

EARTHS G MAGUS 111

111 Knight's Order

Kastan was observing everyone and when Emery walked up to him and said, "How many do we have in total, Kastan?"

"Fifty, including the guards. It's less than what we have hoped," said Kastan. "We could've hired more but news of the latest expedition has discouraged many participants."

Fifty people, including Emery and Kastan, would be fighting against at least a hundred marauders. Once Sir Bagdemagus arrived with his men, it should somehow make the gap of fighters closer.

While Emery was talking to Kastan, a large stocky man made his way through the crowd of fighters and guards, shouting, "Merlin!"

Emery turned around and saw the person calling him. He said, "Gregory, glad to see you're still alive."

"Hah! Indeed I thought I was a goner when we were being overrun by the Chrutins, but when I fell unconscious and someone woke me up, boy was I surprised that am still alive! I heard that because of you, we were able to live another day! That's why when I heard the Quintin are hiring again to bring the fight against those damned criminals with you coming along, I didn't hesitate joining, haha," said Gregory the giant in a loud voice that garnered the attention of the other mercenaries.

Emery ignored the stares of the people and said, "Are you completely healed though?"

Gregory buffed up his chest and said, "Never been better! I've already recovered within a day and me arms are itching for a fight – wait a second, if me memory serves me right, I thought I remember you only having one right...?"

"Let's just say i am very fortunate, and sorry I can't talk about it."?Kastan then went?before the large man and asked him to go back in line to practice coordinating with the guards so they could have a greater fighting chance. They would be needing it due to being outnumbered once they attacked the fort. As for Emery, he wasn't part of the formation; instead, he would be acting similar to an independent unit. He could do whatever he wanted. Still, this didn't mean he didn't have to practice, so he grabbed a sword from the sparred with some of the mercenaries and the guards.

While sparring with them, a new group of people had arrived and Emery took a break and greeted them.

Sir Bagdemagus went forward and said, "So it is true what they say! You're not only able to perform magic, but I can see from the way you move, you're also a skilled swordsman. Probably even better than I am!"

"Surely you jest, Sir Bagdemagus. A veteran such as you would surely defeat me in just a few rounds," exclaimed Emery.

"Well, there's only one way to find out, are you willing to spar with an old man?" answered the old knight as he stood by the weapons rack.

Everyone stopped what they were doing at once and gathered, forming another circle with Emery and Sir Bagdemagus in the middle.

Emery readied his stance, so did Sir Bagdemagus. The old knight asked, "Are you ready?"

Emery nodded. He then exchanged several rounds of swordplay against the famous Knight of the Anvil. As he continued this spar, Emery couldn't help but recognize some of the sword techniques and footwork this old knight was executing reminded Emery of his late father. It looked like his late father's swordplay seemed to have stemmed from this old man's until his late father probably developed his own techniques. It also felt like Emery was practicing with his late father once again.

After a few more exchanges, Emery also noticed that this old knight was holding back and wasn't fighting seriously. Emery was breathing heavily when the old knight stretched his hand and said, "This will be enough."

Emery gave another bow and said, "Thank you very much for the insight, Sir Bagdemagus."

The old knight laughed and said, "You're excellent! I don't know if there's even anything that I can teach you, Merlin. With your knowledge and skill, it makes me wonder if you're of noble lineage..."

"No, Sir Bagdemagus, am not," answered Emery.

"Is that so? It felt like I was sparring with one of my old pupils though. Your techniques and demeanor reminded me of him," said Sir Bagdemagus.

Emery was stunned for a moment; he wondered if he got found out, but he still dared to ask, "May I know his name?"

"Geoffrey Ambrose, the Lion's Fang," answered the old knight. "Unfortunately, he's dead. I've heard from my other pupil that it was due to the Crimson Fang. Heh, I guess this is a bit hypocritical of me because I'm not only doing this for the realm but to avenge my pupil."

A warm sensation then spread throughout Emery's chest as he stared at the old knight. Somehow, Emery wanted to tell this man that he was his old pupil's son. However, the back of his mind reminded him of his past experience regarding Granny. No longer would he trust easily.

"Why don't you apply to be a knight as well, Merlin? A wizard knight! Now that'd be something. Haha. I'm sure that with your current swordplay, you can at least reach the silver rank of our Knights of the Divine Order. The Order has a yearly tourney, and only knights can join. Since you don't have a title yet, I can give you one if you like. You don't have to go through being a squire because your skills are worthy of a knight already."

"Thank you for your offer, Sir. I'll consider it," said Emery.

Of course Emery had known about the trial to become a knight. The Knights of the Divine Order was where all the knights in the seven kingdoms come from. Every year, a trial gets held and only a hundred people would be conferred the title of a knight by the supervising Golden Knights but only the top ten people would receive the status of a Silver Knight.

Hearing about this made Emery's blood boil. Before he had been transported and learned the world of magic, his yet unrealized dream of him wanting to become a knight and protector of the realm resurfaced.

Emery wished to know more but before he could ask further, a group of horses entered the Quintins estate grounds. On top of the horses were men dressed in the same armor as the old knight and were wearing a red cape with the lion's crest.

"Ahh, my men are here," said Sir Bagdemagus.

Seeing the thirty knights dismounted and lined up in a straight row before bowing to the old knight. Every onlooker sure was impressed. Sir Bagdemagus spoke again, "As I said, the kingdom can't send too many especially just for marauders. But don't worry, these thirty knights are my personal guards."

With this, the total number of fighters gathered was eighty people, they were still twenty people short. Kastan then suddenly tapped Emery's shoulder and said, "Don't worry, Master Merlin. They are all knights, and that guy right there, the one with the brown hair and that one eyed guy there are Silver Knights, just like me. As for Sir Bagdemagus, he's on another level. Ah, it's been a while since I last fought alongside fellow knights."

After all preparations had been made, Sir Bagdemagus shouted "Men! Let's head out!"

A mixed party of Venta mercenaries, Quintins Family guards and Lioness knights marched out of the Quintins' estate. Emery, still accompanied by Morgana, who joined the line next to him.

Morgana then casually asked, "Are we going into a battle? If so, why didn't you tell the Akavi Warriors? I think Cavvi would love to join."

"No, thank you," Emery said hastily. He imagined that if the forest people had joined in, chaos would ensue. Forest people against the marauders, the knights, the mercenaries... ahh that was a terrible idea.

"What about my sist—"

Emery interjected with eyes filled with disbelief, "No... definitely no..."

112 Strategies

The fort had several tents inside and outside the fort. There was also a thin wooden palisade guarding its entrance and about a hundred people stood behind the spikes and about another fifty or so on the broken battlements. These people were wearing either hide or leather armor, the typical signature clothing of a marauder but some seemed to be normal looking peasants.

The combined three stood before the ruined fort, waiting for a messenger to go out and meet them. Emery stood beside the commander of the troops, Sir Bagdemagus and Kastan, while Morgana was standing behind him. Soon enough, the ruined fort spewed forth three people riding horses and one of them had his one of his arms raised.

Once the three people were within a distance where they could turn back with ease, the person who had his arm raised shouted with a booming voice, "Our leader wishes to speak!"

Sir Bagdemagus nodded and said, "Keane, Merlin, go and speak with them."

"Yes, sir," said Keane, the knight with one eye. "Okay," Emery said.

Emery and the one-eyed knight Keane rode to the center of the field and met with the other three. They were still quite a distance away but Emery could see that the person in the middle was a brawly man with long messy hair and better looking fur clothing. Emery's instinct was telling him that this person was evil.

"What is the meaning of this?" the man asked. He then looked at Emery and said, "You are not the leader, are you?"

Keane drew his sword, pointed it at the burly man, and said, "You are Padraig, Chief Marauder of the Crimson Fang! Disband your group and give up your weapons so that you may be judged by the law of our kingdom. If you do not, you shall suffer greater punishment."

"There must be a mistake! We are just simple farmers, go back with this pretentious boy for you have gotten the wrong people!"

"There are no mistakes! Surrender now or you shall face Sir Bagdemagus, the Knight of the Anvil, Guardian of the Lioness shall strike you down."

Emery committed to memory the face of this burly man with the long bushy hair who looked like shuddered for a moment hearing Sir Bagdemagus' name. So, he was Padraig, the leader of the Crimson Fang, the one who issued the raid to the ruined home, and the one who had the answers to his questions!

