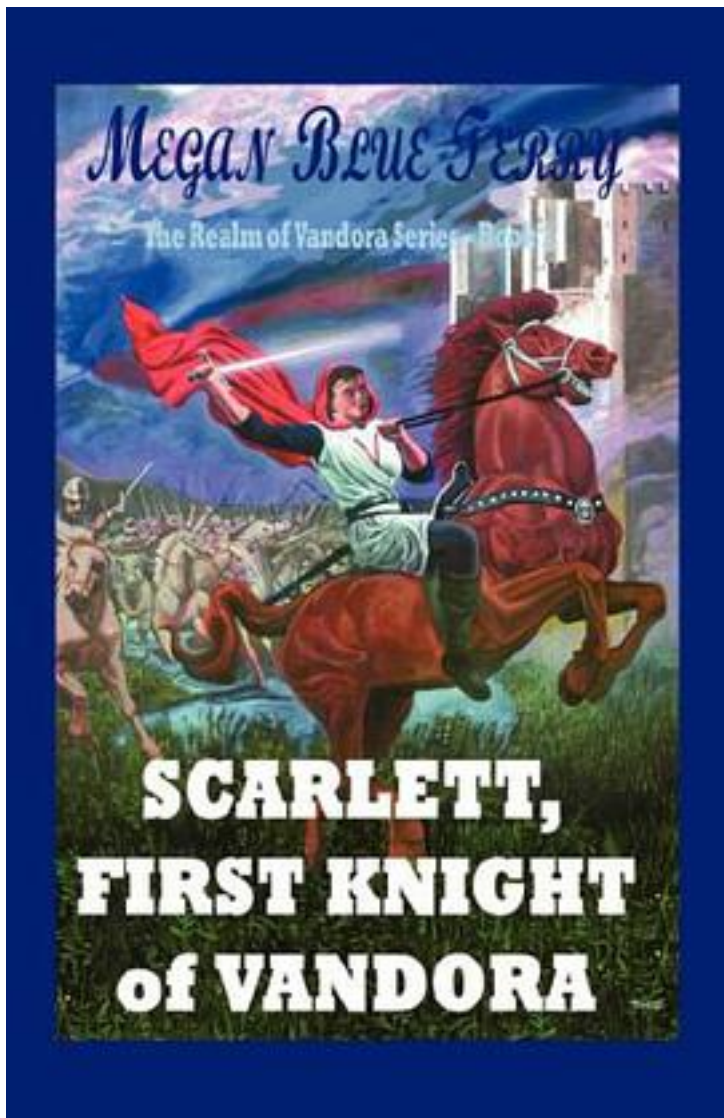


Scarlett, First Knight of Vandora



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"How did my son die?" Scarlett probed. "I know he was alive when he was born and when you left the room to clean him up. So what happened to him?" "It was a girl," the old woman whispered, her eyes clouding over as though she were going back in time. "No, my child was a boy," Scarlett said shaking her head. The old woman she suspected was no longer capable of remembering details. "You must listen to me," The woman cried clutching her hand and digging long jagged fingernails into her flesh. "My time is near. I have waited for you. You must know the truth " "Then tell me," Scarlett replied leaning closer as the woman sank back onto the pillows weakly. No matter what she said Scarlett decided to allow her to speak. "There were two births that night, a boy and a girl. The girl lived and the boy died." "The boy was mine," Scarlett said feeling close to tears. "In that trunk over there." The woman pointed. "I have written it all down, just in case you did not make it here in time." She sank into the pillow and closed her eyes. A horrible rattle had begun in her chest and Scarlett knew within minutes she would die. "My grandson is to have my things, my cottage." "I will call him," Scarlett said trying to release her hand. It immediately tightened. "Your daughter is alive " The woman rasped lifting herself partially from the bed so Scarlett could hear her. "She lives." Scarlett stood as the frail hand slipped away and the old midwife died. "My child was a boy." Scarlett whispered into the air.

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