



**WINTER  
OF  
WOLFGUARD**

**I JENNINGS**

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Three short stories based on the events in and around the Kingdom of Wolfguard.

**THE FIRST DAYS OF  
WINTER**

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*“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold.”*

*- Aristotle*

# PROLOGUE

The two kingdoms of Wolfguard and East Landly had been at peace for as long as anyone could remember. The lands used to be split between five city states but through marriage over the generations the two larger kingdoms had been formed.

The current King and Queen of Wolfguard had been blessed with a daughter called Winter. She was an exceptionally beautiful child with blonde hair and blue eyes, who loved animals, especially horses. King Richard and Queen Elizabeth loved her very much and the royal family were well liked within their kingdom.

The kingdom of East Landly was ruled by King Henry and Queen Margarita. They had a son called Eric. Prince Eric, with his brown eyes and hair was also well liked. Prince Eric was a teenager who loved nothing more than to go hunting deer and practicing his skill at arms.



# CHAPTER 1

## THE RED DRAGONS



*“A new baby is like the beginnings of all things - wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities” -Eda LeShan*

“Tell me another story about the dragons mummy” Princess Winter asked as her mother Queen Elizabeth tucked her into bed for the night. “Alright what about Lord Isaac and the red dragons?” She said softly to her daughter. “Yes please” Winter replied.

“Once upon a time a long time ago there was a great Knight called Lord Isaac, who ruled his manor fairly and was one of the kings most loyal and brave knights. The kingdom had been having trouble in the west where the settlements were close to a family of dragons who lived at the top of a giant mountain, and fed on the villagers live stock.” The Queen paused as Winter yawned before continuing. “The king had lost the local Lords to the dragons when they went to try and vanquish them. Finally he decided to send a squadron of his best men and his greatest knight Lord Isaac to lead them.”

“The journey was a pleasant enough one through the kingdom until they came to the dragons mountain. Here the land had been burnt by the dragons so often nothing grew. The people in the vicinity informed Lord Isaac that the raids



for their livestock were becoming more and more frequent. The men under Lord Isaac's command stopped a few miles short of Dragon Mountain and set up camp. When the camp was completed they posted their sentries and turned in for the night. Or at least that's what it would have seemed like to anyone or anything watching. After the camp was set the men of Lord Isaac's command actually slipped away a few at a time and hid, watching the camp and waiting.

They didn't have to wait long. There was a deafening screech and then out of the clouds swooped a red dragon. It flew over the first couple of tents before a jet of fire sprayed from its mouth setting the camp alight.

Lord Isaac gave the command and his men released a volley of arrows at the creature, most of which bounced off its scales that were like armour. Lord Isaac had hidden half his men in a cave just outside the ambush site, which was partly why he chose to make camp there initially, and the men





charged from their hiding place as they saw the first volley hit its mark. But as they rode toward the beast a second dropped out of the skies. The men fought hard and eventually they managed to bring down one of the dragons. But the cost was high and only a handful of the men were left. Lord Isaac rode out in front of the other men and jumped from his horse. The second dragon spotted him do this and landed in front of him, looking to eat him alive rather than burn him. As the dragon moved its neck back getting ready to strike Lord Isaac stood strong. The dragon's head shot forward and..... Winter? Winter?" The Queen



whispered Winters name softly to check she was asleep. The young princess had drifted off to sleep listening to the story.

The Queen rose from sitting on the bed, kissed her sleeping daughter on the head and left the princess to her dreams.



“She is growing up quickly” General Finn said to the queen as she left the princesses room. “Yes Isaac, she is” the queen replied as she smiled. “Did you tell her about the red dragons again your majesty?” General Finn asked. “Yes she loves the story about your victory over them.” the Queen responded with another broad smile. “I hope it becomes one of the child you are bearings favourites too when they are older” said General Finn as he smiled back at the Queen. The Kings hunting party will not return until tomorrow afternoon” the Queen added as she brushed the generals hand. The Queen went to her bedchamber and dismissed her ladies in waiting once she was changed. General Finn entered the bed chamber shortly after.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE BIRTH THAT CAUSES DEATH



The following morning General Finn took a squadron of Wolfguardian riders out of the west gate along the West Way road until they came to the junction with old road. They took the road northward toward the enchanted forest. By late afternoon they had reached the settlement of Stormgate. “We will stay here for the night. Tell the men. I am going to visit with my family.” General Finn told his captain. With that he left to find them.



