

Atlina Udrea

A Tale

Vol.3



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Volume 3

Note: I want to thank my family for supporting me with special thanks to my mother who is always there for me no matter what.

And I also want to thank my friends from Celtic Heroes for being my inspiration. This book would not have been written if it wasn't for these great people whom I was lucky to meet. However it is a fiction and it should be taken just like that, a figment of my imagination.

Greetings to Concordia!

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Chapter 1: The wall

Two years passed after Dova's failed attempt to conquer Donn. Things were finally calm in the realm. But the battle had been a fierce one so Scar, the mighty and fair king of Donn, wanted to make sure his kingdom would be protected against any known or unknown enemies. Better be prepared for the worst while of course hoping for the best. So Scar hired the best inventor of the time, best of the realm, Scholar the Sage, to invent something to aid in the defense of his kingdom, of his people.

Scar was prepared to use all the wealth he had in the royal treasury to be able to pay for Scholar's invention. He felt it was like an investment. The money had come from taxes, from the people of Donn, his subjects, so he felt it was a good way to use it. This way the money went back to the people in the form of Scholar's invention which was meant to protect them all. His invention was a huge and thick wall which was to be built around the capital, Lir, thus protecting it as well as Scar's castle. The Wall had to be built of cement and thick iron bars through it and would have to be as thick as a millennia old tree trunk.

Scholar ordered the workers to dig deep ditches around Lir for the foundation of The Wall. The Wall would be finished in a couple of years as he reckoned. He meant it to be the highest wall ever built and the beauty of it was the fact that at times of peace The Wall would be underground. When the city would be under attack, The Wall would be raised in a matter of minutes with the help of some intricate levers beneath it. But as this cost

a lot of money, as well as the workers and of course Scholar himself who had to be paid, Scar asked for Noah's advice, his royal treasurer.

- I hope this works, Noah. The treasury is almost empty. And Scholar says The Wall is only half finished. What do you propose Noah?

- As much as you won't like it, if you want your wall to be finished, you will have to raise taxes. It is the only way. Otherwise it will all be in vain. What would be its use if it is only half built? If we don't raise taxes to finish what we started then you might as well have thrown all the money in the fire.

- Although this makes my heart bleed for my people, I am afraid you are right and it must be done. We need to finish the Wall, it is for our safety as well as theirs. They will have to understand...

- And what if they refuse? Asked Noah wondering what his king would do in that case. Or what he would have him do in that case...

After a long moment of contemplation, when Noah was prepared to ask if he could be excused as he didn't think he would get an answer, Scar finally opened his mouth and uttered in a low voice as if afraid of his own words:

- If they refuse, then they will be forced to pay! We have to finish the Wall!

- Understood, my lord, said Noah in such a low tone that it was more of a whisper than an actual answer. Your will is my command! Saying that, he turned around and left the throne room.

Miihah was upset at what she witnessed but she couldn't have contradicted her husband in front of anyone. So after Noah left the room, she approached Scar and looked straight in his eyes. They were the saddest pair of eyes she had ever seen. So she knew it must have been really necessary for him to give the order and raise the taxes. Her heart melted and she knew there was no point in adding anything to the discussion, which would have only tortured her husband even more. So instead she changed the subject.

- I have an idea my dear husband...How about a visit to Loyalis? I miss Bratty and I am sure you miss Mean... and it would take your mind off

your kingly duties at least for a while...I am sure Donn can survive a fortnight without us. What do you say?

- Tempting...I guess Noah can collect the taxes while we are away and Harry and Olek can protect the kingdom. Why not?
- Oh, you really mean it? Asked Miih surprised that she had convinced Scar so easily. On second thought, she could convince him do anything for her, he adored her. But she didn't like to take advantage of his weakness for her.
- Yes my lovely, you are right as always. A little time away from it all would do us good. Let's pay them a visit and also see how they handled their new status, that of King and Queen.
- I am so happy, my king, said Miih in a burst of joy. Will we go alone? Just the two of us?
- The roads to Loyalis might be dangerous, answered Scar contemplating the situation. Maybe we could take someone to protect us but just a small party as I don't want us to travel as King and Queen, I just want to get away from it all for a few days, just like you said, Miih.
- Oh, like an adventure. Great! Who do you have in mind?
- I was thinking...Would you like to fly, Miih?
- Fly? Hmm, I can heal any affliction but I can't fly...
- Ha-ha, of course you can't! You are a druid, not a fairy! But Aggy, Mongo's dragon can...He can accompany us to Loyalis. With Mongo and Aggy, we can rest assured that we will get to our friends fast and safe. So would you like that?
- Very much, if Mongo doesn't mind.
- He won't mind, we are the King and Queen and this is one of the advantages... I will have a talk with him after dinner.

