

The Kingdom of Vog

Sir Gallant the Knight was returning to the City of Philos, but he had lost his way and had wandered into the Kingdom of Vog. Stopping by a wayside tavern, he alighted to ask for directions, but he could not find anyone who knew how to get to the City of Philos. Those he met told him that he had entered the Kingdom of Vog and should return quickly from whence he had come, for strangers were not welcome in this land.

While inquiring at the tavern, Sir Gallant had noticed the peculiar behavior of these people. The customers who filled the tavern complained continually and loudly to the others of their lot and how their neighbors had more than they did. The sound of bickering filled every corner of the room. Sir Gallant observed the owner of the tavern serving a man a tankard of cider and overheard the unhappy customer complain that the mug was not large enough.

“What do you want?—A bucket? If you want more cider, give me more money,” the owner of the tavern yelled as he waved his hand in front of the man’s face.

The man slapped the extended hand away and gulped down his cider, muttering under his breath, “More money? You get more money than you deserve.”

A woman sitting beside the man cleared her throat and addressed the owner. “Excuse me, I have a complaint. There are not enough peas in my soup, and I would hardly call this a slice of bread.”

“I see plenty of peas,” replied the tavern owner. “And the bread is more than an inch thick.” The woman huffed and tucked into her meal.

Sir Gallant, not able to stand the din in the tavern, hurried out the door, doubting the sanity of the people of this place.



Thud! Thud! Thud! The sound of heavy footsteps thundered through the valley, shaking the ground and sending all the creatures scurrying for cover. King Vog, a giant, had heard that a stranger had entered his kingdom, and Vog would not have his domain disturbed by intruders who were out to cause trouble.

Vog fiercely protected the people living in his kingdom, for in the surrounding lands gangs of wicked and fierce giants roamed the countryside, robbing and burning down villages and houses. And while Vog was a fierce giant, he was not a wicked one.

“He is headed up the road that leads to your castle, Your Majesty,” the man, who had seen the stranger at the tavern, informed Vog.

“What?! And what is he doing here?”

“I could not tell ... but he was dressed in armor and carrying a sword.”

After hearing those words, Vog had grabbed his sword and thundered out of the castle, roaring: “I will see who this troublemaker is!”



The terrain Sir Gallant now traveled was rough and foreboding, with large boulders towering over the narrow passageway that cut through the mountains.

Sir Gallant proceeded cautiously, on the lookout for any danger. As the knight turned a sharp bend, he was startled by the appearance of a huge giant. His horse was as startled as Sir Gallant and came to an abrupt halt.

“Who are you? And where are you going?” roared the giant.

“My name is Gallant, I am a knight from the City of Philos, and I’m traveling home,” answered Sir Gallant. He spoke calmly, though he

trembled inside, for the giant was more than three times as large as he was.

“Then you are going in the wrong direction,” said the giant.



“I lost my way and have been seeking someone who might point me to the road that would lead me to the City of Philos, but I have found none yet to help me.”

The giant eyed him suspiciously.

“Good sir, what is your name?” asked Sir Gallant, very politely.

“You do not know? I am Vog, and I am the ruler of this land.” And pointing to a large fortress on the horizon, he said with pride, “And *that* is my castle.” Then, as if remembering the fierce reputation he needed to maintain, he barked, “You have no business here! You must turn back and be on your way.”





The giant glared at Sir Gallant and made as if to unsheathe his large sword that was strapped to his side.

The sun had disappeared, leaving the last glow of light on the horizon, and it would soon be dark. Sir Gallant, tired and worn from the day's journey, could not think of traveling all the way back from whence he had come at this time of day.

"I am sorry, I did not know. But may I be so bold as to ask Your Majesty if you would be kind enough to offer a weary traveler some food and a place to lay his head for the night?"

Vog was surprised by such a request. The knight had spoken with such courtesy and Vog was so impressed by this display of good manners that at length he nodded.

"Only one night ... and you must be off at dawn," replied Vog. "Follow me."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," Sir Gallant replied.

The giant grunted and then turned to lead the way to his castle.



After they arrived at the castle gates, one of the servants led Sir Gallant's horse to the stable, and Sir Gallant followed the giant into the great dining hall. Dinner had been laid out on the table, and two servants stood by in attendance.

A large roast goose lay on a platter at the center of the table. There were also baked onions and potatoes, sausages, egg and ham pie, and apple tarts.

