

# Tragedy at Rayad



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Once upon a time there was a little kingdom called Rayad. The tiny people who inhabited this kingdom were called Rayadites. They lived happily, sharing and caring about each other. Life was good to them.

There were only a few things they needed to watch out for; for instance, chocolate cake or wearing the color red. If any Rayadite ever ate chocolate cake or wore red, his spirit would become weakened, and he would care less and less about himself and the rules of the kingdom.

Also living in this tiny kingdom was Zynock, an evil person who wanted to destroy the kingdom and all of the people in it. He hated for them to be happy and loving, for that made it harder for him to influence them.

He knew what weakened their spirits and made them easier to capture. But Zynock also knew that he could not just offer the Rayadites chocolate cake and have them devour it - they were not that foolish!

Nor could he make the most wonderful garment in bright red and expect them to wear it immediately. The Rayadites wanted to be good and strong.

They had promised each other that they would help and strengthen each other in time of need. So how could Zynock

weaken this people? How could he get them to succumb to him so that he could destroy them and thus the whole kingdom?

"Let's see," he said, "I can't get them to eat chocolate cake right off, but maybe I can get them to develop a taste for chocolate."

That's when chocolate chip cookies were introduced to the kingdom of Rayad. At first the cookies were ignored and scoffed at. Then some commercials and billboards were produced that showed handsome, wonderful-looking Rayadites eating chocolate chip cookies.

And nothing happened to them, except they became more popular and sophisticated - at least that's what the message conveyed on the screens and billboards.

It wasn't long before a few Rayadites could be seen eating a chocolate chip cookies every now and then, and they seemed to be doing fine. They were still loving and caring and hadn't changed at all - so it seemed.

So more and more Rayadites began eating the cookies. What they didn't realize was that the portion of chocolate chips in each cookie had been doubled. They were getting a double dose of chocolate, disguised in the cookie.

You'd hear phrases like these: "That cookie is really good except for a couple of places where it tastes pretty chocolatey. But don't miss the cookie just for those two places. It's too good a cookie, and you can overlook the taste." "I heard that one of our friends has eaten a chocolate chip cookie, and she says it's nothing to be afraid of. It won't ruin your life if you eat it."

That was true: lives didn't seem to be ruined by chocolate chip cookies. Things were pretty much the same as usual. However, some of the teachers and leaders and parents in

Rayad suggested avoiding the cookies because tastes for chocolate were being developed.

"Avoid the cookies?" came the cries of surprise. "What for? What's wrong with them? They're not chocolate cake! How stuffy can you get?" Some who refused to eat the cookies were even laughed at and made fun of.

Zynock himself started chuckling. He had no idea his plan would work so well. And Zynock was patient. He didn't care how long it took to destroy Rayad, just so it was destroyed.

Chocolate chip cookies seemed to be moving pretty well. Zynock didn't worry about the words of caution and counsel from the leaders, because his commercials and billboards were so exciting and enticing. He had to make them that way, or the truth of the leaders would have swayed the Rayadites away from the cookies.

Now it came time to introduce a new product of destruction. No, not chocolate cake, not quite yet. Rather, Zynock began advertising spice cake, white cake, yellow cake, carrot cake, any kind of cake but chocolate - but all with chocolate frosting, rich chocolate frosting.

More commercials, more billboards, a few songs to hum and sing all day about how wonderful chocolate cake would be, although they're not eating it - yet! Get them thinking about it before they will actually succumb. Then in the kingdom of Rayad, you could hear:

"Have you tried that yellow cake with chocolate frosting?"

"Well, no. Is it good?"

"Oh, yes! Granted, it is chocolatey, but it's not chocolate cake. And it really doesn't have much more chocolate than those cookies we've been eating!"

"But the cake doesn't seem right. I mean, cookies are one thing, but cake?"

"Ah, come on! The important thing is the chocolate, and this is no more than you've already been eating. Everybody's eating it. You can't pass it up and be the only one left out."

In the meantime, the songs were subtly strumming away in the background, singing the praises of chocolate cake.

Right, the words were not good, but the beat and the rhythm were so cool that many Rayads listened just for the music. After all, what can music do?

Zynock began thinking again: "One thing that strengthens those Rayadites is when they are together talking to each other. What can I do about that?"

Then he reasoned, "Well, it's all right for them to be together. In fact, maybe there is some way I could use their gatherings and parties for my purposes. Aha! I've got it!"

So parties in Rayad began changing. Instead of the Rayadites talking to each other and playing games so they could get to know one another and share their strengths and talents, a new trend began. Everyone who was anyone had the new kinds of parties.

"Have you been to a party over at our Rayad friend's place yet?"

"No, I haven't."

"You should go. It's really cool!"

"Oh? What do you do?"

"Well, it isn't like any other party you've been to. It's pretty cool. All you do is go and sit down and watch stuff on the screen."

"Stuff on the screen? Like what?"

"Oh, exciting, scary stuff that's pretty good. There are a few scenes showing people eating chocolate cake, but no 'biggy.'"

"People eating chocolate cake? But..."

"Oh, it's not bad, and besides, there's nothing anymore without a little bit of that. It's just fun to get together with your friends."

So Zynock stood back and watched his plot unfold. "Let's see now. They're eating chocolate and they're eating cake. They're listening to songs and watching movies about chocolate cake. They're becoming weaker and weaker, although they're not even aware of it yet because they haven't actually eaten it - yet!

They are falling into my trap! They think their leaders and parents are square and stuffy. It's very helpful when their friends tell them what I want them to hear. Friends are my greatest asset!"

"Hey!" says a friend Rayadite, "have you seen the latest movie?"

"No," comes the response. "I thought it was C-rated, for chocolate."

"No, it isn't. It's R-rated for Red. There's no chocolate in it."

And so Zynock continues his plotting - this time a gorgeous garment, but not in red...yet. It's a luscious pink color.

*Lesson: Satan Wears us Down Over Time*