

The Apotheosis of James: Part I
By Renard De Fleureaux

Power. In a word, it had defined the life of Prince James of Brellech entirely. It had defined his place in society, cursing him at the same time it blessed him. The son of royalty, he was the unexpected product of a love affair between the King of Galaecia and the Princess of Brellech. He was a bastard- by the laws of the land, no throne waited for him in either kingdom.

But power, true power, cares little for laws. True power cannot be bound by treaties and laws written on paper. They are tools to be used, to those that know what they're doing.

So why should his illegitimate status matter? It didn't. At least, to James, anyways. As he grew into manhood, the Prince saw all the pieces fall into place. His father died, leaving Galaecia's throne to his idiot half-brother, a loathsome fop named Magnus. At the same time, his mother Annette, now Queen of Brellech, was supportive, and although she could not make it official, all of Brellech's Royal Court knew who she wanted to succeed her.

James saw only opportunities from this. The people of Galaecia grew tired of their idiot King, and they were starved for an alternative. A bold young Prince from their ally to the North who was himself half Galaecian was perfect. His mother, no slouch herself when it came to seizing the moment, named her son head of her armies, and the Prince was soon off to war.

No matter how much Galaecia despised Magnus, he was still *their* King, and no foreign Pretender. No matter how brilliant a commander, James soon found too much resistance amongst the locals. That was fine, for now. When brute force won't do, manipulation is the logical next step- it was an art James was well-versed in.

Though personally taciturn and cold, the Prince had a very good image. He was conventionally handsome by the standards of the Canid nations, his dark, spotted fur and pronounced muzzle recognizable as pure Galaecian. This helped, certainly, as the Prince began building his political support. One by one, the aristocracy and scholarly circles of Galaecia began to flock to James' promise of a regime based on progress and more independence from Mennatherus' Priests.

Soon, James found himself matching his brother. He had a power base, now, filled with rebellious Lords and scholars, filling his temporary capital in Galaecia's Northern provinces to bursting. But it still wasn't enough, as Magnus brought in the Imperial Armies of Mennatherus, as the Church moved to denounce James.

And when brute force and manipulation fail, there is one more route- recruiting outside help. James, however, had a flair for the exotic and the dramatic. A Prince and future Emperor,

for why limit himself to King when Brellech would be his as well, demands only the most powerful, the most prestigious of aid.

So James summoned a demon.

Despite what the Mennatheran Church may say, the Demon James had encountered was perfectly reasonable. His name was Fenris, and despite a rather haughty demeanor and a flair for melodrama, he had never made any grabs at James' soul or tried to trick him into damnation. In fact, for all their interactions, Fenris was more reliable than most people James knew.

But he needed more help.

The campaign had not gone well for Magnus; the idiot was no commander, and James had him on the run. Galaecia wasn't his yet, and Magnus pulling back his forces to his capital had only made room for the legions of Mennatherus to engage James' forces at full force. They had lost two battles already.

The Prince stalked through empty, cavernous halls of his sprawling Palace, the former home of a deposed noble loyal to Magnus. A row of tall windows let in a flood of moonlight, the only source of light available as the rest of James' household slept soundly. His only company was his bodyguard, the monstrous Lecuyer.

Captain Nicholas Lecuyer was a hulking brute, towering over all of James' army, perhaps any army, by several feet. And every inch was packed with muscle. The good Captain had long since foregone wearing any uniform, as the yards of cloth necessary to clothe him had been deemed unnecessary. He walked with every muscle of his vast upper body bare, his blonde, spotted fur strained to cover every inch. He did not walk as so much as he lumbered about with a swagger, powerful legs surging with every step as massive thighs rippled under the stretched fabric of increasingly taut trousers. His chest alone eclipsed James in scale, two massive plateaus of flesh with a deep cleft separating them. His arms hung out at his sides, swollen biceps and the topography of his great, rolling shoulders making him look more like a force of nature than a personal body guard.

Lecuyer had not always been so; there was a time when he was a normal size. It was one of many of Fenris' gifts to James.

