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Chapter 1—Urgent News

As the grey bleak sky rumbled over the well-watered hills of Chryslan, Sir Vincent—reporter of the nation’s doings—rode into the tall iron gate of the castle.

“The sky is almost as bleak as what has just happened. I must tell the King!”

“Where is the King?” Sir Vincent asked the gatekeeper.

“He is busy,” he answered.

“But I have urgent news!” Sir Vincent declared.

“Alright. If it is so, King Valiortiar the Great is in the upper hall betwixt the atrium.”

Sir Vincent made his way quickly up the flights of stairs. He knocked on the door and awaited a reply.

A servant answered it.

King Valiortiar was just finishing his evening meal when Sir Vincent entered the hall.

“What is it, my brave and valiant knight,” King Valiortiar said.

“I have very grave and urgent news for you, your Highness!” Sir Vincent began to graphically depict the happenings of the night before.

Sir Vincent remembered the shocking news he’d heard, brought to him by a messenger boy:

“Lord Kennexarr of Chrysland has broken away from King Valiortiar!”

Sir Vincent’s heart skipped a beat.

“Lord Kennexarr?” he said quizzically but agitated.

“Yes, it is grave indeed,” the messenger boy confirmed.

“What will this mean for the kingdom?” Sir Vincent’s heart pounded like a hammer. In his mind he would try to calculate what losses it would mean. Kennexarr would probably take a good part of the royal army with him—any that were not totally loyal to King Valiortiar would join this evil troupe and mutinously rebel.

These events Sir Vincent relayed to King Valiortiar.

King Valiortiar replied, “Indeed this is what happened. So far an entire third of my troops have rebelled and left my kingdom. They will probably take a share of my land. I am glad to see that you my loyal Vincent have not chosen the ways of rebellion and mutiny, for they will eventually lead to destruction. When you have rested and refreshed yourself I shall call for you and my best nobles and we will discuss the matter properly. Truly it is a solemn day.”

Chapter 2—Leona the Maid

Sir Vincent solemnly and soberly left the upper hall and proceeded to his quarters to rest as the King had instructed.

Meanwhile Lord Kennexarr was sitting in a dark room in the basement of his manor. Only the light of a candle lit the paper and pen with which he was writing his evil plans. Deep into the night he sat and wrote.

When a cock crowed and the sun rose, lighting the hills with a golden luminescence, Lord Kennexarr was ready to tell all his helpers his plots.

“There is no time to lose, as King Valiortiar will be adding reinforcements to his team. We must act quickly and take our share—or better yet, all!”

The men’s sickening laughter echoed throughout the manor.

Leona the maid heard the laughter and wondered what it was all about. A faint shout or cheer was heard as they were obviously toasting. “To Denoble” was all she could make out before they exited the meeting room.

Just then one of the men drunkenly waddled up to her and told her that Kennexarr wanted to see her.

As Leona walked towards the room she couldn't help but have a premonition that they were up to something a little less than the King's standards and wishes.

"Leona," Kennexarr snapped. "You will be doing a little extra housework... for we are soon to take on extra visitors," he said slyly.

Leona looked suspicious.

"Are you doing all things according to the King's wants and wishes?" she questioned.

"Well," Kennexarr said tenderly, changing his tone of voice. "You are to be a maid of a very important person."

"I thought I was YOUR maid," she said confused.

"Well, yes... with a lot of careful thought and discussion we have decided to gain freedom from a very bad man's harsh and cruel wishes."

"And who is this man?" Leona questioned, not satisfied with his evasive answers.

"This man," Kennexarr continued, "used to be a King and now we shall gain freedom and form our own country."

"That's hardly an answer. But who is this man?" Leona said confused and a little cross.

"Well," Kennexarr's voice trailed off. "This man is King Valiortiar, who used to be 'The Great', but is no more in such usurping power which he used to gain off a poor and suffering people."

"King Valiortiar!?" Leona said, shocked. "King Valiortiar The Great!? How dare you do that."

"Maybe you won't be so important after all," Kennexarr snapped sharply as a shadow came across his countenance.

"Larrol!" he yelled, and in stumbled a servant, saluting. "See to it that she does the lowliest, humblest, and most pitiful jobs. She is not to be trusted, for her loyalties are in question—until she proves herself loyal to the new kingdom of freedom that we are establishing."

Larrol looked over at Leona, and it was tempting to give her an understanding look of sympathy, but quickly hardened his appearance, and saluting once again, said coldly, "I will Sir." He feared that Kennexarr would also put him down to do the lowly jobs, and thus chose to march along with whatever his master demanded.

Leona was undignified at this! —That she was to be put to the lowest jobs for loyalty to the King! As she went about doing her duties, she thought to herself, "If the King had told me to do it, I would have, but because Kennexarr did it because I was loyal to the King... unbelievable! What shall I do? I know. I will leave, for I will never again work for such a rebellious master. But how? The gates are locked and watched by Kennexarr's ever-so-noticing guards."

Just then an idea popped into her head. What if they have another one of those drunken parties? Drunk men are never good at guarding.

When cleaning the hall Leona saw Larrol struggling with a large barrel.

“Would you like some help?” she said, masking her joyful delight with a compassionate look.

