

SONS OF THE KING

There once lived three kings. Three half brothers, through their father the king. Each brother ruled over his own land, had his own people and each had his own title that followed his name, given to him as a reminder of their great deeds or acts of bravery.

First, there was King Regulas the Shadow. King Regulas was half-human and half-elf. He earned his title as the Shadow by defeating over one hundred enemies in the dark forest of his kingdom during a night assault. He hid in trees and attacked from the cover of the shadows without ever being detected.

Then, there was King Hammond the Mountain. King Hammond was half-human and half-dwarf. King Hammond had earned his title as the Mountain by building his great kingdom in and around the mountain of Midas, which was known for its great size.

Lastly, there lived King Draza the Flame. King Draza was fully human and had no incredible abilities like his brothers. King Draza the Flame was given his name after battling and defeating a dragon, which he now keeps in his kingdom as a guardian.

One day, the brothers each received a letter from their father requesting their presence in his castle. He didn't say why only that it was urgent and that each of them is there. The brothers were curious as to what their father's request was for. Perhaps he sensed his time in this world was coming to an end and was

going to offer his kingdom to one of his sons. Whatever the reason, the sons of the king obeyed their father's request and traveled to his kingdom.

The first brother to begin his travel was King Regulas the Shadow. Along his path he came upon a traveling merchant. The merchant was cloaked in black and said nothing as he pushed his cart past the convoy in the opposite direction. The king had almost paid no mind to the merchant until a strange feeling came over him. He began to wonder if that simple merchant might carry interesting trinkets or clothing in which to give to his father as a gift. The king had the merchant flagged down and asked what he offers. The merchant did not say much to the king. "For you Sire? I offer you my most valuable and unique items." The man reached into his cloak and revealed a large and worn scroll. It did not look very interesting except the pin handles that the scroll was wrapped around seemed to made of gold which made the scroll almost seem to glow. The merchant claimed that the scroll was enchanted with a "time spell," but he gave no other description. The king was not sure what to think. He had heard of magic spells but had never seen one. His curiosity bested him and he agreed to purchase it from the cloaked man and he continued on his journey.

The second brother, King Hammond the Mountain, was also on his way to his father's kingdom when he came across some giants who had made camp outside a cave. When the king and his dwarves came closer, the giants waved to the king, signaling for him to come over to them. When the dwarf king approached the giants, they told him that they had recently stumbled upon a

great gem from inside the cave. The giants explained that they had no use for the gem as they were not merchants, nor did they have any need for money. They offered the gem to the king. Upon seeing the gem for himself, the king could not accept the gem and instead asked the giants to think of a request. After the giants thought for a while, they decided that all they asked was that the gem is given as a gift to someone who would truly appreciate its beauty. The king accepted and continued to see his father.

Lastly, King Draza the Flame was the first to arrive in his father's kingdom. He approached the great walls and passed through the enormous iron gates into the kingdom. It had been years since he had been back here, not since he had acquired his own kingdom and left his father's castle. As he walked through the city and gazed upon his childhood home, he became overwhelmed with emotion. Until he was snapped back by the loud clanging of a familiar sound. "Draza!" a friendly voice bellowed from ahead of the king. The Flame did not recognize the voice but as he drew nearer to the source he could not believe it. Before him stood a man at least six and a half feet tall, with long black hair and a beard braided with gold links. He was standing inside the cover of a forge which would explain his long black clothing and why he was drenched in dirt and sweat. Draza went over and was finally able to determine that the man that stood before him now was his childhood friend Aron. The two embraced and began to catch each other up with the past fifteen years since they had seen each other. Finally, Draza explained that he was back home at the request of his father. "Your father?" Aron

asked. "No one has seen him since winter and its almost summer now." This disturbed the king and quickly replied that he will be leaving and heading to his father's castle immediately. "Before you go old friend, I have something for you. At the request of your father I have forged a weapon like no other. A sword fit for a king to do battle against any foe." From a different room the blacksmith returned with a sheathed sword. Without unsheathing it the king took the sword, thanked his old friend and rejoined his traveling court. He continued through the city toward his father's castle. It lay at the center of the whole kingdom and stood taller than all other buildings around it. It had only four massive walls that each stretched over half a mile. The top of the castle rose as one segment before splitting into two separate towers on the East and West side. Each tower was only big enough to hold a single room. The castle was made of large grey stones but in the shadow of the sun the castle gave off an abandoned black color. However, the king did not gaze at the structure and instead immediately approached the doors of his father's castle. He walked through the entrance doors, through the great halls. He walked past all the rooms that he had grown up in. His worry for his father made him blind to the fact that he had not yet seen anyone within the castle. Until finally he stood at the doors to his father's throne room. Nervously, the king reached out his hand to push open the doors but stopped when he heard a terrible and inhuman scream from within the room. The son stood paralyzed as many fears and questions filled his head before he finally gathered the courage to throw open the door and rush inside.