



YOUNG PILGRIM'S JOURNEY

**FROM KINGDOM TEMPORAL
TO KINGDOM ETERNAL**

Imaginary Story

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(January 2020)

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Chapter 1—A Test of Loyalty

All the vast land lay before Young Pilgrim. All the wealth of the Kingdom Eternal was his to claim, but first he had to get from *this point* to *that place* from whence he could not return, not for many years.

“Get you up! I bid you fare speed, for indeed the winter storms that will set upon the land, are brewing on the horizon. It will be some days before they wreak their wretched and treacherous destruction on our homes, our crop lands, and our people. There is but little time to make great headway on your mission,” Young Pilgrim heard the compelling voice, awakening his sense of adventure and duty.

Then was thrust into his hands a small satchel. “The Master of the Realm has asked for this part of his wealth—that he divided severally and fairly, according to each one’s ability and need—to be returned to him promptly.”

The call was urgent, and must be acted upon with fair speed indeed. Yet Young Pilgrim paused for a moment of musing first, for he must be fully persuaded in his mind that he was indeed determined to do as he was bidden.

At first Young Pilgrim thought it far easier were the Master of All to simply send out his troopes to gather up what belonged unto him and to take it as if by force if need be, rather than to entrust his wealth of inestimable value into the hands of the young and given-to-temptation ones.

Yet, the Master's ways were always superior and supreme, though past finding out; way above mortal men's comprehension. But the reason for this quest being given to these brave ones who accepted this task, was simply a test of honour, of bravery and of loyalty. For the goal was never simply to gather again what belonged to the Master, to fill his barns with wealth—for to him that seemed a most lonesome victory. Rather the goal was to test and to try and to purge out from the ranks of the Kingdom Temporal those who were not fit, who did not have the spirit in them to live, and die if need be, for loyalty to the Master. --For to be granted the honour to serve and rule in Kingdom Eternal was a most noble calling and placement indeed, yet not for the doubled-minded.

More importantly, it was not for those who wished to acquire temporal riches, for those would only decay and bring down with them

those who were ruled by them. The servant of the riches would bite the dust as the riches pulled his sorry soul down when the demise of its power was called for.

Thus the test, the test of faithfulness, was given to each contestant in this challenge. If they were faithful, true and loyal, the riches entrusted unto them to transport and to return to the Master would not be used and frittered away or lost along the way. When the package was opened upon their arrival to the glorious gates of Kingdom Eternal, it would be completely intact.

Not many, and certainly not all could carry out this great test of will and selflessness. For selflessness—a giving up of one’s selfish lusts and even hoped-fors—was essential in order for the mission to be completely successful, and to receive the much longed-for reception of the Master’s words of commendation and recognition.

After a time of final consideration Young Pilgrim thought it a most noble challenge to take part in. Up he went with speed, and before his instructor could scarcely say a second farewell, this youth was stirring dust. His steed and his own determination would be faithful companions to carry him along.

Chapter 2—Town of Little Worth

Young Pilgrim had chosen to take the arduous journey, carrying the portion of the King's wealth entrusted to him. He was determined to keep every ounce of it safely. Little did he know in how many ways the tempter would disguise himself all along the way, to get his hands on that royal package. If not all at once, bit by bit would do. But Young Pilgrim would not be easily dissuaded, and was off to a good start.

In the distance he saw Town of Little Worth that he must pass before too long. Fear suddenly clutched him. He knew there was great danger of losing his precious package while passing this town. He was being lured with his first temptation. He felt the pull of desire to trade some of the Kings riches for gadgets of protection.

As this thought flashed into his mind it was soon followed by seeing sellers of just such wares emerging from the foliage on the side of the road. The sellers clamouring to gain his wealth claimed that their style of weaponry would, allegedly, help this traveller and his wealth in safety as he journeyed. But catching a gleam of greed in the eyes of the persistent

bearers of so called “protection for sale”, a drool that he imagined was ready to drip were they to even catch sight of some of the wealth he carried. Young Pilgrim shook off that fanciful nudge and rode speedily away, with purse intact, heading in the way of the gates of Kingdom Eternal.

Night was now falling, and with the remaining glow in the sky Young Pilgrim found himself passing the Town of Little Worth. As he anticipated being accosted, he wasn't sure whether to attempt to use stealth and silence to make his way past, or to use speed, yet risk alerting would-be troublemakers with the sound of swiftly moving hooves.

He didn't have time to do either when a weak and sickly, yet persistent voice spoke out to the latest arrival near their town's entrance.

“Have you no wealth to pay for your stay at our Town of Little Worth? All who stay are encouraged to give up what is of value to them, in order to enjoy the pleasures herein for a little season. Never mind the dwindling of your wealth, for if it's pleasure you seek, we have more than can be dreamed of.”

Young Pilgrim was being urged to come on in and enjoy the best night of his life. As the Worldly Welcomer, always at the gate to call passers by, made a compelling invitation he motioned around to some samples of what this town could offer. Then, seeing the lack of interest and a hint of disdain on the face of Young Pilgrim, Worldly Welcomer added scornfully:

“But if you’d rather hoard your Master’s wealth and not lay up riches here for your own good, then you must be without the gates of our town. For you are a reproach to us.”

Now, Young Pilgrim’s Master had given him a promise, that should he have any true needs along the way, they would be amply and abundantly provided. There was no need to fritter away what belonged to the Master. Those embracing this challenge could both have what they needed on their arduous journey, as well as enter Kingdom Eternal and be enabled to give, in its entirety, the package of wealth that belonged to the Master.

However, he’d also been told that his Master’s promise of provision stopped sharply short when it came to financing indulgences that

were best to flee from. These would not be provided for, for they were not for the wellbeing of Young Pilgrim, and thus the Master would not indulge him in this.

Should he choose to use what was entrusted to him of his Master's wealth to merely gratify his fleshly desires and interests, the dwindling and the diminishing of the gold in his hands would be permanent. He could not recover what was foolishly given. The loss would be a sorry one.

What should Young Pilgrim do, for the night would fast fall in entirety? Outside the wall of the town were snarling dogs, set there by Worldly Welcomer no doubt, in an attempt to prod weary travellers into making an unwise, rash move, and to flee into the town filled with delicacies—if delicacies alone weren't sufficient to charm the pilgrims to enter.

“If I don't make it at all to my destination, due to staying without, where the dogs seek to lap up a meal of my flesh or that of my steed, then wouldn't it be far better to stay just for one night in this place of allurements?” Young Pilgrim pondered and was pressed to make up his mind in a hasty way.

In his moment of decision he allowed his horse to trot closer to the gates of the town, unsure of what to do. Yet because his heart was set on pleasing the Master, in all that he did, and in desperation was he asking for guidance, a flash of a picture appeared in his mind, along with these words, “I will give you far better than this.”

He saw in vision a glimpse of some of the glories that awaited him, should he be faithful and not give heed to the scare of dogs nor the lure of temporal and tarnishing fleeting pleasures.

Chapter 3—Knight Know-Him

Going against greedy hopes, and much to the surprise of Worldly Welcomer, Young Pilgrim turned his steed to trot away from the gates to the Town of Little Worth.

Now it just so happened that as he did so, another traveller was approaching, this one having a sword drawn and was covered in a coat of mail.

“Hail thee,” Young Pilgrim said, trying to ascertain where this one’s loyalties lay. Were he another rogue, sent there to urge him back into the gates of the Town of Little Worth, or was he sent from the Master himself?

At first he could not tell. That is until whatever he was armed with made the wildly barking and lunging canine beasts run away with a greatly wounded howl and sit closer to the gate, licking their wounds.

Then as suddenly as it had appeared in the hand of this timely stranger the sword vanished, or perhaps returned to its invisible state. In its place a lantern appeared in his hands, and the pathway leading away from the town began to glow.

“Come with me,” this sudden stranger, Knight Know-Him, commanded in a direct yet trustworthy voice.

“He knoweth the way that I take. He knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations,” were the words that came to the mind of Young Pilgrim, as he allowed himself to be led forward and on to the main pathway.

“Do not turn this way again, for there be many more such outposts of this same township,” Knight Know-Him instructed. “Go instead to the Inn of the Humble Dweller, and in there seek a meal and a night’s lodging.”

With clear instructions given and heard, Knight Know-Him rode off and was quickly out of sight.

Grateful for guidance and for safe keeping, Young Pilgrim rode on swiftly until a sign was seen on a simple building, indicating it was the Inn of the Humble Dweller. It seemed the light from the lantern of Knight Know-Him was yet on the path all the way to the Inn that he had been instructed to dwell in, though neither the lantern nor its bearer were seen in visible form.

Chapter 4—The Inn of the Humble Dweller

With nothing but a candle, gentle, yet burning at its highest to furnish the room he was appointed to lodge in, the weary pilgrim settled on hay covered ground for the night.

He spread out his bedding, drank from his bottle of water and would have soon fallen asleep. However, before doing so, a young maid brought, wrapped in a cloth, a break of bread, two apples, and a chunk of goat cheese.

It was a worthy supper to be sure. “The humble will see thereof and be glad,” he whispered.

A stall for his steed was adjacent to his lodgings, and likewise the needs of his sturdy travel companion were duly met.

“Better is a little where love is...” he thought as he was drifting into sleep and remembering the false offers of delectable meals in the Town of Little Worth. False, because though seemingly being offered, the intent was to take as much from a pilgrim as could be slyly taken, in return for a few passing seeming delights, whose supposed joys instead passed as a fading mist when the eyes can at last see clearly again.

The crowing of a cock in the dark wee hours of the morning heralded the approaching sun. Young Pilgrim must be off and on his way again. With some of the nourishment left over from the night before, namely one apple and part of the goat cheese, a quick bite to eat was enjoyed with a drink of water.

Once his steed was saddled and ready Young Pilgrim searched for his map, only to discover it had gone missing. Suddenly a sinking feeling, a sick feeling froze his senses when he recalled a memory from the day before. He had taken little thought of it at the time, but now it made sense. Just inside the gates of the Town of Little Worth there was a map merchant selling maps.

