

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

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### Part VI      Installment twenty-two - Rainbow Principle 6: Indigo

"Insist on freedom, justice and peace for all people, "

*We affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.*

*Our story thus far ...*

Jared and Delia, two ordinary children, have set out on an extraordinary quest. Following the directions of an ancient prophecy, and guided by a small, furry creature named Les, they have successfully met and befriended five of the seven Rainbow Dragons. They are now in search of the sixth dragon, Lazyurov, the Indigo Dragon, who prowls the edge of the world's battlefields.

*Our story continues ...*

A few days later, they noticed a dramatic change in their surroundings. For most of their journey, they'd walked through lush forest, ploughed fields with the first few sprouts of green, or busy villages. Now, all around they saw bare earth, smoldering ruins, and ragged camps of hungry and miserable looking people who begged them for food. Les had sometime acquired a backpack that seemed endlessly full of bread and apples, which he handed out freely.

When they were near enough to the camped armies to hear the clanking of swords and the shouting and swearing of fighting men, Les stopped and turned to the children. "Of all the dragons you'll meet on your quest, the dragon you meet next, Lazyurov, the Indigo Dragon, is one of the hardest working and, perhaps, the nearest and dearest to my heart. What you see around you, the devastation and the misery, those are the fruits of war.

"People go to battle, filled with thoughts of revenge, or dreaming of power, wealth, or spoils. What they find, what they create, is a wasteland, filled with pain and suffering. Lazyurov tries, one person at a time, to convince people to find a different way. It's not an easy task, though. You humans, when you're scared or

angry, seem to revert to being creatures of instinct, with only two options: fight or flight."

At that very moment, a rushing of wind and a burst of flame announced the arrival of the Indigo dragon, himself.

"Oh, darn it!" said Les, "I forget how fast he is!" With that, he pulled his vanishing trick again.

The children were left to face the large, mighty dragon on their own. By now, though, their fear of dragons had evaporated, and they simply waited patiently for Lazyurov to settle down.

"WELL," he finally boomed, "I HEARD MY NAME ON THE WIND. WHO COMES IN SEARCH OF THE INDIGO DRAGON?"

"Hi," said Jared calmly. "I'm Jared, and this is my best friend Delia. We're on a quest to meet and befriend all seven of the Rainbow Dragons. You're next on our list."

"YOU HAVE SEEN MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS?"

"All but you and Bagranka, the Violet Dragon."

"SHOW ME THE TOKENS!" Lazyurov boomed.

Jared pulled them out of his bag. The ruby heart from Krasnova, the amber medallion from Yantarov, the crystal prism from Zheltizna, the emerald scales from Zelyonov's eyes, and the single, tear-drop shaped blue sapphire that had been Golubnaya's gift to them.

"YOU NEED NOT FEAR. I WILL ADD MY OWN IN THE MORNING. BUT FIRST..."

"First," interrupted Delia, "we need to accompany you and aid you in your work. Jared's memorized the prophecy, and so we have some idea what we're in for. 'Fly with Lazyurov, the Indigo Dragon of peace. Help two brothers remember their love, and help a third remember who he is.' We're ready."

Lazyurov nodded, and said, "CLIMB ON MY BACK."

They did as he asked, using his bent foreleg as a step stool, and settling themselves between the ridges along his spine. "HANG ON TIGHT!" he warned, just before launching himself into the air with tremendous speed.

The sky was clear and the moon full, and below them they could see the countryside clearly, dotted with campfires and dark shapes they knew must be tents.

"BELOW YOU IS THE ARMY OF LORD STEPHEN. HE IS TRYING TO ASSERT HIS CLAIM TO THESE LANDS OVER THAT OF HIS COUSIN, LORD RICHARD. LORD STEPHEN WAS LOST AND THOUGHT DEAD, AND SO JOHN TOOK OVER. WHEN STEPHEN RETURNED, RICHARD HAD BECOME USED TO THE PRIVILEGES AND THE POWER HE GAINED AS LORD OF THESE PARTS. HE CLAIMS THAT STEPHEN IS AN IMPOSTER. STEPHEN WANTS TO RECLAIM WHAT HE SEES AS RIGHTFULLY HIS. IN THEIR GREED, THEY HAVE LAID WASTE TO THE LAND THEY SEEK TO CLAIM. NOW, THEY ARE FIGHTING OVER NEXT TO NOTHING, BUT NEITHER WILL ADMIT DEFEAT."

The dragon circled down and landed a little ways from one of the camps.

"I MUST NOT SHOW MYSELF, FOR IN THEIR FEAR, THEY WOULD SHOOT FIRST, NOT KNOWING THAT I SEEK ONLY TO GIVE THEM PEACE OF MIND. YOU MUST ENTER THE CAMP. I WILL AWAIT YOU HERE."

"But Lazyurov, won't they shoot us, too?" Delia asked, her voice trembling.