The burly man then spat on the ground, he smiled and shouted toward the old knight, "So, you're the Knight of the Anvil! You and what army, huh? There are only a few of you! Come if you wish to die."

"So be it," said Keane the one-eyed knight. Once the marauders turned around, so did he, followed by Emery.

When they returned, Emery realized that the old knight didn't ask for anything. It looked like he had already expected things would turn out, and to confirm that the Sir Bagdemagus turned to Emery and said, "It would've been best if they surrendered. However, no one really does that. Still, proper etiquette and declaration must be done even if our opponents are criminals for we are knights."

As more time interactions Emery did with this Knight of the Anvil, the more he could see why people talked highly of him. However, there was still that nagging feeling at the pit of his stomach that was preventing him from fully trusting this knight. It looked like Granny truly did damage him by a lot. He shook away his thoughts and said, "What do you think of our chances of winning, Sir Bagdemagus? I think they still have more people inside the ruined fort than what they're letting us see."

The old knight crossed his arms for a moment and said, "Well, let me hear your thoughts first. You should've a better view than I did."

"So... right now we have counted one hundred people standing at the gate, but they also have archers and it's better to assume they have another reserve inside the ruined fort. Assuming everything, I'd say they'd have around two hundred people in total," answered Emery.

"Okay, what else?" the old knight said, nodding.

Emery turned to look at them once more. "Since they are marauders, they are not disciplined fighters like the knights or the Quintin Guards. As for their equipment... I think I can see... about half of them don't have the proper gear, while ours do."

"Alright, good inside. What do you think would be the best way to approach them?" asked Sir Bagdemagus.

"I... don't know, sir. I have no experience devising strategies for battles on this scale..." Emery said, his voice diminishing as it reached the end of the sentence.

"That's fine, I still want your input."

Emery then assessed the situation and hesitantly said, "They may have bigger numbers, but we have better mobility with the horses. So... I guess a pincer attack? Attack the hundred men from both sides then the melee troops attack in the middle and focus killing their leader?"

"Okay, not bad. But there are things you should have considered," said the old knight.

"Please enlighten me, sir," hastily said Emery.

"In every battle or a fight, you must focus on the objective. Our objective is to disband this marauder group not to kill every one of them. They are not an enemy army, and like you said there are peasants among them. So in a way, they are civilians, and most likely ours. Therefore if we surround them and push them to fight till the death, there will only be more casualties on both sides, we don't want that" said Sir Bagdemagus.

"Secondly, you failed to consider the archers on the battlements, our horses will be fired upon if they come too near, they also have that palisade which they can use to stop our horses from advancing effectively. Thirdly, they have a fort, albeit it is ruined, our knights on horses will not be able to get inside and they'll have to dismount. That gives the enemy more time to attack with archers and our people who will be on the front line will be sitting ducks against the rain of arrows.

"The best way to approach this is to push our way inside the fort as fast as possible. Once they feel their fort is not secure, their morale will go down dramatically and they'll try to route."

Sir Bagdemagus then summoned his two officers, Kastan included, and shouted, "We'll form two layers of battleline, in the front are our knights with heavy armor and shield while the rest will be right behind them! We shall push our way inside with overwhelming force, do you understand?"

"Yes, commander!" shouted the two officers and Kastan.

"Sir, with this plan, are you not worried that the leader will run away, possibly on horseback?" Emery asked.

"Of course he will try to run away. But the moment he does, our victory will have been secured. I do not believe these people are here because of loyalty to him, rather, they're here because of desperation or greed. After all, they are a group of ragged tag criminals and recent peasants. People with no loyalty or morale are the weakest of units in a battle. Still, remember, Padraig may be our target but our overarching goal is to dissuade and capture these people, hence they wouldn't be able to do criminal

acts again. Cutting the head of a criminal organization only gets replaced by a worse candidate, they'll always return like a hydra," answered the old knight.

"I understand," was what Emery had said in response to Sir Bagdemagus. However, that was their objective, not his. His' had always been the same, and that was to enact revenge for his late father.

Since the order from the commander had been passed down to his officers, the officers ordered all the knights who were on horseback to dismount from their horses.

Thirty fully armed knights formed the first line and the Quintin guards who practiced formation with the mercenaries formed the second line.

Once everything had been settled, the horn for battle sounded in the battlefield and Sir Bagdemagus waved his sword and shouted, "Advance!"

113 Advance

On the left and the right of Emery were knights with full armor and large shields. The knights seemed intimidating as if they were unmovable rocks.

Kastan and Morgana walk just behind him. Emery of course made sure to remind Morgana not to transform into the feywolf if she wanted to join, she came along using a sword and a knife.

As they drew nearer at the ruined fort, about fifty meters, it meant that they were in the effective range of the arrows, one of the Silver Knights with brown hair shouted, "Arrows! Incoming!"

Everyone stopped and the knights and the Quintin Guards raised their shields, forming a roof of shield and blocking the arrows. Some passed through the gaps and some even hit the knights, however, the arrows couldn't penetrate the armors of the knights.

Once the rain of arrows stopped, the shield formation dispersed, and out came a dozen mercenaries who were holding their own bows and arrows on the backline.

"Return fire!" the Silver Knight with the brown hair shouted as Emery watched a volley of arrows flew overhead their battleline. The arrows reached their highest point and then curved downward at the broken battlements, hitting the underprotected marauders.

Emery heard the screams of the marauders and once more the command 'advance' had been issued. Again, they started walking with thunderous steps, however, they were unable to repeat this again for the marauders standing on the battlements started firing at will.

The enemy line was within sight, about thirty meters away. Emery could see how some of the men from the marauders were shaking despite it being his group were the ones receiving the scattered rains of arrows. Once they had passed the thirty meters mark, the Silver Knight with the brown hair shouted at the top of his lungs, "Charge!"

The seventy men then started running at full speed, easily crashing the wooden palisade into pieces. They were just five meters away when some of the men from the defensive line ran away. A loud clanking of metals; deafening roars ensued as the two opposing forces crashed under the broken gate of the ruined fort. The force of the seventy people stacked on top of each as well as the charge threw some of the marauders' files making it easy to penetrate through the ranks.

The chaos from the marauders; the order from the knights were clearly defined as they continued breaking through the ranks.

This is Emery's first battle in a formation like this, he could clearly see the difference of disciplined people battling in tight formation against an undisciplined foe with low morale. In fact, they were doing the five-man formation, it ensured that each flank of a person was covered as the five people coordinated with each other.

The two silver knights really were skillful in battle, their strength matched Quintin's strongest fighter Kastan. Other than them, Emery saw Gregory The giant also able to make a mess out of the enemy's line. With a huge hammer, he crushed the opponent's shield and head alike. And lastly Morgana, it's the first time Emery saw Morgana fighting skill without her wolf form and now Emery knows why the Akavi warrior gives her the strongest fighter title.

Morgana's fighting skill using a sword and dagger is very fast and unpredictable. She's able to quickly dodge and move behind her opponent and slash the opponent's throat. Emery suddenly feels fortunate that Morgana is not his enemy.

With just two to three minutes, the enemy's line composed of hundred people completely wavered and started routing in all directions. Many marauders ran back to the fort, some ran outside the fort. The knights didn't bother capturing those who had run outside as they stood their ground just underneath the ruined fort's wide open gate.

Like what Sir Bagdemagus had mentioned, the morale of criminals couldn't compare with the professional knights and properly equipped people. The show of force the good sir had presented worked beautifully.

Emery became confused why they had stopped all of a sudden. Less than a hundred people were going back to the fort and if this fort was broken, then it meant there might be gaps where the leader, Padraig, could go through. He was about to say something when the thumping of horses' hooves resounded behind them.

"Do not chase!" It was Sir Bagdemagus. The ten people who had stayed behind were no longer with him but when Emery looked around, they noticed the ten scattered to the left and right of the ruined fort, they were probably trying to block off any possible gaps like what he had thought.

"Kastan! Take the mercs and the guards to secure the perimeter of the fort. Capture anyone who tries to exit through the gaps," said the old knight.

"As you wish," answered Kastan, immediately coordinating the mercenaries and the guards.

"As for the rest, follow me inside," said Sir Bagdemagus as he dismounted from his horse.

