



14 Years: The Chronicles of Sir Reginald The Damned

By Jason Zapata



Introduction

1170 A.D.

“Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?”

These words were spoken by King Henry II and interpreted as royal decree. Sir Reginald FitzUrse along with three other knights burst into Canterbury Cathedral. They stormed the hallowed halls to force the Archbishop, Thomas Becket, to agree to the king's terms. Thomas had refused to sign the Constitutions of Clarendon. Henry's policies aimed at weakening the clergy and Rome's authority. This defiance sealed the holy man's fate.

The four knights had intended to coerce Becket into signing the documents. But the threat of violence became a reality when the righteous Archbishop repudiated their demands. Within the sanctified walls of the Cathedral – Thomas Becket was slain.

Soon after, Catholics throughout Europe venerated Becket as a martyr and his murderers were excommunicated at the hands of Pope Alexander. Their absolution could only be attained once they served a period of 14 years in defense of the holy land. Only three of the knights would honor this penance.

In an attempt to escape his service – Sir Reginald abandoned Jerusalem. This second act of sacrilege ensured the knight's damnation. Stripped of his grace by an angel, Sir Reginald is now hated by his fellow man and forced to battle dark forces.

Redemption only lies in service. Having rejected his opportunity to make amends through the Pope; Sir Reginald must now do so directly with God. For 14 years he will battle evil, but if he fails... his soul will be damned to hell.



The Necromancer of Bern

1172 A.D.

It wouldn't stop raining. For the past six days a steady downpour fell on the covered wagon Sir Reginald rode in. The heavy canvas top was already soaked through and cold rainwater dripped onto him. It always woke him when he managed to doze off.

Reginald wrapped the thick cloak he wore tighter around his muscled frame. He forced himself to ignore the cold that permeated everything. He was still alone in the back of the horse-drawn wagon. His few belongings remained in the bag by his feet. Reginald looked out the back of the wagon and took in the terrain. Tall, snow capped mountains still dominated the landscape. This meant he still traveled through the lands of Bern. It would be another week before they reached Dijon in southern France and hopefully without stopping for more passengers.

Two peasants had boarded the wagon earlier. Poor locals dressed in patchwork animal hides and worn boots. At first they didn't pay Reginald much attention. But as the wagon continued along the rutted pass, they became increasingly agitated. The two men continued to stare at him. Their eyes narrowed angrily and they began murmuring to one another. The peasants then clutched the long hunting knives they wore belted on their waists threateningly.

Reginald didn't know what they had intended, but he let his mailed hand drift towards his sword. The two peasants caught sight of this and made a hasty departure. A man of Reginald's size, clad in chain mail, and armed with a broadsword had that effect. Still their initial reaction puzzled him. He did nothing to provoke such intense disdain.

Yet...

Hadn't Ustus, the old man driving the wagon, acted the same way? Ustus agreed to take him as a passenger reluctantly. His gnarled figure had looked down at Reginald from his perch in the wagon's seat with a fearful expression. Reginald didn't give it much thought at the time. He had just wanted to return home. He wanted to get further away from the sand and senseless death.

The knight was jarred from his thoughts as the wagon came to an abrupt halt. Reginald heard Ustus call for him nervously and he wondered what caused the stoppage. His combat training kicked in. He scanned the area behind the wagon first, taking advantage of its cover before climbing down. Slowly he walked around to the front of the wagon. Reginald scanned the forest to his left and saw no enemies. On the other side of the wagon lay the edge of the narrow pass they rode on.

As Reginald rounded the front of the wagon he saw a lone warrior standing in the middle of the pass. The horses neighed nervously. Reginald clenched the leather wrapped hilt of the sword he wore on his hip. He waited impatiently for the lone figure to declare his intent.

"Hey – you there. Step aside! We need to be on our way before this rain turns to snow!" Ustus hailed anxiously.

The man at arms took no notice. He continued to stand, slightly hunched over, in the middle of the road. Reginald looked closer and recognized the double-headed imperial eagle emblazoned on the ragged surcoat the man wore. What was a soldier of the Holy Roman Empire doing here? King Barbarossa's forces hadn't passed through here since the plague drove the imperials out of Italy four years ago.

"What you suppose is the matter with him?" Ustus asked. The old man's hand grasped the horse's reins nervously.

"I don't know. But I really can't wait for an explanation. I'm going to have a word with our friend," Reginald replied grimly.

Reginald's booted feet crossed the muddy distance in a steady march. The rain fell heavier now. As he got closer he could see the mail armor the man wore was encrusted with rust. The surcoat he wore was little more than a rag that swayed in the breeze. Something was wrong... the way he just stood there...

Suddenly the German soldier reached for his sword. It was a jerky motion and the blade barley cleared the scabbard. Reginald immediately stopped. He lifted his hands up in a none-threatening posture as the warrior staggered closer.

"Whoa, friend! I am no Italian. We're just trying to reach..." Reginald's words trailed away to nothing.

He grew cold as he gazed upon the German's face. The flesh was ragged with putrescence and lifeless eyes bore into his. This soldier was dead – yet it walked towards him to do battle. What devilry was this?

The excited shouting from Ustus shook Reginald from the trance of fear he'd fallen into. In a smooth, practiced motion he unsheathed his broadsword and drove its tip into the chest of the undead warrior. The hardened steel easily punctured the dead man's weakened mail armor. An inhuman moan escaped its flayed lips.

In horror Reginald saw the dead man grasp the broad sword that impaled him. Witnessed the fiend tug on the blade, burying the steel further into its rotting chest to get closer. Its sword arm rose to strike Reginald down. But the knight retained his composure. He stepped back with one foot and planted the other squarely into the dead German's chest in a thunderous kick. Reginald wrenched free his sword from the corpse's grasp as it collapsed onto the ground.

The sound of hooves striking the damp earth caused Reginald to turn. The terrified driver snapped the reins like a madman. The knight barely managed to tumble clear as the horse drawn wagon shot past him. Reginald pounded the mud he lay sprawled in furiously as the old man rode off.

"Coward! Why do you leave me? There is only one and he lies felled!" Reginald screamed as he rose to his feet.

But a quick look around revealed that was not the case. As he was distracted fighting, Reginald failed to notice more lifeless imperial soldiers had appeared. Their bodies were in varying states of decay as they lurched towards him. Haunting figures moving closer through the mist and sheets of rain. A groan by his feet alerted him to the German soldier he just defeated. It was trying to regain its feet, despite the gaping wound in its chest.

