

He quickly found pleasure in shooting with a longbow and was soon on a par with his teacher. Brother Antonius was visibly impressed by the speed with which he managed to bring 10 arrows in a row to the finish, and the English knight from Aquitaine, who had introduced archery to the Templars, also watched the efforts very attentively. Actually archery was something for servants and not for knights who preferred to fight with helmet and sword, but the possibilities of the bow convinced one or the other.

In the meantime a long caravan had arrived. She had several knights and more than twice as many servants and sergeants in her retinue for her protection. They all had to be cared for and given shelter, so there was unrest for days in the order's house. In the garden behind the grandmaster's house several tents had been erected in which knights slept. And in the houses of the wider surroundings knights had also been accommodated.

From the balustrade of his living rooms, Jaques de Molay, as so often, watched the hustle and bustle of the inner courtyard thoughtfully. He stroked his long white beard while watching the young knights and sergeants. He paid particular attention to two of the new members of the Order, Flanders Jan and Achener Johann. The Flanders was able to handle the throwing axe and the English longbow brilliantly and the Achener was just as good with the sword and also to use as Medicus. He obviously had excellent knowledge and was in no way inferior to the real Medicus of the temple. His Seneschall had already explained this to him and he had been able to

convince himself of it.

Jaques de Molay fulfilled triple duties. The office of Grand Master of the Templars required political and economic foresight as well as care for his religious and obedience to the Pope. The experienced fighter at the head of the most powerful order of the Occident was very well aware that it could not succeed to master the three tasks equally well. But he tried again and again. He perceived his fatherly care for his knights with hard but just severity. Too strict, the knights, sergeants and servants often grumbled.

Jan had completed his training lesson at the court of the Order's castle, handed over his weapons to Brother Antonius and said goodbye to Johann, who went to the sergeant's houses. When the Flanders friar turned around, he collided violently with another knight candidate.

"Hey, not so impetuous, Flanders. Or do you want to challenge me in this way? An angry young man of about the same age stood in front of him. According to his clothes, it was a French nobleman who had also asked to be admitted to the Order.

"Why should I demand of you," Jan asked in wonder and continued, "we are Templars and they do not demand of each other and you have done nothing to me and neither have I done to you. The fact that we have now collided is an oversight for which I apologise".

"Not like that", the Frenchman replied, 'repeat your apology

loudly so that everyone on the farm can hear it, otherwise I will beat you up. After all, you are a simple Flemish upstart, actually a freeman, a ministerial, and you have no pedigree. My uncle is a Grand Commander and one of the Grand Master's representatives."

Jan's face darkened. He looked around at Brother Antonius and John, but there was no trace of either. But some other knights had remained curious.

"I don't care about your ancestry. I don't know why you make such a fuss out of a little carelessness among brothers. I have apologized and with that I let it be good." Jan tried to push past his opposite to get into his chamber. But that wasn't as easy as he had thought. The Frenchman blocked his way again.

"So that you know who you are dealing with: I am Geoffroy de Charny, son of Count Richard de Charny of Champagne, and who are you?"

"I am Jan de Koninck, son of a weaver from Flanders, and if I remember correctly, your father escaped from the battlefield in Kortrijk and abandoned the king's knights to save his life. Or am I mistaken," the Flanders man replied so loudly that the bystanders could hear it. The face of the Frenchman took on the colour of a ripe tomato.

"You will atone for this insult to me," gasped the champagne, "I will not let a runaway weaver blame me for something like this. He pulled a long knife out of his belt and penetrated Jan de Koninck. He skilfully avoided it and let the careless man run into emptiness.

"Here I am, brother Geoffroy," Jan teased from the back of the attacker. He turned around at lightning speed and stabbed in the direction from which he had heard the voice coming. But nobody stood there anymore. Jan had no weapon of his own, so he elegantly danced out his attacker. But he wasn't quite that clumsy either. His foaming rage had cooled down a little during the fight. All the more thoughtful he continued the fight. The man from Champagne was a good fighter, the Flanders man noticed that very fast. More and more knights and sergeants had stopped and rallied around them. The knights all around could be heard grumbling.

"Throw away your knife, Knight Geoffroy," one could hear from the audience shouting, "that's not chivalrous. Your opponent has no weapon to defend himself".

Nevertheless, it still took a while until Geoffroy decided to throw the knife away in a high arc and continue fighting alone with his fists. The champagne also tried a trick. He avoided an attack by Jan by throwing himself on the ground, rolling off and picking up a handful of sand. On the first contact with Jan, who had waited until Geoffroy had got up, he threw the fine sand in the face of Flanders. Jan was irritated, couldn't see and took a few heavy blows to his head and stomach. He saw only shadows. By rather accidental skilful body turns he escaped the final blow, it almost looked as if he was dancing in front of his opponent, which made him even more angry. The sand hurt his eyes and yet he tried to recognize his opponent. He was already sure of his victory. A terrible blow should bring the end. But Jan had another feint ready. He turned a pirouette, stretched out his arm, clenched his hand to his fist and with the swing of the turn he hit his opponent's

temple. He had not counted on the blow and had no cover through his hands and arms. From one moment to the next blood flowed out of his mouth and he was completely stunned because the blow had shaken his brain. Slowly he sank forwards to his knees and fell lengthwise into the dirt.

The surrounding spectators mumbled admiringly and gradually withdrew. Jan wiped the dirt out of his eyes with a corner of his shirt. Then he recognized Johann, who took care of his opponent. When Jan wanted to help him, Johann pushed him back.

"Leave it alone, Jan, I can do it alone and I don't think Knight Geoffroy would be pleased if you would help him. I think you have not found a friend for life in him. Go to your quarters."

Without looking around, Jan went to the house of the order. Knight Guido awaited him in front of the entrance. He did not look pleased.

"What was that, Jan de Koninck?" he wanted to know, "there was neither a tournament, nor was there a duel scheduled in which you could have measured your strength. And a guesthouse brawl is not something that Templars should be concerned with. We are not the common people. We are an order. You should have internalized that in the meantime. I expect that such behaviour will not be repeated. I had expected more from you than such rude, landscaped behaviour."

When Jan started to explain the matter, Knight Guido waved off and drove over his mouth.

"You will repent and spend the next two days in your cell