

The Day Before the Next- Part VII, A Sense of Purpose

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Continuing into Chapter 7, Jean and Dominique realize Dante is in danger as Beregond and Maximillian head towards their goal. The fate of Dante Marcel on the edge now.

Day Before the Next- Part VII, A Sense of Purpose

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Dominique and I climbed the steps to the throne room in Couronne. "This should be... easy?" I asked with skepticism. Dominique gave me a confused look, he too was obviously unsure. As we approached the doors, they opened wide as we entered. Two halberds blocked our paths from knights guarding the entrance to the actual throne room. "What businesses have you with the King? Have you an audience with him?" One of them asked. "We wish to inquire about a Knight who may be in grave danger, specifically to the Fey Enchantress." Dominique said to the guard. "No audience, no permission to enter." The guard replied.

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Dominique grumbled before responding. Sure he was telling a lie... but the guards didn't know that. "If you don't let us in Dante Marcel might die!" He shouted. The guard shoved him back and demanded we leave. I sighed as we were escorted out. "Thanks a lot Dom." I said sarcastically. Dom looked at me with a raised brow. "And you had a better plan?" He replied with a smirk creeping on his face.

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"Sir!" A voice shouted from behind us as a knight from the throne room came down the steps. "You mentioned Dante Marcel?" He asked in wonder. Dominique nodded as I watched silently. "His tent was raided not too long ago and an innocent knight was killed by a filthy Warrior of Chaos. If you believe that he is in grave danger as well, I wouldn't doubt it! Dante was just reinstated into the military from being on leave due to wounds. He is heading out to the Marches of Couronne as we speak!" The knight said.

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I looked to Dom for a moment. "You don't think...?" I asked as Dominique. He nodded almost instantly to me in worry. I thought to myself for a moment "Beregond?! No... it can't be... can it?! Dante must be warned! I must get to him, whether it's Beregond or not he could be in danger." Dominique turned to me. "Jean, we must prepare for the worst to come." He said as he quickly ran to the inn, me following behind him.

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"It will be a bit of a walk, you understand this, right?" Beregond asked, turning to the Imperial following behind him slowly, tired from all the walking. "Indeed I do." Max replied, panting. Beregond knew he had to walk fast to come out of the mountains and back into the Marches. He had to catch Dante on his way there or it would be a problem. "Let us pick up the pace!" He said as he climbed further along the mountain side, Max bewildered by his new companion's persistence and determination to get where they're going.

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"I hope if we come across an Imperial-Bretonnian fight, it will not tear your loyalty apart." Beregond said, planting the question into Max's head. "A deal is a deal." He responded quickly as he checked himself for ammunition. After they had reached a break point, he adjusted his rifle with a scope fixed on it. Loading it back up with sniper's bullet, the curves so finely twisted to keep the spiral on the ammunition after being shot, keeping the shot relatively straighter and thus more accurate. "I believe it will be my job to kill him, not you." Beregond said with a bit of ignorance. "I will do what I see fit to fighting the powers of Chaos, sir." Max said back coldly, yet respectfully.

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The two of them packed up and headed out and it wasn't too long until, after some fierce cold weather, they came upon the Marches. Now all that was left on their agenda was to find who they were looking for. Beregond sat on the mountain's slope viewing the Bretonnian encampment below. It flew an Imperial banner... the Bretonnians were pushed back- he would have to at least walk a mile or two to find the next encampment, if the Imperials had not claimed that too.

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"Let us walk." Beregond ordered.

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As Dominique and I entered the inn, he pulled out his blade; one which I had never seen. It had an Elven glow to it; definitely something special. I pulled my Great Sword from its hiding place. Dominique recognized it instantly. "Your Father's sword... he would be proud to see you wielding it Jean." He said smiling at me. I gave him a smile back... I knew he was right.

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We donned ourselves in our armour and I flipped a hood over my face once again. I pulled my gauntlets firmly over my hands and clenched my fists. Soon they would be gripping the blade to rip through Beregond's flesh once and for all. I put on my boots, firmly tightening them around my ankles. Soon they would be the ones to pin him to the ground so I may drive my sword deep within his heart. Lastly I wore a pendant of the Lady, its shine ever vibrant in the magic and protection of the Lady. Soon I would make sure that it was the last thing the traitor saw, knowing the true wrath of those he betrayed.

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Then sheathing my sword on my waist and a dagger in my boot, I looked in a mirror and nodded to myself, turning to Dominique I looked at him in amazement. His tabard over his chain mail was a bright yellow- his colours. His armour was plated armour of the Empire with shoulder plates depicting fleur-de-lys on them in a royal purple shine. His helm as he lowered it onto his face a beautiful ornament piece with a blue and white unicorn holding a banner of the Lady on top. His armour was adorned with all sorts of glowing pendants from the Lady. "I am ready for anything." He stated as we turned for the door.

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The walk down the very staircase seemed slow, the walk out of the inn also slow. It was like time was starting to slow down in the heat of these moments. As we walked out onto the streets we were viewed by the public, turning heads. We mounted our steeds and kicked off... heading quickly to the Marches of Couronne- we could only hope to make it in time.

