

THE SHOPKEEPER

Written by

Christopher Wood

FADE IN:

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

VELERIN D'ARCY, a middle aged, grey-haired man, is HUMMING an upbeat tune as he polishes a prized broadsword, raising the steel toward the sunlight peering through the window.

The sword gleams under the sunlight, making the weapon look presentable for customers.

VELERIN

There we are! Good as new.

Suddenly, the entrance to the shop swings open, SLAMMING against the wall. QUINT RYDER, a young adventurer with a smug expression strides toward the counter, tossing a battered looking short sword in front of Velerin.

CLANG. The sword bounces briefly on the wooden counter top.

Velerin stares quietly at the blade, and then back to Quint.

QUINT

(Boastful tone)

Another monstrous creature
vanquished by my swordsmanship.

Velerin picks up the blade carefully, holding it in front of him with both hands. Velerin examines the blade.

VELERIN

(Light chuckling)

Is that so?

QUINT

Hah! The beast didn't stand a
chance. I bet the village throws a
celebration in my honor.

Velerin places the sword gently on the counter top, and crosses his burly arms over his chest wearing a broad grin.

VELERIN

You know, I was a swordsman in my
younger days!

QUINT

(Doubtful tone)

You? But you're so...
(pause)

Quint's attention is drawn to Velerin's oversized gut.

Velerin looks down to his stomach, realizing what Quint is referring to. Velerin PATS his stomach comically.

VELERIN

Oh, this? No no, my boy! I was a stalwart warrior in my day. You couldn't find a more fierce swordsman.

Quint rolls his eyes, and unattaches a small, leather bag of coins from his hip. He tosses the bag toward Velerin, who catches the bag with a surprised look on his face.

QUINT

I've no time for fairy tales old man. There should be more than enough silver to cover the cost of repairs.

Quint turns to leave the store, saying nothing more to Velerin as he exits the store. Velerin sighs discontentedly.

FADE TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE, Back of the store - Night

Velerin raises his BLACKSMITH HAMMER, striking Quint's sword against a simple, black anvil.

CLINK! The hammer strikes the red hot steel.

Velerin is wearing a protective mask and glasses. Sweat is visible on the shopkeeper's forehead, as a fire CRACKLES behind him inside a stone furnace. Velerin pauses, lowering the mask.

VELERIN

(Velerin exhales deeply)
That...should do it for tonight.
Time to go home.

Gently, Velerin wraps his protective glove around the hilt of the tempered blade, and guides it over toward a oak barrel full of water. He dips the blade into the cool water, and a cloud of steam billows from the surface of the water.

As the steam clears out, Velerin looks around the room, his eyes focusing on dusty, long since forgotten trophies around the room.

On the wall closest to him, is a large, cracked bone mounted on a plaque. The trophy triggers a memory.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRASSY FIELD - DAY

(The memory plays out
silently)

A group of three young men stand victorious around a slain monster, the body archetype matching that of an oversized raptor. One of the swordsmen removes his blade from the beast's tough hide, and looks like a much younger, more in shape Velerin.

VELERIN (V.O.)

I remember those days fondly. That feeling of invincibility, and the adrenaline that filled my body in every fight.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE, BACK OF THE STORE - NIGHT

Velerin is putting his equipment away, then removes QUINT'S SWORD from the barrel. The shopkeeper places the sword on a display hanging on the wall.

Velerin reaches for a nearby CLEAN RAG, drying the steel before tossing the rag on a pile of dirty rags by the door.

Taking one last look around the back of the store, Velerin EXTINGUISHES the now dim fire inside the furnace using a bucket and water from the barrel.

Velerin makes his way out the door, back toward the front of the shop.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

VELERIN (V.O.)

(Smiling)

It's true, much has changed since those days fighting to protect the village.

Velerin strides toward the wooden counter, crouching below to reach for something.

VELERIN

(Groaning)

Damn knees. Now where did I put it?

(pause)

Ah ha!

Velerin stands up, now holding a small children's doll in his right hand. Velerin turns the doll over, examining it carefully, TUGGING at the simple, white bow wrapped around the doll's waist.

VELERIN (V.O.)

It was later in life when I learned what truly mattered.

CUT TO:

INT. VELERIN'S HOME - DAY

(Another silent memory)

A slightly older version of Velerin from the previous memory is seen cradling a newborn, a look of joy on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Velerin pockets the doll in his jacket, patting the outside of the jacket softly. The shopkeeper makes his way toward the exit, revealing a SNOWY, winters night outside.

Velerin shuts the door behind him.

VELERIN (V.O.)

My life changed the day she was born. Suddenly, honor and glory were nothing if not an after thought. The only thing that mattered was her, my reason for fighting.

FADE TO BLACK.

