

The Golden Trio

&

The Quest for Ladon

*By: Mathew D. Miles*

**Written from the perspective of:**

*Archmage Guildmaster*

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*Mariah the Champion of the Virtue of Honesty*

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*Part 2*

I awoke this morning to the sounds of several neighing horses and the mixing conversations of people outside of the house. I ran to the balcony to inspect the situation and found several armored horses strewed along the coast-line, tied to whatever could be found to tie them to. I could not make out the sun, but it was nearly over the house now.

I had over-slept, so I quickly hurried to the stairs, stopping myself to hastily return back to my reading stand to retrieve the two books I had been researching from, the night before. I adjusted my robes, placed both of the books in my right-hand, close to my chest, formulated my posture and made my way down the stairs.

“Good afternoon Archmage”, said Valkyries in a warm-tone. She was alone on the first floor and attending to the Dragon Soulforge as usual.

Is it afternoon already, I asked? “We didn’t want to wake you” replied Valkyries, “here Archmage, I have made for you some tea and its quite good”, as she handed me the drink. “They are waiting for you outside”, she said, as I took the cup from her hands, to take a sip.

They? Who are they? I responded, as I continued to drink the tea, which was as she said, quite good. “You’ll see Archmage”, as she looked to the front-door. So, I walked to the wooden door with iron facets, that Valkyries was ushering me to, still in a confused state, but this tea seemed to help situate myself, as I reached for the door-handle.

Thank you Valkyries I said, as I opened the door. “You are most-welcome Archmage, but they are waiting for us”, Valkyries quickly responded, as if she was speaking directly into my ears now, startling me some, by how close the words she spoke came. I looked back to see Valkyries standing immediately behind myself and she gave me a very polite-smile and then said, “Shall we?”

Stepping through the archway I found the glare of the sun and as my eyes adapted to the light, I made out a camp-site with a fire pit that had gone cold. several Paladins stood near me, while Kumara was in the back, as I made my-way towards them.

I could see Zara sitting down by her parents with another fellow inspecting her white-lute. The other fellow was Lolo and he too was a Champion of the Virtue of Compassion, who is well known throughout the land as being unmatched with a bow and arrow. I briefly wondered for a moment, how he and Saint Valentine would fare in an archery contest, then my gaze shifted to the other occupants in the camp.

Mariah, I said out loud, as through the wall of paladins and shining-armor, I could make out my friend Mariah, who was sitting next to Lord Dupre, across the fire pit from Lolo, Zara and her parents. Mariah had returned from the dungeon of Wrong and I would, very much be interested in knowing what she had found out, I thought, but something was going on here, which I was still unsure about.

“Archmage come and sit down, we saved you a spot”, said Kumara and so I did.

As I peered around the camp site, I greeted everyone with a smile, then a nod, while Mariah gave me a very grand and warm-smile in return, as to suggest that she had found something very important on her expedition. Lord Dupre was looking rather regal in his virtue armor, sitting next to Mariah, with his left hand on the pommel of his sword, as he bowed in my direction, in a way that one may expect of a great and mighty paladin commander.

Suddenly, I felt an unanticipated impact, as if I was being tackled by something and my first thought was maybe the dog had run into me, but it was Zara. “Good afternoon Archmage”, she said excitedly and wrapped her arms around me, to give me a hug. Good after-noon child, I replied and sorry that I overslept, then asked her what was going on?

Kumara spoke up, “Zara”, as he beckoned her over to stand with him by the dog, who was now at Kumara’s right hand and so Zara left me, without answering, to do just that.

After a small pause Zara began to state her intentions to our group and said, “Thank you, good people of the realm,” as everyone quieted down and Mariah returned a beaming-smile by the remark, as I too was smiling by this thing that Zara had said. For this was not the realm at all, but simply Lord Dupre and his men, accompanied by Mariah, Valkyries, an ancient dragon and his dog. Oh, and of course Lolo, Zara and her parents.