Emery followed the Knight of the Anvil and watched as the knights knocked out the ones who had thrown their swords down but killed those who had tried to resist. Once again, Emery was slightly getting anxious, thinking Padraig would escape if they didn't hurry. Fortunately, they went through the courtyard, and there they saw at least two dozens of the marauders busy loading cargos into a cart. Padraig, the leader of the Crimson Fang, was standing next to the cart.

Based on the circumstantial evidence, Emery could guess Padraig didn't think his men would win in the first place, so that was why this man hadn't appeared in the battle a few minutes earlier because this greedy, son of a bitch who had raided and killed his father, as a result, had abandoned people who joined him was planning to run!

A blaze of anger ran past his chest as Emery wanted to kill this man right here, right now!

"Padraig! Surrender now! You have nowhere to go!" said one-eyed Keane, a Silver Knight.

"If you all don't wish to be hanged, fight!" roared Padraig to the men around him.

The two dozens of marauders suddenly charged and fought with the knights, including Emery. This time, it looked like they were a cut above from the ones earlier for these marauders didn't fall after a strike or two from the knights.

Two dozen knights against two dozen elite marauders, the situation turned more lively when a group of marauder archers came shooting from on top of the fort. The brown hair silver knight was forced to head inside the fort with a few other knights. The battle at the courtyard becomes outnumbered but Emery himself is not worried, especially with Morgana fighting beside him.

While facing two elite marauders at the time, Emery still didn't take his attention off of the damned Padraig. So, when the chief marauder got on the cart and was about to whip the horse, Emery deftly dodged the two marauders' attacks and casted a spell that drew water from a nearby well.

[Whip Splash]

Water from the well shot up and struck the burly man with the bushy hair off the cart. The knights, as well as the marauders, stopped fighting immediately, shocked by what they had just witnessed.

Sir Bagdemagus though, shouted, "Attack!" making the knights suddenly be brought back to reality and killed the elite marauders they had been fighting.

It seemed like a split second only but the only one left alive was Padraig.

"So it is true! You truly are a wizard, Merlin," said the old knight.

Emery didn't respond however for his eyes were still on Padraig who was still swinging his sword wildly at every knight close to him.

The one-eyed silver knight Keane moved forward and was about to fight Padraig when Sir Bagdemagus stopped him and said, "Keane, let the young wizard deal with him.

The silver knight obeyed and walked back with the other knights. The old knight shouted to Emery "Young Merlin, he's all yours."

Chapter 114: Executioner

The knights stepped aside, Emery walked with a sword in hand closer to the drenched man in the middle of the courtyard.

"Is this a joke?" cried out Padraig. He pointed his huge blade at Emery and shouted, "I am Padraig! The Crimson Fang Chief! Many knights have fallen to my blade and you're sending a boy to kill me?"

"Padraig, if you can defeat this young man, I'll let you go!" said the old knight.

"Hahaha! The word of a knight is his honor," said the Crimson Fang's chief as he cracked his knuckles, neck and shoulders, looking motivated to fight with Emery.

Although Emery was surprised with the old knight's decision, Emery focused on the opponent in front of him. He gripped both his sword on the right and the shield on the right tighter, facing the arrogant and ugly face of this Padraig, the marauders chief, only now did Emery realize how much he despised his opponent. Satisfying thoughts of cutting this man down permeated his mind. He had been waiting for this moment for a long time. Now that this man was in front of him, revenge was within his reach.

Padraig looked around before walking around to left and right, without a particular sword stance, and he said, "How old are you, boy? I think that if I scratch you even once, you'll run crying to your mommy and daddy!"

Emery tried to hold back his rising emotions but this man in front of him was really not making it easier for him. "Do you want to talk or fight!"

"Oooo! It appears I've hit a sweet spot, haven't I? Hahaha! Take this!" roared Padraig, dashing to Emery.

Emery blocked the incoming swing from the sword; it was fast and heavy. It pushed him a one step back, making his knees buckle for a moment. When he was about to peek and strike the chief marauder, the foot of the large man slammed against his shield and because the force had the weight of a full-grown man, it further pushed him back. If Emery had to gauge the strength of this man, it was lower than Cavvi and about the same as Kastan.

Padraig once again shot forward, he swung the two-handed sword as if it was weightless for him. Each blow from Padraig issued a loud bang against the wooden shield of Emery.

Emery was holding his ground and occasionally striking back, but Padraig, despite being a burly large man himself, moved swiftly. It was a speed one would certainly not expect from a man like him. Nevertheless, Emery kept his composure against the continuous blow of sword.

After several blows, Emery got used to Padraig's strike, so when the next swing flew to him, Emery blocked and pushed the huge sword back with his strength.

The sudden shield bash surprised the huge man. It annoyed him that Emery was able to meet and defend against his forceful strikes. He created distance and said, "Huh! Who are you kid!"

That question drew out the hateful memory Emery had. The massacre of the Ambrose estate. The burnt bodies of the residence, the rotting corpse of his father... His mind was becoming clouded, loathing filled his being as he stared at the man who was responsible for the death of his family! Gritting his teeth, nothing at the moment seemed to matter as shouted in pain, just wanting to get his rage out!

"My name is Emery! Emery Ambrose and I'm here to avenge my father and the twelve residents of the Ambrose estate!" Emery no longer cared whatever thoughts the knights and Sir Bagdemagus would have at his sudden confession.

"Ambrose? Aahh you're the Ambrose kid who ran scared shitless!"

When Padraig let out those words, it only gave vindication toward the rage he had been feeling against this man. Emery held his sword and shield tightly and charged the guy, sticking close to him.

"Hahaha! Let me send you to where your family is!"

Padraig swung down his huge sword with both his hands; Emery raised his shield up again, blocking the powerful strike. However, the strike from the chief of the marauders had more weight behind it, and because Emery's shield had been continuously receiving punishment, the shield split in half and made Emery kneel.

Emery raised his head while in a half-kneeling position and saw the burly and bushy man grin in confidence; Emery didn't move from his position.

"Die!"

The huge sword descended and battered down on Emery; an ear splitting clank resounded! Everyone thought Emery was done for but when Padraig looked down, his smug face vanished. On Emery's shoulder, only a thin amount of blood was dripping out of his leather armor. Padraig tried to pull back the huge sword but it seemed like it was stuck in Emery's shoulder.

[Stone Skin]

Emery had cast the earth spell before the huge sword had hit his shoulder. Although the sword strike had landed and scratched on his shoulder, the heavy blow made Emery winced in pain a bit before changing it grin on his face. "You've had your turn! Now it's mine!"

"How is this possible!" Padraig exclaimed.

Emery didn't bother explaining to the man as he grabbed the fastened sword with his left bare hand, reversed his grip on the sword on the right, and jumped with all his strength, cutting off Padraig's arms! Blood splashed on the ground and on Emery's face.

Padraig screamed in terror as he fell down with blood squirting out of his now missing arms. He stared at Emery with panic-stricken eyes because with only just one move, Emery had decided the outcome of the battle.

Emery let out a villainous smile while the pounding rage in his heart spread a feeling of sweet euphoria coursing through his whole being. Such satisfaction filled him as he enjoyed the blood curdling screams out of this man.

"What-what-what are you!" shouted Padraig, using his legs to push himself away on the ground.

Emery closed in on the man and rended the sword out of his shoulder. He said with a grim voice, "Your executioner!"

Emery swung his sword fully ready to cut Padraig's head off. But then — clank! Another sword stopped his swing. He looked to his right and saw the old knight holding the sword.

"That's enough... Mer—Emery," said Sir Bagdemagus.

"No! This man must die!" Emery snapped, he would not give such mercy to the man who killed his family!

"The man has already lost. He has no hands, hence, shall no longer be a threat to anyone. What we should do with the head of the organization, is to bring him before the King and let this man be judged and punished according to the law of our kingdom," said the old knight in a stern voice.

Emery fought against the reasoning and raging inside his mind. He looked at the Padraig, who had curled up, and the old knight, Sir Bagdemagus, who had a fatherly outlook. In Emery's mind, he didn't want to, 'this man killed my family including many others, he must be killed as well!' said a voice in his head.

But then, a soft hand touched his shoulder. "Calm down," said Morgana softly.

The simple touch startled him. Emery slumped his shoulders and took a deep breath to subside his boiling rage.

