

# Emotions

*It was tumultuous wave of fear and inspiration that swept over her;  
spinning her, confusing her.*

*Here, alone in the black abyss,  
a petrified form stood in the mists of the emotions.*

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It's coming...

Prepare your  
writings.

## Goodbye, Waterfall by Ghost

I had to get out, had to go somewhere. I couldn't bear these walls, still echoing her voice. I went outside, on the dark and empty street where I could be a stranger, a silhouette; featureless. I walked, aimless; down the street I knew best in daylight and now could hardly see. Eventually, the cool air of the evening began to calm me down, soothing my agitated mind with quiet patience.

I turned a corner and found my self at the old park, where I'd spent much of my time as a cub, scurrying about, exploring the world and sports and people. Like everything else, it was quiet, black, cold. As I wandered through, I couldn't help but remembering the times I'd hit the baseball so hard it actually injured the kid who caught it, or I'd played with a little kid to cheer him up, or had driven myself to keep running until I finished training.

I walked through the baseball field, past the basketball courts and the tennis courts and the swings in the sandbox. Past the pool that had replaced the building that remembered how I'd trained for boxing, or practiced acting, or sculpted pots that didn't work. I came to the edge, just beyond the little Japanese garden where I'd climbed on rocks, jumping from one to the other, trying not to fall to my doom just a foot below, behind the auditorium where I'd played basketball and delivered my

lines on cue. The sprinklers had come on, and all the plants glistened in what little light there was. One of the sprinkler heads was broken, and sent a gushing stream of water fifteen feet up before it rained back down.

It was beautiful. I sat down on a nearby bench. Watching this self-proclaiming fountain gave me peace. The water shined as it flew majestically into the air before disappearing against the trees and shining once again on its way back down, changed, better – this water had done something, had been a part of something, this beautiful and glorious arch that defied nature and man. I listened to the soft pattering it made on the cobblestone path.

I left earlier than I wanted, preferring to remember it bold as it was in its prime, rather than to watch it die as I knew it inevitably would.

I had done something wrong again. It was a recurring theme, by this point, so in a way it wasn't so bad – after all, it was nothing that hadn't happened before. History supported me, showed me that there could still be a happy ending. But in a different way, it was almost infinitely worse: was I doomed to live a life forever riddled by mistakes and

foolishness? I'd been here before; had I not learned? As always, she stayed supportive. As always, I found a way to make things worse.

It was my turn to say something, but I didn't. Unsure of how I'd managed to dig such a hole, I was terrified of making things worse. I kept quiet. She asked me what I expected from our relationship. Can't answer. Can't think, can't speak. I can't even move. I want to tell her I love her. I want to tell her I'm sorry. I mouth the words, but I can't make the sound come out.

She deserved better than this. She and I both knew it. I tried my hardest to be a good boyfriend, to be a good person, but every step forward is a new mistake, a new word I didn't mean, hadn't meant to say. We had spent such great times together. I know I'd made her happy, once. I had. Even then, back in days that felt like lifetimes ago, it was hard to speak of the future. She'd join the army, I'd go to college. I never asked her not to. It

was what she wanted, so it was what I wanted for her. I knew it wouldn't be easy – no one had said it would be easy – so I prepared myself for the worst. I prepared myself for the months of silence that would come while she situated herself in her new world.

Hers was a world of success. It was a world of accomplishment. It was a world where duty and honor were manifest each day in each person's very way of life. It was a world I could never know or understand. She asks me what's wrong. There are no words, and won't be for a very long time, so I smile as best I can and tell her that all is well. I feel guilty. Guilty for wasting her time. Guilty for gambling on our happiness.

I had to leave, had to go somewhere. I had to say goodbye.

Goodbye, waterfall.

## Boys Don't Cry by Calann

Flinching away from touch, he rushed along the hallway to his next class. Always forward, forward, never stop, never look up, never make a sound, don't let anything out - the harsh words of someone he had held in high esteem, a father figure, echoing in his head.

