

“Lord Timotheus!”

Lord Timotheus, Grand Commander of the Bowman Defense Force, watched as his trusty second in command, Prince Kristof, came stumbling towards the gates to Johnstowne on his severely wounded steed. Kristof was also Timotheus’ brother, though you wouldn’t know it by looking at the two.

“Hail there, my dear brother. What news do you have from the river?”

Lord Timotheus had sent a small troop of soldiers to explore a disturbance along the Imperial River. One of the smaller settlements along the river had informed the BDF that there were strange goings-on there. When questioned, all they could do was say *strange*. They had stated that *one* needed to see for *oneself*.

The question that now arose was, why has only *one* returned?

“Brother?”

Kristof’s horse lost his life then. The fine stallion had been his go between for many years. In a way, the horse had been his best friend. Things were surely not good down by the river – not good at all.

“Timo...” was all that Prince Kristof could muster before he too collapsed.

“I tell you, I do not know what happened.”

“But you sent him off! And what of your other brother? Hmm?”

“Shhh...he’s waking.”

It hurt for Prince Kristof to lift his head. His vision was clouded and his hearing muffled. Had he just heard voices? It sounded like his brother and his wife, Princess Nenee. Were they arguing? If so, what were they arguing about?

“Thank god!” Princess Nenee gave her husband a quick peck on the cheek.

“Nenee...what...what happened?”

“Hush now baby – lay your head down now and rest.”

Kristof tried to disobey, but his body had other plans. He collapsed on his pillow once again.

“No, no, NO!!!” came screams from Kristof’s bed. They were loud enough to knock Nenee from her stool.

Nenee wiped the dirt from her dress as she rose. She nearly always wore dresses. She was a princess after all – a princess from a far away land. That thought quickly escaped her head as she heard more screams coming from her husband’s bed.

“Kristof. Kristof!” she shouted as she shook her husband awake. She noticed how flushed his face was. There was also a frozen look of terror in his eyes.

“Get my brother. NOW!”

Timotheus was in the middle of romancing his wife when three loud raps sounded from his front door.

“Christ almighty, what hour is this?”

“Two of the morning” his wife answered.

Three more raps, louder this time. “This had better be good.”

Lord Timotheus plopped down out of bed, slapped on his robe, and headed for the front door. The knocking continued when he yelled “Enough, I’m coming.”

As he opened the door, he was greeted with fists.

“Oh my god, I’m sorry.”

“Sure...whatever, just help me up.” Timotheus extended his hand towards his sister-in-law. When he saw that she had ignored his hand, he helped himself up. He wiped the blood flowing across his moustache on to his hand and observed that Nenee was shaking severely.

“What?”

“Just come...please.”

When they entered Kristof’s residence, they were surprised to find his bed empty. A quick search revealed Kristof to be praying to the toilet gods.

Timotheus tried to help his brother up, but he was pushed aside. It was then that he noticed how white Kristof’s face had become. Upon further examination, he swore he saw green blotches across Kristof’s face. He determined that it was merely trickery on his mind, played by the dim lights of the bathroom. Timotheus stood patiently while his brother emptied his stomach time and time again into the bowl.

Fifteen minutes later, Kristof was still puking.

It was nearly 5 AM when the doctor arrived. It would be several hours before the examination was completed. During that time, Lord Timotheus took rest on a chair in the corner of Kristof’s bedroom.

“Lord Timotheus, sir,” the doctor said while shaking Timotheus awake.

Groggily, Timotheus replied. “Doctor, what are the results?”

Timotheus watched as the doctor began pacing, clearly deciding how to best put the diagnosis. The doctor’s name was Germ Legasse. He was a portly fellow, standing about 5’8” with a chubby face, dark curly hair, and thick rimmed glasses. He had been a friend since childhood – along with his brother Boyd. Germ took up medicine, while his brother took a completely different route. He was now a nightly performer in the town of Pleasantville, mainly performing at Cat House – an establishment owned by Timotheus’ and Kristof’s Aunt Winifred.