"Have a care, if you would, Captain." James said. "Even the walls have ears in Galaecia."

"Don't worry, your highness." Lecuyer smirked, rolling his mountainous shoulders, "We catch anyone skulking around, I'll beat 'em into a pulp." He punched his hand for emphasis, flexing his bulbous triceps.

"Mm." James nodded his approval, moving forward.

The two came to the end of the hallway. A grand entryway, decorated with sumptuous statues of the saints of the Mennatheran Church, marked it as the entrance to the Palace's chapel. James had sectioned it off for his personal use, and so far, only Lecuyer had been privy to what James did inside.

The chapel had once been the crown jewel of the Palace, its self-important former owner quick to court the Primarchs of the Church. It had been filled with melodramatic and grandiose frescoes and golden icons, but James had been quick to alter that.

Now, totems and fetishes of Fenris, raven feathers and wolf bones, hung from the ceiling. The demon's icon, a simplified trinity knot, was smeared on the walls, obscuring the faces of scowling saints and doting angels. On the altar an ancient and crude statue of the demon was illuminated by eerie, green light, coming off from the very specific herbs and chemicals that Fenris demanded be burned in his honor.

"Watch the door." James ordered, Lecuyer filling the entry way on his own.

The Prince knelt before the altar, and concentrated. He soon began muttering to himself in the obscene and obscure black language Fenris had taught him, standing up to grab ashes from the smoking brazier and form a circle on the marble floor, chanting all the while.

Lecuyer stood at the other end of the chapel, watching bemusedly. He'd seen the ritual done before, even seen the demon before; it was, after all, directly responsible for his monstrous strength and size. But the sense of awe had all but dissipated as the summoning became more and more routine.

The circle of ashes glowed with heat, gaining the same unnatural green glow as the flames that burned before Fenris' Totem. James finished his muttering and stood at attention, waiting. The glow became a bright and burning light, as an almost electric shock crackled through the air. A gentle breeze whispered, slowly swirling in the center of the circle and growing in strength. Dust and debris littered around the desecrated chapel was kicked up, as the gentle breeze grew into a vortex of dust and ash, and as quickly as it came, the air settled, and there was Fenris.

The Demon was an impressive figure. Though he wasn't as broad as Lecuyer, he stood more than a head taller, and still possessed a phenomenally muscular build. His golden fur was unlike any other canid, his black hair framing two long, curved horns, and his thin tail was struck by bold, red stripes. He wore elaborate armor of black metal, black pauldrons sporting cruel looking spikes, shin guards and gauntlets, with a flowing red cloak to complete his attire. His broad, thick chest was bare, the red trinity knot symbol emblazoned on his left pectoral.

"James." The Demon said as way of greeting, his voice subdued, but hiding formidable power.

“Fenris,” James intoned formally, “It is a great honor to be in your presence.” Fenris, for his station, was the only one James had ever bowed to, and he did so now, a short, simple sign of loyalty.

“What do you seek, then, acolyte?”

“My fool brother has fled the field. He hides in his capital like a coward.” James said disdainfully.

“Then why come to me? Finish him, and take what’s yours.” Fenris said, his glowing eyes of red bearing into James.

“There’s a complication. His incompetent army now gone, it has only made room for a far greater foe, the legions of Mennatheras. My army is spread too thin, and the Mennatherans seem to be infinite. I have already lost two battles, and they now threaten my territories in Galaecia. The Emperor is leaning on my mother, and I may soon be stranded if my situation does not change immediately.” James explained.

“So what do you want, exactly, acolyte? Do not waste my time with excuses.”

“I want more than your blessing, Fenris. I want your power.”

Fenris narrowed his eyes, now two glowing red blades that could puncture the Prince’s very soul. “You are gifted, James. Ambitious, clever, and perceptive. But no mortal can handle the raw, undiluted power of a Demon, even a fraction of it.”

“What about Lecuyer?”

“What about him? His strength is not *my* power. I simply enhanced what was already there.”

