

# The MPire: Death Cometh

## Excerpt from Chapter One: Training Day



After several moments' silence, Malcolm said, "Your mother was a beautiful woman. So smart and bright." Mallory nodded. "I loved her so much. I miss her so much." Malcolm burst into tears. Mallory handed him a tissue, but he wouldn't take it. "She was the most precious thing to me. She was everything to me. I've been so lost without her."

Mallory still sat silently. The pain of his father was choking him, but he didn't move. He never saw his father so humble and broken. He thought maybe he had misjudged him all those years. Certainly, he was in pain. He wasn't a mean brute. Mallory turned to provide comfort, but he hesitated.

Then Malcolm continued in a dark tone, "I gave her everything, my love, my heart and my soul. Everything I had was hers. I would've given her my life..." he paused, then his tone turned ice cold, "but all she gave me was you." Mallory felt a bullet pierce his heart. "She left me with you." Although the words burst Mallory's heart into pieces, he showed no emotion. Malcolm took a sip from the glass and handed it back to Mallory. "The next time you have the impudence to sit with your father, learn how to make a decent drink."

Malcolm walked out of the room. Mallory was crushed as he slid back into the sofa. He had no power, and he was not strong. His mind began battling the pros and cons of joining his family. At Towneson Financial, he was alone, but he was very well respected. He fought back the tears and got up from the sofa. He walked over to his desk and closed the book. He blew out the candles and sat in his chair. He recalled Marek telling him to make a connection.

Each of the horsemen had a connection or something in common with their predecessors. Marek and Uncle Myron were military men. Marc and Uncle Mal were leaders of the family and possessed a strong sense of values and control. Although Uncle Murphy Lee died a couple years ago, he and Marlon were great cooks. Mallory couldn't penetrate the wall between him and his father to discover their commonalities. But, he needed to breakthrough to reach his father, if for nothing else than to learn his destined charge.

He got up from his desk to find his father. He walked through the double doors and into the break area to find his father making coffee. He pulled the chair from one of the tables and sat down. Malcolm glanced over his shoulder to find Mallory sitting and waiting for him. He huffed and resumed waiting for the coffee to brew.

"You drink coffee?" Malcolm said coldly.

Mallory really craved the caffeine but knew this was not a good time to rekindle that taboo. "No, sir. Do you have tea?"

"Nope. Are you hungry?"

"No, sir, I had breakfast this morning."

"Where, at Molina's?" Malcolm referred to Mallory's morning sexual prelude.

"That, too."

Malcolm grabbed the pot of coffee and overfilled his cup. The coffee ran over, spilled on the counter, and down to the floor. "Got damn it!" Malcolm snatched several napkins to wipe the spill. He finished cleaning part of the spill and turned toward the trashcan, which was next to Mallory. When he threw the napkins in the trash, Mallory flinched uncontrollably. They both stood silent. Malcolm wanted to offer the explanation that he only threw them because he didn't want to walk, but

he couldn't make the words come out of his mouth. He slowly returned to cleaning the spill.

Mallory's heart was racing. He couldn't understand why he was so frightened. Even though he knew that his father was tossing napkins in the trash, he couldn't help feeling that Malcolm would cause him harm. As Malcolm turned to walk to the trashcan, he noticed that Mallory moved away from it.

"Do you want the paper?" Malcolm asked.

"I've read it this morning."

"The obituaries?"

"No, sir," Mallory frowned. "I read the financial section."

"You need to read the obituary section. It's helpful. If you get some history on the souls you collect, it'll determine where they should go."

"Where they go, sir?"

"Heaven or hell," Malcolm answered, but Mallory still looked confused, so he continued his explanation. "We're dark angels. We collect souls and send them to heaven or hell. We stay neutral until the battle."

"Will we ever battle?"

"Sure. Everyday, son...but you won't win with me today." Malcolm walked out the room. Mallory was still confused. He wasn't asking if he and Malcolm would battle. He shook his head, then stood up and walked toward the counter. He opened the cabinets to find his favorite Earl Grey green tea.

"That son of a bitch!" Mallory grabbed a cup and poured in some hot water. He stood, waiting for his tea to brew. He noticed that Malcolm didn't add sugar or cream in his coffee. Mallory didn't like sweet or creamy tea. That was a start, but not enough to build a rapport. Mallory strolled back into his office. Malcolm was sitting at Mallory's desk, reading and sipping his coffee. He removed his eyes from the paper briefly but never looked up at Mallory.

"You know, you used to follow me everywhere when you were little." Mallory relaxed his face but didn't deliver a smile. He knew that Malcolm would deliver a

punch that would bruise him. “I hated that then,” he looked up, “just like I hate it now!”

“Get over it.”

Malcolm released a slight grin. His son was beginning to fight back. “Have a seat. What do you want?”

“You to bow to me and give me my position,” Mallory kept standing.

“Bullshit. What do you want?”

“I told you.”

“If you wanted your position, you would have it. Only you stand in your way.”

Malcolm sipped his coffee.

“Me? You won’t bow.”

“Why should I?”

“That is what you’re supposed to do.”

Malcolm shot his head up and shouted, “No, it’s not true! A true horseman never bows, never gives up, and never loses!”

“Didn’t grandpa bow to you?” Malcolm looked down. “Answer me, damn it!”

“You watch your tone!”

“You answer my fucking question!” Mallory shouted back.

“Look, you little bastard...” Malcolm jumped up from his seat and lunged toward Mallory.

“I know who my father is. I don’t like it, but I know,” Mallory didn’t flinch this time.

“You’re still a little shit.”

“And you’re ignoring my question. Answer me. He bowed to you, didn’t he?”

“We had an agreement.”

“What was it?”

“None of your fucking business,” Malcolm sat back in the chair and resumed reading the paper. Mallory pulled up a chair and sat close to the desk. Malcolm continued to read the paper and sip his coffee. “You didn’t answer my question. What do you want?”

“What do you think I want?”

“A father who loves you.”

“That’s fucking obvious.”

“Disrespect me one more time.”

“And what are you going to do about it?” Their eyes locked, but Mallory couldn’t hold the battle stance. “Why do you hate me?” He relinquished his position as he looked down.

“There are many levels of hate.”

“I know that.”

“Why are you here?”

“Long version or short version?” Mallory snapped back. Malcolm looked confused. “Long version is you fucked my mother. Short version...you’re in my office.”

Malcolm began laughing loudly. He was caught off-guard by Mallory’s well-delivered, sharp-tongued comment. Mallory didn’t change his expression. Malcolm got up, grabbed his items, and walked out of the office.

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