

This is an excerpt of a long-running roleplay. It has been consistently this dramatic.

"Brave men of steel... Favored by God for their strength and discipline... How blessed are they to die for such a righteous cause... And in death, they will reunite with Him..."

Blood slowly began to soak into the soil.

Outside of the kingdom's walls, a deathly silence covered the scenery like a heavy blanket.

In the distance, bells from the cathedral slowly began to ring, the song eerily echoing underneath the dark gray skies, ravens chiming in as they flew towards the new gravesite.

Bones, flesh, metal, fur and weak wails were all that was left behind. A weak, trembling hand, soaked in blood, reached towards the sky.

"G...God... Forgi... Me..."

And so the last breath was lost in the cold wind...

"I almost envy them. For I bear the burden of both their ancestors and their children, and their children's children... Nay... I am God's chariot in this cold, rich land..."

The bells were strong and powerful within the walls of the castle, with the maidens of the court huddling and whimpering softly as they clutched on to their terrified children. Any attempt to peacefully console the innocent little beings once the bells fell silent were in vain. They felt the fear of their mothers and gentle maidens that offered comfort and protection, and slowly the silent tension that was building in between those walls started to grow as the faint sounds of battle became louder by the minute. The church bells managed to snuff out the horrifying sounds of war, even inspiring the presence of God, yet when the chiming stopped, the brutal reality had set in once more. Perhaps God was not with them... For if he was... Would things truly be like this?

They broke through all defenses, it seems. Which only means that the battle against those demons is slowly coming to an end, but at the cost of their own lives.

The throne room was a colossal area, dark and cold, graced by the pillars that welcomed the visitors in row towards the lone throne that sat up on the podium. As much as it inspired power and intimidation to all who stepped inside, it also would remind one of loneliness. Once, this place was more lively. They had candles and torches illuminating the cold architecture of the northern ruler. And back in those days, what had felt like a century ago, the halls were graced by the brightest of smiles and softest of voices that made this place feel like a little warmer place. A presence that melted even a king's heart at times.

He had cursed the day he had met her. Because if he didn't know of the life that he had, the life that he had lost, he wouldn't have known any better and living life would be easier. Because now, in the absence of the warmth that he had known, everything is cold, empty, lonely and meaningless.

And that is why, on top of those stairs of the podium, there was a place for one to sit and reign.

Beside the stairs of the podium stood a smaller figure, in an armor that was a little big on his form. He had the stance, he had the confidence, but his blue eyes were set on the lone and elevated figure that sat upon the throne. Benedict's eyes were slightly widened as he stared at his father, pupils slightly trembling as he listened to the king's words. Though his expression remained unreadable, the blond-haired boy's eyes spoke volumes.

And he wasn't alone. Guards that stood still like statues in the room had heavy expressions on their faces as they would eye at each other or just simply stare at their king. Nobody said a word, but the orders were given and they had nowhere to run. There was a sense of finality even before anything had happened within those walls.

One of the unarmed guards stood behind the pillar and in front of one of the many barrels that were assigned to each guard. His trembling eyes were closed, whispering to himself softly as he prayed. And as a man of God as he was, he was holding back tears, knowing what he was about to do if the king gave the final and definite order.

"And I will be damned before I let those heathens and spawns of hell take our God's land. I will take them down with me if I have to."

Hemmet's voice was low and without force, but there was powerful intent behind every word he had said. He glared at the doors of the entrance, eyes filled with determination and anger. Everyone in the throne room was afraid. Both of the enemy and, even worse, of their own king.

The noise from the outside was louder, but it was not the sound of swords clashing or any screams that would end abruptly. As a matter of fact, a very familiar and beloved voice was heard just outside the entrance.

"Go! Move, men! Drag the wounded inside!"

A voice that urged men to hurry and gather around. It had offered a moment of hope to everyone upon hearing prince Nicholas' voice as the double doors were being pushed open. And the moment it gave way, the first figure to enter was of a young man with dark hair and kind eyes. He was adorned in magnificent armor that represented Winthrop and with the sigil of his homeland etched on the breastplate and the battered shield that rested on his back. The man was dirty and exhausted, perhaps even slightly wounded as he pushed his rushing men into the castle, helping out those who struggled to run, but he left no one behind. The sight of him before the guards and maidens was enough to brighten their day and give a shred of hope even in this dreadful time. Even when he was covered in grime, blood and sweat, he was the welcome sight to sore eyes.

On this day, Nicholas was the leader. He was the future of Winthrop, one to take Hemmet's place. And he was beloved and respected by the people, perhaps more than they had loved and respected Hemmet even in his best days. Plenty said that, out of all five children, it was Nicholas who was graced with virtues from both of their parents.

And the moment dozens of soldiers had entered the throne room, both wounded and ready to fight, the doors were barricaded behind them. Not everyone had made it into the castle, but they had the priority to protect the king, no matter the cost.

Nicholas turned around and looked at his father who sat there, with that well-familiar look on his face. The expression that Nicholas abhorred. He immediately frowned as he confidently walked towards the podium, armor clanking with each step. But as he stood next to his younger brother Benedict, Nicholas bowed down before his father, despite the dissatisfaction and the exhaustion. Nicholas was a man of honor. He was the pride of Winthrope. He was the knight that everyone strived to be. Yet his burden was great.