

# *The Truth*

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# *The Truth*

By

Ilze Henderson

*In his quest to search for the truth,  
he almost lost everything*

*To my beautiful son, Michael.*

*May the Lord Jesus reign in your life. May He lead you to where He wants you to be. Always look up to Him for guidance, and then simply do your best. He will give you the strength to succeed!*

*You are our sunshine!*

*Ek is baie lief vir jou*

*Mamma*

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# *The Truth*

## *Synopsis*

Sodekia is a beautiful city nestled close to a hill with a wonderful king who rules over it. He is an amazing king and everyone loves him. He is their ruler and foundation; he is their everything. All the citizens live and breathe his presence and their only goal in life is to please him and be loyal servants. Once a year he graces them with his presence and it is the most joyous day of the year, a celebration to be remembered. Part of the celebration is due to the fact that he will choose ten students to join him in his castle. It was such a huge honor that all parents lived and breathed for, the moment when their children could be chosen to be a part of the king's family.

Michael and Nathan were best friends and this year was their turn to be considered to be part of their king's family. It was their dream and they dedicated their whole lives to be able to make it to the king's castle.

More than that can truly not be revealed, as this book has so many intricacies and surprising turn of events that it would spoil it for you if anything else was said. However what I can reveal to you is that the essence of this book is the battle between good and evil that we are faced with on a daily basis. It is the battle between the values of this world and the values of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a constant battle that we are faced with every single day. I truly believe that this book, though it is a fictitious novel, will help you understand the constant battle raging every day and will help you to deal more effectively with it. There are so many lessons to learn from this book. I myself learn some every time I read the book, as it was truly inspired by the Spirit of the Lord. My wish is that this book will help you see through the deceptive ways of the world and will encourage you to stand firm and strong in the faith. Come on, I dare you to take a chance and see for yourself, it would be worth it.

# *Part 1*



# Chapter 1

“Hurry up Nathan! You are going to miss it!”

“I’m coming, I’m coming!”

Nathan was panting as he tried to catch up with his cousin. He was so unfit and not used to this type of exercise.

“You are too slow!” Michael yelled a few feet ahead of Nathan. He was quickly ascending the hill, jumping from rock to rock. He looked exactly like a small deer accustomed to the paths of the rocky hillside.

Irritated, Nathan looked up.

“I *said* I am coming!” He was a bit annoyed with the whole situation. It was Michael’s idea to come up the hill and watch the King’s parade from up here, *definitely* not his. He was quite comfortable with the idea of watching the parade from down below. He knew he was still young and short and would probably not see much with the crowd of people gathering, but he would have been satisfied with only hearing the sound of the trumpets announcing the King’s arrival. But Michael was different. He wanted a bird’s eye view. He wanted to see it all. He wanted to experience it all.

“Do you hear that? It’s the trumpet. He’s coming! We’re almost there.” Michael gave up waiting for Nathan and sprinted ahead, jumping over tufts of grass and small rocks. He did not want to miss one second of the long awaited parade. Panting and totally exhausted, Nathan followed at a distance. He loved his cousin. They were like two peas in a pod. They did everything together; they shared everything and couldn’t wait to tell each other when something exciting happened. They were actually more than best friends; they were soul mates, almost inseparable. They had a lot of fun together; the only thing that got to Nathan now and again was that Michael was so much more athletic than he was. He was short, stocky and a bit overweight, whilst Michael was tall, athletic and had more energy than the two of them combined. He simply couldn’t always keep up with him, no matter how hard he tried.

“Wow! Come Nathan look! The King!” Michael was yelling only a few feet away, excitedly pointing to down below.

“Almost...there.” Nathan was totally out of breath.

“He just left the gates of the castle, do you see?” Michael pointed excitedly to where the King was leaving his castle in his magnificently embroidered chariot. The chariot was black and was delicately finished off with pure gold glistening in the bright sunlight. Although Michael couldn’t see the detail from this distance, he has seen the chariot on the posters displayed all over the city and could just imagine what it must look like in real life. The parade has been advertised for weeks now and the excitement has been welling up in all of them. And finally the day has arrived for their precious King to come and grace them with his presence. He was going to take a tour of the whole city and end it off with a speech in the antique city square. Michael couldn’t wait for this day to arrive. The King was his idol. He wanted to be just like him. Even though they don’t see him very often, his presence could be felt throughout the whole city. His picture was everywhere to be seen, in every shop and in every house. It was law to keep his picture in one’s home, but nobody really minded, as everyone looked up to him with absolute admiration. The King’s ten laws were also imprinted on their minds. It was drilled into one from an early age and every day when one got up, one needed to repeat the ten laws. The whole law was written in elaborate letters and ended off with a shiny five point star. It was also neatly framed and hanged right next to the picture of the King in every shop and in every house. This was compulsory and the King’s soldiers regularly checked up on everyone to ensure that they knew it off by heart. But again nobody really minded. They all lived to please their King.

“Finally!” Nathan panted right next to Michael. “I made it.” He stood with his hands on his knees, trying to catch his breath.

