

# **Celestial Blade Of The Fallen Knight #Chapter 10: The Weight Of Intent - Read Celestial Blade Of The Fallen Knight Chapter 10: The Weight Of Intent**

## *Chapter 10: The Weight Of Intent*

They put away the wooden swords the next morning. No warning, no satisfying crescendo to mark the shift, just the instructor limping out with a crate and dropping it at the boys' feet, the thud heavier, hungrier.

The practice blades, sleek iron, dulled but thick enough to wound, glinted a dull gray in the watery sun.

Soren watched each boy hesitate before taking one, performing in miniature the same grim ritual: a thumb run along the edge, a bounce in the hand, the silent acknowledgement that they might now actually bleed.

The instructor's scowl seemed carved deeper than usual. He left the crate for a few minutes, pacing the line as the chill deepened.

Soren weighed his own blade, feeling the way it unbalanced his wrist; it was half again the mass of the wooden ones.

In the soundless interval, Tavren's voice piped in: "Must be a punishment round. Someone shoplift the Oathkeeper's daughter?"

No one laughed. Rhain's grip on his sword was so tight his knuckles showed a new shade of white, and Glen flexed his wrist, muttering to himself about yesterday's ache.

The rest just stared at the dirt. Soren felt the familiar heat of the Remnant at his chest, but it offered no advice. No commentary, not yet.

The instructor finally spoke. "You will fight with intent. Not the motions, not the memory, intent." He spat, then coughed a word out as if the sound itself was a heresy: "Intent is the only defense."

Soren did not understand, but the phrase lodged in his head, gnawing at each repetition.

He was paired at random. Tavren tried to elbow into the first round, but the instructor knocked him aside and called Soren forward, matching him with Glen, who massaged his hurt wrist and looked up with the first real hatred Soren had seen in the boy.

The swords started high, long arcs meeting each other with the jarring clang that felt, this morning, like live ammunition. The first exchange rattled Soren's arm nearly to the socket, and he retreated, foot skidding on the sand.

"Get up," someone called. Glen advanced, slicing in with a downward chop that, if not for the dulling, would have sheared Soren's shoulder.

He parried, barely, the blade's jolt running wrist to brow. The ring of metal was different from wood: it left your ears singing and your blood embarrassed.

He tried to remember the night's lesson, elbow higher, wrist loose, move from the waist, but the sequence short-circuited. Every instinct screamed defense, and Glen's weight made him forget all else.

He thought of Valenna, wondered if ghosts could get bored of waiting.

Glen drove him to the fence of the ring, crowding out any strategy. Soren gulped air, sweat icing undercut of his armpits. *'Now, Valenna,'* he thought, as if conjuring a coach would save his skin.

The voice came, sharper, closer. *"Step out of rhythm. Cut it short. No mercy."*

And then, a movement. Not his own, but his body's anyway: a skip left, shifting weight from wrist to hip, and a lunge with a strike angled to Glen's ribs.

It was ugly, but the surprise was enough; Glen's guard dropped, and the blade collided with his side, sending an awful, wet sound through the sandpit.

Glen reeled, shouting, and let go of the sword. His arm hung at a wrong angle, not broken but badly unmoored, dislocated, maybe.

The match ended not with a whistle, but an unkind silence. Everyone stared, including the instructor, who approached and inspected not the wound but Soren's stance, the sword's edge, the look on Soren's face.

"Where'd you learn that?" the instructor asked, voice flat.

Soren blinked, tried to fix his posture. "Nowhere," he said. "Just moved."

The instructor's eyes bored into him, sensing the lie but not knowing what shape it wore. "Do it again," he muttered. "Next round."

Soren's next match was with Tavren, who circled him like a wolf with something to prove. The swords locked and slipped, sparks of cold light scratching off each collision.

Soren held back, not trusting himself or the advice itching in his nerves. He let Tavren score one, then two scratches, each landing with a deliberate show of effort.

Tavren grinned, finally, and pressed harder, the blade chattering against Soren's forearm.

Valenna's advice hummed in Soren's temples: *"Let him tire. Wait for the overreach."*

He... didn't. Soren deflected, forced a retreat, but stopped short of turning the momentum. Tavren tried for an elaborate undercut, missed, and Soren returned a counter, grazing Tavren's thigh but otherwise refusing to escalate.

The instructor watched, then looked away with a sneer.

"So it was luck," he announced, loud enough for the others to hear.

Soren felt the burn of shame. His arms ached, fingers puffy with blood. Tavren basked in the victory, and Glen sat on the ground cradling his useless arm, pretending not to cry but failing at it.

The rest of the day unspooled in hazy violence, rotating pairs, endless permutations of pain and posturing.

The other boys kept their distance from Soren, but not in the way he'd hoped. It was the wary step of dogs who'd seen one of their own go rabid.

At evening mess, Rhain took a seat across from Soren. The bread was dryer than usual, and the broth clung to the cup like dishwater. Soren gulped twice before deciding not to eat again. Rhain just watched him, the stare soft but bottomless.

"You've changed," Rhain said. He picked at the crust, not looking up. "Not just the fighting. The way you listen."

Soren made a motion as if to protest, but Rhain continued, softer. "It's like you're waiting for someone else to speak."

He hesitated, eyes going pale in the refectory gloom. "If you ever need someone to keep a secret, I already owe you two." He finished the bread, stood, and left Soren alone at the table.

He didn't follow. That night Soren climbed into bed and unwrapped the shard, feeling its warmth pulse through his bruised hands.

Valenna spoke, but not with her usual chill. *"Today you hesitated. It was wise. It was foolish. Depends what you want to become."*

Soren pressed the shard to his chest. "I want to survive," he whispered.

*"Then stop pretending this is still about training."*

She gave him a new sequence, just a note, an image of twisting fingers to break a grip, a ghost-memory of bone and grit.

Soren tried it, bare-handed in the dark, until the knuckles blued with the effort and his palms stung raw. He watched the shadows dance along the cot edge, hypnotized by the idea that he could someday own even a fraction of that power.

Another day would bring another round, and another, and another, until someone failed to walk back to bed. Soren understood, now, that the only rule was intent.

He slept poorly, but when he woke the next morning, a pale blue haze leaking through the dormitory window, he looked at his hands, and for an instant did not resent the hunger they held.