“Yes, I would.”

As they carried the barrel into the hall and set it down, an unfamiliar and evil-looking man walked into the room.

“Who are...?” Leona began but was interrupted with the man initiating an introduction of himself.

“I’m Mercelyn... I’m surprised to see you still working in this higher station. I thought you were...” he stopped, realising it wouldn’t be safe to say much around a woman of double loyalties.

Leona sauntered out of the room and pretended to keep on working, but she couldn’t help but overhear Mercelyn discussing something with Larrol.

“We have taken a third of the army, and our surveyors have marked the borders. Now all we need to do is stop all those who are loyal to the King, or at least make life very uncomfortable for them,” he said with a smirk, betraying his evil intentions to ruin King Valiortiar’s kingdom.

“And for her...?” Larrol’s voice trailed off.

“Well...” Mercelyn said, “She shall not be given the honour to work in this palace. We shall probably send her to a lowlier place. —Of course no less monitored by Sir...I mean King Kennexarr’s ever so witting men.”

Leona gasped, but quickly realised she should be silent if she wanted to hear more.

“I must go and tend to the needs of our new, ah, country...” Mercelyn said in his usual sly manner.

Sounds of the drunken party lasted late into the night as the men shouted and cheered to each other, and to Denoble. At last, at twelve midnight, Leona had at last finished her long and tiresome jobs. She retreated to the maid’s dormitory, for it was decided that she should not have her own room, because of her questionable loyalty to the new state of Denoble.

As she lay down she thought of all the interesting happenings of the day. The first introduction to the rebellion, the tiresome jobs, the thought of being sent away to somewhere else, the troublesome news of a divided kingdom, the rebellion of a third of the royal army—later known as the Great Mutiny. What a day it had been.

Chapter 3—Sir Vincent on a Mission

King Valiortiar’s meeting with his nobles was finished in which they had decided to send a band of men into the rebellious territories, to search out all those loyal to the King and bring them to the King. Sir Vincent was chosen to be head of the band, and with his other brave knights left on their mission promptly.

As the sun rose above the mountains and hills, its golden rays penetrated the darkness of the early morning. Sir Vincent and his band were almost at the palace. They could see the great grey "palace".

"Looks more like a fortress to me," one of Sir Vincent's men commented. Another added, "And there is reason for them to be afraid..."

"Yes," Sir Vincent soberly said. By the tone of his voice, the band of his men could tell that he did not feel like conversing at the moment.

They were nearing the gates of the palace. Sir Vincent dropped the reins of his horse and so did the other men. Sir Vincent was the first to speak.

"Open the door, by the order of King Valiortiar!" his voice boomed.

A small weak voice came from inside the heavy doors, "Who was it again...?"

"This is Sir Vincent! Open the door by the order of King Valiortiar!" he repeated.

"Sorry, you are now in Denoble. We usually do not allow people like you in the palace. Only those that are loyal to King Kennexarr can enter," the voice said weakly.

"If they refuse to open the main door, we shall enter another way," Sir Vincent decided.

They trotted around the palace, looking for another way of entry. Just then they saw something!

"Let us go inspect that small breach."

The men trotted over to a crack in the wall.

"Do you think we could fit in?" one of the men asked.

"Perhaps," another man said.

Sir Vincent was elected to try first. He could not fit through. So he took off his heavy armour and tried again. Still he could not make it through the narrow gap.

"I do not think we can enter via this breach," Sir Vincent concluded.

But just as they were about to leave, they heard a female voice coming from inside the castle. They strained to hear what the voice was saying.

"But I will be loyal to King Valiortiar!"

"You know you will be sent away..." a sly but agitated voice answered.

"Who are you?!" A loud and penetrating voice echoed throughout the castle.

"I am Mercelyn! And who are you?!" Mercelyn questioned.

Sir Vincent did not answer.

"No. The female voice I heard. Who is she?" Sir Vincent inquired.

"That's Leona... She is not very loyal to our causes. And your loyalties lie where?" Mercelyn said, trying to get something out of this voice outside of the castle that had boomed through the tall narrow windows.

“Leona, could you please come to this breach where I stand. I wish to get a closer look at you,” Sir Vincent requested.

Mercelyn invited himself along, as if a string was tied from him to Leona.

She came into the dark room that had the breach.

“Leona,” Sir Vincent said, when he saw her approach, “could you open the palace doors, for the porter refused...”

“She shall not!!” Mercelyn snapped.

“She shall!” retorted Sir Vincent.

Leona, having now recognised the face that matched the voice calling her, walked out of the room to do as requested.

Mercelyn quickly trailed, but just before he could stop her, she swung a small side door open, and in burst a dozen burly and strong, but kind and loyal knights. Just as they entered one door, Mercelyn quickly headed for another main door to hastily report to Kenexxarr what had just happened.

Mercelyn, without pausing to knock, swung open the door of a large dimly lit hall, almost surprising Kenexxarr—the black shadowy figure at the back of the long stone hall.

“And what do we have here?” Kenexxarr said, sarcastically, trying to hide his surprise. Mercelyn quickly remembering to salute, did so.

“The King... I mean the former king... has sent knights, which this hour are here in your palace.”

