



# Fire Emblem – Houses of Fate

## Black Eagle Arc V: Fail and Fall

They hurt her and she let them. Edelgard's childhood nightmares took her slithering into the dark and had their way with her, again and again. She screamed. She cried. They violated her and passed her around like a crippled torn plaything, until they thought there was nothing left of her.

How could there be?

How could there be when they had hurt her so badly?

They stopped paying attention to her. They left her crumpled on the floor. They let her binding loose and torn as she lay, coughing on cooling seed. She didn't seem conscious anymore, not really.

Her escape caught them all by surprise.

It was halfway through one of their sessions hurting her, molesting her. They let their guards down, just two of them, enjoying her. She snapped the neck of the man who was thrusting inside her, grabbed the one fucking her from behind by the head and pulled forward, tightly, tightly, pulling down on the neck, collapsing his throat.

Those Who Slither in the Dark may have been monsters but they died like men, shitting themselves.

Edelgard remembered the way they had brought her down and did not take them. Her own paranoia had made her explore every cranny and nook of Garreg Mach, so she knew ways out that even the clergy hadn't. She used them, creeping down them, a single slip of a beaten girl, her mind as sharp as it had ever been.

By the time alarms had been sounded she was off in the hills, retreating.



Edelgard was not anyone's favorite. She lacked the easy charisma of Claude or the magnetism of Dmitri, but who else was there? She rallied what forces she could, building an army using the best of what was left. Nothing special, these people, not one of them a hero. No one she would have chosen to be more than a sergeant-at-arms.

It would have to do.

She used scouts to discover what had happened to her classmates, her professors. She learned how Byleth had fought and finally been brought down. Many Boramans died to bring her that information, to tell her where Byleth was.

Edelgard sat alone and looked at the world, at all her maps, at all her resources and she knew

- she was not good enough to win with what she had. She needed more, someone with more experience, more power. The Professor had both.

Rescuing Byleth would require a sacrifice.

Not rescuing Byleth would ensure defeat.

What else was she supposed to do?



She took the biggest risks. She had to. She couldn't ask anyone to do something that she would not do herself. With a small force she broke into Garreg Mach and rescued the Professor, with only her and Byleth making it out. They escaped their captors, they made it all the way back to Edelgard's forces.

Byleth reviewed what they had, rested up, made small but significant changes to Edelgard's plans. Staring at them shook Edelgard, made her realize the breadth of difference between herself and the Professor. She felt like she was back in class, learning from an absolute master of warfare.

Those Who Slither in the Dark - the Agarthans, Byleth called them - who gathering an army and coming for them. They were strange, relying on arms and armor that Edelgard was utterly unfamiliar with. Byleth pointed out their formations, determining what they likely were and what they could probably do based on their positions.

When Byleth asked Edelgard to gather her forces, she did. She stood beside her Professor as Byleth assessed everyone, standing in front of every man and woman that still had the will to fight.

Clearing her throat, she stepped forward.

" ... "

A cheer went up from the crowd. Even Edelgard was moved by the Professor's words, wiping a tear from her eye as she felt her heart swell with pride.

Searing the sky, a pillar of white light slammed into their army.



Edelgard's ears were ringing. She had been unconscious. Unmanned horses ran by, some still carrying pieces of their riders. Parts of corpses lay scattered around her. Dizzy, stumbling, she found an axe that wasn't hers and hefted it,, leaned on it, used it to stay standing. She could hear terrible violence all around her, though it was hard to see through the thick dark fog.

She followed sounds of battle and say her – the Professor, standing like a god among mortals, reigning down death as she moved her sword from one enemy to another. Roaring, Edelgard moved forward to stand at Byleth's back. The two of them cut a forest of Argathans down, felling them like sapling trees, using their Crests and their weapons, pushing themselves to exhaustion and past it.

Amazingly, Byleth seemed to have some sense of what the rest of the army was doing. She remembered unit numbers and roared commands and her people followed orders. Despite the tricky treachery of the Argathan mages, Edelgard came to believe they might be able to stand.

“Edelgard!” a voice screamed.

She turned, not sure what to expect, and was stunning see a wounded and blood-drenched Casper making his way towards them.

“Edelgard!” he screamed again. He was being chased by shadows in the darkening fog.

