 Berserk

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...this ain't good.
CAGED AND SWORD-LESS... AND THE SHAPE I'M IN.

WHAT DO I DO?!

PROBLEM SOLVED. "RAPPA!"
HERE I AM, "RAPPA!"

*FX: WHMM WHMM

FX: SHMP

ZY CUKKK!

SWIFT HERO

HE'S STILL AROUND...

OH, YEAH.
WHAT ABOUT "THANK YOU"?

Hey, wait a minute!

Then I shall return these. Stealing is wrong, after all.

Look, don't think that just 'cause you've settled in a guy's bag you can...

What, for every little thing...?

Even good friends show courtesy.

"Very much, O Great Puck."

I'll wring him later...

...Thank you very much, O Great Puck...
I'LL PUT THE HURT ON THIS GARBAGE!!

SACRIFICE.

FIRST AID FIRST.

SACRIFICE.

SACRIFICE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, O GREAT FICK.

EHHH? I CAN'T HEAR YOU ALL.

IF I MUST, I MUST. SUCH A BOTHER.

JUST PINCH AND TWIST.

*FX: SCRREE

*FX: VMM VMM VMM VMM

*FX: ZAAAA ZAAAA ZAAA
FORGET ABOUT IT. THE NIGHT-TIMERS ARE A LOT DIFFERENT FROM THE DAY-TIMERS.

WAY DENCHA TELL ME?

IF I DON'T HURRY, I'LL LOSE ANY CHANCE TO GET AWAY.

WHAT TO DO?

BUT ALL MY WEAPONS ARE IN THAT BITCH'S TENT.

ANYWAY, GOT TO GET MY GEAR BACK. THAT'S MY ONLY OUTFIT.

I KNEW IT... HE'S GETTIN' TOO USED TO THIS.

PERFECT. I'LL TAKE HER HOSTAGE IF I GOTTA.

*FX: WHAP

NO GUARDS?
*FX: WHAP!

DEAR GOD.

WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

PLEASE GUIDE ME...
YOU...!!

"GTUNK"

CHARMING, HUH...?

OH, MANN.

FX WHUD
YOU WERE BADLY INJURED. IF YOU PUSH YOURSELF, YOU'LL REOPEN YOUR WOUNDS.

Y- YOU'RE....!!

THE BLACK SWORDSMAN IS--

LADY FARNES, TROUBLE!

NOT QUITE UP TO SNIP....
LOOKS LIKE I GOTA TAKE HER AFTER ALL.

DON'TCHA FORGET THIS. HOW RUDE TO MY BETCH!!

NOW, THEN.

WAIT, LOOK HERE.

WOOPS.

FX: WUFF

FX: FLAPP

THE BLACK SWORDSMAN'S ESCAPED!

ALL FORCES ARISE!!

THE FLAMES WILL SPREAD TO OTHER TENTS IN THIS WIND!!

F-FIIIRE!!

IT'S LADY FARNESSE'S TENT...!!
L-LADY FARNESE...!!

HOW DID YOU...??

JUST WATCH! I'LL LIGHT HER ASS ON FIRE.

WHO SAYS ONLY CLERGY CAN BURN SOMEONE ALIVE?

HOW 'BOLT CLEARIN' THE WAY, PAL?

YOU THINK YOU CAN ESCAPE IN YOUR CONDITION?!

HE'D DO IT, TOO...
TAKING A WOMAN HOSTAGE!

WE'VE NO CHOICE!!

MUCH OBLIGED.

EVERY ONE STAND BACK!!

"HRRR..."

"DESPICABLE..."

"VAHUFF!!"

"SNRR!!"

"BOADUMP!!"

"BOADUMP!!"

"THRRRN!!"

"BOADUMP!!"

"BOADUMP!!"

"GIT!!"

"GIT!!"
DON'T SWEAT IT!

WHAT IT CAN'T BE!!

QUICKLY!!

GATHER UP THE HORSES!!

A COLLOSAL BLUNDER FOR ME!!

*FX: BADUMP* WHO GOES ??!

WE CANNOT LET HIM ESCAPE THIS WAY!!
"FX: BOOM" BOOM "BOOM"

"FX: JERK"

THIS TIME YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR! SETTIN' HORSES ON FIRE! WHO DO YOU HAVE TO THANK FOR HAVIN' RUN THIS FAR?!

"SO LONG AS YOU..."

I SWEAR.

"FX: SMEK SMEK"

A HORSE.

"YOU AINT HUMAN."

THEN APOLOGIZE TO THE HORSE!

"SORRY, HORSE..."
DON'T STRUGGLE! IF YOU FALL ON THESE ROCKS WITH YOUR HANDS AND FEET BOUND, YOU'RE DEAD.

OH, I'M PICK.

DON'T WORRY, WE'RE NOT GONNA EAT 'CHA OR NOTHIN'.

SHOE'S ON THE OTHER FOOT NOW.

IF YOU THINK YOU'LL GET AWAY WITH... WITH TREATING ME, THE LEADER OF THE HOLY IRON CHAIN KNIGHTS, LIKE THIS...!!

LET ME OFF, YOU BASTARD!!

THERE'RE THINGS I NEED TO ASK YOU.

SORRY, BUT YOU'RE WITH ME FOR A BIT.

IF YOU KEEP YAPPIN', I'LL HAVE TO KNOCK YOU OUT AGAIN.

SHUT UP.
LET ME-- OOOOF!!

I'D RATHER FALL AND DIE THAN BE SUBJECT TO YOUR WILL!!

*FX. WHSHH

*FX. WHMP

THAT THIS APOSTATE COULD--!!

...IT'S A DISGRACE!!

IGH...!

NOW YOU BETTER CALM DOWN SOME.

*YANK

*C'MON, GUTS!!

*C'H!!

TCH
BURN HIM AT THE STAKE.

I'LL GET HIM... MY TEACHINGS HARDLY REACH HIM...

FX: MUMBLE MUMBLE

I'M OH, PU**.. NOPE.

AINT THERE ANY LOVE IN THIS MAN?!

FX: FLAIL FLAIL FLAIL

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?

STOP MAKING A FOOL OF ME!!
...to elves...

...she doesn't perceive us.

When it comes to me...

She doesn't see.

Huh?

She's not trying to.

*FX: BDDUMP BDDUMP

*FX: KRKK

*FX: CHAK
CONVICTION ARC
BINDING CHAIN CHAPTER
THE UNSEEN: END
WHAT WAS THAT...?!
DOESN'T PERCEIVE THEM?

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

HMM...

HOWWW SHOULD I EXPLAIN IT.

SOMETIMES PEOPLE DON'T NOTICE AN ELF RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM SINCE IT DOESN'T CAPTURE THEIR ATTENTION.

BUT IF IT'S SOMETHIN', THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT, THEY DON'T REMEMBER, DO THEY?

FOR INSTANCE... WHEN HUMANS... NOTICE SOMETHIN', IT STAYS IN THEIR MEMORY.
FOR SOME REASON, LOTSA PRIESTS ARE LIKE THAT. NOT SO MUCH IN RURAL CHAPELS, BUT WHEN I GO IN BIG CATHEDRALS, I'M NOT SEEN TOO MUCH.

AND LIKE IN BIG CITIES.

WHY DOES HE KEEP MUMBLING TO HIMSELF...?

WHY, THOUGH?

THE OLD FORTUNE TELLER LADY FROM THE ENTERTAINER TROUPE SAID, UH-HH, WHAT WAS IT...?

