

**THE QUEST OF THE RAINBOW DRAGONS: A UU Hero's Story**  
By Elizabeth H. Stevens

**Part III      Installment twelve: Rainbow Principle 3: Yellow**

**"Yearn to Learn (about ourselves, others and the big questions about life & death)"**

***We affirm and promote acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.***

*Our story thus far ...* Jared and Delia are two children on a mysterious quest to find the Rainbow Dragons. Guided by a furry little creature named Les, they are now working on the third of seven tasks. They've traveled to the mystical city of Atlantis, accompanied by a library clerk named Polly. There, they met the Yellow Dragon Zheltizna, who frequently takes the shape of a frumpy librarian with glasses and a worn-out cardigan sweater. She has told them the sad story of Atlantis, a city torn apart by a single question: "Why is there suffering in the world?"

*Our story continues ...* "What a sad story," said Delia, after Zheltizna and Polly had left. "Can you imagine people getting so worked up about a question that they are willing to start a war?" "Unfortunately, yes," said Jared, who had read quite a bit of history in the Library of Atlantis over the past several days. "I think most wars are fought because people have different answers to questions.

"Religious wars are fought because people have different answers to questions about God. Other wars are fought because people have different ideas about who should own a piece of land, or different ideas about how things should be run, or how we should do things. What's sad about it is that when there isn't one clear right answer to a question, people fight each other to try and prove that their answer is more right than any other." "Why can't people just accept that there are different answers to the same question sometimes?" asked Delia.

"I don't know," said Jared. "But the world would be a better place, I think, if someone knew the answer to *your* question, Delia." Delia smiled at Jared, and then shook her head. "Okay. So, how are we going to help Zheltizna? I know she hasn't been very nice to us, but I think I understand why, now.

She is so sad about what happened, and so lonely down here by herself." "I don't know," said Jared. "But I do know I need a break from all these books. Let's take a walk down to the river and see how the turtles are doing." "Sounds good to me," answered Delia, and the two of them headed down to the water.

Great Grandfather Turtle still slept on the shore.

The sea turtle, however, seemed very glad to see them. "Children! Are you ready to return, then? Where is the other?" "No, sorry. She's still in the library, and we haven't finished what we came here to do.

"We're actually pretty stumped. We just needed a break from the books," replied Jared.

"I see. Want to see something special?" asked the turtle.

"Sure," answered Delia. Jared nodded his agreement.

"We will not disturb the Grandfather. I must take you one at a time." Jared motioned for Delia to go first, and so she climbed into the water and took hold of the turtle's shell. Soon, they had vanished from Jared's sight. He sat, looking at Grandfather turtle sleeping.

His thoughts drifted to Zheltizna. *She is so sure that if she finds the right answer to her question, the problem will be solved. But I'm not so sure. I think people might just find something else to argue about,* he thought.

After a time, the turtle reappeared, and Jared waded into the freezing cold water. The turtle took him further downriver and through an underwater cave. He had to hold his breath for a very long time. They stopped in a small, dark space, where Jared was able to catch a quick breath, and then dove deep again. When they surfaced, they were in the most dazzling place Jared had ever seen. He saw Delia sitting on a rock, her arms wrapped around her knees, her face alight with wonder.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she asked. And indeed, he had to agree with her. The cavern they were in looked as if it were made of moonbeams. Glistening, sparkling stalactites hung from the ceiling and were reflected in the water of yet an underground lake. The whole cavern was illuminated by brilliant gems set into the ceiling. Somehow, they didn't just reflect light, they *produced* it. The light was different from the greenish light of the lichen they had found in the sea cave on their way to Atlantis. This light was pure, and bright, and made everything look alive.

Jared found himself without any words to express his feelings. He simply reached for Delia's hand, and the two of them sat together, holding hands, breathing in the beauty.

After a while, the turtle spoke again. "It is time to go. The tide has turned and the current is strong! I am afraid if we don't leave soon, the chamber where we stopped will be full, and you don't have enough breath to make it the whole way without stopping."

Delia immediately went over and hopped into the water, waving to Jared. "See you on the other end," she said.

"See you," answered Jared. Then he was alone in the moonbeam place. He turned around full circle, noticing everything, enjoying all the different shapes and sizes. When the turtle returned, he had memorized this place, so that he could carry it in his heart always.

When the turtle had deposited Jared on the shore beside Delia and both had dried off, they walked quietly back to the library. Somehow, they didn't want to ruin their memories with too much talking. However, mindful of their quest, Jared's thoughts shifted again to Zheltizna's question.

