

# Honor Bracelet

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*"That must be the most beautiful smile he has ever seen, Urthus thought."*

"Close the Gate, and find them!" One of the guardians yelled. The whole country was lit by fire held by the anxious soldiers tonight. The King held tight to the balcony fence of his huge brick castle. He stared towards the mountain in the east with locked brows. His crown shined the orange color of anger against the thick clouds in the sky. The beautiful princess had been captured by The Knight.

Outside the wall of the country was the forest, stretching endlessly into the darkness. A blurred black shadow flashed through the border of the woods. While the country was left in a chaos, nothing could be heard in the forest. Only the heavy breath of the black horse of The Knight, and the silent weeping of the princess.

There was no moon, only the wind howling against the crowded people. People were too worried about the war to feel the coldness of this dreadful night, for they were worried about their kind and beautiful princess. At the same time, they were afraid of the brutal and vicious Knight, who started the war. Among the people stood Urthus, a young man who was born in a blacksmiths family. He had healthy dark skin and strong arms, just like his father. He was woken by a sense of coldness in the air earlier. He stared into the royal castle, like he always did. Two years before he met a girl in yellow clothes climbing a tree near the river. After a long-time silence, they talked with each

other happily. He was convinced to teach her the skills of climbing. They competed; she kicked dirt on his face; they fought with sticks as swords. He was impressed by her bright smile and the vigor of youth inside her healthy body. At the end of the day, she was taken away by soldiers, till then did he realize that the boyish beautiful girl was the princess.

His heart had been lost since then.

He watched all these happening. His love, the Princess, was captured. How could she be captured so easily. She was full of power. The questioning just flashed by, for he felt his eyes burning, blood running. He had a strong feeling coming from somewhere deep in his heart: anger and worry. And, of course, this was the perfect chance to get closer again to his princess, maybe a wedding that he had always dreamed of in the golden hall.

Along with the crowd shouting, and the fire sticks in the dark night, he felt excitement and honor which had never come to his heart in the past 24 years. He packed his best clothes and set off to the tallest building in the country - the royal tower.

He was going to march for his loved one, as a warrior.

In front of a strangely colored window stood a man, the Knight. He wore a set of black armor black. A giant black bear skin was on his back, showing off the glorious power hidden in this strong body. He looked out of this ancient church he held, towards

the lit-up castle, with his hands holding tighter on his sword. Then he turned around and stepped down to the quiet hall. His face was covered in the glittered candle light. Terrible scars crawled from his chin to his left eye. These eyes seemed dull, but deep with sorrow and schemes. He was a little bit limp yet steady in every step he made. And his steps were so heavy that the floor crumbled beneath his huge body.

The Knight looked down upon his left arm – there used to be something setting on the armor.

"He will send it to me." The Knight murmured. Then he walked out of the door.

The searching squad consisted of professional searchers, soldiers, followed by groups of passionate citizens. However, they came across barrier as soon as they stepped into the forest. They met strong and fully-prepared forces of the Knight. Small, big fights had been fought. Not many people were able to stand through the cruel battles. Some people retreated and most died just on this first day. Only 20 strong and steady souls made it to the lake in the middle the forest. They were still half way to the Knight's church.

They had fought all day long so they decided to camp near the lake and rested for the night. Urthus sat near the rock and looked into the sky. No fear or retreat in his eyes, but only the light of peace water. Everything seemed so quiet tonight. The moon showed her face upon the greenish lake. He couldn't fall asleep thinking that princess was caught. As a result, Urthus walked into the dark woods alone, and found a bunch of branches and stones. He made a little tower and prayed to it. He wished that the princess would hear his prayers.

Suddenly, he saw someone leaning on a tree silently.

A royal soldier.

With the head down, the soldier's left hand held a sword. Urthus couldn't tell his face by the dim moonlight. Holding tight to his sword, he got close to him very cautiously step by step.

He was dead. Urthus lowered his sword. Suddenly, he was attracted by a mysterious golden bracelet under the dead soldier. It looked so beautiful that he couldn't look away. He took it and then wore it on his arm carelessly.

The princess was locked in the room. Flowers surrounded her white

dress. Her face showed no fear and no pity. She was a smart and strong woman. She saw fire in the forest this morning. She held her hands, and whispered lightly to the wind. Her eyes were full of worry, but also hope. Even thinking about him was joyful. She smiled silently and took a small bottle of green liquid out of her dress.

When Urthus returned, the camp was in a huge mess. They were already under the attack of the Knight's force!

