

Excerpt from “Martyrs of the Kingdom”

Author: Brother Malven of the Order of the Azure Blade

Chapter II: The Blade who stood Alone

While kings quarreled and nobles schemed, it was Gazef Stronoff who bore the weight of the Kingdom’s defense. The records are clear: born of common stock, he rose through merit alone to become Warrior Captain, the living bulwark of Re-Estize. His name, once dismissed by aristocrats as unworthy, is now invoked in temples as a byword for justice.

Chroniclers recount that Gazef alone stood against threats which would have shattered lesser men. Where nobles hesitated, he acted; where others fled, he held the line. Yet what endears him to history is not only his skill with the blade, but his humility. Anecdotes preserved in the *Annals of the Royal Guard* note how he bowed to merchants, addressed adventurers with courtesy, and treated peasants as equals. In an age when pride was currency, Gazef’s humility was its own quiet dissonant stand.

His encounters with the masked sorcerer Satoru have been much debated. Some argue he recognized in Satoru a dangerous power to be watched. Others insist he saw, perhaps uniquely, the flicker of humanity in the mysterious caster. Whatever his judgment, Gazef remained steadfast in protecting both Kingdom and Crown, even as corruption gnawed at the realm.

For the fools who still claim his complicity in the atrocities that befell that chaotic era, I tell you: “You are not worthy of the peace the existence of such great and merciful men so graciously and selflessly granted you”.

Excerpt from “Women of the Kingdom”

Author: Ardel Roshwyn, Professor of Gendered History at the Golden Institute

Chapter V: The Mistress of Seven Hands

Hilma Cygnaeus, even though her origins could be traced to a decadent noble house fallen into vice, proved to be far more consequential than her detractors ever realized. When the Eight Fingers fractured into Seven Hands, it was Hilma who held their disparate elements together, not by just mindless brutality, as it was usual, but by cunning and sheer survival instinct.

Her rise was unexpected. Records note that Hilma was neither feared for her strength nor revered for her charisma. Instead, she cultivated usefulness. She learned to navigate the whims of monsters far greater than herself, from sadists like the infamous Cocco Doll to the sorcerer Satoru himself. It is no coincidence that when Marquis Satoru sought to recruit Talent holders for his designs, Hilma was entrusted with the task.

The rumors and conjectures my colleagues share of Hilma being the Marquis' lover find no root in any real testimony or text, and I believe that is most likely their bias talking rather than their logic mind.

It is far more likely that Hilma was a strong and independent woman who found herself at the mercy of monstrous individuals and did what she had to do to survive and thrive. And in that, she embodies the fate of many in those years. Survive first, justify later.

Excerpt from “The King in Twilight: The Last Sovereigns of the Old Age”

Author: Rayne III, The King of Storms

Author’s Notes: The thoughts of a King on a king

King Rampossa III ruled longer than most men live, and for much of his reign, he was dismissed as a tired monarch presiding over decline. Yet closer study reveals a man caught between his own failings and a kingdom that no longer heeded kings.

The weakness he displayed for most of his life disgusts me to my core. His weakness in recognizing his youngest daughter aptitude for ruling, far greater than any other of his children, yet still yielding to tradition instead of cultivating the jewel that fell into his hands, shows exactly how such weak men fall easily to their own emotions and wallow in self-pity as if the problem was no them but the world instead.

Even in the wake of his rage, which I hold the most miniscule of my respect for, show his complete and utter incapability of ruling. As if lashing out like a feral animal was something to be either feared or admired... no, it is just another show of weakness.

When my own daughter fell to an assassin’s blade, I was distraught, what father would not be? But did I scream? Lash out at the world like a beast? No, I did not, I mourned, and I gave tentative smiles to fools who thought me fooled by their traitorous pleasantries.

I bode my time, arranged my pieces, as an indescribable wrath consumed my soul. And when all was ready, I stroke with everything I had... so much that the accursed land who caused me such grief was wiped off the map, replaced with a glass desert.

Those who still mistake rage for power do not deserve the Crown.