They cannot die, because they're already dead, Reginald told himself. No matter how many times they fell, they would eventually surround him. Rusted weapons and skeletal hands would tear away his flesh. He was going to die here...

Reginald roared defiantly. He roared to dispel the dread filling his heart. His war cry echoed loudly as he grasped his broadsword with both hands and swung the heavy blade in a rising arc. The attack took his enemies head clean off. The dead imperial's body convulsed for a moment before it went still. Permanently.

A surge of hope filled Reginald. They could be killed...or at least destroyed. He turned as the detachment of undead warriors shambled closer, rusted weapons raised. The closest enemy's mace came crashing down towards his head. Reginald deftly parried the blow aside, his back swing cut deep into the dead man's neck. Bone snapped and sheared. A thin strip of rotting flesh was all that kept the decomposing head attached to its body. It stumbled in place a moment before its brethren pushed it aside.

Reginald back stepped. The rotting soldiers lashed out at him. Weapons hacked the air around him as he continued to dodge their clumsy blows. However, the knight quickly ran out of room as the undead imperials surrounded him. Attacks came at more angles and Reginald was forced to block. To his surprise his arms quickly began to ache after several heavy blows crashed against his blade.

They were strong. Somehow they retained the strength they possessed in life. In terms of agility – their movements were still uncoordinated and awkward with the stiffness of the grave. This was the only factor preventing them from easily cutting him down. He needed to thin their ranks if he was going to survive.

Reginald drove three of the monstrosities back with an overpowering swing of his sword. His blade hacked through decayed flesh and rusted mail. With the opening gained from this attack, he quickly struck at his unbalanced foes. His blade chopped through the shinbone of an enemy and it toppled over in a heap.

Reginald hunched his shoulder and took a numbing blow on the arm from a spiked mace. He pivoted and slashed the top half of his attacker's skull off. His broad sword easily cleaved through the great helm his adversary wore. He gritted his teeth as he crossed his sword over to block a strike from a fifth imperial.

Reginald locked swords with his enemy and was quickly driven to his knees by the dead warrior's strength. Realizing he couldn't overpower his enemy, he twisted to the side. At the same time he turned his sword over top his enemy's blade and thrust upward. The broad sword burst through the maggot-infested face and straight out the back of the dead man's head. Reginald twisted the sword. The weapon further grinded and cracked bone as it was yanked free.

The knight barely managed to sidestep a spear strike meant to impale his leg. Its tip still clipped his thigh, busting a large section of mail and wounding him. Reginald staggered backward, but his attack was focused. He hacked the spear shaft in two. His wounded leg threatened to buckle as he raised his sword overhead. He brought the weapon down. His battered arm throbbed in agony as a tremor from the impact of his strike reverberated down its length. His blade would have normally split the dead German's head in two. Instead it lay wedged within the undead warrior's skull.

With a final tug – he pulled his sword free and attacked with another overhead chop. This time the skull burst into a pile of bone fragments and fetid brain matter. Wounded, exhausted, and chilled by the freezing rain that still fell on him – Reginald finished off the disabled undead. When the last blow fell he leaned wearily on his sword, using the tall weapon to prop himself up.

At first Reginald only took ragged breaths in an attempt to steady himself. As the adrenaline wore off, he began to comprehend what happened. The impossibility of it tested his sanity. Had a detachment of undead imperial soldiers really attacked him? And why?

"Because your presence summoned them here, Reginald, will summon creatures like them wherever you go," a melodic voice answered.

Reginald turned around. Before him stood a woman the likes of which he'd never seen. The stranger was surprising tall for her gender. She wore a white dress and cloak. In stark contrast, long vibrant red hair spilled down her back. There was no visible weapon at her side. But the fact that she read his thoughts was threatening to him. He stared hard into her eyes to determine if this was some new foe.

Strong, piercing blue eyes met his squarely. Reginald felt them looking right through him. Somehow he knew this strange woman who appeared from nowhere already understood everything there was to know about him. It was irrational. And after the battle he just fought – he wanted to know whether or not this woman was responsible for what happened.

"The responsibility lies with you," she answered plainly.

"What are you? Some witch? And how am I responsible for all this?" Reginald demanded angrily. He turned in place and gestured to the fallen undead Germans littering the muddy pass.

The strange woman's face formed a scowl, "I am no servant of the adversary, tainted one. I am God's messenger. My task in coming here is to pronounce judgment on you."

Reginald grew quiet. He looked down to the sword propping him up. The pommel of the blade displayed the crusader's cross. He closed his eyes. Admitting to himself he already knew what crime he was being judged for. It was too much. Reginald tried to will the woman away. Tried to convince himself that she was just an apparition of his guilt. However, when he looked up, she still stood there in the rain. Her gaze was unrelenting and condemning.

Reginald growled angrily,

"Why? I smack a clergyman over the head with the flat of my sword and I'm called murderer? It was not my hand that slew Becket. How is it fair that 14 years of my life are forfeit! No one should have to stay in that God forsaken place! The holy land? Hah! It's a desert filled with revenge obsessed Saracens and religious fanatics. They happily murder each other because 'God wills it' – I am condemned for leaving that?"

"No. You are condemned for the slaying of someone who would have brought great and needed change to the world. Though Becket still served our Lord as a martyr – this was poor recompense for what he would have accomplished had he lived. If you had not lead your brethren to murder him," the woman stated coldly.

Reginald cried out emphatically, "No! I cannot be judged for what they did. They murdered him. Their blades cut into his flesh, not my own. How is this fair?"

"Your actions lead to the death of a great servant of God and then you abandoned the penance that was assigned to you. For these reasons – you are damned. For 14 years you will know no peace. Neither man nor woman will tolerate your presence. And those forces of darkness which haunt this world will be drawn to you until you've made amends," God's messenger declared.

Her hand pointed to him as his judgment was passed.

"What right have you!" Reginald screamed as he stormed forward.

Light flared brightly around the messenger. Through the gaps of his fingers Reginald swore he saw the outline of wings. When the light finally diminished, he stood alone. The strange woman was gone.

Reginald let his head sag down in defeat. He didn't want to move. The weight of his sentence was already heavy on his soul. But night would be falling soon and he would freeze to death if he didn't find shelter. Haunted by the words of the messenger and thoughts of further encounters with the dead, he started walking.

Reginald was half dead when he limped into the city of Bern. The wounded knight had walked several miles in the brutal cold seeking shelter. Even for being so late at night, he was surprised to find the streets deserted. He could not explain why – but the very air was filled with deep and pervasive dread.

