

## Duets: The Final Chapter

Theodore VonHammersmoot was the greatest knight to ever pick up a lance. When he mounted his horse any man facing him cowered in fear. Some say he could throw a knife into heaven, others say he could kill with a stare.

Sarin couldn't control her thoughts. Despite the sweltering heat and her suffocating outfit all she could think about was her soon to be husband. The VonHammersmoot family was very wealthy and she would finally have the fortune she always felt she deserved. She sat in her parents decaying cart, unlaced her tunic, removed her drapery, spread her legs and exhaled a sigh of relief.

"Gods, they torture me. It couldn't be any hotter yet they dress me like I'll be marrying today. Odds are we won't even arrive for 3 more days."

"I do apologize miss Beauvallet, if I could pray so the sun should not beam down so fero..."

"Gods Sebastian how long have you been there, just watching me?"

"Well m'lady I'd say about half a fortnight, since we left your parents keep I suppose."

"Ugh. Vile creature, my distaste for you has no end. "

The heat made her far angrier than she normally would be. She briefly considered covering herself but quickly put the idea away. The heat was simply too much, besides Sebastian had seen her in the nude since she was a baby. She uncomfortably shifted in the soaking wet seat and suddenly felt a sharp pain on her bosom.

"Sebastian what on earth is this wretched thing, how long has it been here?"

She pulled a small medallion out from her leg, where it had left a red sweaty imprint of a lion.

"I can't say m'lady. It's the first I'd ever seen of such a thing. It has the Swigtiddlesworth family emblem on it."

She found that awfully curious. The Swigtiddlesworth family were dire enemies to the VonHammersmoot family. How on earth did this get here? With a slight amount of pressure it opened up and a small note with an accompanying stone fell out.

*"Sarin,*

*I know the day of your wedding approaches, and I'm aware that nothing will change your mind. All I ask is you be careful, the VonHammersmoot family can not be trusted. I hope you never need this but I have sent an old form of dark magic, if you ever feel in grave danger do not hesitate to use it.*

*Mysterious Wizard Adeline LeSecVagine"*

Sarin lifted her head to see Sebastian looking surprised. Adeline was a very powerful yet mysterious wizard, most in the land had heard of her. A small red

stone fell out with the paper. Sarin held it in her hands, its warmth almost causing her to drop it. She put it away in her shirt and tried to get some sleep. Soon she would be in a new city.

By the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the caravan had arrived at the city of BigNewPortSmithVille. It was so expansive, Sarin had never seen a city of such size her whole life. She had arrived just in time for the big tournament, where her future husband would be competing. She wanted to see him first but there was no time, as the tournament had already started.

She took her seat in the stands, high up as she could go. Her family did not come from fortune, yet due to an unpaid debt owed to her family, her father managed to secure a marriage arrangement for the best knight in the land. A knight that was brave like no other. Some say he killed the infamous Bone Dragon by seducing it and then leaving him for his best friend. The bone dragon died from a broken heart.

As she sat high in the stands she thought about how it seemed unfair that she didn't get a seat up with royalty. Once Theodore won the tournament and married her she would have all the respect in the world. A sudden trumpet blast caught her attention. The next part of the tournament must be beginning. The young boy blew the trumpet another time, this time even louder, showing the stands how brave he was. On the third trumpet sound the boy blew with so much strength and nobility that his skull burst outward, spraying the crowd with his brains. The stands went wild cheering for the incredible courage shown by the child as angels came down from the sky to carry him into heaven to sit with the greatest departed warriors in paradise.

"And now, we begin the single combat portion of the tournament! Our first knight, from the city of BigNewPortSmithVille, Theodore VonHammersmoot!"

At once the world stopped for young Sarin Beauvallet. As the knight came around the corner she could not speak, nor could she breathe, she had never seen such a face so fair and beautiful. His gallant stroll seemed to float effortlessly above the earth, and all other men in his surrounding suddenly looked grotesque and repulsive. As he began walking to his place in pit she saw his eyes match hers. Even from such a distance, she could tell instantly that his eyes were matching her gaze. It was as if he has almost forgotten where he was in that moment.

As his first fight began he moved just as swiftly and powerfully as the stories told. As his opponent brought his sword down he moved to the side making him look like an adult fighting a small child. Before his opponent could strike again Theodore pointed to a spot in the sky.

"By god look out, what is that?"

When his opponent was looking away he grabbed a pile of dirt from the ground and threw it into the opponents eyes, he followed up by kicking his legs out from underneath him. He brought his sword to his opponent's neck, the man on the ground had yielded, and soon Theodore's hand was raised in victory.

