

My First Sixteen Days as a Second Century Warlord

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CONTENTS

01 · first day	
as a second century warlord	1
02 · second day	
as a second century warlord	2
03 · third day	
as a second century warlord	3
04 · fourth day	
as a second century warlord	4
05 · fifth day	
as a second century warlord	5

06 ·	sixth day	
	as a second century warlord	6
07 ·	seventh day	
	as a second century warlord	7
08 ·	eighth day	
	as a second century warlord	8
09 ·	ninth day	
	as a second century warlord	9
10 ·	tenth day	
	as a second century warlord	10
11 ·	eleventh day	
	as a second century warlord	11
12 ·	twelfth day	
	as a second century warlord	12
13 ·	thirteenth day	
	as a second century warlord	13

14 ·	fourteenth day	
	as a second century warlord	15
15 ·	fifteenth day	
	as a second century warlord	16
16 ·	sixteenth day	
	as a second century warlord	17

— 01 —

first day
as a second century warlord



HAVE MY MEN tie branches to their
horses' tails to stir up dust and make it
look like there's a lot of us but i forget it
just rained so there isn't any dust and the enemy
can clearly see there's like twenty of us all spread
out in a line

— 02 —

second day
as a second century warlord



BRIBE A BUNCH of kids to start singing
a nursery rhyme i carefully crafted to
spread misinformation and further my
strategic ends but they change the lyrics to be about
poop and the enemy isn't misdirected at all

— 03 —

third day
as a second century warlord



LURE MY ENEMY into a narrow valley and send a team of archers to shoot them from the high ground but there was a feral hog napping on the trail up to the overlook and they couldn't decide whether to try and shoot it or just go around and by the time the hog woke up and left on its own the enemy had already passed safely below

— 04 —


fourth day
as a second century warlord



WE ATTEMPT TO join a battle on the side of the guy we want to ally with but he and the guy he's fighting have really similar names and it's finally dusty and i misread the standards and attack the wrong guy. so now we're stuck with this total loser of a liege lord, because how the fuck do you explain that after a battle?

— 05 —

fifth day
as a second century warlord


ND SOME SORT of wizard wanders into camp, my loser liege lord wants to execute him for being a wizard but i convince him to let the wizard stay, because i want to do more weather-based strategies and i'm pretty sure having a camp wizard can help with that. after the welcome to the team banquet the wizard steals half the treasury and my liege lord's wife and leaves

— 06 —

sixth day
as a second century warlord

MY LOSER LIEGE LORD sends me to reinforce a city he's taken, but in the confusion of leaving i forgot to take the token that would have gotten us into the city, so my men have to wait outside the city walls for like eight hours while i ride back to get it

seventh day
as a second century warlord

ND MY LOSER liege lord finally joins me in the city, it turns out he's actually a pretty cool guy, and he isn't even that mad at me for letting the wizard steal his wife. i decide to shoot my shot but i'm really nervous and keep on stalling because what if i mess up our relationship and by extension jeopardize the security of my men, and eventually he just says goodnight and goes back to his room, where an assassin is in the process of setting up to kill him

— 08 —

eighth day
as a second century warlord


AND MY LOSER liege lord tells me to fake defect to his rival warlord, the one i originally wanted to ally with, to find out if he was the one who sent the assassin and why. but my whole way over to the rival warlord i'm worried that this has something to do with the wizard thing or how awkward i made it last night

ninth day
as a second century warlord



TRY TO TACTFULLY ask my fake liege lord if he sent the assassin to kill my loser liege lord and it turns out the idea of using assassins never occurred to him, but now that i've suggested it he's really into it. in order to save my loser liege lord i volunteer to be the one to kill him

tenth day
as a second century warlord

 N MY WAY BACK to my loser liege lord's city i realize i won't be able to collect my men from my fake liege lord until i bring back my loser liege lord's head. this would have been a great thing to think of before i got myself in this situation. i go back to my loser liege lord and ask him to rescue my men, and he tells me that if he could sack my fake liege lord's camp he already would have. that doesn't change the fact that my men are still trapped. they're prisoners, even. i go back to my room to sulk

eleventh day
as a second century warlord




FIND A LITTLE caged pigeon in the
rafters of my loser liege lord's room
and deduce it belonged to the assassin.
without asking permission or telling my loser liege
lord goodbye i let the pigeon loose and follow it
north. don't ask what i was doing in my loser liege
lord's room. it's not important

twelfth day
as a second century warlord



DISGUISE MYSELF as a wizard and enter the camp of the coalition leader the pigeon led me to. in the middle of my little sleight of hand performance i make eye contact with the coalition leader's second-in-command. IT'S THE WIZARD THAT STOLE MY LOSER LIEGE LORD'S WIFE. after the banquet i corner the fake wizard and ask him what the fuck is going on and he just says "wouldn't you like to know" and leaves. i don't know what to say to that so i just let him go

thirteenth day
as a second century warlord

 I'M HONESTLY SO sick of not knowing what's going on, so i adjust my wizard costume to passably disguise myself as a woman and break into the women's area of the camp, where sure enough my loser liege lord's wife is. i ask her what she's doing here and she tells me the fake wizard overheard her singing a poem she overheard on the street, not knowing it contains the coalition leader's formation's weaknesses. the fake wizard kidnapped her and assigned an assassin to kill her husband before they figured out the poem's significance. she shares the first couplet with me but i'm discovered and thrown out before she can

share any more. she doesn't need to. through a
bizarre coincidence of homophones, it's the poop
version of my misinformation nursery rhyme

fourteenth day
as a second century warlord



GO BACK TO my loser liege lord and tell him everything, urging him to join with my fake liege lord to attack the coalition leader according to the weaknesses in the nursery rhyme. he tells me frankly that he doesn't trust me anymore. i ask him to execute me if that's really true, because i can't bear to live if i can't protect him and i can't protect my men. he agrees to attack the coalition leader

fifteenth day
as a second century warlord

DUE TO THE information in the nursery rhyme, and thanks to my loser liege lord reminding me of the weather conditions multiple times while planning our battle strategy, our alliance carries the day. my loser liege lord gets his wife back. my men tell me that our fake liege lord actually treated them really well and they'd like to stay with him if i don't mind. i do mind, now that neither the men i love nor the man i love have any use for me, but i don't tell them that

sixteenth day
as a second century warlord

I'M PREPARING TO leave to i don't know where, maybe to try to become a wizard for real, when my loser liege lord stops me and asks me where i'm going. he says he had hoped i would continue to work as his advisor. i was unaware i was his advisor in the first place. i agree, and he tells me he's truly honored to have me in his service at last. he has known i am a rare and talented man with a strategic intelligence far above his ever since the day he witnessed me tying branches to my horses' tails in six inches of mud, and could not for the life of him figure out why