

THE KINGDOM : I

ALLIANCE

ONE CABIN : TWO WORLDS

T. J. Miller

Alliance

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Cover Art courtesy of shutterstock.com

Cover Design by Tyler Svec

Interior Design by Tyler Svec

ISBN #9798305440911

ISBN #979-8-2955-7275-3

ISBN #979-8-2955-7282-1

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Other Books by T. J. Miller

The Kingdom

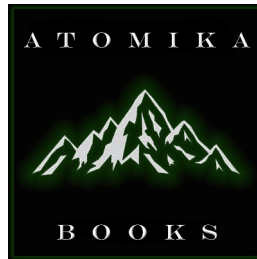
- I. Alliance
- II. Rebellion
- III. Redemption

Super Hero Stories

- Crunch
- Boom! (Coming Soon)

Drake Thomas

- 1. Rise of Grimdor
- 2. Deception of Merderick
- 3. The Dead Mountains
- 4. Idols & Trinkets
- 5. Rings of Koraz



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Introduction

For more than twenty years this story has been a part of my life, and this particular series will always hold a special place in my heart as they were the first books I ever wrote. It was twenty years ago that I started dabbling in writing. Nothing interesting, but it became a secret hobby of mine. It didn't take long for me to realize I was horrible at writing short stories.

Often I would spend weeks, or a month or two writing longer stories and then as quickly as I finished them I would throw them in the trash and start a new one.

The movies called *Dinotopia* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* were the big driving forces that got me into writing. I had struggled to write anything worthwhile for the first few years, but when finally I saw *The Chronicles of Narnia* and saw what you could accomplish when you use your story as an allegory...I was inspired.

This story has gone through many different forms, hence why we're publishing this second edition of Alliance.

In a rather humorous exchange, when my wife read these books, she loved them. She was also quite certain she needed to know more about two certain characters...to which I said ‘

‘Me too, let me know when you finish writing it.’

(I won't put the names of these characters here so as to not ruin the suspense)

So she began to write a great deal on these two characters and it was fun to learn a number of things that I didn't know about the characters! But it certainly shaped the course of the third book *Redemption* .

Therefore, whether the entire story Amanda started will be

published some day, we'll have to wait and see. Nonetheless I decided that sections of it needed to be included in these Second Edition books.

T. J. Miller

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ROY VAN DOREN looked out on the beautiful mountainside as he drove through the lush, green landscape. He glanced in the rear-view mirror, seeing the boxes and packages piled high in the back of his old pickup truck. Today was a day to remember.

“You sure you have to go so far away?” his older brother, Geoffrey, had asked him as he loaded his things.

“Yes, I do,” Roy had answered. “It's not that far.”

“And five hundred miles is a small distance?”

“I know you might not understand, but I have to leave. I have to get out.”

“I don't approve, but I understand,” Geoffrey replied. “Mom and Dad had their faults, and I know their dysfunction affected too many things, but it feels like you're running from the only family you have left.”

“That's not what I'm doing, okay?” Roy defended. “I just found a nice cabin and want to move there. Is that a crime?”

“No, it's not,” Geoffrey replied. “We're the only family either of us have left . . . so come visit every now and then, alright?”
“I will.”

Three days later, those words still echoed in his mind, reminding him he was now officially on his own. Nothing compared to smelling that long-awaited independence.

He loved his parents, but something told him he needed to get away, and he was well on his way to doing that. He had bought a small cabin in the Appalachian Mountains, nestled in an opening between several hills, with the most beautiful view he had ever laid eyes on.

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From the moment he had first seen the cabin, he had fallen in love with it, and it seemed nothing could keep him from getting it. The cabin itself had been abandoned for years and was in terrible shape; he had paid next to nothing for it. It might take some fixing, but he was good with his hands and would have it looking like a jewel in no time.

He cracked his window open and was greeted by the cool morning air. He took a deep breath, glad he hadn't moved to the city like Geoffrey had a few years earlier. As a small charter pilot, Geoffrey had made a good life for himself and made a very nice living besides. Roy knew he would probably never come close to being as well off as his brother, but that didn't matter to him.