“That one looks remarkably like mine,” had thought Young Pilgrim, but he passed it off as yet one more lure to attract him to enter and get a closer look.

This so-appearing map merchant had just been of this trade for but moments—from the moment he secretly stole the map while Young Pilgrim was stalling there at the gate, considering whether or not to enter and was catching a

glimpse of some of the displayed delights one might indulge in while lodging for the night. (Though rumour had it that seldom did one ever stay for merely a night, for it was very hard to leave, with so many new things offered. Indeed the town had made it its goal that none leave the place until they were penniless and ragged, and had spent all they had on riotous living, to the increasing of the wealth of the wicked ones that permanently resided there.)

Young Pilgrim now recalled the call of the map merchant, “You won’t get very far without your...I mean.. without the maps we offer here!”

That’s just what that sly thief meant; it was indeed Young Pilgrim’s map. What could he do now?

Then like a fresh breeze through the air, new thoughts bestirred him. He chose to dwell on this, rather than giving into despair, self-reprimands and despondency. A sudden yearning for a needed solution, coupled with an idea began to form in his mind.

“If the Master would see fit to commission some of his servants to set up towns of inestimable value that could welcome the good pilgrims, nourish them, and prompt them on their

way as swiftly as possible, this would speed on so many other young ones, to make it to their destination, having remained faithful,” Young Pilgrim thought.

He was thoroughly disgusted at himself for that moment of temptation, and for having lingered even for a moment at the gates of the Town of Little Worth. Yet maybe even in that mistake and seeming loss, some good could come of it. A hope buoyed up his heart and spirit.

“I shall have to make do until the Master provides me with another map, for I do not wish to risk yet more harm and happenstance by returning the way I have already travelled, in hopes of regaining it. Perhaps, what seems like a defeat will help someone trapped in Worldly pursuits to find their way out. Perhaps, if the Master sees it right, I will yet, by and by, have another to travel with me; one who perhaps found the map waylaid in that miserable place.”

And with this decided, he mounted and was off, before the cock could crow yet again.

“Perhaps the Master will look kindly on me, as I head in the direction of his glorious Kingdom Eternal, and will send what is needed to speed me on my way.

Chapter 5—The Map

Though Young Pilgrim could not see them, sitting securely on their steeds on either side of Young Pilgrim, were two faithful companions. Indeed, if he had looked behind and further ahead with the eyes of those that see the invisible realm of Kingdom Eternal, he would have seen the team of travellers escorting him.

They did not interfere with his decisions, though they assisted him in every way they could. They helped him to draw the right conclusions; and whenever it was needed, they did make a sudden appearance—such as it was with Knight Know-Him.

The seemingly alone Young Pilgrim rode.

He had been told the way to get a message through to the Master, and he was looking for the right opportunity to do so. By and by he came to a place where his steed could feed, and he could rest under the shade of a beautiful tree that grew by gentle waters.

Securing his horse, Young Pilgrim then filled up his water bottles, and settled for a time of rest. He was told that whenever he focused his thoughts on the Master, and communicated in

heart and mind, or words, what he wished to express, this message was instantly transmitted, faster than any communication system yet known to man. And thus he availed himself of it.

Firstly, he spoke in heart to the Master about the missing map, and his worries of being misled and falling into danger. He then spoke of the idea of Pilgrim Stations being set up along the way, leading to the gates of Kingdom Eternal. He then asked a blessing for his continued journey, and that if it be possible a map be given to him, if not his original one.

At last, he remained very still and quiet, and as if respectfully, his faithful steed did the same. In these moments of quietness Young Pilgrim listened. Not to the song of the birds, or the trickle of the little stream, nor even to his own thoughts, but listened to see if the Master had ought to say to him. And indeed He did.

“You have come somewhat in a loop. You aren’t to go back the way you came, but turn over to the side road, for there is someone I wish for you to meet. This will take you in the direction of the Town of Little Worth, yet a way you didn’t yet ride. And there you will find a house I wish you to use for this mission you indeed have been called to do.

“You will make it to Kingdom Eternal, but not without plenty of side missions, calls, and duties to attend to along the way. Things aren’t always as straightforward as you’d think or wish them to be, for simply getting to the end isn’t the only goal, but doing good for My Kingdom along the way. Now up and be about your journey.

“See, if you still had your map, you would have missed being faced with unexpected challenges and missions for your Master. But I will reward you properly for this inconvenience and delay, for it is for the good of those who are even now preparing to take the same long journey.”

The message of his Master ended.

It was as if a mental map had been transmitted straight to Young Pilgrim’s mind. He now knew just where he was to go and what he was to do. And the words of his Master stirred his heart with courage and his mind with intrigue. He promptly did as instructed, and rode off down the side road, looking carefully for what he was sent to find.

Chapter 6—The Wise Old Shepherd

It was late in the afternoon when Young Pilgrim still had not encountered anyone yet, that is besides the shepherd he saw with his sheep off yonder. “Am I going the right way?” he got off his horse to pause for a time.

“No one is here, there are not even vacant houses...” he looked around at the countryside, and once again looked at the distant shepherd.

“That is who you are to meet,” a voice called.

Turning around and seeing no one, he knew the signal was being given from an invisible source.

Not wishing to scare the sheep by riding swiftly over to them, Young Pilgrim chose rather to walk, pulling his horse gently along.

“Hail!” he said, calling out to the shepherd, when sufficiently close enough to be heard. Gesturing with his hand that he wished to speak, Young Pilgrim continued to approach, and the shepherd began also to walk to greet him.

A brotherly embrace and greeting was exchanged and Young Pilgrim, not knowing just why he was sent to meet this man, began by

asking of his welfare and how the sheep fared. The shepherd spoke of his challenges, the coming storm he could see and his need to get his sheep to a new pasture where they could feed more freely.

“Too many wolves around these parts,” he said, pointing out in various directions with his rod that was no doubt used well in encountering such beasts.

“Now,” the shepherd said, still having not heard much from this traveller, “What brings you here, and how can I be of assistance to you?”

“That is precisely why I am here,” Young Pilgrim responded. “I am to ascertain what I might do to be of assistance to you. Indeed I do not know the full reason why I find myself suddenly in these parts. It is not the path I had thought to be on. A rather roundabout way to my destination,” he chuckled.

“However, something tells me I am to meet with you and from there perhaps I will find out where I am to go or what I am to do next.”

The wise old shepherd nodded. Indeed there was much that together they could do to try and secure a safer place for the sheep. Inwardly,

however, Young Pilgrim was thinking how he could secure a safer place for other young travellers on the pathway to Kingdom Eternal.

Together they walked over to sit under the shade of a tree.

Thankfully this was a fruit bearing tree and the shepherd offered some of its ripening fruit. This was a welcome gift, as indeed Young Pilgrim wondered just where or from whom his nourishment would come. The juice helped to quench his thirst and satisfy his hunger at the same time.

The Shepherd pulled out a map of the area, yea a map that reached far beyond this area. Young Pilgrim's eyes widened. Perhaps this was one of the reasons for being led to the Shepherd.

For the next hour this map was studied and discussed. Young Pilgrim asked many questions about each of the marked areas, roads, towns, hills and monuments indicated on the map. He felt he had a much clearer understanding of the way. It would stay in his mind's eye and be a guide to him.

“Thank you very kindly, this has been of great assistance to me,” Young Pilgrim expressed.

“How is it that you have come on your journey with no map to call your own?” the Shepherd asked, incredulously.

Young Pilgrim then went on to explain what had happened while lingering at the gate of the Town of Little Worth, and how he had been led in this way now to this very spot.

The Shepherd nodded. The conversation that followed showed that it had been in both of their hearts to keep those determined to journey to Kingdom Eternal unhindered.

“There is a place indeed. And I think it may be just the place,” the Shepherd said, as they talked over plans to make a place of rest for weary ones on business for the Master.

“Come, you shall dine with my wife and I tonight. There is a bed you can rest on in a building close to where we live. Let us lead the sheep now to a fold for their own rest, and tomorrow I will employ others to look out for the flocks while we explore this possible location as a rest for travellers.”

Young Pilgrim nodded and smiled, and patted the back of the willing, kind and humble shepherd. Together they worked to see to the flocks wellbeing until the sun had gone down.

Chapter 7—A Rugged Place

Using the map, the team set off quite early in the morning and before noon had made it to an old building. “It was once a chapel, but has been left in disrepair,” the shepherd said. “No one wants it; not many are even around to put it to much use.”

Young Pilgrim’s eyes became interested as he walked in to see, that though dusty and indeed in need of repair, the basic structure was intact. There were side rooms for guests, a dining hall, a basement for supplies, and an upper room for a caretaker to reside in.

“This will do; this certainly will do,” Young Pilgrim mused, then said aloud,

“But how do we secure the right to put it to use? It must belong to someone.”

“Indeed it does,” said the old shepherd slowly. “Indeed it does.” His eyes looked around as if memories were awakening from every corner of the building.

“Yours? Is this place yours?” Young Pilgrim was starting to understand.

“It belongs to my father. I have many memories of this place. It will be good to have it be in use again.”

Young Pilgrim, forgetting for awhile his own journey and how with haste he did want to arrive at the glorious gates of Kingdom Eternal, allowed himself to ponder the work it would take to make this place suitable.

The shepherd wasted no time, and could see the sparkle in the eyes of Young Pilgrim. “We’ve come this far, let us begin, shall we?”

And together they began to pick up debris, pluck up the weeds that were growing indoors and arrange some of the furnishings. By nightfall they had also cleaned out one of the side rooms, and it was looking very promising to be of use for a weary traveller.

Together they shared a simple meal the shepherd had brought and by candlelight they talked on into the night of the needs of this part of the land, the troubles and possible solutions.

Exhausted they at last fell asleep, each on a bench they pulled in to the room and had secured with stones.

They would have slept soundly, had it not been for the unwelcome visit of a fierce creature. The shepherd knew the sound well and was suddenly alerted.

Without a second thought he had grabbed his staff and let the beast know that this house was no longer abandoned and open for the likes of him to come sniffing around.

