

# Tales of the Kingdom

## By Karen Mains

### **Karen Mains**

Let me tell you first how this story was written. And then because you have had a lot of information intake, I will read you a story and you will be out of here early. How about that? A good story.

When I was a younger woman and we were married, we were in an inner city Church. And at that point in time, I began to realize that I really had a problem with depression. And there were days when this black cloche would sort of hood my head and you'd wake up and you just couldn't get out of it. And then it would go. And I would forget about how bad those days had been.

And then I would have periodic times when depression would hit me again. Well, my husband was a Minister, and when you're a Minister's wife, you often hear some of your husband's sermons over and over. And you're kind of like these political wives who have heard the speeches forever. And they sit on the platform or adoringly, looking up with the dooring eyes and pretending like they are listening intently. But they're really doing the recipes, etcetera, and their shopping list.

Well, David's sermon was taken from that portion of First Peter 5:8. You remember this verse, be self-controlled and alert your enemy. The devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour, stand firm in your faith, trust the Lord. And I heard that sermon over and over again. Actually, it was a very good sermon, and so I could listen to it.

And then one day when I was terribly, terribly depressed and I had had really some wispy thoughts of suicide. And these depressions were lasting longer and visiting me more frequently, I

began to realize that there was something. It was outside the door of my soul, rattling the door, and it wanted in. And if I let that dark thing and it would consume me, it would devour me, it would take me away. And my husband's Ministry would suffer.

And my children, we have four of them. I think I had three at the time, would suffer. And I needed to fight that thing with all my soul. Because truly, though I had heard the sermon many a time, it was at that moment on that dark February day that I realized this dark hooded thing that was trying to get into the door of my soul, wanted to destroy me and wanted to destroy me utterly. So I remember standing at the sink and I was washing dishes and my tears from this battle as I stood firm and tried to keep this thing from taking over my soul with dark depression, my tears dropped in the dishwater, and I remember just crying out to the Lord and saying, Lord, you have got to help me.

I am helpless to fight this thing. It wants to devour me. It wants to possess me. It wants to control me and I just am crying out to you. Help.

I'm doing the best I can help, help. This is all I can do, but stand here and you must help me. You must be my deliverer.

Well, at that point in my life, there was something that happened all of a sudden. I'm giving you an analogy. I don't know how to. It's hard to express these things with words. That door and my soul started to stop shaking.

And the dark thing left me. And I lifted my head. And I knew that I had truly been delivered by my God. Well, I had a lot of work to do because you are often given these graces and these favors by God. And then he expects you to do your part.

And there was a lot of work I had to do with self-image. And I had to discover what my calling was. I was not content much to David's surprise, to be Miss David Maine, and the reverend's

wife, because God had given me gifts myself. I live with a man who is a man amongst men. He has put up with me low these many years and truly believes that my gifts are as great a benefit to the Kingdom as his own gifts are.

And I respect and admire him for those things. I give him honor. And so I went about the work of becoming what God had created me to become. And that was to be a writer. Years later, I was putting together a book on the Kingdom of God.

It seems to be a concept we don't understand. And the book is called Tales of the Kingdom. And I use so much of David's theology. It was like I was cheating without putting his name on the book. I did the writing, but the pragmatic theology, which he is most gifted, went right into the stories.

And so there's one story called Princess Amanda and the Dragon. I'd like to read to you today, and I think you will see how the scripture fits into it. How the three points, David's three points.

The Devil's desire is to destroy you. Your opportunity is to overcome three God's promises.

His presence are in this story. And so you see the creative writer writing the story using her

husband's sermon that she's heard low those many times that finally got through to her in her

hour of desperate need, the rationale for that scripture coming out in story form. Let me tell you a

little bit about the book. I think that very often in Christianity, we need to use the Holy

imagination. And when I look at the work of the prophets, I see that that's exactly what they have done.

They were dramatists. They were storytellers. They use analogy. And then I go into the life of the greatest Prophet of all. Christ.

And Christ also used these literary, these creative forms. I feel very comfortable using the

creative imagination as it has been gifted and is made Holy by God. This is a story about a young

fellow by the name of Hero. His name is really Scarboy, and he escapes from the enchanted city into a place called Great Park, where he has heard that there is a King and a good King. And he sets off to find him.

He goes into Great Park, and he is the hero of the story. His search for the real King, his search to see if there is a Kingdom. And one of the other characters in the story is Princess Amanda. She's quite a character. She has perfect aim.

She can spit at a toads stool 15ft away and hit it. And she's a willful little creature. She has the gift of scenes. She can see the Holy world, the other world. And it's all woven into story form. This is a story about the loss of innocence. It's a story about temptation. It's a story about warfare. It's a story about an enemy you have loved that seeks to destroy you. And I think it's applicable to all of our lives.

