

# THE QUEST OF THE RAINBOW DRAGONS: A UU Hero's Story

By Elizabeth H. Stevens

**PART I**      **Installment One: Rainbow Principle 1: Red for "Respect people" or "Each person is important" or "*We covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of all people ...*"**

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, the world was a very dangerous and miserable place. Greed and fear and anger and hatred filled people's hearts, and everyone fought constantly. Many people didn't have enough food to eat or clothes to wear, or lived in thin-walled huts that were sweltering hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. People who had horses and swords used them to rob other people. No one tried to protect the innocent.

Except for one man. His name was Lord Sigismund, and while he did have knights and soldiers in his castle, they fought only when they had to - to protect their home. In his kingdom by the sea, Sigismund spent his money on seeds, building materials, and baby animals to increase the size of his herds. He hired scientists to study and better understand the world. He hired sailors and explorers to travel and bring back stories and ideas from far away lands. He offered safe haven to any people who, like him, longed for peace, and longed to make the world a better place.

Among the people who came to live in the castle by the sea were twelve powerful sorcerers. Tired of the constant fighting and frustrated by people who threatened them in an attempt to force them to use their magic for evil, they banded together and swore to work with Sigismund to make the world safe for all people of good will.

One day, the youngest of the twelve sorcerers (whose name was Marita) was unpacking a box of dusty old books when she came across a book that was older and dustier than all the rest. She blew on the cover page, and when that didn't work, she used a damp cloth to clear away the thick, sticky layer of dust. She read, "The Prophecy of the Rainbow Dragons." She was about to set it aside when some thought, some feeling, some impulse led her to open the book and begin to read.

"In a time of great darkness and violence, one will be chosen to bring light to the land. You will know the right one when the Pearl of Wisdom is found, and begins to sing..."

The book went on, detailing where and how to find the pearl, and telling what the chosen one must do. The last lines read, "When the tasks are complete, the Rainbow Dragons will fly, bringing peace, hope, and love to the hearts of the people, and peace and prosperity to the entire land."

Excited, Marita ran to Sigismund and showed him the book. He called a meeting with all the sorcerers, all the scientists, all his closest friends and most trusted advisors. Together, they read *The Prophecy of the Rainbow Dragons* carefully, and together, they agreed to do all they could to make this prophecy come true.

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An expedition was mounted, and the Pearl of Wisdom was found and brought to the castle by the sea. The search for the chosen one began, as each knight, each sorcerer, each scientist, each explorer, with great trepidation, picked up the pearl, and then set it down again, disappointed, when it failed to sing. Not a peep, not a squeak, even when Lord Sigismund himself held the pearl in his hands.

The message went out to the ends of the earth, and people who wanted to be heroes came from far and wide, and still, the pearl stayed silent. After a while, the people stopped trying, and Sigismund and his advisors gave up hope, and began looking for other ways to bring peace to the land. Some even wanted to sell the Pearl of Wisdom, for it would surely command a great price, and the money could then be used to buy more practical things. Marita and the other sorcerers counseled patience, however, and Sigismund listened to their advice. The pearl was given to Marita for safe keeping, and she placed it on a pillow that sat on a stone shelf built into the wall of her tower room. There it sat, and never made a sound.

One day, several years after Marita found the book, a boy named Jared was tidying Marita's rooms. Jared was a servant who spent most of his time in the kitchens, peeling potatoes and washing pots, fetching this-and-that for the cooks and the servers. On this day, he'd been loaned to the cleaning crew to help with the spring cleaning.

Jared was very curious, and he quickly decided that this job - cleaning the youngest sorcerer's room - was quite possibly the most exciting and fun thing he'd ever done. She had so many interesting things, so many books and gizmos and gadgets. It was hard not to play with them, but Jared had a job, and he knew how important it was to do his job quickly and well. So as he cleaned each precious and

mysterious object he kept his curiosity under control. He carefully picked something up, dusted off, and put it right back.

*It doesn't hurt to imagine, though,* he said to himself. And so, as he held each object in his hands, he imagined what they might be for.

*This one must be for measuring magic,* he thought, as he carefully cleaned a golden scale.

*And this mirror might show the future* (though in fact, it was simply a mirror Marita used when combing her hair.) He sneaked a look in it, but saw only his own familiar freckled face and untidy red hair. His favorite object was a little silver flute. He wanted so very much to try to play it! He resisted temptation, though, and simply cleaned it, and put it back in its spot.

When he came to the place where the Pearl of Wisdom lay, he simply looked at it for a moment, for he could tell it was a pearl, and yet it seemed to him to be a living thing, with subtle colors swirling and dancing in its softly curved sides. *Must be a trick of the light,* he thought, shaking his head, and he took the pearl from its shelf to clean it.

But as soon as he touched it, the pearl began to sing! The most beautiful music anyone had ever heard filled the room, the tower, the entire castle. Everyone stopped what they were doing and listened, feeling their hearts fill with joy, and their eyes fill with tears of happiness. It was Marita who realized first what must have happened, and she rushed back to her tower room to see the great hero who would bring peace and prosperity to the land.

Imagine her surprise when she saw that the pearl sang not for a soldier or a scientist, not for a sorcerer or a great knight, not even for an adventurer. It sang for a simple kitchen boy! Meanwhile, Jared had been first startled, and then transfixed by the music, and so he stood there, still as a statue, looking at the pearl, filled with wonder and confusion. When Marita entered the room, he turned to look at her, and immediately felt embarrassed.

"I'm so sorry, Ma'am. I didn't do anything, I swear. I just was picking it up to dust it ..." Shaking her head to clear away her surprise, Marita said, "What is your name?"

"Jared, ma'am."

"Well, Jared, you'd better come with me."

Jared thought, *Uh-oh. I'm in big trouble.* He began to put the pearl back in its spot. But Marita said, "No, no, bring the pearl, Jared. They'll need to see this to believe it," and she swept out of the room, trying to remember the rest of the prophecy. She had only taken a few steps when she stopped so abruptly that Jared bumped into her.

"Sorry!" he said.

"Not to worry, just don't drop the pearl! Wait here. I'd better get the book."

She rushed back to her room while Jared stood there feeling awkward and rather shy. When she returned, she had the big, dusty old book under her arm, and she smiled gently at Jared, for she could tell that he was confused and nervous and a little scared.

"Don't worry, Jared. It will be all right."

They walked together in silence, and then she paused again, and put her hand on his shoulder. He stopped and looked up into her eyes. She smiled kindly. "Jared, whatever happens next, I want you to know you can count on me to help you in any way I can."

Jared's jaw dropped. To have this beautiful and powerful sorcerer offer to help him, Jared, the kitchen boy - he simply didn't know what to say. "Thank you," he finally got out, and smiled weakly back at her.

She laughed, and ruffled his hair. "You must be just completely confused and baffled. Don't worry, Jared. It will be all right, you know. Different - your life is about to change in ways we can't even begin to imagine. But it will be all right."

Together they walked into the council chamber of Lord Sigismund. "My lord," said Marita, "We've found the chosen one."

***Dragon Task #1:*** *This week, if you notice someone feeling scared or uncomfortable, offer to help them. Be friendly to someone you've never met before.*