OH YEAH, THOSE WHO CLING TO THE RIGID WORLD DON'T PERCEIVE ELVES.

I THINK...

...EVEN SO, BEIN' IGNORED PEEVES ME!

TIME FOR SOME FUN!

*FX: CHIFF CHIFF CHIFF

*FX: HEHE HEHE HEHE

QUIT THAT...!!

RIGID WORLD...

HUh...
HERE THEY COME.

*FX: (effect of noticing something)  *FX: ZZT ZZT

GLUTS ....!

TOUCHING MY BACK...

I KNOW.

MY MEN...?!
UH?!
WILL I LAST 'TIL MORNING...?!

WHAT'S GOING ON...?!

IT'S TOO DARK TO SEE.

...WHAT?!
YOU WON'T SEE THIS, PRAYIN' TO IDOLS.
KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, WATCH.

A MIRACLE ON EARTH.

GOD'S PUTTIN' ON A SHOW FOR US.
IF I KEEP SWINGIN' THIS, THE HORSE WON'T BE ABLE TO TAKE IT!!

AGHH!

HEY! STRUGGLE AND YOU'LL FALL OFF!

UHHH!
"FX: SHNK SHNK SHNK SHNK"

"WHY?!

I'VE GOT TOLD QUESTIONS, YOU.

I CAN'T HAVE YOU BUSTIN' YOUR HEAD ON A ROCK.

QUESTIONS....

...."
YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME WHY YOU PEOPLE...

...FOLLOW ME AROUND.

......

I'VE NOTHING TO SAY TO AN APOSTATE LIKE YOU!!

IN YOUR DREAMS!!
IF YOU'RE SO SPIRITUAL, YOU COULD AT LEAST GIMME ONE OF THOSE LINES...

WHY SHY AWAY AT THE GOOD PART?

...LIKE "DEAR GOD."
I've had my fill of miracles.

Enough to make me puke.
CONVICTION ARC

BINDING CHAIN CHAPTER

PAST AND FUTURE

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

I CAN'T PROCESS ANYTHING.
...AND NOT EVEN WORDS OF PRAYER COME TO MIND.

ONLY THAT I'M FILLED WITH FEAR...
FROM THIS NIGHTMARE...!!

MUST ESCAPE...

...I'M SAVED!!

IF I CAN RIDE THAT...

ALLOW ME TO MOUNT YOU, THEN RUN!! QUICKLY...!!

I ORDER YOU!!
NO.
...the woman.

I MOUNT...

Nooo!

...
IF YOU DON'T WANNA DIE, QUIT WANDERIN' AROUND.

ALRIGHT ...

FIGHTIN' SO RECKLESSLY ...

HE'S OPENED HIS WOUNDS AGAIN.

BUT THERE'S AN UNSTOPPABLE, TERRIBLE RAGE SWIRLIN' INSIDE GUTS, MORE SO THAN USUAL... WHY...?
WHAT WAS THAT ...?!
I DON'T CARE IF MY ARM'S TORN OFF.

I WON'T BOTHER TO SHIELD MY WOUNDS.

...THIS VIVID SENTIMENT...

THANKS TO YOU ALL'S STUPID TRICKS...

...REMEMBERED AFTER SO LONG...
THANK YOU.

IT'S THE WORST I EVER FEEL.
YOU’LL ALL KEEP DYING UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS.
SOMEHOW...

...SPLATTERED WITH THE BLOOD OF HIS PREY, THE IMAGE TOUCHED ME.

...AS HE SAT BENEATH THE BRIGHTENING SKY, PANTING LIKE A BEAST...

...ALMOST LIKE A PAINTING ADORNING A BASILICA...

IT WAS BOTH SOLEMN AND BEAUTIFUL...
...Sought to escape shivering in fear...

I merely...

...but not even the name I've invoked a countless thousand times...

Not once could I call upon my lord. I avow myself a woman of God...

...I...
...I was tiny, wretched, and powerless.

In the shade of the morning sky...

CONVICTION ARC
BINDING CHAIN CHAPTER
MORNING OF TRUTH

断罪篇
縛鎖(ばくさ)の章　真実の朝
POWERLESS?

...THEN WITHOUT SIN?

ARE THE POWERLESS...

DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF WITH FAIR WORDS.

DON'T LIE, DON'T DECEIVE.
DARK, DARK...

... DESIRE.

IT EXISTS WITHIN YOU,

YET YOU CANNOT REVEAL IT.

YOU FELT IT THEN.

EVEN PLUGGING YOUR EARS IS FUTILE.

WHILE YOU THRASHED THAT MAN'S STEEL PHYSIQUE.

THEN.

BECAUSE THIS IS YOUR INNER VOICE.

YOU KNOW YOU FELT IT.

YOU KNOW YOU FELT IT.

THIS MORBID LUST.

IT SWELLS WITHIN YOU.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS!!

...A WAVE OF PLEASURE FILLED YOU.

...AS THE BLOOD TRICKLED FROM HIS UNFLINCHING FORM...

THAT IS NOT ALL.

YOU WERE CONSTANTLY DISCOVERING PLEASURE, EVEN WITHIN THAT PAIN.

WHEN YOU LASHED YOURSELF FEIGNING INTROSPECTION,
AND DEVOTE YOUR BODY TO SHAMEFUL PLEASURE. THAT IS YOU.

YOU SIMPLY LIE TO YOUR OWN SOUL FROM BEHIND YOUR RELIGION.

THERE IS NOTHING AT ALL INSIDE YOU. WHAT THINGS YOU CAN BOAST OF TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS ARE TRIFLING. YOU'RE AN INSIGNIFICANT WOMAN. BECAUSE YOU FEAR KNOWING YOU'RE NOTHING, YOU'RE JUST DRUNK ON GOD'S AUTHORITY.

THAT'S NOT TRUE, I....!!

JUST SUCH A DARK, DARK DESIRE.

ALL THAT EXISTS WITHIN YOU IS DESIRE. YOU WANT TO DEFILE AND BE DEFILED. YOURSELF AND OTHERS, BODY AND SOUL.
Give yourself to it. For you, it's the only sure thing.

You're too far from god.

Only this aching is truth.

...there is no "god."
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

GLITS, SHE'S--

YEAH, BEEN POSSESSED.
LIFT IT UP.

WHAT STRENGTH...

GUTS!!

FX: SKRUTCH

LIFT THE SWORD UP SLOWLY.
THIS PLEASURE.

NOW...

SAVOR IT WITH ME.

SPLIT ME OPEN SLOWLY.
HELL
WITH IT.
I’LL
KNOCK
HER OUT
AGAIN...!!

*HEAVE

*FX: BISH BISH BISH

*FX: DROP
If you're back to normal, then get the hell off me. Look.
CAN YOU STAND?

*FX: STP STP

*FX: SCOOT

*FX: FLUFT

KILL HIM.

FOR THE SAKE OF MY HONOR.

HERE, IMMEDIATELY.

YOU WILL KILL...

... THAT MAN.

KILL HIM!!
...but is not our duty in the first place to apprehend him? to forfeit that for momentary feelings...

I do not know what happened...

That would be, well, unwise in any case.

'Skritch a!'

Lady Farnese, please calm down.

It doesn't matter—kill him!!

You saw it, Commander. his superhuman strength.

I would only die in vain.

To be honest, that is not possible for me.

Ouch.

*FX: STARE

*FX: TMP

Oh, noob-lered.

Ah.

Commander.

Ah.

Commander.
...you have caused her to cry.

Don't look at me.

My commander.

Again...

You just heard the situation.

If you would be willing to overlook things...

