

# TACTICIAN

**Tactics Anthem Chronicles**

by

Thomas C Lim

SMASHWORDS EDITION

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Tactician:

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The constant barking of dogs at the back of the alley roused Gareth from his slumber. The tactician-in-training was not particularly happy. He shook his head vigorously, trying to clear away remnants from his dreamscape where he stood battling a ferocious fire-spouting red-dragon alongside his hero, Sir Gawain of Camelot. There, just moments ago in his dreamland – he was the legendary Sir Gareth. Here, he was a *nobody* – at least for now. True – yesterday he had passed the initial trials of his tactician course, and technically, he could shed his ‘in-training’ title and pass-off as a Junior Tactician, but in this trade – one needs to attain the rank of a Section Tactician and be gainfully employed before the School

would present him the official Tactician certificate necessary to joining the Tactician's Guild. That – Gareth sighed, is at least eighteen months away.

It was mid-morning – and he was due to be at the training grounds by noon. Grumbling, he performed the needed ablutions and putting on the simple garments of a Tactician of Torpann – Gareth got up and double-bolted the wooden doors of his sparsely furnished quarter – one of the two rooms of Rufus' Tavern, and hurried down the creaky stairway and left the Tavern, one hand clasped against the sword hilt on his side. One can never be too careful in the city of Torpann, where thugs, muggers from all of Erets abound.

Today is an important day for Gareth – or so he had thought, as he made his way to the training grounds, greeting the many familiar faces along the way. Gareth was to meet with some of his cohort who 'graduated' with him yesterday and head to the Fair – the Recruitment Fair. "Have you heard?" Rufus the chubby tavern keeper had told him excitedly last evening. "A fair to recruit and train aspiring tacticians, such as yourself, has been set up near the outskirts of Torpann City. Make your way there tomorrow lest you miss this opportunity! I will have more news for you tomorrow, but I sure know where the ten...". The rest of the words were lost on the weary tactician climbing up the stairs... Right. Thought Gareth. I cannot afford to miss this chance, and he doubled the pace of his steps as he strode purposefully towards the training grounds barely fifty away.

Fifty feet away from you.

Here you are, waiting impatiently for Gareth at the grounds with Flubus, Sunil and Heather. The five of you had agreed that banding together would improve the chances of getting hired as it seems the Fair Organizers this year are looking for teams rather than individuals. Not that it mattered. Everyone knows that at the end, the 'team' is just a way of selecting the best performer, and weeding out the losers eventually. But as the adage goes, there is strength in numbers, and better to be part of this team than join up with shady 'tacticians' whom you have never met. Chances are, the odds of being back-stabbed by 'em is roughly the same as the enemy.

"You are late." Heather muttered matter-of-factly. Heather Durill, arguably the finest female tactician from this graduation class, was also the most voluptuous and sensuous girl in this part of town. With mesmerizing emerald green eyes and soft luscious lips, as Flubus have so 'oft dryly said, "Heather is stunning to behold. But her best asset? Her winning tactic? Heaving those bosom of hers and charming the enemy to drop his guard. Before long, he would drop to the ground, and never knew what hit him."

“I couldn’t agree more.” Sunil smacked, as though reading your thoughts. But now, the business at hand is to make it to the Fair by noon. Already, a crowd is forming in the distance... Today, together with your four fellow tacticians, you will find a match – a prospective paymaster. That is a fine thought to hold on to, as the five of you set foot on the Fairgrounds. The stench of a hundred men crowding at the entrance of Fair greeted you. The stale air threatened to choke you, but curiosity got the better of you as the five of you stared at the large signage blocking the way to the Fair.

***‘Only the worthy need apply. To be deemed worthy, defeat the pugnacious bunch of renegade tacticians, all ten of them, and come back with evidence of your win.’***

You cursed beneath your breath. What was that about? Ten renegade tacticians to defeat? Where will you find them? Judging by the shouts from the crowd – none is the wiser. “Now what?” Sunil stormed. Heather turned to Flubus, who shrugged and then to Gareth. One could not miss the sneaky smile on his face. “Lads, spirits up – I know someone who can tell us all about these ten renegades. Follow me.”

Before long, you find yourself face-to-face with Rufus, the tavern keeper with a front-tooth missing, and eyes glued to Heather’s chest. “Out with it!” Gareth bellowed. “Tell us about the ten renegades you were going to tell me last evening.” The five of you had backtracked from the Fair to where Gareth’s ‘abode’.

“What’s it in for me?” Rufus chuckled, and placing one outstretched hand on the table. Gareth and Flubus each set beside the tavern keeper, while Sunil, Heather and you were dumbfounded - staring at the cheeky man from across the table.

Gareth gave Rufus a tight slap on his back that sent his face slamming onto his still opened palm. “I’ll tell you what you will lose if you keep mum. Two more missing teeth! On the other hand, should we prove successful with this bunch of ten renegades...” Gareth lowered his voice to a whisper. “15 Tactics Coins for you.”

DEAL.

Rufus began speaking all at once, exclaiming and gesturing with great anticipation. “Ten young tacticians have recently formed a gang called the ‘TENBADSIRS’. Each of them claims to have attained mastery over one of the aspects of tactical combat. Teach those uppity bullies a thing or two.” From what the tavern keeper is saying, you gather a lot of which he was babbling were plain exaggerations. *Basic spells that can negate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle tactics?* Bah. Yet, you observed that Heather and Sunil were listening intently, nodding from time to time and mentally taking notes. Gareth and Flubus on the other hand, were cursory at best, having little interest beyond wanting to know where to find this bunch of imposters.

The problem at hand was clear to you. Yet no one has mentioned it so far. How in Erets are you going to get the required minions to do battle with these ten tacticians? Rufus was still going on about the earth shattering, fire explosive tactics of the enemy, gibberish nonsense when an idea struck you. This is Torpann! The place of brutes and thugs. Most are cutpurses and small-time villains, but the more ‘serious’ ones have organized themselves into Guilds and such – and you could probably hire the dozen minions you require. Best of all, you recalled that five minion sections have recently returned from northern Bretunia after successfully completing a quest for your trainer. You could seek their help for this mission. Your mind began racing. Ten tacticians to defeat... There are five of you. Each can hunt down two each, and your team could complete the task in a couple of days. This could actually work!