“Your father and his party have been seen returning Winter. Finish what you are doing and join me in the Great Hall.” Queen Elizabeth told her daughter.



“Welcome home, was it a good hunt?” the Queen asked her husband. “It was excellent.” the king replied. “But we spotted something I have never seen before. It was only a glimpse but I swear it was there and some of the men also spotted it.” he paused “A unicorn.” The queen laughed. “The unicorns were killed off by the dragons, who we in turn put to the sword at great cost to the kingdoms. You will have seen a wild horse that’s all.” The king smiled and nodded. “Maybe so” he said. “Now let’s eat.”



The following morning General Finn and his squadron rode out of Stormgate. They cut north eastward through the lands between the northern edge of the enchanted forest and the foothills of the Northern Mountains. “The reports said they were somewhere in this area Sir” said the captain to General Finn. The General unscrolled the map and looked at it. “Yes” he replied. “We shall follow this stream northward to the mountains. Send out your scouts captain and tell everyone to be alert.”

The riders continued north for just over an hour and then once more turned, as the stream did, towards its source in the mountain range. They climbed upward as the foothills became mountains. “We are as far north as we have been since we were sent dragon hunting my Lord.” The captain grinned as he finished the sentence. “We continue on until our game is found.” The general replied. The men spurred on their mounts.

The following day General Finn and his men found a small fresh water spring and used it to replenish their canteens. As they were about to remount they heard a howl further into the mountains. “The hunt is on!” General Finn shouted as he swung his leg over the saddle of his steed. The hooves of the squadrons horses thundered on the mountain side as they galloped to find their quarry.

Finally one of the scouts returned. “Sir, the pack of snow wolves are spotted. They have made a kill so should be there when we arrive still eating the carcass.” he reported. The General signalled for a unit of the squadron to circle to the flank of where the scout reported the sighting under the command of his captain. Moments later the men with General Finn halted and dismounted. They undid their bows from their saddles and snuck forward. Drawing the bows back fully they held and waited for the command. General Finn raised his arm and then dropped it, at which point the men released their bolts. The snow wolves hit yelped in pain as the couple that escaped unscathed ran in the opposite direction. As the fleeing Snow Wolves got to the ridge they had been making for the captain and the unit with him rode forward. They dispatched the beasts quickly. “They won’t be hunting any more live stock.” One of the men stated. “Everything has to eat.” the captain replied to him and then turned his horse and spurred it to rejoin the General. “Back to Wolfcastle” the General ordered and the men rode back the way they had come, homeward bound .



“Our child is due soon” King Robert said to his wife as he softly stroked her hair. He placed his other hand on her swollen stomach. “It is.” the Queen replied. The king smiled “it kicked my hand again.” he said with a smile. “It will be a strong boy, who will reign our kingdom after me.” he finished.

When the king and queen entered the Great Hall, Winter was already there talking to some of the ladies in waiting. “Oh father, I’m so glad your back. Can I go to the Great Lake, please?” Winter asked. The king and queen looked at each other. King Robert smiled. “Yes daughter, but you will take an escort.” With this Winter made her way from the Great Hall and got changed into something more fitting for a walk through the fields that surrounded Wolfcastles curtain wall. Once changed Winter left the Palace through the eastern gate, where her escort of men from the Palace Guard had been waiting for her. They walked through the town of Wolfcastle and out of the eastern gate on the road to East Landly. A couple of miles down the road the party turned left and followed the river towards the Great Lake.

Winter loved walking in this area. The Great Lake was so beautiful, the way that the water shimmered as the light hit it.



The men returning through the Northern Mountains were in good spirits. Their task had been completed and soon they would be back drinking wine and feasting. “May they sing Sir?” the captain asked. “Why not.” General Finn replied. The

men started to sing songs of victories past. The Captain and General both joined in. A few miles later the squadron suddenly became silent. "It can't be." Whispered General Finn to himself. "Look to your flanks" the General shouted his order. Moments passed and nothing. Finally the captain trotted up to General Finn. "Maybe we were mistaken sir." he whispered. "Maybe" replied the General. "We will be on our guard a little longer though Captain just incase." Just over half an hour passed as the men looked out into the mountains before them. All was still.

