

An m/m erotic-romantic fantasy: very sexual, bloody, romantic -- no witches, dragons, elves, shape-shifters -- with a Game of Thrones ambiance, (a minimum of swordplay), and a strong moral thread woven throughout. All the sexes mixed.

# CHRONICLES OF THE MIGHTY AND THE FALLEN

(an m/m erotic-romantic fantasy)

by Richard McHenry

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CHRONICLES  
of the  
MIGHTY and the  
FALLEN



*(an m/m  
erotic-romantic fantasy)*

Richard McHenry

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**PART ONE:**

**The Taking of The Slave.**

## 1. Assessing The Prey.

Splinters of lightning ripped through the dark, rages of rain following. Dull thunder, winds ravaging. I paused to determine the faint lines of the shelter ahead. We had planned well, I thought. Yet who was to say what awaited me inside was really about to be, or happen? Perhaps he was not there, or perhaps with someone unexpected: a guest, a conquest, an equal partner? And best laid plans can go awry. To tackle one giant at a time was the best I could hope for. My wavering stomach nerves roiled at the thought of just being there, much less my mission—*daunting*. So easily the things that could go askew. The wind sliced at my face, wound in under the hooded cloak to the back of my neck. I shivered violently. Half-soaked from the rain, I felt ashen, cold, and damned miserable... my legs torn and stiff as I eased down in the near midnight darkness. The horse, I tied loosely at the gate post.

I had started off two days before, knowing the weather had been predicted to turn bad. It was our ideal strategy: arrive in some distress, in need of assistance, asking for help. Only a man of little character would turn someone away in such a situation. The least he might do is tell me to stay in the barn, then shove off when the storm has abated. But this had turned out to be a tempest of rare order. Some two hours earlier, my rain-proofed cloak had caught a gust, got snagged on a tree limb, was ripped off in the wet, and I was unable to retrieve it. I was now in a tightly woven wool wrap, that while some barrier and repellant to the rain, had finally surrendered to the elements. It felt like a water-sogged blanket, weighted cold and heavy on my shoulders, seeping a nasty chill into my bones. My teeth chattered. Naturally, muscular men don't bear the cold well when they have little body fat. I wasn't as lean as I'd have liked, but my modest extra weight was this

time a true blessing. If I weren't careful, I might soon fall victim to exposure. So I was urgent on two counts: to proceed with my mission, and not perish in the process. The horse just lowered her head reluctantly where I'd tied her. A good steed. But even horses need to be treated with some respect. I cared to have her sheltered as soon as possible, along with myself. Plain common sense, and ordinary survival.

The sheltered door ahead loomed stark and foreboding, a tight fortress of heavy wooden beams set firmly against the rock. I had heard it covered the craggy face of an underground cavern, going how far in no one knew, because they'd never had access. Rumors of the supposed dweller of the place could also be true or false. He was reputed to be among the most formidable men of the kingdom, near as mighty as our once deceased king had been: Raynor, the best built, most desirable of men, a handsome, light-bronzed mulatto—who had humbled many, and left many aching for more—strangely murdered in his own bed, even with his own body. So it was said, but well-hushed over years before I had fully become a man. And therefore the tale of how Garneth had become king in his place, ever a matter of speculation.

But knowing Garneth personally, I could believe he was capable of anything: a ruthless and cruel man, who lived only for his own pleasures. His once impressive beauty now an aura of steely misery around him. And he was never to be crossed under any circumstances. Though one could sense an aching void within, an indescribable grief ongoing, thinly disguised by his relentless acts of cruelty, and almost rabid killing of young, desirable women and men... still a matter of some conjecture and rumor. If he had accomplices, they kept silent. And could a king not do anything he pleased? Though I feared to believe it possible. Yet I was bound to him by oath, and thus my assignment, the nature of which did cause me to suspect the rumors were true—my own life at stake, as well.

The dark wind howled demonically, shrieking, slashing through the scattered foliage. I saw a glimmer of light from within. The branches of the trees wove in tattered dances, slapping the sides of the layered rocks, the edges of the wooden face of the structure. A vague window slit was apparent, but I could see little from this side. Perhaps there was another entrance? I took a deep breath, and knocked hard.