An hour later – the five of you stood before your trainer, Master Tactician Skeentip, and who better than have Heather present your request... Heather coaxed and purred, and teasingly wheedled her way around Skeentip, whom you can see is fast being persuaded to support your cause. “I see you all are determined to get your commissioning, yes?”. the Master Tactician intoned. All of you nodded in unison. “I could do this for you”, but on one condition.” Skeentip eyed each of you fixedly. You noticed your compatriots stiffened. You have some idea what was coming... “Register and defeat Captain Leofric in the upcoming Tactician Exam within the fortnight ~ and graduate to become a full-fledged Section Tactician by joining our ranks in the Guild.”

You guessed right. The Torpann Guild of Tacticians has lost much of its stature in recent times, owing to the multiple defeats of its tacticians in the battles to keep the Morganic troops at bay. Last Spring, the Guild Master had agreed to align itself to King Constantine in the defense of Torpann against the Morganic army. Constantine had dispatched 100 sections to defend the city. Over the last six months, more than half of this army had been decimated, along with sixty section tacticians from the guild. The guild is currently under-staffed and qualified Section Tacticians have been difficult to recruit. Your cohort is one of those that have been hastily put together 3 months ago in an attempt by the guild to bring up the numbers. But everyone knows that it takes at least two years to pass the Section Tactician examinations. To register for the exams under six months? That is a sure-fail scenario.

Gareth was about to protest when Master Tactician Skeentip raised a finger to hush him. “I know what you are thinking”, he began. “But at a time like this, I have struck a deal with Captain Leofric.” Startled – Sunil muttered. “You don’t mean...”. *Hush*. Flubus grabbed Sunil by the hand. “Let Master Skeentip continue.” Skeentip paced the room

discriminately, his favorite teak office situated at the centre of the training grounds, glancing about nervously. “Captain Leofric is a royal examiner from Camelot – and we all know the standards for a Section Tactician is *beyond* you at this juncture of your training..” He paused, letting the words sink in. It certainly achieved the desired effect. “Nonetheless – we cannot defend Torpann without Section Tacticians leading the minion sections into battle. So, here’s the arrangement – A week ago, Captain Leofric has agreed to give provisional Section Tactician-ship to any tacticians with field experience and can defeat him once in five rounds, instead of the required three. When we heard that the rascals from the North-Western Mercenary-Guild have descended upon Torpann a few days back to taunt us with their renegade TENBADSIRS tactics, we convinced the owners of the Fair to post this challenge. The rest I think you can easily piece together. So...” Gareth interrupted Skeentip. “Master - what I really want to know is how many teams have you sent out against the renegades, and how have they fared?”

An uneasy silence ensued. “So far, no team has managed to win more than four battles, but...” Flubus pronounced, “That’s ok Sir, we will do it.” All eyes turned to Flubus. “I mean – what choice do we have?” he challenged. You concurred. Flubus was right. The issue at hand is really about how quickly we can assemble the minion sections and determining who gets to battle whom. “It’s settled then.” Master Tactician Skeentip swiftly wrapped up the meeting, and having made the necessary arrangements for us to meet our allotted minion sections – declared that we should set off first thing tomorrow, and report back in the evening.

The luck of the draw determined who the opponents were. And as it turns out, you get to duel the ‘Alter’ and the ‘Disallow’ tacticians. Coincidentally, both of them have been sighted at the north-eastern outskirts of Torpann. Hence, if providence favored you, these two may yet yield to you before evening tomorrow. But first, you need to get acquainted with your minions, and to build rapport before the battle tomorrow. That set, you made your way to the Adventurer’s Lodge expectantly, and as you were talking towards the lodge, Heather stopped you mid-track.

“Mind if I tag along?” Heather inquired slippery. Having known her for three months, you have come to realize when Heather presents a request, it is a demand statement. “Master Skeentip told me my section will not be ready till day-after, so I was wondering if I could accompany you to see how your duels go. Maybe pick up a tip or two from you?” Heather smiled affably. You really did not any excuse to say no to Heather, nor the heart to

do so. In any case, it probably is useful for her to observe the duel, as the whole team needs to win in order for the quest to be deemed successful.

Before long, Heather and you stepped into the Adventurer's Lodge, and you scanned the room excitedly for Darius, Level One Master Warrior. "Greetings Tactician!" a voice came from behind you. "I have been expecting you." You spun around and beheld an impressive character before you. Before long, Darius was introducing the entire section to you – the 4 different classes and three ranks that make up the classical tactics section. As the leader of this section, Darius explained the strengths and weaknesses of his minions and what, in his experience, are tactics that would go down well with this section.

That done – you headed back to your dwelling, and began formulating a battle strategy for tomorrow. The night seemed to pass by far slowly than normal, but when morning came – strangely, the interest in the TENBADSIRS suddenly waned in Torpann. A bigger news had reached Torpann from Camelot. Prince Uriel had left Castle Camelot unaccompanied, and is now declared missing. Knights have been sent to all the cities, seeking tacticians to look out for the Crown Prince. You could feel the tension in the air, and wondered if by some twist of fate, you might be asked to undertake a quest later that might cross path with the Prince himself. However, the matter on hand is still fighting the duels today, and you must not be distracted. As if on cue, Heather appeared before you. "Heard the news?" she queried, "I think it will be wonderful if we get to seek out the Prince! But looks like you are all set for your duel – and oh? Darius and his minions are here already – so what are we waiting for, let's go!"

Darius informed you that Flubus, Sunil and Gareth had also set off a while ago with their respective sections. Word has gone out that the renegades will be met with a new team of challengers today, and they have readied themselves accordingly. Making a mental note of the scouts, rangers and warriors in your minion section, and their respective ranks, from novices to adepts, you psyched yourself and your newly assembled minions, you make your way towards the outskirts of Torpann – towards your first duel, Juriele, Renegade Tactician of the 'Alter' tactics, with your side-kick Heather, in tow.

It did not take you too long to locate Juriele once you hit the North-Eastern outlands of Torpann. You noticed that Juriele looked relaxed, and was laughing heartily with his minion section a hundred feet away. You slowed your footsteps, and heightened your precautionary instincts. Heather, sensing your change in mental framework, ceased flirting with a particular handsome Red-hooded Ranger Adept, and adopted a well-developed defensive stance.

Heather sized up the situation at hand. She smiled. It has often been rumored that Heather is a walk-over, never serious with her training and more of a vixen than a spellcaster. She knew better. Heather had purposefully built-up this external façade to disarm her opponents. Her deliberate attempts had been successful, and only those who were close to her knew exactly how deadly she can be. “Vixen she is not,” as Gareth had correctly observed. “She’s more like an adder, striking when you least expect it.”