Kumara interjected now, by saying, “as anything anew, it always starts very small, for even the wisest and mightiest cannot comprehend such detail and with this notion of time and space, understand this simple truth, that love shall cure all things.” Kumara shifted his stare to me directly, as he went on. “All that was ever required, was for just one to rise this entire time, for this is the nature of all virtues”.

As he said this, the four champions of their virtues, present among us, were now hyper-focused on Kumara and he continued to speak at me. “It could be big or small or anything at all, a smile is worth more than gold, and for this-the story must be told”.

I Understood the point now, as I am chronicling this quest to find Ladon and although, the entire realm may not be here, the entire realm would surely learn about this. I instantly see now that Zara was speaking to everyone in the realm, not just the people here. I felt a little embarrassed about my previous thoughts and by being late to this engagement, then Kumara smiled at me, as he shifted his look back to the entire group ahead of him.

“All that was ever required, was for just one to rise this entire time, for this is the nature of the virtue of valor itself, so that truth could be known for all to see”, then he looked to Zara.

Zara shifted her stare, from that of Kumara, to that of the dog between them and the wolf now sat down and perked up its ears to listen. "This wonderful friend of mine needs a name and it has fallen to me provide that name. I have thought about this and I asked him what he thinks about this too, for many names we tried-out together." The dog started to wag its tail now, as Zara went on.

"We finally settled on something that we both agree and I think it describes his true nature very well. He is so happy when I am around him and his past was so hard, as I have come to learn. He is brave and continues to be happy when happiness is not something most would choose to be, for he is truly a brave-soul to do this."

"I know he is happy because he is always wagging his tail and this makes me very happy too", Zara said of the dog, as she smiled to her friend the dire wolf. "I, Zara the Champion of the virtue of Compassion", as she briefly paused, then gazed upon Lolo, slightly nodding towards him, then focusing her attention back to the animal, "name my best-friend, Wags, from this day forth. That, not only have we become best-friends, but now my friend has a good name which describes him perfectly."

The dog, now named Wags, stood up and barked loudly, then started to wag his tail furiously by Zara's words, then everyone cheered with laughter and delight, by this display.

Kumara interjected himself once again, by saying, "Wags has destroyed the blight of corruption in the place known as the Blighted Grove. This place, corrupted by evil, has destroyed many lives and some very close to him. As Wags has so seen fit to destroy that corruption and protect those he could, he has made stronger the bonds of honor, compassion, humility, spirituality, sacrifice, honesty and of course brought upon that evil, the justice it has solely deserved. Corruption seeks to undue that which is good, just and right and for his standing and bravery, when few dare to answer the call, all shall benefit from his great deeds."

"Through his actions, he has forged himself into a fierce and loyal friend indeed. His great friendship and kindness stand shoulder to shoulder with his desire to undue and destroy that which threatens those he loves the most. For his love runs deep and kindles the very fire that causes him to stand, as the destroyer of this blight, we shall come to refer to him as: Wags the Destroyer".

Kumara continued on:

"Wags has stood bravely in the face of certain death several times, he has answered the call of the of the Bell of Courage, which is no simple task and he has not disappointed. Wags the Destroyer has protected the weak and stood to avenge those, that corruption has brought many injustices upon."

"So, I Kumara, the ancient dragon of the element of the earth, the bringer of justice, who has dominion over all-virtues here in this realm, declare from this day forward an additional name for this great beast, shall be required. Wags, the leader of his pack, which betrayed him, but that could not force him to act or compromise himself in anyway, shall be known as: Wags the Destroyer, the Champion of the virtue of Valor."

The paladins rose to their feet and waited for their commander, then Lord Dupre stood up and drew his mighty sword into the air and yelled, "Wags the Destroyer, the Champion of the virtue of Valor".

All the paladins drew their sword in perfect unison, to repeat the phrase and so it has been said, declared and now made known, the exploits of this animal. For all those who see him shall know him by his name and that name is, Wags the Destroyer, the Champion of the virtue of Valor.

-Archmage Guildmaster

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I often find writing while on horse-back, a very convenient thing, though I am sure my penmanship could cause some minor sufferings for the scribes back home, at the Lycaem Library in Moonglow. I very much so, do feel anxious with not being engaged with the nature of action and I often notice myself consumed within one project or another, or several at once. I have noticed over the years, that writing while letting the horse focus on the road, is a great use of my time and leaves me many hours remaining to be dedicated elsewhere.