“How did they get in?!” Kenexxarr questioned.

“Leona opened the door!” Mercelyn said with a look of disgust.

“Leona!?” said Kenexxarr angry and surprised at the same time. “I knew she was our weak spot!”

“We should have sent her away earlier!” Mercelyn added.

“Now she has let these infiltrators into our midst... our very lives and lively hood is in jeopardy! We must leave, until the ordeal is over,” Kenexxarr declared.

“Do we have anywhere to go?” Mercelyn questioned.

“Perhaps in the dark forest. There is a cave we can stake as our headquarters. We must leave quickly. Call my best servants—and quickly!” he added with a yell, desperately trying to hide his fear.

“Yes, Sir,” Mercelyn said and headed for the door.

Meanwhile, Leona and the twelve men were sharing all the news that had happened since they had seen each other last. Leona knew these brave twelve men as the King’s top knights. Finally, as the conversation came to a close, she pleadingly asked, “So, will you bring me back to the King’s palace?”

“We talked to the King about it, and we could, but the King’s highest will lies in your staying.”

“Staying?!” Leona replied, shocked.

“Yes. Staying,” Sir Vincent answered. “For there are many who have only heard one side of the story, and not the full truth about the king. I will leave it up to you to decide if you want to come with us and be joyful and safe in the King’s castle, or stay and tell those who have not heard about the King—and join him later on with greater joy, when the job is done.”

“And the two men, why do you not pursue after them, and utterly destroy them?” Leona asked.

“Their judgement will come. However, if they are judged now, their judgement will not be as hard as it would be after they have done more in this evil rebellious life style they have chosen. They will get a more “just desert” if we wait until later. That is what the King has decided,” Sir Vincent explained.

Leona did not know what to say. She was shocked at what they had said. She was to stay here?

“But...” she began.

“Are you really loyal to the King, or just wishing to do as you please?” Sir Vincent asked, looking into her eyes.

“I wish to be all loyal to the King,” Leona replied.

“Well, then you are to stay here for the time being,” Sir Vincent confirmed.

“We have other duties to tend to in this land. Be loyal to the King, and never waver. At the appointed time, I assure you, the King himself will come and escort you to his own royal palace. In the meantime, teach the people of the land the truth about our most wonderful King—even though much of your efforts at this time might need to be done in secret. Be loyal dear Leona. The King will come for you, be assured. Farewell,” they said as they mounted their horses and exited.

Chapter 4—Rebels

Kenexxarr and Mercelyn were galloping through the mud on two skinny black horses. The rain was pouring.

“I hope we reach the cave soon,” Kenexxarr said.

“If it’s not flooded...” Mercelyn added.

“Which of us chose to do this anyway,” Kenexxarr asked.

“We’d be drier in the King’s dungeon, then out here,” said another unshaven scruffly man.

The mud splashed off the horses and on to the men.

“This is life as rebels,” Mercelyn said disgruntledly.

By the time they reached the dark, dank, bat-ridden cave the rain had stopped, but the men’s legs were covered in mud up to their waist from all the splashing. They decided to set up headquarters then and there.

While the men did the work of setting things up, Kenexxarr and Mercelyn decided to go for a walk.

"Is this a forest?" Kenexxarr asked, looking up at the rotten dead remainders of trees blowing in an icy night wind.

Every now and then there was a stagnant pond, infested with mosquitoes and slimy algae.

"I guess now we know what the new Denoble is..." Mercelyn trailed off, mumbling, "Not quite as I expected."

The night past slowly. Neither Kenexxarr nor Mercelyn could get a wink of sleep on the cold damp ground in the cave, with dripping stalactites above them.

In the morning, Kenexxarr was quite glad to get off the ground, and Mercelyn was too. They sat up.

Mercelyn gasped! Trying to hide his surprise. "King Kenexxarr... you... look different... a little darker; a little strange... more beast-like... What has happened?"

"And Mercelyn you look the same," Kenexxarr commented, then suddenly remembered he should be exercising more curt authority. He snapped with rough tone, "Tell the men to get me breakfast, now!"

"We having nothing!" another voice retorted.

"Hurry up! Go find something," Kenexxarr yelled out, more angrily than before.

A shuffle of feet followed, and soon left him alone in the dark cave.

Chapter 5—Amazing Creations

King Valiortiar sat solemnly and soberly in his royal throne. He had a plan that would utterly defeat Kenexxarr and all his evil followers. This plan would take quite some time. A lot of work and a lot of love, but he had decided he would do it. He would create a realm lower than the realm he dwelt in. In this realm he would send his son, Prince Peaceable to live, learn, and suffer as one of the realm that he was sent to. After discussing it with Prince Peaceable, he decided he would. And what better time to begin than now!

Now the grey, bleak, almost seemingly endless valley is where he decided to begin. Since King Valiortiar owned the realm, he had all power over it, and all the forces seen and unseen obeyed him. All had obeyed him, that is until recently when Kenexxarr and his team decided to rebel. He still had full power of the forces of nature—and of course he could do as he wished with all rebels, but had decided for the time being to let them do as they pleased, and reserved judgement for later. But there was one thing he chose not to interfere with and gave liberty to; personal choice and decision that he granted to the beings of the realm.