After three times, a shadow passed the louvered slit—I heard a sharp, distinct slam, then a bolt being withdrawn. The door opened.

A shielded giant of a man stood there, short sword in hand. The light glared from behind him. Even so, my first impression was that the figure was Garneth himself, and at the ready, a tall man of no small proportions. I felt suddenly much lesser. Though being a fine, well-formed man myself, I seemed to come no higher than the mid-portion of his chest. But then, I was on a lower step than he. I dropped back.

He challenged: “Who are you? What do you want?”

I opened my mouth and my tongue froze, looking at him. He had lowered the shield a bit, and I saw a man of true masculine beauty. Not what I’d planned at all. After all, I had to be the aggressive one, if not merely deceptive. I couldn’t jabber like a schoolboy—.

My stomach churned.

“Are you lost?” he interjected more pleasantly.” It’s a rough night. Are you alone?”

“Uhh, rather. But I was on the way to Jernsborg, and think I’ve taken a wrong turn at the tri-cut, back a ways. And it’s a blasted night to be about. I was wondering if maybe I could stop for a chance to get warm and dry, maybe a brief shelter in your stable or something, till maybe in the morning it might be better weather?” I was rather yammering.

He noted my confusion and eased down the sword, then suddenly raised it to my chest. “You have a horse?” pointing it first at me, then outwards to the dark.

“Yes, I tied her to the post, there.”

He lowered the sword, looking at me intently. I pulled back my hood so he could see better. He seemed no longer threatened, taking in the dark mass of my hair, and not unattractive face. I had been chosen, though not the most handsome nor biggest of the candidates available, but perhaps for a certain clear innocence I seemed to project, often unawares. My features were well-defined and masculinely pleasant. Not hard and macho, but honest and considered highly agreeable to most.

“Well, come—.” He grabbed a heavy cloak from near the door, sword still in hand, discarding the shield. He looked around carefully as we descended from the small, running steps by the door, pulling it shut behind him. The wind howled more fiercely, we tightened our hoods. He glanced towards me and a ferocious blast of rain slammed

into our faces. He cursed something under his breath, took me to the horse, unfastened her, and led us around to a small shelter I hadn't noticed on the other side of the rock face. We pried the door open, and the stall smell hit us with its vapid warmth. There was a faint light burning from some well-protected oil lamps placed in strategic spots. His own horse was stalled there. There were three stalls. He gave me the reins of my horse, and indicated I should get her unsaddled and readied. I did so in a flash, shivering, and draining water all over the place from my soaked clothing. He seemed amused.

"I can't thank you enough," I said. "We'll be fine, here. I can settle down in the empty one, if that's alright?"

He gave an odd tilt to his head, and a heavy hand reached out to rest lightly on my shoulder. "No," he said. "Come inside. Stay, and get warm."

This was going to be easier than I had hoped. Still not sure, though. Closer to him now, it was a gesture of such warmth something flooded through me I never expected. He had a massive mane of thick, darkish-blond hair, or so it appeared in the dimness of the light, apparently pulled tightly along the sides of his head, bound at the back. Not quite a pony tail, but more heavily wrapped behind him. His mouth was full, broad-lipped, finely jawed; his face squarely cut, with an appealing cleft centered in his broad chin. His brow was thick, bone-ridged, the eyes set deep and clear. The touch of his hand on my shoulder unnerved me. His neck looked like a fine and well-formed column, springing up from some impressive traps. The effect of his eyes, still and sharp, of an indeterminate color... intensely inviting. I dared not stare.

I smiled, and said, "More than generous of you. Thanks. Let me get my gear," turning to scoop up the saddle bags. He waited. I followed him outside.

\* \*

We entered what appeared to be a semi well-hewn cave, flanked with wooden panel-beaming on the sides. There was a soft moistness to the air, *unusual*. There were a few rooms, divided by sheer and opaque hangings from above: some plain, some of a hand-woven nature, with intricate designs, warm and inviting. A cooking area. A wide-open living space... then the smaller rooms partitioned off

beyond. One of the walls was heavily laden with books and scrolls. Lamps were scattered and profuse, yet modestly lit.