Juriele looked no older than thirty years of age. Stout, and dark-haired, the renegade tactician spotted thick eyebrows and a fairly bushy beard. Looks can be deceiving, Heather knew. His minions were in fact experienced fighters, and Juriele himself is on the verge of acquiring second circle powers. It will be a tough battle, concluded Juriele, and she communicated that thought to you with a facial expression you had seen only occasionally – one of dread, but yet of hope. By now, Heather saw that both Juriele and you have readied your minions and the first round will soon commence. It is interesting to note that the challenge posed by the TENBADSIRS is really a taunt – one engineered by Morgana’s mercenaries to demoralize the Arthurian camp. These tacticians and their sections are battle-hardened fighters, yet they have deliberately limited their powers by constraining what tactics they would use. Juriele for instance, have chosen only to use only ‘Alter’-typed tactics. Within the First Circle tactics, each ‘type’ represents only a limited selection of possible spells. Heather mentally calculated that this means no more than twenty possible spells. Whereas she knew that you have a spellbook selection from more than a hundred spells. Which ones would you use today for this battle?

It was an excellent battle to behold. Heather was glad she came. She saw you had the Initiative most of time, and was able to send out a number of Star deployments, making it difficult for Juriele to respond. Yes, Juriele was able to alter the strength of solo minions you deployed from time to time, and he even managed to change the environmental battlefield effectively. But the sheer numbers from your star deployments over-ran the opponent by the seventh turn, and Darius delivered the victory blow on the eleventh turn by defeating a Skilled Scout of the Red Cloak with a brilliant move. Heather also noticed you had relied mainly on offensive ‘Issue’ and ‘Bury’ type spells for this duel, which complemented the star deployment strategy well.

“Well done, young tactician” – Juriele began. This is only the third duel I have lost since setting foot in Torpann, and I must have had so far, a dozen battles? You would not have stood a chance if I had increased my spell selection.” The renegade said this almost matter-of-factly, with a tinge of condescending attitude in his tone. Yet something tells you

that he was probably telling the truth. “Since this was to be a purely ‘Alter’ type battle, I thought it was quite interesting you countered the tactics fairly well. Instead of using ‘Negate’ and ‘Disallow’ type tactics against my ‘Alter’ spells as most tacticians would have deployed, you chose to go on the offensive. That’s a good strategy, and I commend you for that.” Juriele reached into his cloak and handed you a smooth Blue Gem. “There, show this to Master Skeentip, the emblem of your victory. Now, be gone lad.”

Heather noted how Juriele had so nonchalantly ‘dismissed’ you and gotten back to his minions, who though defeated, did not portray a defeatist attitude. That impressed her – and she mentally made a note that mercenaries could be a useful asset for the future, in battles that would truly matter.” Heather saw you had thanked Juriele for the duel, as one tactician to another – and Darius had taken over command of the minion section, mending the slight wounds sustained during the battle – nothing serious. The minion section would be ready for battle after noon today, and Heather was delighted that there would be more action in a few hours time. And she was right.

Darius barked instructions to the minion section as we made our way eastwards towards our next battle-spot. Heather mused that it took only one hour after the quick meal-break around noon to track down Cidrus, renegade tactician of the ‘Negate’ tactics. Unlike Juriele, Cidrus made no small talk, did not spare a minute for us to form up, and took care to retain Initiative as much as he could. Tall, bald, and clean shaven, Cidrus was intense and methodically in his attack. Heather saw you were on the defensive most of the time. This was because any spell you had thrown at Cidrus were quickly negated, so it was clear from the onset that to win this battle, you had to rely on the minions much more than in the previous battle. As Cidrus often held the battle initiative, you had little chance to deploy the Star deployments as before as well. Turns out, luck was on your side after the tenth turn. Just when Heather thought it was all over for you, Cidrus switched to using Duo after ‘negating’ the star deployments. That proved fatal to Cidrus. Since he had already deployed his Adepts and stronger minions previously, he was left with a number of novices. Although Darius had been successful in a previous turn, he cannot be re-deployed from the Victory ‘pile’. Fortunately, you still have several master rangers and master scouts in your ranks. Exchanging blow for blow, and throwing out the spell-based approach, you fought the Initiative back and took out Cidrus eventually by deploying a Duo of Master Scouts in the final turn. Heather nodded in appreciation. She could see Cidrus fuming in anger. After all, he still had his Red Master Warrior in his rank. But he could not be deployed as the Battle Mode remained ‘Duo’ from turn ten onwards... Excellent luck, Heather concluded. She saw

that you were overcome with fatigue, and still in a daze. She took it upon herself to saunter towards Cidrus to demand the Victory Insignia, and received for her efforts – a Red Gem. She walked over, offered you a hand and kissing you on the forehead, she mumbled something about being she being the Lady Luck for you and handed you the emblem.

“Well done – but it is my turn tomorrow. I too, will need to win before the team is considered victorious.” Heather reminded. “Will you accompany me to my battles?” she offered. Just then Darius marched over, and suggested we head back to Torpann before dark falls, as the section is not really in a state to encounter the ‘random’ encounters that frequently occurred when dusk came. Given the injuries some of the minions have sustained from these two duels, it was essential to get the wounds treated back at the Adventurer’s Lodge. Heather regained her joyful disposition almost immediately. Going back to her interest, the red-cloaked Scout – she was chatty all the way back to camp – which cheered the minions, and playfully – she offered to recruit any of Darius minions the next time she needed a section for her quests. You grumbled. Heather always beats you to it – gaining access to people’s hearts.

Night came and went. You had a concussive sleep with fleeting images from the duels of the day. Master Skeentip had congratulated you heartily on your victories. Flubus, Gareth, Sunil have amongst them won four battles today and in two days, Heather would have gone through her duels and if all goes well, the five of you would become the first team to defeat the ‘TENBADSIRS’ – a great start to your Tactician careers!

Word had gone around that your team, now nicknamed ‘Skeen-Tacts’ stood a chance at being *THE* team to be make it first into the Fair proper, and some townsfolk had chosen to follow your team-mates and witnessing the remaining duels. With six battles won within a day, the remaining four would be closely watched – and Heather would be helming two battles today. You had no doubt in your mind Heather would emerge victorious. Her seemingly casual approach belies her fierce strategies, and as you correctly predicted, both her opponents were totally taken aback at her intensity of her never-ending attacks. Her stamina was commendable, and you thought she would best you in a long-drawn duel. Heather summarily dispatched and disarmed her opponents with her well-balanced spell-deck, specially designed against single tactic-type opponents. She dueled well, and received a Yellow Gem and a Green Gem, which she kept carefully in her front pouch, gleaming with satisfaction.