“The first thing we need to do is fix the doors,” the shepherd said, while watching the wolf limp off into the night. We’ve got to have a secure place, or it’s no good.

Some weeks passed, and this rugged chapel was useable for weary ones to rest in. Young Pilgrim offered to take the first turn at running the place, as well as keeping an eye open for travellers of an honest heart who might wish to seek lodging there.

The shepherd would keep watch also, and direct anyone to rest there, who he saw were determined to follow the path of the Master, and didn’t wish to fall prey to the lures of places such as the Town of Little Worth.

After some months had passed, the shepherd's son returned to live in these quarters, and he was glad to take up residence in the chapel dwelling place and tend to its upkeep—and help to seek out and rid the place of some of the wolves that lurked and caused his father's sheep much danger. Young Pilgrim knew he had done what he should and could, and that it was time to now carry on with his journey.

Many hearty thanks were exchanged between him and the shepherd's family, before parting for the continuing of his journey.

Chapter 8—A Feigned Friend

It felt good to be on the road again, ever nearer to his destination. However, it wasn't long before another travel would-be companion strode up on a steed beside Young Pilgrim.

“Mind if I keep you company?” this stranger asked, in as friendly a voice as could be feigned.

“If you are going the way I am going, and at the speed I am, there is little chance we will part,” Young Pilgrim replied, testing him.

“Indeed I am going where you are going; for I have no plans. I will follow you as you go, and be your companion.”

Young Pilgrim wasn't so keen about this sudden bosom buddy that he had scarcely had a chance to even blink at, and knew from the way he spoke, that this stranger was not to be trusted, not for a second. Yet, he was not to be angered, nor would be easily shaken off his track.

So, Young Pilgrim played along, yet keeping vigilance at all times, and keeping a special watch over the Royal package he was bringing to the Master.

For a day they rode, hardly speaking a word, and encamped in a wooded area for the night. Simple tents were made for evening rest, using blankets and branches. A fire was built and each one's saved morsels for the day were nibbled on.

Young Pilgrim wasn't going to allow himself the pleasure of sleep even if he made a pretence of rest. This man was not to be trusted.

"Master," he called out in heart to the one he knew was watching over him. "I need strength if I am to make it safely through the night, for alas I am ever so tired. I feel that as soon as I drift into a sleep, that this rogue, though finely dressed, will make off with all that is needed and precious to me."

It is then that the most curious idea came to him. He would make as if he wished to relieve himself deeper into the woods, at a time when the man was nearly asleep. First however, as it appeared, he brought some nourishment to the horse and stroked his neck, yet all the while he was loosing the rope from the tree.

He would go deeper in the woods, leaving behind but the blanket tent. It would not be suspected that he was leaving and was not to return.

So on in the bright moonlight Young Pilgrim walked while his horse rested at the camp in the glow of the fading fire. He had whispered something to his horse before leaving and it seemed to have the understanding needed. "You will come and find me before daybreak."

The horse knowingly nodded.

The tired thief slept well, surprisingly so. As long as he saw Young Pilgrim's horse still beside the tree, and saw his tent was pitched, he knew there was yet hope to apprehend whatever treasure that he held. He just had to wait for the right time.

"One last wink of slumber," the drowsy man thought before the sun rose. "Young Pilgrim must be gathering wood now for the morning fire."

Somehow the fine and obedient steed of Young Pilgrim knew it was the time and ever so quietly stole away from the tree. As silently as he could trot he made his way into the forest following the very way of his rider's footsteps; the way Young Pilgrim had walked some hours before.

How he did this, one can't tell, unless one remembers the other silent and yet invisible team of travellers that the Master had sent to escort Young Pilgrim safely to Kingdom Eternal: Those who were always ready to assist in times of peril or when the Master's treasures were in danger.

Once out of hearing range, Young Pilgrim's steed took on a much faster pace and found his rider.

"Good boy!" Young Pilgrim said, very glad and relieved indeed. "Now, we must be off speedily, for I do not want to be met up again with the thief." He gave a pat to his horse, climbed on and rode quickly, hour after hour, until they came to a spring of water.

Climbing down, Young Pilgrim at first felt relief for such a place of refreshing, but as soon as his feet touched the soil a warning of danger shot through his senses. It was as if a hundred pairs of eyes were looking at him, for indeed they were.

Chapter 9—A Young Guide

Feeling very alone, yet not wishing to appear afraid and desperately needing a drink, Young Pilgrim made his way to the water, pulling his horse along as well.

“What am I do to?” he thought, still seeing nothing, yet feeling them far more strongly than if he had.

Suddenly a lad appeared beside him, likewise drinking up water.

“Have you travelled far?” the lad said.

Not sure who he was or if he was to be trusted, Young Pilgrim drank warily and simply nodded.

“I have something to show you,” the boy said, and began to walk across the shallow stream of water, beckoning for Young Pilgrim to follow.

“Was this a trap?” It was urgent that he know what to do. While standing where he stood he felt the most foreboding feeling. Yet to walk to the bushy area, led by a stranger, innocent as he might appear, felt an equal risk.

Then a thought came to him, to test the honesty of the lad by offering him some money for his troubles of leading him to the nearest pathway. If the boy accepted, then he would know that wealth was in his heart all along, and thus he was leading him. Yet, if he was someone sent by his Master to lead him away from trouble, then he would think it unnecessary to accept pay of any sort.

“I would like to follow, if to follow brings me to the best pathway.—For I am on a journey to Kingdom Eternal, and do not wish to linger any longer. If I may offer you a coin or two for your troubles to direct me there, would you accept?”

The lad looked up in a most puzzled way. It was not in his least intentions to be paid for what was his duty at that time. “I’ll show you the way; that’s why I am here.”

So with this first sign of honesty, Young Pilgrim took one, then two, then three steps and so on, across the streamlet. The further he walked, the more relieved he felt. He knew it was right.

Then as soon as they had crossed, and the way to the path had been pointed out, the lad vanished as suddenly as he had appeared. But

not without saying how this area was filled with snares and it was best he be about his journey—staying only on the path that the lad pointed out.

Not wishing to wait to find out what the woodland dwellers would like to discover about this stranger to their parts, Young Pilgrim moved quickly on his way. It was a wonder that he did, for without the guide to show the way, he would have fallen in one of the many traps that were placed around, on both sides of the streamlet and within it.

Before too long he heard a cry coming from where he had just escaped. Yet the next unwatchful one had been caught in a snare. The rustle and cheers were heard from the ones that lurked there and were descending from the foliage to relieve the unhappy traveller of his wealth. Spurred on with the cries, Young Pilgrim travelled yet more swiftly.

Chapter 10—The Welcoming Cottage

By nightfall a welcome sight met Young Pilgrim. A light shone out from a small cottage, and he longed to ask for lodgings there.

He was greeted with a smile that he hadn't expected. "Oh, do come in, yes, most noble sir. Yes, of course I have room, for you and a place for your steed. You will be well cared for."

"Thank you kindly," Young Pilgrim said, rather puzzled. "The Master said you would be arriving just now..."

There was something rather unconvincing in the old woman's voice, and when he caught sight of some hair that was meant to be covered by the grey wig, he was alerted.

"Yes, the Master said for me to set a table before you and give you lodgings, do come in. I'm always here to help those on their way carrying their purse of wealth for him. I will see to it that no harm befalls you here.

"Come quickly in so that none see that you lodge here and seek you out to apprehend the very treasure you are to protect. In fact, I have the best vault set up for just such a one as

you...” she prattled on, attempting to adjust her voice to be one that became an old and kindhearted wise woman.

“Wait a minute,” Young Pilgrim suddenly thought. “I never said, and never intended to say anything at all about the treasures I am carrying.”

“Your hospitality is most... unheard of... however I hesitate to intrude upon you, or cause you any bother due to my presence being here,” Young Pilgrim said as he entered the dining room.

Indeed the food did look mighty good, fit for a prince. “*Paid for, in part no doubt by the last unhappy traveller,*” he thought.

“I am rather tired. I think I shall like to retire first, and will join you in a while. Do you mind?”

Not wishing to show herself to be anything but the hospitable woman she was making herself out to be, she verbally obliged.

Once in a private room he hastily transferred the wealth into the soles of his shoes, covered by his feet, and in place of it, in the bag, he put some smooth pebbles wrapped in cloth.

“These ordinarily are used for weighing and measuring at various markets, but today they will be to weigh out the intentions of this woman,” he whispered aloud.

After a brief rest, primarily in order to communicate a need to the Master, and to hear any message back, Young Pilgrim confidently knew what he was to do.

“I see you are more refreshed,” the woman said, her eyes clearly drawn to the small bag his hands held.

Young Pilgrim’s eyes following hers to the bag he held. “Oh, yes. There was a vault?”

The woman pretending to be completely uninterested in the contents, and rather only on the guests’ needs, motioned for Young Pilgrim to follow her to a side room. There was a large metallic encasement with half a dozen locks of all sorts on the front.

“If you will excuse me a moment,” she said, and laboured to open each one with a ring of keys in her hands.

Before placing his bag within, there were two things he noticed.

Firstly, he realised that she was unaccustomed to opening it, as if she had another way of accessing it entirely.

Secondly, there seemed to be a line around the vault, on the wall, ever so disguised, as if it was a back door that could be opened from another room, to access the goods held within it.

Placing his bag along with two others, he wondered who were the unhappy souls who had left their goods in there. His question was answered with her announcement as they walked into the dining hall.

“Oh, there are two others staying here tonight—John and Paul. I think you’ll enjoy their supper company. They too are on the journey you wish to go on.”

Young Pilgrim nodded and eagerly made his way to the feast that was spread.

Before eating he offered a blessing for the food, and noticed who in the room paid respect and who did not. This was one way he had of ascertaining who to trust and who not to.

During the meal the woman went on about how pleasant the market was that was being

held the day after next, and how they wouldn't wish to miss it. She told of all the delicacies and trinkets and items of great worth that merchants had brought from far away.

Money: keeping, spending, making, using, was all she seemed to speak of.

