

Vengeance

Contributed by Donnie
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Ten years have passed since Bohemond left his son in the care of Louen Leoncoeur. Often times he would receive word that Lomant is progressing well in his training, or that he has just defeated a Knight of the Realm in mock combat. But today, when the messenger came, the message was different. The messenger told Bohemond that it was approaching Lomant's 20th birthday and the end of his training and that his presence was requested in Couronne within a fortnight.

Dismissing the messenger, Bohemond quickly made preparations for his wife, his retainers and himself to make for Couronne the next day. They progressed across the Bretonnian landscape at a brisk pace, and reached Couronne exactly a fortnight after they left. As they entered the city, Bohemond couldn't help but feel that he was repeating history, as he took the exact road ten years ago. They approached the gate warden, and he simply bowed and waved squires forward to take the Duke's horse and those of his retinue.

He entered the castle, and was lead to his chamber that he was to stay in. After seeing the door, he asked the squire to help everyone settle in and he headed down to greet the king. Entering the King's hall, he saw many a knight stand around the throne, and a few Knights Errant were flanking the carpet up to Louen. Each of the young knights was well disciplined and did not so much as move as the famed duke walks past...save one. One turned his head slightly as Bohemond passed...but it was barely noticeable and he quickly turned back.

Kneeling before Louen, Bohemond said, "Louen Leoncoeur, King of the Bretonni. I have come according to your summon."

Smiling, Louen had Bohemond stand and embraced him in a hug and said, "My dear Bohemond. Enough of the formalities, your son is present here, and has completed his training. In fact, recently he had been dispatched to assist in quelling a Green skin invasion of Montfort. At the battle he lead his Errant companions in a charge that ran down the Orc warlord. Now please Bohemond, come stand beside me, and watch, as your son becomes a Knight of Bretonnia." Nodding to the herald beside the throng, the herald took a step forward and yelled, "KNIGHTS ERRANT! Step forward, kneel, rest your shield's against your knee and have your helmet under your arm."

Slowly, starting from the back the young knights marched forward, each joining the line as it came to them, their mailed boots thudding heavily on the oak floor as each walked with pride. They did as they were told, lowering their shields and removing their helmets and kneeling before the king. Louen advanced and drew his sword, holding it high in the air and said, "For courage in the heat of battle, for stemming the green skin invasion, and for slaying the warlord...I hear-by, in the name of the Lady and of Bretonnia, dub thee...Knights of Bretonnia." He lowered the blade and tapped each knight in turn, dubbing them...but stopped as he reach the young knight at the end and turned to Bohemond and said, "Bohemond, as it has been ten long years since you last saw your son, I feel it only right, that you grant him his knight hood."

Louen turned his sword to Bohemond hilt first, "Please..." he said. Grasping the handle of the blade, he stood in front of his son and was smiling greatly as he said as he tapped the blade on his shoulders, "In the name of Bretonnia, the Lady, and our King...I dub thee 'Sir'; Lomant de Bastonne!"

Louen took his sword back and said; "Now arise young knights, and celebrate, for this day belongs to you!" With that said, nine knights whom all bore the symbol of the grail, brought forward a shield for each knight, as well as a helm. Bohemond only paid attention to the knight who brought Lomant his. His helm's crest was that of a dragon crouched over a large rock, and his shield change from the heraldry of his house, to a red dragon battling a Wyvern. After receiving their heraldry, all the young knights turned to the assembled crowd and as one, all the could be heard from the gathered throng of warriors was, "HAIL! BRETHREN AND KNIGHTS OF BRETONNIA!" To which

the new knights responded the same.

Bohemond walked up quietly behind Lomant and tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Congratulations son." Turning, Lomant grinned and grasped his father hand, then hugged him tight. They finally broke the hug and Lomant said, "Father...I have it arranged, tomorrow I leave for Amorelot's castle to avenge Lomandalis. I have not forgotten my oath, and nor do I plan to break it." Nodding, Bohemond said that is what he expected to hear, but first that Lomant had to see his mother.

