

# HERALD OF STEEL

## Chapter 5 Desperate Situation

After the exchange, Amenheratf was in a really good mood. He could not remember the last time he had laughed like that. It seemed like an eternity to him.

Recently, Amenheratf had been under tremendous pressure. He felt like his entire world had collapsed.

He was tricked out of his capital by an ingrate with the false promise of a herb that could supposedly cure his sick father.

His long-time sick father had died just a week ago, most likely poisoned by that snake he called queen mother.

His half-brother Ptolomy had revolted and seized the capital.

His army was nowhere around.

And a 50,000-strong hostile army was in front of him.

One after another, disaster after disaster had hit Amenheratf in the last few days, putting his nerves on the verge of collapse.

He was scared. Deathly scared. But he couldn't show it. He wasn't allowed to show it! Not even the slightest of it!

Because he was the king.

'The son of Ramuh doesn't feel fear' Amenheratf's father always told him.

This meant that as king he must not show the slightest sign of weakness in front of his subjects.

Everyone in the kingdom was allowed to show fear. But not him.

As such, the last few days were brutal for him. He was forced to increasingly put on a tough front and give the impression that everything was okay.

But in reality, Amenheratf was really staring down the abyss. He and his country was just the slightest push-off from failing into ruin and despair.

Even his much acclaimed 'trap' was more of a dice throw rather than a concrete guarantee.

And he and his generals all bought the plan not because it was solid but because they wanted it to be. All of them were in a quagmire of darkness and that trap gave them the slightest bit of light.

Just a mere chance, a sliver of hope to overturn this absolute death sentence.

Faced with almost certain doom, Amenheratf decided to portray himself as a strongman. He wanted to show that he and only he could get everyone through this ordeal. Everyone else was incompetent and they were the reason for this predicament.

Hence he became more and more tyrannical, finding faults over the most trivial matter, dismissing all outside advice, and overruling any orders he didn't like.

But after looking at Manuk's face just now, Amenheratf came to his senses. He had made a grave mistake.

His tyrannical attitude had not only failed to inspire confidence in his subjects, it had only managed to alienate him from them.

If he continued this any longer, Cantagena might not have the pleasure of beheading him. His soldiers might very well do it for them to appease Ptolomy.

"It's a good thing I woke up in time. I really owe Manuk a big one this time." Amenheratf muttered to himself.

Suddenly as Amenheratf was lost in thought the sky let out a bellow as thunder cackled and lightning streaked through the sky.

"Oh, great Ramuh have you finally decided to help your kingdom on earth?" Amenheratf unconsciously muttered as he dazedly looked at the rapidly darkening sky.

And this time it would seem Amenheratf was right. Because Ramuh- The god of thunder and lightning had truly decided to help his believers.

As Manuk made his way to the camp, a lieutenant suddenly appeared before him and saluted, "Archbishop, Captain Beihrut has been moved to the back. He told me to inform you to meet him as possible as you can." This was Nulafzam- Beihrut's personal aide.

"Has anything happened to my brother?" Manuk asked as he felt his heart sink. His brother always led from the front.

"The captain is fine. Allow me to take me to escort you to him." Nulafzam reassured him and gestured to follow.

Soon they saw Beihrut at the back, surrounded by a few men, one wrapping bandages around his right shoulder.

"Alright my ass!" Manuk involuntarily cried out as soon as he saw the state his brother was in.

Beihrut's shoulder bandages had become red and next to his right foot laid a bloody javelin, a gift from the Cantagena cavalry no doubt.

"You call this alright, you imbecile?" Manuk pointed to Beihrut and then roared in fury at Nulafzam.

"..\*Silence\*.." Nulafzam fearfully lowered his head and only returned a wall of silence as a reply.

"Don't kick up a fuss here, it's a military camp. And I told him not to tell. I knew you would make too much noise." Came Beihrut's deep, calm voice. The Captain of the Royal Guards had a booming voice that made everyone want to submit to his authority.

Then Beihrut, seemingly unconcerned about his own health asked Manuk, "So when's it happening?"

The military man always hated small talk and so he asked about the report in the most straightforward manner, with a fierce gaze that seemed to penetrate Manuk.

Manuk seemingly ignored his brother's question and turning his head to the right, he concernedly asked the man tending to the wound, "How bad?"

"The wound is fortunately not too deep. There's no risk of infection. He will fully recover...."

" Just a scratch. Will be gone in a day." Beihrut cut off the man brusquely.

In fact, the wound was quite serious. The physician had deliberately downplayed it in front of everybody. The wound had torn several shoulder tendons and muscles, basically crippling his right hand. After today, one of Adhania's greatest soldiers could never fight again.

"Answer my question, Manuk." Beihrut clenched his jaws as he pressed his brother again for the answer.

Manuk stared at his brother's expectant gaze, feeling a heart-wrenching ache.

"His Majesty believes the time is not yet right," Manuk replied in as a steady voice as he could muster, though his face and trembling body betrayed his indignation.

"Motherf\*\*\*er, you wasted all that time to only tell me this!" Beihrut roared in anger, spit flying everywhere. Beihrut was utterly livid.

"Tell that idiot I can't hold on any longer. Tell him Lamiz is dead. Go, tell him that Lamiz is dead." Beihrut repeated, screaming his head off as if he had lost his mind.

Manuk almost had a heart attack when he heard his brother call the king "idiot."

His brother was known to have a mouth that charitably could be described as "loud and honest." In reality, he had no tact, flapping out anything and everything that came to his mind. But no matter what, no one was allowed to insult the king.

Not like this, so publicly!

Not even the "Royal Mad Dog."

Fortunately, there were only six people around and all of them knew how to keep their mouths shut.

"What?" Manuk asked in a low, confused voice, He had blanked out after he heard the word 'idiot.'

Beihrut stayed simply silent, hanging his head low.

"Commander Lamiz bravely died along with his entire unit. Not a single man ran." It was Nulafzam that answered Manuk's question.

'How could Lamiz die? How could that Lamiz die?' The same question thunderously repeated inside Manuk's head.

Previously his heart had almost given out but now he felt his head spinning and he struggled to keep standing.

Lamiz was the king's cousin but he had a much more important identity. He was 'The sword of Ramuh.' The title given to the strongest warrior in the kingdom.

Mauk had known him for thirty five years and never saw him lose a duel.

Yet even the "Invincible" Lamiz had fallen today.

'Oh great Ramuh have you truly abandoned?' Manuk muttered as he stared blankly at the sky, ruminating if he should bypass the king and spring the trap now.

Suddenly a bright blue light flashed in front of his eyes as the entire battlefield was briefly dyed azure and a thunderous boom smashed his ears.

Manuk stared at the sky in awe as he saw the clear sunny sky transform in a moment to a pitch black color.

The autumn rains had come!

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