A measure of relief filled him as muted music reached his ears and soft light bathed the street ahead. Unsteady steps carried Reginald through the threshold of the Broken Spoke Inn. The sudden exposure to warmth dizzied him. Warily he collapsed into a chair by the inn's hearth. Clumps of slush fell around his feet, thawed layers of ice fell from his shoulders.

It took a moment for him to notice the sudden lack of music and voices within. He looked around. Every man and woman in the room stared at him. It dawned on Reginald what these frightened people must have thought. A stranger limping in from a blizzard, seemingly dead on his feet, reminded them of the something they'd witnessed before. These people knew of the horrors that stalked this land. Fearful gazes said everything unspoken words did not.

Only when he met their fearful expressions with a very human scowl did the patrons reluctantly return to their drinks. The locals still eyed him suspiciously above the rims of the pewter mugs. Reginald forced himself to ignore them and concentrate on getting warm. He stripped out of his cloak and surcoat. He hung the ice-encrusted garments on the back of his chair and rubbed his pale hands. It was a miracle they weren't frostbitten.

Reginald flagged down a server who was doing her best not to notice him. She finally acknowledged his presence and agreed to fetch him some beef stew. Meanwhile some of the men had gathered around a table across the room from him. Looks very similar to the ones he received from the two peasants on the wagon were shot his way.

"Just let me get some warm food in me," Reginald muttered despairingly under his breath.

But the gathering group of men had no intention of letting that happen. Reginald could see them working up the nerve to confront him. He balled up his fists as they rose from their table and approached. He struggled to remain patient; these weren't nobles or warriors he must tolerate.

Fine woolen cloths and well-shod leather boots marked them as craftsmen and skilled laborers. A collection of stonecutters, tailors, and merchant were seeking to remove him. The noble within Reginald bristled at the audacity of these commoners. But he couldn't afford a fight right now...

"What is your business in Bern...mi lord?" One of them asked. The last two words were thrown in as an after thought.

Reginald's eyes narrowed angrily. Part of him wanted to thrash the man who now looked very nervous. The other part just wanted to be left in peace. He took a deep breath before answering,

"If you must know, I was on my way to Dijon."

The man's eyebrow arched doubtfully, "By the looks of it, you were walking there. A lord such as yourself surely has a horse?"

The other men around him nodded their heads in approval, gaining confidence as they continued to question him.

"Look, friend. I can understand your mistrust of strangers, but I'm not here to cause trouble. All I want to do — "

Reginald was interrupted, as another man shouted, "Then why is there blood on your cloak?"

The knight groaned inwardly. Of course, it made more sense now. The cloak he wore upon entering the Broken Spoke was still spotted with his blood and the gore from the slain imperials. Attempting to explain the truth would only cause more uncertainty and fear. Reginald shook his head at the absurdity of his situation and in doing so noticed a familiar face in the crowd.

Ustus! Here was a fragile hope he could grasp onto. He attempted to waive the gnarled figure over, but much to his irritation, the old man looked away. Ustus was trying to ignore him!

"Ustus! Come here and help explain what happened," Reginald ordered impatiently.

The locals in the inn all turned as one to look at the frightened old man sitting amongst them. Apparently he frequented the Broken Spoke enough to be known by name. He coughed into a wrinkled hand nervously before he spoke with a quivering voice,

"We were on our way here, but got stopped. One of those...things blocked the way. He (Ustus pointed to Reginald) stepped out of the wagon and even more of the dead appeared. They stalked out of the woods and mists. It's like they came for him."

Reginald laughed bitterly, "You failed to recall a few things, Ustus. Do you care to mention how I fought them? How I battled those monsters as you left me in that wretched place to die?"

"I didn't see anything! Didn't waste any time leaving once I saw them dead things gathering," the old man lied.

Reginald was beside himself. Ustus had seen him fighting the first undead German soldier. Why was he lying? Did the worthless bag of bones really think he summoned those things there? And if so, why would he have fought them? The whole thing was ridiculous and the knight struggled against the urge to draw his sword and dispatch the deceitful cur.

"Listen to me you wretched little peasant! If you won't at least speak for me truthfully – be decent enough to return my goods. I imagine they are still sitting in the back of your wagon," Reginald demanded.

The murderous look the knight gave Ustus broke the old man's defiance. Ustus looked down at the wooden floor nervously. The timid little man tried to find the courage to answer. The inn was silent again. Small groups of men quickly exited the building. They left either to avoid conflict or to arm themselves for one. Reginald was beside himself. He had done nothing to garner such disdain. If anything the cowardly old man who trembled like a leaf in the wind deserved it.

"Th –The stables. It's in the back of the inn, my wagon. Just take your things and leave me alone," Ustus stuttered.

Giving the fearful old man one last look of disgust – Reginald belted on this surcoat and cloak. He didn't concern himself with the stew he ordered. There was never any intent of serving him food here. Amidst whispers and hushed murmurs he left the warmth of the Broken Spoke. His head tilted down, Sir Reginald stepped out into the unforgiving cold once more.

Reginald recovered his pack from the old man's wagon without incident. However he was still cold, weary, and wounded. He needed to sit by a fire. Not only to warm himself, but the clothing and armor he wore. Not wanting to risk further encounters with the locals – he sought a place where he could rest without being noticed. His feet carried him to a blacksmith's workshop. No one could see the building from the street, being tucked behind what was most likely the owners home. No light illuminated the interior of either building.

Relieved to have some shelter, Reginald ducked into the building. The workshop was still drafty, even with the wall panel that ventilated the building being closed. He wasted no time retrieving his flint and steel striker from his bag. There were enough scraps of wood to create a pile of tinder amidst the coals of the forge. Sparks from the flint lit the darkened space in flashes until the tinder caught flame. Reginald quickly manned the bellows to fan the flame. The fire soon spread to the coals and warmth filled the small space.

The workshop was soon filled with the soft orange glow of the forge. Reginald once more stripped out of his damp cloak and surcoat. He then unknotted the leather straps of his chain mail armor. With the armor removed he could see the damaged sections of rings in the dim light. The right sleeve wasn't too bad. The spiked mace that struck his arm had only stretched out and broken a few rings.

The section that draped over his leg was much worse. Several rings were entirely gone. Either they were ripped away when the spearhead clipped his leg or they fell apart during the long trek to Bern. The smithy more than likely had spare rings somewhere within the shop. He'd look later.