"To the rear!" one of the men shouted as a massive beast burst up from the rocks. With skin in a camouflage pattern of blues from the white blue of ice to the colour of the sky and the waters of the sea. The beast ran forward and grabbed the mans horse by its neck as the rider swung his sword wildly at the beast. The Ice Monster was four times the size of a human and easily ripped the horses leg off. It then used the leg to beat the rider to death. His comrades were to late to save him. They fired a volley of arrows at the beast. Even though they all hit there mark and the creature gave out a scream it carried on towards them. As the men intercepted the first creature a second emerged from their side. "Look to your flank" the General shouted. The men engaged the second creature. It grabbed one of the men by the head and crushed it in its hand. Blood spurted from the beasts hand as the riders head popped under the pressure of its grip. Other men rammed their swords into the creature as the first Ice Monster was hit by yet another volley of arrows. It dropped to its knees and General Finn jumped on to its back and drew his sword across its neck cutting it wide open. A second later the creature dropped forward. Dead. As the General looked

around he saw that the men engaged in battle with the second monster had also managed to slay it. “Where were our scouts?” the General shouted to the Captain who just shrugged. “Send riders out, be on your guard” the General said. The riders continued their journey. This time at a slower, more cautious pace. The following day the Generals men arrived back at Wolfcastle.

“I need to report to the King immediately.” the General said to the Palace Guard on duty. “Is he to be found in the Great Hall?” he asked. “No Sir” the guard replied. “He is in the Royal Chambers.” General Finn made his way through the palace and to the Royal Chambers. At the door to the chambers he asked the guard to fetch King Richard. A few moments later the king appeared. “What is it General?” the king asked. The General told of the attack by the Ice Monsters on their return journey. “The Queen is to give birth any moment now. She has already started.” the King said to his General. “Get the senior officers together and wait for me in the Great Hall.” the King said “I will be with you as soon as my son is born and we will decide the best course of action from this news.” The king turned and went back into the Chambers. The Palace Guard pulled the door shut again and General Finn left.

When the King finally entered the Great Hall he looked angry. He stormed through the hall to his throne. “Is everything alright Sire?” Questioned General Chase. “A girl, another girl!” the king said. “Now about that attack give us all the details and spare nothing General Finn. We need to evaluate the threat.” A Colonel entered the Great Hall from a side door and whispered to General Chase as the report



continued on. The king noticed. "What news General?" he asked. "Sire, there is a rider here from East Landly. He is asking to have an ordinance with you." the General stated. "Have him shown in" the king commanded. The king turned to the men gathered. "No word of this until we have decided what to do." the King said. "East Landly may be at peace with us but we will decide our action before we inform them. There is no immediate threat from this new enemy from what I can tell." he looked at his Generals. "No Sire, if there are more it does seem they are only in the Northern Mountains." General Finn then answered.

The rider from East Landly entered the Great Hall and walked before the king and knelt.

"Sire, greetings from my Lord, His Royal Highness King Henry." the man stated.

"Stand" the king commanded. "What news from the east?" he asked. "Their majesties wish to inform you of a development outside our borders." the rider began. "A Dragon has been sighted. he finished. The King laughed. "Have you been listening to children's stories whilst drunk on your way here?" he asked. "There are no dragons they have been extinct for years." General Chase coughed and whispered to his king "the Snow Wolves your highness, and these new creatures. Can we be so sure?" The King thought. "My apologies." The King stated. "Tell King Henry Wolfguard will dispatch men to join his troops in the search for this creature incase the sightings are correct. Now leave us." The rider stood and left the Great Hall.

"General Finn, you will lead two squadrons to meet King Henry and the men of East Landly in this quest. General

Chase you will take the third squadron to our northern border. Ensure our kingdom is secure. Once this goose chase for a dragon is over we will ask East Landly to send their men with General Finn back to the Northern Mountains to ensure there are no more of these so called Ice Monsters.” The King turned and left to return to the Royal Chambers to be with his queen and two daughters.