Also, as a master of the arcane arts, simply sharing visions with my trusted steed helps her navigate the both of us with ease too. So, in the spirit of saving time and all things convenient, a word of warning to those subject to horse travel and are inspired to scribe. Do not attempt such tasks without possession and use, of strong arcane magiks, or perhaps you might find yourself face down in the mud, in a strange and unknown land.

This doesn't seem to bother my company at all, my attention to writing, as Lord Dupre seldom speaks, though if he does happen to say something I shall-surely pay attention and stop the pen from its task. For Lord Dupre does not say much, but when he does say something, it should be listened to with all senses available, as every conversation I have had with him, always reveals some great thing.

We were heading for the Empath Abbey now and there is much road to be traveled yet, as there is much road to be traveled still, for our entirely new fellowship formed. Kumara, the Archmage and our newest champion of Valor, Wags, have left for the dungeon of Destard. While, Lolo, little Zara and the ranger-scout are securing passage to a small island, somewhere in the sea, north of wind.

I looked up for a moment and to my right, through the trees, I could see part of the ocean, a large bay. For somewhere in this body of water was Zara's destination.

"Helmsmen Raise the Anchor!", for this was the title of episode 7 of *"ImaNewbie Does Britannia"* that I vaguely thought I had remembered seeing elsewhere before. I eventually remembered where I had seen this phrase, which I recall was written above a mural inside of a small room inside of the Empath Abbey. I wanted to take a better look at this mural again and of course, Lord Dupre had told me prior, that Venus instructed him to go to this place, so this is now our destination.

Hopefully the monks there will be cooperative, though I do not mean to suggest they would not be, for the King could simply order them to assist with our requests, if I only asked him to intervene. I do not think it would ever come to that, because those monks at the Empath Abbey are very peaceful and tend to keep to themselves, as their work takes them all over the realm. They are of great help to this realm too, of this I know, but they seem to operate by a different set of codes and mantras.

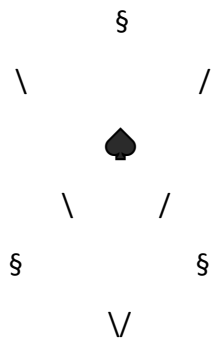
Also, it was discovered by the Archmage that the word of power, "Fallax", my own word of power for the virtue of honesty, might have some effect on the Blanket of Darkness and he was correct. I had assumed that only the Champion of virtues could use such words and I believe I am still right in this thinking.

This ancient artifact, acted as a type of container, that when I spoke the words of power, while holding the blanket in my hands, released the dark magiks binding this relic and the Blanket of Darkness could be unrolled or unwrapped like a Christmas present. What we found inside was a manuscript, written in a language of undetermined meaning or origin. It was unclear how that blanket could be used again, as such a container, but the unraveling process of this device was now made known to us and that discovery belongs to the Archmage, not I.

The Lycaemum Library is said to house every known book ever created, but if there are any understandings in this world not in that library, then those understandings would surely be at the Empath Abbey. The monks there are very secretive and possess much knowledge, that would only lead one to believe that there was much more to their humble origins than they let on.

There was one other thing I was hoping for clarification about, if possible. The metal buttons that I found, while in the dungeon of Wrong, with the same mark that matches the exact symbol on the side of the sandals on display in moonglow. The marks on the sandals were located on the inside portion of both of the shoes, which I always thought to be strange, for if worn, few would actually be able to see those marks at all.

This symbol almost looked to resemble a six-pointed star in some way, with a downward V-shape and three S-shape marks that formed an upward triangle and in the middle was a spade. Someone clearly took great care in creating this mark and the purpose or meaning must have been known by others. The evidence for this revelation exists in the fact that the mark on the sandals was also found on the buttons.