Young Pilgrim had no desire to linger, and excused himself for the night as swiftly as he could.

He awoke in the night with a sound of tinkling and clinking. He knew the sound from earlier that day. The vault was being, or attempting to be, accessed.

When reaching the side room, he saw that one of the guests were standing by the vault, looking most distressed. He had thought something would befall his goods and had second thoughts about trusting them to this woman who seemed to speak of nothing but wealth and acquiring it.

Young Pilgrim spoke in a soft whisper, "Paul, are your goods in there?"

Paul nodded, wondering what to do.

“I think there is another way,” Young Pilgrim said. Together, as quietly and stealthily as they could, the two pushed the vault away from the wall, and sure enough found that it was completely open at the back. The little door on the wall could have opened and thus accessed all that was held in it.

Though the woman slept just behind that little door on the wall, they didn't ask for her assistance, nor did they need to attempt to open the vault. Paul simply reached into the open back of the vault and pulled out his bag, and that of his companion. And quietly they moved the vault again into place.

Paul, with a questioning look, was asking why Young Pilgrim didn't remove his own bag as well.

Young Pilgrim just smiled. He didn't want his voice to be heard. He could explain later. But it was best this way, for in the morning when the woman looked, though she would be frightened to see not all the bags were there, at least one would make her glad that should she need a coin or two, there was something available for her greedy fingers.

Before daylight, all guests had hurried on their way, leaving a note of excuse, saying the Master called swiftly for them, and that whatever was in the vault could be kept until their return.

The three travelled on, until a parting of ways. Each having their own mission call and pathway to go, but as they were all travelling to the same place, in due time they would meet up again, perhaps in a week or two. But they had things to tend to for the time being.

Young Pilgrim had been glad for their company and wondered if it was safest to travel alone. Indeed he had contemplated leaving the path he was to go on for the joy of companionship. Yet, for reasons unknown, it was best that he ride on alone as it seemed, yet never alone to the eyes of the Master. More companions travelling together at this place would attract more, and unwanted, attention. Also, they could be easily swayed by each other's opinions, as it seemed they had done in the last place where they both decided to part with their special package entrusted to them.

So for this time, for this part of the way, being alone with only his invisible companions to accompany him, was the best option for the expediting of Young Pilgrim's journey.

Chapter 11—To Ease the Plight?

Young Pilgrim stoked his campfire, and since he no longer had his blanket to use as a covering, he let the stars be his roof for the night, resting while leaning on the side of his horse who had comfortably settled for the night.

The feast at the wealth-hungry woman's house had been more than sufficient to sustain him for most of the day and there was more than enough left over. He had packed extra food supplies into his pouch. On this he nibbled while looking up at the stars.

“Master, guide me. I thank you for how you have kept me all this way and sent me assistance and swerved me away from danger. I know not what will be on the morrow, but may it be a day of safekeeping and of doing good.”

With that, Young Pilgrim fell asleep and slept well until the morning.

Young Pilgrim was alone, or so he thought, while he packed up and prepared to journey again. However, he soon was approached by a begging boy, very persistent wishing for a few coins.

“I’m sorry, I have nothing to give you. I do not work in the merchandise of mankind. I am on a most strenuous journey and must be on my way. If it’s food you wish for, I will break a piece of my bread with you, but beyond that I have nothing of my own to give. I have left all to take this journey.

“Perhaps if you travel in the way that leads to Kingdom Eternal, and leave this temporal place behind, you too will find that the Master who calls all who will come, can amply provide for you likewise.”

Young Pilgrim tried to explain, but these words fell on deaf ears, it seemed. For a journey that wasn’t for the gaining of personal wealth didn’t seem a worthy task. The beggar would rather stay as he was, roaming around in circles, hoping to get a little relief here and there, than to have a definite place to go, even if it meant an indefinite income.

Up and away Young Pilgrim went. But as he did, a voice kept echoing in his mind,

“You didn’t give to the least. You didn’t help a weary one. You didn’t give anything of value. What sort of a person are you? Where is your generosity? The Master wouldn’t mind if you

were to give away a little of the wealth to relieve the hunger of an unfortunate one.” These words were at first very convincing and brought Young Pilgrim into a state of self-doubting. What worth was he if he didn't ease the plight of each one on his way?

Yet he argued; what if he did give away the treasures that weren't his to give but simply to carry safely all the way? Then there would indeed be nothing left when he arrived at the glorious gate. He also became suspicious of the thoughts that were being placed in his mind.

“Relieve the hunger...” why, that is what he had done, to his own hurt. He had given of his small portion of food.

“Anything of value...” why that too was a false accusation, for he had invited him to go to the Master himself. That is where the things of most value would be. If he would only travel with him to the Master great wealth could be his, if he wished to be a member of Kingdom Eternal.

So, with it resolved that he had made the right decision, and being most relieved that he indeed still had each treasure that was imparted to him, Young Pilgrim carried on determinedly.

Chapter 12—The Master’s Providence

Young Pilgrim’s health began to wane, for the weather was hot, and he had little protection from the elements as he pressed on.

Sometimes fanciful thoughts would come to him. “The wealth I am carrying, hidden in my shoes could buy me a small cottage, or support a wife and child for quite a while, or provide me with all the comforts of delectable meals daily for a very long while.

However, it would then be gone, if I trade what the Master has entrusted to me for temporal and passing comforts. I would rather the things that last, the eternal rewards. Comforts I shall be afforded plenty, if I can bear with the discomfort now and refrain from losing that which has been given to me.”

These talks he had often times with himself, especially when he was feeling in need of food, rest, and the kind reassurance of another faithful follower of the Master.

A fever came on, as Young Pilgrim tried to ride on. Soon he felt himself bowing down, clutching on to his horse. He was well nigh falling off with this troubling sickness. He stopped his

steed, though it didn't seem he would be any better on the ground. He slipped down and fell promptly to the ground. His horse was nice enough to not trot off, but stood faithfully by.

Then Young Pilgrim heard a voice, a melodic and angelic voice, at least to him. He looked up to see a woman dressed in white, kindly stroking the horse, speaking gently to it.

"Come, let me help you," she said, and tugged the steed over to the log cabin that was but a very short distance away.

"Is this a dream," Young Pilgrim wondered, though he had no strength to speak or move or do anything. He closed his eyes and let happen whatever was to happen. "But I am glad that I fell right where there was kindly help available. How precious indeed. This could be nothing short of the Master's providence and foresight."

That was the last thought he had for quite some while.

When he opened his eyes next he found himself on a bed of straw, his horse nearby happily eating, and drinking from a bucket of water. It seemed to be a stable.

How did he get there? Who brought him? And what was to happen next? There was one thought on his mind, and that was his mission. His journey was not to be neglected, though for the time being he simply could carry on no longer until his health was restored.

It wasn't long before that same woman entered the stable with a cooling cloth and placed it on his head. She seemed glad to see his eyes were open and that he was coherent. She quickly went to bring him a cup of broth and helped prop Young Pilgrim into a sitting position.

How long he had been there, he didn't know. The woman could see from the look in his eyes that he had many questions.

She just smiled and said, "I'll return within an hour to see if you have further needs," then placed a blanket on him as he settled for another time of deep rest. She patted the horse on her way out and was gone.

Young Pilgrim didn't fall asleep right way, but in the fading light of dusk used the moments to send a message to the Master.

"I seem to be in a building of sorts, and am too ill to continue. I don't know how long I will be

here, but I am certain that as soon as health and strength return, I will speed on my way, making up for the time lost..." his thoughts trailed off, and into sleep he drifted.

Yet, while he slept, a dream of sorts presented itself. In this dream, he rose from the bed of straw and walked into the cottage. There the woman greeted him saying, "I know who you are and want to help you. When you recover from this time of sickness, you will enjoy the journey more than you have thus far. I too am a servant of our beloved Master. I was placed here to help weary ones, such as yourself. But I long to see the gates of Kingdom Eternal, and I too shall arrive there, when my ministry here is complete."

The dream was clear in Young Pilgrim's mind as he woke sometime in the night. A gentle lantern had been placed to give light, and a jug of water also set there, should he need it. Young Pilgrim stumbled over to get a drink, and noticed through the window that a light was still on in the cottage directly beside the stable.

"Maybe she did visit me after all, and together we talked, though I was asleep—or perhaps I visited her. Whoever she is, it has done me well, and in good timing too."

That is all Young Pilgrim had the strength for, and back to slumbering he went. An uncomfortable night was endured, sweating, tossing and turning much of the time.

Yet before daybreak, a sudden sense of wellness began awakening in his soul. Though tremendously weak, he knew from that moment on he had begun to amend. Though it would take some time, all would be well, and his journey could continue.

Chapter 13—A Tray and a Smile

A tray with a splendid breakfast was brought in just as the sun was shining golden rays all around.

Young Pilgrim thought the sunshine in the woman's smile was far brighter and warmer than any sunrise he had seen.

"I see you are doing better, and I am glad to see that. I asked the Master about your needs in the early part of this morning. Wonderfully I see the request has been granted. Here is something for your continued mending," the woman said, placing the tray across the now sitting pilgrim's lap.

"Thank you kindly," Young Pilgrim said, before she was swiftly off again.

He looked over at his steed, who seemed keen to get moving or possibly grazing.

"What will we do for you, ol' boy. I do not know this place well, but perhaps there is a place you can wander and feed and have a day of relaxing as well. You have certainly earned it."

It was at noon time that this wish was granted, for when the woman brought again a

tray of nourishment and water, she mentioned about a fenced pasture where the horse could enjoy the afternoon in the sun and shade, with grass abundant and fresh water to drink.

“This is better than I could have imagined, I am at a loss for what to say, for words of thankfulness seem too trite to match the sense of gratitude I feel. I have no way of repaying you the kindness, but I trust I shall find some way when I have fully recovered my strength,” Young Pilgrim replied.

The woman smiled and led the willing horse out of the stable. The pasture could be seen from the open door of the stable, and through the window. While Young Pilgrim rested it was easy for him to look out and see if all was well.