“...”

“Yes, okay.”

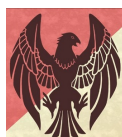
Following Byleth, Edelgard began to move towards the youth. They fought through anyone, everyone, breathless. Edelgard's whole body ached, her arms trembling, overheating and coated in cool sweat and cooling blood.

“Casper, report,” Edelgard panted.

“I know where their commanding officers are,” Casper panted, resting his hands on his knees. “And... and there's a spy among us!”

“Where?”

*And that was where it all went wrong.*



Casper got close and then surged forward, faster than Edelgard had ever seen Casper move. Byleth parried instinctively, sending one dagger flying, but two long tendrils burst out of her back, both ending in daggers that punctured the Professor. Her counterstroke tore Casper's skin, revealing a smiling figure underneath.

*A familiar smiling figure underneath.*

“Hello, vermin,” Casper-Kronya said, two voices coming out of a single mouth.

More Argathans came out of the fog, looking to take advantage of Byleth's wounds and Edelgard's fatigue, and the two were hammered back. Byleth was struggling to breath.

“...”

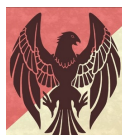
“You are not okay!”

"That would be the poison," Casper-Kronya laughed. The Argathans moved closer, using shields to surround them in a tight circle, slashing at Edelgard and Byleth both. There was no way to defend themselves; they were being sliced to ribbons.

"Nuke on my mark," Casper-Kronya said.

"What does that mean?" Edelgard asked.

"..." Byleth responded, and Edelgard felt herself go paler, looking up and saw the white pillar descending towards them.



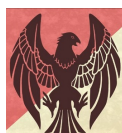
Edelgard was knocked to the ground, breathless.

They weren't even on the killing field anymore. She and Byleth, both naked, both unarmed, had been taken into the depths of Garreg Mach. Byleth was standing protectively over her, wrestling bare-handed with the Argathans that were coming for them both.

Wheezing, Edelgard fought to stand. Byleth took a moment and held her up, two girls against the world.

A crowd of Argathans parted.

Someone new emerged.



Later, Edelgard would hear the name *Shez* associated with the newcomer.

She felt, somehow, like Byleth did. The two of them fought and Edelgard thought that, if she were healthy, rested, not bleeding from a dozen wounds, that Byleth would have won their encounter.

Not a single one of those things was true.

Expressionless, broken, sporting nothing but a collar, Shez moved against Byleth and drove her back, drove her down dismissing Edelgard with a slap that left her dizzy and shaking on her knees, unable to stand.

Byleth finally fell, expression slack, breathing shallow.

Byleth fell, and with her every hope Edelgard had ever had.

"Please," she begged, looking up at the newcomer.

Shaz came for her with slack eyes, the collar on her neck glistening, controlling her. Her hand wrapped around Edelgard's throat, lifting her battered body with single strong arm before slamming her into the ground.



Byleth was beside her, so agonizingly close. Edelgard reached for her, somehow knowing that if she could touch the other woman that everything would be okay, but she screamed and whimpered as a hand wrapped in her hair and jerked her, pulled her away, dragged her down the hall.

Glancing back, reaching with all her might, she saw Byleth's limp body being hauled up by Shez and carried away.

“Well then, back to the flesh pits with you,” an Argathan she knew was named Thales said. Her ass and legs scraped on the cobblestones, what was left of her strength no match at all for him. “Thank you, cocksleeve, we could not have done this without you. You gathered whatever resistance was left and now there is nothing at all to stop us.”

“No...”

“Oh, yes,” Thales grinned, hauling her up, pinning her against the wall by her throat. He kned her legs apart, his other hand griping her, groping her. “This world is ours because of you – truly, you were our greatest ally.”

Sniffing, Edelgard felt herself trembling, her eyes closed. Her shoulders shook as she sobbed, wailed.



She knew she would never recover. What was the point?

Edelgard let them pet her, touch her, fuck her. She was their plaything, Edelgard was, a series of holes for them to take pleasure of, long thin fingers and long slippery tongue there to please them. Her fine mind atrophied in despair, her whole being soaked through with the absolute knowledge of her failure.

They stopped securing her. They didn't have to. The fire in her was ashes.

Much like Fódlan itself, she was completely and utterly theirs.