“God has brought me through many dangers, can He not protect me in this one?”

A Loyal Foe takes a true-to-life look at a grievous and difficult time period: The Wars of the Roses. Young Rex is surrounded by the dark elements that were rampant at the time—treachery, vengeance, and hatred—but he stands out as a shining example of courage, love, and loyalty. Pondering a riddle carved into the tower of his home, he could never imagine how drastically his life was about to change. Plagued by secrets of his childhood he does not understand, pursued by thirsty enemies set on revenge, and wrongly accused of high treason, Rex wonders what dangers he will encounter next. Through the heroic example of his beloved father and the faithful devotion of a young king, Rex models what it means to be courageous and loyal in the most tragic of circumstances.
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List of Main Characters

Rex Damory—main character, Red Rose/Lancaster supporter, becomes companion of Prince Edward
Hugh Damory—Rex’s father, Red Rose/Lancaster supporter
Rance—squire to Damory family
Nicholas Leslie—brother to Elsie Leslie, Hugh’s wife and Rex’s mother; enemy to the Damory family
Ruth Damory—Rex’s twin sister; kidnapped as a child by Nicholas Leslie
King Edward—Current king of England; also known historically as Edward IV; son of Richard, Duke of York, who led the York rebellion to begin the Wars of the Roses
Lady Queen Elizabeth—wife of King Edward; widow of a Red Rose knight
Richard, Duke of Gloucester—King Edward’s brother
Thomas, Lord Woodville—relative to the queen
John Fortescue—friend and ally of Damory family; Lancaster supporter
Princess Elizabeth—oldest daughter of King Edward; marries Henry Tudor
Prince Edward—oldest son of King Edward
Ruth Leslie—maiden to Princess Elizabeth, relative of Nicholas Leslie
Joyce Deventry—maiden to Princess Elizabeth
Nurse Gillian—nurse to King Edward’s children, former nurse to Elsie Leslie (Rex’s mother)
Forrest, FitzAllen, and Thorsby—men loyal to Nicholas Leslie
Henry Tudor—nephew to King Henry VI of Lancaster; becomes king of England and marries Princess Elizabeth (also known as Henry of Richmond)
Father Oswald—Augustinian prior who is loyal to the Damory family
Damory’s Woe

I, HUGO De Damory, do erect this shrine to the memory of John, the wise man, whom I, in my sin, sent to the stake, stealing his land for my Tower, for which he vowed I and all my line would be punished. Ye who shelter here, pray for my sinful soul.

For the wrong so fouly done,
Damory’s lord must aye atone,
Till maiden’s hand bring harmony
And joy and peace to Damory
And Damory’s lord in bitter woe
Conquer Damory’s fiercest foe.

THE WORDS were carved beneath the shrine, and Rex Damory read them aloud as he stood there one bright May morning, waiting for his father. Built into the tower itself, the shrine was of great beauty. The hand which had
carved the Divine Face had been that of a lover as well as an artist. Rumor said that old Sir Hugo, seeking a worker in stone for his shrine, had found one in a small, forgotten monastery, where an old monk’s skill in sculpture had kept pace with a life of prayer and devotion to his Lord. Rex bent his knee and murmured a prayer as was his custom, for since his babyhood, this shrine had been a favorite place of his, and old Sir Hugo in his stormy penitence had always held his interest.

“I wish that I could raise the punishment,” he mused aloud as he seated himself on the narrow stone seat. “There needeth joy for Damory, though Father and I be comrades, true and staunch, and though he says that I be his comfort. But his eyes are always sad, and it is not only for the loss of my sweet mother. There is something else besides. Who is Damory’s fiercest foe? I wonder where he may be.”

He clasped his hands about his knee as he surveyed his home with loving eyes, the keep and battlements of Norman days, supplemented by many a rambling wing and turret of Later England. Southward lay the town of Blandford and on the other three sides was the broad sweep of Dorset Down, broken by copse and woodland and the winding Roman road to the sea. It was a fair place, but old Damory Court bore not only the scars of old-time warfare, but the more recent marks of the Wars of the Roses. Rex, only son of the present Sir Hugh, could not remember the two assaults on Damory in his babyhood when, just before Tewkesbury, the White Rose held the place for four days. It had been recaptured by its lord, but it was a dearly bought victory, for the Lady of Damory had fallen in the strife, flinging herself between her husband and his opponent’s blow. Sir Hugh’s hair had whitened in that night and, after the Red Rose defeat, he had come back, a silent and sorrow-stricken man, to care for his little son. Between Rex and his father as the years went on there grew up a love and devotion unusual in those
formal days.

“Where can I find Sir Hugh Damory, young sir?”

The boy rose to his feet as a young man accosted him. “He is in the house. Can I serve you in aught? I am his son.”

“My message is to him alone.” The messenger threw back his cloak revealing a Red Rose badge, and Rex at once summoned old Rance, the squire, who had been standing with the horses in readiness for the daily ride.

“Take this messenger to my father, Rance,” Rex said, and stood watching them as they crossed the greensward below the moat and mounted the drawbridge.

I wonder if the Red Rose is in the field again, the boy thought; then he started as a stern and authoritative voice spoke behind him.

“What did yon stranger want and whence came he?”