And here I will ask your pardon for now.

I guess I owe you one, then.

Whatever.

Heh!

...yes.

Well...
NICE DRAW STYLE.

JUST AS I EXPECTED.

YOU AS WELL.

IT WAS JUST A GRAZE, TOO.
HELL OF AN EXIT.

SO ON THAT NOTE, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN! I'VE DONE WHAT I MEANT TO DO.

YOU TOO, LITTLE ONE.

FAREWELL FOR NOW.

HEH!

HE'S TRICKY.

...THAT FARNESSE PERSON.

BUT Y'KNOW.

SHE SEEMS KINDA SAD.
...she's bound up on all sides.

Speakin' of which, we forgot to ask why they're tryin' to catch you.

From dead spirits to priests--what a pain.

I'm the one who's bound up, moron! Now I've got even more to worry about.

What was it...?

...and that image I got from guts before.

...I must kill him.

Commander! Please wait!

Must seal his lips.

Must kill him, must kill him.
IF HE'S ALLOWED TO LIVE...

THEN I...

CONVICTION ARC
BINDING CHAIN CHAPTER
MORNING OF TRUTH: END
THE PEOPLE SAW IT IN THEIR SLEEP

CONVICTION ARC
BIRTH CEREMONY CHAPTER
REVELATIONS, PART 1

断罪篇
生誕祭の章
啓示1
Each night an utter darkness fully enveloped their world.

Each event occurred individually yet converged upon one idea.

There were the corpses of both family and neighbor.

There was a kingdom of villages dying out from plague, routed by a army driving mammoth beasts.

There was a city devastated by earthquake, towns swallowed by raging torrents.

There was a sun obscured by black smoke and mobs of starving, vagrant folk.
A single, shining hawk, slumbering in the thick darkness, alighting upon the bloodstained land.

Then, amidst such discord, they caught sight of it.

They believed instinctively: this was their "desired."
WESTERN MIDLAND
WHAT A DREADFUL SIGHT.

ALL THAT REMAINS ARE BARE MOUNTAINS.

DURING TIMES OF WAR, THE STONE AND LUMBER IN THIS AREA WAS CUT AND QUARRIED EN MASSE TO BUILD FORTS AND THE LIKE.

I DO LOOK FORWARD TO SOME STRONG DRINK AT THE INN THIS EVENING, LORD LABAN.

HEY.

BUT STILL... THIS RAIN.
I DO NOT KNOW... THEY SEEM TO BE COMING FROM THE TOWN AHEAD.

WHATSOEVER THE CASE, WHY THIS LARGE CROWD...?

PLEASE FORGIVE ME, OH GOD.

... THAT WAS RASH... OF ME.

"BROAAARRR!"
ALL FORCES HALT!!

HEAVENS! YOUR EXCELLENCY, FOR MERE PEASANTS, TO PERSONALLY!!

RESCUE OUR SUBJECTS!!

ARRGH... VERY WELL, THEN!! HOP TO IT!! FOLLOW GENERAL LABAN!!

FOLLOW ME!!

HEY! HANG ON!

HNN...

THERE-- YOU'RE SAFE, NOW...
WHAT IN...?

I'LL RETURN SOON. PUT THE WOUNDED IN THE COVERED WAGON, AND TREAT THE PEASANTS TO SOMETHING WARM.

...MEANING WHAT, EXCELLENCY! WHERE ARE...?!?

ADJUTANT, TAKE CARE OF THIS MESS. SHOULD YOU FINISH THE WORK BEFORE I RETURN, HAVE ALL FORCES STAND BY... AND KEEP THE PEASANTS HERE, TOO.

I'M BORROWING THIS.

EXCELLENCY!

...DON'T TELL ME...

THIS IS...
'FX: CHIT CHIT CHIT

SO, RATS ARE THE ONLY THINGS LEFT.
AS I FEARED...

THE PLAGUE, THEN.

CONFOUNDED RATS.

NOW THAT THEIR FOOD SUPPLY'S SWOLLEN, THEY'VE GOT BIG AND FAT.

THEY COME FROM THE DEVIL.

ФX: SQUEEK EEP EEP ФX: WHACK WHACK

GRIM LITTLE REAPERS.

IT'S SINCE THESE RATS STARTED GROWIN' IN NUMBERS SO MUCH THAT THE PLAGUE SPREAD THROUGH THIS TOWN.

MAYHAPS WE READ WHAT WE SOW.

BUT THEY CAME TO THE TOWN BECAUSE PEOPLE LEFT THE HILLS BALD AND TOOK AWAY THEIR FOOD AND HOMES.

...WELL, I SAY THAT.
I don't care to desert this town at my age. My whole family's dead anyway.

You won't leave the town, old one?

Waving your sword around will do no good in these parts.

You'd best be off now before death haunts you too, sir knight.

I've seen the same kind of spectacle throughout the kingdom.

It isn't just this town.

Such a dark shadow now covers all of midland—no, it's not just limited to this kingdom.

Plague.

Mercenary bands turned robbers.

Famine.

Is this the price of a hundred years of war?
Yet, over seven tenths of the military have spent two years... searching for a criminal. We're not even certain still lives.

It's vexing... a time like this is precisely when the entire kingdom's efforts must be devoted to rebuilding.

What on earth happened that day two years ago?

The state his majesty is in... what is it?

Surely they are a madman's...

Those eyes...

But this kingdom-wide desolation is a fact.

To say this crisis will decide all our fates is no exaggeration.

Alas...
IF IT WAS...

A DARKNESS THAT COVERS THE WORLD...

THEN...

THAT HAWK OF LIGHT...

I SUPPOSE THAT WAS A REVELATION...
...even this search that seems meaningless...

It may be absurd, but when you think of it such...

Excelency!!

--No.

To me, at least, what a hawk symbolizes...

For all the people of Midland...

...there's but one and no other!!

SO YOU'VE COME, ADJUTANT. AS YOU SEE, WE MUST ALSO BLOCKADE THIS TOWN AT ONCE...

*FX. DDAUMP* 

*DDAUMP*

It is another story for the head of our kingdom.

However, that is...

You jest, excellency. I have had my fill of seeing people drop from the plague.

You don't look well, but it's no surprise under these circumstances.
*FX: CLOP CLOP CLOP CLOP

AYE! TELL ME THE DETAILS ALONG THE WAY. RIGHT, WE MUST RE-GROUP.

*FX: CHEE CHEE KEE KEE CHEE CHEE

*FX: SKITTER SKITTER SKITTER

*FX: ZOMMMM

*FX: ZOMMMM

*FX: ZOMMMM

*FX: ZMMM
CONVICTION/ARC
BIRTH CEREMONY CHAPTER
REVELATIONS, PART 2
SUMMON HIS KIN.

PLEASE HURRY.

COURT DOCTOR.

*FX: MURMUR

*FX: OHHH

*FX: GCHAK

HER MAJESTY QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S...

THE BIRTH OF A NEW QUEEN.

IT IS UPON US.

AT LONG LAST...
WHAT ABOUT FORMER HOME MINISTER FOSS?

FINANCIAL MINISTER YLIGO.

HOME MINISTER GUSTAV.

THEN THOSE IN CANDIDACY ARE...

WE MUST CONSIDER OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE...

PERHAPS EVEN ROYAL HOUSEHOLD PROTOCOL CHIEF CARIEL.

BUT CONSIDER HER DISPOSITION. THERE IS HARDLY A CHANCE SHE WILL NOT APPOINT A REGENT.

