

Brawlhalla Community Anthology

Summer 2022

A Community Writing Showcase

Edited by Baron Dipitous



Art Credit: Baron Dipitous

The *Brawlhalla Community Anthology* is a new endeavor (read: experiment) that aims to showcase *Brawlhalla*-related creative writing pieces made by members of the Brawlhalla community. It is published online, free of charge, on a seasonal basis (to coordinate with seasonal esports championships), with the addition of a fifth “best of the year” issue in November (coordinating with the Brawlhalla World Championships, also known as BCX). This anthology is purely a fan-made effort and has no official connection with *Brawlhalla* or its developers (Blue Mammoth Games, or “BMG”). The written & artistic pieces showcased in this issue are the sole intellectual property of their respective owners (usually the creators).

Each issue of the *Brawlhalla Community Anthology* is available as a free PDF download on <https://barondipitous.itch.io/brawlhalla-community-anthology>.

The anthology welcomes fiction, poetry, articles, essays, fan-made legend lore, and just about any other writing medium that can be published online to the Brawlhalla community. If you are interested in submitting your piece, please read the submission guidelines (link below). You may also contact Baron Dipitous (barondipitous@gmail.com) for additional questions or concerns not covered in that document.

Link to submission guidelines:

<https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1Gry8j5uXLXpbkx0GG1tUaIRWlvbd9rG4w6XVYE6Zgj8/view>

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A Note from the Editor

Thank you so much for reading this summer issue! Sometimes I wonder if this publication is worth the effort, but with each issue I am increasingly pleased with the results! There were very few submissions this season, but I was able to fill this issue with some fun content anyway!

Sometimes, I like to listen to my playlists that focus on “epic” orchestral music. Thomas Bergersen, Full Tilt, Two Steps from Hell, etc. fill this Pandora station. My imagination always runs wild when I play these, and they are an enjoyable diversion in my commutes to & from work each day. These past few months, I was thinking that I don’t create things very often. At least, just fun little things as often as I would like. A lot of what I had been doing this year up to this point has been attempts at longer-term projects & endeavors. It’s kind of nice to just...make something because I think it would be cool. For purely intrinsic rewards. I’m starting to do that again now, with the pixel art piece on the cover of this issue, but also with one of the stories I wrote specifically for this summer issue. It was an idea that came to me as I was listening to some of that music I mentioned earlier, which often underscores many epic scenes I allow to play in my head.

There really is such potential in *Brawlhalla* lore. So many angles to so many familiar concepts are present here (especially all the different takes & cultural clashes with the familiar Norse myth setting). To be fair, you can find this kind of potential in the lore of just about any game or piece of fiction (I’ve seen hours-long video essays diving deep in what the internet has done to *Simpsons*, *Undertale*, and even *Garfield*). I guess I gravitated towards *Brawlhalla* because I found something uniquely appealing to me. That special blend of epic & hilarious, coupled with some really neat & original concepts, all within a fighting game. The other pieces in this issue show more of that potential from a couple other perspectives.

The creativity of the *Brawlhalla* community continues to astound me. This year has seen a tremendous uptick in discussion (sometimes warm debates or worse) about the gameplay & “state” of the game. But these discussions don’t usually take into consideration the aspect of the community that just creates these art pieces & writings & other pieces of creativity that are the product of an idea sparked by *Brawlhalla*. Without discounting the real, valid reasons for change & improvement in the game & its community, I still believe we truly do have so much to be grateful for.

As always, all are welcome to submit their *Brawlhalla*-related fan works & writings for this seasonal anthology. Just follow the links & guidelines on page 1 above. Please enjoy these stories & art pieces!

All the best,

Baron Dipitous :)

Master Hunter Octavius Mordex

Galadheim XIV



Fangwild Song & Script

Battle Pass Season 6 Lore Reveal Video Poems & Script (June 2022)

Baron Dipitous

Below, you'll find some poetry, followed by a script. I wrote the short poems in a moment of inspiration on June 7, 2022, shortly after I learned about the lore behind battle pass 6 ("Enter the Fangwild"). I imagined Orma—Arcadia's singing greatsword—singing to Ember & others. I performed the Ragnir & Ember verses for my lore reveal video. I didn't use the other verses because I thought they would reveal the Dusk & Arcadia skin too early.

The script was the one I wrote for my battle pass reveal video for season 6. I performed the Narrator & Ragnir voice lines, while fellow Global Breakout member, Kimber, performed Ember. I based this story off of lore information given to me by developers from Blue Mammoth Games. I also snuck in the names of each of the battle pass skins ("Fangwild's Heart," "Elder Wild," etc.). See if you can spot them!

Orma Songs

Orma's Arcadian Plea (To Arcadia)

Bulbs and seeds,
Flowers and trees.
So too shall you bloom.

Claim your crown,
Blade, & gown.
Ere arrives the gloom.

Orma's Twilight Dread (About Dusk)

Thorn and shade.
Renegade!
Scorn as sharp as spears!

Scheme and spur.
Sorcerer!
Source of Fangwild's fears!

Orma's Blazing Gratitude (To Ragnir)

Scale & flame,
Boastful name,
Might & power vast.

Branches shake,
Now in your wake,
Daughter found at last.

Orma's Warm Embrace (To Ember)

Into view,
Guardian true!
Friendly roots you tread.

Welcome home!
Long did you roam.
Daughter, rest your head.

Ember Enters the Fangwild

Narrator: Valhalla is heaven for some, but not for Ember. As the Fangwild's Daughter, her heart has always been in the forest she cared for all her mortal life. No amount of mead can slake her thirst for the water of the fey-touched fountains that feed the roots of the finest fangleaf trees.

This pining for the far-off forest isn't from a lack of trying. Countless times she has tried to find the Fangwild again. Often Ragnir would help, especially after he discovered how much the forest missed its daughter. Ember hoped her long absence wouldn't cause her home to corrupt itself beyond repair. Despite the many years, the sense of urgency never goes away. No amount of glory can change that.

Ember gets up and prepares for yet another journey with Ragnir. He insists he's got it this time. Maybe this trek will be different. Maybe this time...she can come home at last.

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[Forest sounds, Ember walking in a forest, flapping of dragon wings overhead]

Ember [to herself, she's been walking for a while]: No matter how many times I try to return, it always seems like this forest never ends, and yet...the Fangwild never begins. *sigh* I need to rest for a bit. [shouting to the sky] Ragnir! We need to stop!