The only thing he wanted to do was sit with his back to the wall and sleep near the forge for warmth. Reginald pulled his legs in close to his chest and covered himself with a smithy's apron. Shivers racked his bruised body and he struggled to keep from coughing – afraid to alert anyone of his presence.

But Reginald was already being swept away in tides of darkness, an inky black sea of exhaustion that claimed him.



Deep lines gouged into the Saracen's face tell Sir Reginald that his enemy has seen many battles. Further confirmation comes in the form of his foe's scimitar strikes. It's all Reginald can do to intercept the blows with his battered shield. Cold certainty fills the pit of his stomach as the battle wears on.

The Saracen is relentless. He wields his wicked looking weapon with frightening efficiency. The blade hooks and slashes ever closer to Reginald's exposed face. Midday heat makes wearing a great helm impossible, the unforgiving sun would cook the insides of his head. A thin mail coif is all that prevents Reginald's opponent from splitting his skull like a melon.

Reginald gives ground as the Muslim presses the attack. The heat and exhaustion of battle sap his resolve. The white surcoat he wears does little to prevent his own chain mail armor from cooking him alive. Reginald is dehydrated. Every ragged breath he takes only robs his throat of what little moisture remains. This doesn't escape the Saracen's notice.

The recognition of Reginald's disadvantages is visible upon his enemy's smiling face. The Saracen was born here – can weather the intense heat. His weapons and armor are lighter, allowing him to move quicker. They also keep him from overheating in the harsh climate. But more importantly, the Muslim is fighting to drive a Christian invader from his homeland. He is fighting for something he believes in.

Reginald is not.

He cannot win this fight. The scimitar that slashes into the flesh above his collarbone seems to confirm this. The knight's sword slips from his numbed fingers. He is going to die now. His bones will litter the sands like so many others, sun bleached monuments to the will of God. Reginald can see his enemy rearing back his sword. The blade falls in a deadly arc...

Reginald screamed in the darkness.

It took several long moments for him to realize he wasn't in the holy land. He'd awoken from another nightmare, like so many before. Familiarity filled him as he gazed around the darkened workshop. He immediately began to cough forcibly. Fever had claimed him during the long night spent in the cold. Reginald was still lying down when he noticed movement from the corner of his eye.

There was a face in the darkness. It weaved in and out of shadow. Green hued skin was visible in the dim light. There was a strange sound and Reginald felt breezes on his face. He squeezed his eyes tightly and reopened them – the face still floated hauntingly in the darkness. The corners of its mouth sloped upwards in a smile that revealed pointed teeth.

Reginald tensed. Lethargy shaken as he realized he was not alone. The thing before him swayed closer. In the lurid red light cast by the dying coals of the forge, he saw the entire creature. A being held aloft in the air by bat like wings that sent gusts of air his way. The source of the mysterious breezes he felt. The wings, like the body, are a dirty green color. Soot covered and smelling of sulfur.

The winged fiend isn't large, perhaps only a third of his size, but it's muscles are heavily corded. Its body is also protected by a miniature set of scale armor. Tarnished and stained, it covers the creature's chest and arms. Reginald also took note of the menacing looking trident leveled at his head as the denizen of the depths of hell began to laugh.

"Didn't sleep well?" It asked mockingly, swinging to the right of Reginald.

The knowing way in which the flying creature asked the question angered Reginald. He stayed still though. He wasn't ready for battle and he didn't want to provoke the strange being. Gradually, Reginald raised himself into a sitting position. The move doesn't go unnoticed.

"Careful human...don't make me kill you before my questions are answered," the fiend threatened, pressing the tip of the trident to Reginald's neck.

Reginald cleared his throat and asked, "What do you want, devil?"

"I am an imp, human! You insult a demon by calling it devil," Reginald's antagonist clarified. The imp pressed the trident harder into the flesh of his neck.

The knight held his breath and said nothing more until the imp eased the trident away. He coughed into his hand weakly and leaned back against the wall. This move increased the distance between him and the imp without looking intentional. Reginald looked over to where his sword leaned against the wall, it was too far away to grasp without getting impaled.

The knight looked back to the imp as it began to speak again,

"I saw you fighting them in the pass, the recently raised dead. Part of an army the necromancer will summon. What business does one of the damned have in Bern? Speak mortal!"

Being hailed as one of the damned again, reminded Reginald of The Lady. He had wanted to forget her pronouncement, wanted to believe her judgment was somehow untrue. Reginald could no longer deny it. The reactions of the Broken Spoke's patrons and the recognition of his condition by the imp removed all doubt. He was truly damned.

"Answer the question human! Who has summoned you to Bern?" The demon asked. Its rusted and scorched trident thrust towards Reginald's face again.

The knight locked eyes with his opponent. He couldn't die here. His damnation meant immediate internment in Hell. Reginald needed time to think.

"...No one sent me. I am on my way to Dijon," he answered.

"Lies," the imp hissed, "You were sent here by that angel!"

Reginald surprised himself by laughing. His laughter broke down into a fit of coughing as phlegm worked free from the lining of his lungs. As he coughed, Reginald looked about the shop. He noticed a heavy set of forge tongs within reach on the table next to him. He swung his eyes back to face the imp,

"You think I follow her? No. I am just as forsaken as you. But -- "

Reginald exploded into motion. His right hand shot up and reached for the handle of the tongs. The imp thrust its weapon towards his face, but Reginald pushed himself aside with his left arm. It allowed him to grasp the tongs and get clear of the attack.

The imp stabbed the points of its trident towards Reginald again, but the knight parried the blow downward. His adversary's weapon was now securely pinned to the floor with the tongs.

With his free hand, Reginald grasped the imp's weapon and hauled it closer. The sudden tug unbalanced the creature and left it open for attack. Reginald slammed the tongs into its face. Utterly dazed from the blow, the imp wobbled in the air. The knight wasted no time wrenching away the trident from the imp's hands. He deftly spun the weapon around and impaled the vicious creature as it hurled itself towards him. Two of the trident's tips pierced the scale armor covering its chest.

" – It will be a cold day in Hell when I'm considered one of you, demon." Reginald finished.

The imp gave Reginald a look of utter hatred. Blood streamed out its mouth as it gargled out curses. Weakened hands still tried to reach for the knight, to gain purchase in order to strike a blow. Disgusted, Reginald pinned the creature to the floor, even as its wings flapped desperately. The knight stomped his foot atop the imp's skull repeatedly. Flesh tore free, bone shattered, and its head became nothing more than a gory pile at Reginald's feet.

