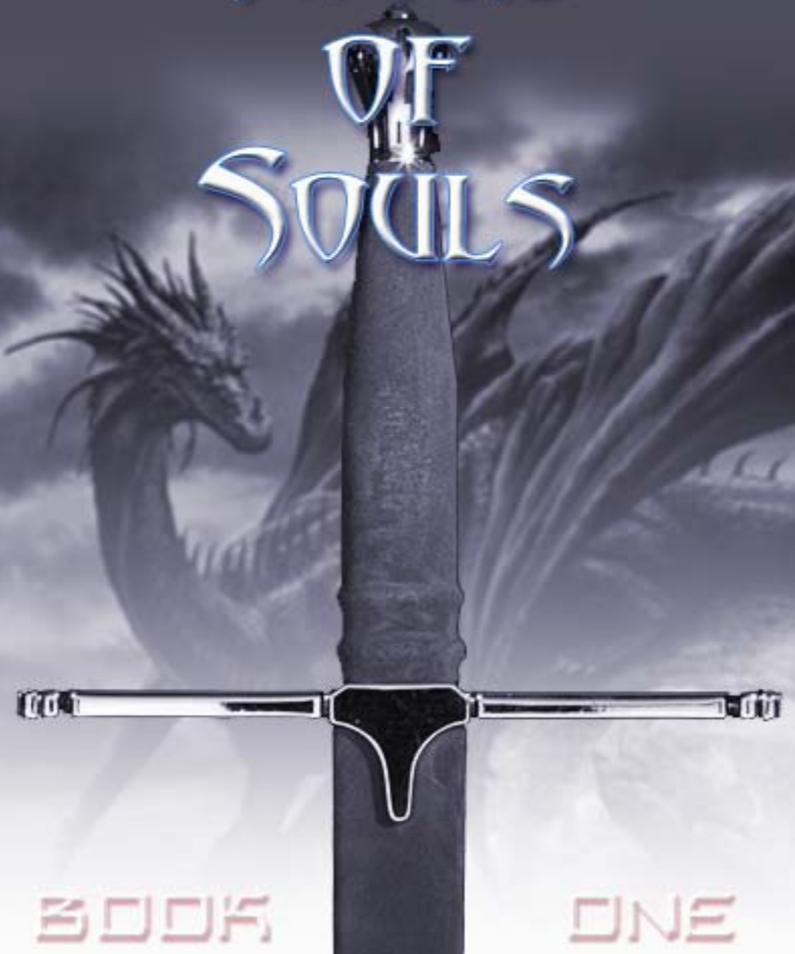


DOUGLAS S. TAYLOR'S

CHRONICLES OF CALEDON

SWORD  
OF  
SOULS



BOOK

ONE

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# I

*“Oh, from afar shall come the Deliverer that will smite the terrible army of the Wicked and bind the hearts of men into one against the Iniquity . . .”* From an ancient Rune Kobarian prophecy.

Long before the fall of the central kingdoms and the dark sails of Draccus pierced the hearts of both men and beasts into a great war, a tribal battle in the frozen north is drawing to a final close. The battle, these barbaric skirmishes have lasted nearly four generations before the silence of near genocide befell the weaker, the quieter and peaceful, as it does so many times before. Now, beneath the audience of the dark granite peaks and across the bloodstained snowfields the spoils of war belongs to the victor. For the victor, the fierce Tarvas who dwelt over timeless seas of generations high in the Catanbar Mountains region had finally come to them. The lands below the snowfields beyond the Iratirus River, the lands of their foes, lay the Ramadan lands. The great Chieftain, Y'llian-Talbok lay dead in the snow, his strong powerful body separated from his head in a pool of freezing blood, along with countless of other bodies that dotted the pristine landscape. The Tarvas warriors raced through the winding pass wreaking havoc upon the villages below like a great pestilence of locusts, and the fall of the Ramadans has now begun.

Soon, pillars of smoke rose from the landscape of the forest canopy below the mountains, and the air filled with screams that were suddenly silenced. With the fall of the Ramadans, the Tarvas grew stronger in numbers, enslaving the women and children and putting to the blade, every old and sick Ramadan man over the age of twelve. In chains, those few Ramadans were forced to march under the Tarvas whip. To the north, through the high passes of the Catanbar Mountains on which many imprisoned succumbed to the elements, the death march continued. A Ramadan boy stood there shackled to his mother who lay in the snow, her body broken and cold, laid still, the boy too exhausted to cry he fell along the side of her, his body barely covered shivered. He looked up into his mother's face; her steel blue eyes had faded as the life left her a few moments before. He knew she was dead, and he realized that he too would be with her, and as he thought, he too would be joined with his father who died months before against the relentless Tarvas masters.

