

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PRINCES OF POLYRON

Life was harsh. They lived to serve their lords, from the beginning to the end of their lives, from the dusk until dawn. It was the only reality that existed for them.

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Not everyone followed the commonly shared schedule and belief. Erik being an exception had never stepped into his farm, nor had he visited the holy house in a decade. The aromatic patchouli fragrance he wore every morning gave the impression that emanated an impression as if he carried the garden of those purple flowers along with him. And But what made him stand out in the crowd was that he had stolen the heart of a beautiful, noble girl. But However, his father, a grumpy middle-aged man who rarely smiled, always interrupted his daydreaming daydreams and urged him to take life seriously.

‘Get up, you idiot!’ his father bawled.

‘What is it, Father?’ Erik asked.

**Commented [CT1]:** Make sure you have a space here.

He stretched his feet and wriggled his way out of the mattress, to finally be on his feet. He stood, but he remained focused on His attention was still on getting rid of the straw and wool that was entangled around one of his feet, that had come out of the mattress.

‘Where were you last night?’

‘Doran insisted I accompany them to the theatre, I had no clue she was going to be there. I assure you! I haven’t been seeing her!’

‘Stop, a No more excuses, you are fifteen and not a child anymore! How many times do I have to tell you to stop being seen around Lady Ariana?’ exclaimed his father, grabbing Erik by his arms and staring right down upon him.

**Commented [CT2]:** This line is a little wordy. Consider the example in my previous comment:  
*...by his arms and glared at him.*

**Commented [CT3]:** Make sure you keep the tense consistent here. “Exclaimed” is in the past tense but “grabbing” and “staring” are in the present. Consider the following:  
*...exclaimed his father as he grabbed Erik by his arms and glared at him.*

**Commented [CT4]:** Add a comma here.

**Commented [CT5]:** I would rework this sentence as it kind of falls a little flat and reads as though it isn’t going anywhere. If I rewrote this line, it would read as the following:  
*There was something about Erik’s gait that was different from the other servants his age, the young warrior within him combined with a gentleness other boys lacked.*

Erik twisted his body to free himself and dashed towards the door and out of his house.

The sun had finally decided to make an appearance that day after a long time. Erik walked through the narrow, well-trodden lane that had hedges on either side of it.

There was something about the way he moved, something of the warrior in him combined with a gentleness that made his walk unique. The lane eventually led him

**Commented [CT6]:** Begin this sentence on a new line as you have transitioned from narration regarding his walk to present action.

to a play-ground. The young boys of Billege often gathered there for recreation and to show off their brawniness.

**Commented [CT7]:** Remove the double space here.

In the ground stood an enormous, monstrous tree with branches dispersed out wide, separating from each other in an artistic and carefree way, turning in random direction. Beside the tree stood a wooden post which had been firmly planted in the ground by the children to practice their sword-skills.

**Commented [CT8]:** There are a few issues with this sentence:  
- The beginning is written in passive voice  
- The tense is inconsistent  
- It's a little lengthy and therefore wordy.

As Erik ~~reached-entered~~, he found the ground to find his best friend, Doran, who lay was laid in on the ground. Doran gazed towards the sky skyward in supine position, enjoying the warmth of the sun on hitting his face. Erik sat beside him in silence.

To make this sentence flow better, I would write the following:  
*An enormous, monstrous tree stood in the ground. Erik had always been fascinated by its wide branches that separated from each other in an artistic, carefree way as they turned in random directions.*

'Why so glum? Is it the same old story again?' inquired Doran.

**Commented [CT9]:** \*...as he enjoyed the warmth...

Erik trailed his hands around his neck and ran his fingers through his jet-black hair. 'Leave it; I don't want to talk about it.'

Doran put his heavy hand on Erik's shoulder and said, 'Maybe he is just being protective. He is your father after all.'

'I can't take this anymore, all I keep hearing is: ~~she is noble and you are a peasant~~. He paused for a moment and looked away. 'Besides, he is not my real father, I am a Buxtor.'

**Commented [CT10]:** As Erik is quoting what has been said to him, I would italicise this line.

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Buxtor was a last name commonly given to people who had no true identity. Erik's father found him in the woods, tied to ~~on~~ the back of a wandering donkey. He ~~grabbed-rescued~~ the child as he feared for the poor soul's life-, but he He soon realized he was stuck with a child that wasn't his own, but he didn't have the heart to abandon him either.