"Boys don't cry," he muttered to himself every time he felt his eyes getting prickly, his head bowing all the way to his chest. He had to be strong, had to take it like a man. Men didn't show hurt, or any other feelings. Displaying things like that was weakness, and men were supposed to be strong. Women were weak. Was he a woman?

He winced, remembering the bruises on her mother's back, remembered pressing an ice bag against the ugly blue-black marks, holding back angry tears and a feral rage towards the person he had begun to think of as a father. Grinding his teeth together, he put a hand in his bag and stroked the sleek, cool metal.

It would all be better soon.

Fuzzily he witnessed the hours ticking by, being ignored by everyone, even those who once would have tried to find out what was weighing on his mind. Too far gone, they said, shaking their heads sadly. Such a shame, he was a fine, talented boy, they would say. If only...

If only what?

His grip tightened around the edges of his table, his knuckles white, the uneven spot under his right palm biting into the skin. Only scarcely did he stop himself from biting his lip hard enough to draw blood. He was attracting strange looks and muffled laughter from the others as it was, it would be better not to give them any more reasons.

He shuddered, thinking what the sight of blood had done to him the last time, fingers just brought down from his temple.

They didn't need to know. He nearly reached into his bag again, but the shrill noise of the alarm jolted him from his dream-like state. He followed the students with his eyes, darted his gaze to the teacher, pupils widening as he became more distressed. Slowly, he started to stand up, started to reach for the comforting coolness of the metal in his bag - and froze.

There should be no hesitations now. Yet he looked on helplessly as the students trickled out of the room, laughing and bright and oblivious, and then the door had slammed closed behind the last one, a girl who always lingered behind, and he hated her the most because she still never said anything, and then he was alone with the teacher who was calling his name. Worried? No, they didn't bother worrying about him anymore, if they did, this would have been over long ago.

He pulled the gun out of his bag and pointed it at the teacher. She had her back turned, but he waited. He waited, and when he saw her expression, a succession of feelings chasing across her face - worry surprise anger fear sadness - he grabbed the handle with both hands, palms sweaty now, closing his eyes and furiously ignoring the tears that began to form at the corners.

He remembered the words again, the hurtful words, the ones his so-called father had said, and then the teacher when jokingly trying to cheer him up. She didn't know, how could she know? It didn't matter.

"Boys don't cry," he whispered, throat constricting, shifted his stance, and pulled the trigger.

No one entered that room for a long time to come.

## Inspiration by Ash

Inspiration is a little bit of everything and can come from anywhere. The bright orange pair of shoes your friend's friend has that are big enough for a Yeti. The clutter of a small and underused genius. These are some of the inspirations in my life; in fact these are two of my friends in real life. My friends are one of my biggest inspirations but not the only one; there are many more that if you look for them can help you become a more inspired writer.

**Movements** in humans and animals is an easy way to become inspired. Take for example a young woman in distress, maybe she's using her hands; waving them frantically and trying to explain. It's a good start to a story, but not a story it's self. You can however go into

why she uses her hands, what she so distressed about, how she's acting and more.

**Natural Noises** from the environment around you. Yes I am talking about the rustling of the leaves and the raging waters of a brook but also hair rubbing against skin and the smacking of lips. All these can inspire you to write a poem or a short story, maybe even the next great novel.

*\*Note: I'm not saying following my advice may lead to the next great novel.*

**Expectations** of the people around you. Maybe you expect the guy in the line next to you buying the six pack to be dumb, or maybe he's sane, or maybe even a frat boy. From there let your imagination take over, make up his house, his friends, his family, even a pet dog named Gruff. Expectations as

you have probably realized come from your background or basically your judgment of others. If you're stuck up they're lower than you and you write like that, if you care then they maybe the sweet old drunk.

**Favorite Things** such as a music box and a car can be great inspiration. I personally like adventure and long hair, so a lot of my characters have long hair and are adventurous. Another twitch is I also always associate short hair with bad guys or misunderstood people, and these are for both genders. (Oh the hippies...)

What ever inspires you, please share it with us. Mail it to me, Ash or 102, with what inspires you most and watch it show up in the Ezine next month.

