

THE STORY OF DRUMMOND CASTLE

CHAPTER ONE

The Scottish countryside was vibrant in its spring colours. The rolling hills and green meadows of the land beckoned William to take his mother on a horseback ride to enjoy the pleasures of the day. William was the youngest son of Sir William Stanley Drummond, an important leader of the Drummond clan. Sir William was heir to his family's empire, and William was his youngest, and most favoured, son.

Sir Drummond had cast aside his older children due to their abhorrent attitudes toward life. Their anger and disrespect marked them ineligible for the title of Lord. These older siblings frowned upon their youngest brother, William, who was more handsome, creative, adventurous, and healthy than his brothers and sisters. These traits, and the obvious favoritism shown to him by their father, brought great jealousy to reign down upon him. William overlooked their toxic behaviour, thinking they acted like children with no sense. He was his father's most trusted advisor, helping him rule his kingdom in an orderly and fair manner. When necessary, he would turn into a great warrior, leading his father's knights in battles against opposing clans.

During happier times, the gathering of the Drummond Clan was an annual event. The year Sir William's castle was the host of this gala proved to be monumental. The finest foods and beverages in the land were served by the host. It was a party of privilege, with only the wealthiest and most connected to Sir William invited to attend. It was at this party, William, the son of Sir William Drummond, was introduced to the daughter of a respected friend of his father, Maid Anne. She would eventually marry William and become an important figure in the dynasty which would be left when Sir William died.

The young couple's wedding was a grand affair, with two hundred people in attendance. The party lasted for three days, with unlimited food, drink, and dancing. Maid Anne and the soon to be Lord Sir William II were centre stage, enjoying the attention being bestowed on them. To them it was a fairy tale wedding. After their wedding, the couple lived at Drummond Castle and helped care for William's elderly parents and much older siblings, who were now quite feeble. The father tutored his son in the art of managing people, the most important trait of a good leader.

Sir William Drummond's death was followed closely by his wife's; their funerals were solemn affairs as they were mourned by the entire kingdom. To the dismay of his siblings, William was given the title of Lord William Drummond and made the new ruler of the fiefdom, with Anne as the Lady. A new feeling would capture the castle, as the old ways of doing things would change to better represent the new generation's beliefs. This is what Sir William Drummond, and Lady Anne would bring, a new future for the Drummond clan, which was different than his father's.

CHAPTER TWO

Lord William returned with his hunting party, two deer and a wild boar in tow. Drummond Castle boasted large gardens and orchards, allowing for the harvest of many vegetables and fruits, including apples, the most prized commodity in the clan. The Lady managed these grounds, treating her servants with respect, which was reciprocated in return. These endeavors were a tremendous success, growing enough food for all the inhabitants of the castle.

The reigning couple were on a horseback ride around their estate, a sprawling land covering twenty-five square miles. They were accompanied by six guards on horseback, who would provide protection for William and Anne. William was a warrior, a respected knight in his late father's eyes, who could take care of his wife, should the need arise. Anne was still learning how to ride. As a young child, she had been thrown from a horse and seriously injured. After she recovered, she refused to get back on one. William had been trying to convince his wife to enjoy riding, slowly instilling self-confidence in Anne's still wary feelings about these animals.

A sudden motion from the guards indicated danger. A contingent of men on horseback, in full fighting armour, were traversing across the territory of the Drummond clan. William's party had not been seen, so they decided to avoid a conflict with these unknown men by not confronting them. They continued on their way, enjoying the warm sunshine and scenic views on their excursion. However, the sighting of these men troubled William, his intuition telling him a darkness was slowly creeping over the land.

Power struggles among the new, younger rulers were causing strife and wars to spike across the land. Opposing clans were now becoming allies, dividing the spoils of war amongst the victorious parties. William knew after seeing the delegation of armed men, his own castle might appear to be a prize to be taken. The struggle for power was now at his doorstep. He vowed to defend himself and his people against any threat they would face. He sent messengers to the other Drummond clans about this new danger. The clans would need to unite to successfully fight this threat for their kingdoms.

Putting the threat of attack in the back of his mind, William declared tonight they would feast. The hunting party which had gone out earlier in the day had successfully killed two wild boar, which were now cooking over the fire. It was a treat for everyone who lived in the castle to indulge in. The threat of war was unknown to these civilians, as peace had reigned for two generations, with only occasional minor incidents arising, which were always resolved peacefully. The party lasted till morning, the drunken still awake clutching their bottles of wine. The rising of the morning sun sent everyone to bed, the warm rays causing drowsiness to take over and a restful sleep to follow. Tomorrow, a somber reality would set in at the realization the lives of all within the kingdom were about to change, a wakeup call for their once peaceful existence.