One thing you need to know, I will mention, as I read the Caretaker, he is a symbol for the Holy Spirit and his wife mercy. She is a symbol also for the Holy Spirit, as the male and female are Wed in the Holy Spirit and then the great Celebration, which is a picture for when the Church gathers in story form. I think that's all you need to know. Here we go. You're ready?

We need glasses to read good stories.

Once tall grasses grew by Lake Marmo, each spring damsel Dragons dropped out of the sky, trampled nests in the reeds, laid clutches of eggs and buried them in the sand. And once they had given birth, the great reptiles flapped away.

Dragons in the sky are the first sign of spring in Great Park. The children come baskets in hand, eager for Dragon egg hunts. They shed their winter stockings and wiggle their bare toes in the warm sand. They race each other laughing and breathless to see who will reach a clutch of Dragon eggs first.

They yell in hoot. When they find the treasure, "dragon eggs", they cry. Soon they shout, "dragon eggs."

Dragon eggs echoes back and forth from both sides of the Lake. Now children know they are forbidden to keep Dragon eggs because the Dragon soon hatches from the egg and it achieves full growth. Six months later, the baby Dragon scales hardened. It begins to breathe fire. At first there are short blasts of warm air than later great, searing torches of flame.

The Dragon has now become cunning and cannot be trusted. So a sign on the shores of Lake Marmo reads, It is forbidden to keep Dragon eggs. The two eggs Princess Amanda found one day were bronze. They glowed like Amber jewels in the sunlight. Perhaps she meant to carry them to Caretaker.

Perhaps she thought that they were old and shriveled inside. Perhaps she forgot, but she did not take them to Caretakers cottage. Instead, she hid the eggs. She hid them in her home, my very own place, her den in the hollow of a mighty Oak on the edge of outpost Meadow, which was so far from Stone gate entrance that few strangers walked to it. It was so peaceful here that Caretaker visited this area only a few times in his yearly rounds.

The spring sun reached the floor of a man who's been and warmed her hiding place. Soon one egg rattled when the Princess picked it up to inspect it. Obviously there was no life inside, but the other one began to crack. By midmorning, a Dragon hatchling picked its way out and left the shell. The baby Dragon squawked for food.

Its long neck bobbed and weaved, its feet pattered back and forth, running to keep up with its huge head, and it bumped into the side of the tree. Amanda laughed. I must take you to Caretaker, she said aloud. He will know what to do about surprise hatchlings. The little beast turned its Brown eye on her, and a great tear dropped unto its breast.

Amanda began to love the baby Dragon, though she knew it was forbidden. She kept the hatchling for a pet just for a little while, she thought. Perhaps I contain it. The Princess fed the baby insects in wild roots. She kept it alive with hour by hour feedings, and because she nurtured the hatchling, she loved it all the more.

The dragon's bare skin soon became covered with soft scales, bronze and dazzling in the sun. That summer was filled with Dragon games. The little beast and Amanda set up relay races with the butterflies, lines of fluttering wings and one sweaty Princess and one growing dragonet race throughout post metal. Other days Amanda and the animal bounded over the meadow buttercups, seeing who would take the longest leap and soon the Dragon won every time. Sometimes Amanda tossed her ball as high as her arm could throw, and the Dragon it would spring almost to treeline and grab it in its jaws.

I have perfect aim. He has perfect catch. We must be a perfect match, she sang as they played in the sun. By the middle of summer, the Dragon. It was large enough for Amanda to wedge herself between the spikes on its back, and together they leaped above the Meadow, flying in and out of the limbs and leaves of the old trees that bordered the open field.

The Dragon let out a joyous scream, and Amanda laughed with glee. Up and down they soared up high into the tree branches and down low into the flowering Meadow. Amanda hung on for her life while the dragon flew flapping its wings. Amanda soon discovered that her pet hated to be left by itself. It wailed piteously when she left it to perfect her aim on the practice field, so she began to practice less and less.

The Dragon particularly hated to be left alone at night, and since the Princess dared not bring it to inmost circle and even feared for its life, should it be discovered, she began to stay away from the great celebration. One night she crawled into her den beside the beast, and he licked her face

in hands. Gratefully, it stretched beside her, panting with relief that she had stayed. She could hear distant music from deepest forests, and she missed her friends. Raising a hatchling was more demanding than she had thought, and Amanda became angry at the law that kept her from sharing her pet with the others.

What harm is one small Dragon? She thought. That same night she noticed a yellow gleam flickering in the Beast's eyes as it looked at her. When it licked her face, she could feel that its breath was warm and dry.

