



Happily Ever After- a parable by John Weston

From ***Uncharted*** by Angela Hunt

Excerpt provided courtesy of www.AngelaHuntBooks.com

In a kingdom far away, a mighty king looked over his empty realm and invited his people to live among his lands and plant his fields.

The first to respond were knights who cared more for games and pleasure and fighting than obeying their benevolent master. The king recognized the hardness of their hearts, but because he wanted his people to make their own choices, he gave them a bag of seed and the mountainous lands at the outskirts of his realm.

A second clan approached and begged for the king's attention. "We have always wanted to be farmers," they said. "We will work hard for you."

The king recognized the shallowness of their hearts, but because he wanted his people to make their own choices, he gave them a bag of seed and a stretch of land just inside the towering mountains.

A third group approached the king and begged for territory. "We are tireless entrepreneurs," they said. "We will labor long and hard for you."

The king recognized the fickleness of their hearts, but because he wanted his people to make their own choices, he gave them a bag of seed and a patch of land outside his royal palace.

A fourth clan approached the king and bowed themselves low to the ground. "Oh mighty majesty," they said, "we are not worthy to be called your people. If you have even a scrap of land for us, we will live on it and work it. We know little about serving a king, but if you will teach us, we will learn."

The king led them to a window and pointed to a muddy field. "This land remains," he said. "If you want it, it is yours."

The humble clan accepted a bag of seed and the land in the shadow of the royal castle.

The knights of the first clan promptly tossed the bag of seeds into an old shed and set about planning a grand tournament. While rats and birds ate the king's seed, the knights partied and practiced their fighting. They wanted nothing more than to joust and frolic and raid neighboring lands. While living under the king's protection and eating from his storehouses, they were free to do as they pleased.

The farmers of the second clan enthusiastically built barns and bought equipment and planted in the cool of the day. But when the sun rose higher and blazed upon their seedlings, the farming clan grew dizzy from the heat. Ignoring their wilting crops, they retired to their barns to polish their tractors. While living under the king's protection and eating from his storehouses, they were free to play pinochle in the restful shade of their barns.

The entrepreneurs of the third clan planted and built barns and put up strong fences to contain their cattle. One enterprise led to another and their love for fine things increased day by day. While living under the king's protection and eating from his storehouses, they were free to grow rich through trade.

The humble folk of the fourth clan drained the mud and plowed the fields, planting and tending their crops. Working tirelessly, they were usually ignored by their fellow tenants. When they were noticed, they were often mocked.

They did not take pleasure in tournaments or warmongering.

They were not skilled pinochle players.

They cared little for earthly treasures.

They asked only to be left in peace so they could wholeheartedly serve the king who had been generous to them.

After a certain time had passed, the royal chamberlain summoned all the king's subjects to the great hall of the palace. "It is time for the harvest," the chamberlain announced, looking over the assembly. "Each clan must present their crops to the king and pay the tribute due him."

The knights looked at each other in consternation when the king looked their way. "But your majesty," they protested, "we kept busy! We are famous for our tournaments and we have guarded your kingdom with our lives!"

The king shook his head. "Where is the bag of seed?" he asked. "Do you even remember where you put it?"

Alas, they did not.

The second clan sent its finest pinochle players to stand before the throne. "See our fine barns," they said, pointing out the window. "See those beautiful tractors? We are expert farmers!"

"But where are your crops?" the king asked. "What happened to the bag of seed I gave you?"

Alas, the farmers had no answer, for their neglected seedlings had wilted and died.

The third clan sent its wealthiest entrepreneurs to stand before the king. "We have done many wonderful things," they announced. "Have you seen our cattle? Our factories? We bake bread and produce clothing and generate much wealth for your kingdom!"

The king shook his head. "But what happened to my bag of seeds?"

For that, the entrepreneurs had no answer, for the crops they planted had been trampled by their cattle.

Finally it was time for the fourth clan to give an account of their efforts. Their leader, a simple man in a plain tunic, stood before the throne with his hat in his hand. "We want to thank you," he said, "for giving us this opportunity to serve."

"But where," the king asked, "are your crops?"

The simple man's face brightened. "Why, they are in your storehouse. There is enough wheat to feed everyone in your kingdom for years to come!"

"Well done," the king said, laughing with delight. "You are good and faithful servants. I will now give the entire kingdom to you, because you alone have honored my command. Because you have obeyed, I will adopt your clan and you shall become my heirs."

Then the king called for the best food in his house. The tables were spread, the musicians summoned, and everyone in the fourth clan sat down to a sumptuous royal dinner.

As for the knights and the farmers and the entrepreneurs, they were exiled to a bleak territory called Haden, where they were to wait until the king decided it was time for all men to give an accounting . . . of what they had done with the simple bag of seed.

© Angela E. Hunt. Please do not reproduce without permission.

Visit www.AngelaHuntBooks.com for more news, excerpts, and book information!