At one loud command King Valiortiar shouted, and instantly a brilliant light of all colours responded to his voice and wish and turned this once bleak and grey valley into one that was teeming with colour and excitement. It was taking shape just as the King had planned.

Next he moved on and commanded water to flow, ripple, run, and splash freely--a pure and refreshing, essential, clear liquid. After which he commanded the water to form rivers, lakes, channels, sea, and to be in just the place King Valiortiar wished. Then he formed mountains, caves, valleys, plains, abysses, beaches, rolling hills, and hidden treasures beneath the surface of the ground. Just as that command was

taking place, Valiortiar commanded plants and trees of all types to grow, turning the flat valley into beautiful lawns, mysterious jungles, yet-unexplored forests, fields of all types of grasses and flowers, fruit trees bearing their delicious and juicy fruits just waiting to be eaten.

After this was finished he formed above it a light that would light up and warm this paradise he had created. It was now suitable for life of a different sort: Animals! Creatures of all types and sizes were made and placed on, in and above the ground, where they each could best thrive and survive and be a benefit to this newly created realm.

Next was a far more important step. Instead of just commanding and watching his plans come into being, at one pull at the reigns of his horse that had been patiently standing at the summit of a tall mountain, he galloped down and then across the fields and plains, across streams, and through forests. Then he stopped at the most beautiful of the places: a garden! With all manner of beauties—grass, trees, flowers, animals, streams, and all manner of life.

King Valiortiar dismounted his horse, and in the clay and the dust, formed a figure that looked strikingly similar to him. With one gust of magical breath this clay image came to life and rose up. It was a man! A living, breathing, talking man, filled with vigour and joy.

King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable watched on, pleased at their handiwork as this man explored the garden around him. But, not after long he began to feel lonesome, as there was no one exactly like him. Already knowing this would happen, and so had planned in advance, King Valiortiar with one touch put this man into a magical and very deep sleep. While he slept, King Valiortiar made someone who looked strikingly similar to him in basic form, yet with a few different features, and other abilities and skills, and with a different personality.

When the man awoke, in utter glee and surprise, he saw someone who was quite like him in many ways, and someone he very much liked—it was a woman. King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable looked on with smiles as the first two living caretakers of the common realm embraced in the beautiful garden.

With the job now done of creating the common realm, King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable decided to have a day of rest, to just enjoy what they had created. Of course their pleasure was seeing others enjoying it, and seeing that it would be cared for well. And every day, Prince Peaceable loved to come and talk with these amazing creations, beings made similar to him, to teach them what they needed to know as they started their life.

Chapter 6—A Dragon-like Beast

The dark cave with dripping water and hanging bats had become Denoble's headquarters. But today, Kenexxarr had called a meeting beside the valley, where the Common Realm, as it was called, was.

"Just look at that!" Kenexxarr railed, "He's made this whole realm, and we don't even have a place in it."

"It's a lot nicer than where we live," Mercelyn added.

Of course by this time Kenexxarr had been totally deformed into a dragon-like beast. And the rebellion he felt was equally as beastly. He and his advisors would devise a plan to harm this newly created "Common

Realm". They decided to create a berry with a little of their "charm" that would make anyone who ate it rebellious and disobedient to King Valiortiar and anyone else around them.

After the meeting, Kenexxarr went down into the valley with the berry bush, to plant it in the beautiful garden. He decided to disguise himself as a beautiful tropical snake, with bright hues and patterns, and slither around the berry bush, trying to attract people. Just as he was all set, a beautiful lady came—the first man's wife.

"What a beautiful snake," she remarked.

"Beautiful indeed," Kenexxarr went on. "I have been created as custodian of this berry bush. It is very beautiful indeed. And the taste is just delightful!"

She remembered how on the day that she was made, that there was a berry that would be placed in the garden by Kenexxarr—an evil enemy. This berry bush should be avoided, and not even a single berry be tasted.

She did not know why, but she trusted her Creator to know what was best for her and her husband.

Was this that berry bush? Or was it just one of the many delightful fruits in the garden. And anyway, this tropical charming snake could not be lying. He looked so "honest". But, on the other hand, this could be the berry she should never eat. But why would a try hurt? Just one...

Just then, her husband came.

"What are you doing, sweetheart?"

"There is a beautiful snake that wants me to eat of this delicious berry—or at least it looks so," she replied.

"Let's just try it!" she said, smiling at her husband. "Don't you love me?"

"Yes, I do, sweetheart. Alright, alright," he said. "How could one try hurt?"

Just as they popped the berries in their mouths, something came over the place. It looked greyer, darker, and less inviting. Within seconds, this tropical and beautiful snake had been transformed into an evil dragon-like creature.

The man and his wife, with a sudden and strange sensation of fear, began to run, tumbling down hills and through forests, to find somewhere to hide—from what, they did not know. They just wanted to hide!

Chapter 7—The Enchanted Berry

King Valiortiar looked on gravely at his beautiful created garden. He could tell something was wrong. He knew exactly what had happened. He and Prince Peaceable galloped down the same hill where they had first gone down to create a man and a woman. As King Valiortiar was all-knowing, he knew exactly where the man and his wife were. He first found the man which he had created.

