

*This letter has been subjected to
scrutiny by the Guild supervisors
and deemed unfit to be delivered to the recipients,
due to its contents. It has instead been submitted
as a report of the quest mentioned inside.*

Supervisor Frank von Hastell

To my master, the willfull Lady of Iiu Monastery

Regarding my time at the Heroes
Guild and the mission we embarked
upon, concerning the
Festival of Swords

The thoughts, account and considerations of your
faithful disciple Cain Enoch

As I embarked in this journey to the Grand City in Frankona Central, I couldn't help but wonder if my lifelong dream of finding the Black Knight would be accomplished, it may as well be, since major knights and nobles will participate in this tourney.

I was paired with some skillfull fellows, namely an overgrown talkative tiger called Louis de Montclair, a warrior; a cloaked druid called Pallida Procella, truly bonded with animals; an able and sneaky rogue called Finn Packwell and a somewhat mysterious sorcerer by the name of Irith.

The various factions of the Guild asked us to accomplish something for them, but while some where conciliable with others, it seemed to me that the Breakhearts faction wanted to accomplish the total disruption of the event to make the voices of the lower classes of Frankonia be heard. This proved difficult per se, so we agreed on pursuing the Oath Keeper's request of keeping the drunkards and the protestors away from the main event; the Alliance asked us to avoid conflict between the Emperor's family and the Count of Bedrovia, and the Inquisition prompted us kill and stop a noble assassin, who's believed to target the Emperor's seat.

Trust me, fair Lady, I would have never consented to take the life out of another human being, and in this I've found allies in my group, since we set out to arrest this assassin and give him to justice... but I will write more about that later on.

As soon as we arrived, the security seemed lax and devoid of numbers, but I guess it was due to the festival being somewhat playful and not a true reason for concern.

I was tense all along at the prospect of the Black Knight making a sudden appearance and slaying my companions alongside me, they must have thought me extremely timid where I usually try to talk and make acquaintances... I must remember to stay composed and not worry too much in the future.

As we proceeded, a sudden wail of anguish could be heard inside of a tent, and upon inspecting such noise we found a curious short fellow with a beaked mask. He was tending to a one legged noble, which we later discovered to be named Sir Grell. The tent was animated by this small, three feet tall kenku named Snap which provided medical assistance to his liege. He prompted Louis, the warrior who peeked inside, to drink some sort of potion and leave immediately, and we decide to move on with our quest.

While we were discussing the modus operandi, the Imperial Carriage rolled by the central way, accompanied by bards chanting the fanfare, and was immediately surrounded by commoners pelting it with rotten vegetables, clear sign of their opinion about the Emperor and his regime. While we tried to calm the mob, Louis roared at them trying to intimidate the boisterous ones, before being targeted by a brick. The situation escalated as the Thug's Leader encouraged his goons to take us by force, and we ended up in a commotion.

It didn't last long, we managed to make the boss scurry off and capture one of the thugs for detention: he reeked of alcohol and was dirty from toes to head, telling us he's been paid around 3 pieces of gold for this charade.

What I noticed, Fair Lady, was that while we were intent on using no lethal force whatsoever, the guards ignored it altogether and started attacking the mob with the point of their spears and the edge of their swords. I am truly saddened by this display of violence, but I was still intent on accomplishing the mission and finding out if my foe would be present or not.

As the central fence of the jousting grounds was removed to place a wooden dais of some sort, another clean and noble fellow approached us: he was the prince and heir to the Empire Sir Ranald it seemed. He asked Louis for a duel, but since he was working at that moment he refused immediately, even when offered a monetary compensation. The prince on the other hand got swarmed by ladies as soon as he left us, all while Pallida was far away towards the seats, speaking with the Count of Bedrovia as she told us later, who seemed to be amused by the prospect of an assassination happening during the event. The Emperor stood up as the beginning of the archery competition was announced, and we followed suit towards the grounds, keeping an eye out for any attempts to his life.

As we arranged ourselves at the archery grounds, Pallida informed Louis about a lady, a noblewoman that her owl has been following. Finn was asked to investigate further without being noticed, but a squire yelled at the crowd to 'pick up a longbow and try to compete with the lady herself'. What better occasion, as Finn took up the challenge and chose between two bows handed by the lady's squire. The first round went smoothly as an unremarkable participant is eliminated, but the second round was the one that went awry.