Timotheus broke the silence first. “Well Doc, what is the verdict?”

Again, Dr. Legasse began to pace, this time more fanatically. Timotheus rose from his chair and shook the doctor to his senses.

“Doctor, please!”

Germ turned towards Timotheus and pushed his glasses further up his nose. He finally replied. “You may want to sit back down.”

Defiantly, Timotheus shook his head *no*.

“Very well,” Dr. Legasse began. “Your brother has slipped into a coma. There is no way to tell when, or if, he will ever wake up. In fact, it is my best guess that your brother will...sadly...pass on from this world within a week. It is though he has been poisoned, but I see no evidence as of such. If it weren’t so absurd, I’d say he was under a spell. But again...absurd.”

Timotheus could do nothing but fall back into the chair he had slept in. This was simply too much to bear. He would lie there for several hours, during which he did not sleep. He simply stared ahead and said nothing.

When Timotheus finally moved, the house was quiet. It appeared to him that Dr. Legasse had taken his leave. Princess Nenee was sprawled on her couch fast asleep. Timotheus rose from the chair and went into Kristof's bedroom. He looked upon his brother and noticed how peaceful he looked. For a moment, he thought Kristof to be dead. However, he soon discovered Kristof's chest rising and falling to the rhythm of his breathing.

Timotheus was about to sneak out of the house and head home to his wife when he noticed a note on one of the end tables. For some reason, he decided to pick it up and read it.

It read as follows:

*Dear Brother,*

*I know this will come as a shock to you, both as how I came to write this letter, and for the subject matter contained within. All I ask is that you open your heart and mind to a new world of possibilities.*

*I don't know how much time I have to write this, so I will keep it short of details. Perhaps there will come a time soon when we can explore those further.*

*When Buck and I came to the river, it wasn't long before we knew something was seriously wrong. There was an absence of sound, almost as if all the animals had disappeared. The light above the river seemed different. I can't really describe how. It surely had to be seen with one's own eyes. A low mist rolled over the water toward us. That was when we realized it was too late to run.*

*The mist was upon us rather quickly. When it reached the shore, it transformed into something else – a gateway of some sort. It was as if that section of space ripped open. At first, there was a blinding glow. Then darkness. A pool of darkness rather. Moments later, foul creatures flew out from the hole.*

*I tell you brother, they were creatures the likes that this world has never seen. They killed many of our men. The others were dragged off into the hole in space. Buck and I were lucky enough to stay on our steeds and make our escape. Only it never really happened that way at all.*

*I turned in time to see Buck launch from his horse and get sucked into the hole. I feared I was next, but I somehow escaped its grasp. However, fate was not on my side. Some kind of green lightning launched from the hole and struck my faithful steed. Although it hit him alone, it also jumped into my body. I did not feel so bad at the time, but it has obviously taken an affect on me after all.*

*With that, I'll leave you with these final words. Do what you can to save Buck. I know he is still alive somewhere. As well, Bowmania must be protected at all costs. I fear that a sinister evil is arising and headed for these lands. As for me, just know that I am safe...for now. My body may be out of commission, but my spirit is not. If you can save*

*me, I would of course be grateful. However, I do not want to be the main focus. The country is in extreme danger. Efforts must be given towards the nation first and foremost. I feel that Buck will be a major player in the coming events as well. He should come before me.*

*Tell my wife and family that I love them. Tell them that I will do what I can to survive. For now, that is the best that any of us can do. All the medicine in the world will not save me now. It is past the realm of science.*

*Take care brother.*

*Signed with hope,  
Prince Kristof*

Lord Timotheus did not know what to take of the letter. It betrayed all the knowledge of science that he was aware of. It defied the nature of the world. Yet even still, there was something just as surprising about to happen. The letter slowly faded out of existence from within his hands. In the end, it was as though it had never been there in the first place.