

Chapter 1: Memories

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The lands of Bretonnia had never been the same since King Louen had cleansed the dukedom of Mousillon. The Affair of the false grail was Duke Maldred had committed foul acts of cannibalism. Had forced their nobles into an unfavourable position and many of the households that had held many years of history to the dukedom had dispersed among the lesser settlements. Leaving their once mighty castles and villas, they moved to the countryside where the peasants had a greater hold over their surroundings.

Many of the peasants had welcomed the presence of the nobles into their villages. Often erecting large villas that resembled their once mighty stately homes. These were often large wooden structures with thatched hay roofs, depending on the local resource. Many had mud walls or simple clay bricks, however many of the villages and small towns where agricultural settlements and lacked any great stone workers, outside of the timely practice of hut making. Obligated to accept these offerings with good will many nobles were happy to be in a seat of power, what small one it was. Many of the rich families had paid for stone workers and such to refine the peasant's first attempts. However some growing into grand edifices unchanged since they were first built. A new age of prosperity also followed the nobles where ever they went. However the past caught up with them. Many felt a great dishonour at what had happened and set out to prove themselves to the lady and others retreated into the lands of the empire, not to be seen again. To this day only a few of the noble families of Mousillon still exist within the great realm of Breton. These Households try to hide their roots and some go as far as denying relations to those found to be of Mousillon birth. As the years have drifted on, the remaining families have rebuilt their reputation and retrieved a small amount of their lost honour. With news of a new errant war many households have gone to fight leaving those few behind. In the fishing town of Embrun the nobility have stayed to keep order amongst the peasants. Embrun is a small town, presiding opposite the river Sirthelle. The townsfolk often drink from the crystal waters as it's believed they can cure their small plagues. Leading from Embrun to the river is a dirt track often travelled by horse and cart or bucket. Fishermen set off at sun rise pushing off from the creaky dock with nothing but the sound of the icy water lapping against the sides of their canoes. The sound of children playing around the trees and in the tall grass is not missed, often bringing life to their otherwise dull lives, the elderly make the trek once a day and stand on the bank admiring the view. On the other side of town, traders and merchants converse the trade route to Summersfall Fort trading metals, food and clothing. However it does not go without dangers, many thieves and bandits roam the highway and wild beasts wander from the forest some say much too often. Leaving it up to the yeomen and citizen militia to keep close eye on the road, as well as the many dodgy travellers that take peasants to the backhouses of the fort to work as slaves. The town itself is another matter. Smoke billows from chimneys made of clay and light masonry littered the ground. Many times ages past had Embrun been raided by beastmen and their infernal pets. All the homes were of similar design, made from clay or mud with large chimneys, protruding from thatched roofs, the doors of the homes were typically rotten or cracked wood if they were lucky a much less weathered material. The town as a whole has been rundown for many a year, with the townsfolk in a grave state of depression.

The people that spent their time mostly in the town where often shells of humanity. Many had caught plagues that drifted through the air. Others had poor conditions or felt the bite of ice. Those that spent their days by the river were of a slightly healthier state and greater mentality. The townsfolk were often generic and rarely looked the part. Most of the men had slight curves in the backs and wore itchy brown rags. However the people had constructed one great building in their time. It lay up a hill just to the left of the road to Summersfall Fort. It could be seen from nearly everywhere in the town, it was better kept then the other buildings and made from slightly better quality bricks. The building itself had an oaken door with stables out back. A small out building for servants that was relatively the same size as most of the townsfolk's homes not to mention same quality. To the right of the great building were a few trees the fruit, which resembled apples in look but were soft as peaches. The building was made from a dark grey stone with wooden beams for support; it resembled the shape of many of the other homes, but much much larger and a large coat of arms had been attached to the north wall. The south wall overlooked part of the river, from there you could the cranes stood still and lifeless in the water. As well as the a grey shape in the distance many had told the owners that was Castle Carcassonne, it's spires rising to the heavens.