EVERY RUMOR SAYS THAT THIS MEDIATOR OF THE FORMER CONSERVATIVES HAS SEEMINGLY BECOME DISPOSSESSED OF HIS POWERS.

IN THE FEW YEARS SINCE THE QUEEN'S ASSASSINATION INCIDENT, THE HONORABLE FOSS HAS NOT FALLEN UNDER ANY FACTION, AS IF HE HAS FEIGNED RETIREMENT.

OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY RESOLUTELY...

GOOD GRIEF... THEY MOVE KEENLY EVEN BEFORE THE SUN FINISHES SETTING.

WHAT SITUATION OUR KINGDOM IS NOW PLACED IN?!

DON'T THEY UNDERSTAND...

WHEN YOU CAN GO SEVERAL LEAGUES FROM WINDHAM AND THE DEAD LIE IN PILES-- NO, EVEN HERE BELOW THIS CASTLE.

THEY'RE ALL SO BUSY WITH SELF-PRESERVATION SCHEMES...
THE HAWK WILL COME AGAIN.

EVERYONE IN WINDHAM...

--NO, perhaps everyone in MIDLAND saw the WONDROUS DREAM OF THE HAWK OF LIGHT.

...THE HAWK.

THAT WONDROUS DREAM...
THE WILL OF GOD.

NOT THAT ONE SUCH AS I COULD TRULY COMPREHEND...

THEY SAID IT WAS A GOOD Omen SIGNIFYING THE APPEARANCE OF ONE WHO WILL SAVE PEOPLE FROM EVERY CALAMITY NOW WIELDING ITS MENACE.

...AFTER THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO TALK OF THE DREAM.

BUT HIS MAJESTY'S FALLING ILL HAPPENED...

BUT THAT THE DREAM HAPPENED IS THE ONLY UNINSTITAKABLE REALITY.

IT'S A STRANGE THOUGHT--

LORD OWEN.

WHAT IS THE MATTER?

PLEASE, OPEN THIS DOOR. YOUR HIGHNESS.

A MIRACLE HAS SURELY OCCURRED.
EVEN BEFORE THAT, SHE HAD NOT SET ONE FOOT OUTSIDE THE PALACE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.

YOUR HIGHNESS.

YOU SEE, THE PRINCESS HAS CONFINED HERSELF IN HER CHAMBERS FOR A WHOLE FIVE DAYS NOW...

SHE WILL ONLY ALLOW ONE PERSON IN, HER FAVORITE HANDMAID... WE ARE PRESENTLY TRYING TO PERSUADE HER, BUT...

HIGHNESS...

*RET RET*
A SINGLE TIMID GIRL IS MADE TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF EVERYTHING.

REPORTING, YOUR HIGHNESS. A CARRIAGE HAS BEEN PREPARED. PLEASE HURRY AND COME TO THE INNER SANCTUARY.

IT'S CRUEL.

PARDON ME.

HIS MAJESTY IS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH.

HE MUMBLES YOUR HIGHNESS' NAME IN...

...OR ANYTHING.

SUCH A MAN ISN'T MY FATHER...

NO!

HIGHNESS!

DON'T TORMENT ME ANYMORE.

HURRY UP AND GET IT OVER WITH...

DON'T KEEP THIS TORTURE GOING FOREVER.
Almost as if I'm freezing.

It's cold...

Magnificent castle walls.

But I cannot defend against the cold this way.

Someone light a fire...

Stone walls merely augment the cold.

The King on his throne.
ON HIS THRONE.

THE KING ON HIS THRONE.

WITH THESE MEN AND THESE WALLS, MY CASTLE SHALL NOT WAVER.

VALENT SOLDIERS. OHH...

I SHALL FREEZE TO DEATH AT THIS RATE...

...BUT FOR NOW, A FIRE.
FIRE! SOMEONE BRING FIRE!!
ENOUGH ALREADY!! I HAVE NO NEED OF SOLDIERS NOW!!

'POFF
BRING WARMTH...

WHAT I WISH FOR... WARMTH...

OH, THAT'S IT!

MOVE ASIDE !!!!

MOVE !!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!

WHAT ... ?!

MY DESIRED IS --

THE KING ON HIS THRONE.
HAWK... A HAWK...?

WHOA...??

STOP THAT!!

GET AWAY!!

...PRE-CIOUS...

THAT'S MY...

SHE'S THE KING'S LIFE...!!

G-GET AWAYY.

"FX: WOOOSH"

ゴオオオオオオ

・・・!!

オオオオオオ

オオオオオオ

オオオオオオ

オオオオオオ
Perhaps I sought after...

...after you...

A solitary man.

From this prison called a throne, to madness...

Perhaps it is so...

...as a rescuer to liberate me--

On his throne.

The king on his throne.

*Rumble*

*Flash*
FATHER...!!
SAVE ME, LORD GRIFFITH!!

AFTER SO LONG...

HIS MAJESTY HAS PASSED...

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO WINDHAM NOW...? AND TO MIDLAND...

THE MOUNTAINS ARE MOVING.

GONNNG... HIGHNESS...

GONNNG... NO!!

GONNNG...
...A BAND OF THREE HUNDRED MERCENARIES....!!

JUST ONE MAN AGAINST...

NO WAY...!!

U-U-U-
UNBE-
LEV-
ABLE!!

B-BLAME THE BOSS!!
HE WAS SO HUNG UP ON GETTING FAMOUS....!!

I KNEW WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THIS GUY ON!!

I... I KNEW IT!!

THE LEGEND WAS REAL!

HE'S THE GOD OF THE BATTLEFIELD...

TH-THE IMMORTAL...ZO--

*FX. GSHANG*
...scoured battlefields, sitting on piles of corpses that I've made?

JUST HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I...
I GUESS SEEKING AMONG MAN REALLY IS USELESS.

WANDERING FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS.

BUT SOMEHOW THEY'RE NO GOOD...

I'VE STOOD BEFORE THE APOSTLES SO MANY TIMES...

THEY CANNOT SATISFY ME.

THERE REALLY ARE NONE BUT YOU, WRETCH.

HE MUST NOW BE SOMEWHERE, CREEPING ABOUT IN THE NIGHT.

THE RUMORS SAY HE'S CUT DOWN SEVERAL APOSTLES...

THE BRANDED SWORDSMAN.

OH, YES. THAT MAN.
FX: CAWW CAWW CAWW

FX: FLAP FLAP

...MY DESIRED IS JUST ONE THING...

IN ANY EVENT...
WHAT'S THIS...?! 

WHY...!

THE DUSK BETWEEN DREAM AND CONSCIOUSNESS.

WHAT YOU SOUGHT WERE NOT WORDS.

YOU MEAN--

YOU'RE --

IMMORTAL.

THIS IS WITHIN YOUR DOZING.

WHY ?!
One thing.

I seek only...

The strong!!

*FX: Grunhh*

Definitely.

Only the absolute strongest!!!
THE DESIRED...

...IT WILL COME.

...WILL COME.

WHEN THE SKY FALLS AT THE HOLY GROUND WHERE BLIND SHEEP GATHER AND ERECT A PILLAR OF FIRE...
No good, this place's the same.

There's no food or anything left.

Every house's empty.

And the church is filled with dead bodies.

Thanks to the plague, every place looks the same.

You ain't slept in two days now.

Why don'tcha go rest on that hill?

The ancients used that place to enshrine elves, so the inbreds shouldn't like it enough to come near, prob'ly.

Now I can't even get decent sleep in the daytime.