Chapter 2: Hizzy

- So you want to fly to Loyalis? Asked Mongo.
- Yes, will be like a little vacation. And truth be told, since you have become the master of the dragon I have wanted and have been longing for a chance to ride it. Saying that, Scar blushed although he was usually very confident and he wasn't the type to blush but now he did, he blushed and then thinking at the fact that he felt his cheeks hot, he blushed even worse.
- Then it is settled. Tomorrow morning we ride to Loyalis, said Mongo. Then he left thinking he would miss Alyss till he would be back. But the king had spoken and he couldn't have refused the king. On his way to bed all he could think of was the elf, Alyss, and how he would miss her. He would at least tell her that he was to leave for Loyalis before he left.

After half an hour of twisting in bed without getting any sleep, Mongo decided to see Alyss right away and tell her of his departure. He had to see her before he left. So he put on his trousers and a blouse and went to see her. When he got in front of her door he froze, he had second thoughts thinking that maybe he should just get back to bed. But then he finally knocked softly on her door. He heard footsteps coming towards the door and he waited. Then the handle turned and there she was in front of him, sleepy but still looking

great.

- What happened Mongo? What are you doing here this late at night? Alyss asked yawning.
- Nothing... sorry to wake you. Scar and Miihah want me to accompany them to Loyalis in the morning, they will visit Bratty and Mean. We are going to ride Aggy and we might be staying there a week or two. So I won't see you for a week or two and wanted to see you before leaving.
- Why?
- Isn't it obvious? I will miss you, I...I like you.

Alyss looked at him and then leaned forward and kissed him. He kissed her back and then she kissed his forehead and told him he had better get some sleep before the journey to Loyalis.

- I guess I'll see you when you get back Mongo.
- Yeah, sure, take care little one.

And saying that he left. He went back to his place and fell asleep almost as soon as his head hit the pillow. He dreamt of the journey and of how the land of Loyalis would look like as he had heard it was a beautiful land with amazing scenery.

The first warm rays of light woke Mongo from his sleep. He packed some stuff for the journey and went to meet with the King and Queen. When he arrived at Aggy's pen they were already in front of it looking eager to leave. He bowed and opened the pen. Aggy was still asleep and snoring so loudly that Mongo wondered if he could wake him. He approached the ancient creature and patted it on its nose. Then Mongo whispered in Aggy's ear and Aggy slowly woke up.

- What is it my friend? Asked Aggy telepathically.
- I need your wings. The King and Queen want to visit their friends, the rulers of Loyalis, and they want to fly so they asked me to ride you

and get them there. So can you take us there my friend?

- Of course I can. And I am also glad, will be good to spread my wings. I got lazy after the battle against your enemies. So this will do me good.

Then Aggy lifted his body from the ground and stretched its wings. He got out of the pen and waited for Scar, Miihah and Mongo to climb on his back.

- Maybe riding to Loyalis the old fashioned way using horses and not a dragon could have also been taken into consideration.... Said Miihah a little scared when she saw herself up on the ancient beast.
- Don't be afraid my darling, Scar reassured her. I am sure Mongo wouldn't have suggested riding Aggy if he felt it was dangerous in any way. Horses would have been fun too but would have taken longer to get there. And be honest, isn't this way better?
- You are right my love. I am sure Mongo wouldn't jeopardize our lives, not on purpose anyway. So let us enjoy the view!
- Everybody ready? Asked Mongo as Aggy was eager to lift from the ground.
- Yes, do your thing mister dragon tamer! Laughed Miihah and no sooner had she said the words when she felt a little dizzy as Aggy lifted and started flapping his large and powerful wings. She felt the wind through her long hair and looked down to see the castle getting smaller and smaller until all that remained was a small dot behind them.
- Oh my God Mongo! Said Scar with obvious delight in his voice. We should have ridden Aggy earlier. This is awesome! I can't believe it! When we get back from Loyalis I will want to ride Aggy at least every weekend as the rest of the days I have to deal with the kingdom's problems and affairs but not on Sundays! From now on Mongo, you will prepare Aggy every Sunday as I will want a ride!