The road was often busy mid noon and the king's soldiers had been stationed near the Sirthelle river for some days, word of goblin raids on the inland settlements had increased in recent days. A small force had come but was sufficient enough, many were the nobles of the nearby land and their squires others brought their villages. The force numbered only a hundred men, but was sufficient enough to take on the raid force. The call to arms was made by the king's advisor of the southern lands.

As with many call to arms a host of knights errant had shown up many wearing little heraldry, others came bedecked in heavy scrolls and impressive displays of origin. The banks were covered in fine purebreds wearing colourful over layers, and shining armour to cart pulling steeds wearing ugly leather saddles. The noble fighters had set up camp on a hill surrounded by trees; the older knights had been discussing who should take control of the forces, leading the charge and where the best ground will be.

The job had come down to two men, Lord Edmond Le Heaulux he was to lead the charge being the most senior knight and Sir Leonard De Marcus the self proclaimed master tactician. Both men were respected amongst the southern regions of Breton and seasoned veterans in their own right. It was late and the sentries were returning to camp from the river mouth. One poor lad had become sodden when he lost his footing at the shallow end of the river and fallen in, however it had created a nice story to tell that evening. Walking through the peasant camp, several of the yeomen looked at them through squinting eyes each staring strangely at the water logged man. The sentries took note of how quick camp had been erected and noticed many of the squires and bowmen had little more than nylon bags to cover their frozen bodies and their saddles as pillows. The ground was also brown and weeds sprang up everywhere, quietly making their way to the slope where the noble's tents lay.

A large balding man with few teeth stopped them. "What happened to him? He looks like he's gone for a swim" he asked saliva flowing onto his moist chin. Wiping the spit from his face and pointing to the soaked sentry, "Well he lost his footing down at the ford near the river mouth." "What's your business?" the peasant attempted to say again without covering the poor soul in saliva. "Yes we had to drag him out of the icy water before his muscles tensed, now please we must be going to see Sir De Marcus," the sentry retorted with a look of relief on his face that they were finally leaving the man's presence. The slaving giant skulked back towards the campfire his shoulders hunched and thudding the ground heavily with each footstep.

Turning on their heels the three sentries hurried towards the nobles' tents their pace quickening. The hill was a gentle slope at best, but opened up to a great plateau. Then tents were almost like miniature buildings, made from fine materials designed to keep the owner dry and warm. Small tapestries were hung on the outside telling the owners' family history and heraldry. One tent had a steeple with a large bronze spike on top, two women were carrying things in and out, one was young with blonde hair and a button nose the other was older with brown hair and a large bosom. From the looks of things they were slave women but the sodden sentry looked at them with curiosity. Wondering why these women would be made to clean and wash the horses, to him they looked more like the damsels of the lady than common whores.

The track around the knight's camp was muddy and large hoof prints covered most of the ground. The three men wondered further into the mass of tents, taking note of the many servants and stable men working in various locations, the magnificent war horses tore up the turf as they went to the stables their massive hoofs stamping grass and small animals alike. A corn vole ran up a servant's pant leg, making him scream and flail his leg around peasants all around laughed at the man's dance. The three sentries walked in towards the centre of the magnificent camp

towards a large blue tent, a brace of swords were hung on a plaque secured by a thick brown rope to the main support poles. The flaps were held open with a red rope and red velvet strips lined the covers. Thin wisps of smoke floated out of the portal and the smell of incense tickled the nose. The three men heard voices and pushing aside the left tent flap when inside.

The room was large and the walls bare, an immense square table had taken position in the centre of the room. Five large wooden chairs were positioned around the table, red leather created a look of pure comfort. Inside there stood two knights wearing their standard plate, one was a muscular man built for combat his hair was black and stopped at his neck, the other was of average height his hair was brown and made into a quiff. His chin sported a fine beard; his left cheek had a deep cut. The knights were pointing at a large map on the table, deep in their conversation they didn't notice the sentries enter.