## **The End of the Line by AuroraLumous**

*The end of the line  
I could wait no more  
He said it was fine  
But I knew before*

*I grasped his hand  
And we kissed goodbye  
Another new land  
I'm ready to try*

*The train left on time  
This made a change  
I tried not to cry  
But the tears still came*

*I was jolted awake  
The end of the line  
I made a mistake  
I knew not the time*

*It's the end of the line  
The end of the line  
The end of the line  
The end of my time*

## Age of the Hunter – The Soldier

An ongoing series by Kuzco

By now, you know what kind of a world Age of the Hunt is. A world made completely of hunters, or so most people would have you believe.

A world shaped around the honor of a fight, of a kill and the meaning on how many different strings of hair you carry.

But this will be, yet again, not a tale of a hunter; for it won't take part during the Age of the Hunt, per say, but rather its end. If you witnessed, or heard, of my first tale, then you know that the Age of Hunters has been a long one, extending for a few centuries now, always under the heel of a king, the greatest hunter of all.

But King Jileo the Wise had an epiphany when hunting a humming bird and decided to end it.

It is when this attempt is at its most violent and decisive peek that we will find the central character of this tale... Maku Gaeus, the Soldier.

We meet him at the battlefield. He is wearing an old samurai helmet, dressed in chainmail with a brown overcoat, leather skin colored boots and armor pads for his legs and arms. He was the only one in this time that used guns; two Berettas that had been cared for for some of his family's generations. He had, at the moment, his two pistols crossed in front of him, holding back the blade of a claymore.

“Damn coward! Using a GUN in a battle!”

“Do not judge me under your...ugn...standards, Hunter!” He pushed the sword aside with one of his guns; blades stuck between barrel and trigger protector, and placed the other one on his forehead. \*BAM\* Blood gushed out the back of his head, chasing the bullet, before the body fell lifeless.

“ARCHERS ON THE LEFT, GET US A FLANK!” He screamed squeezing his triggers thus ending two lives that fall backwards, yelling. The Archers on the left thus released their arrows unto two hundred hunters that made up the tip of the enemy's force. Only fifty die but that was more than enough.

“ARCHERS ON THE RIGHT, LET IT RIP!” He screamed the order that was repeated so that all two thousand archers would release four thousand arrows aimed at the very core of the opposing army.

“THE FLANK IS OURS, TAKE IT!” During the onslaught of arrows to the main force, it would be immovable and with poor sight of the battle.

Once the archers ran out of arrows, the entire left flank had been destroyed. The hunter chieftain of the enemy army looked as his left side laid destroyed, looked as the Soldier jumped off of a bent over body due to a bullet in the stomach; a concentrated and relentless gaze on his eyes, focused on him, even as he shot down two hunters from the air. He looked as the two thousand archers let go of their bows and drew many kinds of weapons, prepared to do what hunters did best.

“FLEE!!!” The chieftain screamed. Every hunter in his army turned tail as Maku stopped running. He smirked and screamed:

“HUNT!”

“ROOOOOOAAAARRRR!” His hunters roared and howled, cheered and feasted in prey after prey. He turned around and left the field of battle whilst his men gave chase.

He walked up the hill he had just descended and, at its top; he turned around to see the mass that was his army stomp on the enemy. He removes his mask, showing a victorious smile. He was of Asian persuasion, a mixture probably; black hair and eyes but of light yellowish skin and short stature even though he was muscled; he had a scar on his right forehead, had opened his head once or twice and his left arm was scared with deep scratches. He stretched his arm to his left to let his courier falcon land on it.

“I wrote this this morning.” He let him and his Lesser Leaders know, as he extended a scroll that had been handed to him, to the falcon. “Jileo shall be glad to be made aware that the

campaign goes well, I will have the queen’s head before New Year’s Eve.” He smiled, wrapping the small scroll to his mascot’s leg and then lift his arm so the mail-bird could be on his way.

“Your plan has worked again.” The oldest Lesser Leader let him know. “You have achieved great victories, recently.”