The sound of mugs clanging and rowdy cheers filled the air at Errand’s Inn, the de-facto place to stay for sojourners in Torpann. Not a day goes by where Torpann does not find

a cause for celebrations, and the bar in Errand's Inn opens only after dusk – and the whole town gathers to get drunk. What's more, since the war started, this is one of the few times where the town roundly rallied behind a cause. The Torpann Guild of Tacticians came out rather well. This week, three teams managed to defeat the 'TENBADSIRS' renegades (many more failed of course), and the ten of them have since returned to report back to one of the Dragonlords. No doubt Queen Morgana now has a good idea as to the abilities of the Torpann tacticians, and therefore what it takes to over-run this stubborn bastion called Torpann. For Gareth, all that mattered was that he is now one-step closer to being offered full membership in the Guild. Of the five, Gareth's motivation had been the most obvious and consistent. Sunil, ale in hand – could almost hear Gareth's thoughts this very moment. Gareth the knightly tactician, sporting a moustache, no beard, blue eyes, short light brown hair and always in chain armor during battles using Trap and Relic-based tactics, sees himself in time to become a Royal Tactician, commanding the knights of Camelot in tactics-battles. For Sunil, however – this journey is a much simpler undertaking. Sunil – the sharp nose, tall and dark fighter known to his peers as Sunil the Dark (some wonder if it is a derogatory term or a description of his disposition), is one of the best magic-based tactician in the cohort. Sunil will lend his tactics to the highest bidder, Arthurian or otherwise.

Somewhere in this fairly large Inn, some drunken patron is looking to start a brawl. Some are flirting openly with the 'wenches of Torpann'. Flubus and Heather are sitting somewhere, seemingly engaged in some deep conversation that only they can understand. Flubus, the 'Spiritist' of the five – a connoisseur of Spirit-based tactics, sporting long brown-red hair with extraordinary large ears and mouth had set his eyes to join the ranks of the mercenaries supporting the Arthurian camp. That leaves you unaccounted for. You had originally planned on being a generalist tactician using the largest range of Colorless-based tactics. Since the last battle however, your resolve has somewhat been shaken. It now seems to you that with the impending war, and your inclination to defend Torpann against the Morganic onslaught – you had better delve deeper and specialize in second circle Light spells eventually. Your reverie was broken with the half-drunk Master Skeentip raising his mug once again to toast your team's victory. This will be a long night, you thought. And glancing around the room, looking at how your friends are soaking in the celebratory atmosphere – you grinned, toasted Skeentip in return and gulped down your tenth mug of Errand's famous ale.

A week later – with the events of the TENBADSIRS behind you, and with your newly found fame, all five had received employment with various parties. You are now very

much on your own, serving the interests of your employer, a middle-age merchant – who hired you primarily for his own protection. He keeps two sections with him at any one time as he travels around Bretunia, and two days ago, Varcous your employer arrived in Torpann with three sections, and two tacticians. The reason is obvious. Today, from out of the blue, Varcous suddenly summoned you to aid a childhood friend of his, Deufus. Apparently, his farms have come under attack from some strange creatures, least of all extremely ferocious vermins. Your first instinct was why would you be needed to cull rats? But as Varcous had explained “I really can’t see how the presence of vermins can lead to your crops disappearing... it’s not like the rats ate the wheat or barley right? It just doesn’t add up. Can you get to the bottom of this so my friend can get his crops harvested and sold? Seems like this phenomenon is not solely confined to his fields, as within ten mile radius, many other farmers are experiencing this hazard also.”

You figured your newly-formed section could do with some ‘training’, in case the ‘enemy’ is not rats but bandits – and not just any roguish grouping, but the work of some highly organized villains. In any case, this is ‘paid work’, and shrugging off the dumbness of the assignment, you make your way to Deufus’ farms located some twenty mile south of Torpann. Along the way, you mentally replayed what Master Skeentip told you this morning. Heather, Flubus and Sunil have also been sent out by their respective employers on various missions. What was interesting however was what Gareth has been asked to undertake. The Fair master had asked Gareth to ready himself for a high-profile mission, which will take place tomorrow. “The leader of the ten renegades is coming down personally to duel any tactician who defeated his renegades.” exclaimed Skeentip. “Param the Joustler, as he is called, has laid down the rules of combat. Gareth, you will choose a list of ten tactics and Param will use the same exact spells for the duel. Each of you will then choose two First Circle Spells which need not be revealed to each other...” Skeentip smirked. “and if Param does not defeat you by the twelfth turn, he loses.”

You regret that you will miss this duel. You would have loved to stay behind and cheered Gareth on, but work being what it is – your time is now not yours to command, and so instead here you are hunting down rats. It could not get any worse. Or so you thought. The journey down south proved to be uneventful. There were a couple of weak attempts to make a quick raid on your party, but you fended off them squarely and quickly enough. Threading along the dusty path southwards, you felt a slight tinge of sadness at having to bid goodbye to Darius and his section. It was your first ‘field outing’ – and Darius had helped you achieve victory. But that is now behind you, and you need to quickly get used to your

new section, under Red Master Warrior, Shamos. You turned your head back and looked at the well-tanned fighter some ten paces behind you, leading the section in silence. There was little small talk, if any, and as with a journey of this nature, in due time, Deufus' farms came within view.

Deufus the farmer, as he is called around here, welcomed you and your section heartily. "Thank you for coming! My friend Varcous is most kind to render me this assistance..." Deufus then went on to give an account of the recent happenings around the farm. Apparently ferocious rats have been making the rounds in the farm, frightening even the dogs. The rats attacked the dogs in groups and usually overrun the poor canine creatures and as quickly as they appear, they vanish without a trace. Any unfortunate dog or human being bitten by these pests become poison and if left untreated, tend to die within two days! You made a quick tour of the farm and listened to Deufus' ramblings as he continued late into the evening, and how he had recently bought two dozen bloodhounds to guard the fields. Finally, having heard all the useful information he could offer – you graciously thanked him for hosting your section and decided to retire for the day.