The front sentry coughed, clearing his throat he spoke; "Lord Edmond, Sir Leonard we have spotted the goblin rafts, but they are another day or two away," The two knights looked up; the black haired noble had a spark in his eye that made the three men flinch. "Very good go and assemble the men; we will have a little pep talk," With that the sentries left the tent leaving the nobles together. "Edmond can we really count on these poor fools to fight, many of them don't even own metal weapons," preached the brown haired noble. "All in due timing, these men will fight for the most noble of cause, the lady and our land. Such a worthy goal will only strengthen their resolves, besides the goblins will fall after a few hard knocks," The two knights laughed, their deep coarse voices echoing through the emptiness of the tent. The air had been sharp and cut into the skin for many days, the goblins didn't know how long they had been afloat but knew it had been too long.

The rafts had been creaking lately and a few had lost their strength and collapsed. Many of the little greenskins had assumed that Gork had been mad with them sinking some of their force; however the more likely reason was the rotting wood they used to build their waterborne beds. The wiser or sneakier of the goblins had thought that there were too many gobos aboard each raft, though nevertheless they persisted. When they set off for their devastating raid, they numbered in the four hundreds but now only three hundred.

The rafts had many varied goblins on board from gobos in hooded cloaks to those with ramshackle armour. One raft held dark skinned goblins, with large swords held ready in their grubby hands, they all seemed to be standing slightly behind one of the gobos in particular. It wore a dirty chest plate with a red handprint on its smoothest surface. The goblin kept its face hidden in a black tattered hood hiding all but its bent nose, in the creature's skinny hand it held aloft a halberd, which looked light and manageable in confined spaces.

A smaller goblin ran towards him screeching in a creaky voice, "Giblar, the scouts say we will be near the shore soon," Looking towards the sky he squinted, looking for some sign of time or date. Turning to the gobo he spoke his voice was in an unnatural slur for a goblin, "Gud now tellz da rest dat we move the squigs in first," With that the smaller gobo went to the edge of the raft disappearing behind the sword bearers, screaming the orders. All around Great War chants started, as the first sign of shore was spotted, Giblar thought to himself why he was sent to attack here, he was one of the bosses most trusted lieutenants by all rights he should have been nay should have been leading mighty invasion

A small goblin with a large wart on his right cheek and a small tuft of purple hair ran towards the hooded gobo. "What's the plan Giblar?" it screeched in a high pitched voice, turning the face the small gobo Giblar spoke "Calm down Grabby, these gobos will tear their heads off," With a mighty cheer the goblins screeched out yet more chants to the gods. Flags fluttered in the distance, and the goblins started to bang their weapons against their shields. The gobo with the purple hair had green ooze dripping from its lip and pulled out a small effigy.

Speaking words of magic or incomprehensible gutter talk made the sky above them swirl purple with chaos and the land began to shake. Right in front of the lead raft a large spike shot up from the river. It split the wooden construction in two, violet bolts of lightning shot to the ground as the river thrashed and heaved with unnatural ferocity.

Thunder drowned the out the noise of frightened goblins. Grabby's eyes shone a baleful purple as the storm reached its peak, they could hear the sounds of humans running for cover in the distance. The lightning hit them one by one thinning the ranks, fortunately for Giblar's goblins the knights were the first hit. Horse reared and let out their distress. As the storm began to increase in power Grabby's face began to swell as the strength of the horde powered the storm. With a mighty bang the gobo's head exploded green ectoplasm flew through the air, as the body fell to the floor a green gas rose upwards into the purple sky, the smell of rotten eggs descended making the goblins feisty. "Great, da shaman is dead!" roared a sword bearer in a choked voice. The storm was quietening down, however the rain fell and stung the greenskins like acid. The sword bearers pretended it was nothing more than an insect bite. Looking to his right Giblar noticed a shallow realising this was were he would run fourth into the human world; he began to shout the order to land. Today was a day to be remembered in all the greenskins history thought Giblar.