The next day, Lomant was lead to the city gate by his father and the king. Before leaving, he knelt before Louen and thanked him for the years of training. Then embraced his father once more and said, "Father, fear not...I shall return." Then, grabbing the front of his saddle he quickly threw his leg over his horse, kicked his spurs into its flanks and sped out of the gate. It was not long before he was out of sight. Bohemond stood staring at the cloud of dust that Lomant's horse had left, and Louen faintly heard Bohemond say, "Please my Lady...watch over my son and see that he returns to me alive and well." They both turned and headed back to the castle.

Lomant rode hard for a few hours, the excitement of yesterday still fresh in his mind. It wasn't until he heard Night-Flash breathing heavily that he slowed to a walk. Riding along, occasionally checking his map, Lomant would just look out at the beautiful countryside and talk to Night-Flash. Just before nightfall, as Lomant was on the edge of sleep, he thought he heard a twig crack in the woods to his right. He thought nothing of it, but when it happened again and Night-Flash's ears perked he didn't move, except his left hand, which loosened his sword in its sheath.

As Lomant rounded the next corner, he saw a group of foreign men carrying rusting blades and broken shields. He brought Night-Flash to a halt and said, "Be there a reason that you block the road that a Knight of the Realm travels on?" The largest man took a step forward and replied, "We control this road, either a tax be paid, or you die by our hand, the choice is yours."

Laughing Lomant said, "I have no money, and I do not wish to kill you. Move aside." It was then that Lomant heard a rope creak and snap. Expecting a trap, he ducked as a massive log swung through the air that his head had just occupied and swung back into the woods. Just when the rope snapped, the men on the road rushed forward with their blades held high. Grabbing the hilt of his sword in his hand, he rolled off Night-Flash's back, pulling it out of its sheath at the same time. As he landed on his feet the first brigand reached him and slashed at his gut. Lomant easily sidestepped the strike, and slammed the hilt of his sword into the back of his head, knocking him out. As he fell, his sword fell out of his hands and Lomant quickly grabbed it and readied himself.

Lomant slowly walked out in front of Night-Flash with both swords ready. When he took a pace forward he saw each and every one of them all take a pace backwards and couldn't help but grin. One glanced from his companion that was laying on the ground and back at Lomant...then screamed some incoherent battle cry and rushed forward, followed by the other three. Lomant ducked the slash that was aimed at his throat and brought his own blade up across the brigands belly, slashing a mortal wound and bringing the other blade down across his back as his momentum spun his first blade and buried it into the chest of the second to come at him. As they both fell at the same time, Lomant was able to parry the attacks of the remaining two men, than smashed his mailed fists into their faces. As they stumbled backwards, clutching their shattered noses, Lomant bellow loudly as he slammed a sword through each of their chests. As they also fell to the ground dead, Lomant heard what sounded like a man choking from seeing his friends being killed without contest, and then it turned to a scream of terror as he threw the rusted blade through the woods and heard it thud into his chest. Lomant mounted Night-Flash again and road off as the last one fell from the tree's.

As night fell, Lomant rode into a small town and headed to a tavern to get a drink. He opened the door and walked in, his blood spattered tunic drawing many gasps and stares. Sitting at a table alone, the keeper of the Inn came over and asked him what he would want. Lomant ordered a draught of ale, a room for himself and a stable for his horse. The Inn-keep nodded, took the money that was on the table and walked away. Lomant slowly surveyed the room and didn't see the Inn-keep return with his drink. Coughing, he said, "Excuse me my Lord, your room is the third door upstairs, finest accommodations we have and here is your ale. Now I don't mean to pry, but you didn't have any trouble on the way into town did you? We have been hearing that a group of renegade Empire soldiers have taken up camp and are harassing any who pass near them." Lomant laughed slightly and said, "There were six men in that group of brigands. One is still lying on the road alive and will wake up with a nasty head ache, the other 5...well they found out why it is not smart to cross swords with me."

Nodding and smiling softly, he shuffled off. Lomant slowly drank his ale, watching the room occasionally roar in laughter from scattered tables as he ordered some food. After he ate, he went to check on Night-Flash to make sure he was comfortable, before proceeding up to his room. After having stripped himself of his light traveling armour, he took time to wash the blood off his clothes before taking a bath himself. After drying himself off, Lomant collapsed on his bed and was on the verge of sleep when someone thudded against his door. Instinctively, he quickly grabbed a dagger, blew out the candle and pressed his back against the wall beside the door and asked who was there. There was no answer, but a small envelope was slipped under the door and he heard boots thudding down the hall. Looking at the letter he could faintly make out his name in the dark. Lomant opened it and out fell a ring; quickly he read the letter, "So 'Sir' Lomant, you have become a full knight...I look forward to meeting you in your 'attempt' to avenge your pitiful brother. Signed, Sir Amorelot."