[sounds of Ragnir swooping down, crashing to the ground near Ember]

Ember: Ahh! Watch where you're landing! I swear you're going to be the deathcap of me...

Ragnir: Haha! Says the elf who's been dead for centuries!

Ember: You know as well as I do anything can happen out here.

Ragnir: We're not even in the Fangwild yet, and you're already worried?

Ember: Actually, about that. We've tried to get me back to the Fangwild for the entire time I've lived in Valhalla. All those centuries you just mentioned. Stuck in an undesired afterlife.

Ragnir: Oh come on. Valhalla is great! All the sheep you can eat!

Ember: Yes, it is a good afterlife, but it's not *my* good afterlife!

Ragnir: Yes, I know all too well. Plus, your absence hasn't exactly been good on the Fangwild itself either.

Ember [frustrated, mocking Ragnir's name]: So tell me, “great Malakkar Rex,” what makes you think this attempt to get me back is any different from countless others? We’ve tried so many things: mushroom circles, back doors through other realms, alignment with every other equinox for 3 decades in a row...twice, an actual wildfire (still haven’t forgiven you for that), and even that one time you *insisted* we follow the migrating pwello...uh, poppy...what was it again?

Ragnir [a bit embarrassed]: Uh, Puella Papilio?

Ember: Yep. That. We ended up in some strange earth wilderness for days! What made you think *that* was a good idea??

Ragnir: I got names mixed up, okay? I’m still embarrassed about it, honestly. At the time, I was still new to the Elder Wild magic, and that name sounded a lot like a spell I came across. It was worth a shot, right?

Ember: *sigh* Debatable, but the effort is still appreciated, I suppose. Anyway, my question still stands. What makes you think this time is any different?

Ragnir: A fair question, and I know I’ve said this before, but now I feel truly attuned to the Elder Wild, as you can see.

Ember: Yes, you look very majestic and all that, but what does that mean??

Ragnir: It means *this* time I was able to detect something I had never noticed before in all those years: An extremely subtle stream of fae dust that weaves through the forest canopy in a deliberate path. We’ve been following it very consistently for quite some time.

Ember [skeptical, but interested]: Huh, never heard that one before. Where does it lead? How much farther along is it?

Ragnir: It leads to your home. Into Fangwild’s Heart. And if my senses did not deceive me, and if you’ve been following my flight all this time...

Ember: Yes?

Ragnir: Then it should be...that clearing up ahead. You see it?

Ember: I do see a clearing at least. Okay. Let’s see if you’re right this time.

[very faint singing]

Ragnir [urgently]: Ember, wait!!

Ember: Oh dear, what is it *now*—

Ragnir: Quiet! Don't you hear that?

Ember: Hear what?

Ragnir: That voice. It's singing a verse. It's about me I think.

Ember: Oh, of *course* you'd think some disembodied voice would be singing your praises. No thank you.

Ragnir: I'm *serious*! Stop. And. *Listen*! I think it's going to sing another verse soon.

Ember: I don't care. I'm going for the clearing. And I swear, Ragnir, if this entire trip has been some lengthy prank, then I'm not going to...

[Ember steps forward into the clearing, and everything changes, the soundscape changes]

Ember: Wait. Ragnir. I can't believe it. I think this is—

[the Singing Voice swells into its final, joyful chorus]

Singing Voice:

Into view,
Guardian true!
Friendly roots you tread.

Welcome home!
Long did you roam.
Daughter, rest your head.

[the Singing Voice stops, and everything is still, but it's clear that this is no longer the same forest they've been walking in all this time]

[Ember starts sobbing as the emotional weight of being away from her home has finally lifted; it is also clear to her that the Fangwild has never forgotten her, which is a huge, unexpected relief]

Ember [emotional, probably in tears]: I...I'm home. [pause for a few seconds, taking it all in]
You've changed, haven't you?

[a breeze swells through the trees, as if in answer]

Ember: Yes...yes...so have I. But...I've never forgotten you. I've dreamed of you every day.

[some birds & insects chirp and chatter, as if in response]

Ember: And you...you have never forgotten me, have you?

[wood groans, as if in response]

Ember: But I'm not your guardian anymore, am I? Someone else has taken up that mantle now? I did not expect to say this but...I think I can accept that. I am only mortal, after all. At least, I was...

[pause for a few seconds, no clear response from the Fangwild, but with a few forest sounds it is a moment of serenity & clarity]

Ember: Well, thank you, Ragnir. In spite of everything, now I am finally at peace. Now, I can dwell here as a quiet spirit. Now...after all these years of trying to come back...I am home.

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Flying High Vector

Galadheim XIV



Galadheim XIV really doesn't like to talk about himself much, preferring to hide behind his illustrations a little bit. He's had the honor to work as an illustrator in films and book covers in the past. Being from a small town in Canada, the internet has been the way to go to get his work seen. You can see some of his work by visiting my artstation page at <https://www.artstation.com/saintgenesis>. If you prefer to see his *Brawlhalla*-related drawings, paintings and designs, you can follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Vincent37601808>.

The End...is Nai

Baron Dipitous

To whom it may concern,

I hope I am not the *only* one concerned. But, I believe I've done all I can do. May this letter be my witness against whatever may come.

The Library of Valhalla is admittedly not a high traffic area. This shouldn't be surprising, considering the fact that the vast majority of the population is composed of the participants of the grandest & longest-lasting invitational tournament in the universe. It is also unfortunate (yet understandable) that the Norse god of wisdom doesn't usually frequent the library stacks or archives, owing to his tremendously limited physical capabilities. At least Odin is the one benefiting from the wisdom imparted from Mimir's head. I shudder to consider what would become of this place, or all of Valhalla, if Odin were left to his own devices. Hugin & Munin can only do so much.

All this is to say that I don't see many of Valhalla's residents, let alone warriors, enter the library. There are some occasional regulars here, even among the greatest legends. I was thrilled when Scarlet approached me asking for a room to reserve on a monthly basis for the Valhallan Ladies Book Club. Apart from that, I see a few others from time to time. Various Valhallans like to review the old stories. Some want to know a bit more about the times & place their opponents come from. But for the most part, this library tends to serve as more of a holding place of information rather than an active study or research space.