All his life he had watched his dad work without stopping, and Roy had been beside his dad as he passed away on that dark, cold morning. He would never forget hearing his dad say, *"I wish I'd spent more time with you guys."* Roy found it ironic as he and Geoffrey had always come in second when presented with anything concerning making more money. However, his dad's sorrowful words had hit home in Roy's heart, and he had vowed he was going to live his life differently.

He didn't exactly know how he was going to live differently, but he knew that if he put his mind to it, anything was possible.

He flipped the radio on, listening to the slow, sad, country songs. The music drowned out his thoughts and pushed the memories from his mind. He focused on the twisting, pothole-filled road as he drove on.

He had only been up to look at the cabin once before, and part of him wondered what it would look like this time. The cabin itself was far different from the picture the realtor had shown him in the file, but aside from it all, it was the same old, beat-up cabin.

It was a nice cabin with a fantastic view, but there had been no explanation as to *why* it had been abandoned. The cabin inside looked as if someone had just picked up and left one day. The floor was dusty and dirty, and even some of the dishes were still in the sink.

He drove on, long into the night, struggling to push away the intruding thoughts of slumber. The radio sang another sad song, slowly lulling him into a light sleep.

His eyes closed, and his hands fell from the wheel as his truck went straight instead of navigating the turn. He was snapped awake and brought back to the present as his truck crashed through the guardrail and careened over the edge. The back end of his truck was thrown up into the air, tipping the truck vertically as Roy looked down the face of a one-hundred-foot drop.

Roy closed his eyes and didn't think he'd ever open them again as he plummeted toward the mountainside. His truck crashed into the ground and was sent end over end, flipping and rolling violently down the mountain. Crunching metal and shattering glass rang in his ears. His belongings were scattered and broken as the boxes were thrown out of the back of his truck. The truck lurched and rolled until it violently jerked to a stop against a tall oak tree.

Saved by the airbags and his seatbelt, he now sat unconscious in the driver's seat. The airbags had deflated, and the sound of the horn filled the valley far below the road. Fuel seeped from the tank, smoke rose from beneath the hood, and a few bare wires dropped sparks onto the ground.

The sparks fell to the ground and ignited the gasoline under his truck. The flames grew larger and began to lick the outside of his truck, burning hotter and hotter. Roy was awakened by the smell of the smoke. He looked out his passenger-side window and saw nothing but flames.

Completely awake, he threw off his seatbelt and shoved the door open. He jumped out of the truck, falling on the ground, and then quickly scrambled back to his feet and took off running. He only made it about ten feet away before his truck exploded.

His truck exploded, rocking the mountainside. The force of the explosion knocked him off his feet and sent him flailing to the ground.

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He looked back at his truck as it burned. The flames and black, thick smoke billowed from the truck, rising to the dark night sky above.

Good luck finding my cabin now, Roy thought as he limped up the hillside, searching for anything that could be salvaged. His foot hit something on the ground, making him look down to see a small flashlight sitting in the middle of the well-worn path he was on. Roy pondered the placement of the flashlight, as he didn't remember having one. He turned it on and shone it around the darkness, thankful for the light someone had lost.

Someone's trash is someone else's treasure, Roy thought.

He walked up the hillside, gathering some of his clothes and possessions that had been scattered and not broken during the crash, and began walking back down the mountain. He shone his flashlight on the ground, lighting up his path, then moved it to the left quickly and stopped. A gold flicker came up out of the brush.

He walked off the footpath that had been worn down during the years and then put his stuff on the ground and continued walking up to the strange object. He knelt to pick up the object and studied it carefully.

It was about a foot long, three inches wide, and a brilliant gold color. Strange carvings ran along the entire object. *I wonder what it's worth,* Roy thought. After a moment, he decided it was probably gold-plated and worthless, so he threw it back on the ground. He continued to the path, grabbing his things as he went.

He kept walking and didn't notice a man drop out of a tree behind him. He stood watching Roy before walking over to the gold object and picking it up. He clipped it to his belt and walked away into the darkness.

Roy walked down the hill the rest of the way, past his smoldering truck, picking up anything that wasn't broken. He shone the light around him in the darkness, trying to get a picture of where he was. He didn't recognize any of it but hoped he might see something familiar as

he set off into the forest.