Crumpling the letter into a ball he hurled it across the room and looked at the ring...it bore the crest of his family and engraved at the bottom of it he could barely make out the word "Lomandalis". Throwing open the door, Lomant ran down the stairs and outside, trying to see if he could find the one that delivered the letter...but the streets were bare. Glancing at the ring, he slipped it on his finger and went back into his room and quickly fell asleep.

The next morning, Lomant got dressed and headed downstairs for breakfast. In the morning light he could see that the tavern was actually quite clean, bright and cheerful. In the corner he could see some men that were passed out on the table, obviously having drunk themselves stupid last night. As the Innkeeper came to ask what he wanted for breakfast, he ordered his food and to have his horse ready to leave within two hours. Nodding, he left to get everything ready.

Lomant couldn't help but run what happened last night through his mind over and over. He knew it would only have been a messenger, but he wondered if he could have gotten some information from him. Pulling his map from his pocket he saw that he was only two days ride from Amorelot's castle. He quickly finished his food, threw some money on the table than walked upstairs and got dressed in his light armour before walking out of the Inn and riding out of town in haste.

He rode fast, for a few hours, than slowed to a walk. Only stopping to rest every few hours, he made good time and got farther in one day than he had originally expected. That night, Lomant steered Night-Flash off the road and set up camp. Lighting a fire he lay back and quickly fell asleep.

In the morning, he awoke to the feeling of Night-Flash nuzzling and licking his neck for food. Laughing he stood and fed his mount some grain he took from Couronne and jerky for himself. In the dawns faint light he could barely make out the spires of a castle on the horizon. Patting Night-Flash on the neck he whispered that they would be there by nightfall. As he donned his armour, Lomant heard a crack of thunder overhead and muttered how much he detested the rain.

Packing his gear, he donned his heavier battle armour before throwing his leg over Night-Flash's back. Looking at the dark clouds overhead he started on the road to Amorelot's castle. Shortly after breaking camp, a bolt of lightning flashed across the sky, followed by the loudest crack of thunder Lomant had ever heard, and right after the sound of rain hitting his armour was almost deafening. Although the weather did not deter Lomant, Night-Flash detested being out in the rain and picked up the pace on his own. Not wanting to waste time by stopping for food, Lomant would steer Night-Flash off the road for him to graze as he helped himself to some more jerky. When Lomant was within a kilometre of Amorelot's castle, a bolt of lightning arced and struck two trees on either side of the road that came up to the bridge. Riding up to the flaming tree's, Night-Flash whinnied and backed up slightly. Leaning forward Lomant patted his neck and said, "Don't worry, it is an omen from the Lady...that blood will be spilt tonight. Now I need you to be brave old friend." Pawing the ground, Night-Flash neighed softly and bobbed his head as if nodding. Lomant smiled and urged him forward.

As they approached the gate, Lomant dismounted and guided Night-Flash under an overhang to shield him from the rain and tied him to a hitching post. Then slowly walked towards the large oak doors and thudded heavily on them with his fist. A small eye slot shot open and a voice came out, "What brings you to this castle Knight?"

Resisting the urge to smash the door open and rush in, Lomant responded, "I have business with Amorelot. He is expecting me." Accepting the answer, the gate warden closed the eye slot and opened the door. As Lomant entered the door, the warden took a quick glance at the heraldry on his shield and allowed Lomant to pass. Looking at the courtyard, seeing bloated corpses impaled on stakes driven into the ground as well as coming from the walls, Lomant frowned in disgust and faintly hear metal scraping against metal...only a sound that drawing a sword would make. Waiting patiently till he heard the man behind him take in a deep breathe he knew exactly when the attack was coming and stepped to the left, drew a dagger from his belt and slammed it into the wardens side, puncturing a lung. As the man fell to his knees, Lomant with drew the dagger and wiped it off on the dead man's tunic before walking towards the courtyard.