Inside there's swarmin' with specters.
WHAT THE...?
STOP!!
STOP!!
STOP...
*EX. HAHH HAHH*

*EX. SPRLLL*

**DID THE INCUBI DO THAT?**
YOU DID IT.
JUST NOW.

D...

GER

DAN...
...YOU TRYIN' TO PULL?!

WHAT'RE...

HURRY...

DAN... GER...

HURRY...

BLIND SHEEP...

GATHER AND...

...AT THE HOLY GROUND...

...WHEN THE SKY FALLS...

...A PILLAR OF FIRE...

ERECT...

QUICKLY...

HURRY...
CONVICTION ARC
BIRTH CEREMONY CHAPTER
CRACKS IN THE BLADE
*FX: HAHHHH

SNOW...

GENTLY FROM THE SKY

SNOW FALLS

*FX: SPIN SPIN SPIN

SPIRIT OF WINTER
*FX: CLANNING CLANNING

RICK-ERRRT!

GOOD WORK, THANKS.

WELCOME HOME, ERICA.
ERICA COULDN'T STAND SEEING IT, SO SHE TOOK HER ALONG TO GO PICK FRUIT...

CASCA HAD LIVED IN THE CAVE FOR SO LONG SHE WAS PRETTY SICK OF IT... LATELY SHE'D GOTTEN WHERE SHE WOULDN'T EVEN EAT MUCH.

AND YET HERE YOU ARE...

YOU KNOW FULL WELL HOW CASCA IS NOW!!

I LOOKED FOR HER UNTIL THE SUN WENT DOWN, BUT I COULDN'T FIND HER...

BEFORE I KNEW IT, SHE WAS GONE.

WHY AREN'T YOU OUT LOOKING FOR HER?!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

STUPID STUPID STUPIIIIIIIID!!

STUPID GUTS!!
GODO...

I HEAR YOU CAN'T THROW A ROCK WITHOUT HITTING A DEAD BODY DOWN THERE.

SO WHAT'S SO WEIRD ABOUT SEEING A HALF-DEAD OLD MAN OR TWO?

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I'D HAVE A QUIET, PEACEFUL DEATH...

THE NOISY IDIOT HAD TO COME BACK.

SO...

LEMMIE SEE THE SWORD AND HAND.

ENOUGH OF THE LONG-Winded SPEECH.

WELL, YOU GET TO BE HERE AT MY DEATH. I GUESS GOD'S BEIN' NICE TO YOU.

PLAUGE?

NOthin' SO SPECIAL AS ALL THAT. IT'S JUST OLD AGE, OLD AGE...
HEH, YOUR FACE LOOKS EVEN MORE...

...TENSE NOW THAN IT DID BEFORE.

...YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO STAND UP, HUH?

...I GUESS I HAD SOME CLUE WHAT IT COULD'VE BEEN.

...BUT WORSE, YOU DO IT FOR RETALIATION, FOR REVENGE.

SO YOU'RE WASHIN' WAR AGAINST THINGS LIKE THAT. I CAN'T EVEN SAY FOR SURE IF THAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

FROM WAR...

FROM HATRED.

SO IF YOU DIDN'T HATE THAT MUCH...

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS THAT HAPPENED TO YOU ALL.

...WHEN RICKERT ROLLED IN HERE WITH THE TWO OF YOU BLUSTED UP...

TWO YEARS AGO...
...WHAT?

THE MORE YOU SHARPEN, THE MORE IT RUSTS, SO YOU SHARPEN IT AGAIN.

IN THE END ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A PILE OF RUST AND SCRAPES.

EVEN MORE THAN A BLOOD-RUSTED SWORD, VENGEANCE IS SOMETHIN'. YOU SOAK AND SHARPEN IN BLOOD.

YOU SINK THE BLADE CALLED YOUR HEART DEEP INTO BLOOD IN ORDER TO FIX THE NICKS CALLED SORROW.

IT'S THE RAMBLINGS OF A DYING OLD MAN.

JUST LISTEN.

IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WHO CAN'T LOOK SORROW IN THE EYE WITHOUT WAVERRIN' RUN OFF TO.

THE THING ABOUT HATRED...

...RUNNIN' ALL THROUGH IT.

DAMN CRACKS CALLED FEAR...

YOU TELLIN' ME TO BECOME A BLACK-SMITH OR SOME-THIN'?

AH, C'MON. IT AIN'T LIKE YOU TO LECTURE.

YOU'VE GOT SOME HUGE NICKS IN YOUR HEART...

I WOULDN'T BLAME YOU IF YOU WANTED TO.
YOU DON'T KNOW...

...YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE WITH NOTHING LEFT BEHIND TO REGRET-- YOU DON'T GET IT...!!

IN THIS COZY PLACE...

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...

...UNDERSTANDS...

...THAT.

NO ONE...

NO HUMAN...
YET YOU COULDN'T BEAR TO IMMERSE YOURSELF TOGETHER IN SORROW WITH THEM...

YOU WERE RIGHT BESIDE THOSE IRREPLACEABLE THINGS...

...YOU RAN AWAY SO THAT YOUR OWN MALICE COULD BURN INSIDE YOU.

AM I WRONG?

SO INSTEAD...
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLACE TALKING ABOUT REVENGE FOR YOUR FRIENDS...

...WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WENT OFF, ABANDONING THAT GIRL HERE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLACE CRITICIZING RICKERT, WHO YOU LEFT HERE?

...AND RELY ON FIGHTING.

YOU GO AND CHOOSE YOURSELF...

AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT...

ONE WITH COUNTLESS NICKS, SOAKED IN BLOOD AND RUSTING.

YOU'RE LIKE A DRAWN SWORD ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

A SWORD THAT'S BEGIN TO BREAK.

...WITH A LETHAL CRACK IN IT.
I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THAT.

Y-YEAH, REALLY. THANKS TO YOU, BOTH GLITS AND CASCA NARROWLY ESCAPED DYING THEN.

WHAT A SHocker!

STILL THOUGH, I'M AMAZED. THAT THE BOY FROM BACK THEN WOULD TURN OUT TO BE GLITS' FRIEND.

OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT?

ALL LIES WITHIN THE CAUSAL CURRENT --

*FX: SNUG SNUG

I GUESS IT'S LIKE WE'RE ALL TIED TOGETHER BY A RED THREAD OF DESTINY.

*FX: HA HA HA HA

NO, NOT RED. ME TOO, ME TOO!

THEN LATER ON I'LL STAKE MY LIFE ON TREATIN' you!!

BY THE WAY, YOU BEEN CURED'A YOUR FEAR'A ELVES YET?

AH... NO... NOT YET...
I know that you're anxious...

But rest well tonight.

They look pretty abused, so we'll get them to where you can head out soon.

There's a lot to talk about, but for now we'll hurry and repair your sword and hand.

No evil spirit's gonna be able to sneak in here easily! Yeah!

No, it's definitely somewhere elves lived!

It's the same as it was.
I'm the one who's sorry...

Hey, what am I, a baby-sitter?

You're being two years here.

Good night. See ya again, if fate chooses...

Okay, then.
NO, CHANCES ARE...

...THERE'S NO WAY I CAN SLEEP IN THE DARK WITHOUT A SWORD.

IT'S NO USE. EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I'M SAFE...

...I WON'T BE ABLE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT THE REST OF MY LIFE...

“POK”
I CAN'T RUN...!!

I DIDN'T RUN AWAY...!!

...SEARED INTO MY RIGHT EYE...!!

NOT FROM THE LAST THING...
BUT I CAN NEVER ATONE FOR THIS DARK FLAME!!!