He walked through the dense forest that was deeply shaded and wandered along. It was thicker and darker than any he had ever seen, and it became more mysterious as time wore on.

The forest became silent, but Roy somehow found that comforting. A few animals here and there scurried in front of him, lost in the darkness.

He finally came out into a clearing and smiled when his flashlight illuminated his cabin sitting peacefully in the middle of the valley. He hurried up to the front porch and breathed a sigh of relief. He'd made it.

He put the key in and turned the knob. The door noisily squeaked and groaned as it opened, welcoming Roy to the dark, cold cabin. He shone his flashlight around. Dust and cobwebs covered everything, as would be expected of a building that had been deserted for years.

He walked in and turned on a light switch. The cabin might look like a disaster to most people, and any other time he would agree, but right now it was the best thing he had ever seen.

He gathered his few belongings and took them to one of the bedrooms on the main floor. An old bed and a dresser filled the room, but nothing else. The silence was strange to Roy, but to an extent, he didn't mind. He had heard enough yelling and fighting in his childhood home.

Roy put all his things away and then built a fire in the fireplace at the center of the small living room. He uncovered all the furniture and slowly began to clean up the dusty space. An hour later, completely exhausted, he sat down in a chair next to the fire, closed his eyes, and smiled. He had done it.

He was finally on his own; free of his family. It was a great feeling to feel independent. He may not know quite what he was doing yet, but he would. This was the best day of his life.

He fell asleep by the fire, which slowly burned down until eventually it was reduced to a pile of coals.

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The door slowly opened but didn't wake Roy. A fairly tall man with short brown hair stepped into the cabin. The man looked around the edge of the door and noticed Roy, and therefore did his best not to wake him. He came in the rest of the way and closed the door, gently clipping the gold cylinder to his belt again, knowing it wasn't needed yet.

The man looked around at the cabin and noticed it was cleaner than it had been earlier in the day. The living room had been cleaned, while most of the cabin was still a mess. The man held out his hand and waved it through the air, and the downstairs was instantly cleaned, spotless.

He smiled and moved towards the staircase and climbed it, hoping the stairs wouldn't squeak as he did. He grasped the handle of the door at the top of the stairs and pushed it open. The floor only squeaked lightly as the man walked inside the room and closed the door behind him.

Meanwhile, Roy was sound asleep, lost in his dreams as he sat next to the fire.



The sound of birds chirping outside his window was the first thing that came to Roy's ear. The morning air drifted through the cracked window to the side of the fireplace. He stretched and groaned with a smile as he stood, surprisingly without pain in his leg, which no longer hurt as it had after the crash.

He ran his hand along the mantle and went to the kitchen, eager to get some food into his stomach. He stopped in his tracks staring at the kitchen in confusion.

He scratched his head in confusion as he slowly turned around in a small circle. The kitchen, as well as the rest of the house, was spotless. There was not one speck of dust or cobweb in the entire cabin. He turned on the light, revealing that everything was clean. The few appliances were so shiny he could see his reflection.

Must have been my imagination that this place was even dirty, Roy thought with a smile. He turned toward the door to go outside and get some firewood from the stack he knew was outside.

He walked along the cabin and then went around the corner to the woodpile where wood was stacked against the wall. His heart skipped a beat as he laid his eyes on his old, beat-up truck sitting in the driveway as if nothing had happened to it the night before. What was going on?

He warily opened the driver's side door and peered inside. He pulled back the floor mat and looked at his name which he had scratched into the floor of his truck with a jackknife, confirming it was his.

He shut the door and moved to the back, which was filled with all his belongings that he hadn't been able to get last night. He stared in awe as he rummaged through some of his things, not finding any broken or damaged. He shook his head and then closed his eyes. He opened them once more, hoping for the sake of sanity that his truck wouldn't be there. But when he opened his eyes it was still there.

He turned towards the woodpile, walked quickly to it, and started to grab a few pieces of wood. He stopped mid-motion, noticing his keys on the ground as though they had been dropped. He tried to make sense of everything as he shoved them deep into his pocket, and noticed a set of footprints next to where the keys were found.