"What have you done?" he asked.

"My wife gave me the enchanted berry, and now I know not what will become of us!"

Together with the man they left off to find where his wife had gone.

For King Valiortiar, it was pretty easy to find someone. He knew exactly where she was. With the sound of horse hooves trotting, the woman dashed and hid deeper in the forest. King Valiortiar found her hiding behind a very large tree with a very sad countenance.

“What have you done, to bring on such sorrow as there is here?”

The woman replied, “There was a beautiful serpent that tempted me to eat one of the forbidden berries. And just after he did that, I saw that it was Kenexxarr, the one you warned us about. What is to be done now? All is lost!”

“Yes, you have done wrong, and sorrowful consequences will now follow—part of which is having to move away from this special garden. However, not all is lost, for I still have a plan that will set all things right again, eventually. But it will be some time before I can enact the plan in full.”

King Valiortiar placed a new garment on each of them, and said, “You will need this for your journey now. If you trust me, I can make all things right again.”

And thus was the common realm cursed with an incurable plague from the enchanted berry.

From a high mountain, Kenexxarr watched, with a sickening laugh said, “Ha, ha, ha! We did it! Just wait till we see Valiortiar again. He’ll probably be pretty sad.”

“Yes, we’ve done it,” Mercelyn said.

“I wonder what else we can do...?” Kenexxarr said. “Perhaps we can make it get so bad that he has to destroy what he made.

“Yes... that actually sounds bad enough to be a good idea,” Mercelyn said with a snicker. “When should we begin?”

“Now!” barked the beastly Kenexxarr. “We’ll send some of our little devious creatures, to whisper little ideas in to the hearts and minds of men and women. And pretty soon we’ll have totally wrecked the King’s creation. Ha, ha!”

Chapter 8—The Only Survivors:

A solemn hush came over the assembly in the hall where King Valiortiar and all his great nobles met. All the nobles knew what King Valiortiar was about to discuss.

“Some various events have been happening in the common realm. Kennexxarr has planned and engineered an epidemic of the enchanted berry. No one that is born shall be without it. All will contain the weakness that this berry causes. And these disease-laden people will not continue forever. But by me and my son Prince Peaceable it was decided that at the appropriate time, he would go to the common realm, disguised as a common man, and wear common clothes, and speak the common tongue, and

suffer as a common man. He will not have to linger there too long, just enough to reverse the epidemic and enact my plan. But everyone in the common realm has the epidemic and their numbers are increasing quickly. If we do not do something about this, it shall become more wicked than Kenexxarr's cave."

All listened with rapt attention while King Valiortiar continued,

"I and Prince Peaceable have decided, that some time before his visit to the common realm, that we will first have to destroy the exterior of the common realm that we have created, for we have only found one righteous man in the whole realm. He and his wife shall be saved. From these, the new population will begin. And in time, Prince Peaceable will come to put an end to the epidemic."

King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable rode to the exact same place where they had been when they had created this once beautiful world.

With a sorrowful expression King Valiortiar said, "It is time to destroy our own creation which Kenexxarr has brought into such a state of sorrowful rebellion that mankind will destroy itself if we do not intervene."

With one gesture to the horses, they galloped on.

Two years later, a man and his family—the only survivors—were planting their crops and tending their vineyard and animals. The common realm looked somewhat different now, but safe and nice. It was getting a fresh start. They'd had the most mild condition of the epidemic and were chosen to be saved. They were the most loyal to the King and now it paid off.

Of course the epidemic would continue on down through the generations that would follow, in some way or another, but Prince Peaceable would show up in the common realm just at the right time.

As the common realm continued to develop, the epidemic raged at different rates, sometimes getting worse, sometimes getting better in various places throughout the common realm. There was one specific place that Prince Peaceable and King Valiortiar had their eyes on, the place the Prince would visit—to live and die as a common man.

King Valiortiar, one day, gazing at the vast valley which now was a bustling place filled with mercenary merchants and pauper peasants and relentless rulers. It was time. He would now put his plan into action. He would send his dearest only son, Prince Peaceable, to the common realm where he would live and suffer as a man, and fight a final battle, and win over Kenexxarr.

King Valiortiar did not want to give up his dear son, and watch him suffer as the wrong doers and rebels. But he knew this was the best choice. Not sending him would not be very good; and comparing that with the decided plan, it seemed a lot better—rather it was the only option worth considering, all things considered.

“Farewell, Father. I will do as you have said, and suffer to find out what it is like to live as one of these common realm dwellers. The end goal being to end this epidemic. I look forward to that time when all is right again,” said Prince Peaceable.

Meanwhile, Kenexarr’s cave, as it had been called, was not a place that you would want to be. Kenexarr knew what would happen. Angry, frightened, but all the time not repentant for all he had done in the common realm, he knew he would fight a losing battle, and Prince Peaceable would win and free the common realm from his clutches and cruelty. This was not a time for rejoicing, because he already knew that he would be judged, quite rightly, for doing all that he had.

Prince Peaceable disguised himself like a middle class man, not in all the royal attire he wore in King Valiortiar’s palace, but wore the clothes that were worn by those around him in the common realm, and spoke a language that most those living around him there would understand. He appeared as those living around there, in skin tone and facial features and bodily form. And in all, he looked quite similar to all those around him. He felt pain, sorrow, grief, and a whole host of other things.

