

Chapter I-Battle in the Valley of the Winds

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well, this is a short story i was thinking of for a while now, i finally managed to take a grip of the storyline and as such, here it is.

ps:sorry for not being able to include every knight in the round table and some from the late Chateau Montreford

Chronicles of the Asturien

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The air itself was tainted with the stench of... death.

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The way the smell was unique reminded him constantly how death was so final, and yet universal to the point that even a young child could know its smell and the meaning of it.

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Smoke rised from several houses where bodies lay, sprawled in the floor the murderers made no distinctions between children, women, old, young, or even pets for the matter...

- Sir? Are you
felling alright sir?

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Uther Di Asturien looked down from his horse into the face of his young squire whose name was Cerval. "Poor thing" Uther thought to himself, "young as he is and already the cold truth of war has come to haunt him.

- I'm fine
Cerval, go and bring me Sir Robert here will you?

Â Â Â Â Uther said to which his squire was all to happy to comply. When he looked back to see his squire vanishing in the mist in the direction of their encampment he once again laid his eyes on the rotting corpses of the people in the village around him...

The winds howled in this valley, it gave him Goosebumps for they seemed like screams of agony and death, he wondered if it was his imagination or if it was the screams of spirits haunting these lands, he dismissed these thoughts as he turned around to see Giselles approaching.

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Uther glanced towards Arakasi, knowing that most the other knights in the tent did as he, what the man was asking for was pure suicide, nobody doubted that, and most of them complied with an honourable death, but the tactics this man wanted were not reasonable at all, even tough everyone knew that this was an intelligent man, and as such, they blamed the fact that he had not slept for days since they had discovered that one of the burned villages was from his own land.

Â Â Â Â - What you ask for Arakasi is madness!
The peasants will never hold the right flank alone against a force that number!
Have you forgotten what our scouts told us?!

Said a knight called Etien from the north, from Bretonnia.

Uther was sure he had not forgotten the frightened reports the scouts had given them. His words where not to be trusted, yet his description implied well over a hundred thousand marauders and mercenaries in this army they had been tracking down since they had attacked

several villages in the border princes, many near the land of the Asturien, that was mostly the reason why these knights had been gathered, most of the experienced knights at the table were veterans from Bretonnia who had settled in the border princes, yet some, such as Marcel, Ferran, Giselles, Montgallion, and others were Lords from Bretonnia and been called for by a messenger sent to the castle of the round table to make sure that this army would not cross the Border into the east of Carcassone, where coincidentally was the land of the Asturien, which was only one more reason for Uther to answer the call to arms with all the men he could get, yet he had not gathered all the men he had, and he knew that nobody of the other knights had, simply because despite their teachings of tactics, they had underestimated their enemies, they thought that it was surely only a couple of thousands of weak rebels and such, it was one of the worst mistakes Uther knew they had made.

He had been called himself by his comrades, he answered the call with nine hundred men at arms, two hundred bowmen and at least sixty young knights eager to earn a small parcel of land. Yet even all the Elder knights owning lands at the table, which were thirteen in total were not enough to bring the numbers to fight in these odds, their army consisted of fourteen thousand men at arms, three thousand bowmen and roughly six hundred knights.

- What if we put a thin line of twenty men deep in this middle section, yet in a manner that they are so close to each other that the enemy will not be able to distinguish it from the other sections in the middle, thus we may gain at least eight hundred men to reinforce the right flank.

^ ^ ^ ^ It was a radical tactics proposed by Sir Guillaume, yet all the knights knew that he had not earned the title "courageux" for nothing and he had lived until today using most of his improvised tactics, yet it seemed reasonable enough to work considering that the terrain where they were going to station their middle was very plain.

-Well, if that tactics does work to let us support our right flank while we go with our knights by our left^ how will we know that twenty men deep will hold them long enough for us to hit deep in their centre and hopefully panic their army?

It was a reasonable question which was answered by another knight called Chretien.

