

A Common Belligerence

“And here is where we should have thrust straight into the heart of the lion, Sir Philippe.”

Sir Guillaume de Fos of the Knights Templar talked strategy as he drew tactical lines in the dirt of his captivity. His sword seized, he relied on a scavenged gnarled stick to help explain to his brother in arms where the battle plan went awry.

Sir Philippe de St Amand paid little heed however. Fairing out far worse than Sir Guillaume in the skirmish, he sat on the ground upright against the crude bench. Due to a grievous wound in battle he now tried his best to hold his intestines in. A large part of his white mantle was now a crimson to match its standard issue red cross.

“I’m dying.” He huffed through strained breaths of clenched teeth as he tried to stay still.

Sir Guillaume took a temporary pause to assess his fellow crusader. Perhaps even his friend. His furred mustache lifted up with the annoyance of being interrupted. “You’ll be fine, Sir Philippe. You always are. Heed my words, kind sir, you too shall fight another day.” He continued his stratagem, not realizing he repeatedly shifted his views on how the battle should have been won.

“So had we have waited to pounce-“

His words were cut short as the two men were joined by a third.

“I demand to see somebody of authority! I’ll have you know I’m a man of your god too, you inglorious scourge!” the man shouted at the closing door as he was also

thrown in with the others. His back to the knights, he hadn't noticed he had their company. "These accommodations are completely unbecoming a man of my standing! You would swear I was no better than a horse or his unworthy -"

"Padre." Sir Guillaume didn't give him a chance to finish.

The short round man jumped at the voice, turning and clutching his bible.

Sir Guillaume continued on. "I hate to belay you, but unless you're the king himself, peasant to pope means nothing here."

Seeing the two Knights Templar before him, the bishop stood straighter and a bit taller.

"Such insolence won't be tolerated. I'll have you know I answer to God himself." Father Millicent feigned his authority. Seeing Guillaume tense upright with his stick, the bishop quickly added, "And the king of course." As he quickly made a sign of the cross then kneeled.

Having his king be given his due, Sir Guillaume relaxed a bit. "As I said, you are a mere friar in here. Airs won't do you any good. Especially since your alb looks like it has come out of battle with not a drop of blood on it. Perhaps you would like some of Philippe's. He has ample."

The bishop could only look at the ground.

"Monsignor..." Sir Philippe panted. "My last rights if you would." His spittle was red as it ran down his chin.

Bishop Millicent's own current predicament prevented him in being overly concerned in giving Sir Philippe his last rites. Yet he couldn't very well risk be beaten to death by Sir Guillaume's stick.

Millicent advanced towards and knelt beside the fallen man.

Sir Philippe's face stayed focused on the floor as his eyes followed Millicent. Phillipe's hands coated with blood as they held his stomach. Kneeling near him, Father Millicent expertly slipped a small dagger from his bible into his robe, undetected. If need be, he was more than prepared to defend himself.

It was God's Will.

Initially Father Millicent blamed the stench on Sir Philippe's leaking bile, but quickly pinned most of the blame on the overflowing chamber pot beside the knight. Millicent grabbed the pot and threw it along with its contents to a dark corner.

There was a thud, followed by an "Ouch!"

The three men looked to the corner. "You that has been spying and learning my battle strategies, show yourself or I'll run you through!" Sir Guillaume stood ready to strike with his stick. There was a brief pause.

"Please, sir, I beg of you, take pity on a few poor beggars," a frightened voice pleaded for leniency. "We've been here long and hard. And just didn't want to draw eyes and the attention they bring to our poor unschooled selves."

"Well, as it may be, show yourselves at once," Father Millicent demanded.

There was a shuffling of feet as three peasants edged forward out from the shadows. The leader of the three cowered in his hole riddled wool shirt. His tunic almost looked as one with his unwashed face and his feigned smile displayed numerous missing teeth. He kept a crooked arm in front of him as he readied for a beating.

“True be to form, sir, we mean you know harm.” He pleaded.

Father Millicent began to berate the farmer, but even before Sir Guillaume could stand up for them they were interrupted. Word came that a castle had been breached and over run. They just didn’t know which castle.

Before anyone could say another word, a massive hand scooped them all up and put them back on the chessboard for a rematch.