The Joker Myth

"When the world turns, there can be no doubt that it is the Joker's hand that pushes it."

-Inscription found on the back of an artefact with the journal of an unknown investigator into the Joker.

The myth of the Joker has its humble beginnings at the start of the 12th century within the court of a French baron.

At the close of the 11th century what would come to be recorded as the First Crusade was waged in the name of God and all that was holy. Many French nobles and barons sought favour with contributions of men, wealth and often themselves in a bid to seize glory and prestige.

In a certain region of France all but one walked this path, that one being the Baron Aquataine who feigned illness and poverty from poor harvest and the pretence of lenient levies against his people to avoid any taxing contributions, a move most wise for war is costly in health, time and gold.

17 months prior to the end of the campaign a young man escaping the fires of war found himself expelling the last of his vigour on Aquataine's land before collapsing half dead from fatigue and fever.

Four days later, upon awakening he was brought before the Baron.

The Baron's advisor believed the young man to be a deserter and public punishment could bring prestige to Aquataine’s court after their lack of support for the conflict. Quickly the advisor set about his interrogation believing his intellect would quickly cause the young man to contradict any story or excuse he would use to defend himself.

Alas it was not so, the young man claimed amnesia and in the ensuing battle of wits and silver tongues the advisor was left looking the fool after joke and retort had all but destroyed his educated pride.

Aquataine was a smart but egotistical man, he knew the young man's story was more than likely false but his intelligent defence and incredible humour, sarcasm and wit could become useful tools at his disposal. Believing such he spared the man's life and gifted him title and role of the court Jester.

Over the next few months the Jester performed marvellous feats of entertainment, from re-enactments of epic duels and card tricks to juggling daggers, but always with a dark comic edge earning him his new name, simply Joker.

During this period he also began offering small advice to Aquataine that proved useful in increasing production and efficiency of the Baron's land and tax collection.

Shortly after the curtain finally fell on the First Crusade and Aquataine's neighbouring barons and nobles returned to their homes, coffers expended and in need of aid to rebuild their lives and holds.

Noticing Aquataine's abundant wealth they approached his court eagerly seeking a friendly hand to help stabilise their own. With only moderate intelligence and huge ego he let them come and one by one he revelled in bellowing his rejection to each request.

The Joker saw the boundless opportunities laid at his feet, for he was far more intelligent than he had ever let on, simply biding his time until something came along that could hold his interest.

He begged Aquataine's ear in private for a brief moment and within it he divulged devious machinations, most devious indeed.

To the march of the Joker's tune a huge banquet was thrown for all of Aquataine's struggling neighbours to celebrate his most gracious of offers in loans of grain, gold and livestock knowing full well the barons would never be able to repay and so would only fall further indebted to him.

Several weeks before each repayment was to be made more festivities were always held in which the indebted often felt compelled to confess their inability to repay that month and each time small concessions of land, livestock or prestigious artefact were given to Aquataine in place of correct payment.

The Joker's plan unfurled without hitch and soon Aquataine's wealth, land and position had soared to heights he never believed possible and by following the Joker's advice his neighbours had gifted it all to him willingly, bearing him no ill.

A few years went by and Aquataine had fashioned himself a King amongst barons. But with such position drew the envy of others and the paranoia it brings knowing all of your neighbours laid in ruin by your own hand.

At this time our Joker set in motion his own scheme. Gambling he further spread rumour of the unsettled nature of Aquataine's neighbours and victims while adding to its rumours that even his own court jester who gifted him such wealth was walking the path of betrayal.

The pious self-proclaimed King was struck mad with fear and suspicion and started executing those he believed whispering evil deeds. At the height of his madness Joker made his move.

He beseeched his Lord to allow his to travel bringing with him fine wines, feasts and his brand of entertainment that Aquataine was once so fond of, to all of his neighbours one by one to extend a graceful hand of friendship and turn their thoughts from present suffering.

Aquataine jumped at the idea not only would this help pacify the extorted barons but also it would rid him of his court jester who he had increasingly grown suspicious of and provide ample opportunity on his return journey to execute him, effectively killing two birds with one stone.

But Joker travelled instead to sway the four warriors he knew from the crusade who were closest in matching his own skill and intelligence. His new elite fighting force assembled he named them the Ace's.

The Ace of Spades and of Death, Danzer.

The Ace of Diamonds and of Jewels, Kiriko.

The Ace of Clubs and of War, Sorin.

And the Ace of Hearts and of Courage whose name has been struck from record.

The Joker and his Ace's returned to Aquataine and after swift battle took all that was his and while the Ace of Hearts went his separate way the rest went from conquest to conquest gaining power, wealth and influence as they moved across the globe finally ascending to ruling the known world.

It is said that all five were immortal demons and that the Joker with his three remaining Ace's still rule the world from the shadows of the underworld to this very day. Some say it's just a story to scare the greedy of us, but maybe that's just what the Joker wants you to think. After all......

"History is written by the victors."-Winston Churchill