“Yes.” Maku agreed, drinking some water from a bottle. He finished, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. “There lies the problem within an army of hunters, led by hunters. Convince them they are preys: checkmate.” He jested, laughing mildly as he took another gulp of water. The Lesser Leaders, rendered uncomfortable, glance at each other. Maku knew they too thought using pistols was dishonorable but who were they to speak of honor? Staying by the sidelines, sending hunters to bring down preys they later claimed theirs...

“Once the army gets back, rally them and ready them to leave. We will advance through the desert under the freshness of night.”

“Very well.” His right hand man acknowledged and they all moved out. Maku retreated to his tent, where he sat and sighed, before proceeding to his pistol’s maintenance. While he did it, calmly and serenely, he pondered...pondered on the war, and how he came to be a part of it. It had been years now, fighting every week. His army was reduced to less than half but they were close to lose the numerical disadvantage; according to his plans, one more month and he would have the numbers.

As he finished assembling his pistols back together, a messenger went in his tent.

“High Leader Gaeus! Our men have been pushed back.”

“What? By whom?”

“The rest of the enemy army, they came to battle; and sir-”

“Are they attacking?” Maku asked, concerned, attaching his holsters to his garments.

“No, they have halted. The men report their leader is of short stature and wears a red cloak and has...”

“The queen’s avatar.” Maku deducts. “I highly doubt she would take the front.” He said, sure of himself, as he left the tent. He walked to the edge of the hill, where he could see his army running back, the ones closer to him already being positioned by his Group Leaders, ranked as Lesser Leaders.

“Hand me the binoculars.” He demanded, extending his hand. After they handed him the binoculars, he used them to look at the front of the massive army that faced him. At its tip, he saw a bright red figure. Also, he witnessed the very colorful uniform that identified dozens of men as the queen’s body guards, the Hunter’s Guild: bloody red and black. Surprised, he acknowledged:

“So ‘tis true...and they just stand there. Fine; tell the men to backtrack to the top of the hill, take the positions we have discussed. I want the archers at the ready, also.”

“Okay.” The messenger ran off and Maku smirked, looking again through the binoculars. Her face was clouded in the darkness of her hood; dark reddish hair showing its tips outside the hood. It was the queen alright and she was just standing

there. He dropped the binoculars and started walking, calmly, down the hill.

As he walked down, his entire army ran and marched up the hill so they would sit at the top. One of the hunters, who was carrying a spear despite his small stature, backtracked once he noticed Maku:

“Maku! Maku, is that the queen there?” The blondish Caucasian asked.

“It sure looks like her. Now follow my orders, Pylaf.” Maku demanded.

“Are ye going down there alone?”

“I have thousands of archers up this hill, and the queen’s under their range; she knows that. It’s fine, now go.”

“Do not die on us, High Leader Gaeus.”

“Pff, please...” Maku reacted, as Pylaf turned around again to head to his post. Maku reached the base of the hill just as his archers were already taking positions, forming a line, taking out their arrows. 2 more minutes of walking and he stopped 50 steps from the queen, archers some way behind and above him, at the ready. The world fell silent, watching these two.

“So, little red riding hood finally came out to play...” He jested, annoying some of her bodyguards. “This war game we are playing.”

She remained silent, though, as did every hunter in her vast army; her head bowed down so that her face would be hidden in the shadow.

“Well? You invited me, what do you want?”

“I offer a chance.” An adult, cold female voice let him know.

“Turn around and leave.” She warned. “Or-”

“Die?” Maku interrupted. “Surely you did not arrange for this meeting to be so boringly cliché... Let us start with one point: WE have YOU on the run. **You** give up. I am certain the king will show clemency.”

“The Way of the Hunter must not die.” She stiffly said, clenching her fists inside her cloak. “I will not let it die.”

“Quite frankly, you do not. Have. The strength.” He stated, slowly. She was left with nothing more than a gasp. This was the first man that had not been intimidated by her presence, her voice, her demeanor. Maku observed her, attentively; she was not worthy of leadership. She reacted though, for she was being watched by the entire army; she drew two swords that peeked out of her cloak, next to her feet. On cue, the hunter’s guild assumed a more aggressive stance, some snarling. Maku in turn lifted his arm high, aiming his pistol at the sky.