- I am glad you like it my lord, answered Mongo with a smile on his face. Glad you like it!
- Sorry to disturb your conversation and interrupt your new found joy Scar, said Miihah with emotion in her voice, but take a look down in that clearing please! I think someone is in trouble! The last words came out of her mouth almost muffled.
- I think Miihah is right, said Mongo looking down at the spot where Miihah had seen someone in trouble. Get us down Aggy! He said in a commanding voice to Scar's surprise who at hearing him thought he would have been a good general for his armies too.

Aggy descended slowly from the height where he was and as they got closer they realized what was in front of their eyes: a lonely woman was being attacked by a pack of savage wolves which seemed very hungry and ready to tear her apart. If they had been late a single minute she would have been dead but they got there just in time to save her life. Aggy burnt the wolves and Miihah went to check on the poor girl.

- Are you OK? Are you hurt?
- One wolf bit my arm, it is bleeding badly, the poor girl could barely answer.
- Let me see. What is your name? Asked Miihah while she already took the girl's arm to inspect it.
- I am Hizzy my lady. Thank you all for saving my life. If it wasn't for you, I would have been wolf food. And if you leave me here, I will still be food for some other vile creatures. Please take me with you... and she started crying and sobbing.
- Your arm looks pretty bad. Stand still, I will stop the bleeding and heal you. And Miihah focused her inner strength and prayed in an ancient language and healed Hizzy's arm. The bleeding stopped and there was only a small scar left now as a reminder of the wolf's bite.

- You healed my arm, thank you again. I don't know how you did it but thank you. And please let me come with you or I will surely die out here.
- But where did you come from? Asked Scar looking at her and wondering if it wasn't a trap.
- I escaped from a farm nearby, I was a slave since I was a child. My family sold me when I was 7 years old to a rich family to do their chores. In return I got just enough to eat to keep me alive and I slept in the stables in a hay stack. I don't want to go back there, please. You can't have saved my life just to send me back...
- Hush, said Miihah moved by her life story. From now on you will be my personal maid. I am the queen of Donn and this here is my husband, and she pointed towards Scar. You will work for me and you will be paid weekly and will have your own room and everything you need. Do you want this?
- Thank you my queen, God bless you and everyone you love. Then she bowed her head and wiped her tears.
- And from now on everywhere I go, you go. So hop on.
- You mean on that thing? Asked Hizzy frightened at the sight of a fire breathing dragon especially as dragons were supposed to have been extinct.
- I assure you that Aggy is harmless, Mongo intervened in the discussion as Aggy was his dragon. Here, see? And asking that he went and patted Aggy on his nose. Purring like a cat! And Mongo laughed to make Hizzy feel better and less afraid of what was nevertheless an adult sized fire breathing dragon.
- What if he only acts like that with you because he knows you? Asked Hizzy still unconvinced.
- Hmm, he didn't always know me. He will know you too if you let him. His name is Aggy by the way.

- He has a name? Asked Hizzy puzzled.
- Yes, he does. Now come on up before more wolves come, ok?
- OK, she said and she let herself in their hands, trusting them completely as they had just saved her from the pack of wolves. They hadn't saved her only to feed her to the dragon, right? Then she hopped on top of Aggy and the great dragon lifted in the air again to continue the journey towards Loyalis.

The rest of the journey was smooth and uneventful and soon they arrived at the border of the great kingdom of Loyalis. First thing that captured their eyes was the field of blossomed flowers and the strong scent that got even at the height they were flying at, making them dizzy with delight. It was a mixture of colors and scents. With the evil king Dova gone and under the rule of Bratty and Mean, the kingdom was thriving and the people were happy and content once more.

