

Lady Luck's Adventure

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Part I

Some people are born lucky, with a golden spoon in their mouths, and wings of light on their backs carrying them over the hardships that others would normally have to face. Evangeline was such a person. She was the first-born daughter of the royal family in the Kingdom of Caelum. Born with great beauty and a kind heart, she was well loved by those around her. Though she was born into such serendipity, her greatest fortune yet was the fact that she was the embodiment of fortune itself in the physical world. It wasn't until her eighteenth birthday that she found out that she would be the next God of the central continent. It was a lot of responsibility for someone her age but she was willing to go through with it, because she knew how much it meant for her family and kingdom.

"Are you ready to depart princess?"

"Yes, are we departing immediately?"

"Yes, it is imperative that we depart swiftly and quietly," replied Apollon handing her a cloak.

Their light footsteps echoed through the hallways as they made their way down to the evacuation passage. The passage was known only by a few members of the castle; it served as a secret escape route for the royal family.

"I've never actually gone all the way down this route before. What is at the end?"

Evangeline peeked over Apollon's shoulder as she followed him deeper down the path.

"There is a teleportation array at the end that will allow us to travel to any of the surrounding neutral territories in the continent. We've made deals with each of the neutral territories to allow us safe passage in times of crisis. But we'll be using it this time to get us to Haven, the adventurer city located between Caelum and the Empire."

Evangeline was listening so closely to what Apollon was saying that she did not even notice that they had arrived at the end of the path, and she almost walked into Apollon. They entered a circular room with runes on the ground, and Apollon took out a curious looking crystal no bigger than his thumb from underneath his cloak. He then inserted it into a hole in the wall and turned it clockwise causing the runes on the ground to shine. Evangeline was soon blinded by the light as it enveloped her, and when she fully

opened her eyes after blinking a few times, their surroundings were different. They were in another room now, although the markings on the walls and the runes on the ground looked familiar. The walls were a different shade from the room they were in previously.

"We've arrived your highness. Let us make haste to our arrangements," Apollon said while gesturing for Evangeline to follow him.

They walked out of the room and into another tunnel but this one led into an alley and was considerably shorter compared to the one in the castle. They made their way out of the alley and into a busy street. It was the main street of the market square where most of the street vendors were located. The vendors were trying to advertise their wares and services by singing into the crowds in a rhythmic tune. The street was bustling with people because it was midday. Evangeline pulled in closer to Apollon and held onto his cloak with her thumb and index finger, fearing that they would be separated in the crowd. The large crowd of people going about their business made her feel like a little girl again. She had never been in such a busy street before; it felt so alien to her. As Apollon felt the tugging at the back of his cloak, a faint smile made its way onto his face. He had known Evangeline all her life and had developed an attachment to her. If he had a daughter, he hoped she would be like Evangeline.

The crowd seemed to part ways for them, offering no resistance as they journeyed down the street. Apollon noticed this and thought to himself, "Evangeline's charm is truly powerful if she can do this unconsciously. Her luck is leaking out without her even realizing it, affecting even my fortune. She will certainly make a great God, bringing prosperity to the continent." At this thought, Apollon could not help but feel a tinge of sadness because it meant that they would part ways and he could no longer watch over her as he had always done.

Soon they arrived at their destination, the Adventurer's Guild, but instead of going in through the front door, they made their way to the side entrance which was reserved for clients. The Guild leader's aide was already waiting for them, and when she saw them, she silently ushered them in with nothing but a nod. They followed the aide upstairs into one of the guestrooms and sat down.

"The Guild Master will be with you in a moment," said the receptionist politely with a small smile and a nod as she left the room.

The room remained silent for a moment after the woman left.

"Relax and keep your hood on, I will handle the rest, so put your mind at ease. I will ensure that everything goes smoothly," said Apollon.

A knock on the door was heard, and before anyone responded, a man had already walked in.

"Apologies for the wait, I was just briefing the group about the request. This is the group that I recommended previously; they are discreet and efficient," said the Guild Master extending his hand gesturing to the line of people that walked in after him.