Lecuyer grinned, “Thanks.” He flexed his arm, his bicep swelling to the size of James’ head, jostling his forearm and shoulder.

“Fenris, to succeed, I need to go to the field and command my army against Mennatheras directly. My commanders are not capable of dealing with the current situation.” James pleaded.

“Then find new commanders.”

“I can’t find able officers out of thin air. Fenris, I want to go to the field myself, and make judgment on my own. To make the fields wet with the blood of Mennatheras... all in your name, of course.” James fought back a grin.

Fenris examined the Prince for a moment. “There is but one way I can give you my power. You must allow me to possess you.”

Lecuyer, surprisingly, was the one who speak, “Sir? You want to let a Demon possess you? That won’t end well. He’ll trick you.”

“SILENCE!” Fenris’ subdued voice snapped like a whip into a thunderous bellow. “This is between your master and me, servile. I made you what you are, I can take it back just as easily.”

Lecuyer stepped back, taking a deep breath and allowing his chest to expand, his heaving pecs filling out, just to make sure it was all still there.

“You have been a faithful servant, Prince James. I do not bargain like the Mennatheran Gods. This is part pact, and part reward for your service to me. Allow me inside you, bind your soul and body to me, and I will make you an avatar of my power and glory.”

James’ mouth thinned, the Prince hesitating.

“Just how willing are you when it comes to your goals, o Prince? You want merely the throne of Galaecia? Then deny my gift. You doubt your ability to lead, but I see you gaining your father’s throne. But Mennatheras knows you are not a friend. As soon as you gain your throne, assassins and rogues hired by Mennatheras will descend upon you. You will die by treacherous hands, and your name will be vilified by the Church. But, if you accept my gift, we, together, can take Galaecia, Brellech, and Mennatheras- and any other throne you desire.” Fenris’ words burned in James’ mind, filling the Prince with grandiose visions.

“How do I know you won’t betray me? Take me over completely?”

“You don’t, James. To be timid now will see you defeated and killed. You want to rule? Then take a risk. Nothing worth having was taken by safe and secure decisions.”

“This is a very big risk.” James argued.

“It’s a very big prize.” Fenris countered.

James paced, chewing on it, before turning to face Fenris again and prostrating before the Demon. “I accept your gift with thanks.”

Fenris’ stoic face cracked into the slightest of grins, “Very wise.”

The Demon approached the Prince, wrapping his clawed hands around James’ sides. Wordlessly, he lifted the mortal off the ground, his red eyes staring straight through James. The same wind that heralded Fenris’ arrival began to pick up again, swirling around the two. Before his eyes, James saw Fenris dissolve, as if the Demon was nothing but an apparition. At the same time, a sharp pain invaded his head, like a splitting headache. His head swam and his vision blurred as the last of Fenris vanished, and the wind immediately ceased, James collapsing on the marble floor.

Lecuyer bent over to see past his massive chest, looking down at his Prince. "...Sir?"

James began to stir, his body twitching and convulsing until he jumped to his feet. "Lecuyer!" he growled through clenched teeth, "Get these clothes off me!" He began tearing at his expensive, embroidered military jacket, "It's choking me!"

The hulking, spotted canine lumbered over, and, after a slight hesitation, began to rip the Prince's uniform off of him, until James was in nothing but his smallclothes, and it was evident why his clothes had been constricting him- he was easily twice as big as he had been.

The Prince had always been tall and lithe, but now, his lean body was transformed into an almost beastly form, covered in thick, bulging muscle. Though still miniscule in comparison to Lecuyer, only coming up to just below the brute's chest, James was now a powerhouse of strength, with shoulders and neck like a bull, thick arms that swelled in size when he flexed, a wide chest, a solid middle, all tapering down to powerfully formed legs. He was still panting heavily, trying to stand up straight as he surveyed the transformation.

"What... Fenris... Fenris, is this what you had in mind?" James grunted. "How is this going to help me conquer Galaecia?"