...FEAR...MALICE. I DON'T KNOW... POSSIBLY IT'S BOTH...

...AND MY ENEMIES WITH IT.

...ALL I CAN DO IS BURN MYSELF...

*HAH* *HAH*

*SHH*

*SHH*

IF I CAN'T ATONE, IF I CAN'T ESCAPE...
Y'mean former Raiders captain.

I don't know if it was for some dream or what, but he left on his own.

I won't recognize it.

He wasn't here when things were at their worst for us. Think I can call someone like that a comrade?

You've already separated yourself.

There's no obligation for you to go that far.

...If you don't...

She...

Take her with you. Even if you have to drag her this time.
...I haven't had that right.

Ever since then...

Long ago...

...That's right.

This war myself.

I started...

But at least it's not like anyone forced me to do it.

But...

It's definitely different from what I had wished for then.

I declared this war myself.
THE CAMPFIRE FROM THOSE DAYS...

...STILL BURNS IN MY CHEST.
...ALL THAT BARELY KEPT ME FROM BEING CONSUMED BY THE BLACK FLAME...?!}

...THAT'S RIGHT.

WASN'T THIS LAST FEEBLE FLAME LEFT TO ME...
DID I GO AND DO IT AGAIN...?

WHAT'VE I DONE?

AGAIN.

DID I--

............... 

AGAIN!!

BEFORE I EVEN NOTICED IT AGAIN?!

YOU MEAN...

DID I LOSE SOMETHING...

WITHOUT EVEN REALIZING I'D THROWN IT FROM THE PALM OF MY HAND....!!

...WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING!!
...GATHER AND
...BLIND SHEEP
...A PILLAR OF FIRE
...EREECT

...AT THE HOLY GROUND

NOT YET...
NO...

...BLOWN OUT...
THE FLAME
IT'S NOT YET...

NOT YET!!

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!

THIS TIME I SWEAR...!!!
I'll never...

...lose her again.
CONVICTION ARC
BIRTH CEREMONY CHAPTER
TO HOLY GROUND, PART 1
H-Hi, weren't you asleep?

But at that rate I woulda been eaten.

Well, I was.

You sure do work hard.

Can I help with anything? I don't look it, but I'm handy.

No... I'm fine.

Your shoulders're stiff? My elf dust does wonders.

Oh... no thanks...

Huh? For what?

But Puck. I really am grateful for you.
But he looked furious and got worried about Casca.

He came back, though—and of course some small things had changed...

The way I used to know him...

So Guts is still Guts.

I'm sure...

...you had more than a little to do with that...

...and I think...

The reason Guts can still laugh...

You said it with such a straight face!

Aww, now I'm all embarrassed!

...is because you're together with him.
But I happened to pass by right when she'd been burned out of her house and was cryin', so on a whim I brought her home and raised her. It weren't like me at all...

...feel pretty, well, human.

She's an orphan who lost her family in the war. Not that that's rare these days...

It let me, who'd known nothin' but steel since the day I was born...

But then...

*FX: BOFF*
...IT'S SURE TO BE REBORN.

...IF YOU RETURN IT TO THE FIRE...

...EVEN IF IT RUSTS AND DULLS...

...HAS GOOD STEEL THAT NEVER RUSTS LEFT OVER IN THE WICK.

TELL THIS TO THAT FOOL.

"DON'T TURN OUT LIKE ME."
Yeah. It's lighter than it looks, and feels good.

How's your new armor? The master had it ready for when you came back.

Even if you don't put 'em all together at once, you'll get the hang of 'em soon enough.

I've also got these new weapons I invented that use gunpowder, and a new model repeating bowgun.
THEN BE SURE TO COME BACK HERE.

TAKE CARE... OF CASCA.

OKAY... I'M OFF.

GLITS.

GODO.

I'LL COUNT ON YOU AGAIN ONCE I COME BACK.

YOU'RE A GOOD BLACKSMITH.

WORTHLESS FOOL.

DADDY, YOU'VE GOT TO GET SOME REST!

SO YOU SAY!
FX: WSHH

THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH THAT FOOL.

OFF HE GOES WITHOUT EVEN A LOOK BACK.

GEEZ.

WELL, IT'S A LOT BETTER THAN GETTIN' ALL GLOOMY.

BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN GOT TIME TO STOP AND ACKNOWLEDGE IT.

THIS MIGHT BE OUR FINAL PARTING.

IT REALLY IS BEYOND OUR CONTROL...

HE TURNS AND STARTS RUNNING TOWARDS SOMETHING ONE WAY, WITHOUT NOTICING SOME OTHER THING, AND NICKS HIMSELF.

LIVING AND DYING.

BEYOND OUR CONTROL.
IT SEEMS IT'S NOT JUST PLAGUE AND FAMINE THAT PRODUCED THIS HUGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES.

THIS FEELS LIKE THE MIGRATION OF NATIONS.

AT PRESENT, IT'S UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE PROMINENT NOBLES IN THE ROYAL CITY, WINDHAM, OR EVEN THE NEXT QUEEN, PRINCESS CHARLOTTE, SEEMINGLY DEBILITATED BY GRIEF OVER THE KING'S DEATH, ARE ALIVE OR DEAD.

ACCORDING TO INFORMATION DELIVERED BY THE HOLY SEE A BIT AGO, SEVERAL DAYS PRIOR A LARGE KUSHAN MILITARY HOST FROM THE FAR EAST CROSSED THE MOUNTAIN RANGE AND INVADED MIDLAND.

IS THIS THE TIME FOR SUCH A CAREFREE INQUISITION?

ARE NOT THE KUSHAN AN OLD ENEMY OF OUR RELIGION?

BUT...IF THAT IS THE CASE, WOULD NOT IT MEAN BIG TROUBLE? THE ALBION MONASTERY WE ARE HEADED TOWARDS IS UNDER DIRECT CONTROL OF THE HOLY SEE, BUT NEVERTHELESS IT IS NEAR THE MIDLAND BORDER.

IMPLI-DENCE!

THAT GOES TO SHOW... MISERY LOVES COMPANY.

UNTIL THEN WE MAY SIMPLY REMAIN SILENT AND UNDERTAKE THE MISSION GIVEN TO US.

IF ANYTHING ABOUT THE SITUATION CHANGES, SUBSEQUENT REPORTS SHOULD ARRIVE FROM THE HOLY SEE.
Lady Farnese is in a worse mood than usual.

What's more, you suffered casualties attempting to capture but one man.

They are a symbol of the authority, so to speak...of the Holy See, God's earthly mouthpiece.

The holy iron chain knights are different from ordinary heathen forces.

You don't seem to understand.

Sometimes there can be losses in battle...

They are just an ornamentation...

Mind your tongue!

What insolence!

Based on your father's good word, we were somehow able to settle the matter amicably...but there were no small number who stated that they were through giving donations to the Holy See.

Fortunately, you yourself are of the world-renowned Vandimon family, which boasts of great fortunes.

Nearly all sons of high nobles from several countries!

I wonder if you realize what type of martyrs they were who died on your last mission.
WHAT'S MORE, THEY SAY THAT ONCE YOU'RE IN HIS GRASP, A SINGLE MOLE CAN MAKE YOU A WITCH OR HERETIC.

HE'S THE MOST FAMOUS AND FEARED INQUISITOR THE WORLD OVER.

THOSE NUMBERS ARE JUST LIKE WAR.

NO LESS THAN FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PUT TO DEATH UNDER HIS JUDGEMENT, AND MANY TIMES THAT NUMBER HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES DURING TORTURE.

