

MARLOW, THE HEADSMAN

Last Reviewed	6	9	2025
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By Richard Wang

“All that is ‘right’ has a shadow of doubt and all that is ‘wrong’ has an ember of truth. Honor cannot live on absolutes.”

Marlow, “The Headsman” is an elite member of **The Order of The Rose** serving under **Ashlyn**.

APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER

Marlow, The Headsman, or **Marlow, The Unbroken**, is a member of **The Order of The Rose** and **The Conclave** serving under **Ashlyn**, and the ‘oldest’ captain amongst the other three. He dresses in traditional **Torminean** knight clothing, brandishing a giant halberd.

Marlow, although undead, is a proud Torminean and holds dearly onto his roots. His fighting style is reminiscent of old Torminean knights: Defensive, but formidable in melee combat. His humanity and autonomy are everything to him, two things he stubbornly holds onto despite being but a husk of his former self: He recognizes being an undead, but will live every day as he did when he was alive, eager to tell stories of Torminean history, from **The Occupation** to the **Fall of Luditorme**.

Marlow, though ruthless in melee combat, is a merciful man, only raising his halberd in the direst of situations. He lives by a strict honor code, the same one he lived by when he was still alive, with an unwavering will to do good and be just, even if that means killing those who choose to do wrong. Though he doesn’t like combat, he will do anything to protect Ashlyn and the future of Torminea.

However, being amongst the oldest Tormineans in The Order of The Rose, Marlow’s mind has begun to succumb to **The Fog**. During **Enra’s** encounter with Marlow, his speech falters and he casts aside his traditional defensive stance for a lumbering, offensive one. This leads to unavoidable situations where Enra has to choose between evasive maneuvers and fighting Marlow, as his mind is sadly no longer his own.

ROLE IN THE GAME

Marlow is the second officer of The Order of the Rose that Enra and her crew must overcome. He bars the way for Ashlyn to advance on **The Grave**, where The Order believes they will find another fragment of **The Chain**.

Marlow is meant to function as a counterpoint to **Valmont**, who is a ranged sniper, and **Renard**, who is a ranged spellcaster. Marlow should probably be dangerous in close combat.

NEGOTIATION INSIGHTS

Honor [Primary]

Empathy

Logic

Charm

Pressure

HISTORY

The Headsman

Marlow, born **Malachai Tamblyn**, was the first son of the Tamblyn family who were headsman by trade in Luditorme under **The Silent Council**. Following the death of his father, Malachai would reluctantly take up his father's axe simply as it was his duty and he did not want the burden to befall his younger siblings. Malachai would see no justice in his profession; killing those he didn't know on the orders of strangers was no duty, and he yearned for a reason to escape the grasp of the council.

The Hand of Du Torme

During **The Occupation**, Malachai would volunteer to be a Torminean footsoldier during the war. Placed under the responsibility of **Gil Du Torme**, Malachai would stand guard in the Du Torme estate. When servants of **Tekiel, The White Hound** would come to assassinate Gil's daughter, **Aschere**, Malachai would put his life on the line to shield her while she used her magic to defeat the perpetrators. Following the war, he would be knighted, and eventually become head of the Kingsguard, during the **Du Torme Dynasty**. He would also become a close friend and trusted advisor to Gil and serve as almost an uncle figure to his children, whom he became very fond of despite having no children of his own. While **Aschere, Adlae**, and **Alibert** were skilled road-masters, Malachai would help them practice their

dueling stances as he believed a shield and halberd were equally important as magic.

The Kingslayer

Following the arrival of the **Pale Woman**, Malachai witnesses the aftermath of the **Du Torme Massacre**. Heartbroken at the madness of his once close comrade and the death of the Du Torme children, he confronts and kills Gil in a duel, half out of mercy and half out of justice. Having committed regicide and the king of Torminea now dead, Malachai had no choice but to forfeit his position in the Kingsguard and live in exile far outside of Luditorme.