"*You doubt me?*" Fenris' voice echoed in James' mind. But as Lecuyer jumped to his feet, swerving around, it was evident he heard the demon, as well.

"*This is a taste of my power. You have the strength of ten men, and your enemies will crumble before you.*"

"You think brute strength will win me my throne, Fenris?" James muttered skeptically, giving his newly engorged arm an experimental flex.

"*Brute strength and your cunning, good Prince. No warrior shall best you, no commander shall outflank you. Is this not what you wanted? Power?*"

"Well... yes, I suppose." James said, still looking over his newly expanded form.

"*Then revel in it, good Prince. Go and fight for your throne. This is a mere glance at what is to come... you wanted my power, and you shall have it. All of it, in time.*"

"Wait, what?" James asked, but the demon would not answer.

James sighed, lost in thought for a moment. He looked out the window as the rays of the rising morning sun began to creep through the chapel's windows before he turned back towards Lecuyer. "Come, then. Let's get the troops ready to march." He stopped, looking at his half-naked form. "And I'll need to see the quartermasters to get a new uniform..."

James' generals and soldiers had a week to get accustomed to their leader's new bulk. With their Prince now twice as large and several times over stronger than any of them, and with Lecuyer looming over them all, prying questions were almost non-existent. How much James' new size would help in battle, however, was a question that would quickly be answered. Half of the Mennatheran army sent to fight on Magnus' behalf, an army able to outnumber James' forces three to one, was bearing down on the Prince's camp.

They weren't bearing down for long.

James led the charge on that day, a sword and pistol in hand. To this day, the veterans of that battle say that their Prince fought like a demon possessed, an irony not lost on James or Lecuyer. While Lecuyer, the great Beast of the Prince, plowed through the enemy, shrugging off lances and spears like they were autumn leaves falling on him, James seemed to actively get strong and bigger as the battle went on, with each swing of his sword, his arms grew stronger and more tense, tearing at the fabric of his uniform, struggling against the armor he had on. He hefted soldiers overhead with ease, taking on two or three at a time. And the longer he was in the heat of battle, Fenris whispered incantations in the Prince's ear to drive James' bloodlust further, his power and strength burgeoning until James, no longer able to contain his own bulk, wrenched off his breastplate with one grunting pull, letting his blossoming back, now a field of bulging muscle, breathe at last.

By the time the battle was over, and Magnus' forces were utterly crushed, James and Lecuyer seemed eerily alike. Both half-naked, their chests heaving and weapons stained with blood, they both stood atop mountains of their vanquished foes. And while James' was still small in comparison to Lecuyer, the active growth and transformation he went through did not wane-many of his soldiers did not know if James was merely their political leader... or something more.

James descended the mountain of corpses he had left behind, wiping his sword clean and sheathing it. The power that coursed through his enlarged body was overwhelming, and still had the Prince in the throes of an insatiable power lust.

"There!" He declared, pointing back at the battlefield, "There is what lies in wait for any who oppose me, the rightful King of Galaecia! And to those that doubt me- look upon your Prince!" James rolled his wide shoulders, letting the muscle rise and fall dramatically before flexing his arms, letting his cannonball biceps peak. "Look at the power I wield!" He growled, lumbering up to a soldier, and thrusting his chest, letting his muscular pecs surge in size against the soldier, who was already a head shorter than James. It knocked him down quickly.

"Do any doubt me now?" He roared in a challenging tone.

None responded.

“Then bow, all of you! Bow before your Prince, and know I will lead you all to victory!” James cried out, and there was a tense pause. Soldiers looked at one another, before, one by one, they fell to their knees.

“Hail James!” a lone voice cried out. “The Autumn Prince!” The praise soon grew, sweeping through the ranks of James’ army.

“Hail James, the Indomitable!”

“Long live King James, the Indestructible!”

“*Long live the King.*” Fenris added, a whisper on the wind as James basked in the adulation.