After a delightful display of archery by the lady, whom we discovered to be Lady Elowen, Finn shot arrow after arrow, and the last one was absurdly skewed off trajectory as it almost hit the Emperor seating on the stands, or someone next to him. Pallida immediately knocked the arrow out of trajectory with her thorn whips and it landed towards the nobles. As the squire tried to skulk away, she entangled him and gave us time to apprehend the man, that's when we made light upon this whole ordeal:

As Rirra Swiftrunner told us, since she couldn't participate to the event, Lady Elowen is a former military officer that became bankrupted as the lands awarded to her were unprofitable. She tries to make a living and her squire wanted to make her look good by fabricating a magic bow, the one Finn used, to make her lady win flawlessly. She had a foul odour about her, the same that Louis smelled on the drunken thug, and connecting the dots led to the discovery of her hiring them to cause a ruckus. She told us, in truth, that she's against killing the Emperor, but has some knowledge of the ordeal nonetheless.

The squire was apprehended and probably was hanged after the tournee, but I wasn't present to interfere. I suppose this is the way it must be around these nobles, Fair Lady, but until now no sign of the Black Knight, and as I was thinking he might never show up, I relaxed a bit and tried to make conversation with the group.

The next events were commencing, and the group split: Me and Louis reached the dueling grounds, where only the prince Sir Ranald seemed to be participating. On the stands, some lesser nobles delighted themselves with the display of force. In the meantime, Pallida, Irith and Finn reached the horsing race alongside the Emperor and, as told by them later on, Irith managed to compete in it with a scrawny old destrier. A guy there tried to convince Pallida to race at first, but she declined immediately, since he wanted to bet on her and make some quick cash presumably. They told us that a horse was duped by another rider, but nonetheless our companion managed to ride toe to toe with him! That's until a cart full of cabbages invaded the circuit and made the horses crash, injuring the poor destrier under Irith and making him fall. Kind Irith adopted the horse, and later reached me and Louis in the medical tent of the prince.

That is, because Louis fought valiantly against Sir Ranald, exchanging blows and tiptoeing about a precarious arena that was set up in the midst of the dueling grounds. The prince was not letting him down though, and started attacking with full force, eventually overcoming my companion.

While this was going on, I spotted a guard trying to throw rocks at Louis and immediately reached it to avoid further disruptions... I even bet 20 gold pieces on the tiger, but I am more mad about me betting than the outcome of the bet itself.

Louis fought splendidly, but still required medical assistance, that's when we reached the tent. There we found a physician intent on healing his bruises and wounds, and Irith too asked about the limp on his newly adopted horse. Sir Ranald soon joined us and was livid about Louis holding his punches, the tiger in response told him how he absolutely didn't and complimented the Prince on overcoming his foe.

While the atmosphere was warming up, we heard commotion outside the tent, guards running around and tearing Sir Grell's tent apart.

We later discovered that Finn had sneaked inside the nobleman's tent in search of something, and upon finding a very precious chest he opened it. Inside were missives, letters, but most importantly a parchment saying that Sir Grell was not entitled to any compensation, and next to all of them a sealed vial of pitch black liquid, which Finn immediately grabbed. He was surprised by Snap, the kenku, entering the tent, but he managed to persuade him into going towards the Emperor to look for Sir Grell and call him at once.

There, at the jousting grounds ready for the final event, he had found Pallida conversing with the Emperor, and as her owl healed Louis of some injuries they reconciled until Finn accused Sir Grell of plotting against the Emperor himself, and trying to assassinate him with the vial of poison he had found.

The guards surrounded the nobleman, who was on his horse, and went to search for any other clue in his tent. As we exited the medical pavilion, this guard named Steven informed us of what happened and we rushed towards the jousting grounds immediately.

Surrounded, Sir Grell tried to justify himself by saying that he had intended to drink the poison to kill himself in case he had lost, since he was a poor nobleman with nothing else to spare. His plan was falling apart fast when asked about the parchment in his tent, and after a while he suddenly charged towards the Emperor to kill him.

I don't know what overtook me, but I came back to my senses as I suspected that we were nearing the end of the quest and the Black Knight wouldn't show himself, so while Finn shot a bolt at the nobleman and Louis tried to apprehend him, I cut the horse's front tendons to make it fall on his knight, and immediately grabbed the man. Irith shot at his balls with no hesitation and no lethal intent, and Pallida tried to do the same with his colorful cluster of lights. In the end, the guards speared him as I was holding him, and I can't help but feel responsible for his death.

Nonetheless, we managed to stop the attempt and defend the Emperor's life, we got compensated and we are a tad bit more renowned across the Guild. Pallida even healed and adopted Sir Grell's horse for herself.

I'm writing this as we're coming back along the road, and I wonder when a soldier must lay down his weapons and accept defeat: when death is at his door, or when he first smells the signs of defeat? Regardless, I've made more experience on the field, even if I couldn't prevent a life from being taken, I will make amend my way.

Fair Lady, I must go, the sun is rising and we're a long way off from our destination. I will pursuit what you have told me until I become strong enough, rest assured.

Your disciple,

Cain Enoch