

# ***Hell Hath No Fury...***

## ***Siggy Commission for PandaKnight***

Valentine's Day was a well known festive celebration around the world. A day for lovers to come together as one, with the men receiving a gift of chocolates from their significant others as a symbol of their unwavering affection, reciprocating in kind with their own heartfelt thanks and good wishes.

But not many were aware of the origins of Valentine's Day, much less the man behind the myth; Saint Valentine himself and the fact that the celebratory period was meant to commemorate his martyrdom with a feast. It was only when embellishments began to spread about the tale did the Valentine's of today begin to take shape. Romanticizing the Saint's sacrifice with suppositions that he had sent a letter to the daughter of the man who jailed him signed 'Your Valentine' while other, more grounded beliefs told of him performing wedding rites for Roman soldiers forbidden from being wedded under the rule of then Emperor Claudius II despite never issuing such an order himself.

It wouldn't take much afterwards to transform the day of respect into one of love and passion, with the majority forgetting the original intent of Valentine's Day itself amongst other things as time went on, but some of those who remembered and wept for the Saint saw this new trend as an ignorant blasphemy of their religion; taking advantage of a man's death to propagate a fairy tale, blaming greedy businessmen and the faithless fools who stood to profit from the business boom Valentine's Day now offered them as lovestruck waifs spent their money on extravagant gifts and treats.

One among these zealots was an accomplished knight known simply as Germaine, taking pride in his accomplishments that saw him through a successful career as a captain of a garrison of knights. Germaine had once been a man of the cloth before deciding to take on the sword in an effort to defend his homeland and the faith, believing that everything in his life wasn't his own, but the work of his one and true God, never feeling self gratified and only ever sharing his beliefs with one another, his closest friend and second in-command; Eustace.

But if there was one fault Germaine was infamous for, it was his inability to hold a proper conversation with women, finding them a bother to talk with stemming more from his mind unable to think of anything a fine maiden would engage with more so a hate for them. Of course, no living man alive could read another's mind, so when people saw the deep furrows in his brow and the sweat beading his forehead, they naturally assumed the knight couldn't stand people of the opposite gender, it was something he had learned to brush off as petty insults by jealous fools. But while they claimed Germaine was nothing but a grump, the rabble had never seen the man angry in the truest sense of the word. For Germaine, there was no such thing as mild annoyance or irritation, there was only righteous fury.

He could take insults, beatings, reprimand, stressful working hours, but the slightest peel of an insult against his faith was enough to incite his wrath, known for his awe inspiring tirades and energetic movement, the man was not to be trifled with when it came to religion, so those who knew of his temperament were careful with their words.

And as expected of a man as devout as he was, Germaine was no slouch when it came to the history of Christianity, memorizing everything from the Bible down to each individual Saint whose name was preserved in the annals of time as martyrs, Saint Valentine included.

Incidentally, the very day celebrated in his name was soon to come, and a certain young maiden hailing from a well off family of nobles had heard of the spreading tales that spoke of the Saint, tales of romance that had immediately enraptured the heart of Sophia, who has found them endearing. Wasting no time, she had put her confectionery skills to good use, and with some of the finest ingredients in the country, had managed to bake and prepare a cake for her beloved, putting all her love and effort into producing the homely little treat small enough to box into a present. A staunch believer in Germaine's unwavering faith, Sophia had high hopes in her heart that the man would open up to her.

And when Saint Valentine's Day came rolling by, Sophia stood waiting patiently by the entrance to the church she knew Germaine frequented, awaiting his arrival with her gift in hand and her proposal in mind, feeling her heart leap into her mouth at the sight of the tall, black haired knight marching down the street accompanied by his fellow knights.

**The romantic and happy occasion Sophia had envisioned however, would never come to pass...**

The instant the man saw the cake in hand as she bowed her head, Germaine's blind rage had kicked in, only managing to hold back because the unwitting 'offender' was a dainty little girl, smacking the thing from her hands with a frown, uncaring even with the soft splat of the cake smashing into a sorry lump on the floor ringing out in the empty town square. In Germaine's eyes, Sophia was yet another fool who knew naught of Christianity but depravity, sighing in disgust while claiming he would never love someone like her, spitting the words right in her face.

One could only imagine the pain that streaked through Sophia right at that very moment, with some eyewitnesses claiming the young lady's eyes had gone dark then and there, as if she'd seen something terrible.

There was no quarrel, no shrill screaming. Instead, Sophia had simply turned away from Germaine, looking sullen as she rubbed the hand that been rudely brushed aside, picking up what remained of the ruin cake she had worked so hard to make before walking away, leaving the band of knights to chastise their ignorant leader while muttering under her breath.

For as much love as Sophia's heart could hold, so too could it contain anger, sadness, all the negative emotions imaginable were now festering within, adding weight to the words seething from her lips as she cast one last sidelong glance at Germaine with a tear in the eye before turning the corner around the street, vanishing from his life altogether.

**"You'd do well to apologize my friend, for as much as I understand your personal beliefs, wounding the heart of a maiden such as Sophia is unthinkable! An outrage!"**

But Germaine hadn't listened to a single word from Eustace as they proceeded into the Church, brushing Sophia off as a blind girl who knew nothing of faith if she thought a cake would turn him. To submit was to admit that the rumors were true in his eyes, and that was the last thing he wanted. He was supposed to be a bastion of his faith, and a bastion did not allow even one speck to break through its dominion. Clasp his hands in prayer as the sermons began.

As he prayed however, the powers that governed the world could not accept the boorish behavior of the man who had so rudely cast aside the love of a pure hearted maiden right outside a church no less, working to right Germaine's wrong by answering Sophia's heartfelt curse to the man who had so brazenly insulted her love for him.

Curses back then worked in strange ways, never taking immediate effect, waiting instead for an opportune moment in the victim's life to take hold, subjecting them to a variety of effects that were almost always negative and detrimental to their current lifestyle, like say a singer having her voice stolen from her or a carpenter losing touch with his skills. But the curse hanging over Germaine's head was something much more powerful than those comparatively minor afflictions. Waiting for the right moment to take effect as the knights finished their morning routine before preparing to head off into the woods to take up their latest assignment; clearing out an encamped group of bandits who had taken to pillaging from the surrounding villages and towns before slinking back into the cover of the overgrown forest. They knew the place like the back of their hands, so it was no surprise no one had been able to take them out.

Until now that is, with Germaine and his garrison called forth to deal with the threat, the bandits' days were numbered.

Or so that was what everyone believed, unaware of the divine retribution soon to be meted out on Germaine's head.

***-CONTINUED OVER ON THE PATREON-***