After that, when Amanda returned from short trips to Forage for their food, she could find the walls of her den scorched. The hollow was becoming more black and it smelled of charcoal. The Dragon was always glad to see her, but she was careful not to stand directly in front of its nose and mouth.

More and more often she had to be careful of its tail. Because you see a full grown Dragon's tail is deadly.

Its powerful sweep can move boulders or knock down medium sized trees or cripple a man or kill a Princess.

Once, when she wanted to hop on his back for a ride, the Dragon leaped up without her Quail. Its cry became defiant as it shot a flame in her direction, and for the first time it had wilfully disobeyed her. As each week passed, Amanda began to laugh less and less. One day, after racing the Dragon through the forest, she left it napping in a sunny Glade and returned to the hollow tree just as Caretaker was backing out of it. His sapling hat pulled out of the hole like a Cork out of the bottle. What is wrong with the inside of my very own place?

He asked Amanda. You haven't been lighting fires, have you? Oh, it's been that way a long time, she lied. I don't know what caused that. Maybe burners were here last winter.

Amanda wish Caretaker would stop wearing that ridiculous tree for a hat. How could she have ever thought it so wonderful? Caretaker stared at the dirt in front of the den. He pushed it with his foot. Ever seen any Dragons around here?

Dragons? Answered Amanda quickly. Not now. The season for Dragons is over.

Caretaker didn't say a word but began to walk down metal path. You old fool, thought Amanda. It was then that he stopped and turned and looked at her sadly. If you ever need me, Amanda, just call. Caretaker gazed at Amanda for several long minutes and turned around again and went on his way.

The next day she hid the Dragon in another part of the forest, and when she returned, it was Mercy, caretaker's wife, who sat outside of her den. She's the ugliest woman I've ever seen, thought Amanda was surprised. She dreaded talking to her. Why don't they just leave me alone? Amanda, Mercy called with a sad smile.

I saw you coming before I heard you. Whatever has happened to your laugh, Amanda did not know how to answer. Had she changed? Everything looked different now. Was she losing her gift of seeing?

Or were things appearing now as they really were? Maybe the great celebration was just a bunch of foolishness. That same night, Amanda realized that the scales of the Dragon sleeping beside her were very hard. She knew that its big body was crowding my very own place, and she knew that grown Dragons were no laughing matter.

This was the last night she would allow the Dragon to return from its hiding place to sleep with her in the den. The next day she took it deep into the forest and commanded it to stay. Secretly, she hoped the beast would fly away. It had become too big, and Princess Amanda was afraid. Somehow she had to get rid of that Dragon.

Trouble was ahead. She could feel it.

One morning, a few days later, she woke early with her eyes still closed. She enjoyed the comfort of having enough room to stretch. It was a crisp fall day. She could smell the cool dry air, and she could smell. She could smell fire.

Amanda leaped to her feet. Fallen leaves had been pushed in a pile beside her. How a tree door. They were burning. Amanda rushed out, stomping and scattering.

Her bare feet felt singed. Looking up, she saw that an old stump was smoldering beside metal path underbrush was smoking on the edge of the forest. Amanda could see something large and bronze colored moving between the trees. She dashed in to put on her shoes and rushed back out. Wait, wait, she shouted.

She began running along the path. Wait for me. She was terrified that the dry grass would catch and begin to flame from the Dragon's breath. In her mind she could see the whole forest burning, the creatures running and, oh, how awful fire in Great Park, fire because of her. Suddenly she knew great harm could come from one small, tame Dragon.

Small, tame things grow into great wild beasts.

Where was Caretaker now? Why had she not taken the hatchling to him right away? Why had she lied? The beast finally heard her call. It stepped out of the trees into the Meadow to face her, and Amanda gasped.

It had grown even more and she had not noticed how much. The huge beast sat waiting for her. Its long tail swept slowly across the ground behind it, then flicked, then swept back. The claws on one paw opened, flexed, tear the thatch flexed again. A thin, wet trickle dripped out of its mouth down its jaw. Yellow light gleamed in its eyes.

The Dragon had become cunning. Why had she not seen this?

Amanda drew herself to full stature. She ignored the throbbing in her feet. Dragon, she announced in her most princessly tone. You must go. You are too big for my den.

Grown Dragons are not allowed in Great Park. Your breath is too hot. Fly away.

The Dragon leered at her. It hunched like a cat on the prowl and moved closer and closer to her. Finally the huge beast was near. It swept its tail, which quickly covered the distance between them. Amanda hopped over the tip.

The Dragon swept the long, jagged tail back faster. She hopped again. It raised its head and blew hot flame onto the grass behind her. She could hear the vegetation crackling. She could feel it's beginning to burn.

