

# A Spartan Dilemma *(cont.)*

## Commander Lear

The day had dawned with wonderful anticipation for Commander Lear, a leader of one thousand of his land's best soldiers. His young son of seven was to enter the Youth Military Academy, and his wife was expecting another child very soon, perhaps this very day.

Lear beamed with pride as his son was met by Academy officials at the gate. Even though his son would never leave the Academy until the age of 20, the commander knew that to be a tough, disciplined soldier (perhaps an officer someday), academy life was required. It was what he had known. It had developed his skills as a leader of men in a land of bravery. It was what everyone who was truly worthy aspired to accomplish. Real men weren't interested in the art or words of other men; real men ruled other men.

However, his send-off for his son was interrupted by a messenger's panting announcement that his wife's time had come. Upon Commander Lear's return home, the midwife passed him with eyes gazing downward. A wailing in the next room alerted him to sharp emotional, not physical, pain. His wife was sobbing uncontrollably. He entered to find an apparently healthy baby boy comfortably cradled next to his mother.

But all was not as it seemed. His wife removed the blanket to reveal the infant's clubfoot. The right foot was positioned slightly askew, pointing outwardly somewhat perpendicular to his leg. This boy would never be able to march among the legions of soldiers. Commander Lear now fully realized the source of his wife's grief.

Upon notification of the birth of his son, the council elders would visit and inspect the child for physical fitness. This one would never pass inspection, and it would be killed. Inferior physical specimens could not contribute to the society, so they had to be done away with.

Commander Lear quietly walked out of the room. His joyous day soured. Like any good soldier, he followed orders well.



### ***Respond to the following questions:***

1. Name any positive characteristics you can detect in Commander Lear.
2. Name any negative characteristics of Commander Lear.
3. From the story, can you infer, or figure out, any information about the land in which Commander Lear lives?
4. What is your overall impression or feeling about the land in which he lives? Could such a place really exist? Why or why not?