

Terry considered the act of drinking the lion's blood. Besides the awful taste, it would be sticky and warm. Could he do it? By nature's design, Terry was much more of a vegetarian. He usually ate strawberries, and sometimes he ate crickets. He never drank blood, though. He'd never had a steak or hotdog or hamburger or chicken or fish or (gasp) other turtles or cat or dog or hawk or seal or oyster or lamb or human. Sure, part of him had always felt a little empty for that, as he'd watch the other animals in the precinct munching up their various wild brethren, but he just stuck to his greens. And he was the best there was.

Terry looked over the body of the dead lion, his new friend, Aslan the Lion. What would Aslan do? Would Aslan drink Terry's blood? Surely not. Terry didn't have much blood, he didn't think. And, from what he'd seen of it, it wasn't very delicious blood. He made his decision to not heed the advice of his vapid, effervescent friend, and to just walk away.

"Terry!" came the terrible voice he'd heard before. Terry turned back, and there was the ghost of Aslan.

"Terry. Drink my blood," said Aslan. "I don't know if we can make it any more simple than that. Drink up, boy. Get your guzzle on!"

"Aslan," said Terry, "isn't that a little extreme? What will drinking your blood do for me?"

"Terry," replied Aslan's ghost, "do you know who God is?"

Terry scoffed. "Of course I do."

"Well, Terry," continued Aslan, "I am one hundred times stronger than God. I'm a lion."

Terry was confused. "So, you're saying that lions are better than God?" Terry didn't know how this could be so. He knew a couple lions, and they were right gits. "Why would God make a creature better than him?"

"No, no, no, Terry," said Aslan, shaking his head solemnly. "Not all lions are better than God. Just me. Because I am God, and I am a lion." Aslan suddenly had a piece of ghost chalk in his hands. He drew a little equation in the air that said "God + Lion = Aslan > God > Jesus > Regular Lions". "You see this equation? God plus a lion equals Aslan, which is me. Now, Aslan is

greater than God, because Aslan is God plus lion, from before. God is also greater than Jesus, because Jesus is his son, and sons never amount to as much as their fathers. Jesus and God and Aslan are all greater than regular lions, which are just animals."

"Oh," said Terry. He never much had a head for math, except that he was a genius at it, but he didn't like it all the time but he did always get it right away no problems.

"Now, I can flesh this out a little more..." Aslan was busy with the chalk, marking some additional math along the equation. He wrote up there, "Terry + Aslan's Blood (< God's blood) = Super Terry (= Terry * 3 or 4) > Regular Lions > Regular Turtles" Then he explained that part of it by saying, "Terry plus Aslan's blood, that's my blood which Carlton told you to drink, and which is less than God's blood because my blood won't save your soul (according to some theologies) is equal to Super Terry, that's you, and which is equal to Terry times three or four. Now, that's not Terry times three OR four, it's Terry times three or Terry times four. I'm afraid I didn't write that out very mathematically clearly. Still, Super Terry is greater than regular lions, from before, and regular lions are greater than regular turtles. Clear?"

"Uh, no. I'm not clear. So, regular turtles are below regular lions?" This was the main part that Terry couldn't believe. How could he be lower than a lion?

"Terry, there is prophecy. It is said that one will come from the clan of Shellbacks who shall have dominion over the FurrNecks. It is this one, this chosen one, who will bring about the... peace... of the world. He can only become the true one through the blood of the greatest of the FurrNecks, he who is also Who Am," said Aslan's ghost, mysteriously. He looked knowingly at Terry.

"Well, if there's a prophecy, then I guess..." said Terry. With that, the ghost picked up the body of Aslan, pushed Terry to the ground, forces his mouth open, and rung the body out over Terry's open face. The lion's blood poured from the broken corpse. Terry tried to drink as much of it as possible, but it just wasn't possible. The ghost was too over anxious. Terry did drink a little bit before feeling sick and turning over. Terry coughed and sputtered.

Some of the blood, now thick with his mucus, came up as he did so. He expectorated onto the hard, dusty ground of the canyon floor.