One could perhaps dismiss the mark, as being only related to the ancient dragons or to Ladon himself on the sandals, but if not for the existence of such a mark on the other items too. Especially, on such simple thing as with buttons, found to be in possession of some unfortunate soul in a prison cell where I had acquired them. Perhaps the Abbey could assist with this, in-fact I was hoping for this very thing.

Upon reaching the Empath Abbey I could see several monks tending to the vineyards, who often supplied many of the celebrations at the capitol with their fine wines and spirits. I could tell that this might be a distraction for Lord Dupre, so I would make sure to keep him focused, while we stayed there.

Lord Dupre's paladins had departed back to Trinsic to await his orders and rest their horses in their stables, so this expedition would just be the Lord and myself.

As our journey finally came to an end, as there was no more road to travel, for directly ahead of us were the front doors of the Empath Abbey, we got off our horses. I mentioned to the Lord that the mural was on the bottom floor in a small room near the back of the Abbey. This I recalled from my memory, but we should search out the head of the order first.

We entered the Abbey and found no sign of any monks at all, but we did see a few of them in the vineyards, so perhaps their humble order wasn't as large as I had assumed. The last time I was here, was many years ago and I remembered their order being bigger than this. We eventually made our way up the stairs, since no one was on the bottom level and we found a monk by the name of Brother Frun, sitting at a table and he asked us how he could be of assistance.

It was difficult to know where to begin, for there was much we would need help with, so instead of just relaying the same message to several people, I asked to speak with the head of their order. I told the monk that the nature of our visit was of great importance to the realm and their services would surely be required for this matter.

Brother Frun nodded and lead us to the main room to his right, asking us to follow him. The head of their order was Sister Anne who was known by the occupants of the Empath Abbey as the Keeper of the Flame. For what her title means or implies, I had not an idea about, but she was clearly the one we needed to speak with.

"Lord Dupre and Mariah" Sister Anne said and bowed to us both. "What is this great importance to the realm that requires the service of our humble order, that imparts onto us two mighty champions of virtue?", she asked.

I looked over to Lord Dupre as he looked to me, as we were clearly thinking the same thing. Brother Frun had never spoke our intentions to Sister Anne the Keeper of the Flame, nor could she have overheard me speaking to the monk either.

I paused a bit and replied to her that we were on a great quest, led by Kumara to find his brother Ladon. Lord Dupre was instructed to come here by Venus, the sister of Kumara. Through our travels together we have also uncovered things that our journey has brought us to this very Abbey, I told her.

I revealed the ancient manuscript I had found in the Blanket of Darkness and handed it to the sister for her opinion on this unknown language.

"You are welcome to use our library here Mariah, to look through what we have, but at first glance, I am sorry to inform you that your journey here may have been for not, as I have no idea what this is or how to even read it", said the sister.

Disappointed clearly by her words, I thanked her and as she turned to walk back to her desk, I spoke up again by saying that there are other matters to discuss.

"I see", said the sister, as she turned around and said, "May I see the sword then" and she looked down to gaze at the weapon at Lord Dupre's side. She then smiled and looked up to make eye-contact with Sir Dupre. The Lord hesitantly produced the mighty sword, then handed the artifact over to Sister Anne. She embraced the weapon with both hands, as she carefully examined the item and after several moments, the sister began to smile uncontrollably. This was not something one would expect to ever see from the head of such a reclusive order of monks, to express themselves so outwardly.

This prompted both the Lord and I to look at each other, yet again, in the same suspecting manner.

"Our order is humble but our beginnings were anything but. We are few in numbers, as we were then, though we have grown some", Sister Anne spoke as she was heading for the stairs with the sword. She turned around and said to the both of us, "are you coming?"

Yes, of course I responded and we proceeded to follow the sister down the stairs, around the corner, where she picked up a lit candle from a small table and we walked into the main-part of the Abbey. She continued to tell us about the history of this place, as we approached a door directly ahead and we walked towards it.

On both sides of us were hallways leading to the barracks and I said to Lord Dupre, I have been in that room once before, for that was the room with the mural on the wall.