For the life of her she could not figure why the crowd was booing and hissing so violently. Did they not see that his strategy was pure cunning? Only someone so

brave and intelligent could think of doing such a thing, and look where it got him! He was the winner! To Sarin, that was all that mattered.

Before the end of the day, after many fights, Theodore would be crowned champion. As soon as his last fight was over he made his way straight to Sarin.

"I pray to the gods you are the one they call Sarin Beauvallet?"

"It is indeed I my lord. You fought with such cunning today, I knew you would be the champion after just the first fight."

"Your words are kind, and your voice is so sweet. When I was told I would be married to a girl from a poor village I immediately thought of a plan to kill you and make it look like an accident, but your beauty makes up for almost all your shortcomings."

They stood for ages admiring each other, until the sun had set and rose again until Theodore broke the silence.

"If I could stay here and look upon you till my death I'm sure I would, yet I am a knight, and I have my knightly duties. Won't you come with me? I can't stand to be away from you now that I know what beauty you possess."

"Oh of course my love, I will follow you to the belly of the Bone Dragon."

"You know I totally killed him."

He was so perfect.

On their way they went. Sarin followed him on his routine tax collection run. At first she thought this wasn't a very big knightly duty, but Theodore, in all his intelligence explained it all to her simple mind. Without tax the city has no way to keep a military, and without a military the city is open to any invaders. Taxes protect the people who can't defend themselves. Without taxes how will the Churches stay standing? It is always in a knight's duty to defend the Church! What he was doing was the noblest job in the city. They approached the first house and her knight spoke up.

"Citizen, it has been 3 months since we have received your taxes, by the right of the city I must claim what you owe, or any males of proper working age will come with me to pay off the debt through hard labor."

"Please, please we have nothing, I only have my son but he is too young, he lost his arm to the last set of tax collectors, he is all I have left after the other tax collectors killed my husband and set our stable and cows on fire."

Theodore was unfazed

"Sounds like you need to learn a lesson on how to pay your taxes."

Sarin was awestruck. He was so dedicated to the cause. It was so honorable. If he didn't make a lesson out of these filthy peasants then soon they will all be thinking they won't have to pay taxes, then who will protect them from invaders? No one would be safe, no man, woman, or child. Theodore raised his sword up and brandished it before the woman and her kin, when suddenly she heard someone cry out right behind them.

"Leave that women alone!"

It was the knight from the Swigtiddlesworth family, she recognized him from earlier in the tournament. What on earth was this scum thinking he was doing? Did he know nothing of how taxes worked?

“François Moribond Swigtiddlesworth! Have you no idea who you defy or have you simply lost your appetite for life?

“VonHammersmoot, I swore I would bring you down one day, and here we stand. That family is innocent and I am turning you in for crimes against the chivalric code!”

He drew his sword and rushed at his opponent. They clashed back and forth for what felt like an eternity. When it seemed one man would get the upper hand God himself would come down from the sky to aid the sword of whoever was losing, as it was in Gods nature to always let a good fight keep going.

With a mighty force François brought his blade down and cut Theodore’s sword in half, bringing the man to his knees.

“So this is it than? Go on, finish me; I know in my heart I am doing what is best for the kingdom. I do what no one else will, for it is my knightly duties to do so. What are you waiting for? Kill me!”

“I will show you mercy, and as well for your women, I will bring you no harm.”

Sarin was so afraid. She knew the Swigtiddlesworth family could not be trusted. This man, he was going to kill her husband, than he was going to kill her. She had never been so terrified in her life, she felt like she was in some sort... some sort of an abyss. Though just as she was beginning to feel all hope was lost she remembered the jewel she had from the mysterious wizard. With the last of her strength she threw it towards François with all her might.

“In fact one day I hope to lead the knights to bring a new era of peace to the cityyaaahhahahhhhhaaaaaa.”

Before her very eyes his face began to melt. She had done it! She had saved the day! The city would be safe again. She looked towards Theodore.

“Are you alright my love??”

“Yep.”

The following few days she preceded with the wedding. It was perfect and everything Sarin had dreamed it would be since she was a little girl. Shortly after they began to travel home together. She felt like she had transformed into a whole new person since she left. She had been through so much. Though now she was stronger than ever before. Accompanied by her new husband she approached her homeland, ready to begin her new life.

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So very well-written! The flow from the first paragraph to the second was a bit jarring, I can see how much effort you put into this, and I'm glad you enjoyed writing it. I legitimately wanted more of the story! The names were great too... rather Terry Pratchett-esque... and suited the whole tone of the highly entertaining story. You fused so many elements from texts we've read this semester in creative and surprising ways to produce an original and successful piece of writing. Loved the divine intervention, the abyss, the knight's dialogue that is so mismatched with the other characters'. Great work!

(bosom = breasts, though) (and woman/women)