Deufus settled you in the main building at the guest room, while the rest of your section is housed about a hundred feet away in some adjourning huts. Exhausted by the day's travel, you soon fell asleep in the sparsely furnished guest room, just as the flame from the candlestick was extinguished. You see Flubus, Sunil and Heather undertaking various quests, from chasing off grieving wraiths to battling aggressive mercenaries from Talmissra and Tarntora. Gareth is getting ready for his major 'joust' battle, and you wanted to step forward to wish him a successful duel. Just as you extend your hand, suddenly Gareth let out an unearthly howl! You broke out in a sweat and tried to focus on your environment, not making much headway since the whole place is pitched-black. Then you heard it again, the howl was distinct this time – it came from the farm, and you guessed it was a bloodhound being attacked. Grabbing your staff beside your bed, you scrambled down the stairs and rushed out into the night, a cold breeze greeting you and sharpening your senses. Your eyes have also grown accustomed to the darkness, and some ten feet away – you witness something that made your skin crawl... Dozens of large black rats were attacking a bloodhound, the sheer weight of their combined mass pinning the dog down. Struggling, the trained dog tried to shake off the rats, clawing and biting where it could. But there were just too many of them, and even in the dark, you thought you saw chunks of flesh being torn from the dog's body, and the first bones protruding from its sides. You staggered a little, but composed yourself quickly enough. Summoning the first spell that came to mind, you cast

‘Minor Rift’ at the hound and rats, sealing as many of the rats and rooting them to the spot. The next spell you cast roasted the rats and hound where they were. Thermal Flare saw to it that flesh and bones disintegrated into fine dust. You needed to contain the poison and although you could not save the dog, you saw to it that the bloodhound did not die in vain.

The commotion had attracted the attention of Deufus, his wife and the rest of the household. Your section minions had also assembled on the field. Little did you imagine that this night would see a showdown between you and the migrants from Durn. From out of nowhere, a section of Durn warriors had gathered and the leader had stepped forward to meet you. Durn warriors traditionally carried a sword and shield. But this Durn section was a bunch of magic-users, with animal control spells to boot.

“I am Ginerawa of the Durns - why do you bother us?” the leader of the pack growled. That statement caught you off-guard. Deufus rushed forward and yelled, “What the heck do you mean? This is *my* property!” the farmer gestured and shrieked, but the Durns chose to ignore him. “Dragonlord Breune had bestowed the lands within a ten-mile radius to us in return for our services” Ginerawa began, eyeing you suspiciously. “In our goodness, we have decided not to drive out the people, like *you* “ pointing to Deufus, “from this land. So we have merely taken the crops and the animals, and left you alone. I see now we have no choice, but to forcefully take over the land. So..;”

“Ginerawa, “ I interrupted. “Perhaps you are mistaken. You are far away from home, and this land is not Breune or Morgana to give, this is Bretunia – and it belongs to the people of Bretunia under the crown of Constantine.” The Durns began talking all at once, seemingly astonished to hear these words. Ginerawa raised his hand, motioning for the Durns to keep silent. “If what you say is true, young tactician,” the Durn leader mocked, “then we, the Durns have been defrauded. We will take the case up with Dragonlord Breune. But in the meantime, we still claim ownership of this land – unless” Ginerawa motioned a dare at you “you can defeat me tonight in a tactics battle.”

From behind you, Deufus dashed forward and shouted. “You are on! Insolent brat – my friends, who have been sent from Varcous, will see to it that you pack your bags and leave my farms this very night!” Hearing this, it occurred to you that should have been a conversation for you - not Deufus. You do not know what to make of it – should you be enraged or gratified that farmer Deufus has committed you to this duel.

“Very well, Ginerawa – I will duel you.” You bellowed. “If I win, you leave tomorrow to seek Breune out. If I lose, I will leave tonight and be back again in a week’s time to challenge you again. Is that agreeable?” The Durn leader laughed. “If you defeat me

young lad, I will ask Breune for a piece of land he actually owns. So bring it on – now!” Your section has already formed up, as have the Durns. Taking some paces backwards, you and Ginerawa moved behind the respective sections, and with a shout, Ginerawa launched the first volley. “Thousand Daggers!” Every nerve within you is now incredibly energized, and raising your staff, you belt out “Frost Element” – and the rain of what seemed to be a blanket of air daggers froze midway, and dropped harmlessly on the field. Ginerawa seemed surprised that you managed to negate his opening tactic rather effortlessly, and decided to end the tactics phase, and enter the combat phase instead. “Star Trio – deploy!” the Durn leader commanded. Five warriors rushed forward, three skilled scouts and two adept rangers – only to be stopped by your star deployment “Dragon Nova” – brilliantly bringing the first tactics turn to a close.

The Durn battle is certainly the most challenging duel you have experienced so far. Unlike the battle with the renegade tacticians earlier, this is a full-blown Tactics duel. Ginerawa masterfully wielded a vast range of tactics, each offensive spell threatening to crush your section. You parried and dodge, and soon began to be accustomed to the rhythm of this duel. Looking at Ginerawa, you noticed while he is a strong offensive player, his defense is sometimes wide-open. Moreover, while the spells thrown at you are powerful in isolation, they do not ‘add-up’. Gradually, by around the fifteenth turn, you slowly began to turn the tide and gain the upper hand. Using a few calculated (and lucky) moves, you forced the Initiative by deploying your Solo Red Master Warrior, Shamos. With the initiative on hand, you knew victory was within sight. In quick succession, you set up two Duo deployments, followed by the winning “Dragon Star” move, abruptly ending the hard fought duel and claiming the win.

You heaved and wiped the beads of sweat off your forehead. Judging by the look on Ginerawa’s face, he was stunned. Transfixed on the spot, he just stood there – and the Durn section looked equally surprised at how the duel concluded. Moments later, having composed himself somewhat, Ginerawa muttered, “I lost.” Turning his back on you, the Durn leader motioned for his section to pick up (the pieces), and without saying a word, the Durns left the field – vanishing into the night silently, just like how they came...