- If we leave at least a detachment of knights, lets suppose, two hundred knights lined behind that section of our middle force and make that section even more thin, thus

giving us more reinforcements for the right flank and when the enemy eventually breaks through our line of men the knights charge into the fray.

It was a good tactic, yet all knew that it meant they had less chances of hitting deep enough inside the enemy.

After a series of debates regarding the tactics most of the knights settled for the two combinations of tactics described by Guillaume and Chretien, and so, with only some hours away from dawn and from the day of the battle they dispersed throughout the camp.

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The descriptions given to them by the scouts were far from accurate. Uther thought to himself, "while viewing the gigantic amount of men in front of him, the enemy, they had come to discover, was much more numerous than they thought, there were at least a hundred and thirty thousand men there, but in compensation, little or none cavalry."

The men from Asturien were nervous, as were most or all of the men from the other lands, they were facing a force at least six times their numbers, yet all the men knew that this was the only chance to stop these dogs before they could reach the southern parts of Bretonnia.

Letting out a sigh he let his visor drop down to cover all from his chin to his eyes.

No knight stepped forward to give a speech to boost the morale of the men, it wasn't needed, all the men knew what their duty was. And all of them knew that they would probably die trying to achieve this one victory.

- Nice day,
isn't it?

Uther looked to his side to a face he knew all too well, Marcel was there, beside him sitting atop of his horse watching the line of men spread for thousands of meters in front of them.

- Nice day to die if you understand whose death I am talking about.

Jean, with a grin conceded and drifted away, the knights knew that Uther certainly was not a morning person, and Uther's answer showed that.

"I'm too old for this" Uther thought to himself, yet he knew that even though he was old for a normal human being, the blessing of the lady that was cast upon him when he drank from the grail had given him the opportunity to survive many times, both from severe wounds and from his age, he realised long ago that he would probably live many more decades, perhaps even a century more if he didn't die in battle.

He thought to himself if he wanted to continue ruling his lands or if he should pass them on to his son and then leave the Asturien to live the life of a Guardian of sacred places, trying to forget his worries he looked to their line of men, in tight formations over two or three miles.

Their men were dwarfed both by the size of the enemy force and by the size of the enemy's men.

Their elite warriors rised at least six feet from the ground, most of them were as tall as seven feet.

Their usual fighting warriors were less impressive, yet no less dangerous for even though they usually were as tall as a normal man, sometimes some inches larger, their muscles and toughness made them look like they were stallions with their veins standing out in their tense arms.

The other persons in this army were mercenaries, mostly tilean, and only considered a danger by the bretonnians due to some rare events when they used gunpowder

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Suddenly, the line of men began moving, trying to better adapt their formations to where the enemy was apparently stronger, the battle had started, he jumped atop of his horse and trotted back to the main unit of knights.

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trumpets sounded like the call of death, and to many they were, yet now, it was their signal to charge into the flank of an enemy unaware of the four hundred knights now bursting from the woods to their right.

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The moment of the charge was what most knights lived for, to some, it was pure adrenaline, to others, it was a state of pure religious stasis, but to the most of them, like Uther, it was the one time of their lives in which time slowed down, in that short space of time, while their horses ran hundreds of feet in less than a minute it seemed that they could hear all the small noises and sounds around them, the breath of their horses and their heartbeat was the most loud sound in their heads while they came closer and closer to their enemies.

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Yet there were also those knights who saw the flank charge as the most dishonourable part of the fight because the enemy wasn't aware until it was too late, and as such, they usually went in the middle of the knight unit.

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Unfortunately for the enemy, Uther wasn't one of them.

He directed his lance to hit the men's head

in front of him just in time to see the look in his eyes, the look of anguish to know that in that brief moment of pain, his life was forfeit.

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The world seemed to explode all around him when his knights hit the enemy's flank, he could hear bones snapping under his horse's hooves, his lance had broken the skull of that men in the first row and some of its splinters had blinded at least two others, his horse, in a frenzied state, charged deeper into the enemy trying at all costs to stay together with the main unit of knights.

