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Battle March

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aiming the rifle at you.” He shuddered at that memory. “I was so scared for your safety, at first I wasn’t sure what to do. Then, just as I was starting to cast a runic protection spell, Jo Gjende’s wraith appeared.” Redbird paused and looked around. “Say, where did he go?”

Marit looked thoughtful. “I don’t know for sure, but if that really was my ancestor’s ghost, my guess is that once he stopped Jon from getting away with his rifle, Jo went back where he came from.”

“We may never know,” Redbird replied, “but if you are up to walking now, I think we’d better head back down the mountain and find a phone. Your folks must be worried sick about your safety.”

The couple rose to their feet, exchanged heartfelt hugs, and began to retrace their steps along the narrow path atop the Bessegen ridge.

Ahead lay a new day and a future together they could, as yet, envision only dimly.

The police came to collect Jon’s body the next morning, and to scour the slope for Jo Gjende’s rifle. When their best efforts failed to find any trace of the gun, Inspector Øyen, the officer in charge of the investigation, concluded that it probably had slid all the way to the bottom of the slope and now resided in the depths of Lake Gjende. Thus there was much muttering and head-scratching in official circles the following day when the custodian of the graveyard at the Vågå stave church came upon a battered old flintlock rifle lying at the foot of Jo Gjende’s headstone. But when the word got around, as it quickly does in a small town like Vågå, Marit and Redbird just looked at each other and smiled.

Battle March

by David Landrum

Dark forces--hags and werewolves, creatures marred
Misshapen from the evil in their souls,
March in uneven ranks, a grisly guard
To aid the White Witch in her evil goals.
Centaur and dryad, talking beasts in form
Of quiet nobility, stand rank on rank,
A righteous host against an evil swarm,
Clear stream against a fen, fetid and dank.
The White Witch leads them forward. Her witch’s wand
Turns flesh to stone, but deeper Magic treads
Not far away, from Aslan, who has donned
New powers and has come back from the dead.
A leap, claws bared: he whom the witch had shamed
Taught her at last how he could not be tamed.