Word of your victory had reached Torpann by noon the next day. Master Skeentip was congratulating Varcous heartily, Heather observed, the hidden message being how well his apprentices have turned out. Skeentip had asked Heather to accompany him to meet Varcous. The reason was simple. Heather’s employer had been assassinated two nights ago, and chaos had erupted within the household – with the inevitable consequence for her fateful

dismissal. It was not often when one can see Heather so downcast and gloomy, but today, she was. Nevertheless, Master Skeentip had hatched a plan, and you had reluctantly agreed to play your part. “Better *that* than being ‘dispossessed’” – the term used for a tactician without employment, Heather had thought. And she is probably right. Twenty miles south, Deufus was still keeping you as a prized trophy in his premises, throwing a ‘party’ for fellow farmers within the ten-mile radius from his farms to boast how he had received help from his friend Varcous and in so doing, gotten rid of the mysterious vermins and crop stealers. Many of his fellow farmers had turned up with presents in droves, and everyone was toasting, praising and heaping thanks on you all morning. Understandably, you felt really dizzy in your head, your soul drunk with elation. Never had you received such attention, and it felt – good. You will miss Gareth’s ‘joust duel’ today. It did not seem that important any more for you to be present at the duel any more. But still, as a friend - you wished him every success, just like the success you have achieved, today.

“So Varcous, what do you say,” Master Skeentip proposed, “it would be great for Heather to be appointed as the Deputy Tactician, given your increased need to increase your rapidly growing trade enterprise.” Pacing Varcous the shrewd merchant around the tight confines in the Adventurer’s Lodge, Heather observed how Varcous skillfully presented his case, cajoling, incentivizing and convincing Varcous to take her as *your* deputy. The news reached you only a day later of course, but while you were sitting on a bench in the hastily assembled celebratory bash in Deufus’ open field with a dozen appreciative farmers, Skeentip sealed the deal. Heather would be assigned to be your deputy in future assignments. Varcous was well pleased and feeling generous that morning. Hence he declared that henceforth, you will be bestowed two sections of minions, and one Galan healer to accompany you in your quests! That – is high honor for one so young and inexperienced as you! Heather tried to maintain a friendly countenance, and thanked Varcous for his bigheartedness, with Skeentip proclaiming what a wise decision this had been for the astute merchant. And the transaction having been concluded, he led Heather quickly to the arena area – where Gareth now stood, facing his adversary, Param the Joustier. No doubt, Gareth is nervous – but the knightly tactician refused to let his nervousness show. A throng had gathered at the arena area, cheering him on and cursing Param. All wished to see Gareth defeat the Joustier-Tactician, few knew that the chances of Gareth winning is slim, and only one – had the words of advice for him.

Two hours after you had set off to seek out Deufus yesterday, Captain Leofric had made his way to Gareth’s quarters at the Tavern unannounced. Having asked Rufus to cook

up a simple meal to be brought to Gareth's room, Leofric knocked on the tactician's door, startling Gareth and dragging him back to his current surroundings. Gareth had been deep in thought, juggling a number of alternative strategies for the upcoming duel. He had not left the room this morning, and it is now past noon. This has been unlike Gareth – whose routine is well known to Rufus. The tavern keeper had contemplated banging on Gareth's door to inquire if he was alright – when Captain Leofric appeared. Now seated next to Gareth in his room, table set for a prime cut of roasted wild boar and a jug of Rufus' famous home-brewed beer, Leofric said something to Gareth which would give him an edge in the duel against Param.

“The thing to remember, Gareth” Leofric had said, “is that you can't win tomorrow's duel with your current set of strategies.” These blunt words had its desired effects. Gareth sat erect and strained to hear the next few sentences. “Do you know I once battled Param – it was a long time ago, but I remembered the duel vividly – coz I lost.” Gareth never choked on a piece of the roast meat he had just bitten into. “That surprised you? Param is a great tactician. He is now a ranked second Circle Darkness tactician in the Bretunia Guild of Tacticians. So even though he will use exactly the same spells as you, his experience will surely overwhelm you.” Gareth's heart dropped. If Leofric was here to encourage him, it was not working. The captain placed his mug on the table, and patted Gareth on his back. “But here's the tip. Param is overly-confident this time. The terms of the duel are stacked against him – if you can last twelve turns, he loses.” Leofric's eyes lit up. “Kick Param's ass for the ego freak he is, Gareth – for my sake and yours...” Gareth took a deep breath and nodded. “GOOD!” the captain now pulled the wooden seat forward. Lowering his voice, and motioning you come closer to him, Leofric muttered wickedly, “So for the duel tomorrow, this is what you should do...”

That conversation took place almost twelve hours ago. The next twelve turns will determine if Captain Leofric's strategy actually works, Gareth gulped. “What tactic cards have you selected for us to do battle with, Tactician Gareth” a voice boomed, shaking you from your reverie. Param was a rather rounded man, circumference wise that is, and rather hilarious to behold, large brown eyes, almost bald – exactly like a clown? THAT - Leofric had cautioned - is exactly what had fell many of his opponents, himself included. “Bring me the list, so we can get started.” Gareth strode purposefully towards Param, handed him the spell-list and stared. The jousting master merely glanced through the ten spells, murmured something intelligible, and handed the spell list back to Gareth. “It is not what I had expected, but no matter, Gareth – let's get started.” Param turned and swayed left and right as he tottered

backwards – until he parked himself 5 paces behind his minions. That very instant, Param the Joust was a very different man.

Captain Leofric had explained to Gareth why Param was called the ‘Jouster’. Primarily, Param is a tit-for-tat type of tactician. Every battle was to him like a joust – the opponents would level their lances and charged headlong towards each other. Except, Param’s tactics and minions would somehow secure the upper hand. “Dodge and avoid Gareth” Leofric had said, “since you know ten of his twelve spells. Maneuver yourself around him and his jousting tactics would not work effectively. Then just dig in and try to sit out twelve rounds.” the captain concluded. Easier said than done, as Gareth soon found out.

As Skeentip and Heather watched, Gareth was clearly struggling. And it was only the third turn. Param firmly held the initiative, and each wave of Param’s deployment threatened to drown the young and clearly less experienced lad. The Jouster effortlessly broke down Gareth’s defenses, and try as he might to evade the attacks, Param seemed to be able to anticipate his moves and cut off his path. “Think, Gareth, calm down and think.” Heather tried to project her thoughts towards her comrade with her now anxious sea green eyes. Whether by coincidence or otherwise, Gareth pulled out one of the two spells that have been hidden from Param. “*Espionage!*” A timely savior. With this spell, Gareth could now see into enemy lines and guessed what Param might want to do next. He gambled that Param would go with Duo mode to end the tourney quickly. Gareth crossed his fingers and cast “Withhold Duo!”. Wham! That spell suddenly worked like a magical wall, and the battle scene which appeared like the rushing and crashing of huge waves that just a moment ago seemed to be engulfing the knightly-tactician, had dramatically been change and deflected to turn the tides against the experienced Jouster.