Now, that he had somewhat calmed down, Emery was actually quite surprised with himself. His initial plan was to interrogate this man before killing him. There was a good chance another person was behind the raid on his estate. With a clearer mind, he self reflected, not sure what had happened.

Morgana whispered words to his ear, "The high priestess had asked me to be with you because you're not used to holding back our bloodline."

Emery remembered what the Lady of the Lake had mentioned to him, 'our ancestor's blood is savage in nature'. But honestly, he wasn't sure if it was his bloodline or hatred that drove the rage.

Emery relented and sheathed his sword. The old knight smiled at Emery and gestured at a knight who had been carrying a rope. They started tying the spooked Padraig as well as patched his missing hands.

Emery turned his back and walked away, but Sir Bagdemagus approached him. The old knight's rough hand patted Emery's shoulder and said, "This is how it should be, Emery. This is good. Your father would have been proud."

Emery turned around, kneel with one knee and said, "Forgive me for lying about my identity, sir knight! Thank you for stopping me before."

"Hahahah! Don't worry, Emery, you're still young. I'll guide you like I've guided your father."

The battle had finally ended, all the marauders were either dead, captured or fled. At the same time Emery received a notification from the symbol on his hand.

[One day until recall to the Magus Academy]

As much as he couldn't wait to return to the academy, Emery was hoping he had enough time left to interrogate the marauder chief.

Chapter 115: Battle Report

The battle had finally ended and the knights were pulling the prisoners they had captured via a rope. Emery watched as more slumped prisoners walking behind the knights exited from inside the fort. In fact, some of them didn't look to be marauders, just peasants based on their linen garments, but Emery

guessed this was how the world functioned, you'd have to stand by your decision and these people, had been unfortunately driven to desperation and became criminals in the eyes of justice.

He then took a walk beside the well and breathed out again, feeling a bit calmer this time while looking at Morgana standing beside him. He smiled at her, thankful for what she did before.

In front of them were Sir Bagdemagus listening to Sir Keane who was giving a battle report. Emery heard that among the enemy's forces of two hundred fighters, forty had died in the battle, twenty had been heavily injured, around sixty were captured and the rest managed to run away.

Sir Keane also mentioned that there were only six knights wounded but nothing severe. Emery was quite surprised to hear that considering these knights took most of the brunt of the initial skirmish and led the charge. Maybe it was due to being better equipped and having more experience in battle that they had suffered less because on the side of the Venta Mercenaries and Quintin's Family Guards, Kastan reported to the old knight they had three dozen people heavily injured, fortunately, no casualties too.

Several people then pulled up empty carts on the courtyard; those heavily injured were laid down on the carts and Kastan mentioned he'd leave at once for Venta to have his men healed immediately.

Among the wounded people on the carts, a bloodied large man stuck out like a sore thumb. Emery made his way toward it and said, "Gregory, you're one tough guy, aren't you? Hang in there buddy!"

The normally cheerful giant wasn't in the mood for jokes, however. "Not sure it was fortunate or unfortunate to go battle with you master Merlin." The big man turned around, groaning, facing away from Emery. Emery opened his bag and handed out a container that had the green healing paste in it to the man taking care of the wounded. He then walked away toward another cart where there were more injured people and gave another healing paste. The healing paste he created should be useful to heal all open wounds because of battle, unfortunately he doesn't have too many of them.

A moment later, Kastan approached Emery. "Master Merlin, will you not join us in the return to Venta?"

Emery shook his head.

"I still have something to do at the moment. After that I plan to travel for a while," answered Emery, glancing at Padraig.

"Travel? I see. Have a good journey then," said Kastan.

"Please relay to Luna my heartfelt gratitude," said Emery, putting out his hand for a shake.

Kastan shook his hand and said before bowing, "I understand, Master Merlin. Please, take care."

Morgana butt in and said, "Tlabel? You flan to tlabel?"

"Wait, did you understand what I just said to Kastan and you're speaking our language? Wow, you're learning fast!" exclaimed Emery in her language.

"Just you know, I'll follow you where you're going, it's the will of the High Priestess," answered Morgana, using her language now. She turned away from him again.

Emery could only laugh inwardly. There was no way she could join him in the Magus Academy and he still wasn't sure how he could convince her to go back to Felaenon because the thought of him disappearing abruptly made him feel terrible. Again, nothing came into his mind, maybe he'd thought of something later, so for now, Emery approached Sir Bagdemagus, who was giving out orders to the rest of the knights, to see if he could have a moment to talk with Padraig.

Sir Bagdemagus shook his head. "The guy's still unconscious because he lost a lot of blood. You want to ask him about the attack on your father's estate, don't you?"

"Yes," Emery said.

"Just as I've thought. What do you plan to do with the information?" asked the old knight, crossing his arms.

"I need to see to it until the end. I won't let my father and the others sleep in their graves until proper justice has been dealt," said Emery with his tone rising at the end, trying his best to hold back the surging anger again.

"I see. Emery..." emphasized the old knight to his name before saying, "will you listen to the advice of an old man?"

"Of course." Emery nodded.

"Leave this thing to be dealt by the laws of the kingdom. I'll personally see to it. I'll find out who's Padraig's backer and once I know who it is, I'll tell you about it. What do you think?" said Sir Bagdemagus in a stern voice.

Emery was conflicted about this. On top of only having one day left, he didn't want to wait another three months for news of who was behind Padraig.

"Will you think of it as a request from me, Emery?" said the old knight, breaking Emery's thoughts. Not sure how to reject his late father's mentor, Emery hesitatingly lowered his head in agreement. He still needed to find a way to get away from Morgana anyway.

The old knight then smiled and called for one of his knights to bring his horse. He mounted it and said to Emery, "You better join this year's Knights of the Divine Order initial trial, Emery. I promise that I'll endorse you under my name so you can participate. With your talent and honorable demeanor, I'm sure you'll be a great addition to the order. Also, I'm confident you'll not be less talented than the famous Logress Prince."

Once again, Emery kneeled on one knee to the old knight in appreciation. Having a knight's title had always been one of his dreams, so Emery made it a goal to join the order once he returned from the Magus Academy.

The old knight led the way followed by the silver knights; at the back where the prisoners tied to a rope, which some of the knights held. As for the unconscious Padraig, he was tied on the back of another horse which Keane guarded.

He and Morgana then hopped on to their horses to follow, but then from the back, Emery noticed the knights' group splitted into two. One group with all the prisoners in tow and another group seemed to follow the Knight of Anvil.

Emery decided to follow the group with prisoners while thinking of a way to get rid of Morgana before his recall when he realized Keane wasn't in sight and so was Padraig, the chief marauder.

Making his way to the front, he asked the leading knight regarding why had the group divided into two. The knight was happy to oblige Emery and mentioned the Knight of Anvil had decided to take Padraig to a different place. This, however, raised a question on Emery's mind.

He then decided to double back with Morgana and follow the tracks of the other group when they had split. It took them a while to pursue the tracks but when the nightfall had, the tracks led them toward an abandoned house sitting in the middle of nowhere. When Emery rode closer, he noticed the knights had set up camp outside of the building.

Emery was about to approach when suddenly something in his heart told him otherwise.

He pulled back the horse, got down and said to his companion, "Morgana, I need you to wait here with the horses, I need to check something out. It won't be long. Guard the horses for now, okay?"

Surprisingly, Morgana agreed easily this time.

With that out of mind, Emery cautiously moved toward the camp while carefully avoiding the broken branches on the ground. The shadow of the night helped make his way through and if ever someone managed to detect him, he planned to use the spell blacksmoke spell if needed.

Fortunately, there weren't that many knights, so Emery managed to arrive one the side of the abandoned house undetected. He pressed his ears against the wooden walls and heard the muffled voice of Sir Bagdemagus.

Following it, he was led to the backside of the house where there was a small window peeping to the inside. He peeked on it to see the old knight talking to the captured Padraig.

To his surprise, however, the marauder chief wasn't tied to a rope nor chained. Instead, he was sitting on a chair, facing a table that had small candles lighting up the dark room together with the old knight sitting in front of him.

Chapter 116: Honorable

Inside the dark room, dimly lit by the flickering candle light, the two men, Padraig, the chief marauder of Crimson Fang and Sir Bagdemagus, the Knight of the Anvil, were sitting in front of a table across each other.