So, imagine my surprise to see Queen Nai approach my desk. She arrived so quietly, I'm not sure how long she waited for me to look up from my work. Her eyes, lacking pupils, formed a glowing white void that never looked so unnerving until this moment up close. Getting over my initial shock at her seemingly sudden appearance, I asked her how I could help.

"I wish to know about Ragnarok."

Her soft voice was earnest, yet also a bit curt. Sometimes, library patrons know exactly what they want, and Queen Nai always struck me as a determined yet patient warrior. It seems she is no different when seeking information.

Her query was simple enough, but even with a simple request it's always good to ask a few more questions to get a better sense of the patron's needs.

"Alright, what do you want to know about it?"

"Everything."

“Okay, but anything specific? It can be a rather broad subject, so I wanted to make sure—”

“Can I be any clearer, *bookkeeper*? I want to know everything about Ragnarok. Tell me where the book is, and I will read it. That is all. I don’t need unnecessary noses in my affairs.”

Her frustration came just shy of insulting, but she made herself clear. So, I made a simple search on the catalog computer at my desk (one might think Valhalla is devoid of “modern” technology, but you’d be surprised). I found the call number for the surprisingly small section on Ragnarok, wrote it down, and invited Queen Nai to follow me to the stacks.

I take great pleasure in teaching people how to use the library, but it seems Queen Nai wasn’t interested in anything besides her simple query. In silence, we found the right section. Ragnarok is considered an inevitable prophecy, recorded by the Norns and aware by all. We also have complete, untarnished copies of the *Völuspá* and the *Prose Edda*, the two primary sources of many Norse myths (including Ragnarok) as the humans of Earth understand them.

It seemed Queen Nai wanted all of those books, and she didn’t want to have to carry them. So, I got the books from the shelf and placed them on a nearby table for her to read. She asked for a more private space, so I offered one of the empty study rooms. Again, she asked me to carry the books for her. It seemed privacy was very important to her, because she kept asking if she would ever possibly be spotted or even disturbed while she was reading. I assured her not many people came to the Valhallan Library, and even those who do won’t likely see her in the private study room. When we arrived, she thanked me for my time and brusquely asked me to leave her be. I obliged, returning to my front desk.

A very slow day that day, even for the library. No one else came by my desk for hours. The next time I heard the front door open & shut, it was Queen Nai leaving. I checked her study room, and all the books were still there. I marked their use and returned them to the shelves, very curious about this entire interaction. I saw no notes left behind. Nothing different about the books. It seems she just read what she wanted and left.

In general, a library patron’s quest for information is their own. It is not my job to police their inquiries. I’m generally just supposed to make sure information is organized and available for all who come here, and help people find what they need. I certainly did my job with Queen Nai, but I strongly suspected there was something going on here.

I looked over Queen Nai’s publicly available bio page (each of the top 100 or so of the *einherjar* has one), and even a quick glance tells me all I think I need to know about this situation. Perhaps the reason she was so efficient today was that it’s quite easy to figure out her motives: She’s got a prophecy of her own she wants to see fulfilled:

“So it is written that the warrior queen shall walk abroad and vex the Stranger Gods in their own house. She will defeat them in tests of their own devising and wrest the laurels from their

crowns. And in the final battle she will call out, and our Old Gods will answer in fury, destroying all so the cycle may begin anew."

– *The Prophecy of the Jaguar Queen*

I wish I knew the exact source of the prophecy, but that's not the issue here. Assuming Queen Nai believes in this prophecy, and wishes to see it fulfilled, I'm guessing she wanted to know about Ragnarok because that last sentence refers to a cycle "begin[ing] anew." I once overheard her explaining to Bödvar her beliefs in a cyclical nature of time & destiny. Perhaps she was familiar with the general concept of Ragnarok before, but maybe something prompted her to explore the topic further? If so, perhaps she is less patient than I gave her credit for...

My worst suspicions were validated by a new report from the Norns. The weavers of fate very, very seldom welcome visitors, for many obvious reasons. I've never seen them, and I think Brynn might be the only person I know besides any of the gods to have interacted with them directly. But, whenever anyone does strike a conversation with them, they send a transcript of the conversation to the archives for safe keeping. These records are generally off-limits without special clearance, but I happen to be one of the few with that clearance.

I know what I'm about to do is against the spirit & the letter of the policies surrounding these transcripts, but I feel this is something that everyone who cares about Valhalla should be aware of. I'm not sharing this letter publicly, but I wish for it to contain a "backup file" of this conversation between Queen Nai & the Norns (among other things, as you'll see).

The conversation is as follows (I trust any reader can understand the implications of this rather quickly):

Verdandi: Ah, sisters, look who has arrived uninvited!

Skuld: Uninvited, but expected nonetheless.

Urd: This was a long time coming. If I weren't a Norn, I'd be shocked she didn't come here earlier.

Queen Nai: So you are the seers of this pantheon. The Norns.

Skuld: Would you be here if we weren't?

Queen Nai: So you know what I want.

Verdandi: We do, indeed.

Urd: We see all you've done & desired in the past.

Verdandi: All you're doing at every moment.

Skuld: And what you will achieve.

Verdandi: You seek information. A journey that began in the library.

Nai: Yes. Out with it. What must I do?

Urd: If you believe in your own prophecy, then why not continue waiting?

Nai: I've *been* waiting! For centuries I chose to bide my time. Enjoying a lavish living of someone else's design. Playing along with Odin's games to avoid suspicion. Waiting, waiting, waiting for the day of the "final battle." Rehearsing over and over what exactly I will "cry out" against the pitiful Stranger Gods. Calculating what will make them "answer in fury." Waiting ever so patiently for lifetimes upon lifetimes for the cycle to turn for me. But all I've seen in all this time is stagnation. Sameness. The unwavering banality of the same formulaic fighting over and over with no updates to my—or anyone's—fate.

Verdandi: My my, aren't you eloquent when you're angry!

Skuld: Before you continue, you should be aware that anyone who speaks to us will have their words be known. The library keeps a record of every conversation we have with visitors.

Verdandi: The very words I speak now.

Urd: And all the words we have spoken together since you've stepped in here.

Nai: Wait, what?? You mean, everyone will know...?

Skuld: They're not public. For all you know, only the librarian will see it.