“You haven’t noticed, apparently. I have thousands of archers on the hill. If I shoot, they shall fling death upon you and your guild. So soften your nerves, we are just conversing.” He smiled. She remained silent and immovable.

“Under hunter law and rules, I challenge you to combat.” The queen challenged, confidently.

“No.” Maku simply stated. He felt like he made a vein in her head pop.

“Ah! Coward!” The leader of her bodyguards spoke out.

“Have you no honor?!” She asked.

“I honor my king, I honor his will and my duty: To fulfill it, I will win this war for him.” Maku smiled. “You are childish to think this would work. For me, honor isn’t attainable; it’s given to me by the one I serve, should I deserve the, ah ha, honor. I am a soldier, and as a soldier I fight for only three things: My home, my lord, and peace.”

“You make war; you kill in the name of peace?” She asked, trying to make him look like a fool.

“You started this war, Huntress. You want a lifestyle that feeds on a cycle of death and misery for the weak, which is most of all borne creatures. I intend to end it and thus allow my lord to usher in a new age.

This can end two ways, huntress: with a million of deaths on your side and nine thousand, eight hundred and ninety nine deaths on mine... or with millions of deaths on your side and between twelve thousand and thirteen thousand deaths on mine.” Maku argued and place truth without quarter or soft words. He knew by heart everyone that had died on his side,

and roughly the amount that had perished from the opposite side. He knew his strategies well, his place in history and the result of his actions. He was so sure, so certain of his words but still the queen did not flinch. Instead, she argued back.

“I see you have lost complete sight of who we are, as a people.” She said. “The only reason you have such an army is because you exploited our system; the lifestyle you so neglect is the very thing you used to amass an army. They follow you to have the honor of a kill; for your men, this is nothing but mass hunting, mass fighting that will put them and their greatness in history. There is great honor and reward in our way. You just don’t feel it, can’t know it, and thus you want it to end; but your own army knows of what I speak.”

“Their offspring won’t.” Maku made his point, smiling.

“You lousy maggot...” The huntress proclaimed, with deep sorrowful rage in her voice. Hearing it, Maku had a gut feeling: one that told him she knew she wasn’t capable of winning this war. At the same time, he remembered a thought he had some years ago, when he heard one of the tales from Baiwoly, The Bard.

“You know, your most famous catch is that of The Protector.” He mentioned; he noticed, by watching her swords that she shivered. “He was very skilled, perhaps as skilled as the king himself, as he is now.”

“So? Yes I claimed him. I am the strongest, hence Queen.”

“Well, I heard a tale from a bard who heard it from another bard. A tale whose main character was the famed Protector. It says it was him who killed Vaarshi, the War Monger. Is that true?”

She waited a minute, considering her reply. When she gave it, her hesitation had already been evident.

“The Sabretooths claimed that prize, I do not challenge that.”

Maku smiled, all knowing. He continued:

“The tale tells of a woman the Protector met. They were together for a good quantity of time and he grew to confide in her, he loved her. That woman, though, was a crafty huntress that was just biding her time to-” Alas, Maku is interrupted, also as expected, by the huntress queen who let out a shout, a raging scream:

“SILENCE! You know nothing about him, the bard knows nothing about him, NO ONE DOES!”

Unseen by her people, a tear came out of her cloak. Maku saw it and understood the situation he was found in, reacting accordingly. He aimed one of his pistols and shot her clean in the head, aiming the second at the leader of the Hunter’s guild which put a shield in front. Maku jumped back as two spears were lunged at him; he shot and turned around running as his men filled the sky above with arrows and ground below with shadows. Alas, there were too many projectiles and Maku was speared.

A spear thrust his torso.

“GRAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!” The arrows hit the front of the late queen’s army, the leader of the Hunter’s Guild protecting her fallen body. Pylaf was already dashing towards Maku who, effortful, removed the spear from his torso.