The Exiled Rhuvenist

The Du Torme Massacre led Malachai to live by a strict honor code to not succumb to the same madness as Gil. His distrust in others, especially monarchs and those who called themselves 'leaders,' only festered over time as he became continuously haunted by nightmares of the massacre and his friend's mad bloodlust. Devoid of purpose, Malachai found solace with a sect of **Rhuvenists** in a rural Torminean town where he closely followed their teachings. He would live out the rest of his days there, sacrificing his halberd and shield for a ritualistic lifestyle where he formed an unbreakable discipline to his chivalric code through Rhuvenist teachings and meditation. His life would be a dull, but peaceful one; one without nightmares and without violence. He would die of old age, unmarried and without children, having fulfilled his purpose in preserving and sharpening his own mind so as not to suffer the same fate as Gil.

The Shield of Torminea

Roughly three centuries later, Malachai would be reborn by **Borangiel's Curse**, rising as **Marlow** in the same town he died long after all those he once cared had passed. Alone in the world, Marlow would find the town sacked and burned upon awakening, with the bodies of peasants and priests skewered on **Silvarian** pikes. Though he woke in a state of confusion and dread, Marlow allowed his sense of duty and justice to be his compass. The undead knight would wander for weeks from town to town looking for survivors only to remnants of massacres he couldn't prevent. As he inched closer and closer to Luditorme, Marlow would come across a town being sacked by a Silvarian battalion. There he would strike down dozens of the invaders, though a more disciplined Marlow would choose life over blind vengeance, escaping

and escorting the injured survivors back to Luditorme where they would be safe. Marlow would finally return home during **The Fall of Luditorme**, sheltering Tormineans with his shield as Silvarian siege weapons lay ruin to the city. But as **The Bombardment** commenced, Marlow could once again only watch helplessly as those he cared about suffered another massacre.

The Husk of The Shattered Throne

It is said that during **The Sacking of Luditorme**, a lone Torminean knight stood unfazed in the streets even after The Bombardment. A Silvarian soldier's entry of the fall states: "I have not known fear as that day I understood the weakness of my flesh. It did not bleed even as his armor tore, and yet the husk wore a dress of Silvarian red. Its halberd stood monolithic above my brothers, its eyes a cold, mad blue that screamed anger, and it could not break. It *would* not break." With every Silvarian footsoldier that Marlow struck down, with every injury he sustained, in his bloodlust he would chant, unbroken, "*Destine de Lu Torme!*" In his final stand, Marlow hoped that any Tormineans that were immediately resurrected by Borangiel's Curse could then escape the city safely. When the Silvarians eventually struck him down and word of the unbroken husk reached even High Command, they scattered his bones across Torminea, fearing the resurrection of their creation. Marlow would die pursuing justice and duty (though in his mind it was a great 'death').

The Unbroken

Many years after the Fall of Luditorme, Marlow would once again be resurrected by Borangiel's spell, though to a much weaker effect as his bones were now scattered across **The Delve**. Half of this resurrection was in part due to the spell, but also due to Marlow's determination to live again (He was too angry to die). Marlow would rise, but once again devoid of purpose, alone in desolate Silvarian territory. He would spend decades wandering and meditating, sticking close to his Rhuvenist teachings before Silvarian tales of **Malachai's Fury** and Marlow's resurrection would eventually reach **The Order of The Rose** and **The Conclave**. **Ashlyn**, determined to find and recruit this unbroken Rhuvenist knight, would not have a pleasant first encounter with the distrustful, monarch-despising Marlow. Despite this, the two would not duel each other (One being a fairy knight and the other having learned great discipline), with Ashlyn leaving in peace. Marlow, surprised by Ashlyn's chivalry and selfless nature, decided to follow her and join The Conclave, casting aside his prejudices in favor of a greater purpose to serve the

future of Torminea. However, even the unbroken knight, who's only true fear was madness, would suffer the same inevitable fate as all dead Tormineans as his mind would slowly succumb to The Fog.