Reginald shook uncontrollably as adrenaline coursed through his veins and fever racked his body. He turned away from the corpse. Unsteady steps carried him to where his cloths and armor were laid out to dry. Reginald put the garments back on. The noise from his battle with the imp could have awoken the owner of the workshop. He took a quick look around, stole whatever he could easily stuff into his pack, and retrieved his sword.

By the time the sun rose, Sir Reginald had fled the city of Bern.



The sun shined through a stand of evergreens on the outskirts of Bern. It was welcome relief from endless rain and snow. Cloudless blue skies stretched overhead. Bird song could be heard from adjacent trees near Sir Reginald. The knight camped at the base of a towering pine tree. Its snow-encrusted branches sagged to the ground and formed a natural shelter from the wind.

The weary knight busied himself with repairing his armor. His shivering hands worked to replace damaged rings with ones he'd stolen from the blacksmith's workshop. A small fire provided little warmth and his cough was growing worse. But he would survive. Reginald refused to consider what the alternative meant at that moment.

Besides he had already tended his wounds. Injuries he was not able to properly treat while in Bern. His shoulder was just bruised. Only two small puncture wounds marred his flesh where the spiked mace had struck home. The wound on his thigh received from the spearhead was worse. Still, the wound was now stitched close. The intense cold had helped clot the gash and prevented excess blood loss.

It throbbed excruciatingly, though. Yet the physical pain paled in comparison to the despair that filled Reginald. Monsters hunted him. Mankind hated him. It wasn't fair. Why? All this pain and suffering for the death of one man. A life that was taken by someone else's hand, yet this damnation was all his. Reginald clutched the mail he held until his knuckles turned white.

"Reginald," a voice called just outside the shelter of the tree.

Instantly Reginald's hand had shot towards his sword. It stopped and hovered over the blade as recognition slowly crept over him. The knight gingerly rose to his feet and cautiously stepped out into the daylight. The sun's rays were blinding as it reflected off the snow. The Lady stood only a few feet away.

The knight's hands shook at his sides. Anger and desperation filled his being as he gazed upon her. She wore the same long white cloak as before. In fact, everything she wore was white. From the hood of her cloak down to the sheepskin boots she wore. Only two distinct details stood out. The long curly red hair that framed her face and the startling blue eyes that held his stare.

"What have you come to do now? Not satisfied with letting monsters and sickness kill me?" Reginald mocked hatefully.

"I delivered a sentence, Reginald FitzUrse. The judgment was passed by His hand," The Lady said unemotionally.

The knight looked down. Guilt and despair filled him as he realized his anger towards The Lady could not reverse his condition. He began to walk back to his make shift camp when she hailed him again.

"Do you not wish for this to end? Have you already accepted the darkness that shrouds your soul?" The Lady asked.

She walked up behind him. Waited patiently for him to turn around. When Reginald did, his eyes were sorrowful and tired. The prideful and defiant stance was gone. He fought down a coughing fit and asked,

"Are you saying I can be forgiven?"

The Lady nodded, "No one is beyond His forgiveness. Serve Him faithfully Reginald. Take up a new crusade, one in which you can fight for something you do believe in."

"Belief in God? After all this?" Reginald started coughing; his raised voice dislodged more phlegm in his congested lungs. "I doubt that. I will serve if it means this curse can be lifted."

Nothing was said for moments. There was only the wind through the trees.

The Lady broke the silence, "That may not be enough in the end. But for now it must do. There is an evil within Bern that must be dealt with."

"Yes. I killed an imp that mentioned a Necromancer," Reginald confirmed.

"I did not think you would be discovered so quickly. This will make confronting the Necromancer difficult. The practitioner of the black arts is located in an old manor beside the cemetery of Bern. The current owners of the home are minions of the enemy and have provided him a place to cast his vile magic. Reginald, you must purge that home of the evil residing within," The Lady commanded.

Reginald knew what must be done. But he was in no condition to do anything about it. Wounded and feverish, he could not overcome the living dead as he had in the wintry pass. It was a suicide mission. But one he could not refuse.

"I will get ready to lea—," Reginald stopped.

The Lady rested her small, delicate hand over his heart. The move startled the knight as a warming sensation spread throughout his body. The throbbing pain in his thigh disappeared, along with his fever and cough. Reginald stared into the cerulean depths of her eyes. He was speechless, overcome with a feeling of gratitude he couldn't put into words.

The Lady sensed this and simply stepped back. Her form slowly grew transparent. Then altogether disappeared, leaving Reginald standing alone in the snowy drift. Renewed resolve filled the knight as he gazed upon Bern with narrowed eyes.



Albrecht Von Zähringen was born to nobility. His family, the Zähringens, had grown prosperous by founding many of the southern cities in the Holy Roman Empire. Little was denied to him. He was a tall, handsome, and broad shouldered young warrior. Women and adventures with his brothers were in abundance.

And then plague had struck Bern.

Though the city was not as heavily populated at that time, it spread quickly and ultimately claimed Albrecht. The young man's once powerful figure was ravaged by disease. Burst pustules had scarred his face. His powerful body was left wraithlike and ruined. No longer did women fawn over him. No longer could he follow his brothers into battle.

Already of diminished value as the third son, his father essentially disowned Albrecht. Unable to bear how people gazed upon his ruined form, many of his days were spent in self-exile within the family's large home. Until the day he rummaged through the storeroom. He didn't know what he was hoping to find. In retrospect it was probably the book that called to him.

The black grimoire that he discovered amongst so many of the looted relics, his family claimed in their conquests.

With the blasphemous tome in hand, Albrecht Von Zähringen left Bern to become a disciple of its dark power. Over the course of many years the unholy knowledge inked upon its pages was made his own. Now he had returned to Bern to reclaim his homeland and was close to securing his base of power. At least that's what he believed until he sensed the knight's tainted presence.

The Necromancer of Bern hurried to complete last minute preparations. His blood stained hands worked to cobble together an abomination he planed to have ready when the knight arrived. Harvested organs in varying states of decay lay piled on the rotten workbench he toiled over. Additional organs, like multiple hearts, meant augmented strength and durability for a ghoul. A contingency that was most likely unnecessary.

The manor's cellar was expanded. His undead minions required no rest and had dug further into the cold, worm ridden earth. Stretches of tunnel now connected the cellar with the cemetery. It provided him easy access to raw materials. Though the supply was limited. After all, people didn't die everyday in Bern, though he preferred it otherwise.

