

VUTHSANYA

Now it so happened that a third child was born to King Rian, and was not a male. This angered the King greatly, for it had been foretold that his third child would be gifted with great powers of knowledge and skill, especially in battle.

The King himself was a mighty ruler and man of renown. He was so angered by the birth of his third daughter, that he refused to speak to her or even to see her. Her name was Vuthsanya and she only ever looked upon her father's face once. She had eyes the blackest of black and secrets the darkest of dark.

On her twelfth birthday she left the castle and the kingdom carrying only the clothes on her back. The King soon learned of her departure, yet he sent no search party and shed no tear. Many others did, for Vuthsanya was well liked by the people although none could claim to know her well.

The next ten years were the coldest and hardest years the Kingdom had ever known. Crops failed, sickness plagued the land, the sun seldom shone, and the King was growing old. It was then that a terrible creature came to the land. He was Teg-Mushrak, one of the ancient tormenters, who took delight in death and destruction. In looks he was something like a giant ogre, yet much more repulsive. Mushrak terrorised the Kingdom for months without rest. Rian had sent many brave knights out to finish him, but none came back.

In frustration and dismay the King sent forth a demand for Mushrak to meet him on the field of battle. This challenge was accepted gleefully by the blood hungry Tormentor. So it was set. In one week, on Mid-Winter's Eve, the two shall meet in battle on the Felion Plains below the cliffs of Aspirion.

The day quickly came, and the King went to meet his doom. The people were frightened and would not come out of their houses. Children wept and the men felt shamed for there was nothing they could do but hope.

Rian reached the plains and there was Mushrak, picking his teeth with the splintered thigh bone of a victim. He laughed and spat at Rian who was clad in bright armour, riding a white steed and carrying a long shining lance. 'Prepare to meet your end!' yelled King Rian as he charged towards the foul creature with blood in his eyes. But Rian was not the young warrior

he once had been and Mushrak leapt aside with surprising speed, knocking Rian from his horse with a tremendous blow. The King fell to the ground and was dazed. He unsheathed his sword, but Mushrak leaped in the air and dealt his head a mighty kick which rendered him unconscious, and at the ogre's mercy, of which there was none.

Mushrak was preparing to sink his teeth into his prize when he heard the beating of huge wings above him, he wheeled around and was dealt a sickening blow on the side of his head. Mushrak stumbled with blood pouring out the side of his face, saliva dribbling down his chin, and he gave a thunderous bellow of anger. He turned to face his foe, and his anger, as great as it was, gave way to a chuckle, and then a laugh. 'A woman dares to attack Mushrak, the most powerful and wonderful creature in the land' he snorted, 'I will teach you the folly of your ways!'

Vuthsanya was sitting astride a black Pegasus with her long sword drawn and no light shone from her eyes. She leapt from her mount with agility and stood to face Mushrak. She said nothing.

The giant ogre lunged towards Vuthsanya, but she nimbly ducked aside and slashed his ribs so that blood poured out like water.

This angered Mushrak beyond belief and he spun around, madly trying to claw at this arrogant pest. But he was no match for Vuthsanya. With two more blows, Mushrak was begging for mercy. The next strike split Teg-Mushrak's skull in two. He was dead and Vuthsanya stood tall and proud over her fallen foe.

Now King Rian awoke from his slumber and saw what had taken place and looked for the mighty warrior who had done this amazing deed, for he would most certainly be the King's new champion. But all he could see was a mighty black Pegasus flying off into the distance with a woman's figure astride. It seemed then to Rian that he knew who this was, though he could not say, or perhaps would not.

Rian rode home and the people rejoiced to see their king return. To this day people still tell the story of Rian's battle with Teg-Mushrak and how he split the monster's head in two and so saved the land. Only two people know what happened that day, and so do you.