The speaker had ridden up over the soft turf behind the boy. He had dismounted and held his bridle rein. He was richly dressed, with a heavy riding cloak of miniver over a knight’s armor, though his hands were covered by heavy leather riding gloves, and his helm hung at his saddlebow. He wore a furred velvet cap on hair slightly gray. He was tall and gave an appearance of strength, but his face held no charm. Thick brows over small pale eyes and a mouth set in cruel curves gave indication of a stern, unyielding man.

“Who was yon messenger and whence did he come?” he repeated.

“By what right do you ask, sir?” Rex returned.

“I want an answer to my question.”

Rex did not give way. “You are on private grounds, sir. Why do you trespass on the lands of Damory and ask questions concerning my father’s business?”

“Your father is a Red Rose rebel, and I am an accredited messenger of the King. So you are Rex Damory! An answer at once.”
“I have none for you, sir. The man told me nothing of his business nor whence he came. Had he done so it is no right of mine to repeat it. If you desire further information, you must go to my father himself.”

The man laughed harshly. “Troth, but that would be a putting of my head in the lion’s mouth! Have you never heard of Nicholas Leslie?”

“I have not. My mother was a Leslie. Are you kin to her?”

“I am, though that matters not at present. My business is to find out how Damory stands. It is a serious thing to refuse the King’s behest, boy.”

“Of which you bring no proof.”

“Do you give me the lie?”

Rex bowed. “I do not, sir. But you are asking questions concerning my father’s guest. It is not my place to answer in any case, and certainly not to give information to one who seems to consider himself Damory’s foe.”

“You will find me yours, if you are not careful, Rex Damory. I am no mean opponent, I warn you. Remember your sister Ruth!”

“My sister? I never had one to my knowledge. If I had, she must be dead.”

“What would Hugh Damory give to know the truth concerning her I wonder? But he never will. She is dead to him at any rate. So Hugh has kept you in ignorance! It is like him. Well, no matter. Are you going to answer my questions or take the consequences?”

“I will take the consequences, Sir Nicholas. You had best not handle that dagger. I have men-at-arms within call.”

He beckoned to an undergroom, but old Rance was back at his post and came towards them with swift steps. He saluted Rex.

“What is it, my young lord?”
“This gentleman would threaten me, Rance. He desires to know the business of the young man who sought my father a few minutes ago, and I have no answer for him. He gives no definite reason for asking, save that he is an accredited messenger of the King and that his name is Nicholas Leslie.”

Into the old squire’s face flashed a look of blackest hate. His hand clenched on his sword. For a moment he seemed unable to speak but he regained his self-control, though his words were grimly stern. “You have dared to come hither, Sir Nicholas Leslie? Have you not wrought ill enough to this house without showing your evil face here again?”

Nicholas Leslie laughed in mockery. “Look to your nursling, Rance the squire. The punishment of Damory still holds good.” He pointed to the inscription on the shrine. “*Damory’s fiercest foe* still lives and does not forget. Till my life’s end will Damory lie beneath my hate. The hour is striking for your rebel lord, but this lad has still to face me. Moreover, have a care to yourself. It is well known that you followed your lord to the wars, and we may hang you yet.”

The veins stood out on Rance’s forehead. He half drew his sword. “Only Sir Hugh’s own command is your safety, Sir Nicholas Leslie. I have never yet disobeyed his behest, and I shall not now. But there are others within call who also remember our sweet lady and your foul blow. They will be less obedient. Get you gone, for in five minutes I shall summon them.”

Sir Nicholas shrank back at his words, then with a contemptuous sneer he remounted his horse. “We shall meet again, Rex Damory. Beware that house. And you, too, will find that I have not forgotten, Rance. Look to yourself! This is an ill day’s work for you both.”

He set spurs to his horse and galloped away. Rex turned to the squire.

“What does it all mean, Rance?”
The squire shook his head. “It means enough to make me uneasy, my young lord. A heavier punishment to Damory hath Nicholas Leslie been than old Sir Hugo and all his sin. I fear for my lord, and I wish that you had been elsewhere today. Your father would be safer in France, methinks.”

“Why do you sentence me to exile, old friend?” asked a clear voice behind them, and the two turned to face Sir Hugh Damory. He was a man older than his years, but in spite of his silver hair, there was still much of his youthful strengths and comeliness, and it was small wonder that his presence brought a look of love and admiration to the eyes of his young son. He laid his hand on Rex’s shoulder.

“What has happened to alarm you, Rance?”

The squire pointed to the disappearing horseman. “Yonder rides Sir Nicholas Leslie, my lord. Methought he was content with the evil which he had wrought, but it seems that he still plots mischief. It would seem true that a Torsman with a blood feud never forgets. He was questioning my young lord here about the messenger who has just come to you.”

“I trust you told him naught, Rex.”

“I did not, my Father. He was sorely angered and rode off vowing vengeance on us all.”

“I would that he had questioned someone else. He is ill to cross. Rance, will you gather a dozen men-at-arms for me? I want tried men who can keep their own counsel. You must stay here to guard Rex, and I will take Roger with me. The message which has come bids me ride forth to consult with Lord Medanham, Sir Harry Dalton, Lord Forthingay, and other Red Rose leaders.”

The old squire looked troubled. “Is such an expedition wise, Sir Hugh?”

“It is not a question for wisdom, old friend. Our young Prince, Henry of Richmond, is in danger. Through him the Red Rose has called, and a Red Rose man can only obey. Though Ed-