The handless criminal seemed to slightly jump every time the old knight moved even though all the knight had done was adjust his chair while grunting and sighing at the same time.

When the old knight placed his hands on the table, the other man shook, and grimly said, "Padraig, you know what's your mistake, right?"

"Y-y-yes lord knight! I-I-I've done great harm to the people of the kingdom. I swear on my life, I shall not do it again," stuttered Padraig, trembling on his chair.

As Emery watched, the arrogant marauder leader had turned into a completely different person.

"Yes... right... However, that's not what I wanted to hear..." answered Bagdemagus.

"If-If so, then what did I do wrong?" asked Padraig, staring at the tapping finger of the old knight on the table.

"Well, you see, Padraig... you've become too greedy," said the old knight, pulling back his hands.

"What-what do you mean, lord knight?" said the criminal in a soft and shaking voice.

"What are you thinking by recruiting that many people? You even dared attack other nobles' estates! What are you planning to do, huh? Be the king of marauders?"

"No, lord knight, no! I did it under the orders of Lord Fantumar! He assured me it wouldn't be a problem. All the nobles' estates targets were given by him!"

The more Emery listened in on this exchange of words between Padraig and Sir Bagdemagus, a feeling of conflict rose inside him.

In one way, he was somewhat assured to receive a confirmation that it was that damned pig's family, the Fantumars, were truly the mastermind behind the raid against his family! But then on the other hand, he was uncomfortable with the way his late father's mentor was talking to Padraig, it felt like he knew the marauder too well.

Emery leaned closer to get a better hearing when Bagdemagus suddenly shouted, "You are a fool to listen to him!"

"Yes, lord knight! I am a fool! Please, lord knight, forgive me! I will do your bidding with my own hands—" Padraig stopped in the middle of his sentence. Staring at his now handless arms, he raised his voice and said, "Ahhh! My hands... my hands! I've become a useless person! That boy. I'll kill that fucking boy!"

Bam! Sir Bagdemagus slammed the table with his fist covered by metal gauntlets, quickly shutting down Padraig's yapping.

"Restrain yourself, Padraig!" commanded the old knight with a wave of his hand.

Padraig jumped on his chair and quickly said, "Y-y-yes lord knight. I'm-I'm sorry... it's just that my hands... my hands..."

Sir Bagdemagus beckoned at the door behind Padraig and the one-eyed knight, Keane appeared. Sir Keane saluted the Knight of Anvil, left the room and a moment later, returned and laid down a bowl of food in front of the muttering Padraig.

Padraig still seemed to be distressed but returned to clarity when the old knight grabbed the silver spoon, scooped its content and placed it before Padraig's mouth.

"No, lord knight. I..." resisted the handless criminal. But Bagdemagus didn't put down his arm until Padraig finally relented and ate it with fear in his eyes.

The old knight once again scooped the bowl's insides before casually continuing the conversation. "You must understand this, Padraig. We're all just part of a bigger plan. A plan to bring our kingdom the peace it deserves."

Padraig nodded in agreement, he couldn't answer for his mouth was full and some were dripping down his chin.

Emery had initially thought Padraig was only agreeing in fear of the old knight. But everything Sir Bagdemagus had done and said so far, it seemed like the both of them had an understanding despite not being completely direct.

Still, the actions of this old man weren't the actions of the man he knew, hence doubts were starting to fill his mind. However, when Emery heard the following words out of the old man's mouth, he was just completely shocked.

"W-W-What are you planning to do with me, lord knight? If you bring me before King Richard, I'll help you tell the truth about Lord Fantumar's plan. I am willing to confess everything before the court! I beg of you, lord knight. Just please Don't kill me!" pleaded Padraig, getting on his knees in front of the old knight.

The old knight put the spoon on the bowl of food and closed his eyes. After a few seconds of silence, he looked at the ceiling then said, "I am sorry but I can't let you do that Padraig. That'll only destroy everything we've worked so far in executing our plan. Fantumar is still needed for the peace of the kingdom. Like what I've said before, this is all for greater good. You understand what I'm saying, right?"

"Then what should I do, lord knight? I'll do anything, I'll say anything!" said Padraig, stumbling to the old man's feet.

Bagdemagus sat up straight and said, "The best thing you can do for us is to be quiet. I am sorry to say that the order I've received is to find out what you know then kill you."

Before Padraig could even react, the one-eyed knight pulled out a knife and slit the throat of the marauder chief.

Padraig's eyes became horrified as he reflexively reached for his throat with his stump-arms. He looked at the old knight one last time before falling head-on to the bowl of food. Crimson red blood crept to the edge of the table and then dripped on the wooden floor.

"I hope you'll accept the meal as my sincerest form of apology," the old knight said before blowing out the candle and casually walking out of the room with Sir Keane following behind.

Everything Emery had just witnessed shook his core. The 'honorable' knight in this room wasn't what he had expected and known!

Emery then started to blame himself again for being fooled by another person. First the two-faced Granny and then this old knight whom he viewed with great admiration...

The world just seemed to be bent on giving him people whom he would think could be trusted only to be later revealed they were like poisonous snakes!

Again, Emery hated himself for being like this. But as he pressed his back on the wooden wall, he forced himself to calm down, wash away those thoughts and reasoned to himself that this wasn't the right time to mope.

Taking several deep breaths, he tried to view things objectively. First, he thought of what was the plan Sir Bagdemagus was talking about, which was something bigger than that pig noble was planning. And from who was the Guardian of the Lioness receiving his orders? Wasn't it the king? If so, was King Richard himself involved in letting Fantumar attack them in the first place?

For every one question he thought he had answered, two more questions popped out.

Emery walked back to the woods first and found Morgana.

She came up to him asking questions as to why he had such a dark face, what had he witnessed, what had happened, however, he refused to answer. He wasn't in the mood to speak.

At the moment, Emery was still in denial despite trying to distance himself from the issue. He just couldn't believe such were the actions of an 'honorable' knight, and it was his late father's mentor, the Knight of the Anvil no less.

Emery remembered the notification stating he had less than a day before he gets recalled back to the academy. His attention now was completely torn in wanting to know the answer to his questions against returning to the academy and returning a few months later. He just couldn't let himself be kept in the dark for that long.

So, he decided to do something. He turned to Morgana and said, "There's something really important I need to do. You should return to Felaenon without me. I will follow later."

After saying those with such heavy tones, Morgana listened and nodded.

Emery was really grateful that he didn't have to spend a lot of energy trying to convince her or think of a way to send her away. He didn't need that headache at the moment.

He then walked back to where the knights had set up camp with a mindset of getting clear-cut answers. Not sneakily, but just plain walking up to them, so they could see him coming.

Chapter 117: Unravel

Emery walked toward the camp where the rundown house was located without concealing him or anything of the sort.

When his silhouette appeared, the knights sitting by the campfire immediately drew their swords, however, when the bright fire of the campfire lit his figure and the knights laid down their swords and asked why he was here.

He answered that he would like to see the Knight of Anvil. They complied and one of the standing knights went in. A minute later, the old knight, his late father's mentor, showed himself on the door.

"Emery! What a surprise," the old knight, welcoming Emery as if he hadn't killed the handless Padraig whom he had asked to be spared because the marauder chief was no longer a threat. "Why are you here? Do you need anything?"

Seeing this old knight welcome him with heartfelt sincerity, Emery was having a hard time this man had just committed an atrocious act. The old knight was either a great pretender or a snake wearing a human's skin. And in Emery's thought, somehow, he found both scary and intriguing.

"Sir knight, I've come here to see the prisoner, Padraig. Please let me talk to him just for a moment," said Emery as normal as he could.

Emery noticed the old knight frowned only for a split second before changing to a disappointed look and saying, "I am so sorry, Emery. Something terrible had just happened. The prisoner had tried to escape, almost hurting one of us, when the accident happened. I am sorry to say that he had died."

The old knight truly appeared both disheartened and remorseful by the sound of his voice. It was a very convincing act. Somehow, Emery felt better about himself. Not because he had fallen for this act, rather, this talented old fox's pretending actions were so real that it could fool anyone. If Emery hadn't known better, he'd still see the old knight as someone who had Emery's interest at heart. So, for Emery, there was no need for him to be pissed at being a fool by him.

"Sir Bagdemagus. You said you wanted to guide me, right?" asked Emery.