”Remarkable.” said an astonished Skeentip to Heather, who on her part – believed that this was a result of her ‘astral projection’. Captain Leofric, seated on the opposite side of the arena, let out a huge grin. *That’s my boy, we got him.* For the first time in the ‘joust’ so far, Param staggered, a little bowled over by this latest twist. It was the tenth turn, and he had played most of his hand, including his two unrevealed spells. Even though with the spells remaining, he could still wrest a victory from this mess, a sense of dread crept up Param’s spine. The revelation was clear. “I can’t win within the next two turns!” And Gareth knew at that instant he had won. History would be made today – and this time, he was absolutely spot on.

The crowd went wild – the whole arena burst into cheers and yells, shrieks and wolf-whistle filled the entire stadium. Gareth was ecstatic. Heather – euphoric, and Skeentip,

jubilant. Only Leofric noticed the deep sense of frustration that emanated from the fallen Param, his defeat was clearly not anticipated, almost not within the realm of possibility. *Tough luck.* Leofric mused. Finally, Param had gotten his just desserts. The captain experienced a deep sense of closure, something he could not understand. But as Param walked out of the arena, shoulders slumped, dejected – Leofric could not help feeling a thread of empathy for Param - the Jouster...

Once more the mugs clanged, hands waved. Bouts of shouting filled the Errand's Inn. Intoxication reigned. Plates were smashed. No one paid any attention to anything, save for Gareth – Hero of Torpann, as he was now called. This label will probably last all of one week, until something more exciting comes along. But for now, Gareth felt almost like a hero. And he was glad. Sunil and Flubus had returned from their respective missions, and you too – have arrived this evening to join in the merriment. You smiled at your new deputy, Heather the heathen as she is known to her close friends. She winked at you, and laughed. The five of you were in high spirits, and shared tales of your quests and conquests. Leofric sat some tables away, alone and appraise the situation at hand. Here in Torpann people have grown accustomed to the frequent skirmishes between the Arthurian and Morganic troops. Actually it was more like Morgana whipping Constantine's royal ass. Leofric shook his head. He had received word that some more knights have been secretly dispatched to locate any and all surviving Knights of the Round Table. Seems like a wild goose chase, but what was worse – they have been ambushed and slaughtered. Things are looking grim. Still no word from Prince Uriel Loron. Leofric downed the rest of the ale in a single gulp. Wiping the froth from his mouth with one hand, the captain bade one and all a good evening and leisurely strolled out of the inn. He is acutely aware that in the coming days, Skeentip's Quintet – as the five of you are now called, will need to come face-to-face with the Royal Tactician, Captain Leofric. He mused. *Let's see how many can make it through the examinations of the Section Tactician.* He glanced back and saw you and your team-mates guffaw and chortling away, enjoying and relishing the ecstasy of the recent week. *Enjoy while it lasts, for the Examiner shall be waiting for you... I have set up a twist for you, for in war – nothing ever goes according to plan.* Leofric reflected. *And I hope for your sake, your resolve to graduate is stronger than your bond of friendship.*

Heather walked out unsteadily from the Tent of Assembly the day after, her face pale and body shaking. She was still trying to let the conversation between Captain Leofric and Master Skeentip sink in. She was there to receive the news, and the assignment. It was not her place to argue, plead or otherwise refuse. That distressed her. And Heather was not one

who is easily flustered. How she was going to go through the next couple of days, she would not know. One thing she knew – things will never ever be the same again. Tomorrow will be the Examination for the position of Section Tactician. Unlike what Master Skeentip had promised, there would not be any provisional Section Tactician-ship ‘nonsense’, snorted Leofric – “*especially in a time like this, Skeentip! and of all people you should comprehend the seriousness of this examination !*” the captain roared. “Yes Leofric” beseeched Skeentip – “but I thought we had an understanding that if...”. Captain Leofric waved him off curtly, saying “No deal Skeentip – either the five of them pass the exam and graduate formally and *legitimately*,” making sure he emphasized the last word, “or they do not enter the exams at all, and that’s final.”

This time Master Skeentip was the one who fumed. “Leofric – they would not stand a chance against you, and you know that – even if you use only First Circle tactics.” The captain suddenly began to chuckle aloud. “Whoever said that *I* was going to be the one to duel your quintet?” Both Skeentip and Heather raised their eyebrows – what is this guy talking about? Then Leofric laid out the ‘concession’ he had in mind – the *offer* as he called it. A most devious and excruciatingly painful path to being a Section Tactician, protested Heather, but to no avail. Master Skeentip shook his head when the captain finished explaining the rules. A sentence or two were said, a few more assurances were given, and the matter was concluded. Master Skeentip was to communicate the Exam details to the quintet, but at Leofric’s instructions – no one is to know who the Examiner is.

Later in the day, as it turns out, Sunil and Flubus were quite glad that they were not going to face Leofric – for obvious reasons. Gareth was silent, pondering what to make of it. Heather appeared downcast. Your gaze fell on one, then another – and in the end, you sighed. Something is definitely not right about this. Deep within, you knew there was more than meets the eye, but you just could not put a finger to it. The five of you spent an hour more discussing about how the Exam would turn out over the next three days. Heather and Gareth drew lots for tomorrow, with Gareth taking on the Examiner in the opening bout, and Heather thereafter. Flubus and you are fielded the day after, and finally Sunil on the third morning. With no additional information made available, it did not take them too long to draw the speculations to a close. Bidding each other good night and good luck, your teammates and you all retired to your respective dwellings as the deep night creeps on.

The events of the next few days did prove too painful to relate. When Gareth and Heather entered the holding area on the first day, Sunil, Flubus and you had presumed it would be advantageous for Heather, since the Examiner needed to battle Gareth first, and

would therefore be worn out to some degree. There the three of you sat, straining intently at the dueling grounds, waiting for the Examiner and Gareth to enter the arena proper from both sides. A large crowd of townsfolk had also gathered to watch the Examinations, including many apprentice tacticians and prospective employers, as well as some mercenary bands.

As the time for the Exam drew closer by the minute, the cheers and excitement intensified, until the arena seemed like a sea of billowing waters. When the duelists entered the arena – the feverish throng let out a fierce shout, almost in unison. You had done the same too – until your gaze became set on the two duelists on the field. Your jaws dropped, and despite the sun’s blazing heat, you shuddered involuntarily. In the same instance, Sunil and Flubus froze in mid-cheer. From the east end of the arena, you could hear Gareth let out a cry. You could not believe your eyes. A sudden hush descended on the arena. All eyes were trained on the duelist entering the grounds from the west entrance. A member of the Skeentip’s Quintet, your deputy and fellow team member – Heather the Heathen slowly emerged from the arena’s shadow.