"Delia," he said, "I don't think there is an answer to 'Why is there suffering in the world?' And even if Zheltizna found one, her people would find another question to fight about. Somehow we need to convince her that she's asking the wrong question." "And how do you propose we do that?" asked Delia. "I'm not sure how we could possibly get her to listen to us. We're children, and she's read most of the books in that whole entire library! It will be very difficult to get her to even *start* thinking of other questions." "I know," said Jared. "You're right. I think that's why we have to find the right question *for her* - the question that will set her heart free. So, let's start thinking about that." "Hmmm," said Delia. "How about, 'What is the source of truth?'" "No," said Jared. "That doesn't feel right. I'm not sure there is a single source, and so people would argue about which source is better. How about, 'How can people live in peace?'"

"You're going to find just as many opinions about that as you would about suffering or about truth. Some people think the way to live in peace is to just do what you're told. Others think we'd be able to live in peace if there were no rules at all!" Delia said. "Somehow, we need to find a question that has an answer people can't fight about."

For some reason, as they talked, Jared kept thinking about the beautiful chamber they'd just visited. He remembered the way the light had played on all the different stalactites, how ripples in the water made patterns and pictures that were constantly moving and shifting.

"It's like light," he said. "Light looks different depending on the place it's shining, but it's beautiful no matter what." "Huh?" said Delia, confused.

"People are always going to have differences of opinion. We need a question that, no matter what a person's opinion, points the person back toward being peaceful, back toward being friends with each other - friends even with people who have different opinions. It needs to be a question that helps people remember that things look different depending on where you stand. We need a question that teaches people to see beauty in other people's

answers *and* in their own - a question that teaches there are lots of different right answers, so that no one needs to defend their answer as the only one.

Maybe 'What can we learn from each other?' or 'How can we get along with each other even when we disagree?'" Delia paused thoughtfully, then burst out. "What about: 'How can we accept and love one another and all of our different opinions about the many mysteries we find in life?'" "Oh, I like that," said Jared. "I like it a lot. Let's see if we can get Zheltizna to come back." He took his flute out of his bag and began to play. Delia began to sing.

Far away, in the distance reaches of the library, Polly heard the music and began to tug on Zheltizna's arm. "Zheltizna, do you hear the music? Come on, let's go listen." "No," snapped the dragon. "I won't! I want to find my answer. I won't get distracted again. Back to work!" Her voice was even grumpier and harsher than usual.

Meanwhile, Delia and Jared played a second song, and then a third. After they finished, Jared put down his flute. "I don't think she's coming," he said sadly.

"She has to!" said Delia. "There's got to be some way to get her here!" Jared closed his eyes and fixed the image of the beautiful moonbeam room in his mind.

He put the flute to his mouth and tried, one last time, to play. The song that he played has never been played before, never been sung, never even existed until that very moment. He played his own song, trying to capture the feeling he'd had when he touched the Pearl of Wisdom, trying to capture the feeling he and Delia and Polly had when they rode on the back of Grandfather Turtle, trying to capture the feeling of being in the presence of the other dragons. He poured his heart into the song, and the dragon - the yellow librarian dragon Zheltizna - lifted her head and began to listen.

As if she were in a trance, she followed the sound of Jared's song through the aisles, leaving her books behind her. She absentmindedly took off her spectacles and left them on a table. Her shoulders, typically hunched over armloads of books, began to straighten.

When she came around the corner and Delia caught sight of her, the change was astounding.

Here was a woman as beautiful as Krasnova had been, standing straight and proud, hair streaming down her back, eyes a luminous gold now that the ugly spectacles were gone.

Even the ratty cardigan had somehow become a robe of woven sunlight.

"Zheltizna," said Delia, while Jared continued to play. "You are searching for the answer to the wrong question. Instead of asking 'Why is there suffering in the world?', you need

to answer this question: 'How can we accept one another and all of our different opinions about the many mysteries we find in life?' If you can find *that* answer, your people will never fight again." Zheltizna stood silent for a long time. Then she whispered, "Yes, yes, I see. I see now! Oh, I have wasted so much time!" Whirling around, she ran back into the library, calling over her shoulder, "Thank you, children! Thank you! Polly, come on, I need your help now more than ever..." Polly hugged Delia and Jared goodbye, and set off after Zheltizna. "Take care, you two.

I'll see you when it's all over," she said.

Delia and Jared walked back to the water. Grandfather turtle was awake, and perhaps Jared imagined it, but it seemed that the massive turtle winked! They climbed on his back and headed back to the surface world for the next part of their journey.

***Dragon Task:*** Think about a place where people with different opinions manage to get along with each other. What makes it possible?