

Trollhunter film response

By what we know them to be: Hans is no Lancelot; Thomas, Johanna, and Kalle make for poor squires; and Norway certainly isn't Camelot. While Chrétien de Troyes' vision of the companion-knights and their several trials paints a very clear picture of how high a standard it means to be a knight, André Øvredal certainly gives us a much more grim, if realistic, interpretation of that same standard.

Hans' job is simple, and arguably holy. The population of troll in the are of his jurisdiction must be maintained in order to be compatible with unwitting human coexistence. In perhaps a usual western style, this means culling the troll population. Like other knights, Hans was given this undertaking by the government who was looking for someone with his level of military experience. After a sizable culling of trolls in order to build Norway's infrastructure, Hans' outlook on his position is that of fatigue from killing beasts who he's come to see as innocents.

In Arthurian legend, tasks are generally cut-and-dry. Some beast is threatening someone seen as innocent or pure, and the knight is tasked with killing the beast. Such is the case with Yvain, in *Yvain, the Knight of the Lion* by Chrétien de Troyes, who kills a wyrm locked in combat with a lion. Aligning the dragon with wickedness made it necessary for Yvain to kill it, and what's more Yvain didn't have to consider the issue too carefully to order to make his decision despite only happening across the scene without context. Hans isn't given this luxury of choosing which to alignment to abide. It's understood by both Hans and the audience that some order needs to be maintained over trolls, however Hans makes it clear that he isn't sure whether Norway is making the right decision. Arguably, by allowing the film crew to accompany him he wants to at least initialise a public examination on the matter.

A particularly striking parallel between Hans and de Troyes' knights was Hans' final confrontation with the giant Jotnar troll. After learning this particular troll was the origin of recent

outbreak of rabies within different troll communities, Hans determined that mercy-killing this troll would likely stand as the best course of action. Everything about this scene was very much the final confrontation of evil in Arthurian legend down to riding into the fight on a steed – played by Hans' jeep – to the killing blow being dealt with a lance-like rocket. With these similarities aside, Hans' didn't kill this troll because he decided it was evil. Instead it was closer to a decision made to the health and well-being of both humans and trolls as it was hypothesised that this troll had contracted and spread rabies to others. This is the distinct modern lens that we don't get to see in Arthurian knights. de Troyes' knights are often set to such standards that even given all the right circumstances, people simply don't act in the way Perceval, Lancelot, Yvain, Erec, or Cliegés act. Each of these men endure much abuse and can endure so by a mysterious grace that ostensibly goes unexplained. On the other hand Hans endures similar hardship and struggles with the orders given to him yet manages to still be concerned for troll well-being as well as Norway's.

It's in this way that I find Hans becomes a greater knight than those present in de Troyes' canon. Hans' motivations are realistic and ground from his own experiences working with Norway's government and witnessing an abuse to what would otherwise be a wild creature. The other knights' motivations are fairly contrived from some notion of love for king or court. Hans' conflicted feelings culminate after the Jotnar dies, as perhaps he can't be bothered living alongside the TSS's standards that are contrary to his own.

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Works Cited

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