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The ride was long through the grasslands of Couronne, and stressful as well. How could we find him? He could be anywhere! I didn't even want to view the Marches of Couronne. As far as I knew it was a muddy and bloody battlefield fought over by the Empire and Bretonnia for centuries. My mind wandered further on some thoughts. How could Dante not find me? Did he know I wasn't dead? Maybe something happened... whatever the matter I would find him eventually and I would get to the bottom of it all.

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Dominique rode beside me at full speed; there could be a thousand things rushing through his head but I hadn't a clue what it was. He was in a serious mood and thus you could see the determination coming from his poise. Alexander was always impressed by Dominique ever since he was little. He would always tell me of his exploits as he grew up. I knew he and my brother were closer due to their ages being much closer than him and I... and that is what probably drove him to help me in the first place. It was a respectable feature I could always look to- he was always family first.

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We passed by Fort DrÃ©faux, the border fort to the Marches of Couronne, in only a matter of an hour or two. I knew it would not be long now as I looked down at the ground, turning into the desecrated fields of war. The Bretonnian encampments and supply routes began to appear in front of us. We would soon be able to find him.

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Beregond dashed across the mountain's slope, Max following closely behind. The sounds of war could be heard and dust kicked up in the far, far distance by the sea. They were nearing the battle lines between the Empire and the Bretonnian forces. Excellent! They would be nearing the main Bretonnian encampment and there was no doubt that they had beaten the convoy of knights from Couronne there through the mountain holds.

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Max stopped for a breather finally as they saw the flags of Bretonnia flying above the nearby camp. Beregond sat down on the slope and looked over at Max. It was the first time he had analyzed the man. He had looked to be in his mid to late 20s, probably 27 or 28 years of age with long brown hair and a full lip-to-chin goatee. His eyes were slightly dark, but green when you looked into him. What he wore was pretty light in clothing too: Some of the fluffier, noble Empire clothing in Red and White; Talabheim colours. His rifle was a bit longer and more expensive looking than the usual imperial handgun. It was no Hochland Long Rifle, but it certainly had a greater range and better design than the standardized weapons of the Empire state troops.

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"Are you from Talabheim?" Beregond asked, showing some interest. "Aye, born and raised." Max replied. "I was originally trained as a swordsman like my father, but was introduced to the ways of handgun weaponry by my master and I went to school in Nuln after my interest was caught. I learned how to make them, how to design, everything... and this gun you see before you is one of my own creations." Max said with pride, a grin taking to his face.

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Being a 'former' Bretonnian, Beregond had no real interest in the ranged weapons of the Empire... a part of him still believed in the lack of honour they portrayed- only a true warrior would face him toe to toe. None the less the rifle was indefinitely a useful tool for him to observe and have around him... in fact the more he thought of it the more intriguing it became- there could be a few uses for the weapon.

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As Beregond looked to the right, an Imperial army was marching across the field. It was then that he noticed there was a bit of dust kicking up behind the Bretonnian encampment. The convoy of knights! Yes! Finally! Beregond jumped to his feet. The Encampment was only 1 and a half miles off, but you could surely see it from the slope. He had to get down there and find Dante to cut his throat himself.

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"Look through your scope, Sigmarite." He demanded as Maximillian pulled his rifle looking in the direction Beregond's pointing figure. "Do you see the one with an aura; he is wearing green and purple more than likely." He asked as Max nodded, "He is the one; Dante Marcel... a cultist of Chaos." Beregond stated. Max nodded again. "We shall get him then! If you can't take him, I will get within 300 paces and cover you." Max said as the two of them began to head down the mountain slope.

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Jean and Dominique rode hard through the dirt and the mud... they hadn't much time. Ahead of them they saw a few encampments laid out in Bretonnian heraldry, the King's colours flying high. "Excellent we must be close!" I said out loud as Dominique lowered himself further and kicked his horse to go faster.

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There was a battle emerging up ahead, two armies- a relatively large Bretonnian force marching onto the field to meet an infantry army of the Empire. Looking closely Jean couldn't help but look for Dante in the crowd, yet no sign of him yet. Dominique quickly marched into the nearest encampment searching for him. "Knights of Bretonnia I look for Dante Marcel, his life may be in danger!" He said as some pointed out to the field.

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Dominique looked out to the field of battle as the fight had just begun. The horns of the Knights of Bretonnia were sounded and they charged deep into the ranks of Imperial ranked infantry. It was a mess of troops on both sides as

bodies could be seen littering the muddy grounds, blood further staining the already ruined earth. One could not pick out a single person from the massive fight, and so there was only one thing to do.

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I had come up from behind him searching frantically for Dante with no sight of him. He had to be in the midst of battle. "Dominique?" I asked without even saying more than his name, a nod following. As we kicked out horses we would join the fray. Our horses sped quickly towards the fight and off in the distance I noticed a man on foot approaching the Imperial side of the armies- I knew who it was... I could sense it. We would have to beat him there! We had no choice.

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The sun had slowly set over the Marches of Couronne as the battle began to rage. Fires lit the now dimming sky from longbows as the arrows fell deep into the ranks of imperial troops. Dominique and I quickly galloped to battle as the sound of handguns burst from afar. As I looked over, I saw Dominique fall from a shot smashing into his shoulder. He pulled his helm off, his eyes meeting mine instantly. He only had to shout at me once: "Run Jean! Go!"