A trio of men emerged from one of the doors along the east wall and looked shocked to see a fully armoured knight. They quickly drew their swords and charge Lomant. Judging which would reach him first he readied his shield and drew his sword. As the first assailant reached him and brought his blade down, Lomant deftly avoided the sword as he brought his own up, separating his face from his head and turning in time to block the sword of the second with his shield. He didn't see the third swing around and bring his sword down until it was too late, and moved in time to save his arm, but not enough to prevent getting wounded. A roar of pain escaped his lips as he bashed his shield against the third mans face and stabbed his sword through the neck of the other. Ripping the shirt off one of the dead, Lomant bound his wound tightly to stem the blood flow as he stood over the man who was writhing on the ground in pain. Uttering a curse he plunged his sword down and pierced his heart before heading to the door they came from.

After getting out of the rain, Lomant slammed the door shut behind him and leaned against it and thought, "Lomandalis give me strength, this is turning out to be harder than I had originally anticipated." After standing, Lomant heard the sound of heavy barrels being dropped behind the door. Although that did not confuse him, it was the sound of a flint being trying to ignite something. Knowing he was close to the Empire boarder, and having heard of their Black powder weapons that cause explosions...he assumed that these barrels were the same and began running down the hall. Getting no farther than fifteen feet away, the barrels exploded and picked him up off his feet and hurled him to the floor. Lomant covered his head as splinters from the door flew overhead and shattered against the wall.

Standing, he turned to see the door nothing but a smoking ruin and a couple of archers appeared with crossbows. Just as the crossbows fired, Lomant ducked into a doorway with only his arm getting grazed by a bolt. Hearing them take a while to reload, he pulled out three throwing knives and ran at them. They dropped the crossbows and tried to get to their swords, but Lomant quickly threw the knives with alarming accuracy, as each thudded into their necks.

Withdrawing his knives from their corpses, he quickly cleaned them and ran down the hall. Turning a corner he ran full tilt into one of Amorelot's knights, knocking him to the ground. As he hit the ground he rolled and came up on his knee with his sword ready. He slowly stood and laughed, "Sir Amorelot said to be ready for an intruder seeking

vengeance…but he said nothing about a kid. I will save him the trouble of dealing with you and will run you through right here.”

Lomant took a fighting stance and said, “I have been trained by the best knights in all of Bretonnia. I shall defeat you and slay Amorelot to regain my brothers honour.” Laughing the knight walked forward and said, “And I’m Amorelot’s most trusted and skilled knight.” As he finished that he brought his blade down in a wide arc that Lomant barely managed to block with his shield.

Now prepared, Lomant stabs out with his blade, and as it gets knocked aside, he spins closer to his adversary and imbeds a knife into his side that he held in his shield hand. Taken completely by surprise at the move, the knight backs away and pulls the knife from his side, licking the blood off it. Throwing the knife at Lomant he charges. Instinctively Lomant raised his shield to block the knife and sees the knight charging over the top of his shield. Waiting for him to get closer, he then moved to the side and bashed it into his helmeted head. Knocking him to the ground, a ringing can be heard and hastily he removed his helm and rolled away from Lomant. Now Lomant rushed him, and as the knight swung his blade in a wide arc, Lomant drops into a roll and quickly crosses the distance under the blade, coming up right in front of the knight, slamming his sword into his gut right up to the hilt. As the knight doubles over in pain and falls to the ground Lomant said, “No one is going to stop me from reaching my goal…not even a fellow knight.”

Placing his foot against the knights chest, he pulls his sword free, and turns to walk away…but the knight grabs his foot in his last dying breaths and doesn’t let go. Lomant turns to look back and kicks his foot out, connecting with his jaw and knocking him back and walks away.

As he approaches a pair of large ornate doors, Lomant gets a sickening feeling in the pit of his stomach as he throws the doors open. On both walls are more impaled bodies and the tapestries are of crimson colour, red fluid drips from the ends of them and puddle underneath before running into a nearby drain. It is then that Lomant realizes that the tapestries are made in blood and that Amorelot has indeed gone further than just dishonour. In the centre of the room sits Amorelot upon a bronze throne, skulls are piled to each side and it appears that blood trickles from some of them still. He looks up as Lomant enters and says, “So Lomant, you made it. My you have grown since I saw you in the tournament all those years ago. I have not forgotten what you said. ‘Tis a shame that both brothers will fall to my hand…well almost a shame.”