Nai: For all I know? What about for all you know?

Verdandi: Now now, you must understand...

Urd: We have never...

Skuld: Nor will we ever reveal what is to come.

Verdandi: But if you seek direction for the moment, we might be in the mood...for now...

Nai: Yes! Tell me what I must do!

Urd: In all your reading of Ragnarok, did you see any mention of you?

Nai: No, but I can change that.

Verdandi: Can you, though?

Nai: You try my patience, hags!

Verdandi: We do indeed.

Urd: Why haven't you done anything before today, hmm?

Nai: I told you. I was waiting.

Skuld: And wait you shall.

Nai: You said you could give me guidance in this moment of my path. Tell me. Now!

Verdandi: Quite impossible.

Nai: Excuse me?

Urd: The moment you shouted "Now" ever so rudely to us is in the past.

Nai: You can't be serious.

Urd: If you seek direction, think back to your studies.

Verdandi: You know of at least one member of the gods with a particularly unique set of circumstances.

Skuld: You know of the part he will play in Ragnarok.

Verdandi: And you must know where he is now.

Skuld: If you wish to speak with him, you will have to go find him.

Verdandi: He is the one with the connections...

Skuld: ...to those beasts and catastrophes that will ravage Valhalla in the end of it all.

Nai: Which will be the beginning of a new age of my pantheon.

Verdandi: You already know now...

Skuld: ...that it will happen.

Nai: And now I know what I must do to make it happen sooner.

Verdandi: You can try.

As further evidence, I have a note from Sigyn, regarding a conversation between Queen Nai and Loki:

Any time away from my husband must be brief, as I cannot bear to hear him suffer or cause more damage to Midgard than is necessary in his condition. Yes, the one you call the Jaguar Queen did visit Loki. She asked how he could be freed, to which he said he didn't know. She asked about some of his children, suggesting perhaps some of them can help. He was skeptical that they could or would. She simply nodded and left without a word. I know nothing else except for the iron resolve I witnessed in her march away from us.

Let my letter, & the sources enclosed therein serve as a warning to Odin & all who reside in Valhalla. We all know Ragnarok is coming, but I fear it will be coming far sooner than expected. I relayed my warning already to Odin. Well, to a member of Odin's bureaucracy, anyway. Only through these meager (and often slow) support channels can I send a request to the king of the gods, even when I can see him sitting on his throne in Thundergard Stadium.

I have my doubts that the warning will reach Odin in time, or if it does, that he will regard it as urgent. I'll say it once more: Let this letter be my witness of what may be to come in a not too distant future.

Regards,

Baron Dipitous
Valhallan Librarian

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Cinderscarlet, Part 2

Story & Cover Art by Wisteria Magic

TW: Physical assault

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When Scarlet opened the door, there stood a little blue mammoth with a sack of letters. “An urgent message from his Majesty King Roland!” He announced as he dug out an envelope from the sack with his trunk and handed it to Scarlet.

“Thank you.” She replied as the mammoth went on his way, Cheddar and Valkyrie skittered around her, curious about the letter too.

Scarlet pondered over it, the mammoth did say it was urgent. She almost reached to break the seal but stopped herself, they would certainly call her out about it.

Speaking of them, Scarlet turned to the stairwell with all the clattering and explosions echoing from above. “Maybe I ought to interrupt the... sparring lesson.” She giggled to Cheddar and Valkyrie who cringed at all the noise. She’ll handle Onyx’s mess later.

Meanwhile, Caspian had Lucien grabbed in a chokehold as the latter tried to scratch his eyes out. The two wrestled on the ground until they reached one of the corners of their room where Caspian’s back hit the wall.

Caspian managed to push Lucien off and sent him flying across the room, but Lucien didn’t give up that easily. He pounced on top of Caspian’s body and the two began rolling around, kicking, punching, and biting each other like wild animals.

When it seemed they were going nowhere, a whistle pierced the air. They both froze, faces covered in sweat. Their father stood there, shaking his head with his hands on his hips.

“HE STARTED IT!” The boys pointed to each other accusingly.

“Boys, boys.” Volkov reminded them. “Above all, self-control.” Lucien quickly got off Caspian, his face red with embarrassment. Caspian also got off from the ground, wiping the sweat on his forehead before standing up straight. The two still glared daggers at each other.

Volkov raised the whistle to his mouth once more but a knock at the door interrupted him. “What is it?!” He snapped as Scarlet entered.

"I'm sorry to interrupt but this just arrived from the palace." Scarlet presented the letter which was promptly snatched up by the boys, wrestling to see who would have the honors of reading it.

"Give it here!" "Let me have it!" Their antics slightly humored Scarlet and offended their father.

"I'll read it." Volkov fetched the letter from his reckless sons and cleared his throat. "Well... There is to be a royal brawl at the palace."

"A brawl?" The two turned to each other with anticipation in their voices.

"In honor of her highness, Princess Augusta Adamaris." The boys' eyes widened upon the mention of the princess, "And, by royal command, every eligible fighter is to attend!" Volkov finished in anticipation as he glanced up to his sons.

"Why that's us!" Lucien quipped as he turned to his brother, identical grins plastered across their faces.

"And I'm so eligible!" Caspian gushed, unaware of the dismissive gesture Cheddar gave to Valkyrie as they laughed, hidden on the rafters.

Scarlet lit up upon hearing her stepfather reading the last line. "Why, that means I can go too!" Her voice betrayed every hint of joy she tried to suppress in front of her stepfamily

Immediately the boys' attention went to their dowdy stepsister. "Tu? S'entraîner avec la princesse?" Lucien scoffed, turning his nose up and looking at her top to bottom.

Caspian laughed as he twirled the rose in his hands. "Good evening your majesty, would you mind holding my wrench?" He mocked as he and his brother began to jokingly spar, poking each other with their katars while making fighting noises.

"Why not? I can hold my own in a fight." Scarlet kept her head up despite her stepbrothers, "And it says, by royal command, every eligible fighter is to attend."

Volkov gave a slow glance towards her before looking at the letter again, "So it does. I see no reason why you can't go." The vampire's words earned disbelieving glances from his sons and stepdaughter, "If you can get all your chores done and find something suitable to fight with."

