There once lived a king of great renown. He was as benevolent as he was just. So great was his kingdom that it oversaw all of human kind. He was respected among the elves, and merchants traded freely with the dwarves. The humans were no strangers to the fairy folk. Nay, they lived peacefully side by side. Any disputes involving man were given fair council in his court, and seldom did he allow for war.

On one rare occasion, an alchemist was brought before his majesty. Many claimed that this alchemist was foul and used dark arts to fulfill his contracts. Screams could be heard from his workshop, and a presence so foul emanated such that birds wouldn't fly above it. The alchemist stood silently, neither confirming nor denying the charges brought against him. While the majority of the court received this silence as an act of treason, punishable by death, the king saw to it that he was not harmed. Instead, the king sentenced the alchemist to exile. His workshop was dismantled and he was couriered far outside of the kingdom's realm. No one gave a second thought to that trial and life resumed.

But the king's kindness, though his greatest attribute, became his greatest weakness. Even before the ruling, the alchemist had already plotted revenge against his former neighbors. Isolation was the best punishment he could have asked for.

Same say he sold his soul, letting true darkness consume him. Others cite forbidden text and forgotten rituals as the fuel of his burning malignancy. Life around him withered as he fed mercilessly upon it, growing ever stronger with each breath he stole. His lungs filled with poison, his touch brought instant decay. He lost all flesh, becoming a living skeleton. A smoky mist enveloped his bones and emanated from his aura.

As this foulness festered, the fair folk fled, leaving man to defend themselves. The Corruption, as it became known, spread faster as the Alchemist made his way back to address the king. Many attempts were made to impede his advance, but it only made him stronger. Soon, the water became tainted and food became scarce. Plagued by pleas from his people, the King sent summons to all races, in a desperate attempt to save what was left of humanity.

Three such heroes answered his call, and not a moment too soon. The alchemist was not alone by then. Corpses roamed amongst the living, wraiths of darkness flitted through the skies. Unknowingly, the Alchemist strode confidently toward the king's castle. In a last ditch effort to contain him, the king, clad in blessed silver, met the alchemist and did battle. The King's sword glanced off the Alchemist's staff, but the pervasive rot could not touch the King. Made of mortal flesh, the King tired quickly, and no amount of silver could stop direct contact with the Dark Alchemist's cursed bones.

It was then the three heroes entered the fray, each awakened in one of the elemental arts. A cleric, who could heal any malady with the ancient language, contained the Corruption and isolated the Dark Alchemist, forcing him to flee. A druid, gifted with unparalleled understanding of energy, called upon the natural world to encase the alchemist in a crypt of blue stone, drawn up from the mantle below, deep in a northern wood. A mage, born with limitless power, sealed the tomb and silenced the Dark Alchemist, finally bringing an end to the tragedy.

Upon their return, the King granted each of them knighthood status across the realm. Parades and celebrations were initiated, great monuments erected in the heroes' honor. After the dust settled, however, the fair folk went away to disappear from man, in the fear that another would rise again to threaten the world. The Elemental Arts were all but lost, with few simple practices kept alive today. Legend says that should disaster strike again, a similar triad will come forth and triumph, yet again. But peace prevailed and soon the memory of the Corruption faded away with the generations, kept alive only by bards who could recall the songs of old.