

Entering the Dragon's Lair: Hope for the Afflicted in North Korea and Ukraine

WASHINGTON—So many Western fairy tales involve a villain and a beautiful maiden they've captured. Fairy tales are not just fanciful stories; they teach about good and evil, and the dangers we encounter in life.

G.K. Chesterton once articulated a profound truth: "Fairy tales don't tell children that dragons exist. Children already know they exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be beaten."

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When looking at a map of the world, there are many real-life "dragons," with North Korea and Vladimir Putin's Russia, to name just a few.

"We just witnessed President Putin's trip to Kim Jon Un's North Korea," says Jeff King, one of the world's leading experts on religious persecution, and president of International Christian Concern.

"They spent much of their time trying to appear strong and in control, hoping to convey an aura of invincibility to deceive those they control or those who might attempt to rescue the 'maidens' they hold captive," he adds.

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In a Washington Times op-ed, "Enter the Dragon's Lair," King lays out a challenge that gives hope to the afflicted in both

North Korea and Ukraine:

The renowned expert on myth, Joseph Campbell teaches that the greatest lesson of fairy tales is “The greatest treasure we seek is hidden in the cave we most fear to enter.” In other words, victory requires us to confront our fears, and to boldly step into the dragon’s lair, which is of course the last place we would ever want to go.

Mr. Putin’s empire is experiencing incredible erosion both economically and militarily. While war is often perceived as merely a clash of arms, it is more fundamentally a test of economies. War is an insanely costly affair, and after observing the most recent financial news in Russia, I feel safe in saying that a certain “maiden” he holds in a high tower will soon be free.

As for North Korea, I have studied and researched the successive Kim regimes for over 20 years in my role as president of an organization that serves victims of religious persecution. And for me, the “maiden” he holds in the high tower is the 100,000-plus secret Christians he holds in concentration camps.

That freedom of that “maiden” – the Christian captives – may not be as imminent as the “maiden” of Ukraine, but I am convinced that freedom is just over the horizon.

The key to defeating the villains lies first in rejecting the image they spend so much time cultivating. It is to simply believe they can be overcome.

We must muster the courage to face our fears, to enter the dragon’s den, to do battle and rescue the “maidens.”

Then, at the end of our days, we can say we did something truly noble and valuable with the freedom and great wealth we were given.

And then we could lie down with the satisfaction that seemingly against all odds, we defeated the dragon, and created a happy ending for the many millions who could never believe they would escape his grasp.

To read more from Jeff King's op-ed, "Enter the dragon's lair: How Russian, North Korean alliance could have fairytale ending," originally published in The Washington Times' "Higher Ground," [click here](#).

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