Scarlet could hardly contain her excitement any longer, "I certainly can! Thank you very much, Stepfather!" The young lady politely curtsied before excusing herself from the room, her stepbrothers' mouths agape over their father's words.

“Mon Dieu, Father! Do you realize what you just said?!” Lucien exclaimed with his hands up, Caspian frantically catching the bomb his brother sent flying into the air

“Of course, I said ‘if’...” Came Volkov’s cold reply along with a knowing eye to his sons. The boys’ scowls became matching scheming grins.

Cinderelly, Cinderelly

The carved mahogany trunk under Scarlet’s bed saw light for the first time in years. To her delight, as she threw open the cover, she was greeted by an ever-so-familiar shade of Scarpa grey. Pulling the uniform out and dusting it off, her eyes watered with emotion as she saw it again in so long.

“Isn’t it lovely? It was my father’s.” She gushed to her friends as she held the grey, navy blue, and gold-trimmed, air force jacket up to herself. It would be appropriate to wear this to a royal brawl since she didn’t have an official uniform or even a proper dress, this was the best she could do.

She ran her fingers over the familiar fabric, remembering her father in all of his glory and the memories he gave her. He always seemed so strong yet gentle that one would never know he had any other side but loving care towards his family. This uniform embodied that very same feeling and Scarlet couldn’t be happier to wear it.

The bots sounded in delight but then one of them, a small tin can robot with wires barely spilling out of it, voiced up with slight skepticism about the style of the outfit, that it looked nice but was rather old. Considering it had been at least 40 years old, she wouldn’t be surprised if the uniform was outdated by now.

Though faded, the fabric was relatively untarnished with only some discolored areas that got rubbed away from constant use. “Well it is a little old-fashioned, but it’s nothing we can’t fix up,” Scarlet remarked, drafting up a few design ideas while her bots got to work.

A few of her other bots began taking out her rocket lance and hammer whilst others went to scrounge through the piles of various items and collect the materials Scarlet would require. Like the uniform, her weapons were not the best looking, especially due to the quality of the material used to create them, but they were functional nonetheless. In no time, she’ll have all she needs to go to the brawl!

"SCARLET!! SCARLET!!!!!!"

“Oh for heaven’s sake! Now, what do they want?!” Scarlet got up in frustration at the call of her stepfamily from downstairs. She didn’t want to deal with them right now, but there was little choice. If she wanted a chance to go to the brawl then she would have to suck it up and get to work.

Sighing softly, Scarlet ran down the stairs to face whatever they wanted. Her uniform and weapons would just have to wait.

Looking at the weapons on the table, Cheddar squeaked sadly to the other sidekicks. Knowing the men, they would only pile more and more chores onto Scarlet. There was no arguing it, with their stupid tricks she'd never get her dress or weapons finished in time. Maybe she wouldn't get to go to the brawl at all.

It hurt to think she might lose the opportunity to compete, her potential didn't deserve to be squandered like this. The bots were quick to agree, wanting nothing less than to do something for their creator.

Suddenly another one of the bots, this time a bronze robot with a metallic top hat named Cogsworth, piped up. Calling the sidekicks to action, they all gathered around the weapons and uniform. If Scarlet couldn't have the time to fix up what she needs for the brawl, then they will!

They'll tie a scarf around it, and fix up all the rivets. When fighting in the brawl, she'll be more powerful than all with her new uniform and weapons. All thoughts of being useless flew out of the sidekicks' minds as they got down to business, sewing up her uniform and making adjustments to her weapons.

While they worked, this new resolve fueled Cheddar who immediately took Valkyrie and went searching for materials. As they peeked through an opening in the wall, they spotted Scarlet with her arms full of clothes her stepbrothers kept piling on her.

"And this too Scarlet, my cravats. Now don't forget."

"Scarlet! Take my hats and mend them properly."

"And press my vest too and mind the tail!"

Scarlet had trouble trying to keep up with the barrage of demands her stepbrothers continued yelling at her, the piles of clothes in her arms getting heavier and heavier as she tried to consider every demand. Just then the door opened.

"Scarlet," Volkov began as the three went quiet. "When you're through, and before you begin your regular chores, I have a few little things."

"Very well..." Scarlet replied with a sigh before carrying the clothes upstairs to wash them.

"Father, I don't see why everyone seems to have such nice things to wear, and I always end up in these old rags!" Caspian exclaimed as he threw a pair of gloves to the ground. "These gloves! I wouldn't be seen dead in it!"

"You should talk!" Lucien added, slamming a belt next to his brother's gloves and kicking it across the room. "This belt! I'm sick of looking at it!"

The brothers continued to complain to their father as they left the room in a huff, completely unaware of the two robots making a beeline for their discarded finery.

Once they reached Scarlet's room, the bots were already hard at work fixing up the uniform. They began sewing up the holes along the sleeve seams, fixing the buttons, and lining the collar up straight. The forest green beret was tastefully patched up with a gear-shaped patch at the center while the boots were shined to perfection.

Meanwhile, her hammer and lance had been replaced with shiny new parts, each piece carefully polished and sharpened. The paint job was a bit dull but still presentable enough to use. There was no use looking great if the weapons themselves weren't sturdy or capable of battle.

Cheddar, who was welding the pipes on the lance, felt a sense of pride watching the team working together to make Scarlet's night come together. Nothing will stop them from getting their girl to the brawl!

The Breaking Point

A carriage pulled up outside the manor, ready to take the family to the palace. Scarlet, broom in hand, dejectedly knocked on the door to her stepfather's room.

"The carriage is here." She said wearily.

Her stepfather opened the door and nodded. "Why, Scarlet," he called to her with faux concern. "You're not ready, girl."

Scarlet shook her head. "I'm not going..." she muttered, avoiding eye contact with him.

The man raised an eyebrow. "Not going? Oh what a shame." he lamented, discreetly smirking at the boys with matching devilish grins as they heard this. "But of course, there will be other times."

"Yes. Goodnight." Scarlet turned to leave, unaware of the sneers her stepfamily exchanged before they all disappeared behind closed doors.

Up in her room, Scarlet put her cleaning supplies away and gazed out the window at the palace, all lit up like a heavenly beacon, its magnificent lights shone down on their tiny kingdom as the stars twinkled above their heads.