The towers of the castle were glistening in the sun like diamonds on the night sky. They all descended in front of the castle gates and after answering the two watchmen guarding the entrance they were allowed to enter. Scar and Miih were admiring the structure of the castle while Mongo went ahead to announce their arrival, hoping at the same time to pleasantly surprise both Mean and Bratty. He was escorted by a guardian. The castle halls were long and high and beautifully decorated clearly showing a woman's touch, Bratty's touch, as Mean had always been a messy guy. There were vases with fresh flowers everywhere and the furniture was also nicely carved. It was so welcoming that it felt like a home. It was Mean and Bratty's home, they had managed to turn the gloomy castle to a cozy home.

Two enormous wooden doors were at the end of the halls marking the entrance to the throne room where Mean and Bratty would be sitting on their thrones instead of a laboratory with dusty spell books. It was pretty odd for Mongo to see them like that instead of just the mages he was used to but as far as he had heard, rumors about the kind and honest way they ruled the land had reached his

ears so it meant that they could really be more than just mages. He knocked on the door and entered. Bratty was wearing a beautiful sleeveless long black and blue dress and Mean had also given up his usual mage clothes and was clad more suitable for the rank of King and of course he was wearing a golden crown.

When the door opened both Bratty and Mean were agape at seeing Mongo enter their throne room. Bratty was the first to speak:

- Hi Mongo, old friend, what brings you here? And welcome!
- Hello Lady Bratty! And Mongo bowed courteously. Hello Mean! I heard only good things of you two since you have become rulers of this old piece of land. It looks like Scar has made the right decision in naming you two rulers over Loyalis.
- Enough with the flattery, Mongo! Mean cut his enthusiasm short, not because he was bad at heart but it was the way he was and he couldn't help himself. He still had some work to do when it came to diplomacy. What brings you here old friend? Good tidings I hope.
- It is not what brings me here but rather who I bring here...Scar and Miihah have come to pay you two a visit and have a little vacation from being rulers of Donn. And also a nice young lady whom we rescued on the way from a pack of hungry wolves. She will be Miihah's maid from now on.
- Well, where are they? Asked Mean always impatient. But hardly had he asked that when the front wooden door opened once again, this time to make room for the King and Queen of Donn, Scar and Miihah. Hizzy was close behind Miihah, shyly entering the throne room. It was the first time in her life that she entered a throne room and she was bewildered at all the luxury that was obviously everywhere.
- Hello Bratty darling! Said Miihah and she almost ran to hug her old friend. Hizzy not knowing what she was supposed to do as Miihah's maid, stood watching everything unfold and decided it was better to wait until she was needed.

- Hi, Bratty answered with a quivering voice. She was struggling not to cry of joy as she didn't want Mean to think that she was weak. But the moment they hugged, she let her tears loose. She decided that appearances weren't all that important.
- Oh, let's go to my private chamber and talk, said Bratty. So much has happened since Mean and I left. If you trust Hizzy, she can come too.
- Of course, she is my new maid. And Miihah, a good judge of character, smiled and took Hizzy by her arm as she was still standing coyly in a corner.

They went to Bratty's chamber leaving the men to discuss their business undisturbed. Miihah and Hizzy followed Bratty along the corridors till they got to a large and beautifully carved wooden door which Bratty opened with a key she had hanging around her neck on a silver necklace. It was a small key encrusted with a small ruby as red as blood. The door opened and they entered. The room was quite the opposite of what Miihah had expected: it was simply furnished with a bed, a rectangular table in front of a large window and four simple chairs around the table. At a closer look one could notice that one of the chairs was more used up than the rest as it was probably the one Bratty always used. It also showed that she hadn't had visitors as the rest of the chairs almost seemed stuck in their place.

Bratty asked Miihah and Hizzy to have a seat at the table and she offered them to help themselves with some cookies which were on the table and which seemed freshly made.

Bratty was so the first to talk:

- I missed you so much Miihah! I don't really have friends here. Don't get me wrong, they are all loyal to us, the people love us but I don't have a close friend to talk to like we used to talk.
- Oh, I missed you too Bratty! But Loyalis need you and Mean. The people here have been oppressed for too long under the rule of Dova and now that you two rule it is like a breath of fresh air for them.