With the sword still in her hands, Sister Anne the Keeper of the Flame, put the candle down on the floor, pulled a key from around her neck and unlocked the door she was at. Picking the candle back up again, she walked in the small room, no larger than a broom-closet and lit the two candles in of the back, along the northern-wall. As the space began to glow with soft-orange tones, we could make out benches and a large Ankh of Spirituality. "Come in please", she beckoned us and then said, "this is our prayer room", as we walked inside.

I looked over to my-left and on the wall, I could read the words, as I walked in, "Helmsmen Raise your Anchor!". It was written exactly in the same way as with the episode from "*ImaNewbie Does Britannia*" and I knew this was the thing that the episode was describing, that Ladon had left behind for us to find. We were now close to uncovering something truly significant, for this I was certain about.

Below the words were two knightly-figures, one in white and gold armor holding a sword before him. On the other side was a woman in grey and white armor holding another sword, but this one was silver and had blue painted swirls around the blade. The two swords together formed an archway and in the middle of that archway was a silver shield that had carvings of sun flares coming off of it. Below the shield was a small inscription on the wall that read: "It is my honor".

"Was this what you were looking for Mariah?", asked the sister. I looked over in her direction, to reply, then realized she was looking at Lord Dupre's sword again.

As she looked up to the mural, my eyes followed hers, to see what she was looking at. The armored figure in the mural on the left was wielding a golden-sword and the guard of the weapon in the mural had a dragon on each side, as they too held a ruby in their mouth, in the same way as with Lord Dupre's weapon.

“How old is this mural?”, the paladin commander inquired, when he also made the same discovery as I. Sister Anne responded by saying that “the mural was painted by Priestess Andromeda, in the first Age, over a thousand years ago. She was the last High-Priestess of the Lemurian High-Council.”

Lord Dupre and I looked over to each other, as it has become our custom here in this place, for we were again thinking the same thing. The sister, when she saw this, asked, “for what do you know of Lemuria?”.

“Only one thing” said the lord, then he continued, as he looked back in her direction. “The exercise at The PAWS Soulforge and those memories. For each of us spoke our words of power in the house and each of us received a word or phrase back from the memory that represented our own virtue.”

I interjected myself and told Sister Anne, that the memories at the PAWS Soulforge are in-fact Valkyrie in service to Kumara and they are pulling memories from the Dragon Soulforge there. The memory that Lord Dupre speaks of, is the one assigned to the virtue of honor and it returned to him the phrase, “Lion of Lemuria”.

Sister Anne the Keeper of the Flame, began to smile uncontrollably again and tears seemed to form on her face, then she told us the following:

“Our order has kept a great secret over these years and only one of us, at any-time, has the knowledge of that secret. So secret and so important is this, that the one entrusted with this knowledge, shall never leave these halls, even so much as to venture outside and this is indeed a great burden. Through the hundreds of years our order grew, but that burden remained, passed down through the generations, until it eventually had fallen to me. we have been waiting for the return of the White Lion, known to us as the Lion of Lemuria”, as she looked to Lord Dupre.

“For it seems you are this lion and in such, I shall impart upon you, that which our order has kept safe for you, all of these years”. She then finished by saying, “thank you kind sir, for my great burden is now over and yours has just begun”, as she bowed in reverence to Lord Dupre.

Sir Dupre and I looked at each other, as was our now established custom of this place, for this was a lot to consider indeed.

Before I could ask another question, the sister closed her eyes, with head bowed, as if to pray. A gust of wind blew out the candles, from no clear-natural source, for this was magik at work, that came directly from Sister Anne the Keeper of the Flame. The candles in the room, that had just gone silent, came back to life, but the colors had changed from a soft-orange glow to a brilliant-white and when it did the room had been slightly transformed.

Illusion magik I said out loud, as I was surprised to witness that here of all places. For illusion magik was indeed one of the lost arts of our realm. I have stumbled upon parts of spells, over my travels, but it was clear she was in possession of this discipline.

“Yes”, said the sister, “for illusion magik is the magik of the priest-hood of Lemuria and these arts have been passed down through the years to the Keeper of the Flame, until it had fallen to me, for this was also my burden to carry”, she added.