The young child had stopped shivering so uncontrollably now as he could almost hear his mother's voice calling him from afar in a direction he could not quite discern. The taste of blood from his bleeding gums, wounds sustained in beatings from his Tarvas masters. His legs bruised and nearly broken and his skin on his back shown signs of old and fresh marks with the Tarvas whip were now completely exposed to the elements of the bitter cold. A sound much closer in the snowfield came forth from behind him, for he knew this familiar sound; it was the sound

of feet in the snow, feet belonging to the Tarvas demons.

The laid still and held his breath, thinking it was his last, “Look here is too more!” growled the menace that loomed just above the boy that concentrated a stare into his dead mother’s eyes. “A boy I think and that of a woman, dead!” The voice said. The boy knew the man above him had his head turned to another farther down the pass at a slight distance from all the others who were chained and marching further up the mountains. “Shit, these Ramadans are weak, if this keeps up, we will have none to tend to our goats!” The Tarvas warrior began to laugh as he bent down and unshackled the small boy and woman. “No sense of leaving good steel on this Ramadan trash.” The boy could feel only the numbing bitter cold go deep into his body while concentrating as hard as he could in staring into his mother’s eyes. He then could hear the footsteps of the Tarvas warrior leave, as he lay there motionless in the snow as the frost began to form on his brow and eyelashes.

Just then, the sun began to shine through the thick brooding clouds, so bright that it nearly blinded him causing him to squint with the reflection off the snow. It has been the first time he has seen the sun in three or four days traveling through the rugged and remote passes of these mountains. He could not move it was now only a matter of time before he too would follow his mother and he accepted it. The young boy thinking that on the other side, somewhere he knew nothing about, only that it had to be a better place, a place that he would find both his mother and

his father waiting for him. Tears began to well up in his eyes as he could feel the sun upon his frozen flesh warming his body slowly at first. After a few minutes, the stinging in his legs, feet, and toes were almost too unbearable, but he was still alive. With each passing minute, he grew warmer under the intensive sun. Eventually for whatever reason, he knew that it would be some other day before he would meet his mother and father on the other side of this life, this harsh life he must continue to endure.

“You will do my bidding” The voice sounded sinisterly and far off that was in the young boy’s native tongue.

The boy remained motionless, and thought about the direction where the old and sinister voice was coming from, he waited nearly holding his own breath, “I have spared you life so that I may do my work in you.” The voice faded off again, and for the boy, this troubled him because he knew that someone out there knew he was yet alive.

“Arise, my child.” The voice sounded closer, sounded it was just behind him, but above him. The boy heard no other noise, no footsteps, no breathing, and no sound of armor and steel mail.

“Adajahara, you will go, there you will learn what is already inside you, and there you will also learn much” The voice faded off into the slight breeze and then came back to the boy lying in the frozen snow.

“Arise and head down on where you have came, I will guide you to where you need to be, and be not afraid.” The sinister voice seemed colder than that of the boy’s surroundings, but he had nothing

else to trust, nothing else to go by and he was certainly smart enough to realize if he stayed there in the pass, he would die.

Shortly after all the noise from behind him had passed and he knew he was alone, he arose and looked around and could see no one, except for his mother's frozen body. He then took her outer garments as his own and arose and turned and walked down the pass, in doing so, he turned on final time to his mother's body as his tears flowed from his reddening frost bitten face and said goodbye in his native tongue.

He traveled down the pass as carefully as he could in the blinding sun, he was warmer now, his body was trembling, but not from the cold, but from fear, fears of being caught, but fear knowing he was truly alone.

Soon minutes passed into hours, and hours into a few days. He had now managed to escape the Tarvas's whip and headed south along the foothills of the mountain range behind him. The young orphan ate wild berries to the point it was making him sick, but he was free. The boy did manage to find a small sword, a Ramadan dagger in fact, but in his tiny hands, it was like a sword, and something that would give him an illusion of protection.

The small boy, thoughts filled on where to go, in what direction, and for how long, preoccupied his mind. He had no real sense of direction, and he found it hard to focus, so he decided to follow the direction of the sun as it rose, and as soon it was over him, he would follow his shadow until night, this he knew

would keep him heading in on direction. He had done this for several more days.