Evangeline snuck a glance from under her hood at the people in the room. The man that was presumably the Guild Master, Ami, was bald, had a tough but kind-looking face, and a large stature. He looked as if he could move a mountain on his own. Behind him was a group of five people, but Evangeline didn't have enough time to notice any defining features because she did not want to reveal her face.

"Hello, my name is Abel and these are my team members, Jian, Calypso, Esmond and Cain."

The man speaking was dressed in the garbs of a cleric, had short blonde hair with a plain face, but wore a smile that was not quite a smile, that looked a little mischievous. Ami had been Apollon's close friend for a great number of years and Apollon had known Ami for an even greater number of years. Ami was a reliable person and a good judge of people. These people were recommended by Ami, so Apollon decided to put his trust in them, for Ami's sake, but made a mental note to keep an eye on Abel.

"It is my understanding that you wish for us to escort you across the continent pass the Empire into the Holy Kingdom, discreetly. I am confident that my group and I will have no issue completing this task, and I know that you have just arrived, but we have already prepared the necessary provisions for this journey, so I would like for us to depart immediately. It is also my understanding that time is of the essence," said Abel without so much as a pause to allow a reply, as he looked knowingly at Apollon and walked out the room. Apollon nodded and gestured for the princess to follow them while he followed behind. Evangeline was actually quite surprised that none of them had even brought her up in their conversation. They did not ask who she was or even how to address her, and it made her feel like she was an object they were transporting. That thought made her feel

uncomfortable but she knew deep in her heart that they were merely being professional. Asking as few questions as possible, only minding the details that were crucial for the mission. These people were truly efficient, having already prepared everything needed for their journey.

When they exited the building, there was a horse-drawn carriage already waiting for them, and the two men named Jian and Cain were already in the coachman's seat. Abel made a gesture to Evangeline as if to say "after you," gesturing to the open door of the carriage. As Evangeline entered, she noticed that the carriage was fairly decent in size considering it had to fit the remaining five of them. Apollon entered after her and sat next to her while the other three sat just opposite her. She made sure to lower her head slightly to ensure that the hood would adequately conceal her face, though she did sneak a few glances at the people in front of her. Calypso was beautiful; she had a serene face with lustrous violet hair. On the other hand, Esmond was a plain looking man with brown hair. There was nothing remarkable about his appearance aside from the fact that he looked very young. Evangeline could feel Abel's gaze on her through his seemingly absentminded smile, so she looked out the window. The journey continued in silence until it was almost dark. The carriage came to a stop, the doors opened and Abel once more gestured for Evangeline to exit the carriage and she complied, but as she got out, she heard Abel ask Jian, "How many?"

"Can't be more than thirty. They will be upon us in a few moments. We should get ready."

Apollon spoke up, "We were followed?" His voice trembled with a slight hint of anger.

"Yes, it would seem that there was a leak of information. I'd like both of you to remain behind Cain. He is quite a capable guardian, but if it wouldn't be too much of a trouble, I'd like you to be prepared to fight as well. The rest of you get into position, I want everyone on high alert, and don't let your guard down." This was the first-time Evangeline heard Abel speak in such a commanding voice that it almost made her reply.

Evangeline had never been in a battle before. She had never even seen violence first hand, but she never thought it would be so captivating. She was not a fan of blood and gore. In fact, the very smell of blood made her ill, but it was hard for her to avert her eyes from the battle before her because it was her obligation towards the people fighting to keep her safe. Should any of these people die, it would be her responsibility to

