

The Silent Paladin
Chapter One

“Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the preliminaries of the Nimbus Kingdom’s Battle Tournament!” said the announcer at the opening of the annual fighting tournament of the Nimbus Kingdom. The battle tournament was a competition where the best warriors from various other kingdoms and lands come to show off the fighting skills of their homelands. It was held over several weeks, even months, traveling from place to place. Because of all the different fighting styles and different kinds of warriors, it always pleased those who came to watch. Well, most of them, anyway. The princess, Umbrina Cunningham, as always, was watching the battles with her father King Orion, with great disdain. Umbrina was not one who enjoyed watching people attack and harm each other, especially for sport. The only thing she looked forward to was the jester, Silence.

Silence was an orphan that Umbrina’s mother, Serenity, found crying, all alone on the side of the road when he was a baby. She was surprised that he was unharmed. Queen Serenity, Umbrina’s mother, and King Orion had started a search to find Silence’s parents or any family members who could take care of him. However, their efforts were fruitless as no one could claim or recognize the little one she had found. Feeling compassionate, Umbrina’s mother took him in as her own. Orion however, disapproved of this. He felt that only those of “royal blood” should live in the castle. Serenity passed away when Umbrina was eight. By then they learned the boy couldn’t speak, so King Orion named him Silence and then gave him the most mind-numbing, tedious and humiliating job there was: court jester. Though most in Silence’s situation would usually

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be have a dismal, pessimistic outlook on life, somehow Silence always maintained a friendly and cheerful disposition. And that's exactly why King Orion wanted him to amuse his daughter Umbrina, for she rarely laughed or even smiled. He hoped that Silence's optimism and good cheer would rub off on her. But now, it was time for Silence to go on the field and entertain the audience. Umbrina observed him with much interest. But just as he got on to the field, a black cloud completely blocked out the sun. Suddenly, everything went completely dark. "Aaaaahhh!!!" someone screamed at the top of their lungs. The cloud passed, revealing an appalling sight. The sky had turned burning red and fearsome winged creatures tore through the sky. They were gargoyles. "Release me, you revolting fiend!" screamed Umbrina. The gargoyles had come to kidnap her.

"Your highness, the gargoyles have princess Umbrina captive. What is your command?" said Arthur, leader of Orion's royal guard. "Don't just stand there! Attack them and get my daughter back!" barked Orion. But just as the guards lifted their weapons, the gargoyle that held Umbrina pulled out a dagger and held it at her neck. Umbrina froze and everyone went silent. Silence saw this and was outraged. Some of the gargoyles began to descend down to the center of the arena, right where Silence was standing. Silence leapt out of view before their eyes caught sight of him. He watched them from the steps of the stage, being careful not to draw attention to himself. The gargoyles were starting to conduct a ritual of some sort. They had carried a large violet jewel to the base of the arena and placed it in the center.

Then they began to perform a peculiar chant of some sort. Their leader was paying his full attention to the gargoyles in the center, and the guards were right beneath him, waiting for chance to come. The guards could not advance towards the gargoyle

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commander without him noticing the sound of their armor clanking up the steps. Silence observed the guards and gargoyles for a few seconds. Then, a glint appeared in his eyes. He had thought up a plan. He quietly placed his jester hat on the ground, so that the bells would not make any noise. Silence then swiftly climbed the steps of the stadium and snuck up on their leader. He went perfectly unnoticed. At that moment, the leader gargoyle that held Umbrina felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around and a sudden blast of water hit him in the face. His hands flew to wipe off his face. In doing so, he accidentally released Umbrina. Once he did, she jumped off the top of the stadium to the lower level and one of the guards caught her effortlessly.

When the gargoyle's sight returned, he saw Silence, whom had used his squirting flower, part of his act, to blind him. The gargoyle scanned the area for Umbrina, but some of the guards had already taken her away to safety. Furious, he looked back at Silence and slashed at him with his dagger. Silence did an astounding back-flip and dodged the blade. Silence was in trouble. He hadn't thought of what to do when he got Umbrina free. The gargoyle slashed once more and Silence dodged again. Silence kept trying to think of a way to get out of this sticky situation until he realized the gargoyle had cornered him. Umbrina had broken free from the guards and rushed back to see what was going on. Upon seeing Silence cornered she was stunned. The audience watched in horror. Silence was out of ideas.

The gargoyle raised his weapon. Just as he was about to strike, Silence looked away and held out his hand hoping the monster would stop and blasted his attacker with a bolt of bright light. It was so powerful; he sent him flying across the stadium. He crashed into a wall on the other side with great force. When the monster realized what had

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happened and regained his senses, he let out a horrifying roar. And with that, all the other gargoyles swooped down to attack Silence. Silence didn't know how he did that, but he hoped he could do it again.

As more gargoyles came at him he focused and sent out another burst of light that seemed to blind and burn the gargoyles. They went up in flames and let out howls of pain. Silence then started to run down the stairs to flee from the gargoyles before they had a chance to retaliate. While he did, Silence then saw their leader lunge for Umbrina. He knew he couldn't let him grab hold of her again or he'd fly off and they'd never be able to catch him in time. Silence jumped after him and then he started glowing like a bolt of lightning and flew through the air. Upon collision with him, Silence effortlessly flung their leader out of the way. Once again, he was sent flying, right into the ground like a comet. The leader, filled with astonishment, realized the guards had surrounded him. However, he easily knocked them out of the way, took a great leap and flew off, signaling a retreat.

While fleeing, one of the gargoyles grabbed the large crystal they had brought and flew off with it. As soon as they took their crystal away, the sky returned to its beautiful blue state. After that, a strange shimmering light seemed to hover over the area and then flew across the sky and disappeared. When the audience finally realized what happened and came to their senses, they applauded and cheered vigorously for Silence. "Everyone, let's hear it for Silence!" exclaimed the announcer. That's how Silence discovered his hidden magical abilities. But little did he know, someone else discovered Silence's little talent that day...