his strength."

"Thank you, Sir Rowan. I lost track of time, and nobody came to get me." Benjamin's eyes fell to the ground. He kicked some of the straw. "None of the other squires ever thinks

to look for me.” Benjamin was the youngest squire at the castle grounds. Very few of the older squires treated him with respect. Benjamin was often overlooked.

Sir Rowan looked into Benjamin’s eyes. “You are a fine young man, Ben. You’re a hard worker. I am proud to have you as one of my squires!” He patted Ben’s shoulder and headed to the training ground.

Sir Rowan’s words made Benjamin feel ten feet tall. Being respected by Sir Rowan made him feel...well, a little braver. He then sat down on a bale of hay to eat his lunch.

While he was eating, he started thinking about Sir Rowan's Ribbon Crest – the one he wore the day he asked Benjamin to join him. Benjamin didn't fully understand what it meant yet, but he knew one thing: it wasn't worn by accident. It was a sign of an oath – a promise given not for applause, but for obedience. And very few knights were ever chosen to wear it.

Across the street, in the training ground, knights were training the bigger squires in sword fighting. If only he could truly be brave enough to be a real knight. He stepped up and leaned on the fence to watch. He imagined himself as one of them. He would do anything to be a knight. Benjamin told himself as he let out a deep sigh, the words a whisper to himself, “How can I ever become a knight when I don’t even know how to be brave? Lord, please teach me how to be brave.”

He didn’t know it yet, but the Lord had already begun to answer.