'Let's practice the swords then; it will be a good distraction,' Doran suggested.

Erik's brows furrowed into a frown. 'I am not in the mood today.' ~~Erik dark brows were actually graceful, but currently furrowed in a frown.~~

~~A short silence ensued between the two friends before Doran changed the subject. Jumping into another topic, Doran said,~~ 'Did you hear that the third child who went missing was the fruit seller's ~~seven-seven~~-year old daughter?'

‘I know, mother told me—’ ~~Erik said as he remembered the last time he had seen her.~~ ‘It’s strange though, I saw her just a few days ago playing with my brother.’  
~~Erik vividly remembered the last time he had seen her.~~

‘Where could she have gone?’ Doran shrugged.

‘Who knows? Maybe she got lost in the dark forest while looking for mushrooms,’ said Erik.

Doran looked towards the narrow lane. ‘~~Look~~ who is coming?’ he said, pointing towards the narrow lane.

Erik frowned as ~~they approached.~~ ~~he watched them walk closer.~~ ‘What is that little brat doing here again? Send her back, Doran! Father will get furious again if he learns that she was around.’

‘What can I do about it?’ said Doran— ‘She keeps showing up.’

The girl wasn’t alone; she was accompanied by another boy ~~called whose name was~~ Willis. He had a distinct face ~~which that~~ as white as a moonbeam. He wore ~~a~~ black trousers ~~that~~ hung ~~lowly~~ around his waist and ~~his~~ white sleeves ~~were~~ rolled up just above his elbow, ~~which left leaving~~ the top ~~most~~ of his woollen tunic unbuttoned.

The girl smiled at Erik with her saccharine sweet lips. Her ~~piercing - blue eyes~~ made her ~~look~~ truly enticing—, ~~but Reluctantly~~ Erik looked the other way—, ~~and ignoring-ignored her attempt how frantically she tried~~ to get his attention. ~~Ariana was clueless~~ about why he was acting indifferent towards her; it had been quite some time.

Willis was two ~~year-years~~ younger than Erik, ~~but he~~ behaved ~~very- rather~~ childish for his age.

He patted Erik’s shoulder from behind. ‘I brought a wooden sword of my own, I had father make it for me.’

Willis spent most of his time in the Holy House reading and writing, ~~but lately,~~ he had developed a desire to learn ~~how to use the~~ swords too.

Erik reached for Willis’s wooded swords. ‘So, ~~you~~ are ready to become the champion of Billege?’

‘Yeah!’ replied Willis. ‘Just teach me anything you know.’

**Commented [CT11]:** Move this dialogue onto a new line.

**Commented [CT12]:** Remove this quotation mark.

**Commented [CT13]:** “Piercing blue eyes” is a bit of a cliché now, so to make this description a little more creative I would consider a different approach.

Consider the following examples:

*Her eyes the colour of the ocean...*  
*Her eyes the colour of forget-me-nots*  
*Her electric eyes made her look...*

**Commented [CT14]:** Avoid using adverbs such as *reluctantly*, they slow the pace and make sentences a little clunky. For this reason, I suggest that you remove it and replace it with “but”, which will extend the sentence.

**Commented [CT15]:** How does the reader know that she was clueless? How did she react to Erik ignoring her? Did she frown with cluelessness? Did she cock her head to the side with confusion? Make sure you *show* the read what’s going on rather than just telling them.

I may rework this sentence into the following:

*Ariana knitted her eyebrows with confusion...*

**Commented [CT16]:** Add a comma here.

**Commented [CT17]:** Add a comma here.

**Commented [CT18]:** Add a comma here.

**Commented [CT19]:** Add a comma here.

‘Practise with Doran for now; you must learn to wield a sword well,’ said Erik, ‘who knows what you might come across.’

Doran glared at his wooden sword in disgust. ‘We are back to these wooden sticks again. If Duke Ulric ~~was-were~~ still active, we would be practising with real swords.’ Unlike most of the other duchies, Ulric allowed the young men to train with real weapons. He even encouraged them to read and write. He was still the Duke, but ~~he~~ had taken the ceremonial position; his old age was getting the better of him.

