Expectation

Wild Card
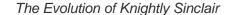
The Evolution of Knightly Sinclair

Knightly
Female Hobbit
Rogue
Level 1 (Novice)

(*A screenshot from Wizardry 8*)

Every time I play through *Wizardry 8*, I create a character named Knightly Sinclair. Despite the many different options for character creation, I find that my party simply isn't complete without her. I'm not sure where she came from, but every time I start a new game file, she's there, and she's waiting for an adventure. As a rogue, Knightly can wield daggers and use her unique "backstabbing" ability to cause extra damage. She can pick locks as well as she can pick pockets, and she has always been essential in maintaining my party's financial standing (even if she keeps a little for herself every now and again). She has the stealth of a ninja and the agility of a cheetah, and as a rogue, she can use some of the best weapons and armor in the game.

To me, Knightly has always represented the ideal character because of her ability to be a jack of all trades. During the beginning of every game, she would easily outshine her teammates and prove to be the most useful character. However, as the game progressed, she would slowly fall farther and farther behind the other members of her party. She went from being essential to being essentially useless. Sure, she could inflict decent damage, but her

daggers were no match for a warrior's swords, and her ability to use a bow and arrow left much to be desired when compared to an archer. She couldn't pick locks as well as an engineer or pockets as well as a bard, and her dexterity, while suitable, didn't make up for her shortcomings. The characteristics that had attracted me to the rogue had also alienated me from her. Because of her mediocrity, I worked with her less and less as I focused on improving her peers' abilities. When the game ended, Knightly Sinclair was nothing more than a side note.

However, there was a large gap of time between my first run through with Knightly and my second, and it appeared that I had forgotten my wrongdoings with her initial characterization. I began to fall into the same pattern of development. Fortunately, this time around, as her teammates began to leave her in a trail of dust, I decided to do something about it. Initially, Knightly had become useless because I had stretched her beyond her capabilities. She had many skills, but she had few skills that, individually, couldn't be better performed by a specialist. I needed to narrow her scope and focus on one attribute at a time. Why did I *really* want Knightly on my team? I could leave the lock picking to an engineer and allow a monk to be my master of stealth, but what made *Knightly* important?

Looking back, I find that Knightly Sinclair embodies my college experience. In high school, I was adept at nearly everything. I performed excellently in all of my classes, had plenty of time to be involved with extracurricular activities, and never had a problem finding time to spend with my friends and family. However, as my high school years quickly transformed into my college years, I found myself trying to exceed at everything just as I always had, only this time, *I couldn't do it*. I saw everyone around me blossom into beautiful, well-rounded people while I seemed to wither and cave beneath the weight of my own expectations. I had become Knightly Sinclair, and like Knightly, I was no longer the star of the show.

At UGA, I wasn't the best writer, or the best note-taker, or the best student, and for me, if I wasn't the best, I wasn't anything. I had once cried at the thought of potentially being my school's salutatorian, as if that title was somehow representative of failure. But now I realize that my high school version of my self was simply my "first draft" so to speak. It was a good draft-an excellent draft, really, and at the time, it suited my needs. However, since then, I've acquired more experience and learned more about myself and my surroundings, and I've had to undergo some serious personal revisions.

Sure, I may not be the best at everything. But now I finally get the chance to ask myself that pesky little question that can cripple any argument: *so what*? What does it matter if I'm not the best writer in my class? It doesn't mean that I can't write efficiently. Not being the best note-taker doesn't mean that my notes aren't sufficient, and not

being the *best* student doesn't mean that I'm not a *good* one. I can't focus on everything anymore; I need to decide what's really important to me and focus on that.

The only problem is that I don't *know* what's important to me. Everything used to be important, and now I'm realizing that some of my previous concerns are actually fairly trivial. Some problems just aren't worth worrying about, and I no longer know what those issues are. However, I'm not terribly worried about it. I'm confident in my ability to figure it out. I figured out where Knightly stood in my party, and I'm sure I can figure out where I stand in my own life. It's not going to be easy, but what's that old expression? Nothing worth having comes easy.