“I think it’s about time I do some reading,” he said, and dug into the best and only book he brought with him. It was a very long one indeed and took many days, yea even a week before he had finished it.

When he read the last page he certainly felt strength had been given to him, if not only by the rest and kindness, but by the very book itself.

All through this week of rest and reading and communicating with the Master, his kind hostess had daily taken his horse to feed and stroll in the pasture, and had brought Young Pilgrim all that he had need of as well.

At times they had short conversations, as that was a need of his as well, to stave off the loneliness that would reverse the healing process. The woman knew that a bit of friendship would aid him and speed healing on,

At last he felt well enough to go and fetch his horse out of the pasture himself, to bring him in for the night.

“I suppose I should be soon leaving this place. I have much time to make up for...” these thoughts were in his mind as he walked back to the stable.

“I’m glad you are feeling so well as to walk around now. I have come to invite you to dine with me at my table, should you like to.” The woman was standing at the door of the stable giving the offer.

Feeling most delighted, yet hiding it somewhat, Young Pilgrim managed to say, “If it saves you the trouble of filling a tray and walking

all the way here to give it to me, I would like to spare you the extra effort. It would be a pleasure indeed to dine with you.”

He somewhat blushed. It had been a long time indeed since he had had a meal with a friend, and even longer had it been since he had the company of a lady.

“I will meet you there shortly then, as the meal is ready even now,” she said, and went quickly over to the cottage.

After placing his steed in the pen, he sat on the straw bed momentarily.

“What can I give her? What do I have to offer this one, for all the favour she has shown? I think I shall be leaving shortly, but I do not want to fail my promise of returning the favour in some way.”

Just then a thought came to mind; something he hadn't dared to think of as of yet, because it went rather opposite to what his mind was set on.

“I shall give it some thought. Perhaps after the meal I will know more clearly what is best to do.”

With this resolution and question, Young Pilgrim went to join the woman for supper.

Indeed it was a delightful meal. "It could be his last," she had thought, knowing how very eager Young Pilgrim might be to be off on his journey again.

She had put the extra effort to make it every bit as pleasant as she could, with delicacies rarely enjoyed.

Chapter 14—A Simple Request

“What can I do for you, dear lady, in return for all you have done for my wellbeing, as well as that of my steed. We both owe you our appreciation in some way,” Young Pilgrim asked.

Not wishing to detain him any longer on his journey, she made one simple request.

“I should like to ride alongside of you, for the first short part of your journey, to see that you are well enough to do so, and do not collapse due to the strain of leaving off so soon. I can then show you back to the main pathway, for these are new parts to you.”

“If that is all you wish for, that is indeed a very simple request, and a joyful one, to fulfil,” Young Pilgrim responded.

“I should like time to make provisions and thus to ensure your journey will be successful. I couldn’t bear the thought of your health failing while you fall into the hands of highway men and the like, after all I have done to nurse you to health. Indeed I fear I shall worry, every day, if something has befallen you...” the woman offered, and revealed this glimmer of caring for him.

“No need to worry, kind lady, for if the Master has kept me this far, he will do so for the rest of the journey. Though I do see that one way he has kept me was through the kindness at your hand. If it was not for you, I see not how I could have managed.”

There was a silence that followed.

“When do you wish to resume your journey?” the woman asked.

“Perhaps it would be wise to gain a bit more wellbeing, for at this point I scarcely can walk. I had thought I could ride, but I think wisdom is to wait, as hard as it is,” Young Pilgrim decided.

“Then I shall try to make your waiting as pleasant as is possible, so that time will fly, and health will speed, and you can with wings set off again,” the woman said with a smile, while clearing the table.

Young Pilgrim tried to assist her, but she encouraged him to rather sit by the fireplace and enjoy this time of rest. “There will be little of this once you head off yonder...” she reminded him, and so he yielded.

Gazing into the fire his mind went back to think of all the perils and trouble of his journey

thus far, and the wonderful fact that the treasure that had been entrusted to him was still intact.

Before too long, when the dishes had been cleared, Lady Lorella, for that was her name, came and sat with him at the hearth. Into the night they talked, he telling of his journey thus far, and she telling of the travellers she had helped along their way.

“But while you are gone, for that short while, riding with me as I resume my journey, will there be someone to look after this cottage and tend to travellers that may come?” Young Pilgrim asked.

“I do have a sister who I can ask to come look after things. I think she would be most delighted to do so, for she has often mentioned her desire to do the same as I have. She will be most pleased to at last have a place in which to serve in the way she too feels called.”

Satisfied with that reply, and not wishing to be of any trouble, Young Pilgrim then excused himself and went out to the stable.

“I hope you are alright here for a bit longer, old boy,” he said to the horse who was by then half asleep. The horse seemed to give a nod, and then nodded off back to sleep.

When Young Pilgrim went to rest on the bed of hay he was surprised to see a note in a card placed there for him.

“If you wish to, and you feel well enough, I bid you to stay in the guest’s quarters in my humble cottage, starting tomorrow night. But if you are content to rest and recover in the stable, I will not press you. Please choose what will best spur you on your journey. I do not wish to take any more of your time in conversing, as may happen were you to use the bedroom provided. This is only an offer should it speed you to better health, and thus a sooner and faster journey ahead. – Lady Lorella”

It was difficult to describe the feelings Young Pilgrim had. Indeed his sleep would be better in a better room; though he was glad that in his sickness he had been out here so as not to bring ill health to the home of this woman. He did feel it was time to take her up on this offer; though the hesitation he felt was something hard to express. Perhaps it was love he was worried about.

“She’s not for you; you must be on your lonesome way, and as quickly as possible at that,” he kept telling himself, for love, though unsought for, had poked its way into the soil of

his heart. Being around her more often might only water this seed and bring it to a full and flourishing plant.

Yet as he attempted to put himself to sleep, the words he had heard in his dream of her the first night he arrived kept coming to mind, "I long to see the gates of Kingdom Eternal, and I too shall arrive there, when my ministry here is complete."

The thought moved in him that, "*It will be very hard for her to see you off, while you get to speed off on your journey to the gates of Kingdom Eternal, and she will have to return to her lonesome cottage.*"

When he at last decided that whatever was the best wishes of the Master for himself and for Lady Lorella, that they would do it, he found rest.

It seemed by the look in her face the next morning, that she had come to a similar conclusion. For indeed in her heart, if she could do as she wished, it would be to ride on her horse, side by side, not just for a little while as Young Pilgrim took his journey, but to keep on going and keep on, until together they reached the gates of Kingdom Eternal. Her heart longed to see the Master.

Waiting and serving alone wasn't easy, although it was satisfying in many ways for it fulfilled the wishes of the Master.

Yet, for Young Pilgrim, journeying on to the gates of Kingdom Eternal was likewise a hard task. Yet, it too had its joy in knowing that he would be counted worthy to inherit a portion of the Kingdom, and work alongside with the Master.

Though the pathway was lonely and dangerous and wearisome at times, he knew the rewards would be well worth it.

Chapter 15—Restored

They looked into each other's eyes as they shared a simple breakfast, trying to determine just what the other was thinking. Afterwards they walked a short while in the pasture, while Young Pilgrim's horse took some time to graze and prance as he wished.

Most of their short walk was in silence, yet it was broken by the invitation to sit under the shade of a tree and read from "the best book ever", as Lady Lorella suggested.

And this was something they did then each day of the following week. After a light breakfast and gentle walk, a time of reading was enjoyed. After midday, as well as the evening meal, the same pattern was followed. Young Pilgrim seemed to gain double strength due to the reading that was coupled with the nourishment, as well as the pleasant company. The remainder of the day was spent resting, or at times, towards the end of the week, gentle horse riding, as Young Pilgrim's strength was regained.

By the time a full two weeks had finished, Young Pilgrim was nearly completely recovered. But there remained a new illness of sorts, if it could be called thus.

Love sick he was, and the thought of journeying was a very difficult one indeed. But go he must. He would not give up all he was aiming for, simply for the comforts of a nice cozy home and a woman who seemed to love him more by the day.

“I must get out while I still can...while I still have any reason left at all,” he thought, as he put his horse into the stable. Then he went to deliver a most unusual message to Lady Lorella.

“I won’t be dining tonight—with any, but in heart with the Master. I must make heart preparations for my journey. Please don’t trouble yourself with making a meal for me.”

Though surprised, Lady Lorella respected this, and decided to do the same. So that evening Young Pilgrim spent in the stable, alone and in quietness, and Lady Lorella spent the same, sitting at her fireplace in quiet contemplation and thought.

It was halfway through his sleeping night that Young Pilgrim woke suddenly. It seemed a voice called him to wake. “Go out in to the pasture and walk awhile. When you come to the tree you usually read under, you will find the answer to your question.”

Pulling on his coat, he squeaked open the stable door, and stepped into the brilliant moon light. Across the pasture he walked until he got to the tree. There he found he was not alone, for under it, curled up on a blanket, was Lady Lorella.

They both were as startled to see one another.

“The Master said for me to wait here...” Lady Lorella said, at the same time when Young Pilgrim started with,

“A voice called me to come here, and that here I will find the answer to my question.”

Without thinking about what they were doing, they joined hand in hand and walked into the centre of the pasture, into the bathing slivery light. Facing each other they waited, each wondering if the other had something to say, some special message they were to share, for both of their hearts were heavy with wondering what the next part of their life would be.

Then as if a bell had chimed from the heavens, and an angel had sung a golden note, they both heard the word, “Together!”

This was followed by a voice in their heart and mind that could come from no one else but the Master.

The instructions were given each of them, and they knew what they were to do. Each of them were to follow what they were asked to do—yet together.

Lady Lorella would continue to be a help to other pilgrims, yet along the way as they journeyed, or at times when they stopped for a few weeks or months at a time, using some location to give weary ones a rest on their way to the gate of Kingdom Eternal.

Young Pilgrim was to carry on, without further delay, on his journey, yet not alone this time. Together they would ride; sometimes speedily making good headway, other times stopping for rest and for the good of other pilgrims.