Sister Anne turned around and as she did, I could make out the Ankh of Spirituality, for it has changed slightly too. There was now an alcove in the front of it, which wasn't there before. Inside was an all-white book, tucked away, as she pulled it from its resting place.

"Inside this tome you will find the writings of the last priests of Lemuria, as it was made for you specifically, so many years ago", she told Lord Dupre as she handed him his sword back, then the book.

I looked over to the mural on the wall and it was now different. The shield was replaced by an all-white skull with ruby eyes. The archway that the two swords had formed was gone, now replaced by a stone archway, forming a door instead, with golden-rays and azure painted undertones coming from behind the skull. Inside the archway was a figure of a man in hooded-ropes, holding a staff with a skull at the top and a crown on the skull's head. No longer were there armored knights on the side, but statues instead. The phrase above the mural was gone now and as I inquired about the change to the mural, sister Anne told me what she knew.

"I have come to refer to this mural as Prophecy of the White Lion, named for the prophecy found in the book you now have. The skull in this version of the mural, is the artifact of great power of the Kingdom of Lemuria, known as the Skull of the Innate Will and its resting place is also described in that book. The Lion, you Lord Dupre, are to be the decedent of the last Queen of Lemuria, Jehanne of Aquitaine and that of David the Architect", she said.

Lord Dupre sat down on a nearby bench and opened the book, entitled: "*The Great War*". Sister Anne continued on by saying, "the first mural with the golden-knight, for that is the Lion of Lemuria and the women to the right is the forerunner. The Unknown figure behind the skull in the version you see now, I believe to be David the architect. Those three I have come to refer to as: The Golden Trio".

I produced the buttons, that I had found in the dungeon of Wrong, from my pouch and held them out. I asked the sister if she had ever seen these marks before. "Of course," as she pulled up her sleeve to reveal a bracelet that she wore. I looked upon the item, to find the very same mark that these buttons had on them and also the same mark on the Sandals in Moonglow.

What does it mean, I insisted?

This is the mark of the once great and mighty kingdom, that David the Architect oversaw, that Ladon was charged with protecting, for this is the mark of the Kingdom of Atlantis.

Lord Dupre closed his book and looked up to me, as I looked down to him, as with our new custom of the strange and powerful revelations, that seem to come to us so often at the Empath Abbey.

"What do you know of Atlantis?", asked the sister.

For that is what the memory of honesty, the mage, spoke to me when I uttered my words of power at the PAWS Soulforge. It returned to me the word, "Atlantean".

We both turned our gaze back to Sister Anne the Keeper of the Flame, while we were in this great room of discovery. She met our focus, paused then smiled and she said the following:

"For in the back of that book I gave to Lord Dupre, is the Prophecy of the White Lion, scribed from the very words of the ancient dragon Lemuria herself." Sir Dupre opened the tome again and turned the

pages to the back of the book, as the sister said, “we will know it is time to reveal the secret that we keep, for there will be many signs that present themselves, as this is one of those signs”.

What sign, I asked the sister?

Sister Anne looked directly at me and said, “For the White Lion will walk with the Atlanteans one last time”.

-Mariah the Champion of the Virtue of Honesty

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**End of part 2**

**The Golden Trio and the Quest for Ladon**

**Sandals of Time**

**Author:** *Mathew D. Miles*

**The Golden Trio & the Quest for Ladon part 2:** *Part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> series entitled: “The Golden Trio”*

**About the books:** Each book within each series acts as a character in a much larger play. They will tell their own story from their own perspective written by a specific avatar in a specific way. All the books of each series will develop themes and concepts unique to each series, while the 5 series of books in total will tell a much larger story. In addition, a repeating theme is on display in every way possible within all works. They are the following:

\*To remember, is to find your way.

\*This is the story of your realm and everyone has a part to play.

**Book series:** *Sandals of Time*

Series 1: *The PAWS Soulforge and the Quest for Ladon*

Series 2: *The Star of Zara and the Quest for Ladon*

Series 3: *The Golden Trio and the Quest for Ladon*

Series 4: *Toccata and Feud and the Quest for Ladon*

Series Finale: *Succubus & Valkyries and the Quest for Ladon*

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