The cellar was now a heavily fortified tomb, guarded by his undead warriors. It was more than enough to handle a mere mortal. Though the loss of his imp familiar was troubling. It should have experienced no troubling in killing the knight. The mortal was either very lucky or more resourceful than he expected. A smile crossed his bearded face. He'd see for himself.



Night fell over Bern and Sir Reginald moved quickly through the city. Sentries patrolled the streets. Restless men with large halberds scoured the area for any potential enemies. The people of Bern knew evil dwelt within their city. Something Reginald would be considered if light from their lanterns revealed his presence.

The knight moved at a steady pace and soon enough spotted the Manor residing by the cemetery of Bern. It was a large, ill-omened structure whose occupants no doubt knew of his arrival. Footsteps on the snowy ground alerted Reginald to a patrol. He quickly stepped out of the street and pressed himself into a shadowed arch of a doorway. He held his breath as two militiamen strode by. The yellow light of their swaying lantern swept over him briefly, but he was not noticed.

Reginald exhaled softly. This was going to be difficult enough without innocent people getting in his way. Taking one last cautious look around, he made his approach to the Manor. There was not a trace of candlelight in any of its windows. The dark glass portals resembled baleful eyes that stared knowingly at the knight. It was an irrational thought, but one Reginald couldn't completely dismiss.

Reginald forged ahead, crept alongside the manor until he found a pantry door. He pressed his ear against the cold, wooden surface. Nothing. Not a sound came from within. Wishing he heard some evidence of enemies he knew to be within, Reginald began to pry open the door with his dagger. He winced as the door jam cracked loudly. There was nothing to do but head inside.

Reginald sheathed the dagger and stepped through the damaged door. He surveyed his surroundings and spotted a small lantern. Reluctantly he lit its wick, regretted further revealing his presence. But he needed to see. The flickering light illuminated the small, cabinet filled space. Reginald held the light before him guardedly as he stepped out into the kitchen.

"Unbelievers must die!!"

A frail form launched itself towards him from the darkness. There was a knife in its hand. Reginald was caught off guard as the weapon hit his outstretched arm holding the lantern. The blade is turned away by the chain mail. But the startled knight dropped his only light source. Recognition filled him as his assailant stepped into the lantern's pool of light. Reginald back peddled defensively. This was no member of the living dead, but the mistress of the home.

The woman screamed and pursued him. Reginald could barely identify her gender. Long hair hung over features utterly twisted by madness. She wielded the knife in a complete frenzy and it was all Reginald could do to block her attacks. The knight recovered from his initial shock and grabbed her wrist. He twisted it roughly, tried to force the crazed attacker to drop the weapon. But she wouldn't. Reginald could hear the bones in her wrist snap and still she wouldn't desist.

Realizing her weapon couldn't be brought to bear, the woman tried to pull Reginald in closer. Her mouth opened and she strained forward to tear the knight's throat out with her teeth. At that point, Reginald had enough. He whipped his head back and slammed the crown of his skull upon the woman's forehead. She stumbled backward from the head butt. Before she could recover, Reginald's mailed fist struck her soundly on the jaw. His attacker dropped to the kitchen floor in a heap.

The encounter left Reginald shaken. The woman had been possessed by madness, the sheer viciousness of her attacks was something he'd experienced battling men in Jerusalem. Unbridled rage was the last thing he expected from a woman who was half his weight.

But the knight couldn't dwell on the matter any further. Creaking floorboards alerted him to the figures moving in the darkness.

Undead warriors raised by the Necromancer stepped into the light. Their broken bodies were in varying states of decomposition. They moaned eerily, raised their arms and crude weapons as they lurched towards him. Reginald abandoned the light, knowing he was going to need both hands to grip his sword.

The lantern wobbled back and forth. An eerie backlight inadvertently kicked in different directions by the living dead that massed towards Reginald. He raised his broadsword high as the first ghoul shambled towards him. He hacked downward. His sword hewed through the ghoul's upraised arm and splintered its skull. It tumbled to the side as two others took its place.

Reginald was not quick enough to dodge a ghoul's grasp. A rotting hand clutched the knight's shoulder and its grimy fingers dug into the fabric of his cloak. Reginald managed to twist free as large strips of fabric were torn away. Another downward chop decapitated the off balanced ghoul. Reginald then thrust the sword's gore covered tip into his next opponent. The undead warrior grunted as steel filled the cavity of its chest. The knight twisted the sword as he pulled it free; he was about to finish his enemy when something brushed his cheek.

The crossbow bolt sticking out of the wall behind him was evidence of a new threat. Laughter filled the air and Reginald searched through the shifting mass of dead warriors to see a man, harried in his effort, to reload a large crossbow. He was positioned on the stairs leading up to the second floor. The elevated position allowed him clearance over the shambling horde.

"Life everlasting will be ours!" The crazed fanatic bellowed.

Reginald shifted to the right as another crossbow bolt sailed wide. But the evasion of one attack left him open for another. A ghoul slammed a thick wooden club across the top of his collarbone and Reginald stumbled backward in agony. The knight hacked wildly as he covered his retreat, struggled to keep an eye on the madman who took aim once more with the crossbow. Desperation and rage lead to the solution.

Reginald sheathed his sword and grappled the nearest ghoul. He slipped behind the uncoordinated warrior and secured a hold around its emaciated neck. His other hand free, Reginald drove his dagger home into the ghoul's festering guts. The flailing creature couldn't free itself and Reginald now had an undead shield.

Reginald dragged the ghoul along in front of him. Felt the impact of crossbow bolts hitting its chest. Some of the attacks of the undead mob still managed to land. Stinging blows that Reginald endured as he plowed through the undead throng towards the staircase. When another stray bolt hit the floor by his booted foot, the knight made his move.

Reginald released his rear chokehold of the ghoul and roughly shoved it into the crowd. He dashed up the steps, dagger still in hand, racing against time as the fanatic frantically worked to ready the crossbow. The deranged looking man brought the weapon up as Reginald's dagger swept down. The blade severed the drawstring and it snapped back into the face of the fanatic, tearing an eye out of his socket.

The man howled. His ruined eye dangled in front of his bloodied face. Reginald wasted no time in plunging his dagger repeatedly into his enemy's chest before tossing the fiend down the stairs. His limp body struck the ghouls who were already climbing up after Reginald. The knight drew his sword and immediately set upon his enemies.

Reginald took advantage of the staircase. He let it funnel the ghouls into a narrow space, which made it possible for him to engage them one on one. The knight's muscles burned with exertion. His sword became heavy as it pierced and hacked through putrid flesh. Coagulated blood splattered onto his surcoat from the impact of his blows. Until, finally, the last ghoul collapsed atop a pile of its twitching brethren.