remember them. The adventurers took up positions around the carriage to ensure all sides were protected. However, Jian stood at a fair distance in front of the rest of the group. He wielded a single-edged blade with a slight curve at the top with a transparent gem embedded into its hilt in one hand and held a wooden sheathe in the other. When the enemies attacked, Jian effortlessly dodged them while countering them. The movements he made while he took on multiple enemies from all sides could be described as nothing but graceful. He was locked in a deadly dance with those around him, skillfully avoided their attacks while only using a single stroke to strike them down. After losing a couple of their companions, the assailants grew more serious. Their movements slowed down and they got into a strange circular formation while maintaining a fixed amount of distance. The first assault was a test to gauge our group's ability, and it would appear the real fight was just beginning. The circular formation started to rotate in a counter clockwise direction, with the enemies readying their weapons. The attackers resumed their assault but this time they were organized. They would retreat after a single attack and let their companions handle the follow up attack. Each attack was coordinated to ensure that the target would slowly get overwhelmed, but it seemed to have an opposite effect on Jian. While the others in the group got visibly annoyed at the attack formation, Jian seemed almost pleased. Up until that point, Calypso and Abel had been using their staves to defend themselves from the attackers while chanting their incantations. Abel made sure to keep a protection charm up at all times on his companions to reduce the amount of damage that was done to them. Calypso on the other hand seemed to have been preparing a large spell. Esmond and Cain did their best to protect the main group from getting caught up in the fray. Cain was obviously a defensive specialist, using his shield to slam into the opponents' bodies to create some space between the group of attackers and his teammates behind him, rarely going on the offensive to strike at the enemies. Esmond, on the other hand, had cast an enchantment on his sword. He swiped the back of his left hand on his sword while emitting black smoke from his open palm. The smoke gathered into a cloud and hovered over him. Every time an assailant came in for an attack he would attack. It did not matter how many came at him, or if they successfully blocked his sword, because a bolt of lightning always followed one of his swings. It came down from the cloud he had made, and it did not miss a target that had come

into contact with his sword. Soon the assailants retreated just beyond the reach of his sword waiting for reinforcements from the other sides.

It was then that Calypso yelled "It's ready!" Jian sheathed his sword and retreated towards the group, and the ground shone with a purple light. "Shadow Bind," yelled Calypso activating her spell, causing tendrils to shoot up from the ground and hold the assailants in place. Then a bright yellow flashed from the gem in Jian's hilt. He unsheathed it for a horizontal slash and lightning arced towards the bound opponents from his sheath. It seemed that the battle was over and everything had calmed down, but it was at precisely that moment when everyone relaxed that an arrow came flying at Evangeline. Esmond standing in front of Evangeline raised his arm in reflex, blocking it with his shield. "Jian!"

"On it," replied Jian as he ran into the forest to chase after the archer.

"Good thing it wasn't a spear, or it would have been pretty dangerous. Seems like whoever attacked underestimated us. We'll leave it to Jian to capture the archer, while the rest of us gather up the bodies to light them. We don't want them turning into undead."

"Your group sure made quick work of the assailants," remarked Apollon towards Abel.

"Of course, the attackers were probably hired from an ordinary mercenary guild. No match for an experienced group of adventurers. The employer was probably hoping that their numbers would overwhelm us and that they wouldn't have expend too much to get this done. I'm just glad that your *Grace* got out of this safe and sound."

Abel had said "Grace" in such a pointed tone that it surprised both Evangeline and Apollon.

"How did you know?"

"It wasn't hard to figure out based on the timing and the details of the mission. Anyone worth their salt could figure it out. Now let us set up camp, night is upon us, if there are any other questions, we can certainly discuss them when Jian returns with our captive."

It didn't take long for Jian to return carrying the archer on his shoulder, but something wasn't right, it seemed like he was just carrying deadweight. The attacker's limbs swung lifelessly as Jian approached us.

"He took his own life right before I caught him. It seems that we'll have to remain in the dark a little bit longer."

"Not necessarily, only three people know about the journey and each were given different details with another two group of people acting as

decoys. It would seem that there was a traitor on our side," Apollon said with a heavy heart.

"Your side being... The palace?"

Apollon nodded slowly at Abel's question. "It seems like you were able to deduce our identities easily, so I'll end this pretense; this girl beside me is Evangeline Grace of Caelum, the most likely candidate to succeed this continent's god. The King and I had planned to use the other two groups as decoys while also confirming the identity of the traitor we suspected was leaking information. Because of the suspicion that there was a traitor, we decided to not transfer directly to the Holy Kingdom directly, because of the risk of being ambushed after exiting the teleportation circle."

