

I SWEAR AMIAH

(Inspired by the princess x knight trend)

Most knew him as Sir Hawk - the fearsome knight who had joined the militia before he had grown a single hair on his chin, he who cut down riders with a broken spear during his third war, he who joined the Queen's Guard before his twentieth year. But she - Queen Amiah - knew him as Bran of Fellbond.

Bran knelt before her in the Cathedral of the Makers, sword held to the side, pointed down into the yellowish tiled ground. Next to him kneeled Sir Gregory of Darlow and Dame Varna of Easthill. They are all here for the same reason: to protect Queen Amiah, though knights stationed during a wedding are more for the reason of ceremony than anything practical.

“Sir Hawk and Dame Varna, please keep a watch over the exit, in case any *unannounced* guests arrive, though I doubt it,” the Queen said with a smile. What a beautiful smile; everything about her was mesmerising: her blond hair with streaks of dark that curled around her fair face, with plump lips that made it hard to focus when she spoke, and her soft voice. But most of all was who she was; she cared more for her people than herself, sometimes too much to Bran’s liking.

“And you, Sir Gregory, please watch over the ceremony stationed next to the throne,” she continued.

“If I may,” Sir Gregory said, still head bowed. The Queen gestured to him to speak.

“I think it's wise if Sir Hawk would stay by your side during the wedding, if anything would happen - by the lights of the Makers it won't - then he would be more vigilant than an old dog like me.”

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Bran of Fellbond wore his father's old shoes, those that were too big for him, as he ran through the tall grass, pretending to be a knight cutting down monsters with his stick. His mother had told him countless times to stay away from the grass, otherwise, he might bring all of the world's ticks and mites back home. Yet it was something so freeing about running through it. He laughed, then jumped and dodged imaginative arrows, as he suddenly burst out from the other side, where the grass was cut precisely to his knees. It was like a large green curtain.

In front of him was the massive grey stone castle with red pointed roofs, where the royal family lived, whatever that meant. Something about great respect and duty. His father would go on and on about it.

"Hey, who are you?" A light voice came from behind a large brickstone wall. He couldn't see the one who spoke.

"I'm Bran of Fellbond, my family lives near the Well. My mom told me not to run through the grass," he said.

"Hello Bran of Fellbond, my name is Amiah. My mom also told me not to run through the grass. Was it fun?" she asked. Bran had never heard of anyone named Amiah, sounded a bit outlandish, but it was nice compared to the names he was used to.

"It is very fun, you could run with me! We could pretend to be knights together!" he said while swinging the stick.

"I wish I could. Maybe I can ask my mom, and we can do it tomorrow?!" Amiah said excitedly.

The next day Bran ran through the grass again, this time with two sticks, one for him and one for his new friend. But they did not end up running through it together, and not the day after either. Yet Bran ran through it every day, no matter the weather, no longer to

cut down imaginative monsters, no, instead to speak to Amiah behind the big stone wall.

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Sir Hawk swung his damaged blade as it crashed into the side of a blue-armoured knight. It did not do much else than push the enemy a couple of feet back, but it was as he intended, he needed space to pick up the spear from the dead beneath him. He would not let a single enemy enter the castle, for inside it was her.

Sir Hawk picked up the spear just in time as the enemy had recovered and gained momentum towards him. As the blue-armoured knight lifted his morning star into the air, Sir Hawk poked the spear tip in under the armpit of the plate. The man before him groaned and slammed the morning star down on the handle of the spear. It split into two pieces, one in the hands of Sir Hawk, who still held it despite the blow and one stuck in the side of the enemy, who screamed in pain as it broke. As Sir Hawk prepared himself for another attack, the man fell lifelessly to the ground.

Sir Hawk had been used to death by now, it was part of being a knight, and he would see the whole invading army dead if that was what had to be done. He reached for his sword, but before he could grab hold of it, a horse came trampling over him, kicking him away from the blade and to the ground a short distance from the bridge to the castle. He felt something snap in his chest, and his foot ached in pain as the weight of the warhorse and the knight riding crushed him. Everything in him screamed to stay down, to pretend to be dead, yet he rose to his feet, that was his duty, his oath. He would die here if it meant to protect her.

Sir Hawk, still holding half the spear, planted his feet between the tramped dead, as another rider came his way. That one would not be as fortunate as the last.

After the battle, he found himself in the medical tents in the bailey, the Makers had blessed him. He didn't remember how he got there. As he lay there beside several other soldiers and knights, he could see that this battle had been devastating. There were too many wounded; most had been placed on the muddy ground. He and the other knights and some valorous soldiers had been given the beds.

Through the tent's opening came Princess Amiah, she bore a distressed look, eyes filled with tears. Had her brother fought this time? No, Bran swore the prince was to command this battle, not join it.

"You're alive! Oh, Bran, I thought you had died. I... I..." she cried and embraced him. It hurt, but he wouldn't want it any other way.

"Ho- How did they let you come down here, Amiah? It's still a war zone, you shouldn't be here." Bran managed to mutter.

"I'll go wherever I want to, no matter what they say, you taught me that. Besides, I am to be queen one day," she said, still holding him.

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"Queen Amiah, do you take him as your lawfully wedded husband?" the priest asked.

Bran stood inside the Cathedral of the Makers, stationed next to the throne in full ceremonial armour. He didn't care what it looked like - the wedding - he cared only for Amiah. She stood there in her wedding gown, divine, the perfect creation of the Makers. Next to her stood the groom - soon-to-be King Korvald. It didn't matter who he was, only that it wasn't Bran. Amiah looked up at Bran with sorrowful eyes, as tears fell from his eye inside his helm for the first time since he was a child.

"I do."