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Uther dropped what was left of his lance and unsheathed his sword in time to parry an axe from a man to his left, he slashed with his sword, making a clean cut across the man's face and he dropped, his horse continued trying to follow behind most of the knights.

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He slashed left and right, cutting of a limb from anyone who got too near, he could see several knights being slowed down to a halt to be pulled down from their horses and being killed in a mob fashion even tough the knights fought with everything they could, slashing left and right, sometimes so hard that their swords would be stuck in the men's chest or skull.

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He looked to where he recalled were his men lined up with the other thirteen thousand men, there, we saw the chaos enemy charging them, hacking their shields apart and then tearing the men open in several ways, for each elite warrior that charged their lines, it took twelve men to bring him down in the best of the occasions.

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He could also see near him Jean and Guillaume on foot with some of the other knights fighting for their lives against an enemy hundreds of times their numbers, he looked to his right to see a remaining group of knights being pulled down and some of their horses being slaughtered with spears and pikes.

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It was in this moment that he was sure all of the knights knew their plan had failed.

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His horse was beginning to slow down, unable to accompany the dwindling unit of knights still charging deeper in the enemy, he slashed and stabbed every thing that moved in an attempt to find an opening for his horse to run, yet now, his horse was finally brought to a halt, and the men started to swarm all around him.

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His horse threw kicks at any men within range, Uther could hear him cracking skulls and breaking bones, yet to no avail, Uther tried to stab at a man who half climbed up in the horse but instead the men got hold of his hand and tried to pull him down, all around him hands tearing at him grabbing his robes and armour and pushing him from one side to the other until he finally fell in the ground.

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moment he met the ground the men were all over him, kicking, punching and trying to stab him.

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Most of the attempts were futile due to his armour, yet Uther could feel broken ribs inside his plate, gathering his strength, he got hold of his hunting knife and stabbed it in the chest of a very surprised man.

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Uther took advantage of that distraction and punched a man in the face while getting hold of his axe, he could feel bone crushing under the gauntlet while the fought to take hold of the axe at the same time that the other men closed all around him.

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Finally getting hold of the axe he turned around and lunged at the nearest men, burying his axe in his face, he was fast enough to get hold of a short blade, he quickly slashed a man to his left and stabbed another to his right, some of the men stepped back, probably not thinking he would give such a fight, yet he suddenly understood why they had stepped back... From between them, a warrior, probably a champion, standing a little more than seven feet tall, with an ornate yet tough looking armour and a horned full helmet, bearing the mark of the god that the Norse called "Khorne" stepped forward, wielding a huge battleaxe his hand, and two other smaller axes and blades in his belt.

Uther stepped in his direction, rising to the challenge just in time to parry his attack, Uther dodged to his left, and ducked, trying to find an opening on the warrior, yet, already knowing this the warrior brought down his axe, Uther had just enough time to bring up his sword to try to deflect the attack, he could see the glow in the warrior's axe as the weapons drew nearer and when they finally touched each other, Uther's blade burst into a thousand tiny fragments.

Stunned by the pain in his arm due to the shock that went from his sword to his hand Uther fell to his knees, only to be lifted by the warrior's hand in his throat.

The warrior rised his axe in one hand, and Uther in the other, showing it off to the other men around him, in this moment, Uther knew he had to do something or this would be his end, he could already feel his life slipping away while he struggled to draw breath, when the warrior raised even more his battleaxe Uther caught a glimpse of one of the knives in the warrior's belt, as quick as he could, managing to draw just a little breath and gathering his strength, Uther released one of his hands from the warriors arm and lunged with it for his belt, as quick as he thought it humanly possible Uther brought up the knife into the small opening between the full plate and the helmet, the opening where there was the warrior's throat.

The knife hit home, spilling blood everywhere the warrior fell back, trying to cover the wound with his armoured hands, Uther fell in the ground, trying to get up while fighting off the warriors around him, yet there were too many, and they were about to swarm over him when turning around the last thing he saw was a mace wielded by an armoured figure coming at his face, then the world turned black...

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