Evangeline removed her hood to reveal her face to the group. Only Esmond wore an expression of surprise. The rest of the group seemed to have already suspected who she was. Watching him with his mouth agape made her giggle a slight bit.

"Your highness! I apologize for my poor manners," said Esmond bowing his head.

"Enough of that, let us eat and get some rest, we still have a long journey ahead of us," commanded Abel.

"So what made you decide to become adventurers," asked Evangeline curiously as she took a bite out of her bread.

"Money mostly. I also didn't want to be confined to a single place so it just made sense," answered Calypso glancing at Jian.

"To continue my journey. I'm a foreigner from the Eastern continent. I crossed the Elven forest into this continent when I was younger," said Jian.

"Well I want to become the most famous blacksmith in this continent, and what better way than to go adventuring. I can obtain materials while improving my skills and building connections. That's how I met Jian. His sword piqued my interest since it was Elven made. It was their gift to him when he left their forest," Cain said proudly.

"I, on the other hand, don't have a dream like him. I am doing this to keep this fool of a husband from dying while out here. He really isn't the sharpest tool in the shed," said Abel looking pointedly at Cain.

"Hahahaha, I can't deny that. Thank you for supporting me," replied Cain.

Looking at this scene made Evangeline smile brightly. She turned to face Esmond and asked, "What about you?"

"I am the third son of a family of farmers living on the frontiers of the neutral territories. It's

common for the third son to leave the family, since the eldest son would inherit the farm and the second would assist him. It makes sense since it wouldn't be wise for farmers to split their land that way. I joined the Knight order of the church to become a paladin but I gave that up to become an adventurer," replied Esmond in a somewhat dejected tone.

Evangeline felt her heart pull at her. It seemed like she brought up something unpleasant for him and she gave him a small sad smile. Seeing the Princess' reaction made Esmond put on a big smile, and he said, "Don't worry, everything worked out in the end."

"For the son of a common farmer to be so skilled at such a young age, you've got some talent there. The Knights Order of the Kingdom of Caelum welcome you should you ever decide to continue on your path to become a knight."

"Thank you, I'll think about it but I don't quite think I'm cut out to be a knight. I don't have anything that I truly want to protect, and I feel that lack of determination would sully the honor of the other knights. Which is why I gave up becoming a Paladin of the church."

"You are quite wise for your age and your insight surprises me. If you ever change your mind, there will always be a place for you in the Kingdom Caelum."

"Well I think we should all get some rest; we leave at daybreak. I will take the first watch," volunteered Cain.

With that everyone headed into their own respective tents to get some rest.

Meanwhile, in the chambers of the Royal palace in the Empire, the Emperor had just received word of the failed assassination. Emperor Jelal was in a terrible mood because this meant that they had sacrificed their informant without gaining anything for it. He thought deeply before finally saying to his aide, "Send word to the Black Scriptures. I have a job for them."

"At once, your majesty."

Intermission

"Hurry up, Charlie! I don't want to miss the best part!"

"I'm running as fast as I can! You've already heard the story dozens of times already anyways, what's the rush."

"How can you say that, it's tradition! Besides I know you're just as excited as I am to hear the story about the Spear Hero."

"Yeah, you're right," replied Charlie with a grin on his face. The two boys raced down the hill towards the crowd in village square for the festival.

"Almost missed it, lucky us," said David as he took a seat with Charlie in front of the village elder as he began his story. Both boys listened to each word intently despite having already heard the story countless times. Their interest in the story was proof of how much they admired adventurers. For orphans like them in a small village like this, stories about adventuring were mesmerizing. At the end of the story, both boys left the square with high spirits.

"When I grow up I want to go on an adventure as well," said David.

"You don't say! I'm not so sure I if I could make it as an adventurer," replied Charlie a little bit doubtful.