The main room was a wide, carefully carved arc, semi-circular, but squared off at the edges. Inside, the area revealed a pleasant, broad roaring fire, the wood piled in huge chunks in a far corner; a well-cushioned divan, and a chair or two, set at spacious intervals. The floor was moderately covered in luxurious animal skins and tapestries, particularly by the hearth. One could imagine it as an idyllic place to be, nestled down in the thick fur with a beloved companion, sipping wine, gazing into the fire and wrapped in each other's presence... whether there was a raging storm outside, or a cooling summer's breeze to stir the air. Or alone with oneself, engaged in reading or plain thinking. I liked it.

The aura was masculine, yet with an edge of warmth and color; not dim and drab, but subdued. Leather and canvas. Easy and comfortable, though austere. An oddity, though attractive, one crystal sphere seemed to have an intriguing place of its own on a special stand. While rounded, its sides were not smoothly circular, but rather jagged and strongly faceted, the points jutting sharply, catching the light, spreading its refracted brilliance throughout the room.

He removed his gear, while I stood there shivering by the fire. Then, coming near me, taking the water-laden cloak from my shoulders, he said firmly, "What you need... is to get out of those clothes—all of them."

I looked at him, finally aware of the great mass of his hair now freed, bound behind his head, and heavily hung in a single plait nearly to his sacrum. It was incredibly appealing. His eyes, a stunning dark gray. But the light still wasn't clear enough to be certain.

"Don't be shy. You're a man, I'm a man. You're soaked. I'll get you a dry cloak, and be back. Lay out your things to dry. Then, you can have a warm bath, something to eat. And get some rest."

My mouth worked, but said little. I sort of swallowed, and nodded. "Sure. You're right. I'm cold as hell."

He left, and I began to peel off my top tunic, under tunic, boots, and leather leggings. I hesitated for a moment, then slipped out of my undersling garment, stood closer to the fire. Its warmth was inviting, caressing me with its heat, luxurious and sensual against my naked skin. I worried I wasn't hung well enough to impress him, being shriveled and cold. I was proud of my endowment, but it felt

withdrawn, more boyish than manly. And that would not be good. I tugged a little at my genitals to warm them—he caught me as he came back in. He surveyed me with what I thought was an imperceptible grin, an almost indrawn breath, but remained deadly casual.

And with a twinkle, complimentary, “I see... you’re beautifully built, well-muscled, indeed. What do you weigh?” pausing. “And finely endowed. You don’t need to impress me.” Cradling the cloak, he extended a drying cloth for my face and head.

I think I turned red, even in the glow of the fire, and looked abashed. “About two-ten.”

“Nothing to be ashamed of. I could tell you were well-made, the minute I laid eyes on you. Something in your jawline. Neck. Always a good indicator. Even in the rain.” He smiled, holding out the cloak, not getting too near. I was secretly pleased, flattered, humbled by his admiration. He shrugged. “Hey, it’s why we care to work out—.”

“You’re hellaciously bigger,” I noted. “How much?”

The breadth of his shoulders alone was staggering. He looked almost top heavy, as I had yet to see the thickness of his quads. His short tunic hung to his knees, keeping their mass out of sight. Not the normal style, since most tunics were cut a bit higher these days to allow the thigh muscles to be shown more. Of course, if he was as well-hung as reported, that might be a reason for the longer hemmed tunic. His mid-calved soft boots revealed hidden knots of densely packed muscle even there. I found myself breathing a little uncomfortably, charged with an inner sense of destiny. Strange, I was in love with his calves, though I could barely see them.

“Two-seventy, two-eighty, sometimes. It’s not the size, it’s the cut.” *I could have crushed against him in a rush.* “Smaller men can be even finer,” he went on, “if they can maintain their symmetry, with the added bulk. You’ve done well.”

I couldn’t believe I was hearing what I was hearing, nor having felt what I had just felt. But it was part of the plan, wasn’t it? I reassured myself that’s what it was.

“Coming from you, that’s quite a compliment,” I stammered. Letting him know I also admired his physique, noticeably prominent in his clothes.

“I’m impressed,” he said, looking directly at my half-turned frontal nudity towards him. “You’re more than the usual. And many do work hard to look good. Your pecs and arms are magnificent.”

I felt my nipples harden. My loins stirred. *We were getting there.* First, I caught his eyes and held them, just a moment, and glanced down. I shrugged into the cloak, letting the front hang open a few seconds, before fastening the waist cord. Wanting him to see the beginning of my engorgement, yet treating it shyly.