By his second week of walking through the foothills that opened to the plains of his people, he came across several villages, mostly leveled to the ground; there he found enough bread and clothing to get dressed. He made a pack, crude in nature so that he could haul some meager supplies and an old flask for his drinking water.

The bruising suffered from his beatings was healing in his legs as he grew stronger, and the wounds on his back and arms began to heal as well. The land he was traveling through was unfamiliar to him and at times he thought briefly about turning back, but he did not, he figured to stay with his original plan as best as he could. His fears of being alone gave way to excitement of the adventure that was beginning to unfold before his eyes.

In another week, the mountains were just a purple distant line barely noticeable over his left shoulder. The young boy continued now accompanied by a heavy wooden staff he held firmly in his right hand as he walked. He also had a leather belt tied around his waist held his dagger and kept his dark-blue wool tunic from blowing up over his head in the wind. He managed to find a pair of leather sandals, slightly too big for his small feet, but they were much better than the animal skin rags he was wearing before.

Eventually he left behind him the ruins of his people and crossed over several small streams before he was at the edge of a huge river, too wide, and too swift to cross, and on the other side, as far as he could

see in either direction was a huge green forest. As he looked through his green eyes, he could see hills rising from the forest, covered in strange trees like that of the forest, trees he has never seen before, they were not of the pine. As he stood there in the midday sun, his face covered in dirt and sweat he looked down at the small pool of still water from the raging river and could see his dirty reflection. He smiled at the reflection, bent down, washed his face in the cool water, and then filled his flask that was nearly emptied.

“Boy, you must find a way across the river.” He arose and turned half-startled and half-expecting to find someone standing behind him, and he recognized the voice to be that of his father.

“What?” He replied clutching his staff with his right-hand looking bewildered. He clearly heard the warning as his heart began to race. “What direction shall I go, I am too small to cross this river, and I would die?” He yelled aloud to the surroundings, and of course, there was no answer as he waited.

He then turned west following the bank of the river half trotting along. He did this until sunset that day and slept during the night. Sometime in the morning, the voice returned to him in the same fashion, “Boy, you must find a way across the river” and there was nothing more. Lithius continued at a fast pace until his sides hurt, it was now midday and still no sign of the river getting any more likely to cross, or any sign of a bridge to aid him.

The boy did not waste time throughout the day, only taking a break long enough to muster enough strength to go again. Eventually he ran up to a

large path, a dirt trail that ran up along the upper bank. He decided to go along the path; he would cover even more distance easier than taking his chances along the lower bank next to the water. The day eventually turned toward night, and before it got completely dark on the small boy, he found the safety of a small tree, a tree that looked odd to him, like those in the forest across the water. That night, he ate the rest of what little of the bread he had left, he was now out of food, and this worried him. Throughout the last couple of days, he has seen no sign of wildlife with the exception of an eagle that flew high overhead. The young boy in his tenth season figured the eagle was also searching in hopes to uncover an unsuspecting hare, but eventually the eagle had moved on, perhaps crossing the river to the forest, so the young boy thought.

The boys slept soundly throughout the night, and in the early dawn, he awoke just as the stars were fading from the brightening sky. It was early as he wiped the sleep away, he was cold and slightly stiff, he knew how to build a fire, but since his escape, he decided against it, too easy for someone to spot him, or the Tarvas to find him. As he arose, he could see a twinkling of a different light from the woods across the river. As he looked, he could see they were scattered campfires, he could smell any smoke, or hear anything beyond the sounds of the river, but he could definitely see the light. He stood there for a few moments looking and the voice came again, "Boy, you must find a way across the river." The voice faded quickly, quicker than before and it sounded somewhat different, a voice familiar like his father's, but

somehow different, never the less he then grabbed his staff and trotted along the trail that followed along the river that shortly turned with the waters south.

By midmorning the young boy ran across large number of tracks, mostly sandaled footprints of what looked like young children, women, and others he would assume would be of men. Oddly, there were no tracks of livestock, no other creatures, and one other thing that he seemed thankful for, no signs of the Tarvas. The tracks, weeks old all was heading to the same direction that the child was heading. He continued as best as he could that eventually led to a small cluster of trees, trees like that from across the river.