Willis pulled out his ~~small, poorly-poorly~~-carved ~~small~~-wooden stick and moved closer to Doran.

Erik followed Willis, as he moved towards Doran.

‘So did you work on your footing as I had instructed?’ asked Erik

‘A little!’ Willis replied.

Willis, a small-framed boy with a soft and elegant ~~bodylooked~~ anything but threatening ~~as he raised his hand that held the wooden sword to swing at Doran.~~

Doran was double the size of Willis as enormous power ~~was radiating-radiated~~ from his ~~huge~~-muscular body. It was an unevenly matched pair. With little effort, Doran blocked the swing while Willis desperately ~~kept swooping-swooped~~ at him with all his energy, ~~however-However, he was~~ too slow and ~~too~~ soft for Doran.

‘Come on, you can do better than this,’ Erik encouraged.

Willis got more desperate to prove his competence. He gathered all the energy he was left with and made ~~strong, intense~~ strokes ~~using more strength and increased the intensity~~, but ~~in no time~~ he grew weary ~~in no time~~. Sweat beaded on his forehead and dripped down his jaw. ~~He-Willis~~ took a deep breath and laid flat on the ground.

Doran helped ~~Willis-him~~ up and patted his back with the front of his palm. ‘You did well; you are getting better.’

Ariana stood beside them ~~feeling ignored~~ by Erik. She glanced at him every now and then, but he didn’t care to notice. His unresponsive behaviour made her ~~feel restless~~ as she did not know how to handle being ignored by him. She tried her best ~~not to not give Erik~~ any attention, ~~to Erik~~ but she eventually gave in.

**Commented [CT20]:** Remove this comma.

**Commented [CT21]:** Remove the double space here.

**Commented [CT22]:** Make sure there is a space between these two words.

**Commented [CT23]:** Make sure there are spaces between these words.

**Commented [CT24]:** Make sure you have a space between these two words.

**Commented [CT25]:** This line is a little clunky, so I would consider the following:

*...as he raised his wooden sword at Doran*

**Commented [CT26]:** Replace the full stop with a comma here as you have a dialogue tag.

**Commented [CT27]:** How did Ariana actually feel in response to being ignored by Erik? Were her eyes ready to flood with tears? Did she shake with frustration? Or was she just a ball of confusion?

Rather than just *telling* the reader that she was feeling ignored, your writing would be much better if you *show* them how being ignored made her feel.

For example:

*Ariana stood beside them, but she gazed at Erik who continued to ignore her. Tears emerged behind her eyes, but she forced them back.*

**Commented [CT28]:** Make sure you *show* the reader how she felt restless. Did she twiddle with her thumbs? Did she fidget with her clothes? Did she sway from side to side?

She marched right in front of him this time and asked, ‘How's Ryia? It's been a while since I last saw her.’

‘Everyone is fine.’ Erik answered, ~~He avoiding-avoided~~ her gaze ~~and before walking-walked~~ away from her.

A few ~~moment-moments~~ later, a chubby, middle-aged man with red blotches on his face appeared. His tanned ~~face-complexion~~ gave the impression that he was constantly exposed to the sunlight and wind. He was an ~~elder-older~~ brother to Willis.

‘I came here out of curiosity,’ said the man.

‘Curiosity for what, Brother Grimm?’ asked Doran.

Grimm praised Erik. ‘Willis often mentions ~~that~~ you have become a ~~very~~-skilled swordsman and you can ~~take-up conquer~~ some of the best fighters in Silion already.’

‘Maybe few of them from Billege,’ replied Erik.

Erik was indeed trained to become one of the most skilled swordsmen of his generation in the Duchy of Billege, at least according to their teacher, the marshal of Billege.

Grimm shifted his attention to address the rest of the people. He bowed towards Ariana ~~and greeted her with warmth~~. ‘Lady Ariana! It's a pleasure to see you.’

She smiled softly at him. ‘How are you doing ~~brother,~~ Grimm?’

‘Please don't call me brother, Lady Ariana. Just call me Grimm.’

‘That's fine!’

