

Anger and Steel
By Phillip Hall

All of the men sat quietly in a row. They did not complain about the hard ground beneath them. The legendary sword teacher, Mazzaak Moreal Maasdan paced in front of them. He was the reason why so many knights came to this small war college. His skill with a sword was unmatched throughout the known world.

He stopped pacing in front of a large muscle bound fellow.

“You,” he said pointing to the large man.

The big man looked around and then back to the teacher.

“Yes my master?”

The teacher walked a little closer to him.

“You have many friends and comrades in this class do you not?”

The large man nodded his head and responded.

“Yes my master it is true.”

The teacher smiled, then spoke.

“Stand up.”

The big man stood and bowed slightly and then stepped forward.

“Today I will teach you all a lesson about anger's proper use on the battlefield.”

Everyone straightened up wanting to hear the masters words. The older teacher walked to a large stone wall where a rack of weapons was set up. He picked up a fine looking silver sword.

“Please come select a weapon my student,” Mazzaak said, gesturing towards the large man.

The large man smiled.

“Yes my master.”

He walked towards the large stone wall and began browsing all the different types of weapons. The teacher stepped around behind him and in one fluid motion he ran the sword through the large man's back and then spun quickly around and sliced the man's head off. The large body fell to the floor with a thump.

Gasps went out from the crowd. Everyone jumped to their feet. Several of the man's closest comrades blindly charged forward. The master swordsman cut them

down one by one as they approached. Several others in the class could not believe the teacher would murder a student. A few ran away screaming.

“COWARDS!” the teacher screamed out at them.

Another group of students rushed him all at once. They had taken tree branches and rocks as weapons. He masterfully side stepped and cut them all down. Finally the sounds of death and battle subsided and silence fell upon the brutal scene. The teacher stood breathing heavily. He was covered in blood and his sword's shiny silver was doused in gory red blood. After catching his breath he took the sword and stuck it into the ground in front of him. He looked up and saw there was one student left. The student was standing, his face showed no emotion. The teacher smiled.

“Why did you not attack me?”

The student stood a moment longer, then replied.

“Because that's exactly what you wanted us to do. Anger clouds your judgment and makes you do rash things.”

The teacher smiled.

“Yes, yes that's exactly right. Anger is a tool to be used on your enemies. There is no true way to show this without spilling blood. If only one man understands this and all the others die then I have done my duty. Now that you have learned why anger is better left at home than brought to the battlefield, let us get on with our next lesson.”

The student smiled and sat back down, ready to listen with a renewed vigor.