She turned and stamped out the fire. The Dragon breathed again. More fire and her heart filled with terror. One small Princess cannot put out all the fires as one large Dragon starts. The Dragon breathed again.

The flames licked her clothes, her hair. She slapped at the fire with her hands. She rolled on the ground. She could see the great beast inching closer, flicking its tail, the yellow light growing brighter in its eyes. Amanda backed away.

She knew it was useless to run. The Dragon always run the races. Oh, help, she cried. Caretaker. Caretaker, I am too small for this terrible Dragon help.

And suddenly she scarcely knew how Caretaker was standing beside her. He must have confounding the moment the flames had begun. Kill it. Kill it, Amanda screamed. The great beast began to lurch.

It raised itself on Hind legs and roared. Flying. Flames filled the air. No, Amanda said. The old man.

I cannot kill this Dragon. Only the one who loves the forbidden thing can do this Lane. You will always hate me if I do it. Only you can slay the Dragon. Caretaker pulled his Woodsman's hatchet from the silver belt around his waist.

He held a wrecked before him. He lifted his eyes to the sky. In the name of the King Amanda, for the restoration, you must slay the Dragon care taker tossed the hatchet directly overhead. It flew high, then started to tumble down and the humming began the singing the Princess had always loved. The hatchet landed at her feet, its blade stuck firmly in the ground.

Amanda reached down and gripped the wood. She felt the Hatchet's power as she pulled it from the soil. By this time Amanda had backed almost to the middle of Outpost meadow and Caretaker had moved out of the circle of Mortal Kombat. Small fires were burning here and there on the grass. The Princess must do this work quickly.

She would only have one chance. Suddenly Amanda had a terrible thought. Her laughter was gone. Her scene had disappeared. What if the gift of perfect aim had vanished as well?

The Dragon was very close. She kept an eye on its tail. Though she had kept the beast alive, she knew it wanted to tear and devour her. The tail moved. Amanda leaped over it.

It swept back. This time Amanda was ready. She whacked the huge tail with her hatchet hurrah. A long piece wiggled on the ground. Oozing green Dragon blood.

At this point, little kids go, eh eh, you can too, if you feel like a little kid.

Oozing green Dragon blood. Perhaps there is hope, Amanda thought. That was pretty quick aim.

The Dragon cried, a terrible creel creel, not so much from pain as from rage.

It reared back on its Hind legs, opened its mouth and let out a fiery blast that caught Amanda full in the face. She could feel hot flames licking her hair, her clothes. Now. Amanda called the Caretaker. Now or never.

She took careful aim, raised the hatchet sided the beer white patch on the breast of the weaving Dragon, which was the Beast's only vulnerable spot. For the King, she screamed, for the restoration, and strength filled her arms. She let the hatchet fly.

At that same moment, the beast roared again. It caught Amanda's legs with the bleeding stump of its swishing tail and she went down onto the grass. But Amanda's aim was true. Caretaker's hatchet hit its Mark and the great Dragon came crashing down upon the little girl. Green ooze splashed over out post Meadow and covered the Princess.

I am dying, she thought. I will smother under this Dragon's heavy, hot body.

Amanda that felt Caretaker's hand touch her arm. Slowly, ever so slowly, the old man raised the edge of the great Dragon Hulk just enough so that Amanda could inch her way along the ground to freedom. Then Caretaker cradled the child in his arms in the middle of Outpost meadow, and he wept. Amanda's hair and eyebrows and lashes were burnt into crinkles. Her clothes were charred.

Her face and feet were all blisters and boils and soot. She was covered with Dragon's blood. She looked all the world like an outcast.

But the Princess Amanda had won the battle. She had slain the Dragon she loved. So the Princess discovered that when one loves a forbidden thing, one loses what one loves most.

This truth is a hard one battle for each who finds it, and it is always gained by loss.

End of the story.

Now you are dismissed.

Thank you for coming to story reading time. This is being made into a musical drama by youth with the mission. So one day maybe it'll tour through some of the schools.

Mains: Tales of the Kingdom

Tales of the Kingdom first in a trilogy to be there are two books, Tales of the Kingdom and Tales of the Resistance, and I'm writing the third.

**Speaker 2**

Are they available?

**Karen Mains**

Yeah, they should be. I don't know if they have them here, but you should be able to get them.

They should be in Christian bookstores or having a special order. They might have it here. I don't know what they have here, but they should be able to order for you. Tales of The Kingdom in a state of sequel publishers, okay.

I don't know. There's another story in your [inaudible] that people just love, too, which would be fun to work with as well. [inaudible]