“I think yours comes more from what’s inside you, though—just a hunch. Not just heredity.”

“And you?” Though I hadn’t seen him except through his clothes.

With a slanted grin, “Yes, well... I have a little “help.” A potion I take. Stick around, maybe I can give you a few pointers.”

“I’d like that. But, I guess I have to get out of here early, tomorrow.”

There was a strange pause.

“You can always stop back, if you’d like.”

“Maybe....”

“Now,” he said, “off to the baths.”

“What?”

He took my arm warmly, pressed in on the thickness of the triceps barely a moment. “Follow me.”

He led the way back beyond the cooking area, past one of the sleeping areas, to another large doorway. He opened it slowly. The warmth and rush of water vapors engulfed me, I gaped. The opening was quite wide, but not long: a steaming pool of mineral water lay in the center of the cavern, not twenty feet from the door. A beautifully lit area, with a roiling spring of heated waters bubbling lightly to the surface. Natural marble was tiled on the floors to the edge of the pool. An in-home paradise. Rocky, yet inviting. He grasped my shoulders lightly, pulled the cloak from me. “Go ahead,” he said. “Enjoy. I’ll fix something to eat.” He left abruptly, though pausing to take in my nakedness once more, without being obtrusive.

I felt high. This was going to be easier than I’d dreamed. If only I could muster the hard courage to finish the task, and saw it might still be tougher than expected! But he was being more than helpful. I had to snare him carefully. Or I’d be lost—and all those I knew and cared for, as well.

I stepped into the steaming water from the far side, where I saw broad chiseled steps leading down into the pool. The sensation was overwhelming. After the driving fierce rains, the piercing cold, the heat was almost too hot to adjust to. But I did so, rapidly. As I moved

further into the deeper side, immersing myself to my chin, I shivered in the rush of the effervescence surrounding me. It felt like I had been sensually enveloped in a vat of warm champagne. The continual bubbling stirred up around me, though the water was relatively clear. Soap? I didn't worry about it. I wanted to drift, to sleep, to completely relax... soothe, not think.

\* \*

I returned shortly, and found he had prepared a simple repast of cold meats and salads. He motioned, and we sat across from each other, eating quietly. A glance or two, a smile of vague amusement; he seemed ravenous, our nearness making each of us a little uncomfortable.

He had changed, removing his outer tunic, for a short, closer-fitting under tunic. I almost cringed at the size of his shoulders, pecs, and arms, the mass of his tapered, yet well-muscled legs now obviously apparent. For sure, I easily noted the heaviness of his undersling, strapped tightly to his thigh. And the wonder of his waist, nearly as small as mine, though he outweighed me by at least sixty-some pounds. Up close, he was more than stunning. His arms were goliath-like, yet so beautifully formed, the mass of them did not look overly bulked, or asymmetrically heavy... though not fully able to be seen, still covered by the loose, short, light blue sleeves of the tunic. But I could well see the might of his forearms, the crisp gold hair covering them, oar-thick wrists, and the wondrous massive belly of the lower biceps, all stridently veined. (I later discovered that he kept the rest of his body shaved, except for his genitals, forearms, armpits, and head.)

I didn't think even Garneth could compare, though this man was about four inches shorter than him, and six or so inches taller than me. I was afraid to wonder what he might look like with that tunic stripped off. But it didn't worry me. After all, I was straight. This was a job. I kept thinking of how it was to be inside my planned betrothed... how the glory of her breasts, and those incredible dark, large nipples drove me to distraction. Regardless of how many men I had been taught to "learn from," I had always managed to focus my mind back on her. Her mouth, a pool of honey and flowers, soft enveloping warmth, and sweet fragrances. Dazzling green eyes. I was entranced. With my aroused broad cock, forcing slowly into her angel-soft moistness—

heaven on earth... my thick glans causing her to thrash, to moan hungrily.

“You seem distracted,” he said. “Something wrong?”

I shook my head, startled back, thankful for the food.

“No, just thinking...” *And yes, for that wondrous, fine pool-bath I’d just had.* “I think I’ve been reborn,” I grinned. “And almost put to sleep. That pool is something else,” I chewed on. “You’re a good cook, too,” smiling at him, rakishly.