“There. I did it. When does the peace begin?” coughed Terry as he stood. He looked around but the ghost of Aslan was no longer there, and neither was the body. In fact, he seemed to be all alone. All alone except for the giant wall of water quivering just a bit off from him.

Terry huffed it. He began at a jog, but he knew he had to catch up with Samwise, to save him. And, hopefully, to save the world. He came wound his way through the canyon. Soon the walls of the canyon fell away and he was on level ground. The path he was on led into a thicket of trees. This forest was fairly overgrown, requiring a great deal of care and cleverness to navigate safely. From time to time, Terry would spy blood on a branch or bramble, and then he saw a clump of white fur. It was Samwise.

Terry stopped, and listened, but he didn't hear the pooch whining. He strained hard, but all he heard was the sound of his blood pounding in his ears. He kept running as fast as he could manage, but he shell was starting to catch on things, and he was getting cut up, himself. Finally he burst from the trees and onto a suburban street.

Terry looked up and down and guessed that he was back in the North Whales residential district. He stumbled onto the sidewalk. There he found another spot of blood and some more fur. He had a trail. When he had been studying in Detective Squad Force Camp, they had taught him how to track a human or an animal. Terry found that he was a natural at it, detecting, with ease, a creature's location. He was even so good as to tell what direction, time of day, and weight of the thing. As for Samwise, he was heading down this road, away from the forest (and toward the wall), it was about fifteen minutes ago, and he weighed a little less than usual. He was losing blood kinda quickly, sorta.

Terry took careful strides, checking the ground as he went, peering at the blood drops and instantly analyzing the density and velocity and pattern. He was also counting the fur clumps. For each clump, Terry guessed that Samwise was losing two or three pints of blood. Not a very good predicament for the little dog. Terry felt sorry that he'd yelled at Samwise. If the ghost was right,

then Samwise was supposed to kill Aslan, and Terry shouldn't have yelled at him for something he was supposed to do.

The trail suddenly departed from the clean, white sidewalk and jutted in between two houses. Terry found it difficult to keep the tracking up, with it being night and everything, but he kept on. The grass between the houses was high and dark. Terry found intermittent blood splatters, but they were hard to detect. Instead he went on looking for the clumps of hair.

The clump of hair trail took him to the backyard of the houses. Here he saw the typical remnants of a suburban family: swing sets, toys, dog kennels, fences. Terry leapt easily over the chain-link fence that separated the two houses from the other dozen or so backyards. He came upon more clumps near a slide. It was a little smaller than the rest. Then he spotted another one, near a forgotten baseball glove. This one was even smaller.

Terry looked around. He couldn't find any more clumps. Where was Samwise? He decided to scour for the blood trail. He spotted a drip on the top rail of a chain-link fence to another house. The trail appeared as if Samwise had jumped the fence and was making his way back to the street. Terry jumped the fence and found more evidence of blood as he walked slowly toward the street again. When he got to the sidewalk, the trail stopped and turned to his left. It didn't turn long, however. Soon, it turned back. Terry followed it to a front door.

He glanced up and noticed that the house number was "999". He puzzled over it; that number sounded familiar. He turned and looked for a street sign. It said "E Corning St". That sounded familiar, too. Had he been here before? Just then the door opened. Terry turned back. There stood a man with a large "O" on his shirt. He smiled at Terry.

"Good evening, Terry. Welcome back," said the strange man. He had piercing eyes that stared straight into Terry's soul. Terry couldn't speak, but he tried to. "Please, come in."

Terry started to stumble toward the door, not of his own accord. He struggled against his limbs, which were no longer obeying him. Then he spotted Samwise inside, hanging limply over the back of a chair like a coat. "No!" Terry managed to scream. For a brief second he had control of his body

back. He ran as fast as he could, as fast as a turtle could. He made it to the sidewalk before he heard something behind him, and then there was a blue flash.

Terry stiffened in mid-stride, then his momentum pushed him over. He lay there helplessly as he heard the steps of the "O" man coming up behind him, to collect, catalog, and kill.