Vog motioned for the knight to sit and eat, and when both had eaten to their heart's content, Vog began to ask many questions of Sir Gallant concerning the City of Philos. Vog had heard rumors there were no quarrels or disputes in that land, and that the people shared all they had.

"Is it true that in that place there is no strife between the inhabitants?" Vog asked.

Sir Gallant affirmed it was so, and how in his country all behaved toward their neighbors as they personally wished to be treated. Sir Gallant told Vog of how strange it was to encounter people such as the ones he had met at the tavern, and asked why his subjects behaved so.



The giant began to tell him the sad story of his domain, and how his people were only concerned with their own well-being and thought little of others. Arguing among these people was widespread, and Vog continually had to sort out their disputes. Besides having to sort out the problems of his people, Vog had to always be on guard against the gangs of roaming giants who would wait for opportune moments to invade his kingdom, carrying off not only goods but his people as slaves. On one such raid, a mean, ugly giant known as One Eye had fought a fierce battle with Vog, and though Vog had asked his people



to stand with him against One Eye, they had been too concerned with their own safety and had hid till the fighting was over. The enemy giant had nearly dealt Vog a fatal blow with his huge club, but in the end, Vog had defeated him and One Eye had fled.

Due to this victory, Vog had not had trouble with invading giants for quite some time, but now he had heard reports that One Eye had vowed to destroy Vog's kingdom. With the support and help of some of the other giants, One Eye was planning an attack.

"I am afraid it will be difficult to defend my land from this group of giants led by One Eye with my people divided and unwilling to stand together," said Vog despairingly. "I do not know how to help my people see the need to band together."

Just as Sir Gallant was about to speak, Vog ended the conversation abruptly. "Enough talk of the problems of my kingdom. I wish to be left alone."

Sir Gallant rose from the table. "Good night, Your Majesty, and thank you for your hospitality," he said.



The next morning Sir Gallant was up at dawn. After he had eaten a hearty breakfast, a servant gave him a map which would help him to find his way out of Vog's kingdom to the City of Philos.

As Sir Gallant was about to ride out of the castle gates, he was surprised by the sudden appearance of Vog, who handed Sir Gallant a sealed parchment scroll.

"Please give this to your king," he said.

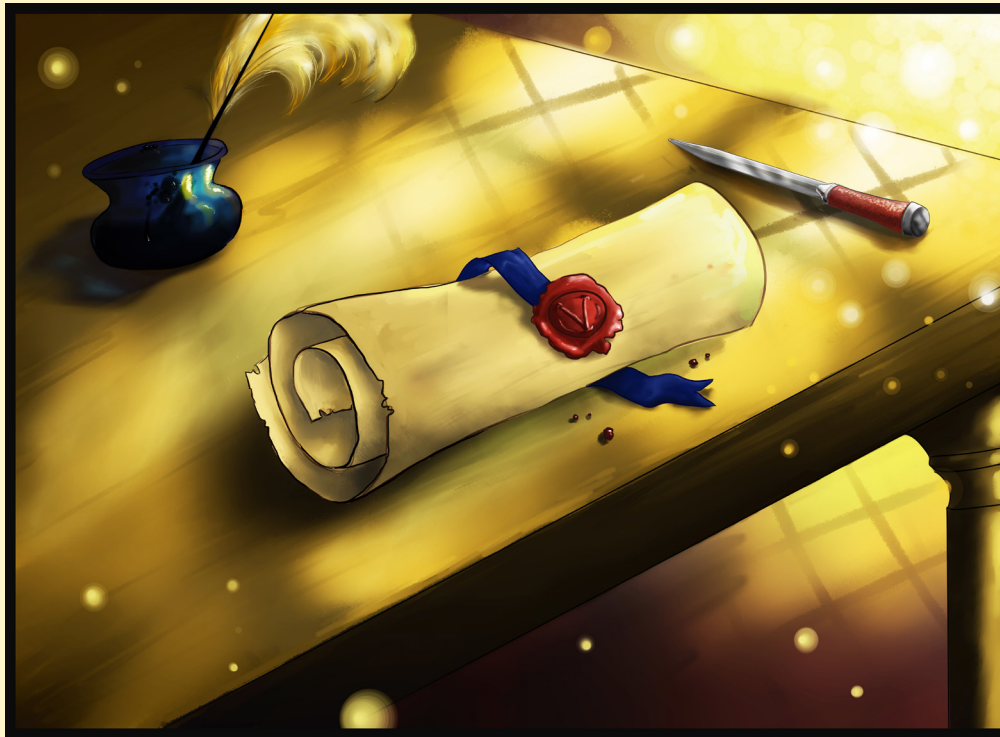
The knight took the scroll and bowed, and then rode out of the castle gates.