Their journey would bring a variety of experiences and opportunities. Young Pilgrim might not go as fast or far as if he were to go alone, but he would have someone there to help nourish him and see to it that he got rest when needed, thus ensuring his safety and moderation.

Lady Lorella wouldn't have as much rest or even be able to help as many people as she wished to, while they sped along, ever closer to the gate of Kingdom Eternal. Yet, she would get

her heart's wish of pressing on to the see the one she so longed to, and time would seem to pass more quickly as she was travelling on.

“Will you be my travel companion, Lady Lorella?” Young Pilgrim asked, now sure in his heart that this was best.

“I will, though it cost me giving up my house and all that I have. Together we will daily get closer to the Master and the gates of Kingdom Eternal.”

They embraced and walked back, each going then to their separate sleep accommodations.

A sleep of peace with hearts of gratitude came over them. Though the way ahead was going to be uncertain, and no less perilous, it was good to know that one part of the journey was settled, they were to travel together.

Chapter 16—Sister Sonrisa

“My dear sister!” Lady Lorella exclaimed, as Sister Sonrisa showed up at the cottage a day later. “I am so glad to see you, for I have the most wonderful news. I wanted you to come in person so I could tell you face to face.”

Lady Lorella then sat for a long while chatting and nibbling, while Young Pilgrim made preparations for the journey.

“How did you know to come here?” Lady Lorella asked.

Sister Sonrisa just smiled. It was common for her to show up at the right place at the right time. They both knew the answer. “Led” they both chorused. “Indeed” both exclaiming.

Lady Lorella explained about the coming journey, and most of all about the offer of this place being turned over into the care of her sister. This was welcome and joyful news indeed—the cottage part that is. However, the news of her travel bought somewhat of a hint of sadness. Yet, as is her name, she put on a smile and cheered Lady Lorella on, telling her, “You do whatever the Master bids. We’ll all be very happy then, I assure you.”

They embraced and then began walking around the property, while Lady Lorella explained to her sister about how it all worked, and where she could find everything needed.

As they walked along past the pasture, Sister Sonrisa caught her first sight of Young Pilgrim, who was giving his horse a bit of a run. She smiled and nodded. It was clear that he was a good man, and she was glad now to have her sister finally heading out to the gates of Kingdom Eternal with one such as he. She could tell that he was determined to not let anything hinder him in his plans, and thus would make a good companion for his sister. She smiled her approval.

“When do you think you could be ready to take over the cottage?” Lady Lorella asked.

“I think I could start tomorrow. Well, I’m ready now, but I think I’ll give myself a bit of time to let it sink in, and time to enjoy a supper with you and Young Pilgrim as well, if you will permit me. Then I shall be ready, and I won’t hinder your journey at all. There are rumours of storms coming in these parts, and you best be on your way. I wouldn’t want a flooding of the roads to stop you,” Sister Sonrisa answered.

“Thank you so much. I think we will both have much to learn, but I hope the Master will be glad,” Lady Lorella expressed.

“Of course, he will!”

“Then we’d best be making the meal, care to join me?” Lady Lorella offered.

“Certainly,” her sister responded. They knew it was to be the last one they were to have together for quite some time, so they put extra effort in to it and enjoyed a great time working with each other. They laughed, they cried, they joked, and they hugged as they chatted and cooked together.

When the meal was ready at last, Young Pilgrim was invited.

It was a solemn time, and a time of joy. When the evening came to a close, they each bid the other good night and farewell, for the travelling team would start off as early as possible in the morning.

After Sister Sonrisa had settled for rest in the guest room, Lady Lorella and Young Pilgrim finished their preparations and packing, out in the stable, so as not to disturb.

At last all was ready; food and water was packed, the saddles for the horses were in place, and they were dressed and shod as needed for a long and exciting trip.

In the dim light of the lantern they both settled together on the bed of hay, sang a song and drifted into a deep and peaceful rest. Where they would sleep the following night, they didn't know. All they knew was that they had to go.

By the time the rooster crowed, they were up and ready to take off. As they trotted their horses, a call and wave came from the house. Sister Sonrisa waved them farewell. As always, she knew just the right time and place to be.

Chapter 17—Thorns

“Ouch! These thorns are pricking at me and tearing my clothes. Ohh! I’m sinking in the mud!”

Lady Lorella along with Young Pilgrim had to pick their way across a marshy pit, filled with thorns. If they didn’t ride their horses there was a better chance of getting out of it safely.

This was simply the only way to pass to the other side of the ridge, but it wasn’t in any way pleasant.

Being a more hearty soul, Young Pilgrim wasn’t going to fuss about a few pains and tears, but he was incredibly concerned that he get his travel companion and both their steeds over to a more solid bit of ground.

It was easy at times like this for Lady Lorella to think back to her lovely garden. About this time of year the roses were in full bloom, and there were other natural delights there to refresh her soul. The only thorns she had to contend with had roses to go along with them. But here in this place it was just all thorns.

To keep her mind occupied and not wonder if she had made the wrong decision to embark on this journey, she had to start singing.

And so sing she did, and she was at times joined by the hearty voice of Young Pilgrim.

He had made it out first, for he was helping to lead the best way, letting himself be the one to discover the wrong steps and to then warn his lovely companion where, and where not, to step. Young Pilgrim tied his horse to a tree and then came back to be of assistance to Lady Lorella and her steed to make it out of there.

For a long while they just sat under the tree, until the silence was broken at last when Young Pilgrim pulled out his faithful book and began to read. As they read, the pains began to heal, the mud began to dry and could be shaken off, and their courage to continue returned.

Lady Lorella pulled out some water and nourishment for them to share. They took some time to rest and recover. Not everything on this journey would be easy, in fact most of it wouldn't. But as long as they got to their destination with the Master's treasures complete, they would be glad.

While thinking this thought, suddenly Young Pilgrim sat up with a start. "The treasure! Oh dear! I think I have lost some of it in the mire and mud we just came through."

“But how? Where?” Lady Lorella asked, eager to help, even if it meant retracing steps to recover what was lost. Even if it meant more pain in the thorns and more mess with mud, it was worth it.

“I made a step into an extra deep place of mud, so deep that it took off my boot as I pulled my foot out. I was so focused on getting up and out to safety that I didn’t realise some of the treasures fell into the mud. I know it did, as I see now there is something missing. There is no other way it could have been lost.

Together they made their way, unhappily but earnestly to find that spot where some of the Master’s wealth had been lost. It was as unpleasant as it was the first time they tried to get out of this mire, with the additional strain and fear of the goods being lost forever.

“Look to the right a little...” a voice called to Young Pilgrim, and as he did he found a neat pile was made of each of the missing pieces of the Master’s treasures. How they got in a nice pile was something he didn’t know, but it might have had something to do with the voice that was leading him to it.

Yes, he was not alone. His invisible team, sent with him by the Master, couldn’t spare him

from having to walk through some muddy and painful times, but they were always there to help when something was beyond what he could manage. Surely, if it weren't for the help at hand, it would have been impossible to recover the loss.

With tears of gratitude, the two companions picked their way back up the incline with the treasures held tightly in Young Pilgrim's hands. All was well. If they hadn't taken the time to rest and read and recover, Young Pilgrim might have been too busy to realise that he'd lost something precious. I

f there hadn't been a few wounds that needed healing on Lady Lorella, they might have pushed on without stopping for healing. If it had merely been mud, a difficulty without any lingering consequences, they may have not stopped to heal, stopped to listen, and stopped to get the needed guidance.

With a complete treasure and with the joy of being helped to find it, they felt renewed strength to pluck up the courage and continued on. First, they walked, and when they were sure that the ground was solid, they began riding again; first slowly, and then at a faster pace.

By the end of the day so much headway was made, it was almost as if they hadn't had that delay. They not only reached their goal for the day but were the wiser for it as well.

Chapter 18—Testing the Trustworthiness

Young Pilgrim was chopping wood for the fire, while Lady Lorella was brushing and tending to the horses. She made sure they had what they needed and fed them some handfuls of special grains in appreciation.

Just then a raspy voice followed by a few shabbily dressed folks broke through the quiet dusk, “Help us please...”

Quickly Young Pilgrim assessed the situation.

“What do you want?” he called out. Using his tactic of testing the trustworthiness of a person by seeing how interested they are with money, he waited to see what they asked for.

“We were travelling, yet we fell sick and have fallen on hard times. We were headed for the gates of Kingdom Eternal, but there is little chance we will ever make it.

“Now we languish in poverty. Our horses have been stolen, and we continue to be weak and too sickly to carry on, on foot. Do you have anything that might heal us of our suffering and give us strength?”

At the sound of this story, and by all outer appearances it seemed rather credible. Lady Lorella's attention was aroused. That indeed was what she was sent out to do.

Young Pilgrim knew, from what was revealed that special night in the moonlit pasture, that it would mean a pause on forward travel. He heaved a sign, and sent a thought to the Master. "If you want us to carry on quickly, then send help soon for these ones. Or if you wish for us to linger here, because it's part of the plan, then give me patience and forbearance."

Lady Lorella knew, in part, what he was thinking, and gave a tender smile his way. Young Pilgrim gave a nod for her to go ahead and do whatever was put in her heart to do at this time.

"Come over here and sit down, I want to talk with you about your situation," Lady Lorella called and motioned.

If they were truly who and what they said they were they would be glad to. If, however, their intentions were to take what was not theirs, then they would insist on speaking with the one who most likely had a bag of treasures hidden somewhere in his supplies.

While most of the beggarly travellers followed over and spoke with Lady Lorella, expressing all that ailed them, there was another person that seemed to gravitate over to Young Pilgrim, seeming to start up a conversation.

“Lady Lorella will speak to you of your need,” Young Pilgrim motioned for him to go over with the others.

“She seems occupied enough,” the man tried to make excuses, “besides, I’m not as they are...”

While trying to separate himself in the hopes of giving himself a reason for communing with the one who might have some riches, he had just given himself away, and continued to do so.

“I found them here some weeks ago and have been trying to help them. All I need is a few coins and with it I can get them all a proper meal. I know they will feel well enough then to beg on the street nearby. The earnings from this can be used to hire a horse and cart to take them up the river a while.

