

“Ye Olde Tech Support”

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*(A blank space. The knight enters. He wears no armor and he carries no shield; he is dressed in shorts and a t-shirt and carries only a backpack. He makes the motion of taking an imaginary sword from his belt loop; he slashes his invisible weapon around in sloppy but impressive strokes.)*

KNIGHT

What do you think of me now, bitches?! I pwned this dragon *and* I got the Sword of Destiny—you ain't got shit on that, sons! Now I'm gonna fucking ride up to the Elder Castle, obliterate that shit brick by brick, bang the princess and turn you motherfuckers into my serfs!

*(A dwarf enters. Again, he wears nothing to indicate his stature or his personality. He's just a guy in a t-shirt and shorts.)*

DWARF

Good den, young master knight.

KNIGHT

What?

DWARF

I bid you good evening.

KNIGHT

Oh. What's up?

DWARF

I was hammering out an axe on my forge—yonder by that thatched cottage—and I heard you proclaiming your feats. You've encountered much in your travels; I seek adventure, too. Would you like a partner in your quest?

KNIGHT

Fucker, you're just a dwarf.

DWARF

Quite so, and you're a knight.

KNIGHT

Exactly. What the hell could you possibly do for me? Unless you want to duel over your weapons store, I won't be getting any experience points out of this interaction.

DWARF

But listen—you're Sir Andrew of Suburbia, are you not?

KNIGHT

You can read my name right on your screen, asshat. It's in my character profile.

DWARF

And you're the primary user of yon account?

KNIGHT

Dude, could you drop ye olde English speak?

DWARF

Look, the higher-ups force us to talk that way; it keeps us from interrupting the gaming experience too drastically.

KNIGHT

Yeah, I was about to hit the road to the castle? So I'd say you're shitting all over my experience right now.

DWARF

Then I'll get right to the point. My name's Dwayne; I'm a member of the online support team for Knights of the Realm. And I need to talk to you about—

KNIGHT

Wait, support team? Ooh, I get it! You're in the game to offer assistance to newbies. Well, I don't need any help. As you can see, I'm a bitch-ass level 33.

DWARF

You might think you don't need any support, but—

KNIGHT

I already know the next step: I'll grab the Gem of Azule from the castlekeep. Then I'll win the princess' fine self, and end up with a fiefdom. Then I'll be one step away from boning the whole game! And I can do that without you because—

DWARF

I understand, but—

KNIGHT

I can do that BECAUSE—

DWARF

But there have been questions concerning your account.

KNIGHT

Look at my giant sword, motherfucker!

DWARF

Watch where you're swinging it— All right, you asked for this!

*(He claps; the knight is frozen in his tracks.)*

Remember, dwarfs have access to time spells, sleep potions and freezing tantrums.

KNIGHT

I needed all my available health for the next battle, fuckface! Why'd you clamp my feet to the ground?

DWARF

We've logged multiple IPs using your account; that's two different computers playing the same character at the same time. Which isn't allowed.

KNIGHT

No shit. Couldn't you have just emailed me about this?

DWARF

Sure, but you happened to wander by and I registered your presence, so you're stuck.

KNIGHT

What do you want?!

DWARF

You haven't shared your login info for Knights of the Realm with anyone, have you?

KNIGHT

No—God—I don't even have it written down.

DWARF

Good, because online gaming gets really messy when the parent company is cheated, and random people are logging on for free all over the country.

KNIGHT

Look, what's it gonna take for you to unfreeze me here?

DWARF

Maybe don't call me an asshat again?

KNIGHT

You don't have to be a douchebag about this, man.

DWARF

You may need a new IP address, if somebody's hacked it. Why don't you give me your account username—the one you use to sign into the game? I'll set up a new IP and—

KNIGHT

No, I really think you should just unfreeze me instead.

DWARF

Oh, yeah?

KNIGHT

Yeah, Dwayne. Because I'm gonna be honest with you. I'm *actually* part of the Knights of the Realm online support team, unlike you.

DWARF

What?

KNIGHT

And I can tell you from experience: members of the staff never contact users during game play.

DWARF

Well, then what are you even doing on a quest, bro?

KNIGHT

It's my day off. I'm betting you're some snot-nosed thirteen year-old who feels like phishing around and stealing information just for kicks. Am I right?

DWARF

How do I know you're who you say you are?

KNIGHT

Trace my IP address. I've got it in my character profile.

DWARF

Everybody has that in their—

KNIGHT

Only mine leads to the online support site. Check and see.