Ariana was the Lady of the house Cardes. The Cardes family was one of the oldest and proudest houses in Silion. Her grandfather was Duke Ulric, and because he made no differentiation between the peasants and noble children, she ~~played and~~ grew up among the peasants.

Grimm looked at Erik again. ‘Did you hear that Prince Leon is visiting our duchy soon? He will be here in a few days.’

Erik was least bothered. ‘Who is Prince Leon? I've never heard of him.’

**Commented [CT29]:** Remove this comma.

**Commented [CT30]:** Make sure you remain consistent with the spelling of “brother Grimm” – on the previous page, you capitalised both “brother” and “Grimm”, but here, you have only capitalised “Grimm”.

If “brother Grimm” is his name, I would always capitalise both.

**Commented [CT31]:** Obviously, I don't know your charcaters as well as you do, but I feel like Ariana would apologise here in response to Grimm's previous line of dialogue.

Perhaps the following or something like this:  
“Apologies, just Grimm it is.”

**Commented [CT32]:** Make sure you only have a single space here rather than a double.

**Commented [CT33]:** This description comes across as though it has been dumped here – I feel that it would fit much better if it were written as the reader first meets Ariana rather than when we meet Grimm.

‘What?’ Grimm ~~exclaimed. was surprised.~~ ‘Leon is the heir to the throne of Polyron Kingdom. He should be on his way now.’ Grimm pointed ~~into the distance. his finger. .~~ ~~‘somewhere’~~ ~~‘Somewhere’~~ over that mountain pass.’

**Commented [CT34]:** By writing “Grimm was surprised” you are only *telling* the reader, but by writing “Grimm exclaimed” you are *showing* that he was surprised.

The frozen mountains were properly visible far north, which were as endless as desert dunes.

‘What business do we have with the nobles and the princes? Why are we even talking about them?’ Erik ~~lashed out.~~

**Commented [CT35]:** Make sure there is a space between the last quotation mark and Erik.

Willis diverted the conversation. ‘Aren't we practising again? I skipped my visit to the holy house today just so ~~that~~ I could come ~~here~~ and practice more.’

‘You will be a better fighter than Prince Leon in the future,’ Ariana said to Willis.

**Commented [CT36]:** Don't forget to add a full stop here.

Erik walked away aggressively. He took out his wooden sword and ~~stroked it~~ against the pole in rage. He was ~~not exactly sure~~ ~~unsure~~ why he was so angry, but every time Ariana spoke, ~~his blood boiled.~~ ~~he overreacted.~~

**Commented [CT37]:** This sentence is another example of *telling* rather than *showing* due to the adverb “aggressively”. Instead of telling the reader how he walked, consider more of a descriptive word.

For example:

- Erik *huffed and marched away.*
- Erik *stomped away with clenched fists.*
- Erik *stormed away like thunder.*

Doran whispered to Grimm. ‘At times, his behaviour is very unreasonable, it's beyond my understanding.’

Not ~~too long~~ ~~long~~ ago, Erik and Araina were always together. ~~There was not a single moment when they two would not be with each other.~~ ~~all~~ ~~All~~ boys in the town ~~were~~ ~~was~~ jealous of Erik, ~~but Erik didn't care, he relished their jealousy. and he loved how the boys felt jealous with him.~~ But now, he avoided her ~~as much as possible~~ ~~the best he could~~ and tried to make her leave every time she was there.

**Commented [CT38]:** If Erik is seething, I feel that he would do a lot more than stroke the pole. I can imagine him full on whacking it with his sword, or slashing it with all of his might.

**Commented [CT39]:** Add a comma in here.

Erik stopped ~~to and found~~ ~~find~~ a crack ~~from the tip to the bottom of in~~ his sword. ~~The crack ran horizontally from the tip to the bottom of it.~~ He shook his head in disbelief and sat under the tree, soaked in sweat.

**Commented [CT40]:** I suggest that you remove this sentence as you're basically repeating the previous one. I would simply continue with: *All the boys in town...*

Doran moved closer to ~~inquire~~ ~~enquire~~. ‘Are you all right?’

‘Yeah!’ Erik blurted, still out of breath.

**Commented [CT41]:** Make sure you add a space here.

‘You have ruined your sword again.’