“When the money runs out, they could then beg on that strip of the road until earning what else is needed.

“By and by through this method they will at last reach their destination, and we’ll all be glad and better off... for no one greatly relishes being accosted and approached by the likes of these.”

Young Pilgrim kept cutting wood, looking up briefly at this man as he continued on with this money related scheme. Rather than helping them he was wishing to use them to raise funds, or so it seemed rather plain to Young Pilgrim.

“Would you be better off then, if they weren’t here?” Young Pilgrim asked pointedly. “Without them, how would you feel the boldness to ask of me some coins, or go begging for more?”

Blushing, the man saw he was going nowhere, and was seen for what he was.

“What do you normally do when not teaming up with the unfortunates and with fair speech letting them believe that you care?”

The man was wishing he had gone over to the tree with the others after all, but his dignity didn’t allow him to go now, and he wasn’t ready to show his true colours by losing control.

“I like to patrol these places and see how the travellers fare, ready to lend a hand to any that

fall prey to the thieves that live in these parts...” the man said, rather uncertainly.

“What parts?” Young Pilgrim asked, almost sure this man was playing both sides.

“Just around here...”

“Well, since you seem to know the residence of the highway men, perhaps you would like to introduce me to them. I shall like to see to it that they are given a proper start on life so as not to fall prey to the lust of riches being their only reason for living another day.”

Young Pilgrim was sure now that this man was indeed the very one who planned and carried out the robbery of these ones as soon as they fell ill, and was now acting as if trying to make things better.

Young Pilgrim continued,

“Or perhaps, since it seems you might have opportunity in the future for an unfortunate meet up with the forest thieves, I should be giving you a bit of advice that you could pass on to them.”

Since to save face the man was obliged to listen. Young Pilgrim then began to tell him about the two Kingdoms, Temporal and Eternal, and to

give him an intelligent chance to make up his mind of what to live for and what to do.

“The Kingdom Eternal is going to rule all these parts, and certainly clear out any and all rogues. Those of us who are loyal to the Master will come back and assist him in this job.

“Those who live for the temporal—that is the things that consume, that are used up, that must always be replenished and gotten at all cost—will themselves pass away and be no more. Whatever glory they thought they had, will be faded and decayed like the leaves of a tree turn colour, fall and turn again into soil as the rain falls.

“The reign of the Master will see to it that all who are not helping the tree of his Kingdom, by remaining true and firmly on the tree, will help by their fall.”

This was rather deep talk for this man of the roads, who seldom thought of anything but temporal things; indeed, he didn't know of such a thing as eternal.

He walked away shaking his head, puzzled and angry that he didn't get the goods he was after, as it would have betrayed his image.

Instead he got a bunch of talk about fading leaves. He knew that the time of fading leaves was his least favourite season of the year. It gave him less covering when lurking in the wooded area, and the crunchy sounds made it hard to be stealthy; the sounds gave him away.

“Stick on the tree or be gone” was the basic idea he was left with from what Young Pilgrim tried to express.

Young Pilgrim looked over to see how Lady Lorella was fairing. She looked over and smiled, yet questioned with her eyes who the man was and why he was walking away.

With a raise of his eyebrows, shrug of his shoulders and a look in his eyes, Lady Lorella got the message from Young Pilgrim that this other man was somewhat the cause of these ones’ troubles, and that it was uncertain just what he might plan to do.

She excused herself saying, “Can you all collect some of the fallen branches and sticks around. We’ll get a good fire going tonight. A bit of warmth and some good soup will make you all feel better I’m sure.”

Then as they got busy in this endeavour Lady Lorella went up to talk with Young Pilgrim.

“I have reason to think that he is, or is one of the highway men that not only robbed these travellers, but is, in his own way, keeping them here as a way to raise goods for himself under the guise of helping them,” Young Pilgrim said.

“That makes sense, according to some of the things they were saying. I think we need to get them on the road as soon as possible. I don’t want to wait for reinforcements to catch up.

“I think after a good warm up and the best soup I can make, we need to get them on the road again, tired or not. They won’t be any better staying here,” Lady Lorella suggested.

“I think you are right. When I first looked at this team it seems some were to be trusted and some weren’t. I think one of them is gone, for the night only, but there might be others among them who aren’t willing to carry on and would rather stay and learn the ways of the roadmen,” Young Pilgrim replied.

“Perhaps,” said Lady Lorealla, “there is a way we can test their loyalties, to see who is actually determined to carry on, and who wants to stay

here—and be part of the ways of the temporal Kingdom.”

Young Pilgrim was eager to try something out.

Later around the fire Lady Lorella handed out soup and as she did so she would ask people personally a question. The answers they gave would indicate to her just where their mind and heart were. Other things were discussed, and so by the end of the evening both Young Pilgrim as well as Lady Lorella, had a pretty good idea of who to awaken and take with them when they fled swiftly in the night.

Three of them would be willing to come, they thought, but two would remain here. Whenever, in the future, they were ready to leave the temporal world's way and were tired of being pushed around by money seekers, then they too could choose to continue on their journey.

There was one trouble that needed to be resolved—transportation. Yet knowing that the men were weak and needed rest and healing, it might be that they didn't have to travel far, nor travel all that night—just enough to give themselves space between those they were leaving behind and hoping to evade.

It would be some weeks before the team of three would be ready physically to take the rest of the trip to Kingdom Eternal. Young Pilgrim knew this, and Lady Lorella was ready to give them her time and care.

Chapter 19—Onward in the Night

That night when all were sleeping soundly, that is all except Young Pilgrim and Lady Lorella, the plan was enacted.

Young Pilgrim quietly woke up each of the three who were to be taken to a place of safety and healing. They were told that a thief was sleeping nearby, and they must leave and promptly in utter silence.

Two of the smaller-built ones were placed on one horse, led by Young Pilgrim, the other was placed on Lady Lorella's horse, and she rode atop with them, very slowly.

In this way they made their get-away.

They walked on this way for a few hours while all was still and quiet in the woods—all except the nocturnal animal life that was always astir. When the rays of sun began to embrace the land, the team found they had come to a mountain pass, and as they walked on they began to see that there were caves to be explored.

Wanting to get out of sight as soon as possible, the team descended from the horses and soon found a cave that suited them just fine, for the time being.

Perhaps they would need to move around from time to time, from cave to cave, but it was just perfect for their needs.

Growing around were several edible plants, roots, and even some wild fruit trees. This together with the grain that Lady Lorella used each night to add to the soup, provided a meagre but sufficient diet. Water was collected twice a day in water sacks from the stream nearby.

Though the journey had taken another delay, Young Pilgrim was not unhappy. For rather than returning to Kingdom Eternal alone and with a full bag of the Master's riches, now all five of them would be arriving. Maybe not all on the team still had their treasures intact, but the Master loved each one and would be very glad to see they had made it anyway.

"I think it's time to go now," Young Pilgrim said as he woke with Lady Lorella by his side, in the cave room where they slept.

"Yes. The rest, the food, and most of all the daily reading of the book has helped the travellers recover so quickly. I think we best be going," Lady Lorella agreed.

“But how? Wouldn’t it be best for them to have steeds to speed them on their way?” Young Pilgrim wondered.

“The Master will provide such as is needed.” Lady Lorella had a way of speaking courage and hope.

“Yes, you’re right. I needn’t worry about such things,” Young Pilgrim relaxed.

Just then a loud neighing was heard.

Both were startled and sat up right, then jumped up to see.

A team of horses that had broken away from the place they had been kept by the thieves had made their way to them.

Calling out their names, each of the travellers found each his own horse once again. Each man stroked their horse and reacquainted themselves again.

“How did you get here?” they were asking. The speechless horses just nodded and neighed as if eager to be going once again. The two remaining horses, whose owners hadn’t come, soon took off on a run down the road and into the bush.

Somehow, the travellers knew that these horses would find their way to the last two travellers. It had been a few weeks, and it was quite likely that by this time they were eager and willing to up and ride again, leaving the temporal living to pursue the path to the Kingdom Eternal.

The travellers laughed and with glee mounted their steeds without a saddle. Seeing the eagerness of this team and their horses, Young Pilgrim and Lady Lorella just waved and said, "God speed! We'll meet you at the gates!"

With a wave of thanks they giddy-upped and took off in a gallop.

Young Pilgrim turned to Lady Lorella and stroked her hair and said, "Thank you. If you hadn't been here, none of this would have been possible."

The two decided to have one day of rest before carrying on. They didn't know why, but just felt they were to wait a bit. After taking a swim in one of the cave pools, they built a cosy fire. It was the first time in weeks that they just had the two of them together.

"Well... since having you along I haven't gotten lonely, that's for sure," Young Pilgrim said with his arm around Lady Lorella.

“And I haven’t had a single dull day, that’s for sure,” she added.

They had a day of relaxing, rest, chatting and hiking around the area while finding something for dinner. The starlight was extra bright that clear night, or so it seemed. What a trip it had been, and it wasn’t over yet, but they were sure it wasn’t too much further to go.

Before leaving the next day they thought they heard a sound of horses galloping. They looked all around the area and over yonder there they saw two riders making great speed on the horses that had found them at last. So swiftly they rode, as if making up for all the months they had lost while lingering in the temporal ways in those sickly wooded areas.

“There they go! They’ve broken away at last. They are really going for it. The Master will be glad to see them. Better late than never!” Young Pilgrim said.

“Speaking of which, should be we off?” Lady Lorella asked.

“Off and away indeed!” he replied. “To Kingdom Eternal!”

Chapter 20—Through the Gates

It seemed they almost flew, as the speed and the joy took them down and around and over the last passes of their journey. They didn't seem to notice the great distance that was passing.

At an unusual speed they reached the cloud before the day was over. This cloud covered the entrance to Kingdom Eternal.

“Shall we go in?” Young Pilgrim said, and with an excited nod from Lady Lorella, they took the last lunge and they were in. Out of sight on one side, and into the brilliant light of the other.