“He is making his way through Main Street, do you see?” Michael excitedly patted Nathan on the back. “Look at all the people! Wow, what a feeling that must be, gently being rocked in your chariot and waving to all your loyal supporters,” Michael sighed, mesmerized by the whole idea.

Breathing in deeply, Nathan gathered all his strength and stood up right next to Michael with his hands on his hips. He stood staring at the parade for a while, but quickly recovered his strength and marveled along with his friend.

“Yeah, wow.” They were standing on a hill right on the outskirts of the city where they could clearly see everything. The whole procession could be admired from up there. He was now especially glad that they came.

“Imagine working for him...”

Michael had a dreamy look in his sea green eyes.

“Well, you will know one of these days.” Nathan looked up to Michael with

his shiny brown eyes. He was about a head shorter than Michael and his light straight hair was in sharp contrast to Michael's dark ones.

Michael looked up, excited. "In just 34 days to be exact." He had a broad smile unveiling his immaculate teeth. He was counting the days to the King's announcement of his new intake for the year. Every year he took ten students in to join his extended family in the castle. These were usually the top students in the class. Not necessarily just the top academic students, but also achievers in sport, leadership and culture; in other words, all round successful students. The prerequisites were that each student had to be seventeen years old and had to be prepared to stay with the King for the rest of his/her life. The student was allowed to go home once a year, but was not allowed to share the secrets of life within the castle. That was forbidden. It has only happened once before that someone dared to say anything. It was Sharon. She tried to tell everybody about what is going on inside the castle, but she was immediately declared crazy. And indeed she was; she kept mumbling unthinkable things. She kept saying that there was another king and that everyone should rather follow him. Michael always admired her for her loyalty and zest for life, but after this incident he lost all respect for her. Michael smiled as he thought back to that time. What a crazy idea! Another King! Everyone knew that she totally lost it and she was removed from society without a blink of an eye from anybody, never to be seen again.

Michael let go of his thoughts and continued to carefully follow the proceedings below. He could clearly make out the silhouette of the King waving at his subordinates. He looked so stately and his superiority could not be denied. Excitement welled up in Michael again. The process of choosing his new intake will start taking place the day after his parade. His senior personnel will come from the castle and visit the school. They will scrutinize all the students' records and have interviews with one hundred chosen from these records. From these, they will shortlist fifty of the seventeen year old students that they believe could have potential. The students then have to choose whether they want to accept this honor, because once chosen, there was no turning back. Nobody really minded to stay with the King forever. It was such a huge honor, that anyone rarely declined the offer, however they still receive a chance to decide. It was more a formality, really. Once that has been established, all these students would be taken to one of the King's cottages right outside the city. They would be groomed and lectured for one week and on the last day interviews would be held. The most senior personnel would conduct the interviews and select twenty five of the fifty students to continue the process. The other twenty five would be given a banquet to say farewell and thereafter be sent home. The remaining twenty five, however, would go through a few days of rigorous

training after which the King himself would grace them with his presence. He would then make the final decision. He himself would choose the ultimate ten. The other fifteen would be given a lavish banquet, with the King as their host, after which they would also be sent home.

Simply the mere thought of seeing the King up close and personal, sent excited shivers down Michael's spine. Even if he only made it to the remaining twenty five, he would be pleased. He would give anything to be in the Top ten, but just to see the King would also be a bonus. He breathed in deeply. He had only one chance to reach the castle and it was now. The teachers and their parents started preparing them for this day since they were twelve years old, and now finally they have turned seventeen; the only age at which you were admitted to the castle. If you were not chosen at seventeen, you had your chance and you should be content with life outside the castle forever. Michael's heart pounded in his chest as he thought about it. His dream was so close, but yet it could also be shattered in a breath of a moment. He shook his head, trying not to think about it. He stepped closer to Nathan and put his hand on his shoulder.

"One of these days we'll know." He kept on staring at the King's procession below. "Just imagine... You and me having fun inside the castle and assisting the one we admire the most." He smiled and looked at Nathan. "Wouldn't that be awesome?" Nathan did not return the smile and looked away. His fair skin looked even paler in the bright sunlight.

"What?" Michael frowned as he couldn't understand his cousin's reaction.

"What do you mean, 'what?'" Nathan retorted. "We have been through this discussion a million times." He shrugged off his cousin's hand from his shoulders.

"Oh that." Michael nodded and playfully stepped closer again. "Come on Nathie. You will make it."

"Oh really?" Nathan looked sad.

"You are top of our class, you are brilliant. How can you *not* make it?" he tried to cheer him up.

"I am not as popular as you are. I am not athletic and certainly not as handsome!" Nathan's heart broke at the mere thought of losing his best friend in the whole world.

"You will make it for sure, and then what will I do?" Nathan turned away.

"Agh, come on. You are being childish now." Michael tried to console him. His tall frame moved even closer to Nathan. "Remember the pact that we made? If both of us are not in the fifty chosen, the elected one will back out and decline