"Oh well, what good is a royal brawl anyway?" she mumbled. "I suppose it would be frightfully dull, and boring, and completely-" Scarlet's face sank into her hands as she sighed. "Completely wonderful..."

Just then, a ray of light from behind her caught her attention. Two of her bots opened her wardrobe to reveal a handsome uniform, the grey fabric shining like new with a green and white scarf and a matching beret, all tied together with tangerine ropes. It hadn't changed much, although some of the newer parts had been patched up and upgraded. Her lance and hammer rested on a nearby table, polished and fortified.

Scarlet had no words as her bots chirped and beeped with excitement upon surprising her. Seeing her smile was their reward.

"I never dreamed! It's such a surprise!" She picked up the suit and held it tight to her chest, eyes welling up. "Oh thank you all so much!"

She rushed over and hugged her bots tightly, repeating her thanks, unable to hold back tears as she hugged them tighter. Cheddar gave everyone a thumbs up as he snuggled into her shoulder, Valkyrie happily nuzzling her cheek.

Down in the foyer, Volkov and the boys were dressed in their best and ready to leave for the palace. Volkov had a stern look on his face as he watched the boys straighten themselves out. Lucien shined up his ruby heart pin that matched his blood-red coat while Caspian smoothed out the bird of paradise flower in his top hat which matched his brother's.

Putting his golden rose hairpin behind his ear, Volkov stepped in front of his sons, placing a hand on each of their shoulders, "Now listen boys," he reminded them. "When you are called to compete with Her Highness, be sure to-"

"Wait!"

The three of them turned to see Scarlet running down the stairs, in her uniform and green beret. Her gossamer eyes, although tired from work, sparkled with joy as her ruffled locks bounced with every step she took.

"Isn't it great?" she asked excitedly as she twirled around. "Do you think it will do?"

The stepfamily stood there silently as they stared at Scarlet. Their eyes darted between her and the uniform, the boys brattily cajoling their father.

"Father, you wouldn't!" Lucien exclaimed as Caspian tugged at Volkov's red suit. "You can't let her!"

"Boys, please!" Volkov chided as he pushed off his sons. "After all, we did make a bargain." Volkov stepped towards Scarlet and examined her closely, "And I never go back on my word..."

Scarlet's eyes widened as her stepfather stepped closer, his intentions anything but good. Something in her gut told her to run but her legs stayed frozen. Above the stairs, Cheddar and Valkyrie started to shake, staring down at the stepfather suspiciously.

"A commendable effort." Volkov remarked as he traced his pale gold nails around Scarlet's waist, "This belt, it gives it just the right touch. Don't you think so, Lucien?"

Lucien looked down at Scarlet in disdain. "Non, je né! I think she's-"

His voice stopped short as he realized just what his father meant when he said 'just the right touch'.

"Voleur!! That's my belt!" Lucien grabbed Scarlet by the waist. "Give it to me!" He yelled, attempting to tear it off her.

Valkyrie tried to fly down to Scarlet's defense but Cheddar held him back, stopping him from possibly making things worse.

Scarlet backed off of Lucien's reach, only for Caspian to grab her by the wrist and pull her towards him, knocking her weapons out of her hands.

"And look, my gloves!" Caspian sneered, tightening his grip. "Wearing my gloves! She can't!" He yanked the gloves off her hands as she tried to escape.

The sound of ripping fabric filled the air as the boys took their katars out, slashing and stabbing at her. Scarlet fought back as best she could, desperately kicking and punching at both of them as hard as she could manage. But it was no use.

"This is mine!" Lucien screamed as he slashed at her shoulders for her rope.

"And my scarf!" Caspian shouted, nearly knifing her in the neck.

She cried in frustration as she attempted to push them off. Unfortunately, they were too quick, grabbing hold of her hair and pushing her against the wall as they continued their assault on her.

"Boys, boys!" Volkov calmly called to his sons. "That's quite enough."

The two reluctantly stopped fighting as Scarlet lay sprawled out on the floor with them surrounding her like vultures picking over a corpse. They stared at their stepsister, cold eyes glowing darkly beneath their hats as their lips curled upwards into menacing smirks.

With a satisfied grin, Volkov looked down at his stepdaughter, taking in her broken state. "Hurry along now, both of you," He opened the door and beckoned his sons to follow him out. "I won't have you upsetting yourselves."

Caspian and Lucien strutted out the door, their noses stuck up high with their father following them.

"Goodnight." Volkov bid his stepdaughter before he shut the door firmly.

Covered in blood and gashes, eyes stung with unshed tears, her father's uniform in tatters around her. A pained scream tore Scarlet's throat as she scrambled to her feet and dashed to the courtyard, her bots following behind.

Her breath came in ragged, painful pants and she ran past the stables as tears streamed down her cheeks, getting the attention of a napping Boomer. She dropped under a weeping willow tree and buried herself in her hands as she sobbed bitterly into them.

Her bots and Boomer could only sadly watch her fall apart, helpless to do anything for her. A shadowy figure loomed next to the cyborgi, but she had no fear. Living Knight Mare too pitied her master's stepdaughter and seeing her in this state pained her just as much.

Scarlet continued to sob from the pain, the grief, the despair. Everything she ever worked for fell apart at her feet. There was no escape, nothing to look forward to anymore. She cried for her life, her love, her innocence, her dreams. At that moment she wished she had never had those dreams in the first place.

"There's nothing left to believe in..." She sobbed, "nothing..."

"Nothing?" A gentle voice spoke above her. "You don't mean that now, do you?"

"Oh but I do." Scarlet protested as her vision blurred from her crying.

"Nonsense, hun! If you lost all your faith then I wouldn't be here, and here I am!"

Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo

It was only now Scarlet became aware of the warm hand brushing her hair this whole time. She gazed up and saw a smiling girl, with a purple witch hat upon tea green hair and thin glasses framing her turquoise eyes. The girl gently placed a hand on Scarlet's shoulder, "Come on now, you can't go to the brawl looking like that!"

Scarlet wiped away her tears with her free arm and stared at the girl with curiosity. "The brawl? Oh but I'm not-"

"Of course you are!" The girl grinned at her. "I'll make sure of it!"

"Who are...you?" Scarlet questioned at last.

The girl beamed, "Your Witchy Godmother, Starspeaker Fait!" The star-shaped bell on her hat rang behind her. "When people consult the stars, I answer the calls!"