Excerpt from “The Life of a Warrior who Failed”

Author: Alakaith Oriculus, First Emperor of the Draconic Empire

Chapter III: Victory and Defeat

Some historians argue Brain Unglaus’ true contribution was not martial but philosophical: Brain Unglaus personifies the human struggle against ceilings of power, whether magical or martial, that cannot be broken. In his despair, later thinkers found a mirror of their own limitations. Thus Brain, who saw himself as defeated, became immortalized as the most human of warriors.

Some may say it is presumptuous of me to write on such a figure. After all, my entire domain owes its existence to said man. So, to be objective on this figure might seem quite impossible for someone in my standing. And yet, nonetheless, I wish to speak of the man in the way I have come to know him.

Mother always referred to him as the most infuriating man she had ever known, quite a boast seeing her, not so veiled, disdain for most powerful man in her era. But I believe that the fact she could be so riled up, for lack of a better term, by him to be a decisive indication of the man’s importance.

Even though the rest of the continent often remembers him for his failings rather than his successes, I strongly believe that to be a misconception caused by the human nature of seeing failing as inherently evil or bad.

As my own Teacher once said: “Defeat and victory mean nothing, someone could find their calling in life through defeat, and find only emptiness through victory... not understanding the value of experience is one of the greatest flaws of humankind as a whole.”

Excerpt from “The Age of Change”

Author: Cirel Maevyn, Historian of Imperial Succession

Chapter V: The Top of the Pyramid

As we approached all the various floors of the social pyramid of that time, we cannot help but dedicate this chapter to who accepted the top floor of this precarious structure. An extremely controversial figure during his time and for till this very day.

Emperor Jircniv Rune Farlord El-Nix, early on known as the Bloody Emperor, began as a reformer of rare brilliance. He envisioned an empire purged of corrupt nobles and bound together under his iron will. His reforms, ruthless as they were, promised a golden age.

Or so, many initially believed. His deep connections into the army induced many thinkers of the time to believe his rule would be glorious but marked by the use of violence to achieve such glory.

Instead, the emperor surprised everyone when he seemed to backtrack from his initial crusade against nobility. Aiding neighboring countries, and even burying the axe of war with the empire’s long standing rival, Re-Estize.

Some of the philosophers of the time called him weak for backtracking from his bloody path. Many others recognized him as a wise ruler who did what he had to do, but never wished to resort to violence if it could be avoided.

To later historians, Jircniv embodies the paradox of leadership in the Age of Change: brilliant men reduced to pawns by forces beyond comprehension. He was neither coward nor fool, but circumstance placed him in a world where intellect and ambition were simply not enough.

Excerpt from “Requiem for those forgotten by History”

Author: Luthais Raeven, Court Historian and Prime Minister

Chapter XXXII: The Queen who was never meant to be

Josefin Vilen, third consort to King Rampossa III and mother of Princess Renner, is a figure shrouded in near-total silence. Contemporary records speak of her rarely, and when they do, it is most often through the lens of her daughter. In the annals of the royal court, she appears only in fleeting mentions: a delicate presence at ceremonies, a brief note on her noble lineage, the occasional remark on her beauty and poise. Yet, as is often the case in history, absence itself becomes testimony.

What little we know suggests that Josefin was not a woman of the court but of the shadows of the palace. She was no schemer in the mold of the great dowager queens, nor did she command attention with flamboyance or patronage.

Her figure is one of those who inspired me to start researching on these obscure members of history who later filled the pages of this book.

Josefin’s disappearance from records during Princess Renner’s adolescence has led to speculation. Some claim she retired to her natal estate; others whisper she fell victim to the slaughter of the Noble Purge. A minority view, preserved in the *Speculum Regiae Vitae*, suggests she was quietly removed at Princess Renner’s own request, a chilling hypothesis, though no evidence confirms it.

Be it as it may, she left the world the same way she had lived, in silence and obscurity. Leaving behind little to no trace of herself compared to the endless documentation we possess on her daughter.