"Fool! You won't know unless you try," answered David with an unwavering tone.

"You're right! I want to go to the adventurer academy in the Holy Kingdom, and join a famous adventurer group like the White Dawn."

"Where's the fun in joining an already famous group? You should make your own group and get famous on your own."

"I wonder if they'll take notice of me if I do well in the academy games."

"You're hopeless. I on the other hand want to become the first adventurer to compile the most detailed bestiary and make a name for myself," declared David.

"I think that suits you perfectly, especially since you got that rare talent of yours."

Part II

"Speaking of which, I got something to show you! Follow me," said David as he began to walk towards the forest.

"Are you sure we should be going so far in forest? What if we get lost?"

"Don't worry, I know these parts like the back of my hand. Hurry up, we're almost there. It's just up ahead."

"What are you even trying to show me?"

"You'll see. Ah, we're here. Oh, you should probably not make any sudden movements and keep your voice down," David said as he led the way into a cavern.

"Wow. This place is humongous."

Just then large shadow flew over pass the two boys, giving Charlie a start.

"What is that?" Charlie asked with his eyes bulging out.

"Relax, they're my friends. I helped them out one time when they were giving birth to a litter."

Just then the three dragonsteed landed in front of them. They were slightly larger than a regular horse, with beautiful wings on their back. Although they seemed friendly enough, affectionately rubbing their head against David's body, Charlie still cautiously eyed their large claws.

"Don't worry I told them you're my friend, they won't do anything to harm you. Did you want to go for a ride?"

"Maybe next time, it's getting late. If we don't get back soon sister will get worried."

"Right you are," replied David as he patted the dragonsteed a few more times before departing.

"I think your dream really will come true. Your talent to communicate with any beast is amazing. I can't wait to read that bestiary of yours."

"I can't wait to hear stories of when you become an adventurer as well, and who knows, maybe I'll write about that as well," replied David with a chuckle.

Both boys made their way out of the forest after expertly navigating through it, and returned to the village.

Part III

"Your majesty, what are your orders?"

Emperor Jelal remained silent for a moment, only regarded the question with his cold gaze. Standing before him was the group known as the Black Scriptures. They were nameless men taken from orphanages at a young age to serve the Emperor. They were trained to do only one thing, to kill, and they did it well.

"I have an assignment for you. I want the Princess of Caelum killed before she reaches the Holy Kingdom. The details of the mission will be given by the minister. I expect to hear good news in the near future. You are dismissed," said the Emperor while waving them away. The Black Scriptures left the hall in a black blur, without a sound.

After the battle on the first day, they had confirmed the presence of a traitor amongst the nobles. Therefore, they knew their route was already exposed. They had concluded that it was most likely the Empire that wanted the Princess dead, but they had no proof of it. They also concluded that the rest of the travel should be uneventful because an assassination attempt out on the road like this would require a direct

confrontation due to the fact that there were no civilians to mingle amongst. Since the group had already demonstrated their ability in handling a direct confrontation even if they were outnumbered, the next attempt at the Princesses life would most likely occur in a village or town. Therefore, they had avoided stopping at any villages or towns along the way, especially since they already had all the provisions they needed. Evangeline and her group of protectors had been traveling for over a week now and were only a few days away from reaching the Holy Kingdom.

"Hey Esmond, what are you going to do after we arrive at the Holy Kingdom," asked Evangeline with a curious face. The both of them had gotten close over the course of the journey because they were similar in age.

"I haven't really put much thought into just yet. Probably accept another job and see where that leads me. We will probably stay in the Holy Kingdom for some time though."

"Really? You'll be in the Holy Kingdom for some time? How come?"

"Well, Cain wants to take a look at the market for any rare ores, and study a little bit of the smiting technique available in the Holy Kingdom. Calypso had pulled some strings to get access to the Royal library to look up some runes and Jian is going to visit his friend in the White Dawn. I have no idea how long all that is going to take," replied Esmond with a shrug.

