On September 4, 1914, the bugler of Destiny sounded the Halt! to the retreat of the armies of the Allies from the Belgian frontier. The marvelous fighting machine of the German armies, perhaps the most superb organization of military potency that has been conceived by the mind of man, seemed to reach its limit of range. Success had perched upon the German eagles, and for two weeks there had been a steady succession of victories. Nevertheless the British and French armies were not crushed. They were overwhelmed, they were overpowered, and, under stern military necessity, they were forced to fall back. Day after day, under the swinging hammer-head blows of the German drive, the flower of the forces of the Allies had been compelled to break. A little less generalship on the part of the defenders, or a little more recklessness behind that smashing offensive might have turned this retirement into a rout. Even as it was, the official dispatches reveal that, while occasional and local retirements had been considered, such a sweeping retreat was far from contemplated by Generals Joffre and French. German official dispatches bear testimony to the intrepid character of the defenders sullenly falling back and contesting every inch of the way, as much as they do to the daring and the vivid bravery of the German attackers who hurled themselves steadily, day after day, upon positions hastily taken up in the retreat where the retirement could be partly repaid by the heaviest toll of death.

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