*(Dwarf taps Knight in the chest. The knight takes off his t-shirt. Underneath it is a collared shirt like you see guys from the Geek Squad wear. He strikes a thumbs-up pose, mimicking the helpful staff image from his support website.)*

See? Yours leads to your Facebook page, and that means—

*(Knight taps Dwarf in the chest. Dwarf takes off his shirt to reveal a Little League uniform. He crouches down on one knee as if taking a posed team photo.)*

DWARF

Oh, Jesus, Mom! She keeps hijacking my page and putting up these cutesy T-ball photos from, like, eight years ago!

KNIGHT

Still, I know pretty much everything I need to know about you, buddy. So you better unfreeze me.

*(Dwarf claps again and Knight can move.)*

Thanks. As a bonus, I'll take any extra health you got outta weapons repair.

DWARF

Anything, dude—just don't put a hold on my account—I was only goofing off!

*(Dwarf rolls up a sleeve on his Little League shirt, revealing a longer shirt with a Red Cross patch on one shoulder. He rips off the Red Cross and hands it to the Knight, who pins it to the name tag of his online support shirt, and brightens.)*

KNIGHT

Ah, leveling up to one hundred percent capacity. That's better.

DWARF

Great, I'll see you later.

KNIGHT

Not so fast! I'm still gonna register a complaint on your account, Dwayne.

DWARF

What?! But—

KNIGHT

You violated the terms of service. I have to follow protocol and punish you. Otherwise I'll lose my job, and any access I have to this game. I won't stand for that.

DWARF

Come on, I can give you lots more stuff. I could win over that whole castle for you!

KNIGHT

No, I don't think so. There's nothing like completing a quest under your own steam.

DWARF

Dude, you can't kick me off—

KNIGHT

Relax, I'm just teaching you a lesson, since this *seems* to be your first infraction. It's a blemish, not a ban. Now I'll need to verify some of your account information. Tell me, under what name is Andrew of Suburbia registered?

DWARF

My mom. Her username's NanceStephens48.

KNIGHT

But you're the only person authorized to use the account?

DWARF

Yeah.

KNIGHT

All right, just give me a minute to plug that into the computer system.

DWARF

Man, whatever you're doing, you gotta promise it's not gonna lock me out of the Lusty Traveler tavern—I've got a date with some hot elf chicks this weekend! I'm talking two for the price of one here, dawg!

KNIGHT

I see plenty of imbibing in your future. This record'll just show people what you've been up to; it won't limit where you can go. What's the password for this account?

DWARF

Well, that's the part I got to choose. It's Dwarvesboinkchicks2.

KNIGHT

Your maturity astounds me. All right, we're set up, you need to log off this account.

DWARF

Why?

KNIGHT

So the update can go through, and the infraction can appear on your profile. Give it a couple seconds to settle into the system, then try logging back in.

DWARF

You got it.

*(Dwarf slumps over, frozen. Knight walks over and lifts up Dwarf's arms; he removes his Little League shirt and the Red Cross shirt underneath it. Knight drops the shirts into a pile on the floor. He pulls down Dwarf's shorts, takes them fully off and shakes out the pockets for change—a set of keys falls out of them, as do some coins. Knight puts the shorts, all the t-shirts, the keys and spare coins in his bag. The dwarf straightens up; now he wears only boxer shorts and a white tank-top.)*

DWARF

What the frak?!

KNIGHT

Oh, hey. What's up?

DWARF

Dude, what happened to my stuff?!

KNIGHT

Dwayne. The online support team would never ask for your password.

DWARF

What are you talking—

KNIGHT

I don't work for Knights of the Realm, sucker. You got pwned! Like that motherfucking dragon!

DWARF

You stole my clothes, my money, the keys to my armory— Why, man?!

KNIGHT

Well, for a dwarf, you've got some pretty heavy shit—endless battle axes, mutton on reserve, plus those sweet spells. Sure, I can take over the castle with this sword, but— what about my final quest? Why take any chances? Especially when there's cyber geeks trolling around scamming me before I even set foot on the parapets.

DWARF

I can't believe this! I saved up for a year to buy this account!

KNIGHT

It's not enough you wanna be one character? You gotta be two? But here's the problem with that, asshole: you think you know who to target in here 'cause their shit's open and listed—truth is, this world is just like everywhere else. You only show people what you want them to see.

DWARF

Come on, dude! Have a heart!

KNIGHT

Have a freezing tantrum. How about that?

*(The knight claps and the dwarf freezes.)*

As for me. It's onto the next quest, bitches!

*(The knight walks off, swinging his sword.)*