‘So what? Let it break, there are plenty of trees around. I can always make another one.’ Erik replied with ~~a~~ ~~stiff~~ arrogance.

‘Let's go to our secret hideout, we haven't been there in quite some time,’ Doran suggested.

‘Let’s lose the brat first.’ Erik signalled towards Ariana.

~~Let her~~ ‘She can come along if she wants to. We can’t just leave her here alone.’  
Doran insisted.

‘Very well then, you people carry on with your Princess. I will head back home.’

‘Come on! You ~~are can be~~ really arrogant sometimes.’ Doran ~~walked edged~~ back towards Ariana.

‘What is wrong with him? Is it because of me or something I have done?’ Ariana asked Doran, ~~feeling worried.~~

‘No, Ariana, he is just ~~too~~ difficult to deal with sometimes, leave him be.’ Doran replied.

Grimm looked towards the enormous tree and ~~opened his mouth.~~ ~~began shouting.~~ ‘Get down from the tree!’

Erik ~~ignored Grimm and~~ climbed farther, ~~ignoring Grimm.~~ He gripped ~~onto~~ an extended sub-branch with his right hand and pulled himself closer to a branch where he sat.

‘Why come down now? I want to see my house from the top,’ Erik yelled.

‘This is not a joke, you idiot!’ Grimm barked back.

‘Come up Doran, and you too Willis. It looks incredible from up here.’

‘Please come down. Don’t go ~~any further farther~~ up,’ Ariana shouted as loud as she could.

‘It is fine, Ariana,’ Doran ~~promptly~~ interrupted, ~~Ariana~~ knowing that the more she tried to persuade Erik, the more agitated he would become.

‘I think I will finally climb to the top today!’

Doran yelled again, ~~as~~ his blood ~~boiling-boiled~~ by the second. ‘No one has ever made it to the top. Remember what happened when Dunkin tried? He won’t be able to walk again for the rest of his life. Don’t fool around! Climb down before you hurt yourself too.’

Erik ignored him and continued to climb, but his foot slipped on one of the branches. The crowd ~~that watched watching~~ from below gasped and shrieked, but

**Commented [CT42]:** Remove this comma.

**Commented [CT43]:** Replace this full stop with a comma.

**Commented [CT44]:** Due to what Erik has been saying, it’s quite obvious that it’s because of Ariana, so I would consider changing this dialogue a little.

For example, perhaps the following:

*“What is wrong with him? What have I done?”*

By rewording Ariana’s dialogue to something like this, she is asking what she has done rather than whether she is the problem.

**Commented [CT45]:** This line *tells* the reader that she feels worried, but how can you *show* the reader that she felt this way? Did her stomach twist with anxiety? Did her heart drop? Did her heart race?

I may write the following example:

*Ariana asked Doran. Her heart skipped a beat as it plunged to her stomach and her insides twisted with an anxiety she hadn’t felt before.*

**Commented [CT46]:** Replace this full stop with a comma.

**Commented [CT47]:** Don’t forget to add the quotation mark here.

**Commented [CT48]:** Add a comma here.

there was nothing they could do. Erik was too stubborn to listen and the inevitable happened. Erik lost his grip and fell through the air, smacking a myriad of branches on the way down. He hit the ground with a bang!

They all rushed towards him as fast as they could. Doran held Erik by his shoulders and shook him. ‘Come on! Wake up! Wake up!’

Fortunately, Erik had landed on a pile of straw and ~~had been was~~ spared from any serious injuries. He managed to survive the big fall, ~~and only gaining~~ ~~gained a few~~ ~~some~~ bruises and superficial cuts. Grimm and Willis stood in bewilderment ~~as they shared the same look, looking at each other.~~

Ariana exhaled a sigh of relief.

‘Thank you Lord Lugath!’ ~~She she~~ continued, ~~–~~ ‘That was stupid of you! Why are you so stubborn? You could have gotten yourself killed.’

‘Why do you care?’ Erik snapped with a scowl.

With a perplexed look on her face, Ariana asked, ‘Why are you being like this with me?’

Erik struggled to his feet as he winced with pain. ‘Your place is not here, ~~you belong but~~ with the royals. Why come here and waste your precious time with us poor?’