THE WHEEL, IMPALING, STAKE BURNING, WATER TORTURE ...

...I'M SURE HE'S THE TARGET OF LOTS OF SPITE AND MALICE.

FOR THAT ALONE ...
HAGYAHHH!

*FX: SHHHNK

*FX: SHHHNK

*FX: KCHK

WH... WHAT'S THAT?!

*FX: HYNN

*FX: VULCH!

GYAH!

UGAH!
FATHER MOZGUS!!
ARE YOU UNINJURED?!
MISS FARNES.

I WAS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO ALLOW AN ATTACK!!

NO, NO. YOU NEED NOT BE SO HUMBLE. PLEASE, RAISE YOUR HEADS.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS A BLESSING THAT NONE FROM THE HOLY SEE BECAME CASUALTIES. THAT IS GOD'S DIVINE PROTECTION.

...BUT FATHER MOZGUS, WHO ARE THESE?

OUR HOLY FATHER IS MAGNIMOUS TOWARDS HIS OWN.

YOU ARE MOST GRACIOUS.

WE SHALL ENDEAVOR EARNESTLY FROM HERE ON.

AHH.
WHAT WAS FAIR ABOUT IT?! ALL WE DID WAS SUGGEST THAT WE TEMPORARILY SUSPEND OUR OFFERINGS TO THE CHURCH SINCE OUR FOOD STORES HAD HIT ROCK BOTTOM FROM THE FAMINE!!

AND YOU ARBITRARILY-- IT'S DIVINE PUNISHMENT!! GOD'S WRATH... IS UPON YOU!!

YOU DARE SPEAK OF PUNISHMENT?!
YOU MISGUIDED FOOL!!!

OF ALL THINGS, AN APOSTATE WHO REBELS AGAINST...

...A PRIEST SPEAKS OF DIVINE PUNISHMENT?!
ATROCIOUS

N-NEXT.

!!!

TWECH TWECH

UWAH!

FX: THUD

H-HELP ME...!!

FX: WHUMP
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL GET INVOLVED TOO!

W-WAIT! SHE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, HE JUST...

ARE YOU IN LEAGUE WITH HIM TOO?!

SHUT UP!!

GIRL!!

HELP...
When I think I'm going to the same place they are, it makes me want to head back to my own plague-ridden village.

Still, this is so gruesome it's making me sick.
COME ON! THIS WAY!
STARING AT IT WILL JUST MAKE YOU ILL.

AHH

HOW LONG'RE YOU GONNA STAND THERE?

COME ON!
DANGER...
?

*FX: BATHUMP BATHUMP

*FX: YAM YAM YAM

*FX: HNNNN HNNNN

HOLD ON.

NO!!

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO HER...?!
Try to catch it, see how wondrous!

It dances lightly down.

It falls down like fluff.

Shwap.

UWO NK!!

Rickerrrrt!!

Yes!

I caught something neat!

A chestnut-head goblin...

Blowing lots of bubbles, spirit of winter...

*flinch
YO.

YOU GOT A BIT TALLER, DIDN'T YOU?
Sorry, Rickert.

Where in the world and why...?!

No word from you in two years...!!

Guts, you're alive!!

Before that...

Is she...

Is Casca safe?
WHAT’S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN, RICKERT?!!
WHERE THE HELL...?!  

WHY NOT?!  SINCE WHEN...?  

IT'S MY FAULT!!  

I DID IT!!  

IT HAPPENED ABOUT A MONTH AGO...  

IT'S BECAUSE I WENT AND TOOK HER OUTSIDE...!!
AND THEN YOU WENT OFF SOMEWHERE FOR TWO YEARS!!

YOU WENT AND LEFT HER HERE...!!

WHAT ABOUT WHAT YOU DID?!!

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!!

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW RICKERT FEELS!!

HE WENT TO LOOK FOR HER AS MUCH AS HE COULD!!

HE DID GO LOOK FOR HER!! AGAIN AND AGAIN THIS PAST MONTH!!

RICKERT...

...CAME BACK TO US.

BUT...
...BACK HOME TO US.

HE CAME...

*FX: GREE

...........

*FX: SNFF

THERE'S A REASON I CAN'T LEAVE.

I CAN'T EVEN SLEEP.

TOO MUCH NOISE.
YOU CAN'T STAY SANE FOREVER, FIGHTIN' THAT WAY.

YOU REALLY MAKE A BLACKSMITH CRY, Y'KNOW THAT?

THIS'S GONNA TAKE MORE THAN JUST A LITTLE ELBOW GREASE.

BLADE NICKS, BLOOD RUST, BENDS... SHOULDN'T BE THIS WAY EVEN AFTER TEN YEARS.

I'M GUESSIN' YOU SWING AND SHOOT TOO OFTEN TO EAT OR SLEEP.
YOU WENT ALONE.

...AND WENT AWAY BY YOURSELF.

YOU ABANDONED THOSE IRREPLACEABLE THINGS.

ON THAT DAY TWO YEARS AGO, IN YOUR HOPELESS SUFFERING, YOU LEFT THE LAST IRREPLACEABLE THINGS YOU HAD...
CONVICTION ARC
BIRTH CEREMONY CHAPTER
A FEEBLE FLAME
WHAT'RE THESE...?

THEY'RE GRAVES.

WE DID THIS ALL THE TIME IN THE FIELD, DIDN'T WE?

AND IT'S NOT LIKE EVERYBODY'S UNDERNEATH HERE, BUT MAYBE IT'S SOME CONSOLATION...

IT'S NOWHERE NEAR THE RIGHT NUMBER, BUT I MADE THEM AS PRACTICE.

IN THE TIME I'VE GONE ON HATING, RICKERT'S DONE THIS...

TWO YEARS... PLenty OF TIME FOR A PERSON TO CHANGE.

HE FOUND A NEW WAY TO LIVE...

...THROUGH THAT VIGOROUS STRENGTH OF HIS.

FUNERALS TO ACCEPT THE DEATH OF HIS COMRADES.
"...you ran away so that your own malice could burn within you."

"so instead..."

"you were right beside those irreplaceable things..."

"yet you couldn't bear to immerse yourself together in sorrow with them."

"you went alone."
It will still thirst.
Forever.
Always.
All alone.
The blood must flow.
So keep killing.

...in a state like that?!

What can I say now when I left her...

Maybe what Godo said is right, though.

I've got no right talking about revenge for my comrades when I abandoned Casca...
...YOUR OWN BATTLES, RIGHT?

YOU FIGHT...

YOU HAVE TO GO.

EVEN IF IT'S ALONE...

YOU HAVE TO GO.
WHAT'S BURNING ME AIN'T JUST THIS BLACK FLAME.

BUT STILL...
IT'S THANKS TO YOU THAT SHE HAD SO MUCH FUN TODAY.

SINCE MASTER GODO FELL ILL... AND THEN SINCE CASCA WENT MISSING, ERICA HASN'T LAUGHED ONCE.

WHEN GUTS RUSHED OUT OF HERE, I HAD THIS OMINOUSLY BAD FEELING.

OF COURSE, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER HE WOULD SURVIVE AND I'D GET TO SEE HIM AGAIN...

...WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER HE'D NO LONGER BE THE GUTS I KNEW...

BUT...

I ALSO...

'FX. NYAHAA

NOT AT ALL.

WELL, KIDS ARE 'SPECIALY GOOD AT ENJOYIN' THEMSELVES.

THEN THERE'S GUTS.

EHH?
I’ve got a built-in drill and cutter.