Fire burned out; tents were torn apart with scary chops. Blood split everywhere under the moonlight, showing a weird dark ruby color. The burnt cloth floated on the water; weapons sank into the river. Then Urthus noticed that there were dead fish in the greenish lake. The water was poisoned! It was a dreadful fight, but the soldiers fought with honor.

Although Urthus was shocked by the brutal forces, he calmed down quickly and decided to keep on the journey. He knew that the princess was protecting him.

He understood that the place was surrounded by the Knight's force. So Urthus found some useful things from the ruin and climbed up

a tree. The forest was old. Thick and strong, the trees were sticking into the sky. He started to move on the trees from branches to branches.

The Knight took off his helmet. His leg hurt more than ever before.

There was no time for him to wait. He had to take back what the King had taken from him, as soon as possible! He smashed the cups on the ground. Thinking of the princess he had captured, he smiled. He put on his helmet, took his sword and stepped into the wood.

It was a long night. But Urthus managed to avoid everyone in the forest. The next morning, tired Urthus finally saw the church bell from the trees. The sun shined strangely bright today - no clouds in the sky, and no one was around the church. He sighed and climbed to the back of the old church and sneakily slid down. But the moment he stepped on the grass land, he was surrounded by the warriors.

It was a trap. The knight knew he was coming.

The knight was standing in the shadow of the church door. He said, "Hand it over."

Urthus was so frightened but confused, "What should I hand over? Just kill me quick, don't let the princess see me dying!"

"You took something belongs to me yesterday," said the knights "You are already impressive to pass through the forest. You deserve me granting you the honorable death." The Knight pointed at him.

"Why does he keep looking at my arm?" Urthus thought, "The bracelet? It must be the bracelet I found under a well-dressed royal soldier yesterday!"

"It doesn't belong to you! It belongs to a dead royal soldier!"

"That's mine. I lost it when I killed him. That stupid betrayer tried to rescue the princess. How dare he

betrayed me! No one can betray me! Now, give my bracelet to me."

Urthus knew whatever he did, his ending was only death. "But why he wants this bracelet so much? He even saves my life for this long." He cleared his mind and put on his gloves - he was ready to die, in blood and honor.

"I'm impressed by your courage!" Suddenly, a white flash appeared from the top of the bell tower. It was too bright in the sky to see it clearly. From the burning sun light, the flash floated in the air, just like a feather of an angel. Beautiful gesture, stretching in a swan-like way, the woman landed in front of Urthus. The familiar scent came to his mouth and nose. It was the princess! The Knight and Urthus were both shocked. Then all the soldiers suddenly fell down.

"I'm not that stupid," smiled the Princess, "I put drugs in your

### **"How dare you!" the Knight yelled and rushed towards the Princess.**

drinking water last night. And the only reason I'm here is to find evidence of your rebellion. You think I could be kidnapped this easily?" She giggled and looked towards Urthus's face.

"How dare you!" the Knight yelled and rushed towards the Princess. He waved his sword so hard that one could even hear the wind scratching the blade.

"Hit his leg!" said princess, "Use the bracelet to defense!"

The princess jumped up to the left. Urthus raised his left arm against the blade, but his bracelet took all the energy and shined a light yellow flame. The sword was broken! "What a power is buried in this bracelet! But the soldier leader had no chance to use it properly!" Then

Urthus squatted and hit the knight's limp leg with the yellow flame. The Knight drew back with pain. His face now filled with furious. "That's my bracelet, you don't deserve it!"

"No, only the honored warrior deserves this bracelet!"

The princess picked up the soldier's sword and jumped towards the right eye of the Knight. The knight took down the attack with his right arm. "You maggots cannot hurt me!" the Knights bled a little bit, but he seemed excited with the blood! Then the Knight took off his cloak and rushed to the princess. He moved much faster now, with his eyes shining reddish lights. The princess avoided his attack, but he rushed too fast so his hands stabbed into the soldier's chest on the ground. He pulled out his hand and licked the blood! He was a monster!

Urthus took the dagger from his back and threw it towards the Knight. The Knight grabbed the knife in the blade and laughed, "you can't kill me with this little toy."

"No, it will." Urthus jumped high upon the Knight and fell with the sunlight echoing his bracelet's yellow flame.

"Nooo..." the Knight felt so heavy in his leg that he couldn't avoid this hit. ....

It was all finished. God bless my princess, Urthus thought.

Lying down exhaustedly, he saw his dear princess walking towards him against the sun.

Step by step, she treaded on the ground. She treaded on the sun. She treaded on his heart.

She smiled, as brightly as the sun.

That must be the most beautiful smile he has ever seen, Urthus thought.



Photograph from Yang Ni, Zurich, Switzerland, Jul., 2017