Sir Gallant arrived at the City of Philos three days later and proceeded to deliver Vog's message to the king.

Taking the parchment scroll out of his satchel, Sir Gallant handed the letter to the king. "Your Majesty," he said, "I was given this message by King Vog the Giant."

The king broke open the seal and read the contents.



"Vog wishes to make an alliance with our city."

The king then spoke to his minister who stood by his side, "Call a council meeting. We will discuss the proposal set forth in this letter." Turning to Sir Gallant, he said, "And *you* will join us."

Sir Gallant bowed and followed the king to the adjoining council room.

When the council members had been assembled together, the king read the letter aloud.

In the letter, Vog told of the problems of his kingdom and how he wished his land could be more prosperous and filled with peace. Vog told of his brief encounter with Sir Gallant and how he had been impressed by the knight's example of good manners and courtly conduct.

"If the subjects of your kingdom are all as Sir Gallant, and behave as he describes the people in your land do, then I believe that you in the City of Philos are the ones who can help me bring my dream to pass," the letter read.

"I, therefore, humbly request, Your Majesty, that Sir Gallant and members of your city instruct the subjects of my kingdom in the ways of courtesy, brotherhood, and unity. Your people may settle in my lands, for I believe my people will learn most by observing your example of daily living. If my people do not learn this, I fear the next attack from One Eye shall mean defeat for the Kingdom of Vog."

After some discussion, the king and his council agreed to send, under the leadership of Sir Gallant, as many as would volunteer to settle in the Kingdom of Vog and help instruct those who lived there in the ways of Philos. Sir Gallant gladly accepted the appointment.



Dum da dum! A proclamation was to be read in every town square throughout Vog's kingdom, and all citizens of Vog were to be in attendance. Vog himself was attending the proclamation at one of his largest towns, and the townsfolk were curious to hear what this important announcement would be about. Standing in the square, there were also a great number of courtly looking knights and well-dressed families whom the citizens of Vog had never seen before. It was all a great mystery, and soon grumbling was heard among the people gathered.

“Foreigners!” said one.

“Riffraff!” said another.

And then after another blast of the horn, those in the town square fell silent as the herald began to read.

“To the citizens of Vog: I, King Vog, after much consideration and many years of deliberation, have come to realize our kingdom could be prosperous and our borders safe from marauding giants *if only* we could work together in peace. I have, therefore, given portions of land to those from the City of Philos. The people from this city are well known for their good manners and most of all for the camaraderie they share. They have agreed to settle in our lands and instruct us in their ways of courteousness and generosity. Please learn from them, for our survival as a kingdom depends upon it. Sincerely, King Vog.”

The citizens gathered in the town square were shocked at this news; most of them had known their behavior was not admirable, but now hearing how Vog had decided on such drastic measures caused them to think long about their past behavior. Others of the citizens moaned that they had difficulty enough living with each other, and to add foreigners to the mix—surely there was some mistake!

But, surprisingly—over a very short period of time—the people of Vog found the people of Philos easy to get along with and often found a way to turn a disagreeable discussion into a pleasant exchange. Not only that, but they consistently went out of their way to help their neighbor Vogians. The Vogians soon picked up on Philos traits, for they found life was much more enjoyable when they found ways to appreciate each other’s opinions and thoughts. They also discovered how helping each other out made life much easier, and they enjoyed being able to count on borrowing an extra loaf of bread or an extra tub of butter when their own pantry was empty, when they otherwise would have had to go without.

Not too long after the people of Philos had settled in the Land of Vog, something occurred that showed the Vogians had truly learned how to help each other and work together in unity.

One fine spring day, One Eye reappeared on the border of the Kingdom of Vog! This time, when Vog called on his people to unite and stand against One Eye, his people came and stood by his side. And when One Eye and his fellow giants attacked, they were caught by surprise, for Vog’s army had laid a trap for them. One Eye was brought down, and his band of evil men fled.



The End

S&S link: Christian Life and Faith: Biblical and Christian Foundation: Brotherhood and Unity-2a;
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