CHAPTER THREE

A scout from a powerful, war-mongering clan had been captured on Drummond land; he had been observing the castle and evaluating the movements going to and from the stone structure.

He was brought to the castle and placed in the dungeon, where he stayed for twenty-four hours without food and water before he was interrogated. The talk and smell of war was crossing the land. After limited torture, and with the promise of water, the captive gave up what he knew. He was conducting surveillance for a large army consisting of three clans, who had joined forces, conquering and taking land across Scotland. The Drummond domain was in their sights, as it was valued for its rich farmland and green meadows for grazing livestock. The invasion and siege of the castle was still in the planning stages, as the movement of men and their supplies for battle, over long distances was not an easy task. The invading force would be a thousand men strong; they had begun assembling and would soon be heading toward Drummond Castle.

Sir William now instituted his plan, calling upon the entire Drummond clan to come and help protect one of their own. Messengers were sent out to inform the distant, unaware clan members their help was needed, as an attack was imminent. This new information led to contingents of men from the Scottish and English fiefdoms of Drummonds to descend upon Sir William's castle. The inhabitants now knew war was inevitable and were keenly aware of what the results would be if they lost this battle. Within days, members of the clan arrived to offer their assistance.

The castle was fortified. Archers took up positions along the top walls, where they would fire their arrows in unison. A reign of these deadly missiles would fall on the first line of the enemy, who would assess the castle's defenses. Large vats were readied to pour scalding liquid on any enemy who attempted to scale the castle's walls. Often, after a castle's defenders had been beaten down, the enemy would use tall ladders to breach the walls, coming inside to finish the battle. This was an event which hopefully would not come about for Drummond Castle.

The sound of thousands of hoofbeats on the hard-packed earth sent a tremor of fear through Drummond Castle. Soon enemy forces had surrounded the castle, with two catapults in position. These weapons of war were used to slingshot large rocks and other destructive objects at the enemy inside the castle, helping to weaken their fortifications. The inhabitants of Drummond Castle spent the night on high alert.

Early morning movements by the enemy signalled an attack was imminent. The sound of bugles blaring and warriors yelling brought a sense of chaos to the scene. The enemy approached. The castle's defenders sent volleys of arrows against the front lines. Men dropped to the cold earth, arrows protruding from their bodies, causing great pain but not instant death. Losses were many for the invader, so a retreat was called. The rest of the day was calm, as the siege of the castle would not continue until the enemy devised a new plan. Sir William knew a much larger battle would rage tomorrow, his hopes for an easy victory against this much stronger enemy were few.

CHAPTER FOUR

Daylight was receding, as darkness fell over the land. The first light of the new day revealed robust enemy movement. The defenders in the castle felt trapped. Though they were surrounded by thick stone walls, their safety was not guaranteed. The civilians inside were placed in a safe area deep in the bowels of the building. If the castle was breached by the enemy, they would be

safe from the main battle taking place above them. Blaring trumpets signalled an attack was imminent.

Large rocks, like deadly missiles, were shot from the two catapults, hitting the walls, killing many protectors who were positioned on them. Enemy archers shot volleys of arrows into the castle, killing more. The invaders swarmed the castle walls, placing tall ladders and climbing to the top. Large containers of boiling water were poured on them from above, the Drummond fighters slowly losing the battle for the castle and all of the spoils which came with it. Suddenly, the thunder of hundreds of hoofbeats were heard, as clouds of dust appeared on the horizon. It was an ally, whose land had once been saved with the help of the Drummond clan in a similar situation a generation ago. After Sir William had asked for their help, they felt now was the time the favor should be returned. This clan sent a force of six hundred men, trained in warfare and strong in statute, to help save Drummond Castle and its legacy.

The battle was now being fought in the courtyard of the castle, as it had been breached by the enemy, who had opened the gates to allow their comrades inside. With no hesitation, the arriving friends of the castle entered the battle, taking on the invading army in and around the fortress. The fighting raged for hours, the dead and wounded littering the battlefield. Then it was over, the enemy making a hasty retreat, their numbers left to fight were few.

Sir William Drummond and his wife, Anne, would commemorate this victory with a huge celebration after the dead were buried, the wounded treated, and the infrastructure in the castle repaired. The McWhinnie clan from northern Scotland, who had saved the Drummond land, would be special guests at this event. All members of this Scottish clan were welcome to attend. By the time Drummond Castle was ready to host this party, two hundred guests were expected. Wild boar, cooked over an open fire, was on the menu, with vegetables added to complement the succulent meat. Those from the McWhinnie clan in attendance were recognized for their bravery and heroism.

Epilogue - Sir William fathered two children, a son named William Stanley and a daughter named Anne Marie. William Stanley died in battle in his early twenties, and Anne Marie became the first woman leader in the history of the Drummond clan, the apple of her father's eyes.

William Stanley