"Yes of course, Emery. What do you wish to learn?"

"Then..." Emery paused for a second before saying, "I want to learn how to lie and pretend as good as you."

The old knight's eyes widened, giving away his shocked feelings after hearing Emery words.

"There's no need to pretend, sir knight. I saw what you did to Padraig. There's no need to deny it," said Emery sternly.

Finally dropping his act, the old knight showed his true self, coughed and said, "Ah, I see. It's unfortunate that you had to see that. But I'm sure you agree that lowlife deserves it, don't you?"

Emery without hesitation said, "Yes. But like I said, until I know who is really behind the raid, I'll never stop. Now, please tell me what you know."

The knights' rustling armors then entered Emery's ears. He noticed them in the corner of his eyes, at least a dozen of them, slowly encircling him. Among them were the two silver knights, one-eyed Keane and the one with the brown hair.

Sir Badgemagus raised his hand and said in an authoritative voice, "Halt your actions, everyone. There's nothing to be alarmed about. Emery is like family to me, aren't you, Emery?"

"At least tell me this, were you involved in the death of my father? Your student?" asked Emery, placing his hand on this hilt of his sword and the other hiding it.

"No, I wasn't. As you might have heard, it was Fantumar," said the old knight, emphasizing the pig noble's name.

"Then why are you protecting him! From whom do you take orders from? Please, tell me!" said Emery, believing that the old knight was once again lying.

"It was for the greater good, Emery. For the good of the kingdom," said Bagdemagus in a heavy voice.

"Then, are you telling me that killing everyone in the Ambrose estate was a necessity for the greater good?" Emery pulled out the sword from his waist and it rang sharply. The rest of the knights around him did the same except for the old knight.

"Calm down," said the Knight of the Anvil, taking a deep breath and sighing. He started speaking slowly, "Emery... I really like you. And honestly I really wish to guide you so that you'll not make the same mistake as your father."

Emery gritted his teeth and placed the sword in front of him. "Tell me!"

"Your father was one of the best knights I've ever taught and known. I was proud of him as my esquire. And if only he hadn't made the wrong choice, he would've been a better knight than Yvain or even me. Too bad."

"What did he do?" Emery asked.

"Your father was too soft. During the war with the Chrutins, your father failed his duties and even made the mistake of letting the enemy escape. Since then he never took the sword anymore. And with the news of him spreading that he had taken a Chrutin as a wife, that made him a betrayer of our code, so no one really cared about his death anymore" explained the old knight.

"What code! If so, then what about me? I am half-chrutin, will you kill me as well?"

"Well you are different, Emery. You're a wizard, you're special. Honestly, the main reason I came to Venta was to find you. You see, I am in charge of knowing about everything that goes on about the Forbidden Forest. And when those mercenaries had returned, spreading news about how a young wizard named Merlin saved them from the Chrutins, I was assigned to learn more about you. When I finally met you, I had my suspicions that you were the missing Ambrose's son, but I was about to tell them to accept you despite the fact your mother is a Chrutin."

"Who did? What do they want with me?" Emery demanded to know.

"Emery, there are much bigger issues than the unfortunate fate of your family and the seven kingdoms. But we need someone like you. Will you join us?" said the old knight.

"No! Definitely no. I'll not join those who're involved with killing my family!"

"I see..." said the old knight. He sighed again and added, "You're really too young. So, hasty... I must tell you, Emery, I have my orders of killing you if I can't get you to join us. We want to avoid you becoming a bigger problem to us."

"You can try!" Emery said as he waved his sword ready to fight!

Chapter 118: Fight

Dozens of knights surrounded Emery, they were closing in on him as Bagdemagus shouted,

"Capture him men!"

Emery had drawn his sword ready to fight. It appears he will not get the information he knew without a fight. But he knew from experience that each of these knights had extraordinary fighting skills, if he let them start coordinating with each other, the difficulty of the fight would increase many times harder.

A moment later, Five of the knights from behind him advanced simultaneously.

[Dark smoke]

Emery then summoned a thick dark mist from his other hand, covering the whole area. Not wasting any time, to do this effectively he had to finish off the head first, so he lunged forward, making a surprise attack under the cover of the fog to immediately pursue victory. He swung his sword at the old knight with his top speed but the sword sparked as it clashed with two swords just a step away from the Knight of the Anvil.

The force blew some of the dark smoke away, slightly clearing it, Emery then saw Bagdemagus standing in confidence, not flinching a bit. The swords that had blocked him were held by the two silver knights on the left and right of Sir Bagdemagus. They then combined their strength, pushing Emery back into the black smog.

Since his surprise attack had failed, Emery understood he had to change tactics, hence he jumped toward where the campfire was and attacked the knight guarding the path outside the camp.

The knight managed to react in time and reflexively launched a slash attack. Emery used [stone skin] and used his left hand to block the knight's slash and stab back with the sword in his right. It went right through the armor of the knight, causing the man to fall face down. With the sword still on his left, he grip on it tight and decided to fall back and run away for the meantime.

"He's running!" shouted one of the knights.

After getting enough distance, Emery struck the ground with the two swords and hastily opened his bag, searching for the strength paste. Once he got it, he immediately applied the strength paste on his hands and feet and the parts where he had spread them became bluish.

With the knights getting closer to his position, he waited at the right moment and swung his two swords. The swords sparked and clanked, but Emery could feel the knight he had hit flew back.

Another knight appeared and darted forward at Emery with his sword raised high. Emery met the attack with his swords and did a circle motion with the swords, sliding the enemy's away, before he kicked the man with his empowered feet.

Emery could feel and see the effect of his strength paste on his hands and feet. More knights arrived and he was able to easily deflect their swords and attack at the same time. One by one the knights advancing were unable to break through and again two more knights fell from his fearsome sword attacks, making them groan in pain on the ground.

However, the two silver knights who had blocked his initial attack arrived. They didn't charge in like what the others had done but gave orders to the other arriving knights to encircle him and attack in an organized rank. Several knights stood together in front of him while the others circled around him,

making sure all the directions he could run toward were covered. Not long after, the old knight also came out and commanded, "All of you just hold the perimeter, make sure he won't be able to run. Keane, you can fight him."

The one-eyed knight nodded and charged at Emery. Emery fought using two swords while Keane used a sword and shield. The two became embroiled in battle. Clank! Clank! Emery tried to use his two swords to the fullest extent but every time he thought he had the opportunity, Keane's shield always blocked his sword, preventing any strikes to land on any vital areas. Truly, the Silver Knights were a cut above the rest. And after exchanging more than thirty moves, even with the enhancement from the strength paste, Emery was still unable to deliver a decisive blow against the one-eyed silver knight, Keane.

The old knight was still watching on the sidelines but after seeing no progress, he sent Abner, the other Silver Knight with brown hair, to join forces with Keane against Emery.

With two Silver Knights coordinating to attack him, Emery was beginning to be pushed back because it wasn't only these two knights he had to take into account, there was the possibility that one of the knights surrounding him might suddenly attack or even the Knight of the Anvil himself might attack. Due to the pressure of the two silver knights, fighting since the beginning, and the mental exhaustion from being surrounded, when he parried the attack from Keane, Abner managed to slide in a sword attack, slashing on Emery's torso. Fortunately, Emery had casted the stone skin, else he would've been covered in blood.

Emery's torso felt like it was burning because of the pain. When Abner's sword slash hit, Emery could tell they had the strength and skills similar to that of Kastan or Cavvi. So, he knew he had to use magic here, else he wouldn't win.

Suddenly, a horrified scream sounded from behind him and immediately, all eyes, including him, looked at the direction of the scream. A shadow brushed past Emery and attacked Keane. Clank! But Keane's reaction was fast and he raised his sword just in the right moment, causing his sword to clash with the unknown attacker.

The figure then jumped back and stood beside Emery.

"I see an unfair fight here" said a beautiful girl with red hair

"Morgana! I am glad that you didn't listen to my request this time," said Emery, gasping for air.

"I never did. I only abide by the will of the High Priestess," answered Morgana, flicking away the blood on her sword and knife.

"Well, thank you anyway. But it seems like you're now involved with my mess," said Emery, glancing at the knights surrounding them and the old knight before falling on the two Silver Knights.

"Yes, you owe me. I'm expecting a reward after this."

"Sure, if we manage to get away from this," replied Emery, gripping his two swords tighter.