Alright! I’ll power up and help, too!

Every damn time he shows up, he drags some other weird thing in with him.

S-stop, that’s absurd!! Let me do--

Dressed like that... what’re you doing?!

There’s stuff I’ve got to do, while I’ve still got the strength to stand.

Rickert.

Erica’s your responsibility.
DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW OF ANYWHERE CALLED HOLY GROUND AROUND HERE?

WELL, ABOUT THAT...

BY THE WAY, GUTS--YOU SAY YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK FOR CASCA, BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW?

SEARCHING RANDOMLY COULD TAKE FOREVER...

OR ELSE, HOW TO SAY IT--SOME PLACE WHERE SHEEP... SHEPHERDS ARE CROWDED TOGETHER...?

WAS THERE SOMEPLACE LIKE THAT?

HMMMM, GATHERING OF SHEPHERDS...

HOLY GROUND...

HOLY GROUND

I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT'S REFERRED TO AS THE TOWER OF CONVICTION.

MAYBE THAT'S THE PLACE?

COME TO THINK OF IT, IF YOU FOLLOW THE HIGH ROAD NORTHEAST FOR ABOUT THREE DAYS, THERE'S AN OLD MONASTERY CALLED ST. ALBION TEMPLE.

FROM WHAT I HEARD, HERETICS ARE MIXED IN WITH THE REFUGEES, AND AN INQUISITOR WILL BE DISPATCHED BY THE HOLY SEE BEFORE LONG.

AND I DON'T KNOW ABOUT SHEPHERDS, BUT I HEAR RIGHT NOW THAT PLACE IS OVERFLOWING WITH REFUGEES FROM THE PLAGUE.

THE TOWER OF CONVICTION...
There is a basis.

In her state I don't think she can make it that far away... and first of all there's no basis...

I think the chances of Casca being there are slim.

There's a basis.

...it's grasping at straws...

...but for now I have to believe it.

What kinda woman's this Casca?

For him to make this face...

But a lot's happened...

S'be-yond me...
ONE MONTH PREVIOUS

FX: CLOP CLOP CLOP CLOP
...Perhaps there is some margin for consideration.

...And finery is all well and good...

While it is established that the leader of the Holy Iron Chain Knights is traditionally a maiden...

Having read the written report regarding that matter, the Miracle Recognition Department has need for you to investigate something.

It isn't as if the Black Swordsman has been substantially confirmed to be the same thing as the Hawk of Darkness described in the Revelations.

...We've no choice but to suspend it.

In any case, the proposal of the task of arresting the Black Swordsman was yours personally. With consequences of this nature...

You are dismissed.

We will declare a new mission to you at a later time.

Reality seen through one's own eyes is better than the confines of conjecture.

Miracle becoming reality is what first bestows power.

And controlling the recognition of that power is our obligation.

Truly, we must hurry to establish a discourse regarding this "Hawk of Light" dream, of which we have recently received reports from each land of our religion.

At any rate, this is no time for the Black Swordsman.

Many even within the Holy See itself have reported experiencing it.
MIRACLES...

I'VE SEEN NO SUCH THING...

MIRACLES, THE HAWK OF LIGHT...

D-DON'T THINK OF IT!!

IT'S NOTHING!!

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

THERE'S NO WAY THAT WAS REALITY...!!
RIGHT NOW JUST FOCUS ON THE DUTY OF GUARDING THE INQUISITOR!

DON'T THINK OF IT! IT'S AN ILLUSION, IT DIDN'T EXIST!

...COULDN'T HAVE...

JUST SO LONG AS I CARRY OUT MY FAITH THAT PROMISES PEACE IN MY HEART...

EVEN IF GOD DOES NOT EXPRESS ANY MIRACLES THROUGH ME...

FROM GOD.

YOU'RE TOO FAR...

I...

THAT'S NOT TRUE...

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE TO GUARD HIM? IT WOULD BE DISPRITING EVEN IF IT NOT LADY FARNES...

...BUT STILL, A NEW MISSION.

LOOKS LIKE IT IS NOT JUST RELEASE FROM THAT DUTY.
CLEAR THE WAY!

NO MISTAKIN' IT, THAT'S THE INQUISITOR'S WAGON.

A HUGE WHITE CARRIAGE ARMORED WITH STEEL PLATE.

DAMN IT! WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?!

THAT'S ONE HUGE CARRIAGE.

DON'T GO SHOOTIN' YOUR MOUTH OFF!

SHHH!

INQUI...!! THAT'S...?!

SEE THOSE FOUR RED WHEELS HOISTED ABOVE THE CARRIAGE?

IT AIN'T JUST ANY INQUISITOR EITHER.

THAT ....!!

B-BLOODY SCRIPTURE MOZGUS!!

THAT'S THE TOKEN OF "BLOODY SCRIPTURE MOZGUS."

THAT ....!!
DIE, MOZGUS!!

MY DAUGHTER!!

MY SON....!!

THIS IS FOR MY MURDERED FAMILY!!

YOU'LL PAY!!!
THE REFUGEES BAR US FROM APPROACHING!!

THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH OUR FLANK!!

*FX: OHHHHHH

*FX: THUD THUMP

*FX: BTAM

GET OUT HERE!!

MOZ-GUS!!
*FX: DUSSH

*FX: SHNK

WHAT THE--?! WHAT WHA--?!

OH.

OH.
WH- WHAT'RE THESE GUYS?!

*FX: SHINK

*FX: BLCH BLCH

WHO...?!

*FX: GREE

WHAT A NOISY AFFAIR.

GRACIOUS.
THE LORD DOTH REVERE SILENCE.
...they are very useful to me in this time of crisis.

With wills of iron long cultivated by strict discipline and duty...

These are my devoted torturers.

Now, line the party of attackers up here.

DAMMIT!!

LEMMEE GO!!

...seem most reliable.

I LIKE HIS STYLE.

Dubious...

So, I would hear the reason you attacked me.

REVENGE!!

You accused our village of being a refuge for heretics, and while the men were working away from home...

But I was following God’s doctrine, in that I passed judgement fairly.

It is certainly a misfortune that such a thing happened.

...you burned all the remaining villagers to death!! Women and children--no one was left!!!
NONE OF YOU HAVE ANY PLACE PRESUMING TO BE GOD'S MOUTHPIECE!!

NO ONE ON EARTH BESIDES WE OF THE HOLY SEE!!

*SILENCE

...DOST THOU FEEL IS APPROPRIATE FOR THESE?

WHAT MANNER OF ACTION...

AYE!

...USUALLY WARRANT BURNING, OR BREAKING ON THE WHEEL.

THOSE WHO WOULD PLOT TO MURDER A PRIEST...

MISS FARNESE.
AND WE ARE Pressed FOR Time AND CANNOT WASTE IT ON INVOLVEMENT WITH THEM...

MOREOVER, THEY ARE FLAGRANT DELICTORS. THEY HAVE NO DEFENSE.

CATEGORICALLY ANSWERED! JUST WHAT I WOULD EXPECT FROM THE GLORIOUS LEADER OF THE HOLY IRON CHAIN KNIGHTS. SPLENDID INSIGHT.

I AM GRAT-FUL....

BY MY AUTHORITY I PASS SUMMARY JUDGEMENT UPON THEM HERE.

ALL OF THE ACCUSED ARE CONDEMNED TO DEATH BY THE WHEEL.

THE SENTENCE.

FORGIVE ME!!

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!!

GO TO HELL!!

N-NO! H-HAVE MERCY....!!

L-LOAD OF CRAP!!
AH...