Once inside the shade of these trees, the dirt path widened into a stony path that was three times as wide as the boy was tall. He found this path odd and he has never seen such a path made of such a stone. The boy then looked directly across this path and could see another dirt path, like the very same he was on. He crossed the stony pathway to the dirt, there he could see the footprints, and they were different from the ones he was following, other people traveling toward the stony pathway. He looked north along the stony path and could see no sign of tracks, he turned south and could not find any available due to the stones. He wiped the sweat from his brow that was stinging his eyes, as it was silent in the small patch of trees and with the exception of crickets and a few grasshoppers singing.

He realized that the people, those that left the tracks from both trails were in a hurry. There was no sign of livestock headed to this point from both

directions, and as the boy concluded, perhaps they were chased, but there was no sign of the Tarvas. He looked south as the path lead slightly west down from the small hill along to a thicker cluster of trees. He figured this was his best bet, which is if he wanted to see his eleventh season.

The boy followed the stony path through the ever-thickening woods, the shade offered coolness as his lungs were on fire and his sides aching from the fast pace. He could not see the mountains any longer, or the plains behind him. He spent a few minutes catching his breath and taking in some water. “Almost there. You must keep going, you are in danger here” It was the voice, not as faint as before, the voice still sounded near the boy, but the boy realized that the voice was more like coming from within him.

“Who are you?” The boy insisted, but there was no answer. “What danger?” the boy asked, and like before no reply.

The boy forced himself to go on as best as he could through the thickening woods on where it was becoming quite dark. At least, he could hear small birds and the sound of small game scurrying through the brush. By late afternoon, the boy could not continue to run any longer and found a dark cool shaded spot that concealed him from view as he fought hard to regain his breath and collapsed.

It was late in the day when he came around out of his slumber, he felt rested but hungry, and he drank from his flask, his lips parched, and his limbs trembling from the lack of food and strength. As he arose, he looked across the stony path, found a small shrub of berries, and crossed the path and picked

them; he recognized them as a safe berry that tasted especially sweet, not as bitter as the ones before. After he carefully picked them, he put what he could not eat into his small pack and headed once again down the stone path.

By sunset, it was entirely too dark within the woods for him to see clearly, he found shelter like before and rested there until morning. When he arose again, it was due to the sound of thundering hooves quickly approaching. The sound filled the forest and he could sense the sounds of many riders were coming from the north. As the riders came into view, he could see they were Tarvas Warriors on Larnges, huge and fast six legged wholly beasts, larger than the horses sent from the gods of the time of old. The boy only saw these horses, the creatures that by the stories of the great elders of his camp said that come from another world far away. As far as the Larnges, these creatures were of this world, but for the boy, he had only seen a couple few in the wild as he was growing up. He knew of no one from his tribe that rode such creatures. His father told him that there was other Ramadans farther east and to the south that did, and of course only a few Tarvas.

As the Warriors' foes rode in a hurry passed the view of the small boy, he could see that these warriors were not the same as those that captured him and his mother. They were slightly different, the color and markings upon their faces in paint were of something the boy has never seen before. There must have been fifty or so riders kicking up the dust and heading in a great hurry with weapons drawn, mostly spears, and swords.

The Warriors, as soon as they had appeared, they were gone as the thunderous sound faded off into the south and out of the eyesight of the small boy. At first he thought, perhaps they were after him, but quickly dismissed it, if he could not find tracks along the stony path, how could they? Besides, they were traveling toward some sort of a blistering attack.

The boy then gathered his belongings and began walking toward the stony path, "If they would have found you, they would have killed you." It was the voice again, sounding even stronger, and more unlike the boy's voice of his father.

"Who are you?" The boys said.

"Someone who has been watching you from afar" The voice replied somewhat reassuring as it could not to alarm the boy who was looking in all directions for the source of the boy.

"Were you the eagle?" The boys asked bewildered and scared.

"No, though I did see him aloft wondering about the same thing as I was"

"What is it that you are wondering?" The boy asked still trying to uncover the source of the voice.

"Why a small boy alone travels great distance alone?" The voice asked as it transformed fully from the voice of the boy's father to an older voice, a voice belonging to an older man, a foreigner that knew the tongue of the Ramadan.

"Not to worry, I mean you no harm man-cub..."

The boy quipped.

"A young Ramadan, and by the looks of it, a young lad who's been through a lot in recent days"

The boy remained silent as the voice, a dialect in it that the young Ramadan has never heard before.