"Do you think we'll be able to meet then?"

"I...I honestly can't say."

Esmond's reply had dampened Evangeline's spirits. Their journey together had been a wonderful experience despite the dangers to her life. It was the first time in her life that she was able to interact with people who had lived such different lives. Listening to their stories of adventure had opened her eyes to the wonders of their freedom. Once she arrived at the Holy Kingdom, she would undergo the succession process and would have limited freedom. This was the most freedom she would ever experience, and comparing that to the life of freedom of an adventurer filled her with longing. Noticing Evangeline's wistful look, Esmond understood what Evangeline was thinking about. His heart began to ache and a path began to form in the journey without a destination that was his life.

"I hear something up ahead, it sounds like quite a commotion," said Jian while the others strained themselves to hear something over the sound of their moving carriage. Jian's senses were much more keen compared to everyone else.

Just then, they heard a scream. Up ahead, near

the entrance of a village, a pack of wild beasts could be seen in the distance. It appears that Cloud Panthers were terrorizing the village. The villagers managed to barricade themselves within the village with a few men waving pitchforks to keep the beasts at bay. Cloud Panthers weren't that formidable on their own; generally a group of adult men would be able to handle them. However, a pack of them proved difficult for normal villagers to handle.

"Princess, I understand your sentiment but protecting you is our main concern. We can't just leave you here to save a village," said Abel in a soothing tone.

But Evangeline's pleading gaze won him over.

"Bah, fine. But only Jian will take care of this, the rest of us will remain with you in the carriage. Jian, if you would be so kind."

"My pleasure," replied Jian as he leapt off the carriage and attacked the pack of Cloud Panthers. Evangeline watched from the window of the carriage as Jian took down the first of the Cloud Panthers. After three of the panthers died without even being able to harm Jian, the panthers began to slowly circle Jian cautiously, waiting for an opening. Jian was a spirit mage on top of being an accomplished swordsman. He had several contracts with different elemental spirits and they all resided within the gem at the hilt of his sword. This power made it possible for Jian to maintain awareness of his surroundings despite only looking in a single direction. It also made him a very adaptable fighter. Jian was very suited for an outnumbered battle such as this.

Just as Jian was locked in this stalemate, a young boy came rushing past the barricade and past the villagers towards Jian. "Stop," yelled the boy. All of the panthers turned to face the boy, and stared at the boy for a few moments before they began to walk away. Jian was caught completely off-guard by the turn of events. The panthers paid the humans no heed as they left. The carriage arrived at the entrance of the village when they heard the boy say, "I just told them to go away or the scary man was going to kill them."

"Scary man...." Jian did not know how to respond.

"The panthers were recently displaced due to a flood nearby, and they lost their hunting ground and home. So, I told them about a new place and said that if they stayed any longer they would surely die to this man."

"It seems like this boy is able to communicate to beasts the same way I can communicate with elemental spirits," said Jian looking at Abel.

"On behalf of the village, I'd like to thank the

brave warrior that saved us. It's getting late. I could arrange for you and your companions to stay the night at the inn. Free of charge of course," said an old man emerging from the crowd. He appeared to be the village elder in charge of this place.

"There will be no need for that, but thank you for the kind offer though. We should be on our way."

"But nightfall is upon us. Why not stay the night and enjoy a good bath?"

"Bath? Are you sure we can't stay? We could really do with a bath," Evangeline said wrinkling her nose.

"I second that," said Calypso.

"I guess one night wouldn't hurt," Abel finally consented.

The group had settled into the inn by nightfall and finally had a decent meal for dinner. It was a welcomed change to their routine.

"So are you guys really adventurers," asked David enthusiastically.

"Yep, you bet," Calypso replied with a wink.

"Do you guys know the White Dawn?" Charlie blurted out.

"I sure do. We've had joint missions with them before in the past," replied Jian as he chuckled, fanning the flames of their enthusiasm. The two boys have been probing the group for stories of their past adventures. While everyone was enjoying themselves, another group of travelers entered the inn. They made their way into the lounge where Evangeline and the others were sitting.

