

Cost of Honor

A SHORT STORY BY JONATHAN MABERRY

STORY
JONATHAN MABERRY

ILLUSTRATION
SURFSIDE 3D

SENIOR DIRECTOR,
STORY & FRANCHISE DEVELOPMENT
VENECIA DURAN

SENIOR MANAGER, WRITING & BOOKS
MATTHEW COHAN

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR
CHLOE FRABONI

SENIOR EDITOR
MEGAN WALKER

SENIOR BRAND ARTIST
SOPHIE ERB

SENIOR PRODUCER
BRIANNE MESSINA

PRODUCTION
CARLOS GARCIA RENTA, TAKAYUKI SHIMBO

GAME TEAM CONSULTATION
RAPHAEL AHAD, JOSHUA GREENFIELD, PHILLIP HILLENBRAND, JR., EVAN LEE, CHRIS METZEN, STACEY PHILLIPS, KOREY REGAN

LORE CONSULTATION
SEAN COPELAND

Blizzard.com

© 2026 Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. Blizzard and the Blizzard Entertainment logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. in the US or other countries.

Published by Blizzard Entertainment.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's or artist's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Blizzard Entertainment does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.



COST OF HONOR

"Settle yourselves down by the fire," said Demar Brant, waving to the logs laid in a half circle. Above them the sky raged with thunder, but beneath the arms of the trees they remained safe. Brant, Knight-Captain of Farholde Keep, brooded for a moment. Flickering firelight traced the edges of every scar won in battle-upon-battle. "You have all heard the songs of battle and victory," he began. "And you think you know the truth behind those tales." He smiled faintly.

"But you know only fragments about the history of the Riverglades. Tales told around fires like this." He paused and shook his head. "But stories *change* in the telling. Knowing the truth is what matters." Thunder boomed above like the roaring of giants.

"When you look at the elders among the brotherhood . . . make sure you study the lines in those faces—those cut by time and those by blade—for they are a map of the journey of our people, the battles fought, the hardships endured, and the risks taken."

He looked at the young faces and saw some nodding.

"To protect our own and to secure the safety of each of you, the brotherhood has taken awful risks. Did we not break with Stormwind and the Alliance to harry the fleeing remnants of the Horde after the Siege of Blackrock Spire? Decisions like that cast long shadows over





each of us, but in those shadows we stand. Sometimes what is *said* to be right is not so—some decisions are too cautious, giving too little forethought to future consequences. We saw that, and we took action lest the fleeing Horde spread like a plague across the world."

He shook his head and smiled.

"Ask yourselves . . . is an oath given of more worth than the lives of villagers and innocent farmers? If the respect and trust of the Alliance is more important than the lives of the people who depend upon us, then who are we? *What* are we?"

"You've heard bits and pieces about the Siege of Blackrock Spire, which is one of those moments around which the history of many cultures turn. That battle pitted the noble Alliance of Lordaeron against the seemingly overwhelming might of the orcish Horde led by Orgrim Doomhammer."

"Was Doomhammer very fierce?" asked a youth.

"He was as fierce as his name suggests."

"Why did they fight?"

"Each side fought for what they believed in. That meant that each felt a sense of righteousness in their cause. Perhaps in some orc hall, one of their elders tells this story from a different perspective."

"But *why* did they fight?" asked a small girl.

"Why do most people fight? For power. For trade routes. For land," said Brant. "The Horde want to close us out, *starve* us out, and take everything for themselves. They came to Azeroth as agents of those demons in the Burning Legion. They feel that whatever they can take through slaughter is theirs by right."

There were shivers and fearful whispers.

"Now," he continued, "when Doomhammer slew Anduin Lothar, by all logic the war should have ended there, and indeed many of the Alliance soldiers felt their own courage drain away with Lothar's lifeblood."

He saw wide eyes around him and mouths open in silent *Ohs*, faces pale with fear at his words. Yet Brant smiled.

"Wars can be lost in a single moment," he said, "but then again, victory can be snatched from between the teeth of dragons. War, like life, is fickle. It is as changeable as the weather."

They leaned forward. "What *happened*?"

"Armies may follow a great hero, but it does not mean that there are no other heroes

in their ranks. No indeed. As Lothar fell, the paladin Turalyon rose. He had learned much as Lothar's lieutenant and at need found within himself the strength to lead and the wisdom to make critical decisions."

He then described how Turalyon, a knight of the Silver Hand, rallied the faltering Alliance forces and then drew upon his own holy powers. An empowering light emanated from him, and this served as a beacon to reignite the courage in the hearts of each soldier. And so they rose too.

"They took up the weapons that had fallen from their trembling hands," said Brant, "and they followed Turalyon, who brandished Lothar's broken sword in one hand and his great hammer in the other."

"No shield?" cried one of the youngsters.

"Ha! No. Orgrim Doomhammer shattered that before he killed Lothar, but did that stop the paladin? No, lad, it did *not*. The paladin swore before both armies and the heavens themselves that he would avenge his lord. Doomhammer laughed in his face and attacked with his great hammer. Turalyon stood his ground, and with that shattered sword he laid to and brought Doomhammer to his knees."

"Good! Glad he killed the green beast," cried a child, but Brant shushed him.

"Hush. Do not mock our enemy. We measure our glory by the courage it takes to fight such fiends. Turalyon knocked the orc warchief unconscious. Then the paladin and his comrades rallied to overwhelm the orcs. Defeating them—but not slaying them all. Instead, they bound them *and* Doomhammer in chains." He paused. "The Horde is evil, yes, but they are fierce. Even they deserve that much respect."He watched their eyes as the youths whispered to one another or chewed on the seeds of understanding within their own thoughts.

"Is that how the Second War ended?" asked a quiet youth.

"No. There were more battles, some as great as that one," answered Brant. "But the Siege of Blackrock Spire was pivotal. Had we lost there, we would likely have lost the whole war and the world would be different."

He leaned back, then spoke of war itself. He did not praise it but explained it as a necessary evil in so complex a world.

"Wars demand so much of us, and when we answer that call, much about us is revealed. When Lothar called for others to aid him, many did not respond. Fear kept them at home,


BLACKROCK
MOUNTAIN
TWILI
SHRO


KROL'DOK
STRONGHOLD
SUNNYGLADE
POWDERFUSE
POINT

huddling behind locked doors. So, instead, those knights who *did* answer rode off to be the shield between their whole world and the Horde."

He explained about the many races fighting for land and resources—the Alliance, the Horde, the ogres, and others—and told them that *need* is not evil, though some methods taken often are.

"And some are greedy and their methods are often brutal and cruel."

"Like the Twilight's Hammer?" asked an older boy.

"Oh yes. They delight in taking what's not theirs and claiming it as their own. Sunnyglade is one, and its memory is like a knife."

But then he smiled and spread his arms wide.

"Yet here we are . . . in Farholde Keep," he cried. "And this has become a safe home for us. Its walls and the soldiers who man them keep us safe, and most importantly, we are *together*."