“If I spoke to you in such a fashion a couple of days ago without any familiarity you would bolt away and I could not guide you.”

“Guide me where?” The boy insisted as he drew his free hand to the hilt of his dagger.

“No need for that, I will not harm you.” The voice said. The boy could feel eyes, unseen eyes upon him.

“How did you know the voice of my father?” The boy asked as his heart raced.

“I read it in your mind; I thought at first you knew I was running around in your thoughts. I also know that you are alone.” The boy remained now motionless except for his probing green eyes looking around the forest for the sign of this trick.

“...I am sorry about your mother as well The Tarvas are ruthless people who do not appreciate the value of their won life let alone a life of one of their slaves I’m afraid. But yet a child was able to fool them and escape” Then the boy felt something, like a hand inside of his thoughts unrolling the scrolls of his thoughts.

“I feel you now, demon!” The boy drew out the dagger.

“Demon?” The voice quizzed, “No, not a demon, I am afraid you are a little wrong on that one.” The feeling of someone inside of his head grew probing his every thought and the young boy did not like it and closed his eyes and strained to find the culprit in his head and once doing so, he has seized

the silhouette of a dark figure like a twisted man without features, a face he could not see.

The boy could see the phantom in his head clearly enough to see it seemed surprised that the boy's thoughts were looking back at the figure. "Release me?" the figure warned inside the boy's head.

"No, I will not!" The child warned as beads of sweat began dripping down from his forehead. The figure then broke free, knocking the boy down physically and removed itself from the boy's mind.

"Amazing, a man-cub, who caught me?" The boy could hear the amazement in the wolf's words. The young boy continued to guard his thoughts. In a way, he was both astonished and could not readily explain this gift.

"I am Naverron, great druidic wolf of the Najar." The boy never heard of such a thing and still on his guard became somewhat curious.

"A wolf?" the boy asked.

"Yes, a wolf" The voice was clearer now than ever before as it began to continue to speak.

"I saw you several days ago when I first came to you. However, I spotted you from the other side of the river. First, I noticed the sent, I knew you were Ramadan, and everyone knows what has been happening to the Ramadans with the Tarvas. So I went to seek you out, found out more about you, and well, I guided you here and thus far, you aren't dead." The voice paused for only a moment, "I took pity on your loss"

"I do not need your pity!" The boy raised his dagger in plain sight.

“That is pride talking their man-cub, and for the dagger would not be much use in your hands against me if I chose to harm you, on which, as I said before, I do not.”

“Show yourself, wolf!” The boy firmly demanded the actions of his words.

“Certainly.” The voice grew quiet and the boy could see from the settling dust from across the stony pathway arose two intensive red eyes, the color of rubies catching what little light there was being offered by the dense foliage. As the wolf entered the stony pathway, the light caught the shining pitch-black fur of the huge beast, its glaring red eyes focused on the boy with the dagger in his hand, not to mention, and the staff in the other. The huge wolf, an animal that outsized the boy in weight and height, then stopped and rested its backside firmly on the stony path never looking away from the boy in the foliage beyond.

The boy could sense the glaring red eyes upon him, and he knew if the wolf wanted to, the wolf could easily take the small boy. “What kind of wolf can speak to a, a, a”

“Man-cub?” the wolf responded.

“Yes.” The boy answered back.

“As I said, I am a Najar.”

“I do not know what a Najar is, is it a type of wolf?” The boy was having some difficulty speaking because of the surmounting fear from the sight of such a powerful wolf, a wolf that was at least twice the size of any wolf that the boy seen growing up.

“Najar, no, not a wolf but of the people far away from here, though you see a wolf before you, I

was indeed a man before.” The wolf spoke through its telepathic powers to the child standing on the other side.

“What trick is this?” The boy was becoming even more bewildered by all of this as the wolf could clearly see.

“I was once a man, a powerful man, a druid of my people the Najjar”

“A druid, what is a druid?” The boy asked.

“A shaman to your people, you do know what a shaman is, right?” The wolf asked with an element of understanding.

“Yes, yes, my father was a shaman before he died.” The boy insisted.

“Pretty much the same in so many ways I suppose. So I chose long ago of being a wolf instead of being a human. A wolf is a sacred animal, but I am still very much a man as I was inside, this is how I can clearly talk with you through the powers of telepathy.” Naverron added.

