

“Where is it?! Where is the source!?”

Demanding roars echoed throughout the thicket. An armoured ring of six soldiers connected by chains to a small, feathery creature in the middle. A small Noxian scouting party, their main force not far behind them. Their division had been directed towards the southern coastlines of Ionia after reports of a magical weapon in the area. One of the men, losing his patience, had broken from the circle inwards, lifting the creature with a heavy kick. The force winded it, its scream of pain cut short as it gasped in an attempt to breath. As it landed, the man leaned over the creature, narrowing his eyes. He drifted his hand into a small satchel by his side and drew out a small, black rock and held it above the whimpering animal. “You know what happens when you play the fool, don’t you?” A jagged grin crept out of the man’s dirt-strewn face, the scars on either side of his cheeks almost lengthening his wretched smile. As he brought the rock closer, it hummed as strands of blue light seeped outwards from the creature, its body convulsing in pain as its life force was slowly sapped out. After another few seconds of this, the man put the stone away, letting the creature recovery momentarily. It slowly got up, hackles raised before its attention was divided as it sensed another form of magic directly south-east of the troop’s direction. Desperately it began pining and almost raced to where it felt this heavy, fat essence. Its chains jingled and became strained as it started to drag the soldiers with it. The lead soldier chuckled to his compatriots at the sight of the creature slowly dragging them towards a small inlet within the treeline. The closer to this mysterious source the creature got, the more desperate it became, whining loudly and dragging it’s talons into the dirt, clawing it’s way forward despite the combined force holding it back.

As the creature slowly got further, a small whistle flicked by its ears, followed by the sound of shattered metal. The collar binding the creature had been shattered, and in its freedom, darted hastily into the inlet. The soldiers had been knocked backwards, the tension from their force snapping as they tripped backwards over themselves, their heavy armour clunking against the ground amidst gasps of surprise. As they picked themselves up, they noticed an arrow on the dirt near where the shattered collar was lain. The grass around it had quickly began to rot and die, leaving a small black patch where it had been previously a verdant green colour.

The creature rushed as quickly as its beaten body could manage. The haze of magic getting ever heavier in its senses. As it reached the most intense part, it saw nothing. However it heard a small creak above it. Tilting its head upwards, the creature saw a pale, nimble man leaning against a branch. Letting out a small mew, the man’s attention turned downwards to the creature. A red scarf hung over his face and bare chest. He brought a finger to his lips, whispering along the air that sifted downwards. “Run, proud creature of Ionia. The magic you seek is naught but a poison to the world. Go now. Live, and let me destroy these so-called “men” of Noxus.” As the man hefted a large stygian bow, he loosed three arrows that seemed to come from out of his very hands, a small purple light expanding as each arrow shot outwards. The creature hesitated momentarily before it turned and ran away, understanding at its level the warning it had been given by the mysterious archer. The sickly magic was more than enough to drive it away. It scurried into the bushes and disappeared from sight.

“Ambush!” Roared the lead scout, quickly raising his shield as he leaned forward, ducking his body behind the metal cover. The other five soldiers followed suit. Three more whistles screamed towards their direction. Three quick thuds as the arrows dug themselves into the shield, one poking through the lead scout's shield. As he eyed it, it oozed a sickly colour. The arrow head glowing with a dark violet. His breathing became tightened, the poisonous aura leaking from the arrow tip forced him to move away from his shield as an intense nausea crept up from his stomach.

A fourth whistle rang by, finding its mark within the lead soldier. He bellowed in pain as the arrow dug itself into a knick between his forearm and elbow. He quickly snapped the arrow and dug it out of his arm. As he desperately tried to cover his wound he noticed the veins within his arm turning a sickly colour; the same shade as the glow on the arrow head that was poking through his shield. As the colour spread throughout his arm, he felt an intense burning and numbness. Panic had set in and now the solder rapidly tore off his gauntlets, the other five men watching onwards. He began screaming as the skin on his arm melted away into a black ooze, revealing the inner workings of his arm. The sinew and muscles turned to red liquid that mixed with his blood, and his bones cracked and fell apart before drifting away. What had been left of the man's forearm was now a rotting stump hanging off his elbow. He dropped to his knees as his body went into shock, grasping at his nub in absolute terror. He felt a slight sting as another arrow found its mark in his chest. He barely noticed as his sternum collapsed, choking on the blood that had been freed of its fleshy cage. The top half his body dipped forwards, before falling backwards. His lower half was still kneeling in the ground as its upper half disconnected itself from his body in a spray of gore. The rest of the soldiers screamed in horror, two of them vomiting heavily. All of them were jittery and pale faced.

A low rumbling befell their ears, coming from the inlet. The archer was slowly walking towards them, with his bow grasped in one hand, and an arrow the size of a ballista rod held in the nock of the bow. His path slowed as he roared with purposeful fury and pulled back the massive arrow. The five remaining scouts dropped their shields and ran screaming in the direction of their division, hoping someone would hear their cries. A roar of wind tore in their direction, the arrow spearing through two soldiers shattering into a tree trunk, impaling them. One of three men glimpsed behind him, seeing the head of the arrow pushing out of the tree his kinsmen had just been taken by. The archer, with his hand still raised outwards, quickly aimed his bow upwards, firing rapidly. The sky momentarily turned black as the three remaining soldiers were skewered by the flood of arrows, their screams cutting short as their arrows pierced their bodies. So many, were the arrows, which they ripped through the scouts like a pincushion. Their bodies shunted awkwardly in the dirt, held up and pinned in place like set of twisted scare crows. Faces of pure terror still etched into their stitched corpses.

The archer stood still, letting out a breath as his rage passed. The pain in his body temporarily lessened in the parts of him that been twisted into a harsh, knotted substance along his lower half of his body & his forearms. Wiping the sweat from his brow, he slung the bow over his shoulder and made his towards the direction the scouts had been running in, drifting into a haze as his mind wandered.

*“One step closer Varus, and you will be that much sooner to accomplish your goal!”* A voice echoed in his mind. Varus. The archer’s name. Memories flashed, bringing him back to his awareness. With renewed focus, his fury returning, Varus noticed the small drifts of smoke at the nearby Noxian camp. Notching his bow again, he prepared for his next assault.