Then the day Prince Peaceable and King Valiortiar knew would come, had come at last. The final battle was to happen.

Chapter 9—Royal Celebration Feast

Kenexarr had been snooping around all the time, filled with anger, fear, and was ready for revenge. He knew he would lose this battle and his days would be numbered until he was eternally terminated. He hoped to surprise Prince Peaceable by suddenly attacking. But of course this feeble plan would not work, as Prince Peaceable already knew Kenexarr’s inner most plots.

As Prince Peaceable was walking along, suddenly Kenexarr appeared in all his full darkness with dragon-like evil looking features, ready to confront Prince Peaceable with all the power he could muster. With a fierce lunge, Kenexarr attempted to bring the Prince down once and for all, yet all he could manage was to wound his foot. However, it looked like that was a victorious move for Kenexarr, as for a brief moment Prince Peaceable lay on the ground motionless—yet this was a well-planned manoeuvre, for instead of the Prince’s life being completely at an end, it was the power of the evil epidemic that died and was brought to an end. At just the right moment, the Prince sprung up, well and full of life, much to the shock and fright of Kenexarr. He knew he was doomed, and his plans were brought to a halt. King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable’s plans were moving along just perfectly, and more good would follow.

Kenexarr, in his dragon-like form slithered at the feet of Prince Peaceable, yet instead of being able to attack him, Prince Peaceable stomped, hitting Kenexarr’s head, wounding it. Kenexarr quickly moved away, after doing so, he collapsed. The victory had been won!

Prince Peaceable was rescued by King Valiortiar and his men, and taken to a royal celebration feast. On the other hand, Kenexarr struggled to move further into the shadows; defeated, angry, but not quite ready to quit, for he wished to hurt and destroy as many of the dwellers of the common realm as he could. Since he knew he could never match the powers of King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable in being able to create whole realms and living beings, all he hoped to do was disrupt and destroy what the King had made. This he did with a focused fury.

King Valiortiar was not meek about this, and now that the battle had been won, kept rescuing people from this awful disease from the enchanted berry—which had been introduced by Kenexxarr. For this, Kenexxarr got even angrier; hurting, destroying and reintroducing many more types of diseases of the enchanted berry. In fact, it was not only him that would do such terrible things. Many in the common realm liked what Kenexxarr was doing, and helped to bring about his plans. Others were uninformed knaves that Kenexxarr had duped into bringing out his terrible plans.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, King Valiortiar sent down others to rescue and assist as many as they could, so they could be saved from this awful disease that brought pain and suffering. These messengers sent by the King, also told others in the common realm to go and tell others how to get cured and eventually come to the safety of King Valiortiar's kingdom. One such messenger was Leona.

Chapter 10—A Royal Letter

Leona patiently waited for the mission she knew she would be given by the King. At last a royal letter arrived, at the hands of none else than Sir Vincent. One day, as she was dusting the window sills in the large meeting hall, she saw him approaching the palace where she stayed as watcher, along with others who had been stationed there.

Eagerly Leona opened the golden seal; the kind that only personal letters from the King had on them. A tear, followed by another, rolled down her face as she read the kind words and challenging mission she was being asked to go on.

“Dearest Leona,

My faithful lady in waiting. I have seen your unwavering faithfulness, and it is because of this loyalty in your heart, I am asking a special and secret mission of you. Once this is completed, you shall abide in my Castle always. I am preparing a special, and luxurious chamber for you to dwell in. By the time your mission is complete, so will the living quarters be ready for you.”

Leona could hardly express the joy that she felt. It would only be a matter of time before she could be living with the King. And she did not want to fail Him. She would do whatever He asked of her, to her best ability. She read on:

“This one who has brought you the letter is to personally escort you and stay with you, while you complete the challenging task I am asking of you.”

Leona looked up at Sir Vincent. He knew then that she had gotten to that point in the letter. He smiled and nodded.

Leona kept reading:

“You are to go and dwell for a time in the common realm, assisting those who wish to also find the way back to my Castle. I will not hide it from you, but will plainly tell you, that it will seem at times that this is the toughest task you have ever taken on. But be assured that you will be more than rewarded. And the joy you feel for having led others away from Kenexxarr's foul plans, when you see them also living in the Castle with us all, will be an added and wonderful source of inspiration.”

There was a second letter, or rather a book that she was to study, so she would be able to make her mission successful. Sir Vincent handed it to her. Leona saw that it was all hand written in the script of the King himself. She clasped it tightly and nodded, wiping away a tear. She would need to get ready, and gestured for Sir Vincent to come in and wait awhile for her, in the sitting room.

Leona would not be long, but she did need a little time to ponder what she was being called on to do.

By early the next morning, the two, on horses, set off for the common realm.

A life time passed, and though it seemed long at the time, when it was over and her mission was through, it seemed it had been but a few days. Then, in the same way their mission began, so ended it with Sir Vincent and Leona once again mounting their steeds, and off they sped victoriously to the King's Castle—with a host of others following. The King would be very glad to see them.