"IF THEY DO, I CAN MAKE THE ARROWS GO ASTRAY. HOWEVER, I HOPE THEY WILL NOT STOOP TO MURDERING CHILDREN. IF THEY ASK, TELL THEM YOU SUPPORT LORD STEPHEN."

"Okay," said Delia. She reached out to Jared and took his hand. Together, they walked slowly toward the camp. Soon, they saw a soldier keeping watch. Moving slowly, their hands above their heads, Delia and Jared stepped into a patch of moonlight and called out, "Hello?"

"Who goes there?" The night watchman bellowed.

"My name is Jared, and this is my friend Delia. We're both twelve. We support Lord Stephen. We're looking," Jared thought quickly, "for my father. My mother has gotten sick, and we are hoping he can come home to help us care for her."

The guard motioned to them to approach, and checked to make sure they had no weapons hidden. Finally, his suspicions allayed, he asked them, "Who is your father? Perhaps I can tell you where he is to be found."

"His name is John," lied Jared, picking the most common name he could think of. He's got brown hair and a brown tunic."

"You've just described about half the men here!" said the guard, a little cranky.

"I know," thought Jared, suppressing a crafty smile. Out loud, he said simply, "You have work to do. May we walk around and look for him?"

"I suppose," said the guard. "Watch your step, though."

Jared and Delia headed straight for the biggest bonfire. In its flickering light, they saw men playing dice, and others chatting quietly. Mindful of their quest, they approached a young man who was sitting alone, staring moodily into the fire.

"Hello," Jared began. "I'm Jared, and this is my friend Delia. Can you tell us, how goes the fighting these days?"

"It goes on and on," said the young man with a weary smile. "I begin to wonder if it wouldn't have been better for the true lord to have remained abroad, as a humble shepherd. I am Stephen," and he extended his hand for them to shake.

"My lord!" gasped Delia, as both she and Jared bowed down respectfully and began to back away.

"No, stay," said Stephen. "I do not deserve your respect and homage. Please, good children, stay near. I could use some company."

Jared and Delia lowered themselves to the ground near the man. Some of Les's magic or the dragon's must have rubbed off on them, for as soon as they were sitting, Lord Stephen began to speak.

"You know, all those months, when I couldn't remember who I was, I was haunted by visions of green, rolling hills, a beautiful palace with children and chickens. I know it sounds silly, but there were always chickens running around the courtyard. As soon as my memory returned, I came straight home, expecting my cousin to welcome me with open arms. We were friends, you see, friends turned into the most bitter enemies, now."

He snorted with disgust. "We've had the beautiful castle under siege for so long that all the chickens have been killed and eaten. The green rolling hills I remember are black and smoking. My dreams are haunted by visions of death and destruction, and my waking hours are more of the same. I want it to end, I tell you. But how? What could I possibly say to the people here, people who have sacrificed so much for my cause, for my sake?"

Delia nodded sympathetically. Jared simply listened, wide eyed.

"I wish I could simply sit down with my cousin, like in the old days, and we could agree to work together. Surely, we could find a way. We will need all the care and leadership we can muster if there is to be any hope of restoring beauty and wealth to these lands."

"Have you tried contacting your cousin, inviting him to talk?"

"Of course," said Stephen tiredly. "My messenger was shot on sight, his message destroyed. I couldn't send anyone else after that."

"What if we told you we could get a message to your cousin," asked Jared excitedly. "What if we knew a way into the castle?"

"A way into the castle? Could I lead my men through it to victory?"

Jared's heart sunk. Obviously, this man was torn between a desire for peace and his desire to win. "No," he said. "There is only passage for one or two, and they must be small. Children, really. We can make it, but you could not."

"Well, then, if you are offering to carry a message, I will give you a message. Giles!" A harried looking man came running out of the nearest tent in response to the Lord's call. "I need parchment and a quill."

"Yes, my lord," the servant said.

"What shall I write? How shall I begin? Should I start from a position of strength, or should I admit to some weakness, to my tiredness and my men's need for rest and food?"

"If I may make a suggestion," said Jared, "you could start with a story. Your story reminds me of an old fable about a wise king, Solomon, I think his name was. The story goes like this: two women were fighting over a child, and they came before King Solomon. Since neither could prove the child was hers, the king threatened to divide the child in half with a sword. The true mother quickly relinquished her claim, not wanting her child to be hurt.

"It seems to me that something similar is happening here, only you are fighting over this land instead of a child."

"Yes! Of course I'm familiar with the story, and so is my cousin. He will understand. I will offer to cede him the territory and ask him to allow me to help restore it to its former glory. No more lives need be wasted in this war."

Stephen accompanied them to the edge of the camp, and wished them "Godspeed" as they walked back into the dark night. They quickly found Lazyurov, who had them climb on his back and began to fly toward the distant castle.

***Dragon Task:** Who are the people you know who have been to war? How do you know them?*