"Only these dozen fighters? Let's transform and we can defeat them in a second," suggested Morgana.

"Alright, let's do it!" Emery said with a nod.

[Fey bloodline activated]

Emery and Morgana both roared simultaneously as their two bodies started to change. Emery turned to his half-beast, half-human form with sharp ears, fur and nails, while Morgana got on all fours, her clothes ripped by her transformation into a large Fey wolf with a black and reddish fur, twice the size of a normal adult human.

As they transformed, some of the knights stepped back while trembling.

[Battle power has increased by 10]

Emery, in his Fey form, pointed one of his swords at the old knight with furious eyes. He snarled before saying in a rough voice, "Grrr, you should give up now, sir knight! I don't want to kill all of you, but I will if you force me to. Tell me who is behind your orders I will let you go! Was it King Richard himself? It's him isn't it! Tell me!"

He could tell his form was more powerful than previously. This was again probably because of the rage or the savageness of his bloodline.

However, the Knight of Anvil wasn't slightly perturbed for he said in a bit excited voice, "You are really special, Emery. I've suspected your friend to be one of the special Chrutin Sorcerers, but now that I've got confirmation, this is great! This is really great!"

The old knight then moved closer, drew a magnificent looking sword, which made an extremely sharp ring upon pulling it out. He said, "Keane! Abner! Give way!"

As the old knight pulled the sword in a vertical position in front of him, Emery suddenly felt a strong, pressuring aura coming from the knight. Something had changed within the old knight as his pupil had turned white. The Knight of the Anvil lowered his sword and said, "Emery, there are things you still do not know. With that said, you shall bear witness to the power of a Golden Knight."

Morgana suddenly decided to pounce at the old knight.

Emery's instinct was warning him so he shouted, "No, Morgana, stop!"

However, Emery's warning was too late, the old knight moved like a flash of light, side stepping Morgana's Fey Wolf form and then stabbed her on the side.

"Morganaa!" Emery shot forward to save her.

Chapter 119: Bend

Emery's Fey form specialty was speed and he was faster than Morgana in this form. So, when he shot forward to save Morgana, the old knight was surprised, making the old knight let go of Morgana and jump away.

Emery didn't chase the old knight right away. Instead, he got on one knee and checked on Morgana who had returned to her human form. Emery could see her chest heaving up and down unevenly, making it known that she was still breathing but in great pain based on her suffering expression. He then touched her bleeding side, which felt warm to the touch and had a deep cut.

"Morgana! Morgana!" Emery called out to her several times however she wasn't responding. Her eyes were kept closed, unconscious. Not again, he couldn't let someone die whom he had considered family, so Emery hurriedly used the spell [nature blessing] which was able to heal open wounds like this. Just to be sure, Emery took out his last container of healing paste from his bag and quickly smeared it all over Morgana's wound. He also removed his clothing to cover her naked body.

The Knight of the Anvil whose pupils were white said, while Emery was doing all of that, "Don't worry too much about that Chrutin Witch. I didn't aim for her vitals. But she will if you do not give up."

The old knight's words only added oil to his already boiling rage. He turned around, teeth bared, and pounced with the intent of slashing the old knight in half!

Their swords clashed, sending a loud clunk throughout the area. Emery's eyes widened in surprise to see that the old knight didn't even budge from his position nor looked struggling after blocking his swords in his Fey wolf form. Thoughts of the old knight having a special skill that could increase his power entered Emery's mind. How was the old knight able to match against him? Was it magic? Or did the old knight have the support of a wizard as well?

Emery's gaze also fell on the sword the old knight was wielding. It didn't look like the normal iron sword he was holding, which had dark spots on the body and had slightly bent from all the fighting he had been doing so far. The sword the old knight was wielding appeared to be a bit shinier and purer in comparison to his two iron swords. Not thinking much of it, Emery proceeded to relentlessly attack the old knight, believing that the old knight's single sword would eventually bend or chip faster than his two swords while using his Fey form.

However, to Emery's surprise, after he had exchanged more than twenty moves with the old knight, it was his swords that had completely bent out of shape while the old knight's weapon was still as sharp and straight as if it hadn't seen any battle.

Switching his gaze between his and the enemy's Emery became more and more enraged as to why and how this old knight was still standing unscathed! In a fit, Emery threw away his useless bent iron swords. He pulled out the jet-black dagger, he took from granny.

The jet-black dagger was a third-tier artifact, and although Emery didn't understand what it meant, he was under the assumption that this dagger was able to damage the sword the old knight had been using. After all, it was able to hurt him even when he was using the sword skin spell. So, if his presumption was correct, he should be able to at least block the Knight of the Anvil's sword with it or hopefully break the sword in half.

Emery lunged forward and swung his jet-black dagger and claws like a savage beast.

The old knight blocked Emery's jet-black dagger and the dagger didn't break! Instead, now the situation has reversed. His enhanced perception made him notice the miniscule chip on the sword's edge. This was good, so Emery kept up his attacks and the old knight kept on blocking.

However, Bagdemagus seemed to have caught on to Emery's plan; the old knight changed strategies and no longer bothered blocking Emery's slashes but just kept on dodging.

A good few more minutes had passed and Emery was surprised to see that the old knight seemed to have endless stamina. Obviously, the weakness of every human was age, and with age came with weaker endurance. Hence, usually, old people used their experience to gain the upper hand in a battle instead of brute force.

However, seeing his attacks only slicing through the empty air, whether it was because of his savage blood or frustration of not touching this old knight, Emery started becoming more aggressive; his mind was being clouded with furious thoughts, and because of that, the veteran knight able to see the openings from his wild attacks, and the Knight of the Anvil had managed to land huge blows onto Emery's body.

Emery winced in pain, feeling the powerful strikes and sharp edge of the old knight's sword. Fortunately, he had cast his [stone skin] spell in the nick of time, so he was able to withstand and not be killed by the old knight's strike. Still, the parts where the old knight had hit began to throb painfully. Emery looked at the wounds and noticed they were dripping blood.

[Nature's Blessing]

Emery used the healing spell to himself and the blood dripping suddenly stopped.

Although the old knight strength was beyond him, but Emery still believed that this old knight would eventually run out of air, he was an old man, after all, so he prepared himself for a battle of attrition and rushed forward once more to attack the old knight with his sharp claws and jet-black dagger. But then, contrary to his expectation, the moment Emery lunged, Sir Bagdemagus suddenly jumped back and shouted, "Emery, this is one of my most amazing fights. However, with that amazing spell of yours, I don't think I can win against you. So, I am sorry that I have to do it this way."

The old knight nodded and when Emery turned his gaze to whom Bagdemagus had nodded to, he saw Keane standing already beside the unconscious Morgana with his sword drawn out.

Emery suddenly regretted how he had been so engrossed in fighting with such aggressiveness against the old knight. Because of his rage, he had failed to notice Bagdemagus' knights advance on the still unconscious Morgana.

The old knight said, "Give up. You know you can't win! It doesn't have to go this way."

Emery let out a steaming breath as he assessed the situation. He wasn't sure if he would be able to get to her in time while the old knight was keeping a close watch at him, running with himself also wasn't an option for that wasn't him for he wouldn't abandon someone without ensuring Morgana would be able to live. That just wasn't him. If he attacked the old knight though, the old knight would most likely issue the order to kill Morgana and that would mean another blood would be on his hands because of his actions.

While Emery was deliberating, the old knight said, "I promise I'll not kill your girl if you listen, so stop resisting your arrest!"

Emery hated this, he was stuck in a hard place and a rock. At moments like this, Emery really wished he had other plans or more spells in his arsenal. If only he had only mastered the [blink] spell, he would be able to help Morgana and this wouldn't have to happen. But he hadn't. It wasn't as simple as he

thought. He continued racking his brain to find even a sliver of a way. However, his line of thinking once again disputed for the old knight didn't give him the chance.

"Kill her!" Sir Bagdemagus shouted.

"Stop!" Emery quickly cried out. He dropped the jet-black dagger for he couldn't find any other way. Forced surrender was his only option.

The browned hair Silver Knight, Abner, cautiously walked closer to Emery with his sword raised. However, that precaution didn't seem necessary for Emery because he simply stood there unmoving. Emery was asked to stretch his hands. He complied.