Naverron’s voice did not sound cold, or sinister like the voice in the mountains. Therefore, the young boy decided he would keep that part, the part of the sinister voice to himself.

“So you are a man in a wolf’s body?” The boy asked looking as bewildered as before.

“No, I am a wolf, just with a spirit of a man. Before I was a man with a spirit of a wolf in him, do you understand?”

“Not really, but I hear your words though you do not open your mouth only to pant or yawn. Why should I trust you?” The boy asked, looking curious at the huge wolf.

“That is a good question, why would you trust me?” Naverron concluded looking down at his two front paws and then back up at the boy who was still concealed in the brush across the path.

“Who taught you the tongue of the Ramadan?” The boy quipped as he held the dagger firmly in his left hand.

“I learned some of it, well, long ago when I first traveled into the Great Plains, long before the Tarvas, and some of it from you since the other day.” The wolf answered.

“If you do not make it to the other side of this river, you will most certainly be caught, more likely than not, killed. If you follow me, I will guide you safely to the other side to the land of the Gwarvarik people. The forestland you have been seeing since you arrived at the great river. There you will travel to the temple ruins of Adajahara. It will be at Adajahara that you will take your leave from me, and we will go our separate ways.” The wolf then grew silent.

“Why have you really chosen to help me?” The boy insisted.

“It’s a long, long story, and if you do not mind, we must go. Adajahara is at the least three days travel from here.” The wolf then arose to all fours and then trotted off only looking once more at the direction of the small boy.

“You can choose life, or you can take your chances with death there in the fallen lands of the Ramadan boy.”

The boy stood there thinking on the words of the Najar wolf and decided to take his chances with the black creature. In doing so, the boy followed

behind him to a great bridge that crossed only halfway across the river to a huge island in the middle. The direct sunlight nearly blinded the boy as he stood there watching the wolf continuing to cross the cobblestone bridge.

The boy had put his dagger away and trotted off after the large wolf as he led the way to the tall trees on the other side of the bridge.

Naverron was the first to cross over into the island, "Come man-cub, we are halfway there to the land of the Gwarvarik." Naverron said without turning around. The boy focused his thoughts toward the wolf far above in front of him, "Can you hear me?" the boy thought without saying a word physically.

"What?" Naverron said suddenly as if he half heard the boy.

"Can you hear me?" The young boy focused with all of his strength.

"Yes, I can, how far back are you?" The wolf turned and trotted back and could see the astonished boy's face halfway to the island, "Come, quit dragging your feet." The wolf said as urgently as he could.

"Okay, I am coming." The boy could see that the wolf realized what he was doing, he was talking to the wolf in a like manner, this of course, and the boy could sense that the wolf was a bit nerved by this.

The wolf turned and trotted back toward the island, "I know you can hear me Naverron" The boy concentrated as he ran headlong toward Naverron. "Yes, yes." The wolf replied as he continued along the path that ran up higher along the island.

Eventually, the cobblestone trail headed to the steep hill of the island, and from there, the boy and the wolf could see in either direction for a great distance. The two could see another bridge on the other side of the island toward the Gwarvarik forestland made of the same stone as the other bridge in like fashion. More importantly, the boy could see that the Tarvas riders were nowhere to be seen.

“So what happened to the riders?” the boy asked Naverron using the new found gift, and with it, the boy could see enough into Naverron’s thoughts that he truly was not there to hurt the boy. The wolf was there to help him, and the boy could sense that Naverron was actually sent, “...sent by whom?” the boy thought. Nevertheless, he was trying to be as careful as he could not to raise the suspicion in Naverron. He knew for whatever reason unknown to the boy that the gift had come natural and easy enough, but did not understand how.

“Whom did I come across this gift Naverron?” the boy asked while he was attempting to catch his breath.

Naverron was preoccupied by something; something far more important than the boy stumbling upon the gift of telepathy and the boy was sensing this as he noticed the large wolf looking on behind them to the huge plains. The boy turned to face the same direction, and with his left hand, he put on the top of the front shoulders of Naverron. “What do you see?” the boy asked.

“The bloodshed will continue until your people are destroyed and have become the ashes and dust of the land. I am also afraid that the Gwarvarik is next,

we must go, climb upon me, I can support you and grab hold of my mane.” Naverron warned.

The boy did so, Naverron trotted down the hill along the winding path into the forest below, and within a few minutes, they crossed to the other side into Gwarvarik. Upon there, Naverron found yet another path leading south and the boy suspected that this path also made of stone would lead to Adajahara.