“Yes, I built this place around it. Or me and my partner did—years ago.”

Then he stopped. I detected a wall.

“Your partner?”

“Yes.”

“And, he’s not...?”

“Not with us any longer.”

“I see. An amiable—”

“No. He’s dead.”

“I’m sorry.”

“So am I.”

“How long?”

“Ten years. *Enough...*” He was freezing down. Then, cleared his throat. “Tell me about yourself.”

“I? Me, I’m just headed into Jernsborg to settle some business. Trying to get some leather traders and craftsmen to come more our way to Kennelbraith, so we can expand our business. My father, uncles and I, are into leather-tooling, furniture and personal items, clothing. We could use more reliable suppliers, as well as some skilled artisans to teach us a few things.”

“Married?”

“Working on it. Maybe next summer, if she isn’t pregnant before then. We try to be pretty proper, but sometimes get carried away. If you know what I mean?”

“A beautiful man like you, with such fine equipment, no problem for sure.”

“Come on.”

“Seriously.”

I think I turned green. Or red, again. “You flatter me. You’re no wilting sheepdog, either,” I swallowed. “And far greater than me, from what I can see, or imagine.”

“You’re a prince!” he laughed suddenly, a sharp jolt of amusement. “But you haven’t seen it all.” Somewhat devilishly.

I was surprised at his easy flirtatiousness. Perhaps he was hungrier than we might have thought; *or easier?* “Could I bear it?”

The bigger man looked at me. “You’ve got a sense of humor. I like that,” smiling faintly, and shrugged. “Maybe you will.”

“What—bear it, or see it?”

An intense, inquisitive smile. “Probably not. You’ve got your own agenda.”

I sighed. “Yeah, I guess I do.” With a heavy pause. “Your partner. It was a he?”

He just nodded.

“I see.”

“No, you don’t,” the blond corrected me. “Not unless it happened to you. No woman on earth....”

“Maybe for *you*.”

“Definitely. And maybe for you, too, if it ever—. Sorry,” he quietened. “It’s none of my business. I have enjoyed your company. I see... very few. Few, indeed.”

He seemed suddenly withdrawn.

“Friends?” I ventured.

“To truly speak to? Share with...? No. Not really.”

“But a virile man like you has to have someone, yes?”

His mouth formed a ragged slant.

“Not necessarily.”

“I’m stumped,” I said. I twirled the wine in my cup. “I could be a friend, if you’d like. I kind of feel close to you, in a way, though we just met. Just friends, you know?”

He opened his lips, those clear, white teeth, dazzling. Glorious full mouth.

“You... maybe we could. If we had time to know each other.” He appeared to almost reach out and grasp my wrist, touch the top of my hand. I sensed it, but it didn’t happen. “I like you. A lot.”

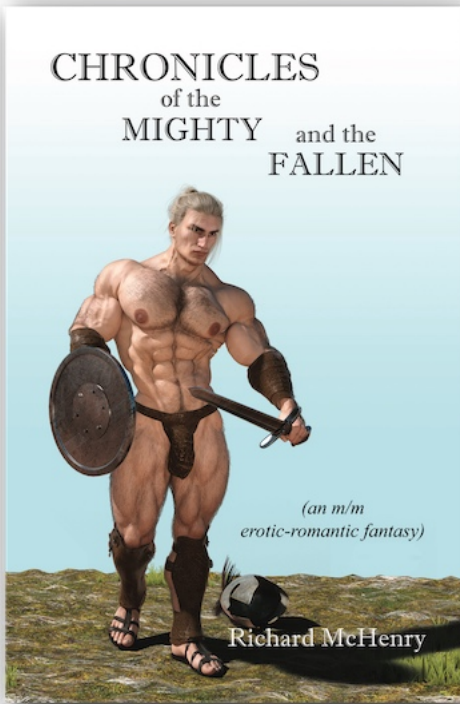
“Even if we, uhh...”

“... were just friends? To talk, hunt? Possible. But you’d need to be nearer than Kennelbraith.”

“It’s only little more than a day’s ride.”

“And if I needed help to lift a beam to my ceiling, I should have to ride over a day’s time and back to get it done?”





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