The footprints were clear and seemed fairly new; they turned around the corner the way he had come. He grabbed a few more pieces of wood and followed the footprints around the corner of the cabin and up along the side until they stopped at the door. He opened the door and walked inside, putting the wood next to the fireplace and then going back to close the door.

He looked around the cabin and stopped at the staircase. For some strange reason, the footprints disappeared before appearing again at the stairs, which were ten feet from the door. He walked over to the stairs, noticing they weren't clean like the rest of the house. The footprints went up the stairs to the door at the top. He walked up and ran his hand

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along the rail, getting dust and cobwebs all over it.

He reached the top where the door was cracked open. He pushed it open farther, seeing that the footprints made their way inside. He walked inside, leaving the door wide open, and grabbed a baseball bat next to the landing on the stairs. He hoped he wouldn't have to use it, but he would if he had to.

He walked into the barren room, suddenly feeling as though he didn't need the baseball bat. It was a fair-sized room with a high ceiling. The room was silent except for his breathing, which was calm and steady.

He put the baseball bat down in the corner, and walked along the edge of the room. He came to a window and looked out, staring into a land he didn't recognize. Green trees, strange flowers, shrubs grew right near the window, which showed no fog as the downstairs window had.

He turned and ran back toward the stairs, running outside to see what the weather was like. He opened the door immediately met by the same foggy air that had greeted him the first time. He slowly walked back up the stairs and into the room. He looked out the window again seeing the lush, green, fog-free forest, as he had before. He unlocked the window and gave it a jerk, opening it, and stuck his head out of the window.

The sky was clear and blue. Roy took in a big breath of the fresh mountain air. The forest was greener and far more beautiful than anything he had ever seen. The air was light and easy to breathe and seemed to welcome him. He pulled his head back into the room, closed the window, and then grabbed his head, trying to make sense of it all.

No wonder this house was abandoned, Roy started to think, realizing that this was too weird to explain to anyone. He rubbed his neck and looked at the floor. The footsteps went right up the middle of the room to the far wall where they disappeared.

He paused once he realized they seemed to go right through the wall. He reached out a finger and moved it toward the wall, relieved

when his finger touched the wall and didn't go through it.

Thank goodness, I'm not going crazy, Roy thought, taking another step forward. He didn't hear the small click as he stepped on one of the floorboards.

A tremendous bang filled the room as the staircase door swung itself shut. Roy whirled around and ran toward the door trying in vain to pull it open. He tried to turn the knob but only succeeded in rubbing his hand raw. He turned around and his eyes were drawn to where the footprints led. Against all logic, a door was now in the wall where there hadn't been one before.

He cautiously made his way over to the strange door which was large and made entirely of wood with a fancy golden handle. He studied the phenomenon looking for any sign that all of this might be a trick. Somehow, the door seemed to have built itself into the wall, like it was part of the house.

He reached for the handle, half expecting the door to blow up or not even be there when his hand reached it. He paused, thinking about all the strange things that had happened.

Finally, with much reluctance, he grabbed the handle and turned it. The door easily swung open. Before him, just outside the door, was a land unlike any he had ever seen. Green trees and lush forests lay before his eyes. A light breeze blew through the trees, and the sky was blue and clear, giving him a sense of peace and security that he didn't expect to feel.

Birds chirped in the forest all around him. He stepped through the door and into the green forest that waited for him. It was full of life and ready to be explored. He turned and looked at the forest, which reached far above him. Wildflowers and plants grew on the forest floor; small animals scurried along the ground. Roy breathed in the strangely refreshing air, feeling energized and restored.

When he looked back to the door and his cabin he realized it wasn't there anymore. *What's going on here?* Roy asked himself, walking to

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the clearing where his cabin and the door should have been. He frantically brushed aside the sticks and leaves, wondering where it had gone.

This is just great, Roy lamented. He had only stepped out five feet from the door, and now the door wasn't even there! He searched the area for several minutes and pondered his predicament for another few minutes before he let his eyes rest on the small worn footpath that wound lazily through the hills. He breathed deeply, a new energy coming to him. He stood and considered his options one more time. Concluding there was no better option he started down the path in front of him.