Drawing his blade, Amorelot slowly stands from his throne and advances towards Lomant. “Well boy, are you ready to die?” “I will not be the one dying this night.” Sighing Amorelot laughs a bit and says, “Fine, lets do this the hard way.”

Lomant throws his shield to the side and takes his sword in both hands. As if time were to slow, it felt like eternity for Amorelot to reach him. Amorelot’s sword comes down in a powerful swing as Lomant turns his body to the side and raises his sword to meet it. A gust of wind causes the candles to flicker as sparks fly from their swords. Lomant brings his sword up and turns to face Amorelot as he slashes down hard. Twisting to the side Amorelot manages to avoid taking the sword at a fatal angle, but feels red-hot pain as the tip of the sword rips down his back. Roaring in pain, Amorelots sword flashes up and Lomant back peddles enough to save his throat, but is temporarily blinded as the blade flashes past his face, catching the glare from the candle off the polished surface. Stumbling backwards, Lomant raises his blade to keep Amorelot at bay as he feels blood trickle down his cheek and nose. “Not so pretty now are we boy?” Wiping the blood from his face, Lomant lunges at Amorelot, sword extended, but is easily slapped aside then he feels a lance of pain in his side as Amorelot brings his sword up and tears through Lomants armour, causing him to collapse to his knees. Gasping for breath, Lomant lowered his head and rested against his sword. Amorelot walked in circles around him before stopping at his side. Kneeling beside him, he whispered in his ear, “In what world did you think that a boy like your self could ever best me? Just like your pathetic brother who thought he could best me in the joust.” Standing, he brought his sword up for the killing blow. As his sword descended, a gust of wind blew through the room and extinguished all the candles. Thinking Lomant didn’t have time to react, Amorelot continued with the attack, only to hear a loud clash of steel. A quick series of flashes from outside illuminated the room for a few seconds, but it was enough for him to see that Lomant had brought his sword around to defend himself and a fierce rage now shone in his eyes before the room was plunged back into darkness. Lomant rose and heard the sound of pounding

feet moving away from him. He turned to the sound and saw Amorelots cloak billowing out from a door before it disappeared. Cursing Lomant ran after him and shouldered his way through the door, ripping it from its hinges. Out on the battlements the wind howled and the rain was torrential. The darkness outside was as bad as it was inside, and it wasn't until the sky was lit up by another flash of lighting did he see Amorelot running towards some stairs. Bellowing his name over the howl of the wind, Lomant ran after him. Catching up to him, Lomant lowered a shoulder and slammed Amorelot off his feet, causing him to slide a few feet on the rain slick battlements Amorelot stood and wiped the blood from his mouth as he turned to Lomant. His sword pointed at Amorelot's chest Lomant said, "I'm not finished with you yet." Amorelot grinned then slowly walked towards Lomant. As the distance became a few feet, Amorelot quickly raised his sword and slashed it down at Lomant's shoulder. Raising his blade to deflect the blow, battle was met again. As their blades clashed a bolt of lighting struck the northern tower and caused it to burst into flames. Lomant's prompt attacks caused Amorelot to back up as he barely managed to defend himself. A look of fear crossed his face as he saw, that not only was the intensity of the fire reflecting from the young mans armour, but it also was reflected in the rage that was in his eyes. Lashing out desperately, Amorelot slashed horizontally at Lomant, causing him to duck backwards. To keep his balance, Lomant turned and brought his foot up. Connecting with Amorelot's sword it was thrown from his hand over the wall. His momentum carried him around and he buried his sword in Amorelot's gut with enough force that it ripped through the armour on his back as well. Somehow the evil knight was still standing and still alive. Clenching his fists, Lomant stared Amorelot dead in the eyes, his rage evident. "This is for disgracing Bretonnia with your actions..." His right fist lashed out and connected hard with Amorelot's jaw, dislodging a tooth. "This is for hurting my family..." His left fist lash out and connected hard with his jaw again, this time dislocating it. "And this is for killing my brother!" Yelling the last words Lomant brought his right hand up as hard as possible and shattered Amorelot's jaw and he was flung from the battlements with the impact and landed with enough force to shatter a rotting cart far below. Taking the stairs that Amorelot was originally headed to, Lomant slowly made his way down beside the still breathing man. Placing his hand on the hilt of the sword, Lomant did not grace him with a look as he said, "Now, you shall be sent from this world as you sent my brother...with no honour and no respect." Quickly, he pulled the blade out of his body and brought it down hard, severing his neck and watching the head roll across the ground before stopping against the wall.