The path to Galaecia’s throne was now clear- the Mennatheran legions sworn to Magnus were on the run. And how could they not be with James the Invincible at the head of an army? In a matter of weeks, marching on the capital, deposing his moronic half-brother... it was all a formality. Galaecia was already his. And not just the throne, but the hearts and minds of the people, as well. For the longer he marched, and as his hold on Galaecia grew stronger, so did James. The demon’s power kept augmenting James’ physical form, until, when he at last stood before his half-brother, Magnus had trouble discerning James from the Prince’s Beast, Lecuyer.

The soon to be former King of Galaecia was fantastically dwarfed by his rival when they at last came face to face, or face to chest, as the case may be. Magnus had once, long ago, been the bigger of the two, a tall canid with blonde fur, but as James’ body was augmented by a demon’s strength, Magnus’ hips and stomach had become enhanced by years of overindulgent living. His royal red robes straddled his bulging belly, and his round, sleek shoulders fell when he saw James burst through his door, completely unhindered.

James had grown to massive proportions, an absolute titan that now matched Lecuyer, almost pound for pound it seemed. He lumbered with a swagger, engorged thighs rolling off each other with each step. He had forced white dress trousers on his pillar-like legs, hugging hips swollen with rock-hard flesh that blossomed into a torso that was at least twice as wide as the pitiful excuse of a King before him. A laurel wreath of silver sat upon his head, the peak of a vast mountain range of muscle that formed his incredibly wide shoulders, but his torso was bare, except for a vast field of purple cloth that travelled across his huge chest like a sash, clasped with a silver brooch fashioned into Fenris’- now James’- three-pointed symbol. A huge sword, that would take two normal men to lift it, hung at his hip.

“...James.” Magnus gulped.

“Magnus.” James returned, looming over his half-brother. He had to bend down to properly look Magnus in the eye, his bulging pecs pressing against Magnus as he did.

“You have something I want.” James said, indicating the golden crown on Magnus’ head.

“B-but... I’m the rightful King!” Magnus offered in weak protest, backing away from James’ chest.

“By what right?” James responded.

Magnus sputtered, at a loss of words. James cracked one of his rare grins, standing up to his full height. He took a few, lumbering steps and snatched the crown off of Magnus’ head. With a negligent shove of his meaty hand, using the least modicum of power in his over-muscled arm, James forced Magnus on to his knees.

“Don’t get up.” Lecuyer said from behind, puffing up his chest. Magnus wouldn’t dream of insulting the huge canids before him of disrespecting the request.

James slumped on to his throne, placing the crown on his head and hanging his huge legs over the arm rest, his vast back able to prop him up on its own. “Not nearly as big as I thought it’d be.” He commented.

“Nothing ever is.” Lecuyer returned. They shared a grin.

“Magnus,” James began, and the former King was hesitant to look up from where he groveled. “Stop cowering. I’m not going to kill you.”

“You’re... you’re not?”

“No. So long as you just abdicate, declare me King, and we can avoid any... unpleasantness.” To drive the point home, James casually flexed his arm, his bicep swelling dramatically and smashing up against his anchor like forearm.

“Oh! Oh, of course... of course, your... y-your Majesty.” Magnus quickly strangled out.

James rose from his throne. “Tell the troops, Lecuyer.” He gave one last grin to Magnus. “The war is over.”

More time passed, and James proved a surprisingly adept King. With the war ending less than a month ago, most of Galaecia’s population could hardly tell there ever had been a war. James’ soldiers were efficiently quick in restoring order, and once peace was declared and the harvest began coming in, the people of Galaecia had little to complain about their new, monstrously sized King.

“You’ve won Galaecia, then, good Prince.” Fenris’ voice echoes in James’ mind.

“King.” James corrected.

“Of course.” Fenris hissed. “But there is still more out there, is there not? Mennatheras will not sit idle for much longer- you’ve disgraced the Emperor.”

“And I’ll soon depose him.” James returned.

“Are you so confident, my King?”

“Why should I not be?” James replied, bouncing his pecs in a display of the sheer vastness of his muscles. They bulged out, pushing out in front of James’ muzzle like a continental shelf. “If I need more power, more strength, you’ll give it to me.”