As they rode blissfully way from the darkened common realm, Kenexxarr seethed with anger. He knew he was losing sorely. Kenexxarr would often remark, "My days are numbered, but at least I can do as much damage as I can before I'm completely stopped. It gives me something to do, since I can't do much else. In fact there's nothing else I wish to do."

And so in deed his days were numbered. As the "Battle for the souls of men" as it was called, became more intense, Kenexxarr could see that his days were coming closer and closer to an end. Finally, Kenexxarr, cunning as he was, devised a plan that would hopefully deceive everybody.

Chapter 11—Confusion in the Common Realm

"Mercelyn!!" Kenexxarr shouted. "Where are you?!"

"Yes, Sir," Mercelyn stumbled out of some shadows.

"I believe I have the most excellent plan."

"What is it?" Mercelyn asked.

"I will send you as my 'ambassador' to infiltrate the common realm. But before that, I will make times of danger and crisis arise. Then, as soon as you get in power, I will partially stop the destruction that I am causing. Then everyone will know our side saved the common realm—or so they will be led to think. As they are duped into this, they will be obliged to comply to the new order and pledge their loyalty to our causes."

The two grotesque creatures gave off a peal of sickening laughter, nearly choking on their own cackle.

"There is no time to lose!" Kenexxarr said. "Any day now, King Valiortiar could come in and get rid of me, you, and everyone else here in this cave."

So it happened as they planned. Times of crises arose, and people did not know what to resort to.

Then suddenly, a hero came on to the scene! As he got into power, the crises stopped—or more like Kenexxarr stopped some of his terrible destructions and disruptions. And all those that refused to comply with this ‘new order’ were severely punished.

Meanwhile, not all was peaceful in the mountains around the common realm. A lot of Kenexxarr’s helpers were cast down into the common realm. This of course made it harder for the people of the common realm, but they were all going to be punished. And all who pledged their loyalty to the rebellious ‘new order’ were to be punished along side of them. Of course this ‘new order’ was not trying to make things better, all it was trying to do was to gain control and destroying what King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable had worked so hard on.

The common realm had begun to be divided into three groups, of sorts. There were those who loved and honoured and were true to King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable. These were the ones that had been pre-warned and alerted about the evil attempt of taking over the kingdom. Then there were those that were not decided, and did not know what path to take. The third team had pledge allegiance to Kenexxarr’s side, and were willing to do whatever it took to fight against King Valiortiar and hinder any others from choosing to be on his team.

The common realm had never known such a time of confusion, trouble and crisis. But as there is always a light at the end of every night, the rescue was on its way!

The scene intensified. Tensions grew, and a lot of people began to see that this was not the path they should have chosen in the beginning. But what to do?

Mercelyn was now in power, and no one dared to oppose him now—that is apart from those who had been pre-warned by the King, and were given special powers as never before. The King wished that all had been warned of this coming time of deceptions, destruction, disruption and distraction. However, distractions and deceptions were made in many attractive ways. Those who heard the announcement written in secret documents, didn’t pass it on like they should have, like King Valiortiar instructed them to. And those who did pass on the message, were met with opposition wherever they went.

The time was coming to end this evil regime, much to the delight of Prince Peaceable and those that followed Him and were loyal to the causes of King Valiortiar.

When Prince Peaceable would enter the scene this second time, it would be dramatic and glorious. It would not go unnoticed. In fact, there would not be one person who would not notice it. What joy it would give to those loyal to the King, and what terror it would strike to the hearts and minds of those who wished to bring about Kenexxarr’s evil ways of destruction and death.

Kenexxarr was very glad, his plan had worked, or so he tried to convince himself. His “ambassador” had the world in his hands, so to speak. He was now so sure he’d won everyone in the common realm over to his side, and tightly controlled those who resisted. Little did he know King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable had other plans. Kenexxarr’s time was nearly up, and he and all those that followed him, and Mercelyn would be dealt with. But first the King must rescue all those in the common realm that secretly were on his side. This he planned to do swiftly. And while Mercelyn’s regime in the common realm raged on, great joy was in the hearts of those who were on the King’s side, for they knew Kenexxarr’s time was closer than ever, to come to a close. And like a child waiting for Christmas, those who loved King Valiortiar and

Prince Peaceable, waited eagerly for the glorious event to take place. Then one glad morning in the realm of the King, King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable decided it was time to do as they had planned to do for so long ago.

As “King Mercelyn” as he had been called, gazed across the mountains above the common realm, with their high, impenetrable cliffs, he heard cheering and all manner of joyful noises. Then he began to hear a rumbling of horses above the plains of the common realm. As they got louder, he knew what was happening.

A cloud of light shone, lighting up the darkness of the early morning. He was now totally certain that he was doomed! The horses which King Valiortiar and all those who followed him were riding on, came galloping down the mountain side, the same one which Prince Peaceable and King Valiortiar had galloped on so long ago, when the common realm had begun.

“Now it is truly happening!” All those loyal to the true King thought and exclaimed.

The joyous parade of horses swept across the common realm, getting larger and larger like a snowball. Finally, when all those loyal to the King were safely mounted on the white horses, the large team turned and galloped up the mountain side. They cheered as they went, and gleefully disappeared into the high mountain peaks.