Scarlet blinked owlishly as she studied her. She certainly looked the part with her sparkly witch hat and a purple robe, but how would that help her?

"Just watch-" Fait snapped her fingers, only to find nothing in her hand. Confused, she patted around the pockets of her jacket and searched through her clothes, "What in the world did I do with that magic scythe?"

Scarlet's confusion only seemed to increase at the mention of a scythe. From what she knew, witches used wands and brooms. "Magic scythe?" She inquired in surprise as she watched Fait rummage through her pockets once more.

As she searched through her hat, Fait jerked up in realization, "Oh I forgot, I put it away!"

Pointing to the sky, a sword engulfed in green flames fell, landing perfectly beside Fait, and making Scarlet and her sidekicks jump back in alarm. Fait picked up the weapon and in a burst of sparkles, transformed it into a scythe with an emerald green blade. She twirled it around several times then gave a triumphant grin at her handiwork. "There, now that is magic!"

Scarlet's gossamer eyes were wide open, her jaw dropping open in disbelief. Her bots hiding behind her from all the magic sparkles.

"Now," Fait beamed, "what we need is something that sort of says 'coach'." She mused as she took Scarlet's hand and pulled along, the stars glimmering behind them through the garden.

"Coach?" Scarlet asked, confused.

Fait chuckled, "Well I'm liking fruit and veg." She glanced at a pile of berries, "Do you grow watermelons?"

"No," Scarlet frowned.

"Cantaloupe?" Fait asked again.

"I don't even know what that is," Scarlet admitted.

"Artichoke? Kumquat? Beef tomato?" Fait listed each thing as Scarlet continued to shake her head.

Suddenly Scarlet's eyes perked up as something else came to her mind. "I do have a carriage in the works. Would that be easier?" she asked, much to the witch's amusement.

The rattle of metal and creaking wheels filled Scarlet's ears as she opened the door to her garage, the bots coming in tow. "I don't usually work with mechanical stuff, too many wires," Fait remarked as Scarlet unfurled the large canvas tarp, revealing a bronze carriage still in the process of being put together.

Faint rust marks covered the side of the carriage, the polishing was chipped on the sides where it was worked on, and the carriage frame had several dents and cracks but otherwise looked fine. Fait reached out and ran a finger across its surface before looking over at Scarlet.

"Yes. This one will do just fine!" Fait smiled, directing the bots to roll it outside as they followed.

"Are you sure?" Scarlet looked doubtful. "I haven't worked with it yet and it's been sitting here for so long. I've barely taken care of it."

"Don't worry," Fait reassured her, twirling her scythe as it spilled with sparkles. "Watch this."

Swinging her scythe at the carriage, Fait summoned a stream of stars and sparkles which poured onto the carriage in torrents of light.

"Salagadoola mechicka boola, Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo," she sang the magic words as the stars slowly began to melt off the metal of the carriage and form into beautiful golden stars. "Put them together and what have you got? Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo!"

She repeated as she sent more streams of stars flying from the top down. Scarlet watched in awe as the golden stars flew through the air, dancing around like glittering fairy dust. The carriage began to reform into gold along the top, the dark wood beneath polished to a gleaming shine. The carvings that lined the interior also began to glow, creating an almost ethereal aura that seemed to surround the carriage like a halo.

As the final stream of stars finished falling onto the carriage, Fait stood back and admired her handiwork. "What do you think?" she asked, spinning around and posing theatrically to Scarlet's brand new carriage.

It took everything in Scarlet not to squeal like a little girl, taking in how it glittered and shimmered in the light. Its shape and design remained as they had since she first built it, though the vintage paint was much brighter. There were gold accents around the windows, the handle, and the wheels. Everything about it made it even more spectacular than before, and Scarlet felt herself getting emotional over every aspect of it.

Scarlet ran over and gently touched the smooth paintwork, unable to believe that this had just been created. "You really are my Witchy Godmother..." she whispered in awe, staring up at the woman beside her.

Fait giggled. "I don't go about transforming vehicles for just about anybody!" she joked, sparkles continuing to fizz from her scythe.

"Now where are those bots?" Fait wondered aloud, looking around. Scarlet's confusion returned at the sound of that, what about her little friends?

Cheddar and Valkyrie looked at each other with concern, Cogsworth and Craig doing the same before they all turned to Scarlet. Before she could say anything, Fait zapped them too with her scythe. "Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo!"

They scurried around in a panic as their bodies took on a more equine form, their metallic limbs morphing into a pair of hooves. The bots quickly changed into a set of robotic horses in gold armor and helmets respectively before hopping around on all fours. Dazed, they looked up at their new forms before turning back to the two humans.

Scarlet blinked in amazement at the three mechanical horses who stood before her, "Cheddar, how fine you look!" she praised, stepping forward and petting him. He neighed happily, smoke snorting from his snout in appreciation as Scarlet continued to stroke him.

However, Fait's attention soon shifted to something else. "Strange, I could've sworn there was one more." She scanned the ground around them, looking for any sign that would lead them to said bot's location.

The sparkles of the scythe exposed Valkyrie's hiding spot behind the carriage. "There you are!" The witch exclaimed, charging her weapon again.

Less than enthusiastic at the prospect of facing another blast of glitter, Valkyrie flew in the other direction but found himself faced by an ambushing Onyx. Between the witch's sparkles and the gargoyle's gauntlets, he floated back just as Onyx pounced.

Lifting her gauntlet, Onyx was bewildered at the absence of shattered robot parts beneath it. Turning around, her tail pricked up straight as she found herself face to face with a very furious mechanical horse. With a loud whinny from the valkyrie horse, Onyx dashed away as sparkles shooed her off.

"Oh, poor Onyx!" Scarlet laughed, Valkyrie proudly trotting up to the other mechanical horses as they snorted in approval over the small victory over their foe.

"Serves her right I'd say," Fait smirked, looking over the carriage and horses. "Alright. Carriage, horses, coachman!" She turned her attention to Living Knight Mare, who stared at her with uncertainty.

Scarlet decided not to question anymore as Fait once again used her scythe to summon a sparkling waterfall of stars, bathing the spirit horse in bright beams of starlight. A soft whinny escaped from the animal as its form slowly reformed into a humanoid with her flowing blue mane. She was dressed in traditional knightly attire, a cloak wrapped tightly around her shoulders.