“What is Adajahara?” The boy asked as he realized that this could be a name of a place.

“A sacred ancient places of people long ago, a place that I must take you.” Naverron said as he panted along the winding trail at a great speed.

“Are these the Gwarvarik people you talk about?”

“No, an ancient race of people long forgotten that very little of the Gwarvarik know about and more importantly, the Tarvas knows nothing about. Be still so that I may concentrate on the way.” He warned, as the boy grew silent.

The wolf raced through the winding woods with great speed and with the boy on his back. This was the case for the remainder of that day. By night, the two rested by a small stream of fresh cold water.

“What of the Tarvas Warriors that we saw earlier?” the boy asked.

“They remained on the first path. The first path will lead eventually to a city of the Gwarvarik, there they will meet with the others already outside the walls of the city, and it will be there that they will find their deaths. The city will eventually fall to the Tarvas, but not for a while yet to come. Already there are soldiers from other villages along the river’s edge that

has joined to do battle against the savages from the mountains, and the Gwarvarik is not as simple as your people man-cub.” The wolf then grew quiet as it took a cool drink from the small bubbling stream of moss-covered rocks.

The boy thought about the campfires he caught a glimpse from earlier, “So that was them?” He thought to himself.

“That was who?” The wolf said.

“Oh the soldiers from the campfires I saw from when I was on the other side of the river a couple of days ago.” The boy whispered.

“Build us a fire if you know how, and I will fetch us supper.” Naverron said looking back at the boy standing there looking somewhat amazed.

“Is it safe?”

“Safe enough” The boy then turned back to the wolf, but the wolf was gone without a sound. A few minutes later, the boy had started a small fire and went to go fetch larger sticks close by and on his return; he saw the large wolf that just dropped a huge hare before the flames.

“It has been a very long time since I have had a cooked rabbit.” The wolf added looking up over at the small boy who was pleasantly surprised.

After supper, the boy filled with meat inside of him grew tired and slept throughout the night. The wolf, Naverron spent most of the evening looking and sniffing about in the night air, looking for something or someone in the distance, someone who hadn't come.

By morning, Naverron woke up the small boy. Like the manner before, the boy saddled the wolf.

The two headed deeper into the forest along the path that out skirted a small village and traveling along the steep hillside of the mountains along the dirt path that faded to nothing. By the evening of the second night in the land of Gwarvarik, up high in the mountains on where the thick forest below tapers considerably, the two had covered great distances. Again, Naverron was treated to cooked meat, and the boy to fresh rabbit. By the third day with little said from Naverron, the two headed up along the crest of the jaded mountains, and to a forest of pines and heavy mountain forest timber. "These trees I know of," the boy said.

"What of the heavy oaks below?" Naverron asked.

"No, they are strange to me?" The boy admitted.

"I see" Naverron said as his attention turned toward Adajahara.

"Up ahead are the ancient ruins, the temples of Adajahara, and it will be here that I will leave you. This is where we will our separate paths." The wolf said soberly.

"Why, why must we separate?" The young boy, who over the last three days grew closer to Naverron as a friend gaining trust as they went on in this adventure.

"It is the way it is supposed to be, this is they way it is intended, do you feel that?" Naverron said.

"Yes, but I do not know why, can I go with you?" the boy asked desperately.

"No, I go to Najar now; it is a very long way from here, very long across the sea and leagues, and passed the shores on the other side."

The boy who had grown close to the wolf, his heart was becoming heavy, “Will I ever see you again?” This caused the wolf to stop in his tracks.

“The next time you will see me, things will be different I’m afraid, and you will be a man, but you will see me again.” Then Naverron grew quiet as the boy held back the welling tears as best he could in his green eyes.

“Many things are not without some sacrifice in this world my young friend, just as you and too many others. I’m afraid has paid too dear of a price, but do not become bitter, do not allow your heart to grow cold whatever you do. I sense that you will become a very powerful man, a man, that will surpass the powers of your father and will lead men, but that is all I can see, other than a dark future of a storm on where I will see you once more, but as a man.” Naverron grew silent and without another word delivered the young boy to the high table rock, a mesa that had a few ancient building covered in moss and vines. From the distance, the boy could see the buildings were made of white stone under the green growth.

“Adajahara” Naverron stopped, “I am afraid my back is rather tired man-cub, could you please get down.” Naverron asked politely.