Their horses seemed to slow to a stop for a calm and relaxing stand in the meadow they found themselves in. Whatever colour their horses may have been the temporal Kingdom, now beyond the cloud and into the gates they were sparkling white, shiny, and royal looking steeds.

Young Pilgrim slipped off his horse, who was now calmly nibbling the grass, and walked over to Lady Lorella.

Holding up his hand as if to assist her, he said, “May I?”

With a smile, and looking around in wonder at the beauty they found themselves surrounded by, she took his hand, and rested her other hand on his shoulder as she descended to the green turf that was coloured with wild flowers.

Together they knelt and looked up at a light that was shining overhead. The presence of the Master was there.

“Well done, Young Pilgrim, well done!”

The words of the Master made his body to wrack slightly with tears and sobs. It was the most beautiful moment he had lived yet.

“And well done, Lady Lorella. Enter and be glad,” the Master said while appearing in human form. He held out his hand to help Lady Lorella stand, and took Young Pilgrim into an embrace.

Together they walked over to the golden and shiny palace that was seen just beyond.

“You are going to love what I have prepared for you!” he said, leading them to the best feast they had ever had, for it was beyond what they could ever have thought up.

“Oh, Master, your treasures, I have kept faithfully...” Young Pilgrim began to say.

“I have it now—the portion of My treasures that you carried. As soon as you entered this realm I was able to claim it and it’s been put into your account for use later on in service for the Kingdom—and it’s been added to a thousand times over.

‘You are glad, no doubt, that you didn’t give it up and were willing to suffer there to now have it to use on matters of much greater worth?’

Young Pilgrim hadn’t expected this. He had kept it for the Master, and in return it was his to use, and many more times over.

“I am glad, Master, that you helped me to be true and faithful in the little things that I had....” for surely anything looked little now in comparison.

“And I will make you both rulers over much, in return for your faithfulness,” the Master said with a smile.

The Master paused to look at Lady Lorella before entering the feasting hall, and said:

“You have something to give me I think, little one?”

She didn't think she had anything to offer, but suddenly in her hand was a bag bursting with all the best and most delightful treasures that she'd ever seen.

“Oh..! Uh..” she stammered, “Yes, I give these to you, for they are yours.”

The Master, looking kindly into her face, smiled. “Thank you for keeping these for me. I knew I could entrust you with them.”

Lady Lorella was somewhat puzzled, and Young Pilgrim even more so. He hadn't been aware of her having any jewels, at least ones that could be seen and felt and possibly lost while in the temporal Kingdom.

“She was faithful with the unseen jewels, and I have rewarded her with riches unimaginable. Sometimes it's the unseen ones that takes the most faith to keep them safely from the unseen foes that wish to snatch them away.

“Things that were unseen in the temporal Kingdom are seen up here, and those that were seen in the temporal Kingdom are no longer seen here in Kingdom Eternal.”

They turned to enter the doors of the massive feasting room, and the Master added to Lady Lorella,

“I’ll have the treasurer place these jewels safely in your Kingdom Vault. They will always be there in an unending supply, whenever you need or want to access them. They will never run out. You are richer, in true riches, than you ever thought possible. Come, enter, and let us enjoy!”

And so they did! The feast with the Master was the most enjoyable event they had ever had.

And the best part was that they were not alone either. For over on this and that table they saw the faces of others they had assisted in their journey to Kingdom Eternal.

A lot of fun was to be had.

However, what Young Pilgrim couldn’t get off his mind was just what the Master was going to entrust him with next. The reign of the Master in the Kingdom Eternal was going to be the best part. He could hardly wait to get clearing out all pockets of resistance in the temporal kingdom, and set things up the way the Master wanted things to be.

Chapter 21—Feasting and Future Joy

The feasting event ended with a grand ball of the most fabulous dancing they'd ever seen.

A cheer and toast was heard at the finale, "To Kingdom Eternal—forever!"

The air was filled with excitement at whatever was to come next.

Young Pilgrim walked out to the meadow to see his faithful steed, and stroked his mane.

"Where will we be sent to next, I wonder?"

At that his steed went back on his hind legs with a loud neighing, then he ran wildly around before returning to Young Pilgrim.

"I think he's ready to go!" he said, noticing the Master standing and smiling beside him.

"And are you?"

Young Pilgrim laughed.

Arm in arm they walked off together.
"Maybe in a bit, after you've had time to look around, relax and enjoy all that I prepared for you," the Master said.

“Yes, that sounds great.”

Just then Lady Lorella came trotting up on her horse over to Young Pilgrim and the Master.

“Wanna come for a ride? Let’s go exploring!” she invited.

Without waiting to be asked twice, he quickly mounted, and off they sped, waving to the Master.

“I’ll see you at the briefing!” the Master called out.

“Hmm?” they both looked at each other.

“I guess after we’ve had our bit of fun, there’s a bit more riding to be done, and missions to be sent on—for Kingdom Eternal, glorious Kingdom Eternal!” Lady Lorella said.

“I’m kind of hoping we’ll be on the same team...” Young Pilgrim expressed with a wink.

“Maybe we will be... but you’ll have to catch me first!” she said, and took off with a leap.

“I’ll catch you alright...” Young Pilgrim said with a laugh. And away the fun continued.

It was some weeks later when the briefing occurred. The team sitting with the Master was many of the people they knew, but a few they weren't well acquainted with.

“Everyone ready to go exploring?” the Master started off.

That got everyone's attention in a hurry. The plans were declared, teams were made, and a timing for the first exploration trip was set.

They were to search all over the temporal zone to find those who were most loyal to the Master. No longer was it a kingdom, but simply the land area to be reclaimed by its rightful owners. They were told exactly what signs to look for, and how to detect them. These ones were to be rounded up and placed in a care facility, to be given special treatment and healing potions. For all who were still in the temporal zone were in need of great care and healing.

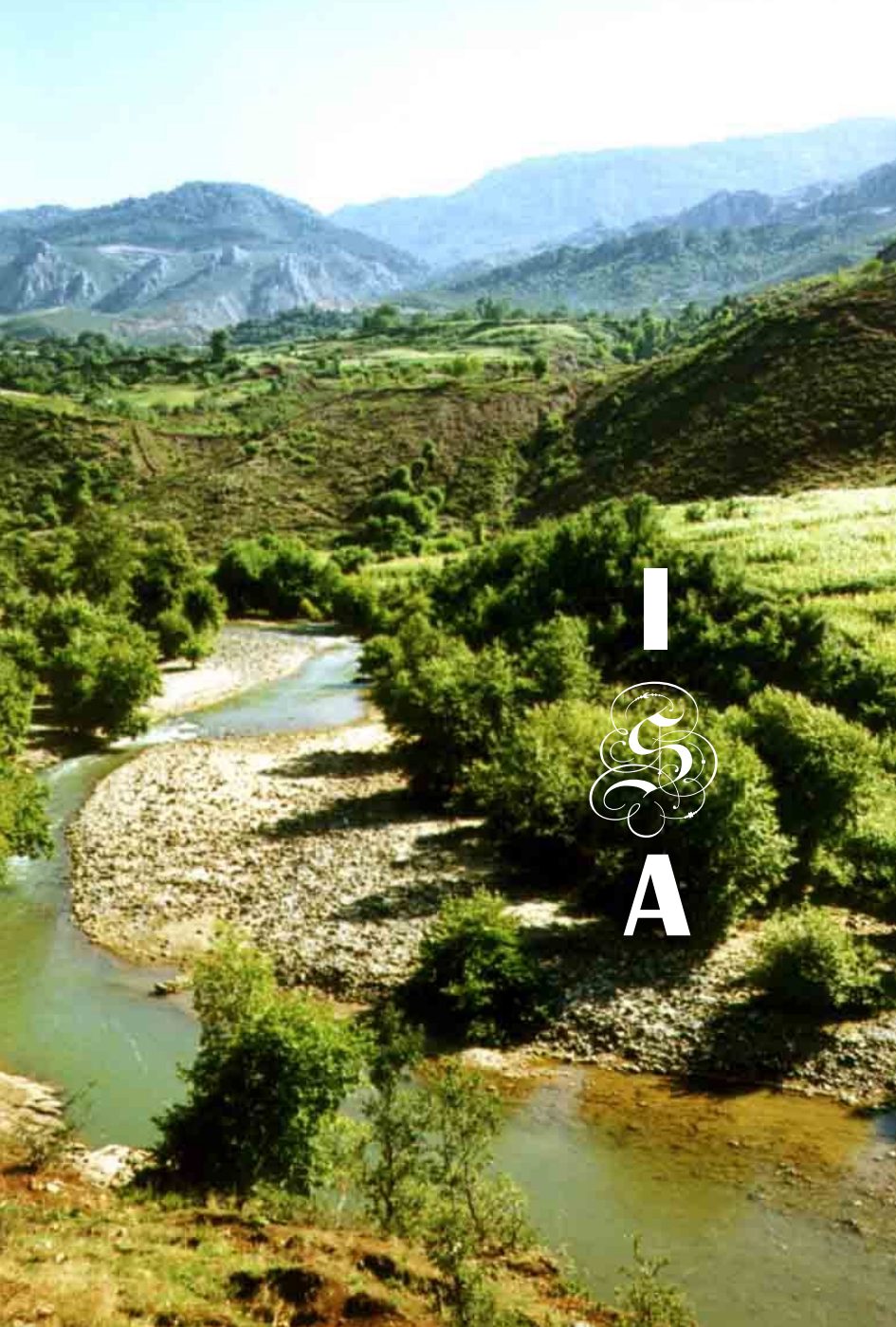
Lady Lorella looked over at Young Pilgrim and winked. They happened to be teamed up to travel through a part of the realm that they knew rather well. This time there would be no more thorns to trudge through, no more tiredness to endure, not even hunger.

As they left the meeting, Young Pilgrim was feeling as high as the sky and rearing to go.

“With this kind of strength that I feel, I could take over all the land!”

“Maybe that’s what we are to do! –Claim it all for the Master!” Lady Lorella said.

“Let’s go!” Young Pilgrim said, as they both mounted their waiting steeds and galloped away.



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