

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

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## Part IV      Installation fourteen - Rainbow Principle 4: **Green**

**"Grow by exploring what is right and true in life"**

*We affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*

*Our story thus far ...*

Two children from the castle of Lord Sigismund, Jared and Delia, are traveling with a creature named Les to find the Green Dragon, Zelyonov. They are working on the fourth of seven quests foretold in an ancient book entitled The Quest of the Rainbow Dragons.

When last we heard of our three brave companions, they had successfully crossed the desert and arrived at the camp of the Tribe of the Thousand Emeralds - the blue-robed, fierce inhabitants of the foothills at the base of the Ring of Fire mountain range, where Zelyonov dwells.

*Our story continues ...*

Delia didn't like the way the tribal people were looking at her, pointing at her curly hair and babbling away in their strange language. Jared didn't like the way they were looking at Delia, either. His hand went automatically to the holster where he typically carried the old practice sword he'd been given as a gift. The sword was missing, already confiscated by the people in the mysterious blue robes.

One of them said something to him, mounted his horse, and reached a hand back down, motioning to Jared to climb up behind him. Jared waited until he saw Delia safely mounted in front of another of the riders before he took the hand that was reaching out to him.

The ride to the campsite took only a few minutes, and Jared was relieved to see Les sitting in clear view. He and Delia hurried over to sit near their guide.

"Hey, kids," said Les with a smile. "You hungry? These folks are some of the best cooks you'll ever meet." "Yes, I'm starving," said Jared, "but I'm a little nervous, too. They took my sword away, and I don't like the way those guys are looking at us. Especially Delia." Lou placed a calming hand on Jared's arm. "Now, you've got to realize that the Tribe has a different culture, a different way of getting along. You've got nothing to worry about, though. Hospitality is the highest and most sacred value. They're not going to hurt you. I think the way they're looking at Delia is meant to be a compliment. They think she's pretty." "Still, I don't like it," said Jared.

"Hello???" said Delia. "I'm sitting right here! I don't really like it much either, but it's not like it hurts or anything. Jared, chill out. Les, please, stick close. We don't speak their language and we don't understand their culture, and I don't know about Jared, but I feel really uncomfortable." Lou looked pretty uncomfortable himself. "See, that's the thing, Delia. 'Round here, the girls stay separate from the men and boys. In fact, unless I'm mistaken, those two women are on their way to take you to the girls' tents." Sure enough, a girl about Delia's age and an older woman approached

Jared, Les, and Delia, and bowed low. They jabbered something at Les, who replied, and then the girl took hold of Delia's hand and began to tug her away. "Les?" said Delia, starting to panic.

"Don't worry, Delia! They'll take good care of you," said Les, waving happily. Jared, meanwhile, made as if to follow his friend, only to discover the way blocked by one of the blue-robed tribesmen.

"Les," he said, "I'd feel a lot better if we could stick together." "Sorry, kiddo," said Les. "Doesn't work like that. She'll be fine." Meanwhile, Delia found herself being led first to a warm pool. Delighted to have the chance to bathe properly, she tried to thank the girl who had guided her there. The girl just giggled and nodded her head. Delia scrubbed every inch of herself. It felt good to be clean again! When she had finished, the girl offered her a clean cloth to dry herself off with, and then some clean, blue robes similar to the ones she herself was wearing. When Delia was dressed, the girl got out a comb. Delia reached out her hand, but the girl shook her head and motioned, instead, for Delia to sit down. Then she began patiently combing the snarls out of Delia's hair.

"I don't even know what to call you," said Delia. Then, pointing to herself, she said her own name. "Delia. Delia." The girl caught on quickly and responded, "Sanah." "Sanah. What a pretty name," said Delia, relaxing a little.

Sanah not only combed Delia's hair, but she braided it in a long plait down her back.

Then she gave Delia a headscarf, and mimed eating.

"Food?" asked Delia, "Yes, that would be lovely." Sanah led her around a corner and into a tent, where a splendid feast of dates, figs, goat cheese and green tea had already been laid out, along with several loaves of flat bread. Delia ate her fill, and then decided to try to communicate a little more.

"Bread," she said, pointing to the bread.

"Pita," said Sanah, catching on immediately.

"Tea," said Delia, pointing to the liquid in her cup.

"Chai," responded Sanah.

"Pita," said Delia. "Chai." The girl replied, "bread," "tea." They went on like this for quite a while, branching out from the names of things in the room to miming things like riding and swimming. By the time night fell, Delia felt a little more at home. She still couldn't understand too much of what people were saying, but she could recognize a word here or there, and between the words she knew and sign language, she'd managed to communicate all of her needs.