"At your service, m'lady." The now human coachman bowed elegantly, holding up her whip.

"And now it's your turn!" The witch turned to Boomer, whose tail began to wag in excitement as sparkles swirled around her. The dog grinned before leaping in the air, landing nimbly next to Living Knight Mare as a footman whose chestnut hair was pulled up into two buns and decorated with brown ribbons tied to keep them in place. Her outfit matched Living Knight Mare's with golden embroidery and lace adorning it.

Scarlet was already too overwhelmed with all the magic being cast upon the scene to speak, her eyes sparkling like the stars Fait conjured up. The witch proudly clapped her hands together. "Come on now everyone! Positions!" Fait ordered, the bots and animals quickly scrambling to their designated spots.

"Witchy Godmother!" Scarlet called out, trying to catch up.

"Yes?" Fait inquired, her smile fading when she noticed Scarlet's gaze as one of sorrow as she gestured to her shredded uniform.

"I can't go in this suit." She murmured, a tear escaping her eye. "Can you mend it?"

"Mend it?" Fait questioned, a confused expression on her features. "I'll just turn it into something new!" she said cheerfully, her scythe beginning to sparkle again.

Scarlet shook her head quickly. "No, please." Her voice quivered slightly. "This was my father's, and I'd like to wear it when I go to the palace." She gently touched the fabric of the ruined suit, "It's almost like taking him with me."

The melancholy in her eyes melted Fait's heart instantly, the witch smiling apologetically, "I understand." She nodded. "Although you wouldn't mind if I cheered it up a bit? Wouldn't mind a nice purple?"

"No." Scarlet smiled, shaking her head.

With a flick of her wrist, Fait swung her scythe at Scarlet, sending dozens of stars streaking towards the young lady. The stars enveloped Scarlet's body as she spun around in wonder. As they flew around Scarlet, the knife wounds and crusted blood healed themselves in seconds, the red skin around her wrists and collar bones regaining its healthy peach color.

Her tattered coat fell away to reveal the gleaming white blouse she wore underneath, now devoid of tears and dirt. Scarlet held up her hands, stars appearing and swirling around her fingers as they formed matching white gloves. The stars traveled down her arms until they formed a violet jacket with Juliet sleeves and dark rose trousers. Swirling down her legs, the sparkles turned her ruined combat boots into a pair of polished dark scarlet high-heeled boots, gold accents adorning the heels and laces.

A spray of stars flew over her hair and covered her face. Scarlet raised her chin upwards as the stars flowed up her head, coiffing her ruffled hair into an elegant curled updo before they settled atop her torn beret. The stars transformed it into inventor goggles with golden frames and shimmering green lenses, setting on her hairdo like a crown. Finally, the sparkles converged on her chest, forming a golden brooch with an emerald in the center, surrounded by a few smaller diamonds.

Scarlet twirled around, floating in a warm spring breeze as the stars danced around her, the light of the moon glowing upon her cheeks in a way that nothing else ever had. Her heart fluttered with exhilaration as she took in the sight of her reflection in the fountain, watching the light shine in her gossamer eyes.

"It's beautiful..." she breathed softly, "he'd love it." The lights around her shone brighter, the stars seeming to wink in approval.

Fait gave her a proud smile. "Come on now!" she urged, waving her arm to signal the others to follow. "You'll be late!"

Grabbing her weapons, Scarlet dashed over to her new carriage. Her friends cooed in admiration at the sight of her, Boomer graciously helping her get in.

"Just a moment!" Fait put her hand up once she noticed the lance and hammer Scarlet had in tow. "Are these the best you have?" she queried, a frown appearing on her face.

Scarlet nodded shyly, holding the objects close to her chest. "It's alright, they'll work well in battle anyway!" She reassured her friend, but Fait didn't seem convinced.

"No! They look like they'll come apart in one swing!" she retorted. "Allow me, I'm rather good with weapon style." She held out her scythe to Scarlet's makeshift lance and hammer, sparkles circling them.

As the sparkles made contact with the metal, the lances started to change shape as Fait directed the sparks along their edges. Within moments, the steel was completely transformed into rich redwood as glistening fortified gold plates replaced its original surface. The stars settled onto every side and became glittering fleur-de-lis patterns.

Scarlet gushed in awe as she took in the sights of her new creations. "They're made of gold?" She gasped in amazement.

"Yes!" Fait chuckled. "And you'll find they're really powerful!" Her smile then grew wider once she saw the look of pure joy spread across the girl's face. "Well come on! We don't want to be late!" She exclaimed as she ushered the girl inside the carriage with a flourish of her scythe.

Scarlet was about to step in until she remembered something deadly important. "What about my stepfather and the boys?" she asked worriedly.

"Don't worry." Fait smiled reassuringly. "I'll make sure they don't recognize you!" The witch giggled as she made a billow of steam puff around Scarlet's hair, making her curls bounce. "Now off you go!"

Scarlet nodded her head in gratitude and stepped in, Boomer closing the doors. She couldn't help but let a smile tug at the corner of her lips as she looked inside the carriage, heart racing for what was to come. She smiled at each of her friends, each giving her encouraging nods and smiles while she felt her excitement growing.

"Scarlet! I almost forgot!" The witch bolted up to the window of the carriage with a serious expression. "At the last echo of the last bell at the stroke of midnight, the spell will be broken. All will turn back to what it once was."

"Midnight? That's more than enough time." Scarlet assured her confidently.

"Good." The witch smiled, "Now go forth and prevail!"

"Thank you! Goodbye!" Scarlet waved farewell as Living Knight Mare whipped the reins and the carriage drove off. The witch watched with a fond smile, waving back before vanishing in a cloud of starlight.

With the fireworks in the distance, Scarlet's enthusiasm filled like a steam pipe as she clutched at her weapons. Soon the kingdom would see what Lady Necessity could do!

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Magic is a Malaysian artist and writer who spends more time planning than actually doing said activities. Her first taste of writing was by replacing character names in random fanfictions with genderbends, as well as entering unnecessary song lyrics wherever. She enjoys flowers, space aesthetics, mermaids, fairies, Greek and Egyptian myth, Disney movies, and Taylor Swift songs. When not writing or drawing, she's often brainstorming new story ideas with trusted friends. These ideas usually never make it into writing.

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