Returning to the hall in which the fight had started, Lomant grabbed his shield and made his way out of the castle meeting no resistance. As he walked up to Night-Flash he patted him on the neck and whispered, "It's done. I have avenged my brother." Night-Flash bobbed his head, and nuzzled close to Lomant, who said, "Lets go home boy...lets go home." Throwing his leg over his side he rode for the nearest town in the dark, his wounds causing him much pain. Entering a small town in the wee hours of the morning, Lomant dismounted and staggered up to the doors of an apothecary. Pounding his fist against the door, he saw a candle be lit through the window. The door opened and an elderly man's face appeared. Seeing the bloodied form standing in his door he quickly helped him in to dress his wounds. Several hours later, Lomant rose from the bed he had been placed on and found his traveling bags. Dressing in his light armour, he descended and thanks the man for his help. Offering to pay him for his trouble, the man just shook his head and told him he was honoured to help a Knight of Bretonnia. Smiling, Lomant bowed slightly and left quietly. Lomant guided Night-Flash through the town until he found the blacksmith's shop. Stepping in he handed him both his sword and a piece of parchment. "Please, if you would inscribe this on the cross guard of my sword." The man looked at the parchment and told him it would take an hour, no more. Lomant waited outside and closed his eyes, reliving the fight in his mind as he waited for the smithy to finish. Touching the freshly stitched wound on his face he knew he would never forget this night. Apparently he fell asleep sitting there, because the next thing he knew a small voice was saying, "My lord? My lord your sword is done." Opening his eyes he saw a boy of no more than ten winters standing in front of him, holding the sword reverently. Thanking the boy, Lomant stood and inspected the work before sliding it into his sheath. Looking skyward he asked, "Do you know what hour it is boy?" Amazed that the knight was actually engaging him in any form of conversation, the boy nodded eagerly and replied, "Yes milord, it is the fifteenth hour of the day. Father has candles marked...he learned that from an man from the east." Nodding, Lomant mounted and slowly rode out of town. The boy, so excited, quickly ran off to tell his friends of what happened...much to the anger of his father. As Lomant edged his way out of town, overhead the cloud cover broke and the sun shone down on the road. Leaning forward, he patted Night-Flash's neck and said, "It's a good omen...the Lady is blessing us for completing our oath. Shall we expend a little energy and show her our gratitude?" Night-Flash threw his head a couple times in acknowledgment and danced across the road. Lomant pulled back on the reins slightly, causing Night-Flash to rear, before he kicked his spurs into his mounts flank, signaling him to run with all haste. It took Lomant two weeks of riding before he approached the Lord City of Bastonne. Almost falling from his saddle in exhaustion, he passed the gate warden with little more then a nod. Trusting his mount to lead him home, Lomant closed his eyes and thanked the Lady that he is still alive. Dismounting at the gates to the castle, he handed the Night-Flash's reins to a squire and told him to take care of his horse...he had personal matters to attend to. Walking a path that brought back a lot of painful memories, Lomant made his way to the family graveyard. Seeing the gravestones of his ancestors he went to the only one that had dried

blood on the top of it. Kneeling in front of it he closed his eyes, remembering as a little boy he had cut open his hand and sworn on his own blood he would avenge his brother. Gazing at the scar on his hand, he placed it over top of the old blood and said, "It is done my brother. Amorelot has been slain and you have been avenged. Be at peace and go with the Lady." He placed a piece of cloth on the ground and stood. Kissing the hilt of his sword he drove it into the ground through the cloth before heading into the castle to see his family. Unknowingly, Lomant was being watched from a distant door. As he disappeared into the castle, his sister walked out to her eldest brother's grave. Kneeling in front of it she looked at the cloth on the ground and saw it was the heraldry of a knight, and in intricate scrollwork was the word "Amorelot". As she rose, she caught a glimpse of etching in the sword. Squinting to see it better it read: "In Life and in Death, Brothers for Eternity." The End. By: Donnie Heibei