“I’ve given you much already.”

“And you’ll continue to.” James said, a threatening edge in his voice. “Until I’m satisfied.”

“Such gall, to speak to a demon in such a manner. Remember who serves who.” Fenris’ voice rose, but did not sound as omnisciently certain as it once had.

“I do, in fact.” James replied. “Do you?”

There was no reply, a silence brought on by shock.

The King sat up as he saw Lecuyer enter. “Leave me.” He said to Fenris. He heard no protest.

“You called for me, James?” Lecuyer asked as he approached the throne.

“I did.” James rose, hefting up his massive bulk and lumbering towards Lecuyer, until their massive bodies pressed up against each other. “You are my bodyguard, are you not, Lecuyer?”

“Uhm... yes?”

“Shouldn’t a bodyguard be stronger, more adept at combat, then the person he’s protecting?” James asked, a strange edge in his voice.

“He should, of course. Just as I am.” Lecuyer said uneasily.

“Are you?”

James’ growth had been much more subtle ever since he’d taken the throne, but now, Lecuyer realized even he had been eclipsed by the monumentally sized monarch. To say there was a wall in front of the canid would be an understatement- it was a mountain. Two massive legs- thighs so thick, they eclipsed a regular person’s waist easily- rooted firmly into the ground in polished boots, leading to James’ waist and the wide, bulging hips that just barely squeezed

into a pair of trousers, the fabric so strained it nearly tore with every move, which caused overgrown quads to bulge out, fighting for room. A thick leather belt, complete with a massive silver buckle in the three-pointed symbol that defined James' regime, was fighting to keep back a solid mass of flesh and muscle in the titan's torso, with no shirt or jacket able to cover him, showing all of the serratus framing abs so heavy with muscle they bulged out, piling on top of one another. This was all by his back, but more specifically, lats that were always in a constant state of flaring. They looked like wings, and were so thick, so vast, they almost made him look wider than he was tall- and there was still yet more to see, for further up showed gratuitously over developed pecs; massive, bulging, a sheer continental shelf with a cleft between them that you could easily fit a hand into, they eclipsed his muzzle when he was standing up straight; James had to bend down to properly eye Lecuyer, and there revealed more of his god like frame as his chest mashed up against Lecuyer's own.

James arms had grown so large they would decimate the sleeves of any shirt, more reason for him to go half-naked. With forearms like rock formations, and biceps that more than eclipsed the smaller canid's head, each one looked like a boulder, forever mashed against his flaring sides. But then, at last, his shoulders- a topography of mountainous, bulging muscle. "God like" truly was the term to be used, for James had eclipsed demon, mortal, every sense of existence with his sheer size and strength.

"I- I can still fight!" Lecuyer said at last, lost in looking over every bulging bit of James' form.

"Let's see if you can, then." And without warning, James threw his whole weight against his former champion and bodyguard, his massive arms wrapping around Lecuyer and slamming into him like a tidal wave.

Lecuyer teetered on his feet, but soon threw his weight back, breaking free of the King's initial hold and tried to push against James' huge, heaving chest. But it was a losing battle; James barely put up a fight as Lecuyer tried in vain to push away the muscle beast, and James slowly, calmly regained his advantage. He wrapped his arms around Lecuyer's form a second time, the sheer girth of both of them ensuring neither could reach around the other entirely, but still, James' impenetrably thick muscle grinded into Lecuyer's sides as the large male pressed his chest up against the soldier, and eventually slammed him to the ground, resting his monstrous form on top, pinning Lecuyer.

"Please- Please, mercy!" Lecuyer gasped. "You win! But, please, James- I've served you well, have I not? You don't... want to throw me out or... kill me, do you?"

James chuckled, causing his vast frame to rumble and press down further on Lecuyer. "Kill you? Perish the thought. Don't worry at all, Lecuyer- I have plans for you." His grin, looking down at his captive, turned predatory, perhaps even lustful. "Lots of plans."