Abner then pulled out a chain that seemed to be made from the same material as the old knight's sword based on its appearance before tying it on his wrists and then hands.

"Don't bother trying to break the chain, Emery. It's a new type of metal called steel from Rome. Its sturdiness and strength couldn't be compared to iron," said the old knight, sheathing back his steel sword on his waist.

Emery stared at the old man as he released his transformation. The last thing he remembered then was some kind of object hitting the back of head, making his vision spin for a moment before everything went blank.

Chapter 120: Final Fight

When Emery awoken, morning had already arrived. Emery groggily found himself to still be in the camp, outside of the abandoned house chained to a tree, before his blurred gaze fell on the knights breaking down the large tent and putting out the campfire, getting ready to leave. As his mind became clearer, the image of Morgana being pointed at by a sword flashed in his mind. He searched around however, there were no signs of her. Where was she? What happened to her?

Unconsciously, he tried to stand up and find her. But then, a figure stood before him, blocking his sight of the camp and the dazzling sun. The figure said, "You have awoken, my dear young wizard."

Emery knew that this voice belonged to the old knight. Memories of everything that had happened last night roused his returning sense as he demanded, "Where is she! What did you do to her!"

"Wow, did you have a bad dream?" asked the old knight, unfazed at Emery who was struggling to break free against the rustling chains.

"Please, tell me!" Emery repeated.

"I will tell you, Emery, but first let me give you another piece of advice. You must control your emotions. Do not let people around you know your real feelings, especially your enemy. You better remember that!" said the old knight using his mentor-like voice. He then added, "As for your friend she's fine."

"Where is she? Let me see her," Emery pleaded.

"I am afraid I can't do that, Emery. Keane had already taken her away, and you see, we only have one cart and cage, so I sent him to take her away first," explained the old knight, shaking his head.

"Where are you taking her! What are you doing to her!" Emery raised his voice, awful thoughts of what they were about to do to her filled his mind.

"Questions, questions, questions... too many questions, Emery. Again, you're showing too much of your emotions. Here's my second lesson, you should always observe first, listen, and think before speaking your mind," said Sir Bagdemagus in a gentle tone.

The old knight sounded so sincere and his advice always seems useful but with the rage within him, how could he listen. Hoping to get a more direct answer than this, Emery said, "Please tell me, what do you want with us?"

"For you... like I've said, you're special. I'm honestly planning to guide you for years if I have to even in my old age. So, you can be the kingdom's greatest hero."

Emery felt his stomach turned upside down sick hearing the word hero from the man. In Emery's mind, this man was no hero, this man wasn't honorable, he was someone despicable.

"As for the girl, well... there's not much that I can do for her. She's our enemy. And for the future of the seven kingdoms she can't be released. They'll probably torture or open her up so they can study her. That's what I think, if you ask me."

Hearing such undesirable words and imagining her going through that, Emery exploded in anger! He tried to stand and pull the steel chains tied to his wrist and feet, but he couldn't get just enough force to break himself free.

"That roman steel really is great! I should get more of this," remarked the old knight in a smile while fiddling with his gray beard.

"Release her! She's just a girl. Whatever happened years ago, it's not her fault. She is innocent!" roared Emery, pulling the chains.

"Huh! I disagree, those Chrutins are far from innocent. Forget about her! Please, don't follow your father's footsteps! Hmpf, if I had known about your mother that time, I would have not let him be close to her. I would have even killed her myself if I had to!" said the old knight, finally a bit displeased.

As for Emery... the rage in his heart was starting to surge once again. The old knight's words about killing his parents, the threat against Morgana's life, the feeling of helplessness... Emery's mind was becoming filled with so many crazy images and thoughts that it was starting to drive him mad! The image of the High Priestess warning him against the savageness of their ancestor's bloodline, he tried to remember those thoughts amidst the maddening fury. However, no matter what he did, he couldn't calm down. The conflict in his heart, the anger, the desperation... Suddenly, Emery felt a strange sensation inside his spirit core. The dark spirit core was throbbing. It was reacting strongly to his anger and desperation, passing some sort of power through his whole body that he began to feel as if he was burning. Let it go, the rage, set it free!

Then... Emery roared!

[Fey bloodline activate]

Emery's body started changing again into his Fey form, startling the old knight.

"Emery! What do you think you are doing? Calm down!" shouted the old knight, pulling his sword.

In this Fey form, Emery tugged the steel chain but it still wouldn't break. He hauled it again and again that his screaming and banging alerted all the knights inside the abandoned house.

Ten knights, including Abner, the Silver Knight, drew their swords and stood behind Sir Bagdemagus.

"It's pointless, Emery! Just give up!"

Emery felt there was something more inside him, he needed to explode more! More and more! Just let everything go! Emery gritted his teeth before letting his anger burst out! His muscles expanded, he became larger, more furs covered his body, his fangs and claws became thicker and sharper, until his face transformed into a full-on beast!

[Fey bloodline stage 2 activated!]

[Battle power has increased by 20]

Emery's body had transformed into something similar to Morgana's Fey wolf form but his form was bigger and more savage! He stood on his two feet, dwarfing the humans below him and became even more tinier as the ten knights ran away in fear! The Knight of the Anvil, however, stood in place and activated whatever it was that made his pupils white.

"What is happening! Everyone get an arrow shoot!" commanded the old knight.

Emery waved both his arms, breaking the tree in half and chain on his wrist. He got down and slashed the chains when half a dozen arrows penetrated his skin. About three arrows managed to puncture into his flesh but the rest seemed to have been deflected. Emery screamed in pain but rage and suffering seemed to only serve to empower him. And at that moment, Emery was losing his sense of self.

Fragmented visions of knights terrified screaming, tearing them in half, blood on his hands and mouth were the last thing he remembered before he passed out.

An unknown time passed, he woke up again only to find mangled and mutilated bodies lying on the ground. Emery stood naked. He grabbed the first robe he found to cover himself and drink water from one of the waterskins he found on the ground.

A cough and weak voice then entered his ears.

"Em..erry..." it was the voice of the old knight

Although this man was one of the people he hated the most in his list, he had once respected the man. So, Emery walked closer. He saw the huge claw marks across that had ripped the old knight's armor, there was also a bite on his neck, which kept pouring blood.

Emery stood quiet for a second processing what had just happened. He was smart enough to know that this was all his doing but all he could remember was being delighted at the sight of blood and screaming.

Emery noticed the old knight was trying to speak, and since this man was no longer a threat. He listened to the old knight's last words.

Bagdemagus said, "Emery, you really are special... I am not wrong... heh..."

"Why are you still blubbering about this old man? You are dying," Emery replied.

"Haha, I know... Cough... My time has ended but your time has come..." said the old knight, trying as hard as he could to speak.

"Old man, just tell me who is behind all of this. Tell me where did you send Morgana to," said Emery.

The last thing the old man said was...

"For the.. great..er.. good.." after that, the old knight stopped moving, his eyes still opened.

As Emery stared at the old man, he was surprised at himself that he felt sad with the old knight's passing. Although they had only been acquainted for only a few days, the knight had influenced him a lot, whether it was good or bad. For some reason, Emery felt the urge to bury Sir Bagdemagus, his father's mentor, but suddenly, the symbol in his hand shone.

[One hour until recall]

"Dammit!" Emery quickly picked up clothes, wore it and found the jet-black dagger and placed it in his bag. He was hoping he could find and rescue Morgana before his recall, and even though time was limited, he had to try.

Walking around the chaos he had created, Emery surprised to find even the horses were mutilated, Emery suddenly became worried that if he lost control again, he might hurt a friend. But now wasn't the time to think about that. Emery easily transformed into his stage 1 Feywolf form and used his fey wolf innate skill [wild hunt].

Not knowing how far the cart traveled, Emery ran the fastest speed he could muster and followed the scent all the while getting worried he would get recalled any moment now. Eventually, he saw the back of the cart and tried to run faster!

Emery unconsciously got in a running position on all fours and he saw Keane notice him in front of the cart and Morgana was on the back, in a cage, half-conscious.

With all his power, Emery chased the cart! He just needed a bit more time. Keane was whipping the horse the hardest he could. And just a few more steps Emery was able to crash into the cart. Morgana's eyes fell on him, she smiled, but Emery suddenly turned into light and vanished right in front of her!

[You are recalled to the magus academy]