Battered and blood covered, Reginald panted like an animal. His body shuddered as he forced himself to step over his fallen enemies and searched the home. The Necromancer hadn't shown himself during the battle. The knight knew neither one of the fanatics were the sorcerer. Reginald walked in the direction where the ghouls had appeared and discovered a door leading to a cellar.

Torchlight illuminated the cellar. Reginald knew the necromancer waited below. But there was something the knight didn't know as he marched down the steps. The lantern the ghouls kicked around in their efforts to reach him was broken and flames eagerly sought to devour the Manor.

Reginald guardedly descended into the cellar's first chamber. The odd bit of rotten flesh and stale blood on the floor marked the recent passage of the undead. Brackish light illuminated the scene. Its source was burning pitch held in metal brackets fastened to the walls. The manor's foundation was built upon crude stones. It was a haphazard masonry that divided the cellar into separate chambers.

Putrescence filled the air. Reginald took shallow breaths to keep from being overcome from nausea. Nothing human could stand to be down here. The knight considered that fact as he hugged the wall and crept closer to the doorway at the end of the room. Cautiously he peered around the corner. The adjacent room stretched the entire length of the manor.

This meant the cellar was divided into three chambers. Two on the right side he entered from and a large one he now peered into. At the far end of the large chamber stood the Necromancer. From his unseen position in the shadows, Reginald took stock of his enemy.

Even with his hunched posture, the Necromancer was noticeably tall. His skeletal frame was wrapped in layers of black rags. He wore a wide brimmed, pointed hat. A wild, ill groomed beard hung halfway down his chest. No weapon was at his side, only a large tome chained to his thin waist.

Taking one last look, Reginald stepped into the chamber. He stood in plain sight of his enemy. The Necromancer shifted slightly upon seeing Reginald and spoke,

"You've overcome my minions and now stand before me. But you won't be taking my grimore, fallen knight."

Reginald shook his head disdainfully, "I've come here to kill you and whatever horrors are down here. That bundle of moldering vellum at your side is of no interest to me."

"Then what do the damned gain in fighting each other? ...What did the angel promise you?" The Necromancer asked knowingly, a sneer on his revolting face.

Reginald grew silent. He was angered by the Necromancer's rhetorical question and the revelation of his motives. The knight let his rage carry him into battle. But before Reginald got within range to strike, a shower of mortar and stone struck him. A hulking form had crashed through the wall and wasted no time in attacking Reginald.

Reginald gave ground. He tried to remain disciplined, but the mere sight of the abomination before him filled his heart with dread. This was no ghoul, but an amalgamation of corpses.

The creature possessed four legs. They were jointed like a beetles and it used them to scuttle towards Reginald. Arms longer than an average human's were without hands. Its forearms ended in sharpened points. The monster's bare chest was covered in stitches. A tale-tell sign the creature had received further augmentation from the Necromancer who cackled maliciously at Reginald's fear.

It was the Necromancer's laughter that steeled Reginald's resolve. He raised his sword and parried aside a forearm meant to spear him. Reginald then ducked down as his backhand swing hacked into one of the monster's legs. He narrowly avoided the monster's other forearm that slashed the air just above his head. Reginald tried to follow up by thrusting his broadsword into the creature's gut, but was slammed backwards as the monster's undamaged foreleg hit him.

The breath was blasted from his lungs. Reginald rose painfully to his feet and once more retreated. The monster had enormous strength and possessed more ways to attack than Reginald was prepared to defend. Even if he possessed a shield – he would be hard pressed to overcome the monster's attacks. Reginald could not overpower this creature. He needed an advantage.

An idea came to the knight as the monster arched both of its arms towards him; they struck only earth as he rolled clear. Reginald got to his feet and ran back into the first chamber. His pursuer followed him. He sprinted into the room and reached for one of the crude torches he noticed upon entering the cellar. Reginald wrenched it free from the wall as the monster barreled through the narrow doorway. Again the poor masonry crumbled. Parts of the wall collapsed around the undead horror.

Reginald charged the abomination. The creature was still trying to get clear of the rubble as Reginald leapt atop its wounded foreleg. The monster roared, tried to orient its arms in a way to intercept the knight. But Reginald had already sprung forward with the torch in hand. The knight thrust it directly into the creature's rotten face, grinded the burning pitch into its eyes with all the hatred and might he could muster.

Reginald's side registered sharp pain as he was shoved away. The knight landed flat on his back as the blinded creature thrashed about wildly. A quick look at his torn surcoat verified where he'd been hit. His chain mail had prevented the sharpened bones of the abomination's forearm from impaling him entirely. Nevertheless, blood was already beginning to bleed through the white fabric.

He needed to end this.

Reginald stayed clear of the monster as it collided into the walls blindly. The knight re-entered the large chamber in search of the Necromancer, the sounds of the abomination's inhuman screams and destruction filled the air. The Necromancer still stood at the far end of the room. A look of confusion on his revolting face as Reginald closed in.

Realizing that the monster he sent to dispatch Reginald was not coming – he began to chant something.

It took a moment for Reginald to recognize the danger. He was used to fighting enemies that favored sword and shield. Dark sorcery existed only in the stories he heard as a child. But as the low, guttural tones of the Necromancer's voice reached Reginald's ears, a sense of urgency grew. The knight sprinted forward just as the Necromancer pointed a withered finger in his direction.

Pain erupted in Reginald's stomach and he staggered to the side. His knees buckled and would not support his weight. He managed to stumble into the last chamber before he vomited uncontrollably. Through blurry eyes he gazed upon severed rats tails and maggots squirming in a pool of bile he puked out. Reginald dry heaved as he stumbled and crawled away from the Necromancer. He heard the dark sorcerer coming towards him and willed himself to seek cover.

The knight crawled behind a stack of wooden coffins. He could only hope nothing decided to crawl out as he desperately fought to keep from vomiting again and thus reveal his position.

Reginald heard the shuffled gait of the Necromancer as he entered the chamber. He didn't know if the cover would even matter, what if the sorcerer's spells didn't require line of sight?

The Necromancer issued a low cackle, "The valiant knight whose come to slay me now hides? Such a pity. I imagine you've accepted there is no escape. Not from here or from the grisly torture that awaits you in hell. What a cruel predicament!"