“You want *me* to battle my four friends in the Examinations?” Heather shrieked at Leofric in disbelief. Heather recalled objecting vehemently to the captain yesterday in the Tent of Assembly. “I *can*’t do it.” Master Skeentip was quick to jump in to support Heather, arguing that the quintet are friends and so on. “If that is your decision, then there will be no graduates this week” shrugged Leofric. “Clearly the quintet is not yet ready, so I have made this concession where Heather needs only to win one duel to graduate, whereas the other four would need to defeat Heather to graduate.” It sounded like a conundrum, but as the captain noted, “if all goes according to plan, up to four of you can graduate. Of course, if Heather beats everyone then only she gets to graduate.”

Heather smiled weakly at Gareth, her friend. The moment of silence was quickly broken as the crowd now whipped itself into a frenzy. Gareth was still in a state of disbelief, and thought this was a sick prank. *It wasn’t*, replied Heather, choking her words, it was a cruel joke. As the minutes ticked by, the two opposing minion sections had started to form up, and Gareth gradually accepted the finality of the battle at hand. He *needed* to defeat Heather in order to graduate. And he wanted to graduate, badly. At about the same time, the realization dawned on Sunil, Flubus and you. You sank back and rested your back against the spectator stone bench. As much as you wanted to watch the battle, you really could not bring yourself to do so. Rising on your feet, you walked sluggishly out of the arena, leaving Sunil and Flubus behind. Heather is your deputy. How would you feel when you face her tomorrow?

The tactics battle between Gareth came and went. The townsfolk were excitedly recounting to each other how thrilling the duel went. They gasped when Heather cast 'Unseen Projectile' at Gareth, and cheered when Gareth deflected it. They applauded when Heather's Master Scout rushed to overcome Gareth's Adept Warrior, and yelled in appreciation when that solo minion deployment was countered by Gareth's 'Humanoid Lock'. Half the crowd rooted for Heather, and the other half for Gareth. It was hard fought, but at the end – someone won. One of them had to. You listened dispassionately when they finally spoke about the presentation of the victor's prize – the certificate of Section Tactician, and the invitation to join the Torpann Guild of Tacticians. The loser? Well, as they would always say – it was a close fight. Better luck next time... Next time. Some might have a next time, some would not. In this set up, you concluded that every battle is a lose-lose situation. One might stand to lose a friend, or you might stand to lose the chance to gain the certificate. In any case, your turn will come tomorrow, and you need to prepare yourself to win – or lose.

This morning, it was chilly – and raining. The duel was however had not been called off. It did mean fewer people would turn up at the arena, which was what you preferred. As you entered the arena, you are conscious of the fact that none of your team-mates would be showing up. Like you, they have found it too painful to watch. Not that they are wimpy or sentimental. It was just that one would not know how to react; cheer the victor and console the defeated? It was plainly too complicated to handle. So here you are, on one end of the arena, and your opponent – in real life, your deputy – in the other. This was to be a standard duel, each preparing thirty spells and the duelist whose minions successfully over-runs the opponent, wins. In the course of your time in the Academy, Heather and you have trained together and against one another many dozen times. You both knew each other's styles and strategies, and so – there would be few surprises.

This day however, Heather would present you with her fair share of surprises. Like the adder she was in battle, Heather struck where you least expected it. Instead of the quick offensive strategy she usually adopted, one that you are well accustomed to, Heather had decided on a long-drawn, solo-centric deployment tactic. And that proved to be working to her advantage. Heather had observed that while you are brilliant in regular duels, you have a stamina problem. That, to her was your weak spot. And Heather intended to fully exploit it, and it was working. Twenty turns into the duel, you found yourself losing concentration and being unable to respond effectively to Heather's attacks. Your mind started to go cloudy, and for an instance, you entertained the thought of giving up. And it seemed like a rather

attractive option... *Get a grip!* a small voice from somewhere within you suddenly rang in your ears. *Gain back the Initiative!!* At once it began to make sense. Change the battle mode! Why play into Heather's plan?

It rapidly became clear what it is you needed to do. Casting 'Spiritual Weakening', you trapped Heather's solo minion, and in the same turn, deployed 'Peering Skies'. With that in place, you fielded in succession Duos and Stars, totally overwhelming Heather, who had no answer to the change of pace. Turn twenty five and half hour later, the duel was over. You had won. With a shout of triumph, you punched one fist in the air, and the crowd cheered...

It seemed like an eerily long three days. Over the course of the five battles, you imagined the person most physically and mentally drained was Heather. In a tea session later, Varcous concurred that you are probably right. Yet, both Heather and you have both graduated, and that was all that mattered to Varcous. It also meant the stipends for both of you have increased, making the upkeep more expensive. Varcous grinned. But he conceded that price is a function of quality, and he had so far been happy with both your performance. Heather remains your deputy, and a number of quests are already looming in the horizon for you two in Torpann.

Since the Examinations, Gareth, Flubus and Sunil have left Torpann for various missions and reasons. Some have come to bade good-bye to you, not all. Heather and you never brought up for discussion the battle where she won, the duel that presented her with the ticket to graduation. One of the five had failed. And he had chosen to leave the Training Academy to pursue his destiny in a different path. Leofric had stated categorically this was the 'best case scenario', and he does not regret the decision. Master Skeentip was a little mollified, but the Guild now did have four more members, and that was cause enough for a modest celebration. Captain Leofric had also recently received word from Camelot that King Constantine had finally located there whereabouts of Sir Bors and Sir Ector, and secret missions have been authorized to bring them back to Castle Camelot. You knew this from an accidental visit to the Tent of Assembly – not eavesdropping, you assured yourself. You did not even know the identity of the person speaking with Captain Leofric.

One thing remains certain – your own destiny is just being charted, and you are confident that in the months ahead, you will find yourself in the thick of action, as a full-scale war now loomed between Queen Morgana and Castle Camelot. And it is at a time like this, when heroes and legends are made – and *you*, Section Tactician of the Torpann Guild of Tacticians will make your mark in history. The time, is now.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NOTE TO THE READER:**

This marks the start of your journey, which inevitably  
entwined your fate with the Heroes of Bretunia in

**CAMELOT**

**Armor of Light Chronicles Volume 1**

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