

Earth's Greatest Magus

Chapter 7: The Raid

7 The Raid

Emery went to the main hall and saw his father still drinking. He had seen him drinking since afternoon, but he was still continuing this evening. Simply silent, drinking alcohol.

Emery walked to up his father and said to him almost a whisper, "Father... I am sorry..."

Geoffrey dazedly lifted his head and replied, "You're fine, my son. It wasn't your fault. It never has been your fault..."

Emery asked, "If it wasn't my fault, then what happened, father? Please, tell me."

Geoffrey opened his mouth, closed it, before saying, "It's—nothing my boy. I just miss your mother so much, that's all."

"Father, I know there's something going on. I am not a kid anymore."

For a moment, his father pondered something before taking another sip of his ale and said, "Okay... Tomorrow. I'll tell you tomorrow. It's already late now, you should get some sleep."

Emery was about to press the matter further when the sound of their horn for battle resounded from the distance. He and his father made their way to the window and saw silhouettes from the distance carrying torches.

The main hall's door banged open and one of the knights came in. "My Lord! Marauders have come to—"

A sword protruded from the knight's chest. The sword was pulled back and blood splashed on the ground. Three bloodied marauders arrived; their faces were covered with cloth.

"There they are boys!" exclaimed the marauder in front. "Kill these chrutin loving people!"

"Emery! Hide!" shouted Geoffrey as he withdrew the sword hanging on his sheath.

"No! I want to help you!" protested Emery.

"It's not the time to argue! Do what I ask!" said Geoffrey, clashing with the blade of one of the Marauders.

The other two tried to flank from the side, Geoffrey pushed the first marauder and jumped back, dodging the attacks from the sides. He waved his sword and two heads rolled down on the wooden floor. In just a matter of seconds, the marauder's comrades had died. The marauder then took a step back and ran away.

Geoffrey had once been a higher ranking noble. He had never played the politics of the kingdom to become a higher ranking noble, instead his great contributions in major battles with other kingdoms were well-known throughout the whole land earning him the title 'The Lion's Fang'. So, even when Geoffrey had been drinking since afternoon, his skills with the sword were still unparalleled.

Geoffrey said to his son, "Follow me!"

"But???"

"Now!" roared his father.

Geoffrey said, "Hurry! It'll be dark, so I need you to keep walking straight with your hand on the wall. At the end of the passage there'll be a ladder leading to the stables. Take a horse, go west and follow the river. You'll be safe there."

"What about you?" asked Emery.

"I'll hold them off here and make sure no one will be following. Once I've made sure everything is clear, I'll find—"

"Over here!" shouted an unknown person.

Shuffling steps neared to where they were and Geoffrey stopped his words. He whispered before pushing the torch, "You're my world, my son. Grow up and be strong. Go, now!"

"I—" Emery didn't finish his words because his father pushed him behind the closing cupboard. He got up and noticed the broken slit where he could peek through. He put his eyes on it and watched as dozens of marauders entered the cellar.

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"Where's your boy? Chrutin lover?" asked the marauder. It was the same marauder who had run away. He went back after calling his comrades.

"You'll never find him! Now, enough talk and show me what you got!" declared Geoffrey, brandishing his steel sword.

"Kill him!" said the marauder.

Emery witnessed his father's might. One by one the marauders fell, but there were too many of them. Slowly, his father's breath became ragged and fell on one knee. The first marauder managed to sneak behind him and slash Geoffrey on the back.

Geoffrey faced flat the dusty ground and struggled to get up, but the marauder stomped on his back, preventing Geoffrey from getting up.

"Fa—" Emery stopped himself from shouting by putting his hands against his mouth. Tears were welling from his eyes. He felt helpless watching his father being struck down.

The marauder twisted his neck to the direction where the cupboard was and smirked.

Geoffrey's eyes widened. He had told his son to run away but he was still here! With the last bit of his strength, he pushed up, making the marauder lose his balance. Geoffrey then tightened his grip on his sword and impaled the marauder on the wall.

He shouted with all he could, "RUN!!!" before being struck with multiple swords on the back.

He was still alive, blood on his lips, chest and back, he swung his sword once more but hit no one. Geoffrey muttered, "Run..."

Finally, Geoffrey fell unmoving on the ground.

Emery froze, he didn't know what to do. The last words of his father just registered on his mind. Run. And that was what he did. He ran and ran. Got up the ladder to where the stables were, but all the horses were dead. The crackling flames, the clashing of swords, the cries of his people, rang out everywhere in the place where Emery had lived his whole life.

Emery gazed at where their house was and the roaring flames engulfed everything it touched. He then ran west, toward the forest, as his father had asked. As soon as he entered the forest, however, he heard horses galloping. One of the marauders had actually seen Emery from afar and gave chase.

He kept on running toward the river, but his weak legs couldn't bear it any longer, making him trip on one of the tree's roots. Emery rolled down onto the freezing river. He struggled to stay afloat and unintentionally drank water, making his every breath hurt like needles stinging his lungs.

There were two marauders that caught up and descended from their horses. They watched Emery drowning at the river's strong current.

"Let's leave, the boy won't be able to survive this freezing river," said the marauder.

"Shouldn't we at least confirm it?" asked the other marauder.

"Are you dumb? Can't you see how strong the current is? If he doesn't die from drowning, then he'll freeze to death. I am sure he'll die one way or another."

"Okay, whatever you say."

The two marauders mounted on their horses and left.

Emery sank, he couldn't do anything against the stream and fell down on a lake when the river ended. His heart pounded against his chest, it felt like his lungs were about to explode. He wished for something, anyone, anything to save him. Soon, he stopped struggling, he was losing consciousness until he arrived at the bottom of the lake.

"Is this the end..."

He didn't notice, however, that a vine was worming its way toward him. The vine wrapped against his leg and pulled him back on land. A few seconds later, he coughed violently, spitting out all the water he had drunk. Emery didn't know how he survived. He then crawled on the muddy ground.

He was now lying down, staring at the night sky. Every part of his body was hurting. He was shivering, his vision was blurring but his gaze fell once more on the three stars lined up in a row.

He wished upon the three stars, "Please, save me... I don't want to die. Father..."

Emery struggled to keep his eyes open but there was like a weight pulling it down to close until he was unable to open it any longer. He was weak, cold and dying. But then, the stars seemed to have answered his wish. The star in the middle of the three lit up as a ray of light hit Emery's frail body floated before vanishing.