

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

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Part V - Installment twenty - Rainbow Principle: **Blue**

"Believe in our ideas and act on them"

We affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large.

Our story thus far ...

Two ordinary children, Jared and Delia, are on a quest to bring peace and prosperity to the world. Helped by a funny, furry little guy named Les, they are attempting to complete seven tasks described in a book called The Quest of the Rainbow Dragons. They are in the middle of the fifth task. After jumping off a mesa at the end of the world, they found themselves on the magical "Road of Good Intentions," a strange, unsettling place created by the Blue Dragon, Golubnaya. They were subjected to a series of tests, which they passed, but then they decided in a conversation with Golubnaya that they didn't want to enter her utopia, the place she'd created where everything was perfect. Hurt and angry, Golubnaya has used her magic against them, imprisoning them separately in a place where they can't see, hear, taste, smell, or touch anything.

Our story continues ... After a while, both Delia and Jared stopped crying. They had both begged Golubnaya to let them free, to give them another chance, but the Blue Dragon hadn't even responded. Suspended in this dark place, they had no choice but to let go of hope. Neither of them knew how long their imprisonment had lasted. They had no way of measuring time. It might have been years, or it might have been only a few moments when they found themselves released, standing on the rock-strewn ground at the foot of the mesa. They sat, curled up with their knees below their chins, in the shadow of a large boulder.

After a few minutes, Jared finally forced himself to speak. "That was horrible."

"Oh, yes. The worst. I think that must have been hell," said Delia. "I pray we never have to go back."

"Delia, what do you think we're supposed to do next? Should we just wait here for Les? Should we try to find the dragon?"

"I don't know, Jared. I don't know."

They sat quietly for just a moment more. Then, a beautiful moth with pearly, iridescent wings appeared nearby. Inexplicably, just seeing it - so lovely, so light - they began to feel better. The moth fluttered around them a bit, and then landed, gently, first on Delia's hand, and then on Jared's shoulder. With its touch came a sense of peace and the beginnings of happiness. As their hearts began to lighten and their faces began to brighten with new smiles, the moth danced in front of them, away, and then back, away, and then back.

"Jared," said Delia, "I think this lovely moth wants us to follow it. Shall we try?"

Because he didn't want to lose this new feeling, this good feeling that he had been missing so very much during his time in the darkness, Jared nodded, and the two children began to follow the moth. Surprisingly, it led them back up the side of the mesa. When they arrived at the top, they understood why. Curled up, looking almost like a giant statue, the Blue Dragon, Golubnaya, lay looking at the sky. Unlike her human form, her true dragon form was huge, and beautiful, and somehow very, very sad.

"Golubnaya? Is that you?" asked Delia. The dragon didn't respond, didn't so much as sigh or turn her head. She stayed completely still. Jared and Delia walked around her gigantic body to the place where her head loomed over them, her eyes fixed on a distant point, far away.

"Golubnaya?" asked Jared. Again, no response. The moth, which had led them up the mesa, flitted around the huge dragon's head, and then, gently, landed *right* on the tip of her nose. Golubnaya twitched her nose, once, and then AAAH-CHOO! she sneezed, sending the moth fluttering away into the distance. A single tear drop, made out of a blue sapphire, fell from the dragon's huge, blue eyes.

"Golubnaya, please don't cry," said Delia, touching an enormous claw gently. It was the only part of the dragon she could reach. "Tell us, what is wrong? Please, can we help you somehow?"

"Oh, children, you already have. More than you know. But now, I must make amends for my mistakes, and no one can help me. I have decided to punish myself as I wrongly punished you. I have constructed a prison, here in my own mind, where I cannot see, hear, touch, or taste. Only, I felt something, just now, on my nose. And ... I'm talking to you? And you hear me?"

"Yes," said Jared. "We certainly do," and fearing that she would not allow them to continue talking for long, Jared jumped right in. "Golubnaya, I don't think imprisoning yourself is the right way to make amends. What you did was horrible, and wrong, but it's wrong even when you do it to yourself. Surely, with all your magic, you can find better ways to make it up to us."

"Like what?" the dragon asked.

Delia chimed in then, saying, "You could start by apologizing. I know I'd feel a lot better if you said you were sorry."

"Oh, child, of course I am sorry!" and another sapphire tear fell at their feet. Golubnaya's head bent, just a bit, and they could see her eyes, brimming with even more tears.

"Golubnaya, if you don't mind my asking, what made you see that what you were doing was wrong?" asked Jared.

"After I banished the two of you, I just felt so ... so lonely, and hopeless, and sad. I thought about what you had said, about how sometimes the things that made your friends imperfect also made them lovable. I remembered the way you kept insisting that my illusions were not the same as real people, the way you responded so bravely and honestly to everything I threw at you, and I found myself admiring the courage you showed in refusing to even try to get into my utopia, my perfect world.