‘I grew up playing with you! ~~all since I was small.~~ Why are you forbidding me to come here now? I am sorry if I have done something wrong!’ ~~She grew quite emotional.~~

‘Don’t be sorry, Princess. We live to see another day because your father gave us land to live on and food to eat.’ Erik’s retorted.

Grimm thought Erik had pushed it way too far this time around. ‘What’s wrong with you, Erik?’

Ariana tried her best to hold back the tears from rolling down her cheeks. ‘If you hate me so much why don’t you just say so?’

Erik remained silent. ~~He was experiencing great confusion himself.~~ He could not bring himself to be ~~so~~ blunt with Ariana and cut off all ties, ~~–~~ a part of him dreaded ~~that~~ she would stop loving him. But on the other hand, he also knew the hard reality of his life; he knew ~~that~~ his father was right, ~~no matter how much he tried to~~

**Commented [CT49]:** Make sure there is a single space here rather than a double.

**Commented [CT50]:** Make sure you have a space between Erik and the closing quotation mark.

**Commented [CT51]:** What does this perplexed look look like? Did she wear a frown? Did she knit or dip her eyebrows? Did she cock her head to the side? Did she grimace? Make sure you show the reader what look she wore on her face so the reader can form an image in their mind.

**Commented [CT52]:** Show the reader how she became emotional. Did her voice break? Did tears swell in her eyes?

**Commented [CT53]:** Remove this comma.



ignore it. He ~~loved her, did love her too~~, but he was slowly losing her. It was just a matter of time before Erik's behaviour towards her would ~~certainly~~ tear them apart ~~for good. one day.~~

~~Ariana said,~~ 'You told me we ~~will-would~~ always be together, and you ~~will-would~~ stand beside me ~~holding a sword~~ in knight's armour ~~with your sword ready~~ to kill off anything that would frighten me!' ~~Ariana said.~~

'Naive! You will never grow up, will you? ~~Yes, I said did say~~ that ~~once~~ as a little ~~boy~~, but ~~ghosts are not real there are no real ghosts~~ and I can never be a knight. You are better off behind the high walls of your castle, with the real knights to protect you.'

Doran lightly tapped her on her back. 'Please, don't mind him, Ariana.'

Horses galloped in a distance, which caught everybody's attention.

'It is Lord David Cardes.'

Grimm recognised the horse ~~David~~ usually rode, ~~a the~~ milky white ~~horse-mount~~ that had beautiful ~~golden-golden~~-brown patches that made it iconic.

~~After a few short moments,~~ David arrived. ~~His strong defined face was how Erik always remembered and his dark, tousled hair was irritatingly thick and lusturous. shortly. He had tousled dark brown hair, which was thick and lustrous. His face was strong and defined.~~

One of the soldiers behind David carried a banner that depicted a black cougar imprinted on a red-white strip field. David dismounted his horse, ~~and~~ took a few steps towards them, ~~He held holding~~ the scabbard attached to his belt with his right hand. 'Salute in my honour right now you dirty peasants.'

Everyone bowed except Erik.

David scrutinized Erik with his laser blue eyes, ~~which that~~ sloped downwards in a serious expression. ~~As if something was bothering him,~~ 'What about you, Erik? Your lord just got here and you, filthy creature, ~~you~~ have the audacity not to bow?'

Doran signalled with his eyes, and Erik ~~languidly~~ bowed his head ~~with deep reluctance. too,~~ feeling embarrassed ~~in~~ front of Ariana to do so.

~~David spoke on as he asserted dominion.~~ 'Grandfather Ulric was benevolent enough to allow you dirty peasants to study and train alongside us highborn, but that doesn't mean you are equal to us. He is retiring soon, and ~~when he does, there~~

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Commented [CT54]: Remove this comma.

Commented [CT55]: To really show the reader David's status, wealth, and power, I may consider referring to him as "Lord Cardes" rather than "David". However, it is up to you.

Commented [CT56]: Feel free to alter this section, but I feel it would be great if the description of David was woven into the action rather than being a separate block of description.

Commented [CT57]: Remove this comma.

Commented [CT58]: This sentence feels random and doesn't really make sense in relation to the rest of the sentence, therefore, I would remove this line and continue with the dialogue.