The top coffins on the stack Reginald hid behind suddenly fell around him. Somehow the sorcerer had shoved them from where he stood across the room. More magic at work, Reginald thought, but remained still. The Necromancer wasn't certain he was there. The fact that he moved further into the chamber and away from his position confirmed this.

Strength returned to Reginald's limbs as time passed unbearable slowly. He braced himself to make a desperate charge at the Necromancer when a thunderous crash was heard on the other side of the room. Reginald peered around the corner quickly. The blinded abomination had stumbled into their conflict and given the knight his opening.

"What are you doing? You mindless collection of rot, you're –!"

The Necromancer didn't finish berating the monster, but turned to face Reginald who charged towards him. The abomination provided the distraction the knight needed. But the Necromancer spoke again – the words hurried, but clear. Again he pointed and this time a numbing wind struck Reginald. But not before the knight's sword hacked deeply into the sorcerer's arm.

The Necromancer screamed and his control over the spell broke. Reginald's hand ached and he removed his mail glove to see the flesh of his hand turned a bluish, death like hue. Gradually color returned and the knight looked up to see the Necromancer flee the room. Reginald chased after him, but the floor above him groaned loudly. Suddenly the timbers snapped altogether and a section of the first floor rained down.

The abomination's rampage had damaged the already weak foundation of the manor. With nothing to hold the home up, it was collapsing in upon itself. Flaming timbers buried the maddened creature and smoke filled the cellar. The manor was on fire.

Reginald didn't dwell on this as he pursued the Necromancer who was fleeing down a narrow tunnel. The knight was about to reach him as another section of the first floor collapsed. It pinned him in place as burning wreckage fell around him. The entire manor and its flaming contents were about to come crashing down on the trapped knight...



Albrecht Von Zähringen crawled through layers of loose cemetery soil until he was finally free of the suffocating earth that buried him. The Necromancer's right arm was all but useless. The knight's blade had cut deep into his bicep and forced him to claw at the cold earth with only one arm. Albrecht had been compelled to retreat. As the manor started to collapse around him, the Necromancer had fled down one of the tunnels leading to the cemetery.

Albrecht was furious. The bastard knight ruined everything. A look behind him confirmed his operations within Bern were destroyed. The Manor had completely collapsed. The building was now a mighty pyre lighting the night and attracting the people of Bern's attention. Albrecht took grim satisfaction in knowing the knight was buried within its burning timbers.

The Necromancer also still possessed his Grimoire. It was chained securely around his waist. Albrecht began to drag his body out of the loose soil that partially interred him. He was about to pull his legs free when a hand clutched his ankle in a vice like grip. The Necromancer looked back. His jaundiced eyes widened in honor at what he beheld.

Crawling up after him was the knight. The warrior's face was caked in blood and dirt. But beneath the grime, the murderous intent of his eyes blazed brightly. Words of dark magic and black sorcery were forgotten. Escape was the only thought that registered in Albrecht's mind. Frantically the Necromancer scrambled and twisted to get free.

But the knight simply dragged him closer. He growled furiously as he flipped Albrecht onto his back. The Necromancer kicked futilely at the enraged warrior, but there was no escape. Being one who dealt in the currency of death – the Necromancer knew when it was present.

Mailed fists rained down on his face. The Necromancer heard bones crack. He was conscious enough to realize they were his own. The endless flurry finally abated. Albrecht's vision was impaired due to the massive breakages in his cheek and orbital bones. But even with his failing vision he saw the knight lift his sword.

Albrecht Von Zähringen, The Necromancer of Bern, knew his plans for conquering his homeland were over. He feebly clutched the Grimoire as the knight's broadsword plunged downward. The last thing Albrecht saw before death claimed him was Reginald's enraged face staring down at his own.



Reginald stared down upon his enemy's corpse. The energy his fury provided was spent. The knight had nearly been buried beneath the manor's rubble. It took all of his strength to free himself from the debris and reach the Necromancer. Reginald had crawled up through the cemetery like one of the ghouls he'd felled. All things considered, the knight wasn't far from death himself.

His body was a collection of wounds; the most serious were inflicted by the undead abomination. Nevertheless, Reginald stood victorious. A battered and blood stained figure illuminated by the flames of the burning manor. He took one last look at the Necromancer and spotted the Grimoire still chained to his waist. Reginald freed the malevolent tome. He could feel the power of the blasphemous book in his mailed hand.

With this artifact he could amass power. Surround himself with his own army of the dead. Those forces that sought this destruction would be helpless against the sorceries he'd wield. All of this would be so. The Grimoire promised...

Reginald held the book close as he exited the cemetery and stood before the conflagration. The knight looked upon the Grimoire once more. His mailed fingers dug into the leather of its cover in a death grip. Reginald heard the approach of local militia and knew he needed to make a choice. Forcing himself to look away, the knight heaved the Grimoire into the greedy flames that consumed what was left of the manor.

Reginald wrestled with the temptation to retrieve the book even as it burned. But Bern's militiamen had surrounded him while he was under the Grimoire's throes. The knight snarled viciously and raised his sword to attack. His reason utterly lost to despair.

Fear saved him.

The fear expressed in the faces of Bern's citizenry. They gripped their weapons with trembling hands, terrified at the very sight of Reginald. They perceived him as some newly risen nightmare from their cemetery. As his reason returned – the knight realized they were right. Reginald had raised his sword arm to strike down the very people he had struggled to save. This cruel irony tore at his soul. Reginald howled his anguish and broke free of the loose circle of men.

The militia gave chase throughout most of the night. But Reginald managed to escape Bern with a bitter comfort. Its people had driven out the last monster within their city.



Later that morning, The Lady trailed after Sir Reginald. Her presence undetected by the knight who trudged on towards Dijon at morning's first light. She had been present during his struggle with the Necromancer, witnessed the near tragedy at the battle's conclusion. Reginald had almost succumbed to the Grimoire's influence. The blood of Bern's men would have stained the knight's hands – ensuring his damnation.

There was darkness in Reginald's heart. The Grimoire sensed it and tried to claim Reginald as it had Albrecht Von Zähringen. But the knight's threadbare conscience resisted the artifact's call long enough for him to see to its destruction. Thus Reginald succeeded in what was his true mission all along. Had the knight fallen under the Grimoire's sway another warrior, much like Reginald, would have been summoned to fight the new Necromancer of Bern.

The Lady did not hold much hope for Reginald. Such a near disaster so early didn't bode well for the knight whose penance had just begun. Still, her task remained the same. Through portents and her direct intervention, she would guide Reginald in his crusade for redemption.