“Motherfucker! ‘m getting old.” He ripped off his shirt just as Pylaf arrived, more arrows preventing the front of the army from attacking. Maku looked at the leader of the queen’s bodyguards, helplessly stuck at keeping his master’s body untouched, looking back at him reddened with anger and spite.

“Hurry, boss.” Pylaf said. “I will lend a hand.”

“You should learn to follow orders.” Maku said, tightening his shirt around the wound.

“You never ordered me not to help you.”

“Good point. Help me then, I do not feel my legs.”

Pylaf sat on the ground so Maku could grab on to his shoulders and then grabbed his lifeless legs, starting to run.

“Their archers have not killed us yet.” Pylaf noted.

“They do not know who the leader is now. The Queen was...ugn...explanation later.”

“Right!”

A division of soldiers was quick to protect their High Leader, as he was brought to be healed, to survive. As he did so, the war took an abrupt turn: The hunter army that so firmly opposed Jileo found itself in disarray for, in that vast army, there was not one left that had the Queen’s strength of intent. The whole army moved on the Queen’s will; her dedication alone was keeping the army united against the King and her dedication was not to the Way of the Hunter, for such a thing can be swayed, but to something else Maku had, with his vast experience on knowing his enemy, recognized.

But that, fair audience, is another story. For whatever reason, all the resistance depended on her and once she perished, the various hunter groups broke rank and left the army, leaving the King unopposed. But the victory was short lived...Maku Gaeus would no longer have the use of his legs and worst than that, a few days later he received word that King Jileo, The Wise, had been assassinated by the Sabretooths. Which begged the question: how to find a new ruler?

It used to be; pretenders would go to the battle and prove their strength by hunting each other in the vast forest that surrounded it. But that belonged to the Law of the Hunter, which wasn’t something Jileo would want to see applied. The answer would be, thus, on an election. But this was war time and so the Councilors alone would elect a new King.

Maku, still alive and bearing leadership over hundreds of hunter groups and individuals, kept pursuing those that wanted

to uphold Hunter's Law, making sure everyone understood that Jileo had started a movement that would last.

And thus, on the year four of what would be known as the Intermission War, Maku was approached by a councilor. Maku Gaeus had been prey to many hunters, or assassins; though surviving, he had retained some scars. He not only couldn't walk, hanging around in a wheel chair, but also had new scars on his face and neck, torso and arm though some were covered.

"High Leader Gaeus! Councilor Gah'jo has arrived."

"Ah! Send the man in, then." Maku demanded. An old bald man covered in a white cloak, head hidden behind a hood went in. He removed the hood and looked at Maku Gaeus. Despite how he physically looked, he still retained the same expression that Gah'jo remembered him by. The know it all smirk that represented both confidence and wisdom; one that talked with him always had the impression Maku knew everything that was going on. The problem with this was that it was true.

"Greetings, High Leader Gaeus."

"Greetings, Councilor." They shook hands. "I do not mean to be without cordiality but there is a resistance movement I am concerned about. I believe me being King would be a bad idea."

The councilor was not a fool, he actually expected Maku to deduct why he was there; he said nothing, waiting for the consequential explanation.

"I see why it would be a good message for a wounded and scarred cripple to start the age that is coming. One that would be undoubtedly successful, I might add." He jested. "But I cannot rule while a war is going on and I cannot un-train hunters for I do not understand how they are trained into the way."

"I see. In that case, would you be so kind as to offer some advice, as to who would be a good candidate?"

Maku smiled.

"Why, actually, I am chasing the perfect candidate. A huntress that would be even a better symbol than I; a weak ruler would only lead to failure, regardless of his mental abilities. I will hand to you one that is strong and as committed as Jileo."

"Who is this Queen?"

"I will not make promises, my friend." He smiled. "But I would advise you to wait 2 weeks."

The councilor, bothered, looked at Maku judgmentally. Maku Gaeus always talked like he knew everything, like he could deliver everything. The highest High Leader ever, it seemed: the problem was, it was all true.

“You have done a lot for the past king, and for us. We will abide to your advice, and hope earnestly for this...queen. I wish you good fortune, High Leader Gaeus.”

“Have a good trip.”