A royal banquet was held. While down in the common realm things less attractive were happening: Hail, fire, floods and earthquakes, extreme heat, and darkness, to all those loyal to Kenexarr and his causes. Did this make them want to repent and reform and turn back to King Valiortiar and his ways? No! Stubborn and stiff-necked as they were, these cruel and unkind people were not about to repent and say they were wrong. They did not want to repent, no matter what happened. And something did happen!

After all these dreadful and catastrophic events were finished, they heard the rumbling of horses and cheers. But this time they knew it was far worse to their causes and plans. These rebellious people had gathered themselves together against the good and true King Valiortiar. These people were very willing and ready to fight King Valiortiar and those that were loyal to him and on his side.

However, in the common realm there were those that never had a chance to hear about King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable’s ways. No one had told them about it yet, but these folks were still unwilling to surrender or give their consent to Mercelyn’s regime.

These ones would be educated and trained in the ways of King Valiortiar, after all those who were rebellious to the King had been dealt with and removed from the common realm to learn a lesson of their own.

As the horses drew near, Mercelyn and Kenexarr shouted, “Attack!” but just as they shouted that, they both fell over from the impact and speed from Prince Peaceable’s horse. Confused and dizzy, the next thing Kenexarr knew was that he was chained in a bottomless pit, while all those rebellious to King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable were sentence to likewise be punished.

There would be much to clean up and repair to get the common realm back to its original state of peace, truth and beauty. This was overseen by all those who had been rescued by King Valiortiar, and been cured from the epidemic of the enchanted berry. With the help of those being trained in the common realm, things were looking better every day, and it would be this way for a long time!

Leona, Sir Vincent, and a special team sent with them, were among some of those sent by the King to get the clean up and training programs started. They had proved their loyalty and the King was glad he could depend on them, and many others.

Chapter 12—“Long live King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable!”

“Long live King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable!” the loyal and loud rumble echoed throughout the common realm.

Though Kenexxarr and his team had been gone for a long time, it was discovered that some of the people of the common realm held their loyalties with Kenexxarr, after all, even though King Valiortiar’s reign was the best they had ever known. Now the dark secret was getting out, and those whose hearts turned away from King Valiortiar were now starting to disrupt the peace and tranquillity of the common realm. This would have to be addressed. There was only one way to do it. Like a garden with weeds growing along side of the good plants, the weeds would need to be identified and pulled out.

As painful as it was for King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable, they had to make the choice that would be better for everyone living in the common realm then, and those that would live there in future days.

“Kenexxarr!” came the stern call from the King. “You are now free to go! Go!”

He was released from his prison hold—but only for a time. Only long enough to round up those who were loyal to him.

Making a dash for the common realm, and fairly sure he at last would gain control, he worked hard to gain the upper hand with those who had been under the rule—a loving but firm rule—of King Valiortiar.

“We’ve got to form an army and band together!” he called out, whispered, implored, pleaded, scared, and threatened those in the common realm to be a part of the “winning side” he told them.

King Valiortiar knew what he was doing in allowing this seeming ruin to take place. It was time for a purging of the land. Only those who really wanted to stay on his side would be allowed to. Those whose loyalties had all along been on, or had drifted towards the evil opponent’s side would be rounded up—unknowingly, done by Kenexxarr himself—and then would be made to simply vanish. Like turning on a light, all traces of the darkness would be gone, once and for all.

None of those joining up with Kenexxarr knew this was to be the unhappy and sudden end, but it would be the only way to have a truly peaceful and beautiful land. Everyone had truly been giving a long and good chance to choose the side that would flourish. Kenexxarr had no real intention of making things good for the people of the common realm, just ruin it and bring it to the lowest state he could.

When Kenexxarr’s large team had gathered and were ready to face down and bring to an end all those who loved and were loyal to King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable, that is when they got the surprise of their life.

“Now!” King Valiortiar gave the order.

Just then like a blast of lightning lights the sky and then is gone, so with these people and their rebellious ring leader whose only goal was disruption and destruction.

"It is finished," Prince Peaceable sighed, with a mixture of feelings.

"We must comfort them now," King Valiortiar said to the Prince, speaking of those who had chosen to stay loyal to him, no matter what happened on the common realm.

"I think I'm going to add some new and spectacular features to the common realm, and make it extra special now!" The King said. And so it was. And now, no longer was it merely the common realm, but the Beautiful and Peaceful Realm.

Now the purged and beautiful land was the best it had ever been. Perhaps even better than when it was originally created, for the hearts of the people were set on doing the good that King Valiortiar wished for. It took a long time until they, those that remained, were ready to really enjoy this land. And now the time had come.

"Long live King Valiortiar! And His Son Prince Peaceable!" the cheer rang out with extra gusto, as there was not a silent or wavering voice, just joy, hearty joy through and through.

It had truly been a hard fight to rescue these people, but King Valiortiar and Prince Peaceable loved each one of those they had made, and it was worth all it took to create—and recreate a pleasant Kingdom they would enjoy living in—because the people of the common realm could thoroughly enjoy it too. It was as if the charred ashes of the old realm had been transformed into a beautiful realm springing with joy, peace and life—far better than the one before.