"Do you know why I wanted everything to be perfect? Because it hurts so much when it isn't. It hurts every single time I see hypocrisy in the world, every

single time someone lets me down. If I can't make a place where everything is perfect all the time, maybe I need to, to stop feeling. Then I won't hurt so much."

"I don't think it works that way," said Delia. "If you stop feeling hurt, you also stop feeling joy, and wonder, and even love. We need our feelings. Otherwise we're not really alive."

"I'm not sure I deserve to be really alive, after what I did," said Golubnaya.

"It's not something you have to deserve," said Jared. "But feeling - well, you have to choose to let yourself feel. I think you are still looking for an easy way *out*, when what you need to do is to find a way to be *in* ... in the world, in life, in the messiness that upsets you so much."

"Yes," said Delia. "If you want to make it up to us, and to all the people who tried to find you and find their way into utopia, then help us now. You have a lot of magic. Use it for good!"

"I'm not sure I know how," said Golubnaya, giving up any pretense of stillness, and beginning to pace back and forth from one end of the mesa to another.

"I thought what I was doing *was* good."

"In a way, it was," said Delia. "But a utopia separate from the world doesn't do anyone much good. Are there things you can do, ways you can help make the real world more like a utopia?"

"I suppose, perhaps," the dragon stopped pacing, and looked into the distance again, thoughtfully.

"You could help us on our quest ..." said Jared, a little bit sneaky. Golubnaya began to laugh.

"Oh, children, if you only knew how beautiful you are, inside and out! I ... I've missed you. Somehow, in just the brief time we spent together, you taught this crusty old heart to love again."

"Golubnaya," said Delia gently, "love works best if it goes both ways. Will you let us love you, too?"

"How!?!!" asked Golubnaya passionately, and this time, her head did turn, fully, to face the children. "How could you possibly love me, after I trapped you that way, just for being honest? How could you possibly forgive me?"

"How could we not?" asked Jared, simply.

And the dragon, the great Blue Dragon bowed down, and laid her head at the feet of these two ordinary children, saying, "Then of course, I will help you, and I will love you, and I will let *you* teach *me* how to do good again, in the real world rather than in my own mind. Here is my token, for you to carry always."

When she lifted her head, a single sapphire, in the shape of a teardrop, rested on the ground at Jared's feet. Full of amazement, he picked it up reverently and said, "Thank you."

He and Delia walked over to Golubnaya and rested their hands on her head for just a moment. Suddenly, they heard the sound of flapping wings, and felt a strong breeze almost sweeping them off their feet. Turning, they saw Yantarov, the Amber Dragon, flying toward the mesa. He landed with a thump, to the left of Golubnaya.

"Sister," he said, gently touching Golubnaya with his snout.

"Children," he added, nodding in their direction.

"Hello, Yantarov," said Jared, a little nervous. The piece of amber he still wore around his neck felt suddenly warm, almost to the point of burning his skin. In his first encounter with Yantarov, the Amber Dragon, Jared had seen in the Mirror of Justice the ways in which he had fallen short, the ways in which he had been less than fair and kind to the people he knew. Yantarov had almost let him fall through the clouds to his death! At the last minute, he had been given a chance to prove himself, and Yantarov had insisted he would watch from a distance while they continued on their quest. Perhaps he had come, now, because he thought they should have allowed Golubnaya to punish herself!

Would it have been fairer? Did crime need a punishment? Was that what justice was about?

The Amber Dragon spoke: "As my younger sister bows to you, children, so, then, do I."

He, too, lowered his great head in front of Delia and Jared. "You have shown yourself time and again to be kind, and merciful, and to have more wisdom than I would expect in one so young. You have heeded the cries of justice, and tempered your actions with mercy. You have taught me, just as you have taught my sister, and I have decided. When you call, I will come."

A sense of triumph bloomed in Jared and Delia's hearts. They looked at one another and smiled.

"Now, sister, let us fly together, back into the world. Much has changed during your long absence, and nothing would please me more than to show you around."

"Thank you, Yantarov. If Delia and Jared think it's okay?"

"We think it's perfect," said Jared with a grin. "As long as you come when we call, when the time is right."

"We will, for sure!" said Golubnaya. Yantarov nodded his agreement. Then the two dragons launched themselves into the air, and trumpeting their farewells, flew off into the distance.

Delia and Jared sat down once more, wondering what to do now.

"Nice job," said a familiar voice behind them. They turned to see Les, already starting on their dinner. "Very nice job, indeed."

Dragon Task: Think about a time when a friend has done something to hurt you, either by accident or on purpose. How did you respond? What do you think the best way to respond would have been?