- Yes, I know, I am not complaining...you are right, let's change the subject. So what really happened? What brought you here?
- Scar had to raise taxes on the people to be able to pay for a wall to defend the same people who complained about the taxes. But Noah said it had to be done as the treasury was almost empty after the war against Dova. That war has cost a lot of money. So Scar needed a break and thought of you and Mean.
- We are honored, answered Bratty visibly touched by Miihah's words. But our treasury is not full either. We can't help your kingdom with money I am afraid as Dova took everything from these people to pay his mercenaries and when we came here we found only poverty and desolation. So first thing we did as King and Queen was to give back to the people what was stolen from them, to give them back their lives and a reason to live.
- Oh, we haven't come here to ask for money, just to house us for a week or two, that is all, said Miihah smiling innocently at Bratty.
- In that case you are more than welcome! And Bratty hugged Miihah again in a huge bear hug.

Meanwhile Scar was talking with Mean explaining the situation in Donn and the reason they had come here, mainly telling him the same thing Miihah was telling Bratty in another room.

- So do you suspect another attack from someone? Asked Mean curious to know if his friends were in any danger and already making plans in his head to help them however he could.
- Not that I know of but I want us to be prepared. Scholar is a great inventor and I trust his invention. The Wall will only be used in case of an attack. In times of peace it will be underground.
- Sounds interesting, said Mean. Talking of interesting stuff, there is a prisoner in the castle dungeons who is probably soft in the head. He

keeps talking nonsense. He keeps repeating that he will call an army of undead to liberate him and that he will destroy us all. He claims to be a shaman of sorts but he looks ragged and as I said, he is probably as daft as a bush. But there is something about him, I can't quite put my finger on it.

- Maybe we should see him, said Scar in a good mood. If you don't have anything better to do, we can go now. You made me curious. How come he ended up in your dungeons?
- Found him one day in small cave mumbling something and he was surrounded by human skulls. Lots of skulls. So I thought he should stay in our dungeons rather than out there. He may be crazy, but he is dangerous.
- Okay...let's see this guy, said Scar and he took a flaming torch from one of the walls as they were descending the steps towards the dark and dank corridors which lead to the dungeons.
- Let me help you, said Mean, and he summoned a ball of light to light their way.
- Oh, yes, I forgot you could do that. Thanks Mean, and Scar put the torch back.
- It's nothing, just a little magic.

The more they descended, the worse the corridors reeked of human filth, mold and animal droppings. Scar began to cough obviously disliking the odors.

- What? Asked Mean peevishly. We are in the dungeons, not in a motel. What did you expect?
- You are right but the stench is unbearable. If your prisoners don't die of anything else, they will die of diseases from all this mess.
- Ok, I will have their cells cleaned tomorrow. It was only the second time Mean came here and the first time he came to see the prisoner everything was pretty neat. But then again it was known he was

going to see the prisoner and surely his guards had cleaned everything before. This time he came with Scar without letting anyone else know he was coming so nobody deemed to clean.

As they were getting closer to the shaman's cell they could hear him mumbling indistinct words, words that seemed like an incantation. Scar saw him in the middle of his dim lit cell in a yoga position mumbling to himself.

- Hey, Scar said in a commanding voice, who are you?

The man stopped his babbling and looked attentively at both men, Scar and Mean. Then after a long pause, he answered in a high pitched voice:

- My name is not that important. What I can and will do is of importance. Two nights from now it will be full moon, then you will know my name. And he started laughing like a mad man. As much as Scar and Mean tried to get any other information from him from that point forward, it only proved useless as the man totally ignored both kings and went back to his mumbling.
- So what do you think? Asked Mean a bit irritated. Is he for real or just a nut case?
- Are you afraid of a shaman? I thought you were a powerful mage yourself...
- I am a powerful mage! And Mean was now even more annoyed by what Scar's words implied. Just saying that maybe we should check on him in two days again, just in case. I am glad you are here, but if this weirdo proves dangerous, well what I am trying to say is that this is not your problem. I will deal with it, you just relax, that is why you came here in the first place, not to find other problems.
- If he proves to be a problem for you and Bratty, then we will deal with it. What? Do you think I would miss out the fun? No worries Mean, my sword is as sharp as ever, said Scar who was almost glad to have found an adventure here. This would surely take his mind off

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