Meanwhile, Les, despite his fluency in the tribe's language, had failed to locate a guide to take them into the mountains to search for the Green Dragon. "I don't understand it," he said to Jared, frustrated. "They all agree that he's up there, and most of them seem to know just where he is. But when I ask them to show us where, they just shake their heads and say, 'not me, not me.'" "Do any of them say why not?" "I think," answered Les, "they're saying something about it not being their

place. We can probably find Zelyonov ourselves, but we'll waste valuable time wandering around looking for him. I really think we'd be better off with a guide." Looking up at the giant, rugged mountains looming against the evening sky, Jared had to agree.

"Well," he said to Les, "we might as well stay the night, anyway, and eat some food.

Maybe you'll figure it out before we have to head out tomorrow morning." "Maybe," said Les. They feasted on roasted meat, root vegetables, flat bread, and more of the sweetened goats' milk. When everyone had eaten, the tribesmen took turns acting out their legends and stories. It was fascinating, and a little strange to be watching people tell dramatic tales in a language that sounded like gibberish, but Les translated faithfully, and Jared at least got the basic gist of what was going on.

Then, long after the sun had gone down, a woman stood up on the other side of the fire.

Immediately, the camp grew quiet. She began speaking in a dark, compelling voice.

"She calls herself the dragon singer," said Les, "and says she'll tell the story of her trial by fire. When she was a girl of twelve, the great dragon Zelyonov sent her a special dream, calling her to the mountain, to the chamber of fire.

"Three nights, she dreamed. Three days, she dismissed the dreams as foolish fancies.

The fourth night the dream came again, more terrible than ever before, and she knew she must obey the dragon and face her doom. So she rose early in the morning and snuck away from camp, wearing only her robes and sandals, carrying only a skin of water and her little eating knife. All day she walked, higher and higher, following the sound of Zelyonov's voice.

"At sunset, she arrived at the gate to his kingdom, and passed through the mighty black doors. The doors slammed shut behind her, and she was in the dark. Seeing a faint glow in the distance, she began to walk toward it. She noticed heat and the smell of sulfur, getting stronger and stronger. At last, she came to a passage that took her into a chamber where the lake of fire was.

"She called for Zelyonov. He answered her call, and lay down across the fiery lake, making his body into a bridge. As she walked across his back, the heat was terrible. It burned her hair and her eyes.

"On an island, surrounded by the lava, she talked with Zelyonov for three days. He taught her about the land above. He taught her about the land below. He told her the names of the stars. Then he told her she must return, and teach all that she knew to her people.

"There would be resistance, he knew, and so he marked her eyes and her hair, and gave her the great emerald as a sign of his favor." At this, the woman threw back her hood, and indeed, her eyes were a bright green, and her hair curly, like Delia's.

"He said one day, another would come, similarly marked. And now that day has come," Lou paused, startled. "Oh, my goodness. They think Delia's the one the dragon told her about!" "That day has come," he continued, "and she has directed her own daughter to take us to the cave with the fiery lake to meet Zelyonov. Her daughter will pass over the lake with us in hopes of being granted the

same favor as her mother." "We are to set out in the morning," finished Les, as the woman regally returned to her seat and accepted a cup of tea. "Well, that explains that, then," he smiled at Jared.

"We'd better get some sleep." The next morning, they packed up their things and accepted food and drink gratefully.

Then they waited. Soon, Delia and a young girl appeared, laughing together like old friends.

"Hey, guys!" said Delia. "This is Sanah. I think she wants to take us somewhere or something." She turned to Sanah. "Jared," she said, pointing at her friend.

"Jared," repeated Sanah.

"Les," said Delia, this time pointing at the furry guide.

"Les," Sanah repeated with a grin.

"Hello, Sanah," said Jared awkwardly. Sanah blushed and hid her face.

"I don't think she's supposed to talk to men or boys," said Delia. "They seem to have pretty strict rules about that sort of thing. Only her mother gets to speak, and that's because she's special somehow. I don't know, I think the word means something like 'teacher.'"

"Oh," said Jared. "Well, okay then, I guess. Are we ready to go?"

"Sure," said Delia. "Where are we going, anyway? I couldn't quite understand what Sanah was trying to tell me."

"To see the dragon," said Les seriously. "The one that lives at the heart of the volcano."

"Oh," said Delia, as her smile and her confidence faded. "Geez, these dragons keep getting harder and harder to get to!"

Lou laughed. "Not to worry. Sanah knows the way."

The four of them waved goodbye to the assembled tribes people and headed off into the mountains to meet the Green Dragon, Zelyonov.

**Dragon Task:** *Learn to say a few words in a foreign language, or read a myth or fairy tale from another part of the world.*