Commented [CT59]: Show the reader how he felt embarrassed. How does Erik react to embarrassment? Does his stomach twist? Do his limbs shake? Does his face turn red?

I may write the following:

*Doran signalled with his eyes and Erik bowed his head with reluctance. His stomach twisted with embarrassment as his cheeks turned pink. He hated being scolded in front of Ariana.*

~~will be a few changes around here.’ things will change soon after that.’ David tried to assert domination.~~

Grimm instantly nodded in approval. ‘Certainly, my Lord! You command, we follow.’ He bowed again.

David continued to mock them. ~~‘~~‘The new taxation law has been passed in the king's high council along with several other new laws in the name of King. Peasants are to provide 10% additional tax from now onwards. So, you had better work hard in the fields to pay the taxes.’

Erik and the ~~other others absorbed~~ ~~listened to David~~ David’s words in silence. Erik realized that everything was going to change for the worse; he had to figure out a way for himself if he wanted to survive.

‘I almost forgot  ~~- father had~~ sent me to bring you back, my dear sister.’ David remembered as he turned to Ariana.

‘But I took permission from grandfather.’

‘Come on now, dear.’ David held her hand and helped her mount his horse. He pulled the reins of the horse ~~and guided~~ guiding them ~~to the way that went~~ back to the castle. The soldiers ~~too~~ mounted their horses as well and followed David.

Ariana turned towards her friends and waved them goodbye.

Erik scoffed with a scowl. ‘What a snob! Put me in a ~~one on one~~ one-on-one combat with him and he will stop calling himself lord!’ ~~anymore.’ Erik looked agitated.~~

Grimm was disheartened by the news. ~~of additional taxes.~~ ‘They won't let us live peacefully. If the crops won't grow, we will never be able to pay all these taxes. The duchy of Billege was situated in the far North-Eastern end of the realm, and experienced some harsh weather conditions, significantly limiting the production of crops and vegetables. ‘I just hope I can get out of here soon,’ said Grimm.

‘And go where?’ Doran questioned. ‘The additional taxes do not imply to Billege alone, but to all the other Duchies and Counties within Silion, there is no escaping.’

The poor peasants were already doing everything in their power to pay the existing amount of tax, but now with the rise in tax, they were doomed. It was not only the

**Commented [CT60]:** Change this comma to a full stop.

**Commented [CT61]:** Close the gap here so the % sign is immediately after 10.

**Commented [CT62]:** This line only tells the reader what Erik looked like, so I have written “Erik scoffed with a scowl” before the dialogue to show the look on his face as well as his immediate reaction to David and Ariana.

**Commented [CT63]:** You show this through his dialogue, so telling the reader here that he is disheartened by the taxes is unnecessary and repetitive.

**Commented [CT64]:** Is all of this dialogue or have you switched back to narration half-way through? I ask due to the new quotation mark that starts with “I just hope...” but you haven’t closed any of the dialogue/narration further up. Make sure it is clear which parts are dialogue and which parts are narration.

**Commented [CT65]:** Add a comma here.

**Commented [CT66]:** You have written this without a capital before this, but it is capitalised here – make sure you remain consistent with the capitalization of certain words.

**Commented [CT67]:** Add a comma here.

Duke, but they also had to pay a considerable amount of tax to the holy houses, ~~which left leaving~~ them with barely anything for themselves.

Commented [CT68]: Add a comma here.

No matter how ruthlessly or cruelly the capital imposed laws on them, Duke Ulric had always figured out a way to lighten the burden of his people, but now, they couldn't expect any help from the old man either.

Commented [CT69]: Add a comma here.

'This place won't remain the same for long, but we must be thankful to Lord Ulric for all ~~that~~ he has done for us. Let's hope something will turn out in our favour with the almighty's blessings.' Though Grimm's words comforted them for the time being, they knew that their worst days were ahead of them.

Commented [CT70]: Add a comma here.

The retreating sun submerged below the horizon and sheltered behind the sloping green hills while the sky turned ~~a warm brilliant~~ orange and red. Grimm looked around as ~~darkness fell. it was getting dark.~~ 'I have to return now.'

He turned to walk back towards home ~~and Erik followed.~~

'Wait for us, Grimm, we are heading back too.' ~~Erik followed.~~