"We'd like two rooms for the night please," said the man to the inn-keeper.

"Sure, and what brings you here to this town?" asked the inn-keeper while handing over keys to their room.

"We're a group of merchants currently travelling to the Holy Kingdom."

"Oh, what a coincidence there's another group here that are heading that way as well."

"Really now? It must be fate."

"Good evening," said one of them with a pleasant smile to the Evangeline and her group.

"Good evening," replied Jian giving him a nod.

"You must be the group heading over to the Holy Kingdom as well. Pleasure to meet your acquaintance," said the merchant extending his hand. The other merchants did the same thing to the rest of the group. Just as Evangeline was about to shake one of their hands, a dagger appeared in each of their hands, and they struck at the people they were greeting. However, Cain, Jian, and

Esmond were able to parry each of them and kick them away.

"What shitty manners you seem to have *merchant!* Is this how you handle your business as well?" said Abel, emphasizing the word "merchant."

"Heh, what gave us away? I thought our acting was pretty flawless," said one of them in reply.

"Well, no merchant would have arms like those."

The arms of the attackers were too muscular, with veins popping and clearly defined muscles. Just then the two children snuck out and ran away.

"Boss, should we chase them?"

"No need, they aren't part of the mission."

When the two boys got out of the inn they saw another group of unfamiliar men waiting outside around the adventurers' carriage across the street. The two boys snuck around the inn and ran away without the other group noticing.

"We've got to get help," said David.

"But who do we ask? Letting the other villagers know will only get them killed if they try to help," replied Charlie.

"I've got an idea. I just hope we make it in time."

Back at the inn, the two groups were at an impasse.

"All we want is the girl, hand her over and we'll be on our way."

"I don't think that's going to be possible; you see, we've grown quite fond of her," said Cain while stepping in front of her.

"Don't be foolish. This isn't a job worth losing your life over. We have another group outside waiting for you, you'll never escape us."

The group looked outside and noticed that their carriage was surrounded by at least a dozen more men. The adventurers knew that their current situation was quite grave. From their earlier exchange of blows, the adventurers knew that the other group was very skilled. The adventurers had tried to counter attack after the successful parry but the other group had managed to avoid it and retreat to a safe distance. Their advantage in numbers also weighed down on the group. Even if they did manage to fight their way out, they would have to face the enemies outside.

Suddenly, a commotion broke out outside. The attackers seemed to be fighting a group of beasts outside, and it caused the group inside the inn to become distracted. Seeing this opening, Jian unsheathed his sword and slashed in front of him creating a wall of wind throwing some of the

assailants out the window and some of them into the wall along with all the furniture, knocking them out.

"Quickly, we need to leave this place," said Jian as he ran outside.

When they got outside, they were dumbfounded by the sight of a dozen dragonsteed attacking the assassins. Then they heard a voice from above say, "I asked a couple of my friends to help out."

It was the young villager David riding one of the Dragonsteed with his friend. They landed in front of the group and dismounted.

"I asked my friends to take you to the Holy Kingdom since they owed me a favor. You should hurry up and get on, there might be more reinforcements somewhere," said David as he beamed with pleasure.

"Thanks, kiddo," said Esmond as he tossed something towards them.

The group mounted the dragonsteed and took off, leaving the two boys as they ran away to hide

as well. The assassins yelled furiously into the sky as they were fending off the remaining dragonsteed, "Damned to hell, I didn't know they had a beast tamer with them as well! It must have been the witch that was with them."

"What did you give the two boys anyway?" asked Evangeline.

"My adventurer coin. It seemed like they wanted to become adventurers as well, so I thought they'd like it as a souvenir," replied Esmond nonchalantly.

"But aren't those extremely expensive to replace considering your rank?" replied Evangeline shocked by this revelation.

"I don't plan on getting another because I am going to join the Knights Order in the Holy Kingdom and serve you," said Esmond with a grin as they flew the rest of the way to the Holy Kingdom.