The boy slipped off and looked at the ancient site. “As you can see, the path down there, follow that up to the temples, there you shall see the main temple, look, it’s the one with a huge dome, and do you see?” The wolf asked.

The boy could see a huge building with a white dome. Upon this white dome, a huge groove or gap

that started at the top of the structure's roof that ran straight down to the base of the dome. "Yes, I see it?"

"Good, and do you see those animals in the field nest to the great temple through the mist?"

"Sheep?" the boy half asked.

"Yes, they are sheep, they are Adajahara temple sheep, they are your sheep, take care of them, and they will take care of you." Naverron said softly.

"Why are you bring me here?" The boy turned to face Naverron.

"To keep you safe, safe from the war below that will soon sweep this land, and like I said there are only a handful of people that know of this place. There is no one down there in Adajahara, just the sheep and you." There was something that Naverron wasn't saying, and the boy could sense it. The boy could sense that the wolf knew that the boy was attempting to peer into his mind in like fashion as the wolf did earlier.

"Now mind what I say, you will be safe young Ramadan, grow wise in the wisdom of the temples below and take care of yourself, already I am late." The wolf warned.

"You have not answered my question Naverron, why are we really here?" the boy insisted.

"In time there will be another who will come and answer that, and of course, other questions. Now listen, there is a great cistern below the temples, there is fresh water, a lake really, but be careful when going down there, draw from the rain water for the livestock as best as you can, the rain season will be in the fall, and in the winter, the snow, but not a lot, least so I am told. Look at the orchard south passed the

pasture; they are of trees not of this world that bare fruit in the late spring and summer, they are ripening even now, as we speak. Store this fruit well; you will draw from them time to time”

The boy turned once more, looking at the three tightly organized rows of trees toward Naverron, but the wolf was gone. “You never did get my name” The boy said through his telepathic power, but no response from Naverron as tears welled up in his eyes as he realized that he was once again very alone, and his future, uncertain.





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The Sword of Souls is the first book of the mystifying Chronicles of Caledon. The book introduces the reader to the Caledon world (Caledon Prime) and a brief history of the planet and how it came to be up to present time is briefly written in the introduction. However, you must read into the book where there are dark passages that clues the reader to more of the rich history adding to the ominous ambience of the series.

The book also introduces the people and kingdoms of this distant world as well as setting the stage in a powerfully rich and dynamic saga.

The Sword of Souls, named after the very powerful translation of "Talqardez-Solstas" from the language of its mysterious maker that men will literally be driven to madness by the supreme and supernatural power.

The Sword of Souls launches just after the fall of the Ramadan tribes by the merciless red bearded Tarvas who invade sparing only the women and the young children in their brutal endeavors of destruction.

The Sword of Souls also introduces the main character of the book, a young orphan by the name of Lithius.

Lithius manages to miraculously escape from the bondage of the Tarvas warriors and his life's journey begins spiraling down through the Catanbar Mountains along the Thunder River and through the Southern Steppes embracing his destiny in a dark and foreboding isle of the "dragons."

Lithius through his acquired strength and magic begins his ascension only to embrace the formidable armies and darker secrets of the evil Lord of Draccus..

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# CHRONICLES OF CALEDON

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## FROM THE AUTHOR

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your continued support by downloading and sampling this book and consequently, the series. The Chronicles of Caledon is a concept of mine that began around 2001-2002 with the foundations of the beginnings with the first book.

Since then, the groundwork continued as we moved to Deadwood, South Dakota, and we never looked back. Continuing both in generating the new adult sci-fi fantasy novels and support for my literary work in this endeavor, we are pleased to offer the world community not only with this fascinating and intriguing mystical world, but with an "award winning" site to support my work that I personally hope you enjoy.

Obviously, hard work pays off, and it shows throughout the site. As an avid reader myself and a very heavy hand in the development of the Caledon world to include the characters, history, and the saga of adventure, it's hard for me — Check that — Impossible for me to let the dust settle of this remarkable place. Having said this, I would like to invite you to come and visit us at [www.caledonseries.com](http://www.caledonseries.com) whenever you get the chance.

By visiting the site, you will be kept current with all things "Caledon." The site is chock-full with information not only explaining my writing, what the series is about, and the latest news such as book signings, links to order the full versions of the novels through on-line bookstores to include, Barnes and Nobel, Amazon Books, iUniverse, and additional stores.

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