He then came outside and smirked as he looked at a forest; there it lay, his chance. He had come very far, sacrificed a lot; he had commanded during the Intermission War and fought at Jileo’s side during the Chain Battles but soon...soon it would be over.

Maku then led his hunters through readied ambushes and prepared traps, outwitting them all. It took a violent bulk of his forces to defeat the Hunter’s Guild and, at the end, Maku watched his personal bodyguard, Pylaf, defeat their leader whose name was lost through the ages.

Finally, his chosen laid there, still in the coma he had put her on.

Pylaf grabbed onto his spear, kneeling and loosing strength due to the wounds he had suffered in that battle.

“Will you be alright?” Maku asked, as he pushed his wheel chair past him.

“Aye. Are ye sure ‘bout this, High Leader? I-Ugh- I would have ye as my king.”

Maku smiled as he approached the woman, sleeping safely in a pod that was counting down to zero. He replied:

“Of course you would. A lot of people would, but I am no king, I am a soldier. I am leader of warriors, not people. And she, she might not be the best but she will send the right message, and a good job.”

“I just thin-.” And Pylaf fainted. Maku waved his hand and his bodyguard was carried off to be treated, washed and healed. He approached further until he could see through the glass, the red cloaked and hooded figure of the Huntress Queen. He knew of Pylaf’s concerns. She was, after all, the most determine of hunters, the most devoted to that way of life...and that’s exactly why she would make a better leader than Maku Gaeus; if, that is, Maku was right about her, about her psyche and about his certainty that he could convince her. As always, he was right.

And he did. How is another story but he did. Kayla Banus, the Huntress Queen, became the first ruler of the new age that followed the Age of the Hunt. Maku, himself, served to the end as the Higher Leader, or in the recuperated nomenclature, General of her army. She brought forth the new age that would later be known as The Age of Peace.

Maku was a soldier. He vowed his service to King Jileo and served him with unrelenting patriotism. He served him after he died and continued that way until his mind began to wither which at that point, he retired with honors to live the rest of his life in his family house, unbothered and alone. He received

awards and recognition from the Queen and all the people, for a loyal service of the highest quality and the only regret he had in his life was not being able to always stand in the front lines, leading his warriors.

Maku lived for his two allegiances: The kingdom of Jileo, The Wise, and peace. He demonstrated that honor alone is not enough: you must understand, you must have and obey what one calls Duty.

They say that the High Leader's bodyguard, Pylaf the Loyal, served his post until he died; That after that, he settled down with a family and saw battle no more. They say that the Queen's rule was a harsh one, that she was never seen smiling

or laughing, and that it was punishment for her. They also say that is a lie; that she smiled when Baiwolly, The Bard, sang tales to her.

They say Jileo's murderer found a place in bounty hunting, and became the most famous of all.

They say that, despite her continuous treacheries, the tale of Kayla Banus, The Establisher, is one from which many lessons can be learned. That, I leave to your judgment when we next meet to remember that harsh age, a violent time that bred the most physically capable humans; a time to prove that honor is not everything you need...an age known as The Age of the Hunt.

## Notes

Hello there! It's another exciting issue is out and hot off the presses... uh... Microsoft word! There we go. Anyway, I was just thinking about college and how a lot of us on the site are going through it, have graduated and so on, so I was hoping maybe next issue will be a school issue \*hint hint\*. The normal stuff (series and all) will be the same but maybe an editorial section and a couple of short stories on it.

Also, I turned the issue sideways to accommodate the amazing photo by Calann, the tid-bit on the front I threw together really quick, nothing special. Thanks to everyone who volunteered this issue! \*throws streamers\* Our first fully volunteer issue, which means I didn't have to work till assembly! 😊

I'm looking for staff! The pay is nothing and you get treated badly (just kidding on the last bit). I need people for everything, pictures, to make contests, series, random writings and reviews of literature. **DONATE PEOPLE!**

Bet some are confused about the 'it's coming' thing, well it is coming, and for three people it'll blow your minds. September 10<sup>th</sup>, whenever that is it will be revealed unto the masses. Watch the news that day very closely.